

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

For NPS use only

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

received MAY 22 1985

date entered

JUN 20

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

**1. Name**

historic Johnson Hall

and/or common University of Oregon Administration Building

**2. Location**

street & number East 13th between University and Kincaid Streets N/A not for publication

city, town Eugene N/A vicinity of Fourth Congressional District

state Oregon code 41 county Lane code 039

**3. 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A being considered	<input 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 Oregon State System of Higher Education

street & number PO Box 3175

city, town Eugene N/A vicinity of state Oregon 97403

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lane County Courthouse

street & number 125 East 8th Street

city, town Eugene state Oregon 97401

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Statewide Inventory of Historic Properties has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1985  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office, 525 Trade Street SE

city, town Salem state Oregon 97310

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____ N/A _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

Johnson Hall, erected in 1915 and located at the center of the University of Oregon campus, was designed by Oregon State Architect William C. Knighton. The building's Classically-derived American Renaissance-style elevations are unique to the campus and to the Eugene area.<sup>1</sup> Constructed of reinforced concrete, brick veneer and architectural terra cotta, the building retains a high degree of exterior integrity. The interior has had some modification but retains its essential character and detailing.

Johnson Hall was completed on November 8, 1915 with the dedication ceremonies held on November 20th of the same year. The building was designed by William C. Knighton, who was the state architect for Oregon at the time. The contractor for the project was Boyajohn Arnold and the final construction cost was \$103,829.96. This sum distinguished Johnson Hall as the most expensive building on campus at the time.<sup>2</sup>

Originally, Johnson Hall was designed to house administrative offices and other campus services. Administrative functions were located on the second floor and included the offices of the President, Registrar, Business Manager and their related support facilities. All other services were located on the first and basement floors, and included the Guild Theatre, major department offices, a collections exhibit and class rooms. In 1949 Johnson Hall underwent a series of renovations which converted the building to administrative use exclusively. As a result, the other original services were relocated to other areas of campus.

Johnson Hall is constructed of reinforced concrete with a brick veneer applied to the exterior of the building. Columns located on the north facade support a two-story portico and are constructed of concrete encased "I" sections with a non-structural glazed architectural terra cotta covering. The roof has a four directional pitch with a skylight framed at its center. The finishing material of the roof is a standard mastif coating. A flat, metal and glass marquee covers the south entrance.

Contexturally, Johnson Hall is oriented with its main entry centered on the north facade. Opposite this entry and centered within the south facade is a secondary entry. These two openings create an interior central axis which extends outside of the building in both directions. Two exterior sculptures, constructed at a later date, serve to terminate this axis. The "Pioneer Mother" sculpture terminates the south end of the axis while the "Pioneer Father" sculpture terminates the north end. The building is located in Section 32, Township 17 South, Range 3 West of the Willamette Meridian, Lane County, Oregon.

Surrounding Johnson Hall are tall trees, manicured open spaces and other academic buildings. Included among these structures are Deady and Villard Halls which were the first two buildings constructed on the campus and which are both National Historic Landmarks. Running in an east/west direction past the north facade of Johnson Hall is East 13th Avenue. At one time this was a major thoroughfare through the campus until a portion was permanently closed to motorized traffic during the protests of the Viet Nam era. Johnson Hall is located within this closed section, which is open to bicycle and pedestrian traffic only.

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In regard to the exterior description of Johnson Hall, its overall dimension, not including the north portico, is 105' x 76' with the longer dimension running in an east/west direction. The building is two stories high with an entablature and parapet wall crowning the structure. A portion of the basement floor is visible above the grade line. The north and south facades are divided into seven bays with each bay being two stories high and containing first and second floor windows. The two end bays are framed by piers with the five interior bays being framed by narrower pilaster elements. The wider dimensions of the end piers act to enclose the interior bays and give the corners a greater visual mass. The east and west facades are treated in the same manner but are five bays wide instead of seven.

Single pane, casemented sash windows in wooden frames are set into each recessed bay. Brick in the spandrels is revealed to create a decorative panel. Operable transoms are a part of the main floor window ensembles. Retractable striped canvas awnings appear on all but the north elevation.

