

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

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **MAY 9 1985**
date entered **JUN 6 1985**

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

1. Name

historic Frye, J. O., House

and/or common Fariss House

2. Location

street & number 2997 SW Fairview Blvd. N/A not for publication

city, town Portland N/A vicinity of First Congressional District

state Oregon code 41 county Multnomah code 051

3. 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 type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Marcus Clark Thrane, Administrator, Halecroft

street & number 2103 De La Vina

city, town Santa Barbara N/A vicinity of state California 93105

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Multnomah County Courthouse

street & number 1021 SW 4th Avenue

city, town Portland state Oregon 97204

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title City of Portland
Historic Resource Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980-83 federal state county local

depository for survey records Bureau of Buildings, City of Portland

city, town Portland state Oregon 97204

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The J. O. Frye House, constructed in the English Cottage style, is located in the affluent Arlington Heights neighborhood in Portland's West Hills. This 1½ story brick veneer residence was constructed for speculation by local builder and developer Jeter O. Frye in 1930. It displays not only the characteristic rolled eaves, low massing, and small paned windows of this picturesque style, but also Frye's own eccentric details. This highly visible local landmark retains a high degree of interior and exterior integrity.

This single, detached, L-shaped house is situated at the south end of Block 18, Lot 9, Arlington Heights Addition to Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, facing Fairview Blvd. and lying quite close to Lafayette Place, which cuts off the southwest corner of the lot. The 1½ story, 22' x 42' main mass of the house lies across the short dimension of the lot, parallel to Fairview Blvd. The 20' wide leg of the L projects 25' forward and contains the living room with its vaulted ceiling. As a result of the steep slope of the lot from front to back, the level of the main floor is somewhat below the street level of Fairview Blvd., contributing to the house's ground-hugging appearance in front, while a daylight basement faces the back yard.

The continuous concrete foundation supports frame construction and a brick veneer. The roof is clad with composition shingles, which appears to have been the original roofing material. Both ends of the main section roof are hipped with inset dormers. The entire ridge and the eaves of the living room gable are rounded over a broad radius, giving the roof a massive appearance.

Apart from the roof, the most prominent features of the house are the leaded windows in the form of spider webs, for which the house is sometimes called the "Spider House," of "Spider Web House." One circular spider web window appears in the living room gable, just below the rolled eaves. The three others are in a cylindrical dormer over the entry and stair hall. Other windows are small paned steel casement.

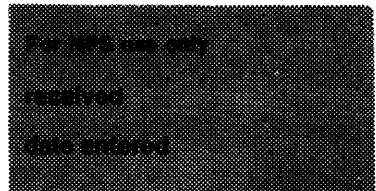
Various odd details further demonstrate Frye's individual treatment of this house. The exterior brickwork includes several projecting black clinkers for variety and rustication, and on the gabled end of the living room, the surfaces of the red bricks carry a diagonal pattern. The chimney, fireplaces, and other features incorporate various outcroppings, ranging from large, free-form projections to individual projecting headers and bricks placed obliquely at square corners. The garage door and the curved front door are made of vertical, random width, log-shaped wood. Carefully placed rocks surround a small pond by the entry. The adjacent lot was part of the original property, but a fence has separated it from the nominated area for several years and its use is independent of the nominated property.

The rooms are arranged around the circular entry and stairway at the re-entrant corner of the L. The rooms on the main floor are typically divided by a few steps. The wall finish is a rough textured plaster. Extensive wrought iron work is found in the stair rails, door hardware, curtain hardware, and lighting fixtures. Doorways and interior wall openings are typically arched.

The living room features a plastered fireplace with brown glazed tile and hand carved wood. The round spider window is set into a deep circular cavity with four peaked notches. Two hollow "beams" span the vaulted ceiling and contain up-lights. They are built up

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from dimensioned lumber which has been adzed and stained dark. Two bookcases feature the spider design in their leaded doors. A small balcony with hand carved supports projects from the second floor hallway.

The basement contains an inside swimming pool which has long been covered over with a floor, since the humidity from the pool deteriorated the plaster on the walls. The family room located below the living room features a large brick fireplace, again with many odd projections, and niches with decorative bases set into the concrete foundation.

