

NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 8/86)  
NPS/CHS Word Processor Format  
(Approved 03/88)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

RECEIVED  
AUG 13 1990

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable". For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries. Use letter quality printers in 12 pitch. Use only 25% or greater cotton content bond paper.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name: Navajo Hogan  
other names/site number: 5EP.1179

**2. Location**

street & number: 2817 North Nevada Avenue (NA) Not for publication  
city, town: Colorado Springs (NA) vicinity  
state: Colorado code: CO county: El Paso code:041 zip code:80907

**3. Classification**

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
(X) private	(X) building(s)	1	0
( ) public-local	( ) district		buildings
( ) public-State	( ) site		sites
( ) public-Federal	( ) structure		structures
	( ) object		objects
		1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

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

Barbara Sudler  
Signature of certifying official

8-3-90  
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Colorado Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commenting or Other Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

(x) 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

Entered in the  
National Register  
William Byers 9/13/90

fu Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Functions or Use**

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**Historic Functions****(enter categories from instructions)**COMMERCE / TRADE: Restaurant  

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**Current Functions****(enter categories from instructions)**COMMERCE / TRADE: Restaurant  

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**7. Description**

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**Architectural Classification****(enter categories from instructions)**OTHER: Novelty Architecture  

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**Materials****(enter categories from instructions)**foundations CONCRETEwalls STUCCO  

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roof ASPHALTother sign: METAL  

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

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The Navajo Hogan is a one-story, polygonal structure originally built in 1935 to house a bar and restaurant. The building was designed to resemble a hogan, a traditional Navajo Indian dwelling. Construction took approximately three months. The plans were drawn up by the owners with the help of John Aaron, a well-known local carpenter and builder, who also supervised the construction. The logs used to construct the roof were brought from the forest directly to the site, where the bark was hand-stripped. After air-curing, the massive logs were assembled one at a time and individually hand-hewn to fit together in a distinctive arrangement that resembled the corbeled log roofs of traditional hogans.

About five years later, the owners expanded the building to the east with the construction of a second corbeled roof multi-sided room and a small pentagonal addition. These additions were in accordance with the original design and did not affect the structure's integrity. Other 1940s changes included moving the main entrance to its present location, relocating the Indian head sign to the front of the building, replacing an Art Deco bar with a streamline Moderne one, and leveling the wood floor between the two main rooms. No changes have been made to the basic lay-out since that time. A 1956 frame addition attached to the northeast corner has since been removed.

In 1981 a fire damaged the interior of the building. It remained vacant until 1989, when it was carefully restored and rehabilitated with the aid of historic photographs and documentation. The Colorado SHPO certified that the work meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and "shows a very sensitive and carefully executed rehabilitation."

(X) See continuation sheet

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

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The Navajo Hogan

The massive, pyramidal roofs, faced with red composition shingles, dominate the building's form and appearance. Two large roofs connected by a flat roof cover the main building sections, and a smaller pyramidal roof tops the east addition. The exterior walls are a heavily textured stucco. Large, almost square, wood windows are the principal feature of the building's elevations. Regularly-spaced, the windows are paired on the west polygon and found one per wall plane over the rest of the building.

Originally the windows were all 4-over-2 double-hung sash windows with plain wood board surrounds. During the period 1960-80 almost all of the windows were substantially altered, boarded over, or damaged by deterioration of the wood sill and surrounds. However, one intact original window remained in the manager's office of the south bay and the structural openings of the windows were discernible. The remaining windows have now been restored.

Like the windows, the building's entrances are utilitarian with no decorative treatment. Each entrance consists of a single-leaf door, not original, surrounded by plain wood molding and with concrete platform and stairs. New exterior features include a handicap ramp with twisted iron railing, paved driveway and parking lot, and attractive landscaping which makes use of older evergreen trees which were already on the property.

Historic signage is an important feature of the Navajo Hogan's exterior. Typical of roadside architecture during the 1930s, the buildings were embellished with bright neon lights and signs designed to attract the motorist. Only a few original pieces remained of the original neon zig-zag lighting that trimmed the hogan's roof eaves of the west polygon, but they served to guide the restoration. The building's most distinctive sign, an original seventeen-foot Indian head, had been repainted numerous times, its base and neon trim removed, and its metal skin and structural supports severely rusted. It, too, was restored in 1989. No other original signage remained, although historic photographs provided documentation of the "Hogan" sign over the main entrance and aided in its replication.

The existing floor plan consists of two large open polygonal rooms with two multi-sided bays at the juncture of the rooms and the pentagonal addition to the east. The north bay now houses the kitchen; the south bay, the vestibule and offices; and the east addition, the restrooms. Although some changes have been made in the usage of these spaces, no alterations were made to the structural walls. Neither do the new freestanding dividers detract from the basic structure. The basement, too, has been divided up into new work and storage areas, although its original concrete and brick construction and old coal chute remain.

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The Navajo Hogan

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The most noteworthy feature of the Navajo Hogan interior is its log roof structure. In the west and east main rooms, massive hand-hewn pine slabs are arranged in successive tiers, with the individual logs rotated so as to bear at midpoint on the logs below, creating domed wood ceilings/roof. This method of construction is similar to that employed to build the corbeled log roofs of traditional Navajo hogans. The 1981 fire damaged the roof somewhat. Smoke darkened the color of the logs, particularly in the east dome. The fire also charred, in varying depths, the wood and damaged the structural supports of the roof of the east dome. During the restoration the roof was repaired where needed and the logs stained so as to appear as they did originally.

Except for the ceiling, very little historic fabric remains in the interior of the Navajo Hogan. During the period 1960-80 extensive modifications were made to the interior divisions, the wall and floor surfaces, and appointments. Fire, smoke, and water further damaged what remained of the original plaster walls, wood floor, original fixtures, and interior trim. With the help of historic photographs and documentation, the interior has been reconstructed as accurately as possible. The wood floor, beveled interior doorways, zig-zag light fixtures, and neon trim have all been reproduced. Even the present bar, in the original location, closely resembles the streamline Moderne one which it replaced.

Inside and out, the Navajo Hogan has been beautifully rehabilitated. Insensitive 1960s and 1970s modifications have been removed, and every effort has been made to restore the building to its original appearance. It now looks very much as it did in early photographs.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:      ( ) nationally      ( ) statewide      (X) locally

Applicable National Register Criteria      (X) A      ( ) B      (X) C      ( ) D  
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)      ( ) A      ( ) B      ( ) C      ( ) D      ( ) E      ( ) F      ( ) G

**Areas of Significance**

(enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

TRANSPORTATION

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1935

1935 - 1940

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1935

1935

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Aaron, John

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

The Navajo Hogan is significant under criterion C for architecture. It is both typical of its era and unique in its design. It is representative of what is called in Colorado "Novelty Architecture," characterized by humor, amusement, and whimsy. The Hogan also has significance under criterion A for transportation because, "although not very common in Colorado, these buildings are associated with the development of the automobile culture, beginning in the 1920's and 1930's."<sup>1</sup>

The Navajo Hogan's massive sign and neon elements are typical of 1930s roadside architecture. The building's one-of-a-kind design is distinctive, however, because its form was borrowed from traditional Navajo architecture. Specifically, the building's hand-hewn, corbeled log roof is a noteworthy example of the craftsmanship used historically in construction.

Originally, the building's location, on the northern outskirts of Colorado Springs, was just beyond the city limits. It sat adjacent to the two-lane gravel road that served as the main route to Denver at that time. Today, this portion of Nevada Avenue remains a commercial strip, serving as the Interstate 25 Business Route through town.

(X) See continuation sheet

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The Hogan's historic significance is associated with a period in history when automobile transportation transformed the appearance of buildings adjacent to busy roadways. Although construction of buildings designed to resemble other forms was not new in the twentieth century, the introduction of the automobile promoted a new wave of such buildings, particularly in the United States. The authors of California Crazy call this type of construction Programmatic Architecture: "In the twentieth century a hotel built as an Aztec temple, or an enlarged ice cream cone used to sell ice cream employ similar elements of indirect symbolism."<sup>2</sup> Chester H. Liebs uses the term "Architecture for Speed-reading" to describe commercial structures designed to capture the attention of an audience passing by at high speed.<sup>3</sup>

To catch the passing motorists' attention in this brief "flash time," the merchant had to resort to anything that would make his business visible (signs, lights, shapes, heights, colors) and to devise a message (something intriguing, fun, comforting, unusual, or just promising cheap goods) that would draw them in without fail.<sup>4</sup>

The trick was to find images embedded in the public's consciousness that would have broad popular appeal. Fantastic, Regional and Historical, and Moderne and Modern (including Art Deco or Zigzag Moderne) imagery were among the most successfully employed. Primitive or indigenous architecture was also a popular theme. Native American tepees and pueblos were commonly used, playing on the romance of the Old West.

The Navajo Hogan utilized these same themes, but with its own twist. Typical of businesses that began during the Depression, it was a small, family-owned enterprise, started by Caesar Gheno with the help of his future father-in-law Nicholas Fontecchio. Fontecchio, a labor organizer with the United Mine Workers, had travelled throughout the Southwest and had spent considerable time with the Navajo Indians. Accordingly, they chose a hogan as the model for the construction of their building.

The traditional Navajo hogan building shape was ordinarily a circular or polygonal single-room structure. Sometimes, although rarely, two hogans were joined with a shared wall, forming a "double" hogan.<sup>5</sup> The corbeled log roof became the most common type after the 1880s. In corbeled log construction, the log ends of each tier rest on the midpoints of the logs of the tier below. Shorter logs parallel to the principal ones are used to fill the gaps.<sup>6</sup>

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Hogan wall construction varied and included stacked cribbed, corbeled, or abutting logs or stone-and-adobe. By the late 1800s, with the availability of European-American tools and materials, other walling materials included railroad ties, rough sawn planking, boulder and adobe mortar, and shaped sandstone.<sup>7</sup> In newer hogans, a stuccoed exterior was another possibility.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, roofing materials varied, ranging from earth and wood chips to sheets of tarpaper, metal, and rolled asphalt.

The Navajo Hogan merely enlarged the basic form of a Navajo dwelling, while remaining faithful to traditional construction methods and materials. Other examples of roadside architecture exist in Colorado, including various representations of Native American tepees and pueblos. However, this is the only known "Navajo Hogan" in the state. The building, along with its huge Indian head sign and zigzag neon trim, has been beautifully restored and rehabilitated without affecting its historical integrity. It remains today a striking roadside attraction.

The period of significance for Transportation has been arbitrarily ended at 1940 in accordance with the National Register's fifty year age criteria.



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CONTINUATION SHEET**

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The Navajo Hogan

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1. Sarah J. Pearce and Merrill A. Wilson, A Guide to Colorado Architecture (Denver: Colorado Historical Society, 1983), p. 76.
2. Jim Heimann and Rip Georges, California Crazy (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1980), p.13.
3. Chester H. Liebs, Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside Architecture (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1985), p.39.
4. Ibid., pp.43-44.
5. Stephen C. Jett and Virginia E. Spencer, Navajo Architecture: Forms, History, Distributions (Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1981), p.14.
6. Ibid., p.146.
7. Peter Nabokov and Robert Easton, Native American Architecture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p.333.
8. Jett and Spencer, p.87.

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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Abele, Deborah Edge. Historic Preservation Certification Application for the Navajo Hogan, 1988.

Heimann, Jim, and Georges, Rip. California Crazy. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1980.

(X) See continuation sheet

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing ( 36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

- Primary location of additional data:
- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other

Specify Repository:  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreeage of property: less than one acre (21,600 sq. ft.)

**UTM References**

A 1|3 5|1|5|7|2|0| 4|3|0|2|4|2|0|  
Zone Easting Northing

B | | | | | | | | | | | |  
Zone Easting Northing

C | | | | | | | | | | | |  
Zone Easting Northing

D | | | | | | | | | | | |  
Zone Easting Northing

( ) See continuation sheet

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

Lots 4 and 5 and the south 10 feet of lot 3 in block 548 of North Colorado Springs, El Paso County, State of Colorado, together with the west 10 feet of the south 70 feet of the vacated north-south 20 foot alley platted in block 548 aforesaid.

( ) See continuation sheet

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**Boundary Justification**

The boundary defines the land historically associated with the Navajo Hogan. It does not include the parking lot east of the alley.

( ) See continuation sheet

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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Name/Title: Vicki Rottman / Historical Consultant

Organization: N/A

Date: April 1990

Street & Number: 436 Delaware Street

Telephone: (303) 623-1592

City or Town: Denver

State: CO Zip Code: 80204

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The Navajo Hogan

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Jett, Stephen C., and Spencer, Virginia E. Navajo Architecture: Forms, History, Distributions. Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1981.

Liebs, Chester H. Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside Architecture. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1985.

Nabokov, Peter, and Easton, Robert. Native American Architecture. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

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Section number photo Page 1

The Navajo Hogan

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**PHOTOGRAPHS:**

1. Navajo Hogan
2. Colorado Springs, El Paso County, Colorado
3. Photographer: Vicki Rottman
4. Date of photograph: March 15, 1990
5. Original negatives are located in the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society

Note: The information listed in items 1 through 5 above is the same for all the photographs.

6. The following information differs for each photograph and is listed by photograph number:

Photo #1: Southwest elevation, view to northeast

Photo #2: West elevation, view to east

Photo #3: Northwest elevation, view to southeast

Photo #4: East elevation, view to west

Photo #5: Building in its environment, view to southeast

Photo #6: Detail of Indian head sign, view to northeast

Photo #7: Detail of "Hogan" sign above door, view to northeast

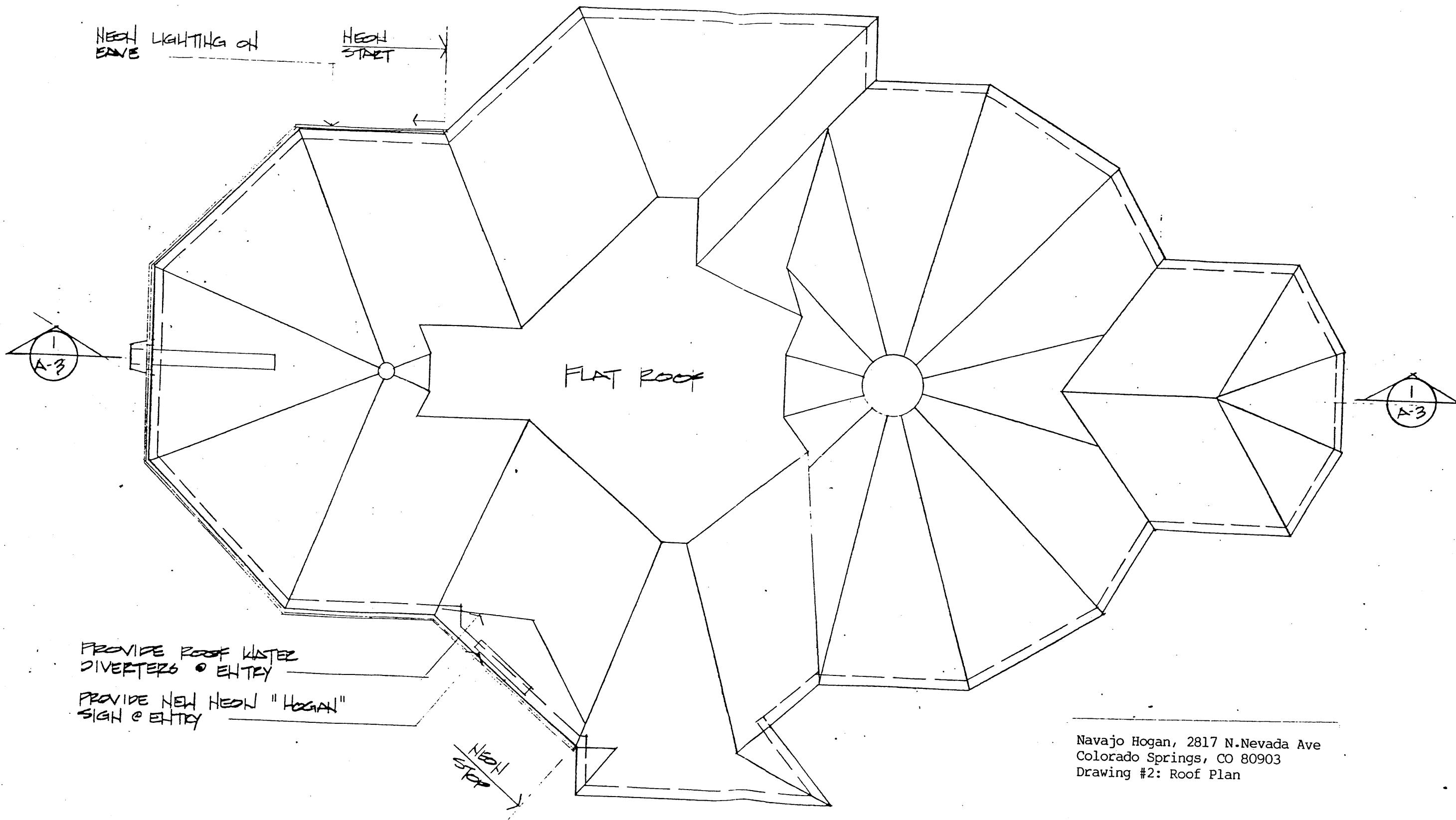
Photo #8: Interior west room, view to west

Photo #9: Detail of west room ceiling/roof, view to northwest

Photo #10: Detail of bar, view to northwest

Photo #11: Detail of office doorway, view to southwest

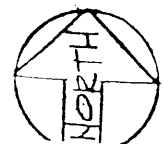




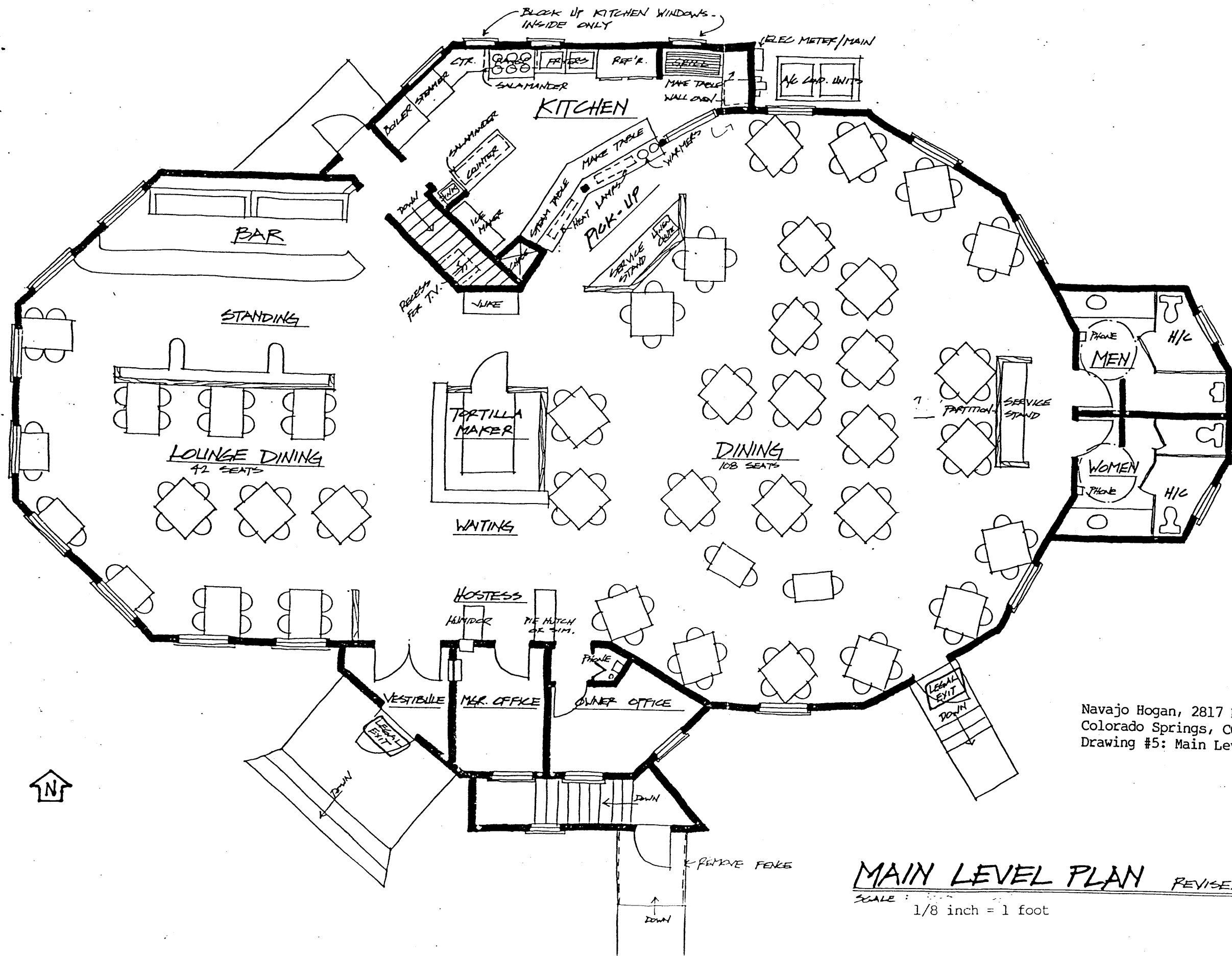
PROVIDE ROOF WATER DIVERTERS @ ENTRY

PROVIDE NEW NEON "HOGAN" SIGN @ ENTRY

Navajo Hogan, 2817 N. Nevada Ave  
 Colorado Springs, CO 80903  
 Drawing #2: Roof Plan



ROOF PLAN 1/8 inch = 1 foot



Navajo Hogan, 2817 N. Nevada Ave  
 Colorado Springs, CO  
 Drawing #5: Main Level Plan

**MAIN LEVEL PLAN** REVISED  
 SCALE: 1/8 inch = 1 foot

REVISIONS

REVISIONS

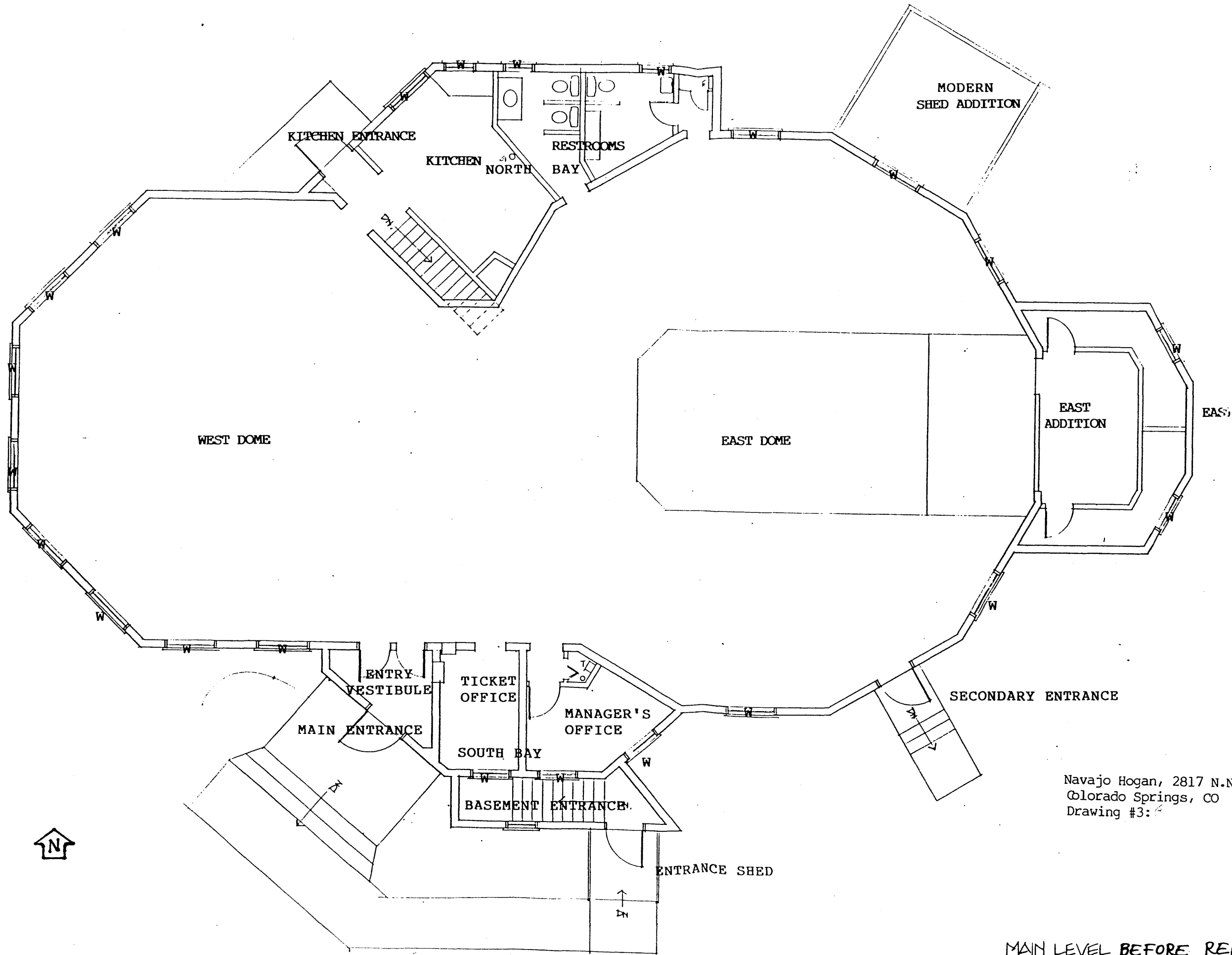


RESTAURANT and BAR  
 2817 North Nevada Avenue  
 Colorado Springs, Colorado

NAVJOGAN

NEWGARD & MAROTTI, P.C.	ARCHITECTS, P.A.
1113 North Tenth Street, Suite 201	Colorado Springs, Colorado 80903
Phone: 435-237-3121	Fax: 435-237-3122

DRAWN  
 JOB NO.  
 DATE



Navajo Hogan, 2817 N. Nevada Ave  
 Colorado Springs, CO  
 Drawing #3:

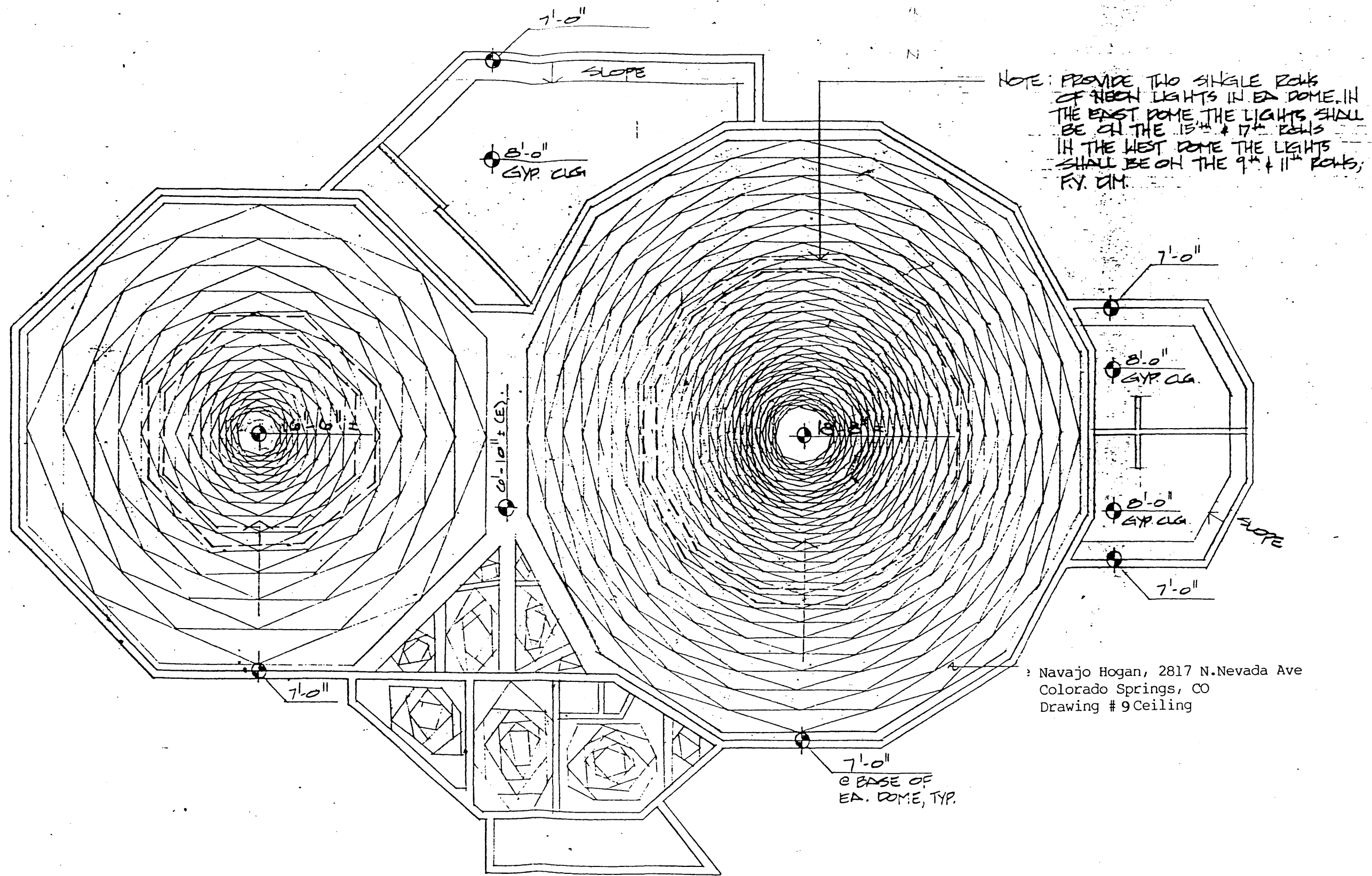
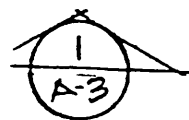
**MAIN LEVEL BEFORE REHAB**

SCALE: 1/8 INCH = 1 FOOT

**NEWGARD & MAROTT, P.C.**  
 ARCHITECTS - A.I.A.  
 118 North Logan St., Suite 201  
 Colorado Springs, Colorado 80903  
 Telephone: 303/632-3121

DRAWN
JOB NO.
DATE
SCALE
SHEET





NOTE: PROVIDE TWO SINGLE ROWS OF RECESSED LIGHTS IN EA DOME. IN THE EAST DOME, THE LIGHTS SHALL BE ON THE 15<sup>TH</sup> & 17<sup>TH</sup> ROWS. IN THE WEST DOME THE LIGHTS SHALL BE ON THE 9<sup>TH</sup> & 11<sup>TH</sup> ROWS, FY. DIM.

Navajo Hogan, 2817 N. Nevada Ave  
Colorado Springs, CO  
Drawing # 9 Ceiling

# MAIN LEVEL REFLECTED CEILING PLAN

1/8" = 1'-0"