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United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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Washington, DC 20240

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OR SHPO

SHPO CASE# 17-0102

MAR 15 2017

Mr. Ian P. Johnson
Associate Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer St. NE Suite C
Salem, OR 97301-1266

RE: Portland Public Services Building, Multnomah Co., OR

Dear Ian:

We appreciated the opportunity to review the proposed project on the 1982 Portland Public Services Building (Portland Building) in Multnomah County. The building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 25, 2011. We concur with the findings of your office that the proposed project to rehabilitate and replace much of the original exterior fabric using aluminum panels as part of a rain screen system would encapsulate key defining historic features and if undertaken, would destroy the historic integrity of the building and necessitate its removal from the National Register.

The information submitted by your office for this proposed project review clearly outlines the historic significance of this property. Designed by architect, Michael Graves, the National Register nomination states that the Portland Building is a "notable work that crystallized Michael Graves's reputation as a master architect and as an early and seminal work of Post-Modern Classicism..."

The design aesthetic of this building was largely achieved on the building's exterior through the use of applied ornamentation, tile, and paint colors on a primary concrete box structure. It is unfortunate, that soon after completion, the Portland Building suffered deficiencies with its building materials and systems, particularly with the thin concrete exterior wall. The Graves's designed lobby and second floor gallery were also altered at later dates. Consequently, the chief historical design component that remains to convey the building's significance is its historic exterior.

The appropriate preservation decision on the use of substitute material in the rehabilitation of a historic building must always center on two principal concerns: the possible damage or destruction of historic building materials; and the possible negative impact on the historic character of the building and its loss of specific aspects of integrity paramount to convey its historic significance. The proposed rain screen system with powdered-coated aluminum panels, while understandable to correct a system problem, would conceal what remains of the historic

exterior, change the building's profile, and impact those essential physical features that are visible to convey historic significance. The fact that this treatment, as stated in the project proposal, will "replicate the appearance of the existing façade" and that the change of materials as viewed from the street level will be "minimally perceptible" does not mitigate the loss of historic integrity to the main character-defining feature of the building.

Since the proposed project materials did not indicated the approximate depth of this rain screen and the drawings provided no scale, we are unable to comment on whether use of in-kind materials would be adequate since the impact of any change to the building's exterior profile still needs to be evaluated.

We hope you find our comments useful and please let us know if we may provide any further information or assistance.

Sincerely,



Lisa Deline
Historian,
National Register of Historic Places
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