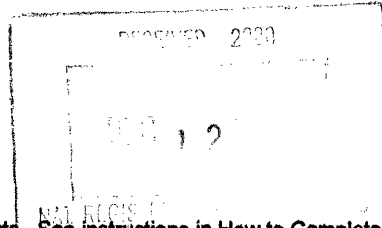


1476

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 for individual properties and districts. See instructions 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 any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, 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 Portland Buddhist Church

other names/site number Oregon Buddhist Church, The Buddha Building

2. Location

street & number 312 NW Tenth Avenue not for publication

city or town Portland vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Multnomah code 051 zip code 97209

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

James Hamrick 5 Dec 2003  
Signature of certifying official / Deputy SHPO Date

State or Federal agency and bureau / Oregon State Historic Preservation Office

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

- 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): \_\_\_\_\_

Edson R. Beall 1/21/04

Portland Buddhist Church  
Name of Property

Multnomah, OR  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes 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	
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u>	buildings
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	sites
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	structures
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u>	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)

RELIGION: religious facility

DOMESTIC: dwelling

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: business, professional

DOMESTIC: dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

20<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other WOOD (cornice)

**Narrative Description**

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

Portland Buddhist Church  
Name of Property

Multnomah, OR  
County and State

**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.

**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 a 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 the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

- 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

- Primary Location of Additional Data**
- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- ETHNIC HERITAGE: ASIAN
- RELIGION
- SOCIAL HISTORY

**Period of Significance**

- 1910-1953

**Significant Dates**

- 1910, 1945

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Portland Buddhist Church  
Name of Property

Multnomah, OR  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** less than 1 acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 10 525010 5041160  
Zone Easting Northing

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

**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 Amy McFeeters-Krone, Architectural Historian

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date February 17, 2003

street & number 1831 NE Thompson Street telephone (503) 493-1926

city or town Portland state OR zip code 97212

**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**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Carroll Investments, LLC

street & number 420 NW 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue #1004 telephone (503) 228-6002

city or town Portland state OR zip code 97209

**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. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Number   7   Page   1  

Property Name   Portland Buddhist Church   County and State   Multnomah, OR  

---

**Summary**

The Portland Buddhist Church is located at 312 NW Tenth Avenue in the Pearl District neighborhood of Portland. The Commercial style building is three stories, constructed of unreinforced brick, with a rectangular footprint and a concrete foundation. The main elevation is of cream colored brick, while the other elevations are of softer red brick. The roof is flat, with a wood cornice supported with large modillions on the façade side only. Simple decorative elements, such as brick belt courses, segmental arched windows, and a bracketed portico with a union-jack balustrade are the main embellishments of the exterior. The interior has been altered to accommodate commercial and residential uses, but was most likely simply detailed with primarily open spaces used for sanctuary space, functions, and dormitory style temporary living space. The building is in good condition and retains a substantial degree of integrity.

**Setting**

The Portland Buddhist Church is located at 312 NW Tenth Avenue in the Pearl District neighborhood of Portland, a former warehouse and light industrial district which is rapidly developing into a trendy and high-priced residential and retail area. The neighborhood is level, with a regular grid street pattern. Many old warehouse and industrial buildings are being converted to residential use, and where there are vacant lots or unsuitable buildings, new construction is occurring at a rapid rate.

Tenth Avenue is a heavily used, two-lane, one-way street with metered parking on both sides. It is lined primarily with one- to three- story buildings housing restaurants, shops, offices, condominiums, and some light industrial operations. New buildings in the area are being built up to twelve stories.

The 45 x 50 foot Portland Buddhist Church occupies nearly all of its level 50 x 50 foot lot located on the east side of the street, mid-way between Everett and Flanders Streets. It has no setback, and is surrounded on the north, east and south sides by one and two story buildings which are not historic. These surrounding buildings will soon be demolished for new development, with the exception of a building to the south of the Portland Buddhist Church, a restaurant, which will remain.

**Exterior**

The Portland Buddhist Church is a three story, unreinforced brick building with a flat roof. The building is three bays wide and three bays deep. The poured concrete foundation of the building is raised approximately four feet above street level. Four basement level windows, two individual and one pair, face east (street side) and are partially below grade in window wells. The main (west) elevation of the building is composed of white brick, with a slightly recessed center bay. Brick belt-courses denote each story. The second story belt course is composed of two sets of tiered brick courses separated by four courses of plain brick, while the third story belt course is composed of corbelled brick brackets supporting a concrete sill. A single oversized corbel is located over the entrance bay.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Number 7 Page 2

Property Name Portland Buddhist Church County and State Multnomah, OR

---

The main entrance of the building is located in the south bay of the west elevation. It has a segmental arched entryway flanked by slightly projecting brick pilasters. The entrance is altered. Wood steps lead up to a recessed front door. Both the steps and the front door are set in the north half of the arched entry, which was probably symmetrical originally. The entrance has a metal security gate, a contemporary pipe stair rail, wood and glass front door and a modern style light fixture. Over the entrance is a portico supported by substantial paired brackets and topped with a union-jack balustrade with boxed corners.

The center and north bays of the first story have large windows with concrete sills and segmental arches with multiple course rowlocks and keystones. The windows are not original. They consist of metal, paired, 2/2, double-hung sash topped with three-light stationary transoms.

The second and third stories of the main elevation have a identical window configurations. These consist of a pair of narrow windows in the south bay, a pair of somewhat wider windows in the center bay, and a ribbon of three narrow windows in the northern bay, which is also the location of a large steel fire-escape. All of the windows are 1/1, double-hung metal sash which are not original. The façade is topped with simple ornamental brick frieze, and a wide overhanging wood cornice supported by oversized modillions.

The side and rear elevations of the building are composed of red brick masonry with no embellishments or cornice. They were meant to abut the adjacent buildings or a narrow alleyway. The south wall of the building has 12 windows, each with a segmental arched brick lintel and a poured concrete sill. Four of the windows are in the westernmost bays, and articulate the staircase located there. The others are uniformly spaced on the eastern half of the elevation, four on the first story, and two on the second and third stories. All of the windows are metal replacement sash except the four on the rear bays of the first floor, which are original. They are 2/2 wood sashes, with wire reinforced, ridged glass.

The northern elevation has no upper story windows, but two blocked, arched window openings on the first story are visible from the interior of the building. The upper portion of the north façade has a faded painted advertisement.

The rear, or east, elevation of the building is unembellished but does contain a recessed bay which would have served as a lightwell had there been another building abutting it. This recessed bay contains the only windows on this elevation. The first story would have had a skylight, but is now covered with a sheet of plexiglass. The second story has three windows facing the lightwell, one on each wall of the lightwell. The third story has a pair of glass doors leading to a steel balcony which fills the space of the lightwell. There is also a window on each of the sidewalls of the lightwell. None of the windows on this elevation are original.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Number   7   Page   3  

Property Name   Portland Buddhist Church   County and State   Multnomah, OR  

---

**Interior**

The interior of the Portland Buddhist Church has been altered to accommodate commercial use. The entrance opens to a small lobby in the southwest corner of the building, which contains an original wood staircase with simple turned balusters and rail. The staircase has a wood wainscot which is not original.

Beneath the stairs is the entrance to the basement. The stairs leading down are not original and the staircase were originally to the rear of the building. The basement has poured concrete exterior foundation walls and a concrete floor. Four recently added windows in the west wall face window wells. The space is divided by a number of unfinished stud walls. There is no ceiling but the space is lit with contemporary can lights mounted on the exposed joists. The space was originally a social hall with a small kitchen, but is now used for storage.

