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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

### 1. Name of Property

historic name People's Bank and Trust Company Building

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number 663 Main Avenue

<input type="checkbox"/>	not for publication
<input type="checkbox"/>	vicinity

city or town Passaic City

state NJ code 034 county Passaic code 033 zip code 07055

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

[Signature] AC/DSHPO 8/24/18  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

NPS DEP National & Historic Resources  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register  removed from the National Register

other (explain:)

[Signature]

11/19/18

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

**Category of Property**  
 (Check only **one** box.)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/financial

**Current Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/business

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Art Deco

**Materials**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: LIMESTONE

walls: BRICK

STONE/Marble

roof: SYNTHETIC

other: TERRA COTTA

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### Summary Paragraph

Located in downtown Passaic City, the People's Bank and Trust Company Building, an Art Deco style skyscraper, was completed in 1931. When it opened, the building featured ground floor retail, a two-story banking hall, and eight floors of speculative office space. In 1989, the property was sold, and by 2010, stripped of most of its interior finishes. In 2016, the building was slated for rehabilitation using federal historic tax credits and the project is scheduled to be completed in 2018. The building is built on a 9,147 square foot, .21 acres, trapezoidal shaped lot at the corner of Main and Broadway. The People's Bank Building is a physical and architectural landmark in the city. At 12-stories, it is the tallest building in downtown Passaic.<sup>1</sup> Designed in the Art Deco style, its materials and architecture distinguishes it from the rest of the downtown Passaic cityscape. This distinctiveness is then enhanced by a dramatic 45 foot tower rising from the north elevation.

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### Narrative Description

The former People's Bank and Trust Company Building, located at 663 Main Avenue in downtown Passaic City, New Jersey, is a 12-story, trapezoidal, brick and limestone-clad Art Deco style commercial office building. The building is sited at the five-point intersection of Main Avenue, Broadway, Howe Avenue, and Prospect Street. The building is 154 feet tall, making it the tallest building in downtown Passaic City. The height is further enhanced by a 45-foot tall tower located at the north end of the roof. Prominently sited and rising far above surrounding downtown buildings, the People's Bank serves as a reference point for miles around.

**Setting:** The building is located in the Central Business District, at the corner of Main Avenue and Broadway, two main arterials for the City of Passaic, and is the tallest building in downtown Passaic. The Central Business District's boundaries are Quincy Street to the north, Pennington Avenue to the south, State Street/Howe Avenue to the east and Prospect Street/Howe Avenue/ Leonard Place to the west. Main Avenue, which runs through the district from north to south, is a primary artery for the City of Passaic, lined with commercial real estate. Approximately 500 businesses are located within the Central Business District, consisting of stores, bodegas, restaurants and other forms of commercial enterprise, many small in scale. The buildings range from 2-story to 6-stories in height. Two schools, one currently existing and one under construction, are located within the district; the Henry Street Elementary School located at 19 Henry Street currently stands and the Leonard Place Elementary School will be located at 715 Main Avenue. The Passaic Municipal Court is located at 330 Passaic Street along the eastern boundary of the district.

The area directly surrounding the subject building features a mixture of public and private structures. Located to the south directly across Broadway is the former Passaic National Bank and Trust Building, constructed ca. 1925. A modern parking deck abuts the former Passaic National Bank and Trust Building to the south. Directly to the west across Prospect Street are 2 to 3-story mixed use buildings. To the north at the corner of Prospect Street and Main Avenue is a late 20<sup>th</sup>-century office building. Located directly to the north in the

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<sup>1</sup> Historically, the building housed 11 stories, but in the 2016 renovation, a third floor mezzanine was added to house the modern gymnasium, located in the former banking hall. All description within the narrative will reflect the building as it stands today.

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neighboring parcel is a three-story stone and brick Richardsonian Romanesque style building, constructed ca. 1899. Prior to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Howe Avenue ran between the People's Bank and Trust Building and the neighboring three story building to the north. This portion of Howe Avenue has since been converted to a public park that runs between the two parcels. Located to the east of the subject building is a parking lot that lies between the rights of way on Main Avenue. Further across Main Avenue are early 20<sup>th</sup> century 2 to 3-story mixed-use buildings.

**Site:** The site is trapezoidal with .21 acres of land area. It is bound by Main Avenue to the east, Broadway to the south, Prospect Street to the west and a public park to the north. The building is constructed to the lot lines and there are no character-defining landscape features. A paved sidewalk abuts the south, east and west boundaries of the parcel.

**Structure:** The building is a trapezoidal shaped 12-story steel frame with concrete encased columns and concrete floor decks with full basement and flat roof. The building is 199 feet tall, including the rooftop tower. In total, the building has 87,240 square feet of interior space. Located at the north end of the roof is an octagonal brick tower.

**Exterior:** The building is oriented to the southeast (the corner of Main Avenue and Broadway) with its primary entry facing east onto Main Street, though the west and north elevations are also prominent and street-facing. All four elevations feature similar design and materials. The building is currently being rehabilitated for commercial use and the following description will reflect the building as such.

**East Elevation:** The east elevation is comprised of three sections, a first floor storefront, a limestone base that includes floors 2-4, and a brick office tower comprised of floors 5-12.

The first-floor exterior features the main entrance to the building, located centrally on the east elevation. The entrance is a modern full-light glass double door with aluminum framing (glass is currently missing). Sidelights and glass transoms encased in a bronze ornamental framing surround the door. The main entrance features a marble surround, roughly 12 feet in height and 15 feet in width. Located above the main entrance is the building signage and an existing historic bronze clock. All features of the entrance, except for the modern full-light glass double door with aluminum framing, are original to the building. The former replacement storefronts have been removed, leaving a majority of the first floor exposed. The upper portion of the first floor is clad in limestone that is original to the building. (See Photo # 7.)

The second, third and fourth floor exterior is clad in large ashlar limestone blocks and features three colossal bronze tripartite windows that illuminate the second floor and mezzanine. Above each window are cast-stone medallions depicting allegorical scenes. Due to the irregular shape of the parcel, the southeast corner of the first and second floors feature a wraparound colossal tripartite window. (See Photo # 2.) All features are original to the building.

Floors 5-12 compose the office tower of the building. This section is constructed of yellow buff brick. The southeast corner is indented by one window bay due to the irregular shape of the parcel. The windows are modern 6/6 aluminum single-sash windows installed as part of the current historic tax credit project. The windows are coupled vertically. Located at the spandrels on each floor are original ornamental terra cotta

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pieces. Further original terra cotta ornamentation is found above the eleventh floor. The elevation features an original ornamental brick parapet. (See Photo # 2.)

South Elevation: The south elevation is similar in material and is also composed of a first floor store front, a second, third and fourth floor highlighted by colossal tripartite windows and an office tower composed of floors 5-12. The former replacement first floor storefronts have been removed, leaving a majority of the first floor exposed. The upper portion of the first floor is clad in original limestone.

The second, third and fourth floors mirror the east elevation in material and style, with the exception of an additional original colossal window that illuminates the second floor and mezzanine located at the left portion of the elevation that is two lights in width. All but the additional original colossal window feature a cast-stone medallion above. Similar to the southeast corner of the building, the southwest corner features a wraparound original colossal window with a cast-stone medallion. (See Photo # 6.)

Floors 5-12 compose the office tower of the building. The style and material of the office tower south elevation mirror the east elevation. The southwest corner of the office tower is indented.

West Elevation: The west elevation is similar to the east and south elevations in material and style. The elevation features the same three-level composition. Located at the western end of the elevation is an original limestone framed entrance, similar in scope to the main entrance located on the east elevation. The former replacement first floor storefronts have been removed, leaving a majority of the first floor exposed. The upper portion of the first floor is clad in original limestone. (See Photo # 8.)

The second, third and fourth floors are similar in style and material to the south elevation with the exception of an additional original colossal tripartite window with a cast-stone medallion.

Floors 5-12 of the office tower mirror the style and material of the east and south elevations.

North Elevation: The north elevation features the same three level composition as the rest of the building with similar material and style. Centrally located on the first floor storefront is an original ornamental limestone surround. Storefronts that have since been removed flank the limestone surround on either side. The upper portion of the first floor is clad in original limestone.

The second, third and fourth floors are similar in material and style. Due to the north elevations size, the second floor only consists of one centrally located original colossal tripartite window with cast-stone medallion, flanked on either side with original colossal windows that are two lights in width. (See Photo # 4.)

Roof: The roof is flat with a modern synthetic membrane. Surrounding the perimeter of the roof is a brick parapet, 6 feet in height, capped with terra cotta coping. At the north is an original multi-level tower, 45-feet in height and octagonal in shape. The tower features three set back tiers. Original ornamental terra cotta and buff brick that runs parallel in color and style to that of the building's shaft, highlight the tower. The roof line of the first tier is stepped and highlighted with cast-stone coping. The top tier is hollow and features semi-arched openings on all sides. Modern exhaust vents and cooling towers are located throughout. (See Photo # 22.)

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**Interior:** The building is currently being rehabilitated for commercial use and the following description will reflect the building as such.

**First floor:** The first floor of the building was previously stripped of its features, exposing the original concrete and steel framing. (See Photo #'s 9 and 10.) The south end of the space is largely open and features metal support beams. Storage rooms, staircases/stairwells (3), and three modern elevator shafts are located at the north end of the first floor, all currently under construction. One of the stairs is original to the building and is located at the northeast corner of the building. This stair extends to the third floor/mezzanine. (See Photo # 14.)

**Second floor:** The second floor houses a modern gym within the former banking hall space which was stripped of its finishes by a previous owner. The space is similar in configuration to the first floor, in so that it features a large open space for gym equipment, with structural beams clad in gypsum board located to the south. The walls are constructed of gypsum board, the ceiling of acoustic drop tile and the floor is carpeted. Modern lighting is located throughout. The north end of the floor features storage rooms, a women's locker room, office space, staircases/stairwells (3) and three modern elevators. (See Photo #'s 11 and 12.)

**Third floor/Mezzanine:** The third floor/mezzanine houses an extension of the gym and was added in the 2016 renovation. The third floor/mezzanine is smaller in floor space to the second floor but similar in configuration, with a large open area designated for gym equipment at the south end. The walls are constructed of gypsum board, the ceiling of acoustic drop tile and the floor is clad in a rubber synthetic membrane. The north portion houses only a men's locker room and the vertical access space featuring 4 stairs and three elevators. (See Photo # 13.)

**Fourth Floor:** The fourth floor currently features exposed structural work due to the ongoing renovations. The floor and ceiling both feature exposed concrete. Exposed metal posts and beams are located throughout the floor. Perimeter walls currently feature exposed insulation. The floor plan offers large open spaces located to the south portion with minimal wall partitions. The north portion of the floor features vertical accesses, both stairs (3) and three elevators. (See Photo # 15.)

