

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



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# 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 The Trenton Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company

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

### 2. Location

street & number 214-218 E. State Street

city or town Trenton City

state New Jersey code NJ county Mercer code 021 zip code 08608

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	not for publication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

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
 I hereby certify that this X 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 X 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 X local

Paul Barony Ass't Commissioner Date 2/10/17  
Signature of certifying official/Title

NJ DEP  
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:)

Jon Edson K. Beall Date of Action 4-3-17  
Signature of the Keeper

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**5. Classification**

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

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

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

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)

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

N/A

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

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

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

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION –  
Communications facility

VACANT/NOT IN USE

**7. Description**

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

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

CLASSICAL REVIVAL

foundation: STONE  
walls: BRICK  
roof: SYNTHETIC  
other: LIMESTONE

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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

The Trenton Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company is a seven-story, Classical Revival-style telephone exchange building. The building is situated mid-block on the north side of E. State Street between N. Montgomery Street and N. Stockton Street in downtown Trenton, New Jersey, and faces south. Built in four stages between 1913 and 1948, the building is thirteen-bays wide (though six-bays wide on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor) and seven-stories tall on the south or primary elevation. The building rests on a granite base and is clad in buff brick with limestone accents. On the interior, the building is largely open in plan with plaster walls and ceilings with square and cylindrical concrete columns throughout.

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## Narrative Description

### *Facade*

On the south elevation, the three easternmost bays – a large storefront window with flanking entrances on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor – comprises the original width of the 1913 building, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> floors, each with five bays (Photo #1). In total, the building is seven-stories tall. The steel-framed storefront window on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, the openings of which have been infilled with painted plywood, contains a limestone entablature surround (Photo #2). The two entrances on either side of the storefront window feature limestone architrave surrounds, above which are inset limestone panels. The remaining three bays on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, which were built as an addition in 1941, are similar in treatment to the earlier building. These bays rest on a granite base and contain infilled window openings with limestone architrave surrounds, above which are inset limestone panels. On the upper floors, all bays contain 6/6 double-hung steel windows, although the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors also contain three-light steel transoms above each window. All of the windows, which appear to be original, contain limestone surrounds. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor is defined by three prominent pedimented limestone window surrounds, which appear in the westernmost, center, and easternmost bays. In the second through sixth and eighth through twelfth bays on the 3<sup>rd</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> floors, there are limestone spandrel panels at each floor. Some windows on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> floors contain louvered metal vents. The south elevation is capped by a simple limestone cornice.

On the west elevation, the building is seven-bays wide (Photos #4-6). Nearly all bays contain twin 6/6 double-hung steel windows, which appear to be original, with simple limestone surrounds. The only exception is in the four northernmost bays on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, which contain two rows of windows. The upper row contains twin 3/3 double-hung steel windows or louvered vents and the bottom row is infilled. Above the three southernmost 1<sup>st</sup> floor windows, which are also infilled, there is a limestone stringcourse and three inset limestone panels above the three southernmost windows on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. Along the bottom of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor windows, there is a limestone sill course. Like the east elevation, the windows on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors contain three-light steel transoms. Some windows on the upper floors contain louvered vents. At the roofline, there is a simple limestone cornice in the three southernmost bays, but the remaining bays contain only a limestone string course and coping.

The north elevation is ten-bays wide (Photos #6 & 7). The three center bays are deeply recessed the full height of the building, forming a courtyard. The courtyard does not appear to have had a specific function other than to provide light and air into the center of the building. To that end, the first three bays from the east, which comprise the north elevation of the 1923 addition, contain 4/4 double-hung steel windows with brick sills, although the openings have been infilled with stucco-clad CMU at the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors and contain louvered vents at the 6<sup>th</sup> floor. There is a limestone belt course at the 7<sup>th</sup> floor and simple cornice at the roofline. In the three recessed bays, there is a fire escape and two 6/6 double-hung steel windows with brick sills per floor. The two westernmost recessed bays (the fifth and sixth bays overall) rise an additional two stories above the 7<sup>th</sup> floor to form the north elevation of the penthouse. The other two sides of the courtyard (the west elevation of the 1923 addition and the east elevation of the 1941 addition) contain 6/6 double-hung steel windows with brick sills on all floors. An additional fire escape exists on the west side of the courtyard (on the east elevation of the 1941 addition). The remaining four bays on the north elevation contain 6/6 double-hung steel windows

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with limestone sills on the 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> floors. All of the windows on this elevation appear to be original. The 1<sup>st</sup> floor windows contain iron security grates (Photo #7). There are no window openings on the 4<sup>th</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> floors.

On the east elevation, the building is seven-bays wide and abuts an adjacent two-story building (Photo #8). The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors contain no windows. The northernmost three bays on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor and all bays on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> floors contain what appear to be original 6/6 double-hung steel windows with brick sills. Some of the window openings contain louvered vents. Below the four southernmost windows on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor, "BELL TELEPHONE" appears in blue and white glazed tiles, which are inset into the surrounding brick. Below the tiled sign, there are tall rectangles – articulated by slightly darker bricks – which are flush with the surrounding brick and extend down to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. At the 7<sup>th</sup> floor there is a limestone belt course. The west elevation is capped by a simple limestone cornice.

At the center of the roof, there is a two-story, L-shaped penthouse of buff brick. The penthouse contains what appear to be original 6/6 double-hung steel windows on the south, west, and north elevations. The remainder of the roof is flat and contains various large mechanical units.

### *Interior*

On the interior, there is a vestibule off of the main entrance from the south elevation (facing E. State Street). The vestibule contains vinyl tile floors and plaster walls although the plaster on some portions of the upper walls has been removed, revealing the terra cotta backup blocks (Photos #9 & 10). In addition, some parts of the lobby have imitation wood paneling. The vestibule leads to the building's only stair, which is U-return in configuration and consists of steel treads and risers with a cast iron balustrade and railing (Photo #11). Beyond the stair, there is an elevator lobby with terrazzo floors and marble-clad walls (Photo #15). The stair treatment is similar on the upper floors (Photo #17). There are two elevators providing access between the basement and 7<sup>th</sup> floor.

Beyond the vestibule and elevator lobby on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, and throughout much of the upper floors, the building is largely open in plan. Drywall partitions have been added over the years to subdivide the spaces, although it is difficult to determine for what reason. The building originally contained different functions on each floor – the original 1913 building, for example, contained offices and public spaces on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, operators' quarters on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, switchboard space on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> floors, and a terminal room on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor – however little to no semblance of these distinct uses remains.

Generally, the finishes throughout the building include concrete and vinyl tile floors and plaster walls. The building's terra cotta-clad steel structural system is visible in the ceiling beams that appear in most spaces, as well as square and cylindrical concrete columns (Photos #13, 14, 18 & 26-29). Both the ceiling and columns are coated in plaster, which is damaged or missing in some areas, revealing the underlying terra cotta blocks (Photos #17-20, 24 & 25). In many spaces, there are large exposed metal ducts, which appear to have been installed during the last thirty years (Photos #13, 14, 19, 20, 23, 30 & 31). In some rooms, there are also remnants of a dropped acoustical tile ceiling including the aluminum grids, many with missing tiles (Photos #12 & 23). There are few historic decorative features in the building. No historic wood trim, including around the windows, can be found.

Note: photos of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> floors are currently unavailable as those floors were inaccessible at the time of survey.

### *Integrity*

The Trenton Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company retains integrity, particularly in the aspects of design and materials. The building's strongly defined Classical Revival vocabulary – with buff brick work and limestone details, such as the window surrounds, spandrel panels, and cornices – is fully intact. The quality, placement and condition of the construction materials remain intact and characteristic of both the Classical Revival style and the era in which the building was constructed. The workmanship is of good quality and is characteristic of the quality of design and construction present throughout the network of Bell Telephone exchanges and central office buildings in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware.

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The aspects of feeling and association are also retained in the intact finishes, voluminous spaces and periodic building campaigns. Although the equipment, furnishings and people have long since departed, these features and characteristics effectively relay the sense of place and the notable telecommunications history of the once omnipresent Bell Telephone Company.

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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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMUNICATIONS  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1913-1963  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1913, 1923, 1941, 1948  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

John T. Windrim (Architect)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (In *one* paragraph, provide a summary that briefly states what the significance of the property/district is, and, for each claim, identifies the level of significance and applicable criteria that apply. The summary paragraph also needs to identify the period of significance.)

In Trenton as in most American cities, the decades following Alexander Graham Bell's invention of the telephone were characterized by cautious expansion and competition among a number of telephone companies, both local and regional. Eventually, Bell Telephone won out. On its completion in 1913, the Trenton Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company became the primary exchange for Trenton and many surrounding communities. As an essential relay point for over 100 long distance lines, the central office kept Trenton connected to the rest of the country, constantly adopting new technologies, particularly dial telephones and later wireless service. Designed by the firm of John T. Windrim, the building is highly characteristic of the Classical Revival style, which Bell Telephone implemented as a standard in nearly all of its central office and exchange buildings across New Jersey and in Pennsylvania and Delaware. The Trenton Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company is significant under Criterion A, Communications, for its dominance in Trenton's telephone networks beginning in the early-twentieth century. The building's significance under Criterion A also encompasses its architectural history. The building's period of significance begins in 1913 with the first phase of construction and ends in 1963 when the last phase of construction was completed and the building became increasingly obsolete.

**Period of Significance** (Briefly justify the period of significance identified above.)

The building's period of significance begins in 1913 with the first phase of construction and ends in 1963 when the last phase of construction was completed.

**Criteria Considerations** (Briefly explain how the property meets any Criteria Considerations that apply.)

N/A

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

The first section of the building was completed in 1913. This first phase consisted of the first seven bays in from the east on floors 1-5. In 1923, two additional stories were added to the 1913 phase, as was a seven-story addition to the north. In 1941, a large three-story addition was constructed to the west of the original building. Finally, in 1948, an additional four stories were added to the 1941 phase.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Demonstrate each of the claims for significance made in the summary paragraph.)

*The Development of Telephone Service in Trenton*

After Alexander Graham Bell introduced the telephone to the United States at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876, several investor-partners founded the National Bell Telephone Company (later the American Bell Telephone Company) to begin employing the patented technology in cities across the country. In Trenton, however, it was the Western Union Telegraph Company, Bell's first competitor, that first brought the device to that city in 1878. Located in the back room of the Western Union office at East State and Warren Streets, the first switchboard handled only a few calls per day from eighteen subscribers and was managed by a single part-time operator. American Bell still controlled the original patents filed by Alexander Graham Bell in 1876, but Western Union opened the Trenton office with its own technology in an effort to forestall Bell's expansion there. Although Bell's founders offered their patents to Western Union for \$100,000 in 1877, Western Union refused. After quickly realizing their mistake, Western Union began deploying telephone technology based on patents filed by other inventors, such as Elisha Gray. Bell challenged these patents and, in November of 1879, the fierce competitors came to an agreement by which Bell took control of Gray's

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patents but agreed to pay Western Union 20% of the rentals and royalties they received for all devices. Bell also agreed not to enter the telegraph business, which Western Union had long controlled.<sup>1</sup>

From 1879 onward, the Trenton Telephone Company continued to operate and grow under patents now owned by Bell, hiring a full-time manager and moving to larger quarters within only a few years. Eventually, in 1887, Trenton Telephone was acquired by the Delaware and Atlantic Telegraph and Telephone Company (DAT&T), a regional company founded in 1883 in Pennsylvania, also to operate under Bell patents. By this point, there were over 250 “stations” or telephones in Trenton and the nearby suburbs.<sup>2</sup> Although DAT&T was still technically an independent company, they were forced to lease all such telephones and other equipment from Bell under the terms of the 1879 agreement. In 1888, the United States Supreme Court invalidated Elisha Gray’s patent altogether, effectively conferring on Bell a true monopoly, at least for the time being. DAT&T survived long enough to see Bell’s patents expire in 1894, however Bell quickly took a controlling interest in the company in 1895.<sup>3</sup>

Although its acquisition of DAT&T made Bell the dominant network in Trenton, independent telephone companies did appear in the city, as they did in cities across the country, shortly after Bell’s patents expired. By 1896, the Home and Standard telephone companies had established franchises in Trenton and the Automatic Telephone Company was “striving to establish a system” there. All three of the independents promised rates significantly lower than what Bell was charging. They would offer a \$24 annual rate for residential service and a \$36 rate for business establishments. The prospect of such strong competition with Bell, which charged \$40 and \$60 for similar service, moved the *Trenton Evening Times* in 1896 to proclaim in a headline that “A Telephone War May Soon be Waged.”<sup>4</sup> Ultimately, there was only room for one major competitor to Bell. The Automatic Telephone Company never gained a foothold in Trenton and, although the Standard Telephone Company had signed up 500 subscribers in its first year, it folded and surrendered its charter in July of 1897.<sup>5</sup>

Even with the Home Telephone rivalry, Bell remained the leading telephone system in Trenton. In fact, during the late 1890s, the pace of growth in Bell’s Trenton service area was rapidly increasing. The company now had nearly 700 subscribers, including both business and residential customers in the city and surrounding suburbs. Future growth was projected to be so strong that a new home was needed for the central office operation. The company soon purchased the property at 216 E. State Street and remodeled an existing three-story building there in 1899. The new central office would accommodate a switchboard capacity of 1,200 lines with additional space for 1,600 to be employed with new switchboards as demand increased.<sup>6</sup> But, as the city’s population rose – from 73,307 in 1900 to 96,815 in 1910, representing a 32% change – demand greatly exceeded expectations. Expanding industry also fueled demand as the telephone became an essential business tool. As a result, Bell was forced to install new switchboards in the building every two years until 1912, some of which required the construction of additions at the rear of the building. By the end of the decade Bell had 7,200 subscribers within the city limits and, including suburban areas, 12,700 overall, a number that placed serious strain on Bell’s switchboards and their 70 operators.

