

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Whidden-Kerr House and Garden
other names/site number "High Hatch Estate"

2. Location

street & number 11648 SW Military Lane N/A not for publication
city, town Portland vicinity
state Oregon code OR county Multnomah code 051 zip code 97219

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>2</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> Total

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

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official [Signature] Date June 2, 1988
Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. Patrick Anderson 10/13/88
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single family

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single family

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century
American Movements/Prairie School

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls stucco

roof wood/shingle

other chimneys/brick

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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The Whidden/Kerr residence and garden occupies an irregularly shaped site with a sloping grade to the north, south and east sides. The property is situated in the exclusive residential neighborhood now known as Dunthorpe in southwest Portland. The Dunthorpe neighborhood is located on the western bluffs of the Willamette River. Among the more impressive aspects of the house and gardens are the magnificent views in all directions from each room in the house. The residence, designed by Portland architects Whidden & Lewis, is an excellent example of Prairie style architecture showing Colonial Revival influences in the formal entry and interior details. The gardens are laid out in a combination of formality and informality. The site has been manipulated considerably to achieve this appearance, and it is presumed the less formal gardens were designed under the Thomas Kerr family's occupancy of the property. The gardens can be divided into five major areas surrounding the house with the most formal and oldest garden leading up to the south facade of the building, which was the original entry. Alterations to the residence occurred in the 1950s under the direction of architect Thornton Ladd.

SITE-GARDENS

1. The approach to the front door was originally by way of a walkway which extended to the west side of the house. There was originally a turn-around drive located south of the present entry drive. The front of the house looks out over a large rectangular lawn flanked by two large Irish yews, probably original. The land slopes away gradually to a rectangular pool. Two large weeping cherries are located beyond the pool at another lower grade. A concrete balustrade covered with honeysuckle and Virginia creeper separates the pool area from the sharp drop to the area below. The property continues at this grade to a row of firs which mark the southern property line. Walking paths weave throughout the lower landscaped area.

The pool is accessible from the original front door by way of two walks which extend to the east and west and turn at a 90° angle south towards the pool. At the juncture of this path on the southeast side of the house sits a large, bronze, 17th century Japanese Buddha, thought to have been added to the grounds in the 1940s or 1950s when the house was remodeled under Thomas Kerr, Jr.'s ownership. At the southwest juncture of the path is an arched, ivy-covered opening. The path to the west continues beyond this opening, flanked on either side by lilac bushes, to border the southern edge of the rose garden which is located to the west of the house. The path which turns and continues toward the pool is lined with carefully pruned crabapple trees.

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2. The rose garden is located to the south of the driveway on the west building facade and contains approximately 75 rose plants, mostly hybrid tea roses and floribundas. The layout is oval shaped.
3. To the north of the driveway is an informal rock garden laid with granite pavers and cobblestones used as ballast for the Kerr grain ships. Large rhododendrons provide a backdrop to this garden along the northern property line.
4. An entrance garden, shielded from the driveway by a stucco wall, was added in the 1950s. Located on the northwest corner of the house, a formal Japanese style garden consists of a lily pond, formal paved brick entrance, a stellata magnolia, and a large wisteria (older than the 1950s) which frames the kitchen entrance. Both the main entrance to the house, the kitchen entrance, and the basement stairs are located in this corner.
5. On the northern building facade, where the kitchen is located, is a large brick and glass greenhouse and a cement cold frame. The grade drops sharply beyond the cold frame on the northeastern corner of the house.

A walking path borders the northern property line and continues beyond the property behind the neighboring house. A grove of firs lines the edge of the property on the eastern building facade.

EXTERIOR - BUILDING

The house is regular in plan with two floors, an attic, a basement, and a hipped roof with flared eaves. It is covered with a gray, coarse stucco and the wood trim is painted white. Two large brick chimneys flank either end of the original primary building facade. Another brick chimney is located on the north side. Five hipped roof dormers, three on the south side and two on the north, project from the roof line. All windows are one-over-one, double-hung wood sash with the exception of a large picture window in the dining room and a casement window in the stairwell. Three sets of windows on the first floor are one-over-one, double-hung sash in bays of three and have a triangular design between each window.

Currently the house is covered with old vines: Virginia creeper, wisteria, honeysuckle actonitia, and ivy; and the mature landscaping surrounding the house obscures many vantage points.

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Section number 7 Page 3West Elevation

The west facade, which now serves as the main entrance to the house, is approached by a drive which is flanked by the rose garden to the south and the garage and rock garden to the north. The wall of the west facade is entirely covered with vines. Two windows are located on each floor. To the north of this wall is a one-story hipped roof pavillion with flared eaves and a stucco wall added in the 1950s. A Japanese styled entrance garden leads to the present main doorway to the house on the north wall.

North Elevation

This facade is L-shaped and covered with vines. Three windows are located on the second floor and double-hung sash windows (in bays of three) are located on the ground floor. The front door, which was added in the 1950s' remodel is set into this wall. Next to this doorway is a stucco wall approximately five feet in height which conceals the basement stairs. The kitchen doors are located at a 90° angle to the front door and are covered by a one-story arbor. The eastern portion of the north facade consists of an exterior chimney, two windows on the second floor, and a small dormer. The greenhouse and cold frame sit very close to the building on this facade. The current owners plan to restore the greenhouse.

