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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
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Historic Downtown Hartford
Continuation sheet

Item number

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Judd & Root Building
175-189 Allyn Street
5-23 High Street

1883
Photograph 3
Building #15

Description

The Judd & Root Building is a large (90 x 140 feet), 6-story, brick building with marble and terra cotta trim at the corner of Allyn and High streets. Its round-arched windows, fenestration pattern, polychromy and corbel tables place it in the High Victorian Romanesque style.

The two street elevations of the Judd & Root Building have a complex design. In recent years the first story of arcaded openings divided by columns has been covered with stucco, covering a pattern of brick and marble comparable to that shown at the second floor.¹ At the corners of the building, above the first floor, the building breaks out to form shallow corner pavilions of one bay. There are four additional bays between the corner pavilions on the Allyn Street elevation and two additional bays on the High Street elevation.

The window treatment at each story is different. The first floor is a continuous arcade of round-arched openings. At the second floor there is a pair of windows in each bay, under a segmental arch. The voussoirs of the arches alternate red brick and white marble. The paired windows are connected by four belt courses of white marble and a band of raised foliate design in white terra cotta connects the tops of the arches under a projecting, white, molded, second-floor cornice.

The third- and fourth-floor windows are set in a recessed, vertical, 2-story panel, two windows in each bay. Another marble belt course runs below the third-floor windows with two additional such courses within each bay. Third floor windows are round headed and fourth floor windows have segmental arches. The area between them is devoted to an intricate terra-cotta design in the color of brick. There is a corbel course within each bay above the fourth-floor windows, under a molded cornice.

At the fifth floor, there are three rectangular windows in each bay under a machicolated cornice. In the top floor, each pavilion bay has a band of five smaller rectangular windows and each intermediate bay four such windows. These windows are flanked by polished, engaged, marble columns. A double tier of quatrefoil bands marks the roof line.

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The architectural details articulated on the street elevations return briefly on the south and west elevations, which otherwise are plain. Two windows of the first floor of the south elevation show in their arches white marble and red brick voussosirs that originally appeared along the lengths of the two street elevations.

The interior surfaces have been largely covered up with plywood paneling and acoustic tile, but some marble wainscoting remains visible. The stairway to the upper floors has marble treads and a railing of square iron spindles with wooden handrail.

1. The original appearance is shown by early photographs.

Significance - Criterion C, Architecture

The firm of Judd & Root was formed by Henry C. Judd and Judson H. Root. They were successful wool merchants for several decades toward the end of the 19th century, catering to such mills as the Hartford Carpet Co., Tariffville Carpet Co. and Broad Brook Woolen Mill and others in Connecticut which consumed large quantities of wool. Judd & Root admitted as a partner in the firm Lucius F. Barbour who also was president of the Willimantic Linen Co. and whose house at 130 Washington Street is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The architect for the Judd & Root Building was Francis E. Kimball (1845-1919) of the New York firm of Kimball & Wisedell. Kimball had lived and worked in Hartford from 1870 to 1879, coming to town as supervising architect for Bryant & Rogers' Second Empire Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Co. offices. Kimball stayed on in Hartford as supervising architect for Trinity College, designed by William Burges in whose London office he worked briefly in preparation for his responsibilities at Trinity. After difficulty in 1878 in connection with a building for the Hartford Theological Seminary, Kimball removed to New York in 1879, formed a partnership with Thomas Wisedell (d. 1884) and entered into a long and successful practice.

The contractor for the Judd & Root Building was Watson Tryon, one of several Tryons engaged in the masonry business in Hartford in the 19th century. Watson Tryon was masonry contractor for a portion of the Connecticut State Capitol. Marble was handled by A. Budde & Co. Charles Loomis had the carpentry contract.

In some respects the Judd & Root Building is retadataire, for 1883. Its arcaded first story, the polished columns dividing the top floor windows

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and the quatrefoil bands were more up to date when used in the Batterson Building across High Street about two decades earlier. The extensive use of terra-cotta ornamentation, on the other hand, was representative of its decade. The Goodwin Building of 1881, also a design of Kimball's but in the more fashionable Queen Anne style, also makes extensive use of terra-cotta surface embellishment. Both the Judd & Root Building and the Goodwin Building are mentioned and pictured in the 1884 catalog of the Boston Terra Cotta Company,¹ the firm that supplied the material. The difference in styles between the Goodwin and Judd & Root buildings was, according to an account in the Courant at the time, intentional. With regard to the Judd & Root Building, the Courant said, "It has been the desire of the architects to avoid what is usually termed the 'Queen Anne style'... (with its symmetrical fenestration)... a building designed with some reference to the old rules of 'voids over voids' and 'solids over solids' should, with skill in the handling of these indispensable features, be more likely to secure perfect repose in the general effect."²

Geographic Data

Acreage: Less than one acre

UTM Reference: 18/692760/4626430

Boundary: City map No. 12, parcel No. 261

¹. Boston Terra Cotta Co., Architectural Terra Cotta of Every Description, Part V, Boston: P. H. Poster & Co., printers, 1884, pp. 3, 72.

². The Hartford Courant, August 30, 1882.