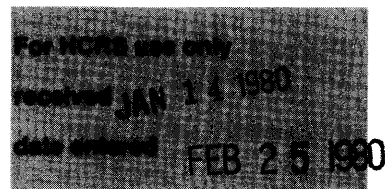


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

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



1. Name

historic Couch Family Investment Development

and/or common Irving Street Houses

2. Location

street & number 1721 - 1735 N.W. Irving and 718 N.W. 18th not for publication

city, town Portland vicinity of congressional district First 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 type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple, see attached

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Multnomah County Courthouse

street & number 1021 S.W. Fourth Avenue

city, town Portland state Oregon 97204

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Nom. pending before Ptld Lndmks. Comm. has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1979 federal state county local

depository for survey records Portland Bureau of Planning, 454 S.W. Main Street

city, town Portland state Oregon 97204

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 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Irving Street Ensemble consists of four identical houses constructed in an eclectic mix of Victorian, Queen Anne, and Eastlake styles. Erected circa 1884 by an unknown architect on fashionable Nob Hill, the houses exist as an early example of tract house construction in Portland. The houses occupy Lots 2 and 3 of block 161, Couch's Addition in Northwest Portland.

The quarter-block on which the buildings stand is 100' by 100', at 18th and Irving Streets, one block East of 19th Street along which the Captain John Couch family built the finest homes in the City of Portland in the 1880's. Each building occupies a 26 x 45 foot section of the lot.

STRUCTURE:

The structure of the buildings comprising the Irving Street Ensemble was typical of buildings of the period: two-and-one-half story, wood balloon-frame construction, on brick foundations. The buildings have four levels: basement, first floor, second floor, and third floor/attic. There have been no structural additions to the house with the exception of a one-and-one half story enclosed rear porch added to 1735 N.W. Irving (probably replacing the pantry). The properties at 1721, 1729 - 31, and 1735 N.W. Irving Street, each have 26 feet of frontage on Irving Street. The corner house (1735 N.W. Irving) also has 45 feet of west facade exposure on 18th Street. The house at 718 N.W. 18th Street has 26 feet of frontage on 18th Street. The buildings at 1721, 1729 - 31, and 1735 N.W. Irving have identical structural plans. The structural plans for 718 N.W. 18th are the same, but reversed. Of the four houses, 1735 N.W. Irving is the most intact, on both the interior and exterior.

INTERIOR:

Three of the four houses have been substantially remodeled on the interior; the properties at 718 N.W. 18th and 1729 - 31 N.W. Irving were gutted to the studs and converted to duplexes in 1977. The house at 1721 N.W. Irving was also remodeled in the same year, to a lesser extent. The three remodeled buildings exhibit much of the original woodwork, including door and window frames, moldings and baseboards, but have been sheetrocked and had carpeting and tile flooring laid in portions of the houses. Some original walls have been removed, particularly in the duplexes (1729 - 31 N.W. Irving, 718 N.W. 18th). Decks have been added to the rear of the duplex buildings.

1735 N.W. Irving is virtually intact. Walls and ceilings are plaster on wood lath. Several rooms are wallpapered, and the original service wainscoting remains in the dining room. Original wall molding and baseboards with cap and shoe moldings are present throughout the house. Two original ceiling rosettes remain. Original floors are tongue-and-groove fir strips and restored throughout the house. Original panel doors are evident in all rooms, with two over two, vertical panels. Door and window frames are identical with circle-pattern square corners.

The main stairway has turned balusters, formed handrail, and a carved newel post with square-paneled ornamentation, cap molding and rounded top. The fire place in the living room is marble and completely intact. The double doors of the main entry are paneled with vertical windows surrounded by colored lights, and topped by a transom with a horizontal window surrounded on three sides by colored lights.

The first floor consists of the main entry hall (with an original closet converted to a water closet), living room, dining room, and kitchen. The original pantry off the kitchen has been replaced by an enclosed rear porch.

The second floor consists of the hall, four bedrooms, and a bath (remodeled). One bedroom has not been restored and reveals the previous condition of the house: painted floor, several layers of wallpaper, and exposed lath.

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Ivan Gould & Trudi D. Nagel
1721 N.W. Irving Street
Portland, Oregon 97209

Ernest R. Munch & Anne C. Rossbach-Munch
1729 - 31 N.W. Irving Street
Portland, Oregon 97209

Fred J. Hansen
1735 N.W. Irving Street
Portland, Oregon 97209

Nancy C. Shaughnessy
718 N.W. 18th Street
Portland, Oregon 97209

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The attic includes two room partitions, built in recent years. Window frames are identical to those on the lower floors.

EXTERIOR:

The exteriors of the Irving Street houses are executed in the Queen Anne/Victorian style with Eastlake detail (simpler than the more notable structures which once stood West of 19th Street; these homes represent a remnant of the ornate structures which existed in the area).

