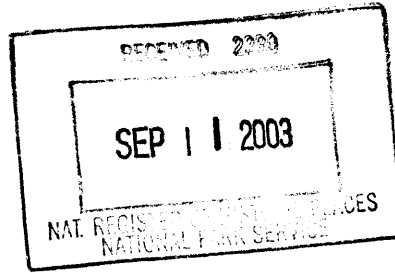


(Oct. 1990)

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**



**1. NAME OF PROPERTY**

**HISTORIC NAME:** New Imperial Hotel  
**OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER:** Imperial Hotel; Hotel Lucia

**2. LOCATION**

**STREET & NUMBER:** 400 SW Broadway      **NOT FOR PUBLICATION:** N/A  
**CITY OR TOWN:** Portland      **VICINITY:** N/A  
**STATE:** Oregon   **CODE:** OR   **COUNTY:** Multnomah   **CODE:** 51   **ZIP CODE:** 97205

**3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  X 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 \_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_ statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*James M. Hamrick Jr.*

Signature of certifying official, State Historic Preservation Officer, Deputy      September 3, 2003  
Oregon State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.  
(\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain):

*Edson H. Beall*  
Signature of the Keeper

10/24/03  
Date of Action

**5. CLASSIFICATION**

---

**OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY:** Private  
**CATEGORY OF PROPERTY:** Building

**NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:**

<b>CONTRIBUTING:</b>	<b>NONCONTRIBUTING:</b>	
1	0	<b>BUILDINGS</b>
0	0	<b>SITES</b>
0	0	<b>STRUCTURES</b>
0	0	<b>OBJECTS</b>
1	0	<b>TOTAL</b>

**NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER:** 0

**NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING:** N/A

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**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

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**HISTORIC FUNCTIONS:** Domestic – Hotel  
**CURRENT FUNCTIONS:** Domestic – Hotel

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**7. DESCRIPTION**

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**ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:** Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movements – Commercial Style

**MATERIALS:** **FOUNDATION:** Concrete  
**WALLS:** Brick  
**ROOF:** Asphalt  
**OTHER:** Terra Cotta

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:** See Continuation Sheets

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## 8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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### APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA:

- 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 VALUE, 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.

**CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS:** N/A

**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE:** Politics

**PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE:** 1909-1950

**SIGNIFICANT DATES:** 1909

**SIGNIFICANT PERSON:** Phil Metschan, Jr.

**CULTURAL AFFILIATION:** N/A

**ARCHITECT/BUILDER:** Whidden & Lewis, Architect

**NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:** See Continuation Sheets

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## 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** See Continuation Sheet

**PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS):** N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

**PRIMARY LOCATION OF ADDITIONAL DATA:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government: *City of Portland Building Records*
- University
- Other: *Oregon Historical Society*

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**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

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**ACREAGE OF PROPERTY:** 0.23 acre (10,000 SF)

UTM REFERENCES	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	10	525680	5040220	3		
2				4		

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:** The New Imperial Hotel is located on Lots 7 and 8 of Block 176 in Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:** The boundary is the legally recorded boundary lines for the building for which National Register status is being requested.

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**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

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**NAME/TITLE:** John M. Tess, President

**ORGANIZATION:** Heritage Investment Corporation      **DATE:** February 28, 2003

**STREET & NUMBER:** 123 NW Second Avenue, Suite 200 **TELEPHONE:** (503) 228-0272

**CITY OR TOWN:** Portland      **STATE:** OR      **ZIP CODE:** 97209

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**ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION**

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**CONTINUATION SHEETS:**

**MAPS:** See Enclosed

**PHOTOGRAPHS:** See Continuation Sheet

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS:**

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**PROPERTY OWNER**

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**NAME:** Gordon Sondland, The Aspen Group

**STREET & NUMBER:** 420 SW 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue      **TELEPHONE:** (503) 222-1515

**CITY OR TOWN:** Portland      **STATE:** OR      **ZIP CODE:** 97210

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Imperial Hotel  
Multnomah County, Oregon

Section number 7 Page 1

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## Overview

The 1909 New Imperial Hotel is located at 400 SW Broadway in downtown Portland, Oregon. Specifically, it is located on Lots 7 and 8 of Block 176 in Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon. The architectural firm of Whidden & Lewis designed the building for hotel developer Phil Metschan, Jr. and landowner Theodore Wilcox. Built as an addition to the 1894-95 Imperial Hotel at 422-26 SW Broadway, the older structure operated as an annex to the new.

The 9-story reinforced concrete and steel frame building is located at the northwest corner of Portland's commercial district. It may be categorized as LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS – Commercial Style of architecture.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Imperial Hotel  
Multnomah County, Oregon

Section number 7 Page 2

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## Setting

The New Imperial Hotel is located on a quarter block parcel at the southeast corner of Broadway and Stark Street. Located along downtown Portland's primary north-south shopping street, the New Imperial is two blocks north of the center of the retail core. The hotel is surrounded by commercial buildings including a large number of hotels. Broadway from Oak to Taylor Streets is home to six hotels representing a third of the hotel rooms downtown. To the north is the Benson, to the south is the Vintage Plaza (old Imperial Hotel), Marriott, Hilton and Heathman hotels.

The New Imperial is also surrounded by buildings of similar vintage and architectural character. To the south is the Vintage Plaza (NR; 1894-95), the original Imperial Hotel. Across the street to the north is the U.S. Bank Building (NR; 1919/1925). Catercorner is the Benson Hotel (NR; 1913). To the southwest catercorner from the Vintage Plaza is the Morgan Building (NR; 1913). Finally, at the rear of the Imperial is the Equitable Building (NR; 1948).

## Site

The building is located on a 100 by 100 foot parcel. The parcel is essentially flat. The hotel is built to the lot line with a perimeter sidewalk. The site contains no significant landscape features.

## Structure

The New Imperial is a 9-story concrete and steel frame building. The first floor is square, 100 feet by 100 feet. Floors 2 through 9 are a closed "L" with 100-foot legs along Broadway and Stark Street, creating an interior light court. The legs are 33 feet wide.

The building features the "Turner Mushroom System", built by Northwest Bridge Works. The first floor structure consists of an 8-inch thick, flat concrete slab supported on round concrete columns 21.5' apart with flared capitals. Upper floors have typical riveted-steel frame and ribbed reinforced concrete floors. The "Turner Mushroom System" is the product of engineer Claude Turner, developed in the first decade of the 1900s. Turner found that a reinforced concrete slab could be supported by columns with broad mushroom capitals. Particularly useful in warehouses, the structural system proved to be cheaper to build and easier to install services such as sprinklers.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Imperial Hotel  
Multnomah County, Oregon

Section number 7 Page 3

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## Exterior

Apart from the ground floor treatments, the main (west) and secondary (north) facades are identical.

The Imperial is a commercial building with tripartite organization common of the era. The base part is two stories originally of cream-colored terra cotta. The next six stories are of buff colored brick in common bond flanked by cream-colored terra cotta quoins. The uppermost story is of cream-colored architecturally detailed sheet metal equivalent to the capital. Detailing and ornamentation is classical.

The first floor storefronts on the west were originally sheathed in cream-colored terra cotta with five horizontal rectangular panels arranged vertically on wall space separating five storefronts with the central storefront bay serving as the hotel's main entry. The entry was recessed with flanking classical columns and a cantilevered metal and glass marquee extending out. The storefronts were a single glass pane with tripartite overlights. In 1956, the storefront was "modernized" with fieldstone and the recessed entry eliminated. The fieldstone was removed in the 1990s. Currently, the ground floor continues to divide the ground floor into five equal-sized bays, but now features shorter storefront window openings. Window frames are modern anodized aluminum storefront systems and canvas awnings in metal frame.

Today, the hotel's primary entrance is still in its original location, in the center storefront bay facing west onto Broadway. It is defined by an overhanging black metal with glass trim marquee that spans the bay. This modern marquee nearly replicates the original with metal frame, glass valance and cast leaf designs and modern-style finials spaced at regular intervals around the upper portion. Flagpoles flank the marquee, projecting out and up at 45 degree angle. The hotel doors are then recessed. It is a modern black anodized aluminum frame and glass storefront system. The doors are automated full-glass multi-light butterfly doors, flanked by matching sidelights and transom above.

The building has two secondary retail entrances, at the northernmost and southernmost bays. Both are similar in design and materials to the door system of the main entry: black anodized aluminum with full-glass multi-light butterfly doors with matching flanking sidelights and transom. The doors themselves are slightly recessed; the sidelights flush with the building face. Above the entries are canvas shed-style awnings, black in color with gray vertical stripes.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Imperial Hotel  
Multnomah County, Oregon

Section number 7 Page 4

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As built, the Stark Street frontage was similar in concept with a secondary entrance (with marquise) located in the western-most bay. Similar to the Broadway storefronts, in 1956, Stark Street storefronts were “modernized” removing the Stark Street entry and covering the ground floor with fieldstone and cement plaster panels. In the 1980s renovation, the owners continued Broadway storefront treatment around to the western most bay on Stark Street but kept the vertical tan cement plaster panels along the remaining ground floor level.

Floors 2-9 featured a symmetrical and consistent pattern reading A:B:C:B:C:C:A, where A represents a pair of windows, B represents a wood-frame casement half-window, and C represents a single window. Originally, A and C windows were wood-framed double-hung one-over-one wood sash with a terra cotta sill. In the 1980s renovation, most of the sashes were replaced with a modern anodized aluminum frame system. The wood window frames, terra cotta quoins and sills were retained. The smaller windows at the fire escape were retained and are original.

### Interior

The New Imperial Hotel is a nine-story hotel with basement service areas, ground floor public spaces and nine-stories of hotel rooms. Both the ground floor and basement are full-parcel, while floors 2 through 9 are a closed “L”. This spatial arrangement has been consistent through the hotel’s 94-year existence. That said, the hotel has maintained its position in the marketplace through frequent interior renovations. While most of the renovations relate to finishes, some remodeling affected the hotel’s fabric, particularly the ground floor. Much of that renovation occurred during Metschan’s four-decade ownership.

The ground floor features the hotel’s public spaces. As built, the ground floor featured a main lobby off the central bay on Broadway. A guest entered the hotel from the west and walked directly across the lobby area to the reception desk. To the right was a cigar stand and further to the right was a café, approximately 25 feet wide and 50 feet deep. This café had entrances both from the lobby and off the southernmost bay of the Broadway façade. Across the lobby, though not partitioned, at the northwest corner between the elevator core and west wall, was a lounge. North of the elevator was a “Ladies’ Reception Room”. To the rear (northeast) of the ground floor was a main dining room, approximately 40 feet by 60 feet. Then at the southeast corner were service areas for the café and dining room. Between the café and the service area was a “connection to old hotel.” Finishes in the public spaces were of classical design and grand, with plaster walls, marble and mahogany trim and coffered plaster ceilings. A large stained glass skylight was featured in the lobby toward the center and southeast.



## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Imperial Hotel  
Multnomah County, Oregon

Section number 7 Page 5

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Within 6 years of construction, the ground floor was modified. In 1915, the lounge at the northwest was transformed into an enlarged restaurant space with an entry cut into the Broadway facade. In 1927-29, the lobby was modernized again with an office being created from the remaining lounge area at the northwest and the reception desk being relocated. In 1949, Metschan lost control of the southern half of the hotel property and so eliminated and remodeled the connector areas and expanded the restaurant.

Today, though the finishes are modern, the orientation and configuration is quite similar to 1950 when Metschan sold the property. This includes a central hotel entrance leading to a central lobby, a restaurant space on the south and a retail entrance on the north – both with separate entrances. Between the lobby and the northern retail space is a small reception room. To the northeast is a meeting room and to the southeast is the kitchen restaurant. The major exception is the addition of a lounge area to the rear (east) of the lobby where a hotel office had been located. The elevator/stair bank at the northwest area of the lobby is original.

The basement provided service areas for the hotel. These functional spaces included offices, toilets, barbershop and mechanical spaces. As with the ground floor, these spaces have generally been modernized over the years, but continues to serve as hotel service areas with offices, toilets and mechanical spaces.

Hotel rooms are located on floors 2-9 along the two legs of the “L”. The elevator/stair bank was located on the interior of the “L” intersect. As built, each floor had approximately 21 rooms accessed off a double-loaded corridor. Of the 21 rooms, 16 were interconnected with a shared bath. The remaining 5 were more austere with no sink. A common bath then was located adjacent to the elevator.

The typical floor had 11 rooms on the streetfronts and 10 rooms on the courtyard. Generally, rooms were 15 by 12 feet, though rooms on the courtyard side of the hotel were slightly smaller. The rooms without a bath were generally on the courtyard side and at the ends of the corridor.

In addition, each leg of the “L” had a fire corridor perpendicular to the hallway and leading to the fire escape. There was also a stair running the height of the building at the south end of the western corridor.

Corridor and room finishes were plaster walls and ceiling with wall-to-wall carpet. Rooms featured classic window and door surrounds, and distinctive wood cornice with distinctive if simple lines.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Imperial Hotel  
Multnomah County, Oregon

Section number 7 Page 6

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As with the ground floor, the hotel rooms have been modernized over time. In the 1927-29 remodeling, Metschan added 32 bathrooms, making a total of 104 baths in the 168-room hotel. Then in 1983, the then owner, Albert Gentner committed to placing a private bath in each room. This feat was accomplished by eliminating the north fire escape corridor, by increasing the efficiency of the space allotted to bathrooms and closets, and by combining ten smaller rooms into five rooms. In addition, the two rooms at the northwest corner on each floor were paired into a two-room, single bath suite. In total, the number of rooms shrank from 168 to 128, or from 21 with shared or common baths to 14 rooms with baths and one double-room suite. Room window and entry door surrounds appear to be original, as does the cornice. Corridor configuration remained as built; changes to the corridor appear limited to finishes, though selected doorways have been infilled to accommodate the reduction in the number of rooms.

## Major Alterations

- 1915 Stark Street entry, lobby and restaurant modifications
- 1920 Stark Street storefront remodeling
- 1927-9 Storefront, lobby and interior remodeling
- 1941 Interior remodeling
- 1949 Lobby and interior remodeling
- 1954 Installed television sets (first hotel in Portland)
- 1956 Remodeled storefronts, installed fieldstone and cement plaster finish
- 1965 Lobby remodeling
- 1970 Installed central air conditioning (first hotel in Portland)
- 1979 Installed sprinkler system
- 1980 Changed entry door system
- 1983 Interior remodeling changing shared baths to private baths

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Imperial Hotel  
Multnomah County, Oregon

Section number 7 Page 7

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1988 Remodeled lobby to create radio studio

1991-4 Storefront, lobby and interior renovation; seismic upgrade; removed north façade fire escape; replaced windows

1998 Broadway storefront remodeling

2002 Lobby and interior remodeling

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Imperial Hotel  
Multnomah County, Oregon

Section number 8 Page 1

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## Overview

The 1909 New Imperial Hotel is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion "B" for its association with Oregon Republican leader Phil Metschan, Jr. For forty years, Metschan developed the hotel into a social center for eastern Oregonians visiting Portland. In so doing, Metschan established friendships and contacts that allowed him to build a statewide Republican political organization. This organization, according to historian E. Kimbark MacColl, made Metschan as an "Oregon Republican kingmaker," and helped the hotelier secure the Republican gubernatorial candidacy in 1930. In 1949, Metschan lost the lease to the older Imperial Hotel to the Plaza Hotel Company and severed the connection of the two buildings. The following years, he sold the New Imperial to Albert Gentner. The building is listed in the City of Portland's Historic Resource Inventory.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Imperial Hotel  
Multnomah County, Oregon

Section number 8 Page 2

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## History of the Building

Built in 1909, the Imperial Hotel was designed by the noted Portland architectural firm of Whidden & Lewis for Phil Metschan, Jr. In creating the hotel, Metschan hoped to follow directly in his father's footsteps as an hotelier and political leader. For forty years – until he sold the hotel in 1950 – Metschan fulfilled his aspirations to the point of having the Oregonian call the hotel “the second state capital” and a second home to eastern Oregonians.

*“When the inquisitive little boy seeking governmental information finds his papa hiding behind the evening paper and questions about politics, if he knows his political catechism, he asks Papa, “What is the hub of Oregon politics?” Then, if Papa knows the answer, he says quickly, “Portland, son,” and reads on about the ballgame and, the son continuing the lesson, asks: “What is the axle about which Oregon politics revolve?” And Papa, being wise, says: ‘Why, the Imperial Hotel, of course. Run away now and play.’” And there you have it. And for ten years it has been so. . . . the inner sanctuary of things political, the granite mausoleum in which reposed the hidden spring unlocking convention doors and ballot boxes and official success, it was the home of the Poo-Bah, the tent of the council of War.”*

So wrote the Oregonian in “The Imperial Hotel as Political Battlefield” as the newspaper dedicated the New Imperial by noting that while the Battle of 1908 “closed the political career of the old Imperial”, the Battle of 1910 would inaugurate the political career of the new hotel created by Philip Metschan, Jr.

By the end of the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Portland was reaping the full benefits of the Lewis & Clark Exposition. In 1908, city permitting reached \$10 million in construction, with projects such as the Wells Fargo Building, Corbett Block, Board of Trade Building, Meier & Frank, Lombard Building and Commercial Club transforming downtown.

Theodore Wilcox, protégé of William Ladd and an active real estate investor in the downtown area, had acquired the parcel on which the New Imperial would be built in the summer of 1907. He purchased it without a specific plan for development, based largely on the notion of its superior location. It was located in what was considered the center of the retail district (3<sup>rd</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> Avenues, Morrison to Oak Streets), and located along Portland's prime theater and entertainment street. His first inclination was a 3 or 4-story office building that he considered “temporary” until the Portland market matured. As real estate values increased in 1908, Wilcox began to look more favorably on a permanent 9-10 story building.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Imperial Hotel  
Multnomah County, Oregon

Section number 8 Page 3

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As this was transpiring, Phil Metschan, Jr. befriended Wilcox. In 1906, Metschan, Jr. replaced his father in managing the Imperial Hotel. This allowed the father to take an extended vacation in 1907 to Europe. Metschan, Sr. had leased the Imperial in 1899 following two terms as State Treasurer. He quickly built it into the unofficial center of Oregon politics, particularly popular with eastern and central Oregon landowners and ranchers. In 1908, Metschan, Jr. succeeded in having the Imperial host William Jennings Bryant on his Presidential campaign. He, the son, envisioned building on this social and political success with a thoroughly modern and expanded facility. Wilcox and Metschan became partners to build the New Imperial.

Planning began about fall, 1908. Whidden & Lewis completed design in October. Structural plans were completed in November. A year and \$250,000 later, the hotel opened to the public – on December 15, 1909. From the cream-colored terra cotta exterior details to the copper marquise to the lobby area decked in mahogany, marble (provided by Mission Marble), Moravian tile (by Mercer) and illuminated by a stained glass skylight (by Povey Brothers), the New Imperial was intended to impress. Above the lobby, each floor had 21 guest rooms. Finishes were detailed in mahogany and brass. The heating system allowed each guest to adjust temperatures, while telephones were scattered through the building. The \$100,000 in furniture was supplied by J. G. Mack & Co. (located at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Stark Street) and represented the company's single largest contract in its history. Upon completion of the new hotel, Metschan closed the older Imperial for remodeling.

The New Imperial was not just any hotel. Because of Metschan, the hotel quickly became identified as “the” place for eastern Oregonians to stay when visiting Portland. As eulogized by the Oregonian in 1951, Phil Metschan, Jr. transformed the Imperial into home away from him for eastern Oregonians:

*For four decades, if one wished to find a visitor from east of the Cascades, it was wise to check the Imperial first. There one's quarry usually would be in a circle of broad-rimmed hats with Phil Metschan in the center. The Imperial was second home to folks from the ranches and towns of central and eastern Oregon. Mr. Metschan, the proprietor, was an old friend who knew the visitor intimately and probably had known his father before him.*

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Imperial Hotel  
Multnomah County, Oregon

Section number 8 Page 4

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Metschan then used this hospitality to political advantage. Again, the Oregonian noted:

*The Imperial hotel was much more than a well-run hostelry in downtown Portland. It was almost the secondary capital of the state, when the legislature was not in session. More political medicine was brewed within its walls than anywhere else. When an upstate political figure visited Portland, he registered at the Imperial. . . . Oregon politics centered at the Imperial.*

It is not surprising then that Metschan provided office space to the politically potent and culturally influential Oregon Cattleman's Association throughout his ownership of the Imperial.

As typical with hotels, Metschan remodeled the property frequently through his 40-year ownership. Five years after the hotel opened, Metschan remodeled the restaurant space, using Sutton & Whitney as architects. He expanded the Stark Street restaurant to 6,000sf, increasing seating from 150 to 250 by eliminating the lobby's writing room and women's reception room. The redesign also created a restaurant entry at the corner of Stark and Broadway, removing the terra cotta and incorporating a revolving door, the first such use among Portland restaurants.

In 1928, Phil, Jr. bought out Wilcox and again modernized the now 17-year old hotel. He hired architect Carl Harding Wallwork of Folger Johnson and Parker to remodel the storefronts, lobby and interior – including the addition of 32 additional bathrooms -- adding four baths per floor.

The following year, in November 1929, Phil, Jr. acquired the two interior lots on Block 176 adjacent and to the east (6<sup>th</sup> Avenue) side to the New Imperial. He intended to build another annex for the Imperial on the 10,000sf parcel with a through lobby from 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Broadway. The parcel cost \$400,000. Metschan proposed a 9-story, \$600,000 addition. Ironically, the stock market crash in October actually allowed Metschan to complete the deal that had been under negotiation for several months. For whatever reasons, Metschan never pursued development of the expanded hotel.

