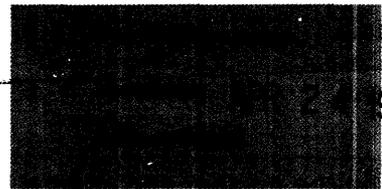


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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



984

1. Name

historic GRIFFITH BUILDING

and/or common GRIFFITH PIANO COMPANY BUILDING

2. Location

street & number 605-607 BROAD STREET

N/A not for publication

city, town NEWARK

vicinity of

~~Congressional district~~

state NEW JERSEY

code 034

county ESSEX

code 013

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<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
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name NEWARK PROPERTIES, c/o SOL & GLORIA GILLMAN

street & number 110-14 63rd AVENUE

city, town FOREST HILLS

vicinity of

state NY 11375

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. ESSEX COUNTY HALL OF RECORDS

street & number 465 HIGH STREET

city, town NEWARK

state NJ 07102

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title NJ Historic Sites Inventory #2186.80 has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1977 federal state county local

depository for survey records Office of New Jersey Heritage

city, town Trenton

state NJ 08625

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Griffith Building, also known as the Griffith Piano Company Building, is located at 605-607 Broad Street, in the central business district of Newark, New Jersey. It was constructed in 1927-28 to the designs of a Newark architect, George Elwood Jones. The combination office and commercial building rises 16 stories, and is abutted on the right by a two story commercial building and on the left by the four story department store of Hahne and Company. The building is richly decorated in an eclectic style, containing classical and Spanish Revival elements as well as elements evoking its musical connection. It is divided into three sections on its front (Broad Street) elevation: a 2 1/2 story base, a ten story brick center section, and a decorative three story upper section.

The base consists of a street-level main story, mezzanine, and second story, clad with scored granite and pierced at center by a recession with angled side walls. Rising 1 1/2 stories, the recession has a large central showcase window which is divided into three parts with nine, eighteen, and nine panes. (Except for the upper mezzanine section, the window is currently boarded for protection.) The window, like all other ground floor openings, has bronze surrounds and muntins. Double-leaf French doors with fanlights containing enriched muntins are found on the recession's angled walls. Above the doors, the founder's name is inscribed and flanked by applied wreaths with central finials. Two casement windows, each hidden behind elaborate grilles, are found on the mezzanine level above the door. At the end of the recession, stylized pilasters with scroll and acanthus-leaf capitals rise to an octagonal coffered ceiling. The sidewall within this recession is paved with black and white granite blocks.

Between the base/mezzanine and second floor, the name "GRIF-FITH" is again inscribed, now in large Roman-block letters approximately one foot in height. Flanking the inscription are garland medallions with finials and bases. Six windows with 1/1 lights and convex stone surrounds enriched with foliage are found above the inscription. The base is topped by a narrow stone dentil and linear enriched bands.

The third floor contains six 1/1 flat arched windows, is faced in yellow brick laid in a header bond, and is crowned by stone egg and dart bands.

The fourth through twelfth floors are identical, each faced with yellow brick laid in a stretcher bond and containing six 1/1 windows with brick sills and lintels. Unlike the lower floors of this section, the twelfth floor has a band at sill level painted and glazed with brown roundals and green shields.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1927-28 Builder/Architect George Elwood Jones

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The exuberance and detailing of the architecture of the distinguished Griffith Building, and particularly the use of the music motif throughout are unique in Newark. The building is equally significant for the role it played as the headquarters of the Griffith Piano Company and the Griffith Foundation, a non-profit organization founded by Mrs. Parker O. Griffith, wife of the founder, which was instrumental in developing an understanding and appreciation for serious music for students and teachers from throughout New Jersey for over two decades. In addition, the erection of the Griffith Building occurred at, and was reponse to, the time of the greatest expansion of Newark's downtown commercial core, which was coincident with the peak of civic and cultural development of the city.

