

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

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

For NPS use only
received **MAY 14 1984**
date entered **JUN 14 1984**

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

1. Name

historic Shelton-McMurphy House and Grounds

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number 303 Willamette Street N/A not for publication

city, town Eugene N/A vicinity of Fourth Congressional District

state Oregon code 41 county Lane code 039

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Dr. Eva Johnson and Lane County

street & number 303 Willamette Street

city, town Eugene N/A vicinity of state Oregon 97401

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lane County Courthouse

street & number 172 E. 8th

city, town Eugene state Oregon 97401

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title City of Eugene Landmark has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1975 federal state county local

depository for survey records Department of Housing and Community Conservation

city, town 777 Pearl Street, Room 106, Eugene state Oregon 97401

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Shelton-McMurphy House designed by Walter D. Pugh of Salem, Oregon, and built by W. H. Abrams and Nels Roney in 1888, is an eclectic, two-story house located on 1.25 acres on the south side of Skinner's Butte in Eugene, Oregon. The property originally included the entire butte and was surrounded by numerous outbuildings and plantings.

The house is situated on a hill overlooking the train depot and the city, and is isolated from other residences. The house is designed in the Queen Anne style. Notable elements include "the elaborately eclectic, decorative details achieved in carved and turned wood; the heavily bracketed and deep cornices; strongly accented gables; the ornate open porch; and, the large circular tower".¹

The property originally included the whole of Skinner's Butte. In the late 1880s structures on the property included the house, a barn and carriage house, an outbuilding, various walls and fences. In the early 1900s a garage was built to the east of the house. In the years that followed, the bar, carriage house and outbuildings were removed. Sale of portions of the original property eventually brought the acreage to the present 1.25 acres, located on Section 30, Township 175, Range 3 west, Willamette Meridian, Tax Lot 9200.² Of the original structures, the house and garage have survived.

Many of the trees and shrubs planted by the Sheltons and McMurphys also remain. The plantings appear to be carefully thought out and have added much to the uniqueness of the property. Some of the trees include California Incense cedar, Big Leaf maple, Douglas fir, Magnolia, and various fruit trees. These and other plantings have grown over the years to produce a picturesque setting for the "castle on the hill" in sharp contrast to the "barren hill" seen in early photographs. Also built in recent years are a greenhouse, a chicken coop and a dog kennel, all located on the west side of the property. These elements are unobtrusive and were designed so that they could be easily dismantled.³

The house is two stories, with a full basement and a finished attic. It adopts an irregular plan around a central hall, features asymmetrical masses and much detail and variety of surface textures to produce a dynamic composition.

The roof is highly irregular and includes elements such as overhanging gables, dormers, an octagonal turret, hips and a flat deck roof with ornate iron work surrounding it.

The house is built on a massive basalt foundation. On the exterior the horizontal differentiations of floors is achieved with a layer of wood shingles between the first and second floors; and on the second floor balcony by lattice work. A third horizontal band is composed of various angles of the pitched roofs that enclose the attic area.

A vertical differentiation of elements occurs at all the major first floor rooms. They are articulated by a bay which moves out beyond the simple rectangular plan of the building. These elements extend through the second floor and are further articulated with a gable or turret on the roof.

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The overall house dimensions are approximately 54' x 37'. The house is rectangular in plan with the central hall running perpendicular to the rectangle on the north-south axis. The stairs leading up to the second floor and to the small stairs leading to the servant's chamber are at the end of the 8' x 27.3' central hall. Flanking this hall is a sitting room to the east and a parlor to the west. These rooms form a rough semi-circle around the central hall. All the rooms on the ground floor have twelve foot ceilings except for the kitchen and bath which had 10' 9" ceilings.

The sitting room is 14' x 19' with four 8' tall bay windows looking south, a fireplace, a pocket door leading into a bedroom and another door leading into an office. The parlor dimensions are 13' x 15' with five 8' tall bay windows looking to the west and south in the turret. Double pocket doors lead into the dining room to the north. The dining room has two slightly shorter windows looking west. It also has a door leading back into the central hall at the base of the stairs and another door leading into the pantry on the north wall.

Part of the original back porch was remodeled in 1952 into a small bedroom.⁴ A door at the east end of the kitchen leads into this room. To the south of this bedroom is the remodeled bathroom. This bathroom is bordered on the other side by the original larger first floor bedroom previously mentioned. The first floor bathroom was at one time the only bathroom in the house. Its dimensions were 9' x 10.5' and included a large 8' tub. Off the bathroom to the east are two closets. The original bedroom has two 8' tall windows looking east and originally had a conservatory, or sun room, to the south and facing onto the porch.

On the second floor the hall runs directly over and parallel to the central hall on the first floor. To the east is one bedroom oriented to the south. To the west of the central hall are two bedrooms, one over the downstairs parlor, and one over the dining room. Originally separated from this organization and with its own stair access from the landing midway up the main stairs, is the servant's chamber. This is now a bedroom and is also accessible from the bedroom over the sitting room.