**Fifth Floor:** The fifth floor features gypsum board walls with exposed concrete flooring and ceiling due to the ongoing renovations. The fifth floor is similar in floor plan to the fourth floor, however, the southeast and southwest corners of the floor plan are indented due to it being the first floor located on the brick shaft of the building. Similar to the fourth floor, the south portion of the floor plan offers large open spaces with minimal wall partitions, while the north portion of the floor features modern bathrooms and the same number and type of vertical accesses.

**Floors 6-12:** Floors 6-12 are all similar in material and floorplan design. Each floor features gypsum board walls, concrete flooring and acoustic tile ceiling reflecting that ongoing renovations. Each floor features three vertical access; one located centrally (stair) and two located to the north perimeter wall (stair and elevator). The two vertical accesses are retrieved via a central lobby that provides access to offices, bathrooms, lockers, kitchen areas, and storage rooms, all located along the perimeter of the building. (See Photo #'s 16-21.)

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**Roof Tower:** The roof tower is a utilitarian space with exposed brick perimeter walls and reinforced concrete stripping. Both the floor and ceiling are concrete. Historically, the roof tower contained mechanical equipment and elevator machinery.

**Basement:** The basement is accessible via the stair located at the northeast corner. The floor plan is similar to the first floor in that it features a large open space to the south and bathrooms, storage areas and mechanical rooms to house plumbing and HVAC systems to the north. The basement features a concrete foundation, walls, floor and ceiling.

**Alterations:** The People's Bank and Trust Company Building retains its exterior integrity as an excellent example of the Art Deco style, adapted to serve a commercial function with ornamental architectural gestures to fit in with its metropolitan context. With the exception of the modern windows and storefronts, the building's features date back to its original construction. The building's interior was fitted with modern material in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. After a prolonged period of vacancy, the building was abated and all interior finishes were removed by a previous owner. The building is currently undergoing a historic tax credit rehabilitation project and rehabilitation plans have been submitted and approved.

The People's Bank and Trust Company Building's primary original character-defining features remain, including the building's footprint and façade configuration, exterior cladding materials and ornamental features, primary entrance including the bronze clock, and rooftop tower.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic 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 or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.



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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Period of Significance**

1931

**Architect/Builder**

Halsey, McCormack and Helmer (architect)

**Significant Dates**

1931

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## Statement of Significance

### Summary Paragraph

Designed by New York architects Halsey, McCormack and Helmer, the People's Bank and Trust Company Building is locally significant under Criterion C as an excellent example of the Art Deco style constructed during a time when the rise of Art Deco style was streamlining the new cityscapes of the United States. The building's period of significance is 1931, the date of completion.

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**Developmental history** (Explain the construction history or the creation of the property, and its evolution through the period of significance.)

### History of the Resource

In 1931, the newly constructed 11-story Art Deco style building at the intersection of Main Avenue, Broadway, Prospect Street and Howe Avenue was complete and stood as the tallest building in downtown Passaic. A grand opening occurred on June 27, 1931 and the bank customers, as well as all citizens of Passaic, were invited to tour the interiors of the "black marble, bronze and antique gold."<sup>2</sup> The banking floor, which was decorated with a polychromed ceiling and extensive marble cladding, was designed to contain 19 wickets for the tellers. The wickets were bronze and mounted on black marble partitions. Above the banking floor was a space designated for office space to be occupied by banking officials. Law offices, medical offices and professional service companies occupied the upstairs offices. Smaller retailers were located on the ground floor all around the perimeter of the building.

Anticipation for the building began in 1930 when the People's Bank and Trust Company undertook two major changes, beginning with the acquisition of multiple banking institutions, thus leading to the need for a new larger building.<sup>3</sup> Ideas for the acquisition began in 1929, when three banks, the Hobart Trust Company, the City Trust Company and the Merchants Bank of Passaic, fell on hard financial times and H.H. Terhune, then president of the People's Bank and Trust Company, proposed the idea to buy and consolidate the three banks under the name of People's Bank and Trust Company. Approval for the acquisition was granted in March 1930. Location for the new building was determined to be the former location of the Hobart Trust Company building located at 663 Main Avenue, situated directly across from the Passaic National Bank building.<sup>4</sup> Due to financial limitations spawned by the Great Depression, the bank sought help from the Realty and Security Company, a real estate investment company created in December 1930, to ensure costs were met for construction.<sup>5</sup> The contract for the new building was awarded to the John W. Ferguson Company, a local contracting company based in neighboring Paterson.<sup>6</sup> The contracting firm was known for constructing industrial buildings and prided themselves at being able to construct any form of industrial building for use in

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<sup>2</sup> "Beautiful Structure Stands Out From Every Approach to the City," *Passaic Daily News*, 27 June, 1931.

<sup>3</sup> The People's Bank and Trust Company was established in 1889 with a capital investment of \$100,000. The company's first location was at 201 Main Avenue.

<sup>4</sup> 1910 Sanborn Map. Passaic, NJ

<sup>5</sup> "Moody's Manual of Investments, American and Foreign; Banks, Insurance Companies, Investment Trusts, Real Estate, Finance and Credit Companies." Moody's Investors Service, 1944.

<sup>6</sup> "Awarded Contract," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (Brooklyn, New York). 18 Sept 1930.

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any industry.<sup>7</sup> Much of their business was in the woolens, silks and metal industries, focusing primarily in the state of New Jersey.<sup>8</sup>

The design of the new building was inspired by the rise of Art Deco style buildings that accentuated skylines of major United States cities, specifically that of New York City during the late 1920s. At this time, New York City was known for its financial institutions as well as its glistening new Art Deco style buildings. Happening concurrently in New York City was the construction of 1 Wall Street (1929-1931 by architects Voorhees, Gmelin and Walker), 20 Exchange Place (1930-1931 by architects Cross and Cross), the Chrysler Building (1928-1930 by architect William Van Alen), and most famously the Empire State Building (1930 by architects Shreve, Lamb and Harmon). The former two were constructed specifically for financial institutions.

Cities within New Jersey also started to experience this emergence of Art Deco styled buildings with examples found in places such as Newark, Elizabeth, Jersey City, Atlantic City and Trenton. These examples include both skyscrapers and low-rise building. Examples of Art Deco style skyscrapers are the New Jersey Bell Headquarters Building in Newark constructed in 1929 by architect Ralph Thomas Walker of Voorhees, Gmelin and Walker, the Hersh Tower in Elizabeth constructed in 1931 by architect Nathan Meyers, and the Jersey City Hospital in Jersey City constructed in 1931 by architect John T. Rowland. Excellent examples of low-rise Art Deco style buildings are found in Atlantic City, Boardwalk Hall constructed in 1929 by the architectural firm of Lockwood Greene, and in Trenton, NJ, the United States Courthouse and Federal Building constructed in 1932 by architect James A. Wetmore.

In order for Passaic to keep up with the architectural trends set forth by New York City and neighboring New Jersey metropolitan area planners and architects, the New York City based architectural firm of Halsey, McCormack and Helmer, who were known for their bank building designs during this period including the lavish Williamsburgh Savings Bank Tower located at 1 Hanson Place (1929), was hired as the architectural firm to design a similar style building that would stand as the focal point of the downtown Passaic cityscape. In all of their bank buildings, no costs were spared to design highly ornamented, grand interiors and sophisticated exteriors.

The architectural firm of Halsey, McCormack and Helmer dates to 1920 when Hayward S. Halsey co-founded the architectural and real estate development firm Thomas Bruce Boyd. By 1925, the firm officially changed its name to Halsey, McCormack and Helmer. George H. McCormack (1888-1954) started his professional career as a banker and had been a financial officer of the Thomas Bruce Boyd firm. Robert Helmer was a registered architect in New York. Beginning in 1929, the firm's primary location was at 286 Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, NYC and continued to be until the 1960s.<sup>9</sup> For more than thirty years, Halsey, McCormack and Helmer specialized in bank buildings. Their first major project was the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Tower located in Brooklyn, NY. The building was a 512 foot tall Art Deco style skyscraper consisting of 26 floors. The building was commissioned in 1927 and completed in 1929. Still in operation today and still largely intact, the building stands as one of the borough's architectural icons. That same year, the firm was commissioned to design the Art-Deco style People's Bank and Trust Company Building in downtown Passaic, NJ. Halsey, McCormack and Helmer architectural firm's prominence in banking design in and around New York City in the 1930s through

<sup>7</sup> John W. Ferguson Company, "Thirty Years of Building Service, 1892-1922."

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> "Dollar Savings Bank Building," Landmarks Preservation Commission, July 19, 1994, Designation List 259 LP-1889. New York, NY.

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the 1950s can largely be attributed to George H. McCormack's connections to the banking industry based on his previous profession whose previous occupation was a banker.<sup>10</sup>

The firm was also instrumental in incorporating new construction techniques that allowed for greater spatial flexibility within banking halls. The Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building used such a design to support the 63 foot high banking room and additional 26 stories. This same technique was used in the People's Bank and Trust Company Building. The success of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building and the People's Bank and Trust Company Building led the firm to be commissioned to design further banking buildings such as the Dollar Savings Bank on the Grand Concourse in the Bronx; and the grand Beaux-Arts building of the Dime Savings Bank in Brooklyn. The former Greenwich Savings Bank, built in 1952 by the firm is a very late example of classicizing Art Deco style bank architecture. Prior to 1932, the firm's architectural style was primarily in the Romanesque and Art Deco styles, with few in the neo-Classicism style. By 1956, the firm was believed to be the "oldest architectural firm in the nation which specializes exclusively in bank design," having designed more than 1,000 banks.<sup>11</sup> The firm was purchased by Duffy, Inc. in 1967 and in 1986, Duffy merged with Ralph Mancini Associates, Inc. to create the New York-based architecture and interior design firm of Mancini-Duffy.<sup>12</sup>

By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Passaic had a thriving downtown district that featured shopping, restaurants and movie theatres. The bank, situated amongst the thriving downtown area, continued to operate at a sufficient level with the office tower being consistently leased by private companies.<sup>13</sup> Yet even with a thriving downtown, the city declined in population with a total of 54,000 in 1960 as compared to a total population of 61,300 in 1940.<sup>14</sup>

The building continued to operate through the 1960s but by the 1970s, the building started to become obsolete as retailers and office users were no longer interested in renting space in a building that had no parking. During this period, the building changed ownership many times. By 1990, all of the offices were vacant and only a few retailers remained. The building was totally vacated by 1994 and has been empty since. Without security, the building was stripped of recyclable metals and vandalized. In 2007, the city of Passaic condemned the building as a result of the owners completely neglecting the building. The Passaic Urban Enterprise Zone purchased the property for \$4.4 million dollars, and then gutted the interior of the building as they believed the building to be more remarkable as a raw shell. Currently, the building is slated for adaptive reuse with the former banking being retrofitted to house a gymnasium with leasable office space above.

