



**ARMOUR & CO. COLD STORAGE &  
WAREHOUSE BUILDING**

**123 SOUTH WALL STREET  
SPOKANE, WA 99201**

**AUGUST 27, 2021**

**SPOKANE REGISTER OF HISTORIC  
PLACES NOMINATION**

# Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination

*Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office, City Hall, Third Floor  
808 Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, Washington 99201-3337*

## 1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Armour & Company Cold Storage and Warehouse Building  
And/Or Common Name: The Atrium, Europa, Magic Lantern

## 2. Location

Street & Number: 123-125 South Wall Street  
City, State, Zip Code: Spokane, WA 99201  
Parcel Number: 35192.5526

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both		<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> residential
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes, restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other

## 4. Owner of Property

Name: 1TWO3 WALL STREET LLC  
Street & Number: 502 West Riverside, Suite 103  
City, State, Zip Code: Spokane, WA 99201  
Telephone Number/E-mail: 509-217-5508/chris@rencorprealty.com

## 5. Location of Legal Description

Courthouse, Registry of Deeds	Spokane County Courthouse
Street Number:	1116 West Broadway
City, State, Zip Code:	Spokane, WA 99260
County:	Spokane

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Title: East Downtown Historic District  
Date: 2003      Federal      State      County      Local  
Depository for Survey Records      Spokane Historic Preservation Office

Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination  
ARMOUR BUILDING

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

**Condition**

**Check One**

excellent

unaltered

good

altered

fair

deteriorated

**Check One**

ruins

original site

unexposed

moved & date \_\_\_\_\_

*Narrative statement of description is found on one or more continuation sheets.*

**8. Spokane Register Criteria and Statement of Significance**

**Applicable Spokane Register of Historic Places criteria: Mark "x" on one or more for the categories that qualify the property for the Spokane Register listing:**

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Spokane history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory history.

*Narrative statement of significance is found on one or more continuation sheets.*

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

*Bibliography is found on one or more continuation sheets.*

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property: less than 1

Verbal Boundary Description: See attached

Verbal Boundary Justification: Nominated property includes entire parcel and urban legal description.

**11. Form Prepared By**

Name and Title: Jim Kolva

Organization: Jim Kolva Associates, LLC

Street, City, State, Zip Code: 115 South Adams Street, Suite 1

Telephone Number: 509-458-5517

E-mail Address: jim@jimkolvaassociates.com

Date Final Nomination Heard:

**12. Additional Documentation**

*Additional documentation is found on one or more continuation sheets.*

Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination  
ARMOUR BUILDING

**13. Signature of Owner(s)**

DocuSigned by:  
*Christopher Batten*  
3A989D6AC9FA46E...  
Christopher Batten 11/10/2021

**14. For Official Use Only:**

Date nomination application filed: 8/27/21

Date of Landmarks Commission Hearing: 9/29/21

Landmarks Commission decision: Approved

Date of City Council hearing: October 25, 2021

City Council decision: Approved

**I hereby certify that this property has been listed in the Spokane Register of Historic Places based upon the action of the Spokane City Council as set forth above.**

*Megan Duvall* 11/2/21  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Megan Duvall** **Date**  
**City/County Historic Preservation Officer**  
City/County Historic Preservation Office  
Third Floor – City Hall  
808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.  
Spokane, WA 99201

Attest:

Approved as to form:

DocuSigned by:  
*Lynn K. ...*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

*Michael P. ...*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Assistant City Attorney



### Description - Summary

The Armour Cold Storage and Warehouse building at 123 South Wall Street is comprised of the combined 1902 two-story red brick cold storage building and 1916 one-story red brick warehouse. With stone and concrete basement foundation and flat brick facades detailed with granite sills and parapet cap, the building is a good example of the railroad warehouses that front the former Northern Pacific Railroad corridor. Heavy wood post and beam construction and a rooftop ramp to transfer freight from the elevated tracks to the main warehouse building convey its function in rail commerce.

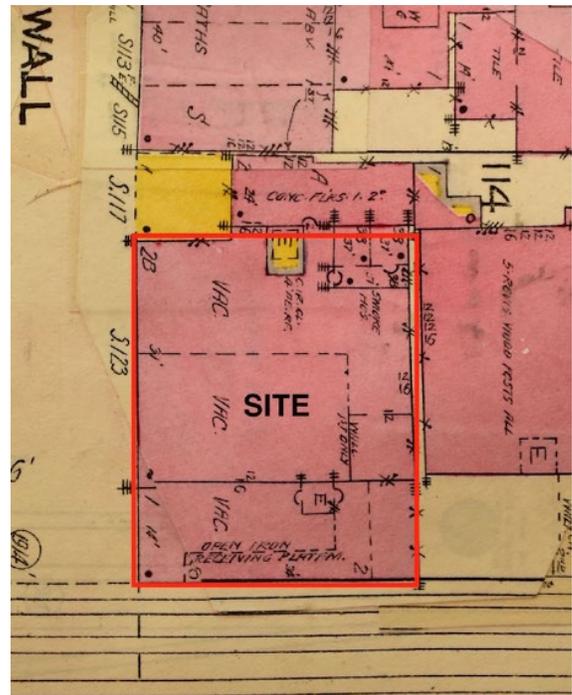
Sited on the east side of Wall Street, the front facade faces west. The 100' x 85' building with basement has been altered but retains its basic form, location, design, materials, workmanship and association. The two-story cold storage façade consists of two segments, the northerly which projects slightly is composed of three bays, and the southerly is composed of two bays. The façade is flat and rises from a dressed granite foundation and terminates in a corbeled cornice and low parapet wall capped by a granite slab coping. The main entry is within a recessed alcove and framed by a tall semi-circular arched opening that rises from the sidewalk landing to the same height at the first floor segmental-arch window bays. The one-story warehouse section extends from the two-story building to abut the BNSF Railroad viaduct on the south side. The warehouse facade is divided into four segmental-arch bays including a single-door entry in the southeast corner. The flat brick wall rises from a concrete basement and is terminated by terra cotta tile coping. A concrete, corrugated steel roof loading platform is atop the one-story warehouse building to provide access between the railroad and storage building.

The building is a contributing building to the East Downtown National Register Historic District.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY - CURRENT CONDITION AND APPEARANCE

Located in the southeast quadrant of the downtown Spokane central business district, the composite building abuts the elevated concrete BNSF Railroad (originally Northern Pacific) viaduct. The building is composed of two red brick buildings: the northerly is two-stories in height and has a frontage of approximately 75 feet on Wall street; and the southerly is one-story with 28 feet of frontage that appears built into the concrete viaduct that forms its southern boundary. Both buildings are approximately 83 feet in depth.

Per the Spokane County Assessor's Office, the building footprint is 8,668 square feet in the basement, 8546 square feet on the first floor and 6220 square feet on the second floor on an 8,623 square foot site (Assessor). Adjacent to the north side is a one-story brick office building originally constructed by architect Kenneth Brooks for his architectural office in 1967 (121 South Wall). This building was part of the original Armour & Company building complex which included the stables in what was an alley (Note: The Northern Pacific Railroad owned the land on which 121 and 123 South Wall are sited and, as such, controlled the alley which they had leased to Armour. The land ownership was held by BNSF as successor to NP until the 2000s). The high-rise Wells Fargo Bank Building (originally Farm Credit Bank, 1981) and an attached five-level parking garage (2005) occupy the remainder of the block, both north and east as the garage wraps the subject buildings.



Across Wall Street to the west and also abutting the BNSF viaduct at 124 South Wall, is the five-story brick and concrete Powell-Sanders grocery warehouse, built in 1915. Across the alley to the north is the Pyrotek Building (first Farm Credit Bank building, Modern, granite-clad, 1968).

#### **Front Façade** (west along Wall Street)

##### **Building Description**

The Armour Building, facing west along Wall Street, consists of two red brick buildings joined together: the two-story cold storage building built in 1902 and the one-story warehouse built in 1916. The two-story building is divided into two segments that are created by recessing the southerly segment about eight inches. Additionally, the exposed foundation walls are different with the north formed by dressed granite blocks that are segmented in correspondence with the two pairs of basement window openings; and the south built of squared sandstone rubble brought to a course with two basement window openings. Because of the northerly decline of the sidewalk and grade slope, the stone foundation walls are also at different heights. From the north corner, the stone height decreases from approximately 16 inches to 1 inch at the south corner. At that point the stone rubble wall height is about 27 inches declining to 22 inches at the south end juncture with the abutting one-story building.



The north wall segment is divided into three bays within the flat common bond brick wall. At the basement level are two pairs of small segmental-arch bays and granite steps to the granite landing of the semicircular-arch entry bay that rises to the height of the two first floor window bays. Within the segmental arches of each window is a paired wood sash 12-over-1 double-hung window. Slightly projecting rough hewn granite slabs form the sills and quadruple row of voussoired brick headers form the arches. A wood tympanum with a scroll pattern applique fills the space between the window head and arch intrados.

The open entry portal is approached by a dressed granite slab that corresponds with the height of

foundation wall and steps to the granite slab facing the landing. A wrought iron gate fills the arch opening. The portal arch, like the window openings is composed of a quadruple row of voussoired brick headers. Within the vestibule is an intermediate landing that provides approach to an open run of steps down to the basement and a run up to the first-floor landing. Set back in the first-floor landing is a double door entry consisting of multi-light wood-frame doors and a fan light transom. The landing floors and the steps are clad with red-brown terra cotta tile, and the baluster railings are wrought iron. Aligned over the first-floor windows and entry portal are windows identical to those of the first floor. Four brick courses above the window arch extrados is a corbel course composed of a rowlock arch—a brick header, a 6-inch stretcher and a full 8-inch stretcher that support the slightly projecting flat parapet wall. Atop the wall are two courses—a stretcher and a header—that project slightly and support rough-hewn granite squared slabs about 7-inches thick and 82 inches in length. The roof is flat composition. The south wall segment is divided into two window bays that are smaller than the north segment. Within the stone basement wall are two window openings spaced equally between the openings and the corners. The openings rise to the juncture of the stone and brick walls with segmental arches springing from the stone and extending into the brick with the triple course of voussoired brick headers. Aligned above the basement windows the first-floor windows are the same width as the basement and extend from the same sill height as the northerly are about 2/3s the height of those in the northern wall segment. The first-floor windows are detailed with rough-hewn



granite slab sills and voussoired triple-header-course segmental arches. The sash is 8-over-1 wood with a plain wood panel tympanum. The second-floor windows are aligned over those below and are detailed with slightly projecting brick header sills and flat brick arches. The wood sash is 12-over-1-light. It appears that the window openings have been altered because of the variation in brick face and mortar joints. The top of the wall is configured identically to that of the northerly segment.

The abutting the south side of the two-story building is the one-story warehouse building which extends south to abut and integrate into the concrete wall of the BNSF viaduct. The façade is flat red brick rising from a concrete basement wall/foundation approximately 10 inches in height. The wall is terminated by a glazed terra cotta tile coping course. Four segmental-arch bays divide the façade: three window bays and an entry bay in the southwest corner. The bays are spaced equally in the façade with the window-window and window-door pairs slightly wider than the corner wall segments, but not as wide as the middle wall segment. Corresponding to the three window openings are horizontally-oriented basement windows. The segmental arched openings rest on the concrete wall which functions as a sill line. Triple rows of voussoired brick headers form the arches of both the basement and of the first-floor window openings, and the door opening. Six-inch wide rough-hewn granite slabs form the sills of the three first floor window openings.

The wood sash is fixed with six-over-one lights. The single-door entry is recessed into an alcove walled by glass panels and a fixed transom window (address S125 Wall Street).



Bronze-anodized aluminum frames the full glass panel door and transom window. A concrete slab step to a concrete landing provide the approach to the door. Inside the door, four steps ascend to the first-floor level. A striped canvas awning attached to the wall near to tops of the window and entry bays extends from corner to corner to cover the upper sections of the windows.

#### North Facade

The former office of architect Kenneth Brooks abuts the two-story north façade. (Note that this building occupies the footprint of the stables and accessory structure of the Armour cold storage facility.) The exposed north wall is brick that was laid over the original wall during the construction of the Brooks' office building. The upper portion of the original brick wall and the granite coping are visible above the Brooks building. The wall also jogs about 3 feet to the north at about its midpoint. At the northeast corner is an elevated light well capped with sheet metal and TPO membrane.



#### South Facade

The south end of the one-story warehouse building abuts the concrete BNSF railroad viaduct. The second story of the two-story cold storage building is visible above the southerly building. The slightly projecting corbeled parapet wall of the front façade turns and wraps the corner running east about 4 feet. At its terminus, the flat wall topped with the granite slab coping drops down slightly. Four 20-light-sash window bays with brick header sills and flat arches divide the wall segment which terminates in a southward projecting stair/lift tower that rises above the wall approximately eight feet. Approximately 8-feet-square, the wall is topped by glazed terra cotta tile coping. Within the upper portion of the west face is a small segmental arch window framed by a wide sandstone sill and double-header segmental voussoired brick arch. A wood tympanum is above the vertically divided two-light wood sash. Within the north face is a rusted steel fire door set within a rusted steel frame (not visible from the ground). Between the tower and the southeast corner is one window bay, configured with a segmental arch comprised of voussoired triple row headers and a wide sandstone sill. Within the opening is a fixed 20-light sash. Atop the roof of the one-story warehouse building is a concrete ramp covered with corrugated tin roof that extends south from the second floor adjacent to the east side of the stair/lift tower, the turns as an "L" to the west to parallel the BNSF viaduct. This platform was used for off-loading meat and related products from the box and refrigerator cars of the Northern Pacific Railroad into the cold storage building.

#### East Facade

The east façade is obscured by the parking garage to the east. A brick chimney, approximately 15 feet in height is above the east wall near the southeast corner.

