



FALL CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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“Win-win” project coming on Main Street!

You may remember that 337th Pl SE was designated **Main Street** on the original 1887 Fall City Plat. The corner of River Street and Main Street is “Hotel Corner,” site of Doc Taylor’s early Hotel and Restaurant and the hotels which followed it. Main Street is wider than other streets in town and was expected to have businesses as well as residences. Some of the early buildings on Main Street were the Valley Hotel (1890s), the Baptist Church (1899), the Masonic Hall (1895), and the Neighbor-Bennett House (1904). One that is often overlooked is the small cottage just south of the Masonic Hall, shown at right in a 1940 Washington State Archives photo. It was built ca. 1904 by George Hamlin and had several owners before being purchased in 1909 by Andrew and Karen Ronnei. After the Ronneis’ death in 1919, it was sold to Chris Raum, a relative of Karen Ronnei. It is referred to as the Ronnei-Raum house. In mid-1965, the house was purchased by the Falls City Masonic Lodge and was used by the Lodge as a rental property. Although originally built on a single lot, later lots were added to the property, so that it sits on a very generous site.



The small cottage as shown in the 1940 photo sits directly across the street from the Neighbor-Bennett House, built in the same period, and reflects similar materials, including the fish-scale shingles under the front gable. Its decorative porch, with ornate turned posts and jig-sawn brackets originally wrapped around to the south side of the house. Although the Ronneis owned the house for about 10 years, it is not clear that they ever lived in it. It appears to have been a rental property for most of its existence.

In May this year, the King County Preservation Action Fund gave Historic Seattle the go-ahead to purchase the Ronnei-Raum house. (See page 8 for more about these King County agencies.)

Historic Seattle will rehabilitate the house and will ensure its protection by landmark designation and a preservation easement. Then it will be resold and the funds returned to the Preservation account. This is **Win #1!**

In addition, the purchase of the property from the Masonic Lodge will provide the Lodge with some funds to help with needed work on the Masonic Hall building. And having Historic Seattle working next door, they will be able to take advantage of their experience and advice. **Win #2!**

Overall, what a great gift to Fall City! Our thanks to Preservation and to Historic Seattle. We look forward to learning more from them during the project.

Support for our work from King County Heritage 4Culture is gratefully acknowledged.



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Historic Seattle is a public development authority established by Seattle city ordinance in 1974. For 45 years, Historic Seattle has worked to preserve historical buildings and educate the public through a series of informative events.

As a community-based organization, Historic Seattle focuses on the reuse and reimagining of historic properties for new purposes.

An early example is the Good Shepherd Center, a 1906 Catholic Home for Girls that was slated for demolition. The property was purchased by the City of Seattle and the buildings transferred to Historic Seattle in 1975. Today, the Good Shepherd Center accommodates the Wallingford neighborhood's desire for community space, housing nonprofit organizations, a school, six units of artist housing and a 200-seat performance space (in the former chapel) hosting over 100 musical events and programs each year.

Currently Historic Seattle is working with community members to establish Landmark designation for Seattle's renowned music venue **The Showbox**.

Visit <https://historicseattle.org/> for an overview of their many projects and the tours and presentations being offered.

We salute the current effort by Preservation Action Fund and Historic Seattle to extend their preservation focus to areas outside of Seattle. Fall City is delighted to be the first Historic Seattle project in this new focus.