

The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649 Seattle WA 98124-4649
Street Address: 700 5th Ave Suite 1700

Landmark NOMINATION Application

Historic / Current Name	Continental Hotel, Earl Hotel / Hotel Seattle
Historic / Current Use	Hotel
Year Built	1926
Address	315 Seneca Street, Seattle WA 98104
Assessor's File No.	0942000120
Legal Description	The westerly 60 feet of lot 2, Block 15, Addition to the Town of Seattle, as laid out on the claims of C.D. Boren and A.A. Denny and H.L. Yesler (commonly known as C.D. Boren's Addition to the City of Seattle), According to the plat thereof recorded in volume 1 of plats, page 25, in King County, Washington.
Original Designers	Stuart and Wheatley Architects
Original Builder	Stephen A. Berg
Original Owner	Stephen A. Berg
Present Owner	Win Forever LLC, Butch T Cougar LLC, and Spirit of Troy LLC
Owner's Representative:	Collin Hagstrom, Principal and Broker Westlake Associates 1200 Westlake Ave N, Suite 310 Seattle, WA 98109
Submitted by	Susan Boyle, Principal BOLA Architecture + Planning
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Date	November 26, 2022

Reviewed (historic preservation officer): _____

Date: _____

The Continental Hotel / Hotel Seattle
315 Seneca Street, Seattle
Seattle Landmark Nomination

November 26, 2022



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City of Seattle Nomination Application (1-page)

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Cover: The building in views looking south on Seneca Street in 2021 (Kidder Matthews), and in a ca 1926 photo (University of Washington Libraries Special Collections, Item 2558)

BOLA Architecture + Planning, Seattle

1. Introduction

This landmark nomination was prepared for the new owner of the Continental Hotel / Hotel Seattle, a local developer undertaking a renovation of the 96-year-old building. The eleven story hotel, at 315 Seneca Street, operated continuously until it was closed temporarily in 2020 with advent of the Covid 19 pandemic. It is one of only eight hotels dating from the early 20th century that remain in operation in downtown Seattle and Pioneer Square.¹ The building was constructed by a local developer and builder of hotels and apartments, Stephen Berg, and designed by Seattle architects Bertram Dudley Stuart, Jr., and Arthur Wheatley. Clad in masonry and terra cotta, it expresses the design and construction legacy of the early 20th century, while its distinctive stepping massing and decorative details embody the eclectic stepped skyscraper style of the mid-1920s to early-1930s.

Research

This report was prepared by Susan Boyle, of BOLA Architecture + Planning, with assistance from consulting historian Tom Heuser of T.G. Heuser Company. Research tasks involved the collection and review of historic building permits on file in the microfilm library of the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) and historic survey inventories and landmark nominations from the and Department of Neighborhoods (DON); archival property records of the King County Assessor from the Puget Sound Regional Archives (PSRA); local archival newspaper articles from databases at the Seattle Public Library (SPL); historic survey inventories, and National Register nominations available from the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP); the digital collections of the Seattle Municipal Archives (SMA), Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) and the University of Washington Libraries Special Collections (UWLSC); and, city directories, maps, and publications cited the bibliography.

The research involved several site tours to document the current building in August to October 2021 and assistance from Weinstein A + U, the architect for the rehabilitation, which provided the current record drawings.

Seattle's Landmarks Process

[Note: The following information is provided for those unfamiliar with local landmarks.]

Designated historic landmarks are those properties that have been recognized locally, regionally, or nationally as important resources to the community, city, state, or nation. Official recognition may be provided by listing in the State or National Registers of Historic Places and locally by the City of Seattle's designation of a property as a historic landmark.

¹ Other purpose-built historic hotels in downtown and Pioneer Square include the Alexis (1901), Moore (1907), Yesler Pioneer Square Hotel (1911), Artie Club (1916), Olympic (1924), Vance/Max (1926) Claremont/Andra (1926), Bergonian Mayflower Park (1926-1927), Roosevelt (1928), and Hungerford/Executive Pacific (1928). Historic hotels operating as low-income housing include the Morrison (1908), Frye (1911), and Leamington/Pacific (1916).

The City's landmarks process is a multi-part proceeding of three sequential steps involving the Landmarks Preservation Board: a review of the nomination and its approval or rejection; a designation; and negotiation of controls and incentives by the property owner and the City's Historic Preservation Office and its approval by the Landmarks Preservation Board. A final step in this landmarks process is passage of a designation ordinance by the City Council.

These steps all occur with public hearings to allow input from the property owner, applicant, the public, and other interested parties. Seattle's landmarks process is quasi-judicial, with the Board ruling rather than serving as an advisory body to another commission, department, or agency.

Under the ordinance, more than 470 individual properties have been designated as landmarks. Others within one of the City's eight special review and historic districts are also local landmarks. There is no Seattle ordinance that requires an owner to nominate its property, and the City may require a nomination for substantial development requiring a Master Use Permit as part of its environmental review under the State Environmental Policy Act.

The City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Ordinance (SMC 25.12.350) does not consider future changes or uses, or other land use issues. It requires a property to be more than 25 years old and to "have significant character, interest or value, as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, State or Nation," and that the property meet one or more of six designation criteria:

Criterion A. *It is the location of, or is associated in a significant way with, an historic event with a significant effect upon the community, City, state, or nation.*

Criterion B. *It is associated in a significant way with the life of a person important in the history of the City, state, or nation.*

Criterion C. *It is associated in a significant way with a significant aspect of the cultural, political, or economic heritage of the community, City, state, or nation.*

Criterion D. *It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or of a method of construction*

Criterion E. *It is an outstanding work of a designer or builder.*

Criterion F. *Because of its prominence of spatial location, contrasts of siting, age, or scale, it is an easily identifiable visual feature of its neighborhood or the City and contributes to the distinctive quality or identity of such neighborhood or the City.*

2. Building Information

Historic Name: Continental Hotel / Earl Hotel

Current Name: Hotel Seattle

Year Built: 1926

Address: 315 Seneca Street, Seattle, WA 98104

Assessor's File No.: 0942000120

Legal Description: The westerly 60 feet of lot 2, Block 15, Addition to the Town of Seattle, as laid out on the claims of C.D. Boren and A.A. Denny and H.L. Yesler (commonly known as C.D. Boren's Addition to the City of Seattle), According to the plat thereof recorded in Volume 1 of Plats, page 25, in King County, Washington.

Current Zoning: DOC1 U/450/U

Use: Hotel (original and current)

Size: 3,600 square foot site
36,240 square foot building, 11 stories

Original Owner: Sarah Slyfield (landowner, 1917-1926)
Stephen A. Berg (land lease and building owner, 1926 - 1928)
Stephen A. Berg and his company, Continental Hotel, Inc. (1928 – 1934)

Original Designer: Stuart and Wheatley Architects

Original Builder: Stephen A. Berg

Present Owner: Win Forever LLC, Butch T Cougar LLC, and Spirit of Troy LLC

Owner's Rep: Collin Hagstrom, Principal and Broker
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3. Architectural Description

Neighborhood Setting

The Hotel Seattle was built originally as the Continental Hotel. As noted in early advertisements, the hotel is in the center of Seattle's downtown commercial district on Seneca Street between 3rd and 4th Avenues. This is an area of the city that developed initially between 1910 and 1930. **(Figures 1 & 36)** Its urban pattern has largely persisted for more than a century, even as the downtown financial core has seen increased density with larger assembled sites and taller buildings built in the post-war period of the late 1950s to the 1970s. **(Figures 8 & 9)** During this latter periods open space diminished while alley vacations that allowed for half and full-block sites and larger buildings, were commonly allowed. (Recent projects are typically granted sub-grade vacations.)

The age and size of the buildings that surround the subject property represent the area's 20th century history and also the dramatic change of recent decades. Abutting it on the east there is a small 8,280 square foot, two-story flat roof, Classical style structure at the corner of 4th and Seneca (319 Seneca / 1411 4th Avenue). Built as a bank on a small, 3,060 square foot (.07-acre) site in 1921, this terra cotta-clad building currently contains a coffee shop and a dental clinic. **(Figure 43)**

The property to the south contains the present Hotel Monaco, a thirteen-story, 154,723 square foot building with an underground parking level on a 19,910 square foot (0.48-acre) site at 1101 4th Avenue. This hotel results from the recent rehabilitation of a reinforced concrete office building from 1969. At the southwest corner of the block there is a steel frame building with fourteen stories and 186,768 square feet and three levels of subgrade parking on a 12,210 square foot site (0.28 acre). Dating from 1972, it still serves as an office building. To the west across the alley from the Hotel Seattle, there is another reinforced concrete office building with fifteen stories and 230,000 square feet on a 14,415 square foot (0.33-acre) corner site at 1122 3rd Avenue. Built in 1955, it is a commercial condominium building.² **(Figure 44)**

To the northwest of the Hotel Seattle, across Seneca Street at 1200 3rd Avenue, there is an older concrete frame high-rise office building from 1921 with 189,175 square feet and thirteen stories on a 13,320 square foot (0.31-acre) corner site. **(Figure 45)** On the block to the southeast there is the large 25-story W Hotel, at 1111 4th Avenue, built in 1998 on the site of the earlier Gowman Hotel **(Figure 22)**. To the south of it there is the nine-story Hungerford Hotel / Executive Inn at 400 Spring Street, built in 1928.

Among the nearby hotels, the largest is the landmark Fairmont Olympic Hotel, which fills an entire block to the northeast, at 411 University Street, with a twelve-story, concrete frame structure. This Seattle institution, built in 1923-1928, was financed in part by community bond funding. The Beaux Arts Italian Renaissance style hotel contains 450 guestrooms and over 28,000 square feet of event and meeting space, along with retail shops and several restaurants. The Olympic Hotel's original entry was on its south side, on Seneca Street, but it was moved to the north side within a deep setback in the 1980s. **(Figures 12 & 24)**

² Parcel and building sizes and dates of construction are from King County Department of Assessment detail property reports.

Directly north, across Seneca Street at 1215 4th Avenue, there is the Unico Financial Center, a 28-story office building dating from 1972. (**Figure 46.**) This building, presently known as Rainier Square Tower, along with the Olympic Hotel, the 1976 Rainier Tower/Rainier Square, and other buildings are part of the Metropolitan Tract on the original site of the Territorial University of Washington. The tract consists of a 6.23-acre site with over 1.5 million square feet of offices, luxury apartments and retail spaces, and up to seven stories of underground parking. A recent development on the Metropolitan Tract, the 58-story addition to Rainer Square, which opened last year.

In contrast to new construction there are a number of Seattle landmarks nearby that recall the early to mid-20th century development of the city's financial core. They include the Northern Life Tower / Seattle Tower, a 28-story Art Deco style office building at 1212 3rd Avenue (1928) (**Figures 27 & 28**), the four-story Brooklyn Building at 1222 2nd Avenue (1903, altered), Federal Reserve Bank at 1015 2nd Avenue (1950), Mann Building at 1411 3rd Avenue (1925-1926), 1411 4th Avenue Building (1929), and Great Northern Building at 1404 4th Avenue (1928-1929). The Leamington Hotel and Apartments (Pennington Hotel, Pembroke, Milner Hotel (1917), at 317 Marion Street, the 1411 4th Avenue Building, and the Olympic Hotel are listed on the National Register.

The Site

(Note: The building and site are set on an angle due to the street grid layout, with Seneca Street to the northeast. For clarity in this nomination, reference north is established in this direction, with 3rd Avenue and the adjacent alley to the reference west, 4th Avenue to the reference east, and the back of the building to the reference south.) The 36,240 square foot building sits on the 60 by 60-foot, 3,600 square foot (0.83-acre), mid-block site on the south side of Seneca Street between 3rd and 4th Avenues. A portion of the original Northern Pacific Railroad tunnel runs below part of the eastern part of the site far below grade.

A 15'-8"-wide paved alley runs along the west side of the building, and the sidewalk along Seneca Street along the north. (**Figures 42B, 44 & 53. See also the site plan in the attached record drawing set.**) At this location, the topography slopes steeply downhill from the east to the west, with an overall estimated grade change of 10 feet. This slope is accommodated in mass of the hotel building with steps to its primary entry at the center of the north facade, and its basement level service entry exposed along the west alley.

The Building

The building's square mass is stepped. It fills the 60-foot-wide and 60-foot-deep site at the basement and lower two floors. Above the second floor a step-back, approximately 14.75 feet deep, on the back (south side) provides a footprint of 60 by 45.2 feet and open space for a rear lightwell. In addition, there is a slight recess on the east side at the ninth and tenth floors. The resulting open spaces provide separation from neighboring buildings on the south and east. In addition, the uppermost floor steps further on the east and west to create the building's unique stepped massing, a 35 foot-wide eleventh floor, and an identifiable rooftop sky profile. (**Figure 37**) This massing emphasizes the design's verticality.

The building's primary façade features a Gothic inflected Art Deco style, composed with perpendicular emphasis. A terra cotta clad base level extends to the second floor with masonry of tan colored brick masonry embellished by terra cotta decorative elements, and a distinctive uppermost stepped eleventh floor level and raised parapet.

The structure consists of fire-resistant steel and reinforced concrete framing with a concrete foundation and basement. The foundation includes a deep concrete shaft, built over the pre-existing railroad tunnel, which was remarked upon during its construction for the deep excavation.³ The structure is five bays wide, and these are clearly legible on the primary north facade: three center bays, each 11.75 feet-wide, and two outermost ones of 12.5 feet. The four bays on the sides vary in width, from 11.25, 14, 14.75 and 18.75 feet. Octagonal concrete posts and perimeter pilasters support the perimeter walls and floor and roof slabs. Typical upper floor heights are approximately 9 feet-tall, while the first floor with mezzanine is 18.3 feet-tall and the basement 12 feet.

The original brick masonry appears to have been a light color, and it appears white in early photos. The brick masonry is coated with a darker color painted paster parge coat. The base below the second floor, which featured the light-color terra cotta cladding, is currently covered by dark colored cementitious cladding ("Marblecrete") added in ca 1962. **(Figure 40)** The lower level terra cotta cladding on the northernmost 20 feet of the west facade, which faces the alley, is treated similarly. **(Figures 50 & 51)** The original terra cotta window and door surrounds and the water table band that separates the lower floors from field levels above remain. Windowsills are brick or terra cotta.

The primary north façade contains the building's Gothic Revival inspired decorative features. Here brick inset panels are provided as decorative relief below the paired windows in the center three bays on the second through ninth floors. The top two floors carry decorative terra cotta panels below the windows of the center three bays, and shallow decorative balconies with heavy terra cotta cross railings on the outer two bays where larger segmental arched head windows heads are provided. Terra cotta is present in the raised parapet with crenulated elements above the center three bays. To the sides, each of the outer bay parapets of the tenth floor features a central gabled peak. While visibility of the elevator penthouse above the eleventh floor is obscured by setbacks, the terra cotta clad crenulated parapets are seen on the sides and back. **(Figures 43 & 47)**

Typical windows on the primary north facade feature 1:1 double-hung sash, originally wood framed, and set in individual openings in the two outer bays, and in pairs in the three central bays. The windows above the first floor are non-original dark bronze colored anodized aluminum types with double-hung 1:1 sash, similar to the original wood-frame windows, and fitted with double glazing. The storefront level and mezzanine windows are wood frames and sash that feature divided lites, and these appear to be original. **(Figures 51-52)**

Most of the openings are rectangular with flat heads, with the exception of low segmental arched head windows at the first-floor transoms and in the three center bays on the uppermost two floors. Single windows extend on the secondary east facade in three vertically aligned openings. They also align in openings on the west facade along with service doors and the projecting concrete exit stair.

³ *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, May 30, 1926, p. 31.

Some data/telecommunication equipment is attached to the east wall at and below the seventh floor, and a dish type antenna is placed on the uppermost roof.

The central bay on the south façade, which faces onto Seneca Street, contains a slightly recessed primary entry. Large storefronts are provided on either side, each with a tripartite, arched head transoms. In the easternmost bay there is a secondary entry to the retail space. **(Figures 54 & 55)** In addition, there is a solid wood entry door to the basement in the westernmost bay, which leads from a lower sidewalk level to an interior landing and stairs. **(Figure 53)** The original storefront at this basement entry was closed and replaced by the wood door, salvaged from an earlier building, in 1962. Low openings with non-original windows admit light to the basement. **(Figure 56)**

The original hotel design with its identifiable stepped Art Deco massing, subtle modulated façade, and expressive terra cotta decoration has persisted over the past nine decades along with much of its original interior layout. The plan features a first floor vestibule at the main stairs and a small front lobby in the center of the southern two bays along with direct access to the elevator and south stair core. A reception desk is to the west of this core. **(Figures 57 – 60)** A retail space is in the eastern two bays behind a tall partially glazed partition. The western bay contains office space, the exit stairs, restrooms, and an enclosed stairwell at the northwest corner leading to the basement. The southern bays, behind the lobby, contain service spaces. A mezzanine fills the western and southern bays. The exterior south setback, above the second floor, provides a roof deck accessed by a door from the hotel laundry room in the southwest corner. This lower roof deck holds mechanical and communication equipment, as does the adjacent building's roof to the east. **(Figure 49)**

Consistent with the hotel building type, the upper floors contain double-loaded corridors that leads from the central stair and elevator core to the guestrooms, typically five on the north and three or four on the south, and to the east and west corridor ends. Windows at the east end above the second floor overlook a lower neighboring building. The secondary exit door at the west end leads to the exterior stairs with landings that project above the alley on the west facade. **(Figure 50).**

The hotel was built with an estimated 94 guestrooms, each with its own bathroom, on floors two through eleven and retail spaces and the hotel lobby below. **(Figures 48 & 49)** A small radio station and sound studio was constructed on the first floor in 1926, and a café was built soon afterwards in the basement. The hotel currently contains 79 guestrooms including several suites created by combining smaller guestrooms, with seven small rooms and the hotel laundry on the second floor, nine small rooms each on floors three to five, eight rooms each on floors six to ten, and four on the eleventh floor. This top floor contains several larger suites. Corridor walls are finished with non-original wallpaper and carpeting, and guestroom doors have been upgraded to rated, flush types. The transom window openings above these doors are infilled to meet contemporary fire and life safety codes, but what appears to be the original wood door trim and base remain on corridor walls. **(Figures 65 & 66)** Most finishes within guestrooms date from recent decades, while the original room layout and spatial qualities remain, with exception of several small guestrooms assembled into suites. **(Figures 67-69)** Current finishes include carpet, wallpaper, painted wood base and trim, plaster walls and ceilings, and suspended acoustic ceilings. The small bathrooms contain contemporary fittings and tub showers; some of these rooms retain original hexagonal glazed tile flooring and marble thresholds. **(Figure 70)**

Changes through Time

Original drawings of the Continental Hotel have not been discovered in the microfilm records of SDCL, and the earliest permit records date from the mid-1930s calling for a roof sign and/or billboard for the Earl Hotel. (The resulting rooftop sign, dating from ca 1935 to 1961, was removed in the when the property was renamed the Heart of Seattle Hotel.)

Plans by architect George Bolotin, with a permit date of 1957, show the addition of a stair and mezzanine to access a south door to the Earl Hotel. A 1962 permit set for the Heart of Seattle Hotel calls for an interior upgrade with new finishes, mirrors, fixtures, and furnishings, along with a lobby stair to the mezzanine and south exit, and remodeling of first floor western bay to accommodate office and storage rooms. In an attempt to modernize the hotel to meet popular taste, and in anticipation of the 1962 World's Fair, distinct changes were made to the primary facade. The original terra cotta cladding below the second floor was covered, according to the permit drawing by the addition of "plaster on metal lath nailed to existing terra cotta, plaster to have marble chip finish." In addition, the first floor entries were replaced with "new aluminum frame, anodized" and the eastern one further revised with the addition of a "random wood panel." According to a drawing, the entry to the basement was changed also: "Remove front (contractor to Install salvaged front from Old Building.)"⁴

In addition, the original central marquee was removed and three thin-shell concrete canopies were added at the entry and storefronts in accordance to a design by structural engineer E. L. Strandberg. A fourth canopy, framed with steel, was added above the basement entry. **(Figures 40 & 51-52)** Original storefront window and entry door openings remained at this time, along with the letter "C" in medallions above the canopies, a reference to the name of the 1926 Continental Hotel.