East Elevation

The east elevation is the most difficult to gain access to due to the sharp drop in grade very near the building. A narrow path winds around this side and connects with the more formal paths on the south elevation. This elevation consists of a large picture window on the first floor, a basement entrance, and one-over-one windows on the second floor. The southern half of this elevation is a projecting bay with open air balconies on the first and second floors.

South Elevation

This elevation, though now considered a rear or side elevation, was originally the primary facade. It is still the grandest facade in terms of its symmetrical presentation and its visibility from the pool/garden area. This facade consists of three bays with projecting wings on each end and three dormers. The first floor central bay, which is slightly recessed, consists of French doors (newly added to replace sliders), flanked by triple one-over-one windows. The second floor consists of six one-over-one windows, two per bay. Each wing is

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slightly recessed and contains smaller one-over-one windows except on the east end where the open porch is located. A patio extends from the French doors covered by a large awning. A low cement wall runs along the edge of the patio shielding it from a sharp drop in grade to the garden beyond. Steps on either side of the French doors lead down alongside the building and turn at a 90° angle to continue along a path to the pool. Steps also lead down from the open porch on the eastern end of this elevation connecting with the path leading to the pool.

INTERIORFirst Floor

The overall floor plan is symmetrical with the exception of a projecting wing on the west side. The first floor consists of a central foyer flanked on either side by two large rooms. The formal staircase is located at the back wall of the foyer. The four rooms laid out symmetrically on the first floor are designated living room, dining room, sun room, and study. The projecting wing on the north side of the building contains the kitchen, butler's pantry, and pass hall. The original, formal entrance was altered in the 1950s by architect Thornton Ladd and owner Thomas Kerr, Jr.

Foyer

The foyer looks out over the formal garden to the south through French doors flanked by fixed light panels which were recently added by the current owners to replace the sliding glass doors added in the 1950s. Historical photographs of the house show the original entrance as a framed, recessed porch enclosure supported by two boxed columns. The front door was solid wood, flanked by two fixed single pane windows. The flooring is wood parquet. Brick flooring covers about one-half to one-third of the foyer floor indicating the original entrance location which has now been incorporated into the interior. The walls are painted wood panel and the ceilings are painted wood beams. Silver metal sconces flank either side of the central opening. The existing main entrance is now located to the west of the staircase. The staircase, set on a platform, has oak treads, painted turned balusters and newel posts. The original newel posts were replaced in the 1950s and now reflect the Japanese influence in the oriental carved wood patterns. A large crystal light fixture is located at the top of the stairs. A large casement window is located on the west wall of the stairwell. Walls are painted wood paneling. Doors leading to all four rooms off the foyer are pocket doors.

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The living room is located to the right of the current main entrance (southwest corner). Its one-over-one windows in bays of three look out at the lily pond and magnolia tree. A single one-over-one window faces the driveway. The room has a painted beamed ceiling, four brass wall sconces which appear to be original, wood parquet floors, and a fireplace of painted wood and black marble. The fireplace mantle and hearth are from the 1950s remodeling.

Dining Room

The dining room is located on the northeast corner of the house. It contains the only picture window in the house. This window, which looks to the north, was altered in the 1950s from the one-over-one windows in bays of three typical throughout the house. The painted wood paneling is a vertical pattern, the ceiling is painted wood beam, and the floors are parquet. The wood and black marble fireplace dates from the 1950s remodeling. A large crystal chandelier, thought to be original, hangs in the center of the room. Doors from the dining room lead to the open porch and the butler's pantry.

Sun Room

Located on the northeast corner of the house, the sun room contains the only original, unaltered fireplace on the ground floor. It has a painted wood mantle and a brick fireplace surround and hearth. The mantle has delicate classical proportions in contrast to the wider, simplified proportions of the altered 1950s fireplaces. The one-over-one double-hung windows in a bay of three look to the east at the formal garden and pool below. A glass paneled door leads to the open porch. Walls are plaster with coved ceilings and crown molding, and floors are parquet.

Study

Located at the southwest corner of the house, the study is covered in black walnut paneling, the ceiling is wood beam, and the 1950s fireplace is beige marble. The one-over-one double-hung sash windows face the formal garden, and a doorway on the south wall leads to a powder room with two one-over-one windows facing the stairway. The bath fixtures were recently added.

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Kitchen

The kitchen can be reached through the pass hall, dining room (via butler's pantry), and the lily pond garden area on the southwest end of the building. The large kitchen is equipped with metal cabinets (1950s), double French doors which open to the lily pond garden, and one-over-one windows which look north and west. The pass hall is located to the north of the stairs and connects the foyer with the kitchen and servants' stairs.

SECOND FLOOR

The second floor plan is symmetrical with a projecting west wing.

