

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Date listed 11/9/08
NRIS No. 67001378
Oregon SHPO

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instruction in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classifications, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Kern, Grace House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1740 SW West Point Court

☐ not for publication

city or town Portland

☐ vicinity

state Oregon

code OR

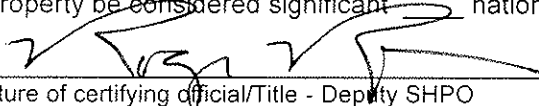
county Multnomah

code 051

zip code 97201

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide X locally.


Signature of certifying official/Title - Deputy SHPO

11.19.07
Date

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
Action

Signature of the Keeper

Date of

_____ 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): _____

Kern, Grace, House
Name of Property

Multnomah Co., OR
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many as apply)

☒ private
☐ public - local
☐ public - state
☐ public - Federal

Category of Property
(check only one box)

☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th and 20th CENTURY REVIVALS:
Georgian Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: BRICK

roof: SLATE

Other: _____

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

See continuation sheets.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing).

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1955

Significant Dates

1955

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Brookman, Herman, Architect

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B removed from its original location
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave
- ☐ D a cemetery
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F a commemorative property
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance Within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite books, articles, and other sources used in preparing the form on one or more continuation sheets) See continuation sheets

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36CFR67) 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

Name of repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 10 523768 5040173
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____

4 _____

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Amy McFeeters-Krone, Historic Preservation Consultant

organization Building History date July 1, 2007

street & number 1831 NE Thompson St telephone (503) 493-0477

city or town Portland state OR zip code 97212

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation sheets

Maps: A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs: Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

name Sharon and Paul Murphy

street & number 1740 SW West Point Court telephone (503) 248.9907

city or town Portland state OR zip code 97201

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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SUMMARY

The Grace Kern House is located at 1740 SW West Point Court in the Portland Heights neighborhood of Portland. It was exactly designed by noted architect Herman Brookman. The symmetrically arranged house is set on a landscaped, wedge-shaped lot with a massive retaining wall along Montgomery Drive. The house is in the Colonial Revival style exhibiting the stripped style of the mid-20th Century. The main elevation exhibits the classic symmetry of the style with the surprise of a concave façade wall. Constructed of wood framing sheathed in red brick on a poured concrete foundation with a slate shingle roof, the house has two stories with a two-story basement and 4422 square feet of finished living space.

The Kern House has many of Herman Brookman's signature elements. The curving walls, leaded glass casement windows with colored jewels, ornamental ironwork, and rich detailing are all hallmarks of Brookman's work. Brookman is well known for his architectural skill, unique and well thought out plans, attention to detail, and unique blend of traditional and modern elements. The Kern House is an excellent example of this.

Constructed in 1955, the Kern House retains a very high degree of integrity. The house remains largely unchanged, with the exception of the service corridor on the second floor, which was opened up to allow access to the fourth bedroom.

SETTING

The Kern House is located in the established and affluent neighborhood of Portland Heights in Portland, Oregon. The neighborhood is characterized by its winding roads, lush green hills, and large, well-tended homes, many with spectacular views. The top of the hill within the horseshoe curve of Montgomery Drive was the last section of this plat to be developed, with the houses on West Point Court all being built in the 1950s. The Kern House is set at about 410 feet elevation and faces south. The hill slopes down to the north.

The house is set on a wedge-shaped lot located on the north side of tiny SW West Point Court, a cul-de-sac of only four houses set on the crest of a hill within the horseshoe curve of SW Montgomery Drive. It is flanked on either side with houses. The rear or north side of the house faces Montgomery Drive. The lot originally sloped down to the north, but a massive, three-tiered retaining wall along Montgomery Drive essentially leveled the lot at the elevation of West Point Court. The two-car garage entrance is off of Montgomery Drive.

The Kern house and its setting were all designed by Herman Brookman in excruciating detail. The house fits the wedge shaped lot, down to the curve of the façade of the house, which matches the curve of the cul-de-sac. The front yard is enclosed by a curving, four-foot, red brick wall topped with slate. The double-leaf front gate, designed by Brookman, is a delicate wrought iron piece with paired urns of flowers and winged dragons. It is in the style of Oscar Bach, a prominent New York metal artist who worked with Brookman on many of his projects.

The rear yard has a curving brick terrace against the house and a small lawn. The top tier of the retaining wall has an open brick-work balustrade fronted with a narrow, linear parterre garden. A secondary brick terrace is located at the end of the west wing of the house and has a sunken hot tub. The two lower tiers of the retaining

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wall are accessed from a pathway along the west side of the house. They are narrow, only a few feet wide, and contain mature rhododendrons and other deciduous and evergreen shrubbery which soften the massive wall.

PLAN

The Kern House is two stories, with a two-story basement and a hipped roof. The house contains 4422 square feet of finished living space on two floors. The upper basement contains service areas and storage, while the lower basement consists of the garage, a wood room and the elevator room.

The plan consists of a roughly U-shaped volume that follows the east and west lot lines of the wedge-shaped lot. The primary elevation of the house faces north toward the street. Two two-story wings angle away from the north elevation of the main block.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The exterior of the Kern house is sheathed in red brick laid in a Flemish bond, with a slate roof. The main (south) elevation is symmetrical and at first glance not unlike other Colonial Revival style houses. The most surprising and unique aspect of this elevation is that the entire front wall of the house curves gently inward, matching the

curve of the cul-de-sac. Brookman was known for his use of curves, but this is the only known house by him where the entire front wall of the house curves in this way. This masterful design accommodates what must have been an awkward, wedge-shaped, sloping lot in a way that takes advantage of the sweeping views.

The entrance is centered in the main elevation under a simple marble portico supported by slender paired marble columns. The columns are not tapered and have an almost Egyptian style capital. Drawings show that an elaborate wrought iron railing was to encircle the portico roof, but it was never installed. The front door is a solid eight-panel door with a narrow surround and a blind leaded glass transom.

The door is flanked with six-over-nine double-hung wood sash with very narrow, delicate muntins. The second story has a centered triple-hung six-over-six-over-six sash flanked by six-over-six double-hung sash. The door and all windows are topped by splayed brick lintels with marble keystones. Solid paneled shutters, shown in drawings, were never installed on the windows.

A restrained cornice with dentil molding is surmounted by a hipped, slate roof.

The massive foundation of the house is visible from Montgomery Drive. Curving walls along the sweeping lot line lead to a recessed, two-car garage. The retaining wall has three distinct tiers, each topped with a narrow garden of mature plants, which soften what is an imposing, red-brick faced concrete structure. This system of walls rises two stories to the rear garden and the main level of the house.

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The east and west sides of the house are only a few feet from the lot lines, with narrow paths along each side. The east elevation is marked by a pair of large, exterior brick chimneys with corbelled brick caps, set symmetrically. There are only three windows on this elevation, two leaded casement windows with amber jewels flanking the south chimney, and an arched, leaded glass casement window with jewels on the second story to the north of the southern chimney.

The west elevation has a hipped roof, two-story ell extending from the middle of the west elevation toward the north. To the south of the ell, the main block of the house has a large exterior brick chimney and a ribbon of four two-over-four double-hung sash on each story. A service entrance is located on the south side of the ell. The ell itself has three windows on the west side, one six-over-six double-hung sash in the southern portion of the ell, and two three-over-six double-hung sash approximately centered on the ell. The lot slopes down to the north. There are three basement level windows on this elevation, as well as a single small gabled dormer with a three-over-six light sash.

The north elevation is quite different from the other elevations, with large expanses of glass meant to take advantage of the view. The main block of the house has a convex curve on this elevation, with two wings extending from it at angles to match the wedge shape of the lot. A courtyard is formed between the two wings.

The center of the main block has a convex curve and is constructed of wood rather than brick. The first story has a centered, 25-light fixed window flanked by sets of five-light French doors. Pilasters flank the window, and recessed panels are located below it. A cornice with dentil molding marks the second floor, which is recessed from the first floor. It has a centered, twenty-light fixed window flanked by eight light doors. Originally these doors were to lead to the second floor balcony, but the wrought iron railing was never installed. This center section of the house has a wide frieze capped with a dentil molding cornice, which matches up with that on the brick wings.

The east wing is constructed of brick with a half-round, two-story wood bay at the north end. This bay is encircled by four-over-six light double-hung sash on the first story and four-over-four double-hung sash on the second story, arranged in three sets of three divided by stylized, fluted pilasters. The two stories are divided by a series of recessed panels. The hipped roof of the wing adjoins the half conical roof of the bay. The west wall of the wing has one six-over-six double-hung sash on each story.

The west wing has three distinct sections. The main block of the wing extends one bay from the center block. It has three six-over-six double-hung sash on the east side, one on the first story and two on the second story. A small two-story, shed roof projection extends from the north side of the wing. The first story has a ribbon of three four-over-four double-hung sash which open onto a recessed porch. The second story has a single three-over-six double-hung sash on the north side. The easternmost section of the wing adjoins the ell on the west side of the house. This section has three-over-six light double-hung sash on the north and east sides. The north side of this section has a gentle convex curve.

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INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The interior of the Kern House has a comfortable scale and a seamless blend of traditional and modern details. One cannot help but appreciate the precision and details that are incorporated in the design of this house. Grace Kern asked Brookman to incorporate a significant amount of woodwork taken from the Ellis Lawrence designed house she inherited from her father, which was torn down to build the Lloyd Center Mall. These items include the main staircase, and many of the pilasters, cornices, brackets, and panels in the house. The older woodwork is subtly discernable from the newer wood because it is slightly darker in color, and it is rather more elaborate than more restrained designs of Brookman.

The oak front door opens into a small vestibule that steps up to the main stair hall. The clear oak paneling of the vestibule hides a coat closet to the west and a small powder room to the east. This powder room has a curving pink veined marble two-level counter that matches the marble floor.

Stepping up from the vestibule to the stair hall, the room opens up to the view beyond the wall of windows on the north side of the room. Glazed, four-light French doors flank a 25-light fixed windows in the curving wall. The windows are framed with fluted pilasters. The doors access the brick terrace.

The stair hall has oak panel wainscoting and its original green paint washed with gold on the walls. The open staircase, from the old Kern house, has turned balusters and an oak rail. It was reworked by Brookman to fit into this house, and it wraps around the stair hall seamlessly. The wainscoting goes up the stair as well.

To the west of the staircase, a small hall with a barrel vault ceiling contains the elevator and the door to the kitchen and dining room wing. The elevator is concealed by a flat oak door with a porthole window. The door to the kitchen, like the other doors in the house, has eight raised panels.

In the east wall of the stair hall is a pocket door that leads into the living room wing. Another door leads down a small paneled hall to the library. The library, in southeast corner of the house, is an intimate space with floor to ceiling oak paneling.

Inside the library, directly opposite the door is the east wall containing a centered fireplace flanked by leaded casement windows. The fireplace surround and mantel as well as the arched broken pediment with dentil molding over the fireplace came from Ms. Kern's former home. The windows have clear glass set with amber colored jewels, a style that is a Brookman trademark. The south wall of the room has a centered six-over-nine double-hung sash window flanked by recessed bookcases hidden behind panels. A carved panel over the windows came from the former Kern house.

The north wall has a pair of three-panel doors that match the wall paneling. These doors conceal a full wet bar including a sink, refrigerator, mirrored wall and original cabinetry.

The east wall features an elaborate three part recessed bookcase. The three arched openings are set on a base of cabinetry. The arches are divided by fluted pilasters supporting a frieze of recessed arches. The frieze is surmounted by a large carved panel. The pilasters and panel are from the former Kern house.

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A concealed door in the north wall of the library hall leads into the spacious living room. This formal room has painted, paneled walls, wide crown molding, and fluted pilasters. The east wall has as its focal point a centered Georgian style fireplace surround with carved festoons. The north end of the room has a half-round bay featuring three sets of four-over-six double-hung windows divided by fluted pilasters. The west wall has one six-over-six double-hung sash window overlooking the terrace, and the door back into the stair hall.

To the west of the stair hall is the west wing, containing the kitchen, dining room and maid's quarters. A pocket door from the stair hall leads to the formal dining room. This room has paneled walls, a rectangular bay at the north end, and a recessed niche with a scalloped arch in the west wall. The molding in this room is particularly fine, with fluted, Ionic pilasters. It is highlighted by the original cream-colored paint with an antiqued finish. A door in the northwest corner of the room leads to the kitchen.

The kitchen has its original layout and flat front, painted wood cabinetry. The sink, set in a stainless steel counter, is set along the west wall under a bank of two-over-four double-hung sash windows. A peninsula, faced on both sides with cabinetry, extends at an angle into the kitchen. The range is on the south side, and the refrigerator on the north side. The north side of the peninsula creates a kind of butler's pantry area leading into the dining room.

To the north of the kitchen is a long hall into the maid's wing. This area contains storage areas, the servants' stairs to the second floor, a service entrance on the west side of the house, a full bath and the maid's room at the north end. These areas have the simple finishes typically found in service areas.

The main staircase leads from the main stair hall up to the oval center hall on the second floor. The north wall is rounded and has a large, fixed, 20-light window flanked by eight-light doors. These doors were meant to lead to a balcony overlooking the north lawn, but the wrought-iron railing was never installed. The upper hall has a paneled wainscot and a curvilinear valence that encircles ceiling, highlighting the oval shape of the hall.

To the east, the hall curves to the north and enters the master suite. This very large room has a half-round bay at the north end with a spectacular view of the river and beyond to the mountains. The west wall of the room features a classical fireplace with fluted pilasters and decorative relief urns.

The master bedroom was reportedly redesigned by Roscoe Hemenway after Ms. Kern had a dispute with Herman Brookman. The molding in this room is different than that in the rest of the house. It is much more linear and less organic in style than Brookman's. This is the only area of the house that appears to have been influenced by another architect.

At the north end of the room is an alcove containing doors to the closets as well as to the master bathroom. This master bathroom originally contained a dressing area, which the current owners have sensitively incorporated into the bathroom. The entire bathroom is faced in pink veined marble, including the floors, walls, shower and countertops. Round marble posts support the vanities.

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The entrance area to the bathroom has a barrel vault ceiling and contains a curved marble sink counter and vanity, added by the current owners. An arched leaded glass casement window with colored jewels is located over the vanity. The bathtub is recessed in an arched marble niche in the southeast corner of the room. The ceiling in the main area of the bathroom has a barrel vault ceiling, and the west end of the room is rounded.

A second sink and vanity is set along the north wall. The toilet was originally located in the center of the curved west wall, but it has been relocated to an enclosed area in the former dressing room. The unique round marble shower is set in the northwest corner of the room. It has a built in marble niche with a seat.

To the west of the upper stair hall is the guest wing. A corridor off the west end of the stair hall accesses the elevator, a guest room in the southwest corner of the house, and a guest bath as well as a service area and the service stairs. The guest room and bath are spacious but more simply appointed than the more lavish main areas of the house.

To the north of the corridor is a suite of rooms that Grace Kern laid out with the idea that a friend would live there. Although they are now used as bedrooms, originally they were laid out as a living room and bedroom suite with an attached bath and kitchenette.

The first room accessible from the corridor was meant to be the living room of the suite. It has a large window overlooking the terrace. An alcove at the north end of the room was originally laid out as a kitchenette, with cabinetry and some appliances. The current owner maintained the upper cabinets but changed out the lower ones to a desk.

The bedroom and bathroom of the suite were originally only accessible by going through the living room. The current owners have opened up the corridor near the service stairs so that these rooms are also accessible from the service area. The bedroom has a headboard attached to the wall that came from the former Kern house. The north wall of the room has a gentle outward curve. Double-hung windows on the north and east walls provide views of the city and river.

The basement levels of the house are accessed from a stair off the kitchen service hall. The upper basement contains the laundry room, a half bath, two large storage rooms and the boiler room. The east wing of the house does not have a basement. From this level another staircase leads down to the garage level. This level has a wood room, machine room for the elevator, and a small tool room in addition to the two-car garage.

ALTERATIONS

The Grace Kern House has a very high level of integrity. Miss Kern lived alone in the house until her death in 1984. The home was then owned for two years by Tom Spencer, who made some minor changes. The current owners purchased the house in 1986 and have made only modest changes which do not affect the integrity of the house.

Ms Kern never completed the house due to financial constraints and disagreements with Brookman. When she dismissed Brookman, the master suite was not finished. The bedroom had no finish flooring, and the trim and built in cabinetry for the dressing room was not installed. The master bathroom had been paneled in

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marble, but the plumbing was not functional. Kern lived primarily in the suite of rooms that she had planned for a friend to occupy. In addition, the planned wrought iron railings on the front and back balconies of the house were never installed.

The current owners installed hardwood floors in the master bedroom. They reconfigured the master bathroom by moving the toilet into a closet, creating a second sink area in the adjoining dressing room using the same pink marble as in the original bathroom, and completing the plumbing. The other baths as well as the kitchen are in original condition.

The current owners also opened up the service hall to create better flow to the fourth bedroom which had been captive in the suite of rooms located in the west wing. This change creates a natural flow and does not damage the integrity of the building.

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SUMMARY

The Grace Kern House is significant under Criterion C as an excellent example of the masterful work of Herman Brookman. Constructed in 1955, the symmetrically arranged Georgian Colonial Revival style house is set on a sloping, wedge shaped lot on a quiet cul-de-sac. Although very late for its style, the house exhibits many of the hallmarks of Brookman's work, including curving walls, ornamental ironwork, and extraordinary attention to detail. Brookman is well known for his architectural skill, unique and well thought out plans, and seamless blend of traditional and modern elements. The Kern House is an excellent example of Herman Brookman's residential design, and has many of his signature elements that are reflective of his attention to detail and fine craftsmanship.

HERMAN BROOKMAN

Herman Brookman was born July 2, 1891 in Brooklyn New York, the son of Russian Jewish immigrants, Joseph and Dora Brookman. Brookman's first job after high school was as an office boy with the New York architecture firm of Albro and Lindeberg, a prestigious firm which specialized in building estates and mansions for wealthy Long Islanders. Brookman worked for the firm from 1909-1914, learning the practice of architecture along the way.¹ After the firm dissolved in 1914, Brookman continued to design fine houses and estates with Harrie T. Lindeberg until 1922. Lindeberg was known to use only the best of materials and artisans in his work. He epitomized the emphasis on craftsmanship that was the hallmark of the Arts & Crafts and Beaux Arts philosophies of his time. Lindeberg was skilled at integrating the interior and exterior spaces of a building through patios, gardens, and vistas relating directly to his interiors. Undoubtedly, Brookman was greatly influenced by his early training with Lindeberg.

Brookman married his wife Sophie in 1911, and had three children, Bernard, Emanuel, and Dorothy. The family moved to White Plains, New York, in 1917, and Brookman commuted by train to Lindeberg's office in New York City. After a disagreement, Brookman left Lindeberg's office around 1919 and began working on his own. In 1921 Brookman and his family embarked on a two-year tour of Europe, where Brookman spent much of his time observing architecture.² He was touring Europe when he was contacted by Lloyd Frank, an owner of Meier and Frank, to design his house on a 60-acre property south of Portland.

Brookman was recommended to Frank by Oscar B. Bach, a fine metal artist who Frank, a department store magnate, was acquainted with through his many connections in the decorative arts world in New York. Brookman completed the M. Lloyd Frank house, named Fir Acres, on Palatine Hill in 1924. Many of his colleagues believed that the Frank house was a masterpiece of design. Portland architect Saul Zaik calls the Frank estate a small masterpiece: "All architects have the quest for making something perfect. I think Brookman came close to that with Frank's house."³ Fir Acres is now the centerpiece of the Lewis and Clark College campus. After completing Fir Acres, the Brookmans decided to stay in Portland, where Herman Brookman easily procured many more wealthy clients.

¹ Ritz, Richard Ellison. *Architects of Oregon*. Lair Hill Publishing, Portland, Oregon 2002.

² Donovan, Sally, and Rob Dotignacq. *Goldsmith, Alan and Barbara House National Register Nomination*. 2006.

³ Van Cleve, Jane. *Brookman Designed with Passion*, *Willamette Week*, 19 April 1976 p9 c1

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Lloyd Frank helped Brookman obtain another prestigious commission, Temple Beth Israel, completed in 1927. The congregation also hired the firm of M.H. Whitehouse and Associates and the architect Harry Herzog, a member of the congregation. This arrangement was especially difficult for Brookman, who preferred to work alone.⁴ Brookman began to gain a reputation for being difficult to work with. He insisted on control, and would make corrections and ask for re-orders of materials if he didn't get precisely what he was looking for. Despite these difficulties with his temperament, Brookman developed a reputation for having a remarkable sensitivity to detail and craftsmanship. Robert Wilmsen worked on several projects with Brookman, including the Pharmacy Building at Oregon State University and consulted with Brookman on the long-range master plan for the formal mall of the state capitol building. Wilmsen says of Brookman: "I'll bet you that if there was a bird house on the Frank Estate, it was designed by Herman Brookman. Herman Brookman designed."⁵

Throughout his career, Brookman relied on his reputation and referrals from his wealthy clients to procure new projects. He was a perfectionist who preferred working alone in order to maintain control over his designs. He did not like to base his designs on a budget, preferring instead to design as he saw fit without being encumbered by financial restraints. He viewed each of his commissions as his project, not his clients. Not surprisingly, this led to a reputation as difficult to work with.

The great depression of the 1930s was a difficult time for Brookman, as clients were few. His income declined to the point that he almost lost the home he had designed for himself. He was forced to market himself for the first time, and took whatever small commission came his way. His business picked up again after the economy recovered, and he again relied on referrals for his large residential commissions.

Brookman did not work on many high profile architectural projects, focusing instead on detailed, intimate house designs for his clients. Focusing on residential architecture did not, however, prevent him from exploring new design and forms. As Hawkins and Willingham stated: "By the mid-1930's, Herman Brookman, of all the Portland architects, had explored the furthest in developing new forms of architectural expression."⁶ Gene Westburg, who worked for Brookman from 1953-55 recalls: "Everything was designed in those days. They didn't have catalogues then. Much of his sources were from the East but he had a style with some Northwest flavor, though always more elaborate. Basically, he worked in a Georgian style, but with innovations."⁷

Brookman had an office downtown until about 1940 when he decided to work out of his home, which he designed himself. The Brookmans sold this home in 1941 and bought a two-story Queen Anne house in the Westover Terrace development of Southwest Portland. The Southwest Hills neighborhood grew rapidly after WWII, and Brookman had many commissions there. Brookman went on to practice from his home studio until 1965, when he closed his practice.

