

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

SEP 75



County Multnomah

Theme Glazed Terra Cotta

Name
 (Common) Oregon National Building
 (Historic) + Selling Building

Address 610 S.W. Alder
Portland

Present Owner Ralph D. and Bernice W. Schlesinger
 Address 01425 S.W. Mary Failing Drive
Portland 97219

Original Use Office/Retail

Date of Construction 1910

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.

enclose map Township N E W Section

+ PRIMARY

This brick and glazed terra-cotta structure was the first office building designed by the architectural firm of Doyle & Patterson. On a 70' x 125' lot at the S.W. corner of Alder and Sixth, it was originally flanked by two Richardsonian buildings, the Marquam Building to the south and the Oregonian Building across the street to the north. Developers were Ben Selling, C.S. and R.S. Moore, and Moses Blum. James Stewart & Co. were the general contractors. The terra cotta was supplied by Gladding, McBean & Co. The basic structure is a riveted steel frame with a concrete slab. A light court runs along the west wall.

Nau's Modern Prescription Drug Store was the initial ground-floor tenant. The original street-level windows were divided into two parts: a large plane of glass below and a somewhat smaller area of prism glass above. Small awning windows were set into the upper portion. Below the sidewalk windows were wrought-iron grilles. Columns and spandrels on the lower three floors were faced with cream-colored glazed terra cotta. The main body of the building is faced with buff-colored Normandy brick. Florentine style windows at the upper two stories are also executed in terra cotta, as is the roof cornice.

An unusually attractive cast-iron and glass canopy, decorated with light bulbs and with a large "S" on its face, hung over the main entrance. This canopy had by 1934 already been removed.

As originally built the lobby included marble wainscotting, ornamental plaster work, and a cast-iron stair with marble treads. The stair window was of leaded glass. Elevator doors were bronze and bronze fixtures with red and glass ball lights indicated the elevators' direction of travel.

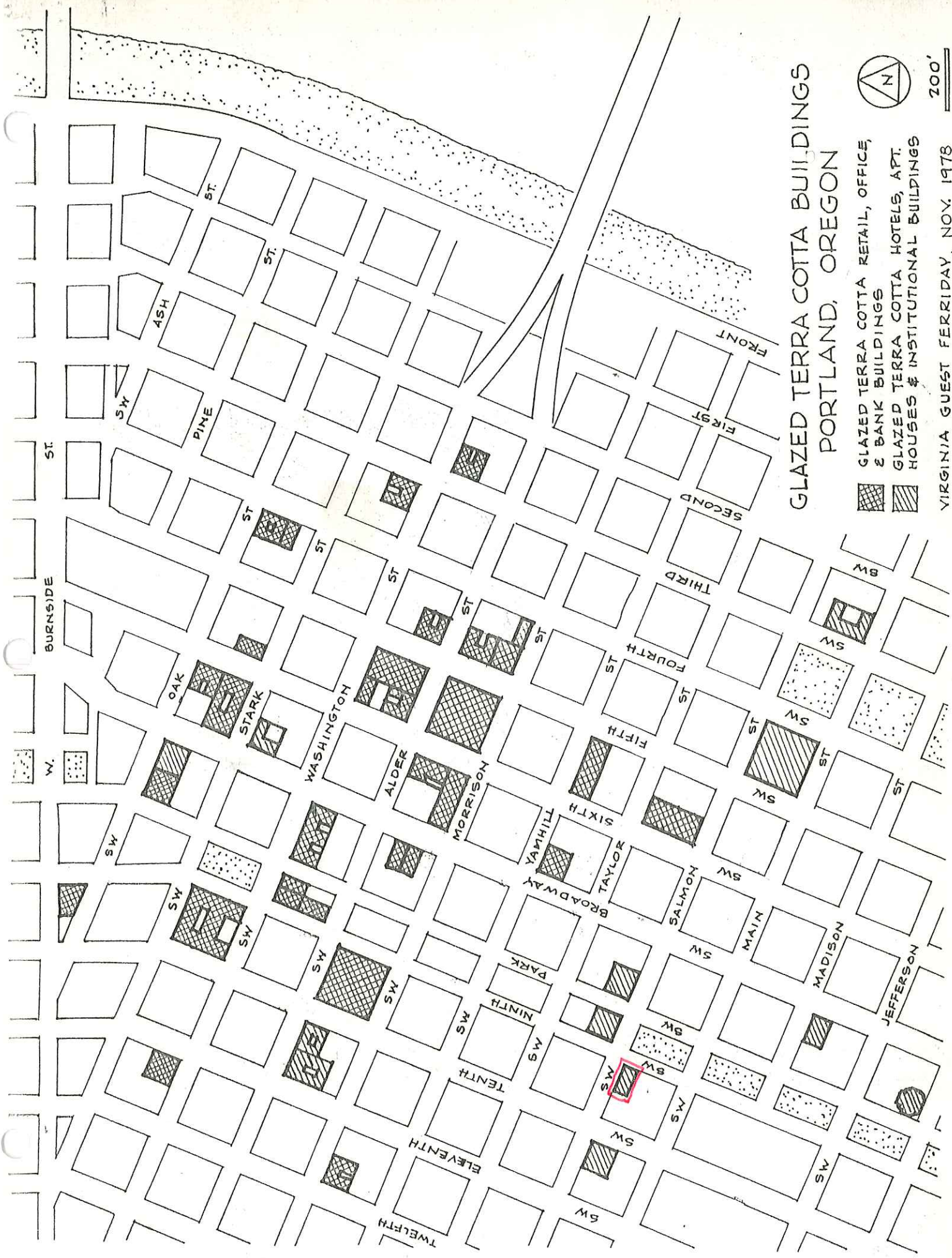
The building's corridors were lined with marble wainscotting. Partitions had glass relights and transoms. The Phillipine mahogany was supplied by Hanford & Sutthoff of Seattle.

In 1931 the entire retail base was re-done in the Art Deco mode for the Lerner store. A subsequent remodeling for the same tenant completely obliterated the original construction.



The entrance and lobby were first remodeled in 1937 under the direction of architect Harry Herzog. Herzog was also architect for the small 1934 shop front produced by Oregon Brass Works still in existence just to the left of the main entrance.

In 1958 automatic elevators were installed and the corridors and other public spaces renovated. The main entrance was remodeled again when the "modernization" was completed in 1966.

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, and engineer, joined the firm for brief periods in 1913 and 1920.



GLAZED TERRA COTTA BUILDINGS PORTLAND, OREGON

-  GLAZED TERRA COTTA RETAIL, OFFICE & BANK BUILDINGS
-  GLAZED TERRA COTTA HOTELS, APT. HOUSES & INSTITUTIONAL BUILDINGS



VIRGINIA GUEST FERRIDAY, NOV. 1978 200'