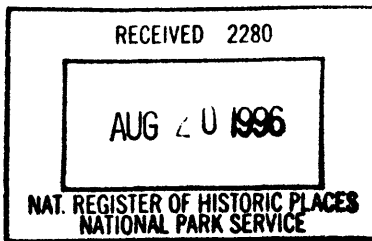


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Northwestern National Bank Building

other names/site number American Bank Building

2. Location

street & number 621 SW Morrison Street  N/A not for publication

city or town Portland  N/A vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Multnomah code 051 zip code 97205

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
[Signature] August 12, 1996  
Signature of certifying official/Title Deputy SHPO Date  
Oregon State Historic Preservation Office  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:  
 entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register.  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other, (explain:)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper [Signature] Date of Action 9.12.96

Northwestern National Bank Building  
Name of Property

Multnomah, OR  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

n/a

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

-0-

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE--Financial Institution  
--Business

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE--Financial Institution  
--Business

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURY AMERICAN  
MOVEMENTS - Commercial Style (Skyscraper)  
Beaux Arts Classicism

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete  
walls Terra Cotta  
Brick  
roof Synthetic--fiberglass  
other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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### SETTING

The Northwestern National Bank Building is located at 621 SW Morrison Street between 6th and Broadway at the heart of the west end of downtown Portland. Directly to the south is Pioneer Courthouse Square. To the southwest is Nordstrom's Department Store. To the west and rear are office buildings with ground floor retail; these include the Broadway, Pioneer, Selling, and Maegley-Tichner Buildings. To the east is Meier & Frank's Department Store. To the southeast is Pioneer Courthouse. Sixth Avenue is Portland's northbound transit mall; Broadway is a major southbound automobile artery. Light-rail runs westbound along Morrison.

### EXTERIOR

The Northwestern National Bank Building is a steel frame structure with ribbed concrete floor slabs. It is 216 feet tall, with 15 stories inc. mezzanine. As constructed, the basement, first floor and mezzanine were for the joint operations of Portland Trust and Savings and the Northwestern National Bank. The building runs 200 feet along Morrison Street between Sixth Avenue and Broadway and is 60 feet deep.

To understand this unusual, long narrow site, it is necessary to consider the earlier history of the block. The entire block had previously belonged to Judge Philip A. Marquam, who had built his own house, and several others for rental on the block. When the block to the south was cleared for construction of the Portland Hotel, Marquam moved the public school building from that block to the northeast corner of his block, now the site of the 60 foot by 125 foot Selling Building. When Marquam built his theater and office building, the Marquam Grand Theater and Marquam Building, the old school restricted the office building width, and dictate the mid-block location of the theater north of the office building. The theater site needed depth, and was made 75 feet wide by 140 feet deep, with a 15-foot wide access strip to both Sixth and Seventh (now Broadway) Streets. This left a 65 foot by 125 foot site at the northwest corner of the block and a 60 foot by 200 foot site for the new Marquam Building. When the block was acquired by Pittock and Leadbetter, the corner properties were sold and the Selling Building and Maegley-Tichner Building constructed, both in 1910. When the Marquam Building was demolished, Pittock and Leadbetter had only a 60 foot wide parcel. They also had control of the air rights over the 15-foot theater entrance which ran east to west and could incorporate the entry into their plans.

In its exterior details, the building is in the Classical style. In the organization of its

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architectural elements, it follows the traditions for tall buildings, divided vertically into a base, shaft and capital, like the classical columns of Greek and Roman architecture.

The base consists of a giant order of flattened pilasters with Corinthian capitals, surmounted by a narrow entablature and cornice, all of off-white terra cotta. The long side of the building (Morrison Street) has eleven bays, each approximately 18 feet wide. The spaces between the pilasters are filled with triple windows in cast-iron frames with elaborate cast-iron spandrels. The cast-iron was originally painted a greyish-green, simulating the appearance of oxidized bronze. The ground floor, mezzanine and second floor are incorporated in the base. The pilasters are supported on California granite bases, which vary in height from a foot at Broadway to six feet at Sixth Avenue, reflecting the elevation change of the land.

The east (Fifth Avenue) and west (Sixth Avenue) end of the building are divided into three 20-foot bays. On the east facade, where the entrance to the bank is located, engaged columns, instead of pilasters, flank the bank entrance. A short flight of stairs leads to the bank through a pedimented opening, which was said to have been a replica of the entrance to the Knickerbocker Trust Building in New York City.

Above the entablature and cornice, the third floor is contained within a band of terra cotta ornament, topped by a terra cotta belt-course. Windows are paired, double-hung wood sash, a pair to each bay and separated by an elaborately sculpted terra cotta cartouche.

The shaft of the building includes floors four through twelve. It is sheathed with smooth-faced buff brick (painted white in 1983). Windows are paired, double-hung wood sash, two to each bay. They are set in the brick facing simply, without an enframingent, presenting a large smooth, curtain wall-like surface, surprisingly modern for its date.

Above the shaft, floors thirteen and fourteen are faced with terra cotta. At the top of the brick facing are a belt-course; two story Classically detailed pilasters; and an elaborate dentilled cornice; above which there was originally a terra cotta balustrade. At these floors, tripartite Chicago windows with double hung wood sash are set within a painted cast-iron enframingent, similar to that at the base of the building. A large, stuccoed masonry elevator penthouse extends two stories above the roof.

Decorative motifs in terra cotta include urns, egg-and-dart, an acanthus scroll terminated by griffins, and Corinthian column capitals with eagles.

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This handsome building, which when built faced the old Portland Hotel, now faces the open block of Pioneer Courthouse Square, allowing it to be seen in straight elevation, which was not originally possible.

### INTERIOR

The plan of the new office building was revolutionary for Portland, since its narrow dimension allowed it to be designed without deep light courts often found in office buildings previously constructed in Portland. The building had only shallow light courts at the rear (north), and the five elevators were laid out in a row the long direction of the building. This minimized the interruption of rental space on the office rental floors. This floor plan has kept the building competitive with newer office buildings, even today.

One of the major interior features was the large banking room, which was originally two stories high. Four immense steel girders, 60 feet in length, stretched from the Morrison Street side to the rear of the building and had a clearance of about 23 feet above the floor. At the second floor, then, the deep girders received loads from the twelve stories of office space above, with angled struts assisting in the transfer of column loads.

The interior of the office floors, now completely altered, were originally typical of their time. The original light fixtures were provided by Fred C. Baker. According to the working drawings, the second floor corridor was finished with cork tile and the upper floor corridors with terrazzo. Office spaces had cement finished floors. Corridor doors and frames were of mahogany, with glazed transoms and relites for borrowed light and ventilation. Each office had a chair rail and picture molding, also of mahogany. Stairways are still the original steel stairs with marble treads and landings.

### MAJOR ALTERATIONS

Save for storefront changes, the exterior of the building remains essentially as built. The storefront modifications, completed over the life the building, generally are sympathetic. The interior spatial arrangement and central corridors also are essentially as built, although office interiors have been upgraded, renovated and modernized over the life of the building. In the course of the years, following tenant improvements, the entire building has been air conditioned, suspended ceilings installed throughout, and an automatic fire sprinkler system installed. All corridor doors have been

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replaced with flush panel rated doors and transoms and relites removed and covered up. Major modifications include:

- 1928            The demolition of the Baker Hotel made possible the closing of the 15-foot alley at the rear of the theater. A two-story addition, matching the exterior detail of the office building, was constructed the full length of the block, extending the size of the ground floor and mezzanine. In that same year, the 7th Avenue (Broadway) storefront, interior and mezzanine was remodeled by Charles McCall, AIA for tenant (Great Northern Railroad--City Ticket Office)
- 1936            The main building entrance and lobby were remodeled under the direction of Doyle's successor firm, Doyle & Associates, with Pietro Belluschi as designer. Lobby walls are dark, polished granite; floors are dark terrazzo; and the entrance of bronze and glass, manufactured by Oregon Brass Works. Replacement light fixtures were provided by Fred C. Baker. Installation of upgraded elevators by Otis Elevator Company. At this time, the metal marquee at the building's entrance was removed, and a simple, painted sheet metal, cantilevered canopy installed in its place.
- 1947            The storefront at 625 Morrison and interior were altered by Glenn Stanton for tenant (Tommy Luke Flowers)
- 1953            A steel platform was constructed on top of the elevator penthouse to receive an air-raid siren, which was tested daily at noon during the Cold War.
- 1954            The Broadway storefront, interior and mezzanine were altered by Frederick Wescott, AIA for tenant (Martel's Women's Clothing).
- 1958            The storefront at 619 Morrison and interior were altered by L. S. Harlan for tenant (United Air Lines).
- 1962            Addition of a microwave tower
- 1970            Elevators converted to automatic, one of the last conversions in a major Portland office building.

