

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

FEB 07 1989

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name El Zaribah Shrine Auditorium

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 1502 West Washington Street

not for publication

city, town Phoenix

vicinity

state Arizona

code AZ

county Maricopa

code 013

zip code 85007

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official Arizona State Historic Preservation Office

Date 1/31/89

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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:)

Signature of the Keeper: Alton Byers

Entered in the National Register

Date of Action: 3/9/89

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Social - Meeting Hall

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Social - Meeting Hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Exotic Revival (Moorish)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick/Stucco

roof Rolled asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY

The El Zaribah Shrine Auditorium is a highly visible landmark in the Arizona State Capitol area. The building is used as the meeting place of the fraternal organization familiarly known as the Shriners, and includes an auditorium with a proscenium arch and stage. The Temple is of the Exotic Revival style and is Islamic in detail. It retains a high degree of integrity both interior and exterior.

SITE

The El Zaribah Temple occupies the northwest corner of 15th Avenue and Washington Street, an important intersection near the Arizona State Capitol. The building has only shallow setbacks from either street. The area between the street and the building is provided with sidewalks and is landscaped with grass lawn, palm trees, and other canopy trees. A small area to the west end of the site is used as a service and storage yard. Although the south facade appears dominant, the main entrance to the building is through the doors of the shorter east facade. A corrugated metal and wood frame storage building borders the west side of the site. This building does not contribute to the historic character, but appears contemporary to the Auditorium Building.

PLAN

The Temple is rectangular in plan, with the long axis oriented east/west, and is two stories high. The interior space is divided into three major sections. The first section, at the east end, includes the entry lobby, business offices, board room, and restrooms on the first floor, and a kitchen and meeting room on the second. The center section, the largest, forms the main meeting room/auditorium, and is an open

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2-story space. The north and south sides of the room are provided with balconies continuous from the east to the west ends of the room. Exit doors under these balconies lead directly to the outside. The third and westernmost section of the building encompasses the stage and fly tower, together with stage support spaces and two additional meeting rooms on the second floor. Partial basements exist at the east and west sections.

STRUCTURE

The structure of the building is simple and typical of buildings of its day. Brick walls and pilasters carry wood floors and a steel-trussed roof system. The steel roof trusses carry a conventional system of wood purlins and wood decking covered with rolled asphalt roofing. The auditorium floor is finished in hardwood, probably installed over wood sleepers directly on a concrete slab-on-grade.

EXTERIOR APPEARANCE

The El Zaribah Temple is a very late "survivalist" example of an Exotic Revival Style, termed "Oriental" at the time, but is in reality Islamic or Moorish in influence. The overall appearance is that of a simple rectangular prism with surface features applied to achieve the desired architectural character. The body of the building is divided horizontally into the classic three-part composition: base, shaft, and cornice. The base steps out from the main wall mass to meet the ground. The cornice at the top of the parapet is articulated with inverted arches. The dominant south facade features a central group of six pointed arches supported on round columns framing the 6 exit doors from the auditorium within. Centered in each arch, above the exit door, is a Shrine medallion and an Islamic-style electric lamp fixture of wrought iron. The columns are topped with cast acanthus leaves and deeply textured capitals. The group of arches is framed with a linear pattern in plaster. The title "EL ZARIBAH TEMPLE" and the initials "A. A. O. N. M. S." (Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine) appear over the arches in an oriental letter style. The building has always been painted, but original colors have been obscured.

The east elevation is similar in composition and detail to the south side, except that there are only two arches at the center. In addition, double-hung wood windows are symmetrically placed on this facade.

The north and west facades are secondary and are devoid of the ornament

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seen on the south and east facades. Randomly placed steel casement windows appear, as do service doors and a fire escape. These facades have been painted to echo the colors and shapes seen on the two major facades, including base, arches, and cornice.

INTERIOR APPEARANCE

The interior of the building has undergone localized alterations, but many significant features remain. Some original finishes, such as plaster walls and wood floors, remain as well.

The finishes of the entry lobby, offices, and restrooms have all been altered, and in the case of the office area, the original floor plan has been altered.

