

Historic
Resource
Inventory
CITY OF PORTLAND, OREGON

0-630-00621

621 S.W. Morrison Street

Portland, Block 178, Lots 4, 5, South halves of 3, 6
QUARTER SECTION MAP #: 3029.5
Downtown Community Association

ORIGINAL NAME: Northwestern Bank Building
OTHER NAMES: American Bank Building

ORIGINAL FUNCTION: Bank, Office

DATE BUILT: 1913

STYLE: Twentieth Century Classical

ARCHITECTURAL PLANS BY: Doyle, Patterson and Beach

ORIGINAL OWNER: Pittock, Henry L., Leadbetter, Frederick W.
TENANTS: Northwestern Bank

TAX ASSESSOR'S ACCOUNT #: R-66771-8270
ZONING: C1Z

Rank I

HISTORIC DISTRICT: Glazed Terra Cotta (potential)

SPECIAL FEATURES AND MATERIALS:

Three-part vertical composition with glazed terra cotta on lower and upper parts and buff-colored brick on center portion. Glazed terra cotta decoration includes pilasters in the Corinthian order, with eagles, a frieze with griffins and acanthus leaf scroll, and a decorative roof cornice. Upper



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windows are double-hung. Lower windows are set in decorative cast-iron frames. Granite plinth at the sidewalk. Steel frame with reinforced concrete floor construction.

SPECIAL F/M - ORIGINAL REMOVED:

Glazed terra cotta roof balustrade. Glazed terra cotta building entrance (with bronze lighting fixtures by Fred C. Baker). Building lobby and banking space decoration.

SPECIAL F/M - SIGNIFICANT ALTERATION:

Main building entrance on Morrison Street, and building lobby.
Buff-colored brick painted white, July, 1983.

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture, Commerce

Industry, in association with Frederick W. Leadbetter

Architecture: Glazed terra cotta was used as an exterior sheathing material and for individual decorative elements in buildings in Portland from about 1900 to 1930. Terra cotta blocks (which are similar in size and configuration to concrete blocks but have decorative glazed faces) were made by pressing fine clay into plaster molds. The clay blocks were then glazed, dried, and fired.

Because terra cotta was fireproof, lightweight and, compared to carved stone, inexpensive to produce, it was the favored material for the large commercial structures built during Portland's era of rapid growth. However, cast stone ornament (concrete), developed in the late 1920s, was even less expensive, and gradually gained popularity over terra cotta. Later, with the introduction of mass-produced aluminum and glass-wall systems, the use of decorative masonry ceased altogether.

Although most glazed terra cotta buildings in Portland are found in and around the downtown retail core, there are numerous schools and apartment buildings with glazed terra cotta decoration scattered throughout the metropolitan area. **Determined eligible for listing on the National Register.**

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

MacColl, E. Kimbark, *THE GROWTH OF A CITY: POWER AND POLITICS IN PORTLAND, OREGON 1915 - 1950* (Portland, 1979).

MacColl, E. Kimbark, *THE SHAPING OF A CITY: BUSINESS AND POLITICS IN PORTLAND, OREGON 1885 - 1915* (Portland, 1976).

Vaughan, Thomas and Ferriday, Virginia Guest, editors, *SPACE, STYLE AND STRUCTURE: BUILDING IN NORTHWEST AMERICA* (Portland, 1974).

Withey, Henry F. and Rathburn, Elsie, editors, *BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN ARCHITECTS (DECEASED)* (Los Angeles, 1956).

Cheney, Charles H., "The Work of Albert E. Doyle, Architect of Portland, Oregon," *THE ARCHITECT AND ENGINEER*, 58:1 (July, 1919).

OREGONIAN, Jan. 1, 1913, sec. 3, p. 3; Jan. 1, 1914, sec. 4, p. 13.

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Doyle, Patterson and Beach, Northwestern Bank Building working drawings, 1913, City of Portland Buildings Bureau Microfiche Collection.

Doyle, Patterson and Beach, Northwestern Bank Building working drawings (ink on linen), 1913, OHS Collection.

Doyle, A.E. and Associates, Pietro Belluschi, designer, Northwestern Bank Building alteration working drawings, 1936, City of Portland Buildings Bureau Microfiche Collection.

Northwestern Bank Building, exterior photograph, extruded bronze entrance by Oregon Brass Works, 1937, OHS Collection.

Baker, Fred C., recorded interview by Janet Charlton, George McMath, and Anne Murphy, 1979, Janet Charlton Collection.

Kendall, Harry, unrecorded interview by Claudia Ainsworth, 1979.

Brewster, Bill, unrecorded interview by Claudia Ainsworth, 1979.

Cooper, Herb, unrecorded interview by Claudia Ainsworth, 1979.

Gladding, McBean and Company, Northwestern Bank Building shop drawings and photographs, Gladding, McBean and Company Collection, Lincoln, California.

ORIGINAL BUILDING PERMIT #: 43001

MAJOR ALTERATIONS: 1936/235489/Pietro Belluschi

Present owners, as of May 1980: Building Syndicate Company

MAILING ADDRESS: c/o Smith-Ritchie, American Bank Building, Portland 97205

No Preservation Funding

Negative: 121-2, 121-3, 122-16

Score - Design/Construction: 18

Score - Historical:

Score - Rarity:

Score - Environment: 10

Score - Integrity: 9

Score - Intrinsic: 18

Score - Contextual: 19

Score - Total: 82

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Industry, in association with Frederick W. Leadbetter: Leadbetter was born in Clinton, Iowa in 1870 and educated in public schools and the State Normal School in San Jose, California. He came to Portland in 1894 and worked in the advertising department of the OREGONIAN. He married Henry Pittock's daughter and became Pittock's chief business advisor. He devoted much effort to developing the paper industry at Camas, Washington for Pittock, becoming the president of various lumber and paper companies. He was active in various charitable organizations and was an avid sportsman.

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