

291

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

JAN 26 1990

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Irving Street Bowman Apartments  
other names/site number Alhambra Condominiums

### 2. Location

street & number 2004-2018 NW Irving Street N/A  not for publication  
city, town Portland N/A  vicinity  
state Oregon code OR county Multnomah code 051 zip code 97209

### 3. Classification

<b>Ownership of Property</b>	<b>Category of Property</b>	<b>Number of Resources within Property</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<b>Contributing</b>	<b>Noncontributing</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

[Signature] January 19, 1990  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Oregon State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

[Signature] 2/23/90  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

---

**6. Function or Use**

---

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: multiple dwelling

---

---

---

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: multiple dwelling

---

---

---

---

**7. Description**

---

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals:

---

Mediterranean

---

---

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

---

walls concrete

---

roof concrete: tiles

---

other windows: glass

---

---

---

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   7   Page   1  

---

The Bowman Apartments (renamed "the Alhambra" in 1975), a three story, reinforced concrete apartment house, was constructed in 1926 for noted Portland contractor and realtor, Frederic E. Bowman. The Bowman Apartment house was designed by Otis Josselyn Fitch in a unique expression of the Mediterranean style; incorporating elements of a Northern European tradition. The Bowman apartment house is located in the Nob Hill neighborhood of Northwest Portland on N.W. Irving and 20th. The apartment house was converted to condominiums in 1975, at which time the name was changed to "The Alhambra". The original legal description of the property was Lots 1,2 and 6, Block 282 of Couch's Addition. In 1975 the site was replatted as Alhambra Condominiums, Lot 1.

The Bowman Apartment house is locally significant under National Register Criterion "c", as one of the finest examples of a medium scale, luxury 1920s era apartment house in the Nob Hill neighborhood, designed specifically for the urban family. The Bowman is a unique variation of the Mediterranean style and significant for its sculptural use of concrete. The Bowman Apartment house is the only building designed by Fitch identified in the Portland Historic Resource Inventory, in which it is listed as a Rank II property.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 2

---

The building is entirely of poured reinforced concrete, including chimney stacks and ornamentation. The Bowman Apartment house is distinctive in its plastic quality and restrained use of ornament which anticipates the more functional designs of the modern era. Windows are industrial type steel multi-paned casements. Throughout the building there are variations of rectangular and round-head windows, composed of a rectangular window with a fanlight. The windows have no frames and are set directly into the concrete wall. There is very little elaboration of the wall surface other than the sloped sill of the window openings. The steeply pitched hipped roof is clad in cement tiles which simulate terra cotta tiles in color and form. Throughout the building, a use of wrought iron for stair rails and balconies, both decorative and functional, reflect stylistic elements derived from the Mediterranean style.

The Bowman is a luxury apartment house, covering an area 56' x 113'. It includes eight units as well as a "manager's apartment" in the basement, currently rented as a one bedroom apartment. The major facade of the building faces north on N.W. Irving Street and the east elevation fronts N.W. 20th. The Bowman Apartment house is well maintained and in excellent condition. It retains its original use and maintains a high degree of physical integrity.

The Bowman Apartment house is "U"-shaped, with a recessed garden court that features a colorful tile fountain. The exposed concrete exterior exhibits the forms of the boards left from the pouring process. According to original drawings, the exterior was to be surfaced in "California Stucco" but never was. The reason the building was not surfaced in stucco is not known, however budgetary concerns seem a likely reason. These drawings also reveal that windows of the primary facade of the Bowman were not completed as designed, probably for a similar reason. The windows designed by Fitch were casements, with fanlights in a parabolic curve form. Mullions were curved and a plaster papyrus plant form adorned the area between the casements. The design exhibits an Art Nouveau quality.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3

The building has been painted white; a light blue tints the trim around the front entrances and the door to the "manager's apartment" at the basement level. The massing of the building is characterized by a rectangular form situated along an east-west axis, with two wings projecting on the north; the main facade. A recessed volume between the two projecting wings is planted as a garden court. The primary elevation is that of the asymmetrical front facades of the two projecting wings, and the facade of the recessed volume. There is a common entrance in each of the projecting wings. The vertical massing of each wing is accentuated by a steeply pitched hipped roof with cross gable at one end, and projecting entrance portico with steeply pitched end gable in the center. A half-round balcony consisting of a concrete platform supported by wrought iron brackets, is positioned beneath this gable. Windows on the major facades of the projecting wings are multi-paned steel with a fanlight. The windows throughout are combinations of fixed and casement windows. Rectangular multi-paned steel casement windows with a similar configuration appear on secondary elevations.

**SETTING**

The Bowman is located in the Nob Hill neighborhood of Northwest Portland; the densest area of the city, composed predominantly of multi-family apartment houses and older single family dwellings. Many of the single family dwellings have been converted into apartments. Neighboring buildings, except for one, are of approximately the same age. The primary elevation faces N.W. Irving Street. Directly across the street to the north are the Hubbard House Condominiums, designed by John Storrs in 1963. The White Apartments, sited to the east across N.W. 20th, were also constructed for F.E. Bowman. Designed in the California Mission Style, this "U"-shaped apartment house was constructed in 1925; a year earlier than the Bowman Apartments. It is of wood frame construction, clad with an exterior surface of stucco.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

---

Frederic E. Bowman is attributed as the designer of the White Apartments. South of the Bowman, the William Temple House (formerly the Mackenzie Residence), a Portland Historical Landmark designed by Whidden and Lewis in 1892, occupies a corner lot on N.W. 20th and Hoyt. West of the Bowman apartment house, a single planted lot is included in the parcel. An article in The Oregonian indicates that this lot was purchased for use as a play area for the daughter of an early owner of the complex: Walter Gearin. A one story concrete double-car garage and driveway of unknown date is located at the southeast portion of the property line.

The Bowman Apartment house fronts N.W. Irving street and is sited close to the street edge. A rock retaining wall and lush planted border consisting of flowering shrubs, define the front of the building. Mature deciduous trees align N.W. Irving and N.W. 20th and shade the building in the summer. The east elevation of the Bowman is built to the public-right-of-way edge. A narrow planted area is situated along the rear of the building and the single lot at the west edge of the property is planted with grass and perennials.

