NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

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

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

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

## 1. Name

historic: Colwell, Elmer, House

and/or common: Jewish Shelter Home ~~(preferred)~~

## 2. Location

street & number: 4133 SW Corbett Ave~~nue~~ — N/A not for publication

city, town: Portland — N/A vicinity of — First Congressional District

state: Oregon — code: 41 — county: Multnomah — code: 051

## 3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ district | ___ public | X occupied | ___ agriculture | ___ museum |
| X building(s) | X private | ___ unoccupied | X commercial | ___ park |
| ___ structure | ___ both | X work in progress | ___ educational | X private residence |
| ___ site | **Public Acquisition** | **Accessible** | ___ entertainment | ___ religious |
| ___ object | N/A in process | ___ yes: restricted | ___ government | ___ scientific |
| | ___ being considered | ___ yes: unrestricted | ___ industrial | ___ transportation |
| | | ___ no | ___ military | ___ other: |

## 4. Owner of Property

name: (1) Brian D. McCabe
(2) Robert C. Jackson

street & number: (1) 0604 SW Florida Street
(2) 2131 SE Tenino Street

city, town: Portland — N/A vicinity of — state: Oregon 97201

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.: Multnomah County Records Office

street & number: 310 SW Washington Street

city, town: Portland — state: Oregon 97204

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title: City of Portland Historic Resource Inventory — has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date: 1981-1983 — ___ federal ___ state ___ county X local

depository for survey records: Portland Bureau of Planning

city, town: 1120 SW Fifth Avenue — state: Oregon 97204

# 7. Description

| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
|---|---|---|---|
| ___ excellent | ___ deteriorated | ___ unaltered | X original site |
| ___ good | ___ ruins | X altered | ___ moved date N/A |
| X fair | ___ unexposed | | |

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Jewish Shelter Home was constructed c. 1902 and first served as the private residence of United States Marshal Elmer Colwell and his family until its purchase in August of 1919 for use as the Shelter Home.[1] The house is a stylistic amalgam of the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles.[2] Today, most of the original external features of the house remain intact. The interior has been remodeled to accommodate three apartment units. The house is an important in respect to the architectural as well as ethnic diversity that created South Portland.

The Shelter Home is situated to the west side of the lot with its front facing east. The first floor is twenty feet above Corbett Avenue giving the house a grand appearance from the street below. A long and wide concrete stairway centered on the house provides access from the sidewalk level. A rare old Monkey Puzzle tree adorns the north corner of the front yard. The property is part of the proposed Corbett Conservation District suggested by the Portland Bureau of Planning.[3]

The house plan is rectangular, measuring twenty-five feet by thirty-eight feet, with full basement, first floor, second floor, and an attic accessable by stairs. The exterior walls are finished in bevel siding with wood shingles on the base of the veranda. The roof is full hip, containing an internal gutter, and is interrupted by a large dormer on the east facade and small dormer on the north.

An L-shaped veranda wraps around the east and south sides of the house with columns, cornice, and frieze resembling the Tuscan order. There are two large and one small bay windows, several windows with small panes set in wood or lead mullions forming a diamond pattern. In the center of the large dormer lies a small Palladian window. Some of the other classical features include the eaves, brackets on the front facade and corner pilasters. The entry features a paneled door with transom window. Two simple brick chimneys penetrate the roof: one against the front portion of the north wall, the other where the ridge line and two rear hip lines join.[4]

The railing on the veranda which originally consisted of two by two inch vertical members has been replaced by diagonal two by fours. The railing which once adorned the veranda roof on the east elevation of the house is now missing. Pictures of the original railings taken in 1919 have provided accurate information so that they could be replaced.

The first floor interior echoes the exterior with classical features. An intricate oak mantel piece with beveled glass mirror surrounds the tile and iron fireplace. A paneled wainscot and festooned plaster ceiling decorate the dining room. An ornate banister, now stored in the basement, was located on the U-shaped stair going to the second floor. A matching banister also follows the stair to the attic and remains intact.[5]

The second floor is currently undergoing extensive restoration with a floor plan that has been altered from its original design. A major addition was constructed against the south side of the second story above the veranda very shortly after the house was built. This addition measures eight by sixteen feet and is detailed with classical features matching those of the house. The addition seems to be originally designed as a sunroom by the larger number of windows present.

The IsolationHospital now connected to the west end of the house, was built as a separate structure about ten feet west of the Shelter Home, c. 1920.[6] The hospital (measuring eighteen by thirty-six feet) was designed to accommodate four children. The Isolation Hospital carries a hip roof similar to that of the house and beveled siding to match that of the house, but unfortunately lacks the detailed ornamentation of the house.

The Isolation Hospital had several different commercial uses after the Shelter Home ceased functioning. As Barbur Boulevard to the west of the hospital was widened to accommodate increasing traffic flows into Portland, the hospital was eventually attached to the back of the house.[7] The original configuration of windows in the isolation hospital is unknown as a result of the extensive alterations made to the hospital by its commercial use tenants. These alterations included two 4 x 8-foot aluminum windows on the west side of the building and asphalt siding throughout.

In 1981, the Isolation Hospital underwent extensive restoration. The building was put on a full concrete foundation, wooden casement windows were installed to replace the aluminum windows, and bevel siding was applied to match that of the house. The interior of the building, once one large room, has been divided into four rooms for office type use. Currently a lighted sign stands at the outermost southwest corner of the property which is not attached to the building structure and is fully removable.

