United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

   historic name  Pallay Apartments
   other names/site number  The Cody Apartments; Mount Vernon Apartments; The Rose Apartments
   Name of Multiple Property Listing Portland Oregon’s Eastside Historic and Architectural Resources, 1850-1938
   (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

   street & number  631 SE Taylor Street  not for publication
   city or town  Portland  vicinity
   state  Oregon  code  OR  county  Multnomah  code  051  zip code  97214

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
   I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
   In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance: ___ national ___ statewide ___ local
   Applicable National Register Criteria: ___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

   Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  Date
   Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
   State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government
   In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.
   Signature of commenting official  Date
   Title  State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

   I hereby certify that this property is:
   ___ entered in the National Register  ___ determined eligible for the National Register
   ___ determined not eligible for the National Register  ___ removed from the National Register
   ___ other (explain:)

   Signature of the Keeper  Date of Action
5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Count as many boxes as apply.)

- X private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

Category of Property
(Count only one box.)

- X building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- Contributing: 1 buildings
- Noncontributing: 0

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY
AMERICAN REVIVALS: Classical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: BRICK
roof: SYNTHETICS
other:
**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity).

**Summary Paragraph**

The Pallay Apartments is located in Portland’s Central Eastside Industrial District at the corner of the SE 7th Avenue and SE Taylor Street. The surrounding area features primarily commercial and industrial buildings, although the building is bounded to the north and west by two other apartment buildings that are similar in size and age. The 26,644 square-foot, three-story building sits on a 100x100-foot quarter-block parcel. It has a concrete foundation and a stucco and masonry exterior with architectural details including brick arches and dentils, scoring in the stucco to mimic stone block, and a cornice and decorative parapet at the roof. The primary elevation is arranged symmetrically with the main entrance in the center of the façade. The original one-over-one double-hung wood window sashes have been replaced with beige-colored one-over-one vinyl windows, although the original wood window frames were retained. The building’s interior is organized around a U-shaped double-loaded corridor. The residential units feature their original window casings, baseboard trim, and picture rail trim. Some apartments have their original kitchen cabinets and Murphy Bed alcoves. The building’s character-defining features include the beige brick walls; stucco used at the ground story; centrally-placed main entry; punched window openings with masonry arches; bellybands and brick dentils; cornice and parapet details; U-shaped floorplan with a large light court; double-loaded corridor; open main stairwell associated with an entry lobby; wood newel posts and balusters; wood trim including picture rail and window casings; and original kitchen cabinetry. The building has integrity to reflect its historic significance as an early, single-use apartment building. Modifications include the window replacements, a new ADA-accessible entrance on the east façade, and some reconfiguring of the apartments. However, these modifications have not detrimentally affected the building’s integrity. Compared with period photos, the building retains its historic character and continues to reflect its typology as an early 20th Century apartment building.

**Narrative Description**

**EXTERIOR**

The three-story, 26,644 square-foot Pallay Apartments sits on a square-shaped 100x100 parcel and is comprised of Lots 5 and 6 of Block 136 in the Park Addition to East Portland. As shown in Photo 1, the surrounding area features primarily commercial and industrial buildings, the greatest number being one to four stories tall. There are clusters of apartment buildings, including the block where the Pallay Apartments is located. The building’s adjacent neighbors include a U-shaped apartment building to the north built in 1913 and another U-shaped apartment building to the west constructed in 1927. The Pallay is also U-shaped with a large lightwell that opens to the north. There are passageways between the nominated property and these buildings to the west and north, allowing for windows on all sides.

The Pallay is constructed with red brick masonry; however, the two primary elevations are finished with more refined materials over the rick brick. A concrete water table wraps the two primary elevations (south and east) at the foundation line. At the ground floor, the masonry structure has a stucco coating with score lines to look like stone blocks. The second and third stories are clad with buff-colored brick. A painted concrete belt course also wraps the two primary elevations, separating the two exterior wall materials. There are segmental brick arches above every window on the second and third floors. The original one-over-one double-hung window sashes have been replaced with beige-colored one-over-one vinyl windows. The wood window frames were retained and the vinyl windows were inserted into the frames. The windows at the ground floor have non-original metal security bars. The windowsills are painted concrete. Figures 9 and 10 are historic photos of the building, showing the original windows.
Below the roof cornice, the brick is articulated in a decorative dentil pattern with additional banding above and below. The sheet metal cornice is a replacement, but closely mimics the original. There is a raised section of brick parapet that lends visual prominence to the south elevation and marks the primary entry. A similar parapet treatment is used on the east elevation. The roof is flat.

The south façade is arranged symmetrically with the primary entry in the center of the façade, as shown in Photo 2 and the elevation drawings in Figure 8. There are several steps up to the recessed entry door. Shown in Photo 3, the primary entrance is a non-original wood door with a single light in the door panel and side lights on either side of the door. On the south façade, the windows are arranged in an alternating rhythm of two large windows followed by two smaller windows.

The building’s east façade is shown in Photo 4 and in Figure 8. As originally designed, the façade was nearly symmetrical except for an additional bay of windows at the south end. A secondary entry was added in a window opening at a date unknown, but likely within the last 30 years. This was further modified in 2020 to make the building ADA accessible. The opening was enlarged and there is a wood door with relites, providing at-grade access to an elevator. The windows follow the same pattern as the south façade, alternating two large windows followed by two smaller windows.

A large light court that opens to the north is shown in Photo 5. The light court was historically utilitarian to allow light into all parts of the building. The walls within the courtyard are red brick and all window opening are topped with segmental arches. The windows are the same one-over-one vinyl windows with concrete sills. There are no other decorative brick features. The courtyard includes a garbage enclosure, raised planters, a patio deck area, and ADA ramp that leads to a door at the southeast corner. These nonoriginal features were updated in 2020.

There is a walkway between the building’s west wall and the neighboring building. This wall is also comprised of red brick and features the same window treatment as the light court.

**INTERIOR**

Arriving in the building through the main entry, the first space is a lobby with the primary historic feature being the main staircase. This is shown in Photo 6. The wood stair treads have had rubber added for slip-protection. The original painted wood newel posts and bannisters are intact, as shown in Photo 7. Modifications for safety include a glass guardrail and a gate at the stairs leading to the basement. The lobby has been reconfigured several times. Most recently in 2020, a mailroom was added to the east of the entry and a window to the west looking into the manager’s office.

The three-story building with partial basement has a U-shaped double-loaded corridor from which studio apartments are accessed, as shown in Photo 8. There are more utilitarian secondary staircases at each end of the U-shaped plan. These were enclosed behind doors for fire safety early in the building’s history, if not originally. The corridors feature picture rail mouldings. All original corridor doors, which were likely five-panel wood doors, have been replaced with flush doors with lever door hardware. The removal of the original doors was likely done in c. 1980 and they were replaced again in 2020. Each corridor door casing is comprised of flat-stock wood trim and a parting bead. The corridor flooring is carpet.

The residential units feature their original window trim, baseboard trim, and picture rail trim, as shown in Photos 10-12. The window trim is made from flat trim stock and features a parting bead and a cornice molding at the top of the window. The wood baseboard trim is flat without decorative features. The picture rail features a standard profile. Many units have original Murphy Bed alcoves and decorative cast iron radiators. Some have original built-in kitchen hutchies with glass upper cabinet doors, as shown in
Photo 9. The walls and ceilings are painted plaster with painted fire sprinkler lines. Some units have original five-panel closet doors with original door hardware.

The building has shared common area restrooms and kitchenettes, which have been remodeled several times (most recently in 2020) and do not have any historic features.

**ALTERATIONS AND INTEGRITY**

The following list includes the alterations to the building and how these alterations affect the property’s integrity:

- The wood windows were replaced with vinyl window at a date unknown, but likely in the last 20 years. Given that they are one-over-one and the beige color is compatible with the color of the masonry, they are sympathetic with the original one-over-one double-hung windows shown in Figures 9 and 10 and do not cause a detrimental reduction in integrity.

- A secondary entry was added at an existing window opening on the east elevation at a date unknown, but sometime in the last 40 years. This entry was further modified for ADA accessibility in 2020. While this entry creates a change in the design and fenestration pattern of the east elevation, it does not disrupt the primary façade and the centrally-place main entry.

- Security bars were added to the ground floor windows at a date unknown, but likely sometime in the last 50 years. This is a minor, reversible change that does not alter the physical window opening.

