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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

JAN 26 1990

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 Wheeler, Cora Bryant, House
other names/site number Wheeler, Mrs. Coleman H., House

2. Location

street & number 1841 SW Montgomery Drive
city, town Portland
state Oregon code OR county Multnomah code 051 zip code 97201

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: [x] private, [] public-local, [] public-State, [] public-Federal
Category of Property: [x] building(s), [] district, [] site, [] structure, [] object
Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 1, Noncontributing 0, Total 1
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 [x] 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 [x] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. [] See continuation sheet.
Signature of certifying official: [Signature]
Date: January 10, 1990
State or Federal agency and bureau: Oregon State Historic Preservation Office

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:
[x] 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:):
Entered in the National Register: [Signature] 2/23/90
Signature of the Keeper: [Signature]
Date of Action:

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single family dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single family dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century Revivals:
English Arts and Crafts

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
walls stucco
wood: shingle
roof wood: shingle
other ceramic tile
stones

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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Continuation Sheet**

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BUILDING AND SITE DESCRIPTION

The Wheeler House sits on the crest of the West Hills in Portland, Oregon, with views from the east and north of the house sweeping across the city to distant hills. The Arts and Crafts style home was built in 1923 for Cora Wheeler, widow of Coleman H. Wheeler, and was designed by Albert E. Doyle. The Wheeler House has been used throughout its history as a private residence, and is in an exceptional state of repair. No exterior deterioration in the condition of the house can be detected, and only minor interior alterations have occurred. The home remains a superbly elegant example of the Arts and Crafts style in the Northwest, and of the work of Albert E. Doyle.

The home is located at 1841 S.W. Montgomery Drive, Portland, Oregon, on the crest of a ridge line in the Portland Heights area of the West Hills, allowing views of the city to the east and north and of the timbered hills rising further to the west. Albert E. Doyle insisted that the home be built directly on the "natural point" of the ridge, despite Cora Wheeler's initial wish to place the house further back from the street. [1] Throughout his career, Doyle carefully placed his creations to take best advantage of their building sites.

The lot is approximately 162 feet from north to south. The east and west property lines follow the curving paths of S.W. Montgomery Drive and S.W. Montgomery Place respectively: the southern line is some 219 feet while the northern line is 165 feet. The property is in Carter's Addition to Portland, Block 65, Portions of Lots 2,3, and 8. It may be further identified as Tax Lot 5.

The Wheeler House is asymmetrical in composition, with a complex mixture of roof, window and porch projections, and

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with several prominent intersecting gables. Large, multi-paned, windows open over all sides of the home. The home is clad with a combination of rough stucco and cedar shingles, variously highlighted by brick trim, large river stones, false half-timbering, and wrought iron railings. The facades, except for those areas where new shingles are now being applied, [2] are painted gray with white trim. The steeply sloped pitch of the hipped roof is covered with cedar shingles applied in a waveform pattern to resemble thatch. Proportioned as a haystack, the false-thatch room rises as a natural extension of the hill. The combined use of these materials and elements is characteristic of the Arts and Crafts style, particularly as practiced in the Northwest. [3] In the Wheeler House, the materials blend to create a home of striking elegance and beauty. The Wheeler House fits comfortably into the surrounding Portland Heights neighborhood, consisting of elegant homes that represent some of the finest residential architecture in the city.

The Wheeler House is formed as a large L, with part of the structure filling the interior angle of the L. The front, east wing, runs north to south, where it joins the side, south wing. The side wing then follows the southern boundary line to the west. The garage and servants' quarters angle north-west from the end of this wing. The front wing of the home runs some 72 feet north to south, with a width of between 22 and 52 feet. The side wing, including the garage, runs some 112 feet toward the rear of the property, with a width of between 20 and 49 feet. The home has a half basement under the southern wing of the house, two main living stories, an attic above the front wing, and a half-level apartment over the garage. The home is built on a massive concrete foundation. According to the Sanborn map of the home, the first floor walls were built using tile, with wood frame construction above.

BUILDING EXTERIOR

Front Facade (East)

The eastern (front) elevation of the Wheeler House is dominated by its steeply sloped hipped roof intersected by a large gable rising above a two-story semi-hexagonal bay next to the main entrance. The entrance porch projects next to

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this bay and has a steep roof and an arched portal. The rough-stucco and shingle clad walls are broken by large, multi-paned, windows spaced along the facade. The three major first floor window groups all have a very large single-panel windows surrounded by groups of multi-paned casement units. The second floor displays a series of massed double hung sash windows.

North (Side) and West (Rear) Facades

The north elevation is dominated by the projecting glass walls of the sun room and the steep roof above it. The roof is broken by a small second floor balcony. The sun room walls are formed by five tall sets of multi-paned casement windows. To the west of the sun room is a large brick and tile porch with columns of rough river stone supporting a stuccoed second floor. A wrought iron railing - decorated with an intricate grape vine design - surrounds the porch, and flanks brick stairs descending to the lawn. The hexagonal terra-cotta colored tiles, bordered by square tiles, match those of the vestibule and sun room. The porch's foundation is set with large river stones. The river stones of the columns and foundation were originally natural, but have since been painted light gray. [4] The stones flanking the stairs on the outside remain natural. The second floor level of the sun room's west wall has decorative half-timbering. A large brick chimney rises through the peak of the roof, serving both the living room and second floor sewing room fireplaces. Above the porch are two double hung windows.

The west and north west (rear) elevations of the house, and the steep slope of the ground away from the building, form a cul-de-sac at the interior angle of the building's L. The main wing's west facade consists of the open porch at the northwest corner, topped by the steep main roof. South of the porch is a two-story rectangular bay with a stuccoed wall on the lower level and horizontal courses of shingles on the upper. The the first floor of the bay holds the end of the dinning room, with its large, multi-paned, windows, similar in design to the large window units at the front of the house. The bay's steep hipped-roof gable dramatically intersects the main roof. A small shed-dormer sits just

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north of the gable.

Viewed on the plans, the area south of the dining room bay appears as a star-bastion salient of the garden projecting into the angle formed by the wings of the building. The west facade of the main wing has a small entry porch leading to the kitchen. The first floor is clad in stucco, and broken by a long series of small casement windows. The second floor has a small balcony, with shingled walls. The north wall of the side wing (forming the border of the garden's salient) is clad in stucco on both the first and second floors. A two-story rectangular bay blends into the angled wall of the garage attachment. This large bay is also stuccoed. A small semi-hexagonal bay - holding the sitting room of the servants' apartment - projects from the second floor of the large bay, and is clad with shingles.

At the west edge of the large bay, the wall of the garage and the servants apartment angles to the northwest forming a separate visual element. The steep roof over the garage descends to form a mansard roof covering the second story servants quarters. The northwest facade of the garage and servants apartment appears as a hipped roof gable intersecting the main wing of the building. The wall is clad in stucco, and is visible from the basement level to the roof. The facade holds several small windows, in both casement and double hung sash styles. At the upper level, a arched porch spans the wing, and a steep staircase descends to the rear driveway, providing a private entrance to the servants' apartment. Under the driveway is a long, narrow, gardener's storage room set into the hill.

South Facade

The south elevation of the Wheeler House is clad on the first floor with stucco and on the second with cedar shingles. The home, set some 44 feet back from the sidewalk, then runs straight to the slight salient of a false chimney, matching a non-functional fireplace in the library. River stones are set into the wall of the chimney. Large, multi-paned casement windows flank the chimney on the first floor. The second floor holds several double hung windows.

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About a third of the way toward the rear of the house, a rectangular salient holds a roofed side entry porch supporting a rectangular window bay. This second floor bay's walls are multi-paned casement windows, with a single double hung window. The porch roof and the bay are supported by corner columns of painted river stone. Next, a semi-hexagonal bay with multi-paned casement windows holds the breakfast nook on the first floor. The second floor roof curves to form a small hipped-dormer with a single double hung window. A shed-roof dormer then protects two small double hung bathroom windows. This is followed by a two story semi-hexagonal bay with a service entrance having a lattice work door and an arched lintel. The bay's second floor has three windows. Another shed-roof dormer is next. At the west end of the south elevation a rectangular salient with a sharp gable roof and the garage angle sharply to the northwest. The double garage is capped by a large shed-roof dormer with three multi-paned casement windows. Stairs rise at the end of the building to the servants' apartment over the garage. This facade's mixture of hexagonal and rectangular bays, steep gables, and variously shaped dormers is characteristic of the Arts and Crafts Style.