Brookman served as Treasurer of the Oregon Chapter of the American Institute of Architects from 1933-1935. He became Vice President in 1937, then Director in 1941. He was elected Director again from 1944-46, and

⁴ Donovan, Sally, and Rob Dotignacq. *Goldsmith, Alan and Barbara House National Register Nomination*. 2006.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Hawkins, William J. III and William F. Willingham, *Classic Houses of Portland: 1850-1950*. (Timber Press, Portland, OR; 1999)

⁷ Pintarich, Paul. *Brookman: Masterworks Remain*. *The Oregonian*. June 6, 1974. Sec. 2 p14, c5

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from 1951-53. In 1950 he was elected Chapter President of the local AIA. Brookman became a Fellow of the AIA in 1951. He retired to California in 1965, where he died November 6, 1973, at the age of 82.⁸

GRACE KERN

Grace Barber Kern was born in 1890. She was the daughter of Daniel Kern, who with his brother John, founded the town of Kernville and operated the Kern Brothers Packing Company, a fish cannery, at the mouth of the Siletz River until 1907. Daniel Kern was also the founder and president of the Columbia Contract Company of Portland, which constructed roads, railroads, jetties and reservoirs, and other large public works. Daniel Kern was very successful and made a fortune in his business enterprises.

Daniel Kern and his wife, Emma, had a three-story, thirteen room, Georgian brick mansion designed by Ellis Lawrence in 1915 at 1421 NE 15th Avenue. The house occupied the whole block and was surrounded by a formal landscaped garden. Grace Kern inherited the house and lived there until 1953, when the Lloyd Corporation bought the house from her for \$325,000 to develop the Lloyd Center Mall. She was one of the last holdouts in the Lloyd area.

Grace Kern attended Portland Academy, studied music and took a two-year trip around the world, including eight months in Europe. She was active in fund-raising for a variety of charitable groups, including the Oregon Maritime Museum in Astoria, a fine arts building at the University of Washington, the Waverly Baby Home, the United Way, cancer control, the Oregon Symphony and a diabetic children's camp. She served as a board member and president of the Holladay Park Hospital, where she also helped organize the auxiliary. She also served on the board of the Oregon State Federation of Music Clubs, worked for the library of Shriner's Hospital for Crippled Children and was a member of the Town Club. She never married, and died at the age of 94 in 1984.⁹

Kern hired well-known architect Herman Brookman to design her new house in the Georgian Colonial Revival style. She must have specified the Georgian, because the majority of Brookman's designs from the fifties were much more contemporary than the Kern house. The Kern House, by contrast, was more like Brookman's designs from the 1920s and 1930s.

The house was begun in April 1954, when a huge crater was excavated at the site. It took most of May to construct the huge forms for the foundation of the house, and two more months before the foundation was actually complete. Facing the massive concrete foundation with brick and framing of the house did not begin until late July¹⁰. Brick masons worked on the house continuously through at least January of 1955.

In 1960, Kern sued to recover \$47,644 in income tax. Because her new house was not completed within 18 months of the sale of her old house, she was not allowed to take all the deductions for expenses on the new residence. Even though she moved into the new house on January 4, 1955, the IRS said that some of the

⁸ Ritz, Richard Ellison. Architects of Oregon. Lair Hill Publishing, Portland, Oregon 2002.

⁹ *Grace B. Kern Obituary*. The Oregonian. 1984.

¹⁰ Photograph Collection. Sharon and Paul Murphy, homeowners.

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work on the house was completed after the deadline of January 27, 1955. Her suit to recover the income tax was unsuccessful.¹¹

This financial blow seemed to have impacted the completion of the house, as some elements were never finished. Grace Kern lived in the suite that she had intended for a friend to occupy, and never lived in the entire residence.

THE KERN HOUSE: TRADITIONAL and TRANSITIONAL:

Herman Brookman's work can be divided into two broad categories. In the 1920s and 1930s, his designs were influenced by traditional period revival styles, although interpreted in his own distinctive way. In the 1930s and 1940s, Brookman designed in a more modern International and Northwest Regional style. Before the Depression, Brookman had ample commissions from wealthy clients, allowing him the freedom to design without restrictions. With the onset of the Depression, his business declined dramatically, to the point that he himself almost lost the home he had designed for himself. He was forced to advertise his business for the first time. The few commissions that he did work on in these years had budgetary limits, which Brookman was unaccustomed to.

During this period, Brookman became more involved in the AIA, becoming more involved in the architectural community and even working on some projects with other architects such as Harold Doty and Hollis Johnson. Brookman made friends with the architects who were thinking about the emerging Northwest style, and that undoubtedly influenced his later work.

In Classic Houses of Portland, Hawkins and Willingham describe a trend in the 1920's and 1930's which ultimately led to the Moderne, International and Northwest styles. They describe this as a transitional period, where Portland's residential architects like Herman Brookman, Morris H. Whitehouse, Richard Sundeleaf and Sutton, Whitney and Aandahl explored simplified traditional architectural forms with minimal ornamentation. The Kern House, while constructed later, reflects this transitional period. It is likely that Grace Kern asked Brookman to design her house in the Georgian style because her family home, designed in 1915 by Ellis Lawrence, which was demolished to construct the Lloyd Center Mall, was of that style. Brookman, who was by this time designing houses with a much more modernistic or northwest regional vocabulary, designed this house as a Georgian Colonial Revival, but with a distinctively modern twist.

The late Colonial Revival period, from about 1915 to 1940, was different from the early Colonial Revival period in that the style was more authentic and stylistically faithful to the original Colonial style. Earlier Colonial Revival houses were rarely historically correct and often had exaggerated proportions. As the style developed and became disseminated, a more carefully researched and accurately proportioned and detailed standard emerged, beginning around 1915. The Kern House reflects the restrained and delicate details and proportion of this late Colonial Revival period, although with the unconventional design attributes that mark it as a transitional house by a master architect.

¹¹ *Judge Denies Tax Refund. The Oregonian.* August 3, 1960.

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Hawkins and Willingham attribute specific definable stylistic characteristics to the transitional period including many that can be attributed to the Kern House. These include a slate roof without eave extensions, exterior finish of brick with simplified dentil work, prominent brick chimneys, and double-hung sash and small-scale casements with leaded mullions.¹² The Kern House appears to be a traditional and formal Georgian Colonial Revival style house, displaying the symmetry and proportion typical of the style. Other characteristics of the Colonial Revival style include an emphasis on the centered front door, often under a portico, supported by slender columns, a hipped roof and double-hung sash windows. In a nod toward modernism, however, instead of applied decoration, the Kern House depends on its fine form, including the sweeping concave curve of the façade wall, for its attractiveness. This distillation of ornament and emphasis on form mark the Kern House as transitional.

In contrast to the symmetry of the façade, the rear of the house is informal and rambling. It has several intersecting parts, curving walls, and expanses of windows. The overall impression from this side is more contemporary, and reflective of the functions of the interior. Clearly, the Kern House was meant to be seen from the front, where visitors would be impressed with the restraint of the façade.

The interior of the Kern House gives the impression that every detail was considered and thoughtfully designed. In fact, Kern's request that elements of her former home be incorporated into the interior probably influenced the design a great deal. The interior is traditional in its detailing, with paneled wainscot, fine Georgian fireplace surrounds, and pilasters. However, the layout is not so traditional, instead taking its cues from the desire to highlight the view. The public spaces, such as the entry hall, living room, and dining room, take advantage of the spectacular view to the north. Service areas and private rooms, such as the kitchen and library, are situated at the front of the house. Brookman managed to seamlessly incorporate many interior wood elements from the old Kern House into his design for Grace Kern, while still imparting his own sensibilities to the design of the interior finishes. For example, the curving cornice with a built-in curvilinear valence in the upstairs hall, a Brookman designed element, is supported by carved brackets from the old house. Like so many Brookman designs, the Kern House seamlessly mixes the formality of the traditional and the freshness of the contemporary to create what can best be described as a work of art.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Herman Brookman was a prolific designer of houses in Portland, primarily for affluent clients. His designs are scattered throughout Portland, but the largest concentration of his houses are in the Southwest Hills area of the city. There are currently five Brookman designed structures on the National Register of Historic Places: Fir Acres (Lewis and Clark College), the Commodore Hotel, Temple Beth Israel, the Baruh-Zell House (3131 SW Talbot Rd), and the Alan and Barbara Goldsmith House (4140 SW Greenleaf Ct). Additionally, nineteen of his structures are on the Portland Cultural Resource Inventory.

¹² Hawkins, William J. III and William F. Willingham, Classic Houses of Portland: 1850-1950. (Timber Press, Portland, OR; 1999)

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Brookman was known for his artistry and attention to detail, and he designed buildings in a number of styles popular when he practiced. From 1924, when he designed his first house in Portland, Fir Acres, the huge estate of M. Lloyd Frank, until about 1940, Brookman designed primarily in traditional revival styles such as Colonial, Tudor and Mediterranean, with his characteristic attention to detail and propensity for stripping his designs down. After 1940, he began designing in more contemporary styles, such as Early Modern and Northwest Regional variations. Whatever style he worked in, no two Brookman designs were the same, each designed to suit the particular client and site he was working with.

Although technically Colonial Revival in style, the Kern House has many modern touches. Traditional, academic Colonial Revival style houses are strictly symmetrical, and typically a two-story box. A hipped roof and double-hung sash are common, as are dentil molding cornices and solid paneled doors. Brookman paired these traditional features with modern, fresh elements such as the curving façade, the wings extending from the rear of the house, and the expanses of glass on the north façade.

Brookman had a number of signature elements, which are exhibited on many of his designs including the Kern House. These include designing houses perfectly situated on difficult sites, recessed entrances, curving design elements, casement and leaded glass windows, and masterful wrought iron work.

Many Brookman designed houses are set on difficult or awkward sites, which tend to provide spectacular views. But as with the Kern House, Brookman managed to not only fit the house to the setting but site it in such a way as to take maximum advantage of both the view and the lot. The Lee S. Elliot House, just around the corner at 1475 Vista Avenue, while a masterpiece of design, is set on a difficult site, which required that the façade face inward toward a private lane. Like the Kern House, the lot slopes steeply down to the rear, a situation that is remedied in both cases with a massive retaining wall. The Barbara Price House at 2143 SW Buena Vista Drive is another example of a Brookman house on an awkward sloping lot. Brookman sited this house close to the street and provided a sunken entrance court, a split-level entrance and a sunken living room a half-story down. While the main entrance of the Kern house is not recessed, the garage is recessed within the curving retaining wall. Brookman's unique use of curving elements lent a modern air to his more traditionally styled houses. The Kern House is unique in that the entire façade is a single concave curve. Additional curves are found in the curving retaining walls along Montgomery Drive, the walls of the front garden, and the wings on the north side of the house. Inside, the north wall of the stair hall curves outward, and the upper stair hall is oval in shape. Even the master bath has a rounded shape, with barrel vault ceilings and a circular shower. The Baruh-Zell House has curving walls at the recessed main entrance, and also on the north side in the breakfast room. The Lee S. Elliot House, has an unusual entrance portico with a three-part barrel vault roof. The use of curving walls foretold of Brookman's evolution towards the Moderne style. Many of Brookman's Moderne style houses employed curving surfaces. The Keith Gilbert Powers House, located at 287 NW Cumberland Road, has several curving walls evoking the Moderne style.

Another signature Brookman element was his use of decorative wrought iron. He worked frequently with the noted metal artist Oscar B. Bach, of New York, whose work adorns the Empire State Building and the Chrysler Building, among many others. Nowhere is Brookman's use of decorative wrought iron more evident than in the

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Mediterranean style Harry A. Green House, at 3316 SE Ankeny, which has an elaborate wrought iron entrance gate complete with a peacock, and a gracefully curving interior staircase. Most of his other commissions had more restrained wrought iron elements, such as those on the Kern House, where it was used for the front gate. Brookman also designed railings for the front and rear balconies, but these were never installed. It is not known whether Oscar Bach produced the Kern gate, as it does not appear to be signed.

Brookman was partial to casement windows and used them on most of his designs regardless of style. In some cases, such as on the Baruh-Zell House, the Green House, and the Adrienne Arnsberg House, 1136 SW Davenport Street, three-light casements leant an air of modernity to traditional designs. The Kern house has primarily double-hung sash windows, but it also has leaded glass casement windows with colored glass jewels. This was another Brookman element, and can also be seen in the Baruh-Zell and Green Houses.

Designed in 1954, the Kern House is a late example of the Georgian Colonial Revival style by Brookman. By this time, most of Brookman's designs were less traditional in style and more contemporary, exhibiting a northwest regional moderne flavor, such as that of the Alan and Barbara Goldsmith House, located at 4140 SW Greenleaf Court and constructed in 1959. The Kern House is more reflective of Brookman's earlier work from the 1920s and 1930s, when many of his designs were in the stripped traditional style. This departure was probably at the behest of Kern, who built this house to replace the grand Georgian mansion built by her father in 1915, and torn down to develop the Lloyd Center Mall. Kern had Brookman utilize elements of the old house in her new home, including the staircase and many decorative wood elements such as carved panels, pilasters, fireplace surrounds, and brackets. Still, Brookman managed to make this house both traditional and fresh, adding his signature details and imaginative design sense, as well as fitting the house perfectly on its awkward lot. It is an excellent example of Brookman's mastery of design and detail, and a tribute to his artistry.

PORTLAND HEIGHTS

Houses were beginning to be built in Portland Heights in the early 1880s. However, early development in the area was limited by poor roads and haphazard, the houses being poorly situated and not suited to the difficult terrain. By 1909, most homes were designed to fit the natural topography, and streets followed the natural contours of the terrain. Because of the irregularity of the area, lot sizes varied widely, inspiring a variety of architectural styles and plans. The area is nearly entirely composed of single family residences, with just a few blocks of commercial activity including a grocery store, grade schools, churches, and some small shops. From its earliest development, the neighborhood had public transportation. By 1890, a cable car ran up the hill to about where the Ainsworth School is today. In 1907, the streetcar line was extended to Council Crest, where an amusement park was located, making it a destination for many Portlanders. The Vista Avenue Viaduct was constructed in 1926, the cost split between the City and the affluent Portland Heights Association. It provided a direct route for cars as well as the streetcar. This spawned growth in the area, with a large percentage of the houses being constructed in the 1920s and 30s.¹³

¹³ MacColl, E. Kimbark. The Growth of a City. The Georgian Press, Portland, 1979.

Kern, Grace, House
Name of Property

Multnomah Co., OR
County and State

NPS Form 10-900-a

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

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The Kern house is located in the tiny West Point addition, a teardrop shaped plat surrounded by Montgomery Drive and Vista Avenue. The plat was built upon from the south to the north, with the earliest houses built in the 1930s and West Point Court being developed last, in the 1950s. It is surrounded by Carter's Addition, where most of the houses were constructed in the 1920s and 1930s.

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Kern, Grace, House
Name of Property

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OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

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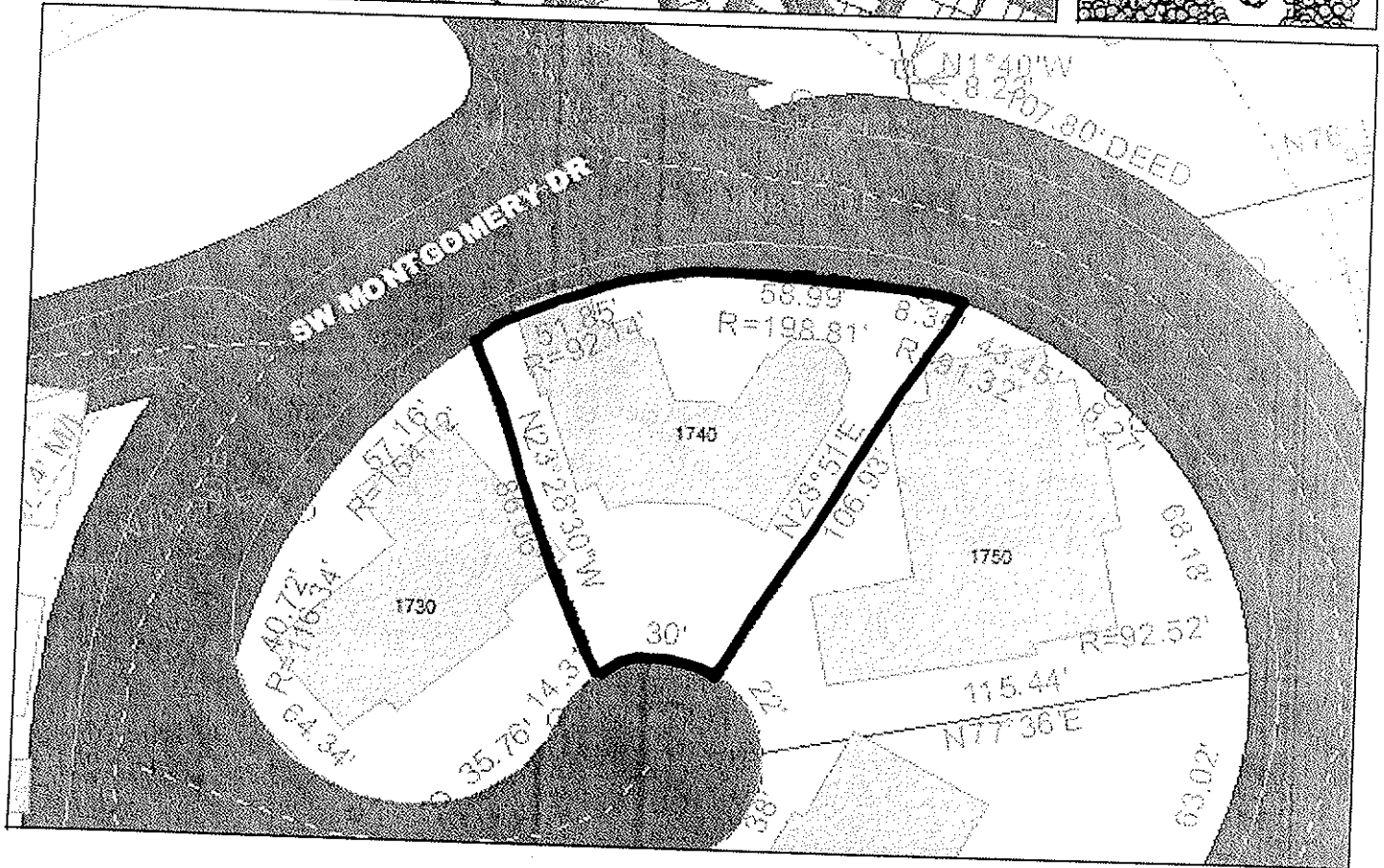
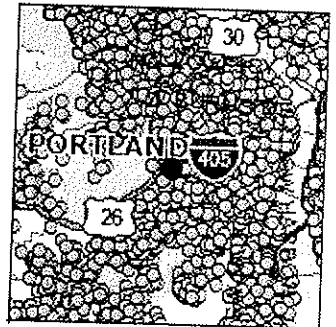
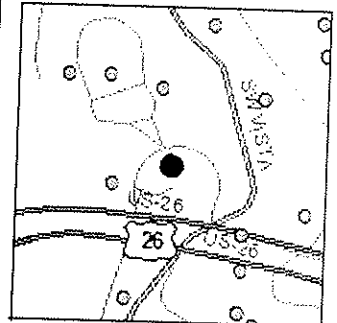
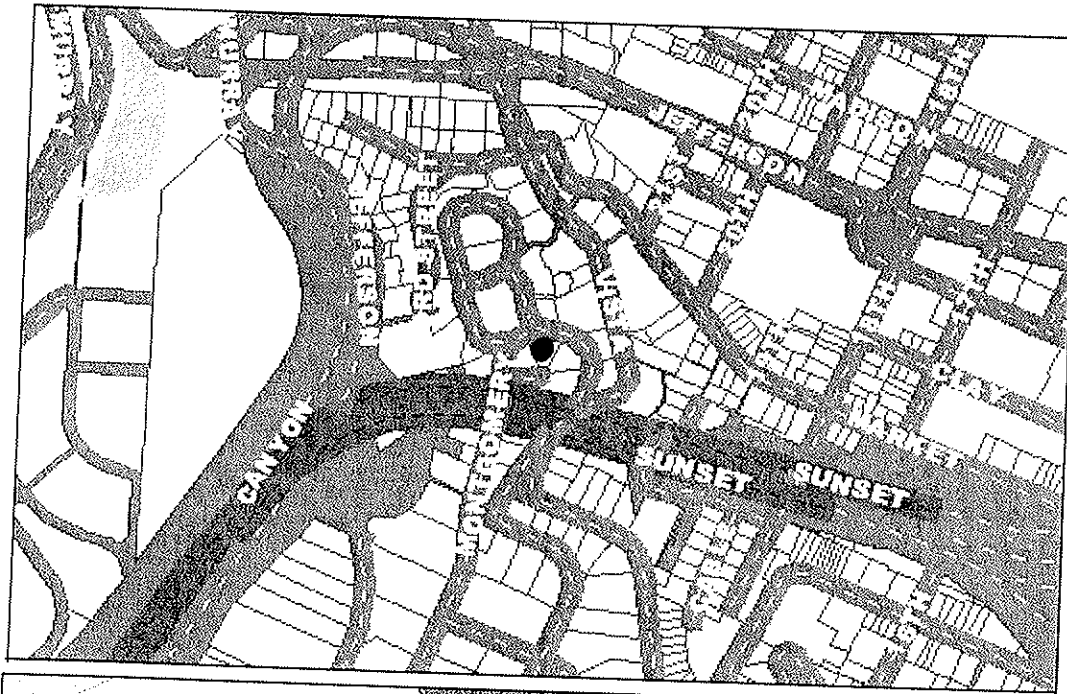
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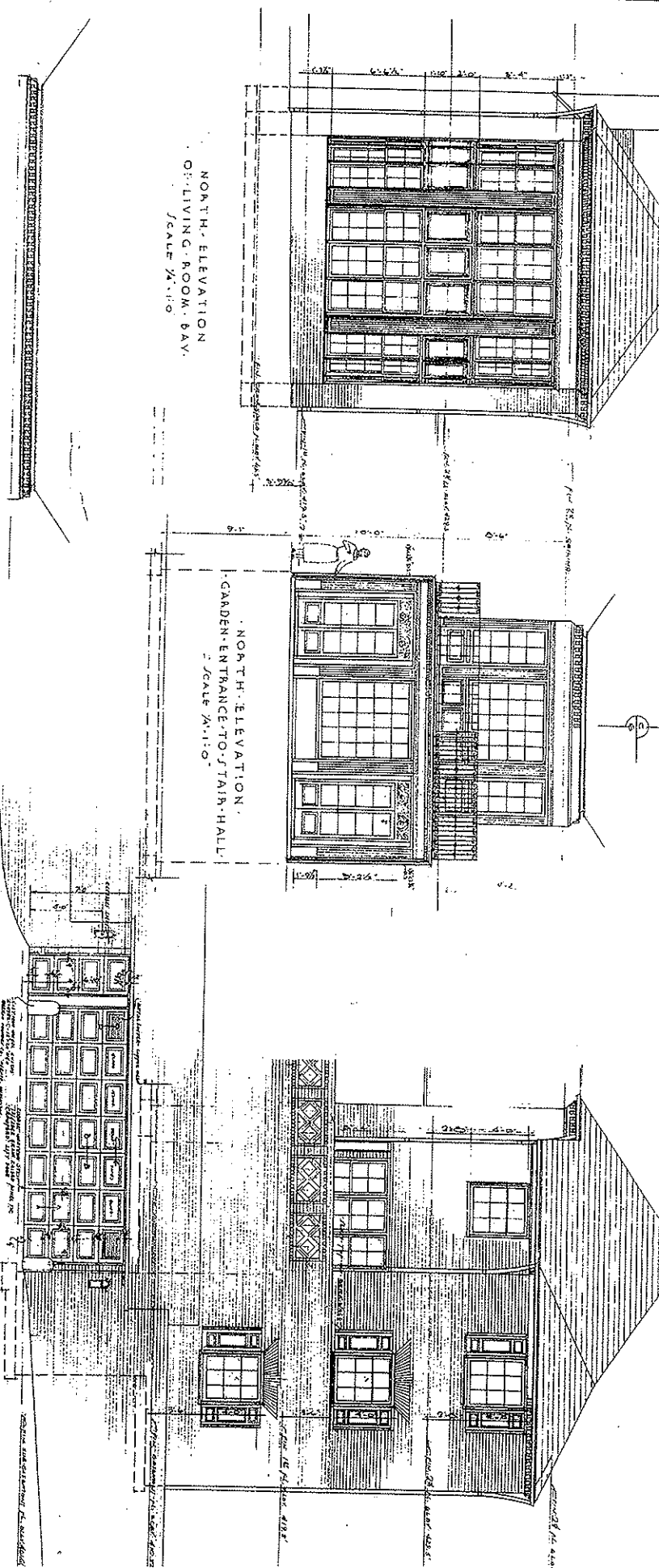
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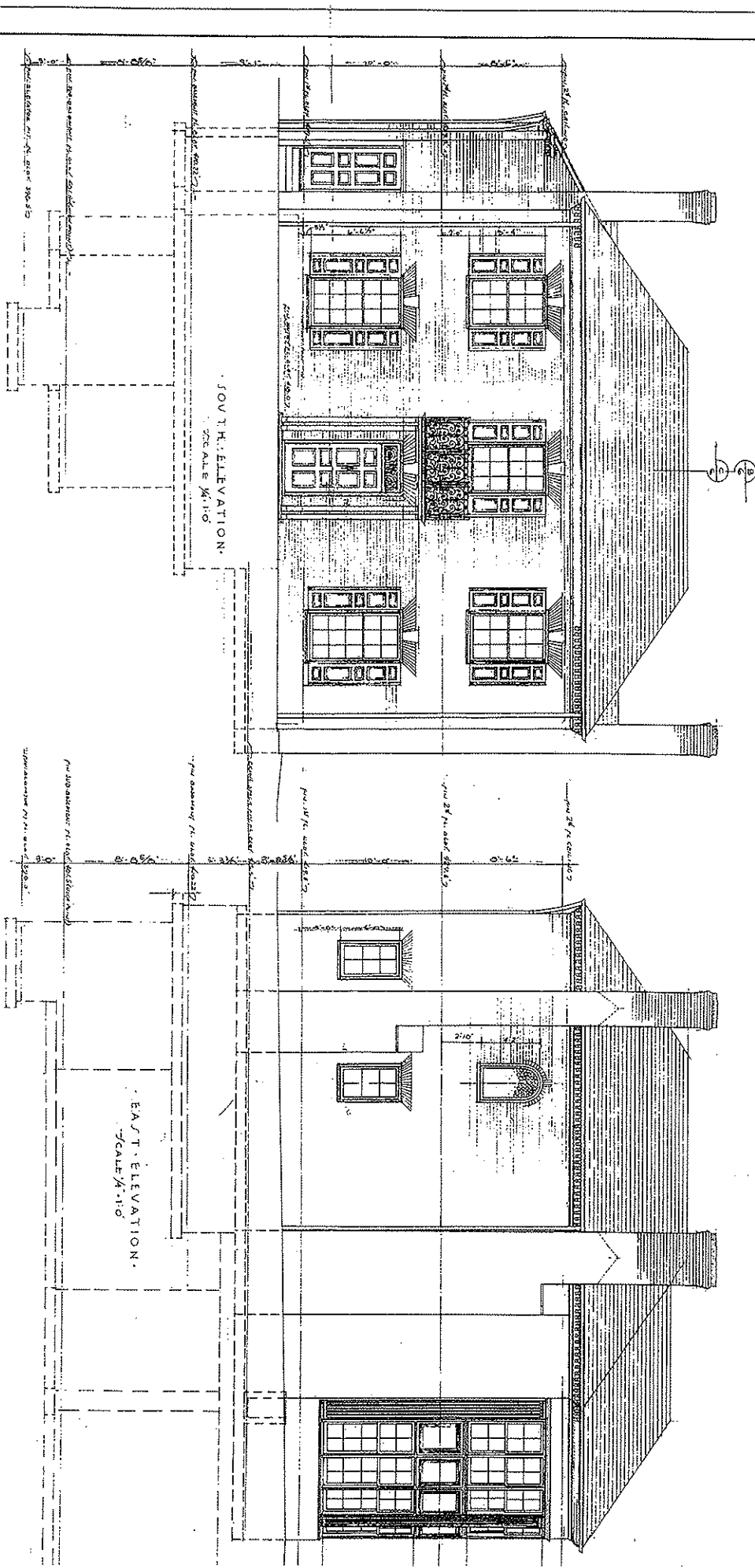
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Property & Location

