

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91000043 Date Listed: 2/19/91

Corning Court Ensemble Jackson OR
Property Name County State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

for Elizabeth Potter
Signature of the Keeper

2/19/91
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

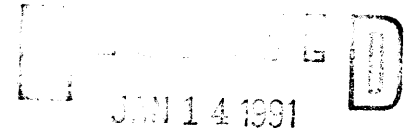
Statement of Significance: Under Criteria Considerations (Exceptions), box B should be checked because the principal building was repositioned on the lot

This information was confirmed with Elizabeth Potter of the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Corning Court Ensemble
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 5 - 16 Corning Court N/A not for publication
city, town Medford N/A vicinity
state Oregon code OR county Jackson code 029 zip code 97504

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>4</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
James M. Brown December 31, 1990
Signature of certifying official Date
Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. Autawicelli Glee 2/19/91
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Business: Other (cottage industry)

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals:Colonial Revival, Bungalow/Craftsman,English Cottage, Mission/Spanish

Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls wood: weatherboard, shingle

stucco

roof asphalt

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1

The five structures of the Corning Court Ensemble are an eclectic grouping of architectural styles and materials that are tied together by a common development scheme. Ranging in date of construction from 1906-7 to 1926, the five houses form a coherent unit in layout concept, landscape features and site placement as a result of the planning principles utilized in Corning Court's original development. Individually, none of the Corning Court buildings is exemplary in style or technique. Their collective appearance however, in both structure and landscape, continues to relate the original design of the development. The appearance and feeling of the Corning Court Ensemble today remains consistent with its original history, setting, use of materials and workmanship. The Corning Court Ensemble continues to relate an early example of a planned residential neighborhood in southern Oregon.

SITE:

Corning Court is comprised of eight tax lots occupying the rear 4/5ths of Lots 1-3, Block 1 of the Cottage Home Addition, at the corner of Cottage and East Main Streets in Medford, Oregon. These eight lots include the five nominated structures, two vacant parcels and one compatible apartment complex.¹ The north edge of the nominated area is defined by a large (+8' tall) hedge that serves as the development's boundary to the front (north), visually separating it from commercial uses along East Main. An original concrete roadbed, 16 feet wide, bisects Corning Court from north to south. Turning from concrete to dirt just past the

¹ For a full history of these eight lots see Significance Statement.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2

southern edge of the Vilas-Richardson House and finally meeting an unpaved publicly maintained alley at the extreme rear of the development.²

As required by the development scheme, each of the five structures are oriented inward, facing the easement, and are each sited with matching setbacks of approximately 40 feet. Original concrete curbing rises from the easement and one apparently original parking bay cuts into the lawn space between the Elliott and Kent-Holt Houses. All structures except the Elliott House have concrete "driveways" or parking pads perpendicular to the central easement. Some of which appear original, newer concrete work at the Kent-Holt House is likely a later replacement of an original element.

Lush vegetation and landscaping plays an instrumental role in establishing the special character of the Corning Court Ensemble. Front lawns and established foundation plantings and shrubs add to the numerous large trees which form an integral element of Corning Court's design character. Six huge maple and fir trees, with trunk diameters in excess of 4' dominate the interior of Corning Court. Many smaller specimens of these and other species are found throughout the development.

INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURES:**Dr. Bert Elliott House**
5 Corning Court (Tax ID 10300)

The Dr. Bert Elliott House is a one and one-half story gable-roofed wood-frame dwelling in the Colonial Revival style. Designed by Medford architect, Frank Chamberlain Clark, the Elliott house was completed in the summer of 1925.

² This drive, actually an privately held easement, originally ended in a cul-de-sac at the end of the concrete portion. Some of the circular curbs still remain. It is unclear at what point it was continued through to the alley.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3

In appearance, the Elliott House presents a symmetrical second-story over an asymmetrical first. Typical of Clark's work, the house utilizes details of the Colonial Revival style intermixed with other less traditional elements.

Notable landscape features include a curved concrete walkway leading to a pad of dry-laid slab granite or flagstone at the entry. Reportedly these stones were once part of a building in Jacksonville and were brought here under the direction of the original owner.³ In the rear of the property is a series of stone-lined fish ponds, currently non-functional.

A split pediment (with returns) tops a simple leaded-glass arched window with a modest keystone-like detail to form the elaborate classic style entry. Paired pilasters enframe the door itself. The arched window/keystone detail is repeated in the windows of two gable dormers at either end of the front (west-facing) elevation. A pair of arch-top casement windows is also found on the small gabled wing to the south of the main volume. Remaining windows are all rectangular, 6/1 wood frame double hung in the central shed dormer or multi-pane casement, double-hung or fixed on the remainder of the structure. A central shed dormer on the rear elevation opens onto a recessed balcony.

Exterior siding is of wooden shingles with approximately 6" to the weather. At the eaves are a small overhang and a simple, plainboard frieze. Roofing is composition shingle. The original flat-roofed garage remains facing the rear driveway/easement and the adjacent property to the east.

The Elliott House remains substantially as built. Minor modifications include changing a window at the southwest

³ According to Amy Elliott Barnum her father had these stones brought from Jacksonville when the "Jacksonville Fort" was demolished shortly after the construction of the subject house.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

corner into a door way, (1987: Brad Young, Contractor) and miscellaneous interior alterations. The house retains integrity in design, setting, use of materials, workmanship and appearance.

Kent-Holt House
11 Corning Court (Tax ID 10400)

Built sometime between April 1906 and June 1907, the Kent-Holt House was repositioned onto this lot in early 1924 at the beginning of the Corning Court project. The Corning Court elevation (west) originally faced what is now East Main Street (north) prior to the move.

The Kent-Holt House is a two and one-half story wood frame dwelling with a complicated roof consisting of three intersecting hipped-roof volumes with a small shed-roofed service area at the extreme rear (east). Sanborn maps indicated that an extension/garage area has been added at the NE corner, coming off the porch described below. All roof surfaces are composition shingle.

Along the north elevation is a colonnaded porch area, an extension of which to the west forms the main entry. The porch columns are of simple Doric design made of wood stave construction. A matching column nests below a 45 degree angled jetty portion of the second floor at the extreme SW corner of the structure.

Exterior cladding is 6" horizontal drop siding on the first floor. Bands of wood shingles of alternating widths clad the second story. A slight flaring of the shingles over a broadly spaced "dentil" course eases the merger of these two siding materials. On the front elevation are two unusual wall dormers with gable roofs and flanking Doric pilasters. The plain tympanum area with a curved recess is repeated in the gable end of the first floor porch. At the base of the two wall dormers is an idiosyncratic "finned" design that somewhat resembles a non-functional window box. Early

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 5

photos show these finned projections to be original. An additional gabled dormer, plainly detailed, overlooks the porch to the north.

The windows on the facade are 6 vertical lights over 1 light wood sash, double-hung with the upper sash only 1/3 of the total height. Secondary elevation windows are 1/1 wood sash double hung.

No other alterations or additions to the Kent-Holt House are apparent or documented. It remains consistent with its historic design, setting, use of materials, workmanship and appearance.

Vilas-Richardson House
16 Corning Court (Tax ID 10800)

Reportedly the Vilas-Richardson House was also moved to the Corning Court development c. 1924⁴ Some similarity exists between this house and the Kent-Holt House in the exterior siding shingle pattern as well as the use of shingles over a horizontal siding material and the two structures may well have once been connected in some fashion.⁵ However, no specific information on the location of the Vilas-Richardson House prior to Corning Court's development has been located.

The Vilas-Richardson House is a single story rectangular volume, wood-framed with a central gable roof surrounded by a perimeter pent. All roofing is composition shingle. Originally the gable portion of the Vilas-Richardson house was a flat roof. A poor design, the roof leaked severely, resulting in extreme structural deterioration and termite infestation. In August 1987 the flat roof was removed and reframed to the present configuration by Tim King of Medford Construction. The original perimeter pent was retained and

⁴ Please refer to Significance Statement, Page 13, Note #22.

⁵ A corner porch post removed as part of this remodeling appears to have been identical to those of the Kent-Holt House further strengthening the theory that the subject was once a wing or other portion of that structure.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

incorporated into the new design. Exposed rafter tails under the broad overhanging eave are cut to a rounded profile. A stucco-clad chimney penetrates the eaves on the north elevation.

Exterior windows are single pane wood-sash casement windows. Original windows remain on the three secondary elevations. The original bank of five sashes of 10-light casement windows on the north of the main facade were replaced in October 1987 with the present bay window. At that time the original recessed porch was enclosed to create a sun room and encased with double-paned insulated windows in similar proportions as other original windows. Original glass-paned doors remain behind the new entryway through the sun room.⁶

The Vilas-Richardson House was built as a modest structure, perhaps only as a portion of a larger house, that was later converted into a free-standing residential unit at the time of Corning Court's development. Various structural changes have been required to compensate for inadequacies in the original design. Additional exterior changes, while not entirely consistent with the original design of the structure, do not entirely diminish the structure's role in Corning Court. The Vilas-Richardson House maintains its historic scale, setting, and basic use of materials. While it continues to adequately relate its historic role in the overall design of the Corning Court development, visually it no longer contributes to the unique character of the area.

Max GeBauer House
15 Corning Court (Tax ID 10900)

The Max GeBauer is a two story gable-roofed wood-frame dwelling in the Arts and Crafts idiom utilizing elements also associated with the Norman Farmhouse. Designed by

⁶ Originally two matching sets of French doors opened onto this porch. One was replaced in-kind by Valley Door of White City, Oregon as the result of damage caused by an attempted burglary in November 1985.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 7

Medford architect, Frank Chamberlain Clark, the GeBauer house was built by contractor Elmer Childers. It was completed in late summer or early fall 1925.

The asymmetrical composition of the GeBauer House is highlighted by the prominent swooping gable over the entryway. At its base this wall plane is extended into a low brick-topped wall that defines a small front patio-like area. A transverse gable with clipped (jerkin) ends forms the main volume of the house. At the rear a flat-roofed extension serves as a balcony. A small arch-topped dormer is centered above the main entry, next to a large gable dormer. A single gable dormer is found on the south elevation. Narrow arched-top louvered ventilators are located in the gable peaks.

