

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **SEP 30 1985**

date entered **OCT 31 1985**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Myrtle Arms Apartment Building
and/or common Same Number of Contributing Resources 1

2. Location

street & number Sixth and Central Streets N/A not for publication
city, town Coos Bay N/A vicinity of Fourth Congressional District
state Oregon code 41 county Coos code 011

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A in process</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<u>N/A being considered</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: apartment

4. Owner of Property

name Lanny Mix
street & number c/o 2700 Highway 101
city, town Coos Bay N/A vicinity of state Oregon 97420

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Coos County Courthouse
street & number _____
city, town Coquille state Oregon 97423

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Statewide Inventory of Historic Properties has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1985 federal state county local
depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office, 525 Trade Street SE
city, town Salem state Oregon 97310

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>N/A</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Myrtle Arms Apartment Building, located on the southwest corner of Sixth & Central Streets in Coos Bay, Oregon, was built in the California Mission style in 1914. Of wood frame construction, the building exterior is stuccoed. The interior retains its original configuration and detailing and has a high degree of integrity.

The building is located on Lots 1 and 4, Block 29 of Dean & Co.'s Addition to Marshfield, (later Coos Bay), Coos County, Oregon. The building is approximately 50 x 100 feet with the length of the building running north and south. Photographs A and B show the building just after it was completed. On the west side of the building there appears to have been a small church or meeting house and directly across the street there is a two and one half story building of some size. To the east and south is the mudflat after which Marshfield was named. Directly to the north of the apartments was a slightly filled area. The building was served by a wood sidewalk and street that can be seen most clearly in photograph B. Today the streetscape around the building is quite different. To the south is an office building, to the east is the new City Hall complex, to the north is a gas station and to the west is the parking lot to the building and a Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet.

The apartment building heating system was a "newer style" oil burning furnace (in a coal exporting community) for both heat and domestic hot water which, according to one of their advertisements, "burned from 1,000 to 1,500 gallons of oil per month." The building was also constructed with an English basement with electricity and shower bath, trunk, laundry, dry room storage, electric and gas meter rooms, janitors quarters, etc. One of the most attractive features about the apartment house was the "roof garden" and a beautiful penthouse entertainment hall with a hardwood dancing floor. The rental rate on opening ranged from \$25 to \$85 per month. In a postcard advertisement the owner claimed, "This building is second to none in its class and one that Coos Bay may well be proud of. Few towns of this size can boast such improvements."

The Coos Bay Times, Saturday, February 28, 1914, reported that O. L. Clark was making arrangements to start work on the F. E. Conway Apartment House. The article mentioned that Charles Noble was scheduled to drive the piling for the structure. By August 3rd, the newspaper reported that Conway was rushing the work on the entertainment hall situated on the roof garden. Apparently the Ashland Shriner group was invited to the Myrtle Arms Apartments for an informal dance, and although the quarters were not plastered and much of the building was still in the rough, the roof garden and the entertainment hall was expected to be available for this function. It was reported a few days later that there was a large attendance and that the event went very well in spite of the project being incomplete. On November 22, 1914, F. E. Conway announced that every apartment in the new apartment house had been filled and that he was compiling a waiting list of parties anxious to move into the building. This was done in spite of a ruling against families with young children and a policy of not renting to anyone other than permanent residents of Marshfield.

According to a September 12, 1914 article in the Coos Bay Times, the design process was generally accomplished by the owner, F. E. Conway in collaboration with a Southern California draftsman and his company engineer as well as assistance from his master builder and assistant master builder. The design process began in Los Angeles in 1913 by F. E. Conway when he consulted with R. J. Horner, chief draftsman for Wilson's Bungalow Book. Mr. Conway claimed to have spent all winter traveling over the entire Pacific coast with his camera and notebook gathering data from "hundreds of sources" for his apartment house.

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In his account he mentioned that most of his research had occurred in Southern California, specifically San Francisco, Oakland, Los Angeles, Long Beach, Pasadena, Santa Monica and other Southern California points (where they have "reduced the apartment house game to a science"). Apparently, five sheets of drawings were created by Mr. Horner, probably taking the project through the schematic design or the design development phase. Twenty-eight drawings were made in Marshfield by Mr. C. E. Bunting, who was the company engineer for the Conway Company. He made these drawings during the summer which would lead one to believe that this project was probably "fast tracked" with a great deal of input from master builder O. L. Clark and assistant master builder H. Lupton.

