

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received OCT 31 1985

date entered

DEC 2 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Wimer, James, Octagonal Barn Number of contributing resources: 1

and/or common Same Number of non-contributing resources: 0

2. Location

street & number 1191 Coos Bay Wagon Road N/A not for publication

city, town Lookingglass N/A vicinity of Fourth Congressional District

state Oregon code 41 county Douglas code 019

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Kenneth and Nancy Bohon

street & number 1191 Coos Bay Wagon Road

city, town Roseburg X vicinity of state Oregon 97470

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Douglas County Courthouse

street & number 1036 SE Douglas Street

city, town Roseburg state Oregon 97470

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Statewide Inventory of Historic Sites
and Buildings, Douglas County has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1976 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office, 525 Trade St. SE

city, town Salem state Oregon 97310

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____ N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The James Wimer Octagonal Barn stands near Lookingglass in Douglas County, Oregon along the historic Coos Bay Military Wagon Road in a rural farming valley southwest of Roseburg. It is located on a farm consisting of a 1915 Bungalow-style house, a garage and six storage and equipment sheds, most built within the first twenty years of this century. The barn is one of the earliest octagonal barns in Oregon and was originally built as a cattle barn about 1892. George Marsh bought the farm in 1895, and converted the barn for fruit storage about 1900. With the exception of a lean-to added to the northeast side about 1910, a livestock chute and makeshift lamb pens in the southwest portion, and new corrugated metal roofing, the barn has remained unchanged since the turn of the century.

The nominated parcel occupies a 160-foot square which begins at the southwesterly corner and encompasses the Wimer Barn exclusively. The farm lies one and one-half miles west of Lookingglass in Section 34, Township 27 South, Range 7 West, Willamette Meridian. The barn's structural system, joined with pegs and mortise and tenon joints, is of milled old growth cedar resting on stone footings and is in very good condition. The exterior is covered with vertical board and batten siding in good condition except for the lean-to, which is covered with shiplap siding. The corrugated metal roof, originally split cedar shingles, is crowned by an octagonal wooden cupola.

The barn measures thirty-one feet on each side, giving an overall dimension of 74 feet. The roof is pitched at 45 degrees and reaches a height of nearly 60 feet at the apex of the cupola. There are two pairs of main doors, one on the north and the other facing the Coos Bay Wagon Road to the south. Additional smaller doors are found in the east, north and west walls. Unglazed window openings are in the east, northeast, northwest and southwest walls.

The barn's interior originally consisted of three concentric partial octagons of cattle stanchions, the first row being along the perimeter facing outwards, the inner two being head to head. The outer row was served from the hay loft by openings at the perimeter while the interior rows were served by a series of chutes from the loft to the feeding racks below. Hay was loaded into the loft through large openings above each of the sets of main doors.

The cattle stanchions were removed about 1900 after George Marsh's expansion of the prune orchards begun by Wimer required storage space for the fruit. Marsh built a fruit storage room by enclosing the northwest portion of the barn and giving it a raised wooden floor.

At the same time, Marsh closed off the perimeter openings serving the feeding racks from the loft, enlarged the opening above the north pair of doors, but left the southern opening intact. The doors on the south elevation are in poor condition.

Other alterations include the building of a storage lean-to on the northeast side about 1910 of frame construction, covered with shiplap siding. About 1950, a livestock chute and makeshift lamb pens were built in the southwest corner; the chute projecting through the wall to the exterior.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1892 **Builder/Architect** James Wimer (attributed)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The James Wimer Octagonal Barn, located on the former George Marsh farm on Coos Bay Wagon Road near Lookingglass, Douglas County, Oregon, is one of the earliest of the limited number of standing octagonal barns constructed in Oregon. Other known octagonal barns later in date than the 1892 Wimer Barn are the Frank Imbrie Barn, Beaverton (1902), the James Pugh Barn, Shedd (1910), the Milton Levy Barn, Union (1900) and the Samuel Evans Barn, near Sutherlin (c. 1900). The Wimer Barn is situated on a farmstead but is the only building or structure on the farm that is being proposed for nomination.

For its rarity as a type in Western Oregon and for its integrity, the Wimer Barn is eligible under criterion "c." Constructed of milled old growth cedar on stone footings, the barn displays a mortise and tenon structural system joined with pegs. Originally functioning as a cattle barn, the lower floor of the structure was altered c. 1900 to house fruit, work horses and sheep.