Common in both Arts & Crafts and Norman Farmhouse style, a tudor arch frames the main recessed entrance. This detail is repeated above the three-part window opening on the facade. Here two 8-light wood sash casements flank a large picture window with a bank of 4 lights above. Remaining windows are 8-light wood-sash casement. Early photos show that these facade windows were once flanked by shutters.⁷ At the rear a more modest 6-light sash is used.

Exterior surfaces are all original stucco. A large stucco chimney rises on the north elevation. Roofing is composition shingle. At the rear, a shed roof storage area is the original garage. A newer garage unit, covered with T-111 was built c. 1980.

The work of a prominent architect and built by a well-known local contractor, the Max GeBauer House is an integral part of the Corning Court Ensemble. It retains integrity to its original design, setting, use of materials, workmanship and appearance to successfully relate its original role within the development.

⁷ Medford Mail Tribune, 1 January 1927, "Medford Section":1 included a photo of the GeBauer House in a full page layout "Medford is a City of Many Beautiful Homes."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 8Williamson-Heckman House
6 Corning Court (Tax ID 11000)

The last house built within the original development of Corning Court, the Williamson-Heckman House was completed in late 1926. A modest one-story wood-framed dwelling, the structure is built in a simple Spanish Colonial bungalow style.

The main volume of the Williamson-Heckman House is rectangular with a flat roof and stepped parapets. A red Spanish-tile gable extension projects to the front (east) and extends to form the arched portal, with a matching portal facing north at the recessed entry. As in the GeBauer House to the south, this wall plane extends into a low wall to form a front patio area. To the north a extension of the wall line forms an open gateway with a small tile roof above the opening.

The arched-entry theme is repeated in the massive oak entry door with original hardware and the large picture window at the north front. An early use of such a large glazed area in Medford, this window reportedly was briefly an item of curiosity upon completion of the house. Remaining main facade windows are 4/1 wood sash casement. The other elevations have wood sash 1/1 and 5/1 double-hung and casement windows. An end-hall stucco-clad chimney rises on the north elevation.

In 1984 a 14x16 foot shed-roof addition was added to the west, Cottage Street, elevation of the Williamson-Heckman House.⁸ A basement was excavated to extend the original basement area. Original exterior windows were moved and incorporated into the new exterior facade of the addition. Exterior surfaces are stucco and the roof is red Spanish tile, both to match the original structure.

⁸ The contractor was Lighthouse Enterprises of Medford.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 9

The original matching garage remains facing Cottage Street. A new roll-up door has replaced the original garage door. A steel storage shed extension runs east off the rear of the garage.

Since the 1980 the Williamson-Heckman House has been owned by another Corning Court resident and used as an office, shipping, and warehouse area for a small cottage industry; the manufacture and wholesale distribution of paper mache masks and other costume apparel.

The Williamson-Heckman House retains substantial integrity in design, setting, use of materials, and workmanship to its historic appearance. Additions to the rear, the secondary facade, do not seriously diminish the building's role in the Corning Court development.

SUMMARY:

The five individual structures that combine to form the Corning Court Ensemble share little affinity in design, workmanship or style. Each was built and designed as an individual expression by a different owner and designer within the restrictions imposed by the common development program. Sixty years later, individual structures exhibit changes and alterations in varying degrees. All, however, continue to reflect the intent of the original plan of the project. The Corning Court Ensemble retains substantial integrity to its historic design, setting, use of materials, workmanship, landscape features, and overall appearance to successfully relate its significance as an early planned residential neighborhood in southern Oregon.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning and Development

Period of Significance

1924-1926

Significant Dates

1926

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Multiple: Clark, Frank Chamberlain
Anonymous

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Jackson County Courthouse, Medford

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property 0.98 acres Medford East, Oregon 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	0
---	---

5	1	1	2	5	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	6	8	5	9	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

 Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 Zone Easting Northing

D

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated area is located in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 30, Township 37S, Range 1W, Willamette Meridian, in Medford, Jackson County, Oregon. It includes portions of Lots 1, 2 and 3 of Block 1 of the Cottage Home Addition to the City of Medford, and is more particularly identified as Tax Lots 10300, 10400, 10800, 10900, and 11000 at said location. Jackson County Map Ref. No. 371W 30AC.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated area of nearly an acre includes on contiguous parcels all five extant original dwellings within Corning Court that remain consistent with their original use, orientation, function and continue to convey the original intent of the development.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title George Kramer, Historic Preservation Consultant
 organization _____ date August 1, 1990
 street & number 386 North Laurel telephone (503) 482-9504
 city or town Ashland state Oregon zip code 97520

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 1

The Corning Court Ensemble located on the south side of Main Street in east Medford, Oregon is a grouping of five contiguous properties fronting opposite sides of a private lane known as Corning Court that is accessible from Main Street on the north and via an alleyway from Cottage Street on the west. The area proposed for nomination is slightly under an acre in size and represents a coherent residential unit in layout, landscape characteristics and set back from the commonly-held north-south easement. The houses were assembled or constructed on the site in the period 1924 to 1926, and their significance is collective, in that they represent a development concept that is distinctive locally. The ensemble meets National Register Criterion A in the area of community planning and development. The balance of property making up Block 1 of the Cottage Home Addition is unimproved parcels and a compatible apartment complex and is not included in the nominated area.

The Corning Court development is one of the earliest documented examples in southern Oregon of private community planning through the exercise of deed restrictions and covenants. The loss of one of the original residential units notwithstanding, the character of the small, park-like enclave has been well preserved to the present day. The inspiration for the development was the Garden City concept promulgated by the English designer Ebenezer Howard that, in turn, was based on the ideals of aesthetic harmony and efficient use of limited ground space. The Corning Court Ensemble shows that such ideas had spread even to smaller communities before zoning and municipal planning were commonly practiced in this country.

The Craftsman-style house at No. 11 Corning Court was built in 1906-1907 by Luman B. Kent, retired orchardist, on former orchard land within the subdivision. It faced Main Street before its relocation and re-orientation to the west in 1924. L. B. Kent and his wife, Helen; Edward and Cora Kent Welch, and Benjamin Harder were founders of the development. Remaining lots were sold and developed in accordance with covenant.

The architectural styles represented by the ensemble are Colonial Revival, Bungalow/Craftsman, English Cottage, and Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival. Of the five houses, four are in an unaltered

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 2

state having clear-cut status as contributing resources. Number 16 Corning Court, because of recent alterations, is somewhat problematic in this regard and is therefore classified as historic/non-contributing in present condition. No. 16 nonetheless upholds the traditional building materials, set back and scale of the building group as well as the landscape characteristics of the front yard. It was a requirement of the development scheme that each of the houses be oriented inward from the streets surrounding the block so that they faced the central easement and were sited with matching 40-foot set-backs. The front lawns are dominated by mature maples and fir trees.

- No. 5 - Dr. Bert Elliott House (1925), Colonial Revival, Frank C. Clark, architect. Contributing.
- No. 11 - Kent-Holt House (1907), Bungalow/Craftsman, relocated from Main Street. Contributing.
- No. 16 - Vilas-Richardson House (anonymous design), vernacular, relocated, altered in 1987. Historic/non-contributing in current condition.
- No. 15 - Max GeBauer House (1925), English Cottage, Frank C. Clark, architect. Contributing.
- No. 6 - Williamson-Heckman House (1926), Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival, altered rear face, 1984. Contributing.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 3

The compact residential development known as Corning Court was first laid out in its present configuration in 1923-4. Intended as a homogeneous neighborhood, various design and site decisions were limited via the use of perpetual deed restrictions or covenants. Access into Corning Court was provided by a jointly held easement. In each case, Corning Court represents one of the earliest documented attempts at private community planning in southern Oregon. Sixty-four years after the construction of the last of the original six houses on the nominated portion of Corning Court, five survive. Four maintain a substantial integrity in original design, use of materials, landscape features, and workmanship to successfully convey the appearance of the original development. Corning Court, although now located at the edge of a main commercial and professional corridor, retains its original secluded, park-like atmosphere, and continues to evoke the qualities that were intended by its original developers, builders, and residents.

LOCATION:

The Corning Court Ensemble is located within Township 37 South, Range 1 West of the Willamette Meridian, Section 30 on Lots 1, 2 and 3 of Block 1 of the Cottage Home Addition to the City of Medford as filed on 23 October 1895. These three lots, hereafter referred to as "Lots 1-3", run between East Main on the North and a public alley on the south. With the development of Corning Court these three lots were divided east to west to create 10

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2B

individual parcels but the land was never formally sub-divided and recorded. Of the ten parcels, five are included within the nominated area. These are 10300, 10400, 10800, 10900 and 11000 as shown on Jackson County Tax Assessor's Map 371W30AC.¹

HISTORY: 1884-1922:

The land that would become Corning Court was originally settled as a portion of the Napoleon B. Evens DLC #44 and remained as orchard/agricultural property until 1900. Following the recording of the Cottage Home addition in 1895, Lots 1-3 were a part of the 30 acre parcel purchased by John W. Prall on 28 March 1901. Records indicate that all three lots continued as orchard land and no buildings of any type were present. In 1906 Lots 1-3 were sold to L. B. Kent for \$3200.00.²

Luman B. Kent was born in 1840 and married Helen M. Kent (b. 1850) in 1872. Prior to 1907 they built a large house on the eastern half of Lots 1-3, roughly centered on Lot 1. Other structures on the parcel by 1907 included a large barn, a

¹ The entire 10 lots of Corning Court included Tax Lots 10200-11000 (see maps). 10200 and 11100 front on East Main and although developed under the Corning Court restriction have since been converted to professional use and severely altered. Lots 10500[1] and 10600[1] are both vacant. (Jackson County uses a "1" to designate vacant tax lot parcels). The history of the buildings originally located on these lots will be covered in the history portion of this nomination. The apartment building located on 10700 is a 1950s era structure which while somewhat compatible is not considered significant. The 5 nominated properties include all surviving original Corning Court structures that continue to front upon the central driveway and retain a Corning Court address.

