OMB No. 10024-0018

NPS Form 10-900 (Oct. 1990)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



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 parative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property			
historic nameKre	ess Buil	ding	
other names/site number	······································		
2. Location			
street & number638	3 SW Fif	th Avenue	NA not for publication
city or townPoi	rtland		N/♠ vicinity
	code	OR county Multnomah	code <u>051</u> zip code <u>97204</u>
3. State/Federal Agency Certifi	cation		
☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ loo Signature of certifying official/Title Oregon State Historic	Deputy	August 12 SHPO Date	2, 1996
State of Federal agency and bure	au		criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional
State of Federal agency and bure	eets does		
In my opinion, the property comments.)	eets does	s not meet the National Register	
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Name of Property			ty and S	an, OR State	
5. Classification					
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number (Do not inc	of Res	ources within Proper	r ty :he count.)
	☑ building(s)☐ district☐ site☐ structure☐ object			Noncontributing	sites structure objects
Name of related multiple p (Enter "N/A" if property is not part n/a	roperty listing of a multiple property listing.)	Number	of con	tributing resources p Register	
6. Function or Use		····			
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)		Current Fui (Enter categori			
COMMERCE/TRADEDepar	tment Store	COMMERCE	/TRADI	ESpecialty Stor Business	re
7. Description					
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)		Materials (Enter categori	es from	instructions)	
LATE 19th AND EARLY 20		foundation _	Gran		
MOVEMENTS: - Comme	ercial Style K Arts Classicism	walls	Ten	ra Cotta	
			Svnt	thetic	
		roof			
		other			

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

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SETTING

The S. H. Kress Building is an elegant, five-story, steel frame structure. The company took great pride in its store buildings, many of which were faced with glazed terra cotta, and Portland's store is no exception. It is located at the northeast corner of Fifth Avenue and Morrison Street. The cream-colored terra-cotta clad building has been a prominent landmark since its construction in 1928.

The Kress Building is sited in the heart of Portland's downtown retail district. Directly across Morrison to the south is Pioneer Place. Directly across to the west is Meier & Frank's headquarters store, with the old Lipman-Wolfe & Company (presently being adapted for hotel use) just beyond. To the southwest is the Pioneer Courthouse (with Pioneer Courthouse Square just beyond westbound). Occupying most of the rest of the block behind the Kress Building is J. J. Newberry's. To the east is parking, with a surface lot on the southeast corner of Fourth and Morrison and a modern multistory ramp garage at the northeast. Morrison is west bound light rail, Fifth Avenue is the southbound transit mall. Fourth is a major automobile artery northbound.

EXTERIOR

The steel frame building rests on a concrete foundation. Its exterior is faced entirely with creamcolored glazed terra cotta, enhanced with a variety of classically inspired decorative motifs. The roof is flat. The footprint of the building is rectangular and the massing is simple. Historic photographs depict somewhat smaller storefronts and transoms on the first floor; however the original placement of the openings and their general configuration remain intact and the new treatment is sensitive to the original design.

The building retains its original use as combined retail and office space. The first floor businesses on the Fifth Avenue elevation (west) are accessed through three recessed entrances flanked by large plate glass windows; the Morrison Street elevation contains several identical entrances. Large multi-light wood transoms above the storefronts are surmounted by a simple, wood cornice which contains recessed lighting. Although the first floor interior ceilings have been lowered, they have been corbeled to leave the original, highly ornate column capitals intact on the interior and visible from the exterior.

A small, single door entrance on the west elevation provides access to the upper floors. It remains largely intact and is repeated on the Morrison Street elevation. Here, the decorative terra cotta work

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is exuberantly displayed both for those who enter the building as well as passersby. The original doors have been replaced but the terra cotta surrounds remain in place. A single terra cotta panel simulating a transom light is located above each door; above the door surround a small double-hung window further articulates the entries. The window surrounds are terra cotta blocks flanked by scrolls "set" on an elaborately embellished entablature with dentil and egg and dart courses.

With the exception of the small windows noted above, fenestration is consistent on all elevations. Windows are double-hung, one-over-one light sash in groups of three.