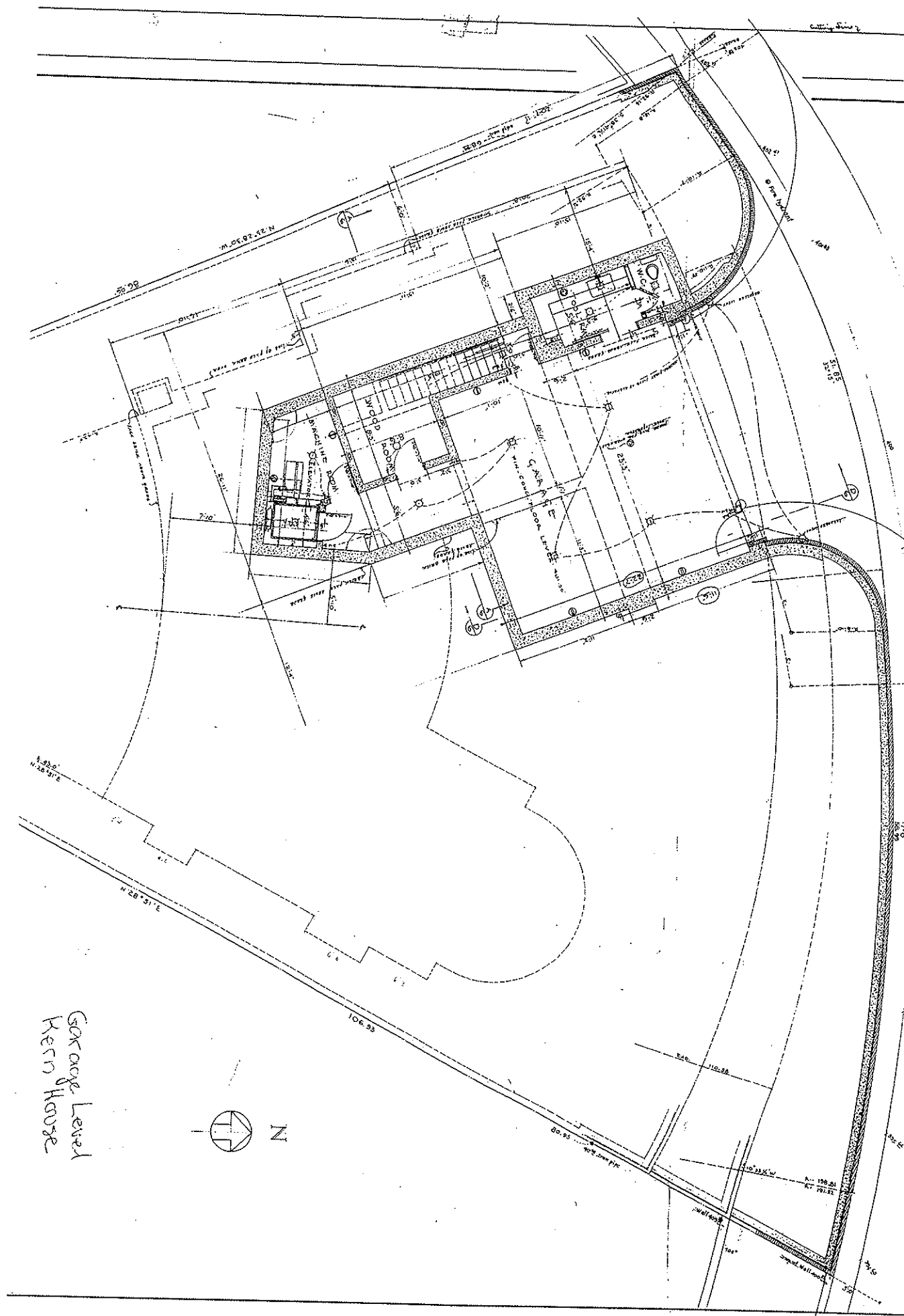




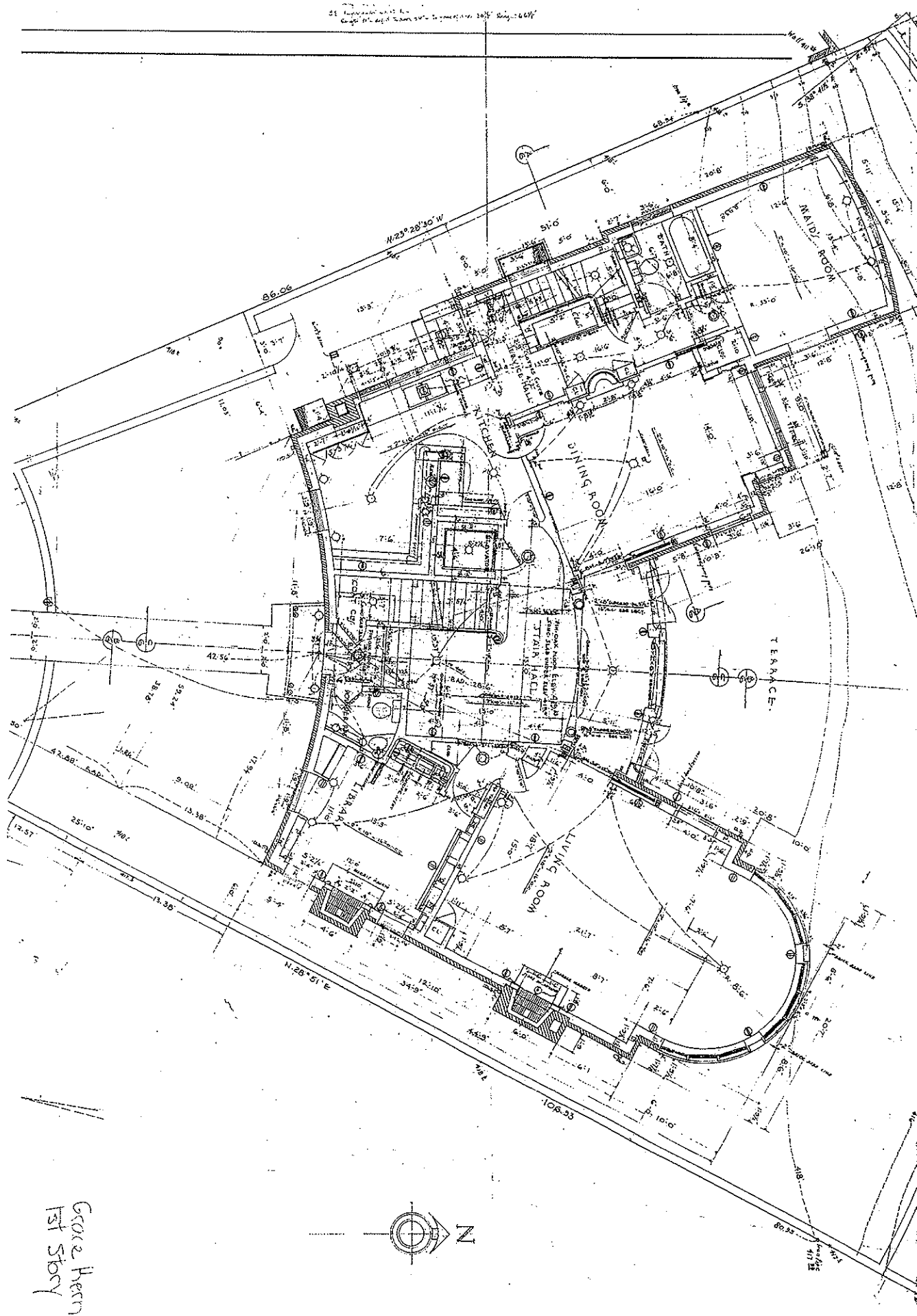
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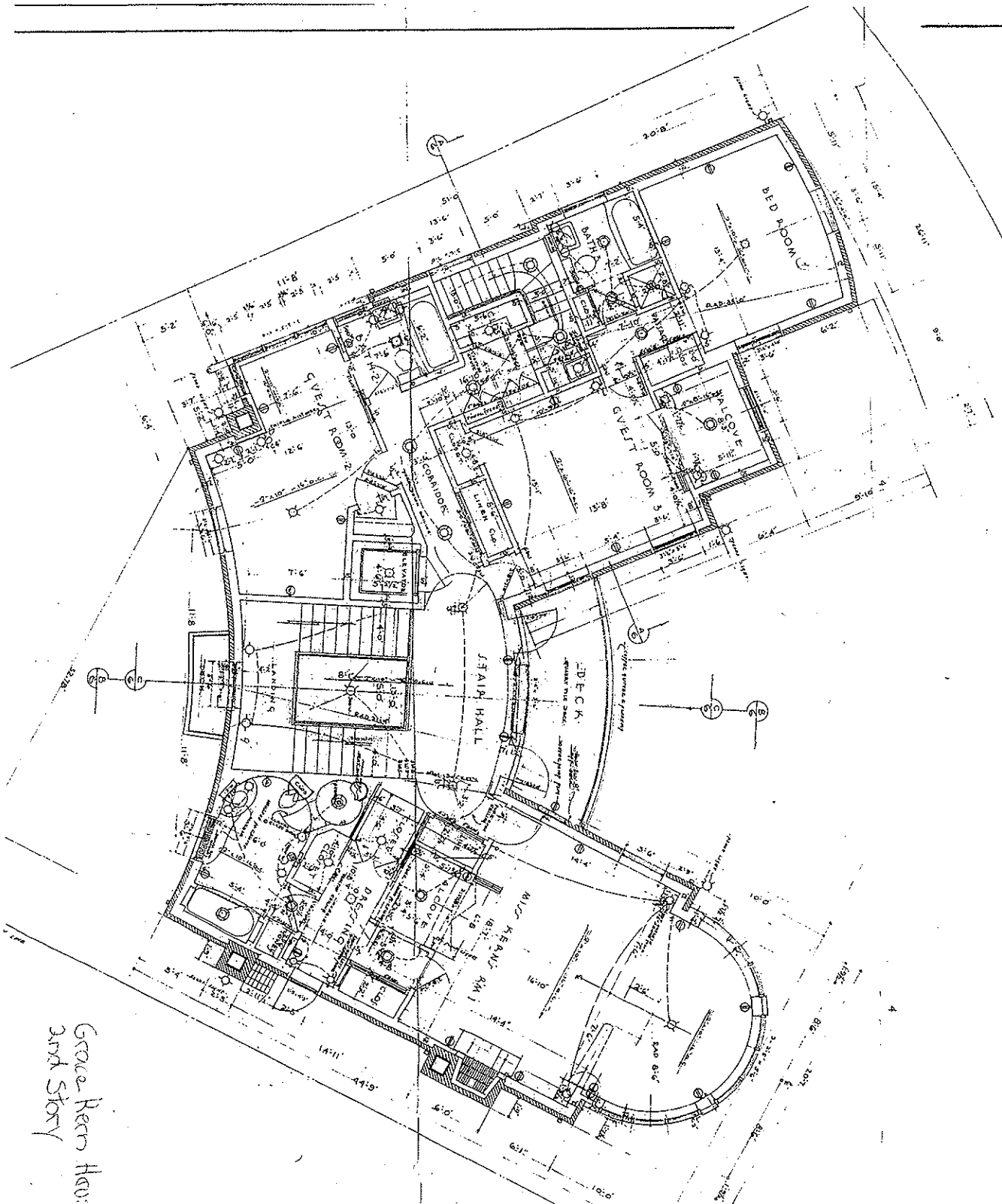
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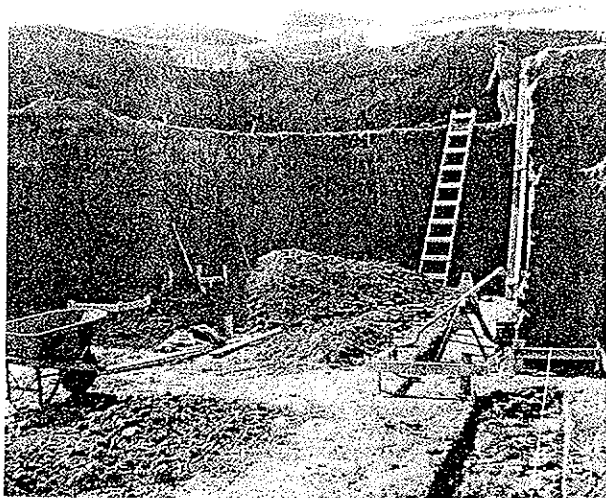
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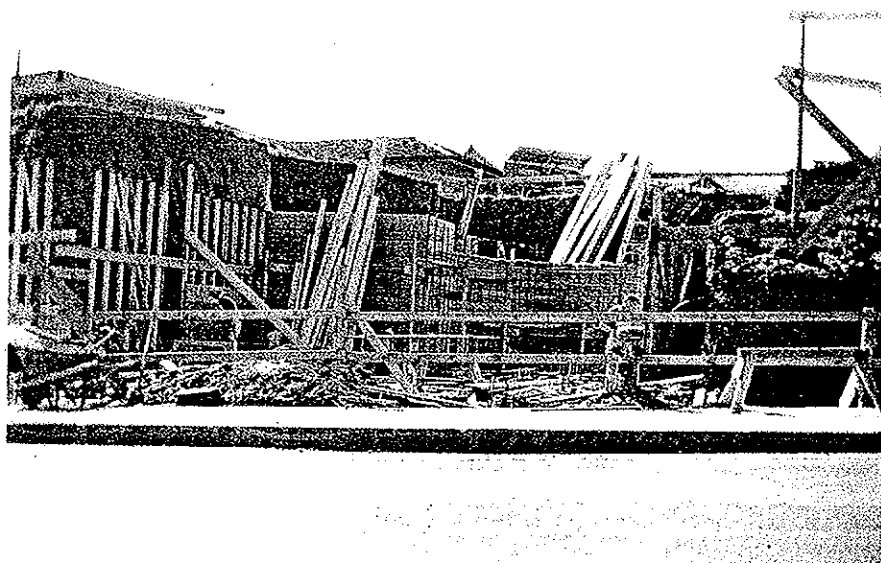
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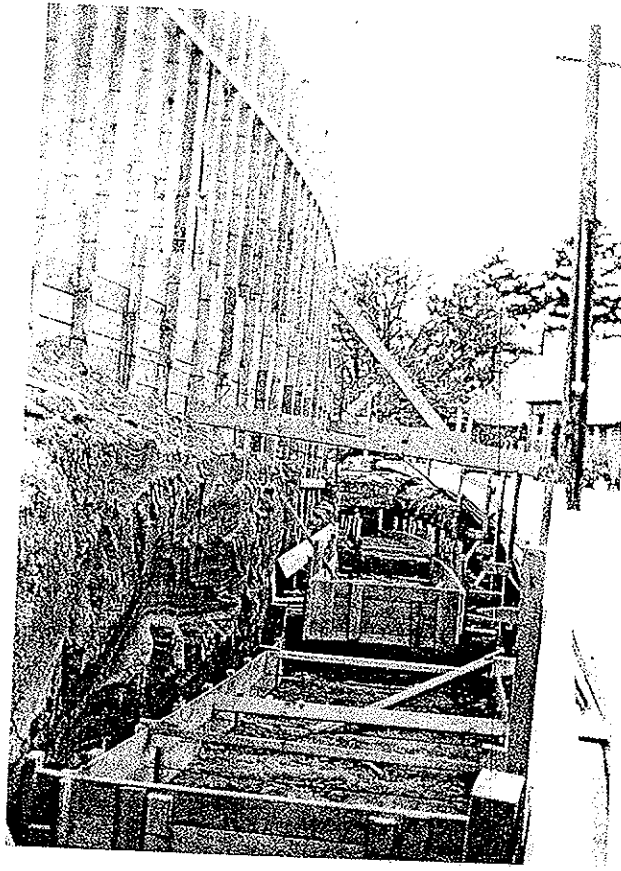
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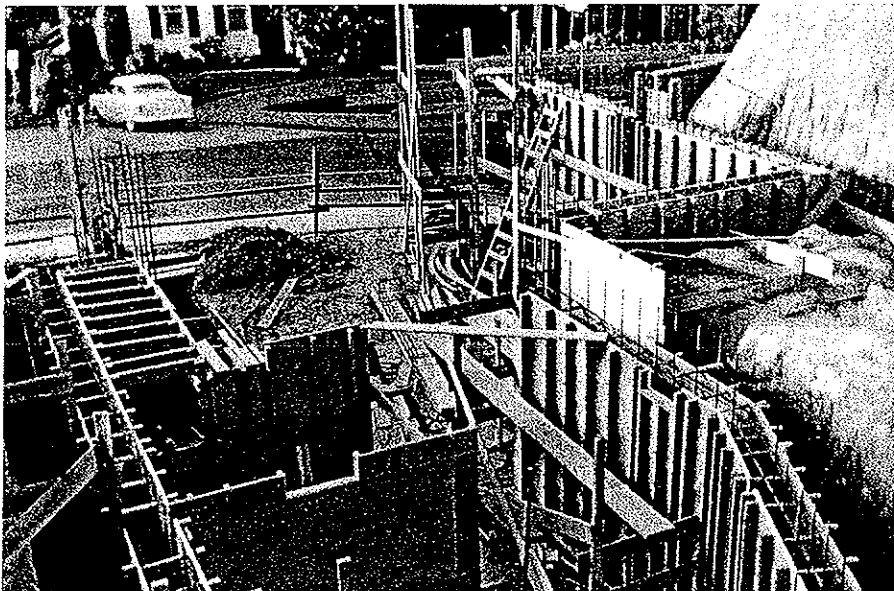
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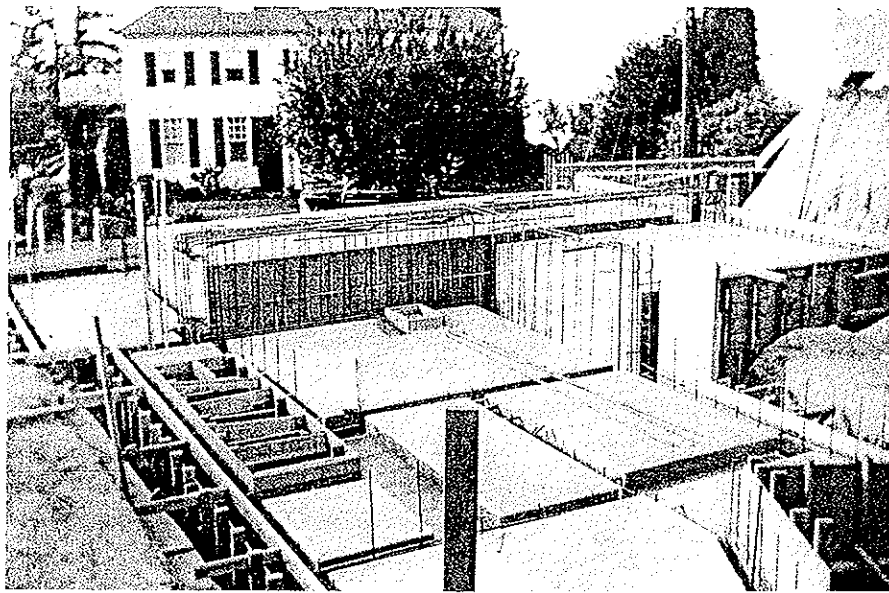
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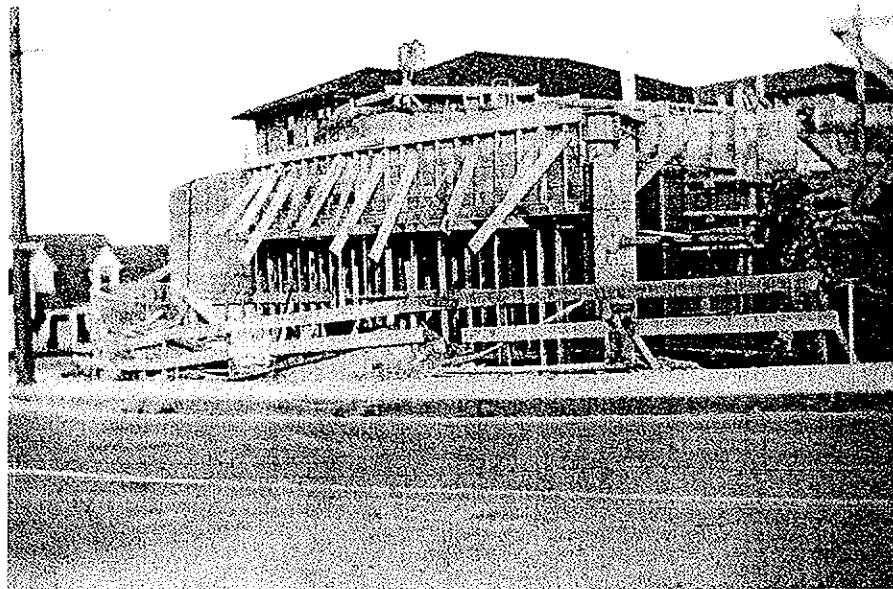
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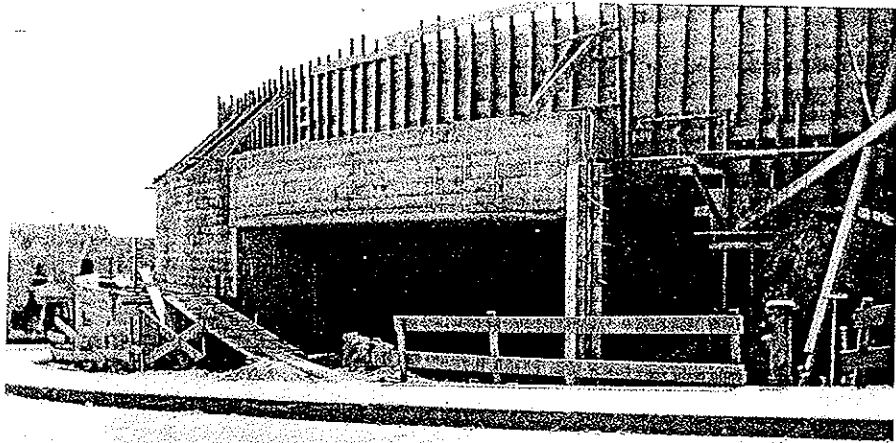
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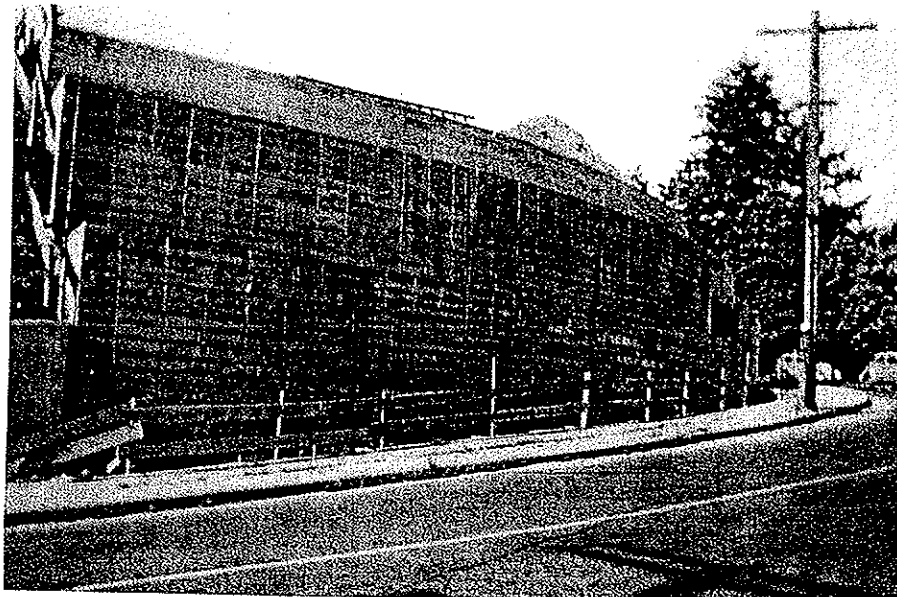
