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The building was designated as a local historic landmark in 1988 by Astoria's Historic Landmark's Commission.

"We felt an obligation to preserve it," says Jeff Smith, curator at the maritime museum. "It wasn't cheap, but it was well worth it."

The building now serves as a place to showcase trades and skills that helped build and shape Astoria, such as workshops and classes on kayak and boat building, maritime knot tying, bronze casting, leather work, Northwest Native American basketry and woodcarving, and more.

Before its makeover, however, the building was the Astoria train depot.

Built in 1925 by the Spokane, Portland and Seattle Railroad, the train depot was designed by Thomas D. McMahon, who is famous for the Many Glacier Hotel in Glacier National Park.

The building is divided into two sections separated by a covered breezeway: the east wing, where freight was stored, and the west wing, further divided into two waiting rooms for train passengers.

In its heyday, the depot serviced up to eight passenger and freight trains a day from Portland. With the construction of better roads, passenger service halted in 1952. From that point on, the depot was used exclusively for freight handling until that, too, dwindled.

In 1987, Burlington Northern Railroad gave the building to the maritime museum, which used it as a boat shop to build the replica of a historic sailing gillnet boat that is displayed at the museum.

Between 2002 and 2005 the train depot served excursion trains as part of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. Otherwise, it had been used mainly as a storage area.

In 2005, the museum acquired additional storage space, freeing the depot for other uses. However, no major alterations had been undertaken since the building's construction. In addition to enduring normal aging, an earthquake in 2001 caused significant structural damage that needed to be addressed before moving forward.

The choices boiled down to repair and restore the depot for community use or let it continue to crumble.

In 2010, the maritime museum chose the former.

The \$2.5 million restoration



PHOTO BY ALEX PAJUNAS

Maritime Museum Executive Director Sam Johnson, right, leads a group around the Astoria train depot in June 2011 before restoration work began.

spearheaded by museum Executive Director Sam Johnson included seismic upgrades, restoring historic windows and doors, adding contemporary canopies over doors, removing added walls and a drop-down ceiling, and more.

The restoration project preserved one of Astoria's most historic buildings, but the project also symbolized more than bricks and mortar.

"It's a real gem, and it's become such an asset to the community," Smith says. "It continues to stand the test of time."

'A most sad and interesting story'

Some buildings carry on a life of their own, even after they are long gone.

The Neahkahnie Tavern — once perched proudly above the beach in Manzanita — continues to live on in fond memory and local mythology.

In 1912, Samuel Reed named his new property development Neahkahnie. Reed commissioned Portland architect Ellis Lawrence to design a hotel. The building, called the Neahkahnie Tavern, was erected at the western end of Nehalem Road close to the beach with views



SUBMITTED PHOTO

A hotel and restaurant situated practically on the Manzanita beach, the Neahkahnie Tavern was occupied by the U.S. Coast Guard during the 1940s and burned down in 1956.

of the mountain.

"The Reed family dream was to run a resort hotel on the beach," says Tom Mock, President of Nehalem Valley Historical Society.

This magnificent setting prompted Reed to write to potential investors "Nothing can prevent Neahkahnie from becoming the finest beach resort in Oregon."

Advertising for the hotel prom-

ised "plenty of ranch food will load the tables, garden produce raised on the place, eggs, butter and milk of the very best, and pure water from the mountain streams. The ranch is carefully stocked with the choicest breeds of cattle, sheep and hogs. Hundreds of chickens, housed in clean sheds, produce the fresh eggs for breakfasts."

Another brochure extolled such

virtues as "a comfortable lobby with a cheerful fireplace from which opens the commodious dining room and attractive sun parlor."

In all, there were three floors with a restaurant, eight baths and 19 guest rooms. The family had its own quarters above the kitchen.

The Neahkahnie Tavern flourished during the 1920s, languished during the Great Depression of the 1930s, and was commandeered by the U.S. Coast Guard in the early 1940s.

After Samuel Reed died, his widow sold it. The building passed through several owners until it burned under somewhat questionable circumstances in 1956.

"There was an attempt to restore it, and there were economic difficulties," Mock says. "When it burned, there was every reason to believe it was intentional."

He adds that had the building not burned, it would perhaps remain as one of the most desired destinations on the West Coast.

Now, all that remains — buried between overgrowth and dunes — is a glimpse of the foundation and chimney.

"It makes for a most sad and interesting story," Mock says.