### **Criterion C: ARCHITECTURE**

The People's Bank and Trust Company Building is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture as an excellent example of the Art Deco style, completed in 1931. The design of the building and materials reflect the Art Deco style and represent the use of the style for public buildings during the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and stands as the only skyscraper Art Deco style building in downtown Passaic.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> "Architectural Firm Now 31 Years Old," The Troy Record, January 6, 1956.

<sup>12</sup> "Dollar Savings Bank Building," Landmarks Preservation Commission, July 19, 1994, Designation List 259 LP-1889.

<sup>13</sup> Polk City Directory

<sup>14</sup> United States Census. 1960

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### **Art Deco Style of the late 1920s and early 1930s:**

During the late 1920s and early 1930s, a number of civic, commercial, ecclesiastical and other public structures were built in the United States featuring various Art Deco styles, from Mayan Revival to Streamline Moderne, and from low-rise industrial to high-style Parisian. This trend was happening in large cities and small towns alike. The appeal and optimism for future growth and endeavors was the driving force behind this movement.

In the United States, New York City was paramount for the Art Deco style skyscraper building during the late 1920s and early 1930s, specifically the borough of Manhattan. Examples of such iconic buildings are found across the Manhattan skyline, such as the Empire State Building (1930), the Chrysler Building (1931), Radio City Music Hall (1931) and Rockefeller Center (1933). These buildings were not only admired for their functionality, but also for their artistic appeal with decorative elements that serve both to embellish and unify the buildings. These elements included limestone piles, bases and spandrels, and sculptured images allegorical in nature.<sup>15</sup> These elements are common place in many Art Deco style buildings.

Other cities around the United States also had skylines featuring Art Deco style skyscrapers. In Philadelphia, several prominent Art Deco style skyscrapers helped define the growing skyline of the city such as the N.W. Ayer & Son Building (1927-1929), the WCAU building (1928) and the Market Street National Bank (1930), now One East Penn Square. In Chicago, the Merchandise Mart (1929-1930), the Palmolive Building (1929-1930), the Chicago Board of Trade Building (1929) and the Holabird & Root's Riverside Plaza (1929) the former Chicago Daily News Building, deemed 'a symbol of the triumph of modern journalism.'<sup>16</sup> The trend followed suit all the way to the west coast in cities such as Los Angeles and San Francisco with examples as the Medical and Dental Building (1930), the Richfield Oil Building (1928-29), the Easter Columbia Building (1930), and the 450 Sutter Building (1929); the three former buildings are located in Los Angeles while the latter one is in San Francisco. New Jersey's role in Art Deco style architecture during the late 1920s and early 1930s was not centralized in one metropolitan location, but instead, featured sparingly throughout the state in cities such as Atlantic City, Newark, Trenton, Elizabeth and Camden.<sup>17</sup>

The style was not exclusive to skyscraper buildings. Many shorter buildings that functioned as factories, warehouses, power stations, printing plants and other industrial buildings featured buildings constructed in the Art Deco style. Architects sought to use the style to 'humanize' the often heartless image of the industrial sector and wanted to replace the common Victorian-era factory buildings. Examples of these types of buildings include the Lasher Printing Company Building (1927) and the Firestone Tyre Factory (1929).

New York City was also significant in providing architectural firms that specialized in the Art Deco style skyscraper building. One such firm, Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker, designed some of New York City's most exuberant Art Deco style structures. The Western Union Building (1928-1930), located at 60 Hudson Street, is an Art Deco style skyscraper clad in brick. The firm also designed several New York Telephone Company buildings, including three in Manhattan between the years 1929-30, and the Long Island Area Headquarters in

<sup>15</sup> Patricia Bayer, "Art Deco Architecture: Design, Decoration and Detail from the 20s and 30s." page 89.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, page 95-96.

<sup>17</sup> Refer to examples mentioned on page 10 of the document.

People's Bank and Trust Building

Name of Property

Passaic County, NJ

County and State

Brooklyn (1931). The buildings are all geometrical in style and reflect the Art Deco style. Another New York City based architect, Ely Jacques Kahn (1884-1972), was responsible for over three dozen commercial structures stylized in Art Deco style architecture in the city.

The Art Deco style has many character defining features. Buildings of this style have a linear appearance with stylized ornamentation. Low-relief decorative panels are found at the entrances, as well as around windows and along roof edges. The buildings feature a smooth finish with material such as large block stone. Decorative details such as exotic motifs can be incorporated to suit the building's function or simply for artistic purposes. Geometrical motifs are common forms of ornament on Art Deco style buildings.<sup>18</sup> Primary examples of the Art Deco style in architecture were distinctively urban in setting. These structures were exuberantly decorated and usually terraced due to their immense height. Typically these buildings were featured a steel and reinforced concrete system to support their immense height. Art Deco style architecture can also be found in a myriad of other building types, both vertical and horizontal, public and private, and monumental and vernacular. Examples of such buildings are Cubist-like apartment houses, power stations and factories, cinemas and churches.

### **People's Bank and Trust Company Building as an Example of late 1920s and early 1930s Art Deco Style Architecture:**

The People's Bank and Trust Company Building was built in 1931 as a banking and office building to house the People's Bank and Trust Company along with various local tenants. The building is an excellent example of Art Deco style architecture designed in the late 1920s and early 1930s for commercial use. The design and materials of the building reflect the Art Deco style trend prevalent during the late 1920s and early 1930s for skyscraper commercial buildings in metropolitan settings.

The People's Bank Building fully reflects the character-defining features of the Art Deco style. Defining features of the Art Deco style include the following: linear appearance with stylized ornamentation; low-relief decorative panels located near the entrance, as well as around windows and along roof edges; a smooth finish with materials such as large block limestone; exotic motifs for artistic purposes, usually geometric stylization; distinctively urban in setting; and featuring a steel and reinforced concrete system to support their height. All of the character defining features survive in excellent condition and continue to express the People's Bank and Trust Company Building as an exemplary subject of Art Deco style architecture in downtown Passaic, New Jersey. The building's appearance, while subject to its unique footprint located in downtown Passaic, offers a linear appearance with stylized ornamentation constructed of smooth finished material; ashlar block limestone at the base of the building and buff brick featured on the shaft. The colossal, bronze windows featured on the exterior of the banking hall add to the unique stylized ornamentation. The most character defining feature of the building are the decorative relief cast-stone medallions located above the colossal windows. Each medallion showcases a unique trait associated with the history of Passaic industry. Securing all of these features is the steel and reinforced concrete system acting as the backbone of the building.

Art Deco Style in Passaic: As noted, the People's Bank is locally significant as an example of the Art Deco Style. Beginning in the mid-1970s, the New Jersey DEP – Historic Preservation Office began to document

<sup>18</sup> "Art Deco Style 1925-1940," Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission.

People's Bank and Trust Building

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historically significant buildings found on both the New Jersey and National Register of Historic Places inventory lists. The city of Passaic is a sub-category of the New Jersey DEP – Historic Preservation Office's list, located in Passaic County. Within the city of Passaic, there are 28 listings, both individual buildings and districts with historic and architectural significance. The survey included identification of buildings in the City in the Art Deco style. According to the inventory Passaic is home to only one other Art Deco style building, the Main Post Office (listed 1983). The building is located at 46 Grove Street, two blocks west of the People's Bank and Trust Company Building. However, the Main Post Office is only a two-story building, leaving the People's Bank and Trust Building as the only standing example of the skyscraper type Art Deco style building whose construction was integral in defining the skylines for American cities during the late 1920s and early 1930s in downtown Passaic. The integrity of the building is outstanding and still reflects fully its same character that was admired during its inaugural opening in 1931.

### **Conclusion**

The People's Bank and Trust Company Building is locally significant under Criterion C for Architecture as an excellent example of Art Deco style architecture and for its relevance to the Art Deco style movement in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The subject building was designed by the architectural firm of Halsey, McCormack and Helmer, a firm that was well established in the Art Deco style of architecture. The People's Bank and Trust Company Building remains intact in its original location and remains the tallest and one of the most prolific buildings in the downtown Passaic skyline. The building retains its architectural integrity.

People's Bank and Trust Building  
Name of Property

Passaic County, NJ  
County and State

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

“663 Main Avenue,” Polk City Directory provided by EDRnet.

“Architectural Firm Now 31 Years Old,” The Troy Record, January 6, 1956.

“Art Deco Style 1925-1940,” Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide. Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission.

“Awarded Contract,” The Brooklyn Daily Eagle (Brooklyn, New York). 18 Sept 1930.

“Beautiful Structure Stands Out From Every Approach to the City,” Passaic Daily News, 27 June, 1931.

“Dollar Savings Bank Building,” Landmarks Preservation Commission, July 19, 1994, Designation List 259 LP-1889. New York, NY.

“Moody’s Manual of Investments, American and Foreign; Banks, Insurance Companies, Investment Trusts, Real Estate, Finance and Credit Companies.” Moody’s Investors Service, 1944.

“Three Large Banks Merge in Passaic.” The New York Times, 3 February 1903.

Bayer, Patricia. *Art Deco Architecture: Design, Decoration and Detail from the 20s & 30s*. New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1992.

Breeze, Carla. *Art Deco Architecture: Architecture and Regionalism*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003.

Geidion, Sigfried. *Space, Time and Architecture*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965.

John W. Ferguson Company, “Thirty Years of Building Service, 1892-1922.”

Pape, William J. and William W. Scott. The News’ History of Passaic, From the Earliest Settlement to the Present Day. 1899.

Sanborn Map Company, 1910 Sanborn Map. Passaic, NJ

United States Census. 1960

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University



People's Bank and Trust Building  
Name of Property

Passaic County, NJ  
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\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** .21 Acres  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

(Follow similar guidelines for entering these coordinates as for entering UTM references described on page 55, *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*. For properties less than 10 acres, enter the lat/long coordinates for a point corresponding to the center of the property. For properties of 10 or more acres, enter three or more points that correspond to the vertices of a polygon drawn on the map. The polygon should approximately encompass the area to be registered. Add additional points below, if necessary.)

Datum:

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 40.860692 | Longitude: -74.126680 |
| 2. Latitude: 40.861076 | Longitude: -74.126757 |
| 3. Latitude: 40.861175 | Longitude: -74.126521 |
| 4. Latitude: 40.860871 | Longitude: -74.126229 |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The People's Bank legal description is Block 2155, Lot 1, Passaic City, Passaic County, New Jersey.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the chosen boundaries are the most appropriate.)