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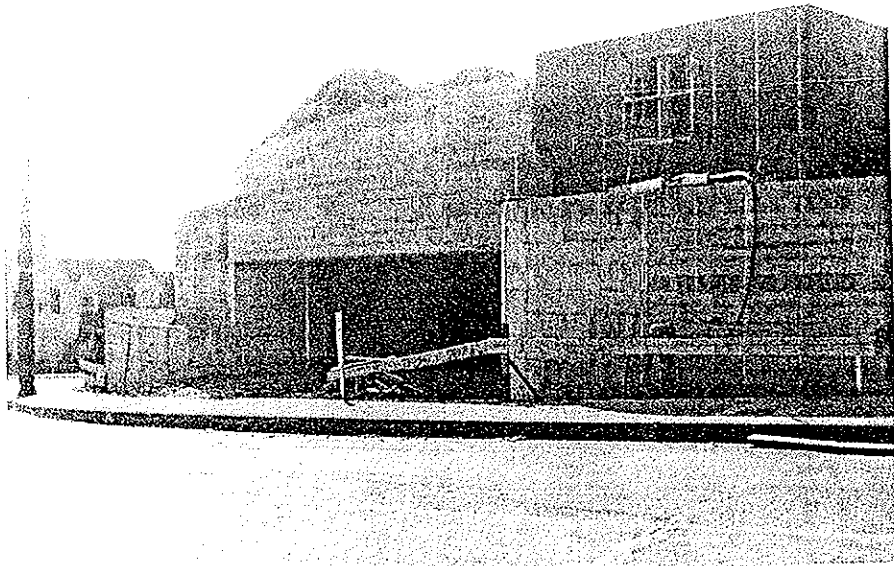
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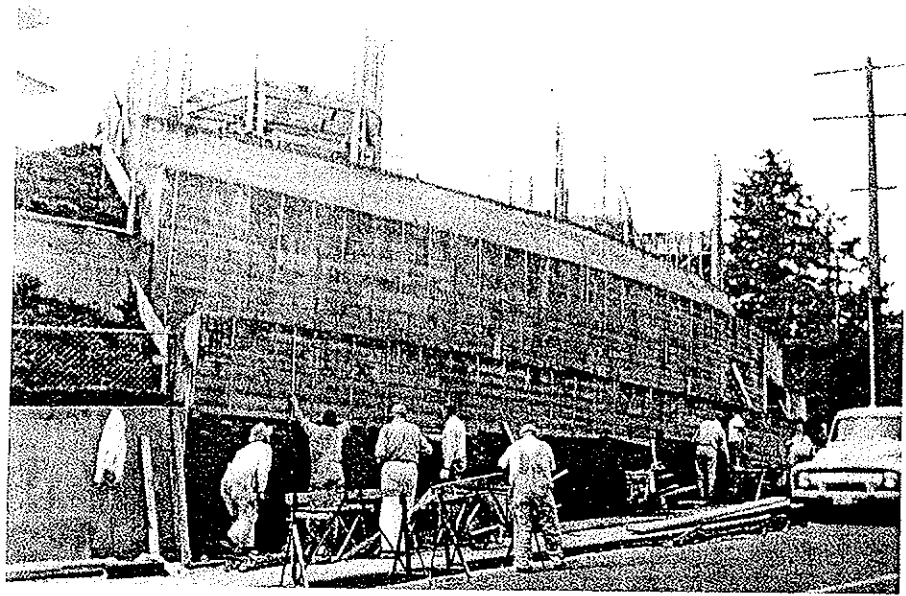
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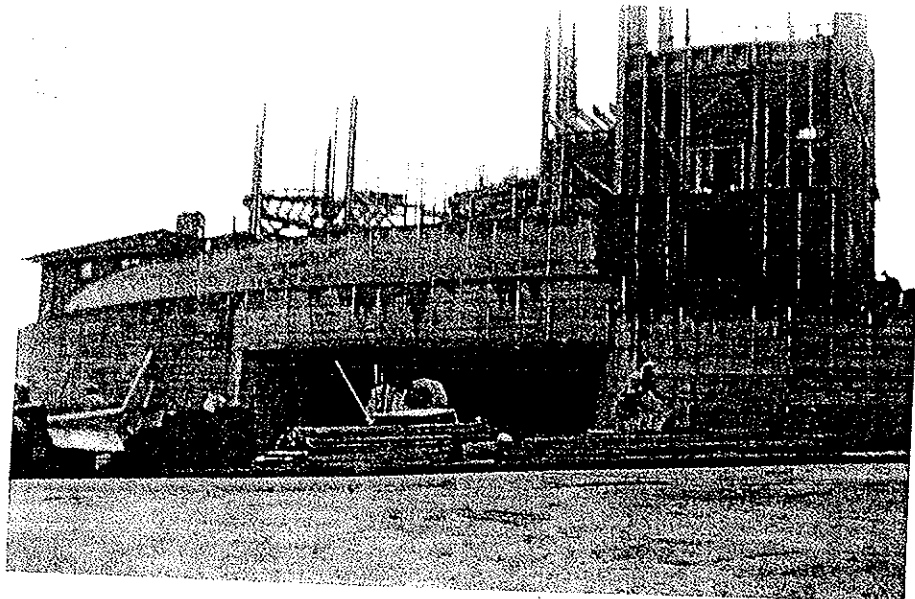
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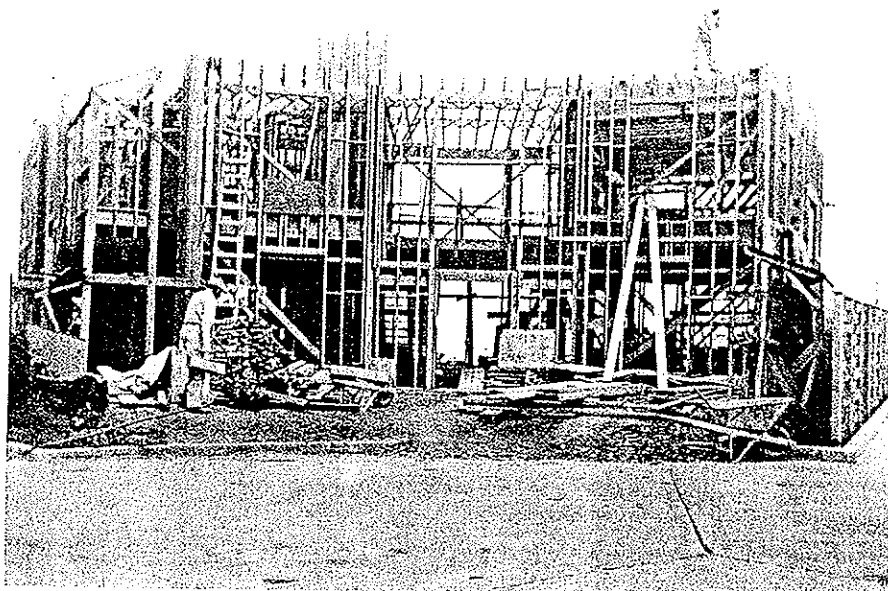
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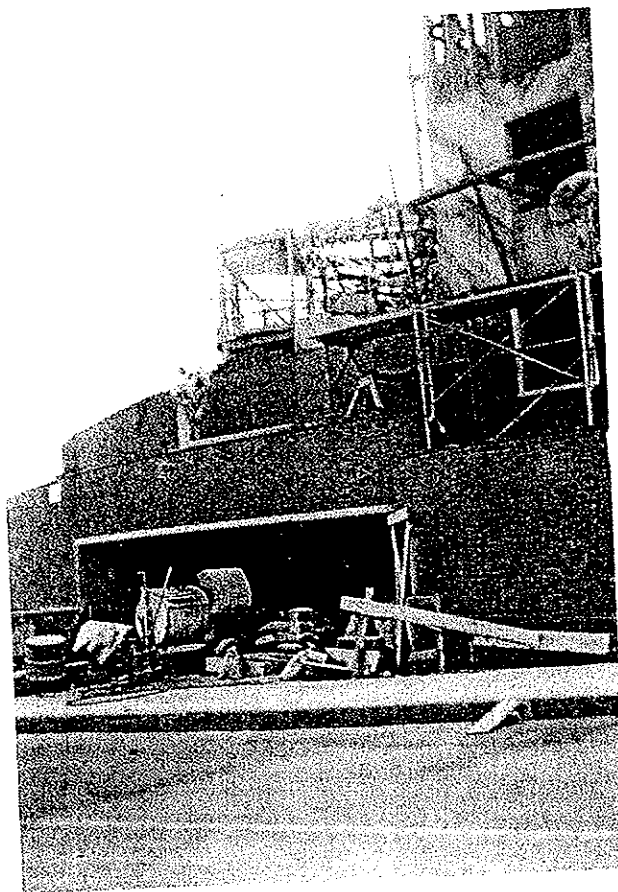
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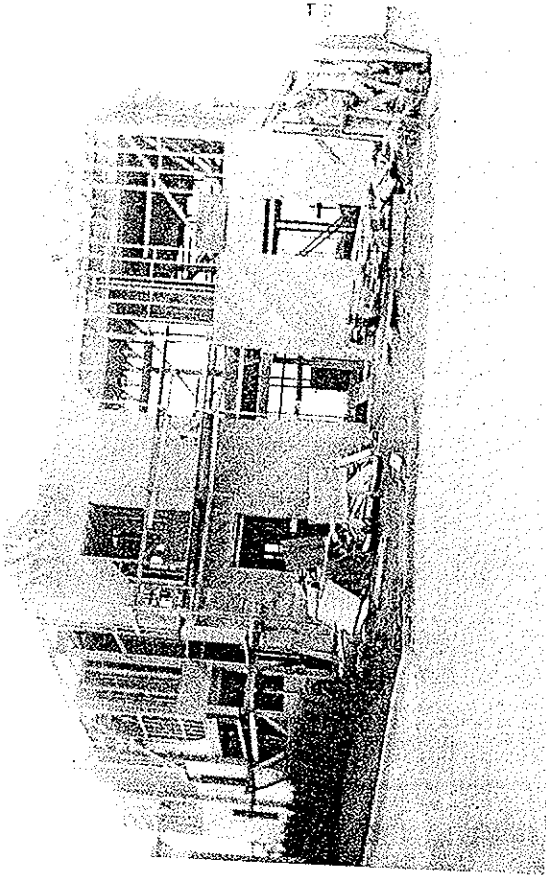
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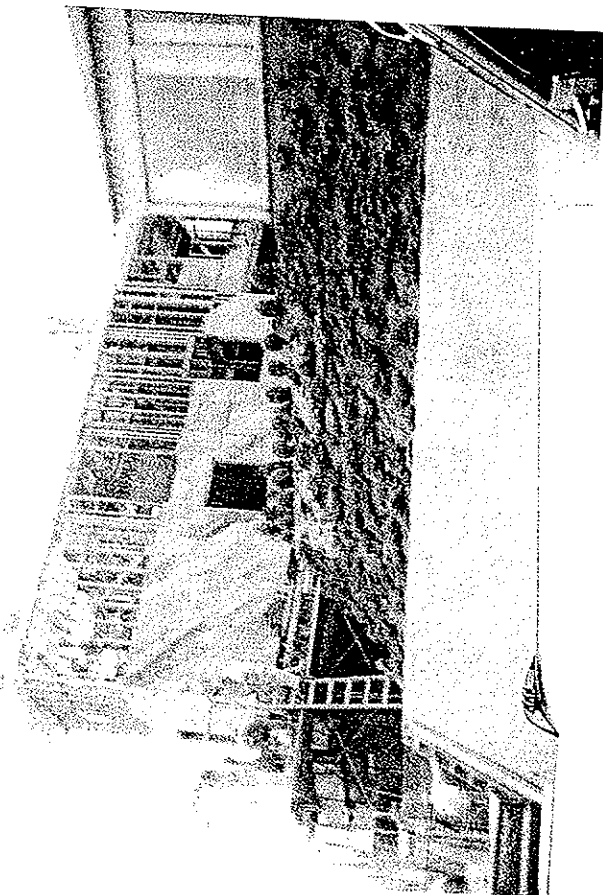
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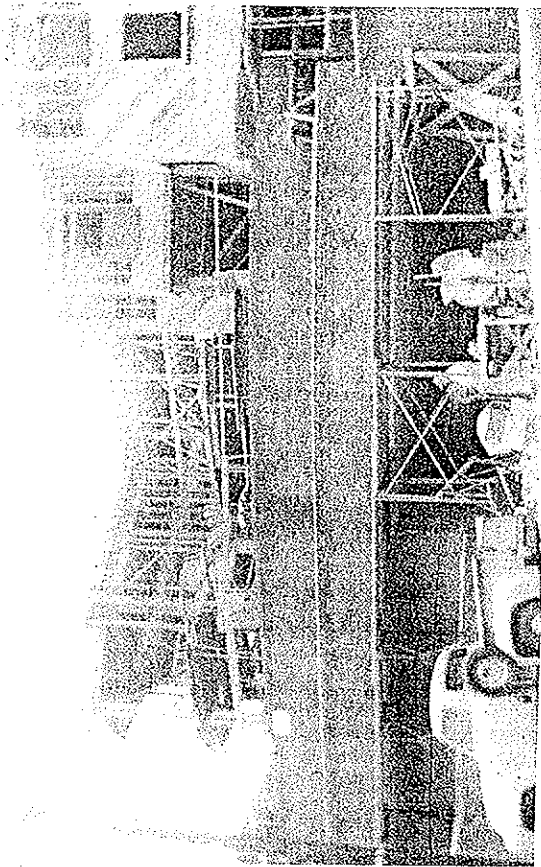
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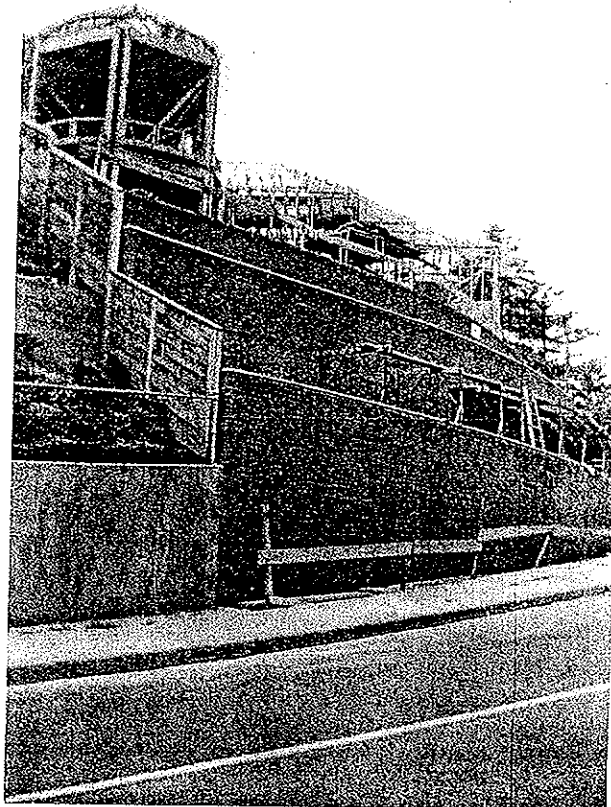
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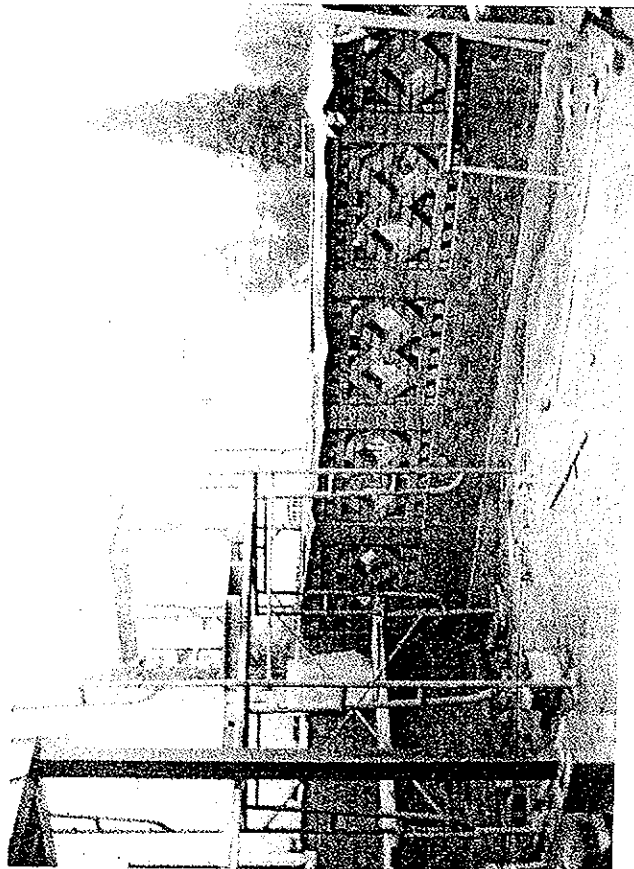
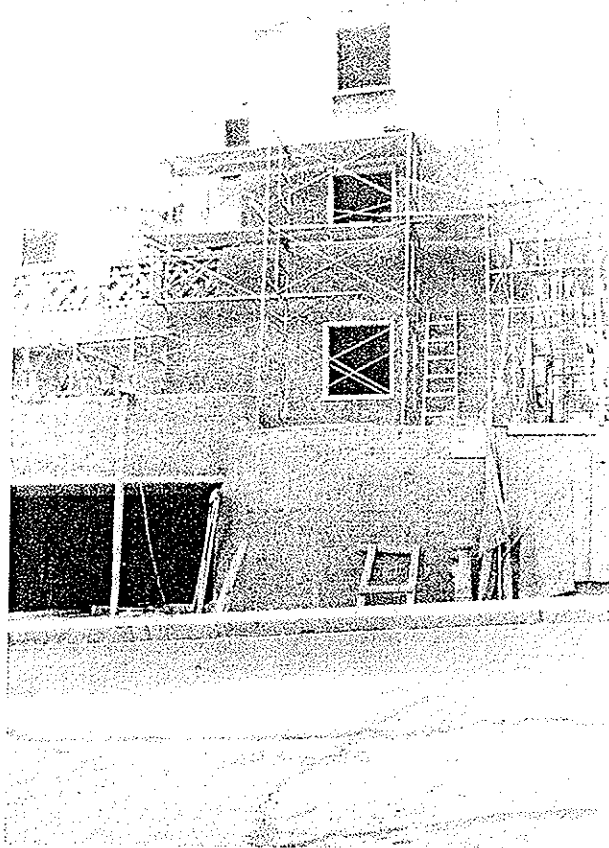


