

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUL 11 1979
DATE ENTERED	AUG 29 1979

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC KERR (ALBERTINA) NURSERY

AND/OR COMMON

Old Kerr Nursery

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 424 N.E. 22nd Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Portland

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

\_\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Third

STATE

Oregon

CODE 41

COUNTY

Multnomah

CODE

051

**CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Building owned by:  
Albertina Kerr Center for Children

Property owned by:  
Alexander H. Kerr Benevolent  
Association

STREET & NUMBER

2307 N.E. Flanders

501 South Shatto Place, Third Floor

CITY, TOWN

Portland, Oregon 97232

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

Los Angeles, California 90020

STATE

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Multnomah County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

1021 S.W. Fourth, Room 102

CITY, TOWN

Portland

STATE

Oregon 97204

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

\_\_\_FEDERAL \_\_\_STATE \_\_\_COUNTY \_\_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

EXCELLENT       DETERIORATED  
 GOOD             RUINS  
 FAIR              UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Albertina Kerr Nursery was built to care for abandoned babies and babies who needed somewhere to live while their mothers worked to support the family. It was constructed in the "Georgian" Style from a design by the Portland architectural firm of Johnson, Parker and Wallwork, and was completed in 1921. Primary responsibility for the design has been attributed to Folger Johnson on the basis of a notice which appeared in the Oregonian the year of the project's completion. Other principals of the firm were Carl H. Wallwork and Jamieson Parker, whose "Georgian" First Unitarian Church of Portland (1924) is a National Register property. The Nursery is in generally good condition. The third floor has just been repainted, and complete renovation of the first floor is planned. At present the first floor is vacant; the second floor houses a day care center, and offices are on the third floor.

The Nursery occupies lots 1, 2, part of 3, 5 and 6 in Block 2 of the Darch Addition to Portland on the City's East Side. The building faces west, overlooking NE 22nd Avenue. It is set back on the property with a cement stair and walkway giving access from the street. At present a large laurel hedge conceals the building on three sides, but it could be pruned to provide greater visibility. The buildings in the immediate neighborhood include single family dwellings and small apartment houses dating from the same general period, and they are generally cohesive in size and style.

The Nursery is basically U shaped, with two wings projecting from the east face of the building. The facade of the building measures 145'8", and the width of the building from the front door to the back wall is 42'. The building is 60' wide from the front of the building to the east end of the wings. The three story building has a partial basement. The foundation of the building is cement. An inscribed cornerstone was placed at the southwest corner. First and second story exterior walls are faced with brick. The porches at the north and south ends of the building and the north and south wings at the rear (east) of the building are wood frame construction. The pilasters, columns and other facade details are composition. The gable roof, originally metal-clad, is presently covered with composition shingles. Third story dormers have flat roofs.

Albertina Kerr Nursery reflects the formal organization of its Georgian models. Two matching chimneys of the front slope of the roof are equidistant from the center of the building. The focal point of the facade is a central pedimented two-story portico supported by colossal columns of the Corinthian Order, which have shadow pilasters. The classical entablature is detailed with modillions. Double-hung window sash have six over six lights on the ground story; four over four lights on the second story. Third story dormer windows are casement type. At the rear of the building, long slides serve as fire escapes from the second story. The front entry framement has engaged columns of the Ionic Order and a classical entablature with broken, scrolled pediment.

In the framing of ground story windows of the facade is an aptly symbolic borrowing from the arcade of Filippo Brunelleschi's Foundling Hospital in Florence (1421-1445)--a celebrated Early Renaissance master piece--in which spandrels of the arches are decorated with Andrea della Robbia's terra cotta medallions of babes in swaddling clothes. In the Johnson, Parker and Wallwork design, the plaster-surfaced tympanae of the arched window frames are similarly decorated. The tympanae of the portico pediment is lighted by a bull's eye window.

The building and its environs have changed little since the 1920s. A project undertaken by the Nursery Auxiliary was a wading pool in the yard to the south of the building. It was built during the summer of 1938 and paid for in part by a gift of \$45 from the Almeda Club. Mrs. Charles Wegman facilitated the construction of a glass canopy over the playground at the rear of the building, completed in February 1944.

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Exterior changes to the building include the addition of dormers on secondary elevations, replacement of the bull's eye window and door of the facade, and extensions on each end of the building. A dormer was added on the north face of the south wing, and louvers were replaced with windows on the east faces of both the north and south wings after March 1952, according to plans drawn up by John H. Dukehart. Hollis Johnston drew up plans for a new front door to replace the glazed original in 1953 and the new door was installed in September of that year. Designs for a bull's eye window in the portico pediment were completed in November 1953 by Dukehart, Wallwork and Kinne. The window was installed in January 1954. The "Griswold Nursery", a one-story extension was complete in April 1956. A one-story "play porch" was added to the north wing, similar to the south wing addition. The play porch was completed in November 1957 and paid for in part by a \$1000 grant from the Rotary Club.