## **Floor Plan**

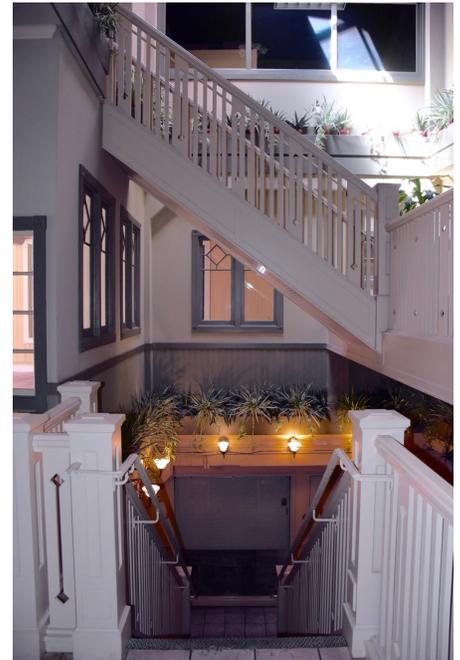
### **Basement**

The basement is accessed from the main building (1902) entry via an at-grade landing and straight run of nine steps down to the day-lighted offices and retail space. The basement extends beneath both buildings. At the bottom of the steps is an open court beneath the atrium with men's and women's restrooms in the northeast corner. Studios/offices are in the northwest corner, and former café/retail spaces in the east and southern portions. The floors are concrete finished with wood, tile, and carpet. Walls are stone, brick, sheet rock and ship lap wood panel. The ceiling is the timbered post and beam structure of the first floor.

### **First Floor**

The ground floor in the main building is approached through the main at-grade entry landing, up a straight run of six steps to the open first floor landing. A pair of wood-frame multi-light doors topped by a fan-light transom window provides access to the main floor. The entry foyer and hallway floors are clad with 12-inch ceramic tile and carpet, walls are sheetrock with beadboard wainscot and multi-light glass panel sections. The ceilings vary in material and include flat sheet rock, dropped acoustical tile with integrated fluorescent light fixtures. Original beam, heavy wood joist and lapboard ceilings are also exposed.

Within the first floor is the entry foyer with a glass-panel door to the office in the northwest corner and hallways that wrap the open atrium and provide access to offices, restrooms and restaurant. Stairs to the basement and to the second-floor step into the atrium to the north side of the foyer. The office suite wraps around the west and north sides of the atrium to paired windows provide light access. Wood posts and beams are exposed as is the ductwork. The ceiling and some wall sections are wood lap and appear original. Contemporary boxed fluorescent light fixtures are suspended from the ceiling. Sheetrock clads the newer wall sections including the atrium walls. Floors are strip hardwood and exposed plywood. In the northeast corner is a brick vault with original steel doors.



The Europa restaurant pub and meeting room occupy the southern half of the 1902 building as well as the 1916 building (S125 Wall). Brick, sheetrock, and shiplap wood paneling form the walls, the floors are carpet, with original and well-worn wood strip floors in the pub. As with the basement, heavy timber post and beams (cast iron posts) supporting the second floor form the ceiling in the 1902 portion with post and beams and heavy tongue and groove lumber ceiling in the 1916 portion. Within the ceiling of the one-story section are skylights. A single aluminum-frame, glass-panel door is in the southwest corner of the restaurant, with four steps from the at-grade landing to the first-floor level.

### **Second Floor**

The Magic Lantern Theater with two screening auditoriums, and men's and women's toilets occupied this area as a tenant in the Ken Brooks Atrium adaptive reuse project. An open stairway provides access from the first floor. A door at the top of the stairs provides access to the office suite. In its current configuration, the open office suite wraps around the glassed-in atrium which continues from the basement and first-floor levels. Floors are plywood, wood strip and carpet. The walls are brick and sheetrock and timber posts and beams support the roof structure. The ceiling is clad with sheetrock from which chain suspended box fluorescent light fixtures are hung. Exposed duct work is also attached to the ceiling. In the northeast corner at an intermediate upper level are two rooms with plastered brick walls and exposed corrugated panel and steel-framed hipped roofs with chimney openings which appear (from

Sanborn maps) to be the original smoke rooms. Original wood stairs are also located in the northeast corner. Along the south wall is a door that opens to the concrete loading platform that runs along the top of the 1916 warehouse building roof.

**ORIGINAL APPEARANCE & SUBSEQUENT MODIFICATIONS**

No photos are available showing the original street level façade.

The exterior of the building appears to have been sandblasted. The original doors and windows have been replaced, most likely in the early 1970s conversion from a manufacturing to a retail building. The interior has been renovated with a mix of original and new materials from renovations and reconfigurations over the past fifty years. The central atrium and stairs were most likely added in the original reconfiguration of the building to create the Atrium shopping center.

## **SECTION 8: STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

<b><u>Area of Significance:</u></b>	<b>A – Broad Patterns of Spokane History, Commerce C – Architecture</b>
<b>Significant Dates:</b>	<b>1902, 1916, 1924, 1932, 1971</b>
<b>Period of Significance:</b>	<b>1902-1971</b>
<b>Architect:</b>	<b>Unknown</b>
<b>Building Developer:</b>	<b>Owner Armour &amp; Company</b>
<b>Building Contractor:</b>	<b>Unknown</b>

### **SUMMARY STATEMENT**

The 1902 Armour Cold Storage and 1916 warehouse buildings are eligible under Category A as typical railroad corridor warehouses constructed during the city's most significant period of growth, 1900 to 1910. The building has had three lives, first as a storage/warehouse building built and occupied by Armour & Company between 1902 and 1924 as a meat processing and warehouse facility; second as the original electrical equipment manufacturing building for a prominent Spokane manufacturing company and entrepreneur, Columbia Electric founded by Eric A. Johnston; and third as the Atrium, a collection of unique shops, restaurants, and Magic Lantern Movie Theater, owned and designed by one of Spokane's notable mid-century architects, Kenneth Brooks. In spite of its adaptive reuses over the years, the building retains good integrity of form, material, and craftsmanship.

The building is listed as a contributing building to the East Downtown National Historic District (2003) and meets the characteristics of the railside warehouse as described both that nomination and the West Downtown Transportation corridor, (NHD,1999). The building is within an historic corridor of warehouse buildings that runs from Division to Cedar streets in the downtown core. Both sides of the 1916 elevated Northern Pacific railroad viaduct between the flanking alleys were lined with two-to-three story red brick buildings that were built to support the Northern Pacific Railroad (on land owned by NP) and Spokane's position as a regional distribution center. The building meets the description of the typical warehouse in the National Register District nomination: utilitarian two-to-three story unreinforced red brick walls on a basalt foundation, wood post and beam structure, concrete loading docks, flat and simple in design, segmental-arch windows and flat roofs.

The warehouse symbolized the city's position as a regional distribution center, particularly in association with the railroad corridor that crossed Spokane's downtown business district. The twenty-five warehouses within the district served as receiving and distributing points for a continuous supply of manufactured goods arriving and leaving by train. Spokane's West Downtown Historic Transportation Corridor exemplifies that development. Most of the district's buildings that face the Northern Pacific Railroad were built between 1891 and 1911 as railroad dependent businesses.

The commercial vernacular brick warehouses throughout Spokane are working-class buildings that were designed for warehousing and had the structural stability to perform in this function. They have a utilitarian aesthetic and are simple in material, form and detailing. The Armour

warehouses retain much of their original character as railroad warehouses with the adjacent backdrop of the elevated Northern Pacific Railway viaduct.

### **Historical Context**

The historical context for Spokane has been included in several National and Spokane Register nominations, including the West Downtown Historic Transportation Corridor (WSU, 1999), East Downtown National Historic District (Woo, 2003); thus, the Spokane historic context discussion is abbreviated.

The Spokane River and its falls had long been a gathering place for native American tribes. It also attracted white settlers, J.J. Downing and family, and S.R. Scranton who established a claim at Spokane Falls in 1871. James N. Glover and Jasper Matheny would follow and purchase the claims of 160 acres and the sawmill from Downing and Scranton. Early industry would use the water power for milling and sawing lumber and to generate electrical power. The settlement would grow slowly until the coming of the railroad.

The Northern Pacific Railroad arrived in Spokane Falls in 1881, the year of Spokane's incorporation, and with the connection of the eastern and western branches in 1883, transcontinental service through Spokane Falls was established. Spokane continued to grow as a regional shipping and distribution center through the 1880s. Between 1886 and 1889 the population increased from 3,500 to 20,000 people. Although suffering a set back by the fire of August 4, 1889, which destroyed approximately thirty-two blocks of the business district from the railroad tracks to the river and from Lincoln to Washington Streets, the city quickly rebounded as new brick buildings rose from the ashes. The devastation wrought by the fire resulted in a city ordinance to reduce fire hazard, leading to brick and terra cotta becoming the dominant building materials of the rebuilt downtown.

When Spokane rebuilt the downtown after the fire, the business district would spread east to Division Street and follow Monroe Street across the river. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps from 1891, 1902, and 1910 show a marked increase in the building of commercial buildings in the east downtown. Frame dwellings gave way to brick commercial buildings and street frontages began to solidify. Among the property types and businesses that were prevalent were hotels, lodging houses, saloons, banks, drug stores, and restaurants. They were built to meet the needs of a rapidly growing population.

Generally, warehouses cropped up along the Northern Pacific rail corridor, between the two alleys bracketing the tracks. In the blocks south of that warehouse district were shops and two-to-three-story apartment buildings and hotels. These apartment blocks ran along Second and Third avenues, and the cross streets including Post, Howard, Stevens, and Washington as they advanced up the lower South Hill.

According to historian Eugenia Woo (2003), Spokane's population exploded from 36,848 to 104,402 between 1900 and 1910.

This growth mirrored the population expansion of the state that saw its greatest increase in the same decade. Many people moving to Washington settled in the state's three largest cities: Seattle, Tacoma, and Spokane. Various industries rapidly developed and with it a demand for more buildings. Most of the city's urban downtown skyline was created from

about the late 1890s to 1912 with the construction of office buildings, banks, hotels, department stores and other commercial buildings. As author John Fahey describes, Spokane, which had put up 675 new structures in 1900 as migration accelerated, built 1,500 to 1,900 buildings a year from 1904 through 1909.

The economic boom and population expansion of approximately the first fifteen years of the 20th century was short-lived. Growth in both areas in the next decade slowed considerably. By 1920, the population of Spokane was only 104,437, an increase of only 35 people from 1910. Investors soon realized the city was overbuilt. The region it served (the Inland Northwest) was not able to sustain the city and keep pace with the speculative growth. By 1950, the population had increased by only 50,000.

### **The Railroads and their Influence on Industry, Commerce, and Labor**

The story of industry, commerce, and labor in Spokane is tightly interconnected with the coming of the railroads. The Northern Pacific Railroad (NP) came to Spokane in 1881 with the connection to cross the continent in 1883. During the next two decades, several Northern Pacific branch lines were built through the region, establishing Spokane as a hub, to serve the farming, lumber, and mining areas of the Inland Northwest. Additionally, the Union Pacific (UP), Great Northern (GN), and the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific (MILW) came through Spokane on their way to the west coast. By the turn of the century, eight railroads converged in Spokane making the city a major transportation center.

Spokane's proximity to abundant natural resources in mining, lumbering, and agriculture was a great catalyst in transforming Spokane into the major distribution center of the Inland Northwest. The prospect of finding gold, silver, lead, copper, zinc and other minerals drew men to the area seeking their fortune. Spokane became a principal distribution point for equipment and supplies.

In addition to mining and lumbering, Spokane's economy has been greatly influenced by the agricultural industry. Again, the railroad, by providing relatively low-cost transportation to the eastern markets brought striking changes to agriculture in the Inland Empire. The Northern Pacific, the Union Pacific, and the Great Northern transcontinental lines and their feeder lines brought in immigrants and provided farmers a means for shipping their products out to market.

Railroad connections to eastern markets and to the west coast created a demand for agricultural products that led to the increasing growth of Spokane. Flour was shipped to such diverse ports as Liverpool, New York, or Tokyo. Livestock and meat also moved out of Spokane. Eventually, the city became a regional supplier as well as a market, with warehouses and wholesalers eager to supply retailers in the towns of the region.

The meat packing business was also connected to the railroads. Armour and Company on Wall Street and M.J. Morris on Jefferson Street, John Morrell & Company (and National Packing Co.) on the north side and Hammond and Cudahy packing companies on the south side of Lincoln connected with the Northern Pacific railway. E. H. Stanton had a cold storage plant on Bernard and Trent and would build a major cold storage/curing house and packing plant on east Trent which would later be purchased by Armour & Company and joined by several other meat packers and the Union Stockyards, all served by rail.

### **Chronology of the Armour & Company Cold Storage and Warehouse Buildings**

Sanborn Insurance maps from 1891 to 1902 show the site at the northeast corner of Mill (renamed Wall Street) Street and Railroad as undeveloped. The portion of the block between the alley and First Avenue was developed with one-story brick store buildings. The site itself was occupied by "W. Rail Road Av." which was subsequently vacated. And in 1891 a wood frame Northern Pacific Freight Depot that spanned Mill Street as well as the Northern Pacific main line and rail spurs. That depot was not depicted on the 1902 Sanborn map and a building had been erected on its footprint on the west side of Mill Street.

An article of November 20, 1899 in the *Spokane Chronicle* revealed that the Spokane branch of the Armour & Co. Meat Company of Chicago was planned to be moved from 716 First Avenue to the new quarters on the Northern Pacific tracks between Post and Mill Streets. Armour had arrived in Spokane in the late 1890s. The 1902 Polk Directory listed under "Packers" in its classified section the following companies in Spokane: Armour Packing Co. at the northwest corner of Mill and railroad and 705 Railroad; Cold Storage Market at 317 Riverside (E.H. Stanton); Cuhady Packing Company at 711 Railroad, Hammond Packing Company; and Swift & Company. Others would follow along the Northern Pacific rails.

On January 1, 1902, the *Spokane Daily Chronicle* ran a front page article from the masthead to the bottom of the page filled with details about the new Armour and Company plant. "Armours to Build."

#### **"Fine New Warehouse by Northern Pacific Tracks." At Mill Street**

##### **"Two Story Structure That Will Be a Hundred Feet Square."**

The new building will be across the street from Powell, Roberts, Finley's building. The new structure will be 100 feet square. It will be two stories in height, with a basement. The structure will be designed strictly for a warehouse and cold storage, the walls in some places being insulated for this propose.

The company expects to have the building completed by the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, and it is believed that dirt will be turned within a week or 10 days. The cost of the building could not be learned from persons representing the Armour company in this city, as the contract had not been let and they did not care to state an estimate until this had occurred.

...

The erection of this building means that this company is to make this city its permanent headquarters for this section of the country. Already it is using two car service out of Spokane to supply the trade in eastern Washington and northern Idaho, and this will probably increase now to a considerable extent.

#### **Plan of the Building**

The plans of the building may be changed, but are now about as follows:

On the ground floor will be situated the offices, the salesrooms, the cold storage room, three cooling rooms for butter and eggs, with a shipping platform at the front for the railroad and one at the back for teams and local trade. There will be a barn for the horses, situated at the northeast corner of the building, which will contain four single stalls and a box stall. Between the local shipping platform and the stables will be the wogan [sic] room.