On July 1, 1949, Metschan lost control of the southern half of the Imperial – the 1894-95 portion that his father had leased in 1899 – to the Plaza Hotel Company led by Dean Vincent. The following year, Metschan sold the New Imperial to Albert W. Gentner, owner of the Mallory Hotel for \$750,000. Keeping the existing management, Gentner immediately began refurbishing the hotel's lobby and interior. In 1954, the Imperial became the first hotel in the city to offer televisions. In 1956, Gentner completed a modernization of the exterior and lobby. In 1970, he installed central air conditioning, making the Imperial the first hotel in Portland to do so. In the 1980s, he embarked on a wholesale renovation of the property, including the removal of fieldstone from the Broadway façade,

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Imperial Hotel  
Multnomah County, Oregon

Section number 8 Page 5

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and adding private baths to each room. In the 1990s, he again modernized the hotel, replaced the sashes and installed seismic bracing. In 2002, the property again changed hands with the new owners renaming the property Hotel Lucia and modernizing it as a boutique hotel.

### **Phil Metschan, Jr. (1876-1951) and Oregon Republican Politics at the Mid-Century**

Born into a political family, Philip Metschan built on the footsteps of his father. In the words of E. Kimbark MacColl, Metschan was an “Oregon Republican Kingmaker” in the era. With the hotel as his base of operations, Phil Metschan, Jr. singularly created a home for eastern Oregonians in Portland. He then leveraged the social connections into a political center that would result in him being the state chairman of the Oregon Republican Party and ultimately gubernatorial candidate.

Metschan was born on March 24, 1876 in Canyon City in the middle of eastern Oregon cattle country. His father was a German immigrant who arrived in the United State in 1854 and in Oregon in 1862. That year, gold was discovered in Canyon City and Metschan, Sr. first panned for gold and then for customers among the miners. He became active in Grant County politics. In the 1870s, Metschan, Sr. was elected to County Treasurer, then later County Clerk. In the 1880s, he was elected County Judge.

The son’s political tutelage grew in the 1890s. His father was twice elected State Treasurer and moved to Salem. Metschan, Jr. attended high school at Willamette Academy, and then attended Willamette University for three years. He then attended Stanford where his roommate was future Oregon Senator Charles McNary. After a stint traveling in Central America, and being rejected for military service in the Spanish-American War (his second finger on his right hand amputated as a child), Metschan returned to Portland where he worked as a bookkeeper at Wells Fargo and married Mary Velente Kubli of Jacksonville, Oregon.

In 1901, 25-year-old Metschan, Jr. returned to Canyon City where he founded the Grant County Bank and was elected to City Council. In 1902, he acquired the Palace Hotel in Heppner and established it as a center for cattleman hospitality. Four years later, he sold the Palace and moved to Portland where the 30-year-old managed his father’s hotel so Sr. could travel to Europe. The Palace was later demolished in the 1910s.

It was Metschan, Jr. who shortly after arriving, befriended Theodore Wilcox and convinced him to use the parcel north of the Imperial for hotel expansion. With the Imperial hosting national political leaders such as William Jennings Bryant, Metschan, Jr. sought larger spaces for larger gatherings. He also understood the political value of maintaining the hotel as a center for visitors



## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Imperial Hotel  
Multnomah County, Oregon

Section number 8 Page 6

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from eastern Oregon.

Metschan grew a political career that eventually would allow him to claim the Republican nomination for Governor. Operating from his rolltop desk in the lobby of the New Imperial, he began in the 1920s as Treasurer of the Republican State Central Committee and subsequently as Chairman of the Committee. In the spring of 1930, George Joseph outmaneuvered Metschan and won the Republican nomination for Governor. Joseph ran on a platform that among other items called for state ownership of the power companies, a position that Metschan opposed. When Joseph died suddenly in June, Metschan managed the process such to overturn the Joseph platform and to get himself the Republican nomination. This prompted Julius Meier, business partner to Joseph, to run as an independent candidate. Meier eventually won with 54% of the vote.

Simultaneously Metschan served as a commissioner on the Port of Portland from 1919 to 1935, and served a term as the Port's treasurer. With Port revenues doubling in this period and the success of the shipping interests, the Port was cited frequently in the 1920s and 1930s for conflicts of interest, political patronage and political deal making.

Among his other Republican duties was serving as delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1924, 1940, 1944 and in 1948 headed up the delegation.

In 1950, Metschan retired and sold his interest in the Imperial. On August 1, 1951, Metschan died at home after a long illness. His funeral was held at the Trinity Episcopal Church with services overseen by the Bishop. Honorary pallbearers included Governor Douglas McKay, Senator Wayne Morse and 70 others whose names were a veritable who's who of Oregon Republican politics. Acting Mayor J. E. Bennett called for the City flags to be lowered at half-staff, proclaiming, "I feel, and am quite sure the people of Portland and the State feel, that we have suffered a real loss in the passing of Phil Metschan, native son, farmer, stockman, successful businessman, civic and political leader." The Oregonian eulogized that Metschan "was the magnet that drew thousands of visitors from Eastern Oregon to the Imperial"

In addition to the Republican politicians and the Imperial Hotel, Metschan was active in the Knights of Columbus, served on the board of Willamette University, was President of the Oregon Hotel Association, and a member of the State Board of Higher Education. He was a director of the Chamber of Commerce. Metschan was also a strong advocate for Oregon history, being a recognized student of Grant County history, publisher of Oregon Inn-side News (a regular irregular pamphlet of Oregon pioneer history) and served as an active board member of the Oregon Historical Society.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Imperial Hotel  
Multnomah County, Oregon

Section number 8 Page 7

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## Comparative Analysis of Resources Relating to Philip Metschan, Jr.

Phil Metschan was an hotelier, a politician, but first and foremost a man who enjoyed people and enjoyed seeing them in the Imperial. On the occasion of his Golden Wedding anniversary, the Oregonian wrote:

*For the Metschan name has been identified with the hotel business in Portland for sixty years, and there is nothing quite like the hotel business—a successfully conducted hotel business—for the promotion of friendly acquaintance over a populous area. Success in business connotes attentive, progressive and genial management and only that sort of management goes with sixty years in the same business in the same place under the same name.*

Two years later on Metschan's death, the Oregonian noted that:

*Even after he and his associates sold the Imperial a year and a half ago, the aging Metschan would return almost daily to his old rolltop desk off the lobby to trade stories with old acquaintances.*

The Oregon Journal headline the same day summarized his life, reading: "Phil Metschan, Hotelman, Political Leader, Dies." The story went on to quote L. E. Warford, a former Oregonian living in Akron, Ohio:

*When I stepped into the lobby of the Imperial Hotel, I was pleased to see eastern Oregon's native son, Phil Metschan, standing in the center of the spacious lobby with a cheery smile and a warm hand-clasp of welcome back home. He was talking with his Oregon friends just as his father used to do. Talking and listening to Oregon's Phil Metschan about Oregon and Portland was well worth the trip back home.*

In a very real sense, the New Imperial was Phil Metschan, Jr.'s creation and home. He held an ownership position in the hotel from the day it was built to 1950. He was the person responsible for enticing Theodore Wilcox into investing in the hotel. He was a constant fixture in the hotel throughout his ownership and afterward. It is not surprising then that his birthday celebrations were held at the New Imperial; more often than not, that was where he would be found.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Imperial Hotel  
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Other resources affiliated with Metschan include the older Imperial Hotel and his home at 2028 SW Clifton Street. The older Imperial Hotel is listed on the National Register for its architecture and association with Phil Metschan, Sr. While Metschan, Jr. served as manager of the older building from 1906, it was the father who established that hotel as a political center. Metschan's period of association with the older hotel is short and secondary to his father.

Metschan's residence on SW Clifton is notable, but not the best resource to associate with the man and his accomplishments. It was designed in 1922 by Lawrence & Holford in the Arts & Crafts Style. It remained Metschan's home until his death in 1951. However, until Metschan's Golden Wedding anniversary in 1950 (after sale of the Imperial), there is no record of any social or political gatherings at his residence. The contemporary record speaks of him in the lobby of the hotel, and speaks of the hotel as the center of Oregon politics; outside the one anniversary event, there is no reference to Metschan and the Clifton Street residence.

Though substantial, the house itself is not grandly sited or a prominent building, and is indistinguishable from neighboring houses. It is located in the Portland Heights neighborhood of Portland, a fashionable upscale neighborhood then in the early development stages. The house sits on a square 11,500 square foot lot. As built, the house was roughly 4,000 sf. over two stories with four bedrooms and three-and-half baths.

It is not considered a grand home architecturally or an important commission to the architect. Classic houses of Portland, by William J. Hawkins and William F. Willingham makes no mention of the Metschan house. Harmony in Diversity: The Architecture and Teaching of Ellis F. Lawrence mentions the house only in passing, noting only that the house was consistent with Lawrence's earlier works in that genre. There is no evidence that Metschan worked with the architect in personalizing the house.

Collectively then, it seems that the hotel is the best resource associated with Metschan. His association with the hotel was 40 years, while the house was only 29. The hotel was his brainchild. References associating him with the hotel are frequent and strong. Social gatherings and political meetings are cited as being at the hotel until Metschan no longer owned the building – and then the contemporary record talks of him still heading to the hotel lobby to meet acquaintances and friends. By contrast, there is no evidence that Metschan worked with Lawrence in the design of the Clifton house. Nor is there evidence that Metschan ever used the house for social or political gatherings, beyond the single citation on his golden wedding anniversary.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Imperial Hotel  
Multnomah County, Oregon

Section number 8 Page 9

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## **Whidden & Lewis – Firm Background and Architect Biography**

Firm Overview: The New Imperial Hotel was designed by Whidden & Lewis, Portland's premier architectural office of the era. William Marcy Whidden and Ion Lewis formed the partnership late in 1889, and the firm name continued until the death of Ion Lewis in 1933.

Nearly 30 employees of the firm have been identified, and judging from the volume of the firm's work, there must have been many more. The list reads like a roster of the profession in Portland, including a number of well-known names in Portland architecture. Joseph Jacobberger, David Chambers Lewis, Harrison A. Whitney and Frederick A. Fritsch all worked for Whidden & Lewis for various periods of time. The employee with the greatest longevity in the office was Albert E. Doyle, who started as a 14 year old office boy, and progressed to be an important designer, remaining with the firm for 12 years.

The firm's body of work is substantial. Prominent public buildings include City Hall (1895), Forestry Building (1905; demolished), the old Portland Art Museum (1905; demolished) and the Multnomah County Courthouse (1914). Major commercial commissions included the Concord Building (1890); Gilbert Building (1893); Hamilton Building (1893); Failing Building (1897); Failing Building (1907 and 1913); Corbett Building (1907), demolished; Arlington Club (1909); New Imperial Hotel (1910); Wilcox Building (1911); and Stevens Building (1914). A complete list of the residential projects designed by Whidden & Lewis would include more than 40 fine houses. Outstanding works include the McKenzie House (1892); Wilcox House (1892); Good House (1895); McCamant House (1899); W.B. Ayer House (1903); Isom White House (1903) and the Koehler House (1905).

Whidden & Lewis designed the majority of Portland's important commissions for 20 years, but beginning in 1909 the firm's dominance of the profession in Portland faded, and they were succeeded by their protégé, Albert E. Doyle.

In 1930, the firm was honored by the Oregon Chapter of the American Institute of Architects with a bronze tablet, placed at the west entrance of the Portland City Hall designed by the firm.