Other changes to the original hotel include enclosure of the original storefront in the westernmost bay to the basement restaurant as required to meet local liquor service regulations. A new cocktail lounge was proposed for the east retail space as indicated by a drawing by Dohrmann Hotel Systems. In addition, the guestrooms received new finishes and furnishings, selected for their Modern style. **(Figure 41)** The basement laundry was relocated and a restaurant, the Bavarian (later Bernard's on Seneca) was refurbished in 1962 to 1964 with new finishes and kitchen layout.⁵ **(Figures 61-64)** In mid-1969 the eastern retail space was proposed as a small drug store according to drawings by Street Store Fixtures, and in 1984-1985 it was occupied by Buddy Squirrels nut shop.

In 1964 the eastern retail space and mezzanine were enlarged and the lobby received new finishes, glazed partitions, and wood trim and doors in 1964 according to designs by architect Alfred P. Croonquist. Interior elevation drawings suggest that much of this design remains. Later, when the nearby Olympic Hotel underwent rehabilitation in the early 1980s a private club that it had housed

⁴ Drawing notes from Sheet 4, Seneca Street Elevation, "Heart of Seattle Hotel," by owners Fred Streib and Lee Sutcliffe, and Kenneth Davis," 1962 (SDCL).

⁵ Design drawings from 6.2.1962 for the Heart of Seattle Motor Hotel, Damn, Daum and Associates, Architects. The restaurant space later received repeated upgrades. One online review from 2018 of Bernard's restaurant notes, "You step right into the 1970s."

was relocated temporarily to the southwest mezzanine. A remnant of this tenant, the “4798 Club” label, remains as door signage.

Newspaper records, city directories and records from SDCI reveal the following changes:

Tenant Improvements

1926	Radio station equipment installed at the first floor
1927	Beauty salon built at first floor retail space, basement coffee shop
1938	Barber shop at first floor retail space
1936-1940	Broadcasting studio built in basement
1949	Remodel for gift shop in retail space
1949, 1956	Office tenant remodel
1969	Street Store Fixtures, drug store
1984-1985	Buddy Squirrel Nuts shop

Building Permit Records

1956-1957	Montgomery elevator modernization
1957	Proposed parking lot (unbuilt)
1957	Entrance and stairs, balcony at lobby, Hotel Earl (George Bolotin, architect)
1962	Alter building; construct marquee; alter basement, first floor and mezzanine; coffee shop and cocktail lounge in first floor the lobby; alter basement and occupy as restaurant, Heart of Seattle Hotel (Theo Damm, architect)
1964	Alter interior of building; alter portion of first floor; erect and maintain D/F sign; new first floor mezzanine lounge and lobby remodel, Heart of Seattle Hotel (Alfred Croonquist, Architect; and Damm, Daum and Associates, Architects)
1965	Alter portion of basement restaurant to create cocktail lounge
1967	Alter first floor, occupy as drugstore (unbuilt); erect and maintain S/F plex sign
1968	Alter portion second floor
1969	Connect eleventh floor to office
1971	Construct partitions; alter lobby, occupy as office
1972	Add plasterboard to corridors, 12 floors
1981	Fire alarm upgrade
1984-1985	New illuminated signs on existing canopy; wiring, retail store signage
1991 & 1995	New natural gas fired boiler required, boiler repair
2007	Install natural gas generator on second floor rooftop to serve adjacent building; structural framing at roof to support roof-top generator

Many permits relate to the elevator: a new elevator and controls in 1967-1968, elevator repairs in 1974, elevator door alteration in 1998, replacement of the elevator machine and hoist ropes in 2000-2001, alternations to the cabled elevator in 2019-2020 and an elevator upgrade in 2022. Recent permits also include rooftop equipment and a wireless antennae, south and west 2nd floor roof (and on the adjacent 51 x 60 building roof to the southeast) in 2011-2013, rooftop communication equipment and a structural frame support for rooftop antennae in 2016-2017, and alterations to a minor communication utility (Verizon) on the rooftop in 2021-2022.

4. Historical Significance

Development of Seattle's Central Business District

The part of the city in which the Hotel Seattle is located developed initially as a commercial area in the late 1880s with the extension of Seattle's first electric streetcars and regrade programs, and the city's expansion after the great fire of 1889. Relocation of the territorial university in 1895 created a nearby opportunity on ten open acres, later known as the nearby Metropolitan Tract. Development of it and other properties continued through early decades of the 20th century as the city's service economy emerged along with its population growth and establishment of land use ordinance that codified the creation of the Central Business District (CBD) as the densest part of Seattle.⁶

Prior to the regrades the steep downtown streets, such as Seneca, were difficult to access. Some mid-block parcels contained wood frame buildings, such as the boarding house built at 315 Seneca Street in ca 1909. Street regrades along 3rd, 4th, and 5th Avenues provided easier construction of new buildings. **(Figures 2 & 3)** By the teens, the north-south streets in the CBD had been leveled, paved, and fitted with adequate drainage and sidewalks. Streetcar routes were expanded to run along the more level, pedestrian friendly avenues. By 1941, when the system was dismantled, downtown access was provided on all avenues from 1st to 5th Avenues.

Some parcels were assembled into bigger corner sites with depths extending from the avenues to the north-south alleyways to allow for larger structures. These new larger buildings contained commercial offices and banks that complemented the City's municipal center to the south, and the retail shops and department stores on 2nd and 3rd Avenues to the west.

The City of Seattle compiled building codes as early as 1909, but it was not until 1920 that it established a Zoning Commission. In 1923 it adopted the first land use ordinance. This effort divided the city into zones or districts and specified the uses allowed within them. Ordinance 45382 called for "regulating and restricting the location of trades and industries; regulating and limiting the use of buildings and premises and the heights and size of buildings; providing for yards, courts or other open spaces; establishing districts for the said purposes; defining offenses; [and] prescribing penalties and repealing all ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict therewith."⁷

The new land use code established many of Seattle's single-family residential zones. It called for the densest concentrated commercial development in the CBD and allowed buildings within this area to be to over 100 feet-tall, with maximum heights proportional to street widths. At the same time, the economic prosperity following World War I and innovations in construction technologies stimulated construction of high-rise office buildings, banks, hotels, and apartment hotels, along with club buildings and theaters. By the end of the 1920s nearly all of the early wood frame buildings were removed, and most of Seattle's oldest residential properties – as well as many of the late 19th century, immediate post-fire commercial buildings outside of Pioneer Square – had been replaced.

⁶ Crowley, 1998, pp. 90-116.

⁷ City of Seattle Municipal Archives, "Researching Historic Land Use and Zoning."

While retailing moved further north on 2nd Avenue to Pike and Pine Streets, and later east to 4th and later 5th Avenues, most service businesses and financial institutions remained in the Central business District (CBD). Thus, by the mid-1920s, when the Continental Hotel was constructed, the surrounding blocks contained banks and office buildings along with a mix of small retailers located on the more level, pedestrian-friendly avenues. The many hotels in this area served traveling businessmen and tourists as well as some residents. Their builders and operators were drawn to the CBD because of its proximity to commerce and to the city's railroad stations and passenger ship terminals. **(Figures 4-7)** As transportation systems gave way to automobiles, purpose-built parking garages were constructed and basement parking spaces were created for many of the buildings.

Historic maps and photographs from the end of the 1920s, soon after the Continental Hotel was built, show that the city's commercial core was well established. With the onset of the Great Depression, the era of early 20th century hotel development ended.

A History of Hotels and the Lodging Industry

The concept of the modern hotel that would include private rooms, toilet and bathing facilities, public spaces, and related guest services, originated in 18th century England, and soon spread to other European and north American cities. However, buildings that offer refuge and temporary lodging to travelers extend back to the thermal baths of classical Greece and the Roman Republic, and to the caravanserai of the Silk Road from Turkey to China and along trade routes from Persia, India, China, and Roman Empire.⁸ In the Middle Ages, monasteries and abbeys built inns, hospices and hospitals, and rest stops were built along pilgrimage and crusade routes. Later Inns and staging housed couriers. One of the earliest remaining from this period is the Angel Inn in Grantham, Lincolnshire, England (1312).⁹

In England and France, regulations requiring guest registration date to the 1600s. By this date there were more than 600 licensed inns in England. Similar to caravanserai these inns were often housed in courtyard buildings with guestrooms on an upper floor or on two sides, a kitchen and public room in the front along the roadway, and storage and stables in the back. By the late 1600s traveler guidebooks were published in France, and regularly scheduled stage coach routes were operating in England. These modest accommodations provided multiple beds in each room and multiple guests per bed. There was little privacy and no bathrooms. The 17th and 18th century also saw the establishment of men's clubs, such as l'Auberge des Trois Rois, Basle, Switzerland (1681), fraternal lodges that offered guestrooms to members, and construction of England's first hotel, the Royal Clarence, in Exeter, Devon (1768).

Holiday resorts were built along Mediterranean coasts and alpine lakes in the 19th century, such as l'Hotel des Berges built on Lake Geneva (1832), l'Hôtel des Trois Couronnes in Vevey (1834), and the Baur au Lac in Zurich (1840). Meanwhile public houses (pubs) in England provided lodging along with drinking and dining facilities for more common people. Colonial America inns followed British precedents, and later early roadhouses serve carriage and stage coach travelers in the American

⁸ UNESCO, Silk Road Programme. "Caravanserai: Crossroads of Commerce and Culture."

⁹ Levi-Bonvin, "Hotels – A Brief History," Hospitalitynet.

West, .¹⁰ Increased tourism, such as the Grand Tour of Europe and more distant travel led to construction of hotels in exotic locales.

By the mid-19th century luxury hotels began to take a prominent place in society. When Le Grand Hotel opened in Paris in 1862, the event involved an orchestra playing La Traviata under the direction of Jacques Offenbach and attendance by Empress Eugenie and other aristocrats. This luxury hotel was built with the first hotel hydraulic lift, lighting supplied by 4,000 gas jets, heating by 18 boilers and over 300 hot air supply vents. Electrical lights were installed in 1890, and central heating by 1901.

The 73-room City Hotel (1794), at Thames Street and Broadway in New York City, is cited as the first purpose-built America hotel. It soon became a venue for social celebrations, including George Washington's birthday in 1798. In 1829, the Tremont House in Boston was the first American hotel to offer single-room occupancy and locks on guestroom doors along with soap and laundry services. Luxury hotels, such as the Waldorf Astoria, opened in New York (1836), while the Statler Hotel in Buffalo (1805-1808), was a more modest hotels that offered "a room and a bath for a dollar-and-a-half."¹¹ Meanwhile, the six-story Holt Hotel in New York City (1830) providing a lift for luggage. New hotels with private bathrooms were built in Kansas City and Philadelphia in 1844 and 1845. The Palmer House, built in Chicago (1870), was the nation's first fire-resistant hotel building. In 1880, the Sagamore Hotel on Lake George provided electricity in all rooms, and by the late 1890s the Netherland Hotel in New York offered private telephones in each guestroom.¹²

Meanwhile, the Palais de Wurtemberg in Vienna was transformed into the luxury lodging, l 'Hôtel Impérial, in 1873, and the Grand Hotel Europe opened in St. Petersburg in 1875. These and other grand hotels in European capitals offered private bathrooms, electric lighting, on-demand hot and cold water, and room service along with multiple dining rooms and ballrooms, laundries, and shops.¹³

The lodging industry emerged as a managed business with the first school for hoteliers, founded in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1890. By this time, many hotel builders and operators, such as Cesar Ritz, rose to celebrity status, known by royalty. (King Edward VII, called Ritz, who opened his hotel in the Place Vendome, Paris in 1898, the "king of hoteliers and hotelier to kings.") Ritz Hotels were soon built in Madrid, Barcelona, and London.¹⁴ The gilded age of the late 19th century continued as an era of luxury hotels in urban settings.

Construction of more hotels occurred as train travel began replacing horse-drawn coaches. Railway hotels flourished in the 19th and early 20th centuries with hotel buildings constructed adjacent to station terminals throughout the major cities in England and Europe. American and Canadian railroads also built resorts and grand inns throughout the West as part of their efforts to promote real estate expansion; examples include the Grand Hotel on Michigan's Mackinac Island (1886), Le Chateau Frontenac, Quebec (1893), Chateau Lake Louise (1890) and Banff Springs (1888), Alberta,

¹⁰ Sudir, 2007.

¹¹ Keiser, *Baltimore Sun*, October 15, 1996.

¹² Williamson, *The Cambridge Sentinel*, September 19, 1931.

¹³ Levi-Bonvin, "Hotels – A Brief History," Hospitalitynet.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

and Hotel Vancouver (1888, replaced in 1916) as well as El Tovar, the Grand Canyon Lodge (1905), and Glacier Park Lodge (1913). Other American National Park lodges followed.

The rise in national and international commerce prompted construction of more modest accommodations for traveling businessmen and salespeople. In addition, in cities such as Seattle, with dynamic growth in the early 20th century, residential hotels provided temporary housing for newcomers. Those with dining and entertainment facilities also served resident professionals, much like clubhouses.

A second boom in the western hotel industry followed World War II with construction of the first casino hotels, the first Club Med, and development of hotels by major airlines, which primarily catered to businesspeople. By the 1960s tourism had become a primary economic sector throughout Mediterranean Europe, Scandinavia, Portugal, and later Japan, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. In the late 1970s, China opened to foreign tourists. The post-war decades also saw the proliferation of American motels, notably those built along with the county's interstate highways.

The third boom in the hotel industry occurred in the 1980s with the reconstruction of historic luxury hotels and the trend of differentiation for different clientele. New types emerged also, such as airport hotels, conference hotels, health hotels, time-shares and holiday villages, and Japanese capsule hotels. Business practices from this period include property management and marketing systems and emergence of international chains, loyalty programs, and extended-stay hotels. Recent technology simplified check in and out procedures, global reservation systems, and marketing management. The late 20th century and recent decades has seen increased globalization, and aggregation of many chains: Holiday Inn, Intercontinental, and Crown Plaza merged to create the Six Continents Hotels chain; Marriott acquired Renaissance and Ramada International; Accor with Sofitel and joint ventures built up in the East and Far East; Forte acquired Méridien; and Starwood (Sheraton) absorbed the Italian Ciga chain and Westin.¹⁵ These chains and independent locally owned hotels have had to compete with private lodging that emerged in recent decades, such as vacation rentals and Airbnb.

The Hotel as a Building Type

Many modest urban hotels and apartment buildings closely resembled commercial office buildings in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with bearing brick structures, double-loaded corridor plans, small rooms with exposure to daylight, windows set in single openings. Small lobbies led to iron-framed elevators and stairs. Exteriors utilized historic revival styles, and tripartite façade composition regardless of upper floor functions. The typical massing of “alphabet” shaped buildings – those with setbacks and lightwells – allowed for ventilation, daylighting, and fire separation.

By the 1920s hotel designs emphasized exterior appearance, and focused on the entry and lobby. Appealing to tourists rather than residents many “included large lobbies, restaurants, meeting rooms, and storefront level retail spaces. They were typically [still] executed in a modest neoclassical mode with brick cladding and distinctive terra cotta ornament at the base and building

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

cap.”¹⁶ Plans retained efficient double-loaded upper floor corridors and repetitive guest rooms, but with separate bathrooms.

Hotel Development in Seattle¹⁷

By 1853, the settlement community of Seattle had its first hotel, the Felker House, which appears to have been a modest boarding house. By the late 19th century, however, Seattle – like cities throughout the nation – had numerous hotels serving a wide range of guests, including temporary and permanent residents. The late 1880s saw the emergence of elegant hotels, as well as the workingmen’s lodgings clustered along 1st Avenue between Cherry and Columbia Streets in close proximity to the city’s central waterfront and earliest passenger railway depot.

Hotel development was stimulated by improvements in railroad service that brought immigrants, tourists, and entrepreneurs to Seattle. The Occidental Seattle Hotel (1864, 1887 & 1889, destroyed), offered the city’s premier tourist-oriented lodging, though there were many other hotels located in the area. At least a dozen of these hotels were destroyed by Seattle’s Great Fire in 1889, which burned most of the Pioneer Square and nascent downtown areas, but within four years some 63 hotels were operating. By the turn of the century, tourist and residential hotels lined the west side of 1st Avenue to Pike Street.

After the fire, both the Rainier Hotel (1889, destroyed) between Columbia and Marion Streets on 5th Avenue and the Rainier-Grand Hotel (c.1889, destroyed) at Marion Street and 1st Avenue functioned as major tourist hotels. (The Rainier was built originally as a resort hotel, as was the Denny Hotel (1890-1892, destroyed). These large wood-frame buildings were located above the commercial and residential districts and offered panoramic views of the harbor. Other post-fire tourist-oriented hotels included the Butler Hotel (1893, destroyed) and the Lincoln Hotel (1900, destroyed), which was promoted as a residential hotel with family-style living quarters.

By 1900 many of Seattle’s operating hotels served long-term residents rather than temporary visitors, and some buildings identified as hotels actually functioned as lodging houses or apartment hotels. This was a typical phenomenon in the developing cities of the American West. Given the tremendous population growth in Seattle after 1902, hotels played a key role in absorbing the new residents. Hotel construction between 1906 and 1910 coincided with increased economic opportunities and population growth, as well as the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific (AYP) Exposition. This fair drew some 3.7 million visitors in 1909. As a result, the 1910 *Polk Directory* lists over 475 hotels. The buildings varied in size and accommodations to serve every class, from the wealthy to recent immigrants, tourists, transient businessmen, and laborers. **(Figure 10)**

An article in the February 1915 issue of *The Hotel Monthly* cites a local hotelier predicting an increase in the number of travelers to Seattle. To aid flexibility a combination hotel-apartment building emerged, which allowed each section to subsidize the other. One such building that served

¹⁶ DON Historic Sites Inventory, Bergonian / Mayflower Hotel.

¹⁷ This overview of Seattle’s hotel development is derived largely from historic context statements in DON inventories and several landmark hotel nominations, including the January 12, 1999, nomination of the Camlin Hotel, and the April 3, 2021, Report on Designation, the Lorraine Hotel / William Tell Hotel.

transient residential needs was the Leamington / Pembroke Apartment-Hotel (later the Milner or the Pacific Hotel) built on Spring Street in 1916-1917.¹⁸ **(Figure 11)**

Seattle's population grew rapidly from 80,671 in 1900 to 237,194 in 1910, and 321,931 in 1920. While the significant growth from 1900 to 1910 is attributed primarily to annexations, the second decade represents an increase in residents, and a sharp rise in housing needs. By the mid-1920s, the demand for apartment accommodations in Seattle exceeded supply. In 1925 City Building Superintendent Robert Proctor noted in the local business paper, "The phenomenal apartment house . . . development experienced last year was the result of delayed activity, just as now an active hotel construction program is needed to even up the lean years of the past. Investors have avoided hotel development for several years so that now this city is behind with that type of housing."¹⁹

During the 1920s the city saw a second boom in hotel development with construction of several luxury hotels and large apartment hotels in the CBD. The new buildings were taller than earlier hotels, which were rarely taller than six stories, and often much larger with hundreds of guest rooms. Several, including the Spring Apartment Hotel (Kennedy, Vintage Park, 1922), Claremont Apartment Hotel (Hotel Andre, 1925) **(Figure 15)**, and Camlin Apartment Hotel (1926), were designed with kitchen facilities in guestrooms to serve as both hotel lodging and apartment. Along with clubs with residential quarters, such as the Sunset and Rainier Clubs, these buildings began to blur the differences between building types.