Architectural detailing is rich, but understated. Each primary elevation is broken into three or more vertical bays by full-height pilasters enriched with recessed panels. Horizontal lines are accentuated by terra cotta rosettes in the spandrels, and a large belt course with a low-relief, modified wave scroll. The prominent, bracketed cornice is emboldened with modillions. The stepped parapet wall on each of the primary elevations contains the word: "KRESS."

A later one-story addition to the east was given a terra cotta veneer when the company acquired it in 1953 from Fred Meyer. The structure, originally wood frame with masonry storefronts, was built around the turn of the century. Upon acquiring it, Kress sheathed the building in terra cotta in a style sympathetic to its original store. It was used as a side entrance and had an access to the basement. Subsequently, in the 1980s renovation, ceramic veneer was used to replace damaged terra cotta and for in-fill.

INTERIOR

As originally configured, the Kress Building served the corporation exclusively. The basement, ground floor and second floor were devoted to retail sales. The upper three stories were used for regional offices and for reserve storage. In 1953, the store expanded a one story structure at the rear (east) at 4th and Morrison with an entry off Morrison and access to the basement. In the later years, Kress was noted for its "old-fashioned" look with wood floors and outdated store fixtures. In the 1970s, after J. C. Penny's leased the space, the retail space was modernized, putting tile and carpet on the floor and a new coat of paint on the walls. Penny's also removed the food counter and installed an escalator to provide access to the upper floors. In the 1980s, with plans for Pioneer Place afoot, the owners repositioned the property to serve as ground floor specialty retail and office space upstairs. This renovation work substantially altered the interior finishes.

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Nonetheless, the interior retains much of its original spatial configuration. On the ground floor are a number of retail spaces and two elevator lobbies. Although many of the finishes have been replaced, the elevator lobbies retain some original features including classical decorative motifs in the ceiling.

ALTERATIONS

- 1953 Kress expands into a one story structure to the east, sheathes it in terra cotta, opens a Morrison Street entrance and an escalator to the basement. Design by S. H. Kress architect
- 1975 Complete modernization of building by J. C. Penney by company architect. Install escalators, new awnings, rework storefronts, carpet/tile floors, drop ceiling, HVAC and new mechanicals.
- 1979 Install new roof of fiberglass materials
- \$2 million rehabilitation of building and addition, rehabilitating storefronts, removing inappropriate improvements, repairing terra cotta, upgrading mechanical systems, removing fire escapes, install fire escape to the basement at the corner of the building and adapting upper stories for offices. Design by Alan Beard of Gordon, Beard, Grimes, Bahls and Domreis. Replacement pieces by Architectural Reproductions. Brookstone Store designed by Cornerstone of New York City.

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering

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KRESS BUILDING (1928)

638 SW Fifth Avenue Portland, Multnomah County

COMMENTS OF THE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

The five-story, steel frame store and office building with terra cotta cladding that is located on the northeast corner of SW Fifth Avenue and Morrison Street in the center of Portland's retail district was built for the S. H. Kress Company in 1928 from plans by the national chain store's corporate architect, E. J. Hoffman.

The building footprint of 100 square feet was extended to the east by a 50 x 100-foot single story wing in 1953 when an adjoining building was acquired and faced with terra cotta to conform with the parent block. As integrated and remodeled, the east wing is a compatible but not yet historic extension of the five-story volume.

The store's design in the Commercial style has conventional facade composition and cream glazed terra cotta detailing in the Classical vein. It exhibits the retail base including mezzanine level and multiple stories capped with a full classical entablature that are characteristic of Commercial style emporiums. The attic, or parapet wall above the cornice carries the store's title in escutcheons centered on either street face. The fenestration pattern within a wide four bays on either facade is subtly varied between regular three-part window groupings in outer bays and similar groupings in the two central bays that are separated by inset panels. Inset panels make up the decorative theme of the exterior, since the convention is used on continuous pilaster faces from base to entablature, on spandrels, and on ground story piers. The entire scheme reflects the influence of the Chicago School, and while it is conservative, especially in consideration of its late date, it is a generally well-preserved and well-crafted part of the aggregation of fireproof tall buildings dating from the 1910s and 1920s which distinguishes Portland's central business district to the present day.

