

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Date Listed: June 17, 2026

NRIS No. SG100013139

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office

# 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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Le Guin, Ursula K., House

other names/site number Hutchin House

Name of Multiple Property Listing N/A

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

## 2. Location

street & number 3321 NW Thurman Street  not for publication

city or town Portland  vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Multnomah code 051 zip code 97210

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:  national \_\_\_ statewide \_\_\_ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: \_\_\_ A  B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D

Ian P. Johnson  
Ian Johnson (May 6, 2026 13:16:05 PDT)

05/06/26

Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register  removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**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.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		site
		structure
		object
1	0	<b>Total</b>

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/  
 Queen Anne; Shingle Style  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: BRICK  
 walls: WOOD/Weatherboard; Shingle  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 roof: ASPHALT  
 other: STONE  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity).

### Summary Paragraph

The Ursula K. Le Guin House at 3321 NW Thurman St. in Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, occupies an approximately 0.07-acre parcel set amongst the largely residential neighborhood of Willamette Heights in the Northwest District. The ca. 1908 Queen Anne/Shingle Style house is one of several similarly styled houses within the neighborhood.<sup>1</sup> The building is two-and-a-half stories tall with a daylight basement, brick foundation, a small addition (1984) to the west and an one-story attached garage (constructed sometime between 1908 and 1960, likely during the height of automobile popularization in the 1920s) to the east.<sup>2</sup> A small brick chimney rises from the attic story on a gabled portion of the roof facing north. The building's style is characterized by its prominent use of wood shingles, its complex, side-gabled roof, and deep overhanging eaves. The façade faces south towards NW Thurman St. At the rear of the house, a prominent deck extends across the north elevation and wraps around to the east and west. The interior consists of a first floor, a second floor, and partially finished basement and attic. Materials in the primary spaces of the house are generally hardwood floors, painted plaster walls, and a mix of painted and unpainted wood trim. Doors are largely original wood paneled units. Character defining features associated with Le Guin's work include the built-in desks and windows overlooking the mountains within her writing studio, as well as built-in bookshelves across multiple spaces. The vast majority of materials date to ca. 1908 or were updated by Ursula K. Le Guin and Charles Le Guin during their ownership, which began in 1960. Following the 1960–1974 period of significance, the house experienced modest alterations also completed by the Le Guins, including the addition of a laundry room and basement apartment between 1984 and 1986, as well as the installation of interior French doors between the entry and living room. The building remains in its original location and setting and continues to reflect its appearance from the period of Ursula K. Le Guin's residence and work. It therefore retains the integrity necessary to convey its significant association with her life and literary career.

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### Narrative Description

The spaces associated with Ursula K. Le Guin's productive life are concentrated primarily within the interior of the house, particularly the second-floor writing studio, attic workspace, and adjacent living areas that supported reading, drafting, and revision. The surrounding landscape, including the gardens and the large redwood tree planted by the Le Guin family, also formed an integral part of this working environment, contributing to a setting of sustained reflection and creative practice. Together, these interior and exterior spaces are central to the property's significance as they reflect the integration of domestic life, designed workspaces, and a cultivated natural environment that supported Le Guin's literary production over time. The description that follows highlights both the broader environmental context and the specific features that shaped and sustained her daily writing practice.

### SETTING

The Ursula K. Le Guin House is located at 3321 NW Thurman St. in Willamette Heights, a neighborhood approximately three miles northwest of downtown Portland (**Figure 1**). Thurman St. runs east-west, adjacent to the south side of the house's façade (**Figure 2**). Thurman St. intersects NW 34<sup>th</sup> Ave. to the southwest and NW 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave. to the east. The neighborhood is located on a terraced hill above the

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<sup>1</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps show empty lots in 1901. In 1908, the house appears on the maps, making the construction date ca. 1908; Sanborn Map Company, "Portland, Oregon," 1908 (New York: Sanborn Map & Publishing Co, 1908), Sheets #22, 12 & 21.

<sup>2</sup> Le Guin family members conveyed that the garage was constructed by the time the family purchased the house, meaning it was added pre-1960.

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industrial district historically known as “Slabtown,” developed following the introduction of the trolley to the city. The residential neighborhood is characterized by densely packed single-family houses with private yards on both sides of the street. Many houses were constructed around the turn of the twentieth century; however, some modern examples exist as well. The neighborhood terminates to the northwest in a densely forested area utilized for hiking and outdoor recreation. To the east, NW Thurman St. continues across a bridge that spans the Lower Macleay Trail, another hiking trail leading from Lower Macleay Park to the north. A small commercial corridor is located about a mile to the east surrounding NW 23<sup>rd</sup> St. The north portion of the property is bound by a forested hill, which is largely inaccessible due to the steep incline. The east and west elevations face other single-family houses of similar design.

The house’s proximity to significant natural landscapes, including the forested west terminus of Willamette Heights and the adjacent trail systems connecting to Forest Park and Lower Macleay Park, provided a direct and recurring connection to wooded environments and seasonal change. These landscapes are part of the contemplative backdrop and working environment that shaped Le Guin’s writing practice, reinforcing her sustained engagement with ecological themes, place-based observation, and the relationship between human habitation and the natural world. The neighborhood’s elevated position above the former industrial district of “Slabtown” further contributes to a sense of physical and symbolic separation from the urban core while maintaining visual and geographic access to it.

#### **SITE (FIGURES 2-4, PHOTOS 1 & 2)**

The Ursula K. Le Guin House property occupies two parcels, with the west addition existing on its own parcel. Lush gardens planted by the Le Guin family wrap around the house from west to north (*Photos 1 to 3*). Fitting with the terraced character of the neighborhood, the site slopes down dramatically to the north of the house into a heavily wooded area. Stone paths wind through the gardens connecting the different areas. Trees, shrubs, and other greenery obscure much of the site. Notably, a large redwood tree rises from the south side of the site, planted by the Le Guins as a reminder of Ursula K. Le Guin’s Northern California roots.<sup>3</sup> A small path leads around the east side of the house along the garage and to the driveway at the south side of the house, which remains in use.

#### **EXTERIOR (FIGURES 4, 8, & 9, PHOTOS 1 THROUGH 8)**

The ca. 1908 Ursula K. Le Guin House (*Figures 8 & 9*) exhibits elements of the Queen Anne and Shingle styles. The building is two-and-a-half stories tall with a daylight basement and has a small laundry room addition (1984) to the west and a garage addition (ca. 1920s) to the east. It has a complex side-gabled roof featuring a prominent gabled wing extending from the primary façade, as well as a hip-roofed rear wing including a small brick chimney at the rear of the tallest portion of the roof. Most windows are wood-sash, double-hung 1/1 original units. Historic painted wood shingles clad the main block of the house at the upper stories, and painted wood lap siding clads the ground level and additions. Stylistic characteristics of the house include its prominent use of wood shingle cladding at the upper stories, painted wood lap siding below the second story, and its deep overhanging eaves. The façade faces south towards NW Thurman St. and features a small entry porch with exposed rafters supported by round columns. A large, covered wrap-around porch extends from the laundry room addition on the west elevation, across the north (rear) elevation, all the way to the flat roof of the garage on the east elevation.

#### **SOUTH ELEVATION (FAÇADE) (FIGURE 4, PHOTO 3)**

At the primary facade, the main portion of the house features a one-story portion below the steeply pitched, side-gabled roof with a centered gable dormer. A two-and-a-half story, front-gabled bay extends to the east. A small set of concrete steps with painted wood rails provides access to the front porch and main entrance (*Photo 3*). The central primary entrance is a single-leaf wood replacement door with wood paneling and three rectangular lights at the top, which is compatible with the historic house. West of the

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<sup>3</sup> “Le Guin Family Donates Portland Home To Literary Arts For New Writers Residency,” Literary Arts, June 10, 2024, <https://literary-arts.org/2024/06/le-guin-family-donates-portland-home-to-literary-arts-for-new-writers-residency/>.

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main entrance is a pair of small stained-glass windows set within the same opening. The first story features a pair of 1/1 double-hung wood sash windows looking out from the living room at the interior. A bay window on the east elevation projects slightly over the garage at the east.

At the second story, the house is two bays wide and features a sloped, asphalt shingle-clad roof to the west above the porch, and a painted wood shingle-clad gabled section to the east. On the sloped portion of the second story is a small gabled dormer which features a smaller wood-sash, 1/1 double-hung window. The east section has a pair of double-hung windows in the second story (matching those of the first story) as well as a single, multi-lite leaded window within the gable.

The single-story attached garage to the east is relatively utilitarian, with a simple overhead replacement garage door installed sometime after the original construction of the house, painted wood siding, and a replacement metal rail which converts its roof into a deck accessible at the southeast side of the rear porch via a few wood steps. The west addition, which sits back from the historic south elevation, features no openings at this elevation.

#### WEST ELEVATION (FIGURES 4, 8, & 9, PHOTOS 1 & 4)

The west elevation faces a portion of the property's garden, with much of the basement level and first story obscured by greenery (*Photos 1 & 4*). The elevation is approximately four bays wide and features the original house, the 1984 laundry room addition (*Photo 4*), and the wrap-around porch at the north. A stretch of decking constructed in 1984 connects the laundry room addition to the porch. As the site slopes down to the north, the basement becomes increasingly exposed, dropping down a full story to the north. Beneath the addition, the earth has been lowered only in this area to provide access to the north portion of the basement. The large gable dominates this elevation. A hipped roof tops the 1984 addition.

Metal rails line the edge of the 1984 deck, which is comprised primarily of composite plank decking. Stairs lead up from ground level at the approximate center of the elevation, providing access to the 1984 deck, entrance to the addition, and wrap-around porch. At the south side of the elevation, the front porch is tucked beneath the gable's edge and features a painted wood trellis at the basement level beneath the porch, and the open porch area with a painted wood rail above. The second story features four bays with different windows within each opening. The northern and southernmost windows are double-hung, 1/1 units, while the remaining two are smaller single-lite fixed windows. The third story features a single opening with a paired window configuration of single-lite units. Two paired 1/1 double-hung wood windows are located at the south side of the addition.

#### NORTH ELEVATION (FIGURES 4, 8, & 9, PHOTOS 5 THROUGH 7)

The north elevation is surrounded by dense greenery, which obscures most of the building at this side; the site steeply slopes down at the north side as well. The historic wrap-around porch dominates this elevation, with painted wood railings and a rounded, dome-like roof (*Photo 5* and *Figure 8*). The porch extends over the entrance to the basement, which contains an apartment dating to 1986 (*Photo 6*). This centered entrance features a single-leaf painted wood door. Columns supporting the upper porch line the basement porch. West of the entrance, the basement level extends to meet the edge of the porch. At this side are two rows of three ganged single-lite units. To the east of the unit's entrance, the area serves as storage behind wood trellis.

The wrap-around porch dominates the first story. The northern half-hex shaped wall features two windows and a glazed wood-framed door on each side of the hex-shape (*Photo 7*). The non-historic connecting deck and stair are visible to the west. Above the porch, at the center of the second story, are bay windows reflecting the same hex-shaped wall with 1/1 double-hung wood windows on each side. To the west are the wood-framed, multi-lite glazed casement windows of Ursula K. Le Guin's writing studio, which were likely added or replaced during her occupation of the house.

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**EAST ELEVATION (FIGURES 4 & 5, PHOTO 8)**

The east elevation consists of a single-story attached garage, technically at the basement level, and the main house. A large deck is located on the roof of the garage and features the same non-historic materials as those at the west elevation's deck and addition, with the garage likely having been reclad during the same building campaign in the mid-1980s. The garage roof deck is at a slightly higher level than the rear wrap-around covered porch but is connected via a short set of wood stairs (*Photo 8*). The garage features non-historic wood siding, matching that of the addition at the west elevation. No windows are located along the garage's east elevation. At the first story of the house, above the garage, the elevation features a bay window with 1/1, double-hung wood windows. A painted wood ladder extends from the deck-level up to the second story. At the north beneath the covered porch is a double-leaf door with divided lites. Above, walls are clad with the typical wood shingles. Two windows pierce the second story, with a single 1/1, double-hung window to the south and a set of paired matching double-hung units to the north.

**INTERIOR (FIGURES 5 THROUGH 7, PHOTOS 9-18)**

The house has a generally rectangular plan, with some areas of irregularity to the north and west, characteristic of the Queen Anne and Shingle styles. The main entrance is located at the south side of the plan and provides access to the main house and its related interior spaces. Separate entrances provide access to the basement apartment or the garage. Materials generally include hardwood floors, painted plaster and gypsum board walls, vinyl and cork tile, and sealed wood trim and baseboards.

**FIRST FLOOR (FIGURE 5, PHOTOS 9 THROUGH 13)**

At the first floor, the living and dining spaces fill the east half of the plan, while the entry and kitchen fill the west half; the 1984 laundry addition extends from the west half of the building. The foyer at in the southwest corner of the plan provides access to the living room to the east and a small interior vestibule to the north, which creates a passage to the kitchen in the northwest corner, and the laundry addition to the west. A wooden L-shaped stair in the southwest corner of the foyer leads up to the second floor (*Photos 9 & 10*). Fifteen-lite French doors were added between the stair hall and living room in 1986 (*Photo 10*), with a natural finish matching the remainder of the wood trim in the house. On the north side of the stair leading to the second floor is the basement stair, which is painted wood and entirely utilitarian.

The living and dining rooms are the two primary spaces on the first floor. The living room features a bay window to the east and built-in shelving and benches to the south providing space for a portion of Ursula K. Le Guin's book collection alongside an area often used by the writer for reading and journalling (*Figure 24*). Other character-defining features of the living room are the brick-hearth fireplace with a simple wood mantel along the west wall, and a wide arch that opens into the dining room to the north (*Photo 11*). On either side of the arch are built-in painted shelving units, also providing space for Le Guin's book and art collection.

The dining room features a large half-hex shaped plan, following the curved design of the connected porch to the south, with access to the kitchen via a five-paneled wood door at the west wall (*Photo 12*). The dining room features comparable materials to the living room, with windows comprising much of the rear porch-facing walls. Door to the rear deck are located in the northwest and southeast corners of the dining room. The doors are wood framed and partially glazed single-leaf, divided-lite units.

The rectangular kitchen in the northwest corner of the floor features cork tile flooring, plaster walls, and painted wood trim (*Photo 13*). To the south of the kitchen is the vestibule connecting the entry foyer to the west laundry room and kitchen. A painted wood paneled door original to the house provides access to the basement stairs at the west end of the south wall. A door in the west wall of the vestibule leads into the laundry room addition. Within the northwest corner of the laundry room is a small half bath. Vinyl tile clads the floor of the laundry room and half bath.

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SECOND FLOOR (FIGURE 6, PHOTOS 14 THROUGH 16)

The second floor contains three bedrooms, a private writing studio (initially used as a nursery and converted at an unknown date during the period of significance), and two bathrooms organized on a central, narrow corridor with built-in barrister-style cabinets along the east wall. The bedrooms line east side of the corridor while a bathroom and the writing studio are located to the west (*Photos 14 & 15*). The second bathroom is located at the south end of the corridor, abutting the stair. Adjacent to the south bathroom is a narrow, painted wood slat attic door and stair that extends access to the third level. This attic stair is relatively utilitarian. Most of the second-floor wood trim is painted.

The writing studio at the northwest corner of the second floor features multi-lite wood sash windows installed during the period of significance by the Le Guins (*Photo 15*). These windows provide views of Mount St. Helens and Mount Adams to the north. The writing studio features multiple wall-mounted, custom-built shelving units on each wall, providing ample space for books and materials. These stained, adjustable wood shelves complement a built-in desk, specifically designed to accommodate the typewriter Le Guin used to produce her final manuscripts, that lines the north and east sides of the room.

The three bedrooms to the east side of the corridor (*Photo 16*) are comparable in size. The central bedroom, which is the smallest, can be accessed via the primary bedroom to the north, or by the corridor. Materials in these spaces are comparable to those in the living and dining spaces of the first floor. Wood paneled doors access the bedrooms. The two southernmost bedrooms feature additional built-in shelving as well as desks for writing space.

THIRD FLOOR/ATTIC (FIGURE 7, PHOTOS 17 & 18)

A winding carpeted stair with a wood railing leads to the landing (*Photo 17*) of the partially finished attic, which Ursula K. Le Guin used as her first writing space before converting the second-floor nursery into a studio.<sup>4</sup> The walls and ceiling of the landing are clad in unpainted wood paneling. The carpeted landing extends north of the stair, and a single bedroom (*Photo 18*) sits to the east. To the north a simple utilitarian wood door leads to the remainder of the third-floor plan, featuring unfinished storage space.

BASEMENT

The basement is divided into two primary spaces—unfinished storage space to the south, accessed either via the interior vestibule at the first floor or from the exterior beneath the 1984 construction, and a small, one-bedroom apartment unit to the north, built between 1985 and 1986. The unfinished space holds free-standing shelving that contains a large number of books from Le Guin's collection. To the north but inaccessible from the unfinished space, the plan of the apartment generally reflects that of the spaces above, with a kitchen to the northwest and living space to the east. A single bedroom is located to the south of the apartment's kitchen.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> This information was gathered from an exhibition on Ursula K. Le Guin held by Oregon Contemporary and curated by her son Theo Downes-Le Guin. The information was included on a sticker outside a writing studio mockup noting that Le Guin initially wrote in the attic, while the space that would become the studio was used as a nursery.

Theo Downes-Le Guin, *A Larger Reality Salon: Ursula K. Le Guin*, Exhibition, Oregon Contemporary, October 31, 2025, <https://www.oregoncontemporary.org/a-larger-reality>.

<sup>5</sup> The basement apartment was not accessible at the time of survey. Description of the unit's plan was pulled from drawings and photographs.

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## ALTERATIONS AND INTEGRITY

Since the end of the period of significance (1974), the property has undergone limited and compatible alterations that do not substantially affect its historic character, including the addition of a laundry room, connecting deck, and basement apartment constructed between 1984 and 1986, as well as minor interior modifications such as glazed French doors. These changes were completed during Ursula K. Le Guin's and Charles Le Guin's continued occupancy of the house and did not significantly alter Le Guin's primary writing spaces, which remain largely intact. No substantive alterations have occurred since Le Guin's death in 2018, and the property's historic workspaces and overall configuration remain intact.

## LOCATION AND SETTING

The Ursula K. Le Guin House (*Figures 1 & 2*) remains in its original location within Portland. The surrounding neighborhood of Willamette Heights retains its character from when Le Guin lived here, remaining largely residential, with rolling terraced hills and natural forests along NW Thurman St.

## DESIGN, MATERIALS, AND WORKMANSHIP

As a residence, the Ursula K. Le Guin House has changed minimally since its occupation by the Le Guins beginning in 1960. Furthermore, the original ca. 1908 property retains changes made during the period of significance related to Le Guin's need for a professional working space. At the beginning of her career, Le Guin initially wrote in the attic, while the existing writing studio was used as a nursery. Her children were born in 1957 (Elisabeth), 1959 (Caroline), and 1964 (Theodore). Once her children were older and the nursery was not needed (circa 1967), the small second floor nursery was converted into a writing studio, which involved the replacement of windows and the addition of built-in shelving and a desk. The attic was subsequently converted into a full bedroom and flexible workspace. Despite the conversion, a built-in desk was intentionally retained in the attic bedroom for flexibility of use, expanding and retaining the secondary spaces in the house being used for Le Guin's writing.<sup>6</sup>

Another change that occurred during the period of significance is the deconstruction of an original detached garage. According to the Le Guin family, the detached garage was on a quarter lot sold to them by the neighbor to the west in ca. 1961-1962.<sup>7</sup> According to the Le Guin family, this lot was not historically associated with the subject house. Charles Le Guin, with the help of a friend, demolished this garage brick-by-brick, making space for the garden at the west. The gardens surrounding the house are character-defining, establishing the environment in which Ursula K. Le Guin lived and worked. The attached garage to the east was likely an early addition or original to the house following the popularization of cars. By the time the Le Guins occupied the property, this attached garage already existed.

In addition to the alterations that occurred during or before the period of significance, there were two primary building campaigns after the period of significance but still during the Le Guins' occupation of the house.<sup>8</sup> The primary changes to the house occurred between 1984-1986 (after the period of significance) when the laundry room addition (1984), connecting deck (1984) (*Figures 10 through 16*), and basement apartment unit (1986) (*Figures 17 through 22*) were constructed.<sup>9</sup> A pair of glazed French doors were also added between the stair hall and living room (*Figure 16*).

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<sup>6</sup> Downes-Le Guin, *A Larger Reality Salon: Ursula K. Le Guin*.

<sup>7</sup> This fact was conveyed to the author by Theo Le Guin, son of Ursula and Charles Le Guin.

<sup>8</sup> Sanborn Map Company, "Portland, Oregon," 1908 (New York: Sanborn Map & Publishing Co, 1908), sheets #22, 12 & 21.