The Griffith Piano Company was founded by Parker O. Griffith in 1911, and their first shop was in a storefront at 605 Broad Street. About 1917, the company expanded into the adjacent storefront at 607 Broad Street. As the business flourished, it was decided to erect the present building. At that time, the company moved into a former automobile showroom at 1010 Broad Street while the two original buildings were demolished and the new structure erected. The company was fortunate in its original location, facing Military Park, in that this neighborhood was to become the focus of expansion of the central commercial core of the City.

The new building was adjacent to Hahne and Company, one of the City's leading department stores. The park was already bordered by major office towers and the city's most important hotel, the Military Park (later renamed the Robert Treat).

The company first commissioned a design by William E. Lehman of Newark, who was perhaps the most prolific architect then working in downtown Newark. Full drawings were prepared, but for reasons unknown, the company rejected the designs and turned instead to another Newark architect, George Elwood Jones (1886-1952). Primarily an architect of large apartment houses, including the Colleoni Apartments on Lincoln Park, Jones had also designed the Federal Trust Building and the Riviera Hotel; his subsequent designs included the Academy Building and additional apartment houses. Construction began in 1927, and the new building opened for business on June 1, 1928. In 1929, the Griffith Building was cited by the Broad Street Association "as meriting the Association's certificate of merit for...contribution to the architectural beauty of the district during the past year."

¹ Newark Star-Eagle, 10/22/29.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Charm Magazine, June 1928.

Interview, George Griffith (nephew of Mrs. Parker O. Griffith). 1/18/84

Journal of Industry and Finance, 3/28. "Pride in the State's Metropolis" . continued

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.25

Quadrangle name Elizabeth NJ/NY

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	8	5	7	0	0	4	0	4	5	1	0	0	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

According to Newark Tax Maps, Block 18, Lots 27-28.

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Charles E. Wyatt

organization Charles Wyatt Associates date 1/31/84

street & number 83 Wayne Street telephone (201) 332-6536

city or town Jersey City state NJ 07302

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature [Signature]

title Assistant Commissioner for Natural Resources date 4/17/84

For NPS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.	
<u>[Signature]</u>	Entered in the National Register date <u>5-24-84</u>
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

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National Park Service**

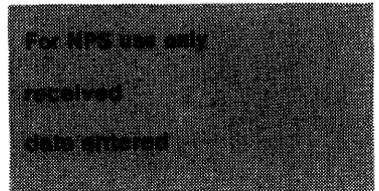
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The thirteenth and fourteenth floors of the facade are joined by three sets of two-story recessed arches which hold two 1/1 windows per floor. The recessions, decorated with glazed and colored ornament, have window surrounds with white-ribboned and colored fruit bands, marble spandrels with central medallions containing fleur-de-lis designs, and yellow and green central twisted columns with foliated and lineaged work of yellow and blue. The center panel retains a central medallion which protrudes to its column's base. The facade is topped by a band identical to that found at the twelfth floor sill level. Above the band is a parapet central urns. The obelisks, painted and glazed are enriched with green egg and dart moldings, yellow lyric green florets and yellow acorn finials. The urns, also colored and glazed, have green acanthus leaf bands, egg and dart moldings, central festoons with white garland, and yellow flame finials and side scrolls.

Recessed and hidden from view from street level is a two-story, three bay section built of yellow brick with 1/1 windows and doors on the fifteenth floor leading to the roof terrace.

The north and south elevations are built of yellow brick laid in a stretcher bond, and contain few decorative features. The facade's cornice and twelfth floor belt course are continued on both elevations. The north elevation is five bays wide with two windows per bay. The paired windows are centered between blind arches which echo those found on the facade's thirteenth and fourteenth floors.

The south elevation is more elaborate, and contains a five bay center recession and two-bay in width ends. Windows on this side have 1/1 lights, except for those on the upper floors of the end bays, which have 3/3 panes. Like the facade and north elevation, blind arches with decorative brick tops are found on the thirteenth and fourteenth floors. Five obelisks and urns decorate the roofline.

The rear facade is pierced on each floor by two 1/1 windows and recessed balconies/fire escapes with metal doors. A four story, five-bay rear wing, constructed of red brick laid in a stretcher bond, is exposed on the north end. This elevation contains simple 2/2 windows and a loading dock platform and entry. Its east bay openings, which are not aligned with those on the four west bays, are set approximately one foot higher.