The expansion of Trenton’s network could also be attributed partly to improving telephone technology, which expanded the range of calls to all parts of the country and made placing a call increasingly simple. Adapting the official slogan of Trenton, the *Trenton Evening Times* in 1910 proclaimed, “Trenton makes telephone calls and the world takes them.” The play on words could not be truer as the city was the center of 117 long distance lines, which led to all parts of the United States and gave Trenton “direct and immediate connection with every city, town and hamlet worth being connected with.” Between 1908 and 1910, the Trenton Central Office experienced an 80% increase in the number of such long distance

<sup>1</sup> G.B. Garwood, “Trenton, the Capital of New Jersey,” *Telephone News*, 1 Aug 1913.

<sup>2</sup> “Interesting Story of City’s Development Told by Garwood,” *Trenton Evening Times*, 12 Aug 1913.

<sup>3</sup> Federal Communications Commission, *Proposed Report, Telephone Investigation* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1938), p. 134-137.

<sup>4</sup> “A Telephone War May Soon be Waged,” *Trenton Evening Times*, 23 Aug 1896.

<sup>5</sup> “Charter Surrendered,” *Trenton Evening Times*, 26 July 1897.

<sup>6</sup> “Hello Central! At the Bell Telephone Company’s New Exchange. An Entirely New System When Completed,” *Trenton Evening Times*, 21 Jan 1899.

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calls.<sup>7</sup> Both long distance and local calls were routed from customers to the Trenton Central Office using modern switchboards on the “relay system,” which streamlined parts of the calling process. For one, the customer no longer needed to ring a bell to attract an operator’s attention. To place a call, one needed only to lift the hook on newly provided telephone models, which in turn would light a small bulb on the switchboard under the subscriber’s number in the central station. At this point an operator would pick up, take the caller’s instructions and place his or her call to the desired number.

As a result of Trenton’s unrelenting growth in population and industrial might, Bell sought to build an entirely new central office beginning in 1913. That year, the company hired Philadelphia architect John T. Windrim to design their new home at 216 East State Street. The five-story building, constructed of steel and faced with brick and limestone, cost \$130,000 and was completed in September of 1914 (Figure 2). Like all of Bell’s central offices, the new building would function in a highly standardized way to “place the subscribers in talking relations with each other and to disconnect their lines when conversation is completed.” As described by the *Trenton Evening Times* in 1913, the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the new building would contain the company’s business office where customers could sign up for service, file complaints, or pay their bills. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor would be reserved as operators’ quarters with a cafeteria, rest rooms, and changing areas. Because the central office was a 24-hour operation, the provision of break rooms with areas for operators to rest, dine, and socialize were provided in most central office buildings. The “home-like atmosphere” of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor was “calculated to make the employees comfortable and at the same time preserve their health.” The 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, a “large and clean and airy” space, would house the heart of the operation with a switchboard for 10,000 telephone lines. The switchboard was “the chief and most important feature of the central office because the success of the system as a whole depended upon its proper operation”. It was the apparatus by which operators would connect the lines of different telephone subscribers “by means of plugs joined by flexible conductors, all connections being made in accordance with the oral instructions of the calling subscribers”. The 4th floor would contain the terminal room, where the outside underground telephone cables terminated and the circuits were permanently connected with the switchboard wire system. Finally, the 5<sup>th</sup> floor would be reserved for additional switchboard space to be installed concurrent with future growth in the Trenton service area.<sup>8</sup>

#### *The Architecture of the Trenton Central Office*

The new Trenton Central Office was designed by the Philadelphia firm of John T. Windrim (1866-1934), who became Bell Telephone’s chief architects around the turn of the century, a role that the firm would hold at least until the early 1930s. Windrim was arguably Philadelphia’s preeminent civic architect of this era and certainly one of the region’s most prolific designers. Over the course of his career Windrim and his firm designed numerous office buildings, banks, court houses, hospitals, theaters, museums, and private residences throughout Philadelphia and nearby towns and suburban communities in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey.

Most often, Windrim tended toward a sober but refined expression of the Classical orders. Some of the firm’s most highly acclaimed work includes the Commonwealth Title & Trust Company, a fifteen-story Beaux-Arts style bank and office building, built in 1901 at 1201 Chestnut Street in Philadelphia; two massive generating stations for the Philadelphia Electric Company, built on the Delaware River in nearby Chester, PA and in the Fishtown section of Philadelphia in 1916 and 1920, respectively; and the Franklin Institute Science Museum, a Classical Revival limestone edifice on Logan Square in Philadelphia, completed in 1931.<sup>9</sup> “Due to the visibility of his projects,” architectural historian Sandra L. Tatman writes, “Windrim became the best-known Philadelphia practitioner of the classical revival style often designated as Beaux-Arts.”<sup>10</sup> Although the Trenton Central Office is Windrim’s only known work in that city, the architect and his

<sup>7</sup> “Trenton is One of the Busiest of All Telephone Centers,” *Trenton Evening Times*, 10 Nov 1910.

<sup>8</sup> Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, *Special Reports: Telephones and Telegraphs* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1906) and “New Home for Bell Company,” *Trenton Evening Times*, 16 Mar 1913.

<sup>9</sup> Windrim also served as the chief architect for the Philadelphia Electric Company, designing numerous power plants and substations and the company’s headquarters at 130 S. 9<sup>th</sup> Street in Philadelphia in 1927. Both of the generating stations on the Delaware River remain today. The Chester station was listed on the National Register in 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Sandra L. Tatman and Roger W. Moss, *Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects: 1700-1930* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1985), accessed at [www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/21563](http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/21563) on 9/12/14.

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firm designed numerous other Bell central offices and exchanges throughout southern New Jersey, including in Atlantic City, Collingswood, Haddonfield, Margate, Merchantville, Ocean City, and Palmyra, among other towns. Many of these buildings remain today.

It appears that Windrim's firm was first hired by Bell in 1905 to design a new exchange building at 1705-07 S. Broad Street in South Philadelphia, followed shortly by another in 1906 at 54<sup>th</sup> Street and Woodland Avenue in West Philadelphia.<sup>11</sup> Windrim's association with Bell would continue over the next three decades, with the architect and his firm designing dozens of central offices or exchanges throughout Bell's network. Windrim's largest and most important commissions from Bell were the company's Parkway Central Office, a 17-story building at 17<sup>th</sup> Street and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway in Philadelphia, completed in 1921; and its western region headquarters at 420-24 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Pittsburgh, a 20-story building completed in 1923. In total, Windrim and his firm would design about sixty buildings for Bell throughout Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware by 1933. Although it is unknown how many of these buildings Windrim designed himself and how many were designed by associates in his firm, other architects he employed, including W.R. Morton Keast (1888-1973) are known to have executed designs for several Bell central office buildings.<sup>12</sup>

The significance of Windrim's commissions for Bell arises both from their individual expressions of the Classical Revival ideal and for their collective formation of an architectural "brand" for the company. Nearly all of Windrim's central office designs were derivations of a basic Classically-inspired Classical Revival formula. While their scale and level of architectural detail varied from building to building, nearly all of them were two- to five-stories tall, occasionally taller, and constructed of brick with details such as water tables, string courses, window surrounds, and cornices executed in limestone and/or terra cotta.

At first glance, the application of a refined architectural language with high-quality materials to what was a utilitarian building type seems unusual, but the Classical Revival mode fit well into existing streetscapes and ennobled the central office – and, by association, telephone communication itself – through its inherent formality. Because central offices and exchanges functioned most efficiently closest to the center of their service areas, they were often located in highly visible downtown locations. With the addition of dozens of such buildings throughout Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey and Delaware between 1905 and the early 1930s, Bell and Windrim sought to create a consistent architectural language throughout a large geographic area, one that would be compatible with existing commercial and residential streetscapes.

By 1913, when Bell hired Windrim to design a new central office for Trenton, the architect had fully developed an architectural standard for Bell's network, one rooted in the Classical tradition. Still, as demonstrated by his Bell designs both before and after the Trenton Central Office, Windrim never applied the standard in a formulaic or repetitive way. In fact, the architect had to be flexible as budget and program both played a role in determining what the final product would look like. As noted above, the level of ornamentation, grandeur and sometimes material quality depended on the size of the exchange area the building serviced, where it was located, and whether or not future expansion was planned.

The result of Windrim's commission for the new Trenton Central Office was a refined Classical Revival design. The building's prominent location on a downtown site in a state capital demanded full Classical treatment with a granite base, a façade of buff brick, Indiana limestone window surrounds and pediments, and cornice on the upper floors. Like many Bell central offices, the building was designed for future expansion by means of an additional two stories. In fact, the repetitive rhythm of the building's fenestration and other ornamental features allowed the possibility of future expansion without compromising the balanced and symmetrical effect of the original design, perhaps another reason why the Classical Revival style was particularly well-suited to the central office type. By the time the expansion was executed in

<sup>11</sup> *Engineering News* 54.23 (December 1905), 192. Although the precise circumstances surrounding Bell's choice of Windrim are unknown, the company was using other architects to design exchange buildings as late as 1903. The first Lombard Exchange at 17<sup>th</sup> and Lombard Streets in Philadelphia, for example, was designed by the firm of Rankin, Kellogg & Crane in 1903, although it was later replaced with a Windrim-designed version in 1923.

<sup>12</sup> A photographic portfolio of Keast's work while employed by Windrim is held by the Free Library of Philadelphia. Keast began working for Windrim in 1910 and remained with the master until he retired in 1933.

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1923 – the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> floors were completed that year – the overall composition read as if it had been the original design. The additions were treated much the same as the original building; with buff brick, and limestone window surrounds, the expansion only reinforced the dignified and balanced nature of the original building. Further additions in 1941 and 1948, although not designed by Windrim (as mentioned above, they were designed in-house by Bell), matched the design of the original building and therefore did not disrupt its symmetry.

### *The Trenton Central Office and Bell Dominance*

The new Trenton Central Office became a symbol of Bell's domination over the city's telephone system, and ultimately its monopoly throughout the industry. A year after the building was completed, Bell's only competitor in Trenton, the Inter-State Telephone Company, which had absorbed the Home Telephone Company in 1901, was sold to the New York Telephone Company.<sup>13</sup> The latter was previously absorbed by Bell's parent company, the American Telephone & Telegraph Company (AT&T) in 1909, therefore in 1915 Bell controlled the full extent of telephone systems in Trenton and surrounding suburban areas.<sup>14</sup> Bell executives and economists would argue – rightly or wrongly – that their monopoly was a “natural” one, asserting that Bell's gargantuan national network was inevitable due to economies of scale. The network was vast, so theoretically Bell could provide far less expensive service than any smaller independent company would be able to (In reality, Bell was often accused of gouging subscribers on rates). Additionally, the monopoly grew out of Bell's vast political influence and the lack of regulation over telephone utilities. For example, even with the Inter-State rivalry, there was no mechanism by which the government could force the networks to interconnect. In fact, for decades, telephones could only connect to other telephones within the same network.<sup>15</sup> Often, homes and businesses in Trenton would have two telephones, one for the Bell system and one for the Inter-State system. After 1915, the need for dual-service in Trenton was eliminated.