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- 1972           The storefront at 635 Morrison was altered by Reimers & Jolivetti for Jack Ewing Jewelers.
- 1979           The mezzanine floor was extended over the bank space, lowering the ceiling of the bank.
- 1984           Entrance (621 SW Morrison) modifications with installation of the present marquee which attempts to replicate the original.
- 1994           The storefront at 635 Morrison and interior were altered by NBBJ for tenant (Garden Botanica)

Northwestern National Bank Building  
Name of Property

Multnomah, OR  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1913

**Significant Dates**

1913

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Doyle & Patterson

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Oregon Historical Society



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National Park Service**

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**NORTHWESTERN NATIONAL BANK BUILDING (1913)  
(AMERICAN BANK BUILDING)**

621 SW Morrison Street  
Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon

**COMMENTS OF THE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**

The 15-story steel-frame Northwestern National Bank Building was erected in Portland's central business district in 1913 from plans by Doyle and Patterson and has a footprint of 60 x 200 feet. It presents its major frontage along SW Morrison Street, between Sixth and Broadway. Street elevations are faced with brick and terra cotta. Advertisements of the leasing agent and newspaper progress reports counted the building's height at 15 stories to include the mezzanine.

This documentation shows that the building project originated in the collapse of the Marquam Building which stood on this site at the corner of Sixth and Morrison. When the Marquam Building collapsed in 1912 as it was being renovated for Henry Pittock, the investor was obliged to construct a new office building to replace the failed structure.

The Northwestern National Bank Building is among the several prominent commercial properties defining the public open space reclaimed as Pioneer Courthouse Square. The effect of the full-block elevation facing south onto the square is imposing. The compressed verticality of the narrow east and west end elevations is the result of a restricted lot size. The clean lines of an unadorned nine-story building shaft are an effective foil to articulated transitional and terminal stories and the peripteral, two-story retail base in which colossal columns and pilasters of the Corinthian order support a full Classical entablature with decorated frieze.

The Northwestern National Bank Building is one of a number of outstanding examples of early 20th century fireproof tall buildings detailed in the tradition of the American Renaissance, or Beaux Arts Classicism, by A. E. Doyle's leading Portland firm. Each has particular distinctions in terms of composition and fine workmanship and is equally qualified for listing in the National Register under Criterion C.

In the skyscraper genre, patterns of fenestration have a significant part in the scheme. Here, central window bays contain paired openings in the shaft and are bracketed by outer bays with single openings while windows in the superimposing two stories between string course and

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modillioned cornice are Chicago School windows having the characteristic three-part division as wide central opening with narrower side lights.

The building's interior is distinctive. The narrow dimension obviated the need for deep light courts, although there are shallow courts at the back wall. The building's five elevators were aligned as a group to minimize intrusion into rentable space. The large, two-story banking room introduced a scheme which the architect would carry out in the the U. S. National Bank project, an example of High Beaux Arts Classicism of 1917. The banking room was altered in 1979 when the mezzanine was extended over it, thus lowering its ceiling. The original interiors of the office floors, typical of the period, have been completely altered by the installation of sprinklering and air conditioning systems, the suspension of ceilings, and replacement of corridor finish work. Stairways are intact with original steel stairs and marble treads and landings. Typical original two-story storefronts consisted of plate glass in cast-iron frames with elaborate cast-iron spandrels. Over the years, there have been modifications to some of the storefronts. Between central engaged columns on the east end elevation, the original pedimented bank entrance framement is intact. The shaft of the building, originally presenting a taut surface of buff colored brick, was painted white in 1983.

Upon the building's opening, the basement, first floor and mezzanine were used for the joint operations of the Northwestern National Bank and Portland Trust and Savings. These were separate corporations having common management. Henry Pittock, publisher of *The Oregonian*, was president of both entities. Northwestern National Bank veered into mismanagement and closed in 1927. The American Bank, whose title plate is remains on the building, grew out of these developments in 1929. Further into the Depression, in 1933, the bank was sold to the First National Bank, which in turn was reorganized in 1981 as First Interstate Bank, the current occupant.

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### SETTING - Block 178

The Northwestern Bank Building runs the length of the north side of Morrison between 6th Avenue and Broadway. Today, it sits in the center of downtown Portland. Across the street to the south is Portland's "living room," Pioneer Courthouse Square. To the southeast is 1869 Pioneer Courthouse, with Pioneer Place beyond. Across the street to the east is Meier & Frank's downtown store (the closest portion being an addition built in 1932). At the rear (to the north) is Doyle's 1910 Selling Building. To the southwest is Nordstrom's Department Store. Sixth Avenue is the northbound transit mall (Fifth Avenue is the southbound) and Tri-met's light rail MAX lines run along Morrison.

The setting, however, was considerably different in the mid-19th century.

In 1862, William W. Chapman gave what is now block 178 to Philip A. Marquam to settle a \$500 bill for legal service. At the time, the parcel was isolated, west of the center city. The land contained a heavy stand of trees. After taking possession, Marquam ran a wood yard from the block, converting trees 4 and 5 feet in diameter into cord wood for sale to nearby residents. Marquam also built a 1½-story Carpenter Gothic house in the center of the western half of the block. Marquam later built several frame houses on the block which he rented out. When Henry Villard purchased the block to the south for the Portland Hotel (presently the site of Pioneer Courthouse Square), Marquam took the school building which had sat on that parcel and moved it to the northeastern portion of block 178 where the Selling Building is now located. He used it for an apartment house and storage.

In 1889, noting that Portland did not have a decent opera house, Marquam decided to build one on his block. The result was the Marquam Building and Theater, completed in 1890. Noted as Portland's first skyscraper, the building was 60 feet by 200 feet, eight stories high with towers ten stories high. The top of the towers were 160 feet above street level. The theater, which was entered from Morrison Street, was 70 feet by 130 feet, five stories high, with seating for 1600 people.

### HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

"The finest of its type ever constructed in Portland"

- E. Kimbark MacColl

"Probably no other building so well typifies the progress of Portland"

- The Oregonian, 1913

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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The origins of the Northwestern National Bank lay with the collapse of Portland's first skyscraper. Workman had been remodeling one of the storefronts to the Marquam Building and the poor quality brick gave way. At 4:00 a.m. on November 23, 1912, the east side of the unreinforced masonry building collapsed.

The building had been financed by Northwestern Fidelity Corporation, a financial enterprise of Henry L. Pittock and his son-in-law Frederick W. Leadbetter. At first, they intended to reconstruct the building. Upon further inspection, however, the standing portion of the Marquam was deemed structurally unsound. Pittock and Leadbetter took the opportunity to construct a new office building with space for a bank on the first floor. It would be "a bank building without peer."

In a little more than a year, the site was cleared and the building designed, erected and occupied. Five weeks after collapse, on December 31st, 1912--before the building's plans were complete--the construction contract was let to Dinwiddie Construction. C. J. Cook & Company of Portland cleared the site in two months, removing more than 4,000 cubic yards of debris by February 1st. Site prep and foundation work began immediately. Steel frame erection began in early June and was complete by the end of July. The building was closed in by mid-September and ready for occupancy by New Years' Day, 1914.

According to the 1919 Architectural Record, bank designs should convey "stability, dignity and security." An architectural competition for the Second Bank of the United States in Philadelphia in 1818 was won by William Strickland; he patterned his design after the Parthenon. From that time forth, architects relied on the tenets of classical architecture in the design of banks.

From 1870 to 1920, the number of banks increased tenfold from 3,000 to 30,000. During this period, of course, the skyscraper was introduced. Relying on a traditional form of base, shaft and capital, the concept allowed the main banking premises on the first floor to still be clothed in classical garb.

Such was the pattern for the Northwestern National Bank.