² Charly and Albra Prall to L.B. Kent, JCD:55-269, 27 April 1906. One week earlier (19-April-1906) Charly Prall had received ownership of the property from Sarah and John W. Prall, presumedly his parents, for \$1.00 with no other consideration listed.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3B

watertower and a small one-story outbuilding. A second dwelling, located on Lot 2 to the west, was also built and another single-story outbuilding was behind it. By 1910 this second house was the residence of Edward A. and Cora Kent Welch. Mrs. Welch, the only child of L.B. and Helen Kent, was born in 1881 and had married Welch in 1902. Welch was employed as a wholesale grocer. Little other information regarding Welch or his wife has been located.

L.B. Kent was apparently a retired orchardist or farmer when he had the house built on Lot 1. He was 66 years old. By 1907 most of the lots along East Main Street had begun to shift from long-standing orchard use to large-lot residential development. The title to Lots 1-3 was transferred to Cora Kent Welch on 12 November 1917.³

HISTORY: 1923-1924

On 7 November 1923 Edward and Cora Kent Welch, along with both L.B. and Helen Kent, entered into an agreement with B.E. Harder to serve as a trustee in the sale of the subject property. By 27 August 1924, Harder was released as trustee, "having fulfilled all requirements" and the Welch's and Mrs. Kent (Mr. Kent having died in the interim) sold the three lots to Harder. However, at least one portion, (Tax Lot 10300) somehow reverted to Welch prior to the final sale and construction of the structures.⁴

Benjamin E. Harder was a prominent figure in Medford. Born in Idaho in 1879 had served in various capacities at a number of financial institutions throughout the Pacific northwest. From

³ JCD 141:147. This transfer was not officially recorded until 26 August 1922. Since both elder Kents were alive as late as 1924 this transfer was likely in anticipation of the development of Corning Court and was processed for estate planning reasons.

⁴ On 9 November 1923 Cora Kent Welch filed a decree for divorce from Edward A. Welch. This sale of this lot may have been somehow related to the divorce settlement.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

1921 to 1936 he was the president of the First National Bank of Medford. Later Harder would become a director of the 1st National Bank of Oregon, the California-Oregon Power Company and other important financial concerns. The exact financial relationship between Welch and Harder and their individual contributions to the Corning Court project remain unclear. It seems likely though that Harder, through his financial acumen, as well as personal friendship with most of its early residents, played the key role in Corning Court's development.⁵

Likely as a stipulation of the previously mentioned trusteeship, the two existing residential structures located upon the subject parcels were relocated to help define the new development. The Kent House was rotated counter-clockwise 90 degrees and repositioned a short distance to the south of its original location. It remains as the Kent-Holt House, located at what is now 11 Corning Court. The Welch House was also rotated counter-clockwise 90 degrees and was moved SE to the south of the Kent-Holt House at what was to become 17 Corning Court. These were the first two structures to reflect the new overall scheme of the development.⁶

Likely the result of Harder's influence, construction within the Corning Court development was subject to certain guidelines that were included as deed restrictions and recorded along with the transfer of property. Although varying slightly depending on the individual parcel involved the following is typical of the Corning Court deeds of sale between Harder and the various original residents:

⁵ As per information from the various interviews undertaken for this project, original resident Bert Elliott banked at Harder's First National and Drs. Holt and Heckman, as well as the GeBauers (pronounced "Geh-Bauer" with a soft "e" sound) were all known to Harder prior to moving to Corning Court.

⁶ The Vilas-Richardson House may also have been moved to Corning Court. See this nomination under the specific discussion of that structure.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 5

[property] ...conveyed subject to a building restriction to the effect that any dwelling house to be hereafter built on the premises shall cost not less than \$3500, and shall face west with the western line thereof in line with the houses situated on said Lot One in said Block 1 of the premises, and the entire east 8' and the entire west 8' of said premises are subject to an easement for a driveway to be used for all proper purposes of travel and transportation.⁷

The details of the construction of each of the individual properties is covered elsewhere in this nomination. Each however were subject to the above restrictions which in effect fixed the setback to that of the relocated Kent and Welch structures for the east half of the project and the Vilas House on the west. Properties on the west of the development were subject to a single 8' easement at the eastern edge which, combined with westernmost 8' of the eastern properties forms the 16' wide driveway that continues to serve as a private road for Corning Court residents. The second easement on the five eastern lots, the east 8', has since been either abandoned or obscured by adjacent development.

Following the release of Harder's trusteeship, title to Lots 1-3 were formally transferred by the Welch's to him. Sales of the remaining lots and the construction of the subject properties continued rapidly thereafter. In Medford, Corning Court developed and was quickly recognized as one of the better areas of town to live in. The first group of families to move to Corning Court were well-known professionals and business owners. Doctors Holt, Elliott, and later Dr. Heckman, all had established practices and were active in a wide variety of civic and social concerns. The GeBauer and Richardson families owned prominent local businesses. The Vilas family was an instrumental and well-respected one in Medford's orchard economy. Each of these first

⁷ B.E. Harder, Trustee to Wm. W.P. Holt, 6 August 1924, JCD 151:49.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 6

and second generation Corning Court residents were affluent people who could have afforded to live in virtually any part of the Rogue Valley yet they each choose Corning Court due to its special qualities. They may have been hand-picked by Mr. Harder and told of the idea of the new development. No public advertisement or announcement of ensuing development was ever located during the course of research for this project.

CONTEXT:

Planned community development can trace its widespread use to advent of the "Garden City" concept as promulgated by the English designer Ebenezer Howard. Howard's ideas, as transported to America, resulted in developments such as Lake Forest, New York and Shaker Heights, Ohio. In these areas, prominent architects worked to create a development that was "planned" in toto rather than the result of various accretions over time; the traditional pattern of city development. The belief that a holistic design approach would provide for greater harmony, greater beauty, better land utilization and, ultimately, greater liveability and a better home environment was central to the ideas of the planned community and the Garden City movement.

The development and adoption of zoning and municipal planning in the United States began in earnest only after the landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 1926 that cities and municipalities could legally regulate the uses of lands within their jurisdiction without it constituting a taking of private property.⁸ Prior to that ruling only a few cities controlled development to any degree. Even in those cities regulations were generally of a zoning nature, to prohibit the mixture of commercial, industrial and residential uses within any given area. In upper-middle class residential developments, potential residents placed special value upon community appearance and harmonious design. When cities could not, or would not, regulate aesthetics, a new method was needed. Jesse Clyde Nichols, developer of the

⁸ Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Company, 272 U.S. 365 (1926).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 7

successful Country Club District of Kansas City was a pioneer in private aesthetic and designs controls. "Nichol's major innovation was the self-perpetuating deed restriction which provided that stipulations laid down by the developer would continue indefinitely unless a majority of the owners in the subdivision voted to change them..."⁹ Nichols' subsequent success led many other developers and planners to rely on these types of deed restrictions or "covenants" to guarantee the continued quality of their projects.

A restrictive covenant is legally defined as a "provision in a deed limiting the use of the property and prohibiting certain uses."¹⁰ Unfortunately, such deed restrictions soon became useful as a tool of racism or exclusionary practices and it is in that light they are most remembered. Deeds dating from most post-war suburban developments included covenants whose sole intent was to limit the potential for sale or resale to minority buyers including Blacks, Jews, Chinese or Japanese peoples. However, in the early years of the 20th century, restrictive covenants had a positive impact in serving as a design control tool that was more powerful than any then available on a governmental level. Many developments were tied together visually via the use of benign covenants regarding aesthetics.

Aesthetic and design control deed restrictions were likely common in the larger metropolitan areas of the West. But in the smaller communities of southwestern Oregon the use of deed restrictions to control aesthetics was infrequent. Growth in these areas before 1945 was slower than that in the cities and was less likely to occur on the multi-property level that would require or benefit from the harmony a covenant sought to impose. Within smaller cities or towns, large open tracts of land for new

⁹ Wright, Gwendolyn. Building the Dream, p. 202.

¹⁰ Black, Henry Campbell. Black's Law Dictionary, p. 1182.

Subsequent legal rulings have made the modern enforcement of such restrictions in perpetuity problematic but this in no way diminishes the effect which they at one time had on appearance and development of the projects in which they were utilized.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 8

residential development were rare and growth did not warrant the development of the open areas beyond the city limits until the population boom of the postwar era. A survey of the six largest cities in southwestern Oregon yielded only two examples of pre-WWII aesthetic or design covenants within a private residential development.¹¹ These two were the subject ensemble, Corning Court in Medford, and the Laurelwood District of Roseburg, in Douglas County.¹² No other community reported an aesthetic design covenant or deed restriction of any type as being in use prior to the late 1960s and early 1970, almost 50 years after Corning Court was first developed.

The second planning element of Corning Court's development that is of note here was the use of a jointly-held easement to serve as its sole roadway. Harder at one point seems to have intended to formally sub-divide Lots 1-3 and grant a right-of-way to the City of Medford as is typical of modern developments. However it appears that some legal or financial concern resulted in a revocation or non-acceptance of this offer by the city.¹³ The 16' wide cement driveway that bisects Corning Court remains a privately held and maintained easement between East Main Street and the public alleyway to the south. This unusual situation

¹¹ The cities were Grants Pass, Coos Bay, Klamath Falls, Roseburg, Ashland, and Medford. A questionnaire was sent and received to the planning departments of the first four cities. In Ashland and Medford local individuals were interviewed as to the existence of such areas.

¹² Laurelwood, a 90-lot development was platted in two phases beginning in June 1920. Buyers deeds included a a six-point covenant covering dwelling cost (\$2500), setback (min. of 20'), allowable uses, protection of existing landscape and a prohibition of fencing. Streets in Laurelwood, unlike Corning Court, were deeded to the City of Roseburg as is typical of modern subdivisions.