Impressive high-style residential hotels were built for upper-income visitors and long-term residents: the Frye in Pioneer Square (1911), the Moore and Camlin at the north end of the downtown retail district, and apartment-hotel buildings on First Hill. These buildings offered attractive, convenient residences in well-managed buildings with housekeeping and laundry services for high income and professional residents. Well decorated common areas, such as lobbies, libraries, rooftop terraces, and dining rooms, were offered along with servants' quarters in a few buildings, such as the Sorrento Hotel (1909), and the former Perry Hotel on First Hill.²⁰

The Olympic Hotel surpasses these in amenities and luxury. Built at a pivotal location in the Metropolitan Tract in 1923-1924 it appears to have spurred nearby construction of other downtown hotels, all of which were easily accessed by ship, train, and vehicles. **(Figures 12 & 24)** New buildings included the subject building in 1926 and the Hungerford Hotel at 400 Spring Street in 1928. **(Figures 22 & 23)** Lower scale hotels included the Leamington Hotel and Apartments (1916-1917), 317 Marion Street, which provided simple kitchenettes within guestrooms. In contrast, the Continental Hotel clearly reflects its owner's intention to serve a transient clientele with limited services and modern rooms.

During this period large hotels were built near the retail core that emerged north of the commercial district: the Vance Hotel (1926), Bergonian Hotel / Mayflower Park Hotel (1926-1927) **(Figure 16)** the Benjamin Franklin Hotel (1928, demolished 1980).

¹⁸ Citation from the Report on Designation, the Hotel Leamington Hotel – Apartments, June 28, 1994.

¹⁹ *Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce*, January 24, 1925.

²⁰ BOLA Architecture + Planning, "The Baroness Hotel, Landmark Nomination," May 2009.

The era of the downtown hotel boom ended with the advent of the Great Depression, which was accompanied by a sharp drop in tourism and stabilization of Seattle's population. Residents numbered 363,426 in 1930; and 368,302 in 1940. The seventeen-story Roosevelt Hotel, designed in the distinctive stepped Art Deco style and built in 1930, was the last major downtown hotel constructed during this era, and the tallest one until the late 1960s. In 1969, the thirteen-story Benjamin-Franklin Hotel was connected to a new 40-story tower wing and renamed the Washington Plaza Hotel. In 1980, the 1928 Benjamin Franklin Hotel was demolished for construction of a second 44-story tower wing, known as the Westin Hotel. Meanwhile, in the post war era, the downtown business core continued to densify with larger, taller commercial office buildings. (Figures 24 & 25)

The Original Owner – Developer and Contractor Stephen A. Berg

The original Continental Hotel owner was developer and builder Stephen Berg, a well-known member of Seattle's Norwegian community. (Figure 15) Berg built hundreds of homes in north Seattle between 1909 and 1922, along with apartment buildings on Capitol Hill and a number of hotels in downtown Seattle.²¹

The eldest of eight children, he was born on March 17, 1887, to Kristian and Anna Corneliussen in Trondheim, Norway. His father was a carpenter, with whom he worked from an early age. In ca. 1905 both his parents died, and he left for America. Upon arriving in Boston in 1905 at the age of 18 he took the more common Norwegian name of "Berg" and began working in construction. He soon moved to Seattle, where he later received naturalization papers in 1913. By 1909 Berg had saved to purchase a parcel of land in north Seattle, at 8029 Ashworth Ave N, for \$475, and establish a general contracting business. He married Rachel Tjentland, another Norwegian Lutheran immigrant, in 1910. In 1912 the couple purchased a house at 3402 Woodland Park Avenue N, which later became the site of his office. The Bergs later resided at 4105 Wallingford Avenue N.

Berg's early construction projects include steel framing for the L.C. Smith Building (Smith Tower), residences for E.E. Davis and Fred Wagner, "and many other homes which form the principal ornaments of their respective neighborhoods, pleasing to the eye and constructed with a conscientious regard for real utility and comfort and health of their inmates."²²

Berg's ambitions and reputation resulted in a biography published by Clarence Bagley in 1916:

Stephen Berg has won distinction as a prominent factor in the mammoth building operations of Seattle during the past few years, a period marked by an entire revolution in the style of architecture. He entered upon his varied duties with admirable equipment, having learned the carpenter's trade in Norway, and gaining board practical experience ere (sic) starting business for himself in the northwest, where he has carried out his projects with such industry that within the last five years, he is credited with the erection of one hundred and twenty-five buildings. He believes that the city offers a field for profitable investment and as his operations in

²¹ Some of this biographic sketch is derived from one by Tom Heuser in his exploration of the Biltmore Apartment Building in the *Capitol Hill Seattle Blog*, January 10, 2016.

²² Bagley, Clarence, *History of Seattle from the Earliest Settlement to the Present Times*, Volume 2, 1916, pp. 664-665.

the field of contracting bring his success, he adds to his property holdings. He is a typical young businessman of the present age, alert and enterprising, and his career has been marked by steady progress.²³

Berg's business prospered, and by the early 1920s it had grossed more than one million dollars in revenue.²⁴ A respected businessman, he was known for constructing and selling moderate sized quality houses. In 1923 Berg commissioned Seattle architects Stuart and Wheatley to design a modest four-unit building on Capitol Hill, at 405 E Olive Street, which he named the Stephensberg Apartments. He sold the building that same year for \$90,000, and soon after began developing a far more elaborate and larger building, the Biltmore Apartments at 418 E Loretta Place. Berg initially planned the Biltmore to be a five-story, \$350,000 building, and the city's second largest apartment complex. His ambitions grew, and he had architects Stuart and Wheatley add another story, which increased the building's estimated construction cost to \$565,000.²⁵ The design, a Tudor-Gothic Revival style, concrete frame structure featured brick and decorative terra cotta masonry, a grand lobby, 125 luxury units accessed by two elevators, and fitted with built-ins and modern kitchen appliances. Occupants were served by 24-hour on-site staff, and Berg even had a rooftop antenna to connect to his tenants' radios. In 1925 he built the Biltmore Annex at 113-117 Summit Avenue, also designed by Stuart and Wheatley, to provide associated retail shops to serve the residents.

Upon completion of the Biltmore Apartments, Berg began three large hotel projects: the 10-story Claremont / Andra Hotel, at 2000 4th Avenue, completed in January 1926 (**Figure 15**); the 11-story Continental Hotel (the subject building), completed in December 1926; and the 12-story Bergonian Hotel at 405 Olive Way, completed in July 1927 (**Figure 16**). The Bergonian was a luxury building containing 240 guest rooms, spacious lobby and lounge areas, and a restaurant, and its construction cost \$750,000.²⁶ Despite their historical and architectural significance, none of Berg's have been recognized by a local landmark designation or National Register listing.

In July 1926 Stephen Berg leased or purchased through contract the parcel for the Continental Hotel from landowner Sarah Slyfield.²⁷ Slyfield had acquired the property in April 1917; records suggest it contained a wood frame boarding house prior to the hotel's construction. Berg's construction crews began excavation of a deep shaft in spring of 1926 to ensure the solidity of the building's foundation over the Great Northern railroad tunnel, which ran below the easterly half of the site.²⁸ The hotel was built for the cost of between \$176,000 and \$300,000 (citation differ).²⁹ Berg owned and operated it through a corporation, the Continental Hotel Company Inc.

²³ Bagley, 1916, p. 664.

²⁴ Heuser, 2016.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ After being rescued from foreclosure in 1934 the Bergonian was renamed the Mayflower Park Hotel. The Mayflower was rehabilitated in 1988, and is operated by its local owners as a member of Historic Hotels of America.

²⁷ Property Abstract for Block 15 of C.D. Boren's Addition, SDCI.

²⁸ *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, May 30, 1926, p. 31.

²⁹ *Seattle Daily Times*, November 28, 1926, p. 17, and *Seattle Daily Times*, April 15, 1928, p. 53.

As both a builder and property manager Berg assured his apartment residents and hotel guests were well served. His buildings were well designed, and of long-lasting durable construction. He built the nearby retail component to serve the Biltmore Apartments residents, and was known for serving fresh salmon in his hotel restaurants that he had personally caught while sailing.

Berg followed his downtown hotels projects with construction of the Casa Nita Apartments at 12th Avenue and Republican Street on Capitol Hill. By mid-1927 he had developed and constructed seven large buildings.³⁰ However, his business incurred considerable debt and required multiple mortgages to support its developments. At the end of 1927 he was forced to sell the Biltmore building, after having mortgaged it for well over \$100,000, and in 1928 he gave up operation and ownership of the Continental Hotel, Inc. Between 1927 and 1930 his creditors filed over 20 lawsuits against him, and Berg and his wife were forced to forfeit their assets after declaring bankruptcy in late 1930. In May 1934 the company, Continental Hotel, Inc., ceased operating.³¹ His marriage strained, Berg retired alone to a farm in Auburn at the age of 43, his wife and children remaining in Seattle. Stephen Berg died on January 5, 1966, at the age of 78.

In addition to his business interest, Berg was active in community and civic activities, in particular those serving the Norwegian community. He was a member of the Lay Association for Lutheran Unity, which believed “that European linguistic, provincial, and racial divisions must give way to American unity” in order for its church to become the country’s largest congregation.³²

Other Property Owners

The hotel property passed through a number of owners in the 1930s through the late-1970s until it was acquired by members of the Neyhart family. Permit records and newspaper citations note:

5/31/1934 – 12/18/1935	William Mackay, (deceased Dec 1935; rename to Hotel Earl)
12/18/1935 – 3/28/1939	Frederick T. Fischer (deceased March 1938)
3/28/1939 – 7/6/1939	Estate of Frederick T. Fischer, John D. Stockton + The Pacific National Bank of Seattle, trustees
7/6/1939 – 12/14/1951	Estate of Frederick T. Fischer, deceased; John D. Stockton + The Pacific National Bank of Seattle, trustees, estate of Lucile C. Fisher,
12/14/1951 – 10/3/1961	Thomas Fischer Gates
10/3/1961 – 11/24/1961	Fred P. Streib, Lee F. Sutcliffe, Kenneth C. Davis, jointly + severally (change of name to Heart of Seattle Hotel)
11/24/1961 – 8/30/1963	Heart of Seattle Hotel Co. Inc. (sister to the 1962 Edgewater Hotel)
8/30/1963 – 1/16/1964	Senfour Investment Co. Inc.
1/16/1964 – 8/13/1965	Republic National Life Insurance Co.
8/13/1965 – 4/25/1977	Pier 67, Inc. (Edgewater Hotel ownership)
4/25/1977 – 2021	Heart of Seattle, Inc., dba Hotel Seattle ³³

³⁰ *Seattle Times*, July 15, 1927, p. 17.

³¹ *Seattle Daily Times*, November 16, 1926, p. 30.

³² Heuser, 2016.

³³ The long-term ownership and operation by the Neyhart family of Seattle began in the 1970s. According to Miller, *Daily Journal of Commerce*, May 10, 2021, the Neyhart family “owned and operated it as a as a sister to the Edgewater, which opened in 1962 as the Camelot. City records agree.”

Construction History

The Continental Era – 1926-1934

Stephen Berg officially opened the Continental Hotel for business on December 4, 1926 with an evening gala that included a series of live music performances.³⁴ Entertainment was provided by radio station KFQW from its new studios in the hotel, with “one large studio for orchestras and other large productions, one small studio for solo work, and a reception room adjoining the hotel lobby.”³⁵ The 100-watt radio station, at frequency 1380 kHz, was established initially in Knierim’s Photo Radio Electric Shop in North Bend in mid-1925, and it broadcasted from the hotel from June 30, 1926 to November 11, 1928.³⁶ The hotel’s first floor was changed to accommodate other uses after the radio studio left.

In an article extolling Seattle's building activity in 1927, the Continental Hotel’s \$176,000 construction was noted along with two other nearby hotels: The Stratford, built for \$275,000, and the Hotel Hungerford / Executive Hotel, built for \$500,000.³⁷ These three hotels, and others nearby were situated within a few blocks of the Olympic Hotel, which had opened in 1924. The Olympic promoted its first-class lodging, ballrooms, and meeting facilities, and over 400 varied size guestrooms. The hotel’s construction was partially financed by a public bond, and it garnered considerable pride as indicated by the extensive coverage of its construction and opening.

In 1926, the year that the Continental Hotel opened, the local Chamber of Commerce extolled the city’s downtown developments, and described Seattle as “One of America’s healthiest . . .” Building permits illustrated steadily growth since 1918, and in 1926 alone the permits represented \$34,000,000 in construction. Investments in hotels and apartment buildings during this period totaled over \$5,777,000. This occurred while the city’s economy boomed and its population grew.³⁸

In addition to the radio studio within the Continental Hotel, Berg installed other retail businesses within the building, including a coffee shop and café in the basement.³⁹ The configuration of the lower floors changed with the tenants, which included a beauty salon located in the street-level retail space adjacent to the hotel’s main entrance on Seneca Street by 1927.⁴⁰ *The Polk City*

³⁴ *Seattle Daily Times*, December 4, 1926, p. 4.

³⁵ *Seattle Daily Times*, October 3, 1926, p. 29.

³⁶ “Chronology of call letters KFQW,” in Radio-TV Broadcast History, <https://broadcasting.fandom.com/wiki/KFQW>; and “Puget Sound Radio Stations,” in qzvx.com. See also Mishkind, Barry, “The Great Frequency Move of 1928,” in *The Broadcasters’ Desktop Resource*. KFQW may have closed after the Federal Radio Commission reduced the number of authorized stations in an effort to improve reception and eliminate “non-essential” station.

³⁷ *Seattle Daily Times*, July 9, 1928, p. 34.

³⁸ The Chamber of Commerce report is cited in the Camlin Hotel Landmark Designation Report, January 12, 1999, p. 10. After rising from 237,194 in 1910 to 315,312 in 1920, the city’s population rose to only 365,583 in 1930.

³⁹ *Seattle Daily Times*, October 3, 1926, p. 29, and July 6, 1927, p. 24.

⁴⁰ *Seattle Daily Times*, February 27, 1927, p. 58.

Directory identified the hotel's manager as Albert E. Walsh in 1927 and 1928; the 1928 entry describes the hotel as having "100 rooms 100 baths, all outside rooms, coffee shop in connection."⁴¹ In March of 1928, Stephen Berg turned the hotel over to a "veteran hotel man," Herman A. Greenberg, for \$240,000.⁴² Greenberg, an owner and hotel operator, made it his permanent residence.⁴³ Greenburg purchased the land which Continental Hotel Company had leased from the estate of the original landowner, Sarah Slyfied in a October 1930.⁴⁴ Greenberg owned the Continental Hotel Inc., until May 1934 when he sold it to a retired salesman, William MacKay.⁴⁵

The Earl Hotel – 1934-1961

Upon purchasing the property as an investment, MacKay leased it to another local hotel operator, Earl Hungerford, who changed the hotel name from the Continental to the Earl.⁴⁶ Hungerford had entered the hotel business with his father in ca. 1903. At the time he acquired the Continental Hotel he also operated two other downtown Seattle hotels, the Caledonia, and the Hungerford Hotel.⁴⁷ Upon MacKay's death in December 1935, a retired wholesale grocer, Frederick T. Fischer, purchased the hotel as an investment from MacKay's estate. The Fischer family held it through October of 1961.⁴⁸ The Earl Hotel added a prominent sign on the rooftop of the building in ca 1935. The sign, a typical feature of hotels in the 1930s through the 1950s, helped identify the building before the era of high-rises. **(Figures 38 & 39)** The sign was removed in ca 1961 after the hotel was renamed.

The Earl Hotel faced a significant change in June 1957 when its owner announced plans to construct a new "drive-in" entrance from 4th Avenue with a parking facility for 50 automobiles.⁴⁹ The project apparently involved plans for the parcel to the south. Changes noted in the project's permit included installation of an additional lobby stair and a balcony above the first floor level and a waiting area or secondary lobby and entry to the mezzanine level on back (south façade) to serve guests arriving from the parking lot.⁵⁰ The parking facility was not built, but the back door remains.

Heart of Seattle Hotel – 1961-1977

In October 1961, a group of investors led by Lee F. Sutcliffe, of the St. Louis firm Lamplighter Motel Inns, acquired the property. Sutcliff and others formed the Heart of Seattle Hotel Co. Inc. the following month to own and manage the hotel.⁵¹ Anticipating increased tourism drawn to the 1962

⁴¹ *Polk Directory to Seattle*, 1928. Note: The plan layout suggests there were only 94 original guestrooms.

⁴² *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, March 18, 1928, p. 87.

⁴³ *Seattle Polk Directory*, 1928-1934.

⁴⁴ *Seattle Daily Times*, November 5, 1930, p. 1. See also the Property Abstract for Block 15 of C.D. Boren's Addition for the full chain of ownership.

⁴⁵ *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, December 12, 1936, p. 3.

⁴⁶ *Seattle Daily Times*, December 22, 1935, p. 22.

⁴⁷ *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, September 10, 1956, p. 26. The Caledonia was located at 700 Union Street and the Hungerford at 400 Spring Street.

⁴⁸ *Seattle Daily Times*, March 4, 1938, p. 36.

⁴⁹ *Seattle Daily Times*, June 23, 1957, p.29.

⁵⁰ SDCI Permit #457399, July 23, 1957.

⁵¹ Property Abstract for Block 15 of C.D. Boren's Addition, SDCI.

World Fair the new company announced plans for a \$2,000,000 project to be completed by January 1962.⁵² The proposed project included alterations and refurbishing of the hotel and construction of an adjacent multistory building, both to be operated as the “Heart of Seattle Motor Hotel.”⁵³

Alterations to the primary north facade of the original hotel building included recladding of the lower level terra cotta, replacement of a rod-supported flat roof marquee over the hotel entry with a new canopy, installation of a coffee shop and/or cocktail lounge in the east retail space adjacent to the lobby, and a new restaurant in the basement named Bavarian Haus.⁵⁴ The canopy, which remains, consists of three thin shell concrete vaults at an upper level above the main entry and storefronts, and later a glazed steel framed canopy at a lower elevation above the basement entry. The lower canopy and a solid door to the basement, which was installed at this time, obscure the original rectangular opening in the lower western bay that had held a glazed storefront. **(Figure 40)**

The planned exterior alterations were not completed until late-1962, too late to take full advantage of Century 21 tourism, and the proposed adjacent building was not constructed. The investment company went into bankruptcy due to cost overruns and unpaid debts totaling \$109,500 (approximately \$1M today) and it was soon reorganized.⁵⁵ The new company held the property for only a few months before selling it to the Republic National Life Insurance Company in January 1964.⁵⁶ That same year a new lounge was reportedly built on the first-floor mezzanine and other changes made to update the main lobby.⁵⁷ The hotel’s management changed again in March 1965 when Pier 67 Inc., the owners of the Edgewater Hotel, leased the Heart of Seattle Hotel, which they later purchased.⁵⁸ The new operators undertook further interior updating of the lobby, cafe, and guestrooms. **(Figure 41)** Under Pier 67 management, the hotel’s Bavarian Haus restaurant began focusing on its cocktail lounge and live performances as noted in newspaper ads from the time.⁵⁹

Hotel Seattle – 1977-Present

In April of 1977, Pier 67 Inc. sold the property to a new owner, Heart of Seattle Incorporated. Despite taking “Heart of Seattle” as its corporate name, the new company, owned by members of the Nyherts family, simplified the hotel’s name to “Hotel Seattle.” It also hired Fry Interiors, a local

⁵² SDCI Permit # 494885, January 26, 1962. Century 21 opened for only six months, April - October 1962.

⁵³ SDCI Permit # 496740, May 21, 1962.

⁵⁴ *Seattle Daily Times*, November 2, 1962, p. 2.

⁵⁵ *Seattle Daily Times*, November 2, 1962, p. 2. At a hearing with the United States District Judge in August of 1963, the insolvent Heart of Seattle Hotel Company was reorganized as Senfour Investment Company Inc., with Sutcliffe continuing as president along with career U. S. Air Force pilot Mel Davis as vice-president and general manager.

⁵⁶ SDCI Permits # 507294, May 21, 1964, and # 507452, June 2, 1964. Davis remained with the business and oversaw the alternations, and he was credited with making the hotel profitable again. *Seattle Daily Times*, September 25, 1964, p. 3

⁵⁸ *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, March 11, 1967, p. 22.

