

Oregon Historic Site Record

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME					
address:	116 NW Gilbert Way Newport, Lincoln County (97365)		historic name:	Bloch, Ernest, House	
assoc addresses:			current/other names:	Bush Family Beach House; Seakrest Lodge	
location descr:	Circle Way; Agate Beach		block/lot/tax lot:		
			tnwshp/rng/sect/qtr sect:	10S 11W 29	
PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS					
resource type:	Building	height (stories):	1.0	total elig resources:	2
elig evaluation:	eligible/significant			total inelig resources:	0
prim constr date:	c.1912	second date:		NR Status:	Formally Determined Eligible
				date indiv listed:	02/09/2009
primary orig use:	Single Dwelling			orig use comments:	Internally famous composer Ernest Bloch lived here between 1941-1959
second orig use:				prim style comments:	
primary style:	Rustic			sec style comments:	
secondary style:	Arts & Crafts			siding comments:	
primary siding:	Shake			architect:	
secondary siding:	Stone:Other/Undefined			builder:	
plan type:					
comments/notes:					
S.D. Beckham notes "national" significance in his 1976 documentation. Garage/studio/dormitory adjacent to house. Found "eligible" under "national" significance by the National Register 02/02/09.					
GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS					
Not associated with any surveys or groupings.					
SHPO INFORMATION FOR THIS PROPERTY					
NR date listed:	02/09/2009	106 Project(s)		Special Assess Project(s):	None
ILS survey date:	06/14/2008	SHPO Case	Date	Agency Effect Eval	
RLS survey date:		15-1268	08/13/2015	no adverse effect	
Gen file date:	07/01/1976			Federal Tax Project(s):	None
ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION					
<i>(Includes expanded description of the building/property, setting, significant landscape features, outbuildings and alterations)</i>					
<p>DESCRIPTION SUMMARY The Ernest Bloch House, located at 116 N.W. Gilbert Way in the Agate Beach district within the city limits of Newport in Lincoln County, Oregon, was the last residence where the notable teacher and composer Ernest Bloch lived and the only property Bloch ever owned. Although initially built in 1914 as a coastal retreat for the locally well-known Asahel Bush III family of Salem, Oregon, Bloch would later purchase the house and property in 1941, remaining there until his death in 1959. While living at Agate Beach, Bloch undertook over twenty-five musical works, composing both in the main room of the house and in the upper floor of the garage-studio. In addition, Bloch used the lower floor of the garage-studio as a lapidary, and often walked a trail that wound down to Agate Beach. Today, the property remains relatively unchanged, and includes three contributing resources, including a house, a circa 1914 garage-studio, and a beach-access trail in its original location.</p> <p>SETTING The Ernest Bloch House is situated on eleven lots, totaling 1.59 acres, which slope gradually to the southwest before ending at a steep wooded bluff overlooking Agate Beach and the Pacific Ocean. The area is located in the city of Newport in western Lincoln County along the central Oregon coast. The property is accessed from U.S. Highway 101 via N.W. Gilbert Way; a paved driveway leads from N.W. Gilbert Way to the main house. The property is heavily wooded with large coniferous trees, bushes, and other vegetation. Agate Beach and the Pacific Ocean can be viewed from most points on the property. Upon first accessing the Bloch House property, the garage-studio is set on a small rise toward the northeast corner of the property along a portion of the southeastern property line. A narrow paved driveway roughly parallels the main facade of the garage-studio, ending in a large paved parking area to the south. The house is located downhill from the garage-studio, perched at the top of a steep bluff. A trail system that winds down the bluff to Agate Beach begins a few feet from the rear, ocean-facing facade of the house. Remnants of a circa-1914 fence system, still with white weathered paint and decorative post finials, line portions of the southeastern property line near the southeast facade of the house. Both the house and garage-studio are constructed of Douglas-fir that was most likely produced by the C.D. Johnson lumber mill in nearby Toledo, Oregon.