NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

0059 OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

JAN 23 1989
NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Electric Building
other names/site number: ~~Broadway Building~~

2. Location

street & number: 621 SW Alder Street — N/A ☐ not for publication
city, town: Portland — N/A ☐ vicinity
state: Oregon code: OR county: Multnomah code: 051 zip code: 97205

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
☒ private	☒ building(s)	1	____ buildings
☐ public-local	☐ district	____	____ sites
☐ public-State	☐ site	____	____ structures
☐ public-Federal	☐ structure	____	____ objects
	☐ object	1	____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official — January 17, 1989 Date

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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:) _____

Entered in the National Register — 2/23/89

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Industry/Processing/Extraction: energy facility
Commerce/Trade: office building

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade: office building

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements: Commercial Style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation: concrete
walls: reinforced brick masonry
roof: built-up asphalt
other: terra cotta ornament

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

☒ See continuation sheet

SETTING

The Electric Building is specifically located on a 100'x100' lot on the southwest corner of Block 177 on Lots 5 and 6, Portland Addition to the City of Portland. The building fronts S.W. Broadway to the west and S.W. Alder to the south and abuts adjacent buildings to the east and north.

Other National Register listed properties located in the same vicinity include the Meier and Frank Company Building, Pioneer Courthouse, the Equitable Building, and the Charles F. Berg Building.

When constructed, the area surrounding the building was emerging as the commercial center of the city. A gradual westerly movement of the commercial district of Portland had been occurring since the great fires of 1872 and 1873, which destroyed major sections of the city along the waterfront. Spring flooding of the city, until the construction of the sea wall in 1929, further spurred the movement of the commercial section of the city to move west away from the river. Following the Lewis and Clark Exposition of 1905, the City of Portland grew by leaps and bounds. This period of growth is marked by the construction of many commercial institutions following the Exposition until the stock market crash of 1929 which led to the Great Depression.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

When first constructed, the power generators occupied the west 60 feet of the basement, ground floor and second floor levels in a large, three-story open space spanned at the third floor level by four 11'-3" deep steel trusses which occupy the full depth of the third floor, and each support four interior columns for this section of the building above the third floor. The trusses are supported at each end by built-up steel columns which bear on cast iron bases on reinforced concrete spread footings. At their east ends, the trusses are cantilevered beyond their east support to receive one of the columns above.

The power station was visible and audible from the sidewalk adjoining through windows in large arched window openings which were two stories high. These windows were generally left wide open to cool the space and were protected at street level by heavy

ironwork grilles. Pedestrians were treated to the hum and whine of the generators, and on Alder Street were also assaulted by the roar of the huge rotary presses in the basement of the Oregonian Building adjoining to the East, where the newspapers were loaded across the sidewalk to waiting trucks. It was an exciting part of downtown, symbolizing the energy and dynamism of the growing city.

The eastern 40 feet of the first and second floors contained, besides the entrance lobby, an electric store, a cashier's window where customers could pay their electric bills, a practice very common when the building was new. Checking accounts were not as common as today, and one could pay be cash, or save the 2 cents for local postage to mail a check. The balance of the first floor was occupied by offices for the "solicitors" who signed up electric service customers, and on the second floor was a display room for electric appliances.

At the third floor, where the trusses divided the building into five separate bays, were company offices, connected by one small door opening in each truss, made possible by special framing of the trusses. Skylights lighted the interior of this floor from the interior light court above. At the northwest corner a stair connected the third and fourth floors, an elevator ran from the power station below to the third floor.

Above the third floor the building is "U" shaped in plan, with a 14'-0" wide light court running north and south. At the rear of the east property line there is also a 7'-5" light court, having hollow metal, double-hung sash with wire glass. On the north wall windows have been added in recent years at the fifth and sixth floors, which are rolled steel, with pairs of casements and a hopper vent below. Glazing is with wire glass. At the ninth floor are double-hung windows which may be original.

