

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railway Company East and West Freight Houses

other names/site number North Bank Depot Buildings (common, preferred title)

2. Location

street & number 1029-1101 NW Hoyt Street N/A not for publication

city or town Portland N/A vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Multnomah code 051 zip code 97210

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

James Hannah January 5, 1996  
Signature of certifying official/Title Deputy SHPO Date  
Oregon State Historic Preservation Office  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
  - determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
  - determined not eligible for the National Register.
  - removed from the National Register.
  - other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper  
Date of Action 2/22/96  
Entered in the  
National Register

North Bank Depot Buildings

Multnomah County, Oregon

Name of Property

County and State

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.)

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

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

Contributing Noncontributing buildings sites structures objects Total

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)

Transportation: rail-related, depot

Vacant/not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th/Early 20th Century American Movements: Commercial/Industrial

foundation concrete walls brick

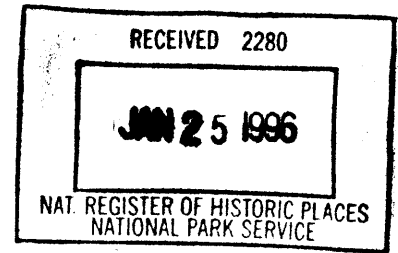
roof asbestos

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet



Section number 7 Page 2

---

The 1908 North Bank Depot is located in two buildings: The East Building is located at 1029-35 NW Hoyt Street. Specifically, it is located on Lots 4-13 of Pearl Block Number 2. The West Building is located at 1101 NW Hoyt Street. Specifically, it is located on Lots 14-23 of Pearl Block Number 2. Both are located in Couch's Addition to the City of Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon. The North Bank Depot Buildings were constructed in 1908 as part of James J. Hill's railroad empire. Completion of the rail line and its associated Depot, which connected the city to the transcontinental rail system, was hailed by the Oregonian as meaning "commercial supremacy of Portland in the Pacific Northwest."

The buildings, which are a mirror image of each other, are both two story brick utilitarian structures, nominally placed in the category of LATE 19TH/EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS--Commercial Style. Both buildings received are listed in the Historic Resources Inventory of Portland.

The North Bank Depot is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion "A" as an early critical cog in Portland's railroad development and the city's consequent rise as a commercial distribution center. It was also the direct catalyst for the development of the warehouse area now recognized as the 13th Avenue Historic District, listed on the National Register. The buildings are listed in the Historic Resources Inventory of Portland.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   7   Page   3  

---

### SETTING

The North Bank Depot is located just south of the Lovejoy Ramp and west of Union Station. Historically, Northern Pacific occupied much of the area for rail and terminal operations. Today, the United States Postal operations occupies a considerable portion between Union Station and the North Bank Depot. To the west is the 13th Avenue Historic District, which was spawned by James J. Hill's announced intention to build the North Bank depot. Further to the south are warehouses increasingly adapted for storefront commercial, light industrial and residential uses.

The North Bank Depot is at the southwestern corner of what has is termed "the River District." In its efforts to contain urban sprawl and to increase in-town population density, the city has targeted the area for redevelopment with a focus on multi-family housing. Development currently underway to the south includes Union Station Housing and the Agricultural Marketing Center, both located along Front Avenue by Union Station. Adjacent to the parcel to the south are Hoyt Street Commons, a new residential multi-family construction, which draws its architectural inspiration from the North Bank Depot.

### EXTERIOR

As built, the North Bank Depot buildings are a mirror image of one another. Each is two story, with a partial basement and a slightly gabled roof. As built, the buildings were provided office space along the southern 40 feet on the first floor, while the remaining 160 feet was intended to provide grade level freight or passenger access to train cars on the rails which ran along each side of each building. The upper floor was intended for office and business.

Structurally, the buildings are frame construction with a brick veneer on a concrete foundation. Steel I-beams provide support to the second floor, with wood beams providing support for the roof. The veneer is common-faced red brick, laid in common bond on all facades.

The buildings run along a north-south axis, each 50 feet wide along Hoyt and 200 feet deep. The site slopes slightly, from northwest to southeast.

The North Bank Depot buildings are utilitarian and unpretentious--yet distinguished by their simplicity and clean lines. This is most evident on the south facades of both buildings which are essentially intact. The facade is divided by brick pilasters into three segments. The two outside

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

---

segments are both approximately 18 feet wide and are three bays across. The interior segment is approximately 14 feet with two bays. Arched windows with light-colored rusticated stone sills are arranged evenly with an equal number on the first and second floors. At the base is a concrete watertable, approximately 3 feet high, painted to match the color of the stone sills. At the cornice, the low sloping gabled roof offers the opportunity for a stepped brick pattern, which adds considerably to the overall design.

This design sense was carried through the remainder of the building, although subsequent alterations require some speculation. The east and west facades, again nearly mirror images of each other, are symmetrical. Each is divided by brick pilasters into ten equal segments, each 20 feet wide. At the second level, each segment of each facade contains three arched windows with lightly colored rusticated stone sills. The concrete watertable continues to run along both facades of both buildings, the height being that required to provide grade access. A brick cornice line also runs along both facades of both buildings.

At the south end, the inside or 11th Avenue facade (west on 1029 and east on 1101) contained the main entry, an arched double door on ground level. Above the doorway was a single pane arched window lighting an interior stairwell. At the south corner of the first floor was a double window. The second most southerly segment contained a single large arched casement window (10 over 1). The northern most nine segments were framed by the steel I-beams and open-air (or enclosed by rolling wood freight doors) on the first level. These areas were protected by the elements by a steel awning.

The outside facade (east on 1029 and west on 1101) were framed by the steel I-beams and open air (or enclosed by rolling wood freight doors) on the interior eight segments. These areas were also protected by a steel awning. In the southern most segment, the first floor contains three arched windows matching the pattern of the second floor. At the northern most segment provided stair access to the second floor and contained a transom light (6 over 1) three bays wide, single paneled door leading to the second floor stairs, and presumably wood paneling.

