

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received JAN 28 1986  
date entered FEB 27 1986

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

1. Name

historic Cornelius Hotel Number of contributing resources 1  
and/or common Same Number of non-contributing resources 0

2. Location

street & number 525 SW Park Avenue N/A not for publication  
city, town Portland N/A vicinity of First Congressional District  
state Oregon code 41 county Multnomah code 051

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<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 checked="" 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Housing
			<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

4. Owner of Property

name Leonard Zell  
street & number 1722 Southwest Highland Parkway  
city, town Portland N/A vicinity of state Oregon 97221

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Multnomah County Courthouse  
street & number 319 Southwest Fourth Avenue  
city, town Portland state Oregon 97204

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title City of Portland  
Historic Resource Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
date 1983  federal  state  county  local  
depository for survey records Portland Bureau of Planning, 1120 SW Fifth Avenue  
city, town Portland state Oregon 97204

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<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 _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			N/A

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Cornelius Hotel, completed in 1908, is a six and one-half story, mansard-roofed brick hotel designed in the French Renaissance style by noted Portland architect John Virginus Benes of the firm Benes, Hendricks, and Tobey. The exterior is intact but deteriorated above the ground floor, and the hotel rooms are arranged around a double-loaded corridor. Storefronts and entries have been altered within the original structural bays, and elements of the original lobby are intact but hidden.

### SETTING

Located on Block 2, Lot 2, of the Portland Addition to the City of Portland, the Cornelius Hotel shares its block with three similarly scaled quarter-block commercial buildings which were constructed between 1912 and 1914. The hotel is within a potential glazed terra-cotta/streetcar-era historic district of buildings which were built during Portland's period of optimism and expansion after the Lewis and Clark Exposition of 1905, and which contribute to the history of Portland's downtown commercial core.

The Cornelius Hotel occupies a 50' x 100' lot on the southeast corner of the block, at the intersection of Park Avenue and Alder Street in Downtown Portland. The block was originally platted as part of the Portland Park Blocks, a promenade of 100' wide blocks (half the normal 200') extending from the northern boundary to the southern boundary of the original townsite. Some of these blocks became privately owned and commercially developed. The two Park Avenues on either side of the blocks are narrower than the main downtown thoroughfares, contributing to a quieter and slower pace than in other commercial blocks; a point which was noted in the Cornelius Hotel's early advertising.

### EXTERIOR

The exterior is divided into a commercial base, five stories of hotel rooms, and a mansard roof containing additional rooms. At street level, the structural bays are unchanged, although the storefronts have been altered. Three businesses front on Alder Street, while a basement entry, hotel entry and one other business entry are on Park Avenue.

The upper stories are separated from the base by a sheetmetal belt course with a pierced cross-and-dot pattern. The walls are buff-colored brick with cream-colored terra-cotta keystones and sills. The facade is divided vertically into major (A) bays and minor (B) bays in an ABAABAAABA pattern on the Park Avenue (east) facade, and an AAAA pattern on the Alder Street (south) facade. These vertical divisions are unrelated to the bays on the ground floor. The major bays are in canted, recessed panels outlined by a projecting row of bricks. Mitered, rectangular panel heads below the cornice contain ornamental keystones. The panels contain large, wooden, double-hung windows below flat arches with decorative keystones and radiating brick rusticated voussoirs. Minor bays are flush, with small double-hung wooden windows below flat arches with plain keystones and radiating brick voussoirs, two of which project.

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A cornice above the sixth story almost obscures the view of the elaborate mansard roof from street level. Both are green sheetmetal. The bed molding below the cornice is dominated by a course of large pearl moldings which terminate at oval convex cartouches at each end. The fascia is decorated with vertical grooves. The major and minor bays on the roof structure repeat the pattern of the floors below, represented by two types of dormers. In the major dormers, pediments and pilasters with lion's-head capitals surround a wooden, double-hung window. Each minor dormer has a half-round pediment and fluted pilasters on a raised sill which contain a round window. Shingles between the dormers are pressed sheetmetal. A second decorative cornice caps the roof.

INTERIOR

The three store spaces facing Alder Street retain their original configuration. The original lobby of the hotel has been converted to a flower shop, but the original beamed ceiling exists above a dropped ceiling, and the round tiles of the original floor are under wall-to-wall carpeting. The lobby fireplace, although altered, is still functional.

Above the ground floor, the hotel is L-shaped, surrounding a light well. On each floor, the L-shaped corridor serves fifteen single rooms which may be joined to form suites. Each floor has various single, shared and communal bathrooms. The elevator shaft and surrounding stairway are in their original locations.

ALTERATIONS

The ground floor has had several cosmetic changes, although a few minor original features exist, such as entry tiles and a large downspout with decorative hangers. Structural columns remain, but storefronts and entries have been altered. The store transoms have been filled and dropped, the corner entry filled hotel entry moved, canopies removed, and the rusticated original wall stuccoed. The retail spaces inside have been continuously modernized. In the basement, the original restaurant space has been converted to a men's steam bath.

