

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

8603



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 Rector Hotel

Other names/site number Hotel St. Charles, Governor Hotel, St. Charles Hotel

### 2. Location

street & number 619-621 Third Avenue not for publication

city or town Seattle vicinity

State Washington code WA county King code 033 zip code 98104

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

[Signature]  
Signature of certifying official/Title

6/26/02  
Date

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:

- 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]  
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

8/9/02

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not incl. previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Non-Contributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously  
listed in the National Register

**6. Functions or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Hotel

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Hotel/

Multiple Dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals: Beaux-Arts

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete: Poured

walls Brick/Terra Cotta

roof Synthetic: Bituminous

other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- 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.
- 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)

ENTERTAINMENT

COMMUNITY PLANNING

& DEVELOPMENT

**Period of Significance**

1912-1917

**Significant Dates**

1913

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Alson Brown

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

John Graham, Sr., Architect

Harry Brandt, Contractor

**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:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

**Name of repository:**

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

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** Less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM References on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>10</u> Zone	<u>5</u> <u>50</u> <u>310</u> Easting	<u>52</u> <u>72</u> <u>205</u> Northing	3	<u>    </u> Zone	<u>    </u> <u>    </u> <u>    </u> Easting	<u>    </u> <u>    </u> <u>    </u> Northing
2	<u>    </u> Zone	<u>    </u> <u>    </u> <u>    </u> Easting	<u>    </u> <u>    </u> <u>    </u> Northing	4	<u>    </u> Zone	<u>    </u> <u>    </u> <u>    </u> Easting	<u>    </u> <u>    </u> <u>    </u> Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property.) The northern 1/3 of Lots 2 and 3, Block 3, Boren & Denny's Addition to the City of Seattle. Parcel # 093900-0085

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.) The boundary includes those sections of Lots 2 and 3 on the SW corner of Third Avenue and Cherry Street historically associated with the hotel building.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Phillip Seven Esser

organization Historic Preservation Services date March 15, 2002

street & number 318 Terry Avenue North Suite B telephone 206 818 8700

city or town Seattle state WA zip code 98109

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

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

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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

name Plymouth Housing Group

street & number 2209 First Avenue telephone 206 374 9409

city or town Seattle state WA zip code 98121-1614

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet - [RECTOR HOTEL - KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON]

Section number 7

Page 1 of 8

### DESCRIPTION

The Rector Hotel, completed in 1913, is located at the southwest corner of Third Avenue and Cherry Street on the southwestern edge of downtown Seattle, Washington. Founded in 1851, the City of Seattle is located on Puget Sound, 113 miles from the U.S.-Canadian border. Seattle is a commercial, cultural and advanced technology hub of the U.S. Pacific Northwest and a major port city for trans-Pacific and European trade. The greater Seattle area is a leading center for advanced technology in aerospace, computer software, biomedicine, electronics, medical equipment, and environmental engineering. Other major industries include wood products, transportation equipment, food products, fish-processing, and apparel design.

### Setting

Sited southwest of the central business core, the hotel building lies just north of Pioneer Square, a National Register Historic District in the shadow of the imposing 1914 Smith Tower. The majority of the buildings directly to the north of the hotel serve in local, county, and federal government capacities, with Interstate 5 bordering to the northeast. To the southwest are numerous commercial buildings, beyond which runs the Alaskan Viaduct (Highway 99) and the commercial waterfront bordering Puget Sound.

In the direct vicinity of the hotel are a number of notable historic buildings. Across Cherry Street to the north is the Dexter Horton Building, designated a City of Seattle landmark, and on the northeast corner of Third and Cherry is the Arctic Building, both a city and a National Register landmark. Adjoining the hotel on the south is the Lyon Building, also a city landmark and listed on the National Register. Across the street to the east is the Public Safety Building which takes up the entire block.

The hotel is placed in a northwest-southeast orientation, parallel to and bordering Third Avenue, whose grade gently rises to the north. Perpendicular to Third Avenue, is the north elevation that faces Cherry Street. On this elevation the building is only 34 feet in depth, and the grade drops sharply to the west towards Puget Sound.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet - [RECTOR HOTEL - KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON]

Section number 7

Page 2 of 8

### Architectural Description

#### Exterior

The highly symmetrical Beaux-Arts style hotel, designed by well-known architect John Graham, Sr., is a six-story, 11-bay, flat-roofed, brick and terra cotta building. The architectural expression includes elements of Greek and Roman classicism, English Georgian and Adam styles, and is commonly referred to as American Renaissance style. The rectangular-plan design is constructed with steel-reinforced concrete footings supporting a concrete frame structure and 5-inch concrete slab floors. The ground floor has a granite base and is trimmed with glazed terra cotta, as are the entablature, window surrounds, and cornice molding surmounting the second floor windows. The terra cotta color and texture remains uniform throughout the exterior. The majority of the first and second floor terra cotta elements have been painted a cream color. The second floor is a mixture of patterned brickwork and terra cotta trim. The remaining four floors consist entirely of a brick façade with terra cotta window sills. The roof parapet is trimmed in metal flashing.

Simple, classically inspired pilasters and piers punctuate the ground floor of the primary, or east elevation. The central and terminating pilasters all consist of base, shaft and capital, the shafts having recessed panels. Where exposed, secondary piers are plain and smaller in scale. The ground floor consists of a 18-foot high ground floor level with a centrally placed three-bay, semi-circular arched arcade that serves as the entrance to the hotel lobby (see Photo #7). The arcade is designed to mimic carved marble and has classically-inspired detailing such as stepped pilasters, decorative, beaded scrolled keystones at the arch tops, and decorative 'vignette' spandrels. The flanking entrance pilasters are decorated with cartouche placed on the capital, interlaced with ribbon swags and hanging garlands (see Photo #9). The arcade openings are infilled with painted wood trim and glazing with the fanlights executed in simple radiating mullions with a bold center radius finely detailed in overlapping discs. The center opening features two granite steps leading up to the wood frame hotel entrance with a simple, single-pane glazed door flanked by hinged sidelights. The outer openings consist of a three-part glazed infill with a larger pane flanked by smaller panes. The wood trim in the center mullions is detailed similarly to the bold fanlight radius, with all four vertical mullions topped by scroll acorn, or

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet - [RECTOR HOTEL - KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON]

Section number 7

Page 3 of 8

consoles. Sitting on top of the consoles and below the fanlight is a classical entablature with a simple dentil molding. Mounted on the pilasters at door height on either side of the entrance door are wood plaques on which single lantern style fixtures are mounted. The ground floor is terminated at the north end by a monumental pier stylistically similar to the entrance pilasters. The south end of the main façade is punctuated by a single-bay entrance flanked by two monumental piers similar to that of the north end, but are slightly smaller in scale. A modern, standard black anodized aluminum store door and single sidelight with a fabric awning are topped by a simple classical entablature, on top of which is a recessed transom space with a contemporary triple-casement window.

Interspersed between the central portion and south end of the hotel is a three-bay storefront with a tall base of green marble square sections and a standard height black anodized aluminum frame door and sidelight, flanked by framed glazing. Filling the remainder of the first floor level above the storefront at the transom level is a simple, black horizontal panel of black corrugated metal. The northern portion of the ground floor consists of a four-bay, two-level façade. Three evenly spaced glazed openings mounted flush with the surrounding smooth wall space takes up three bays. The northernmost bay of the lower portion has a recessed standard height black anodized aluminum framed double door and sidelight with an awning similar to the southernmost entrance of the hotel. The top transom level of the entire horizontal section between the lobby arcade and north pier is completely infilled with a band of glazing separated by green-painted wood mullions (see Photo #6). The overall pattern consists of large central glazing panels surrounded on four sides by smaller rectangular panes and finished with small square panes at the four corners. At the southern end, the introduction of a ventilation fan and louvered panel interrupts the pattern. On the northern end, the last bay has two greatly reduced versions of the typical pattern with frames separating the last large panel and between the two scaled down windows. At the top corners of each end and at the frames on the north end, the framework curves into the small, square panes, softening the square edges. Surmounting the entire ground floor level of the hotel is a classically designed terra cotta entablature with a dentil course and plain frieze punctuated by decorative discs located over each pilaster.

The second floor consists of eleven symmetrically placed windows interspersed with decorative panels set on a frieze of terra cotta that incorporates the window sills. Each window opening is framed in plain terra cotta and each window head is made

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places

### Continuation Sheet - [RECTOR HOTEL - KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON]

Section number 7

Page 4 of 8

up of a band of terra cotta only slightly wider than the side trim elements and topped with a band of an incised wave molding. The rectangular spaces between the window openings are made up of patterned brickwork in a standard bond with the center section divided by a boundary of headers with the four corners trimmed with a small squares of terra cotta. The top sixth of the rectangular spaces are finished in a vertically laid Flemish bond. The terminating panels are similar except that they lack the header boundary and terra cotta inserts. The two panels flanking the center window are differentiated from the remainder in that the center portions are infilled completely with a terra cotta element that has at its center a raised plaque motif with squared indents at the four corners. The windows are all newer recessed, double casement aluminum-frame. Placed directly over the second floor window heads is another frieze on which sits a cornice mold and an additional frieze that incorporates the third floor window sills.