The foundation is made of random ashlar basalt rock laid with mortar with sandstone lintels over the basement windows. In 1977, the foundation piers for the front porch were restored to resemble the original ones.⁵ The lattice work which surrounds and encloses the base of the porch is the original. The pattern of lattice work is continued at a slightly larger scale around the upper balcony balustrade. The metal stair railing on the front porch is considered temporary and replaces the original wooden railing.

The walls are balloon frame construction using 2 x 4 studs, 2 x 10 joists and 16" on center using cut nails. The exterior finish is predominantly of 1 x 8 shiplap with vee edges with no sheathing or underlayment. Small portions of the exterior siding are accomplished with wooden panels and wooden shingles.

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The front porch extends the full length of the front portion of the house. In 1919 the conservatory, or sun room, was enlarged and expanded out onto the front porch in a manner sensitive to the original details shortening the porch by about twelve feet.⁶ This was done in order to construct an office for the ailing Mr. McMurphy. The porch is open with ornate detailing and is further articulated by the lattice balustrade which surrounds the second floor balcony above. There is also a smaller back porch with access to the kitchen, on the north-east corner of the house.

The original main chimney, set diagonally within the rectangle of the house, was replaced in 1952 after a fire did some damage. The new chimney is set parallel to the rectangle of the house and has been built in a modern style with none of the detail seen on the original. The sitting room mantle and fireplace were reconstructed and restored to their original design at the same time. The original kitchen chimney has been removed to below the main roof eaves and blocked with masonry fill.⁷

The interior construction includes floors of T & G Douglas fir or hemlock. The dining room has similar flooring material but is contrasted with a diagonal flooring pattern. Many of the floors have beautiful throw rugs on them, some of which may be original.

The staircase in the central hall of the house uses soft and hard wood of standard mill work. The baluster and newel posts are of carved solid walnut. The balustrade is of an unusual design with a small partial arch placed within a frame located between each post about two-thirds up each post. Graining is applied on the outside edge of each stair which is of the same finish applied to the pocket door's decorative panels leading into the sitting room and parlor. A flower motif is repeated on this stair detail as it is in several other places in the house, i.e. brackets, front door transom and a carved fireplace mantle.

Interior doors are for the most part original. In the major public rooms on the ground floor are pocket doors. The two doors leading into the parlor and sitting rooms are double sliding doors and are one foot higher than the other pocket doors leading from these rooms into the dining room and the first floor bedroom, respectively. The remainder of the doors in the house are the hinge type, except for the front door which has two hinged doors at the same height as the major pocket doors of the hallway. The large transom over the front door is of etched glass with another floral motif. The four bedroom doors in the second floor have transoms although one has been blocked by a recent alteration. Some of the second floor doors have been stripped to the wood. The original hardware still exists in good condition on most of the doors in the house. This hardware is of fancy wrought iron in a Victorian design.

Almost all of the windows are double-hung, one-over-one sash. The exceptions, which are recent additions, include the long horizontal bands set in the turret, and large front and west gables just below the eaves. These were originally wooden panels but were replaced in 1952.⁸ The majority of the windows maintain

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the verticality of the major front windows. The lower windows are rectangular in shape, while many of the upper windows have Romanesque arches. The interior hardware is original and includes ornate locking mechanisms and vertical sliding wooden shutters. The latter additions of the sleeping porch in 1912 broke away from the verticality of the original windows and developed a horizontal band that wrapped around the back (north) side and east corner of the second floor.⁹

As was common in late Victorian or Queen Anne "Villas" of the period, draperies were hung over the alcove entrance and at the end of the hall to prevent drafts and contain the heat in the winter. Brackets are still intact and a heavy curtain is still in use at the entry alcove of the house.

Interior wall and ceiling finishes consist of plaster on wood lath and are part of the original condition. Ornamental plaster rosettes are found on the first floor, from which hang light fixtures. These fixtures are believed to have been installed around the turn of the century replacing the original kerosene fixtures.¹⁰

On the second floor there have been changes made by various tenants over the past twenty years. Gypsum board and wood fiber board in some places and T & G wood wainscoting have been applied over the original plaster. Over the sitting room in the upstairs chamber a lowered ceiling creating a storage loft has been built.

A paint study done by Alfred Staehli states that the exterior of the house was originally painted a "light green body color. . . and a darker gray-green trim color."¹¹ The exterior then went through several changes in color combinations until 1951, when Dr. Eva Johnson had it painted in order to duplicate the original color scheme.

The interior colors are generally from "the typical grayish ochres, umbers or greens of Kalsomines."¹² Over the years there have been changes in most of the rooms, but they have been, for the most part, subtle and have often stayed within the general hue or intensity of the original color. The rosettes were originally gilt or bronzed, but have been painted to match the present color of the room in which they are situated.

