

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON MUSEUM OF ART
1470 Johnson Lane on the University of Oregon campus
Eugene
Lane County
Oregon

HABS No. OR-175

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PHOTOGRAPHS

PHOTOGRAPHIC REPRODUCTIONS OF DRAWINGS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Columbia Cascades Support Office
National Park Service
909 First Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98104-1060

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
UNIVERSITY OF OREGON MUSEUM OF ART

HABS No. OR-175

Location: 1470 Johnson Lane on the University of Oregon campus.

A portion of Tax Lot 100, Amended Plat of University Addition, Assessor's Map: 17-03-32.

Beginning at a point 660.0 feet North and 440.22 feet West of the southeast corner of the Hilyard Shaw Donation Land Claim No. 56 in Township 17 South of Range 3 West of the Willamette Meridian in Lane County, Oregon, and run thence North 570 feet to the north line of Fourteenth Avenue in the City of Eugene, if extended east; thence West 528.78 feet to the east line of Kincaid Avenue; thence South 570 feet; and thence East 528.78 feet to the place of beginning, all in Eugene, Lane County, Oregon.

Present Owner/
Occupant:

The owner is the State of Oregon acting by and through the State Board of Higher Education. The occupant is the University of Oregon Museum of Art.

Present Use: Art museum and associated educational uses.

Significance: The University of Oregon Museum of Art is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register nomination states that the museum's historic significance: "centers on the history of its inception; the community and individual involvement, especially that of Ellis Lawrence; the uniqueness and quality of its design; and the exceptional craftsmanship of its construction."

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: May 1929 to August 1930.
2. Architect: Lawrence, Holford, Allyn and Bean. Chief designer was Ellis F. Lawrence.
3. Original and Subsequent Owners: State of Oregon acting by and through the State Board of Higher Education.
4. Original and Subsequent Occupants: The building has continuously been occupied by the University of Oregon Museum of Art. Historically, the building has been known as the Murray Warner Art Museum, the University of Oregon Fine Arts Building, and the University of Oregon Prince Lucien Campbell Memorial.
5. Builder, Contractor, Suppliers:
General Contractor: Ross B. Hammond, Inc., Portland, Oregon
Miscellaneous Iron Contractor: Eugene Foundry and Machine Co.,
Eugene, Oregon
Heating Contractor: Urban Heating Co., Portland, Oregon
Plumbing Contractor: Portland Heating and Plumbing, Portland, Oregon
Brickwork Contractor: Willamina Pacific Brick Co.
Cast Stone Contractor: Ernest Thomas Cast Stone Co.
Main Doors and Ironwork Craftsman: Ik Tuerck
Courtyard Stone Capitols and Cast Stone Lunette Panels: designed by
Richard W. Bock, then head of the University of Oregon Sculpture
Department, and carved by S.J. Patten
Courtyard Stone Sculpture Artist: Oliver Barrett
Mechanical Engineer: George S. Reed
Landscape: Professor Arthur L. Peck, Oregon State College, Corvallis,
Oregon
6. Original Plans and Construction: The drawings for the original building plan were prepared by Lawrence, Holford, Allyn and Bean with approval noted on some drawings by "E. F.L." (chief designer, Ellis F. Lawrence) and stamped by George S. Reed, Engineer. The drawings date from 1927 to 1929, with the final revised drawings for the original design dated August 1929.

Ross B. Hammond, Inc. began construction in May 1929 and ended in August 1930

The building's exterior is essentially intact as originally built. Minor changes have been made to the interior, but the essential character remains intact.

7. Alterations and additions: The rear entrance portico was added in 1934. Minor interior changes in 1956, made primarily to the lobby and mezzanine level, were designed by Lawrence, Tucker and Wallmann. Changes included remodeling the small mezzanine level exhibit halls to house the reference library. No structural changes were made. In 1966, alterations to update the basement and mechanical features were designed by Balzhiser and Colvin. In 1982, interior alterations to make the building accessible to people with disabilities (primarily an elevator and ramp added to the north gallery) were designed by Zaik/Miller, Portland, Oregon.