The interior of the Griffith Building is divided into three principal areas: a one and a half story piano shop/sales area/recital hall, a four story piano workshop and warehouse, and a fourteen story office tower. As a whole, the building's interior is narrow and deep in plan.

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The first floor and mezzanine, consisting of a piano sales area, recital hall and entries to the offices, are the most elaborate in the structure. The main piano salesroom and office entries have terrazzo-floored foyers with bronze octagonal coffered ceilings. Both foyers have inner French doors with fanlights, similar in design to the outer doorways. The central display window is visible from these foyers through oversized plate glass windows on the the inner walls, as well as from the street. The foyer windows have transom bars containing classical urns.

The display window, revealed on all sides by glass, rises 1 1/2 stories and is decorated on the north and south walls above the inner windows by iron grilles filled with linear enrichment. Flanking the windows on these walls are plaster pilasters identical to those of the exterior recession. The west display wall is constructed of glass and is divided into small panes. The ceiling of the display area is enriched with a central rosette and two rectangular end panels with egg and dart moldings.

Behind the display window and south foyer is a one and a half story principal showroom elaborately decorated with bronze, marble, and plaster ornament. Almost square in plan, the lobby has two Palladian-like openings on the south elevation. Each opening has central round-arch and side straight-head windows divided and flanked by pilasters with capitals decorated with beaded moldings and roundals. Medallions with garlanded classical urns flank the central sections. At center on the north and south walls are projecting piers rising the full height of the room and containing Athenian and palmette-filled capitals. Above the Palladian blind openings of the south wall are four, 8/8 casement windows with continuous sills. These windows are flanked by pilasters which have bead moldings and palmette-filled capitals. Below all casement windows are blind grilles with guttae. The north wall has three similar casements and a doorway nearest the display window. Along the west wall of the lobby an identical casement window is flanked by two large squared openings without surrounds. The doorway leads to a mezzanine level walkway with decorative iron railing. The walkway runs across the east wall of the room to a small office located above the south foyer.

The principal showroom's floor is laid in white and black alternating square tiles and the room is lighted by four large crystal chandeliers suspended from the diamond and octagonal-shaped coffered ceiling. The ceiling is ornately enriched by gilt and painted blue and red details.

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Behind the lobby on the north wall is an office tower lobby consisting of a narrow hallway with elevators. This lobby contains marble walls and floors, bronze doors, and a square coffered ceiling, each square containing a central roundal and egg and dart border. Three elevators with panelled mahogany interiors and bronze exterior doors are found in a row along the north wall. Forward of the elevator bank is a small parcel room. Embedded on the wall just inside the entry is a bronze-bordered building directory case.

Across from the elevators, glass and bronze French doors lead to a staircase, separated from the principal showroom by bronze folding gates. This staircase, which leads to the basement and to the mezzanine, is decorated with plaster ceiling medallions with linear foliage enrichment, a marble floor, and an acanthus-leaf cornice. The staircase landings are lighted by paired sconces with gilded bases and crystal drops.

Beyond the staircase room, at the building's center is another showroom which is entered from the staircase room by way of a Roman archway. This room is flanked on its north and south walls by narrow sales offices approximately six by ten feet in plan, and has a marble floor and plaster walls. Offices are entered at center by a single-leaf door topped by gabled pediments and flanked by six-paned casement windows. Metal frames for both the doors and casement windows are painted to resemble marble. Above the openings are raised plaster panels enriched with nymphs and foliage.

A large room spanning the width of the building is found west of this room. Entered at center, the room contains a hardwood floor, plaster walls with outlined panels, chairrailing and exposed ceilings. At center along the room's west wall is an entry to a hallway. This hall runs east/west and divides four private sales/practice rooms, each containing upper glass walls with bordered etched glass, double-leaf glass doors and pilasters. Practice rooms are lighted by hanging lamps with brass lyric bases. Small brass and glass paired-light sconces are found in the center hall.

