

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

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



81

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

1. Name

historic Corkish Apartments

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 2734-2740 SW Second Avenue not for publication

city, town Portland 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 checked="" 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	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> 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 E. G. Newville & J. R. Newville, Newville and Newville partnership

street & number 2740 SW Second Avenue

city, town Portland vicinity of Oregon state 97201

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Multnomah County Courthouse

street & number 1021 SW 4th Avenue

city, town Portland state Oregon 97201

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Lair Hill Conservation Dist. Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1977 federal state county local

depository for survey records City of Portland Bureau of Planning

city, town Portland state Oregon 97205

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Lair Hill Conservation District is a sub-area of Old South Portland, an area which originally stretched west from the Willamette River to SW 5th, and north from Pennoyer Street to Harrison. Located on the west side of the Willamette River and just south of present-day Downtown Portland Lair Hill District is a 17.26-acre area triangular in shape, the boundaries of which are generally the same topographic features that historically defined the neighborhood. The district is bounded on the east by Front Avenue, which runs parallel with the Willamette River, the West Hills, and on the north by the former Arthur Street Gulch.

South Portland developed primarily as a mixed residential/business community between 1862 and 1900. Architectural styles within the neighborhood are varied, ranging from vernacular farmhouses in the Rural Gothic tradition to Queen Anne and Eastlake styles. Wood frame construction predominates.

In the late 1870s, construction activity crossed the Arthur Street Gulch from the downtown and spread south along First Street. A tightly clustered group of homes, tenements, and small businesses was built at the south end of the First Street bridge on Block 59 in the Caruthers Addition. About 1890, one or more small buildings on Lot 5 were demolished and the existing 2½ story, 4-unit, Queen Anne Style apartment building was constructed in their place. The building has historically functioned as rental property, and the half dozen owners of the property since the building was constructed, only the Thiberts, owners from 1948-1980, and the present owners have lived on the premises.

The foundation and other major structure components of the building are sound. The wood exterior while intact, has suffered from deferred maintenance over the past ten years, as has the majority of the interior. The present owners are rehabilitating the building and bringing the living units to a state of utility.

The building is located in Caruther's Addition to Caruther's Addition to the City of Portland. It occupies the west 44' of Lot 5 of Block 59. The building has a 47-foot frontage on SW Second Avenue, and a 39-foot frontage on SW Meade Street.

The hip-roofed frame building has a rectilinear plan, 47' x 39', and is 2½ stories above a concrete and brick foundation. An eight inch thick brick wall, possibly built as a fire break, divides the structure from basement to attic into north and south halves. Due to a grade change about 1900 along SW Meade Street and Second Avenue, the level of the sidewalk rose about six feet and the basement is now below the level of the surrounding streets. The basement level has beveled vertical wood siding and fixed light windows along 3 of the 4 exposures. Beneath the porch on the first level are two large wood doors that lead into the two sections of the divided basement.

The first story level has beveled horizontal wood siding. The second and attic levels are clad with shingles of varying coursed patterns. The west facade is divided into 3 wide bays. Each of the outer bays at the first story level are slant bays decorated with wood carved panels, leaded stained glass windows, and corner brackets below a belt cornice. Other windows on the first and second levels are one-over-one, double hung sash with plain frames for the most part. Those in gabled sections are coupled or single bay windows with bracketed sills and paneled lintels.

Cross-axial frontal gables at either end of the west face contain round arched openings framed by similarly arched and bracketed vergeboards of fancy cut-out work. The facade is unified by a bracketed cornice beneath these gable ends. A similarly treated wall dormer is centered in the south face fronting SW Meade. A pair of entrances recessed between the ground story slant bays is sheltered by a porch with bracketed entablature supported by three pairs of square Tuscan columns with entasis atop a solid, paneled railing. Originally, the outer bays of the facade were pavilions, and the space over the porch was not filled. In the intervening years,

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

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



Continuation sheet Corkish Apartments

Item number 7

Page 1

however, the area above the porch is thought to have been enclosed to gain more interior floor space in the second story. If so, the modification was carried out at an earlier date with materials and detail to match the main volume. Two formally-placed brick chimneys with flared tops rise above the roof top. Skylights in the roof deck light the second level units.

