

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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

1. Name

historic The Segal Building (or Commerce Building)

and/or common Segal Building

2. Location

street & number 1200 Atlantic Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Atlantic City vicinity of ~~congressional district~~

state New Jersey code 034 county Atlantic code 001

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 type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name 1200 Atlantic Associates

street & number 1234 Market Street, Suite 2000

city, town Philadelphia vicinity of _____ state Pennsylvania

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Atlantic County Clerk's Office

street & number Main Street

city, town May's Landing state New Jersey

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Atlantic City Historic Building Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records New Jersey Office of Historic Preservation

city, town Trenton state New Jersey

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Segal Building is a very well preserved commercial building of 1920 in the classical-revival style, located on the corner of Atlantic and North Carolina Avenues, in what was the heart of Atlantic City's business district in the first part of the 20th century. The three story yellow brick building is dominated by a copper awning which projects over the sidewalk on both street facades. The detailing of the Segal Building is representative of the early 20th century's interpretation of classical architecture: simplified mouldings and orders, stone accenting a pale brick building, and conspicuous use of copper. The building was erected to house a showroom for fancy fruits and vegetables, storage for the produce, and offices for the produce company on the first floor, in addition to rental offices on the upper floors.

The Segal Building is a steel frame structure walled with hollow tile and veneered with yellow colored tapestry brick and cast stone trim which imitates limestone. The showroom is emphasized on the first floor exterior by walls entirely of cast stone, punctuated by large plate glass windows set under elliptical arches. The windows on the North Carolina Avenue facade have recently been closed with cinderblock, but no damage was done to the window frames. The showroom was originally entered through doors flanking the Atlantic Avenue facade windows, although they have now been closed.

The off-center main door to the upper floors of the building is surmounted by a pedimented door frame. The entablature over the door has the inscription "COMMERCE BUILDING", but all records of the building, from 1920 to the present, refer to it as the Segal Building. A bronze plaque to the left of the door bears the inscription "Wm. I. Segal & Son." A small, separate storefront occupies the northwest corner of the building. The lower portion of this storefront has been altered somewhat over the years, but above the window lintel the original fabric remains.

The Segal Building is best known for the copper awning or canopy which wraps around both exposed sides of the building. It has gold-colored letters arranged marquee-like stating: "WILLIAM I. SEGAL HOT HOUSE AND IMPORTED FANCY FRUITS AND VEGETABLES." The awning has a rolled seam copper roof, and it is supported by large metal chains attached to the building. It is ornamented with pressed copper cresting at the top, and glass filled "flags" at the bottom. Although some of these decorative elements have been broken off, most of the missing or damaged pieces have been stored in the building by the owner, anticipating future restoration.

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

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

Segal Building, Atlantic City,

Atlantic County, NJ

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1

Description (continued)

The upper floors of the Atlantic Avenue facade contain five regularly spaced bays. They are one over one wooden sash windows, set under arches of cast stone, accented by a stylized urn motif within the arch. A continuous stone sill delineates the "attic" story. The third floor windows are unframed, and are slightly smaller than those of the second floor. The North Carolina Avenue facade contains twelve bays, simpler and more utilitarian looking than those on the main facade.

The building is finished off with a wide but simple cornice of a stone band, bricks laid vertically, and a wooden cornice of large scale dentils. The parapet projects quite high above the single slope roof, blocking the street level view of the mechanical housing on the roof.

The interior of the Segal Building was used for the Segal family's produce business on the first floor, and rental offices on the second and third floors. The upper floors have been remodelled several times according to the needs of various tenants, and have no architectural distinction. The first floor show room in the front of the building has an elaborate interior with patterned tile floor, ornate cornices with a complete vocabulary of classical forms, scroll brackets, and columns with an original capital design, based on a stylized floral motif. The ceiling light fixtures were first installed in the several plaster medallions with a bay leaf garland motif. The lights are no longer there, but the medallions and most of the other interior detail remains intact and in good condition.

