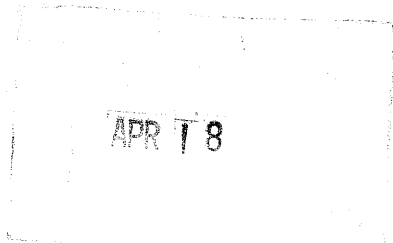


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



516

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instruction in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classifications, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Woerner, Louis and Elizabeth, House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 2815 NE Alameda not for publication

city or town Portland vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Multnomah code 051 zip code 97212

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally.

James Hamrick

14 April 2005

Signature of certifying official/Title Deputy SHPO

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register
 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 *Edson H. Beall* Date of Action *6/1/05*

Woerner, Louis & Elizabeth, House
Name of Property

Multnomah, Oregon
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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many as apply)

- private
- public - local
- public - state
- public - Federal

Category of Property
(check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & Early 20th C. American Movements:
Arts & Crafts

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Concrete
walls: Stucco
roof: Composition shingle
Other:

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

See continuation sheets.

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NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Summary

The Arts & Crafts-style Louis and Elizabeth Woerner House is a grand single-family residence occupying three adjoining tax lots at 2815 NE Alameda Street in the historic Alameda neighborhood of Portland. Completed in 1923, the residence was designed by nationally renowned Minneapolis architect William Gray Purcell. The residence is significant under Criterion C as an excellent example of the work of William Gray Purcell. It is also significant as a well-preserved and locally distinctive example of Arts & Crafts architecture. The house is listed in Portland's Historic Resources Inventory, where it is cited for its significance in the area of architecture.

Setting

The Woerner House occupies the center and back of Lots 1, 2 and 3, Block 12 of the Alameda Park subdivision of Portland. The house is situated atop the natural ridge of "the Alameda", an affluent residential boulevard affording panoramic views of the Tualatin Mountains, the Willamette River and downtown Portland. The undulating street meanders through Northeast Portland, providing a sharp contrast to the orderly grid pattern most common to Portland's generally level east side. The surrounding neighborhood is characterized by an assortment of stately homes, most of which were built in historic period styles such as Tudor, Colonial and English Cottage. While many of the area's homes are grandiose, architect-designed displays of affluence, just as many are more modest, non-architect designed period revival houses built in the 1920s and 1930s.

The Woerner House is set back approximately twenty-five feet from NE Alameda Street and approximately fifteen feet from NE 28th Avenue. The house is elevated approximately seven feet above street level, and rests atop a sloping lawn. At the property's southeast corner is a copper beech tree. There is a sweet gum on the north side and a large oak tree on the west. Additional landscaping includes a variety of fruit trees and ornamental shrubs, mostly mature camellias, rhododendron and azaleas. A rose garden borders the driveway on the west side of the house. From Alameda Street, arching concrete footpaths approach the front porch.

Plan

The Woerner House consists of two-and-one-half-stories and a basement. The plan indicates that specific details of the house were tailored to fit the needs of Louis and Elizabeth Woerner. The first floor contains (from west to east) a living room, main hall, central staircase, vestibule, dining room, pantry and kitchen. Also on the first floor, though barely noticeable from the more formal rooms located at the front (south) of the house, is a service hall, service staircase and water closet. According to William Purcell's architectural plans, the second floor would consist of an "Owner's Room," "Daughter's Room # 1," "Daughter's Room # 2," and "Guest Room". These designations reflect the size and needs of the Woerner family. The attic, which originally contained a pair of "Maid's Rooms," is now open space.

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Exterior

Set upon a concrete foundation, the wood-frame structure is asymmetrical in plan. All elevations are finished in white-painted stucco. The home's large, centrally hipped roof contains an assortment of steeply-pitched gables visible from each elevation.

South Elevation (front)

The primary elevation faces NE Alameda Street, and features the home's triumvirate of telescoping gables, in addition to much of the pitch of the home's massive hipped roof. All three gables project from the central hipped roof. Viewed from NE Alameda Street, the gables seem to align, creating the illusion of a continuous diagonal line which begins at the living room, continues along the central bay, and ends at the apex of the home's high southeast gable. The lowest of the three gables serves as the roof of the home's one-bay entrance porch. This particular gable features a wrap-around hipped eave (sometimes referred to as a hipped roof with truncated gable) which extends out over two large wooden support columns. The columns are finished in white-painted plaster. The intermediary gable crowns a wide two-story polygonal bay. The bay features the tall leaded windows of the first floor vestibule. At the second story, the bay sports the windows of the former "Owner's Room," which is now used as a family room. Under the flush southeast gable, a wrap-around eave extends over a band of triple casement windows belonging to "Daughter's Room #1". This steeply pitched, multi-gabled roof is a dramatic derivation from the stylistic norms of the period, revealing the architect's "masterful sense of balance," and "inventive and unique sense of design" (Hawkins and Willingham, 1999).

On the first floor (from west to east) is an open terrace, living room (featuring a long, off-center landscape window), gabled entrance porch with columns, full-length paired windows on the center and east-facing volumes of the two-story polygonal bay, a porthole window, and a three-part Palladian window belonging to the dining room. The second floor features (from west to east) the living room's steeply pitched hipped roof, the second story of the polygonal bay with paired casement windows on each of the bay's three volumes, a small casement window and a band of triple casement windows belonging to "Daughter's Room #1". A massive brick chimney is located at the roof's highest peak. It contains four brick chimney caps. The third, or attic story, is comprised of a band of triple casement windows (belonging to the maid's room) under the home's flush eastern gable.

West Elevation (side)

The west side elevation faces NE 28th Street. On the first floor, at the north corner of the property, is the home's large attached garage. A concrete driveway ascends from NE 28th Street. To the south is the living room's towering fourteen-foot high Palladian-style window. The window is flanked by glazed French doors, all of which are located under a gable roof. An open terrace with large, square-shaped planters extends into the west (side) lawn. The second floor, from north to south, features a steeply pitched hipped roof capping the "Guest Room," which is located directly above the garage. At the third, or attic level, is a hipped-roof dormer. Also visible from the west elevation, is the side of the home's massive brick chimney.

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North Elevation (back)

The north elevation looks out over the south (back) elevations of three neighboring houses whose main (north-facing) entrances are located on NE Hamblet Street. The first floor of the Woerner House's north elevation (from east to west) features the width of the kitchen, three casement windows, a sliding glass door to the small back patio, a ribbon of four casement windows belonging to the garage, and a set of French doors leading from the living room to the west-facing terrace. Visible at the stair landing between the first and second floors is a magnificent, ten-foot high, arched stained glass window featuring a colorful depiction of Mount Hood. At the second floor, also from east to west, a wrap-around eave extends over a band of triple casement windows belonging to "Daughter's Room # 2". Further west there is a casement (closet) window, the top of the aforementioned arch of the stained glass landing window, and a band of three decorative casement windows and a set of paired windows, all belonging to the "Guest Room".

