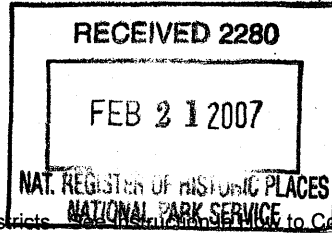


263

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. 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 an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classifications, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Wilson-Chambers Mortuary

other names/site number Little Chapel of the Chimes

2. Location

street & number 430 N. Killingsworth Street

not for publication

city or town Portland

vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Multnomah code 051 zip code 97217

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official/Title - Deputy SHPO

2-15-07
Date

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
Action

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

4/5/2007

Wilson-Chambers Mortuary
Name of Property

Multnomah Co., OR
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many 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 include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>		Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY: mortuary

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: restaurant

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY
REVIVALS: Mediterranean Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: BRICK
roof: TERRA COTTA TILE
Other: _____

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

See continuation sheets.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Overview

The 1932 Wilson-Chambers Mortuary is located at 430 N. Killingsworth Street in north Portland, Oregon. Specifically, it is located on Lots 1-3, 12-14 of Block 1 of the Walnut Park Addition to the City of Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon. The building was designed as a mortuary by noted Portland architect Richard Sundeleaf. It may be categorized as LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURY REVIVALS – Mediterranean Revival.

Setting: The building is located on a commercial street adjacent to a streetcar suburb nine miles north of downtown Portland. Killingsworth Street is a major east-west arterial leading to I-5 approximately ten blocks west of the mortuary. Toward the west nearing Albina Street, Killingsworth has a number of early 20th century two and three story buildings with ground floor commercial space and apartments above. A neighborhood with increasing investment, new construction of a comparable height is also prevalent.

In the immediate vicinity, the Mortuary is surrounded by buildings similar to the larger neighborhood. To the immediate west is the 1912 North Albina Branch Library with Jefferson High School to the southwest and its track and football field due east of the library. Across Killingsworth to the northwest is the modern Portland Community College Cascades Campus, located on the site of the defunct Cascades College. Directly across the street are three one and two story commercial buildings. Beyond to the north are the single family detached homes of the Piedmont residential neighborhood. Further to the east along Killingsworth are several homes of similar vintage now adapted for commercial use. Due east is McCullen Crossing, a 3-story mixed use housing development with single family homes to the southeast. Immediately to the south is the now vacant Mt. Hood Masonic Temple.

Site: The Mortuary is located on a 27,170 square foot parcel with a street front north onto Killingsworth, east onto Commercial Street and west onto Haight. The parcel runs 220 feet east-west along Killingsworth and 123.5 feet south. An abandoned 20 feet north-south alley divides the site into two equal size parcels 100x123.5.

The Mortuary is located on the western half of the parcel. It has a setback of approximately 25 feet from Killingsworth and 15 feet from the western boundary of Commercial (to the building face). Attached garages of equal depth on the south and east then separate the building from the property line on the south and to the abandoned alley. The 120 feet to the east is a landscaped parking lot.

The parcel is flat. Appropriate landscaping of lawn and low trimmed shrubbery fills the setbacks on the north and west. The parking lot also features landscaping to soften the appearance. Of note, a circular rose bed is located in the center of the parking lot.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Structure: The Wilson-Chambers Mortuary is a two-story wood frame building with brick exterior walls. It has a partial basement.

Plan: The building is roughly rectangular in form with a combination of hip and gable roofs. The long ends of the rectangle run approximately 72 feet north/south, while the east-west measure runs approximately 66 feet. Although Killingsworth is the major thoroughfare, the building has two primary elevations – the north elevation facing Killingsworth and the west elevation facing Commercial Street. Attached garages are centered on the south and east elevations. The garage on the east elevation is one story and the garage on the south elevation has been altered from one story to two stories.

Exterior: The mortuary is reminiscent of Sant Appollonare in Classe in Ravenna Italy, constructed in 533-549ad, and other small churches from the period located in Greece. A low gable roof, numerous semi-circular arches, blind arcades, and severe geometric massing suggests the architect was familiar with these early Christian Byzantine buildings. Sundeleaf himself described the building as Italian Romanesque. The building has abundant brick decoration suggesting a skilled brick mason. Terra cotta pattern is also abundant -with the incorporation of interlocking organic designs in low relief medallions, panels, voussoirs. Some of the patterns are vaguely Celtic, others are Moorish in design. The interior is also notable in its use of iron, varnished wood, leaded glass, and arched niches.

North elevation (Killingsworth Street): The north elevation is comprised of three sections. The center section has a side-facing gable roof with a projecting brick entrance vestibule. Topped with a shallow gable, the semicircular arched door opening is accented with a terra cotta frame and quoins. The terra cotta blocks alternate between plain blocks and blocks with an interlocking pattern in low relief. A brick course set on end frames the terra cotta arch. The cornice of the entrance vestibule is comprised of rounded terra cotta blocks with a low relief interlocking organic pattern. Ceramic tile covers the gable roof. From the center of the vestibule ceiling hangs an iron and glass light fixture. The door is framed with a terra cotta surround and varnished wood frame. The door has twelve lights topped by a large semi-circular arched transom. The transom is decorated with an iron grille of scrolls and leaves.

A red brick path and series of low red brick steps lead to this entrance. On either side of the path are trimmed hedges. Paired semicircular windows with alternating brick and terra cotta segmental arches flank the vestibule. Separating the paired windows is a flat terra cotta pilaster with a simple capital. The sills are red brick. The eight light casement windows have wood sashes. At the second floor level of the center section upper above the windows are brick framed terra cotta medallions with an interlocking organic pattern in low relief. At the cornice is a terra cotta frieze. Metal letters reading "Little Chapel of the Chimes" are attached to the frieze. At either end of the frieze are terra cotta panels with low relief ornament. A course of red brick set on end runs immediately below the frieze.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

To either side of this center section are two wings with hip roofs. The wings project slightly from the center section. Each of the wings includes a set of paired windows at the first floor and a single door at the second floor. The first floor arched windows are identical to the windows in the center section. The second floor doors open onto small balconies with painted iron railings. The doors are wood framed with wood multi-light sash. At the cornice line is a red brick frieze with a sawtooth pattern. A course of red brick set on end runs immediately below the frieze continuing the coursing from the center section.

Red brick pilasters frame the ends of each wing.

West elevation (Commercial Avenue): The west elevation is comprised of three sections – a center section with a front-facing gable and a one story loggia and two wings with hip roofs. The center section has a front-facing gable roof. Within the gable pediment at the peak is a terra cotta panel with a low relief Moorish style pattern. The gable edge is accented with raised brick corbelling accented with terra cotta modillions.

The flat roofed single story loggia is supported by an arcade of slender paired terra cotta columns topped with Corinthian capitals from which semicircular arches spring. The arches are framed in terra cotta. The floor of the loggia is red brick and the ceiling is plaster. The supporting corner columns of the loggia are comprised of terra cotta blocks with narrow bands of red brick in between. In the spandrel above the arcade are small terra cotta squares. Sheltered by the loggia, the central door is flanked by two leaded glass windows. The brick wall is decorated with a brick blind arcade. Each of the windows and the door are framed within these arches. In the spandrel above the door and windows are brick framed terra cotta medallions. The medallions contain a low relief Greek Cross design. The entrance is comprised of varnished wood double doors. The diamond patterned leaded glass casement windows are framed with painted wood sash. An original iron light fixture hangs from the loggia ceiling.

Flanking the central portion are the two wings, each slightly recessed from the center section. Each side is identical with the first floor having three semi-circular arched windows framed by brick and terra cotta segmental arches. The windows are wood framed eight light casements. The second floor windows are directly above the first floor windows and are rectangular wood frame six light windows. Above the second floor windows is a course of red brick placed on end. As with the north façade, at the cornice is a red brick frieze and framing the corners of each wing is a red brick pilaster.

The attached garage on this elevation was originally a single story hip roof structure. A second story was added and the roof is now flat. The arched opening is accented with a course of bricks set on end. At the second floor level are two wood framed casement windows. A simplified brick frieze and coursing tops the second floor.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

East elevation: The east elevation is comprised of three sections – a slightly projecting central section with a front facing gable roof, a single story garage with a hip roof, and two wings with hip roofs. A one-story garage projects from the central section. Two small semicircular arched windows are in the garage wall. Each is accented with alternating terra cotta and brick segmental arches. Painted iron grilles cover the windows. An open red brick grille is located in the center of the garage wall and serves as ventilation.