Beyond the practice/sales rooms, toward the building's rear, is a squared hall with enclosed side staircases constructed of concrete and metal. Each staircase leads to upper storage and workshop space. The north staircase has an adjacent freight elevator. Two rectangular offices, each reached by double-leaf French doors, are found off the hall in an L-shaped plan at the southwest corner. The

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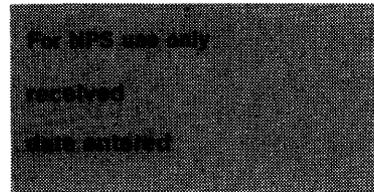
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office along the west end has a marble mantle with wood shelf and flanking 10-light false casement windows. Plaster roundals and square panels with their original four-light chandeliers decorate the ceiling. The south office is decorated with two large roundals from which hang bronze chandeliers with scrolls and drops. The room also has a fireplace with a marble mantle decorated in the Renaissance Revival mode and containing a segmental arch opening, florets, and linenfold-like center plaque.

The mezzanine, reached by the main staircase adjacent toward the principal showroom, is smaller in plan than the first floor due to the height of the principal showroom and show window. The stairway landing on this level is square in plan and is decorated with a simple coffered ceiling, outlined panelled walls, acanthus leaf and egg and dart cornice and parquet floors. Three continuous, double-leaf French doors of bronze and glass divide the landing from the elevator bank on the north wall. A small hall line with casement windows runs along the north wall to the front of the building. Two offices, separated by the walkway over the show window, have angled walls, corresponding to the shape of the exterior facade recession. Unlike the main floor rooms, these office are unadorned, containing wood floors and molded baseboards and window surrounds.

An anteroom, octagonal in plan with corner niches, is located adjacent to the stairway on its west side. Like the room directly below it on the first floor, this space is flanked by small salons approximately six-by-ten feet in plan. The octagonal room is decorated with a plastered ceiling enriched with a central roundal, containing a garland urn, guilloche bands and Tiffany-styled stained glass inset lamps.

Located above the practice and sale rooms is the recital hall; it contains wood floors, chairrailing, recessed panelled walls, and wainscotting. The rear section (the easternmost portion of the room) of the hall contains a low ceiling, central entry, and paired pilasters found flanking the doors and corners. Five lamps with plaster enriched surrounds are also found in this section. Like those in the anteroom, the lamps are inset and are of stained glass. The main portion of the hall has a ceiling height of approximately 20 feet divided into three sections. At the ceiling's center is a large medallion containing a multi-colored stained glass lamp surrounded by foliage-enriched bands with six inset lamps. Flanking

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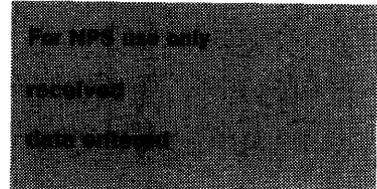
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the center section are rectangular panels with three lamps each, surrounded by alternating acanthus and shell and vine bands. The side walls of this section have three recessed arches with mirrors resembling windows. Each mirror has iron muntins and elaborately shaped surrounds with garlanded urns, side scrolls, dog ears, palmette finials, and guttae. The stage is centered and raised, with a bow front and parquet floors. The proscenium arch is surrounded by a wave scroll band and is topped by a central oval medallion. Flanking the stage are two Roman archways with flat-arched double-leaf doors and decorative iron grilles. Behind the doors are the rear side stairwells and freight elevator and the third story of the four story warehouse.

Each floor of the warehouse has concrete floors, plastered walls, and exposed beamed ceilings. Windows are found along the north wall with 2/2 lights and metal surrounds. All floors have rectangular rooms and are devoid of decorative elements, excluding the second floor, which contains a glass and paneled room divided enriched with a plaster festoon band.