⁵⁹ *Seattle Daily Times*, October 28, 1965, p. 2. An article in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, February 26, 1973, p. 9, notes the company installed an innovative a computerized drink mixer and cash register.

company to renovate the interior, including the combination of several corner rooms to create a honeymoon suite.⁶⁰ Ads cited specials at Bavarian Haus: a 1987 New Year's Eve special: dinner for two and a room.⁶¹

Hotel Clientele and Retail Occupants

When it opened in 1925 the nearby Olympic Hotel was seen as the city's first-class lodging, providing ballrooms and meeting facilities, and amenities and rooms that garnered pride from many as noted in extensive coverage of its construction and opening. In contrast, the design of the Continental Hotel suggests Stephen Berg's intent to serve a business clientele rather than blue-collar working class visitors who sought out single room occupancy hotels and boarding houses or upper income and professional visitors who were drawn to storied accommodations offered by the Olympic or Berg's Bergonian Hotel for business or vacation travel and special events. The Continental Hotel was presented as up-to-date and modern, clean, and efficient, with simple, similar-sized guestrooms and private baths.

Under the management of owner Herbert Greenberg classified print ads in local newspapers beginning as early as November 1928 describe the Continental Hotel as "eleven stories of supreme comfort; newest and most modern." An advertisement from September 1929 offered rooms for \$2, \$2.50, and \$3 per night, comparable to the average estimated rate in the US hotel industry of \$3.21 per night in 1930, or around \$51 in 2022 dollars. In contrast, the more luxurious Bergonian Hotel posted room rates of up to \$4.50, while rates at the Olympic Hotel were greater. (Estimated average household income for cities the size of Seattle in 1930 range from \$2,450 to \$4,000; \$55 per was the average weekly union wage, and \$42 was the average monthly rent for a single-family house.)⁶²

Later print advertisements for the hotel reflected the worsening economic conditions following the stock market crash on October 29, 1929. In December 1929, ads described the hotel as "refinement with economy," and in December 1931 as "economy with refinement" with rooms prices starting at \$8 per week indicating a further shift. Print ads for the hotel did not resume until March 1948, at which time it offered "desirable rooms for weekly or monthly occupancy" in a "Class A building" with "Choice location."⁶³ The hotel also advertised an option for permanent occupancy in October 1949.⁶⁴ The following year, in September 1950, it announced completion of a "complete" renovation.⁶⁵ Room prices advertised in *The Seattle Times* between 1950 and 1956 ranged from \$15-\$17.50 per week and \$60-\$70 per month. These rates contrast with the U.S. hotel industry

⁶⁰ *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, September 16, 1977, p. 53; *Seattle Daily Times*, June 8, 1977, p. 84.

⁶¹ *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, December 18, 1987, p. 9.

⁶² Starch, Daniel, "The Income of the Average Family," 1930; and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin No. 540, October 1931, "Union Wages and House of Work, May 15, 1930."

⁶³ *Seattle Daily Times*, March 22, 1948, p. 20.

⁶⁴ *Seattle Daily Times*, October 4, 1949, p. 29.

⁶⁵ *Seattle Daily Times*, September 9, 1950, p. 11. No permit records exist for this interior renovation, and it may have been limited to upgrading of finishes.

average of \$5 per night in 1950 and \$10 per night in 1960.⁶⁶ By 1958 the Earl Hotel's advertised room rates ranged for \$4.50 to \$8 per night.⁶⁷

Retail tenants of the former radio studios and street-level commercial unit have varied over time. They included a barbershop in 1938, Seattle Recording Studios in 1936-1940, George Rex Studios (music instruction) in 1940-1945, Central Catholic Gifts in 1949-1951, Communication Workers of America in 1949-1955, and Plus Computing Machines Agency in 1956-1959. In 1984-1985 Buddy Squirrel Nuts opened a shop in the hotel. A coffee shop and cocktail lounge also occupied the space at times.

The Building's Style and Materials

Seattle's remaining buildings terra cotta clad buildings, such as the Continental Hotel, express the design and construction legacy of the early 20th century, while its distinctive stepping massing embodies the period from the mid-1920s through the 1930s.⁶⁸

Design Origins

As noted in the architectural description, the Continental Hotel / Hotel Seattle embodies an eclectic features of a stepped Art Deco skyscraper style along with Gothic revival decorative elements. Despite its ornamentation, the massing of the building represents a departure from historicism.

Many people identify Art Deco primarily as a style of ornament with decorative fluting and reed shapes, horizontal bands, chevrons or zigzags, and richly treated surfaces, including inlays, castings, polychrome glazes, and etched glass. The origins of the style can be traced back to early 20th century European aesthetic movements that sought to break with historicism, such as French Cubism, Dutch de Stijl, and Italian Futurism. Examples of European Art Deco date from the teens, but the 1925 Parisian *Exposition des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Moderns*, brought it worldwide attention.⁶⁹

Art Deco architecture also expresses a dramatic break with the past historicism and the traditional Beaux Arts composition of facades with a base, shaft, and cap. In America, the Art Deco style coincided with technical and social changes that impacted building design, in particular with the stepped skyscraper where horizontal layers gave way to a vertical emphasis and receding upper floors.

The realization of the stepped skyscraper came after New York City zoning regulations were passed initially in 1916 in reaction to blocks of tall commercial structures in Manhattan in an effort to retain daylight at the ground plane. **(Figures 25 & 26)** The resulting American skyscrapers are exemplified by stepped towers and ziggurat-shape buildings rendered by Hugh Ferriss and architectural designs by Raymond Hood with his Daily News Building (1929). The influential Gothic Revival stepped style

⁶⁶ Choicehotel.com, "About – History."

⁶⁷ *Seattle Daily Times*, February 13, 1958, p. 6.

⁶⁸ Allied Arts of Seattle, 1986, pp. 52, 72. (Note: The hotel's original designer is mistakenly identified in this publication as architect Victor Vorhees.) See also Kreisman, 1979.

⁶⁹ Robinson, 1975. The Art Deco style, like Moderne and Streamlined Modern styles that followed, was used for a relatively short period in fashion, graphic and interior design, as well as architecture. In addition, there are examples in jewelry, light fixtures, statues, and tableware design.

of the Chicago Tribune Tower (1924-1925), by Hood and architect John Mean Howells, used buttresses and gargoyles on its upper floors, in the so-called “American Perpendicular Style.” Hood’s American Radiator Building (1924) features brick masonry with stone and terra cotta decoration that, like the Hotel Seattle’s original design, appears to be both Gothic and Art Deco.⁷⁰

Other nationally known Art Deco designers include Norman Bel Geddes, Raymond Loewy, Russell Wright, Lorelle Guild, Walter Teague, and William Lascaux. In Seattle, local designers who had previously worked with revival styles began developing eclectic Art Deco and Moderne designs. They included architects J. Lester Holmes, R. C. Reamer, Carl Gould, Earl Morrison, Floyd Naramore, John Graham, Sr., James Schack and A. H. Albertson, as well as B. Dudley Stuart.

American cities that are known for Art Deco architecture include Miami, Tulsa, and Los Angeles. In contrast, Art Deco’s presence in Seattle appears more limited as it was introduced late and largely in commercial applications, where it provided a fashionable and urbane identity. But because of the worldwide economic depression, Art Deco’s popularity was cut short, and later replaced by buildings embodying “a new machine art: honest, simple, and functionally expressive . . .”⁷¹

Buildings in downtown Seattle that represent the stepped skyscraper Art Deco style include:

- The Northern Life Tower, 1212 Third Avenue (A. H. Albertson, Joseph Wilson, and Paul D. Richardson, 1928, a local landmark) (**Figures 27 & 28**)
- Olive Tower, 1624 Boren Ave, (Earl W. Morrison architect, 1928)
- Roosevelt Hotel, 1531 2nd Avenue (John Graham, Sr., 1928-1930) (**Figure 29**)
- Exchange Building (John Graham, 1929) (**Figure 32**)
- Olympic Tower / United Shopping Tower (Henry Bittman, 192 and 1929)
- Washington Athletic Club, 1325 6th Avenue (Sherwood D. Ford, 1930) (**Figures 30 & 31**)
- Textile Tower, 1813 7th Avenue (Earl W. Morrison, 1930)
- Federal Office Building, 909 1st Avenue (James A. Wetmore, 1931-1932) (**Figure 34**)

Outside of downtown buildings that represent stepped Art Deco style include the Meany Hotel / Graduate Hotel in the University District (R. C. Reamer, 1931), Harborview Hospital First Hill (1931) (**Figure 33**), the U.S. Marine Hospital / PAC Med on Beacon Hill (1932). A lower-scale example is the Seattle Art Museum / Asian Art Museum in Volunteer Park (Bebb and Gould, 1932).

Material Features

Traditional exterior materials used in the early 20th century on downtown buildings include cut and polished stone, masonry and cast stone, while technical advancement introduced enameled steel panels, reflective, tempered and laminated glass, glass tiles and glass block, decorative metal screens, and aluminum window frames. Seattle buildings from this period are often clad in terra cotta (“baked earth”), which was also used for decoration because of the plastic nature of its mold-making, variety of textures and colors and reflective glazes. This material also provided a fireproof and weatherproof skin.

⁷⁰ Botham, February 26, 2021.

⁷¹ Grief, 1975, pp. 13–16.

In the Northwest, local manufacturers of terra cotta, such as the Northern Clay Company, Auburn, and the Denny Renton Clay and Coal Company were organized by 1900. These firms provided materials for many of the region's early 20th century buildings, including the permanent structures at the 1909 Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition. In 1925 the two companies were acquired through mergers by the large California manufacturer, Gladding McBean. By that date terra cotta was produced in a wide range of products and colors, highly glazed or mottled finishes, and decorative shapes from Classical, Beaux Arts, Mediterranean, Gothic Revival, Art Deco and other eclectic styles.

Seattle saw the use of terra cotta on masonry structures as early as the 1890s, as represented by Pioneer Square buildings designed with Sullivanesque and Richardsonian Romanesque elements, such as the Delmar Hotel (1890), Pioneer Building (1892), Arlington Building (1901), Seattle Quilt Building (1904) and City Club (1890/1905) where terra cotta complemented or replaced cut stone.

However, the unique advantages of terra cotta emerged only later with the building of skyscrapers: the material was less costly and far lighter weight than stone, and this lent its use as cladding on tall steel frame structures, such as the Smith Tower (1912-1914), Arctic Club (1914), and Dexter Horton Building (1922). These are among the 120 examples of early 20th century Seattle downtown terra cotta buildings catalogued by Allied Arts in 1986. Others that demonstrate the material's expressive range include the Union Stable (1909), Cobb Building (1909), Joshua Green Building (1913), Arctic Club (1914-1917), Coliseum Theater (1916), Terminal Sales Building (1923), Camlin Hotel (1926), Mann Building (1926), Olympic Tower (1929), Old Federal Building (1932), Woolworth Building (1939), Seattle Labor Temple (1942), and Sailors Union of the Pacific Building (1954).⁷²

Throughout the 1920s terra cotta continued to be used on smaller scale buildings and concrete frame structures as well as steel framed skyscrapers. This was the case with the Continental Hotel / Hotel Seattle where the fire-resistant and noise-abating concrete frame was finished with brick, and terra cotta used for decorative elements. As was popular in this period terra cotta was used also, "to clad the street level facades to provide a more elegant contact with pedestrians."⁷³

With rising production costs and the advancement of the Great Depression the use of terra cotta declined. Its popularity diminished with changing taste and the run-up to World War. Gladding McBean closed its Auburn and Van Asselt facilities and moved their operations to Renton, and it later consolidated manufacturing in a single facility in Lincoln, California. With the rise of post-war Modernism, symbolic decoration was eliminated in favor of abstraction, and buildings received less costly and planer cladding. Thus, the terra cotta buildings that remain in Seattle represent a unique early 20th century period of technological, cultural, and aesthetic change.

The Original Designers – Architects Stuart and Wheatley

The Continental Hotel was designed by architects Bertram Dudley Stuart, Jr. and Arthur Wheatley, whose Seattle partnership was active from ca 1925 to 1930. Other Seattle buildings designed by the firm include the Landham Residential Hotel; and a number of University District buildings: the Sigma

⁷² Allied Arts of Seattle, *Impressions of Imagination: Terra Cotta Seattle*, surveyed downtown buildings, most located between Yesler and Wall Streets, pp. 58-71. Dates cited are from this publication.

⁷³ *Ibid*, p. 10.

Alpha Epsilon Fraternity House at 4506 17th Avenue NE (1925); Davison Apartments, a 22-unit building at 5003 15th Avenue NE (1926) and the Levere Apartments at 4105 Brooklyn Avenue NE (1927); along with the Sunset Electric Company Building #3 at 1111 E Pine Street on Capitol Hill (1925-1926, demolished); and the Garfield Building, 715 24th Avenue (1929). After his partnership with Wheatley ended, Stuart went on to establish partnerships with other well-known architects: Stuart, Kirk, and Durham, Architects in 1941 to 1945, and Stuart and Durham in 1941 to 1952.

Buildings designed by Stuart and Wheatley for Stephen Berg include the Biltmore Apartments (1923), Claremont Apartment Hotel (1925), and the Bergonian / Mayflower Hotel (1926-1927), as well as the Continental Hotel. Stuart and Wheatley or Stuart alone is also attributed with the design of the Exeter House Apartments (1927), and the Marlborough Apartments (1926-1927).⁷⁴

Bertram D. Stuart, Jr. (1885 – 1977)

Bertram Dudley Stuart (**Figure 14**) was born in London, England, the son of a local merchant in the Surrey district of Epsom. He spent his early years in Kent, but his educational background has not been verified. By 1910 he was living in Seattle with his mother and stepfather, Arthur Sackville-West was identified as a draftsman in the local directory. (His mother had remarried in ca. 1890. She and her husband migrated to the U.S. and settled in Seattle.)⁷⁵ Stuart married in Seattle in 1910.

A talented and very prolific designer, he worked initially as a draftsman for Saunders and Lawton, Architects in 1910 before moving to Canada. He opened his own sole practice in Edmonton, Alberta, and then moved to Vancouver where he and his wife had two children in 1912 and 1914.

Stuart's early Canadian projects involved the Palace of Horticulture for the Vancouver Exhibition Association (1911) and the Forestry Pavilion / B.C. Wood Products Building for the Hastings Park Exhibition Grounds (1913), a rustic Classical style wood framed and log structure designed in partnership with Howard E. White. The two men practiced together in ca. 1913 to 1915, when Stuart moved permanently to Seattle.⁷⁶ His other projects in British Columbia include a rooming house for M.K. Nigore (1911), Jean Templar Residence (1912), Broker's Arcade Pedestrian Passage (1912), an apartment Block for William Dobson (1912), stores and apartments in the Poulson Block (1912), and the Campbell Apartment Block in Vancouver (1914). With Howard E. White Stuart designed a number of other residential projects in Vancouver including the Collingwood Residence for Edward J. White (1912), Point Grey Residence for H. N. Halberg & Co (1912), Point Grey Residence for William W. Ingledew (1913) and a residence for Mrs. Philip W. Burbridge (1913), along with the

⁷⁴ Seattle Dept. of Neighborhoods, "Historical Sites Inventory, Holland Building, 1417 4th Avenue" ca. 2006.

⁷⁵ Biographic details in this section came from Michelson, "Stuart and Wheatley (Architects)," "Bertram Dudley Stuart, Jr., (Architect)," and (Arthur Wheatly (Architect)" in PCAD. The Canadian work by Stuart is listed the *Biographic Dictionary of Architects in Canada, 1800 -1950*, <http://dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/>. See also Ochsner, *Shaping Seattle Architecture*, 2014, 478-79; and D. Luxton, *Building the West: The Early Architects of British Columbia*, 2003, pp. 380, 519.

⁷⁶ While establishing his early professional career in Canada, Stuart continued to maintain close ties to family members in Seattle. He became a Canadian citizen, according to his World War I registration card, and moved to Seattle in late June 1915. He began the process to become an American citizen in 1924; finally achieving this in 1931.

Watson Bros. Fish Curing Building (1913), Rowling Apartments (1913), and the Bachelor's Club (1913). In a separate partnership, Stuart designed a Chinese Association Building (1912-1913).⁷⁷

In Seattle he established and operated a sole practice, B. Dudley Stuart, Architect, from 1918 to ca. 1924 before partnering with architect Arthur Wheatley. The two men are credited with many apartment houses and commercial and light industrial buildings as well as a sorority house and the hotel buildings for Stephen Berg. **(Figures 17-19)** Bertram Dudley Stuart continued to work in several partnerships and as a sole practitioner until 1971. He died in 1977 in Seattle at the age of 92.

Arthur Wheatley (1885 – 1916)

Wheatley, like Stuart, came from England. He was born in Barnsley, Yorkshire, on December 13, 1885, and resided in Britain to at least until 1901 according to 1891 and 1901 census records. In March 1919 he and his wife, Ethel, arrived by ship in the U.S. They soon after came to Seattle from Vancouver, B.C. Wheatley received his naturalization papers in September 1919, and became a citizen in 1930. The U.S. Census from that year noted his family's residence in Seattle and his work as an architect in the industry simply as "houses." In the 1940 U.S. Census he was noted as an engineer working on WPA projects. Wheatley died in Seattle in May 7, 1946, at the age of 61.⁷⁸

Wheatley practiced as a sole proprietor in Seattle from 1920 to 1924 and in association with architect Edward Thomas Osborn in 1923-1924. He joined Stuart in partnership in 1925 to 1930, and was again a sole proprietor from 1931 to 1942. One of his early projects was the Lockhart House (1919-1920), a two-story Colonial style residence at 201 E Boston on North Capitol Hill. Wheatley designed a four-story addition to the 1909 Holland Building at 1415 4th Avenue in 1923 **(Figure 21)**. He is also credited for the design of the Central Auto Terminal Project, a six-story Tudor Revival warehouse/retail building in association with Thomas Osborn (1923-1924, unbuilt).⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Luxton, 2003, does not identify the specific Chinese Benevolent Association building by name or address.

⁷⁸ Biographic information about Wheatley from Ancestry.com, including U.S. Census records, 1930 and 1940, Draft Registration 1919, Naturalization record, 1901; Washington State Department of Health Death Record, file 2057; and obituary, *Seattle Star*, May 7, 1946.

⁷⁹ Wheatley's professional history from Michelson, PCAD, and also *Domestic Engineering*, March 29, 1919, p. 585.

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Note:

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MOHAI	Museum of History and Industry
PSRA	Puget Sound Regional Archives
SDCI	City of Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections
SMA	City of Seattle Municipal Archives
SPL	Seattle Public Library Photo Collection
UWLSC	University of Washington Libraries Special Collections

Unless indicated otherwise all contemporary photos in this report were taken by Susan Boyle of BOLA, or Matt Zinski of Weinstein A + U.

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Drawings

A 2022 set of record drawings showing existing conditions with a site plan, floor plans, roof plans, and elevations is provided with this report.

