

# Oregon Historic Site Record

| LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME |   |                                 |  |
|----------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>address:</b>            | 1918-1926 SW Elm St<br>Portland, Multnomah County (97201) | <b>historic name:</b>           | Bohnsen Cottages                             |
| <b>assoc addresses:</b>    | 2412-2416 Vista Ave                                       | <b>current/other names:</b>     | 1926 Elm Street Bungalows; Bohnsen Bungalows |
| <b>location descr:</b>     |   | <b>block/lot/tax lot:</b>       | 93 / 1-2                                     |
|                            |   | <b>twshp/rng/sect/qtr sect:</b> | 1S 1E 4                                      |

| PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS |                       |                                |                     |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>resource type:</b>    | Building              | <b>height (stories):</b>       | 1.0                 |
| <b>elig evaluation:</b>  | eligible/contributing | <b>total elig resources:</b>   | 5                   |
| <b>prim constr date:</b> | 1926                  | <b>total inelig resources:</b> | 0                   |
|                          |                       | <b>NR Status:</b>              | Individually Listed |
|                          |                       | <b>second date:</b>            |                     |
|                          |                       | <b>date indiv listed:</b>      | 12/04/2008          |
| <b>primary orig use:</b> | Multiple Dwelling     | <b>orig use comments:</b>      |                     |
| <b>second orig use:</b>  |                       | <b>prim style comments:</b>    |                     |
| <b>primary style:</b>    | Spanish Revival       | <b>sec style comments:</b>     |                     |
| <b>secondary style:</b>  |                       | <b>siding comments:</b>        |                     |
| <b>primary siding:</b>   | Stucco                | <b>architect:</b>              |                     |
| <b>secondary siding:</b> |                       | <b>builder:</b>                |                     |
| <b>plan type:</b>        | Bungalow              |                                |                     |
| <b>comments/notes:</b>   |                       |                                |                     |

| GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS                      |
|---|
| Not associated with any surveys or groupings. |

| SHPO INFORMATION FOR THIS PROPERTY |            |                    |                        |
|------------------------------------|------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| <b>NR date listed:</b>             | 12/04/2008 | Special Assessment | <b>106 Project(s):</b> |
| <b>ILS survey date:</b>            |            | <b>Status</b>      | None                   |
| <b>RLS survey date:</b>            |            | <b>Term</b>        | None                   |
|                                    |            | <b>End Yr</b>      |                        |
|                                    |            | Closed             |                        |
|                                    |            | 1st                |                        |
|                                    |            | 2024               |                        |

**ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION**

*(Includes expanded description of the building/property, setting, significant landscape features, outbuildings and alterations)*