The Kress Building meets National Register Criterion C as an outstanding representative locally of the last phase of Beaux Arts Classicism promoted so effectively by the World's Columbian Exposition and its "White City" of exhibition buildings in Chicago in 1893.

The Kress Building also is significant in the area of commerce under Criterion A as the original

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national variety chain store in Portland's downtown. The interior spaces were modernized in separate episodes in the 1970s and 1980s, following the Kress Company's departure from the site in 1974 after 46 years at the corner of Fifth and Morrison. "Five and dime" stores fulfilled an important function in American retailing in their heyday. Woolworth and Kress, among the leading chains, provided a variety of affordable goods and convenient location in the heart of urban shopping districts to working men and women and customers from all walks of life. J. J. Newberry's, the last such store to operate in downtown Portland, is expected to close its doors imminently.

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SETTING

The Kress Building is located on Block 62 of the original Overton-Lovejoy land claim. It was first claimed in 1843 by a frontiersman from Tennessee by the name of William Overton. To file his 640-acre claim, Overton hired an Oregon City lawyer by the name of Asa Lawrence Lovejoy, paying him with a half interest in the property. Over the years, the ownership of this claim divided and subdivided as portions were surveyed, plots sold and fortunes came and went.

In 1889, the Sanborn Map depicts Block 62 as billiard parlors, saloons and stores on the south, and First Baptist Church on the west. By 1901, the Benson Building, a three-story frame building that was one of Simon Benson's first forays into real estate was at the southwest corner. At the northeast corner of the block, occupying about a third, was the Honeyman-Denny & Company Hardware. Between the two was a sausage factory. By 1908, Honeyman had expanded to occupy a full half block.

When constructed, the area surrounding the building was emerging as the commercial center of the city. A gradual westerly movement of the commercial district had been occurring since the great fires of 1872 and 1873, which destroyed large parcels of waterfront buildings. Spring flooding of the city, which occurred until the construction of the sea wall in 1929 further spurred the movement west. At Third and Morrison was the 1903 Roberts Brothers store. Across Fifth Avenue from the Kress site was the Meier & Frank store. Down Fifth at Alder was the 1910 Lipman-Wolfe Store. When Kress decided to locate at Fifth and Morrison, many--including both the <u>Oregonian</u> and the <u>Oregon Journal</u>--perceived it as an affirmation of this trend.

HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

On May 1, 1927, E. L. Campbell, Building Superintendent for S. H. Kress & Co.'s western division, announced plans to construct a four-story building for the exclusive use of its company. It would be located at the southeastern corner of Fifth and Morrison Streets. Working with Portland real estate broker James D. O'Donnell, Kress purchased lot 5 of Block 62 for \$363,000. The lot contained the three-story Benson building with ground floor retail and upper story hotel. Kress then leased lot 6 of Block 62 for 35 years (with an option to renew) for \$18,000 per year. That lot contained a five-story brick structure which housed a saloon and restaurant on the ground floor and residences above.

Kress moved quickly to start clearing the land. Meanwhile, the Oregonian hailed the arrival of Kress

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as "the advent of the chain store in the Portland field."

By July plans for the five-story steel and terra cotta building were prepared by E. J. Hoffman of Kress' New York office and submitted for city approval. "It would be one of the finest buildings owned by the concern" boasted Hoffman. The store would cost \$225,000 to construct. Kress awarded the construction contract to Pacific States Construction of Seattle in a competitive bid process. Steel erection would be handled by Poole and McGonigle of Portland. Initial plans called for the store to be completed in time for the Christmas season. However, the terra cotta finish did not go into place until December and Kress began planning a spring, 1928 opening.

In March, Grand Rapids Store Equipment Corporation began installing the fixtures and Kress was publicly discussing how "the scientific display of store merchandise will aid shoppers." W. H. Lollar moved from Ft. Worth, Texas to become the manager of the Portland store, while W. G. Kurth, district manager from Seattle came down to guide an April 3 opening. In total, the Kress Store had 250 employees, 200 of which worked as sales clerks.

The building was five stories. The first floor, second floor and basement were used for merchandise sales. In addition, the basement had a modern lunch counter and soda fountain which could seat 80. The third, fourth and fifth floors were used for office space and merchandise storage for other Kress stores in the Pacific Northwest.