¹³ See JCD 150:50 (11-August 1924) which grants to the public the land in question "on which there is now a cement driveway". No mention of the acceptance of this land could be located in the minutes of the Medford City Council and subsequent deeds include the easement restriction.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 9

created no little problem for the residents of Corning Court in the first years of its development. As private property, the City engineering department never assigned a name to the easement---they had no authority to do so. The only reference located in association with the development was a comment in the local paper that "...Mr. and Mrs. F.L. Heath are moving to their new home in the Welsh Court"¹⁴

The lack of an official name for the easement was most strongly felt by Mrs. Isabel Holt. Unable to determine addresses for the houses built facing the private road, the post office would not deliver directly to the residents' doors. Instead all mail was sent to the office of Dr. Holt, on Central Avenue about 1/2 mile distant. When the Holt's daughter Helen was attending nursing school at the University of Oregon, Mrs. Holt would walk to her husband's office every noon anxious for the daily letter from her daughter. This soon grew tiresome and upon inquiring what would be needed to begin doorfront delivery, Mrs. Holt was told to give the street a name. Mrs. Holt, a proud native of Corning, New York, inquired of her neighbors if they minded using "Corning Court" as the name and thus the easement was christened.¹⁵

ARCHITECTURAL STYLES:

Typical of many exclusive developments, Corning Court represents a variety of architectural trends popular in mid-1920s American housing. This was a period of rapidly changing styles as the established bungalow style gave way to Colonial Revival and period designs following World War I. Some early 20th century deed restrictions or civic aesthetic regulations enforced a particular architectural style or materials, such as the use of Spanish Colonial or adobe-look masonry in Santa Barbara, California to promote a homogeneous appearance. Such was not the

¹⁴ Medford Mail Tribune, 1 September 1924. The Heath House, not included in this nomination, stands at 820 East Main. "Welsh" is presumed a corruption or mis-spelling of the surname of E.A. Welch.

¹⁵ Personal Communication with Helen Holt Wilson (Dr. and Mrs. Holt's daughter), 14 June 1990

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 10

case in Corning Court. Here residents and their architects were free to choose whatever style they wanted. A consistent level of quality and scale for the development was achieved through the use of a minimum allowable structure cost of \$3500. Of the five houses¹⁶ designed and built subsequent to the establishment of the Corning Court development, The Campbell House may be classified as Bungalow, the Williamson-Heckman House as Spanish Colonial, the Heath and Elliott houses as Colonial Revival and the GeBauer House as Arts and Crafts, or Period Revival.

The three pre-existing structures moved or re-positioned to conform to the development guidelines are also mixed stylistically. The Kent-Holt House is an eclectic mix of Queen Anne, Colonial Revival and vernacular elements. The Vilas-Richardson House was a simple flat roof cottage, essentially modest and astylistic. The now demolished Welch-Heath house was reportedly built in a Colonial Revival style.

CORNING COURT RESIDENCES: Individual Histories**Dr. Bert Elliott House
5 Corning Court (Tax ID 10300)**

Dr. Bert Roy Elliott was a prominent Medford dentist when he commissioned local architect Frank Chamberlain Clark to design a new home for the family. Born in Dallas, Oregon on 1 July 1887, Elliott was trained at North Pacific College, graduating in 1915. Known as the "Painless Dentist", Elliott established his practice in the Medford area in 1919. His office, located in the Medford Center Building, shared a reception area with Dr. Wm. W.P. Holt. Elliott was a member of the State Board of Dental Examiners (1938-1942),

¹⁶ The Kent-Holt, Welch-Heath and Vilas-Richardson Houses all pre-date Corning Court's development. Later structures at 22 and 23 Corning Court were not built following the original development program.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 11

a member of the Medford City Council, and served as a Captain in the U.S. Army Dental Corps.

The Elliott family was living on South Oakdale within what is now the Oakdale NR Historic District, when Dr. Elliott purchased the Corning Court property in February 1924. It appears that construction of the new house did not begin immediately and it was the summer of 1925 when the family finally moved into their new home.¹⁷

The Elliott House was the fourth house to be located on Corning Court. Designed by architect Frank Chamberlain Clark in the Colonial Revival style, the contractor or builder is undocumented. The building may be the work of Elmer Childers, known to have worked with Clark on many residential structures, including the Max GeBauer House across the street at 17 Corning Court. In the 1982 Frank Clark Inventory, the Elliott House was ranked "Primary" within the body of Clark's works.¹⁸

Following Elliott's divorce, the Corning Court House went to his first wife, Marguerite H., who resided there until 1938. The house was then rented to Nathaniel E. and Dorothy S. Bender. Mr. Bender was the manager of the mail order department of the Holmes-Bear Creek Company. In 1946 Mrs. Elliott sold the property to Col. Franklin D. Applin (ret.) and his wife Dorothy. The Applins resided here until 1972. The present owner purchased the property in 1977.

¹⁷ Personal Communication with Mrs. Amy (Elliott) Barnum (Dr. and Marguerite Elliott's oldest daughter), 13 July 1990

¹⁸ Atwood and Evans, Frank Clark Inventory-1982, Site No. 346.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 12

Kent-Holt House
11 Corning Court (Tax ID 10400)

The L.B. Kent-Wm. W.P. Holt House was built c.1906 facing East Main Street and was rotated and moved to its present location in the Fall of 1923 or early Spring 1924. On 6-August 1924 Harder, as trustee of the new development, sold the house to Dr. William W.P. Holt.

Wm. W.P. Holt was a family physician who practiced in the Rogue Valley for over 50 years. He was born 22 December 1875 in Hangchow China, the son of Presbyterian missionaries. He married Isabel T. Purdy in San Francisco in 1901. Holt attended school in Minnesota and graduated from the University of Oregon Medical School in 1905. He established a practice in Eagle Point, Oregon, and remained there until 1921 when he moved to Medford.

Dr. Holt travelled the valley in the days when rapid communication was virtually unknown. A white bed sheet hanging from the front porch of a farmhouse signaled that his services were needed. Tin cans strung across the road at night to rattle when struck by the horse's hoofs was another signal.¹⁹

Dr. Holt was a founding member of the Jackson County Medical Society, served as the county public health officer and, in 1959, was named Doctor of the Year by the Oregon State Medical Society.

Although two other houses were in place along Corning Court, (the Vilas House at 16 Corning Court and the moved Welch House at 17), the Holt's were the first residents of the development, moving in September 1924.²⁰ Holt, his wife, and family lived in the house until 1961, over 37 years.

¹⁹ Medford Mail Tribune, obituary, 5 November 1965, 1:5-6.

²⁰ Personal Communication with Helen Holt Wilson 14 June 1990

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 13

Vilas-Richardson House
16 Corning Court (Tax ID 10800)

Edward Platt Vilas was the patriarch of the noted Vilas orchard family, operators of the Vilas Ranch east of Medford near modern-day Vilas Road. Born in Kaukauna, Wisconsin on 9 September 1894, Vilas moved with his family to the Medford area in 1905. In 1914 he married Catherine Deuel, member of another prominent orchard family. The Deuel family operated the Del Rio orchards, which still exist, near Gold Hill.

On 22 March 1924, Vilas purchased the subject property and the "house now situated on the premises" from Harder.²¹ It is not clear where this house was previously located although it apparently was moved to Corning Court and its placement is used in subsequent deeds to determine the setback for all structures along the west side. One informant reports that it was a portion of the original L.B. Kent House although Sanborn maps do not clearly bear this out.²²

Vilas likely intended for Corning Court to be a second, city house, for the family in addition to the large Vilas orchard home. Six months later following his purchase of the house, Vilas was recuperating from surgery in the hospital and Mrs. Vilas "...was still quite at home at the Vilas Ranch."²³

²¹ JCD 150:318

²² Personal Communication with Helen Holt Wilson 14 June 1 1990. Mrs. Holt stated that all three original properties were on the site prior to the 1924 development and were relocated so as to establish the easement facing orientation. All were extant when the Holt family moved to Corning Court in September 1924. The Vilas House may have been an additional structure built on Lots 1-3 between 1911 and 1924 (and thus not shown on the 1911 Sanborn Map) or could have been originally located elsewhere and moved to the site for the Corning Court development.

²³ Medford Mail Tribune, 10 September 1924, 2:3.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 14

The family apparently decided to return to the ranch full-time as just five years later the Corning Court property was sold to Bel F. Richardson.

Bel Richardson was a widow with two small children when she moved her family from their home on Geneva Street across East Main to Corning Court.²⁴ Her husband, Samuel F. Richardson, who established and was president of the Model Clothing Company in Medford, had died sometime earlier. Bel took over the management of the business. Mrs. Richardson moved out in the late 1930s when the house was sold to Richard E. Payne, the president of Medford's First National Bank, and his wife Elinor. The Paynes lived in the house from 1934 to 1944 when it was sold to Lewis H. and Rosa Gillilend. The Gillilend family lived at 17 Corning Court for the next 31 years. Following the death of Lewis, in the 1950s and later Rosa, Bonnie Gillilend sold the property in 1975.

Max GeBauer House
15 Corning Court (Tax ID 10900)

The Max GeBauer House was built in late 1924 or early 1925. Designed by Frank Clark, the GeBauer House was built by Elmer Childers.²⁵ Childers, a member of a prominent construction family in the Medford area, had worked in Medford as a contractor since shortly after 1900. Childers bought the vacant parcel from Harder in August 1924 with a deed restriction referring to structures "to be erected"²⁶. Five months later the property was sold to Max and Myrtle GeBauer. It is not entirely clear whether the house had actually be constructed at this time. One source reports

²⁴ Personal Communication with Sam T. Richardson, (Mrs. Richardson's son) 14 July 1990

²⁵ The Gebauer House was rated as "secondary" in the 1982 Frank Clark Inventory by Evans and Atwood.

²⁶ Harder to Elmer and Lilah R. Childers, JCD 151:51-2, 9 August 1924.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 15

the GeBauer House being built as late as the Summer-Fall of 1925.²⁷

Max GeBauer was the president and owner of the Gold Seal Creamery. He also had a number of local real estate investments. The family originally settled in Ashland and only moved to Medford upon the completion of the Corning Court house. In the late 1920s, GeBauer built the GeBauer Apartments at the corner of 6th and Oakdale in Medford. Near that time he also acquired the Hotel Ashland on Main Street in that city. For many years he owned a ranch in the Eagle Point vicinity and served as the Chairman of the Eagle Point Irrigation District for some time.²⁸

GeBauer sold the Corning Court house to Delwin Link of LaSalle City, Illinois in 1936 and left the Rogue Valley area, moving to Pasadena, California. There they purchased a small cottage or bungalow court. Max died shortly thereafter and Myrtle died in the early 1950s.

Link apparently kept the GeBauer House as a rental unit as city directories show a succession of individuals living at the address. In 1963 Link sold the structure to Richard J. and Mary Louise House. House was the owner/manager of a local insurance and investment company. Subsequent owners include local architect Glenn Thompson.