Since the sale of the property by the Jewish Shelter Home, back into private hands in June of 1937[8], the house has been used as three apartment units and the Isolation Hospital has been used for various commercial purposes.

# 8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ prehistoric | ___ archeology-prehistoric | ___ community planning | ___ landscape architecture | ___ religion |
| ___ 1400–1499 | ___ archeology-historic | ___ conservation | ___ law | ___ science |
| ___ 1500–1599 | ___ agriculture | ___ economics | ___ literature | X sculpture |
| ___ 1600–1699 | ___ architecture | ___ education | ___ military | ___ social/ humanitarian |
| ___ 1700–1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | ___ theater |
| ___ 1800–1899 | ___ commerce | ___ exploration/settlement | ___ philosophy | ___ transportation |
| X 1900– | ___ communications | ___ industry | ___ politics/government | ___ other (specify) |
| | | ___ invention | | |

**Specific dates** 1902 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

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

The Jewish Shelter Home finds historical significance as an important early Jewish humanitarian institution in Portland. Established for the "care, protection and education of ... Jewish children in need of temporary shelter,"[9] the Jewish Shelter Home was of substantial benefit to the Jewish immigrant population which dominated and shaped South Portland during the early 1900s. The Shelter Home is also significant as a result of its direct association with important early Portland personalities and institutions responsible for the development of law, politics, and society in Oregon. We feel that it is eligible under Criteria "b".

The Home was first owned and occupied By Elmer Colwell[10]. Born in Millport, Pennsylvania in 1868, Colwell eventually settled in Washington state and in 1895, was elected auditor of Wahiakum County. He was re-elected in 1897 and moved to Portland by 1902. He was Secretary-Treasurer of the Multnomah Trunk and Box Company when first elected Multnomah County Representative to the Oregon Legislature in 1904. After serving one term, he was appointed by President Taft as a Federal Marshal. Appointed in 1910, he only served one year. It is apparent that his house played a role in the political activities of the day. Elmer Colwell died on June 22, 1914[11] and his family remained in the house until 1919, the year it was sold to the founders of the Jewish Shelter Home.

After purchasing the Shelter Home, its founders elected board of directors and drafted articles of incorporation to guide its operation. In August of 1920, the children moved in under the care of the Home. In the course of a year, eighteen to twenty children would pass through the house, each staying whatever time was necessary.[12] This process was extremely important to the maintenance of Jewish culture and society in South Portland.

The Shelter Home provided the Jewish immigrant district a certain continuity and support that would have been neglected without its existence. The Home allowed Jewish children of disrupted family background a Jewish upbringing which they quite possibly would have missed had they been housed in a state-operated orphanage. The children were afforded contact with the large population of Portland's influential Jews, such as the Meier family, as well as the large numbers of children living in the South Portland neighborhood. The Home's board of directors wished to raise the children entrusted to them in a Jewish atomosphere and so sent the children to Chanukah parties and Passover seders in neighborhood homes whenever possible. Nearby residents would occasionally take the children to movie theaters, many of which were owned by local Jews. While the children did not attend public school, most were enrolled at the Hebrew School as Neighborhood House, which is close by and also listed in the National Register for its similar public service role in the South Portland neighborhood.[13]

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 60' x 150'

Quadrangle name Lake Oswego, Oregon

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 10 | 525380 | 5037580 |
| B | | | |
| C | | | |
| D | | | |
| E | | | |
| F | | | |
| G | | | |
| H | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification The north 60 feet of the south 90 feet of Lot 1, Block 6, Portland Homestead Addition, lying east of Southwest Barbur Boulevard, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon.

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

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| state | None | code | county | | code |
| state | None | code | county | | code |

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Brian D. McCabe/Owner

organization None date 12 May, 1983

street & number 0604 SW Florida Street telephone (503) 245-3417

city or town Portland, state Oregon 97219

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state X local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date April 17, 1984

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the National Register

Keeper of the National Register date 6-14-84

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

The Home could obtain legal custody of children and place them for adoption. Though it was never considered an orphanage, the Home was operated with a mixture of paternalism and very professional welfare techniques. When an application for admission to the Home was received, careful biographical records were taken, a complete physical examination was administrated by a staff physician, and the child was given a mental health test.[14] After 1924, cases were screened for admittance by a professional social worker provided by the Jewish Welfare Federation, and periodic medical services were provided on a volunteer basis by a group of four Jewish doctors.[15]

The Shelter Home itself consisted of a large kithcen, living room, dining room and playroom on the main floor. The upper level consisted of five bedrooms and two baths. To the rear of the house was an isolation hospital with housing capacity for four children.[16] It was considered effective in the containment of communicable disease, often a threat to children of a young age. Activities in the Isolation Hospital are discussed frequently in the Shelter Home's minute book after 1921.[17] The existence of the Isolation Hospital is confirmed by the Portland Sanborn Insurance maps.[18] It was here that the four doctors would perform examinations and treat the sick children.