Pittock and Leadbetter spared no expense in developing the building. At fifteen stories including mezzanine, it was to be the tallest building in Portland (and would remain so for over a decade). "Every known device to enhance the convenience and safety of tenants is [sic] being

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incorporated.” Chilled drinking water would be circulated through each floor , an innovation unheard of before on the Pacific Coast. Five elevators were installed, the most modern available. The banking rooms were finished in Italian marble and mahogany. Colorado Yule marble was used for hallway wainscoting with terrazzo floors on the upper stories. In total, the Northwestern Bank Building used twelve carloads of marble, at a total cost of \$75,000, selected and installed by Mission Marble Works of Portland. The building even featured a penthouse observatory 216 feet above street level.

When the bills were paid, the Northwestern Bank Building cost \$900,000 to build and another \$650,000 to equip and occupy it. The interior holds 140,000 sf. divided originally into 490 offices. In total, the building was estimated to house approximately 1,000 people.

The building was paid for by the Northwestern Fidelity Corporation, another Pittock-Leadbetter controlled financial institution. In 1924, ownership was transferred to the bank, having identical directors and management. In 1927, as part of the liquidation of Northwestern National, the building was sold to a local corporation, Building Syndicate Incorporate. Headed by George Black, Building Syndicate was formed specifically with the intent of keeping ownership local. The building sold for \$2.4 million.

In 1983, William E. Roberts, Richard H. Roberts and Ralph D. Schlesinger, principals of the American Bank Building Corporation, purchased the tower for slightly more than \$6 million from Building Syndicate.

### **ALBERT E. DOYLE - ARCHITECT**

Born in California in 1877, Doyle arrived with his family in Portland five years later. Educated in the city's public schools, he learned a great deal about construction from his father who was a carpenter and building contractor. When he was 14, Albert went to work as an apprentice in the architectural firm of Whidden & Lewis. At the time (1891), William Whidden and Ion Lewis had been partners for only three years but were responsible for the design of many of the city's fine classical buildings. While Doyle was with them, the firm produced structures such as the Public Library (1891), the Packer-Scott Warehouse (1891-92) and Portland City Hall (1894-95). After ten years with the firm, Doyle attended the College of Architecture at Columbia University for approximately two years. His interlude in New York City also entailed employment in the office of architect Henry Bacon, the designer of the Lincoln Memorial. After Columbia, Doyle spent

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time at the American School of Architecture in Athens where he reflected upon the ruins of classical Greece and Rome. He then returned to the office of Whidden & Lewis in 1906 to watch the rise of one of Portland's first skyscraper, the Wells Fargo Building (which is now a part of U.S. National Bank).

Doyle opened his own office in 1907 and within a year took on as his partner W.B. Patterson, a construction supervisor. It was then that Doyle received his first major commission: a ten-story addition to the Meier & Frank department store. Originally, he designed the addition to match the old building but the owner of the store talked Doyle into changing the design to match the white terra cotta commercial palaces found in Chicago. Identical Doyle-designed additions were built in 1915 and in the early 1930s to complete the present block. This building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

For the next ten years, Doyle's office had a dominant influence over Portland's downtown skyline. During this time, he produced buildings such as the Selling Building, 1910; the Oregon Hotel (Benson Hotel), 1911; the Central Public Library, 1913; the Northwestern National Bank (American Bank) Building, 1913; the Morgan Building, 1913; Pittock Block, 1914; and U.S. National Bank, 1917 and 1925.

Doyle's office went through a number of corporate name changes during this period, first to include Patterson and then to include engineer James G. Beach. Beach, a son-in-law to Simon Benson, had become a partner at the time the Oregon Hotel project began. By 1915, both Patterson and Beach had both left the office and Doyle began operating under his own name.

Of Doyle's designs during this early period, the Benson drinking fountain has been one of the most influential. Northwest Magazine states that "a Benson fountain is an epitome in miniature of Doyle's design talent: wholly practical, timeless in its traditional motif, and a balanced, tasteful work of art." These bronze fountains, first designed in 1913, are still being cast today for the city for new locations.

On his own, Doyle's designs continued to influence Portland's skyline. Buildings such as the Broadway Theater, Portland's grandest of the time; the Terminal Sales Building, 1926; the Bank of California Building, 1926, and the Public Service Building, 1927 are among these. Outside of Portland's center city Doyle designed the shingled beach cottages of "Lakecliff," which is west of Hood River, and some of the Tudor-style buildings on the campus of Reed College.

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Doyle died in 1928 just as the long building boom was about to end, but not before he had made a permanent mark on Portland architecture. As a result of his apprenticeship with Whidden & Lewis, classroom training at Columbia, and travel in Europe, Doyle had become a master at designing buildings in the classical architectural styles. His love of traditional design, however, did not include traditional building materials; for instance, the Benson Hotel, American Bank Building, and Morgan Building all featured the popular new building material of the time, glazed terra-cotta. Most of Doyle's buildings have survived to this day and it is fair to say that no one else has had such a lasting or widespread effect on Portland's city scape.

### **HISTORY OF TERRA COTTA IN PORTLAND BUILDINGS**

There are different types and uses of glazed terra cotta. Portland office buildings generally used architectural terra cotta. This type is a design of hollow blocks of baked clay hand-pressed into molds and used to decorate the exteriors of buildings. Most of the terra cotta buildings are found in the downtown core of the city, but there are also residential and institutional examples outside the city center. These buildings were constructed in Portland from 1905 to 1930 and the Northwestern National Bank Building is a strong example.

Although dating back centuries, architectural terra cotta became popular as an overall facing in the 1890's, beginning in Chicago. Use of terra cotta in Portland commercial buildings started around the same time. The period between 1907 and 1920 was the main period when large commercial type in downtown Portland were finished in this manner. The popularity resulted from the popularity of steel framed skyscrapers; these large commercial structures needed a protective, yet lightweight and economical facing. Terra cotta answered these needs. Molded and glazed, it also gave the architect an economical, creative source for decorative exterior treatments.

Architectural terra cotta is of hard-baked, fine-grained clay. It is similar to brick, but made of a finer grade of clay and fired at a higher temperature. Generally, it is manufactured in hollow blocks, 4 inches deep with faces typically 12 x 18 inches.

Given the decorative nature of the facing, terra cotta ornamentation begins with a set of shop drawings translated from the architect's drawings. These drawings outline each individual piece of terra cotta, with details including how it is to be secured. From the drawings, sculptors employed by the terra cotta firms make plaster and clay models; the plaster for the main body and the clay

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for the detail. In interpreting the relatively simple shop drawings, the model makers supply their own sense of proportion, scale and texture to any ornamentation. In addition to the detailing required, terra cotta firms must also plan for shrinkage when the clay is baked; shrinkage varies according to the clay used but could be as much as 10%. From the models, the manufacturers create plaster molds. From there, grog (ground-up, previously burnt clay) is added to the clay to control plasticity and firing behavior. The mixture is wetted, blended, aged up to 24 hours and then hand-pressed into the molds. Carefully pressed, the clay is left in the mold for several hours. After this, the presser removes the clay and cleans off any imperfections. The terra cotta is then placed on a drying rack for about 24 hours. The piece is then glazed accordingly and fired. To allow the piece to warm and cool gradually, firing generally stretches from days to a week. Subsequently, the pieces are checked for size in the fitting room and shipped.

The dominant firm manufacturing handmade architectural terra cotta for the Portland market was Gladding, McBean and Co. of San Francisco. They produced the terra cotta for the Northwestern Bank Building. In the 1880's, Charles Gladding, visiting from Chicago, convinced his Midwestern partners to establish a plant in Lincoln, California after sending them samples of the clay. Initially, Gladding, McBean and Co. manufactured sewer pipe, but almost immediately began producing architectural terra cotta for buildings in Portland and elsewhere on the west coast. Other terra cotta firms active in Portland during the period were N. Clark & Son and Washington Brick, Lime & Sewer Pipe Company.

Masons installed the terra cotta from scaffolding while working from drawings. They attached the terra cotta to the building's skeleton using metal anchors. Generally, anchors were made of wrought iron before 1930. Preservation of such terra cotta is often difficult as water seeps in and rusts the anchors; the weathering eventually explodes the terra cotta. Once in place, the masons saturate the terra cotta with water, rake out the 1/4 inch joints about 1/2 inch, and point.