At the time the Bell system absorbed Inter-State in 1915, the former had nearly 10,000 subscribers in Trenton proper, a number which continued to rise as the city and its industries grew. The empty fifth floor space in the new central office was occupied much sooner than expected in 1916 and new switchboards were installed to handle steadily growing demand. As the Trenton Central Office grew, more and more operators were needed to work the switchboards. In fact, from the 1910s through the early 1940s, more than half of the central office's workforce consisted of women operators. In 1916, they numbered 85 out of a total 150-person workforce. Work as an operator represented one of the first non-industrial employment opportunities for women in Trenton and elsewhere. Bell advertised frequently in the *Trenton Evening Times* throughout the 1910s and 1920s, often imploring women to join their workforce as “soldiers of the switchboard.” Their work during World War I was particularly important as it was “essential to winning the war,” one ad proclaimed in 1918. To that end, Bell wanted the women to think of operating work as a “patriotic opportunity,” another ad implored, because “Every ounce of energy in the operator's arms, which carries the telephone cord from line to line, finds its source of strength in the same spirit of Americanism which is carrying the bayonet ‘over the top’ in the hands of the boys ‘over there.’”<sup>16</sup> Although in other parts of the country this patriotic ideal developed into a militancy among the women operators, who demanded union recognition and better wages and hours during and after the war, labor relations at the Trenton Central Office appear to have been fairly calm throughout its history.<sup>17</sup>

Through the end of the 1910s, the Trenton Central Office experienced steady growth concurrent with the city's rising population. By 1916, there were 11,000 subscribers within the city limits making 65,000 calls per day, a figure that

<sup>13</sup> “Sale of Inter-State Company of New Jersey,” in *Telephony* 69.7, 14 Aug, 1915, p. 39, and F.A. Demaresi, “Eastern Telephone Development,” in *Telephone Magazine* 22.142, July 1903.

<sup>14</sup> “American Telephone and Telegraph,” *The Economist, Investors' Section* (June 1916), p. 19.

<sup>15</sup> In *The People's Network: The Political Economy of the Telephone in the Gilded Age* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), historian Robert MacDougall notes that a city with two telephone systems would require “two networks of poles and wires, ...two sets of operators and exchanges, two solitudes of nonconnecting telephones.” (p. 160).

<sup>16</sup> See select advertisements from the *Trenton Evening Times* in Figures 4-6.

<sup>17</sup> Maurine Weiner Greenwald, *Women, War, and Work: The Impact of World War I on Women Workers in the United States* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 185.

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increased to 100,000 during the holiday season. As described by Bell's chief operator in Trenton, Anna M. Whalen, in the *Trenton Evening Times* shortly after the building was completed, the telephone had become "the very barometer of city activity." The new central office "is always at work from high noon to dark midnight, and on again to the next noon." It was a 24-hour operation. "Before five o'clock the city begins to awaken. Signal lights on the switchboard begin to glow; a "Good morning" call here, and an early worker telephones the office there. By eight o'clock it is fully awake – the calls come with increasing rapidity. The volume triples at nine o'clock; ten o'clock sees six times the number, and between ten and eleven there is a roar of talk which tingles every wire in the system."<sup>18</sup>

All phones in Trenton continued to operate on manual switchboards, requiring operators to complete every call. Although Bell began to introduce dial phones to select cities in 1919, the new technology did not reach Trenton until 1924. That year, the company began to install dial phones – to be used for local calls only – for all new customers and to replace manual equipment where necessary. Although dial service made telephone calls simpler for the customer, the technology required a new range of mechanical switching equipment at the central office. To provide room for the vast equipment, the company began its first expansion of the central office in 1923. That year, the sixth and seventh floors were added to the existing building as planned by Windrim's office in 1913. A seven-story addition was also constructed at the rear of the building.<sup>19</sup> The new construction more than doubled the building's square footage and would provide enough space for the mechanical switching equipment required for a full switchover to dial service, which began in 1929.<sup>20</sup> By early January 1930, the Trenton Central Office had completed the switchover of its 24,000 subscribers to an all-dial system, although toll calls and long-distance service still required the employment of a full workforce of operators.<sup>21</sup>

Bell initially expected the 1923 addition to be sufficient for years of projected growth, but even before the all-dial system was completed the Trenton Central Office faced a shortage of space for additional switching equipment. As a result, in 1929 the company purchased the adjacent Union Library at 214 E. State Street, a three-story 1882 building in the Romanesque Revival style (Figure 8). By 1930, Bell had moved 50 employees and some equipment into the building, but this was only a temporary solution to demand that continued to grow beyond all expectations. For ten years, the Trenton Central Office ran part of its operations out of the Union Library. By 1941, when the number of daily calls had reached 155,000, a more permanent solution was needed. Bell's chief engineer in Newark, Robert P. Garey, designed a three-story addition on the west side of the building, which would require the demolition of the old Union Library. Work began that year on the structure, designed by Garey to match the brick and limestone treatment of the 1913 building next door.<sup>22</sup>

Apart from satisfying an ever increasing demand for standard service during the 1940s, the Trenton Central Office continually implemented new telephone technologies, many of which were developed not far away at the Bell Labs in Holmdel, New Jersey. In the mid-1940s, Bell began to experiment with mobile telephone service along highways and in urban cores between Boston and Washington, D.C. To tie Trenton into the new mobile service area, two vertical rod antennae were installed on top of the building in March 1947 (the antennae no longer exist). Initially, the mobile service was meant for trucks, the drivers of which could use radio telephones to report progress or difficulties during their journeys. Later, service was expanded to automobiles.<sup>23</sup> In 1948, the company also began to handle long-distance calls with code dialing, "which gives direct contact in distant exchanges as in Los Angeles and San Francisco, providing faster connections for long distance callers." Although most long-distance calls (and toll calls) were still completed manually by operators in the central office, this new technology began to automate the process, making it easier to telephone faraway places but making the operator obsolete.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Anna M. Whalen, "'Smiling' Voices on the Wire Now Show Trenton's 'Bigness,'" *Trenton Evening Times*, 29 Aug 1915.

<sup>19</sup> Bell Advertisement in the *Trenton Evening Times*, 7 June 1923, p. 11 (see Figure 7).

<sup>20</sup> "All Phones in Trenton to be Dials," *Trenton Evening Times*, 9 June 1929 (see Figures 8 & 9).

<sup>21</sup> Bell Advertisement in the *Trenton Evening Times*, 3 Jan 1930.

<sup>22</sup> "City Landmark Will be Razed; New Building to Rise on Site," *Trenton Evening Times*, 6 Mar 1941.

<sup>23</sup> "Mobile Telephone Service Will Be Inaugurated Here," *Trenton Evening Times*, 17 Mar 1947.

<sup>24</sup> "Phone Company Catching Up With Huge Postwar Demand," *Trenton Evening Times*, 22 Apr 1948.

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Although by the end of World War II Trenton was growing at a much slower rate than in previous decades – between 1940 and 1950 the city’s population increased only 2.7% – dramatic growth in the nearby suburbs created unprecedented demand for telephone service. In June 1946, the *Trenton Evening Times* reported that daily calls completed by the Trenton Central Office, now with 50,000 subscribers, had increased to a staggering 240,675 from an average of about 190,000 during the war. Even with a more than 50% increase in the number of operators – to 315 from 196 during the war – the company was struggling just to keep existing phone lines working.<sup>25</sup> “Swamped with requests in the thousands for telephones and faced with overloading existing facilities,” the *Trenton Evening Times* reported in 1948, the company faced an “up-hill battle of equipment shortages.”<sup>26</sup>

The only solution to rapidly increasing demand in Trenton was to expand the central office yet again. In 1948, Bell began the construction of four additional stories atop the three-story addition completed in 1941, part of Bell’s enormous \$250,000,000 post-war investment to upgrade and expand its New Jersey facilities (Figure 9).<sup>27</sup> Once again, the expansion was designed by the company’s engineering office and exactly matched the brick and limestone treatment of the existing buildings, making it appear as if the full E. State Street façade had been completed in a single campaign. The new space would not only house switching equipment but would also provide for enlarged operators quarters, additional training rooms, and office space.<sup>28</sup> New switching equipment continued to be added to the building over the next few years as the suburbs grew.

Despite the expansion, by 1952 suburban growth had grown so strong that the Trenton Central Office was unable to keep up with demand. That year the *Trenton Evening Times* reported that Bell had a waiting list of 2,500 applications for new telephone service, the vast majority of which came from outside the city. Even more new switching equipment was added to the building in space formerly occupied by administrative offices, which were moved to rented space in other buildings in the downtown area. Soon, however, there would be no room left to expand. In an effort to ease the shortages in a more permanent way, Bell began construction on a separate facility at 243 East State Street in 1963 (at the southwest corner of E. State and Stockton Streets). The new building would house what became known as the Centrex system, which would handle all telephone service for the growing capitol complex, including the new 13-story Labor and Industry Building (1962) and the 8-story Health and Agriculture Building (1964). By transferring all state telephone systems into the new Centrex building, the Trenton Central Office would now focus solely on growing residential and business demand, including toll calls and long distance service.<sup>29</sup>

With the completion of the new Centrex exchange in 1963, the Trenton Central Office played a diminishing role in the Bell system in Trenton. Although Bell built another new facility in Trenton in 1965 – the two story building at 222-226 E. State Street, which abuts the east elevation of the central office – the new space served as company offices and an employment bureau and did not expand the exchange function of the original building next door.<sup>30</sup> After 1965, new exchanges also began to appear in suburban locations to handle increasing demand outside the city, an acknowledgement that the Trenton Central Office was becoming obsolete or would be unable to cope with future growth. As early as 1975 it was rumored that the State Street building would close. That year, Bell moved 120 toll operators to a new toll office in Mercerville, just outside the city.<sup>31</sup> Although the Trenton Central Office continued to house some dial equipment into the 1980s, by 1990 all service had been transferred to other, more modern exchanges and Bell finally removed the building from service.

<sup>25</sup> “Telephone Service Demands Exceed Wartime Figures,” *Trenton Evening Times*, 17 June 1946.

<sup>26</sup> “Phone Company Catching Up With Huge Postwar Demand,” *Trenton Evening Times*, 22 Apr 1948.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> “As ‘Raising the Roof’ Project Progresses,” *Trenton Evening Times*, 29 June 1948.

<sup>29</sup> “N.J. Bell Telephone to Expand in City,” *Trenton Evening Times*, 19 Mar 1965.

<sup>30</sup> “N.J. Bell To Expand Facilities,” *Trenton Evening Times*, 30 June 1965.

<sup>31</sup> Donald P. Delany, “N.J. Bell squashes the rumor it’s leaving downtown Trenton,” *Trenton Evening Times*, 14 Feb 1975.

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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.)

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MacDougall, Robert. *The People’s Network: The Political Economy of the Telephone in the Gilded Age*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.

Tatman, Sandra L. and Roger W. Moss. *Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects: 1700-1930*. Accessed at [www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab](http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab).

*Telephony* (Periodical; See footnotes for specific citations).

*Trenton Evening Times* (Newspaper; See footnotes for specific citations).

**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
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: Trentoniana Room, Trenton Public Library

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

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Trenton Central Office of the Bell Telephone  
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Name of Property

Mercer County, NJ  
County and State

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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property** ~0.33 acres  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References** (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet. A patch is also available to permit use of latitude and longitude coordinates. It may be cut and pasted into this document in the place of the UTM coordinates.)

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 40.220512 Longitude: -74.761170

2. Latitude: 40.220554 Longitude: -74.760853

3. Latitude: 40.220920 Longitude: -74.760916

4. Latitude: 40.220894 Longitude: -74.761247

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

The boundary of the property is shown as a line on the accompanying map entitled "The Trenton Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company: Proposed National Register Boundary," which is identified as Block 607, Lot 14, of the City of Trenton tax map.

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

The nominated property includes the entire tax parcel on which the building is situated and historically associated with the nominated property. No historically associated resources have been excluded.

Trenton Central Office of the Bell Telephone  
 Company  
 Name of Property

Mercer County, NJ  
 County and State

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Kevin McMahan, Associate  
 organization Powers & Company, Inc. date 6/1/16 (Revised 8/10/16)  
 street & number 1315 Walnut Street, Suite 1717 telephone (215) 636-0192  
 city or town Philadelphia state PA zip code 19107  
 e-mail kevin@powersco.net

**Additional Documentation**

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, or acceptable substitute map.  
 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.)