The main auditorium retains a high degree of integrity. Two balustraded stairways flanking the east entrance to the auditorium lead to the north and south side balconies. The original auditorium measures approximately 100 feet square. These balconies retain their original ornamental panelled wood fronts. The original maple floor remains throughout the room. A non-original suspended acoustical ceiling conceals an early plain plaster ceiling, which was attached directly to the bottom chord of the steel roof trusses. It appears that, in the early years of the Temple, the auditorium was open to the roof deck. The steel trusses have a painted finish and at the points of bearing are shaped to continue the curve of the supporting pilasters. The wood purlins and beaded tongue-in-groove decking are stained dark brown and are left exposed.

Projecting into the main auditorium and flanking the proscenium arch are two small, highly ornamental ceremonial balconies cantilevered from the wall. Access to the balconies is from the meeting rooms at the second floor. The balconies feature a wrought iron balustrade and bracketed plaster supports. A similar bracketed treatment is given to the cantilevered control/projection booth at the east wall.

The west section of the building, containing the stage, has been partly altered. Similar to the east end, most alterations have been to finishes, although some walls have been reworked. The basement under the stage, once the heating plant, has been converted into a bar/lounge.

One particularly notable feature of the building is a set of large original oil paintings. The artist, David Swing, was a prominent local artist of the day whose work hangs, among other places, in the Arizona State Capitol. The paintings, originally adhered directly to the walls of

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the building, depict various Arabian and Islamic themes. These paintings have recently been professionally removed, restored, and framed, and now hang in the board room.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Social History

Period of Significance

1921-1938

Significant Dates

1921

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Clinton Campbell - Contractor

Lescher & Mahoney - Architects

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

SUMMARY

The El Zaribah Shrine Auditorium is significant under Criterion A for its relationship to the status and place in society of fraternal organizations in Arizona in the early part of the twentieth century, and, in particular, for its association with the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, or "Shriners". It is additionally significant under Criterion C as an intact, unique example of Exotic Revival architecture in Arizona, built at an unusually late date for this style. The period of significance dates from 1921 when construction was completed, to 1938, arbitrarily set at the 50-year cut-off date for the National Register. While this period coincided with a national decline in Shrine membership, local members remained active in philanthropic service to the community.

CONTEXTS

Fraternal Organizations/Shriners in Arizona

The period between 1880-1900 is marked by a national mania for organizational membership. An increased popularity in secret/fraternal societies is one aspect of this mania. 460 new societies were created during this period and by 1900 there were 600 orders with five million members.

The Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine (the Shrine) was founded in 1870 in New York by an offshoot of the Ancient and Accepted Order of Freemasons (the Masons), which originated in England. An American

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Arizona Republican. May 27, 1914; Feb. 6, 16, 19, 22, 23, 1921

Demott, Bobby J. Freemasonry in American Culture and Society. University Press of America, Inc., Lanham, MD., 1986.

Dumenil, Lynn. Freemasonry and American Culture 1880-1930. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ., 1984.

El Zaribah Temple handbooks, 1906 and 1907. Arizona Collection, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona.

Masonic Directory, 1898. Arizona Collection, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona.

See continuation sheet

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 3/4 acre

UTM References

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3	7	0	1	3	5	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The property is bounded by the inside curblineline of Washington Stree on the south, the inside curblineline of Fifteenth Avenue on the east, the mid-block alley on the north, and a north-south line 250 feet west of the east boundary on the west.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the Shrine Auditorium building and surrounding land that has historically been associated with the property since the Auditorium was built in 1921.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert G. Graham
organization Don W. Ryden, AIA/Architects, Inc. date August 1988; revised Dec., 1988
street & number 400 North Seventh Street telephone (602) 253-5381
city or town Phoenix state Arizona zip code 85006

