

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) Henry Building  
 (Historic) + Henry Building  
 Address 309 S.W. Fourth  
Portland  
 Present Owner Oregon Investment Co., 326  
Henry Bldg., Portland, 97204  
 Address and Jane Nagel; Ruth Heldford,  
508 Henry Bldg., Portland, 97204  
 Original Use Retail/Office  
 Date of Construction 1909



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 West Ferriday Date Jan. 1980

Sources Consulted: See below

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Designed by Francis Berndt for C.K. Henry this six-story combination retail-office building is situated between the pre-1900 commercial area bordering the river and the post 1900 core. Soon after the building's construction its location must have already been perceived as disadvantageous as a promotional brochure published around 1915 took pains to argue that because the mass of the population lived on the East Side the Henry Building was in fact centrally situated. The slogan was "Located Right - Rented Right," the latter claim perhaps invalidating the former.

The 100' x 100' plan is roughly doughnut-shaped with three light courts, one in the center and one on each interior wall. The promotional brochure curiously claimed that all offices were outside offices, even though 18 out of the 31 on each floor faced into the light courts.

Essentially of mill construction the building has reinforced concrete ("Kahn") lintels and a 2" concrete base for tile floors in the corridors.

The exterior walls are faced with a glazed "Tiffany" brick, all white except for some blue diamondwork in the spandrels. There are four large glazed terra-cotta cartouche just under the sheet metal cornice, as well as a glazed terra-cotta cornice above the first floor. The present Moderne glazed terra-cotta main entrance replaced the original glazed terra-cotta entrance which incorporated decorative motifs similar to the cartouche above.

The Henry Building was one of two glazed terra-cotta buildings in Portland with a "glass base" - a common treatment for similar commercial structures in San Francisco. Exterior walls at the first floor were almost entirely of glass, leaving the masonry block floating above. On the Henry Building masonry extended to the ground only at the party walls and at the main entrance. A recessed corner entrance with free standing cast-iron column cased in copper served further to dematerialize the base.

The lobby originally included a decorative tile floor, wood paneled walls, and (according to the working drawings) bronze elevator doors and balustrade.

Hex tiles were used at the corner entrance and in many interior spaces such as the "... beautiful and sanitary Henry Building Barber Shop."

Office partitions were glazed with transoms above the doors. Picture rails were provided throughout. The original lighting fixtures were apparently left in place when suspended ceilings were installed.

E.B. White was the carpenter and general carpenter. :Hanford & Sutthoff of Seattle supplied Phillipine Hardwood (mahogany).

## Henry Building - Portland

Charles K. Henry (1856- ? ) was born in Liverpool, England, when his Irish parents were immigrating to California. The senior Henry mined for a short time and then moved to San Francisco where he operated a hotel until his death. Henry graduated from St. Mary's College in San Francisco in 1874 and then learned the cabinetmaker's trade. In 1878 he moved to Walla Walla and went into the furniture business. He subsequently became involved in real estate and in 1890 came to Portland to live. In 1903 he suffered heavy financial losses but paid off all his debts. In 1909 Henry formed a syndicat of Portland and Seattle men who purchases Ladd's Hazelfern Farm. Henry was a member of the Arlington Club, Chamber of Commerce and Commercial Club. Kimbark MacColl quotes an Oregonian article as saying that Henry in comparing Portland's buildings with Denver's liked Denver's enamelled brick buildings because they were "easier to keep clean."

### Sources Consulted

Gaston, Joseph, Portland, Oregon; Its History and Builders. Chicago, 1911.

The Henry Building (promotional pamphlet, no publishing date or place).

MacColl, E. Kimbark, The Shaping of A City; Business and Politics in Portland, Oregon, 1885 to 1915. Portland, 1976.

