

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

For NPS use only

received **OCT 31 1985**

date entered

DEC 2 1985

**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 Ira F. Powers Building Number of Contributing Resources: 1

and/or common Director's Furniture Store Number of Non-contributing Resources: 0

2. Location

street & number 804-810 SW Third Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Portland N/A vicinity of

state Oregon code 41 county Multnomah code 051

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Michael Purcell

street & number PO Box 22251

city, town Milwaukie n/a vicinity of state Oregon 97222

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Multnomah County Courthouse

street & number 319 SW Fourth

city, town Portland state Oregon 97204

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Resources Inventory
City of Portland has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 198-83 federal state county local

depository for survey records Bureau of Planning, City of Portland

city, town Portland state Oregon 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Ira F. Powers Furniture Company Building, Located at 804 SW Third Avenue in Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, is a six-story building with basement and mezzanine, designed by the prominent Portland architectural firm of Whidden and Lewis and constructed in 1970 in the Commercial Style of architecture. With the exception of alterations at the storefront level, the upper elevations (north and west) are virtually intact and the overall condition of the building is good.

The Ira F. Powers Furniture Company Building was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places by the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office on April 9, 1980, and by the Keeper of the National Register on June 20, 1980.

Setting

Located at the corner of SW Third Avenue and Yamhill Street in downtown Portland, the Powers Building occupies a 100 x 100 foot parcel on Lots 7 & 8 of Block 22 of the Portland Addition to Portland. To the east the building's lower floors abut the Moy Building (David L. Williams, 1910), located within the Yamhill National Register Historic District. The Yamhill Historic District is a small business district which encompasses approximately six city blocks and separates the Powers Building from Waterfront Park and the Willamette River. The western boundary of the Yamhill district intersects Block 22 from north to south. To the west of the building there is currently surface parking which will be developed by the Rouse Company as part of the multi-block Morrison Street Project. To the south a two-story structure abuts the Powers Building. This building will most likely be torn down and the site redeveloped. To the north is the Mohawk Building. The new Portland Light Rail system will also run along the north side of the building.

Exterior (Ground Level)

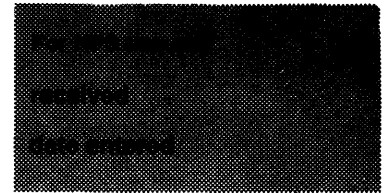
The original storefront configuration on the north elevation consisted of plate glass windows divided by thin wood mullions across almost the entire face. Brick piers were located at the east and west corners. Structural posts supporting each bay were located behind the glass front. The easternmost bay and the center bay each had a single door in a recessed entrance. Above the plate glass storefront windows, transoms were divided in a vertical three-over-one light configuration. The center light over each single pane of glass was operable. Four of the single light transoms are located in each bay, but the complete row of transoms was uninterrupted by bay divisions. A wood panel was located below the plate glass windows. At the northwest corner of the two major elevations was the primary entrance. This entrance was placed at a forty-five degree angle across the corner bays, forming a covered entry. This entrance consisted of double doors, which could swing in either direction, and a with similar transom divisions above.

The west storefront elevation was a mirrored image of the north elevation's entrances, plate glass windows and transoms except for the location of a paneled wood pilaster dividing the two southernmost bays. The pilaster rose from the sidewalk grade to the top of the transom windows.

(continued)

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Continuation sheet IRA F. POWERS BUILDING Item number 7 Page 2

Alterations on Ground Level

The first storefront remodeling occurred in 1939 under the direction of Portland architect Glen Stanton. The remodeling included the covering of the brick piers with vitrolite, the changing of display windows and the installation of terra cotta trim. In January, 1966, a second remodeling was announced. The design alterations to the exterior facade were executed by Portland architect Richard Sundeleaf.

Today, the existing storefront consists of stuccoed piers located at each bay, with plate glass set in aluminum strips between the piers. The only entry is located at the northeast corner of the building and is marked by a large trapezoidal awning. Above the plate glass windows is a wide flat band across both elevations on which the store's name is painted.