- The main entry door to the building was replaced at least twice in the last 50 years, most recently in 2020. The replacement wood door is sympathetic to the early 19th century character and does not cause a harmful reduction in integrity.

- The sheet metal cornice and parapet cap were replaced at a date unknown, most likely in the last 20 years. The new metal cornice largely replicated the character of the original cornice, so this did not diminish the integrity.

- The light court has had accessibility improvements and other outdoor amenities such as benches added. Because the light court is not visible from the exterior and its purpose has always been utilitarian in nature, the changes that have been made do not negatively affect the building’s historic character.

- Some reconfiguring of the apartments has been done given that they were originally advertised as having en-suite bathrooms. The date and extent of this work is unknown. However, all the walls are plaster, so the work is not recent. Mostly importantly, the double-loaded corridor and public circulation spaces are retained. Within the apartments, the plaster walls, historic trim, window casings, some historic doors, original radiators, Murphy bed alcoves, and some built-in kitchen cabinetry remain. Said features continue to convey the character of these less public spaces from the historic period.

- Some apartments were converted into offices, common-area shared kitchens, and community space within the last 30 years. Because this a small proportion of the building square footage, the changes in these spaces is not harmful to the building’s overall integrity. In some of these spaces, character features such as the original window casings are retained.

- New common restrooms were added at a date unknown. Prior to their remodel in 2020, they appeared to be a 1980s vintage. It is not uncommon for bathrooms to be remodeled frequently in historic buildings. Nothing suggests the bathrooms were a character feature during the period of significance, so their loss is not impactful to integrity.
• The apartment entries were given new doors in the 1980s, which were replaced again in 2020. The loss of these interior doors does cause a reduction to interior integrity. However, the door casings are retained. Most importantly, the rhythm of doors along the corridor is retained and the historic feel of an apartment building with many units is unchanged in this respect.

• The apartment kitchens were remodeled in c. 1980 and again in 2020. Some kitchens retain their historic cabinetry with wood-and-glass cabinet doors and under-counter storage. Some kitchens have been fully remodeled. The retention of these built-ins provides a direct link to the past and indicates the original character of the apartments.

• Carpet and vinyl flooring has been replaced multiple times as is common with buildings that have a large numbers of occupants. While the original floor coverings are unknown, the use of carpet and vinyl does significant change the building’s interior character and diminish its integrity.

• Rubber treads were added to the main staircase at a date unknown, but probably c. 1980. The addition of rubber treads covers the original wood treads, causing a reduction of integrity at the staircase. However, the loss is not significant.

• Exposed fire sprinklers were added at a date unknown, probably in the last 50 years. While the fire sprinklers add a non-historic component to the building’s interiors, this piping is painted white to match the ceiling and does not conceal or distract from any character features such as a decorative ceiling.

SEVEN ASPECTS OF INTEGRITY ANALYSIS

The Pallay Apartments retains historic integrity to convey its significance as an early single-use apartment building on Portland’s east side that was architect-design and constructed with high quality materials. Integrity is reflected through the retention of many of its original character features. These include the beige brick walls; stucco used at the ground story with score lines suggestive of stone blocks; centrally-placed main entry; punched window openings with masonry arches; bellybands and brick dentils; cornice and parapet details; U-shaped floorplan with a large light court; double-loaded corridor; open main stairwell associated with an entry foyer; wood stair features include a newel post and turned balusters; wood trim including picture rail and window casings; and original kitchen cabinetry.

The following is an analysis of the seven aspects of integrity:

Location. The property remains at the same location, so integrity is high.

Setting. Integrity of setting is high. The most notable aspect of the setting during the period of significance was its commercial-industrial character. Presently called the “Central Eastside Industrial District,” this character is present today. Additionally, the Pallay is located one block outside the boundary of the East Portland Grand Avenue Historic District where many buildings from the historic period are retained. While development pressure has brought about changes to Portland’s east side, the low-rise, commercial-industrial character is still present near the nominated property.

Design. Integrity of design is the combination of elements that creates the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. For the Pallay, integrity of design is moderate-high. The exterior form of the building is unchanged with no alterations to massing, proportional, or scale. There have been some changes to the plan, but the spatial organization is retained. The building retains its central entry with foyer and main staircase and the double-loaded corridor that accesses the many small apartments within the building. While there have been some changes to materials, such as with the window replacement, the building’s style is unchanged. The fenestration pattern is largely intact except for the conversion of one window opening into an accessible entry on the east elevation. The
placement of the bellybands, brick dentils, metal cornice, and parapet details is all unchanged.

**Materials.** Integrity of materials is moderate. The building retains its brick and stucco walls. The wood window frames are present; however, the one-over-one wood windows were replaced with one-over-one vinyl windows. The metal cornice was replaced in-kind when it had deteriorated beyond repair. Inside, the original staircase with wood details, plaster walls, wood trim, radiators, some secondary doors, and some kitchen cabinetry are retained. Original apartment entry doors and bathrooms have been replaced, and the kitchens have been remodeled.

**Workmanship.** Workmanship refers to the quality of the craftsman’s product. While the Pallay was a trailblazing single-use apartment building that was constructed with high-quality materials, it was built for working and middleclass occupants and did not have numerous or elaborate finish details. Integrity of workmanship is moderate and it is seen in the brick detailing, stucco detailing, cornice and parapet, main interior staircase with its wood newel post and turned balusters, the wood trim such as window casings and picture rail, and the original wood kitchen cabinetry.

**Feeling.** Feeling is a property’s expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period. At the Pallay, integrity of feeling is moderate-high. Through the retention of the aforementioned character-defining features, the building retains its feeling from the historic period such that a visitor can experience an awareness of its history as an early 20th century apartment building.

**Association.** Integrity of association is defined as “the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.” This connection can occur only if the property’s historic features survive. For the Pallay Apartments, integrity of association is moderate-high. There are enough surviving physical features for a visitor to experience the directly link with the building’s significance as an early single-use apartment building in Portland’s east side.

In summary, the Pallay retains high integrity with respect to location and setting, moderate-high integrity with respect to design, feeling and association, and moderate integrity with respect to materials and workmanship. Alterations to the buildings discussed previously have reduced some aspects of integrity. However, the building retains many of its character features and convey its significance as a single-use, early 20th century apartment building.
Pallay Apartments
Multnomah Co., OR

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance (justification)

The year 1910 is chosen as the period of significance, as this was the year in which construction of the building was completed. Because the building is being nominated for its significance as the first true apartment house within the MPD study area, the year of completion is the most appropriate period of significance.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A
The Pallay Apartments is locally significant under National Register Criterion C for architecture as an example of an early apartment house located within the boundary of the Portland Oregon’s Eastside Historic and Architectural Resources, 1850-1938 Multiple Property Document (MPD). It meets the general and property type specific registration requirements of the MPD. Morris Pallay—a successful immigrant tailor turned apartment developer—commissioned the nominated property in 1909 and it was the first large-scale, masonry, 100% residential apartment block to be constructed in the MPD study area.1 Designed by Charles Ewart and completed in 1910, the Pallay Apartments was built to cater to individuals employed in this rapidly-developing, commercial-industrial part of the city.2 The building was noteworthy at the time for the exclusion of ground-floor commercial space. Initially, most single-use apartment houses were in the well-to-do neighborhoods of Northwest Portland. Development of Portland’s eastside lagged behind the west, but expanding transportation networks and infrastructure improvements allowed for rapid development of real estate in the early 1900s to meet the demands of a growing population. The city’s working and middle classes increasingly moved to the neighborhoods within the MPD study area due to the east side’s affordable housing, employment opportunities, and streetcar accessibility to downtown. At first, most large, high-quality buildings on the east side were two-part commercial block buildings that featured flats above retail storefront spaces. As the first single-use apartment building the MPD study area, the Pallay Apartments reflects the marked economic growth and population expansion during the early 20th century that resulted in a more urban character to the architecture of Portland’s eastside. Eventually, as apartments became a more publically-acceptable form of housing and consistent demand resulted in favorable investment returns for developers, high-quality masonry buildings like the nominated property were constructed on most major eastside streets.