B. Historical Context:

The museum's inception reflects the original purposes of the museum, which were to house one of the largest collections of Oriental art in the country (the Murray Warner Collection) and to establish a memorial for past university president, Prince Lucien Campbell.

Many community members and individuals were involved in the construction of the museum. The collection was at first housed primarily in the Woman's Building on campus (Gerlinger Hall). Prince Lucien Campbell wanted to build a museum to permanently house the Murray Warner Collection in appreciation of the gift. He started a general building fund drive to raise \$5,000,000 in five years and had allocated \$300,000 for the museum. However, when he became ill these plans were curtailed. Early in 1925, just before his death, Irene Gerlinger began a fund drive specifically for the museum. When Campbell died, it was natural for the museum to be seen as a memorial to him and this became the rallying cry for the fundraising effort. The building, although state-owned, was largely privately funded.

As the chief building designer, Ellis Lawrence was the most important individual involved in the building design. Lawrence was the university architect from 1914 to 1949 as well as the founder and dean of the university's School of Architecture and Allied Arts. He designed virtually all buildings on campus during this time. The siting and design of the museum were part of Lawrence's larger campus and museum plans. The Museum of Art is unique in that the historic context of the setting is of equal, if not greater, historic significance than the architectural character of the building itself. The Museum is one of a collection of buildings specifically sited to create an open space framework of quadrangles, axes and malls designed and established by Lawrence.

In addition, the building design is significant for its early use of innovative features, which later became widely used in museums: the lack of exterior windows, and artificial lighting and ventilation. These design features were the product of a great deal of research on the part of Gertrude Bass Warner, donor of the art collection. In particular, Warner was responsible for the lack of windows to ensure safety and prevent artifact damage due to daylighting.

Many of the artists responsible for the building's integrated artwork and sculptures were associated with the School of Architecture and Allied Arts, most notably Richard Bock, who had created sculpture for many of Frank Lloyd Wright's early works.

The building, as built, was actually the first unit of what had been proposed by Lawrence as a three-part structure. The main section and two perpendicular wings were to surround the Prince Lucien Campbell Memorial Court on three sides. The two wings were to house artwork other than the Warner Collection – some of the collections had already been given. The plain, boldly massed rear side resulted when only the first stage of the proposed project was completed. Anticipation of the addition of the wings may explain why the decorative work is limited to the east façade instead of continuing around the building. Lack of funds, however, may be also be a reason.

When the museum opened, Mrs. Warner was appointed Director of the Museum. By the 1940s, survival of the museum was threatened due to local apathy and national problems (World War II). In 1958, then University President Meredith Wilson took an interest in revitalizing the museum. The tightly worded Deed of Gift was broken with Sam Bass Warner's approval and new collections and exhibits were at last permitted. A collection of Pacific Northwest art is one of the notable results of this action.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Stylistically, the building combines a unique, exotic blend of modernistic, Oriental and European styles. The building style has been described as exotic as well as Eclectic modified with North Italian Romanesque.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of the Exterior:

The most significant character-defining feature of the exterior is the overall symmetry of the building, particularly on the front (west) facade. The centrally located main entry, along with the unique decorative wall treatment used in place of windows, creates a striking facade.

1. Overall dimensions: Floor plans, sections, and details are included in the photographic documentation. The building is 187 feet wide and 43 feet deep, excluding the Campbell Memorial Court, which extends about 50 feet behind the structure. The building is basically a two-story structure with a basement, but it actually contains four interior levels. These include an intermediate level between the first and second floors in the back and two exhibit halls on a mezzanine level over the low-ceilinged rooms on the second floor.
2. Foundations: Concrete.
3. Walls: The walls are concrete with masonry facing. The front façade is windowless, yet highly decorated with brick patterns, cast stone and polychrome tile. The decorative brickwork on the front facade wraps around to the north and south façades of the front mass of the original building. It is believed that the façade was designed to replicate an oriental rug. This was the architect's decorative solution to a building without windows. The design was carried out by the use of face brick in five shades of red, with a "rug" finish (texture produced by vertical striations on the surface).