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY The Bohnsen Cottages, constructed in 1926 and located at 1918-1926 SW Elm Street and 2412-2416 Vista Avenue, consist of five, similar, small, detached one-story rental houses built in a single year and located on a single common parcel of land. The parcel is located on the southwest corner of SW Elm Street and SW Vista Avenue in Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon. In form, the Bohnsen Cottages are a unique variation of multi-family rental housing built in the Portland Heights neighborhood and in the city of Portland. Built for Iver M. Bohnsen in 1926, the cottages were constructed for rental use and have continued in this use for more than 80 years. Although the Bohnsen Cottages are stylistically similar, each has unique architectural elements. Stylistically, they may be categorized as Spanish Colonial Revival. The Bohnsen Cottages are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for their association with the development of multi-family housing in residential neighborhoods in Portland during the 1920s. The Bohnsen Cottages are also eligible under Criterion C for their building type as a distinctive local form of multi-family housing in the Portland Heights neighborhood and Portland. SETTING AND SITE The Bohnsen Cottages are located in the Southwest Hills neighborhood, historically and locally known as "Portland Heights." The neighborhood is located roughly a mile-and-one-half southwest from the downtown core. It is distinguished, however, by its dramatic elevation situated on the Tualatin Hills rising from 200 feet at the Vista Avenue Bridge (over Canyon Road) to 1,200 feet at its pinnacle at Council Crest Park. Primary access to the cottages is via Vista Avenue, a curving arterial street with one travel lane and a parking lane in each direction. Vista Avenue runs the length of the neighborhood, beginning at Burnside south upwards to Council Crest and then the West Hills. The neighborhood is largely defined by single-family houses set on large lots approximately 5,000 to 10,000 square feet in size. Single-family homes are typically about 2,500 square feet. These homes were primarily constructed over two building phases, one during the early 1900s, and the other during the 1920s. Architecturally, these buildings feature a current revival styles, including English Cottage, Colonial, and Tudor, as well as Foursquare and Arts and Crafts. The neighborhood contains a number of high-style properties. Some are noteworthy for their scale, such as the 14,783 square foot 1917 Cobb House at 2424 SW Montgomery, while others are notable as superior works by the city's leading architects of the period. An upscale neighborhood from the outset, non-residential buildings are rare as are apartment buildings. The exception is a small cluster in the area immediately surrounding the subject property: Once a streetcar turn-around, these blocks include an elementary school, fire station, church, and several small retail establishments. The Bohnsen Cottages are located at the intersection of Vista Avenue which runs north-south and Elm Street which runs east-west. Directly across Vista Avenue is the Ainsworth School. Built in 1913, the school building is situated on two-and-one-quarter acres of land, formerly location of Cable Park, a park once frequented by riders of the cable car in the late 1890s and early 1900s. The school's playground is directly across Vista Avenue, while the school building is set further west at the other end of the playground. To the northwest and north of the Bohnsen Cottages are single-family homes typical of the neighborhood. The Bowman Apartments, located on the corner of Elm Street and 19th, are located northeast of the cottages (these apartments were built in 1913 and are listed in the National Register). To the east of the Bohnsen Cottages, occupying half the block, are the 1960 Portland Heights condominiums. Located one block further east is the 1911 Bishopcroft, once the home of the Episcopal Bishop and also listed in the National Register. Adjacent to the Bishopcroft to the south is a small brick structure that was built in 1911 to house the library of the Episcopal Bishop. The Episcopal Church, built in 1889, is located further to the south. Directly south of the Bohnsen Cottages and within the same block is the only commercial property located in the area. It houses three businesses including the one time location of the Portland Heights Grocery. Further south and across Spring Avenue is the Fire and Rescue Station rebuilt in 1927. The original turnaround of the cable car was located on the corner of Spring Street and Vista Avenue. The Bohnsen Cottages are located on Block 93 which slopes upward north to south and measures 200 feet north/south by 170 feet east/west. This block is divided into three parcels. The east half is occupied by condominiums housed in a modern two-story garden-style, east-facing U-shaped building. A two-story wood-frame 1908 commercial built to the lot line resides on the second parcel. The Bohnsen Cottages are located on the third parcel at the northwest end of the block. The legal plat is the west half of Lots 1 and 2 of Block 93 of Carter's Addition to the City of Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon. This parcel is 8,500 square foot, measuring 100 feet along Vista Avenue and 85 feet along Elm Street. It is defined at the street by a three-foot stucco retaining wall with red brick caps with breaks in the wall for both stairs to the units and to garages built below each cottage into the slope. The Bohnsen Cottages are assembled in a closed "L" along the street front set back from and above the retaining wall with three units facing north along Elm Street and two units facing west along Vista Avenue. The setbacks and elevations are consistent to create a uniform street front, although two units on Vista Avenue rise with the slope of the land. To the rear of the Bohnsen cottages is a common green space that measures approximately 44 feet by 58 feet. This space is generally lawn with arborvitae at the property line and two mature trees in the southeast corner. This common space is accessed both by the rear doors of each cottage and by narrow concrete sidewalks that run between units. THE BOHNSEN COTTAGES In style the Bohnsen Cottages can be categorized as Spanish Colonial Revival. The style is characterized by the use of stucco wall coverings and low-pitched roofs, with one or a combination of the following roof forms: flat roofs with parapet; gable roofs; and hipped roofs with ceramic Spanish tiling. Also present on the cottages are eaves with little or no overhang, arched windows, stained-glass windows and decorative stucco or tile vents. The use of asymmetrical front facades, an arched semi-enclosed covered porch entryway, iron railings, and decorative door hardware are also characteristic, all features commonly found in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The Bohnsen Cottages consist of five detached one-story, one-bedroom, unreinforced masonry units with below grade garages/basements. All cottages identical in massing, measuring 18 feet across and 31 feet deep. Exterior stylistic variations, however, distinguish each unit, varying from roof form to minor detailing. With the roof, the cottages exhibit three different forms: two have flat roofs with terra cotta tile parapet;