Hall

A wide central hall runs on a north/south axis with a bedroom at each end and two bedrooms off the east wall of the hall. Each bedroom has its own bath. A linen closet and storage room are located off the west wall. Servants quarters are located in the west wing of the building, and stairs to the attic are located at the north end of the hall. The hall has one remaining original brass wall sconce on the east wall, plaster walls, simple wide wood base molding and door trim, and soft fir floors. All doors are paneled wood.

South Bedroom

Located at the south end of the hall, this bedroom has a 1950s gray marble fireplace, fir floors, plaster walls and ceiling, two one-over-one windows facing south and east. The adjoining bath has been recently retiled.

Southeast Bedroom

Two one-over-one windows face east in this bedroom. The room has plaster walls, fir flooring, and an adjoining bath with a south facing window. The 1950s fireplace is white marble.

Master Suite

Facing south, two one-over-one windows look out at the formal garden-pool area from this master bedroom. The adjoining dressing room to the north also contains two one-over-one windows facing east and a 1950s white marble fireplace. The dressing room is equipped with a multitude of built-in shelving and closet space. Walls and ceiling

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are plaster and floors are fir. To the north and adjoining the dressing room is the master bath which was recently retiled. Off this master bath is the second floor open porch with views to the north.

North Bedroom

This bedroom contains the only unaltered fireplace on the second floor. It is red brick with a wood mantle similar to that in the first floor sun room. Three one-over-one windows face north. The adjoining bath also contains a north facing window. Walls and ceiling are plaster and floors are fir.

Servants Quarters

Stair and landing for the servants quarters have chamfered newel posts, a plain rail and balusters. The walls in the stairwell and hall have beaded wood wainscoting. The ceiling is acoustical tiling in the hall. The servants quarters consist of a hallway, bath and two small rooms each with an original brass sconce, plaster walls, and fir floors. Each room has two one-over-one windows. One room faces southwest and the other northwest.

Basement and Attic

The basement is a full cement basement which has been divided into numerous rooms. The attic is a larger undivided area with five dormers, three on the east wall and two on the west wall. Views from these dormer windows are excellent.

Carriage House/Garage

The former carriage house, an original feature of the home dating from 1901, is now used as a garage with living quarters on the second story. It is a wood frame structure located just off Military Lane, at the west edge off the property. The building is rectangular in plan, covered by a hip roof with flared eaves. Two dormers with bell cast gable roofs and wooden sash windows are located on the south side of the roof. The cupola, topped by a spire, is a noteworthy feature which rises above the roof line. The garage has shiplap siding on the upper portion of the building. The lower portion of the building is covered with wooden shingles. The windows, 8/2 wooden sash, are covered by trellises of lilies, roses, and foxglove. The building has had many functions, serving at one time as a gardener's cottage, a school, and now houses a garage. The main entry drive leading to the Whidden/Kerr residence, located to the south of the cottage, is flanked by two brick posts, capped by cast stone ornaments. There was originally a turn-around drive located to the south of the present drive. This change in entry was probably a change that occurred under the Kerr family occupancy.

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1901

Significant Dates

1901

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Whidden and Lewis, Architects

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

The Whidden-Kerr House and Garden occupies about an acre in Dunthorpe, an exclusive residential community adjacent to the Willamette River south of the city limits of Portland. It was designed by William Whidden in 1901. William M. Whidden (1875-1929) is well known in the annals of Oregon architecture as a principal in the firm of Whidden and Lewis, the preeminent firm at the turn of the century which designed Portland City Hall in addition to much fine residential work. Whidden had been an associate of McKim, Mead & White for a brief time as supervisor of the historic Portland Hotel project, thus accounting for his first appearance in Oregon in 1883.

The nominated area includes as its focal point the estate house, a formally composed, 2 1/2-story stucco-finished rectangular mass with hovering hipped roof having hipped roof dormers and sweeping, bellcast eaves, and exterior elevations in the Prairie School tradition. The house is significant under Criterion C as the best expression by the regionally-important architects of Prairie School design. Only the house designed by the firm for Walter J. Burrell is as clear-cut in its influence. The latter also was built in 1901, on Portland's East Side. The original weatherboard-clad and cupola-surmounted carriage house has a hipped roof with bellcast eaves and hip-roofed dormers mirroring that of the estate house. It is counted a separately-contributing feature. While the planting schemes of the garden were revised and elaborated by subsequent owners over the years, certain aspects of the layout reflect well today the tradition of Whidden's time. In its relationship to the principal facade, the south garden, especially, conveys the school of landscape design which epitomized the "Rational Modern Movement" of which Whidden and Lewis were exemplary practitioners. There, the terraces are laid out on a rigidly formal axis, centered on the front entrance and diminishing in elevation until they merge with the natural landscape. The open expanse of terraced lawn is contained by sidewalks and border plants and shrubs. A cross axial walk at the head of the uppermost terrace is anchored by yew trees offset from either corner of the house. The latter are staples of landscape design in the Italian Renaissance tradition, a predominant influence in early 20th century garden layout.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 1.19 acres Lake Oswego, Oregon 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	0
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5	2	7	3	1	0
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5	0	3	1	8	3	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated area is located in SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 35, Township 1S, Range 1E, Willamette Meridian, south of the City Limits of Portland, in Multnomah County, Oregon. It is legally described as Lot 1 of the High Hatch Estates subdivision at said location.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated area, an irregularly-shaped parcel 1.19 acres in size, encompasses the lot historically developed and occupied by the eminent Portland architect William M. Whidden from 1901 to 1911.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kimberly Demuth and Kimberly Lakin
 organization Northwest Heritage Property Associates date August 15, 1987
 street & number PO Box 1871 telephone (503) 227-6357
 city or town Portland state Oregon zip code 97207

