

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received **FEB 10 1983**
date entered

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

1. Name

historic White, Catherine, House

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 1924 SW 14th Avenue _____ not for publication

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

state Oregon code 41 county Multnomah code 051

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name David L. and Nancy L. Cutler

street & number 1924 SW 14th Avenue

city, town Portland N/A vicinity of _____ state Oregon 97201

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Multnomah County Courthouse

street & number 1021 S. W. 4th Avenue

city, town Portland _____ state Oregon 97204

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Portland Historical Landmark has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date June 16, 1982 _____ federal _____ state _____ county local

depository for survey records Portland Historical Landmarks Commission
Portland Bureau of Planning

city, town Portland _____ state Oregon 97205

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Queen Anne style house built in Southwest Portland for Catherine White about 1893 occupies a 50 by 100-foot lot fronting vacated SW 14th Avenue on the northeast slope of Gander Ridge. It commands a view to the northeast of the central business district and peaks of the Cascade Range beyond. Owing to the steeply sloping site, access to the house is limited to a public stairway descending along the vacated street from SW College Street. A 20 by 40-foot portion of the vacated street is included in the nominated area as part of the developed grounds of the house. Because a steep embankment marks the northerly edge of the property, residential development until recently was confined to the south, east and west sides of the property. In the last few years, a condominium complex was erected on the north, or downslope side of the property.

The Catherine White House is irregular only in the massing of elements of the principal facade. Measuring approximately 40 by 40-feet, the ground plan is essentially square. The house is of frame construction on a brick foundation and basement. It is two and a half stories in height above the basement story and has a steeply-pitched hipped roof with flared eaves. The roofline is broken by a large brick flare-top chimney, a rear shed-roofed dormer, front and side gables, and a front dormer with steeply-pitched gable and a slit window in the gable end. The gables and dormers are shingle-clad. The body of the house is clad with lapped weatherboards on the second story and shiplap siding on the ground story. The tops of the walls are finished with a plain architrave and frieze, and first and second stories are divided by a similar classical string course. Window trim, flat and unadorned, is partially made up of these horizontal elements. Attic windows on the front elevation have diamond patterned glazing in the upper sash. Typical windows are double-hung with one light over one. Some of the windows are arranged in pairs or banks of three. One of the distinctive features of the front, or north elevation overlooking the city is a two-story beveled window bay in which the center windows are large fixed panes approaching picture window proportions. As is typical of its period and style, the house has a veranda with tapered Tuscan columns which wraps around the northwest corner. The main entrance is in the west elevation, which faces vacated SW 14th Avenue. Including window bay and veranda, the slightly longer axis of the house is oriented south to north, at a right angle to the main axis of the lot. As the house is situated at the westerly end of the lot, the major expanse of yard and garden is east of the house.

Between 1954 and 1969, years during which the house was occupied by Catherine White's granddaughter, the house was converted to a duplex. The kitchen was remodeled in 1976. The property was acquired by its present owners in 1977, at which time reversal of some of the later modifications was begun. The house is a well-preserved example of its type and style notwithstanding the modifications of later years. Except for new kitchen window openings in the rear face and composition roof cover, there are no apparent exterior changes. The ground story contains all the paneling, woodwork, bejeweled windows and brass hardware characteristic of the historic period, and all in original condition. The second story was substantially altered by the addition of a kitchen, lowering of ceilings, and removal of all original woodwork when a rental apartment was created in the 1950s. Some of the effects of this remodeling have been reversed. Bedrooms in the attic story are unaltered.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For NCRS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page

2

The property is more particularly described as follows:

On the west side of the house, the dooryard is shaded by maple, hawthorne and fir trees. The walk-way in front of the house is paved with old brick and cobblestone. Through a gateway at the southwest corner of the house, a brick foot path leads to a narrow flower garden along the south wall of the house and to the back yard and back porch entrance beyond. A large concrete slab midway along the path covers a subterranean brick cistern. The cistern, now no longer in use, was once used to collect rain water from the roof. The garden gateway is formed of vine covered lattice work. The back yard is terraced, with a rose and rhododendron garden extending down the slope. In the back, the path changes to stepping stones which curve down the terraced slope to a flat 50 by 50-foot lawn lined by mature maples, fir, dogwood, cherry, Italian plum, and chestnut trees which create a display of blooms in the spring. There is no garage, since the house is not accessible from a paved street.

