

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

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions 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 any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, 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 Psi Alpha Chapter, Chi Omega House

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street & number 1461 Alder Street  not for publication

city or town Eugene  vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Lane code 039 zip code 97401

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
  - See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
  - See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes 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.)

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Non-contributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Residential Architecture in Eugene, Oregon, 1850-1950

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic Sub: Multiple dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic Sub: Multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Tudor Revival: Jacobethan Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete, walls brick, wood: vertical tongue and groove, roof asphalt: composition shingle, other

Narrative Description

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

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.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Social history

Education

Period of Significance

1926

Significant Dates

1926

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Roscoe Deleur Hemenway

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

Oregon Collection, University of Oregon

10. Geographical Data

Psi Alpha Chapter, Chi Omega House

Name of Property

Lane County, Oregon

County and State

**Acreage of Property** 0.2464

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	_____	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____

	Zone	Easting	Northing
3	_____	_____	_____
4	_____	_____	_____

See continuation sheet

**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 Leslie Heald & David Pinyerd

organization Historic Preservation Northwest date February 27, 2001

street & number 1937 Olive Street telephone 541-342-3334

city or town Eugene state OR zip code 97405

**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**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title Psi Alpha Chapter of Chi Omega

street & number 1461 Alder Street telephone 541-683-4715

city or town Eugene state OR zip code 97401

**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. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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, P.O. 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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### **SITE**

The Chi Omega Sorority House is located a block west of the University of Oregon between 14th and 15th Avenues on the east side of Alder Street. Situated at 1461 Alder Street, Chi Omega shares lots 7, 8 and 9 with two other sororities on block 2 of Kincaid's addition. The sorority is sited mid-block facing west with a fraternity to the north and sororities to the south and east. Across Alder Street are apartments. The T-shaped sorority is hemmed in by an alley on its north edge, 11 feet of space between it and the sorority to the south and 18 feet of space between it and the sorority to the east. Only in its 35-foot-deep front yard does the sorority have any breathing room. There is a large red maple in the front yard on the alley and a very large atlas cedar on the opposite side of the yard. There are yew, holly and osmanthus hedges demarcating the house and alley from the lawn.

### **HOUSE**

The Chi Omega Sorority House was designed by Roscoe Hemenway starting in 1925, with construction completed soon after October 1926 (*Oregon Daily Emerald* 1 October 1926). There are indications that Julia Burgess, a professor of English at the University of Oregon and alumnae of Chi Omega, gave \$50,000 to build the house and was intimately involved in the design process (Chi Omega 1928:135). A historic photo taken soon after completion has the notation that the house cost \$39,180 to build, though that figure most likely did not include furnishings (University of Oregon Archives, Photograph Collection).

The sorority house is the finest example of Jacobethan architecture in Eugene. In fact, using the Eugene Historic Inventory as a source, it is the only Jacobethan-style building in Eugene. The Jacobethan Revival style is an amalgamation of the Jacobean (early 1600s) and Elizabethan (late 1500s) styles; however, many Jacobethan features can be traced to the earlier Tudor (early 1500s) style. In Oregon, the Tudor and Jacobethan were the chosen English revival styles (1900-30), both sharing far more similarities than differences. They both have prominent entrances. They both commonly have steeply-pitched, gabled roofs and dormers, though a Jacobethan will sometimes have a low-pitched roof. Parapet walls with crenelations are frequently present, though more often on Jacobethans. They both have massive chimneys with decorative chimney pots. Windows are invariably multi-paned casements, often grouped, often with lead comes. Bay and oriel windows are frequently used. Prominent entrances, passages, and windows often incorporate the Tudor arch. Both styles make use of dark finished wood on their interiors. There are two basic differences between the Tudor and Jacobethan: plan symmetry and exterior surfacing. The Tudor has an asymmetrical plan, whereas the Jacobethan usually has a symmetrical plan. The exterior finish on Tudors invariably display half-timbering, where

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Jacobethans often do not. Jacobethan usually has a facade entirely of brick with stone or architectural cast stone trim. Tudor exteriors often display brick but mixes in stucco, particularly for the nogging between the half-timbering, and sometimes makes use of horizontal wood siding, usually in the gables. Tudor made use of eaves with decorative bargeboards where Jacobethan usually had minimal eaves. On the interior, Jacobethans and Tudors are very similar. Dark wood paneling lines the walls and frames the fireplace in the public rooms. The fireplace opening will usually be surmounted by a Tudor arch. A true Jacobethan will more likely have an ornate plaster ceiling than a wood-beamed ceiling.

### **EXTERIOR**

The surface treatment of the original portions of the Chi Omega sorority house is common red brick (8"×3-3/4"×2-1/4") laid in a common bond pattern. Every seventh course is a header course. The face brick has a wire cut surface with smooth-raked mortar joints. A light gray mortar was used for the joints which average a 1/2" thick. The exterior walls are 12-1/2" thick, consisting of three wythes of brick.

Openings are supported by steel angle lintels capped by a soldier course. Sills are formed by a bricks laid in a rowlock pattern sloped to the weather. Windows are 6-, 8- and 12-pane wood casement.

The roof is composition shingle; originally it was wood shingle. The copper, half-round gutters and downspouts have been replaced with site-formed, aluminum 'K' gutters and ribbed downspouts.

### ***West Elevation***

The west elevation is the sorority house's front facade. All of the unique Jacobethan elements are amassed on this elevation. As appropriate, the dominant feature is the entry. An architectural cast stone, Tudor arch rimmed with quoins frames an oak door with large, decorative strap hinges. Above the entrance is a large, three-sided oriel window. The oriel is supported decoratively by a highly articulated corbel and capped with a flat-seam copper roof. To the right of the entry is a two-story, three-sided bay. The bay is capped by a parapet wall inset with five, architectural cast stone squares each embellished with a wheel motif.

The casement windows on this elevation are all leaded glass in wooden frames with wood trim. All the windows, with the exception of those in the dormers, have gothic hoods of architectural cast stone protruding from the brickwork. The casements are all rounded at the top with the

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exception of those on the first floor of the bay which have rounded transoms. A leaded-glass French door with transom opens up on the patio at the south end. On the brick patio is one of the three architectural cast stone benches shown in the 1926 photos of the completed house.

In the center transom at the center of the bay is a stained glass crest for the sorority. Supposedly, it was donated by Julia Burgess at the time of the house construction. It was reported at the time to be “studied by art majors for its intricate and perfect workmanship” (Chi Omega 1928:135). A house member mentioned that they still have art majors coming by to look at it.

A prominent front gable framing the bay has a parapet wall with an architectural cast stone coping. At the apex of the gable is a cast stone triangle insert. At the base ends of the gable, the parapet wall is flattened to provide a seat for a pyramidal finial on either end. At the center of the gable is a small diamond pattern in the brick work.

In c. 1985, a compatible addition was made in the front entrance to provide for a covered entry and walk to the alley. The addition employs brick identical to the house in its columns, a concrete Tudor arch framing the door, and concrete coping on the parapet ends. The shed roof is sheathed in standing seam metal. An original carriage light next to the front door was lowered to accommodate the new addition.

### ***North Elevation***

The north elevation presents the end of the front rectangular volume and reveals the long wing of the house’s rear where the non-public rooms are contained. The original brick portions of this elevation are completely intact with original casement windows capped with architectural cast stone hoods. The wooden casements on this lesser elevation have wooden muntins as compared to the lead comes of the front elevation.

Like the gables on the front and south elevations, the gable on this elevation is topped with a parapet wall capped by an architectural cast stone coping. At the apex is a two-flue false chimney, as the chimney serves only a decorative purpose to provide Jacobethan balance to the front facade. The twisted, twin chimney pots are surfaced in stucco and are presumably terra cotta. At the base ends of the gable, the parapet wall is flattened to provide a seat for a pyramidal finial on either end. Three wall dormers mark the third floor while two shed dormers with aluminum windows light the attic.

In 1963, a major building campaign constructed a 18-foot, two-story addition on top of the kitchen at the rear. The design was by Morin & Longwood of Eugene. This addition is easily

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distinguished by a vertical board siding treatment and slight projection over the brick first floor. A 12'×13' sitting room for the housemother was added to this elevation as a bump-out on the rear wing. A small porch was removed to accommodate the addition. The bump-out has a flat roof and is sheathed in the same vertical board siding (5" exposure) to distinguish it from the original structure. The wood casement windows in the two additions are nearly identical to the ones on the rest of the house. A small, gable roof, metal structure has recently been erected over the left-most entrance. Bars have been added to the ground floor windows on the rear wing.

### ***East Elevation***

The east elevation is the sorority's back facade. It has the most alterations of all the elevations. In 1963, two additional stories were built on top of the one-story kitchen. This allowed the second, third and attic floors to extend over the kitchen. The one-story kitchen area retains its original brick surface and window openings while the addition was sheathed in vertical, flush tongue and groove siding. On the upper floors, the wood casement windows are nearly identical to the ones on the rest of the house and in some cases were recycled from the original facade. Hopper windows were installed in banks of three near the fire escape. Bars have been added to ground floor windows on this elevation. A second exterior basement entrance was added in 1963 and sheltered by a concrete slab. An unadorned chimney for the furnace and hot water heaters protrudes from the ridge. A metal fire escape provides emergency egress from the attic, third and second floors.

