

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) Frederick & Nelson Building

(Historic) + Lipman, Wolfe & Co.

Address 521 S.W. Fifth
Portland

Present Owner Marshall Field & Co.

Address 25 East Washington St., Chicago, I 60690

Original Use Retail

Date of Construction 1912

ysical 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 predominently 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

orded by Virginia Guest Ferriday Date Feb.. 1980

Sources Consulted: See below.

ase enclose map Township ___ N E W Section ___

+ PRIMARY

Designed by Doyle & Patterson and built for the H.W. Corbett Estate and O'Shea Bros. to house Lipman, Wolfe & Co., this half-block, ten-story building is sheathed entirely in white glazed terra cotta. Unlike most buildings of the time it has no light courts. The basic structure is composed of a steel frame with concrete ribbed slabs formed around integral terra cotta tiles. Bays are 19'x25'. It was designed to carry an additional four stories, which were never added.
The facade is divided vertically into four sections by cornices above the second and eighth floors and at the roof, and by a belt course above the third floor. The classically-derived ornamental motifs are quite varied: lamb's tongue, bead and reel, medallions, egg and dart, torus moldings, dentils, antefixae, wreaths and meandering frets. During the 1930s a lions head fell from the roof cornice and, as a result, all cornices in the downtown area were examined by the City Inspectors and those found unsafe had to be either removed or repaired. The Lipman cornice was, fortunately, repaired and some of the lions replaced with fibre glass copies.
The upper, modified Chicago windows are of wood. The original window and door frames for the lower floors are of decorative cast iron. There were initially cast-iron and glass canopies at the main entrances. The original medium gray granite base is still in place.
The interior was decorated with ornamental plaster work. Some of the original cast-iron stair railings remain. Fred Baker recalls that the building was lit by carbon arc lamps with gas jets on top.
Gladding, McBean & Co. of Lincoln, California, supplied the terra cotta. Spokane Ornamental Ironworks was one of the other sub-contractors.

AlbertE. Doyle (1879-1928), whose firm was responsible for the design of 12 glazed terra-cotta buildings in downtown Portland, was apprenticed for 12 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.

Lipman, Wolfe & Co. was founded in 1850 by Soloman Lipman as a small merchandise store in Sacramento. Other branches were subsequently opened in Napa and Virginia City. Adolphe Wolfe (1848-1934), Lipman's nephew, left his native Germany in 1863 for California where he worked for his uncle. In 1880 Lipman sent Wolfe to Portland to establish a store. Wolfe purchased the small store of Clark, Henderson & Cook on First and Washington. Later his uncle joined him and they relocated in the Dekum Building where they remained until the 1912 move to Fifth. The store has been sold five times: to National Dept. Store, South American Platinum Co., Roberts Bros. Dept. Store, Dayton Hudson, and in 1979 to Frederick & Nelson.

Lipman, Wolfe & Co. - Portland

H.W. Corbett (1827-1903) moved to Portland from New York at age 24 to open the H.W. Corbett Co., a general merchandise store at Front and Oak. He was subsequently financially involved in the First National Bank, Oregon Iron Works, Willamette Iron Works City and Suburban Railway Co., Portland Gas Co. and the Portland Hotel Co. , to name a few. By 1870 he had become the largest non-corporate investor in downtown real estate. He was twice elected U.S. Senator, served as County Commissioner and was appointed to the Water Committee.

The O'Shea Brothers, John F. and James B., are listed in the 1911 City Directory as "capitalists" with offices in the Merchants Trust Building.

Sources Consulted:

Lockley, Fred, History of the Columbia River Valley, Vol. III, Chicago, 1928.

Vaughan, Thomas and Ferriday, Virginia Guest, Space, Style and Structure; Building in Northwest America. Portland, 1974.

Oregon Journal, Feb. 10, 1979, p.2.

Portland Oregonian, Jan. 1, 1910, Sec. 2, p.2.

Portland Oregonian, Jan. 1, 1912, Sec. 2, p.2, col.1.

Portland Oregonian, Jan. 1, 1913, Sec. 3, p.3.

MacColl, E. Kimbark, The Shapingof a City; Business and Politics in Portland, Oregon, 1885 to 1915. Portland, 1976.

The Pacific Coast Architect, Vol. 3, No. 6 (Sept. 1912).

Portland City Directory, 1911.

Plamendon Scrapbook, Vol.V (owned by Al Staehli).

Withey, Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased). Los Angeles, 1956.

Working Drawings, Portland Bureau of Buildings.

Photographs, Oregon Historical Society.

Job List, Photographs, Shop Drawings, Gladding, McBean & Co., Lincoln, California.

Interviews: Charles Rogers
Bill Roberts
Fred C. Baker


W. BURNSIDE ST.
SW ASH ST.
SW PINE ST.
SW OAK ST.
SW STARK ST.
SW WASHINGTON ST.
SW ALDER ST.
SW MORRISON ST.
SW YAMHILL ST.
SW TAYLOR ST.
SW SALMON ST.
SW MAIN ST.
SW MADISON ST.
SW JEFFERSON ST.
TWELFTH
ELEVENTH
TENTH
NINTH
PARK
BROADWAY
SIXTH
FIFTH
FOURTH
THIRD
SECOND
FIRST
FRONT
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
N
200'