

# Oregon Historic Site Record

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME							
<b>address:</b>	19131 S Leland Rd Oregon City, Clackamas County			<b>historic name:</b>	Ainsworth, Captain John C, House		
<b>assoc addresses:</b>	19195 Leland Rd; 19130 Lot Whitcomb Dr			<b>current/other names:</b>			
<b>location descr:</b>				<b>block/lot/tax lot:</b>	1/6 & 7 / 14200		
				<b>township/rng/sect/qtr sect:</b>	3S 2E 7 CB		
PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS							
<b>resource type:</b>	Building	<b>height (stories):</b>	2.0	<b>total elig resources:</b>	1	<b>total inelig resources:</b>	1
<b>elig evaluation:</b>	eligible/significant			<b>NR Status:</b>	Individually Listed		
<b>prim constr date:</b>	1851	<b>second date:</b>		<b>date indiv listed:</b>	03/26/1973		
<b>primary orig use:</b>	Single Dwelling			<b>orig use comments:</b>			
<b>second orig use:</b>	SOCIAL: General			<b>prim style comments:</b>			
<b>primary style:</b>	Classical Revival: other			<b>sec style comments:</b>			
<b>secondary style:</b>				<b>siding comments:</b>			
<b>primary siding:</b>	Horizontal Board			<b>architect:</b>	Unknown		
<b>secondary siding:</b>	Wood:Other/Undefined			<b>builder:</b>	Unknown		
<b>plan type:</b>	Side Passage/Entry						
<b>comments/notes:</b>							
Can be rented as Event Space.							
GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS							
<b>Survey/Grouping Included In:</b>				<b>Type of Grouping</b>	<b>Date Listed</b>	<b>Date Compiled</b>	
Landmarks Oregon City ILS 2011				Survey & Inventory Project			
Settlement-era Dwellings, Barns & Farm Groups of the Willamette Valley, Oregon				Survey & Inventory Project		2013	
SHPO INFORMATION FOR THIS PROPERTY							
<b>NR date listed:</b>	03/26/1973	Special Assessment		Federal Tax Program		<b>106 Project(s):</b>	None
<b>ILS survey date:</b>	01/25/2012	<b>Status</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>End Yr</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>Compl</b>
<b>RLS survey date:</b>	01/09/2013	Closed	1st	2006	Dormant		
ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION							
<i>(Includes expanded description of the building/property, setting, significant landscape features, outbuildings and alterations)</i>							
<p>1-25-2011 Update The John C. Ainsworth home was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. The house was first restored by Ruth McBride Powers in 1965 for use as a museum. It was restored again in the early 1990s by Claire and Tom Met (Hawkins, 1999:45). It is currently used, in conjunction with its gardens, as an event space and is privately owned. It underwent reviews by the Historic Review Board in 2005 for an addition and in 2010 for an addition and alteration. It retains excellent integrity and is a historic resource. The following statement of significance for the Ainsworth House is from Rosalind Clark's "Architecture Oregon Style:" "Oregon's best example of the Greek Revival temple form exhibits a front façade pedimented gable, full entablature, colossal two-story octagonal columns, pilasters, six-over-six [sic] double-hung front windows that extend to the floor, transom and side lights surrounding the front entry narrow weatherboard siding, a recessed balustraded balcony, and an inconspicuously sited chimney. The bay window is a later addition. John C. Ainsworth, captain of the steamboat Lot Whitcomb, built the house on a slight knoll with a commanding view of Oregon's Mount Pleasant area" (Clark, 1983:34). The following more detailed description of the Ainsworth house is from the 1973 National Register Nomination: "Situated atop a slight knoll on the outskirts of Oregon City, the Ainsworth House commands a view of Mount Pleasant Heights south of the city. Built in 1851 for Captain John C. Ainsworth, a prominent pioneer steamship captain, merchant and financier, the house is one of the well-known examples of the Classical Revival style in Oregon because of its dramatic two-story portico. The house is rectangular in plan, with gable ends oriented north to south, and it has an offset kitchen ell. Horizontal lap siding or clapboarding covers the south, east and west exterior walls. On the north face the pedimented gable end and the area protected by the portico have flush wall boards. The porch was designed as a tetrastyle-prostyle portico with a colossal order. The Ainsworth House is believed to be a unique example of the temple front type on a large scale west of the Rockies. The four columns supporting the pediment are octagonal rather than turned. To simulate fluting, lathes were attached to the planes of the octagon. A half balcony on the second story is independent of the columns. At the corners of the façade are two-story pilasters with elaborately molded capitals. The cornice of the rear gable end has returns. The gable roof has a boxed cornice and frieze that is divided into two registers by a strip of molding. An interior brick flue with corbelled cap is located on the ridge of the roof. Fenestration is unusual in that coupled openings are used on the sides of the house with double-hung sash windows with six lights over six. Openings of the three-story bay façade are of the so-called French type extending to the floor line with sashes of six lights over nine. Lintels are slightly tapered and decorated with molding to suggest shallow pediments. The off-center entry serving the side stair hall consists of a six panel door with side lights and transom. Directly above it, a similar entry opens onto the balcony from the second story. The interior of the house has been essentially unaltered. A projecting bay with sash windows was added to the east elevation to serve the dining room and a bedroom above. The current owner partially restored the house in 1965 and has operated it for the past several years as a house museum accessible on a regular basis during the summer and by appointment (Hartwig, 1973)." Today the 2.2-acre site is surrounded by suburban residential development within Ainsworth Estates No. 3, on Lot Whitcomb Drive. Also on the site are a contemporary event center and a smaller house with a side gable roof, a half-width recessed porch, and six-over-six-light, wood-frame, double-hung windows in wood frames. It is clad in clapboard with a composition roof and concrete foundation. The parcel is formally and extensively landscaped. Diana Painter</p>							
HISTORY							
<i>(Chronological, descriptive history of the property from its construction through at least the historic period - preferably to the present)</i>							
<p>The following is an account of the life of John C. Ainsworth, who developed the Ainsworth House, from the National Register Nomination for the building: "In 1851, the year after his arrival in Oregon, Captain John Commingers Ainsworth built his large house that was one of the most fully-developed examples of the Classical Revival style in Oregon. Captain Ainsworth took a leading role in commercial development of the Pacific Northwest. Born and raised in Ohio, Ainsworth was thirteen years old when his father died. He immediately began to earn his own living as a storekeeper. When still in his teens he was employed on the Mississippi and gained rapid promotion, becoming a pilot and subsequently master of a passenger steamship plying between St. Luis and up-river points. Attracted to California in 1850 by the gold rush, Ainsworth was in Sacramento when offered the command of a new steamer that was under construction at Milwaukie, Ore. Ainsworth came to the state late in 1850 to take command of the Lot Whitcomb, the first steamer built on the Willamette River, and the first steamer to ply a regular route on the Willamette and Columbia Rivers. From this point Ainsworth's mercantile activities grew in proportion to the rapid settlement of the country, and it was at this juncture that he ordered his house built south of Oregon City. Remarkably elegant of the period and conditions his house was for a time a center of hospitality. When Portland displaced Oregon City as the center of trade and commerce, Ainsworth sold his house and moved to Portland to manage his business dealings down river. Ainsworth helped organize the Oregon Steamship and Navigation Company, and was its leading spirit until the company merged with the Oregon Railroad and Navigation Company. Ainsworth became</p>							

