

STATE OF OREGON INVENTORY
 HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS
 State Historic Preservation Office
 Oregon State Parks, Salem 97310

County Multnomah
 Theme Glazed Terra Cotta
 Name
 (Common) Pittock Block
 (Historic) ⁺Pittock Building
 Address 921 S.W. Washington
Portland
 Present Owner Pittock, Henry L. et al
 Address 900 S.W. Fifth, Rm. 1939
~~Portland, 97204~~
 Original Use Retail/Office
 Date of Construction 1914/1923



Physical description of property and statement of historical significance:

This glazed terra-cotta building is one of approximately 50 constructed in Portland's downtown area between 1900 and 1930. During this period major commercial development shifted away from the strip of land along the Willamette River to border the principal street car routes on Morrison and Washington. As the street car system spread into outlying residential areas (Portland Heights, Willamette Heights, Ladd's Addition Laurelhurst, etc.) it brought increasing numbers of workers and shoppers downtown. And as the demand for office and retail space increased the construction of taller buildings became economically feasible. These taller buildings required a light weight and fireproof facing. Terra cotta met these requirements. It was also relatively inexpensive and could accommodate varying degrees of ornamentation - traits which fostered its use for public buildings of all heights. While unglazed terra cotta had been used for the Romanesque buildings constructed before 1900, the predominantly Classical Revival buildings following 1900 featured terra cotta glazed either buff or cream to give the appearance of stone. (con't)

continue on back if necessary

Recorded by Virginia Guest Ferriday Date March 1980

Sources Consulted: See below.

Please enclose map Township N E
 W Section

+ PRIMARY

The block on which the Pittock Building is located, originally Henry Pittock's home site, was leased by Pittock in 1913 for 99 years to Herbert Fleishhacker of San Francisco. Fleishhacker agreed to build a building worth not less than \$650,000 to be named "Pittock Building." Yearly ground rents were pegged to increase \$9000 every ten years. A previous lease agreement had been made in 1907 with the Trustee Company, developers of the Olds, Wortman & King Building. Under the terms of that 90-year lease \$150,000 bond was deposited to guarantee construction of a building not later than 1908. Rents were also to increase each year. full-block,

The A-shaped, eight-story building, designed by Doyle & Patterson, was constructed in two parts: the south half and lower two stories of the north half in 1914 and the remainder in 1923. The rather scanty cream-colored terra-cotta ornament on the lower and upper floor was produced by N. Clark & Son. The remainder of the facade is faced with smooth-faced, buff-colored brick. The basic structure is reinforced concrete with ribbed concrete slabs.

Store fronts originally had marble bases with cast-iron grilles and awnings hung below the transom windows.

The interior arcade originally had terrazzo floors with marble borders and bases, marble wainscoting, ornamental plasterwork, and a leaded-glass skylight.

Fred Baker provided the lighting fixtures, which he described as "non-descript."

The lobby and Washington Street entrance were altered by A.E. Doyle's office in 1939. Another "modernization" occurred in 1960.

The basement was built to house the electric sub-station and west side distributing plant for the Northwestern Electric Company. For many years it provided both steam and direct current generation to run elevators for downtown buildings.

Albert E. Doyle (1879-1928), whose firm was responsible for the design of twelve glazed terra cotta buildings in downtown Portland, was apprenticed for twelve years to architects Whidden & Lewis. In 1903 Doyle left Portland for New York where he attended design classes at Columbia University and worked in the office of Henry Bacon. In the spring of 1906 he sailed for Europe to study and travel. Returning to Portland Doyle opened an office early in 1907. By 1908 he had taken on W.S. Patterson as a partner. J.G. Beach, an engineer, joined the firm for brief periods in 1913 and 1920.

Henry Pittock (1836?-1919) arrived in Portland in 1853 to be assistant on The Morning Oregonian, then a struggling weekly. Within seven years he became the paper's owner and the following year made it a daily. He maintained control of the paper until his death. Following the 1893 marriage of Frederick W. Leadbetter to Pittock's daughter Caroline, Pittock and Leadbetter combined talents to put together a vast timber and paper empire. The two were also involved in real estate and banking. Pittock is perhaps best known for his 22-room mansion completed in 1914 atop Imperial Heights. It is now City property. Pittock moved there from a six-room cottage on the site of the Pittock Block.

Herbert L. Fleishhacker, one of California's most powerful capitalists and close friend of the Meier family of Meier & Frank, invested in numerous Portland enterprises: Northwestern Electric Power Company, the Northwestern National Bank, and the Portland Telegram.