BUILDING INTERIOR**Basement**

The basement of the Wheeler House sits beneath the south wing of the building, and does not extend under the living room and dining room. The unfinished basement is divided into a number of service and storage rooms. The major rooms are a large furnace/storage room at the front of the house, and a laundry room located under the kitchen. Several interesting features are present in this area. In the short hall between the two large rooms is the basement opening for a wood lift to the first floor. It is still operational, and is worked with a large hand crank. Adjacent to the wood lift, but exiting in the laundry room, is a round laundry chute with openings on both the first and second floors. In the front furnace room, a vent with a sliding cover opens into the library on the first floor. Air from the basement, cool in summer and warm in winter, can

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circulate through this vent.

First Floor

The Wheeler House is entered through an elegantly arched door, filled with glass panels. This door opens to a small vestibule. The vestibule has a floor of rich terra-cotta colored tiles. The tiles are predominantly hexagonal, with a border of square tiles. They are believed to have come from Italy [5], and match the tiles used in the sun room and on the large porch at the north end of the house. The main hall of the home sweeps from the front bay windows to a grand staircase that rises to the second floor. The main hall, living room, dining room and library all have elegantly paneled knee-high wainscoting, heavy door frames, and wide molding descending from the ceilings. The woodwork of these areas is painted the original beige. The windows of the main first floor rooms are all multi-paned casements. The oak floor of the main hall is in a square parquet pattern, with a highlighting strip of dark mahogany set as a border. The grand staircase rises to a wide intermediate landing, then to a sunlit landing on the second floor. A large coat closet is set under the staircase, opening from either side.

Two sets of wide French doors lead from the main hall to north and south. The original clear glass in these doors has been replaced with mirrored glass. [6] The French doors to the south open to the library. This large room has an oak floor, heavy exposed beams on the ceiling, and a non-working tile fireplace. Wide, multi-paned, casement windows open on the front of the house, while other tall casement windows flank the fireplace. Built-in book cases and cabinets have been added to this room, in a style that very closely matches the room's original panels and woodwork. The alteration can be detected, however, because the bookcases only partly cover the floor vent to the basement.

A paneled door, with a matching panel set in place of a transom, leads through the west wall to a wide hall that joins the north (side) entrance porch to the main hall. The woodwork of the side hall matches that of the main hall. It also has a parqueted floor with a dark mahogany strip

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border. A single French door, flanked by side lights and capped by a four-paned window transom, exits at the end of the hall. All of the doors in this hallway match the paneled door and transom of the library room. On the west side of the hall, a central door enters a small breakfast nook set in a semi-hexagonal bay. The nook currently has a linoleum floor, that replaced the original tile floor. North of the nook's door is a butler's pantry that has been converted into a small wet-bar.

The French doors leading north from the main hall sweep into the living room and the sun room beyond. Large, multi-paned casement windows surrounded by a large single panel, open on the front of the house. The west wall holds mirrored French doors leading to the dining room, an elegant fireplace with borders and a hearth of black and gray marble, and a single French door opening to the tiled porch at the north end of the home. The wooden mantle of the fireplace displays three bas-relief urns. The two smaller urns flank, while the larger separates, two large horizontal panels. Above the mantle is an inset panel that originally held a large painting, and now houses a mirror cut to match the space. A striking, gray and blue rug with a border of dark blue, covers the living room floor. The rug is the Wheeler's original living room rug and was custom-made in New York for this space. Long in storage, the rug was purchased by the current owner and restored to its proper position. It is in nearly perfect condition. [7]

The glass walled sun room opens to the north of the living room through a wide doorway. The original French doors are currently stored in the basement, having been removed by a previous owner. The sun room's floor tiles match those of the vestibule. Tall louvered shutters can be closed across the tall windows of the sun room. An elaborate chandelier, not original to the house, hangs from the center of the room.

The wood work of the dining room, west of the living room, matches that of the other main rooms of the first floor. A large window overlooks the rear garden, while double French doors open north onto the tiled porch. A large chandelier, not original to the house, hangs from the center of the ceiling. The walls are covered in a floral-patterned

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wallpaper.

A long, narrow, pantry, sweeps from the south side of the dining room through to the breakfast nook. The pantry is lined with glass-fronted cabinets above work counters with drawers and storage space. The counter tops are of rich, golden, pine. The west counter has two galvanized steel basins. The long pantry windows have louvered wooden shutters on the inside. The floors of the pantry, kitchen, and breakfast nook are of matching linoleum, that replaced the original tile. The first floor entry to the wood lift and laundry chute is near the south end of the pantry. The kitchen is entered through a door in the pantry's west wall. During the later 1950s, the kitchen was modernized, and the original floor tiles replaced, as noted. A large, professional, gas stove and oven, was added during the 1980s. The original refrigerator with its nickel plated hinges and latches, a Leonard Cleanable made by the Grand Rapids Refrigerator Co. of Wisconsin, is still in place against the south wall of the kitchen. It was in use by the former owner, and will be placed back in service after inspection by an electrician. The back of the old refrigerator is against the wall of a side vestibule, set in the southwest corner of the kitchen. A second outside door exits the kitchen to the north, and leads to the long porch that parallels the pantry.

A hall leads west from the kitchen to the garage, two rooms variously used for servants or for storage, and a stairway to the second floor. A small bathroom also opens off of this hall. The white, hexagonal floor tile and the fixtures are original. The tub that once occupied part of the bathroom was removed by a former owner, and replaced with a large dressing table.

Second Floor

The grand staircase sweeps from the main hall upward to the second floor, through a large U shaped opening. The banister is supported by elegant turned metal balusters, alternating with straight balusters. The second floor landing is flooded with light from a single French door, flanked by large multi-paned windows, that opens onto a small

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balcony. Steps rise from the southwest of the landing to a narrow hall and the rear of the house. This hall houses the second floor laundry chute. Wide stairs rise on either side of the main staircase toward the front (east) of the house. A large chandelier, a replacement for the original chandelier, hangs over the grand staircase. The walls of the main upstairs halls have high baseboards, a picture-frame molding set near waist height, and heavy molding circling the ceiling and upper walls. Fluted pilaster cornerboards rise around the hall, while intricate beams cross the ceiling. The floors of the second story are Douglas Fir or pine. The main windows are double hung sash windows.

The south wing of the second floor holds a succession of bedrooms, all with connecting doors that allow passage from the front to the rear of the house. Starting at the west (rear) end of the wing, the rooms are: a small bedroom set in the rear gable; a bathroom, with the original white hexagonal floor tiles and square wall tiles, and its original fixtures; a second bedroom; and a larger bedroom set in the southeast corner of the second floor. These rooms display a mixture of wallpapered and painted walls. A private bath is entered from the northeast corner of the front bedroom. It is in its original configuration, with tile and fixtures similar to the smaller bathroom. Originally, a small, non-functional, fireplace was set against the south wall. It was removed by a previous owner, and only the hearth tiles remain.

The master bedroom occupies the large semi-hexagonal bay at the front of the house. A series of windows fill the bay, giving a panoramic view. The room is wallpapered. A master bathroom, remodeled in the 1950s, connects the bedroom to a small dressing room set above and to the side of the entrance porch. Glass mirrors have been installed in the room, replacing some of the original built-in cabinets. A large closet is attached to the dressing room. It was originally much larger, with a skylight to the attic. The area was, however, partitioned to provide space for a large linen closet opening to the main hall.

Next to the dressing room, set in the northeast corner of the main wing, is a sewing/sitting room. It is now used as a family room. A wide series of three double hung windows

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open to the east. A fireplace rests against the west wall, next to a door to the main hall. At some time after the Wheelers sold the home in 1953, the original hearth tiles were replaced, and mirrored glass placed around the fireplace. The mantle and side columns are, however, original. A single French door, flanked by multi-paned windows, opens to the north onto a small balcony that provides a spectacular panorama of the city and the distant hills.