All of this interior decoration continues the classicizing detailing of the exterior, and the addition of an original order is one which complements the produce and flowers which were displayed on tables in the room. Along the side walls, metal canopies or awnings, reminiscent of the exterior, provided a setting for spotlights over the produce displayed. All but a small section of these interior awnings have been removed.

The rear of the Segal Building was built for storage of fresh fruit and vegetables, and was strictly utilitarian in nature, with concrete floors and walls. It has been modified only by the changing of refrigeration technologies, as large walk-in units have been added.

The Segal Building is in structurally sound condition, and its interior and exterior detailing has survived over sixty years of use with very little change or damage.

For NPS use only

received

date entered

8. Significance

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

Specific dates Built 1920 **Builder/Architect** Architect: Vivian B. Smith

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

The Segal Building is an important architectural survivor in Atlantic City's commercial district. Best known for its copper marquee, the classically detailed building is a good example of the work of Vivian B. Smith (male), a local architect who designed a number of commercial and public buildings in and around Atlantic City in the 1920's. The Segal Building housed Atlantic City's most famous produce company, founded by William T. Segal in the early 20th century. The Segal company was a major supplier of fruits and vegetables to the large resort hotels which flourished here in the early 20th century.

Architecture

The structure is notable for its integrity and classical detailing. It has achieved "landmark" status in Atlantic City by its prominent copper awning. The architect, Vivian B. Smith (1886-19?) lived in Ventnor, New Jersey, a suburb of Atlantic City, and practiced as an independent architect in Atlantic City from 1910 to the 1930's. He designed several hotels along the Jersey shore, as well as schools, apartment buildings, and commercial buildings. Strongly influenced by the Beaux-Arts classical tradition, Smith designed in a variety of surface styles - Gothic, Roman Classical, Georgian-Revival - in the best eclectic manner of traditional architectural taste in the early 20th century.

Three of Smith's remaining buildings in Atlantic City's commercial district demonstrate his versatility. Number 1714 Atlantic Avenue is a four story, terra cotta clad commercial structure with little period detailing of any sort; 1516 Atlantic Avenue is a four story yellow brick building with stone trim of oversize shell motif, seemingly adapted from Georgian furniture; and 1515 Pacific Avenue has Gothic detailing on its terra cotta facade. The Segal Building is by far the best preserved of Smith's Atlantic City commercial work, the others having been much abused by varied storefront renovations and signs. The Segal Building is also one of Smith's better integrated buildings, where form and detailing share consistent expression, unlike some buildings where classical detailing is embellishment only on a modern, unproportioned, box-like building.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property .20 acre

Quadrangle name Atlantic City

Quadrangle scale 1: 24000

UMT References

A

1	8	5	4	9	4	2	0	4	3	5	6	9	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

Block 22, Lot 36 in Atlantic City, Atlantic County, New Jersey
see Continuation sheet 5

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Janet W. Foster/Historic Preservation Consultant

organization N/A date September 29, 1980

street & number 44 Hill Street, 4K telephone (201) 539-2755

city or town Morristown state New Jersey

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Russell W. Myers

title Director, Division of Parks & Forestry date January 6, 1984

For NPS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	Entered in the
<u>[Signature]</u>	National Register
Keeper of the National Register	date <u>2/9/84</u>
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

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

Segal Building, Atlantic City,

Continuation sheet

Atlantic County, NJ

Item number 8

Page 1

Significance (continued)

Commerce

William Isaac Segal was introduced to the produce business by working with a Mr. Arata. They eventually became business partners, and Segal & Arata were quite well known by the turn of the century in Atlantic City as suppliers of produce to the hotels of the growing resort. From 1906-1911, they had a store at 1212 Atlantic Avenue, and even earlier at other locations on the same block, while it was still a street of wooden buildings.

In 1912 the partnership dissolved, and Segal continued the produce business alone. In 1914, he moved down the street to 1220 Atlantic Avenue. His business prospered, and Segal's rise into mainstream, middle-class America is chronicled by the city directories, which note his home address changing from 1224 Atlantic Avenue (probably an apartment over a store), to the Santa Rita Apartments, and finally in 1924, to a house in suburban Ventnor. During the same time, he transformed his name from Isaac Segal, to William Isaac Segal to William I. Segal.