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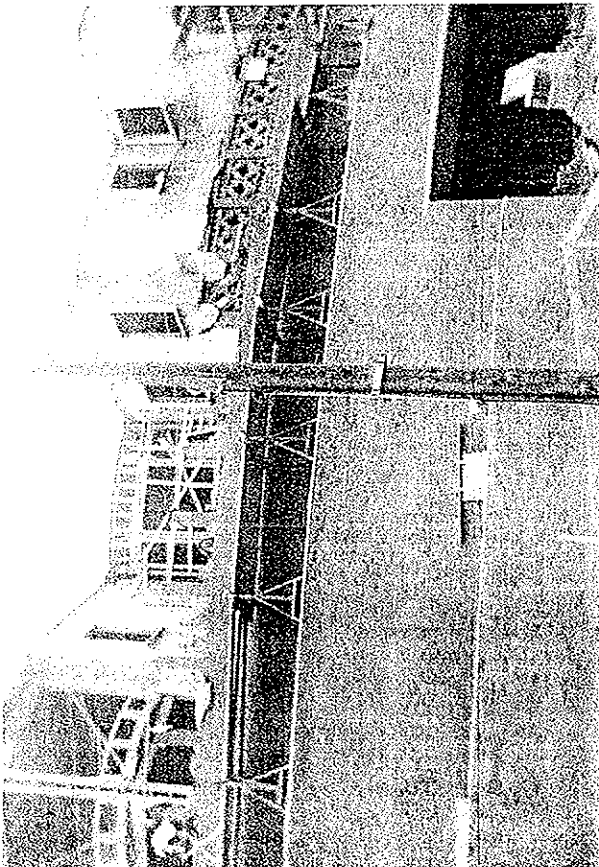
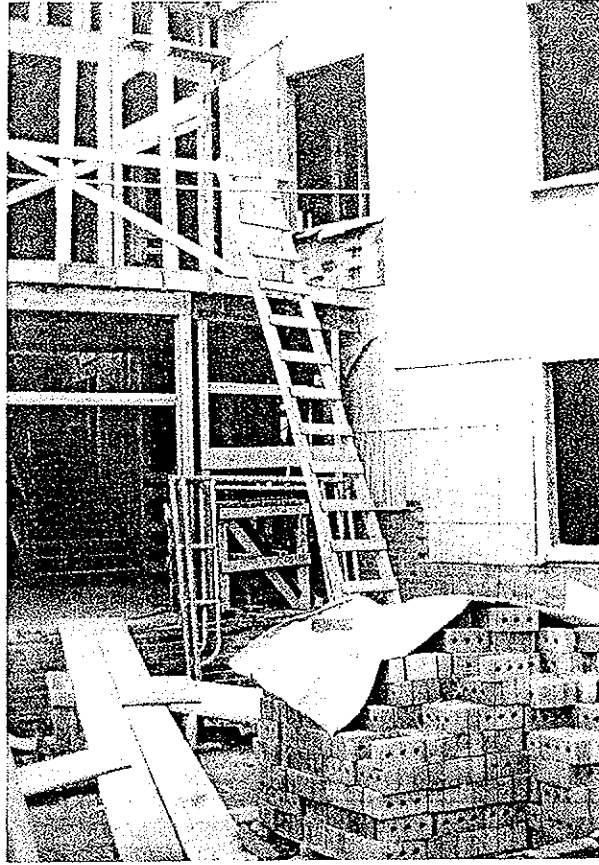


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Oct 9 1954



Oct 9 1951

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National Park Service

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PHOTOGRAPHS

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1710 SW West Point Court
Portland, OR 97201
Photographer: Margaret Marcusen
Date: June 2007
Ink and paper: Cannon Chromoalife 100 Ink and Cannon Photo Paper Plus Glossy
Location of negatives: Digital, images held by photographer

- 1 of 50 Exterior view, looking N at S facade
- 2 of 50 Exterior view, looking NW at SE facade
- 3 of 50 Exterior view, looking NE at SW facade
- 4 of 50 Exterior view, looking NW at garden gate
- 5 of 50 Exterior view, looking NE at S facade, inside garden wall
- 6 of 50 Exterior view, looking S at N facade detail
- 7 of 50 Exterior view, looking W at north facade and patio
- 8 of 50 Exterior view, looking E at N facade, garden and patio
- 9 of 50 Exterior view, looking SE at W facade
- 10 of 50 Exterior view, first floor S at N facade retaining wall and garage door
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Kern, Grace, House
Name of Property