The offices will be placed on the west side of the building. They will not extend clear down to the track, but will be on the west side of the building, in the middle, facing Mill street. These will include the general office and the private office of the local manager of

the concern. These offices will be fixed up with large plate glass fronts. Directly back of the offices will be the salesroom. This will extend from the back of the building on the north side to the wall which separates the offices from the south room. The offices and salesrooms will occupy about one fourth of the entire ground floor of the building.

Spruce will be used in the walls, and the trimmings, consisting of doors and other furnishings, are to be of dark oak.

The cold storage will be the largest room on the ground floor. It will extend from the salesroom to the eastern wall and from the stables and wagon room to the wall separating the office from the south rooms. The finishing of this room will be entirely rough warehouse work.

#### **The Tracks for Beeves.**

The south tier of rooms in the building will consist of three cooling rooms and a track room, where the heavy wares are unloaded to be taken on the track into the salesrooms or cold storage. This latter space will have 10 overhead tracks for the carrying of beeves and meats of different kinds. At the northeast corner of this space the track will run into one which will take the loads into the salesroom. From here other tracks take the beeves into the cold storage or into the cooling rooms. The track runs entirely around the room in the salesroom, and at one place runs over a set of scales, by which the beeves can be weighed without taking them off the track. There will be two waterproof platform scales in the building.

There is to be a long platform on the south end of the building, whereby cars can be unloaded. From these platforms there will extend three or four chutes into the cellar, so that barrels can be run down and be carried clear back to the north side of the building. These will be used in the basement, where barreled goods will be kept.

The cooling rooms will be used largely for the purpose of storing butter and eggs.

#### **Can Add More Stories**

The walls will be thick enough so that a building from four to five stories high can be erected, if necessary. At present, however, there will be only two stories. This will necessitate walls from 12 inches to two feet in thickness. One of the features of the walls will be the insulators used for the purpose of keeping the building cold. These will be arranged with sheeting and paper in such a way that it is almost impossible for the cold air to escape.

First, upon the brick walls there will be placed a thickness of sheeting, then of paper especially prepared for this use, another thickness of sheeting and another of paper, and so on, until there is an insulator about 14 inches thick on the walls of brick.

The cellar will contain one large cooling room, and the balance of the space will be for general use. On the second floor will be storage rooms and ice bunkers.

There will be an elevator at the back of the building, in the center, just inside the wagon shed. This will be run by either electricity or water power, as the case may be.

The company does not own the land on which the cold storage and warehouse will be built, but has a long time lease on the property. The architects of Spokane state that this will one of the most compact buildings of its kind in this city.

On the next day, *The Spokesman-Review* also reported the new plant to be built by Armour & Co. E. Blair, superintendent of construction for the company, was in the city to look after the work. On January 15, the turning of the first earth for the excavation of the large cold storage and warehouse was reported. Further, the building permit says it will cost \$15,000, but it is estimated by those who profess to know, that it will cost between \$20,000 and \$25,000.

J. Ogden Armour is listed as owner on the city permit issued on January 20, 1902 to connect to city water. This would be followed on February 20 for a side sewer permit issued to Armour & Company on the NP right of way at Wall Street.

As construction progressed, the *Chronicle* reported neighborhood concerns in that the alley was being blocked. According to the article of March 31, "**Is Blocking Alley.**"

A petition has been circulated among the business men who are interested in property which touches upon the alleys in the blocks between Railroad and First avenues, asking the Northern Pacific Railroad company to take steps by which Armour & Co., who are now putting up a building on the northeast corner of Railroad and Mill, will keep the alley to the rear of their building open for general uses. As it is now, they are putting a portion of their building directly upon the alley, and in this manner closing this thoroughfare. They have been planning to use the portion which is on the alley for their stables.

General Merriam owner of the north half of the block between Mill and Howard, is rumored to have started the petition and has been delivered to Northern Pacific. The matter of moving the stables has been given to F. Beal, special agent of Armour & Co. "The trouble concerning this building is largely up to the Northern Pacific, as it made out a lease in such a manner as to give the Armour people a right to go onto the alley and utilize it. It is held by some that this was never the intention of the Northern Pacific, but was given inadvertently, and the road is now trying to undo the damage which has been done."

...On the other hand, Armour & Co. are only using the land which they leased from the railroad company, and if anything is done toward changing the stables of this firm, the railroad company may have to stand the cost.

Some of those who have buildings on this alley state that they understand that the leases allow any of them to build over the alley as they wish to, while others believe that this is not so nominated in most of the bonds, but only was put into the lease of Armour & Co. through a mistake.

As an aside, Northern Pacific Railway could do essentially as it wished with the land within its right of way boundaries. Their rail corridor extended between and parallel to the alleys between First and Second Avenues in a swath through downtown Spokane at a width of 300 or so feet. The Northern Pacific owned the land, through a land grant, between the alleys and leased it to the owners of the buildings along the corridor. The railroad encouraged the construction of warehouses and industrial buildings along the corridor since these businesses would provide revenue to the railroad through the leases as well as the freight charges. Typically, the Northern Pacific (and subsequently the Burlington Northern, and Burlington Northern Santa Fe) entered into what amounted to month-to-month leases for the land although the term of the lease might be for several years or decades. The improvements on this leased land were financed and owned by private individuals or corporations, mostly those using them for business. The railroad

lease provided that the building owners would vacate the land (remove the buildings) with thirty-days notice, if requested by the railroad on termination of the land lease.

Meanwhile as Armour was getting established in its new building in Spokane, it was busy elsewhere joining a consortium of packing houses as reported in *The Spokesman-Review* in June 1902: "**Billion Dollar Meat Trust.**" According to the article, the newly formed New Jersey corporation will rival United States Steel and plans to be a billion dollar concern. It "may be called the American Meat company. The big combine will be composed of "The Big Four, Armour & Co., Swift & Co., Nelson, Morris & Co. and the G.H. Hammond Co." This group of Chicago-based packing companies agreed to merge into a giant corporation called the National Packing Company, conceived as a holding company. The corporation bought up smaller meat companies, and between 1904 and 1920 acquired 23 stockyards and slaughtering plants. It would control about one-eighth of the U.S. meat production, own branches in 150 cities around the world and operate a fleet of 2,600 refrigerated railcars. U.S. government regulators forced the corporation's dissolution in 1912. (Chicago Historical Society, 2005)

One of Armour's local competitors was expanding operations. E. H. Stanton was building a new plant in the East Syndicate of Spokane. As reported in *The Spokesman-Review* on May 20, 1905:

The E.H. Stanton company is completing the most modern slaughter house and plant in the northwest, just east of the Interstate fairgrounds (3300 block of East Trent) The plant is being built at a cost of \$20,000 and is equipped with all of the new overhanging tracks, chutes and automatic devices known to the packing world. It will have a daily capacity of 100 cattle, 300 sheep and 1000 hogs.

A cold storage plant will be operated in connection with the slaughter house and with meat cooling appliances for 250 head of cattle.

The plant and yards cover nearly nine acres of land. ... The company has a storage plant and salesroom on Bernard street, between Main and Front avenues. Stanton also developed a fertilizing plant—the one other such plant in the state was in Seattle. The article informed that the waste from slaughter houses such as hoofs, entrails, heads and the like, will soon be turned into a good fertilizer to be sold to the gardeners. E. H. Stanton and W. L. Smith, as Cold Storage Market Company, built plant.

On March 3, 1906, the *Chronicle* reported that Armour & Co., S123 Wall Street was granted a building permit for "alterations to brick building, \$9500."

The 1910 Sanborn Insurance Map shows the Armour & Co. brick building "Provisions" and indicates "Smoke Houses." A wooden loading platform is along the south side with three siding tracks. Spanning the alley along the north side is a two-story brick structure fronted by a wooden structure along the Wall Street frontage.

In February 1911, the Northern Pacific Railroad first revealed its plan to invest \$2.5 million to construct a graded separation between its Hangman Creek approach to the city and its exit from the city east of Division Street. Northern Pacific's Chief Engineer W. L. Darling proposed a 12 to 14-foot clearance for all street underpasses. The at-grade tracks and lines of railcars split the downtown east-end and created barriers to movement of automobile traffic on north-south

streets. Watchtowers and guard-gate arms directed traffic at the crossings but the trains prevailed. Kalez (1968) described the Railroad Avenue corridor, as a double track main line augmented by eight switch tracks, within a long canyon walled with warehouse buildings. Passing freight trains as well as switch engines maneuvering cars to the warehouse sidings would often block traffic along the intersections of north-south streets. The elevated tracks would consist of parallel poured-in-place concrete walls that would be filled with earth and some 17 trestle-like street overpasses between Division and Cannon streets.

With the completion of the viaduct in 1916, the Northern Pacific Railway footprint had been narrowed to approximately 90 feet although the Northern Pacific (and successor BNSF) continued to own a swath of land through downtown up to 370 feet wide. As in the case of Armour and Company, the 1902 cold storage building and adjacent stables in the "alley" to the north were built on land leased from the railroad. The consolidation of tracks on the viaduct allowed another 28-foot strip of land on which buildings could be built. The tracks serving the rail sidings were no longer needed. In the case of the Armour buildings, the new warehouse with loading platform on its roof at viaduct level became the conduit for goods moved into and out of the cold storage building. In most cases, pre-viaduct buildings that had surface rail sidings were not expanded, but reached the viaduct by building bridges to connect with the rails.

**"Armour to Have New Warehouse,"** reported the *Chronicle* on December 18, 1915.

Erection of a new warehouse on Wall street adjoining the Northern Pacific grade separation work has been announced by Armour & Co., packers, it was announced today by A.A. Hollander, manager of the Spokane offices.

The new building will have a frontage of 28 feet on Wall street and will be 100 feet long. It will adjoin the present building occupied by the company on Wall street.

"Three different sets of plans are now under consideration at the head offices in Chicago for the new building," said Mr. Hollander today. "Decision on the specifications will be reached in a few days and the contract will be let soon after. We expect to start work on the building before the close of winter. No estimate of the cost can be offered at this time."

It is expected that the building will be but one story high, with walls sufficiently heavy to receive an additional story later.

*The Spokesman-Review*, in its January 25, 1916 edition reported that the Armour stables would be allowed to remain. The city commissioner, corporation council and health officer "reported adversely on the petition of the McGowan Hardware company and H.C. Merriam asking that the stable be removed from the alley near the rear of their plant on Wall street. They claimed that it "obstructs free passage from Howard to Wall streets." The city officials found that Northern Pacific owned the land and paid taxes and that taxes on the barn were being paid by Armour. [A portion of this building would be reconfigured by Kenneth Brooks for his architectural offices in the late 1960s.]

A building permit was issued by the city on March 1, 1916 to Chas Jasper on behalf of Armour Pk Co. to build a new warehouse with a value of \$9,500.

On March 3, 1916, *The Spokesman-Review* added to the previous reportage by the *Chronicle* back in December: **"Armour Plant to Extend Capacity."**

Improvements and alterations to cost \$20,000 were started at the warehouse of Armour & Co., wholesale meat dealers, S123 Wall street, Wednesday morning.

A building 80 feet long and 30 feet wide will be erected in the space vacated by the Northern Pacific railway. It will be one story high, reaching to the new grade, and have a basement. The construction is of a character that will permit the addition of two stories, if needed, making the height equal to that of the main building.

In the next week on March 12<sup>th</sup>, *The Spokesman-Review* gave a report of building activity in Spokane: " Building improvements to cost \$714,000 are proceeding and being prepared for within the city." The meat packing industry was well represented in that list of fourteen or so buildings in the downtown area. They included: Swift & Co. - \$20,000; Carsten's Packing company - \$20,000; Armour & Co. - \$20,000; Stanton stock yards - \$100,000; Stanton curing plant - \$150,000...

Ground is being broken for buildings to cover the commission stock yards of E.H. Stanton company, adjoining other properties of the company in the eastern section of the city. The investment in improvements will be \$100,000, it is stated by Mr. Stanton. The erection of a five-story curing plant and a box and barrel factory to cost \$150,000 will begin as soon as the stock yards are finished.

The Carstens Packing company will build an addition to its packing plant in the eastern section of the city. The investment will be \$50,000.

Swift & Co., wholesale dealers in meats and provision, are adding a floor to their warehouse at S12 Division street. The addition and equipment will cost \$20,000...

...

Material is being assembled for the addition to be built by Armour & Co. to their wholesale meat house at S123 Wall street. The building will occupy the space to be vacated by the Northern Pacific on completion of the new grade, and will be of two stories and a basement. It will cost \$10,000, and the refrigerating and other equipment will cost \$10,000 more. The contract is held by Charles Jasper.

Other buildings listed in article were the Ziegler Block, Merriam Building, Spokane Cycle, Sherwood Block, Hill Brothers, International Harvester, J.R. Roberson, McClintock-Trunkey, and Crane Company.

*The Spokesman-Review* reported on April 9, 1916: "Armour company, S123 Wall street, remodeling brick garage, \$900." On April 30, the *Review* reported: "**Construction Work in City Now Under Way to Cost \$5,000,000.**" The article lists the projects with the Grade separation as the largest at \$2.5 million. Merchants Central Heating (\$500,000), City bridges (\$300,000), E.H. Stanton Co. (\$250,000) and the Inland Empire paper mill (\$250,000) as the major projects. Others included Carstens, Swift and Company, and Armour.

The big news in the was revealed on May 26, 1917 when *The Spokesman-Review* announced. "**Armour & Co. Buy Stanton Plant; Consideration Above \$1,000,000.**"

Negotiations which have been pending for some days for the acquisition of the E. H. Stanton company by Armour & Co. of Chicago, as reported exclusively in *The Spokesman-Review* 10 days

ago, were completed yesterday when the big packing establishment in the east end of the city passed into the control of the Chicago packers, George B. Bobbins, vice president of the Armour company, announced the closing of the deal and E.H. Stanton, president of his company, confirmed it.

The officials did not state the consideration, although it is understood the Armour interests have purchased 4600 shares, or approximately 80 per cent. The actual money transaction, which includes name and goodwill and an increased stock value is said to be over \$1,000,000.

#### **Capitalized for \$600,000**

The company is capitalized at \$600,000, there being 6000 shares at \$100 each. Mr. Stanton for several years it is said, has been acquiring all the stock he could pick up. His personal holding are said to be not much over 50 per cent of the total. Of the total capital stock 310 shares never were issued.

