

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

**RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION**

Current building name: Johnson Hall  
Historic building name: The Administration Building  
Building address: 1098 East 13th Ave.  
Ranking: Primary

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**

Architectural style classification: American Renaissance (per National Register nomination)  
Building plan (footprint shape): Rectangle  
Number of stories: Two on a raised basement  
Foundation material(s): concrete  
Primary exterior wall material: Brick, common bond  
Secondary exterior wall material: Terra cotta and granite  
Roof configuration/type: gable on hip  
Primary roof material: Metal  
Primary window type: Casement windows are the primary type. There is an even distribution of double casement windows on the second floor and triple casement windows topped with horizontal panes on the first floor.  
Primary window material: Wood and glass  
Decorative features and materials: terra cotta tile accents throughout the building: cornice, water table, columns; granite veneer accents the foundation  
Landscape features: The north entry features parallel sidewalks with a topiary 'O' in the center. Previously, across 13th Ave, Proctor's *The Pioneer* sculpture faced Johnson Hall while the *Pioneer Mother* faced Johnson from the south. Both sculptures were removed in 2020. Numerous mature trees.  
Associated resources: 13th Ave. Axis, Pioneer Axis, Johnson Lane Axis  
Comments: Johnson Hall has a symmetrical design plan. From the north entry, the building presents a two-story portico supported by six concrete Ionic columns that are covered with terra cotta tiles. See Statement of Significance for further details.

**ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY**

Date of construction: 1914 - 1915  
Architect: William C. Knighton  
Builder/Contractor: Boyajohn Arnold  
Moved? (yes/no): No                      Date of move(s): n/a  
Description/dates of major additions/alterations: 1949, Interior renovation eliminated Guild Theater; 1984 Exterior restoration by Brockmeyer McDonnell Architects.

**HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS & SIGNIFICANCE**

Original use(s) or function(s): University administration, campus services  
 Current use(s) or function(s): University administration  
 Area(s) of significance: Education, Architecture Period of significance: 1914-1915  
 Statement of Significance (use continuation sheet if necessary):

Johnson Hall houses the University's administrative offices, including the Office of the President and the Provost. Influenced by Beaux-arts and classical revival styles, this brick building, accented with terra cotta tiles, has a symmetrical design plan and a rectangular footprint. The north entry sidewalk features a center "O" topiary. From this side, the projecting center bay's two-story portico is supported by six concrete iconic columns that are covered with terra cotta tiles. The entablature above the portico is decorated with dentil molding and other terra cotta tile decoration, such as the University of Oregon seal in the center. The terra cotta cornice and frieze continue along the entire perimeter of the building. The south entrance of Johnson Hall features a cast iron and glass awning described in Knighton's plans as "Marquise Metal." The east, west and south sides of Johnson Hall's windows are accented with green fabric awnings. These awnings are not original to the building and it is unknown if they were included in the original design intent, but they are evident in early photographs.

Completed on November 8, 1915, the Administration Building, as it was originally known, was designed by William C. Knighton, Oregon's State Architect. Costing over \$100,000, it was campus' most expensive building constructed at the time. In 1918 the Administration Building was renamed Johnson Hall after John Wesley Johnson, the first president of the University of Oregon. Ellis Lawrence is somewhat connected to this building. He advised Knighton on the design and President Campbell referred to him as "advisory architect." He also advised the University on various issues regarding this building including acoustical problems and maintaining the terra cotta "Administration Building" plaque when the building's name was changed. The placement of Johnson Hall between the Lawrence campus building projects (i.e., the Women's Quad, Museum of Art, and Knight Library), and the Old Campus Quad, which contain the University's first buildings, is symbolic because it stands as a transition between these two significant periods in University history. Johnson Hall's presence, building technology, and sheer expense symbolized the University's transition into a new era of progressive change as exemplified in the University's subsequent growth and ambitious building projects. Its applied terra cotta decoration, architectural form, and construction of reinforced concrete make this building unique to the campus at the time of its construction. Originally, Johnson Hall featured the Guild Theater and an impressive Povey Brothers stained glass skylight that covered the entire center of the second floor. The theatre was converted to office space and the glass skylights were removed when Robinson Theater was completed in 1949. The glass panels were dispersed around campus and can now be found in Johnson Hall Conference Room, Lawrence Hall, and Erb Memorial Union. Johnson Hall was the site of various student-led protests during the Vietnam Era. In fact, UO students took over Johnson Hall in 1970. Subsequently, sixty-one students were arrested. In 1984 the architectural firm of Brockmeyer McDonnell executed an exterior restoration of Johnson Hall. Among the projects included in this restoration were the removal and replacement of the roof, repair of terra cotta tiles, repointing of brickwork, resealing of windows, and patching of plasterwork. In 2004, the Project Management Group and UO Facility Services performed a historical improvements study and had several recommendations.

In 1985 Johnson Hall was added to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. Johnson Hall's overall integrity is intact and it is in good condition. Johnson Hall is significant because of its architecture – it is a rare example of American Renaissance in the area and the only example on campus. Additionally, it was built using new materials and techniques. Although it had been used in other parts of the country, the use of reinforced concrete was a fairly new process at the time of Johnson Hall's construction in this area. Additionally, the use of applied glazed terra cotta was a first for a campus building, which in turn started a trend in many subsequent campus buildings like Condon and Chapman Halls. The use of this new technology combined with Johnson's design by Knighton and Lawrence (as advisory architect) and fine architectural characteristics contributed to its eventual listing on the National Register of Historic Places. It is considered a primary resource for its excellent integrity and high significance.

**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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic photographs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biographical encyclopedias     | <input type="checkbox"/> Obituary indexes                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other see below      |

**BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

"Building will be best of its kind, Administration Building", Daily Emerald, 09/22/1914, 1.

"Building done in May," Daily Emerald, 01/09/1915, 4.

Campus Maps, UO Info Graphics lab, <http://geography.uoregon.edu/infographics/campusMaps/LineArtMap.pdf>.

Historical Campus Map Buildout animation, UO Info Graphics Lab, [http://geography.uoregon.edu/infographics/projects/campus\\_Mapping.htm#](http://geography.uoregon.edu/infographics/projects/campus_Mapping.htm#)

Johnson Hall National Register Nomination, 1985.

Lakin, Kimberly and Michael Shellenbarger, directors. Ellis Lawrence Building Survey. Salem: State Historic Preservation Office, 1989.

The Project Management Group and UO Facility Services. "Johnson Hall Historical Improvements Study," 2004.

"Start building before June 10," Daily Emerald, 05/09/1914, 8, il.

Teague, Ed. University of Oregon Libraries website. The Architecture of the University of Oregon: A History, Bibliography, and Research Guide, <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/architecture/oregon/johnson.html>.

William C. Knighton's original plans (copy), Facilities Services Office.

**RECORDING INFORMATION**

Researched: Sarah Helwick and Erica Steverson, January 2006

Recorded: Susan Johnson and University Planning Office, Summer 2006

**PHOTOGRAPH**



**SITE PLAN**