**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.

Name of Property: The Trenton Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company

City or Vicinity: Trenton

County: Mercer State: NJ

Photographer: Robert Powers

Date Photographed: March 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

<i>Photograph #</i>	<i>Description of Photograph</i>
1.	South elevation, view north
2.	South elevation, display window, view north
3.	West and south elevations, view NE
4.	West elevation, view NE
5.	West elevation, view E
6.	North and west elevations, view SE
7.	Alley along north elevation, view east
8.	South and east elevations, view northwest
9.	1 <sup>st</sup> floor vestibule, view south
10.	1 <sup>st</sup> floor lobby, view southeast
11.	1 <sup>st</sup> floor, main stair, view northwest
12.	1 <sup>st</sup> floor, view south
13.	1 <sup>st</sup> floor, view south
14.	1 <sup>st</sup> floor, view south

Trenton Central Office of the Bell Telephone

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15.	1 <sup>st</sup> floor elevator lobby, view north
16.	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor, stairway, view north
17.	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor, view south
18.	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor, view northeast
19.	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor, view north
20.	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor, view north
21.	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor fire escape
22.	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor elevator lobby, view north
23.	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor, view northwest
24.	5 <sup>th</sup> floor, view southeast
25.	5 <sup>th</sup> floor, view south
26.	5 <sup>th</sup> floor, view southwest
27.	5 <sup>th</sup> floor, view west
28.	7 <sup>th</sup> floor, view west
29.	7 <sup>th</sup> floor, view north
30.	7 <sup>th</sup> floor, view south
31.	7 <sup>th</sup> floor, view north

**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

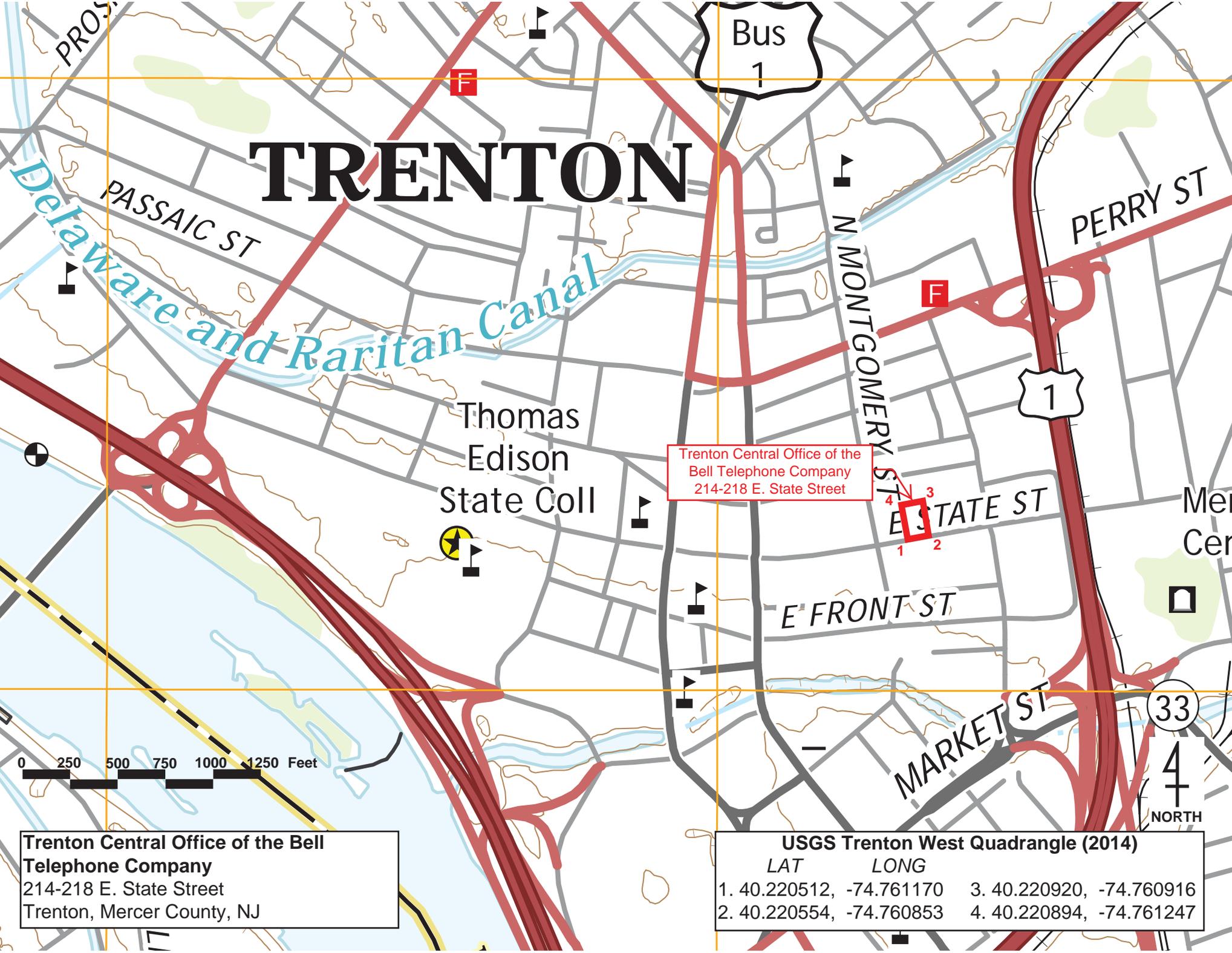
name City of Trenton  
street & number 319 East State Street telephone 609-989-3511  
city or town Trenton state NJ zip code 08608

**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.

# TRENTON

Bus  
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Thomas  
Edison  
State Coll

Trenton Central Office of the  
Bell Telephone Company  
214-218 E. State Street

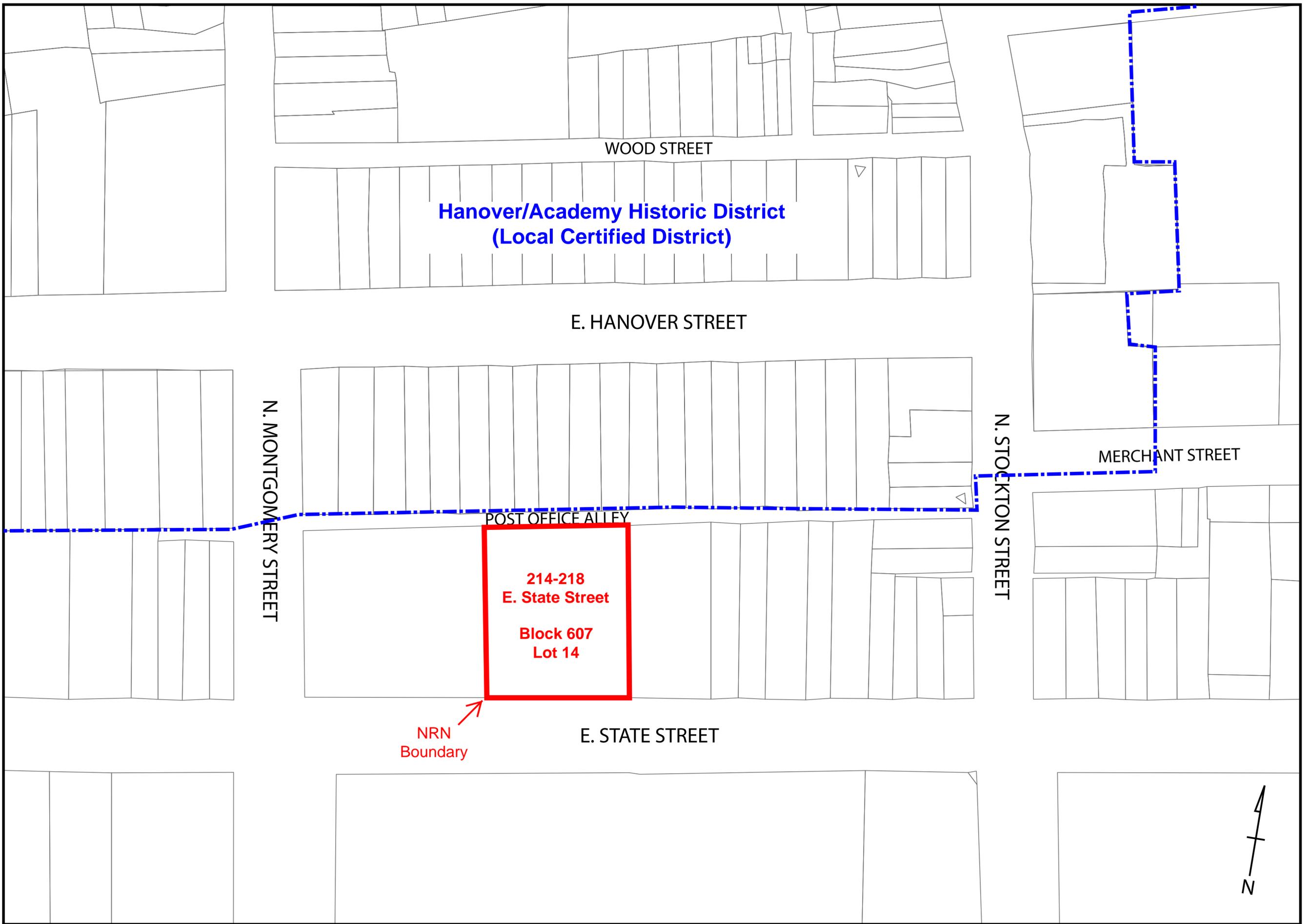
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Trenton Central Office of the Bell  
Telephone Company  
214-218 E. State Street  
Trenton, Mercer County, NJ

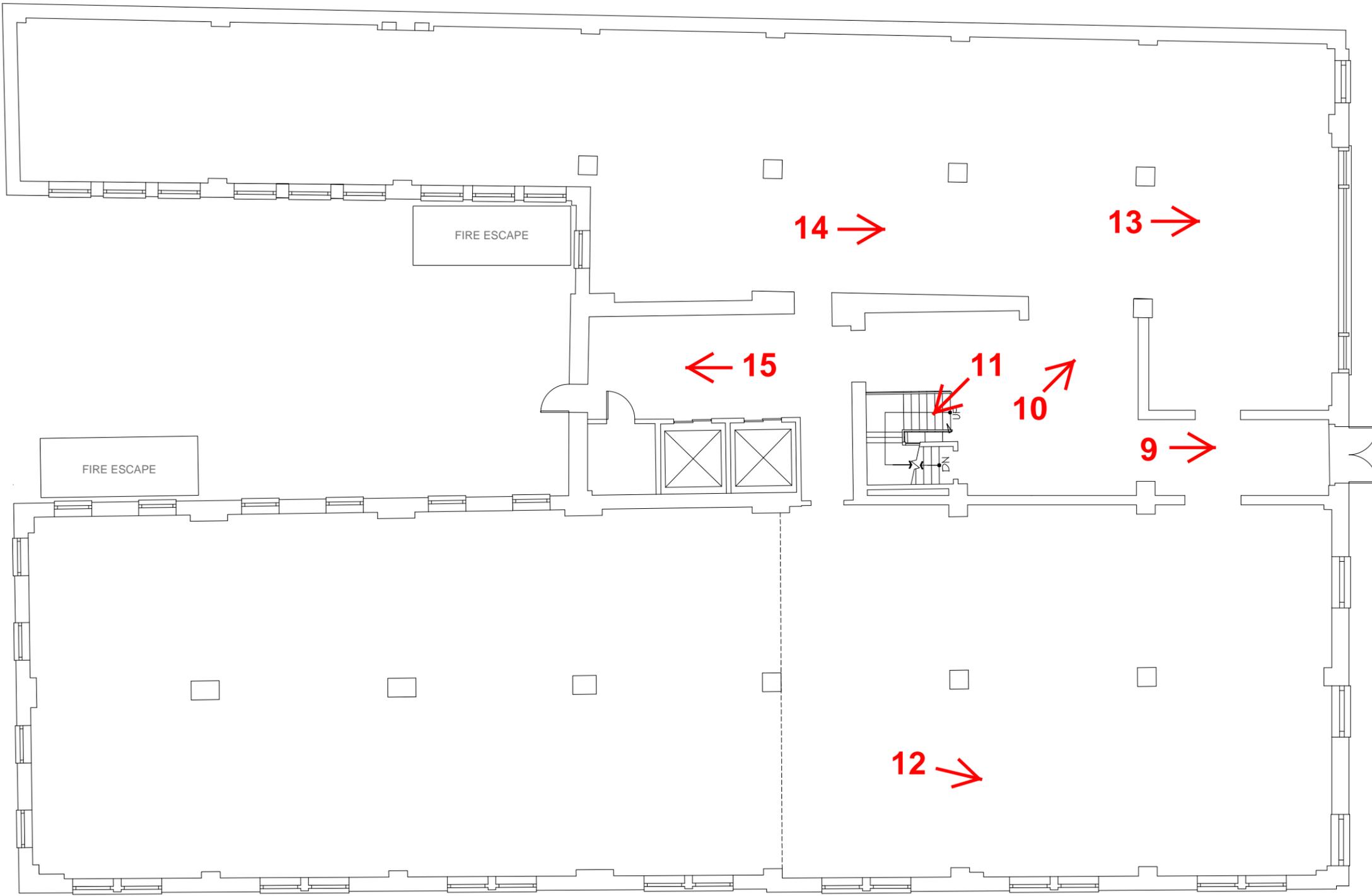
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2. 40.220554,	-74.760853	4. 40.220894,	-74.761247