...  
It was declared yesterday that the Armour company planned to extend the operations and increase the capacity of the Stanton plant and would have 1000 men on the payroll inside of a year.

*The Spokesman-Review* in flying the banner "**Inland Empire Outlook Bright For Future Reconstruction Period When Peace Comes**" on November 28, 1918 conveyed that "**Spokane Can Become Big Meat Packing Center of Northwest.**"

An article by J.M. Van Kleek, manager of Armour & Co. predicted a bright future for the meat packing industry in Spokane.

Spokane as a livestock center is slowly but surely coming into its own. The feature that will bring this about more rapidly than anything else is a ready cash market at all times for the livestock producer. When Armour & Co. purchased the E.H. Stanton company plant at Spokane in the spring of 1918 they supplied a ready cash market for all kinds of livestock in the city of Spokane in a degree that had never been enjoyed in this city heretofore: a factor of the utmost importance, not only in building up the cash livestock market in the city of Spokane, but holding out to the livestock producers in this country encouragement for greater and better production.

...  
When this city was selected by Armour & Co. as the point for their most western packing house it was after due deliberation and consideration of two important features. First, the potential supply of livestock; second, the distributive possibilities. Spokane offered many attractions covering both of the points. It is situated practically in the midst of a country well adapted to the production of livestock of all descriptions, also favorable located as a distributive point for the branch houses already owned and operated by Armour & Co. in the west states.

...  
Spokane is the livestock center of the northwest. With better breeding and increased hog production it will rapidly become the meat packing center as well. When this occurs it will be fully realized that this industry is the greatest industrial asset the city possesses.

**"Grow more Hogs, Armour Urges; Wants to Expand Local Plant."** In repeating the message Mr. Van Kleek delivered back in 1918 that Spokane needs more hogs to supply the Armour Plant, Mr. Phillip D. Armour himself was visiting Spokane to emphasize the call. The Chronicle reported Armour's visit on January 26, 1920.

Mr. Philip D. Armour and his brother Lester and the first vice president of Armour company, F.E. White, arrived last evening from Denver. They were advising Spokane that their present plant facilities are adequate to handle the hogs coming in, but stated that not enough hogs are raised in the region and that "we have to import dressed hogs from St. Paul to Spokane. That situation is eminently unsatisfactory to Spokane, the Inland Empire, the producer and consumer. ... "We want more hog producers in the Inland Empire and we want them right away.

"We came here to see our plant, to get acquainted with the western stockmen and to see Spokane," said Mr. Armour. "In the past the packers and the producers have not always known each other and certain misunderstandings have arisen which could have been and are always quickly remedied when the two get together. We came to meet with the stockmen and look things over."

*The Spokesman-Review* reported in July 1921: "**Spokane is Now Big Lamb Center.**" "**Huge Deal Made by Armour Branch in City.**"

Through arrangements consummated by the Washington Wool Growers' association and the Northern Pacific railroad, Armour & Company and representatives of stockyards interest, at least 100,000 lambs, it is expected will be slaughtered at the Spokane Armour plant this fall instead of being shipped to Chicago. ... "The arrangement marks a new epoch in northwestern live stock animals, as it will halt in Spokane for the most part trainloads of lambs that have moved east for years." ...

**Increase in Armour Force**

"The Armour plant will probably have to take on 40 to 50 more men to handle the new business," said Mr. Flood. "Already there is talk of increasing the size of the Spokane plant if the lambs come in as we expect. The money that formerly went east will not come to Spokane. ..."

With little fanfare, Armour moved out of the downtown location on Wall Street and moved all its operations to its plant on East Trent. A short notice in the May 24, 1924 *Chronicle* announced:

**Armour & Company** announce the removal of their distribution service, effective Monday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, from 123 South Wall street, to the Packing Plant on East Trent avenue. This change is made to speed up deliveries, cut down rehandling of products and give a larger selection of goods to their customers. The entire line of Armour's Quality Products will be handled at the new location.

The same deliveries as at present will be made and all services will be continued.

After a ten-year interlude, with the building primarily listed as vacant in the Polk directory, the second life of the former Armour Cold Storage and Warehouse building began in 1935. On September 1, *The Spokesman-Review* announced: "**Brown-Johnston Buys Building.**"

The Brown-Johnston company electrical concern, yesterday announced an expansion program with the purchase of the former Armour two-story heavy fireproof brick building at Railroad and Wall from the Northern Pacific railway and a longer term lease on the ground from the railroad, which has tracks along-side.

The transaction was described as one of the largest cash purchases of downtown property in recent years. The consideration was not disclosed. The building, 100x125 has a full basement and originally cost about \$70,000. Its three floors give 36,000 square feet.

Brown-Johnston will use the building for wholesale merchandising display space, for warehousing, and their shop and factory operations will be moved from the present retail location at N118-120 Lincoln, which will be maintained. The Brown-Johnston factory has been handling such a growing volume of business this expansion into a new location became imperative, it was said.

The plating department will be doubled in size in the new location. New buffing wheels and other equipment will be installed.

The new quarters will also house the commercial refrigeration, air conditioning, electrical contracting and wiring and shipping departments.

...

The Power Brown Company had purchased the pioneer electrical company, Doerr-Mitchell in 1923, and by 1924 the Brown-Johnston company was formed with J.C. Power Brown as president and Eric A. Johnston as vice president. The new firm maintained the existing Doerr-Mitchell electrical store at 118-120 N. Lincoln Street and continued to operate retail business there after the purchase of the former Armour building.

Brown and Johnston would enter a new era as reported by the *Chronicle* on March 30, 1940.

#### **"New Electrical Firm Organized."**

A new firm, the Columbia Electric and Manufacturing company, has been incorporated to take over and expand the manufacturing and wholesaling operations of Brown-Johnston Wholesale company, it was announced today.

The new firm, of which Eric A. Johnston is president and W. E. Lofgren, secretary-treasurer, will continue to occupy the present Brown-Johnston quarters at S123 Wall.

"The new company is to be entirely divorced from Brown-Johnson's retail store and electrical contracting business at N118 Lincoln," Mr. Johnston said. "I will continue to be interested in both companies, however."

"Columbia Electric and Manufacturing company employs 66 persons in the manufacture of flood lamps, lamp shades, lighting equipment and ornamental work. These products are sold in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Hawaii and California.

"Chief purpose of the new company is to further expand the territory and number of jobbers now distributing these manufactured items." ... Brown-Johnston Wholesale company started its manufacturing business in 1926.

"The firm is the only manufacturer of electric equipment in the Pacific northwest and there is a big field for expansion. Next year is planned to add a third story to our present two-story, fireproof building. We will also push our distribution of many nationally advertised electrical products, which we hand in the Inland Empire."

Brown-Johnston Wholesale company started its manufacturing business in 1926.

On June 6, 1940, *The Spokesman-Review* told an abbreviated history of the rapid expansion of the Brown-Johnson company.

The history of the Brown-Johnston company is closely linked with the growth and development of the Inland Empire, which it has served for so many years.

The firm had its real beginning in 1897, with the establishment of the Woerr-Mitchell company [sic, should be Doerr]. Spokane's population at that time was less than 25,000. The firm specialized in gas-lighting fixtures, decorative iron and glass merchandise and many similar items. ...

In a half page spread in its Sunday September 1, 1940 edition, *The Spokesman-Review* extolled the accomplishments of Eric A. Johnston. In words and pictures, the Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate was portrayed.

### **"Eric Allen Johnston Whirlwind of Action."**

Eric A. Johnston, Republic candidate for United States senator—what about him?

He is young, dynamic, ambitious. Not too young, 44. He began life as a newsboy in Spokane to eke out a living for himself and his mother when she worked in a doctor's office. He is now president of the Columbia Electric and Manufacturing company, largest manufacturer of electric goods in the Pacific northwest, and president of Brown-Johnston, retailers of electric supplies. He is also chairman of the board of the Washington Brick, Lime and Pipe company. That gives him the background of American tradition found in all the history books—poor boy who climbs to the top. ...

Immediately after the onset of World War II, on January 25, 1942. *The Spokesman-Review* reported:

### **"Spokane Concern Gets Navy Work."**

The Columbia Electric and Manufacturing company yesterday announced the award by the navy department of a type A contract for the manufacture of various types of telephone connections electrical fitting and lighting equipment for all kinds of warships.

Eric A. Johnston, president of Columbia Electric stated: "This is a contract based upon the actual cost of manufacturing with a guaranteed ceiling price. ... "I anticipate that we will do more than \$1,250,000 during the current year."

Columbia Electric is now in the process of enlarging its building at S123 Wall to accommodate the machinery and equipment purchased last week when the Spokane Tool, Die and Machine Works was acquired. "Approximately \$40,000 will be spent," said Mr. Johnston.

"We have also acquired the Travis Pattern and Foundry company and will greatly enlarge its operation. This operation will be in charge of Paul Travis," Johnston announced.

...

"It will also be essential to work three shifts a day or completely around the clock so that none of our machinery or equipment will be idle a minute. I am now in the process of employing a large number of additional pattern makers, die makers, machinists, foundrymen and sheet metal workers. Undoubtedly at least 250 additional men will have to be employed." [Stated Walter A. Toly, production manager of the Columbia Electric.]

In 1941, Eric Johnston was elected president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and served that position until 1946. During his tenure with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Johnston had met with FDR, served as chairman of the United States Commission on InterAmerican Development and traveled to South America and Roosevelt's emissary, and was invited by Stalin as the emissary of President Roosevelt. Life Magazine published a major story about Mr. Johnston in the June 19, 1944 issue. He would culminate his career – with intermittent diplomatic missions for presidents Eisenhower and Truman--as president of the Motion Picture Association of America, a position he held until his death in 1963.

Back in Spokane, in January 1945, Johnston, although reelected president, announced he was releasing active management of the Columbia Electric company to Vice Presidents Tubbs and Toly. Mrs. Ida B. Johnston [Eric's mother] was reelected secretary-treasurer.

Clarence A. Tubbs, vice president and general manager of distribution told *The Spokesman-Review*, "Columbia Electric has grown from its initial start in the wholesale business in 1935 to the largest independent electrical distributor in this area," he added. The manufacturing division, under Walter Toly, has grown from a custom manufacturing establishment into one of the leading manufacturing firms in the Pacific northwest. ... "The management realizing the possible necessity for war materials, entered into contracts with the navy department for war supplies prior to Pearl Harbor."

#### **Makes Ammunition**

"Since the inception of the original contract the plant has been engaged entirely in war production and the complement of the Columbia plant at present is 185 persons engaged in the manufacture of electrical fittings, valves and other items of necessity to the navy department. In addition, the firm is also engaged in the manufacture of ammunition for the war department."

"After the termination of the war we feel we will be able to maintain the present personnel in the production of civilian goods of a similar nature to the items manufactured previous to the war."

*The Spokesman-Review* reported: "**Johnston Leaves Firm Presidency.**" In an article of December 12, 1949 describes the announcement. Walter A Toly would become president of the Columbia Electric and Manufacturing company and Eric A. Johnston would become chairman of the board. Johnston made the announcement at a luncheon at the Spokane Club to a group of approximately 200 of Spokane's business and industrial leaders. He told of Columbia's phenomenal growth since its incorporation in 1939 with a net worth of \$100,000. And then noted that the company was worth nine times that much with annual sales of \$4,500,000. The company's business extended beyond the Inland Empire to New Jersey, Texas, Manila, Detroit, throughout the USA. "Two factories of the Columbia Electric on Ide Avenue are "bursting at the seams," Mr. Johnson said, which may mean the company will have to invest from \$500,000 to \$600,000 in a new plant," he declared. Turning from the affairs of Columbia, he regaled the group with his duties as president of the Motion Picture association that took him world-wide from his present office in Washington D.C.

In February 1960, *The Spokesman-Review* reported the reorganization of the Brown-Johnston company:

**“Electrical Firm is Reorganized.”**

Eric A. Johnston, former president of the firm who still retains an interest in the company, said the appliance portion of the business was sold so that Brown-Johnston could put more emphasis on its main field of contracting air conditioning refrigeration and heat installations John F. Boothe, president, would direct contracting operations. The appliance retail division has been sold to Charles Nelson. Under the new corporate structure of Brown-Johnston all financial links between the two firms have been severed [Columbia Electric and Manufacturing had a plant at E 3420 Ferry and was no longer listed at S123 Wall].

Brown-Johnston and a subsidiary, Micro-Film Systems founded by John F. Boothe in 1966, continued to operate out of 123 South Wall Street until 1969. Other occupants of the building during this period included Carswell Co., a manufacturing agent for automatic doors; Mailwell Envelope; Micro-Film Systems; and Western X-Ray supplies.

The third life of the Armour building opened in the late 1960s, when Spokane architect Kenneth W. Brooks bought the dilapidated building in the alley that had originally served as Armour's stables and wagon garage. John F. Boothe, president of Brown-Johnston sold the building at 121 Wall to Brooks in 1966 with an option to buy the remaining Armour buildings at 123 Wall. *The Spokesman-Review* reported that Kenneth W. Brooks had been issued a building permit for S121 Wall Street for alterations to office building on March 31, 1967 with a construction value of \$45,000. S121 Wall was first listed in Polk in 1968 with Kenneth Brooks Architect as the occupant. Carswell Company, Mail Well and Micro-film Systems were listed as occupants of S123 until 1973 when the building was listed as vacant.

After John Boothe solid his interests in Brown-Johnston and Micro-Films Systems in 1969, he sold the building to Kenneth Brooks who had exercised his option to buy the former Armour buildings at 123 S. Wall Street. The sale took place in 1970. Brooks envisioned a renovated and repurposed building that would follow the “multi-shop idea” concept with boutique shops, coffee houses, and restaurants that would become the Artrum Building. He followed the model of the neighboring Second City at 605 First Avenue, that opened in June 1972 and housed eleven arts and crafts shops.

*The Spokesman-Review* reported in August 1972 that:

The building at S123 Wall is about to undergo a facelifting which will turn it into a restaurant and organic foods center.

Architect Kenneth W. Brooks, building owner, said remodeling will start within a few weeks, with tenants for the renovated building to be Mr. and Mrs. Charles Serpinas, owners of the Well restaurant.” A natural food and juice bar will be on the second floor next to restaurant; on main floor will be kitchen utensil shop, bakery, grain mill and combination apiary and flower shop. A fish and fowl market and cold storage area planned for basement. It was hoped a wine shop would join the group. Produce stalls were also planned for the building.