The center section has a wood framed casement window at the first floor. It is accented with the same brick and terra cotta detailing as the other first floor windows. At the second floor are five windows. The center window is a semicircular arched casement window. The remaining four windows are six light casement windows. Arched courses of red bricks accent the central window. The cornice is decorated with a brick blind arcade with terra cotta modillions. The first floor of the north wing has three windows identical to all other first floor windows. The second floor windows are six light wood frame casements. The decorative brick frieze is continued from the north elevation. Brick pilasters frame the corners. The first floor of the south wing has a door opening at the first floor. It is covered with a flat metal roof supported by painted iron brackets. The door is varnished wood with nine lights in the upper half. The two second floor windows are six light wood frame windows. The decorative brick frieze and corner pilasters are identical to the north wing.

Interior: As built, the mortuary was arranged in a methodical fashion. At the center of the first floor is the chapel measuring approximately 30 feet east-west by 22 feet north-south. To the west of the chapel is a reception hall with doors opening onto Commercial Avenue. To the east of the chapel a multipurpose room served either as overflow to the chapel or as a separate smaller chapel. At the north end, visitors entering from Killingsworth Street would enter a two-story foyer with offices to the west and a small reception room to the east. Three slumber rooms and an exit hall, including an elevator, then aligned to the south.

The second floor contained residential and service rooms. A display room is located directly above the chapel space. At the northwest corner is an office and along the west elevation, a one-bedroom apartment. At the east end was originally a two bedroom apartment. To the south are the preparation and dressing rooms.

Access was via a double stair from the foyer, combined with an enclosed stair/service elevator at the southeast corner. The basement is partial, located along the south and east wall and served as storage and a workshop.

Finishes are appropriate. Public spaces are elaborate while offices, apartments and service areas austere. Particularly in public spaces, unpainted dark wood trim is used to contrast against light

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

painted plaster. Trim throughout includes baseboards, doors surrounds and window surrounds. Doors are paneled wood, both half-light and full wood.

The foyer is a two-story volume entered off Killingsworth. It is sixteen feet deep and along the south wall is low three step landing that leads to mirror stairs to the second floor. These have wood treads and risers with wrought iron railing. At the center of the landing is a voussoired arched nook that features "Book of Remembrances" encased in a wood and glass cabinet. The ceiling is unpainted wood with north-south beams, centered on the ceiling is elaborate and original wood chandelier. At the second floor is a balconet with four short columns supporting voussoired arches on an unpainted wood base. At the east and west are several squared doorways. At the second floor on the east and west are paired voussoired arched windows with diamond shaped leaded colored glass.

The chapel reception hall along the east elevation is similar in style to the foyer. The entry doors (off Commercial) are paired half-light paneled wood with wood surround. Arched window openings contain clear leaded glazing in a diamond pattern. Door paneling repeats the diamond pattern. Flanking the doors are a pair of rectangular windows with leaded diamond clear glazing and wood surround. In the east wall of the reception hall is an arched entry leading to the chapel flanked by paired arched windows. The ceiling continues the beamed wood ceiling affect of the foyer – though with the beams now running east-west.

The chapel is similar in feel to the reception hall. On all but the south wall are arched paired windows with diamond leaded glazing with a contrasting wood sill. Voussoirs surround all windows and doors, while the room corners are rusticated. Ceiling is exposed wood beam. Beams are varnished and stenciled with a sun pattern. An original chandelier hangs in the ceiling center. Original iron sconces are on the north and south walls. The east wall has a wide opening with decorative wrought iron gates and a carved wood lintel. Flanking the opening are tall arched openings with painted wood grating.

The room to the east is simpler in design with painted plaster walls and ceiling with a contrasting wood cornice. Featured in this overflow room is a corner fireplace with decorative white variegated marble surround.

By contrast, the offices, display rooms and apartments are largely unadorned beyond the standard trim. The most elaborate is the second floor display room which is elevated to accommodate the first floor chapel. Access is via a six step low-rise wood stair with decorative wrought iron rail.

Alterations: The mortuary has a high degree of integrity. Exterior changes are limited to the replacement of the "Wilson-Chambers Mortuary" sign with "Little Chapel of the Chimes" on the north face in the 1940s and the addition of the crematory facilities over the garage at the south end in the

Wilson-Chambers Mortuary
Name of Property

Multnomah Co., OR
County and State

NPS Form 10-900-a

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

1960s. Interior changes also occurred in the 1960s. At the time of the addition of the crematory, the west apartment was adapted into a new display room and snack bar/kitchenette.

In 2006 and 2007, the mortuary was renovated into a pub and office space. The renovation was mostly cosmetic with some code-required modifications and the original floor plan was retained. The interior was painted, the floors refinished with wall to wall carpeting, and some light fixtures were added. On the first floor the pub was installed with completely free standing fixtures. The kitchen facility for the pub was built in the central slumber rooms; a minor demising wall between the slumber rooms was removed. The south garage was converted into office space and the east garage was converted into pub space. The garage doors were replaced with compatible in fill of doors and windows. The second floor was converted into office space and the 1960's cremator was removed. As required by code a sprinkler system was installed for fire and life safety standards and an entrance ramp was added along the west entrance for ADA accessibility. The interior is intact as built with very slight modification.

Wilson-Chambers Mortuary
Name of Property

Multnomah Co., OR
County and State

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).

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

- 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.

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1932

Significant Dates

1932

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

- 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 of age or achieved significance Within the past 50 years

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Sundeleaf, Richard (architect)

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite books, articles, and other sources used in preparing the form on one or more continuation sheets) See continuation sheets

- Previous documentation on file (NPS):
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36CFR67) 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
- Name of repository: _____

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The 1932 Wilson-Chambers Mortuary, located at 430 N. Killingsworth Street in Portland, was designed by the Portland architect Richard Sundeleaf. It is eligible for listing on the National Register under Criterion C for Architecture as a superior local commercial example of the Mediterranean Revival style and as an excellent representation of the mortuary building type as manifested in the 1930s. The building is listed in the City of Portland Historic Resources Inventory as a Rank II resource.

The Rise of the Modern Funeral Home: The funeral home is a distinct 20th century specific-use structure and reflects changing attitudes toward death and mourning. Historically, family members died in the home and mourning among friends and family typically occurred at the home. The role of the undertaker was performed by the livery stable keeper, who provided the hearse and funeral carriage, by the carpenter, who made the coffin, or by the sexton, who was charged with bell-tolling and grave digging. The undertaker's responsibility was supplying the coffin, providing chairs for the home, taking charge of pallbearers, supervising removal of the body and finally ensuring the body was lowered into the grave. Most often, undertakers operated out of their home.¹

Beginning at the turn of the century, however, the "undertaker" became "funeral director". This change of semantics paralleled the transition of death from an intimate family experience at home to a sanitized celebration off-site as part of an increasingly standardized funerary industry.²

The new title reflected the rise of the celebration of the recently deceased defined by elaborate ceremony and expensive accoutrement in an appropriate setting. Changes in the medical profession and medical technology led to the rise of the modern hospital and by the 1920s combined with rising incomes and health insurance, fewer and fewer individuals died at home. Hospital and medical staff increasingly handled the details of post-mortem, increasingly to the exclusion of the family beyond deciding the preferences of the deceased.³

It also reflects the growing acceptance of embalming in treating the recently deceased. Simply put, embalming is the treatment with preservatives to prevent decay. In the United States, the first modern example of embalming dates to 1861 with the use of arsenic mixed with water. By the 20th century, the process became more involved with the body first treated with a disinfectant, then positioned for viewing (as once embalmed, the body is "set"), then typically formaldehyde injected into

1 Robert Wesley Halbenstein, The History of American Funeral Directing (New York: National Funeral Directors Association, 2001); Jessica Mitford, The American Way of Death (New York, NY: 1963).

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

the arteries simultaneously with drainage, then body cavities are treated with a trocar and finally the body is sealed and dressed.⁴

Paralleling the rise of the funeral home were several factors: The rise of apartment buildings and residential hotels altered the concept of a residence for many from a detached house to a unit on a floor within a building. Of single family homes, new construction tended toward smaller homes without large rooms for gatherings as the traditional parlor. And the rise of the streetcar dispersed the city's population into suburbs, a dispersion accelerated dramatically by the automobile.⁵

These trends also combined with changes in the 1920s in the real estate financing that allowed the rise of specific use buildings. In that era, real estate developments were increasingly financed with leveraged funds provided by loan associations, insurance companies, savings banks and other lending institutions with developers only making low down payments, often as little as 10%. This "easy money" acted as an accelerant to real estate development. On the large scale, it produced grand buildings, like the 1930 Chrysler Building or the 1931 Empire State Building. On the smaller scale, it allowed business owners the opportunity to create a building specifically for their enterprise – such as a funeral home.⁶

The Modern Funeral Home: The funeral home of the era was a complex operation. Typically, it required domesticated space to meet the needs of mourners. Such spaces included a reception room, chapel for services and slumber rooms for private viewing, along with adjacent family rooms. In some instances, there were also child's slumber rooms and a second smaller chapel. A number of slumber rooms were critical in allowing services to be staged with efficiency. From a business perspective, a funeral parlor also contained a casket sales room, offices and storage. There was also an operating room for embalming and dressing room for final preparations. As a 24-hour a day operation, funeral homes also included one or more residential apartments. Finally, the modern funeral home needed to accommodate the automobile, with appropriate settings for arriving and departing bodies, and with appropriate accommodations for staging processions.⁷

The Funeral Home in Portland: In Portland, the first known "funeral home" was the Portland Crematorium, located at 6705 SE 14th Avenue. It was built in 1906 by the Portland Crematorium Association. That structure had a chapel, but also included a columbarium (a vault to receive the ashes of the dead). As much, the rise of the Portland Crematory represented a growing acceptance

4 www.embalming.net. A trocar is a surgical instrument that suctions fluids out of the body.