Outside the sewing room, the east wall of the main hall holds two other doors. The northern most of these leads to the attic stairs, while the other opens to a linen closet. Two other portals open on the west side of the hall to rooms overlooking the rear of the house. At the northern end of the hall, an opening passes through to a side hallway. Originally, a door closed this opening. That door now secures the linen closet. Off of the side hall, to the north, is a small study. Directly west is a bathroom, with its original white tile and fixtures matching those discussed above. South of the bathroom, and entered through either the bathroom or the main hallway, is a medium sized bedroom that overlooks the garden and the rear of the house.

Half-Floor Above the Garage

A small servants' apartment, also used as bachelor quarters by a succession of young men of the Wheeler family, is placed above the garage in the angled section of the south wing. This apartment is half way between the first and second floor levels. It consists of a small sitting room set in the semi-hexagonal bay noted on the north exterior of the south wing; a small, irregularly shaped room opposite that overlooks the driveway; a large living room directly above the garage; and a small bathroom with the original tile and fixtures noted in the other bathrooms. An arched porch is reached from the rear of the living room. Stairs descend from the porch to the driveway.

Attic

The attic runs above the living room, main hall, and

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library of the east wing. The central section of the attic is floored, with the outside portions of the unfinished. A cedar room was added to the south portion of the attic at some time after the Wheelers sold the home. The skylight to the master suite's dressing area and closets has been sealed, as noted above.

GARDEN AND LANDSCAPING

East

The Wheeler House sits on a high grade well above street level. A gray, rough-stucco, retaining wall runs along the front of the property at the sidewalk level, and beside the driveway to the south of the house. The wall is topped by a course of dark red brick. A wide red brick staircase leads from the southeast angle of the wall to the front entrance of the home. The stairs are flanked by a wrought iron railing - decorated with scrollwork - to one side, and by the retaining wall and sculptured evergreens to the other. The garden at the front of the home is small, and rises from the retaining wall to the level of the house. It consists of numerous small trees and bushes screening the building from the street. A brick walkway continues from the front entrance along the front of the house to the garden's wrought iron gate.

North

At the northeast corner of the house, a tall wrought iron gate opens to a small horseshoe-shaped lawn that follows the crest of the hill. This area is bordered by flower beds and large bushes. Beyond the shrubs, at the edge of the garden plateau, a wrought iron fence protects the steep slope down to the the neighboring home. Large, natural, river stones reenforce the bank. The west edge of the north lawn is lined with flower beds. Additional flowers and bushes border the cul-de-sac formed by the two wings of the house. The cul-de-sac is nearly filled with flowers and bushes.

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South

The main garden is west of the house. The ground slopes down sharply to the west, with a series of concentric paths forming long switch-backs. Several stone staircases cut sharply downhill. The first major terrace marks the boundary of the original garden. The dominant feature of this level is a large, natural stone, horseshoe shaped bench. Several waterfalls spill down the hillside, with the main stream cascading from the just above the horseshoe into a reflection pond. On the extreme southwest end of this level, a small fountain and another waterfall - added to the garden in the later 1950s, provide a private refuge. The path switches back to the bottom of the garden as a long, grassy, mall between the steep hill and a border of shrubs. The flat bottom of the garden was originally an orchard. The Wheelers later added a badminton court for the children. The children themselves built tree-houses and swings in the unlandscaped western edges of the property. [8]

Shortly after the Wheelers sold the property in 1953, the orchard and badminton court were removed, and a large circular garden installed. This formal area is dominated by concentric circles formed by bordering shrubs, a low hedge, a wide lawn, a flower bed, and a large circular fountain with a statue of a cherub at its center. A small garden bench of white stone sits on the north side of the circle garden, protected by a white lattice-work frame and roof. The formal garden of the Wheeler House, seeming to cascade down the steep hill to the circle garden, superbly complements the home itself.

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ALTERATIONS

Exterior

There have been only slight, cosmetic, changes to the exterior appearance of the Wheeler House. There have been no alterations to its exterior structure. The columns of river rock on the north and south of the house, originally left natural, have been painted, and there is some minor variation in the painting of the building's trim. The sixty six year old original cedar roof and side shingles are currently being replaced with new cedar shingles. While the work has not yet been completed, it is clear that the pattern and style of the original roof is being maintained.

Interior

The interior alterations to the home are minor, though more numerous than the exterior alterations. In the library, built-in bookcases and cabinets have been added. They closely match the style of the original woodwork. As noted above, the alteration can be detected because the bookcases only partly cover the floor vent to the basement. At some time during this era, the butler's pantry in the side entrance hall was changed into a small wet-bar. During the later 1950s, two related alterations occurred. The tile floors of the breakfast nook, pantry and kitchen were replaced with linoleum, and the kitchen fixtures and cabinets were modernized. The final alteration on the first floor involved the servants bathroom behind the kitchen. The bathtub was removed, and replaced with a vanity. The remainder of the room is intact.

Several changes were made on the second floor during the late 1950s or 1960s. The master bathroom was renovated, with the original tile and fixtures - matching those of the other bathrooms in the house - being replaced. The dressing room of the master suite was also slightly altered. Additional mirrors were added, and one set of built-in drawers and shelves were removed to provide more room for the new bathtub. In a related alteration, a large closet between

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the dressing room and main hall was changed. Originally, it had been lit by a skylight open to the attic. The skylight was closed off, and the dressing room closet converted into a linen closet entered from the main hall. The portal used to create this new entrance was apparently taken from the entrance of the small side hall in the northwest corner of the second floor. [9] Two other alterations occurred on the second floor. A mirrored frame was placed around the fireplace in the sewing room of the master suite, and its hearth tiles changed; and a false fireplace in the southeast corner bedroom was removed. The original electric outlet, and the tile hearth, remain. Finally, a small cedar room for the storage of clothes has been added to the attic. [10]

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
1923

Significant Dates
1923

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Albert E. Doyle, architect

Robertson, Hay & Wallace, builders

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

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

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 # _____

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 0.82 acres Portland, Oregon-Washington 1:24000

UTM References

A

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

B

Zone		Easting				Northing							

C

Zone		Easting				Northing							

D

Zone		Easting				Northing							

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is identified as Tax Lot 5 of Block 65, Carter's Addition to Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated area of 0.82 acres is the property acquired by Mr. and Mrs. Coleman H. Wheeler in 1918 and developed, subsequently, by Mrs. Wheeler following her husband's death in 1920. The house designed by Albert E. Doyle was completed in 1923 and is the single contributing feature of the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title James Fiscus and Melissa Darby
organization James W. Fiscus and Associates date July 31, 1989
street & number 3253 SE Belmont telephone (503) 239-0292
city or town Portland state Oregon zip code 97214

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INTRODUCTION

The English Cottage of Cora Bryant Wheeler located near the intersection of SW Montgomery Drive and Vista Avenue in the Portland Heights neighborhood of Portland, Oregon, was built in 1923 from plans provided by leading local architect A. E. Doyle. The property meets National Register Criterion C as a superior example of the firm's later work in the tradition of the English Arts and Crafts. Much of the on-site supervision was entrusted to Doyle's younger associates, Pietro Belluschi and Richard Sundeleaf. The latter was at that time an apprentice. Mrs. Wheeler was the widow of Oregon lumberman Coleman Wheeler.

The well-crafted interior was finished substantially with lumber manufactured by the Wheeler Lumber Company which centered its operation in the Coast Range, in westernmost Washington County. The design process began a few years after Coleman Wheeler and his wife acquired the building site in 1918. Upon Wheeler's death in 1920, the work was carried forward under the direction of his widow. Cora Bryant Wheeler acted as vice-president and treasurer of her husband's company before and after 1920 and was prominent in community activities, particularly in those supporting the Portland Symphony.

The large, two-story house on concrete foundation has the irregular massing required for optimum adaptation to its demanding ridge-top site. The spreading hipped roof with its complex of cross gables, undulating dormers and minor slopes is entirely clad in wavy shingle thatch. Exterior elevations are enlivened by balconies, bays and oriels, and are finished with shingles and stucco accented by curvilinear half timber effects and river-washed boulders artistically applied to piers and buttresses. Multiple window panes are used in window banks and upper sash and borders surrounding picture windows centered on choice view angles from the hilltop site. The interior is characterized not only by fine craftsmanship but by the elegance and restraint of its formal spaces based on the classical vocabulary.