Picture moldings in the dining room, parlor, hall and sitting room are original and covered with gesso and gilding. Some of the original built-in furniture is still intact on the first floor. These include the sitting room china cabinet, a parlor corner cabinet and several sideboards. An original marble wash bowl with a wooden cupboard below is in the second floor hall.

Additional Alterations

In 1912, a bathroom was added to the north end of the upstairs hall. Also a sleeping porch next to the bathroom, situated over the kitchen was added, as was a stair leading up to the attic. Around 1950, after the Johnson's purchased the house, the sleeping porch was converted into a kitchen and sitting room and a stair was added down to the old back porch.

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The attic, which was partially finished in 1912, was further remodeled in the early 1950s. These changes included new gypsum dry wall and windows to replace the wooden panels below the eaves on the turrets and major gables. Also at this time, the third floor turret was remodeled to allow for a tiny museum for Dr. Curtis Johnson's Asian art collection and bits of military medical artifacts.

At this time the turret roof was reconstructed to resemble the original design which had been altered in 1915 during repairs. However, the present design is not quite the same as the original. The base configuration is slightly different as is the wrought iron finial.

Other alterations to the original design include a 1915 replacement of the wooden front porch stairs with concrete or masonry. Later, in 1977, the stairs were changed back to the original wooden condition except for the lowest stair which is wood instead of the original stone.

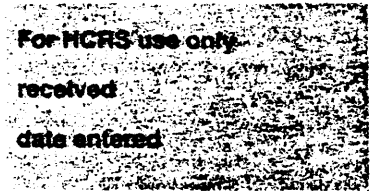
In the basement, the original design had an open plan with furnace and main flue under the sitting room fireplace and the laundry room directly below the kitchen. The central stair continues down to the basement. Another stair leads from the north wall up to the back yard. In the 1950s, the basement was partitioned into bedrooms and a bathroom.¹³

Judging from our own observations and the "Maintenance, Preservation and Restoration Guide for the Shelton-McMurphy-Johnson House" presented by Alfred Staehli for Lane County, it appears that most of the changes which have been made in the house are possible to restore to the original or nearly original condition. The addition of the sleeping porch and upstairs bath and the expansion of the conservatory on the main floor were carefully integrated into the existing structure, and, as such, might be preserved as a testimony to the changes in values and life style of the people that lived there.

- 1 Marion D. Ross, A Century of Architecture in Oregon, 1859-1959, American Institute of Architects, Women's Architectural League, June, 1959.
- 2 Official Record of Descriptions of Real Properties, Office of County Assessor Lane County, Oregon, No. 9419, Deed No. 430/616 4617 (1967).
- 3 Information in a letter to Judith Rees, City of Eugene, from June Stewart on September 9, 1980.
- 4 Interview with June Stewart, daughter of Eva F. Johnson, Eugene, Oregon, October 17, 1983.
- 5 Alfred Staehli, "Maintenance, Preservation and Restoration Guide for the Shelton-McMurphy House," 1978, pp. 1-3.

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- 6 Ibid., pp. 1-2.
- 7 Ibid., pp. 2-9.
- 8 Ibid., pp. 1-2.
- 9 Ibid., pp. 1-2.
- 10 Ibid., pp. 1-4.
- 11 Ibid., part 2 A, "Paint Color Study."
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid., pp. 2-14.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input 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 1888 **Builder/Architect** Roney & Abrams/Walter D. Pugh

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Skinner's Butte is the major topographical and historical feature of Eugene, being the site of the first settlement by Eugene Skinner for whom the town and butte were named. The Shelton-McMurphy House's location on the south side of the butte, facing the city, makes it an extremely prominent landmark. For Eugeneans, its description as the "green house on the hill" is sufficient.¹ In fact, it is impossible to view the house from any angle without also seeing the butte. Immediately after its completion, this Queen Anne style mansion was described as "palatial, elegant and an ornament to the city."² "The house is grand in style, and in its siting, yet it is modestly groomed, with the property retaining some of the vestiges of the farm with its array of goats, chickens and dogs."³ The house sustains its uniqueness with characteristics of urban, suburban and rural homes. We feel it is eligible under criteria "b" and "c."

This property has played an integral role in the evolution of the north end of Eugene. Dominated by the butte, this part of town was Eugene's first settled community. Many of Eugene's oldest and best preserved buildings are in this area. An historic district now lies to the east of the butte. The Southern Pacific Depot and the Oregon Electric Station, which are on the National Register are situated just south of the butte off of Willamette Street. The Shelton-McMurphy House was given landmark status in 1975 by the City of Eugene.

The house has remained in a unique position from which to view the progress of the railroad, countryside and the south expansion of town to Spencer's Butte. It remains isolated amidst an urban setting. "Located in the heart of town, isolated yet bordering two very public places, the butte and the railroad depot, the property maintains a unique role as history-maker and history-observer."⁴

Another unique characteristic of the house was that it has been occupied by only three families, all of whom have been public-spirited.⁵ This fact, added to the house's significant characteristics and uniqueness, make it important that the property remain protected and in the public domain to be enjoyed. In addition to these physical aspects, the house is significant because of the involvement of the owners in the development and progress of the City of Eugene.