Williamson-Heckman House
6 Corning Court (Tax ID 11000)

The last of the original structures to be built on Corning Court, the Williamson-Heckman House was completed late 1926. Originally this parcel was a part of the two lots Harder sold to W.F. Campbell, the original owner of the structure

²⁷ Personal Communication with Mrs. Amy (Elliott) Barnum 13 July 1990

²⁸ Personal Communication with Mr. Ken Parrett, (widower of Oma GeBauer, Max and Myrtle's youngest daughter), 18 July 1990.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 16

at 804 East Main. In 1926 Campbell sold to rear 60' of his lot to H.C. Williamson, a local sheet-metal and heating contractor. Williamson built the house, lived in it for a short time and then sold it to Dr. William Heckman in 1929.²⁹ No additional information regarding Williamson has been located.

Dr. William H. Heckman was born in Greenville, Pennsylvania in 1866. Educated at Edinboro Normal and Chicago Homeopath schools, he establish a practice in Central Point, north of Medford, in 1913-14, Heckman either retired or reduced his practice upon his move to Corning Court. Like Dr. Holt, Heckman was an early member of the Jackson County Medical Society and was active in the establishment of a professional medical community in the Rogue Valley area. Heckman lived on Corning Court until 1950, apparently until his death or shortly before.

OTHER CORNING COURT STRUCTURES:

Although not included in the nominated area for the reasons outlined in Note 1 above, the following comments briefly discuss other structures which are or have been associated with the nominated development.

W. F. CAMPBELL HOUSE, 804 East Main Street

The building permit for this bungalow style house was issued to W.F. Campbell on 10 May 1924.³⁰ Prominently sited along East Main, it was converted to professional office space in the 1950s. During the 1960s it was used for dental offices and by other professionals.

²⁹ JCD 177:252, 19 May 1929. Informants report that Williamson actually traded the house for Heckman's ranch property near Central Point. Address listings in city directories support this trade.

³⁰ Medford Mail Tribune, 10 May 1924 2:2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 17

Substantially remodelled, the grounds of the Campbell House have been removed and paved to provide parking.

FREDERICK L. & GERTRUDE HEATH HOUSE, 820 East Main

Designed by architect Frank Clark for prominent Medford druggist and civic leader Frederick Heath, this house was completed in September 1924.³¹ The Heath House, like the adjacent Campbell House, has been converted to commercial and professional uses. Much of its original landscaping has been paved to provide parking. Since the 1960s the Heath House has been better known at the Hearing Aid Center, after a longtime and continuing use.

E.A. WELCH-FRED & INA C. HEATH HOUSE, 17 Corning Court

Originally located on the site of the Campbell House, the Welch-Heath was moved during the development of Corning Court to this lot. In 1924 it was purchased by Fred Heath, the eldest son of the Frederick and Gertrude Heath whose house is described above. Heath lived here until the early 1940s. Subsequent uses apparently consisted of rentals and multi-family occupancy. The lot is now vacant. Standing as late as 1966, the Heath House either burnt or was demolished sometime prior to August 1981.

23 CORNING COURT:

Apparently built in the late-1930s, the single story structure at this address did not follow the deed restrictions and setbacks of the other structures in the Corning Court development. Following numerous ownerships, the building was long used for renters, primarily single working women. Reportedly quite deteriorated the structure was demolished by Dwyer and

³¹ Atwood and Evans, Frank Clark Survey-1982, rate the Heath House "minor".

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 18

Doble in 1981.³² The site, along with the site of the Welch-Heath House to the north, is now enclosed by fencing.

28 CORNING COURT:

Long vacant, a single-story apartment unit was built upon this lot in the 1950s-60s. A second development phase added to the original units at a later date. While not a part of the original Corning Court development, the wood-framed complex retains a compatible landscape with the nominated property and is not intrusive.

SUMMARY:

Corning Court was an exclusive residential development for select members of Medford's upper-middle class and professional society in the mid-1920s. Designed to maximize the convenience of city living with the privacy and seclusion of a country-like setting, the project was controlled via aesthetic covenants or deed restrictions to retain those characteristics, one of the earliest such examples in southern Oregon. A jointly-held and privately maintained easement serves as the roadway to the development. Typical of such exclusive developments one individual remembers Corning Court as "...the really good area of town, where good citizens, the professional people lived."³³

Over sixty years after the development of Corning Court, five of the six original structures within the nominated area remain. Recognition and maintenance of the extensive planting and landscape features, along with compatible later development, preserve the original atmosphere and seclusion of Corning Court. Despite its location off a major arterial street and adjacent

³² Medford Building Department, demolition permit 18 November 1981.

³³ Ken Parrett, personal communication with the author, 18 July 1990.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 19

commercial uses, Corning Court is a quiet, shady, and serene area within the larger city. The structures within Corning Court retain substantial integrity to their original designs, use of materials and workmanship. The area as a whole is consistent with the appearance and intent of the planning concepts which were at the heart of its original development. Corning Court remains a tangible link with one the earliest examples of a planned residential development in southern Oregon.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Atwood, Kay. Blossoms and Branches: A Gathering of Rogue Valley Orchard Memories. Ashland: Kay Atwood, 1980.
- Atwood, Kay. An Honorable History: 133 Years of Medical Practice in Jackson County, Oregon. Medford: Jackson County Medical Society, 1985.
- Atwood, Kay and Evans, Gail. Frank Chamberlain Clark Inventory. Medford: Southern Oregon Historical Society, 1982.
- Capitol's Who's Who in Oregon. Portland: Capitol Publishing Company, 1936, 1942-44, 1948-49 and 1954.
- Clark, Rosalind. Architecture Oregon Style. Portland: Professional Book Center, 1983.
- Handlin, David P. The American Home: Architecture and Society 1815-1915. Boston-Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1979.
- Jackson County Deed Records, Miscellaneous Records, Tax Records and Road Books.
- Jackson County Title Company, Abstract of Title #23164 [Kent-Holt House], Collection of Forrest and Starlene Collins.
- Medford Mail Tribune, misc. issues, 1906-
- Mumford, Lewis. The City in History. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1961.
- Polk Medford City Directories; 1911-Present.
- Wright, Gwendolyn. Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America. New York: Pantheon, 1981.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 1

CORNING COURT ENSEMBLE

5-17 Corning Court
Medford, Jackson County, Oregon, 97501

PHOTOGRAPHIC INVENTORY

1. Site View: Corning Court Ensemble, north entrance looking south across East Main Street. Note Heath House (L) and Campbell House (R) in front of boundary hedge.

Photographer: Mark Goodman
Date of Photograph: August 1990
Negative: Collection of the Photographer

2. Site View: Corning Court Ensemble, from north entrance looking southwest across interior easement. Note landscape features, trees. Williamson-Heckman, GeBauer and Vilas-Richardson Houses on west side of development.

Photographer: Mark Goodman
Date of Photograph: August 1990
Negative: Collection of the Photographer

3. Site View: Corning Court Ensemble, from north entrance looking southeast across interior easement. Note Elliott and, Kent-Holt Houses. Fenced area to right of Kent-Holt is site of demolished Welch-Heath and 23 Corning Court.

Photographer: Mark Goodman
Date of Photograph: August 1990
Negative: Collection of the Photographer

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 2

4. Historic View, Kent-Holt House, 11 Corning Court, looking south from East Main Street, showing structure in its original location prior to Corning Court development. [Reproduced from Medford, Oregon & the Rogue River Valley, Sunset Pub. Co., 1909]

Photographer: Unknown (Possibly Frank Hull)
Date of Photograph: c. 1909
Negative: Southern Oregon Historical Society, (SOHS), negative # 12939
5. Historic View, Vilas-Richardson House, 16 Corning Court, east (front) elevation, looking southwest. Prior to remodeling, note original roofline.

Photographer: Mark Goodman
Date of Photograph: 1987
Negative: Collection of the Photographer
6. Historic View, Max GeBauer House, 16 Corning Court, looking SW from central easement. [Reproduced from Medford Mail Tribune, 1 January 1928]

Photographer: Unknown
Date of Photograph: c. 1927
Negative: Collection of George Kramer
7. Historic View, Williamson-Heckman House, 6 Corning Court, looking SW from central easement with GeBauer House at left. [Reproduced from Medford Mail Tribune, 1 January 1928]

Photographer: Unknown
Date of Photograph: c. 1927
Negative: Collection of George Kramer
8. Exterior View: Elliott House, 5 Corning Court, west (front) elevation, looking east.

Photographer: Mark Goodman
Date of Photograph: August 1990
Negative: Collection of the Photographer

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 3

9. Exterior View: Elliott House, 5 Corning Court, east
(rear) elevation, looking west.

Photographer: Mark Goodman
Date of Photograph: August 1990
Negative: Collection of the Photographer

10. Exterior View: Kent-Holt House, 11 Corning Court, west
(front) elevation, looking southeast.

Photographer: Mark Goodman
Date of Photograph: August 1990
Negative: Collection of the Photographer

11. Exterior View: Kent-Holt House, 11 Corning Court, east
(rear) elevation, looking west.

Photographer: Mark Goodman
Date of Photograph: August 1990
Negative: Collection of the Photographer

12. Exterior View: Vilas-Richardson House, 16 Corning
Court, east (front) elevation, looking southwest.

Photographer: Mark Goodman
Date of Photograph: August 1990
Negative: Collection of the Photographer

13. Exterior View: GeBauer House, 15 Corning Court, east
(front) elevation, looking west.

Photographer: Mark Goodman
Date of Photograph: August 1990
Negative: Collection of the Photographer

14. Exterior View: GeBauer House, 15 Corning Court, west
(rear) elevation, looking east from Cottage Street.

Photographer: Mark Goodman
Date of Photograph: August 1990
Negative: Collection of the Photographer