In 1920, Segal purchased a lot, 55' x 150', on the southwest corner of Atlantic and North Carolina Avenues. He commissioned a local architect, Vivian B. Smith, to design a building for the sale, storage, and display of fruits and vegetables. Segal's business was largely wholesale, although his building's location in what was then the heart of the commercial district of the city, and the lavish show room open to the public, did not discourage retail sales.

Segal specialized in "fancy" grade fruit and vegetables, and he dealt in a limited way in flowers. He supplied the hotels and more discriminating tables of Atlantic City. Segal would go to markets in Philadelphia and New York, and had his selections brought to Atlantic City by train. Tracks and siding for freight trains ended at Commerce Street, just opposite Atlantic Avenue from the Segal Building, making delivery fast and easy.

The show room was something of a tourist attraction, with its artistically arranged produce and classical decoration. Although certainly not an attraction like the boardwalk amusements, Segals was one more piece of a city self-consciously "on display", ever aware of seeming better than the home the tourists had left behind. A post card from the 1930's pictured the Segal Building, and said, "When in Atlantic City we invite you to visit us."

(See continuation sheet 3)

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

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

Segal Building, Atlantic City,
Atlantic County, NJ

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

~~Significance (continued)~~

Item number

8

Page

2

William's son Nathan joined him in business around 1925, and eventually took over the business. Nathan's son Richard carried on in his turn, although by the 1960's the show room was closed and the operation was strictly wholesale. A changing local economy and the decay (and demolition) of the downtown commercial district has now forced the Segal family to give up their business at this location.

The Segal Building is a noteworthy survivor in downtown Atlantic City. The other early 20th century commercial buildings which once surrounded it have all been demolished. The produce business which is still advertised on the awning of the building still speaks of a different resort era of Atlantic City.

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

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Segal Building, Atlantic City
Atlantic County, NJ Item number 9 Page 1

Bibliography

- Atlantic City Directory. Boyd & Company, Philadelphia. 1900-1925.
- Atlantic City Real Estate Board. Atlas of Absecon Island, Vol I. A.H. Mueller, Philadelphia, 1924.
- Atlantic County Book of Deeds. Book 617, page 490, February 4, 1920.
- Heston, Alfred M., ed. South Jersey. A History 1664-1924. Vol. III. Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., New York, 1924.
- Venturi, Rauch, and Scott Brown, and the CLIO Group. Atlantic City Historic Buildings Survey. New Jersey Office of Historic Preservation, March 1980.

Also:

- Atlantic County Historical Society, Photographic files, with special thanks to Mrs. Elaine Abrahamson, curator.
- Heston Room of the Atlantic City Public Library, with special thanks to Mrs. Marie Boyd.
- Interview with Mr. Richard Segal, September 23, 1983.
(Grandson of William I. Segal, produce merchant and founder of the Segal Building.)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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

Segal Building, Atlantic City,

Continuation sheet

Atlantic County, NJ

Item number 10

Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description

For NPS use only
received
date entered

ALL THAT CERTAIN lot, tract or parcel of land and premises situate, lying and being in the City of Atlantic City, County of Atlantic and State of New Jersey, bounded and described as follows:

BEGINNING at the Southwesterly corner of Atlantic and North Carolina Avenues, and extending thence

- (1) Westwardly along the Southerly line of Atlantic Avenue 55.11 feet; thence
- (2) Southwardly parallel with North Carolina Avenue 150 feet; thence
- (3) Eastwardly parallel with Atlantic Avenue 55.11 feet to the Westerly line of North Carolina Avenue; thence
- (4) Northwardly along same, 150 feet to the Beginning.