</p> <p>House Exterior Description The one-story gable-roofed, U-shaped house is situated near the edge of a steep hillside and is constructed of old-growth Douglas-fir. A mix of the Arts and Crafts and Rustic styles, the building rests on a large aggregate concrete basement foundation and consists of a large, side-gabled, main volume. Two front gable wings extend from the northeast and southeast corners of the main volume: the south kitchen wing, and the north bedroom wing. There is also a relatively small, front gable volume stacked in front of the bedroom wing. A deck located on the south facade of the house provides exterior access to the kitchen wing, while another smaller deck on the north facade, connected to a non-original deck on the rear facade, provides access to the main volume of the house. An exterior entry to the basement is located on the south facade of the building. The entire building is clad in original 30-inch split cedar shake with 12-inch reliefs arranged in a coursed pattern. Two types of paired casement windows are found throughout the house. The "large" type consists of a set of 3 ½ foot wide by 5 foot tall paired casements windows with 8-lights per sash; the "small" type consists of a set of 3 ½ foot wide by 2 ½ foot tall paired casement windows with 4-lights per sash. Original wood knee braces and vergeboards are present in the gable ends of the building, while the gable sides exhibit exposed rafter tails. The building features a high-relief, but low-profile, non-historic concrete shingle roof. Front (East) Facade The front facade of the Bloch House features an easterly-facing courtyard area made of poured concrete, flanked by the two wings of the house, and serves as the main access to the house. Attached near the middle of the north side of the kitchen wing is a large exterior fireplace and chimney constructed of smooth rounded river rock laid in a roughly coursed pattern with an original poured concrete mantel. To the south of the fireplace is a 4-sash fixed ribbon window with 4-lights per sash. Two sets of large paired casement windows, and one set of small paired casement windows in between are present on the bedroom wing side facing the courtyard. Four small planters made of the same smooth rounded river rock as the fireplace are also present within the courtyard area, with two planters flanking a 1-panel, 8-light door with 8-light sidelights that serves as the main entrance of the house. A low pair of poured concrete steps lead up to the main entrance. The gable end of the kitchen wing consists of one 4-light casement window, followed by two of the large paired casement windows as are present in the courtyard. The gable end of the bedroom wing also consists of one set of large paired casement windows, but also includes a slightly sloped scored terra cotta tile patio area recessed 4 ½ feet deep and is 8 ½ feet wide with a beadboard ceiling. This recessed area was once used as an outdoor shower and wood shower curtain rod holders are still present. Exterior access to the bedroom wing of the house is provided for by a 1-panel 8-light door from this recessed patio. North Facade The north facade of the recessed patio area contains one paired casement with 2-lights per sash. From here, four windows in the north gable side of the bedroom wing alternate between the smaller and larger paired casement windows. Moving west along this facade sloping toward the bluff, the large aggregate concrete foundation becomes more exposed. At the west corner of the north facade, a patio and non-original deck area is present within the "ell" created by the main volume of the house and bedroom wing, sheltered by a shed roof with exposed rafter tails and a smaller shed roof underneath constructed of beadboard. Two 4 by 4-inch wood posts resting on a remnant of a low river rock wall with a 4 by 4-inch crossbeam, braced with two 2 by 4-inch brackets, support the two shed roofs. Remnants of brick pavers originally used in the patio area are also present. A non-original concrete step and wood deck lead up to a 1-panel, 8-light door with 8-light sidelights (same as the main entrance door). A large paired casement window is present within the patio area on the end of the bedroom wing. Across from this window, on the west side of the patio area, is a non-original 2-panel sliding glass door that leads to the rest of the deck area. Rear (West) Facade As the site</p>					