The lobby on the first floor opens through a large, contemporary wood and glass door and window into an open commercial space which currently houses a photography business. This floor was originally the sanctuary space of the church, and was thus undivided. The space is still largely undivided, although a wall has been constructed along the line of the southern bay. To the south of this wall is another wall, which is original and constructed of plaster. It contains two small rooms which contain the only original windows in the building. The undivided space of the first story has high ceilings and exposed HVAC. The western wall has the original plaster walls and window frames around the replacement arched sash windows. The north and east walls are exposed red brick with visible grooves which originally held the wood grounds for the plaster walls. The north wall has two blocked arched openings which appear to have been windows. The soft red brick used to block the windows suggest that they were eliminated at an early date. The eastern wall has a skylight which opens to the lightwell. This opening is supported on its interior corners by concrete covered steel posts. Although it probably had a steel skylight at one time, the opening is now covered with a sheet of plexiglass.

The second story of the building is divided into several small office suites and occupied by a variety of tenants. This floor was historically used as a hostel for needy parishioners and office space for the church. The original configuration of the northern two-thirds of the floor is not clear, but a series of three small rooms on the southern side of the building are original and have plaster walls, wood moldings, and doors. Outside of these rooms, all of the walls appear have been constructed after the historical period. The north exterior wall is exposed red brick like the first floor. Plaster ceilings, which may be original, are covered in corrugated metal. Old wood doors, which are not original to the building, are used throughout.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Number   7   Page   4  

Property Name   Portland Buddhist Church   County and State   Multnomah, OR  

---

The third story of the building contains a residential unit. Originally it was the minister's residence and rooms for Sunday school. It is now a large undivided space, or "loft." The floors are polished hardwood, but are not original. The north, south and part of the east walls are exposed red brick. The ceiling has been lowered. There is an original rectangular steel pyramidal skylight in the north central area of the space. At the four corners of the skylight are old wood columns, which are not an original part of the building. A kitchen is located in the east end of the southernmost bay of the building. In the west end of this bay is a room which appears to be original, with plaster walls and old moldings. All other moldings and woodwork in the space is not of the historical period. On the east side of the building, large glass and wood double doors open onto a steel grate balcony which fills the lightwell.

**Alterations**

The Portland Buddhist Church building served as a religious institution and hostel until it was sold by the church in 1966. Thereafter it has served primarily as commercial and office space, with a residential space on the third floor. Most of the alterations to the footprint of the building were probably done in the first years after it was sold by the church.

Although the original layout of the interior of the building is not known, some small parts of the original footprint remain. The first floor was most likely a fairly open sanctuary space, and it remains a large open space today. Some small rooms in the southeast corner were most likely restrooms and storage or a small office. The second and third floors were used as a residence for the minister and as a temporary shelter for newly immigrated and displaced parishioners. They were divided into smaller rooms, some of which still exist on the south side of the building. The offices on the second floor were probably built in the late 1960s, and altered periodically to suit new tenants. The third floor was divided into rooms for an apartment, but walls were torn down when the area was converted to a residential loft.

**Future Plans**

The Portland Buddhist Church building has recently been purchased by Carroll Investments, LLC. The entire block, with the exception of the restaurant to the south of the building (Jimmy Mak's) will be redeveloped, and the Portland Buddhist Church building is the only building which will remain. How the building will be utilized remains to be determined. A large condominium building will be built on the eastern half of the block.

The Portland Buddhist Church building will be left as intact as possible, but some changes will be necessary to bring the building up to code, including seismic retrofitting and adding an elevator and a fire escape to the rear of the building. The current owner is applying for the Oregon Special Assessment to facilitate the preservation of the building.



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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Number   8   Page   1  

Property Name   Portland Buddhist Church   County and State   Multnomah, OR  

---

**Summary**

The Portland Buddhist Church meets significance criterion A, as an important remnant of the thriving Japanese community once located in Northwest Portland. The Portland Buddhist Church was the first Buddhist church founded in Oregon. This modest building served as a religious, social, and community center for many years, offering not only a religious refuge but also a temporary home to many recent Japanese immigrants, as well as those who were displaced by war and disaster. The period of significance is 1910 to 1953, from the date of construction to the end of the historical period. During this time the building was continuously used as a Buddhist church. Significant dates are 1910, when the church was built, and 1945, when it was reopened after the internment of the Japanese during World War II.

**Japanese Immigration to Oregon**

The first Japanese in Oregon were three shipwrecked seamen who washed ashore near Cape Flattery in 1834. The first permanent Japanese resident of the state was a Japanese girl brought to Portland by a sea captain in 1880. There was no significant immigration to the state until the turn of the century, and even then, it was modest when compared to California and Washington. In 1902, only 130 of the more than five thousand immigrants who arrived in the three west coast states came to Oregon (8).

The early Japanese immigrants, up until about 1907, were known as *dekaseginin*, or temporary immigrants who intended to return home eventually. Mostly men, they left their homeland empty handed, dreamed of coming to the United States and becoming rich overnight, and returning home wealthy (3). They were often employed through the labor contracting system, in which newly arrived laborers, unable to communicate and unfamiliar with American labor practices, relied on fellow countrymen who were labor contractors to gain initial employment. Labor contractors procured laborers primarily for the agricultural, railroad, mining, lumber and fishing industries, in return charging a daily commission from each worker. In Portland, Ban Shinzaburo was the largest labor contractor. He supplied labor for the Southern Pacific line, the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company, the Astoria and Columbia River Railway, and the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy. He also ran three retail stores, in Portland, Denver, and Sheridan, Wyoming, a lumber mill, and a dairy farm. Ban had about 3000 workers under contract at the height of his prosperity, just after the turn of the century (3).

Around 1907, immigrant leaders encouraged the *dekaseginin* to become permanent residents. One leader, Abiko Kyutaro, was the greatest proponent of settlement. He felt that settlement was the key to ending

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Number   8   Page   2  

Property Name   Portland Buddhist Church   County and State   Multnomah, OR  

---

anti-Japanese sentiment. Abiko encouraged laborers to become farmers, marry and settle down. Many laborers became farmers and small businessmen around this time, partially because the Japanese government would not permit laborers to summon wives (3).

As Japanese immigrants gained a foothold in the United States and became successful in their businesses, Caucasian Americans felt threatened. Oregon Governor Ben W. Olcott warned the legislature in 1920 that "an alien race of differing ideals and aspirations of our own are gradually acquiring a tenacious foothold within the confines of the state...in my opinion steps should be taken by means of proper legislation to curb the growth of the Japanese colonies in Oregon: to preserve our lands and our resources for the people of our own race and nationality (10)."

In 1922, the first generation Japanese immigrants, or *issei*, as well as other Asian immigrants, were classified as "aliens ineligible to citizenship", and did not have the right of naturalization. Because of this, they had fewer rights than nearly every other segment of society, including blacks and European immigrants. In the western states especially, this classification exacerbated the discrimination to which the *issei* were already subject. The Alien Land Laws enacted by most western states prohibited "aliens ineligible to citizenship" from purchasing or even leasing land (11). Although aimed at agricultural land, the laws also affected urban *issei*. In 1923, Oregon passed a law to prevent Japanese from acquiring or owning real estate, and from operating certain small businesses (10). Two decades later, in 1945, the Alien Land Law of Oregon forbade the *issei* not only from leasing or buying land, but also from working on their U.S. born children's property, or even living with their children. These laws were nullified in 1949, when the Oregon Supreme Court concluded that "our Alien Land Law must be deemed violative of the principles of law which protect from classification based upon color, race and creed (10)."

**Japanese in Portland**

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, more than half of the approximately twenty-six-hundred Japanese immigrants in Oregon lived in Portland. They lived in a segregated district in the northwest part of the city called Japantown, or *Nihonmachi*. This self-contained district included more than twenty small hotels and dozens of other businesses including groceries, dry goods, restaurants, bathhouses, barbers, tailors and pool halls (8). These establishments served the immigrant population of mostly laborers.

