

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

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received JAN 23 1986

date entered

FEB 20 1986

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

1. Name

historic Pythian Castle

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number 1100 "H" Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Arcata

N/A vicinity of

state

California

code

06

county

Humboldt

code 023

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Scott Christensen and Demetrius and Despina Mitsanas

street & number 362 10th Street

city, town Arcata

N/A vicinity of

state CA 95521

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Humboldt County Courthouse

street & number 825 Fifth Street

city, town Eureka

state CA 95501

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Reflections of Arcata's History

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date January 1979

federal state county local

depository for survey records City of Arcata

city, town Arcata

state CA 95521

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Pythian Castle is an excellent example of commercial Queen Anne architecture. Prominent among the century-old building's exterior features are the five towers -- three round-corner ones with "witches hats" and two square bays in the centers of the street-side walls. Curved brackets line the vertical-board cornice on the street sides: colonettes, pointed pediments, and brackets decorate the windows in the towers, and broken pediments top two pairs of windows in the south wall. The building has recently undergone major restoration/renovation work. Exterior alterations are confined to ground-level changes in doors and windows; interior remodeling is extensive. However, intrusive exterior alterations have been corrected and interior work retained as many original features as possible. Located on a busy corner just two blocks north of Arcata's downtown Plaza, the Pythian Castle is the community's most notable 19th-century commercial building.

The Pythian Castle is a two-story building of wood construction with 2,880 square feet on each floor. The steps and deck on the south side cover 640 square feet, and the north-side stairs from the upper floor total 148 square feet. Located on a corner two blocks north of Arcata's Plaza, the building is in an area of mixed architectural styles and periods. Newer buildings and parking areas occupy the other three corners of the intersection, but within the same block as the Pythian Castle are settlement-period houses, a Victorian, and two turn-of-the-century houses.

The building's Queen Anne architecture is dominated by five projecting towers. Three round-corner towers contain five windows and are topped by "witches hats" that in times past sprouted tall finials. The two center-wall towers are square bays with four windows and truncated hip tops, once highlighted by cresting. Patterned shingles covered the tower roofs in the early days. The bays are decorated with triangular pediments, colonettes, and brackets. A vertical-board cornice along the east and south walls is marked by a line of curved brackets. Two pairs of upper-story windows on the south wall are covered by broken pediments.

There are three large, four-pane windows and a single door with multipanes and panels topped by a divided transom on the ground floor in the east wall. In the south wall, there are three large, four-pane windows, two two-pane windows, two single doors, and a larger door with a sidelight. All the windows and doors are bordered by a decorative moulding. The north wall contains two sets of double windows, two single windows, a small added square window, and a fire escape door leading to long wooden steps. Windows in the bays and along the north wall have rounded heads. There is a single, round-headed window in the upper story of the west wall and a squared window in the lower.

Siding is narrow shiplap. Matching the building's cornice are panels of narrow diagonal and vertical boards below the bay windows and the east wall windows and covering the bottoms of the towers. The building has corner boards and a prominent moulding between stories. The walls are painted a gray-beige color with a darker paint on the corner boards and moulding. Blue paint highlights the windows, doors, colonettes, and panels. There is a touch of burnt orange in the centers of the corner squares in the window moulding, on the applied ornamentation above each window, and in the grooves of the brackets.

Comparing the building's appearance today with its appearance in the 1890s reveals the following alterations: 1) roof cresting and finials are gone, as are the patterned shingles from the tower roofs; 2) there were originally only two windows in the east wall and a door

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Continuation sheet 1

Item number 7

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which was centered below the square bay; now there are three windows, and the door has been moved to the side of the bay; 3) originally, there were two four-pane windows, three double and one single door, and two two-pane windows in the south wall, now the easternmost door is gone, another door has been added, the door below the center bay is now a window, and the westernmost door has been changed to a single door with a sidelight; 4) the original, two-pane transoms are now three-pane, and the long, narrow panes of the double doors are now multipanes in a single door; 5) on the north wall, there were originally several windows and at least one door on the ground floor, now there are none; 6) panels which match those below the tower windows have been added below the ground-level windows in the east wall; 7) a vertical plywood siding has been added along the lower part of the north wall where the shed was removed; 8) a small, square window was added at some time in the north wall; 9) a covering for the electrical boxes has been added on the west wall; and 10) the walk and iron-pipe railings along the south and east sides have been replaced by a concrete planter on the east and by a wood ramp with steps and railing on the south.

The intrusive alterations on the east wall, probably dating to the 1950s, have been corrected by recent restoration/renovation work, as have those along the north wall. On the east, the two large four-pane windows were restored, a door was removed, and the siding restored. The shed and stairway on the north were removed.