#### PLAN

The Bowman Apartment house is "U"-shaped in plan with two projecting wings. The front facades of these wings are the dominant elements of the front elevation. A secondary facade is recessed behind the two wings. A common entrance with stairhall accesses the four units located in each of these wings. There are four apartment suites in each wing; two on the first floor and two on the second. The second floor units are two story suites. There are four apartment types; the floor plan of the east half of the building is essentially identical to that of the west, with minor variations in the apartments which face the recessed court. Two recessed stairwells at the rear of the building provide additional access to the apartments. Each wing of the building contains one of the following apartment types:

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number   7   Page   5  

---

**Type "A"**

This is an "L"-shaped, two bedroom apartment located on the first floor at the location of the side elevations. The primary entrance off the main stairwell enters into a living room at the north end of the suite. A series of steps lead from the south end of the living room through a truncated arch opening to a raised dining room. There is a balcony off the dining room and a hallway beyond provides circulation throughout the rear of the suite to the more private spaces, including two bedrooms and a bathroom. A kitchen is located south of the dining room, and the rear stairwell is accessed off the end of the hall. A bathroom is situated across from the bedrooms.

**Type "B"**

This is a two bedroom apartment located on the first floor adjacent to the recessed garden court. The main entrance from the common stairwell opens into a living room facing north. A large truncated arch opening separates the living room from the raised dining room. A balcony situated off the dining room faces the planted court between the two projecting wings of the building. An "L"-shaped corridor is accessed through the dining room and leads to the kitchen and bathroom. The two bedrooms are located deep within the apartment beyond the kitchen. One of the bedrooms is located in the recessed north facing area behind the court. The units of the two wings are identical with the exception that the unit in the west wing has only one bedroom. Access to the rear stairwell is at the south end of the corridor.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 6

---

**Type "C"**

These large five bedroom apartments occupy two stories at the outer edges of the building. They were originally three bedroom units, however the "maid's room" and storage room on the third floor, were converted into additional bedrooms early in the building's history. The apartments occupy the second and third floors of the building. The second floor (first level) of this apartment type is essentially identical to the two bedroom unit below, with the exception of a stairway in the living room which accesses the third floor. In addition, the living room is open to the third floor and features a vaulted ceiling. The upper floor includes bedrooms, bathroom, and access to the rear stairwell at the end of the hall. There is a balcony off the dining room.

**Type "D"**

This is a two level apartment with three bedrooms. The unit in the west wing has two bedrooms on the lower floor and one above, while the unit in the east wing has one bedroom on the lower floor and two above. Both units occupy the second and third stories of the building and have balconies off the dining room which face the garden court. A "maid's room" on the third floor in each unit has been converted to other uses. The first level of both units is similar to the floor plan of the units directly below. The exception is the stairway off the dining room which ascends to the third floor; the location of the bedrooms, bathroom and storage facilities.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 7

---

**BASEMENT**

The basement includes a "manager's apartment", now rented out as a one bedroom apartment. This unit is located in the east wing of the building and includes a living room, dining room with kitchen in between, and a bedroom and bathroom. It has a separate entrance located on the east elevation. The west wing of the building was designed to include "maid's quarters", with four separate rooms and one bathroom. The original building permit suggests that the bathroom facilities were not installed in this portion of the basement. This area has been converted to storage facilities for the owners.

**EXTERIOR**

**North Elevation**

The primary facade of the Bowman faces north and is broken up into three bays; that of the projecting east and west wings which dominate the perspective, and the facade of the recessed portion of the building. The tall round-head arch windows and steeply pitched roofline result in a series of vertically oriented facades. The front elevations of the east and west wing are mirror images. A projecting entrance portico with a steeply pitched gable roof is placed centrally within the main facade. The battered walls of the entrance portico further accentuate the vertical orientation of the facade. A tall round-head arch, embellished with a rope motif, forms the opening in the portico. The main entrance is a single round-head multi-paned wood door. Flanking this door are two elongated side-lites of the same round-head form. A half-round balcony consisting of a concrete platform, with wrought iron rail and brackets, projects above this main entrance at the location of the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 8

landing on the second floor. A round-head door identical to that of the ground floor, is flanked by narrow, rectangular side-lites. Copper canopies with scalloped edges originally graced this opening. These were removed prior to the conversion of the apartment house into condominiums, and replaced with canvas awnings of the same shape. These have since been removed, and the owners are discussing the possibility of replicating the original canopies in the historic material - copper. Two elegantly styled original brass light fixtures are located on either side of the main entrance of each wing.

The west half of the east wing (and the east half of the west wing) include paired round-head windows on the first and second floors beneath a steeply pitched hipped roof. These windows are multi-paned steel casements with fanlight. Single windows of the same type are located on the other half of the wing beneath a steeply pitched hipped cross gable which intersects the main roof volume.

The truncated north facing facade of the recessed volume of the building has a flat roof and no eaves. This facade is symmetrical, with an identical pattern of fenestration on each of the three floors. Rectangular, multi-paned steel casement windows are flanked by small multi-paned casements of 12 lites each. An ornate colored tile fountain is located at the base of the wall. The central ornament of the fountain is a round-head arch of tile with a decorative border of tiles with projecting floral forms. The tile of the fountain is installed flush against the wall and a small basin projects from the base.