Multnomah Co., OR
County and State

NPS Form 10-900-a

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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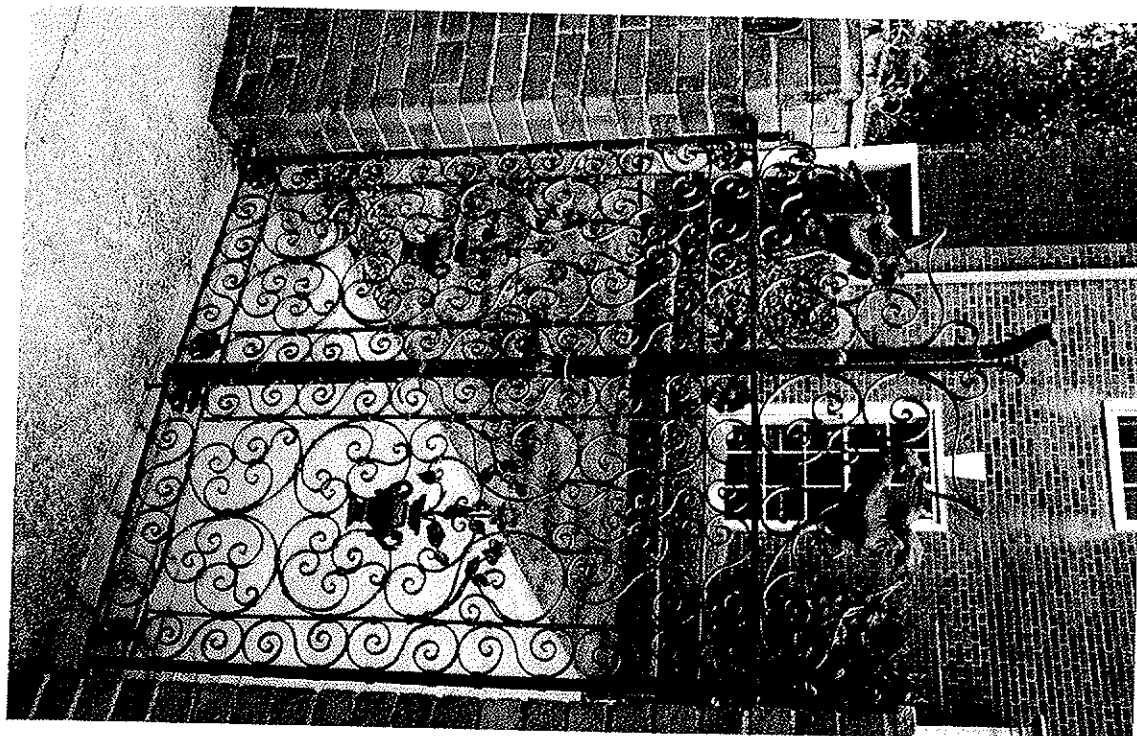
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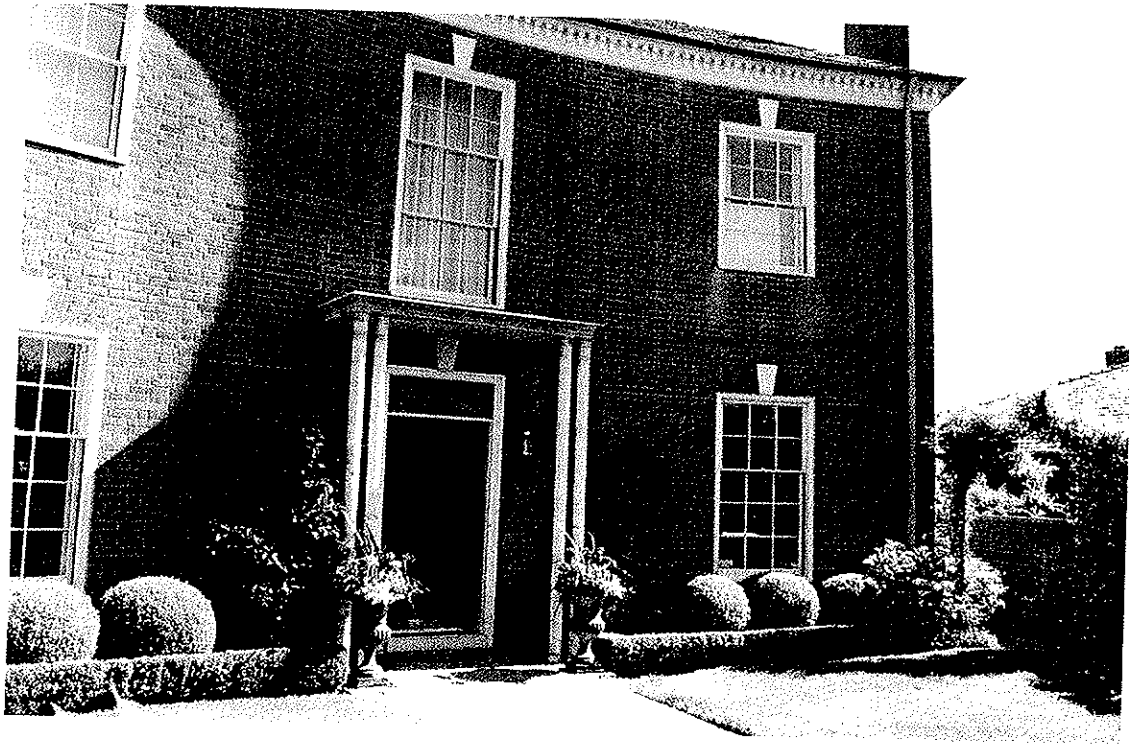
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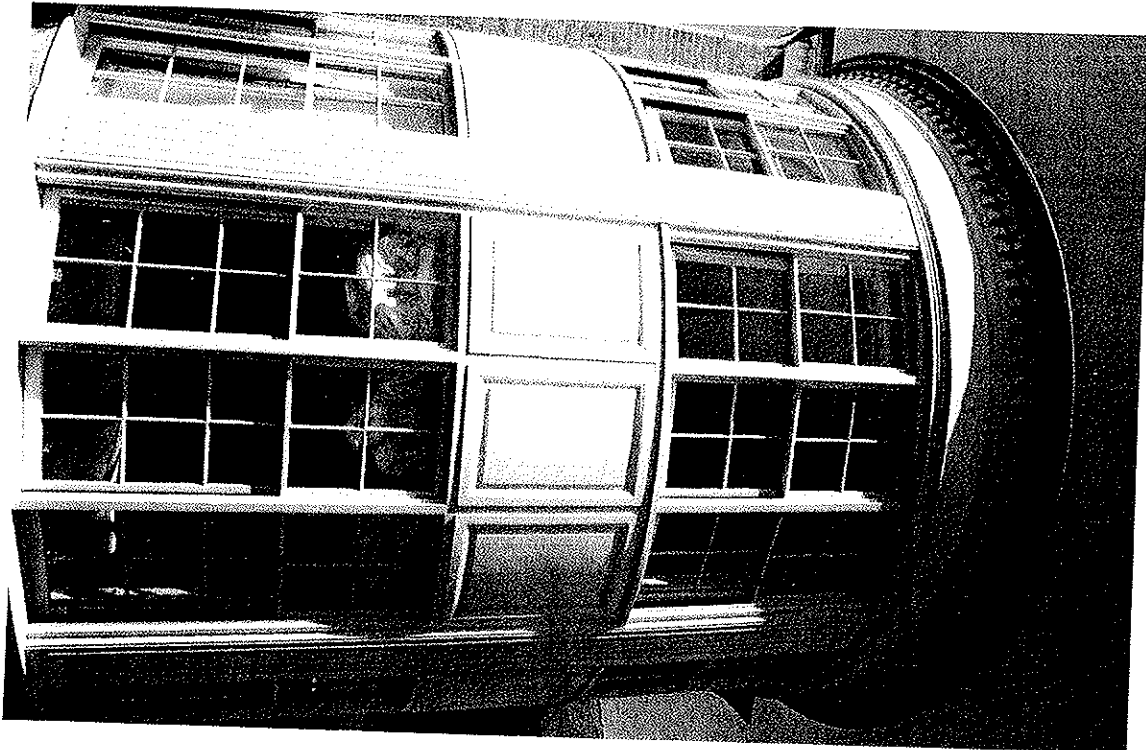
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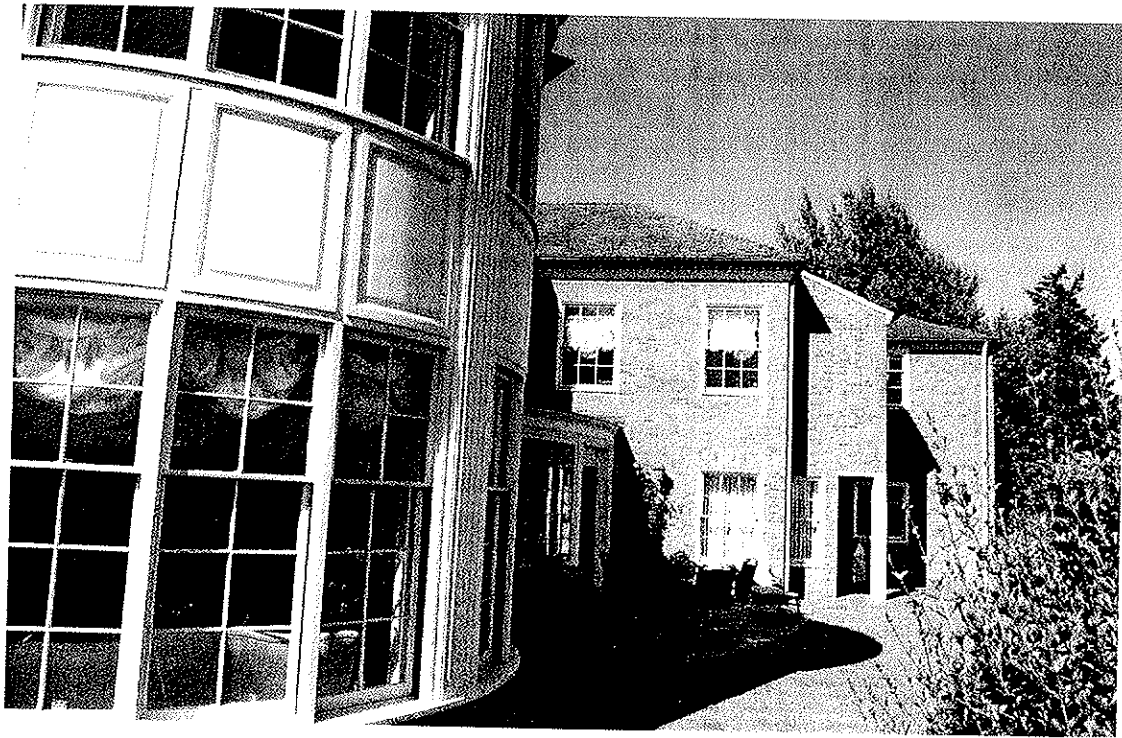
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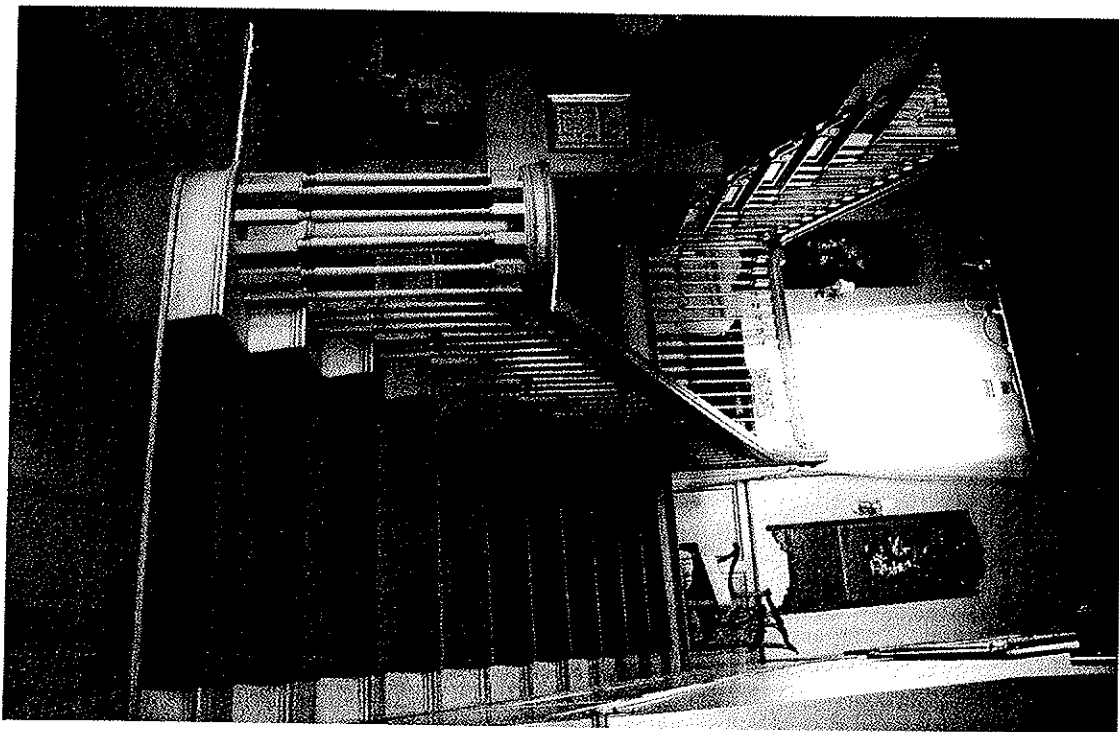
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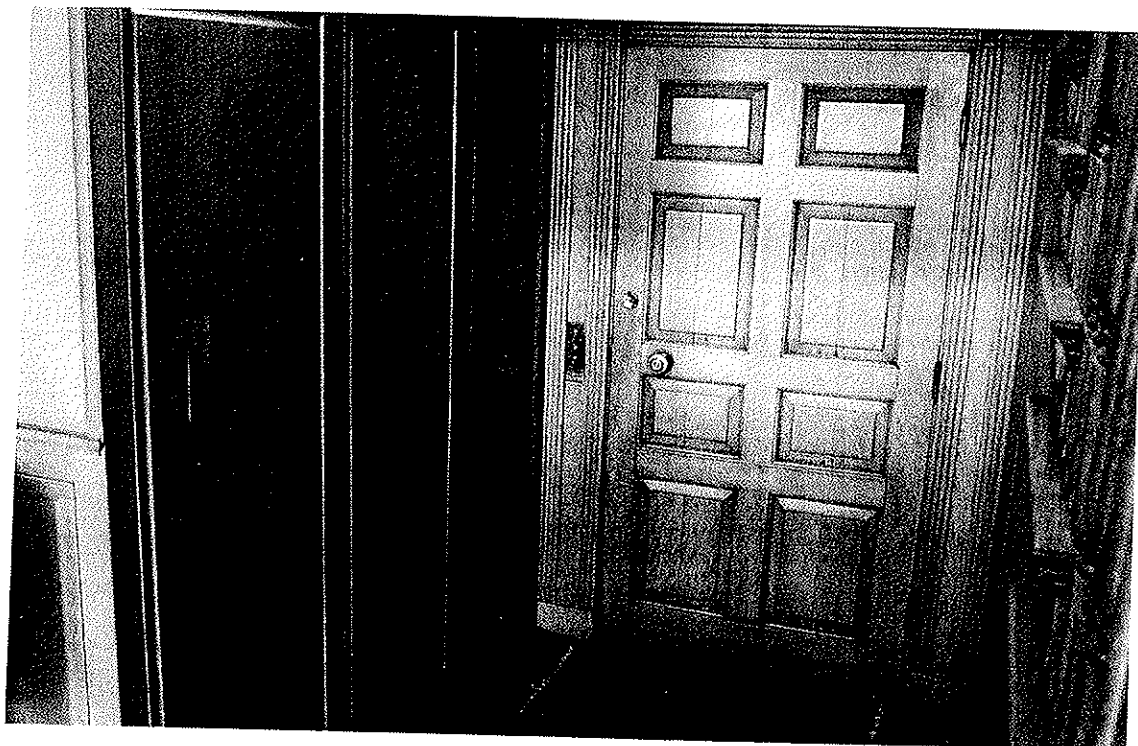
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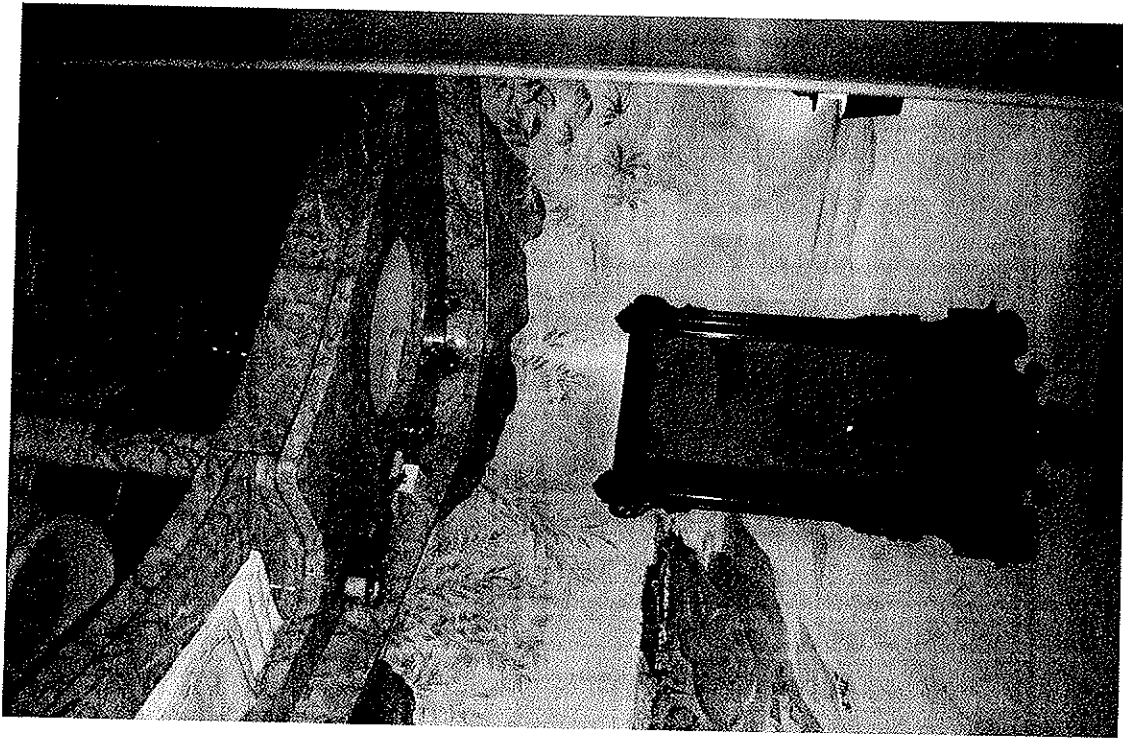
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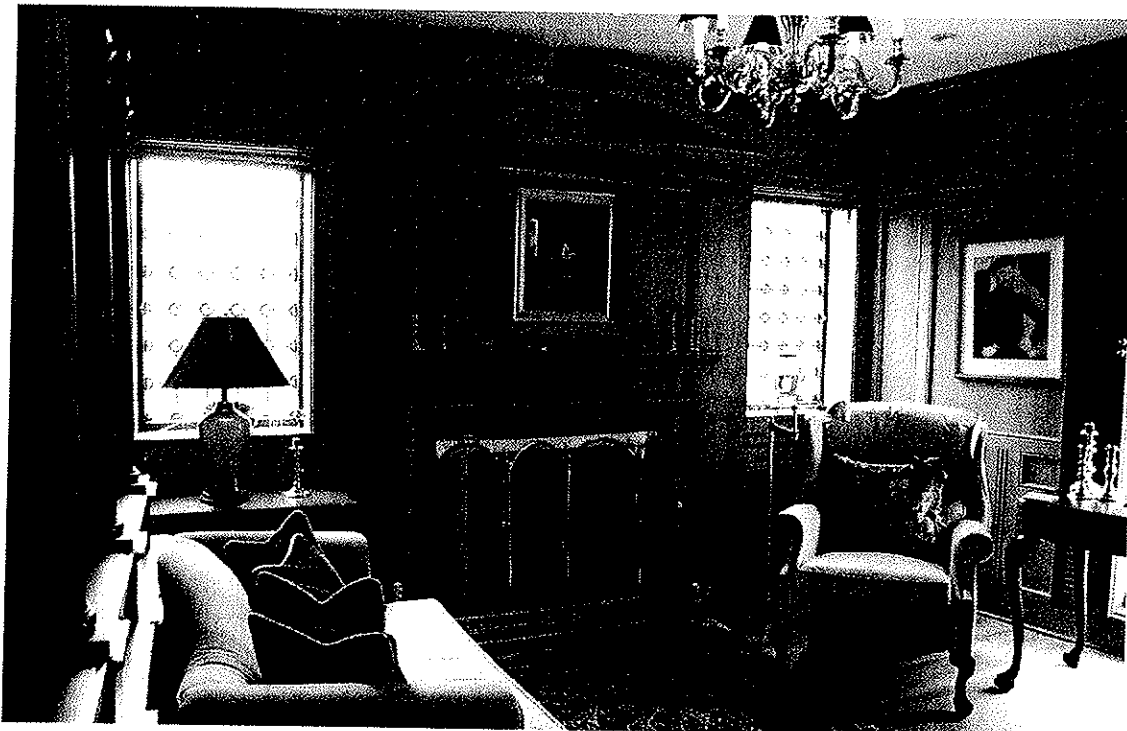
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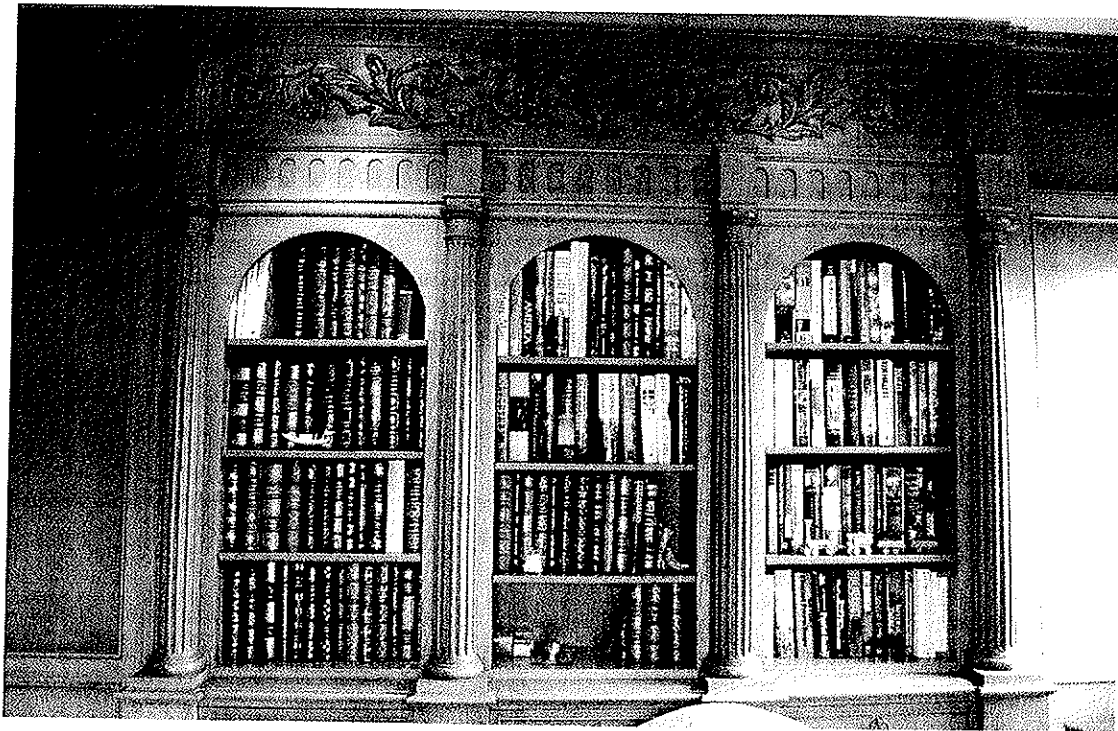
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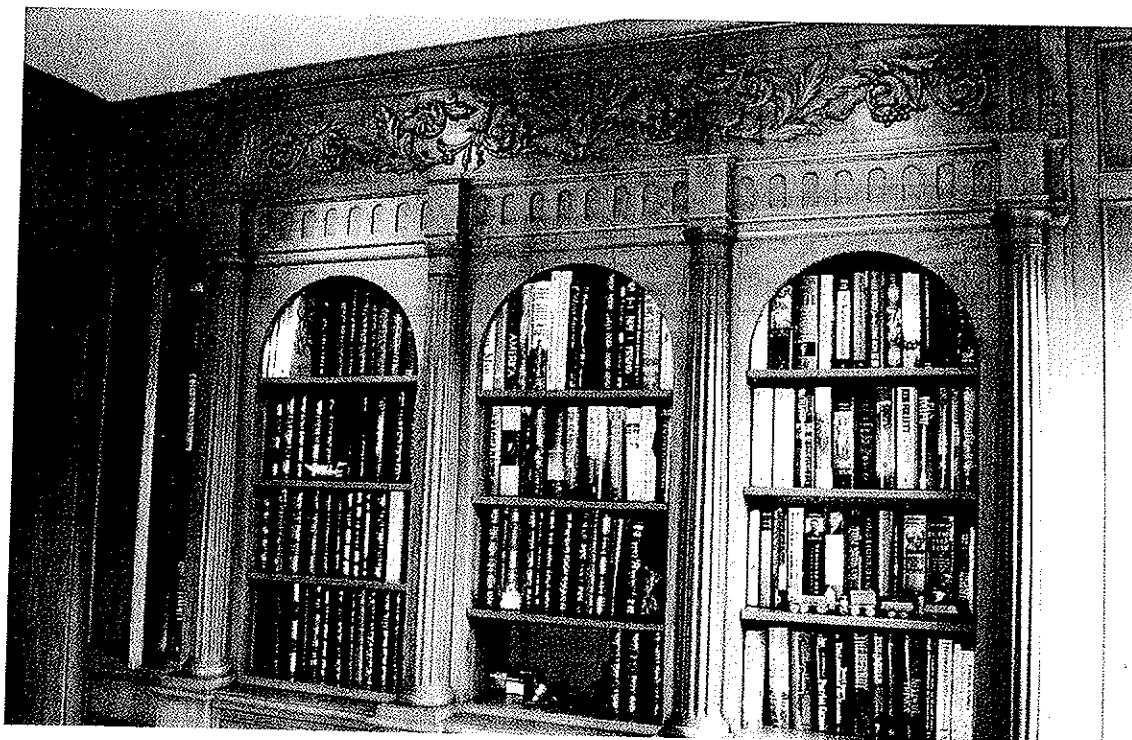