The office tower, rising from the second to sixteenth floors above the front half of the building, is reached by elevator and an adjacent fire stair. The office floors have few decorative elements. All floors contain a corridor running east/west along the north wall. The halls have tile floorings, doors, and interior windows with metal surrounds and wired safety glass. On the north side of the corridor are the elevators, stairwell, and bathroom facilities. At the corridor's west end are fire escape doors and concrete balconies with metal railings. Offices are found along the east and south sides. The south side features a slight windowed inset at the center which, below the fifth floor open onto an airshaft. Each floor's plan differs, altered by the addition or deletion of walls and the installation of new materials throughout the life of the office tower. The fifteenth floor has roof terraces along the east and south ends. The sixteenth floor contains only one office and a staircase which rises to a mechanical room.

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received
date entered

As Newark prospered, so did the piano and music business of the Griffith brothers, Parker O. Griffith and Paul Griffith. When the new building opened in 1928, the company advertised that "The new Griffith Building with its intimate recital hall and fine piano salons brings to this side of the Hudson the refinements of the most exclusive warerooms of Manhattan."² The Griffith family had long been active in music circles in the community, to a degree which was much greater than being merely good for business. In particular, it was Mrs. Parker O. Griffith who made the Griffith name, and the Griffith Building, instantly identifiable with music and culture not only in Newark, but throughout the state.

In 1936, Mrs. Griffith formed the Essex County Symphony Society, and in 1938 she formed the Griffith Foundation, the purpose of which was to raise the level of understanding and appreciation of fine music for Essex Countians of all ages. As part of the Griffith Foundation, there was division called the Griffith Music Institute. Both the Foundation and the Institute were headquartered in the Griffith Building, and its various salons and the Recital Hall were frequently used for their activities.

The foundation, which lasted until shortly after the death of Mrs. Griffith in 1961, underwrote the appearance in Newark of first-rate musical artists and groups, usually in performance at the Mosque Theatre (now Symphony Hall). Among those performers underwritten by the Griffith Foundation were the symphony orchestras of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland, and the NBC Symphony under Arturo Toscanini, the pianist Ignace Paderewski, the sopranos Lily Pons and Blanche Thebom, the Ballet Russe do Monte Carlo and the Agnes DeMille Dance Theatre, as well as popular Broadway plays and miscellaneous groups such as the Vienna Marionette Theatre. The Foundation also sponsored a series of chamber music recitals in the Recital hall of the Griffith Building. Among the groups appearing in that series were the Budapest String Quartet, the New York Pro Musica Antiqua, the Barylli Quartet, and the Albeneri Trio. It also sponsored, at a nominal admission fee, a series of outdoor concerts for all citizens at the Newark City Stadium.

The Griffith Institute was involved in placing music more directly in the lives of New Jerseyans, particularly in the lives of children. To that end, it sponsored throughout the year various refresher courses and workshops for music teachers. This program was highlighted each year by an all-day seminar at the Griffith Building during which master musicians and theorists held classes

² Advertisement in Charm, June 1928. (Fashion & style magazine of the Bamberger Department Store.

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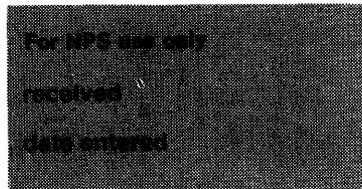
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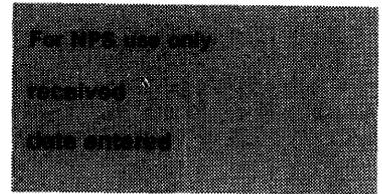


and lectures in salons and rooms throughout the building; at the luncheon program, held in the Recital Hall, distinguished figures from the world of music spoke or performed. Featured at various times during the 1940's and 1950's were the composers Aaron Copland Howard Hanson, and Virgil Thomson, the singer Beverly Sills, the folksinger John Jacob Niles, the pianist Leonid Hambro, and the critics John Mason Brown and Boris Goldovsky. Perhaps the most direct outreach to gifted young New Jersey musicians were the annual auditions at Symphony Hall. The winners were enabled, the next year, to give individual recitals at the Griffith Recital Hall. There was also a series of young people's orchestral concerts, held on Saturday mornings at the Mosque.