Whidden, William Marcy (1857-1929): William Whidden was born in Boston, Massachusetts on February 10, 1857. His father was a contractor and a county commissioner. He graduated from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1877, and then studied for four years at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. After completing his architectural studies, Whidden went to work for the

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Imperial Hotel  
Multnomah County, Oregon

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nationally prominent firm of McKim, Mead & White in New York City.

In the winter of 1881-1882 Whidden came to Portland with Charles F. McKim in connection with the hotel and railroad station projects in Portland, and a hotel project in Tacoma, which Henry Villard of the Northern Pacific Railroad had commissioned McKim, Meade & White to design. In 1883 Whidden returned to the northwest to supervise the construction of the Portland and Tacoma hotels. However, Villard's financial empire collapsed and the Portland Hotel project was abandoned with construction halted at the main floor level, and only the stone base standing. Whidden remained in the west to supervise completion of the Tacoma hotel in 1884, and then returned to the east. While in Portland, Whidden married Alice McLoughlin Weygant, a descendant of John McLoughlin.

Returning to Boston, Whidden formed a partnership with William E. Chamberlain, a former schoolmate at M.I.T., and fellow draftsman at McKim, Meade & White, with the firm name of Chamberlain & Whidden. In 1887, while still in Boston, Whidden submitted plans, prepared by Chamberlain & Whidden, to the Library Association of Portland for their proposed new library building (later carried out by Whidden & Lewis in 1890).

In 1888, a group of prominent Portlanders put together a syndicate to finance completion of the Portland Hotel, and Whidden was brought out to Portland to supervise the construction, following McKim, Meade & White's plans. He apparently dissolved his partnership with Chamberlain at this

time. In 1889 Whidden designed Cloud Cap Inn on Mt. Hood. This may be his earliest design in the northwest. In the same year, Whidden's friend, Ion Lewis came to Portland for a visit, and stayed to form the partnership of Whidden & Lewis. The new firm had instant success.

In 1920 Whidden retired. He died in Portland on July 27, 1929 at the Mallory Hotel, where he had been living. He was 72 years old. Surviving were his wife, Alice, and two sons. Whidden's architectural library was given to the University of Oregon School of Architecture by his heirs.

Lewis, Ion (1858-1933): Ion Lewis was born in Lynn, Massachusetts on March 26, 1858. He studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he became acquainted with his future partner, William M. Whidden. After finishing his schooling, Lewis worked in the offices of Boston architects Peabody & Stearns, and Cabot & Chandler.

In 1889, Lewis came to Portland, Oregon to visit Whidden and stayed to form the firm of Whidden & Lewis. In 1920, after Whidden retired, Lewis continued practice alone, using the Whidden & Lewis firm name at their office in the Wilcox Building.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Imperial Hotel  
Multnomah County, Oregon

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Ion Lewis died in Portland at the age of 75 on August 29, 1933 at the Arlington Club, where he had lived for many years. Lewis had never married, and left no close-surviving relatives.

Lewis was a founding member of the Oregon Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and was elected to Fellowship in the Institute in 1916. Lewis received license No. 14 under the grandfathers clause when licensing of architects commenced in Oregon in 1919.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Imperial Hotel  
Multnomah County, Oregon

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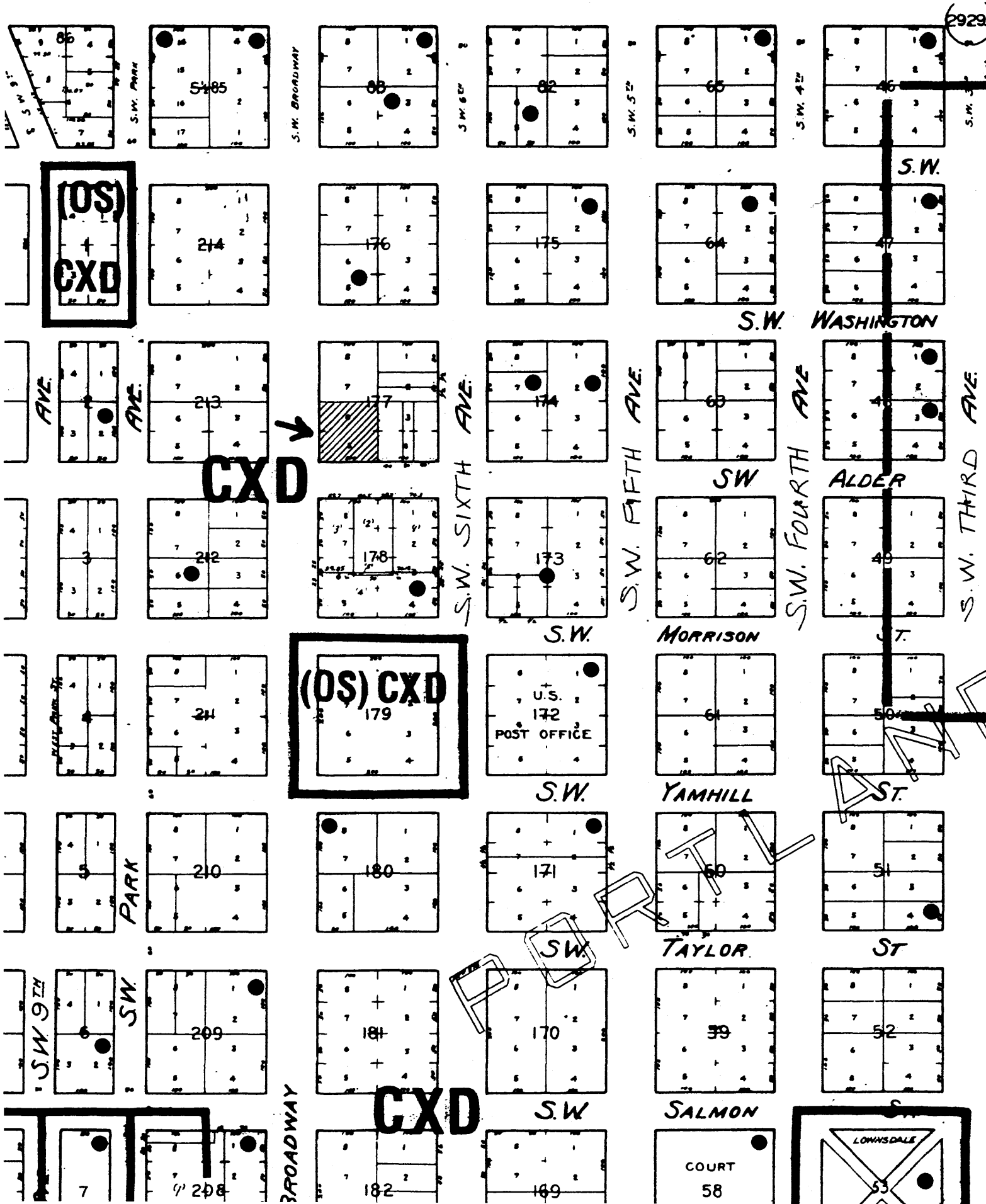
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ELECTRIC BUILDING