<sup>9</sup> 1980s dates are based on photographs from the Le Guin Family Collection, which were labelled with completion dates.

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Despite these later alterations, the basic design, massing, and features of the Queen Anne/Shingle Style house have remained intact, including the shingle siding, sloping roof, and multiple porches/decks, as have the changes made by the Le Guins per the needs of their family and Ursula K. Le Guin's career. Other changes to the house are minimal and include the replacement of flooring in some areas of the porches over the years as materials deteriorated. The gardens were planted and continuously maintained by Ursula K. Le Guin's husband, Charles Le Guin. They remain intact. Following Le Guin's death and the subsequent transition of ownership to the Le Guin children, no alterations have been made to the physical fabric of the house. All writing spaces were left as is, preserving them and the vast majority of their contents.

In summary, the property retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. The majority of materials and workmanship of the house have been retained. Though certain aspects of the house and site were updated or finished, or certain trim painted since its initial construction, these changes were led by the Le Guin family and occurred during their occupation of the house. The painted shingle siding, wood sash windows, wood window surrounds, and characteristic entry and rear covered porches continue to reflect materials of the building's original construction, which the Le Guins maintained throughout their occupancy. At the interior, the original wood trim, hardwood floors, plaster walls and ceilings, tiling, and general plan remain.

FEELING AND ASSOCIATION

The feeling and association of the house as a space that was maintained and adapted slightly to fit the needs of a writer and her family in the mid-to-late-twentieth century remains intact. The alterations completed by the Le Guins during the period of significance remain, including the addition of built-in shelving and desk space, and the conversion of rooms into flexible workspaces to coincide not only with family life but professional life as well. These physical changes continue to reflect the life of a writer, maintaining the feeling and association of the house as a hybrid workshop and family home. The property's continued location and setting on NW Thurman Street, nestled into a mixed residential and natural setting, also contribute to the feeling and association of the property with Ursula K. Le Guin's life. This neighborhood in Willamette Heights was a source of inspiration and comfort for the writer, as outlined in her book *Blue Moon Over Thurman Street (Figure 24)*.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LITERATURE

SOCIAL HISTORY: WOMEN'S HISTORY

**Period of Significance**

1960-1974

**Significant Dates**

1960 (Le Guins purchased home)

1966 (publication of *Rocannon's World*, Le Guin's first novel)

1968 (publication of *A Wizard of Earthsea*, first in seminal series)

1969 (publication of *The Left Hand of Darkness*)

1974 (publication of *The Dispossessed*)

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Le Guin, Ursula K.

**Cultural Affiliation** (if applicable)

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

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**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance for the Ursula K. Le Guin House extends from 1960, when the Le Guins purchased the property, to 1974, the year her work *The Dispossessed* was published.<sup>10</sup> This period encompasses Le Guin's emergence and maturation as a writer and her most active engagement with the New Wave movement in science fiction, a literary avant-garde that redefined the genre through experimentation with structure, psychology, and social critique. While residing and working at the Thurman Street house, Le Guin produced *A Wizard of Earthsea* (1968) and *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), among others, which established her national reputation and articulated the social, philosophical, and feminist ideas that became central to her career. *The Dispossessed* (1974) represents the culmination of this creative trajectory—a synthesis of the anthropological imagination and moral and political thought that defined her early work—and secured her standing as one of the most influential female literary voices of the twentieth century. Its critical and commercial success, including receipt of major accolades including the Hugo and Nebula Awards, confirmed Le Guin's lasting impact on modern literature and marked the point by which the property had attained the associations that convey its significance under Criterion B. Although Le Guin continued to live and write at the house until her death in 2018, later works reflect the continuation of an already-established legacy rather than the formative or climactic phase of her development. The period of significance therefore extends from 1960 to 1974, the years during which the Ursula K. Le Guin House achieved the historic associations that qualify it for National Register listing. Because Le Guin's association with the house continued through her death in 2018, the end of the period of significance may warrant reevaluation in the future as more time passes and her later career can be assessed with sufficient perspective.

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**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

N/A

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations).

The property at 3321 NW Thurman Street in Portland, Oregon, is nationally significant under Criterion B in the areas of LITERATURE and SOCIAL HISTORY: WOMEN'S HISTORY for its association with Ursula K. Le Guin (1929–2018), one of the most influential female literary figures of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, particularly in the genres of science fiction and fantasy. Over a career spanning six decades, Le Guin published more than twenty novels, volumes of poetry, critical essays, and children's books, earning five Nebula Awards, five Hugo Awards, and the National Book Award, among other honors. Her work challenged genre boundaries, addressed complex questions of gender, freedom, power, and identity, and left an enduring mark on American literary history. From 1960 until her death in 2018, the house at 3321 NW Thurman Street served as Le Guin's primary residence and creative workspace. The house retains physical spaces that are closely associated with her life and career. Within the second-floor writing studio and various secondary workspaces scattered throughout the house, she produced works that transformed speculative fiction into a vehicle for exploring social, political, and philosophical themes, infusing the genre with feminist perspectives during a pivotal period in American literary history. Her groundbreaking novels—*The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), *The Dispossessed* (1974), and the *Earthsea* series (1968–2001)—as well as numerous poems and essays, shaped the course of modernism and New Wave science fiction and fantasy, inspiring her audiences and generations of writers alike. These works embody the evolution of the genre as it intersected with feminism, humanism, and literary modernism, catalyzing and defining the New Wave science fiction. The most important years of Le Guin's productive life occurred while living and working at this house on Thurman Street, making it the location most directly representative of her creative achievements. The Ursula K. Le Guin House embodies both the broader historical patterns of American literary development in the postwar era and the

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<sup>10</sup> Ted R. Roberts and Miriam R. Roberts to Charles Alfred Le Guin and Ursula K. Le Guin. *Warranty Deed*. Multnomah County, Oregon, January 25, 1960. Book 1994, Page 38; Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Dispossessed: An Ambiguous Utopia* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1974).

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personal history of a revolutionary figure whose contributions permanently altered the landscape of science fiction and fantasy.

The period of significance is 1960, when the Le Guins purchased the house, to 1974, when *The Dispossessed* was published, marking one of her most important contributions to the genre of science fiction, and encompassing the years during which the Ursula K. Le Guin house attained the associations that convey its significance under Criterion B. The house is the best representative resource associated with Ursula K. Le Guin throughout her productive career.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

**CRITERION B: URSULA K. LE GUIN – A LEADING FEMALE LITERARY LEGACY IN THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY**

Ursula K. Le Guin (1929-2018) was a transformative figure in American literature whose career spanned more than six decades and whose works challenged societal and academic understandings of genre fiction and its perceived value. Best known for her novels in the science fiction and fantasy genres, she was also a prolific poet, essayist, and children’s author whose works bridged popular and literary traditions. Writing from her long-time home and studio in Portland, Oregon, Le Guin infused her fiction with feminist thought, anthropological insight, and philosophical depth, challenging readers to reconsider concepts of gender, freedom, power, societal structure, and the potential of the science fiction and fantasy genres. Her innovative narratives and richly imagined worlds earned her critical acclaim, a devoted international readership, and an enduring place in the canon of twentieth- and twenty-first-century literature. Ursula K. Le Guin and her family occupied the house at 3321 NW Thurman St. throughout her working career, making it the most important location associated with her body of work.

URSULA K. LE GUIN – A BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Ursula K. Le Guin (**Figures 23-25**) was born in 1929 in Berkeley, California, to anthropologists Alfred L. and Theodora Kroeber.<sup>11</sup> Le Guin grew up with three older brothers, who she says she “got to have fights with” and “tag around after.” Her childhood house at 1325 Arch Street in Berkeley was the site of her early, juvenile writing and formative years; however, she had left the residence long before the publication of her first works and did not return as a resident after high school, limiting its association with her mature literary production.<sup>12</sup>

Le Guin’s teenage summers were spent in the Napa Valley with her parents after her brothers had gone to serve in World War II. She described herself as “a teenager wandering the hills on my own, no company, nothing to do.”<sup>13</sup> The influence of her family and the natural landscape of the Napa Valley shaped her future career. Her brother’s interest in the science fiction periodical *Amazing Stories* introduced her to the world in which she would go on to devote the majority of her career.<sup>14</sup> Le Guin’s serious pursuit of a writing career came with her first short story submission to *Amazing Stories*, a pulp science fiction magazine, at the young age of twelve. Although she was rejected, this moment catalyzed her future.<sup>15</sup>

While living in the Napa Valley, Le Guin immersed herself in mythology books, including James Frazer’s *The Golden Bough* (1890), and classic fantasy novels such as *A Dreamer’s Tales* (1910) authored by Lord Dunsany. Though she found an early love for science fiction and fantasy, she lost interest in her adolescence, citing that the stories “seemed to be all about hardware and soldiers: White men go forth and conquer the universe.”<sup>16</sup> Although her teenage disinterest in the male-dominated science fiction of the time distanced her

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<sup>11</sup> Susan M. Bernardo and Graham J. Murphy, *Ursula K. Le Guin: A Critical Companion* (Greenwood Press, 2006), 3-4.

<sup>12</sup> Information provided by Ursula K. Le Guin’s son, Theo Le Guin.

<sup>13</sup> Bernardo and Murphy, *Ursula K. Le Guin: A Critical Companion*, 3-4.

<sup>14</sup> Bernardo and Murphy, *Ursula K. Le Guin: A Critical Companion*, 3-4.

<sup>15</sup> Bernardo and Murphy, *Ursula K. Le Guin: A Critical Companion*, 3-4.

<sup>16</sup> Gerald Jones, “Ursula K. Le Guin, Acclaimed for Her Fantasy Fiction, Is Dead at 88,” *The New York Times* (New York, New York), January 23, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/23/obituaries/ursula-k-le-guin-acclaimed-for-her-fantasy-fiction-is-dead-at-88.html>.

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from the genre, her academic pursuits and personal experiences in the years that followed gradually shaped the voice and perspective she later brought to her writing.

In 1951, Le Guin earned an undergraduate degree from Radcliffe College in the romance languages with the goal of becoming a teacher, following her father's advice to find a marketable career.<sup>17</sup> In 1952, she earned her master's degree in romance literature of the Middle Ages and Renaissance from Columbia University. While pursuing her PhD, a Fulbright fellowship led her to Paris. En route via ship, a young Ursula Kroeber met her future husband, Charles Le Guin.<sup>18</sup> The two married in Paris in 1953.<sup>19</sup> The newlyweds found themselves in Atlanta, Georgia, following a temporary job offer for Charles. Here Le Guin moved on from her studies to raise her family but never strayed far from her writing.<sup>20</sup>

Although her focus shifted toward family life during these early years of marriage, Le Guin's creative ambitions continued. Wherever the couple moved, she carried her writing with her, developing her voice through poetry and fiction even as her husband's academic career shaped their geographic path. The first long-term job offer Charles received was from the University of Idaho in Moscow, Idaho, where they lived for a year or two. After this point, the family decided they couldn't stay in Idaho and Charles began job hunting. Ursula was eager to return to the West, if possible, but she was led by her husband's job opportunities. Luckily, Charles was offered a job at Portland State College and so began their move west to Oregon.<sup>21</sup> In 1960, the couple moved into the ca. 1908 house at 3321 NW Thurman St in Portland, where they remained for the rest of their lives. It was around the time they bought their home on NW Thurman Street that Le Guin's published writing career began.<sup>22</sup> In 1959, her first work was published: the poem "Folksong from the Montayna Province," which she set in a fictional Central European country she called Orsinia.<sup>23</sup> By the early 1960s, while residing on NW Thurman Street, Le Guin had written five unpublished novels, with most set in Orsinia. She found it difficult to find a publisher, and aiming to realize her career in literature, decided to pursue a different market: genre fiction.<sup>24</sup>

The partnership between Ursula K. Le Guin and her husband Charles Le Guin was integral to her sustained literary productivity during the years she resided at 3321 NW Thurman Street. A historian by training, Charles Le Guin provided both intellectual companionship and practical support, contributing to a household structure that enabled Le Guin to balance writing with family life. The couple shared responsibilities for raising their children and maintaining the home, an arrangement that Le Guin later described as essential to her creative work: "One person cannot do two fulltime jobs, but two persons can do three fulltime jobs — if they honestly share the work."<sup>25</sup> This collaborative domestic model, which Le Guin did note was uncommon for the era, not only reflects the egalitarian values that informed much of Le Guin's writing, but also underscores the degree to which her professional achievements, which were cultivated at home, were made possible through a mutually supportive partnership.

The Le Guins' residence in Portland provided the stability and inspiration that would anchor Ursula K. Le Guin's career. However, the family ranch in Napa Valley, Kishamish Ranch, was a secondary, significant cultural influence and an early site of writing activity, later informing works such as *Always Coming Home* (1985). Nonetheless, it was not a primary place of sustained composition for her major published novels, which

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<sup>17</sup> Bernardo and Murphy, *Ursula K. Le Guin: A Critical Companion*, 3-4.

<sup>18</sup> Jones, "Ursula K. Le Guin, Acclaimed for Her Fantasy Fiction, Is Dead at 88."

<sup>19</sup> Bernardo and Murphy, *Ursula K. Le Guin: A Critical Companion*, 3-4.

<sup>20</sup> Jones, "Ursula K. Le Guin, Acclaimed for Her Fantasy Fiction, Is Dead at 88."

<sup>21</sup> Bernardo and Murphy, *Ursula K. Le Guin: A Critical Companion*, 3.

<sup>22</sup> Bernardo and Murphy, *Ursula K. Le Guin: A Critical Companion*, 3-4.

<sup>23</sup> Brian Attebery ed., "The Complete Orsinia," Library of America, accessed August 11, 2025,

<https://www.loa.org/books/513-the-complete-orsinia/>.

<sup>24</sup> Attebery, "The Complete Orsinia."

<sup>25</sup> "Ursula on Ursula," Ursula K. Le Guin, accessed April 13, 2026, <https://www.ursulaklequin.com/ursula-on-ursula>.

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were only partially drafted there during episodic visits.<sup>26</sup> It was within the domestic and geographical grounding of her primary home in Portland that her early literary efforts began to find direction and recognition. Le Guin's first sale of a short story was "April in Paris," published in *Fantastic* in September 1962. The story recounted a young woman's journey to Paris, seeking inspiration in the city and encountering a range of characters along the way.<sup>27</sup> The story tackles themes of longing, nostalgia, and a search for identity throughout its text. It presents a transformative journey, highlighting the power of place and memory in shaping our conceptions of the self and those around us.<sup>28</sup> The story, her first to be seen by the public, is no doubt reflective of herself as a writer, and her own transformative adventures.

*Rocannon's World*, published in 1966, was Le Guin's first science fiction novel. Two years later in 1968, *A Wizard of Earthsea* was published, becoming her first publication to be set in a fictional world where the practice of magic was commonplace. The magic she invented in these novels was unique, precise, and as her *New York Times* obituary states, just as "morally ambiguous" as science.<sup>29</sup> Le Guin described her early style as "fairy tales in space suits."<sup>30</sup> In *Ursula K. Le Guin: A Critical Companion*, authors Susan Bernardo and Graham Murphy assert the importance of this description, which broke down the boundaries between science fiction and fantasy, and reflected Le Guin's "unwillingness to be restricted to rigid genres."<sup>31</sup>

These early publications established Le Guin's distinctive voice and hinted at the ambitious ideas she would soon develop more fully. With each new work, she refined her balance between mythic imagination and philosophical inquiry, setting the stage for her breakthrough novels of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Le Guin's most significant novels to the history of literature were published between 1968 and 1974, written and published while she resided on Thurman Street. These three novels, *A Wizard of Earthsea* (1968), *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), and *The Dispossessed* (1974), established her as a major literary figure and explored complex themes, pulling from both pulp fiction as well as literary modernism, launching Le Guin into the New Wave movement of genre fiction.<sup>32</sup> During this time, much of her work shared a common background, playing on traditional themes of the genre of science fiction. Her stories, particularly those after *A Wizard of Earthsea*, were set amongst a loosely knit confederation of worlds known as the Ekumen, founded by an ancient people who seeded humans on habitable planets throughout the galaxy.<sup>33</sup>

By the mid-1970s, Le Guin had achieved both critical and commercial success. Her work not only reached wide audiences but also transformed the literary landscape, garnering numerous awards that reflected her growing stature in the field. The original Earthsea trilogy (1968-1972), including *A Wizard of Earthsea* (1968), *The Tombs of Atuan* (1972), and *The Farthest Shore* (1972), has been compared with Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and is often considered her most successful work. The series helped Le Guin gain mainstream recognition, receiving a 1972 Newbery Medal Honor, which is awarded annually by the Association for Library Service to Children to the author of what they consider to be the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children, for *The Tombs of Atuan*, and winning the 1973 National Book Award for Children's Literature for *The Farthest Shore*.<sup>34</sup> While many consider *A Wizard of Earthsea* one of her best, her philosophical contributions to science fiction in the 1970s helped reshape a genre that initially relied on the entertainment focused space adventures published in pulp magazines. Le Guin revisited the series and

<sup>26</sup> Theo Le Guin, email interview by Nika Faulkner, April 2026.

<sup>27</sup> "April in Paris Overview," Barnes & Noble, accessed August 11, 2025, <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/april-in-paris-illustrated-ursula-k-le-guin/1147267416>.

<sup>28</sup> "April in Paris Overview."

<sup>29</sup> Jones, "Ursula K. Le Guin, Acclaimed for Her Fantasy Fiction, Is Dead at 88."

<sup>30</sup> Lluís Dalmau Mestre, "The Fruit of Fear Is Ripening: Violence in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Word for World Is Forest*" (UNIVERSITAT DE VALÈNCIA, 2021), <https://www.scribd.com/document/701186975/DFD-The-Word-for-World-is-Forest-Ursula-K-Le-Guin>.

<sup>31</sup> Bernardo and Murphy, *Ursula K. Le Guin: A Critical Companion*, 3.

<sup>32</sup> "Ursula K. Le Guin Was a Creator of Worlds," National Endowment for the Humanities, accessed August 11, 2025, <https://www.neh.gov/article/ursula-k-le-guin-was-creator-worlds>.

<sup>33</sup> Jones, "Ursula K. Le Guin, Acclaimed for Her Fantasy Fiction, Is Dead at 88."

<sup>34</sup> Larry McCaffery and Sinda Gregory, "An Interview with Ursula Le Guin," *The Missouri Review* 7, no. 2 (1984): 64 <https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/mis.1984.0004>.

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expanded upon it between 1990 and 2001 with *Tehanu* (1990), *Tales from Earthsea* (2001), and *The Other Wind* (2001).

In the 1980s, the Le Guins purchased a vacation home at 172 W Washington Street in Cannon Beach, on the Oregon coast. The house functioned as an important later retreat and inspired works such as *Searoad* (1991), but by the time it was acquired, most of Ursula K. Le Guin's major novel-length fiction had already been completed, and her time there was limited to part-year residency. In contrast, the NW Thurman Street house was the principal long-term residence where her most significant and sustained body of work—including major novels, essays, and later digital writing—was produced.<sup>35</sup>

Le Guin's accomplishments in the literary world are immense. She is a five-time winner of the Hugo Award, for *The Left Hand of Darkness* (Best Novel, 1970), *The Word for World is Forest* (Best Novella, 1973), "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" (Best Short Story, 1974), *The Dispossessed* (Best Novel, 1975), and "Buffalo Gals, Won't You Come Out Tonight" (Best Novelette, 1988). The Hugo Awards, among the most prestigious honors in science fiction, are voted on by members of the World Science Fiction Society and are widely regarded as a key measure of peer recognition within the genre. With *The Left Hand of Darkness* in 1970, Le Guin became the first woman ever to win the Hugo Award for Best Novel, marking a major milestone in the field.<sup>36</sup> She is also a four-time winner of the Nebula Award for *The Dispossessed* (Best Novel, 1974), "The Day Before the Revolution" (Best Short Story, 1974), *Tehanu: The Last Book of Earthsea* (Best Novel, 1990), and *Powers* (Best Novel, 2008). The Nebula Awards, presented by the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, are especially significant because they are selected by fellow professional writers, underscoring recognition from within the field itself. Other honors include a Pushcart Prize for "Bill Weisler" (1991), awarded for excellence in small press publishing; the Prix Lectures-Jeunesse for *Very Far Away from Anywhere Else* (1987), a French award recognizing outstanding youth literature; the Gandalf Award for fantasy writing (1979), a fan-voted award honoring excellence in fantasy fiction; and the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award for *A Wizard of Earthsea* (Fiction, 1969), a major American prize for children's and young adult literature.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to her multiple genre awards, she was recognized with the World Fantasy Award for Lifetime Achievement in 1995, honoring her foundational influence on fantasy literature. In 2000, the Library of Congress named her a Living Legend, placing her among a select group of American cultural figures whose work has shaped the nation's artistic and intellectual heritage. Later, in 2016, she was further distinguished by inclusion in the Library of America during her lifetime—an honor reserved for the most significant contributors to the American literary canon—affirming her lasting critical and cultural stature.<sup>38</sup>

Taken together, these accolades reflect not only Le Guin's sustained critical acclaim across multiple genres and decades, but also her exceptional standing within the field. According to the *Science Fiction Encyclopedia*, she is among the most awarded authors in the genre.<sup>39</sup> Compared to major contemporaries such as Isaac Asimov and Arthur C. Clarke, Le Guin's award profile is both broader in category range and more sustained over time. Clarke, for example, won major awards including the Hugo and Nebula for *Rendezvous with Rama*, but his recognition is more concentrated in specific landmark works rather than distributed across multiple fiction forms.<sup>40</sup> Asimov, while enormously influential, received comparatively fewer top-category novel awards

<sup>35</sup> Theo Le Guin, email interview by Nika Faulkner, April 2026;

<sup>36</sup> Emmanuel Nataf, "Ursula K. Le Guin: A Primer," LitReactor, accessed August 11, 2025, <https://litreactor.com/columns/ursula-k-le-guin-a-primer>.; Though Le Guin was the first woman to win the award for a full-length novel, Elision Busby won the Hugo Award in 1960 for co-editing a fanzine with her husband, and Anne McCaffrey in 1969 for her short story "Weyr Search."