The most interesting feature of the three-bedroom upper floor is the bathroom, which contains many Frye innovations. A large amount of random-sized, glazed brown tile covers the floor and lower portion of the walls and bathtub. The towel bars and towel hooks match the tiles. The layout is symmetrical, with curved alcoves on either side of the door containing the shower and w.c. Arched cabinets flank the central projecting bathtub, which features a ceramic faucet in the shape of a frog.

Alterations have been minimal - a garage extension, updated kitchen, and some plumbing changes. Their effect is minimal, and Frye's original romantic concept and details survive intact and in excellent condition.

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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1930 **Builder/Architect** J. O. Frye

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The J. O. Frye House, located at 2997 SW Fairview Boulevard, in Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, was constructed in the English Cottage style as speculative housing by local architect/contractor Jeter O. Frye in 1930. Situated in the Arlington Heights neighborhood, the house is on a fairly active arterial and, because of its distinctive leaded window treatments, is widely known in the community as the "Spider House" or "Spider Web House." Its significance to the city has been enhanced through its high ranking in the recently-completed, city-wide, historic resources inventory, and through its general exposure to the public in a recently published layman's guide to historic architectural styles in Oregon.

American fascination with picturesque architectural styles in domestic buildings was manifest largely after World War I, and their proliferation paralleled other new expressions of cultural change in the optimistic generation of the 20s. Many of the stylistic inspirations could have come from returning veterans, who spent time in Britain and France during the War. At any rate, the distinguishing characteristics of each period revival style were then formularized and mass-produced for American consumption.

The J. O. Frye House fits into this genre and meets eligibility Criterion "c" as one of the finest examples of the English Cottage style house in Portland. Character-defining features include the dominant gable roof with rolled eaves, eyebrow dormer, and window recesses; tall, wide chimney with multiple flue; small-paned casement windows; clinker brick; intersecting volumes; whimsical "spider web" leaded windows; interiors featuring wrought iron, arched openings, plaster walls, glazed tile and carved wood.

The property is equally significant under Criterion "c" as a notable example of Jeter O. Frye's limited architectural output. Working through the Twenties, Mr. Frye erected a number of fine period revival style houses, none more remarkable than the Canterbury Castle, a stylistically eccentric stone edifice that eventually drove him into bankruptcy during the Great Depression (1930).

Period revivals gained popularity during the 1920s as America searched for houses which reflected the exuberance of the times more than the formal Classical Revival or the staid American Foursquare, without becoming as frivolous as the late Victorian styles. Many styles were imitated, and throughout the country, one can still find reproductions of Norman farmhouses, Cotswold cottages, "Hansel and Gretel" cottages, American Colonial houses, Spanish Colonial missions, Medieval castles, French Renaissance mansions, and many others.

The English Cottage was one of the more popular styles. As suburbs became more popular, Americans sought detached houses on their own plots of land, surrounded by lush gardens. The English tradition of country houses, from baronial estates to humble cottages, in particular, were influenced by their vernacular English antecedents which were glorified by William Morris' Arts and Crafts movement, which emphasized hand crafting and natural

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Portland, Or - Wash.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 10 5225810 51041071210
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification The J. O. Frye House occupies Lot 9 of Block 18, Arlington Heights, Addition to the City of Portland, located in the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 32, Township 1 North, Range 1 East of the Willamette Meridian, Multnomah County, Oregon.

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

state None code county code

state None code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Charles E. Pritchard and Allen T. Denison

organization N/A date November 27, 1984

street & number 2030 SW Vista Avenue telephone (503) 227-4449

city or town Portland state Oregon 97201

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national state X local

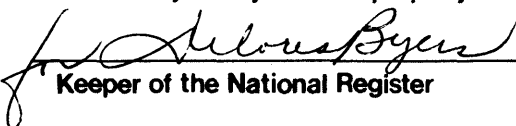
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date March 19, 1985

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


Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

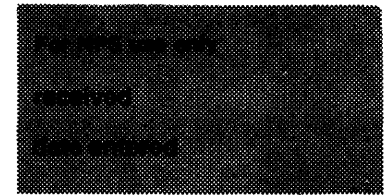
date 6-6-85

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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materials in reaction to the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century. Ironically, these houses had become so popular by the 1920s that they were mass produced throughout the country.