slopes down toward the bluff, the foundation of the house becomes more exposed at the rear facade. Four large picture windows, likely replaced during the 1940s or 1950s, are present on this facade and are situated in the same dimensional space as the original multi-pane casement windows. Two picture windows are located in 7-foot wide chamfered corners of the rear facade. The remaining two picture windows flank the exterior of a large 8 ½-foot wide non-original chimney constructed of oversized rock-faced brick. Roughly in the middle of the rear facade, the chimney extends through the gable side of the roof. Remnants of the original river rock chimney are present at the base of this newer chimney. An elevated wood deck spans the entire width of the rear facade, complete with railing and balusters. The north end of the deck contains a wood ramp for wheelchair access to the house, while the south end of the deck contains a short flight of wood stairs. The lower portion of the deck is covered with wood lattice work to hide the deck's support structure. Although not original, the deck does not obscure views of the bluff, Agate Beach, or the ocean, and does not compromise the integrity of the Bloch House.

South Facade Like the rear facade, the south facade of the house sits on the exposed concrete foundation. A picture window is located in the middle of the gable end of the main volume of the house, with another picture window situated in the gable end of the kitchen wing. Exterior access to the basement of the house is situated in the "ell" formed by the two gable ends. A pair of cellar doors constructed of 2 by 4-inch lumber and plywood covered with metal sheeting supported by two poured concrete walls provides access to a steeply sloped poured concrete ramp stamped with trowel marks for traction. A set of long wooden boards with rungs for traction are positioned on top of the ramp. A 1-panel door located at the bottom of the ramp in the southeast facade provides access to the basement. The south side of the kitchen wing contains three, 6-light fixed windows, with two of the windows flanking a 2-panel, 4-light door, which provides access to the kitchen. A small non-original wood porch with one flight of stairs on either end provides exterior access to the kitchen door.

Interior Description The interior of the Bloch House consists of four volumes: the main room, kitchen wing, bedroom wing, and basement area. Common throughout the house is the use of 4-inch wide beveled tongue-and-groove Douglas-fir for the ceiling, flooring constructed of 2 ½-inch wide tongue-and-groove Douglas-fir, and walls constructed of 12-inch wide wood boards and 4 ½-inch wide wood battens. 4-inch and 5-inch wood ceiling moldings and baseboards with ¼-inch wood round trim, as well as 4-inch and 4 ½-inch plain wood door and windows surrounds, are also found throughout the interior.

Main Room The main entrance to the house is through the courtyard on the east side, which leads directly into a large main room. The main room is an approximately 33 by 23-foot oblong octagon with an approximately 10-foot high ceiling constructed of 4-inch wide beveled tongue-and-groove Douglas-fir running the width of the south and north ends of the room. The ceiling breaks into a high angled vault constructed of board-and-batten before breaking again into a flat apex made of beveled tongue-and-groove Douglas-fir that defines most of the center of the room. Decorative wood box ceiling molding is present, as well as wider box beams where the ceiling begins to vault. The walls are constructed entirely of board-and-batten with each batten topped with a decorative cavetto-shaped molding. Both the north and south walls have two wide-chamfered corners on either end, with openings on the easterly side leading to either the bedroom or kitchen wings. Picture windows are located on the south and west walls, with two windows located in the chamfered corners. Several windows have 1 by 7-inch windowsills that are supported by inverted cavetto-shaped brackets. Two picture windows flank a large fireplace constructed of multi-color brick centered on the west wall. A multi-light door with multi-light sidelights on the north wall provides access to the exterior of the house.

Kitchen Wing Entry to the approximately 36 by 22-foot kitchen wing is through a double-action swinging, 2-panel door with cross bracing. Like the main room, most of the walls consist of board-and-batten, but without the decorative cavetto-shaped moldings. The north, east, and portions of the south walls are constructed of 4-inch wide beveled tongue-and-groove Douglas-fir. The south portion of the kitchen is divided by a single boxed-post supporting a box beam that extends nearly half the length of the wing and contains short decorative battens. The floor is currently covered in vinyl flooring. Off of the kitchen area through the south wall is a small pantry with its original cabinetry. This space also provides access to the house's attic. Also off the kitchen through the south wall is a 5-panel door leading to a small half-bathroom, with a single, short multi-light paired casement window and walls consisting of 4-inch wide beveled tongue-and-groove Douglas-fir boards.