5 Heritage Consulting Group, *Historic Resources in Downtown Portland, Oregon, 1919-1931*.

6 Ibid.

7 Barrett & Logan, *Plans for Hennessey, Goetsch & McGee Funeral Home*, 1935.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

of cremation; the first cremation in the United States occurred in 1876, the second in 1884 and in 1913 the country still had only 52 crematoriums nationwide.⁸

More typical, early funeral parlors were located first in storefronts, such as St. John's Undertaking Company at 8717 N. Lombard, Bruning & Driscoll at 315 SW 3rd Avenue, the Edward Holman & Son at 532 SE Grand Avenue or Merrills Mortuary at 1536 SE 11th Avenue. Gradually, the enterprises also found greater successes in adapting older homes, such as Holman & Son which adapted the Burrell Mansion at 2610 SE Hawthorne or McEntee & Eilers at 1609 NW Everett Street.⁹

The 1920s however ushered in the new era of modern funeral homes. The earliest was the Miller-Tracey Mortuary at 714 SW 20th Place. The second mortuary was the Pearson Mortuary at 301 NE Knott built in 1926. Following shortly after was the Wilhelm McGinner Mortuary at 6637 Milwaukie and the East Side Mortuary at 537 NE Alder Street designed by Thomas & Mercier. All total, the City of Portland, with a population of 300,000, had 21 funeral homes at the beginning of the 1930s, overwhelmingly located on the east side of the river.¹⁰

The Wilson-Chambers Mortuary: It was into this market that 51-year old C. E. Wilson embarked on the Wilson-Chambers Mortuary. Built in 1932, from the outset, it was to be a magnificent and luxuriously appointed building. Among competitors at the time, it was the grandest structure and would remain so with the possible exception of the Belluschi-designed remodel of the now demolished 1936 J. P. Finley Mortuary.¹¹

The mortuary was located on Killingsworth at Commercial Street. With the streetcar running east-west with north-south connections at Mississippi, Williams and Union, the street was a prominent main street. Key buildings included the 1912 North Albina Public Library (512 N. Killingsworth), designed by Jacobberger & Smith, the 1930 International Order of Odd Fellows Star Lodge (635 N. Killingsworth Court), and the 1922 Sutton & Whitney Mt. Hood Masonic Lodge (5308 N. Commercial), of which Wilson was a member. With the area too was the 1909 Jefferson High School (5210 N. Kerby Street), designed by Lazarus, Whitehouse & Fouilhoux.¹²

Adjacent to the northeast was the Piedmont neighborhood. The district developed in the 1890s as a streetcar suburb and it thought by some to be Portland's first planned community. Streets were designed to be 60 feet wide with 15 foot alleys running north and south. All water, gas, electric,

8 City of Portland, *Landmarks Database*; Virginia Guest Ferriday, et. al., Historic Resources Inventory of Portland; en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cremation

9 City of Portland, *Landmarks Database*; Virginia Guest Ferriday, et al., Historic Resources Inventory of Portland;

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

telephone and other utilities were excluded from the street and confined to the alleys. Homes had to be built at least 25 feet from the street and 15 feet from the lot's side boundaries. The minimum construction price for a house was \$2,500. The neighborhood also excluded factories, mills, lumber yards and a manufacturing or vending of intoxicating liquors. Development in the district was rapid and by 1907, each of the boundary streets was extended and by 1909, 140 homes had been constructed, mostly for upper-middle class professionals.¹³

The owner and developer of the funeral home was Clarence Ethan Wilson. He was born in 1881 and in 1907 came to Oregon at the age of 26. He started as funeral director at the W. T. Macy Funeral Home in Sheridan, Oregon. Ten years later, he moved to Portland to start the Wilson & Wilson Mortuary at the corner of Kerby Avenue and Killingsworth Street. In 1922, he purchased the Chambers Mortuary and combined with his own to establish the Wilson-Chambers Mortuary.¹⁴

Ten years after, he asked architect Richard Sundeleaf to design an appropriate building for his enterprise at the corner of Killingsworth and Commercial Street. One of Wilson's particular concerns was that the new structure harmonize with the other buildings in the neighborhood – though curiously, the mortuary did not mimic any of the styles of the major buildings in the neighborhood.¹⁵

In total, Wallace spent \$40,000 on the structure (approximately \$500,000 in today's market). Robertson, Hay & Wallace was the general contractor. With the chapel entry off Killingsworth, the facility could seat up to 125 persons and was equipped with loudspeaker systems to adjacent parlors. The home featured a pipe organ by Robert Morton Pipe Organ Company of Van Nuys, California; more commonly found in theaters, Robert Morton was considered the premier organ manufacturer in the country at the time. Equally important, the parcel contained a 12,000 square foot parking area for patrons and for staging funeral processions.¹⁶

The architect was Richard Sundeleaf. At the time, Sundeleaf was in his young thirties with a solo and rapidly successful practice. A Portland native, Sundeleaf attended the University of Oregon and received his Bachelor of Architecture degree in 1923. He worked briefly as a draftsman for A. E. Doyle and then for Sutton & Whitney. In 1928, Sundeleaf opened his own office. One of his first major commissions was the Jantzen Knitting Mills Office Building, located at 411 NE 18th Avenue, completed in 1930 and featured in the June, 1931 issue of *Architecture Illustrated*, the September, 1931 issue of *Master Builder*, and selection as the outstaying commercial building in Oregon by the American Institute of Architects in 1932. He would continue to produce designs for Jantzen, locally

¹³ Portland Historical Landmarks Commission, *Potential Historic Conservation Districts*, pp. 139-147; John T. Labbe, *Fares Please! Those Portland Trolley Years*.

¹⁴ *Oregonian*, November 15, 1964.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*; *Oregonian*, October 2, 1932; *Oregon Journal*, October 2, 1932.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

and internationally. Other notable commissions included the Art Deco Oregon Portland Cement Building at 111 SE Madison Street and the Zig-Zag Moderne facing to the New Fliedner Building at 1017 SW Washington Street.¹⁷

The facility opened on October 2, 1932 with a 12-hour open house. The program featured musical performances that included pipe organ music by William Robinson Boone, vocal solos by Alice Mae Hudson, and a piano recital by Elsie Wilson. It was capped by an address from Charles Walker, president of the Northwestern School of Commerce.¹⁸

At its opening, the Wilson-Chambers Mortuary embodied the characteristics and features of the modern mortuary. While its functions have changed today, the rooms, spatial considerations, and decorative features remain intact, clearly illustrating the functions of a 1929 state-of-the-art mortuary. It features two distinctive entrances: The north entry is a smaller yet formal opening into a foyer that allowed individuals or families access to the home for varying reasons, whether to offices, to the smaller chapel at the east, or to the slumber rooms. The west entry with portico is a larger opening to a reception hall with more direct access to the larger chapel. The building held two chapels; both rooms are intact, though no longer used as chapels. There are smaller rooms at the south and southwest that served as slumber rooms for private mourning. Along the south is a garage with double entrances; this garage was directly accessible from both chapels, and to the elevator, with access to the second-floor holding and preparation room. Also just south of the small chapel is the pipe organ, which served both chapels. A second garage is located at the east, originally for the mortician who lived on site. The second floor is accessible from the north foyer and leads to rooms that served as offices and a raised casket sales area over the chapel. Along the east and west are rooms that functioned as apartments for the mortician and his assistant, though later the west apartment was transformed into additional office space. Rooms to the south were used as the holding room, preparation room, dressing room and later cremator. The partial basement was previously used for storage and a workshop.