<sup>37</sup> William Walsh and Ursula Le Guin, "I Am a Woman Writer; I Am a Western Writer: An Interview with Ursula Le Guin." *The Kenyon Review* 17, no. 3/4 (1995): 192. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4337281>.

<sup>38</sup> "Awards & Honors," Ursula K. Le Guin, accessed April 13, 2026, <https://www.ursulaklequin.com/awards-honors>.

<sup>39</sup> "SFE: Le Guin, Ursula K.," accessed April 13, 2026, [https://sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/le\\_guin\\_ursula\\_k](https://sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/le_guin_ursula_k).

<sup>40</sup> "Clarke, Arthur C.," SFE: The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction, April 2026, [https://sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/clarke\\_arthur\\_c](https://sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/clarke_arthur_c).; "Asimov, Isaac," SFE: The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction, February 2026, [https://sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/asimov\\_isaac](https://sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/asimov_isaac).

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during the peak era of his output, with much of his Hugo recognition occurring through retrospective or non-novel categories. By contrast, Le Guin received major awards consistently from the late 1960s through the early twenty-first century, including recognition for novels, short fiction, and fantasy literature alike. Even Philip K. Dick—considered one of the most important speculative fiction authors of the twentieth century—received limited major award recognition during his lifetime, with his Hugo Award for *The Man in the High Castle* arguably standing as his most significant contemporary honor.<sup>41</sup> Le Guin’s sustained, cross-category recognition underscores her unusually durable position within both the critical and popular spheres of science fiction and fantasy.

Ursula K. Le Guin passed away at her Thurman Street home at the age of 88 in 2018, leaving an incredible legacy behind. Her books have been translated into more than forty languages and have sold millions of copies worldwide.<sup>42</sup> *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969) has remained in print for over fifty years, and her more than twenty novels, dozen poetry books, more than 100 short stories compiled in various volumes, seven collections of essays, thirteen children’s books, and five volumes of translation, including the *Tao Te Ching* of Lao Tzu and selected poems by the Chilean Nobel Prize winner Gabriela Mistral, as well a writer’s guide, are found on bookshelves across the world. Beyond the breadth of her publications and the international reach of her readership, Le Guin’s work occupies a pivotal position in the broader history of American science fiction and literature. Taken together, Le Guin’s life and career trace a path from private imagination to public influence. To fully appreciate her literary significance, it is essential to understand the broader context of American science fiction into which she emerged, and which she ultimately transformed.

#### URSULA K. LE GUIN’S PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN SCIENCE FICTION & LITERATURE

Ursula K. Le Guin was a groundbreaking voice in American literature whose work expanded the possibilities of genre fiction, particularly fantasy and science fiction, transforming them into arenas for profound social, political, and philosophical inquiry. Writing during a period of sweeping cultural change from the mid-twentieth through the early twenty-first centuries, she emerged as a leading female figure in American literature and beyond, carving out a particular place in the New Wave movement of science fiction discussed below. Utilizing speculative worlds to interrogate gender roles, power structures, and the nature of human freedom and power, her novels, stories, poems, and essays combine anthropological insight, likely seeded at childhood, with lyrical prose. Le Guin’s work challenges readers to examine the present by imagining the future. Her home writing studio on Thurman Street marks the place where most of her important works were written, including the *Earthsea* series (1968-2001), *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), and *The Dispossessed* (1974), among a plethora of others. With these novels, Le Guin redefined the scope of genre fiction, earning both critical acclaim and popular success while influencing generations of writers. Through six decades of sustained creativity, partially shaped by the rhythms of domestic life at her home on Thurman Street, Le Guin secured her place as one of the most important and influential literary figures in modern American literature, and as an influential feminist thinker of the twentieth century.

Le Guin’s emergence coincided with a pivotal moment in the evolution of speculative fiction. The genre she entered had been shaped by half a century of experimentation, industrial modernity, and popular media. As Le Guin’s career began in the mid-twentieth century, she entered a genre that gained widespread popularity at the beginning of the century through motion pictures and pulp magazines. The first science fiction movie made was *A Trip to the Moon* (1902), proving that fantasies on the written page could be brought to life on the screen. Science fiction films sprang up in the early years of cinema, referencing many previously written texts, such as Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley’s iconic 1818 novel *Frankenstein*.<sup>43</sup> In the early twentieth century, social commentary was not something that was easily sold, though the film version of *Frankenstein* proved

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<sup>41</sup> “Dick, Philip K,” SFE: The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction, October 2025, [https://sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/dick\\_philip\\_k](https://sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/dick_philip_k).

<sup>42</sup> Jones, “Ursula K. Le Guin, Acclaimed for Her Fantasy Fiction, Is Dead at 88.”

<sup>43</sup> David Reinecke, *From the Pulp to the Stars: The Making of the American Science Fiction Magazine, 1923-1973*, Working Paper #44 (Princeton University Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies, 2011), 14.

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entertaining enough that Shelley's criticisms of unchecked scientific pursuit proved secondary.<sup>44</sup> People sought escapism, which pulp science fiction novels reflected.<sup>45</sup> Newspapers featured serialized narratives, and publishers created their own magazines made from cheap paper. This is how the latter gained their name: "the pulps."<sup>46</sup> It was here that tropes and archetypes arose in the texts in the earlier half of the twentieth century, with swashbuckling space adventures treated similarly to American Westerns. Tropes aside, this was the setting in which many writers experimented with new and outrageous ideas about aliens, spaceships, and interplanetary romance.<sup>47</sup>

Science fiction writers of the 1930s were influenced not only by earlier imaginative adventure stories but also by the broader literary trends of their time—particularly literary modernism. Authors such as F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway, active in the decades surrounding this period, helped define a style marked by concise, economical prose and an intense focus on the human experience.<sup>48</sup> Their emphasis on psychological depth and the interplay between the individual and larger social forces impacted many literary circles. Modernism also took into consideration geohistorical transformations on a large scale, such as The Great Depression or wars. The two genres shared a discussion of planetary concerns pertaining to world-changing developments. In both, their narratives were often contradictory or ambivalent to such change.<sup>49</sup> For science fiction writers, these modernist sensibilities offered tools to move the genre beyond pure escapism, opening space for stories that explored the human condition as much as futuristic inventions or alien worlds.

Pulp magazines began to flourish in the early twentieth century as well. In 1923, the first science fiction magazine, *Weird Tales*, was published.<sup>50</sup> That year American editor and publisher, Hugo Gernsback, coined the term "scientific fiction," dedicating an entire issue of the science magazine *Science & Invention* to the emerging genre.<sup>51</sup> Gernsback linked science fiction with popular science to differentiate the evolving genre from the pulp adventure stories. In his vision, the genre combined "charming romance" with "scientific fact" and "prophetic vision."<sup>52</sup> He saw the potential for the genre to instruct and predict the future—a new horizon for a genre previously entrenched in pure entertainment.<sup>53</sup>

In 1926, pulp magazine *Amazing Stories* was published for the first time, followed by *Astounding Science-Fiction* in 1930.<sup>54</sup> These pulp magazines cemented the science fiction genre in the United States.<sup>55</sup> John W. Campbell became one of the greatest facilitators of the genre's evolution; in the late 1930s he became the main editor of *Astounding Science Fiction*. Campbell took his job seriously and only published high-quality works that explored science from a modern perspective. He helped push the genre away from mere adventures in space and time, supporting stories that dealt with the human psyche.<sup>56</sup> By the 1940s, *Astounding Science Fiction* was one of the leading sources of the genre, remaining tethered to the hard sciences. By the time Ursula K. Le Guin began her career in the late 1950s and early 1960s, *Astounding Science Fiction*, renamed *Analog Science Fact & Fiction* in 1960, remained focused on this tradition and

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<sup>44</sup> Karen O'Brien, "Frankenstein by Mary Shelley," Faculty of English, University of Oxford, accessed August 12, 2025, <https://www.english.ox.ac.uk/ten-minute-book-club/shelley-frankenstein>.

<sup>45</sup> Reinecke, *From the Pulps to the Stars*, 14.

<sup>46</sup> Reinecke, *From the Pulps to the Stars*, 14.

<sup>47</sup> Reinecke, *From the Pulps to the Stars*, 14.

<sup>48</sup> Ronald Berman, *Modernity and Progress: Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Orwell* (University of Alabama Press, 2007). 1-12.

<sup>49</sup> Adam Stock, "Modernism and Science Fiction," *Modernism/Modernity Print Plus*, Johns Hopkins University Press, May 16, 2022, <https://modernismmodernity.org/forums/modernism-and-science-fiction>.

<sup>50</sup> Reinecke, *From the Pulps to the Stars*, 14.

<sup>51</sup> Reinecke, *From the Pulps to the Stars*, 14.

<sup>52</sup> Reinecke, *From the Pulps to the Stars*, 14.

<sup>53</sup> Reinecke, *From the Pulps to the Stars*, 14.

<sup>54</sup> Reinecke, *From the Pulps to the Stars*, 11-12.

<sup>55</sup> Reinecke, *From the Pulps to the Stars*, 11-12.

<sup>56</sup> Reinecke, *From the Pulps to the Stars*, 11-12.

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guided by editor Campbell.<sup>57</sup> Campbell's editorial influence helped define what would later be recognized as the genre's formative period—a foundation upon which later writers, including Le Guin, would build.

The years between the 1930s and the 1950s became known to fans and historians as the "Golden Age of Science Fiction."<sup>58</sup> It was then that writers Arthur C. Clarke (British), Robert A. Heinlein (American), and Isaac Asimov (born in Russia, raised in the United States), all male, became synonymous with the genre.<sup>59</sup> As the genre evolved, science fiction became international, however, most was reprinted and translated versions of works originally published in English.<sup>60</sup> The 1940s, specifically World War II, ushered in a new era of science fiction. In the wake of the war, many writers, alongside the general public, experienced a fatigue with technology. This new dismissal of technology initiated a departure from the hard sciences in the genre and a new embrace of the speculative or fantastical. This shift reflected a dismissal of the greatest existential threat and most powerful piece of technology known at the time: the atomic bomb. In reaction, the genre of science fiction pivoted and exploded in popularity.<sup>61</sup>

Though often exploring similar themes within alternate time periods and intergalactic settings, the postwar stories became much less traditional. The extraterrestrials long known to the genre took on new roles, not just as invaders, but as guides for humanity.<sup>62</sup> The humanism of literary modernism rose to the forefront of science fiction, with texts moving away from sheer entertainment and infatuation with the hard sciences. Lasers and spaceships were less interesting to writers than the consequences of using them.<sup>63</sup> George Orwell's *1984*, published in 1949 shortly after the war, revealed a new take on how dystopia could be constructed in the future.<sup>64</sup> Authors like Ray Bradbury, who was most active in the 1950s and 1960s, rejected scientific realism almost entirely. In Bradbury's works, readers see a dystopian view of the future in which humanity's reliance on technology has led it to give up its autonomy. His fictional world indulges in "virtual hedonism", as written by Theodore Giraud in *An Economy of Distraction: Ray Bradbury's Vision of Technology in the Modern Age*, rather than seeking to be challenged intellectually.<sup>65</sup> The purpose of texts such as his was not to explore a fetishization of the machine, which the pulps had long indulged, but the implications of technology on human morality. Ursula K. Le Guin herself thought his work to be beautiful and romantic, infused with a warmth and humanity, which spoke to his move towards modernism as well.<sup>66</sup> Some stories simply asked, "what if?" without relying on technology at all, moving the genre towards speculative fiction.<sup>67</sup> Postwar science fiction began to examine the human consequences of technological advances, and the fear that we might become the victims of our own creations.<sup>68</sup>

Out of these changing attitudes toward science, technology, and humanity, a new literary sensibility began to emerge—one that valued ambiguity, experimentation, and the blurring of traditional genre boundaries. These developments formed the bridge between literary modernism and the experimental science fiction that would

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<sup>57</sup> Nathan Vernon Madison, "Astounding Stories," The Pulp Magazine Project, accessed November 12, 2025, <https://www.pulpmags.org/content/info/astounding-stories.html>.

<sup>58</sup> Reinecke, *From the Pulps to the Stars*, 15.

<sup>59</sup> Scott St. Clair, "The Fear of Things to Come: Science Fiction Before and After World War II" (2018), *Western Washington University Honors Program Senior Projects* 89, 10. [https://cedar.wvu.edu/wvu\\_honors/89](https://cedar.wvu.edu/wvu_honors/89)

<sup>60</sup> "What Was 'World Science Fiction'?", *Sean Guynes*, October 24, 2023, <https://seanguynes.com/2023/10/24/what-was-world-science-fiction/>.

<sup>61</sup> Walsh and Le Guin. "I Am a Woman Writer," 196.

<sup>62</sup> St. Clair, "The Fear of Things to Come," 11-12.

<sup>63</sup> St. Clair, "The Fear of Things to Come," 13.

<sup>64</sup> Walsh and Le Guin, "I Am a Woman Writer," 196.

<sup>65</sup> Theodore Giraud, "An Economy of Distraction: Ray Bradbury's Vision of Technology in the Modern Age," *The New Ray Bradbury Review*, Ray Bradbury Center, Indiana University, no. 7 (August 2023): 45.

<sup>66</sup> "Ursula K. Le Guin: Still Battling the Powers That Be," Geek's Guide to the Galaxy Podcast transcription, *Wired online*, July 2012, accessed August 12, 2025, <https://www.wired.com/2012/07/geeks-guide-ursula-k-le-guin/>.

<sup>67</sup> Giraud, "An Economy of Distraction," 39.

<sup>68</sup> Marshall B. Tymn, "Science Fiction: A Brief History and Review of Criticism," *American Studies International* 23, no. 1 (1985): 46-47.

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dominate the mid-century. The convergence of these ideas marked the beginning of what became known as the New Wave movement.

### *Le Guin and The New Wave Movement*

In 1957, the successful launch of the artificial satellite Sputnik by the Soviet Union turned space travel from an imagined future into a reality.<sup>69</sup> John Clute puts it well: “There may have been a time, in the morning of the world, before Sputnik, when the empires of our science fiction dreams were governed according to rules written out in the pages of *Astounding* [the magazine], and we could all play the game of a future we all shared, readers, writers, fans... But something happened. The future began to come true.”<sup>70</sup> This event kicked off a new movement within science fiction known as New Wave. New Wave was a transatlantic avant-garde movement that took place primarily in the 1960s and 1970s, the period in which Ursula K. Le Guin’s most important novels were written. The rapid technological advancement of the 1960s coincided with a period of transformative social change. Youth countercultures emerged throughout the country opposed to what they experienced as conservatism and social conformity in the 1950s.<sup>71</sup> New Wave writers, including Le Guin, were experimental, aiming to develop a modern literary science fiction with advanced aesthetic techniques, focused on the soft sciences of psychology and sociology rather than physics and astronomy. The New Wave movement sought to subvert the simplicity and action-packed pulp genre that had dominated science fiction’s Golden Age.<sup>72</sup>

As the speculative landscape shifted under the influence of New Wave experimentation, Le Guin emerged as one of the movement’s most distinctive voices. Her early novels bridged the pulp traditions of the past and the philosophical ambitions of the new era. In the late 1960s and 1970s, as New Wave became solidified, Ursula K. Le Guin cemented her place in the history of American literature, and within genre fiction. Although she wrote novels and short stories during the 1950s, in 1966, Le Guin published her first novel, *Rocannon’s World*.<sup>73</sup> This novel represented a transition between the Golden Age and New Wave science fiction, blending elements of fantasy into a world that readers quickly recognize as science fiction.<sup>74</sup> The story features a man of the hard sciences as its protagonist on a classic interstellar adventure.<sup>75</sup>

If *Rocannon’s World* marked Le Guin’s entry point into the New Wave, *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969) and *The Dispossessed* (1974) confirmed her status as one of its defining figures. These novels made a decisive departure from the pulps, setting new artistic and philosophical standards for the genre. They became symbols of the high-quality standards of which science fiction was capable, and how politics and feminism could be integrated.<sup>76</sup> *The Left Hand of Darkness* follows the story of the human of the planet Earth who is sent to the planet of Gethen as a representative of a growing intergalactic civilization. Her protagonist’s goal is to facilitate Gethen’s inclusion in the intergalactic confederation, but to do so he must try to understand the gaps between his views and those of the culture he encounters.<sup>77</sup>

Le Guin’s treatment of gender in *The Left Hand of Darkness* represents one of the most influential and debated contributions to New Wave science fiction. By imagining the inhabitants of Gethen as ambisexual, she

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<sup>69</sup> Dave Higgins, “Science Fiction, 1960-2005: Novels and Short Fiction,” in *Women in Science Fiction and Fantasy*, Volume 1, Overviews (Greenwood Press, 2009), 1.

<sup>70</sup> Adam Roberts, “The Impact of New Wave Science Fiction 1960s–1970s,” in *The History of Science Fiction*, ed. Adam Roberts (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2006): 230. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230554658\\_11](https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230554658_11).

<sup>71</sup> Higgins, “Science Fiction, 1960-2005,” 2.

<sup>72</sup> Higgins, “Science Fiction, 1960-2005,” 1.

<sup>73</sup> The Ursula K. Le Guin Foundation, “Ursula K. Le Guin — Bibliography,” Ursula K. Le Guin, accessed September 19, 2025, <https://www.ursulaklequin.com/bibliography>.

<sup>74</sup> Sean Guynes, “Rocannon’s World: Where the Hainish Cycle Begins,” *Reactor*, June 10, 2020, <https://reactormag.com/rocannons-world-where-the-hainish-cycle-begins/>.

<sup>75</sup> John Wray, “Ursula K. Le Guin, The Art of Fiction No. 221,” Interview in *The Paris Review* 206 (Fall 2013), <https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/6253/the-art-of-fiction-no-221-ursula-k-le-guin>.

<sup>76</sup> Walsh and Le Guin, “I Am a Woman Writer,” 195.

<sup>77</sup> “Ursula K. Le Guin — The Left Hand of Darkness,” Ursula K. Le Guin, accessed September 19, 2025, <https://www.ursulaklequin.com/left-hand-darkness>.

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challenged binary conceptions of sex and gender at a moment when both literature and society were beginning to grapple more openly with feminist thought and sexual difference. This speculative framework allowed Le Guin to explore how identity, social roles, and political structures might function without fixed gender categories, aligning closely with the New Wave's emphasis on the "soft sciences," particularly anthropology and sociology. At the same time, the novel's reliance on a male, Earth-born narrator foregrounds the difficulty of perceiving a gender binary-challenging society through inherited linguistic and cultural assumptions, making gender itself a central site of misinterpretation and tension.

The novel's impact extended far beyond its initial publication, generating decades of discussion around gender, language, and representation. In response to both praise and critique, Le Guin revisited her own work in *Is Gender Necessary?* and later in *Is Gender Necessary? Redux*, where she directly addressed concerns about her use of masculine pronouns for Gethenians. Acknowledging that this choice risked reinforcing male normativity, she explored alternative pronoun systems and reflected on the limitations of her earlier approach. This evolution in her thinking not only highlights her central role in ongoing literary discussions of gender and sexuality but also exemplifies a defining feature of the New Wave movement: its openness to self-critique, formal experimentation, a reflectivity of humanity, and the recognition that language itself plays a crucial role in shaping how imagined—and real—worlds are understood.