two are low pitched hipped roofs; and one is a moderately pitched gable roof. Other variations include the placement of chimneys, the number of windows along secondary facades, the number of lights found in each window and the use of leaded glass. Collectively, these variations are complimentary in style but act to give individual character to each cottage while still allowing all the cottages to be read as a whole. On the interior, the cottages are also fundamentally identical with a front parlor that runs across the width of the building. Diagonal from the entry is a large arched opening that leads to a small dining room. From that room to the rear is a small linear kitchen with a back door at the end. From the dining room back across the width is a bathroom and then bedroom. As with the exterior, slight variations are found on the interior also to distinguish each cottage. Construction materials are consistent with painted stucco walls over a painted cement foundation. Windows are painted wood-sash in wood-frame with painted cement sills. Roofs are typically asphalt covered with select use of red terra cotta tiles. Exterior trim includes wrought iron railing, of which some is original and some is replacement. Similarly, doors and garage doors are wood, but vary between original and replacement. On the interior, walls and ceiling are painted plaster with extensive natural wood trim and wood floors. The unfinished garages/basements are accessed from a rear stair. Given the similarities among all the cottages, the cottage at 1922 Elm Street is discussed in further detail below to exemplify a typical Bohnsen Cottage. Exterior Primary Facade The primary facade is organized in an asymmetrical form, featuring a slightly recessed portico set on the east and a window on the west. The portico is accessed from the side-walk through two, short flights of stairs set at right angles to one another. The stairs are detailed with wrought iron railings. The portico, enclosed on three sides, protrudes from the dwelling and has an arched entrance. It is accented with a small arched casement window on the right. The portico extends the height of the facade and measures approximately three feet deep by five feet across and is covered by a gable, tiled roof. The door within the portico is wood with an upper glazed panel in a wood frame. The window on the west side of the facade has a central casement window with a leaded and stained-glass transom, flanked by narrow double-hung windows on either side. The windows are wood in wood frame painted red in color and anchored with a cast concrete sill. Three feet below the window is the wooden garage door that leads to the below grade garage/basement. Secondary Facades The side facades are considerably simpler than the primary facade. The east facade is composed of two nine-over-one, double-hung, wood-sash windows, a pair of nine-over-one, double-hung, wood-sash windows, and two, wood casement windows at the garage/basement level. The west facade contains a protruding chimney at the north flanked by two, square, wood casement windows, a pair of nine-over-one, double-hung, wood-sash windows, one nine-over-one, double-hung, wood-sash window, and one wood casement window in wood at the garage/basement level. All of the wood window elements are painted red. The rear facade is also simple in design and exhibits a porch that covers three-quarters of the facade. Within the porch is a pair of nine-over-one, double-hung, wood-sash windows to the east. A wood paneled backdoor with square framed glazing in the upper-third portion is at the west. This facade also contains an external descending flight of stairs that run perpendicular to the house from the kitchen backdoor to the garage/basement door. Interior Living Room From the street, the Bohnsen Cottages are accessed via a short flight of stairs through the front door and straight into the living room. The living room measures 18 feet across and 12 feet deep and is the largest room in the house, with the volume of one-third the size of the cottage. The room is well-lit, containing windows on three sides that run over half the length of each wall. Walls are painted plaster, as is the cove ceiling. Extensive wood trim dominate the room, including a 2-inch picture rail, 3½ -inch trim around each window, and 4½ -inch thick baseboard. The most prominent feature is the brick fireplace flanked by ceramic tile and finished with a large wooden post and mantle. The room also contains a small alcove to the right of the door, measuring approximately 3 feet by 1½ feet deep and frames an arched casement window. Directly across from the entrance is a large double-door closet, measuring 6 feet by 1½ feet deep. Dining Room The dining room is located off the living room and is accessed through a large basket-handle archway. The room measures 8 feet deep by 7 feet across and in turn leads directly to other rooms in the cottage. The elaborate detailing of the wood is highlighted in this compact space by the floor-to-ceiling built-in cupboards with glass doors that frame the door-less entry to the kitchen. The built-in cupboards measure 2 feet across by 1½ feet deep and give definition and character to the dining room's small space. The dining room also contains a window that runs the length of the wall. With access on three sides and a window on the fourth, the small amount of wall space acts as a frame to all the wood finishes. Kitchen Access to the kitchen is through the dining room. The Pullman-style kitchen is long and rectangular, measuring 10 feet deep by 7 feet across. With cabinetry and sink assembled to the outside wall and appliances on the inside. The floor is linoleum, while walls and ceiling are painted plaster. At the rear of the kitchen is a backdoor that provides access to the exterior-accessed garage/basement. Hall, Bathroom, and Bedroom Also accessed from the dining room is a small square hall measuring 4 feet by 6½ feet. Like the dining room, three of its walls contain doorway access to other rooms. The hall provides access to the bathroom and bedroom. The bathroom measures 6½ feet by 6 feet and contains the basic amenities of a ceramic bath, pedestal sink, and toilet. Walls surrounding the bath are tiled as is the floor. The bedroom is 11 feet by 12 feet and includes a 3-foot deep floor-to-ceiling built-in dresser/closet that runs the length of one wall left of the door. Walls and ceiling are painted plaster while the floor is exposed wood. Garage/Basement The unfinished garage/basement is accessed through the back kitchen door to the outside and down a flight of stairs. The basement has an open plan with a utilitarian wood wall to define a garage and furnace area. The ceiling is exposed wood joists and the perimeter walls are concrete. ALTERATIONS The Bohnsen Cottages have remained intact with only minor changes due to repairs. The exception is the addition of a shed roof that shelters the entire rear facade of each cottage, thereby sheltering the kitchen backdoor, windows, and basement stairs. The condition of the handrails varies and original wrought iron railings are extant at some cottages while some have been altered. The pipe railings on the rear facades are non-historic, added in the 1930s after the Preston Family acquired the property.