### **NORTHWEST NATIONAL BANK/PORTLAND TRUST AND SAVINGS**

The first floor of the Northwestern National Bank Building was occupied jointly by Northwestern National Bank and the Portland Trust and Savings. Although corporately distinct, the two banks had the same management and the same directors. As organized, Northwestern National would focus on commercial banking activity, while the Portland Trust would concentrate on savings and trust activities.



## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Portland Trust was one of Portland's oldest financial institutions, organized on May 10, 1887. Up to 1913, despite substantial growth, Portland Trust had had six homes. Most recently, it had been located in its own building at Third and Oak.

Northwestern National Bank first opened in January of 1913. A child of Portland Trust and Savings, Northwestern occupied space in Portland Trust's offices at Third and Oak until the Northwestern Bank Building was ready. It was the city's sixth national bank and its 22nd banking institution overall. Once organized, it took over the commercial accounts of Portland Trust, with the latter focusing on trust and savings activities.

Henry Pittock served as President of both enterprises with son-in-law Frederick W. Leadbetter as Vice President. They hired Emery Olmstead to run both banks, beginning with the Portland Trust Company in 1910. Olmstead was an aggressive banker and by the mid-1920s, Northwestern was Portland's third largest bank, although its business performance was not notable. The bank paid no dividends during the 1920s, its loans were of doubtful quality, and one bank officer could not resist using fraudulent methods. By 1924, Pittock trustees attempted to remove Olmstead, but with only 43% control, they were outmaneuvered by the Bank President. In early 1927, a bank examiner concluded that Northwestern National was a plundered and sinking ship. With its reputation failing, the bank opened its doors on March 28, 1927 to long lines of anxious depositors. At the normal closing hour of 3:00, so many people had packed into the lobby that the bank literally could not close its doors. By the end of the day at 6:00, worried depositors had withdrawn over \$2 million.

Clearly, the next step was closure. Northwestern's president, O. L. Price, requested a meeting of the Portland Clearing House Association. The result of the meeting was that U.S. National officials would examine and evaluate Northwestern's condition. The result of that examination was the recommendation that Northwestern sell its assets.

### **AMERICAN NATIONAL BANK**

As the Northwestern National Bank Building grew from the ruins of the Marquam Building, so too did the American National Bank grow from the ruins of the Northwestern National Bank. During the liquidation of Northwestern's assets, Robert F. Smith, President of Portland's Lumberman's Trust Company, formed a syndicate to purchase the building and land for \$2.7 million. In the spring of 1927, Smith moved his Lumberman's Trust into the southeast corner of

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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the building and then arranged for the organization of a new bank, American Exchange Bank. American Exchange then signed a twenty-year lease for \$48,000 annually. In March 1929, American Exchange merged with the Portland National Bank to form the American National Bank, which in turn was bought out by the Pacific Bancorporation (subsequently controlled by Julius Meier) but remained a separate entity.

By 1932, American National Bank--under the control of then Governor Julius Meier--bought out Columbia National Bank and became the fourth largest bank in the city. Clearly, Meier harbored great expectations for this financial institution located just across the street from his store. But American National found itself in a straightjacket of insufficient liquid assets and its ratio of loans, many of which had turned sour in the depression, was too high for its level of deposits. By June 1933, under the direction of Aaron Frank, American National Bank was sold to First National (First Interstate since 1981).

Northwestern Bank Building  
Name of Property

Multnomah, OR  
County and State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre (0.34 acres) Portland, Oregon-Washington 1:24000

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	10	525160	5040490
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2			

3			
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4			

See continuation sheet

#### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

#### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title John M. Tess, President

organization Heritage Investment Corporation date November 15, 1995

street & number 123 NW 2nd Ave., Suite 200 telephone (503) 228-0272

city or town Portland state OR zip code 97209

#### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

#### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name American Bank Building Corp. % Morgan Park, Inc.

street & number 720 SW Washington St, #330 telephone (503) 226-7025

city or town Portland state OR zip code 97205

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Oregon Historical Society, Vertical Files.

The Oregonian

The Oregon Journal

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### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Northwestern Bank Building is located on Lots 4 and 5 , and the south 25 ft. of lots 3 and 6 of Block 178, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon.

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary is the legally recorded boundary lines for the building for which National Register status is being requested.

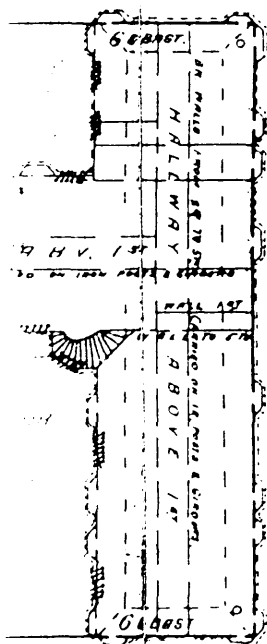
22

(48)

CISTERN  
CAP. 8000 GALLS.

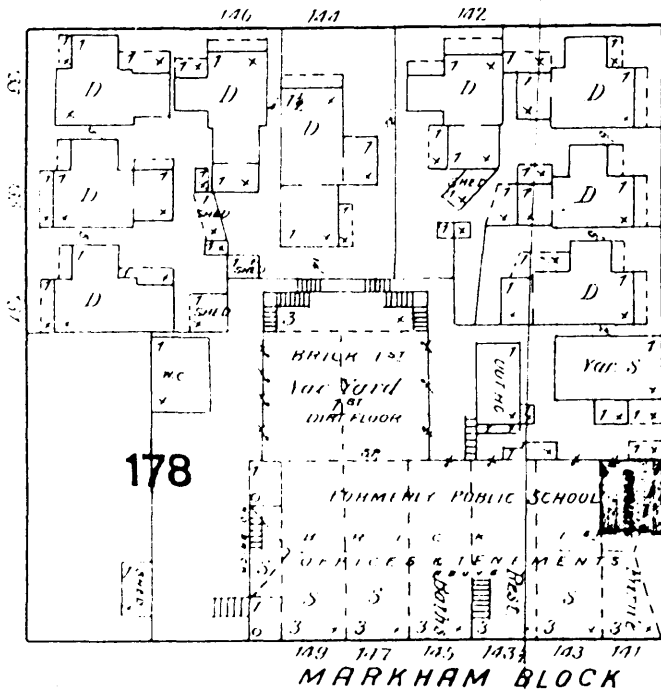
SEVENTH

(42)



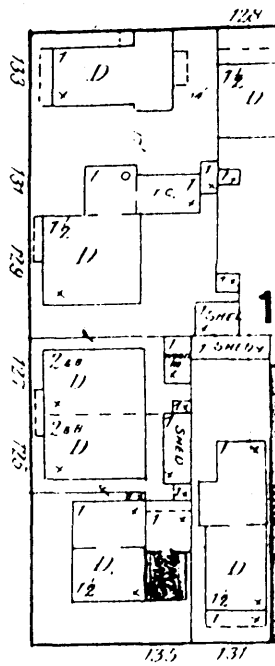
60'

STREET



60'

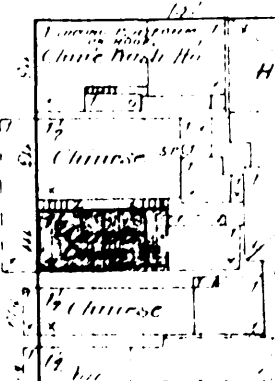
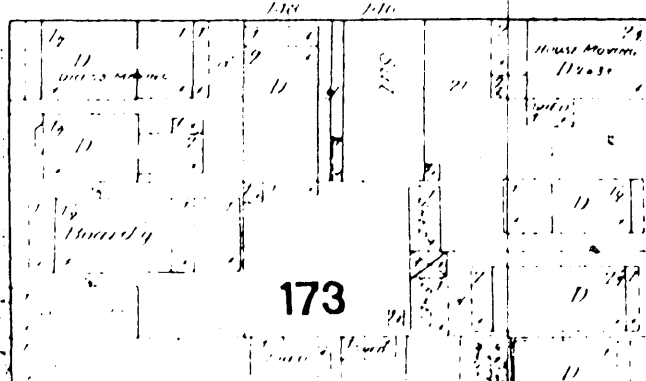
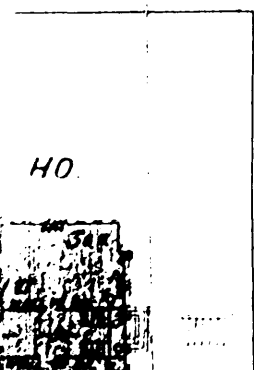
STREET