East Elevation (side)

The east elevation looks out over the Woerner House neighbor at 2843 NE Alameda Street. The first story features (from south to north) a side view of the front entry porch, the tall leaded windows of the east-facing portion of the polygonal bay, the Palladian windows of the dining room, and three casement windows spanning the length of the kitchen. Also visible at the first floor is a recessed glass door, leading out to the small back patio. At the second story, from south to north, is a pair of leaded windows belonging to the former "Owner's Room," located at the upper story of the polygonal bay, a pair of casement windows belonging to "Daughter's Room # 1," a pair of fixed windows belonging to the "Daughter's Bathroom," and a pair of casement windows belonging to "Daughter's Room # 2." Recessed over the door to the back patio is a small casement window belonging to the bathroom of the "Guest Room".

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Interior

Like the exterior, the interior of the Woerner house retains the highest degree of integrity and features numerous well-crafted details. Floors throughout the house are hardwood oak, and those in the major rooms of the first floor feature decorative designs and inlays. Wood moldings are a feature of every doorway and window in the house.

Main Hall and Vestibule

The main entrance to the Louis and Elizabeth Woerner House opens onto a spacious main hall and vestibule. Eight mahogany beams accentuate the ceiling. The oak floors contain a decorative mahogany inlaid border. To the east of the main hall is the living room, and to the west is the dining room. The central staircase is located at the north end of the hall. Just west of the central staircase is a small room containing a built-in desk, surrounded by an assortment of mahogany cabinetry, each featuring decorative leaded glass doors. On either side of the desk, mahogany panels cleverly conceal narrow drawers meant for storing special keepsakes.

Following the stair hall north, two steps descend to a short hallway. Immediately west is the door to the attached double car garage. Further north, a multi-paned glass door leads to the rear patio, which is nestled against the backyard walls of three neighboring houses fronting NE Hamblet Street.

Central Staircase

A large half-turn staircase ascends north to a wide landing, and then continues south to the second floor. All stairs are made of oak. The starting step is rounded to a quarter-circle, beginning an eight step climb to the primary landing, with its massive stained glass depiction of Mount Hood rising above a fir forest and crystal-blue lake. The mahogany stair rail is voluted at the platform (supplanting the need for a newel), and features a half-cylinder crook at the turn of the landing. The square balusters, placed three to a step, create a graceful balustrade. Concealed behind and beneath the central staircase is a small half-bath, which retains its original white mosaic floor tile. The fixtures have been replaced.

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West of the main hall and vestibule is the dining room. Dividing the vestibule from the dining room is a small pass-through area containing built-in mahogany closets facing each other on the north and south walls. Between the closet space and the dining room is an arched opening with mahogany trim.

Living Room

West of the main hall is the magnificent formal living room, which features a sixteen-foot high barrel-vault ceiling. The room's west end is punctuated by a dramatic three-part Palladian style window. The center window reaches a maximum height of fourteen feet, and contains some thirty individual lights. The central window is flanked on either side by glazed four-light French doors. Access to the home's west-facing terrace is gained through these doors. The west wall also contains hot water radiators concealed by elegant metal screens depicting water reeds. The screens are flush with the walls. Similar screens can be found on the east and west walls of the entrance hall.

The center-piece of the living room is its massive fireplace. As was often the case in the residential work of William Purcell, the fireplace was designed specifically for the house. Tapering towards the top, an angled chimney breast forms the front portion of the chimney stack. The hearth is rounded, featuring cream-colored bricks. A large rounded step composed of the same cream-colored bricks extends into the living room. The fireplace is flanked by three-foot high brick surrounds, both of which are capped by ornamental stone pieces. West of the fireplace is a full-length built-in bookcase. The bookcase features mahogany trim and glazed doors. East of the fireplace is a pair of full-length glass doors.

The south wall of the living room is dominated by a large landscape window overlooking "the Alameda."

Dining Room

East of the main hall and vestibule, through the mahogany cased opening of the closet space, is the dining room. A second opening is topped by a Palladian-style arch, and leads directly into the dining room. The small space between the two openings contains a set of built-in mahogany closets, with the south-facing closet containing a beveled-glass porthole window looking out on NE Alameda Street.

The dining room features five-foot high wainscoting with walnut paneling. The floor is oak, with the same decorative mahogany trim found in the entrance hall, vestibule and living room. The dining room's east and south walls contain three-part Palladian style windows. The ceiling is coved at the corners.

A mahogany door with a Palladian-style arched top is integrated into the dining room's north wall. This door leads to the pantry. The pantry, through which access to kitchen is gained, contains all of its original built-in cabinetry. Additionally, on the east wall, the pantry contains a beautiful silver plated sink surrounded by a white mosaic tile counter top. The tile is the same employed (and still extant) on the first and second floor bathrooms.

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Kitchen

North of the dining room is the kitchen, which is the most altered space in the house. The remodel was conducted by the home's present owner, and incorporates many original elements of the former kitchen. The space retains its original size, shape and proportions. Several original windows have been preserved, and original built-in cabinets have been relocated within the kitchen.

Second Floor

Three bedrooms and a family room comprise the second floor. According to Purcell's architectural plans, the upstairs rooms were labeled "Owner's Room," "Daughter's Room #1," "Daughter's Room #2," and "Guest Room." Shortly after the house was completed, the so-called "Owner's Room" became a family room and the "Guest Room" became the master bedroom. The "Owner's Room" occupies the space beneath the second telescoping gable of the front (south) façade. The room is defined by the interior expression of the three part bay, which is composed of three sets of paired casement windows.

The "Guest Room" is located in the northwest corner of the second story, over the garage. The renamed master bedroom room contains a bathroom with original tile-work and updated fixtures. The room also contains an alcove echoing the shape of the first floor's Palladian-style windows

Daughter's Room # 1 and #2 remain bedrooms. A full bathroom, with original tiling and updated fixtures, is located between the two bedrooms. Both second floor bathrooms retain their original cream colored ceramic wall and floor tiles. Long, thin colored tiles accent the design.

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Third Floor/Attic

The third floor is reached by way of a back stairwell (the servant's staircase) that can be accessed at the first or second floor and is located near the kitchen on the first floor. There are two rooms on the third floor labeled in the architectural plans. These are "Maid's Room # 1" and "Maid's Room # 2". There is a small bathroom located down a short hall between the two rooms.

