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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

JUN 13 1988

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Robb, James D., House  
other names/site number Robb-Roberts House  
Coleman, Samantha, House

2. Location

street & number 2606 17th Avenue N/A not for publication  
city, town Forest Grove N/A vicinity  
state Oregon code OR county Washington code 067 zip code 97116

3. Classification

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

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
Signature of certifying official [Signature] Date June 9, 1988  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register. [Signature] Entered in the National Register 7-14-88  
 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 \_\_\_\_\_

**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 Victorian/Italianate/Gothic

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stucco over brick

walls wood/weatherboards

roof asphalt (composition shingle)

other chimneys/brick

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Washington County tax records indicate that the nominated house was built for James D. Robb in 1874. The two-story residence, located at the southeast corner of the intersection of 17th Avenue and Filbert Avenue in Forest Grove, remains substantially as originally constructed. The salient features of this Italianate house with Gothic overtones are a relatively steep (12/12) gable roof with a one-story cross gable volume abutting on the east. All main gables and the wall dormer roof have identical pitches. The full width entry porch has two-member columns with caps and scroll sawn brackets. The "signature" feature is the one-story, polygonal bay with conical roof, bracketed cornice, patterned cut-out, ogee arches over square-headed, four-over-four, double-hung wood windows.

The influence of the Italianate style is most apparent in the elongated window openings with hooded lintels. The front entrance, offset to the east side, has a top light with central mullion. The house is Classically detailed with boxed cornice, wide unadorned frieze and attenuated cornerboards with delicate cap molding. The siding is eight-inch channel, or drop siding. The porch, which is especially fine, is intact with its original uprights and full entablature. The upper deck railing appears to be a replacement.

The floor plan of the house is an asymmetrical T-shape with the leg of the "T" abbreviated and formed by a one-story gable-roofed wing extending to the east. The long north-south axis is formed by three rectangular volumes, each covered by identically pitched gable roofs of different height. The slight asymmetrical alignment of the three gabled masses that comprise the north-south element suggest they may have been constructed at different times. However, the framing systems, size of the rough sawn rafters, and exterior finish materials seem consistent and may indicate they were constructed concurrently. Further, the original function of the spaces is thought to have been wood storage and utility service. These, along with the still-existing cool storage room and pantry, would have been essential for the operation of the structure as a residence. A door "clanger" patented in 1860, is still functional in the back door located in this area.

The ground floor plan of the main two-story mass originally was asymmetrical, with entry stairhall and sitting room on the left (east) and parlor, dining and kitchen spaces aligned on the right (west). Later, probably when wood burning stoves were discontinued, the kitchen was relocated into the service-wood storage area and the former kitchen area converted to a dining room. The

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1

original fir wainscot of the kitchen remains in this area. A bathroom was installed in the service area at some early date. A double floor-to-ceiling French door was installed in the west wall of the bathroom about 1980. A fireplace was added to the parlor about 1940, and with the exception of a surround of "Roman Tile," the paneled wood chimneypiece is compatible with the original finish and detail.

Access to the second floor is given by an open string stairway with painted fir treads and risers, turned hardwood balusters and newels, and a broad hardwood (maple or birch) handrail with sweeps and turns. The handrail underside is inscribed with the inscription "J. D. Robb." The second floor also presents an asymmetrical room arrangement within the two-story mass, containing a stairhall on the left (east) and bedrooms on the right (west). About 1960 the second floor area was extended into the attics of the service and wood storage areas to create an apartment with a bath, kitchen and utility space. These spaces have differing floor levels and ceiling heights as dictated by the existing attic spaces. A shed dormer was added to the eastern slope of the original gable to allow headroom within the bath. During the 1980s the second floor was returned to a three-bedroom, bath and utility configuration as an integral part of the single-family residence.