110'

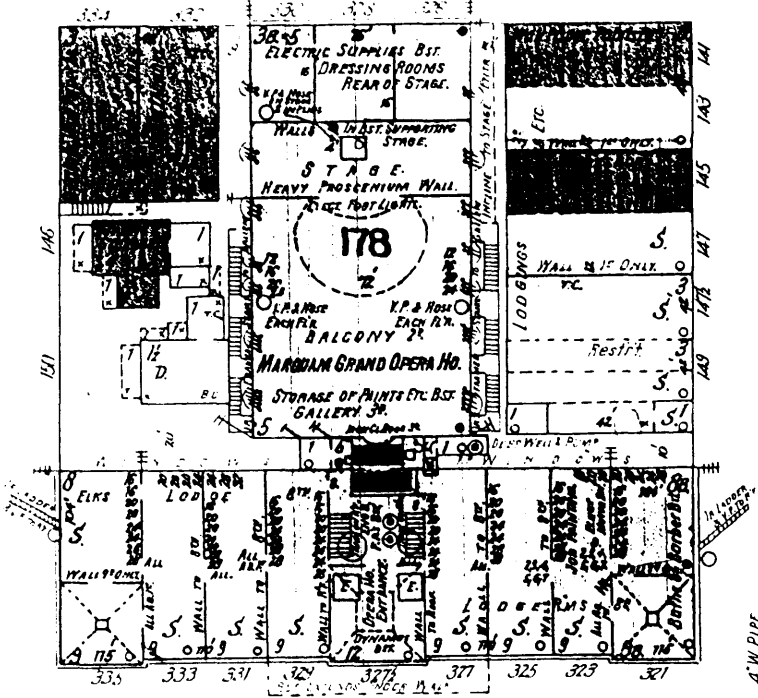
SIXTH

32'



60 ft wide

42



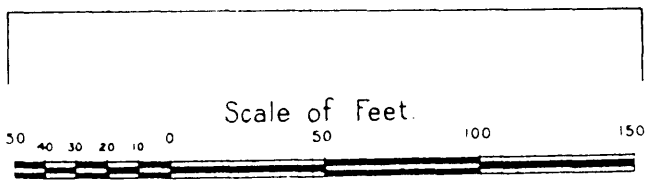
THE MARQUAM ST.

Architects: [illegible] Engineers: [illegible]

80' S.W. PIPE

49

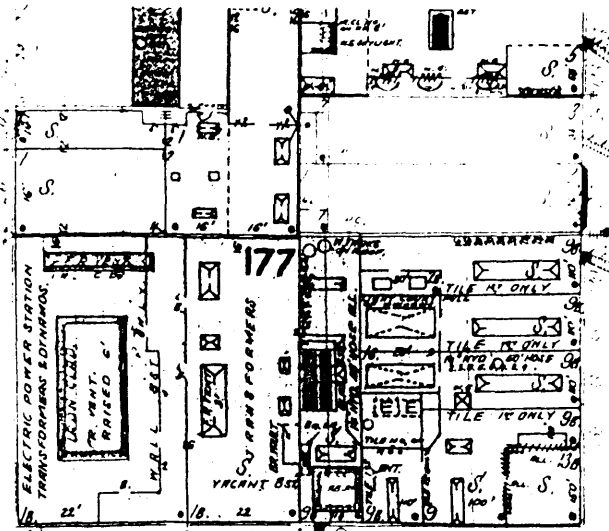
D.H.



55

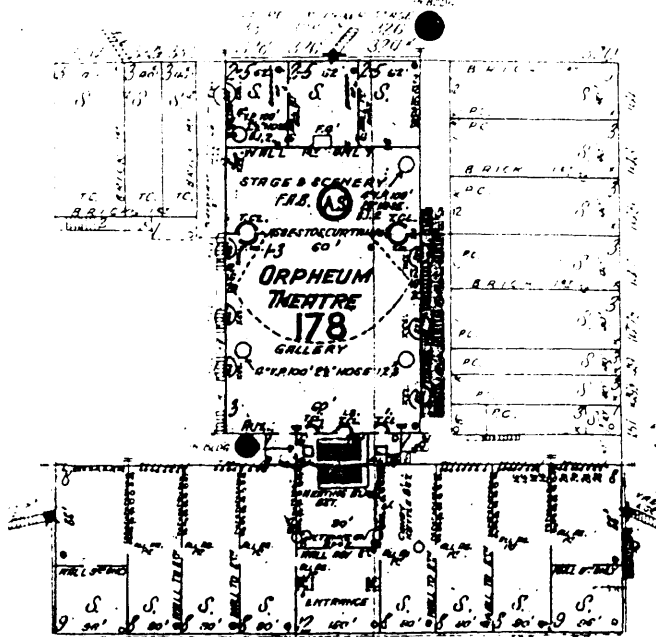
© [illegible]





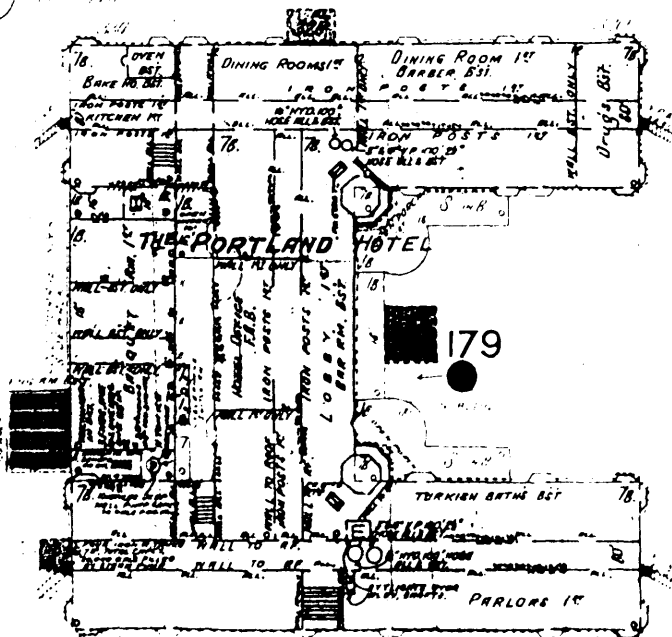
PORTLAND GENL. ELEC. CO. OREGONIAN BLDG  
SUB STATION

ALDER



MARQUAM BUILDING

MORRISON



THE PORTLAND HOTEL

ST.

ST.