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Whidden sold the estate to Scottish-born grain exporter Thomas Kerr, Sr. (1896-1925) in 1911, after which time the gardens were further developed by Kerr and his wife, the former Mabel Macleay, knowledgeable gardeners both. The estate was to be the setting of the momentous organization meeting of the Portland Garden Club in 1924, at which time Mrs. Kerr was elected the club's first president. "High Hatch" remained under ownership of the Kerr family for 75 years. Thomas Kerr, Sr. and his son and successor in ownership, Thomas Kerr, Jr., were principals in Kerr-Gifford and Co., the grain exporting firm which was established by the elder Kerr and his brother, Peter Kerr.

WILLIAM M. WHIDDEN (1857-1929)

William Whidden, born in 1857, a native of Boston, Massachusetts, had formal training in architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and later at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. In 1882, Whidden joined the firm McKim, Mead & White of New York. By the spring of 1883, Whidden visited Portland to supervise the construction of the Portland Hotel, which was a project awarded to McKim, Mead & White. The construction of the hotel was halted at the first story level due to a collapse of the railroads in 1883, and it did not resume until September 1888.

When William Whidden returned east, he did not go back to working for McKim, Mead & White. Instead, he formed a Partnership with schoolmate William E. Chamberlin, who had also worked for McKim, Mead & White, and established a practice in Boston (Chamberlin & Whidden). This partnership lasted until 1891, and during this time many of the firm's designs were published in the American Architect and other architectural journals.¹

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Whidden returned to Portland in 1888 when he was asked to resume supervision of the Portland Hotel project. It was taken over by a Portland syndicate who had purchased the unfinished building and asked McKim, Mead & White to oversee the completion of the project. McKim, Mead & White then turned the project over to Whidden's firm.² Ion Lewis, a friend and M.I.T. schoolmate of Whidden, visited Portland a year later and joined Whidden in partnership. The firm of Whidden and Lewis became well known in Portland for introducing eastern architectural styles such as the the Colonial Revival style to Portland.

The Portland Public Library was designed in 1891 after a similar design of the Boston Public Library by McKim, Mead & White. The Arlington Club was also built that year. Portland City Hall was designed a year later and Good Samaritan Hospital was designed and constructed in 1900. A lengthy but incomplete project list of the work of Whidden & Lewis compiled by Herb Fredricks shows that the firm was very successful for both residential and commercial projects. Lewis continued the practice for a number of years after Whidden retired in 1920.³

William Whidden is first listed in the Portland City Directory in 1889 as "Architect in charge of Portland Hotel residing at 261 11th Street." By 1891, Whidden was listed as residing at 475 F Street and had a business address of 46 and 50 Concord Building (designed by Whidden). His business address was listed at the Concord Building until 1909, when the firm moved to the Corbett Building.

HIGH HATCH ESTATE

Whidden resided on Johnson Street until 1898, when he moved to 20th Street. Portland City Directory records show that in 1902 he had moved to "High Hatch Estate" in Rivera or Riverwood where he and his wife, Alice Wygant, great-granddaughter of Dr. John McLoughlin, resided until 1911 when the house was sold to Thomas Kerr Sr. William Whidden died on July 28, 1929 at the age of 72. He was listed in the Portland City Directory as residing in the Mallory Hotel at this time. Jamieson Parker, president of AIA at this time, is quoted in Whidden's obituary: "Much of the excellence of the city's architecture of the period is due to him and Mr. Lewis. He came early and built well indeed."⁴

KERR FAMILY

The Whidden/Kerr residence and gardens is also significant for its association with the Thomas Kerr family who resided there from 1911 until 1987, when the property was sold to the Stevensons. Brothers Peter and Thomas Kerr were acquainted on both a personal and

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professional level with William Whidden. The Portland City Directory shows Peter Kerr residing and having a business in the Concord Building in 1893. Peter Kerr first came to Portland from Scotland in 1888 and had an office located in the Concord Building. Kerr's business was with Dewar and Webb, a London based importing firm.

THOMAS KERR, SR.

In 1896, Thomas Kerr, born in Newton, Scotland in 1865, came to Portland at his older brother's request to be in charge of the firm's Tacoma office. Soon after Thomas came to Portland, Patrick Gifford came from Scotland to join the Kerr brothers. By 1900, the company Kerr-Gifford was established. Gifford's involvement with the firm was brief; however, the firm name Kerr-Gifford lasted for many years until Peter sold the company in 1957. The firm of Kerr-Gifford rapidly became "synonymous with the worldwide grain trade as it affected the west coast..."⁵ Thomas Kerr served as director of Kerr-Gifford, maintaining contacts with all of the local and regional farmers.

