

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH 0675563

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED APR 18 1979

DATE ENTERED

**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 Multnomah County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 1021 S. W. 4th Avenue

___NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Portland

___ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1st

STATE

Oregon

CODE
041COUNTY
Multnomah051^{CODE}**CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input 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 checked="" 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:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Multnomah County ✓

STREET & NUMBER 1021 S. W. 4th Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Portland

___ VICINITY OF

Oregon^{STATE}

97204

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Multnomah County Courthouse, Recorder's Office, Room 102

STREET & NUMBER 1021 S.W. 4th Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Portland

Oregon^{STATE}

97204

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Portland Historical Landmark

DATE

May 6, 1970

___FEDERAL ___STATE ___COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDSPortland Bureau of Planning
424 S. W. Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Portland

Oregon^{STATE}

97204

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Occupying an entire block bordering two park blocks in downtown Portland, the Multnomah County Courthouse stands as a model of the prevalent style for governmental buildings erected in the early 20th century. The eight-story Neoclassical Revival structure is 200 feet square and is of riveted structural steel, fireproofed with concrete and faced with terra cotta (the decorative elements and courtyard walls) cementitious plaster (the seventh & eighth floors), and regular course granite (the two-story "pedestal and limestone (the base, columns, pilasters, and entablature). The central courtyard, 64 by 100 feet, contains a three story annex completed in 1951. The seventh and eighth floors, designed for detention purposes, are recessed from the perimeter 8 to 10 feet and were originally shielded from public view by a 10 feet high terra cotta-faced parapet wall (which has since been removed due to structural weakness). The ribbed metal roof of the two attic stories is very slightly hipped to allow drainage.

The east and west facades contained the primary and secondary entrances, respectively; however, the formal entrance on the west facade was later filled in to allow more courtroom space within, leaving two smaller flanking entrances. Either facade features a four-story colonnade of six Ionic columns resting on a two-story "pedestal", alternating with seven bays of triple wooden windows (original, although in poor condition). The first two floors--the "pedestal"--contain nine bays of windows except where entrances occur in their place. The north and south facades contain three wide bays of windows alternating with two narrower bays, each bay separated by a pilaster. Whereas the east and west facade windows are divided horizontally into four one-story sections reflecting the one-story offices within, the north and south facade windows stretch two stories to indicate the high ceilinged courtrooms within. Originally covered with bronze decorative screens, the north and south windows have been replaced with glass blocks and aluminum frame windows during remodeling of the courtrooms.

Exterior details are rich but subtle, with carved granite and cast terra cotta ornament on entrances, entablature, columns, and base. The style of ornament is neoclassic Roman, with "egg and dart" horizontal bands, carved lions' heads, rondels, and fluted consoles.

The original Courthouse interior was predominately of marble wainscoting, floors, and stairs; plaster walls, ceilings, and cornices; oak doors and molding; bronze stair railings and posts; and Italian statuary newel posts. Courtrooms were two-story spaces, decorated with marble Corinthian columns and tapestry-covered walls. The main staircase is open on all six floors; its marble steps and bronze railing make it the focal point of the structure.

Over the years the demand for courtrooms has grown, and the building has been remodeled on a recurring basis. All but four courtrooms have been changed from a single two-story space to two one-story spaces, effectively doubling the number of courtrooms but necessitating the removal of all original decorative elements. These modifications, plus the remodeling of the majority of the remaining offices throughout the eight floors and basement, have left only the hallways, stairs, and two courtrooms in original or near-original condition.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

The mechanical system was quite innovative and complex for its time, supplying the building with forced air and radiant heating, on-site generated electricity for emergencies, and a built-in central vacuuming system with outlets for hose attachments located throughout. The original heating system pipe network, in poor condition, is still used, although other heating, ventilation, and cooling systems have been added over the years.

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that occurs in tall spaces. Providing forced air from a central source also reduced the noise of individual fans and motors and of creaking radiators that could disrupt courtroom proceedings.