On the upper floors of the building, besides the offices of the Power Company, space was leased to other tenants. Paneled doors and frames, as well as frames of glass transoms, baseboards, chair rails and picture molds were of Siberian oak. All of these, together with the original solid plaster partitions, have been removed except at the toilet rooms, where the original corridor doors and marble toilet stalls with nickel plated fittings and paneled oak doors still remain. Corridor floors were originally terrazzo, now covered with carpet. The building originally

featured indirect incandescent lighting and a central vacuum cleaning system.

On the exterior the Electric Building presented a striking appearance. The first two stories with their arched openings were sheathed with unglazed buff colored, rusticated terra cotta. Plinths of the same material projected at the sidewalk level, and ornamented keystones projected from the various voussoirs at the head of each arch.

A belt course of ornamented sheetmetal separated the terra cotta base from the brick sheathing above. The brick is an especially beautiful close range of orangy-brown bricks of a color quite generally used in Portland between 1890 and 1910. It is tradition that these bricks were imported both from Japan and from England and brought to Portland as ballast in the square-rigged sailing ships which loaded grain and lumber at the Portland harbor. The Electric Building was one of the last Portland buildings to use this color of brick because of the demise of the sailing ships. The bricks are very precisely made, permitting thin, close fitting joints. The corner bays have pairs of double-hung wood sash, and brick spandrels. The three inner bays have groups of three windows with ornamented sheetmetal spandrels. At the ninth floor level is another sheetmetal belt course, identical to that at the third floor.

At the top of each of the six brick piers, which divide the window bays, is an exuberant cartouche ornament of terra cotta. Surmounting the building is a wide projecting cornice of sheetmetal ornamented with dentils and moldings. An iron fire escape is hung at the center bay on both Broadway and Alder streets. At the north end of the Broadway side was an employee's entrance, with access to the power plant and to the elevator to the third floor. Over the building entrance, at the east end of the Alder Street side, an ornamented marquee of iron and glass was suspended by two chains. This marquee has since been removed.

A special feature of the building exterior were the approximately 1100 light bulbs which were installed in sockets at the cornice, belt courses and in the brick piers. These lights, of low wattage, gave the building a wonderfully picturesque appearance at night. The sockets, no longer functional, are still visible in the brick piers. In later years a large vertical neon sign was installed at

the corner of the building and a smaller sign over the building entrance. Both signs have been removed.

In June of 1941 the power station was removed and the space it had occupied remodeled into basement, street level and second floor retail space. The rusticated terra cotta and the arches were replaced with rectangular window openings, and a new front of ceramic veneer was installed. The second floor of this space was for many years leased to the Fahey-Brockman men's clothing store, which advertised their location as "up the marble staircase". Numerous minor changes in the storefronts have since been made. Major access to the building is located on the south elevation.

INTERIOR

In the mid-1970s Portland General Electric, successor to Portland Railway, Light and Power Company, moved out of the building, and the office floors were completely remodeled with the installation of new doors and partitions, a suspended ceiling, automatic fire sprinklers, and air conditioning throughout.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
Architecture	1910	1910
Industry: electrical power generation		

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Carl L. Linde, associated with Edgar M. Lazarus
Trussed Concrete Steel Co., structural engrs.
Hurley Mason Company, contractor

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

☒ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

[x] See continuation sheet

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:
- [x] State historic preservation office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [ ] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [ ] Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 0.23 Portland, Oregon-Washington 1:24000

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	10	522180	5040580
B			
C			
D			

[ ] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated area is comprised of Lots 5 and 6, Block 177, Portland Addition to the City of Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon.

[ ] See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated area consists of the entire 100 x 100-foot lot in downtown Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon historically developed and occupied by the Electric Building from 1910 onward.

[ ] See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John M. Tess, President
organization Heritage Investment Corporation date August, 1988
street & number 123 NW Second Avenue, Suite 200 telephone (503) 228-0272
city or town Portland state Oregon zip code 97209