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number Photos Page 4

15. Exterior View: Williamson-Heckman House, 6 Corning Court, east (front) elevation, looking west.

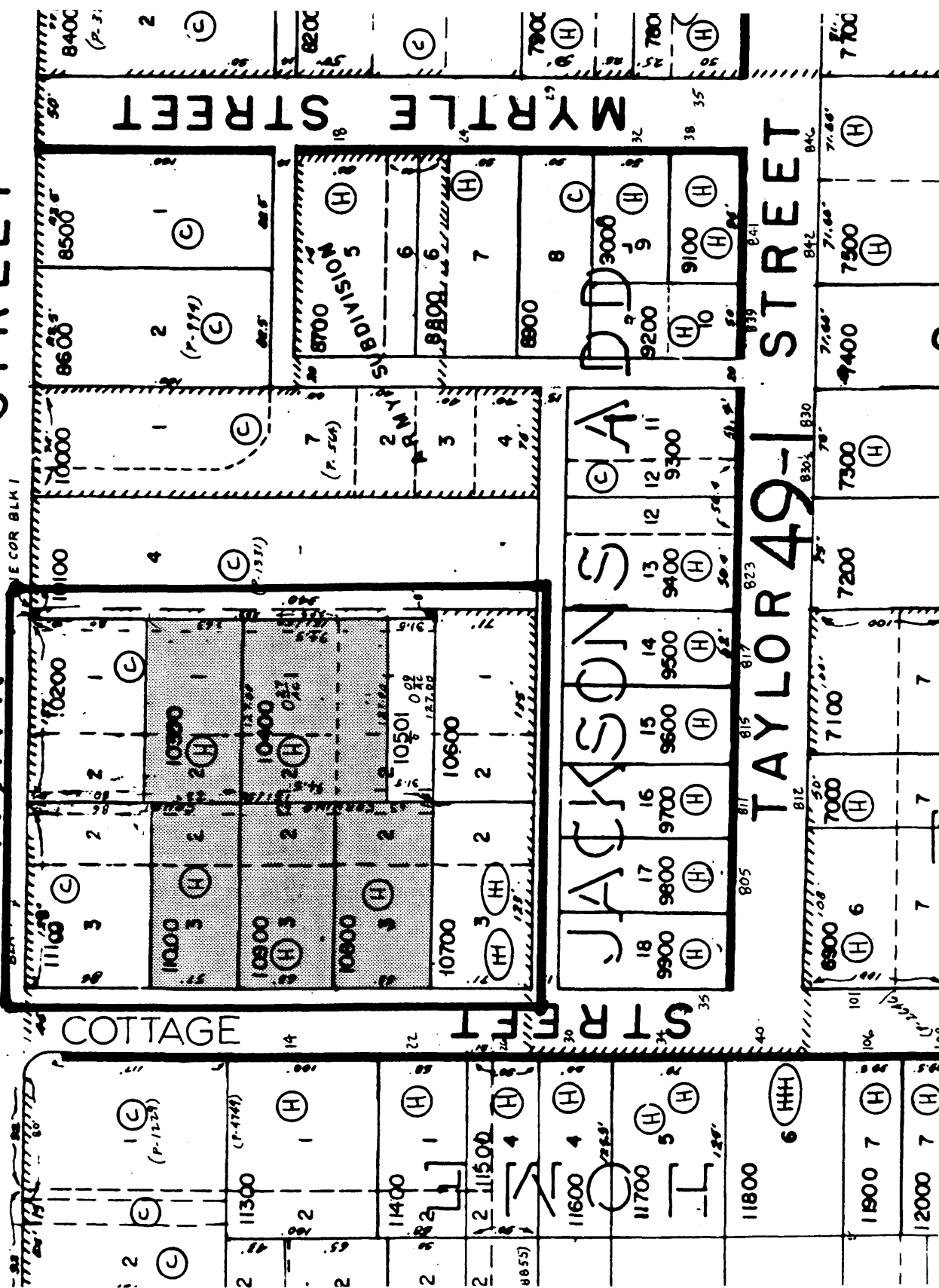
Photographer: Mark Goodman
Date of Photograph: August 1990
Negative: Collection of the Photographer

16. Exterior View: Williamson-Heckman House, 6 Corning Court, west (rear) elevation, looking southwest from corner of Cottage and East Main Streets.

Photographer: Mark Goodman
Date of Photograph: August 1990
Negative: Collection of the Photographer

1" = 100'

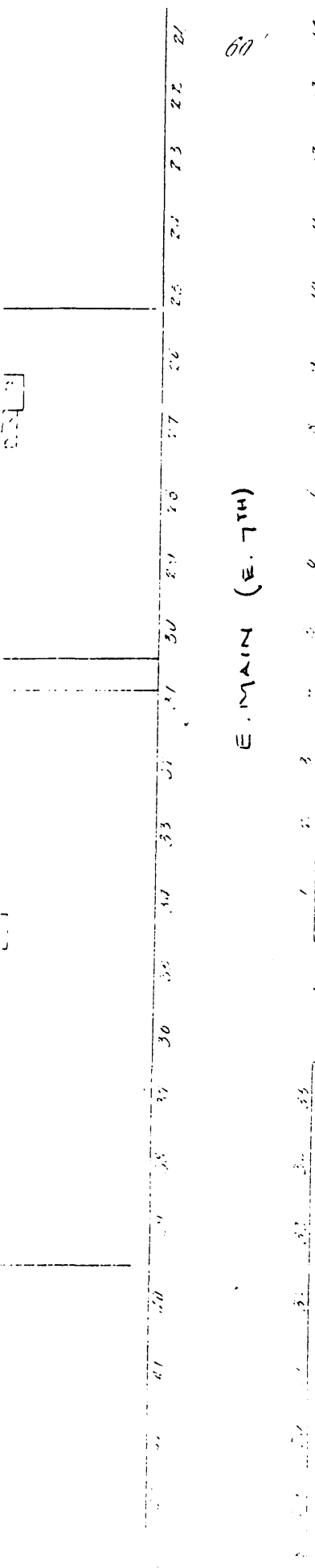
MAIN STREET



CORNING COURT ENSEMBLE
 Medford, Jackson County, Oregon
 Jackson Count Tax Assessor's Map

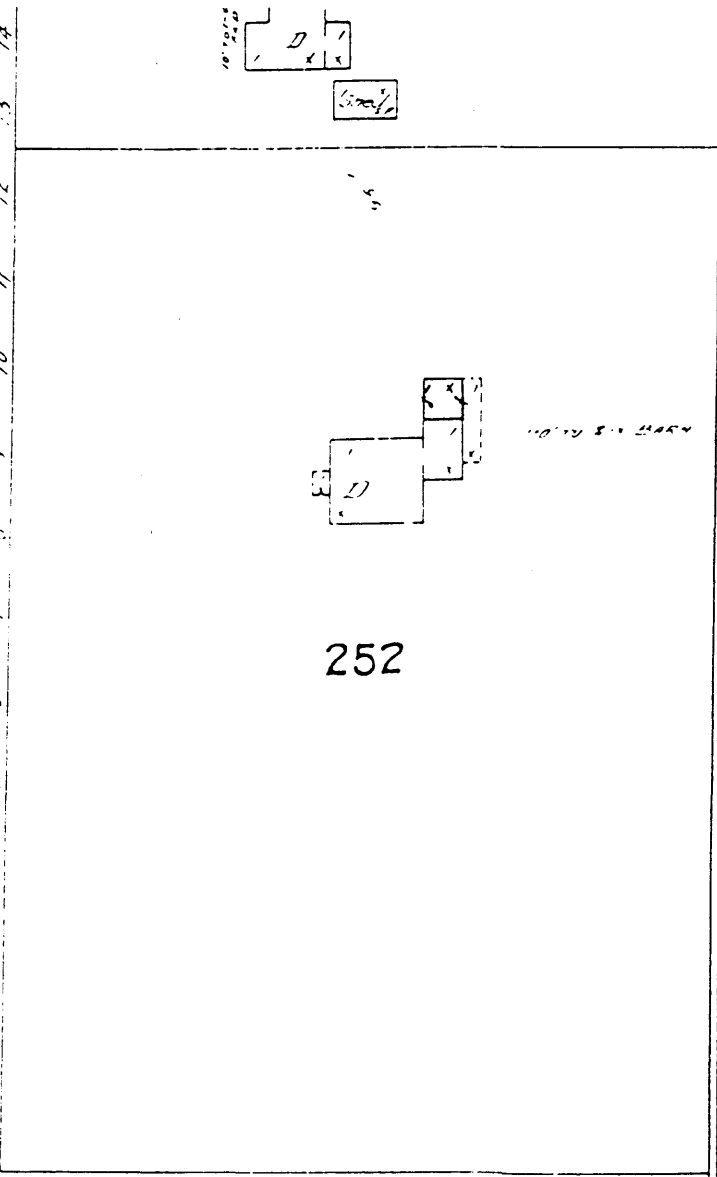
T. 37S R. 1W Section 30 (AC)

Outlined area showing Block 1, Lots 1-3
 Cottage Home Addition.
 Shaded area showing nominated property.