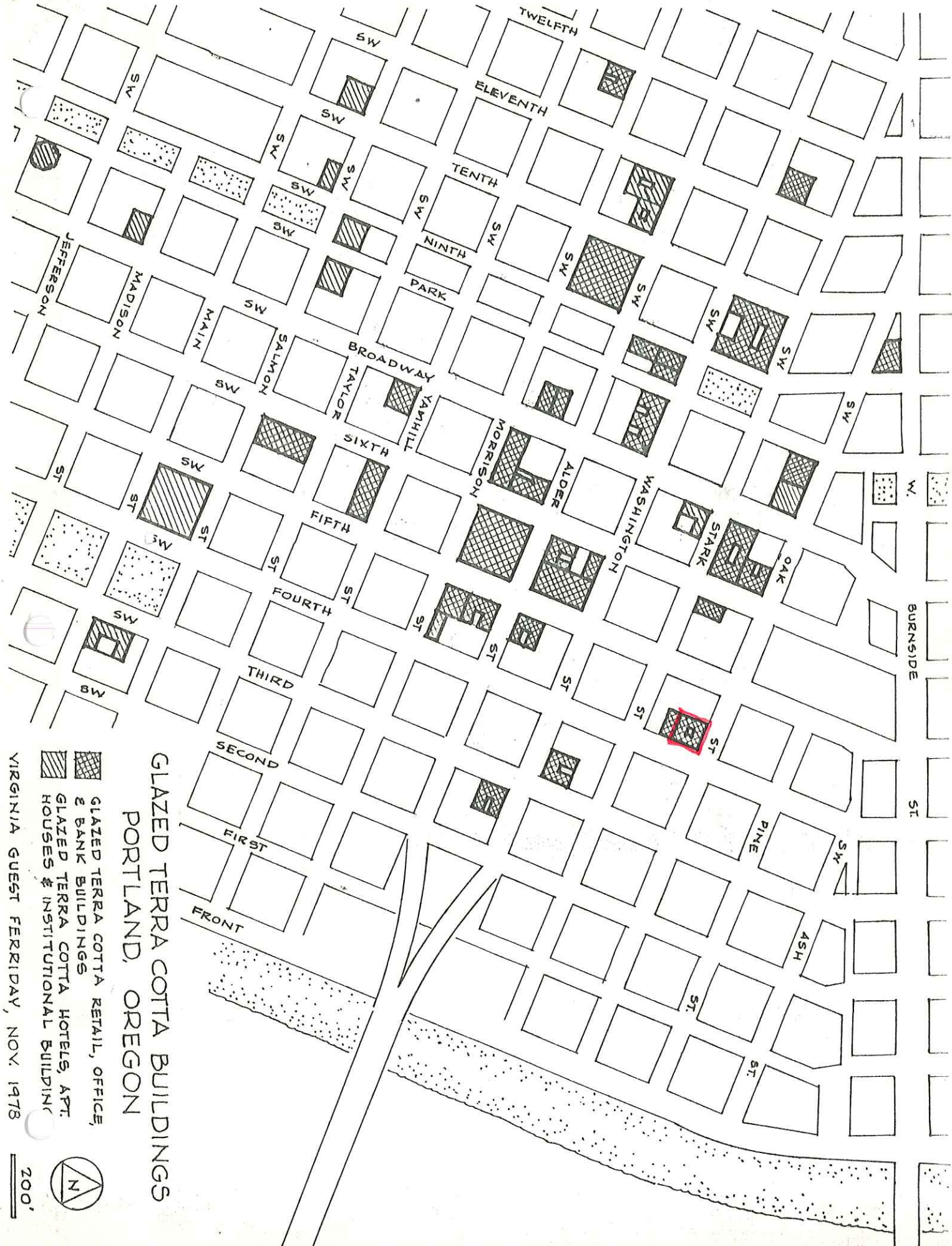
Portland Architectural Club Yearbook, 1909.

Splendid Survivors. Charles Hall Page & Associates, Inc. San Francisco, 1979.



Working Drawings, City of Portland Bureau of Buildings.

Photographs, Oregon Historical Society.

Interview: Mr. Naigel



GLAZED TERRA COTTA BUILDINGS  
 PORTLAND, OREGON

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

VIRGINIA GUEST FERRIDAY, NOV. 1978



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