Recent interior alterations have been extensive in order to provide contemporary commercial and residential income space which allowed the investment in the exterior restoration of the building. The large open space in the upstairs has been divided into five apartments; downstairs remodeling provides commercial space for three businesses. Care was taken, however, to preserve the moulding around the doors and windows, the old flooring where possible, in the wainscot, wide stairs and balustrade in the rear hall leading to the upstairs, ceiling height and window size, and the beautiful ceiling medallions in the upstairs.

The Pythian Castle's architectural integrity and historical character have been recaptured with the recent restoration/renovation work. The old Arcata landmark is deserving of National Register designation in recognition of its fine Queen Anne architecture.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1885 **Builder/Architect** A. P. Glidden

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Pythian Castle is nominated to the National Register as an excellent example of commercial Queen Anne architecture. Variety in form, ornamentation, and wall surfaces, as expressed in the towers, bays, and applied decoration, combine to create an exciting representative of that popular late 19th-century style. Celebrating its centennial this year, the Pythian Castle is of particular significance to the community as its only remaining Victorian commercial building that has not lost its architectural and historic character. It is also important for its long service in the community's social and commercial life, having accommodated for many years local Knights of Pythias activities on the upper floor while providing commercial space for Arcata businesses below. Recent adaptive restoration has rescued the building from continued deterioration and allowed restoration of the exterior to near-original appearance. Retaining a high degree of architectural and historic integrity, the Pythian Castle qualifies for National Register status for its remarkable Queen Anne commercial architecture, so exuberantly expressed in its towers, bays, and ornamentation.

Based on an ancient Greek story of unremitting friendship, the Knights of Pythias was organized in the United States by Justus H. Rathbone at the close of the Civil War. It was his intent that such an organization, founded on the principles of friendship, charity, and benevolence, could do much to heal the wounds of war. The Arcata Order, known as the North Star Lodge No. 39, was established in 1876. In November 1881, George H. Tilley, J. A. Whaley and Jacob Richert, trustees for the North Star Lodge, purchased the lot at 11th and "H" Streets from F. P. Nye for \$350. Construction of the building, however, didn't begin until the fall of 1884 with completion in April 1885. The contractor, A. P. Glidden of Eureka, also built Arcata's Catholic Church that same year and the Western Hotel in Eureka.

Dedication ceremonies for the Pythian Castle were held on May 8, 1885 and included a procession of Knights in full uniform led by the Arcata Cornet Band, vocal music, orations, and a Grand Ball to the music of Madsen's String Band.

The spacious second-story hall was used by the Knights for their ceremonial functions and conferences. Dinners were held at the rear of the downstairs where the kitchen and dining room were located. The remainder of the ground floor was commercial space. The Castle had its first renter in April 1885 when John E. Crawford opened his general mercantile business. Arcata's kindergarten used the building for its school room in the late 1880s, and even high school students turned to the old building for their housing during construction of the Arcata High School in 1903. Early Arcata physician, Dr. Fred Bangs, had his office in the Castle, as did Dr. J. A. Hadley in 1914.

Nineteenth century and early 20th-century America relied heavily on fraternal orders for fellowship, civic activities, and ceremony -- the latter of some importance to Americans during that period. Much of Arcata's social life centered around its churches and fraternal organizations with dances and parades as favorite activities. The Knights of Pythias held annual balls and a "grand hurrah time" each October to celebrate the anniversary of its founding.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Daily Humboldt Standard, Oct. 2, 1884; Dec. 2, 1884; April 21 & 24, 1885.
Deed Records, Humboldt County Courthouse, Eureka, CA.
Photographs, Humboldt State University Library and Peter Palmquist collection.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .19 acres

Quadrangle name Arcata South

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	0	4	0	8	5	6	0	4	5	2	4	7	9	1	0
Zone		Easting				Northing									

B

Zone		Easting				Northing									

C

Zone		Easting				Northing									

D

Zone		Easting				Northing									

E

Zone		Easting				Northing									

F

Zone		Easting				Northing									

G

Zone		Easting				Northing									

H

Zone		Easting				Northing									

Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at the northwest corner of 11th and "H" Streets, thence north 75', thence west 115', thence south 75', thence east 115' to place of beginning, being AP #21-091-07. Boundaries encompass the building on its historic lot.