The Griffith Building was erected during the decade 1920- 30, when Newark was moving toward the most intense years of its development. The city's, population moved toward its 1930 peak of 442,000. Large apartment buildings, department stores, and theatres were erected, and, unlike other cities in northern New Jersey, which even in their peak years were essentially satellite cities to New York, Newark had become a preeminent American city in its own right, with its own suburbs on the hills to the city's west. In the developing core area, which stretched from Washington Street northward along Broad Street to the Lackawanna Railroad State, new skyscraper office towers rose, including the state's two tallest buildings, 744 Broad Street and the Raymond Commerce Tower, and Jone's Federal Trust Building (1926). Beyond the Griffith Building, on Washington Park, New Jersey Bell's Art Deco headquarters building was erected. Simultaneously with the Griffith Building construction, the mammoth Bamberger Department Store was being erected to the designs of Jarvis Hunt.

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Metro, publication of Newark Chamber of Commerce, December 1981.

Newark Public Library, Art Department Files on Newark Architects & Griffith Foundation.

Newark Public Library, New Jersey Room. Misc. Insurance Atlases, Scrapbooks of the Griffith Foundation.

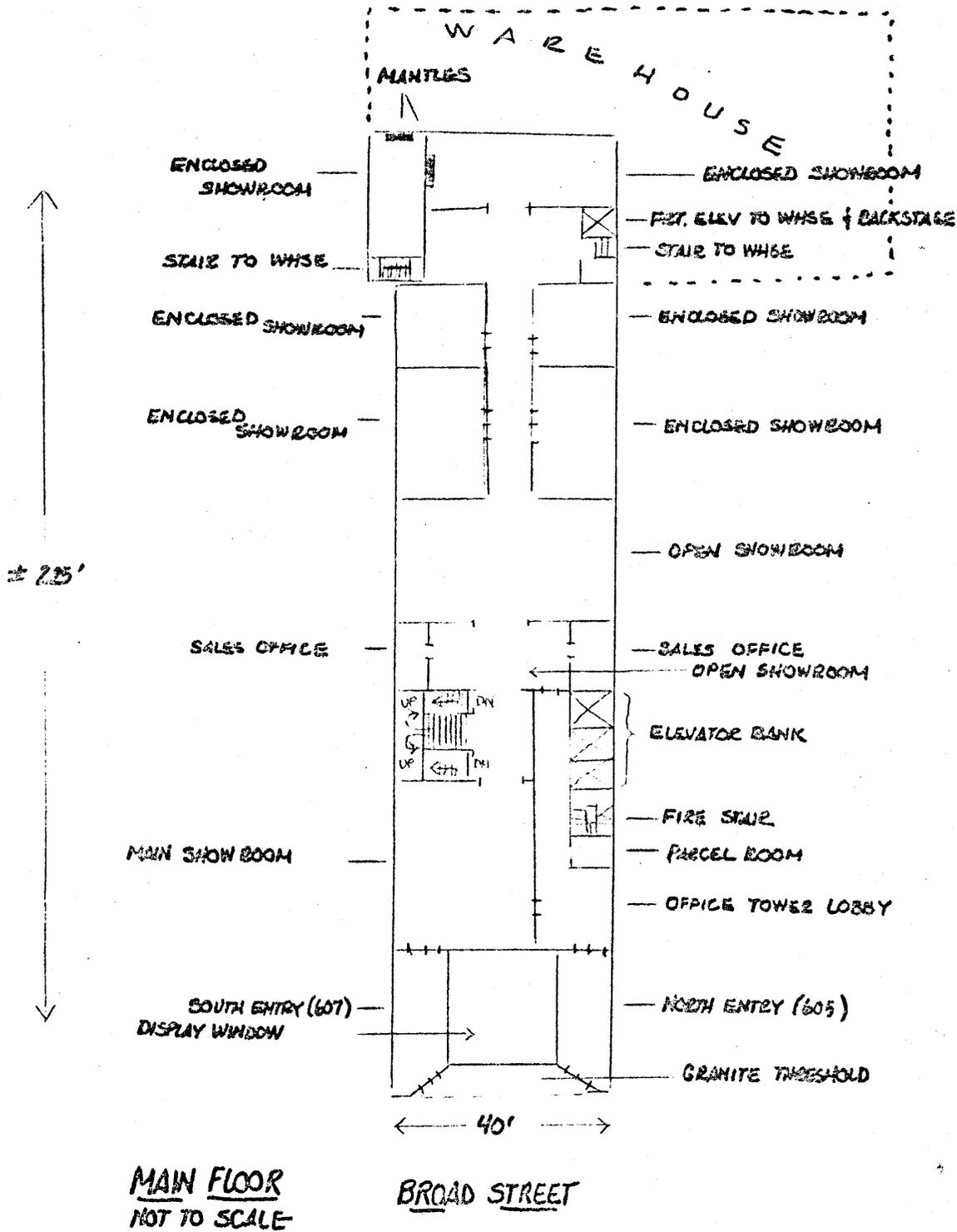
Newark Star-Eagle, 3/15/29. "Buildings Win Beauty Prizes".