Susan Schwartz of the New York Times described *The Left Hand of Darkness* as "probably one of the most extraordinary examples of soft-core [science fiction], which reflects the author's formidable background in anthropology as well as her overriding ethical and artistic concerns." Her reference to "soft-core" reflects the rejection of the hard sciences and embrace of the soft sciences, which helps define New Wave science fiction.<sup>78</sup> In his review of *The Left Hand of Darkness* for *Reactor Magazine*, an online publication dedicated to science fiction and fantasy, critic Robert Repino wrote that Le Guin "not only demonstrates how to build worlds. She shows why we build worlds in the first place."<sup>79</sup>

Le Guin's work did not evolve in isolation. The same intellectual energy transforming her writing was sweeping through the broader field of speculative fiction. During this period, other science-fiction writers were also producing works of exceptional depth and originality. Through her work and critical thought, Le Guin helped elevate science fiction from pulp entertainment to a respected and intellectually serious form of literature—capable of addressing complex social, political, and existential themes. Others in the genre who were writing during the height of her career reflected similar expansive humanist perspectives, with one example being Philip K. Dick. In the 1970s, Dick published *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said* (1973) and *A Scanner Darkly* (1977), both of which explore dislocation, identity, and altered realities in ways that pushed the genre's boundaries.<sup>80</sup> Interestingly, Dick and Le Guin were in the same class at Berkeley High School but never crossed paths. However, later in life, the two became pen pals and publicly celebrated one another's work. In a 2012 interview with *Wired*, Le Guin said the following of her interactions with him:

I kept saying, "This guy is really good. This guy is writing completely original stuff. You know, it isn't conventional, it isn't run-of-the-mill. It's different, but it's really interesting." And of course, Phil picked up on that, and you always like it when another writer likes your stuff, you want to know that writer, so he may have written me or me him, and we talked some. I got a little bit bossy and told him that the women in his novels were kind of predictable. I didn't think he'd really pay any attention, but he did. Apparently, he really tried to think about the way he'd been handling women in his fiction. That touches me. You know, he didn't have to pay any mind to anything I said.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Ursula K. Le Guin, "Ursula K. Le Guin — The Left Hand of Darkness."

<sup>79</sup> Robert Repino, "'With Luck We Shall Make It, and Without Luck We Shall Not' – The Left Hand of Darkness," *Reactor Magazine*, January 12, 2015, <https://reactormag.com/with-luck-we-shall-make-it-and-without-luck-we-shall-not-the-left-hand-of-darkness/>.

<sup>80</sup> Tymn, "Science Fiction," 47.

<sup>81</sup> Geek's Guide to the Galaxy, "Ursula K. Le Guin."

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These exchanges reveal Le Guin's generosity and critical insight as a peer, and they hint at the intellectual atmosphere in which *The Dispossessed* took shape. With her 1974 novel *The Dispossessed*, Le Guin created a feminist utopia through radical world-building and linguistic design. On her invented planet of Anarres, gender equality is integral, embodied through the invented fictional language, Pravic. Le Guin engineered Pravic to eliminate possessive constructs and reflect egalitarian values; terms like "my mother" give way to "the mother," dissolving notions of ownership.<sup>82</sup> On Anarres, women inhabit intellectual and engineering roles as equals, and motherhood is a mindful choice within a communal childcare system. Le Guin used science fiction as a metaphor for analyzing the present, creating new unknown times and places to process existing societal structures.<sup>83</sup>

Le Guin made clear that *The Dispossessed* (1974) reflected her knowledge of anarchism and her sympathy for the central ideas and ideals of communal life. She formulated the novel's political theory after considerable study of proponents of anarchist communism, "Kropotkin and Emma Goldman and the rest."<sup>84</sup> Drawing on this work, she frames *The Dispossessed* as a reconstruction and defense of the foundational assumptions of anarcho-communist ideology. Central to Peter Kropotkin's theory was the belief that humanity's survival and progressive development depend on the voluntary cooperation of individuals. He saw individuals and society as interdependent, evolving together within a constantly changing world. *The Dispossessed* presents a deliberately flawed utopia addressing this concept.<sup>85</sup> Within the novel, the tombstone of the founder of the world of Anarres reads: "To be whole is to be part."<sup>86</sup> The protagonist, Shevek, embraces the coexistence of internal harmony, social interests, and social duties. He contends that the fact that "Anarres had fallen short of the ideal," allowing Le Guin space for the potential of the society's betterment.<sup>87</sup>

The social climate that greeted *The Dispossessed* amplified its impact. Its feminist and anarchist ideals resonated deeply with the shifting cultural and political consciousness of the 1970s. At the time *The Dispossessed* was published in 1974, society was grappling with the historical role of women in a new way, aligning with the evolution of feminist thought.<sup>88</sup> It is clear, as it became to writers like Philip K. Dick, that women in literature and beyond played a much larger role than previously accepted and that literature could be a powerful tool for reflection and change.

Le Guin's influence radiated outward, shaping both contemporaries and subsequent generations of writers. Her example redefined what science fiction—and literature at large—could achieve. Molly Gloss, an Oregon-based historical and speculative fiction writer known for work blending realism with ecological and historical themes, and a close friend of Le Guin, said that Le Guin's "willingness to write serious science fiction raised the bar in that field tremendously, a genre in which it was possible to read quite a lot of schlock."<sup>89</sup> Other authors attest to the influence of Ursula K. Le Guin on the science fiction and fantasy genres. Portland-based writer, editor, and designer Molly Gloss, who works across literary and arts communities particularly in the Pacific Northwest, believed that Le Guin made the genres "something bigger and more beautiful."<sup>90</sup> Susan DeFreitas, an American novelist, editor, and writing instructor whose work spans literary and speculative fiction, said Le Guin was "one of the female writers of her generation who began to imagine a different kind" of science fiction and

<sup>82</sup> Richard J Whitt, "Schemata of Estrangement in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*," *Language and Literature* 33, no. 2 (2024): 119, <https://doi.org/10.1177/09639470241240923>.

<sup>83</sup> Laurence Davis and Peter G. Stillman, *The New Utopian Politics of Ursula K. Le Guin's The Dispossessed* (Lexington Books, 2005). 111-114.

<sup>84</sup> Davis and Stillman, *The New Utopian Politics of Ursula K. Le Guin's The Dispossessed*. 112.

<sup>85</sup> In the books early editions, the subtitle for *The Dispossessed* was *An Ambiguous Utopia*.

<sup>86</sup> Davis and Stillman, *The New Utopian Politics of Ursula K. Le Guin's The Dispossessed*. 114.

<sup>87</sup> Davis and Stillman, *The New Utopian Politics of Ursula K. Le Guin's The Dispossessed*. 111-114.

<sup>88</sup> Mario Klarer, "Gender and the 'Simultaneity Principle': Ursula Le Guin's 'The Dispossessed,'" *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 25, no. 2 (1992): 107-110.

<sup>89</sup> Bailey Potter, "The Influence of Ursula K. Le Guin" (Book Publishing Final Research Paper, Portland State University, 2021), [https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/eng\\_bookpubpaper/62?utm\\_source=pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu%2Feng\\_bookpubpaper%2F62&utm\\_medium=PDF&utm\\_campaign=PDFCoverPages](https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/eng_bookpubpaper/62?utm_source=pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu%2Feng_bookpubpaper%2F62&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages). 10

<sup>90</sup> Potter, "The Influence of Ursula K. Le Guin." 9-10.

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fantasy.<sup>91</sup> Their compliments are shared with the likes of Margaret Atwood, internationally acclaimed Booker Prize-winning Canadian novelist, poet, and essayist best known for *The Handmaid's Tale*, who described Le Guin as 'one of the classic twentieth-century writers,' praising her talent as a stylist, thinker, and world builder. David Mitchell, twice Booker Prize shortlisted novelist, regularly cites Le Guin as a major influence, impacting many of his novels including *Cloud Atlas* (2004). In 2011, Zadie Smith, British novelist and essayist known for works such as *White Teeth* and *Swing Time*, and prominent contemporary literary writer and cultural critic, was introduced to *The Dispossessed*. She has said that she felt like a child reading it and was totally subsumed in it, and that it influenced her novel *Swing Time* (2016). George R.R. Martin of *A Song of Ice and Fire* fame said that his series (which began with *A Game of Thrones* [1991]) could never have been written without Le Guin's work.

These examples outline only a handful of the more contemporary authors whose work was impacted by Ursula K. Le Guin. Others who have cited her influence include: China Miéville, a British novelist, literary critic, and academic associated with contemporary speculative fiction; Octavia Butler, an American science fiction writer and MacArthur "Genius Grant" fellow whose work is central to modern Afrofuturist and feminist speculative traditions; Salman Rushdie, an internationally acclaimed Booker Prize-winning novelist known for his contributions to magical realism and postcolonial literature; Robin Hobb, the pen name of American fantasy author Margaret Astrid Lindholm Ogden—a major figure in contemporary epic fantasy world-building; Kelly Link, an American short story writer and MacArthur Fellow recognized for her blending fantasy, horror, and literary fiction; Michael Chabon, a Pulitzer Prize-winning American novelist whose work often incorporates elements of science fiction and comics into literary fiction; Jonathan Lethem, an American novelist and essayist known for blending literary fiction with science fiction and noir traditions; and Iain Banks, a Scottish novelist whose career encompassed both literary fiction and the influential *Culture* science fiction series, noted for its philosophical scope and expansive world-building.<sup>92</sup> Le Guin's lasting impact in transforming science fiction and fantasy into vehicles for profound artistic and intellectual exploration.<sup>93</sup>

Anthropology, politics, sociology, and geography (from a small to large scale) are at the core of her work, providing the bedrock for her explorations of the human experience, both present and future, individual and communal. Le Guin's impact on New Wave science fiction influenced many writers, as noted above, and impacted the literary community and publishing industry immensely. Le Guin made space for and encouraged women and other marginalized writers to pursue their own careers and build on the genre themselves. With her inclusivity and breaking of barriers between genre fiction and literary fiction, she expanded the possibilities for all types of writers, contributed to the definition of New Wave science fiction, and influenced the evolution of literature through her impact on contemporary writers.<sup>94</sup> While her contributions are significant at the national level, Le Guin's community service and teaching in all aspects of writing should also be noted at the local level. She was involved in making space and encouraging many who sought her guidance. She spent decades involved in the local library system, was founding member of the Oregon Institute for Literary Arts (OILA), taught at Portland State University, and conducted workshops all over the region. She also participated in other forms of engagement such as protest. Her local legacy is as important, if not more important, than her numerous formal awards.<sup>95</sup>

Le Guin's prominence within the New Wave movement cannot be separated from her identity as a woman writing in a male-dominated field. To understand the full scope of her achievement and her contributions to women's history, it is essential to situate her within the longer history of women who forged paths through the restrictive terrain of science fiction and fantasy.

<sup>91</sup> Potter, "The Influence of Ursula K. Le Guin." 9-10.

<sup>92</sup> "Drama on 4 - Ursula Le Guin," BBC, accessed September 19, 2025, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/NvYCd6pbQ0wCvvY1PFZdtX/ursula-le-guin>.

<sup>93</sup> BBC, "Drama on 4 - Ursula Le Guin."

<sup>94</sup> Potter, "The Influence of Ursula K. Le Guin." 14.

<sup>95</sup> OILA merged with Portland Arts & Lectures to form the organization [Literary Arts](#) in 1993. Information involving Le Guin's community service was provided by her son, Theo Le Guin.

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URSULA K. LE GUIN WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF FEMALE SCIENCE FICTION/FANTASY WRITERS

In the mid-twentieth century when Ursula K. Le Guin entered the world of literature, science fiction was focused on the hard sciences and for the most part, led by men. Arguably, the first work in the history of the genre can be traced to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818).<sup>96</sup> During a time when women writers were not easily embraced, she initially published the book anonymously, which no doubt assisted in its popularity.<sup>97</sup> Though women have long contributed to the fantasy and science fiction realm, they had yet to find equal respect and acceptance to their male counterparts. Leading authors in the genre included Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke, and Robert Heinlein, who became known informally by historians, critics, and readers alike as the "Big Three," a term which evolved within the science fiction fandom and critical circles in the twentieth century.<sup>98</sup> These men were scientists as well as writers, and undoubtedly rooted in the hard sciences. While undeniably impactful in the history of literature, the content of the texts written by these leading male authors were limited by means of many social constructs and norms, including that of gender. Science fiction in the earlier mid-century, led by these men, aimed to be as accurate as possible while remaining within the limits of reality. The literature of that era prized scientific plausibility over social or philosophical exploration—a terrain Le Guin, with homage to her foundational predecessors, radically transformed.

Women who entered the world of science fiction and fantasy were largely born and raised at the turn of the twentieth century, when progressive political ideals, such as first-wave feminism, opened new doors for women as subjects and leaders alike.<sup>99</sup> The first wave of feminism occurred in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, birthed from urban industrialism and socialist politics with the goal of opening up opportunities for women, particularly suffrage.<sup>100</sup> In 1915, in a refreshing and rare acceptance and celebration of the female contributions to society, Randolph Bourne (1886-1918), progressive writer and intellectual, wrote a letter stating that modern women had "an amazing combination of wisdom and youthfulness, of humor and ability, and innocence and self-reliance, which absolutely belies everything you will read in the storybooks or any other description of womankind. They are of course all self-supporting and independent, and they enjoy the adventure of life; the full, reliant, audacious way in which they go about make you wonder if the new woman isn't to be a very splendid sort of person."<sup>101</sup> As a leading thinker of the time, Bourne's words reflect the evolution of first-wave feminism and the shifting role of women in society. This quote reflects both the historical roles and qualities of women prior to this point in time, and how they were being challenged at the turn of the twentieth century. While not all celebrated the ongoing revolution of female gender norms and roles, this quote reflects that blossoming first-wave feminist was a point of intellectual and societal conversation.

While men dominated science fiction, women were consistently present though their visibility was much less. Clare Winger Harris became the first woman to publish science fiction under her own name in 1926. Published in *Amazing Stories*, her stories frequently featured scientifically minded female protagonists, expanding the possibilities for women within the genre's confines at the time.<sup>102</sup> Another early contributor was Lilith Lorraine. Lorraine wrote the feminist utopian novelette *The Brain of the Planet* in 1929, which promoted visionary gender

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<sup>96</sup> Chiara Crozzoli, "The Feminist Science Fiction of Ursula Kroeber Le Guin: The Left Hand of Darkness and The Dispossessed" (graduate thesis, University of Padua, 2022), 11 [https://thesis.unipd.it/retrieve/eae7b654-c108-49bb-86d4-ad3ccecdd9d3/Crozzoli\\_Chiera.pdf](https://thesis.unipd.it/retrieve/eae7b654-c108-49bb-86d4-ad3ccecdd9d3/Crozzoli_Chiera.pdf).

<sup>97</sup> O'Brien, "Frankenstein by Mary Shelley."

<sup>98</sup> John Uri, *Arthur C. Clarke - Prophet of the Space Age*, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, n.d., <https://ntrs.nasa.gov/api/citations/20180006504/downloads/20180006504.pdf>. 1-4.

<sup>99</sup> Martha Rampton, "Four Waves of Feminism," *Pacific Magazine*, October 25, 2015, <https://www.pacificu.edu/magazine/four-waves-feminism>.

<sup>100</sup> Rampton, "Four Waves of Feminism."

<sup>101</sup> Lisa Yaszek and Patrick B. Sharp, *Sisters of Tomorrow: The First Women of Science Fiction* (Wesleyan University Press, 2016), xvii.

<sup>102</sup> "Clare Winger Harris – The Future Is Female!," *The Future Is Female: A Celebration of the Women Who Made Science Fiction Their Own, from Pulp Pioneers to Ursula K. Le Guin*, accessed September 19, 2025, <http://womensf.loa.org/clare-winger-harris/>.

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politics. Included too is Sophie Wenzel Ellis, whose pulp fiction of the late 1920s and early 1930s was later rediscovered for its early exploration of female agency.<sup>103</sup>

Of note in the early history of science fiction is the story of Leslie F. Stone: a pen name for Leslie Frances Silverberg. As an early female contributor to the pulps, Stone faced much sexism throughout her career. In 1938 she was rejected by the editor of *Astounding Science Fiction*. The rejection came with a note that read, “I do not believe that women are capable of writing science fiction—nor do I approve of it!”<sup>104</sup> On her rejection slip from *Galaxy*, editor Horace L. Golf wrote, “Why not face up to it? Women do not belong in science-fiction.”<sup>105</sup> Perhaps selectively chosen anticipating misogyny, her ambiguous first name led many to believe she was a man. In 1946, Gross Conklin, editor of *The Best of Science Fiction*, realized he had mistaken Stone’s name for a man’s, saying “are you telling me I used a story written by a woman in my book? I don’t believe women can write science fiction.”<sup>106</sup>

Stone looked back on her career, aware of her place in the history of female science fiction: “while I cannot claim myself as the pioneer science fiction women, since Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley beat me to it in 1818 with *Frankenstein*... I do happen to be one of the first woman writers in the fantasy pulps.”<sup>107</sup> Silverberg/Stone accomplished several firsts in her texts. She is remembered especially for her creation of female and Black characters. Her books featured the first woman astronaut, the first Black hero, and the first alien civilization to win a war against human characters. Fans at the time debated the merits of Stone’s socially provocative stories in the letters of pages in early science fiction magazines. One such young man, Isaac Asimov, was so inspired by her 1936 story “The Human Pets of Mars” that he attempted to write science fiction for the very first time.<sup>108</sup>

These pioneering figures established a foundation—albeit one marked by exclusion and resistance—on which future generations would build. Their persistence demonstrated that women’s voices could not be silenced within the genre. Stone was one of the first women in the fantasy pulp fiction, but she was not alone. More than 450 known women published science fiction stories, professional and amateur, between 1926, when Hugo Gernsback created the first dedicated science fiction magazine, and 1945, when the end of World War II ushered in a new group of writers and periodicals alike. Women made up approximately 16 percent of the science fiction community in the first two decades of its formal existence at the turn of the century. These women helped shape the genre at a critical moment when its meaning was hotly debated throughout the literature community and contributing to the evolving feminist cause, which took root in the mind of Ursula K. Le Guin in the later century.<sup>109</sup>

Beyond fighting for visibility, these authors shared a deep curiosity about science itself, a passion that often mirrored the motivations of their male peers. Like with their male counterparts, science fiction was initially attractive to many female writers because of their love for science.<sup>110</sup> Clare Winger Harris connected her interest in the genre to her “love of science” that she developed at Smith College, a women’s college that was the first of its kind to create a dedicated science building for its students. Science fiction author and journalist L. Taylor Hansen claimed that her work was driven by her desire to “capture something of the thrill” of scientific discovery while overcoming the limitations of traditional scientific perspectives. This perspective blended romanticism with scientific fact and a prophetic vision of the future.<sup>111</sup> Gernsback published much of Hansen’s

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<sup>103</sup> Lisa Yaszek, “Feminism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Science Fiction*, ed. Rob Latham (Oxford University Press, 2014), 540 <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199838844.013.004>.

<sup>104</sup> Matthew Wills, “Pulp Woman: Leslie F. Stone,” *JSTOR Daily*, February 5, 2025, <https://daily.jstor.org/pulp-woman-leslie-f-stone/>.

<sup>105</sup> Wills, “Pulp Woman.”

<sup>106</sup> Wills, “Pulp Woman.”

<sup>107</sup> Yaszek and Sharp, *Sisters of Tomorrow*, xvii-xviii.

<sup>108</sup> Yaszek and Sharp, *Sisters of Tomorrow*, xvii-xviii.

<sup>109</sup> Yaszek and Sharp, *Sisters of Tomorrow*, xvii-xviii.

<sup>110</sup> Yaszek and Sharp, *Sisters of Tomorrow*, xxi.

<sup>111</sup> Yaszek and Sharp, *Sisters of Tomorrow*, xxi.

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early work in *Amazing Stories*. In an era when opportunities for women in education and other professions began to compete with patriarchal assumptions about where a woman's place was, as well as the accepted male presence in the hard sciences, women in science fiction created new opportunities for one another, and their readers, to engage with science in critical, creative, and politically active ways.<sup>112</sup>

Many women involved in these literary movements were social activists whose art was influenced by their politics.<sup>113</sup> Liliith Lorraine argued that the genre was not "escape literature," which it had long been claimed to be by many, but a powerful mode of storytelling that presented a challenge for humanity through its propensity of "constructive dreaming" by "cutting the imaginative patterns for better social conditions, more mature systems of government, more advanced biological research...and more daring encroachments upon the secret of life itself."<sup>114</sup> Women working in the formative years of these genres imagined revolutionary new worlds in their art, reflecting the progressive world they aimed to realize in their own lives.