Above the ground floor, however, the Cornelius Hotel has changed little. A neon sign has been added at the corner, and fire escapes at each end, but the windows, brick facades and sheetmetal roof appear to be as originally constructed. The sheetmetal is rusted and leaking, and in need of repair and maintenance. A sheetmetal roof addition with a slope similar to the original has been added to the north. Various code and safety changes have been made on the interior, but the basic configuration of the hotel rooms appears unchanged.

Adequate physical and photographic evidence exists to replicate the storefronts and lobby with reasonable accuracy. With repair and maintenance, the intact upper floors can be restored to their original appearance. A fire gutted the fifth and sixth bays of the top two stories. Windows in these openings are broken and open to the weather. As a result of the fire, hotel rooms are not being rented on the second through the fifth floors. Hotel employees are quartered on the sixth, and the seventh floor is vacant. Most of the exterior decoration survived the fire.

# 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** 1907-1920 **Builder/Architect** John V. Bennes, Architect

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Cornelius Hotel, constructed in brick between 1907 and 1908, was erected for Dr. Charles W. Cornelius, a multi-faceted individual whose varied interests included gold mining and acting, among others. His interest in real estate precipitated the hiring of noted Portland architect John Virginius Bennes to design the mansarded, French Renaissance style building at 525 SW Park Avenue, in Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon. The building, designated a Portland Historical Landmark, is proposed for listing under criterion "c" as a rare example of the style remaining in the core area and for its association with John V. Bennes, whose architectural practice extended throughout the state.

The building is also locally significant under criterion "b" for its association with Dr. Charles W. Cornelius, Oregon pioneer and renaissance man, whose varied and colorful career included the construction and proprietorship of the Cornelius Hotel.

Construction of the Cornelius Hotel began in early May, 1907. An article in The Oregonian on May 5, 1907, entitled "Progress on Buildings" reported that "excavation work has started. . . and during this week a steam excavator will be put on." The hotel was designed by the Portland architectural firm of Bennes, Hendricks and Tobey, who exhibited drawings and photos of their project in the Portland Architectural Club Exhibit in March, 1909.

Another article in The Oregonian dated February 23, 1908, with the headline "New Hotels Soon to be Completed," stated, "The Cornelius, for instance, represents others (hotels) that now await the closing of contracts. . . for early opening." The hotel was open for business by early July, 1908, as evidenced by an advertisement in the newspaper on July 4, 1908.

The hotel was built and operated by Dr. Charles W. Cornelius until approximately three years before his death in 1923. By 1920, the hotel proprietor was W. C. Culbertson, who also operated the Hotel Seward, one block west of the Hotel Cornelius. In an advertisement in the 1923 City Directory, Culbertson listed the two hotels on the same page. Calling the Hotel Seward the "House of Cheer" and the Cornelius Hotel the "House of Welcome," the proprietor emphasized their proximity to the "new \$1,000,000 Elks Temple," the fact that they were both close to the City's shopping and theater districts and were conveniently located for Oregon Electric train service. In addition, hotel shuttle bus service was provided for patrons' transportation from all trains.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Portland, Oreg. - Wash.

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

### UTM References

A 

1	0	5	2	4	9	5	0	5	0	4	0	4	2	5
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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** The Cornelius Hotel occupies a 50 x 100 foot parcel, known as Lot 2, Block 2 of the Portland Addition to the City of Portland in Multnomah County, Oregon.

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

state N/A code county code

state N/A code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title John M. Tess, President

organization Heritage Investment Corporation date August 14, 1985

street & number 123 Northwest Second Avenue telephone (503) 228-0272

city or town Portland state Oregon 97209

# 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 Office date January 16, 1986

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

*for*

Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the National Register

date 2/27/86

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

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Charles W. Cornelius

Charles W. Cornelius was born on October 13, 1856, on his parents' donation land claim in Washington County. His father, Benjamin Cornelius, Jr., had arrived in Washington County in an early wagon train in 1845, with his father, Benjamin Sr., mother, and nine siblings. One of his brothers was Tom Cornelius, for whom the town of Cornelius was named.

In 1872, at age 16, Charles and his two sisters moved with their parents to Forest Grove. He attended classes at Pacific University and, in 1876, married Minnie Canon of Portland. In 1877, he began to study medicine with Dr. F. A. Bailey in Hillsboro but soon began to move from one occupation to another. In 1879 he went to Spokane, Washington, where he engaged in a drug store business for 18 months. He then returned to Portland where he studied in Willamette University's medical school for two terms.