Historic Images

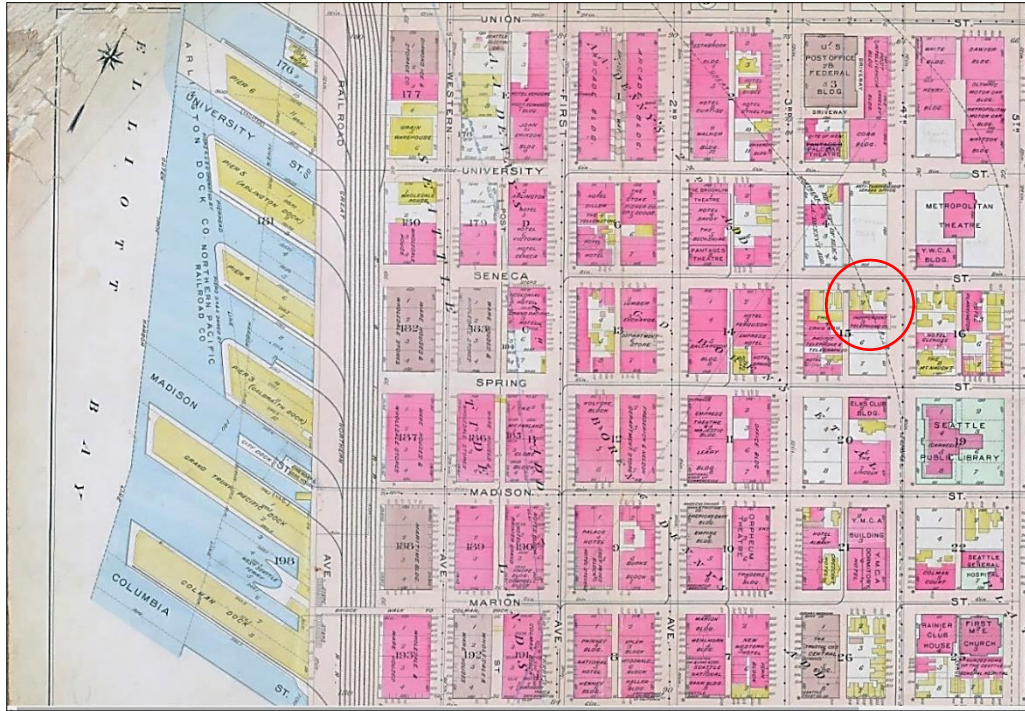
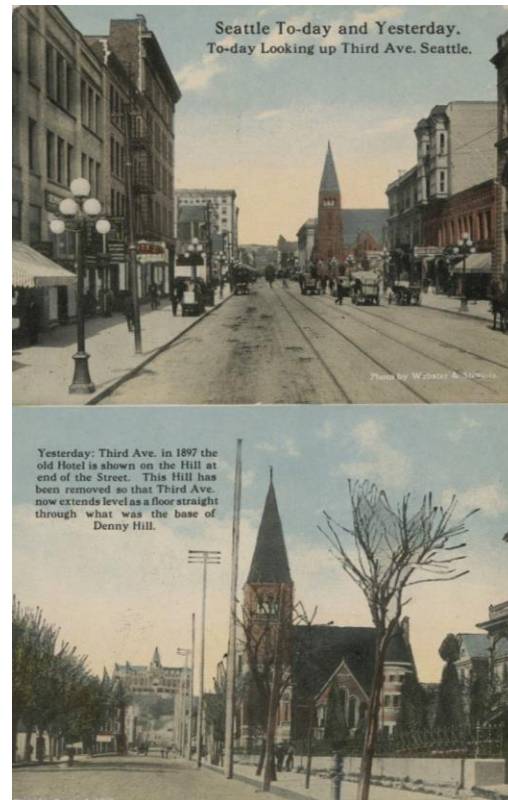


Figure 1. Left, much of downtown west of 3rd Avenue was developed by the early 20th century as indicated on this 1912 Baist map, Plate 2. The hotel site, within a red circle, contained wood frame dwellings. (Baist map courtesy of Dorpat)

Figures 2 & 3. Below left and right, street grading, looking north on 4th Avenue north of Madison Street ca. 1906. Development in the area was limited by topography and infrastructure projects. Many of the buildings at this time were small scale wood frame dwellings or bearing masonry commercial structure. (SPL, spl_dr018)



Origins of the CBD



Figures 4 & 5. Parts of the city's commercial core urbanized in the earliest decades of the 20th century. Above left, a view looking north on 2nd Avenue from Spring Street in 1907. Above right, comparable views looking north on 3rd Avenue from Marion and Spring Streets ca 1900 and 1917.

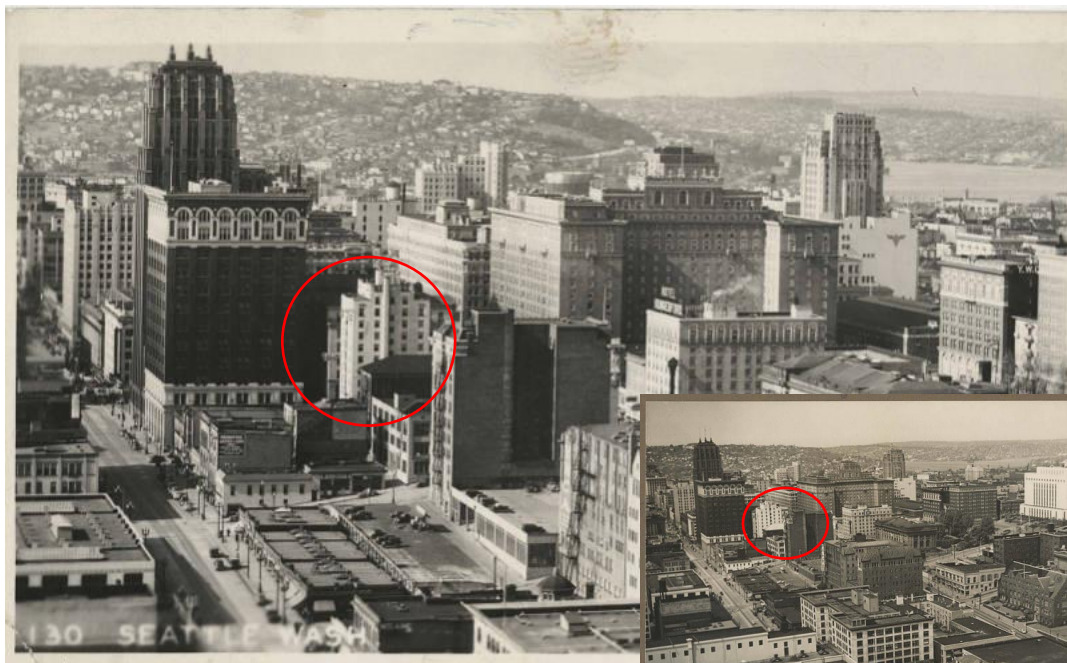
Figure 6. Below, looking south on 2nd Avenue from Spring Street in 1911. (SPL, spl_shp43043) By this date 2nd Avenue had seen construction of larger department stores and office buildings.





Figure 7. Above, looking north along 3rd Avenue north of James Street in 1914. (SPL, spl_shp7383).

Figures 8 & 9. Below, looking north of Marion Street ca. 1941, with 3rd Avenue on the left. The hotel is circled. (SPL, spl_shp40969) It is also apparent in as a light colored, building in the inset view from 1949. The building's stepped massing reflects its Gothic Revival/Art Deco skyscraper style, also expressed in the tall Northern Life Tower to the north (SPL, spl_shp22845)



Early Seattle Hotels



Figure 10. Above, a postcard view of Seattle hotels in 1907, clockwise from upper left the Rainier Grand, Savoy, Butler, Lincoln, and Stander. Hotel construction boomed in the years leading up to the 1909 Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition, and many of the larger buildings also served as residential hotels. (SPL, spl_shp14461)

Figure 11. Below left, the Leamington Hotel at 317 Spring Street, one block south of the subject property in 1917. (Polk Directory) **Figure 12.** Below right, the much larger Olympic Hotel, built in 1924, a half-block to the northeast. This view looks northeast and shows the original entry on Seneca Street. (SPL, spl_shp11682)



The Original Owner and Designer



Figure 13. Far left, a photo portrait of Stephen Berg, the original owner and developer of the hotel. (Photo courtesy of the Berg Family in Festin, et al, *The Mayflower Park Hotel*, 2014)

Figure 14. Left, a photo portrait of architect B. Dudley Stuart, Jr. ca. 1951 (Michaelson, PCAD, from Ancestry.com)

Figures 15 & 16. Developer/contractor Stephen Berg built three large hotel projects in 1926-1927 designed by architects Stuart and Wheatly: the Continental Hotel, and the 10-story Claremont / Andra Hotel, 2000 4th Ave. below left, 1925-1926 (MOHAI, 1983.10.3745), and the 12-story Bergonian /Mayflower Hotel, 405 Olive Way, below right. (Festin, et al, 2014) The developer and architects also collaborate to design and build the Biltmore Apartments (1923) and the Biltmore Annex.



Other Projects by Architects Stuart & Wheatly



Figures 17 – 21. Above, apartment buildings from ca. 1927 and 1923 (UWLSC SEA2574 & 2575). Left, the Roundcliffe Apartments, ca. 1925 (UWLSC SEA2576). Below left, the Christie & Co. Building, 1516 11th Avenue, 1927 (UWLSC SEA2570). Below, the 1909 Holland Building with the architects' four-story 1923 addition (UWLSC SEA2570)





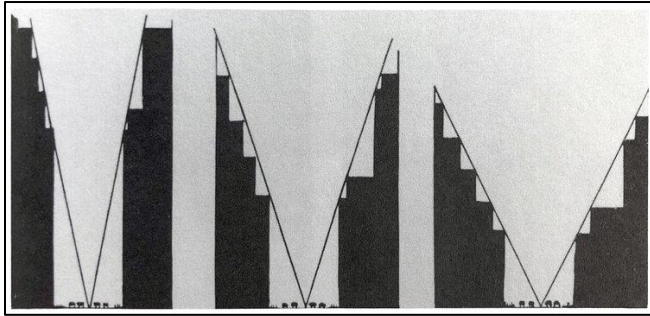
Figure 23. Right, looking northeast on 4th Avenue from Spring Street in 1950, past the Hungerford Hotel sign, with the Hotel Earl and Northern Life Tower in the background (SPL spl_shp_20053).

Figure 24. Below, looking northwest on 5th Avenue at the Olympic Hotel in 1951 when its main entry was on Seneca.(SPL, spl_shp_20050).

Hotels in the CBD

Figure 22. Left, a night view looking south on 4th Avenue from Seneca 1928 with the Hotel Gowman. (The Hotel Gowman site is the present W Hotel.) (SMA 7236).





The Origins of Stepped Massing

Figure 25. Above left, diagrammatic profiles cited in the 1916 Zoning Resolution of New York, show street setback requirements that created the highly influential stepped skyscraper.

Figure 26. Above right, drawings by Hugh Ferriss of a setback and tower New York skyscraper of the 1920s. (Botham, both views)



Figure 27. Above left, the stepped massing of the Northern Life Tower in 1929 (SPL, spl_shp_00228). **Figure 28.** Above right, a view of the hotel and the Northern Life Tower in the background in a view of the former Seattle Public Library in ca. 1960 (SPL, spl_shp_41102).



Other Buildings with Stepped Massing

Figures 29-31. Art Deco style lodging buildings with stepped massing include the Roosevelt Hotel / Hotel Theodore, left (1928), (Downtown Seattle Association, 2018), and the landmark Washington Athletic Club, below (1929-1930) (Joe Mabel, photographer, Wikimedia Commons, 2015).





Art Deco style stepped massing was used on institutional and commercial buildings.

Figures 32. Left, the 1929 Exchange Building (Steve Morgan, photographer, Wikimedia Commons, 2015).

Figure 33. Below left, the architect's sketch of Harborview Hospital, ca. 1931 (University of Washington Libraries Special Collections, SEA3111).

Figure 34. Below, the wedding cake-like massing is apparent in the ca. 1932 Federal Office Building (General Services Administration).





The Post-War Hotel Earl

The hotel's location in the middle of the city's post-war central business district is evident in the historical views of the downtown.

Figure 35. Left, a view looking west on Seneca Street from 6th Avenue with the Hotel Earl with its distinctive rooftop sign in the background left, April 1957 (SPL, spl_wl_str_00081.) This sign was removed in the 1960s.

Figure 36. Below, an aerial view of post-war Seattle's central waterfront and downtown ca 1946. The hotel (circled in red) is a small, light colored tower in the dense fabric of the city's central downtown core. (Sherrard, *Seattle Times Pacific Northwest Magazine*, August 19, 2021.)





**The Original
Continental Hotel**

Figure 37. Left, a historic view of the Continental Hotel, ca. 1926 (UWLSC, SEA2558). This view, looking south across Seneca Street, shows the building's primary north façade as originally constructed with its rod-supported entry marquee, and a large storefront opening to the westernmost basement space. Note the modulation of planes that emphasize the building's verticality, the single and paired, flat and arched head windows, and the terra cotta cladding at the base and Gothic-inspired upper ornamentation. Projections over the alley are the cast concrete landings of the exit stairs.

DISTRICT 158	2 ADDITION C.D. BOREN'S		NAME EARL HOTEL	
SECTION WLY 1/2	TWP. N. RANGE	EWN: BLOCK 15	TRACT OR LOT NO. 2	
DESCRIPTION	Wly 1/2			
3 ADDRESS-PROPERTY 315-19 Seneca St.	CONT. PURCHASER			
4 FEE OWNER Frederick T. Fischer	12-19-35			
5 ARCHITECT	CONTRACTOR			
ORIG. COST	BASEMENT Full	STORE FRONTS	EXTRA FEATURES Fire escape inside 10 landings	
6 BUILDING	60 x 60 Concrete	Plate glass	Concrete stairs iron railing	
Hotel	Concrete floor 50%	Copper sash	CONSTRUCTION Good - Reinforced Concrete	
11 Stories	50% Plastered	Terracotta Bulk hd.	REFRIGERATION 1 Small Mezz floor above lobby.	
1 Store	50% Terrazzo floor	EXTERIOR	7 CONDITION: EXTERIOR Good INTERIOR Good FOUND Good	
90 Rooms	FOUNDATION	Brick Reinf. conc.	8 MAIN SUPPORT COLUMN CONCR. FOOTING CONCR. SPAN FT.	
Basement 1-2 room	Concrete	Terra cotta to 2nd	9 FIRST FLOOR JOINT Concrete INCH CENTERS BRIDGED	
apartment 2-4	Class A. 712 x 272	Floor " Trim	10 FINISHED BUILDING	
Interior Sound proof	ROOF	Window sills to 2nd	11 GROSS INCOME \$ EXPENSE \$ NET INCOME \$	
Post & beam	Ter & gravel	Fir ornamental &	12 DEPRECIATION: COND. 77 % OBSLSE. % ECON. SUIT. % TOTAL 30 %	
Concrete & steel (trim		From 18th flr. to	YEAR BUILT 1926 REMODELED No	
Part. usual to type		Pent house	EFFECTIVE AGE 10 YEARS FUTURE LIFE 50 YEARS	
FLOORS			DIMENSIONS 60 x 60 x 18'4" SQUARE FT. 3600 AREA CUBIC FT. 3600	
Fire PLACE				
PLUMBING				
84 Tubs-leg 87 Toilets 86				
Basins 1 Sink 1 urinal				
1 Drinking fountain				
TILE WORK				
Usual to type				
WIRING				
CONDUIT				
HEATING				
Steam 2 Oil burners				
also summer heater				
ELEVATORS Make unknown				
Pass. 8 landings manual				
LOBBY				
Usual type				
Ceiling - High				
1st to 10th floor 9'2"				
11th Floor 8'4"				
OWNER OR CONTRACT PURCHASER				
REMARKS				
315-19 Seneca St				
MANUAL TO AUTOMATIC				

Figures 38 & 39. Left and below, the King County Assessor's property record card and photo in 1936 when the property was known as the Hotel Earl. The prominent rooftop sign, added ca.1935, was removed ca. 1961 when the hotel was renamed.



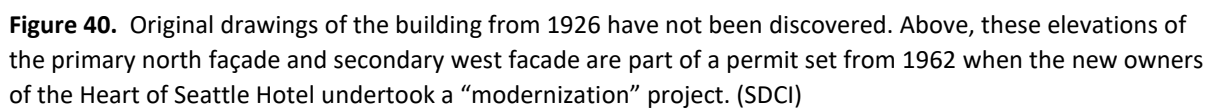




Figure 41. Above, postcard views of the hotel and its interior from the 1960s when it was known as the Heart of Seattle Hotel, a sister lodging establishment to the Edgewater Hotel.

Current Photos - Vicinity

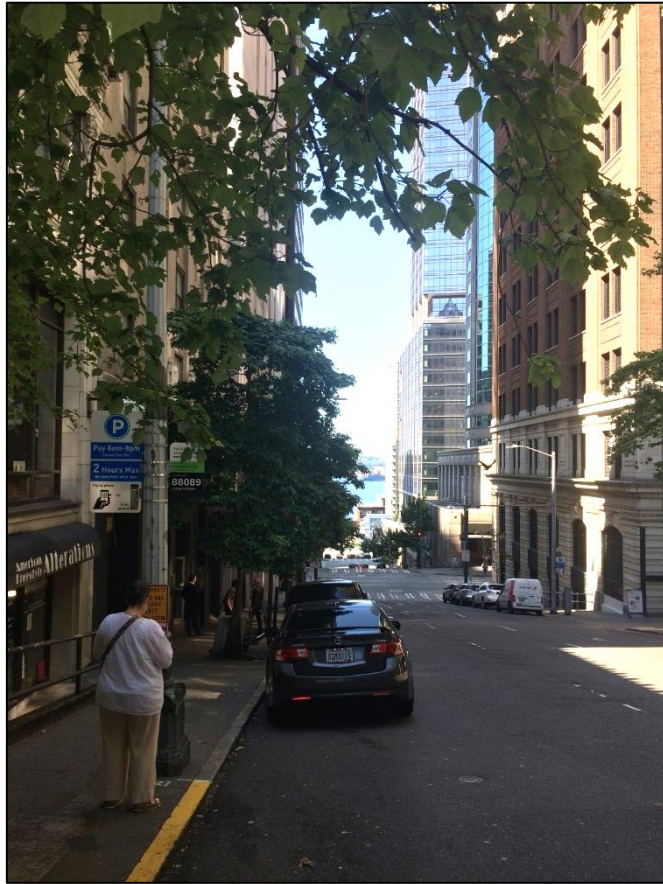


Figures 42A & 42B. Above, an aerial photos from 2021, showing the vicinity of the property in the downtown financial core. The insert shows the hotel on its block. (King County GIS)

Current Photos – The Building and Surrounding Neighborhood



Figure 43. Above, looking southwest at the intersection of 4th Avenue and Seneca Street with the hotel in is sloped mid-block location. The low-scale neighboring building in the foreground at 319 Seneca / 1411 4th Avenue, was built as a bank in 1921. To the west of the hotel (background right), at 1122 3rd Avenue, is a 15-story commercial building dating from 1955, and behind it to the south (background left) there is the Hotel Monaco, which occupies a 1969 office building.



Figures 44 & 45. Above, views on Seneca Street. Above left, looking down (west). Above right, looking up (southeast) on Seneca Street.

Figure 46. Left, looking north from the uppermost roof at nearby office buildings of different scales and eras of construction in the downtown core.

The Exterior



Figure 47. Looking southeast at the primary north facade and west facade. (Kidder Matthews, 2020)



Figure

48. Looking southwest at an upper portion of the east and north facades and the uppermost setback floor.



Figure 49. Above, Looking upward at the south façade.

Figure 50. Below, looking upward at the west façade and egress stairs above the alley.