Thomas Winthrop Shelton was born in Missouri in 1884. His parents later settled in Yamhill County. Thomas graduated from medical school and in 1870 married Adah Lucas who was born in Monmouth (Polk County) in 1852. Her family were founders of Monmouth College. Alberta, their only child was born 1872 in Salem.⁶

In March of 1873, Shelton and his family moved to Eugene where he established himself as a physician and a druggist. He purchased property at the north end of town in two segments. The actual boundaries of the property are unclear, but the first segment was purchased in July of 1883 from N. L. Packard. In 1884, he purchased an additional parcel of land from E. and R. Anderson. The property now extended from Lincoln to High Streets and from the O & C Railroad to the

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1.25 acres

Quadrangle name Eugene, East

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	0	4	9	2	7	8	0	4	8	7	8	0	8	0
Zone		Easting					Northing							

B

Zone		Easting					Northing							

C

Zone		Easting					Northing							

D

Zone		Easting					Northing							

E

Zone		Easting					Northing							

F

Zone		Easting					Northing							

G

Zone		Easting					Northing							

H

Zone		Easting					Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

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

state None code county code

state None code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nancy Sussman and Robert Warwick

organization Department of Architecture date December 1983

street & number University of Oregon telephone 686-3656

city or town Eugene state Oregon

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

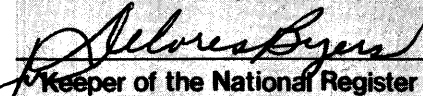
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date April 27, 1984

For NPS use only

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

 Entered in the National Register date 6-14-84

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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Willamette River. This comprised nearly one-half the original land of Eugene Skinner and most of the Butte property. These segments were later subdivided. One, called Shelton's Addition to Eugene, was dedicated in March 1886 and included the north-west segment of property between Washington and Lincoln Streets and between Clark and Third. Three years later, in 1889, a second segment between Washington and Lawrence and between Clark and Cheshire Streets was subdivided.⁷

The year 1886 brought about another important event involving Dr. Shelton. Along with Charles Lauer and Associates he was granted the first water franchise in Eugene and built the reservoir, which still exists, on the east side of Skinner's Butte. Capping the highest point on the butte, the reservoir marked a sign of progress for Eugene.⁸

In May of 1887, the construction process on the Shelton House began. Dr. Shelton had hired Rob McGhee to level 200 square feet at the base of Skinner's Butte for the house. Roney and Abrams began the foundation of basalt rock in random ashlar which was completed in July when the framing work began. Work progressed steadily until a fire in the fall of 1887. Apparently set by a disgruntled workman, the fire began shortly after midnight on November 26, and the house was destroyed down to the stone foundation. A train standing north of the main depot blocked the Willamette Street entrance and made it impossible to have access to the house in order to curtail the flames. In December of that year, the Sheltons' decided to resume construction of the house as originally planned. The house was completed sometime in October when the Sheltons' were first reported to occupy the house.⁹

Dr. Shelton was interested in obtaining an extension of Willamette Street through the O & C Railroad. At the August 30, 1888 meeting of the University of Oregon Board of Regents, Shelton tried to rally support for the project. The University of Oregon was interested in a portion of the butte crest for an observatory. Shelton had considered deeding a piece of land to the University if they would grant his assistance in getting the right-of-way. The Board, reluctant to get involved with railroad land swaps, refused. In September, 1888, Shelton agreed to sell the University a plot 100' x 180' on the east crown of the butte which included a deed stating a right-of-way for egress and ingress to and from the tract to be included. W. H. Abrams was awarded the contract and a mini-remission of Villard Hall became the observatory. This building was left unattended over the years and became such a public nuisance that the University had the building destroyed in 1905. In the spring of 1892, Shelton was instrumental in putting in a roadway up to the top of Skinner's Butte with its beginning at the intersection of Third and Pearl Streets.¹⁰

Shelton, known for his public-spirit, was "deeply involved in the social and economic fabric of 19th century Eugene."¹¹ In addition to his medical practice and role in the city's first water company, he owned at least one commercial block in Eugene as well as land outside of the city. When he died of leukemia and pneumonia in February of 1893, at the age of 49, he was said to have amassed a small fortune. This he left to his wife Adah and his daughter Alberta.¹²

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Not much is known of Adah. Her grandchildren recollect her love of beautiful things and a deep interest in gardening, which seems evident on the Shelton property. She moved to Portland after Alberta's wedding to Robert McMurphy in July of 1893. She died in 1910. Alberta (Mrs. Robert McMurphy) was a member of the first graduating class at the University of Oregon School of Music. She was involved in numerous civic and social affairs. Robert McMurphy was born in 1866 in Pierce County, Wisconsin. He was employed by the railroad company before moving to Portland in 1889. There he accepted the position of personal secretary to George Andres of the O & C Railroad Company. Robert was also very active in civic affairs as well as engaging in his livelihood of real estate and insurance. He helped organize the Willamette Valley Woolen Manufacturing Company in 1901, and became the first vice-president of the Eugene Commercial Club in 1902. McMurphy also sat on the Eugene Water Works and City Park Boards.¹³