The original interior finishes of wood lath and plaster ceilings and walls have been preserved throughout most of the interior. Where deteriorated painted or papered surfaces required refinishing, the replacement materials and colors were made compatible with the original. The 10' 8" high ceilings of the parlors and entry hall have three cast plaster medallions dated 1872. Walls have wood picture moldings and a wide molded wood baseboard. The original four-panel wooden doors with operating transoms and five-inch wide architrave casings remain throughout the original two-story area. The white porcelain door knobs, transoms, window and shutter hardware all appear to be original. About 1940, oak strip flooring was installed over the original 1 x 4" fir flooring in the entry and parlors. The original vertical grain Douglas fir flooring remains elsewhere. The large second floor bedroom, facing north, has full height eight-light window/doors opening onto the upper deck of the front porch.

The structural system is balloon frame using rough sawn floor joists, studs and rafters. Cut nails are visible in exposed framing areas. Although the present roofing is an unobtrusive dark composition material, evidence of the original cover of wood shingles is visible in the attics over spaced rough sawn sheathing. The structure is founded on brick perimeter walls that have been covered with cement plaster. The entry porch is placed on brick piers.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   7   Page   2  

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The original heating system was undoubtedly from wood burning stove(s), vented to a central corbelled brick chimney. This was removed along with the wood stoves when an electric furnace was installed, providing heat to the first floor.

The house presents a pleasing appearance, sited with generous set-backs on its large corner lot. A detached double garage constructed about 1940 with compatible details does not detract from the character of the house, but is not counted as a contributing feature. The feeling of the property is enhanced by the well-maintained yard featuring a large Sequoia and mature maples and hawthorns.

**8. Statement of Significance**

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

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)  
Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance  
1874  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates  
1874  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person  
James D. Robb

Architect/Builder  
Harley McDonald

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

The fine two-story Italianate house with Gothic overtones and longitudinal, end-entry plan located south of the city center of Forest Grove, Oregon, is one of two houses remaining in the community which are confidently attributed to local carpenter-builder Harley McDonald. It was built in 1874 for pioneer educator James D. Robb.

The Robb House has been modified in its private east side elevation, but the original front porch, with its delicate cut-out and scroll-embellished uprights, is intact. Like the Benjamin Cornelius, Jr. House, also built by McDonald, the Robb House is characterized by boxed cornice and wide, unadorned frieze, gables with comparatively steep pitch, channel siding, tall window openings with hooded lintels, and a conical-roofed, polygonal bracketed window bay. The Robb House has a wall dormer above the projecting bay. The house was modestly modified in three essential episodes in later years. In 1940 an outside chimney was added on the west side elevation for a parlor fireplace. In 1960 the second story was renovated for an apartment (this work was reversed recently), and in 1980 a low wood deck was added to the southeast corner of the house by the previous owners.

The building is locally significant as a distinctive example of Italianate architecture showing some characteristics of the Gothic Revival style, and it is one of the two remaining houses in Forest Grove confidently attributed to the carpenter-builder Harley McDonald, who was among the first "architects" to work in Oregon.

The house is noteworthy, though not nominated, for its association with an early day principal of Tualatin Academy, a Congregational denominational school organized in the 1840s which became Tualatin Academy and Pacific University in 1854. James D. Robb and his wife, Caroline, occupied the house from the time construction was completed to 1882. During this time Robb was principal of Tualatin Academy and Superintendent of Schools for Washington County. The house was next occupied for a span of one year by the Reverend William Roberts, who had presided over the organization of the first Methodist Conference in the Pacific

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Washington County Deed Records. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.  
City of Forest Grove Cultural Resource Inventory.  
Corning, Howard McKinely, ed., Dictionary of Oregon History (Portland: Binford and Mort, 1956).  
Eels, Myron, History of Tualatin Academy. Rare book collection, Pacific University.  
Gaston, Joseph, The Centennial History of Oregon (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1912).  
Wilkes, P.A., "Mayors and City Councils of Forest Grove,," Senior thesis, Pacific University, undated.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository:

Forest Grove Planning Department

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property less than one Forest Grove, Oregon 1:24000