In the beveled window bay adjacent to the veranda on the north elevation is a window which functions as a door which slides up into the living room ceiling, giving access from parlor to the north end of the veranda which wraps around the northwest corner of the house. This feature is unusual. A similar door is found in the Haas-Lilienthal House in San Francisco.

Catherine White had her house built with seven bedrooms, enough to accommodate all her five children in their own rooms and guests as well.

There are five leaded glass windows in the house, three of which are original and two of which were added later. The three original windows contain beveled glass, jewels, and stained glass. The fixed center panes of the bay window are unusually large for the 1890s, but were apparently designed to take advantage of the view from Gander Ridge.

Instead of having the rectangular sidehall plan typical of the period, the house is square in plan with a room in each corner. The entry parlor, in the northwest corner, has a large, elaborately-carved chimney piece with ceramic tile fire box surround and a fancy iron heating vent. Above the mantle is a cabinet with a leaded glass and bejeweled front. Directly beyond the entry parlor is the parlor sitting room with its bay window, vertical sliding porch door, and stained glass window. To the southeast of the entry parlor, through a sliding pocket door, is the dining room, which has shoulder-high wainscoting and another hand-carved chimney piece with an owl motif. All of the woodwork on the first floor is in original condition, and has never been painted. The dining room is stained in a dark mahogany, the rest is in yellow pine. All is old growth fir. The first floor also has maple floors throughout. The kitchen is entirely modernized. Proceeding up the stairs to the second floor, there are three bedrooms, a kitchen, and two bathrooms. Two bedrooms and one of the bathrooms have been restored to original condition. The master bedroom above the main parlor has an equally impressive view of the city and the Cascade mountains, including Mt. St. Helens and Mt. Hood. Proceeding up the open staircase to the topmost story, there are three unaltered bedrooms tucked into the attic space.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For NCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page 3

The appointments of the house are typically fancy on the first floor and plainer as one ascends to upper floors. All of the door knobs and hinges are original brass identical to patterns that can be found in the 1902 Sears Catalogue. Even the sash locks are of that particular pattern. The downstairs locks are all of solid brass; those of the upstairs are a combination of brass and iron, and the third floor hardware is solid iron, all in the same pattern.

There are no detectable alterations in the attic story. Apparently, this floor was not in use between the deaths of Catherine White in 1917 and Bibiana Maher, her granddaughter, in 1969. The second floor, however, underwent extensive renovation. Some of the modifications have been reversed by stripping and refinishing the woodwork, removing a false ceiling and lifting up a plywood floor. The master bedroom and the library are now returned to near original condition. The bathroom is also restored with the addition of a new oak floor, period wainscoting, old fixtures, and an antique stained glass window. The remainder of the second floor consists of a modern bathroom, kitchen and bedroom. This portion of the house was "remuddled" in the 1950s by Bibiana Maher to rent as an efficiency apartment. For no apparent reason, all of the original woodwork was removed and replaced with new. The first floor is entirely as it was in 1893, with the exception of the kitchen. However, the 1976 kitchen remodeling resulted in changes to fenestration in the back of the house. Four double-hung windows along the south and west walls were removed to accommodate new cabinets. To let in more light, floor-to-ceiling glass was added on the south wall bordering the back porch. In addition, in 1980, the current owner replaced one of the missing windows with an antique leaded glass window. Altogether, eight of the eleven rooms and the two major facades (north and west) are essentially in 1893 condition.