### ***South Elevation***

The south elevation is the sorority's most hidden facade. It faces an adjacent sorority that at one point is only 11 feet away. The elevation presents the end of the front rectangular volume and reveals the long wing of the house's rear. The wooden casements on this lesser elevation have wooden muntins as compared to the lead comes of the front elevation.

Like the gables on the front and north elevations, the gable on this elevation is topped with a parapet wall capped by an architectural cast stone coping. At the apex is a two-flue chimney, though only one of the flues serves the one fireplace in the house. The twisted, twin chimney pots are surfaced in stucco and are presumably terra cotta. At the base ends of the gable, the parapet wall is flattened to provide a seat for a pyramidal finial on either end. Three dormers mark the third floor while a shed dormer lights the attic.

In 1963, a 16'×52', three-story addition was inserted into the courtyard area behind the front volume. This addition increased the size of the kitchen and dining room on the first floor and

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added four study rooms to both the second and third floors. The addition was topped with a flat roof which doubles as a sun deck. Two small shed dormers on this elevation light the attic. A metal fire escape from the sun deck provide emergency egress for the attic, third and second floors.

The surface of the addition continued the pattern of the east elevation with brick on the first floor and vertical tongue and groove siding on the second and third floors. The brick detailing is consistent with the rest of the house, as the skills and materials of the 1926 construction were still available. On the upper floors, the wood casement windows are nearly identical to the ones on the rest of the house and in some cases were recycled from the original facade. Three aluminum sliding glass doors used in the first floor of the addition are the only indications that the first floor exterior is not original.

### **INTERIOR**

The interior is organized with the public rooms in the front on the first floor, study rooms lining the exterior walls on the second and third floors, and sleeping porches at the center rear of the second, third and attic floors. A decorative stair off the foyer provides access to the second floor only. An unadorned stair at the center of the building serves all floors including the attic and basement.

The public rooms are richly finished with walnut woodwork and oak floors. The remainder of the house is finished in a more utilitarian manner. In several utility closets within the house, the original interior finishes of the study rooms can be seen. Walls are plaster, with the plaster applied directly to the brick on the exterior walls and plaster applied to lath on the interior walls. The trim pieces are painted a dull gray green which was probably the color of most of the Douglas fir woodwork in the upper rooms. Today, the walls and woodwork in all the private rooms have been painted a universal off-white. The unpainted plaster and lath is also exposed in several of the utility closets. Doors are two paneled. The Douglas fir flooring has not been touched in the utility closets; elsewhere, the flooring has been covered up with vinyl asbestos tiles and carpeting.

#### ***First Floor***

The first floor is the only floor with public rooms and those are kept to the front of the house. After passing through the massive oak doors at the entry, a visitor finds him/herself in the foyer. Other than the decorative strap hinges, the oak door is cluttered with non-original hardware. The tile work in the entry area is at least as old as 1963, as the addition plans show it already in place.

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Immediately, a visitor has to step up from the tile onto an oak floor that covers the foyer. The oak floor is inlaid with the Chi Omega crest and was installed in 1999. The wallpaper is only a few years old.

To the left is a stair with two landings. It leads to a small lounge on the second floor. The stair rail appears to have the original finish, though it may have been refinished in the 1963 remodel. The stair has elaborate newel posts at the splayed first tread. The spindles of the rail are in a bead and reel motif. The stair treads are carpeted.

To the left of the stair is a door into a small guest bedroom (Room 111). To the right of the stair is a door into the bull room, also referred to as the beau parlor (Room 113). The door to the parlor has been removed and is possibly in the basement, as there are several doors stored there. The room has a small closet. Behind the stair between the guest bedroom and bull room is a bathroom. The bathtub is the only plumbing fixture original to the house, the sink and toilet are more recent replacements. The built-in medicine cabinet also appears to be original.

On the right side of the foyer, opposite the stair, is the living room. A visitor passes through a walnut screen to reach the 40'×24' living room. The screen is pierced by a Tudor arched entry flanked by a lancet arch on either side. The varnished finish of the walnut screen has been painted off white. On the far wall is the fireplace, the dominant feature of the living room. The floor-to-ceiling walnut cabinet work surrounds a fireplace that exhibits an exposed cementitious face and a brick firebox. Scrapbook photos indicate that the wood portions of the fireplace were painted c. 1965. Prior to that period, the woodwork was finished with a flat to satin varnish.

A photo from early in the house's history shows the ceiling in the living room broken up with a grid of dark wood. At the center of the room, the ribs formed a lozenge shape. At the center of the lozenge was a light fixture. The ribs were removed from the ceiling by 1958. All of the trim, including cornice moulding, window surrounds, door surrounds and base mould were originally dark wood.

The original oak flooring is underneath the current carpet and pad. The floor was carpeted as early as 1958. The living room has never been wallpapered. The plaster was finished in an irregular texture to suggest an ancient plaster wall.

Off the living room towards the rear of the house is the dining room. The 32'×38' dining room can be accessed through either of two sets of bifold doors. Prior to the 1963 remodel, the dining room was only half the size it is now. The 16'-wide addition in 1963 removed the exterior wall and pushed it south 16'. The 21"-deep box beams in the ceiling conceal 16"-deep steel I-beams

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supporting the new upper floors. The two 21"-deep beams over the original dining room are false beams added only to provide symmetry to the dining room. Originally, the dining room ceiling appears to have had shallow false beams evoking the ceiling moulding in the living room. (Only one scrapbook photo (1958) of the dining room ceiling with woodwork has been found.) Two posts occupy the center of the room to support the new upper floors.

The dining room floor was exposed oak, similar to the floor in the living room. In 1963, the oak floor was covered with vinyl tiles (Kentile TR-191). The current light fixtures date to the 1963 expansion of the dining room. Prior to that there were only wall sconces in the dining room.

Behind the dining room at the rear of the house is the kitchen. The room partitions at the rear of the house were heavily altered in 1963. The kitchen (Room 105) was expanded and moved into the addition area. The blueprints for the 1963 building campaign note the movement of most of the kitchen cabinets from the old kitchen in the northeast corner of the house to the new kitchen in the southeast corner. The cabinets display a variety of hardware, though the majority could date to 1926. The steel and formica topped counters appear to have all been constructed in 1963. The floor is covered in vinyl tile and the trim is painted Douglas fir.

The 1963 remodel in the northeast corner created a room and bath for the cook (Rooms 100 and 104) and a closet and toilet for the houseboy (Rooms 102 and 103). These are used today for food and dry good storage for the kitchen. Across a hall that leads to the back door is a food storage closet (Room 124) and a cleaning closet (Room 122). To the west of these closets is the housemother's suite. Consisting of five rooms (Rooms 117-121), the suite contains an office, sitting room, bedroom, dressing room, and bathroom. All five of these rooms were created during the 1963 remodel. The rooms are trimmed in Douglas fir and carpeted, except for the bathroom which has vinyl asbestos floor tiles. The housemother's suite lies just east of the side entrance. The halls in this area are trimmed in painted Douglas fir with a vinyl tile floor covering. At the center of the original house is the central staircase leading to the basement and second floor.

### ***Second Floor***

Circulation on this floor is U-shaped. Study rooms are arranged on the outside of the 'U' along the exterior walls; a lounge, bathroom, and sleeping porch are on the inside of the 'U.' Originally, there were eight study rooms along the north and west walls. With the 1963 addition, there are now twelve study rooms along the north, west and south walls. The study in the bay has turned into a TV room. The studies all have unique floor plans with either one or two closets. All rooms have two-panel doors and many still have their original glass door knobs.

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Door frames are untrimmed but the plaster has a rounded profile at the jamb. The four new rooms in the addition have the same detailing, though bi-fold doors were used for the closets instead of panel doors. One of the study rooms from the 1963 addition (Room 207) has the brick exterior wall as one of its interior walls. A few of the rooms even have their original shoe shelf. One of the few character-defining features of the study rooms are the radiators. The original hot water heating system is still used. Flooring throughout is the original Douglas fir under more recent carpeting.

At the top of the formal stair off the foyer is a small lounge. It is lit by the oriel bay over the entrance and contains a window seat. A closet with bi-fold doors is on its south wall. It appears to be rarely used and serves as little more than circulation space. A paned-window and door in its east wall separates the small lounge from the hallway.

At the center of the 'U' is a lounge, bathroom, and sleeping porch. The lounge has vinyl tile flooring, painted Douglas fir trim, and a c. 1975 wetbar. The bathroom has three toilets, two showers, and four sinks; all part of the 1963 remodel. The floor and walls are lined with ceramic tile. The sleeping porch has twelve bunkbeds and is pierced by the furnace flue.