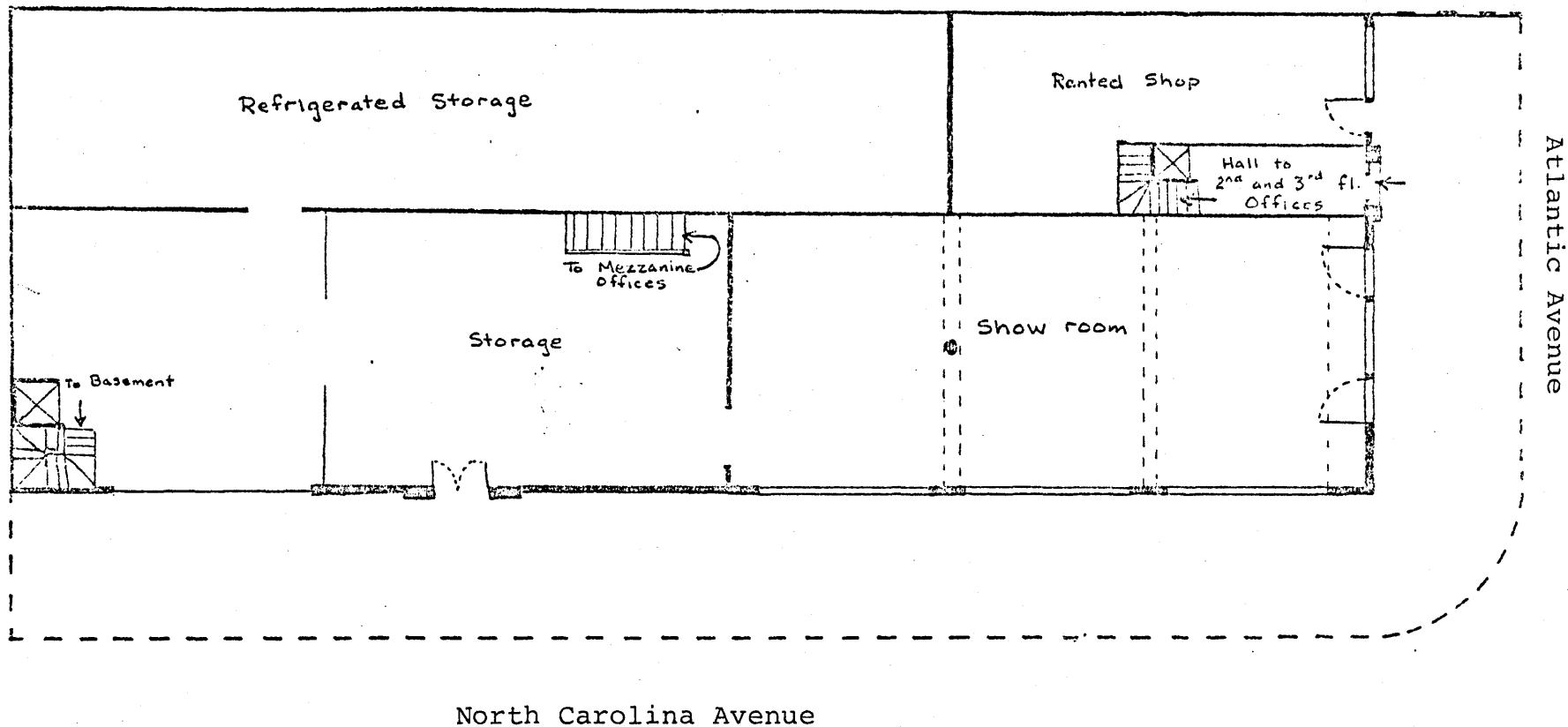
SUBJECT TO RIGHT OF WAY of 9 feet in width and 55.11 feet in length over the Southerly end of said premises, said space to be kept open and free and clear of buildings, structures, and obstructions of any kind of nature whatsoever and to be used as a private alley for the benefit of the adjoining property holders on the West to Chalfonte Avenue.

BEING KNOWN AS 1200 Atlantic Avenue.

BEING Lot 36 in Block 22 on the Tax Map of Atlantic City.