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

People's Bank and Trust Building  
Name of Property

Passaic County, NJ  
County and State

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Cindy Hamilton and Nate Curwen  
organization Heritage Consulting Group date 4/16/2018  
street & number 15 West Highland Avenue telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Philadelphia state PA zip code 19118  
e-mail chamilton@heritage-consulting.com

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Continuation Sheets** (in ascending numerical order, by section and page number)
- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.  
Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for additional items, especially for "Photographs" below.)

People's Bank and Trust Building  
Name of Property

Passaic County, NJ  
County and State

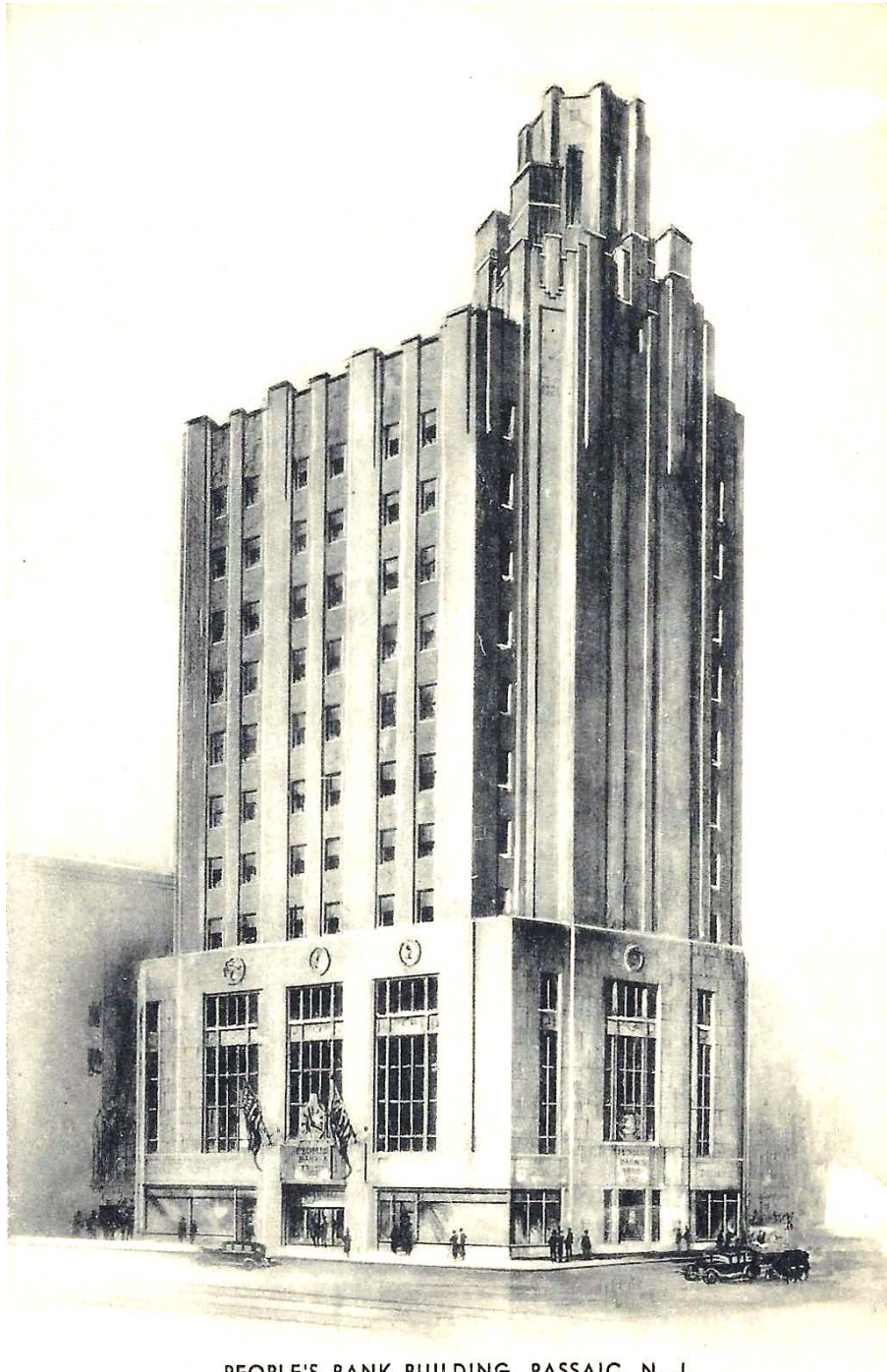
**Historic Image of building, ca. 1950 (courtesy of Mark Auerbach)**



People's Bank and Trust Building  
Name of Property

Passaic County, NJ  
County and State

**Historic Image of building, ca. mid-1930s (courtesy of Mark Auerbach)**



PEOPLE'S BANK BUILDING, PASSAIC, N. J.

People's Bank and Trust Building  
Name of Property

Passaic County, NJ  
County and State

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**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. Each digital image must include an array of 3000x2000 pixels or greater. For the submission of hard-copy photographs, consult your SHPO or FPO. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Photo 1.

Name of Property: The People's Bank and Trust Company Building

City or Vicinity: Passaic

County: Passaic

State: New Jersey

Photographer: Cindy Hamilton

Date Photographed: July 2017

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View of the building, south and east elevations, looking northwest.

Photo 2. View of the building, east elevation, looking west.

Photo 3. View of the building, north and east elevations, looking southwest.

Photo 4. View of the building, north and west elevations, looking southeast.

Photo 5. View of the building, south and west elevations, looking northeast.

Photo 6. View of the building, south elevation, looking northeast.

Photo 7. View of the building, east elevation, looking south.

Photo 8. View of the building, west elevation, looking east.

Photo 9. Interior view, first floor, looking northeast.

Photo 10. Interior view, first floor, looking east.

Photo 11. Interior view, second floor, looking northwest.

Photo 12. Interior view, second floor, looking north.

Photo 13. Interior view, third floor/mezzanine, looking southwest.

Photo 14. Interior view, third floor/mezzanine, looking east.

Photo 15. Interior view, fourth floor, looking south.

Photo 16. Interior view, sixth floor, looking southeast.

Photo 17. Interior view, seventh floor, looking northeast.

Photo 18. Interior view, eighth floor, looking south.

Photo 19. Interior view, ninth floor, looking west.

Photo 20. Interior view, tenth floor, looking west.

Photo 21. Interior view, eleventh floor, looking south.

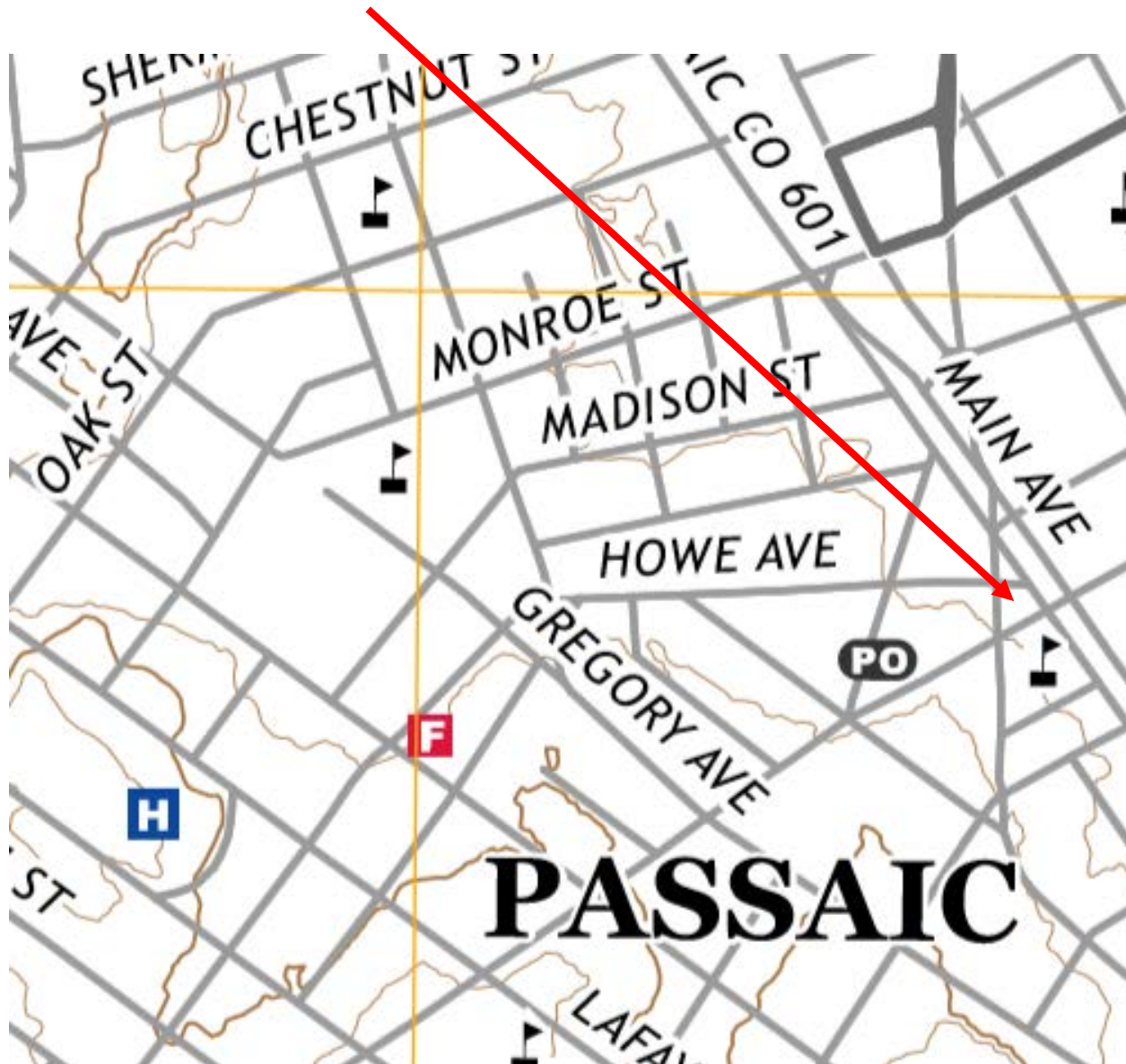
Photo 22. Exterior view, rooftop, looking north.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

## Orange Quadrangle – New Jersey

663 Main Avenue – People's Bank and Trust Company Building



**The People's Bank and Trust Company Building: Tax Parcel Map**  
**663 Main Avenue, Passaic, NJ**

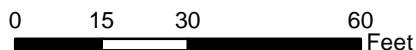







## People's Bank and Trust Company Building

New Jersey and National  
Registers Nomination  
663 Main Avenue, Passaic City  
Passaic County, New Jersey