The remainder of the elevation, the third through sixth floors, is completely uniform. The only interruption in the standard bond brickwork is the incorporation of a header course running the entire elevation at the window tops at each floor. The recessed, original windows are all wood-frame, eight-over-one, double-hung sash. The window sills are made up of a three part terra cotta detail with raised fillets at the mortar joints.

The three-bay north elevation mimics the east elevation in overall composition with some slight differences. At the ground level the grade slopes sharply to the west. A single-bay entrance, similar to that of the south end of the east elevation, lies on the westernmost end. The pier shafts rest on tall, plain granite bases (see Photo #5). An entablature with a segmented frieze and dentil course is located between the halfway point of the pier shafts. The remaining space between this entablature and the main one running the perimeter of the two elevations is infilled with a glazed bull's eye, or oculus window (see Photo #10). It is encircled by a double arched frame with voussoirs, and at each spandrel corner are recessed triangular panels, the inside edge following the curve of the arched frame. The remainder of the ground level elevation is divided into two levels of three equal size windows in each. The large plate glass windows on the bottom level are placed close together and are separated from the transom level by a horizontal band of flat wall space. The plate glass windows in the transom level are smaller in scale and are separated and surrounded by flat wall spaces. The upper levels mimic the east elevation with the exception of the center bay, which features pairs of steel-frame, two-over-two, double-hung sash



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet - [RECTOR HOTEL - KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON]

Section number 7 Page 5 of 8

---

divided by a wide center portion also of steel. The glazing is all translucent and wire-embedded. A tag mounted to the bottom of each frame reads "Puget Sound Metal Co., Seattle, Wash." These windows open to a black painted, wrought iron fire escape (see Photo #8). At the center of each railing, facing the street is a curvilinear pattern integrated into the ballusters. The base and rail tops are all punctuated with integrated wrought-iron circles.

The west elevation is attached to the adjacent building (Cherry Street Garage) along the length of the elevation with the exception of three light wells that provide light for corridors and rooms on the second through sixth floor. The walls are rough-finished concrete with the parapet level constructed in brick. The windows on the west elevation, regardless of their size, in single or double banks, are all steel-frame, two-over-two, double-hung sash as described for the center bay of the north elevation. The south elevation is essentially a party wall shared with the neighboring Lyon Building.

The roof consists of four louvered and pyramidal shaped ventilation shaft covers, a centrally located brick elevator tower, and stair access boxed section on the south end. Covered in a silver-painted bituminous, overlapping sheet covering, the flat roof is entirely surrounded by a low parapet.

### Interior

The hotel lobby takes up the central portion of the ground floor level, and is rectangular in plan corresponding with the primary elevation, it reaches 16 feet in height. The architectural expression can best be described as Greco-Roman as it incorporates Roman classicism on the elevations and a Greek-inspired coffered ceiling (see Photos # 15 & 18). The academic design is highly-ordered and symmetrical. Each elevation is a mirrored view of the one opposite in style, but the arcade openings serve various functions, or none as in the case of the north and south elevations. The floor is finished in pieced marble sections reflecting the outline of the coffer frames of the ceiling. The infill sections are finished in terrazzo and a marble baseboard runs the perimeter of the lobby. A small poured concrete step sits at the base of a steel fire-door on the center of the north elevation. The walls and ceiling are finished in painted plaster, gypsum board and trimmed in both wood and metal. The commercial spaces to the north and south of the lobby take up the rest of the ground floor level.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet - [RECTOR HOTEL - KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON]

Section number 7

Page 6 of 8

The east elevation of the lobby is a simplified version of the arcade in the exterior description in that the window trim and decorative keystones lack ornate detailing, and there is no denticulation on the entablature portions (see Photo #11). The half-round arches reach the full height of the elevation and are divided by full height pilasters mimicking those of the exterior. The north elevation has at its center a single arch. In the half-round section is a corresponding raised panel framing a banded wreath relief at the center. The unadorned bottom portion consists of a plain, steel-framed fire-door. Pilasters flank the arch followed by raised panel sections divided by an entablature-type molding that runs the perimeter of the three interior wall elevations, interrupted by the vertical elements. The frieze portion is comprised of an incised wave molding. Completing the elevation at the wall ends and serving all four elevations, are pilaster corners. The west elevation mirrors its opposite elevation whose arches serve as passage ways. The southernmost arch has a standard-height foyer and elevator door. Above the doors is a painted, three-part wrought-iron repeating decorative element. The half-round portion is infilled with an elaborate Adamesque, wrought-iron fanlight (see Photo #14). The bottom portion of the center archway is comprised of a plain infill panel punctuated by a steel-framed glazed opening, and contemporary paneled exterior-type door that opens to a small office. The open, half-round portion is a black-painted wrought-iron fanlight slightly less elaborate than its above-mentioned counterpart. The northern archway is completely open and paneled on its jamb sections. At the base of the arch is a marble staircase leading to a landing with a stylistically incorporated steel, double, two-panel fire door on the west wall (see Photo #16). The staircase has an elaborate, high style cast-iron balustrade capped with mahogany handrails and acorn-motif finials crowning the newel posts. The landing area and balustrade has a curved protrusion that has at the rail level a simple mounted wood shelf. Above the staircase and landing is a coffered skylight with recessed diamond-pane mullions. The south elevation is identical to the north with the exception of a single rectangular, horizontally oriented raised panel placed over a plain, framed panel (see Photo #15).

The marble staircase turns south and leads up to a second landing at which point it leads east up a second floor corridor. On the east elevation of the second floor is a wide, recessed arch section is built into the wall. On either side of the corridor are doorways leading to the north and south ends of the floor. This, and some unit floor plans, differentiates the second floor plan from the remainder of the upper stories.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet - [RECTOR HOTEL - KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON]

Section number 7

Page 7 of 8

The remainder of the hotel rooms, corridors and stair halls are simple and uniform in plan and decoration (See Floor Plans), and are finished in painted concrete, plaster, and wood trim. Stair halls are located at the northwest and southwest ends of the building, connected by corridors running the length of the building (see Photo #19). A fire door is located at each end of the corridors. Doors off the corridors lead to individual units, most of which run the length of the east half of the building. The northwestern end of the building houses two units on each floor flanking the staircase, and the remainder of the western portion contains service rooms and elevator shafts. Standard architectural details include four-panel doors, wood trim, and Craftsman inspired picture mold trim high on the walls (see Photo #20). Many rooms have closets that are built out from the wall, while others have closets incorporated into the room entrance passages. Some of the rooms have tub sink and toilet fixtures, while some feature only small sinks. Community bathrooms and shower rooms are found on the third through sixth floors.

### Evolution

Overall, the building retains a high degree of originality, both on the exterior and interior. The terra cotta elements have been painted. The retail spaces at the ground floor have undergone numerous changes over the decades. The only exception to these spaces is the large percentage of original upper-level window frames and glazing that remain intact.

At the exterior ground level, the lobby entrance was originally comprised of a double, wood-framed glazed door, and the light fixtures were a hanging-type with curved armatures and glass shades. At one time a small, wrought-iron fire escape was placed over the entrance at the south end. The second floor windows were originally double, six-light casements, replaced in the mid-1980s with aluminum, single-light crank-operated casements.

On the interior, the hotel lobby has had minimal stylistic and functional changes and no structural alterations. The entrance door was replaced in 1991 with a

contemporary wood frame and gas filled glazing. In 1994 the office area was walled and a door and window installed. According to both historic photos and documentation, there was at various times access from the hotel lobby to the retail space on the north end which has always served as a restaurant or food service. The

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet - [RECTOR HOTEL - KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON]

Section number 7 Page 8 of 8

---

doors at the stair landing are no longer functional since the Grand Opera House (1898-1917) finally closed and was converted into a parking garage. While architecturally unchanged, the skylight above the staircase no longer functions. The glazing is covered and the area above serves as a platform for an air circulation unit. The light fixture mounted to the ceiling in the center of the lobby uses fluorescent tubes and is contemporary in design.

Changes common to the remainder of the upper floors have dealt mostly with fire safety. The staircases have been enclosed and fire doors installed at each end. The raised panel sections of the intact original doors to the dwelling units and the transoms above the doors have been covered with fire-retardant panels. It is likely the interiors have been repainted numerous times due to obvious buildup of paint layers. The most significant changes to the dwelling units have been the replacement in some rooms of the wash sinks with contemporary fixtures. A freight elevator abutting the south staircase runs the height of the building and is no longer operative.

The central portion of the second floor was originally an open, "reception area." In 1956 this area was infilled creating a "living room," in which a wall was erected and entrance door placed directly across from the elevator. This turned the original one-room unit off the north section of the reception area into a one-bedroom unit. The area was altered again in 1992 at which time it was divided into three units. Two new entry doors were added on the east elevation.

The third through sixth floors have undergone perhaps the least amount of alterations, mostly changes that address fire safety. In 1992 the community toilet rooms on the third through sixth floors were vented. Passages between the rooms on the east elevation have been sealed off with fire-retardant panels. Plan changes that occur in only a few of the units are non-structural.

