

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

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### SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91001685

Date Listed: 11/27/91

US Bureau of Reclamation Project Office Bldg., Montrose Co., CO  
Property Name County State

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**Multiple Name**

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Beth Boland  
Signature of the Keeper

11/27/91  
Date of Action

=====  
**Amended Items in Nomination:**

National level of significance = 1905-1932; local significance = 1932-1941.

This information was verified by Steve Ireland of the Denver Office, Bureau of Reclamation.

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**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



**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: U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Project Office Building  
other names/site number: Uncompahgre Valley Water Users Association Office  
5MN2724

**2. Location**

street & number: 601 N. Park Ave. N/A ( ) not for publication  
city, town: Montrose. N/A ( ) vicinity  
state: Colorado. code: CO county: Montrose code: 085 zip code: 81401

**3. Classification**

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
( ) private	( ) building(s)		
( ) public-local	(X) district	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u> buildings
( ) public-State	( ) site		_____ sites
(X) public-Federal	( ) structure		_____ structures
	( ) object		_____ objects
		<u>5</u>	<u>5</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this (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.

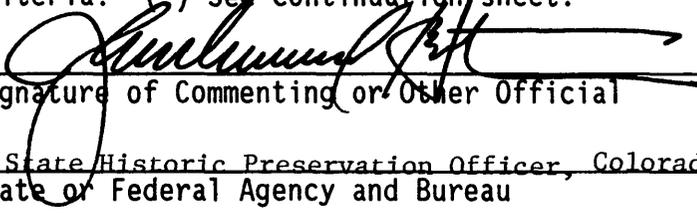
A. K. Judson

Signature of certifying official

10/10/91  
Date

Acting Federal Preservation Officer, Bureau of Reclamation  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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



Signature of Commenting or Other Official

10/3/91  
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Colorado Historical Society  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

Patrick Andrews 11/27/91

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

for Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Functions or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(enter categories from instructions)  
Government Office

**Current Functions**  
(enter categories from instructions)  
Government Office

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(enter categories from instructions)

Other: Four Square

foundations concrete  
walls asbestos (sheet siding)  
sheet metal  
roof asphalt shingles  
other \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Uncompahgre Office Building is generally known locally as the Water Users' Association Building because that group has occupied it since 1932. The building stands in an older residential neighborhood on the near north side of the town of Montrose, Colorado. The legal address is 601 N. Park Ave., Montrose, Colorado. Some of the nearby houses are contemporary with the building and are of architectural styles that are comparable.

The office building today presents an appearance rather similar to its appearance at the time of construction in 1905. However, a comparison with historical photographs,

(X) See continuation sheet

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plans, etc. reveals some changes, both internal and external. The building is of an architectural design widely used in the early twentieth century which is commonly called the four square style. Builders of this period usually used four square only in residence designs. (The name derives from the shape of the building in a simple square.) Four square is a uniquely American architectural style and gives a very solid appearance.

The building has porches on both front and back with doors for entry into the first floor from each porch. Additional concrete work on the front porch bears a date of 1964. There were originally five rooms on the first floor, in addition to a hallway. A portion of one room on the first floor is now a rest room. A remodeling project in the 1950s included paneling of all walls on the first floor. Currently there are five rooms on the second floor, and a hallway on each floor. Originally there were six rooms on the second floor. Removal of a wall between two of these rooms created a conference room. There are twenty-nine windows which today are one-over-one metal sash type in place of the original wood one-over-one type of windows. Most of these are now thermal pane metal sash. In addition to the stairway from the first to the second floor, another stairway connects the second floor with the attic. The attic consists of two additional rooms, each of which includes a dormer with window. The attic may have served as office space or even living quarters for a period. The wallpaper in the attic area is probably original. The center of the roof area consists of a small catwalk which originally included a flagpole. Today a radio antenna stands in place of the flagpole, however a newer flagpole stands in front of the building. White asbestos siding today covers the outside of the office building; the original exterior was wood dropsiding darker in color than the present material, though several early photographs give somewhat different NPS Form

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ideas of that material and its appearance. The original exterior is now removed. The current roof consists of asphalt shingles and appears to be fairly recent. The original roof consisted of wooden shingles which are still present below the asphalt shingles.

A cellar beneath the northern part of the building originally consisted of two rooms; one for storage, the second for the furnace and coal. However, the cellar now includes only one room with the coal furnace and coal chute removed. A natural gas furnace now heats the building. A chimney extends from the furnace through both floors, the attic, and above the roof. This chimney originally vented the coal furnace and is now used for the natural gas heating facility. Inside the cellar, several areas reveal an original foundation beneath reinforcing concrete later added to the foundation. Also in the cellar, several modern supports (turnbuckles) provide additional support for the building. Floors throughout the building are linoleum. Original floors appear to have been of linoleum, but in different patterns. Electrical wiring may be original but is in a poor state of repair.

From 1905 to 1910 the building stood by itself on the block with one small outbuilding, number 11 on the map, possibly having been added during this time. Then from 1910 to 1912 a major project of expansion of the facilities included the addition of a concrete vault to the northwest corner of the office building itself as well as the construction of several outbuildings. Four of the outbuildings which still exist behind the office building date from the period 1910-1912. They are identified on the map sketch of the current complex with numbers 3, 4, 5, and 6. All show indications of substantial changes. (All historical descriptions are from the *Project History*, all current descriptions are from field inspections.)

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Only outbuilding no. 5, marked as a granary/fruit cellar, is the one which most retains its original character. It has special wooden walls to protect grain, an elevator, and cellar for fruit storage. However, the exterior is more recent sheet metal which replaced the same type of material that originally covered the building.

Outbuildings no. 3 and 4 are shown on more recent maps of the area as separately designed and are discussed in that manner for the ease of reference to the maps which are standard. However, they were constructed together and are listed in the original *Project History* as a single structure called a warehouse and are counted as one contributing building. The warehouse was originally covered with corrugated galvanized iron which accounted for much of the total building costs. Otherwise, the building has simple wooden frameworks with segments of concrete and dirt flooring on the first floor and wooden flooring on that section with the second floor. The two story portion (outbuilding 3) is currently used for storage of various materials. Though the exterior represents a rather recent replacement of the iron material, the foundation and framework are original. The structure retains its original shape and general appearance despite the fact that the galvanized metal is still "shiny new." Similarly, the portion noted on the map as 4 is only one story with a recent exterior of corrugated galvanized iron. Currently, this portion of the building serves as a "tin shop" for sheet metal.

