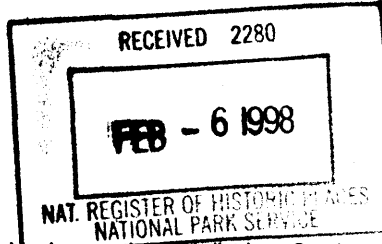


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



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

1. Name of Property

historic name Stevens Building

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 812 SW Washington Street N/A not for publication

city or town Portland N/A vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Multnomah code 051 zip code 97204

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

James Hannah January 16, 1998
Signature of certifying official/Title Deputy SHPO Date

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action
3-5-98

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 3 Page 1

STEVENS BUILDING (1913-1914)
812 SW Washington Street
Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon

COMMENTS OF THE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE:

The Stevens Building occupies a 50 x 100 foot lot at the southeast corner of the intersection of West Park (9th) Avenue and Washington Street in Portland's central business district. The twelve-story steel frame skyscraper with ribbed concrete floor system and brick and terra cotta cladding was completed in 1914 for the investor Theodore B. Wilcox. The design was adapted by Whidden and Lewis from the firm's earlier plans for the Wilcox Building of 1911, which stands at Sixth and Washington [506 SW Sixth Avenue], three blocks to the east. The earlier building was entered into the National Register in 1989.

The Stevens Building meets National Register Criterion C as an indispensable contributor to the concentration of early 20th century brick and terra cotta-clad tall buildings which give Portland's downtown its character. Chronologically, it represents the late end of the spectrum of works in this genre by Portland's leading architects of the turn of the century. In 1954, a remodeling project sharply altered the retail base and second story. The project was undertaken at the express request of a banking institution which, like most other tenants in the post War era, placed a high premium on modern-looking surfaces stripped of clutter. Modernizing trends in real property development ultimately affected the street levels of almost all of Portland's terra cotta skyscrapers. The Stevens Building remodeling was designed by David Pugh of the firm of Belluschi and Skidmore, Owings and Merrill. Pietro Belluschi, the area's preeminent architect of a later generation, for a time maintained his association with SOM after being designated Dean of the School of Architecture and Planning at M. I. T. in 1951. He was not involved in this project, however, which today, technically, falls six years short of being a historic alteration. The project designer has affirmed that while the remodeling, with its ground story marble facing, strove for a taut-surfaced look, careful thought was given to visual integration. The original structural bays were scrupulously respected at both ground level and the second story, where brick was used in place of terra cotta. However, elimination of transitional string courses and transoms in the window membering resulted in some proportional discord, an effect that was heightened by the contrast in surface coloration. A good faith attempt to achieve compatibility between old and new face brick on the upper stories miscarried. For purposes of this nomination, the 1954 alteration is non-historic and non-contributing to the building's significance under Criterion C.

The Stevens Building rests on a foundation of reinforced concrete, and its footprint is extended to

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National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 3 Page 2

the lot line, with the main entrance on the minor street frontage on Washington Street. There is a 17-foot set-back on the east elevation for a light court. The primary facade faces north onto O'Bryant Park.

Exterior elevations are organized in the conventional manner worked out for tall buildings in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The formula as originally carried out included a retail base, including plate glass storefronts in the structural bays, a rusticated superposed story with Chicago School windows, an eight story shaft faced with brick, a belt course demarcating the uppermost two stories clad in terra cotta, and a boldly projecting classical entablature with modillioned cornice. The terra cotta is off white, and the grey-tan brick is laid in a common bond. Regular, trabeated fenestration is not embellished with frames. Openings are paired within the structural bays and are fitted with double-hung wood sash having one-over-one lights.

The point is made by the applicant that exterior articulation of the Stevens Building is slightly simplified in comparison with the archetype. As in the Wilcox Building, structural bays of the terminal stories are set off by pilasters with inset panels and decorated spandrels. A fundamental redesign of the retail base and second story was undertaken in 1954 by the firm of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill with Pietro Belluschi. The ground story alterations included new fixed frame storefronts on marble bulkheads and recovered pier. Second story window openings were enlarged, and the exterior was reclad with tan brick. The elevator lobby was remodeled in marble and glass, and the upper story interiors were comprehensively revised. No original partitions remain.