The physical condition of the building is very good overall. The exterior masonry, terra cotta detailing, window frames, and roof are in very good condition and the building is well maintained. The interior suffers only minor wear due to normal aging and functional rework, and some minor cracks in the finishes due to the 2001 Nisqually earthquake are evident in the lobby.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet - [RECTOR HOTEL - KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON]

Section number 8 Page 1 of 7

---

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Rector Hotel is historically significant under *Criteria A*, for its interrelationship with the adjoining Grand Opera House, part of an important aspect of theater history in Seattle and the United States.

The Rector Hotel is also significant under *Criteria B*, for its association of the construction and development of the property by the Alson Lennon Brown, son of real estate and timber pioneer Amos Brown.

### Building History

A City of Seattle building permit dated July 6, 1911 to "demolish store buildings" on the building site precedes a permit dated August 29, 1911 to "Build a 9 story - store & hotel bldg. 34 x 120 Bldg. designed for 12 stories." Architectural drawings from notable Seattle architect John Graham show plans for the construction of a nine-story "Hotel For Amos Brown Estate." According to the July 1, 1911 trade journal, *Pacific Builder and Engineer*, bids were going to be called by the architect to construct an eight and twelve story structure, which would be determined based on the figures submitted. A September notice in the journal reported that the building contractor, Harry Brandt, had awarded sub-contracts for what was being referred to as the "Amos Brown hotel." The notice states that the present plans called for a six-story structure but would be probably nine stories when complete. John Graham's original nine-story plans include an ornate, architecturally unified eighth and ninth story portion. These plans reveal the original design intent and confirm the building as period, high-style Beaux-Arts. Seattle architect Herbert B. Pearce (? - 1921) designed the storefronts of which the top portions remain intact. The builder of the storefronts is identified as J. Levinson, who would become the owner and general manager of the newly built hotel.

The Rector Hotel opened on May 6, 1913 to fanfare including a six-piece orchestra in the second floor reception area and the lobby lined with palms and cut flowers. Complimentary rabbits' feet were passed out to hundreds of visitors who were encouraged to tour the entire facility. The hotel was hailed as "absolutely fireproof," and acknowledged for its up-to-date appointments, high quality furnishings, and "general excellence of the building." Some of the most modern

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet - [RECTOR HOTEL - KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON]

Section number 8 Page 2 of 7

---

conveniences for the time included private baths, hot and cold running water and telephones in every room. The first manager of the hotel was Doc Humphrey, who was described as "one of the best-known hotel men in the Northwest." The first official guests of the new hotel were Mr. and Mrs. L. Wurzburg of London, England who were on their way to Alaska.

The hotel remained the Rector (see Photo #2) until 1918 when Seattle directories list the building as the Hotel St. Charles. The listing also describes the hotel as "European Plan," with room rates of \$1.50, and \$1.00 for a room without a bath. In 1932 the hotel was renamed again to the Governor Hotel (see Photo #1). Then in 1938 it was again renamed the St. Charles Hotel and has retained that name since.

Since its construction in 1913, the building has always been used as a hotel, but over the decades of the last century it has evolved from serving a middle and upscale clientele to a single-residence-occupancy building catering to lower income and transitional housing needs. A sharp drop in the assessed value of the building from 1965 to 1966 demonstrates a dramatic change in the decline of the economic viability and condition of the hotel. In December 1984 the Seattle-based Plymouth Housing Group purchased the property from the Cornerstone Development Company. At that time the hotel had been run by Tom Ito for many years, who operated under a management fee from the owners. Rooms were offered daily, weekly, and monthly and the hotel was not subsidized through any government agencies. When Plymouth Housing Group took possession of the hotel, the tenants changed through attrition. Today the hotel continues to be used as transitional housing with no governmental subsidies.

In 1999 Plymouth Housing Group was preparing to update the plumbing, but after analyzing the degree of disruption involved, decided to wait and plan for a substantial rehabilitation of the building. Plans include a seismic retrofit carefully designed to minimize visual impact to the building, particularly the historic lobby. Plans to alter some of the dwelling units to meet code requirements are planned, as some of the units are considered undersized, by current housing laws. The general configuration of the floor plans will remain the same. Additional rehabilitation plans call for updating the plumbing, electrical and heating systems. An important component to the rehabilitation is a plan to expose and restore the original storefront glazing. The overall design philosophy is to retain and preserve the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet - [RECTOR HOTEL - KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON]

Section number 8

Page 3 of 7

---

character-defining and extant historic features of the hotel.

### Seattle Theater History

Seattle is unique in that, despite its relative small size and stature as compared to entertainment centers of the major cities like New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, it played a significant role in the development of theater history in the United States. The nature of the city provided fertile ground for a handful of local theater promoters and architects who would go on to regional and national prominence. The Rector Hotel is tied directly to this history, as a structure that was built to take advantage of the adjacent Grand Opera House.

In the late nineteenth century Seattle was in many ways a young city in the wilderness. A city of less than one hundred thousand people, it grew vigorously due to productivity through the thriving timber industry, and through trade as a port city. This activity naturally created a demand for leisure-time entertainment. The 1870s produced a large number of variety halls that catered to a wide audience. A depression in the 1890's gave way to a turn of the century economic boom that spawned the growth of important landmark entertainment venues in the city.

Seattle was the starting point for three visionaries who would each reach national prominence by building entertainment empires. In 1902 Alexander Pantages started by building a vaudeville theater in Seattle which eventually grew into a chain of theaters throughout the country. John Considine also built a chain of vaudeville theaters in Seattle, ultimately becoming part of the Orpheum nationwide chain. John Cort is known to have introduced what was considered the first respectable theaters to Seattle, and then went on to own theaters coast to coast. The Cort Theater still exists on Broadway in New York City. It was in Seattle that nationwide vaudeville circuits were established, not in New York or Chicago. Even though it was a small city, Seattle in the early twentieth century lured opera companies and major symphony orchestras to perform in their theaters. Entertainers from Sarah Bernhardt to Al Jolson and Ethel Barrymore and music from the New York Philharmonic to George M. Cohan, all performed in Seattle.

Part of the tremendous success of theaters were the architects and designers who responded to the intuitive nature of the entertainment entrepreneurs, who in the face of intense competition were in a constant struggle to find ways to lure patrons.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet - [RECTOR HOTEL - KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON]

Section number 8 Page 4 of 7

---

John Cort was the first to attempt to create a niche for more upscale theatergoers and retained Seattle architect E. W. Houghton to design the Grand Opera House. The result was a distinct departure from the simple, restrained exteriors and predictable European-style opera house interiors with box seats, gilt plaster and velvet plush of the typical vaudeville theater. The Grand Opera House was the first to employ a high-style façade with interior elements consisting of decoration depicting exotic locales and the grand proportions that would become the hallmark of theater design in the United States, especially in the movie houses. The theater was a huge success and led to the Houghton's commission for the legendary Moore Theater (1903-1907) which incorporated a hotel in anticipation of the upcoming Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition. Houghton went on to design numerous vaudeville and movie theaters in the west.

Other notable Seattle architects who were hired to build theaters would become famous and sought after in other regions for the skills they acquired in building for the theater magnates. The most famous was B. Marcus Pretica, who began by designing a theater for Alexander Pantages in San Francisco. He would go on to design thirty theatres for Pantages, his most famous, the 1930 Art Deco style Hollywood Pantages.

### Rector Hotel and the Grand Opera House

Unique to the Rector Hotel is a clear pattern of an incorporation of architectural elements into the design of the building that served hotel guests, the theater patrons and performers. The Grand developer, John Cort, most likely coordinated with, Alson L. Brown, developer of the Rector, to incorporate components of his building into the construction of a future hotel.

In the late nineteenth century Seattle's entertainment district was confined to areas south of Yesler Way, two blocks south of what would become the site of the Rector Hotel. In an attempt to reign in a bawdy assortment of bars, gambling houses, and brothels, a city ordinance was enacted to keep the influences of vice from the respectable neighborhoods. At the time, John Cort successfully managed to convince the city to allow his "better class of entertainment" to encroach two blocks north of Yesler. This allowed Cort to begin building The Grand Opera House in 1898 and thus begin a new era in Seattle theater history.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet - [RECTOR HOTEL - KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON]

Section number 8 Page 5 of 7

---

Cort was a pioneer in the creation of a regional booking organization, the Northwestern Theatrical Association (sometimes called the Cort circuit), which expanded to control thirty-seven theaters in seven states by 1904. The Grand Opera House, one of his first theaters, opened in 1900 to great public acclaim and financial success. Considered a "legitimate" theater, it attracted both renowned performers and well heeled patrons. Despite a fire in 1906 and its loss to the new, more dynamic Moore Theater the following year as the premier theater in town, the Grand remained popular and spurred the economic growth and vitality of the surrounding area. It remained open until 1917.

Significant in the development of the Rector Hotel were the functional components incorporated into the design of the building that served the abutting Grand Opera House. The most obvious feature is the prominent entrance from the stair landing in the Rector Hotel's lobby that opened directly to the balcony of the theater. The double fire doors are placed at the first landing of the formal staircase, fully integrated into the lobby. The imposing entrance façade on the hotels' shorter, north elevation was originally designed as a passage that led to a bank of three doors opening to the theater mezzanine level. This explains the rich decorative bulls-eye transom element on what would normally be considered a secondary, or service elevation. It is known that in Seattle, all level street elevations were generally reserved for retail and commercial access, which would be utilized most frequently. The steep grade of Cherry Street between the level Avenues was used for secondary, less frequently accessed purposes. In any case, if you were wealthy and going to the theater, you would arrive by carriage and be let off at the front entrance. A similarly bold entranceway at the south end of the primary elevation of the Rector served as a stage entrance for the Grand and featured a small mezzanine level above.