## 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 early twentieth century was an era of considerable experimentation in domestic architecture. The challenge of creating an affordable home for individuals and for middle-class families was considerable, particularly in light a growing demand for housing. The Bohnsen Cottages, constructed in 1926, represent an attempt to meet this need by blending both elements of the single-family detached home with rental property. The cottages consist of five, stylistically similar, small, detached one-story houses, located on a single, common parcel of land in the Portland Heights neighborhood in Portland. In form, the Bohnsen Cottages stand out as rare example of multi-family rental housing in both this traditionally affluent west-side neighborhood and in the city as a whole. The Bohnsen Cottages are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for their association with the development of multi-family housing in residential neighborhoods in Portland during the 1920s. The Bohnsen Cottages are also eligible under Criterion C for their building type as a distinctive local form of multi-family housing that responded to the needs of burgeoning middle-class in the Portland Heights neighborhood and Portland. PORTLAND AND THE PORTLAND HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE 1920s The decade of the 1920s generally is recognized as one of the city's most active. In these years, Portland saw a building boom second only to the years immediately following the Lewis & Clark Exposition in 1905, thereby following a national trend of enormous growth. Between 1922 and 1929, the F.W. Dodge Corporation, which provided real estate analyses, reported an annual, record-breaking average of \$7 billion in construction contracts awarded nationally. Some of the factors that drove this growth were an increasing demand in and lower cost of materials. Additionally, the 1920s saw enormous population growth in the United States with the national population increasing by an astounding average of 1.6 million annually – a growth rate of roughly 10 percent! Also at this time with the rise of agricultural and transportation technology, significant portions of the country's population migrated from rural and farm areas to cities. Growth in per capita income during the post-World War I period resulted in a demand for improved dwellings, and construction of single-family houses during the 1920s reached a national peak in 1925, a year before the peak in multi-family structures. In addition, the percentage of families owning their homes increased, while the number of families living in apartments also increased. Following the national trend, the 1920s were also kind to Portland. The city's population experienced a 16.9 percent increase between 1920 and 1930, growing from 258,288 to 301,815 citizens. Its economy boomed with the doubling of lumber exports both in quantity and value. Portland particularly benefited from the growing transportation infrastructure that allowed harvesting of the state's enormous forest resources. The city had strong roots in the Good Roads Movement, a movement that was popular in the United States between 1880 and 1916 in which participants advocated for the education of road building and the improvement of roads in rural areas between cities. In 1914, under the Good Roads Movement, the Columbia Gorge Highway opened creating speedy access to rural areas from Portland and vice versa. This population increase and economic success was reflected in the development of housing, especially for the rising middle-class. Located well outside of the city's core in the upscale Portland Heights neighborhood, the Bohnsen Cottages were constructed to meet the growing demand for middle-class housing during the 1920s. Regarded by many as the "playground and 'toy of the wealthy,'" the Portland Heights neighborhood was first platted in the late 1870s and later developed as a result of the cable car. Before the installation of the cable car, travel to the Heights during fall and winter seasons was threatened by dangerous mudslides, discouraging the use of the area and allowing for only seasonal use for summer vacation homes. In 1889, Portland's Carroll McCaffrey, a lawyer and realtor, and Preston Smith were largely responsible for promoting both the new Cable Railway and the early year-round residential development of Portland Heights. The two knew that if the neighborhood was going to flourish, reliable transportation into the area was key. Author Christine Hunter explains: Streetcar and trolley lines were a powerful tool for real-estate development. With amazing rapidity, private entrepreneurs across the United States secured operating franchises from local governments. According to a federal study, a total of about 7,500 miles of streetcar track existed nationwide in 1890 . . . thirteen years later, in 1903, this had grown four-fold to 30,000 miles. Access issues to the Portland Heights would be changed with the construction of the cable car and trestle in the late 1880s. The trestle would allow the cable car to ascend a thousand feet at a steep 20 percent grade, giving the hill-top area year-round access. In its design, the trestle also allowed a lane for horse-drawn carriages. Operation of the cable car began in 1890, with the original route running from present day 18th Avenue to its terminus at Spring Street. Here, where Spring Street meets Vista Avenue, was Cable Park, a popular picnic and viewpoint area for riders. It is now the location of Ainsworth School. Development of the Portland Heights continued to advance with the construction of the Henry Ford Bridge across Canyon Road in the early 1900s. This bridge, located at the present day Vista Avenue Bridge, included electric streetcar access along Vista Avenue, continuing south to Council Crest. These "Council Crest Cars," as they were known, gave Portland Heights' residents more convenient access to their properties by traveling than had the original cable cars. In addition, the Council Crest Cars allowed visitors access, especially the thousands of visitors attending the 1905 Lewis and Clark Exposition, to enjoy panoramic views of Portland from Council Crest. At Marquam Hill, a stop on the way to Council Crest, was an Observation Tower erected for the Exposition and to promote Portland Height's real estate. Council Crest soon developed into Council Crest Amusement Park, which ran from 1907 to 1929, with an elaborate amusement park that had crowd-drawing rides and amusements such as the "Trip up the Columbia," a boat ride that encircled the Park, the "L.A. Thompson Carousel," the "Ferris Wheel," the

