NPS Form 10-900
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received FEB 1 1985
date entered FEB 28 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Seward Hotel

and/or common Governor Hotel

2. Location

street & number 611 SW 10th Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Portland N/A vicinity of Third Congressional District

state Oregon code 41 county Multnomah code 051

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	_X_ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
_X_ building(s)	_X_ private	___ unoccupied	_X_ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	N/A in process	_X_ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	N/A being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
		___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Lee and Florence Ellmaker

street & number 5100 SW Laurelwood Drive

city, town Portland N/A vicinity of state Oregon 97225

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Multnomah County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Portland state Oregon 97204

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title City of Portland Historic Resource Inventory has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes _X_ no

date 1981-83 ___ federal ___ state ___ county _X_ local

depository for survey records Portland Bureau of Planning, Portland Building

city, town Portland state Oregon 97204

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	_X_ original site
_X_ good	___ ruins	_X_ altered	___ moved date N/A
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Seward (Governor) Hotel was designed by noted Oregon architect William C. Knighton. Constructed in 1909, the building's exterior ornamentation presents stylistically idiosyncratic elevations in architectural terra cotta and brick. Although altered on its storefront level, the building retains a remarkable amount of original fabric and is in good condition.

Located at the corner of 10th Avenue and Alder Street, the building occupies Lots 1 and 2 of Block 252 of the Portland Addition to Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, a space 100' x 100' square at the base of the building. To the west, the hotel's lower floors abut the landmark Elk's Temple (1920, Houghtaling and Dougan). To the east, it faces the block-long, terra cotta-encased Galleria (formerly Olds, Wortman & King, 1910, C. R. Aldrich), and to the south is Knighton's 1906 Tilford Building, which although altered, still indicates the architect's decorative inventiveness.

The east (front) and north elevations are identical above the first floor, presenting variegated, greyish brick walls which are ornamented with off-white glazed terra cotta. These primary facades are tightly organized into three symmetrical bays, each of which is further divided into three vertical bands of window groupings. Recessed stacks of tripartite Chicago-style windows mirror the interior room configuration and are composed of narrow one-over-one double-hung sash which flank a larger single fixed pane in the center. In turn, these sets of windows flank the smaller six-over-six, double-hung windows that service the bathroom facilities.

Slightly projecting, the end and corner bays suggest pavilions, an effect which is heightened by the pronounced, arched parapet which caps the corner and end bays. Four highly-stylized engaged columns on each elevation extend from the top of the projecting belt course or sub-cornice at the base to the sill level of the fifth floor. Chamfered corners provide texture and movement and help delineate the bays. Each capital at the fifth floor is composed of a series of layered, flat, geometric panels and suggests a pendant. In the original drawings, the hard-edged character of this feature was to have been alleviated by swags.

Above this level, the fifth floor window frames for the rooms are arched behind corbeled, arched lintels. At the parapet level, large cartouche-like projecting ornaments appear. While each has stylistic elements in common, the center feature in each bay is larger and, with one exception, features large blue mosaic panels. The other projections are smaller, almost anthropomorphic in character. All of these elements are connected by a simple terra cotta coping that is ornamented with large beads and an occasional small square panel incised with Knighton's signature logo. Partially hidden by the parapet, and by its black-painted exterior is a penthouse, or sixth floor (so designated in the original plans). This feature cannot be seen from the street.

As noted in the City of Portland Historic Resources Inventory sheet for the property, the bell-shaped shield or inverted key motif is peculiar to Knighton's work, appearing in both commercial and domestic architecture. This decidely unconventional decorative treatment was applied in a minor fashion as early as 1892 to a residence at 1827 NW 37th Avenue. It is also evident on the Trinity Place Apartments (1910), Whitney-Gray Building (1911), and much later in the Washington Park Automobile Company Building (1920). His use of this motif is most consistent in the Seward Hotel, appearing on practically each decorative and functional element, whether on the exterior or interior. Remarkably,

painted stencils of the logo are extant on the unaltered main entrance on 10th Avenue, on the panels encasing the stairway to the upper levels, and in the former window seat areas of the original northeast corner lobby.

At the street level there have been alterations, although the original entrance on the east elevation is intact. This includes the recessed wood-framed entry which leads to the marble wainscotted vestibule. Multi-colored mosaics representative of the parapet level cartouche designs are set into the brick piers flanking the entrance. The original copper and glass marquee, whose panels display the Knighton logo, still shelters the entrance, whose floor is tiled in white with multi-colored borders, a motif repeated in other areas of the stair/elevator lobby.

