United States Department of the Interior
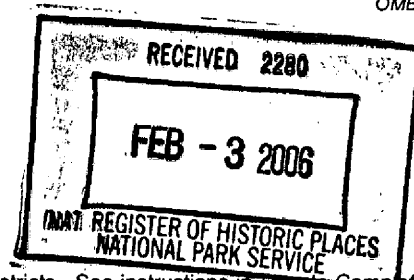National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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 any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional 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 **ALMIRA HOTEL**

Other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number   3 North Third Avenue   ___ not for publication

city or   Almira   vicinity

town

State   Washington   code   WA   county   Lincoln   code   043   zip code   99103

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this **X** nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property **X** meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally ___ statewide **X** locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title   Date   1.31.06

WASHINGTON STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
State or 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 this property is:

Signature of the Keeper   Date of Action

✓ entered in the National Register.   3.15.06
    ___ 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:) _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- x private
- ___ public-local
- ___ public-State
- ___ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box

- x building(s)
- ___ district
- ___ site
- ___ structure
- ___ object

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

Contributing	Non-Contributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: hotel

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: hotel

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & Early 20th CENTURY REVIVALS:

commercial building

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation   STONE, BRICK

walls   BRICK

roof   ASPHALT

other

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property.)   SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

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.)

X 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.

X 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** owed by a religious institution or used for
religious purposes.

____ **B** removed from its original location.

____ **C** a birthplace or grave.

____ **D** a cemetery.

____ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

____ **F** a commemorative property.

____ **G** less than 50 years old or achieving significance
within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE, ARCHITECTURE

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Period of Significance

1918

_____

_____

Significant Dates

1918

_____

_____

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.)   SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)   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 Engineering
Record#_____

Primary location of additional data:

X   State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
Name of repository:

_____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property   Less than one acre

UTM References
(Place additional UTM References on a continuation sheet.)

1 | 11 | | 3 | 544 | 11 | | 528 | 599 | 8 | 3 | __ | . | __ | __ | __ | __ | | __ | __ | __ |
    Zone   Easting   Northing   Zone   Easting   Northing

2 | __ | | __ | __ | __ | | __ | __ | __ | 4 | __ | | __ | __ | __ | __ | | __ | __ | __ |
    Zone   Easting   Northing   Zone   Easting   Northing

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property.)   See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)   See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title   Linda Yeomans

organization   Historic Preservation Planning & Design   date   24 Sept 2005

street & number   501 West 27th Avenue   telephone   (509) 456-3828

city or town   Spokane   state   WA   zip code   99203

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name   Todd & Amanda Starkenburg

street & number   P.O. Box 86   telephone   (509) 639-2477

todd@oldride.com

city or town   Almira   state   WA   zip code   99103

NPS Form 10-900a
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet –

ALMIRA HOTEL
LINCOLN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Section number ___7___   Page 1 of 6

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Completed in 1918, the Almira Hotel is one of the best-preserved commercial buildings and the only single room occupancy hotel in the town of Almira, a small agricultural community located on the west edge of Lincoln County in Central Washington State. The community of Almira lies approximately 20 miles south of Grand Coulee Dam and it's location would play a key role in the construction of the dam during the Great Depression. At a height of three stories, the Almira Hotel towers over surrounding buildings and homes and is prominently sited in the town's central business district on the northwest corner of Main Street and Third Avenue. With un-reinforced brick masonry construction, symmetrical fenestration patterns, street-level storefronts, and intact multiple single occupancy hotel rooms on the second and third floors, the Almira Hotel is an excellent example of the building type "single room occupancy hotels."[1] The Almira Hotel has had few modifications since it was built in 1917, and retains good exterior and interior architectural integrity in original location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association as a single room occupancy hotel built during the early 20th century in Almira, Washington.

CURRENT APPEARANCE & CONDITION

Site

The Almira Hotel is built on level ground on Lots 8, 9, and 10, Block 13 in the addition known as the Original Town of Almira.[2] Identified as Lincoln County tax parcel number 01-01-013-002100, the building is sited on a parcel that measures 56 feet wide and 103 feet deep. The hotel building occupies most of the parcel on which it is sited and has a rectangular footprint that measures 52 feet wide and 98 feet deep. It is joined to a two-story brick commercial building to the north and is bordered by a single-story brick commercial building to the west, Third Avenue on the east, and Main Street on the south. The Almira Hotel is surrounded by paved and unpaved streets and a sparsely populated business district that is composed of one and two-story brick and frame buildings built from the late 1890s to the 1950s.

Exterior

With modest embellishment, the Almira Hotel is a plain brick building with two primary facades at the east and south elevations that face the intersection of Main Street and Third Avenue. The building rises three stories to a height of 40 feet and abuts a paved sidewalk that wraps around the southeast corner of the building. The hotel is made of un-reinforced brick masonry and has a flat roof with a vinyl membrane under which are located layers of built-up tar. The roof is articulated at the south and east facades with a prominent galvanized metal parapet and wide overhanging eaves which extend four feet from the planar

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[1] Although the Almira Hotel is not located in the central business district of Spokane, Washington, it does meet the SRO building type description outlined in the National Register Multiple Property Documentation, *Single Room Occupancy Hotels in the Central Business District of Spokane, WA, 1900-1910.*

[2] Lincoln County Tax Assessor records, 2005. Lincoln County Courthouse, Davenport, WA.

NPS Form 10-900a
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet –

ALMIRA HOTEL
LINCOLN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Section number ___7___   Page 2 of 6

wall surface of the building. The first floor of the building has commercial storefronts along the south and east facades, and symmetrical fenestration patterns on the second and third floors. All of the second and third-floor windows are identical 1/1 wood-sash pivot units with single-pane glazing. Anchored to the wall by metal bracing, a metal and neon sign that reads "HOTEL" is located at the second floor above street level on the building's prominent southeast corner. The foundation of the building is made of basalt rock and brick masonry. At street level and twelve inches above grade, the foundation is brick masonry and is covered with a layer of concrete slip.

As the primary facades of the building, the east and south elevations reflect a nearly identical design. All three floors are clad with red and brown face bricks laid in stretcher bond. The first floor is separated from the second floor by a ten-inch wide horizontal belt course made of galvanized metal. The second and third floors a distinguished by a series of evenly spaced brick pilasters with twelve pilasters featured on the east façade and six pilasters featured on the south façade. Windows on the second and third floors are located between the pilasters. The spaces between the second and third floor windows are accentuated with decorative brickwork that has vertically aligned soldier bricks laid in stretcher bond. Pedimented window hoods with a broken apex design cap the windows along the third floor and are made of galvanized metal.

Due to its larger size and large front entry marquee, the east façade (faces Third Avenue) of the Almira Hotel is the most prominent façade of the building. The marquee over the front lobby entrance is 33 feet wide, nine feet deep, and is suspended from the planar wall surface of the building by four hand-forged metal chains. Made of wood frame construction, the marquee is completely covered with decorative galvanized metal. The parapet of the marquee is accented with a wide coping ledge and geometric cresting patterns that resemble mortise-and-tenon joinery. Decorative massive consoles are located under the marquee and are attached to brick pilasters that flank the center front lobby entrance of the building. The ceiling of the marquee is embellished with a paneled design. Located under the marquee, the center front lobby entrance is protected by the marquee and features center double doors which are flanked by plate-glass display windows. Wood paneled bulkheads separate the windows from the foundation. The doors are made of solid paneled wood with multiple divided lights in the upper leaf. Transom windows are located above the display windows and the front doors. Except for the transom windows, the storefront next south of the center entrance is covered with plywood and other wood boards. The storefront next north of the center entrance feature two original canted entrances. Vertical board paneling covers the transom windows and plywood covers part of the display windows. Original paneled bulkheads separate the display windows from the foundation at the north and south bays.