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HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Summary and Contents

The Wheeler House, 1841 S.W. Montgomery Drive, Portland, Oregon, represents an excellent design by Portland's leading architect of the period, Albert E. Doyle. Doyle's design was superbly executed by the contractor, and has been maintained to the highest standards. The home is an excellent example of the Arts and Crafts style. Construction was started in 1923, and the basic cost of the foundation and building was \$49,000. [11] As this does not include the cost of the land, furnishings, the finishing work on the home, the cost of the garden, or the fees of Doyle and the landscape architect, the total cost of the home may have approached the \$240,000 suggested by Bruce Hall. [12]

Several internal details of the Wheeler House are of particular note in showing the high craftsmanship displayed throughout the home. The home is finely wrought in the details of its wood work, oak floors and tile porches. The wood lift and laundry chute add considerably to the convenience of the home. A servants call system, with buzzers in all of the main rooms of the first and second floors, is still working. The kitchen panel that indicates the room of origin of a summons is not working. Restoration of the full system is planned. In another interesting touch, the closets in the main sections of the house have automatic switches that turn lights on and off as the doors open and close.

The involvement of the Wheeler family in the construction of the home, and Doyle's desire to use local

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materials in his work, is revealed by the fact that all of the wood in the house - with the exception of the oak floors on the main floor and their mahogany strips - came from land owned by Coleman Wheeler's Wheeler Lumber Company near Cochran, Oregon, in the Coast Range. The Wheelers, however, had full confidence in Doyle, and once he started his designs and began work on the house, they took a trip to Europe. Much of the day-to-day supervision of the construction was left to two of Doyle's apprentices, Pietro Belluschi and Richard Sunde leaf. [13] In its elegance and high craftsmanship, the Wheeler House fits easily with the other luxurious homes located in the Portland Heights.

The Family of Coleman H. and Cora Wheeler

Coleman H. Wheeler was born in Ontario, Canada, in 1865. His father, Isaac, was a lumberman in Canada, and Coleman Wheeler learned the business from him. At sixteen, Wheeler left home for the woods of Michigan and his own start in the lumber business "driving" logs on the rivers of the state. He soon moved to Tacoma, Washington, and then to Oregon. He surveyed the timber lands of the upper Nehalem river, and established his own lumber holdings in the areas of Cochran and Wheeler. The town of Wheeler in Tillamook County was, in fact, named for Coleman Wheeler, and incorporated in 1914. [14]

Coleman Wheeler and his family lived in east Portland for a number of years, before he purchased the land upon which the Wheeler House was later built. He obtained the property in 1918 from the Dekum family of Portland. The family lived in the former Dekum home for several years before it was demolished prior to the construction of the home designed for them by A.E. Doyle. [15] In the years before his death in 1920, Coleman Wheeler was becoming increasingly prominent in Portland. His daughter, Mrs. Berglund, reports that he lunched weekly with a number of prominent business leaders, including his brother-in-law Michael Bryant, lumberman and developer John Yeon, and Meier and Frank President and future Oregon Governor Julius Meier. [16]

Coleman H. Wheeler married Cora E. Bryant in 1896. The

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Bryant family had come to Oregon in 1852, and become active in the early lumber business in Clatskanie. The marriage thus united two significant lumbering families. The Wheelers had three children, Coleman H. Jr. (Coley), Joseph B., and Marguerite. In the years prior to Coleman Wheeler's death, Cora Wheeler acted as Vice-President and Treasurer of his Wheeler Lumber Company, managing the finances of the business. She continued in the position for several years after his death, until Coley Wheeler fully took over the firm. She remained, however, active in the business after relinquishing her official position. Cora Wheeler was extremely active in the affairs of Portland in general, and of the Portland Symphony in particular. She lived in the Wheeler House until her death in 1951. [17]

In addition to Cora Wheeler, many other members of the family lived in the home throughout the Wheeler's ownership of the property. Coleman and Cora Wheeler's daughter, Mrs. Marguerite Berglund, resided there until 1953. Her son, Bruce Hall, was raised in the home, living there until entering the service during World War II. The house was wonderful for the children of the family and the neighborhood, with its many rooms and halls, and large garden. Coley Wheeler lived in the house at various times during his life, while continuing his own career in the Oregon lumber industry. [18] In 1947, Coley Wheeler was instrumental in merging his own Santiam Lumber Company with the Willamette Valley Lumber Company owned by the Swindells family, and in bringing Ira Keller from the East to direct the new firm's pulp and paper operation. The firm was to become Willamette Industries in 1967. Coley Wheeler served as Willamette Industries first Chairman of the Board, a position he held until his retirement in 1971. He also served as a founding director of the Western Forestry Center, and as a director of the Oregon Historical Society. Coleman Wheeler Jr. died in 1973. [19] [20]

The house that Albert E. Doyle designed for the Wheelers in the early 1920s served the family exceptionally well as a home for thirty years. The organization of the large house, with its many private bathrooms, and nearly separate apartments, allowed three generations of the family to live together in comfort.

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ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

House

The Wheeler House reflects Albert E. Doyle's mastery of detail, proportion, and mass. The home also displays his talent for siting a building naturally into the environment, rather than altering the landscape to fit the building. The Wheeler House rests on, and articulates, the crest of a crescent shaped ridge in the Portland Heights neighborhood.

The Wheeler House is asymmetrical in composition, with a complex mixture of roof, window and porch projections, and with several prominent intersecting gables. Large, multi-paned, windows open over all sides of the home. The home is clad with a combination of rough stucco and cedar shingles, variously highlighted by brick trim, large river stones, false half-timbering, and wrought iron railings. The facades, except for those areas where new shingles are now being applied, [21] are painted gray with white trim. The steeply sloped pitch of the hipped roof is covered with irregular cedar shingles applied in a waveform pattern to resemble thatch. Proportioned as a haystack, the false-thatch roof rises as a natural extension of the hill. Doyle's design is fully realized and well detailed, with the rounded sweeps and edges on the dormers, the eaves, and on the roof ridge, accentuating the false-thatch appearance, and making this roof a remarkable example of design and craftsmanship. Finally, the combined use of complex materials and elements in the creation of the Wheeler House is characteristic of the Arts and Crafts style, particularly as practiced in the Northwest. [22]

In the Wheeler House, and throughout his career, Albert E. Doyle sought to create a regional architectural style in Portland, while adhering to classical forms. He achieved this in both his commercial and residential designs. In his residential buildings in particular, his use of natural materials was unrestrained by the constraints of commercial design. His exceptional skill in accommodating the design of a building to the site, and in opening the building to natural light, could be freely expressed in his residential designs. The Wheeler House is one of the very best examples

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of a residence designed by Albert E. Doyle, and clearly represents his design philosophy.

Albert E. Doyle

Albert E. Doyle was perhaps the most important local architect working in Portland at the time that he designed the Wheeler House. Doyle was born in Santa Cruz, California in 1877. His father, contractor James Doyle, moved the family to Portland shortly after Albert's birth. James Doyle, in partnership with a Mr. Porter, became one of the leading building contractors in Portland. The firm erected "many of the most substantial structures during the early period in the development of this city." [23] Albert Doyle attended public school in Portland, and spent considerable time helping in his father's business. He thus moved naturally into architecture, becoming an apprentice with the important local firm of Whidden and Lewis. Doyle stayed with Whidden and Lewis for twelve years, before traveling to New York to attend Columbia University's School of Architecture. After his graduation from Columbia, and a period of time working for New York architect Henry Bacon, Doyle spent several months as a student at the American School of Archeology in Athens, Greece. He then spent an additional year traveling and studying in Europe. [24]

Doyle returned to Portland in 1906 and entered partnership with W.B. Patterson, in the firm of Doyle and Patterson. Doyle's work with Patterson continued until 1912 when he began working with James G. Beach in the firm of A.E. Doyle and Company. Doyle worked with Beach until 1914, and again in 1926, but most of his work was carried on independently. During his career, Doyle helped train a number of architects who later became important in Portland. By his death in January, 1928, Doyle was recognized as one of Portland's master builders. [25] After Albert Doyle's death one of his most important aides, Pietro Belluschi, who had helped oversee the construction of the Wheeler House, assumed direction of the firm. [26]