**East Elevation**

The dominant feature of the east elevation is an engaged chimney stack with corbelled base which projects from the northern edge of the wall, and the curved balconies which extend off the dining rooms of the apartments on the first and second floors. The roof of this elevation is essentially flat except for the hipped portion of the gable roof which faces north. At the third floor level the roof line has a truncated form. The engaged chimney rises as a free-standing element above the height of the second floor, its form tapering slightly towards the top. The corbelled base is a decorative bowl form. Multi-paned round-head windows flank the chimney on both the first and second floors.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 9

---

A multi-paned wood door with multi-paned sidelites accesses the "manager's apartment" at the basement level. A canopy door hood with scalloped edges is positioned over this entrance. The canopy, now painted light blue, is crafted of copper and is the only remaining original canopy on the building. Large, rectangular multi-paned steel casement windows flank the doorway at the basement level. A rounded

balcony with concrete platform and wrought iron rail projects from the dining room at the first floor level. Decorative wrought iron brackets beneath the balconies have been removed for repair and painting. The multi-paned wood door which accesses the balconies, is set within a frame of steel multi-paned casement windows with fixed transom. A multi-paned casement window of 12 lites illuminates the kitchen to the left; beyond that is a rectangular multi-paned casement. Fenestration of the second floor level is identical to the first floor. The third floor includes two rectangular multi-paned casement windows positioned within the truncated form of the wall.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 10

---

**South Elevation**

The functionally designed south elevation is separated into three bays by the two recessed volumes which house the rear stairwells. The rear stairwells consist of rectangular openings in the wall, enclosed by wrought iron railings. The reinforced concrete stairs are recessed behind the openings. The stairs rise in a circular manner around a massive concrete pier. A metal shed roof over the rear stairwell is a later addition. The east bay reveals the tile clad sloping edge of the hipped roof. Paired multi-paned steel casement windows are located at the basement level. The first and second floors have identical windows. A concrete wall addition at the third floor level projects from the slope of the roof. This addition was constructed in 1944 when a storage area was altered for use as an additional bedroom. Multi-paned steel casement windows identical to those used elsewhere in the building were installed by the current owners to replace wood sash windows added at the time of the alteration. The west bay is identical to the east and has had a similar addition; the date of this alteration is unknown. The central bay is rectangular in mass and has a flat roof with no eaves. This bay rises to the height of the roof line on either side. Paired groupings of steel, multi-paned casement windows similar to those of the other facades are located at the basement, first, second and third floor levels.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 11

---

**West Elevation**

The west elevation is identical to the east with the exception that the engaged chimney stack extends from ground level.

**East and West Elevations Facing Court**

The west and east facing facades of the projecting east and west wings, and the recess formed by the junction of the wings and the north facing volume of the building, face the recessed garden court. A tapering, engaged chimney stack beginning at ground level, is free-standing from a point just above the second floor line. A hipped gable crosses the hipped roof behind the chimney stack. A hipped roof continues along the recess, above the location of the court facing balconies. A multi-paned door is situated to the north of the chimney stack at the second floor level. Wrought iron balconettes, originally attached below the doorway, have been removed for repair and painting by the owners. A dormer window, with tile clad gable roof and casement windows, projects from the hipped roof above the balconies on the second floor. Decorative wrought iron balconettes, removed for repair, will be reinstalled in their original location below this gabled dormer. A balcony at the first floor level of the east wing was enclosed in 1957 and converted into a bathroom.

**INTERIOR**

The interior of the Bowman Apartment house is notable for the sculptural quality of the fireplaces and walls. The apartment suites have hardwood floors throughout, plastered walls, unique, half-round fireplaces and decorative wrought iron railing. The original floor and wall tile remain in several of the bathrooms. The wall tiles are iridescent lavender and turquoise. A few of the kitchens retain the original yellow and black tile. Bedrooms throughout have closet facilities trimmed in simple moldings of darkly finished wood. There are no ceiling moldings except in the entrance hall and the dining rooms.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 12

---

**Entrance Hall**

The entrance foyer consists of a threshold with tile floor and a raised landing of polished oak. The two one level apartment suites are accessed from the landing. The stairway, also of oak, features a wrought iron rail. The interior of the entrance hall has a coved ceiling and is vertical in proportion. The concrete walls, tooled to imitate ashlar stone, are painted a warm ocher color. A round-head arch niche is located in the center of the rear wall and is flanked by original brass light fixtures. The light fixtures are composed of a shield form with brackets supporting three "candles". These fixtures are also located on either side of the doors to the apartment suites as well. The oak stairway with wrought iron rail curves up to the second floor landing where the entrances to the apartment suites on the second floor are located. The balcony above the main entrance is accessed by the second floor landing.

**First Floor Apartments**

The living room spaces of the first floor units are characterized by the plastic quality of the coved ceiling forms into which the windows are set. Truncated arch openings between the living and dining rooms are also set within coved forms. The living room features a half-round fireplace that projects from the surface of the wall. The hearth is rounded and trimmed with bricks laid on end, set into the concrete hearth. The fireplace is surfaced with smooth white stucco. The upper portion of the fireplace is cone shaped and swells towards the base. The raised dining room is separated from the living room by a wrought iron rail.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 13

---

**Second Floor Apartments**

The living rooms of these units are characterized by vaulted ceilings with false beams which extend from the springline of the truncated form of the ceiling. Each apartment has either a round-head arch or rectangular opening between the living and dining room. The third floor master bedrooms of the end units feature a round arch doorway of darkly finished wood which overlooks the living room below. A wrought iron balcony with curled rails is positioned beneath this doorway. A fireplace identical to those of the first floor units is located in the living room. An oak stairway with wrought iron rail leads from the dining room to the upper floor. This rail is composed of curvilinear elements; attachments to the wall are brackets crafted in a leaf form.

**ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS**

Alterations to the Bowman Apartment house are minor, and generally occurred early in the history of the building.

Storage area on the third floor of the east wing was converted into a bedroom in 1944. This resulted in the concrete wall addition which projects from the hipped roof on the south elevation of the east wing. A similar alteration occurred on the west wing; the construction date is unknown. The balcony of the court facing first floor apartment of the east wing was enclosed in 1957 and converted into a bathroom.

The converted bedroom of the east wing was recently remodeled for use as a den, at which time a fireplace was installed on the west wall of the room. The new chimney stack is visible only from the rear of the building.

The original copper canopies that were attached above the main entrance porticoes on the north elevation were removed approximately 15 to 20 years ago and replaced with canvas awnings. These canvas awnings have since been removed, and the owners of the Bowman are discussing the possibility of duplicating the original canopies in the original material - copper.