To the south of the centered entrance bay are two storefront bays, both altered from the original. The southernmost is the most intact, having retained the original door/display window configuration. Its windows and doors have been replaced, and wrought iron grills cover the sill-level panels. To the north, the entire original storefront is missing, having been replaced c. 1930 when the building owenrship changed. It was at this time that the storefront's interior business function was taken over by the hotel, and became the new lobby which previously had occupied the northeastern-most corner of the building. The storefront is now composed of large sheets of glass in aluminum frames above a multi-colored square tile base.

To the north of the entrance, the storefront was altered c. 1930. A new storefront was installed within the existing structural framework, composed of large sheets of glass, fluted edges around window and door openings all covered in stucco. Knighton's decorative motifs are still visible above the transom level and behind the sill plate grates. Similar alterations extend around the corner to the north elevation, again being composed within the existing structural bays. The historically-located north entrance to the original lobby has been replaced by aluminum-framed full-height windows and an unused door. One of the other two original storefront entrances has been replaced. The western-most is still in the original position but has also been modernized. Finally, the double-door entrance at the western edge of the building, which once serviced the business located on the southwestern corner of the first floor, is still intact and is used as a fire exit.

The south, west and light court elevations are much simpler, and are generally composed of red brick walls and two-over-two, double-hung sash windows set into arched brick frames.

On the interior, much of the original spatial arrangement is extant. The previously mentioned interior business space has been joined to the gallery operating out of the southernmost storefront. With the exception of some partitions and a door cut into it to join the other space, it is intact, although all of its detailing is missing. The current lobby space, once a storefront facing 10th Avenue, is also intact. It currently serves the hotel clientele and is distinctive for its original coffered ceiling detail and pilaster detailing on the walls. The original hotel desk, so noted because it is embellished with a Knighton-designed cashier's grill, still serves this function. It, unlike most of the other detailing in this room, has not been painted.

The lower walls are currently paneled with 4 x 8 sections of commercially-available siding and the floors are covered in wall-to-wall carpeting. The entrance lobby, sheathed in mahogany and Circassian walnut like the rest of the building, maintains almost all of its original fabric. A coved, coffered ceiling replete with a Knighton logo design shelters the paneled, unpainted staircase leading to the upper levels. Two arched doorways with logo-embossed keystones once led from the original lobby space. These have been plastered but the frames are still extant. The original elevator is still functioning. The tripartite sliding wrought-iron gate presents another skillful design by Knighton. The main stair leading to the upper levels is characteristically embellished with the signature logo, specifically on the balusters, unique newel posts, and recessed into panels.

Due to code considerations, a metal and glass panel partition leads from each stair landing to the corridors, which are wide. Painted wainscotting appears on every level but the sixth floor, and all original doors and other wooden detailing is extant. Original light fixtures can also be seen. Above the wainscot, all wall surfaces are papered and wall-to-wall carpeting covers all corridor floors.

The northeast corner, which once housed the sumptuous lobby space, retains its coffered ceilings and square columns embellished with Knighton's idiosyncratic designs. Arched doorways with his keystone are found throughout this room. Remarkably, the original wood framed curtain enclosures around the deep window seats are extant and unpainted, as is some of the other woodwork. Particularly unusual are the Moorish-style cutouts that appear at the transom level on the perimeter of the room. This feature also appears in the storefronts to the west. The original fireplace has been removed, and partitions block the entrance to the hotel lobby to the south. Major remodeling of this space occurred in 1975 to accommodate the current business operation, but obviously did not seriously damage the original detailing.

Above the first floor, the circulatory system is identical on each floor. The structural system, a combination of cast-iron columns, massive joists, steel plates, and some steel girders, supports the U-shaped plan of the upper levels. Rooms are dispersed around a central light-court, thus allowing the management to boast that each room faced "outside." The stair and elevator are located east of and abutting the light court. Outside rooms have connecting baths, while interior rooms share common baths. This arrangement is the same on each floor with the exception of the sixth, which has a smaller square footage.

Major changes other than those already mentioned are comprised of fire and exiting code alterations, including the installation of fire doors in the stairways, the blocking of transoms, and the sprinklering of the entire building. The glass block sidewalk was removed at an unknown date and the lightwell was re-roofed with fiberglass in 1970. Some of the interior wood detailing has been painted and one of the mosaic panels at the parapet level is missing. In addition, awnings have been added to the northeast corner storefront elevations.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600–1699	_X_ architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater
___ 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation
_X_ 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)
		___ invention		

Specific dates 1909 **Builder/Architect** William C. Knighton

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Seward (Governor) Hotel, located at 611 SW 10th Avenue in Portland, Oregon was erected for Mr. G. Rosenblatt in 1909. The building, five stories in height with a recessed penthouse was erected in bearing wall brick over a wood and cast iron frame. The hotel is locally significant under Criterion "c" as an outstanding example of William C. Knighton' architectural production. It is additionally eligible under Criterion "c" for its unconventional decorative program in architectural terra cotta which possesses high artistic values and is unique when compared to buildings of similar function, scale and period. The building could be categorized as being Prairie School in style based upon its decorative program, although comparisons to European precedents (Vienna Secession and the architecture of Charles Rennie MacIntosh) are also appropriate.