**Trenton Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company**  
214-218 E. State Street, Trenton, NJ  
Proposed National Register Boundary





Trenton Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company  
214-218 E. State Street, Trenton, NJ  
Part 1 Photograph Key

○ First Floor



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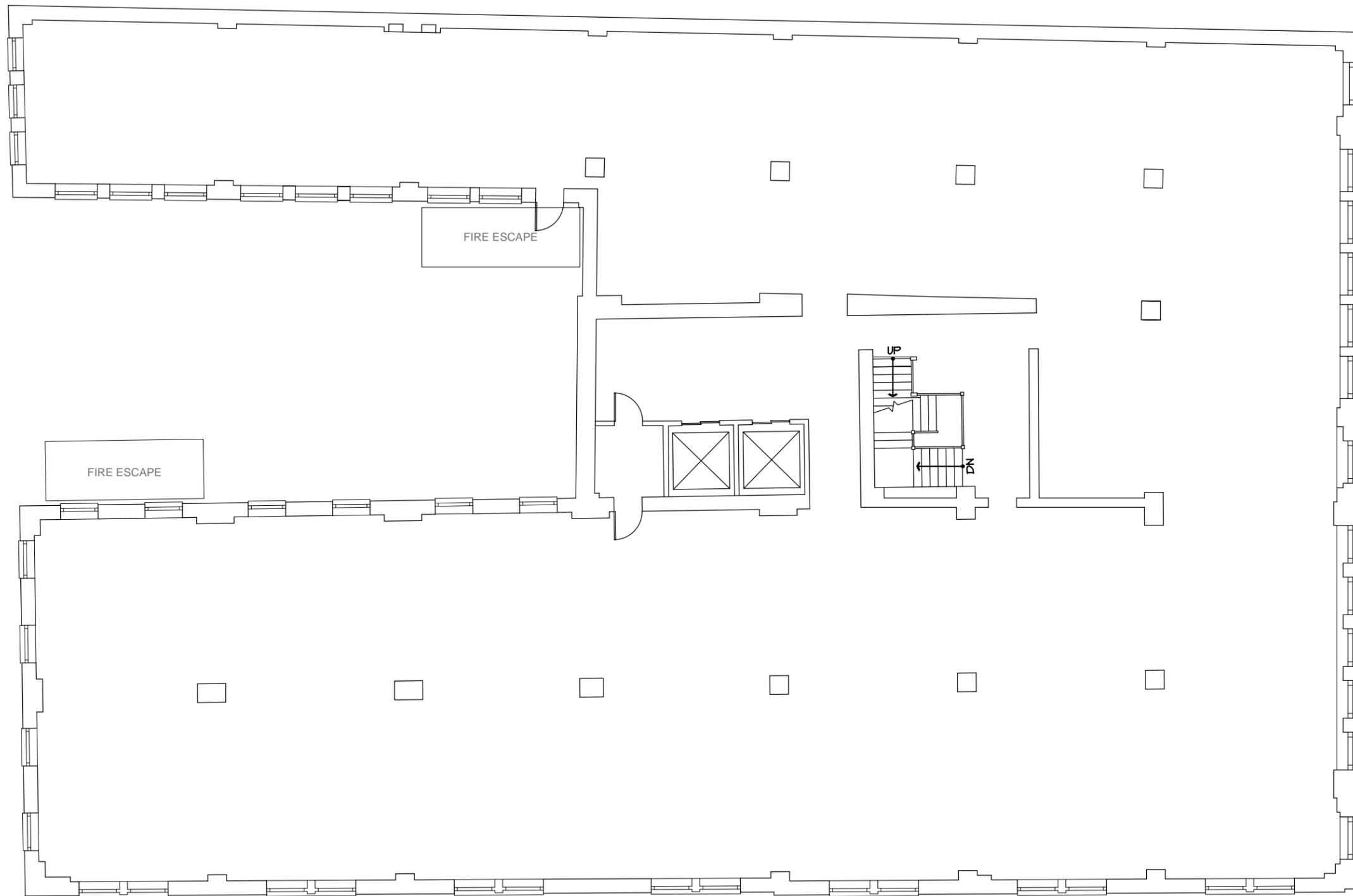
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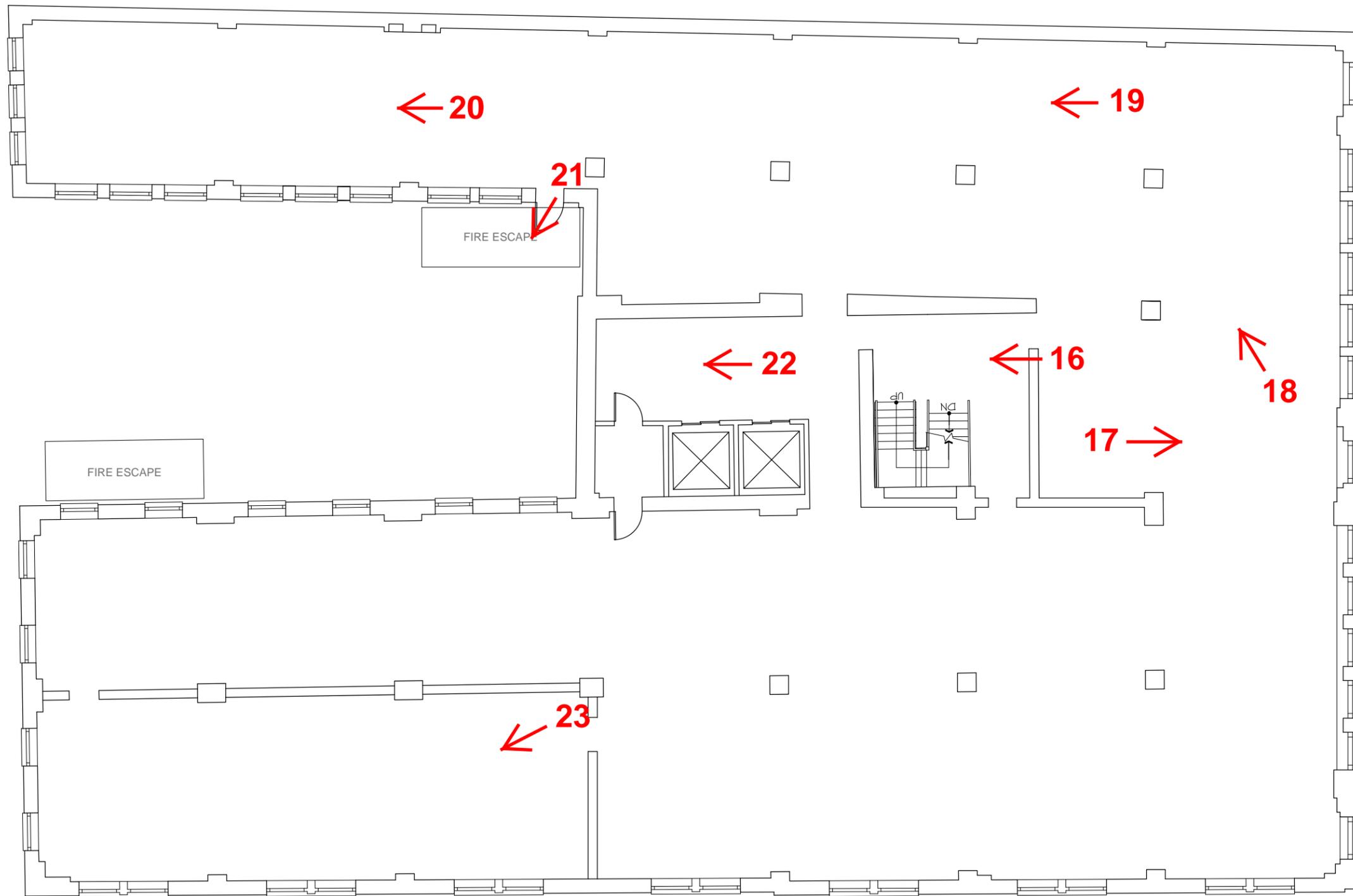
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○ **Second Floor** —————

**Trenton Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company**  
**214-218 E. State Street, Trenton, NJ**  
**Part 1 Photograph Key**

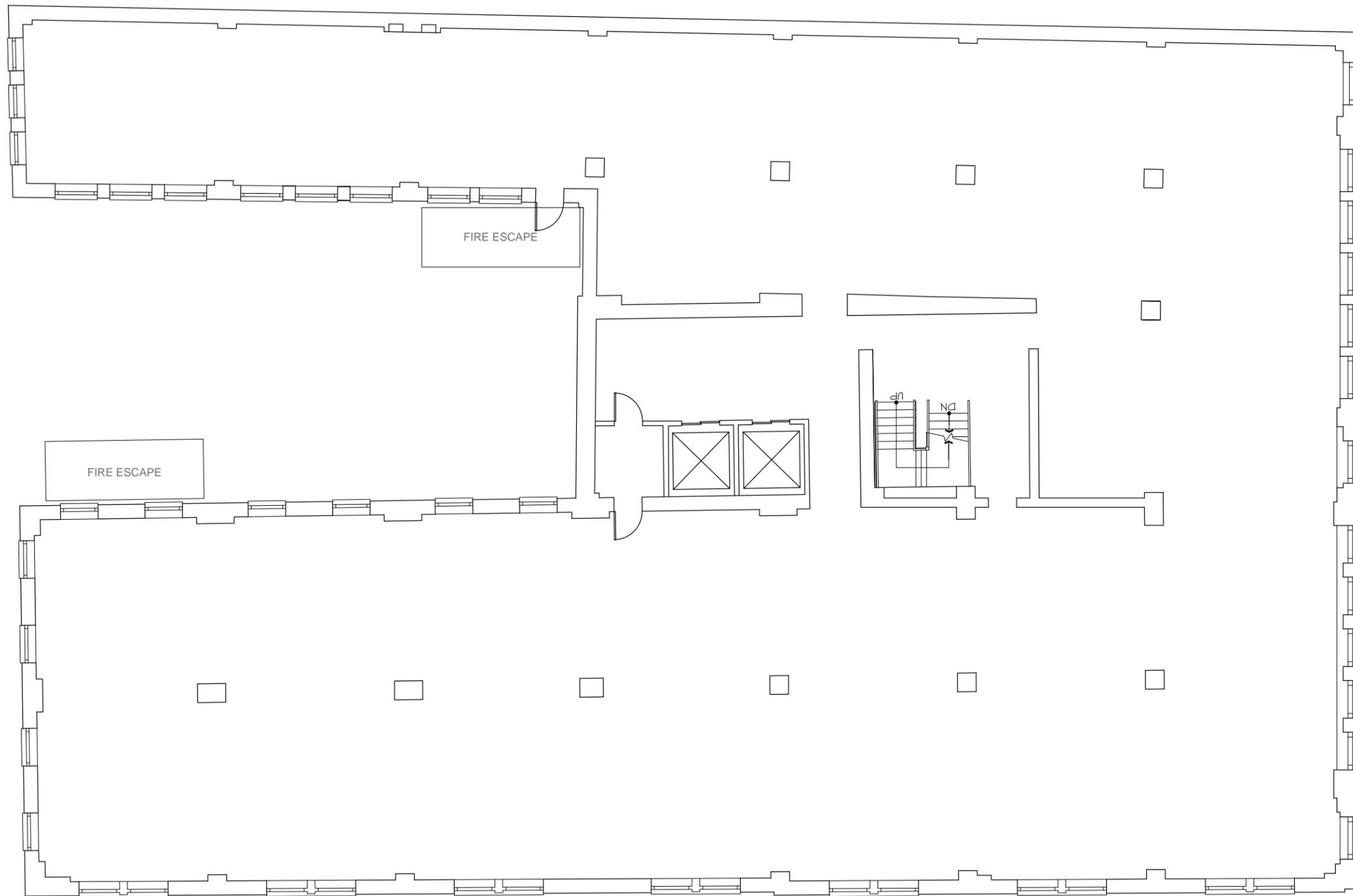




○ Third Floor

Trenton Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company  
214-218 E. State Street, Trenton, NJ  
Part 1 Photograph Key