Peter Kerr was one of the first to develop land just south of Portland on the west side of the Willamette River referred to as Rivera or Riverwood. He settled, with his brother Thomas and Pat Gifford, in a cottage in Rivera called "Cliff Cottage". In 1900, Thomas Kerr married Mabel Macleay, the daughter of Donald Macleay, founder of the U.S. National Bank and President of the Board of Trade. The couple resided at the Macleay house at 189 Lownsdale (now demolished) until 1911, when they purchased the Whidden estate on Military Lane known as "High Hatch". Three sons, Donald Macleay, Thomas Jr., and George were raised in the house. Thomas and Mabel were both active participants in Portland society. Thomas was a member of the Arlington Club and a charter member of the Waverly Club, two of the most prominent social clubs in Portland. He was also a member of the Foreign Trade Committee for the Chamber of Commerce and a director of the Columbia Pacific Shipping Company. Thomas's untimely death in 1925 left Peter solely in charge of the company. His wife Mabel lived for many years at "High Hatch" raising her sons and continuing in her social pursuits.

Both Thomas and Mabel were avid gardeners and in 1924, the Portland Garden Club was established on the formal front lawn of "High Hatch". Mrs. Mabel Kerr was voted first president of the garden club. She was also a life member and president of the Town Club and was the last surviving charter member of the Waverly Club until she died in 1973.

Thomas, Jr. eventually moved back to "High Hatch", after World War II, and resided there with his wife, Barbra Labbe Pooley. They raised three children in the house, Randy Labbe, Thomas Kerr III and

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Josephine. The current owners of the residence, Bruce and Susan Stevenson, recently purchased the property from Thomas Kerr III.

THOMAS KERR, JR.

Thomas Kerr, Jr. resided at "High Hatch" for many years. He left for war service in the Pacific and returned to the house to live with his bride, Barbra Pooley. Thomas first worked for his Uncle Peter at Kerr-Gifford, and eventually replaced Peter in 1950 as president of the company. Kerr-Gifford was bought out in 1953 by Cargill and in 1955, Thomas formed a new company, Kerr Grain.

Thomas Kerr, Jr. was more of a speculator than his uncle Peter. He invested in a number of business ventures, aside from the grain industry, some successful and some not. He was a likeable businessman who spent much of his time abroad, negotiating business ventures. His brother Andy once stated of Thomas, "By virtue of his force of personality, he created opportunities."⁶ It was under Thomas, Jr.'s ownership that the residence "High Hatch" went through some modifications. He hired Arthur Erfeldt, landscape architect, and Thornton Ladd, architect, to make alterations to "High Hatch". Thomas was also a collector of rare art objects, one of which is a lifesize buddha now located in the formal garden area of the estate.

Peter Kerr's daughter, Lady Ann (Kerr) McDonald, cousin to Thomas Kerr, Jr., recalled in a recent interview that Military Lane was a very pleasant place to spend one's childhood. The Kerrs and their neighbors were a small, close group. A school was formed for the children in the original carriage house of the Whidden/Kerr estate.⁷ This was the second Riverdale school house, according to Lady Ann McDonald. The building remains on the property today and is used as a garage with a small apartment above.

ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE

The Whidden/Kerr estate is significant in terms of its architecture and gardens. Though the house was remodeled in the 1950s, it retains its symmetry of plan as does the landscape. The changes made to the house and site have not compromised its significance as a Whidden-Lewis design. This early Whidden and Lewis design exhibits an interesting combination of the Prairie style of architecture with Colonial Revival style details and plan. One of the most notable aspects of the design is the manipulation of light and the spectacular views which are afforded from every window including the servants quarters.

Thornton Ladd was recognized for his architectural accomplishments as well as his interior design work. Although Ladd was not a licensed

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architect in Oregon, he was a licensed architect in California, according to the California Board of Examiners. He has resided in California for many years. His father, Thornton Ladd, Sr., son of William Ladd, resided in Dunthorpe for many years, and it is likely that Thornton, Jr. would have known Thomas Kerr, Jr. during the time that his family lived in the area.

No written documentation has been found to clarify who originally designed the grounds of "High Hatch". It is believed that the grounds were first laid out by Whidden in terms of site planning when the residence was designed.⁸

The formal relationship that still exists between the house and grounds was popular at the time Whidden was designing the residence. This was brought on by the popularity of the return to period architecture, as evidenced in the expositions such as the Columbian Exposition of 1893 and the Lewis and Clark Exposition in Portland of 1903. Norman Newton refers to this period as the "Country Place Era" in his book Design on the Land. Mr. Newton describes the collaboration between landscape architect and architect on country residences and refers to the influence of the Olmsted brothers as well as that of Charles Adams Platt. Several of Charles Platt's landscape designs can be compared to the "High Hatch" estate. It is the son of Frederick Law Olmsted who can be directly connected with the Kerr family. John Olmsted was hired by Peter Kerr in 1916 to design grounds for his new house in Rivera.⁹ It is very likely that John Olmsted also consulted with Thomas Kerr regarding "High Hatch", considering Thomas and his wife Mabel were keenly interested in landscape gardening.