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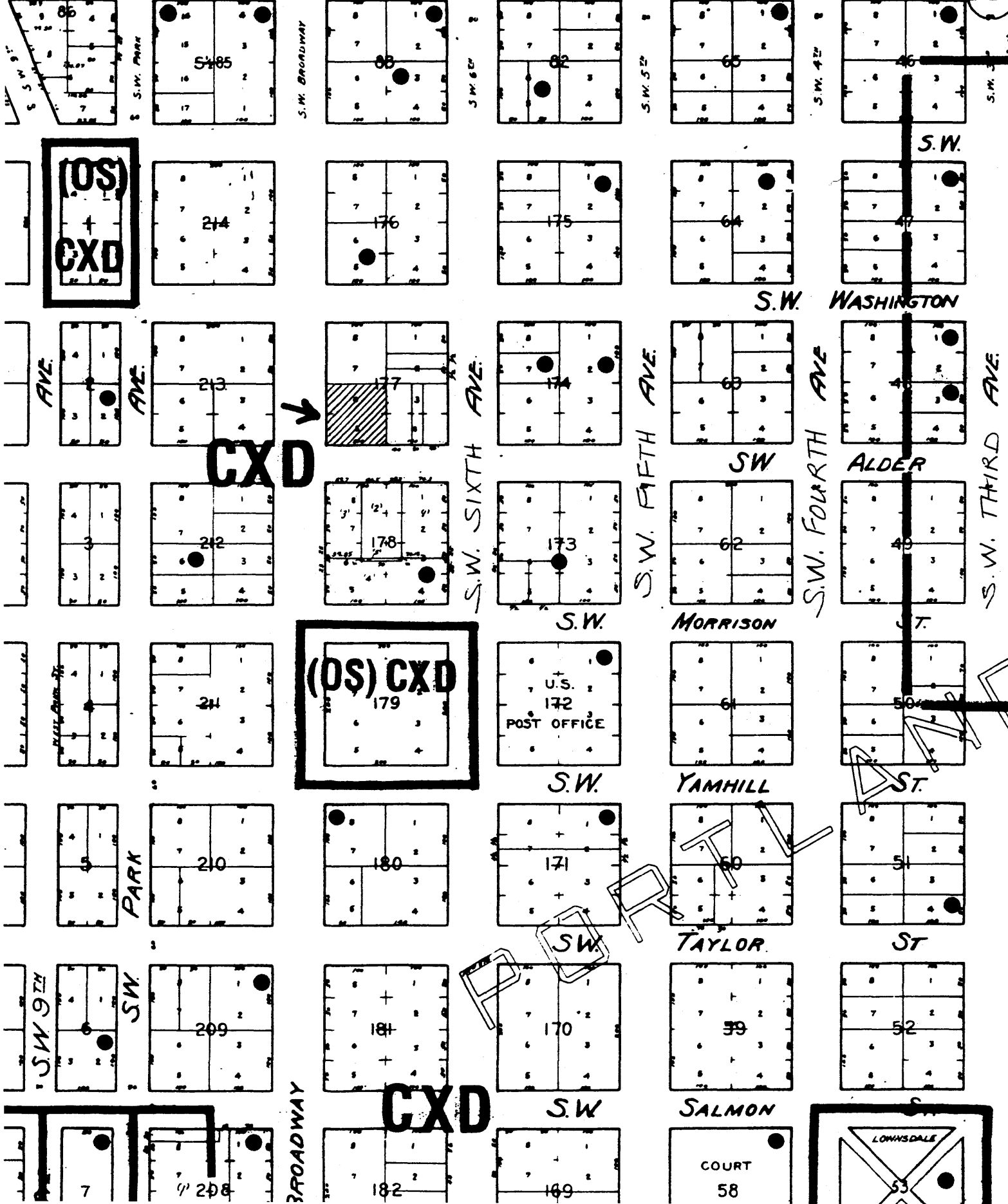
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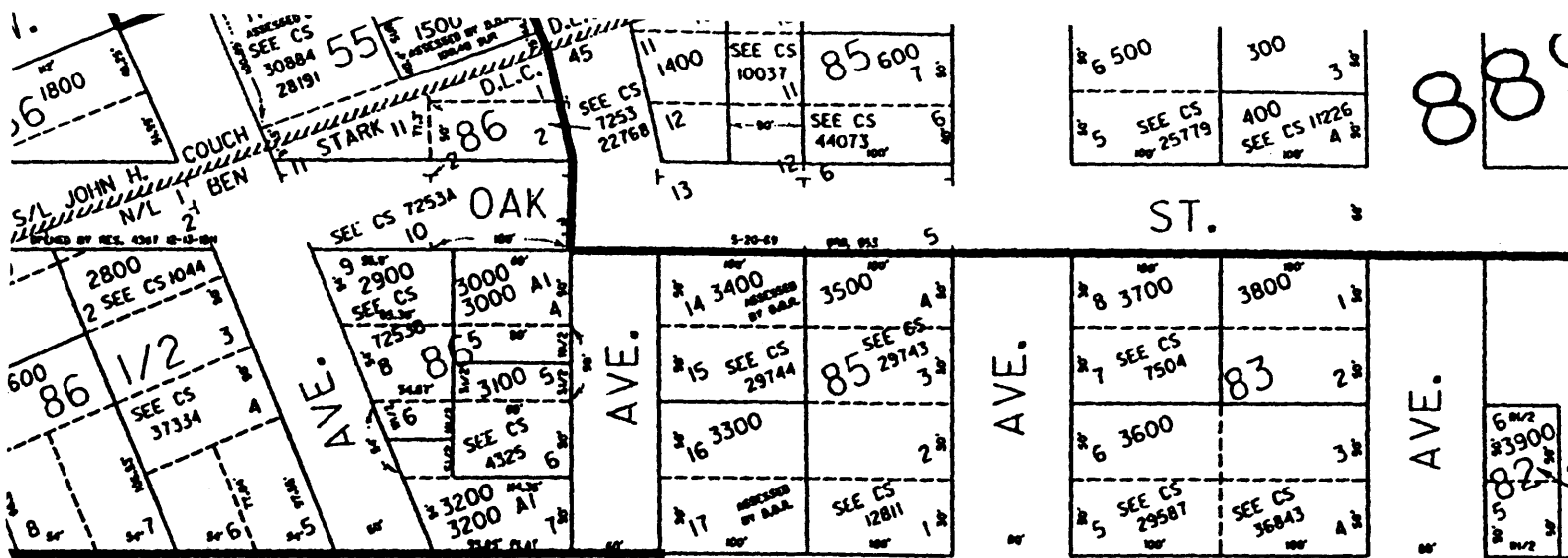
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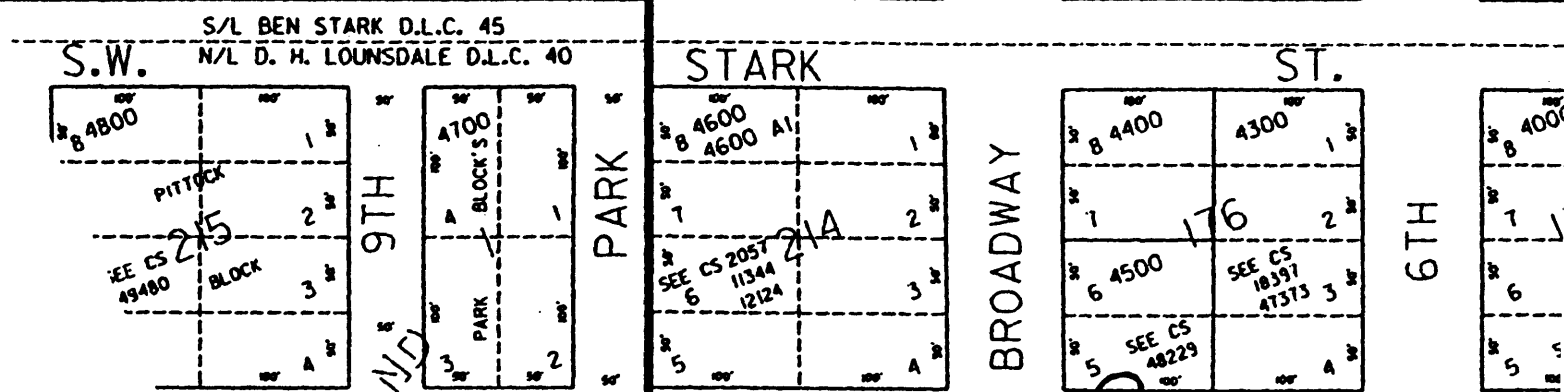
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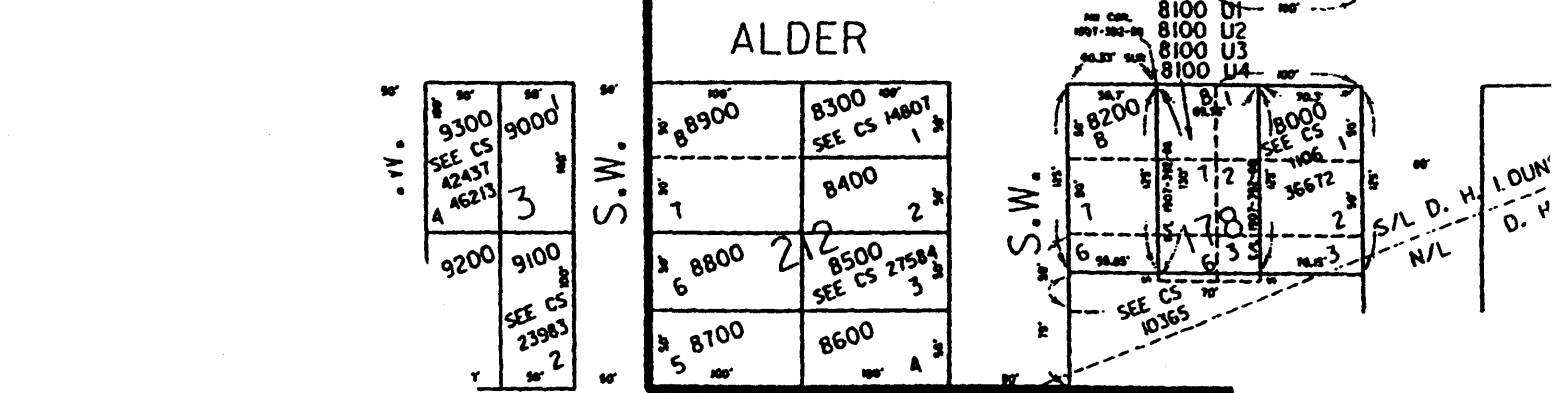
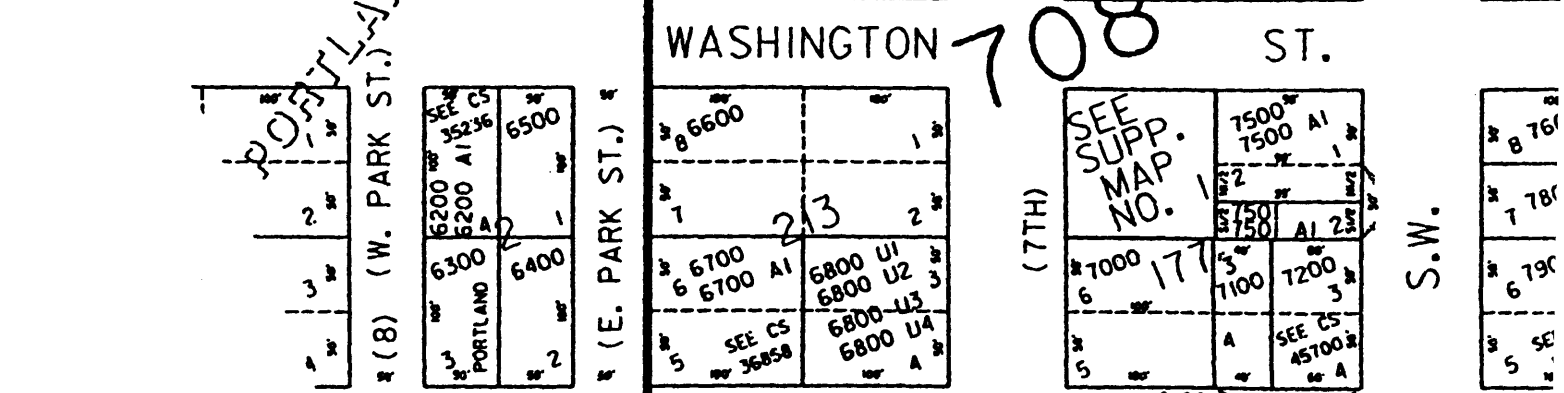


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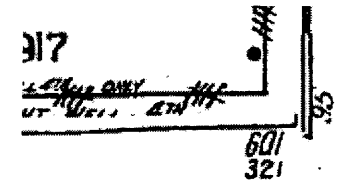
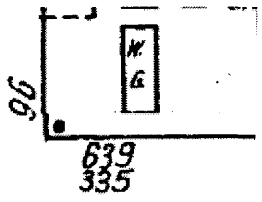


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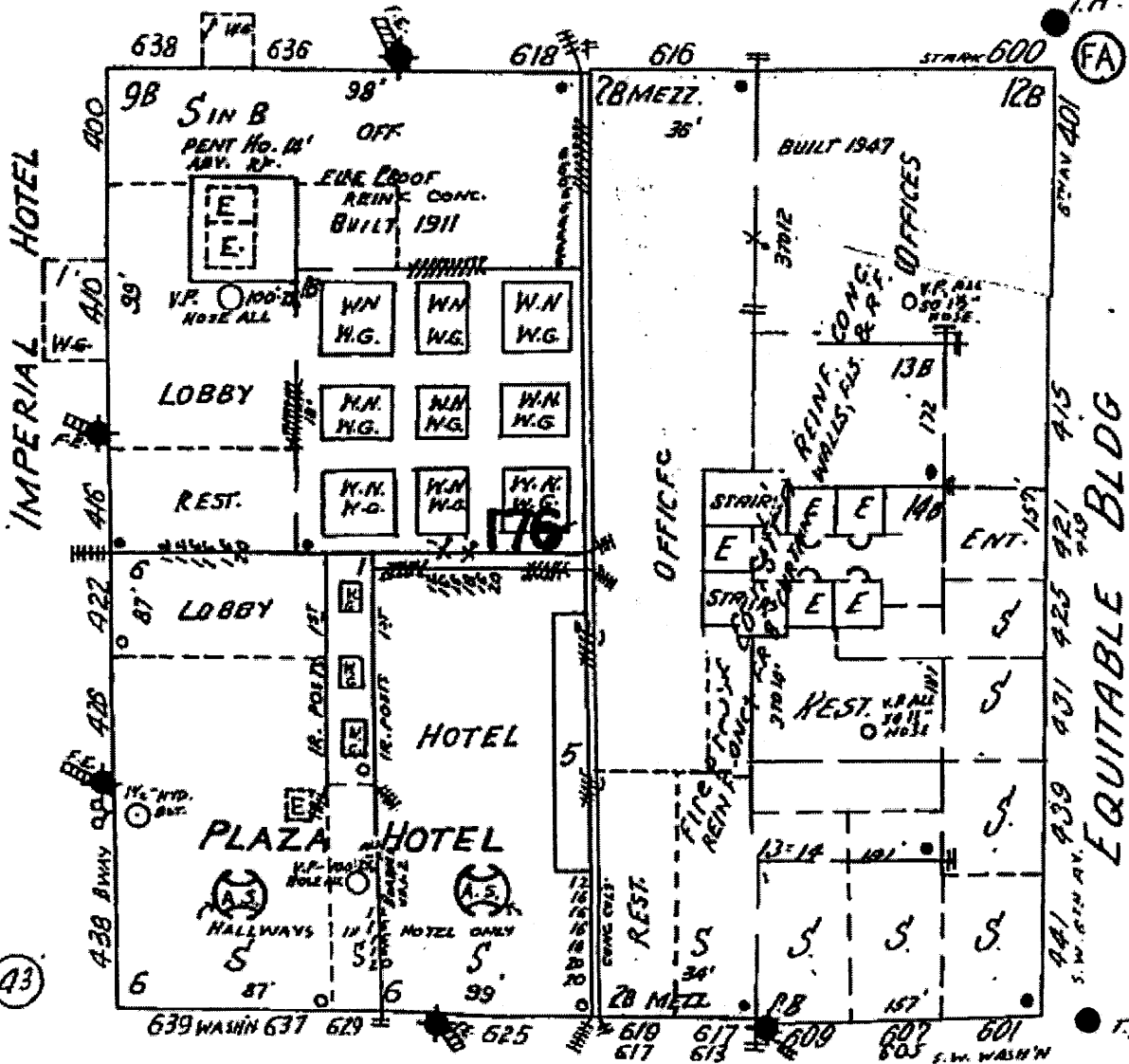
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S.W. STARK