The application provides good information about the origin of the north-south strip of land in the Portland plat that was reserved for public use. The blocks originally used for a carriage and wagon road evolved as park land landscaped under City auspices. By the 1880s, the South park Blocks were an amenity attracting prime residential, public school, and church development. Through a flaw in the will of Daniel Lownsdale, seven blocks nearest the city center were sold by the heirs for development by commercial interests. The Stevens Building stands upon one of the resulting Commercial Park Blocks. T. B. Wilcox acquired a quarter of the commercial block at Park and Washington in 1908. On two other parcels acquired elsewhere at the same time, Wilcox developed with the help of Whidden and Lewis the Imperial Hotel (1909) and the Wilcox Building (1911).

The Stevens Building was designed as a medical-dental building with state-of-the-art fixtures and utilities built in. Construction was commenced in 1913 and the building was opened for use in

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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1914. The applicant evaluated the building in the context of the large body of work by Portland's preeminent architects of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and finds it is the last building in date among those still standing downtown and thus represents the end of the spectrum. Its value lies not in its distinction among these works but in what it adds to the cumulative effect of a great concentration of fine academic office and retail buildings, including those by Whidden and Lewis's successor, A. E. Doyle, that define downtown Portland.

Theodore B. Wilcox was undeniably a prominent figure in Portland commerce, but the ultimate expression of his achievement in the upbuilding of Portland was the office tower that carries his name. For this reason, Criterion B is not invoked in this nomination. The Wilcox Building, three blocks to the east of the Stevens Building, was the symbolic seat of the president of the Portland Flouring Mills Company, the largest milling and grain exporting operation in the Pacific Northwest. The architects Whidden and Lewis relocated their office to the Wilcox Building as soon as it was opened.

Stevens Building
Name of Property

Multnomah, OR
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

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

n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

-0-

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE--Office Bldg.

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE--Office Bldg.

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th & EARLY 20th CENTURY AMERICAN
MOVEMENTS - Skyscraper Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls brick/
terra cotta
roof asphalt
other _____

Narrative Description

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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The Stevens Building is located on a quarter block site at the southeast of the SW Washington Street and 9th Avenue intersection. Washington Street is a major west bound automobile artery. 9th Avenue is a narrow, one-way, southbound street. This block is one of Portland's south Park Blocks and as such does not follow the typical 200' x 200' block pattern. Portland Park blocks run 50' east to west (in this case on Washington) and 100' north to south (on 9th). The primary entry is at the south end of the Washington street facade. It was constructed in 1914 for Theodore B. Wilcox. At the time, the extant buildings were demolished and the site leveled.

The building is twelve stories above grade with a full basement. The floor plan is essentially rectangular, though there is a 17' setback along the east facade to create a light/air well. Directly to the east are the Platt Building and the Morgan Building. To the north is O'Bryant Park with the Pittock Block to the northwest. To the west is a vacant surface parking lot. To the south are the Woodlark Building and the Cornelius Hotel.

Exterior -Original Design

The Stevens is a steel framed structure. It has a reinforced concrete foundation. Cladding is brick and terra cotta. Horizontally, the build is designed in the manner prescribed for tall buildings, divided into three segments. The exterior of the building is virtually intact excepting for alterations made at the ground floor level. As designed, the lower two floors and the upper two floors had an off-white terra cotta veneer. Floors three through ten are clad in a common-bond grey-tan brick veneer with natural color mortar. The ground floor level was broken into storefronts. The north elevation consisted of three storefronts while the west elevation was divided into five. The divisions at the ground floor level were translated through to the top of the building. The storefronts as originally constructed had an oversized rectangular single glass window, with a three paned fixed transom above. Terra cotta pilasters with recessed panels and a terra cotta bulkhead and mullion completed the storefronts.