Decades of quiet but determined work by these early writers laid the groundwork for the feminist reinventions of the mid-twentieth century. Out of this lineage emerged Le Guin and her contemporaries, whose work embodied the ideals of the second wave of feminism. By the time Le Guin emerged in the second half of the twentieth century, alongside the second wave of feminism, these feminist literary seeds had been planted—and in her, among others, they flourished. The second wave of feminism refers roughly to the time between 1960 and 1990.<sup>115</sup> American feminists of the 1970s turned to French feminists for answers to their concerns. Despite cultural and linguistic differences, French and American feminists grappled with issues when it came to women's rights and were involved in what Joanna Russ called a "parallel evolution."<sup>116</sup> Although published in the late 1940s, Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* became a key text for second wave feminists, analyzing in detail the ways in which society constructs women and femininity. Other prominent French psychoanalytical feminists were referenced as well.<sup>117</sup> While some histories of the New Wave movement in science fiction have described it as a male-dominated movement, this characterization neglects many women's contributions and their impact on literature and philosophy. Influenced by the women's movement that flourished during the 1970s, feminist science fiction authors such as Suzy McKee Charnas, Marge Piercy, James Tiptree Jr., and Ursula K. Le Guin contributed to the feminist science fiction bibliography and fought for a place at the literary table alongside men.<sup>118</sup>

The 1970s are considered by editor Lisa Yaszek to be the decade in which feminist science fiction was born. Though women have long written science fiction, they have been a distinct minority in publications, particularly in the American pulp magazine community where science fiction was popularized. Though represented to a lesser extent, they made their voices heard. Speculative pioneers like Leslie F. Stone wrote the same kind of stories as their male counterparts while expanding the fledgling genre's roster of female characters to include female leaders, scientists, and even housewife heroines, showcasing that domestic life could be just as exciting settings for the genre as laboratories and spaceships.<sup>119</sup> Early female science fiction writers did not see themselves as a coherent political or aesthetic group at the time, but by the 1970s, when women writers became substantially more visible, this began to change.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Yaszek and Sharp, *Sisters of Tomorrow*, xxi.

<sup>113</sup> Yaszek and Sharp, *Sisters of Tomorrow*, xx.

<sup>114</sup> Yaszek and Sharp, *Sisters of Tomorrow*, xx.

<sup>115</sup> Meghan Jackson, "Science Fiction and Second Wave Feminism: Women's Writing, Individuality, and (in)Action in Joanna Russ's *The Female Man* and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*" (master's thesis, Iowa State University, 2022), 2 <https://dr.lib.iastate.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/e76e2eaa-c732-408a-b12d-0300b3d0bdd6/content>.

<sup>116</sup> Jackson, "Science Fiction and Second Wave Feminism," 3.

<sup>117</sup> Jackson, "Science Fiction and Second Wave Feminism," 3.

<sup>118</sup> Jackson, "Science Fiction and Second Wave Feminism," 1; Higgins, "Science Fiction, 1960-2005," 10-12.

<sup>119</sup> Library of America, "Lisa Yaszek on 'the Watershed Moment' of 1970s Feminist Science Fiction," March 16, 2023, <https://www.loa.org/news-and-views/2128-lisa-yaszek-on-the-watershed-moment-of-1970s-feminist-science-fiction/>.

<sup>120</sup> Library of America, "Lisa Yaszek on 'the Watershed Moment' of 1970s Feminist Science Fiction."

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Women had always comprised about 15 percent of the creative science fiction community, meaning authors and artists. As author-agent Virginia Kidd notes, those numbers changed minimally in the 1970s.<sup>121</sup> What changed was their visibility. Suddenly, women were winning major awards such as the Hugo and Nebula Awards, taking over important professional organizations, and creating new anthologies, fanzines, and artwork. They were beginning to think about themselves in collective terms, building on the work of their predecessors, infusing their stories their burgeoning feminist ideologies, all whilst creating new ideas of their own.<sup>122</sup>

Yet statistics alone do not capture the energy of this transformation. What mattered was the spirit of discovery that drew women toward the genre in the first place. Women were drawn to science fiction because it celebrated change and presented options that weren't yet available to women.<sup>123</sup> Feminist themes were incorporated into their fiction, and real-life activism followed. Not only were women authors of this period artistically innovative, but they were also politically passionate. By harnessing the political energies of the era, women writing science fiction in the 1970s expanded the genre in three ways. First, authors paid homage to the feminist utopias of their suffragist predecessors with stories of all-female societies where women could develop as fully realized people and characters. Second, women challenged the genre's historically limited representations of women as alien monsters and love interests with stories of women building new futures at every stage of life.<sup>124</sup> This is represented in Le Guin's 1974 short story "The Day Before the Revolution," in which elderly women lead the revolution. Third, women revised the historic themes of the genre to generate new perspectives on science, gender, and society, as is presented in Le Guin's 1974 *The Dispossessed*.<sup>125</sup>

Within this climate of creative and political experimentation, Le Guin's own feminism matured. She recognized herself as part of a collective reimagining of language, power, and identity. Le Guin described herself as coming to feminism slow and late, after much discussion with her fellow female authors on feminist theory and literature.<sup>126</sup> Not only were women arguing with their male counterparts, but they were debating with one another as well, embodying the evolving reality of the movement in art and beyond.<sup>127</sup> With *The Dispossessed*, Le Guin experimented with feminist utopias—not an uncommon experimentation among New Wave feminist art. Authors of feminist utopia stories of the 1970s-1990s infused them with the awareness of how everyday language functions, to some extent, as an agent of oppression.<sup>128</sup> These authors presenting new feminist concepts within their texts were forced to be linguistically inventive, requiring new terms for fictional cultural practices or objects unique to their invented worlds.<sup>129</sup> Le Guin's fictional language of Pravic in *The Dispossessed* eliminated possessive constructs and reflected egalitarian values, dissolving notions of ownership.<sup>130</sup> Alongside the efforts of feminist language reform within fiction were new non-sexist publishing policies and the production of non-sexist dictionaries.<sup>131</sup> The work of these feminist forerunners was indeed changing the realm of literature. These changes outlined the exploration of the ramifications implied by gendered language and an imagination of what a non-sexist society and its language could be like.

Le Guin's work both inherited and transcended the feminist tradition. She did not merely continue what earlier women had begun; she redefined it for a new generation of readers and thinkers. The emergence of Ursula K. Le Guin in the lineage of speculative fiction reflects the continuation and a transformation of the tradition forged by earlier women writers, paralleling the ongoing evolution of feminism. Those who came before her—Shelley, Stone, Lorraine, and many others—challenged the male-dominated norms of the pulp and early science fiction

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<sup>121</sup> Virginia Kidd was Ursula K. Le Guin's agent for the bulk of her career.

<sup>122</sup> Library of America, "Lisa Yaszek on 'the Watershed Moment' of 1970s Feminist Science Fiction."

<sup>123</sup> Library of America, "Lisa Yaszek on 'the Watershed Moment' of 1970s Feminist Science Fiction."

<sup>124</sup> Library of America, "Lisa Yaszek on 'the Watershed Moment' of 1970s Feminist Science Fiction."

<sup>125</sup> Library of America, "Lisa Yaszek on 'the Watershed Moment' of 1970s Feminist Science Fiction."

<sup>126</sup> Kristine J. Anderson, "Places Where a Woman Could Talk: Ursula K. Le Guin and the Feminist Utopia," *Women and Language* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 7, accessed via GenderWatch

<sup>127</sup> Library of America, "Lisa Yaszek on 'the Watershed Moment' of 1970s Feminist Science Fiction."

<sup>128</sup> Anderson, "Places Where a Woman Could Talk," 7.

<sup>129</sup> Anderson, "Places Where a Woman Could Talk," 7.

<sup>130</sup> Whitt, "Schemata of Estrangement in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*."

<sup>131</sup> Anderson, "Places Where a Woman Could Talk," 7.

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worlds, often at great personal and professional cost. They expanded the genre's boundaries, insisted on the inclusion of women's perspectives, and demonstrated that science fiction could serve as both a forum for scientific imagination and a vehicle for political and social critique. By the time Le Guin began publishing, this groundwork had created space—albeit still limited—for women to write boldly about gender, freedom, and alternative social structures. Though the forward thrust of progress is undeniable during this period, the reception of feminist critique and world building in literature at large remained seen as its own category. In a 1995 interview with William Walsh, published in *The Kenyon Review*, Le Guin discussed the difficulty of women in literary history, "The old guard says the only women writers are Austen, Bronte, Woolf, and maybe Plath. And Dickinson, of course. The only good women writers are dead virgins. Not only dead, unmarried, but preferably childless. In other words, as much like men as possible." "There's women's literature," she said, "but there isn't men's literature."<sup>132</sup>

Ursula K. Le Guin is best understood not as a singular or isolated figure, but as one of the most influential writers among a cohort of women who reshaped science fiction and fantasy in the mid- to late twentieth century. Alongside aforementioned contemporaries such as Joanna Russ, James Tiptree Jr. (Alice B. Sheldon), Marge Piercy, and Suzy McKee Charnas, Le Guin participated in a wider feminist reimagining of speculative fiction that expanded the genre's thematic and formal boundaries. Each of these authors, among others, contributed in distinct ways: Russ foregrounded explicitly feminist critique and literary theory; Tiptree explored gender and identity through psychologically complex and often subversive narratives; Piercy developed politically engaged feminist utopias and dystopias; and Charnas interrogated power structures and social hierarchies through speculative world-building. Within this group, Le Guin's work is distinguished by its sustained engagement with anthropology, linguistics, and philosophy, as well as its nuanced exploration of gender as a cultural construct, most notably in *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969) and *The Dispossessed* (1974). As editor and scholar Lisa Yaszek has argued, feminist science fiction of the 1970s emerged as a collective movement rather than the achievement of any single author.<sup>133</sup> In this context, Le Guin stands as a leading figure among female science fiction and fantasy writers whose combined efforts transformed the genre into a vehicle for complex social, political, and intellectual inquiry.

As Le Guin outlined in later interviews, though science fiction places stories in a different time or existence, they are a critique of the here and now—of our society as it exists. Her work not only altered the trajectory of science fiction and fantasy but also secured a place for women's voices at the center of the genre's ongoing evolution while functioning, as literature often has through history, as a tool for social and philosophical exploration, particularly through the eyes of a woman. In assessing her identity as a female writer in a world of men, she was careful not to mince words. She drew a line, "I am a woman writer, not an imitation man."<sup>134</sup> Le Guin embraced her womanhood, intellect, and talent as her own, and through her work, she celebrated her identity as a mother, a wife, an academic, a philosopher, and an author.

By the late 1970s, even mainstream observers recognized a shift within the science fiction genre. What had begun as a literary subculture had become a movement that permanently altered the genre's trajectory. A staff writer for the *Oregon Journal* pondered the impact of Le Guin and other women of her ilk in 1977. They asked, "will science fiction ever be the same again, now that the women have invaded the spaceships?"<sup>135</sup> Ursula K. Le Guin changed the landscape of science fiction, bringing her fresh perspective to the genre, and infused it with a politically charged speculative fiction that would inform all who pursued the genre's in and around science fiction in the future, men and women alike. The answer to the *Oregon Journal* author's question—nearly fifty years later—is a resounding no. Le Guin and her cohorts fundamentally reshaped the genre of science fiction.

<sup>132</sup> Walsh and Le Guin. "I Am a Woman Writer," 200.

<sup>133</sup> Library of America, "Lisa Yaszek on 'the Watershed Moment' of 1970s Feminist Science Fiction," March 16, 2023, <https://www.loa.org/news-and-views/2128-lisa-yaszek-on-the-watershed-moment-of-1970s-feminist-science-fiction/>.

<sup>134</sup> Walsh and Le Guin. "I Am a Woman Writer," 200.

<sup>135</sup> Susan Stanley, "'Real Women' in Fantasies: Will Science Fiction Ever Be the Same?," *Oregon Journal* (Portland, Oregon), April 28, 1977. 21.

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## DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY OF THE URSULA K. LE GUIN HOUSE – 3321 NW THURMAN STREET

By the mid-twentieth century, Ursula K. Le Guin's writing had firmly established her as a transformative figure in science fiction and fantasy, and her intellectual and creative pursuits were inseparable from the environments in which she lived. Portland, Oregon, became the backdrop for much of her personal and professional life, providing both the privacy and inspiration she needed to develop her worlds. The residence she shared with her family at 3321 NW Thurman Street was more than a home; it was a space that nurtured her imagination, supported her writing practice, and reflected the artistic and cultural milieu that had long characterized the surrounding Willamette Heights neighborhood. Understanding the history and development of this property offers insight into the domestic and physical contexts that shaped Le Guin's creative life, connecting the intimate details of her home to the broader arc of her literary legacy.

Willamette Heights, a verdant and secluded neighborhood in northwest Portland, has long been recognized not only for its scenic residential character overlooking Mount St. Helens and Mount Adams, but also for its rich cultural and artistic heritage. From the late nineteenth century through the twentieth century, Willamette Heights developed a distinctive identity as an artists' enclave and a hub for art patrons, reflecting the community's commitment to fostering creativity and cultural engagement. The Willamette Heights Historical Archive Committee documented the neighborhood's character when it published *Artists of Willamette Heights: A Centennial Catalogue*, as part of the community's centennial celebration. In 1991, Joe Fitzgibbon wrote in the *Oregonian* that "for years, artists representing a virtual who's who of the Portland Art scene have called Willamette Heights home. Painters, sculptors, potters, weavers, metalworkers, film makers, architects, writers, and designers have hung their canvases, constructed looms, mounted cameras, and set up their artistic tools." From the 1890s to the present, Willamette Heights has attracted art patrons and artists who have appreciated a neighborhood that supports their talents.<sup>136</sup> The neighborhood's early residents, many of whom were active in the arts, helped establish Willamette Heights as an environment that attracted painters, sculptors, writers, and other creative professionals seeking a supportive and inspiring place to live and work. Locally notable figures include Cornelia Mossman, a leading arts organizer and chair of the Oregon Federation of Women's Clubs' Art Department, and painter Mary S. Morpheu, whose work was exhibited at the Portland Art Museum.<sup>137</sup> Nearby residents such as watercolorist Cleveland Rockwell and printmaker Louis Bunce further contributed to the area's association with artistic production.<sup>138</sup> This artistic legacy formed part of the neighborhood's cultural identity, though there is no firm documentation that it directly influenced Ursula and Charles Le Guin's decision to purchase the house in 1960.

The house at 3321 NW Thurman St. was constructed between 1901 and 1908 within the Willamette Heights neighborhood, a residential subdivision that developed during Portland's rapid growth in the early twentieth century.<sup>139</sup> The Le Guin property was originally part of a larger tract sold in 1894 by John Hale to the Scottish American Investment Company Ltd., which was headquartered in Edinburgh, Scotland.<sup>140</sup> The Scottish American Investment Company, in partnership with the Portland-based real estate firm Russell, MacCleod, and Blyth, held exclusive marketing rights for lots in in the neighborhood.<sup>141</sup> The Willamette Heights subdivision occupied a prominent location in the hills above Guild's Lake, the location of the Lewis and Clark Centennial Fair and Exposition in the summer of 1905, and was sure to attract the attention of countless fairgoers. Aware

<sup>136</sup> Fulton, *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Clarke-Mossman House*.

<sup>137</sup> Fulton, *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Clarke-Mossman House*. 13-16.

<sup>138</sup> Fulton, *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Clarke-Mossman House*. 13-16.; US City Directory, Portland, Oregon, 1943. 237.

[https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2469/records/980874992?tid=&pid=&queryId=35eaa97b-538a-4eb1-a607-aecb32297bef&\\_phsrc=MXJ37&\\_phstart=successSource](https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2469/records/980874992?tid=&pid=&queryId=35eaa97b-538a-4eb1-a607-aecb32297bef&_phsrc=MXJ37&_phstart=successSource)

<sup>139</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps show empty lots in 1901. Rumors asserted it was constructed in 1899, however the Sanborn maps conflict with this. In 1908, the house appears on the maps, making the construction date ca. 1908; Sanborn Map Company, "Portland, Oregon," 1908 (New York: Sanborn Map & Publishing Co, 1908), sheets #22, 12 & 21.

<sup>140</sup> Donovan and Associates, "Oregon Inventory of Historic Properties Historic Resource Survey Form: Hutchin House #5722," (Spring 1993): 2.

<sup>141</sup> City of Portland Bureau of Planning, "Kenton Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (US Dept of the Interior, National Park Service, 2005): 8:6.

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of the potential profitability of such a conspicuous location, Lewis Russell and Percy Blythe, agents of the Scottish American Investment Company, aggressively marketed the new neighborhood.<sup>142</sup> Shortly after the selection of the Guild's Lake site for the Exposition, Russell and Blythe engaged prolific local architect Emil Schacht to design a series of "modern" houses to be built speculatively in Willamette Heights in the years leading up to the fair.<sup>143</sup> This may have included the Le Guin house, though confirming documentation has not been found.

By 1903, the lot containing the future house of Ursula K. Le Guin was deeded to Cora L. and George L. Hutchin, who had relocated to Portland the previous year.<sup>144</sup> It is unclear if the house was already present on site at the Hutchins' acquisition of the property. 1901 Sanborn Fire Insurance maps show an empty lot; the next Sanborn Fire Insurance Map available was published in 1908 and shows the house. Therefore, the house was constructed between 1901 and 1908, indicating a ca. 1908 construction date.<sup>145</sup>

George Hutchin, the aforementioned 1903 grantee, built a career in civic pageantry and public promotion, notably serving as a director of the Portland Rose Festival, where he was responsible for developing the festival's pioneering night electric parade. Cora Hutchin contributed as a costume designer for the festival's parades, underscoring the couple's involvement in Portland's cultural life.<sup>146</sup> In 1920, the Hutchins sold the house to Dorothy and Randolph Bingham.<sup>147</sup> Following Randolph Bingham's death, Dorothy deeded the property in 1922 to relatives Randolph V. and Florence Bingham. The Bingham's held the property until 1938, when it was sold to Nina L. and Gertrude Greathouse. Gertrude Greathouse retained ownership until her death in 1946.<sup>148</sup> Ownership of the property was ultimately transferred to Ted and Miriam Roberts sometime between 1946 and 1960, though available documentation has not yielded an exact date.

In January 1960, Ted and Miriam Roberts sold the house to Ursula and Charles Le Guin.<sup>149</sup> Over the decades that followed, the Le Guins adapted the property to accommodate their family life and Ursula's writing career, making selective improvements that reflected her daily routines and creative practice. Interior character-defining features—including the preserved second-floor writing studio, built-in bookshelves and desks, and other flexible writing spaces—especially contribute to the house's association with Ursula Le Guin's significance in literature and women's history. The intact writing studio, which includes a built-in desk designed for her typewriter (on which she would type her final manuscripts), remains a tangible expression of her working environment and symbolizes the disciplined, domestic setting from which she produced her most influential novels.<sup>150</sup> Likewise, the surrounding gardens cultivated by Charles Le Guin evoke the natural imagery and environmental consciousness that recur throughout her writing. In addition, the large redwood tree at the rear of the house, planted by the Le Guins in the 1960s, is an intact reminder of Ursula K. Le Guin's roots in Northern California.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> City of Portland Bureau of Planning, "Kenton Historic District," 8:6.

<sup>143</sup> City of Portland Bureau of Planning, "Kenton Historic District," 8:6.

<sup>144</sup> Hutchin House #5722, 3.

<sup>145</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps show empty lots in 1901. In 1908, the house appears on the maps, making the construction date ca. 1908; Sanborn Map Company, "Portland, Oregon," 1901 (New York: Sanborn Map & Publishing Co, 1901), sheet 120; Sanborn Map Company, "Portland, Oregon," 1908 (New York: Sanborn Map & Publishing Co, 1908), sheets #22, 12 & 21.

<sup>146</sup> Hutchin House #5722, 3.

<sup>147</sup> Hutchin House #5722, 3.

<sup>148</sup> Hutchin House #5722, 3.

<sup>149</sup> Ted R. Roberts and Miriam R. Roberts to Charles Alfred Le Guin and Ursula K. Le Guin. *Warranty Deed*. Multnomah County, Oregon, January 25, 1960. Book 1994, Page 38.

<sup>150</sup> Literary Arts, "Le Guin Family Donates Portland Home To Literary Arts For New Writers Residency."

<sup>151</sup> Post-period of significance additions such as the 1984 laundry room and deck increased the home's functionality while maintaining the domestic scale that defined Ursula K. Le Guin's working environment. Between 1985 and 1986, the Le Guins converted the north portion of the basement into a one-bedroom apartment, which was rented exclusively to tenants outside of the family and provided privacy and stability that helped support Le Guin to continue her literary work from home. The basement apartment was not used by the Le Guins.