The exterior board and batten siding is in good condition and with the exception of the removal of the original roofing material in favor of corrugated sheet metal, the barn is intact.

The Wimer Barn is an example of fine craftsmanship in its complex structural system and is an early example of the polygonal barn type in Oregon. Popularized in farm journals of the 1880s, the octagonal barn shape has earlier precedent in a treatise entitled A Home For All, or the Gravel Wall and Octagon Mode of Building, by Orson S. Fowler (1853). Propounding a revolutionary concept in building for domestic architecture, Fowler's book on the merits of the octagon as opposed to the conventional rectangular house plan was widely circulated in America and abroad. It influenced all forms of architecture, including the barn, to which Fowler devoted a chapter in his book. His predilection for the form for barns is explained thusly:

This form subserves several other purposes, one of which is, that it gives more sides, and hence, different bays for different things, than a square barn furnishes - one or two each for cattle, horses, hay, wheat, oats, straw, stalks, etc. - and will furnish many more handy places for different things. For reasons already shown, it is both more compact and more capacious for its outside wall, than a square or oblong. Considered in any and every aspect, the octagonal form of barn facilitates all the ends of a barn far better than the square.

The Wimer Barn stands as an important landmark both in the Lookingglass Valley and along the Coos Bay Wagon Road. The wagon road opened in 1873 and was the first overland route from Roseburg and the Umpqua River Valley to the coast, carrying stages as late as 1914.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Interviews: George Marsh, former, owner, Roseburg, Oregon, October 31, 1983; Nancy Bohon, present owner, Lookingglass, Oregon, October 19, 1983.
Douglas County Museum File #A-48 containing notes on the Shrum family, descendents of James Wimer.
Cultural and Historic Resources Inventory for Douglas County (1982).

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Camas Valley, Oregon

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UTM References

A

1	0	4	5	8	9	0	0	4	7	8	0	5	5	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
N/A			

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christopher Rubright
School of Architecture
organization University of Oregon date December 10, 1983
street & number 929 Queen Anne Avenue N., #305 telephone (206) 284-3324
city or town Seattle state Washington 98109

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date October 25, 1985

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the National Register date 12/2/85

Keeper of the National Register

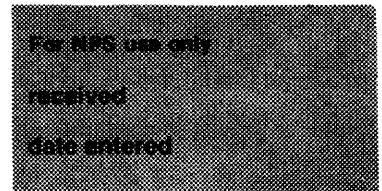
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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Continuation sheet WIMER, JAMES OCTAGONAL BARN Item number 8 Page 2

James Wimer came to Oregon from Ray, Missouri, where he was born in 1856, settling first in Murphy then Glide where he operated dairy farms before coming to the Lookingglass Valley in 1891. He bought parcels of land from Joel Davenport and O. H. Buell totaling 40 acres.

The Shrum family of Roseburg, descendants of James Wimer, related that Wimer himself shingled the barn with split cedar shingles, but it is uncertain exactly how much of the total construction he did himself. It is probable the construction took place within the first year Wimer owned the farm since there is no knowledge of an earlier barn and it is known to have been standing when George Marsh bought the property in 1895.

Wimer's farm was primarily a dairy farm so the barn was built for cows, but he did start a prune orchard in 1892 which the Goerge Marsh family subsequently expanded, requiring storage space for the fruit when the orchards came into full production about 1900. It was at this time Marsh removed the cattle stanchions, enlarged the loft opening over the north doors, closed off the other openings and constructed the fruit storage room with its raised wooden floor in the northwest corner.

In addition to hay and fruit storage, the barn housed tack for the work horses and lambs in the pens in the southwest corner. The barn continued to store fruit until the orchards went out of existence in the mid 1960s and it has remained unused since that time. No orchards remain on the present ten acre parcel.

The Marsh family owned the property until the end of 1983. The Marshes were among the early settlers in the Lookingglass Valley and were active in church, Grange and school affairs. Their apples were marketed statewide. The orchard packing labels carried the name "Lookingglass Brand, grown and Packed by Marsh Ranch, Route 4, Box 1240, Roseburg, Oregon."