On the south façade (faces Main Street), the street-level storefront features all of its original design and materials. It is clad in red and brown face bricks and has a center entrance which is distinguished with a single door, two flanking sidelights, and a transom light. Two display windows are located west of the

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet –

ALMIRA HOTEL

LINCOLN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Section number ___7___   Page 3 of 6

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center entrance and have brick bulkheads. Set at a higher level than the display windows, two pairs of 1/1, wood-sash pivot windows are located east of the center entrance.

Only partly visible from Main Street, the elevation at the west side of the building faces the rear commercial yard and storage area of the adjacent next west commercial building. The west elevation is clad in stucco over brick masonry and features a continuation of the upper-story symmetrical fenestration patterns that punctuate the east and south facades of the building. A large plain brick chimney is located on the west elevation at the northwest corner of the building. The north elevation is attached to a common wall of an adjoining two-story brick building that was erected in 1917 at the same time as the Almira Hotel.

Interior

The Almira Hotel has three floors with 5,096 square feet on each floor for a total of 15,288 square feet of finished interior space.[3] The first floor is divided into three commercial bays, south to north. The south bay functions as a cafe, cocktail lounge, and kitchen, all refinished in the 1940s. The center bay serves as the hotel lobby (refinished in 2004-05), and the north bay includes commercial space for two storefronts (gutted in the 1970s), storage areas, and a service elevator that runs from the basement to the third floor. The floor at the first floor is made of two-inch-wide planks of fir, the walls are mostly plaster-and-lathe construction, and the ceilings are twelve feet high. Regarded as a focal point of the lobby, a wood staircase turns and rises to the second and third floors and features a unique design with Asian influence. It features an open string, a square newel post with a round cap, and a wood balustrade that is embellished with circular cutouts. Each cutout is a full circle bisected vertically by a pair of vertical bars. The baluster railing appears to pierce the newel post and come out the other side, reflecting Japanese-influenced mortise-and-tenon joinery. The balustrade is made of wood finished in a deep mahogany/cherry to match the original finish. The lobby is also defined with shallow arched corbelled spandrels on the west and south walls. The original wood paneled door (opens to elevator) next north of the stairwell on the west wall has an arched surround that matches the arch at the spandrels.

The second and third floors contain 39 existing original single occupancy hotel rooms which are located around the interior perimeter of the building (22 rooms on the second floor and 17 rooms on the third floor). The rooms are small, designed for single occupancy, and measure approximately eight feet wide and twelve feet deep. Each room has an electric light fixture (some original) that is suspended from the ceiling, a wall-hung porcelain wash basin, and at least one window that opens to fresh outside air. The interior area between the hallways is located in the center of the building and houses community bathrooms, a maid's mop/laundry closet, an elevator, a light well/ventilation shaft that is open to fresh air, and a stairwell. A large interior hallway that encircles the center spaces of the building provides access to

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[3] Lincoln County Tax Assessor records, 2005. Lincoln County Courthouse, Davenport, WA.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet –

ALMIRA HOTEL
LINCOLN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

each hotel room, community bathrooms, and the stairwell. The staircase balustrade is enclosed at the second and third floors and has a wood railing. An original multi-paned glazed skylight illuminates the third floor area over the stairwell. The hallways and rooms have three-inch-wide fir plank floors finished in deep ebony. Woodwork consists of vertical grain fir and "curly" grain fir milled as eight-inch-deep floor molding, four-inch-wide window, door and transom trim, and solid wood paneled doors (2 panels). The woodwork is plain with a square-cut Mission-style design. Second-floor woodwork is covered with paint while third-floor woodwork is finished in dark mahogany/cherry. Original transom windows are located above each door. Chair rail molding is located in the hallways, stairwell, and some of the rooms. The walls and ceilings feature plaster-and-lathe construction, the hallways are four feet wide, and the ceilings are nine feet high. A three-foot high unfinished attic space is located above the third floor. The basement is unfinished and includes mechanical areas (heating/plumbing and electrical panels) and storage space.

ORIGINAL APPEARANCE & SUBSEQUENT MODIFICATIONS
Exterior
Very few exterior alterations have occurred to the Almira Hotel. The original exterior appearance of the building is pictured in a circa 1917 photograph of the building taken during construction, and in a circa 1919 photograph of the building just after construction was completed.[4] Both photographs reveal the building's original design which exists intact today and includes a rectangular footprint, un-reinforced brick masonry construction, three stories, flat roof, galvanized metal parapet and trim, widely overhanging eaves on the east and south facades, symmetrical fenestration patterns, 1/1 wood-sash pivot windows on the second and third floors, three street-level merchandise bays with display windows on the first floor (east and south elevations), and a center marquee over the first-floor center front lobby entrance on the east façade. According to the photographs, the existing design and materials on the second and third floors are original, the existing south storefront design and materials are original, and most of the existing east façade storefront design is original. Exceptions include plywood and vertical boards that cover parts of the original south and north storefronts, and new compatible contemporary windows, doors and wood paneled bulkheads located in the center bay. The plywood and vertical boards were applied over part of the original north and south bays in the 1940s and again in the 1970s. In 2004-05, the original wood center front double entrance lobby doors in the center bay were replaced with wood paneled multi-paned units that mimic the design of the original wood doors. At the same time, the original wood bulkhead, which was damaged from abuse, weather and deferred maintenance, was replaced with a wood bulkhead that repeats the panel design of the original bulkhead. A difference is found in bulkhead height: the original bulkhead was 16 inches high (from the top edge of the foundation) and the current bulkhead is 34 inches high (the difference is due to Universal Building Code requirements that mandate new-construction bulkhead heights

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[4] Starkenburg Collection. Todd & Amanda Starkenburg, Almira Hotel, Almira, WA.

NPS Form 10-900a
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet –

ALMIRA HOTEL
LINCOLN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Section number ___7___   Page 5 of 6

for commercial buildings).   New double-glazed plate glass display windows were installed over the bulkheads.

Interior
The interior of the Almira Hotel is nearly original on the second and third floors but the first floor commercial spaces have been remodeled several times during the last eight decades since the building was completed in 1918. The last remodel effort was in the 1940s which included the south and center bays. The center bay (hotel lobby) was remodeled again in 2004-05 which included a restoration of the wood plank floor, the plaster walls and ceiling, and the woodwork and wood staircase/balustrade. The floor was refinished back to an ebony finish, the walls and ceilings were repaired and repainted, and the woodwork was refinished to a dark mahogany/cherry finish that matches the original woodwork color. The center hallway in the north bay was also restored to match the interior finish in the lobby. The north bay was remodeled in the 1940s and then stripped of its interior finish during the 1960s-1970s.

Most of the second and third floors retain the original floor plan, single occupancy hotel room configurations, woodwork and interior finish materials as built in 1917-18. According to newspaper articles that described the Almira Hotel in 1918 just after construction was completed, there were a total of 45 hotel rooms on the second and third floors.[5] Modifications were made beginning in the 1940s when a change of ownership occurred. Rooms along the east and south walls on the second and third floors were remodeled as larger rooms (interior walls removed), all of the mahogany/cherry-finished fir woodwork (doors and trim) was painted, the floors in the hotel rooms were covered with linoleum and vinyl, and many of the original light fixtures were removed. In the 1960s-1970s, the hotel rooms on the north wall were stripped of their interior finish and were not refinished. During this time, deferred maintenance resulted in damage from water and weather throughout some of the rooms and hallways (falling plaster, peeling paint, burst pipes, frayed electrical wiring). The condition of the second and third floors was poor when the current owners purchased the building in 2003.

In 2004-05, the current owners began an intense and sensitive rehabilitation of the Almira Hotel with the idea of restoring original features and materials where possible and economically feasible as per federal rehabilitation guidelines for historic buildings established by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. The woodwork and fir floors on the third floor were refinished and restored to the original dark mahogany/cherry finish. The walls and ceilings were repaired and repainted. Electrical wiring was updated and new plumbing was installed in the community bathrooms. Where the originals were missing,

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[5] "Working On New Hotel." *The Big Bend Outlook,* 23 March 1917. Currently, there are a total of 39 rooms (22 on the second floor and 17 on the third floor). The discrepancy in rooms today versus 1917 reflects remodeling efforts completed primarily during the 1940s.