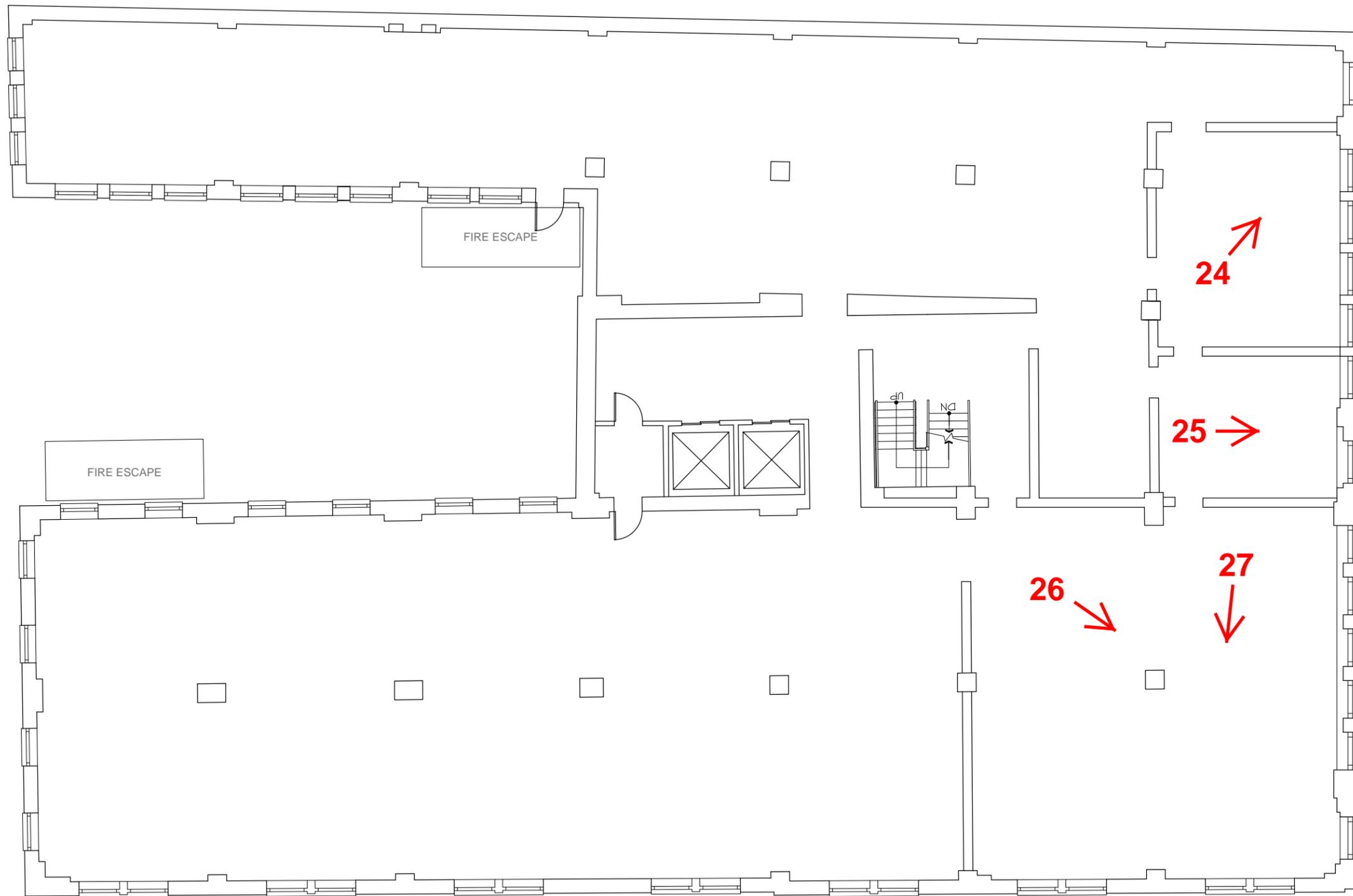


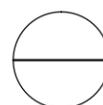


○ **Fourth Floor**

**Trenton Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company**  
**214-218 E. State Street, Trenton, NJ**  
**Part 1 Photograph Key**

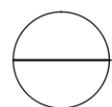
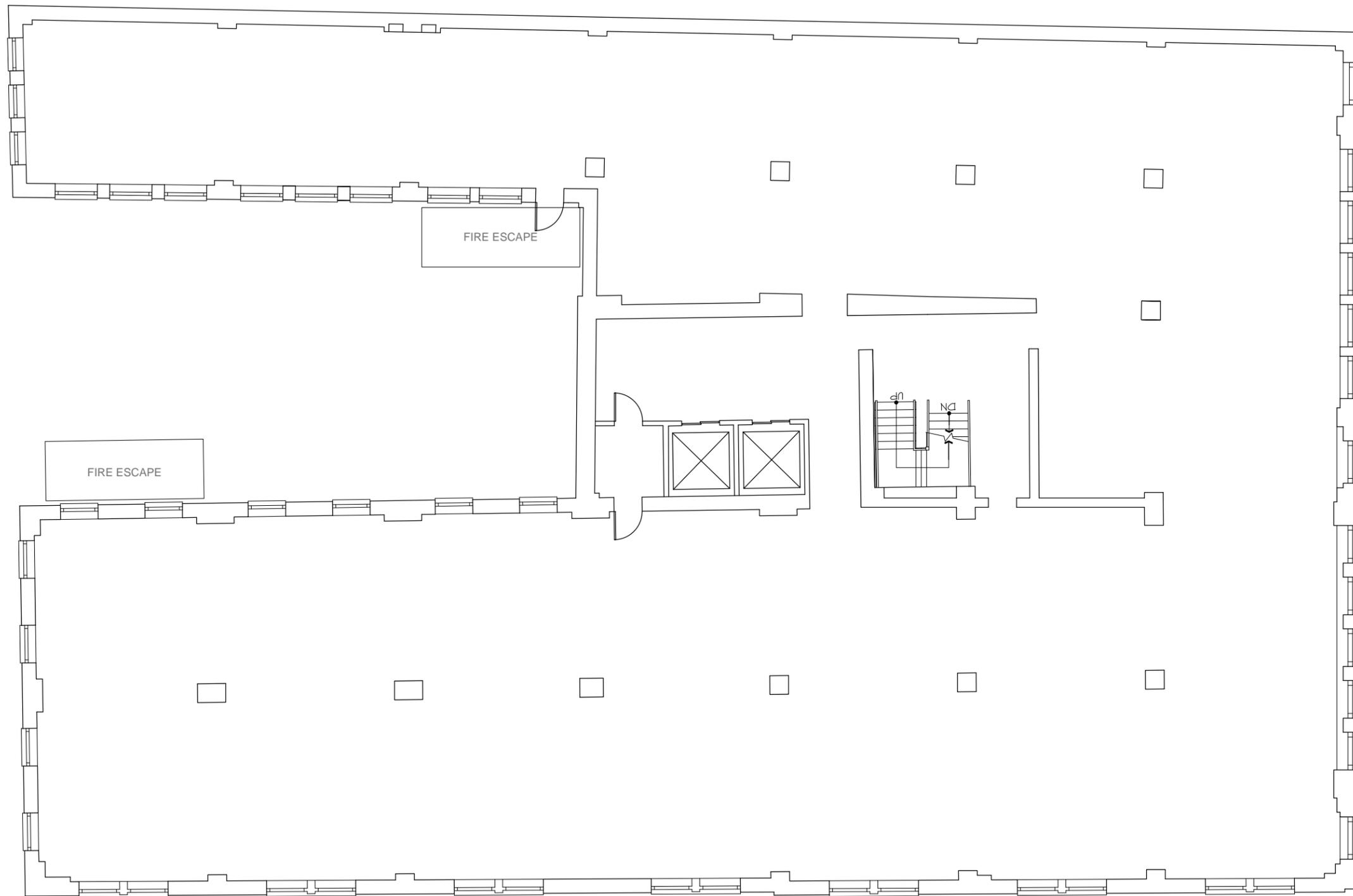




 **Fifth Floor**

**Trenton Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company**  
214-218 E. State Street, Trenton, NJ  
Part 1 Photograph Key

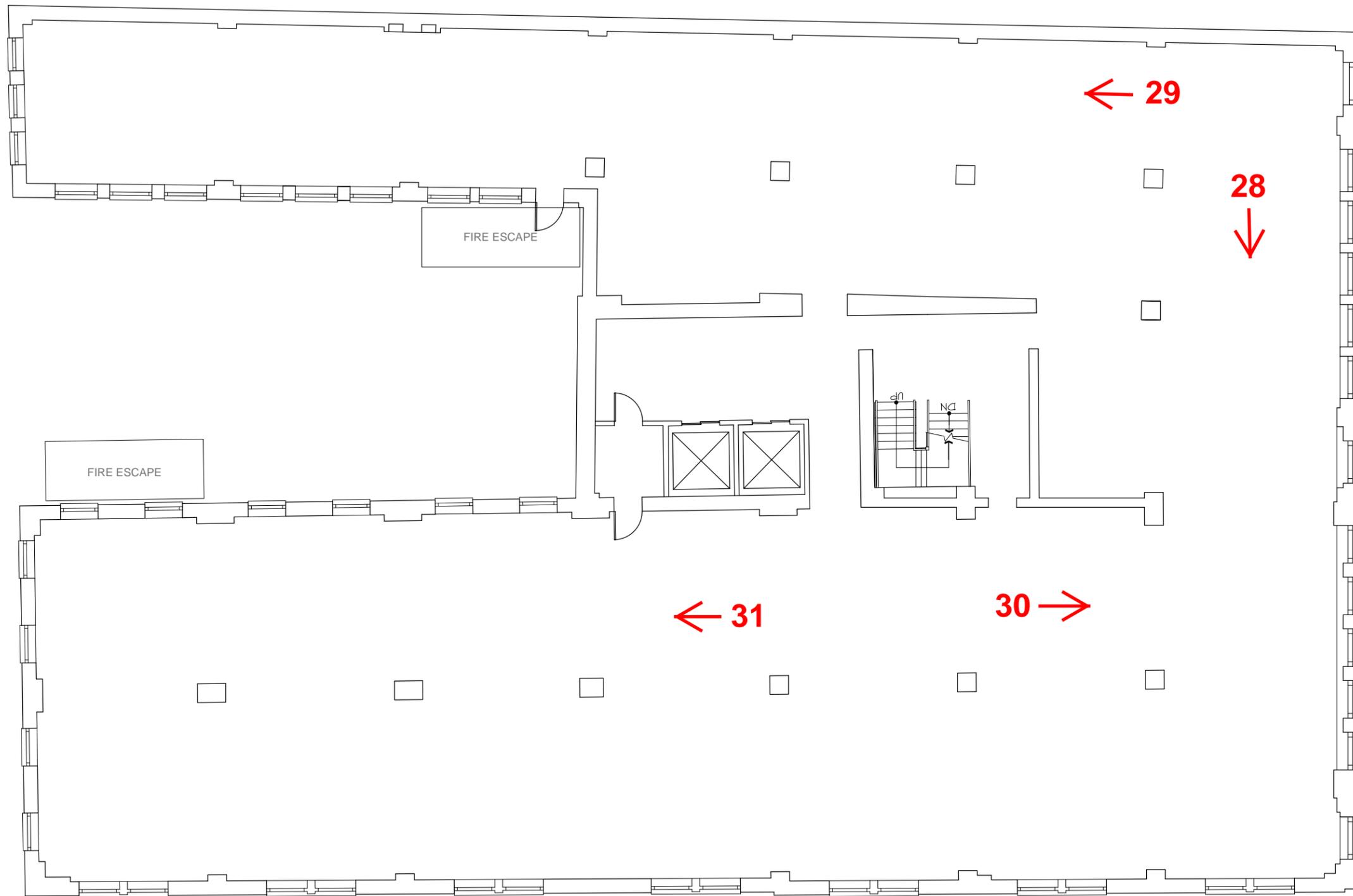


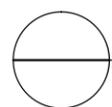


**Sixth Floor**

**Trenton Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company  
214-218 E. State Street, Trenton, NJ  
Part 1 Photograph Key**