### Alson Lennon Brown (1868-1942)

A native of Seattle, Alson Brown was trained as a lawyer at the University of Oregon and was a member of the Washington Bar Association. He practiced as an attorney and was involved in the insurance business as well. Upon the death of his father, Amos, Alson began managing the families real estate holdings. Among them were several lots on Third Avenue where the Rector Hotel would be built. The entity which was formed to develop and liquidate Amos Browns' substantial holdings was listed as Amos Brown Estate, Inc., with Alson Brown cited as president.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet - [RECTOR HOTEL - KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON]

Section number 8

Page 6 of 7

It is likely that Alson Brown used at least part of his inherited wealth to embark on an ambitious development project outside Seattle. A 1980 article in *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* reveals that from 1904 through 1919, Alson purchased 2,300 acres of land in the Nisqually Valley, southeast of Olympia, Washington. Designed by Brown, the farm was a sort of experiment in modern farming. He used all the latest methods and equipment, hiring a year round crew. Ten years after he started, the farm was completely self-sustaining. The farm production fed the crew and Brown provided housing by taking room and board out of the worker's pay. In addition to raising crops the facility produced a wide variety of farm products, including dairy and poultry. The output of the farm was significant enough to have a box factory built on the farm for packaging. The large-scale farm distributed its products to the growing Puget Sound region. The farm was considered a model of efficiency and unique to the Puget Sound region as a volume producer of a wide variety of products.

Brown's fortunes turned for the worse at the onset of World War I, and unable to meet his debts, and lost the farm to creditors. For the next fifty-five years they leased the land for agriculture. In 1974, the U.S. government purchased the delta lands to create a wildlife refuge.

In 1922, Alson and his wife moved to Kent, Washington where she died in 1938. Alson Brown died in Caliente, California on June 29, 1942 where he had only been living for a year and a half.

### Amos Brown (1833-1899)

Amos Brown, Alson's father who owned the land on which the Rector Hotel sits, played a contributing role in the development of Seattle and was considered a prominent citizen. His role as a "pioneer lumberman" of Puget Sound is well documented as are his substantial real estate holdings in present downtown Seattle and in several counties along Puget Sound. He served as a member of the Seattle City Council, and was remembered as an "honored pioneer of the city".

A native of New Hampshire, Brown was of English and Scotch ancestry. His father was a prominent lumber manufacturer with extensive mills on the Merrimac River in which Amos started working at the age of ten. Although his formal education was limited, his practical skills and management experience gained through the years provided a valuable foundation. Brown left home at age twenty-one. Four years later

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet - [RECTOR HOTEL - KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON]

Section number 8 Page 7 of 7

---

he left for the northwest, tempted by the prospect of gold in Victoria, Canada. Leaving the Fraser mines disappointed, he immediately settled in Port Gamble, Washington where he resumed his trade running a logging camp. Soon thereafter he bought an interest in logging teams and secured contracts to deliver timber to milling companies.

During this period Amos Brown had purchased land, sight unseen, on what is now Spring Street between Second Avenue and the waterfront. The property would serve as the basis for his later wealth. He first visited Seattle in 1861 and in 1863 built the old Occidental Hotel in partnership with John Condon and M.R. Maddocks. In 1867 Brown moved to Seattle where he became a partner in a highly successful lumber business in Olympia. An obscure newspaper reference tells of the near completion of a floating hotel Brown built for workers in his logging camps. The 24 by 36 foot, one story building was constructed on a float of logs. He sold his interest in the business in 1882 and retired to manage his real estate holdings in Seattle.

Upon his unexpected death in 1899, Brown was honored as a founding father. Nearly one thousand mourners thronged the family home to pay their respects. Recollections from old friends include significant facts including Brown being generous and encouraging his workers in contributing to the newly formed sanitary commission who was raising money for the relief of Civil War soldiers all over the country. Another fact was that Amos Brown furnished the timber spars that helped the *Puritan*, *Mayflower*, and other racing yachts in defending the American Cup against England at the time. It is well-documented that Brown built a cottage for Princess Angeline, the daughter of Chief Seattle, and was kind to her.

The Rector Hotel retains a high degree of historic as well as architectural integrity. The role it played was short-lived, but crucial in the evolution of the development of the legitimate theater in Seattle and subsequent theater circuits in the United States. The building retains the unique characteristics that had the design conform to the needs of its neighbor, in a unified and unobtrusive manner. The building also represents the involvement of a significant family who contributed to the history of the United States by being important participants in the development of the city and the region. Little physical evidence of their contributions remain, especially one of historic importance in its own right.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet - [RECTOR HOTEL - KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON]

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

Page 1 of 3

---

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- "Alson L. Brown Taken by Death In California." *The Seattle Times*, 29 June 1942.
- "Amos Brown Passes Away." *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, 9 April 1899, 10.
- Bagley, Clarence. *History of Washington*. Chicago: S. J. Clark Publishing Company, 1916.
- City of Seattle. "Inspector of Buildings Building Permit." Permit # 104502. Department of Construction and Land Use, July 6, 1911.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Inspector of Buildings Building Permit." Permit # 106199. Department of Construction and Land Use, August 29, 1911.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Inspector of Buildings Building Permit." Permit # 117358. Department of Construction and Land Use, October 1, 1912.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Inspector of Buildings Building Permit." Permit # 120902. Department of Construction and Land Use, March 6, 1913.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Inspector of Buildings Building Permit," Plans. Microfilm Library. Department of Construction and Land Use, 5 March, 2002.
- Conover, C.T. "Amos Brown's Industry and Thrift Brought Him Wealth in Sound Area." *Seattle Times*, 20 February 1957.
- Craig, Jerry. "Graham Drawings a Picture History of the City." *Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce*, 21 March 1988, 1-2.
- Harris, Cyril M. *Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture*. New York: Dover Books, 1977.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet - [RECTOR HOTEL - KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON]

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page 2 of 3

---

King County Assessor. "Property Assessment." 093900-0085, Property Records and Research. Puget Sound Regional Archives. Bellevue, Washington, 1937-1973.

King County Department of Assessments. "Lot Map," Parcel # 093900-0085. Seattle, Washington, February 25, 2002.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Real Property Characteristics." Property tax assessment, 093900-0085. Seattle, Washington, February 25, 2002.

King County Records. "Warranty Deed." 8412040604. King County Recorder, 1984.

Kreisman, Lawrence. *Made To Last: Historic Preservation in Seattle and King County*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1994.

"New Hotel Opens Wide Its Doors." *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, 6 May 1913, 2.

Nielsen, Mark. "The Brown Farm on the Nisqually Delta, 1904-1919." *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, October 1980, 162-70.

"Night Pictures, Third Avenue and Yesler Way." 1521, 28, Photograph Collection. Seattle Municipal Archives. Seattle, Washington, 1918.

Ochsner, Jeffrey Carl, ed. *Shaping Seattle Architecture*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994.

*Pacific Builder and Engineer* 12, no. 13 (23 September 1911): 139.

*Pacific Builder and Engineer* 12, no. 1 (1 July 1911): 7.

*Pacific Builder and Engineer* 14, no. 14 (5 October 1912): 292.

"Tributes to Amos Brown." *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, 10 April 1899.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places

## Continuation Sheet - [RECTOR HOTEL - KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON]

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

Page 3 of 3

---

United States Geological Survey. *Seattle South Washington*. United States  
Department of the Interior, 1983.

"Amos Browns Floating Hotel..". *The Washington Standard*, 6 February 1880, 4.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet - [RECTOR HOTEL - KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON]

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page 1 of 1

---

### ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

#### PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic photograph #1 was taken ca. 1938 and was provided by Puget Sound Regional Archives, Bellevue, Washington.

Historic photograph #2 was taken in 1918 and was provided by the City of Seattle Municipal Archives Photograph Collection.