The Home, often operating on a limited budget, depended on the volunteer services of men like Israel Dautoff, Hip Shank, and Max Turtledove, all of whom had successful businesses in South Portland.[19] The Home was a special concern of Mrs. Jeanette Meier, wife of Aaron Meier, the founder of Oregon's largest department store. Mrs. Meier continually provided assistance and guidance to the Home by raising funds, hosting parties at the Home and by donating money for specific projects like the construction of the front concrete stair leading to the house.[20] In celebraton of Mrs. Meier's eighty-first birthday, she paid the balance due on the Home's mortage which was more than half its original price. For this generous gift, the Shelter Home Board elected her Honorary President.[21]

Oregon Governor Julius Meier, son of Aaron and Jeanette Meier, and Chief Executive Officer of Meier and Frank Department Store, was the President of the Jewish Shelter Home Board from its beginning through at least 1933.[22] He maintained a strong interest in the home even during his term as Oregon's Governor (1930-1934), while he continued to serve as its Board President. Many times, board meetings were held at his office in the Meier and Frank Store where either himself or Aaron Frank would preside.[23]

The Jewish Shelter Home was to be one of the eight Jewish immigrant benevolent agencies held under the umbrella of the Federated Jewish Societies of Portland during the 1930s. (The other agencies included: The First Hebrew Benevolent Society, The Jewish Relief Society, The Jewish Service Association, the South Portland Benevolent Society, The B'nai B'rith Center, The Portland Hebrew School

and the Neighhborhood House). Oregon Governor Julius Meier also served as President of the Federated Jewish Societies of Portland. By way of the Federated Jewish Societies, the Shelter Home was partially funded with Portland Community Chest monies, indicating its importance to the larger Portland community as well as to the Local Jewish community.[24] The Home provided security for the Jewish immigrant society and fulfilled a sense of civic duty for many people. The Home is a reminder that the transition to the Middle Class, or to white-collar status, was not smooth for all of Portland Jewry.

The Shelter Home operated out of this house through May of 1937 and then moved to a new location at the corner of 12th and Jefferson downtown, which no longer stands. The Jewish Shelter Home is the only visual reminder of the institutions role as the forerunner to the now important Portland Jewish Family and Child Service. After the Shelter Home was sold back in to private hands in June of 1937, its use and transformation into three apartment units and a commercial space are difficult to trace. The exterior facades of the house, however, retain their original character and the Home inspires a strong sense of history. It remains an integral part of the South Portland Neighborhood. Now called the Corbett Area, South Portland has been identified by the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission as a potential Historic Conservation District because of its rich history and significant architecture.

[1] Multnomah County Records Book 278, p. 300, and Book 201, p 77.

[2] Letter from Elisabeth Walton Potter, Nominations Coordinator for the State Historic Preservation Office, dated April 12, 1983.

[3] Portland Historic Landmarks Commission and the Portland Bureau of Planning Special Projects Section, "Potential Historic Conservation Districts - an Inventory of Historic Resources," 1978, p. 51.

[4] Marcus Whiffen, American Architecture Since 1780, Cambridge, Mass., The M.I.T. Press, 1969.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Jewish Shelter Home Minute Book, January 1921, p. 9. (On reserve at the Portland Jewish Historical Society, Mittleman Jewish Community Center.)

[7] Portland City Records, 1955.

[8] Multnomah County Record Book 154, p. 99.

[9] The Original Incorporation Documents for the Jewish Orphan Home, (A name that was soon to be changed to the Jewish Shelter Home.) August 26, 1919.

[10] Multnomah County Record Book, June 28, 1901, Book 278, p. 300.

[11] The Oregon Journal, June 23, 1914.

[12] The Scribe, February 18, 1921.

[13] William Toll, The Making of an Ethnic Middle Class, Albany, N.Y., The State University of New York Press, 1982, pp. 121-124.

[14] The Scribe, April 11, 1930, p. 9.

[15] Loc. cit., pp. 121-124.

[16] The Scribe, April 11, 1930, p. 9.

[17] Jewish Shelter Home Minute Book.

[18]Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Portland, 1909 corrected to 1926, Vol. 2.

[19]Loc. cit., p. 122.

[20]Jewish Shelter Home Minute Book.

[21]Jewish Shelter Home Minute Boook, February 13, 1924, p. 55.

[22]The Scribe and Jewish Shelter Home Minute Book.

[23]Ibid, February 19, 1924, p. 56.

[24]Information found in a letter from the Federated Jewish Societies to the Jewish Shelter Home dated January 9, 1933.

Multnomah County Records Book #278.

Portland Historical Landmarks Commission and Portland Bureau of Planning, "Potential Historic Conservation Districts - an Inventory of Historic Resources."

Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780, Cambridge, M.I.T. Press, 1969.

Jewish Shelter Home Minute Book.

Portland City Records, 1955.