The landscape is not easily documented in terms of the changes that have occurred over the period of the Kerrs' residency. One of the more unusual aspects of the grounds is the rock garden laid out to the north of the driveway. This area was definitely added by the Kerrs, as both Susan Stevenson and Lady Ann McDonald have noted that the large granite pavers and cobblestones were once ballasts for the Kerr's grain ships.¹⁰

Changes made to the landscape under Thomas Jr.'s ownership of the property are a bit more easily documented. Portland landscape architect, Arthur Erfeldt, remembers working with the Kerrs in the 1950s, though he no longer has drawings of his work on the grounds.¹¹

Arthur Erfeldt graduated from the University of Oregon in 1939 and opened his office in Portland shortly thereafter. He worked for the Army Corps of Engineers during the war. He then pursued graduate work in landscape architecture and planning at the Royal Academy in Sweden. In 1948, he reopened his architectural landscape practice in Portland which lasted until 1980. He completed many residential and

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commercial projects during this time and became the landscape architect for Lloyd Corporation through his work with the Lloyd Center in the 1960s.

Josephine Lowe, daughter of Thomas Kerr, Jr., remembers that the changes were made to the landscape under Erfeldt's direction in the 1950s, when Thornton Ladd was retained as an architect for the remodeling of the residence. When the front entrance was changed from the east to the west side of the house, a lily pond was added, and brick work leading to the new front door was installed. Though Mr. Erfeldt does not remember a swimming pool, Josephine (Kerr) Lowe spoke of the pool being added in 1957-58. Originally a large oak tree graced the area where the pool is now.

The current owners of the Whidden/Kerr residence wish to retain and restore the house and grounds. Susan Stevenson, a landscape designer, has an appreciation for the formal and informal landscape elements that still remain on the site. The grounds of the residence reflect the changes that were made to the house through the years in terms of what was vogue for the era. Both the changes to the landscape and building do not, however, compromise the integrity of the estate.

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END NOTES

- 1 Vertical Files, OHS; correspondence from George McMath to Richard Marlitt, 17 April 1987, p. 2.
- 2 Ibid., letter from G. McMath to R. Marlitt.
- 3 "Work of Whidden & Lewis" compiled in 1969 by Herb Fredricks, OHS, vertical files.
- 4 Oregonian, 28 July 1929, p. 15; Dimon, Elizabeth Fitzgibbon. 'Twas Many Years Since; 100 Years in the Waverly Area, 1847-1947.
- 5 Willamette Week, "Kerr: The House that Grain Built", by Mark Zusman, 6/15-6/21, 1982, p. 11.
- 6 Willamette Week, "Kerr: The House That Grain Built," Mark Zusman, p. 13.
- 7 Margaret Pietsch, Riverwood Yesterday and Today, Lake Grove Printing Co., Lake Oswego, OR, p. 124.
- 8 According to both Wallace Kay Huntington and George McMath, many architects working in Whidden's day designed both the residence and grounds initially.
- 9 MacColl, E. Kimbark. The Growth of a City - Power and Politics in Portland, Oregon, 1915-1950.
- 10 Interview with Lady Ann McDonald and Susan Stevenson.
- 11 Interview with Arthur Erfeldt.