According to Mr. C. M. Dickenson in a 1910 Oregonian article, before the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition of 1905 there were only four hotels in the city of Portland that could be rated "first or second class." Because of the exposition, and the resultant surge in growth of the community, a great demand for temporary and permanent housing arose. This was alleviated in large measure by the erection of at least ten new hotel buildings before 1910 which fell into the "first class" category and which represented a total investment of approximately $15,000,000. The completion of these buildings resulted in the hotel industry's ability to house 2,000 to 3,000 guests per day.

The Seward Hotel, constructed at a cost of $100,000, was one of the finer of the new establishments. Boasting interiors lavishly detailed with mahogany and Circassian walnut, the hotel became an immediate success and was frequented by such notables as Governor Oswald West, who would eventually name the architect, William C. Knighton, as State Architect.

With Walter M. Seward as proprietor, the "Hotel of Quiet Elegance" offered rooms at $1.50 to $2.00 and employed only the European Plan, which limited guests to a morning meal only. It was variously advertised as the "most elegant and modern hotel in Portland," and as the only hotel building in the city "equipped with the famous Sealy mattresses," which were like "sleeping on down."

The building's early success lead Mr. Seward to spend an additional $20,000 to fashion the Seward Grill in the basement, a 75 x 100 foot space which was decorated by the Gevurtz Brothers. The business remained in the hands of Mr. Seward until 1921. Afterward, W. C. Culbertson operated the hotel until 1930, when it changed hands, perhaps due to the Great Depression. The new owners, who included Mr. Harold Heathman, altered the building, changed the first floor circulation, and reopened in 1932 using the name "Governor Hotel," under which it is currently known.

The architect, William C. Knighton, was born on December 25, 1867, in Indianapolis, Indiana, and was the son of Charles J. and Mary (Hill) Knighton. His father was a native of Great Britain, who later emigrated to New York. The younger Knighton came to Oregon in 1893 and moved to Salem, where he apprenticed with C. S. McNally and assisted in the drafting for the design of the Frank Furness-inspired Capitol National Bank Building.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Portland, Oregon **Quadrangle scale** 1:24000

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	10	524920	5040640
B			
C			
D			
E			
F			
G			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification The Seward Hotel, located at the corner of 10th Avenue and Alder Street, occupies Lots 1 and 2 of Block 252 of the Portland Addition to Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, a parcel 100' x 100'.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	None	code	county		code
state	None	code	county		code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title

organization Heritage Investment Corporation **date** July, 1984

street & number 123 SW Second Ave., Suite 200 **telephone** (503) 228-0272

city or town Portland **state** Oregon 97209

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state _X_ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer **date** January 8, 1985

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the National Register

for Keeper of the National Register **date** 2/28/85

Attest: **date**

Chief of Registration

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1983 O - 419-311

His practice was based in Salem until 1895, when he departed for Alabama. Returning to Oregon in 1902, he and his wife made their home in Portland, where Knighton engaged in an active private practice. In 1912, Governor Oswald West appointed him as State Architect, a position he held until 1917. During that time, he was responsible for the plans of the Eastern Oregon State Hospital in Pendleton, the State Boys Training School in Woodburn, and the Supreme Court Building in Salem (1913).

Other notable works by Knighton are: the Dr. L. A. Port House (1894) in Salem, known as "Deepwood," Grant High School in Portland, the Knights of Pythias building in Vancouver, Washington, and the Masonic Home near Forest Grove. Many of his later works were designed in conjunction with Leslie D. Howell, who became his partner in 1922. Knighton was also interested in civic, social, and fraternal affairs. He was a 33rd Degree Mason and belonged to the Knights of Pythias chapter in Portland. He served as the first chairman of the Oregon State Architectural Board and was also president of the Oregon Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. He died in Portland on March 14, 1938.