Wilson retired in 1936 and sold the mortuary to William F. Jones. Jones renamed the facility the "Killingsworth Avenue Funeral Home". Born in 1892, Jones grew up in Washington State and graduated from the University of Washington. He moved to Portland upon acquiring the mortuary in 1936. However, Jones died unexpectedly in the winter of 1939. His wife, Alice, continued to operate the funeral home along with Jones' assistant Elsworth Purdy. It was during her management that the facility was renamed "The Little Chapel of the Chimes". In 1971, Purdy established the Uniservice Corporation to create a chain of funeral homes under the brand "Little Chapel of the Chimes"; Uniservice was based across the street at 425 N. Killingsworth. From that point forward, Purdy

¹⁷ Ritz, Richard E., FAIA, Architects of Oregon.

¹⁸ Oregonian, October 2, 1932; Oregon Journal, October 2, 1932

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

acquired existing funeral homes in the Hollywood, Sunnyside, and Gateway, rebranding them with the "Little Chapel" name. In 1976, Uniservice merged with Olympus Service Corporation and in 1995 with Service Corporation International. SCI today operates 1400 funeral homes nationally.¹⁹

The Wilson-Chambers Mortuary as a Building Type-A Comparative Analysis: The Wilson-Chambers Mortuary is significant and worthy of being listed on the National Register as one of only a handful of largely intact early local examples of the modern funeral home. It is also arguably the grandest with detailing superior to its competitors. At present, no Portland funeral home is individually listed in the National Register. The Historic Resources Inventory of Portland has identified the following funeral homes or mortuaries:

- Barber Block (532-38 SE Grand Avenue), 1891
- The St. John Undertaking Company (8717 N. Lombard Street), 1910
- Miller-Tracey Mortuary (714 NW 20th Place), c. 1920s
- The Pearson Mortuary (301 NE Knott Street), 1925
- Wilhelm-McGinnis Funeral Home (6637 SE Milwaukie Avenue), 1928
- Eastside Mortuary (547 SE Alder Street), 1930
- The Wilson-Chambers Mortuary (430 N. Killingsworth Street), 1932
- Hennessey, Goetsch & McGee Funeral Home (210 NW 17th Avenue), 1935

At the time the inventory was completed, the inventory also included the J. P. Finley & Sons Mortuary, remodeled and enlarged by Pietro Belluschi in 1936; however that resource has since been lost. A field survey of the 22 mortuaries and funeral homes operating when the Wilson-Chambers Mortuary was built indicated that 13 have been demolished, one, the Gable Funeral Home at 225 NE 80th Avenue modified so as to loss its integrity, one, Edward Holman & Son at 2610 SE Hawthorne Street, was operating from an adapted house, and one Merrills Mortuary at 1536 SE 11th Avenue, operating out of a commercial building.

The Wilson-Chambers Mortuary as a Representative Example of Style: The Wilson-Chambers Mortuary is also eligible for listing in the National Register as a superior example of the Mediterranean Revival style applied to a commercial enterprise. Popular particularly in the 1920s, the Mediterranean style appeared at the same time as a series of exotic revival styles, particularly with residential architecture. In addition to Mediterranean were Spanish, Tudor as well as Colonial.²⁰

The style is well represented in the City. The Inventory of Historic Resources completed in the 1980s has nearly 100 entries that are identifies as Mediterranean in style. The current City data base of

¹⁹ Polk's City Directory, Oregonian, February 27, 1939; Oregon Journal, February 25, 1939.

²⁰ Rosalind Clark, Oregon Style: Architecture from 1840s to the 1950s (Portland, OR: Professional Book Center, 1983).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

National Register or City Landmark properties – either individual or contributing in Districts – lists 48 such properties.²¹ However, the vast majority of these buildings are residential. Other major forms and uses include one-story streetcar commercial buildings (such as the Olsen & Weygandt Building at 1421-41 NE Broadway), hotels (as the Grove Hotel at 401 W. Burnside) and apartment buildings (such as the Biltmore Apartments at 20124 NE Glisan Street). The earliest example dates to 1894; the majority date to the period 1922-1930.²²

For the Wilson-Chambers Mortuary, the style was an important choice for two reasons: First, as discussed above, although fundamentally a commercial enterprise, the design intent of a funeral home in the 1920s and 1930s was to create a home-like setting for grieving. Particular to this funeral home was Wilson's association with the Catholic Church, which for its part employed this and related styles in its development in the era.

The style is marked by:

- asymmetrical floor plans, often with angled wings
- low-pitched hipped roofs often tiled
- stuccoed masonry exterior with cast stone or concrete dressing at the primary openings
- casement or double hung windows, set within masonry walls, arched fanlight transoms, but no dormers
- Entrance doors are paneled with arched openings;
- Gabled entrances, porticos, with arched openings, balustrated loggias or side porches with ante-openings.²³

The Wilson-Chambers Mortuary had a relatively opulent budget. In comparison to the Hennessey, Goetsch & McGee Funeral Home, built in the similar style three years later, Wilson-Chambers is nearly twice the size. As important, the desire for a domestic-like appearance allowed the architect greater opportunities to express the style beyond the usual application of decoration. Whereas most commercial buildings are built to the lot line, the Wilson-Chambers building was located on a corner lot with setbacks on all four boundaries. Though essentially a rectangular form, the use of bays, porticos and even garage allowed for the creation of a variety of vertical planes and treatments on the primary facades, while the setback allowed landscape treatments to accentuate the style. The extensive use of contrasting terra cotta and elaborate brick detailing, particularly at the cornice, further accentuate the style.

²¹ City of Portland, Historic Alphabet District National Register Nomination, 2000; City of Portland, Landmarks Database; Virginia Guest Ferriday, et al., Historic Resources Inventory of Portland.

²² Ibid.

²³ Rosalind Clark, Oregon Style: Architecture from 1840s to the 1950s.

Wilson-Chambers Mortuary
Name of Property

Multnomah Co., OR
County and State

NPS Form 10-900-a

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Such commercial application of the Mediterranean Revival style are rare. Commercial buildings with setbacks are viewed as prime development sites and demolished. For example, both Henry Thiele's Restaurant and the Farmers & Ranchers Market, designed in the style, have long since vanished from the building stock. Extant examples that are comparable are more social or institutional as opposed to commercial. These include the Carnegie Library at 2909 SW 2nd Avenue and the Town Club at 2115 SW Salmon Street.

Conclusion: The Wilson-Chambers Mortuary was built in 1932 as a modern funeral home at a time when the funeral profession transitioned and adapted to changes in the manner in which society celebrated death. It is significant locally as one of six examples extant. Of those six examples, it is arguably the most opulent. It is also significant locally as a rare commercial use of the Mediterranean Revival style that was not simply built to the lot lines but featured setbacks that allowed more varied treatments of the facades.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

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Wilson-Chambers Mortuary _____
Name of Property

Multnomah Co., OR _____
County and State

NPS Form 10-900-a

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

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OTHER SOURCES

City of Portland Building Development Services Microform and Card Files: 430 N. Killingsworth Street
City of Portland, Landmarks Database.

Heritage Consulting Group historic Portland research files

Multnomah County Tax Assessor Records

The Oregon Journal

The Oregonian

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Portland, Oregon

Wilson-Chambers Mortuary
Name of Property

Multnomah Co., OR
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>10</u>	<u>525802</u>	<u>5045290</u>	3	<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

2

4

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John M. Tess, President

organization Heritage Consulting Group date July 2006

street & number 1120 NW Northrup Street telephone 503-228-0272

city or town Portland state Oregon zip code 97209

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

name Mike McMenamin, Little Chapel of the Chimes, LLC

street & number 1624 NW Glisan Street telephone 503-223-0109

city or town Portland state OR zip code 97209

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Wilson-Chambers Mortuary
Name of Property