Upper Exterior Elevation

Despite considerable changes to the ground-floor level, the upper portion of the building has remained unchanged over the years. The upper north and west elevations are divided into five bays. Pilaster-like piers of buff-colored pressed brick rest on a brick base at the second floor window sill and rise to the top of the sixth floor window openings. The central face of the pier is recessed slightly from the bricks forming the outward edges. The second floor fenestration consists of three transom lights over three single-light vertical windows. The central window and transom are wider than the windows and transoms on each side. The central window is fixed, and the side windows open by pivoting on the center of the vertical axis.

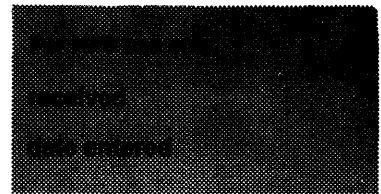
From the third through the sixth floors, windows consist of three vertical one-light windows in each bay. These windows are shorter in height than the second floor openings, because there are no transoms. The vertical divisions are identical to those on the second floor and consist of a wider, fixed, central window flanked by two vertically pivoting operable windows.

The second floor windows rest on a heavy concrete string course now painted a dark brown. The spandrel panels separating the second through sixth floor windows are composed of a flat brick soldier arch immediately above the wood window frame. Capping this course are header bricks on edge, projecting slightly, and above this course are ten courses of brick laid in stretcher bond. Above this infill of brick, a thin, painted concrete window sill rests immediately below the wood window.

A simple frieze of buff brick laid in stretcher bond is punctuated by plain galvanized sheet-metal panels. The panels are rectangular and are located above each vertical brick pier. An elaborate sheet-metal cornice caps both building elevations. The cornice has mutules on the soffit, and each is decorated with three rows of three guttae each. Above the cymatia, the cornice is topped with a row of anthemias which have a fish-scale pattern on the face.

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Interior Description

The interior floors of the Ira F. Powers building are supported on an interior structural framework of wood beams which rest on 12 x 12 wood posts with rounded corners. The wood floor joists are covered with tongue and groove wood decking, over which is installed one by four tongue and groove fir flooring. Most of the flooring has been covered by carpet or linoleum.

The first floor contains numerous wall partitions which are part of the furniture display area. These walls are not original and are not permanent partitions. The second floor is a mezzanine level which contours the perimeter walls and is open to the first floor at the center of the building. A staircase which only ascends to the mezzanine is located near the southwest corner of the building. The structural posts supporting the mezzanine and the third floor have been furred out and are plastered. All ceiling areas on these two levels have been covered with acoustical ceiling tiles.

The main staircase, which rises to the sixth floor and ascends around the elevator shaft, is located at the center of the east wall. Bathrooms are located on each floor to the south of the stairs.

The third through the sixth floors are totally undivided by partitions and is warehouse storage. The ceilings on each of these floors are beaded tongue and groove, one by four boards. The structural wood beams and posts are exposed. All surfaces are painted. On the sixth floor three light monitors penetrate the roof. One is approximately centrally located, and two are placed near the east wall. The vertical windows of the monitors face north.

Current plans call for the rehabilitation of the Powers Building into retail and office space in 1985.

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/
<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 checked="" 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 1910 **Builder/Architect** Whidden & Lewis

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The 1910 Ira F. Powers Furniture Building, located at 804 SW Third Avenue in Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, is a six-story brick and sandstone-faced structure with basement and first floor mezzanine. The building was designed by the prominent Portland architectural firm of William Whidden and Ion Lewis. On June 20, 1980 the Keeper of the National Register determined the building to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Section 106 provisions under criterion "b" for the building's association with Ira F. Powers, "a prominent furniture merchant, businessman, and philanthropist in late 19th and early 20th Century Portland." The building was additionally found eligible under criterion "c" as a work by the important local firm of Whidden and Lewis, representing one of the few examples of Commercial style architecture in the Chicago School vein attributed to the firm.

Early Site Development

Downtown Portland grew, after 1845, from an original one-acre plot called, appropriately enough, "the clearing" by the Indian traders and trappers who used it as a midday resting spot in their travels between the older towns of Oregon City and Fort Vancouver. The clearing was located just northeast of the present Powers Building. As early Portland developed, 16 small blocks were laid out with lots 50 x 100 feet. In the early days, Block 22, like all of the land surrounding the clearing, was covered with trees. As Portland continued to grow, land was cleared and the city expanded north and southward along the river, and slowly towards the west hills.