Scale: 1:400



### Legend

-  Coordinates
-  NR Boundary
-  Tax Parcels

0.21 Acres



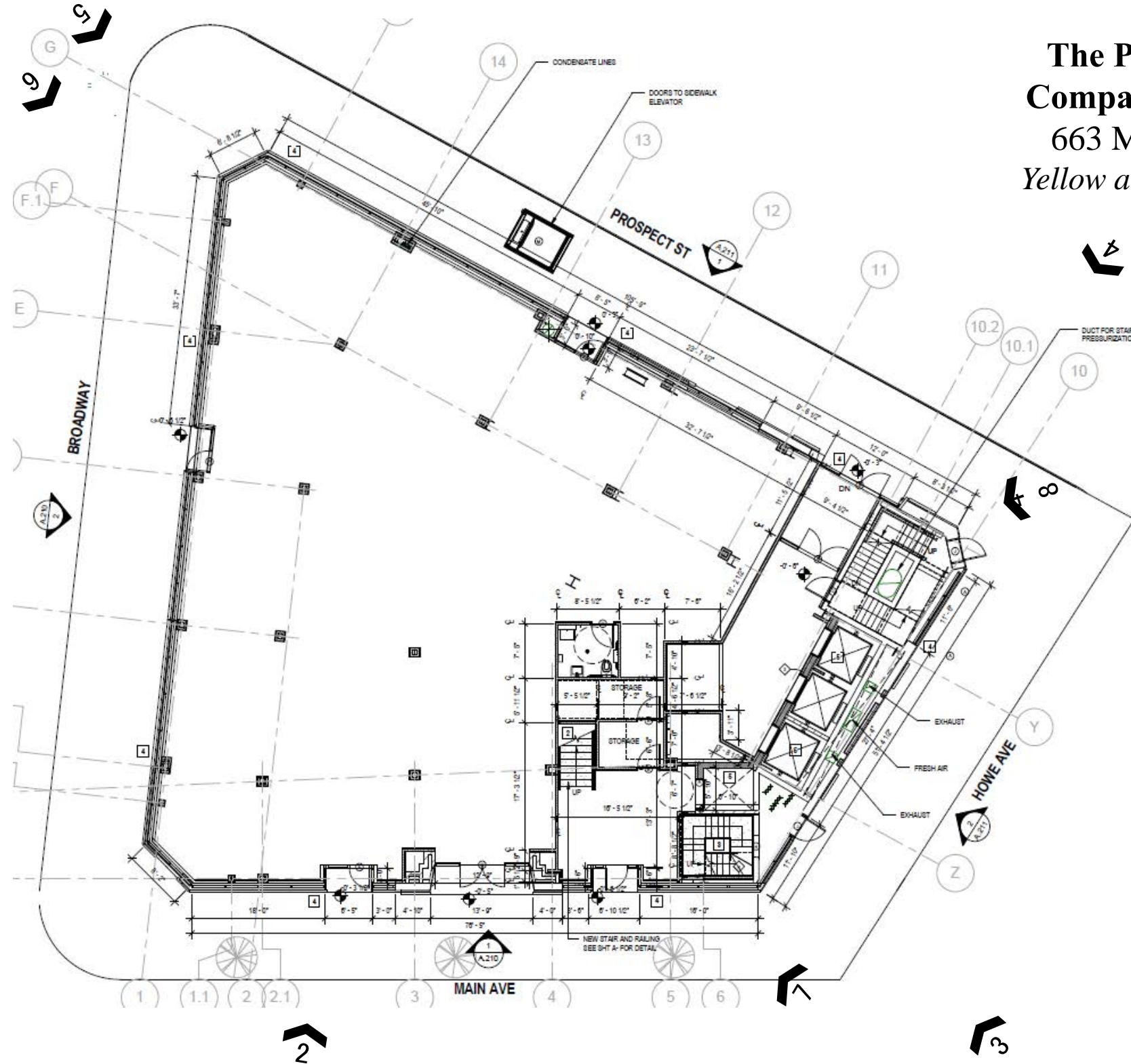
*NJDEP,  
Historic Preservation Office  
April, 2018*



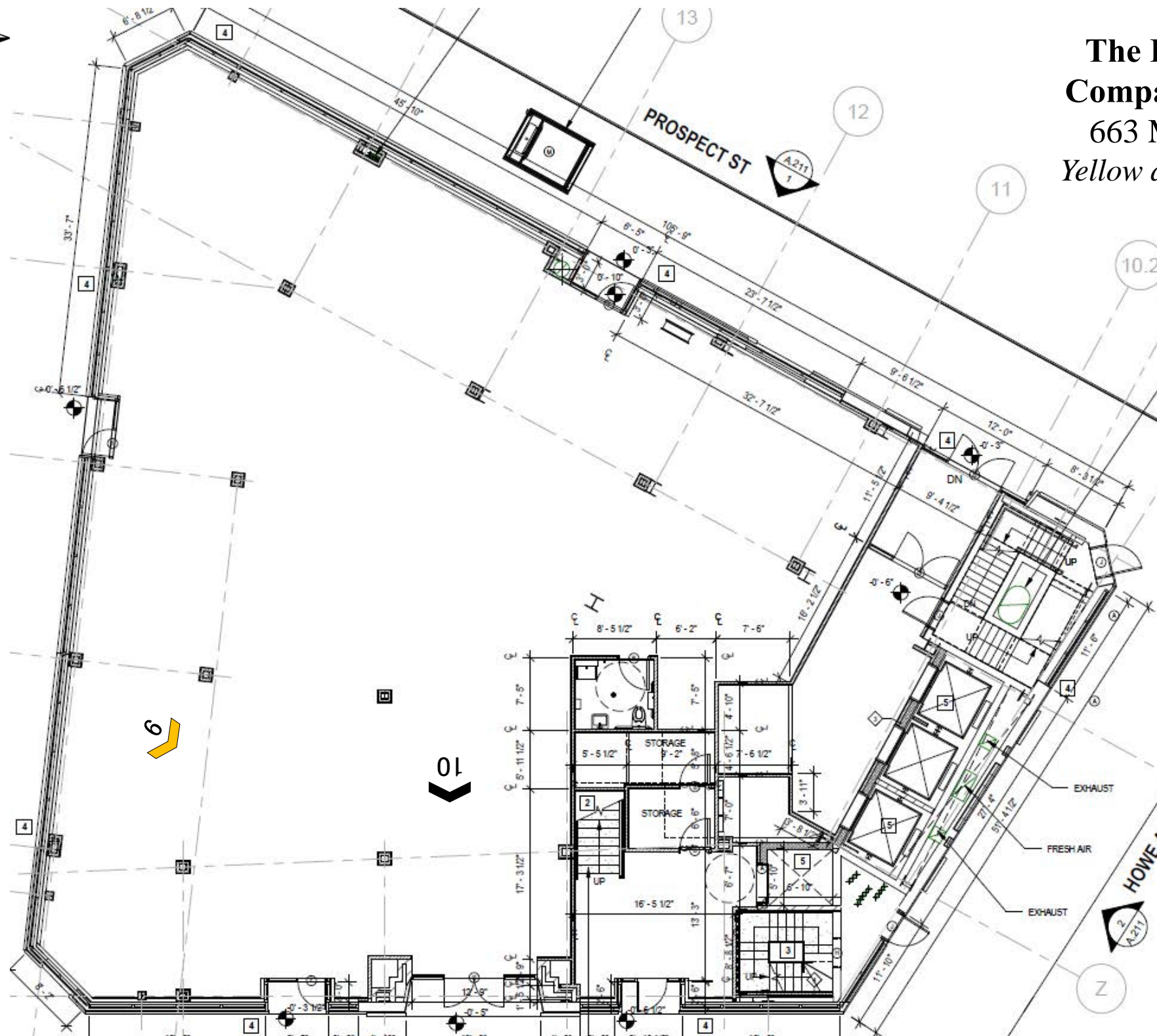
Exterior



**The People's Bank and Trust  
Company Building: Floor Plans**  
663 Main Avenue, Passaic, NJ  
*Yellow arrow indicates starting point*



# First Floor

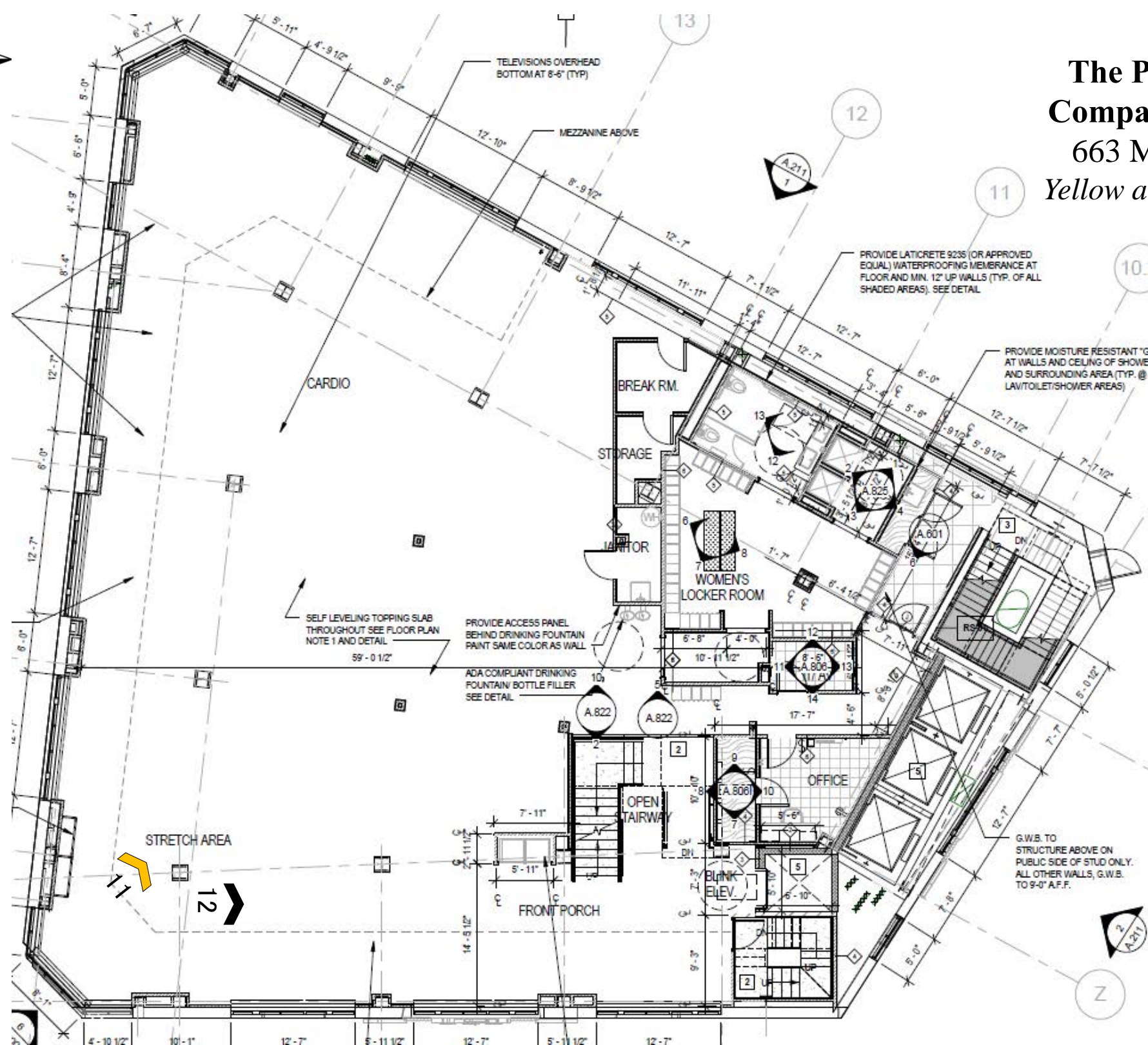


**The People's Bank and Trust  
Company Building: Floor Plans**  
663 Main Avenue, Passaic, NJ  
*Yellow arrow indicates starting point*