The structural plans for 1721, 1729-31, 1735 Irving are identical, and reversed for 718 N.W. 18th St. Each of the buildings sits on a stuccoed-brick foundation with four-paned square windows. A sill divides the foundation from the first floor level which is clad in beaded horizontal wood siding as is the second story which is divided from the first level by a belt course band of mixed fish-scale and square butt shingles. Another belt course and thin band of fish-scale and square butt shingles separate the second story and the cornice. Each of the four structures has a gabled and hipped roof with box cornice, with dentils. All exterior corners of the structure are trimmed with plain corner boards.

Windows are mostly one-over-one double hung sash, with plain frames, except for the enclosed rear porch at 1735 N.W. Irving (which has 8-paned casement windows) and the side projecting bay and one-story main entrance bay. The projecting bay consists of a slant bay at the first story level; the center window is topped with a pediment with a sunburst design. To each side of the center window is a panel of diamond-shaped shingles. Each of the side windows have bracketed hoods with pendants. Below each of the windows are carved wooden panels. The fish-scale and square butt shingled band which encircles the entire structure separates the first-story slant bay from the upper square bay, which has two one-over-one double-hung sash windows. The bay is topped with a gable, covered in staggered butt shingles; with casement dormer windows. A sunburst-like wood carved panel decorates the eave with tie beam and pendant. The West facade has a identically articulated projecting bay. Again the plan is reversed for the structure fronting 18th Street.

The main entrance bay of each of the structures has wooden steps and lattice-like porch. The porch roof is supported by four turned wood posts. The porch roof is flat with a box cornice, carved wood paneled frieze board and dentils. Topping the porch is a pediment with sunburst pattern.

The original main entrance has two-paneled double doors with transoms.

EXTERIOR ALTERATIONS:

718 N.W. 18th: No exterior alterations to main facades. Rear deck has been added.

1735 N.W. Irving: No alteration to main facades. An enclosed rear porch has been added.

1729-31 N.W. Irving: Original gabled-dormer window has been replaced by an anodized horizontal sliding window. Storm windows and a rear deck have been added. There have been some window alterations in the rear facade. Original entry door has been replaced and some porch detail is missing.

1721 N.W. Irving: Carved wooden panels of porch frieze board are missing. The upper West projecting bay windows have been altered.

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

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The significance of the Irving Street houses lies primarily in the fact that they represent an intact collection of modest Queen-Anne structures common to this area of Portland during the 1880's - 1890's. These structures, once located on the edge of the great mansions of 19th Street, were one of the earliest investment housing developments of the subdivided Couch Family Donation Land Claim. There are the remainder of eight identical structures which once stood on the block, and an excellent example of early tract house construction as are the Trenkman Houses one block South, built in the 1890's and listed on the National Register.

The Nob Hill area, then referred to as the West End, has represented fashion and sophisticated wealth since its early development in the 1870's. Ship Captain John H. Couch laid claim to a 640 acres expanse in 1845, which he partially platted in 1849 at the age of 38, ten years after his arrival in Portland. Later, he sub-divided the land on both sides of 19th Street giving birth to a residential area unparalleled anywhere in the city in terms of prominence and culture.

Beginning in 1881, three of Couch's four daughters, Caroline Wilson, Clementine Lewis, Elizabeth Glisan, and brother-in-law George Flanders built elegant homes on 200' x 400' foot blocks along 19th Street, and the Couch Compound began to develop in the area, then somewhat isolated from the rest of the City of Portland.

John Couch had passed away in 1870, followed by the death of his widow Caroline in 1885. Their daughters and son-in-laws were willed Nob Hill properties that became valuable for their real estate value as the area developed. Portland of the mid 1880's was becoming a city of elegantly expensive dwellings and growing economic development. Nob Hill was in its heyday and city directories of the period show the area as a Who's Who in terms of prominent Portland families.

The parcel of land on which the Irving Street houses are situated along with other properties were willed by Caroline Couch to several Couch heirs (for the sum of \$1.00): Robert and Caroline Couch Wilson, Cicero H. and Clementine Couch Lewis, Rodney and Elizabeth Couch Glisan and Mary H. Couch, John Couch's youngest daughter. This transaction took place in November of 1872. This particular parcel was one of the 200' x 200' foot blocks on the fringes of the Couch family estates in the "Couch Compound."

Research and later transactions placed Cicero Lewis, in particular, in a prominent role in the development of Couch family property. Robert Wilson and Rodney Glisan were premier physicians, but C.H. Lewis was a businessman par excellence. Undoubtedly, he directed much of the Couch family real estate investment, considering his expertise and involvement in wholesaling, stock holding, the formation of the Oregon Railway and Navigation Co. (major business force in Portland in the mid 1880's), and the Security Savings and Trust Co. (formed for the management of real estate). His house at 20th and Glisan was one block to the southwest of the Irving Street houses.

