

# City of Gresham

## Historic and Cultural Landmark Inventory Form

### LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

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Historic Name: **The Louise Home,  
Hospital, and Residence Hall**

Current/ Other names: **Albertina Kerr  
Lisa C. Gibson Center**

Address: **722 NE 162<sup>nd</sup> Avenue**

**Gresham, Oregon**

**Multnomah County**

Township: **1n** Range: **3E** Section: **31**

$\frac{1}{4}$ : **SW  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the NW  $\frac{1}{4}$**  Zip Code: **97230**

Tax Lot: **36** Addition: **Beaver Acres**  
Block:

Assessor: **R061800870**



The Louise Home viewed from NE 162<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

### PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS

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Resource Type: **Home/ Hospital**  
Eligibility: **Eligible/ Significant**  
Primary construction date: **1912**  
Secondary construction date: **1945**  
Primary use: **Home/ Hospital**  
Secondary use: **Children's Home**  
Primary style: **Georgian Revival**  
Secondary style:  
Primary siding: **Brick**  
Secondary siding:  
Plan type: **"U" Shaped**  
Architect: **Carl H. Wallwork**

Height (stories): **2**

Total # eligible resources: **1**  
NR status: **Listed**  
City Landmark Status: **Listed**

Use comments: **Excellent condition**

Style comments:

Siding comments:

Builder:

Notes: **Narratives quoted from National Register Nomination Form.**

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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The Louise Home represents a time in U.S. society when governments did not offer social services. The home, designed in 1925 by Architect Carl H. Walworth, once part of an extensive seventeen-acre farm and wooded campus for unwed mothers, which private philanthropists and religious organizations funded.

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

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The Louise Home is located east of NE 162<sup>nd</sup> Avenue on the edge of Gresham. The home is

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situated on the original seventeen-acre Albertina Kerr campus. The campus is surrounded by residential neighborhoods, but once consisted of a large farm that supported the hospital and home. An extensive stand of Douglas fir trees has also been well-preserved and shade the entire campus. Because the home is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the narratives are quoted below. Several minor updates have been added.

### **From the National Register Nomination:**

The plan of the Hospital and Residence Hall is a modified "U" or "V" shape, with the legs, or wings, at 45° angles to the main portion. The wings are about 25 feet wide and 45 feet long and the main portion is about 30 feet wide and 74 feet long. The building has a full basement, two floors and an attic and partial third floor. The basement foundation is of concrete construction and the main and second floors have solid brick exterior walls with wood framed and plaster interior walls. The attic and partial third floor is wood framed with plaster walls and segmental-arched dormers and a long shed dormer on the rear. The hipped roof is covered with composition shingles. The major brick outside end chimney with corbeled cap rises above the roofline at the outer end of the north wing to vent the boiler and kitchen range. The living room fireplace chimney rises above the rear slope of the south wing roof.

Exterior elevations faced with Flemish bond brick are formally composed, having regular fenestration in upper and lower stories. Generous window openings are unframed and fitted with six-over-six, double-hung sash. A continuous string course divides the stories at the second story window sill line. In the main block, lower story window openings are headed by blind relieving arches accented by keystones and impost blocks. The principal, west-facing facade, approached by a semi-circular driveway, is organized into three bays on either side of a central projecting entrance pavilion which is two stories in height and is terminated by a pediment above the full classical entablature which encompasses the entire main block. The pediment with its modillioned raking cornice is embellished with plaster relief ornament in the tympanum. The ornament consists of garlands and an escutcheon bearing the initials of the Pacific Protective Society. The entrance is gained through a recessed porch framed by a classical portico with segmental-arched pediment supported by two round Tuscan columns. Brick quoining at the corners of the main block and entrance pavilion are rusticated.

Interior spaces are arranged with a recreation room in the basement of the main block and heating plant and storage in the basement of the north wing. On the main floor, the central circulation hall separates the living room, or common room from the matron's suite and other staff quarters. The large dining hall and original kitchen space are contained in the north wing; original receiving rooms in the south. The second story, laid out on a double-loaded central corridor plan throughout, was originally allocated to hospital wards in the wings and treatment rooms in the main block. In the main block, a partial third story was utilized as a convalescent ward.

Except for a small brick-faced kitchen extension measuring 12 feet wide and 20 feet long added to the end of the north wing in 1945, the building is essentially unchanged on the exterior. About the only change to the interior original walls was to open two doors, one each side of the fireplace in the livingroom to provide access to residence areas when the building was changed from a hospital use to a residence for emotionally and behaviorally disturbed girls. Also, for this change, the sliding doors to the entry hall were closed and a non-bearing partition was placed in

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front of the sliding doors and another non-bearing partition was placed to separate the main stairs and living room from the public entrance.