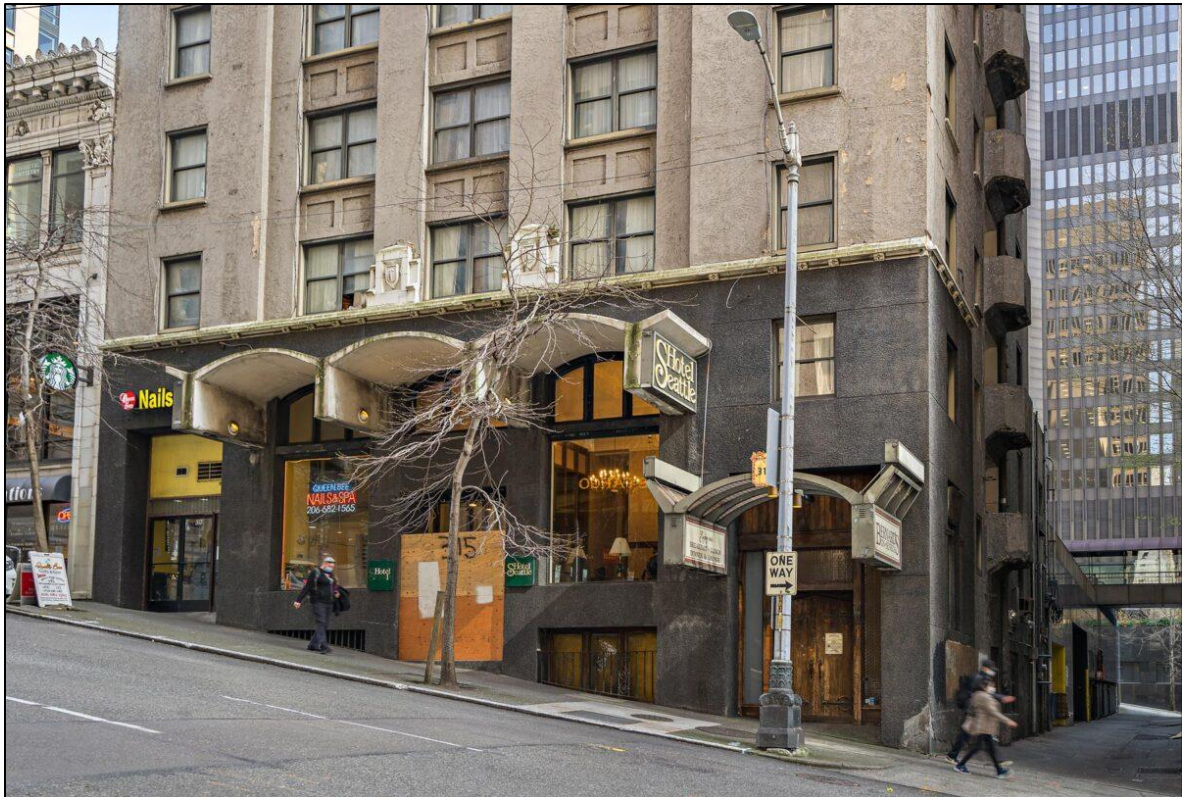


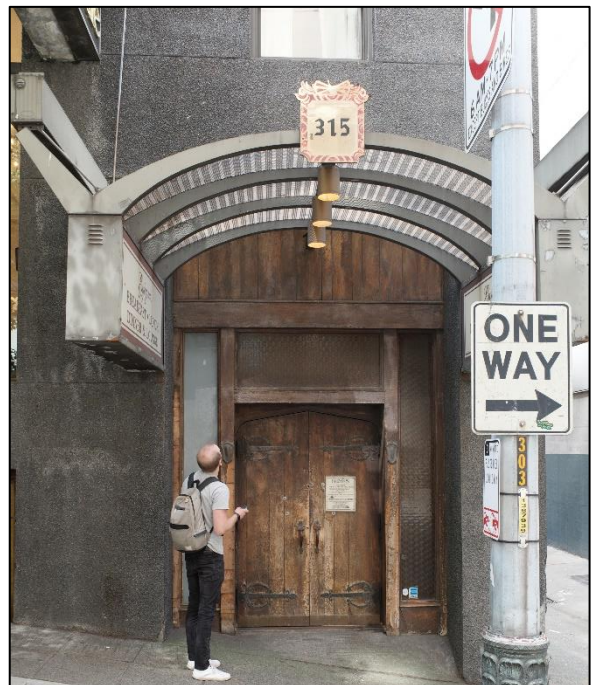
Figure 51. Above, the lower level, north façade with its three thin shell canopies. (Kidder Matthews photo, 2020) **Figures 52 & 53.** Below left, detail view of the lower steel canopy. Right, the base and sidewalk.



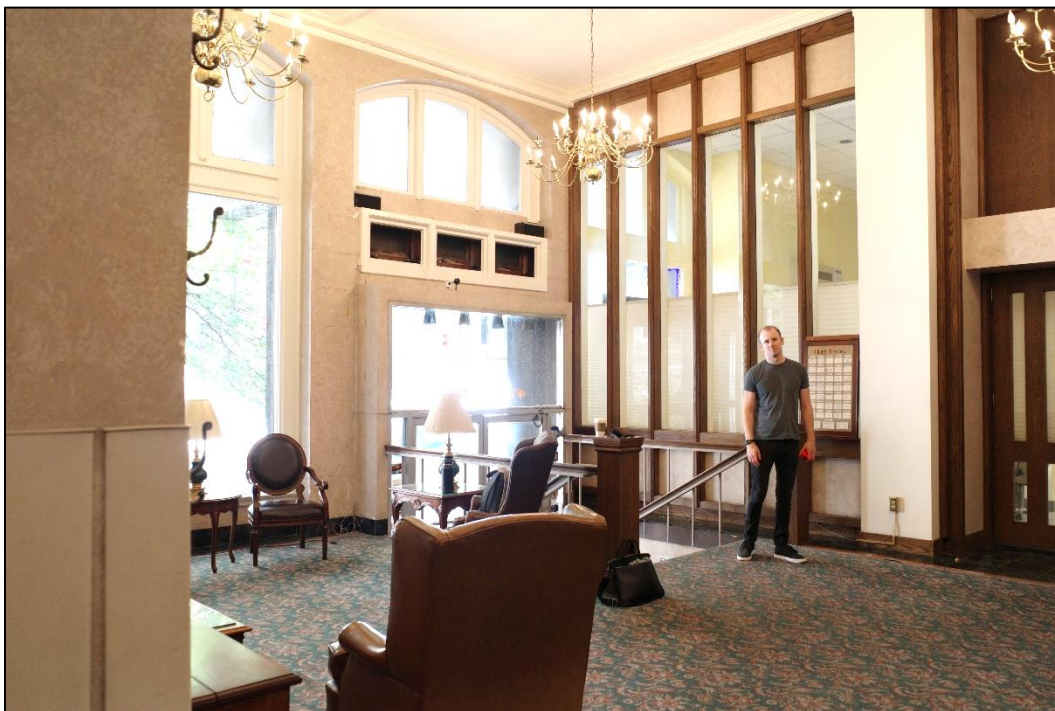


Figures 54 & 55. Above left, the south entry to the retail space at 317 Seneca Street. Above right, the main entry to the hotel lobby. The recessed, aluminum framed storefront entries, sidelights, transoms, and infill date from the 1960s.

Figure 56. Below, the base and basement window along the sidewalk. **Figure 57.** Right, the basement entry at 315 Seneca Street. This non-original rustic style wood door, salvaged from another building, was installed in the 1960s. Canopies date from the same period.



The Interior



Figures 58 & 59. Views looking north at the stairs that rise from main hotel entry, parts of the south storefront and transom windows, and first floor retail space on the east side of the lobby. Most of the current finishes are non-original, and appear to date from the 1960s.



Figure 60. Left, looking southeast in the lobby at the elevator door and entry to the adjacent retail space. These interior features date from the 1960s.

Figure 61. Below, the reception desk.



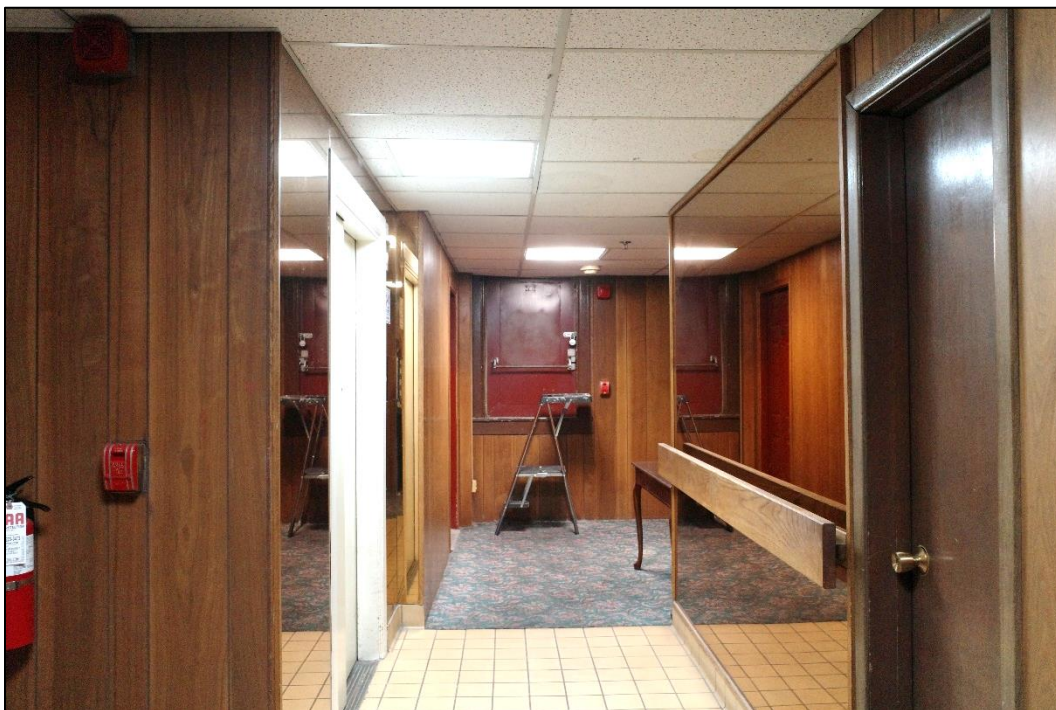


Figures 62 & 63. Above, the basement entry stairs at the northwest corner.



Figures 64 & 65. Left and below, the basement restaurant space and kitchen. (Upper right and left photos, from online, show the former restaurant, Bernard's, when it was operating. Lower photo from Kidder Matthews)





Figures 66 & 67. Above, typical upper floor double-loaded corridors on the 8th and 11th floors.



Figures 68 & 69. Guestrooms on floors 2 – 11 include several suites, such as the room above in the southwest corner, along with standard double rooms, below. (Lower photo, from online Hotel Seattle ca. 2018).



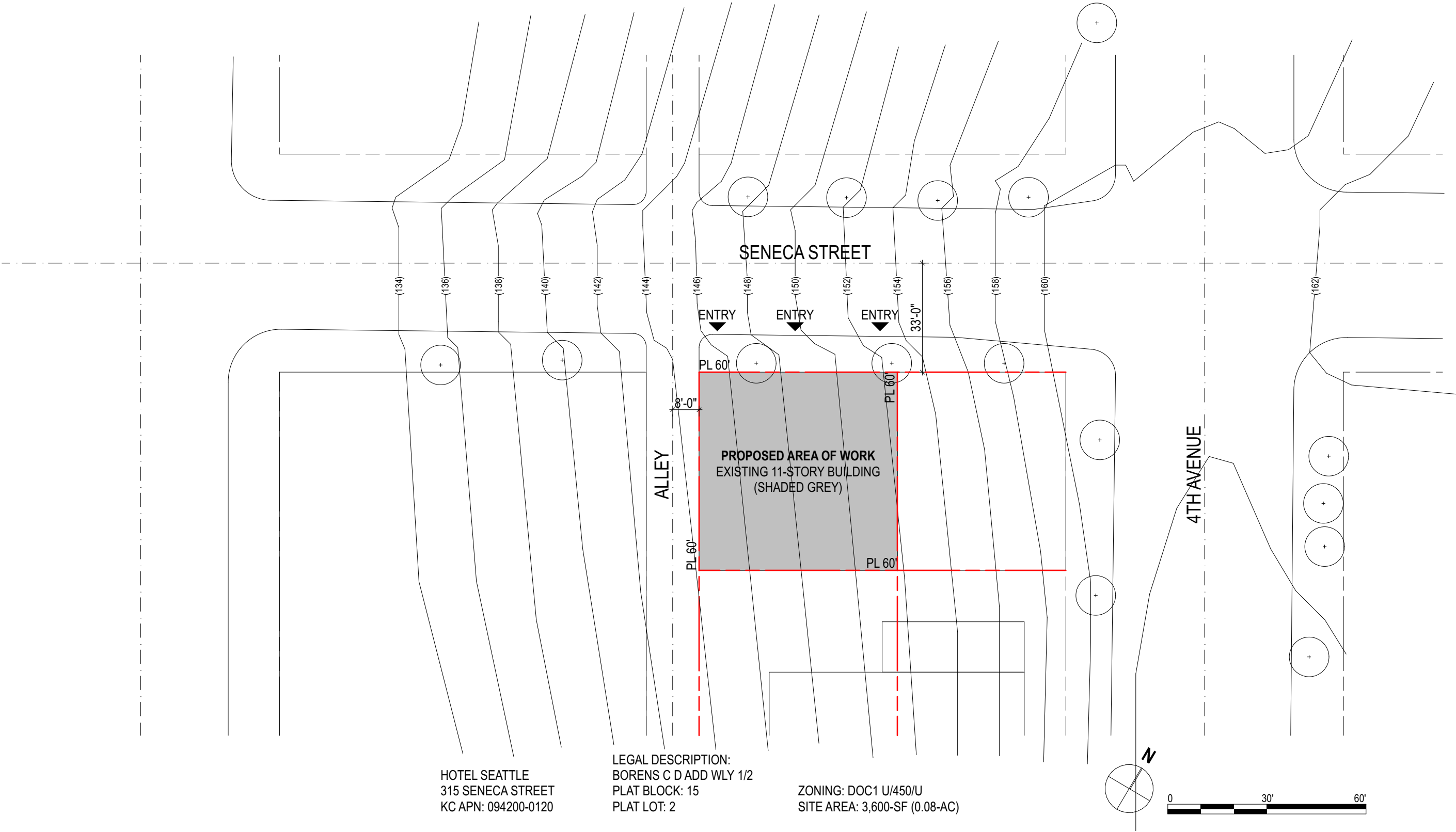


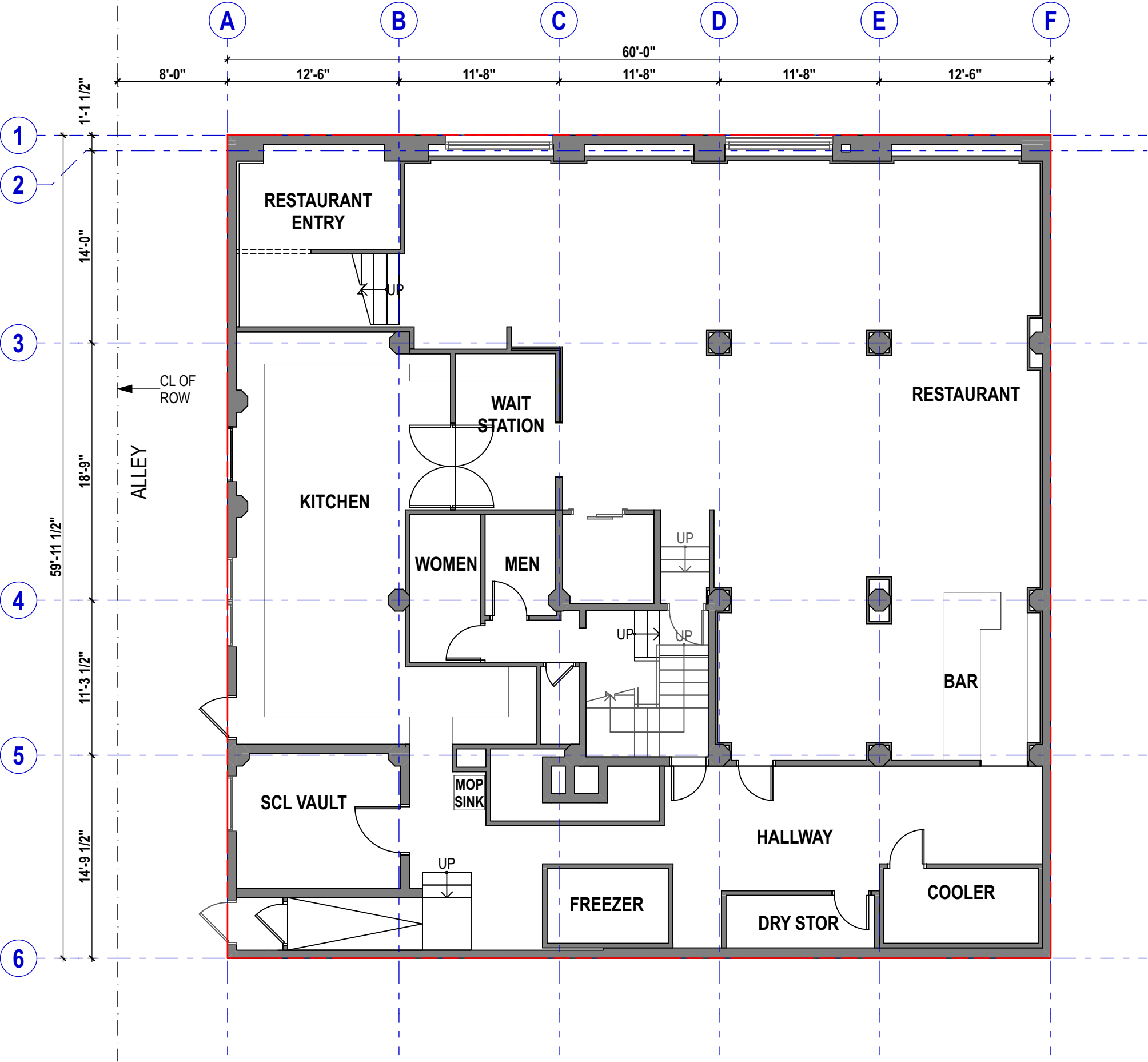
Figure 70. Above, a guestroom on the 11th floor showing the arched head windows on the north façade, 11th floor.