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innovation, the Shrine was created by Dr. Walter M. Fleming and William Florence. It was Dr. Fleming's desire to create a "fun" organization of Masons. In the nineteenth century, rituals were the major Masonic activity. The rituals were highly religious and moralistic in content. This was especially true of the Craft or Blue Lodges where the first three degrees of masonry are confirmed with the ceremonial pageantry of medieval guilds of Masons. The two higher bodies of the Masonic organization, the Scottish Rite and York Rite, continued historic ritual teachings. It was actor William Florence's notion to give the Shrine an Arabian theme. In 1867, while Florence was in Marseilles, France, he was invited by an Arabian diplomat to view a musical comedy which concluded by making viewers members of a secret society. It was from this experience that Florence developed the first draft of the Shrine ritual. With the help of Arabic scholar Albert L. Rawson, the newly organized fraternal order took on the guise of an ancient society instituted by the prophet Muhammed's son-in-law Kalif Ali in the year of the Hegira 25 (A.D. 644) at Mecca. The Shrine ritual was attributed to the great Persian poet, Alnasafi the Hafez. Carrying on the organizational theme, lodges were known as "temples" and members were referred to as "nobles."

Membership was restricted to the highest level of Masonry: Knights Templar in the York Rite, and 32nd-degree Scottish Rite Masons. From the very beginning the Shrine was at the apex of Masonry. By 1900, six percent of all Masons were Shriners, reflecting both the popularity of the Shrine within Masonry and the growth of the Shrine. The first temple, Mecca, was formed in New York in 1872 with 23 charter members. In 1888 there were 47 temples across North America with 7,210 members. When Arizona's El Zaribah Temple was established in February, 1896, it was the 72nd temple to be organized.

The El Zaribah Shrine was one of 12 major fraternal Societies in Phoenix. Its name derives from a peaceful valley on the Moslem pilgrimage from Medina to Mecca. It was felt that this valley had many parallels to Phoenix. The direct Arabic translation of El Zaribah is "the cattle pens," referring to the area in which travellers boarded their cattle. The name was suggested by Phoenician Loftus H. Goodrich, M. D., who came across it in his reading of the Prince of India by General Lew Wallace, one of the organizers of the first temple in New York City.

Initial membership of the El Zaribah Temple consisted of 9 charter members and 27 initiates. These included territorial governor L. C. Hughes, two future territorial governors (M. H. McCord and Nathan Oakes Murphy), and prominent business leaders George H. N. Luhrs, Edward Eisele and E. J. Bennett. An organization of predominantly middle class, a high business profile, and local boosterism would remain characteristics of the Shrine during its early years. El Zaribah's membership was regional,

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being the only temple from Austin, Texas, to Los Angeles. It would remain the only Shrine Temple in Arizona until the 1960s.

In 1897 the El Zaribah Shrine membership had grown to include 104 members. In 1906 there were 98 temples nationally and the Arizona Shrine had 279 members. By 1914, larger quarters were needed for the 600 members of El Zaribah than those available in the Monihan Building, where all masonic organizations were housed. It was also felt by the members that a larger facility could be used as a community convention center, not just for Shrine activities. Land was purchased on North Central Avenue and an elaborate Moorish temple was designed, but was never built. In April, 1919 at the El Zaribah monthly meeting, Noble Clinton Campbell, a Phoenix contractor, submitted a design by architects Lescher & Mahoney of Phoenix for a temple with an estimated cost of \$150,000. The 900 members of the Shrine accepted these plans and later that year the site was changed to its present location on the northwest corner of 15th Avenue and Washington Street.

The dedication of El Zaribah Shrine Auditorium occurred on February 22, 1921 amidst full pomp and celebration. At the time, the Shrine was the only organization to have its own building solely for societal activities. Both the International Order of Odd Fellows Hall, built in 1920, and the Knights of Pythias Building, built in 1928, combine retail space on the ground floor with fraternal meeting rooms on the upper floor.

In 1920, the Shrine voted to adopt its own official philanthropy: providing free orthopedic medical care to children in need. The first Shriners Hospital for Crippled Children was built in Shreveport, La. in 1922. Locally, El Zaribah Shrine Temple passed a resolution in 1926 to provide a mobile unit of 20 beds to be established at Deaconess Hospital (now Good Samaritan Hospital) in Phoenix. To date, there are 19 orthopedic and three burn institutes operated by the Shrine. El Zaribah now sponsors a Shrine Clinic operating on a bi-monthly basis at St. Joseph's Hospital in Phoenix.

The period 1921-1938 witnessed a decline in Shrine membership. Nationally, membership peaked in 1927 with 587,000 members and declined to 306,000 at the outbreak of World War II. El Zaribah Temple followed this trend with a high of 1600 members and a low of 698 in 1938. This may be attributed to an overextension of the Temple and financial hardships as a result of the Depression. Nevertheless, the El Zaribah Temple increased its visibility between 1921 and 1938 with the establishment of Shrine Clubs throughout the State.

Membership continued during this period to be of the Arizona elite,

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including elected officials and business leaders. New members between 1921 and 1938 include Governor Benjamin B. Moeur and future U. S. Senator and Governor of Arizona Ernest McFarland.

During the historic period, the building was in continuous use as home for the El Zaribah Temple and auxiliary groups. A newspaper account of 1927 stated that the Shrine Auditorium was "largely used for meetings, concerts, addresses, and other public functions as well as for Shrine affairs." However, a member of the Shrine since 1921 did not concur, reflecting that, to the best of his knowledge, the Auditorium was used exclusively for Shrine functions during the historic period.

Architecture in Phoenix, 1921

The El Zaribah Shrine Auditorium is a unique example of Exotic Revival architecture in Arizona. The design of commercial and fraternal buildings of the 1920s reflected the popular Period Revival styles, such as Spanish Colonial Revival. The Auditorium, a break from the common architecture of the day, is a survivalist example of the Victorian era exotic Moorish Revival style.

The A.A.O.N.M.S. (Shriners) is a theme organization. The theme chosen for the organization was surely influenced by the styles and popular themes of the 1870s, when the Shrine was first organized. The height of popularity for the Exotic Revival Styles in general including Egyptian, Moorish, and Swiss Chalet Revivals was from 1835 to 1890. The Moorish Revival was influenced at this time by the increasing exploration and trade in the Far East earlier in the century. In the 19th century, the style was termed "Oriental" and included Moorish and East Indian design in addition to the Asian influences.

The Shrine, as a theme organization, had a tradition of building Moorish Revival style meeting halls to reflect their theme; this precedent was set by the first temple, Mecca, in New York. The use of this style was a calculated attempt to create a "dreamlike," "fairy-tale" atmosphere in which to conduct Islam-inspired rituals and meetings. At least one other example of the style was built in Phoenix during this period: the Arizona State Tuberculosis Sanatorium (now demolished) near Papago Park, which was a much more ornate example of the Moorish Revival style than the Shrine Auditorium. Its existence, together with the Shrine Auditorium, may reflect the smaller "second revival" of the style in the early part of this century.