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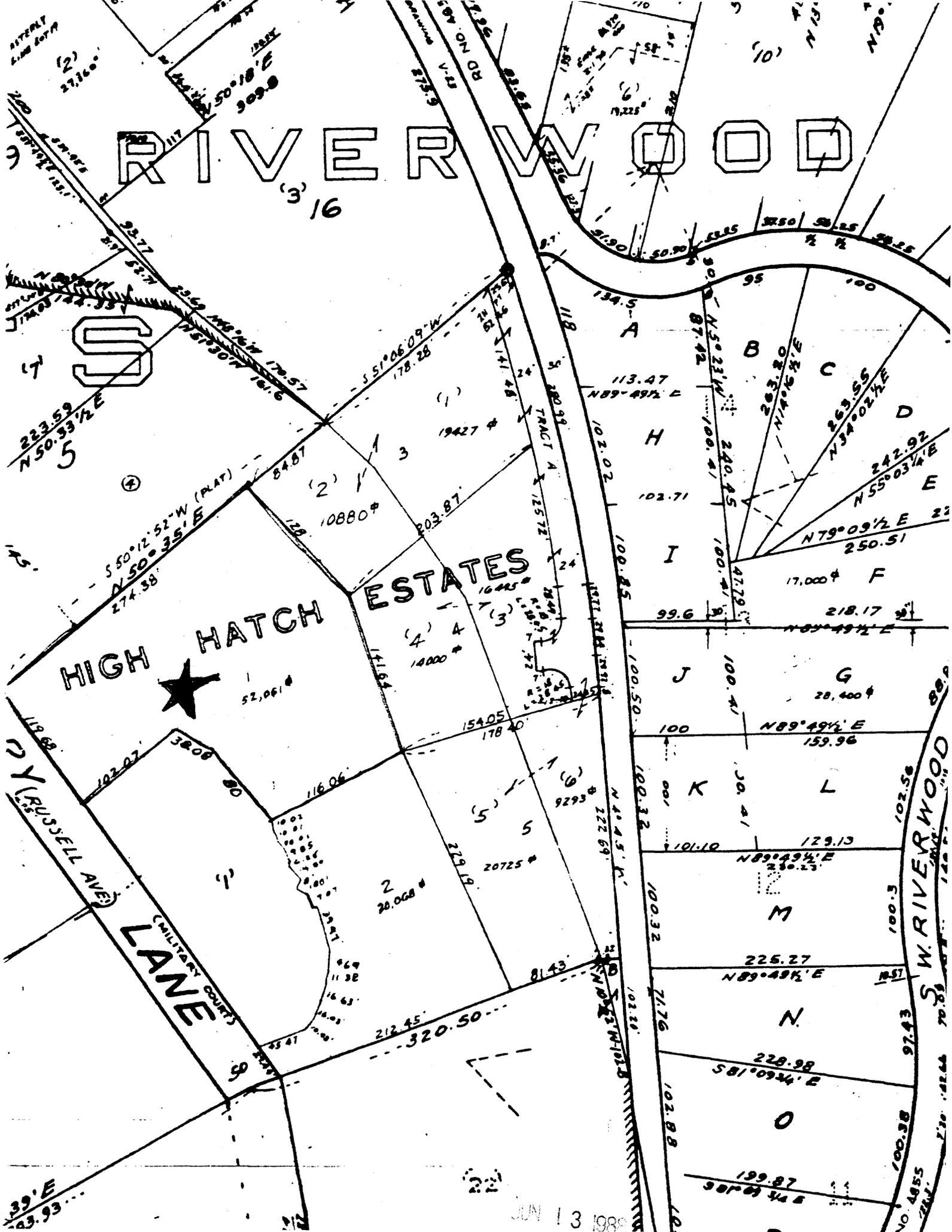
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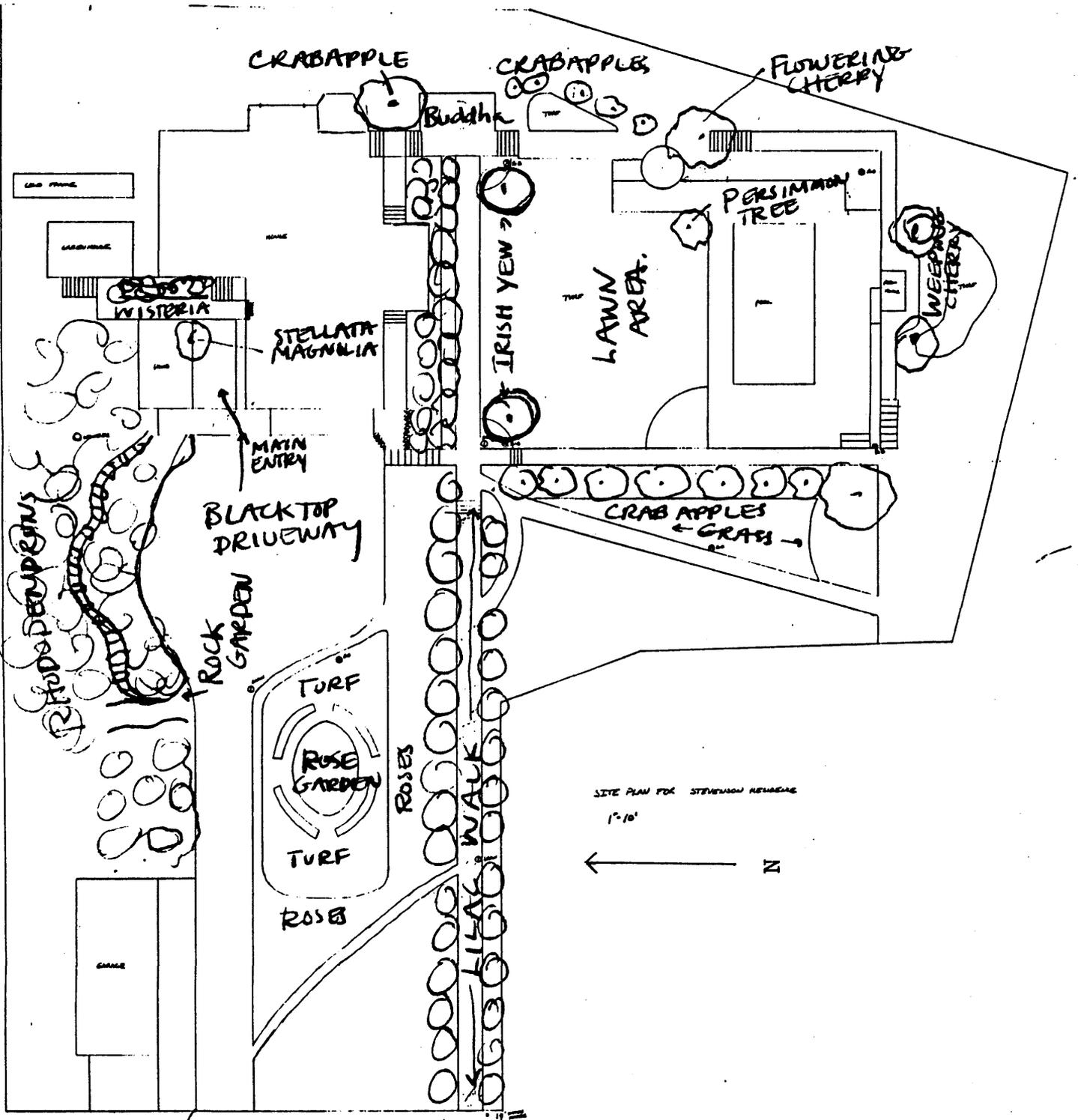
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RIVERWOOD



