

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

RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION

Current building name: Villard Hall
Historic building name: Villard Hall, New College Building
Building address: 1109 Old Campus Lane
Ranking: Primary

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Architectural style classification: Second Empire
Building plan (footprint shape): Rectangular
Number of stories: 2 ½ (3 floors)
Foundation material(s): Brick
Primary exterior wall material: Concrete stucco (or parging?) over brick
Secondary exterior wall material: n/a
Roof configuration/type: Mansard roof with flat top
Primary roof material: Wood shingle on Mansard portion / metal roof on flat portion
Primary window type: 1/1 double hung sash
Primary window material: Wood sash with cast iron sills
Decorative features and materials: Four square towers set at each corner; Mansard roof with decorative iron railings and wooden balustrades; molded cornice; brackets; rounded arches; triangular pedimented windows in towers; second-story window aedicules with square-pilasters of the Corinthian order, entablature and oculus windows in the tympanum; balustraded portico at east side.
Landscape features: "Class of 1897 Condon Oaks and 1893 stone memorial in old campus quadrangle
Associated resources: Normal Gate (1885), Dads' Gates (1940), the Hello Walk, the old stairway at 11th Avenue, Villard Green, Old Campus Quad, attached to Robinson Theatre
Comments: Villard Hall is listed as a National Landmark

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

Date of construction: 1885-1886
Architect: Warren H. Williams
Builder/Contractor: W.H. Abrams, contractor; Lord Nelson Roney, construction superintendent
Moved? (yes/no): No Date of move(s): N/A
Description/dates of major additions/alterations: 1895: interior remodel and gallery added in assembly room; 1926: remodeled – E. F. Lawrence, architect; 1948-9: interior remodel / University Theatre attached at West side; 1976: remodel/fire sprinklers. 1987: Historic Preservation Program porch restoration; 1989: handicap access remodel/elevators; 1997: third floor remodel by UO Facilities Design Services; 2023-2025: As part of the 'Heritage Project' for Villard and University Halls, anticipated completion by Fall, 2025, full interior renovation, exterior restoration, and seismic upgrades.

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS & SIGNIFICANCE

Original use(s) or function(s): Classrooms, offices Current use(s) or function(s): Classrooms, theater, offices

Area(s) of significance: 19th c. Architecture, Education Period of significance: 1886

Statement of Significance (use continuation sheet if necessary):

Designed by Warren H. Williams, noted architect of iron front buildings from Albany to Portland, Villard Hall was the second building constructed on the University of Oregon campus due to a grant from University patron Henry Villard. It was referred to as the New College Building during construction but by the dedication ceremony it received the name Villard Hall, in honor of Henry Villard. He had assisted the university in 1881 with a donation of \$7000 to erase the remaining debt from the construction of University Hall, now known as University Hall (he was a friend of Matthew Deady). He also donated \$1000 for a library, \$1000 for science equipment, established five \$250 scholarships and a \$50,000 endowment to UO. In 1885 a cornerstone ceremony took place and a small time capsule was placed under the stone in the northeast corner of the building (Oregon State Journal, August 1, 1885).

Henry Villard was born in Bavaria as Ferdinand Heinrich Gustav Hilgard. He changed his name when he was 18 years old and immigrated to the US. He settled in Illinois where he became an English reporter for the German newspapers and was purportedly a friend of Abraham Lincoln. He married Abolitionist Fannie Garrison. He studied finance and supervised US holdings of German businessmen. He amassed great wealth through his land holdings on New York's Madison Avenue and through his ownership of the Northern Pacific Railroad and General Electric. McKim, Mead & White designed his house in New York.

The decorative iron cresting was designed by Williams and made at the Cherry and Parks Iron Works in Albany. Villard has decorative wooden balustrades, brackets at the molded cornice, rounded arched window bays, with triangular pediments above the tower windows and oculus windows above the windows in the main body of the building. The windows are double hung wood sash framed in aedicules with square pilasters of the Corinthian order. Villard originally had large urns atop the balustrade and ornamented shields in each pediment which have deteriorated and have been either removed or lost.

Villard Hall was built originally as offices on the first floor for administration and now notable staff (including Dr. Thomas Condon, President Chapman, and Dr. Luella Clay Carson) and with classrooms and a large (held 1,000 occupants) auditorium. In 1895 a gallery was added to the auditorium. In 1946, Villard's third floor was used to temporarily house returning veterans from WWII and became known as "Old Soldiers Home." In 1949, the interior of Villard was completely remodeled, including removal of two of the three main doors at the Franklin Street entrance, the interior double entrance stair, and the West porch. Originally built with 2 floors and an attic, a third floor was added. Robinson Theatre was then attached on the west side.

The building was listed on the National Register for Historic Places in 1972 (#72001083) and is a National Historic Landmark as of May, 1977. The University of Oregon's Historic Preservation students undertook the restoration of the East porch in 1987 and the roof in subsequent years. Villard Hall currently houses the Theater Arts Department and the Comparative Literature Department. Multiple remodeling projects over the years have dramatically altered the interior of this building. The building is in good condition, However, many of the historic architectural features of Villard Hall are either missing or in disrepair and in need of restoration. The interior integrity, for reasons aforementioned, is fair. The exterior integrity is good despite the presence of Robinson Theatre with its contrasting building style, massing, decoration, and building material. A full exterior restoration (including removal of the exterior stair at the northwest corner) and interior renovation will be complete in 2025. Villard Hall is a primary resource for the UO campus, due to its high significance associated with the early University of Oregon development, Henry Villard, and architectural excellence.

(See Continuation Sheet 2)

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: <u>see below</u> |

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Archival Materials

Old Oregon, October 1948, p. 13.