The main floor units have one bedroom each. The bathroom is in the rear of the building and opens off the kitchen. The second floor area consists of two two-bedroom units. There is an open hallway off the landing at the top of the interior stairway from the front porch. Off this landing opens both bedrooms, the kitchen and the bath. The living room is reached through a corner of the kitchen. The toilet facilities appear to have been updated about 1950.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates	ca. 1890	Builder/Architect	Unknown
-----------------------	----------	--------------------------	---------

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The well-preserved four-unit Queen Anne Style apartment building at the NE corner of SW 2nd and Meade, in SW Portland, was constructed about 1890 for John Corkish. The building is a prime landmark at the north edge of the 17-acre Lair Hill District which was declared a City of Portland Conservation District in 1977. A National Register nomination proposal for the district has failed to gain local approval to date. The building has fulfilled a rental property function from the time of its construction to the present day. The original owner did not occupy the building, nor did he reside elsewhere in the immigrant neighborhood. An Isle of Man native, Corkish emigrated to the United States around 1877 at the age of 17. He arrived in Portland in 1884 as agent for the Continental Oil Company, which he subsequently served as western superintendent. Corkish eventually went into business on his own and formed and directed two manufacturing corporations located in Washington state. He lived in Portland, however, until his death in 1916. The rental property on Lair Hill represents one of the projects which enabled Corkish to build his capital within a few years of his arrival in Portland. Except for the rebuilding of front porch steps following a change in street grade, possible enclosure of space over the front porch, an overlay of composition roof cover, and possible loss of roofline cresting, the building has not been altered externally. The interior, too, is little altered and is presently being refurbished for continued apartment use. Finish details are standard for the period. Having been designed for multi-family housing, the building contains no focal staircases nor fireplaces. With its flare-top chimneys, imbricated shingle siding, and its bracket, panel and vergeboard decoration of fancy cut-out work, it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Queen Ann Style. However, its formal plan and facade organization are unusual for a style which normally relied upon picturesque asymmetry. It possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association with the historic period of development on Portland's Lair Hill.

Lair Hill contains what remains of Portland's foremost immigrant neighborhood. The city grew from 800 persons in 1860 to 17,500 in 1880. By the turn of the century, the entire city was feeling the impact of exporting Oregon's lumber, wheat, and other commodities. Immigrants flocked to Portland to fill the available jobs and usually found a home in South Portland. For several succeeding generations, new arrivals to the city settled here, started new businesses and became established. Predominant were people of Jewish and Italian background, but French, Turkish, Sicilian, Black and Asian groups were represented also. In the early days, Lair Hill was a community of "expectation and hope." Following is the account of the district's initial development from the Lair Hill Conservation District National Register nomination proposal by John M. Tess in 1978.

"In 1847, Elizabeth Caruthers and her son Finice arrived from Tennessee and each filed donation land claims for the west side of the Willamette River just north of the present Ross Island Bridge. At that time, the natural topography was dominated by the gulches along Arthur and Gloyer Streets, and a creek that flowed through present day Duniway Park provided clean drinking water.

As more and more settlers came to Portland, (the city grew from 800 persons in 1860 to 17,500 in 1880) the Caruthers' lands were platted for development. Streets were laid out in the familiar 200 by 200 foot grid pattern, lots were sold, and homes sprouted up. The rich farmland along the river's edge gave way to sawmills and factories.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Tess, John M., Lair Hill Conservation District, National Register nomination proposal, 6/3/78.
 Oregon Historical Society: Photographs, Scrapbooks.
 Portland Block Book 1907, Multnomah County Assessment Records, City of Portland Archives,
 Sanborn Insurance Maps, City Directories, Pioneer National Trust Company, Multnomah County
 Recording Department (Deeds, Mortgages, Liens).