### ***Third Floor***

As with the second floor, circulation is in a U-shape with study rooms along the exterior walls and lounge, bathrooms and sleeping porch in the center of the 'U.' Many of the study rooms have their original finishes. One of the study rooms from the 1963 addition (Room 307) has the brick exterior wall as one of its interior walls.

Unlike the second floor, the third floor has two bathrooms. One was remodeled in the 1963 reorganization, the other placed where there used to be several small rooms. The bathrooms are mirror images of each other and identical to the bathroom on the second floor in everything but color. Each bathroom has three toilets, two showers, and four sinks. The floors and walls are lined with ceramic tile. The lounge was created out of pieces of rooms leftover from the new bathroom in 1963. On either side of it are two utility closets. The sleeping porch has twelve bunkbeds and is pierced by the furnace flue.

### ***Attic***

The floor area of the attic is limited by the pitch of the roof. Originally, it appears that the attic area was meant only for storage. In 1963, the 18' wide addition to the rear of the house created a large sleeping porch area suitable for eight bunk beds. The chimney flue for the furnace, once on

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the exterior, now punctures through the center of the sleeping porch. There was a plan to insert a bathroom on this floor, and the rough plumbing was brought up to this floor, but the bathroom was never finished and the room serves as a locked storage room. To the west is another locked storage room. Access to the sundeck is through a shed dormer.

### ***Basement***

The full-height basement area exists under only the original portions of the rear wing of the house. There is only crawl space under the front volume of the house and under the 1963 addition. The crawl space area reveals a post-and-beam construction technique on a 12" poured concrete foundation wall.

The 1963 addition removed many partitions in the basement including a bathroom. The remaining rooms are a chapter room, three storage rooms, a work room, and the mechanical room. The chapter room lies underneath the old dining room. It has built-in benches, those on the north wall appearing to be original. The nearly identical benches on the south wall were built in 1963. One of the three storage rooms was partitioned off after the 1963 addition, though it has exterior access created during the 1963 remodel. The mechanical room contains the boiler for the hot water radiator system and three hot water heaters. There is a large sump pump in the room and a wood or coal bin area that has had its access to the exterior sealed.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The Psi Alpha Chapter of the Chi Omega Sorority House is a well-preserved sorority building located in Eugene, Oregon. It has been the home of the Psi Alpha Chapter of the Chi Omega sorority for the last 75 years. The sorority house is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under the requirements laid out in the applicable Multiple Property Listing, “Residential Architecture in Eugene, Oregon, 1850 to 1950.”

The Chi Omega House is clearly eligible under National Register Criterion A for its association with broad patterns of residential and community development in Eugene. In particular, it is significant for its association with the growth of fraternities and sororities at the University of Oregon. Chi Omega is one of the oldest sororities at the University of Oregon, and its house was built during an important period of growth and construction for sororities in Eugene.

The Chi Omega House is also eligible for National Register listing under Criterion C. Designed by Portland architect Roscoe D. Hemenway in the Jacobethan Revival style, it is an excellent example of fraternal architecture and Eugene’s sole example of this style. The exterior of the sorority house, in particular its front facing façade, is largely intact and possesses a high degree of integrity.

### **MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS**

In 2000, a Multiple Property Documentation Form, “Residential Architecture in Eugene, Oregon, 1850 to 1950,” was listed on the National Register. The Chi Omega House meets all of the five general requirements outlined for multi-family dwellings, including fraternities and sororities, in this MPS.

1. *The apartment house or fraternity or sorority house must have been constructed between 1850 and 1950.*

The Chi Omega House was constructed in 1926.

2. *The building must meet one or more of the criteria outlined here. Apartment houses and fraternity and sorority houses constructed during the historic period are locally significant under Criterion A for their association with the settlement and growth of Eugene. In addition to this association, they also may be considered individually significant in association with social history and/or education if appropriate. Multi-family dwellings may be eligible under Criterion*

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*C if they are architecturally significant as outstanding examples of a type, style, or method of construction. If designed by a recognized architect or builder, they may represent the work of a master.*

The Chi Omega sorority house is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C. It is clearly associated with the growth and development of Eugene, and in particular with the expansion of the University of Oregon and the growth of fraternities during the 1920s. Chi Omega is the second oldest sorority at the University, and has played an important social role for University women for more than 90 years. In addition, it is significant as an excellent example of a Eugene sorority house in the Jacobethan Revival style and as an important work by noted Oregon architect Roscoe D. Hemenway.

*3. Character-defining features should be intact and sufficient integrity retained. Regardless of current use, the building should retain key features, including design, plan and spatial organization, materials, and workmanship. Ideally, it should be in its original location. If it has been moved, the building must meet the Criterion Consideration for moved properties.*

The Chi Omega House stands in its original location at 1461 Alder Street. While some alterations, additions typical of fraternities and sororities, have been made to the building, it maintains its primary character defining features. Its street facing façade, in particular, looks almost exactly the same as it did when constructed in 1926. The building clearly maintains integrity of use as it was built for and is still used by the Chi Omega sorority as their chapter house.

*4. Multi-family dwellings constructed as part of a larger existing complex, such as a housing project, should be evaluated in terms of the broader context of the overall complex. In such cases, the complex should be nominated as a grouping or historic district, as individual buildings may not be eligible alone. Only in the absence of the overall complex should an individual building be considered individually eligible. An individual building built originally as part of a complex may be eligible as an individual resource if it represents a significant example of an architectural style or method of construction or the work of a master. Emphasis should be placed on design, setting, workmanship, and feeling. Spatial and functional relationships of the original design of the complex should remain intact and key features of the complex should convey the original design.*

The Chi Omega House was not built as part of a housing complex. It is located in an area west of the University of Oregon which contains a number of historic and non-historic fraternity and

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sorority houses. The proximity of these buildings contributes toward a definite “Greek Row” sense of place. However, as these fraternities and sororities were all built at different times by individual owners, they cannot be considered as a complex.

*5. Multi-family dwellings located in the West University neighborhood may be eligible for nomination in association with “Historic and Architectural Resources in the West University Neighborhood, Eugene, Oregon 1855-1941” MPS listing and should be evaluated for appropriate listing.*

The Chi Omega House is located in the West University neighborhood and the abovementioned MPS was consulted in the compilation of this National Register Nomination. The West University MPS does include some more specific background information on fraternities and sororities in Eugene, and several fraternity houses were listed under this MPS at the time that it was submitted. However, this older MPS employs registration criteria which are vague and difficult to apply, and the decision was made to use the more clearly defined criteria outlined in the 2000 “Residential Architecture in Eugene, Oregon, 1850 to 1950” MPS.

### **CONTEXT**

#### ***Eugene in the 1920s***

The city of Eugene experienced an extended period of growth and development during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Between 1884 and 1929, more than 125 additions and subdivisions were platted in the city. These were primarily residential additions, built to accommodate the growing need for housing fueled by a booming economy. The growth of the Willamette Valley’s highly successful agriculture and timber industries made Eugene a center for shipping and processing of these products.

The growing presence of the automobile was also a primary factor in the development of Eugene and other Oregon towns during this period. By the 1920s, cars had become much more common, and automobile related resources, like roads, service stations and garages had proliferated. The car also made subdivisions possible in outlying areas. Other forms of transportation were also revolutionized during the first few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first airpark was built in Eugene in 1919 and was replaced with a larger airport in 1940.

National agricultural prices fell sharply in 1926, greatly impacting Eugene area farmers. The advent of the Great Depression in 1929 was also a sharp blow to agriculture (Eugene Area

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Historic Context Statement 1996:88-89). Other businesses were also hard hit and the economic and physical growth that had occurred so quickly during the 1910s and 1920s slowed dramatically during the 1930s.

### ***The University of Oregon***

The University of Oregon was chartered in 1872, although classes were not officially offered until 1876. The University was sited on 16.75 acres purchased from J.D. Henderson east of downtown Eugene. Its first building, Deady Hall, was completed in 1876 and students began taking courses in subjects such as mathematics, astronomy, physics, literature and chemistry. Debts caused the fledgling university to consider selling its only building in 1881, but the school was rescued by the generosity of railroad baron Henry Villard. The university's second building, Villard Hall, was constructed in 1886 and named for him.

The University grew quickly, both physically and in the breadth of curriculum offered. A School of Law was established in 1884 and the Medical Department soon followed in 1887. The Art Department began informally in the 1890s and the Schools of Journalism, Commerce and Education were founded in the 1910s. Dormitories, sports facilities and more classroom buildings were constructed or purchased: Friendly Hall in 1893, the Collier House and eight additional acres of land in 1895, McClure Hall and Mechanics Hall in 1902 and Fenton Hall in 1907. By 1900, the University was well established, and in the following decades the institution experienced significant growth. In 1902 there were 17 faculty members, and by 1915 the number had increased to over 50.

As part of the state government, the University of Oregon was able to benefit from some of the increases in government funding made available during the New Deal era. Ellis Lawrence, well-known architect and Dean of the UO architecture school, designed the university library, Esslinger Hall and Chapman Hall during the 1930s. However, the 1930s would also see a threat to the continued existence of the university as rivals at Oregon State University (OSU) sought to consolidate the two campuses to one school at Corvallis. OSU president William Jasper Kerr was defeated in this plan, and the UO continued to grow and thrive.