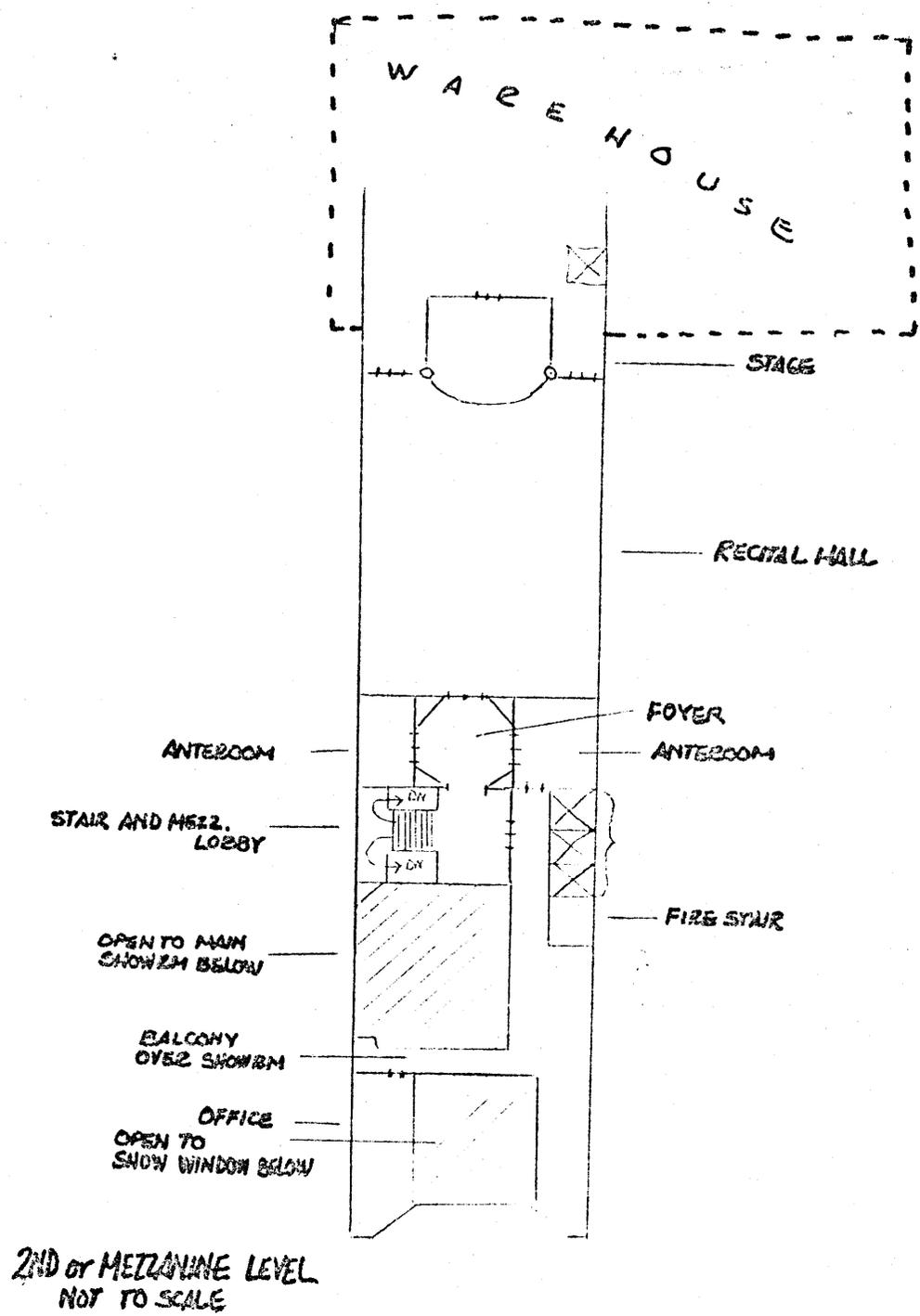
Newark News, 5/14/52 "George Jones, Architect, Dies".

