

HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM
University of Oregon Cultural Resources Survey
Eugene, Lane County, Oregon
Summer 2006

RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION

Current building name: Gilbert (James H.) Hall

Historic building name: Commerce Hall, renamed to Gilbert Hall in 1975

Building address: 955 East 13th Ave.

Ranking: Secondary

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Architectural style classification: Modernized Byzantine (from Ellis Lawrence Survey)

Building plan (footprint shape): L-shaped

Number of stories: 2 with raised basement

Foundation material(s): Concrete

Primary exterior wall material: Brick

Secondary exterior wall material: Concrete, Terra Cotta

Roof configuration/type: Flat

Primary roof material: Bituminous built-up roofing

Primary window type: 9/9 multi-pane horizontal pivot

Primary window material: wood

Decorative features and materials: Decorative brickwork; terra cotta banding at cornice, terra cotta columns at entrance, terra cotta window sills, etc.; Palladian Windows

Landscape features: paved courtyard between Gilbert and Peterson, lampposts, foundation plantings, brick planter beds

Associated resources: Gilbert Hall is now part of Lillis Business Complex (attached); adjacent to 13th Ave Axis, Dads' Gates Axis, Peterson Hall, Memorial Quadrangle

Comments: Gilbert is a brick building most noted for its staircase entryway on the west façade of the building. This staircase and entryway faces into the courtyard and mirrors the image of Peterson Hall, which is located directly across from the courtyard of Gilbert.

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

Date of construction: 1921

Architect: Ellis Lawrence

Builder/Contractor: Lanning and Hoggan, Portland (general contractor)

Moved? (yes/no): No Date of move(s): N/A

Description/dates of major additions/alterations: 1951: joined to Commonwealth Bldg., entry gable parapet removed, entry stairs altered, courtyard elevated, retaining walls built, Oregon University seal relocated to Commonwealth; 1955-1997: interior remodels; 1976: re-roofing; 1983: South Wing alteration; 1990, '92 & '96: re-roofing; 2003: Commonwealth razed, Gilbert joined to Lillis Business Complex, courtyard redesigned, new planters/paving installed

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS & SIGNIFICANCE

Original use(s) or function(s): Classrooms

Current use(s) or function(s): Classrooms

Area(s) of significance: Education, Architecture

Period of significance: 1921

Statement of Significance (use continuation sheet if necessary):

Gilbert Hall was originally known as Commerce Hall. Construction was completed in 1921. It was the east wing of the "front pillars" of Ellis Lawrence's axis plan, along with Peterson Hall which sits opposite to the west. Gilbert was constructed mainly out of brick with exquisite detailing of terra cotta and molded concrete. According to the Ellis Lawrence Survey (see Bibliography) it is built following the Modernized Byzantine style. Lawrence designed primary campus buildings such as Peterson and Gilbert in exotic styles, as seen in his other works on Memorial Quad, while he reserved Colonial Revival for secondary buildings (Education East, Education West, Women's Memorial Quad buildings).

Commerce remained as it was built until 1951 when a large addition connected it to Peterson Hall. The ensemble became known as the Commonwealth Complex and the name "Gilbert Hall" was given to the large building that connected Commerce Hall and Peterson Hall (then known as the Education Building). In 1975 Commerce Hall was renamed Gilbert Hall and the original Gilbert Hall held the name Commonwealth. Commonwealth was later razed for construction of the new Lillis Business Complex.

1951 held many alterations for Gilbert Hall (Commerce). The Commonwealth addition obstructed the Dads' Gates Axis originally intended by Ellis Lawrence and caused a need to elevate the grade of the courtyard. The first flight of the entry stair was removed to meet the level of the new re-grade and retaining walls around basement windows had to be built to compensate. The most startling alteration in 1951 was the truncation, or flattening, of the parapet on the entry façade. What was once a gabled parapet is now a flat grade. Also in 1951, the interior's finished plaster was replaced, and acoustic ceiling tiles and new floors were installed. Many of the original doors were replaced with wood panel doors as well.

In 1975 interior partition walls and handicap access were added. In 1992 the roof was replaced. In 2002-2003, when Commonwealth was razed and replaced with the Lillis Business Complex, some alterations to the former's connection to Gilbert Hall were required. Although now on the interior, Gilbert's north façade remains virtually intact.

For all of Gilbert's "life" it has been a part of the business program at the U of O. Its original use was a business school and today it is still a part of the business school.

Gilbert may be eligible for the National Register, due to its high architectural significance yet diminished integrity. It is clearly eligible as a contributing resource. As previously mentioned Ellis Lawrence designed the Memorial Quad with points from Knight Library to the view of Dads' Gates. Gilbert is one of the buildings which create this quad and axis along with Peterson, Chapman, Condon, Prince Lucien Campbell, and the Museum of Art. Gilbert is in good condition yet has only fair integrity. The original bricks of the removed parapet have been found underneath the stairway, so in theory the parapet could be rebuilt. Gilbert is ranked as a secondary resource due to its fair integrity and high significance.

For more information regarding Gilbert Hall and surrounding business complex, please reference "In Defense of Historic Structures: A Historic Structures Report" (in bibliography)

NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENTHistoric Significance (check one): High Medium Low Very Low or NoneIntegrity (check one): Excellent Good Fair PoorCondition (check one): Excellent Good Fair PoorBuilding designation: City Landmark National Register National Historic Landmark Not listedPreliminary National Register eligibility findingsBuilding is potentially eligible: Individually or As a contributing resource in a district only

If eligible individually, applicable criteria (check all that apply):

 A. Associated with significant events C. Distinctive architecturally B. Associated with significant persons D. Archaeologically importantIf applicable, building qualifies under NR Criterion Considerations: Yes No If yes, which apply:Building is NOT eligible: Intact but lacks distinction or Altered/loss of integrity or Not 50 years old

DOCUMENTATION

Indicate resources consulted when researching this building (check all that apply):

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> University archives | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UO Planning Office files | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspapers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sanborn maps | <input type="checkbox"/> Building permits | <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO files |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State Archives | <input type="checkbox"/> State Library | <input type="checkbox"/> State Historic Society |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Historic Society | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal interviews | <input type="checkbox"/> Historic photographs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biographical encyclopedias | <input type="checkbox"/> Obituary indexes | Other <u>see below</u> |

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"The Getty Foundation Campus Heritage Grant"

By: the University of Oregon

Copyright: 2005

"Oregon Inventory of Historic Property: Ellis Lawrence Survey"

By: Ellis Lawrence

Published/printed by: the University of Oregon, Historic Preservation Program
School of Architecture and Allied Arts
For SHPO

Copyright: 1989

"In Defense of Historic Structures: A Historic Structures Report"

By: David Adam Singer

Published/printed by: the University of Oregon
2000

Ellis Lawrence Building Survey, Oregon Inventory of Historic Places, 1989. v.2 (Eugene). Compiled by the Historic Preservation Program, School of Architecture and Allied Arts, University of Oregon; project directors, Michael Shellenbarger, Kimberly Lakin. [Salem, Or.] : State Historic Preservation Office, [1989].

University of Oregon Campus Planning and Facilities Services hanging files and building plans.

RECORDING INFORMATION

Researched: Erin Pochert and Jennifer Flathman, Winter 2006

Recorded: Susan Johnson and University Planning Office, Summer 2006

Photo number or name: Gilbert

PHOTOGRAPH



SITE PLAN