The growing population of students and staff during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century led to residential development in the areas adjacent to the campus (Eugene Area Historic Context Statement 1996:65-67). Since its inception, the West University neighborhood has always had a close relationship with the University of Oregon. Both sprang up on land that was originally part of the Hilyard Shaw donation land claim. As the University grew, instructors, staff and students

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looked for housing nearby. The former settlement period fields became highly desirable land, and the platting of the Kincaid's and Prescott's Additions in the early 1900s instigated residential development.

### ***Fraternities and Sororities in the United States:***

The first fraternity in the United States was founded at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia in 1776. This group was known as Phi Beta Kappa, and was a secret society formed for social and literary purposes. In 1779, branches of Phi Beta Kappa were established at Yale and Harvard. Despite disruptions during the Revolutionary War, the society survived and eventually expanded to other schools. Phi Beta Kappa was the only chartered organization bearing a Greek-letter name until c. 1825, when Kappa Alpha was established at Union College. During this period, a number of other campus organizations were established. These groups were primarily literary in nature and held debates and discussions, but "they were usually too large to promote the cultivation of close friendships" (Baird 1915:6). The founding of Kappa Alpha at Union college caused other students at the school to form their own groups, and by 1827, three Greek-letter societies existed at Union. These three fraternities, sometimes called the Union Triad, are regarded as the founders of the modern fraternity system. From 1830 to 1860, fraternal groups spread throughout eastern and southern colleges. Growth of the fraternity system was interrupted by the Civil War, but many new chapters were established, particularly in the south, in the wake of this disruption.

Also during the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, some fraternities began to be established in conjunction with certain schools within universities, such as colleges of medicine or arts. A fraternity founded at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1864 was the first which aimed to restrict its membership to students intending to engage in the same profession. Around 1900, honor societies began to appear. These groups often used Greek-letter names, but unlike fraternities and sororities, they were invitational groups based on excellence in scholastic achievement or professional achievement.

Since their inception, fraternities and sororities have been know by names that are almost always a combination of Greek letters. In fact, they where first known as Greek-letter societies. The letters used generally represent a motto, which is supposed to be kept secret from all but the group's members. The lodges located at various colleges or universities are known as chapters, and they also have an additional Greek letter name. This name may denote the order in which they joined the national group, or it may be a random designation.

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In the early days of the fraternal system, individual chapters were quite independent. There was little formal organization at a regional or national level, and chapters were sometimes unified by nothing more than a common name and motto. Gradually, a more centralized model began to emerge. One chapter, usually the oldest, was chosen as the “Grand” chapter. “This chapter was . . . to be the governing body of the fraternity, subject only to the directions of the assembly of delegates from the chapters, termed conventions, and to preserve and maintain some sort of settled policy in the administration of fraternity affairs” (Baird 1915:17-18). By c. 1870 however, fraternities discarded this system and replaced the grand chapters with boards of alumni, still subject to the annual or semi-annual conventions.

Fraternities and sororities generally employ a great deal of symbology in their customs and practices. A fraternity usually has a crest which is often worn by members as a pin or pledge button. They also have distinctive colors, flowers, flags, coats or arms and other symbolic insignia. Chi Omega, for example, uses the owl as a central symbol and its crest features an owl, skull and cross bones and a white carnation. Their official seal features a likeness of their patron goddess, Demeter. Fraternities and sororities frequently have their own songs, often published in fraternity songbooks. Typical Chi Omega songs include, “I Love You Truly” and the “Chi Omega Loyalty Song.”

“Since the fraternities have been firmly established, graduate and undergraduate members have united in contributing toward building funds, and have built chapter-houses and halls, sometimes at great expense” (Baird 1915:31). Houses were originally built in two types, the lodge, which was used only for meeting purposes, and the club-house, which contained living space as well as common rooms, and which was the more popular model of the two. According to William Baird, author of *American College Fraternities*, the construction of chapter houses was a greatly appealing endeavor to alumni members, who often oversaw fundraising, design and construction. Chapter houses were quite common by the early 1900s and had become a typical sight on the fringes of college and university campuses.

During the Victorian period, women were just beginning to have a real presence on college campuses. Sororities became a means for them to support and encourage one another. The first women’s fraternity was founded in 1870 at DePauw University. The women’s groups were modeled on the earlier fraternity system created for men and were quite similar in terms of government and administration as well as criteria for membership. However, sororities were more likely than fraternities to support charitable or community causes and have traditionally been more associated with this type of outreach work.

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### ***Fraternities and Sororities at the University of Oregon***

The first fraternity at the University of Oregon (UO), Sigma Nu, was founded in 1900. It was closely followed by Kappa Sigma in 1904. The first sorority, Gamma Phi Beta, was installed in November 1908, just months before Chi Omega was officially recognized on April 30, 1909. In total, five sororities were installed at the UO between 1908 and 1913, reflecting the national popularity of these organizations, as well as their growth at UO and the growing presence of women on campus. In addition, fraternities and sororities experienced strong growth during this time because housing facilities at the UO were insufficient to meet the demand of a growing student population (Sheldon 1940:220). Growth remained strong up until the Great Depression of the 1930s. In 1910, there were five fraternities and four sororities. By 1930, there were 32 Greek houses.

Sororities and fraternities played an important social role on the UO campus. They were the primary sponsors of parties, dances and other social events (Sheldon 1940:221). A University policy set in 1915 restricted the number of dances fraternities could give to two per year; Chi Omega is included in the list of organizations governed by this rule. The restrictions also prohibited any student activities from being held Monday through Friday except from 4:00 to 6:00 PM (“Social Affairs” September 1, 1915).

Sororities and fraternities have also offered an important housing option to UO students. A significant percentage of women students at the UO have lived in sororities over the years. There has traditionally been a perception that sorority houses are more expensive than dormitories or other housing choices. This idea, apparently common even in the 1920s, was debunked by a 1928 article in the *Oregon Daily Emerald*. The article examined costs for the 18 sororities operating at that time and compared them with dorm costs. They found that the average cost of living, including both room and board, in a campus dormitory was \$35.00 per month, and the average cost for sororities was \$37.22 per month (“Sorority Expenses Are No Higher Than Halls Recent Survey Shows” 19 May 1928).

The manner in which sororities and fraternities recruited students, through “rushing,” was highly regulated by the University of Oregon. An annual publication called “Sororities and You” published by the University of Oregon Panhellenic Association outlined specific rules for sororities and young women wishing to join them. It was common for alumnae members to send invitations to friends and relatives entering the university. Only those invited by alumnae would be rushed by the sorority. Sororities could only communicate with rushees at certain times, were not allowed to break dates or appointments with them, and were forbidden from using male

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friends to aid in rushing. In turn, freshman girls participating in rush were expected to follow a particular etiquette of dress and manners. Those who were accepted to sororities were required to live in the sorority house, although this rule was relaxed by the 1940s. Those rejected lived in the dorms or at their parent's houses in town.

A 1942 University policy set limits on the number of students who could live in each fraternity house. The number set for Chi Omega by Karl W. Onthank, Chairman of the University Housing Committee was 46 (letter September 16, 1942). The membership of the chapter could be as much as 120% of that limit if the additional members did not live in the chapter house. Despite these restrictions, 42% of women enrolled at the UO in 1944 were living in sorority houses, making it the most popular housing option, with dormitories coming in second at 26% ("Sororities House Majority of Women," *Oregon Daily Emerald*, 27 January 1944). In 1948, a new policy was instituted by the University requiring all first year students to live in dormitories or rented town rooms rather than fraternities or sororities. The goal of this policy was to "provide common experience and broaden non-curricular benefits for first year students" as well as to "result in maturity and stability in houses" (University of Oregon Office of Student Affairs November 5, 1948).

While the Psi Alpha Chi Omega sorority was based in Eugene, its alumnae chapter has traditionally been located in Portland (Baird 1915: 414). The alumnae chapters of Chi Omega and other UO sororities have historically played an important role in shaping these organizations. All sororities at the UO were subject to the control of a Panhellenic Alumnae group known as the Eugene City Panhellenic. An executive board made up of members of both the Campus Panhellenic and City Panhellenic set UO policy for fraternities and sororities. In addition, alumnae chapters for each sorority appointed advisors to aid the undergraduates in such matters as rushing, pledging, financial, scholarship and social questions. As stated previously, alumnae often extended invitations to freshman girls who they were acquainted with. As late as the 1950s, three recommendations from alumnae were necessary for a pledge to join a sorority house at the UO. Alumnae chapters also sometimes set quotas for the minimum or maximum number of pledges to be accepted. (Alumnae editorial series, *Oregon Daily Emerald*, 29 January, 1953-3 February, 1953)

The strong influence of alumnae, which tended to be fairly conservative, in part led to a drop in fraternity and sorority membership during the cultural upheaval of the 1960s and 1970s. Fraternity and sorority numbers at UO were fairly high in 1965, with 37 houses that had about 2,000 members. By 1970, there were only 22 houses, with a membership of about 800. Numbers dropped in part because of changing cultural attitudes, especially among young people.