Introduction

Built in 1910, the Pallay Apartments is locally significant as the first large-scale masonry apartment block constructed within the study area of the Portland Oregon’s Eastside Historic and Architectural Resources, 1850-1938 MPD. This three-story, quarter-block (100 by 100’) building is nominated under Criterion C as an example of an architectural type—the first true apartment house that has no ground-floor commercial uses in the MPD study area. Its size, number of rooms, construction with expensive, durable materials such as masonry, and the fact that it was exclusively apartments make it significant. The building is named for its developer and first owner Morris Pallay—a successful tailor who saw a money-making opportunity in the building of apartment houses. He worked primarily with architect Alexander C. Ewart who designed the nominated property. At the time, most masonry apartment buildings were aimed at middle- and upper-class renters on the westside. As such, the Pallay was trailblazing a housing strategy for working- and middle-class individuals in this evolving part of the city. It should be noted that housing discrimination was widespread during this time. In almost all cases, people of color were only allowed to buy or rent property in certain parts of the city and these were typically away from where “respectable” white people lived. Jewish people, non-Protestants, and women also commonly faced discrimination, although to a lesser degree.

The City of Portland began on the west side of the Willamette River in 1843 and the east side of the river was originally developed as three separate towns: East Portland (1850), Albina (1872), and Sellwood (1882). The MPD study area is almost entirely within the boundaries of East Portland, which was incorporated in 1870 and later consolidated with Portland in 1891. Early building on Portland’s east side proceeded slowly compared to development west of the river. The Willamette’s east bank had low, marshy land with sloughs and gulches while the west bank had a naturally deep harbor ideally suited to river transportation. These physical characteristics played an important role in early settlement patterns and naturally constrained development

1 This is known through the research described in the comparative analysis section.
2 “Pallay Block is Finished,” Oregonian, October 2, 1910, 10.
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until the physical environment could be modified for better transportation connectivity and building construction. With the arrival of the railroad, construction of bridges connecting the two sides of the river, and a network of streetcar lines, city government and landowners were highly motivated to improve the land of the inner eastside for commercial development. This initiative was furthered by the explosive population growth that Portland experienced between 1901 and 1914, which, in large part, can be attributed to the city’s visibility generated by the 1905 Lewis and Clark Exposition. The inner eastside area attracted residents from the city’s rapidly growing working and middle classes due to its close proximity to public transportation, the downtown core, employment opportunities, and affordable housing.3

This Statement of Significance provides several historical contexts to build an understanding of the factors that brought about the development of the Pallay Apartments. After discussing the how the property meets the MPD registration requirement, it provides a history of national trends in the building of apartments. Next, it discusses the development of multifamily housing in Portland generally and the eastside specifically, including the Pallay Apartments. The section ends with a comparative analysis, looking at other similar apartment properties within the MPD study area.

Eastside MPD Registration

The Pallay Apartments is being nominated under the Portland Oregon’s Eastside Historic and Architectural Resources, 1850-1938 MPD umbrella. The multiple property document details the criteria and registration requirements for being included under this umbrella listing. These requirements are as follows:

- An eligible resource must have been built between 1862 and 1938.
- It should retain sufficient integrity to evoke the character of its style or function type.
- It should be one of the best examples or most characteristic examples typifying that style or function.

The Pallay Apartments were built in 1910 and therefore meets the first registration requirement. While the building has alterations on both the exterior and interior, it retains sufficient integrity to meet the second registration requirement. Its functional type is clearly expressed through its massing, site orientation, centrally-placed entrance location, fenestration patterns, and interior plan type with a U-shaped, double-loaded corridor and light court. The building also maintains the characteristics of its streetcar commercial style, including a symmetrical primary façade and classical details including dentil brickwork and a prominent cornice.

As the oldest quarter-block masonry apartment building in the study area, it is a highly characteristic example of its functional type in the MPD boundary area. This is reflected in its size and number of rooms, the use of high-quality construction materials, and the absence of ground-floor retail spaces. The building’s history reflects Portland’s growing population and the expansion of housing types on the east side of the river. As an apartment house specifically intended to house individuals working in the east side employment district, the building is deeply rooted in the development and urbanization of Portland’s eastside during the early part of the 20th century.

The Apartment Building as a National Trend

The development of the apartment building was an urban phenomenon that clustered multiple dwelling units into a single large building. In the 1800s and early 1900s, there were different types of multifamily buildings, each with a different name and, in some cases, with a different meaning from our present-day use of the word. Lodging houses and boarding houses were commonplace in all cities during this time period. It is estimated between one-third and one-half of nineteenth-century urban residents either took in boarders or were boarders

Stuyvesant admired the French apartment buildings and wanted to bring the concept to New York. Paris is America’s first apartment house in Boston. However, the real beginning of the higher-end apartment movement was spurred by Richard Morris Hunt’s 1869 design for the Stuyvesant (demolished) in the Gramercy Park neighborhood of New York City. Built for Rutherford Stuyvesant, the five-story High Victorian Gothic building was the first apartment building in the city intended for the middle class. While in Paris, Stuyvesant admired the French apartment buildings and wanted to bring the concept to New York. Paris is also where he met Hunt and believed the architect had a particular understanding of what had been required for middle-class Parisians to accept apartment-living. In fact, apartments for the middle class in the United States Department of the Interior
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These buildings typically featured multiple private bedrooms for rent, with en-suite or shared bathrooms. Boarding houses typically had common spaces like a parlor and a dining room where tenants ate meals together. Tenements or tenement houses referred to low-rent, high-density buildings that were characterized by the poverty of their residents and the overcrowded and unhealthy nature of the living conditions. The “flat” generally referred to a dwelling unit comprised of a suite of rooms designed for people of moderate means. Price-wise, the urban flat was on par with a small cottage in the suburbs. Around the turn of the century, the apartment building differed from the tenement and the flat in that it had a higher level of architectural finish, great number of tenant conveniences, centralized building systems such as steam-heat radiators that serviced all units, and a prominent common building entrance. Flats were more often wood-framed buildings with a modest number of units, while their apartment counterparts were generally larger, constructed of masonry, and often had twenty or more units. Hotels were another form of multifamily housing. While most of today’s hotels provide short-term stays for out-of-towners, most hotels around the turn of the century offered both short- and longer-term rental options. “Apartment hotels” offered the highest level of luxury and convenience, acting like a modern-day apartment but with the service level of a hotel and a restaurant within the building.

Multifamily buildings first came about in America in response to rising city populations and increasing land values that made it unaffordable for much of the urban population to own their own homes. The earliest large multifamily buildings were tenement buildings, found in major cities like New York and Chicago that had substantial numbers of poor and working-class people. In the 1830s, the first tenements were three or four stories tall with two families on each floor. Typically, each dwelling unit had a living room, a kitchen, and two bedrooms. They allowed only a minimum of space, light, and ventilation. Access to each room in the apartment was via the central stairwell or by passing through the other rooms of the apartment. The average tenement contained 65 people. In the 1850s “railroad tenements” came about, in which rooms were strung together like boxcars without corridors. These were larger buildings 90-feet long that left only a narrow alley at the back of the building. With 12-16 rooms per floor, those facing the street or alley were the only ones that received direct light or air. The living conditions were highly unsanitary with clogged open sewers, a single privy per building, and no garbage collection service. These conditions resulted in outbreaks of serious infectious diseases. During the 1870s, many sought to remedy the unhealthy living conditions of the tenement building. Trade journals, architectural and social work publications, newspapers, and magazines such as Harper’s and the Atlantic all took up the issues of tenement housing and sanitation. The solution that many considered ideal involved small cottages located in the suburbs with access via streetcars. However, deep levels of widespread poverty made single-family dwellings of any sort an unreachable dream for many. As such, architects continued to seek new designs to improve multifamily buildings.

While tenements were built to provide dense, low-rent housing, multifamily buildings would later expand to include apartments for the well-to-do who wished to reside in the inner city. In 1855, Arthur Gilman designed America’s first apartment house in Boston. However, the real beginning of the higher-end apartment movement was spurred by Richard Morris Hunt’s 1869 design for the Stuyvesant (demolished) in the Gramercy Park neighborhood of New York City. Built for Rutherford Stuyvesant, the five-story High Victorian Gothic building was the first apartment building in the city intended for the middle class. While in Paris, Stuyvesant admired the French apartment buildings and wanted to bring the concept to New York. Paris is also where he met Hunt and believed the architect had a particular understanding of what had been required for middle-class Parisians to accept apartment-living.

