

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH 068 3957

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED SEP 6 1978

DATE ENTERED NOV 22 1978

**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

First Unitarian Church of Portland

AND/OR COMMON

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

1011 S.W. 12th Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Portland

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1st

VICINITY OF

STATE

Oregon

41 CODE

Multnomah COUNTY

051 CODE

**CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> 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:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

The First Unitarian Society of Portland, Oregon

STREET & NUMBER

1011 S.W. 12th Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Portland

VICINITY OF

Oregon

STATE 97205

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Multnomah County Court House

STREET & NUMBER

1021 S.W. 4th Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Portland

Oregon

STATE 97204

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Portland Historical Landmark

DATE

1974

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Portland Historical Landmark Commission  
Portland Bureau of Planning, 424 S.W. Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Portland

Oregon

STATE 97204

## 7 DESCRIPTION

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

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The red brick and cast stone trimmed First Unitarian Church of Portland was patterned closely after Christ Church in Philadelphia and Christ Church of Alexandria, both colonial interpretations of the Georgian churches of London. It was originally constructed with a Parish Hall, offices, and Sunday School rooms in a small wing at the southwest corner. Of the original design of 1924, the street facades on the north and east remain unchanged. Internally, the Parish Hall (Channing Room) and the sanctuary remain faithful to the original design. Original interior furnishings were designed by Miss Bertha Stuart. Contractors were the Stebinder Brothers. Lettering in the portico pediment is similar to that of the nearby Central Public Library which Parker did as an employee of A.E. Doyle, Architect.

The southwest wing was substantially remodeled and expanded in 1955 by Stewart and Richardson, but the changes were not apparent from the street. A major fire in July 1965 resulted in a comprehensive remodeling and restoration of the building under the direction of Church and Sheils of Portland. All original parts of the building were restored with minor alterations. The new organ required alterations to the chancel area organ chambers, namely: removal of the fan-shaped spindle organ grills and their replacement with panels of rectangular shape with matching spindles. At the same time, the choir loft and organ position were changed to permit greater flexibility in programs, and the pulpit and lectern positions were changed. Additional chandeliers were added to the space, matching the original design. The coffered skylight over the choir loft was covered and converted to electric light.

The building now has a full basement under the original sections with reinforced concrete used for foundations, structural floors, and for walls of the newer additions. Main sanctuary and Parish Hall walls are of load-bearing brick. Wood truss roof framing is covered with slate. Bituminous composition roofing is found on flat roofed portions of the later additions. Interior partitions are wood frame. Interior finishes include plaster, ornamental plaster work, and wood trim. The steeple is constructed of brick and cast stone trim up to the belfry level and wood frame with copper sheathing for the spire above. The belfry contains a set of 1930s dynamic loudspeakers. The base section of the steeple was constructed as the chamber for the echo organ, now abandoned.

The building has central force air heating and ventilating system with steam radiators, heat is from Pacific Power and Light Company's downtown piped steam system.

Landscaping for the front grounds and inner courtyard -- part of the 1955 remodeling and additions -- was the work of Barbara Fealy, a noted Northwest landscape architect who re-introduced to fashion the use of native plant materials.

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

SPECIFIC DATES 1924

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Jamieson Parker, Architect

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Georgian Colonial First Unitarian Church of 1924 is the third building occupied by the Unitarian congregation formed in Portland as early as 1866. It is significant to Portland and to the state as one of several outstanding examples of the work of Jamieson Parker, Beaux Arts-trained Portland architect who headed the initial Historic American Buildings Survey effort in Oregon in 1934. Expansion of the Parish Hall wing in 1955 was supervised by the local firm of Stewart and Richardson. A fire which damaged the interior in 1965 prompted further changes, including faithful restoration of Parker's sanctuary and Parish Hall under the direction of Portland architects Church and Sheils.

The First Unitarian Society of Portland was incorporated in 1866 and the following year occupied its first building, a modest structure at 7th and Yamhill. By 1878 the congregation had outgrown this building and a new church was built on a second lot next to the original structure. Then, with the rapidly growing business district of Portland surrounding the church, a search for a new location was undertaken. Due to economic depression in the country and other factors, it was 1924 before the downtown property was sold and a new church edifice was erected at the S.W. corner of 12th Avenue and Salmon Street. Jamieson Parker, designer of the Georgian Colonial building, was a member of the congregation. His widow is still an active member of the church. In 1955 additions to the southwest wing of the church included a chapel, additional church school rooms, and a minister's study. The exterior of the building remained the same from both the 12th Avenue and Salmon Street sides. In July, 1965, the interior of the church was destroyed by fire. After long discussion, it was decided to restore the church on its present site. The choir loft was remodeled, but the sanctuary and the Channing Room, or Parish Hall, remain the same in appearance as they did originally. The exterior of the building was enhanced by suitable landscaping and by replacing the concrete sidewalk with brick pavers.