Beginning at the top, the cornice consists of small arches with sculpted heads in every third arch. According to the original specifications, these were to be carved from Bedford Limestone. Later construction drawings detail them as terra cotta, but cast stone was substituted. The heads are of primitive, Egyptian, Greek, and Oriental muses. Between the cornice and the belt course that defines the second story level is flush face-brick in a diaper pattern. There are two sets of two unpatterned vertical bands on each side of the façade running from the cornice to the belt course over niches on the first floor. The belt course consists of cast stone squares and rectangles with delicate linear designs filling the geometric shapes. These are flanked, top and bottom, with rounded bands of cast stone in stylized organic motifs. Below this face brick is laid a common bond with glazed polychrome tiles set in between every eight bricks in the header course (every seventh course). Brick courses continue to the base changing subtly in color from lighter to darker as one moves to the bottom. It is interrupted in three places by the main entry and two niches. The niches as built protrude only a few inches from the wall surface. They are slightly

pointed arches of embellished cast stone framed in a rectangular shape of the same material.

4. Structural systems, framing: Concrete frame.
5. Openings:

Doorways and doors: The main entrance is located in the center of the front façade. It is surmounted by a series of receding cast stone ogival arches. The three rows of arches are supported by matching columns decorated with spiraling garlands. In the entablature over the door is carved "Museum of Art" and in the spandrel above it is the inscription "Through wisdom is an house builded [sic] and by understanding it is established and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches. Proverbs."

The decorative front doors are made of steel, bronze, and wrought iron. In addition, decorative iron gates lead to the Campbell Memorial Courtyard.

- a. Windows and shutters: There are no windows in the front façade. There are three steel framed, stained glass windows on the second level of the south façade and three additional steel framed windows on the second level of the rear (east) façade.

6. Roof: The roof is flat with a bituminous built-up roofing material.

C. Description of the Interior:

The most significant characteristic of the interior is the axial symmetry expressed by the sequence of entry into the building - beginning at the front doorway leading to the vestibule, the lobby and culminating in the Campbell Courtyard. Although all of these spaces have historic significance, the Campbell Courtyard itself is the most significant interior space because of its unique open-air character, its decorative and landscape features, its integration of artwork into the design, and its designation as a memorial to Prince Lucien Campbell. In addition, the Throne Room is a very significant interior space because of its unique design and its relationship to the original use of the building. Following these two spaces in significance are the entry area, vestibule, and main stairway and, finally, the other gallery spaces.

1. Floor plans: Floor plans, sections, and details are included in the photographic documentation. The front doors lead to a vestibule and lobby. On either side of the lobby are exhibit halls and straight ahead is the stair hall and the Campbell Memorial Courtyard. Some offices and a gift store occupy the first floor as well.

The Campbell Courtyard is significant because of its unique open-air character, its landscape and decorative features, its integration of artwork into the design, and its designation as a memorial to Prince Lucien Campbell. It is 58' 8" long, perpendicular to the long axis of the building exactly opposite the main entrance. Decorative brick arches supported on limestone columns form a cloister that surrounds a thirty-foot by seven-foot rectangular reflecting pool on three sides. The fourteen columns have capitals depicting the small bird and animal life of Oregon. The arcades lead to a niche of Pink Tavernelle marble with a dome of gold mosaic tile.

Wide stairs, which return from landings, flank the stair hall to the left and right. The south stair landing leads to a small exhibit hall and the north stair landing leads to two small exhibit halls, one of which was converted into a reference library in 1956. The second floor contains the museum's largest exhibit hall, called the Throne Room. It is flanked on each side by three smaller exhibit halls. Narrow stairs lead to small mezzanine exhibit halls over these smaller halls.

The basement contains lavatories, storerooms, and a mechanical room. In 1966, the north portion of the basement was remodeled into administrative offices.