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

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susie Van Kirk

organization N/A

date 17 March 1985

street & number 1162 C Street

telephone (707) 822-6066

city or town Arcata

state CA 95521

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Kathryn Huattieri

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 1-13-86

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

for [Signature]
Keeper of the National Register

date 2/20/86

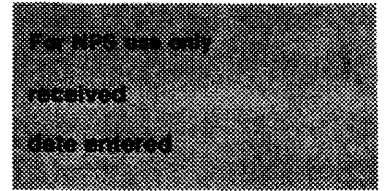
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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Continuation sheet 2

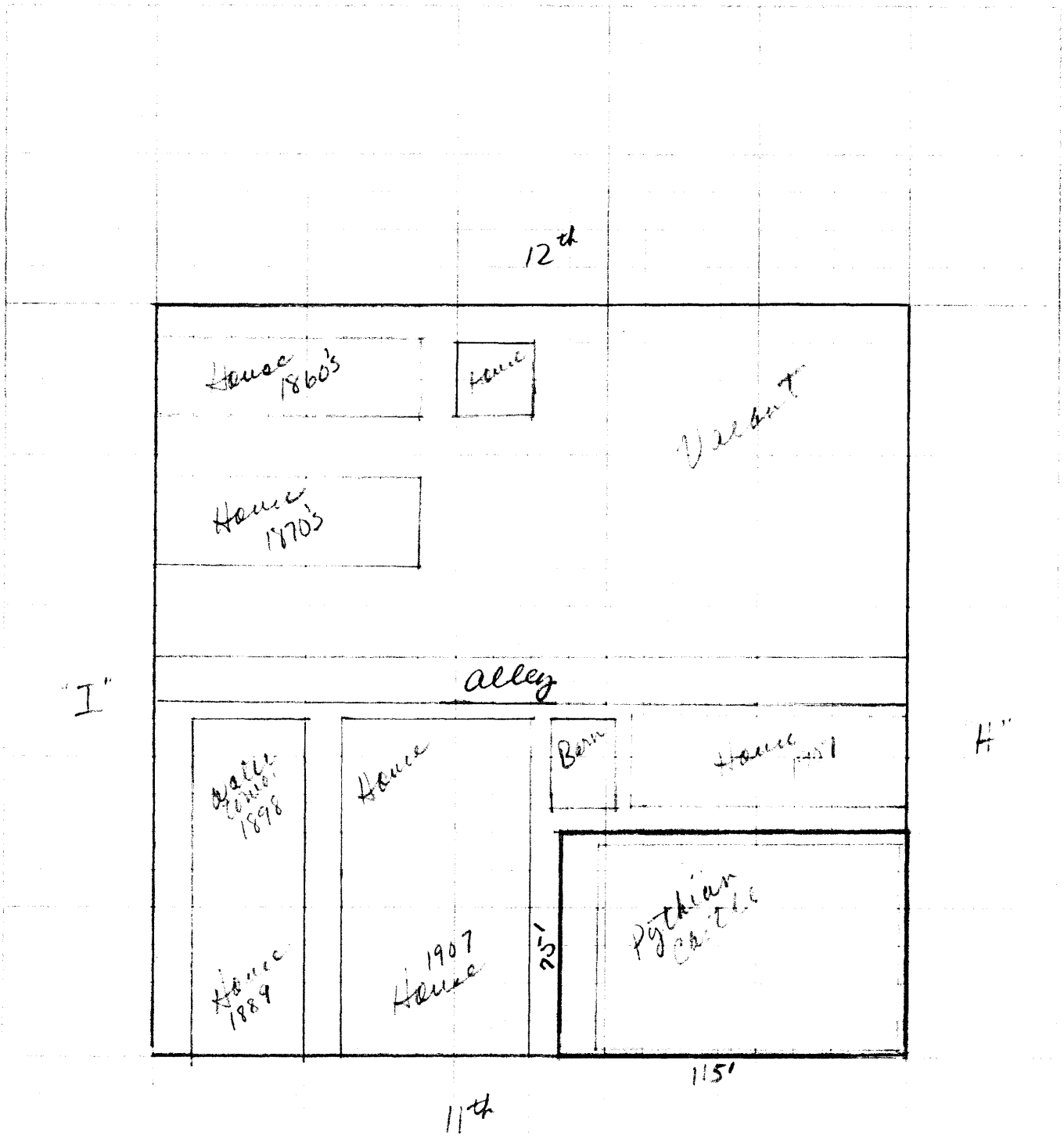
Item number 8

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Sold to several local people in 1944, the Castle was purchased the following year by the Arcata Aerie of the Fraternal Order of Eagles. Since 1957, it has had six different ownerships, with the present owners undertaking restoration/renovation in 1984.

The Pythian Castle is a strong local example of Queen Anne commercial styling and is the largest and finest example of its type in Arcata. The building is one of the few buildings which retains its historic 19th-century character in the old downtown. The building has been identified as locally significant in the city's comprehensive historical sites survey.