In the one hundred and twelve years since the incorporation of the Society, First Unitarian Church has been a major force in the community at large as well as in the lives of its members. The first minister of the church, T. L. Eliot, was also Superintendent of Schools of Multnomah County. Church members did much toward establishing free kindergartens in Portland. Unitarians were instrumental in founding Reed College, and the cause of adult education was dear to the hearts of both lay people and clergy of First Unitarian Church. Dr. W. G. Eliot, minister of the church in the early years of this century, was a prime mover in establishing the Oregon Mental Health Society. Dr. Richard Steiner, whose tenure with the church extended from the 1930s until the mid-1960s, was active in public affairs and was regarded as a major spokesman for liberal causes in the community.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

A Time to Build, Centennial history of the First Unitarian Society of Portland, available on church premises.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	0
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5	2	4	6	5	0
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5	0	4	0	4	0	0
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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B 

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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 1 and 2, Block F of the Portland Addition, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Alfred Staehli, Architect  
Lorraine P. McConnell, Moderator

ORGANIZATION First Unitarian Society

DATE January 15, 1978

STREET & NUMBER 1011 S.W. 12th Avenue

TELEPHONE 503-288-6389

CITY OR TOWN Portland

STATE Oregon 97205

# 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

*David B. Steuber*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE August 23, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*Charles Adams*  
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 11-22-78  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *W. Ray Luce*  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 11-21-78

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

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Jamieson K. Parker (1895-1935) was one of a small group of important local architects working in the transitional years between Beaux Arts and Modern architectural traditions. The group shaped Portland architecture in the 1920s more, perhaps, than any group or individual before or since that period. Had he not died in mid-career, Parker undoubtedly would have become much better known. During his ten-year practice he was responsible for approximately eighty homes in Portland and elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest, several churches and their remodelings, and a small number of commercial projects. He was a leading contender in the design competition for the Portland Art Museum (1932) and there are distinct similarities between his design and that of Pietro Belluschi, who, like Parker, was a former employee of A. E. Doyle. (Belluschi's was the winning design.)

Parker was graduated from Portland Academy in 1912 and obtained his architectural training at University of Pennsylvania. He studied briefly in England and later in New York City. Following military service during the First World War, he returned to Portland in 1919 and worked for a short time with the firms of A. E. Doyle and Folger Johnson. In 1921 he opened his own practice, which flourished until the Depression. In 1934 Parker became District Director of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Under his direction many of Oregon's unemployed architects searched out the region's pioneer buildings and recorded them with measured drawings. Parker was named local director for the Federal Housing Administration in 1935.

The First Unitarian Church was Parker's first large commission. It exemplifies the successful rendition of Georgian Colonial architecture in modern materials and construction methods, and it is possibly the best example of the Georgian Revival Style employed in an institutional building in Portland. Further, the church represents Parker's early interest in "American" building traditions. He had, by 1924, already done a series of residences in this style in Eastmoreland and Portland Heights.

The handling of the church's exterior and interior detailing and ornamental work shows Parker's command of details, his understanding of their function, and his ability to have them executed with artistry and careful workmanship. He used graphics on the principal facade in a manner which continued his earlier work with the Doyle firm. Within the sanctuary there is a wealth of ornament to delight the eye and articulate the space but which is used in a manner conveying the quiet dignity appropriate to this church meeting hall with roots in New England Congregationalism and Puritanism.

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The principal motif in Parker's rendition of the Georgian Style for this church is in the Roman Doric Order as interpreted by Palladio and, later, by Sir Christopher Wren. In his interpretation of the style, Parker has incorporated other designs, particularly on the interior of the sanctuary where he employed palmetto and wheel-of-life symbolic designs in the frieze. The exterior embellishments are simplified and include no iconographic decoration except for that used in the pediment of the portico and the graphics used in the portico frieze.

Jamieson Parker's later buildings show a marked development in style and treatment, moving from "correct" revival styles to an increasingly free and innovative treatment of traditional and modern styles. Through his studies in England, he appears to have been influenced by the work of William Morris and C. F. A. Voysey; his work tended to develop toward the Arts and Crafts Style and the emerging Modernistic Style of the late 1920s. His later homes have their stylistic roots in the early American New England Colonial period and appear to have many of the qualities coming to be associated with the Bungalow Style. His house for the Williams Ranch at Chiloquin in Klamath County is directly related to the Arts and Crafts Movement.

The architect's drawings, specifications, and construction correspondence for the First Unitarian Church have been deposited with the Oregon Historical Society in Portland.