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Le Guin herself frequently emphasized the experience of working within a stable, domestic environment, describing writing not as an isolated or romantic endeavor but as a disciplined daily practice integrated into the rhythms of home life. She worked primarily from her second-floor studio, where the built-in desk and surrounding shelves supported a consistent and organized workspace; there, she typically drafted in longhand before producing final manuscripts on her typewriter. In essays such as “*The Fisherwoman’s Daughter*” and “*The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*,” Le Guin reflects on writing as a sustained, everyday practice rather than an act of sudden inspiration.<sup>152</sup> She also noted in interviews that remaining rooted in one place—rather than relocating frequently—enabled the kind of long-form imaginative development required for complex works such as *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969) and *The Dispossessed* (1974). The house at 3321 NW Thurman Street provided this essential continuity, offering both physical seclusion and intellectual stability during the most productive decades of her career.

The surrounding Portland environment also played a meaningful role in shaping Le Guin’s creative outlook. Scholars and critics have frequently noted the ecological awareness that defines her work, particularly in relation to landscapes that emphasize balance, interdependence, and restraint. The natural setting of the Willamette Heights neighborhood, along with the gardens cultivated on the property and views of the broader Pacific Northwest landscape, parallel these thematic concerns. The rhythms of daily life within the household—shared with her family yet structured to allow periods of solitude—mirror the balance between community and individual inquiry that recurs throughout her fiction. In this way, Ursula K. Le Guin’s House is not simply associated with her life in a general sense, but directly embodies the physical and intellectual conditions under which her most significant literary contributions were conceived and produced. One poem from the collection *Finding My Elegy* (2012) conjures familiar visions of the house on Thurman Street, and the scene and ethos in which Le Guin wrote. Included below, the poem reflects the purpose and capacity of a house to produce and cultivate beauty, art, and family simultaneously.

***For the New House***

From *Finding My Elegy: New and Selected Poems* by Ursula K. Le Guin (2012)<sup>153</sup>

May this house be full of kitchen smells  
and shadows and toys and nests of mice  
and roars of rage and waterfalls of tears  
and deep sexual silences and sounds  
of mysterious origin never explained  
and troves and keepsakes and a lot of junk  
and a flowing like a warm wind only slower  
blowing the leaves of trees and books and the fish-years  
of a child's life silvery flickering  
quick, quick, in the slow incessant gust  
that billows out the curtains for a moment  
all those years from now, age.  
May the sills and doorframes  
be in blessing blest at every passing.  
May the roof but not the rooms know rain.  
May the windows know clearly  
the branch and flower of the apple tree.

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<sup>152</sup> Ursula K. Le Guin, “The Fisherwoman’s Daughter by Ursula K. LeGuin,” *K. Ibura* Vol. 39 (January 2004), <https://kibura.com/2004/01/01/vol-39-the-fisherwomans-daughter-by-ursula-k-leguin/>; Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction* (Cosmogogenesis, 2024). 165-170.

<sup>153</sup> Ursula K Le Guin, *Finding My Elegy: New and Selected Poems*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012.  
<https://www.ursulakleguin.com/finding-my-elegy>

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And may you be in this house  
as the music is in the instrument.

**CONCLUSION**

The house at 3321 NW Thurman Street in Portland, Oregon, holds national significance under Criterion B in the areas of Literature and Social History: Women’s History for its long and direct association with Ursula K. Le Guin, one of the most influential literary figures of the 20th and early 21st centuries. The ca. 1908 house became Le Guin’s primary home and creative workspace from 1960 until her death, encompassing the most productive decades of her career. Its preserved second floor writing studio, first floor living spaces, and park-like setting remain intimately connected to her life and work and served as the setting where she composed groundbreaking novels such as the *Earthsea* series (1968–2001), *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), and *The Dispossessed* (1974). Within these walls, she transformed genre fiction into a powerful vehicle for exploring social, political, and philosophical themes, often infusing her work with feminist perspectives that reshaped the boundaries of science fiction and fantasy. The house not only reflects the personal history of a revolutionary author but also embodies the broader evolution of American literature in the postwar era, standing as a tangible link to a career that garnered five Hugo Awards, four Nebula Awards, the National Book Award, and an enduring legacy that continues to inspire readers and writers worldwide.

Le Guin, Ursula K., House  
Name of Property

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** less than one

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage; enter "Less than one" if the acreage is .99 or less)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>45.536075°</u> Latitude	<u>-122.716167°</u> Longitude	3	_____ Latitude	_____ Longitude
2	_____ Latitude	_____ Longitude	4	_____ Latitude	_____ Longitude

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary for the Ursula K. Le Guin House encompasses two parcels located within Willamette Heights: Parcel ID# R307927 and ID# R307928. The two combined parcels are bounded by residential homes to the east and west, a steep descending hill to the north, and NW Thurman Street to the south.<sup>154</sup>

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries of the site encompass the contributing building and related gardens and addition which are historically related to the property. The boundaries remained unchanged since the end of the period of significance in 1974.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Nika Faulkner/Project Coordinator date October 2025  
organization Heritage Consulting Group telephone 215-248-1260  
nfaulkner@heritage-consulting.com;  
street & number 15 W. Highland Ave. email projects@heritage-consulting.com  
city or town Philadelphia state PA zip code 19118

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Regional Location Map**
- **Local Location Map**
- **Tax Lot Map**
- **Site Plan**
- **Floor Plans (As Applicable)**
- **Photo Location Map** (Include for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map and insert immediately after the photo log and before the list of figures).

<sup>154</sup> Multnomah County assessor data accessed October 2025.

Le Guin, Ursula K., House  
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**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Photo Log**

**Name of Property:** Le Guin, Ursula K., House  
**City or Vicinity:** Portland  
**County:** Multnomah **State:** OR  
**Photographer:** Nika Faulkner/Heritage Consulting Group  
**Date Photographed:** May 1, 2025

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- Photograph 1 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0001  
Site, view looking northeast.
- Photograph 2 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0002  
Site, 1984 Stairs and Gardens, view looking east.
- Photograph 3 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0003  
South Elevation (Façade), view looking north.
- Photograph 4 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0004  
West Elevation, view looking northeast from gardens.
- Photograph 5 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0005  
North Elevation, view looking southeast.
- Photograph 6 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0006  
North Elevation, view looking south towards apartment unit entry.
- Photograph 7 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0007  
North Elevation, Covered Porch, view looking east.
- Photograph 8 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0008  
East Elevation, Garage Roof Deck, view looking north.
- Photograph 9 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0009  
First Floor, Entry/Stair Hall, view looking south.
- Photograph 10 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0010  
First Floor, Living Room, view looking west towards entry.
- Photograph 11 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0011  
First Floor, Living Room, view looking northwest towards Fireplace and Dining Room.
- Photograph 12 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0012  
First Floor, Dining Room, view looking northwest towards kitchen entry.

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**Photograph 13 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0013  
First Floor, Kitchen, view looking north.

**Photograph 14 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0014  
Second Floor, Ursula K. Le Guin's Writing Studio, view looking northwest.

**Photograph 15 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0015  
Second Floor, Ursula K. Le Guin's Writing Studio, view looking north towards Mount St. Helens and Mount Adams.

**Photograph 16 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0016  
Second Floor, Bedroom, view looking southwest.

**Photograph 17 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0017  
Third Floor / Attic, Landing, view looking northeast.

**Photograph 18 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0018  
Third Floor / Attic, Bedroom, view looking east.

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

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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### List of Figures

(Resize, compact, and paste images of maps and historic documents in this section. Place captions, with figure numbers above each image. Orient maps so that north is at the top of the page, all documents should be inserted with the top toward the top of the page.)

**Figure 1 of 26:** Regional Location Map.

**Figure 2 of 26:** Local Location Map.

**Figure 3 of 26:** Tax Lot Map.

**Figure 4 of 26:** Site Plan / Photo Key 1 of 4.

**Figure 5 of 26:** First Floor Plan / Photo Key 2 of 4.

**Figure 6 of 26:** Second Floor Plan / Photo Key 3 of 4.

**Figure 7 of 26:** Third Floor (Attic) Plan / Photo Key 4 of 4.

**Figure 8 of 26:** Aerial image of the rear of the house.

**Figure 9 of 26:** Photograph of the rear of the site.

**Figure 10 of 26:** Ca. 1960s photograph of 3321 Thurman Street after the Le Guins' purchase of the property.

**Figure 11 of 26:** Ca. 1960s photograph of 3321 Thurman Street after the Le Guins' purchase of the property.

**Figure 12 of 26:** Construction photos showing 1984 Laundry Room Addition.

**Figure 13 of 26:** Construction photos showing 1984 Laundry Room Addition.

**Figure 14 of 26:** Construction photos showing 1984 deck and Laundry Room Addition.

**Figure 15 of 26:** Construction photos showing new Laundry Room Addition and deck, 1984.

**Figure 16 of 26:** Construction photos, 1984.

**Figure 17 of 26:** Basement construction photos, 1985-86.

**Figure 18 of 26:** Basement apartment unit construction photos, 1985-86.

**Figure 19 of 26:** Exterior construction photos of the basement apartment unit, 1986.

**Figure 20 of 26:** Basement apartment unit construction photos, 1986.

**Figure 21 of 26:** Complete basement apartment unit, 1986.

**Figure 22 of 26:** Complete basement apartment unit, 1986.

**Figure 23 of 26:** Ursula K. Le Guin poses for a portrait in her house in Portland, Oregon, on July 5, 2001.

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**Figure 24 of 26:** Ursula K. Le Guin writing in her living room. Unknown Date, Pre-2018.

**Figure 25 of 26:** Ursula K. Le Guin on the porch of her Portland home, ca. 2014.

**Figure 26 of 26:** Poem from Ursula K. Le Guin's 1993 book *Blue Moon Over Thurman Street*.

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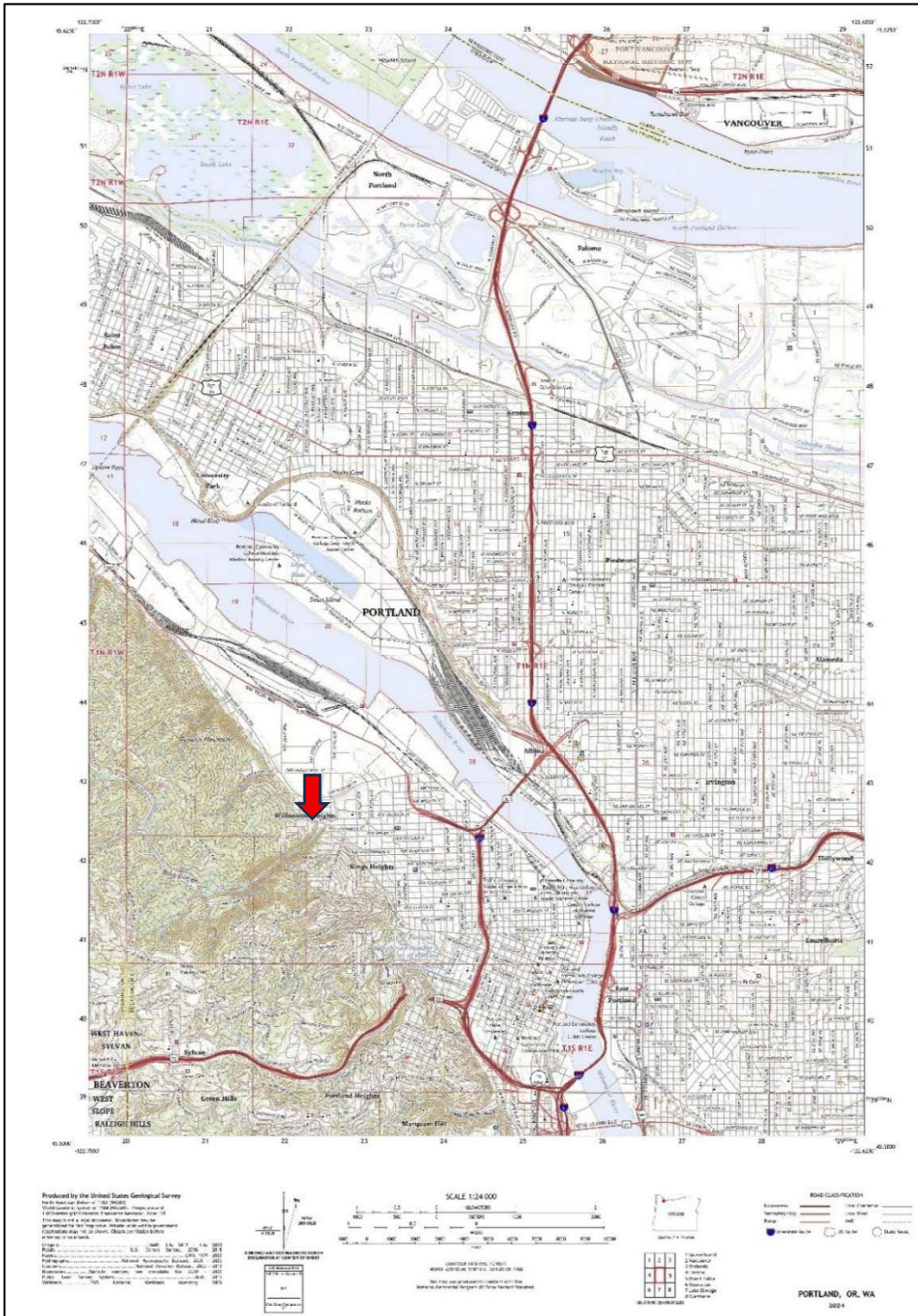
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## Figure 1: Regional Location Map.

See location of subject site in red. Base map from USGS.

Coordinates: 45.536075°, -122.716167°.



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National Park Service

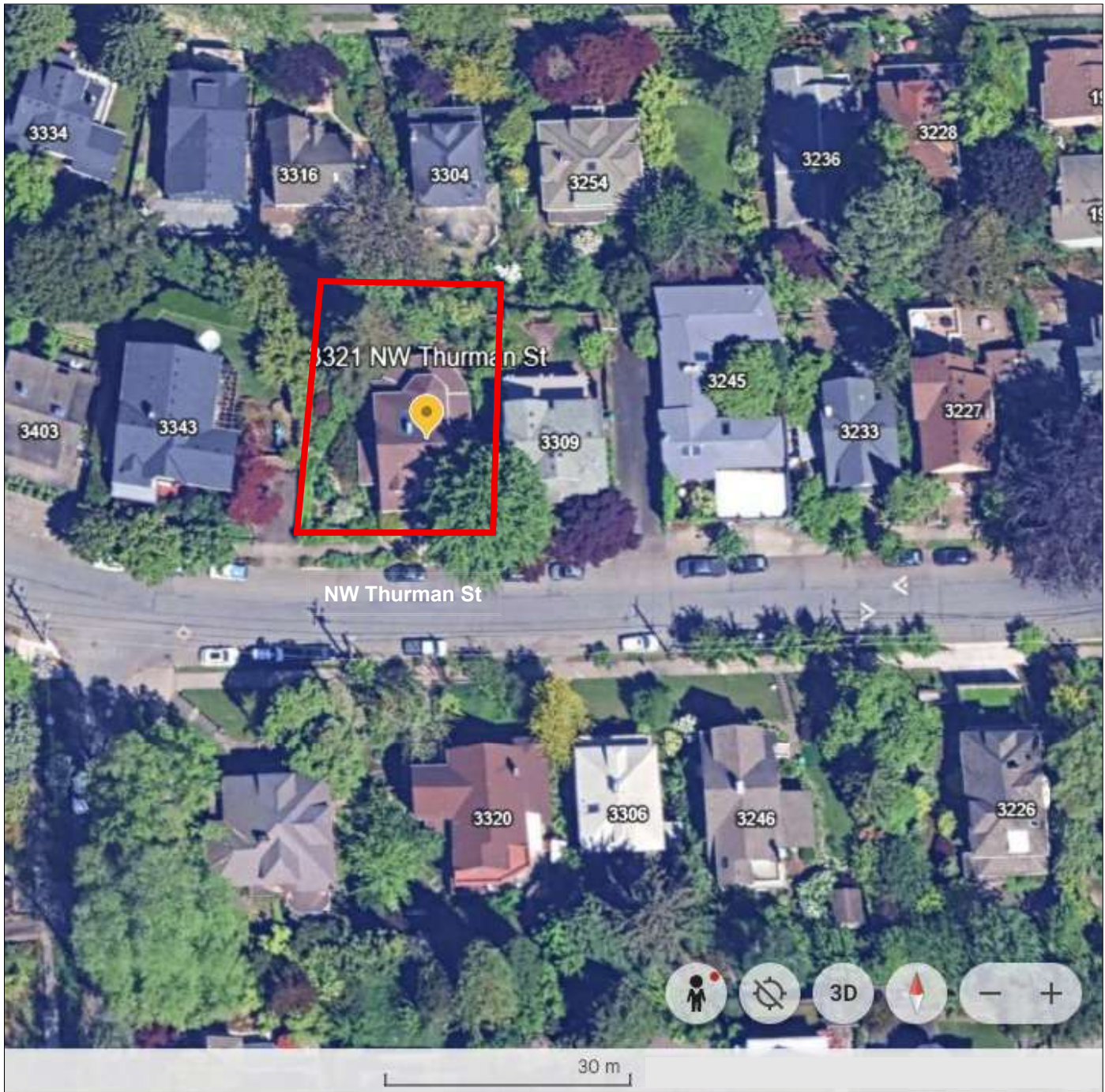
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**Figure 2: Local Location Map.**

Base map from Google Earth.  
Coordinates: 45.536075°, -122.716167°.



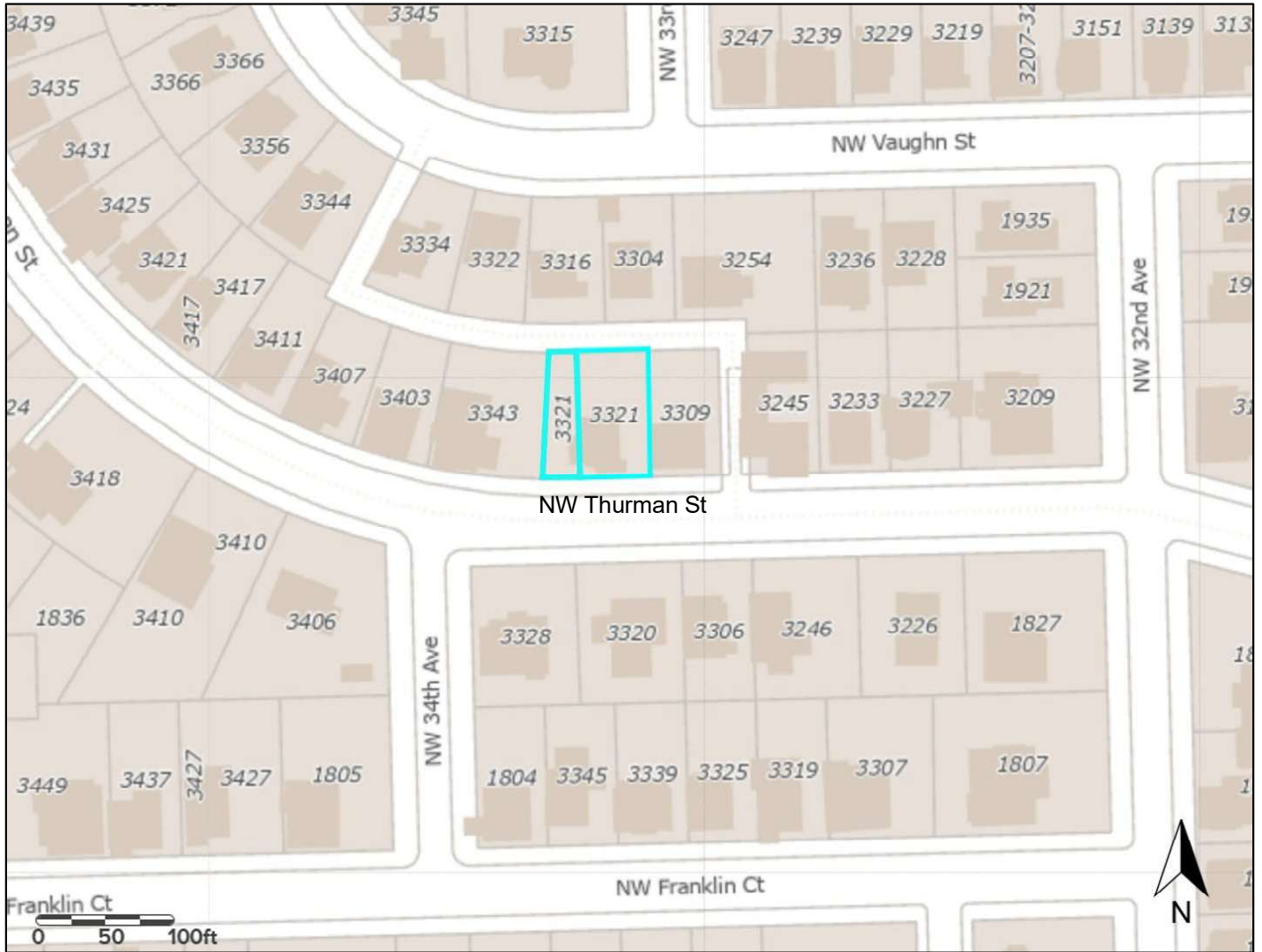
United States Department of the Interior  
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**Figure 3: Tax Lot Map.**  
Base map from Multnomah County GIS Parcel Map.