Because of the central location of the chimney, many of the rooms apparently had wood stove heat initially. It is possible to tie into the chimney venting systems from almost any of the rooms. The house currently has gas heat, an insulated attic, and wood-framed storm windows.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1892–1893 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The two and a half-story Queen Anne style house of frame construction at 1924 SW 14th Avenue in Southwest Portland, Oregon was built for the widowed Catherine White about 1893. White, an Irish Catholic and sometime journalist, made a home there for herself, her son, and four daughters. She resided in the house until her death in 1917. Thereafter, the house continued to be occupied by three of Catherine White's accomplished daughters: Honora, a dressmaker and shop owner; Margaret Rose, an attorney; and Marie, a school teacher. Panels of the front door and two elaborate chimneypieces were carved in floral motifs by Elizabeth White, another of the daughters, who taught at the Failing School, married, and died in 1914. The house is locally significant as one of the oldest houses on Gander Ridge. It represents the beginning of development of middle class housing on Portland Heights shortly before the turn of the century. It was declared a Portland Historical Landmark in 1982. With its picturesque asymmetry in the front elevation, flare-topped chimney, shingle-clad gables and dormers, its two-story polygonal window bay, and its wrap-around veranda, the Catherine White House embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Queen Anne style. With its squarish plan, simplified classical trim, veranda columns of the Tuscan order, and its lapped weatherboards, it also shows the growing influence of the Colonial Revival style. The property meets National Register criteria b and c because it possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling, and is associated with a family active in the business and professional affairs of Portland in the 1890s and throughout the first half of the 20th Century.

This house first appeared in local tax records of 1893, but according to the Portland directory of 1892, Catherine White had already moved to the address. The house was apparently completed in the later year, and it was one of the first houses on Gander Ridge. Catherine R. Doyle, the daughter of Hannah and James Doyle, was born in 1838 in Dublin, Ireland, and later emigrated to New York City. She married a man named William White and had five children: Honora (1866-1938), Elizabeth (1868-1914), Margaret Rose (1869-1954), Thomas (1876-1917), Marie (187?-1944). Sometime in the 1880s, William died, and Catherine White and the children moved to Portland. In 1886, the name of Catherine White first appears in the Portland directory. It shows her to be residing at the south end of Twelfth Avenue. Since Twelfth Avenue is now Fourteenth Avenue this would mean that Catherine White lived close to where the present house is located (Elizabeth Murphy Humphrey, 1981). In 1888, 1890, and 1891, her address is listed as the east side of Twelfth Avenue, between College and Hall Streets. This address could very well be the house itself. Was the house erected in 1888, or did the family live in a temporary structure until the present one was completed? In 1892, the street name was changed from Twelfth to Fourteenth Avenue, and in 1893 the address is listed as 430 SW Fourteenth Avenue. Thus, were it not for the tax records, and stylistic indicators, it could be difficult to pinpoint the date of construction. Stylistically, the house certainly postdates 1890.

Shortly after she moved into the house with her family, Elizabeth White began carving the chimney pieces in the entry and in the diningroom. She also carved an escutcheon and garland in the front door. These carvings remain in original condition. The entry fireplace is carved in motifs of ivy and berries along the sides, and potted lilies on either

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Portland, Oregon-Washington

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 1 10 5 2 4 2 5 10 5 10 3 19 6 8 10
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification The Catherine White House occupies Lot 6, Block 292 of the Portland Addition, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon. The nominated area includes a 20 by 40-foot portion of vacated S.W. 14th Avenue which adjoins Lot 6 at the northwest corner, and which is part of the developed grounds of the house.