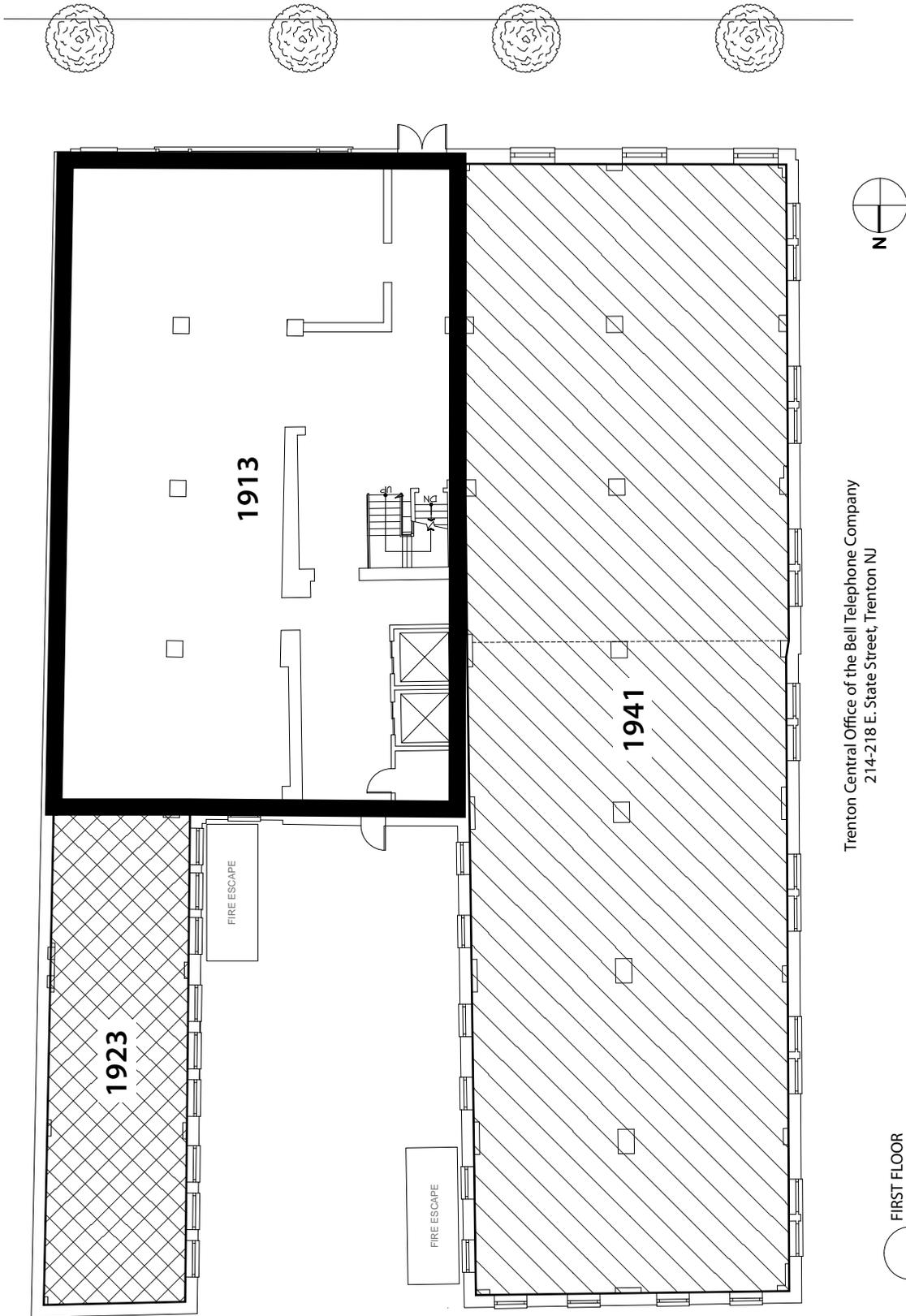


 **Seventh Floor**

**Trenton Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company**  
214-218 E. State Street, Trenton, NJ  
Part 1 Photograph Key

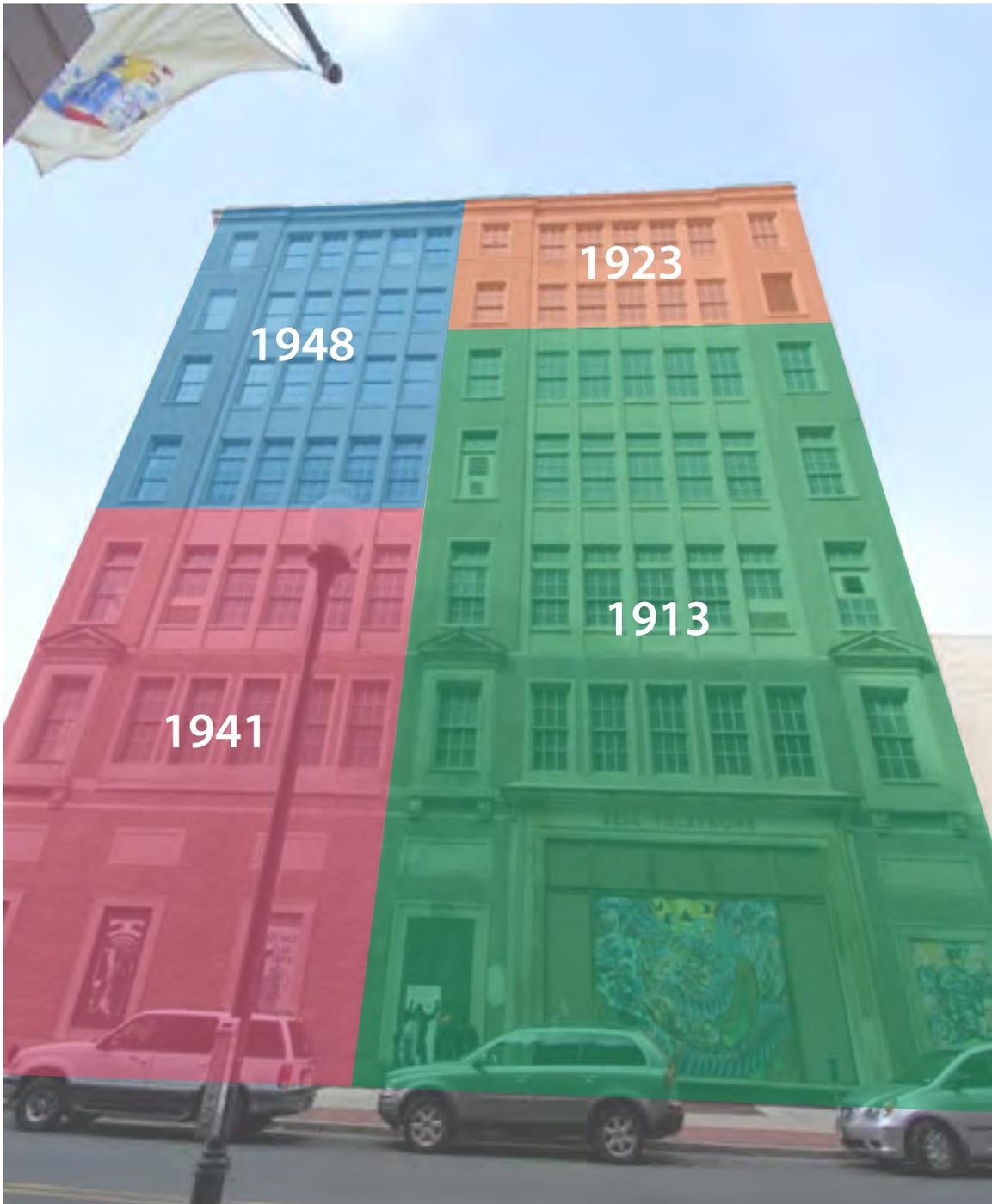


E. STATE STREET



Trenton Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company  
214-218 E. State Street, Trenton NJ

FIRST FLOOR  
Not to scale



### **Building Chronology Diagram**

Trenton Central Office of the  
Bell Telephone Company

214-218 E. State Street,  
Trenton, NJ

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Trenton Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
<b>Name of Property</b>
Mercer County, NJ
<b>County and State</b>
N/A
<b>Name of multiple listing (if applicable)</b>

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National Park Service

### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Trenton Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company
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N/A
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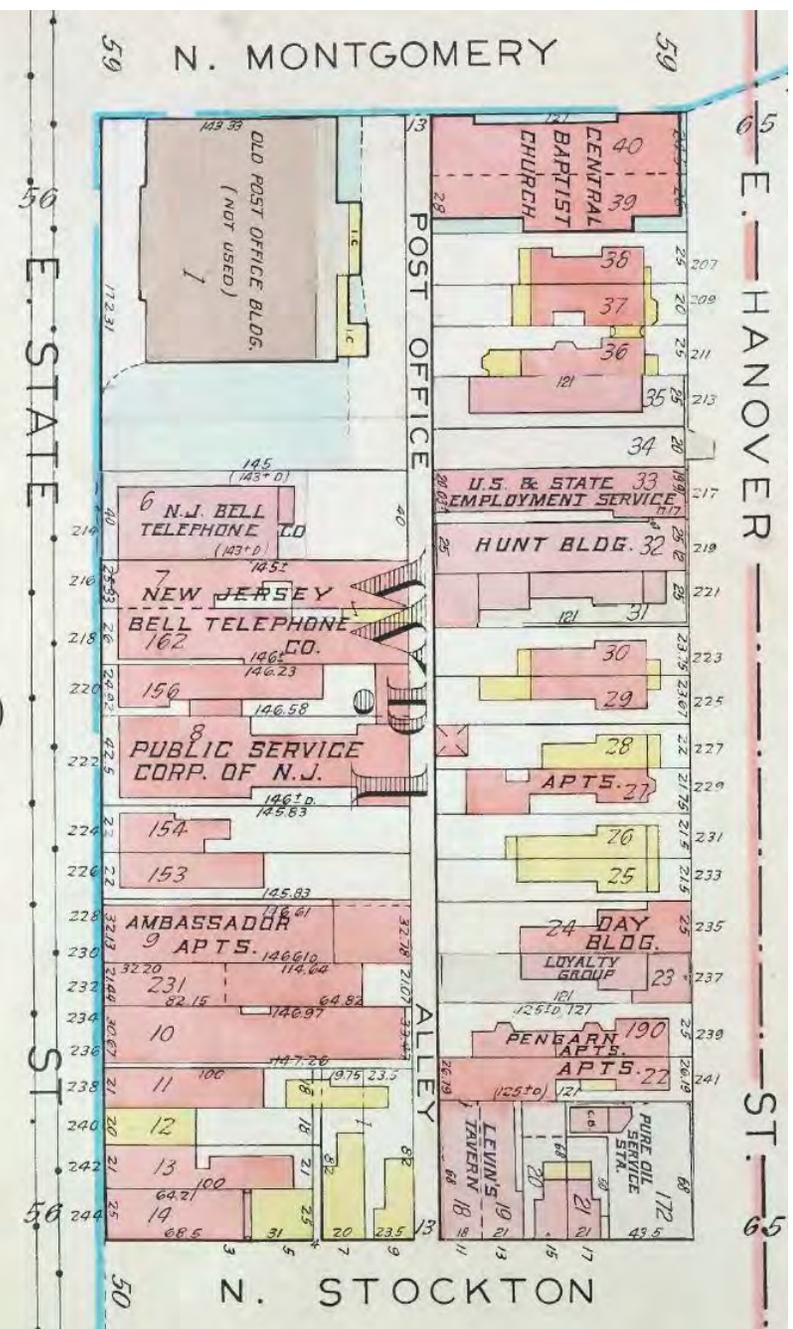