UTM References

A 10 492210 5040040  
 Zone Easting Northing

C         

B           
 Zone Easting Northing

D         

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description The nominated property is located in Section 6, Township 1S, Range 3W, Willamette Meridian, in Forest Grove, Washington County, Oregon. It is identified as Tax Lot 4702 of Block 35 of the Town of Forest Grove and is more particularly described as follows: Beginning at the NW corner of said Block 35, thence East 110 feet, thence South 146 feet, thence West 110 feet, thence North 146 feet to the point of beginning.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property, measuring 110 x 146 feet, encompasses the parcel historically developed and occupied by James D. Robb, principal of Tualatin Academy, from 1874 to 1882. A compatibly-styled, double-car garage of 1940 also stands on the property but is not counted a contributing feature.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Kathleen Pearson  
 organization Historic Landmarks Board of Forest Grove date August 1987  
 street & number 2606 17th Avenue telephone (503) 357-9457  
 city or town Forest Grove state Oregon zip code 97116

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 1

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Northwest at the close of the mission period. During the time he lived in the house, Reverend Roberts completed a four-year appointment as pastor of the Methodist congregation in Forest Grove.

The James D. Robb-William Roberts House is a locally distinctive example of Late Victorian Italianate architecture in which the influence of the Gothic Revival is evident also. Of eleven houses in Forest Grove environs dating from the 1870s, the houses of James D. Robb and Benjamin Cornelius, Jr., are the best designed and best preserved examples of the Italianate/Gothic type in the town limits. The dignified but modest Robb House, surrounded by stately trees and well tended grounds, reflects a more quiet time when Forest Grove was known as "Piety Hill." Its schools, churches and "small town" ways were a major attraction to the many families who went there to have their children educated at Tualatin Academy and Pacific University.

Harley McDonald had been among the first architects of record to work in Portland when he designed and built the First Congregational Church in Forest Grove in 1857. He lived in Salem until about 1870, at which time he and his family moved to Forest Grove, where McDonald remained until his death in 1903. The Robb-Roberts House, the Benjamin Cornelius, Jr. House and the architect's own house, relocated outside the community, share common design, construction and decorative details. All three houses date from the early 1870s: McDonald (1872), Cornelius (1873) and Robb (1874). All original occupants were connected in Congregational Church circles.

The Robb-Roberts House stands on what was originally part of the Harvey Clarke Donation Land Claim, land deeded to the Tualatin Academy (which became Pacific University). The land passed as wages owed to its first president, Dr. Sidney Marsh.

Marsh sold the land to James Dunlap Robb and his wife Caroline Cookson Whittaker Robb in 1874. James and Caroline and their two sons, John H. and Horace L., lived in the house from 1874 to 1882, during which time Professor Robb served as principal of Tualatin Academy and Superintendent of Schools of Washington County. Robb was a well known pioneer educator. He taught in most of the early schools of the Willamette and Tualatin Valleys including Oregon City, Albany and Yamhill. He also served terms in The Dalles, Astoria and Portland. Robb arrived in Oregon from Ohio in 1864. He is noted in the annals of Oregon education as an active supporter of the movement for a common school (Normal School) for teachers. He contributed materially to its eventual acceptance.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 2

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In January of 1882 the house passed to Reverend William Roberts and his wife Hannah, who lived in the home until November of 1883. Reverend Roberts was born in New Jersey and was admitted to the Philadelphia Conference of the Methodist Church in 1834. In 1846 he was selected by the Board of Bishops as Superintendent of the Oregon Mission. After sailing around Cape Horn he explored California for six weeks and organized the first Methodist church in San Francisco. He reached Oregon in 1847 and replaced the Reverend George Gary who was acting as interim superintendent of the mission. Roberts organized the Oregon and California Mission Conference which also included Idaho, Washington and part of Montana. He was superintendent of the mission for four years.

In the 1850s the Reverend and Mrs. Roberts took in young Catherine Sager, one of the survivors of the Whitman Massacre. Catherine later married Clark Pringle, the grandson of Tabitha Brown (one of the founders of Tualatin Academy and Pacific University).