10. Geographical Data

ACCEPTED FOR LISTING
 UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property less than one
 Quadrangle name Portland, Oregon-Washington

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	0	5	2	5	1	2	10	5	10	3	18	6	9	10
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone		Easting			Northing				

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

West 44 feet of Lot 5 of Block 59 of Caruthers Addition to Caruthers Addition to the City of Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon

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

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Edward G. Newville

organization _____ date October 10, 1980

street & number 2740 SW Second Avenue telephone 503/295-2103

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date June 30, 1981

For HCERS use only

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

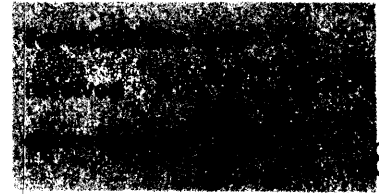
 Entered in the National Register date 12/2/81

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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

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



81

Continuation sheet Corkish Apartments

Item number 8

Page 1

Construction of a railroad connecting the downtown wharfs to the Tualatin Valley wheat-fields was the first major project to affect the area. Built in 1868 over wooden trestles spanning the gulches, the line ran along the base of the west hills where Barbur Boulevard is today. Horsedrawn trolleys along First Avenue introduced transit to the neighborhood. In 1889, this became the Fulton Park line, the second electrical trolleyline on the Pacific coast.

As early as 1862, South Portland had been viewed as a preferable location for a Jewish community. Early residents of the area spread the word describing opportunities. Later arrivals were drawn toward the area by shared ties of culture and language. This phenomenon was the foundation that saw the area develop with an atmosphere not unlike European villages left behind.

By the turn of the century, the entire city was feeling the impact of exporting Oregon lumber, wheat, and other commodities. Immigrants flocked to Portland to fill needed jobs and usually found a home in South Portland. This second wave of new arrivals formed in this area one of the city's most culturally diverse neighborhoods. Predominant were people of Jewish and Italian backgrounds, but French, Turkish, Sicilian, Black and Asian groups were present in sizable numbers."¹

South of Arthur Street Gulch, development concentrated at the south end of the First Avenue Bridge, on Block 59 of the Caruthers Addition. Small tenements, private residences, and small businesses (a bakery, cigar factory, drug store, and wood working shop) were tightly clustered together on a single block. The existing 4-unit apartment building was built on the SW corner of the block for John Corkish about 1890, following the removal of one or more small tenements or other buildings. The contractor and architect (if any) are as yet unidentified. The building served as family residences for the ethnic blue-collar workers who settled in the district.

The structure is one of two Queen Anne Style apartment buildings in the district, but it is the better preserved example of the two, and it is the only one still serving its original purpose.

The original owner of the apartments, John Corkish, did not live in South Portland. He did, however, have a history not unlike many of the immigrant residents of the neighborhood. Born on the Isle of Man in the Irish Sea, Corkish came to the United States with a ship-master uncle at the age of 17. After living for 5 years in both Cleveland and Cheyenne Wyoming, where he married a school teacher, he came to Portland in 1884, acting as an agent for the Continental Oil Company. He eventually became the western superintendent of that company, a position he later resigned to engage in business in his own account. He formed and directed two large corporations in the northwest: The Puget Sound Pipe Company in Olympia, Washington, which in 1885 was the only manufacturer of thin wood shell pipe west of the Mississippi, and the Goldendale Milling Company in Goldendale, Washington. In Portland, where he lived until his death in 1916, Corkish was also a charter member of Grace Methodist Church. Like most of the immigrants who lived in the apartments that Corkish built, he arrived in the county without influence or capital and with meager formal education, but he improved his fortune through hard work and shrewd investment.

¹ John M. Tess, Lair Hill Conservation District National Register nomination form, 6/8/78.