Albert E. Doyle had phenomenal range and versatility. He sought throughout his career to achieve a regional form of architecture blending classical design elements with

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materials from the Northwest. One of earliest important designs generally credited to Doyle was of the Forestry Building erected for the Lewis and Clark Exposition in 1906. "The Forestry Building was the exposition's only bona fide 'regional' contribution. Completed under the supervision of Whidden and Lewis, the drawings, and perhaps the design were the work of none other than Albert E. Doyle, a quickly rising Oregon talent who was completing a 12-year apprenticeship with the firm of Whidden and Lewis." [27]

The Forestry Building was called the Parthenon of Oregon. It was a fusion of materials from the region with classical Greek architecture. The building marks both an interesting beginning for Doyle's career, and a striking symbol of his future work and of the design philosophy that supported that work. He "continued to explore and would achieve brilliant effects from the marriage between regional materials and classical architectural forms." [28]

In the Portland Historical Resource Inventory, there are thirty eight buildings credited to Doyle, and twenty three more listed as designed by the various firms with which he was associated. [29] His interest in what he referred to as "the old that was good" [30] is clear from the residences he designed or upon which he collaborated. At least ten of the twenty four homes credited to Doyle or his firms by the Portland Historical Resources Inventory are Colonial Revival or Georgian in style. The abundance of wood in Oregon enabled Doyle to design massively scaled wooden residences with a generous use of wood shingles on the wall and roof surfaces. He designed three homes listed as Arts and Crafts, including the Wheeler House; one described as Shingle Style; one described as a Bungalow Style; one described as Mediterranean Style; and two described as Tudor Style. [31]

Doyle is, however, known more for his commercial buildings than for his residential designs. He designed or collaborated on some of the most important buildings in Portland. The United States National Bank Building is one of his most famous works. Others these include two white terra cotta buildings for which Portland is famous: the Meier and Frank Department Store (1909), and the Lipman Wolf Department Store (1929). They were designed by the firm of Doyle and Patterson, as were the Morgan Building, the Pittock Block,

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the Neighborhood House, and many others. The firm of Doyle, Patterson and Beach designed several very important buildings, including the Portland Public Library, the Northwestern National Bank Building (now the American Bank), the Benson Hotel, and several buildings on the Reed College Campus. Doyle's work was not, however, limited to office buildings or residences. He designed the Hippodrome (Broadway) Theater - recently torn down - and Civic Stadium. Perhaps Doyle's most used creations are the Benson fountains he designed for the city. The pedestalled single-bowl and four-bowl bronze drinking fountains are present throughout downtown Portland, and are regularly used by the people of the city.

Through the range and versatility of his designs, Alfred E. Doyle placed his mark on the City of Portland. He succeed in his "all-consuming ambition was to invent and build a Portland architectural microcosm commensurate with the demands and potential glories of a young West Coast metropolis on the rise. Shrewd, fiercely independent, and well-positioned in social circles, Doyle was Portland's master builder of the early twentieth century." [32]

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Comparative Analysis

Four of the homes designed by A.E. Doyle, and listed in the City of Portland Historic Resource Inventory, are placed by the Inventory in styles derived from English traditions, and have thus been chosen for comparison. All four are in styles that related to that of the Wheeler House: two are listed as Tudor Style, and two as Arts and Crafts Style.

2040 S.W. Laurel Street (1921)

This residence is the only one of the four homes similar to the Wheeler House in scale, proportion and detailing. Built two years earlier than the Wheeler House, the home is well sited, and blends into its setting. It has a false-thatch roof with the same swept entry porch roof, and rolled eaves as the Wheeler House. The original wooden shingles have, however, been replaced with composition shingles on this home, while the Wheeler House is being re-roofed with wooden shingles carefully chosen and applied to match the original roof in style and appearance. Further, the high center gable at the front of the Wheeler House, with its prominent first and second floor windows, give the Wheeler House a feeling a grandeur not fully matched by this home.

2424 S.W. Montgomery Drive (1917)

This residence reflects Doyle's skill in designing buildings where volumes intersect in obtuse angles (as in the Wheeler House) in order to accommodate them to their sites. This house is constructed on the top of a round hill, and is composed of three intersecting units that face outward in different directions as the home curves to match the hill. Tudor in style, it has gabled dormers single spaced along the elevations, and a massive Tudor compound flue chimney. The exterior is clad in a mixture of brick and stucco, and the roof is slate. The home is, however, more modest in scale than the Wheeler House.

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2470 N.W. Westover Road (1908)

This Tudor residence is a considerably earlier example of Doyle's skill in configuring a building to suit its site. The home is built on a slope, and the volumes are stepped down from each other slightly. The building is not set parallel to the street, but, rather, at an obtuse angle in order to maximize the space available for the main entry. Non-symmetrical, the home has elaborate half-timbering, shingle siding, multiple gables with wide barge boards, and small multi-paned windows placed irregularly on the facade. The home is considerably more modest its scale and details than the Wheeler House, and lacks the polished elegance of that home.

6320 S.E. Yamhill (1925)

This residence is the third Arts and Crafts home designed by Doyle that is listed in the Portland Inventory. It features a large chimney with a compound flue. The home has stucco cladding on its prominent cross gable, with shingle on the main body of the building. It does not, however, have a false-thatch roof, and is much more modest in style, proportion and detailing than the Wheeler House.

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FOOTNOTES

1. Interview with Marguerite Berglund, daughter of Cora and Coleman H. Wheel, and her son, Bruce Hall, conducted by James W. Fiscus and Melissa Darby, July 25, 1989.
2. As of late July, 1989, the re-shingling of the roof and walls is about 60% complete, and should be finished well before the end of the summer.
3. Clark, Rosalind L, Architecture: Oregon Style, Portland, Oregon, the Professional Book Center, Inc., 1983, page 140.
4. Berglund interview.
5. Berglund interview
6. Berglund interview.
7. Interviews with the owners, Douglas and Sheryl Boyd, by James W. Fiscus, July, 1989. Confirmed by the Berglund interview.
8. Berglund and Hall interviews.
9. The floorboards show a sharp change of pattern at the hall entrance, and there is further evidence of the original door's removal in the irregular surface of the north wall. Confirmed by Hall interview.
10. Information on the alterations to the Wheeler House come from the Berglund and Hall interviews, and from a careful inspection of the home. City of Portland building permits provide no data on the building after its construction.
11. City of Portland, Bureau of Buildings, permits number 127164, July 18, 1923; and 128556, August 21, 1923.
12. Hall interview.

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13. Berglund and Hall interviews.

14. Date of incorporation of Wheeler: Phone interview of Vergil Staben, Wheeler City Recorder, by James W. Fiscus, July 24, 1989.

15. Ticor Title Company, Land Ownership Records for Multnomah County, Oregon; Polk's Portland City Directory, Portland, Oregon, R.L. Polk and Company, 1913-1924; Berglund Interview.

16. Biographical data on Coleman H. Wheeler: Carey, C.H., The History of Oregon, Portland, the Pioneer Historical Publishing Company, 1922, pages 72 & 75; and "Timber Operator Expires Suddenly", The Oregon Daily Journal, August 30, 1920, page 7:4.

17. Berglund interview.

18. Berglund and Hall interviews.

19. Coleman H. (Coley) Wheeler Jr.: Baldwin, Catherine A., Making the Most of the Best: Willamette Industries' Seventy-Five Years, Portland, Oregon, Willamette Industries, 1982, passim; note continued:

20. Note 17 continued: "Coleman H. Wheeler: 1897-1973", unidentified obituary in the files of the Oregon Historical Society dated 4-14-75; "Coleman H. Wheeler", Obituary in the Mill City, Oregon, Enterprise, October 18, 1973; and the Berglund and Hall interviews.

21. See note 2.

22. Clark, page 140.

23. Carey, page 110.

24. Carey, page 111; and "Doyle, Albert E.", in Withey, Henry F., and Elsie Rathburn Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased), Los Angeles, Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970 facsimile edition of the 1956 edition, page 181.

