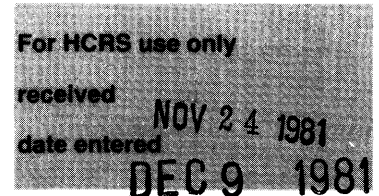


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 Farra, Dr. George R., House

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 660 SW Madison Avenue  not for publication

city, town Corvallis  vicinity of congressional district First

state Oregon code 41 county Benton code 003

**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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input 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 Kathryn Brandis et al

street & number 660 SW Madison

city, town Corvallis  vicinity of state Oregon 97330

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Benton County Courthouse

street & number 120 NW 4th St.

city, town Corvallis state Oregon 97330

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Statewide Inventory of Historic Properties has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date June 26, 1976  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Salem state Oregon 97310

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<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 Queen Anne Style house built for Dr. George R. Farra on the southerly border of Central Park in Corvallis in 1903 is 3½ stories in height and exhibits the multiplicity of gables, bays, projections, balconies and porches, and variegated siding characteristic of its style. Its rectangular ground plan measures 50 x 60 feet. It is oriented on a north-south axis athwart its two lots, facing north onto Madison Street and Central Park beyond. The third story and attic are enclosed in a steeply-pitched longitudinal gable, the side slopes of which are broken by dormers having varying roof forms: shed, gable and gambrel. Three tall brick chimneys with arched, inset panels and corbeled neckings break the roof-line. The two at the center and rear of the main gable ridge originally served stoves. That on the east face, which rises from a pedimented ground story bay through the overhanging eave to bisect a minor gable before standing free, serves the main parlor fireplace.

The foundation and high pedestals for porch posts are of coursed rock-faced ashlar. Ground story siding is horizontal weatherboards; the second story is clad with shingles with flared base courses, and gable ends of the third story and attic are faced with shingles with fancy butts. The wide, overhanging eaves of the main volumes are enclosed and unembellished. In combination with the plain wide frieze board below, the eaves give a clean, horizontal emphasis not unlike the effect achieved by Prairie Style eaveslines.

The principal facade is formally organized, with a small central attic window, a bank of three double-hung windows lighting the third story, and a pair of polygonal bays at the second story level. The central entrance of the main story is reached by a flight of porch steps. The porch, or veranda sweeps fully across the north front and wraps in a curve around the northwest corner of the house. Round wood columns with entasis on their high masonry pedestals support the roof of the veranda. The railing has turned balusters. The space between porch floor and grade level is screened by lattice work.

Typical windows are double-hung with one over one lights, most of them grouped in bays or banks. Smaller windows on either side of the parlor chimney and in the attic story of the facade, however, have diapered leaded glass lights. A beveled and leaded glass picture window in the second story of the east face lights the second floor stairway landing. A second story porch on the south, or rear elevation was enclosed for sleeping porch use in later years. Three second story window openings at the south end of the east face have been fitted with sliding aluminum sash. A single-story bedroom wing was added to this service end of the house, at the southeast corner, the side least exposed to public view. Also on the east face, toward the north, or front end, a single-story bay with exterior finish materials consistent with those of the original volume, was added to gain extra floor space for the ground story.

Over 6500 square feet, are contained in the 3½ stories and full basement of the house. Ceiling heights remain at the original ten feet throughout first and second stories. All interior walls and ceilings are finished with plaster, and most walls are covered with paper and have picture molding. Door hardware throughout is of solid brass with stamped decoration. All original door and window trim on the first floor is of oak or fir. Hardwood floors of oak predominate on the first floor, while all other flooring is of fir.

The first floor contains one bathroom and bedroom as well as a pantry, kitchen, entry stairhall, parlor, or living room, formal dining room and library. Two large fluted oak columns with Ionic capitals frame the entrance to the dog-leg staircase in the entry hall.