60'

E. MAIN (E. 7TH)

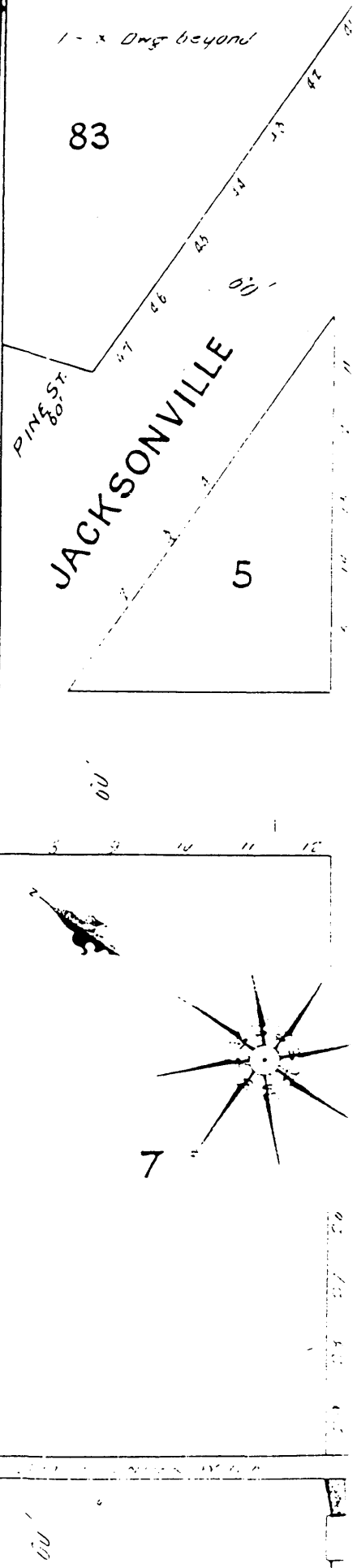


252

COTTAGE

CORNING COURT ENSEMBLE
 Medford, Jackson Cty, Oregon
SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAP

July 1898, Sheet #2



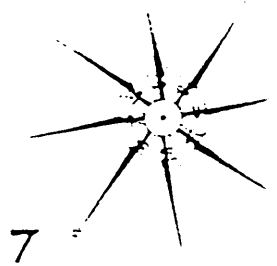
1 - x Dwg beyond

83

PINE ST.
60.5'

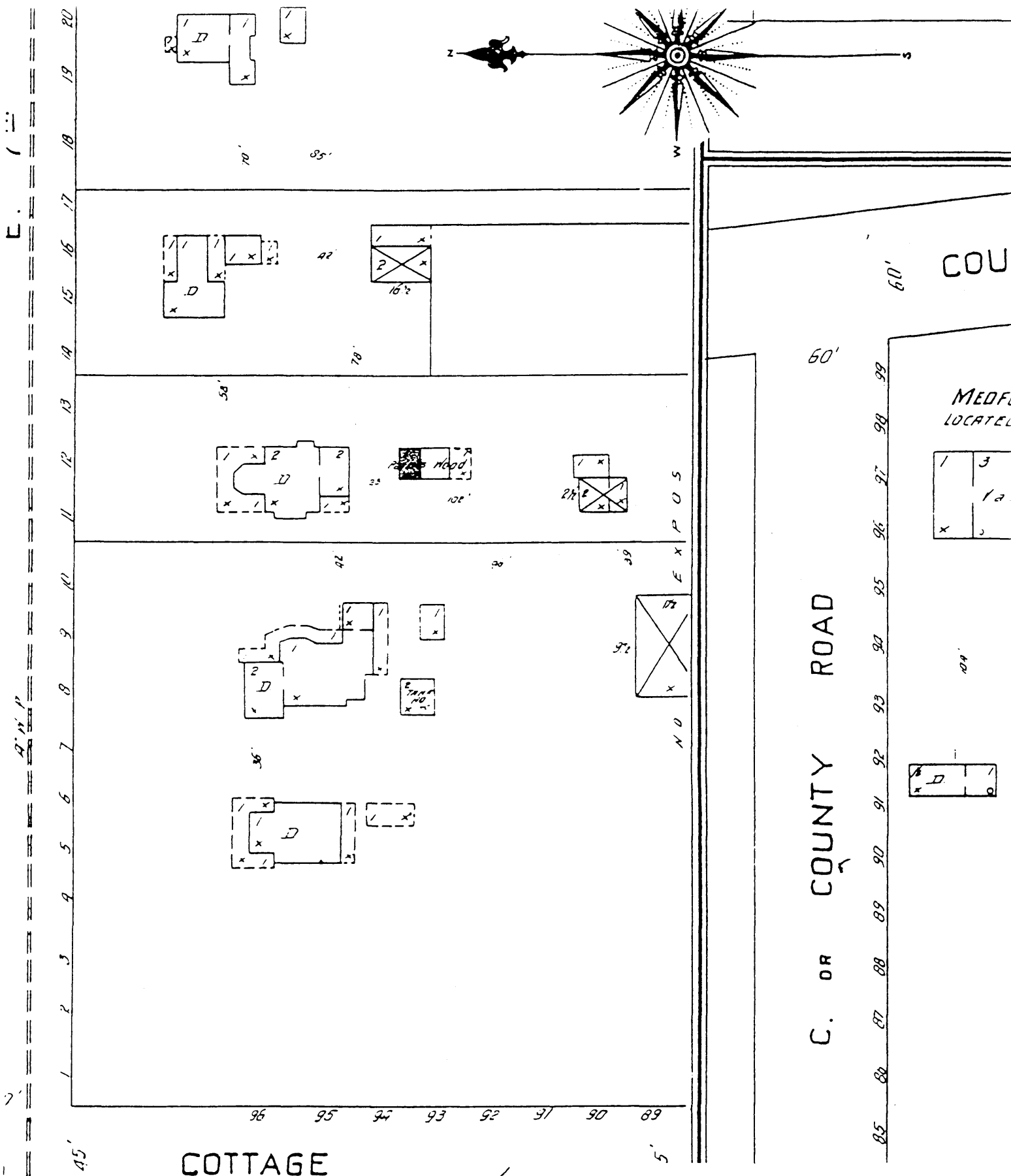
JACKSONVILLE

5



7

60'



CORNING COURT ENSEMBLE
 Medford, Jackson Cty, Oregon
 SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAP

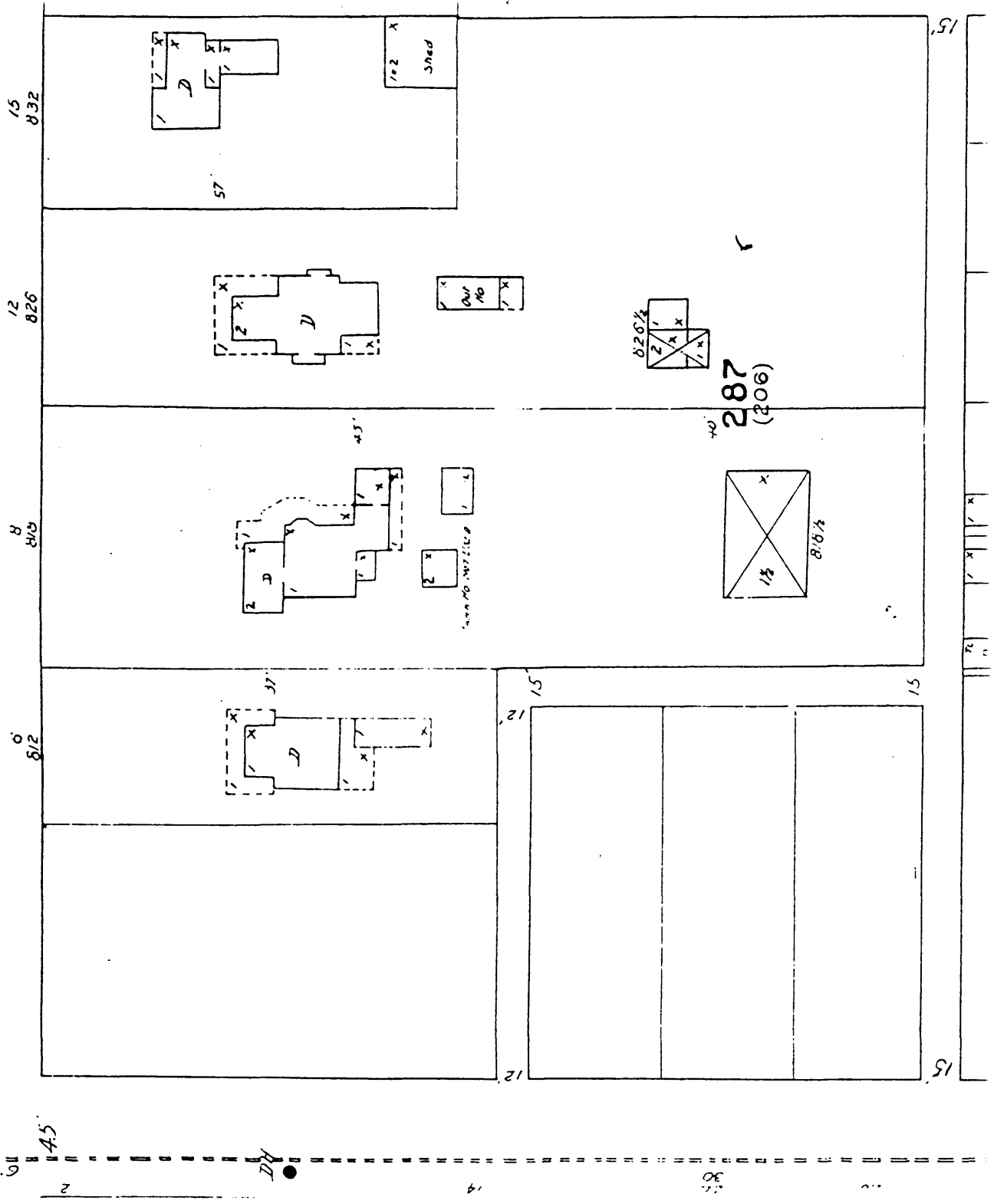
29

GENEVA

12" W.P.

JH

MAIN E. (7th E.)



CORNING COURT ENSEMBLE
Medford, Jackson Cty, Oregon
SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAP

October 1911, Sheet 30

GENEVA ST

MAIN E.