G-3384H



PYTHIAN CASTLE
 1100 H Street
 Arcata, Humboldt County, California

Pythian Castle
 1100 "H"
 Arcata, Cal.
 Bk 233



CITY OF ARCATA

PYTHIAN CASTLE
 1100 H Street
 Arcata, Humboldt County, California

UTM Reference:
 10/408560/4524790



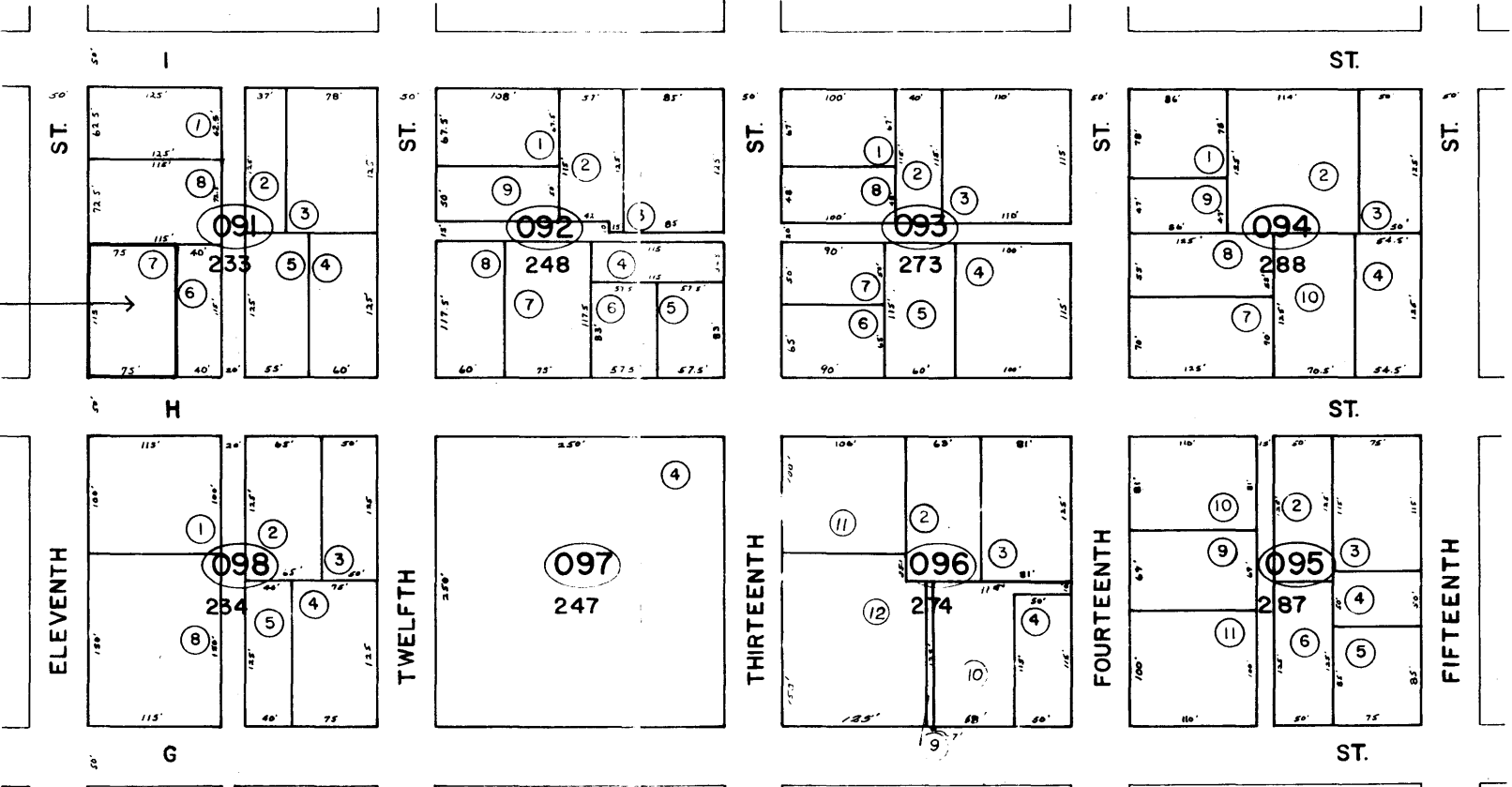
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10

Pythian Castle →

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 HUMBOLDT COUNTY ASSESSOR

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05



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Assessor's Maps Bk. 21 -Pg.09
 County of Humboldt, Calif.

NOTE - Assessor's Block Numbers Shown in Ellipses
 Assessor's Parcel Numbers Shown in Circles