### **HISTORIC DESCRIPTION**

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The history of the institution on NE 162nd Avenue outlying Portland's easterly city limits opened in 1912 when St. Elisabeth's Home for wayward girls acquired nine acres at the site. The enterprise of the Episcopal Sisters was eventually sold to the Pacific Coast Rescue and Protective Society, which moved to the site in 1915. The Society transferred to this place the title of its own home for wayward girls which it had operated in Portland since 1908. Thus, the Louise Home was a carry-over name which applied to the institution's campus as a whole.

Today, the oldest building on the campus is the Juvenile Hospital, later named Kathyne Carlson Residence Hall, which was designed in 1925 and completed and opened for use in 1927. Two and a half stories in height and taking the shape of a modified V, it was designed by Portland architect Carl H. Wallwork, who had earlier (1921) designed the Albertina Kerr Nursery in association with Folger Johnson and Jamieson Parker. The Albertina Kerr Nursery has been listed in the National Register.

The hospital's finely-detailed exterior elevations are well preserved. While the building is locally noteworthy as an example of institutional architecture of the 1920s in an appropriately traditional style, it meets National Register Criterion A, primarily, as the discretely-sited flagship of the Louise Home campus. Specifically, it represents an historic continuum of social services fulfilled by private philanthropy where public facilities were lacking. Like the Multnomah County Poor Farm and more precisely comparable institutions elsewhere in the state, such as the Children's Farm Home near Corvallis, the Louise Home was situated on the outskirts of the city where undeveloped acreage was affordable and such land could provide a healthful environment, contribute to the subsistence of the institution and remove the clients from unwholesome distractions of city life.

No safe haven or institution for unwed mothers existed in Portland before 1908. With characteristic Christian vision and pragmatic approach, humanitarian William G. MacLaren sought to provide asylum in establishing the Louise Home. The plethora of pregnancies among "wayward girls" which accompanied the greater than normal population increase in Portland in the early years of the 20th Century was recognized as a root cause of related societal problems by the Pacific Coast Rescue and Protective Society, founded by MacLaren, and the Portland Police Bureau. MacLaren's objective in arousing public concern for indigent and unfortunate persons was reinforced by the work of Alexander Kerr, Dr. Wynne Watts, and others. The specialized medical care required by unwed mothers who had venereal diseases could not be given readily in regular hospitals before the advent of penicillin and other "wonder drugs" in the 1940s. Delivery rooms to accommodate the mothers were thus provided at the Louise Home. The Louise Home was opened in 1908 at 373 Cable Street in Portland and operated there until moving to the present site in 1915. The evolution from need to solution spanned the years from 1908-1927, and in these years St. Elisabeth's House, Albertina Kerr Nursery, and the Louise Home all aided the unwed mother population. The year 1927 was the completion date of the Louise Home Juvenile Hospital, a culminating development which provided the latest in clinical services and an attractive home-like residence for the girls during their time of waiting and recuperation.

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Following the founding of the Pacific Coast Rescue and Protective Society by W. G. MacLaren, the Albertina Kerr Nursery was established by Alexander Kerr for the purpose of providing care for infants, usually orphans and children of unwed mothers, while the Louise Home was a residence for pregnant girls, of whom some needed treatment for venereal disease. Inevitably, administration of the separate but related institutions was meshed. Laundry and sewing services and food production for both agencies were centered at the Louise Home in rural Multnomah County. The "farm" provided meat, poultry, dairy products, vegetables and fruit. The Louise Home also had a cannery to process food.

Formal education and useful occupations were integral parts of the daily routine for residents of the Louise Home. In earlier days, when a resident's stay was six months or so, there was training or work to be done in the gardens, cannery, laundry, sewing rooms, dairy, or general running of the institution. Domestic science and commercial arts skills were practiced by the young women, as were secretarial skills such as typing. While regular classroom education always was a part of the program provided by the Louise Home, the Wynne Watts School was established in 1933 as one of the first publicly assisted special schools in the state. The school's specially-designed facility was opened for use on the Louise Home campus in 1938. The curriculum extended through high school grades. The school on campus was initiated in part, because it was not thought fitting for pregnant girls to be among other teenagers in the public schools.

The broader significance of the Louise Home and its sister institution founded at the inspiration of W. G. MacLaren in the early years of the 20th Century is that they set a standard for treatment of pregnant teenagers, their infants, and behaviorally disturbed youth elsewhere in the state and region.

In 2016, Scott Edwards Architecture won the Grand Award at the annual Golden Nugget Awards for their redesign and forthcoming remodel of the building. After design review with the City of Gresham, the building's modern addition will blend old and new styles with a completely new addition that features an interior light well to allow people to interact with the old building's façade.