In comparison to earlier designs, the final design of the El Zaribah

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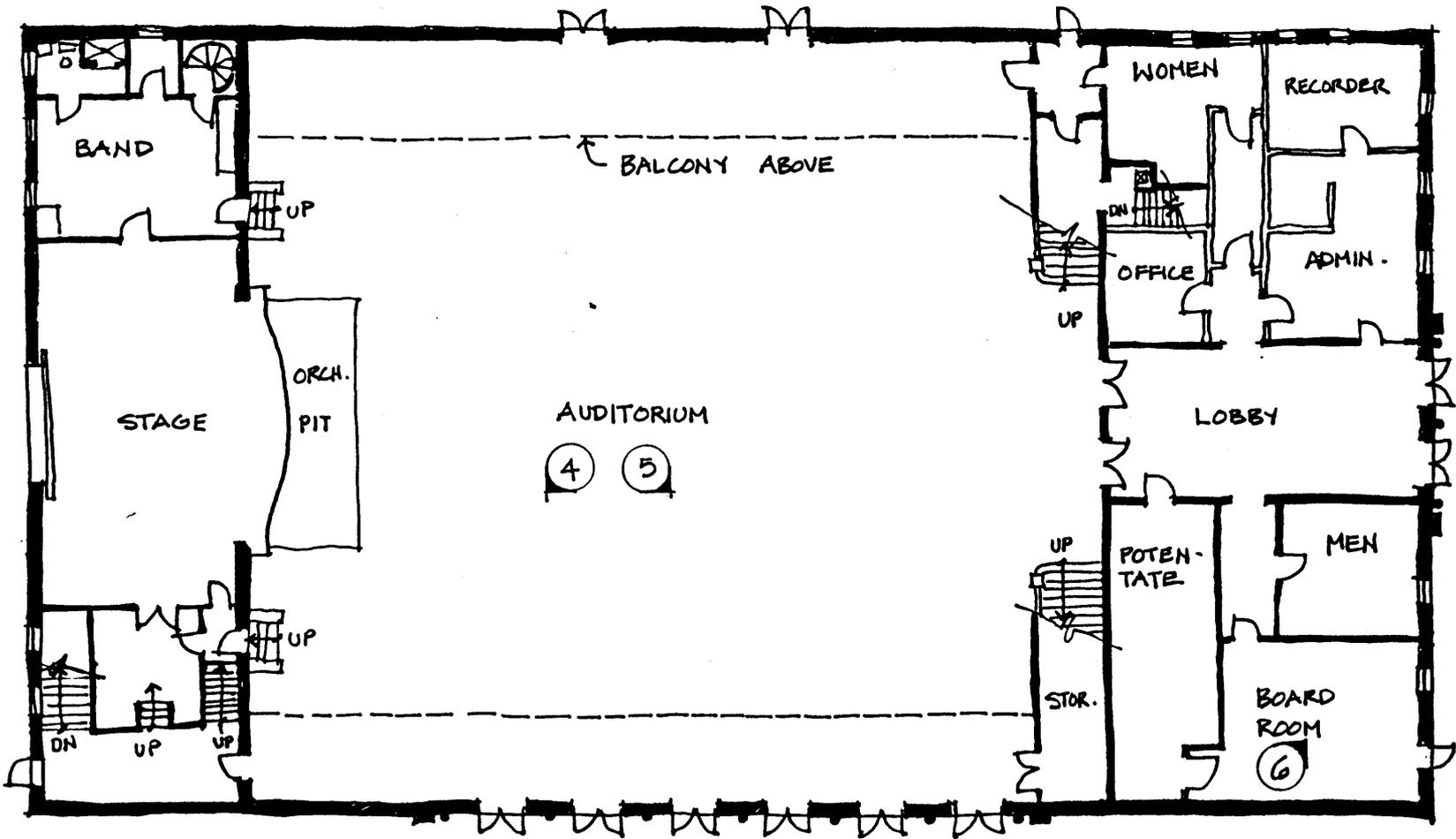
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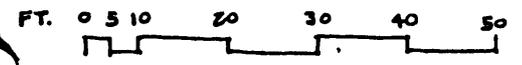
Shrine Auditorium appears restricted by budgetary constraints. The elements of the building which convey its character are mostly applied pastiche rather than forms integral to the mass of the building. Early designs published years before construction show a much more complex and ornamental mosque-looking structure. In any case, the ornament applied to the exterior of the building does successfully convey the Islamic feeling desired by its designers. The columns and ornamental capitals supporting the pointed arches appear very similar in detail to those used at the Alhambra, in the Court of Lions, which may have been a source of inspiration for much of the ornament.

Lescher & Mahoney, the architects of the Shrine Auditorium, were prominent local architects of the early 1900s. The firm was responsible for many of today's historic buildings in Phoenix. Clinton Campbell, a long-time contractor and founder of the Phoenix Brick Yard in 1917, had worked with Lescher & Mahoney for years. As a member of the El Zaribah Shrine Temple, it appears that he may have been responsible for the hiring of Lescher & Mahoney to design and draw plans for the Auditorium. The Auditorium remains as an unusual example of their work.