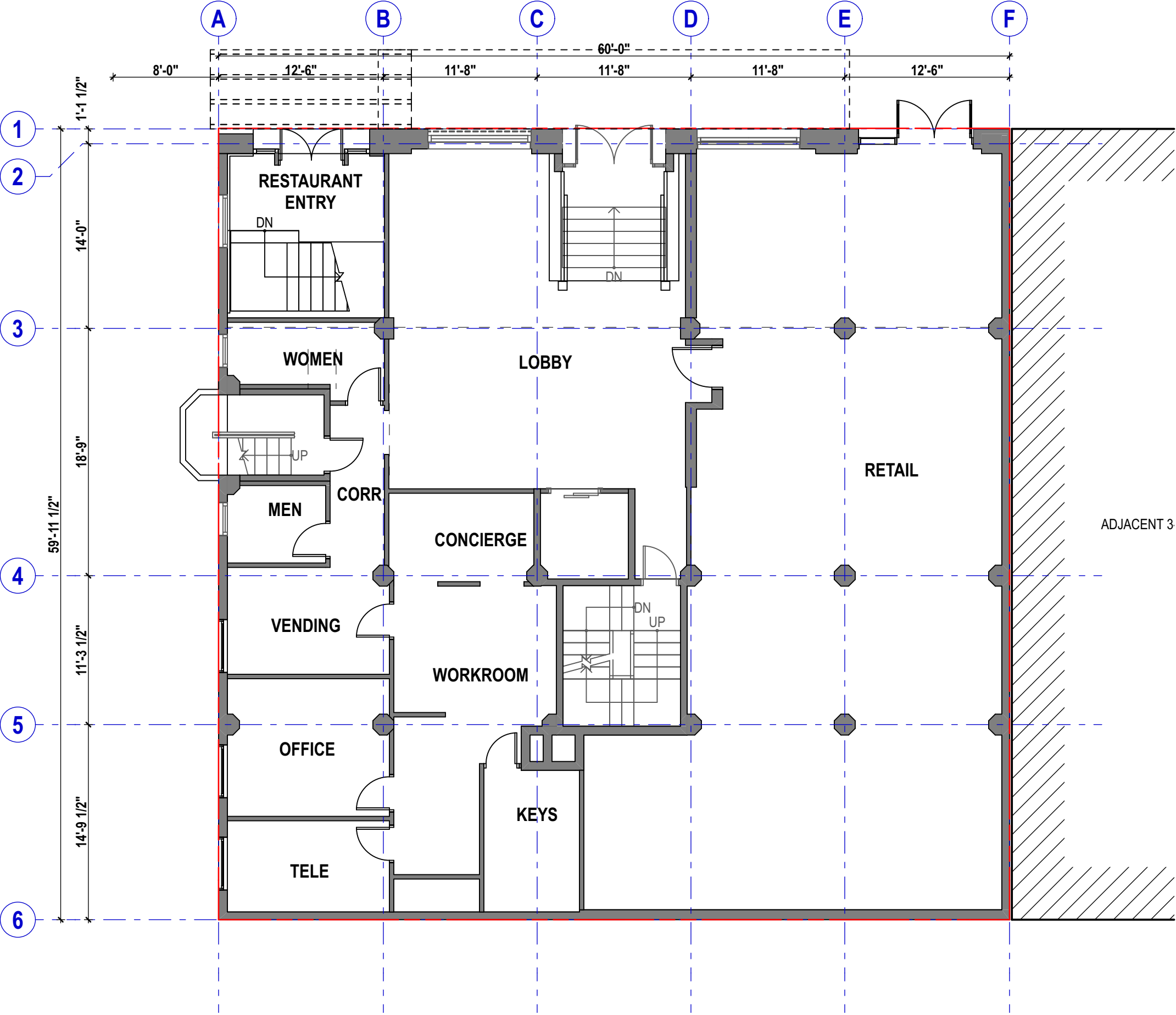


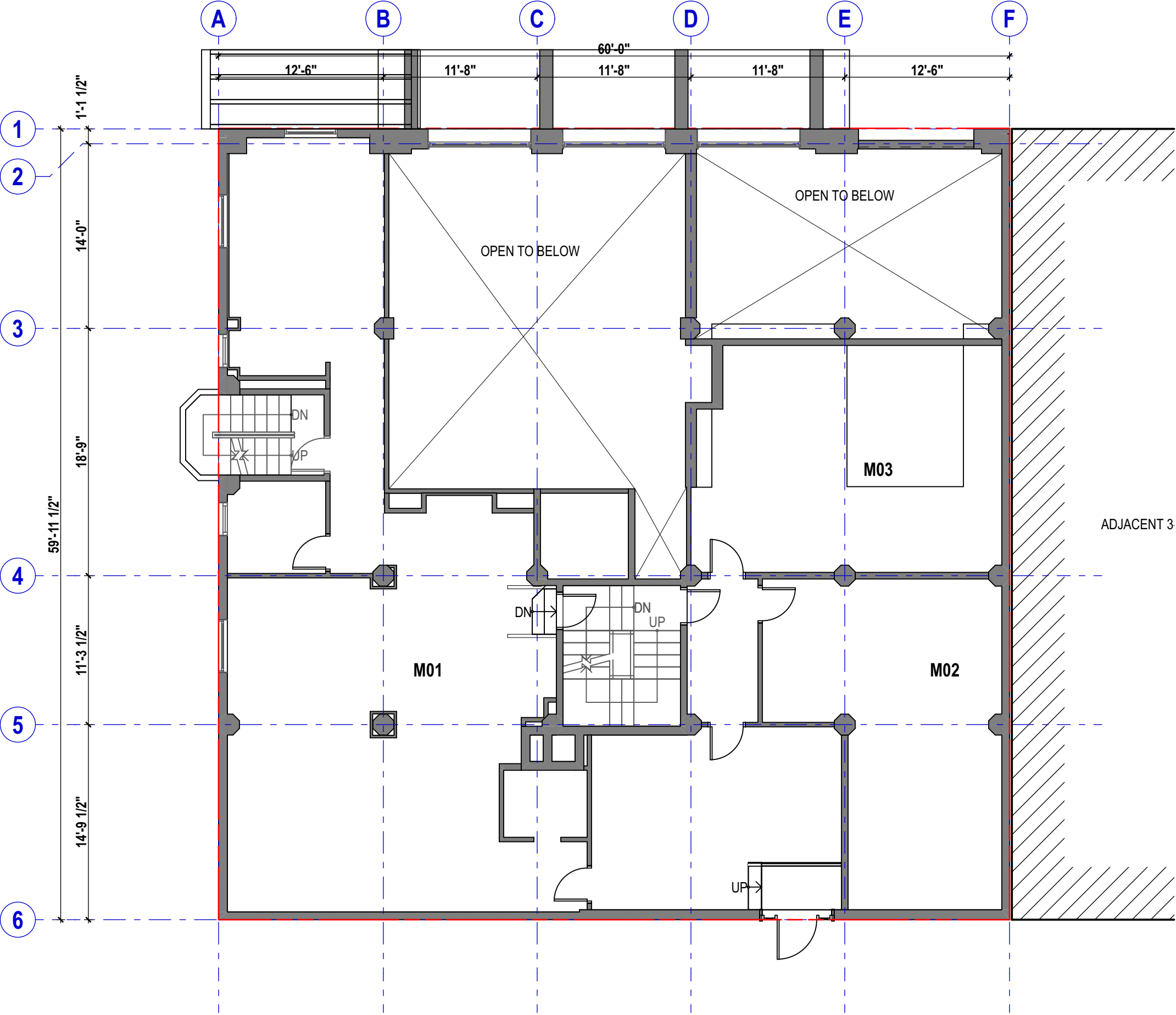
Figure 71. Left, a typical guestroom bath contains a mix of plumbing fixtures, including tub-showers. Some retain hex tile floors and marble thresholds. Non-original finishes includes the suspended ceiling systems in the halls, and guestrooms, in addition to carpet, wall coverings and trim and wood paneling in some hallways.

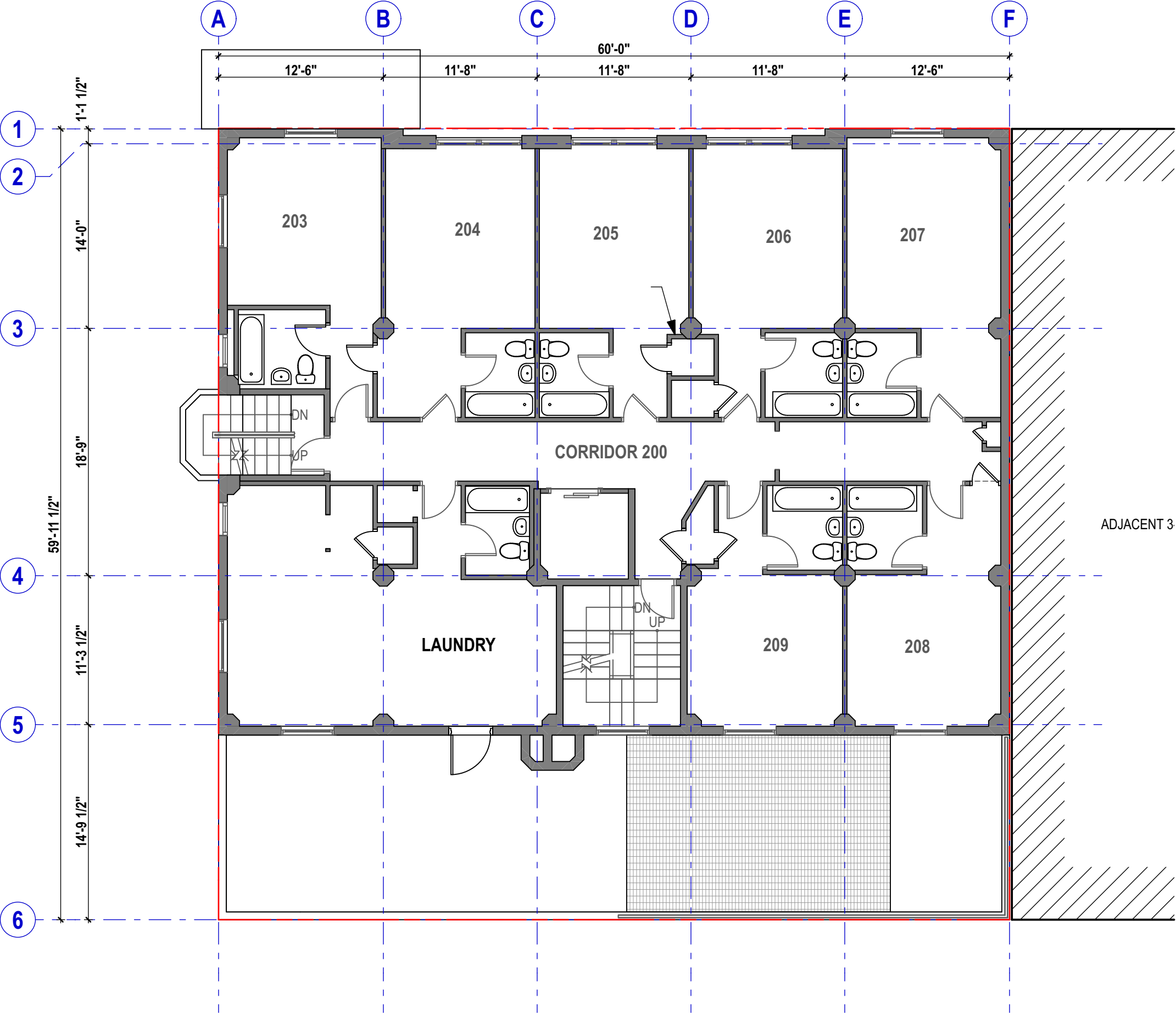
A set of current record drawings, including a site plan, floor and roof plans, elevations, and sections, prepared by the owner's design architect, Weinstein A + U in are provided with this nomination report.