25. Withey & Withey, page 111.

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26. Bosker, Gideon and Lena Lencek, Frozen Music: A History of Portland Architecture, Portland, Western Imprints, 1985, page 87-88.

27. Bosker and Lencek, page 31.

28. Bosker and Lencek, page 31.

29. Doyle and Patterson; Doyle, Patterson and Beach; and A.E. Doyle and Associates.

30. Bosker and Lencek, page 17.

31. Bureau of Planning, City of Portland, Historic Resource Inventory: City of Portland, Portland, Oregon, City of Portland, 1984, passim.

32. Bosker and Lencek, page 81.

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Fiscus, James W., Interview (phone) with Vergil Staben, City Recorder of Wheeler, Oregon, July 24, 1989.

Fiscus, James W. and Melissa Darby, Interviews with Marguerite Berglund and Bruce Hall, July 25, 1989 and phone interview with Marguerite Berglund, July 28, 1989.

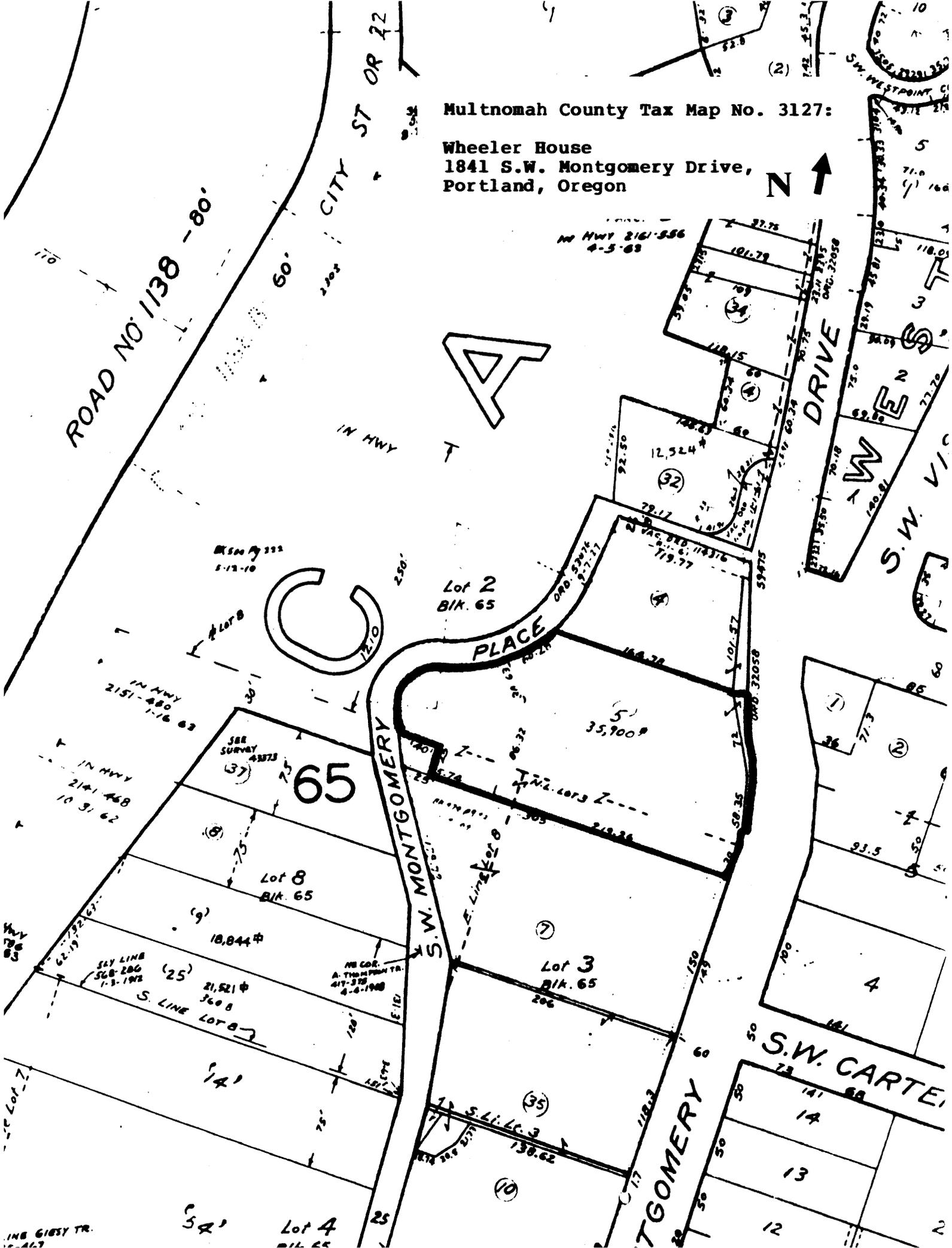
Polk's Portland City Directory, Portland, Oregon, R.L. Polk and Company, volumes for 1913-1924.

Ticor Title Company, Portland, Oregon, "Land Ownership Records for Multnomah County, Oregon."

"Timber Operator Expires Suddenly," Obituary of Coleman H. Wheeler, Sr., in The Oregon Daily Journal, August 30, 1920, page 7:4.

Multnomah County Tax Map No. 3127:

Wheeler House
1841 S.W. Montgomery Drive,
Portland, Oregon



ROAD NO 1138 - 80'

CITY ST OR 22

DRIVE

S.W. MONTGOMERY

S.W. CARTEL

Lot 2
Bik. 65

Lot 3
Bik. 65

Lot 8
Bik. 65

Lot 4
Bik. 65

65

A

C

LINE GIBBY TR.

NO HWY 2161-556
4-5-63

IN HWY
2151-480
1-16-63

IN HWY
2141-468
10-31-62

SAY LINE
568-286
1-3-1978

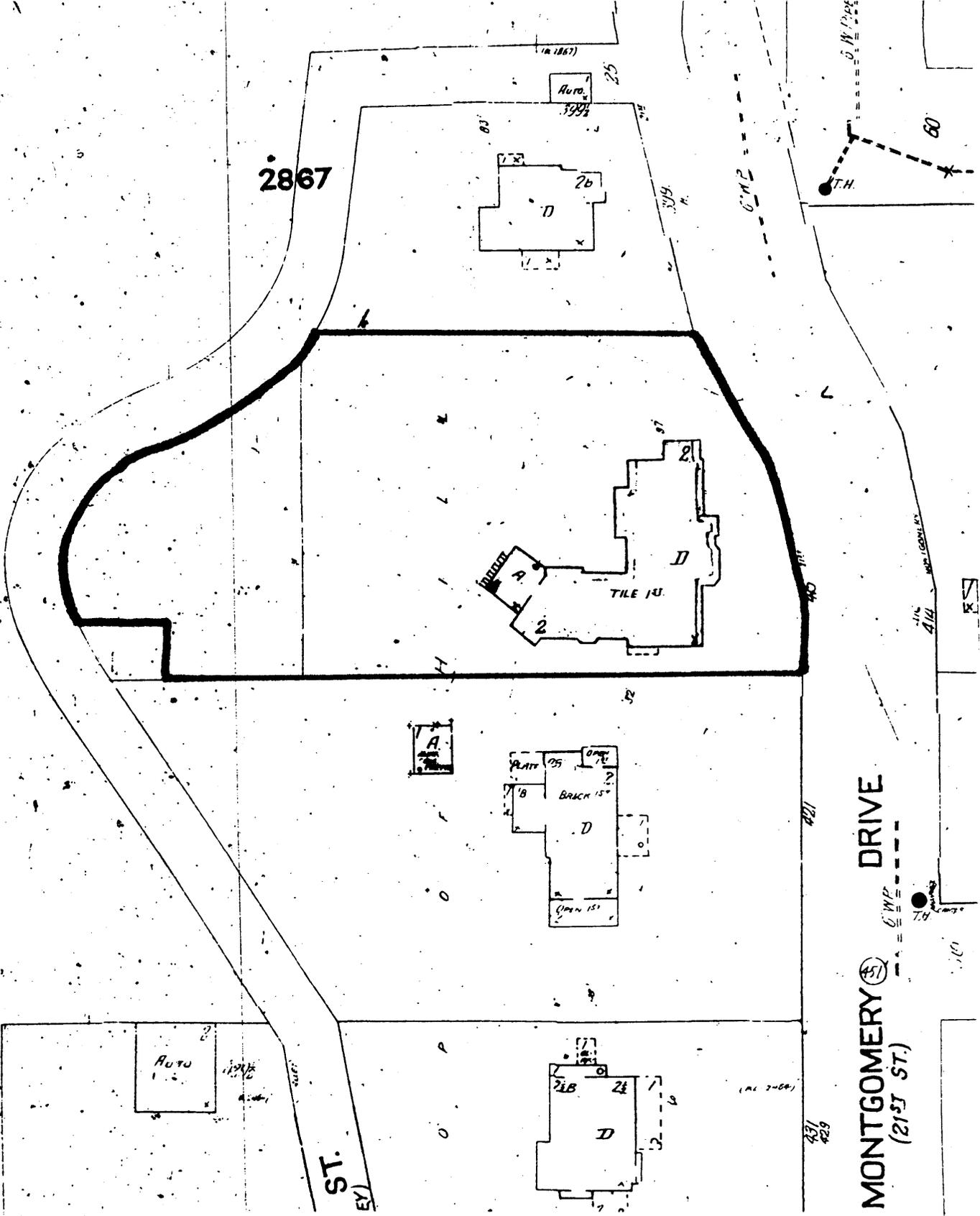
ME COR.
A. THOMPSON TR.
417-378
4-8-1968