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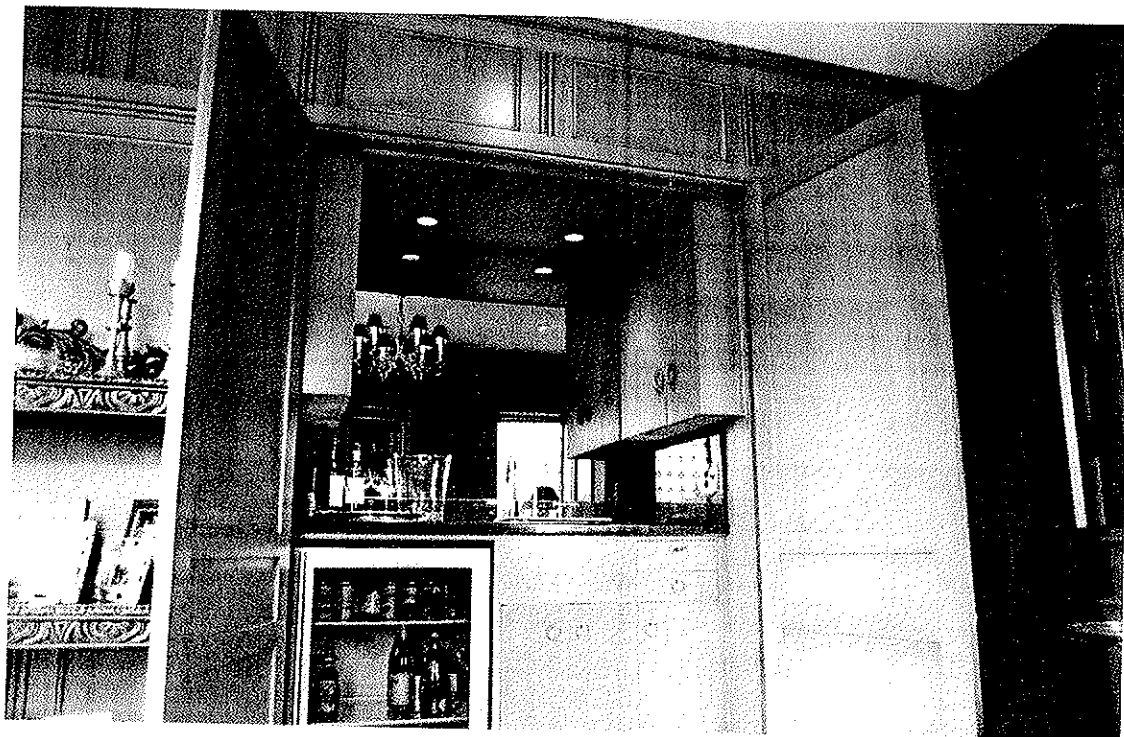
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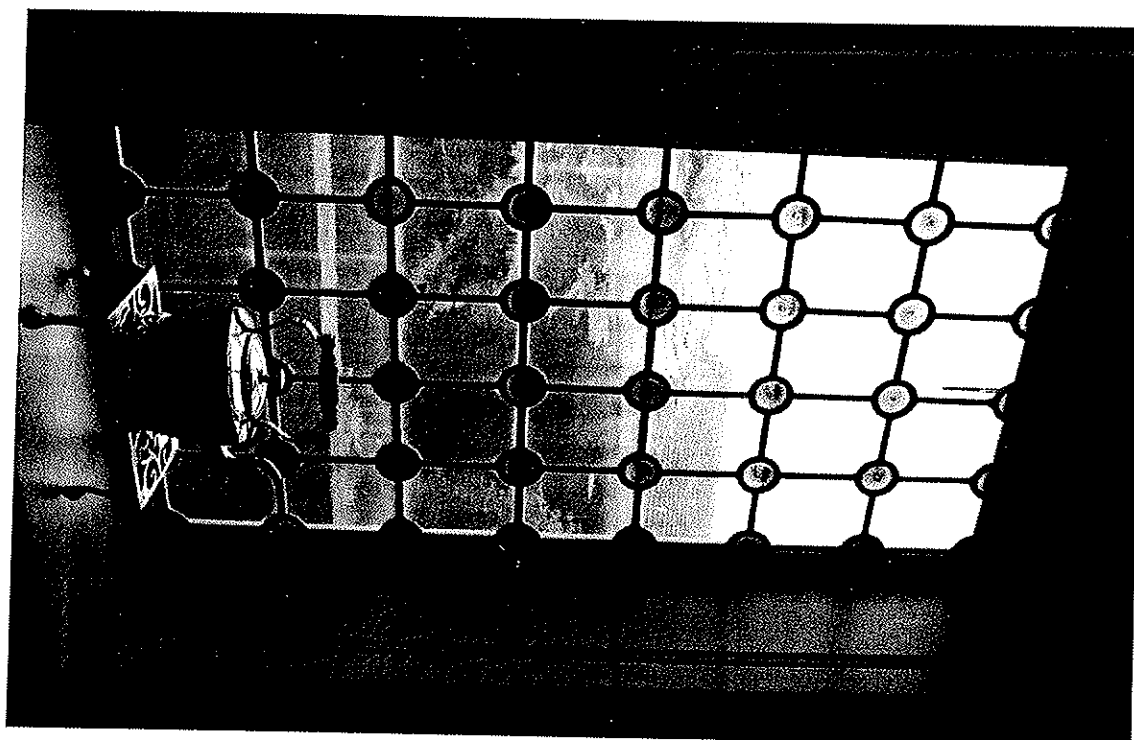
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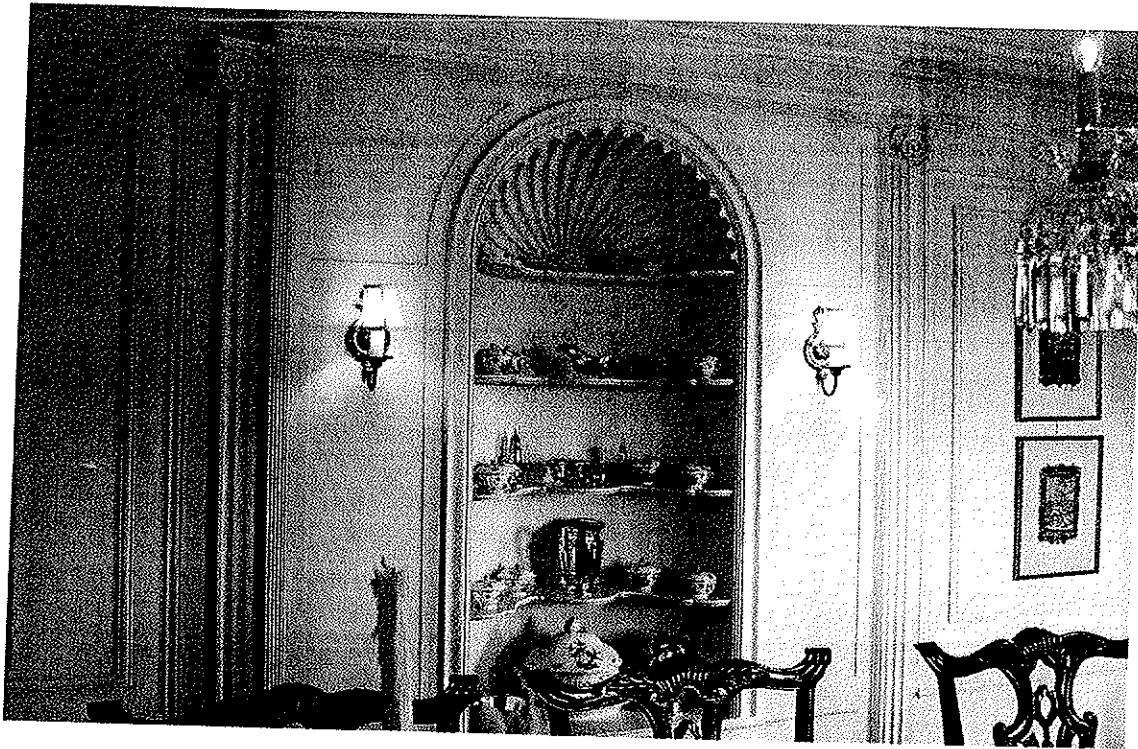
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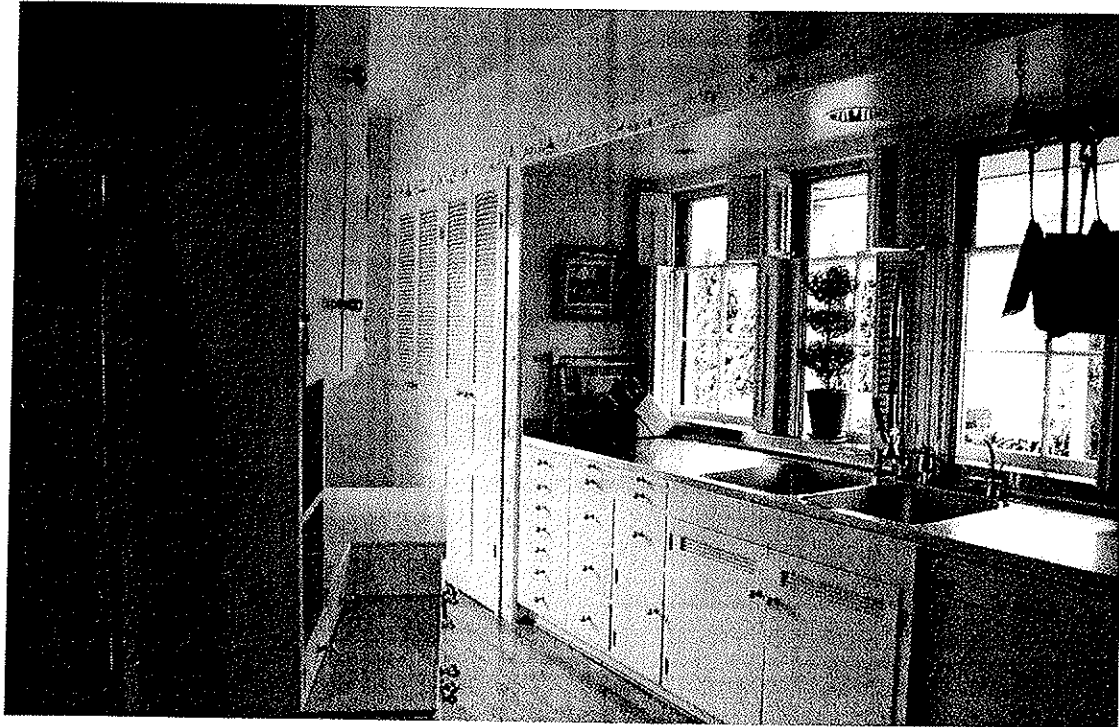
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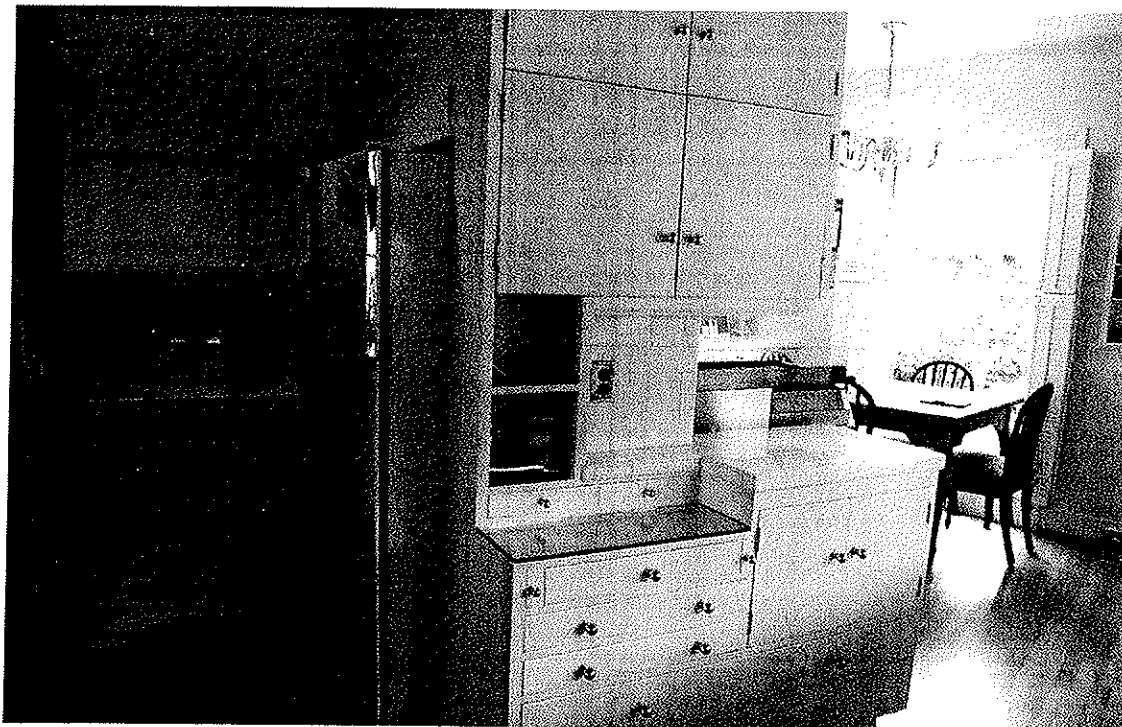
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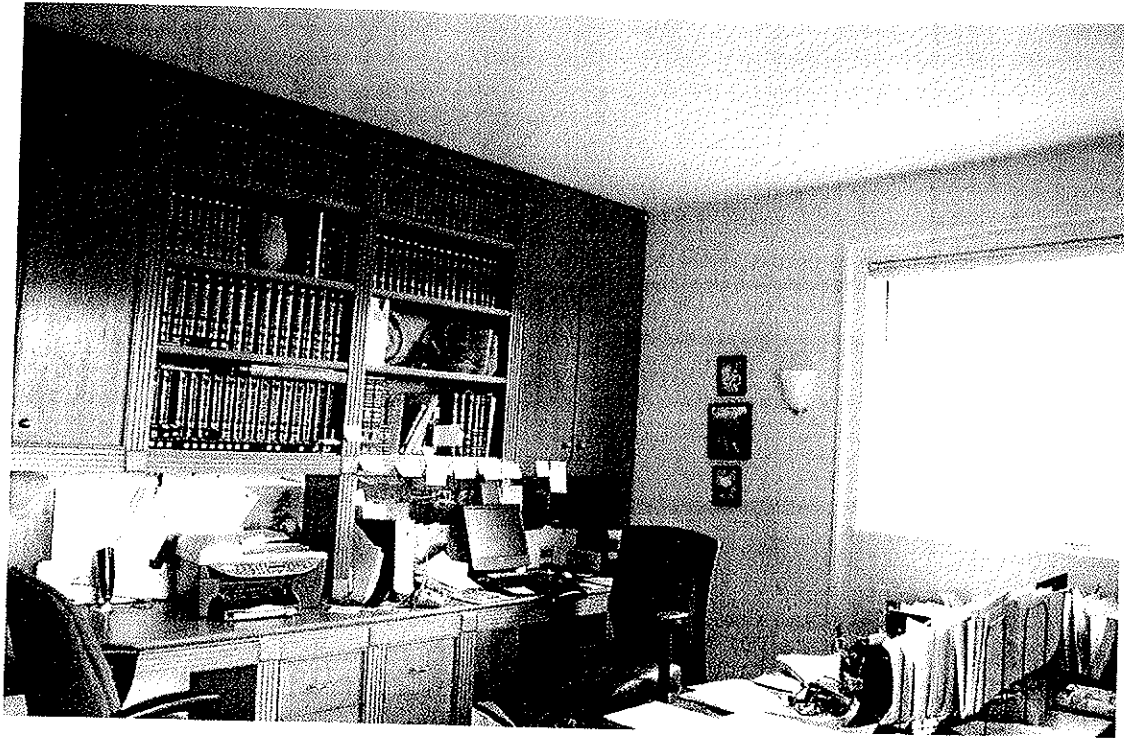
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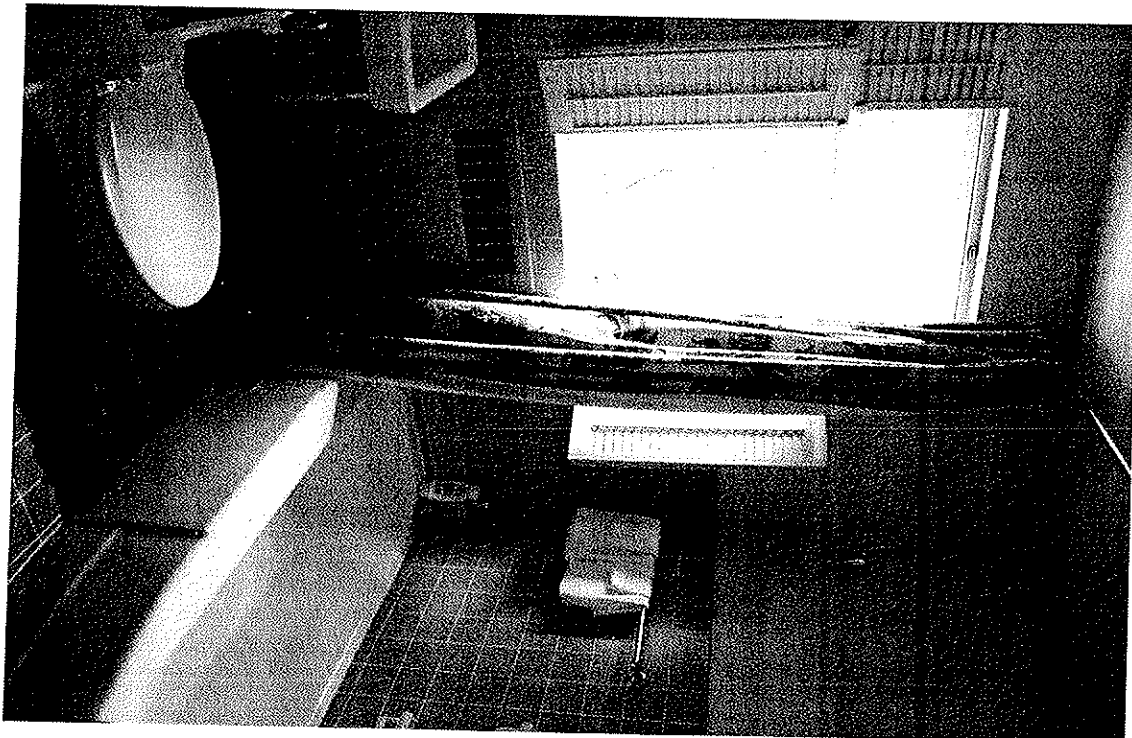
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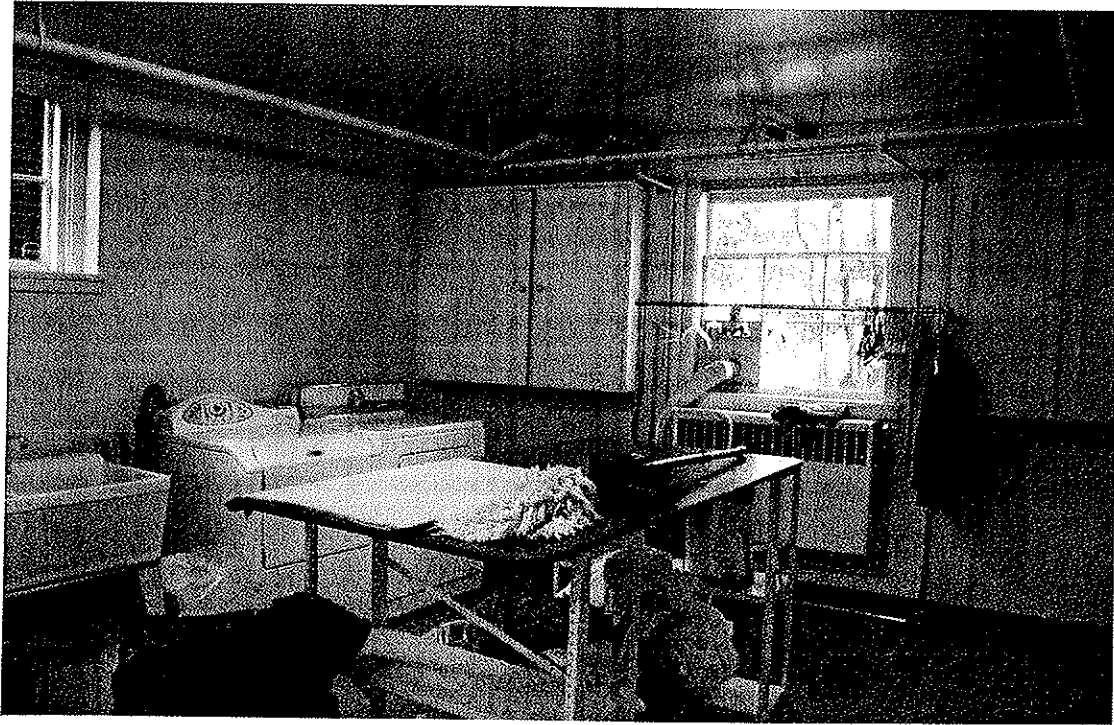
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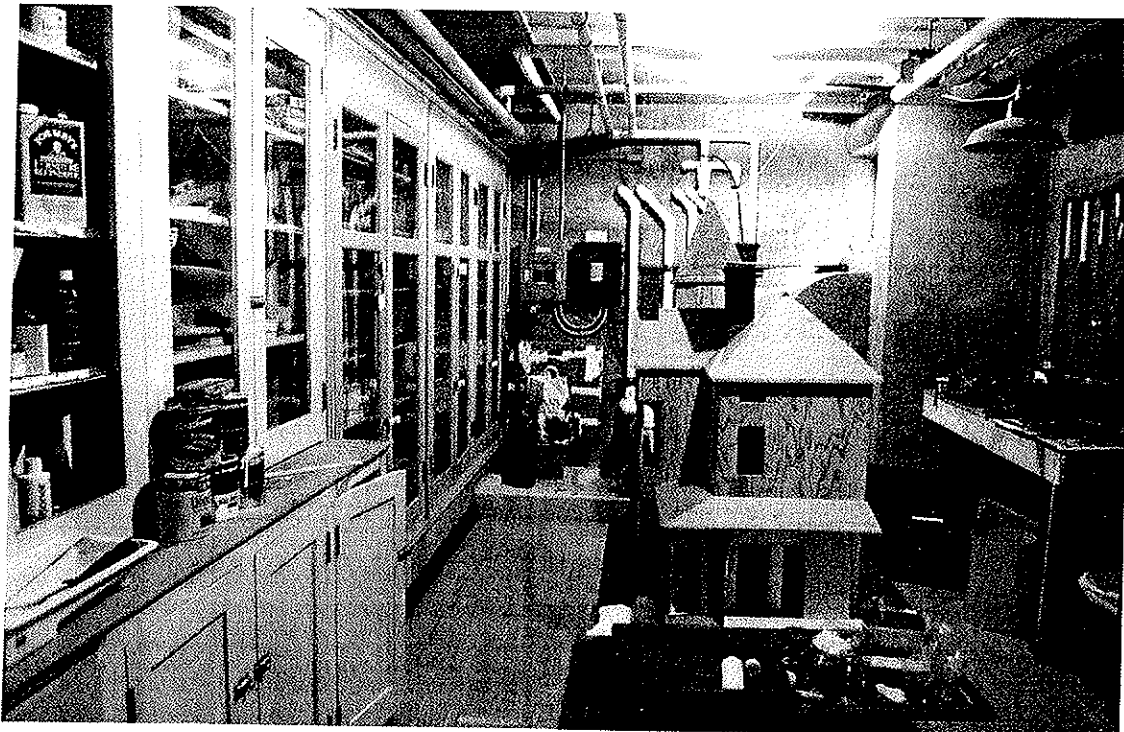
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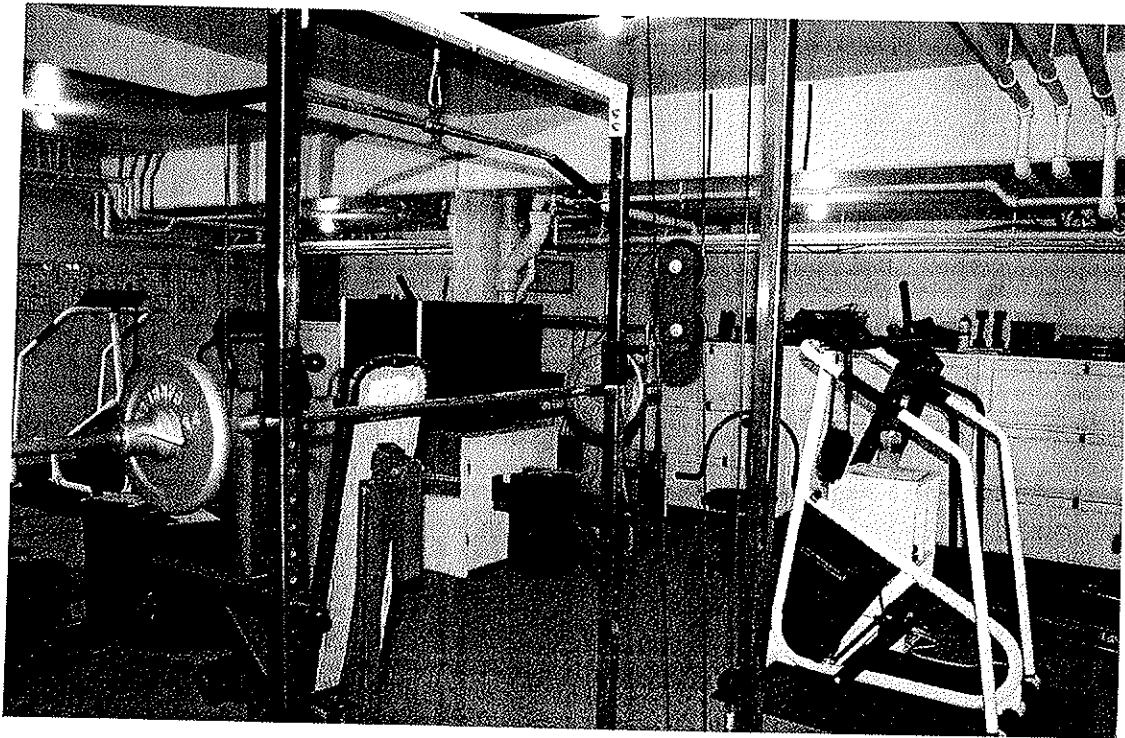
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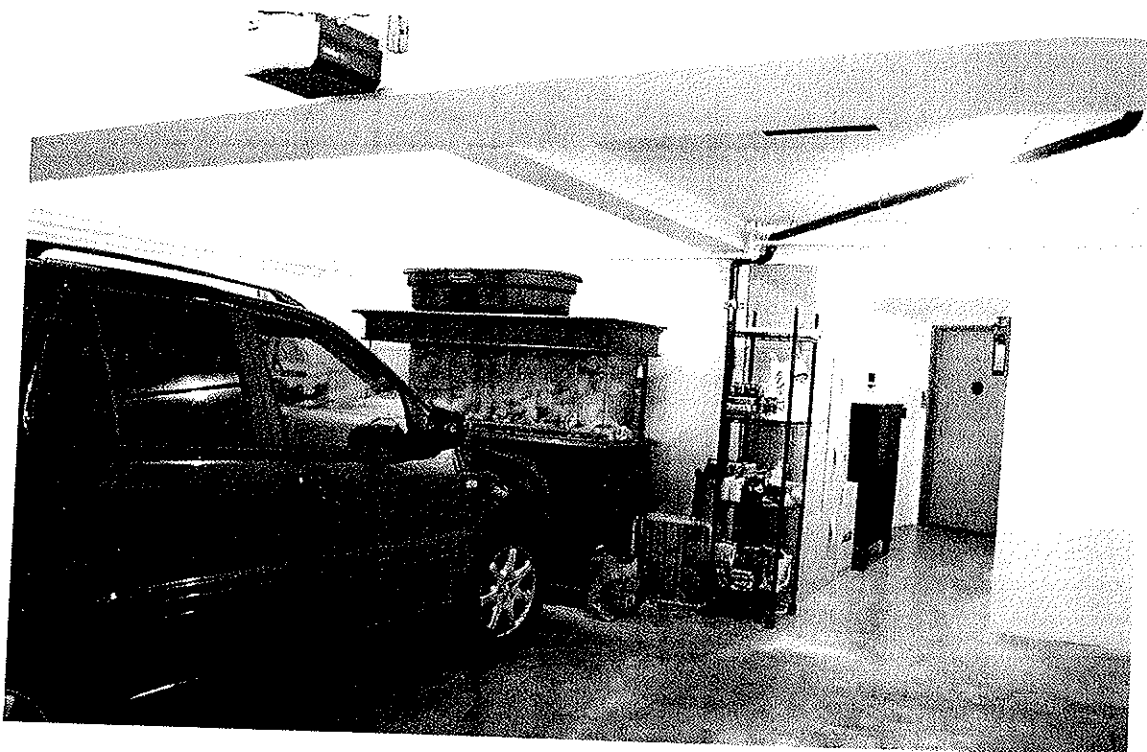