Despite the relatively small community, Portland supplied Japanese workers for railroads, lumber companies, canneries, and farms throughout Oregon and even Idaho, Wyoming and Alaska. Labor

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Number   8   Page   3  

Property Name   Portland Buddhist Church   County and State   Multnomah, OR  

---

contractors shipped out workers to a variety of industries, but the largest was the railroads. Japanese railroad laborers made about one dollar a day, compared to their Caucasian counterparts, who made \$1.40 a day. During salmon fishing season, many Japanese laborers were sent in ships to Alaska to work in the salmon canneries. Still more laborers toiled in lumber mills (10).

In the early years, most of the residents of *Nihonmachi* were young men, making the area a rough and boisterous place. Initially, all Japanese immigrants were laborers. As they settled, many became farmers or small businessmen. During the second and third decades of the twentieth century, the number of Japanese women in Oregon increased rapidly, as Japanese men settled and sent for "picture brides" from Japan(11). They married and had children, and *Nihonmachi* developed into community of families. Because of rampant discrimination, this community was largely self sufficient, serving nearly all the needs of its residents within its boundaries. It evolved from a rough neighborhood into one where children could play in the streets and visitors were welcome. There were over 100 Japanese managed business and offices in the area which provided indispensable services to the Japanese population. It remained the center of Japanese culture in Portland even after Japanese families gradually scattered around the city (7).

The Japanese of Japantown built family run businesses that served other Japanese. There were Japanese style bath houses, laundries, a daily newspaper, barbers, florist shops, restaurants, and hotels. Many business operators had no previous experience, but provided a needed service to the Japanese community and learned through experience. The entire family participated in the businesses as unpaid labor, and many families lived above or behind their businesses, both to save money and be able to keep the business open for longer hours. Nearly everyone lived in rooms rather than detached houses, and families all worked long hours (10).

*Nihonmachi* was socially and culturally separated from the larger society, and this separateness fostered cohesiveness within the community. There was a sense of needing to provide for themselves, and they were willing to work hard for it in a way they would not be willing to work for someone else. This is why families worked so hard for such low wages, and other Japanese were willing to work just as hard toward owning their own businesses. There was a kind of apprenticeship system to help new immigrants learn a business and eventually own their own business. Shops avoided competing with each other, forming coalitions to set prices and locating as to avoid infringing on each other's space. The traditional homogenous, consensus-building characteristics of Japanese culture became a part of the Portland immigrant community (10).

*Nihonmachi* never recovered after World War II, at least not the way it had been before. Business inventories were liquidated, and household items and personal possessions were reduced to what could be

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Number 8 Page 4

Property Name Portland Buddhist Church County and State Multnomah, OR

---

carried. After the war, some businesses, restaurants and hotels returned to *Nihonmachi*, but it was never the cohesive, self-sufficient neighborhood it once was. The *nisei*, who were born in the United States and educated in public schools, felt more American than their parents, and no longer wanted to be segregated. Instead, returning Japanese families settled throughout Portland (7).

Education was of paramount importance. The Japanese children of *Nihonmachi* attended either Shattuck School, now a part of Portland State University, or Atkinson School, formerly located at Eleventh Avenue and Davis Street. Nearly all of the students at Atkinson School were children of Japanese and Chinese immigrants (7). After a day of American school, the Japanese children attended Japanese school, where cultural ethics and speaking, reading and writing Japanese were taught (10).

One of the first institutions to help the *issei* was the Japanese Methodist Church, which was established in 1893, ten years before the first Buddhist Church (8). The Methodist mission was located at NW 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Glisan Street (7). While many new immigrants remained Buddhist, the primary religious faith of their homeland, some of the more successful *issei* adopted Western faiths. This was just one way that they assimilated into American culture and became more acceptable to Caucasian Americans (8).

Besides the Portland Buddhist Church, two other Buddhist churches formed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the Nichiren Buddhist Church and the Buddhist Daihonzan Henjyoji Temple. Both still exist. There was also Shinto institution, called to Konko-kyo Portland Kyokai, and two "universal" churches, the Portland Tenrikyo Church and the Columbia Tenrikyo Church. Some Nisei children attended St. Paul Miki School, a Catholic school run by nuns, whose goal was to "Americanize" the Nisei children and convert them if possible (10).

Another institution which assisted immigrants was the Japanese Deliberative Council of Oregon, which was formed in 1907 to new arrivals understand American laws and customs. In 1911, it became the Japanese Association of Oregon (*Nihonjin Kai*). It still exists today as the *Nikkeijin Kai* (7).

As *Nihonmachi* became crowded during the second and third decades of the twentieth century, a second, less defined Japanese community formed along Portland's Southwest waterfront, just south of Burnside Street. This area was inexpensive because it was subject to periodic flooding from the Willamette River. The Japanese businesses here catered to the general public, including housekeeping hotels, dry cleaners, laundries, farm stands, groceries, and barbershops (7).

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Number   8   Page   5  

Property Name   Portland Buddhist Church   County and State   Multnomah, OR  

---

After the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Japanese residents of the United States were viewed with suspicion, and there was a push to imprison them. This happened in April 1942, when those of Japanese ancestry living in Oregon and Washington were told to evacuate. President Roosevelt created "restricted" zones, which were transferred to the military so that relocation could be initiated. Temporary camps were formed which were called Assembly Centers, to contain the prisoners until permanent camps could be created, called Relocation Centers. Evacuees were told to take only what they could carry or pack in a duffel bag. They were taken to the International Livestock Exposition Center, which was the Assembly Center for Portland. There they were assigned one small cubicle per family, each separated by plywood from the next. Most spent the entire summer there. Most Portlanders were eventually moved to Minidoka Relocation Center in a barren portion of southern Idaho. At its peak, Minidoka held 9397 inmates.

After the war, the Japanese were returned to their home cities, but many had lost their houses, business, farms and nearly all their possessions. Fewer than 70% of the prewar Oregon Nikkei returned to Oregon at all, preferring instead to relocate to other western states or even the interior of the country, which they hoped would be safer. Those who did return discovered that their businesses were difficult to re establish. Racism was still rampant, and many of their farms and businesses had been poorly attended to (10).

### **Early Buddhism in the United States**

Buddhism in Japan is a multi-dimensional religion which has fifty-six primary, formal divisions and more than 170 subdivisions, representing a wide range of philosophical ideals. Early Japanese immigrants to the United States were primarily from areas that were strongholds of the Jodo Shinshu (Pure Land School) sect. That combined with the fact that this sect sent the first priests from Japan to attend to the needs of immigrants gave them the first foothold for the Buddhist church in America (6). The Buddhist beliefs of Japanese immigrants and their children was formally institutionalized as the North American Buddhist Mission (NABM), changed to the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) in 1944 (6).

The first Buddhist religious missions were called *bukkyokais*, which means Buddhist association temple. Around 1905, however, the director of the San Francisco headquarters of NABM Changed the name to the Buddhist Church of San Francisco, and allowed other locales to also call themselves Buddhist churches. It is not entirely clear why this was done, but probably to make the Buddhist organizations appear less exotic to Americans, and to place the emphasis on their religious rather than social activities. The *issei* continued to use the term *bukkyo*, but their American born children and grandchildren more readily adopted the word church (6).

Buddhist institutions were formed to create a familiar religious refuge for the Japanese immigrants, who faced anti-Japanese agitation outside their own community. Many immigrants were not devout, but the Buddhist institutions provided a familiarity and social outlet that outweighed their need for religion.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Number 8 Page 6

Property Name Portland Buddhist Church County and State Multnomah, OR

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Social functions, including organized bazaars, dances, ball games, and movies, as well as informal gatherings, were just as important, and maybe more important than the religious functions of the church. It dominated the social order of the Japanese community (6).

**History of The Portland Buddhist Church**

On August 10, 1903, Portland's Japanese settlers invited Reverend Gendo Nakai of Seattle to give a sermon in town (1). His sermon, on August 10<sup>th</sup> of that year, inspired the organization of a Buddhist congregation for Portland. The founders of this community wrote to the Buddhist Mission of North America in San Francisco, requesting the appointment of a minister. The Reverend Shozui Wakabayashi arrived in Portland from Japan on November 16, 1903, and became the eleventh appointed Buddhist minister in the United States (2).