Bedroom Wing Like the kitchen wing, entry to the approximately 36 by 30-foot bedroom wing is also located off of the main room through a double-action swinging, 2-panel door with cross bracing. Wood ceilings, and board-and-batten walls are present, as are wood floors, but these are currently covered with carpet. The attic of the house can also be accessed from the hallway. All five bedrooms are accessed from the hallway through 5-panel doors. Upon entering, each bedroom consists of the same board-and-batten walls as are present in the hallway, and are configured in approximately the same way. To the right of each bedroom doorway is a 5-panel closet door; next to this door on the left is a built-in dresser/vanity area with an overhead storage cupboard. Continuing on the same wall, to the left of the built-in dresser/vanity is another closet with a 5-panel door. Although the southwestern-most bedroom still retains its original built-in dresser, the room's closets are no longer present. The northeastern-most bedroom's closet that was closest to the door is also no longer present. Each room has at least one tall, paired casement window (the northwestern-most and southeastern-most bedrooms have two sets of these windows). Currently, freestanding wood bunk beds installed by the present owners are in each bedroom. The bedroom that Bloch used varies slightly from the arrangements of the other bedrooms. The northwestern-most room, Bloch's bedroom retains a closet and built-in dresser/vanity to the right of the entryway. Instead of a closet on the other side of the dresser/vanity, however, there is access to a half-bathroom that has board-and-batten walls, a single short, paired casement window, and vinyl flooring (this half-bath also connects through another door to an adjoining bedroom). Two more closets are instead located against the western wall of the bedroom, flanking a tall casement window. The bedroom wing also contains two half-bathrooms and two full-bathrooms. Each bathroom contains board-and-batten walls, a single short, multi-light paired casement window, and original screened vent. The northwestern-most bathroom also has a built-in cupboard/vanity. Most floors in the bathrooms are currently covered by vinyl. Although originally a half-bathroom, the northeastern-most bathroom has also been retrofitted for the inclusion of a shower stall and was installed in a space that was originally a closet for the northeastern-most bedroom.

Basement The basement of the Bloch House is accessed from outside, down a poured concrete ramp and through a 1-panel door. Inside, a portion of the basement situated under the main volume of the house is only 6 ½ feet high. Crawlspace accessed through the basement are located under the bedroom and kitchen wings. The basement floor is poured concrete with massive concrete footings to support the building throughout. At times, the concrete footings are nearly two feet thick. Originally used to store firewood, the basement also contains many of the original windows and window screens that were removed from the rear facade of the house.

Garage-studio Exterior Description The circa 1914 two-story, gable-roofed garage-studio sits just to the northeast of the house. Also constructed of old-growth Douglas-fir, the building mimics the appearance of the house in its use of elements borrowed from the Arts and Crafts and Rustic styles. Occupying an approximately 24 by 38-foot rectangular footprint, the building is supported by a large aggregate concrete foundation that becomes more exposed as the land slopes downhill towards the bluff. A small covered entryway addition on a concrete foundation is positioned at the northwest corner of the building. Although not original, this entryway provides access to the upper floor of the building. A set of concrete stairs leads up a small slope on the north side of the building to a non-original 1-panel door that provides access to the lower portion of the garage-studio. A non-historic wood staircase and landing on the east side of the building serve as an emergency exit for the upper floor, while a non-original, 1-panel door on this same side provides an emergency exit for the lower floor. Like the house, the entire exterior of the garage-studio is clad in original 30-inch split cedar shake with 12-inch reliefs arranged in a coursed pattern. Two window types are common throughout the building: a large set of 4-foot tall by 3 ½ -foot wide paired casement windows with 6-lights per sash, and a small set of 4-foot wide by 2 ½-foot tall paired casement windows with 4-lights per sash. Original wood knee braces, tongue-and-groove soffits, and vergeboards are present in the gable ends of the building, while gable sides also exhibit tongue-and-groove soffits and exposed rafter tails. The building has an asphalt composition shingle roof. Front (North) and West Facades The front facade of the garage-studio exhibits a full-width skirt-roof positioned approximately half-way up the side of the building. Below the skirt-roof on the lower portion of the facade are two, non-original, 2-sash sliding glass windows. The upper portion on the facade consists of four equally spaced and sized small casement windows, although one window has been replaced with a 1-light fixed pane, although the original opening and casings are intact. A 1-panel door towards the northwest corner of the building provides entry to the lower floor. Entry to the upper floor of the building is accessed by a set of concrete stairs and wood hand railing leading to an outside porch and entryway. The west facade contains two, evenly spaced picture windows that were most likely replaced by the Blochs sometime during the 1940s and 1950s. The non-original porch and entryway at the southwest corner of the facade also contains a small, 2-sash sliding glass window. Rear (South) and East Facades The rear facade features four evenly spaced and equally sized small windows in the upper portion of the building. One of the windows is a small paired casement window. Although the other three windows have been replaced with a 1-light fixed pane, the original window openings and casings are intact. The lower portion of the facade also exhibits three evenly spaced, large paired casement windows. The east facade consists of an emergency exit door on the lower portion of the facade, and an emergency exit door and wood staircase on the upper portion.