S.W. WASHINGTON

SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAP  
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IMPERIAL HOTEL & ANNEX

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IMPERIAL HOTEL ANNEX

DINING RM, FIRE PROOF, REST, LOBBY, Rest, Drugs

IMPERIAL HOTEL

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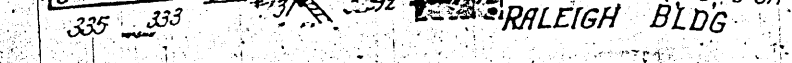
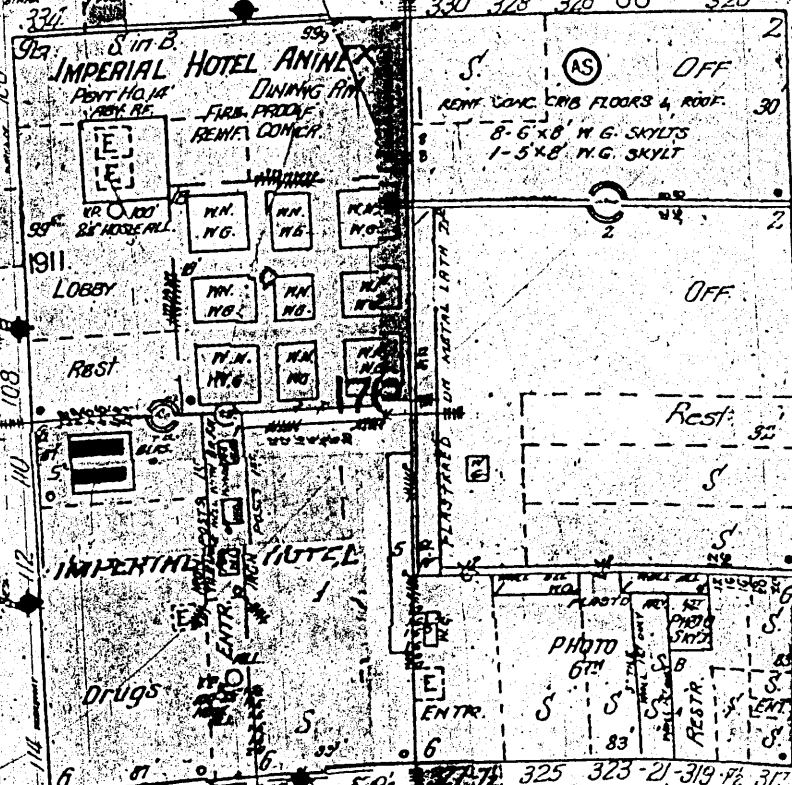
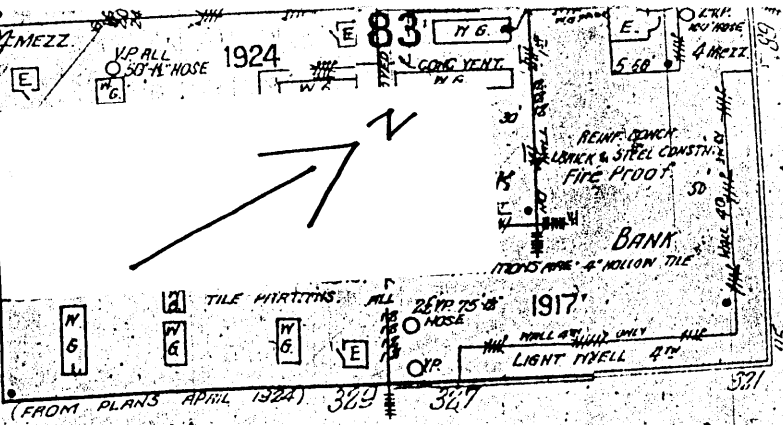
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SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAP 1932

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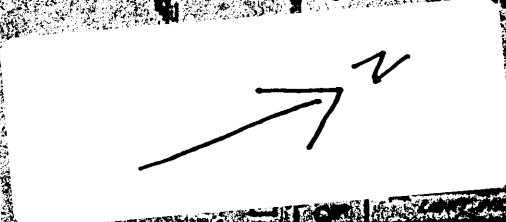
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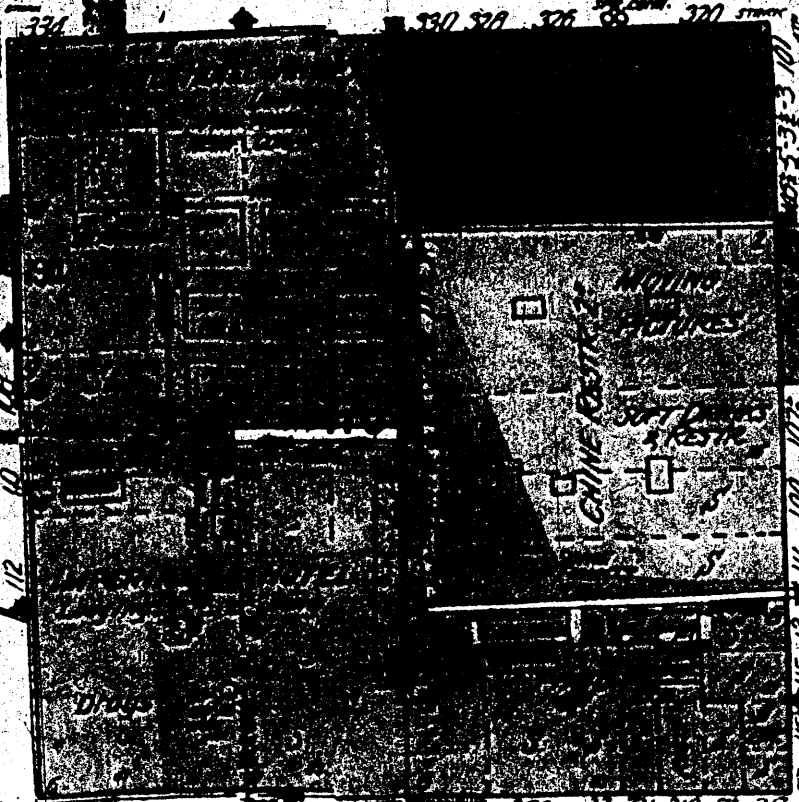
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IMPERIAL HOTEL & ANNEX

6TH STREET



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SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAP 1926