The original main entry, was located in the easternmost bay of the north elevation. It had a traditional glass and metal canopy which extended over the sidewalk, supported by chains at the corners. A classical belt course separated the first and second floors. The second floor was rusticated with terra cotta panels which separated tri-paneled windows with transoms. A classically detailed terra cotta beltcourse divided the second floor from the 3rd through 10th floors. The 10th floor was divided from the upper two floors by another simple terra cotta beltcourse. The building

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is capped with a large overhanging classically detailed cornice. Decoration includes lions' heads, block modillions, egg and dart, and dentils.

Fenestration on the upper levels is regular, one-over-one, double hung wood frame with concrete sills.

The building is fire resistant.

Exterior Alterations

In 1954, the firm of Belluschi and Skidmore, Owings & Merrill redesigned the lower two floors and lobby areas under the direction of David Pugh. The redesign features a new fix-metal frame storefront window system sitting on a marble bulkhead. The terra cotta pilasters were removed, replaced with marble. The second floor terra cotta was also removed, replaced by new tan-colored brick. In changing the ground floors the architect did however, maintain the rhythm of the original storefronts and fenestration at the second floor level.

The alteration of the ground floor level was typical of the period, in which storefronts were generally altered to the first belt cornice. In this case the belt cornice was removed. The purpose of the alterations was to modernize or bring up-to-date storefronts which were considered old. In the case of the Stevens storefronts, the remodeling was done to attract a new tenant, the Oregon Bank. The architect who directed the remodel explained that it was important to the tenant, the building owner and the architect to maintain a brick exterior on the second floor level during the remodel. It was hoped that the infill brick at the second story level would match the old brick once it was cleaned. Unfortunately, when they went to clean the upper floor brick they were unable to remove the soot on the building. Even to this day the bricks have never matched.

The post War alteration was typical of the ever changing remodeling of storefronts in a downtown area. An earlier wave of remodeling had occurred in the 1930's throughout the downtown. The Broadway Building also listed in the National Register and located on SW Broadway not far from the Stevens Building is a good example of numerous storefront changes which numbered a minimum of four major alterations. Given the vitality of the economy in the downtown at this time we continue to see remodeling of storefronts in an attempt to upgrade the buildings at the ground floor level. Fortunately, the cycle has gone full circle and in many cases we are seeing more historically compatible storefronts replacing earlier remodeling. Given the date of

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the change it should be determined ~~non-contributing~~/non-historic.

INTERIOR

As built, one entered the building through the Washington Street doors immediately to an elevator lobby, with three elevators at the east side of the lobby. The lobby and interior spaces have been altered completely. The only remaining character defining features on the interior include one elevator door on each floor and the interior stairwell. The stairwell is marble with wrought iron banisters and a wood railing. The lobby has been completely remodeled with marble and glass.

As built, each office on the second floor and above had a concrete floor, wood base, picture molding and lavatory. Partitions separating the offices and corridors were 35% glass. Marble wainscoting lined the corridors and lavatories, which also had marble floors.

Over time the building has been completely updated. Floors are now carpeted. No original partitions remain; present day partitions are painted gypsum board. Ceilings have a drop-tile acoustical systems. New elevators were installed in 1954; a sprinkler system installed in 1988; and an alarm system installed in 1991.

Stevens Building
Name of Property

Multnomah, OR
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1913-1914

Significant Dates

1914

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A Theodore B. Wilcox (noteworthy as the original investor, but Criterion B not apply

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Whidden & Lewis

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other Oregon Historical Society
- Name of repository:

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SETTING-Portland Park Blocks

The Stevens Building is located in the commercial portion of the Park Blocks, one part of the Lownsdale Donation Land Claim.

When Daniel Lownsdale arrived in 1845, Portland had fewer than 60 people and Oregon was not yet recognized as a U. S. territory. Yet, following the precedent of William Overton and Asa Lovejoy, Lownsdale claimed 640 acres on the river bank to the south of Benjamin Stark's claim. In 1852, he--along with the city's other founding fathers agreed to establish a green strip across the entire length of the young city, from south to north. The strip was to be dedicated for public use. At the time, the strip consisted of steep fir-covered land a mile from the river's edge. Between 1852 and 1876, the Park Block land was used as a roadway for wagons and carriages. In 1876, the City Council began developing the blocks as parkland, starting with the planting of shade trees. Over the ensuing years, the space between the trees was planted with grass. By 1883, the South Park blocks were a prime residential area with a public school, several churches and many of the city's finer homes.