### RESEARCH INFORMATION

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Title Records    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Census Records       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Property Tax Records | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Histories      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sanborn Maps     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biographical Sources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SHPO Files           | <input type="checkbox"/> Interviews                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Obituaries                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Newspapers           | <input type="checkbox"/> State Archives                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic Photographs |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> City Directories | <input type="checkbox"/> Building Permits                | <input type="checkbox"/> State Library                   |  |

Library: **Multnomah County Public Library, Gresham Branch**

### Bibliography:

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Form prepared by: **David-Paul B. Hedberg, 2016**



West and south façade of Louise Home from NE 162<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.



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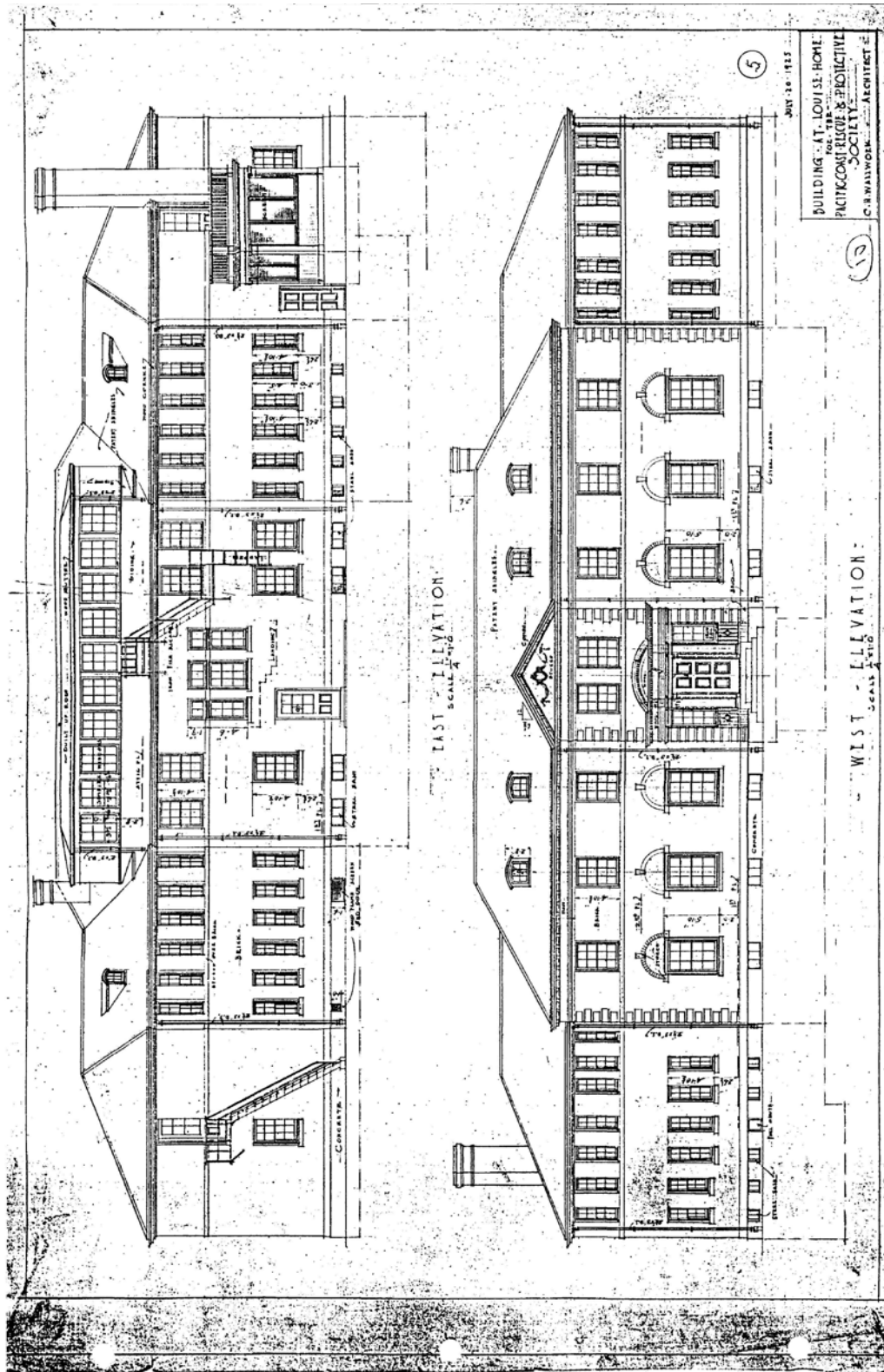
West and North façade of Louise Home from NE 162<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.



West and north façade pictured in 1930.  
Image from Albertina Ker center and used in National Register Nomination.

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East and west elevations from architect Carl H. Wallwork's design. Image used in National



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Register Nomination.



Mockup of the new building's integration to the original structure.