**Postscript**

The **Armour & Company** meat packing plant (acquired by Armour from Stanton in 1916) on East Trent closed on April 30, 1971. With closure of the Union Stockyards in 1999 and later closure of the Hygrade plant, the meatpacking industry in Spokane had gone by way of Spokane's lumber milling industry.

In 2008, **Columbia Lighting** which had its Spokane roots in the founding of Doerr-Mitchell in 1898, closed its doors with the elimination of more than 200 manufacturing jobs. The business, founded by Eric Johnston, had been purchased and closed by Hubbell, Inc., a Connecticut-based company in 2002.

### **The Atrium building**

The Magic Lantern Theater opened in the Atrium in December 1973 and treated Spokane movie fans to great art films until 1998 when it closed at its Wall Street location for the last time. Currently Europa Restaurant and Bakery, with dining and meeting rooms and pub, founded as the Europa Pizzeria and Bakery in 1991 continues to operate on the first floor of the 1916 and a portion of the 1902 building. About half-vacant, there are a couple of businesses with offices in the building, portions of which are being renovated.

### **ADDENDUM WITH BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON NOTABLE OWNERS**

#### **Philip Danforth Armour (founder Armour & Company)**

Philip Danforth Armour, born in 1832 in upstate New York, was an industrious young man who started a meat packing business with his brother Joseph at Chicago's Union Stockyards in 1867. Armour designed an efficient assembly line for slaughtering animals and built a large fleet of refrigerated rail cars. He tried to use every part of the animal and sold byproducts for glue, cosmetics, medicines and fertilizer. Armour and Co. quietly bought up shares of Spokane's E.H. Stanton meat packing plant at 3300 East Trent Ave. and took over in 1917, quickly building it into one of Spokane's largest businesses. It sat along rail lines and near stockyards that supplied its production line. Armour's business boomed during World War II, and FDR issued an executive order placing Armour's assets, including the Spokane plant, under federal control to put down labor disputes and strikes during wartime. The Spokesman-Review reported that government food purchases filled 75 to 80 railcars a week during the war. Armour made soap animal byproducts and invented Dial soap in 1948. It was an immediate hit. Armour expanded the Dial line, and Dale Carnegie, based in Omaha, Neb., became the company's most famous salesman. Business slowed after the war. The Greyhound bus company acquired Armour/Dial in 1970 and reorganized the company, closing the Spokane plant. It was torn down in 1979. Armour died in 1901 but was known for encouraging the children at the free trade school he built in Chicago: "Always keep at it. Don't let up. Let liquor alone, pay your bills, marry a good wife and pound away at whatever you want – and sooner or later you'll make good." (Tinsley, 2013)

**J. Odgen Armour** was listed on the building permit for the city of Spokane building permit for the 1902 cold storage building. J. Odgen Armour was the sole surviving son of Phillip Armour and took over the company after his father's death in 1901. J. Odgen Armour inherited a \$100 million business which grew to an almost \$1 billion company in 1918. The post-war years—the slump, however, proved disastrous for Armour, who in 1917 was known as "the second richest man in the world." The company lost \$125 million between 1919 and 1921 and Armour lost most of the family stock at \$100 million. J. Odgen Armour was relieved of his presidency in 1923 and died in England in 1927.

**Eric Allen Johnston (1895-1963)**

Eric Allen Johnston's obituary was published on August 23, 1963 in the *Spokane Daily Chronicle*.

**"Final Rites Here for Eric Johnston." ...**

Johnston, one of Spokane's most distinguished citizens, died Thursday afternoon in a Washington, D.C. hospital. He was 67.

He made his start here as a vacuum cleaner salesman and went on to an outstanding career encompassing business, government, diplomacy and the arts.

Hundreds attended the services at St. John's Cathedral. Burial was in Greenwood Memorial Terrace.

**Kenneth W. Brooks, Architect, Building Owner and Developer (1917-1996)**

Architect Kenneth W. Brooks was born in Cedarvale, Kansas in 1917. He received his undergraduate degree in Architectural Engineering in 1941 and a master's degree in Architecture in 1948, both from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He served in the Caribbean with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (1941-1943) and the U.S. Marine Corps (1944-1946). After the war he worked for the New York office of Skidmore Owings, & Merrill and passed the National Council of Architectural Board exam to become licensed in the state of New York.

In 1948 Brooks traveled to Europe on a University of Illinois Francis Plym Fellowship, spending most of his seven-month trip in Sweden working with Sven Markelius, a Swedish city planner and architect.

He moved to Spokane in 1948 worked in the offices of George Rasque but soon left for a six-month fellowship in Europe and worked in the town planning offices of Stockholm and Goteborg Sweden. Upon return to Spokane he worked for Carroll Martell Architects, but, again, for only a short time before returning to educational pursuit earning a Masters in Architecture from University of Illinois. He returned to Spokane in 1949 to establish his own firm, Kenneth Brooks, Architect, in 1951. In 1954 he designed the Verne Johnson House, and 1958, the AIA-Honor-Award Washington Water Power (now Avista) corporate headquarters with Bruce M. Walker.

in 1966, Brooks received a National Award of Merit from the AIA for his Intermountain Gas Company Central Service Facility in Boise, Idaho. In 1967 he designed the award-winning First Church of Christ, Scientist (310 E. 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Spokane). In 1969 he partnered with Joseph Hensley and Fred Creager to form Brooks, Hensley, Creager Architects. He became an award-winning urban designer and city planner; one of his most ambitious and noteworthy projects was "A Place in the Sun," an urban design plan for downtown Spokane. He participated very actively in the planning process for Expo '74, the World's Fair held in Spokane in 1974.

He was a member and Fellow of the American Institute of Architecture, was the first chairman of the Urban Design Commission for the national American Institute of Architecture, past president of the former Spokane Municipal League, past president of the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and a member and deacon at First Presbyterian Church. He also served as a member of the Washington State Arts Commission, the Governor's Executive Committee of Design for Washington, and the National Urban Design Committee of the American Institute of Architects.

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--. "Many Permits for Buildings Granted." 3/1/1906. p3:4.

--. "Armour to Have New Warehouse." 12/18/1915. p8:7.

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--. "Armour & Company." [Announcement of relocation]. 5/24/1924 p2:7.

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- . "Armour Plant to Extend Capacity." 3/3/1916. p9:7.
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- . "Iron Beam Falls on Roeske." 3/24/1916. p6:6.
- . "Building Permits." [Armour warehouse]. 4/9/1916. p7:2.
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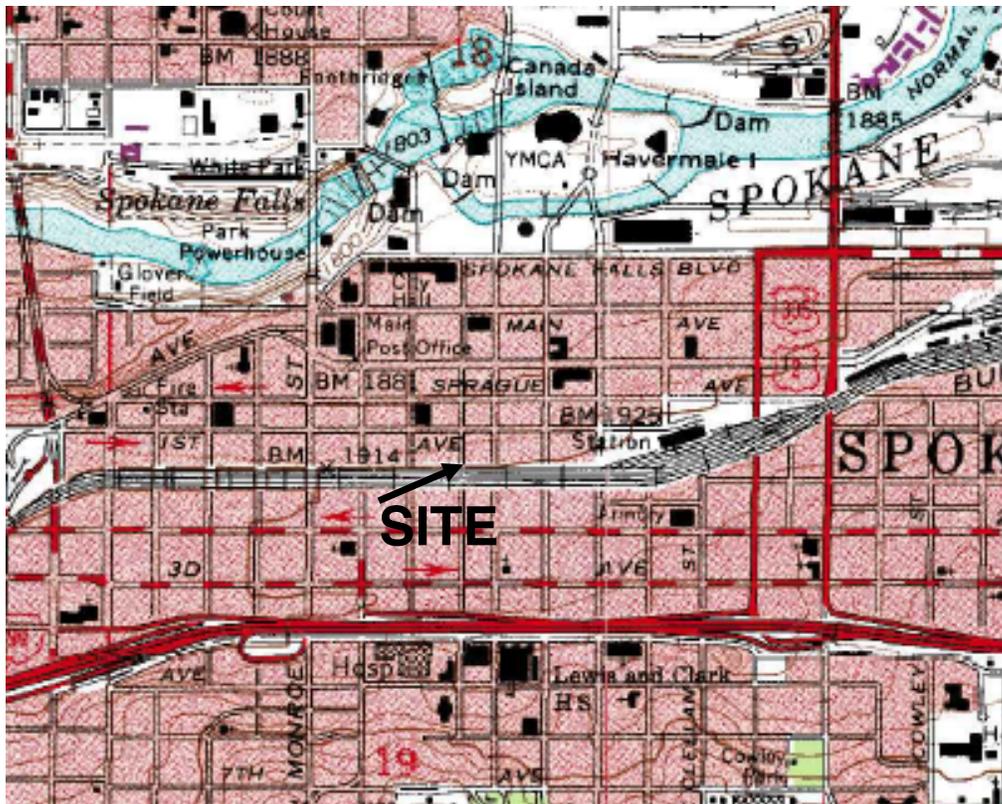
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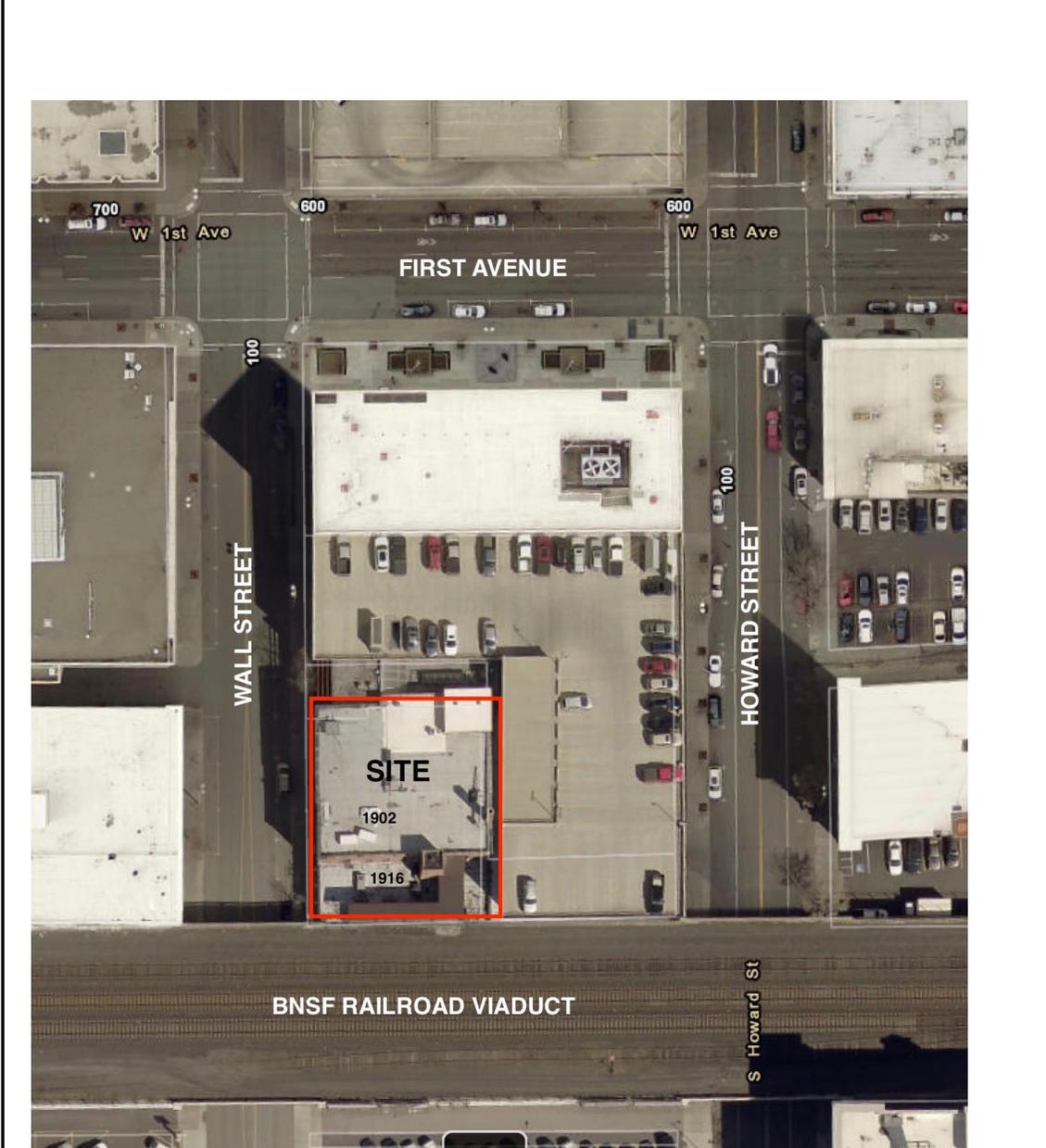
## **Maps, Drawings, and Photographs**



USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle. Spokane NW, Wash. 1974. Photorevised 1986

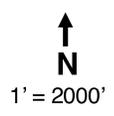
**ARMOUR BUILDINGS**  
**123 SOUTH WALL STREET**  
**SITE LOCATION**

↑  
N  
1' = 2000'



Spokane City Map – downloaded June 2021

**ARMOUR BUILDINGS**  
**123 SOUTH WALL STREET**  
**SITE LOCATION**



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet  
 Armour & Company Cold Storage and Warehouse Section 12 Page 4  
 Buildings

ADDRESS/BLDG. NAME **S. 123 Wall Street**  
 BUILDING # **The Atrium Building**

TYPE-USE-QUALITY	EXT. WALLS	BASEMENT	EXTRA FEATURES
Apartment	Brick	Full	Marquees
Office	Stone	Size	Canopy
Warehouse	Concrete	Finished	Balcony
Gas Station	Siding	Utility	Insulation
Motel	Con. Blk.		Cold Storage
Garage		HEATING	Sound Proofing
Store	Cast Panel	Hot Air	
No. Stories		Hot Water	INT. WALLS
No. Rooms	ROOF CONSTR.	Air Cond.	
No. Apts.	Flat	Gas	
ANNUAL GROSS INC.	Pitched	Electric	INT. PARTITIONING
DATE	Steel Truss	Oil Burner	Lin-Fest
	Wood Truss	Coal Stoker	
		Steam	ELEVATOR
		Central	Kind
	ROOF COVERING		Stops
	Asphalt Shingles		
	Corr.	Toilets	APPLIANCES
	Tar-Gravel	Tubs	RG & OV
		Basins	HF
	FLOOR STRUCTURE	Sinks	DW
	Reinf. Conc.	Showers	Washer
CONSTRUCTION	Conc. Slab	Laundry Trays	Dryer
Frame	Joisted Const.	H. W. Tanks	
Steel Frame		Sprinkler System	
Reinf. Conc.	FLOOR FINISH		
Brick	Asphalt Tile		GEN'L CONDITION
Con. Blk.	Fir		Excellent
	Linoleum		Good
FOUNDATION	Cement		Fair
Con. Stone Blk	Hrdwd		Poor
	W/W		