The use of the building today is nearly identical to its use of 1914 (over 70 years later). The major changes that have been made include the division of the entertainment hall into two deluxe penthouse apartments complete with fir paneling in the living area topped with myrtlewood panels (photo #21). The remainder of the apartments remain in some need of repair but generally appear as they were constructed in 1914, including such dated innovations as the outside vented coolers in the kitchen areas (photo #2), hidden laundry sinks under the kitchen counters, and delivery boxes, (photo #13) for each apartment at each floor, for milk and bread (at the south end of each corridor). On the exterior, there were originally six planter boxes set on the protruding vigas on the north wall. Those have been removed, but could be re-fabricated from the original photograph B. On the roof of the entertainment hall, the protruding vigas have been shortened (probably due to weathering and rot) and a fascia placed over their ends.

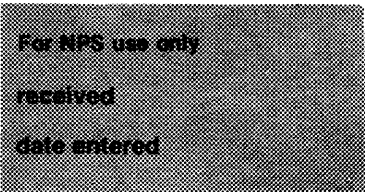
The shape of the building is generally rectangular. The plan was a simple double loaded corridor with apartments east and west of the corridor. The corridor on each floor was accessed by stairways on the north and south ends of the building. The original stairways remain (photo #14). The main part of the building is 3½ stories, including a ½ story for a daylight basement. Including the penthouse level, the building stand 4½ stories.

The basic construction is described as follows: The building is wood framed and has a stucco exterior and plaster in the interior. The wood framing includes floor joists running east to west supporting the floor/ceiling framing. The loads are transferred down through the bearing walls to footings or grade beams (assumed) that transfer loads to piling which may or may not have piling caps poured over them. The roof structure is also wood frame with a rather flat built up roof over the decking, probably to accommodate the "roof garden" concept. Projecting vigas support tile covered pent eaves on the north end east faces of the structure (photos #7 and #8). A similar system frames the entry area roof. Both the pent eave and the entry roof are covered with the original clay tile which is still serviceable.

Some of the salient features of the exterior include the elements of the Mission and Pueblo styles. The above-mentioned pent eaves and tile roofs are very distinctive in Coos Bay. Some of the other outstanding Mission style features include the bell towers (photo #7), curvilinear parapets (photo #8), the round arched openings in the parapet and bell towers, the stucco surface of the entire exterior and the small paned windows of the entertainment hall (photo #21). The Pueblo influence includes the flat roof design and the projecting vigas on the north and east elevations and at the roof of the entertainment hall.

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In the entry stairway, the sides of the stairway are covered with marble (photo #9). The entry door frame and side light assemblies are made of myrtle wood and are glazed with beveled glass (photo #10).

As one moves into the interior of the space, the rich beauty of the entry foyer is the first thing that catches ones eye. It is constructed (See photographs #11 & #12) of myrtlewood paneling on all four walls. The apartment doors are multi-paned with dark stain trim that crosses at the jamb/head intersections (photo #15). The interiors of the apartments were efficiently designed with a dressing area (photo #20) located behind a fold up Murphy-type bed which supported a mirror facing the living space (photo \$19). In some of the larger apartments there was another type of bed - a couch or day-type bed that, when unused, would slip into a wall cavity and serve as a couch during the day (photo #18). These beds are still in use and many are in good working order. Some of the apartments also had wood batten (photo #16) that articulated selected walls. They were stained dark and plaster infill used between them. As you can see from the photographs, the builders and the designers carried the Mission theme into the rooms and the corridors with a great deal of consistency. It is fortunate that much of this original historic fabric remains and that the owner intends to preserve it as much as possible.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1914 **Builder/Architect** F. E. Conway (builder)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The significance of the Myrtle Arms Apartment Building, constructed in 1914, is centered around National Register Criteria "c." This building constructed for Franklin Conway and located at the corner of Sixth and Central Streets in Coos Bay, Coos County, Oregon, embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction - that being the Mission style, common to the period 1910-1935. This style of architecture is rare in Coos County and is exemplified by stucco covering, corner towers, curvilinear gables and tile-covered pent eaves. The Myrtle Arms was also one of the first buildings in Marshfield to encroach on the major part of the slough area. It is significant also to find much of the original historic fabric intact, both in the interior and exterior of this building. In 1914, the construction of the Myrtle Arms was a signal that apartment house living had come to even small Oregon towns as a way of life.