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nancy and David Cutler

organization N/A date August 20, 1982

street & number 1924 S. W. 14th Avenue telephone (503) 223-9513

city or town Portland state Oregon 97201

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *David H. Talbot*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date January 31, 1983

For NPS use only

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

J. Melores Byers Entered in the National Register date *3/10/83*
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____
Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For NCRS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page

2

side of the cabinet overmantle. The diningroom fireplace displays a carved owl and flowers. In 1895-1896, Elizabeth taught at Failing School. She later married Charles R. Maher, a bookkeeper who lived at 531 SW Hall Street and was apparently a neighbor. They had two children, Bibiana and Richard. Elizabeth died in 1914, when Bibiana was about six years old, and apparently a struggle ensued between the White and Maher families as to who would raise the children. The Whites prevailed and Bibiana and Richard spent their formative years raised by their three spinster aunts: Honora, Margaret Rose, and Marie. Catherine White and her son Thomas lived only three more years, both passing away in 1917.

According to Doris Dix Atkins, who was born in the tower of the tall green house at 1931 S. W. Fourteenth Avenue, there were two disastrous events which occurred on the hillside in the early 1900s. Mrs. Atkins returned to the neighborhood in 1981 and described the fire that destroyed her father's house in 1903. Mr. Dix rebuilt the house in 1904, the year Mrs. Atkins was born. Although the fire in the Dix house did not threaten the White house, a landslide from the Dix backyard almost did. According to The Evening Telegram, January 17, 1911, there was a major landslide on Gander Ridge. In the 1890s and early 1900s, a good deal of the hillside was clear-cut for housing development. The loss of the trees affected soil stability and the residents were periodically confronted with landslides. This slide came down from approximately Fifteenth and College through the front yard of the Dix house, taking with it many tons of earth which were held back by a weak wooden retaining wall, and then continued on down the hill into the backs of other houses directly across Fourteenth Avenue from the White house. (Apparently there were two nearby houses, one above the other which closely resembled the house of Catherine White and her family). The subject house, however, was not damaged in that landslide or any of the others that followed.

Honora, the oldest of the three sisters, worked at Meier and Frank from 1888-1917, after which she opened her own dressmaking and dry goods shop at 335 S.W. Morrison Street, and was known as a button manufacturer as well.

Margaret Rose White had an interesting work history in that she was employed at Praeger Brothers from 1890-1897, later moved to Lipman and Wolfe as an assistant bookkeeper until 1909, and then worked for Cotton, Teal and Miner (a law firm) until she became a stenographer and secretary to city commissioner William L. Brewster between 1914-1916. Following this she went to law school at the University of Oregon College of Law, and entered the bar in 1925. She then practiced law until her death in 1954. She was a member of the Queen's Bench and the Oregon Bar Association.

Marie White, the baby of the family, was also a school teacher between 1894 and 1897. Following that it is not known what she did except that she was a "world traveler" and is said to have been to New Zealand and other parts of the Far East (Elizabeth Murphy Humphrey, 1981). Mrs. Loprinzi, who grew up in the Dineen house, which is directly next door to the White house, remembers as a child playing in the back yard. She particularly remembers Marie as being, "a very sweet, kindly lady" who worked very hard in the garden. The Whites were apparently fond of flowers and maintained beautiful grounds. The back yard still remains in much the same form as it was with a hidden garden visible only from the White house and Dineen house behind it.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For NCRS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page 3

For approximately thirty years the three surviving White sisters lived in the house together: Honora until 1938, Marie until 1944, and Margaret Rose until 1954. The White sisters were said to be aloof and very private. Many of the neighbors remember them and describe friendly but cordial relations. Some neighbors can still recall funerals of the White sisters which were held in the parlor room of this old house.

When Margaret Rose White died in 1954, Bibiana Maher inherited the house. She repaired much of the house and turned it into a duplex. She, like her aunts, never married and lived in the house until she died in 1969. She had a successful career as one of Portland's first policewomen. "Miss Maher was the first director of the night command of the women's division, which she joined in 1942. She retired after 22 years of service. Before joining the Police Bureau, she was a social worker for the Multnomah County Public Welfare Commission." (Oregon Journal, April 11, 1969, p.4.) Bibiana's brother, Richard Maher, married and had three children: a daughter, Jean Marie Maher, and two sons. In 1969, when Bibiana died, she left all of the furnishings in the house to a young woman named Bibiana Ries whom Bibiana Maher had become acquainted with after reading an article about her in the Catholic Sentinel. Ms. Ries's grandmother had tended Bibiana Maher as an infant and always like the name Bibiana. Later, she convinced her daughter to use this name for her baby. Ms. Ries still lives in Portland and still has all the original furniture from this house.