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Continuation sheet WIMER, JAMES, OCTAGONAL BARN Item number 9

Page 1

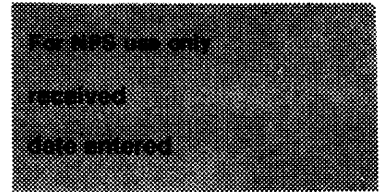
Interviews

George Marsh, former owner, Roseburg, Oregon, October 31, 1983; Nancy Bohon, present owner, Lookingglass, Oregon, October 19, 1983.

Douglas County Museum File #A-48 containing notes on the Shrum family, descendents of James Wimer.

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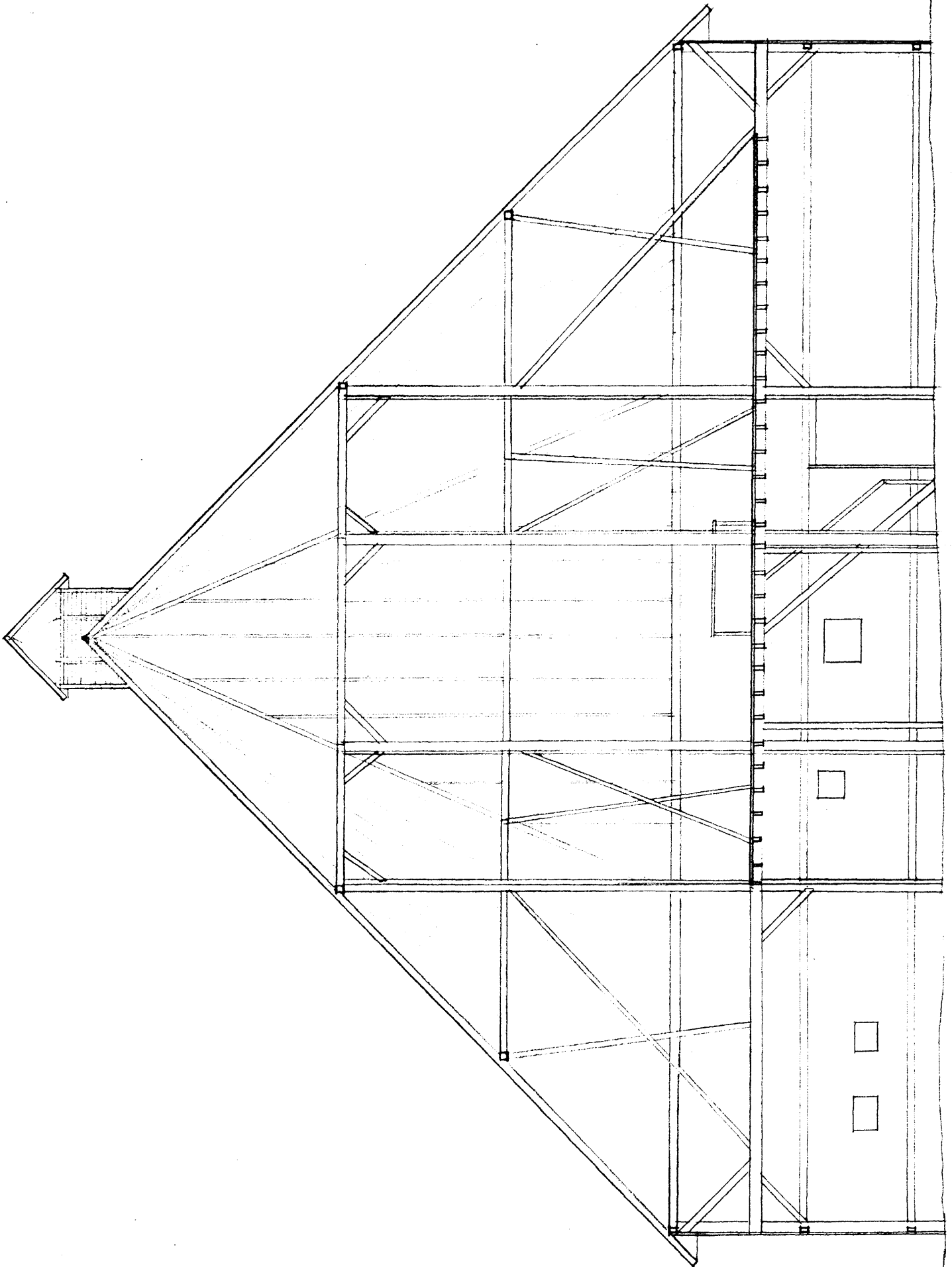
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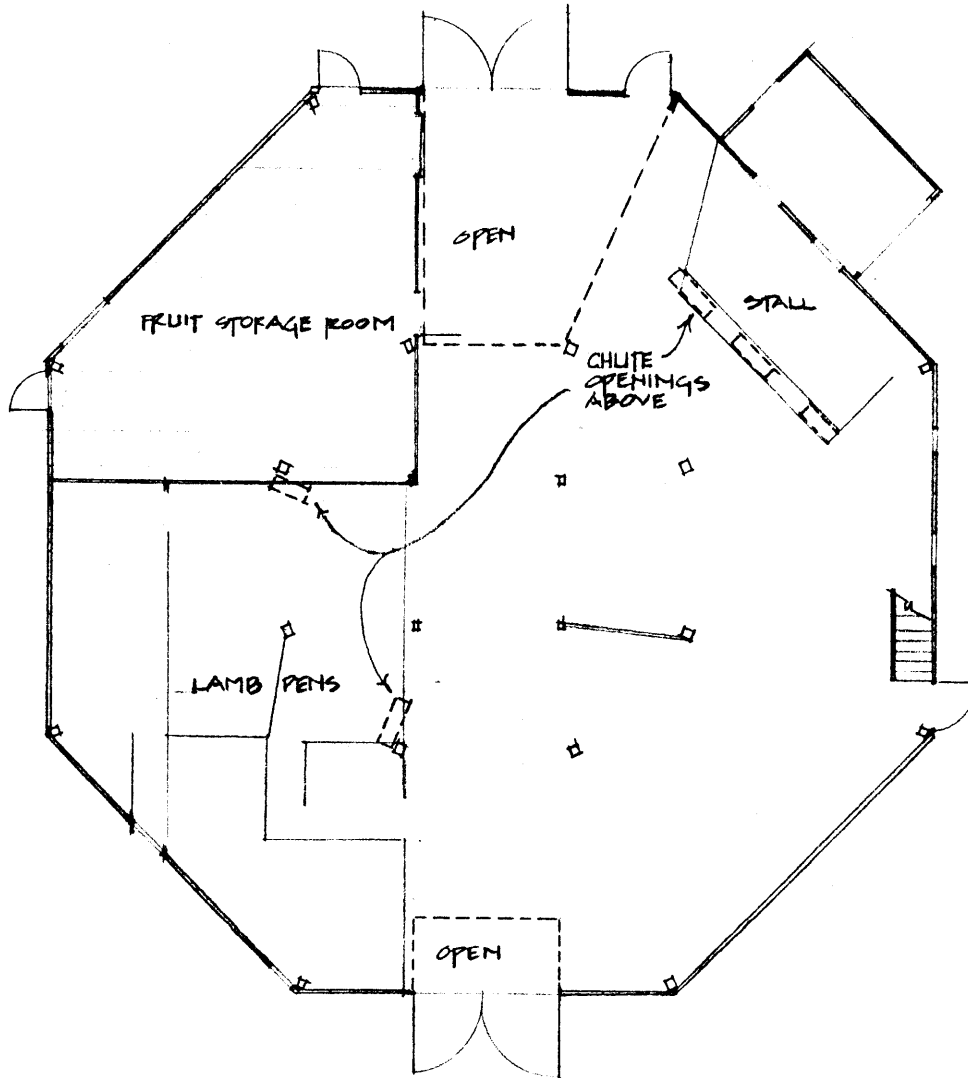
Continuation sheet WIMER, JAMES, OCTAGONAL BARN Item number 10 Page 1

The James Wimer Barn is located on a 160-foot square within the 9.73 acre parcel comprising the entire holding which is found in Section 34, Township 27 South, Range 7 West of the Willamette Meridian, Douglas County, Oregon, and is otherwise known as Tax Lot 400.

Beginning at a point which is the southwest corner of Tax Lot 400, THENCE easterly along the southern boundary of said tax lot 160 feet; THENCE northerly 160 feet; THENCE westerly 160 feet; THENCE southerly along the west property line 160 feet to the point of beginning.



NORTH - SOUTH SECTION 1/8" = 1'-0"



PLAN $\frac{1}{16}'' = 1'-0''$ 