In Eugene, as in other parts of the country, the 19th century railroad was seen as a source of pride. Due to their proximity to each other, the railroad, the butte and Shelton-McMurphy House shared a unique relationship to each other. When considering its location near the railroad station, the house and its siting must be taken into consideration as a 19th century phenomenon. The railroad and the grounds were much admired by active citizens. The Sheltons' and the McMurphys' were very much aware of this and participated in such beautification activities. The house was in a unique position from which to view such development.¹⁴

Beautification efforts began in 1908 with the construction of the third railroad passenger station. A standard Northwest railroad station plan of brick and concrete was utilized. In order to create a good first impression of the depot area, a landscape architect was hired to design gardens which would act to hide unsightly buildings. This trend was called the Railroad Gardening Movement, and along with the City Beautiful Movement, found its way to Eugene. In Oregon, it was said to be the first time that a community and a railroad company worked hand in hand for civic improvement. It provided advertising value as well as a place to stroll. Mr. Chace, a Portland architect, was selected as the ground's designer. The park was 1000' x 150' wide, approximately five acres of land. The station acted as a midpoint between two distinctly different gardens. The east side was in a formal Italian style, all roses, with ornamental vases. The west side was an Alpine garden. It contained ferns and palms and other foliage planted among rocks. Lawns with trees and shrubs surrounded the gardens with a path system of granite walkways connecting them. The garden was unique and Western in character. It was dedicated in June of 1909. An electric fountain was erected in November of that year and dedicated by Auxillary president Alberta McMurphy. There now seemed to be a synonymous blending between the railroad and the ornate Shelton-McMurphy House.¹⁵

Eugene's first public park became a reality in November of 1906, when the City Council accepted a donation of T. G. Hendricks Park. In 1908, the Willamette Valley Company, owners of the reservoir and water works located on Skinner's Butte, became interested in selling its holdings to the city for yet another park. Five years later this sale occurred and the private land held between the

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butte and the house was no longer. The butte underwent a tree planting campaign in another beautification effort. This occurred on Armistice Day, 1934. A fireplace on the north side of the butte, still remaining, was also dedicated at this time. Alberta McMurphy was similarly involved.¹⁶

Major changes occurred in the house between 1894 and 1904, with the addition of six children to the McMurphy family.¹⁷ Daughter Adah McMurphy Brown (Mrs. Percy) recalled times at the house. These included holiday and birthday parties with as many as forty guests who would sit down at a long table together. Fourth of July was replete with fireworks, homemade ice cream and pink punch. Weddings and gatherings of fraternal, civic, historical and social groups were common. Even though privately owned, the house remained as popular a public place as it had been with the Shelton's.¹⁸

1919 marked the semi-retirement of Robert McMurphy causing an addition of office space to be made at the house as previously described. Robert died a sudden death enroute to California in 1921. Alberta died in 1949, her last years spent in a Portland nursing home.¹⁹

In 1951, Dr. Eva Johnson purchased the house along with her husband, Dr. H. C. Johnson. She is the daughter of Idaho Cogswell Frazer Campbell, a family of prominent Lane County pioneers. The house carries a memorable role in Dr. Johnson's own childhood since she grew up in a house on the east side of the butte on Pearl Street, between Second and Third. She spent considerable time on the property, considered a "veritable paradise for a child."²⁰ She fulfilled a dream of owning the house and has continued to live there with her daughter, son-in-law and close friend Corel Moran, after her husband's death. The family occupied the first floor, as the second floor and basement were converted to apartments in the 1950s.

Dr. Eva Johnson was instrumental in securing riverfront park areas for the city which now connect Skinner's Butte and Alton Baker Parks.²¹ She also helped save Lane County's Celeste Campbell Park from being closed, and in saving the Pioneer Cemetery from displacement.²² Also of note is the corner turret room which has come to house Dr. Curtis Johnson's collection of Asian art and military memorabilia.²³

At the time of the sale in 1950, the property was 4.5 acres. Dr. Johnson sold 3.25 acres to Evergreen Union Retirement Association in 1966, leaving the house on 1.25 acres.²⁴ Except for some plantings and trees, the front walk to the end of Willamette Street and the garage, there is little evidence of the original ground, pastures, barns and/or carriage house remaining. Yo-Po-Ah Terrace, an elderly facility, is now in the location of the original barn and carriage drive.²⁵ In 1975, Mrs. Johnson deeded the house, property and garage to Lane County, to be overseen by the Lane County Museum. Presently, she maintains life-estate privileges and continues to rent to students in order to generate income to cover routine expenses. When Dr. Johnson leaves the house, the county resumes responsibility. A quit-claim deed was signed December 30, 1975, stating that in case of a debilitating fire which would cause the house to be beyond feasible repair, the property shall remain in public hands with preference given to a park. At present, there is no policy or plan regarding the future of the Shelton-McMurphy property.²⁶