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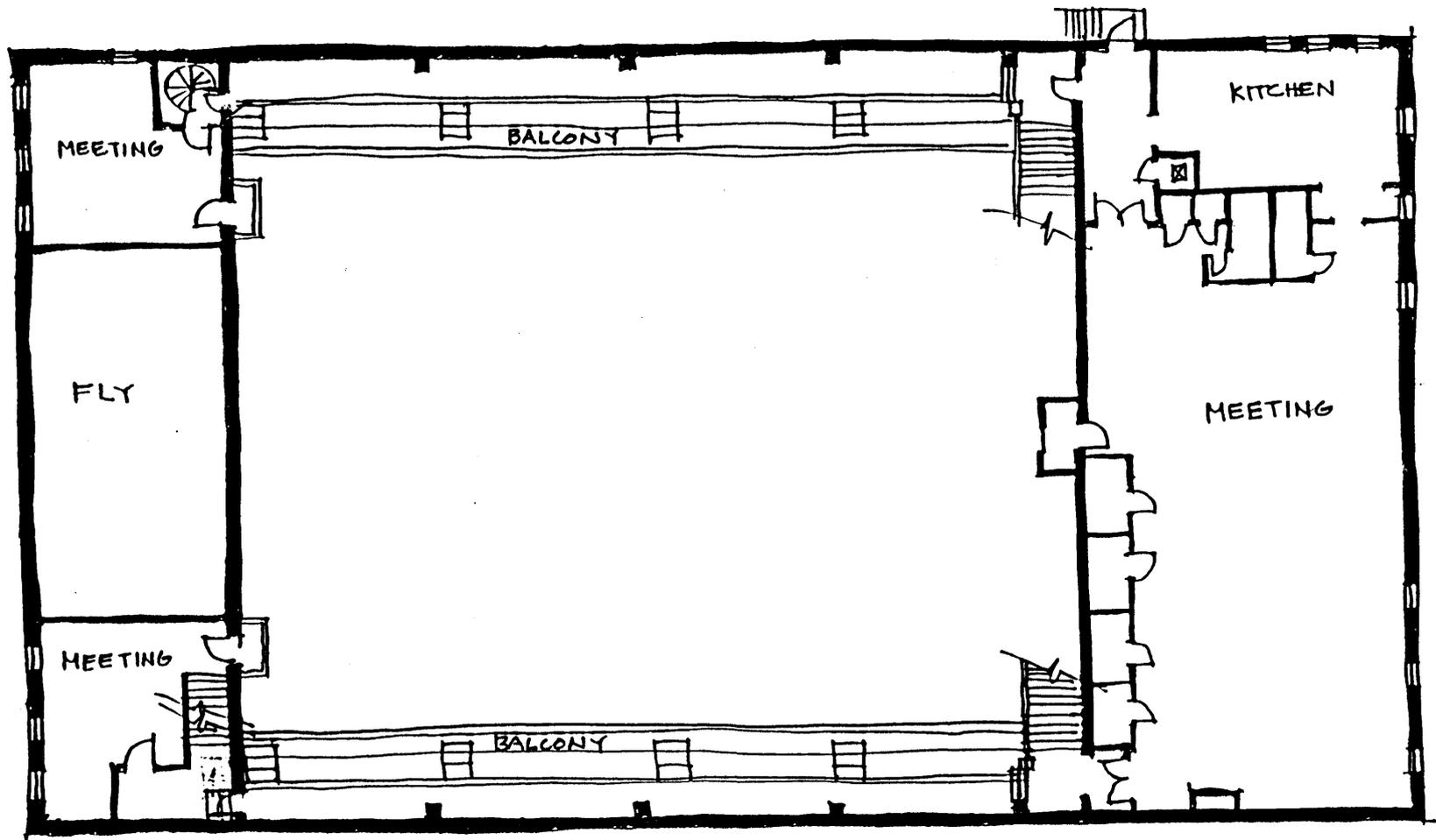