Often the most prominent feature of these houses was the large roof with rolled eaves. They were intended to imitate thatched roofs, and were often made of steamed cedar shingles bent either across the grain or with the grain, as appropriate. The shingle butts were cut at angles and laid on the roof in waving courses. Many colors and shapes were available from various manufacturers. A less sophisticated roof could be shingled in in composition shingles, but in either case, the extra framing and custom fitting necessitated by the rounded shape made this type of roof expensive. The great mass of the roof gave the house a humble, sheltered, homey feeling.

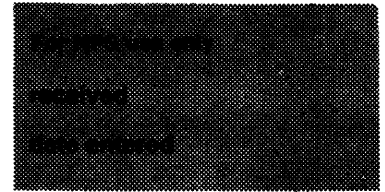
Even though many of these houses were built, the tradition of hand crafting was not entirely lost. In addition to the individual effort necessary for the roof, many details were often hand crafted. These are demonstrated to a great degree in the Frye House. Most houses built for speculation were built as simply as possible in the most universally accepted manner in hopes of a quick resale. Defying convention, Frye included many extra-cost details, and found a buyer who apparently appreciated these labor intensive features. The rounded walls and arches, hand fitted masonry protrusions, random pattern tile, and wrought iron all exemplify hand craftsmanship in a surprising quantity. Frye seemed to do all he could to make this house as unique, rustic, and charming as possible.

Most of what we can determine about Frye himself exists in his houses and property records. At various times, he listed himself in the city directory as "mechanic," "contractor," "builder," "carpenter," and "building contractor." He was apparently involved in the development of Collegiate Heights, just to the northeast of Reed College. He and his wife built and occupied a modest house there in 1924, and he opened a planing mill nearby. As he built more houses, his tastes became more flamboyant. In the late 1920s, he built a series of small Spanish Mission Revival houses and an English Cottage, all near 43rd and Liebe Street. He also built an English Cottage a few blocks to the west on Liebe Street. He occupied some of the houses as his own residence, but he built some on speculation, and others as a contractor for owners. In 1929, he and his wife bought the nominated property in Arlington Heights and started construction of the house, again for speculation. Fred A. Blackmore, a Portland dentist, purchased the unfinished house for his residence on December 16, 1929, shortly after the stock market crash which marks the beginning of the Great Depression. Frye completed the house the following May at a total cost of \$7000.

At about the same time, Frye worked on two other homes in Arlington Heights. He was hired to build a somewhat conservative English Cottage next to the Blackmore's house, and he constructed his most ambitious speculative project, Canterbury Castle. The Castle seems to have ended Frye's construction career. With the deepening depression, Frye could not sell the house, and in September, 1930, his suppliers and subcontractors attached liens to the house for over \$20,000. Frye stayed in Portland until 1937. He returned to Canterbury Castle around 1970, but the owners were out at the time, and he never returned.

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Continuation sheet

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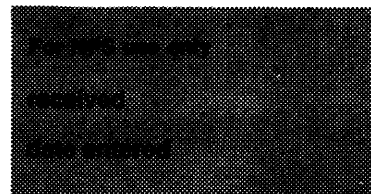
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Frye's houses share many similarities. Two other English Cottages have large rolled eaves drooping over a prominent gable with a round window, two with a "spider web" pattern. The stucco on the exterior of his Spanish Mission houses resembles the interior walls of the nominated house. One house exhibits an exterior deep around cavity with four notches similar to one on the interior of the nominated house. The same house has two exterior concrete decorations similar to the bases of the niches in the basement of the nominated house. Both Canterbury Castle and the nominated house have an inside swimming pool, circular stairs, arched doorways, round nooks, varied levels, and decorative brown tile.

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Continuation sheet J. O. FRYE HOUSE Item number 9 Page 1

Clark, Rosalind. Oregon Style: Architecture from 1840 to the 1950s. Professional Book Center, Inc., Portland, Oregon, 1983.

Historic Resources Inventory, City of Portland. Inventory #0-271-02997.

City of Portland Buildings Bureau microform and card files.