Montgomery Ward/Park Building

The Montgomery Ward building in northwest Portland was a hallmark of modern industrial design when it opened on January 1, 1921. Built with fireproof, steel-reinforced concrete to be light and airy, the nine-story building housed a branch of Montgomery Ward & Company until 1982. The building, at 2701 Northwest Vaughn Street, is on the grounds of the 1905 Lewis and Clark Exposition. Company engineer W.H. McCaully created the design for the building, which was used in six other company buildings around the nation.

In 1925, the company placed a large neon “Montgomery Ward” sign on the roof. Several years later, in 1936, an addition transformed the building from an L-shape to a U-shape, providing showroom space for the company’s retail sales.

When Montgomery Ward closed its northwest Portland branch in 1982, the company sold the building to H. Naito Properties. Naito hired SERA Architects and spent $36 million to renovate the building for office use, adding a nine-story glass atrium inside the U. The neon sign on the roof was changed to read “Montgomery Park.”

The building has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1985.

Written by Kathy Tucker

Further Reading:

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Walters, Jonathan. “Reviving Portland’s Parthenon." *Historic Preservation*, 40:2 (March/April 1988).

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