The northern facade is also divided into three segments divided by brick pilasters (as the south) but contains only a single second story window and a first floor freight door. A gabled belt course divides the first and second floor.

The original windows were double hung wood sash, one over one.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   7   Page   5  

---

While the southern facades and the east/west second floors of both buildings are reasonably intact, the east/west first floor and northern facade have been altered reflecting their utilitarian heritage. The open bays have been closed using either cinder block or brick. Most windows have been replaced with metal casement. The doors have similarly been replaced with standard aluminum storefront fare. Many of the original second floor window openings have been bricked in. The north facade of both buildings have been badly scared by subsequent additions. The west facade of the 1101 has had a brick addition added at the south end.

### **INTERIOR**

Entry to the building was from a double door on 11th Avenue at the south end of the buildings. It led immediately up to a staircase providing access to the first and second floors, or down to the partial basement where the boiler was located. On the first floor was an office with vault. The second floor housed offices.

Given their functional nature, the interiors of both buildings were adapted over time. The eastern building (1029) has been gutted. The western building (1101) retains some of the vestiges from its early days, such as the stairs and some floor moldings, but has been substantially adapted for office use on both the first and second floors.

### **PLANS FOR RENOVATION**

As noted, it is the city's intent to redevelop the River District into a high-density residential area. At fruition, that area will contain a community of 15,000. The property owner plans to adapt the buildings for housing, while retaining the industrial heritage of the neighborhood.

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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation

Period of Significance

1908-1945

Significant Dates

1908

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 #

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Oregon Historical Society

North Bank Depot Buildings

Multnomah County, Oregon

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.86

Portland, Oregon-Washington 1:24000

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 10 524900 5041400
Zone Easting Northing
2

3
Zone Easting Northing
4

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John M. Tess, President, and Robert Mawson

organization Heritage Investment Corporation date July 29, 1995

street & number 123 NW Second Avenue, Suite 200 telephone 503/228-0272

city or town Portland state OR zip code 97209

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name Pearl Town Homes, L.L.C., and Hoyt Street Properties, L.L.C.

c/o Patrick Prendergast

street & number 333 SW Fifth Avenue, Suite 200 telephone 503/223-2818

city or town Portland state OR zip code 97204

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.



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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 1

---

**NORTH BANK DEPOT BUILDINGS (1908)**

1029-1101 NW Hoyt Street  
Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon

**COMMENTS OF THE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**

The buildings of the North Bank Depot, historically known as the East and West Freight Houses of the Spokane, Portland and Seattle Railway, stand on NW Hoyt Street in Portland's Northwest Industrial Area, where they are separated by Eleventh Avenue.

As head of both Great Northern and Northern Pacific railroad systems headquartered in St. Paul, Minnesota, James Jerome Hill exerted immense influence upon the industrial growth of Oregon's metropolis at the junction of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers. In 1905, his interests commenced work on a rail line from Portland along the north bank of the Columbia River east and north to Spokane. In 1907, the Northern Pacific company acquired the Astoria and Columbia River Railroad to complete the rail network down river from Portland to tidewater. The resulting Spokane, Portland and Seattle Railway offered to wheat growers of the inland empire the advantage of direct access to seacoast shipping. By means of a double-track bridge across the Columbia at Vancouver, S. P. & S. Railway trains entered the Portland depot for rerouting to the mouth of the Columbia at Astoria.

The mirror-image freight houses are oriented longitudinally on their lots, with long axes running north to south. Built in 1908, they took the traditional form of 19th Century industrial buildings. Instead of heavy timber framing, however, they were constructed on a concrete foundation with steel I-beams supporting the upper story and a wood post and beam system supporting the roof. Brick bearing walls have regular, arcuated fenestration, and exterior strip pilasters demarcate the structural bays. Gable ends of low pitch and side elevations have corbelled cornices.

Either building measures 50 x 200 feet in ground plan. Interior space is configured for offices in the south 40 feet of the ground story and in the upper story. The buildings are open at grade level in their northerly 160 feet as freight and passenger platforms. The tracks which paralleled the platforms are no longer in evidence.

The North Bank Depot Buildings meet National Register Criterion A in the area of transportation as key remnant features of the early phase of development of Portland's Northwest Industrial Area adjacent to Grand Union Terminal. The viability of the northwest area for

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 2

---

industrial development owed to lead tracks connecting to main line rail service and to adjacent developable land for warehousing. The period of the buildings' significance is drawn from the opening of the Northern Pacific subsidiary to the year 1945 in order to reflect the S. P. & S. railroad's long-sustained importance to commerce and industry locally.

The nomination discloses that most of the original wood sash windows have been replaced in the buildings and that there have been alterations to the north faces. The East Freight House has been gutted; the West Freight House contains some of the original office interiors. Plans are to adapt the buildings for housing in complement to the City's program for high-density residential development of the River District.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

---

### HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

#### Oregon Becomes Coveted Ground

The closing months of 1905 have proved to be the most noteworthy of any in the history of Oregon since direct railroad communication with the East was consummated by the opening of the line of the OR&N Co. . . . The dream of Oregon for years has been that those great systems should provide direct communication with Portland and enweave outlet to the world's commerce as an integral part of their plans. And the closing months of 1905 have seen this dream brought into the region of actual accomplishments. Therefore the description of the new railroad being built by the Northern Pacific and Great Northern Companies . . . by way of the north bank of the Columbia, bridging that stream and the Willamette in finding entrance to Portland is an industrial project of the magnitude that makes it rank among the greatest feats of American railroad building and the importance of which can hardly be overestimate.