NPS Form 10-900a
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet –

ALMIRA HOTEL
LINCOLN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Section number ___7___   Page 6 of 6

period-appropriate antique light fixtures were installed. The south end of the third floor, which was remodeled to larger rooms in the 1940s, was remodeled again in 2004-05 as one large room. The stairwell from the first-floor lobby to the third floor was repainted and refinished.

Except for modifications to the interior commercial spaces on the first floor, changes to the hotel rooms and their configurations, and to the exterior of the building have been few. The building retains good and sufficient architectural integrity inside and out and is regarded as a fine example of the building type, "single room occupancy hotels." It easily conveys its original design, materials, workmanship, location, setting, feeling, and associative use as an SRO built during the early 20th century in Almira, WA.

NPS Form 10-900a
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet –

ALMIRA HOTEL
LINCOLN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Section number   8   Page 1 of 9

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Completed in 1918, the Almira Hotel is one of the best-preserved and most prominent historic buildings, and the only single room occupancy hotel in the small agricultural town of Almira, Washington. Architecturally significant, it is an excellent example of a single room occupancy hotel. Anticipatory newspaper articles written before construction of the hotel was completed announced that it would be "up-to-date throughout" and promised to be "the best hostelry" in Washington State in the rural region between Almira and Spokane.[1] Newspaper articles in Almira and Wilbur and as far away as Spokane announced the hotel's grand opening in 1918, and reported the construction cost at $60,000.[2] The hotel was built with first-floor commercial bays that over the years housed a hotel lobby, a popular dining room and café, various drugstores and soda fountains, a long-standing clothing store, and the town's telephone/telegraph office and post office. Proving the newspaper predictions true, the building became a noted community center in Almira,[3] and during the construction of the Grand Coulee Dam in the 1930s, was home to hundreds of engineers, government officials, and laborers who built the concrete superstructure. The hotel was built for Willis Schrock and Boone Thompson, prominent Lincoln County landowners, real estate investors, grain directors, and Almira businessmen. Achieving importance in the areas of significance "commerce" and "architecture" during a period of significance identified as the date it was built in 1918, the Almira Hotel is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT
Almira, Washington

With a population that fluctuates around 400, the small rural town of Almira is located in the heart of the prairie and scabland region in Central Washington State. With its low rainfall and semi-arid climate, the area supports ranching and dry land crop farming, and is considered to be one of the finest agricultural regions in the state. Mark W. Harrington, former chief of the U.S. Weather Bureau, commented on the area's soil, saying "it seems to be a kind which is perpetually fertile, requiring little irrigation."[4] The town is located just east of the midway point between Seattle and Spokane and is linked by roads, railroads, and U.S. Highway 2 to other small, sparsely populated agricultural towns that are scattered throughout Central Washington.

In 1884, Charles C. Davis, a young teacher, left his native Indiana by way of St. Paul, Minneapolis and arrived at the banks of a little creek located on the western edge of Lincoln County in Central Washington. Railroad and homestead land was available to those willing to farm, and the rumor spread that the soil and

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[1] "Hotel Opens Soon." *The Big Bend Outlook,* 1 Feb 1918.

[2] "$60,000 Almira Hotel is Opened." *Spokesman-Review,* 14 Feb 1918, p. 10.

[3] "Almira's New Post Office." *The Big Bend Outlook,* 8 March 1918.

[4] "Lincoln County." Lincoln County Economic Development Services, Lincoln County, Davenport, WA. 1985.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet –

ALMIRA HOTEL

LINCOLN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

climate were perfect for crop farming and stock grazing. Davis liked what he saw, returned to St. Paul, and married his sweetheart, Almira Ridgeway. Together, they traveled west to the present townsite of Almira and set up a trading post and boarding house. The area grew and Charles Davis applied for a United States post office, calling it "Davisine." The arrival of the Central Washington Railway line sparked more interest in the community and fostered the need for a town with food and shelter for community residents and the men who worked on the railroad. Charles Davis and his wife, Almira Ridgeway Davis, opened the doors of their boarding house, accommodating as many men, women, and children as possible. Regional legend recounts that Almira Davis's "boarders appreciated her bountiful table. As they sat around the table discussing the formation of the proposed town with the railroad crew, one of them suggested that the new town be named after their hostess."[5] After that, the village was called Almira in her honor.

The plat for the Town of Almira was filed on August 27, 1889. It was designed with a directionally correct grid pattern and included the names of streets and avenues.[6] The Central Washington Railway tracks were located by a creek in the northeast corner of the town, and Main Street was located in the town's center. In 1889, the *Wilbur Register* printed promotional advertisements for the towns of Creston, Wilbur, and Almira (Creston and Wilbur are less than 20 miles east of Almira) with the following account:

> Almira is the new townsite fifteen miles west of Wilbur and will be the terminus of the
> Central Washington Railroad. It is surrounded by magnificent agricultural and stock grazing
> lands, and will be the commercial center for a radius of 30 miles, and the railroad
> freighting terminal for the far west. Almira offers excellent openings for all classes of business,
> and business men seeking locations should by all means visit Almira.[7]

People came, buildings and homes were built, business flourished, and by 1902 the town had grown to 289. The first hotel built on the present site of the Almira Hotel was the Northwestern Hotel. Samuel Hyde bought it in 1897, and re-opened it with a new name: the "Hotel Almira." In addition to the Hotel Almira, two other hotels, the Great Western Hotel and Hotel Fisher, were built in the town.

In May 1902, Frank Heffenish bought Hotel Almira for $4,500. One year later his investment went up in smoke. A fire that started in the kitchen destroyed the hotel and surrounding buildings. In the following two years, Frank Heffenish died and his widow, Alice Heffenish, sold the burned-out property for $1,250 to David Wilson and Boone Thompson. A short time later, David Wilson sold his half interest to Willis E. Schrock for $625.

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[5] *The History of Almira.* Almira, Washington: Almira Centennial Committee, 1989, p. 9.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.

NPS Form 10-900a
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet –

ALMIRA HOTEL
LINCOLN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Section number ___8___   Page 3 of 9

The two property owners had a new plan for a new hotel. In 1905, a newspaper article reported that "Boone Thompson and Willis Schrock have commenced the erection of a $14,000 hotel on the corner of Third and Main... The building is to be a two-story brick. They expect to have the same completed before spring."[8]

The *1909 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map* pictured a footprint of the hotel with a hotel office, dining room and kitchen on the first floor along with a saloon in the southeast corner and a grocery store in the north end of the building. Hotel rooms were located on the second floor. In addition to housing town residents, guests, and travelers, the hotel was regarded as a community center and hub of activity. Local newspaper articles in *The Big Bend Outlook* described alumni reunions, social events, and dinners for civic, social, commercial, and hunting clubs that were given in the hotel.[9]

The success of the second Almira Hotel, however, was short-lived. On December 8, 1916, fire again destroyed the building:

> Last Friday evening the Thompson & Schrock building, [which was] occupied by the
> Hotel Almira, the Union Supply Store, R. L. Drinkard [Clothing], and the Pastime Billiard
> Parlor, was destroyed by fire, resulting in an estimated loss of $70,000. The fire started in
> the basement... The alarm was turned in but all that could be done was to protect the buildings
> on the east side of the street and prevent the fire from spreading. By 9 o'clock the interior of
> the building was destroyed. Thompson & Schrock will rebuild as soon as possible. It is
> understood that the new building will be larger than the old one and that the hotel portion
> will contain three times the number of rooms.[10]

The Almira Hotel
Although they sustained a loss which was eventually listed at $88,000,[11] Boone Thompson and Willis Schrock made good on their word. They cleared the ground and began construction of an un-reinforced brick masonry single room occupancy hotel building in 1917. The March 23rd edition of *The Big Bend Outlook* reported that "work commenced on the new Hotel Almira the first of the week. The new building will be three stories high and will contain 45 rooms. In addition provisions will be made for a store for

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[8] "Almira Topics." *Spokesman-Review,* 16 Nov 1905, p. 5.
[9] "Alumni Reunion." *The Big Bend Outlook,* 7 Jan 1916, and "An Enjoyable Event." *The Big Bend Outlook,* 21 Jan 1916.
[10] "70,000 Goes Up in Smoke." *The Big Bend Outlook,* 8 Dec 1916.
[11] Ibid.