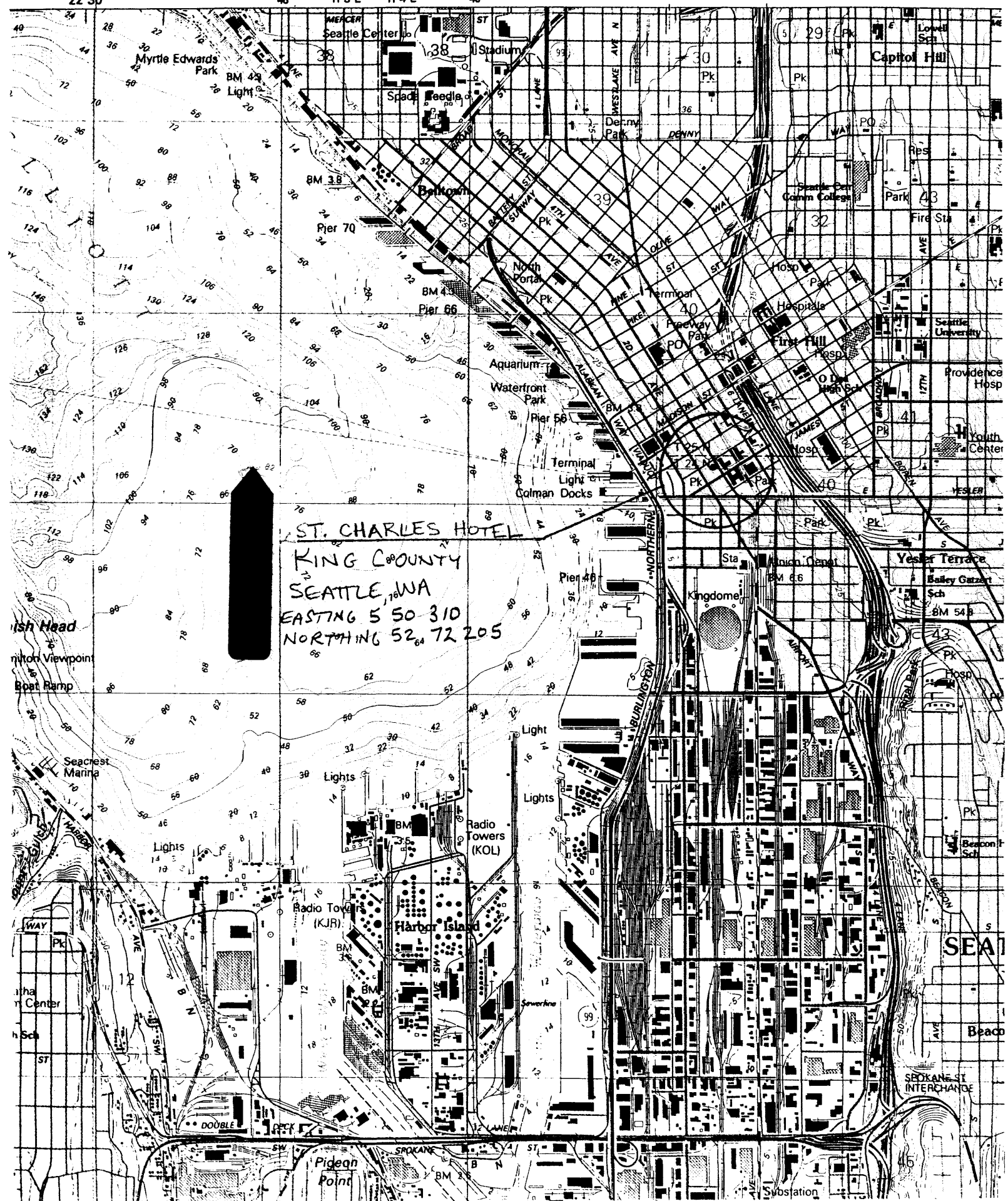
Photographs 3-20 listed below were taken by Phillip S. Esser on February 28, 2002. A 35mm camera was used and the negatives are in the possession of the photographer.

- 1) East and North elevation - View from northeast
- 2) Night view - View north of Third Avenue from Yesler Way
- 3) East and North elevation - View from northeast
- 4) East elevation - View from southeast
- 5) North elevation - View from north
- 6) Storefront detail - View from northeast
- 7) Façade detail, east elevation, View from east
- 8) Fire escape detail - View from north
- 9) Lobby entrance detail - View from southeast
- 10) Bulls-eye detail, north elevation - View from north
- 11) East elevation, lobby - View from southwest
- 12) North & west elevations, lobby - View from southeast
- 13) West elevation, lobby - View from northeast
- 14) West elevation, lobby - View from southeast
- 15) North, east & west elevations, lobby - View from north
- 16) Staircase, fire door & skylight, lobby - View from east
- 17) Staircase, lobby - View from southwest
- 18) Ceiling detail, lobby - View from west
- 19) Typical corridor - View from north
- 20) Typical dwelling unit - View from east

SEATTLE SOUTH, WASHINGTON  
N4730—W12215/7.5x15

1983

22'30" 48 R 3 E R 4 E 49



ST. CHARLES HOTEL  
KING COUNTY  
SEATTLE, WA  
EASTING 5 50 310  
NORTHING 52 64 72 205

Fish Head  
Historic Viewpoint  
Boat Ramp

Seacrest Marina

Harbor Island

Radio Towers (KOL)

Radio Towers (KJR)

Pigeon Point

SEATTLE

Beacon

SPOKANE ST INTERCHANGE



ARCTIC BUILDING

PARCEL NO. BD3-A

THIRD AVENUE

JAMES STREET

DEXTER HORTON BUILDING

CHERRY STREET

ST. CHARLES HOTEL  
CHERRY STREET GARAGE  
(FORMERLY GRAND OPERA HOUSE)

LYON BLDG.

120' ALLEY

ALASKA BLDG.

CORNA HOTEL

HARTFORD BLDG.

606-610

SECOND AVENUE

BRODERICK BLDG.

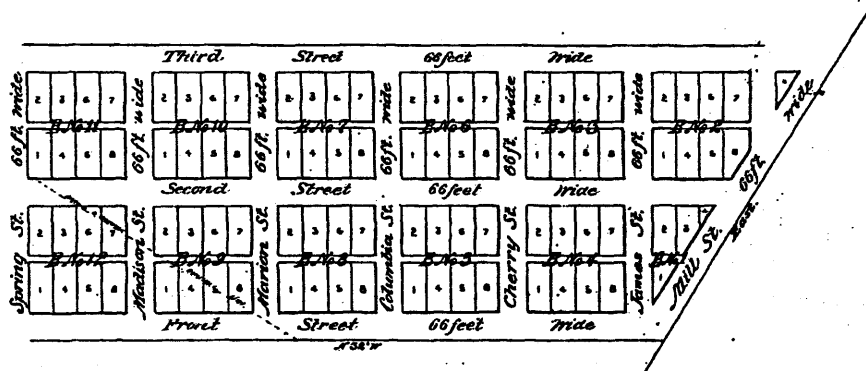
BUTLER BLDG.

CHI  
SEP  
STA

AREA MAP

plat of the  
**TOWN OF SEATTLE**

S. 200' / inch.



Lots are 66 feet by 120, except Nos 1, 3 and 4 of B No 1 and lots No 8 B No 2 and lot No 9. Streets and Alleys are as represented on the above diagram. The above Town is laid out on the claims of C. D. Borer and A. A. Dornny in King County, Washington Territory.

Seattle King Co. Washington T. May 23<sup>rd</sup> 1853.

I, H. L. Vester clerk of Probate, do hereby certify that the above named C. D. Borer and A. A. Dornny have this day been examined by me, and acknowledged the above Town Plat to be correct as laid out by them, and of which they claim to be the proprietors.

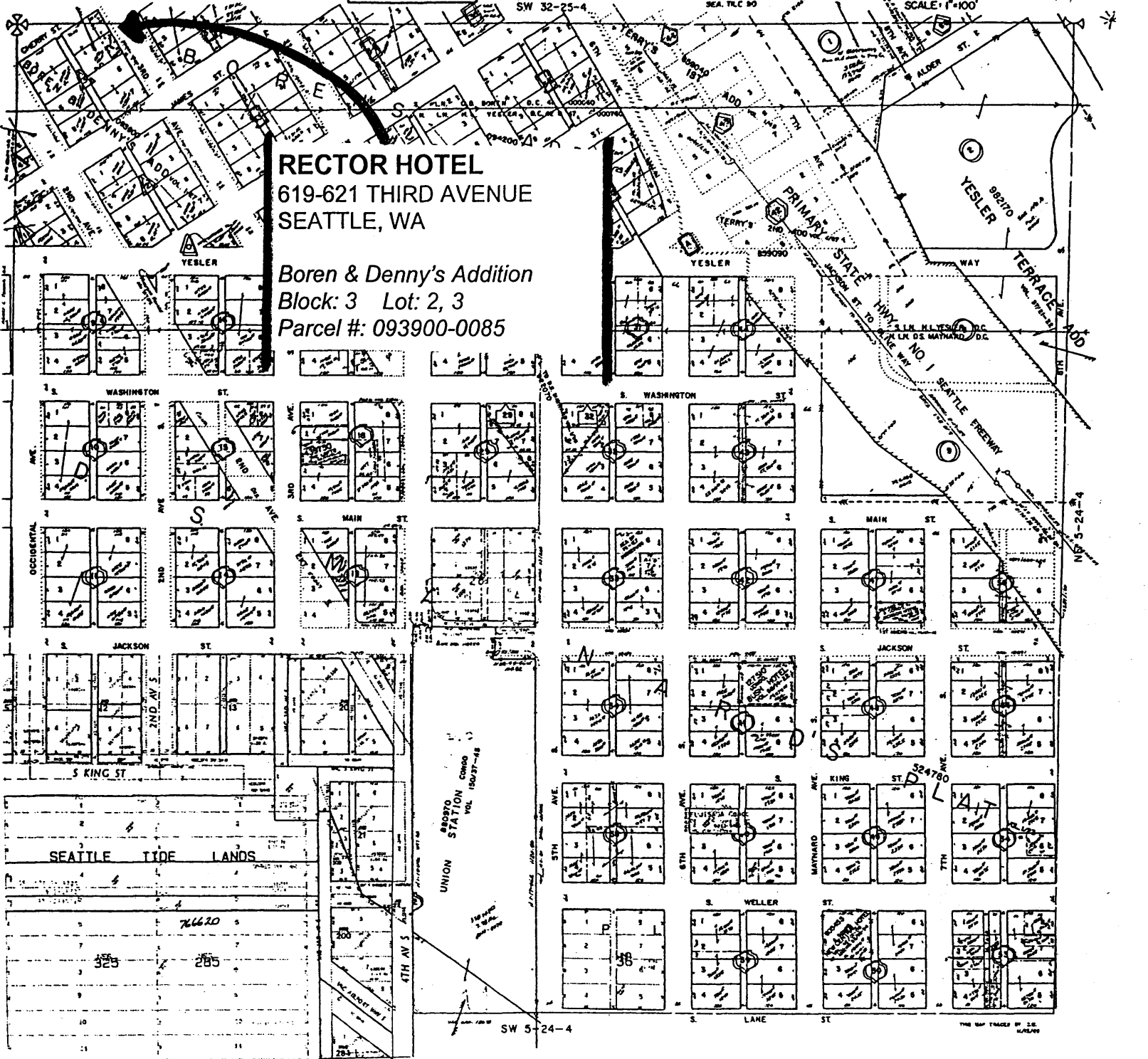
H. L. Vester.