Building number 6 is a simple frame open garage with dirt floor used for parking heavier equipment. It has three closed sides with the open side to the east. It was originally designed as an equipment shed with malthoid covering at the time of construction, May to June, 1911. No other information is in the early *Project History*. A very small, more recent addition connects this building to the granary (bldg. 5, noted above).

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Building number 11 is the least documented of any in the district. The map of the grounds in the early *Project History* shows a small building on this site with the same basic outline as the existing building with the exception that it was divided into two rooms: a "blue print shop," and "carp't shop." One other entry notes that a "carpenter shop" cost \$253.80. However, the *Project History* includes no other information at all on this small structure, in contrast to all the other buildings and facilities on the grounds which are described in some detail, even including blueprints. The present building consists of only one room and shows evidence of a new roof and either well painted exterior or new siding on the walls. However, the earliest photograph of the main office building clearly shows a portion of the smaller building in the background so it probably even predates the additions of 1910 to 1912. It is thus listed as contributing to the nomination.

Five other outbuildings of considerably later vintage are present. Outbuilding number 2 is a long metal storage shed for lumber with one open side. It appears to date from the same rather recent period of addition of the new corrugated metal as used on outbuildings 3, 4, and 5, as discussed above. Building 7 is a closed garage with a door which opens to the south. Building 8 is of concrete construction with an attached metal portion. It is used for the storage of chemicals. Building number 9 is a bay metal garage with overhead doors that open to the west. Building number 10 is a metal mechanics garage and machine shop with doors that open away from the complex. These outbuildings are far enough away that they do not detract from the quality of the office building. They are noncontributing though present in the district.

Photographs and copies of detailed plans of the buildings are enclosed.



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Reclamation soon after the initiation of the agency which also reflected a major expression of the Progressive Era values of official national policy. Finally, the building is historically significant as the focus of the local activity of the Bureau of Reclamation. This function continued as managed by the Uncompahgre Water Users Association which subsequently occupied the facility. With the above areas of significance, the request for determination of eligibility is made under criteria A and C.

The building has architectural significance as one of the relatively rare examples of the four square style of construction originally used for any function aside from residential (Gowans, 1986; Hanchett, 1986). The design, based on a simple square floor plan outline, became quite common throughout the United States from the 1890s through World War I. The four square design has a massive, solid appearance. The professional architectural community regards it as a uniquely American type of construction. The style is often called "hip roofed" as well as four square. In Colorado, it locally bore the name "Denver square." The town of Montrose had a number of homes of similar construction in the immediate neighborhood. Four square homes ranged in size from small one floor "bungalows" to large farm houses and "streetcar suburban" homes. Such major mail order firms as Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Ward provided prefabricated four square designs. Prices ranged from \$800 to \$1200 for the mail order models (Gowans, 1986; Hanchett, 1986). Hence the construction cost of \$4166 makes the Montrose building far more substantial than the typical example of the style. (A heating plant, installed separately for \$800.00, and the vault, a 1910 addition which cost \$764.08, further enhanced the magnitude of the building.) The same contractor, J.J. Kewin, that built the original Bureau of Reclamation Office Building also constructed a number of nearby homes of similar, but considerably

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smaller, design through the neighborhood. One outbuilding was clearly present from an early date so it contributes to the nomination. Subsequently, the agency attached a vault to the office building as well as adding several outbuildings in the period 1910 to 1912. Three more outbuildings which date from this period are present and contribute to the district. Five other outbuildings of more recent construction are present in the district but are noncontributing.

The Montrose Office Building also has significance as the focus of the early construction activities of irrigation facilities in the area as well as the site of ongoing administrative management of the completed project. The U.S. Congress created the Reclamation Service in 1902 for the purposes of irrigation and flood control (subsequently the agency has been named the Bureau of Reclamation). President Theodore Roosevelt signed the Act which created the agency. The Bureau, then, is one of the federal agencies which is most associated with the Progressive Era and the various changes in national values that were ongoing at the time of its creation. The Secretary of Interior authorized the Reclamation Service to undertake what was then called the Gunnison Project in early 1903 thus making it the second project undertaken by the new agency (Arizona's Salt River Project was the first). Subsequently, the Reclamation Service would undertake dozens of projects. Construction of the first facilities in the Gunnison Project began in 1904. From an engineering standpoint, the Gunnison Tunnel and the Gunnison Diversion Dam were the most important items in the project (*Project History*). Significantly, the National Register of Historic Places has included the Gunnison Tunnel since July, 1979, as entry no. 79000616. The Keeper of the Register has declared additional parts of the system as eligible for inclusion, though they do not yet actually appear on the Register.

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The Montrose office building, approved in 1903 and actually constructed in 1905, is documented as the second oldest facility built by the Bureau of Reclamation for offices. The national scope of the agency and the fact that it was so much a part of the application of the federal government into the Progressive Era justifies the nomination at the national level. (Though an office building at Arizona's Salt River Project is just a few months older, it has not been used in its original capacity for many years. The Salt River building is at the dam site rather than in the local community, is considerably smaller than the Montrose building, and is of a different architectural style.) The warehouse (3 and 4 on the map, as noted above), equipment shed (6), and carpenter shop (11), are part of a complex that was used for portions of construction and subsequent mechanical maintenance of the irrigation facilities, hence they definitely contribute to the significance of the complex in this regard. At costs of \$2172.59, \$649.74, and \$253.80, respectively, the warehouse, equipment shed, and carpenter shop represented important outlays for the Reclamation Service when they were constructed (*Project History*).

The four square design as exemplified by the Montrose office building is significant as indicative of a general transition of patterns of American social history from the Victorian Era of the late 19th century to the Progressive Era of the early 20th century. One important school of U.S. historians, generally recognized as led by Robert Wiebe, has interpreted the advent of the Progressive Era as part of a national *Search for Order* as Wiebe titled his book (1968). He noted the "bureaucratization" of the period and a "standardization" of many aspects of life. The Reclamation Service was clearly a reflection of both of these themes at the federal level. In addition, the Montrose

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office building represents the standardization style just then becoming part of American life. Thus it symbolizes the very essence of the period. Perhaps it is indicative of further changes that the four square design fell out of use just after World War I (1917-1918 for U.S. participation). Historians generally recognize that even as the end of the Progressive Era as a central theme is American social history. The so-called "Roaring '20s" brought different architectural designs which represented that period.

The Montrose office building has further significance as the unique site of the ongoing administration of the Uncompahgre project which serves much of western Colorado. The influence of irrigation projects as economic forces throughout the western U.S. can only be described as crucial. The region around Montrose was certainly no exception. The Reclamation Service office building naturally developed as a focus of ongoing community activity, not only in daily administration of the project, but as the site of public meetings. These assemblies provided liaison between the agency and the local populace on such issues as allocation of water, assessment of fees, and determination of rights-of-way for facilities. In 1932, the Uncompahgre Water Users Association assumed responsibility from the Bureau of Reclamation (as it was named by that date) for maintenance and operation of the irrigation project. The Association employed a staff for daily conduct of business involving the system which maintained office space in the building, essentially performing the functions that Bureau staff members had previously performed. In addition, the monthly meetings of the Association's Board of Directors convened in the building, though an annual meeting of all members of the Association met in a larger facility. Despite the occupancy of the Water Users' Association, the building legally remains federal property. The local significance of the district was basically the same

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under directt Bureau of Reclamation control or occupancy by the Uncompahgre Water Users' Association (*Project Data*, 1981).

The granary/fruit cellar has special significance as representing important administrative policies of the early agency. The Reclamation Service added it as part of the expansion of facilities on the site beginning in 1910 at a cost of \$1327.13 (*Project History*). When Congress created the Reclamation Service in 1902, it included a provision in the Act that farmers who drew water from irrigation projects but lacked cash could satisfy billings by supplying produce. The agency thus built a storage facility for the most common types of produce in the area. It then used the foods for its own workers and draft animals on the project, or resold them after the project was completed.

[A nomination for the district with the office building and outbuildings should have accompanied the nomination of the related Gunnison Tunnel to the National Register. The relationship of the office building and outbuildings to this early project and the early Bureau in general justifies the national significance of the nomination.]



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**Boundary Justification**

The boundary as described includes the main building with vault, the granary, and the outbuildings.

( ) See continuation sheet

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**11. Form Prepared By**

Name/Title: C.W. Miller, Ph.D., Historian

Organization: U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Street & Number: 125 S. State St., Room 7418

City or Town: Salt Lake City,

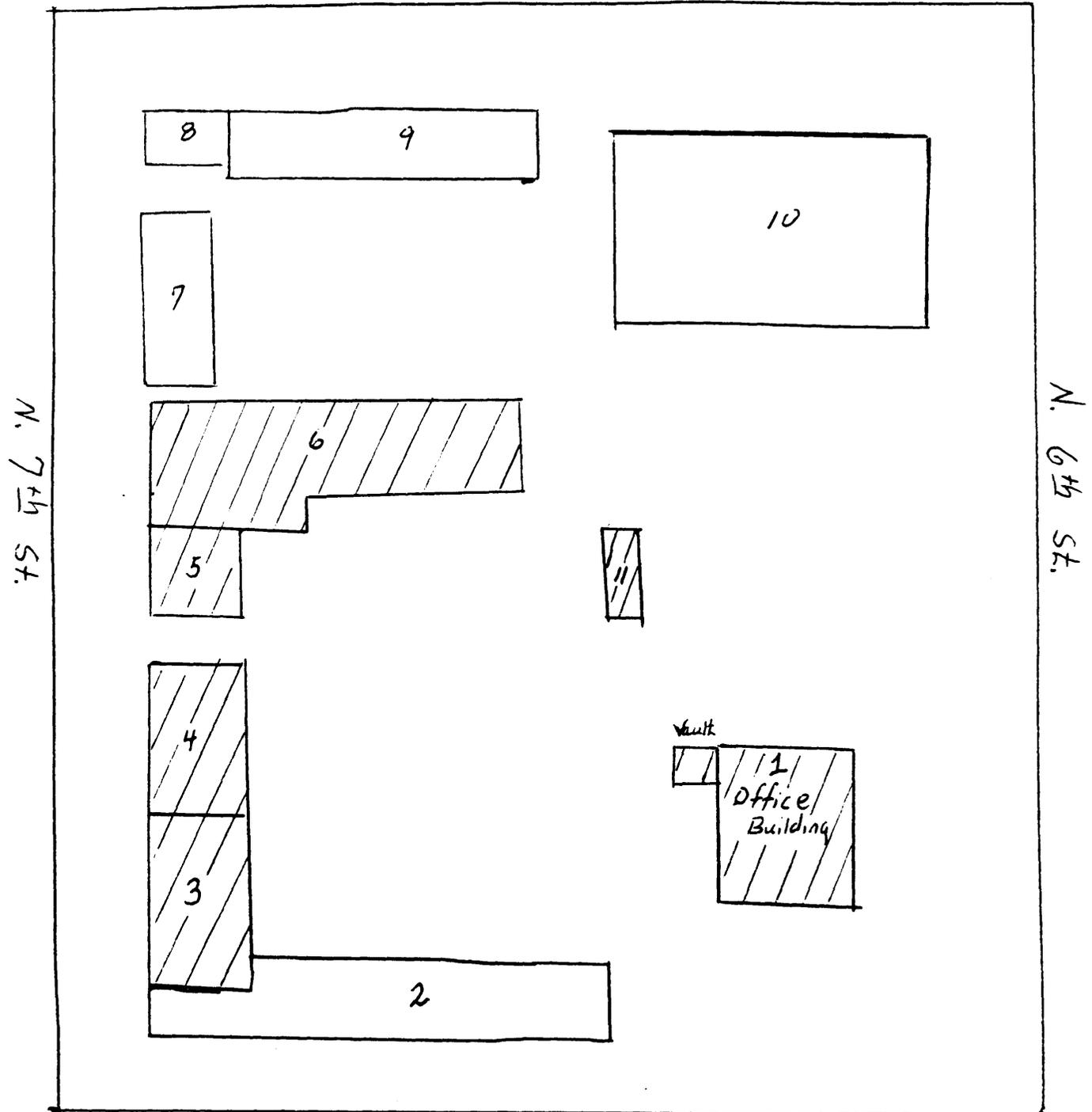
Date: 9/16/91

Telephone: (801)524-6868

State: UT Zip Code: 84147



Mesa Ave.



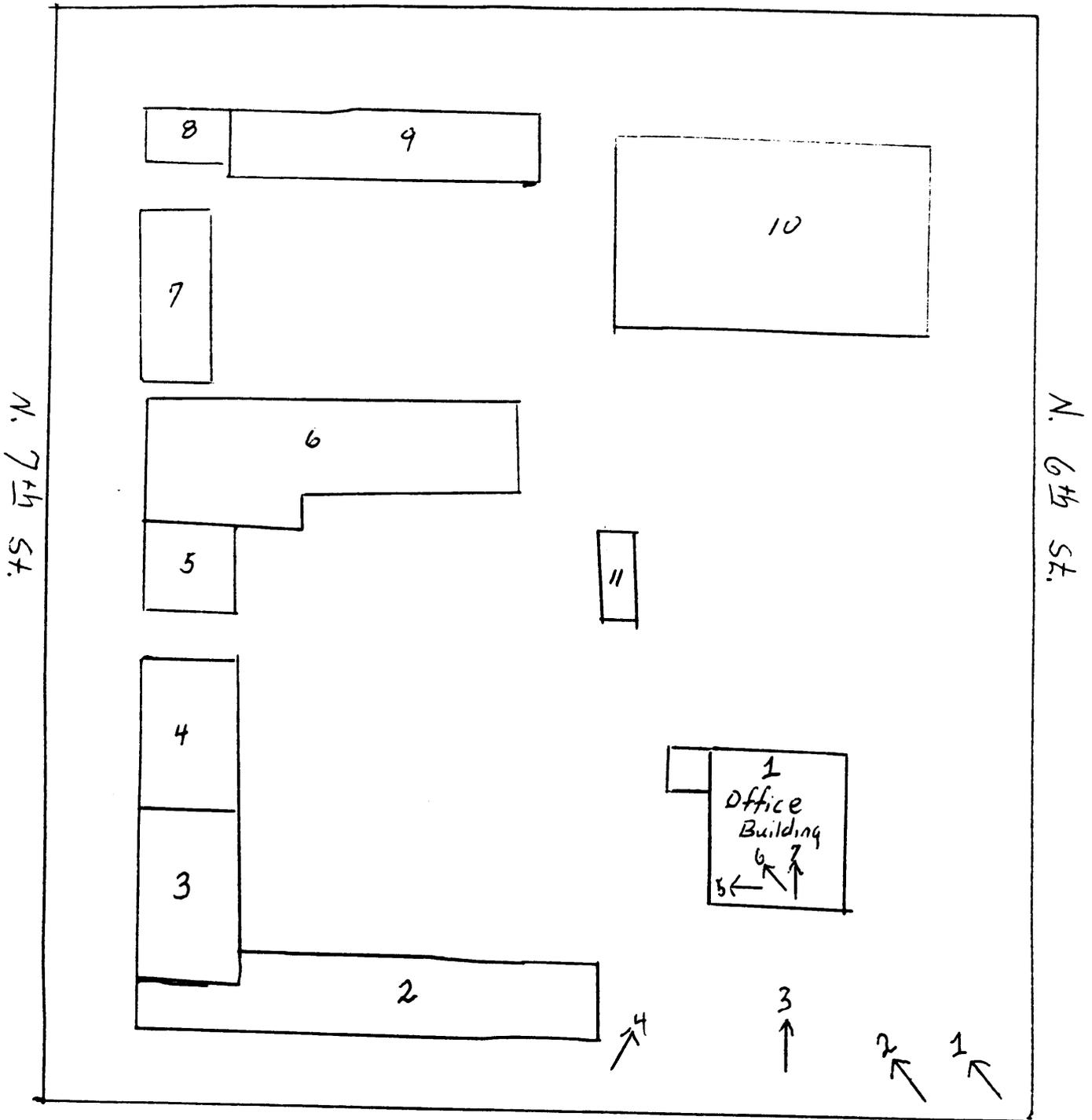
Park Ave.

 Buildings Contributing to Nomination

Map sketch of Area Described in Nomination Showing Office Building and Recent Structures (See discussion in item no. 7 of Nomination form.)



Mesa Ave.



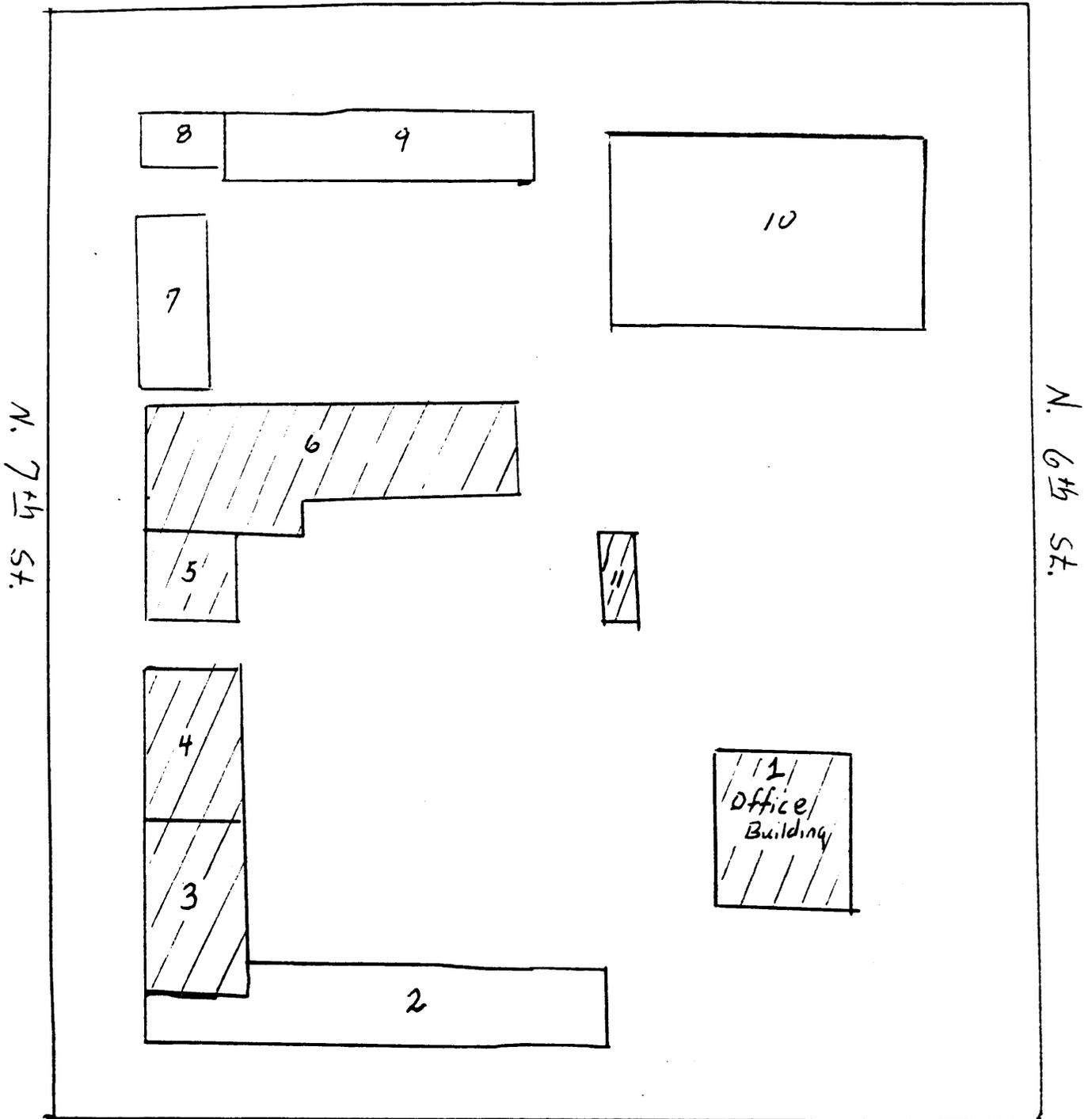
Park Ave.

← Camera direction by photograph numbers.

Map sketch of Area Described in Nomination Showing Office Building and Recent Structures (See discussion in item no. 7 of Nomination form.)



Mesa Ave.



Park Ave.

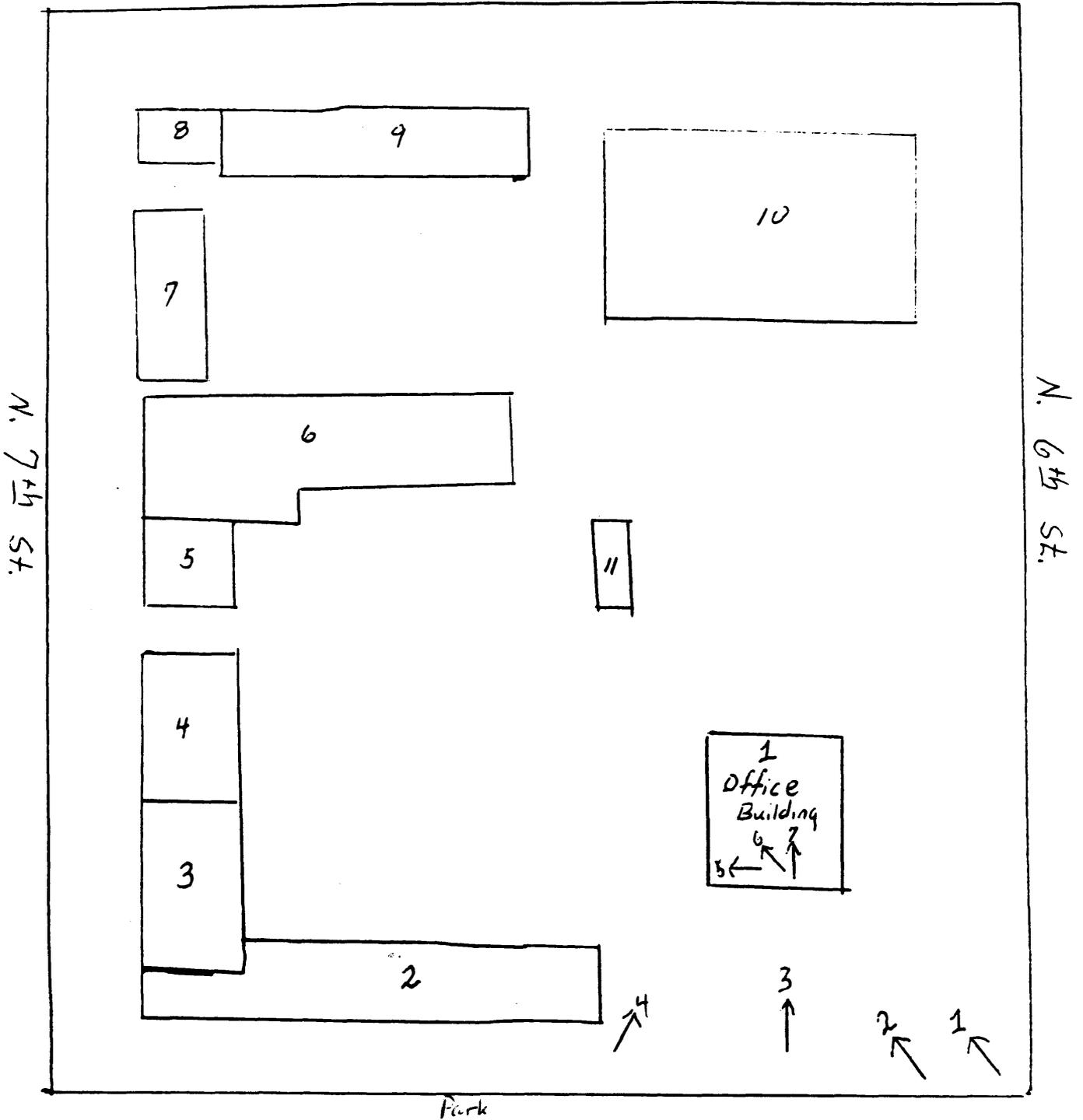
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation District of Buildings  
 Montrose, Montrose County, Colorado  
 Contributing and non-contributing buildings, 1991.

1" = approximately 40'  
 Map No. 1

(Buildings shown in cross-hatching contribute to nomination;  
 photographs numbered on Map No. 2.)

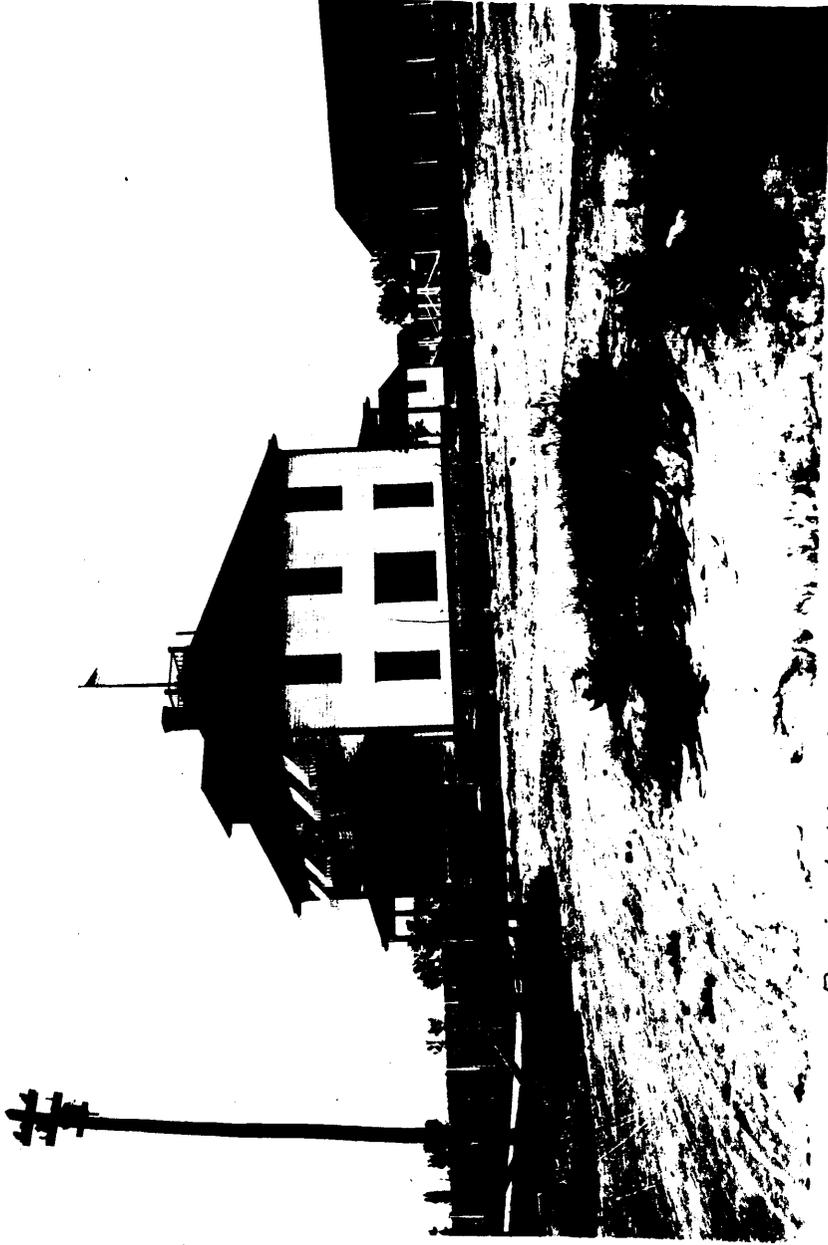


Mesa Ave.



U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, District of Building  
 Montrose, Montrose County, Colorado  
 Photographs by number and direction of camera, 491.  
 1" = approximately 40'.

Map No. 2  
 Arrows indicate direction of camera, numbers at arrows  
 indicate photograph numbers.



*Project Headquarters - Montrose*

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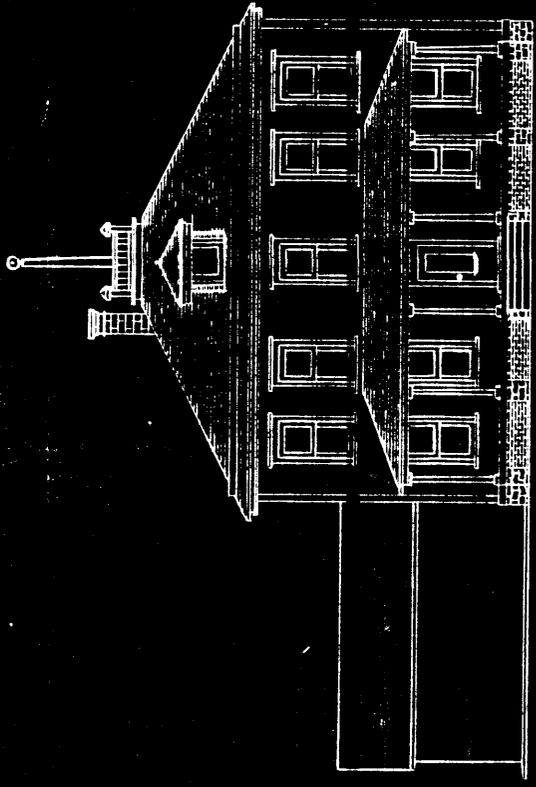
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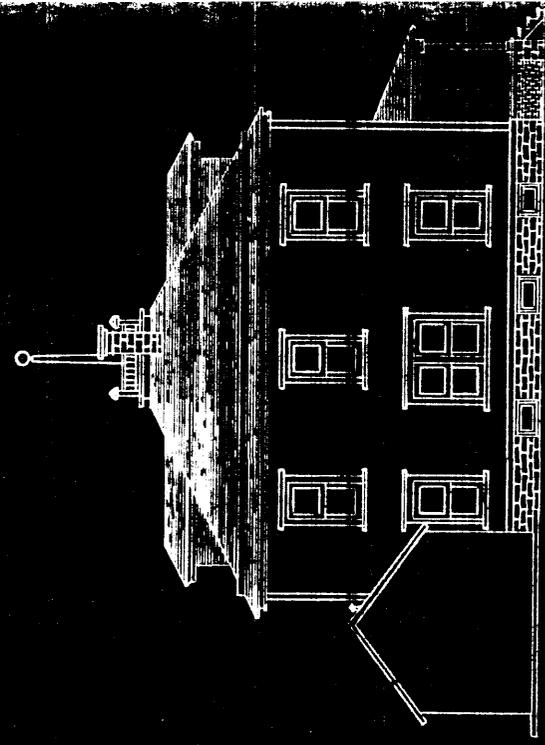
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FRONT ELEVATION



LEFT SIDE ELEVATION

U.S. RECLAMATION SERVICE  
UNCOMPANHGRE PROJECT

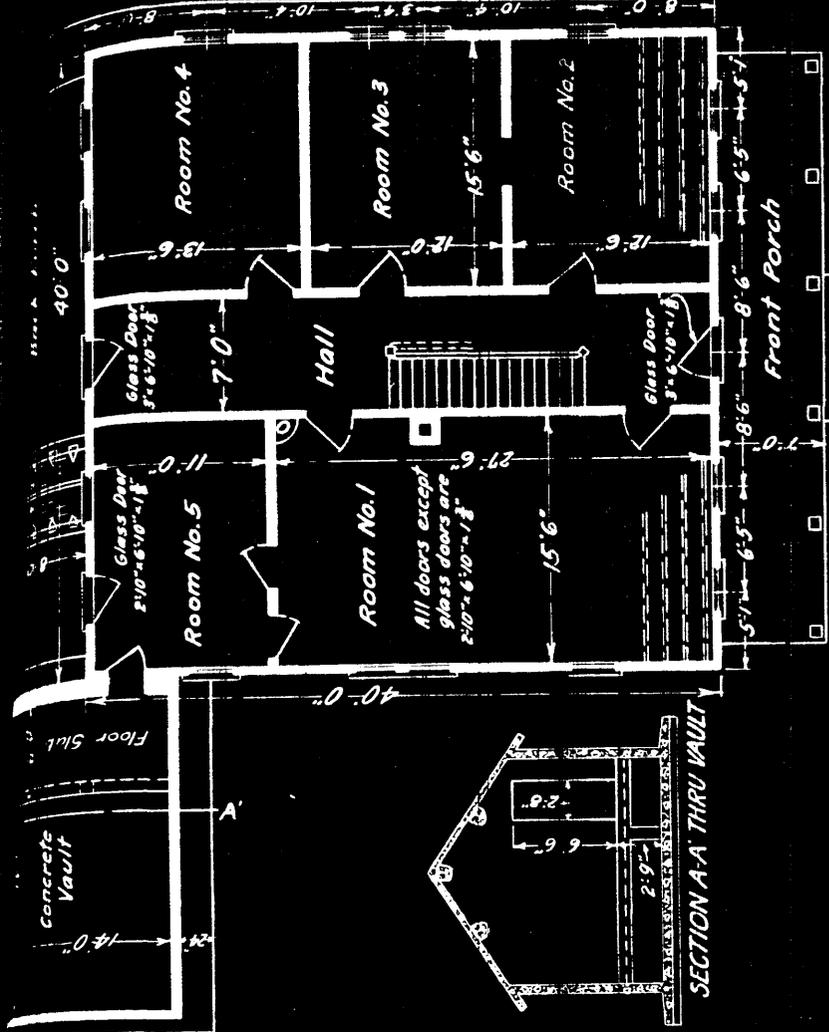
PLANS FOR OFFICE BUILDING AT MONTROSE

SCALE -  $\frac{1}{16}'' = 1'$

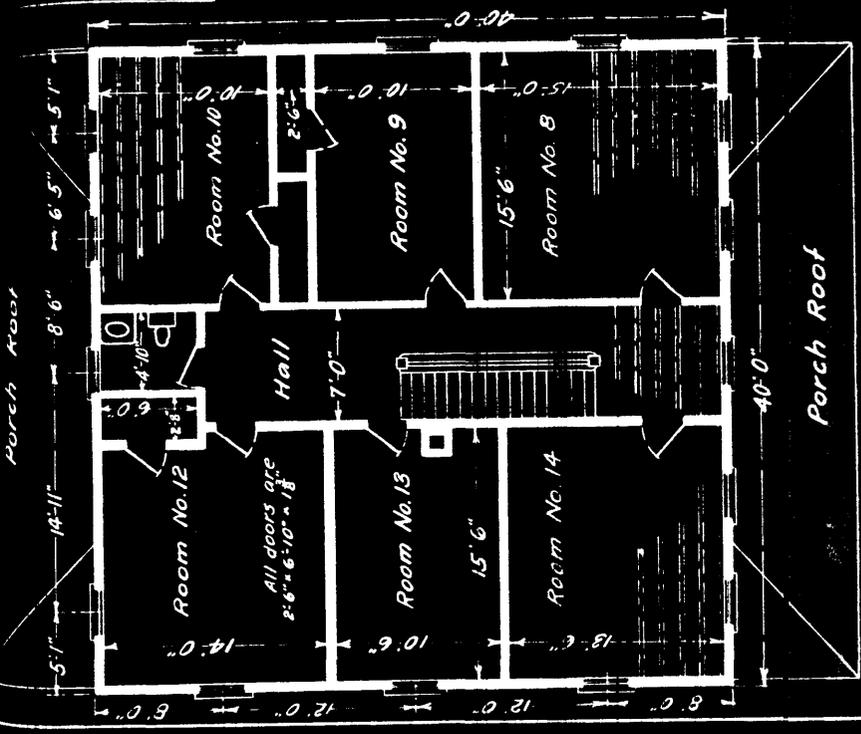
SHEET 3 OF 4

APRIL 1, 1913

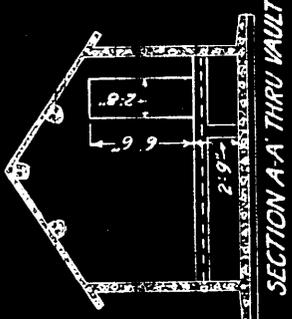




PLAN OF FIRST FLOOR



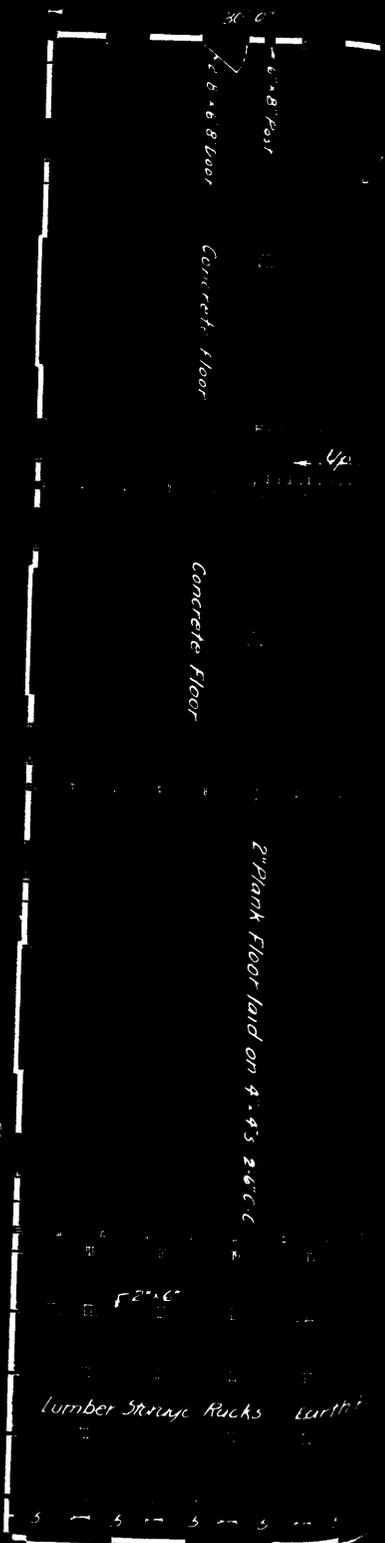
PLAN OF SECOND FLOOR



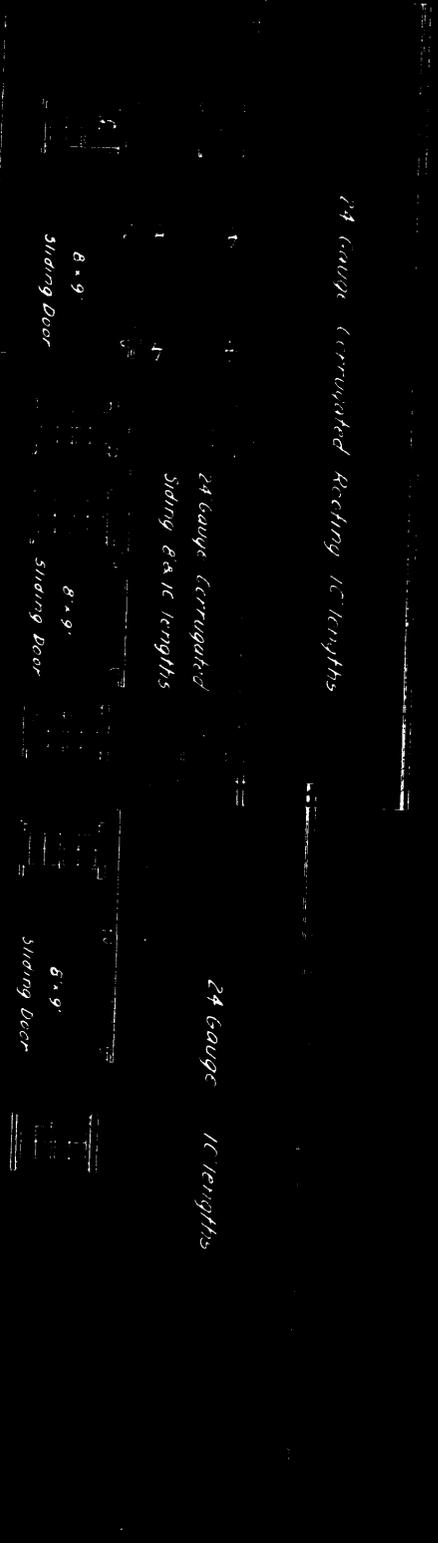
U.S. RECLAMATION SERVICE  
UNCOMPANGRE PROJECT

PLANS FOR OFFICE BUILDING AT MONTROSE  
SCALE 3/8" = 1'  
SHEET 2 OF 4  
MARCH 22, 1913





PLAN

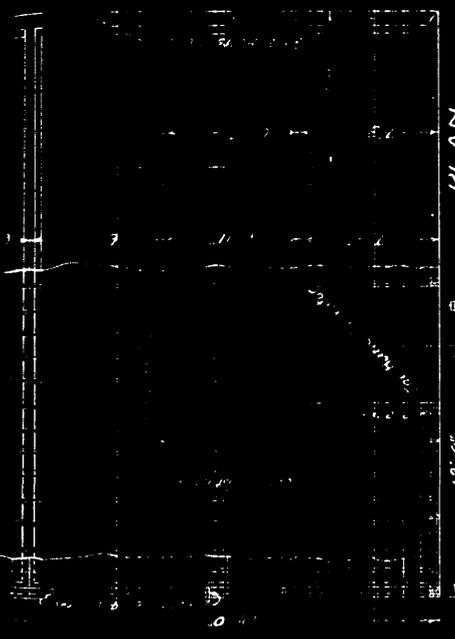


SIDE ELEVATION

U.S. RECLAMATION SERVICE  
 UNCOMPANIGRE PROJECT  
 PLANS FOR  
 WAREHOUSE

SCALE 3/4" = 1'  
 APRIL 6, 1915

SIDE ELEVATION



PLAN

13' 0"



FLOOR DETAILS

RECF  
DETAILS

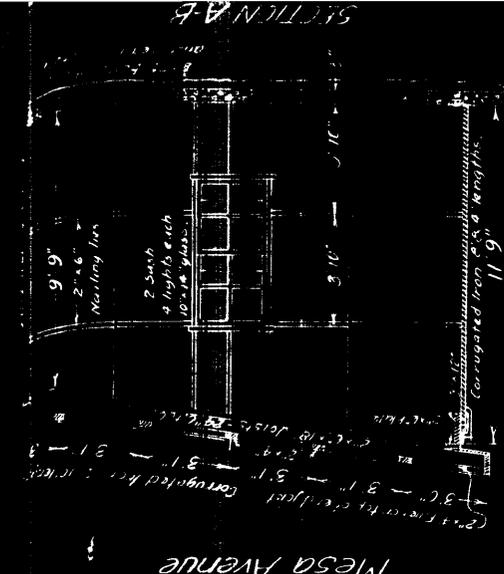
PLAN OF CHAIR

DETAILS OF JOINT A

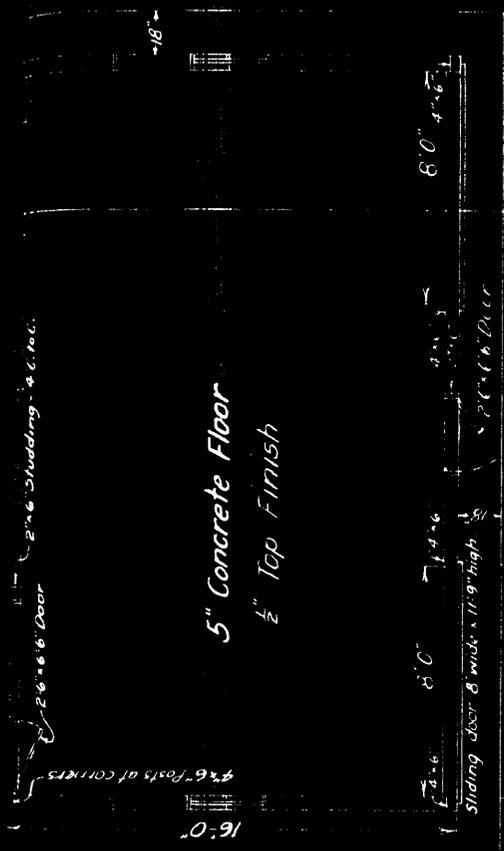
FRONT ELEVATION

13' 0"

3



Mesa Avenue



5" Concrete Floor  
1/2" Top Finish

PLAN

N. 6th ST.

U.S. RECLAMATION SERVICE  
UNCOMPAHGRE PROJECT  
AUTOMOBILE SHED

SCALE - 1/4" = 1'  
MAY 6, 1912