Earliest accounts of activity on the site of the Powers Building come from the Sanborn Insurance maps. These maps show a lumber yard operation on the site from the late 1870s to the mid-1880s. Surrounding the site at this time were a mixture of one and two-story residences and small businesses, including dressmakers, a tin shop, saloons and offices. From the late 1880s through World War I this block marked the western edge of Chinatown, which ran along SW Second.

Beginning in 1882 the site was used for the storage of lumber, lime and cement by the firm of Wadhams and Elliot. This company dealt primarily in wholesale groceries, with its main business address on Front, between Pine and Ash Streets. Since waterfront property at this location was highly developed and expensive, the firm placed its lime warehouse and building materials yard at the Third and Yamhill site. From 1887 to 1890, George W. Crow, a former manager with Wadhams and Elliot, operated a lumber yard on this site under his own name. As the city continued to grow, he moved his business further west, to Eighth and Yamhill, in 1890.

(continued)

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Portland, OR-Washington

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UTM References

A

1	0	5	2	5	4	5	0	5	0	4	0	2	5	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

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D

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification The Ira F. Powers Building occupies Lots 7 & 8 of Block 22 of the Portland Addition to the City of Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, a 100 x 100 foot parcel.

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 N/A

organization Heritage Investment Corporation date March, 1985

street & number 123 NW Second, Suite 200 telephone (503) 228-0272

city or town Portland state Oregon 97209

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

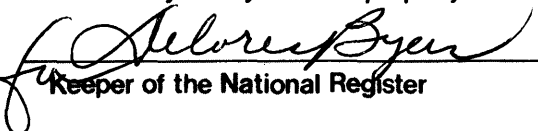
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date September 26, 1985

For NPS use only

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


Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

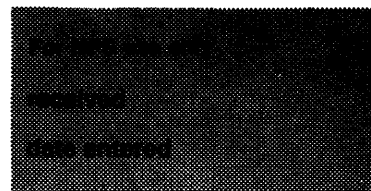
date 12/2/85

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet IRA F. POWERS BUILDING Item number 8 Page 2

Perhaps the most interesting era of the site dates from 1891, when John Cordray erected a tent on the woodyard site, and moved his "Musee" to the site from its former location on First, near Alder. The exhibit area faced Yamhill, while the theater was entered on Third Street. The main feature of his curio hall was a clock 20 feet tall and 10 feet wide, which played music, gave the time of day in a dozen cities of the world, and had many little doors at which figures of angles or apostles would appear when the clock chimed. Should visitors become bored with the clock, they could view a vaudeville act, live monkeys, or other "curiosities." Typical of Cordray's way of "improving things," to make the "Musee" more comfortable in winter, he surrounded the bottom of the tent with corrugated iron siding and boards.

As time went on, interest in the Musee's curiosities waned, but demand for its theatrical features increased. In response, Cordray decided to build a permanent structure. According to Walter K. Waters, Jr., Cordray decided not to bother with building regulations or fire codes, but began construction inside the tent walls:

Cordray. . . quietly built all the framework of the theater from the ground up, until late one Saturday night, the tent was quickly and quietly dismantled leaving the frame of his future theater in the open. Quickly, carpenters and workmen were summoned and by the following Monday morning the townspeople and city officials were greeted with the sight of a new and complete theater . . . Shouts of dismay arose from neighboring property owners, from the fire marshall, and from city hall. All were to no avail. The city ordinances were so loosely written that the city attorney could find no way in which to cause Cordray to remove his rather inartistic addition . . . The theater remained and flourished until the depression of 1898 . . .

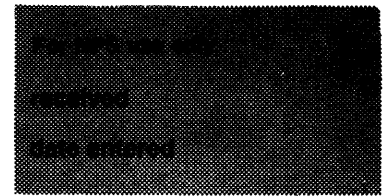
In June, 1892 the Oregonian reported that Cordray had incorporated a new opera house, with capital stock valued at \$400,000. One of the incorporators was Donald MacKay, President of the North Pacific Lumber Company, who owned the property on which the theater sat. In 1898 Cordray leased his building and moved into the old Casino Theater on Broadway near Washington, on the site of the present-day Morgan Building. In later years, when nickelodeons became popular, Cordray retired from theater proprietorship and became manager of the Oaks Amusement Park.