Interior Description Lower Floor The lower floor of the garage-studio is accessed through the front facade. Due to its original use as a carriage house, the lower floor is an open volume consisting of a poured concrete floor and walls. The ceiling is covered with plywood, as are the ceiling beams, with ¼-inch ceiling molding. Like the house, this floor contains several freestanding wood bunk beds that were installed by the current owners. A non-original bathroom area on the west side of the building is divided from the main volume and accessed through a 1-panel door, containing toilets and two shower stalls. Flooring in the bathroom and shower area consists of vinyl and tile. A closet is located off the bathroom, also accessed by a 1-panel door. Although adapted for use as a garage and lapidary, and later "bunkhouse," the lower floor of the garage-studio still retains its sense of openness and original use.

Upper Floor The upper floor of the garage-studio is accessed through the small porch addition, the interior of which is sheathed in plywood with ¼-inch ceiling molding and vinyl baseboard. An original staircase off of the porch addition leads up to the studio area of the building. The enclosed staircase is clad in 12-inch board and 3 ½-inch battens, and includes a banister with 6 by 6-inch wood end posts with plain square post caps. Like the main volume of the house, the studio area is also a large volume with a vaulted 4-inch wide Douglas-fir beadboard ceiling that reaches approximately 8 ¼-feet in height before sloping to approximately 5 ¾-feet high along the gable sides. All walls on the floor consist of 12-inch board and 3 ½-inch battens, with ¼-inch round ceiling molding, and 5-inch wood baseboards. Although original tongue-and-groove wood floors exist, they are presently covered with carpeting. Windows exist on three walls of the volume, including a picture window in the southwest corner near where Bloch composed. Because the building sits on a slight rise, Agate Beach and the Pacific Ocean can be viewed from this corner of the studio. Several freestanding bunk beds installed by the current owner are present in the room. The upper floor is divided by a wall and doorway that provides access to a sink, toilet, and shower area. Originally designed as a bedroom and half-bathroom, this smaller volume retains most of its original form. Like the main volume of the upper floor, this smaller bathroom area also has a vaulted ceiling, board-and-batten walls, and original tongue-and-groove wood floors underneath vinyl flooring. Sinks, countertops, and mirrors were installed in the former bedroom area by the current owners, while toilet and shower stalls were installed in the former half-bath area. The original 5-panel wood door separates the sink/vanity area from the toilet and shower area. There is a single window present on either side of the volume. The east wall contains a 1-panel door for emergency access. Beach-Access Trail Bloch regularly accessed Agate Beach via a trail that begins near the rear facade of the house, winding