The <u>Journal</u> hailed the Kress Building as an indicator of "a change in the merchandising character of Fifth Street."

In 1953, Kress acquired the building directly to the rear at 4th and Morrison from the Fred Meyer Company. It was a one-story, wood-frame structure with masonry storefronts built around the turn of the century. The building had housed speciality stores, such as shoes, and had served as a rear entrance to Fred Meyer. Upon taking possession, Kress put on a terra cotta veneer, opened a side entrance and access to the basement.

Kress remained at this site for 46 years--until 1974. In that year, Genesco, a retail and manufacturing conglomerate which now owned Kress, launched a major retrenchment and closed 80 of its 330 stores nationwide. With its wooden floors and pre-World War II displays, Kress simply had not kept pace with changing consumer tastes and suffered declining profits. The building was sold to a California developer.

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The building stayed vacant only briefly. J. C. Penney's, which located at 511 SW Washington, jumped at the opportunity to sign a 15-year lease. The new location would increase their retail space by 1/3 to 78,368. Penney's took the opportunity to completely gut and refurbish the store. "The old 5 and dime atmosphere of wood floors will give way to chrome and color" announced the national chain.

Somewhat surprisingly, Penney's closed their store after only nine years, citing the store's small size. The move was surprising in that plans were already a foot to build Pioneer Place--a guaranteed shopping draw.

With the building vacant, the owners opted to refocus the property to speciality shops with offices on the upper four floors. The intent was to capitalize on the boon of being located next to Pioneer Place. In 1985, they launched a complete rehabilitation of the structure, modernizing and upgrading its overall look. Brookstone, Laura Ashley, Boyds and Nordstrom Rack were all entired as tenants.

S. H. KRESS COMPANY

At the age of 24, with money saved from his teaching salary, Samuel Henry Kress purchased a stationery store in Nanticoke, Pennsylvania in 1887. With profits from the first, he opened a second store in Wilkes-Barre, and then a third in Memphis. By consistently putting the stores' income into expansion, Kress had acquired twelve stores by 1900. His stores offered fewer items than most variety stores, but at lower prices. Kress also bought goods directly from manufacturers and relied on sales volume to make up for his low profit margin.

In 1907, now operating 51 stores, Kress moved his headquarters to New York City. In 1927, Kress looked to the Northwest and to Portland. During his lifetime, his chain grew to 264 stores nationally with annual sales of \$169 million.

The 5 and 10 phenomenon of the early 20th century capitalized on bulk buying of standard, mostly dry, goods for chains of stores. Names like McCrory, Kresge, Ben Franklin, Newberrys and Kress come to mind. Often, these were the brainchildren of individual entrepreneurs that went on to become great philanthropists. Samuel Kress created the Kress Foundation in 1929, endowing it with 40% of his voting company stock; over the years, the Kress Foundation has give away tens of millions. Similarly, S. S. Kresge created the Kresge Foundation in 1924, which has given away \$70 million and still has \$175 million in assets.

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Beginning in the years after World War II, American tastes, lifestyles and buying habits changed dramatically. Large discount houses offering quality products at drastically low prices all under one roof became popular. Names included the likes of Shoppers Fair, Target and K-Mart, a reborn Kresge. Extensions of this concept lead to the big box retailers as Walmart and Costco.

Unlike competitors, Kress did not keep pace with the changing marketplace. His stores remained a statement of merchandising in the 1920s with wood floors and display islands. With increasing rents and low profit margins, Kress simply dwindled out of business. Kress died in 1955 and the business lost its guiding light. Kress & Co. was bought out by Genesco of Nashville, Tennessee, a retail and manufacturing conglomerate.

HISTORY OF TERRA COTTA IN PORTLAND BUILDINGS

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 Kress & Co. Building is a strong example.

Although dating back centuries, architectural terra cotta became popular as an overall facing in the 1890's, beginning 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 of buildings glazed of the large commercial type in downtown Portland. Its popularity 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 also 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 grade of clay and fired at a higher temperature. Generally, it is manufactured in hollow blocks, 4 inches deep with faces typically 12 inches x 18 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

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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 would vary according to the clay used but could be as much as 10%. From the models, the manufacturers created 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. The clay is left in the mold for several hours. After which, 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.