The Oregon Journal, January 1, 1906

"The greatest seaport is on the rails in the railroad years." This epigram from that master of railroad finance, construction and operation, James J. Hill, tells eloquently the importance of terminals to any railroad. It concisely states the fact that no port can be commercially great without adequate terminal facilities at the end of railroad trackage that brings the traffic from and carries the freight to the interior of the country. Operating on that singular premise, the Northwest Improvement Company, the Portland and Seattle Railway and the Northern Pacific Railroad Companies acquired approximately 40 blocks of ground adjacent to the present freight yards of the Northern Pacific in Portland for development as a freight yard and depot. The approximate boundaries of the purchase were Hoyt Street to the south, the Northern Pacific freight yards to the north, 12th Avenue to the west and Willamette River to the east.

Hill's project was not without controversy. The land he had quietly purchased over a ten year period was residential in nature. His plans involved displacing a considerable number of Portlanders. To accomplish the task, the total purchase price of this residential area was \$2.5 million.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

---

Completion of the North Bank road is one of the most notable achievements of railroad construction in the West . . . The opening of this railroad means the commercial supremacy of Portland in the Pacific Northwest. In addition to connecting the city directly with two transcontinental railroad systems, the Great Northern and the Northern Pacific, Portland is made the natural gateway and metropolis of a water grade route from a wonderfully productive Inland Empire.

Oregonian, November 2, 1908

To celebrate the opening of the new road, James J. Hill came to visit and enjoy a week long anointment of entrepreneurial genius.

Service actually began on November 22nd with a Spokane, Portland and Seattle passenger train leaving the Hoyt Street Depot precisely at 8:15 a.m. arriving at Pasco, Washington on 1:00 p.m.. A companion train left Pasco at 7:30 a.m., arriving in Portland at 4:30 p.m.. General Freight and Passenger Agent H. M. Adams announced that the train "will be the most handsomest and most uniform from a constructive point of view that has ever been run in the west." Schedules were coordinated to provide transcontinental connection to Northern Pacific passenger service in Pasco. Adams further elaborated that the depot at 11th and Hoyt "is being fitted up with all modern conveniences and will afford passengers all the comforts to be found at the larger [Union Station] depot."

The eastern building, at 1029 NW Hoyt, served as the passenger depot for the Spokane, Portland and Seattle Railroad from 1908 until 1922, when passenger service moved over to Union Station. It continued as a station for the Oregon Electric Railway until 1930 when passenger service was discontinued. The western building, at 1101 NW Hoyt, served exclusively as a freight depot. Both functioned for freight and storage well into the 1980s.

In addition to its impact on railroading, the North Bank Depots had a defining affect on the surrounding neighborhoods. Hill's decision to location at 11th and Hoyt led directly to the development of the surrounding neighborhood as a warehouse center. That area today is recognized as the Northwest 13th Avenue Historical District.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

---

### COUCH'S ADDITION

The North Bank Depot was located on what had been residential property in Couch's Addition, originally part of Capt. John H. Couch's land claim. Couch was a Massachusetts seaman who first came to Oregon in 1840. Portland was not much more than a simple clearing in the wilderness at that time. He returned to the area in 1845 and claimed an area of land bounded by the Willamette River and NW Twenty-first, Ankeny and Thurman-Donation land Claim #52. Couch chose this territory because he felt it had the greatest potential for the shipping and commercial industries. The total claim was perfected in 1849 to include 640 acres. In 1850, Couch sold one-half his interest in the claim to George Flanders.

The Couch family settled in the claimed area setting aside 13 acres for the Couch estate and orchard. The first residential houses were built north of A and B streets. The commercial district was near the water in the 1850's and was expanding northward. The first residential district was centered along 4th and 5th streets. Couch decided to move north as the city began to grow. Large, double blocks were given to the Couch children and the area between 16th and 26th began to develop into an area of elegant homes. People moving into the area were the successful merchants, doctors, and other professionals who had taken advantage of the opportunities that existed in the young city of Portland. The Nob Hill area was an isolated area of the city with the Couch family creating their own New England style niche in the neighborhood.

The early years of the 20th century were a time of rapid growth and development in Portland. The city's population more than doubled between the years 1900 and 1910 from 90,000 to 212,000. This growth surge was due in part to the 1905 Lewis and Clark World's Fair, which gave the city international exposure it had not previously known.

Much of the population growth in Portland was absorbed in Nob Hill, an area which had previously been distinguished by its stately mansions, owned by many of the city's leading families. Some of these mansions still remain, including the Ayer-Shea residence and the George Heusner residence, both on the National Register. However, many of the mansions were replaced in the first two decades of this century by apartment houses like the American. The area became, and remains to this day, an intensely urban concentration of residential, commercial, and institutional uses.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   8   Page   6  

---

### PORTLAND AND THE RAILROAD

“In the late 19th century, the railroads . . . had become the most important institutions in the economics of the western states” The region developed simultaneously with the building of the railroads and in no part of the nation was their importance more generally recognized. They gave vitality to the regions it served, or in contrast, by withholding service, doomed communities to stagnation.

For Portland, seeking to be the Queen City of the Pacific Northwest, the railroads had a defining quality. The city sought not just rail service, but to be the northwestern terminus for the transcontinental routes. In fact, the national railroad ended the region’s isolation and opened a period of full economic development. Industrial employment increased rapidly as large service yards and bridge across the Willamette were built. The railroads became the city’s first major institutional employer. The roads fostered growth by the introduction of a more cosmopolitan population than had arrived in the pioneer era. And the presence of the railroad stimulated interest and growth of electrified street railways.

In total, the railroads confirmed Portland’s position as the metropolis of the state. With the railroads, commerce now drained into the city from a far broader territory than that just served by the waterways. They linked the city and state with the Mississippi Valley and with California. They integrated Oregon’s farm and forest economy with the world, speeding the processes of urbanization and industrialization and increased migration.