7 Ibid.
States were often called “French flats,” capitalizing on the European association and to ensure clear differentiation from the tenements of poor immigrant neighborhoods. When the Stuyvesant opened, it was a success, having been fully leased before the completion of construction.\(^{11}\)

Before the Stuyvesant, almost all of the housing in New York City consisted of either tenements or townhouses. The Stuyvesant satisfied the need for higher density, but upscale, housing. The building was successful in leading the way for other such buildings to be constructed. In the book *New York 1880*, Robert A. M. Stern and his co-authors wrote that the Stuyvesant was the “foundation stone” of the movement of the middle-class into apartments.\(^{12}\) Apartment living was marketed to the upper and middle classes on the basis of efficiency, technological advances, and luxurious amenities that were out of reach for most single-family homes. The public spaces in these buildings featured marble, crystal chandeliers, imported carpets, and walnut or mahogany wainscoting. The buildings featured central hot-water heating, central gas for lighting, and uniformed elevator operators that made high-rise living convenient and elegant.

During the 19th Century, however, most of mainstream America viewed apartment living as an aberration and antithetical to the American dream.\(^{13}\) The image of the tenement building contributed to a nationwide fear of multifamily housing and many false stereotypes about apartment dwellers. Mainstream notions of the tenement housewife in particular was one of being “shiftless” and “slatternly” with a “favorite pastime to gossip and quarrel with her neighbors,” while the reality of tenement life was one of exceptionally arduous work.\(^{14}\) Although some Americans were interested in imitating European apartment living, the majority found this morally substandard. Americans were suspicious of—if not repulsed by—the idea of a shared dwelling. The notion of “respectability” was a common concern in this era and many felt that the proximity and shared facilities encouraged promiscuity. Some also believed the housekeeping efficiencies and technologies of apartment life would cause housewives to become lazy and negligent in their responsibilities of caring for their home and children. Well into the 20th Century these fervent concerns about the inadequacy of apartments continued across the nation. *Ladies Home Journal* warned of Bolshevik influences over American women exerted through the increasing number of apartments.\(^{15}\) *Better Homes in America* reported to the 1921 National Conference on Housing that a child’s sense of individuality, moral character, and intellectual efficiency could only develop in a private, detached home.\(^{16}\) The apartment was blamed for social ills ranging from the rising divorce rate, the declining birth rate, premarital sex, and the social and economic disparities between the rich and poor. However, these criticisms could not counteract the strong economic forces that ultimately made apartments one of the dominant building typologies in urban America.

**Multifamily Housing in Portland: A Historical Context**

Like any city with residents scattered across the economic spectrum, Portland had housing options at all price points even though the predominant housing type prior to 1905 was the single-family home. For the least well-off, there were low-rent, tenement-type buildings. These were constructed with the rise in immigrant groups, primarily those from China who arrived in large numbers at the peak of railroad construction, salmon packing, and gold mining activities of the 1850s to 1870s. However, tenements were nowhere near as prevalent in Portland as they were in major cities like New York and Chicago. Along Portland’s main commercial streets, housing also existed above retail shops. Shop owners would sometimes live upstairs or the flats or individual rooms would be rented. In the late 1800s, Portland had several downtown boarding houses that served meals in a common-area dining room. An article about the Newcastle (demolished) at SW 3rd and Harrison noted how the tenants were distributed in the building: “The upstairs rooms are let to families, and the rooms along


\(^{13}\) Sandoval-Strausz, 280-281.

\(^{14}\) “In the Ghetto of New York City,” *Oregonian*, June 29, 1902, p. 27.

\(^{15}\) Tess, 11.

\(^{16}\) Ibid.
the third floor were mostly let to young women, trained nurses, stenographers, etc.”\textsuperscript{17} The Portsmouth\textsuperscript{18} (demolished) was Portland’s first multifamily building that was clearly attempting to emulate the new apartment houses of East Coast cities. However, it was not a true apartment house in that it heavily catered to out-of-town guests who were in Portland for several weeks or months.\textsuperscript{19} Built in the 1890s at the corner of SW Park and SW Alder, it was touted as being “a model apartment house” owing to its plentitude of light and ventilation, wide corridors, modern conveniences, architect-designed plumbing and “sanitary arrangements,” and its “numerous means of egress which save the lodger from all worry over the horrors of fire during the hours of slumber.”\textsuperscript{20}

In addition to these types of buildings that provided single or multi-room suites, duplexes were not uncommon in Portland in the late 1800s as a form of rental housing.\textsuperscript{21} These were typically two-story, wood-frame buildings with two separate entries and a common central demising wall. Owners would have been incentivized to build two units in one house-sized building to maximize land efficiencies and economies of scale in construction. In the 1889 Sanborn Map for Portland, there was a concentration of these duplexes at the south end of downtown. One rare and highly altered example of an 1884 Italianate duplex still stands at 1984-1986 SW 5th Avenue. While these are classified as “dwellings” as opposed to “flats” on Sanborn maps due to their side-by-side nature, they were often advertised for rent in the \textit{Oregonian} as flats.

An architecturally notable example of rental housing that was not a detached home and catered to the upper-middle-class was the Campbell Townhouses at 1705-1719 NW Irving Street. Significant for their construction with brick when most residential buildings were wood-frame, the six row houses were built in 1893 and were the first of their kind in Portland. They were modeled off of the ubiquitous East Coast brownstone and featured handsome sandstone detailing. The row houses were rented to tenants who desired the posh Nob Hill location but who could not afford the stately single-family homes in the neighborhood. It was the success of these dwellings that suggested there was a market for “respectable” rental housing citywide for the middle and upper classes.\textsuperscript{22}

In 1899, the precursor to the 20\textsuperscript{th} century apartment block first appeared in Portland in a building type that local newspapers called “modern flats.” Like the apartment houses that would come later including the Pallay, these buildings were solely residential with no ground-floor shops. They were a similar scale to many moderately-sized commercial buildings at the time and were likewise built out to the street-facing property lines. However, they were constructed of wood, often had individual unit entries instead of a central building entry, and still contained a relatively small number of apartments. The first of these modern flats buildings was at SW 1\textsuperscript{st} and SW Harrison (demolished) and developed in 1899 by John A. Devlin—a real estate investor from Astoria.\textsuperscript{23} The two-story, wood-frame building contained 12 units and featured three narrow lightwells, as well as a small courtyard at the rear. An awkward newspaper description of the building reflects the lack of familiarity Portlanders had with this new building type: “The compartments are set off from each other in such a manner that several families may dwell under one roof and yet be entirely separate, so far as noise or sociability are concerned.”\textsuperscript{24} Another article about the property notes that flats had not become popular in Portland because “families here have preferred to live a little way out in the suburbs, where there is plenty of room for romping and where the noise of the street car or the factory whistle, or the numerous church bells, does not disturb the slumber.”\textsuperscript{25} However, it goes on to state that because of “Portland’s continuous growth [it] now demands modern conveniences and quick transit between ‘down town’ and home. Hereafter, space between these will become more of a factor with the house hunter, and so flats are likely to be more

\textsuperscript{17} Fire in Newcastle,” \textit{Oregonian}, September 22, 1902, 12
\textsuperscript{18} Later called the H. F. Spalding and sometimes Spalding House or Spalding Hotel
\textsuperscript{20} “The Spalding,” \textit{Oregonian}, January 1, 1900, 11.
\textsuperscript{21} Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Portland Oregon, 1889.
\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Alphabet Historic District National Register Nomination}, 2000, Section 8 page 333.
\textsuperscript{23} “Thinks Flats in Demand,” \textit{Oregonian}, April 18, 1899, 3.
\textsuperscript{24} “Goes steadily forward no lull in building,” \textit{Oregonian}, July 31, 1899, 5
\textsuperscript{25} “Thinks Flats in Demand.”
common.”26 As the building was being completed in October 1899, the Oregonian noted it was “already considered a landmark of the South End” and a “forerunner” amongst other flats that were under construction elsewhere in the city. These included the Durkheimer & Company Flats—an eight-flat building at SW 11th and SW Alder (demolished)—and the Wheeler Flats at SW 14th and SW Madison that had four units (demolished).27,28

Portlanders had begun debating the merits of multifamily housing ten years prior to the construction of these “modern flats.” The author of an 1889 newspaper article asked the question: “Why do not Portland’s moneyed men build ‘flats’ after the style of those so popular in San Francisco, and many Eastern cities? There are many inquiries every day for houses within a reasonable distance of the business center, and parties are willing to pay from $30 to $35 per month for such an apartment of that of six or seven rooms. By building flats, one can gain much larger revenue from the same amount of land required for a cottage.”29 However, Portland mirrored national trends with a reticence to accepting this new form of housing, as evidenced by this article that attempts to point out the good and the bad aspects of this building type:

“This article goes on to lay substantial criticism of the apartment house as well, and particularly towards the “apartment hotel,” which provided numerous tenant services that eased domestic labors. The primary concern was that the apartment was a “powerful discourager of children” and part of “a gigantic conspiracy against the baby.” This criticism was not only due to their smaller spaces and lack of yard, but also in that many places specifically prohibited children in their rental advertisements. The particular concern was with the apartment house/hotel promoting childlessness among the middle classes and instead substituting “clubs, visiting, gossip, gadding, mischief and divorces for the good old regime of big families, sward and gravel walks, croquet in the side yard, clothesline in the bag, dog on the front porch and kittens in the cellar.” Women who labored hard to keep a tidy house, while maintaining the good health, appearance, and education of their many children were considered virtuous. Another local article expresses disgust with the “the display of hands unused to labor” associated with “lazy women” living in apartments and that “the complete relief of responsibility and every kind of duty have turned idle hands and minds to various unworthy undertakings.”31

To combat concerns around the respectability of apartments, developers of some early modern flats buildings gave some or all of the units private entrances at the street. These entries provided greater privacy and fewer opportunities for social interaction that could be viewed as inappropriate. A flat with a private entry and no shared common space provided a safe middle ground between the single-family home and the multifamily building. One example from 1902 that is still standing is the Lauer Apartments at NW 17th and NW Flanders.32 Listed in the National Register, this two-story, wood-frame building has six flats—three on each floor. Similar in size to a cottage, the flats each featured a living room, dining room, kitchen with a large pantry, two

26 Ibid.
27 “Rushing Up Houses,” Oregonian, November 27, 1889, 10.
28 “Many Want to Build,” Oregonian, November 20, 1889, 11.
30 “Mania for Apartment Houses,” Oregonian, June 2, 1902, 6.
32 “Mania for Apartment Houses,” Oregonian, June 2, 1902, 6.
bedrooms, one bathroom, and modern amenities such as firewood dumbwaiters, china cupboards, and built-in ironing board closets.

Although many in Portland remained skeptical about the place of multifamily buildings in society, it is undisputed that there was high demand for these buildings and that they were financially lucrative for the developer. One 1902 *Oregonian* article notes that the typical return on investment was 15%, which is significant.33 The financial success of these early projects combined with the impending 1905 Lewis & Clark Exposition, developers began to shift toward building larger apartment houses. These bigger structures were built with more units accessed from a common lobby, stairwell, and corridors. While some of these apartment buildings were of wood-frame construction, masonry quickly became the dominant building material. Masonry buildings required a greater upfront investment, but their superior architecture and fire safety meant they could command higher rents, were more durable, and had higher resale value. This was also related to a growing trend in Portland but also across the nation to create apartments for the higher end of the market rather than for working-class families. Wood-frame versions of the apartment house typically had eight to twenty units. Masonry apartment buildings typically had more units, often as many as 50.

William L. Morgan, a prominent local apartment developer, proclaimed that he erected Portland's first true apartment house in May 1904. This was also the first year that Polk's City Directory for Portland used the category “apartment houses” and there were four entries, including Morgan's building—The Jeffersonian (demolished). Located at SW Jefferson and SW 16th Avenue, the wood-frame building had 13 units, which all leased immediately. Due to the success of the project, Morgan formed a corporation and purchased a quarter block at NW Everett and NW 15th Avenue, building two “much more pretentious” apartment buildings with 22 units each. His peers cautioned him that he was overbuilding and would have difficulty renting the apartments, but they all leased immediately and he continued to build ever-larger buildings.34

Morgan’s ongoing success as a housing developer and that of many other developers and real estate investors was largely owed to the Lewis and Clark Exposition of 1905—Portland's most significant civic undertaking. From its opening on June 1, 1905 through its closing on October 15th of that year, there were 1,588,000 admissions, for a daily average of 11,600 visitors.35 The fair succeeded in jumpstarting the city's economy and the summer of 1905 was pinpointed as the beginning of a sustained real estate boom and population explosion. Between 1900 and 1910, the city's population more than doubled—from 90,000 to 212,000.

This new chapter in Portland's growth as a city was particularly noticeable for the physical changes it brought to the built environment. Between 1903 and 1912, the city experienced over $64 million in new housing and neighborhood development.36 Following the fair, Portland's close-in neighborhoods experienced increasing real estate values due to their proximity to downtown and available streetcar service. These desirable neighborhoods were the first to be transformed with new building types and increased density. In particular, Portland's Northwest neighborhoods including Nob Hill, which had been the gateway neighborhood to the fair, was the first area to experience such redevelopment. As a consequence of increasing property values, many of the large single-family residences that had dominated the district's architectural landscape were demolished in favor of new building types, including schools, commercial buildings, and most notably, apartment houses. William Morgan went on to build some of the finest apartment houses in Nob Hill after the Exposition, including the Day, Ormonde, and Dayton Apartment Buildings all on NW Flanders between NW 20th and 21st Avenues in 1907. Subsequently, high-class apartments gained popularity. Typical residents were single men, couples with no children, and single women. Locations in fashionable neighborhoods like Nob Hill assuaged tenant fears of being stigmatized as an apartment dweller, as residents could now flaunt the advantages of a Northwest Portland address.

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33 “Progress on Richardson's Excavation,” *Oregonian*, April 25, 1902, 9.
34 Tess, E9-10.
36 *Alphabet Historic District National Register Nomination*, Section 8 page 333.
While apartments grew in popularity based on their conveniences, developers responded with more buildings due to quick leasing and generous returns on investment that were now reaching 20-40%. One newspaper article noted that “So great is the demand that prospective leasees begin negotiating with the owner almost as soon as ground is broken, while the individual tenants begin seeking apartments even before the building is completed.” In 1910, Morgan noted that apartment buildings in Portland had continued to increase in quality and “no one contemplates anything less than pressed brick buildings, with everything that goes to make housekeeping easy for the occupant as well as home-like and convenient.” Floorplans also became more standardized. The most common apartment design in Portland was a three or four-story building comprising a quarter city block. The units were accessed from a double-loaded corridor in an L, H, or U-shaped plan that provided light and air to each apartment. The Pallay is a three-story, quarter-block, pressed brick building with a U-shaped plan featuring a double-loaded corridor. As the first of its kind in the MPD study area, the Pallay Apartments followed the trends that had been established on the west side and kicked off a new paradigm for apartment building on the east side of the river.

While there was still angst over this new housing type well into the 20th Century, the Lewis and Clark Exposition and the significant economic and population growth that followed would cement the apartment house in Portland’s urban fabric. As one local writer put it: “The fact of the matter is the apartment house has come to stay. It is a great public necessity and demand.” Indeed, from the time the Exposition opened in 1905 until 1920, over 400 new apartment buildings were constructed in Portland.

Multifamily Housing in Portland’s East Side and the Development the Pallay Apartments

Prior to the development of the Pallay and other east-side apartment buildings, housing options on were much more limited on this side of the river compared with the west side. More significant development of housing came about once there was improved access from downtown and the west-side waterfront industrial areas. This took place around the turn of the century with the construction of bridges and streetcar lines. However, building construction continued to lag behind Portland’s central city. The 1901 Sanborn Map shows the east side as a sparsely developed town with industrial areas along the waterfront, commercial uses concentrated along SE Grand and SE Union, and a patchwork of residential areas extending east with smaller commercial nodes on SE Hawthorne and SE Belmont. There were tenements, hotels, and other lodging options primarily along Grand and Union Avenues. Many of the extant masonry buildings in the East Portland Grand Avenue Historic District that were built in the 1890s included flats on the upper floors. Examples include the Barber Block (1890), West’s Block (1892), and the East Bank Saloon (1896). Although no longer standing, the Burkhard Building was the largest early masonry building in the MPD study area constructed in 1895. Located on E Burnside at Grand Avenue, the three-story, half-block building featured flats on the second and third floors. Unlike the west side, there were very few, if any, duplex and fourplex flats on the east side in 1901. However, that would change by 1905 when streetcar development and the post-Fair economic boom spurred the development of these wood-frame buildings near streetcar lines. The Buckman neighborhood area east of SE 12th Ave is replete with these Craftsman and Colonial Revival buildings that blend in with their single-family counterparts. Examples include the Caroline A. Vergil Fourplex (1905) at 532-538 SE 15th Avenue and the Charles O. Sigglin Flats (1908) at 701-709 SE 16th Avenue.