In 1879 Reverend Roberts arrived in Forest Grove, where he was the minister of the Methodist Church from 1879 to 1883. He purchased the Robbs' House in 1882 when the Methodist church and parsonage were sold. The minister and his wife left the area in late 1883 for Dayton, Oregon, where Roberts died in 1888.

Little is known about the next family to own the house, except their names were John and Caroline Blank Showers. John was the Superintendent of Roads in Forest Grove from 1879 until the late 1880s. They had three children: William, a lawyer living in Portland; Ida a school teacher in Gales Creek, who married into the Hillsboro Imbrie family, and Charles, about whom nothing is known. Caroline died in 1895, and John and his second wife, Emily Odell Showers, sold the property to Edward H. and Samantha Coleman in 1900.

The history of the house would not be complete without some mention of Samantha Coleman. The stories of her life in Forest Grove and Hillside are too numerous to recount. However, she was an avid suffragette and temperance lady and the town's endearing "character." An old Forest Grove newspaper article tells that in 1913, during the first official election in which women were allowed to vote, Mrs. E. H. Coleman received 75 "complimentary" votes for Mayor of Forest Grove making her the first woman to run for the office of Mayor of Forest Grove.

At her death in 1939 the house was purchased from her estate by General and Mrs. Foote. In 1964 it passed to Mr. and Mrs. B. Gerald, and in 1969 it was sold to a family named Cooke. In 1974 Mr. and Mrs. A. Wilcox bought the house and sold it in 1978 to Dan and Cindy Hull. The current owners, Mike and Kathleen Pearson, purchased the home in 1983 and are in the process of renovating the property.

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National Park Service**

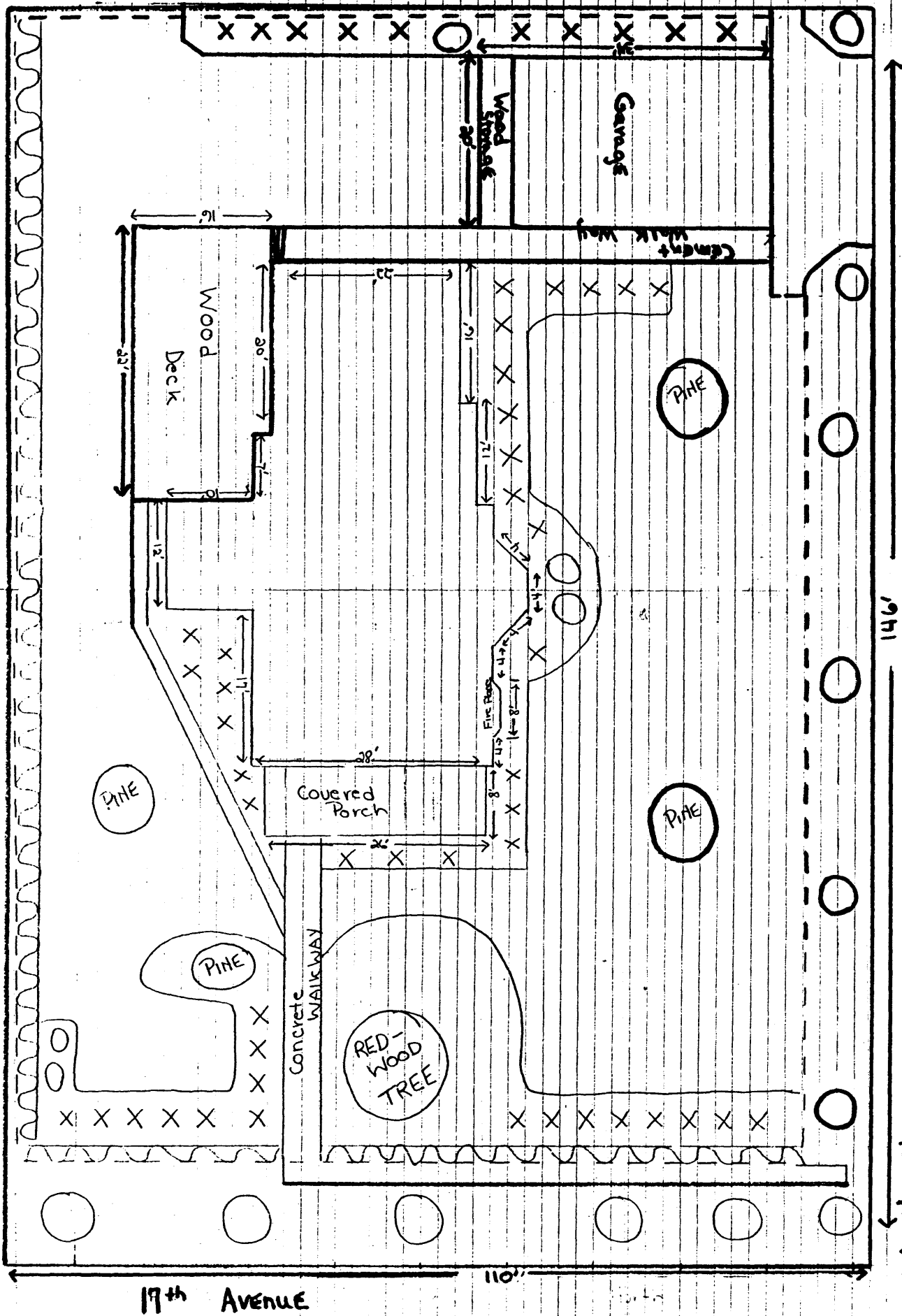
**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   8   Page   3  

