

House and Property History - <https://multco.us/records/house-and-property-history>

Although house and property history is a popular way to connect with local history, this may be one of the most difficult areas to research. The records are often hard to locate, scattered in a variety of sources, and in many cases, non-existent. This is particularly the case with photographs. The following suggestions are not intended to be exhaustive, but can provide you with starting points for your research.

If you are looking for information on the current ownership of a property, see our section on [Property Ownership Information](#).

Available online :

Begin your search at [Portland Maps \(link is external\)](#), a service of the City of Portland. After searching for a property, you will be able to view not only current statistics about property, but also some historic information, including year of construction and often scanned permits under the "Historic Permits" section.

You can also check the [State Historic Preservation Office \(link is external\)](#)'s [Oregon Historic Sites Database \(link is external\)](#) to see if the house or property you are investigating has been designated as historically significant. In addition, this site provides information about having a house or property added to the [National Register of Historic Buildings in Oregon \(link is external\)](#).

You can also access digitized Land Use Planning Decisions online from 1998 to the present through a searchable database. Please contact the Department of Land Use and Transportation directly with questions about their database.

Available at the County :

Additional resources are available at the [Multnomah County Library \(link is external\)](#), including the *Historic Resource Inventory of Portland* (1984) and Digital Sanborne Maps. Please view their [House History Guide \(link is external\)](#) for details on resources available at the Multnomah County Library.

Property zoning is performed by [Multnomah County Land Use Planning](#) in unincorporated areas. Zoning information dates from the early 1950's for most areas and provides a history of land use for properties.

Survey information is maintained by the [County Surveyor](#) and includes microfilm, paper and on-line records of surveys performed in Multnomah County dating from 1852 until the present. Types of records include field notes, indexes, maps, subdivisions and partition plats, and other records used to determine property boundaries and locations.

The [Recorder's Office](#) provides access to land records and property tax records. Please see their website for details on how to access these records.

Eviction Records are held by the Sheriff's Office as part of the [Civil Process Unit \(link is external\)](#). Per compliance with Oregon Records Law, they only maintain eviction records from the past five years.

Additional Resources :

In incorporated areas, zoning is performed by cities, with online information available for [Portland \(link is external\)](#) and [Gresham \(link is external\)](#).

Historic structure information is also available at the [Oregon Historical Society \(link is external\)](#). Their holdings include a copy of the *Historic Resource Inventory of Portland* (1984), block books, Portland city directories, Sanborn insurance maps, and historic photographs. See their [Guide to House and Building History \(link is external\)](#).

Looking into the history of the neighborhood in which the house or property is located can provide additional context into the history of your house. The [City of Portland Office of Neighborhood Involvement \(link is external\)](#) and the City of Portland Archives' [Website Links \(link is external\)](#) (scroll to bottom of page) provide guidance on neighborhood research.

Another valuable and often forgotten resource is one's neighbors. Long-term neighbors may have stories about previous owners, or your home may be in photographs of the exterior of their own homes.

Key Contacts :

[Multnomah County Surveyor](#)

1600 S.E. 190th Avenue
Portland, OR 97233
(between S.E. Stark and S.E. Division)
503-988-3600

[Multnomah County Land Use Planning Division](#)

1600 S.E. 190th Avenue
Portland, OR 97233
(between S.E. Stark and S.E. Division)
503-988-3043

[City of Gresham Planning Department \(link is external\)](#)

City Hall
1333 N.W. Eastman Parkway
Gresham, OR 97030
503-618-2780
Hours: 9:00-Noon, 1:00-4:00

[City of Portland](#)

[Office of Planning and Development Review \(link is external\)](#)

1900 S.W. 4th Avenue
Portland, OR 97201
503-823-7300

[State Historic Preservation Office \(link is external\)](#)

1115 Commercial Street N.E., Suite 2
Salem, OR 97301-1012
503-368-6305

Oregon Historical Society

[Research Library \(link is external\)](#)

1200 S.W. Park Avenue
Portland, OR 97205-2483
503-222-1741