"L.A. Thompson Scenic Railway," and a large dance pavilion. During the Lewis and Clark Exposition, Portland Heights' real estate was marketed to profit from the exposition visitors. The Exposition was successful in its exposure of the Heights and the greater Portland area and gave the city international exposure. It was in the years following the Exposition that Portland experienced rapid growth and development. Specifically from 1905 to 1909, Portland had a population growth explosion of over 80 percent, from 111,000 to 207,000, and a 30 percent increase of the city's boundary. Author Carl Abbott explains: Portland also built a new middle-class city on the east side of the Willamette. Homes and home-owners followed trolley lines north to Woodlawn and University Park, east beyond city limits to Rose City Park, Mount Tabor, and Woodstock. Streetcar traffic doubled and doubled again as Portland added 2,400 houses and apartments each year during the Exposition boom. Between 1900 and 1916, the old west side neighborhoods grew from 58,000 to 96,000 residents by packing families more tightly into already developed areas. Already considered a high-class neighborhood, the upper-class built their large homes in the Portland Heights to reflect their social status. But the area also developed a small commercial core at Vista Avenue and Spring Streets, as typical with developments around streetcars. A grocery store was built on the corner of Vista Avenue and Spring Street in 00, along with a handful of apartments in the immediate area. The advent of the automobile further expanded the city, allowing progressively more Portlanders to move outward to neighborhoods beyond walking distance and streetcar lines from their work. "The effects of the automobile on daily behavior were ubiquitous by the 1920s. Portland was more dependent than the average city on personal transportation. In 1930, Multnomah County had one car for every four residents, compared to one in five nationwide." The automobile also helped open up the steep slopes of the Portland Heights neighborhood to residential development, as well as the ability to access the Heights with the convenience of personal transportation. Given the affluence of the neighborhood, residents were at the forefront of the trend of owning an automobile. Abbott further explains that "when the majority of households had access to their own automobile, it was not surprising that streetcar use began to drop after 1926. Retail stores that had strung out along trolley lines began to cluster more tightly in suburban shopping districts." By the 1920s, the West Hills area, including the Portland Heights, had asserted itself as Portland's elite district, affording the affluent close access to the city. Multi-Family Housing in 1920s Portland With the economic success of Portland during the 1920s also came an increased population that stressed the city's current housing stock and living conditions. Examples of makeshift dwellings to accommodate the growing population included subdividing existing houses without the installation of new plumbing, hotel rooms converted to apartments without external light and air, and neighborhoods near shipyards overcrowded with poor-quality structures that had been brought in from elsewhere. In response to this situation, a select body of architects and planners urged the city to adopt zoning ordinances to insure there were "decent living conditions in the congested core of Portland and to protect the character of the outlying neighborhoods." A newly appointed Planning Commission in 1919 was elected to propose the planning code and the city's first zoning ordinance was passed in 1924. As the 1920s brought rapid growth to Portland, the city and nation also grappled with technological and social change that helped bolster a growing middle-class, beginning a fundamental shift in the American lifestyle. Domestic architecture both reflected this shift and worked to reinforce traditional values. As explained by Gwendolyn Wright in *Building the American Dream: A Social History of Housing in America*, "for centuries Americans have seen domestic architecture as a way of encouraging certain kinds of family and social life . . . that domestic environments can reinforce certain character traits, promote family stability, and assure a good society." In essence, for many Americans, how they lived was a direct reflection of who they were, and with rapid social and technological change, the early twentieth century saw multifaceted responses to this fundamental question of "how should we live?" At one end of the spectrum was the apartment building. While sub-standard tenements long served as territory for the poor and lower classes, upscale apartment living by the late nineteenth century had appeared as favorable among many of society's well-to-do. Particularly in large cities prompted by scarce land, apartment buildings grew in popularity based on their convenience to the city and the advanced domestic technology they offered. Returns on investments of 10-30 percent prompted developers to respond to this choice of lifestyle. As apartment living became more socially acceptable, developers also extended such housing down the economic scale. To be cost conscious, as apartment buildings catered toward middle-income families, an emphasis was placed on dramatic, typically revival architecture, and on opulent public spaces, while the units themselves became more austere and standardized. Nonetheless, apartment living increasingly became popular. The notion of apartment living was sold on the basis of efficiency and unheard-of technological advances. In finer apartments, entrances and public spaces were often sumptuous with marble floors and paneling, crystal chandeliers, and imported carpets. Walnut or mahogany wainscoting also often adorned public doorways, lobbies, staircases, and steam elevator cars with uniformed operators. Central hot-water heating systems and gas mains for lighting, along fully equipped bathrooms for each unit were also often found. Bathrooms became more elaborate with hot and cold running water, hand painted china basins, and hand carved shower stall screens. Architects experimented with electric generators, later connecting buildings to streetcar electric service, and installed central vacuum cleaning systems with nozzles in each room connected to a large pump in the basement, with individual attachments used as hair dryers or reversed as dust collectors. To increase light and ventilation, subsequent designs grouped apartments around a central courtyard with central corridors. This emphasis on efficiency resulted in some apartments separating the heat and discomfort of cooking and laundry from the living quarters with public dining rooms, kitchens, and laundries. Some provided servants for serving meals and cleaning clothes. These cooperative services, technological advances, and attention to public spaces made apartment living seem like one of the most advanced institutions in American society. A variation on upscale apartment living was the residential hotel, directed most often toward single men or women. As with apartments, residential hotels might offer suites with finishes for the upscale clientele. For middle-class patrons, a residential hotel may have offered dramatic settings in the lobby and dining room, but a