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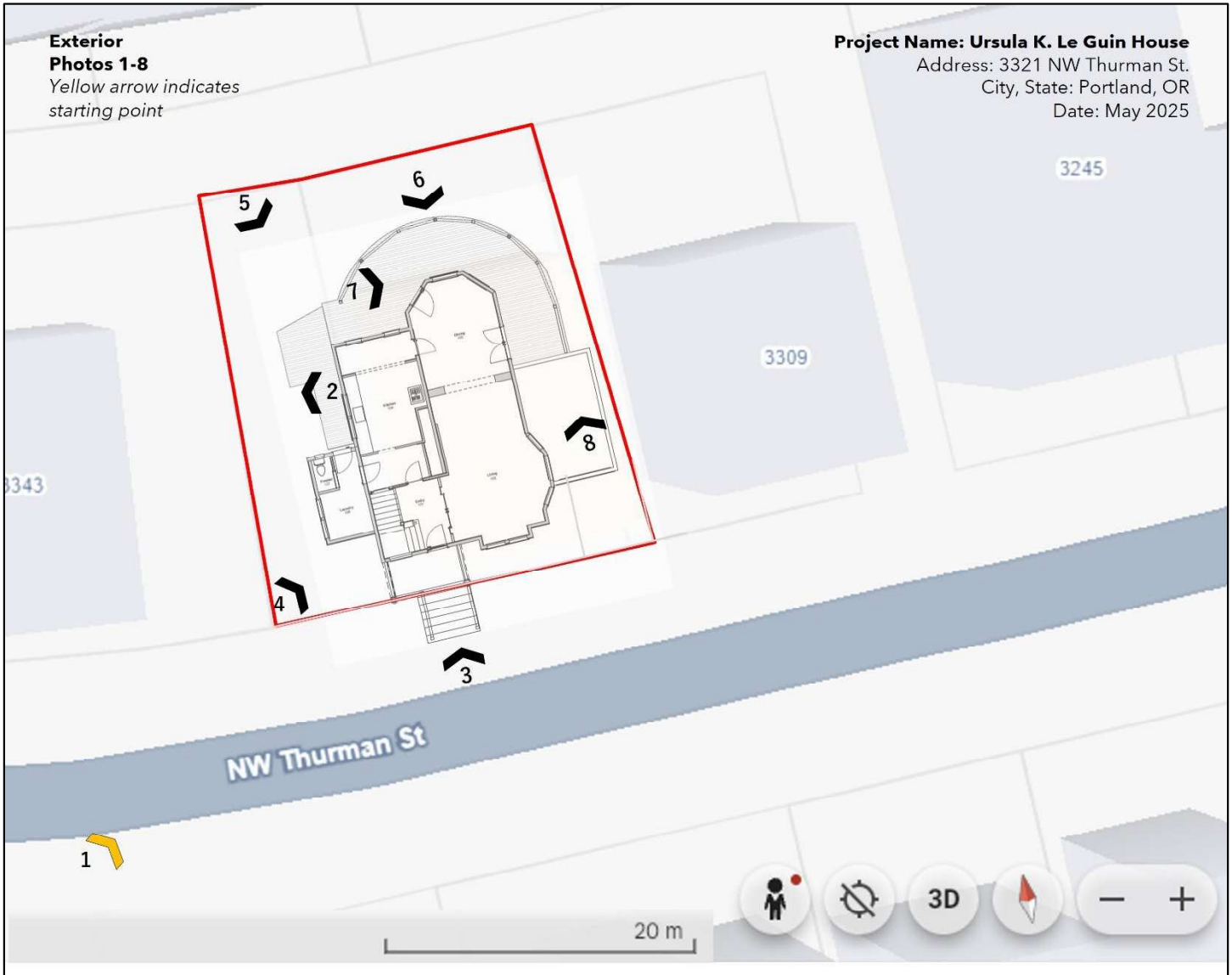
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**Figure 4: Site Plan / Photo Key 1 of 4.**

Base map from Google Earth. See nominated boundary in red. Plan not to scale.



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National Park Service

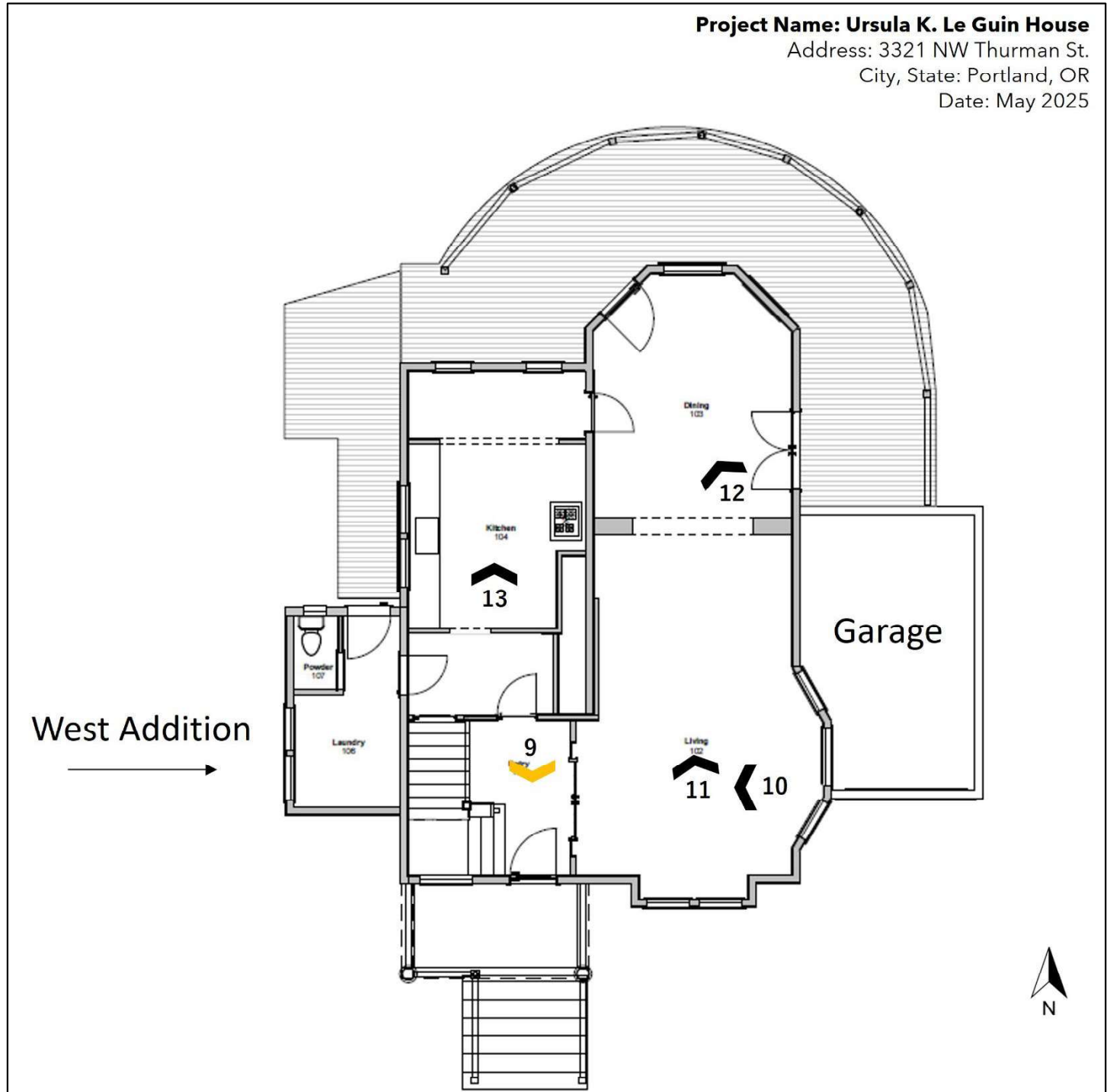
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**Figure 5: First Floor Plan / Photo Key 2 of 4.**

Base plan is current first floor plan. Source: Paul McKean Architecture, LLC, 2025. Plan not to scale.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

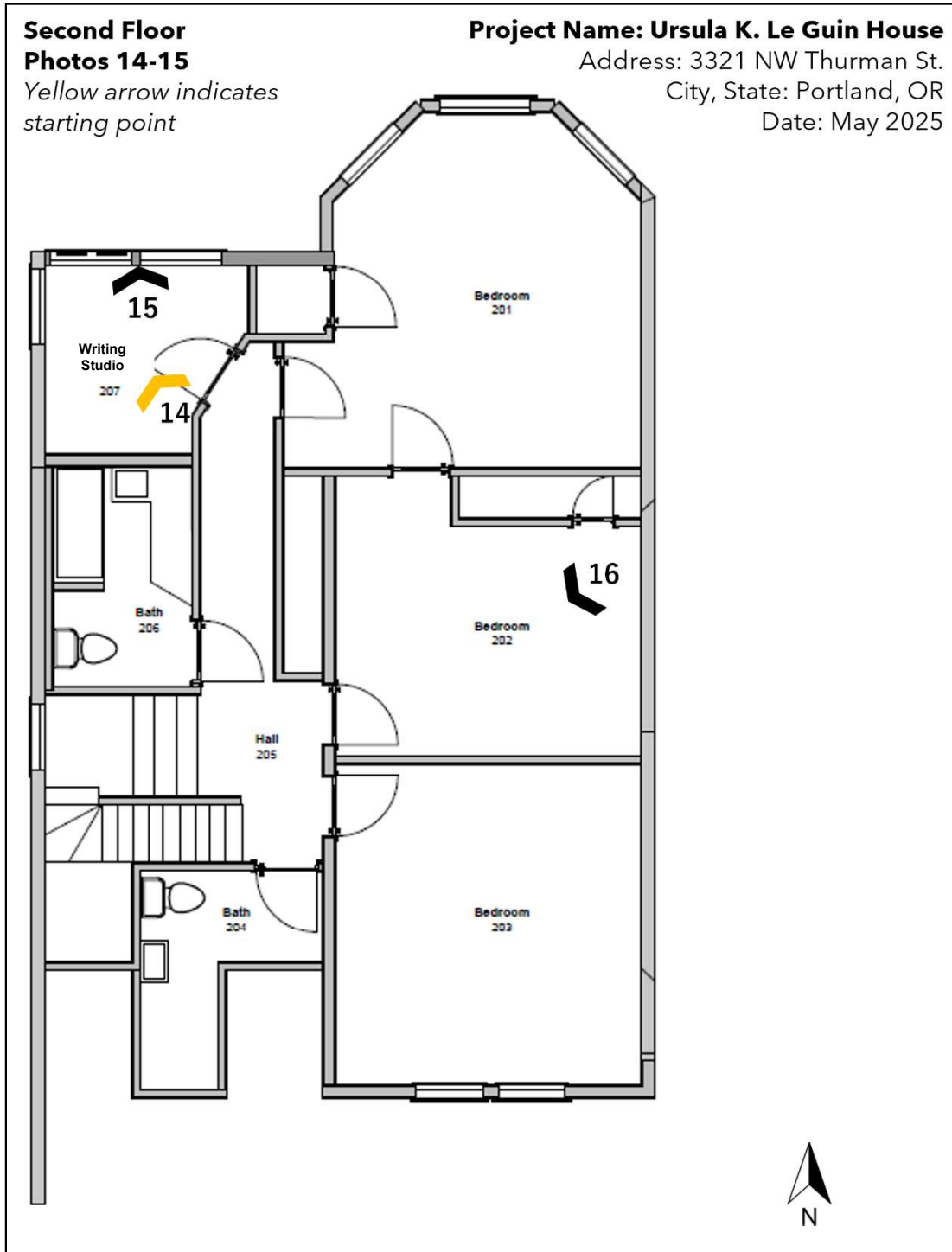
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**Figure 6: Second Floor Plan / Photo Key 3 of 4.**

Base plan is current second floor plan. Source: Paul McKean Architecture, LLC, 2025. Plan not to scale.



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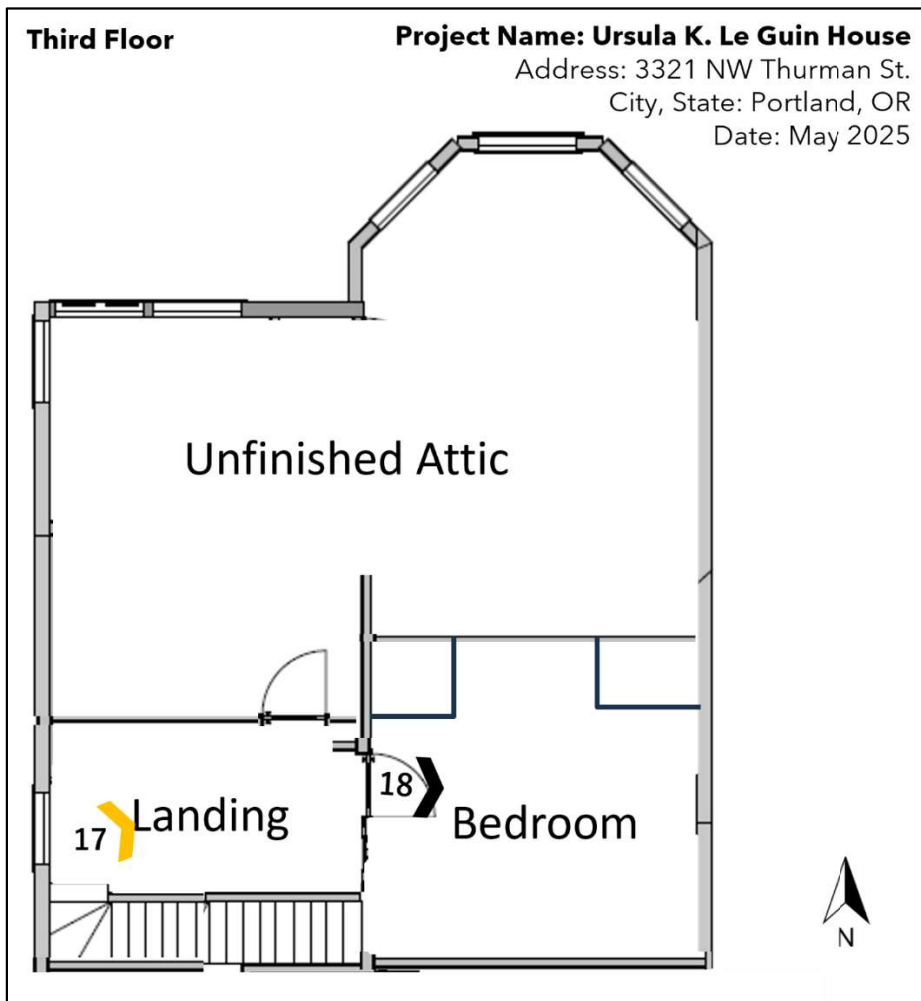
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**Figure 7: Third Floor (Attic) Plan / Photo Key 4 of 4.**

Source: Paul McKean Architecture, LLC, 2025. Plan is based on second floor plan and altered to show general layout of attic/third floor. Plan not to scale.



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**Figure 8: Aerial image of the rear of the house, looking southwest.** Note complexity of roof and porch. Source: Aerials courtesy of Portland Literary Arts included in article "Ursula K. Le Guin's 19th-century home in Portland, Oregon, is being repurposed by Literary Arts to host a writer's residency," *The Architect's Newspaper*.



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**Figure 9: Photograph of the rear of the site, looking southeast towards north elevation.** Note dense greenery and redwood tree in the foreground.  
Source: Aerials courtesy of Portland Literary Arts included in June 13, 2024 article "Ursula K. Le Guin's 19th-century home in Portland, Oregon, is being repurposed by Literary Arts to host a writer's residency," The Architect's Newspaper.



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**Figure 10: Ca. 1960s photograph of 3321 Thurman Street after the Le Guins' purchase of the property.** The present laundry room addition replaced the old side porch. View looking northeast at west elevation. Source: KGW News.<sup>155</sup>



<sup>155</sup> "Space to Dream": Ursula K. Le Guin's Longtime Portland Home to Welcome Aspiring Writers, directed by KGW News, Portland, Oregon, 2024, 03:59, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YIXrZFC-Ao>.

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**Figure 11: Ca. 1960s photograph of 3321 Thurman Street after the Le Guins' purchase of the property.**  
View looking northeast at façade. Source: KGW News.<sup>156</sup>



<sup>156</sup> "Space to Dream."

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**Figure 12: Construction photos showing 1984 Laundry Room Addition.** View looking northeast at west elevation. Source: Le Guin Family Collection



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**Figure 13: Construction photos showing 1984 Laundry Room Addition.** Views looking at west elevation.  
Source: Le Guin Family Collection.



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**Figure 14: Construction photos showing 1984 deck and Laundry Room Addition at the west side of the house.** Source: Le Guin Family Collection.



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**Figure 15: Construction photos showing new Laundry Room Addition and deck, 1984. Views looking at west elevation. Source: Le Guin Family Collection.**



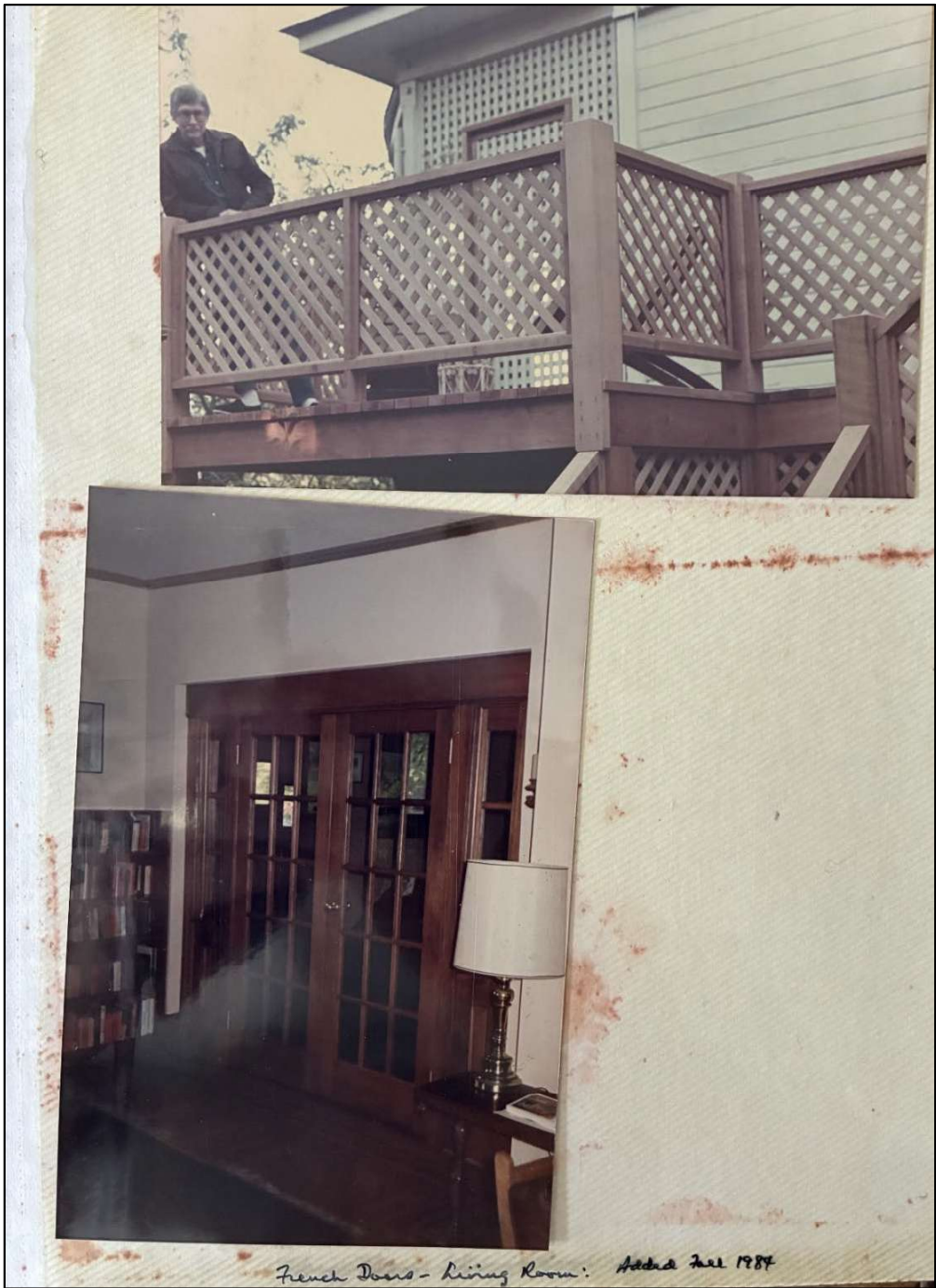
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**Figure 16: Construction photos, 1984.** Top: Connecting deck, view looking northeast towards rear original covered porch. Charles Le Guin pictured to the left side of the photo. Bottom: New french doors between the entry and living room, view looking southwest.  
Source: Le Guin Family Collection.