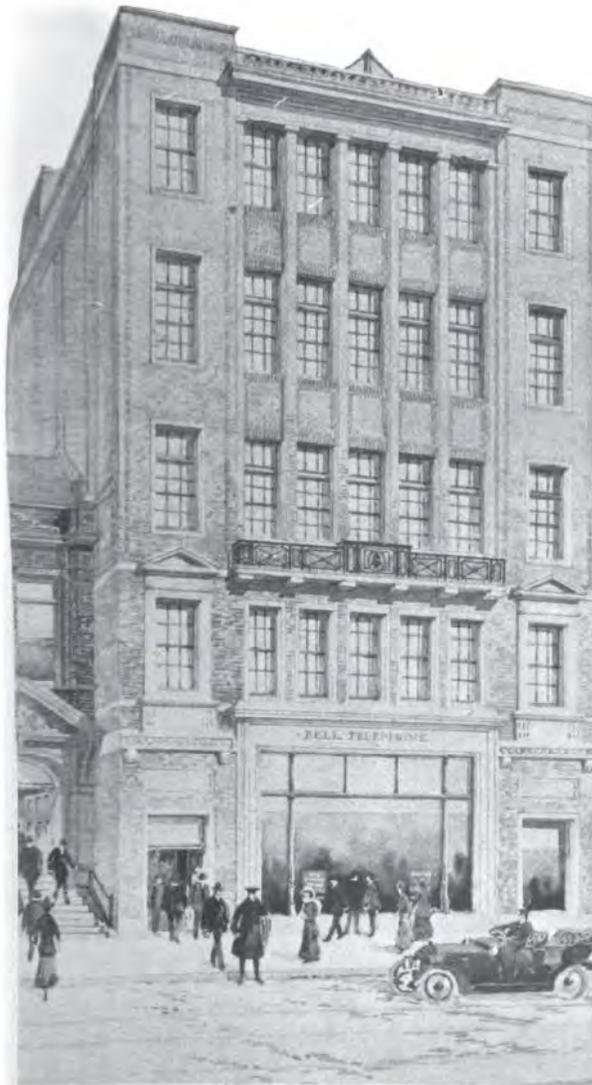
Figure 1 – 1930 Franklin Survey map showing Bell's 1929 acquisition of the Union Library at 214 E. State Street. (Trenton Free Public Library)

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**Proposed Building for Trenton, N. J.**

**Figure 2 – Rendering of the original 1913 building.**

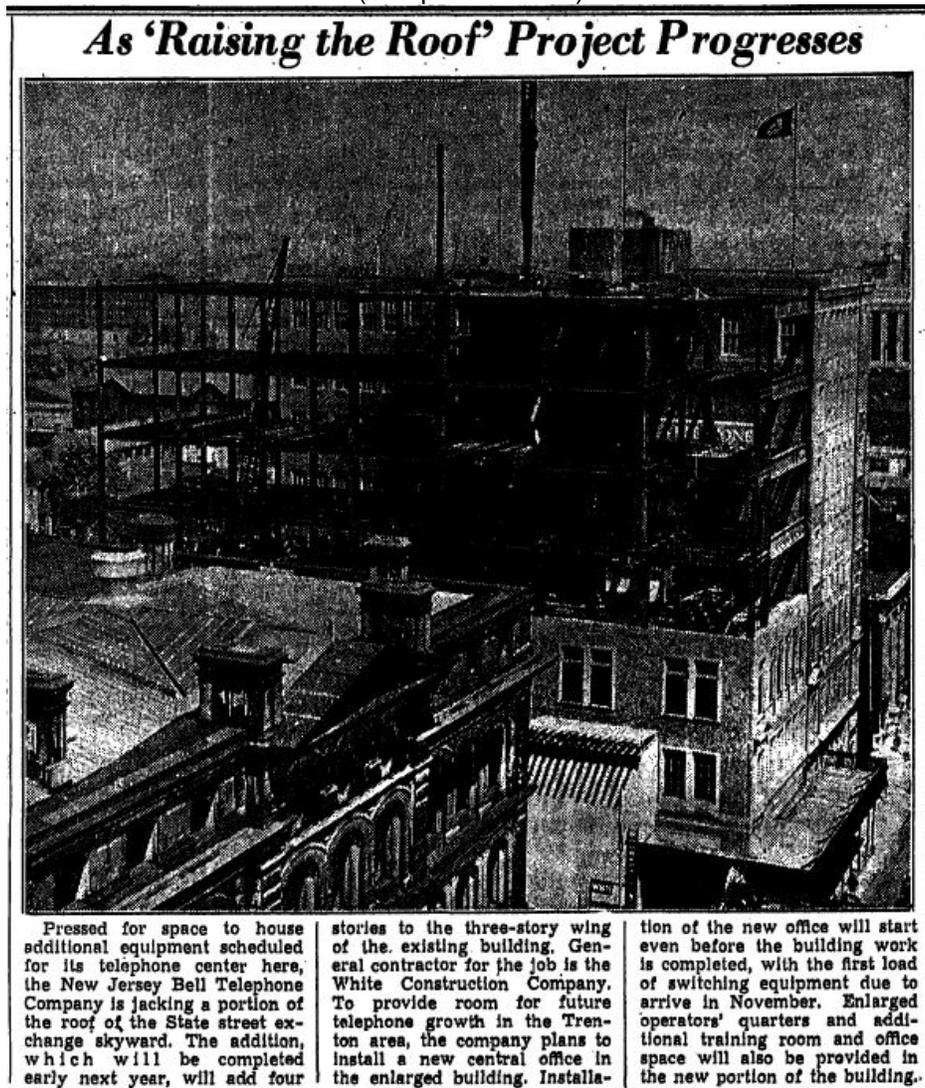
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(Telephone News)



**Figure 3** – 1948 photograph showing the construction of an additional four stories on top of the 1941 addition.  
 (Trenton Evening Times)

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**“Where There is Happiness  
in Work There’s Success”**

**T**HE Delaware & Atlantic Tel. & Tel. Company thinks of the “off duty” hours of its operators as well as the “on duty” ones.

Therefore, attractive, comfortable rest rooms for reading and relaxation, and pleasant dining rooms with lunches served at less than cost, are available for the use of Bell telephone operators during their “off duty” hours.

A good salary is paid while learning and there are frequent and regular increases, with many special opportunities for promotion.

Then, too, there is an additional pleasure for the Bell telephone operator in knowing that she is one of those whose work is essential for the winning of the war.

Application may be made to Miss Morgan at the Bell Telephone building, 216 E. State Street, Trenton, N. J., between the hours of 9 A. M. and 5 P. M.

**The Delaware & Atlantic Tel. & Tel. Co.**

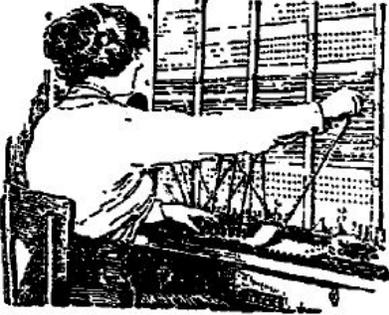
Figure 4 – 1918 Bell advertisement for new operators.  
(Trenton Evening Times)

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Trenton Central Office of the Bell  
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**Soldiers of the Switchboard**

**T**HE Delaware & Atlantic Tel. & Tel. Company wants you to become a "soldier of the switchboard"—a Bell telephone operator.

Within the operator's reach are the telephone lines from a veritable forest of factories and plants where thousands of skilled workmen are busy day and night building great ships, guns and engines which must win the war. Every ounce of energy in the operator's arms, which carries the telephone cord from line to line, finds its source of strength in the same spirit of Americanism which is carrying the bayonet "over the top" in the hands of the boys "over there."

Bell telephone operating is a war work; it is essential to the completion of the war program.

It is a patriotic opportunity and may be taken by seeing Miss Morgan at the Bell Telephone building, 216 E. State Street, Trenton, N. J., between the hours of 9 A. M. and 5 P. M.

**The Delaware & Atlantic Tel. & Tel. Co.**

Figure 5 – 1918 Bell advertisement for new operators.  
 (Trenton Evening Times)

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Continuation Sheet

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**THE VOICE WITH THE SMILE**

When one of Trenton's 177 Bell telephone operators answers your call, she says "Number, please?"

She says it with the pleasant rising inflection which expresses better than words her desire to serve you.

These 177 Trenton young women were chosen for their ability and intelligence.

They were trained to be quick, careful and accurate. They have all of these qualities.

And in addition, they have "the voice with the smile." It's not just a part of their "stock in trade."

The desire to serve their neighbors and friends is in their very nature.

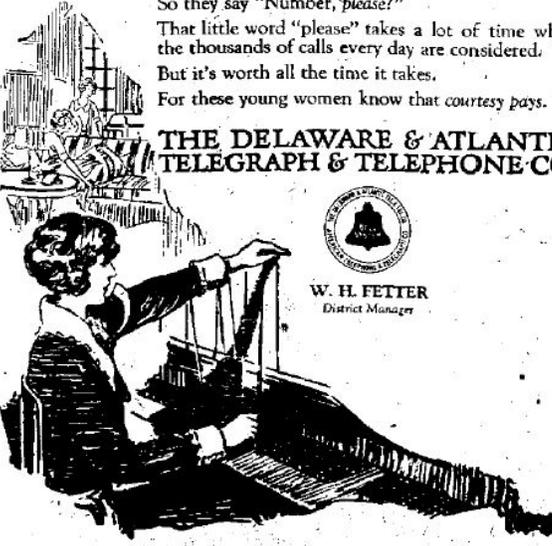
So they say "Number, please?"

That little word "please" takes a lot of time when the thousands of calls every day are considered.

But it's worth all the time it takes.

For these young women know that *courtesy pays.*

**THE DELAWARE & ATLANTIC TELEGRAPH & TELEPHONE CO.**



**W. H. FETTER**  
District Manager

Figure 6 – 1922 Bell advertisement for new operators. (Trenton Evening Times)

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Continuation Sheet

Trenton Central Office of the Bell  
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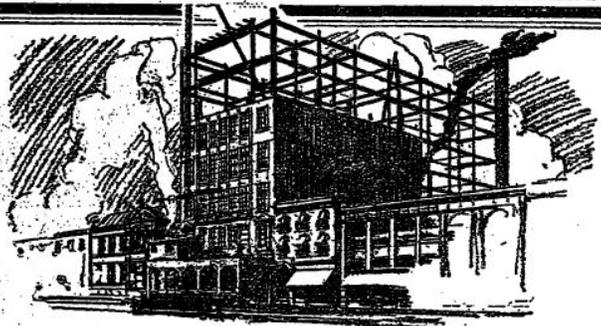
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County and State

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**TRENTON'S BELL BUILDING MUST BE ENLARGED TO CARE FOR THE DEMANDS FOR TELEPHONE SERVICE**

THE present Bell Telephone Building was completed in 1916. There seemed to be ample room for expansion to care for the demands for telephone service well into the future.

*But Trenton has already outgrown it.*

Within the next few weeks we will begin work on a two story addition and a seven story extension in the rear, which will double its size.

This city is demanding more and still more telephones. We are forced to meet these demands. This \$300,000 building addition is required *right now* to house the central-office equipment which Trenton must have so that business here will not suffer from a lack of telephone facilities.

**THE DELAWARE & ATLANTIC  
TELEPHONE & TELEGRAPH CO.**

W. H. Fetter  District Manager

Figure 5 – 1923 Bell advertisement outlining need for new addition.  
(Trenton Evening Times)

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**NEW MECHANICAL TELEPHONE "OPERATORS."** This photograph shows a part of the new equipment in the central office of the New Jersey Bell Telephone Company to handle the dial telephones now being installed in Trenton. A central office maintenance man is shown here preparing a connector switch. These switches take care of the last two digits dialed by subscribers. This is the equipment that starts the ringing as soon as a call line is reached; supplies current for talking; gives the busy "tone" if call line is in use, and indicates when either party has failed to hang up after call is completed.

**Figure 9** – 1929 photograph showing new automatic switching equipment in the Trenton Central Office.  
(Trenton Evening Times)



BELL TELEPHONE

WINDOWS OF SOUL

THE BLACK MUSEUM



BELL TELEPHONE







MAGIC BRAIN  
MAGIC EYE  
MAGIC WINDOW

CUPCAKES

MAGIC  
MAGIC  
MAGIC

The Key to Change is to forget fear

Totally

WHILE THE CAR IS AWAY



ONE WAY

W83-FDN

84871

P88-23Y

EX-101





BELL TELEPHONE

TROLLEY  
STOP  
ART ALL DAY

KEBAB HOUSE

STOR  
FOR R  
609-227





S18











CHECKS  
ONLY





NO  
SMOKING































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received:  Date of Pending List:  Date of 16th Day:  Date of 45th Day:  Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept  Return  Reject  Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Edson Beall Discipline Historian

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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.



State of New Jersey

MAIL CODE 501-04B

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

NATURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

P.O. Box 420

Trenton, NJ 08625-0420

TEL. (609) 984-0176 FAX (609) 984-0578

Project # 16-1848

HPO B2017-084



CHRIS CHRISTIE  
*Governor*

KIM GUADAGNO  
*Lt. Governor*

BOB MARTIN  
*Commissioner*

February 9, 2017

Paul Loether, Chief  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Trenton Central Office of the Bell Telephone Company, located at 214-218 East State Street, in the City of Trenton, Mercer 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,

Rich Boornazian  
Deputy State Historic  
Preservation Officer