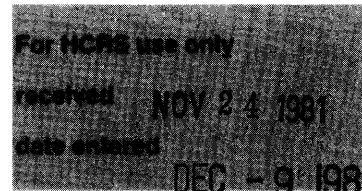


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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



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

1. Name

historic First Congregational Church

and/or common DeMoss-Durdan Mortuary

2. Location

street & number 8th and Madison Streets ___ not for publication

city, town Corvallis ___ vicinity of congressional district First

state Oregon code 41 county Benton code 003

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name J. K. Buddingh, Broker, Green Tree Realty

street & number P.O. Box 878

city, town Corvallis ___ vicinity of state Oregon 97339

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Benton County Courthouse

street & number 120 NW 4th Street

city, town Corvallis state Oregon 97330

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

First Congregational Church constructed in 1917, is an outstanding example in Corvallis and Benton County of 20th Century Georgian architecture somewhat Palladian in character. It is of interest also for an extensive array of high-quality ornamental plaster work introduced in the interior in 1935 at the time the building was converted to mortuary use.

The three-story brick and wood frame structure roughly T-shaped in plan, measures approximately 65 by 80 feet and is sited on a north-south axis. The roof is composed of two perpendicular bisecting gables of moderate pitch. Two chimneys break the roof plane: one in the northwest corner; one the the southwest corner. The chimneys are free of any decoration and are difficult to see from the ground.

The basement is constructed of concrete with stucco finish. The main story is raised approximately eight feet above ground level atop the basement story. Two doors give access to the basement on the east elevation: one at the north giving access to living quarters found in the basement; and a double door on the south as an entrance to the mechanical area of the building. A doorway can be found in the north elevation on the west side, while a double garage door is visible near the center of the west elevation.

The north, or front elevation is dominated by a temple-fronted portico two stories in height and supported by six colossal columns of the Tuscan order. Access to the main entrance is gained by two flights of brick steps. Three large doorways open onto the porch, with the center of the of the three being of greater width. The side doors contain fifteen panes, while the center, or main door contains twenty lights.

Three nine-light second story windows are located directly over each doorway. Wood panels and a cornice separate these openings at the division between the first and second stories. Second story windows abut the cornice line. The tympanum of the pediment is finished with stucco.

On either side of the projecting portico section is a single window bay. The windows on the first floor are six-over-six double hung while the second story windows are nine light windows. A large stucco panel with wood trim separates the stacked openings. Above the cornice line is a balustrade in which panels alternate with sections of eight turned wood balusters aligned over window bays. Smaller turned balusters are used also as decorative relief in spandrel panels.

The west elevation is approximately nine bays wide and is dominated by a central pedimented projecting section. Two building entrances can be found on this elevation: the garage entrance containing a double door, and a step-up entrance on the southern bay.

The east elevation is nearly identical to the west, with the excpetion of a flat roofed, one-story parking canopy. This canopy extends from the stairway entrance found at the south end. This parking canopy was a later addition and plans are being made for its removal.

The south, or rear elevation is nearly blind. Two six-over-six windows are found on the first story. There are no windows on the second floor. The gable end is pedimented.

The focal point of the building's interior is the sanctuary, which was remodeled in 1935 as a mortuary chapel. Portland architect R. D. Kennedy planned the liberal use of pre-cast plaster ornament for door and window trim and the removal of the side aisles and balconies.

As remodeled, the two story sanctuary oriented north to south measures twenty-five by fifty feet. Offices and overflow rooms radiate from the sanctuary on all sides. In the northeast and northwest corners of the building are small ten by twelve-foot offices. The northwest office contains a fireplace on the south wall. Separating the corner offices is a thirty by eighteen-foot foyer.

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 1917 - 1918

Builder/Architect R. H. Dobell, Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The First Congregational Church occupies two lots immediately west of the relocated Episcopal Church of the Good Samaritan (now Corvallis Art Center), a National Register property, and both former church buildings front Central Park in the heart of Corvallis, Benton County, Oregon. These and other public buildings, including the Public Library and City-owned Southern-Pacific Railroad Passenger Station, define the edge of the city's green open space. Constructed in 1917 in the Georgian Style by local architect R. H. Dobell, the building was occupied by the Congregationalists for 17 years. In 1935 it was converted to mortuary use, which purpose it served until 1978. The Congregationalists were organized in Corvallis as early as 1883. Their church at 8th and Madison Streets represents the culmination of a campaign to gain a new building which began in 1909. The building's architect is noteworthy for having pioneered an architectural curriculum in the Oregon Agricultural College Art Department which was superseded by the founding of the School of Architecture and Allied Arts at the University of Oregon in 1914. Whereas the church's auditorium, or sanctuary was redecorated when it became a mortuary chapel in 1935, its essential spatial configuration is intact. Portland architect R. D. Kennedy was engaged to plan the remodeling, which included the introduction of pre-cast plaster ornament in the classical vein. Under the period of occupancy by the Congregationalists, the building was the site of formation of the first troop of Boy Scouts in the Oregon Trail Council, in 1919. The First Congregational Church is significant to Corvallis as an outstanding example of 20th century Georgian architecture and one of the dignified public buildings defining the bounds of Central Park. It possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association with the city's religious and cultural life, 1917-1935.