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 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 often difficult as water seeps in and 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 ½ inch and point.

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Oregon Historical Society, Vertical Files.

The Oregonian

The Oregon Journal

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Kress Building	Multnomah, OR					
Name of Property	County and State					
10. Geographical Data						
Acreage of Propertyless than 1 acre (15,000 sf.)	0.34 acres					
UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)	Portland, Oregon-Washington 1:24000					
1 1 0 5 2 5 3 0 0 5 0 4 0 4 4 0 Zone Easting Northing 2 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	3 Zone Easting Northing 4 Zone Easting 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/titleJohn M. Tess, President						
organization Heritage Investment Corp.	dateNovember 25, 1995					
street & number 123 NW 2nd Ave., Suite 200	telephone(503) 228-0272					
Portland city or town	OR 97209 state zip code					
Additional Documentation						
Submit the following items with the completed form:						
Continuation Sheets						
Maps						
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the prop	perty's location.					
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.						
Photographs	•					
Representative black and white photographs of the prop	erty.					
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 Pegg Investment Co. et al, % Morris J.	Galen					
street & number <u>888 SW 5th Ave.</u> , #1600	telephone(503) 221-1440					
city or town Portland	state OR zip code 97205					

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 obta 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 aspet 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 Burdent Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018) Washington, DC 20503