Unlike the south park blocks, however, the seven blocks nearest to the center of the city--called the commercial park blocks--were developed by private owners in the late 1880s. Though originally reserved for the city by Daniel Lownsdale, Lownsdale's widow did not legally dedicate the land to the city prior to her death in 1854. Consequently, in absence of a will, her land was divided equally among her heirs. By the time, the city investigated the land's status in 1871, only four of the six blocks were for sale; two blocks were then being developed. The asking price was \$6,000 per block, twice what the city was prepared to pay. Consequently, the land was left for private development.

By 1889, Park Block 2 was subdivided into six parcels: two private residences on the southern and in the middle. The north, where the Stevens Building would be located, contained wood frame buildings with ground floor commercial with furnished rooms above. To the west was the Arlington Club and Hirsch & Selling Building. To the east was the Comstock Boarding House and Cordray's New Washington Street Theater.

By 1901, the north half of the block remained substantially the same. At the southeast, the Cornelius Hotel had been constructed. In the ensuing decade, however, the area would experience an unprecedented building boom. New structures included the Morgan Building, Platt Building, Benson Hotel, Pacific Telephone & Telegraph, and Pittock Block all surrounding the Stevens.

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HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

In the July of 1913, Theodore Wilcox announced plans for a new 12-story reinforced concrete structure at the southeast corner of Washington and Park Streets. Designed by noted Portland architects Whidden & Lewis, the building was to serve physicians and dentists. Following the example of the Cobb Building in Seattle, the building would feature compressed air, gas and electrical connections for the latest technological innovations in medicine. Corridors would be finished in marble and the building would have three high-speed elevators. Above the sixth floor, the rooms were to have outside air and light, and all rooms below would face a 17 foot light court, created in conjunction with the Platt Building on the east. The projected cost was \$350,000.

Demolition of the existing structures began in August. Construction began immediately under the supervision of the General Contractor, Brayton Engineering. In addition to the air, gas and electrical connections, rooms were equipped with knee valve basins and special dental fixtures. The final cost was \$375,000.

By May 1, 1914, the building was open.

WHIDDEN & LEWIS - Architect

The Stevens Building was designed by the prominent Portland architectural firm of Whidden & Lewis.

William M. Whidden and Ion Lewis were both trained at M.I.T. After graduation, Lewis worked in the Boston office of Peabody & Stearns, and later formed a partnership with Henry P. Clark.

Whidden, after four years at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, joined McKim, Meade & White in New York. Accompanied by McKim, Whidden came to Portland in 1882 to supervise work on railroad magnate Henry Villard's Portland Hotel. Villard's financial collapse in 1883 ended work on the hotel and Whidden returned to the east coast.

In 1888 the partially completed hotel was acquired by a local syndicate headed by H. W. Corbett and William Ladd who invited Whidden to return to Portland to oversee construction. A year later

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Whidden was visited by his friend and classmate, Ion Lewis, who stayed on and joined Whidden in partnership.

The arrival of Whidden & Lewis marked the arrival of current eastern styles, and architecturally speaking, Portland had "come of age." Whidden & Lewis introduced the Georgian in residential design, the Second Renaissance Revival in public buildings, and the classically detailed Commercial Style in office buildings. Notable examples of their work are the Hamilton Building (1893), the Postal Building, located just to the west (1900), and Portland City Hall (1892-95), all listed on the National Register.

Comparative Analysis of Works by Whidden & Lewis

Whidden & Lewis designed the building in 1914, two decades after establishing themselves as Portland's premier architectural firm. In those twenty plus years, Whidden & Lewis--along with A. E. Doyle, who apprenticed for Whidden & Lewis over a dozen years--defined the skyline in downtown Portland. In commercial as with residential works, they expressed themselves in a variety of styles and materials, but consistently brought a facile sense of design and proportion.