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The very large, old Sequoia tree in the front yard was acquired from Forest Grove nurseryman John Porter. After unsuccessfully mining for gold in California, Porter returned to Oregon with Sequoia seeds and started a nursery. Many of these original trees are still in the surrounding area including the Hillsboro Courthouse, the Verboort Church, the campus of Pacific University, the Porter Farm east of Forest Grove and numerous residences in Hillsboro, Cornelius and Forest Grove.





2' per square

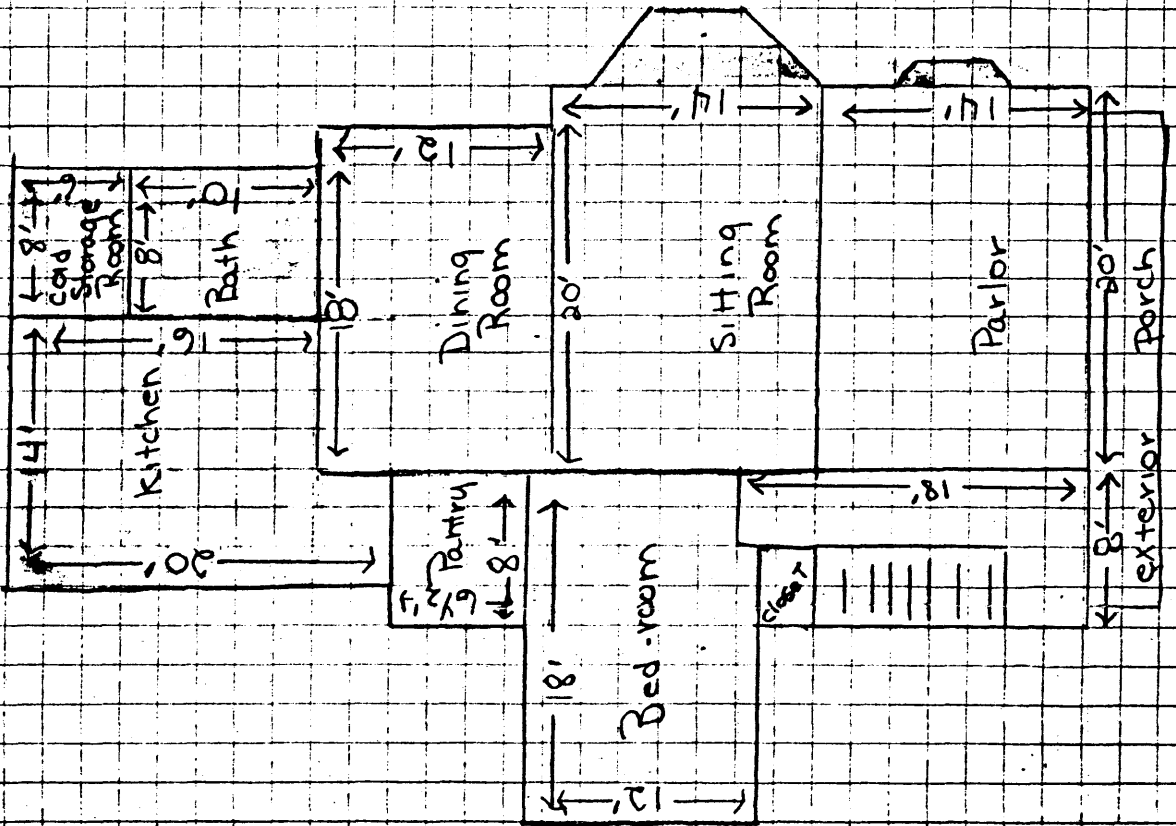
Filbert Avenue

North

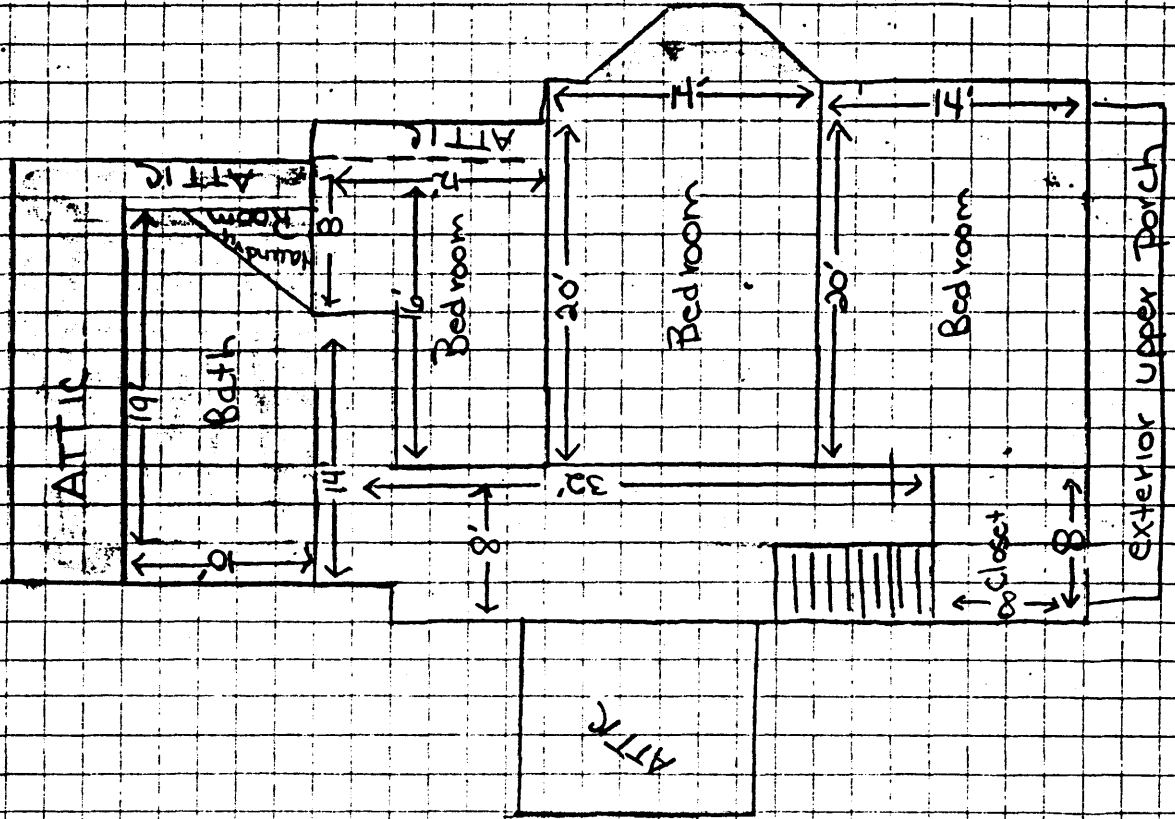
- - - Fence
- Trees
- ~ Hedge
- X X X Plants