The interior of the first floor included offices, dining room, kitchen and sterilization facilities, meeting room, play rooms and porches. Access to the second floor was by ramp. The second floor included sleeping wards and porches, bathing rooms with raised bathtubs and changing tables, a small maternity ward including a lying-in room and delivery room. On the third floor were nurses' quarters and sewing and storage areas. The interior has been modified, particularly on the second floor by the addition of partitions, but most basic features and walls remain. Particularly attractive are the woodwork and chimney pieces in the entry hall and meeting room.

The Albertina Kerr Center for Children has decided to utilize the building in fund raising by establishing in the building a volunteer-operated restaurant, a gift shop and re-sale shop on the ground floor. All profits will help sustain the agency's child care services at other outposts throughout the city. Preliminary designs for remodeling the first floor have been drawn up, and the final plan will be done by someone sensitive to restoring historic buildings. The preliminary plan would involve no changes to the exterior other than the possible addition of a canopied door at the center of the rear of the building. Inside, the main entry hall would be opened up by extending the hall from the front to the rear of the building. The gift shop would be located on the north side of the entry hall, and part of an interior wall would be removed to make room for it. A closet and bathroom would be removed from the room just to the south of the entry hall in order to enlarge the dining area in the restaurant. To make room for the re-sale shop, a toilet room in the north wing would be removed, as would the wall dividing this bathroom from the rest of the north wing. The ramp in the center of the building would be replaced by stairs. Two restrooms would be added at the rear of the building on either side of the extended hall. Children will continue to be cared for in the day care facility on the second floor of the building. An exhibit will be installed in the building to show the history of the Nursery and other programs of the Albertina Kerr Center for Children. The adaptive renovation plans are merely in the preliminary concept phase.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
—PREHISTORIC	—ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	—COMMUNITY PLANNING	—LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	—RELIGION
—1400-1499	—ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	—CONSERVATION	—LAW	—SCIENCE
—1500-1599	—AGRICULTURE	—ECONOMICS	—LITERATURE	—SCULPTURE
—1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	—EDUCATION	—MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
—1700-1799	—ART	—ENGINEERING	—MUSIC	—THEATER
—1800-1899	—COMMERCE	—EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	—PHILOSOPHY	—TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	—COMMUNICATIONS	—INDUSTRY	—POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	—OTHER (SPECIFY)
		—INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Johnson, Parker and Wallwork Architects

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Albertina Kerr Nursery built on Portland's East Side in 1921, is important to the city of Portland as an early center for the care of venereally diseased mothers. It was an outgrowth of the pioneering social work of William Gordon McLaren and others involved in the Pacific Coast Rescue and Protective Society. The nursery was named in honor of Albertina Kerr, second wife of the benefactor, Alexander Kerr, founder of the Kerr Glass Manufacturing Company. Moreover, the building is significant as an example of polished period architecture in the "Georgian" vein by a noted Portland firm, Johnson, Parker and Wallwork.

The history of Albertina Kerr Nursery was integral to the development of child care in the West, and the building is symbolic of the orphanage type of care. Within the building medical care was offered that was not equaled by Waverly Baby Home or Providence Nursery, the other major child-care institutions in Portland. Albertina Kerr was the main facility for caring for venereally diseased mothers and children. Through the Nursery medical program, interns from the University of Oregon Medical School and graduate nurses were sent to Albertina Kerr for practical training, thus accounting for the high quality of care at the Nursery. The Nursery extended its services beyond the child to work with families--probably partly as a result of a deep religious focus which stressed family stability--and provided temporary child care until children were able to return to their families. The latter was equivalent to present-day shelter care. Unusual among child care agencies, Albertina Kerr Nursery stressed education. A kindergarten was started at the Nursery in 1933. Classes were always part of the curriculum at the Louise Home, and the Wynne Watts School, established in 1933, was one of the very first publically funded special schools in the state. Because need always outran the facilities, the Nursery provided a precedent for, and perhaps was the start of foster care in Oregon. Some children, especially older ones, were placed in private residences at an early period. Through W.G. McLaren's leadership, the Nursery work was not confined to Portland, but established programs throughout Oregon. The Nursery offered a unique combination of quality medical and family care. Albertina Kerr is the most exemplary of orphanage-like institutions in Oregon and should be preserved because it is an attractive building with unusual facilities that link a present child care agency to its past role in the community.