The original cement roof tiles were removed, due to severe deterioration and replaced in 1986 with cement tiles that are almost identical to the original tiles.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)  
Architecture

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance  
1926

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates  
1926

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person    N/A

Architect/Builder  
Fitch, Otis Josselyn, architect  
Bowman, Frederic E., builder

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet



**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property 0.34 acres Portland, Oregon-Washington 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	0	5	2	4	1	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

5	0	4	1	4	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

B 

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

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

Zone Easting Northing

C 

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

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

D 

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

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

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated area is located in NW¼ Section 33, Township 1N, Range 1E, Willamette Meridian in Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon. It is identified by its original legal description: Lots 1, 2 and 6, Block 282, Couch's Addition to Portland; or as Alhambra Condominiums Lot 1 at said location. Multnomah County Assessor's Map Ref. No. 2927.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated area of 0.34 acres is the entire urban tax lot developed by Frederic E. Bowman for an apartment building in 1926. The apartment building is the sole contributing feature of the property. A non-historic, two-car garage of concrete construction at the southeast corner of the property is counted as a non-contributing feature.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Patricia L. Sackett  
organization \_\_\_\_\_ date August 8, 1989  
street & number 612 NW 20th, #21 telephone (503) 294-0888  
city or town Portland state Oregon zip code 97209

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 1A

---

**SUMMARY**

The arresting, two-story, U-shaped apartment building of unfaced poured concrete at 20th and Irving in the Nob Hill neighborhood of northwest Portland, Oregon was built by Portland apartment developer Frederic E. Bowman in 1926. With its plain exterior wall surfaces, frameless arched openings, tile roof, and Spanish Colonial interior decorative scheme, the design is essentially Mediterranean in spirit. It also has a Northern Romanesque flavor in the steeply-pitched hipped roof and gabled entrance pavilions with their tall, round-arched reveals and archivolts framing recessed entries and balconies. The architect of the building, which is presently known as the Alhambra condominiums, was O. J. Fitch, a little documented Portlander who for a time engaged Van Evera Bailey as draftsman. The building is detailed with some fine decorative touches, such as copper balcony hoods, wrought iron fixtures and ornamental tile work. It was highly ranked in the City of Portland Historic Resource Inventory and meets National Register Criterion C as an outstanding, finely-detailed luxury apartment building of the 1920s and a leading example of its eclectic stylistic type in the Nob Hill area.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1B

---

The three story, reinforced concrete Bowman Apartment house, constructed in 1926 in a variation of the Mediterranean style, is locally significant under National Register Criterion "c", as one of the finest examples of a medium scale 1920s era luxury apartment house in the Nob Hill neighborhood. An article printed in The Oregonian in 1937, identifies the Bowman Apartments as offering "some of the largest apartments available in the city." The Bowman Apartment house is a unique expression of the Mediterranean style; an eclectic mix of dominant Mediterranean stylistic elements, combined with features of a Northern European tradition. The sculptural quality achieved through the use of poured concrete is significant. The Bowman Apartment house was designed by Portland architect Otis J. Fitch for prominent Portland contractor F.E. Bowman. It is the only building identified in the Portland Historic Resource Inventory designed by Fitch.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

---

The Bowman Apartment house is a landmark in the Nob Hill neighborhood, where it occupies a prominent position amidst a thick growth of trees at the corner of N.W. Irving and 20th streets. The unique style and conspicuous siting of the Bowman Apartment house solicit comments from passersby as a visible remnant of an affluent period of Portland history prior to the great depression. The Bowman Apartment house was renamed "The Alhambra" in 1975 when it was converted into condominiums. It is listed as a Rank II property in the Portland Historic Resource Inventory. In Preservation Options For Portland Neighborhoods, written in 1975, author Al Staehli comments on the role of this building within its geographic and temporal context:

An architectural survey of the neighborhood would be incomplete without mention of the excellent example of 1920's cast-in-place ornamental concrete work in the apartments at N.W. 20th Avenue and Irving Street...

### Nob Hill

The Nob Hill neighborhood of Northwest Portland may be described roughly as that area which lies between West Burnside and N.W. Kearny streets, and N.W. 17th and 22nd avenues. These boundaries are derived from "Potential Historic Conservation Districts", a report of the Portland Bureau of Planning written in 1978. Located on the Donation Land Claim of Captain John Couch, this area developed from the most fashionable neighborhood of single family dwellings in the 1870s and the 1880s, to a neighborhood of multi-family dwellings and apartment houses. This transition began soon after the population boom following the Lewis and Clark Exposition of 1905. The Nob Hill neighborhood is once again a fashionable place to live as the result of a renaissance in Northwest Portland which began in the 1970s.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 3

---

As a result of the increase in construction following the turn of the century, and the appearance of convenient trolley lines that ran up and down West Burnside and across N.W. 19th and 21st streets, land values increased rapidly in the Nob Hill neighborhood. The evolution of commercial strips, particularly on W. Burnside and N.W. 21st Ave., resulted in an area prime for the development of apartment houses. The old established Portland families moved either further west, or to new developments south of the city such as Dunthorpe or Rivera.

The history of the development of multi-family dwellings is an important component of Nob Hill's history because the density achieved by the proliferation of apartment buildings has given Nob Hill, and Northwest Portland, the character it now enjoys. Prior to 1910, early apartment house types in the area were predominantly of wood frame construction; often rectangular in plan with apartment units characterized by long and narrow proportions. Large, multi-storied brick apartment houses, utilizing historic or exotic styles and increasingly complex floor plans, began to appear around 1910. To allow more light and air into the units, apartment buildings of this period were often planned in a "U" or "H" shape. Reinforced concrete structures, generally with a brick or stucco facing, began to appear in the 1920s. It was during this period that Mediterranean and Mission style apartments were popular; reflecting a similar trend in single family dwellings.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 4

---

By the 1920s, apartment house construction in the Nob Hill neighborhood followed three modes: 1) the large apartment house, often occupying several lots, designed in either a "U" or "H" shape with a central court; 2) the medium scale structure consisting of up to ten units, often two to three stories, with a "U" or "H" shape plan; and 3) the small, modest, rectangular structure occupying a single lot. The Bowman Apartment house is a prime example of a medium scale luxury 1920s era apartment house of the Nob Hill neighborhood. It includes spatial qualities rare in apartments of the period. The majority of apartments at this time consisted of either studio or one bedroom units. The Bowman apartment house was clearly designed for the affluent urban family, with units of two to four bedrooms, living and dining rooms of generous proportions, and a "maid's room" in each of the two level units. The Bowman was a luxury class building; the projected cost when plans were completed was listed in the Pacific Builder and Engineer as \$75,000. When the building was completed, the headline of an article printed in The Oregonian at the time of construction read: "\$150,000 Apartment Ready - Attractive Spanish Type Building Completed By Contractor."