2606 1/2 N. WOOD AVE.  
 FOREST GROVE, OREGON

Main Floor



2nd story



North



James D. Robb/William Roberts House  
Forest Grove, Oregon, *WASHINGTON COUNTY*

Photographed by Eric Stewart  
4-1-1987

Negative located at Forest Grove Planning  
Department, *CITY HALL, FOREST GROVE, OR 97116*

North elevation of house

Photo # 1 of 9



James D. Robb/William Roberts House  
Forest Grove, Oregon, *WASHINGTON COUNTY*

Photographed by Eric Stewart  
4-1-1987

Negative located at the Forest Grove planning  
department, *LIM HALL, FOREST GROVE, ON 97116*

*WEST* elevation of house.

Photo #2 of 9



James D. Robb/William Roberts House  
Forest Grove, Oregon, *WASHINGTON COUNTY*

Photographed by Eric Stewart  
4-1-1987

Negative located at Forest Grove Planning  
Department, *CITY HALL, FOREST GROVE, OR 97116*

*EAST* elevation of house

Photo # 3 of 9



James D. Robb/William Roberts House  
Forest Grove, Oregon, *WASHINGTON COUNTY*

Photographed by Eric Stewart  
4-1-1987

Negative located at Forest Grove Planning  
Department, *CITY HALL, FOREST GROVE, OR 97116*

South ~~WEST~~ *EAST* elevation of house, *SHOWING COMPATIBLE,  
NON-HISTORIC GARAGE*  
Photo # 4 of 9



James D. Robb/William Roberts House  
Forest Grove, Oregon, *WASHINGTON COUNTY*

Photographed by Mollie Todd  
4-1-1987

Negative located at Forest Grove Planning  
Department, *CITY HALL, FOREST GROVE, OR 97116*

*ENTRY STAIRWELL*  
Interior view of stairway and entry.

#5 of 9 photos



James D. Robb/William Roberts House  
Forest Grove, Oregon, *WASHINGTON COUNTY*

Photographed by Mollie Todd  
4-1-1987

Negative located at Forest Grove Planning  
Department, *CITY HALL, FOREST GROVE, OR 97116*

Interior view of stairway, viewed looking  
east through front parlor door.

#6 of 9 photos



James D. Robb/William Roberts House  
Forest Grove, Oregon, *WASHINGTON COUNTY*

Photographed by Mollie Todd  
4-1-1987

Negative located at Forest Grove Planning  
Department, *CITY HALL, FOREST GROVE, OR 97114*

Interior view of parlor and original kitchen  
to the left. View facing west.

#7 of 9 photos



James D. Robb/William Roberts House  
Forest Grove, Oregon, *WASHINGTON COUNTY*

Photographed by Mollie Todd  
4-1-1987

Negative located at Forest Grove Planning  
Department, *CITY HALL, FOREST GROVE, OR 97116*

Interior view of bay window facing west.

#8 of 9 photos



James D. Robb/William Roberts House  
Forest Grove, Oregon, *WASHINGTON COUNTY*

Photographed by Mollie Todd  
4-1-1987

Negative located at Forest Grove Planning  
Department, *CITY HALL, FOREST GROVE, OR 97116*

Interior view of plaster medallion dated 1872  
located in north parlor.

# *9* of *9* photos