Garage

Located at the northeast corner of the residence is a large attached garage, which was included in William Gray Purcell's original plans for the house. The car entry is located on the west elevation, with direct access to NE 28th Street. The garage features a massive, three-part, sliding door constructed of solid fir. The interior of the garage is a combination of concrete and wood, with fifteen foot ceilings. The north side of the garage features a ribbon of casement windows spanning the east-west length of the wall.

Modifications to the Residence

The Woerner House appears much the same as it did when Louis and Elizabeth Woerner occupied it. Modifications have been few. The most significant change is the updating of the kitchen. The kitchen remodel did not alter the original footprint of the house, and incorporated several original built-in cabinets, cupboards and windows into the update. Many of the home's bathroom fixtures have also been replaced. Updates have been minimal, made primarily to the kitchen and bathrooms. Past and current owners of the property have been painstaking in their effort to preserve the essential qualities of the property.

Woerner, Louis & Elizabeth, House
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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing).

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1922-1923

Significant Dates

1922-1923

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

William Gray Purcell

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B removed from its original location
- C a birthplace or grave
- D a cemetery
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F a commemorative property
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite books, articles, and other sources used in preparing the form on one or more continuation sheets) See continuation sheets

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36CFR67) 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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

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NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Louis and Elizabeth Woerner House is significant under National Register Criterion C as a fine example of the work of renowned architect William Gray Purcell. It holds additional significance as a well-preserved, intact, and locally distinctive example of the Arts and Crafts Style.

William Gray Purcell (1880-1965)

William Gray Purcell was born in Wilmette, Illinois in 1880. He was raised by his grandfather, William Cunningham Gray well-known Ohio newspaperman, and long-time editor of the influential Presbyterian weekly, "The Interior" Purcell spent his adolescent years in the developing Chicago suburb of Oak Park, Illinois, where he found himself fascinated by the radical designs of Frank Lloyd Wright, a close and well-known neighbor (Brooks, 1972). After graduating from Oak Park and River Forest High School, Purcell attended Cornell University, receiving an architecture degree in 1903. Returning home to Oak Park, Purcell managed to secure an internship under celebrated master architect Louis Sullivan. Though he only worked with Sullivan for five months, this apprenticeship was a seminal experience in the creative and professional development of the budding architect. It was at Sullivan's office where Purcell became acquainted George Grant Elmslie (1871-1951), who would become both a mentor and a partner.

Since Sullivan's workload was insufficient to sustain his young intern, Purcell chose to explore his professional options. Long attracted to the Pacific Coast, he left the Midwest for California, visiting with prominent Los Angeles architects Myron Hunt and Elmer Grey (Hammons, 1994). For a year and a half Purcell worked for Berkeley architect John Galen Howard; by 1905, Purcell had left the Bay Area for Seattle, Washington, and the firm of Charles H. Bebb and Leonard L. Mendel, where he was employed for seven months (Brooks, 1972). During a brief stay in Oak Park, Purcell made plans with former Cornell classmate George Feick Jr. (1881-1945) for an extended trip overseas. Together, they embarked on an eight month tour of Europe and Asia Minor (*Northwest Architect*, August 17, 1953).

Purcell & Feick 1907-1909

Returning to the United States in 1907, Purcell & Feick established their partnership in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The firm's early years were lean, subsisting mostly on the commissions of relatives, friends and acquaintances. Their first realized residential design was for Purcell's grandmother, Catherine Gray (Hammons, 1994). During this period, the young firm established a solid reputation throughout the Midwest. The firm designed two churches, Eau Claire, Wisconsin's Christ Church and south Minneapolis' Stewart Memorial Church in 1909; the Stewart Memorial Church would be the largest commission completed by Purcell & Feick (Hammons, 1994).

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Purcell, Feick & Elmslie 1909-1913

In 1909, George Grant Elmslie made the difficult decision to leave Sullivan's Chicago office and move to Minneapolis. Elmslie, who was born in rural Scotland in 1871, had arrived in Chicago with his family in 1884. At the age of seventeen, he was employed with the firm of Joseph Lyman Silsbee, where he became acquainted with the likes of Frank Lloyd Wright and George W. Maher. In 1889, under Wright's recommendation, Elmslie went to work for Louis Sullivan and Dankmar Adler. Upon Wright's dismissal in 1893, Elmslie became Adler & Sullivan's chief draftsman—a position he would hold for nearly fifteen years. When Adler departed in 1895, Sullivan became increasingly dependent on Elmslie (Zabel, 1991). Sullivan's office experienced a steady decline in commissions. Immensely dedicated to Sullivan, Elmslie worked on "half-pay" for years in an effort to help Sullivan keep his practice afloat. By 1909, however Elmslie's departure was inevitable.

According to Hammons, the addition of Elmslie spurred the architects to reach "for a new creative balance that resulted in a cascade of advanced organic designs unequalled by any other progressive firm." Although Purcell & Feick had already established a strong practice, Elmslie's association furthered the firm's reputation substantially. Additionally, Elmslie brought with him several important new business contacts from his days with Sullivan. The three years of the Purcell, Feick & Elmslie partnership saw "many sensitive expressions of functional architecture" completed, primarily in the form of small prairie town banks (Hammons, 1994). Notable examples are the Exchange State Bank at Grand Meadow, Minnesota and the First National Bank at Rhinelander, Wisconsin, both of 1910. The "superbly detailed" Merchants Bank of Winona, Minnesota, built 1911-12, may have been the firm's finest commercial building, and is considered a standard of American commercial architecture.

According to H. Allen Brooks, owing to Purcell's adeptness at public relations, "the firm soon had a larger and more diversified practice than Frank Lloyd Wright," adding that "they built more banks than Wright and Sullivan combined, and with that residences, churches, town halls, courthouses and fire stations."

A series of twelve commissions for the Woods Hole, Massachusetts estate of millionaire Charles R. Crane began in 1910, and continued for the next three years. Among these important commissions, their greatest challenge came with the design of a summer residence for Crane's daughter, Josephine Crane Bradley, which was constructed on a thin peninsula jutting into the Atlantic Ocean.

In 1912, however, tragedy struck with the sudden death of George Elmslie's wife. In March 1913, Elmslie left Minneapolis for Chicago, where he sought the peace and consolation of his sisters. Later that year, the Edna S. Purcell House was built, which according to Hammons, "achieved the fullest and most articulate expression of their abilities."

George Feick did not share Purcell and Elmslie's intense dedication to the organic philosophies of an indigenous architecture, and was sometimes unable to engineer the innovative techniques of his more progressive partners. Feick elected to leave the firm in 1913, choosing to rejoin his father's contracting business in Sandusky, Ohio (Brooks, 1972).

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Purcell & Elmslie 1913-1922

The newly inaugurated firm of Purcell & Elmslie “entered a period marked by a diversity of challenging projects.” The three buildings Purcell & Elmslie executed for companies selling Edison phonograph machines were “high points in their commercial design,” noting that “although the Chicago store was the most highly developed of the three, other Edison Shops were built in Kansas City and San Francisco in 1914” (Hammons, 1994).