The Beginnings: In 1862, Congress authorized the construction of two railroads that together would provide the first railroad link between the Mississippi River valley and the Pacific coast. One was the Union Pacific to run westward from Council Bluffs, Iowa; the other was the Central Pacific to run eastward from Sacramento, CA. To encourage the rapid completion of these roads, Congress provided generous subsidies in the form of land grants and loans. Construction was slower than Congress anticipated, but the two lines met on May 10, 1869.

In the meantime, other railroads had begun construction westward, but the Panic of 1873 and the ensuing depression halted or delayed progress on many of those lines. With the return of prosperity after 1877, some railroads resumed or accelerate construction. By 1883, three more rail connections between the Mississippi Valley and the West coast were completed: Northern Pacific Railroad from St. Paul, Minnesota to Portland, Oregon; Santa Fe Railroad from Chicago, Illinois to Los Angeles,

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

---

California and the Southern Pacific Railroad from New Orleans, Louisiana also to Los Angeles. The Southern Pacific also acquired by purchased or construction lines connecting from to Portland.

The Railroad in Oregon: The first railroad in Oregon was the Oregon and California, which began construction in Portland at in 1868. An outgrowth of the sternwheeler company Oregon Steam Navigation Company (OSN) and under the leadership of Ben Holliday, trackage was completed to Oregon City by 1870, to Salem later that year and to Roseburg by 1872. To facilitate funding, Holliday threatened Portland than unless he received a \$100,000 subsidy, he would bypass Portland as a terminus. In 1870 (but kept secret until 1872), Philadelphia financier Jay Cooke agreed to buy 75% of OSN stock to \$3.75 million. He purchase the line as part of his efforts to build the transcontinental Northern Pacific Railroad. In total, Cooke raised \$100 million to run from Lake Superior to a port on the Pacific Coast. For the effort, Congress gave the Northern Pacific Railroad a land grant of 40 million acres. Cooke planned to run the line down the Columbia River to Portland. Passengers would be ferried to Kalama and transported by rail either to Seattle or Tacoma. The connection between OSN and Northern Pacific-made sense, allowing a major expansion of OSN's sternwheeler fleet and extending Portland's national influence while solidifying its position as the center of the region's banking, trading, and transportation network. Unfortunately, Cooke's bank collapsed in the Panic of 1873 when German and Austrian Banks refused to purchase additional railroad bonds.

Following the national trend, the Panic of 1873 halted railroad construction in Oregon for several years. In 1878, Henry Villard took over control of Oregon Steam Navigation (shortly to be renamed Oregon Railway & Navigation Company) and restarted construction. In December 1880, Villard learned that the Northern Pacific intended to duplicate facilities to the West coast: one line over the Cascades to Tacoma, the other along the Columbia River to Portland to compete with his OR&N-Union Pacific Line. Eastern bankers for both companies felt competition would be deleterious and called for the two to consolidate. Villard achieved control of Northern Pacific in 1881 and created the Oregon and Transcontinental Company to serve as a holding company for the OR&N and Northern Pacific. Only about 700 miles of track remained to complete the transcontinental. Villard put the Tacoma cross-cascades line on hold and designated Portland as the northern terminus. The line was completed in September of 1883.

In his effort to complete the line, Villard overextended his resources and was forced to give up control in 1884. Northern Pacific struggled financially through the remainder of the 1880s, balancing rail expansion with cash flow. Northern Pacific encountered new financial difficulties in 1890s, and

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   8   Page   8  

---

it was reorganized as part of the Great Northern Railroad by J. P. Morgan under the control of James J. Hill.

Hill's railroad experience dated to 1878 when he developed a profitable enterprise out of the struggling Minnesota Railroad and the St. Paul & Pacific Railroad. Under Hill, Great Northern envisioned supplying cargo for his railroad through export markets in the Orient for American cotton, flour and metals, and eastbound, through lumber from the Pacific Northwest to the Midwest prairies.

The North Bank Road: Hill wanted a more direct route to the Northern Pacific terminal grounds while refusing to operate over the rails of his primary competitor, Edward Harriman's Union Pacific. In 1905, he organized the Seattle, Portland and Spokane (SP&S) Railroad to construct a line from Spokane to Portland along the north bank of the Columbia River. A force of 7000 men bore through five miles of solid rock to form 13 tunnels in a rail line of 230 miles, built in two and half years. The original cost of \$8 million grew to nearly \$45 million upon completion. The project included an immense double track bridge across the Columbia at Vancouver to the Portland depot. About the same time, Northern Pacific bought the existing line of the Astoria and Columbia River Railroad, running from Portland downriver. Together, these lines completed a long distance through route from the Inland Empire wheat country to Northwest tidewater shipping ports.

SP&S would assume control of all freight and passenger operations between Seattle and Portland using new bridges under construction across both the Columbia and Willamette Rivers. To facilitate operations, Hill created the Northern Pacific Terminal Company, under the direction of Henry Failing. "Portland business interests were so excited by the prospect of the north bank line and by the realization that for the first time James J. Hill was recognizing Portland as a major terminus."

The major economic force behind this railway expansion within greater Portland was the effort to create a unified belt line system of freight movement and to shut out Union Pacific. As early as January 1906, the Journal had noted that the Northern Pacific was buying large tracts of land along the Columbia Slough for future freight yards at prices ten times its 1905 value. Hill was trying to block Harriman from establishing a terminus in the Pacific Northwest.

### **OREGON ELECTRIC RAILROAD**

From 1908 until 1930, Oregon Electric Railroad also used the North Bank Depot. Investment bankers George B. Moffat and Augustus White, working through his cousin in Portland, Abbot Mills,



## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   8   Page   9  

---

handled the financing for the Oregon Electric Railroad. Financing came from Standard Oil of New Jersey, General Electric of Boston and Electric Bond & Share of New York. The plan called for operating inter-urban electric passenger service to Eugene. In 1908, OER completed service to Salem. In 1910, Hill operating through the United Railways Company, purchased the OER. Inside the downtown, it ran south from the North Bank Depot, along 10th Avenue to Madison Street, to Front Avenue and then south to Salem and points beyond. Hill acquired the OER again as an attempt to outflank Harriman and the Union Pacific. For several years, Harriman had been trying to secure a franchise application to run a rail line down Front Street to the Northern Pacific Terminal.