But while the Courthouse functioned beautifully, it is its elegant appearance that gives it its acclaim. In 1914 it stood as Portland's largest building as well as the West Coast's largest courthouse. Its style harks back to the monumental architecture of Rome while adhering to the modest scale of downtown Portland. The somewhat somber exterior serves as a foil to the wealth of detail within. A visitor in 1914 was greeted by inlaid marble floors in the portico and lobby; from there he could travel up the formal marble staircase to the ornate courtrooms or to the plaster-corniced offices throughout. From the bronze grilles covering the courtroom air ducts to the terra cotta lions' heads along the cornice, the careful attention to detail makes the Multnomah County Courthouse a superior and valuable building, not to be lost.

To be sure, the Courthouse property is intensively used; additional floor space has been gained wherever possible, and modern mechanical systems have been introduced. Two facades have lost their bronze screens and wooden windows; many plaster ceilings are hidden beneath modern suspended acoustical ceilings; most courtrooms have been horizontally divided into two more modern, less impressive courtrooms; a three-story annex partially fills the courtyard; and general remodeling and modification of office space have given the Courthouse interior a variety of styles and elements. The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners realizes that modernization is inevitable for most vital buildings, but it wishes to focus its efforts in the future on repair, renovation, and restoration activities that will return the Courthouse to an appearance substantially closer to that which was originally intended. Major structural changes, such as the division of courtrooms, the addition of the annex, and some enlargements of offices are irreversible; but many other modifications--glass blocks, suspended ceilings, bricked-up entrances--are not. Some work has begun, and it is hoped that acceptance on the list of the National Register of Historic Places will provide the guidance and, possibly, some financial assistance to carry out the work in the best manner possible.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1911 (East Wing)
 1914 (Remainder) BUILDER/ARCHITECT Whidden & Lewis, Architects

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Multnomah County Courthouse (1911-1914) is significant to the city of Portland and Multnomah County as an outstanding example of Neo Classical Revival architecture by the preeminent Portland architects of the turn of the century, William H. Whidden and Ion Lewis. Whidden and Lewis also were responsible for another civic monument nearby-- the Second Renaissance Revival City Hall of 1895. In the Courthouse project, conventional surface detail and progressive notions of function and utility were successfully combined in a solid academic design which defines the northwesterly border of a two-block park area in the downtown core. Since completion of the initial wing in 1911, the Courthouse has served as the seat of government for Multnomah County, which throughout the intervening 68 years has been the most urbanized and populous local jurisdiction in the state.

During the years 1890-1915, Portland, Oregon experienced a growth rate of phenomenal proportions. Economically and culturally Portland was "coming of age". The buildings and other structures erected during this time reflected the richer, more discerning taste that was prevalent. The premier architects were Whidden and Lewis, two "Easterners" who moved to Portland in the 1880s and who, more than any other architects, shaped the appearance of downtown Portland.

With flexibility and ingenuity little seen today, construction of the new Courthouse was directed so as not to interrupt the proceedings of the old Courthouse sitting on the same block. The east wing of the building was completely finished through the eighth floor and the employees were moved from the old Courthouse into the new; only then was the old structure razed and the remaining three sides of the building begun.

Upon completion, the Courthouse was considered a model of fire safety; the only wood used is for furnishings and trim. All parts of the steel frame are covered with concrete to prevent damage in case of fire, and plaster ceilings are applied directly to the masonry instead of to wooden lath.

Ease of maintenance was also addressed creatively, with the choice of windows that pivot about a vertical axis and thus allow cleaning of both sides from within the building. As mentioned in the building description, a built-in vacuuming system (no longer in use) allowed cleaning of the entire building by hose attachment outlets located throughout.

Mechanically speaking, the Courthouse was quite progressive for its time. Radiant heat was supplied to offices, hallways, and lobbies, while forced air heating kept two-story courtrooms comfortable by eliminating the stratification of hot and cold air

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Oregonian Newspaper, March 24, 1912, pg. 6, sec. 2.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1 (one).

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,0	5,2,5	225 4,5,0	5,0,4,0	175 3,0,0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	
C					

B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All of Block 58, Portland Addition, Portland, Multnomah County

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

Carl P. Moseley, Energy Coordinator

ORGANIZATION

Multnomah County

DATE

January 7, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

2505 S. E. 11th Avenue

TELEPHONE

(503) 248-5200

CITY OR TOWN

Portland

STATE

Oregon 97202

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 State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE March 3, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 6-4-78

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE June 5, 1975

for KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER