NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If 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 **Wilson Hotel**

Other names/site number New Wilson Hotel

2. Location

street & number 804 Commercial Avenue ____ not for publication

city or town Anacortes ____ vicinity

State Washington code WA county Skagit code 057 zip code 98221

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 10/29/04

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:

- V entered in the National Register.
  - __ See continuation sheet
- __ determined eligible for the National Register.
  - __ See continuation sheet
- __ determined not eligible for the National Register.
- __ removed from the National Register.
- __ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

Carol M. Beall 12/15/04

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
COMMERCE/restaurant
COMMERCE/specialty shop

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling
COMMERCE/restaurant
COMMERCE/specialty shop
Work in progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Romanesque Revival
LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Brick
Concrete
roof Tar
other Stone

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** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

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

___ **C** a birthplace or grave.

___ **D** a cemetery.

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

___ **F** a commemorative property.

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

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)
Architecture
Commerce

Period of Significance
1890 - 1926

Significant Dates
1890
1911
1926

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
James Pickles & Albert Sutton (Architect)

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
x Other

Name of repository:
Anacortes Museum

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM References on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	10	5 285 84	53 736 89	3			
2				4			

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 Eugenia Woo
organization Vermilion preservation consulting date July 30, 2004
street & number P.O. Box 17595 telephone (206) 297-8036
city or town Seattle state WA zip code 98127

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.
Site plan
Sketch floor plans

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.
Historic photographs

Additional items

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

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

name Wilson Hotel Housing, LLC
street & number 719 Q Avenue telephone (360) 293-7831
city or town Anacortes state WA zip code 98221

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:

Setting

Built in 1890, the Wilson Hotel was one of several hotels constructed during Anacortes's short-lived building boom. Located in the commercial core of the city of Anacortes on Fidalgo Island in Skagit County, Washington, the Wilson Hotel is prominently situated at the southwest corner of Commercial Avenue and 8th Street (804 Commercial Avenue). It is one of the most substantial buildings in the historic business district, which consists of a collection of late 19th to early 20th century buildings, mostly one or two stories in height. Many of the facades of these buildings were changed over the decades to reflect more "modern" styles. Several landmark buildings representing the city's beginnings are extant and continue to be landmarks in the area, the Wilson Hotel being one of them. Construction of the hotel began in the summer of 1890 and was completed by December of the same year at a cost of approximately $42,000.[1]

Approaching north into the downtown core along Commercial Avenue (also known as State Route 20 Spur between 36th Street and 12th Street), the street changes from the strip mall developments flanking both sides to a more pedestrian-friendly environment in the historic business core. Adjacent to the Wilson Hotel on the west is a one-story, brick-clad, commercial building. Residential neighborhoods and Causland Memorial Park lie farther to the west. Across Commercial Avenue to the east is a one-story, commercial building containing a bank and a restaurant. Two blocks farther east of the Wilson is the deepwater Port of Anacortes and Fidalgo Bay. To the north is the heart of the historic commercial district consisting of one and two story commercial buildings with Guemes Channel, the continuation of the Port of Anacortes, and the marina stretching beyond. To the south is an alley and one-story commercial building housing a bank and a barbershop. The topography in this part of Anacortes is flat.

The three-story, Romanesque Revival style Wilson Hotel stands on a flat rectangular corner lot. The 24,400 square foot building features an L-shaped plan. The plan's shape forms an exterior courtyard on the building's southwest side which is used more functionally for parking and storage of trash receptacles. The building was originally rectangular in plan. The 1926 addition changed it to an L-shape plan.

For ease of description, the original building and the addition are described separately.

Exterior: 1890 Building

The original 1890 building (rectangular in shape measuring 100' x 60') is constructed of unreinforced masonry walls with a concrete foundation supporting wood floor and roof/ceiling joists around the exterior and wood stud bearing walls at the interior. The entire south (alley) façade is clad in stucco (over brick) and painted with a mural depicting Anacortes history. This mural was painted by local artist Bill Mitchell in recent years to commemorate the city's heritage. Portions of the stucco to the rear and at the base of this alley façade have been removed and reveal the original red brick underneath. The three remaining elevations are clad in painted brick. The primary (east) façade is divided into five bays—two bays on either side flanking a central bay with an arched entrance. This arch is repeated on the multi-light window on the third level. Brick piers with rusticated sandstone bases break up the ground floor's five bays on the east façade. The sandstone bases are painted with some of the paint and layers of sandstone chipping off.

The north and east facades are characterized by a brick cornice punctuated with brick corbels. The first and second floors are separated by a non-historic sheet metal stringcourse which either cover up or replaced the original stringcourse. The north elevation has three bays separated by brick pilasters. The pilasters and brick corbelling on the second and third levels create visual relief and texture for the building's restrained decorative motifs.

The primary entrance to the building is through the non-historic aluminum-framed glass double doors under the central arched entry off Commercial Avenue. This entrance leads into a small lobby and the main staircase for the upper floors. The original recessed arched entry has been altered by the removal of the original doors, covering of the fanlight with stucco, and removal of the semi-circular brick arch itself. However, the shape of the archway has been maintained. Some of these changes most likely occurred in the mid-1950s when the storefronts were renovated.

All four ground floor storefronts on the east façade have been altered, some more extensively than others. Given the number of different establishments that have been housed on the ground floor over the decades, it still retains its proportions. Each of the four ground floor retail spaces has its own primary entrance off Commercial Avenue. None of the doors on the east elevation are original to the building. However, with the exception of the southernmost storefront, three of the four entrances are in their original locations. Three of the four storefronts retain their original cast iron columns—the Bangkok Bistro storefront is the exception.

The two southernmost storefronts retain the most original fabric with their multi-light transom windows and cast iron columns still extant. Both of these storefronts have non-original fixed windows surrounded by horizontal wood siding. Originally, large plate glass windows and bulkheads characterized the storefronts along with the transom windows and cast iron columns. The two southern spaces are currently used by one establishment (a tavern) with a set of non-historic double doors serving as the main entrance. A non-historic single door is also located in the southernmost bay. Both sets of doors are flush with the building.

The hotel underwent an extensive remodel in 1954. A drawing of the storefront level in the local newspaper, the *Anacortes American,* shows the proposed work. The Bangkok Bistro storefront adjacent to the north of the main

entrance to the building dates from this period and has elements of the Populuxe or Googie style born from the post-WWII era which thrived between 1954 and 1964. The style was characterized by bold angles, colorful signs, plate glass, sweeping cantilevered roofs and pop-culture imagery capturing the attention of drivers on the streets. The storefront was remodeled for Sucia Reef Restaurant which occupied the space between 1954-1975. The 1954 storefront originally featured a prominent colorful neon sign of the restaurant's name. With the Wilson Hotel's location on Anacortes' main business thoroughfare, the sign and angled storefront were meant to draw attention to the business. The 1954 storefront's angled façade, two large one-over-one, fixed wood windows frame a double-door entrance, and random coursed stone bulkheads are all intact.

The northernmost storefront only historic feature is the original cast iron columns. The rest of the storefront is non-original wood-framed with large plate glass and transom windows divided into two panes separated by a mullion. It has a recessed entrance with double doors. The wood window on the north elevation just around the corner is non-original.

Secondary entrances for the building and retail spaces are located on the three remaining sides. On the north elevation off 8th Street, a single door (original) at the rear (just east of the addition) leads into a storage area for the building. The northernmost retail space also has a secondary entrance (non-original) on the same north elevation near the rear. The southernmost retail space has a secondary single door entrance (original segmental arched opening) on the south (alley) elevation. The west elevation has two entrances on the ground floor—one leading from the rear of the tavern and adjacent to the one-story concrete masonry unit restroom addition; the other is an entrance for the one story storage shed addition. The second and third floors have door openings that are no longer used—these openings led to an exterior stair that was removed.

The Wilson Hotel's windows are mostly original and provide important visual character. The total number of windows on the upper floors of the east façade is thirty-two. All are original one-over-one, double-hung, wood windows. Each of the second floor windows is distinguished by a flat arch with a decorative molding with scrolled ends above each flat arch.

Each of the upper floors on the north and south end bays contains two pairs of windows while the two bays next to the central bay have three windows on each floor. The third floor arched windows are made more pronounced by the presence of semi-circular, brick, arches. The upper floors of the central bay contain a pair of windows on each level with the third level pair of windows separated by a pilaster with an ionic capital and characterized by a multi-light arched window with a stilted semi-circular brick arch. The brick pilasters separating the bays terminate above the parapet line.

The total number of windows on the upper floors of the north elevation is eighteen. Like the north façade, all are original one-over-one, double-hung, wood windows with the same stylistic elements in their details and type of arches. The only difference is the fenestration pattern. Whereas the east façade has five bays, the north façade has three. The second and third floors of each end bay on the north elevation have a pair of windows on each floor and the larger center bay has five windows on each level.

The south elevation contains the only non-original windows on the upper floors of the building. The total number of window openings (ten) has been maintained with five windows on each floor. The original lower sashes were replaced with aluminum sliders and the upper sashes were boarded up and painted over. A metal fire escape at the center of this elevation provides egress to the alley at the second and third levels.

The upper floors of the west façade have four six-over-two, double hung wood windows with segmental arches on each level. Two of the windows on the second floor are boarded up. The first floor windows have been boarded up and painted or partially blocked off due to the addition of the restrooms for the tavern and the storage shed.

The roof is flat with a parapet and the roof material is tar/built up. Two brick chimneys located near the center also characterize the west elevation.

As originally built in 1890, one of the building's most prominent features was the triangular pediment that rose above the parapet above the arched center bay. The building name, "Wilson Block," was inscribed on the face of the pediment. The numbers indicating the year of construction were located between the second and third floor windows in the center bay. Neither of these features remains on the building—the date of their removal is unknown.

Interior: 1890 Building

The interior of the 1890 building has been altered extensively over the years because of the hotel's frequent change of ownership and many renovations. The current lobby is a long, narrow space with a recessed ceiling and an elevator in the back behind an archway. A doorway leading to the tavern in the space next south is near the rear of the lobby. The original staircase from the first floor lobby to third floor remains. The original newel post, balusters, and hand rail are missing on the first floor. All other original parts of the staircase and the wainscot on the walls remain. The other floors have retained all parts of the original staircase except for the balusters, which have been replaced. Walls are painted, textured plaster. Ghost images of three archways that used to lead into a larger lobby are evident on the south wall. The only decorative feature that remains is the Spanish galleon relief in the arch over the door on the north wall before ascending the stairs. These features were part of a 1926-1927 renovation of the lobby.

Each of the four ground floor retail spaces measures approximately 21' x 58'. Due to the many different uses for these spaces, no original features remain. Only the original configuration of the volume of space is retained—the hotel was built to house four commercial/retail spaces. The floors for all the spaces are concrete with the exception of the northernmost space, which has a wood floor.

The second and third floors each have a long wide corridor that runs north to south. The corridors are in their original location and retain the same dimensions. Secondary hallways are located near the north end. On the second floor, the hallway continues with a slight jog into the corridor of the second level of the addition. The same hallway also leads to a narrow flight of stairs going up to the third floor of the addition. Access to the fourth floor of the addition is through

the same stairs at the third floor of the addition. Plans for making the two structures level were never completed. An original skylight is located at the center of the building, providing natural light to the third floor corridor and staircase.

The floors for both upper levels have been stripped to a wood sub floor. Some portions of the corridor walls and ceilings are drywall, other portions are plaster, and some walls have been stripped down to the wood stud partitions. Many of the exterior walls are exposed brick. These conditions are reminders of earlier renovation attempts by previous owners that were never completed. Only a few units retain the original five-paneled wood doors with decorative door hardware, wood window casings with rosette corner blocks, and baseboards. A recent previous owner converted the northeast corner unit on the third floor to an apartment—it is the only unit with a kitchen and full bathroom (non-historic).

Alterations

The interior spaces have undergone significant alterations over the years due to the nature of the building's mixed use as a hotel with ground floor commercial/retail spaces. The *Anacortes American* followed the construction of the building and reported on its subsequent changes through much of the building's life. These newspaper accounts offer glimpses into the property as it developed over the years. In 1890, Anacortes was experiencing its biggest boom phase and the Wilson Hotel represented this growth offering first class accommodations in a place that had not yet incorporated and was looking to get its name on the map.

An *Anacortes American* article from October 23, 1890 anticipates a December opening and speaks to the importance of the Wilson Hotel:

> Since Anacortes became a City, one of the greatest needs has been a first-class hotel centrally located...The Wilson Hotel building, which occupies a fine location overlooking Fidalgo Bay and the country surroundings, is 60 x 100 feet in size and three stories in height. The lower story contains two store rooms, twenty-one feet wide and fifty-eight feet deep, a dining room on one side of the hallway and an office and barroom on the other. The second story contains thirty rooms, well lighted and ventilated, and the third story, thirty-two rooms. A hallway runs the entire length of the building on both floors. The hotel will be hard finished throughout with all windows, doors, casings, and wainscoting of red cedar, and when finished will be one of the most substantial hotel buildings on the lower sound.[2]

The configuration of the ground floor plan has been maintained and the uses are similar to what they were historically—restaurant and tavern/bar. Originally, the ground floor spaces had fifteen feet high ceilings and storefront windows were fine quality French plate glass.[3] In the first few years of operation, the Wilson provided a sample room in the front half of the southernmost retail space. Sample rooms were rooms that could be rented by traveling salesman for the display of their merchandise. These rooms were popular for salesman because they were less expensive than renting a meeting room and more accessible to the public than their own guest room. Sample

rooms were a popular service offered by good commercial hotels throughout the country from the late 19th century through the first half of the 20th century.

The second floor originally contained either thirty rooms or thirty-two rooms with a public parlor at the northeast corner and the third floor housed either thirty or thirty-two rooms. Different newspaper accounts gave conflicting numbers of the units on each floor.[4] The total number of units would have still been sixty-two. In addition to the main corridor on each of the upper floors, smaller side entrance halls led from the main hallway to the outer rooms on both sides of the corridor.[5] Portions of this configuration can be seen today.

By 1901, only eleven years after it opened its doors, the Wilson Hotel was no longer the fine hotel it once was and was in need of repairs. Valentine Funk acquired the property from the English Company which obtained the building from Wilson through legal proceedings due to taxes owed by Wilson. A news article from 1901 described the building as being dilapidated.

1911 brought about the first major renovation to the building in an effort by Funk to modernize the hotel at a cost of approximately $18,000. It was at this time that the exterior brick was first painted. Steam heat was installed, several of the front rooms gained private baths, and the entire hotel was refurnished. The office was "enlarged by the removal of the partition which is now between the stairway and the office, thus giving an added number of feet to the dimensions of the room. A new floor is to be laid in the bar-room, while Messrs. Whalen & Freeman, the new proprietors of the hotel, contemplate putting in new fixtures."[6] In addition, a red concrete floor was laid in the business office and pulp floor put in the café. The Pacific Telephone Company installed a switchboard in the hotel, enabling guests staying in second floor rooms to have their own telephones. Another improvement was the addition of an electric switchboard which gave the hotel the most up-to-date lighting of any hotel outside of larger cities.[7]

Funk and the proprietors of the hotel renamed the building twice in 1911, first calling it the "New Wilson Hotel" and then changing it to the "Hotel de Fuca" for its proximity to the Juan de Fuca Strait. The latter name was short-lived and the hotel was thereafter known as the New Wilson.

The renovation was complete by October 1911 and was described in newspaper accounts as "strictly first class in all respects." Having such a modern hostelry reflected well on Anacortes's progress and general prosperity in the region. The alterations reduced the number of rooms from sixty-two to fifty-one. The *Anacortes American* describes the New Wilson, "Fifty-one rooms have been provided for the accommodations of guests and these have been furnished with the very finest quality of furniture. They are electric lighted, steam heated and have hot and cold water and telephone, the only hotel anywhere in this section in which these modern accommodations have been provided. There are twelve rooms with private baths and fine bath rooms for other guests. A finely appointed grill has been provided..."[8]

Five years after the overhaul, Wallie Funk (Valentine and Barbara Funk's son) bought the hotel business from Cohen and Sheedy who acquired the business from Whalen a few years earlier. Wallie Funk planned to make more changes to the interior including reopening the dining room, converting the barroom into a first-class card and billiard room and

soft drink emporium, installing a plate glass front in the lobby, adding an archway to the back room and turning it into a reading room with a new fireplace.[9]

The next period of work at the New Wilson occurred in early 1926 when Valentine Funk and his son announced plans for an addition to the New Wilson and another major renovation to the old hotel. An *Anacortes American* article reported, "All inside rooms of the present building will be eliminated. The entire building will be improved and refinished. All rooms in the improved hotel and addition will adjoin private bath or shower facilities. A private lavatory will be provided for each room. The present lobby of the hotel will be improved and new equipment added."[10] It was also at this time that the hotel received an entirely new electrical wiring system and an expanded telephone switchboard. Also part of the scope of work was the inclusion of a new Otis elevator with a steel carriage enclosed by a reinforced concrete shaft. It was installed in the space between the stairway and the hotel desk and remains today. This elevator replaced an earlier one that was installed in 1905 which was also the first elevator in Anacortes.

The capacity of the New Wilson was increased significantly with the addition of a new four-story, reinforced concrete structure extending west on 8th Street. The addition originally contained thirty rooms on the upper three floors with three sample rooms on the ground floor.[11] By November of 1926, "...all three floors of guest rooms in the annex were complete. Lighting and bath fixtures have been installed. Interior woodwork finished. Painters have completed decorating the woodwork in attractive tones of driftwood gray and calsomining the walls and ceilings in a light shade of rose...All rooms having baths are also equipped with showers. The bath rooms are furnished with up-to-date lighting fixtures, built-in tubs and other features intended to make the hotel one of the most modern in the state."[12]

With the addition completed and the rooms of the original hotel updated, the Funks concentrated on renovating the hotel lobby at the end of 1926 until the spring of 1927. They chose a Spanish décor theme for the lobby in their choice of colors (tan and cream), lighting, furnishings, grillwork, and features such as a brick fireplace built by a local mason. It was at this time that the arches and Spanish galleons in plaster relief in the arches were put in. The galleons were designed by a local commercial artist, L. Kronquist and are a design feature that was used throughout the lobby area.[13] Remnants of the archways on the south wall of the lobby are evident as is one of the galleons above a doorway on the north wall.

In 1944, the New Wilson had grown tired again and it was time for another renovation by the Funks. Ceilings in all the rooms were lowered by three feet; walls were papered and wood work was painted; showers were added in those rooms that had baths; new light fixtures were installed; new furnishings replaced the old pieces; the hallways on the upper floors were also lowered and the ceilings and walls were painted; and the hallway walls were finished off with an embossed paper.[14]

1926 Addition

The addition is a four-story, reinforced concrete structure with a concrete foundation. It stands at the same height as the original building but the ceiling height on each floor is lower than ceiling height of the 1890 building. As a result, the floors for the two buildings do not match up. The architect or builder of the addition is unknown. Its Commercial style design is restrained, exhibits no ornamentation and was meant to be a background building to the original Romanesque Revival style Wilson Hotel. The 1926 addition has retained its physical integrity and stands as an important component of the Wilson Hotel's development history.

Its primary façade (north) fronts 8th Street. The building is square in plan (40' x 40') with a small, one-story, concrete masonry unit storage shed jutting out from the southwest corner. As is characteristic of a Commercial style building, all three visible facades have flat fronts. The north façade is sheathed in textured stucco while the west and south facades have a smooth stucco finish. The building is painted in a light gray color. The original metal fire escape is located on the west elevation. Like the original building, the addition has a flat roof with tar/built-up roof material. A lightwell, which is visible from the south looking north, separates the addition from the original building. Access to the upper floors of the building is gained from the interior through a second story hallway and stairs on the second and third levels of the original 1890 building. The ground floor houses two commercial/retail spaces, storage areas, and the kitchen for the restaurant in the original building. Each of the commercial/retail spaces has its own entrance off 8th Street. The west space (a style salon) measures 12' x 26' and the east space (an electronics business) measures 25' x 18'. The storefront system was built with wood and has transom windows with textured glass. The electronics establishment has non-original aluminum double doors while the salon has a single wood framed glass door.

The upper floor windows on the north elevation are original, three-over-one, double hung wood windows. Each floor has three windows for a total of nine. The west elevation has only three windows, one on each floor, located in the center allowing access to the fire escape. The south elevation also has nine windows, three on each floor—same type as on the north façade. Five of the openings are boarded up and one window on the third floor farthest to the west is missing the upper sash. On the first floor, a mechanical hood obscures one window and another window is boarded up. A single door entrance between these windows provides access to the kitchen of the restaurant. The storage shed also has its own entrance through a single door. A chimney is visible at the southeast corner of the building.

The existing configuration of individual units reflects some changes made by previous owners. The total number of units is eighteen, six units on each floor. Originally, the addition had thirty units. The units are stacked so they are the same in plan from floor to floor—three units on either side divided by a corridor that runs east to west. All units except for one (the northeast unit on second floor) have a living/sleeping area, bathroom and closet. The northeast unit on the second floor does not have a closet. Corridor floors have been stripped to the wood sub floor and the walls are finished in plaster or partially gutted to the studs. The room floors are carpeted and the walls are either finished in painted plaster or covered in wood paneling. All original paneled wood doors, hardware, door frames and window frames remain. The ceilings in the corridors and rooms are finished in plaster.

At 114 years, the Wilson Hotel remains a testament to Anacortes history. It exhibits many years of constant use and hard wear, and in recent decades, neglect on the upper floors through vacancy and incomplete alterations. Due to the nature of its use as a hotel with commercial/retail space, it has seen many alterations to the interior throughout its life but has generally maintained its spatial relationships. The Wilson retains its exterior character-defining features, massing, and scale and still exhibits a large presence in downtown Anacortes.

NOTES

[1] "Bounding Ahead, the Wilson Hotel Building Commenced," *Anacortes American* (June 5, 1890), Vol. I No. 4, p. 4.

[2] "The Wilson Hotel to be Opened to the Public by December 15th," *Anacortes American* (October 23, 1890), Vol. I No. 24, p. 1.

[3] "New Buildings, Handsome Structures Being Erected, Blocks of Brick and Stone, The Wilson Block," *Anacortes American* (July 31, 1890), Vo. I No. 12, p. 1.

[4] *Anacortes American* (July 31, 1890 and October 23, 1890).

[5] *Anacortes American* (June 5, 1890).

[6] "Wilson Hotel to Undergo Improvements," *Anacortes American* (April 13, 1911).

[7] "Electric Switchboard for New Wilson Hotel," *Anacortes American* (August 24, 1911).

[8] "The New Wilson Hotel, the Most Modern and Up-to-Date Hostelry in this Section," *Anacortes American* (October 12, 1911).

[9] "New Wilson in New Hands," *Anacortes American* (January 6, 1916).

[10] "Funk Makes Plans for Enlarging New Wilson," *Anacortes American* (May 20, 1926).

[11] *Anacortes American* (May 20, 1926).

[12] "One Floor of New Wilson Will Be Ready This Week," *Anacortes American* (November 11, 1926).

[13] "Lobby of New Wilson is Made Elaborate, No Expense Spared to Make Hotel Attractive," *Anacortes American* (April 28, 1927).

[14] "Wilson Hotel Modernization Being Completed," *Anacortes American* (April 27, 1944).

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Wilson Hotel, prominently situated on Anacortes's main business thoroughfare, Commercial Avenue, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. The period of significance begins in 1890 with the construction of the hotel and ends in 1926, when the addition to the hotel was built. The hotel provided the finest lodging for travelers and visitors to Anacortes for decades. When construction on the Wilson Hotel began in the summer of 1890, Anacortes was little more than a field of tree stumps and mud, with the cedar and fir trees cleared away just months before. Within a few short years, the Wilson Hotel would see Anacortes through its boom time, the disappointment that it would not be a terminus for any of the railroads, the bust, the Panic of 1893, its rebirth through the lumber and fishing industries, and its continuing adaptability to the needs of our times.

Commerce is the area of significance which demonstrates the building's eligibility under Criterion A for its association with broad patterns of history which led to the growth and development of Anacortes as Skagit County's largest city. The Wilson Hotel is also eligible under Criterion C as a good example of the work of a prominent Tacoma architecture firm, Pickles and Sutton. The Wilson Hotel in Anacortes was designed in a style similar to their other works in Tacoma and it remains as one of only six of the firm's buildings still extant. The firm was considered one of Puget Sound's most prominent and prolific firms in the 1880s and 1890s. They worked at a time when cities throughout the West were experiencing tremendous growth, largely due to the railroads.

The story of the West is tightly connected to the coming of the railroads and Anacortes is no exception. The town hinged its hopes on being the terminus for the Northern Pacific Railroad. Like many other cities, Anacortes has experienced cycles of boom and bust. These economic occurrences are often manifested in the city's built environment through its pattern of development. Anacortes retains a somewhat intact downtown dating from 1890 through the first few decades of the 1900s, with pockets of infill development from the 1950s through the present. Commercial Avenue is a fine example of the city's pattern of development. In general, existing buildings have seen alterations to the exterior on the ground level—these alterations reflect changes in taste and design over the decades as property owners and business owners looked to "modernize" entrances, windows, and doors to suit aesthetic desires or changes in use. Building materials range from red brick facades; wood; concrete; sandstone detailing; and stucco.

Historical Development of Fidalgo Island

Anacortes is a waterfront community situated in the north section of Fidalgo Island in Skagit County in northwest Washington. Fidalgo Island is connected to the mainland (east) by a slough and to Whidbey Island (south) by Deception Pass Bridge. To the north is Guemes Island and to the west are the San Juan Islands—accessible by ferry.

For thousands of years before European American settlement, indigenous peoples who lived on the land inhabited the area. According to Theresa Trebon's *First Views, An Early History of Skagit County: 1850-1899*, "Fidalgo Island and the 'Skaadchet' villages...were at the epicenter of a territory inhabited by these Indians. Whites oftentimes grouped the valley's Indians and those from the offshore islands as 'Skagits,' a term that included distinctly different

bands such as the Swinomish, Lower Skagit, Samish, Kikiallus, Noo-wha-ah, and those from the upper Skagit River. These communities, each unique cultural units unto themselves, affiliated with each other according to need. Their inhabitants traveled widely in their seasonal search for food and trade goods, interacting with Indians from southern British Columbia, the Central Washington Plateau, and southern Puget Sound."[1] In 1873, the Swinomish Reservation was established on southeastern Fidalgo Island where many of the Swinomish and other native Skagit peoples continue to live.

European exploration of the state's northwest coast began in the late 1700s. Spanish explorer Captain Juan Francisco de Eliza named Fidalgo Island for his lieutenant, Salvador Fidalgo. The Spanish influence in the area was short-lived and ended by 1818 when Britain and the United States attempted to claim the area.[2] In 1841, Commander Charles Wilkes of the U.S. Exploring Expedition was mapping the northwest coast and changed the name of Fidalgo Island to Perry's Island for Oliver Perry (known for the Battle of Lake Erie, War of 1812.) In 1846, the Oregon Treaty resolved the border disputes between Britain and the United States. A British officer, determined to recognize the area's first European explorers, restored the Spanish names of the various islands the following year.

Soon after the region was mapped, fur traders and trappers followed. As the Hudson's Bay Company "extended its reach into the Puget Sound region, its traders used the thin ribbon of water between Fidalgo Island and the mainland as a transportation route."[3] A general peaceful coexistence between Indians and fur traders that had existed effectively ended when in 1850, Congress passed the Oregon Donation Land Claim Act that offered 320 acres of free land to single white males and 640 acres to married men.[4]

The first settlers to Fidalgo Island arrived in the late 1850s and early 1860s. By 1870, residents of the island were counted for the first time in the United States census. All sixty residents lived on March Point or around Fidalgo Bay. The population of the island continued to grow through the 1870s. One of the prime motivators for settling in the area was speculation that the Northern Pacific Railroad would terminate on Fidalgo Island.

The Birth and Growth of Anacortes

Like so many other communities in Western Washington hoping to become a railroad terminus, Fidalgo Island was swept up in this speculative atmosphere. "Among those settled on Fidalgo in the late 1870s was an engineer whose visions for the island would one day have profound consequences."[5] Canadian-born Amos Bowman was a civil engineer who worked in the railroad industry. He came to Fidalgo and purchased land on its northeast shore, an area known as Ship Harbor. He bought the land from Maude Stevens, daughter of Washington's first governor, Isaac Stevens. She had bought the property in anticipation of the railroad's arrival. The Northern Pacific Railroad had announced its intention to resume construction of its transcontinental line. Bowman had an insider's knowledge of the railroad industry and knew of the NP's interest in Fidalgo Island as a terminus site. His vision for the island was a grand one. He anticipated a city of thirty thousand with major industries such as fisheries and lumber; mansions and cottages and a commercial hub all in a naturally beautiful setting.

In 1879, Bowman built a small store, post office and wharf on Guemes Channel. "When it came time for officially naming the post office, he turned to his wife for inspiration. He combined her first name of Anna and maiden name of Curtis, and then tweaked the spellings somewhat so it 'reflected the Spanish sounds of neighboring place names'—or so the legend goes Anacortes it would be."[6] Bowman promoted his grand vision through the *Northwest Enterprise*, the island's first newspaper, which he launched in 1882. When the Northern Pacific completed its line in 1883, Tacoma remained the terminus and Anacortes did not experience the growth Bowman had envisioned. Four years after it began, the *Northwest Enterprise* ceased publication in 1886 due to a lack of subscribers. Bowman and his family left Anacortes only to return three years later to promote the community again as a site for a railroad line. The *Anacortes Progress* became the community's second newspaper, a successor to the *Northwest Enterprise*.

In 1888, the Oregon Improvement Company (OIC) offered to bring a railroad to Anacortes if Bowman and others on the island gave the company a land grant of two thousand acres. By January 1890, speculation about which Puget Sound communities would be the terminuses for the Northern Pacific, Union Pacific and Great Northern Railroad was in full force. The OIC offer rekindled interest in Anacortes as a terminus for the railroads. The NP considered expanding its line north from Tacoma. The Union Pacific's terminus was in Portland, Oregon but wanted access to Puget Sound's ports. The Great Northern was under construction and its Puget Sound terminus was unknown. A branch line of the OIC's Seattle and Northern Railroad between Fidalgo and Sedro opened in August 1890. It had planned to build its line over the Cascade Mountains to Spokane, hub of the Inland Empire.

1890 marked a watershed year in Anacortes. Surveyors began platting Anacortes in January that year. The community had a population of 200. By mid-March, the population increased to over 2,000.[7] Anacortes began to take shape. What was once an almost impenetrable forest of cedar and fir trees transformed into Skagit County's first major city. The forests had to be cleared away for streets and buildings. Only stumps remained which were then removed with black powder. The rate at which this happened was rapid and somewhat surreal. Buildings cropped up amongst this landscape. According to *An Illustrated History Skagit and Snohomish Counties*, "In 1889 there were practically no buildings or street improvements. A year later Anacortes had 2 completed wharves and 3 more under construction, 3 miles of graded streets, 2 banks, 3 saw-mills, 2 sash and door factories, 4 grocery stores, 3 general merchandise stores, 2 drug stores, 3 boot and shoe stores, 3 bakery and confectionery stores, a three-story brick printing-house, 12 hotels, a theater, a costly school-house projected, several churches, 27 real estate houses, 2 newspapers, the Daily Progress and the Anacortes American, besides the other customary miscellaneous lines of business."[8]

The growth of Anacortes was often the topic of journals and periodicals in the state. An April 1890 issue of *Washington Magazine* contained a nine-page article titled "Anacortes, The Key City of the Sound." It was published during the town's period of exponential growth and it extolled the virtues and assets of Anacortes, describing its good topographical character for a town-site, its deep harbor, proximity to timber, minerals and produce, mild climate, and views of Mt. Baker and the surrounding countryside. It describes a Western town in its infancy looking to become the key city. "At night, Anacortes presents all the features of a thrifty Western town in its first stages. The streets are crowded with day laborers, who are employed on the railroad or in the suburbs working in the timber. Saloons are filled to overflowing. Gambling halls are in full blast...The town, however, is orderly and its inhabitants peaceable."[9]

The article goes on to describe the changes underway with the development of substantial brick buildings housing hotels and banks, the organization of a Chamber of Commerce, construction of an electric railroad, and the opening of more sawmills. "It is probable that in one year there will be *four* railroads with terminal depots on Fidalgo Island, centering in Anacortes. Two are assured in fact—we are speaking of facts, and it is apparent to all who have given the map careful study and reflection, that Anacortes, sometimes called The City of Necessity, will one day be the Key City of the Sound."[10] Anacortes was also known as the "Magic City" in the same time period due to its quick growth.

In May of 1890, a second Anacortes newspaper called the *Anacortes American* began publication. The new newspaper followed the growth and development of the community. In the first five months of January 1890, over 300 buildings were erected in Anacortes but most of these were wood-framed structures and not that solid in construction. Brick buildings were soon to be erected—these were more imposing and impressive structures built to impress newcomers and show that Anacortes had arrived. The first brick building erected on the island was the two-story Platt Building which housed Anacortes's first bank. The Platt stands today as a landmark and reminder of Anacortes's beginnings.

Other brick buildings were constructed shortly after the Platt Building. The material was readily available from a newly established brick yard (See's Brick Yard) near Guemes Channel. "John See, a well-known Tacoma brick mason and builder, moved his business to Anacortes at the behest of David Wilson."[11] As more permanent buildings were erected, the need for better streets became clear. The planking of Anacortes's streets in the business core began in 1890. P Avenue (Commercial Avenue's original name), where the Wilson was being built, was one of Anacortes's main business streets and was planked during this time. It was not paved until 1914.[12]

As with other communities that experience growth, attention turned to Anacortes's incorporation which would allow for more improvements to its infrastructure and more controlled growth and development of the city to benefit all. Incorporation came to Anacortes in May 1891.

The great boom went bust almost as suddenly as it had begun. "Times were very quiet in the latter part of 1891, and the following year the town was sustained chiefly by a fight for the County seat...In 1893 the hard times struck Anacortes with full force...Business was completely paralyzed and the spark of life left in Anacortes was feeble indeed. However, a spark did remain, which was fanned by a few devoted souls who had confidence in the future of the place. Its excellent harbor and manufacturing facilities were such that a more substantial nature was almost certain."[13] The population plummeted to 936 by 1893, less than half the number of people in 1890. Seven years later, the figures increased to 1,476 and by 1906, approximately 4,100 people lived in Anacortes.[14]

Anacortes was able to overcome its earlier problems with a fluctuating population and did not need to rely on a railroad for its success. The fishing industry flourished and was the biggest industry in Anacortes for decades. Salmon canning and codfish curing began in the 1890s. By the early 1900s, there were a dozen fish processing plants employing hundreds of people, including Chinese workers. Lumber mills were also established in the 1890s. By 1903, Anacortes had four shingle mills and three sawmills. The Anacortes Lumber and Box Company began operation in 1904 and closed in the 1950s. The Anacortes Pulp Mill was set up in 1925; it was bought by the Scott

Paper Company in the 1940s and closed in 1978. Boat building and repair was another early industry. A plywood mill (Anacortes Veneer) began in the 1930s and stayed in operation until 1992. Shell and Texaco built refineries on March Point (across Fidalgo Bay east of Anacortes) in the late 1950s providing a large source of employment for the island. The late 1960s brought more upscale housing developments which attracted retirees to the area. The old mill and cannery sites have been adaptively reused as marinas.[15] Tourist-based industries are continually growing. Fidalgo Island has also attracted fine artists since the 1960s, adding to the diverse culture of the area. Anacortes has grown considerably since its early boom days. It has proved resilient in times of hardship and continues to evolve.

The Wilson Hotel

Like the city in which it resides, the Wilson Hotel, constructed in 1890, has seen its share of ups and downs. It was built during Anacortes' boom time and was touted as one of the finest hotel establishments north of Seattle, serving business travelers and visitors to the Fidalgo Island.

Developer David Wilson, who made a name for himself in Tacoma, built the Wilson Hotel. He was a speculator looking for property in cities and towns he thought had growth potential. In only three years, he built upwards of $300,000 worth of buildings in Washington, mostly in Tacoma. In a Tacoma Daily Ledger article, Wilson was reported as saying he should have focused his investments in Tacoma and not in the smaller towns in Washington because although he was doing well, he could have done better.[16] The Wilson Hotel was one of three buildings he constructed in Anacortes—only the Wilson remains.

It was in an atmosphere of speculation and growth that Wilson decided to build a hotel in the heart of Anacortes on the southwest corner of P Avenue at 8th Street, a prominent corner with views of Fidalgo Bay. He saw a great need for first-class hotel accommodations. He retained the prominent and prolific Tacoma architectural firm of Pickles and Sutton to design a Romanesque Revival style brick building and used the local building/contracting firm of Long and Merritt. Long and Merritt was the largest builder in Anacortes and had erected most of the residences of the city and many of the commercial buildings including other hotels, the post office, and the Northern Pacific depot.[17]

Born near Princeton, Illinois in 1853, Wilson attended college in Galesburg, Illinois before heading to San Francisco in 1871 to finish his education at Heald's Business College. After college, he went into the clothing and furniture business in Santa Cruz, California. Wilson returned to Illinois in 1875 and married Emma Goodspeed. They moved back to Santa Cruz to continue his business. Looking for new opportunities, Wilson had been following news about Washington territory and knew of its potential for new business. He initially made investments in eastern Washington but then turned his sights on Tacoma in 1880. He purchased lots in Tacoma and built hotels and office buildings. He moved to Tacoma in 1887 to devote more time to his investments and to take more interest in the overall business community by participating in the Chamber of Commerce as an officer (Secretary).[18] Among his buildings in Tacoma were the Wilson Building (1887) and the California Block (1889), both demolished. He organized the Tacoma Dock and Warehouse Company and built the first wheat warehouse in the city. Although his base was in Tacoma, Wilson developed properties in smaller cities throughout the state such as Anacortes. Wilson is listed in the Tacoma City

Directories from 1890 (the first year of the directory's publication in Tacoma) to 1896. His family had remained in California while he was in Washington. Presumably, he moved back to California after his business ventures in Washington failed.

The Wilson Hotel stands as one of the few reminders of David Wilson's business ventures in Washington State. Although built on speculation, the Wilson Hotel was a quality project and became a landmark of Anacortes. Wilson retained one of the most prominent firms in Tacoma to design the hotel. In 1890, Pickles and Sutton were at the height of their practice. Both James Pickles and Albert Sutton were listed in the Tacoma City Directory in 1888 as partners in the firm of Pickles and Sutton until 1893 when Pickles began his own practice. Sutton then formed a short-lived partnership with Ambrose J. Russell from 1893-1895. Together, Pickles and Sutton designed several significant commercial buildings in Tacoma including the Sprague Block (1888-89) and Sprague Building (1889-90), wholesale warehouse buildings of similar style to the Wilson Hotel but larger in scale. The Sprague Block is no longer extant but the Sprague Building is listed on both the City of Tacoma and National Registers of Historic Places. Among other known works in Tacoma, Pickles and Sutton also designed the U.S. Post Office (1889), Abbot Building (1889), Uhlman Block (1889), Baker Building (1889), Wolf Building (1889), Joy Block (1882), Berlin Building (1892), Dougan Block (1890), and the Holmes & Ball Furniture Co. (1890). In addition to the Sprague Building, only the U.S. Post Office, Abbot Building, Dougan Block and Joy Block remain in Tacoma. The Wilson Hotel in Anacortes is only one of a handful of Pickles and Sutton's buildings that are extant.

The design of the Wilson Hotel seems to be a common design theme of the work of Pickles and Sutton in the 1880s and 1890s. Like other architects of the time, they were heavily influenced by stylistic movements that came out of Chicago and the east coast. The size of their buildings may vary a little in scale and bulk but they all follow a similar aesthetic and observe design elements from the Romanesque Revival style which was in vogue when the Wilson Hotel was built. Heavy, masonry buildings appeared solid and long-lasting especially at a time when many cities experienced their own version of the Great Fire. All commercial buildings designed by Pickles and Sutton were constructed of unreinforced masonry; exhibit symmetry in the front facades with decorative brick detailing; feature centrally located, prominent, round-arched, masonry entrances; were clad in brick with sandstone detailing; and had a similar rhythm in the fenestration. The Wilson Hotel is a good example of the firm's work; its design is typical of the firm's commercial buildings; and it is one of a handful still extant. Pickles and Sutton was one of Tacoma's most well regarded and prolific architecture firms during that city's own boom time which was longer-lasting than Anacortes' boom year. Only half a dozen of the firm's buildings remain. They survive as a testament to the important work of a key firm in Pacific Northwest architectural heritage.

Scant personal information is known about Pickles. The 1889 Census of Pierce County describes him as "age 26, male, white, architect, single, birthplace England, citizen."[19]

Albert Sutton was born in Victoria, British Columbia, in 1867, but grew up in Portland, Oregon. After attending Portland's public school system, he studied for two years at the University of California. After his time in Berkeley, he became a draftsman for the Southern Pacific Railroad. He moved up to Tacoma in 1888 and formed a partnership with Pickles. Together, they designed at least six commercial buildings in Tacoma's downtown. Knowing the quality

of their work and design, Wilson retained their services for the Wilson Hotel in Anacortes. After his partnerships with Pickles and later Russell ended, Sutton moved to San Francisco and established the firm of Sutton and Weeks which was in business from 1895 to 1910. After this venture, Sutton moved back up to the Northwest and opened a practice in Hood River, Oregon. He also operated a ranch outside of town. In 1913, he formed a partnership with Harrison Whitney of Portland, but maintained his residence in Hood River until 1916 when he returned to Portland, his boyhood home.[20] In 1920, Sutton returned to Tacoma and practiced under the firm name of Sutton and Whitney until his unexpected death from a heart attack in November 1923.

Wilson Hotel Development and Use History

The Wilson Hotel in Anacortes is the only known work of Pickles and Sutton outside of Tacoma. Construction of the three-story Wilson Hotel began in June 1890. Brick was supplied by See's Brick Yard. The previous month, John See, well-known Tacoma brick mason and builder, arrived in Anacortes and set up a new brick yard, taking advantage of the fine and ample clay supply on the island. The brick yard was to supply one million bricks for Wilson's new building.[21] See was drawn to Anacortes by Wilson with this contract and was lured by the prospect that more brick buildings were to be erected in this growing city.

The local newspaper, the *Anacortes American* followed the Wilson Hotel's construction progress throughout the year and announced that it would open to the public in December 1890. Construction of the hotel cost an estimated $42,000. The upper two floors contained fifty-two rooms and the ground floor hosted a restaurant, saloon, retail shops, and office space. The hotel's first proprietors were Robert Ehman and Joseph Slaven. According to an 1891 issue of *Anacortes Illustrated,* "The house is run on the European plan, with restaurant attached and at popular rates. It is finished principally in cedar and is handsomely furnished in every point, the public parlor being in especially good taste. The Wilson has been a great success from the outset, its proprietors, Messrs. Robert Ehman and Joseph Slaven, having made themselves especially agreeable, willing and accommodating to every guest."[22]

The Wilson Hotel came under different management frequently. Ehman and Slaven managed the hotel for only one year. E.S. Dodge followed in 1892 and turned over management of the hotel to E. Moyer in 1893 who lasted until about 1896 when G.W.L. Allen took over management of the hotel. Moyer also managed another Anacortes hotel, the Keystone. The boom expected from the railroads never came and the economic depression of 1893 brought economic trouble to Wilson. A March 17, 1901 *Anacortes American* article reports that Valentine Funk purchased the building from the English Company, the creditor which obtained the building because Wilson had defaulted on payments.[23]

Valentine and Barbara Funk had arrived in Anacortes in 1889, the year before the Wilson Hotel was built. They were "drawn to the 'Magic City'...by rumors of imminent prosperity. There they joined the merchant class, first opening a bakery, and then a grocery store, on the city's main street, P Avenue."[24] The Funks also pinned their hopes on Anacortes becoming a railroad terminus but learned that was not to be the case. They survived the lean years of the depression and the economy started to slowly turn around in 1897. "That year, the excitement of the Klondike gold rush brought many to the Puget Sound region, a convenient jumping-off point for the Yukon. This influx gave local

businesses a reprieve from the 'dull times,' as they were called, enabling merchants like Valentine and Barbara Funk to expand their businesses."[25] The Funks did well enough to start buying property. They purchased a vacant lot at Sixth Street and P Avenue (just two blocks north of the Wilson Hotel) and the old Nobar Hotel on Second Street and O Avenue. They moved the Nobar to the vacant lot and expanded it to twice its size. In 1899 they opened the Pioneer Hotel and a hardware store in the building.

Two years later, the Funks purchased the Wilson Hotel, both the building and the business. By then, they were prominent members of Anacortes's business community and participated greatly in helping to promote its economic vitality. "Within the year, they opened the Hotel Wilson and attracted an important tenant, The Place, noted as 'one of the most magnificently furnished saloons in the Northwest.'"[26] While the Funks maintained ownership of the building from 1901 to 1952, proprietorship of the hotel business changed hands frequently. The building was known as the Hotel Thomson for a short time. In 1902, C.E. Hackett, the proprietor of the hotel at the time, changed the name back to the Wilson Hotel. By 1904, John Meltenberger (Barbara Funk's brother) arrived to manage the hotel. The Funks made improvements to the building including adding an elevator in 1905, Anacortes's first elevator. In 1911, they renovated the building and for a short time (about three months) it was known as the Hotel de Fuca but was later referred to as the New Wilson Hotel. Pacific Telephone installed an electric switchboard in the hotel which allowed every guestroom on the second floor its own telephone. These improvements were made to turn the New Wilson into one of the best hotels in the Puget Sound. An October 1911 issue of the *Anacortes American* boasted about the hotel's new amenities (fine furniture, steam heat, electricity, hot and cold water, and the telephone) and the new proprietors, Jack Whalen and Burnham Freeman. Whalen and Freeman were experienced hoteliers who took ownership of the hotel business after Meltenberger's management. Whalen would later assume full ownership of the hotel in 1912, buying out Freeman's share in the business. The following year, Whalen sold the hotel business to Cohen and Sheedy who operated the business from 1913-1916. The hotel finally maintained longer proprietorship when Wallie Funk, son of Valentine and Barbara Funk, bought the business in 1916. His parents remained owners of the building.

With business growing, the Funks doubled the size of the building in 1926 with a four-story addition extending to the rear (west.) An *Anacortes American* article described the plans, "Eighty modern hotel rooms will be available to patrons of the New Wilson on completion of the building. The addition will contain 30 new bedrooms and three sample rooms on the ground floor on Eighth Street. All the rooms in the present building will be refinished and refurnished. All rooms in the improved hotel and addition will adjoin private bath or shower facilities. A private lavatory will be provided for each room. The present lobby of the hotel will be improved and new equipment added."[27] An Otis elevator was added at this time as well to replace the older elevator. The Funks renovated the New Wilson again in 1944. Valentine Funk maintained ownership of the building until 1952.

Ownership of the building and hotel business after the Funks is unknown but the hotel continued to operate. Ground floor storefronts were consistently occupied by long-term tenants. By 1956, there were longer term residents living in the hotel as they were listed in the telephone directory. The building is listed as the Cove Hotel in the 1962 city directory and operated under that name until 1975. There is no listing for the hotel in 1975. An *Anacortes American* article from July 3, 1984 reported on the purchase of the building in 1984 from Seattle realtor Sidney Sears by

William Pangburn of Oak Harbor. The upper floors of the building had been vacant for some years. Pangburn had plans to renovate the building but it is unknown whether he performed any work on the building. In 1989, the building was sold to Albert D. Behar. Al Mycon of Seattle purchased the building in 1997 and Mycon Real Estate owned it from 2001 until 2004 when the Wilson Hotel Housing, LLC purchased the building.

Chronology of Use

With a new owner, the Wilson Hotel will once again become a key building in Anacortes. Plans for rehabilitation of the building will make it become economically viable again and good quality housing on the upper floors will be provided for the community. The Wilson Hotel was known as a first class establishment in its early years. The upper floors of the hotel have always been used as a hotel or a rooming house but have been vacant for at least two decades. Given the number of times it was renovated in its first fifty years, the hotel's proprietors and the building's owners must have had competition from other hotels in Anacortes. City directories from 1911 through 1930 show anywhere from five to eight other hotels in town. The hotel's proprietorship changed hands frequently but the longest running ownership was by Wallie Funk who acquired the business in 1916 and maintained ownership for about forty years.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps from 1892 through 1907 show one-story structures connected to the Wilson on the west. At various times these structures were used for storage and as a kitchen for the restaurant in the hotel. Two freestanding structures on the property were used as sheds. None of these structures are extant.

The building's ground floor has seen many different establishments over the years but the uses have been consistent with those when the hotel first opened for business in early 1891 (with the building completed in December of 1890.) Eating and drinking establishments (restaurants, cafes, saloons, bars, taverns) and retail stores have been located at the Wilson Hotel since its inception. Typically, a store occupied the north storefront and a tavern or restaurant occupied the south storefront while the spaces adjacent to the main entrance were used for the lobby and hotel office. Following is a list of some of the uses on the ground floor over the years. This information is from a combination of Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, newspaper articles, City directories, and the "Wilson Hotel Timeline" by Theresa Trebon.

1892 – Grocery store, restaurant, hotel office, sample room, hotel bar and billiards
1893 – Wilson Restaurant, saloon and billiards parlor, jewelry store
1896 – B.L. Martin Clothing and Dry Goods, dining room
1897 – Hotel office, furniture store, vacant space
1899 – A Dr. Smith practiced out of the hotel for several years and moved out in 1899.
1901 to 1922 – Soule's Grocery (northeast corner)
1902 – The Place Saloon
1903 – Grocery, dining room, hotel office, saloon, vacant space
1905 – Grocery, storage, saloon, vacant space
1907 – Grocery, vacant space, tailor, saloon
1909 – G.E. Mars (tailor), the Senate Bar

1914 – Café remodeled
1921 – New Wilson Cafe
1925 – Grocery/meat, restaurant, office/lobby, soft drinks and pool
1926 – New Wilson Café under new ownership
1929 – Green Lantern Coffeeshop; Community Stores; Samuel Mendelson Cigars and Tobacco
1932 to 1934 – Sav 'n' Pay Grocery operated by Wallie and Valentine Funk
1937 to 1960 – New Wilson Tavern
1948 – Lunsford Grill
1954 to 1975 – Sucia Reef Restaurant
1956 – Mirror Dress Shop; New Wilson Tavern; Sucia Reef. Residents listed in the Wells Index to Anacortes, Western Skagit County, included seven men, most of whom were retired.
1960 to 1965 –Montague's Ladies Apparel
1962 – Hotel name changes to the Cove Hotel
1963 – Montague's Ladies Apparel; Sucia Reef; Bus Depot; Island Empire Bus lines
1965 – Same ground floor establishments as in 1963. Cove Hotel advertised in the telephone directory as having rates by the day or week.
1975 – No listing in the telephone directory

Although the Wilson Hotel has housed many businesses, gone through numerous building owners and hotel proprietors, and several interior alterations over its 114 years, it retains a significant amount of integrity on the exterior, has maintained its spatial volumes and relationships on the interior, and has been used in its original manner as a hotel on the upper floors and commercial/retail uses on the ground floor.

As the new owners, The Wilson Hotel Housing LLC plans to rehabilitate the building to provide twenty-five low-income housing units and the ground floor commercial/retail spaces will be renovated. The Anacortes Housing Authority will manage the building. The residential and commercial units should be ready for occupancy by 2006.

Summary

When rehabilitated, the Wilson Hotel will once again be a landmark in Anacortes. The building contributes to the broad patterns of history which led to the growth and development of Anacortes as Skagit County's largest city. The Wilson Hotel has grown up with Anacortes—it was there when the town began and has provided lodging to many who have come to this "Key City." And like the city in which it resides, it has enjoyed times of economic growth as evidenced by its many renovations and the 1926 addition and weathered through economic hardship (the bust in Anacortes coupled with the Panic of 1893, the Great Depression, and the numerous ownership changes.) With the building's rehabilitation, important character-defining features on the exterior will be restored and the Wilson Hotel will once again be a prominent building on the Anacortes' main business thoroughfare and continue to be a good example and of the few remaining examples of the work of the prominent Tacoma architecture firm of Pickles and Sutton.

NOTES

[1] Theresa Trebon. *First Views, An Early History of Skagit County: 1850-189*, (Skagit Valley Herald, 2002), p. 4.

[2] Trebon, p. 2.

[3] Trebon, p. 3.

[4] Trebon, p. 4.

[5] Trebon, p. 51.

[6] Trebon, p. 53.

[7] "Fidalgo and Guemes Islands History" Timeline, Anacortes Museum (2002).

[8] *An Illustrated History of Skagit and Snohomish Counties* (Interstate Publishing Company, 1906), p. 213.

[9] "Anacortes, the Key City of the Sound," *Washington Magazine* (April 1890), Vol. 2, p. 41.

[10] *Washington Magazine* (April 1890), Vol. 2, p. 42.

[11] Trebon, p. 74.

[12] Trebon, p. 109.

[13] *An Illustrated History of Skagit and Snohomish Counties*, p. 218.

[14] "Fidalgo and Guemes Islands Historical Trivia," Anacortes Museum (2002).

[15] "Fidalgo and Guemes Islands Historical Trivia," Anacortes Museum (2002).

[16] "Men Who Made Their Mark," *Tacoma Daily Ledger* (September 7, 1890), p. 9.

[17] *Anacortes Illustrated* (1892).

[18] *Tacoma Daily Ledger* (September 7, 1890), p. 9.

[19] Tacoma Public Library, Northwest Room Reference Desk.

[20] John M. Tess. *National Register Nomination for the Sprague Building*, (need to find date.)

[21] "See's New Brick Yard is to Furnish 1,000,000 Bricks for Wilson's New Building," Anacortes American (May 15, 1890).

[22] *Anacortes Illustrated* (1892).

[23] "Weekly American," *Anacortes American* (March 17, 1901).

[24] Trebon, p. xii.

[25] Trebon, p. xii.

[26] Trebon, p. xiv.

[27] *Anacortes American* (May 20, 1926).

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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located in the SW ¼ of Section 18 in Township 35N, Range 2E of in Anacortes, Washington.
Legal description: Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4 of Block 37; except the west 20 feet of Lot 4; Original Anacortes Addition.
Parcel number 3772-037-004-0008

Boundary Justification

The nominated property encompasses the entire tax lot historically associated with the Wilson Hotel.

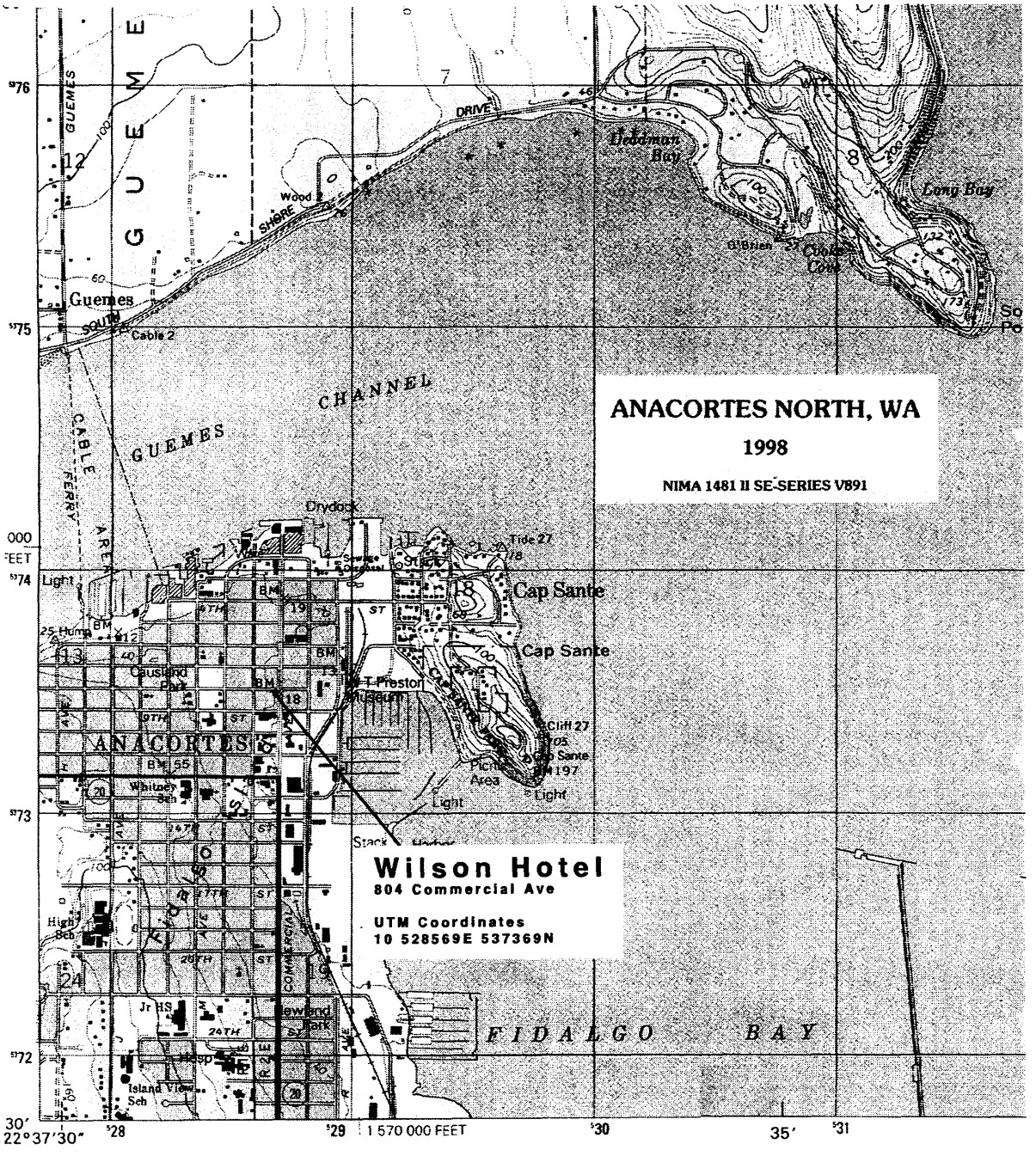
Contemporary Photograph Log

1 of 21 Wilson Hotel 804 Commercial Avenue Anacortes; Skagit County, WA Photographer: Eugenia Woo Date: January 2004 View: Commercial Avenue, looking north	**7 of 21** Wilson Hotel 804 Commercial Avenue Anacortes; Skagit County, WA Photographer: Eugenia Woo Date: January 2004 View: South elevation, looking northwest
2 of 21 Wilson Hotel 804 Commercial Avenue Anacortes; Skagit County, WA Photographer: Eugenia Woo Date: January 2004 View: Front (east) elevation and south elevation, looking northwest	**8 of 21** Wilson Hotel 804 Commercial Avenue Anacortes; Skagit County, WA Photographer: Eugenia Woo Date: January 2004 View: West elevation of original building (right); south and west elevations of addition (left, background)
3 of 21 Wilson Hotel 804 Commercial Avenue Anacortes; Skagit County, WA Photographer: Eugenia Woo Date: January 2004 View: Front (east) elevation, looking southwest	**9 of 21** Wilson Hotel 804 Commercial Avenue Anacortes; Skagit County, WA Photographer: Eugenia Woo Date: January 2004 View: Front (east) façade windows and details at 2nd and 3rd floors
4 of 21 Wilson Hotel 804 Commercial Avenue Anacortes; Skagit County, WA Photographer: Eugenia Woo Date: January 2004 View: North elevation, looking south	**10 of 21** Wilson Hotel 804 Commercial Avenue Anacortes; Skagit County, WA Photographer: Eugenia Woo Date: January 2004 View: Front (east) façade storefronts at south half of building
5 of 21 Wilson Hotel 804 Commercial Avenue Anacortes; Skagit County, WA Photographer: Eugenia Woo Date: January 2004 View: North elevation of addition, looking south	**11 of 21** Wilson Hotel 804 Commercial Avenue Anacortes; Skagit County, WA Photographer: Eugenia Woo Date: January 2004 View: Interior, first floor staircase (original), looking west
6 of 21 Wilson Hotel 804 Commercial Avenue Anacortes; Skagit County, WA Photographer: Eugenia Woo Date: January 2004 View: North and west elevations, looking southeast	**12 of 21** Wilson Hotel 804 Commercial Avenue Anacortes; Skagit County, WA Photographer: Eugenia Woo Date: January 2004 View: Interior, second floor corridor and staircase (original), looking south

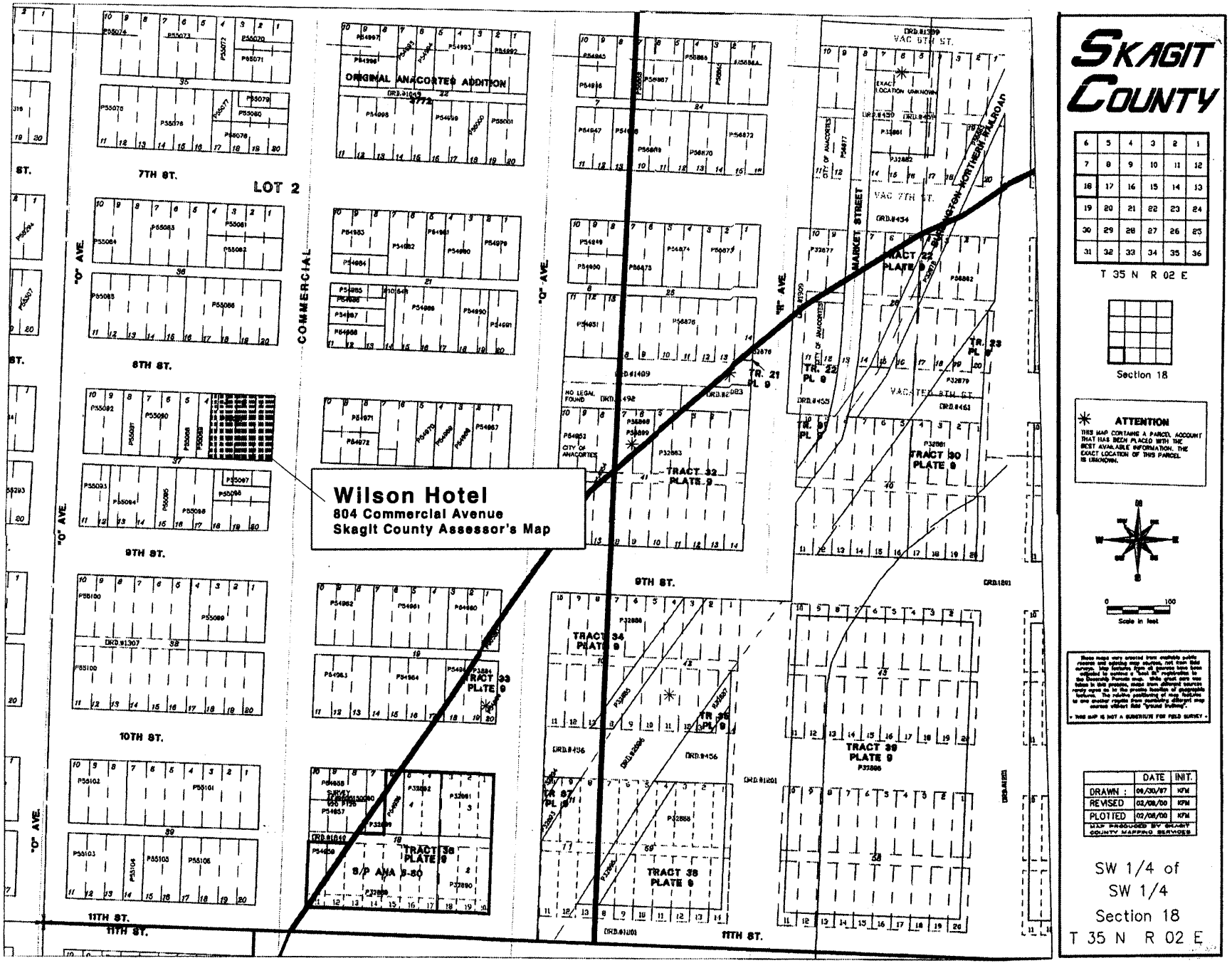
13 of 21 Wilson Hotel 804 Commercial Avenue Anacortes; Skagit County, WA Photographer: Eugenia Woo Date: January 2004 View: Interior; third floor corridor and top of staircase (original), looking south	**18 of 21** Wilson Hotel 804 Commercial Avenue Anacortes; Skagit County, WA Photographer: Eugenia Woo Date: January 2004 View: Interior; original five-paneled door, third floor
14 of 21 Wilson Hotel 804 Commercial Avenue Anacortes; Skagit County, WA Photographer: Eugenia Woo Date: January 2004 View: Interior; skylight (original)	**19 of 21** Wilson Hotel 804 Commercial Avenue Anacortes; Skagit County, WA Photographer: Eugenia Woo Date: January 2004 View: Interior; stairs from third floor of original building to fourth floor of addition
15 of 21 Wilson Hotel 804 Commercial Avenue Anacortes; Skagit County, WA Photographer: Eugenia Woo Date: January 2004 View: Interior; third floor unit with original windows, looking southeast	**20 of 21** Wilson Hotel 804 Commercial Avenue Anacortes; Skagit County, WA Photographer: Eugenia Woo Date: January 2004 View: Interior; third floor corridor of addition, looking west
16 of 21 Wilson Hotel 804 Commercial Avenue Anacortes; Skagit County, WA Photographer: Eugenia Woo Date: January 2004 View: Interior; third floor large room, looking northwest	**21 of 21** Wilson Hotel 804 Commercial Avenue Anacortes; Skagit County, WA Photographer: Eugenia Woo Date: January 2004 View: Interior; third floor units of addition, looking through two units
17 of 21 Wilson Hotel 804 Commercial Avenue Anacortes; Skagit County, WA Photographer: Eugenia Woo Date: January 2004 View: Interior; original windows in bedroom of northeast corner unit, third floor	

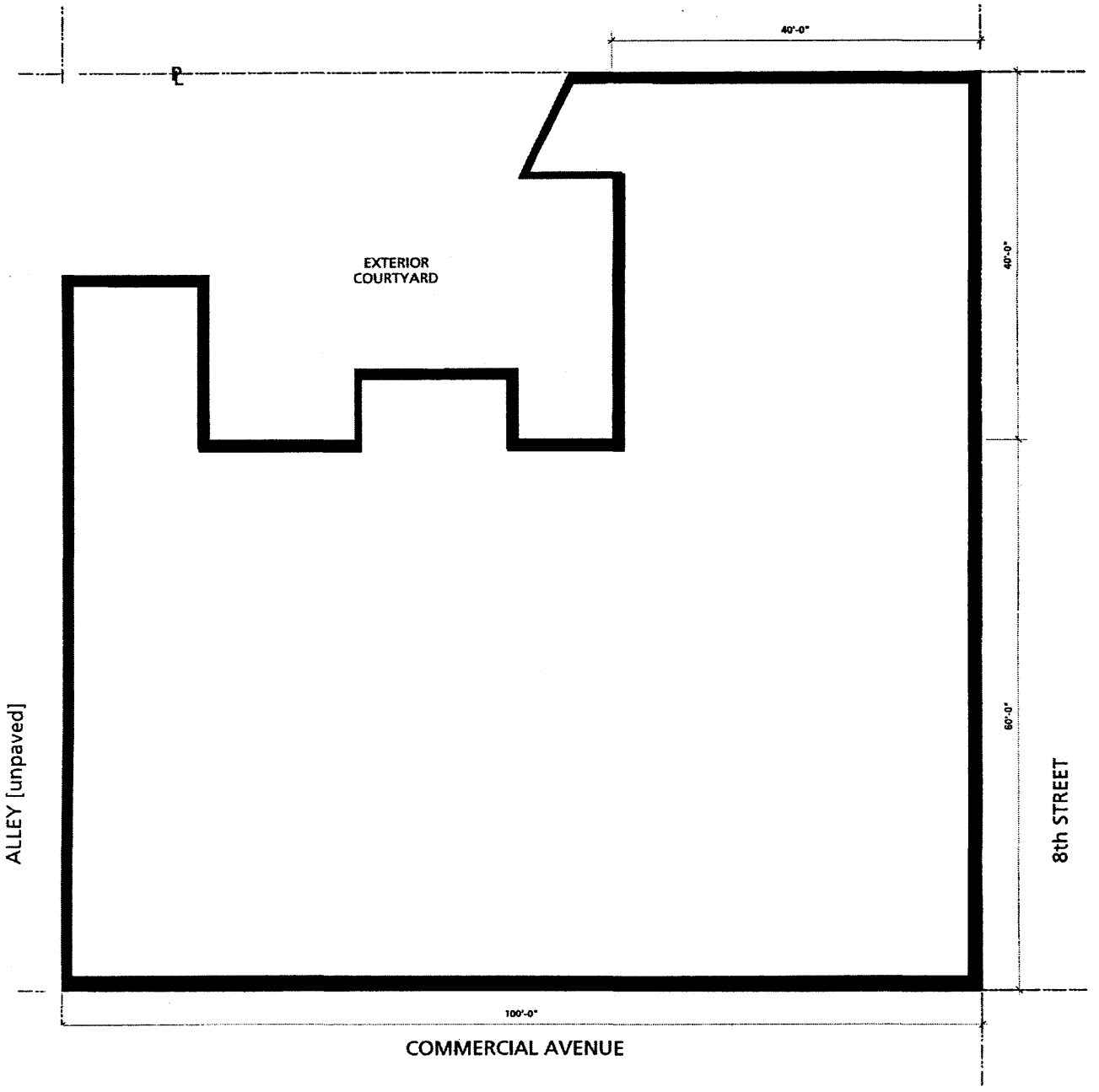
Historic Photograph Log

HP 1 of 6: Wilson Hotel nearing completion; 1890. Anacortes Museum Collection
HP 2 of 6: Planking of P Street (Commercial Avenue); 1890. Anacortes Museum Collection
HP 3 of 6: Postcard view of Commercial Avenue with New Wilson Hotel on the left; c. 1925. Collection of Eugenia Woo
HP 4 of 6: Wilson Hotel Saloon; c. 1905. Anacortes Museum Collection
HP 5 of 6: Postcard view of Commercial Avenue with New Wilson Hotel on the left; 1920s. Collection of Eugenia Woo
HP 6 of 6: Children posing on sidewalk of Commercial Avenue with New Wilson Hotel in the background; 1930s. Anacortes Museum Collection



Wilson Hotel
804 Commercial Avenue
Anacortes, Washington
Source: USGS 7.5' series
Anacortes North Quadrangle
Washington-Skagit County

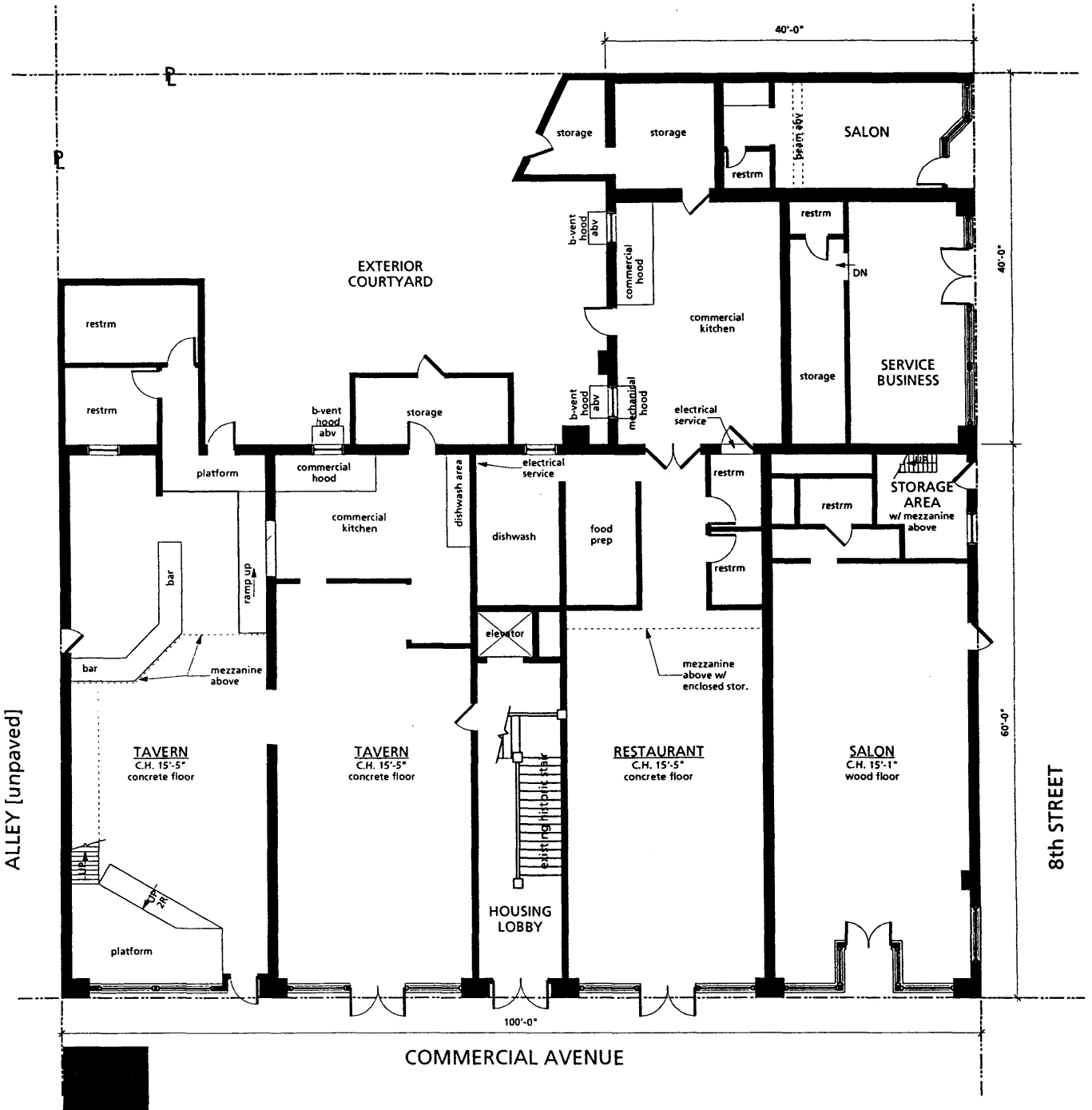

Wilson Hotel
804 Commercial Avenue
Skagit County Assessor's Map
ORIGINAL ANACORTES ADDITION
LOT 2
COMMERCIAL
"O" AVE.
"P" AVE.
MARKET STREET
7TH ST.
8TH ST.
9TH ST.
10TH ST.
11TH ST.
VAC 6TH ST.
VAC 7TH ST.
VAC 8TH ST.
TRACT 22 PLATE 9
TRACT 23 PLATE 9
TRACT 30 PLATE 9
TRACT 32 PLATE 9
TRACT 33 PLATE 9
TRACT 34 PLATE 9
TRACT 36 PLATE 9
TRACT 38 PLATE 9
TR. 21 PL 9
TR. 22 PL 9
TR. 23 PL 9
TR. 35 PL 9
TR. 37 PL 9
S/P AMA 9-80
CITY OF ANACORTES
NO LEGAL FOUND
SKAGIT COUNTY
SKAGIT COUNTY
T 35 N R 02 E
Section 18
ATTENTION
THIS MAP CONTAINS A PARCEL ACCOUNT THAT HAS BEEN PLACED WITH THE BEST AVAILABLE INFORMATION. THE EXACT LOCATION OF THIS PARCEL IS UNKNOWN.
Scale in feet
SW 1/4 of
SW 1/4
Section 18
T 35 N R 02 E



N

Wilson Hotel
804 Commercial Avenue
Site Plan

scale: 1/16"=1'-0"



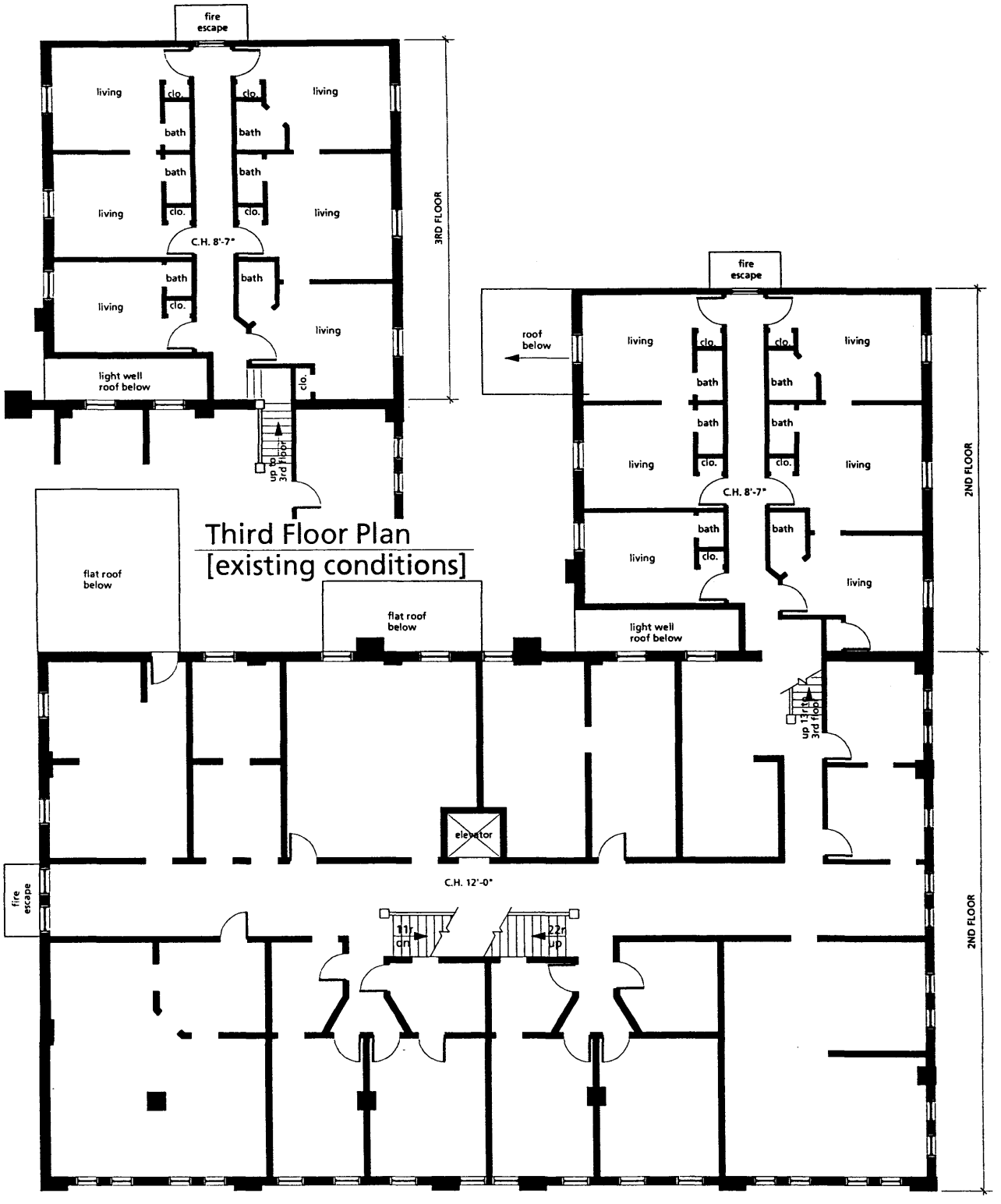
Stickney Murphy Romine
911 Western Avenue
Suite 202
Seattle, Washington
98104

N

NEW WILSON HOTEL: 804 Commercial Avenue
First Floor Plan [existing conditions]

scale: 1/16"=1'-0"
08.15.03

NOTE:
DRAWINGS ARE BASED ON LIMITED SITE ACCESS.
DIMENSIONS ARE APPROXIMATE AND SUBJECT TO FURTHER FIELD VERIFICATION.



Stickney Murphy Romine
911 Western Avenue
Suite 200
Seattle, Washington
98104

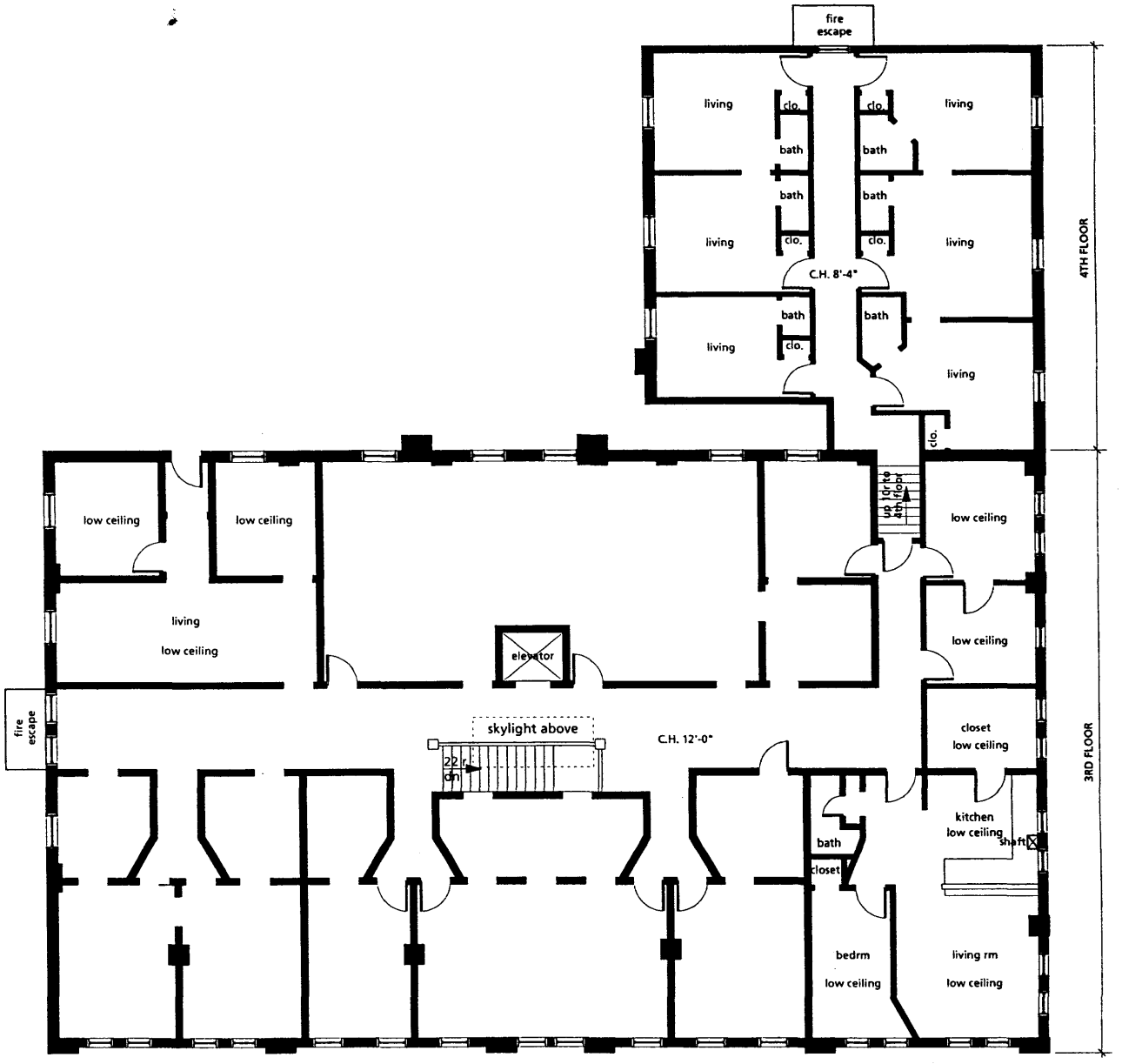
N

NEW WILSON HOTEL: 804 Commercial Avenue

Second Floor Plan [existing conditions]

scale: 1/16"=1'-0"
08.15.03
rev. 08.26.03

NOTE:
DRAWINGS ARE BASED ON LIMITED SITE ACCESS.
ALL REPRESENTATIONS AND DIMENSIONS ARE
APPROXIMATE AND SUBJECT TO FURTHER FIELD
VERIFICATION. INTERIOR WALLS SHOWN VARY IN CONDITION.



Stickney Murphy Romine
911 Western Avenue
Suite 200
Seattle, Washington
98104

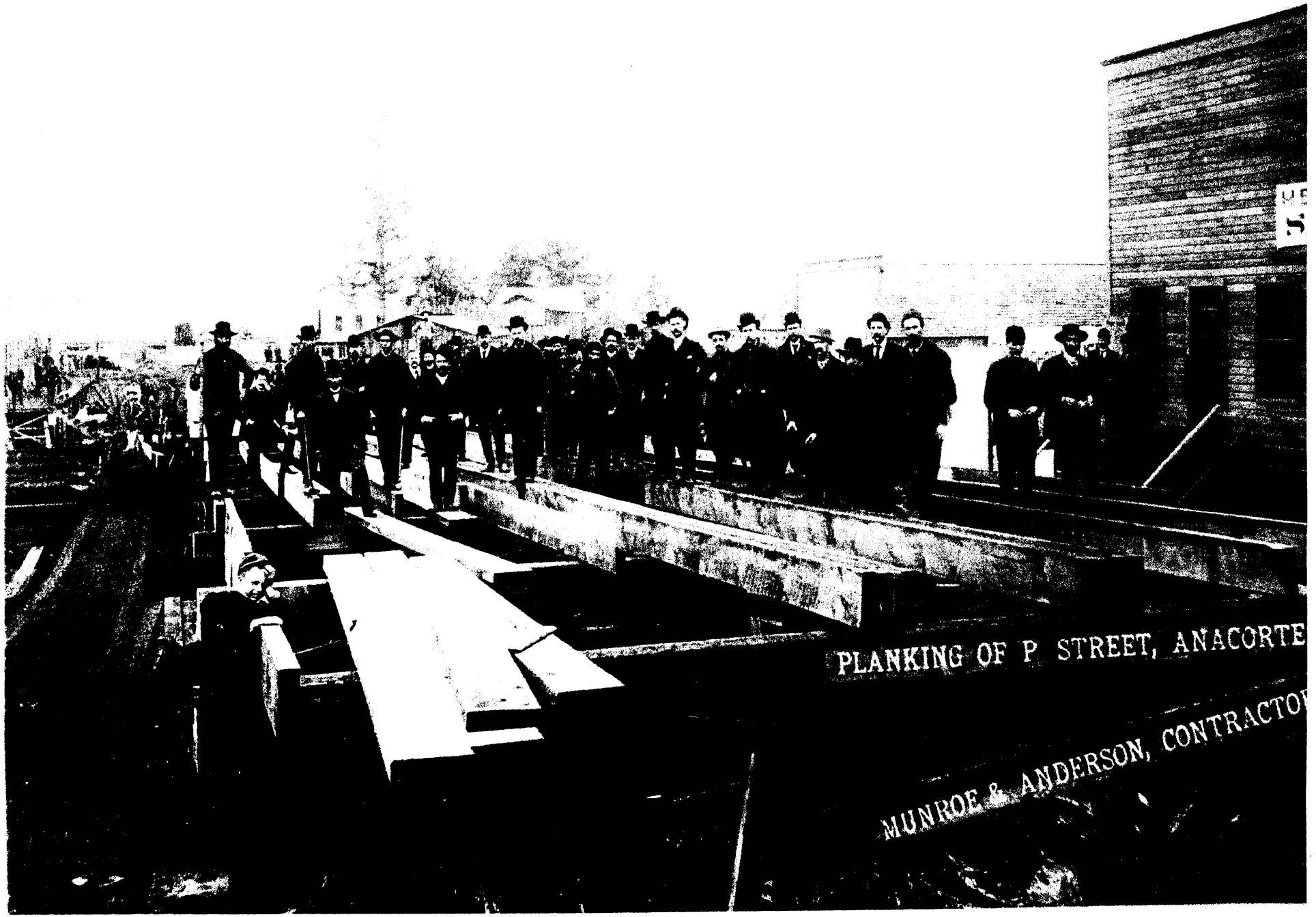
N

NEW WILSON HOTEL: 804 Commercial Avenue

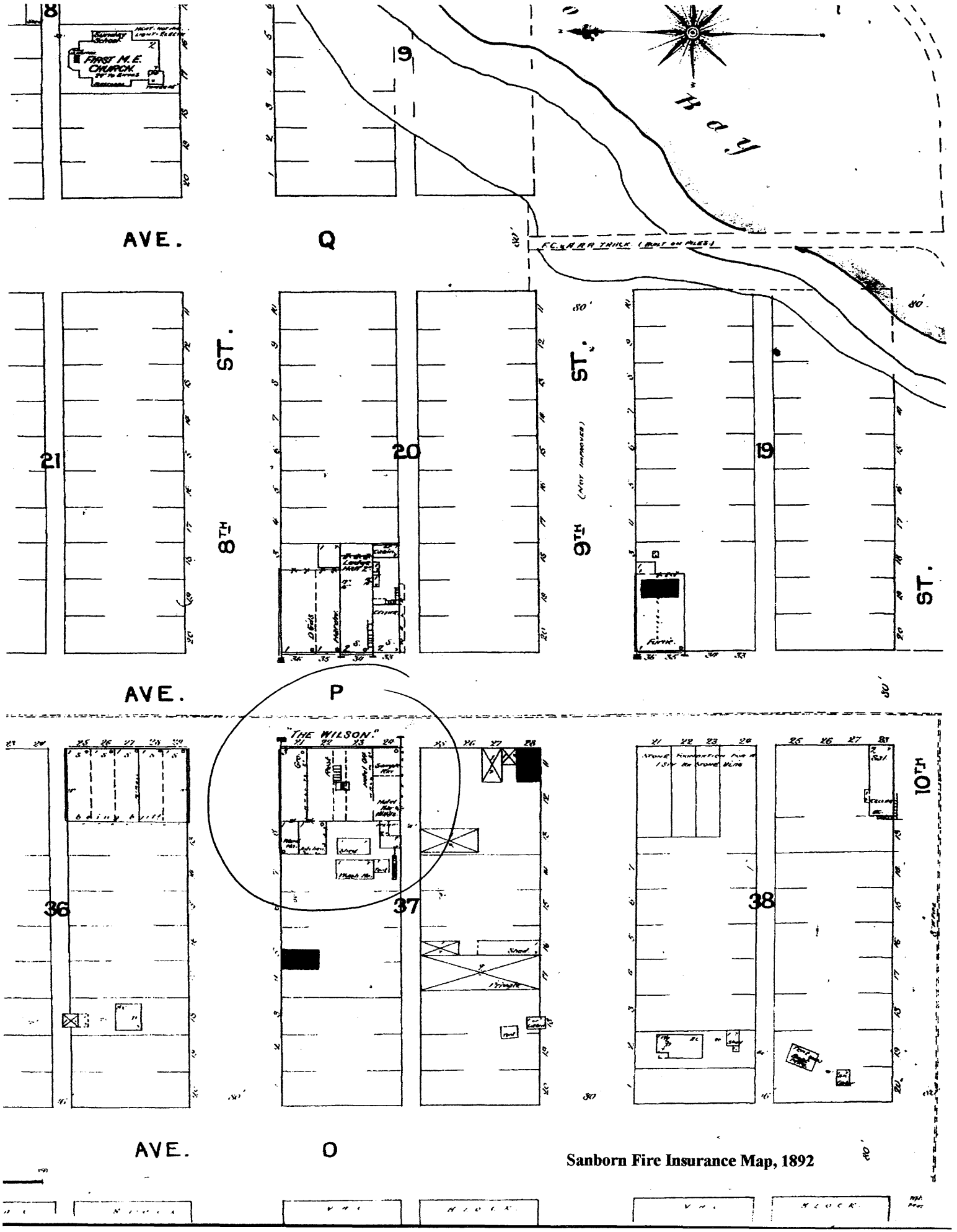
Third Floor Plan [existing conditions]

scale: 1/16"=1'-0"
08.15.03
rev. 08.26.03

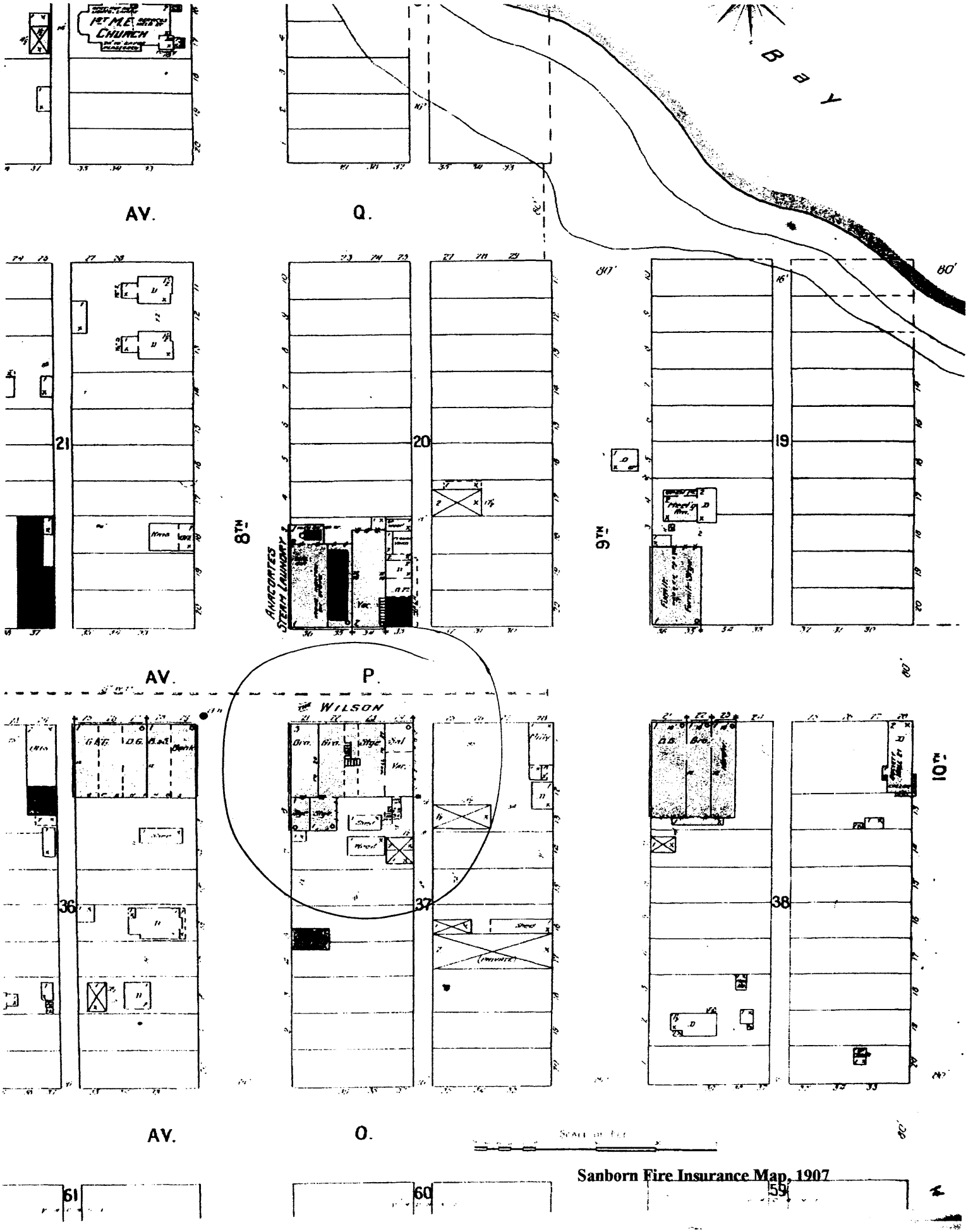
NOTE:
DRAWINGS ARE BASED ON LIMITED SITE ACCESS.
ALL REPRESENTATIONS AND DIMENSIONS ARE
APPROXIMATE AND SUBJECT TO FURTHER FIELD
VERIFICATION. INTERIOR WALLS SHOWN VARY IN CONDITION.


PLANKING OF P STREET, ANACORTE
MUNROE & ANDERSON, CONTRACTO

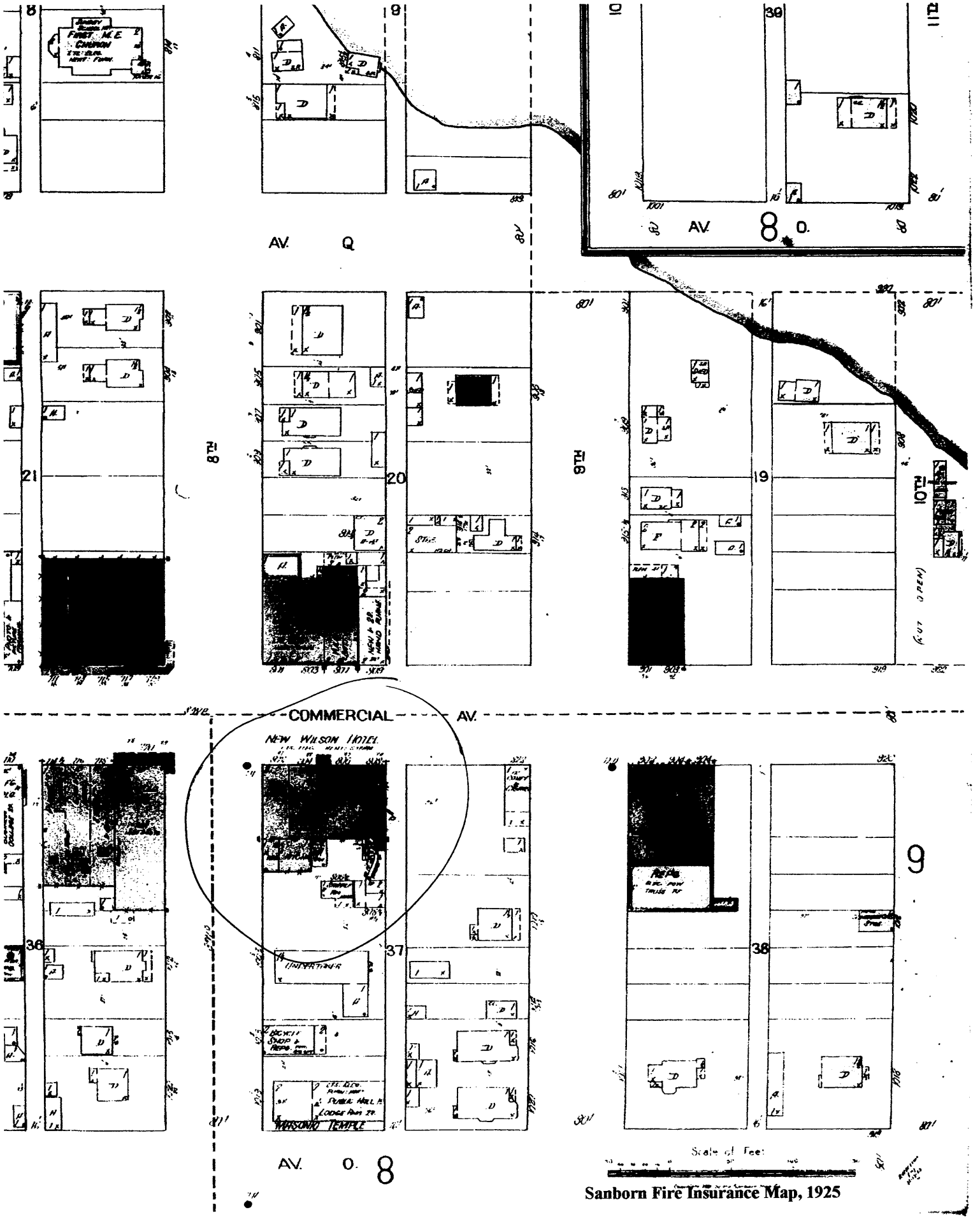
CLUB



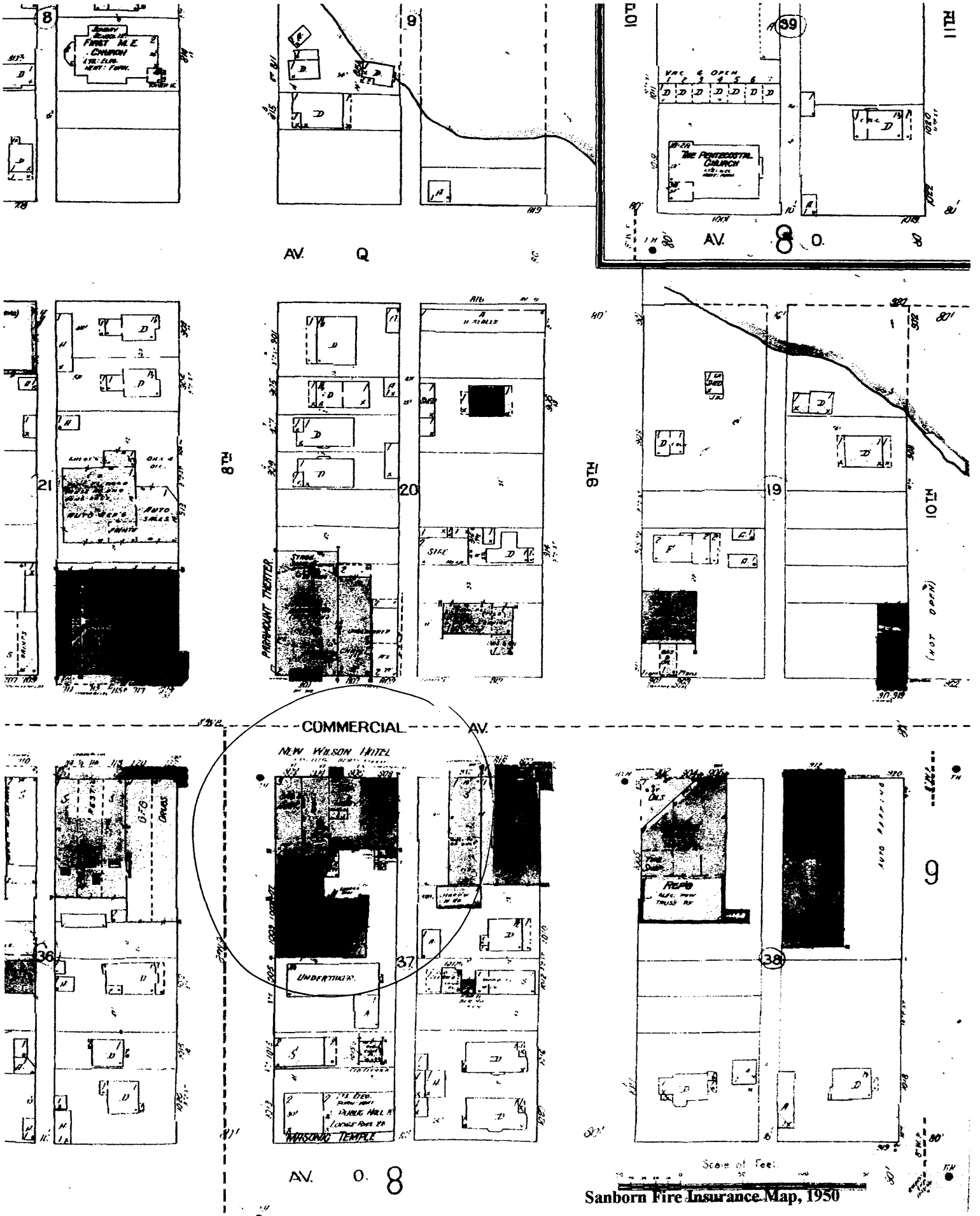
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1892



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1907



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1925



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1950