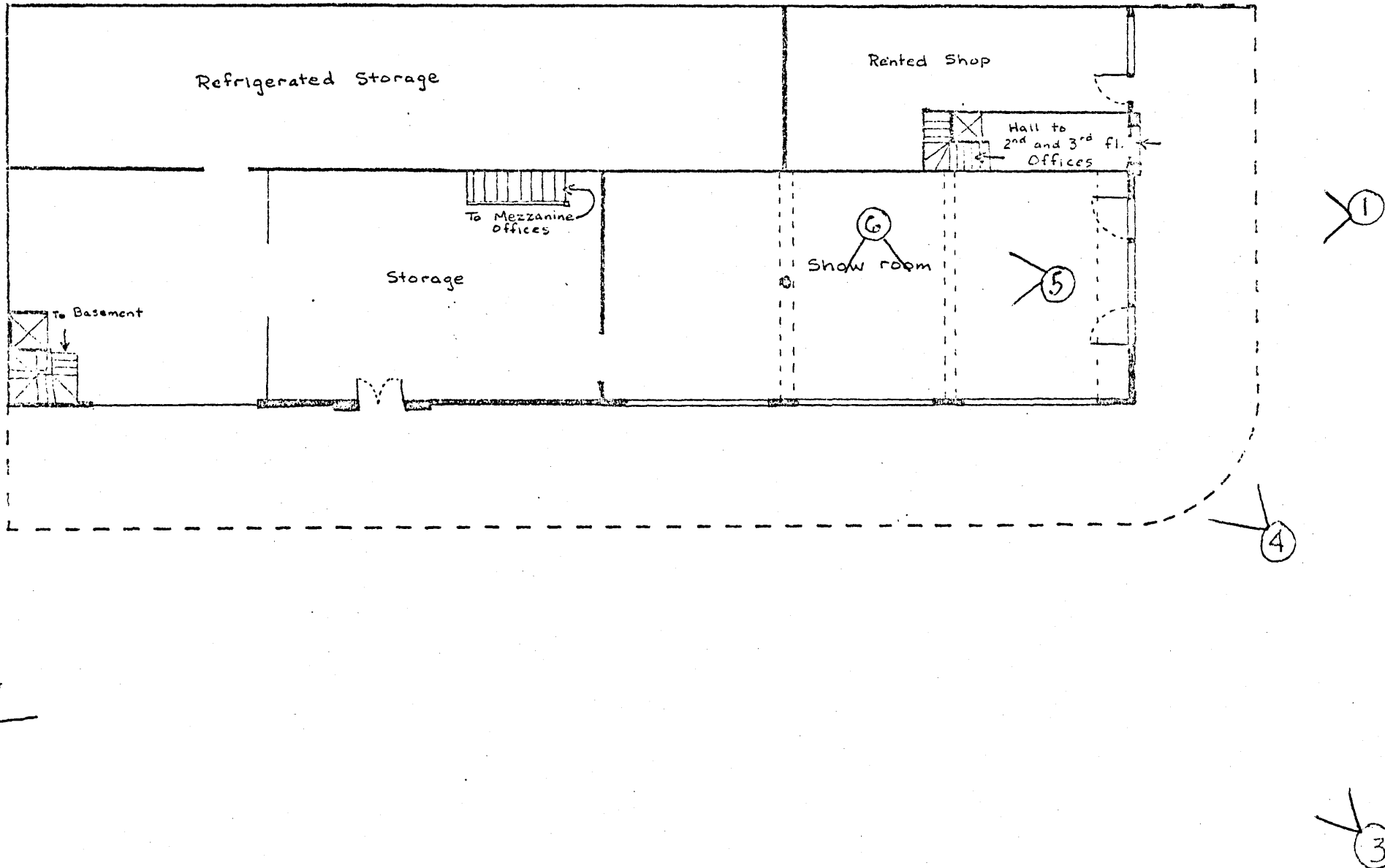
Segal Building
1200 Atlantic Avenue
Atlantic City, N.J.
Atlantic County