Up until 1908, natural barriers like ponds and sloughs hampered consistent development of high-quality masonry buildings in the commercial area west of SE 12th Avenue. For instance, SE Stark Street (an east-west street) was impassible in multiple places due to its crossing of the marshy lowlands, which, at the time,
were referred to as “The Great Frog Pond.” In previous years, efforts to fill and macadamize streets like SE Stark had been thwarted by property owners who objected to the cost. However, other property owners continued to push for these improvements, believing that property values would rise and real estate development on the east side would take off if the roads were brought up to modern standards. In 1907, major public improvement projects were underway on several streets to do exactly that. An article in the Oregonian at the end of the following year—appropriately titled “Little Room for Cheap Buildings: East Side Lots Become Too Valuable for Inferior Structures”—made some conclusions about the value of these infrastructure upgrades:

“As the improvements between East Tenth Street and the river approach completion it will be found that the residence property to the eastward will advance in value until it corresponds to some extent with the values on the West Side. [...] The unsightly sloughs will disappear inside of two years under the filling contracts, and it is considered certain that all the property in Central East Portland will appreciate in consequence.”

Development activity made a perceptible uptick in 1908 and the first buildings beginning to exhibit some, but not all, characteristics of the modern apartment house opened their doors on the east side. Possibly the first was a stately Neoclassical building by Stokes & Zeller at 525 NE Couch Street as seen in Figure 12 (demolished). On a parcel comprising 1/8th of a city block, the building had just six units, all accessed via a single building entry. While on the scale of a modern flat for multiplex building, the use of brick and the rich architectural detail made it very much in keeping with some of the luxury apartment houses being constructed on the west side.

The year 1910 saw the construction of many quarter-block buildings that featured two or more floors of apartments. The Oregonian noted early that year that east side apartment buildings “are combination store and rooming-house buildings” and the “pure apartment house seems to be left to the West Side.” Two large and costly east side apartment buildings completed in 1910 were the Page Investment Company Building at 723-737 E Burnside Street and the McKinley Mitchell Building at 621-635 SE Morrison Street—both still standing and in the MPD study area. At three stories tall and constructed with masonry, the buildings featured retail shops on the ground floors with apartments above.

The Pallay Apartments was much along the lines of the Page and the McKinley, owing to its quarter-block, three-story size, and masonry construction. However, the notable difference is that the Pallay was exclusively an apartment house with no ground-floor retail. Within the MPD study area, the Pallay was the first apartment house of this kind. The Oregonian specifically noted that the building first floor was “not to be occupied by stores, as is the case in many apartments put up recently, especially on the East Side.” This followed the building trends in the Nob Hill residential area of Northwest Portland where apartment houses very often did not have ground-floor retail. There were two reasons for the growing popularity of this type of apartment house. First, forgoing ground-floor retail helped promote the image of these buildings as exclusive, high-class residences. Without storefronts, the design could take on a grand and palatial character following trends in East Coast cities, looking more residential and less commercial. Second, it maximized the number of rentable units, which was advantageous during these times when the rental housing market was strong and investment returns were high. Morris Pallay was more likely targeting the second reason rather than the first. The Oregonian noted the building was “erected to suit the manufacturing district and meet a demand for small suites which rent for a reasonable amount. It contains more rooms than any other building of the sort erected on the East Side so far and is a pioneer in its class.”

44 “City Made Out of Hole in the Ground,” Oregonian, December 5, 1909, 5.
45 “Little Room for Cheap Buildings,” Oregonian, December 6, 1908, 10.
46 “Many Flats Are Built,” Oregonian, December 27, 1908, 9.
47 “Flats Popular in Central District,” 3.
50 “Pallay Block is Finished,” Oregonian, October 2, 1910, 10.
Around the time the Pallay was being built, land use patterns and building types in the surrounding area were highly variable and disjointed. The eight blocks immediately surrounding the city block upon which the Pallay was constructed featured industrial and residential uses in 1908. Industrial uses in the vicinity included planing mills and lumber yards; construction trades such as plumbers, carpenters, and cabinetmakers; various types of metal workers and foundries; clothing factories and steam laundry facilities; food manufacturers such as pickles, ice cream, and fruit canning; ice manufacturing and cold storage; and horse and agricultural related businesses such as stables, hay barns, and grain storage. There were concentrations of retail stores along Grand and Union Avenues, especially where they intersected with Morrison Street, Belmont Street, and Hawthorne Boulevard. The majority of these commercial and industrial buildings were one or two stories. Interspersed throughout the area were single-family homes and newly-constructed duplexes. In some cases, residential uses shared the block with industrial uses and, in others, an entire block would be built-out with houses. Some buildings were constructed to their lot lines while others were set back. There were also vacant parcels and blocks that were unbuildable due to sloughs and other barriers like sloping banks.

When completed in October 1910, the Pallay would have stood out as a modern structure due to its quarter-block size, three-story height, masonry construction, and organized facades with classically-inspired details. This marked a turning point in the character of the architecture and development patterns for the inner eastside. The Oregonian noted that the construction of the Pallay signaled a forthcoming “general sweep of the old buildings” and replacement with similar larger and more permanent structures like the Pallay. Indeed, the majority of the single-family houses and duplexes in the area were demolished and replaced with larger buildings. Wood-framed commercial and multifamily buildings were demolished and replaced larger buildings of masonry or concrete construction. Ultimately, large numbers of apartment buildings would be constructed along the streetcar lines of Portland’s eastside. The Pallay Apartments was the start of this major change in the urbanization of the east side as these larger, more permanent buildings facilitated the growing density of residents. A 1932 photo of the building in its neighborhood context is provided in Figure 11.

City Directory research on the early tenants living in the Pallay Apartments reveals a mix of white collar and blue collar workers. In 1911, there were 55 people listed with addresses in the building and, of those, 15 were women living in the building without a husband of the same last name. Professions were listed for 43 people, though rarely with the address of their place of employment. When the address is listed, most often it was within walking distance from the building. In 1912, there were 57 people living in the building and 22 were single women. Professions were listed for 38 residents. In both years, the most common profession was a clerk. Railroad workers, salesmen, seamstresses, stenographers, carpenters and other construction tradesmen were also common. The building was home to professionals such as attorneys, draftsmen, bookkeepers, a nurse and a teacher, as well as blue-collar workers such as a meat cutter, automotive repairman, barber, and a lumber yard crane operator. While the Pallay Apartments certainly housed people who were employed within Portland’s inner east side, it also appears that the building attracted a wide range of individuals including those that likely worked on the west side. Being situated at SE 7th Avenue and SE Taylor, the building is close to the Hawthorne Bridge and would have been a short streetcar or bicycle ride to Portland’s downtown.

As for the development of the building itself, this apartment block was Morris Pallay’s first development on the east side after having been successful developing apartments on Portland’s west side. In 1908 he finished the 3 ½-story, masonry Heinz Apartments at 1329 SW 14th Ave and sold the building quickly to investors for $75,000. He similarly sold the Pallay Apartments several months before construction wrapped up in 1910. The buyer was S. Morton Cohn, who paid $80,000. Pallay’s profit was $25,000 after holding the property for six months and spending $55,000 to purchase the land and construct the building.

52 “Each Day Building Contract is Let,” Oregonian, August 14, 1910, 8.
53 Polk’s City Directory for Portland, Oregon 1911 and 1912.
54 “Newly-Completed Apartment House Sold for $75,000,” Oregonian, January 31, 1909, 8.
55 S. Morton Cohn was multi-millionaire commercial property owner, particularly known for his affiliation with theaters. He was
Advertisements for the apartments in 1911 note that they were furnished, with private telephones, steam heat, electric lights, janitor service, and “all outside rooms”—meaning, none of the were without windows or looked into a small lightwell. Rents started at $22.50 a month.57 At the time of the building’s construction, it was described as having “suites with baths” and all units featuring “disappearing beds.”58 The Oregonian noted that “Light and ventilation were emphasized. Long halls run through the three floors and fire escapes are placed on two sides. It is an attractive structure, the upper stories being light-colored pressed brick, and the lower story of rough brick cemented on the outside.”59

Since its construction in 1910, the building has continuously been operated as an apartment house. In the 1980s, Reach Community Development Corporation acquired the property and has operated it as low-income housing since that time. In 2019-2020, the building was rehabilitated using historic tax credits.