The man to whom Cordray had rented the old building at Third and Yamhill was his former property manager, George L. Baker, who launched the Baker Stock Theater Company. The company soon became very popular and successful with Portland residents. With the exception of a saloon, which occupied a corner of the building at Third and Yamhill, the theater company used the entire quarter block. Baker remained at this location until September, 1910, when he moved into a new theater at Eleventh and Morrison.

In August of 1910, Donald MacKay, with some encouragement from the city, decided to tear Cordray's old building down. The saloon owner who leased the northwest corner of the theater filed an injunction to prevent demolition. A later inspection of the property indicated that most of the wood supporting members were resting directly on the ground, and were consequently rotted through. The building was declared unsafe and was demolished.

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Donald MacKay then hired the architectural firm of Whidden and Lewis to design a new six-story brick building to house the Ira F. Powers Furniture Company. Construction of the new building was as rapid as Cordray's earlier building. By Christmas day, 1910, the Oregonian announced that the building was nearing completion and that the Powers Company intended to be in operation there by April, 1911.

Donald MacKay

Donald MacKay, owner of the Powers Building property, and the person responsible for the building's construction, was born and raised on his father's farm in Oxford County, Ontario. He apprenticed as a plasterer and brought this skill with him when he came to Portland in 1865. After working as a journeyman plasterer for several years, he became a contractor and builder. In 1882 the North Pacific Lumber Company was organized with MacKay as one of the directors. By 1891 he was president and director of the company. Active in local and state politics, he served on the city council for two years and served one term as a state representative and five terms in the State Senate.

Ira F. Powers

Ira F. Powers, Sr. established his furniture company in Portland in 1875. Born in upstate New York in 1831, he had fended for himself from the age of 12, first farming for six years, and then working in iron manufacturing. At the age of 21, he traveled to Placer, California to look for gold. For the next 13 years he followed gold discoveries in various western states until settling in Portland in 1865.

Shortly after arriving in Portland, Powers formed a partnership with A. Burchard, and they operated a new and used-furniture store in a two-story frame building on SW First, between Yamhill and Taylor. After the great Portland fire of 1873 Powers joined the firm hereafter known as Donly, Beard & Powers, furniture manufacturers. Their factory was in Willsburg (now Sellwood) and produced spindle beds, wooden chairs with rawhide seats, and "hand-hewn tables of quaint design."

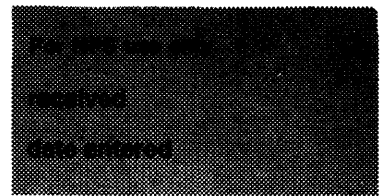
One year after the dissolution of his first partnership Powers suffered the loss of his second wife, and was left with two sons, Frederick and Ira, Jr.

By 1877 Powers had formed the Ira F. Powres Furniture Manufacturing Company. Its factory was located on Water Street, near the foot of Montgomery. The retail store was located on First, between Taylor and Yamhill. Fires at this store in 1888 and at the factory in 1890 forced him to move to a new 3-acre location in South Portland, present site of John's Landing. At the new location, in an effort to control the entire manufacturing process, Powers set up his own saw and planing mills which promised to reduce his costs. Unfortunately, in 1891, much of the south Portland factory was swept away by a flood. The net result of the fires and flood produced losses of over \$150,000.

In June, 1892 the Oregonian reported that Powers had been "forced to the wall" when he wasn't able to repay \$25,000 loaned to him by the Oregon National Bank. Ironically, Powers had been one of the founders of the bank and, just a year later, it demanded the loan repayment. The bank itself was later to fail, due to financial mismanagement.

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In an interview with the newspaper Powers was disheartened but not without hope:

I have met with misfortunes ever since I started the business, but I am still satisfied that the business is a paying one and a profitable one. The cities need more factories and it would be too bad to let this one close. It is a good paying property but it needs better financial backing than what I have been able to give it with all of my reverses. If the people of Portland don't want to help me out . . . I shall run the factory until all the raw material is used up and then close down. That is all I can do singlehanded.

Powers' plea must have resulted in some financial assistance, because the factory and store continued in operation. However, Powers had to relinquish control of the business to V. B. DeLashmutt, who became president of the company. Van B. DeLashmutt was a successful Portland businessman and financial leader who had served as Portland's Mayor in 1888-90. DeLashmutt remained president until 1902, when Ira Powers, Sr. resumed the title of president and manager of the company.