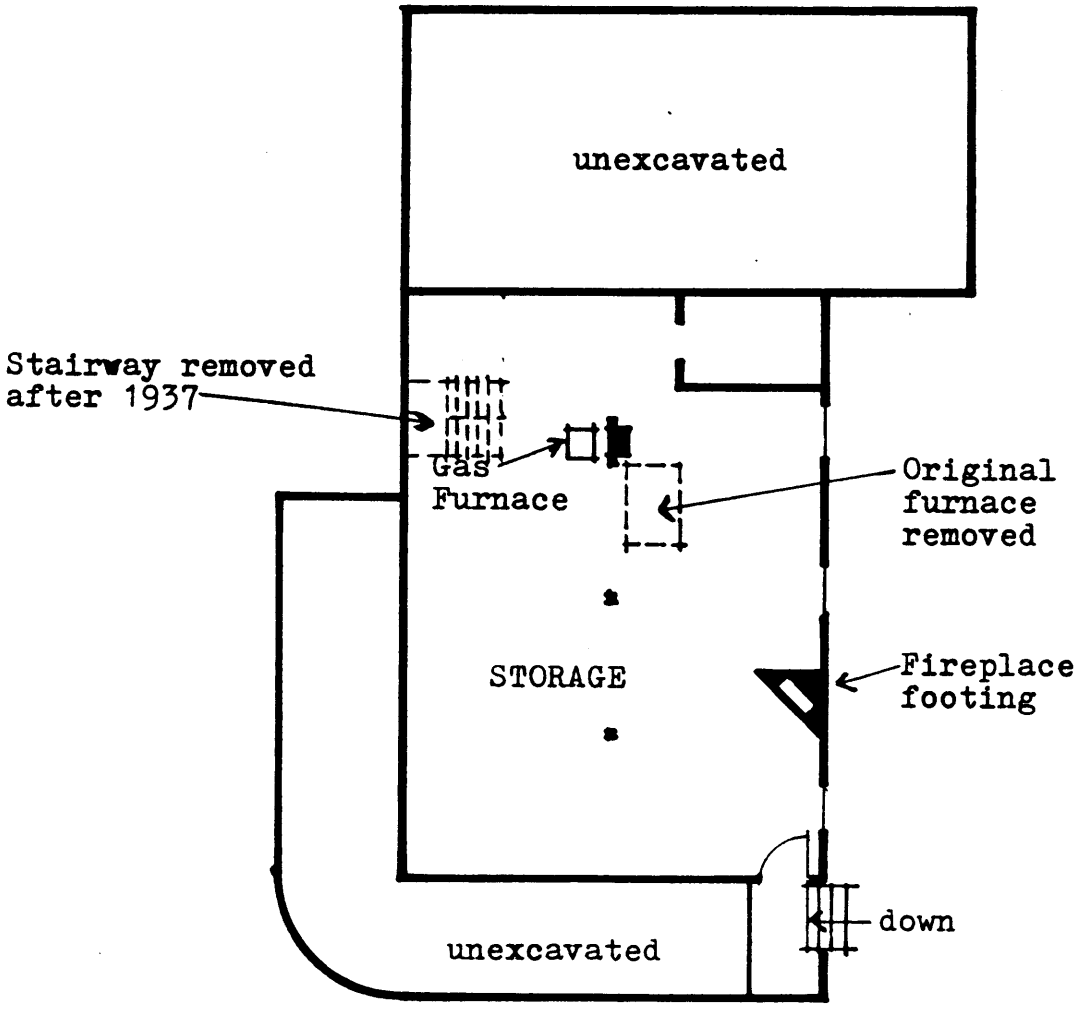
Multnomah County Records Book #154.

Original incorporation documents for the Jewish Shelter Home, August 26, 1919.

The Scribe, February 18, 1921.
April 11, 1930.

Oregon Journal, June 23, 1914.

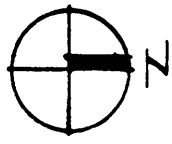
Jewish Shelter Home
4133 SW Corbett Avenue
Portland, Multnomah Co., Oregon