The firm was prolific, producing an average of more than one major downtown structure per year. Today, the Historic Resources lists 17 buildings of Whidden & Lewis design in the downtown area. A half dozen are listed in the National Register. Styles were diverse, progressive and "au courant". In the Richardsonian Romanesque, they designed the 1890 Packard-Scott Building (16-28 SW First Avenue) and the 1891 Concord Building (208 SW Stark Street). In the Second Renaissance Revival, they designed the 1893 Hamilton Building (529 SW Third Avenue), 1893 Gilbert Building (319 SW Taylor Street), the 1895 Portland City Hall (1220 SW Fifth Avenue), the 1900 Postal Building (510 SW Third Avenue), and the 1902 George Lawrence Building (306 SW First Avenue). In the next several years, the firm defined the architectural theme of the Lewis & Clark Exposition and six of the major structures. Following the Exposition, downtown Portland experienced a building boom of unprecedented proportions. It was Whidden & Lewis directly and through their protege Doyle indirectly that provided the design sense of that boom. It was overwhelmingly twentieth century classical: Works included the 1907 Failing Building (620 SW Fifth Avenue), the 1907 Corbett Building (demolished), the 1909 Imperial Hotel (400 SW Broadway), the 1910 Arlington Club (811 SW Salmon--with a Georgian wrinkle), the 1911 County Courthouse (1021 SW Fourth), the 1911 Wilcox Building (506 SW Sixth Avenue), and their last extant work downtown--the Stevens

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Building.

The significance of the Stevens Building lies not as their last major commission downtown, nor as defining example of style or telling breakthrough design. Rather, the import of the building lies with the sheer number of quality, comparable examples by the firm within a short distance. It lies with the cumulative effect of this body of work in defining downtown Portland architecturally. And when the numerous designs of their former apprentice Doyle are added to that body (which includes works as the Morgan Building, the Northwest Bank Building and Meier & Frank Buildings), the cumulative impact is overwhelming.

THEODORE B. WILCOX

The developer and owner of the Stevens Building was Theodore B. Wilcox. This was the third structure designed by Whidden & Lewis for Wilcox. The first was the Imperial Hotel in 1909, the Wilcox Building in 1911 and the Stevens in 1914. Wilcox was a noted Portland businessman and developer.

Theodore Burney Wilcox was born on July 8, 1856 in Agawan, Massachusetts--the only son of Henry and Sarah (Burney) Wilcox. He was descended from David Wilcox, who came from Wales to the New World in 1635, and on his mother's side, from Thomas Burney, who emigrated to Massachusetts from England in 1820. After attending school until the age of sixteen, Wilcox started work at the Hampden National Bank of Westfield, Massachusetts. From the outset, Wilcox displayed a strong aptitude for business.

At the age of 21, Wilcox moved to Oregon. Asahel Bush of the Salem, Oregon bank, Ladd & Bush, recognized Wilcox as a man of uncommon talents while visiting Massachusetts in 1877. He offered Theodore a position as a teller, and Theodore accepted.

Ladd & Bush was a private bank. Under the leadership of William S. Ladd, it had but one purpose: to invest its resources and gain control of potentially profitable enterprises. In 1883, Ladd selected Wilcox to serve as his administrative assistant, confidential advisor and protege. Wilcox continued in that capacity until Ladd's death in 1893.

In that same year, 1883, Ladd established the Albina Flour Mills and installed Wilcox as general

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manager. Together, they collected several failing mills into a single profitable entity, ultimately called the Portland Flouring Mills. At the time, grain export was one of Portland's most profitable enterprises with over \$7 million of wheat and flour shipped from the state.

Upon Ladd's death in 1893, Wilcox found himself excluded from all of his mentor's enterprises except the flour mills. Over the years, Ladd's wife and sons grew to resent Wilcox's influence over their father. Now in control of the family wealth, they excluded him from the family business.

Nonetheless, over the next three decades, Wilcox worked aggressively to expand Portland Flour Mills, accepting few barriers to growth. His vision was worldwide: to export his grain, he would establish railroads, build docks, make channels and create banks. Wilcox successfully tapped and developed the Chinese and Japanese markets. Through his enterprise, Portland Flour became one of the largest and most successful of its kind in the world, producing 10,000 barrels daily shipped from Amur River to Cape of Good Hope, Alaska to Cape Horn.