One of the major characteristics of Johnson Hall is its use of glazed architectural terra cotta. This building was the first of five on campus to use the material and its application on Johnson is the most complex and elaborate. The terra cotta is used extensively on the north portico, entablature and parapet wall.

The north portico is supported by six colossal Ionic columns which are given their form through pieced cylindrical terra cotta blocks. The columns are composed of a fluted shaft with scamozzi capitals and the base of each column is supported by a granite block.

Surrounding Johnson Hall at the attic level is a classical entablature. This element is divided into three sections which include an architrave, frieze and cornice. The architrave and cornice are formed by the terra cotta with the frieze being formed by a brick veneer. It is in the cornice that the terra cotta installation is most complex. To allow the system to project from the building, an extensive metal anchorage system, common to construction in this material, was needed for the support of each terra cotta block. The individual blocks are hung by metal rods which tie into metal beams that are imbedded in the concrete wall. Johnson Hall is the only building on campus to use this type of terra cotta construction.

Extending above the entablature is a parapet wall which runs around the entire perimeter of the building. Significant to this element is an ornamental cap of terra cotta which acts to crown the building.

The interior of Johnson Hall has changed some of its original organization since a 1949 renovation. The building was originally designed with a centrally-located, one story rotunda which remains today in its original form. Its materials consist of a marble wainscot with yellow plaster walls, a molded white ceiling and grey pilaster forms which define the rotunda area. Flanking this space to the east was the Guild Theatre which is now administrative offices and a conference room. Flanking the rotunda to west was an exhibit room and class rooms. This area now houses the President's office and has retained most of its original materials.

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On the second floor there was originally a central public space which contained a skylight of hung Tiffany-style glass panels designed with a Roman motif. These glass panels were removed during the 1949 renovation and the skylight was replaced by a hung acoustical ceiling. It is important to note that the Tiffany-style panels are still intact and could possibly be put back into place. Also removed during the renovation were the wood panels and marble baseboard of the public space which are also still intact and stored at the University's Physical Plant. Occupying this space now are support facilities for the second floor offices which are in their original locations and which contain much of their original materials. These offices are also used for their original purpose of administration.

The basement was originally composed of departmental offices and is now a part of the administration function. Most of the original materials there have been removed.

In summary, the general physical condition of Johnson Hall today is good. In regard to the interior of the building all of the remaining original materials are in sound shape. The supporting structure also seems in good condition with no visible problems evident. Problems occurring on the exterior of the building were mainly associated with the terra cotta. The terra cotta exhibiting advanced decay through glaze spalling and corrosion of the metal anchorage support of the cornice line, has been recently restored. Some efflorescence is also visible below the parapet wall on the north facade but this does not appear to be a major problem.

Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Ross, Professor Marion Dean, personal interview, November 18, 1983

<sup>2</sup> Henry F. Whitney and Elsie Rathburn Whitney, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased); Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Company, 1956, pp. 352.

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1915 **Builder/Architect** Boyajohn Arnold, builder  
William C. Knighton, architect

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

Johnson Hall, a two-story reinforced concrete, brick and glazed terra cotta veneer building with raised basement, is located in the center of the University of Oregon campus in Eugene, Lane County, Oregon. Situated on an important axial alignment between the "old" and "new" campus quadrangles, the prominent site is emphasized by the building's imposing American Renaissance-style design by William C. Knighton, who was State Architect for Oregon between 1912 and 1917. Named in honor of the first University of Oregon president, John Wesley Johnson, the building is significant to the Oregon System of Higher Education and to the City of Eugene, and meets eligibility Criterion "a" as the administrative center of the University of Oregon for 70 years. Symbolic of a renewed interest in higher education and of building expansion in the campus, Johnson Hall, erected for almost \$104,000 in 1915, was initially a multi-function building which housed various departments and a theater in addition to the University's administrative offices.