NPS Form 10-900a
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet –

ALMIRA HOTEL
LINCOLN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Section number ___8___   Page 4 of 9

R.L. Drinkard [Clothier] and for the post office and the telephone office."[12]   Two months later, a newspaper article reported that "work on the new three-story hotel building" was "delayed on account of inability to get material."[13]   This predicament was probably due to the need for construction materials for World War I which was being fought at that time in Europe.

Even with the abiding scarcity, materials were found, the building was erected, and by December 1917, the Almira Ladies Auxiliary publicly thanked the hotel's property owners for hosting their fund-raiser dinner event. They published their thanks in the local newspaper and said, "We feel that we are much indebted to Mr. Schrock for his generosity and kindly considerations in allowing us the use of the dining room of the new hotel...[14]

Apparently not all of the work had been completed in 1917, however, but enough work was finished by the first of the next year that the local newspaper could envision the hotel's future success in the region. Articles appeared in *The Big Bend Outlook* in February 1918, listing upcoming events in the hotel and praising it with predictions of future success:

HOTEL OPENS SOON

[Hotel proprietor] Sanderson hopes to open the new Hotel Almira sometime
during the second week in February. The hotel will be up-to-date throughout and will be
by far the best hostelry on the [railroad] line of the Central Washington [Railway].[15]

The new Hotel Almira was opened for roomers the first of the week. Mr. Sanderson
expects to have the [public] dining room running next Monday. Thursday evening a luncheon
will be given by the [Almira] Commercial Club for the Wilbur Commercial Club. Friday
from noon to 1:30 p.m. a dinner will be given for the Farmer's Union. The formal opening
will be announced later.[16]

Six days later on February 13th, a 70-seat dinner was hosted in the Almira Hotel.[17]   The event was considered so newsworthy that it sparked articles in newspapers in towns and cities as far away as Spokane.

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[12] "Working On New Hotel." *The Big Bend Outlook,* 23 March 1917.
[13] "Almira Building Stops." *Spokesman-Revivew,* 23 May 1917, p. 9.
[14] "Chicken Dinner a Success." *The Big Bend Outlook,* 21 Dec 1917.
[15] "Hotel Opens Soon." *The Big Bend Outlook,* 1 Feb 1918.
[16] "Take Notice." *The Big Bend Outlook,* 8 Feb 1918.
[17] "Commercial Clubs Fraternize." *The Big Bend Outlook,* 15 Feb 1918.

NPS Form 10-900a
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet –

ALMIRA HOTEL
LINCOLN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Section number ___8___   Page 5 of 9

$60,000 ALMIRA HOTEL IS OPENED

Almira celebrated the opening of the new $60,000 hotel... The [Almira] Commercial
Club invited the commercial club of Wilbur down for the big spread... Howard Spining, editor
of the Wilbur Register, told of visiting Almira 28 years ago when Mrs. Almira Davis, for whom
the town was named, was running a boarding house. Mr. Spining complimented
[the town of] Almira on the new hotel.[18]

The next month another newspaper article lauded the Almira Hotel as the site of the town's new post office
and telephone/telegraph office. In reference to the hotel's popularity as a public gathering place, the
newspaper stated that "the location of the post office and the telephone office in the hotel building will tend
to make it what it should be in a community center."[19]

The Almira Hotel continued to be a popular town center and neighborhood hub with a variety of services
and businesses located in the first floor of the building. Facing east on Third Avenue, R. L. Drinkard's
clothing store was located along with the post office and telephone/telegraph office in the two commercial
spaces in the north bay of the building. The hotel lobby and office were housed in the center bay, and the
south bay was occupied by various drug stores, soda fountains, and the hotel's dining room. "Luncheon"
(late afternoon and evening meals) was served from 2:00 to 5:00 pm. and from 8:00 to 11:00 pm. and
offered soups, sandwiches, salads, pastries, and beverages as well as desserts (ice cream, sodas, sundaes,
etc). Prices were listed on a 1921 menu from 5-cents for a cup of coffee to 25-cents for a cold chicken
sandwich.[20]

There were a total of 45 to 48 hotel rooms housed on the second and third floors (some rooms originally
designed for storage may have been re-finished as hotel rooms after the building was built).[21] The single
occupancy hotel rooms were originally furnished with metal-frame spring-coiled beds, oak dressers, and
chairs and rocking chairs.[22] Each room had a window which could be opened for fresh air and was
equipped with an electric light fixture at the ceiling. Community bathrooms, including a bathtub, were

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[18] "60,000 Almira Hotel Is Opened." *Spokesman-Review,* 14 Feb 1918, p. 10.

[19] "Almira's New Post Office." *The Big Bend Outlook,* 8 March 1918.

[20] Circa 1921 menu from the Almira Hotel's dining room. Emil Erickson Collection c/o Todd & Amanda Starkenburg, Almira Hotel, Almira, WA.

[21] *The Big Bend Outlook* (23 March 1917) reported 45 rooms; *The History of Almira* (1989, p. 55) reported 48 rooms.

[22] Some of the original hotel furnishings were found in 2003 in the hotel rooms and basement of the building. At least one dresser has the name of the supplier and shipping date written on the back of the mirror: "John R. Gedlich, Spokane, WA, November 1918."

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(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet –

ALMIRA HOTEL
LINCOLN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Section number ___8___   Page 6 of 9

located on each floor, and a multi-paned skylight illuminated the stairwell. The *1917-18 Washington Gazetteer* listed Hotel Almira with "good clean rooms and beds, good dining room service, steam heat, baggage to and from trains, and sample rooms."[23] By 1925, the advertisement for the Almira Hotel had taken on a more worldly air, reflecting its local and regional success. Hotel amenities included a "European plan, steam heat, hot and cold water, artesian baths, dining room in connection, and popular prices."[24]

If the success of the Almira Hotel was good in the 1920s, it was elevated to great in part of the 1930s. "The Great Depression," the severe economic scourge that befell so many communities across the nation during the 1930s, was uniquely reversed for a time in the town of Almira. In 1933-34, construction of the gigantic megalith superstructure known as the Grand Coulee Dam began, forever affecting the entire agricultural region in Central Washington. "Conceived in a time of hardship and humiliation and undertaken in adversity, Grand Coulee Dam would become the largest masonry structure ever built."[25] Located 20 miles north of the town of Almira in a deep trough entrenched in the Columbia Basin, the dam was built to block water flowing down the Columbia River from Canada and thus provide much-needed hydro-electric power and irrigation to Central Washington. Dam site headquarters were promptly established in Almira, one of the closest towns with access to the railroad, paved highways, and reliable accommodations. Hundreds of engineers, government officials, and laborers thronged to the town, fostering a period of unprecedented activity and economic growth in the area. Flyers and maps were printed and Almira was dubbed the "The Gateway City to the Grand Coulee Dam."[26]

As the largest and most prominent hotel in town,[27] the Almira Hotel reaped the economic benefits associated with the construction of the dam through most of the 1930s, but by the 1940s, dam activities had slowed due to World War II. After the war, dam construction resumed but most of the workers and officials lived in "company towns" built at the dam site instead of in Almira. Activity in the Almira Hotel changed along with the times. The drugstores and soda fountains that for so many years had occupied the prominent southeast corner of the hotel's first floor were replaced by a cocktail lounge called the "Wheat Room." It was managed by proprietors, Larry and Lois Wilson, who also owned the hotel building.

[23] Polk, R. L. *1917-18 Washington Gazetteer*. Spokane: R. L. Polk Publishing.

[24] Polk, R. L. *1925-26 Washington Gazetteer*. Spokane: R. L. Polk Publishing.