The Electric Building is a nine-story Commercial style building of reinforced concrete frame construction clad in brick with sheet metal cornice, spandrel and belt course decoration and some ornamental terra cotta. It occupies a 100 x 100-foot site at the southeast corner of the intersection of SW Broadway and Alder streets in downtown Portland, Oregon. The building was constructed in 1910 for the Portland Railway Light and Power Company to house its offices and main power generating station. The generating station provided direct current for surrounding buildings and for the streetcar railway operated by the company. The architect was Carl L. Linde, who at the time was associated with the noted Oregon architect, Edgar M. Lazarus. The building contractor was Hurley Mason Company, and structural engineering was by Trussed Concrete Steel Company. Alteration of the three ground floors containing the generators for adaptive use as office and retail space was designed by the Portland firm of A. E. Doyle & Associate and carried out in 1941. The building is significant under Criterion C as an outstanding example of Commercial style architecture locally, but it is chiefly significant under Criterion A as the historic headquarters of the Portland Railway, Light and Power Company, one of the important Portland-based companies of the Progressive era. Portland Historic Landmark designation is pending. A remarkable feature of the building was its outlining with electrical light sockets which provided for the building's illumination at night. The effect was at once a tour de force of embellishment in keeping with the City Beautiful Movement and an undisguised advertisement of advanced technology of the day.

PORTLAND RAILWAY, LIGHT & POWER COMPANY

Portland enjoyed a very rapid growth in the decade following the Lewis & Clark Exposition in 1905. The Exposition opened its gates in northwest Portland on June 1, 1905 to commemorate the centennial of the arrival of Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark in the Oregon Territory. In reality, the Exposition glorified the progress of the American nation as it entered the 20th century. Attendance was phenomenal considering the Exposition's short run to October 15, 1905. Visitors came from all over the United States and many remained in Portland. Population increased 50% by 1910. Business boomed, and the positive spirit generated by the Exposition's success formed a strong base of confidence for the future.

Electricity played an important part in the success of the Exposition. Portland General Electric Company profited from the increased street railway traffic generated, but particularly from the electric load and publicity produced by the grand display of electric lighting.

Portland was one of the first cities in the United States to develop a true criss-cross interurban-suburban railway. system. It was recognized as one of the most complete metropolitan railway networks in the country.

During the years 1905 through 1907, Portland General Electric Company, Portland Railway Company (owning and operating the city's railway lines) and the Oregon Water Power and Railway Company (owning and operating the electric interurban lines) merged into the newly organized Portland Railway, Light and Power Company, incorporated June 29, 1906.

That same year the new public service giant was sold to eastern investors. In keeping with its eastern ownership, top management brought in from Baltimore, Maryland in the person of Benage Stockwell Josselyn. "B.S.," as he was known, served as company president from July 6, 1907 until his resignation July 1, 1913. It was during his tenure that the Electric Building was erected, an edifice consistent with the newly merged company.

Josselyn proved an effective leader for the company if not the City of Portland and its citizenry. His sold concern was the generation of maximum profits.

By 1910 the Portland Railway, Light and Power Company was a recipient of 43 separate franchises through its various mergers. It was cited in American Banker that year as a $15 million holding company, a monopoly liable to anti-trust action under the Sherman Act.

Portland's mayor, Harry Lane, battled Josselyn and the giant monopoly but with little success. Most of the city council lined up behind Josselyn on every issue. For the six years that he served as president, B.S. attached the city on every franchise award, bridge construction project and street repair claims.

Privately, Josselyn lived in a grand style befitting a leader of Portland's corporate life. He purchased the classical Massachusetts State Building from the Lewis & Clark Exposition and had it moved section by section to a large tract of land near Mount Tabor on Portland's east side.

In the years following Josselyn's resignation, relations between the City of Portland and Portland Railway, Light and Power Company improved considerably as the company became more responsible to its employees and the public it served.

In the scheme of things the Electric Building represented the growth and progress of the Portland Railway, Light & Power Company in Portland from the turn of the century. The building which the Electric Building replaced was almost 20 times the size of the building which previously existed on the site.

To exemplify the growth of the company one can look at the growth of the railway system. In 1900 there were approximately 100 small cars in use on Portland's street railway system. By 1910 there were 450 cars in use with nearly twice the capacity of those in 1900. In addition to the increased number of cars, the actual railway system was equipped with more powerful motors and the speed at which the cars could travel was much higher.