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Fraternities and sororities were inevitably identified with “the establishment” and with WASPism. Many fraternities were accused of racism because of their selective admissions procedures. However, fraternity groups had allayed some of these fears by the mid-1970s and early 1980s, and have again become a desirable choice for UO students. There are currently 30 fraternity and sorority chapters active at UO, rivaling their peak period of popularity during the 1930s.

### **CHI OMEGA SORORITY**

#### ***National Organization***

The Chi Omega sorority was founded April 5, 1895 at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. Dr. Charles Richardson, a Kappa Sigma member and advisor to the undergraduate founders, was a primary influence on the creation of Chi Omega. He drafted the sorority’s first ritual and constitution, chose names of offices and developed the Eleusian mysteries as the basis of the sorority’s symbolism. Other founding members of the sorority were Jobelle Holcombe, Jean Vincenheller, Ina Mae Boles and Alice Simonds.

By 1899, Chi Omega was publishing its own journal, *The Eleusis*, which was first edited by Ida Pace Purdue. This journal is still issued quarterly. A second journal, one available only to members, called the *Mystagogue*, was established in 1905. The first National Headquarters of Chi Omega was organized in Lexington, Kentucky in 1915, then moved to Cincinnati, Ohio in 1924 and to Memphis, Tennessee in 1992. The first chapters were largely based at southern universities, but the organization quickly spread north, with the founding of a chapter at the University of Illinois in 1900. By 1920, Chi Omega had 40 chapters across the United States and was continuing to grow. In the late 1920s, Chi Omega experienced a building boom, with many chapters constructing sorority houses. Between 1927 and 1930 alone, the number of chapter houses surged from 29 (with a valuation of \$814,000) to 50 (with a value of \$1,700,000). However, due to the Great Depression, building plateaued during the 1930s. No new houses were built between 1930 and 1935 and only six were constructed between 1935 and 1940.

Chi Omega has established a number of significant awards and scholarships dedicated to recognizing and assisting women. As early as 1915, an annual prize of \$25 was awarded by each chapter to the woman student most successful in the fields of economics or sociology. By 1930, the fields considered for this award expanded to include political science and psychology. In that same year, Chi Omega established a national award, the National Woman of Achievement Medal, a gold medal presented annually to a woman of notable achievements in the fields of

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“public affairs, art, the professions, business and finance, education and literature” (Baird 1935:312). Margaret Mead, Madame Chiang Kai-shek, and Maine Senator Margaret Chaise Smith are some of the significant women who have received this award.

Alumnae chapters continue to uphold the mission of the sorority and have traditionally been involved with social and civic work. Definite programs for these works were established in 1910 and covered civic matters and scholarships. Chi Omega also established national committees in 1910 to collect data on education, vocations, personnel and volunteer interests. Because of these efforts, Chi Omega was admitted to the Personnel Research Federation and the American Association for Adult Education.

Today, Chi Omega is the world’s largest women’s fraternal organization. It has over 170 collegiate chapters and more than 240,000 initiates. Its Mission is to be “a sisterhood that provides a network of friends and lifelong development for collegiate and alumnae members” ([www.chiomega.com](http://www.chiomega.com)).

### ***Eugene chapter, Psi Alpha***

The Psi Alpha chapter of Chi Omega was founded in Eugene at the University of Oregon in 1909. It was the 27<sup>th</sup> chapter of the sorority and one of the earliest founded along the West Coast. Only the University of California established an earlier chapter, 1902, while the University of Washington also opened a chapter in 1909. A second Oregon chapter, Eta Alpha, was founded at Oregon Agricultural College (now Oregon State University) in 1917.

The Psi Alpha chapter was initially formed by six University of Oregon women. In 1907, Louis Bryant, Bell Van Dwyn, Bertha Dorris, Cora Cameron, May Loveridge and Elizabeth Elliott organized a local club, known as Zeta Iota Phi, or the Zips, with the intention of petitioning Chi Omega for membership. It took two years for the Zips to receive their Chi Omega membership. On April 5, 1909, Chi Omega accepted the local into the national organization as Psi Alpha Chapter.

Of these founding members, Louis Bryant was the one who went on to have the most unusual and famous career. Bryant was a liberal arts major at the UO who was active in student literary efforts, campus theatre and the campaign for women’s suffrage. She went on to become a noted journalist and writer as well as a celebrity associated with the liberal, artistic and avant-garde elements of 1920s society, including women’s rights, free love and communism. Bryant traveled to Russia during the Russian Revolution and chronicled her observations in her first book *Six Red*

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*Months in Russia.* She published several other books and traveled to Turkey, Russia and other countries as a correspondent for the Hearst news empire. Louis Bryant later became an alcoholic and died in Paris at age 49 (Schneir 1982:43-46 & 92-93). Her life served as the subject for the 1982 movie, *Reds*. Even during her younger years at the UO, Bryant was noted for her flamboyant personality, and for her open affair with a Eugene man. Her presence amongst the founding members of Chi Omega suggests that the Zips may have been a fairly liberal and progressive group of young women.

Prior to the construction of the Chi Omega House at 1461 Alder, the Psi Alpha Chapter owned a house at 1312 Mill Street, at the southwest corner of East 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Mill. This house was built in 1908 for the Zips at a cost of \$6,000 (*Eugene Daily Guard*, 22 June 1908). The large, three story, Craftsman style house is located near the University, but is several blocks more distant than the current house. Deed records show that Psi Alpha Chi Omega purchased two parcels of property for the construction of their new house in 1926. The Chi Omegas bought the west 20 feet of lot nine in block two of Kincaid's Addition from the Beta Omega Alumnae Association on April 27, 1926. The second and larger parcel, the north halves of lots seven and eight in the same block, was purchased from Frank L. and Edith K. Chambers on May 24, 1926.

The house was built with the assistance of Julia Burgess, a professor of English at the University of Oregon and the faculty advisor for Psi Alpha Chi Omega at the time the house was constructed. Julia Burgess was born in 1870 in Panama New York, received a BA at Wellesley in 1894 and an MA at Radcliffe in 1901. She came to the University of Oregon in 1907 and taught English there for 35 years, retiring in 1941. Julia Burgess "was a Chi Omega and acted in the capacity of faculty advisor for the local chapter," although it is not known for how long she served in this role ("Burgess, Julia" UO Archives). Burgess is also noted for contributing the Burgess Collection of rare books to the UO Library. This collection included thousands of rare books including illuminated manuscripts dating back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Her exact contributions to the construction of the Chi Omega House are somewhat unclear, but a 1928 article states, "Julia Burgess, professor of English in Oregon University, made possible the beautiful new \$50,000 chapter house Psi Alpha now occupies. Through her planning the house was completely perfect in every detail" (Chi Omega 1928:135).

The Psi Alphas most likely moved into their new house in 1927. An article in the Oregon Daily Emerald dated October 1, 1926 states "because their house is yet uncompleted, the Chi Omega's will be hostesses at the Kappa Sigma House" (page 1, col. 6). However, a photograph of the new house was included in the 1927 Oregon yearbook, and it seems safe to assume the sorority sisters were living in the house when the school year began in Fall 1927. In that year, Chi

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Omega had a membership of 42, up from 38 in 1926. A photograph of the house in the University of Oregon Archives Photograph Collection lists its capacity as 45 and describes its cost of construction as \$39,180.00.

### **DIFFERENTIATION**

The 1926 Chi Omega House is clearly the most important resource associated with the Psi Alpha Chi Omega chapter. The 1908 chapter house is still in existence, but it has been fairly heavily altered, and has lost much of its integrity. In contrast, the 1926 house is largely intact in materials, workmanship, design and function.

The Chi Omega House is comparable in age and integrity with other fraternity and sorority houses built near the University of Oregon, a number of which have already been listed on the National Register. However, it is the only fraternity or sorority house, and in fact the only identified structure in Eugene, built in the Jacobethan Revival style, making it a highly significant resource for the city.

### **ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

Roscoe Deleur Hemenway was born in Cottage Grove, Oregon on February 12, 1889. He later moved to Portland and attended Portland public schools before entering the University of Oregon. Upon graduation from the UO, Hemenway moved to Philadelphia for some time and most likely began practicing architecture there. He returned to Oregon in about 1923 and began practicing in Portland. His earliest recorded building in Oregon is a house built in 1923 for a "Miss Johnson." According to the Oregon State Board of Architects, Roscoe Hemenway was first registered in Oregon July 29, 1927. His application shows that the registration was granted in reciprocity, meaning that he was a registered architect in another state prior to Oregon. This fact indicates that he may have practiced under a Pennsylvania license for some years before taking his Oregon license.