Purcell & Elmslie’s design for the Woodbury County Courthouse in Sioux City, Iowa (in collaboration with another former Sullivan protégé William L. Steele) was equally influential upon its completion in 1916. In addition to The Jump River, Wisconsin, Town Hall and the Kasson, Minnesota Municipal Building, Purcell designed a large and complex residence for Louis Heitman in Helena, Montana in 1916. It was built with a steep pitched roof, a favorite device of Purcell’s, and one used to dramatic effect in the Louis and Elizabeth Woerner House.

In 1916, Purcell relocated himself and his family to Philadelphia to take a decidedly non-architectural position as advertising manager for Alexander Brothers, a Pennsylvania ‘leather belting’ firm for which Purcell and Elmslie had done previous drafting work. When Alexander Brothers entered into bankruptcy in 1919, Purcell resigned his position.

According to Ronald Schmitt, “Purcell and Elmslie became the leading advocates of ‘modern’ or progressive architectural design,” adding that the interiors of the Winona Bank by Purcell, Feick & Elmslie, and the Woodbury County Courthouse by Purcell & Elmslie “are among the most beautiful and distinctive architectural spaces to be found anywhere.”

Purcell & Elmslie produced numerous banks and residences across the Midwest. Their collaboration on more than 70 buildings made them the most prolific of the Prairie School architects. Purcell & Elmslie regarded themselves as the heirs to Sullivan’s ideals. Strengthened by their intimate knowledge of Frank Lloyd Wright’s more modern forms of architecture, the firm’s work displayed a distinctive synthesis.

William Purcell and George Elmslie continued their partnership until 1922.

William Gray Purcell in Oregon

After leaving Philadelphia, Purcell faced an uncertain future. He was nearly forty years old now. He considered returning to Minnesota, but “felt a strong need for a new beginning” (Hammons, 1994). Hoping to “renew the independence and freedom he felt was lost during his time with the Alexander Brothers...his mind turned to the fresh, vigorous potential of the Pacific Northwest” (Hammons, 1994).

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In the fall of 1919, Purcell relocated to Portland, Oregon. Providentially, Purcell happened upon his former Oak Park school teacher, Helen E. Starrett as soon as he arrived. Starrett had left Illinois, becoming a nationally renowned feminist leader. A permanent resident of Portland, Starrett was headed for Washington, D.C. to lobby for women's suffrage at a special session of Congress called by President Woodrow Wilson. More than happy to rent her house to Purcell, she only asked that he "leave the car and the cook in the same condition in which he had found them." Finally settled in Oregon, Purcell sent for his family, ready to begin his life anew (Hammons, 1994).

By all accounts, Purcell had no intention of continuing his architectural practice, though he did intend to join his cousin, Charles H. Purcell, a talented civil engineer, in establishing a bridge-building firm. Unfortunately, Charles Purcell, who would go on to design the Oakland Bay Bridge, was constrained by time-consuming government road building projects that prevented him from ever fully participating in the prospective company with his cousin, William (Hammons, 1994).

While the Purcell & Elmslie partnership still existed (if only in name), the firm secured few commissions. George Elmslie drew preliminary sketches for a resort hotel to be located on Hood River; however, plans did not materialize beyond general discussions. In 1922, Purcell requested that the firm be dissolved (Hammons, 1994).

In the meantime, William Purcell busied himself with all manner of activity. He became director of the Architects' Small House Service Bureau and an editor for *Northwest Architect* magazine. Purcell became increasingly active in professional, civic, and arts organizations. In 1923 he was elected president of the Oregon chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and from 1926 to 1927 he served as president of the Oregon chapter of Pro Musica, International. He joined the Portland Architectural Club, the Portland City Club, and was a moving force in the local meetings of the literary Knights of the Round Table. From 1928 to 1930, Purcell enjoyed painting on the nature outings of the mountain climbing Mazama Club, an arts organization. To develop a greater public understanding of the role of architects in the community, Purcell initiated a group called the Architect's Research Board. One of the most significant and lasting results of Purcell's involvement in the Portland arts community was his co-founding (in 1927) of the Oregon Society of Artists.

Purcell attempted to market architectural services to contractor-builders who more than likely would have assumed an architect's fee cost-prohibitive with a series advertisements offering standardized plans for banks and small houses. These ads were placed in various periodicals under company names like "Cunningham Gray Architectural Service," the "Builder's Plan Service," and "Pacific States Engineering Corporation (PSEC). In an effort to lend the impression of an established and flourishing businesses, advertisements listed the addresses of the architectural offices maintained in Minneapolis by Frederick A. Strauel, the one in Chicago maintained by Elmslie, and the one in Portland maintained by Purcell. The companies developed several speculative residential properties, and although several large apartment projects were designed, none were built. Projects tended to be small houses located throughout southeast Portland.

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PSEC houses, intended for working families of limited means seeking a higher quality residence than was customarily available, were a mainstay of Purcell's Portland practice over the next ten years. Most sold for between seven and nine thousand dollars and many offered experimental solutions to the challenges that came with rainy Pacific Northwestern winters, including innovative heating systems intended to improve air circulation and special shingling techniques to keep moisture out. Because the houses were "built along common lines within a limited budget using commercially available materials" variations were employed to avoid obvious similarities.

In addition to PSEC, Purcell proved adept in providing readymade home designs for the Architect's Small House Service Bureau (ASHSB). A national American Institute of Architects-endorsed organization, the ASHSB encouraged the construction of small quality homes by offering professionally designed stock plans. The ASHSB divided the United States into regional divisions, and Purcell served as an officer in the northwestern division of the ASHSB that included Oregon. At least one of his house plans was mass-marketed nationwide by the organization.

In 1925 Purcell made the acquaintance of James Van Evera Bailey, a young architect "who introduced himself as the nephew of the plumber who had worked for Purcell & Elmslie thirteen years earlier on the C. I. Buxton residence in Owatonna, Minnesota" (Hammons, 1994). Bailey served as Purcell's "associate architect" on several Portland projects, proving himself an active and able participant in both the design and construction process. Purcell provided the plans while Bailey supervised the construction details. Purcell, always seeking a spiritual expression of his functional ideals, found Bailey's sound grasp of such ephemeral principals encouraging, and even allowed Bailey sole supervision of Purcell's practice when he left on a lengthy tour of Europe. Bailey would distinguish himself as "an important figure in the development of the Northwest Regional style" (Ritz, 2000).