Criterion "c" is applicable in regard to the fine classically-detailed elevations in the American Renaissance tradition. Johnson Hall is further significant as the first reinforced concrete building on campus and was also the first to employ glazed architectural terra cotta for its decorative program. Dominated by a two-story portico supported by white, glazed architectural terra cotta-encased colossal Ionic columns, the building is also embellished with terra cotta sills, friezes, modillioned cornice and parapet coping. Its interior, altered in 1949, still conveys its essential character. The main floor lobby dominated by a north/south axial, retains its marble sheathing, original light fixtures, stylized columns with "UO" logogram, coffered ceilings and varnished wood details. The second floor lobby, originally featuring a large Tiffany-style skylight, has been modernized and the skylight panels removed and stored.

Architect William C. Knighton designed notable landmarks such as the Dr. L. A. Port House (1894), old State Office Building, and Supreme Court Building (1913), all in Salem. Other notable Knighton buildings include the Seward Hotel in Portland (1909) and Eastern Oregon State Hospital in Pendleton.

The position of Johnson Hall terminates the "old quadrangle" formed by Deady and Villard Halls and marks the connection to the new quadrangle containing the museum, library and other important buildings. The significance of Johnson Hall as a transition element between the old and new quadrangles goes beyond formal campus planning. At the time of Johnson Hall's conception, the University gained new financial stability by the passage of the 1913, "Millage Bill" which marked both a renewed interest in the role of higher education and a new period of building expansion on the University of Oregon campus.<sup>1</sup>

Johnson Hall was completed November 8, 1915, and was dedicated to the first President of the University, John Wesley Johnson, on November 20, 1915. The speakers at the

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1.05 acres

Quadrangle name Eugene, East

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	0	4	9	4	0	2	0	4	8	7	6	6	8	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

See continuation sheet

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

state None code county code

state None code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Brooks Walker and Rande Larsen

organization School of Architecture and Allied Arts date December 11, 1983

street & number University of Oregon telephone (503) 686-3656

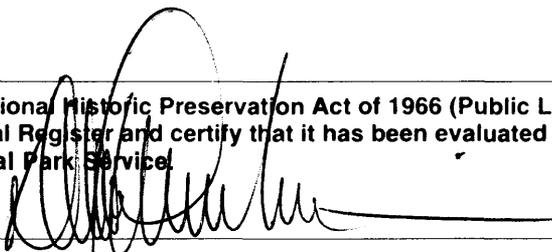
city or town Eugene state Oregon 97403

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

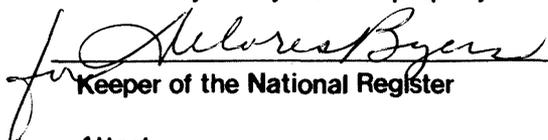
title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date March 8, 1985

### For NPS use only

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

Entered in the National Register

date 6-20-85

  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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dedication ceremony eloquently summarized the importance of Johnson Hall in relation to the campus and to the system of higher education in Oregon. J. D. Churchill, State Superintendent of Public Instruction said of the building:

Today we rejoice because an edifice which Oregon dedicates is the last word in architectural beauty for an administration building; because at last the safety of the records is assured through a fire proof structure, and for the further reason that a new era in building is ushered in through this latest type of architecture.

Another speaker, A. C. Dixon, Chairman of the Executive Committee, reinforces the significance placed on the completion of Johnson Hall.

I believe the construction and completion of this splendid building marks an epoch in the development of our institutions, and the change from the old to the new in Architecture and construction marks the beginning of a more loyal, intensified interest in the work of the University and the beginning of a period of increasing strength of faculty and curriculum, improvement in scholarship and broadening of influence. The building itself we think is a model in many ways, in that it is enduring in character, both as to materials and workmanship, and from the foundation to the roof we have attempted to make it in every way permanent and suitable for its purpose, not overlooking the opportunity to make it pleasing to the eye. In the quality of the work put upon it and in the harmony of its parts, the students of the institution may well find a pattern for the modelling and building of their lives and characters.

Prince Lucien Campbell, President of the University, summarizes in his speech the buildings intent and original use.