FIRST FLOOR PLAN/PHOTO KEY

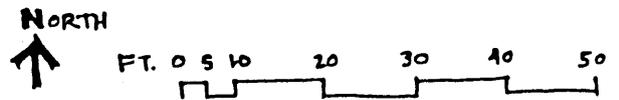


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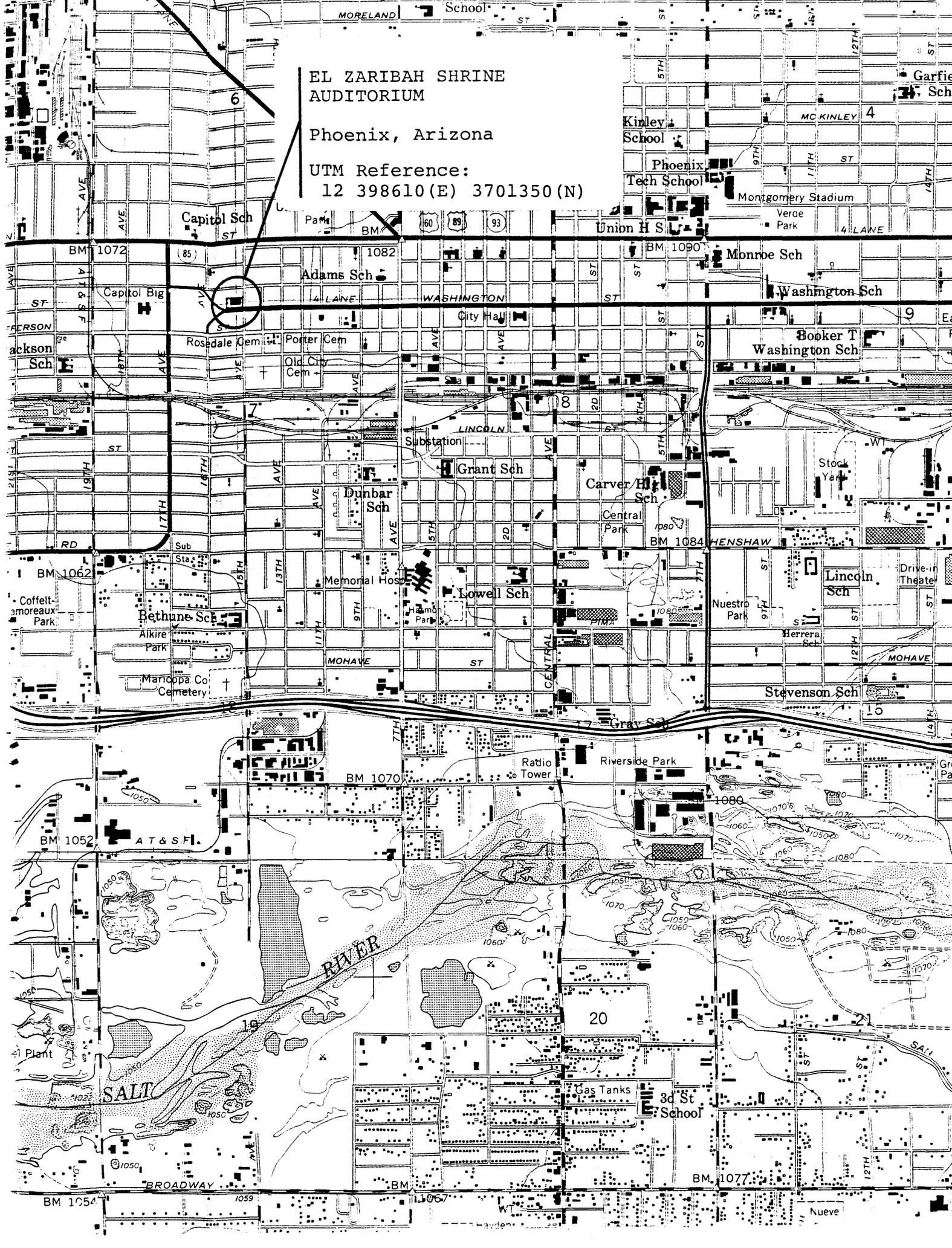
SECOND FLOOR PLAN