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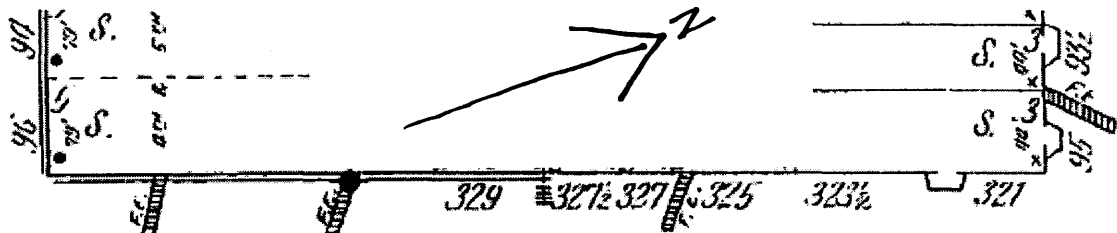
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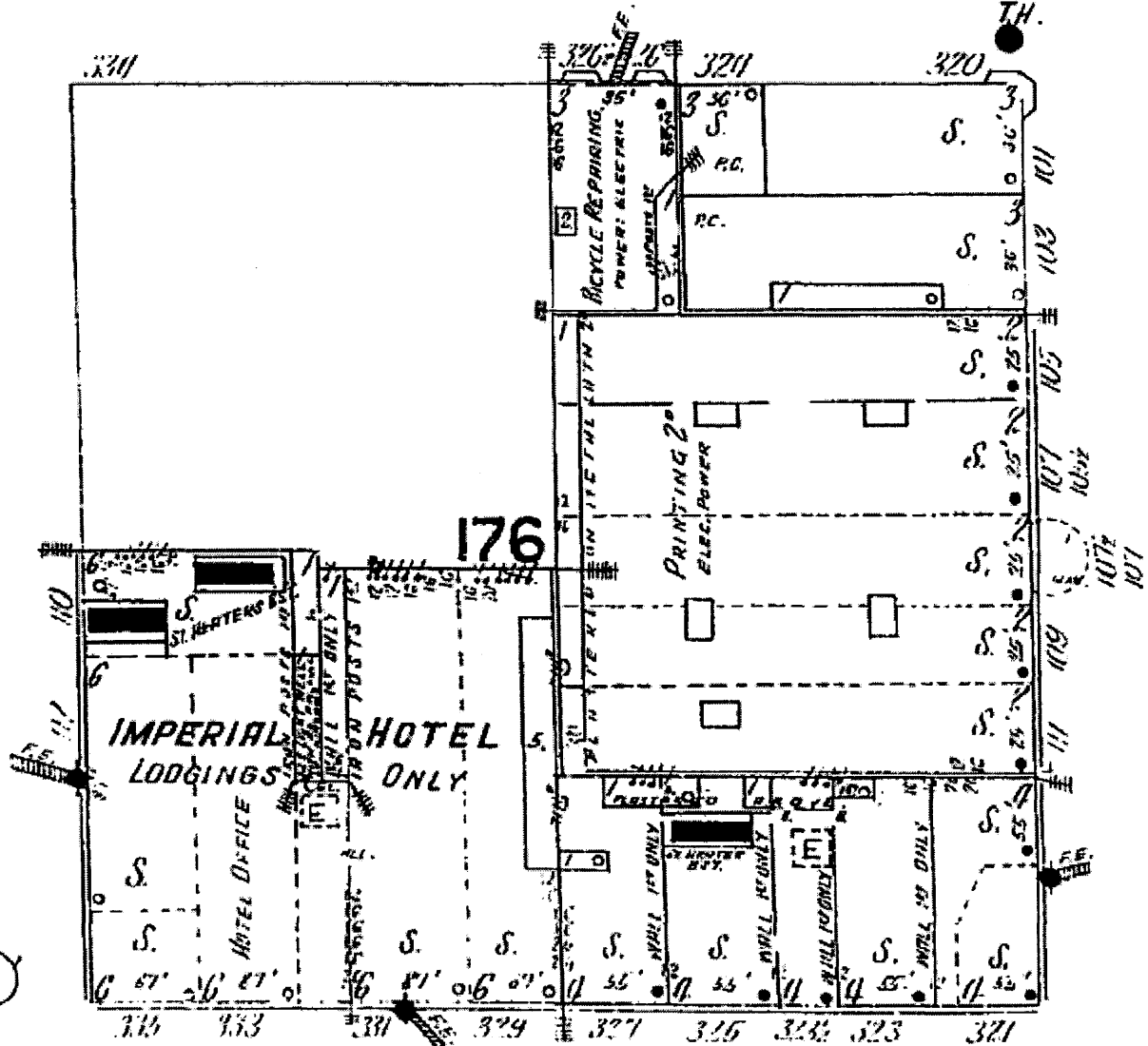
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SANBORN FIRE  
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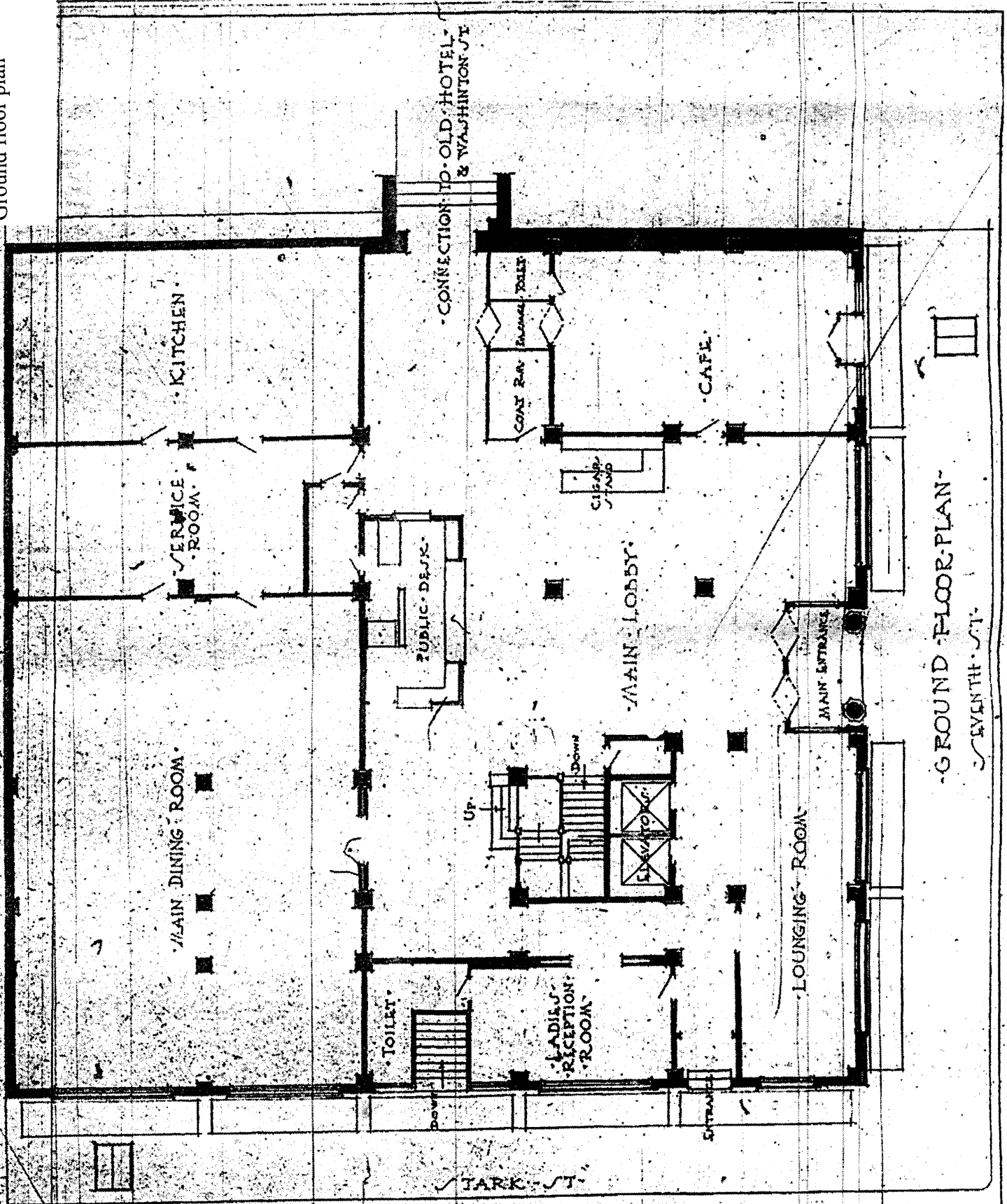




NEW IMPERIAL HOTEL

Imperial Hotel -- 1909  
Ground floor plan

WHIDDEN AND LEWIS ARCHITECTS

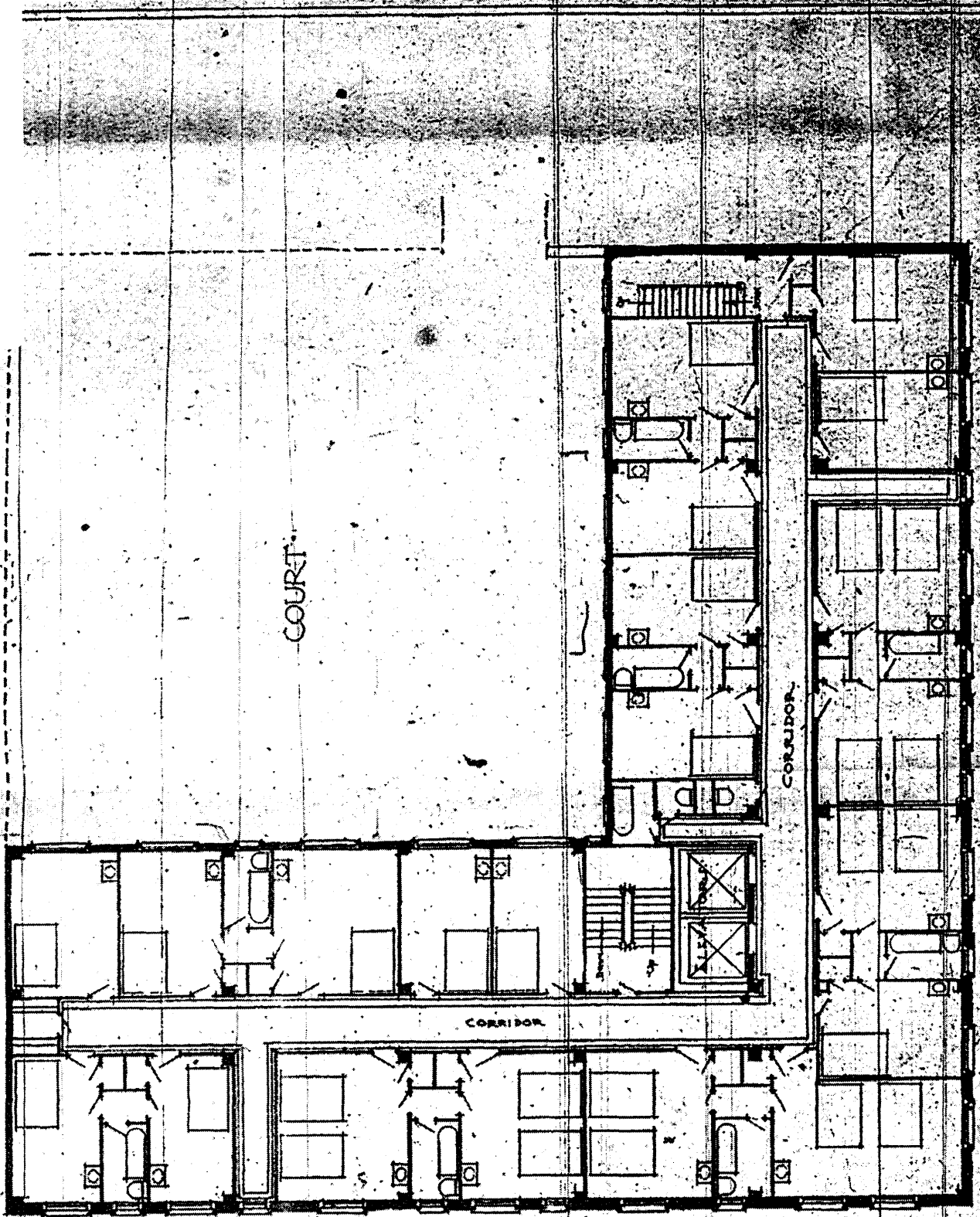


- GROUND FLOOR PLAN -

SEVENTH ST.

Imperial Hotel - 1909  
Typical floor plan

NEW - IMPERIAL HOTEL -  
WHIDDEN AND LEWIS ARCHITECTS.