# Second Floor



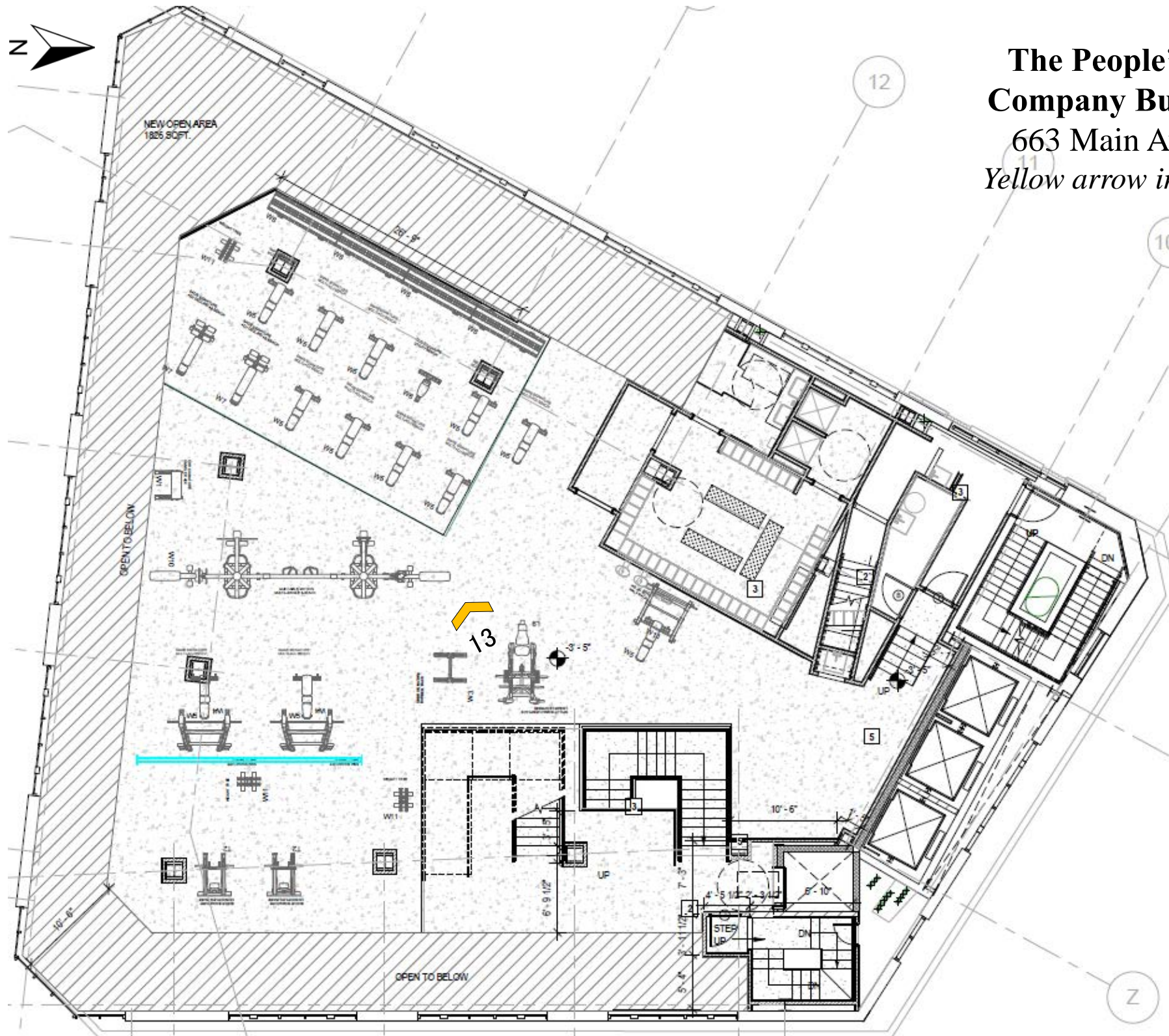
## The People's Bank and Trust Company Building: Floor Plans 663 Main Avenue, Passaic, NJ *Yellow arrow indicates starting point*



# Third Floor/ Mezzanine



**The People's Bank and Trust  
Company Building: Floor Plans**  
663 Main Avenue, Passaic, NJ  
*Yellow arrow indicates starting point*

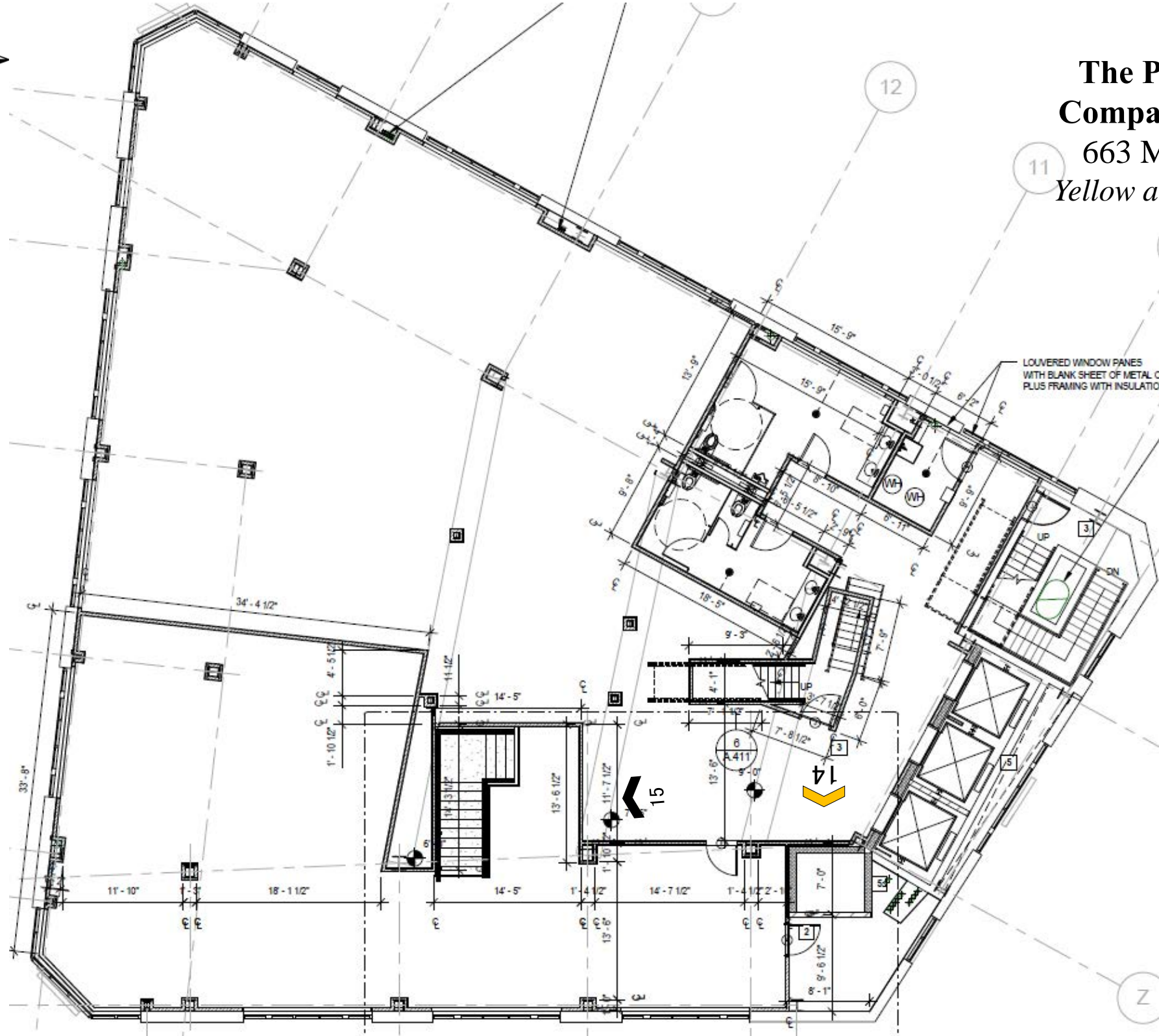


Fourth Floor 

# The People's Bank and Trust Company Building: Floor Plans

663 Main Avenue, Passaic, NJ

*Yellow arrow indicates starting point*



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PLUS FRAMING WITH INSULATION