Built of reinforced concrete faced with brick, costing in round numbers one hundred thousand dollars, admirably planned and splendidly furnished, this administration and recitation building marks the beginning of a new era of construction at the University. In its location, it both closes up the composition of the old quadrangle and makes a beginning on the new composition of the block - plan adapted by the Board of Regents last year. In its interior arrangement, not only are the University administrative offices handsomely provided for on the upper floor, but the two lower floors provide, in addition, comfortable and convenient recitation rooms for the housing of the department of Geology, Mathematics, Greek, and Public Speaking, besides dean's offices and a delightful little theatre for general University use.<sup>2</sup>

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The design and construction documents for Johnson Hall were drawn by the State Architect, William C. Knighton. The last off-campus architect to design a building until 1946, Knighton was born in Indianapolis, Indiana, 1866 and worked in architectural offices in Chicago and Birmingham, Alabama, before moving to Portland in 1895. He completed his apprenticeship under C. S. McNally, working as chief draughtsman on the Capitol National Bank Building in Salem. He established his own practice a few years later and was appointed architect of the Oregon State Board of Control in 1912. During the next five years he designed the Supreme Court Building in Salem, Johnson Hall in Eugene, the State Hospital in Pendleton and several armories. In 1922 he formed a partnership with Leslie D. Howell and the firm designed many important buildings, including Grant High School in Portland. The old State Office Building in Salem, the Pythian House, Vancouver, Washington; Junior and Senior high school in Salem as well as numerous commercial buildings in Portland and Salem. Johnson Hall exemplifies Knighton's skillful use of architectural terra cotta to create a classical design image, in a material he also employed in other significant buildings in his career.<sup>3</sup> Several of these buildings are already listed on the National Register.

The reinforced concrete construction system is one of the building's most historically important aspects. Concrete had been used in the state since the later part of the 19th Century but the first use of a reinforced concrete frame did not appear until 1908. The lack of good, inexpensive Portland Cement contributed to the early difficulties in building with this material. Cement manufacture first began in the state in 1913 which helped to bring about a surge in reinforced concrete construction. This new technology gained rapid popularity due to its relative ease of construction, fire proof qualities, durability and ability to resist strong lateral loads produced by earthquakes; the 1906 earthquake in San Francisco left a strong impression in the minds of architects and builders. Although not the first to employ reinforced concrete, Johnson Hall represents part of the early phase and development of this building system.

Besides being the first building on campus to use reinforced concrete, it was also the first to use glazed architectural terra cotta. All of the refined detailing of the buildings exterior was executed in white terra cotta, which helped to give the building a classical effect. The use of terra cotta on Johnson Hall set a precedent for many of the buildings that followed.

#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>University of Oregon Archives, Johnson Hall File.

<sup>2</sup>University of Oregon Archives, Johnson Hall File.

<sup>3</sup>Henry F. Whitney and Elsie Rathburn Whitney, Biographical Dictionary of American Architect (Deceased), Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Company, 1956, pp. 352.

<sup>4</sup>Harry Weiss, Early Concrete Construction in Oregon, Masters thesis, Spring 83, AAA Library, University of Oregon.

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Whithey, Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Whithey. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased). Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Company, 1956.

Weiss, Harry. Early Concrete Construction in Oregon. Masters thesis, 1933. Architecture & Allied Arts Library, University of Oregon, Eugene.

University of Oregon archives. Johnson Hall File.

Personal communication, Professor Marion Dean Ross, November 18, 1983.

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Description of Johnson Hall Historical Site

1.05± acres - 45,781 sq. ft. Beginning at the intersection of the centerlines of University Street and Thirteenth Avenue East as constructed; thence, N89°23'23"W, 223.97 feet along the centerline of Thirteenth Avenue East as constructed (including a portion within now vacated Thirteenth Avenue East) to the TRUE POINT OF BEGINNING on the northerly projection of the easterly edge of a concrete walk; thence, N89°23'23"W, 177.23 feet continuing along the centerline of now vacated Thirteenth Avenue East as constructed to a point on the northerly projection of the westerly edge of a concrete walk; thence, S0°34'09"W, 258.39 feet along said northerly projection, the westerly edge and the southerly projection of said walk to a point on the westerly projection of the south line of a walk; thence, S89°19'51"E, 177.00 feet along the westerly projection, the southerly line and the easterly projection of the southerly line of said walk to a point on the southerly projection of the east line of a concrete walk; thence, N0°37'12"E, 258.57 feet to the true point of beginning in Eugene, Lane County, Oregon.