7 TH.

6 TH.

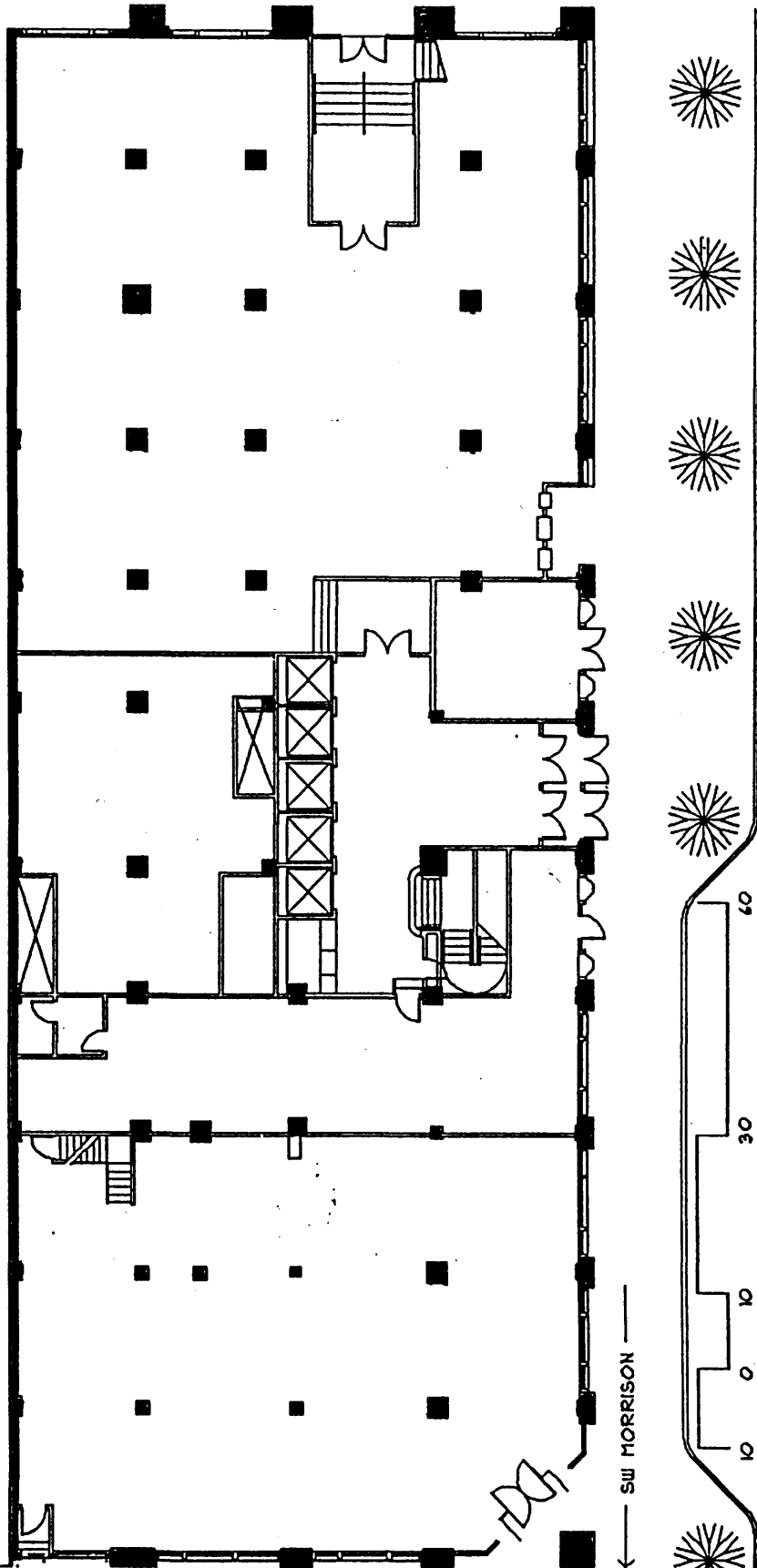
110

112

# THE AMERICAN BANK BUILDING

MORGAN PARK PROPERTIES, INC.

GROUND FLOOR PLAN



SW BROADWAY →

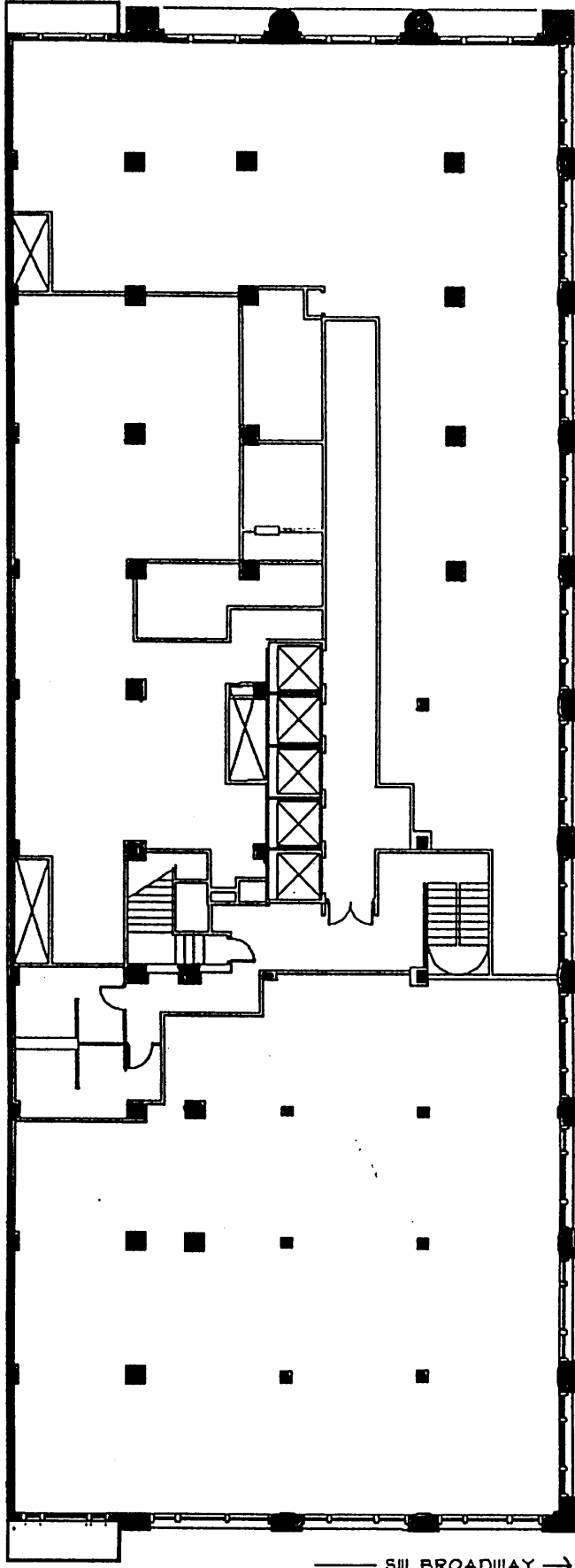
← SW MORRISON



THE AMERICAN BANK BUILDING

MORGAN PARK PROPERTIES, INC.