**Fifth Floor**



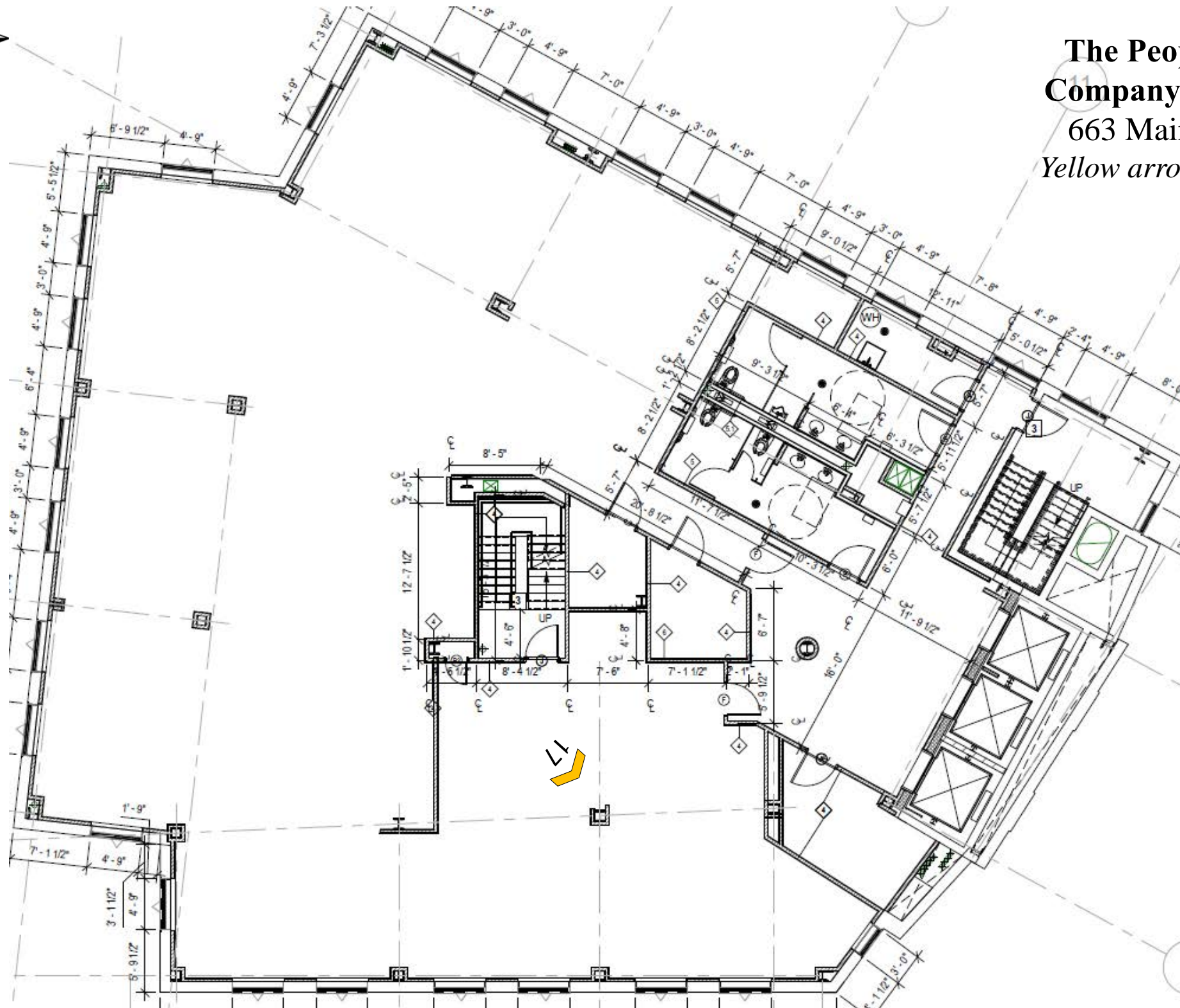
**The People's Bank and Trust  
Company Building: Floor Plans**  
663 Main Avenue, Passaic, NJ

Yellow arrow indicates starting point



Seventh Floor 

**The People's Bank and Trust  
Company Building: Floor Plans**  
663 Main Avenue, Passaic, NJ  
*Yellow arrow indicates starting point*