The Bowman Apartment house was intended to be surfaced with stucco rather than brick, as were the majority of reinforced concrete apartment houses of this period. The entire building, including ornament and chimney stacks, is poured in place concrete. The plastic, sculptural quality achieved with the Bowman Apartments is unmatched in the Nob Hill neighborhood.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

---

The area east of the Bowman Apartments on N.W. Irving, and along N.W. 20th between N.W. Hoyt and Johnson Streets, is a dense area consisting of a cross section of apartment types. The majority of apartments on N.W. Irving, between N.W. 19th and 20th, are modest buildings designed by Elmer Feig and constructed in the years following the construction of the Bowman Apartments. Many of these employ elements of the popular Mediterranean style, such as a stucco exterior with cast stone or tile ornamentation. These apartments are generally sited on a single lot and have a rectangular plan. Several are "U" shaped with narrow courts. The White Apartments, a "U"-shaped, wood frame apartment house with a stucco exterior, is located adjacent to the Bowman Apartments at 624-636 N.W. 20th Ave. The Forest Apartments, adjacent to the White Apartments on N.W. 20th, is a modest version of the medium scale apartment house, constructed of wood frame and with stucco exterior. This "H"-shaped apartment building was constructed in 1923.

There are nine apartment houses in Northwest Portland designed in the Mediterranean style, as identified by the Portland Historic Resource Inventory. Of these buildings, only The Bowman Apartment house is listed as a Rank II property. The Bowman Apartment house, although not a pure example of the Mediterranean style, stands out as the finest medium scale apartment house with Mediterranean characteristics in the context of the Nob Hill area. Its unique style and complex mass, as well as its plastic use of concrete, are distinctive within the context of Nob Hill.

The White Apartment house is the only other medium scale luxury apartment house in the immediate vicinity, and like the Bowman, is listed as a Rank II property in the Portland Historic Resource Inventory. Also constructed for F.E. Bowman, the White Apartment house has a floor plan similar to that of the Bowman Apartments, however the eight apartment suites are two bedroom units only, and each unit occupies only one level. The White Apartments, of wood frame construction with a stucco exterior, are horizontally composed, with a low pitched hipped roof, indicative of the California Mission style. The original tile roof of the White Apartments has been replaced with composition shingles.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 6

---

Stylistic elements of both buildings are derivative of the Mediterranean style, however the Bowman is clearly a more unique expression in its combination of Mediterranean elements such as the red tile roof, wrought iron work, colorful tile fountain, niches and intended stucco surface, and elements that reflect a Northern European tradition such as the steeply pitched hipped gable roof, projecting entrance portico, vertical proportions and round-head arches.

**Otis Josselyn Fitch**

Otis Josselyn Fitch, the eldest son of Charles Otis and Harriet Josselyn Fitch (1860-1949), was born in Council Bluffs, Iowa, April 24, 1893. In 1907, the Fitch family relocated to Portland, where Charles Otis Fitch was employed as a purchasing agent for the Portland Railway Light & Power Company.

Mrs. Fitch's brother was Benage Stockwell Josselyn, an early president of the Portland Railway Light & Power Company. When the P.R.L. & P. merged with Portland General Electric in 1907, "B.S." Josselyn (as he was called) was brought to Portland from Baltimore, Maryland to manage the company. His sister and her family arrived in Portland soon after. Josselyn had a taste for opulence and ostentation. Josselyn purchased for his residence, the Massachusetts State Building from the Lewis and Clark Fair of 1905. The house was moved in sections to Josselyn's property at the base of Mt. Tabor in East Portland.(1)



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

---

Charles Otis Fitch died in 1909. The family remained in Portland and Otis went on to work several jobs; initially as a clerk at P.R.L. & P. Between the years 1915 and 1921, Otis is listed alternatively as "salesman" and "electrician." In 1918 he worked in the shipyards. By 1924, Otis' career took a different turn. He is listed in Polk's Portland City Directory of that year under the title "Creative Design and Construction," with offices on the fourth floor of the Platt Building. It is not known how or where Otis received his training, or when he actually began to design buildings. Other buildings designed by Fitch have yet been identified, however a nephew, now residing in Omaha, Nebraska, recalls that his uncle designed houses in the Laurelhurst and Irvington neighborhoods of northeast Portland.

Little is known of Fitch's personal life as he left no direct descendants. His first marriage was to Estelle Talmadge around 1921. The Fitch's lived in the Irvington neighborhood in a modest bungalow. The Portland Historic Resource Inventory indicates that the plans for the house were from the "Home Builders Securities Company". Estelle Talmadge Fitch died in 1926. After moving to California, Otis Fitch married Dee Clark.

Otis Fitch is listed as "architect" in the 1926 Portland City Directory; the year the Bowman Apartment house was constructed. This evidently caused some turmoil with the State Board of Architect Examiners, as Otis Fitch was not licensed at the time. This was a period when the licensing of architects was still relatively new. In 1928 the State Attorney General ruled that Fitch could not use the title "architect" until he fulfilled the requirements of the State Board of Architect Examiners. Fitch complied with this ruling and was licensed the same year. Little is known of Fitch's architectural practice except that prominent Portland architect Van Evera Bailey worked for him as a draftsman in 1925.(2)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 8

---

Fitch continued to practice architecture in Portland until 1932 when he moved to California, eventually settling in San Mateo, where he is presumed to have resumed his architectural career. Otis Fitch died March 15, 1941 at Letterman Hospital, The Presidio in San Francisco. Otis Fitch had been called to active military service from reserve status; he held the rank of Captain and was assigned as assistant quartermaster of the Ninth Corps. While in service to the army, Otis Fitch suffered a heart attack and died at the early age of 48.