Yr. Built	% Fin.	Class	Sq. Ft. 1st	Sq. Ft. 2nd	Height	Per	S PSF	A. V.
BLDG. DESC	BLDG. #	BLDG. #	BLDG. #	BLDG. #	BLDG. #	BLDG. #	BLDG. #	BLDG. #
Const.	East Covered Deck							Ramp Area
Fndtn.	Concrete							
Floors	2x6's on 2x12's - 2'00"							
Ext. Walls	Stucco North, Suptate 2x6" L" Steel Posts							
Roof	Corrugated Steel on 2x6" L" Steel Purlins 3'00"							
Plumb. Fix.	on 4.5x10" I" Beam Trusses 10'00"							
Year Blt./Life								
S PSF	See Layout on Back of							32x64's
Sq. Ft.	240	Sheet 3 of 4					2064	
Value	500						500	
LAND: 11,642# 1985 @ \$12.50								

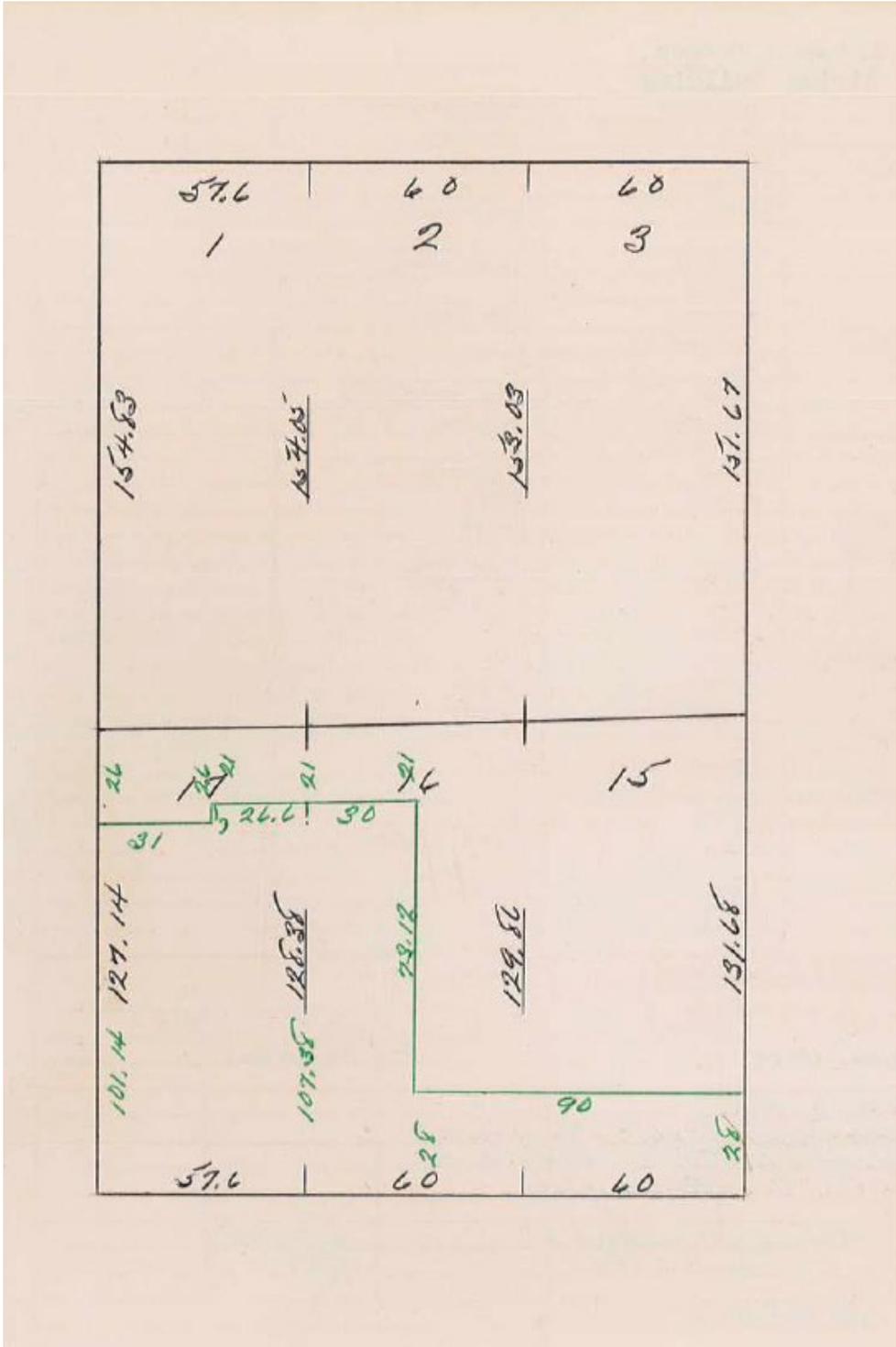
YEAR	LAND VALUE	BLDG. VALUE	APPRSR.	DATE
1980	100,000	54,400	RB	4-28-88
1984	171,000	64,000	DW	8-9-83
1988	145,000	90,000	RW	10-28-87
2004			LG	4/04

PARCEL NUMBER Sheet 1 of 4  
 U19531-5507  
 LEGAL DESC: 35191.5518  
 Northern Pacific Railway Company's  
 Subdivision of Right of Way  
 S 28 Ft. of Lt 15 & S 28 Ft of E 1/2  
 of Lt 16 & W 1/2 of Lt 16 Exc N 21  
 Ft, Lt 17 Exc N 21 Ft of the E  
 26.6 Ft & Exc W 31 Ft of N 26 Ft;  
 BA Lease No. 97897

Floor	Square Feet
2	6,220
1	8,485
Basement	8,668
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,373</b>

Please see the floor-by-floor descriptions on Sheets 2 and 3 and 4 of 4.

The "BA" in the legal description above signifies Block A.