The largest commission William Gray Purcell received while in Oregon was for Portland's Third Church of Christ, Scientist, in Portland. Built in 1926, the building only a portion of Purcell's design was realized. Based on ideas first considered for a Christian Science project in Minneapolis, plans called for "construction in phases," beginning with a Sunday school auditorium, with a reading room to be added when necessary. With the Third Church of Christ, Scientist, Purcell fulfilled a long desire to design a Christian Science assembly hall.

While living in Portland, Purcell remained in close contact with his many friends and associates still in the Midwest. Upon learning that sculptor Richard Bock was unemployed in Chicago Purcell encouraged him to relocate to Oregon, and was instrumental in gaining Bock an appointment as head of the Department of Sculpture at the University of Oregon. Bock welcomed the much-needed assistance, and in appreciation cast a duplicate model of his "Nils the Gooseboy" sculpture, which was originally designed for the Edna S. Purcell residence in Minneapolis. Unfortunately, the sculpture was damaged beyond repair during shipment to Oregon.

Purcell also turned to writing, prolifically articulating his views on art and architecture. Through his personal acquaintance with *Christian Science Monitor* editor Willis J. Abbott, Purcell sold more than a dozen articles to the magazine between 1923 and 1927. He also wrote a series of advisory columns called "The Lamps of Home Building" for *The Small House*, ASHSB's monthly journal, edited by Purcell's friend Maurice I. Flagg. From 1929 to 1930, Purcell edited the Arts Page of Portland's weekly, *Spectator*, in which he explored his interests in a wide range of historical and contemporary subjects (Hammons, 1994).

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Despite his achievements, Purcell experienced a general decline in his physical well being throughout the 1920s. Persisting in his Christian Science beliefs, he refused to see a doctor. Matters worsened dramatically on a 1929 visit to the John Jager's rustic cabin at Lake Vermilion, Minnesota. Not yet fifty years old, Purcell found himself almost completely incapacitated. Persuaded by friends, Purcell reluctantly sought medical attention in 1930. The doctors discovered that Purcell was suffering from an advanced case of tuberculosis. Purcell was forced to leave the damp Oregon climate for California, where he spent five years recovering in a sanitarium.

Following his slow recovery, Purcell settled in the dry climate of Pasadena, California, where he ultimately retired. He continued to write prolifically until his death on April 11, 1965. He was buried in Forest Home, Illinois' Forest Home Cemetery, under the monument he designed for his grandfather while still a student at Cornell University.

W.G. Purcell Houses in Portland

In addition to the Louis and Elizabeth Woerner House, Portland, Oregon boasts only four significant Purcell-designed residences. They each contribute creativity and energy to the development of Oregon architecture, and their designs are the unique works of a gifted master. Additionally, they each represent bold interpretations of Prairie-influenced concepts, adapted to fit a West Coast environment. The Woerner House is the most visible and accessible of the works, owing to its prominent and unobstructed placement. It is the only Purcell house located east of the Willamette River.

William Gray Purcell House, 1920, Arts and Crafts

Less than a year after his arrival in Portland, William Purcell constructed a home for himself in the southwest hills. Located at 2649 SW Georgian Place, this house is significant for its interweaving of Prairie-style ideas with Arts & Crafts aesthetics. As with the Woerner House, Purcell incorporated telescoping gables. In addition, the façade is treated with white stucco. However, the home's hillside location ends any further comparison. Despite the difficult building site, Purcell managed to overcome all obstacles with a commanding design. Purcell's "masterful sense of balance" is revealed in the graceful proportions of its elevations.

Lillian K. Pollock House, 1921, Prairie Style

The Lillian Pollock House, located at 2666 SW Vista Avenue, was the first of two neighboring houses located in the southern reaches of Portland Heights. The house is situated at the foot of a hillside, and is built two floors above the garage level. The primary entrance contains a prominent polygonal bay, extended to the full width of the eave. The gabled roof is low-pitched and a flight of concrete steps curves above and behind the garage to the front door. Great effort was taken to synthesize the garage into the overall design. In effect, the bulk of the garage is minimized by a large garden trellis, which is supported by two large columns. The roof of the trellis doubles as a paved terrace.

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Purcell Residence, 1923, Arts and Crafts

The house at 2534 SW Arden Road is also located in the southwest hills. Representing one of Purcell's most unusual designs, the house has been compared to a sculpture in its use of low-sloped intersecting gables. Seemingly Gothic pointed arches are mixed with elements evoking the English domestic designs of Lutyens. Tall, narrow windows give a cathedral-like effect to the asymmetrical design.

Thomas Mostyn, 1924, Prairie Style

The aforementioned Lillian Pollock House received its Purcell-designed neighbor three years later. The Thomas Mostyn House, located at 2660 SW Vista Avenue, was completed in 1924. Like the Pollock house, it is situated two stories above street level. Unlike the Pollock House, however, it contains a polygonal dining room bay. While massing of the house is horizontal, the porch supports are decidedly vertical. This is a characteristic trait of Prairie Style houses. The interior of the house is filled with numerous Prairie details, including an angled fireplace and "linear geometries" found on stair, fireplace and woodwork details.

Development of Alameda

Developers platted Alameda Park as an addition to the City of Portland district in 1909 (The Oregon Journal, September 6, 1976). At that time, much of the east side was still open fields and farmland. In June of 1854, William and Isabel Bowering settled on their 320-acre tract bounded by today's 24th, 29th-Fremont-33rd, Halsey and Prescott. William was born in England in 1812, but immigrated to America with his father when still a boy. Settling in New York, he married Isabel in 1838. Fourteen years later they went west to Oregon, taking full advantage of the federal DLC incentive. Tragically, on a trip to California in 1859, William died. His widow and two children kept the property until 1870, when it was sold to Owen Wade for \$1,000. Mr. Wade in turn sold a section to Joseph Dolph and John H. Mitchell. In 1875 Dolph bought out Mitchell (The Community Press January 29, 1975). Four years later, Dolph sold his stake to Abraham Buckman, best known for lending his name to the city's Buckman School. Mr. Buckman died in 1882, leaving a wife and eight children. The following year saw far-reaching improvements to Fremont Street, which was extended to Sandy Road. The area was now opened for broad-scale development.

In 1908, Sarah Buckman sold 40 of her remaining 160 acres to the Astoria Title and Trust Company. Its owner, E.L. Ferguson had formed the Alameda Land Company, and slowly acquired land for development. The Alameda Park plat was filed on February 1, 1909. The streets along the crest of the plateau (formerly known as Gravelly Hill) were graded, and soon after an agreement was reached with the City of Portland to that extend the Irvington sewer district to Alameda Park.