### COMPARISON OF RAILROAD-RELATED RESOURCES

Despite the unquestioned impact of the railroads in determining Portland's future as a major transportation, distribution and shipping center, very few historic resources that are associated the roads have been recognized. Certainly, Richardsonian-styled Union Station is listed on the National Register; however, that listing is as much for the architectural accomplishment of Van Brunt and Howe.

In the Historic Resources Inventory, three 1907 SP&S bridges and viaducts are recognized as is a 1914 Northern Pacific Signal Tower. Also recognized are the resources relating to Hill's competitors: a 1887 Union Pacific smokestack at 3000 N. Interstate, a 1910 Southern Pacific Railroad station (at 2279 NW Front), a 1912 Southern Pacific Freight Station at 121 SE Oak and a 1910 Union Pacific railroad tunnel at 4401 N. Willmaette in the yards of Hill's competitor, Southern Pacific.

Of the resources still extant, the North Bank Depot stands tall. Unlike rails, bridges, tunnels and Union Stations, these utilitarian buildings reflect a rail-heritage that speaks to the serious business of moving freight on a scale which reflects the importance to the city, on a scale which excited the city in 1908 when James J. Hill announced the completion of the North Bank Road.

Equally important as a historical resource is the relationship of the North Bank Depot to the warehouse district surrounding it. The National Register has recognized the historical importance of the area by designating the Northwest 13th Avenue Historic District. It was the placement and existence of the North Bank Depot that directly led to the sudden demand to provide warehouse space and service. Without the North Bank Depot, there would be no 13th Avenue warehouse district.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   9   Page   2  

---

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbott, Carl. Portland: Planning, Politics and Growth in a Twentieth Century City. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1983).

Blumenson, John J. G. Identifying American Architecture. (Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1977).

Bosker, Gideon and Lencek, Lena. Frozen Music. (Portland, OR: Western Imprints, 1985).

City of Portland Buildings Bureau microform and card files.

Corning, Howard McKinley, Dictionary of Oregon History. (Portland, OR: Binford and Mort, 1956).

Ferriday, Virginia Guest, et al., Historic Resource Inventory. (Portland, OR: City of Portland, 1984).

Heritage Investment Corporation, "Northwest 13th Avenue Historic District: National Register Nomination" (Portland, OR: unpublished, 1986).

Labbe, John T., Fares, Please: Those Portland Trolley Years. (Caldwell, ID: The Caxton Printers, 1980)

MacColl, E. Kimbark. Merchants, Money and Power. (Portland, OR: The Georgian Press, 1988)

MacColl, E. Kimbark. The Shaping of a City: Business and Politics in Portland, Oregon, 1885-1915. (Portland, OR: The Georgian Press, 1976)

MacColl, E. Kimbark. The Growth of a City: Power and Politics in Portland Oregon, 1915-50. (Portland, OR: The Georgian Press, 1979)

Multnomah County Tax Assessor records, microform, automated data files and card files.

Oregon Historical Society, Vertical Files.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   9   Page   3  

---

The Oregonian

The Oregon Journal

Polk's Portland, Oregon City Directory. (Portland, OR: Polks).

Renz, Louis Tuck, History of the Northern Pacific Railroad (Fairfield, WA: Ye Galleon Press, 1980).

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Portland, Oregon.

Vaughan, Thomas and Ferriday, Virginia Guest. Space, Style and Structure: Building in Northwest America. (Portland, OR: Oregon Historical Society, 1974).

Vaughan, Thomas and McMath, George A., A Century of Portland Architecture. (Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1967).

Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to Styles. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1969).

Wood, Charles and Dorothy, Spokane, Portland and Seattle Railway, The Northwest's Own Railway. (Seattle, 1979).