[25] Downs, L. Vaughn. *The Mightiest of Them All: Memories of Grand Coulee Dam*. New York: ASCE Press, 1993, p. 19.

[26] "Visit Grand Coulee Dam Site Via 'Gateway' Almira—Nearest Town on Main Highway." Circa 1930s map of Almira and Grand Coulee Dam. Big Bend Historical Society, Wilbur Museum, Wilbur, WA.

[27] According to state gazetteers and Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, the Commercial Hotel, a smaller frame building located one block northeast of the Almira Hotel, was the only other hotel in Almira during this time.

NPS Form 10-900a
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet –

ALMIRA HOTEL
LINCOLN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Section number ___8___   Page 7 of 9

Local and national transportation trends had a lasting effect on Almira and the Almira Hotel. In the late 1800s, the Central Washington Railway established a railroad terminus in Almira which led to the town's first population explosion and ensuing building boom. In the early 1900s, paved roads called "highways" were constructed throughout America. In Almira and to the benefit of the Almira Hotel, U.S. Highway 2 was built through the town on Main Street right in front of the Almira Hotel. In the 1920s, the highway through Almira was chosen as part of the "National Park-to-Park Highway," a federally funded system of 6,000 miles of paved highways that "passed through eleven western states and connected twelve national parks."[28] Travelers could buy a map, "hit the road," and travel by car or truck from any national park in Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana to Almira. Pictured in numerous National Park Service publications and travel guides, the small town of Almira, Washington was literally "on the map." [29]

Between the early 1900s and 1960, tens of thousands of automobiles and many buses and trains stopped and/or passed through Almira.

> Passenger trains were stopping here and Almira hotels had accommodations for them.
> Wednesday nights were "salesmen nights" when all the salesmen would show their wares.
> When passenger [train] service stopped, the [Almira] hotel was the local bus stop,
> bringing in…people.[30]

The year 1960 changed the pattern of transportation and economic success in Almira: U.S. Highway 2 was re-designed and re-built to bypass the town. No longer did the highway come through Almira on Main Street in front of the Almira Hotel. Business slowed and the Almira Hotel closed except for the lounge on the first floor. Other buildings built during the early 1900s were either destroyed or burned, and the few remaining buildings showed increasing signs of deferred maintenance. The Almira Hotel became an isolated hotel, the only one in Almira. As residents of Almira explained, the highway bypass rendered the town and the hotel "out of sight, out of mind."[31]

In 2003, a young couple from Bellingham, Washington, Todd and Amanda Starkenburg, bought the Almira Hotel for $50,000. They have plans to rehabilitate the property for use as a hotel and bed-and-breakfast

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[28] Whiteley, Lee & Jane. *The Playground Trail: The National Park-to-Park Highway: To and Through the National Parks of the West in 1920.* Boulder, CO: Johnson Printing, 2003, p. 2.

[29] Ibid, p. 2 and back cover of book.

[30] *The History of Almira.* Almira, WA: Almira Centennial Committee, 1989, p. 56.

[31] Ibid.

NPS Form 10-900a
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet –

ALMIRA HOTEL
LINCOLN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Section number 8 Page 8 of 9

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inn, and have already restored some areas of the third floor. Their interest and enthusiasm may prove to be a catalyst for future growth in Almira, Washington.

HISTORICAL SIGNFICANCE *(Criterion A)*

The Almira Hotel is historically significant in the area of significance, "commerce," for its association with the broad patterns and trends that led to the development of the town of Almira in Central Washington State. Advantageously sited on the prominent corner of Main Street and Third Avenue in the center of Almira, the hotel was the largest and only brick hostelry in the town. It was a hub of community and commercial activity especially since it housed both public (post office) and private (merchant shops, drug stores, cafes, hotel rooms) interests and was strategically located along U.S. Highway 2 as it passed through Almira. Since it was completed in 1918, the hotel has housed and fed hundreds of travelers, visitors, and the men and women who worked on the design, development and construction of the Grand Coulee Dam. Regarded as the largest and most prominent building in the town, the well-preserved Almira Hotel symbolizes the associative patterns that led to the community's early 20th-century development and subsequent settlement

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE *(Criterion C)*

The Almira Hotel is architecturally significant as a fine example of a single room occupancy hotel. Identifying elements of the building type include the following:[32]

- construction period: 1890s to 1920
- two to five-story un-reinforced brick masonry commercial building
- usually sparse exterior architectural detailing
- symmetrical fenestration patterns
- street-level storefronts and merchandise bays
- interior hotel lobby
- upper-story single occupancy hotel rooms connected by hallways
- community bathrooms, light well/ventilation shaft, skylight
- documented historical significance as an SRO

> Fenestration patterns on the upper levels normally reflected the regular, consistent arrangement of the guest rooms. Windows were almost always double-hung wood-sash. Plate glass display windows were common features of the street level commercial bays

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[32] Holstein, Craig. *Single Room Occupancy Hotels in the Central Business District of Spokane, WA, 1900-1910.* National Register Multiple Property Documentation, 1993, sections 7 and 8.

NPS Form 10-900a
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet –

ALMIRA HOTEL
LINCOLN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Section number ___8___   Page 9 of 9

that existed in most SROs.

Perhaps the most character-defining feature of single room occupancy hotels is their floor plans on the upper, residential floors... Normally hallways cross the width of the buildings, paralleling the street behind the bank of rooms that face onto the street...hallways, often wide in dimension, run at 90-degree angles off the front hall into side wings of the buildings, with rooms facing into the hallways... Some upper-level hallways received both artificial and sunlight from ceiling skylights. Hallways were occasionally, but not always, adorned with wainscoting... Hinged transoms above the doors provided ventilation to the rooms, all of which had additional ventilation from exterior windows.[33]

Well-preserved with good integrity of original location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association as an early 20th-century SRO, the Almira Hotel represents the aforementioned identifying features of the building type, "single room occupancy hotels." It is a three-story building with un-reinforced brick masonry construction and features first-floor commercial bays with plate glass display windows, and second and third-floor single occupancy hotel rooms. The original hotel room configurations and finish remain nearly intact, conveying the above-referenced architectural elements that describe the building type. Overnight patrons stayed in the hotel's single occupancy hotel rooms and enjoyed the variety of sundries and services that were provided by businesses that leased space in the first-floor commercial bays. These included a dining room and numerous cafes and fountains, drugstores, clothing shop, telephone/telegraph office, and the town's post office. The commercial spaces were leased continually from 1918 until the 1970s by businesses that helped meet the needs of the hotel's patrons. As the largest and most prominent hotel built in Almira, the Almira Hotel's documented associative history supports the fact that it was the longest-running SRO in the community. It became the town's social and community center and housed hundreds of working class people for over 50 years.

In summary, the building embodies the specific architectural elements attributed to the property type, "single room occupancy hotels," and conveys early 20th century building trends, materials, and designs associated with the construction of SROs. Architecturally and historically significant, the property is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C.

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[33] Holstein, Craig. *Single Room Occupancy Hotels in the Central Business District of Spokane, WA, 1900-1910.* National Register Multiple Property Documentation, 1993, pp. F:17-19.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet –   ALMIRA HOTEL
LINCOLN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

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Emil Erickson Collection. Circa 1921 photograph of dining room in Almira Hotel, and circa 1921 menu from dining room. Todd & Amanda Starkenburg, Almira Hotel, Almira, WA.

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NPS Form 10-900a
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet – ALMIRA HOTEL
LINCOLN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Section number   9&10   Page 2 of 3

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"Almira's New Post Office." *The Big Bend Outlook,* 8 March 1918.

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"An Enjoyable Event." *The Big Bend Outlook,* 21 Jan 1916.

"Chicken Dinner a Success." *The Big Bend Outlook,* 21 Dec 1917.

"Commercial Club Fraternize." *The Big Bend Outlook,* 15 Feb 1918.

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"Take Notice." *The Big Bend Outlook,* 8 Feb 1918.

"Working On New Hotel." *The Big Bend Outlook,* 23 March 1917.