A job list of Hemenway's work available at the Oregon Historical Society shows that he designed 254 houses during his 36 years of practice in Oregon. The vast majority of these projects were built in Portland, where Hemenway's practice was located. Only 24 Hemenway-designed residences were built outside of Portland. Hemenway specialized in residential architecture and built only three apartment buildings, one barn, one parish building and one commercial structure. Hemenway's clientele was largely made up of the Portland elite. He

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designed primarily for well-to-do clients who lived in the prestigious neighborhoods of Portland's west hills as well as Laurelhurst, Alameda, Dunthorpe and Lake Oswego.

Hemenway built almost exclusively in the period revival styles popular in Oregon during the 1920s, 30s and 40s. Like many builders of the time, he created designs in a myriad of revival styles, although much of his later work was in the Colonial Revival style. Only one residence designed by Hemenway, the streamlined moderne Hudson Residence (1937) in Portland, strayed from his trademark use of period revival styles. Roscoe Hemenway died July 26, 1959.

The Psi Alpha Chi Omega House is significant not only as an example of Hemenway's work, but because of its Jacobethan Revival style architecture. This style is extremely rare in Eugene. While the more common Tudor Revival style was used in a number of other fraternity and sorority houses, as well as residences, the Chi Omega House appears to be the only manifestation of the less common Jacobethan style. This makes it an architecturally significant resource for the city.

### **SUMMARY**

The 1926 Psi Alpha Chi Omega House has been the home of the Eugene Chapter of the Chi Omega sorority for the last 75 years. This building is significant for its historical association with the growth of the city of Eugene, the development of fraternities and sororities at the University of Oregon, and the Psi Alpha Chi Omega chapter. In addition, it is architectural significant as a work by noted Oregon architect Roscoe D. Hemenway, and the sole identified Eugene example of the Jacobethan Revival style. The Psi Alpha Chi Omega House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and C.

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### **VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The Chi Omega Sorority House lies at 1461 Alder Street in Eugene, Lane County, Oregon. The property is identified as Tax Lot 400 of Lane County Assessors Plat 17-03-32-34. This lot is composed of three partial lots in Kincaid's Addition and has a total of .2464 acres. In block 2, the Chi Omega Sorority House occupies the north half of lots 7 and 8, as well as the north half of the west 20 feet of lot 9. Tax Lot 400 is 80 feet wide by 131.2 feet long.

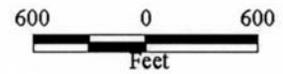
### **BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

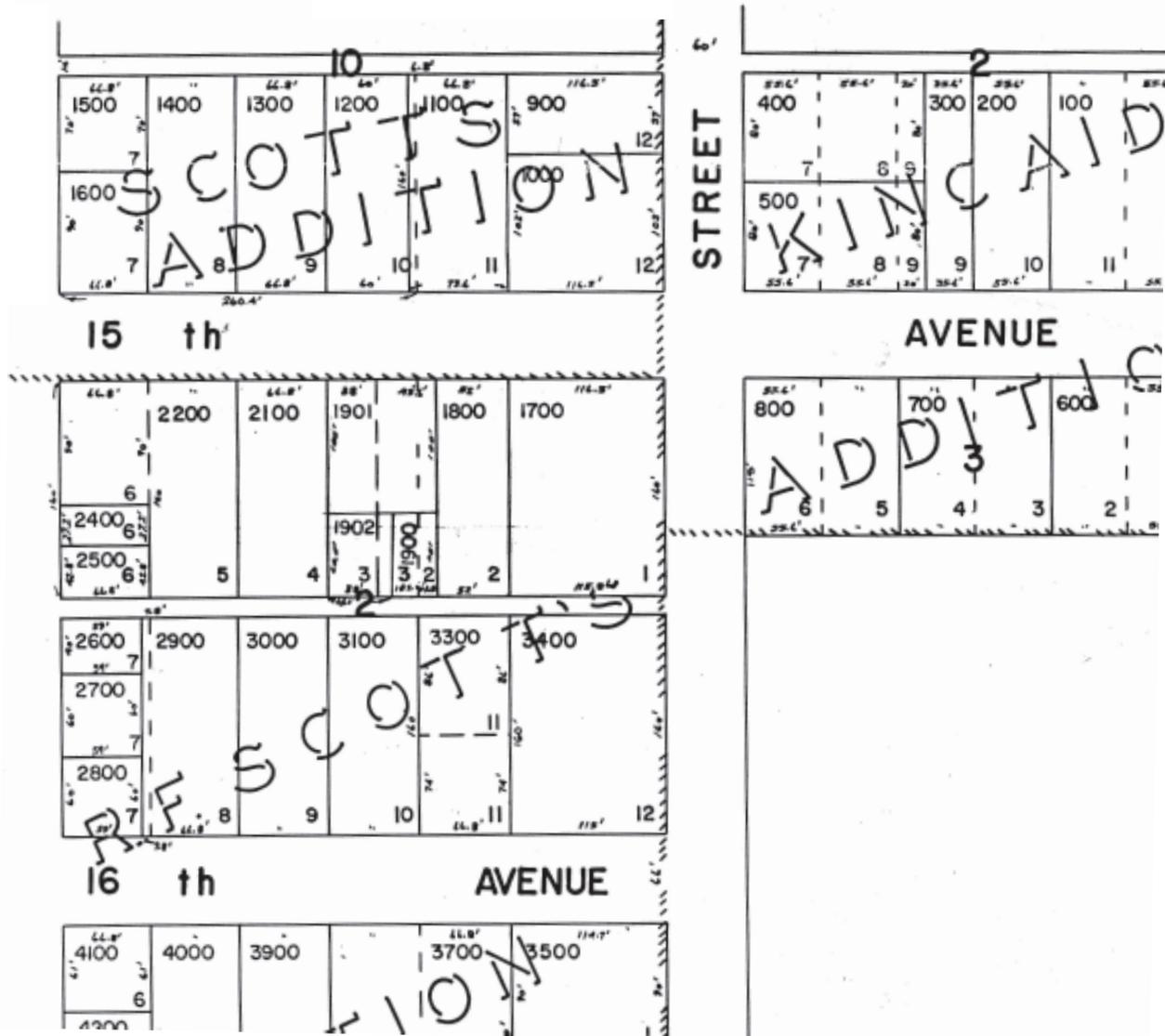
This property was purchased by the Psi Alpha Chapter of Chi Omega in the spring of 1926 for the purpose of building their sorority house. It has remained in their ownership, without the purchase or sale of surrounding property, ever since.



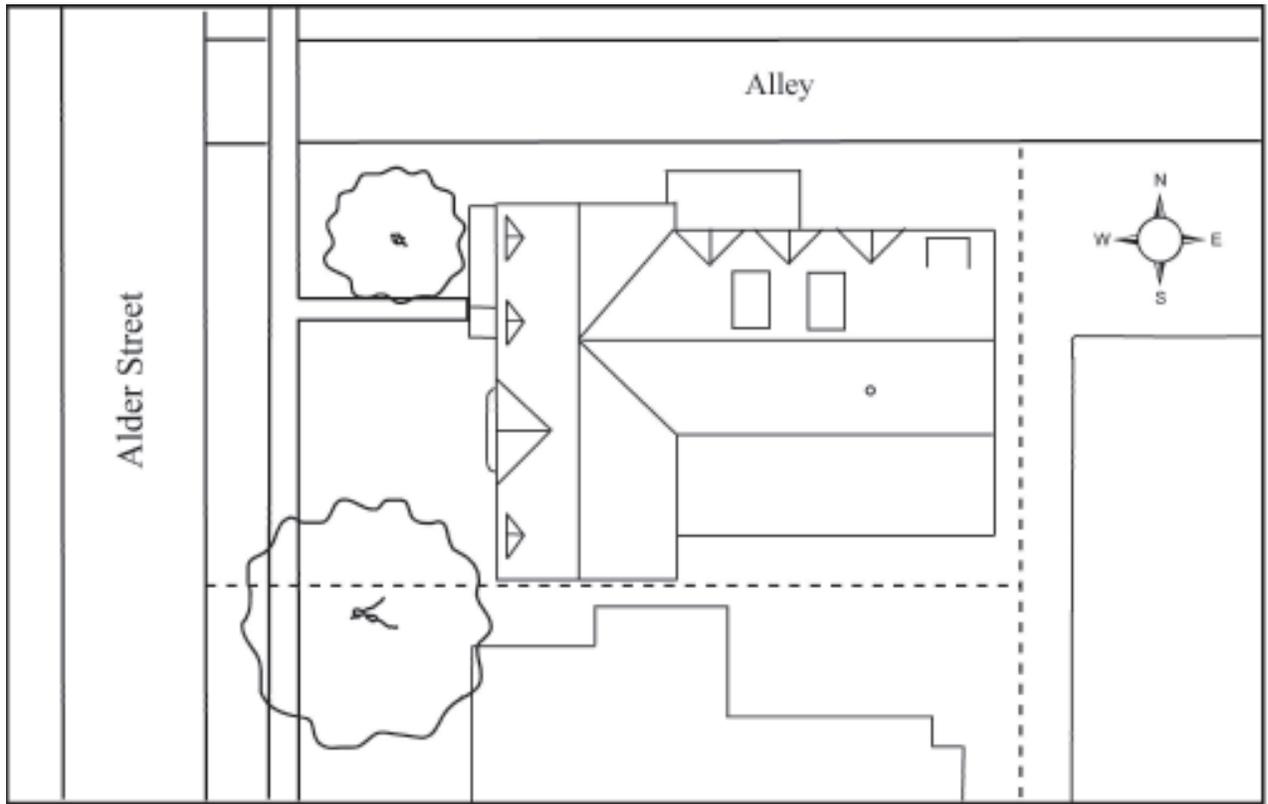
Psi Alpha Chi Omega House  
1461 Alder Street, Eugene, Oregon

# VICINITY MAP





Psi Alpha Chi Omega House  
 1461 Alder Street, Eugene, Oregon  
**LANE COUNTY ASSESSORS PLAT**  
 17-03-32-34 Tax Lot 400



Psi Alpha Chi Omega House  
1461 Alder Street, Eugene, Oregon

## **SITE PLAN**

Source: City of Eugene Cultural Resource Inventory



Figure 1. Construction photo, c.1926.