In the later 1890s, as furniture designs changed, the company shifted production from the simple rustic styles of the 1870s to more contemporary styles. The wider variety of household furniture now offered bedroom and parlor sets in oak, cherry, maple and walnut; cane-bottomed and upholstered and spring rocking chairs; dressers, tables and commodes with marble tops; hand-carved armchairs, cradles and horsehair mattresses. Steel engravings, carpets and china were also sold in the Powers establishment.

By 1910 the business was back on its feet, and plans were made for a move into the new building on SW Yamhill Street. In April, 1911, after a large stock reduction sale at their old store, the Powers Furniture Company moved into the store at Third and Yamhill. Ira F. Powers, Sr. was 80 years old and was to remain involved in the store's operation until the end of his life in September, 1920. Over the years the company's trademark, a white goose, could be seen not only on billboards across the city, but, particularly, atop the Powers Building, along with the firm's name. The sign was illuminated at night and was a commercial landmark of the city.

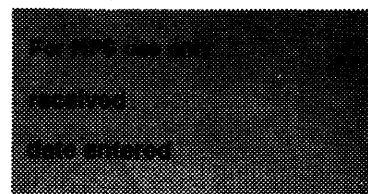
During his lifetime Mr. Powers, Sr. took special interest in the welfare of homeless children. He was one of the founders and generous supporters of the Boys and Girls Aid Society and his generosity extended into his personal life. For many years he took orphans into his home providing a foster home for these children. Powers was also one of the builders of the Morrison Street Bridge.

Ira F. Powers, Jr. who had entered the business in 1895, took over management of the company, upon the death of his father, and remained in control of it until his own death in 1933. Just prior to that, he donated Powers Park to the City, an 8.5 acre tract of land on the west bank of the Willamette river near the Sellwood Bridge, in memory of his father.

Little is known of the elder son, Frederick, who is noted in his father's obituary as living in Maine. After the death of Ira F. Powers, Jr. in 1933, the Powers Furniture Store continued to operate in its Third and Yamhill location.

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By 1957, the Powers Furniture Store no longer was listed in the city directories. Shortly thereafter, the Director's Furniture store moved into the Powers site. Pictures in the Portland Oregonian documented the move by store personnel and their families as they walked down from Director's previous location at First and Yamhill carrying furniture and equipment.

In 1966, Director's purchased both the Powers Building and the Moy Building adjacent to the east from the Powers Investment Company at a reported price of \$500,000. At the time of purchase alterations were made to both buildings to house the new facility. Director's have recently sold their downtown location to relocate in the suburbs.

The architectural firm of Whidden and Lewis was commissioned, by Donald MacKay, in 1910 to design the Powers Furniture Company Building. William M. Whidden and Ion Lewis were both trained at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. After graduation, Lewis worked in the Boston office of Peabody and Stearns, and later formed a partnership with Henry P. Clark.

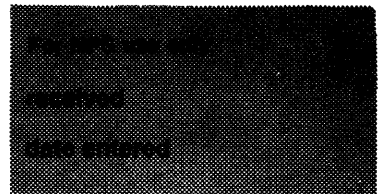
Whidden, after four years at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, joined McKim, Mead and White in New York. Accompanied by McKim, Whidden came to Portland in 1882 to supervise work on railroad magnate Henry Villard's Portland Hotel. Villard's financial collapse in 1883 ended work on the hotel and Whidden 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, Whidden was visited by his friend and classmate, Ion Lewis, who stayed on and joined Whidden in partnership.

The partnership of Whidden and Lewis marked the arrival of current eastern styles. Architecturally speaking, Portland had "come of age." The firm introduced the Georgian style in residential design, the Second Renaissance Revival in public buildings, and the classically detailed Commercial Style in office buildings.

Notable commercial structures by Whidden and Lewis included the Packer Scott Warehouse (1891-92), the first Portland Public Library (1892), Portland City Hall (1892-95), the Hamilton Building (1893), the Postal Building (1900) and the Wilcox Building (1910).

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Oregonian

Journal

6/23/1892
6/24/1892
8/14/1910
12/4/1910
12/6/1910
12/8/1910
12/25/1910
7/20/1929

6/24/1892
9/9/1902
9/9/1920
9/17/1930
2/28/1933

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City of Portland Building Permit Department - microfilm.