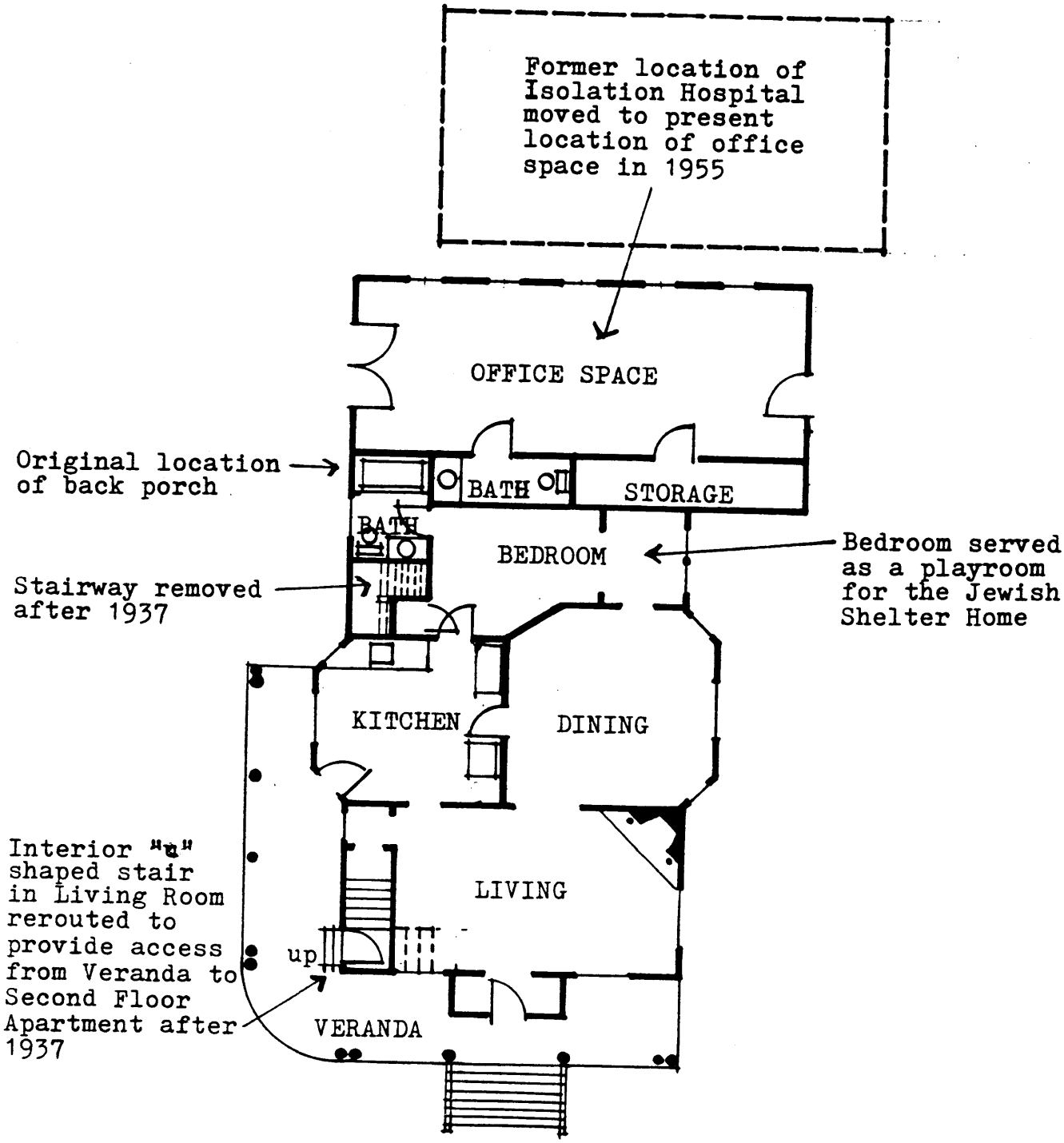

BASEMENT PLAN

5/11/83

950 SF - Storage



Jewish Shelter Home
4133 SW Corbett Avenue
Portland, Multnomah Co., Oregon



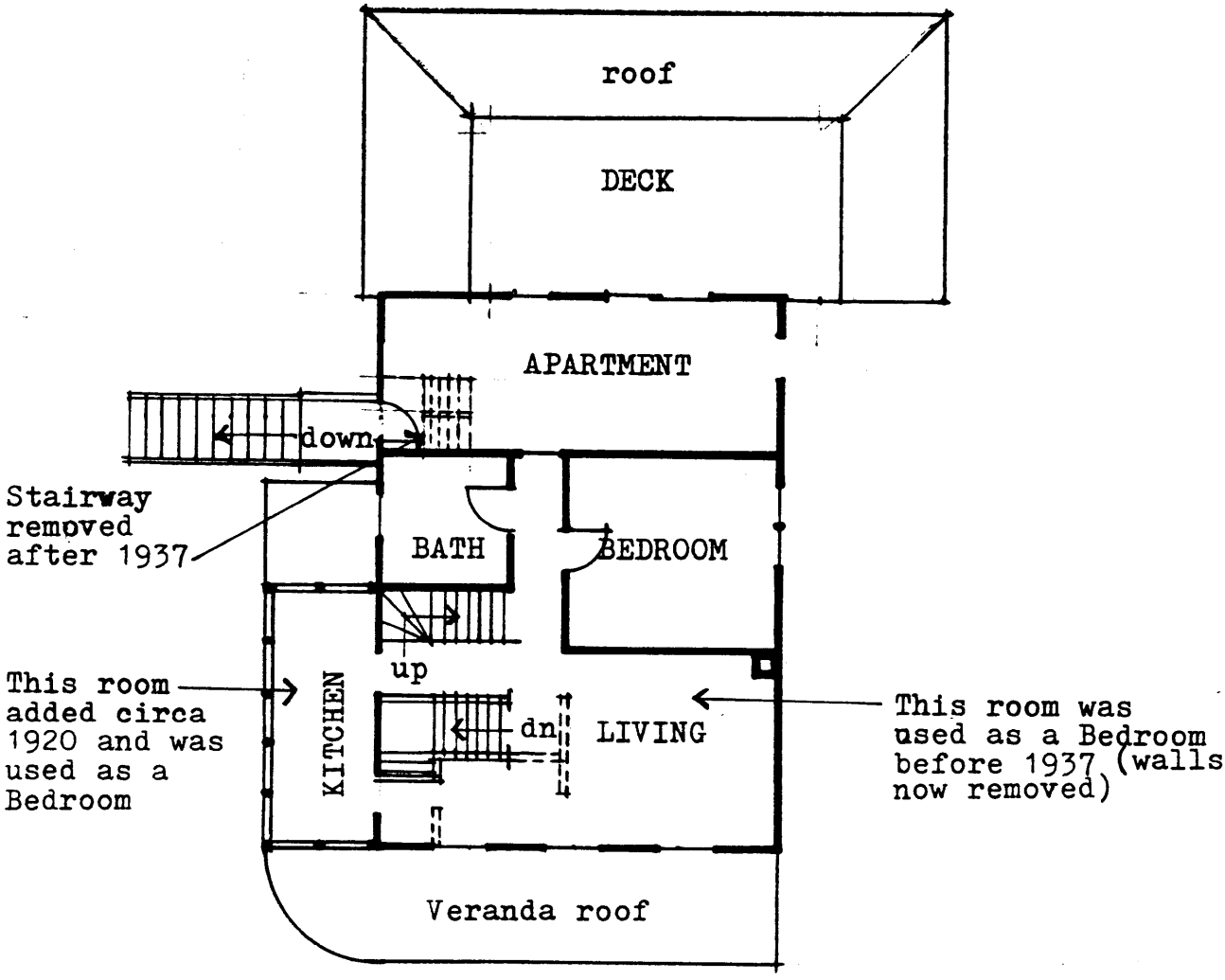

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

5/11/93

N

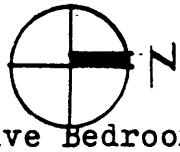
1,000 SF - House
950 SF - Office (formerly Isolation Hospital)