With the arrival of Reverend Wakabayashi, the Buddhist Church of Portland was officially founded. It is a part of the Jodo Shinshu sect which founded the Buddhist Churches of America (17). The mother temple is called Nishi Hongwanji and is located in Kyoto, Japan (17). The church was first located in two rented rooms at 43 Fourth Avenue, in the heart of Japantown. Services were held each Sunday, and on the third Saturday of the month a Buddhist lecture was given. Reverend Wakabayashi was a tireless leader, seeking out *issei* wherever they were, be it muddy logging camps or remote farms (10). He endeared himself to the laborers through his good nature and adherence to Buddhist teachings, and donations began to accumulate (1).

In January 1904, 300 members met for a general meeting and decided to rent a building at 18 First Avenue to accommodate their growing congregation. The church moved there on February 1, 1905 (2).

After this relocation, the church continued to grow steadily. The members heard of a master carpenter, Masaichi Hayashi of San Francisco, who was directing the construction of Japanese buildings at the 1905 Lewis and Clark Exposition. Reverend Wakabayashi and several other church members met with Hayashi to discuss the building of a *butsudan* for the church. Hayashi volunteered his services provided that he receive assistance from church members. The names of those who assisted were inscribed on the *butsudan*. This inscription was forgotten until the *butsudan* was dismantled to move to the new church in 1966 (1). The *butsudan* was enshrined on February 25, 1906, a great occasion. The previous September, Reverend Koyu Uchida arrived in San Francisco with a gift of a *rokujisongo* (scroll) for the church, from the Hompa Hongwanji of Kyoto, Japan. To commemorate the day of the enshrinement, Reverend Wakabayashi organized the Buddhist Women's Association, the *Fujinkai* (1)

The church was incorporated as the Japanese Buddhist Association on October 19, 1908. After much discussion, it was decided on July 7, 1909, to build a new church. The 50 x 50 foot lot, located at 86 NW Tenth Avenue (old address) was purchased on July 25, 1909, for \$5,500 (2). Although it is not known why

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Number  8  Page  7

Property Name  Portland Buddhist Church  County and State  Multnomah, OR

---

the church was built outside the boundaries of *Nihonmachi*, there were several other Japanese institutions in the vicinity, including the Japanese Methodist Church (NW 15<sup>th</sup> and Glisan) and the Atkinson School ( NW 11<sup>th</sup> and Davis). Land was most likely cheaper and more available in that area, and it was within walking distance to Japantown.

On May 23, 1910, an old house located on the lot was razed by church members. One thousand bricks were removed and may have been used in the construction of the new church (17). Construction began on the church building on April 26, 1910. By September, the three story, 45 x 50-foot building was completed. It cost \$22,429.22 to complete, financed by the contributions of 1763 members and friends of the church. The new church was dedicated on December 15-16, 1910 (2). Church members speculate that it was built as a commercial style building to accommodate the many roles it had to play, including sanctuary, minister's residence, and hostel. Therefore it was built in three stories on its very small lot. Although it did not look like a religious institution, it was marked as a Buddhist church by the swastikas which marked the original double door. Until World War II, the swastika was a symbol of Buddhism. It was replaced by the wistaria branch after the war (16).

The church contained a sanctuary on the first floor with a dais to the rear, a hostel for *issei* students and laborers on the second floor, which was originally divided into separate rooms with a common kitchen, and the minister's residence on the third floor, which was also divided into rooms. The minister and his family used the kitchen on the second floor. An office where the church newsletter was printed was located in a room on the second floor which overlooked the balcony over the front door. Sunday school was also held in rooms on the third floor. The basement had a social hall and a small kitchen (16). Joe Masaki Kinoshita, a student in the early 1900s who lived at the temple, recalled that the second and third floors could each accommodate 20 people (17).

The church quickly became a center for both social and spiritual gatherings (10). Yukl Ogawa remembers that her grandfather, Nobuichi Nunotani, was very proud of the temple, as it was quite a feat for an immigrant group to have constructed it. Dr. Matthew Masuoka said that his mother was unhappy with the amount of time her husband volunteered to maintain the temple (17). Jean Matsumoto, a member of the church who remembers the building from childhood, remembers the children sitting on the stairs and watching the services, which were all in Japanese. She also remembers sliding down the stair banister, and one child breaking her arm. Dances for young people were held in the basement social hall. The children made a roast beef luncheon for mothers day in the small basement kitchen one year (16).

Activities in the early years included *Fujinkai* (women's group), who held sewing, clothing care, knitting, American cooking and table etiquette classes. The Young Men's and Young Women's Buddhist Associations enjoyed socials, sports, and handcrafts. Sunday school classes as well as a Japanese language

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Number 8 Page 8

Property Name Portland Buddhist Church County and State Multnomah, OR

---

high school, the only one in Portland, attracted neighborhood children, who were mostly within walking distance (17).

On July 8, 1915, The Reverend Wakabayashi died. His successor, Reverend Keijo Fujii, continued collecting donations to pay off the church building, which was accomplished shortly thereafter (2).

On June 14, 1940, because it was the only Buddhist church in the state, the Portland Buddhist Church was officially renamed the Oregon Buddhist Church (2).

In May 1940, it was decided to build a new church. A lot was purchased on the corner of NW First and Davis Streets, and a *Jihin* or groundbreaking ceremony was held on February 2, 1941. By the end of the year, however, World War II had begun and plans for the construction of the new church were canceled (2).

In May 1942, the church was forced to close and the members were evacuated to relocation centers. A Portland attorney, Neal Crouse, was asked to take care of the church (17). At Minidoka Relocation Center in Idaho, the members of the Oregon Buddhist Church held a meeting and decided that the lot purchased for the new church in Portland should be sold, which it was in March 1945. The minister of the church during the interment was Reverend T. Terakawa, who was praised for helping the internees get settled at Minidoka. He died while interned at the camp on November 12, 1944 (2).

Minidoka was emptied in 1945 and the internees were allowed to return home. The Reverend Hojun Sugimoto worked tirelessly to reopen the church upon his return to Portland. The church was reopened in March 1945, but not for religious services. It was converted to a hostel to house the returning members while they worked to regain their former lives. The church could house 15 to 20 families at a time (2).

On September 30, 1945, the church was formally reopened for services. The *Fujinkai* (Women's Association) and the Young Buddhist Association were also reorganized (2).

Upon returning from Minidoka, many of the Japanese residents of Portland lived in Vanport, a large housing project hastily built to house shipyard workers during the war. On Memorial Day, May 1948, the dike protecting Vanport from the Columbia River broke, and Vanport was destroyed. Church members who were left homeless sought refuge in the church, which provided them with food and clothing and helped the victims recover from the disaster (2).

By 1960, there was a need for a larger building with parking facilities. Young couples were reluctant to hold weddings in the old building, and parents worried about the steep narrow stairs in case of an emergency. Plans for a new church were begun (17).



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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Number  8  Page  9

Property Name  Portland Buddhist Church  County and State  Multnomah, OR

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In 1965, a new church building was constructed on SW 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and the old church building was sold (2). It has since been used primarily as offices for a variety of businesses, including an architectural office, a photographic studio, and several accountants. It currently is used primarily as offices but has one residential unit on the third floor.

In all, twenty ministers served at the old temple. Today the resident minister is Reverend Jundo Gregory Gibbs, the first non-Japanese minister to serve the congregation (17).

**The Pearl District**

The Portland Buddhist Church is located in what is now known as the Pearl District. It was reportedly named in the 1980s by a gallery owner, Thomas Augustine, who was referring to the precious gems which could be found in the area's old crusty warehouses (5). The area was previously called the Northwest Triangle. It is defined by Marshall Street on the north, Broadway Avenue on the east, Burnside Street to the south, and Highway 405 to the west.