Multnomah Co., OR
County and State

NPS Form 10-900-a

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

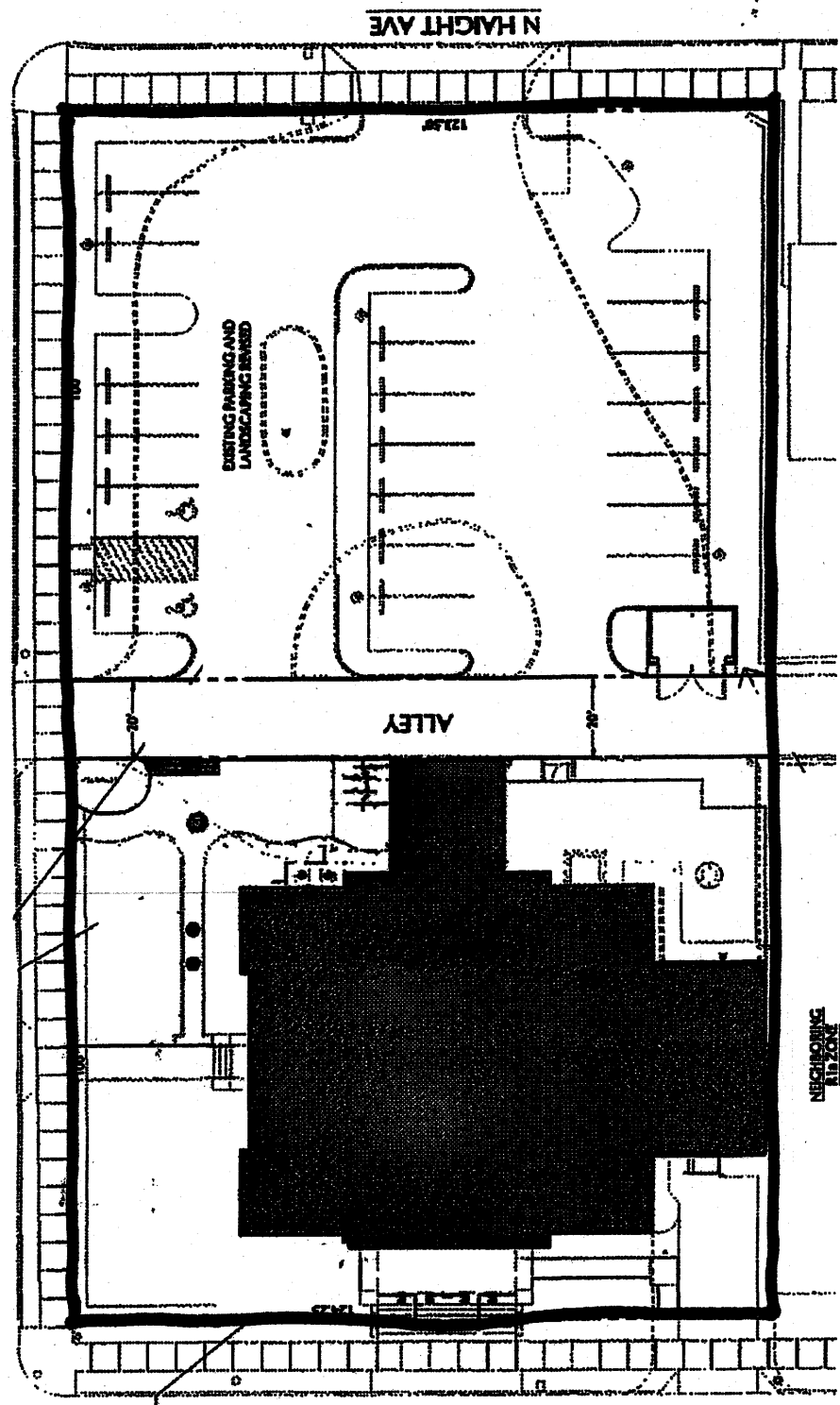
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Wilson-Chambers Mortuary is located on lots 1, 2, 3, 12, 13 and 14 of Block 1 of the Walnut Park Addition to the City of Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary is the legally recorded boundary for the building for which National Register status is being requested, and with which the building has been historically associated.