**Frederic E. Bowman**

Frederic E. Bowman (1862-1948) conducted business as F.E. Bowman and Company in Portland for twenty years. The company is described alternatively as "contractors" and "real estate and architects" in Portland City Directories. A successful contractor, Bowman was responsible for the construction of three apartment buildings identified in the Portland Historic Resource Inventory. Included in this number are the Bowman Apartments (1926) on Irving, the California Mission style apartments on N.W. 20th (1925) and a Craftsman style apartment building at 1825 S.W. Elm, constructed in 1916.

An apartment building constructed in 1913 for Bowman in the Craftsman style, located at 1624 - 1636 N.E. Tillamook, was not included in the Portland Historic Resource Inventory. However, it was identified as an early example of a Craftsman style apartment house designed by the F.E. Bowman Company, and was recently nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. Bowman and his wife Harriet lived in the apartment complex located at 1825 S.W. Elm. Bowman was associated for several years with his nephew Mark D. Hawes, who was both vice-president and secretary-treasurer of the F.E. Bowman Company. Hawes was involved with financial transactions for the Bowman Apartments on N.W. Irving, having held the deed to the property from 1926 - 1927.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 9

---

Several designers were involved with the F.E. Bowman Company including George R. Wright, formerly a draftsman in the office of A.E. Doyle.(3) Wright designed the Craftsman style apartment house on S.W. Elm where Bowman resided. It is not clear whether Otis J. Fitch's involvement with Bowman continued beyond the design of the Bowman Apartment house on N.W. Irving, however the apartment building Fitch designed for the F.E. Bowman Company stands out as the most unique in style and scale.

Notes

1 E. Kimbark MacColl, The Shaping of a City: Business and Politics in Portland, Oregon 1885 - 1915. (Portland: The Georgian Press Company, 1976), 367.

2 Gideon Bosker and Lena Lencek., Frozen Music. (Portland: Western Imprints, The Press of the Oregon Historical Society, 1985), 122.

3 Koler/Morrisson Consultants, "National Register Nomination for the Bowman, F.E., Apartments", 1988.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number   9   Page   1  

---

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bosker, Gideon and Lena Lencek. Frozen Music. Portland:  
Western Imprints, The Press of the Oregon Historical  
Society, 1985.
- City of Portland Buildings Bureau Microform and Card Files.
- Clark, Rosalind. Oregon Style: Architecture from 1840 to the  
1950s. Portland: Professional Book Center, Inc., 1983.
- Fitch, Otis J., Apartment House for F.E. Bowman, plans, 1925  
City of Portland Buildings Bureau Microfiche  
Collection.
- Fitch, Roger. Interview by author, August 7, 1989.
- McAlester, Lee and Virginia McAlester. A Field Guide to  
American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984.
- MacColl, E. Kimbark. The Shaping of a City: Business and  
Politics in Portland, Oregon 1885 - 1915. Portland: The  
Georgian Press Company, 1976.
- Oregon Historical Society Library, vertical files.
- The Oregonian. (Portland, Oregon).  
December 5, 1926.  
July 4, 1937.
- Pacific Builder and Engineer.  
January 16, 1926.  
January 23, 1926.
- Polk's Portland City Directories (Portland, Oregon).
- Portland Bureau of Planning, Portland Historical Landmarks  
Commission, "Potential Historic Conservation Districts"  
(Portland, 1978).

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   9   Page   2  

---

Portland Historic Resources Inventory, City of Portland,  
1984.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1926.

Staehli, Alfred. Preservation Options for Portland  
Neighborhoods. National Endowment for the Arts, 1975.

Ticor Title Insurance Records.

Weiss, Harry Moisseiff. "Early Concrete Construction in  
Oregon, 1880-1915." Thesis, University of Oregon, 1983.

**National Register Nominations**

Envoy Apartment Building. Prepared by Heritage Investment  
Corporation, 1986.

Bowman, F.E., Apartments. Prepared by Koler/Morrison  
Consultants, 1988.

**Historic  
Resource  
Inventory**  
CITY OF PORTLAND, OREGON



2-444-02004

2004 N.W. Irving Street

Alhambra Condominiums, Lot 1  
QUARTER SECTION MAP #: 2927  
Northwest District Association

ORIGINAL FUNCTION: Apartment House

DATE BUILT: 1926

STYLE: Mediterranean

ARCHITECTURAL PLANS BY: Fitch, Otis Josselyn

ORIGINAL OWNER: Bowman, F.E. Company

TAX ASSESSOR'S ACCOUNT #: R-01430-0010

ZONING: AO

Rank II

HISTORIC DISTRICT: Nob Hill (potential)

**SPECIAL FEATURES AND MATERIALS:**

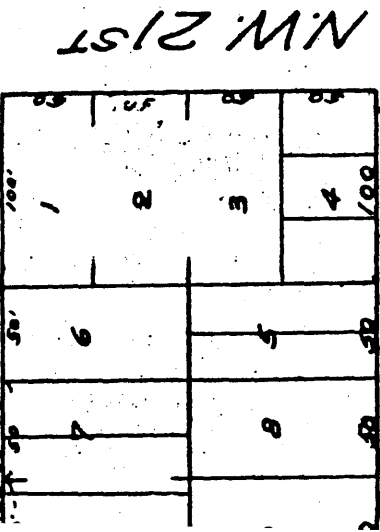
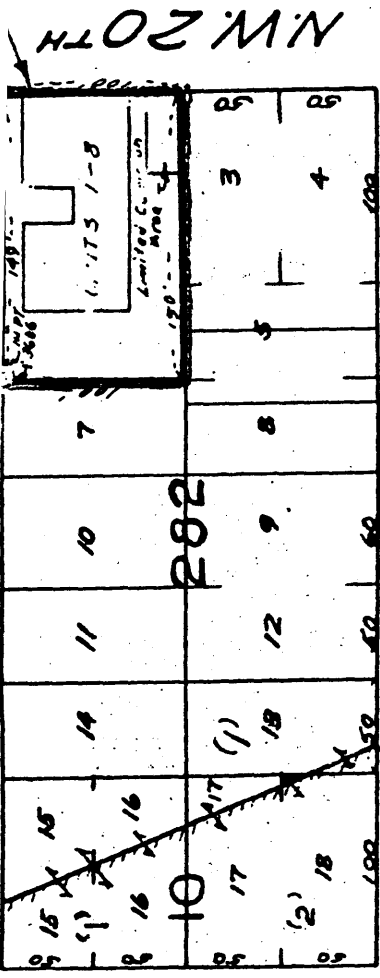
Steeply-pitched clay tile hip roofs with cross gables.  
Round-headed openings. Balconies with copper canopies. Cast stone corbels  
and twisted columns. Wrought iron balconets. Walls of exposed reinforced  
concrete.