The Congregationalists of Corvallis were formed in 1883 as a splinter group from the First Presbyterian Church. Their original church building was located at Third and Jefferson Streets, Corvallis. As early as 1909, the Church officers started discussing the need for a new building. With the arrival of the Reverend Edwin T. Sherman, the building plans gained momentum. In December, 1912, Rev. Sherman "presented the matter of making an effort for a new building."¹ At a Church meeting on March 12, 1913, "A motion was made and carried to ask the Church Building Society for \$10,000" for the construction of a new church.² A Building Committee made up of six members of the congregation, two of whom were employed at Oregon Agricultural College, were "instructed to get options on available lots" in 1916.³ In March, 1916, the congregation purchased a 100 x 100 foot lot on the corner of 8th and Madison Streets on which to erect its new building. It was nearly two years later on April 5, 1918, that the first gathering was held in the new church. A banquet was prepared by "the ladies of the church" . . . "the honored guests were Reverend A. J. Scullens, State Superintendent of Congregational Churches, and Dr. H. H. Wickoff, Pacific Coast Secretary of the Church Building Society."⁴ The dedication service was attended by Congregationalists from all of Oregon. The total expenditure on the building was \$15,000.

The building was designed by Roy H. Dobell of Corvallis. A native of Indiana, Dobell received his education at DePauw University and the University of Illinois. Prior to moving to Corvallis, he worked in Chicago for the architectural firm of Spencer and Powers. During the years 1910 to 1914, Dobell was an instructor in the Art Department of Oregon Agricultural College, where he was instrumental in the establishment of an architecture curriculum.

When the State's School of Architecture was opened at

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Corvallis, Oregon

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	0	4	7	8	9	3	0	4	9	3	4	4	1	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 7 and 8 and the north ten feet of lot 9, Block 19 of the County Addition to the City of Corvallis, Benton County, Oregon. Code 9-01, Account No. 127153, Map and Tax Lot No. 11-5-35CD-6100.

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

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rusty Gorman and William Lewis

organization Willamette Landmarks, Inc. date November 10, 1980

street & number 330 SE Viewmont telephone 503/758-1300

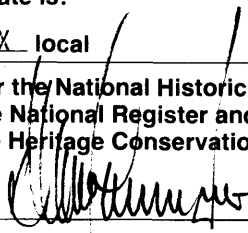
city or town Corvallis state Oregon 97330

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.


State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Deputy Historic Preservation Officer date June 11, 1981

For HCRS use only

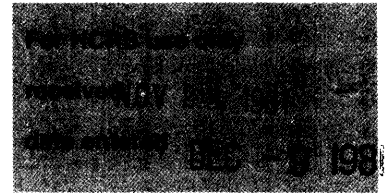
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

 Entered in the National Register date 12/9/81

Attest:  date

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet First Congregational Church Item number 7

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The south foyer wall contains three paneled doors to the chapel, the central door being a double-leaf door, those on the outside being sliding pocket doors. The west foyer wall contains two doorways: one leading to the staircase to the second floor; one to a hallway containing a stairway to the basement and access to the corner office. The east wall contains a similar doorway leading to the second floor and office.

On the east and west side of the sanctuary is a forty by eighteen foot over-flow room. The western overflow room contains a fireplace on the north wall. The overflow areas are closed off to the chapel by five pairs of paneled pocket doors.

Above the sanctuary doors are multi-paned windows with fan lights. The spandrels have inset panels and a scrolled pediment of plaster with anthemion crest.

Five such doorways and blind arches line either side wall of the sanctuary. Surrounding each arch is a beaded plaster rosette molding terminating at a wood wainscotting. Large plaster corbels support five heavily molded ceiling beams. The corbels are centered between the apex of each arch. Each beam contains two recessed stained glass light bays separated by recessed rectangular panels. Cornice molding is of both wood and plaster construction. All walls, doors and moldings have been painted. Cast plaster work received a final coat of brown ink lending an antiqued finish.

The south end of the sanctuary contains the chancel separated by a large ornate plaster arch, the crown which is marked a cast plaster female face decorated with floral trim. The arch is trimmed with a ten-inch-wide plaster molding in a repeating rosette pattern.

The chancel floor is elevated one and one-half feet above the sanctuary.

Behind the chancel, at the south end of the building, is an office containing a fireplace. The southwest corner of the building is comprised of a hallway containing a large, hand-operated elevator shaft; a staircase leading to the second floor; a rear entrance to the building, and a staircase to the basement.