Special Collections Alphabetical files,

Box 1 and 2 of 12. File: Buildings, History of

Box 11 of 12. File: Villard Building, File: Villard Cornerstone, File: Villard Building. "Fragments from Villard Hall: A

Survey of Architectural Elements with Recommendations for Restoration," manuscript produced by graduate students from a special term class in historic preservation, investigated the issues, problems and potential solutions associated with the restoration of Villard Hall, printed 1988

Box 12 of 12. File: Villard Endowment Letter, File: Villard Hall Centennial, 1 & 2 of 2

UO Planning Office & Facilities Services Files:

Construction set of building plans dated 1949

Villard Hall building file

UO Building Records – Projects and Improvements, February 2006 disc

Newspapers

"February Completion Scheduled for Villard," Oregon Daily Emerald, January 15, 1949.

"Landscaping the Theatre," Oregon Daily Emerald, October 21, 1949.

Handout

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

Website

National Register for Historic Places at <http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/OR/Lane/state.html>

Other

National Register nomination

RECORDING INFORMATION

Researched: Kathryn Burk, Melissa Stoller, Winter 2006

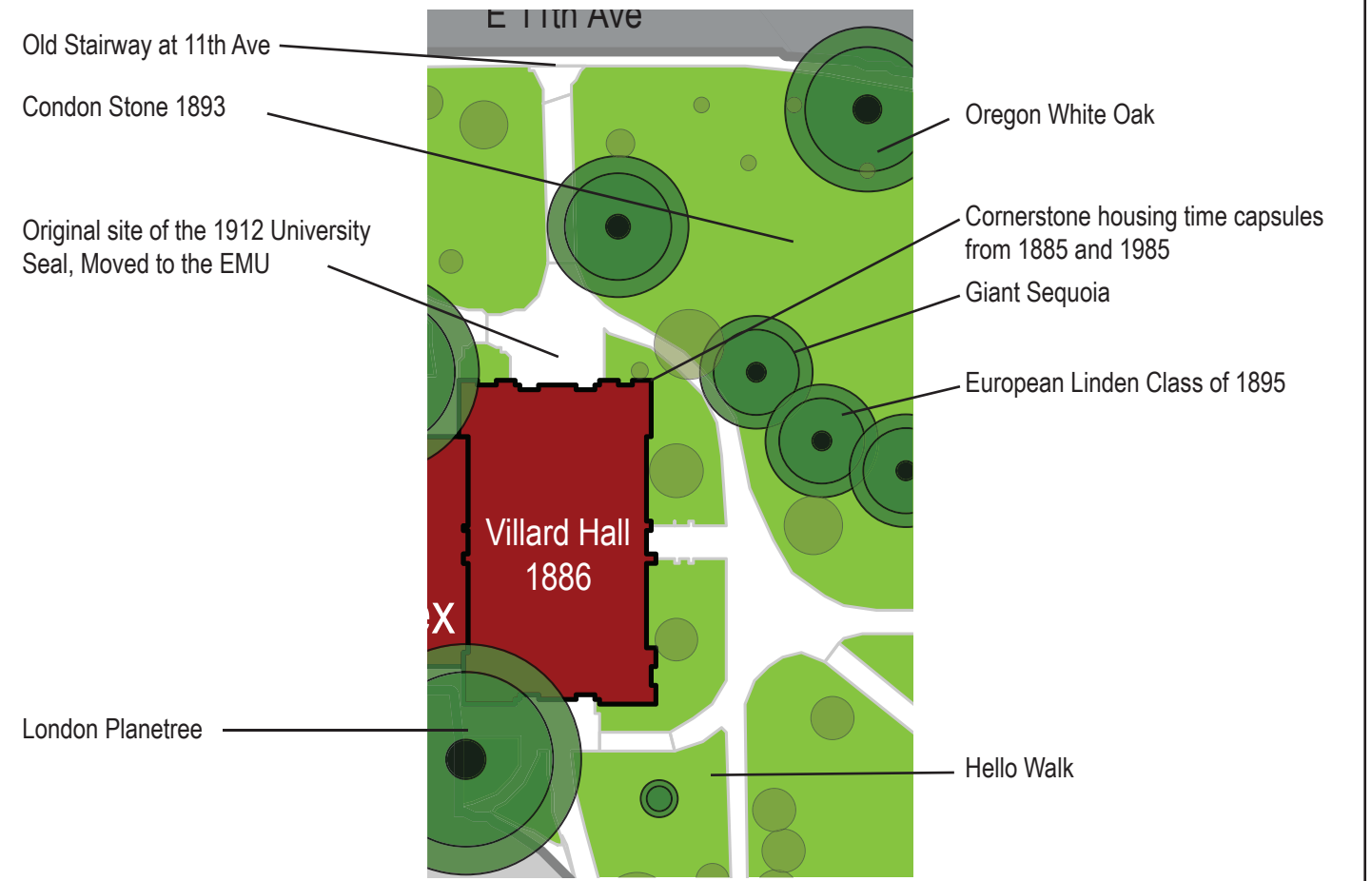
Recorded: Susan Johnson and University Planning Office, Summer 2006

Photo number or name: Villard Hall

PHOTOGRAPH



SITE PLAN



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Continuation Sheet 1**Section Historical Associations and Significance****Page 1**

Located at the northeast foundation corner of the building is an 1885 cornerstone housing time capsules with items from 1885 and 100 years later in 1985. The 1885 time capsule, rediscovered and opened in 1985 by university archivist, Keith Richards as part of the building's centennial celebration, contains various unique items from 1885. Items included photographs, newspaper articles, coins, and natural material samples. Items added to the time capsule in 1986 included items sought during a statewide search and contest. The time capsules were subsequently returned to the cornerstone location of the building in 1986 during a public ceremony.



Cornerstone housing time capsules from 1885 and 1985

April, 2021