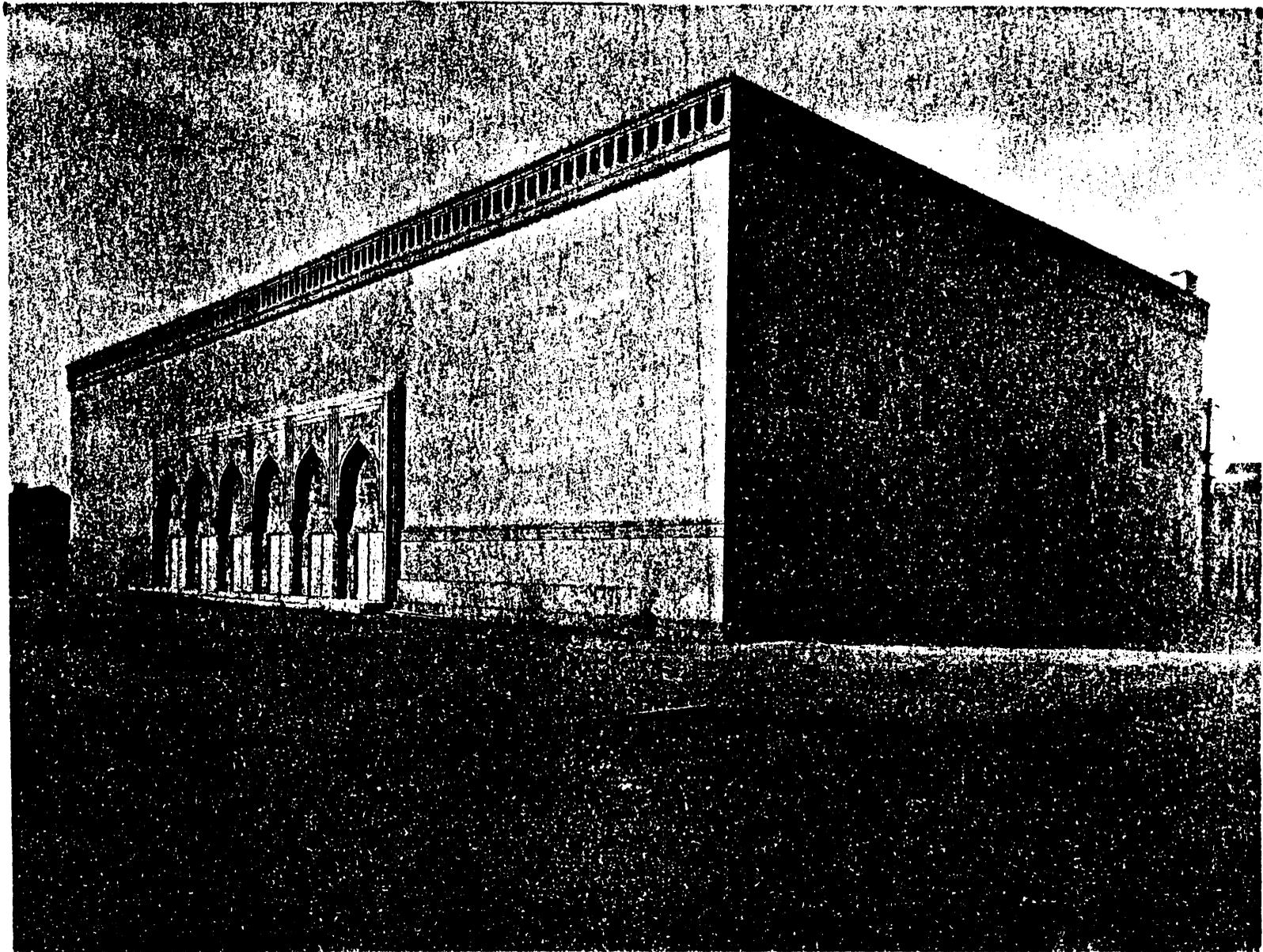


EL ZARIBAH SHRINE
AUDITORIUM

Phoenix, Arizona

UTM Reference:
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El Zaribah Shrine Auditorium, 1921

Shrine Auditorium