Access to the second floor is gained in four ways: the foyer at the north end of the building containing two staircases and the southwest corner staircase and elevator.

The sanctuary is accessible from the eighteen by forty-foot second story office at the north end and from the organ loft at the chancel end.

Floor height on the second floor is twelve feet, while first floor ceiling height is eight feet. Sanctuary ceiling height is twenty feet. All hardware is solid brass of conventional design. Lighting fixtures are a mixture of contemporary designs. Light fixtures in both the chapel and overflow rooms are of religious motif. Circulating water in cast iron radiators make up the heat source.

With the relocation of the DeMoss-Durdan Funeral Home to a new facility, it is proposed that the building will be converted to office space. With the change of use, all uniform building code, fire and life safety violations, will be corrected. In brief, electrical wiring, plumbing, mechanical system and minor design changes are necessary.

Removal of the large hand-operated elevator will allow for the installation of a smaller hydraulic elevator. The excess space will be converted to restroom facilities. The current mechanical system will be removed to make way for a more energy efficient heat pump system. The electrical service will be expanded to facilitate the heat pumps and elevator as well as the increased needs of office space.

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Continuation sheet First Congregational Church Item number 7

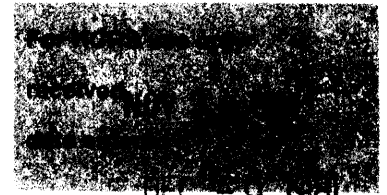
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Several design changes are planned, including the removal of the parking canopy to make better use of the parking area. The exterior of the building will be repainted in keeping with the original color scheme.

Proposed interior design changes include the removal of the recessed arched plaster panels lining both sides of the sanctuary at the second floor level. These panels will be replaced with windows designed to match those currently found on the south wall and retrimmed with the existing plaster ornament. The intention is to provide more light. The floor of the chancel will be lowered to match that of the sanctuary and bookcases will be installed. The entire interior will be repainted. All hardware is to remain, as are most light fixtures.

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the University of Oregon in Eugene in 1914, he left his teaching position to open a private practice. He spent the rest of his career working in Oregon and Washington on various architectural and landscape architecture projects, including a number of golf courses, among them the Oakway Course at Eugene, the Bridgeway course at Albany and courses at Aberdeen, Everett and Tacoma, in Washington.⁵ During the 1930s, he was associated in construction of the State Capitol Building in Salem. During the 1920s and 1930s a number of his articles were published in trade journals. In 1945 Dobeil moved to Tacoma, Washington, where he died in 1953.

The building he designed for the First Congregational Church proved to be an active center for religious and community functions. "The new Church building will be 65 x 80 feet and will have Sunday school auditorium, Church auditorium and balcony. The church auditorium is to be so arranged that when closed to its smallest size it will accommodate 175 people. By opening to full size it will accommodate 750 to 800 people."⁶ The First Congregational Church had plans for expanding its congregation to fill this building. However, with a decrease in new members in the early 1930s, the Congregationalists formed the Federated Church of Corvallis with the Presbyterians. This necessitated a move to the church building of the Presbyterians and the sale of their own church at the corner of 8th and Madison Streets.

In October of 1919, Boy Scout Troup One, the oldest troop in the Oregon Trails Council, was organized in the First Congregational Church. The Congregational Church sponsored the troop and led the boys in many church and community functions. Troop One contributed \$100.00 to the remodeling of the chancel. In 1929, the Scouts of Troop One, spend 80 hours painting an aerial sign "Corvallis" measuring twenty feet by 180 feet on the roof of the College Armory. The young boys of Troop One who met in Pilgrim Hall in the basement of the Congregational Church, have gone on to excel in many aspects of adult life. The Troop was forced to find another meeting place when the congregation found it necessary to sell its building.

In 1935 the building was purchased by J. B. Hollingsworth, a Corvallis funeral home director. Hollingsworth engaged Portland architect R. D. Kennedy, who had done fraternity houses in Corvallis, to plan the changes necessary to make the church a mortuary. Hollingsworth named the main auditorium "Mayflower Chapel" in token of the Congregationalists' pilgrim ties. The major changes in the building were the installation of an elevator and ramps and remodeling of the auditorium, or sanctuary, which work included the removal of side aisles and balconies. Hollingsworth operated the mortuary until 1941, at which time he sold it to Corvallis businessman, Raymond A. DeMoss.

Born in 1891, Mr. DeMoss lived his early years in Iowa and New Mexico. While in New Mexico,⁷ "he enlisted in the National Guard in 1911" and "received his honorable discharge in 1913." He and Mary Louise Holte were married in 1913 and moved to Corvallis, Oregon, in 1917. "Mr. DeMoss established the Sanitary Bakery at NW 6th Street and Van Buren Avenue."⁸ He owned another bakery in Albany, but later sold them both and started a turkey ranch southwest of Corvallis.