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 2

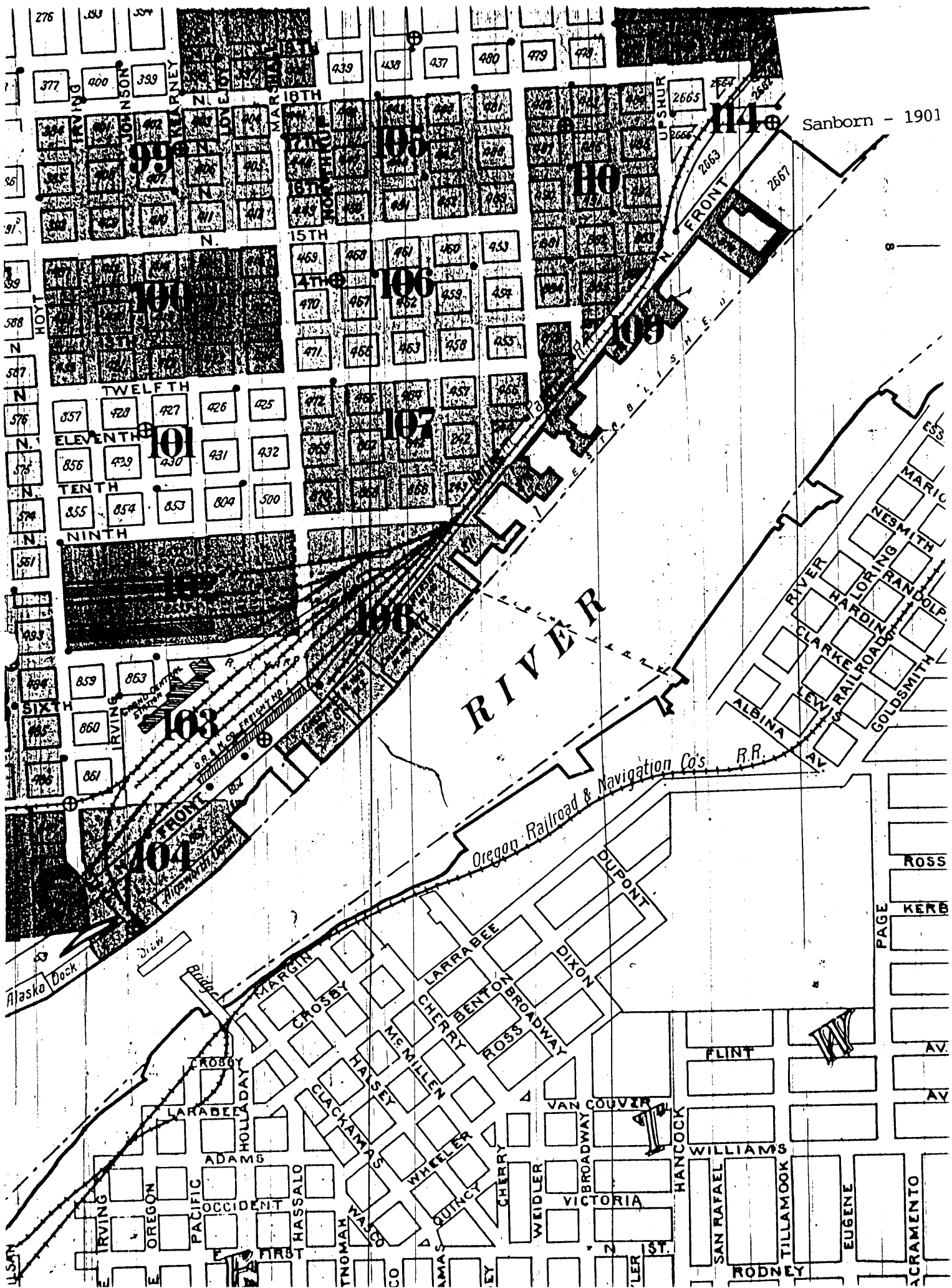
---

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The North Bank Depot is located on Lots 4-13 and Lots 14-23 of Pearl Block No. 2, Couch's Addition to the City of Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon.

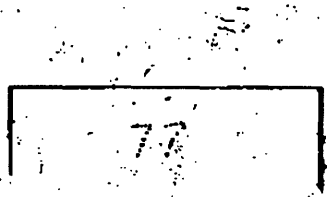
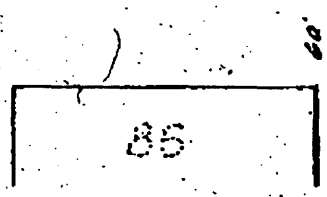
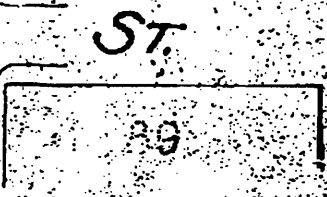
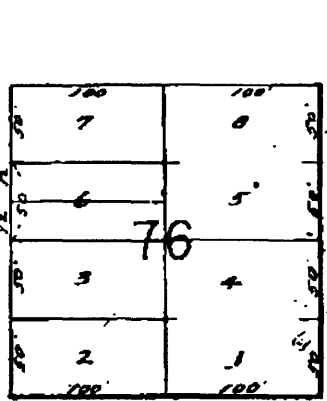
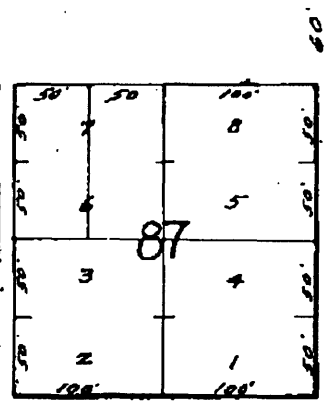
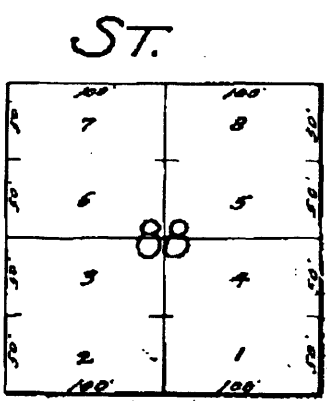
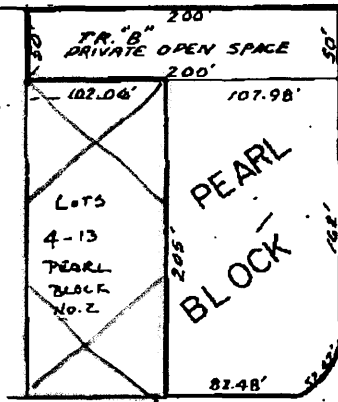
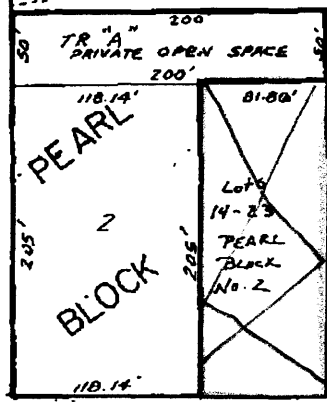
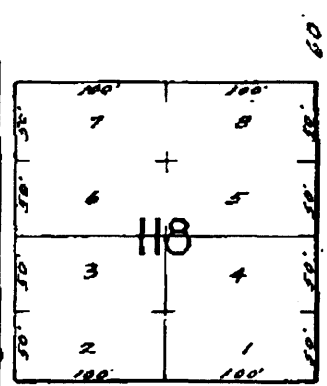
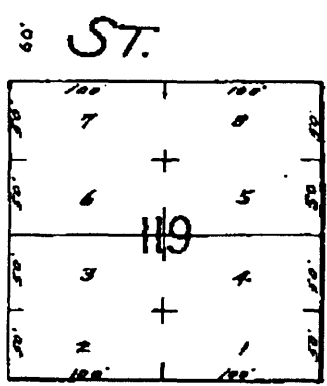
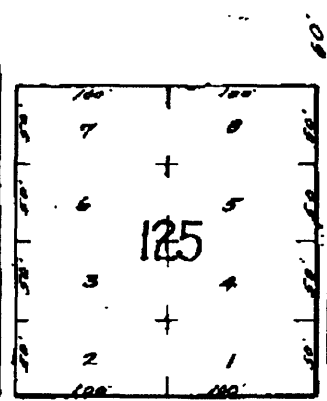
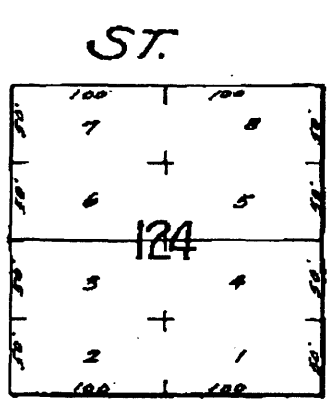
### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