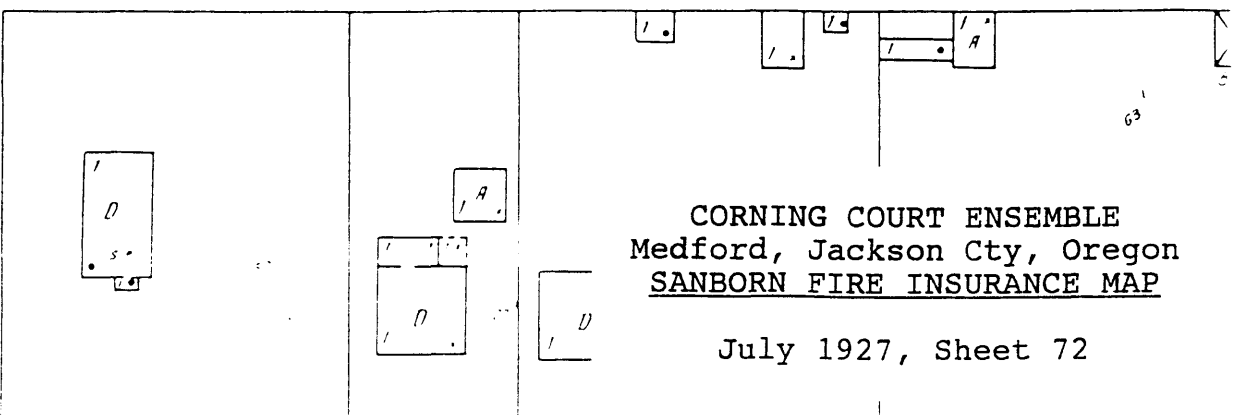
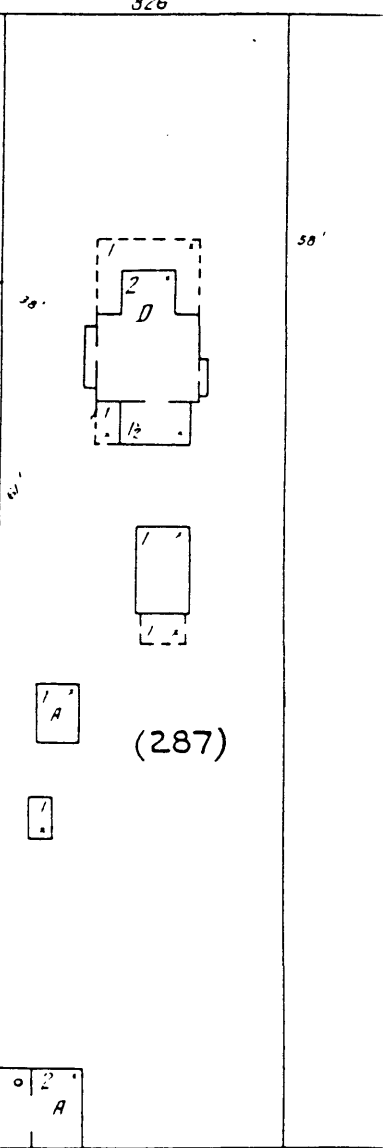
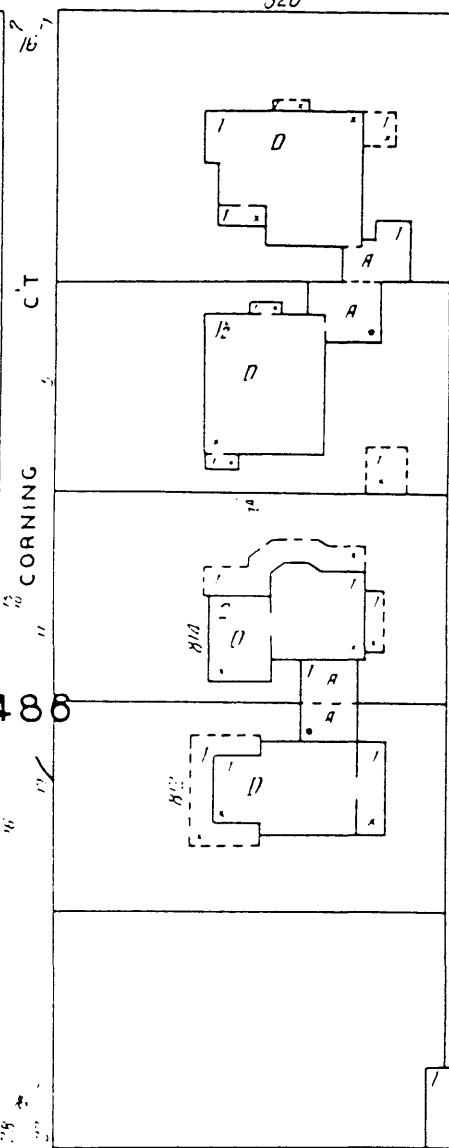
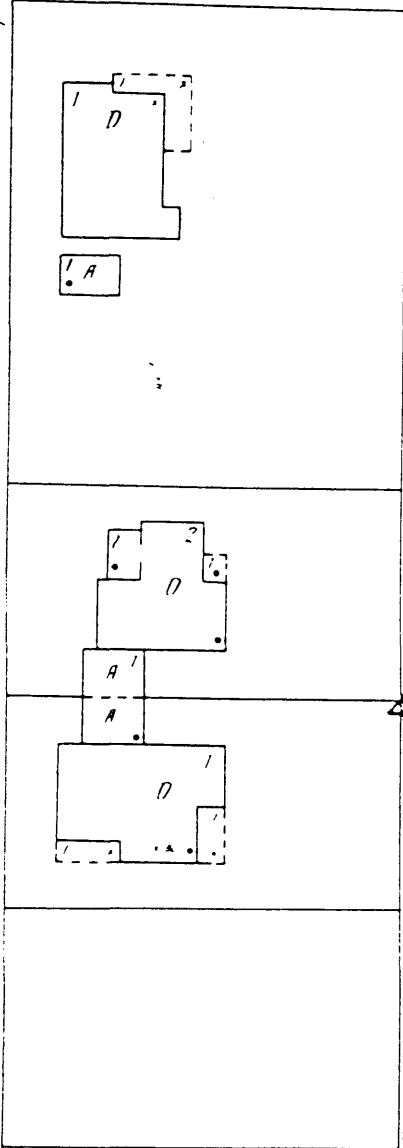
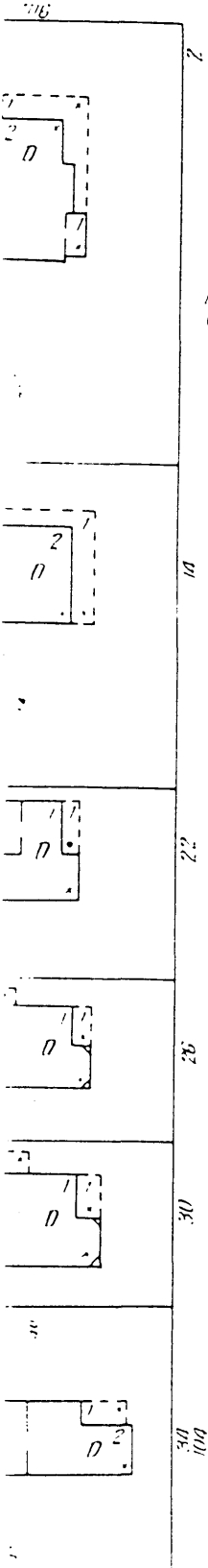
DH

6" W PIPE

800
804

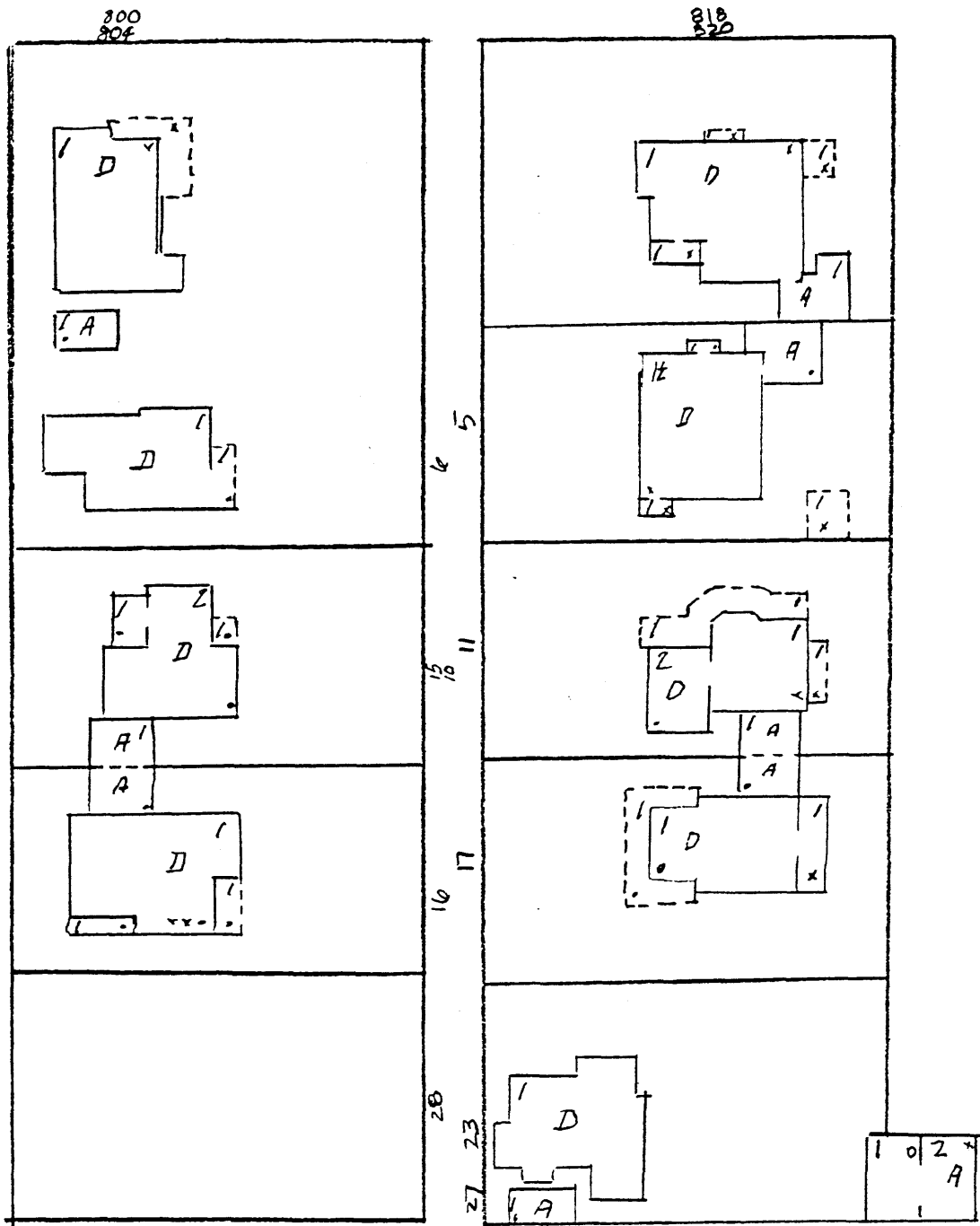
813
820

826



CORNING COURT ENSEMBLE
 Medford, Jackson Cty, Oregon
SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAP

July 1927, Sheet 72



CORNING COURT ENSEMBLE
Medford, Jackson Cty, Oregon
SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAP

July 1927, Sheet 72
UPDATED JANUARY 1931