By 1897, the Ladd family made peace with Wilcox. In that year, he joined with Charles E. Ladd to form the Equitable Savings and Loan from the old Oregon Building and Loan Association. It would fuel his next vision: real estate development.

In 1907, amidst the post-Lewis & Clark Exposition boom, Wilcox joined with Walter F. Burrell, John L. Hartman and Edward L. Thompson to form the Rose City Park Association of East Portland. Together, they developed 1000 acres of former farmland along northeast Sandy Boulevard, between 45th and 62nd Avenues. The Association planned a strict residential community of homes that was well within the means of the average skilled craftsman. No house could cost less than \$1,500 or be closer than 15 feet to the street. Equitable provided the financing. The investors realized an 800% profit from the venture.

Shortly thereafter, Wilcox invested heavily in downtown Portland. As a result of annual flooding and the two great fires of the 1870s, Portland's business community was steadily moving to the west. With the post-exposition boom, that pace quickened. In 1908, Wilcox purchased the quarter block at the southeast of Sixth and Washington for \$250,000. In that same year, he purchased the site for the Stevens Buildings and the Imperial Hotel for comparable amounts. In 1909, he built the Imperial. Two years later, he built the Wilcox, and in 1914, he built the Stevens.

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In 1912, Wilcox replaced Charles Ladd as the president of Equitable. Under his guidance, it invested \$2.2 million in 38 cities. It returned more than \$2.2 million to investors, including himself.

Over the years, there were few branches of human endeavor vitally affecting the Northwest in which he did not have a part. He was a leader in developing the Columbia River for commercial purposes. He was one of the founding commissioners of the Port of Portland, and served as its President. Other civic memberships included the Oregon Development League, Chamber of Commerce, Portland Water Board, and Portland Commercial Club. He was a member of the Lewis & Clark Exposition Committee, a member of the First Presbyterian Church, and held memberships in the Waverly Country Club, Multnomah Athletic Club, and Arlington Club.

HISTORY OF TERRA COTTA IN PORTLAND BUILDINGS

The Stevens Building is recognized one of 40 buildings discussed by Virginia Guest Ferriday in her Last of the Handmade Buildings as defining a Terra Cotta District in downtown Portland.

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

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

Architectural terra cotta is of hard-baked, fine-grained clay. It is similar to brick, but made of a finer

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grade of clay and fired at a higher temperature. Generally, it is manufactured in hollow blocks, 4 inches deep with faces typically 12x18 inches.

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

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

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

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The Oregonian

The Oregon Journal

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Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to Styles. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1969).

Stevens Building
Name of Property

Multnomah, Oregon
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre (15,000 s.f.) 0.11 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

Portland, Oregon - Washington 1:24000

1	110	5250710	50406710
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John M. Tess, President