comparatively small individual room for occupancy. At the other end of the spectrum was the rise of the streetcar suburb. Streetcars, coupled with the affordability of the automobile, allowed cities to sprawl out and developers to acquire large parcels of land to subdivide. Depending on the developer and the subdivision development, homes were both built and sold on speculation, or parcels were sold and custom homes built. In Portland, early developments included Laurelhurst and Ladd's Addition with their comparatively upscale homes. And as with apartments and residential hotels, more middle income options arose in places such as the Hollywood and Rose City Park neighborhoods. Typically, these homes were smaller, yet considered more efficient with modern home technologies. Unbound by tradition, developers also experimented in middle-class apartments in a variety of new forms. The most popular was what came to be known as the bungalow court. In 1907, Sylvanus Marston designed the first recognized example of a bungalow court. These buildings were originally designed and used as rental cottages, with their inspiration taken from summer rental cottages on the east coast. The St. Francis Courts in Pasadena, as they are known, form a cluster of eleven detached bungalows with a central court, each differing in shape and slight variation in floor plan, but retaining the same number of rooms and amenities. Bungalow courts came to feature a grouping of six to ten small, detached houses centered on a communal garden. To maximize units, housing around a court developed into the more common attached apartment court. The garden style apartment paralleled this form on the east coast, appearing in 1910 in Queens, New York, designed by Edward MacDougall. A different variant were the patio houses (known as "casas de vecinos") of Los Angeles, California. Here, architects capitalized on traditional Spanish architecture to create a two-story complex grouped around a courtyard. The 1926 Andalusia in West Hollywood, which featured nine one and two-story units organized around a central garden with a nearby garage court is but one example. The earliest recognized court apartments appeared in Portland just prior to the Bohnsen Cottages, although variations of the court apartments abounded. Typically low-rise, they varied in size up to three floors. Some bore a striking resemblance to row houses with front and rear entries, two-story interior floor plans, and individual addresses. Others were inclined to assemble units in groups of four or six with a single entrance to serve those units and multiple entrances for the complex. A lesser-adopted experiment was the rise of the multiplex. In many communities, particularly on the east coast, the multiplex was expressed as a duplex, triplex, or some small multiple-family unit. These featured separate entrances and internal stairs to typically two or even three story units. In Portland, however, this form is largely unfound, although there are examples of the four-plex which typically consisted of four separate entries on a front porch with two central entrances opening to stairs which led to a second-story apartment. It is evident that Portland mirrored the national trend of developing multi-family housing for its burgeoning population, peaking in development in 1926. For the most part, Portland's residential real estate was dominated by construction east of the Willamette River which held approximately 70 percent of the city's population as the city experienced a decentralizing. Predominantly, new multi-family residences for the middle-class consisted of duplexes and apartments built within a two-mile radius of Burnside Bridge, thereby filling land from the base of the West Hills to older east-side neighborhoods. An estimated seventy-five apartment buildings were constructed in Portland during the 1920s, consisting of 40 percent of the new building stock. The Bohnsen Cottages were constructed at the peak of this multi-family housing trend, but unlike the bulk of multi-family units built in Portland during the 1920s these cottages were located in an established, upper-class neighborhood. DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOHNSEN COTTAGES Iver M. Bohnsen, a native of Germany, was born in August 1866 and immigrated to the United States in 1890 at the age of 24. In 1893, he married Emma Pheister, and from 1901 to 1906 operated the Bohnsen Brothers Grocery store located on Jefferson Street in Portland with his brother, John. From 1907 to 1919, Bohnsen continued in the retail grocery business, operating two grocery stores consecutively on Jefferson Street and on Clay Street. Also during this time, he managed the Colonnade Apartments with his wife. In 1920, Bohnsen moved into a commercial building in the Portland Heights neighborhood at Vista Avenue and Spring Street where he operated a grocery store on the ground floor and made his home on the second floor. Four years later, in 1922, he acquired a vacant 8,500 square foot lot to the north of his store from A.S. Ellis and began to plan the development of his new land. Surrounded by a school, fire house and commercial enterprises, Bohnsen appears to have been intent on developing the parcel for commercial uses. In 1923, however, Bohnsen was stymied by neighborhood concerns for commercial development and by Portland's new zoning laws. With the new Vista Bridge underway, developers were increasingly interested in the Portland Heights neighborhood and parcels along the streetcar line. As recently as 1922, a hotel had been proposed for the neighborhood. Residents, however, feared that the hotel would undermine the character of their neighborhood and pushed for restrictive zoning. They successfully fought the hotel project and called for more restrictive zoning for the neighborhood. In 1925, residents specifically fought Bohnsen's development plans for his lot. The prominent Bishop Walter Taylor Sumner summarized the neighborhood's opinion for the local newspaper: Portland Heights is a strictly residential district and is well built up. There are two stores on that block now and they lead a very precarious existence. One of them has failed four times in the ten years that I have been here. If the others come in, it will not be long before all of them are closed . . . I have seen stores in that district go before; I don't want to see any more of them. Led by Bishop Sumner, Portland Heights' residents sought closed zoning that precluded nearly all uses other than single-family detached homes. This included apartment houses, flats, dormitories, theaters, public garages, and even schools other than the current. It was both in this atmosphere and growing demand for affordable, middle-class housing that Bohnsen refocused his plans. Rather than a commercial enterprise, he built five, single, detached cottages. Construction of the cottages began in July 1925 and was completed within a year. The Bohnsen Cottages were designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, which came into popularity as a result of the Panama-California Exposition held in San Diego in 1915. The cottages, built during the height of the style's popularity, embodied the style with character-defining features such as a low-pitched or flat roof, tile clad roof, typically with one or more prominent arches above a door or window, stucco

