

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) Galleria
 (Historic) ⁺ Olds, Wortman & King Building
 Address 921 S.W. Morrison
Portland
 Present Owner Direct Imports Inc.
 Address 55 W. Burnside, Portland
 Original Use Dept. Store
 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 Feb. 1980

Sources Consulted: See Below

 Please enclose map Township N E
 W Section

+ Primary
 DOK's 3-27-80

The five-story Olds, Wortman & King Building was constructed in 1910 by the Trustee Company to house the Olds, Wortman & King department store. The block had previously been the site of Sylvester Pennoyer's home. The Trustee Company, which was founded by A.L. Hawley of New York and Judge W.D. Wood of Seattle and dealt in real estate in Spokane, Los Angeles, and Seattle, was in 1907 negotiating leases on both the Pittock and Pennoyer blocks. The Oregonian reported on Feb. 27, 1907, that both leases were closed; that the Trustee Company also held options to lease or purchase one half-block, six quarter-blocks, and two lots in the same area and that the Pennoyer block would not, as was rumored, be occupied by Olds, Wortman & King but that negotiations were being carried on with a "large Eastern company." On April 14, 1907 the Oregonian reported that, according to J. Whyte Evans of the Trustee Company, the "required amount to be raised by adjoining property owners" had not been subscribed and so it was not certain that Olds, Wortman & King would locate there. On August 16, 1908, however, Oregonian readers were assured by Hawley that excavation for a building to be occupied by O.W. & K. was to begin in Feb. of 1909, (which it apparently did). "Financial conditions in the East" had made waiting desirable. Construction, as well as architectural work, was to be done by the Trustee Company's own force as soon as other buildings were complete in Seattle and Los Angeles. Hawley was also quoted as saying that Portland property was cheaper than similarly situated property in Seattle, Spokane or Los Angeles. By early 1910 the structural concrete was in place and O.W.&K. moved in later that year.

The building's basic structure is steel frame (utilizing "I" beams) with ribbed concrete slabs. Bays are 21' square. A grand stairway to the second floor was located in the central light well. Smaller stairs on the east wall gave access to the upper floors. The light-well stair was eventually replaced by escalators and the light well itself enclosed. With the exception of the sheet-metal roof cornice the exterior is entirely faced with white glazed terra cotta. Ornament is flat and sparse: dentils at the cornice, a hint of capitals at the piers, raised panels in the spandrels, and some rustication. There were originally five-ball light standards around the edge of the roof and awnings were placed below the transoms above the large first-floor windows. The original entrance canopy remains on 10th street.

The interior was also spare. The original first floor maple flooring has been replaced by marble. The upper floors were originally covered with fir.

In 1916 O.W.&K. was said to be the only retail store in the Northwest occupying an entire city block.

Remodeled in 1976 for shops and offices the light court has been re-opened and enlarged.

Sylvester Pennoyer (1831-1902) was born in Groton, New York, and educated at Harvard. A successful lumberman, he was both mayor of Portland and governor of Oregon. Governor's Park, a narrow six-acre strip above S.W. Broadway Drive, was donated by him to the city.

Olds, Wortman & King Building - Portland

The Olds, Wortman & King department store originated as McLaren Bros. This firm was sold to John Wilson, who in 1878 sold the business to employee William Parker Olds. The name was then changed to Olds & King. In 1890 John Wortman bought part interest and in 1901 it was renamed Olds, Wortman & King. Successive locations of the store are illustrative of the move of the commercial area from the river: 1852 at Front and Taylor, 1868 to Front and Morrison, 1870 to Third and Morrison, 1878 to Third between Morrison and Alder, 1887 to First and Taylor, 1891 to Fifth and Washington, and 1910 to the 10th street location. In 1925, when the business was sold, it had 1200 employees.

William Parker Olds (b. 1857), a native of Washington County, was president after 1897.

John Wortman's brother, Hardy C., worked for McLaren Bros. Charles Willard King, a native Oregonian, was educated in Portland. He began carrying parcels for the store in 1878. In 1891 he was admitted to the firm. It is not clear from the resource material whether he is the original King, and, if not, whether they were related.

Sources Consulted:

Architectural Record, 1912.

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

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

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

Oregon Journal, April 26, 1877, p.3.

Photographs, Oregon Historical Society.

Plamandon Scrapbooks, Vol.V (owned by Alfred Staehli).

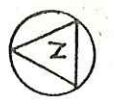
Portland Oregonian; Feb. 27, 1907, p.14; April 14, 1907;
June 23, 1907, p.32; July 23, 1907, p. 10;
Aug. 16, 1908, p.10; Jan. 1, 1909, p. 12; June 13, 1909, p.5;
July 1, 1909, p.12; Aug. 1, 1909; Jan 1. 1910, Sec. 1, p.2 and
sec. 4, p. 2; Jan 1, 1916.



Working Drawings, City of Portland Bureau of Buildings.

Interviews: Bill Naito



GLAZED TERRA COTTA BUILDINGS PORTLAND, OREGON



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

VIRGINIA GUEST FERRIPDAY, NOV. 1978