The Pearl district is part of Captain John Couch's Donation Land Claim, which was incorporated into the City of Portland in 1851 as Couch's Addition. In the late 1800s the area was a blue collar neighborhood of European immigrants, built around the railroad, which ran along the northern and eastern edge of the area beginning in 1869. Union Station was constructed in 1896 (5).

Beginning around the turn of the century, the proximity of the neighborhood to Union Station caused it to change from a primarily residential district to an area of manufacturing and shipping businesses, wholesale warehouses, and storage facilities. Spurs from the main lines of the railroad served these business and made this area a primary industrial area of the city (5). In 1910, when the Portland Buddhist Church was built, the surrounding neighborhood was composed primarily of dwellings and shops, but the encroachment of industry was apparent (15).

Until about 1950, the area remained a stable light manufacturing and warehouse district. Around that time, the warehouses began to relocate to the suburbs, where land was cheaper and there was better access for large trucks. Warehouses sat vacant and deteriorating, and the Northwest Triangle began to decline (5).

The district languished until the early 1980s, when new businesses were attracted to the area's historic buildings and low rents. These businesses, which did not match the warehousing and manufacturing zoning of the area, prompted changes in the zoning code from strictly industrial to mixed use. The area continued to develop, and became known as an area of artist's galleries (5). Redevelopment increased in the 1990s, primarily focused on renovations of historic buildings for residential use, as well as new construction. Today, the Pearl District is still experiencing major development and has become a fashionable and expensive urban residential neighborhood.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Number   9   Page   1  

Property Name   Portland Buddhist Church   County and State   Multnomah, OR  

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14. Portland Historic Resource Inventory, 1981.
15. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Portland, Oregon, 1908-1909, 1950.
16. Interview with Jean Matsumoto, August 12, 2003.
17. Interview with Etsu Osaki, August 26, 2003.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Number 10 Page 1

Property Name Portland Buddhist Church County and State Multnomah, OR

---

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The Portland Buddhist Church is located on the western half of lot 3, block 62 of Couch's Addition to Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon. The parcel is 50 feet by 50 feet.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary encompasses the entire urban tax lot, and is the legally recorded boundary for 312 NW Tenth Street.

# PORTLAND BUDDHIST CHURCH, MULTNOMAH CO., OREGON

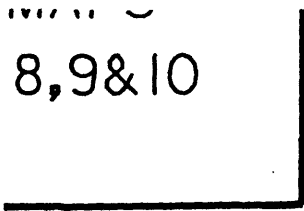
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NEGATIVES HELD BY: Amy McFeeters-Krone  
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Portland, OR 97212

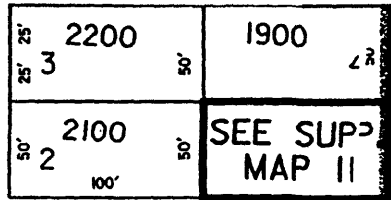
DATE TAKEN: 2/3/2003

1. main (west) elevation, facing NE
2. south elevation, facing NE
3. east elevation (top portion, center of photo), facing SW
4. north elevation, facing SE
5. detail, main entrance, facing E
6. basement, facing W
7. staircase detail, lobby
8. first floor windows, facing NW
9. brick wall showing old window opening, facing N
10. first floor, office suite door, facing S toward lobby
11. first floor, east wall, showing location of skylight and supporting posts
12. second floor hallway, facing E
13. third floor, facing NW
14. third floor, facing N (note skylight with columns)
15. third floor, S wall and kitchen area
16. third floor, doors to lightwell balcony
17. detail, third floor skylight

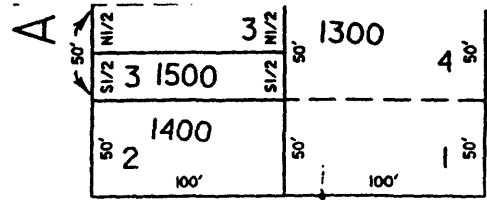


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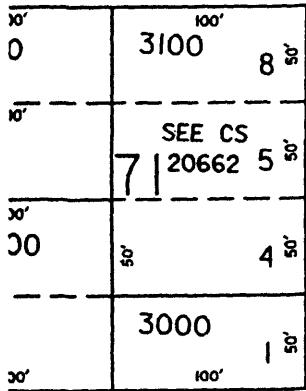
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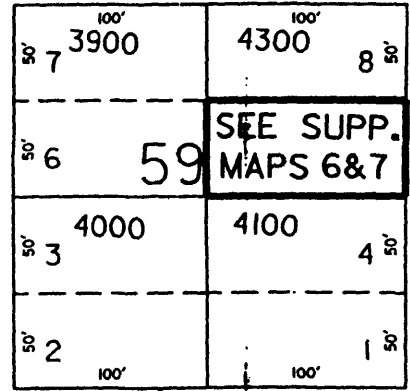
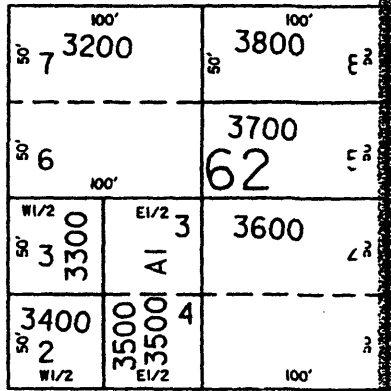
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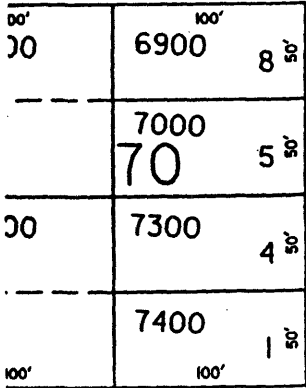
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(E)

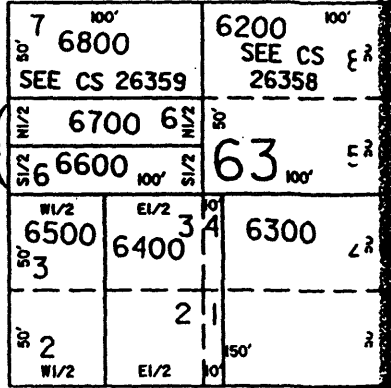


EVERETT



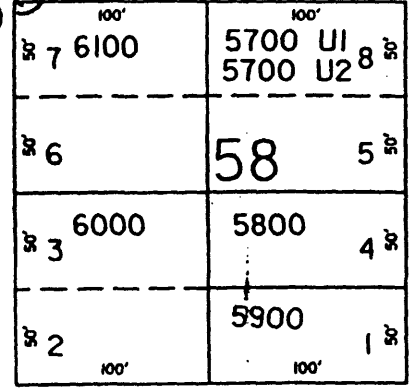
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10TH



(D)

COUCH'S  
9TH



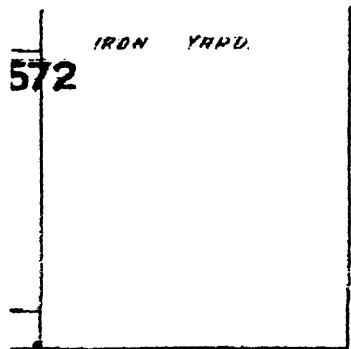
DAVIS

PARK

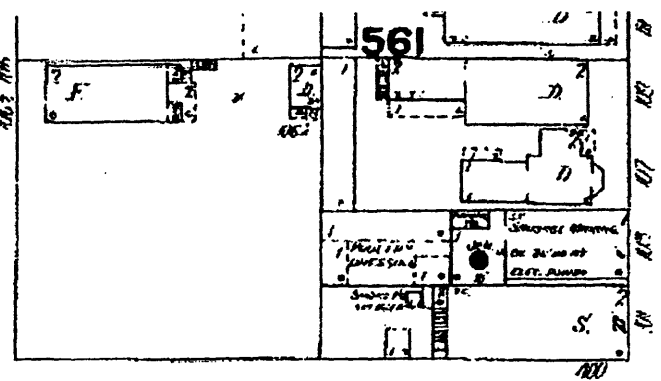
Portland Buddhist Church  
Multnomah Co., Oregon