N KILLINGSWORTH ST



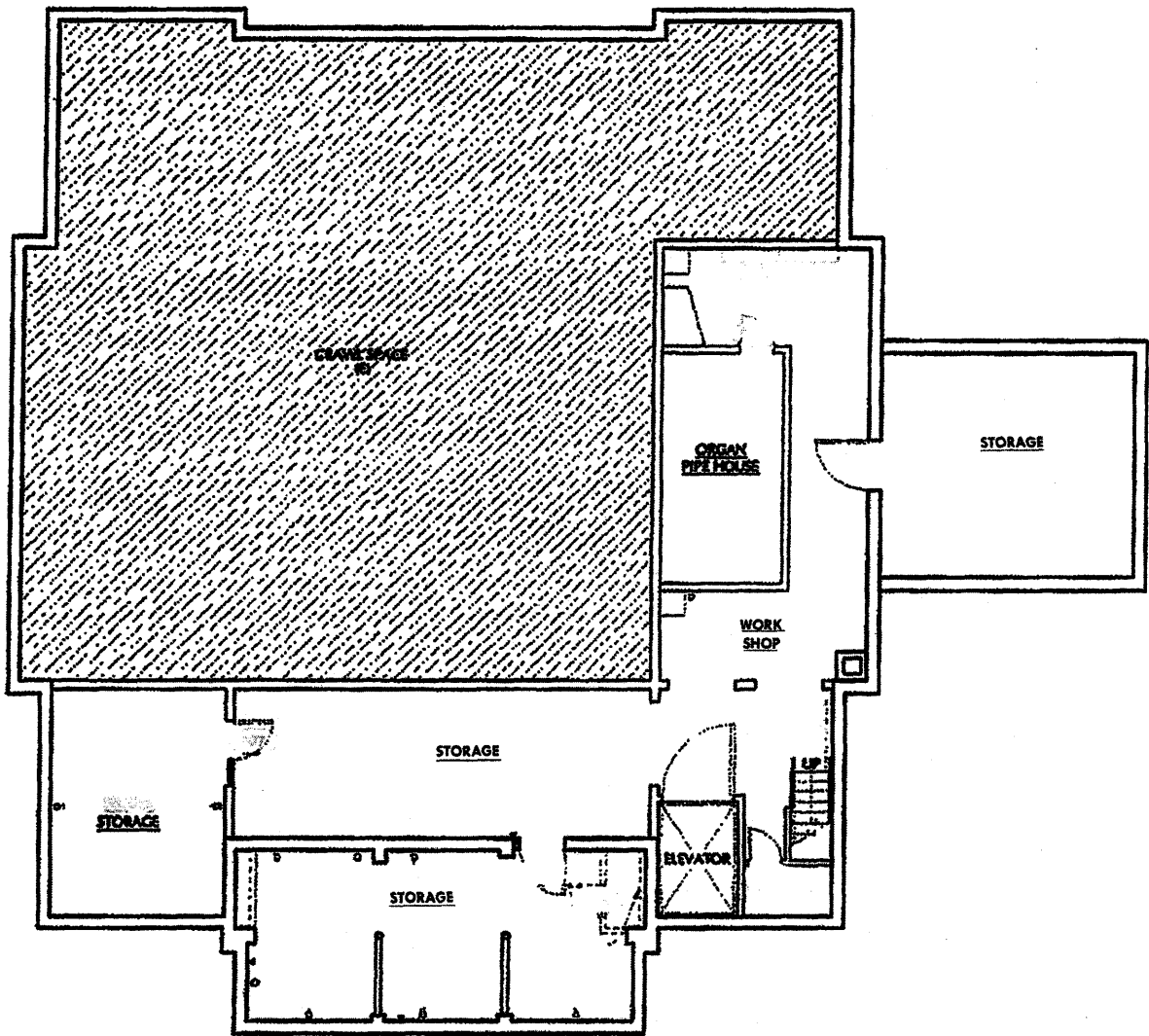
N COMMERCIAL AVE

NEIGHBORING BUILDING

NEIGHBORING BUILDING



OVERALL SITE NTS



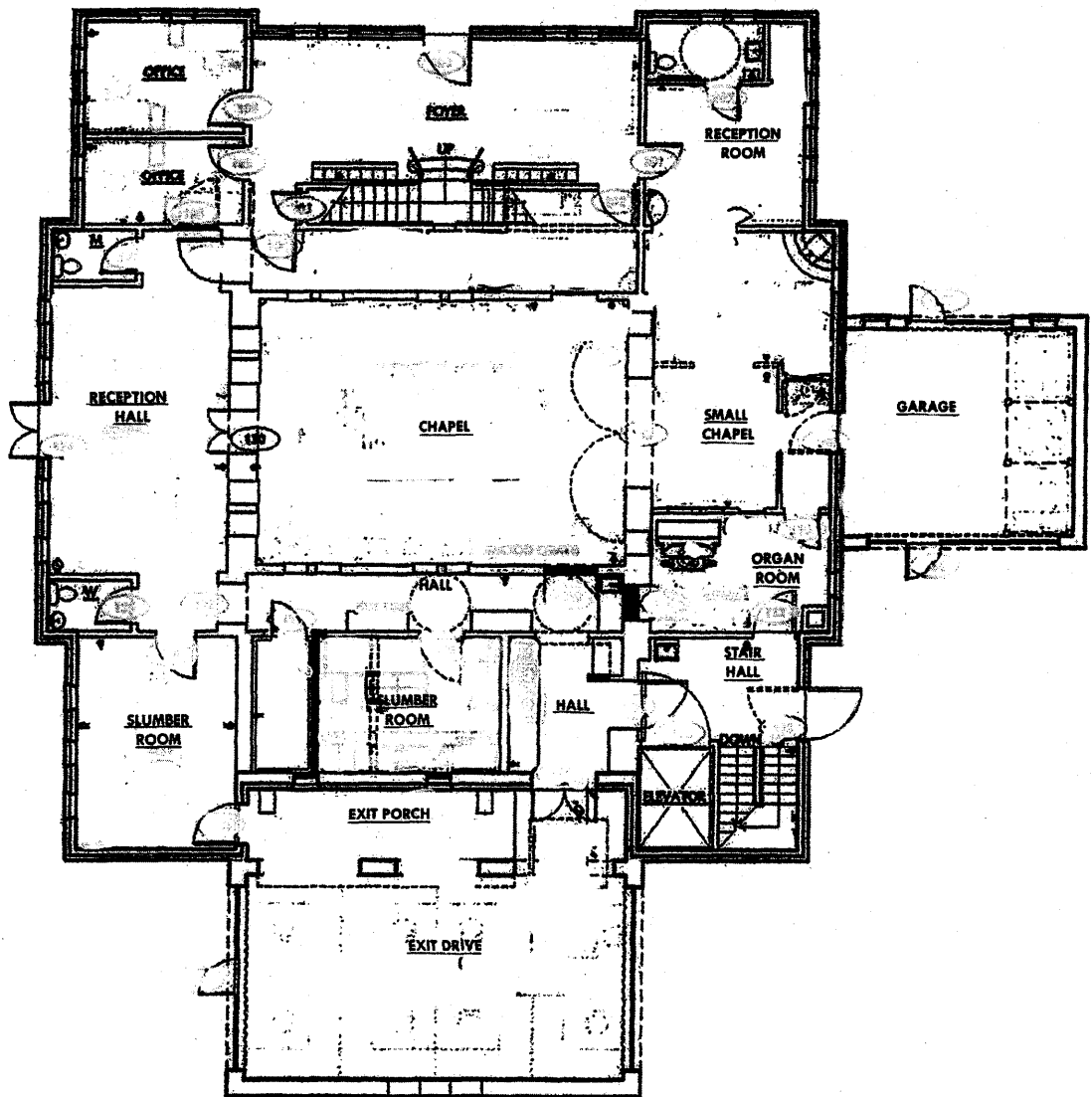
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BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

1/8" = 1'-0"

EXISTING FLOOR-PLAN WITH HISTORIC FUNCTIONS





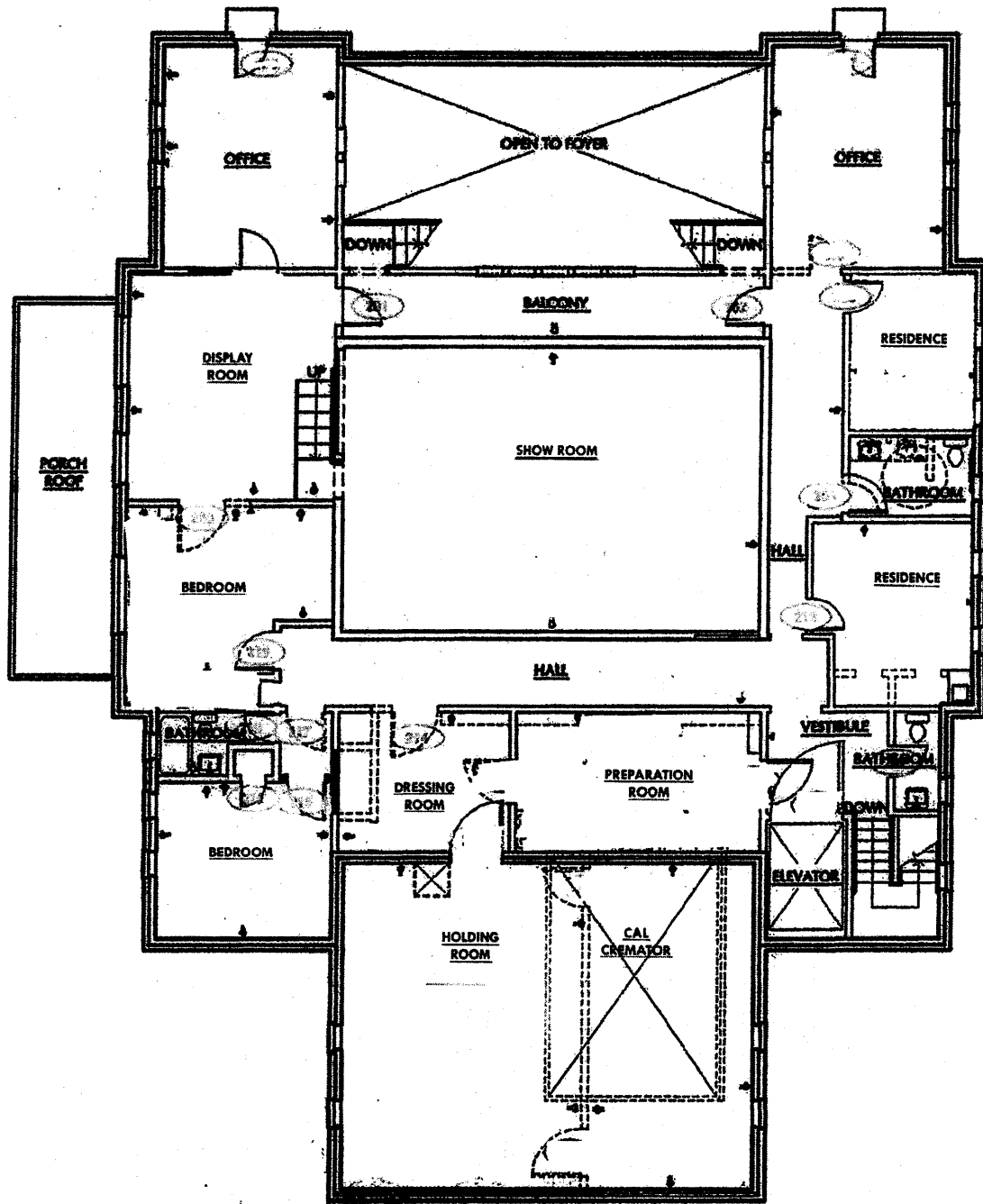
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FIRST FLOOR PLAN

1/8" = 1'-0"

EXISTING FLOOR PLAN WITH HISTORIC FUNCTIONS



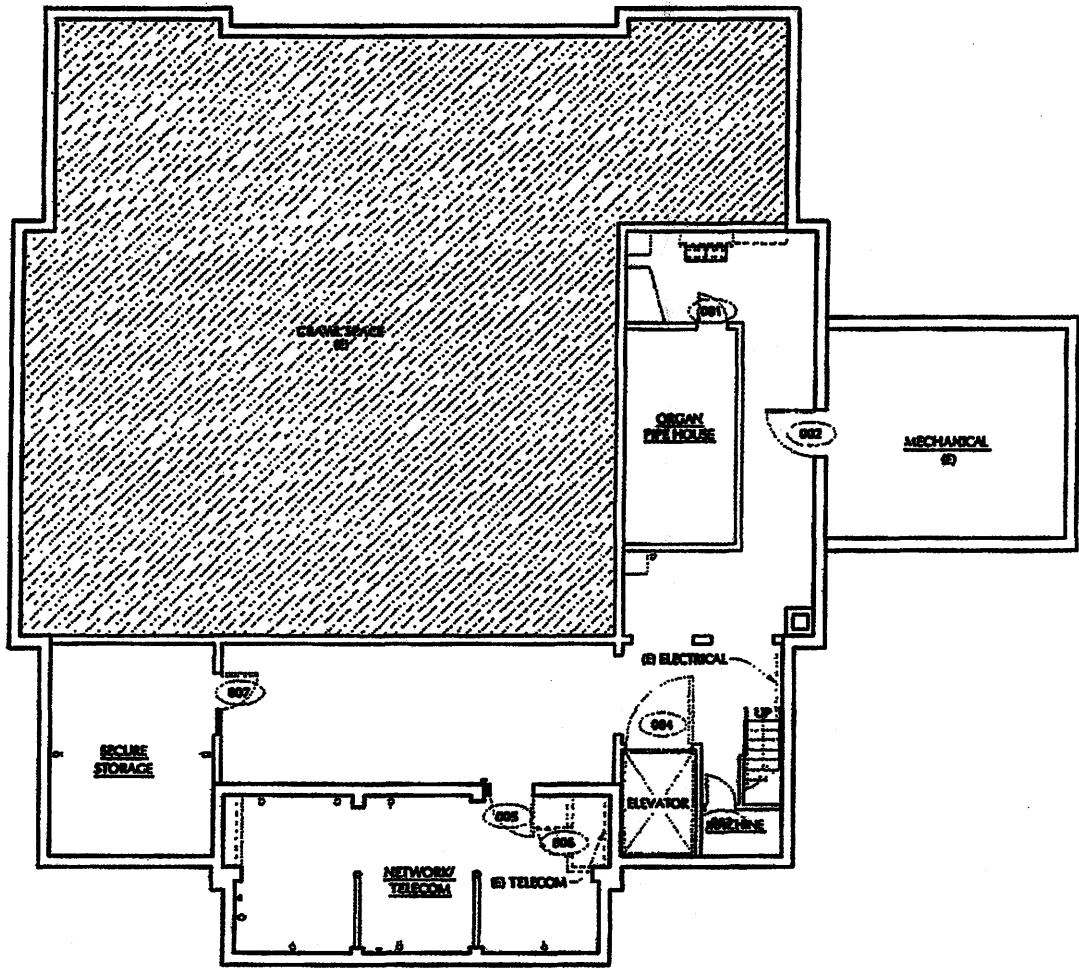


SECOND FLOOR PLAN

1/8" = 1'-0"