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Alameda Park boasted being the “the largest restricted residential area on the Pacific Coast.” Deeds of the era ensured that property could not be occupied by “Japanese or Chinese, except for servants” and forbade the establishment of “flats, tenements, saloons, stables and foundries.” In addition, residences could cost no less than \$2,500 to construct. The racial exclusionary clauses were removed in 1923, the year the Woerner House was completed. In 1924, Portland’s City Council passed a zoning ordinance that effectively divided Portland into four districts, redefining the area’s land-use. In 1931, the streets in Alameda (and all of Portland) were renumbered, and many renamed.

When the street was first named (as part of the Rose City Park plat of 1907) it was called “The Alameda.” Today, Alameda Street is recognized by the City of Portland as an official “Scenic Drive.”

Neighborhood Context

The Louis and Elizabeth Woerner House is unique among its Alameda neighbors. Situated among many large and affluent homes of similar age, the Woerner House is not only significant in the development of Portland architecture, but in the life and career of its prominent architect, William Gray Purcell. William J. Hawkins III and William F. Willingham, in their Classic Houses of Portland, Oregon 1850-1950, refer to the property as “one of the more exciting and original Portland designs in the Arts and Crafts mode”. They add that while “the brief Portland stay of nationally recognized William Grey (sic) Purcell, formerly of Minneapolis is rarely recognized locally,” that “Purcell designed houses in Portland...display the talents for which he was acclaimed nationally. The structures demonstrate his ability to adapt to his typical Midwest designs to local influences and scale.”

The Louis and Elizabeth Woerner House is the first William Gray Purcell-designed home in Oregon to be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

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Louis and Elizabeth Woerner House Chain of Title

The Louis and Elizabeth Woerner house was built in 1923. Louis Woerner first appears in Portland City Directory's in 1910, in association with the Pacific Cooperage Company. By 1920, he is identified as the secretary-treasurer of the enlarged Western Cooperage Company, which maintained offices in Portland and Seattle. Louis Woerner's first home was located at 372 E. 8th Street. Advancing to the position of vice president with the Western Cooperage Company, Woerner maintained offices in the Corbett Building downtown. In 1922, at the peak of his fortunes, he commissioned William Gray Purcell to draw plans for a house to be built at NE 28th and Alameda. The home was completed in early 1923.

The Woerner family occupied the home for nearly thirty years, selling the house in the 1951. According to the Portland City Directory of 1952, Louis and Elizabeth's next address was an apartment building located on SW 6th Street.

From 1952 until 1957, the house remained under the ownership of Caroline M. Sherer.

In 1957, the home was sold to Linus Windnagle, who occupied the house until 1965, when it was bought by the Schnell family.

The current owners of the property are Whitney Boise and Julie Vacura.

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Portland City Directories (1910-1970)

Woerner Home Architecture Plans and Notes, prepared by William Gray Purcell, located at the Woerner house.

Woerner, Louis & Elizabeth, House
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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 10 528367 5043969
Zone Easting Northing
2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing
4 _____

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Matthew Hayes

organization _____ date July 2004

street & number PO Box 1284 telephone 503-774-3566

city or town Portland state OR zip code 97207

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation sheets

Maps: A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs: Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

name Whitney Boise and Julie r. Vacura

street & number 2815 NE Alameda telephone 503-287-1804

city or town Portland state OR zip code 97212

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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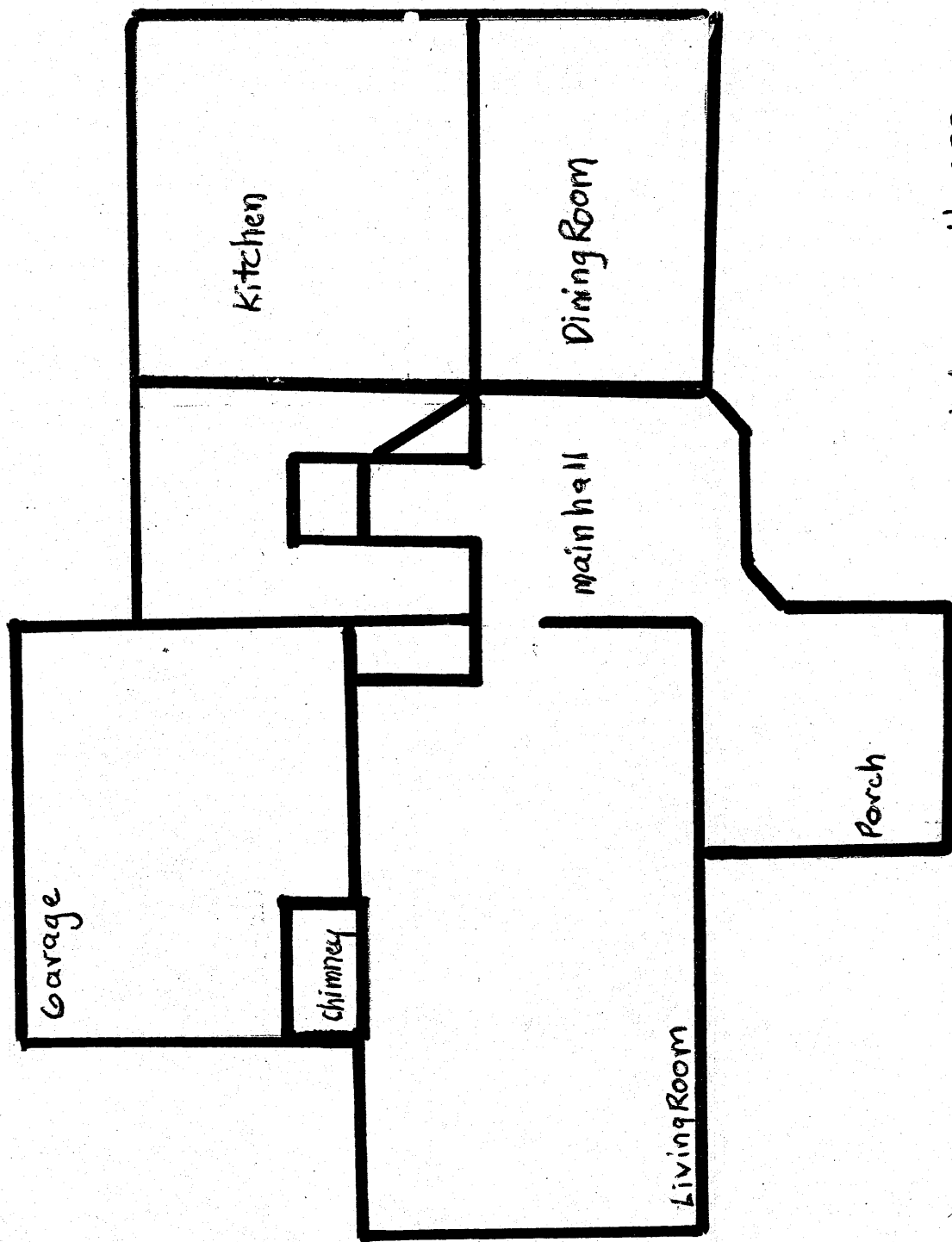
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Louis and Elizabeth Woerner House – Boundary Description