Multnomah County Assessor's Map  
1"=100'

IN IE 34CB  
PORTLAND

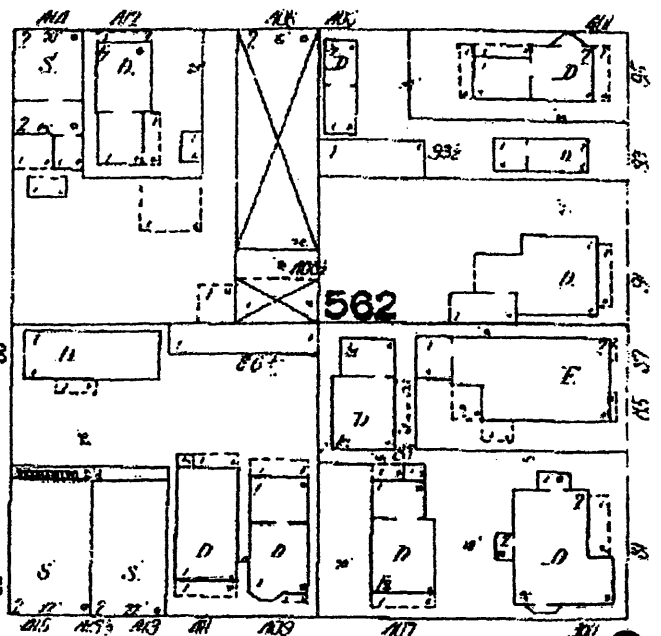
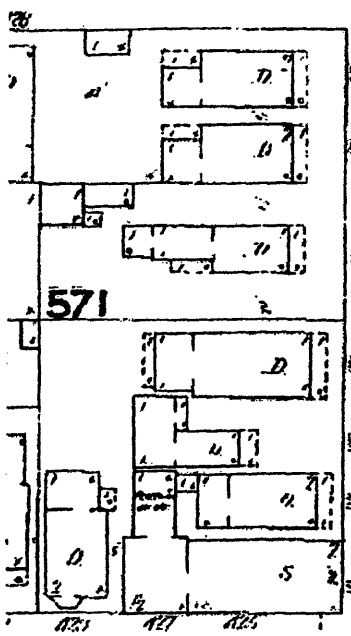


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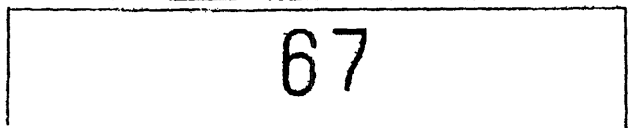
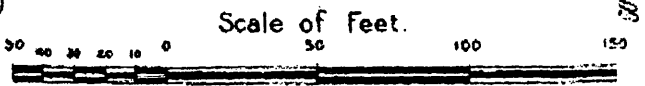
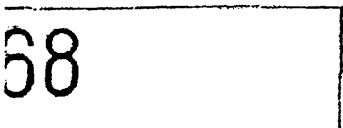