**ASSESSOR FIELD FILE PLOT SKETCH**

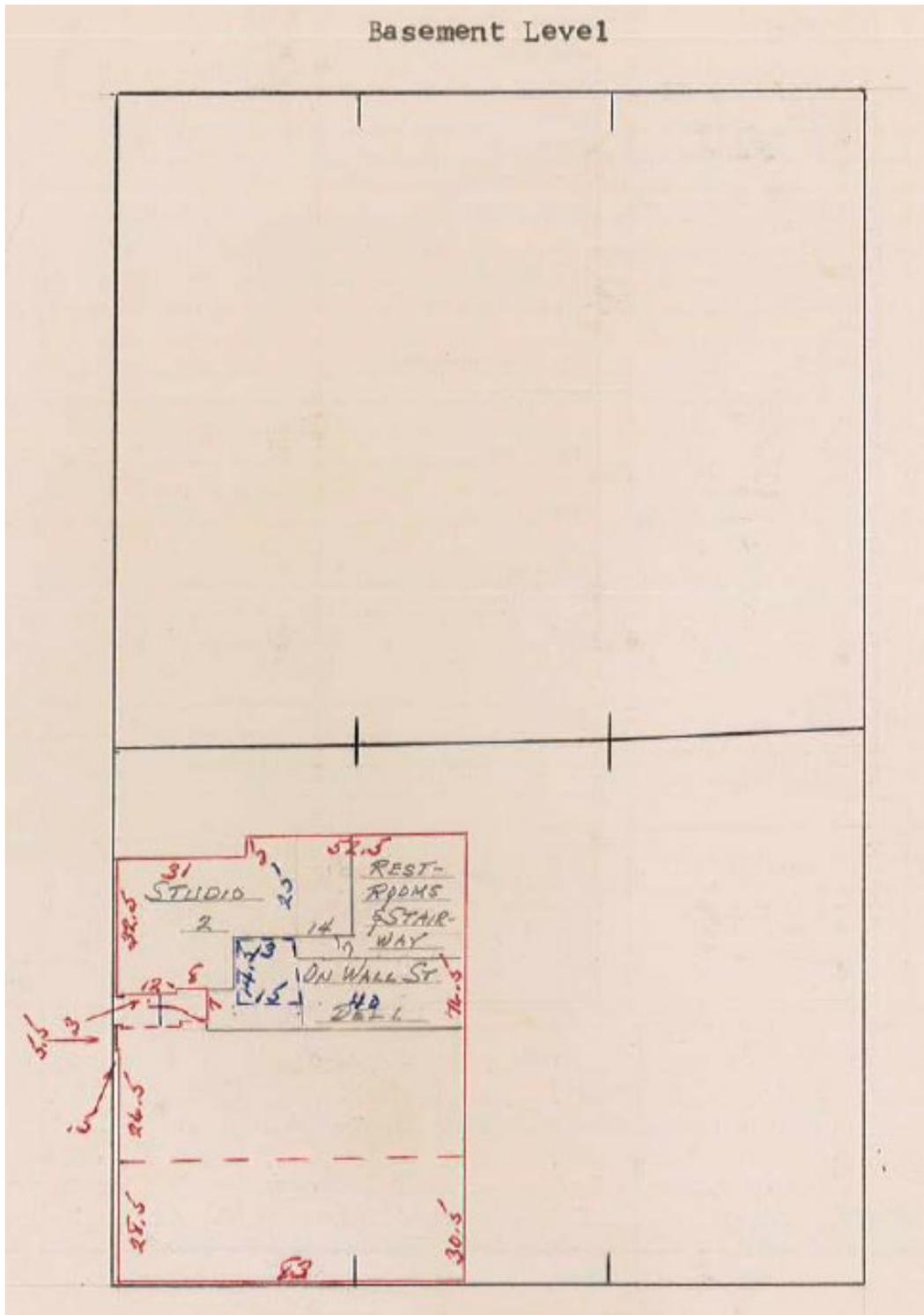




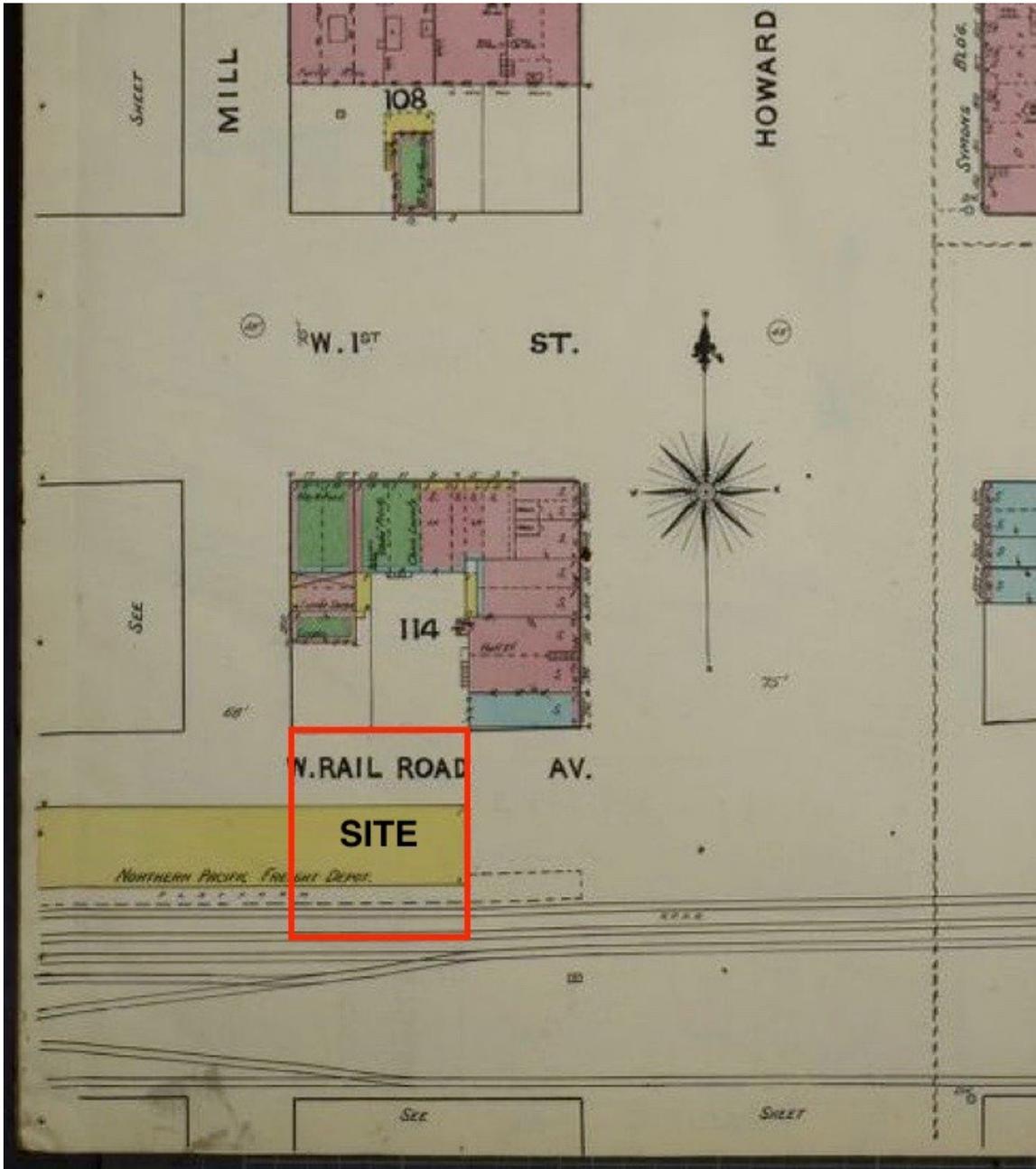




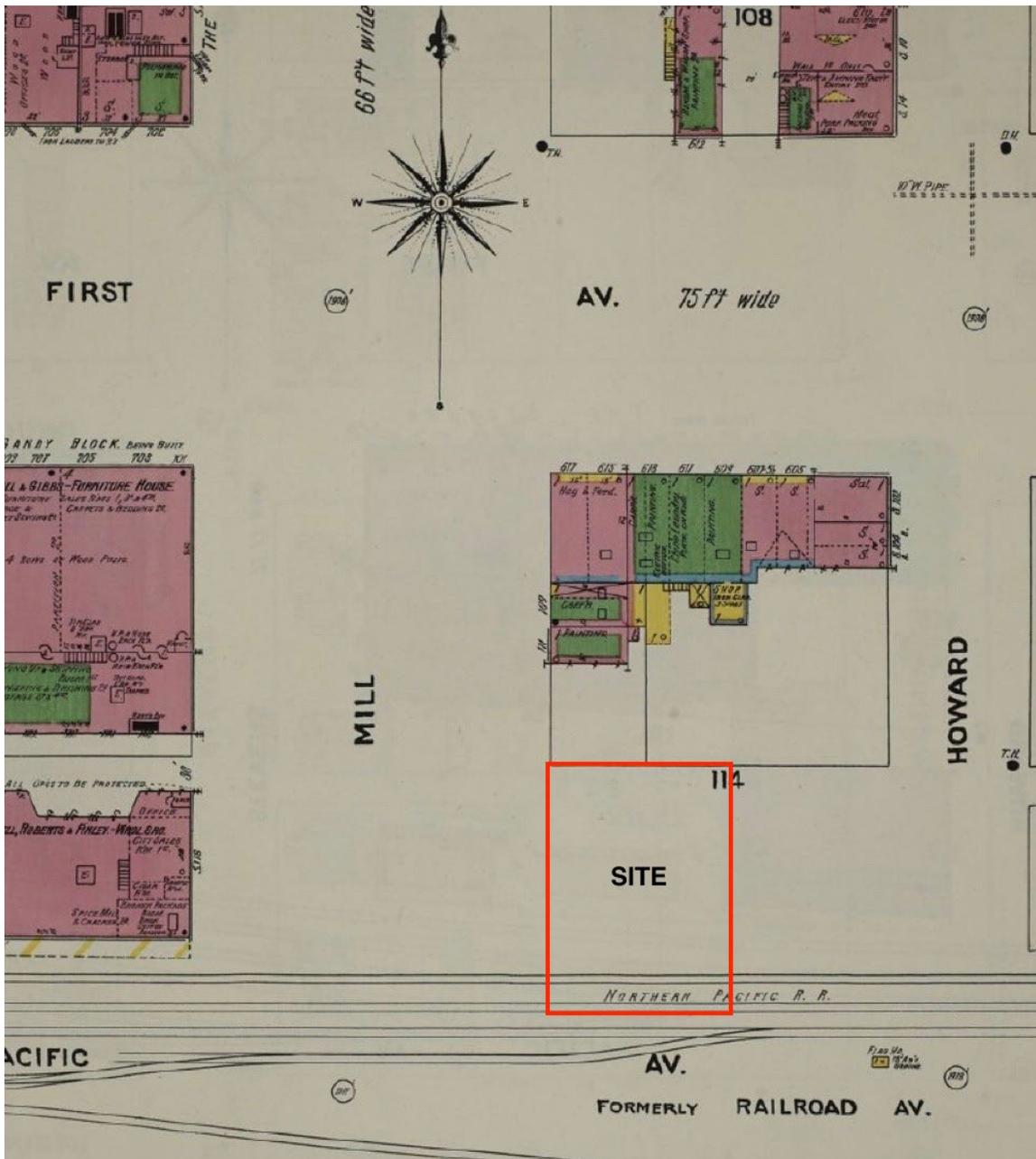




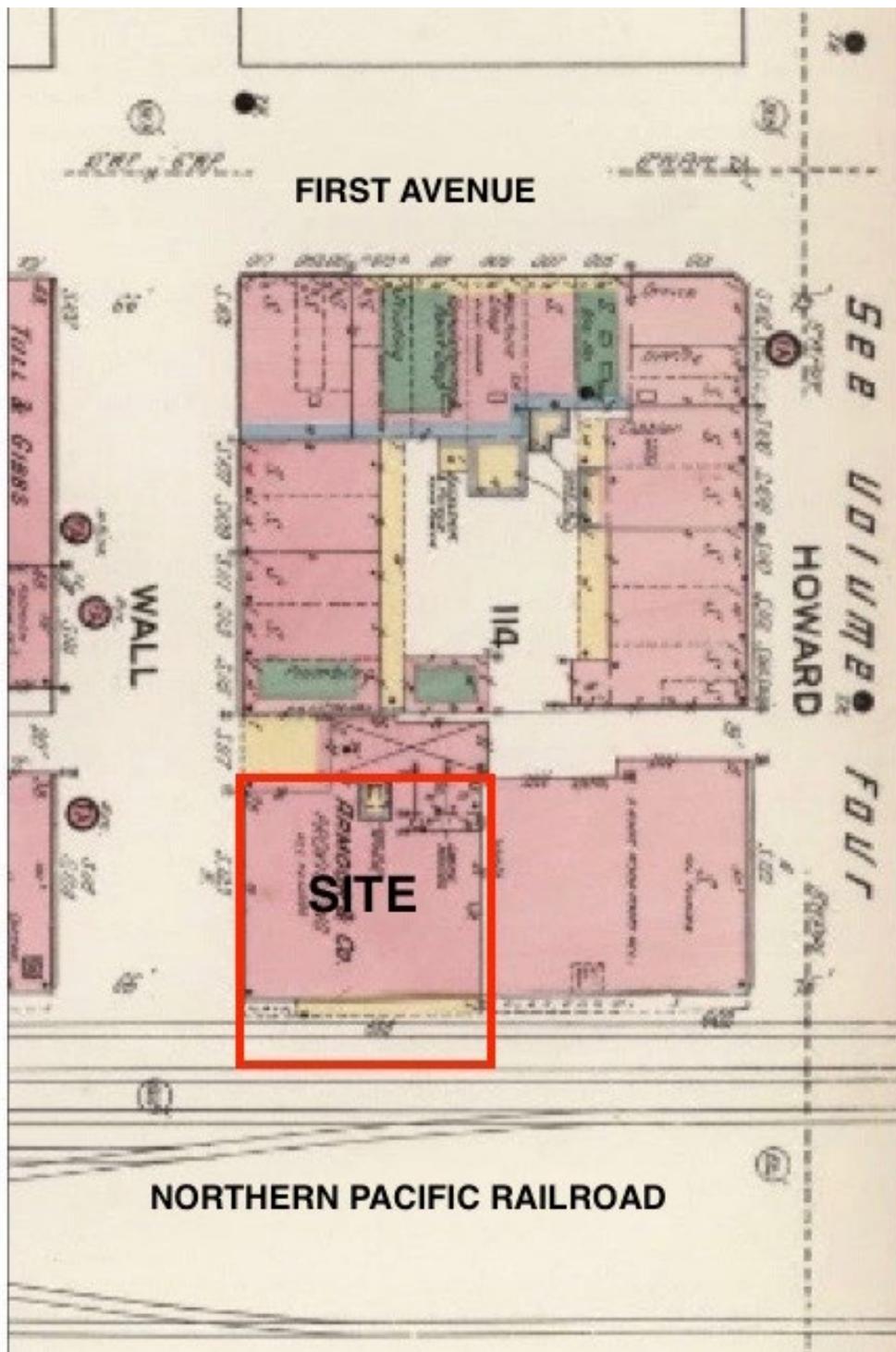
**ASSESSOR FIELD FILE PLOT SKETCH – BASEMENT**