A further comparison shows that in 1900 there were 450 men employed by the street railway system. At the time of the construction of

the Electric Building approximately 2,900 men were employed by the Railway Division of Portland Railway, Light & Power company. In short, the system had grown almost eight times in ten years and could accommodate sixteen times the seating capacity as what was available in 1900. In addition to the increase in size and seating capacity, the number of miles of track had more than doubled from 1900 to 1910.

The following schedule from a souvenir booklet distributed at the time of the opening of the building compares and illustrates the incredible growth of the company between 1900 and 1910.

	1900	1910
Number of generating stations.....	2	9
Total generating capacity.....	6,600 KW	27,200 KW
Expressed in 16-candle-power lamps..	330,000 lamps	1,360,000 lamps
Number of sub-stations.....	1	12
Cities and towns supplied with current	2	10
Light and Power Department employee.	80	600

As part of the increased growth and coinciding with the construction of a new building in downtown Portland, the company removed the overhead wire distributing electricity around the 180 blocks in the center of the business district. An underground system was then installed at cost of approximately $2 million. Thus, the Electric Building truly exemplified the growth of Portland Railway, Light & Power Company in the years following the Lewis & Clark Exposition.

EDGAR M. LAZARUS

Edgar M. Lazarus was an architect who designed a large number of important public buildings and residences in Portland during a 25 year period from 1895 to 1920. Born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1868, Lazarus came to Portland, Oregon in 1892 to practice architecture, with a letter of introduction to a prominent Portlander, and remained in Portland the rest of his life until his death in 1939.

His public works include Apperson Hall at Oregon State University in Corvallis, 1898-99; Ahvai Shalom Synagogue in Portland, 1904; Clatsop County Courthouse in Astoria, 1904-07; the Agriculture

Building at the Lewis & Clark Exposition in Portland, 1905; Oregon State Hospital Receiving Wing, Salem, 1912; and the Vista House at Crown Point, 1915-18. Lazarus designed early alterations to the Pioneer Courthouse and was the resident architect for the U.S. Customs House. He designed the first Multnomah Athletic Club building at 10th and Yamhill, together with the first grandstand at the clubhouse site. He also provided the design for the Electric Building in downtown Portland, 1910; the Taft (Franklin) Hotel in Portland, 1906; and the Wickersham Apartments, also in Portland, 1910.

His residential designs were unique and include the George F. Heusner house in Portland, 1894, which is on the National Register; the Sigmund Sichel house, the Frederick V. Holman house, the I. Leeser Cohen house, 1892, and many other Portland houses. One of his most notable houses is unfortunately no longer standing, the Solomon Hirsch house which stood on a magnificent elevated site between S.W. Vista Avenue and St. Clair, just above West Burnside. Hirsch had been U.S. Ambassador to Turkey.

Soon after coming to Portland, Lazarus joined in partnership with William M. Ellicott, practicing as Ellicott & Lazarus from 1892 to 1895. In 1908 he formed a partnership with Morris Whitehouse and J. Andre Fouilhoux, practicing as Lazarus, Whitehouse & Fouilhoux from 1908 to 1910. From 1911 to 1914 he was in partnership with Frank Logan as Lazarus & Logan. From 1915 to his death in 1939 he practiced by himself.

From 1911 to 1914 Edgar Lazarus served on the Board of Directors of the Oregon Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, serving as president in 1913. Before the establishment of the Oregon chapter in 1911, Lazarus was a member of the San Francisco chapter of the Instituted, being elected to Fellowship in the Institute in 1895, the first Oregon architect to be a Fellow.

Lazarus's design for the Vista House in outstanding, exhibiting great sensitivity to the site, and almost immediately on completion becoming one of Oregon's most important monuments. It has deservedly been placed on the National Register. His Taft Hotel and Wickersham Apartments have also been placed on the National Register. Also on the National Register is the U.S. Customs House for which Lazarus was resident architect.

Toward the close of his most active practice, Lazarus engaged in disputes with the Oregon Board of Control concerning fees for his work on the Vista House and on the Oregon State Hospital. These disputes brought him much unfavorable publicity in the press and must have hurt his practice, and he performed little work of importance after these unfortunate events.