FLANDERS

N.W. PIPE

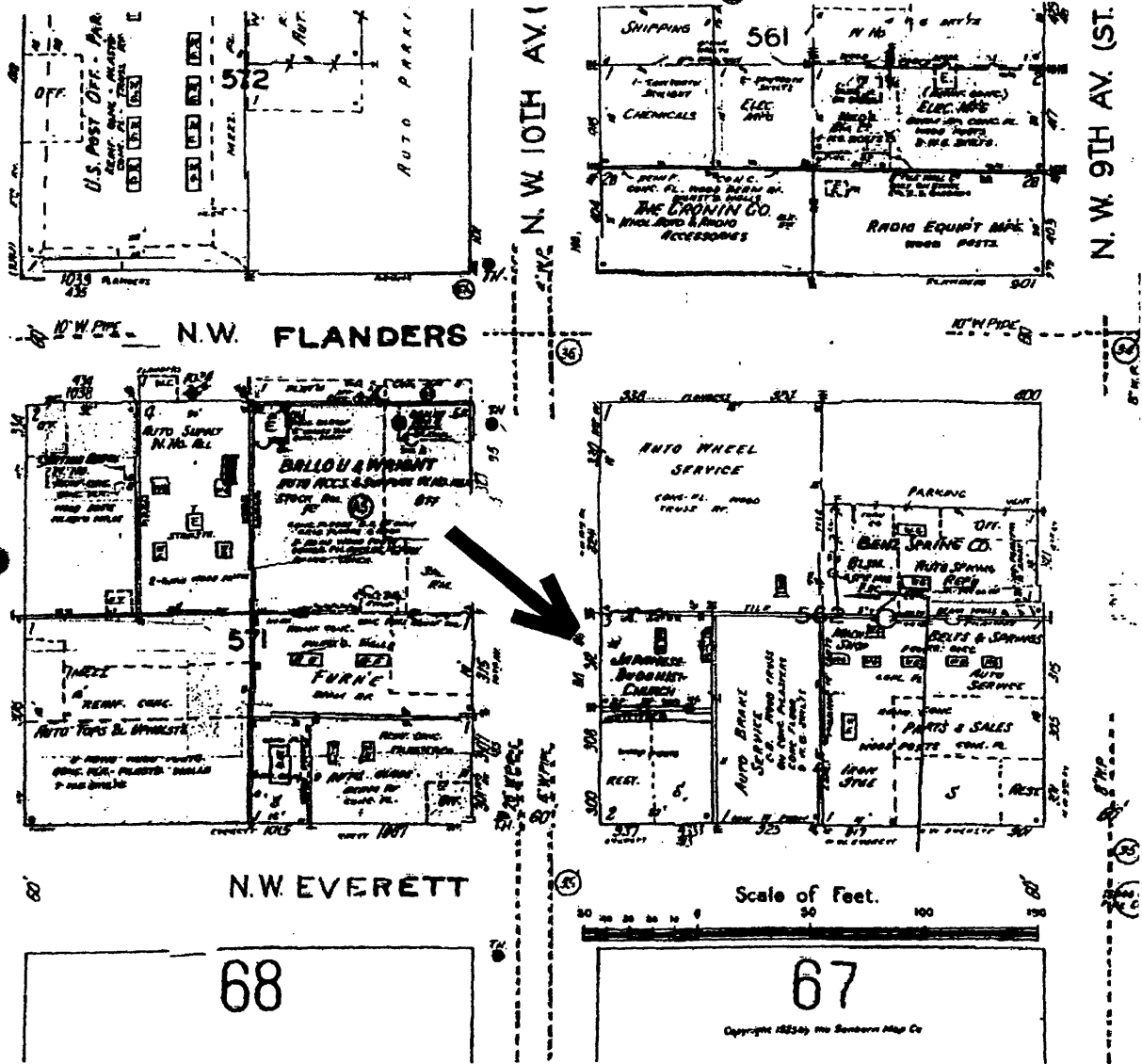


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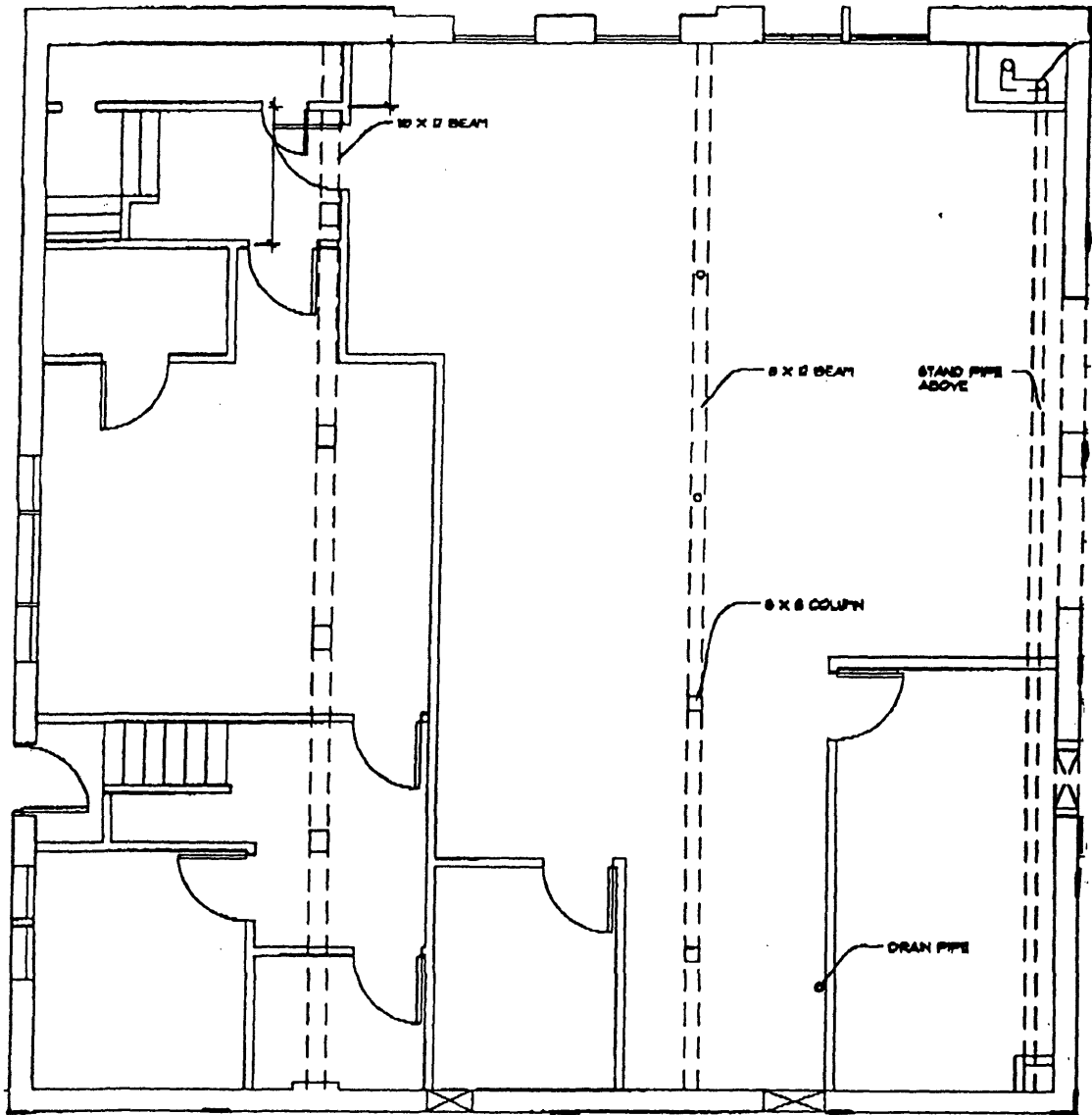
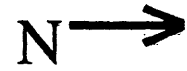
Portland Buddhist Church  
Multnomah Co., Oregon

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map  
Portland, 1908-1909



Portland Buddhist Church  
Multnomah Co., Oregon

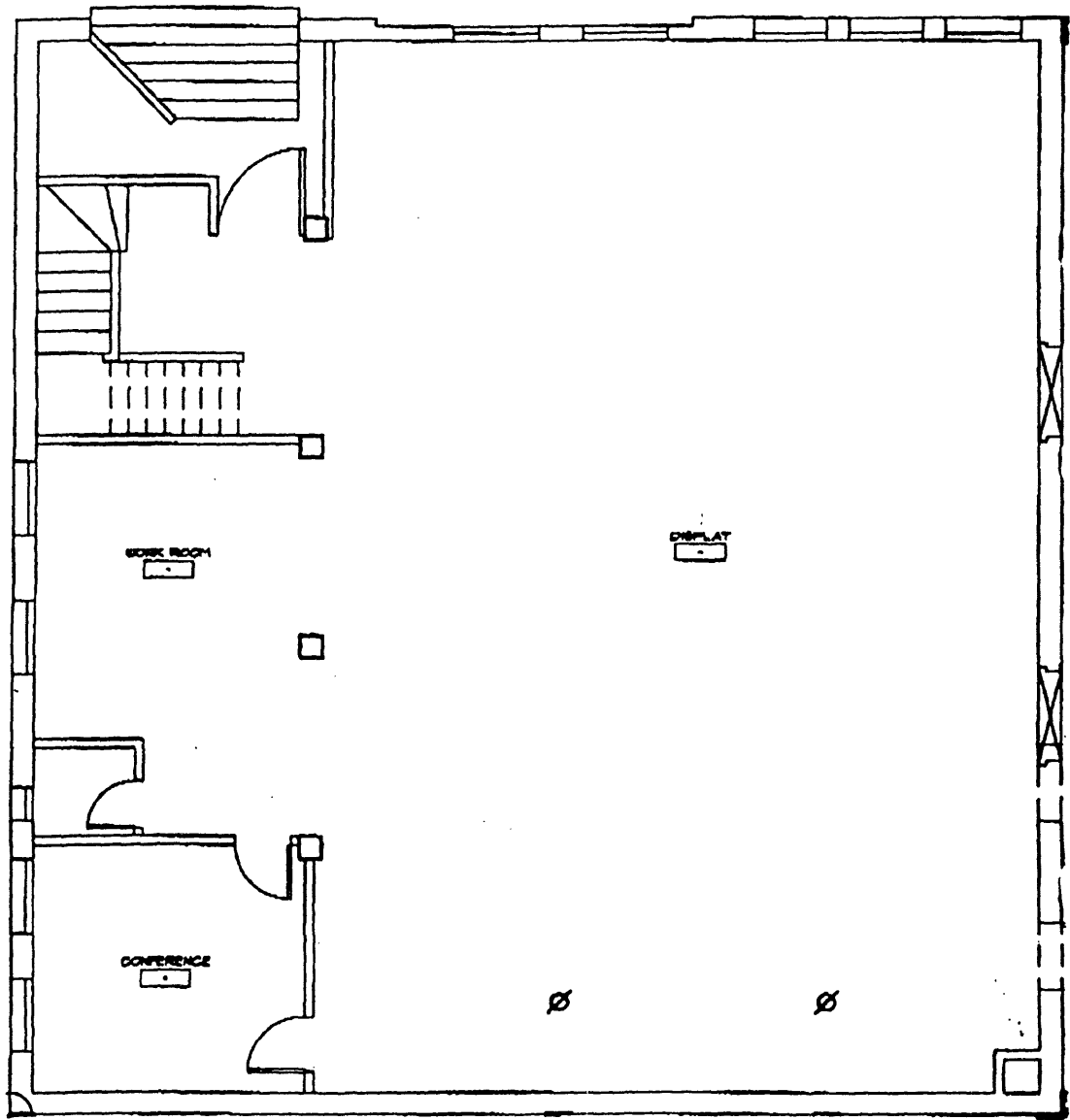
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map  
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Portland Buddhist Church  
Multnomah Co., Oregon