With the purchase of the Hollingsworth Funeral Home, DeMoss changed the name of the business to DeMoss-Britt Funeral Home, taking Ernest H. Britt on as partner and mortician. This partnership lasted until 1947, and in 1948 Mr. DeMoss took Donald E. Durdan into the business. Durdan, who had married Maxine DeMoss, daughter of Raymond DeMoss, in 1946, was the mortician and later a partner in the DeMoss-Durdan mortuary.

Raymond DeMoss "was past member of the Corvallis City Council and during World War II he was

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Continuation sheet First Congregational Church Item number 8

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a member of the Benton County Ration Board."⁹ As a Councilman, 1941 to 1945, DeMoss was active on the Health, Streets, and Fire and Water Committees. His committee work involved the solving of such problems as proper disposal of the city refuse and the location and construction of public restrooms in the Corvallis business district. He also worked with the Airport Committee, which was responsible for Corvallis having a public airport. Mr. DeMoss's concern was with the planning of proper water and fire facilities at the airport. At the end of 1945, DeMoss "announced that he was moving into another ward and submitted his resignation as Councilman for Ward One."¹⁰

Raymond DeMoss was also active in community organizations. "He was a past exalted ruler of the Corvallis Elks Lodge, past president of the Corvallis Area Chamber of Commerce and a member of the Moose Lodge, International Order of Odd Fellows, Corvallis Rotary Club and Corvallis Country Club."¹¹

In 1978, after living in Corvallis for 61 of his 86 years, Raymond DeMoss died following a prolonged illness of several years.

Donald Durdan, associated with DeMoss and Durdan Funeral Home for twenty-three years was also active in the Corvallis community. After spending his early years in California, Durdan came to Corvallis in 1939 to attend Oregon State University. While at Oregon State University, he excelled in sports, especially football. In the 1942 Rose Bowl game between Oregon State University and Duke University, Durdan made a name for himself in helping the Beavers to defeat Duke. "In the words of Wallace Wade, Duke Coach, it was 'Just too much western football in general and too much Don Durdan in particular.'"¹²

Durdan played professional football from 1946 to 1948 with the San Francisco 49ers. After living in San Francisco for two years with his wife, Maxine, they returned to Corvallis.

"Durdan was a member of Corvallis Elks Lodge, Corvallis Moose Lodge, Corvallis Masonic Lodge, Al Kader Shrine Temple, Benton County Shrine Club, Sigma Nu Social Fraternity and St. Mary's Chapter of the Order of Eastern Star."¹³

"He also served as either president or chairman of the Oregon State Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers, Benton County Red Cross, Benton County Chapter of the Oregon Society for Crippled Children, and the Corvallis Country Club."¹⁴

Donald Durdan, during his thirty-one years of living in Corvallis, proved to be an asset to the community.

The DeMoss-Durdan mortuary had prospered under the direction of Raymond DeMoss and Donald Durdan. In 1971, it was sold to Uniservice Corporation, the third largest funeral home business in the nation. That Uniservice continued to use the DeMoss-Durdan name for the next seven years indicated the stature of the local operation built up over thirty years.

REFERENCES

¹First Congregational Church Minutes, Corvallis, OR, Book D.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

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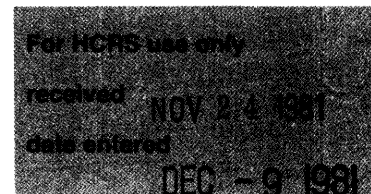


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- ⁵"Impressions and Observations of The Journal Man", Lockley, Fred, Oregon Journal, 2, July, 1936, p. 10.
- ⁶"Jones Sells Property to Church", Gazette-Times, 27, March, 1916, p. 1.
- ⁷"Funeral Home Owner Raymond DeMoss Dies", Gazette-Times, 4, May, 1978, p.8.
- ⁸Ibid.
- ⁹Ibid.
- ¹⁰Ibid.
- ¹¹Corvallis City Council Minutes, Corvallis, OR, 5 November, 1945, Book 23, p. 402.
- ¹²"Funeral Home Owner Raymond DeMoss Dies", Loc. Cit.
- ¹³The Beaver Yearbook, Corvallis, OR, Volume 36, 1942.
- ¹⁴"Donald Durdan Dies, Former Star Athlete", Gazette-Times, 28 June, 1971.
- ¹⁵Ibid.

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Interview with Carl Merryman, former member of Boy Scouts of America, Troop One, Corvallis Oregon, October 30, 1980.

"Jones Sells Property to Church", Gazette-Times, Corvallis, Oregon, March 27, 1916, p. 1.

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Maxson's Corvallis Directory, 1947, Maxson's Business Service, Corvallis, Oregon.