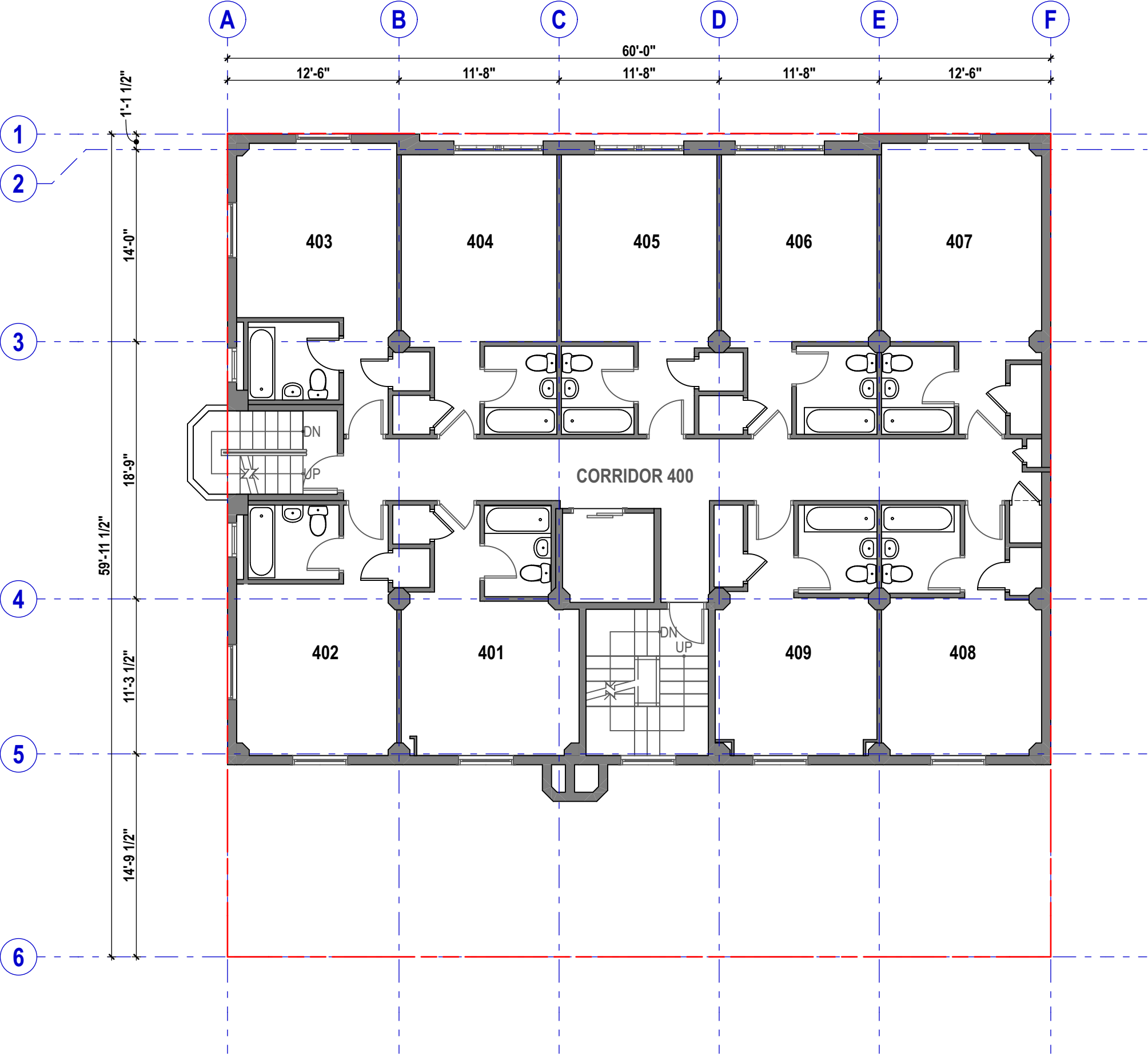


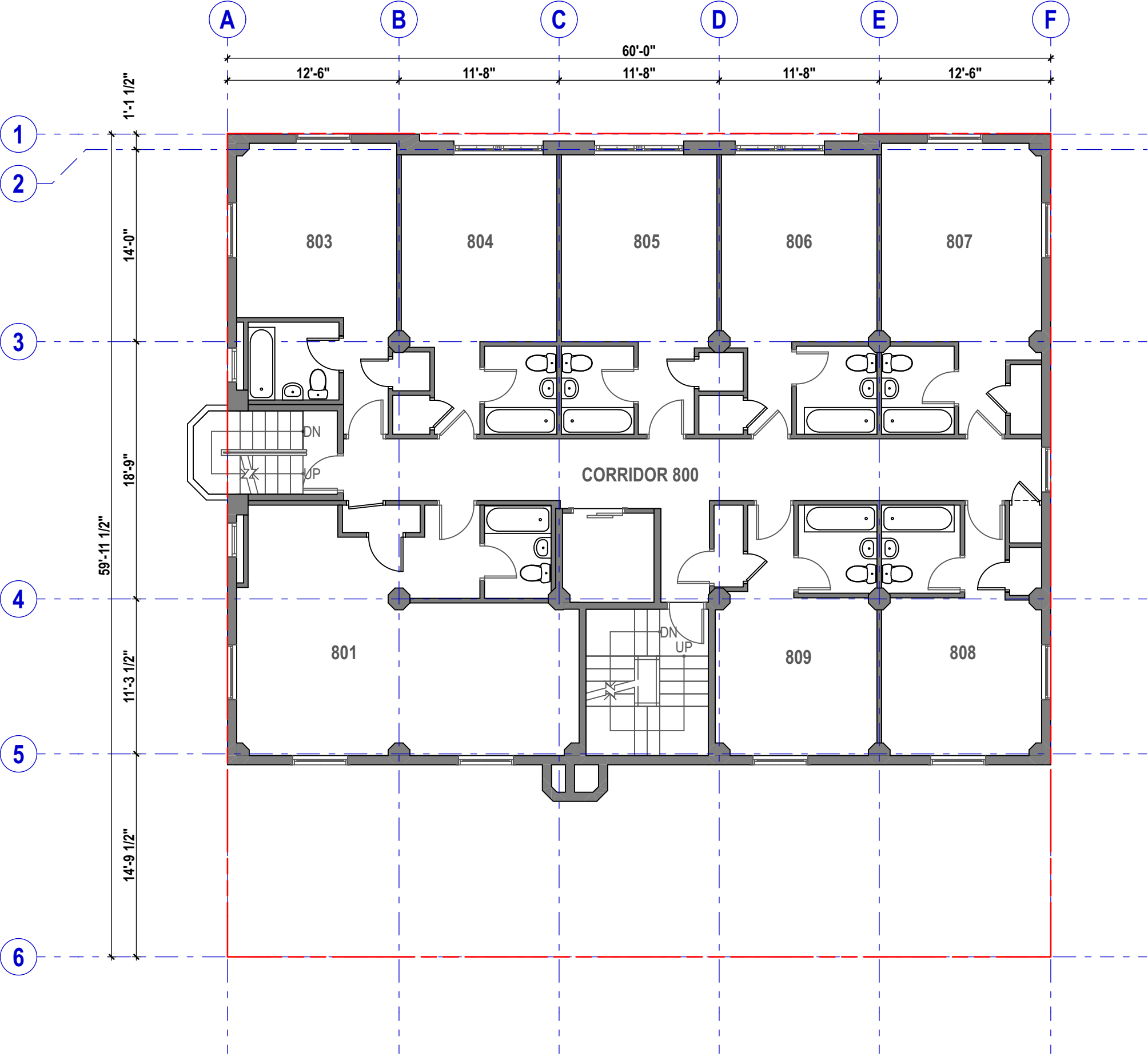


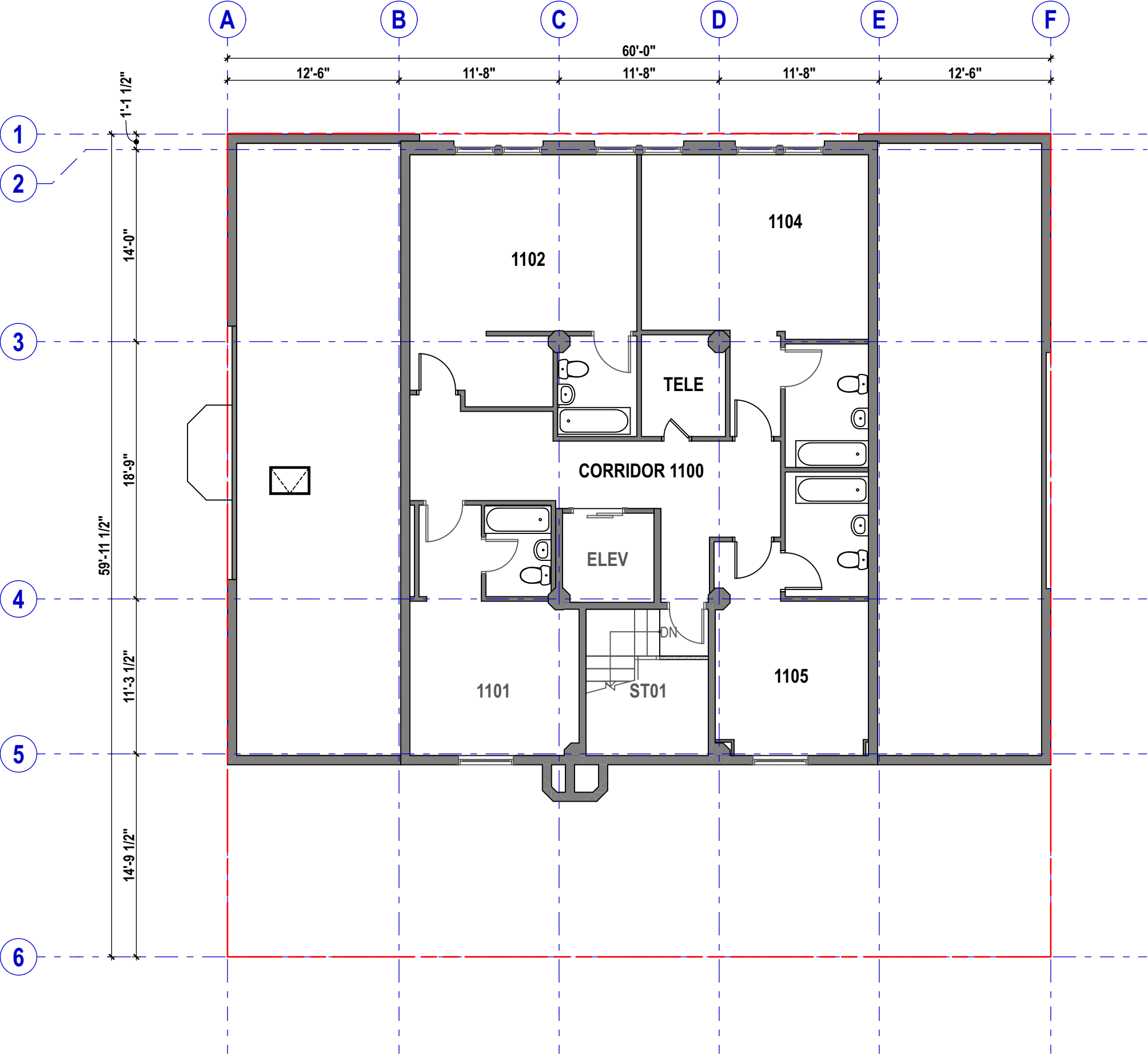


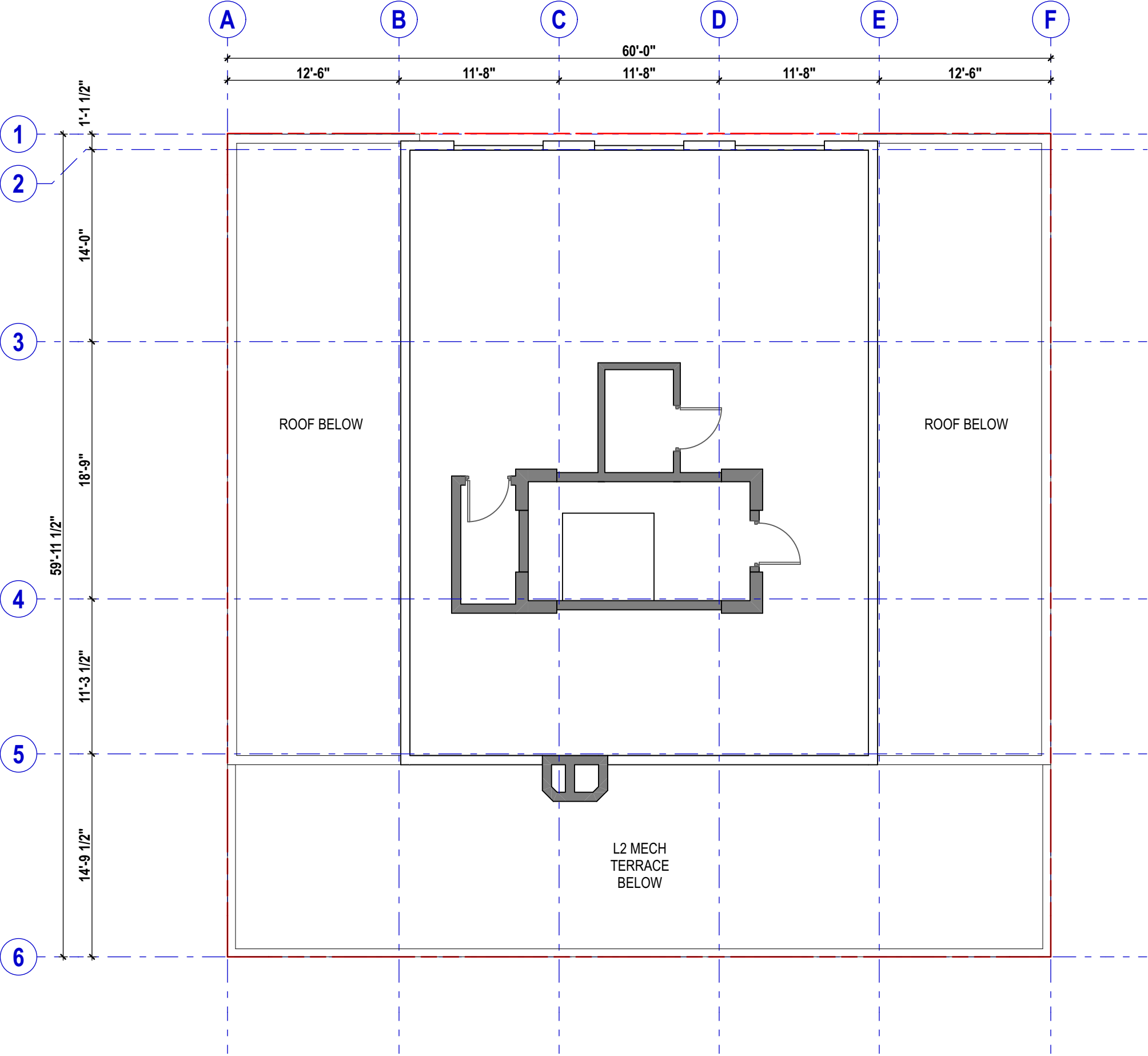


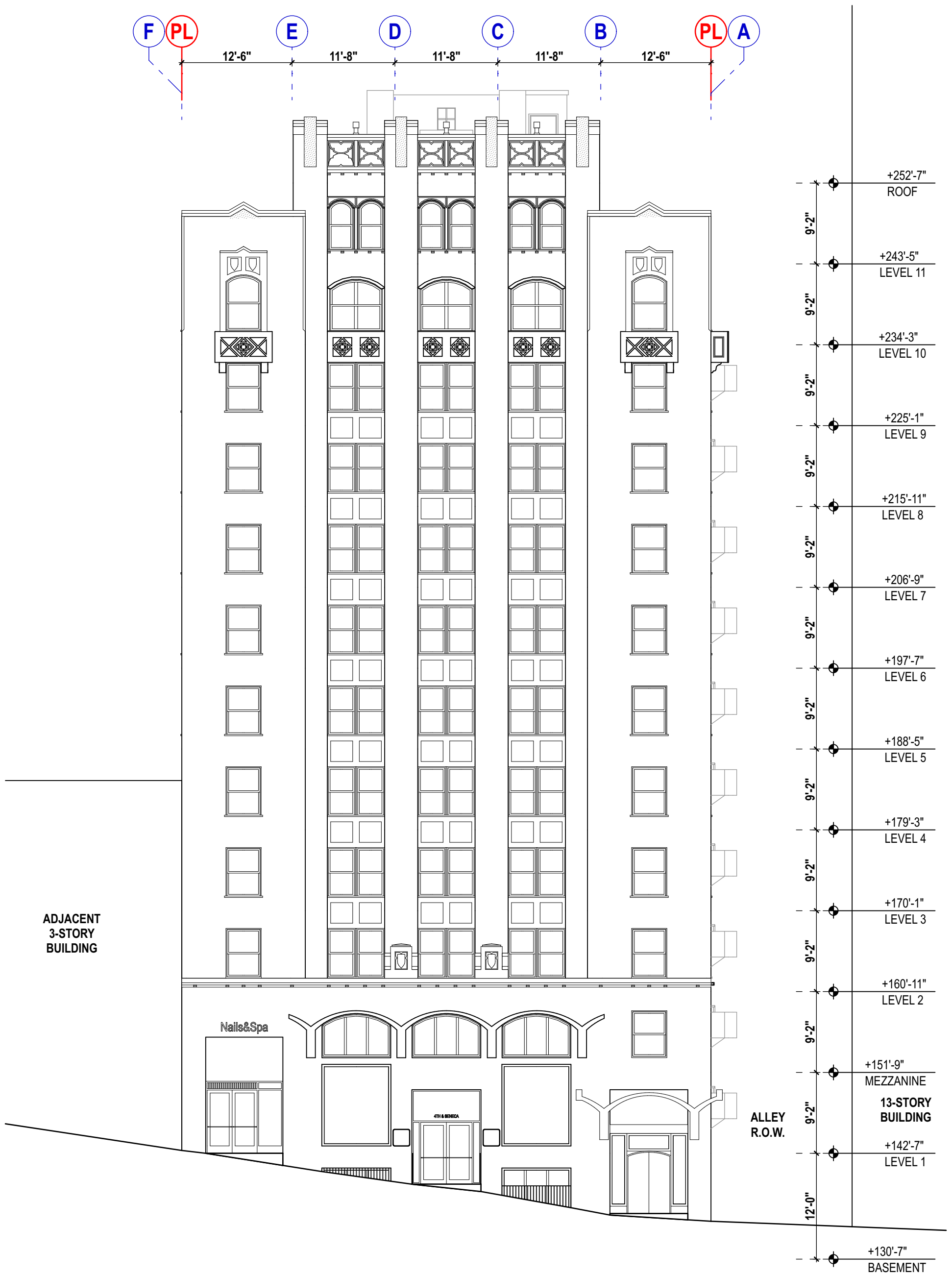


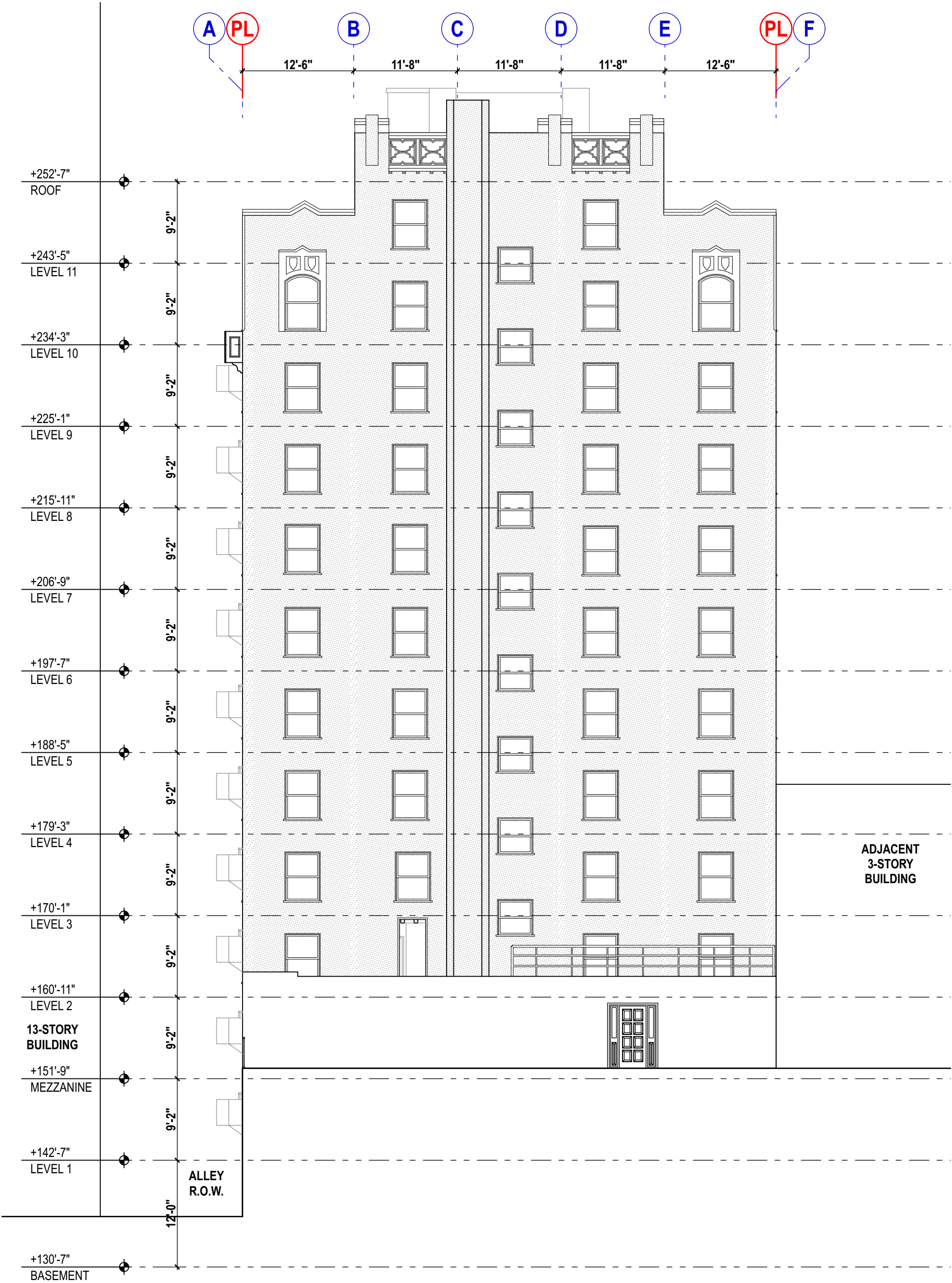








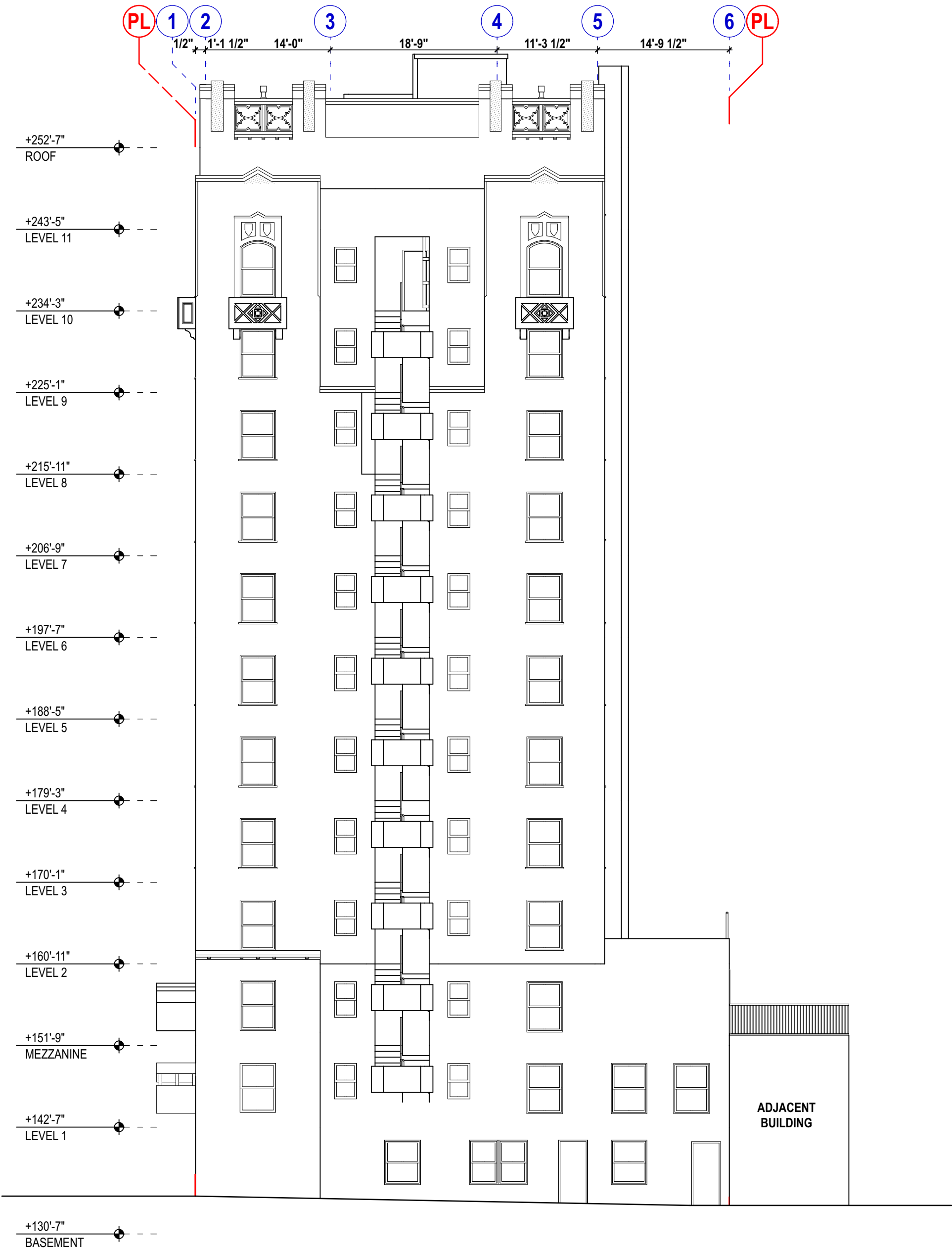




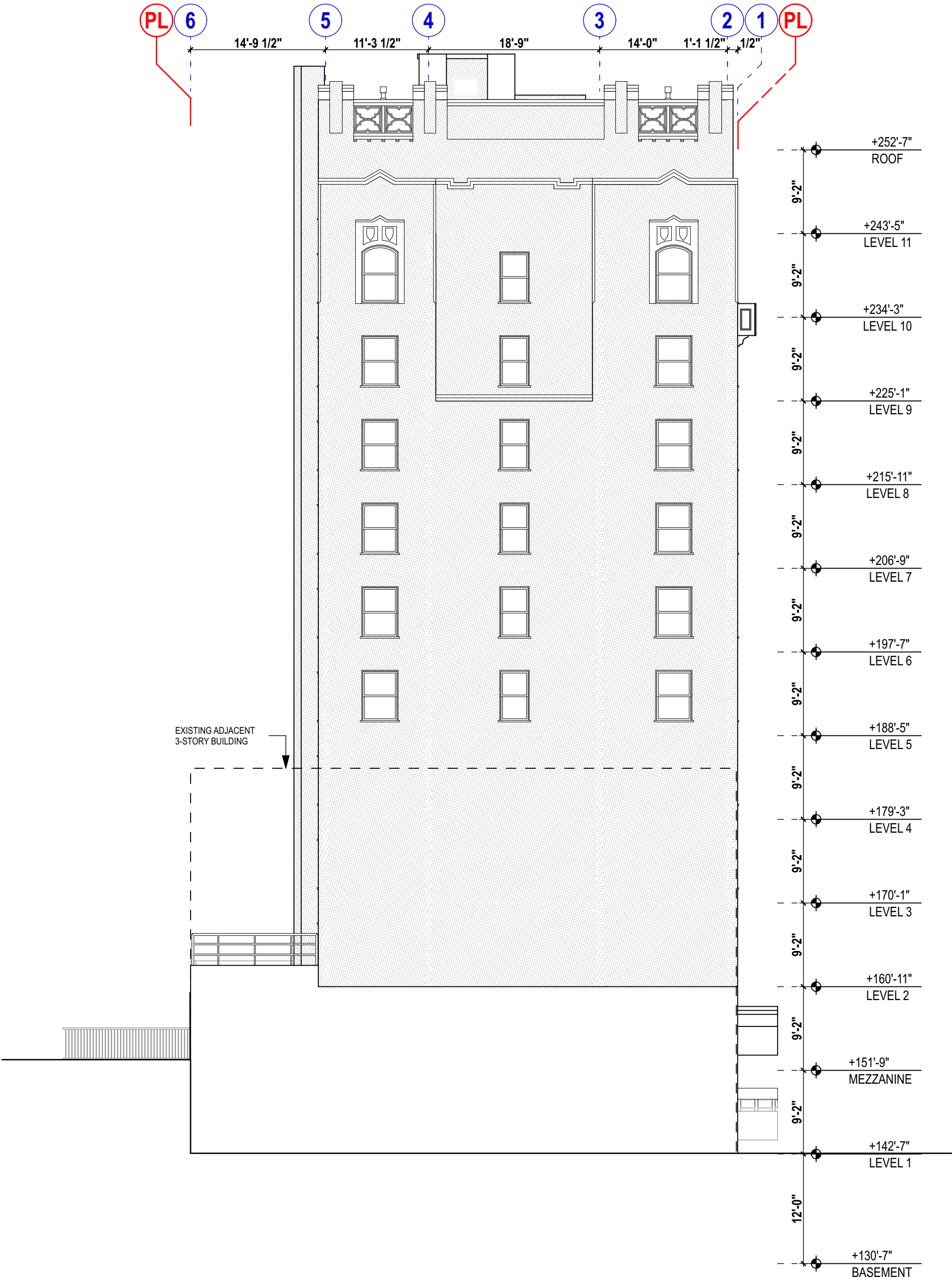
1
11

ELEVATION - SOUTH

SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"



1
12 ELEVATION - WEST
SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"



1
13 ELEVATION - EAST
SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"