2. Stairway: The stairways have plaster side rails capped with carved oak banisters. Matching oak newel posts have carved pineapple finials. The travertine stair treads and upper landing floor match the lobby floor.
3. Flooring: The lobby and stair hall flooring is travertine tile while the first floor gallery flooring is cork tile.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The interior walls are plaster. Some of the gallery ceilings have translucent drop ceiling panels with artificial lighting above to create the effect of natural lighting.

D. Site:

1. Historic Landscape Design: The Museum of Art is situated on the University of Oregon campus on the east side of the Memorial Quadrangle. Of primary significance is the Museum's siting and massing relative to its placement on the Memorial Quadrangle that takes into account landscape features and related buildings that define the quadrangle. The museum is one of a collection of buildings specifically sited to create an open space framework of quadrangles, axes and malls that was designed and established by Ellis Lawrence. As described in Harmony in Diversity: The Architecture and Teaching of Ellis F. Lawrence:

“Lawrence’s 1914 Campus Plan for the University of Oregon clearly expressed his beaux-arts training. The major element of the plan was a new quadrangle [Memorial Quadrangle] located to facilitate an axial, ‘proper and dignified’ entrance to the campus. . . Although many details changed over the following years, the basic organization of this plan provided a firm foundation from which, over thirty-two years, Lawrence would build a campus of unusual charm and serviceability.”

The Memorial Quadrangle, in association with the adjacent University of Oregon Knight Library, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Also of primary significance is the museum's relationship to the other features of the open space framework established by Ellis Lawrence, including the east/west cross axes to the north and south of the museum site and the Women's Memorial Quadrangle to the rear (east) of the museum. The Women's Memorial Quadrangle ensemble is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

1. Architectural Drawings: Photographs of relevant sheets of the original drawings have been photographed and included with the accompanying photographs. The original drawings of the original building design and of all subsequent changes to the building are housed at University of Oregon Facilities Services. Copies are available for viewing at the same location.

2. Bibliography:

Parks, Bonnie. University of Oregon Museum of Art National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. 1984.

Shellenbarger, Michael, Harmony in Diversity: The Architecture and Teaching of Ellis F. Lawrence. Eugene, Oregon: Museum of Art and Historic Preservation Program, School of Architecture and Allied Arts, University of Oregon, 1989.

Shellenbarger, Michael and Lakin, Kimberly. Oregon Inventory of Historic Property: Ellis Lawrence Building Survey. Salem, Oregon: Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, April 1, 1989.

3. Supplemental photographic documentation is available from the following sources:

A. University of Oregon Museum of Art Collections:

- Series of black and white photographs documenting virtually every room in the museum immediately prior to 2002 construction (September 2002).
- Series of color slides documenting the exterior setting immediately prior to 2002 construction (September 2002).
- Variety of additional interior and exterior images taken over a wide period of time.

B. University of Oregon Archives, University Photograph Collection:

- Collection of historical photographs of the Museum of Art (interior and exterior) and of the University of Oregon campus including the following folders:

Museum of Art Shop - Group shots

Museum of Art - Construction (Construction shots, Group shots c1928)

Museum of Art-Courtyard (Interior and exterior courtyard shots, Group shots, Statue shots)

Museum of Art-Exhibits, Receptions etc. (Interior exhibit shots, Group shots, Proof sheet)

Museum of Art-Exterior (Negatives, Exterior building shots)

Museum of Art-Friends of...

Campus Plans (Campus model shots and plan)

Campus Plans - 1920 (Model shots and drawings)

Campus Scenes - Aerials (Two aerial shots)

Campus Scenes - Memorial Quad (Memorial Quad student shots)

4. Supplemental information about the physical elements of the museum is available by visiting the facility, which is open to the public.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This report was prepared by Christine Taylor Thompson, University of Oregon Planning Office, as part of Section 106 mitigation requirements for the Museum of Art Additions and Alterations Project as specified by the Memorandum of Agreement between the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Oregon State Historic Preservation Officer, and the University of Oregon. All photographic documentation was prepared by James Norman and Leslie Schwab, Technical Services Branch of the Oregon Department of Transportation.