Stylistically speaking, Knighton ably displayed a thorough knowledge of accepted Classically-inspired design inspiration, particularly in his later works for the State of Oregon, and in those executed in conjuction with Leslie Howell. His early domestic architecture, often designed in collaboration with Edward T. Root, are vigorous interpretations in the Arts and Crafts style without being unconventional. In his earliest known commercial works, particularly the 1906 Tilford Building which is practically adjacent to the Seward Hotel, he remains committed to a commonly-accepted design formula of base, shaft and capital while beginning to experiment with the decorative elements. The remaining classicized ornament on this unfortunately altered building demonstrates a penchant for stylistic exploration. Some of the flat-arch lintels with keystone, a common feature of the period, are attenuated in a decidely unhistorical manner. In addition, the belt cornice below the capital level presents, atypically, a large-scaled bead molding accented by drop, urn-like moldings.

The creation of the decorative program for the Seward several years later had no precedent in the city. As mentioned in the Historic Resource Inventory form, Fred Baker, noted lighting designer, stated that the design was considered "far out" at the time and that he thought that Knighton had gone "a little overboard on the outside." Surely, no other similar building in the city, other than Knighton's later efforts, displays this type of decorative program. A visual survey of approximately 50 hotel buildings from 1900 to 1915, located within the downtown core area extending to the Union Pacific Depot, indicate a typical, Classically-oriented decorative pattern of exterior embellishment. In many instances, these buildings have received a stylistic categorization by the city - Streetcar Era Commercial - to indicate that they have minimal decorative motifs. However, for the most part these buildings also exhibit Classically-derived ornamental motifs.

It cannot be said, however, that Knighton initiated new interior spatial configurations, or exterior programmatic expression in the Seward design. Rather, Knighton applied his uniquely modeled ornament in a traditional manner. The base, shaft, capital arrangement

of parts, and their juxtaposition, were within accepted practice for the period. The fact that he chose to create a completely new ornamental expression, and to apply it liberally in differing materials, underscores the building's artistic significance.

Finally, it should be noted that the use of architectural terra cotta allowed Knighton to create this unique decorative expression with little difficulty. Heavily employed in the United States and in Portland during this period, the material's inherent plasticity encouraged singularity in decorative programs, even though pattern books of popular Classically-inspired motifs did little to encourage the type of textural exploration that is expressed on the Seward Hotel exterior.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

Historic Resource Inventory, City of Portland. #1-010-00611

National Register Nomination, Whitney and Gray Building, Portland, Oregon.

City of Portland Buildings Bureau microform and card files.

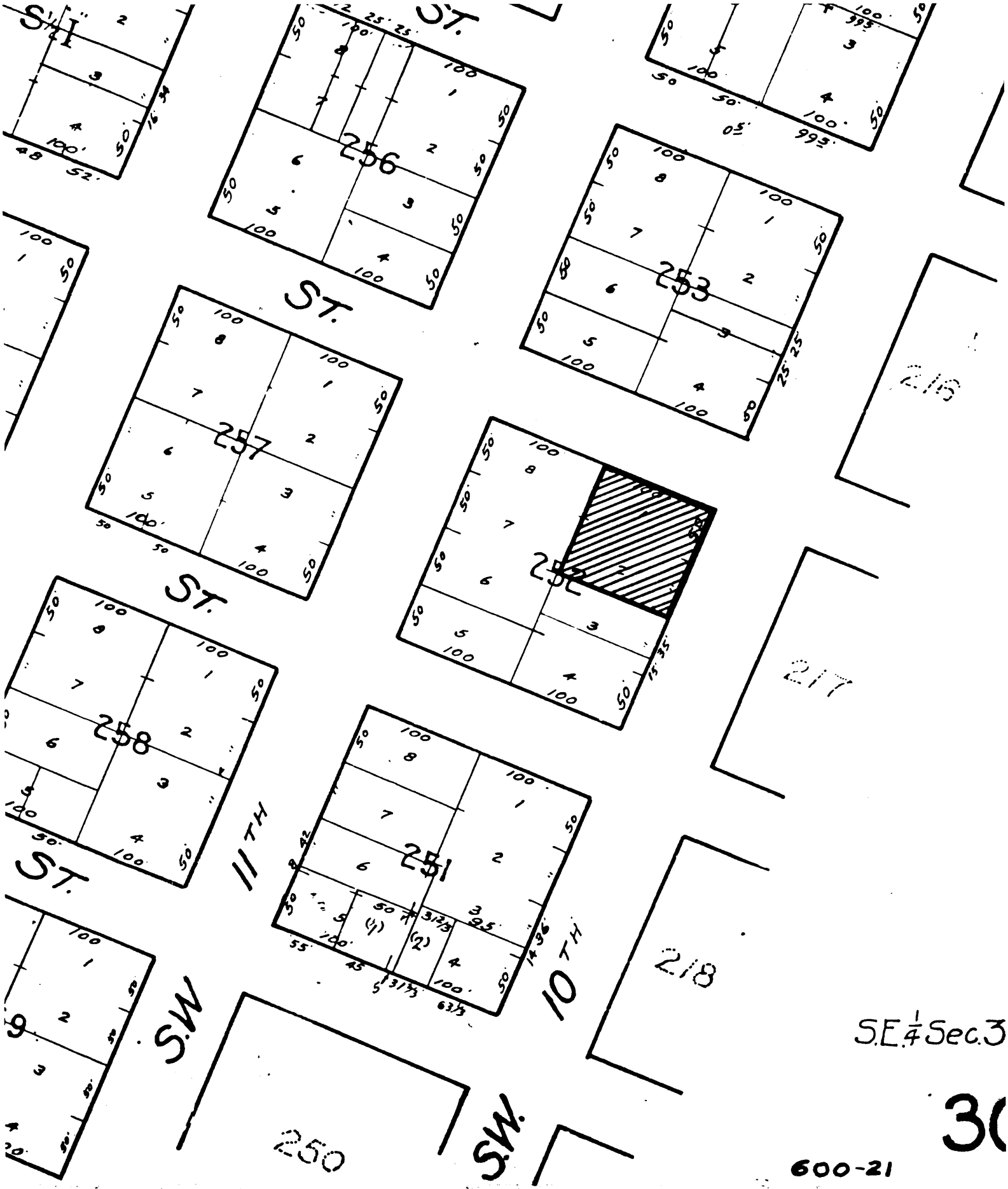
Portland City Directories.