Sketch Plan of first floor
Not to scale
Vivian B. Smith, architect, 1920



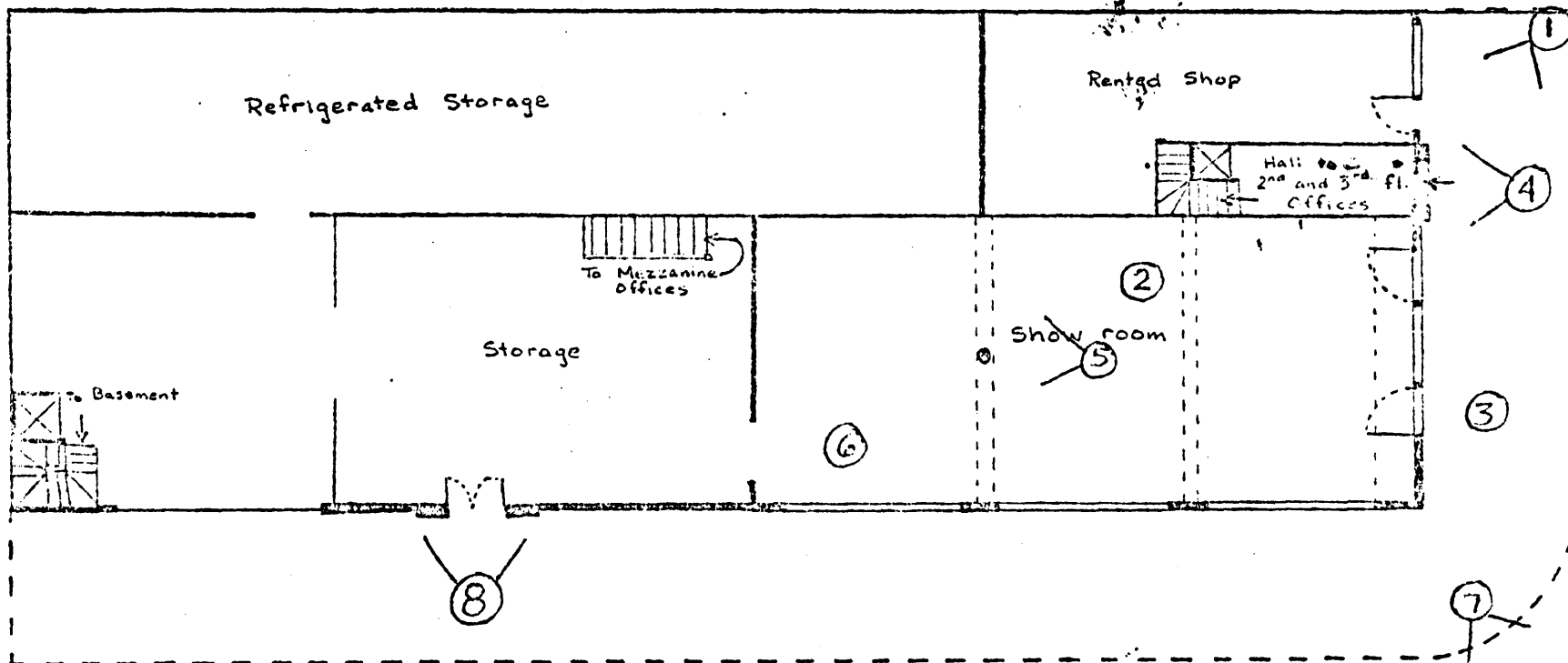
Segal Building
1200 Atlantic Avenue
Atlantic City, N.J.
Atlantic County

Location of photographer
for Series I photos.



Segal Building
1200 Atlantic Avenue
Atlantic City, N.J.
Atlantic County

Location of photographer
for Series II photos.