Figure 2. After completion, c.1928.



Figure 3. West elevation, 2001.



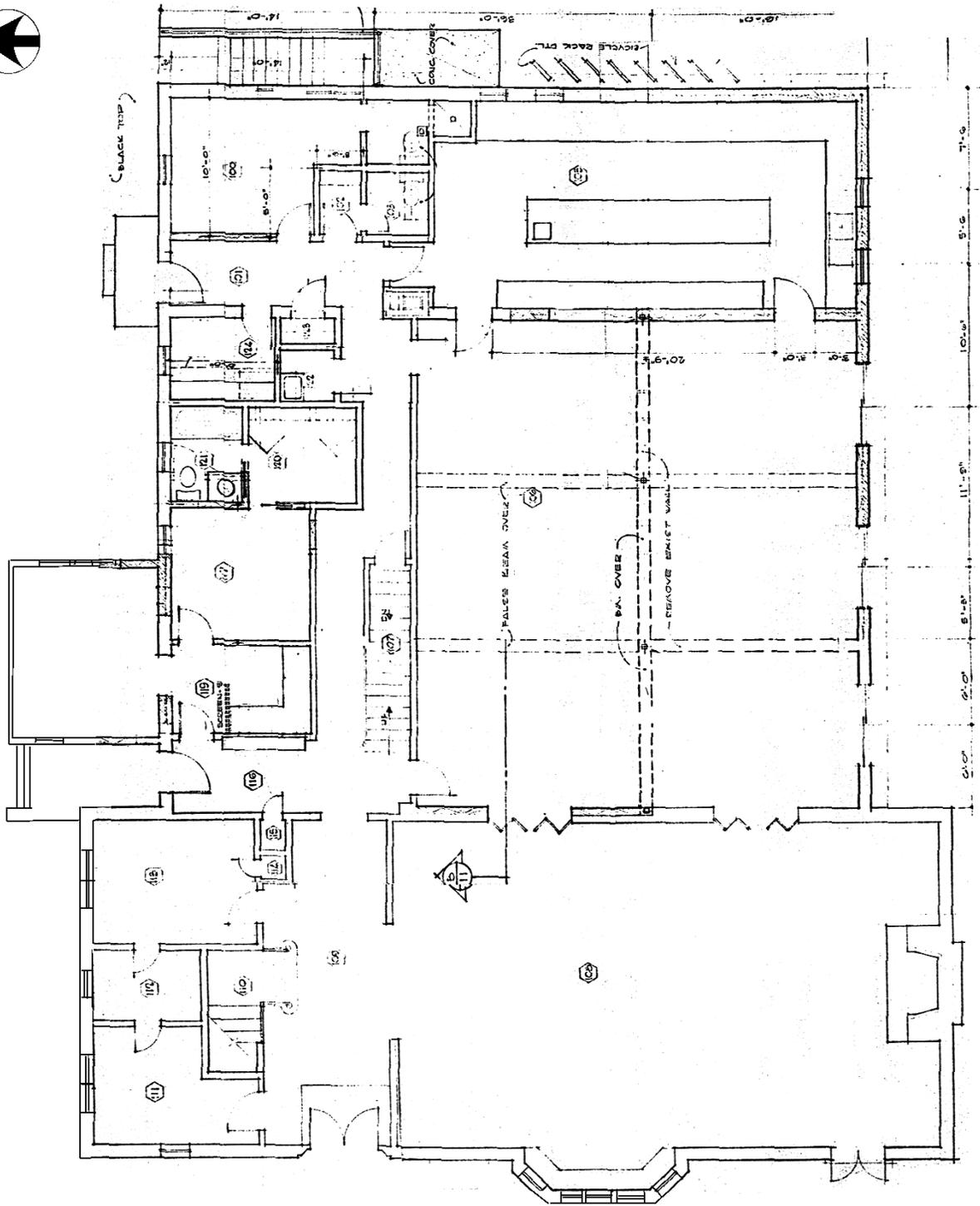
Figure 4. North elevation, 2001.



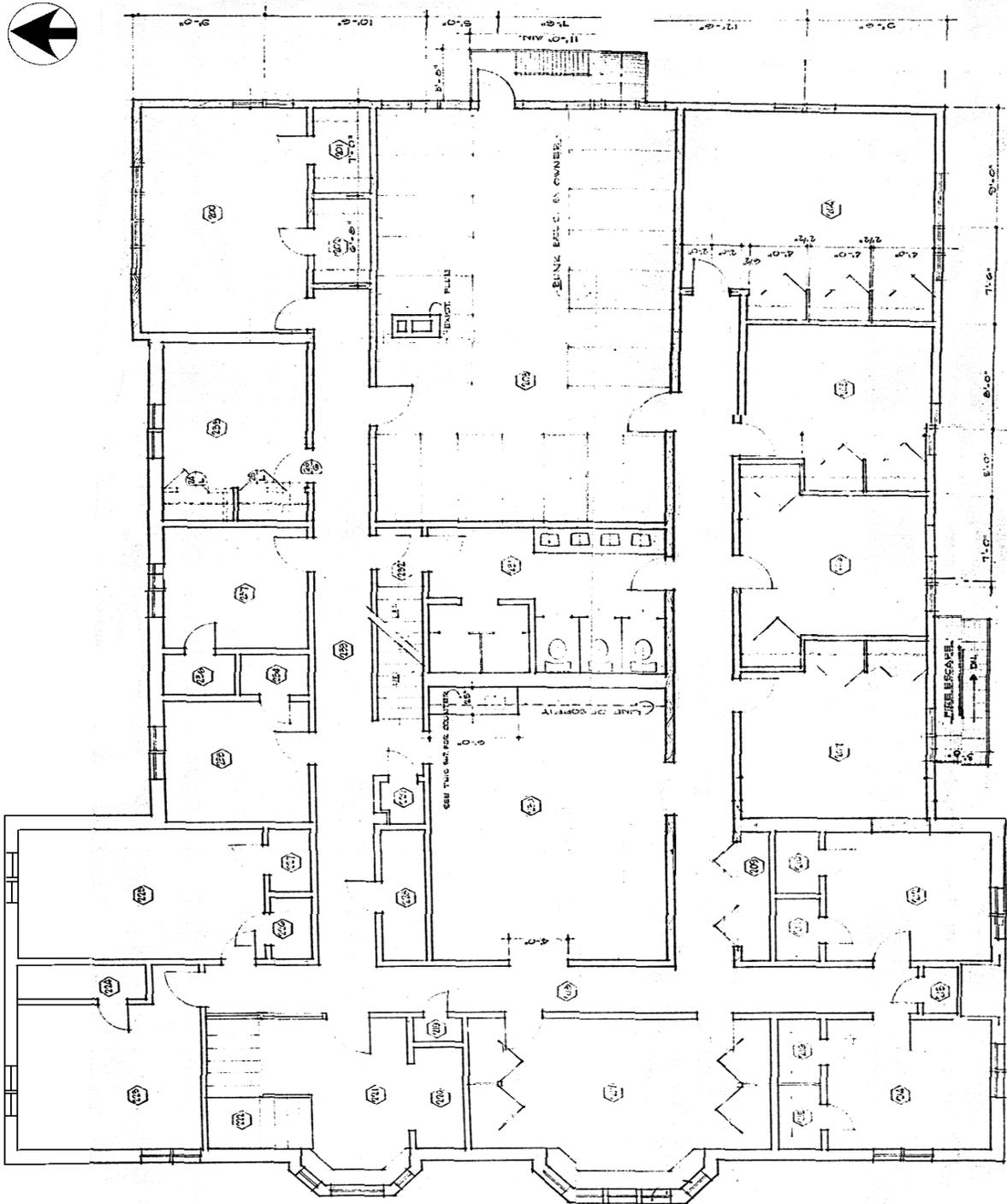
Figure 5. East elevation, 2001.