CARL L. LINDE

Carl L. Linde, a Portland architect for nearly 40 years, and designer of a large number of outstanding buildings in Portland and Seattle, a number of which are on the National Register, was born in Brunswick, Germany, May 21, 1864. He was brought to the United States by his parents at the age of five, where the family settled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1870. There he attended the German-English Academy, but before graduation he apprenticed to an architect. In 1883 he enlisted in the Navy in New York City, serving at the Newport, Rhode Island Naval Training Center. After a year his parents purchased his release from the service. He may have then worked as a draftsman in New York for the McKim, Mead & White firm, although this is not confirmed from the firm's records.

About 1884 Linde returned to Milwaukee, where he worked for a Milwaukee architect until 1888. There in 1890 he married Hattie Lebus. From 1882 to 1892 Linde worked in Chicago, part of that time on the World's Fair, and later for Ryerson Steel Company. In 1892 he returned to Milwaukee where he worked from 1892 to 1900 as supervising architect for the Pabst Brewing Company. In 1900, still in Milwaukee, Linde formed a partnership with Otto Wehling, Wehling & Linde, which continued until 1906 when he left Milwaukee to move to the West Coast. Linde first worked in San Francisco with James W. Dolliver, who had at one time worked in Milwaukee. Dolliver is known to have worked with the Reid Brothers in San Francisco, who are known in Portland for their designs for three Portland buildings: the old Oregonian Building (next to the Electric Building), the Oregon Journal Building, and the Yeon Building. The dates of Dolliver's connection with the Reid Brothers are not known.

Late in 1906 Linde moved to Portland, where he was to live and practice for 39 years until his death on July 12, 1945. In Portland he first worked for Edgar M. Lazarus, a prominent Portland

architect who had practiced in Portland since 1892. It was in Lazarus's office that Linde prepared the designs for the Electric Building, the outstanding and unique qualities of which brought Linde national attention. On the completion of this design, Linde practiced briefly under his own name. When the Electric Building was placed under construction, he went to work for its owners, the Portland Railway, Light and Power Company as superintendent of construction for the building. Following this project Linde worked in 1911 as a superintendent for Doyle & Patterson, who then had a large volume of work under construction. In 1912 Linde was back in practice until 1914, when he worked briefly as a draftsman for the Pacific Fixture & Cabinet Company. Following this, in 1915 he worked for a short time for Whitehouse & Fouilhoux.

From 1916 on Linde carried on his own practice, and in 1921 associated with Richard Wassell, a developer and contractor, for whom Linde designed a number of apartment houses which established his reputation, and produced much of the work for which he is best known. Besides five wood framed, brick veneer apartments, among them the Royal Arms, the Imperial Arms and the Tudor Arms, built between 1921 and 1922, Linde then designed for the same client the Sovereign Hotel, the Ambassador Apartments, and the Envoy Apartments, all of them major fireproof buildings. The Sovereign and the Ambassador have been placed on the National Register. About this time Linde also designed the Camlin and Sorrento hotels in Seattle. His View Point Inn of 1924 and the Clovelly Garden Apartment of 1928 are both on the National Register. Another outstanding apartment design was his 1928 Holman Gardens.

Carl Linde also designed many fine houses in the Portland area. Perhaps the most outstanding of these is the J. N. Barde house on S.W. Park Place. Others are houses for Lloyd Bates, A. Craig McMicken, Dr. Frank McCauley and James Hickey. Linde also in 19265 designed the Shemanski Fountain in the South Park Blocks which has recently been restored.

Linde's work is all outstanding and deserving of further attention, study and recognition. He has left a priceless architectural heritage to Portland and the Northwest.

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The Oregonian, Oct. 1, 1905, p. 14.

Ibid., Feb. 21, 1909, sec. 3, p. 7.

Ibid., Apr. 25, 1909, p. 5.

Ibid., May 2, 1909, sec. 4, p. 4.

Ibid., May 9, 1909, sec. 4, p. 4.

Ibid., May 23, 1909, sec. 4, p. 4.

Ibid., Jan. 1, 1910, sec. 2, p. 2; sec. 3, p. 10.

Ibid., Feb. 26, 1910, p. 11.

Oregon Journal, May 20, 1976.

ELECTRIC BUILDING