Jewish Shelter Home
4133 SW Corbett Avenue
Portland, Multnomah Co., Oregon



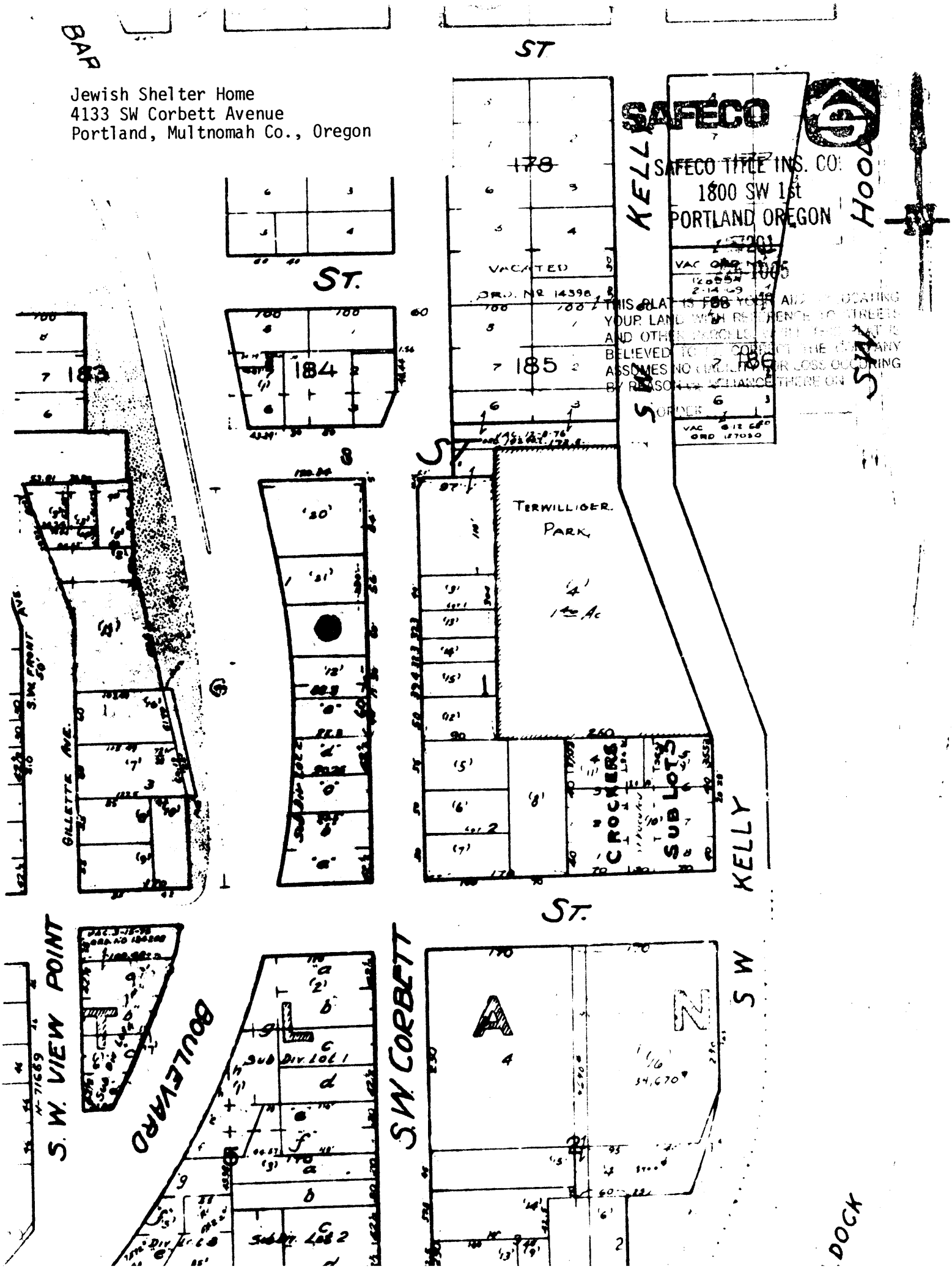

SECOND FLOOR PLAN

5/11/83




1,000 SF - two apartments (formerly five Bedrooms)

Jewish Shelter Home
4133 SW Corbett Avenue
Portland, Multnomah Co., Oregon



Jewish Shelter Home
4133 S.W. Corbett Ave.
Portland, ORE 97201
Front view from east

5/5/83 taken by:
Brian McCabe
0604 S.W. Florida St.
Portland, ORE 97219

1 of 16

2

Photograph taken ca.1920
neg. available:
Brian McCabe
0604 S.W. Florida St.
Portland, ORE 97219

Jewish Shelter Home
4133 S.W. Corbett Ave.
Portland, ORE 97201
Front view from S.E.