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Walter D. Pugh (1863-1942) was an architect from Salem, Oregon. He was the son of David H. and Catherine Fitz, children of Oregon pioneers. Pugh began his career in Salem (Marion County) around 1880 as a carpenter and builder. Listed as an architect, he went to work for the Salem firm of McCauley and Wickersham, one of the city's most prominent, and then for Fred A. Legg. Among his works (now demolished) are the Old Salem City Hall, 1893, a replacement dome on the Old State Capitol, 1893, the First Salem High School, 1893, and the Eugene Opera House. Pugh also did buildings at the University of Oregon and Oregon State College. Other buildings with parts remaining include the Thomas Kay Woolen Mill, 1890, Chemawa Indian School, a state penitentiary, and the south portion of the Bush-Breyman Block, 1889, in Salem. In an interview with Mrs. Pugh, after her husband's death, she noted that "his most precious book" was The Student's Instructor in Drawing and Working: The Five Orders of Architecture, published in 1893, which is perhaps indicative of his 19th century sources. (Capital Journal 8/3/72). It is not known how Pugh received the Shelton-McMurphy House commission. Speculation has it that Pugh may have been an acquaintance of the Shelton's as both had ties in Salem.

Nels Roney was born in Auglaize, Ohio in September of 1853. He began learning carpentry at the age of 19 and apprenticed in Missouri. He moved to Eugene in 1876 and was employed by Miller and Son, bridge builders, until 1882. Roney is best known for his extensive bridge building in Lane County. When the railroad extended south from Roseburg to Redding, Roney built many bridges (now demolished). Roney was also employed by the State as supervisor of construction for Villard Hall at the University of Oregon. He built many private residences as well as his own, located at 6th and Jefferson (now demolished). Roney's other buildings include Lane County Bank, Loan and Savings Bank, Hotel Smeede, Episcopal, Christian and Methodist Episcopal Churches, the Eugene Opera House, the Eugene Courthouse tower and others, now all demolished. The Tiffany Building built in 1902 at the corner of 8th and Willamette Streets partially survives. In addition to being a well-known Eugene builder, Roney served on the City Council and the County Commission as well. Roney and Abrams were awarded the contract for the Shelton-McMurphy House at an estimate of \$8,000.

¹ Carmi F. Weingrod, The Shelton-McMurphy Property: Developing a Case for an Historic/Cultural Landscape, Diss. Interdisciplinary Studies Program: Historic Preservation, School of Architecture and Allied Arts, Graduate School of the University of Oregon, March, 1983.

² Ibid., p.1

³ Ibid., p.2

⁴ Ibid., p.79

⁵ Ibid., p.2

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- 6 Ibid., p.38
- 7 Ibid., p.38, 42-43
- 8 Ibid., p.42
- 9 Ibid., p.44
- 10 Ibid., p.45-48
- 11 Ibid., p.36
- 12 Ibid., p.9-50
- 13 Ibid., p.51-53
- 14 Ibid., p.35-37
- 15 Ibid., p.61-67
- 16 Ibid., p.69-70
- 17 Ibid., p.53
- 18 Josephine Evans Harpham, Doorways Into History, A. K. Briggs, Eugene, OR, 1966 pages 38-39.
- 19 Weingrod, p. 75.
- 21 Ibid., p.3
- 22 Interview with June Stewart, daughter of Eva F. Johnson, Eugene, Oregon, October 17, 1983.
- 23 Alfred Staehli, "Maintenance, Preservation and Restoration Guide for the Shelton-McMurphy House," 1978, pp. 1-2.
- 24 Weingrod, p. 78.
- 25 Staehli, pp. 1-3.
- 26 Weingrod, p.3.

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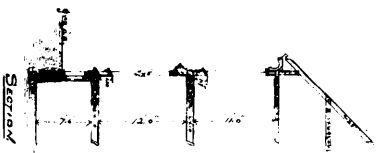
Page 1

Beginning at a point 150 feet west of a point 990 feet north, 26 feet east from the northeast corner of Block 1, Skinner's Donation; thence westerly 189.0 feet approximately to the east line of Oak Street, if extended north; thence southerly 124.0 feet; thence westerly approximately 403.50 feet to the east line of Willamette Street, if extended north; thence southerly approximately 225.0 feet to the north line of the O & C RR Co., depot grounds; thence southerly $80^{\circ} 10'$ east approximately 409.50 feet; thence northerly 88.0 feet to a point due west of the point on the west line of Pearl Street, 659 feet north of the northeast corner of said Block 1; thence easterly 186.30 feet; and thence northerly $0^{\circ} 26'$ east approximately 331.0 feet to the point of beginning.