Oregon Historical Society, Vertical File - "Architects".

Oregonian
January 1, 1910, p.3; sec.4, p. 14.
March 26, 1927, p.9.
March 16, 1983, p.6.

Oregon Journal
March 15, 1938, p.6.

Hotel News
June 8, 1909.
July 20, 1909.
October 18, 1909.
November 20, 1909.
February 12, 1910.
January 6, 1911.
December 5, 1911.
January 24, 1912.

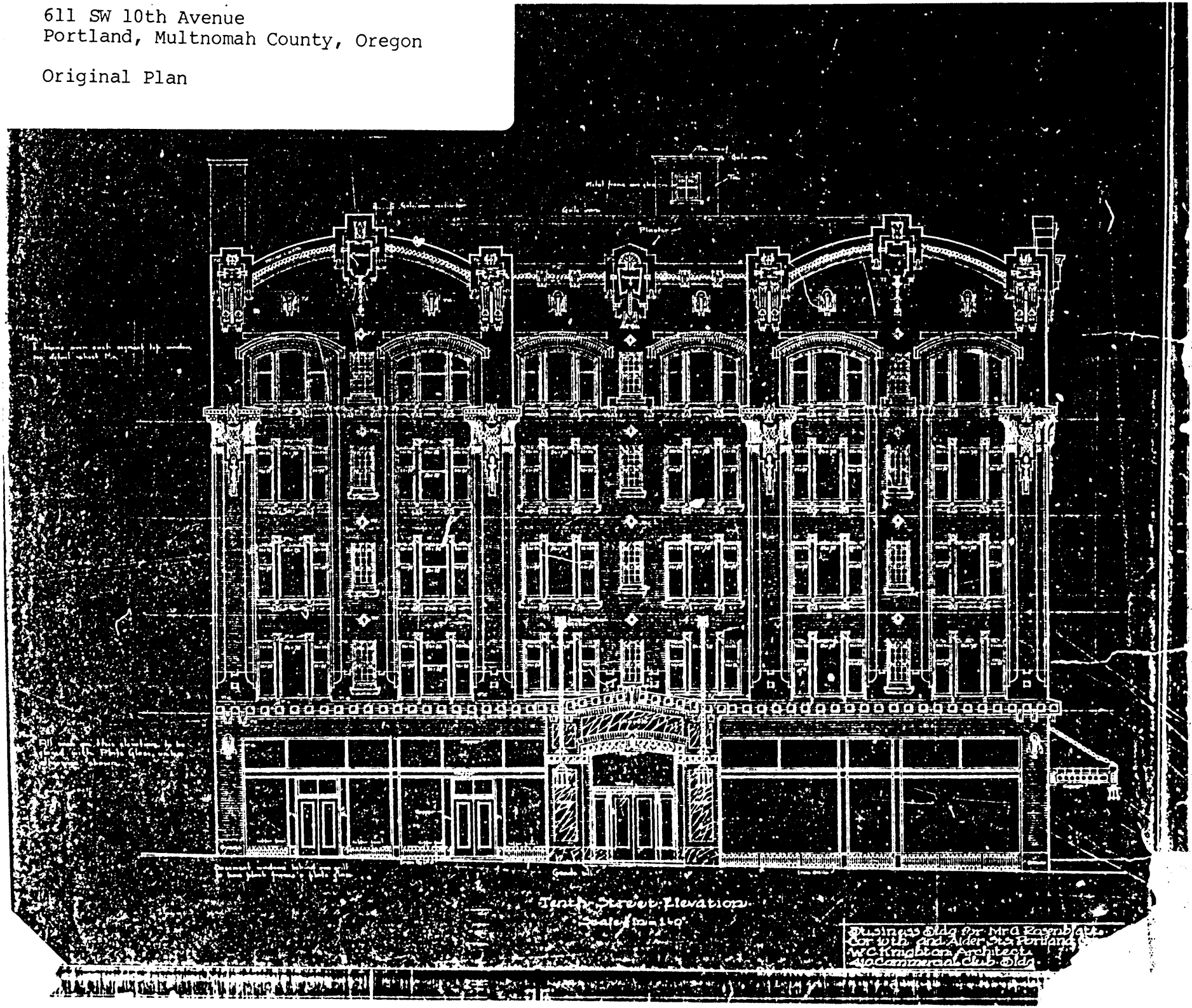


Seward Hotel 611 SW 10th Avenue

Portland, Multnomah Co., Oregon

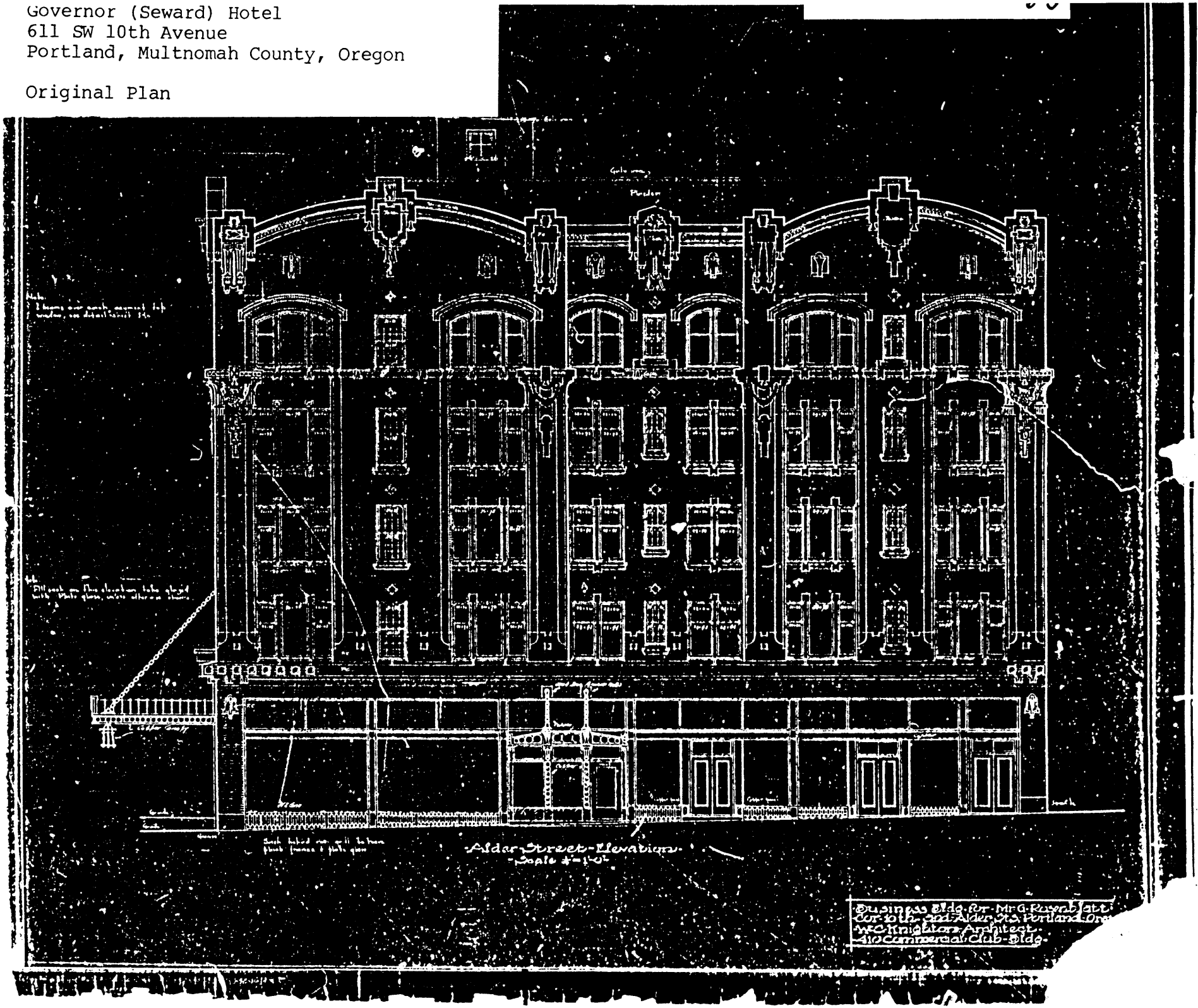
611 SW 10th Avenue
Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon

Original Plan



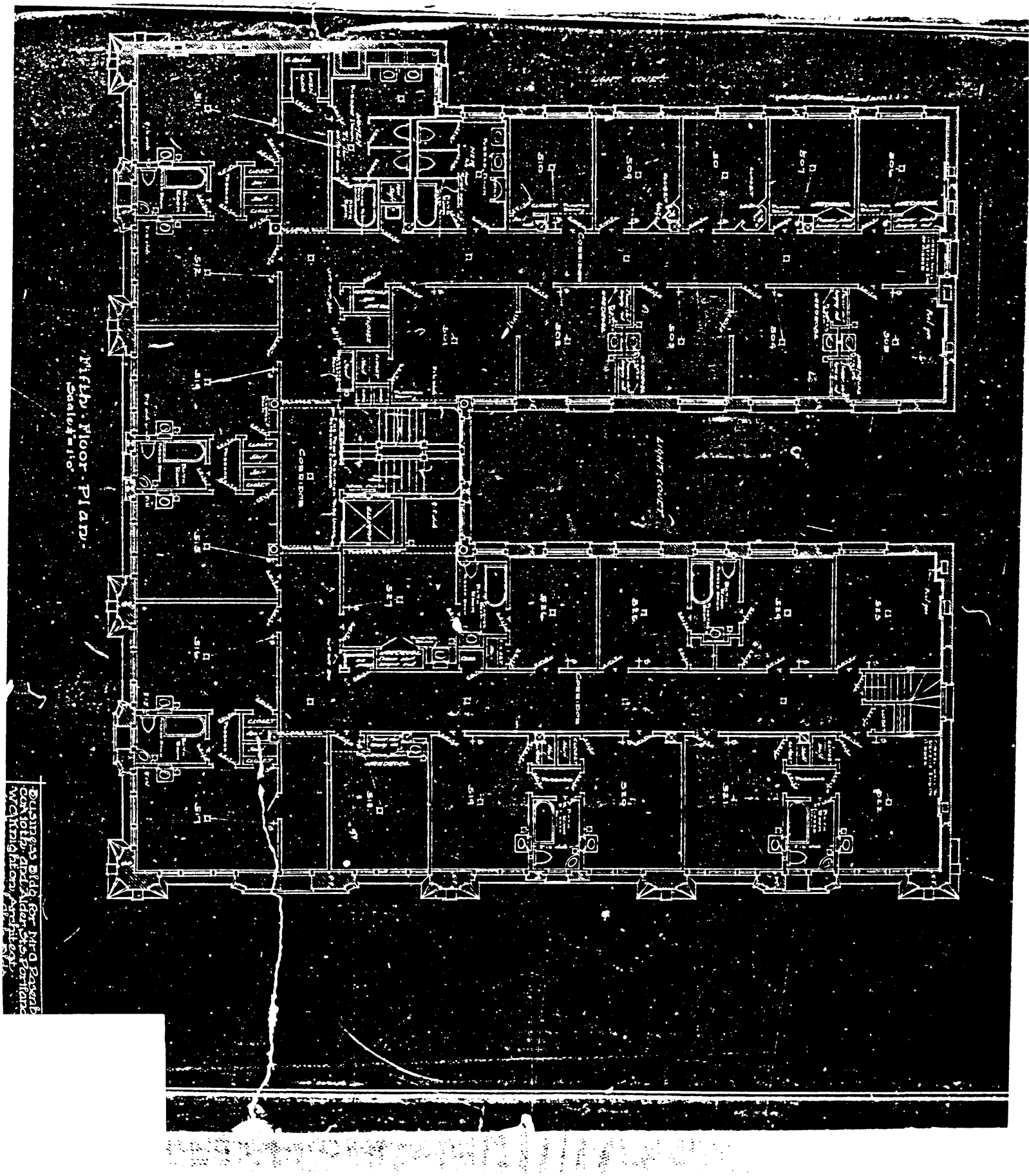
Governor (Seward) Hotel
611 SW 10th Avenue
Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon

Original Plan



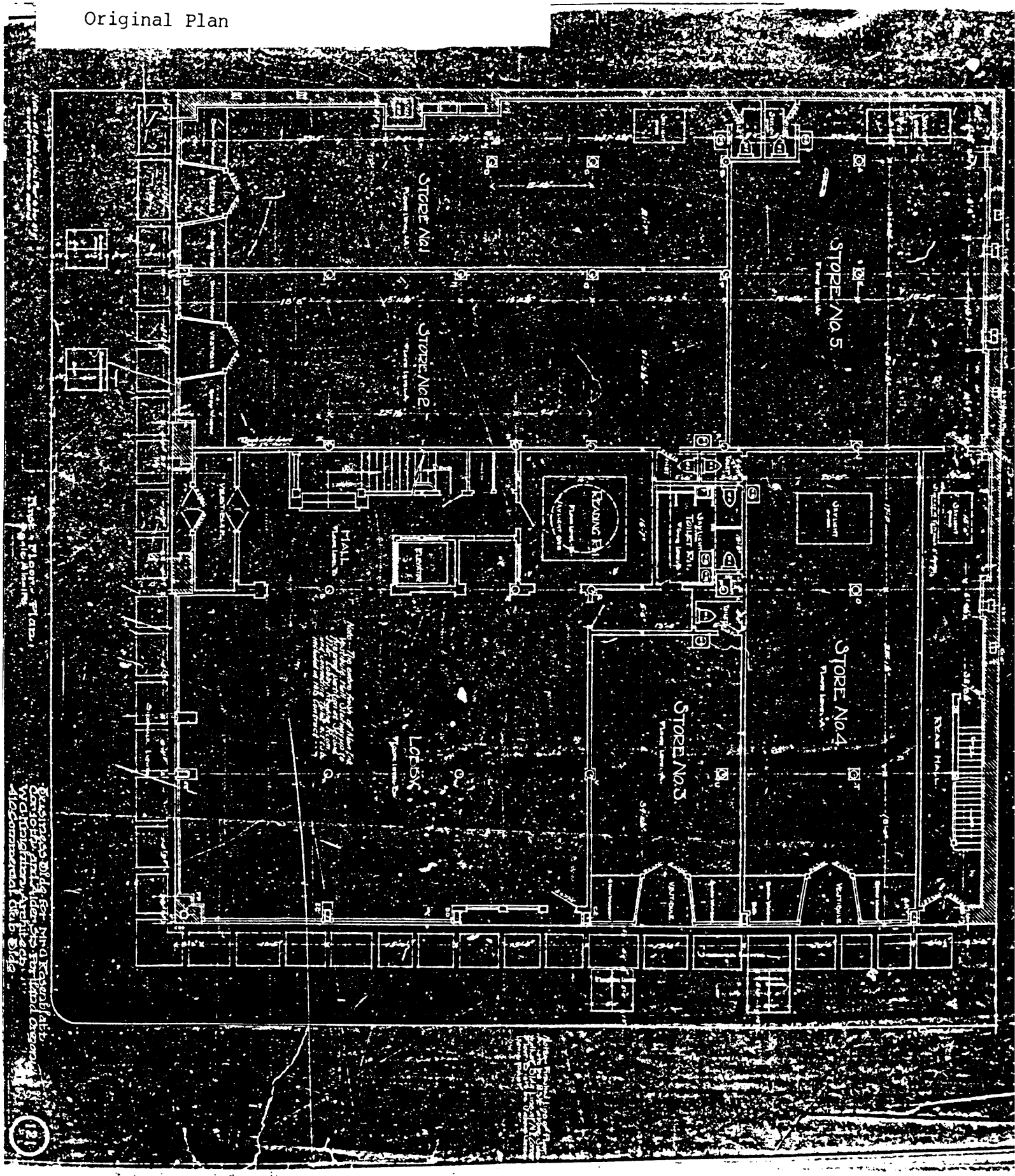
Governor (Seward) Hotel
611 SW 10th Avenue
Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon

Original Plan



Governor (Seward) Hotel
611 SW 10th Avenue
Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon

Original Plan




AUGEN GALLERY
HOTEL
SALE
COME
SEE

Heritage Investment Corporation 1 of 123
Dale Archer Photograph
123 NW Second Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97209

Property: The Governor Hotel (Seward Hotel)
611 SW Tenth Avenue
Portland, Multonomah County, Oregon

Description: East Elevation.


HOTEL
GOVERNOR HOTEL
CITY CENTER PARKING
100 1ST ½ HR
125 2ND ½ HR
200 EA ADD HR
395 EARLY BIRD
500 MAX

Heritage Investment Corporation 2 of 123
Dale Archer Photograph
123 NW Second Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97209

Property: The Governor Hotel (Seward Hotel)
611 SW Tenth Avenue
Portland, Multonomah County, Oregon

Description: North Elevation.