down the steep bluff, and ending at the beach below. The approximately 300 foot long dirt beach-access trail winds through dense vegetation and tall trees, and includes a wood bridge, multiple sets of stairs, and rock retaining walls. Although part of the trail is inaccessible in its current condition, the majority of the trail is still used by residents of Agate Beach year-round. The trail begins at the top of the bluff, although the entrance is now blocked by a metal gate to prevent access on the steep hillside. A set of stairs now covered with vegetation leads to a wood bridge. The bridge is divided into five sections and is approximately 30 feet long, 4 ½-feet wide, with 3 to 4-foot high railings. The bottom railings appear to be constructed of 2 by 6-inch lumber, with 2 by 2-inch balusters, while the top railings appear to be made of 2 by 4-inch lumber. The center section of the bridge is more decorative than the outer sections, as the bottom railings and balusters are angled below the bridge's walkway in a fanned pattern. Although partially collapsed in the middle, the bridge still retains good integrity. An approximately 2-foot high river rock retaining wall begins at the eastern end of the bridge and continues for about 10 feet before ending in a "V" shape at the intersection of another trail. The trail continues to wind downhill and has remnants of other river rock walls and steps. A simple, newer bench constructed of 2 by 4-inch and 2 by 12-inch lumber is located at one of the bends of the trail, with a view of the Pacific Ocean. Steps along the trail were made by using lumber boards supported by steel rebar and in-filled with dirt. At the bottom of the trail is a set of winding, large aggregate, poured concrete steps. Four- by four-inch pressure-treated wood posts with three long pieces of ½-inch PVC pipe attached to the posts make up a handrail along these steps. ALTERATIONS Overall the Bloch House has great integrity with only modest alterations made both during the period when it was owned by Bloch and by the current owners. Alterations that appear to have been made before or during when Bloch owned the property include the installation of picture windows in the main room, and the enclosure of the south portion of the kitchen wing to accommodate a washing machine, refrigerator, and pantry area. Alterations that occurred with the current owners include the replacement of brick with concrete in the front courtyard area, and some minor replacements of the original cedar shake with cedar rake shingle on the exterior of the house. A small, open porch has been added to the south facade and a larger deck and wheelchair ramp to the rear facade. This new deck replaced portions of an exterior partition at the northwest corner of the house, including the replacement of a multi-light paired casement window with a sliding glass door. The original river rock chimney and fireplace that is located in the main room was also replaced with an oversized-brick chimney. Inside the house, sinks and mirrors have been installed in some of the bedroom closets, but do not compromise the integrity of the space. Bathrooms have also been updated with newer toilets, shower stalls, and vinyl flooring. The kitchen wing originally had a servant's bedroom along the northeast side, partitioned from the kitchen. This partition has since been removed and the bedroom area converted to house kitchen countertops, cupboards, and appliances. These alterations, however, are comparatively minor and do not effect the building's integrity for listing in the National Register. The garage-studio has been also modestly altered over time, but like the house, some of these alterations were carried out while Bloch lived on the property. These include the replacement of multi-light windows on the southwest facade with picture windows, and the reconfiguration of the lower floor as a garage and lapidary. Modifications made after the Bloch family sold the property include the addition of a small porch and entryway to the southwest corner of the building, and a slight reconfiguration of the upstairs bed and bathroom. This included the move of a doorway connecting the main and bathroom areas two feet to the northwest of its original location, and the move of an original wall separating the bedroom and bathroom areas. It appears that a set of paired casement windows were removed on the northeast facade to accommodate an emergency exit door and stairs. A set of windows may have also been removed from the lower floor where there is now an emergency exit door. The bays of the building that originally housed carriages and cars on the north facade have also been filled in with new concrete footings, walls, and sliding glass windows, and the original main entrance has been altered with a wall to prevent access to the upper floor from the lower floor. There are also some areas where original cedar shakes have been replaced with cedar rake shingles. Although several modifications have been made to the building, most have been conducted in the garage area and not the upper floor studio area where Bloch composed many of his musical works.

HISTORY

(Chronological, descriptive history of the property from its construction through at least the historic period - preferably to the present)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY. The Ernest Bloch House, scenically perched on a high bluff overlooking Agate Beach and the Pacific Ocean, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B for its association with the internationally famous composer Ernest Bloch. Although originally constructed for the wealthy and prominent Asahel Bush III family of Salem, Oregon, the house at Agate Beach would later become notable both in the local and international musical community for its significant association with the Swiss-born composer Bloch, referred to by some as the fourth "B" after other notable composers Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms. The only property he every owned and the best property to demonstrate its historic association with him as a creator of acclaimed musical works, Bloch resided in the beach-side house from 1941 until his death in 1959. Author Nancy Steinberg explained that Bloch "wrote some of his most moving and renowned works in the house at Agate Beach," and according to one Bloch scholar, University of Florida professor David Kushner, "the compositions of the Agate Beach period are, for the most part, an amalgam of Bloch's best creative impulses." In composing some 72 pieces over his 57-year career, Bloch composed nearly 30 of those pieces at Agate Beach. The period of significance begins in 1941 when Bloch acquired the Agate Beach house, and ends in 1959 with his death at the age of 78.

RESEARCH INFORMATION

Title Records	Census Records	Property Tax Records	✓ Local Histories
Sanborn Maps	Biographical Sources	✓ SHPO Files	✓ Interviews
Obituaries	Newspapers	State Archives	✓ Historic Photographs
City Directories	Building Permits	State Library	

Local Library:	University Library:
Historical Society:	Other Repository:

Bibliography:

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