Morris Pallay

Born in c. 1862, Morris (formerly Moritz) Pallay was a Russian immigrant who came to the United States in 1890. Before immigrating to the US, Pallay was a tailor in Russia. When he arrived in Portland, he continued in the tailoring business and, at one time, employed approximately 90 tailors.60 His younger brother Benjamin Pallay was also in the clothing business. Morris Pallay passed away in 1943.

It is unknown when Pallay began investing in real estate, but newspaper searches suggest it may have been around 1902. His most notable apartment building is the 1911 Highland Court at 2181 NW Glisan Street—a contributing resource in the Alphabet Historic District.61 This project was done in partnership with his brother. Morris Pallay appears to have almost exclusively built apartments; however, he did construct a commercial building called the Pallay Building with second-floor residences at 231-239 NW 3rd Ave in c. 1915.62 Pallay also opened early movie theaters in Portland and, as a partner in one or more theater companies, operated some 20 theaters in the city. The early theaters he was involved with included the American Theatre at SW 1st and Main Street (demolished) and the Jefferson Theatre at SW 12th and SW Jefferson (demolished). His son, Sam Pallay, worked as a musician providing background music to silent films.

Alexander Charles Ewart

From historical records, it appears that Morris Pallay hired Alexander Ewart exclusively as the architect for his real estate development projects until Ewart’s death in 1916. Ewart designed the Heinz Apartments, Highland Court (2181 NW Glisan), the Pallay Building, and the nominated Pallay Apartments.

Alexander “Alex” Ewart (1850-1916) came to Portland in 1903 and practiced architecture in the city until his death at age 61. Ewart was born in Canada and, as an adult, lived in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Victoria (B.C.) before moving to Oregon. Nothing is known about his architectural training or employment during this time. Around 1880 he moved to Corvallis, Oregon. He had some involvement in the building of the Administration Building at the Oregon Agricultural College (now Oregon State University). Between the early 1880s and 1903 when he came to Portland, Ewart frequently moved between Ashland, Corvallis, and the British Columbia towns of Nelson, Cranbrook, and Victoria.

called the “Father of the 10 Cent Vaudeville.” In 1906, he was a party in the Oregon Supreme Court case Taylor v. Cohn where an African American man named Oliver Taylor brought a suit against Cohn, whose theatre refused to seat Taylor on the main floor of the theater during a show for which he purchased tickets.

56 “Each Day Building Contract is Let,” Oregonian, August 14, 1910, 8.
58 Pallay Block is Finished,” Oregonian, October 2, 1910, 10.
59 Ibid.
61 Highland Court is located at 2181 NW Glisan Street.
62 This building is individually-listed and contributing in the Chinatown New Japantown Historic District. NR nomination 85003503.
In addition to those buildings designed for Pallay, Ewart designed several other notable apartment and hotel buildings that are listed in the National Register:

- Hill Hotel (1904) – 2255 W Burnside St, Portland
- Bushmark Hotel (1906) – 1703 W Burnside St, Portland
- Buck Apartment Building (1910) – 415 NW 21st Ave, Portland
- Housman Apartments (1910) – 2164 NW Hoyt Ave, Portland
- Campbell Hotel (1912) – 530 NW 23rd Ave, Portland

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The methodology for choosing properties for comparative analysis began with trying to identify all early apartment buildings within the MPD study area. As mentioned earlier, the “apartment house” category first appeared in Portland’s City Directories in 1904. The research for this nomination included reviewing eastside directory listings from 1904 to 1911. These were cross-referenced with Sanborn Maps, historic newspaper searches, and the Oregon SHPO database to ensure that city directories were providing a comprehensive list. While the lists of apartments in City Directories sometimes also include a random assortment of fourplex flats and boarding establishments, they appear to capture all the large, newly-built apartment houses. In the 1911 City Directory, 15 buildings within the MPD Study area were listed under “Apartment Houses.” Nine of those buildings have been demolished. Except for the Burkhard’s Building, none of the demolished buildings appear to have been substantial masonry apartment blocks. In addition to the Pallay, the buildings still standing include:

- The Gardner Apartments at 1304 SE Ash Street
- McKinley Mitchell Building at 621-635 SE Morrison Street
- Morrison Court at 1511 SE Morrison Street
- Page and Sons Apartment Building at 723-737 E Burnside Street
- The Wassel at 1235 SE Yamhill Street

The Gardner, Morrison Court, and the Wassel are excluded from comparative analysis because they reflect a smaller and more residential-neighborhood apartment typology. All three of these buildings are located in a historically residential part of the MPD study area that is east of the commercial section where the Pallay, Page, and McKinley buildings are located. Built in 1911, The Gardner is a 3.5 story wood-framed, Craftsman-style apartment building constructed on a 55 x 69’ lot (smaller than an 1/8 of a block). Also wood-framed, Morrison Court was constructed as a high-end fourplex with four large flats in 1907, which were converted to 12 smaller apartments in 1943. The Wassel is a three-story masonry apartment building that was built before the Pallay in 1909; however, it is very small having an 1800 sf floorplate built on a 50 x 50 lot.

Four buildings were selected for comparative analysis. These include the Page and McKinley buildings, as well as two other 100% residential apartment blocks that followed closely on the heels of the Pallay. They were chosen due to the fact that they share a similar scale, quality of materials, and age as the nominated property.

**Page and Sons Apartment Building** (Historically called the Page Investment Company Building)
723-737 E Burnside Street
1910
See Figure 13

As discussed earlier in the nomination, the Page and Sons Apartment Building was written about in the Oregonian at the time of its construction in 1910. The building’s quarter-block size and cost were considered noteworthy at the time. At three stories tall and constructed with masonry, the building featured retail shops on the ground floor with apartments above, as it does today. The storefront level features a pedestrian arcade
that passes under the upper stories (an alteration in 1931 when E. Burnside was widened), prominent bay windows, and a cornice with stepped parapet. Designed by Bennes and Hendricks, the building is individually listed in the National Register. The nomination states it is locally significant under criterion C “as a well-preserved example of a commercial-residential property type associated with the advent of the streetcar and the automobile.” The Pallay Apartments is similar to this property in that they are both three stories tall, comprise a quarter block, and are constructed with masonry. The Page & Sons Building is richer in architectural detail and retains a high level of integrity both inside and out. However, the Pallay Apartments is significant as the earliest apartment building on the east side with no commercial uses. While 100% residential apartment houses were initially more prevalent on Portland’s west side, the Pallay was the building that pioneered this specific building type on the east side.

McKinley Mitchell Building
621-635 SE Morrison Street
1910
See Figure 14

Also discussed earlier in the nomination, the McKinley Mitchell Building was another prominent apartment building written about in the Oregonian at the time of its construction in 1910. It is a contributing resource in the East Portland Grand Avenue Historic District. Architecturally, it shares many similarities with the Page and Sons Apartment Building except for the pedestrian arcade and bay windows. The masonry building has a symmetrical façade, corner quoins, and a prominent cornice with stepped parapet. It features ground-floor commercial storefronts with a central entry on the front façade that leads to the apartments on the second and third floors. Some modifications have been made to the ground-floor storefronts, the windows have been replaced, and there has been some interior remodeling. Again, while this building shares similarities with the Pallay Building due to their same height, quarter-block footprint, and masonry construction, the Pallay is notable as the first building on the east side with 100% apartments and no ground-floor commercial use.