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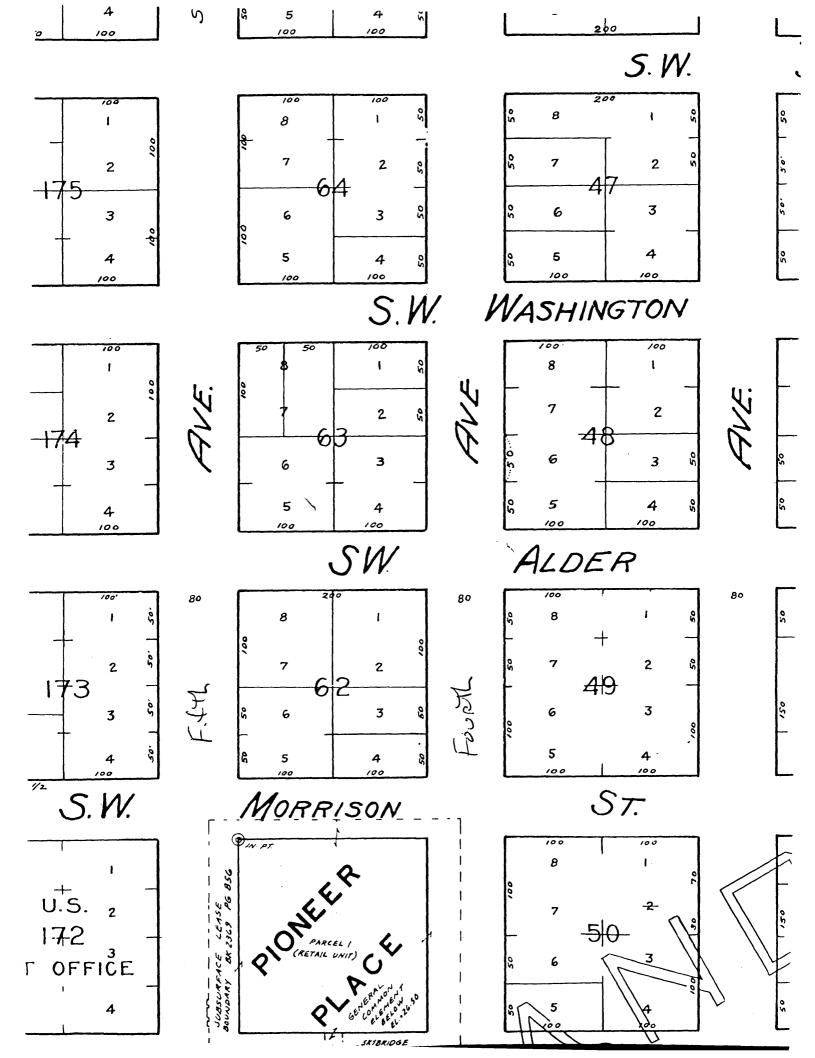
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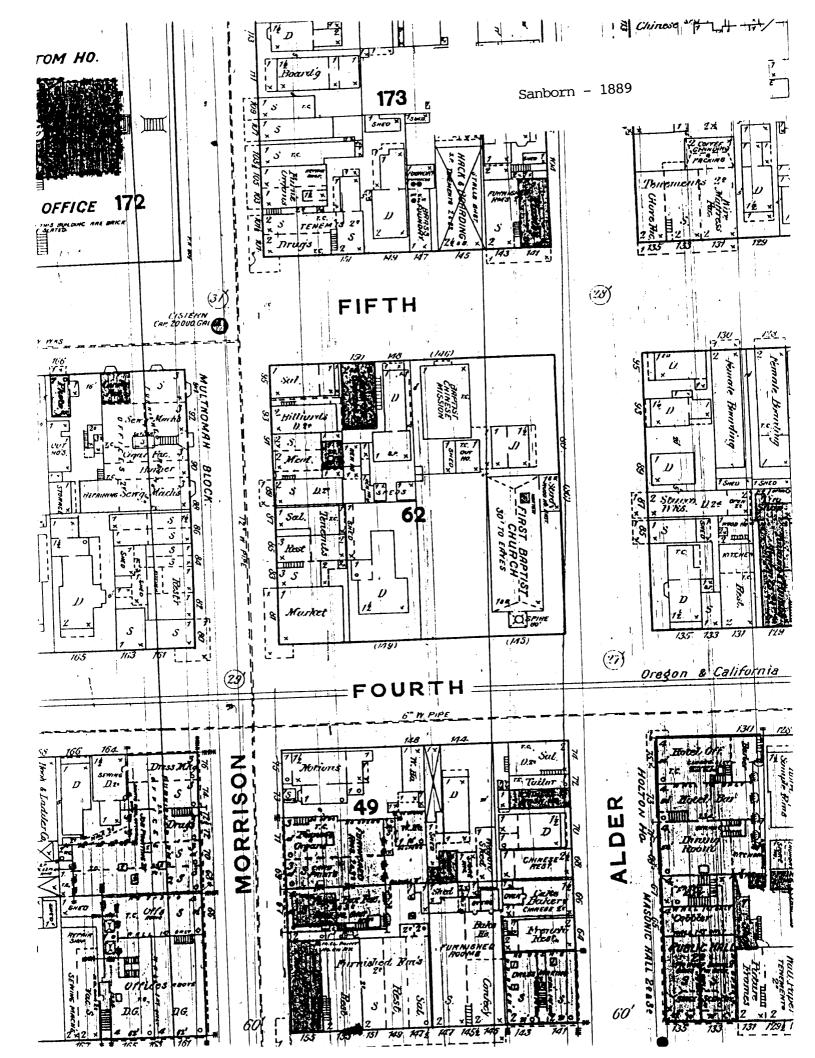
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

