

The Press Hotel

390 Congress Street, Portland



Significance

The Portland Press Herald building was constructed in 1924, designed in the Beaux Arts style by Desmond and Lord of Boston, the former of whom designed several buildings in Portland. The original building, seven stories tall and constructed with limestone and buff brick, was the most modern newspaper plant in New England at the time. The Gannett Building, a five-story addition, was constructed in 1947 on Congress Street. The building housed the *Portland Press Herald* from 1924 until 2010, when the paper relocated its headquarters. It is a contributing building in the Congress Street Historic District.

Project Scope

The building sat vacant after the paper's relocation until it was purchased in 2012 to be adapted into a hotel, offering modern accommodations while interpreting the building's past through the hotel's theme and atmosphere. Each of the 110 guest rooms is furnished with a journalist style desk. Real *Press Herald* headlines wallpaper the hallways, and objects from the building's former life, like steel rollers and scales, are incorporated into the interior design. Oversized letterpress blocks form a collage on the wall behind the front desk, and an installation of typewriters is scattered across the lobby wall.

The developer employed and commission local architects, contractors, and artists for the LEED-certified project and utilized historic tax credits to help fund the building's restoration and reuse. The marble entrance on Exchange Street was restored and made accessible, while an obsolete fire escape was removed. A lobby staircase has been also been preserved. The building's former name remains intact over a rear door on Federal Street, with a new sign erected at the corner.

Recognition

Developer Jim Brady was sensitive to and appreciative of the building's history and role in the city of Portland. His team enacted a clear vision for an ambitious, seven-story project, celebrating the Press Herald building's history through creative and compatible reuse.