Among the people most significant in the history of Albertina Kerr Nursery were Albertina Kerr, Alexander Kerr and William G. McLaren. Albertina Kerr was the second wife of Alexander Hewitt Kerr (1862-1925), who organized the Kerr Glass Manufacturing Company in 1902. Kerr moved West from Philadelphia and operated a wholesale grocery business in Portland for a time. The finance offices of his glass manufacturing plant famous for its canning jars were located in Portland from the 1890s into the 1930s. Mr. Kerr married Albertina in 1910; she died of typhoid fever several months after the birth of their son and little more than a year after their marriage. In 1912 Alexander Kerr relocated corporate headquarters to Chicago. He gave the use of his West Side Portland home to the

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Jane Richardson, Anne Joachim and Ann Robinson of Albertina Kerr Center for Children. Historical records at Albertina Kerr Nursery, including Commons Voice, (a publication of the Pacific Coast Rescue and Protective Society) 1921 dedication issue; memo about W.G. McLaren; and Alexander H. Kerr's obituary.  
 Kenneth Legge, architect: phone interview, October 1978.  
 Margaret Parker: interview, October 1978.  
 Fred Hutchinson: interview by Anne Joachim, February 1979.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY ca. 1 acre  
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1,0	5,2,7,9,6,0	5,0,4,1,2,6,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots One (1), Two (2), Fractional Lot Three (3), Lot Six (6), and Lot Five (5); all in Block Two (2), Darch Addition to the City of Portland, and also a tract of land described as follows, to wit: Beginning at the Southeast corner of said Lot Five (5), in said Block Two (2), Darch Addition to the City of Portland, thence East Fifty (50) Feet, thence North One Hundred Fifteen (115) Feet, thence West Fifty (50) Feet, thence South One Hundred Fifteen (115) Feet, to the point of beginning.

### LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE	
Sarah Munro	
ORGANIZATION	DATE
Albertina Kerr Center for Children	February 12, 1979
STREET & NUMBER	TELEPHONE
2307 N.E. Flanders	232-1988
CITY OR TOWN	STATE
Portland	Oregon 97232

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL \_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_ LOCAL X

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 *David G. Walker*  
 TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer  
 DATE June 25, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
<i>Coral Shull</i>	DATE 8-29-79
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
ATTEST: <i>W. Ray Luce</i>	DATE 8/29/79
for	KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Pacific Coast Rescue and Protective Society with the request that the mission start a home for abandoned babies and infants whose mothers had to work. In 1920 Kerr provided the money to purchase the property for the present Nursery building on NE 22nd Avenue and made a large donation toward the building and equipment. The Kerr family has continued to play an important role in the programs of the Nursery.

William Gordon McLaren (died 1946) was another person who played a significant role in Albertina Kerr Nursery. Originally from Scotland, he eventually settled in Oregon, where he began to work to promote humane policies in Oregon prisons and to change state penal laws. In 1907 he started a mission for homeless men and a year later opened the Louise Home for girls (originally on the West Side at 373 Cable Street, and on NE 162nd after 1915), which cared for pregnant and venereally diseased girls. The Pacific Coast Rescue and Protective Society, a non-profit corporation, was formed in 1907 and incorporated on December 14, 1909 by McLaren, Fred Voget and T.O. Sands. The Albertina Kerr Nursery became part of this Society after December 1912. The Pacific Coast Rescue and Protective Society was changed to the Pacific Protective Society in 1928. The Society included branches in Washington and California and was under the executive leadership of McLaren. In 1940 the Society was reorganized so that each branch obtained local autonomy, and the Oregon institutions were grouped under the Oregon Protective Society, renamed the Albertina Kerr Homes in 1947 and then Albertina Kerr Center for Children in 1974.

The Albertina Kerr Nursery building was constructed for, and always has been used to provide direct services to children. After the building was closed to boarding children, a variety of parent-child services were housed there, and a day-care center continues to operate on the second floor. Children were boarded at the Nursery from its opening in 1921 until 1967, when institutional care for children was being phased out in Oregon. The original residential character of the neighborhood has been maintained since the building was constructed. As one of the older significant buildings in the vicinity, the building has become a focal point in the neighborhood. The future of the building depends upon finding an alternate use to institutional child care facilities. Under the present plan of remodeling the first floor and establishing a volunteer-operated restaurant, gift shops and re-sale shops, the building will retain its character and style but will again be a useful part of the child care agency, serving both as a symbol of the period of institutional child care and as a profitable enterprise for the Albertina Kerr Center for Children.

The architectural firm of Johnson, Parker and Wallwork was started in Portland by Folger Johnson, who moved to Oregon from Georgia; Jamieson Parker, and Carl H. Wallwork, who was primarily an engineer. The firm disbanded in 1928. Johnson eventually went to work for the Public Works Administration and, during the Depression, Parker became an administrator for the Federal Housing Administration. Johnson was the architect for

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for the Town Club and Racquet Club in Portland. Parker designed the "Georgian" First Unitarian Church, which is on the National Register, and St. Mark's Episcopal Church. The only variation from the plans (dated February 14 and 17, 1920) was that a third story balustrade was never constructed. The building cost \$63,200.