C.H. Lewis and the Couch heirs et al held the property from 1872 to December of 1886 when Lots 1, 2, 3, 4 of Block 161 (houses located on Lots 2 and 3) were sold to George Watkins and Fred Bartels for \$5,050.00. From the deed it is evident that the houses comprising the Irving Street ensemble were built prior to this transaction. Sanborn insurance maps show that four houses of identical size and structure were located on Lots 5 and 8 of the same block, at 17th and Johnson in the same period (demolished in 1928). Also, tax

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property .229

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle name Portland, Oregon-Washington

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	0	5	2	4	3	7	0	5	0	4	1	4	7	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

Lots 2 and 3, Block 161, Couch's Addition, 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 Catherine M. Galbraith

organization date August 15, 1979

street & number 1415 S.E. Sherrett Street telephone (503) 239-4155

city or town Portland state Oregon 97212

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 State Historic Preservation Office Designee

date December 19, 1979

For HCRS use only

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

for W. Ray Luce

Keeper of the National Register

date 2/25/80

Attest:

Kristin O'Connell

date 1/28/80

Chief of Registration

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records reveal an increase assessment after the year 1884. These lots were not sold by the Couches until 1888. City directories show no Couch family members or persons of known historical importance at any of these addresses in the 1880's. It appears the Couches built eight houses (four of which comprise the Irving Street ensemble), choosing to enter the residential real estate investment market, renting the houses for a time before selling the properties. Considering the real estate boom in the area during this period and other rental developments such as the 1890 Trenkman houses (8 single family rental houses, built on a half-block area one block away), the Couch family's actions were not unusual.

Couch school was less than two block away. The blocks West of 18th were occupied by the Couch clan, whoc children attended the Couch schoolhouse, built for them in 1884 at 20th and Hoyt. East of 18th smaller houses were built, with many more to the block than the one or two in the Couch compound blocks. Block 161 on which the Irving Street houses are located, appears to have been the earliest densely built block in Nob Hill, with 18 dwellings in 1894. Early residents in the houses were laborers or persons of other semi-professional occupations.

The Irving Street ensemble and two vacant lots at 17th and Irving left Couch family ownership in 1886. One of the purchasers, George Watkins first appears in City directories in 1884, as a partner in Parrish, Watkins, and Cornell (a real estate firm, founded in 1867), which was quite active in the sale and rental of city properties. The firm is referred to as "the pioneers in city real estate development for home-makers on a large scale" in later newspapers.

Little is know about Fred Bartels, except that he is listed in a mid 1880's city directory in Nob Hill. Watkins and Bartels retained the property for a short time, selling the houses to William MacMaster in the winter of 1887 (the two vacant lots they had purchased with the houses that were sold the following summer). MacMaster in turn, sold the houses several months later to Alex Birrell, his partner in MacMaster and Birrel, Mortgage and Investment Company. The two ment were prominent in a Scottish investment boom in the Northwest property in the mid 1880's, which contributed substantially to the City's growth.

This property, along with other Nob Hill land parcels in the East and West of 19th Street continued to serve as investment properties for the upper echelon of Portland's high society for the next two decades. Owners included: D.S. Tuthill of the Lucius, Allen and C.H. Lewis Company; Benjamin Lombard, Stockbroker and Lawyer; David Oliphant of the Oliphant and Company Mercantile Enterprise; W.H. Nunn of the Nunn Real Estate Company. In 1909, the property was sold by Kunkel Investment Co. (a mortgage company) to Fred Geiger and Patrick Devine. Both men were assess a total of \$578 in 1910 for the improvement of 18th Street, with Devine shown as 3/4 owner of the property. City directories of the period show no listing for Geiger. Patrick Devine moved from East Portland to one of his Irving Street houses (1729-31 N.W. Irvin today) in 1914, and remained there until 1934. Within that time Devine mortgaged portions of the property for varying amounts of money. He sold the property in 1934 to Victor Blum (who is listed in many previous mortgage transactions) and moved to Albina.

After 1934, the properties changed hands many times. The once-elite Nob Hill had changed into a declining area of run-down rentals and commercial and industrial development, beginning in the 1920's. Considerable multi-family construction had already been stimulated in the early 1900's by development of the Northwest street-car lines for the Lewis and Clark exposition. The established families of Nob Hill were relocating to suburban areas of Portland and major demolition and redevelopment began to erode the residential qualities of the neighborhood.

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Like many other large Nob Hill Victorians, the smaller-in-scale Irving Street houses continued to deteriorate, functioning as low-rent rooming houses. These uses continued until the 1970's when the newly discovered Victorian began to appeal to those wanting to live near the urban center. Today, the restoration and re-use of these and many similar structures is taking place on a grand scale in the Northwest. The houses are owner-occupied, with a duplex unit added to two of the houses: 718 N.W. 18th and 1729-31 N.W. Irving.

Other Portland Landmark buildings in the area include: The Campbell Townhouses, on the same half block on Irving Street; the Herman Trenkman residences on 17th and Hoyt; the Richard Koehler residence at 732 N.W. 19th; the W.B. Ayer residence at 811 N.W. 19th; and the John Shea residence at 1809 N.W. Johnson. While 18th Street is heavily trafficked, Irving has been designated one-way between 17th and 18th to reduce traffic. Street trees and other landscaping have been planted and street lights and fences have been replaced and present owners are continuing restoration work. Other restorations in the neighborhood will undoubtedly take place as the Northwest renaissance continues.

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