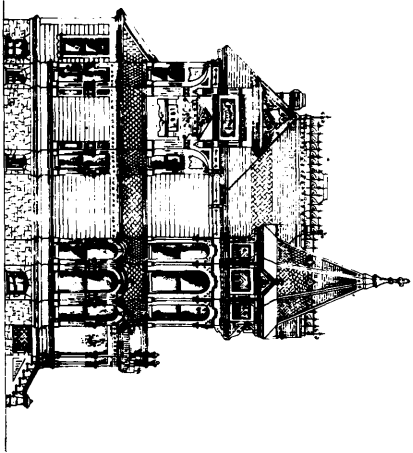
EXCEPT AS FOLLOWS:

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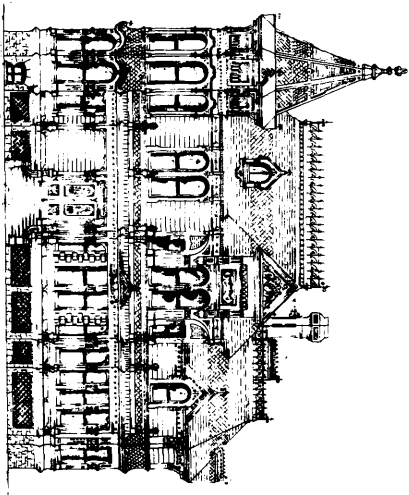
Beginning 22 feet north and 216 feet west of the northwest corner of Block 8, Original Plat of Eugene, said point being also the intersection of the east line of Pearl Street and the south line of 3rd Avenue East; thence north $73^{\circ} 50'$ west 196.70 feet to a point 12 feet north of an iron pipe located at the intersection of the north line of 3rd Avenue East, if extended west, and the east line of Oak Street, if extended north, said iron pipe being at the most southerly and easterly corner of Skinner Butte Park. (TL 4500 on Map 17 03 30 44) Except TL 85-1 of Sec. 30, T17 S, R3W, WM Lane Co., (17 03 30 44 TL 4400); Except TL 85-2 (17 03 30 44 TL 4800); Except 1.89 Ac. to TL 9100 on Map 17 03 30 44 by W/D R287/47560, 1966.



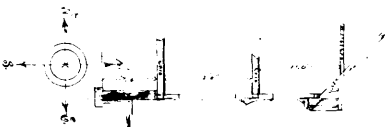
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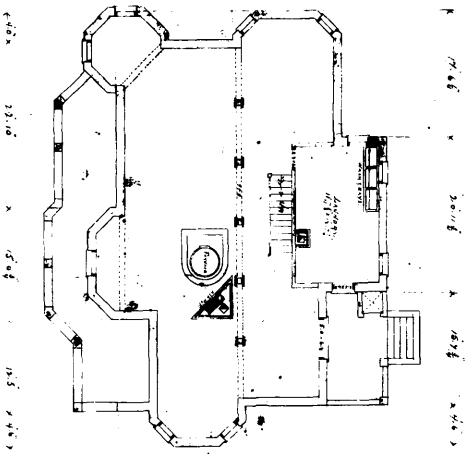
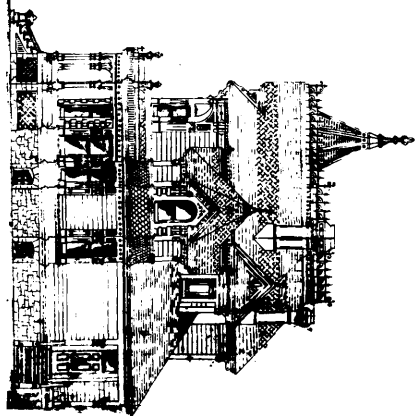
WEST ELEVATION