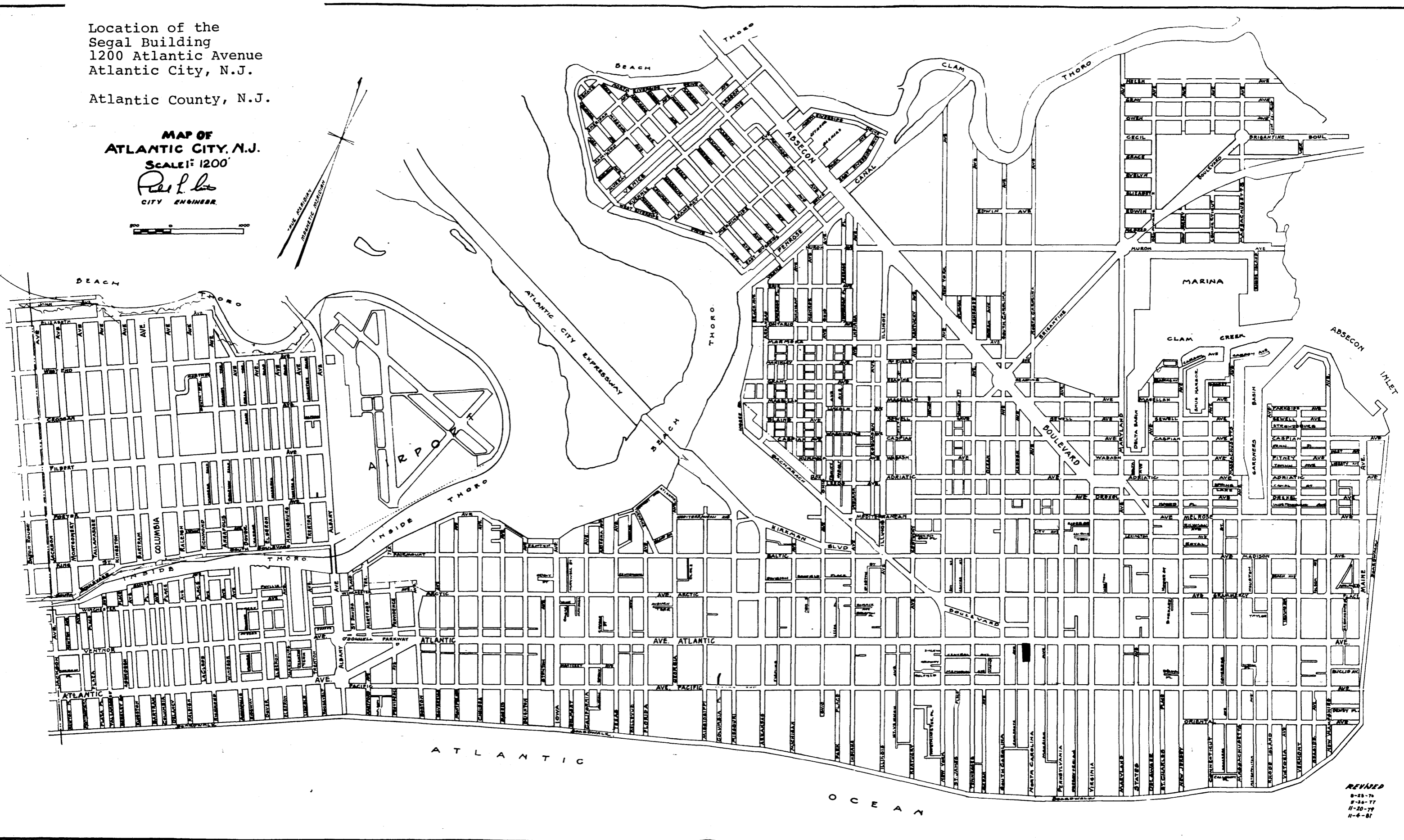
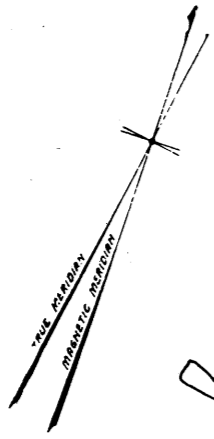
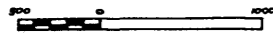
Location of the
Segal Building
1200 Atlantic Avenue
Atlantic City, N.J.

Atlantic County, N.J.

**MAP OF
ATLANTIC CITY, N.J.**

SCALE: 1200'

Paul L. Lee
CITY ENGINEER



REVISED
8-29-76
8-26-77
11-20-77
11-6-81