MEZZANINE FLOOR PLAN



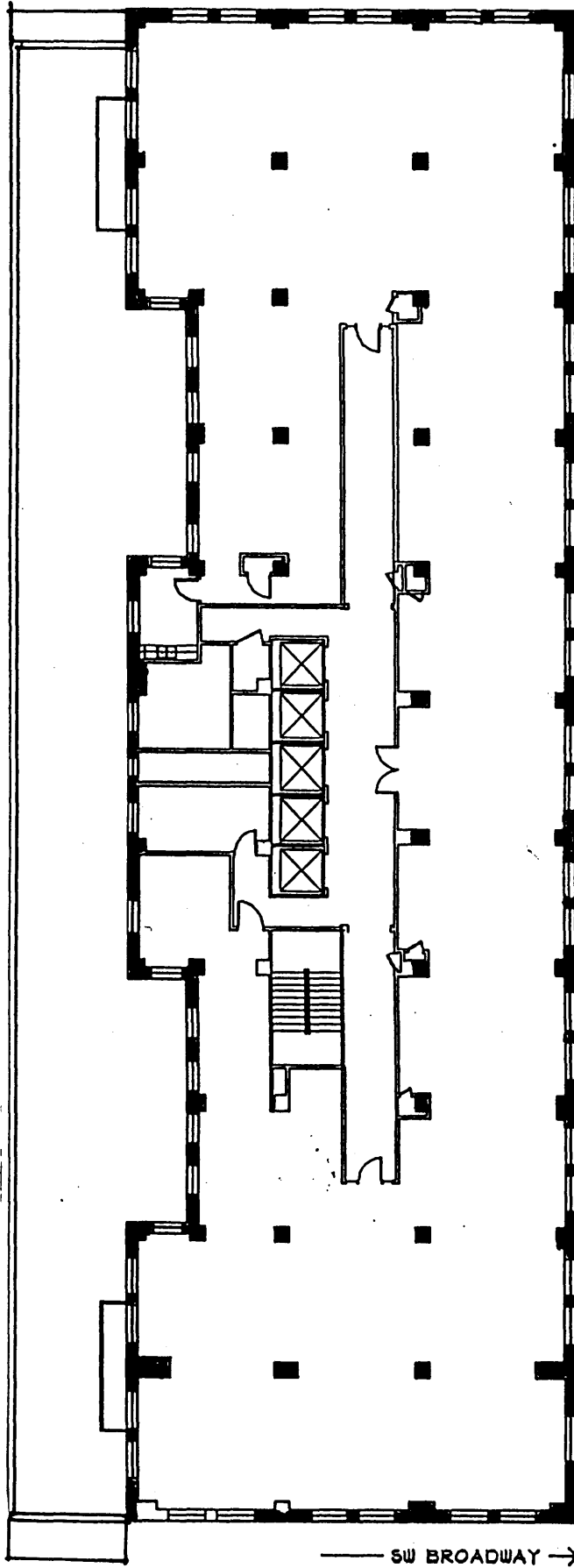
SW BROADWAY →

← SW MORRISON



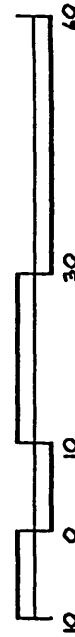
# THE AMERICAN BANK BUILDING

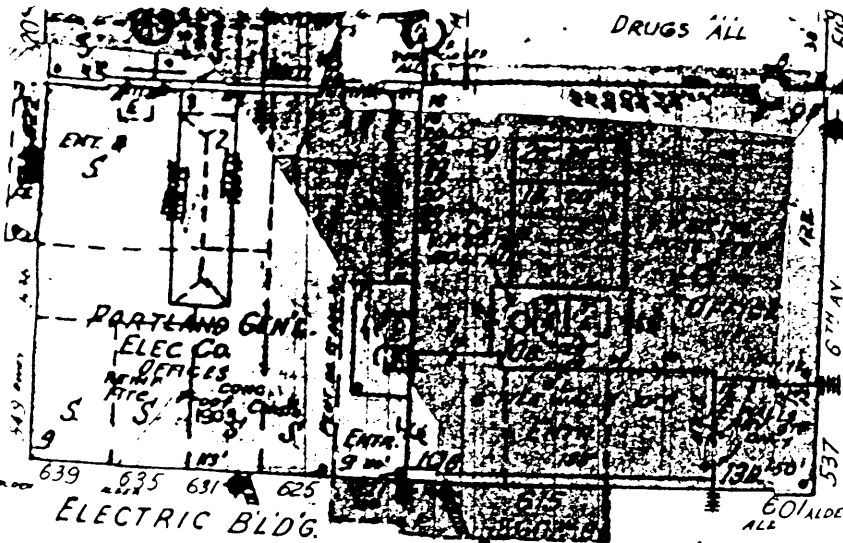
MORGAN PARK PROPERTIES, INC. TYPICAL FLOOR PLAN



← SW MORRISON →

→ SW BROADWAY ←





Fire Proof. Constr. - BUILT 1895  
 LEADED BR. WALLS - TILE R.F.  
 TILE, 2" CONC. OVER - TILE PA  
 EL. & R.F. SUPPORTED BY PA  
 PROTECTED STEEL GIRDE  
 POSTS - 15' W. G. SKYLTS.

T.H.

ALDER

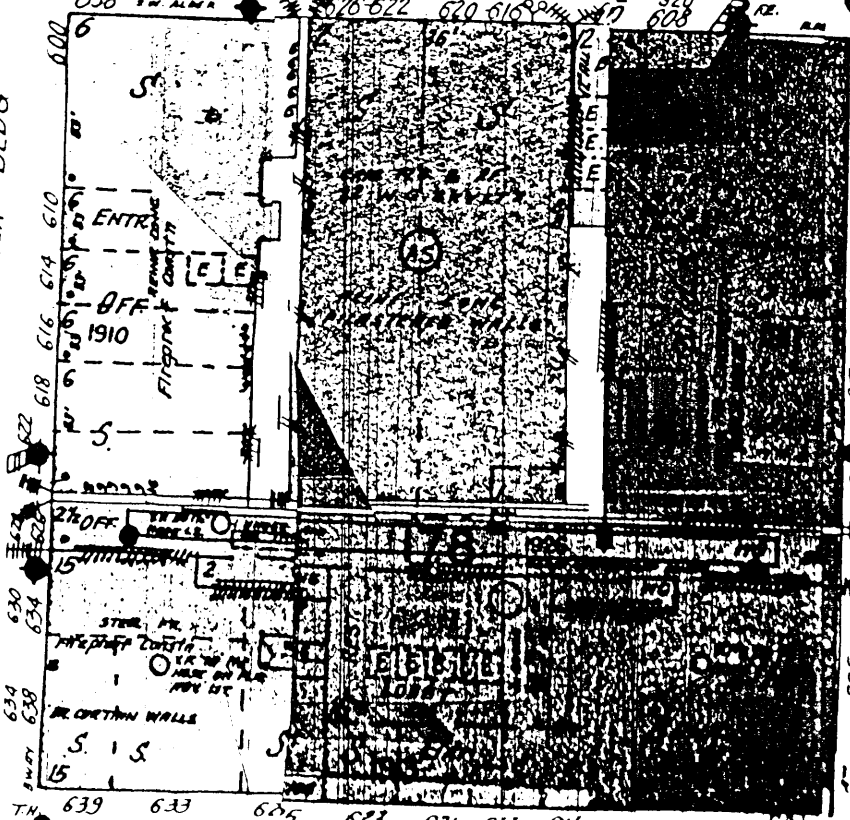
ELECTRIC BLDG.

OREGONIAN BLDG.

S. W. AL

UNGAR BLDG.

MAREGLY - TEHNER BLDG.

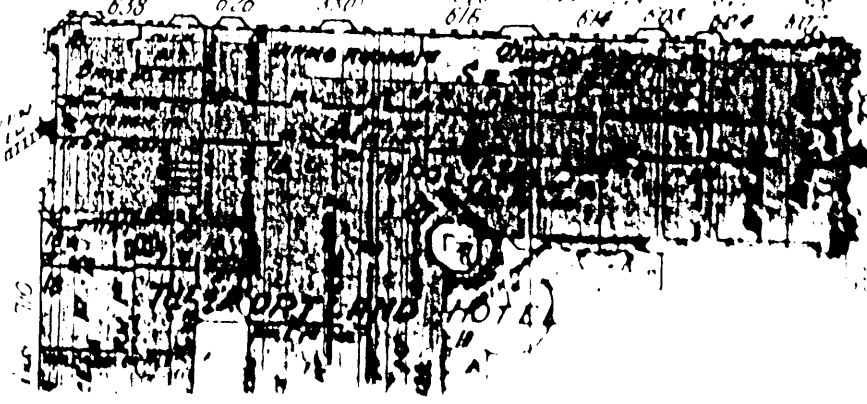


SELLING BUILDING  
 MOST MATHEMATICAL CLOR. 13 STAIRS. 1000 SQ FT  
 FLOOR

AV. (ST.)

AMERICAN BANK BLDG.