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture

APR

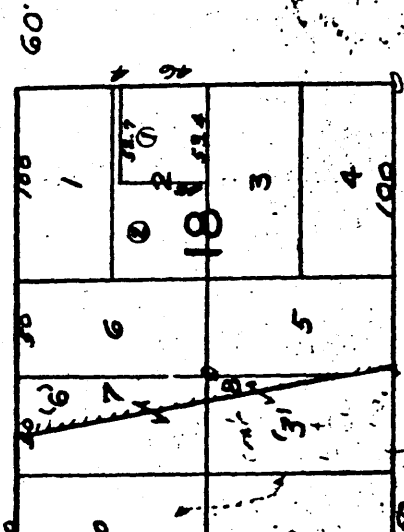
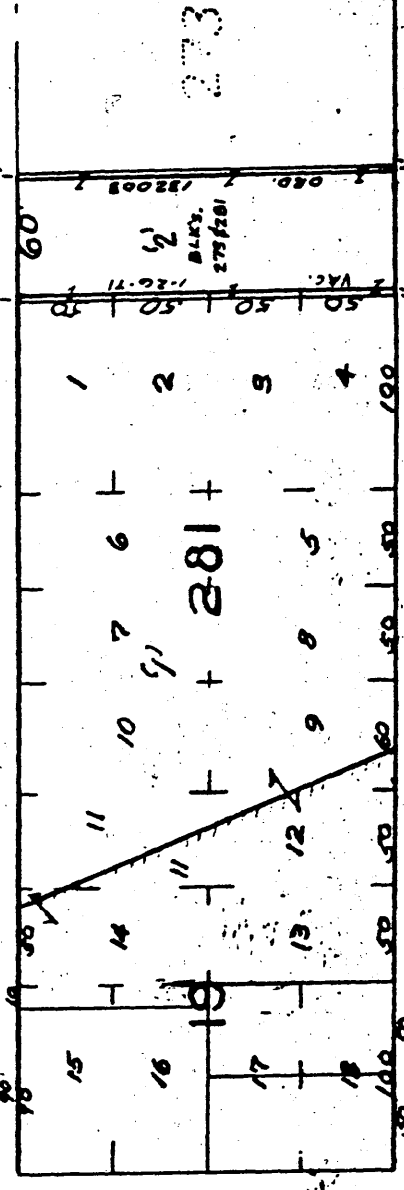
ALHAMBRA  
CONDOMINIUMS

272



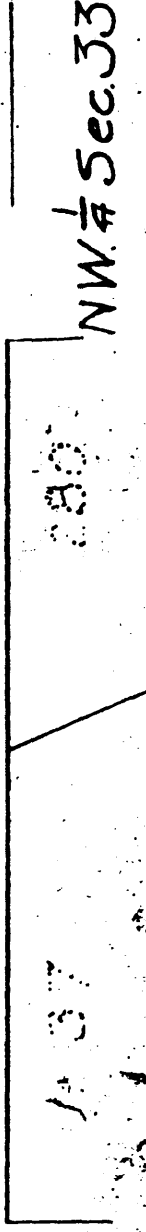
ST.

60



ST.