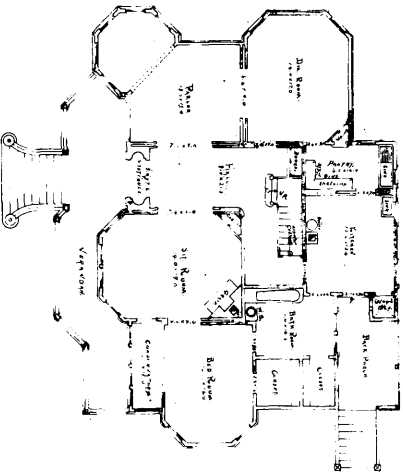
SOUTH ELEVATION



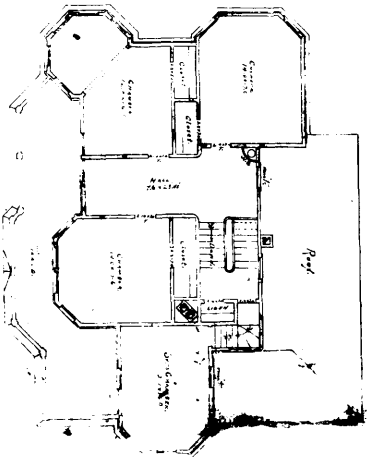
EAST ELEVATION



Basement Plan



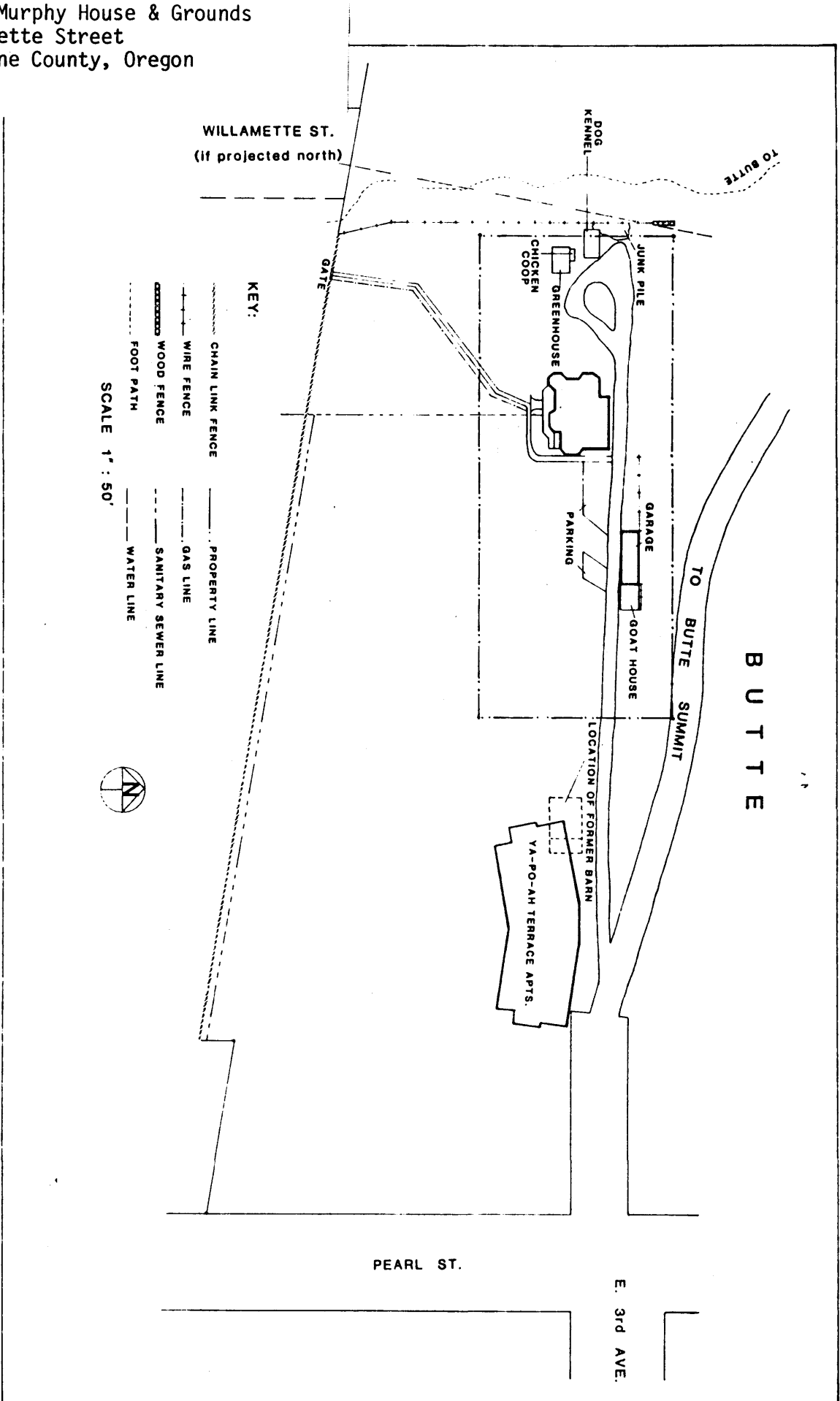
PLAN 1st Floor 1st floor



PLAN 2d Floor 2d floor

Shelton-McMurphy House & Grounds
303 Willamette Street
Eugene, Lane County, Oregon

AS-IS 1982 SITE PLAN
SHELTON-MCMURPHY PROPERTY



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Shelton-McMurphey House and Grounds

Lane County, OREGON

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

Keeper *Melvin Byers* 12/24/88

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SHELTON--McMURPHEY HOUSE AND GROUNDS

Control number: 84003028

303 Willamette Street
Eugene
Lane County
Oregon

Listing date: 6-14-84

The purpose of this continuation sheet is to correct the spelling of the name of Robert McMURPHEY (1866-1921), who occupied the house with his wife, Alberta Shelton McMURPHEY, daughter of the original owner, from 1893 onward.

The correct spelling of the property's title is Shelton--McMurphey House and Grounds.


Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Date: November 15, 1988