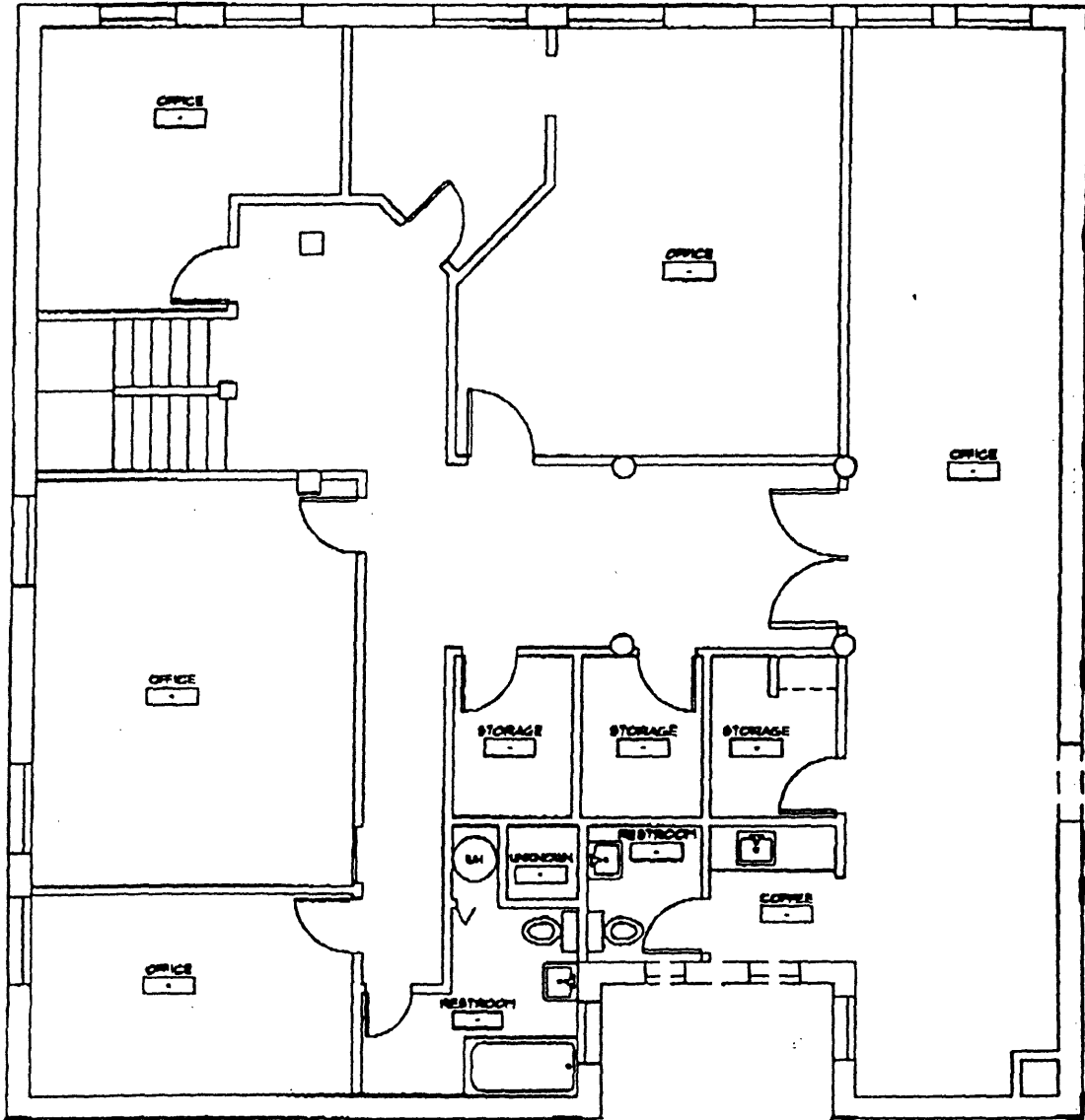
Basement Plan  
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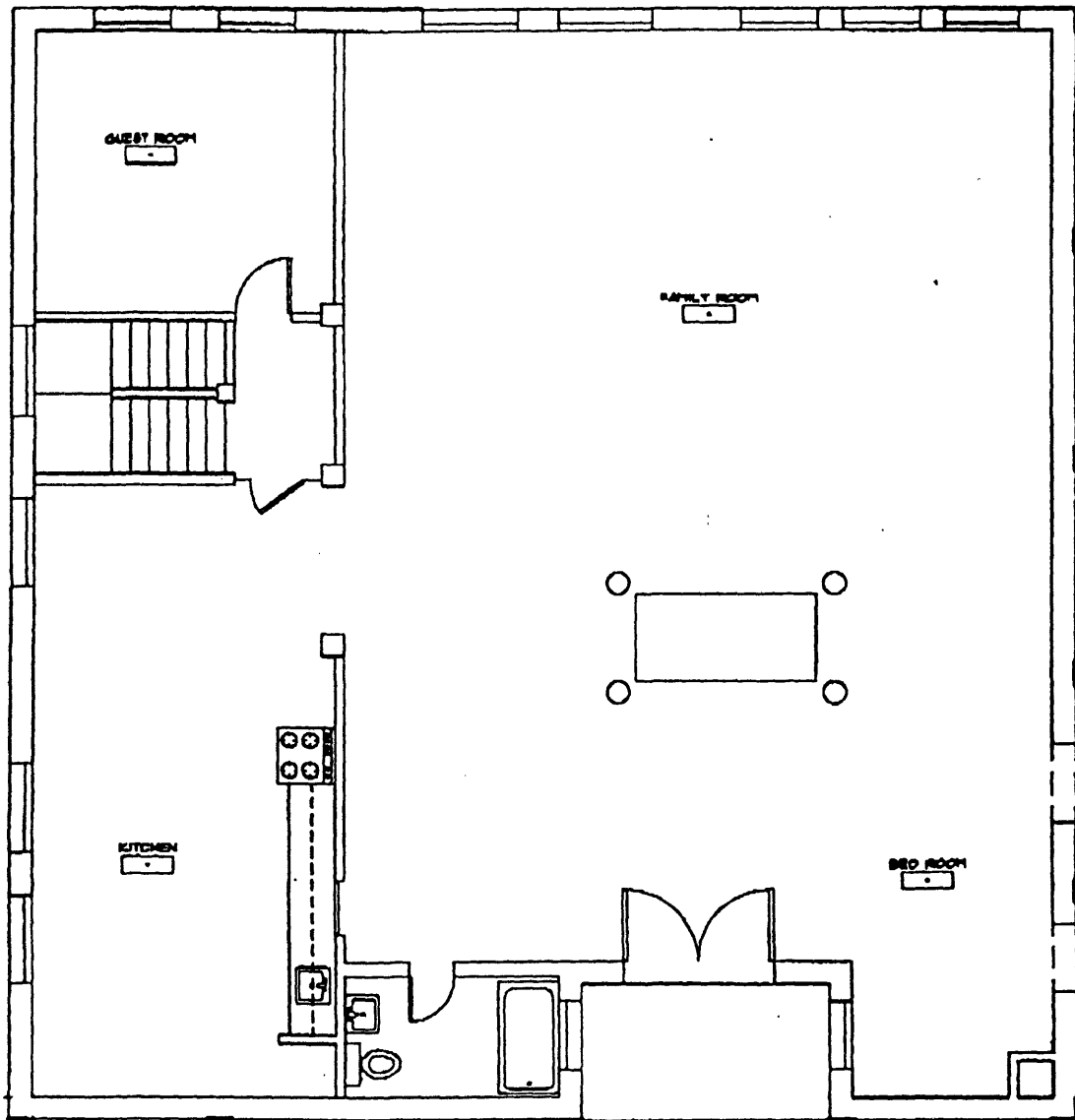
Portland Buddhist Church  
Multnomah Co., Oregon

First Floor Plan  
Scale: 1/8"=1'0"



Portland Buddhist Church  
Multnomah Co., Oregon

Second Floor Plan  
Scale: 1/8"=1'0"



Portland Buddhist Church  
Multnomah Co., Oregon

Third Floor Plan  
Scale: 1/8"=1'0"