Recorded in the Records of King County, Washington Territory  
 on February 28<sup>th</sup> of March at page 1. No recorded. (per order  
 County Clerk) in this plat book No 10. 1875.  
 S. C. Harpiz  
 Register.

THIS MAP IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF  
ADDING TO OR LOCATING YOUR  
PROPERTY AND IS NOT GUARANTEED  
TO SHOW ACCURATE DIMENSIONS

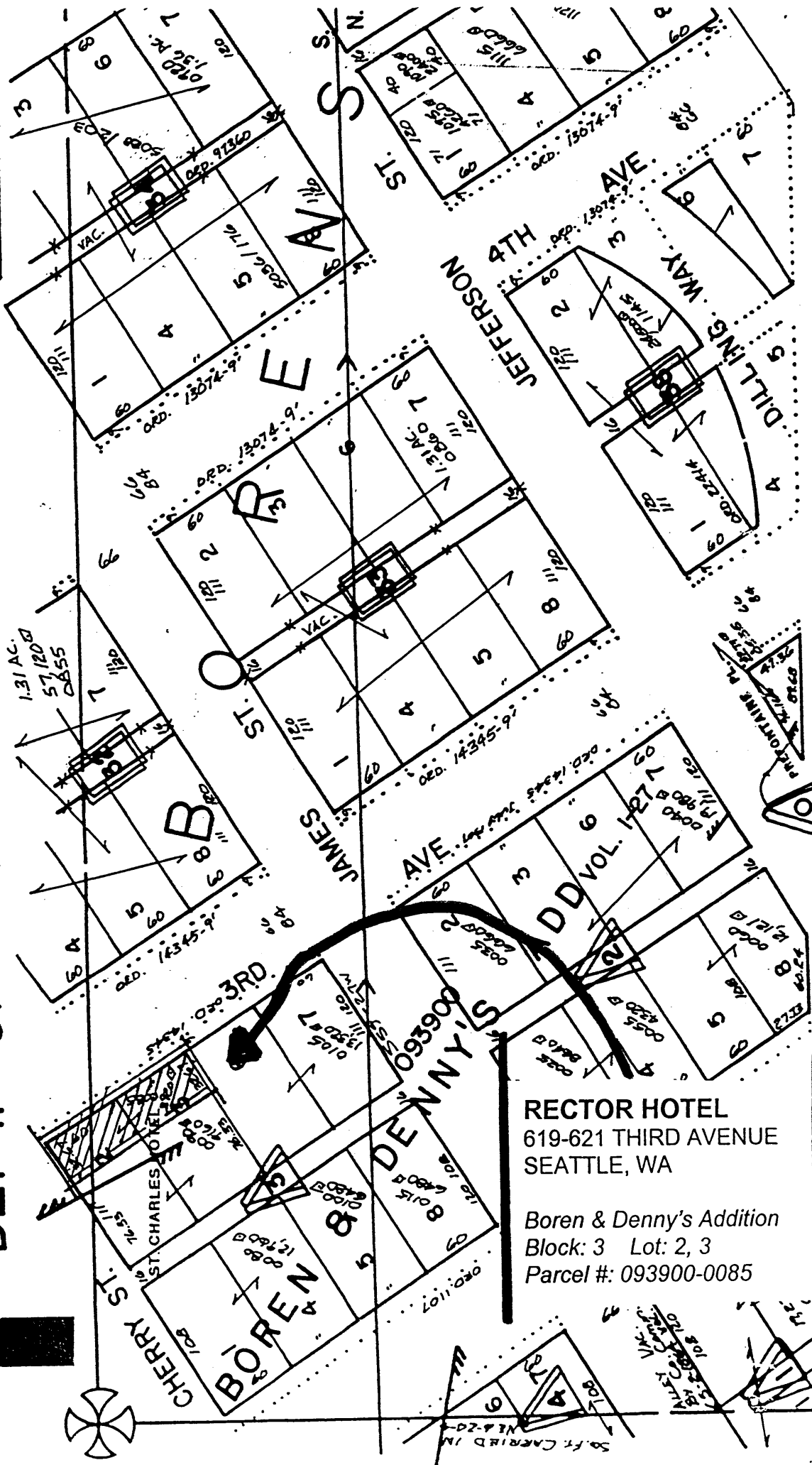
**RECTOR HOTEL**  
619-621 THIRD AVENUE  
SEATTLE, WA

*Boren & Denny's Addition*  
Block: 3 Lot: 2, 3  
Parcel #: 093900-0085



10 SHOW ACCURATE MEI

# DEPT. OF ASSESSMENTS



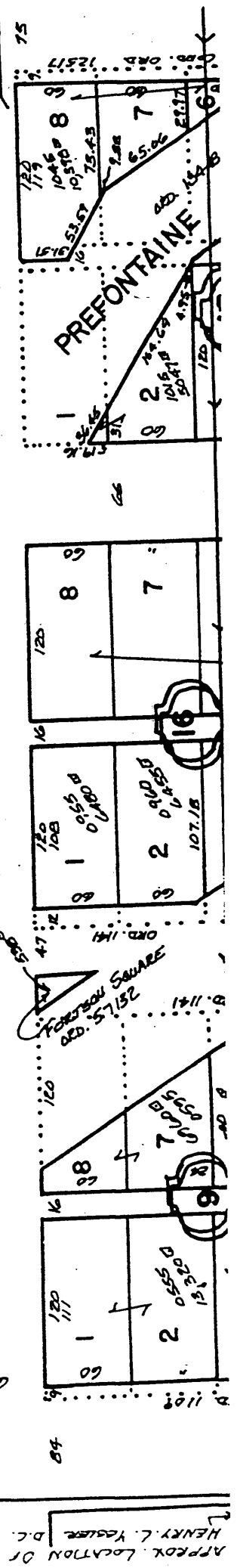
**RECTOR HOTEL**  
 619-621 THIRD AVENUE  
 SEATTLE, WA

*Boren & Denny's Addition*  
 Block: 3 Lot: 2, 3  
 Parcel #: 093900-0085

OVERPA:

WAY

YESLER

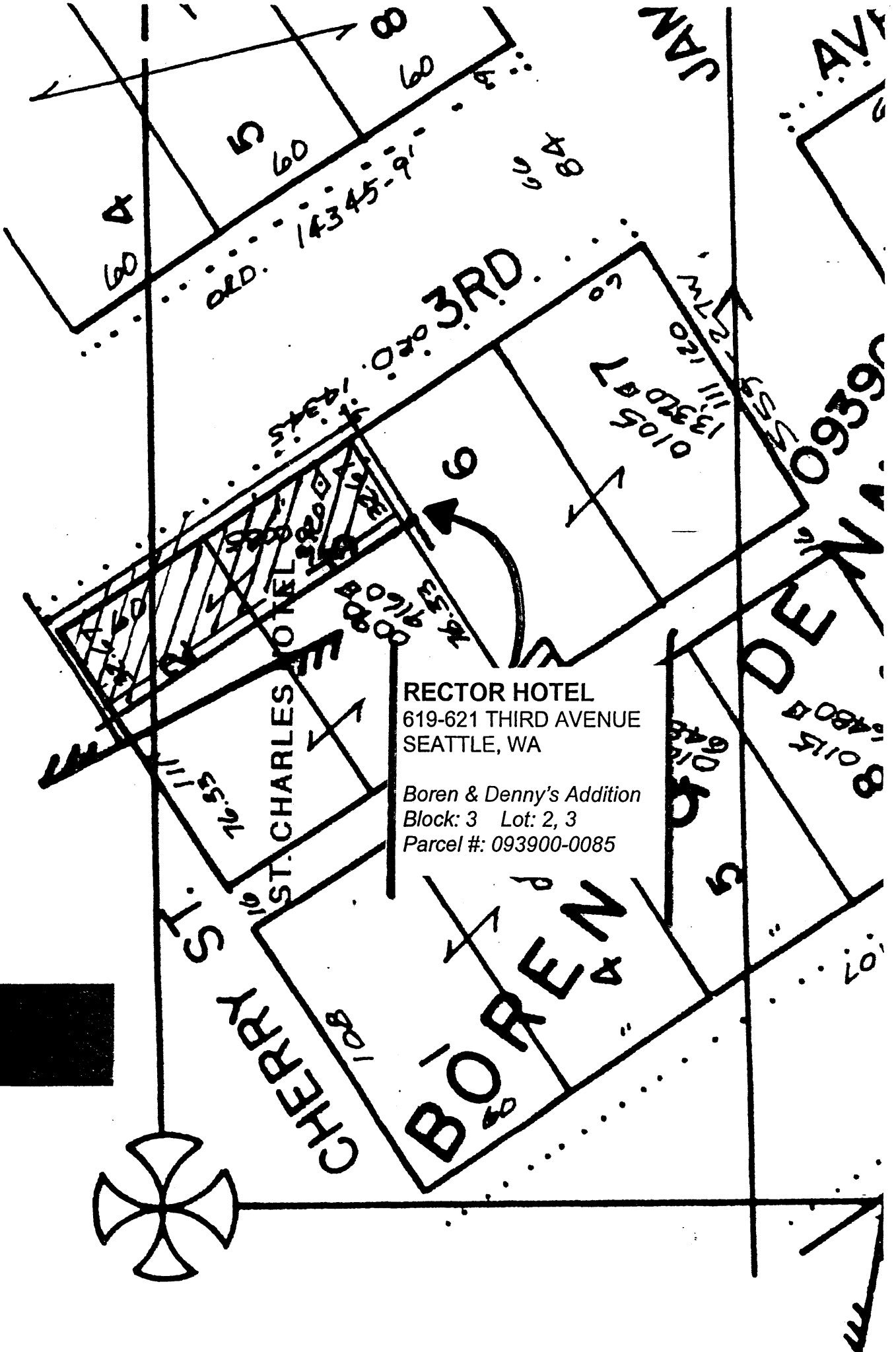
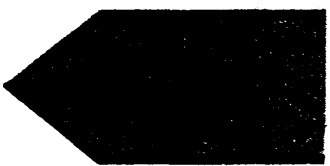


APPROX. LOCATION OF S. L. HENRY L. YESLER D.C.

50 FT. CARRIED IN



# DEPT. OF AS

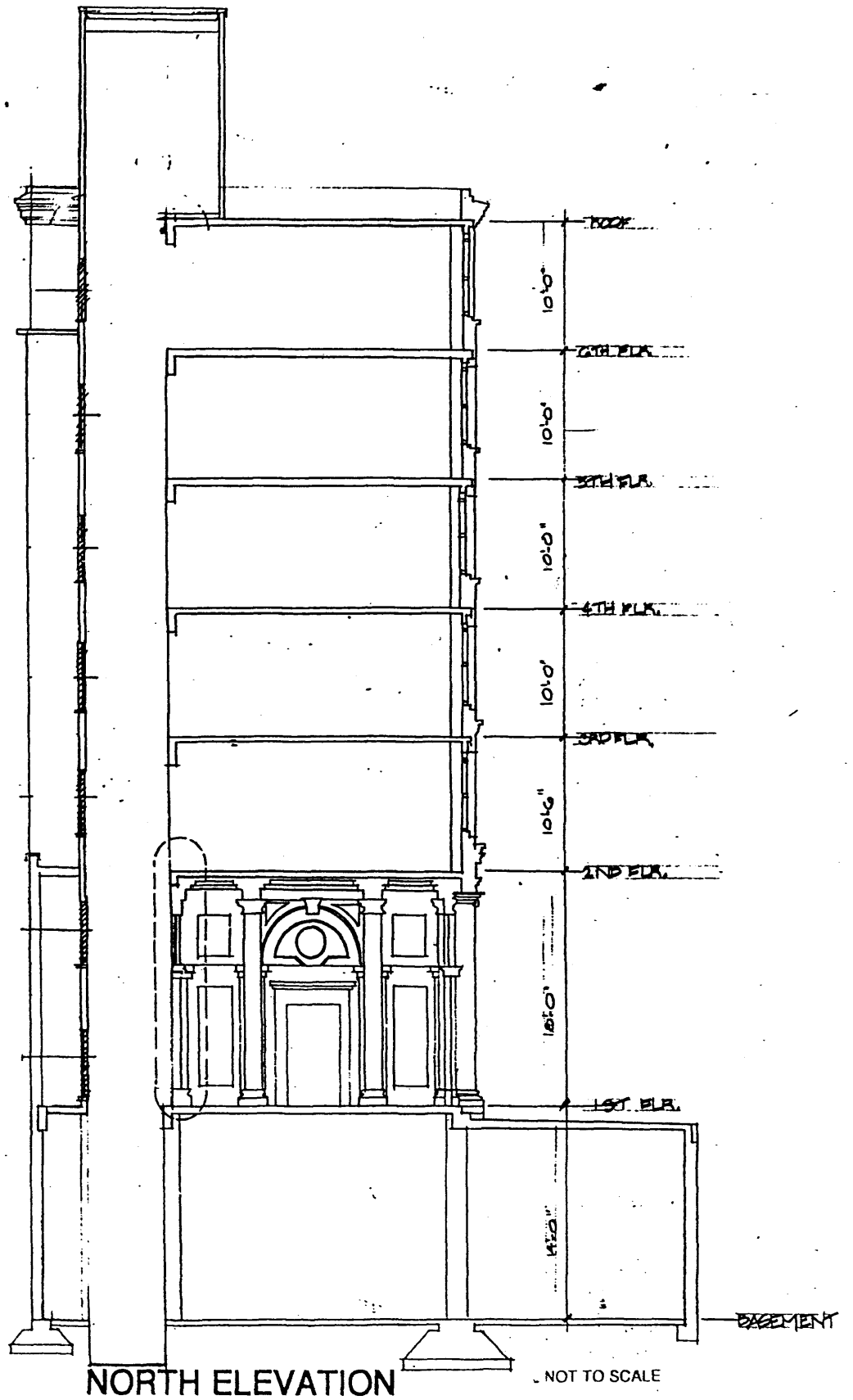


RECTOR HOTEL  
619-621 THIRD AVENUE  
SEATTLE, WA

Boren & Denny's Addition  
Block: 3 Lot: 2, 3  
Parcel #: 093900-0085

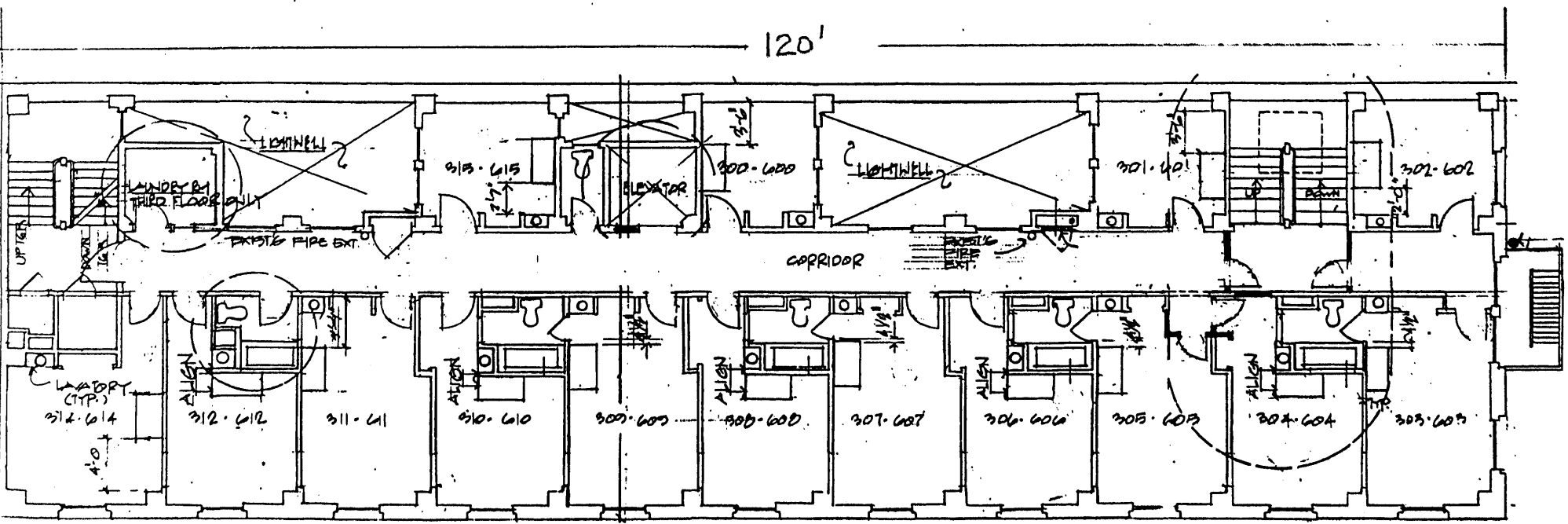
**RECTOR HOTEL**  
619-621 THIRD AVENUE  
SEATTLE, WA