walls, and an asymmetrical oriented facade. The use of revival styles during the 1920s created an aura of the exotic and particularly the Spanish Colonial Revival style was not common in the Portland Heights neighborhood. A particularly unusual feature of the Bohnsen Cottages is the internal below-grade automobile garages. The automobile had arrived in Portland at the turn of the twentieth century at first only used by adventures and the upper-class. By the 1920s, however, Portland had embraced the automobile. Henry Ford's Model-T, introduced in 1908, and regarded as the first affordable car made it possible for middle-class America to own a car. The city's acceptance of the automobile was reflected through the improvement of roads and the boom of auto-related businesses in the city. At home the innovation in transportation began to be reflected as garages were integrated into home designs -- a clear break departing from the earlier detached carriage house. Bohnsen was clearly appealing to the modern professional who wanted the advantages of a house and possibly the amenity of a garage. The garage feature made the Bohnsen Cottages a more marketable property and set them apart from other rental properties. Although garages were becoming more common during this period, it was rare in 1926 for a multi-family housing unit to have this feature. It is evident from the design of the Bohnsen Cottages' unique size and layout that they were intended to generate income. Once built, the cottages were rented to single and married working professionals who included several bookkeepers, a credit manager, music teacher, and a widow. During this time, Bohnsen continued to work at the Portland Heights Grocery store. In 1931, he moved to Southeast Portland and operated a Grocery Store on Gladstone Street. Before his retirement in 1938 and his death at age 79 in January 1946, Bohnsen sold the cottages in the Portland Heights neighborhood in 1933 to Charles Ebenezer and Christianne Preston. The Bohnsen Cottages remained in the Preston family until 2006, passing through two generations -- Charles Vern and Margaret Preston and Bonnie Spaulding Preston. In 2006, it was acquired by the current owners, Timberline Partners. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS As suggested by Bohnsen's zoning predicament, multi-family dwellings are uncommon in the Portland Heights neighborhood, even in what must be considered the neighborhood's commercial core. In the 1920s, neighborhood activists sought to ban nearly every form of apartment living. It is not surprising, therefore, that the neighborhood contains just four other multi-family dwellings and all except one were constructed before interest in commercial development in the neighborhood began following the World War I. All of these multi-family buildings were constructed either on or within one block of the electric streetcar line, including the Bohnsen Cottages. Below is a comprehensive list of multi-family residences that were extant in the Portland Heights Neighborhood at the time of the Bohnsen Cottages construction. The information was gathered through the 1901, 1909, and 1926 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, City of Portland tax assessor records, the National Register of Historic Places nominations, and the Historic Resource Inventory for the City of Portland (there are additional apartments in the district that did not appear until 1960, well after the period of significance). Properties below are listed in chronological order of building date: 2303-2305 SW Vista Avenue This duplex, built in 1885, is located one block north from the Bohnsen Cottages on the west side of Vista Avenue, is a two-story and basement Colonial Revival style building. It is rectangular in form, has a front-facing gabled roof, a double-story, full-facade porch supported by three round columns, and two entrances placed side-by-side on the left half of the street facing primary facade. The duplex is directly accessed from the sidewalk, has no green space and is built to the lot line. Vista Hill Apartments, 2314 SW Vista Avenue The Vista Hill Apartments, built in 1910, are located one block north from the Bohnsen Cottages on the east side of Vista Avenue. The building is a two-story four-plex in the Craftsman style. The four-plex is square in form with a pair of covered two-story porches on either side of the central main entrance, has shingle siding, and a hipped roof. The four-plex is street-facing and is typical for a middle-class to upper-middle-class neighborhood built near or adjacent to electric street car lines. The four-plex, like the duplex across the street, is self contained without any common grounds or court yard and is directly accessed from the sidewalk. Bowman Apartments, 1837 SW Elm Street The Bowman Apartments, listed in the National Register, are located one block northeast from the Bohnsen Cottages on the north side of Elm Street. Built in 1913, the Bowman Apartments are two-story in the Craftsman style building, constructed in a front facing 'U' shape in form around a small landscaped courtyard that is accessed from the sidewalk. Like the Vista Hill Apartments, it is also a typical multi-family building constructed for a middle-class to upper-middle-class neighborhood built near or adjacent to electric