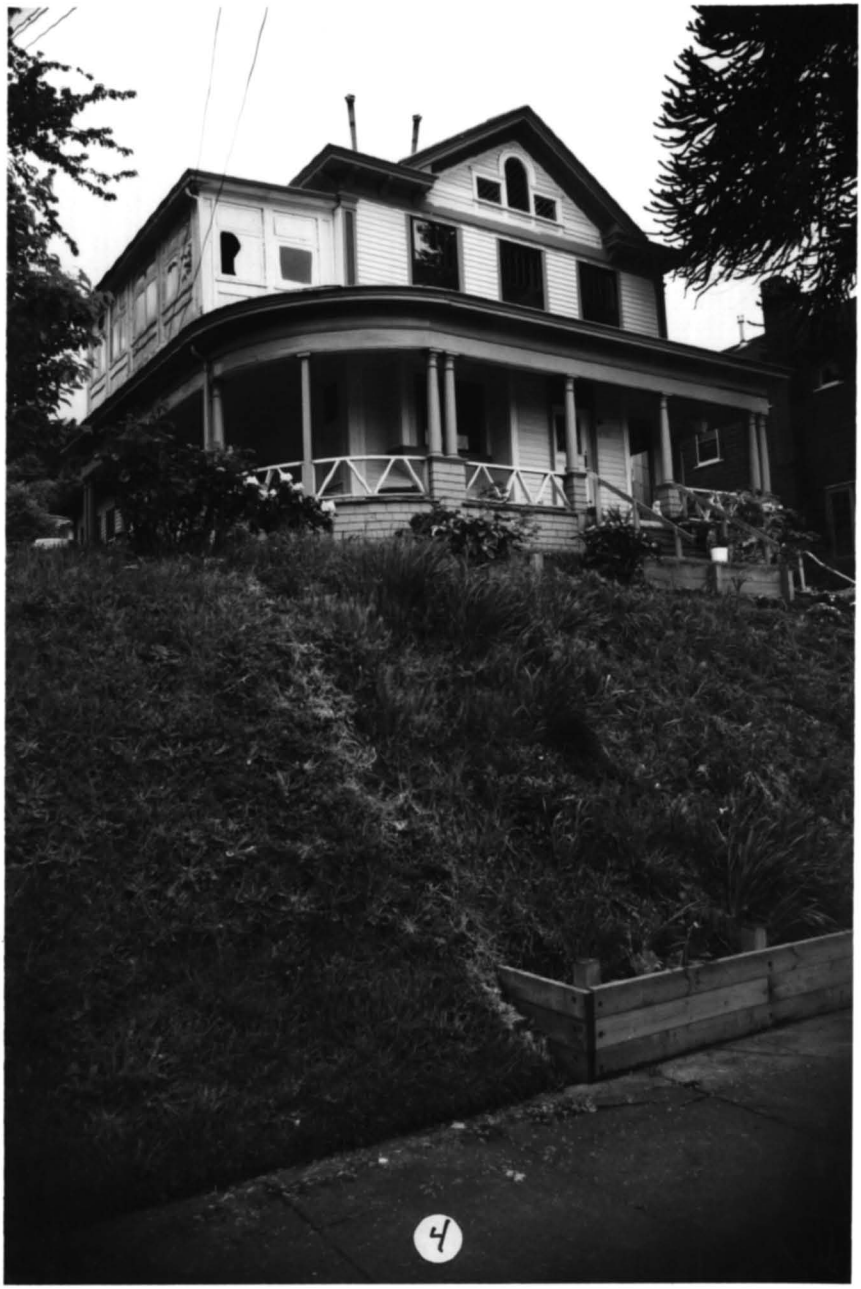
2 of 16

3

5/5/83 taken by:
Brian McCabe
0604 S.W. Florida St.
Portland, ORE 97219

Jewish Shelter Home
4133 S.W. Corbett Ave.
Portland, ORE 97201
Front view from S.E.

3 of 16


4

5/5/83 taken by:
Brian McCabe
0604 S.W. Florida St.
Portland, ORE 97219

Jewish Shelter Home
4133 S.W. Corbett Ave.
Portland, ORE 97201
Front view form S.E.

4 of 16

5

5/5/83 taken by:
Brian McCabe
0604 S.W. Florida St.
Portland, ORE 97219

Jewish Shelter Home
4133 S.W. Corbett Ave.
Portland, ORE 97201
Varanda from S.E.

5 of 16

6

5/5/83 taken by:
Brian McCabe
0604 S.W. Florida St.
Portland, ORE 97219

Jewish Shelter Home
4133 S.W. Corbett Ave.
Portland, ORE 97201
Side view form S.W.
6 of 16

7

5/5/83 taken by:
Brian McCabe
0604 S.W. Florida St.
Portland, ORE 97219

Jewish Shelter Home
4133 S.W. Corbett Ave.
Portland, ORE 97201
Side view from N.W.
7 of 16

5/5/83 taken by:
Brian McCabe
0604 S.W. Florida St.
Portland, ORE 97219

Jewish Shelter Home
4133 S.W. Corbett Ave.
Portland, ORE 97201
Front view from N.E.

8 of 16

9

5/5/83 taken by:
Brian McCabe
0604 S.W. Florida St.
Portland, ORE 97219

Jewish Shelter Home
4133 S.W. Corbett Ave.
Portland, ORE 97201
Front view from N.E.

