

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

RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION

Current building name: Straub (John) Memorial Hall
Historic building name: John Straub Memorial Building, Men's Dormitory
Building address: 1451 Onyx Street
Ranking: Secondary

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Architectural style classification: Colonial Revival
Building plan (footprint shape): "E"-shaped
Number of stories: Four
Foundation material(s): Concrete
Primary exterior wall material: Brick-faced concrete
Secondary exterior wall material: Stucco attic half-story
Roof configuration/type: Gabled roof of medium pitch
Primary roof material: Composition shingle
Primary window type: Eight-over-eight, double hung sash
Primary window material: Wood
Decorative features and materials: running bond brick pattern, terracotta quoins, lintels, keystones, triple-arched entry portico with urns.
Landscape features: Foundation plantings; two rear courtyards each with lawn and various plant materials.
Associated resources: Attached to Earl Hall; Straub Hall Green and Onyx Axis to the west; Promenade to the north & 15th Ave. Axis to the south.
Comments: Six of the fourth floor windows are pedimented through-the-cornice, balustraded and project from the main building plane; terracotta swagged escutcheons; copper canopies over the four secondary entries; two rear courtyards; pedimented projecting main entrance with an oculus window in the tympanum.

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

Date of construction: 1928
Architect: Lawrence & Holford. Primary architect: E. F. Lawrence
Builder/Contractor: Hanson & Hammond, Portland, OR
Moved? (yes/no): No Date of move(s): N/A
Description/dates of major additions/alterations: 1955 Earl Hall constructed and attached to East (rear) side of Straub Hall; 1975 interior remodeled for classrooms and offices for Psychology Department, The Amundson Associates, Springfield; 1980s various basement and first floor remodels; 1998 installation of fire alarm system, Balzhiser & Hubbard Engineers; 2001 courtyard and interior remodel for fMRI facility, L.A. Kersh Architecture Inc, Eugene; 2013, major remodel and large addition in courtyard, Rowell Brokaw and Opsis.

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS & SIGNIFICANCE

Original use(s) or function(s): Men's dormitory
Linguistics and Psychology; also houses Public Safety

Current use(s) or function(s): Classrooms, labs and offices for

Area(s) of significance: Architecture, Education

Period of significance: 1928

Statement of Significance (use continuation sheet if necessary):

Ellis Lawrence designed the Men's Dormitory in the Colonial Revival style, the style reserved for his secondary campus buildings (ie, those not on the Memorial Quadrangle) such as Education West and East. This is also seen in his design work in the East (possibly Whitman College). This building was one of seventeen of Lawrence's works to be selected to be shown in an Oregon AIA exhibit in 1929. Originally, the dormitory was built to be self-sustaining per Oregon's Enabling Act (1859), which was enacted to finance new university buildings. Total cost was \$375,000 including construction, lands and furnishings. To make the new dormitory comply with the self-sustaining rule, room rents were raised higher than they had been at its predecessor, Friendly Hall; rooms in Straub were \$36 per term plus \$1.00 per day for board.

The new Men's Dormitory was completed in seven short months in 1928, with six residential units, a central kitchen and dining room, six additional dining rooms which could be opened to create a large hall, an ice plant, sewing room, linen room, laundry, an electric engine room and storage rooms in the basement. During WWII women students were moved into half of Straub Hall. In 1946, temporary housing arrived to handle the 47% increase in students returning from the war. The women were later moved into their own new dormitory, Carson Hall, in January of 1949.

The Men's Dormitory was renamed the John Straub Memorial Hall in 1933 for John Straub (1853-1932), former Greek Professor, Dean of Men, College of Liberal Arts. In 1955, Earl Hall was attached to the rear (east) of Straub Hall. After 5 years of debate, Straub Hall was remodeled in 1975 to house the Psychology Department. It was one of the pioneer projects using the Oregon Experiment "patterns" for diagnosis and analysis. Over the years, vines were allowed to grow up the brick exterior and caused a good deal of damage; the vines were removed in 1985. In 2013, the building underwent a major exterior renovation, interior remodel, and seismic upgrade. Primary historic features, including the entry lobby and original dining room (which was dismantled), were retained and restored. All original windows were restored and converted to double-pane by adding an exterior glass panel. As part of this project, a large addition was constructed to the rear (east), partially disrupting the original courtyards to make space for numerous general pool classrooms. The building still houses the Psychology Department and Psychology clinics as well.

Straub Hall has good integrity and is in good condition. The entry lobby's original wood paneling, lunette paintings by K.E. Hudson and the ceramic tile floor are still intact and in good condition. It may be eligible individually for the National Register under Criterion C for its fine architecture and celebrated design by Ellis Lawrence. Straub Hall is listed as a secondary resource for its good integrity and medium level of 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 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

Archived Materials

Old Oregon, vol. 10, 1927-1928

Old Oregon, vol. 11-12, October 1928-June 1930

Alphabetical Subject Files, Box 1 of 12

Alphabetical Subject Files, Box 2 of 12

Ellis Lawrence Building Survey, vol. 2

UO Planning Office & Facilities Services files

Construction set of building plans

Straub Hall building file

UO Building Records – Projects and Improvements, February 2006 disc

Handout

Shellenbarger, Michael. *University of Oregon Architecture: A Personal Tour*. Historic Preservation Department, 1986.

RECORDING INFORMATION

Researched: Kathryn Burk, Melissa Stoller, Winter 2006

Recorded: Susan Johnson and University Planning Office, Summer 2006

Photo number or name: Straub Hall

PHOTOGRAPH



SITE PLAN

