

HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM
University of Oregon Cultural Resources Survey
Eugene, Lane County, Oregon
Summer 2006, Updated 2025

RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION

Current building name: Bean Complex

Historic building name: Bean Complex, Justice Bean Hall

Building address: 1416 Columbia St/1601 E 15th Ave. East section: 1695 E 15th Ave/1410 Moss St.

Ranking: Tertiary

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Architectural style classification: Modern

Building plan (footprint shape): Asymmetrical

Number of stories: 3

Foundation material(s): Concrete

Primary exterior wall material: Brick

Secondary exterior wall material: Concrete

Roof configuration/type: Flat

Primary roof material: Elastic sheet roofing

Primary window type: Casement

Primary window material: Aluminum

Decorative features and materials: Pre-cast concrete panels, exposed aggregate finish

Landscape features: Located along the 15th Ave. Axis with courtyards with lawns, concrete paths, numerous rectangular concrete planters and exposed aggregate walls. A large pin oak appears in each of Bean's enclosed courtyards along with a mixture of smaller ornamental trees, shrubs and perennials.

Associated resources: None

Comments: The Bean complex is comprised of three main sections. The two dormitory buildings (Bean East and Bean West) are square in plan, each with a square courtyard in the center.

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

Date of construction: 1963

Architect: Wilmsen, Endicott, and Unthank

Builder/Contractor: Paul B. Emerick Co.

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

Description/dates of major additions/alterations: 2020, major interior remodel and additions on the north and south by Mahlum.

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS & SIGNIFICANCE

Original use(s) or function(s): Dormitory Current use(s) or function(s): Dormitory

Area(s) of significance: Education, Architecture Period of significance: 1962-1963

Statement of Significance (use continuation sheet if necessary):

The Bean Complex was built during an era of rapid growth in student enrollment at the University. It is a dormitory complex that was completed in 1963 in the Modern style amidst a university housing boom by architects Wilmsen, Endicott, and Unthank. DeNorval Unthank Jr. is noted by some references as having a lead role in designing Bean Hall. He was the first African American to graduate from the University of Oregon School of Architecture and Allied Arts in 1952. Despite facing racial discrimination that was prevalent at the time, Unthank was a prolific and successful architect from 1952 to 1998. Unthank designed schools, public buildings and business facilities around the state of Oregon, including some in the Eugene area, such as McKenzie Hall, Bean Hall, Lane County Courthouse, J.F. Kennedy Junior High School, and Springfield's Thurston High School, and the Crasemann House on Madrona Street. In addition, he served as an architecture professor at UO from 1965 to 1980. In 1980, following more than 30 professional awards, Unthank was named a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, "recognizing his design work on the Lane County Courthouse, the former UO Law School [McKenzie Hall], Central Oregon Community College campus buildings in Bend, the U.S. Consulate Quarters in Fukuoka, Japan, and numerous banks, professional offices, churches, and private residences around the state of Oregon". This was at a time when the number of black architects in the US was less than 2 percent (AIA). Not only was Unthank known for his excellence in architecture, he was also known for his commitment to his guidance of aspiring architects and of the Black community in Eugene.

Bean Hall is one of the few buildings constructed as a direct result of the Lawrence Lackey Plan. Lackey was hired by the University of Oregon to prepare a planning report for the future growth of the campus in 1962. A significant amount of growth was targeted in the I.O.O.F. cemetery and land east of Agate Street. The Bean Complex appears in Lackey's proposed plan in its current location. It has an asymmetrical plan, with 3 stories and a concrete foundation. While the primary exterior wall material is brick, concrete is also used throughout. Bean has a flat roof with elastic sheet roofing, and has aluminum casement windows. The only decoration comes in the form of pre-cast concrete panels with an exposed aggregate finish. The complex is named for Robert Sharp Bean, who was chief justice of the state supreme court and later judge of the federal court of Oregon, a position he held until his death in 1931. He was the first University graduate to serve on the University's Board of Regents, and was first president of the University of Oregon Alumni Association. Units within the complex are named for former faculty: Parsons, Thornton, Caswell, DeBusk, Ganoë and Henderson. Landscape features include courtyards with lawns, concrete paths, numerous rectangular concrete planters and exposed aggregate walls. Large pin oaks appear in each of Bean's enclosed courtyards along with a mixture of smaller ornamental trees, shrubs and perennials. As an example of late modernist landscape architecture, the design by Maryl S. Lorish may prove to be more historically significant than the buildings.

Because of misgivings with earlier campus planning strategies, Bean complex, along with numerous other buildings on campuses throughout the country at the time, were designed without any effort to conform to the existing built environment. Today Bean Complex stands at the east end of campus with other similarly-designed dormitories that were also completed in the Modern style, and which stand in contention to the unified styles of the buildings in the center of campus.

In 2020, the interior catering kitchen and conference office spaces were fully converted to living learning spaces. Also, additions were constructed on both the north and south, creating new building entrances. The original pre-cast concrete panels were retained but the exposed aggregate finish was painted black.

While the building has good integrity, it is not a notable example of modern architecture. However, it is associated with DeNorval Unthank Jr., one of the first black architects in the state, and a partner of the well-known Eugene firm of Wilmsen, Endicott, and Unthank (Criterion C). Also, the design of the courtyards are a good example of modern landscape architecture. It is ranked as a tertiary resource.

NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT

Historic Significance (check one): High Medium Low Very Low or None

Integrity (check one): Excellent Good Fair Poor

Condition (check one): Excellent Good Fair Poor

Building designation: City Landmark National Register National Historic Landmark Not listed

Preliminary National Register eligibility findings

Building 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 important

If 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 type="checkbox"/> University archives | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UO Planning Office files | <input checked="" 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 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other : <u>see below</u> |

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Primary source materials, Bean Complex architectural drawings located in the Facilities Services hanging files.

"Dedication set for Bean Hall," Eugene (OR) Oregon Daily Emerald, 8 April 1964. p. 3.

Lackey, Lawrence, University of Oregon Campus Planning Studies: Progress Report. Eugene, OR. 1962.

Sandahl, David Alan and Castro, Ricardo, An Architectural History of the University of Oregon, s.l.: s.n., 1975.

Taylor, Christine L. "Planning For The Preservation Of The Campus Plan: University Campuses Of The West Coast." Master's thesis, University of Oregon, 1990.

Teague, EH. (2004, Oct. 10). Bean Complex. The Architecture of the University of Oregon. Retrieved Mar. 1, 2006, from <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/architecture/oregon/>

RECORDING INFORMATION

Researched: Dustin Welch and Andrea Blaser, Winter 2006

Recorded: Susan Johnson and university Planning Office, Summer 2006

Photo number or name:

PHOTOGRAPH



SITE PLAN