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



SEE  
2929

# BLOCK NO. 2



N.W. 13<sup>TH</sup>

N.W. 12<sup>TH</sup>

N.W. 11<sup>TH</sup> AVE.

75  
NE 1/4 Sec. 33 IN 1E.

# 2928

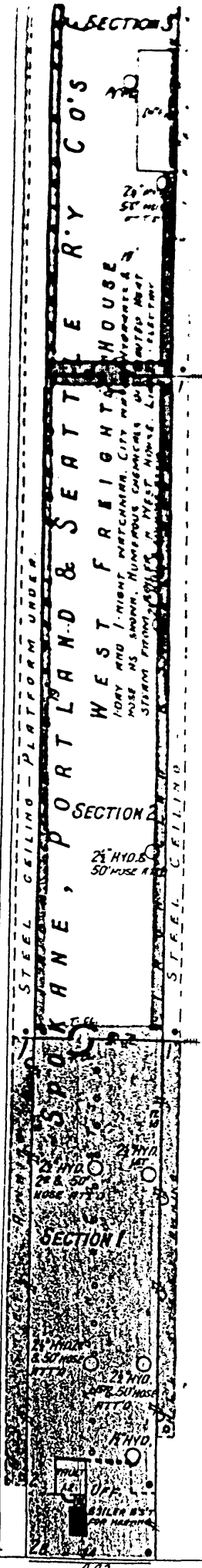
600-21

SANB 22  
1927



428

857



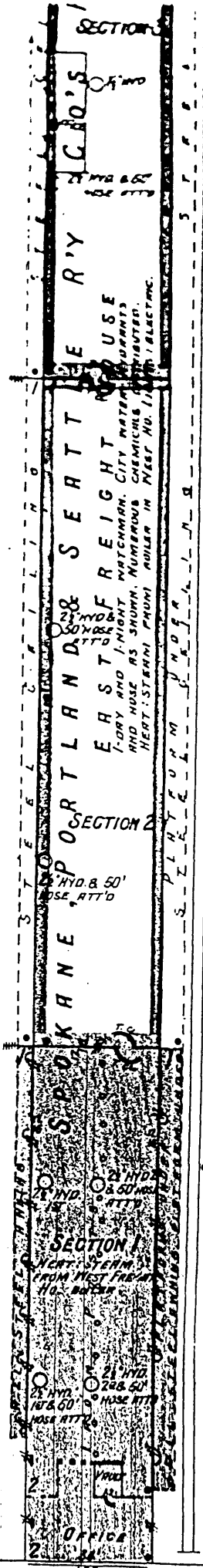
G.I.V. PIP.

08'

HOYT STREET

429

856



T.H.

T.H.

T.H.

(32)

T.H.

20" N. PIPE  
1" W. PIPE

60

LOVEJOY

SANBRO  
1924

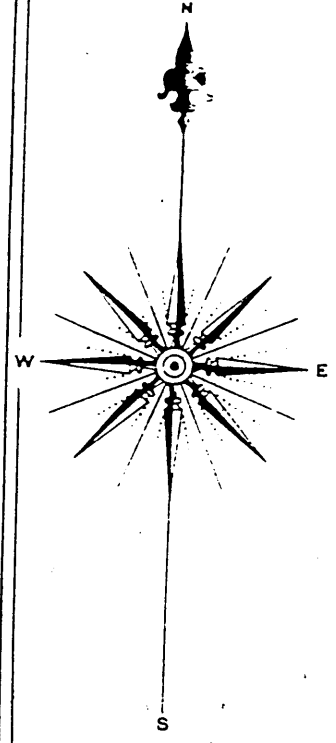
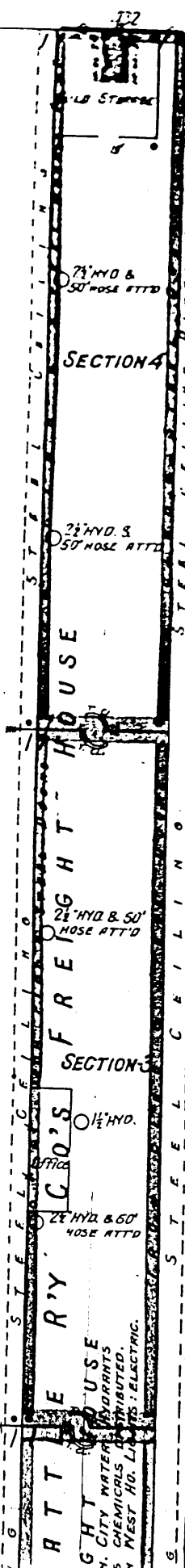
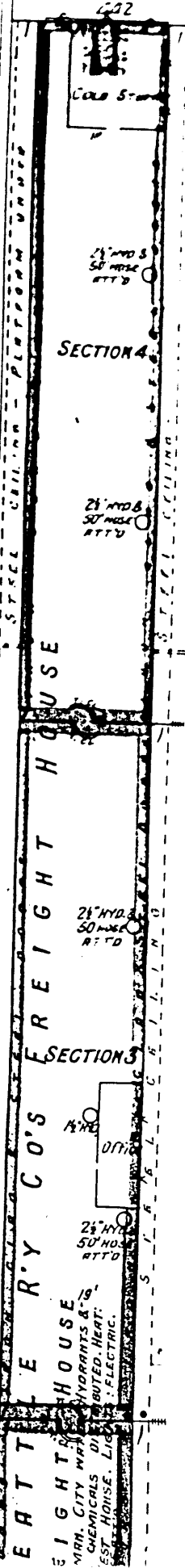
11" W. PIPE  
20" W. PIPE

