

This Place Matters

By Susan Blake, Historic Preservation Board



The January featured Landmark is the Gilman House located at 151 N. First Street. and Grant Avenue.. Built in 1900, it has watched over the transformation of our downtown from a rural, agricultural area with orchards and dirt roads when horse and buggies passed by, to today's Civic Center with City Hall just across the street.

The house was the original home of an early settler, Mrs. Maude Gilman. Mrs. Gilman is reported to have been an active member of the Campbell Methodist Episcopal Church. That church was located at the northwest corner of Campbell Avenue and North First Street, currently a Starbucks, and stood at that location until 1955.

This single story, Colonial Revival Cottage home is unique with its wide corner entry, wooden porch and many cantilevered windows. The windows allow for more light and opened up the views on all sides of the house. It also features a hip roof with dormer gable above the front entrance and a combination of narrow ship lap siding below with redwood shingles above. Leaded and Stained glass windows adorn many of the front three façades.

It is a fine example of adaptive re-use as the current owner has done extensive restoration while turning it into his business. When he purchased the house, most of the doors and door frames along with decorative molding had been removed. Fortunately, he found them stacked and preserved in the basement, and he was then able to figure out the puzzle and have them reinstalled.

In talking with the owner, he shared out an interesting story about the home. About ten years ago, shortly after he had purchased it and moved in, an elderly lady came to the front door and knocked. She asked if she could come in for a few minutes, just to look around.

Welcoming her in, she said that she had lived here as a child. She said that she was now 86, but remembered how she loved to sit by the big window in the dining room (on Grant) and watch

the buggies go by on Sundays on their way to church. Back then the 'side' streets were dirt, but the town sprayed them with oil starting on the main road (Campbell Avenue) to help keep the dust down. She also said that the house was a hangout for all the local kids after school.

Before she left, she told him that the house had spirits. She made her way back out to the front door, but paused, laughing. She said she was just a silly old woman and paused again. Turning back briefly, she told him, "Oh, they're still here." Unfortunately, the owner did not catch her name.