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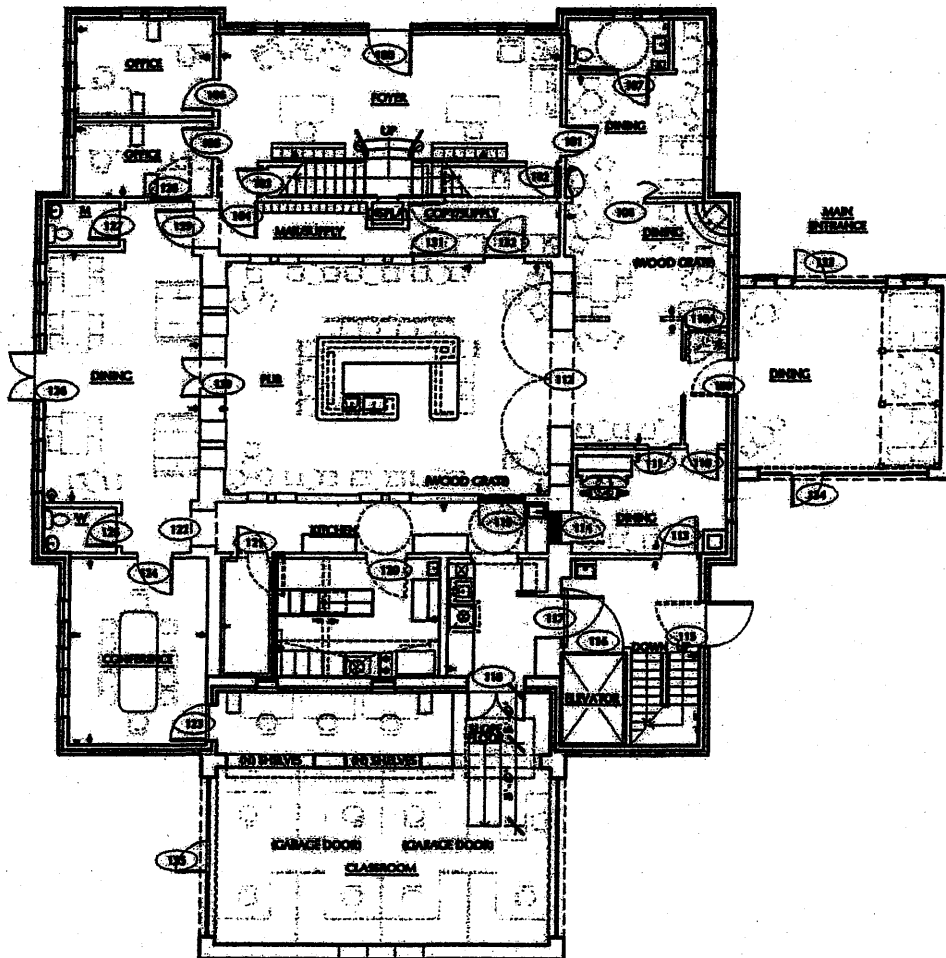




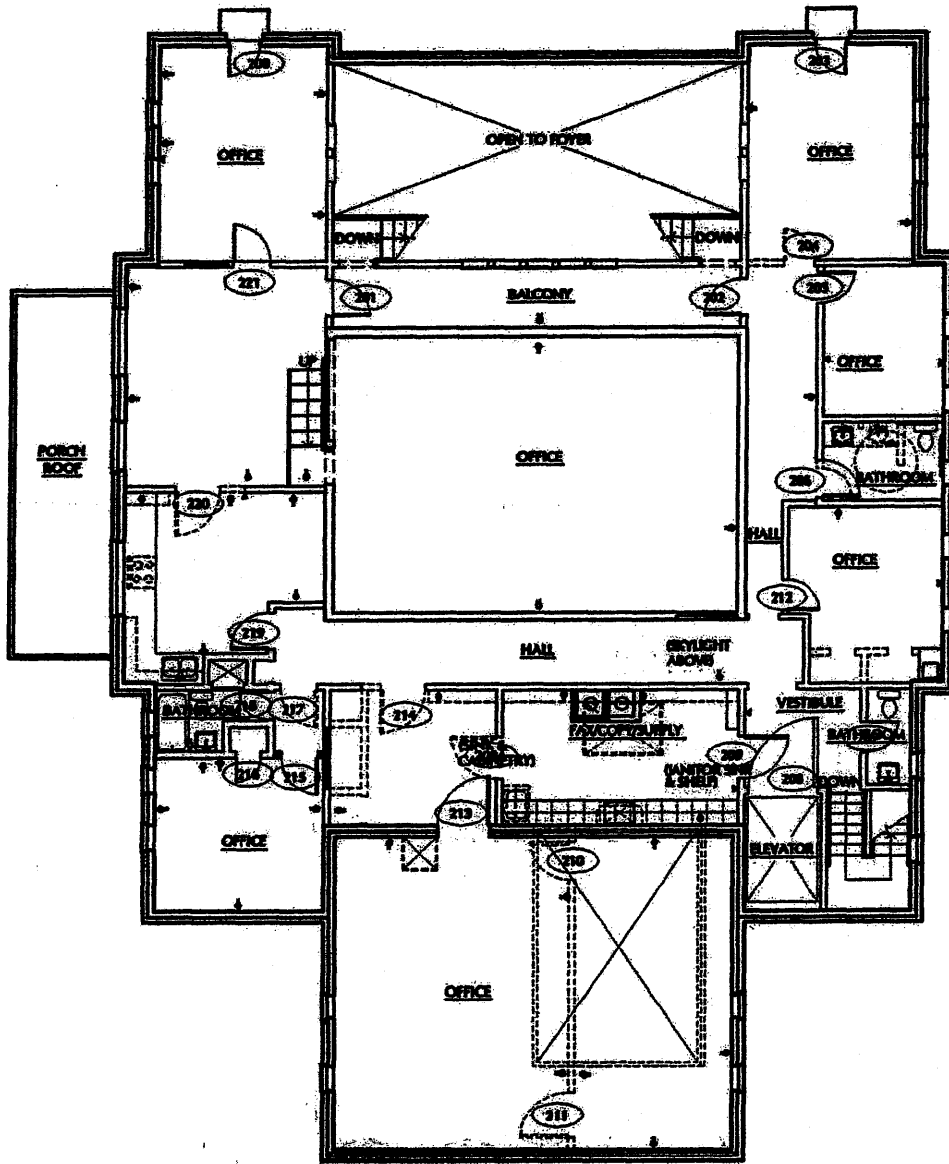
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1/8" = 1'-0"