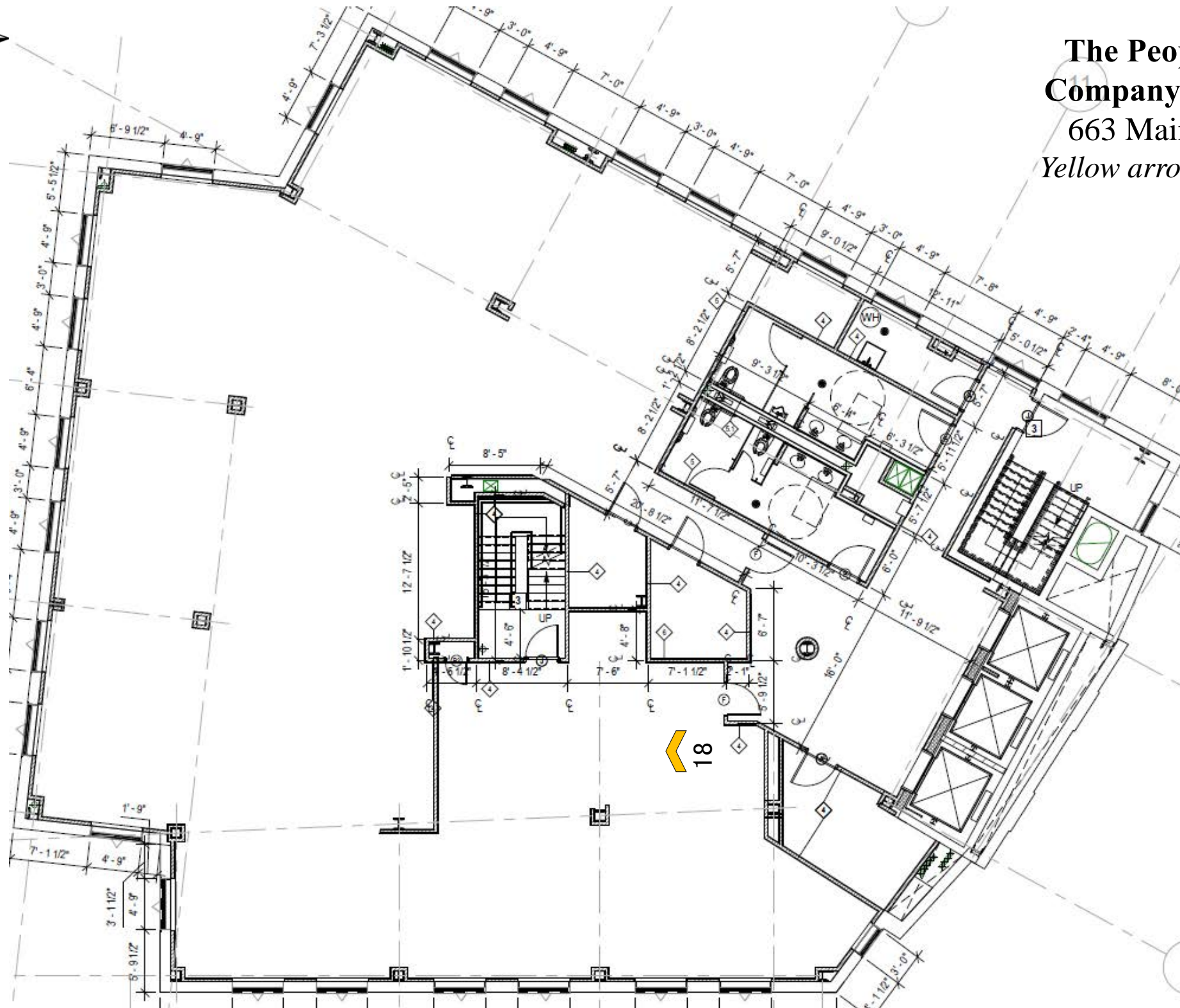
**Eighth Floor**



**The People's Bank and Trust  
Company Building: Floor Plans**

663 Main Avenue, Passaic, NJ

*Yellow arrow indicates starting point*





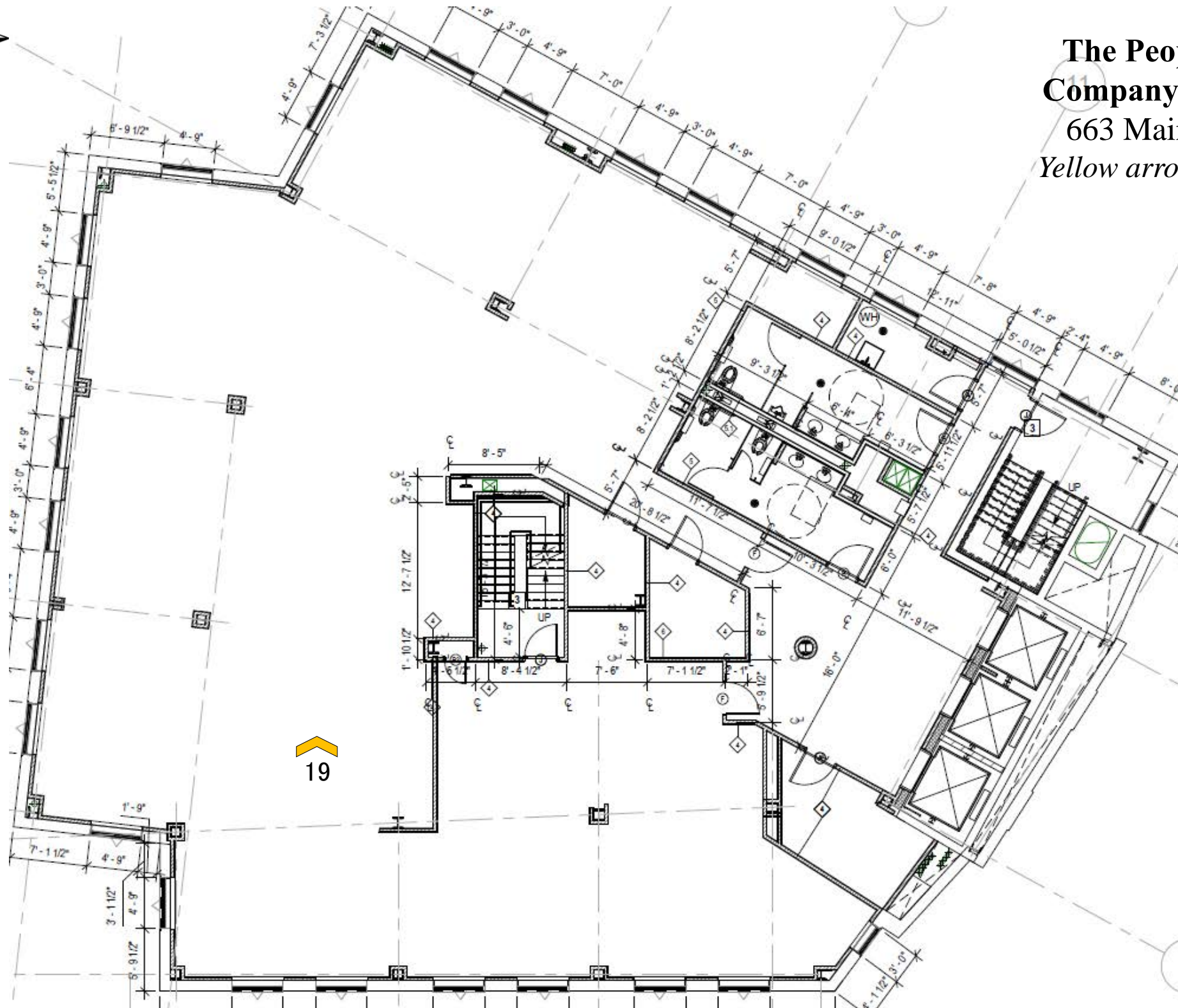
Ninth Floor



**The People's Bank and Trust  
Company Building: Floor Plans**

663 Main Avenue, Passaic, NJ

*Yellow arrow indicates starting point*



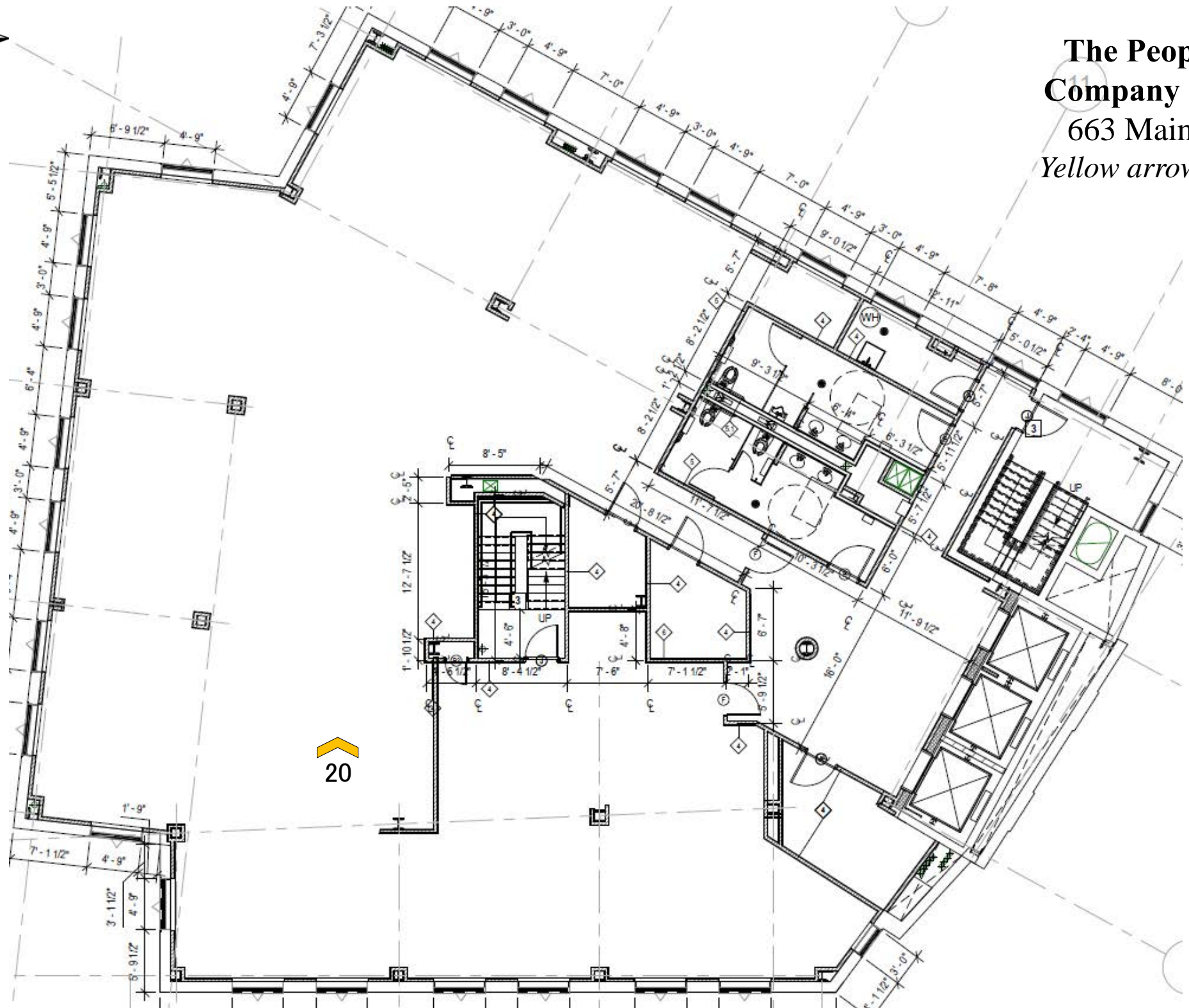
Tenth Floor



**The People's Bank and Trust  
Company Building: Floor Plans**

663 Main Avenue, Passaic, NJ

*Yellow arrow indicates starting point*



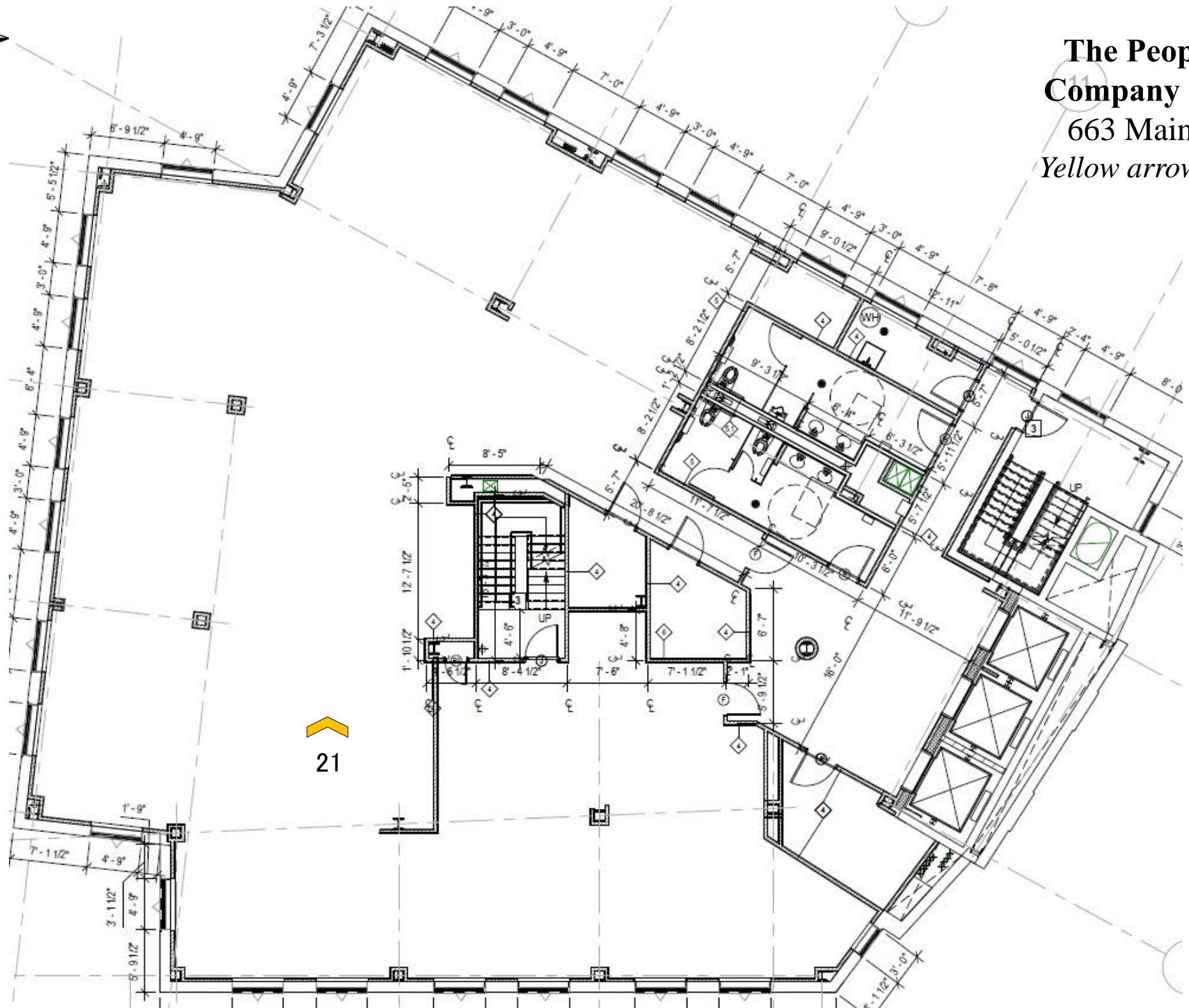
20



# The People's Bank and Trust Company Building: Floor Plans

663 Main Avenue, Passaic, NJ

*Yellow arrow indicates starting point*



# Roof



**The People's Bank and Trust  
Company Building: Floor Plans**  
663 Main Avenue, Passaic, NJ  
*Yellow arrow indicates starting point*

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UPPER FLOORS  
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YODOCK





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MUSCLE

EXPERIENCE THE  
WORLD OF MUSEUMS



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MUSCLE





EXIT >





















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: People's Bank and Trust Company Building

Multiple Name: \_\_\_\_\_

State & County: NEW JERSEY, Passaic

Date Received: 10/3/2018      Date of Pending List: 10/25/2018      Date of 16th Day: 11/9/2018      Date of 45th Day: 11/19/2018      Date of Weekly List: \_\_\_\_\_

Reference number: SG100003110

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

- |                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape       | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver       | <input type="checkbox"/> National        | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other        | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP             | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
|                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG             |   |

Accept       Return       Reject      11/19/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: POS: 1931; AOS: Architecture; LOS: local.

Recommendation/ Criteria: NR Criterion C.

Reviewer Lisa Deline      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2239      Date 11/19/18

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



HPO Project#:18-0886  
HPO-H2018-195

## State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
NATURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES  
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER  
MAIL CODE 501-03A  
P.O. BOX 420  
TRENTON, NJ 08625-0420  
TEL: # 609-292-3541 FAX: # 609-984-0836

PHILIP D. MURPHY  
*Governor*

SHEILA Y. OLIVER  
*Lt. Governor*

CATHERINE R. McCABE  
*Commissioner*

August 30, 2018



Julie Ernstein, Acting Chief  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Dr. Ernstein:

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the People's Bank and Trust Company Building, 663 Main Avenue, Passaic City, Passaic County, New Jersey.

This nomination has received unanimous approval from the New Jersey State Review Board for Historic Sites. All procedures were followed in accordance with regulations published in the Federal Register.

Should you want any further information concerning this application, please feel free to contact Katherine J. Marcopul, Administrator, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, Mail Code 501-04B, P.O. Box 420, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0420, or call her at (609) 984-5816.

Sincerely,

Ray Bukowski  
Deputy State Historic  
Preservation Officer