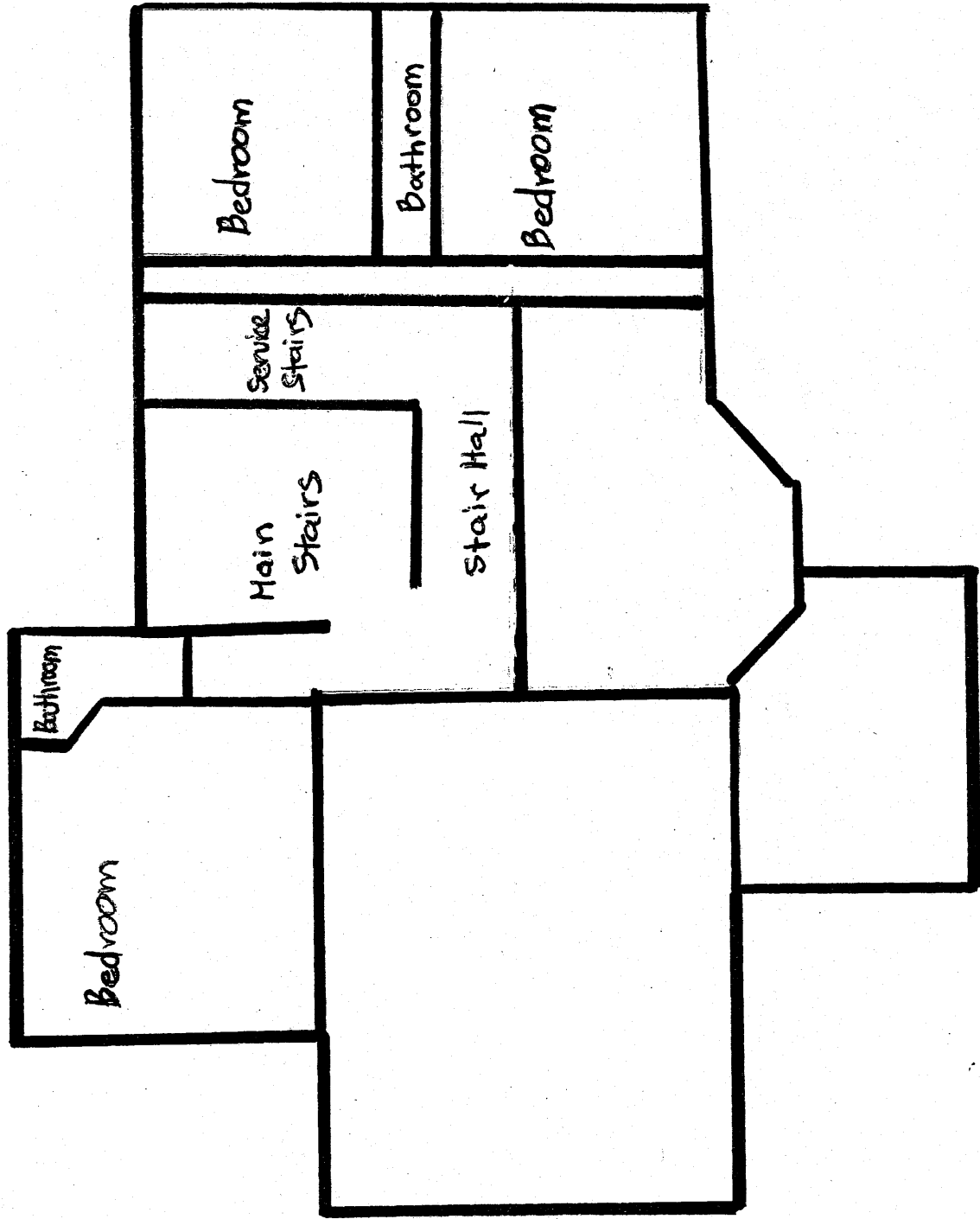
The nominated area consists of Tax Lots 1, 2 &3, Block 12 in the Alameda Park subdivision. The official tax lot number is R100988.

Boundary Justification

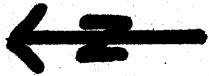
The nominated area encompasses the entire urban tax lot on which the building occupies. The site address is 2815 NE Alameda Street, Portland, Oregon.



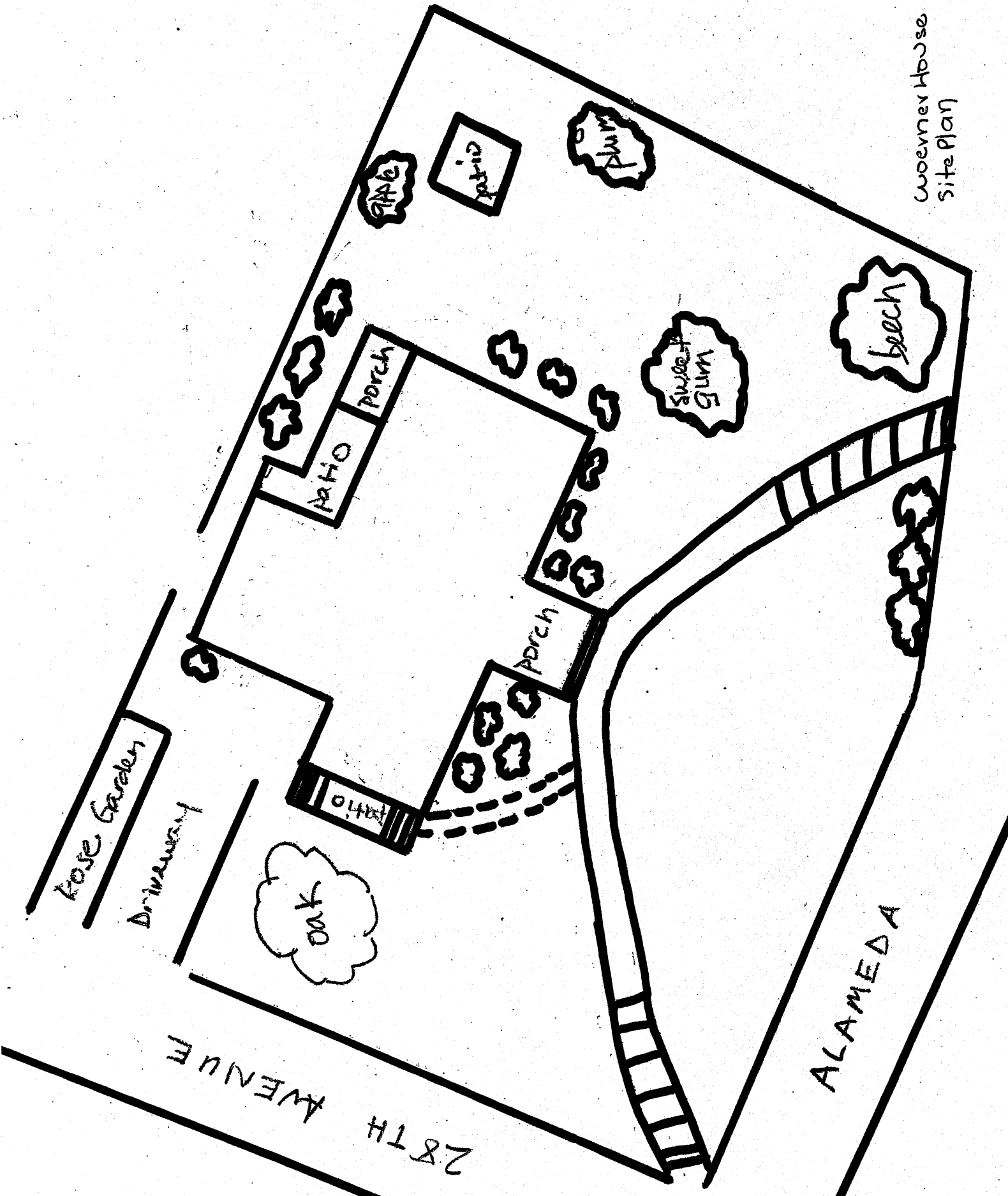
Woerner House
First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan
Louis + Elizabeth Weber House