From 1882 to 1885, he purchased and operated a second drug business in Portland. His occupation in the 1886 Portland City Directory was listed as "actor." He then traveled to San Francisco, where he managed a theater until approximately 1887. After a brief and unsuccessful fling with gold mining in Southern Oregon, he enrolled in medical school at Oregon State University and finally graduated in 1889, at age 33.

After moving to Portland, he practiced medicine on his own until 1892-93, then formed a partnership with Dr. Horace R. Littlefield. In 1895, Cornelius was elected county coroner for two years on the Republican ticket. Infected once again with gold fever, he spent 1898 in Skagway, Alaska, during the height of the gold rush. His partnership with Dr. Littlefield lasted until 1905, when Cornelius again began to expand his vocation to include real estate and the hotel business.

Portland City Directories for 1906 through 1909 list Charles Cornelius as a physician and, in 1909, as proprietor of the Cornelius Hotel (constructed between 1907-08). He appears to have operated the newly-opened establishment himself, while maintaining his medical practice, until 1911 when he hired hotel manager H. E. Fletcher.

In 1912, Cornelius's sole occupation was listed as "real estate" rather than medicine; but, by 1913 he appears to have refocused his attention on medicine. From 1912 to 1913, the Cornelius Hotel was operated by the Cornelius Hotel Company, and the doctor was not listed as a company officer. By 1914 he had resumed control of the hotel (as president) as well as his medical practice, which continued until approximately 1920. At this point the hotel was sold to W. C. Culberston, proprietor of the Seward Hotel.

In December 1922, Cornelius reportedly had a "breakdown." He moved to the beach in an attempt to regain his health, but on November 2, 1923, "weakened by

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neuritis," he died at the age of 67. At the time of his death he was living at SW 21st and Yamhill with his widowed mother, two sisters, a niece and an adopted son, Harry Cornelius. It appears that he and his wife were estranged, as she was never listed with him in the City Directory. She died in 1924, and left no other children.

The Architects

John Virginus Bennes practiced architecture in the City of Portland for 37 years, either by himself or as a partner in one of four firms:

- 1906 - 1909, Bennes, Hendricks & Tobey
- 1910 - 1911, Bennes, Hendricks & Thompson
- 1911 - 1913, Bennes & Hendricks
- 1914 - 1925, independent
- 1926 - 1931, Bennes & Herzog
- 1933 - 1943, independent

Bennes was educated in Chicago public schools and studied architecture in Prague, Bohemia. While he is known to have been raised in Illinois, there is an oral tradition locally that he was born in Bohemia, evidently in 1867. Returning from his studies abroad in 1890, Bennes began his professional career in Chicago. He moved to Oregon in 1900 and opened his practice in Baker City in eastern Oregon. The Hot Lake Resort and Sanitorium outlying LaGrande, in Union County, lately has been attributed to Bennes. The sanitorium has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Relocating to Portland in 1906, Bennes practiced independently or with the above-named partners over the ensuing period of 37 years. Bennes died at the age of 76 in Los Angeles in November, 1943, and was buried in Hoopston, Illinois.

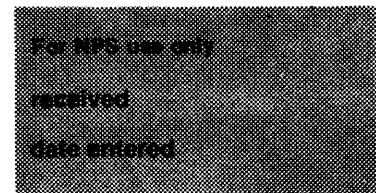
The Portland Historic Resource Inventory lists 35 Portland buildings, predominantly residential and commercial works, attributed to Bennes. Among them is the A. H. Maegly House (1915) in Arlington Heights, a National Register property noted as an outstanding example in Oregon of the Mediterranean style influenced by Prairie School architecture. Bennes for many years served as architect for the State System of Higher Education. Most of his work for the State of Oregon is concentrated at Oregon State University in Corvallis. The Italian Renaissance style Administration Building on the campus of eastern Oregon State College in LaGrande (1929) has been listed in the National Register.

There is little information on Erick W. Hendricks except that he was practicing in Portland in 1904, and disappeared from the City Directory in 1914.

Willard F. Tobey was born in Aurora, South Dakota in 1883, and arrived in Portland in 1893. In the 1906 City Directory, he was listed as a partner with Hendricks, who were joined later that year by Bennes, a partnership that lasted until approximately 1909. Tobey evidently continued to practice in the city until his death in 1972, at the age of 88.

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The Oregonian

- 5/5/1907
- 2/23/1908
- 7/4/1908
- 1/1/1910
- 11/1/1923
- 11/2/1923
- 3/10/1924
- 11/30/1948
- 1/18/1972
- 12/17/1976

Portland Telegram

- 12/5/1916

Benson, Robert L. "Historic Roads and Landmarks of Northwest Oregon," in Land of Tuality, Washington County, Oregon Historical Society, 1976, Vol. II.

City of Portland, Bureau of Buildings Microfilm.

Hines, The Rev. H. K., An Illustrated History of the State of Oregon, Chicago, Lewis Publishing Co., 1893.

Portland Architectural Club Catalogue, 1908, 1909.

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