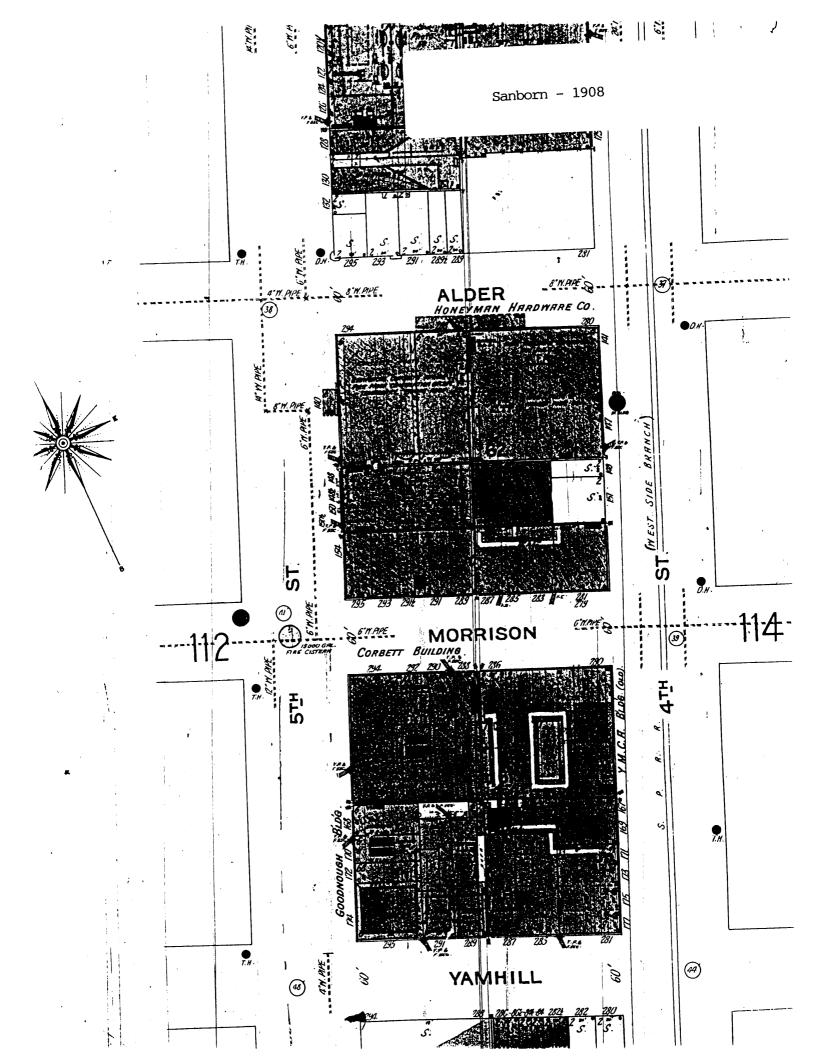
The S. H. Kress Building is located on Lots 4,5 & 6 of Block 62, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon.

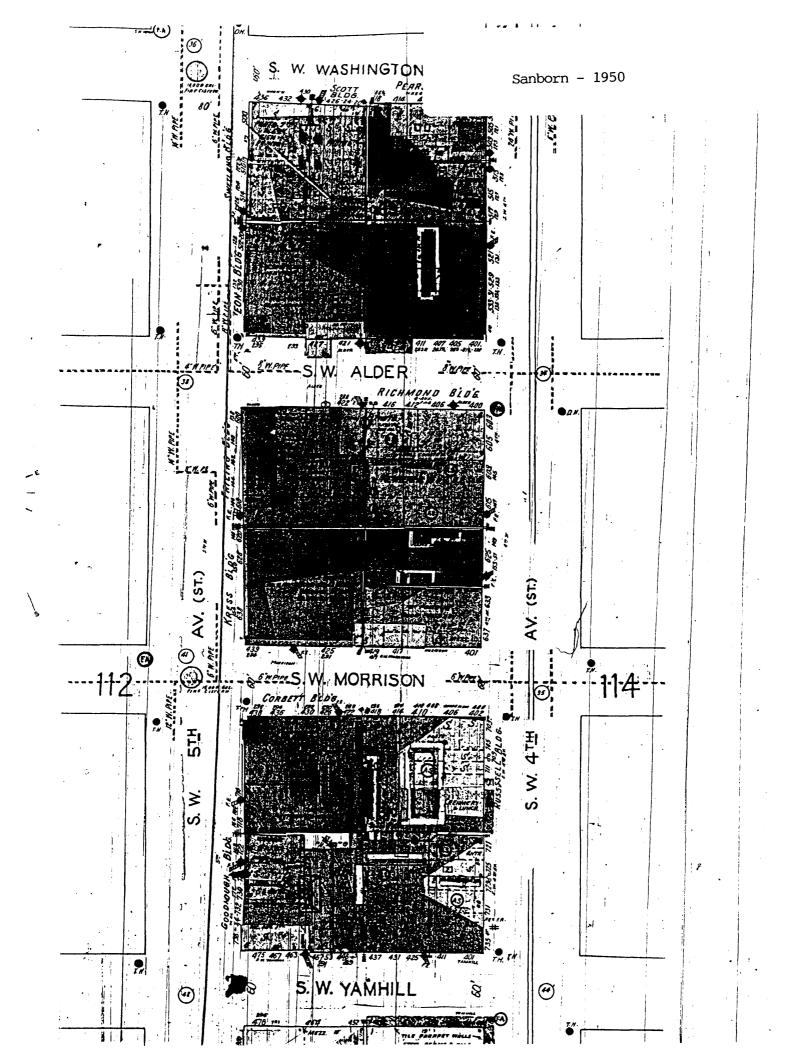
BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