*NOT TO SCALE*



**NORTH ELEVATION**

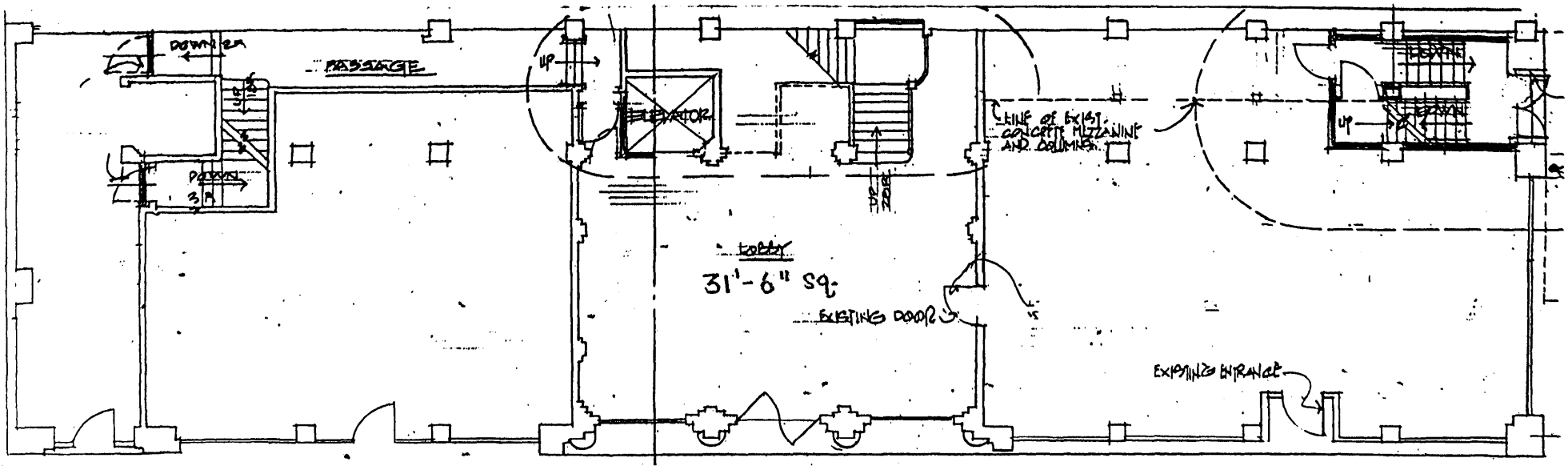
*NOT TO SCALE*



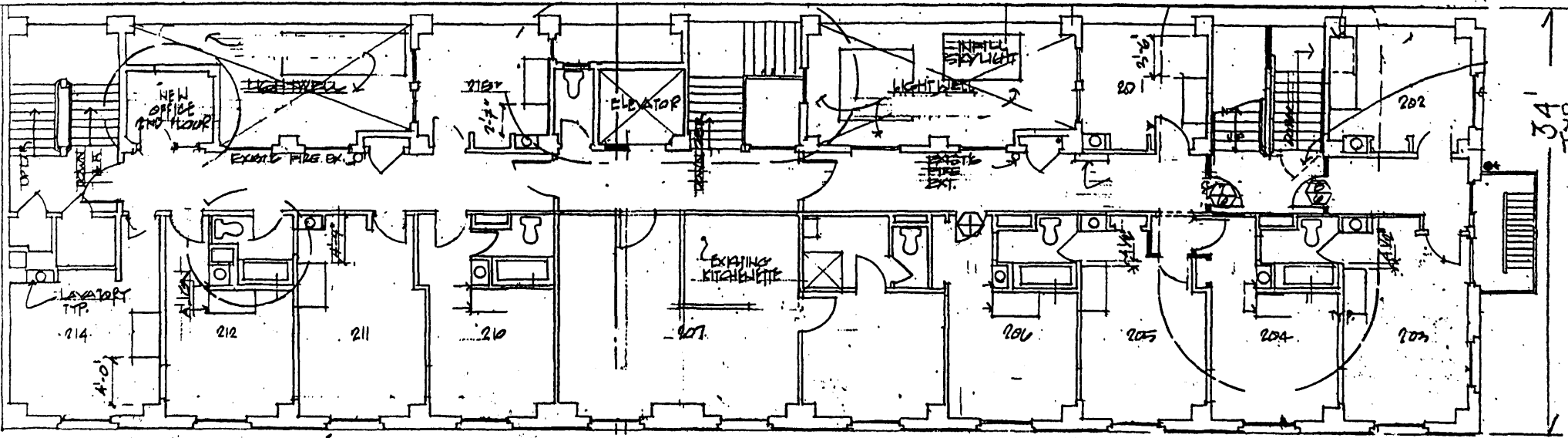
3RD, 4TH, 5TH & 6TH FLOOR PLAN  
 NOT TO SCALE

**RECTOR HOTEL**  
 619-621 THIRD AVENUE  
 SEATTLE, WA

NOT TO SCALE



**FIRST FLOOR PLAN**  
 NOT TO SCALE



**SECOND FLOOR PLAN**  
 NOT TO SCALE

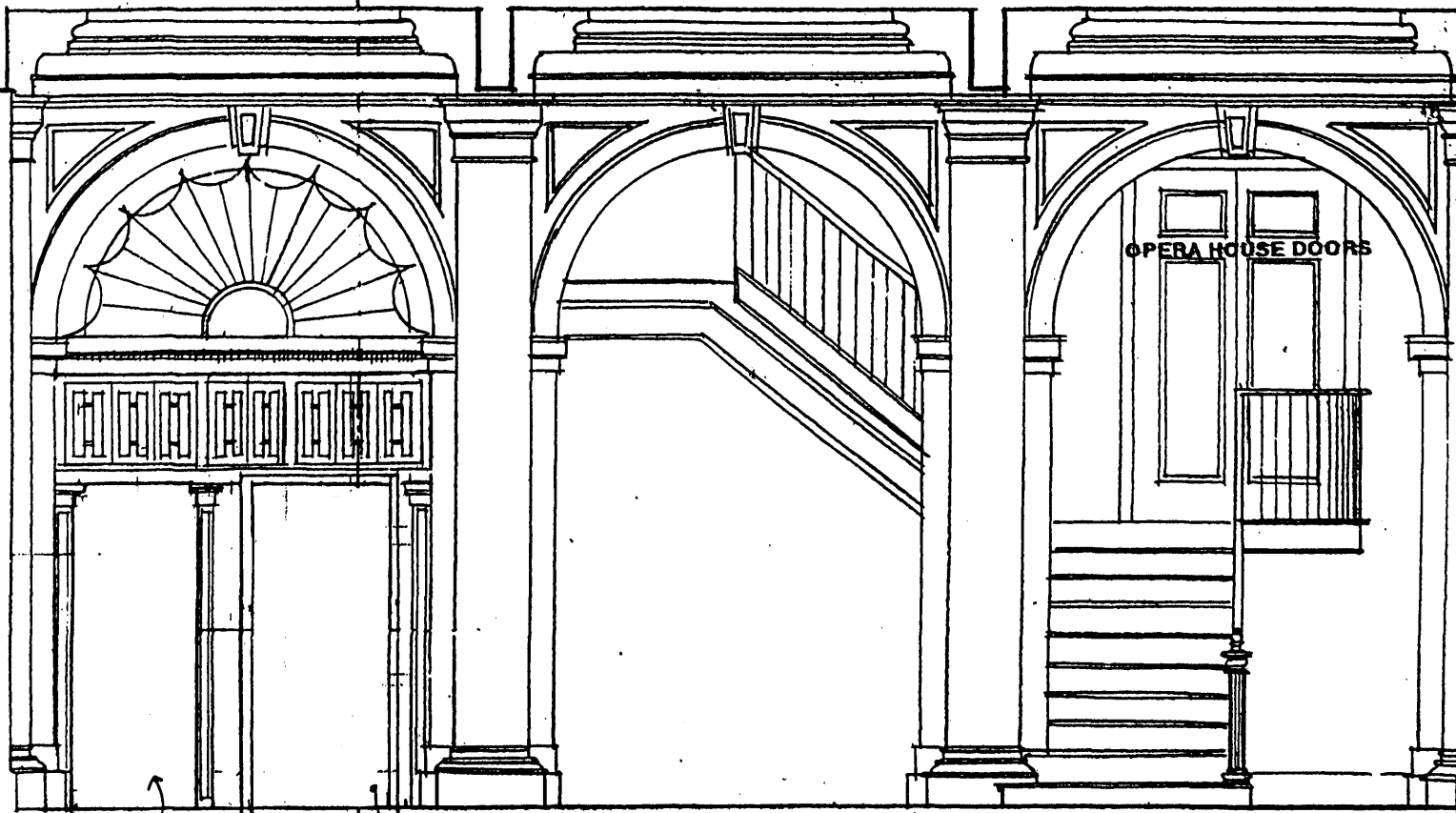
**RECTOR HOTEL**  
 619-621 THIRD AVENUE  
 SEATTLE, WA

NOT TO SCALE



31'-6"

18'



PASSAGE

ELEVATOR

OPERA HOUSE DOORS

**ELEVATOR @ LOBBY WEST ELEVATION**

NOT TO SCALE



**RECTOR HOTEL**  
619-621 THIRD AVENUE  
SEATTLE, WA

NOT TO SCALE



*Amos Brown*

AMOS BROWN