street car lines. The Bowman Apartments show Japanese influence within the Craftsman Style and are listed as one of the best examples of Craftsman style apartment buildings within Portland. The Bowman Apartments are similar to the Vista Hill Apartments in that they contain individual balconies but lack individual access to communal green space. Portland Heights Apartments, 1928 SW Laurel Street The Portland Heights Apartments, built in 1923, are also located one block north of the Bohnsen Cottages adjacent to the electric street car line, and are next to the Vista Hill Apartments. The Portland Heights Apartments is a three-story Italian Renaissance style building. The Apartment building is square in form, with a rusticated first-story followed by a belt course, has symmetrical bay windows and a roof-line parapet roof. These apartments are the only resource, except for the Bohnsen Cottages, constructed during the 1920s. City directories from the era indicate that this apartment home was geared toward single women, typically widows. These multi-family residences in the Portland Heights neighborhood are better compared to one another for their similar qualities than compared to the Bohnsen Cottages. The apartment houses share many characteristics such as access to an individual apartment through a common entrance used by all tenants. Examples of this can be seen in the Portland Heights Apartments with its single central entrance that leads to a foyer, the Vista Hill Apartments on Vista Avenue that also lead to central foyers, and even the Bowman Apartments that contain two entrances -- these entrances service four apartments each and also lead onto a central foyer. These apartments also lack the distinction of a cottage with their basements and access to natural light from all four sides of a building. At most, the Bowman Apartments, Vista Hill Apartments, and the Colonial Revival duplex can claim access to views on two facades. Another comparable distinction is they all lack any type of green space except the Bowman Apartments, and even with the Bowman it is a small garden courtyard that is not accessed by any of the apartments but rather from the sidewalk. In comparing these resources, it is clear that the Bohnsen Cottages are unique multi-family residences in the Portland Heights Neighborhood. The buildings' uniqueness lies in their appearance, as they stand alone, detached, and appear as quaint, small cottages each set back from the curb with their individual entrances accessed from the sidewalk through a series of stairs to a covered porch. Each contain their own garage and driveway entrance, street numbered address, permanent planters and green areas, and a full basement with individual furnace. Their only indication of being part of a multi-family complex is in the deed title. Many of these same comparisons hold true for the Bohnsen Cottages when compared to apartment buildings throughout the city. The 1920s was an era of both experimentation and repetition in apartment construction. A common paradigm is the low-rise building on a 5,000 square foot parcel. These are commonly found in northwest Portland but not exclusively. The building is typically built near the lot line, features a common entrance with double-loaded corridor on each floor leading to individual apartments. A variation of this is found on 10,000 square foot parcels and in a more high-rise form. Closely resembling this basic form are the residential hotels in the city's core. Typically none of these buildings have accommodation for automobiles. In the 1920s, the garden court apartment appeared in Portland. While more common on Portland's east side, these apartments are also found in Portland's northwest neighborhoods in a variety of architectural styles. Most often, these are one- or two-story buildings with individual entrances. Options may include a town-house style unit with interior staircase or single entry serving four flats on two levels. Typically, however, there is not a provision for automobiles, though where geography allows, some buildings feature a garage at grade with the living units elevated. Finally, there is the comparison with the four-plex, an example of which is found in the Portland Heights as well as throughout the city. As with the apartment buildings, this form makes no provision for automobiles and, as the name suggests, features an assembly of four flats (two-over-two) in a single structure. Compared to multi-family residences in the city, the Bohnsen Cottages stand distinct. They are unique in the neighborhood and no comparable example is known city-wide. The qualities that distinguish Bohnsen Cottages are the detached form organized to suggest single-family homes but clearly developed for rental use with common green space. CONCLUSION The Bohnsen Cottages represent an attempt to blend both the single-family detached home with rental property during a time of domestic architectural experimentation. As such, the

## RESEARCH INFORMATION

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|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| ✓ 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:

Historical Society: Oregon Historical Society

### University Library:

Other Repository:

### Bibliography:

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