Wellesley Court Apartments
829 SE 15th Avenue
1913
See Figure 15

Within the MPD and constructed three years after the Pallay, the Wellesley Court Apartment is a substantial apartment house with no ground-floor commercial uses. It is located along the historic Belmont Street streetcar line at the corner of SE 15th Avenue, which is outside the east side employment district. At four stories tall with a daylight basement, the U-shaped building sits on a quarter-block lot. Designed by Lambert & Bailey, the masonry exterior is comprised of red brick with projecting brick belt courses and engaged piers. There are metal cornices below the parapet. The sidewalk entry into the U-shaped courtyard features brick piers with cast stone capitals and ball finials, and wrought iron. The building’s entry doors are set into a projecting porch supported by cast stone piers and pilasters. Some historic integrity has been lost due to the replacement of many of the original six-over-one and eight-over-one wood windows with vertically-oriented slider windows. The building is an example of an early, high-end apartment house on the east side of the river. Its large size and higher level of architectural detail make the building similar to those apartment houses being built in the Nob Hill area of Northwest Portland. The Pallay Apartments is a three-story building that has a less detailed façade. However, the Pallay is significant as the first apartment house within the MPD study area and was built specifically to cater to those working in the commercial-industrial area of Portland’s inner east side.
Constructed in 1913, this quarter-block apartment building is adjacent to the Pallay Apartments on its north side. It is also three stories tall and constructed with buff-colored masonry. It can be seen in the historic images provided in Figures 10 and 11. The building has a plain exterior with no architectural detailing or ornamentation. This is in part due to the loss of the parapet cornice and the cornice between the first and second floor sometime around c. 1940. The cornices are visible in Figure 11. The building shares some notable traits with the Pallay including its size, masonry construction, location within the east side employment district, and the fact that it is a true apartment house. However, the significance of the Pallay Apartments is tied to it being the first apartment building within the MPD study area to be constructed with 100% apartments and no commercial uses.

Conclusion

Beginning around 1910, Portland’s eastside saw a substantial uptick in apartment-style housing for the rapidly grow population that was attracted to the area because of its affordability, accessibility, and employment opportunities. The first large-scale buildings with apartments were two-part commercial blocks that featured ground-floor shops. The Page and Sons Apartment Building and the McKinley Mitchell are two excellent examples of this typology. With the completion of the Pallay Apartments in 1910, the true apartment house that was popular on the west side of the river was now present on the east side. The Pallay reflects the characteristics of this type: First, it was a large-scale building being a quarter city block and three stories tall. Second, it was constructed with long-lasting, high-quality materials including brick and stucco. Lastly, there were no ground-floor commercial uses, which both maximized the number of rentable units and helped create an image of an exclusive, high-class residence. Other apartments of this type would follow—the Wellesley Court Apartments being an example of a larger and more architecturally detailed apartment house and 630 SE Yamhill Street a more restrained example. The Pallay Apartments embodies an important paradigm shift in the multifamily house architecture of the eastside. As the first of its kind, it signaled a growing maturity of Portland’s eastside. Apartment houses were not only a financial boon for developers, but they had become a socially-acceptable house type to provide greater density and affordability in the city. The Pallay Apartments is significant as the frontrunner in a trend that would continue to shape the character of the east side in the following two decades.
9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)


Oregonian. “Fire in Newcastle.” September 22, 1902: 12


Oregonian. “Goes steadily forward no lull in building.” July 31, 1899: 5.


Pallay Apartments


Oregonian. "Thinks Flats in Demand." April 18, 1899: 3.

Polk’s City Directory for Portland, Oregon 1904-1912.


Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Portland, Oregon, 1901.


Tess, John, Middle Class Apartment Buildings in East Portland MPD, no. 64500511, 1996.

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Digital newspaper archives

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A
10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Less than one
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage; enter “Less than one” if the acreage is .99 or less)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84: N/A
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

As a quarter-block, zero-lot-line building, the boundary for the Pallay Apartments is the tax lot. The tax lot is the Park Addition to East Portland, Block 136, Lots 5 and 6. The property lines run 100 feet in all directions.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary was selected because this is the historic lot.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Jessica Engeman, Historic Preservation Specialist
date: 7-27-2020
organization: Meritus Consulting, LLC
telephone: (503) 943-6093
street & number: 1111 NE Flanders St., Suite 206
email: Jessica@merituspg.com
city or town: Portland
state: OR
zip code: 97232

Additional Documentation
Submit the following items with the completed form:

- Regional Location Map
- Local Location Map
- Tax Lot Map
- Site Plan
- Floor Plans (As Applicable)
- Photo Location Map (Include for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map and insert immediately after the photo log and before the list of figures).
Pallay Apartments

Name of Property                   County and State

Multnomah Co., OR

Photographs:
Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn’t need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: The Pallay Apartments
City or Vicinity: Portland
County: Multnomah
State: Oregon
Photographer: Sally Painter
Date Photographed: July 15, 2020

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo 1 of 12: (OR_MultnomahCounty_PallayApartments_0001) South and east elevations, camera facing northwest.

Photo 2 of 12: (OR_MultnomahCounty_PallayApartments_0002) South elevation, camera facing north.

Photo 3 of 12: (OR_MultnomahCounty_PallayApartments_0003) Main entry, camera facing south.

Photo 4 of 12: (OR_MultnomahCounty_PallayApartments_0004) East elevation, camera facing east.

Photo 5 of 12: (OR_MultnomahCounty_PallayApartments_0005) Light court, camera facing south.

Photo 6 of 12: (OR_MultnomahCounty_PallayApartments_0006) Entry lobby, camera facing north.

Photo 7 of 12: (OR_MultnomahCounty_PallayApartments_0007) Main stair, camera facing south.

Photo 8 of 12: (OR_MultnomahCounty_PallayApartments_0008) Typical corridor, camera facing north.

Photo 9 of 12: (OR_MultnomahCounty_PallayApartments_0009) Original kitchen casework, camera facing east.

Photo 10 of 12: (OR_MultnomahCounty_PallayApartments_0010) Typical residential unit, camera facing east

Photo 11 of 12: (OR_MultnomahCounty_PallayApartments_0011) Typical residential unit, camera facing east.

Photo 12 of 12: (OR_MultnomahCounty_PallayApartments_0012) Typical residential unit, camera facing northwest.
Pallay Apartments
Name of Property

Multnomah Co., OR
County and State

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC
List of Figures
(Resize, compact, and paste images of maps and historic documents in this section. Place captions, with figure numbers above each image. Orient maps so that north is at the top of the page, all document should be inserted with the top toward the top of the page.)

Figure 1: Regional location map
Figure 2: Local location map
Figure 3: Tax lot map
Figure 4: Site plan
Figure 5: Ground floor plan
Figure 6: Second floor plan
Figure 7: Third floor plan
Figure 8: South and east elevations
Figure 9: Pallay Apartments on August 10, 1910
Figure 10: Pallay Apartments, c. 1940
Figure 11: SE 7th Avenue and SE Belmont Street in 1932 after street widening project.
Figure 12: Stokes & Zeller Flats, 1983.
Figure 13: Page and Sons Apartment Building
Figure 14: McKinley Mitchell Apartment Building
Figure 15: Wellesley Court Apartments
Figure 16: 630 SE Yamhill Street
**Pallay Apartments**  
Name of Property  
Multnomah Co., Oregon  
County and State  
Portland Oregon’s Eastside Historic and Architectural Resources, 1850-1938 MPD  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 1:** Regional Location Map, Latitude 45.305483, Longitude -122.393259
Pallay Apartments
Name of Property
Multnomah Co., Oregon
County and State
Portland Oregon’s Eastside Historic and Architectural Resources, 1850-1938 MPD
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 2: Local location map, Latitude 45.305483, Longitude -122.393259
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Figure 7: Third Floor Plan
Figure 8: South Elevation and East Elevation
Figure 9: Pallay Apartments on August 10, 1910.
Figure 10: Pallay Apartments, c. 1940.
Pallay Apartments  
Name of Property  Multnomah Co., Oregon  
County and State  Portland Oregon’s Eastside Historic and Architectural Resources, 1850-1938 MPD  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 11: SE 7th Avenue at SE Belmont Street in 1932 after street widening project. Red arrow denotes Pallay Apartments.
Figure 12: Stokes & Zeller Flats at 525 NE Couch Street, completed in 1909.\textsuperscript{63} Demolished.

\textsuperscript{63} Historic Resources Inventory for 525 NE Couch St., Portland.
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**Figure 13:** Page and Sons Apartment Building.
Figure 14: McKinley Mitchell Apartment Building.
**Figure 15**: Wellesley Court Apartments.
### Pallay Apartments

**Name of Property**

Multnomah Co., Oregon

**County and State**

Portland Oregon’s Eastside Historic and Architectural Resources, 1850-1938 MPD

**Name of multiple listing (if applicable)**

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**Figure 16:** 630 SE Yamhill Street.
Photo 1 of 12: South and east elevations, camera facing northwest.

Photo 2 of 12: South elevation, camera facing north.
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Pallay Apartments
Multnomah County: OR

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Pallay Apartments
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Pallay Apartments
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