"$60,000 Almira Hotel Is Opened." *Spokesman-Review,* 14 Feb 1918, p. 10.

"$70,000 Goes Up In Smoke." *The Big Bend Outlook,* 8 Dec 1916, p. 1.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of property:	Less than one acre.
Verbal boundary description:	Original Town of Almira Addition, Block 13, Lots 8-9-10 as the South 103 feet of Lots 9 and 10 and of Lot 8 except the West 22 feet of the South 60 feet thereof.
Boundary justification:	Nomination property includes the entire parcel & urban legal description for the Almira Hotel.

NPS Form 10-900a
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet –

ALMIRA HOTEL
LINCOLN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Section number   9&10   Page 3 of 3

PHOTOGRAPHS

Taken in 2005 by Linda Yeomans, preservation consultant, the following photographs picture the Almira Hotel which is located in Almira, Lincoln County, WA. The negatives are filed with the consultant.

Photo 1   Almira Hotel: east façade
             (looking west along Main Street which before 1960 was also U.S. Highway 2)

Photo 2   Almira Hotel: southeast façade corner

Photo 3   Almira Hotel: east façade marquee

Photo 4   Almira Hotel: south façade and part of west elevation

Photo 5   Almira Hotel: south façade window and brick detail

Photo 6   Almira Hotel: west elevation (building with chimney is Almira Hotel—notice adjoining
             building shown at left in photograph

Photo 7   Almira Hotel: interior first-floor lounge with curved bar built in 1947

Photo 8   Almira Hotel: interior first-floor lobby, looking west

Photo 9   Almira Hotel: interior first-floor lobby, looking west at newel post and door to elevator

Photo 10   Almira Hotel: hallway on second floor, looking north

Photo 11   Almira Hotel: hallway on third floor, looking south

Photo 12   Skylight over third-floor stairwell landing

ALMIRA HOTEL
3 North Third Avenue
Almira, WA 99103
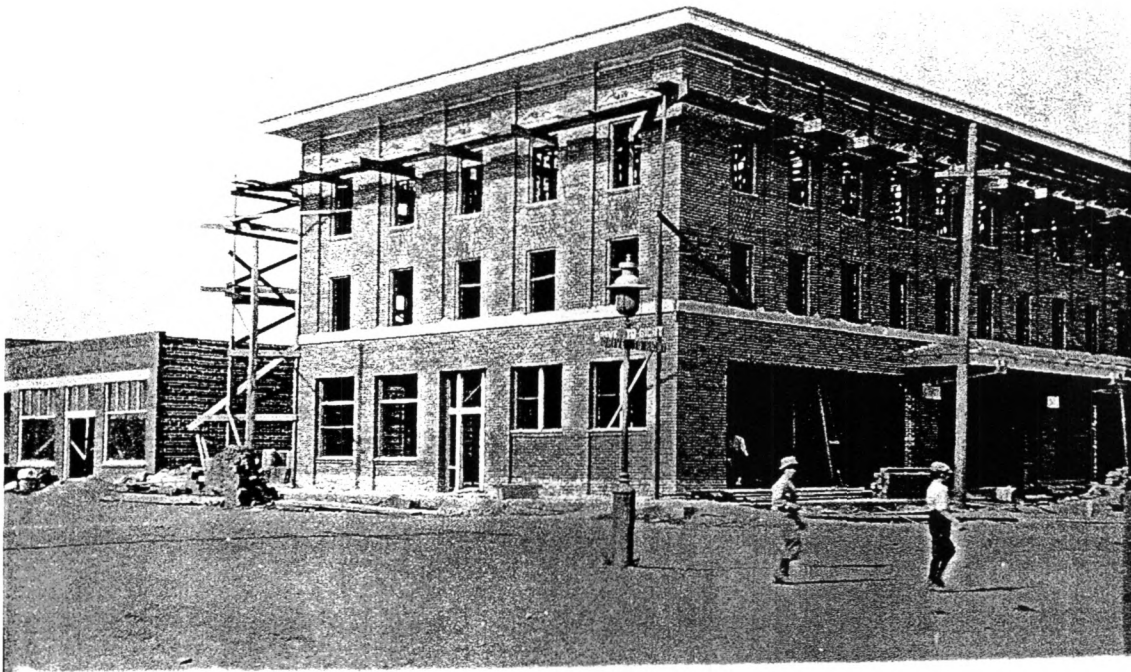
Circa 1919 photograph of Almira Hotel just after it was built.
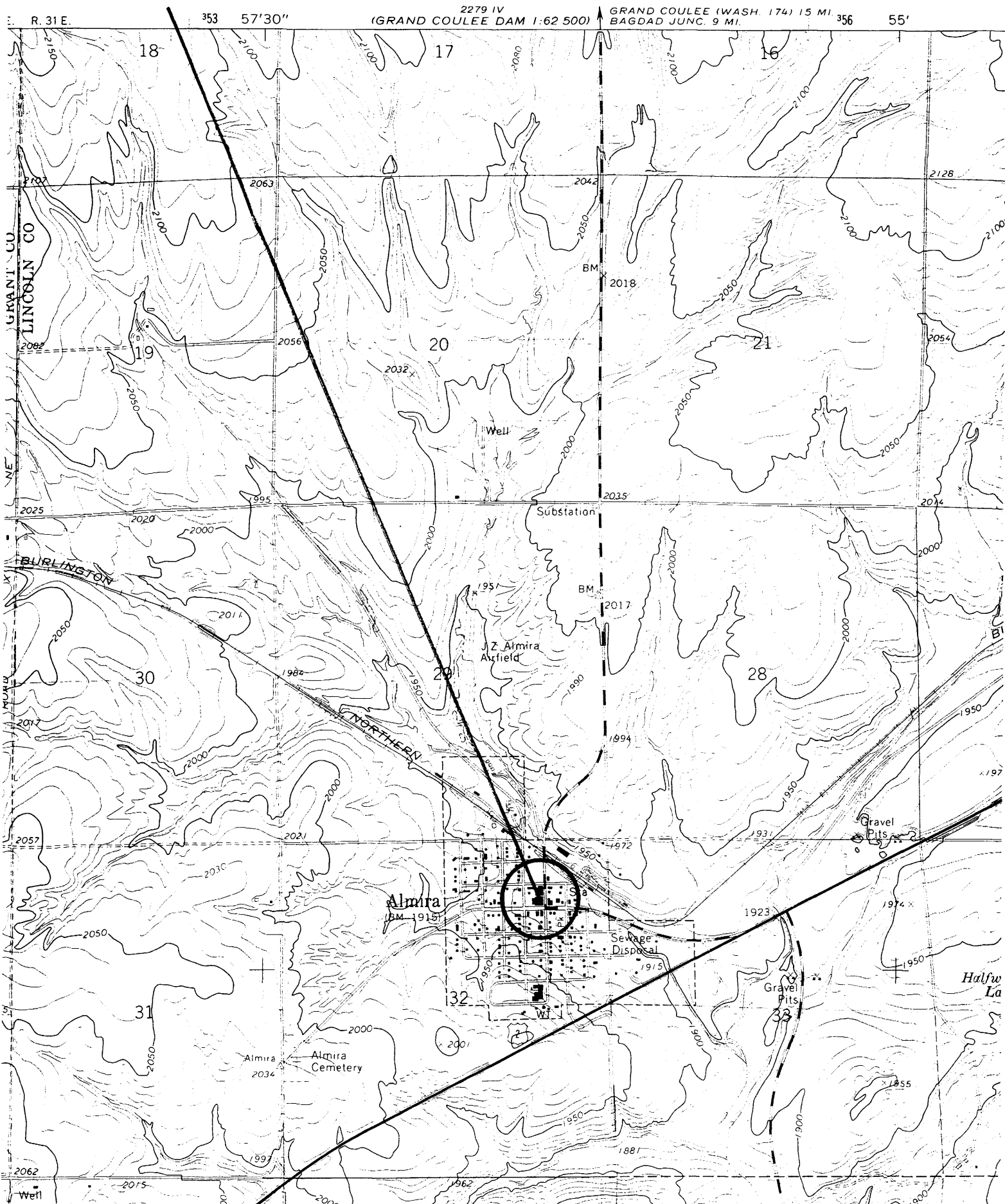
ALMIRA HOTEL
3 North Third Avenue
Almira, WA 99103

Circa 1917 photograph of new Almira Hotel being constructed

R. 31 E.   353   57'30"   2279 IV (GRAND COULEE DAM 1:62 500)   GRAND COULEE (WASH. 174) 15 MI.   356   55'
BAGDAD JUNC. 9 MI.