The Myrtle Arms apartments introduced the new California Mission architectural style to the Coos Bay - Southern Oregon Coast area. This distinctive architectural style was locally newsworthy and credit for the design was the subject of some local controversy. Franklin E. Conway, the initial owner, claimed to have designed the apartments while in Southern California where he evidently researched a number of fashionable new apartments there. Conway also got some assistance in Southern California from R. J. Horner, the chief draftsman for Wilson's Bungalow Book who did five drawings for Mr. Conway. Mr. Conway employed a master builder, O. L. Clark and assistant master builder, Herbert Lupton during construction. He also employed C. E. Bunting as "engineer" during construction. Mr. Bunting made a total of 28 drawings and was locally featured in a trade magazine called, The Pacific Builder and Engineer in the August 15 issue. The writer, W. A. Scott gave Mr. Bunting credit for being the architect of the building. The issue was settled by Mr. Bunting and Mr. Conway, by each person publishing paid advertisements in the September Coos Bay Times stating their position. After this, they parted ways. Mr. Bunting went on to be the designer of several Coos Bay homes, working with several local contractors and builders. Mr. Conway continued as manager of this very successful apartment complex for several years before apparently moving on again.

The Coos Bay Times, dated May 30, 1914, evidenced the fact that the Marshfield Chamber of Commerce and the F. E. Conway Company developed quite an interesting promotional effort together. The Conway Company, at that time, offered \$25 to anyone who could come up with a name for the apartments. F. E. Alan, Major of Marshfield, M. C. Maloney, and A. R. O'Brien agreed to be judges for the contest. The contest enjoyed a great deal of success and notoriety. It was reported in the July 2, Coos Bay Times that the committee had selected a name for the apartments - that being "The Myrtle Arms," submitted by F. H. Brigham of North Bend. It was interesting to note that this contest had gained such attention that entries arrived from Paris, France; Spokane, Portland, Tacoma, San Francisco and Sioux City, Iowa. Subsequent to the committee's selection of the name, "Mr. Conway announced that the finishing of the doors entrance to the new building would probably be changed to myrtlewood to conform to the name selected."

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Coos Bay, Oregon

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 1 0 4 0 1 4 0 0 4 8 0 2 1 9 0
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification The Myrtle Arms Apartment Building occupies Lots 1 and 4, of Block 29, Dean & Co.'s Addition to Marshfield (later Coos Bay), Coos County, Oregon.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state None code county code

state None code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Steve L. Clay, Architect

organization Samuels & Clay, Architects & Planners, AIA date March 14, 1985

street & number 375 N. 4th Street telephone (503) 269-555

city or town Coos Bay state Oregon 97420

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

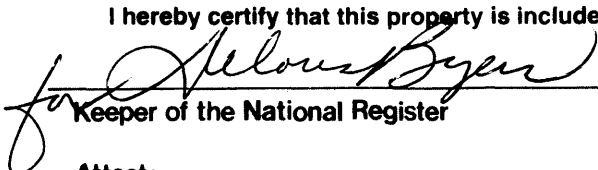
State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date August 29, 1985

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register. Entered in the National Register

date 10/31/85


Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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The most salient feature of this building, of course, is its architectural style and that style's comparative rarity in Coos County and along the Southern Oregon Coast. This building is a good example of the Mission style with Pueblo style influences (photos B and #1-8). In Architecture Oregon Style, by Rosalind Clark, advised by Phillip Dole, Elisabeth Potter and Marion Dean Ross, page 166 displays the Myrtle Arms apartment house as being a classic example of the style. Some of the elements typical of that style and that period found in and on the apartment house were: the curvilinear parapet, bell towers on three corners, and the tile covered pent eaves. Other features include the round arched openings, the stucco surface, bell towers, and the rich interior detailing. A very symmetrical composition of the elements of this structure's exterior also substantiates the Mission style as does the small pane windows in the entertainment hall on the roof. The Pueblo style was also represented in the flat roof configuration as well as in the projecting roof rafters or vigas found on the roof of the entertainment hall, the supports for the pent eaves and the bell tower eaves. It is clear that the above-mentioned "design team" made careful note of the elements of the Mission and Pueblo styles in California. In California, those styles were perpetuated by Polk, Brown, Maybeck, Gill and other architects of the day. It is very significant that within a small Oregon town, the essence of a new and popular California architectural style could be so crisply and accurately translated by a design/build team as diverse as this team was that constructed the Myrtle Arms Apartments.

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Blumenson, John J. - G. Identifying American Architecture. American Association for State and Local History, 708 Berry Road, Nashville, Tennessee 37204. September, 1982, pp. 4-7.

Clark, Rosalind. Architecture Oregon Style. Professional Book Center, Inc., 5211 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland, Oregon 97321, 1983, pp. 165-166.

Coos Bay Times, Saturday, February 28, 1914; May 30, 1914; July 2, 1914; August 3, 1914; August 11, 1914; August 16, 1914; September 12, 1914; September 14, 1914; and November 22, 1914.

Postcard of the Myrtle Arms. Printed c. 1914. In the possession of Mrs. Barham, 926 S. 5th, Coos Bay, Oregon 97420.