S. L. L. C. 3
138.62

141
14
13
12

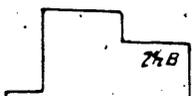
SW WESTPOINT C

S.W. VIC



Sanborn Map, City of Portland, Oregon, Volume 2, 1909 Corrected to 1926, Page 139, Block 2867:

Wheeler House
 1841 S.W. Montgomery Drive,
 Portland, Oregon



(NOT TO SCALE: INTERIOR WALLS PROVIDED TO ASSIST IN APPROXIMATE ROOM LOCATION ONLY)

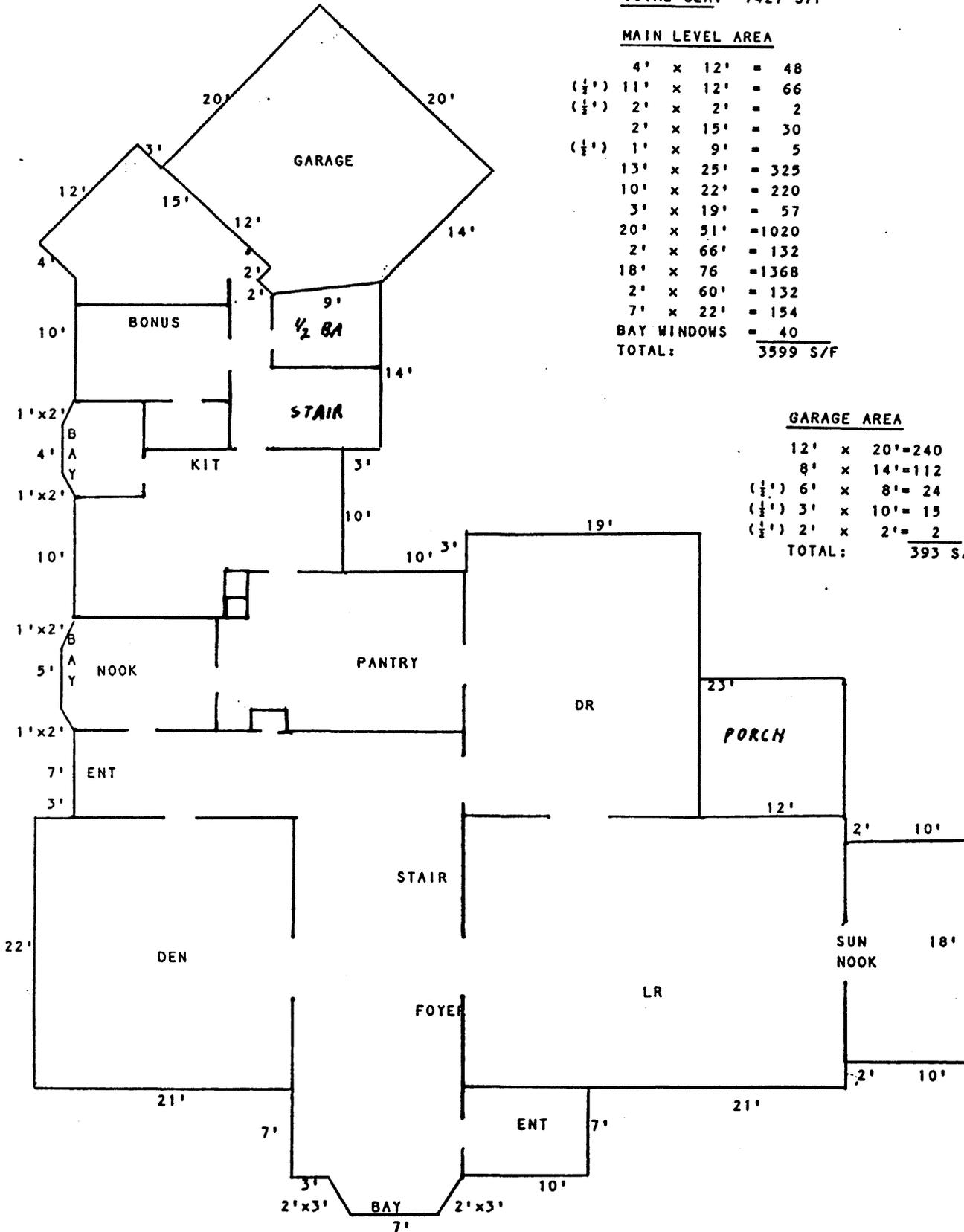
TOTAL GLA: 7427 S/F

MAIN LEVEL AREA

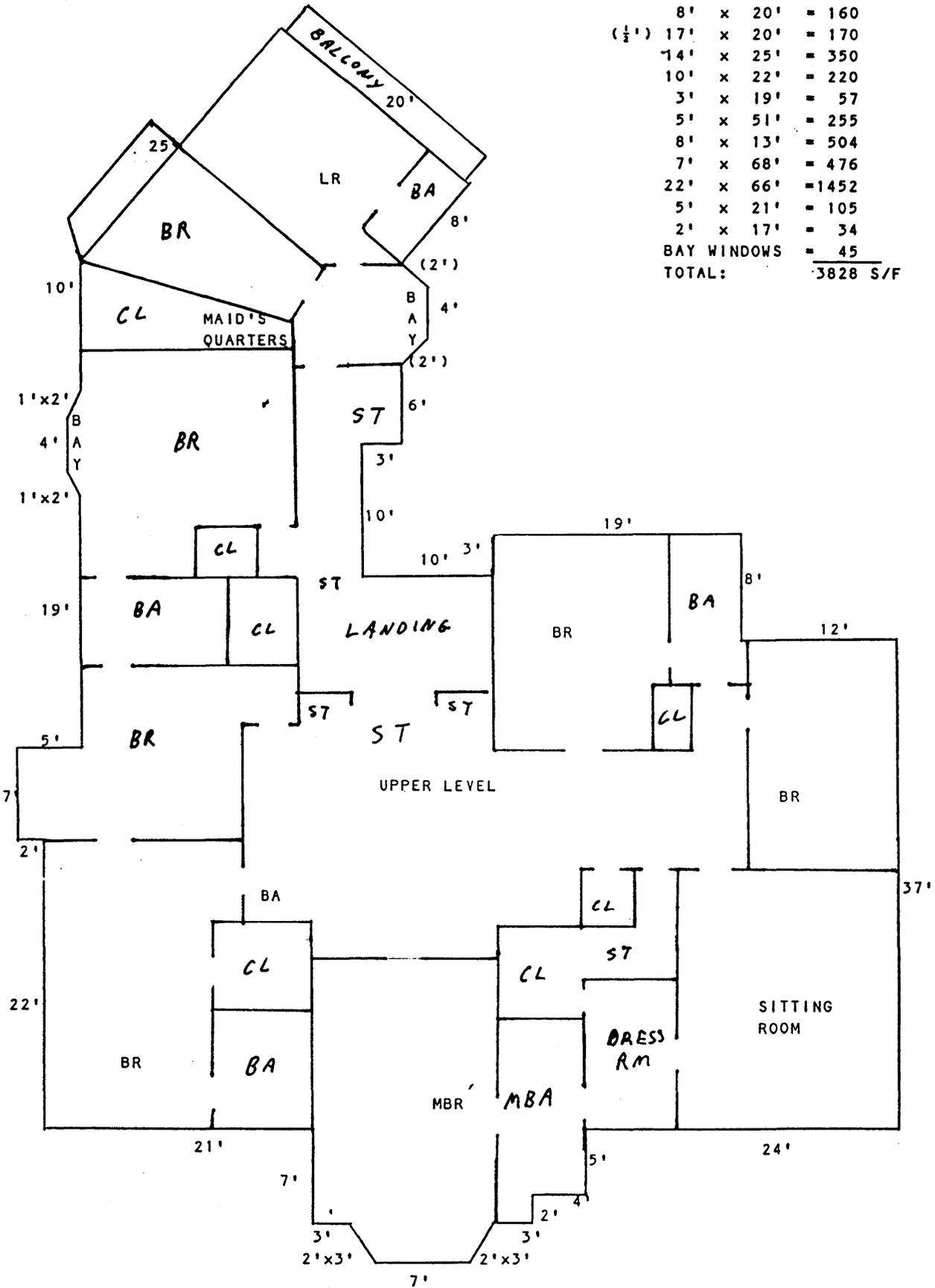
	4' x 12'	= 48
($\frac{1}{2}$ ')	11' x 12'	= 66
($\frac{1}{2}$ ')	2' x 2'	= 2
	2' x 15'	= 30
($\frac{1}{2}$ ')	1' x 9'	= 5
	13' x 25'	= 325
	10' x 22'	= 220
	3' x 19'	= 57
	20' x 51'	= 1020
	2' x 66'	= 132
	18' x 76'	= 1368
	2' x 60'	= 132
	7' x 22'	= 154
BAY WINDOWS	=	40
TOTAL:		<u>3599 S/F</u>

GARAGE AREA

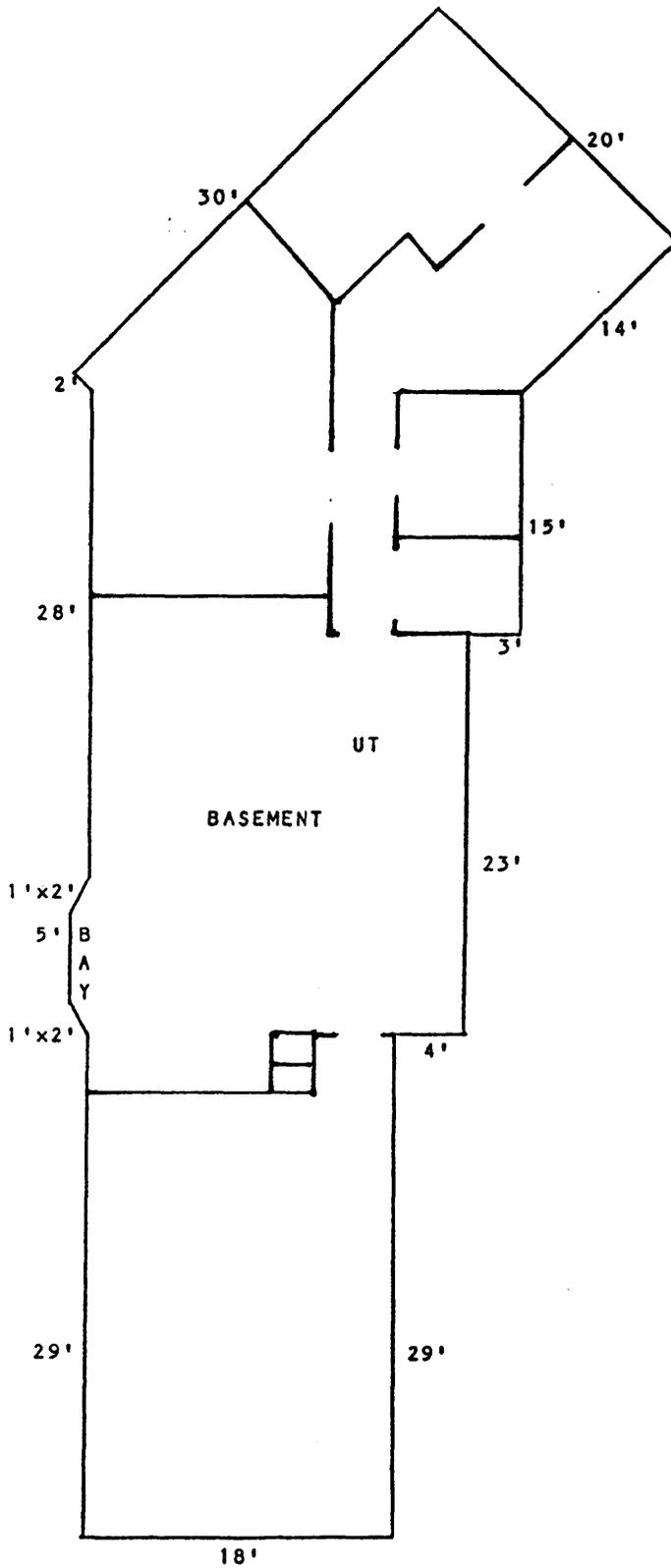
	12' x 20'	= 240
	8' x 14'	= 112
($\frac{1}{2}$ ')	6' x 8'	= 24
($\frac{1}{2}$ ')	3' x 10'	= 15
($\frac{1}{2}$ ')	2' x 2'	= 2
TOTAL:		<u>393 S/F</u>



(NOT TO SCALE: INTERIOR WALLS PROVIDED TO ASSIST IN APPROXIMATE ROOM LOCATION ONLY)



(NOT TO SCALE: INTERIOR WALLS PROVIDED TO ASSIST IN APPROXIMATE ROOM LOCATION ONLY)



BASEMENT AREA

	2' x 30'	=	60
	14' x 18'	=	252
(1/2')	16' x 18'	=	144
	15' x 25'	=	375
	22' x 23'	=	506
	18' x 29'	=	522
	BAYED AREA	=	7
	TOTAL:		1866 S/F

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



0-626-01841