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SITE PLAN FOR STEVENSON RESIDENCE

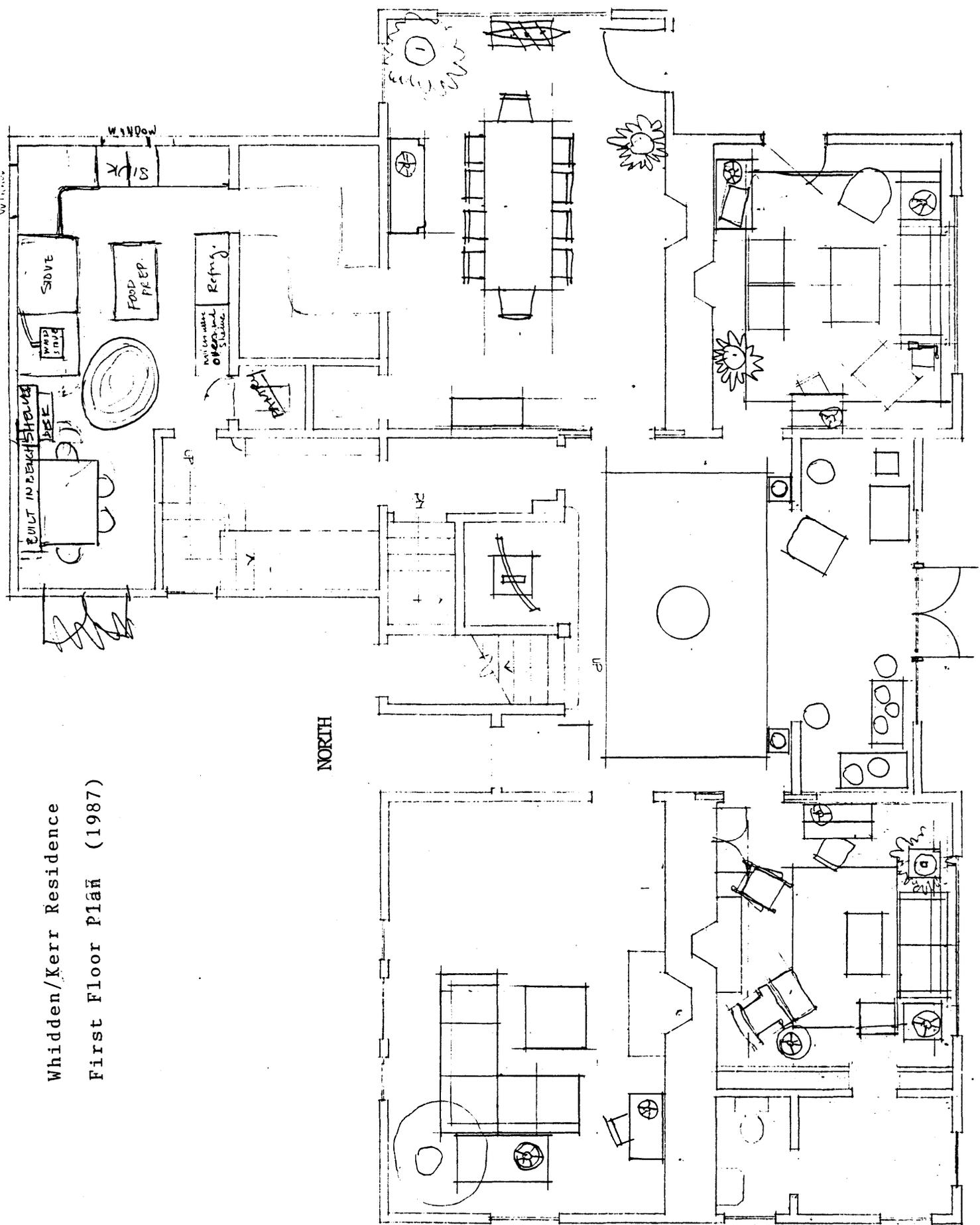
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EAST



Whidden/Kerr Residence
First Floor Plan (1987)

NORTH

SOUTH

WEST