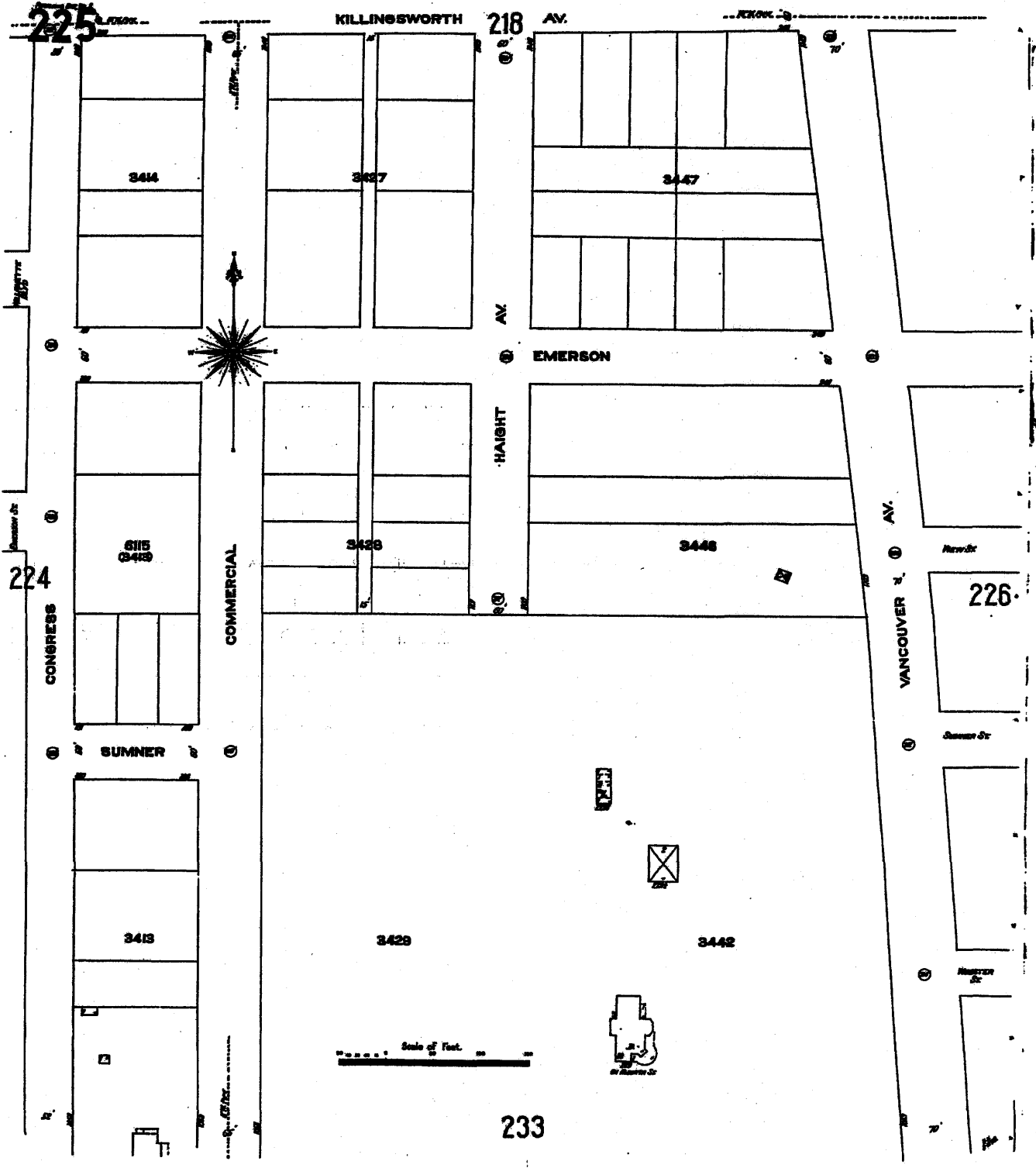


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FIRST FLOOR PLAN - Current use
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SECOND FLOOR PLAN - *current use*

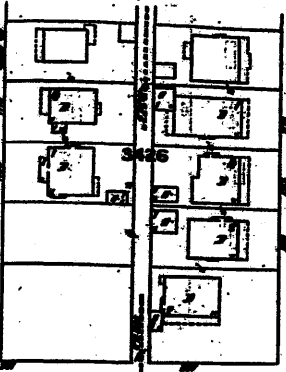




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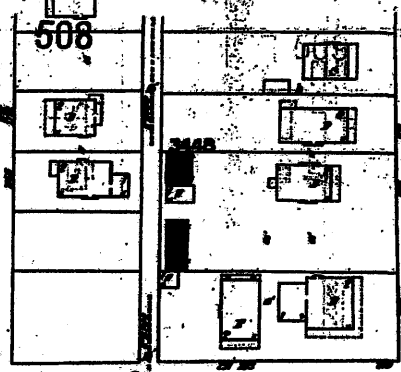
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COMMERCIAL



Haight Av.

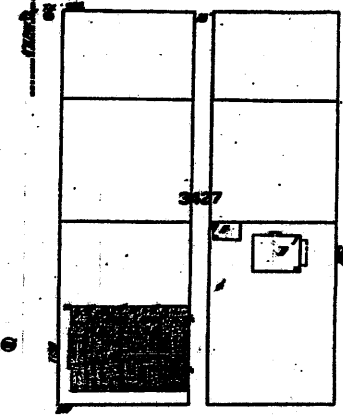
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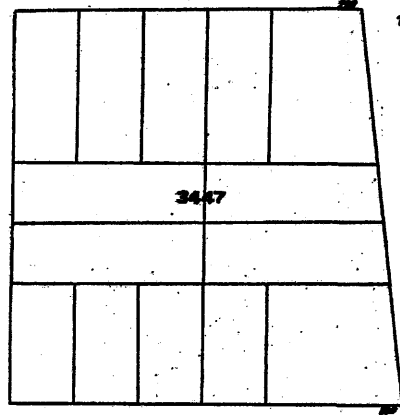
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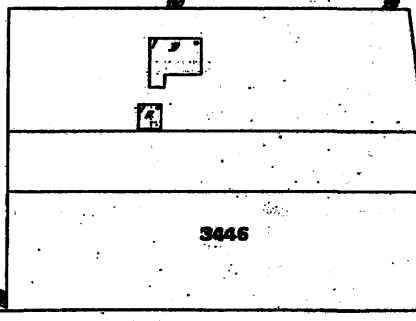
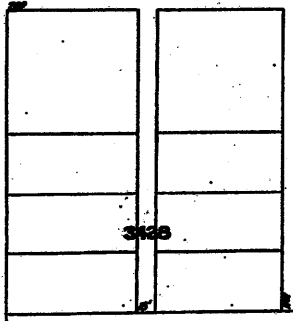


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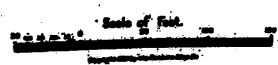
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VIEW SE. COR.

VIEW SW. COR.



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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Photographs _____ Page ____1__

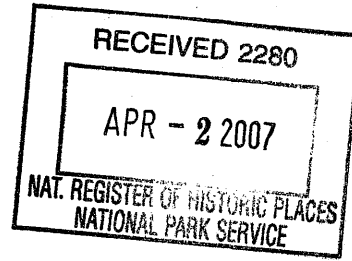
PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographer: Heritage Consulting Group
Date of Photographs: June 2006
Negatives Location: Heritage Consulting Group, 1120 NW Northrup Street, Portland

1. North facade. View to south.
2. North facade. View to south.
3. East facade. View to west.
4. East facade. View to west.
5. South facade. View to northeast.
6. West facade. View to east.
7. Detail, typical brickwork, east facade.
8. North entry foyer, first floor. View to southwest.
9. Stairs, north entry foyer, first floor. View to south.
10. West reception room, first floor. View to southwest.
11. Chapel, first floor. View to west.
12. East reception room, first floor. View to northeast.
13. Balcony hallway above north foyer, second floor. View to south.
14. Hallway, second floor, view to south.
15. Display room, second floor. View to southeast.
16. Northwest corner office, second floor. View to northwest.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet



Section number _____ Photographs _____ Page 1

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographer: Heritage Consulting Group
Date of Photographs: June 2006, March 2007
Negatives Location: Heritage Consulting Group, 1120 NW Northrup Street, Portland
Photo Paper: Epson Premium Glossy
Photo Ink: Epson Ultra Chrome K3 Ink, Inks T5641, T5647, and T5649
Printer: Epson Stylus Pro 4800

Pre-Rehabilitation: June 2006

1. North facade. View to south.
2. North facade. View to south.
3. East facade. View to west.
4. East facade. View to west.
5. South facade. View to northeast.
6. West facade. View to east.
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8. North entry foyer, first floor. View to southwest.
9. Stairs, north entry foyer, first floor. View to south.
10. West reception room, first floor. View to southwest.
11. Chapel, first floor. View to west.
12. East reception room, first floor. View to northeast.
13. Balcony hallway above north foyer, second floor. View to south.
14. Hallway, second floor, view to south.

Wilson-Chambers Mortuary
Name of Property

Multnomah Co., OR
County and State

NPS Form 10-900-a

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Photographs _____ Page 2

15. Display room, second floor. View to southeast.
16. Northwest corner office, second floor. View to northwest.

Post-Rehabilitation: March, 2007

17. Exterior, Looking Northeast at West Façade
18. Exterior, Looking West at East Façade
19. Interior, First Floor, Looking Northeast from Southwest corner of Foyer at North Entry
20. Interior, First Floor, Looking Southeast from Northwest corner of East Reception Room
21. Interior, Second Floor, Looking SE at Display Room