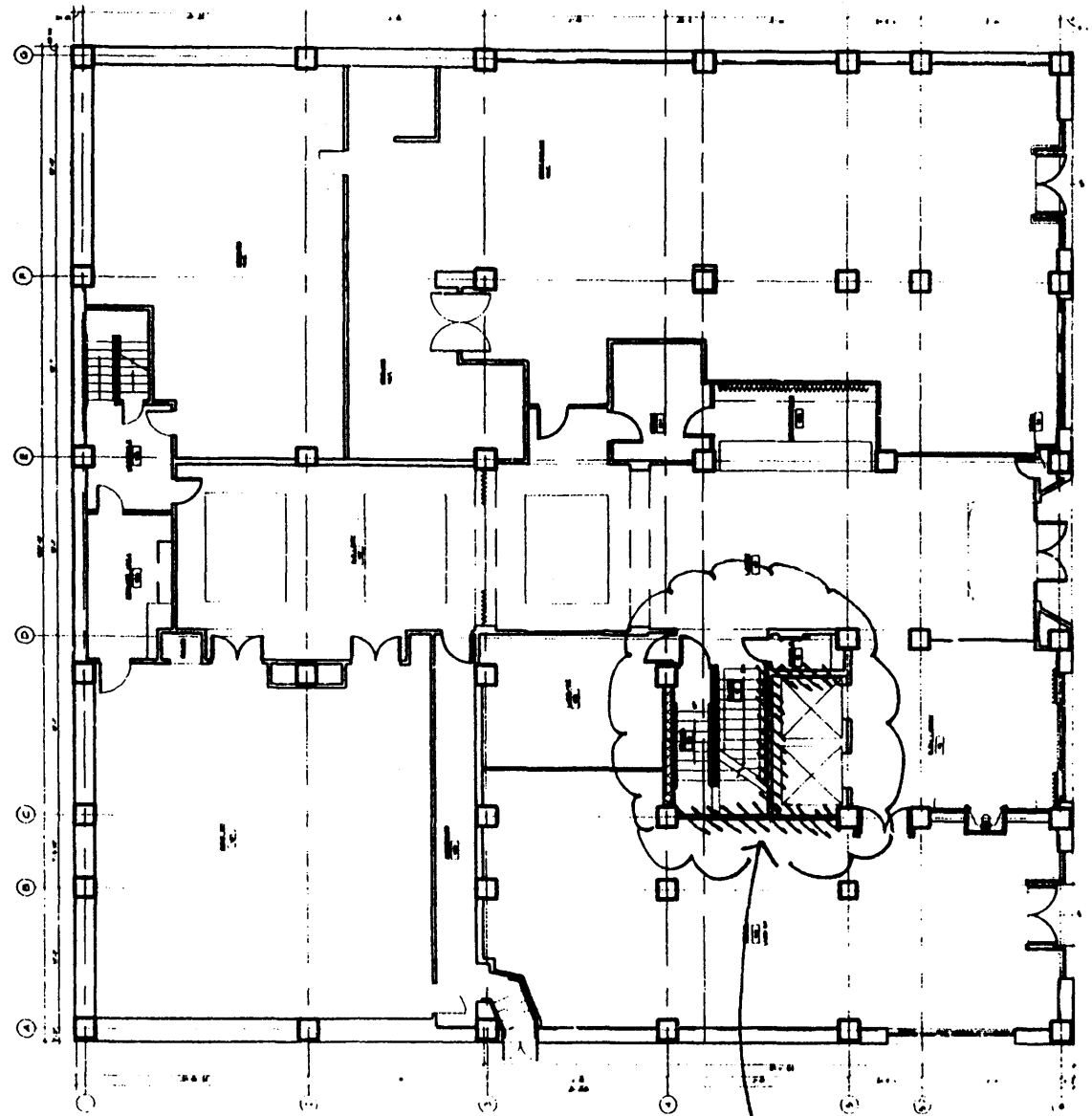
TYPICAL FLOOR PLAN  
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

Imperial Hotel - 2002  
Ground floor plans

ANKROM MOISAN  
ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS  
1720 SW MARION STREET - PORTLAND OREGON 97219

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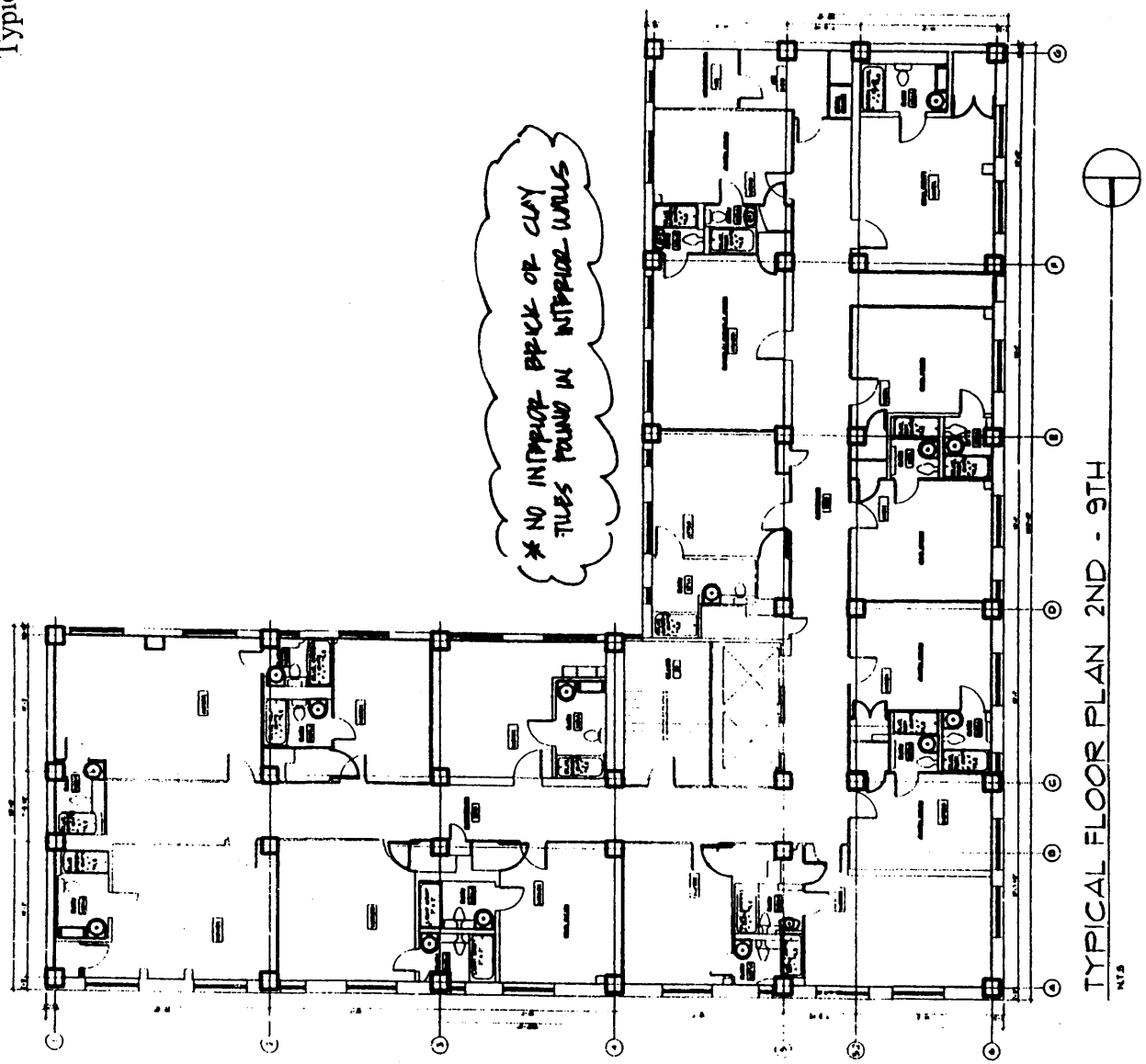
GROUND FLOOR PLAN  
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Imperial Hotel - 2002  
Typical Floor Plan

ANKROM MOISY  
ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS  
0720 S.W. Macadam, Suite 100, Portland, Oregon 97214

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OF SHEETS





NEW IMPERIAL HOTEL

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NEW IMPERIAL HOTEL  
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New IMPERIAL Hotel  
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NEW IMPERIAL HOTEL

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NEW IMPERIAL HOTEL  
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**NOW  
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NEW IMPERIAL HOTEL

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NEW IMPERIAL Hotel  
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NEW IMPERIAL HOTEL  
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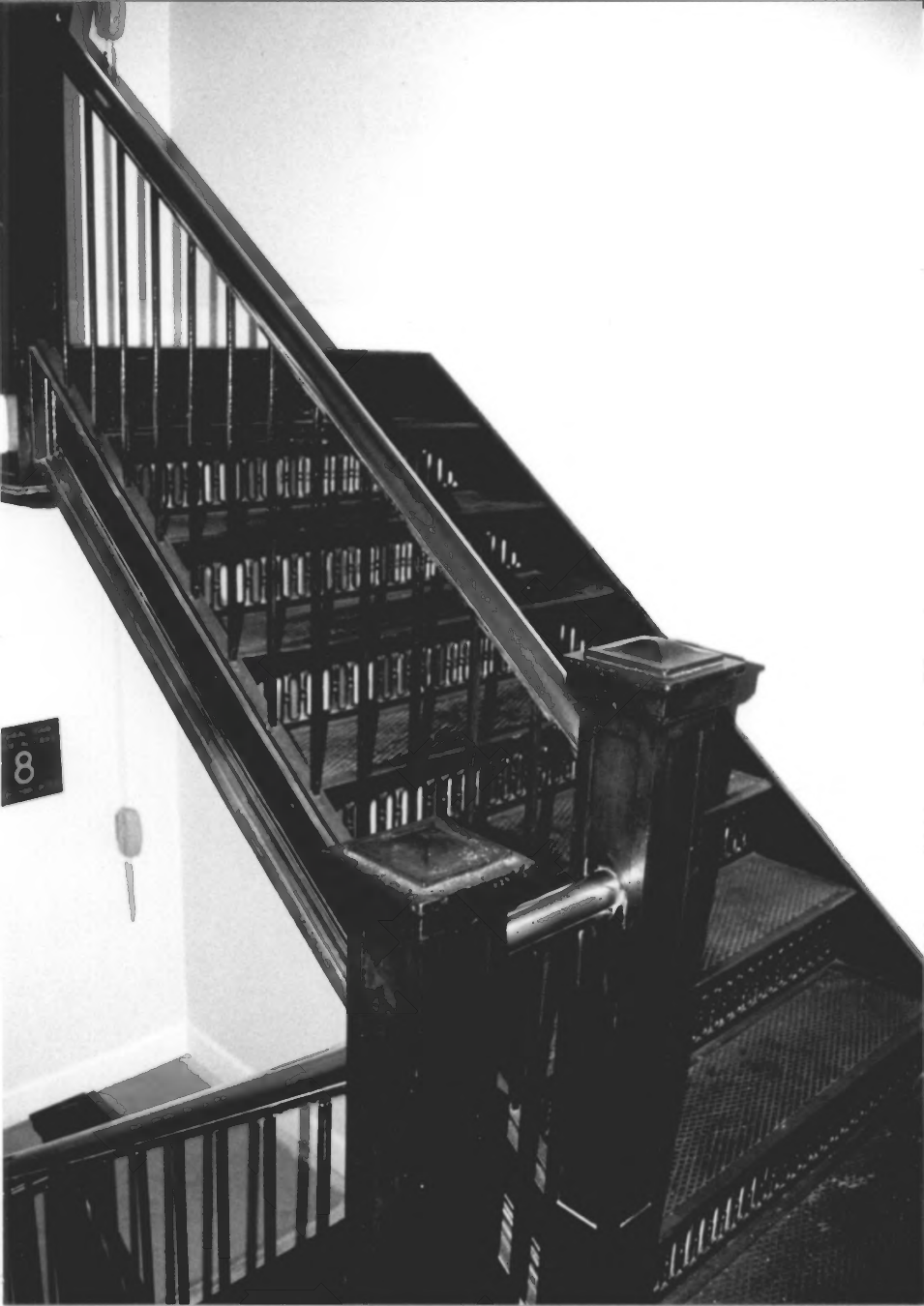




NEW IMPERIAL HOTEL

PORTLAND, OK

#19



NEW IMPERIAL HOTEL  
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