In 1970, the house was sold by the Maher estate to Frances Terrell, who was a music teacher at Portland State University. At one time she owned much property on the hill. Her intent had been to create a musical conservatory. The house was purchased in 1976 from her estate by Kenneth McDougall. McDougall remodeled the kitchen. In 1977 the house was purchased by the present owner, who, with consultation from William J. Hawkins, A.I.A., painted the exterior in 1978. The Cutlers have also restored much of the garden and interior of the house.

To date, the architect of the house is not identified. Treatment of the shingled gables and distinctive gable-roofed front dormer are reminiscent of the work of noted Portland architect Edgar M. Lazarus in the 1890s, but a solidly-based attribution has yet to be made.

The house occupies a prominent site on Gander Ridge. It is visible from most locations in downtown Portland and contributes to the West Hills skyline. It was among the first houses built on Gander Ridge and represents the beginning of the movement of the middle class into Portland Heights. The White House and its neighborhood were made accessible by cable car. Over the years, the house has witnessed the development of Gander Ridge, including construction of houses along Hall Street, which represented a real estate boom spurred by the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition of 1905, and displacement of landmarks in the immigrant neighborhood below, by construction of the Freeway. While Gander Ridge changes, the White House remains intact.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For NCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

9

Page 1

Newspapers and Periodicals

The Evening Telegram, Jan. 17, 19-1, Section 1, p. 1 (Landslide).

Oregonian, Feb. 20, 1944, p. 8 (Miss Marie White).

Oregon Journal, April 11, 1969, p. 4 (Retired Sgt. Maher).

Oregonian, Nov. 29, 1954, p. 15 (Attorney, Margaret Rose White).

Oregon Journal, Nov. 30, 1954, p. 9 (Attorney, Margaret Rose White).

Maps

Sanborn Insurance Map, 1908.

Books

Portland City Directories, 1886 through 1969.

Portland Block Book, Vol. 2, 1907, p. 49.

Other Sources

Riverview Cemetery Office, Portland, Oregon, data concerning death of White family members.

Multnomah County Courthouse

File No. #73481 - Margaret White

File No. #108522 - Bibiana Maher

Interviews

Dineen, James C., Portland, next door neighbor to White sisters.
Telephone communication May 16, 1981.

Atkins, Doris Dix, California, early neighbor of the White family. Born in the house at 1931 S. W. Fourteenth Avenue. Personal interview in July 1981.

Humphrey, Elizabeth Murphy, Portland, unrecorded telephone interview by Nancy Cutler. Mrs. Murphy is a cousin of the Whites.

Loprinzi, Claire Beth, Portland, next door neighbor to White sisters.
Personal interview May 12, 1982.

Lodwig, Mrs. Emily, Portland, unrecorded telephone interview by Nancy Cutler.
Mrs. Ludwig is a cousin on the Maher side.

Maher, Bernice, Eugene, unrecorded telephone interview by Nancy Cutler.
First cousin of Bibiana Maher.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For NCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

9

Page

2

Interviews (Cont'd.)

Ries, Bibiana, telephone interview by Nancy Cutler, June 15, 1982.

Ries, Elinor, Portland, unrecorded telephone interview by Nancy Cutler, 1981.
Mrs. Ries is the mother of Bibiana Ries.

Sidman, Jane, Portland, close neighbor and acquaintance of White sisters and
Bibiana Maher since the early 1940s. Personal interview by Nancy Cutler.