9 of 16

10

5/5/83 taken by:
Brian McCabe
0604 S.W. Florida St.
Portland, ORE 97219

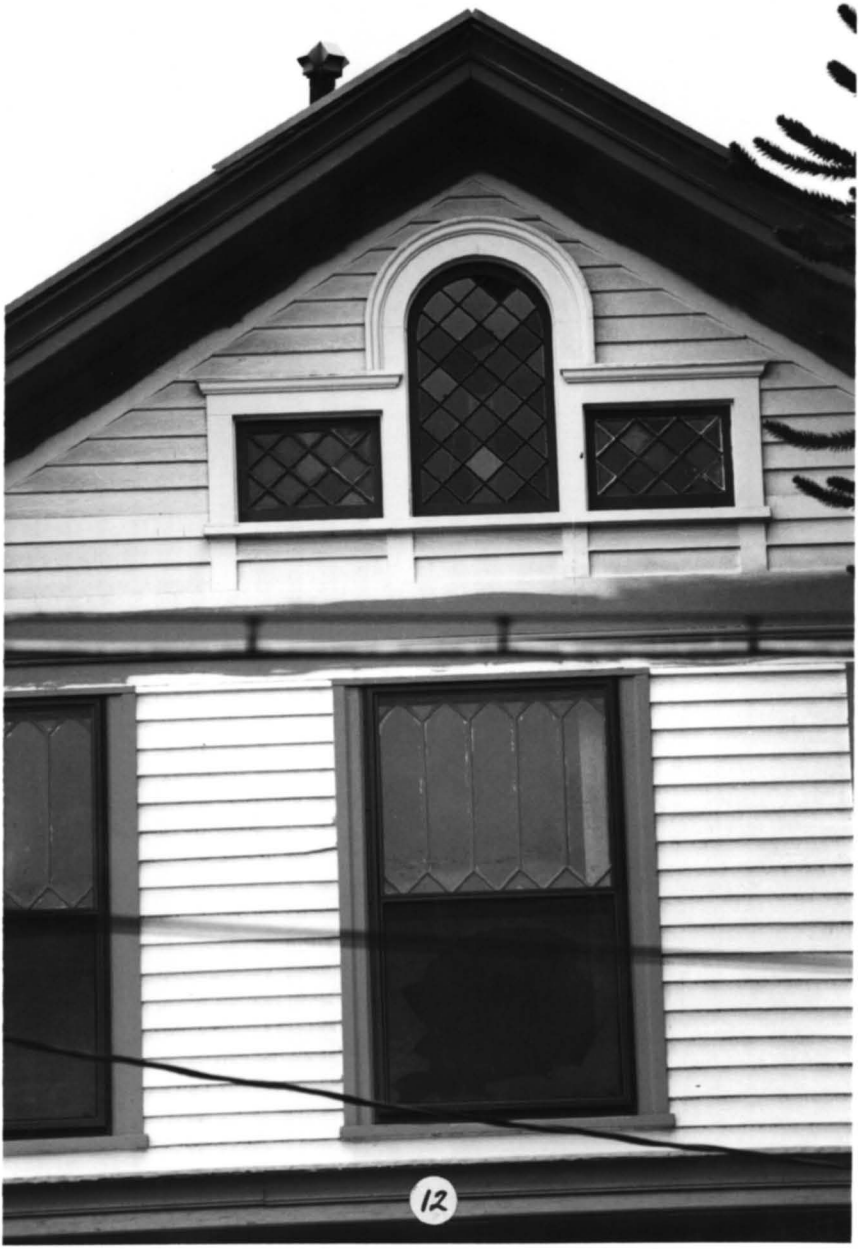
10 of 16

Jewish Shelter Home
4133 S.W. Corbett Ave.
Portland, ORE 97201
Front view from N.E.
Other homes in view

5/5/83 taken by:
Brian McCabe
0604 S.W. Florida St.
Portland, ORE 97219

Jewish Shelter Home
4133 S.W. Corbett Ave.
Portland, ORE 97201
Front small bay window

11 OF 16



5/5/83 taken by:
Brian McCabe
0604 S.W. Florida St.
Portland, ORE 97219

Jewish Shelter Home
4133 S.W. Corbett Ave.
Portland, ORE 97201
Front view of Paladian window

12 OF 16

5/5/83 taken by:
Brian McCabe
0604 S.W. Florida St.
Portland, ORE 97219

Jewish Shelter Home
4133 S.W. Corbett Ave.
Portland, ORE 97201
Main floor fireplace and mantel

13 of 16

14

5/5/83 taken by:
Brian McCabe
0604 S.W. Florida St.
Portland, ORE 97219

Jewish Shelter Home
4133 S.W. Corbett Ave.
Portland, ORE 97201
Dining room wainscot

14 of 16

15

5/5/83 taken by:
Brian McCabe
0604 S.W. Florida St.
Portland, ORE 97219

Jewish Shelter Home
4133 S.W. Corbett Ave.
Portland, ORE 97201
Festooned Plaster ceiling
15 of 16

4132
PARKING
PARKING
PARKING

Jewish Shelter Home
4133 SW Corbett Avenue
Portland, Multnomah Co., OR
16 of 16

Isolation Unit from the west
Brian McCabe photo, 1984
0604 SW Florida Street
Portland, OR 97219