woerner House
Site Plan





First American Title Insurance Company of Oregon

An assumed business name of TITLE INSURANCE COMPANY OF OREGON

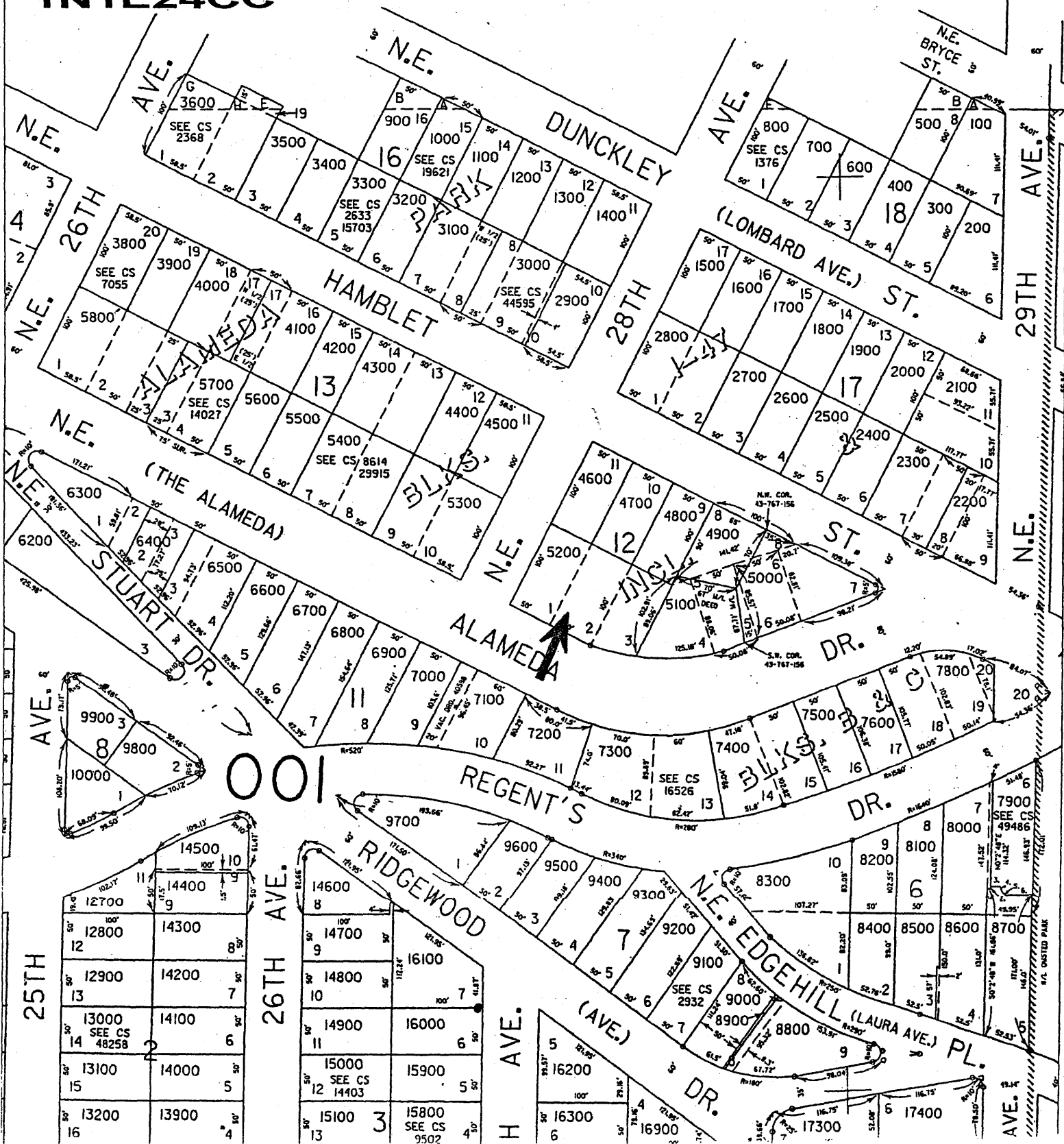
1700 S.W. FOURTH AVENUE, PORTLAND, OR 97201-5512

(503) 222-3651



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SEE MAP IN 1E 24CB



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Photograph List

The following information applies to all photographs:

Woerner, Louis and Elizabeth, House
Multnomah County, Oregon
Photographed by Whitney Boise
Photographed September 10, 2004
Negatives held by Whitney Boise, 2815 NE Alameda, Portland OR, 97212

The following information is unique to each photograph:

1. Primary façade from Alameda Street, looking northeast
2. North and west elevations, looking northeast
3. View from living room through entryway into dining room, looking east
4. Built-in desks with leaded glass cabinets in entryway
5. First floor side hallway
6. Living room with coved ceiling and Palladian-style window, looking west
7. Living room with fireplace on north wall
8. Radiator screen, southeast living room wall
9. View of stained glass window from central staircase, looking north
10. Second floor bedroom #1
11. Second floor bedroom #2
12. Second floor bedroom #3 from hallway