1841 S.W. Montgomery Drive

Carter's Addition to P, Block 65, Tax Lot 5 of Lots 2, 3, 8
QUARTER SECTION MAP #: 3127
SWHRL

ORIGINAL FUNCTION: Residence

DATE BUILT: 1923

STYLE: Arts and Crafts

ARCHITECTURAL PLANS BY: Doyle, A.E.

OTHER OWNERS: Wheeler, Mrs. Coleman

TAX ASSESSOR'S ACCOUNT #: R-14040-3830

ZONING: R10

Rank III

SPECIAL FEATURES AND MATERIALS:

Simulated thatched roof with rolled eaves. Steeply pitched shed-roofed entry porch with elliptical eaves. Double-hung windows. Projecting gable-roofed central wing with hip-roofed bay.

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture

0-626-01841

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Multnomah County Tax Assessor records, microform, automated data files, and card files (Portland, 1980).

Sanborn Insurance Map, 1969.

Southwest Hills Residential League, inventory, 1981.

OLD ADDRESS: 411 Montgomery Drive

ORIGINAL BUILDING PERMIT #: 128556

MAJOR ALTERATIONS: 1923/125635/Dolan Wrecking and Construction Company

Present owner as of May 1981: Harriet Irwin

MAILING ADDRESS: Bank of California, Trust Department, P.O. Box 3121,
Portland 97208

No Preservation Funding

Negative: 653-8

Score - Design/Construction: 11

Score - Historical:

Score - Rarity:

Score - Environment: 10

Score - Integrity: 10

Score - Intrinsic:

Score - Contextual: 20

Score - Total: 58.5