# 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 checked="" 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1903 **Builder/Architect** unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The 3½ story shingle and weatherboard-clad house built in 1903 by Dr. George Farra at 660 S.W. Madison Avenue is an outstanding example of late Queen Anne architecture in Corvallis. Not only is it a well-preserved, sizeable house associated with a prominent professional man, it occupies a generous, landscaped corner site on Madison at S.W. 7th Street, across from the former Episcopal Church of the Good Samaritan, a National Register property, and it is one of the numerous historic buildings defining the perimeter of Central Park. George Farra (1843 - 1925) was trained in medicine at the University of Louisville before settling in Corvallis about 1877. He was active in civic affairs as a member of the city council business enterprises which helped finance this, his second and grandest house in Corvallis. Following the death of Farra's widow in 1929, the house passed through a succession of ownerships, including that of an Oregon State College sorority, beginning in 1952. While a small single-story bedroom wing was added to the rear face and the interior was renovated as a consequence of its adaptation for sorority use, key interior spaces and finish details are intact. The house exhibits the distinctive characteristics of its style. It possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association with a noted figure in Corvallis society from the turn of the century onward.

George R. Farra was born September 13, 1843, on a farm in Woodford County, Kentucky, the son of John R. and Martha J. Farra. John Farra, a farmer, relocated the family to Platte County, Missouri soon after George's birth. George was but nine years old when his father died. Being fatherless, he had few educational advantages and was forced to defer his schooling.

Eventually engaged in the grocery business, Farra resided at Humboldt, Kansas until 1872, at which time he returned to Platte County and entered the pharmaceutical business. While employed as a pharmacist, he began reading medicine under the direction of Dr. W. P. Moore. In 1875, he entered the medical department at the University of Louisville and was graduated two years later. After briefly practising medicine in Louisville, he moved to Corvallis, Oregon where he "rendered himself indispensable to hundreds of families in the [Benton] county."1 Further, according to a biographical note of 1903, his "pronounced business and executive ability" resulted in his "equal prominence as a promoter and financier."2 Dr. Farra was noted for his contributions to medical, political and economic affairs in Corvallis for nearly half a century. While he never worked toward or desired official political positions, he was nevertheless elected to the Corvallis City Council on May 16, 1887. As a member of the "Committee on Streets and Public Improvements," in 1888 he was responsible for three ordinances pertaining to the improvements of streets, establishment of an adequate water system and the installation of arc and incandescent illumination of public streets. Farra's capabilities were acknowledged by the Mayor when he was appointed to "confer with and engage one or more lawyers to revise and compile City ordinances and to make all changes and amendments to the City Charter necessary to present the matter of amending said charter properly before the next legislature."3 Due to professional commitments, Dr. Farra resigned his council post in December, 1889.

Dr. George Farra maintained a successful medical practice. Always a student, he was

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

UNRECORDED

# 10. Geographical Data

UNRECORDED

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Corvallis, Oregon

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UMT References

A 

1	0	4	7	9	0	2	0	4	9	3	4	3	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

The Dr. George R. Farra House is located in Sec. 35, T. 11S., R. 5 W., W.M. It is legally described as Lots 7 and 8, Block 10, County Addition to the town of Marysville (now Corvallis) in the City of Corvallis, Benton 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 Kathryn Brandis, with assistance from Rusty Gorman, 330 SE Viewmont, Corvallis, OR

organization  date April 21, 1981

street & number 660 SW Madison telephone (503) 757-1274

city or town Corvallis state Oregon 97330

# 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 [Signature]

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Office date July 29, 1981

**For HCERS use only**

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

[Signature]  
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the National Register date 12/9/81

Attest:  date

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
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For NCRS use only

received: NOV 24 1981

date entered:

DEC 9 1981  
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The front staircase has posts and railings of oak as well as oak paneling and rises to the third story. Back stairs provide access to the second floor from the kitchen. The landing is illuminated via a small leaded round window. The living room, located at the northeast corner of the first floor, contains two beveled, leaded glass windows separated by a brick fireplace. The parlor archway is embellished by an architrave skirting of spindles and portiere rods.