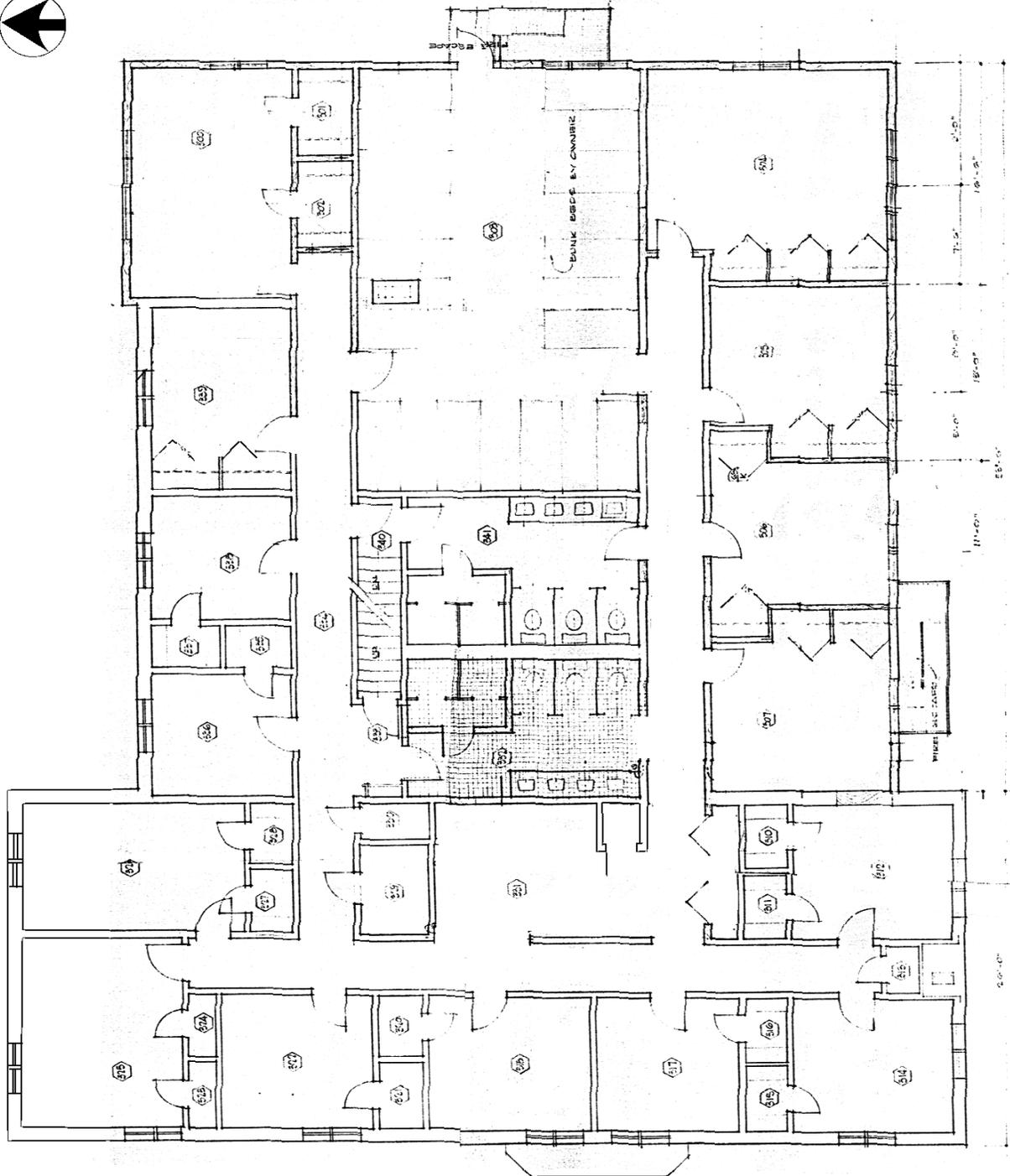
Figure 6. South elevation, 2001.



First Floor, Chi Omega, 2001.

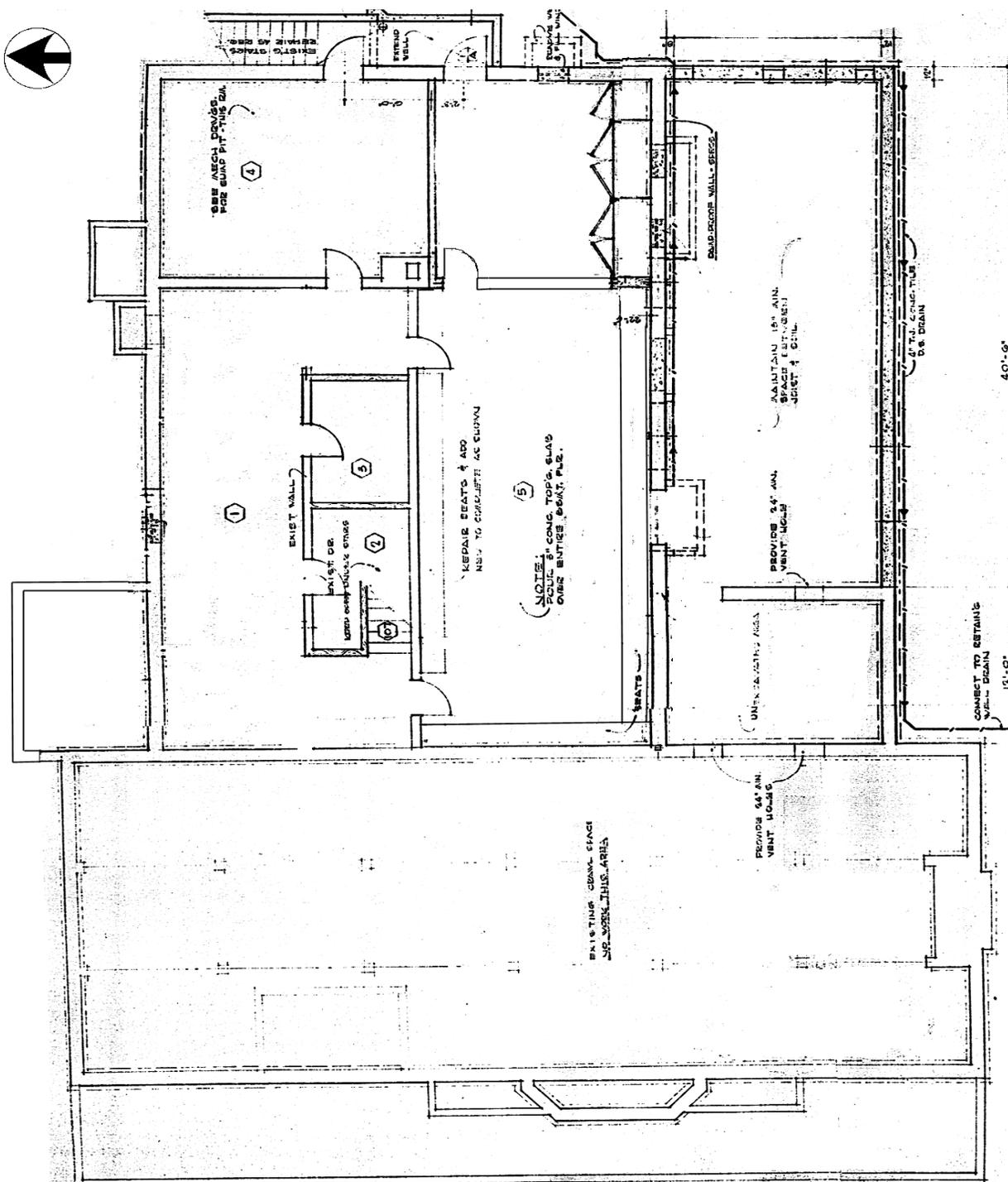


Second Floor, Chi Omega, 2001.



Third Floor, Chi Omega, 2001.





Basement, Chi Omega, 2001.

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1. Historic View: Construction Photo  
Looking: East from Alder Street  
Photographer: unknown  
Date of Photograph: c. 1926  
Copy Negative: City of Eugene, Planning Division
2. Historic View: Historic Photos  
Looking: East from Alder  
Photographer: unknown  
Date of Photograph: c. 1928  
Copy Negative: City of Eugene, Planning Division
3. Current View: West (front facing) Elevation  
Looking: East, from Alder Street  
Photographer: Leslie Heald  
Date of Photograph: February 26, 2001  
Copy Negative: City of Eugene, Planning Division
4. Current View: North Elevation  
Looking: South, from alley  
Photographer: Leslie Heald  
Date of Photograph: February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2001  
Copy Negative: City of Eugene, Planning Division
5. Current View: East (rear) Elevation  
Looking: West, from alley  
Photographer: Leslie Heald  
Date of Photograph: February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2001  
Copy Negative: City of Eugene, Planning Division
6. Current View: South Elevation  
Looking: Northwest, from adjacent property  
Photographer: Leslie Heald  
Date of Photograph: February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2001  
Copy Negative: City of Eugene, Planning Division