18   17   16

GRANT CO.
LINCOLN CO.

19   20   21

Well

BM 2018

Substation   2035

BURLINGTON   BM 2017

J Z Almira Airfield

30   29   28

NORTHERN

Gravel Pits

Almira
(BM 1915)

Sewage Disposal

31   32   33   Halfway La
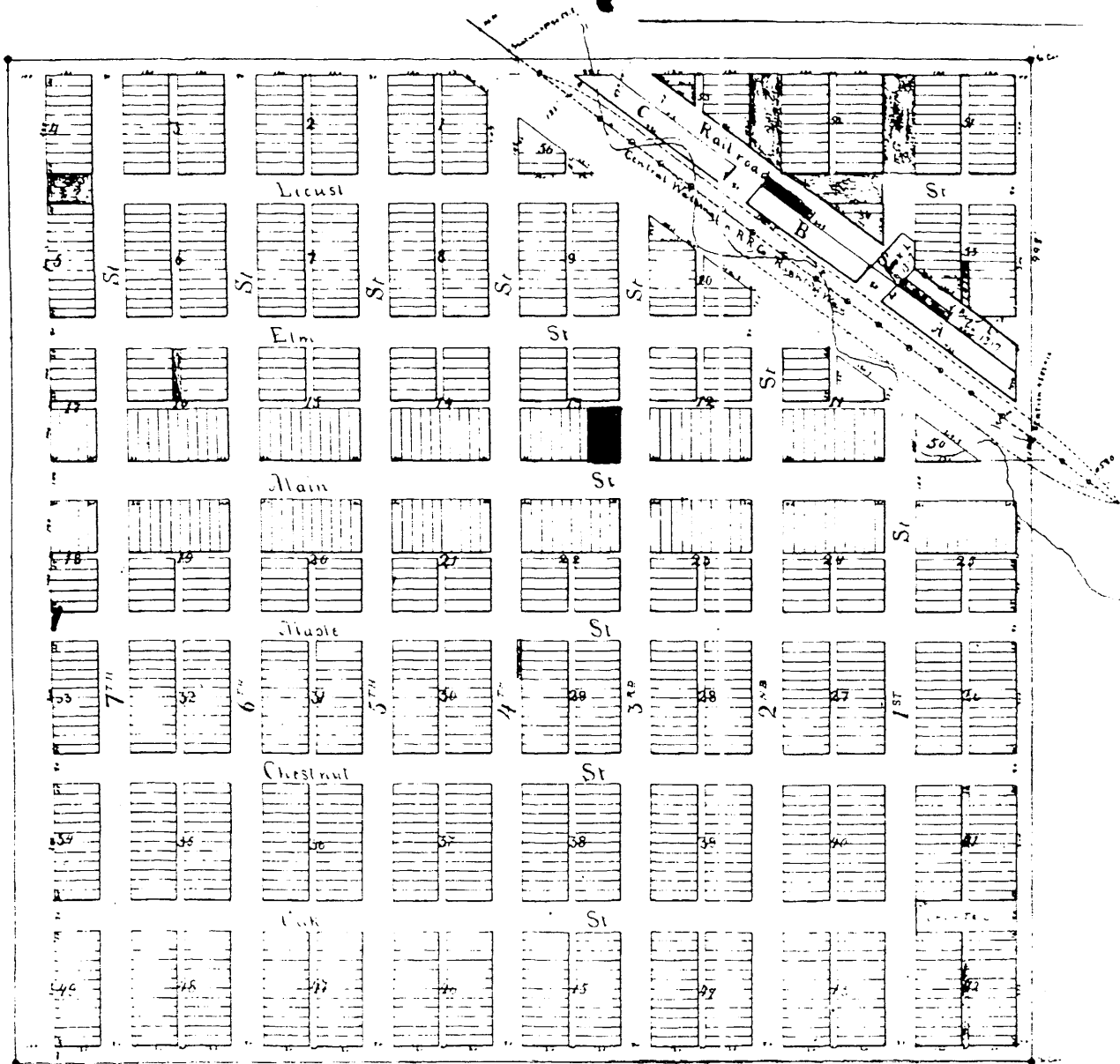
Almira Cemetery   2034

Gravel Pits

Well

ALMIRA HOTEL
3 North Third Avenue
Almira, WA 99103

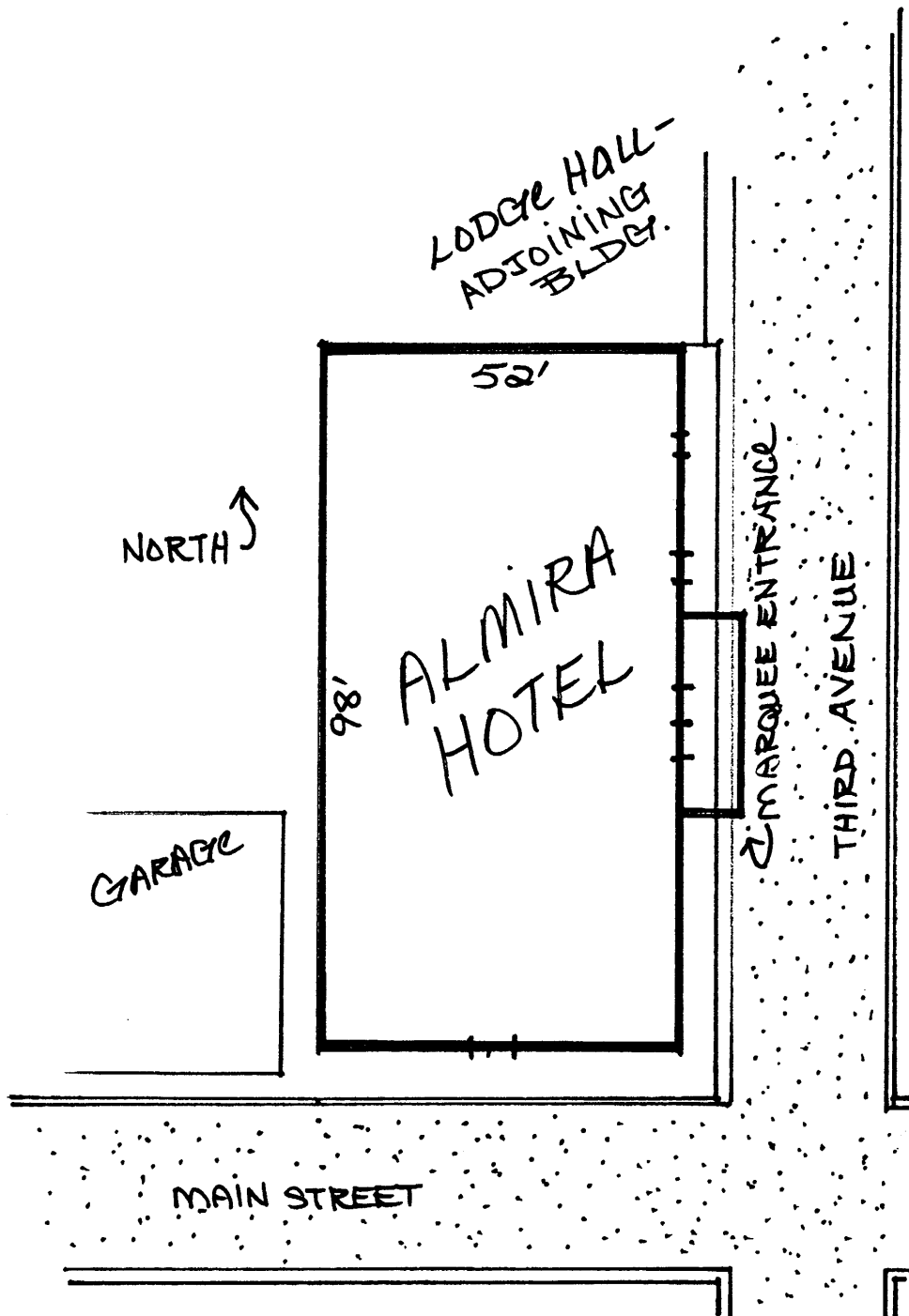Original Plat Map of Almira, Lincoln County, WA in 1889