NEW JERSEY COMMERCE AND FINANCE-RECORD AND GUIDE, Credit Reporting Company, Newark. 1/29/27.

Suburban Life, 3/52: Profile of Mrs. Parker O. Griffith.

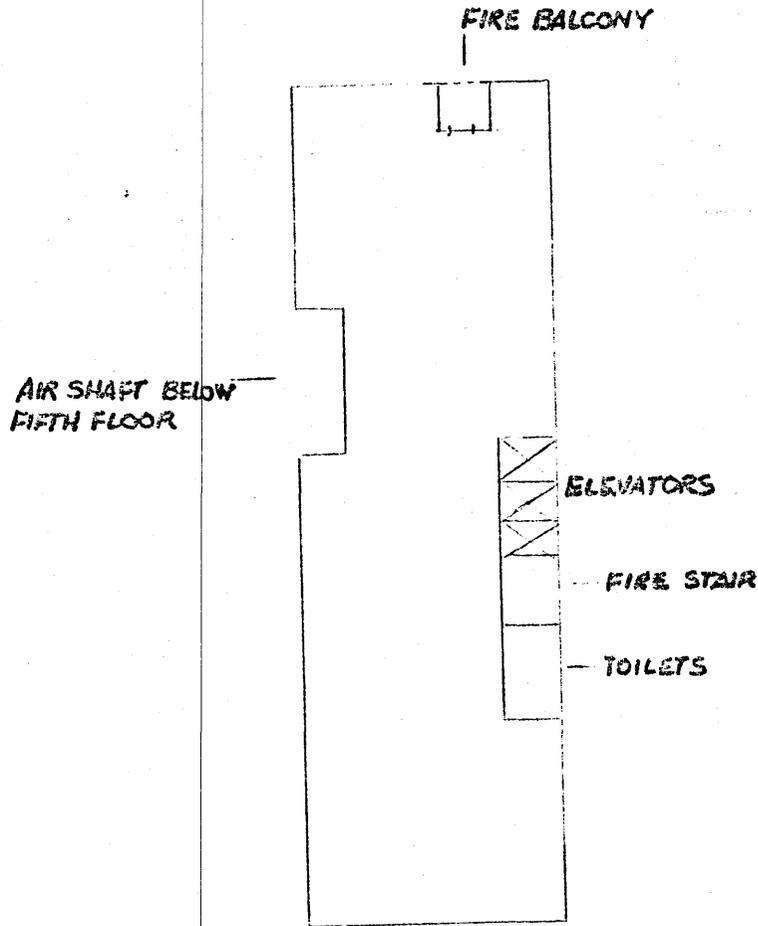
National Register of Historic Places
 Nomination Report
 THE GRIFFITH BUILDING, 605-607 Broad Street, Newark, New Jersey (Essex County)





National Register of Historic Places
Nomination Report

THE GRIFFITH BUILDING, 605-607 Broad Street, Newark, New Jersey (Essex County)



TYPICAL OFFICE FLOOR
(NOT TO SCALE)

Griffith Building
Newark, Essex County,
New Jersey