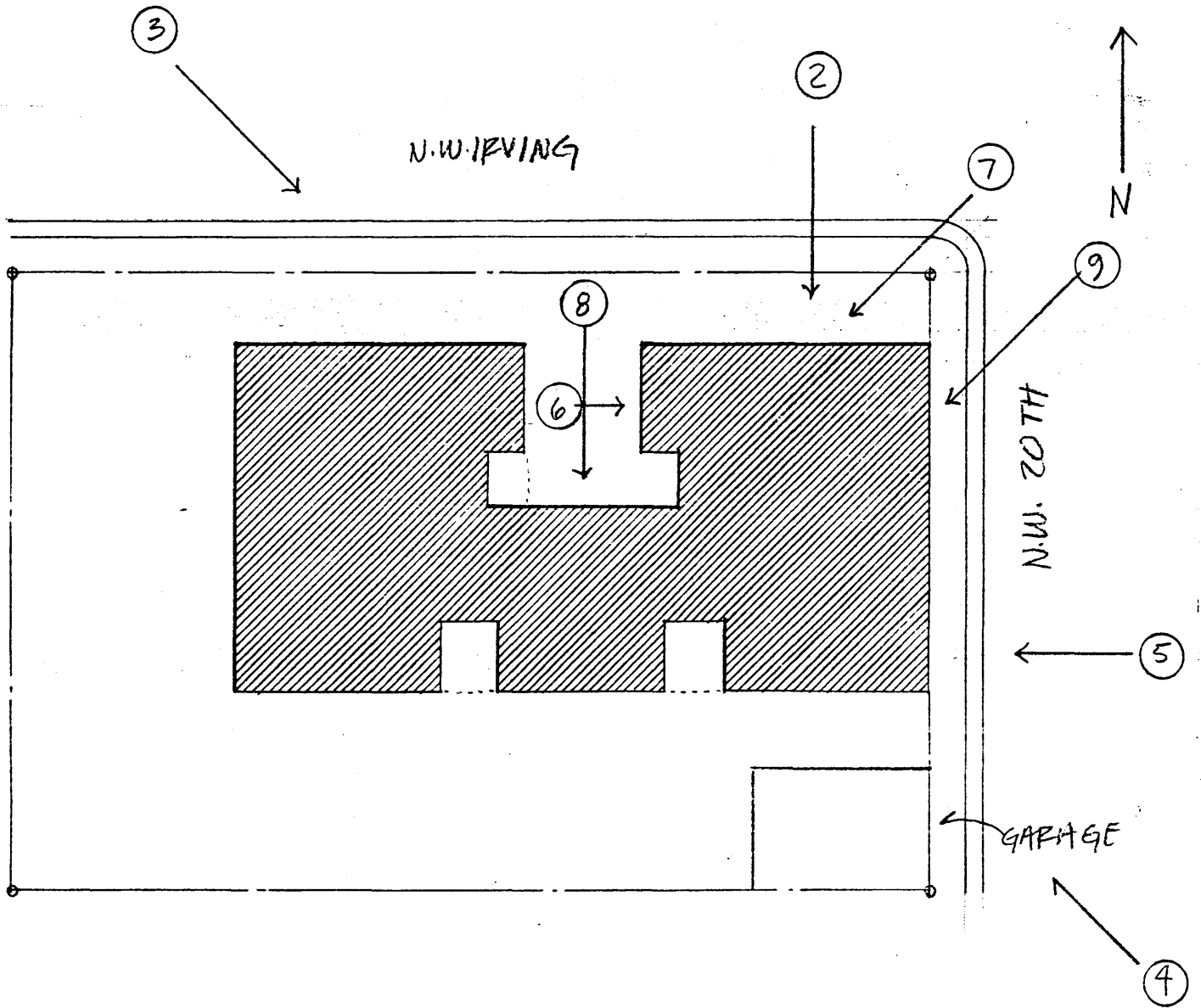
60



NW 1/4 Sec. 33 IN. 1E.

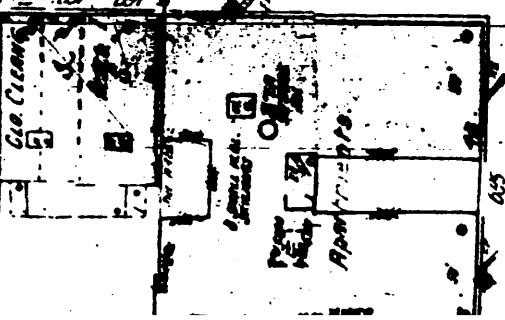
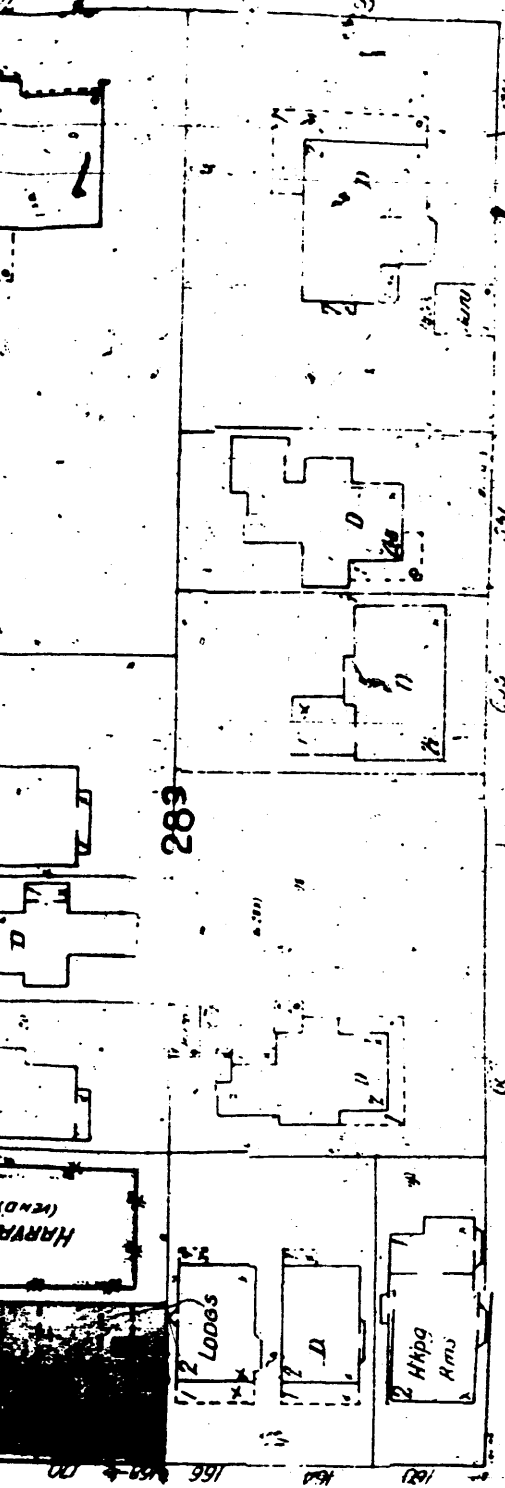
2927

600-21

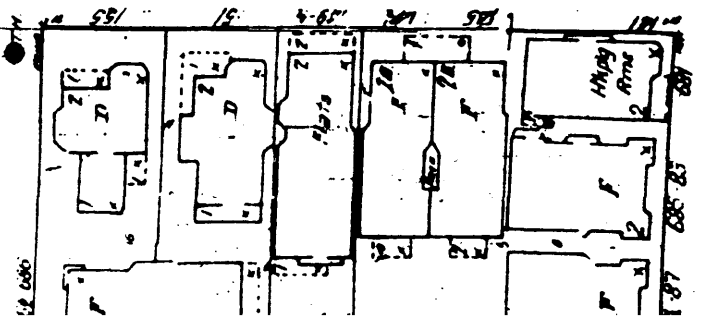


THE BOWMAN APARTMENTS (ALHAMBRA CONDOMINIUMS)





IRVING



OYT

Sanborn Map 1926  
 Portland, V.I., W.S.  
 N.E. of Washington  
 Page 45

Sanborn Fire Insurance  
 Maps; 1926

Scale of Feet.

BOWMAN  
 APTS.

Apartment

MASONIC  
 HALL

Garage

289

282

HARVA  
 (END)

Lodges

H Hpg  
 Arms

Lodges

20

21

20

20

21