ALMIRA
Lincoln County Washington
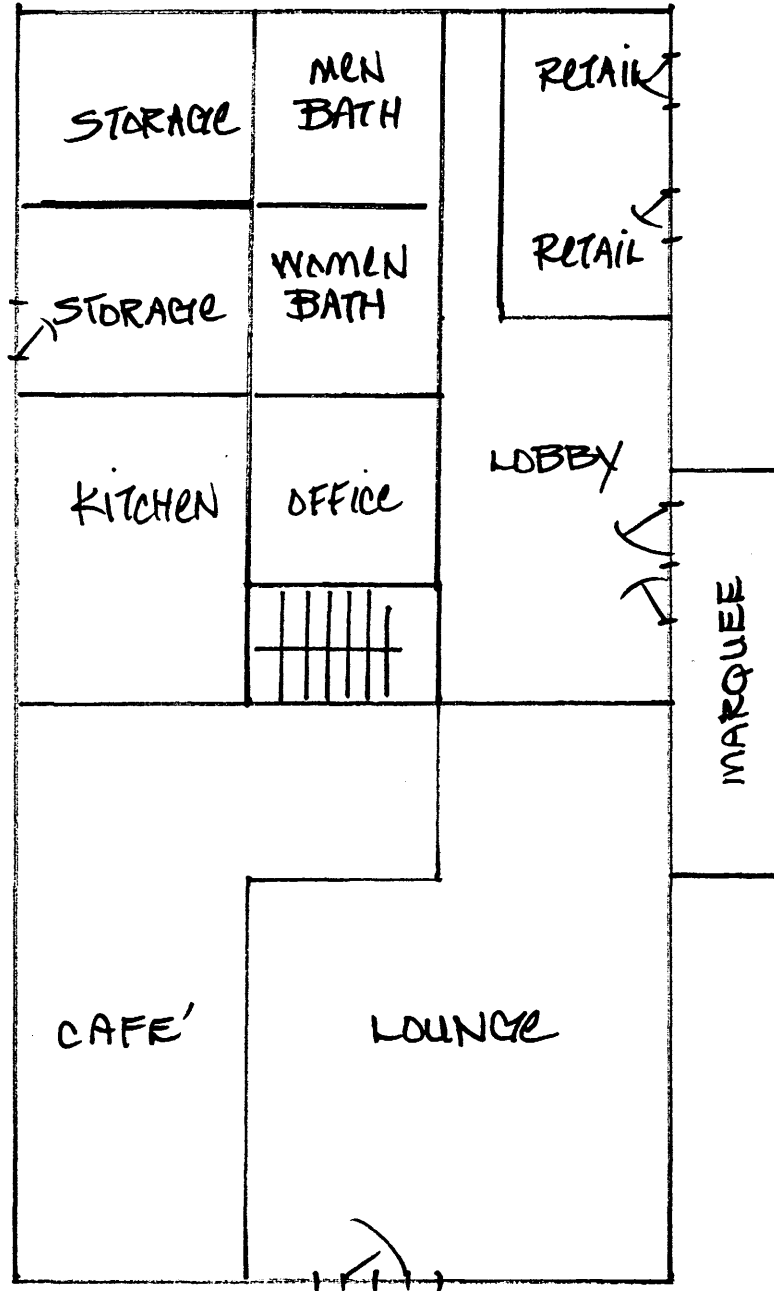
Scale 200 ft pr inch.

ALMIRA HOTEL
3 North Third Avenue
Almira, WA 99103

Almira Hotel in Lincoln County, WA: Site Plan for property

LODGE HALL ADJOINING BLDG.

52'

NORTH

98'

ALMIRA HOTEL

MARQUEE ENTRANCE

THIRD AVENUE

GARAGE

MAIN STREET

ALMIRA HOTEL
3 North Third Avenue
Almira, WA 99103

Almira Hotel in Lincoln County, WA: First floor plan

STORAGE | MEN BATH | RETAIL
STORAGE | WOMEN BATH | RETAIL
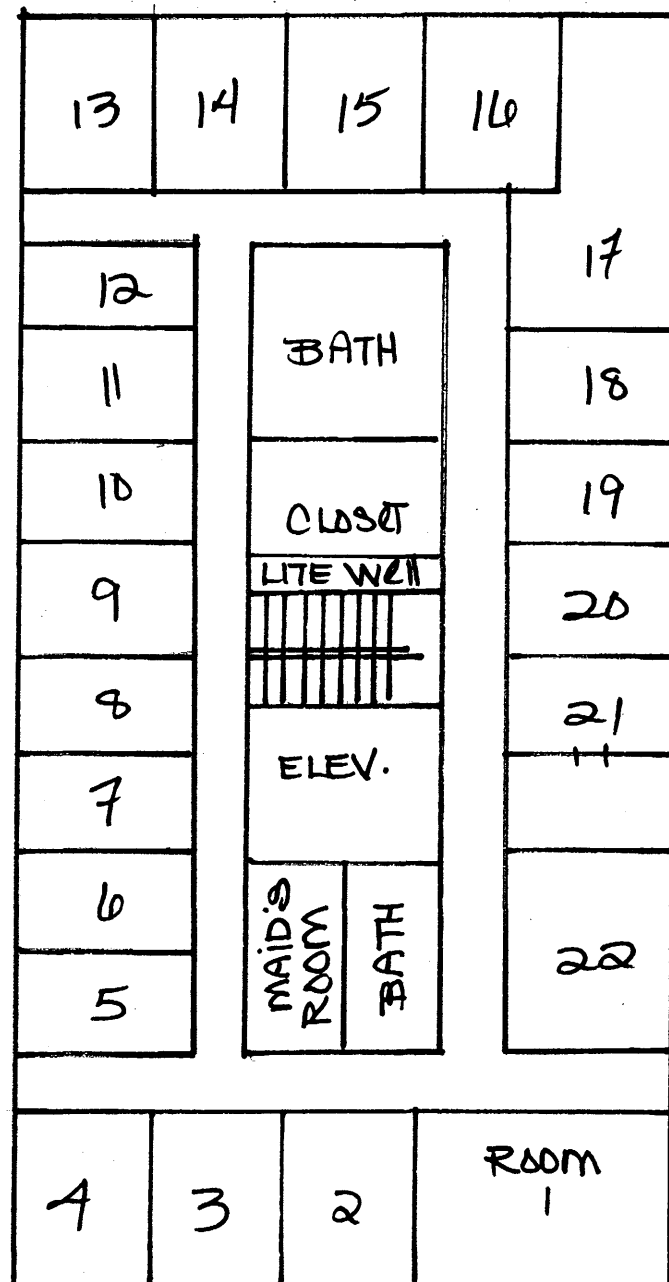KITCHEN | OFFICE | LOBBY
| | MARQUEE
CAFE' | LOUNGE

ALMIRA HOTEL
3 North Third Avenue
Almira, WA 99103

Almira Hotel in Lincoln County, WA: Second floor plan

ALMIRA HOTEL
3 North Third Avenue
Almira, WA 99103

Almira Hotel in Lincoln County, WA: Third floor plan

11 12 13 14 15

BATH

9

8 CLOSET

7 LITE WELL

6

5 ELEVATOR

4 LAUNDRY

3 BATH

2 ROOM 1

10

16

17