426

431

427

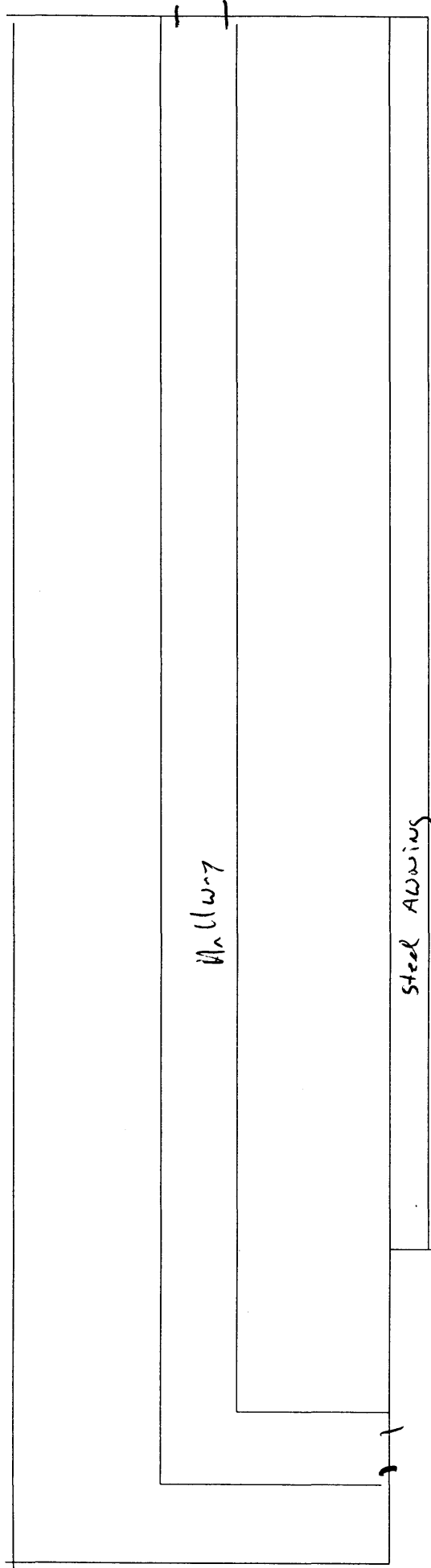
430



D.S.

120 T.H.  
215 T.H.  
T.H.  
T.H.  
T.H.



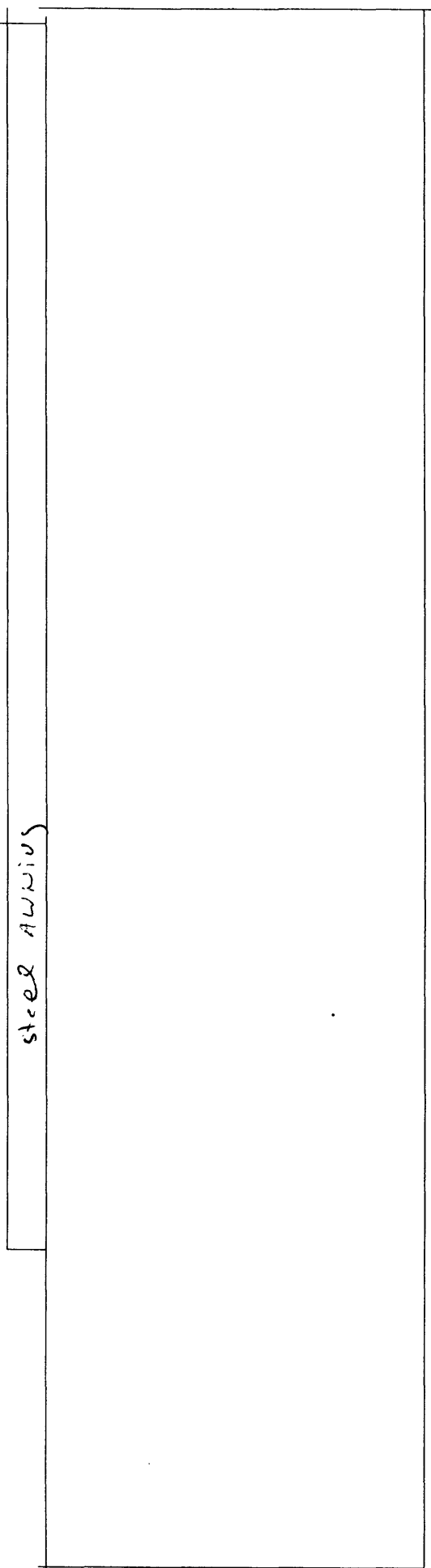


North Bank Depot - West Building - First and Second Floor

1/2" = 10'



2 →



North Bank Depot - East Building - First and Second Floor

1/2" = 10'