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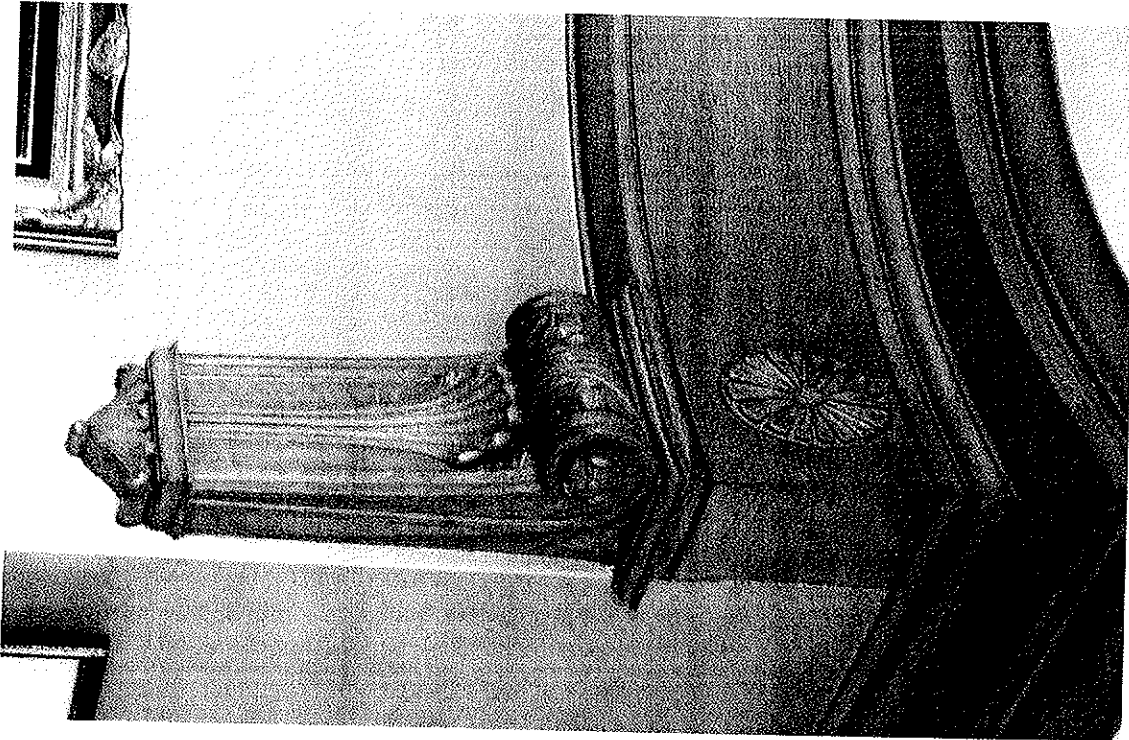
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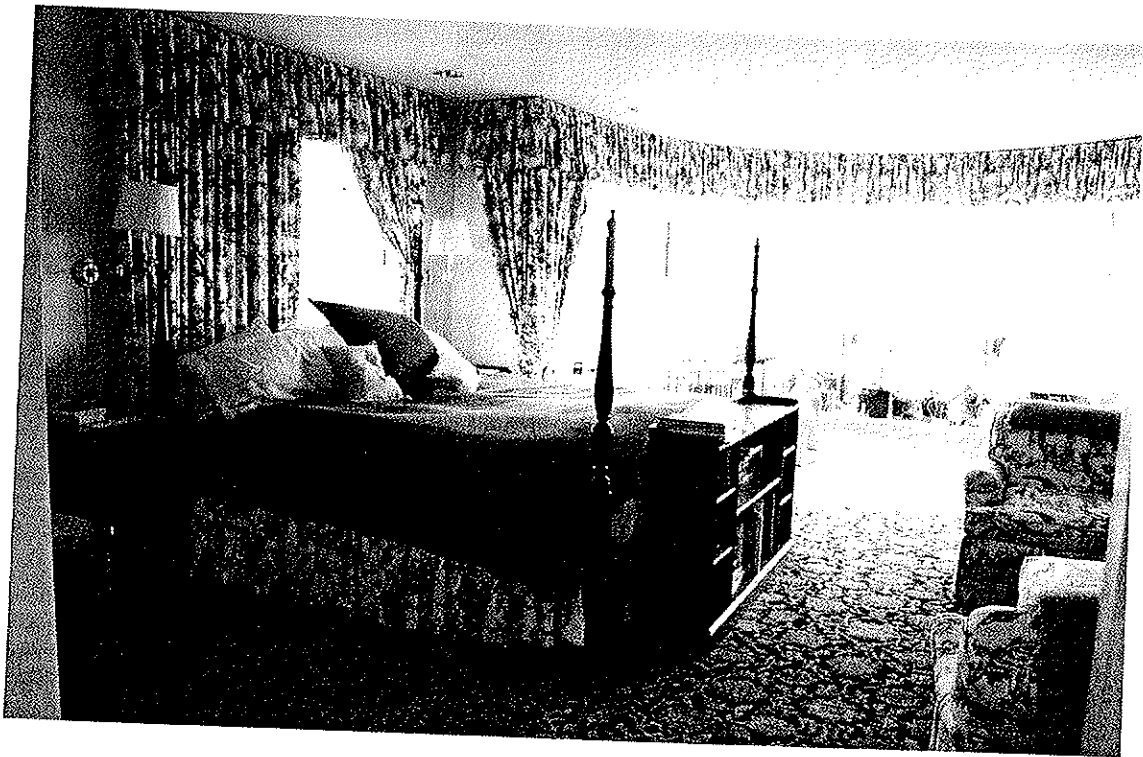
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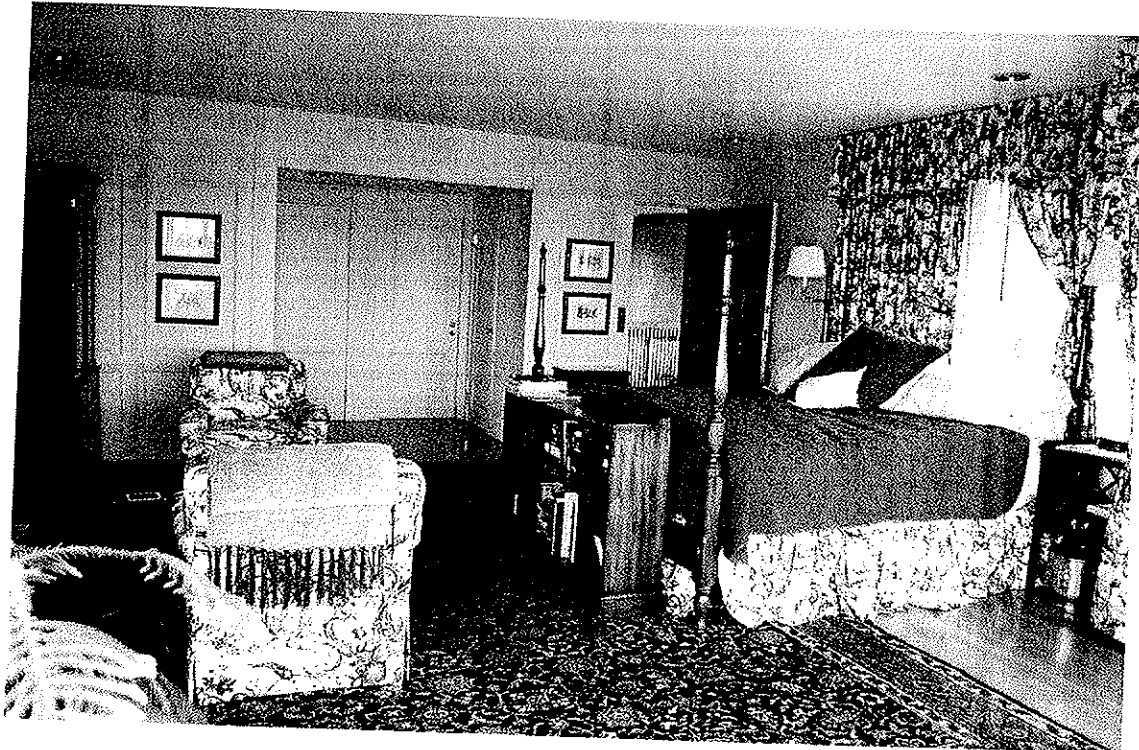
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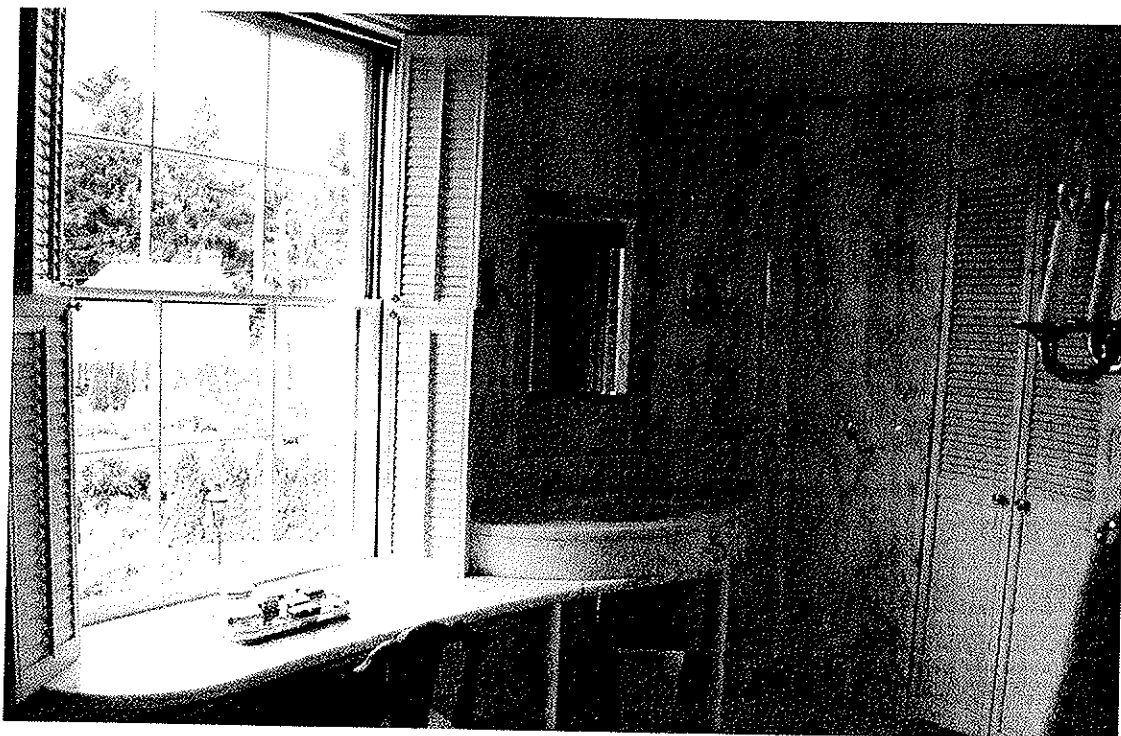
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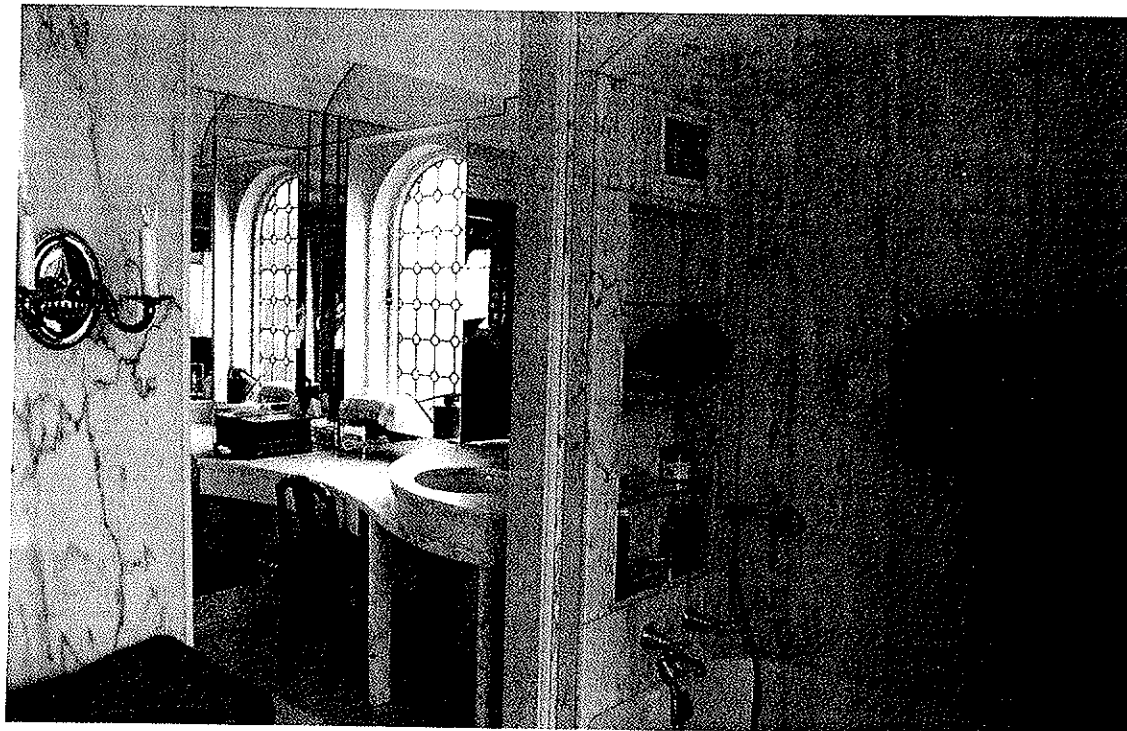
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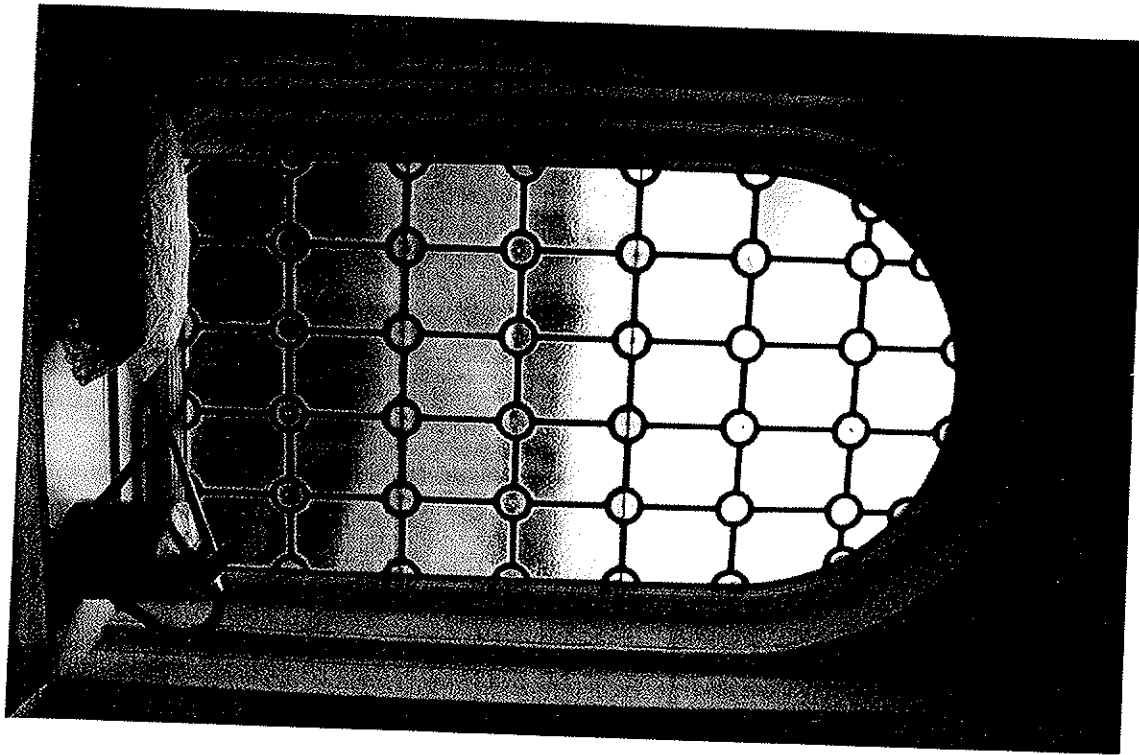
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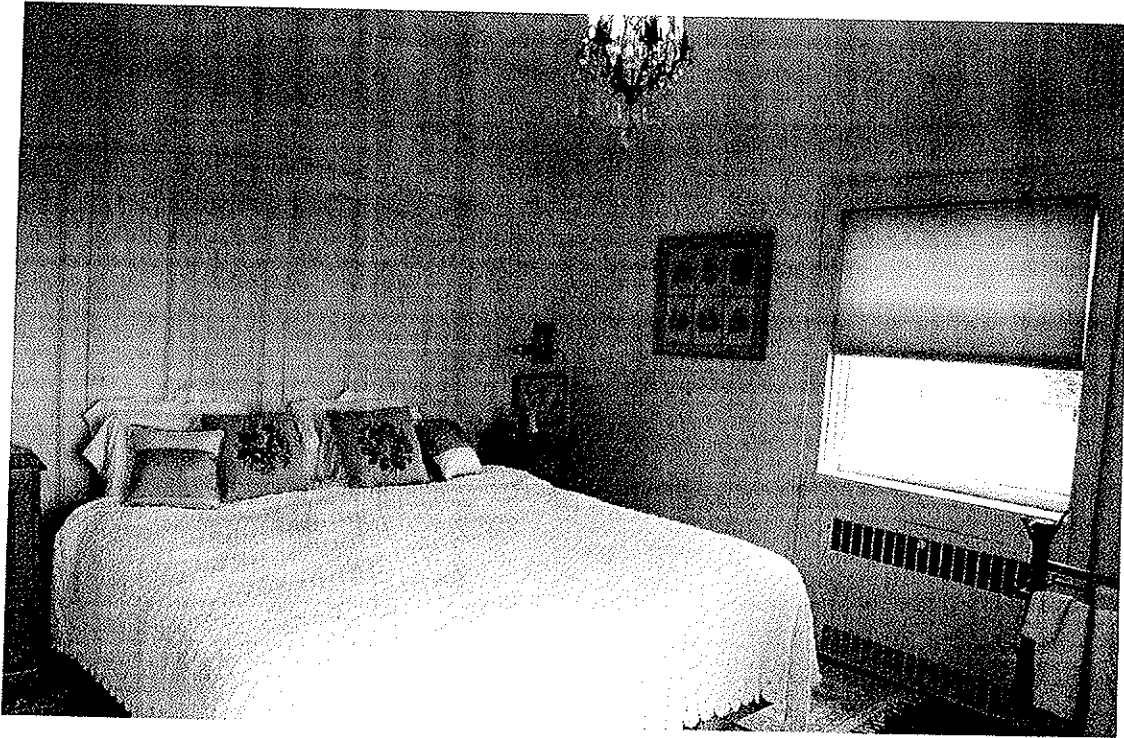
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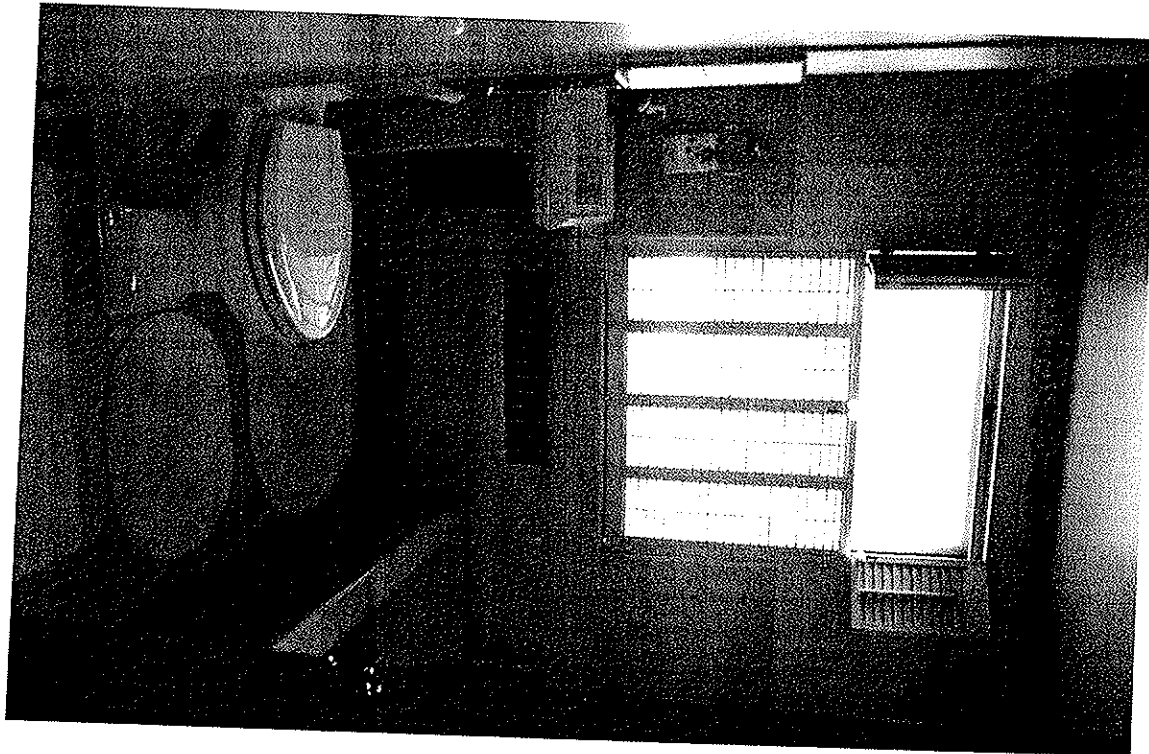
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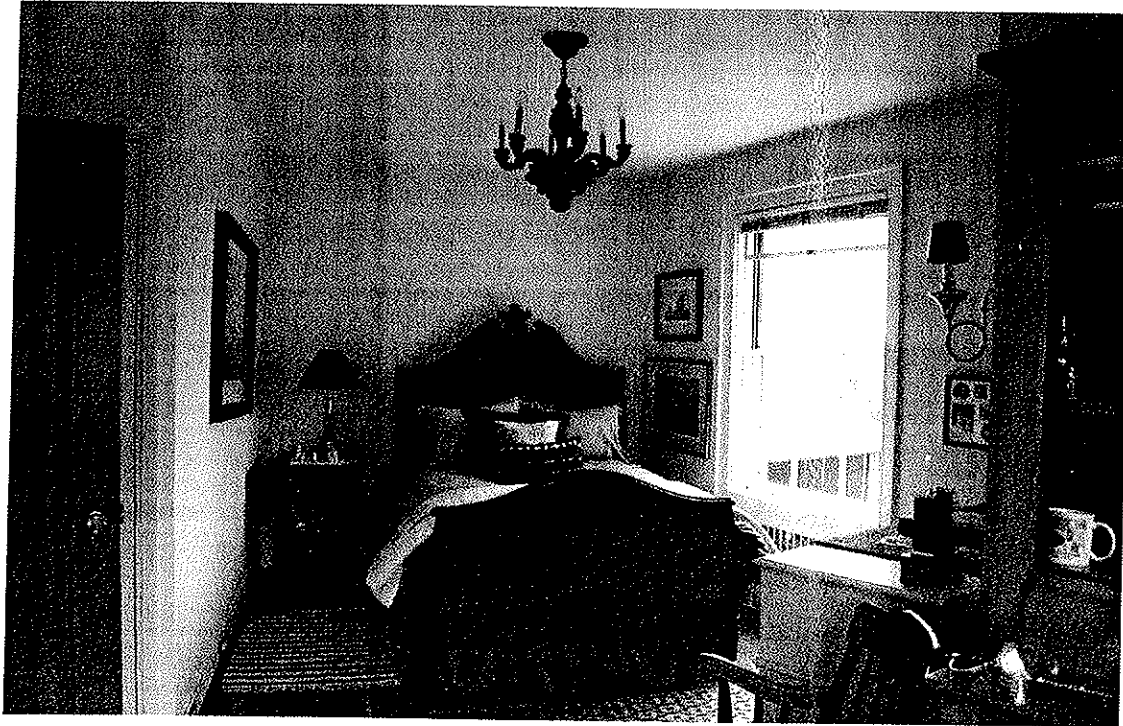
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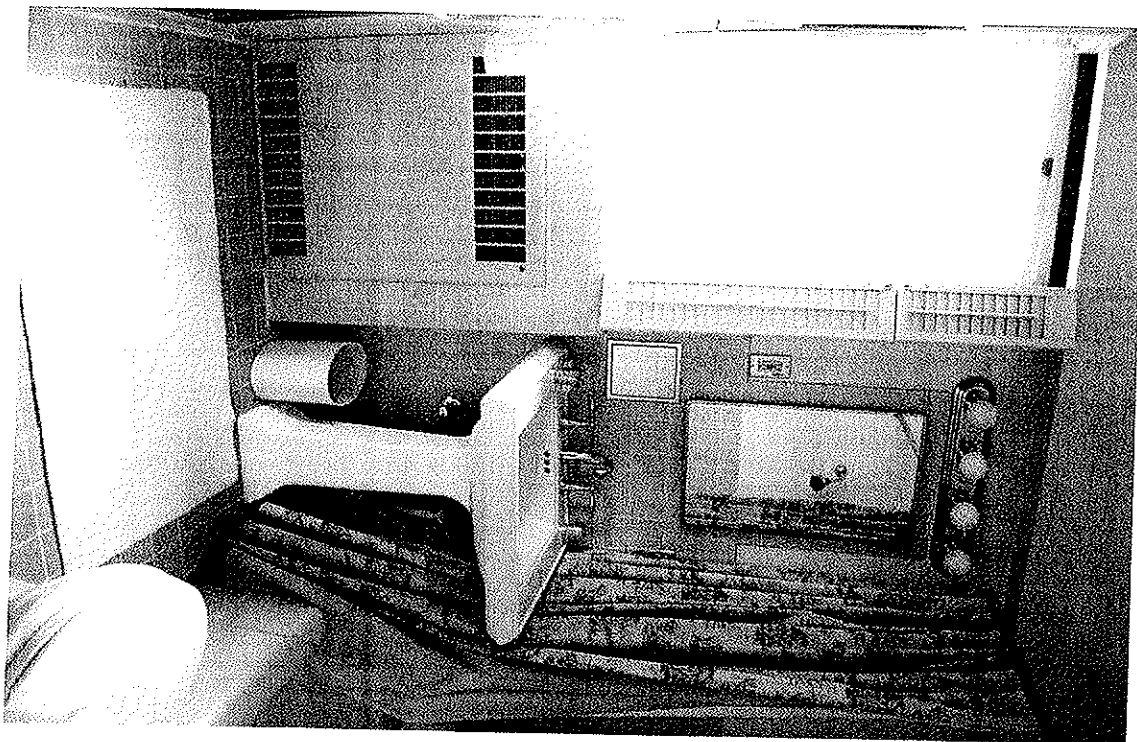
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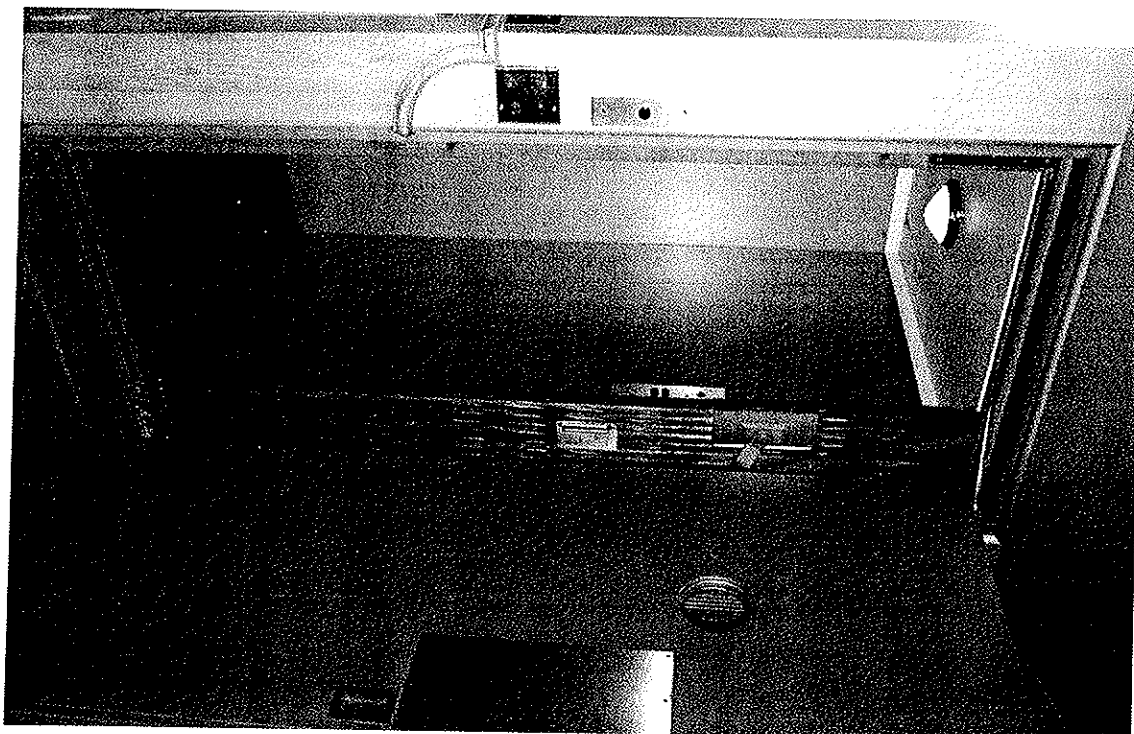
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