president of the new corporation and remained at the helm until 1881, when the Henry Villard syndicate purchased the operation. However, Captain Ainsworth's connection with transportation interests were not terminated. He was a factor in the construction of the Missouri Pacific Railroad from California of the South. As the years passed and the Northwest developed he made extensive investments in real estate in Tacoma on the southern end of Puget Sound in Washington and he promoted the building of a railroad between Puget Sound and the terminus of the Northern Pacific Railroad on the Columbia River. In 1881 Ainsworth erected the Ainsworth Block in downtown Portland and later extended his activities to Oakland, California. He established the Central Bank in that city and remained its president until his death in 1893. In 1883 he organized the Ainsworth National Bank of Portland. Many of the most important Portland business projects of the day were backed by Ainsworth. He was also instrumental in the development of Redondo Beach, one of the fashionable beachside resorts of Los Angeles. By the end of his career, Ainsworth was well recognized for his business acumen among eastern financial circles as well as those of the West (Hartwig, 1973). According to William Hawkins, the house is the Portland area's only remaining temple-fronted Green Revival house. The house was first restored by Ruth McBride Powers in 1965 for use as a museum. It was restored again in the early 1990s by Claire and Tom Met (Hawkins, 1999:45). It is currently used, in conjunction with its gardens, as an event space and is privately owned.

## RESEARCH INFORMATION

Title Records	Census Records	Property Tax Records	Local Histories
Sanborn Maps	Biographical Sources	SHPO Files	Interviews
Obituaries	Newspapers	State Archives	Historic Photographs
City Directories	Building Permits	State Library	

<b>Local Library:</b>	<b>University Library:</b>
<b>Historical Society:</b>	<b>Other Repository:</b>

## Bibliography:

"Ainsworth House & Gardens, <http://www.ainsworthhouse.net/>, accessed February 2011. Clark, Rosalind, "Architecture Oregon Style." Portland, OR: Professional Book Center, Inc., 1983. Hawkins, William J., III and William F. Willingham, "Classic Houses of Oregon 1850 - 1950." Portland, OR: Timber Press, 2005. Hartwig, Paul, "Ainsworth (Captain John C.) House, National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form," February 1973.