organization Heritage Investment Corporation date July, 1997

street & number 123 NW Second Avenue #200 telephone (503) 228-0272

city or town Portland state OR zip code 97209

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

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

Property Owner

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

name Park Washington Assoc. LTD

street & number 1166 Broadway #K telephone _____

city or town Placerville state CA zip code 95667

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

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

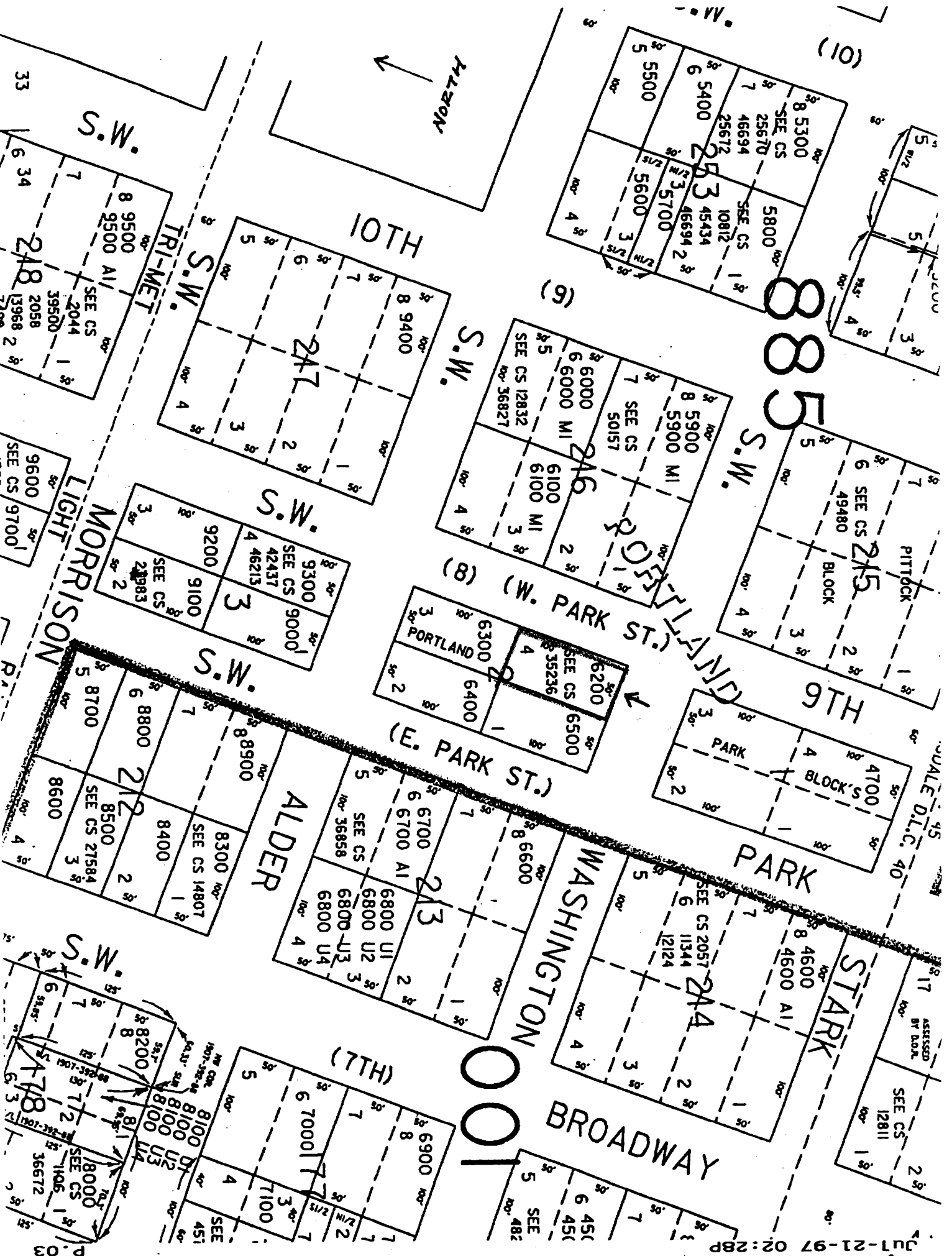
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Stevens Building is located on Lot 4 of Portland Park Block 2, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

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



885

NORTH

Map labels and lot details:

- Streets:** 10TH, 9TH, 8TH, ALDER, WASHINGTON, STARK, BROADWAY, MORRISON LIGHT, S.W. PARK, S.W. TRIM-MET, S.W. ALDER, S.W. WASHINGTON, S.W. STARK, S.W. BROADWAY.
- Block Labels:** BLOCK'S, PITTOCK BLOCK, W. PARK ST., (E. PARK ST.), (7TH).
- Lot Numbers:** 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.
- Addresses:** 89400, 85300, 8400, 8300, 8200, 8100, 8000, 7100, 6900, 6800, 6700, 6600, 6500, 6400, 6300, 6200, 6100, 6000, 5900, 5800, 5700, 5600, 5500, 5400, 5300, 5200, 5100, 4980, 4700, 4600, 4500, 4400, 4300, 4200, 4100, 4000, 3900, 3800, 3700, 3600, 3500, 3400, 3300, 3200, 3100, 3000, 2900, 2800, 2700, 2600, 2500, 2400, 2300, 2200, 2100, 2000, 1900, 1800, 1700, 1600, 1500, 1400, 1300, 1200, 1100, 1000, 900, 800, 700, 600, 500, 400, 300, 200, 100.