*French Doors - Living Room: Added Feb 1984*

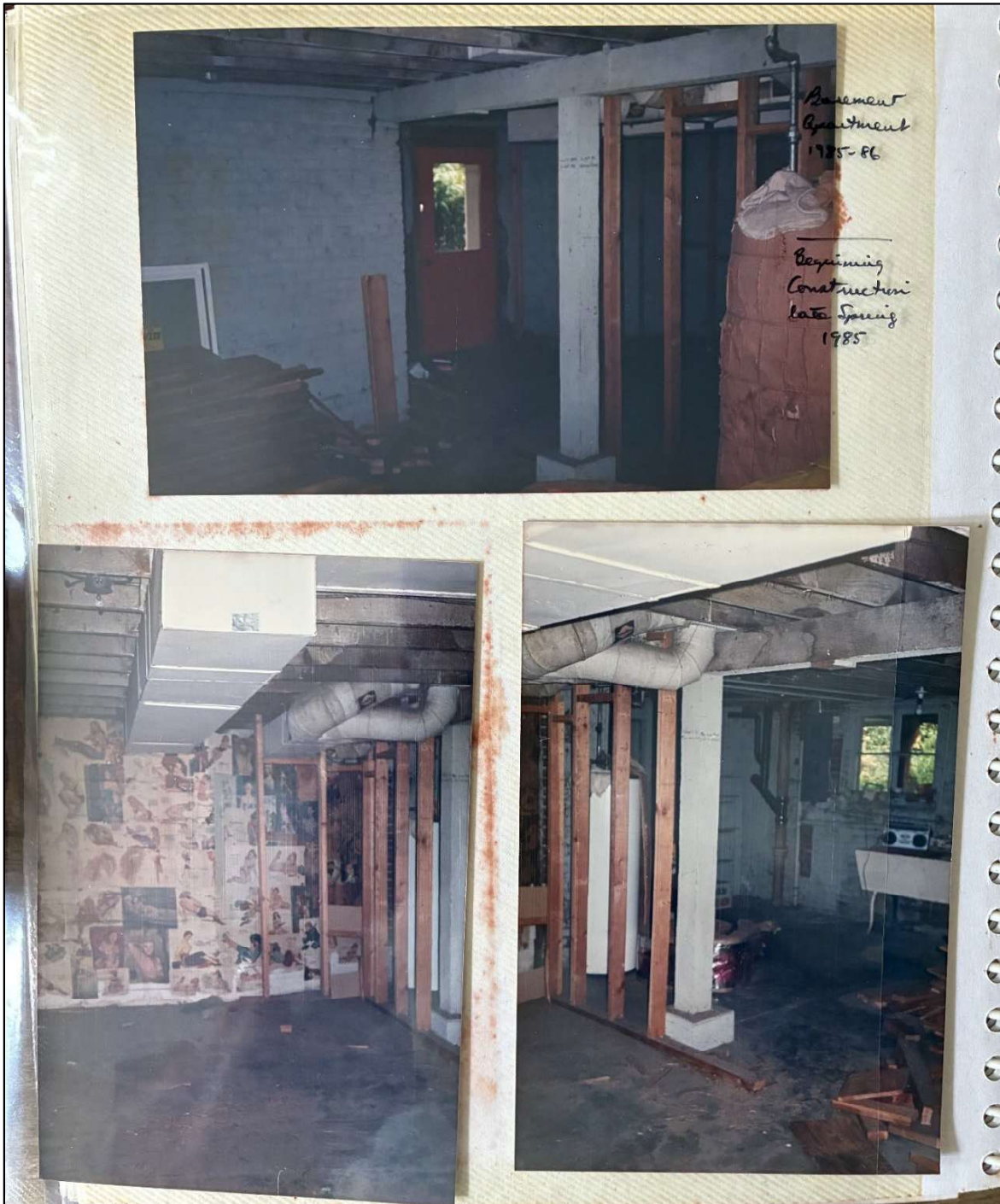
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**Figure 17: Basement construction photos, 1985-86.** Showing storage and utilitarian space for the main house and door leading to the west gardens. View looking northwest at exit.  
Source: Le Guin Family Collection.



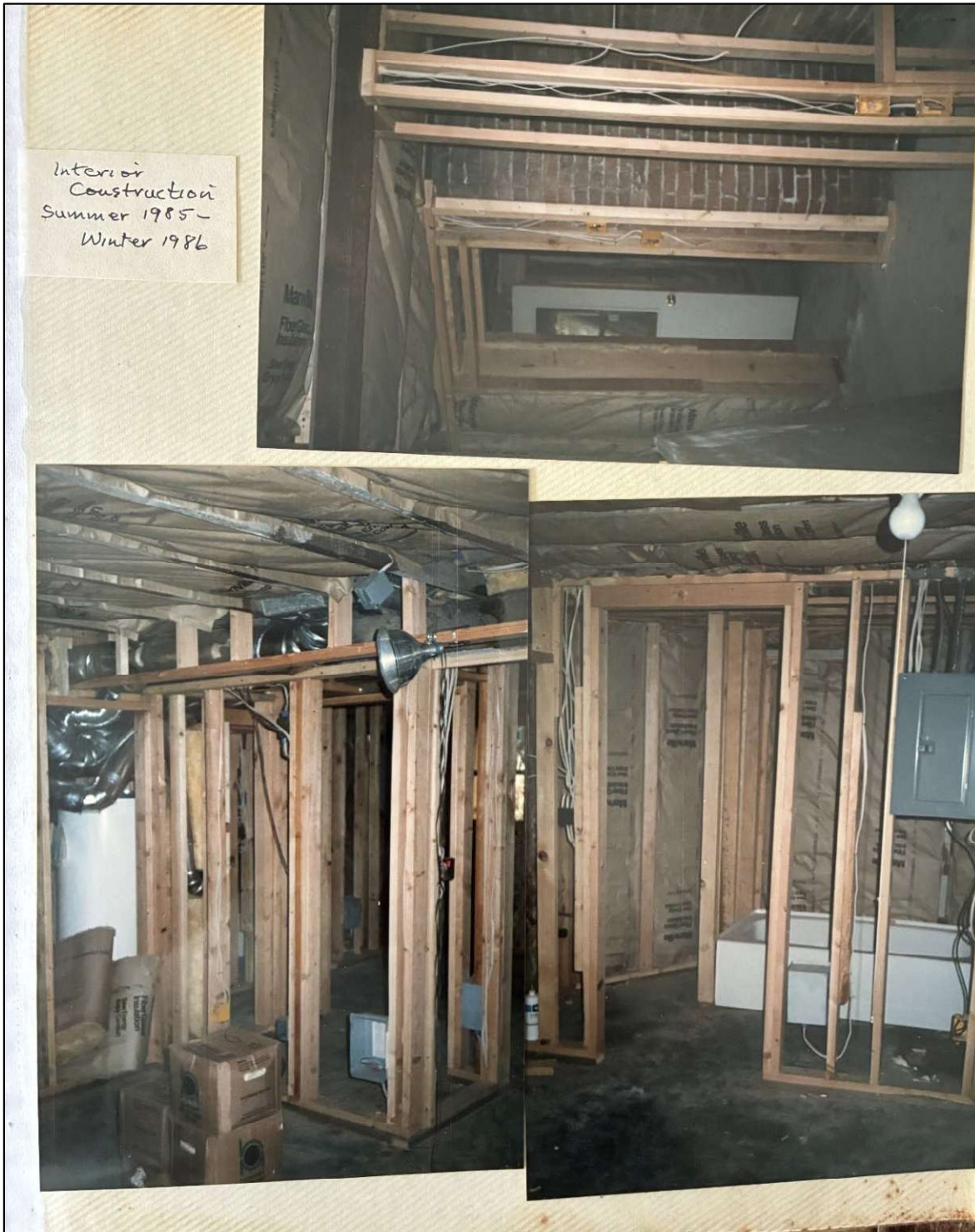
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**Figure 18: Basement apartment unit construction photos, 1985-86.**  
Source: Le Guin Family Collection.



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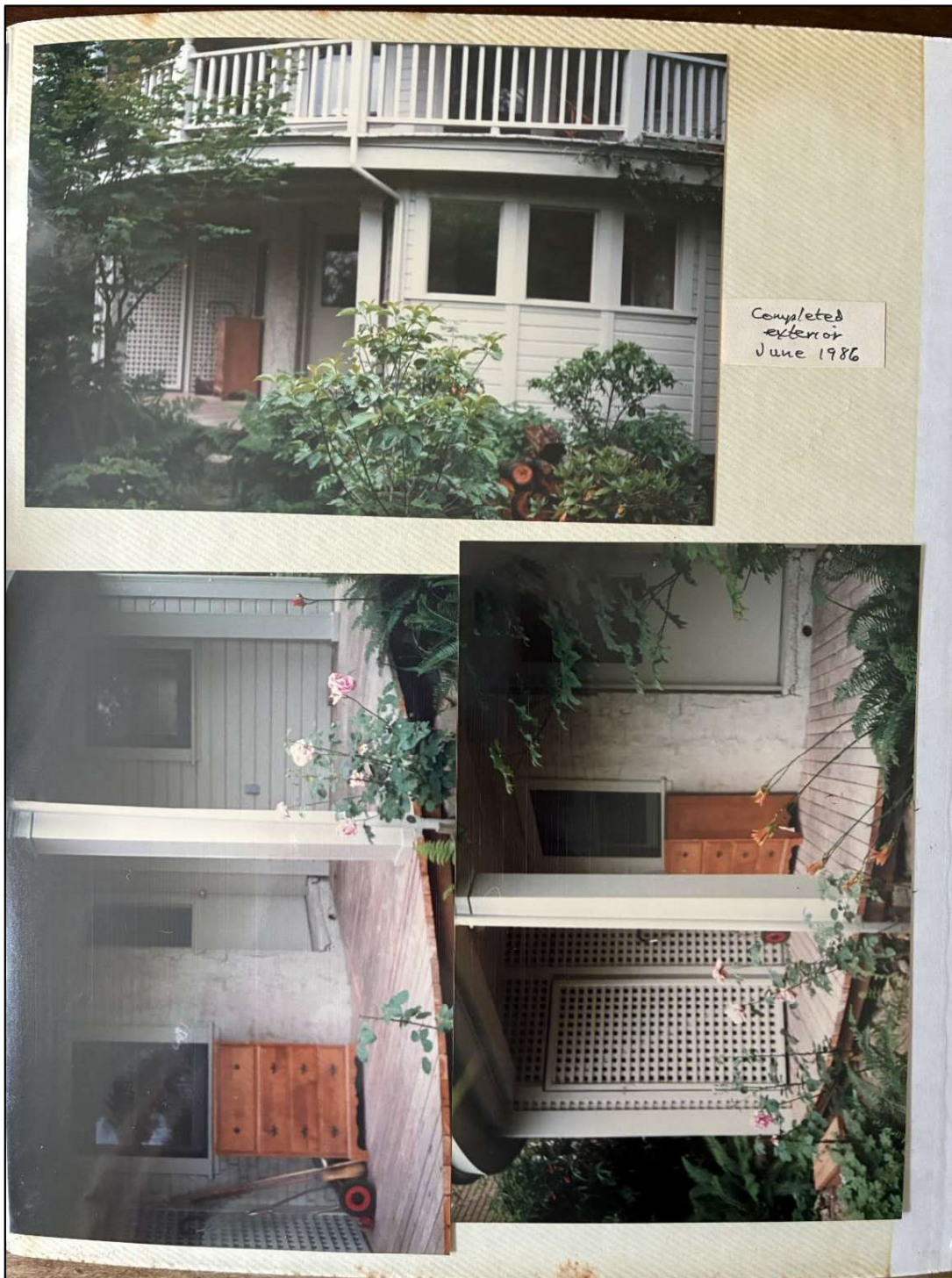
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**Figure 19: Exterior construction photos of the basement apartment unit, 1986.** View looking south at unit entrance.

Source: Le Guin Family Collection.



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**Figure 20: Basement apartment unit construction photos, 1986.** View looking northeast at west elevation.  
Source: Le Guin Family Collection.



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**Figure 21: Complete basement apartment unit, 1986.** View looking north in kitchen.  
Source: Le Guin Family Collection.



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**Figure 22: Complete basement apartment unit, 1986.**  
Source: Le Guin Family Collection.



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**Figure 23: Ursula K. Le Guin poses for a portrait in her house in Portland, Oregon, on July 5, 2001.**  
Source: Beth Gwinn, *Smithsonian Magazine*.<sup>157</sup>



<sup>157</sup> Ella Feldman, "You Could Write in Ursula K. Le Guin's Former Portland Home Studio," *Smithsonian Magazine*, accessed August 13, 2025, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/you-could-write-in-ursula-k-le-guins-former-portland-home-studio-180984535/>.

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**Figure 24: Ursula K. Le Guin writing in her living room. Unknown Date, Pre-2018.**  
Source: Literary Hub.<sup>158</sup>



<sup>158</sup> "Attention: Soon You'll Be Able to Do a Writing Residency in Ursula Le Guin's Home.," Literary Hub, June 10, 2024, <https://lithub.com/a-writing-residency-in-ursula-le-guins-home-is-the-closest-youll-get-to-earthseas-wizard-school/>.

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**Figure 25: Ursula K. Le Guin on the porch of her Portland home, ca. 2014.**  
Source: Sue Zalokar, Street Roots.<sup>159</sup>



<sup>159</sup> "The Otherworldly and Utterly Portland Ursula K. Le Guin," Street Roots, August 14, 2014, <https://www.streetroots.org/news/2014/08/14/otherworldly-and-utterly-portland-ursula-k-le-guin>.

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Figure 26: Poem from Ursula K. Le Guin's 1993 book *Blue Moon Over Thurman Street*.

Source: *Blue Moon Over Thurman Street*, Multnomah County Library.<sup>160</sup>



Thurman Street  
crossing its bridge says:  
I take off for a moment,  
I leap!  
I lay me down on trestles  
to jump the gap  
like a spark.  
And the park starts  
under my feet.

Busses jostle  
the framework, the maples.  
Swallows swoop under asphalt.

Where I hop the creek  
it goes into hiding.

How many streets  
get to cast a shadow?

Ursula K. Le Guin

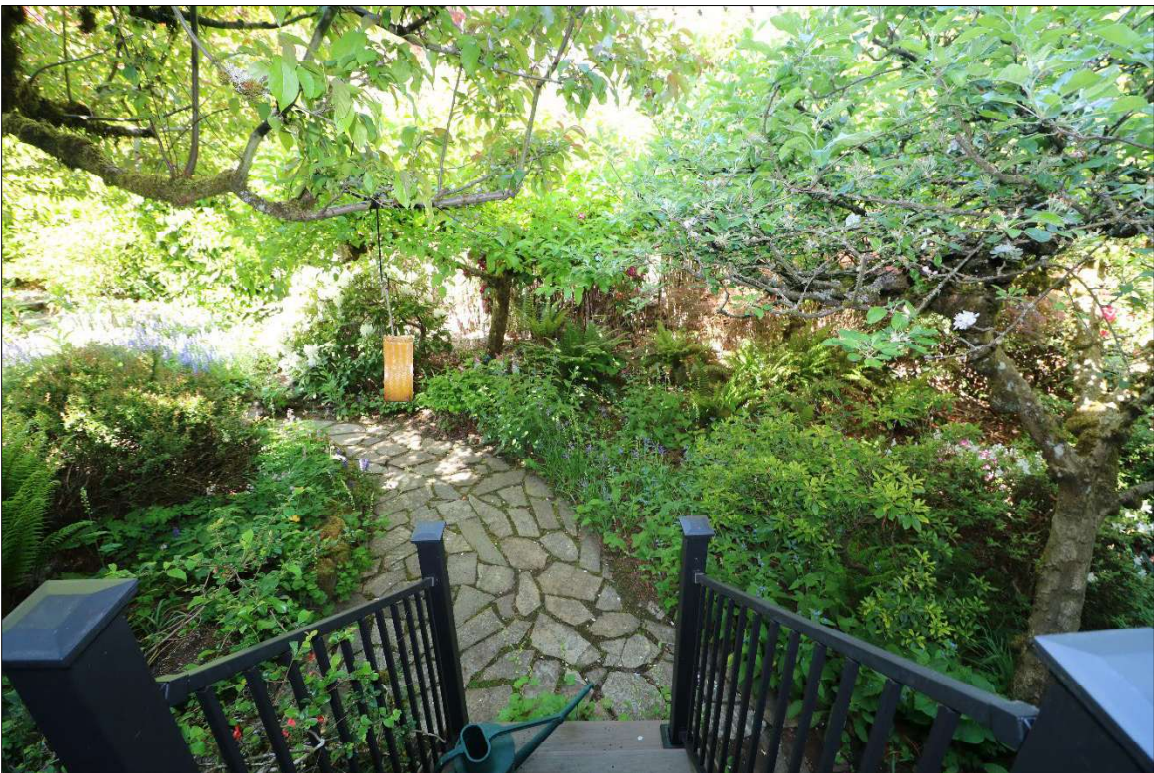
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<sup>160</sup> Ursula K. Le Guin and Roger Dorband. *Blue Moon Over Thurman Street*. NewSage Press, 1993.

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**Photograph 1 of 18: OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0001  
Site, view looking northeast.**



**Photograph 2 of 18: OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0002  
Site, 1984 Stairs and Gardens, view looking east.**

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**Photograph 3 of 18: OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0003**  
South Elevation (Façade), view looking north.



**Photograph 4 of 18: OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0004**  
West Elevation, view looking northeast from gardens.

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**Photograph 5 of 18: OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0005**  
North Elevation, view looking southeast.



**Photograph 6 of 18: OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0006**  
North Elevation, view looking south towards apartment unit entry.

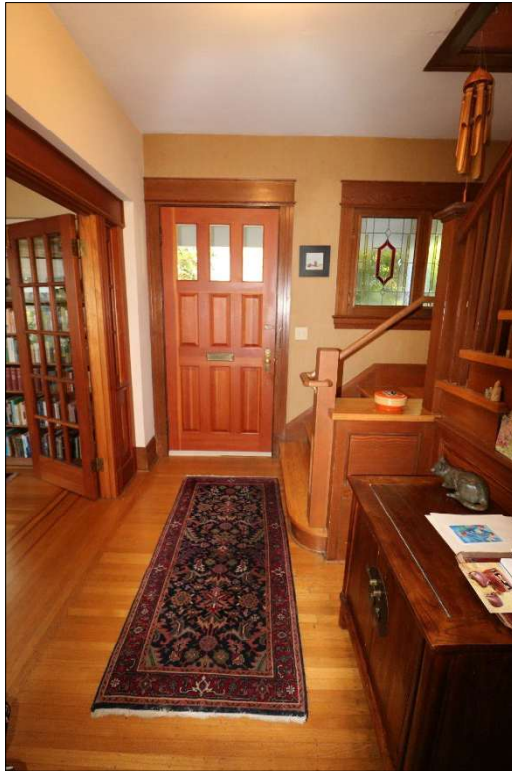


Photograph 7 of 18: OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0007  
North Elevation, Covered Porch, view looking east.



Photograph 8 of 18: OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0008  
East Elevation, Garage Roof Deck, view looking north.

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**Photograph 9 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0009  
First Floor, Entry/Stair Hall, view looking south.



**Photograph 10 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0010  
First Floor, Living Room, view looking west towards entry.

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**Photograph 11 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0011  
First Floor, Living Room, view looking northwest towards Fireplace and Dining Room.



**Photograph 12 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0012  
First Floor, Dining Room, view looking northwest towards kitchen entry.

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**Photograph 13 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0013  
First Floor, Kitchen, view looking north.



**Photograph 14 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0014  
Second Floor, Ursula K. Le Guin's Writing Studio, view looking northwest.

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**Photograph 15 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0015  
Second Floor, Ursula K. Le Guin's Writing Studio, view looking north toward Mount St. Helens and Mount Adams.



**Photograph 16 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0016  
Second Floor, Bedroom, view looking southwest.



**Photograph 17 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0017  
Third Floor / Attic, Landing, view looking northeast.



**Photograph 18 of 18:** OR\_MultnomahCounty\_LeGuinUrsulaKHouse\_0018  
Third Floor / Attic, Bedroom, view looking east.