S. W. MORRISON

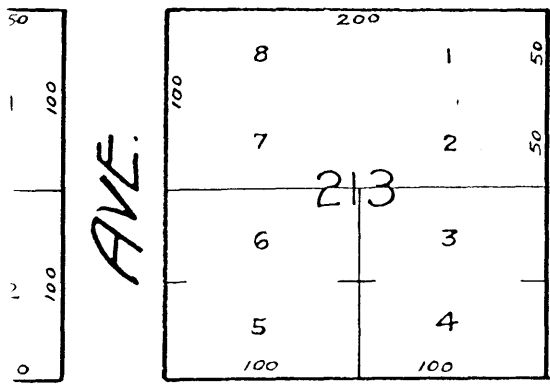


BROAD AV

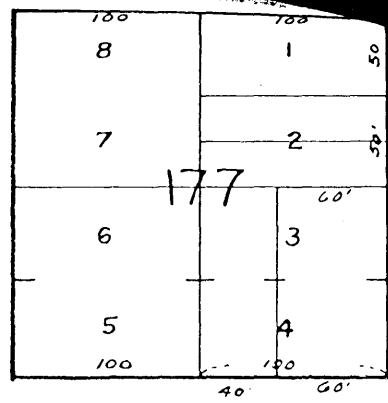
S. W. 6TH

58

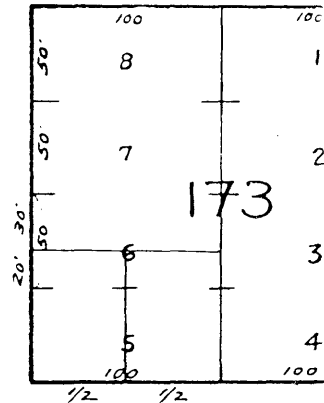
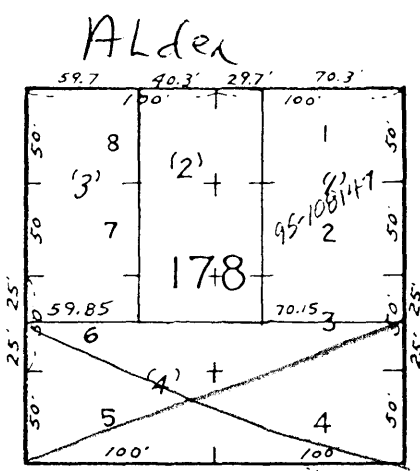
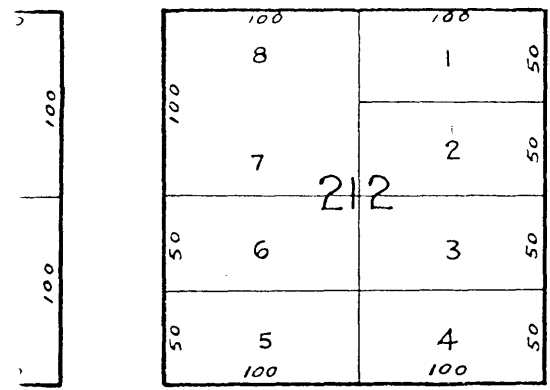
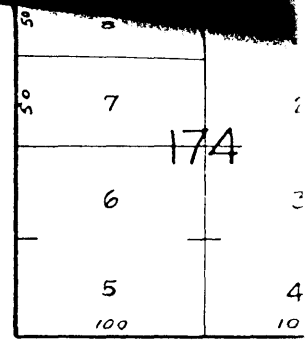
43



AVE.

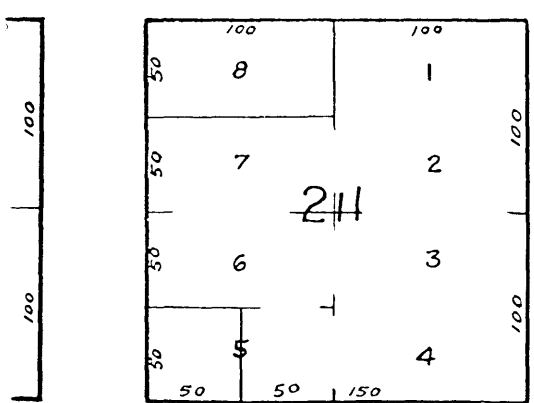


AVE.

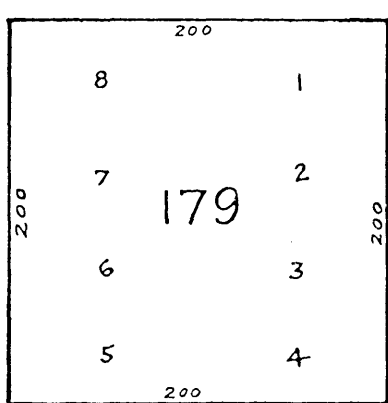


MORRISON

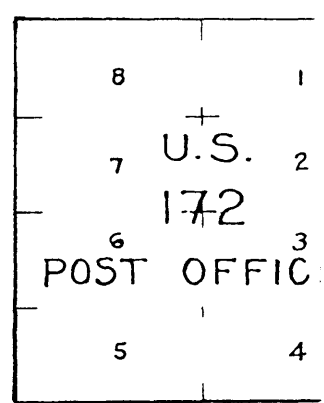
S.V.



80

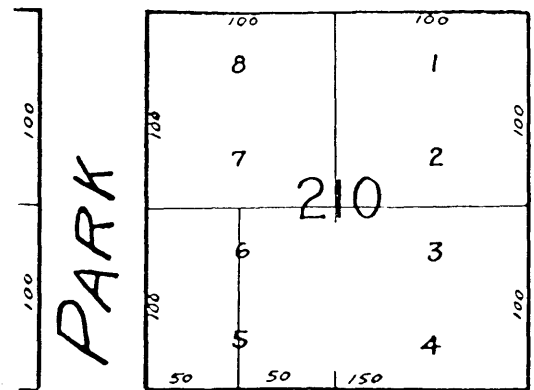


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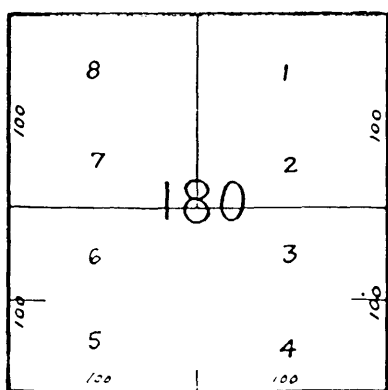
YAML II

S.W.

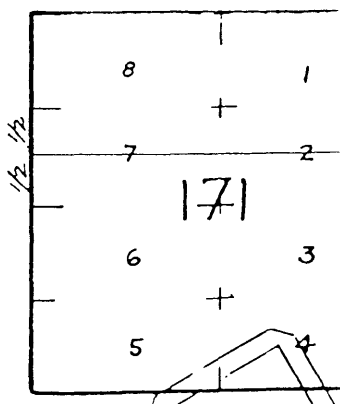


PARK

BROADWAY



SIXTH





STARBUCKS COFFEE

Northwestern Bank Building  
621 SW Morrison Street  
Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon 97205

Heritage Investment Corporation Photo - 1995

HERITAGE INVESTMENT CORPORATION  
123 N.W. SECOND AVENUE, SUITE 200  
PORTLAND, OREGON 97209

South elevation

PHOTO 1 OF 8





Northwestern Bank Building  
621 SW Morrison Street  
Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon 97205

Heritage Investment Corporation Photo - 1995

HERITAGE INVESTMENT CORPORATION  
123 N.W. SECOND AVENUE, SUITE 200  
PORTLAND, OREGON 97209

West elevation

PHOTO 2 OF 8



AMERICAN  
BANK BUILDING  
Established Business Address

ONE  
WAY  
←

*Wick*

Federal  
of

Northwestern Bank Building  
621 SW Morrison Street  
Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon 97205

Heritage Investment Corporation Photo - 1995

HERITAGE INVESTMENT CORPORATION  
123 N.W. SECOND AVENUE, SUITE 200  
PORTLAND, OREGON 97209

Looking S at N and W elevations

PHOTO 3 OF 8



First  
Interstate

10

Northwestern Bank Building  
621 SW Morrison Street  
Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon 97205

Heritage Investment Corporation Photo - 1995

HERITAGE INVESTMENT CORPORATION  
123 N.W. SECOND AVENUE, SUITE 200  
PORTLAND, OREGON 97209

Detail E elevation

PHOTO 4 OF 8



Northwestern Bank Building  
621 SW Morrison Street  
Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon 97205

Heritage Investment Corporation Photo - 1995

HERITAGE INVESTMENT CORPORATION  
123 N.W. SECOND AVENUE, SUITE 200  
PORTLAND, OREGON 97209

Looking E along S elevation

PHOTO 5 OF 8



A black and white photograph of a decorative architectural column. The top of the column features a series of vertical, rounded, fluted sections. Below this is a wide band of intricate, symmetrical floral and foliate carvings. At the bottom of this decorative band is a dark rectangular panel with a thin white border, containing the text "AMERICAN BANK BUILDING" in white, serif, all-caps letters. The lower portion of the column is a plain, textured surface. The background is dark and indistinct.

AMERICAN BANK BUILDING

Northwestern Bank Building  
621 SW Morrison Street  
Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon 97205

Heritage Investment Corporation Photo - 1995

HERITAGE INVESTMENT CORPORATION  
123 N.W. SECOND AVENUE, SUITE 200  
PORTLAND, OREGON 97209

S elevation detail

PHOTO 4 OF 8



Northwestern Bank Building  
621 SW Morrison Street  
Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon 97205

Heritage Investment Corporation Photo - 1995

HERITAGE INVESTMENT CORPORATION  
123 N.W. SECOND AVENUE, SUITE 200  
PORTLAND, OREGON 97209

Lobby detail

PHOTO 7 OF 8



Northwestern Bank Building  
621 SW Morrison Street  
Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon 97205

Heritage Investment Corporation Photo - 1995

HERITAGE INVESTMENT CORPORATION  
123 N.W. SECOND AVENUE, SUITE 200  
PORTLAND, OREGON 97209

Typical upper floor

PHOTO 8 OF 8