**Historic
Resource
Inventory**
CITY OF PORTLAND, OREGON

0-936-00812

812 S.W. Washington Street

Portland, Portland Park Block 2, Lot 4
QUARTER SECTION MAP #: 3029.5
Downtown Community Association

ORIGINAL NAME: Stevens Building
OTHER NAMES: Farwest Assurance Building

ORIGINAL FUNCTION: Office, Retail

DATE BUILT: 1914

STYLE: Twentieth Century Classical

ARCHITECTURAL PLANS BY: Whidden and Lewis

ORIGINAL OWNER: Wilcox, Theodore B.

TAX ASSESSOR'S ACCOUNT #: R-66774-3240
ZONING: C1Z

Rank III

HISTORIC DISTRICT: Glazed Terra Cotta (potential)

SPECIAL FEATURES AND MATERIALS:

Greize-colored brick. Off-white glazed terra cotta at upper two stories. Decorative terra cotta roof cornice with lion's heads, block modillions, egg and dart, and dentils. Double-hung windows with wood sash. Glazed terra cotta window sills. Ribbed concrete floor system.



100-320
100-3100

SPECIAL F/M - ORIGINAL REMOVED:

Glazed terra cotta on lower two floors including pilasters with fleur-de-lis at street level and rustication above. Shop fronts with plate glass below transom. Entrance marquise of cast iron, copper, and wire-ribbed glass hung by wrought-brass chains from lion's heads on spandrel. Roof flag pole with gilded ball.

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture

Architecture: Glazed terra cotta was used as an exterior sheathing material and for individual decorative elements in buildings in Portland from about 1900 to 1930. Terra cotta blocks (which are similar in size and configuration to concrete blocks but have decorative glazed faces) were made by pressing fine clay into plaster molds. The clay blocks were then glazed, dried, and fired.

Because terra cotta was fireproof, lightweight and, compared to carved stone, inexpensive to produce, it was the favored material for the large commercial structures built during Portland's era of rapid growth. However, cast stone ornament (concrete), developed in the late 1920s, was even less expensive, and gradually gained popularity over terra cotta. Later, with the introduction of mass-produced aluminum and glass-wall systems, the use of decorative masonry ceased altogether.

Although most glazed terra cotta buildings in Portland are found in and around the downtown retail core, there are numerous schools and apartment buildings with glazed terra cotta decoration scattered throughout the metropolitan area.

Plans for the Stevens Building were adapted from those for the Wilcox Building, also designed by Whidden and Lewis for Theodore B. Wilcox. Ornamentation for the Stevens Building is, however, much more restrained. The steel-frame and ribbed-concrete slab structural system was designed by the Trussed Concrete Steel Company. Bays are 13' 3" x 20'. The ribbed slab utilized the "Floretyle" system. A 8' x 60' light court runs along the east wall. There was originally a light court over the first floor space under this light court.

The storefronts, which, according to the working drawings would be "arranged to suit the tenants," originally had undivided areas of glass below the transoms and approximately 3' x 6' sections of glass above. Awnings were hung at the transom. Ceiling height for the first floor space accommodated a mezzanine. Each office had concrete floor, woodbase, picture mold, and lavatory. Partitions separating offices and corridors were 35 percent glass. Marble wainscoting occurred in the corridors and in the rest rooms, which also had marble tile floors. Reason for the building being named Stevens has not been determined.

0-936-00812

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ORIGINAL BUILDING PERMIT #: 45604

MAJOR ALTERATIONS: 1954/344019/Pietro Belluschi and Skidmore, Owings and Merrill

1962/401160, 401458

Present owners, as of May 1980: International Health and Life Insurance Company

MAILING ADDRESS: 812 S.W. Washington, Portland 97205

No Preservation Funding

Negative: 123-11

Score - Design/Construction: 11

Score - Historical: 2

Score - Rarity:

Score - Environment: 6

Score - Integrity: 6

Score - Intrinsic: 13

Score - Contextual: 12

Score - Total: 57.5