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









NDEX TO DRAWINGS

ARCHITECTURAL

1

- AT MICHOPLOOFPLAN, GROUND PLOOFLIMEY
- SECOND PLOOR ELECTRICAL PLAN
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 - THIND FLOOR PLAN, RESTROOM ELEVATION
- THRO PLOOR ELECTRICAL PLAN
- THIND PLOOK REPLECTED CEILING PLAN, LORNY ELEVA
 - FOURTH PLOOR PLAN, ROOF PLAN, SKYLICH

 - * * * * * * * *
- FOURTH PLOON ELECTRICAL PLAN
- FOLMTH RLOOM MERLECTED CILLING RLAN FFTH RLOOM PLAN, ELEYATON CAB RLAN AND ELEYATIONS
 - FFTH PLOOR ELECTRICAL PLAN
- FFTH PLOOR REPLECTED CELING PLAK, EXTERIOR ELEVATION NEW WINDOW OPENINGS

MARIESS

- INTERIOR ELEVATIONS
- INTERIOR ELEVATIONS **2** 4

CASEWORK

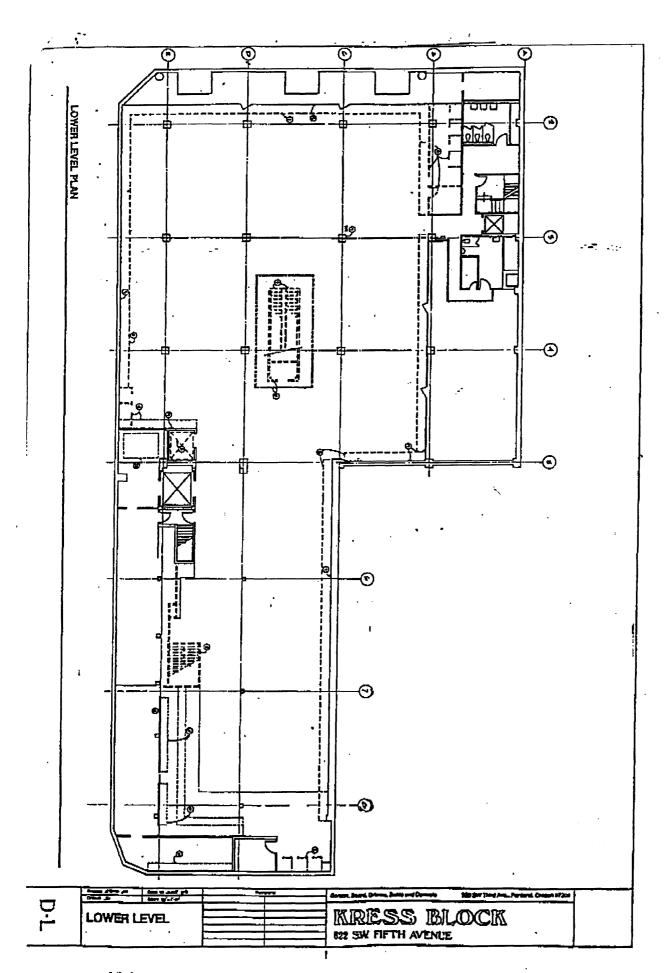
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 C: CAEWORK ECTIONS
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SOUTH ELEVATION

\$ 100 miles

KRESS BLOCK

622 SW FIFTH AVENUE PORTLAND, OREGON



RETAIL TENANT SPACE B RETAIL TENANT SPACE A
3,900 SF RETAIL TENANT SPACE C RETAIL TENANT SPACE D RETAIL TENANT SPACE E 3313.5FMAIN LEVEL PLAN

16 MAIN L RETAIL TENANT SPACE G 5 Ħ MAIN LEVEL PLAN FIFTH & MORRISON EXHIBIT A

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