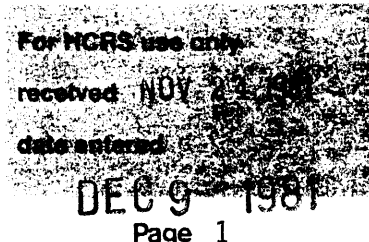
The second floor contains a sleeping porch on the south, separated from the main house by a utility room and two bathrooms. Four bedrooms are on this floor also. Two bedrooms on the north are believed to have served as Dr. Farra's office, which was divided by a pair of large, paneled sliding pocket doors. The third floor contains two bedrooms and a bathroom.

The basement contains three bedrooms, a bathroom, kitchenette and canning room presently being used for storage.

Early photographs of the property show that extensive landscaping was carried out on the double lot by the Farras. With the exception of evergreens on the parking strip, most of the original plant materials remain, including cedar, azaleas, holly, rhododendrons and camelias. Ivy still climbs from the foundation to the top of porch columns. A mature chestnut, birch and several species of fir also are found on the site.

Equally important to the immediate setting is Central Park, two blocks in area and replete with open and shaded lawn, fountains, sculptures, pathways, and bedding plants. Plans are underway to close Madison Avenue to motor vehicle traffic and develop a unit-paved pedestrian mall. Funded through grants and donations, the first phase has been realized with the closure of Madison Avenue in front of the Corvallis Arts Center, which is located across SW 7th Street to the west of the Farra House. Phase two calls for further improvements to Madison Avenue, including landscaping and the addition of park benches.

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known to keep "thoroughly posted with the march of science."<sup>4</sup> His memberships included such fraternities as the Blue Lodge of Masons, Woodmen of the World (as examining physician), Ancient Order of United Workmen (as examining physician), as well as the Oregon State Medical Society. Professionally, he served as the County physician.

As a businessman, Farra was not only as the chief promoter and instigator of important enterprises, but a large stockholder as well. He was president and a major stockholder of the Corvallis Water Company, and it was said in 1893 that the company owed its "present prosperity to his farsighted management and progressive methods."<sup>5</sup> He was a director of the Willamette Land and Loan Association (incorporated in 1889) as well as the Oregon & Pacific Railroad Company (originally the Corvallis & Eastern) eventually assimilated by the Southern Pacific Transportation Company. He also held stock in other companies, including the Corvallis Carriage Manufacturing Company.

Dr. Farra built two residences in Corvallis, but his second house, constructed in 1903, was described upon completion as "by far the finest in the town."<sup>6</sup> On February 9, 1873, while residing in Platte County, Missouri, he married Anna Hamilton. Both of their two children died in infancy.

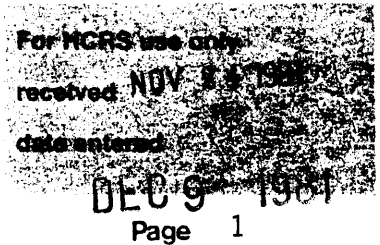
News of the death of Dr. George R. Farra on December 27, 1925 as was reported on the front page of the local paper. He was survived by his widow, who continued to reside at home until her death in 1929. At that point, ownership of the home passed through a succession of owners, including Benton County and Corvallis General Hospital (1937) and Alpha Phi Sorority (1952).

#### FOOTNOTES

1. "George R. Farra, MD", Portrait and Biographical Record of the Willamette Valley. Chicago: Chapman Publishing Company, 1903, page 743.
2. Ibid.
3. "Minutes to the Meeting", Corvallis City Council minutes, page 35.
4. "George R. Farra, MD", An Illustrated History of the State of Oregon. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1893, page 449.
5. Portrait and Biographical Record of the Willamette Valley, loc. cit.
6. Ibid.

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

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- Martin, Bruce, History of Corvallis 1846-1900. University of Oregon Masters Thesis, 1938.
- Hines, Rev. H.K., D. D.D., An Illustrated History of State of Oregon. Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1893, page 449.
- Coad, Frank J., Portrait and Biographical Record of the Willamette Valley Oregon. Chicago: Chapman Publishing Company, page 743.
- "Life Ends for Dr. G. R. Farra", Corvallis Gazette-Times, December 28, 1925.
- Corvallis City Council Minutes, May 16, 1887 to December 10, 1889.