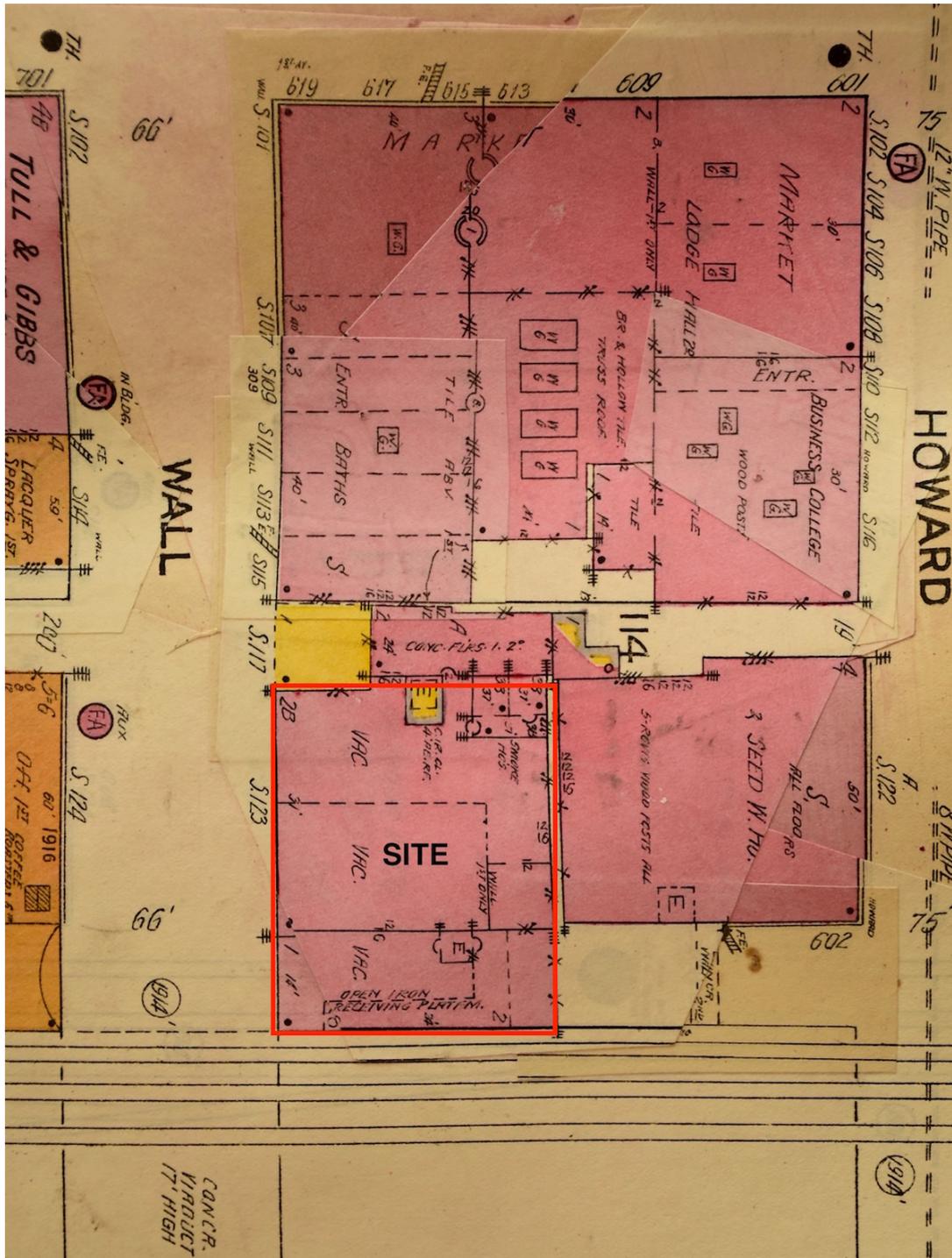
SANBORN INSURANCE MAP – 1891- Page 8

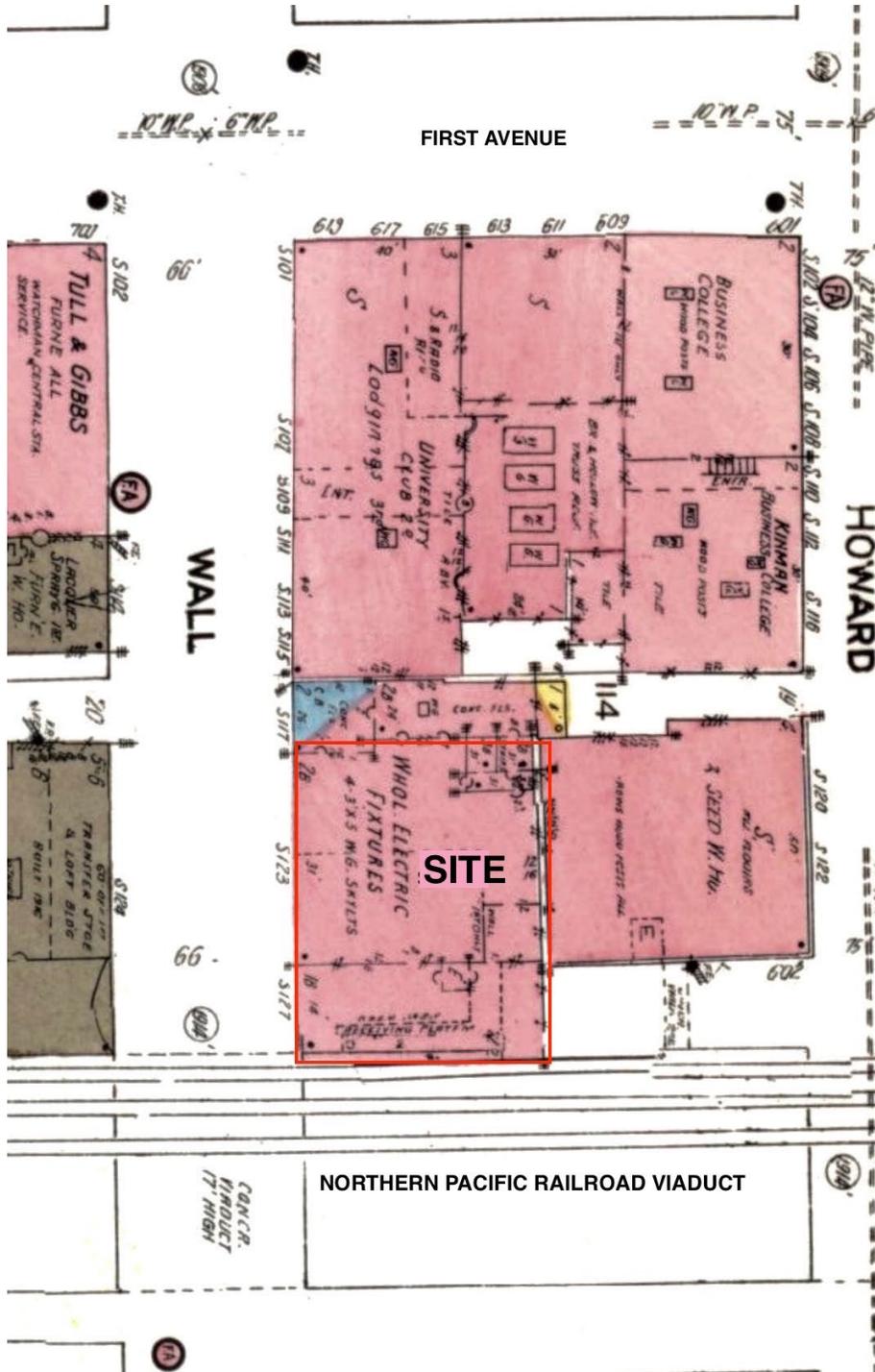


SANBORN INSURANCE MAP – 1902- Page 8

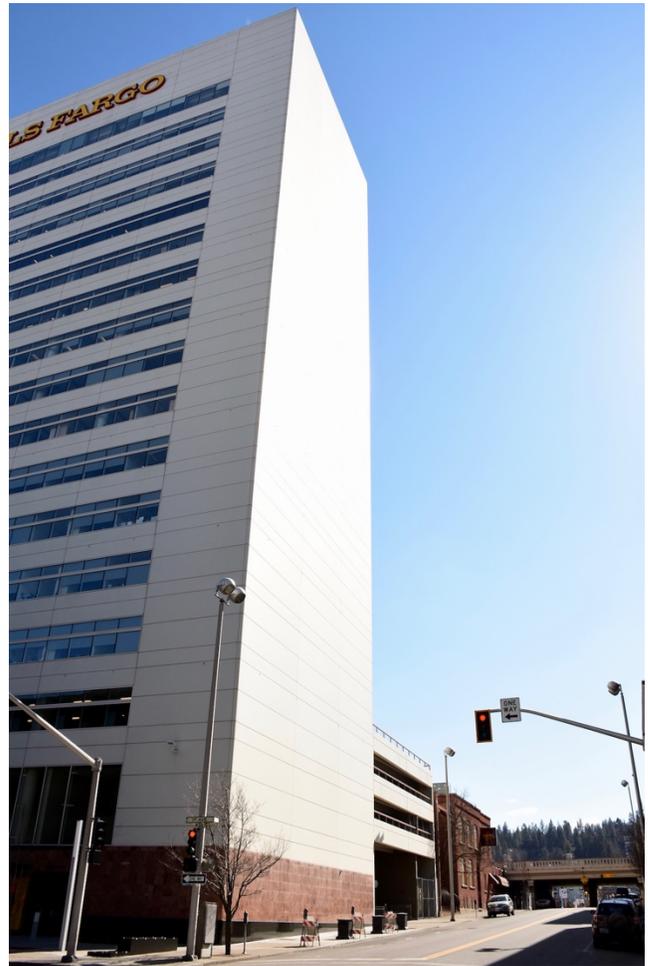


SANBORN INSURANCE MAP – 1910 - Page 286





1. Context along the east side of Wall Street, looking north



2. Context along east side of Wall Street, looking southeast



3. Northwest corner - front facade, looking southeast



Armour & Company Cold Storage & Warehouse Building

4. Cold storage building - front facade, looking east



5. Front facade of warehouse building, looking east



6. Southwest corner - front facade, looking northeast

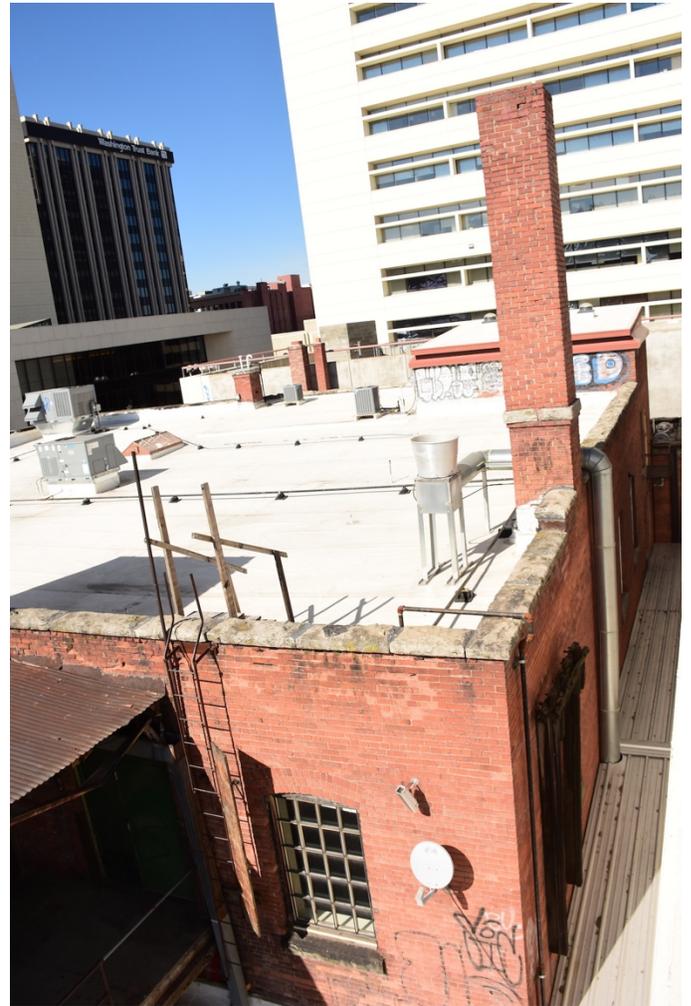


7. Rooftop and north wall of Cold Storage Building - granite coping, looking southeast



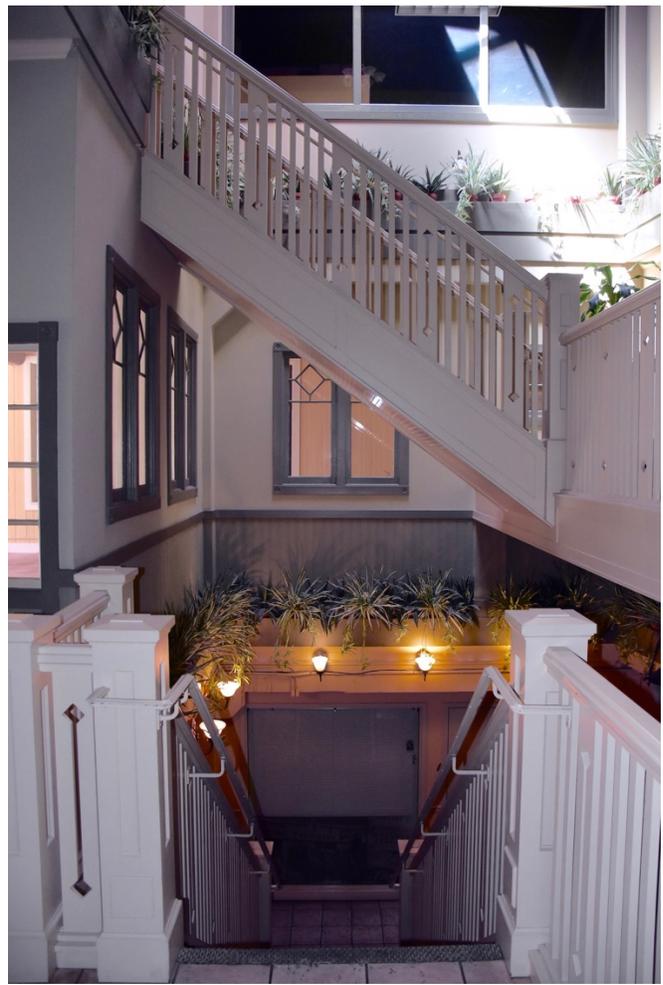
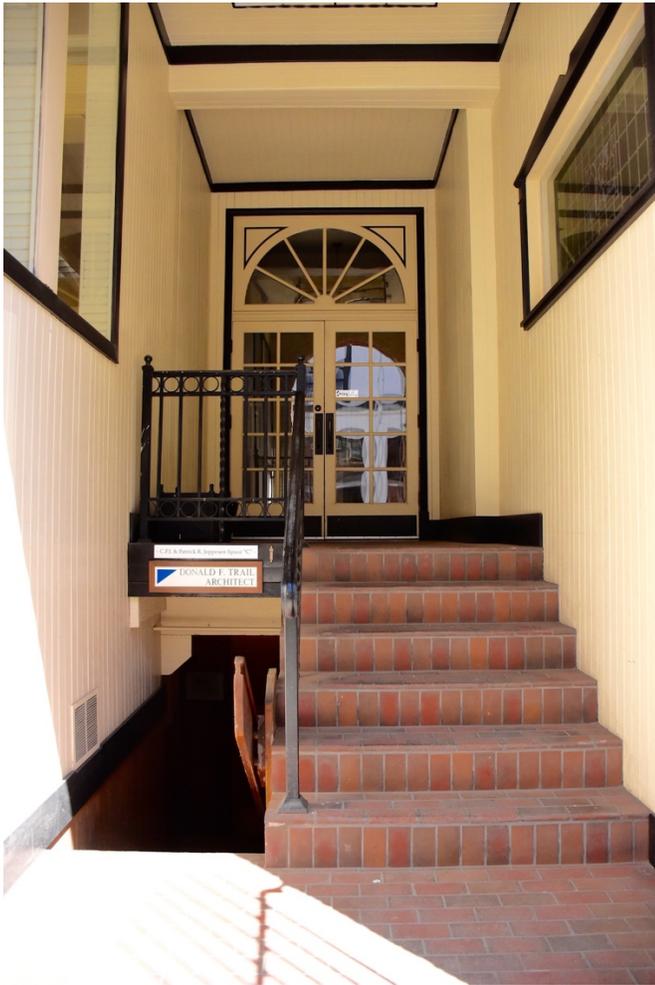
8. Roof top of warehouse - rail loading platform, looking west

9. Northeast corner - east facade, looking south



10. Southeast corner - east facade, looking north

11. 123 South Wall Street - main entry, looking east from entry portal



12. First Floor Atrium-stairs to basement and to second floor, looking north

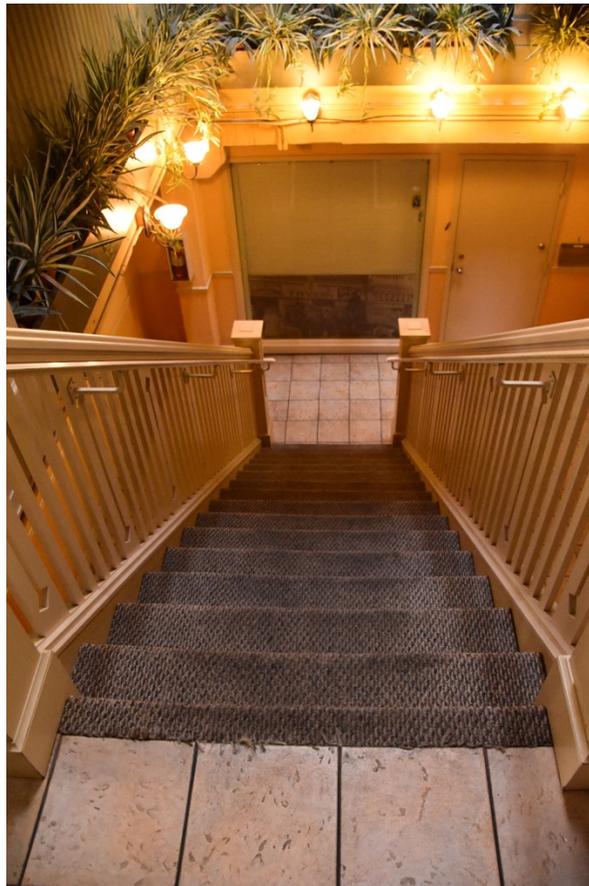
13. First floor hallway to Europa (right), office suite and restrooms, looking east toward rear



14. First floor office suite-northwest corner, looking northwest



15. First floor office suite-northwest corner, looking east toward atrium



16. Atrium stairs from first floor to basement, looking north



17. Basement room south of entry, looking south (original freezer door in corner)



18. First floor - entry to Europa Pub and Restaurant, looking southeast from main entry



19. Europa Restaurant Pub, looking east



20. First floor Europa Restaurant, looking south toward Southwest corner entry (S125 Wall)

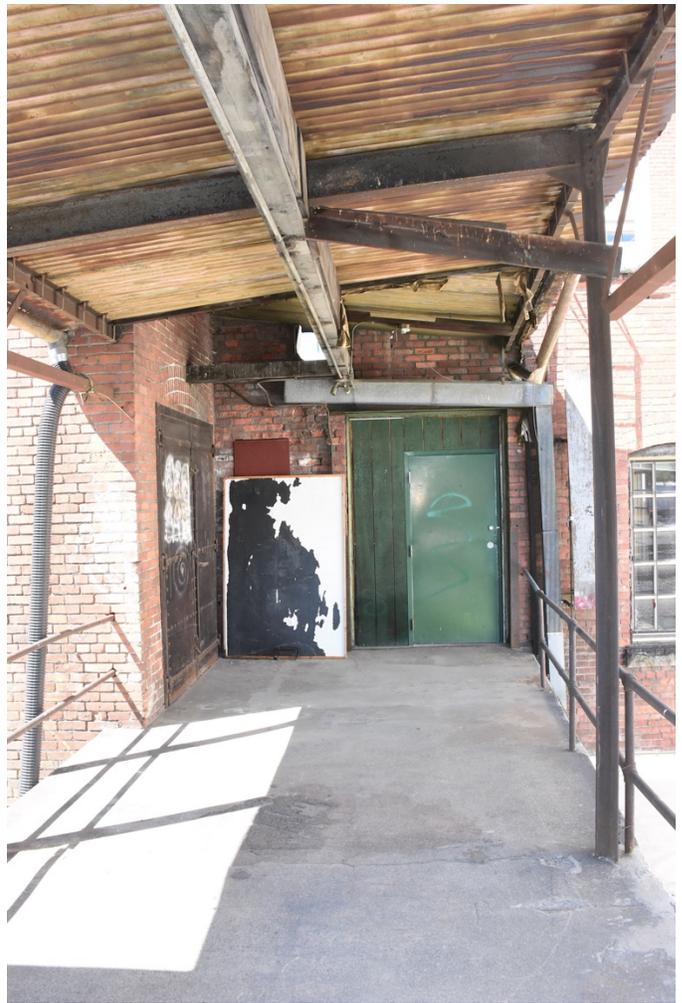


21. Second floor open office and atrium, looking northwest



22. Second floor Original roof of smokehouse room in northeast corner, looking up and north

23. Original back stairs in northeast corner



24. Rooftop loading platform entering tower and south wall, looking north