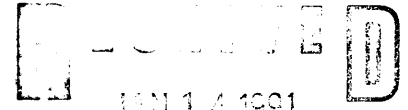


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

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

1. Name of Property

historic name New Houston Hotel  
other names/site number Athens Hotel  
Montana Hotel

2. Location

street & number 230 NW Sixth Avenue N/A not for publication  
city, town Portland N/A vicinity  
state Oregon code OR county Multnomah code 051 zip code 97209

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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.  See continuation sheet.  
James M. Hamvich December 31, 1990  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Oregon State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register.  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other, (explain:)

Entered in the  
National Register

Andrew Byers 2/20/91

for Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade: hotel \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ restaurant \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ barber shop \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ stores \_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant \_\_\_\_\_  
Work in progress \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

---

**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century American  
Movements: Commercial Style \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation \_\_\_\_\_ concrete \_\_\_\_\_  
walls \_\_\_\_\_ brick \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ roof \_\_\_\_\_ asphalt, built-up \_\_\_\_\_  
other \_\_\_\_\_

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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Introduction

The New Houston Hotel, constructed in 1912, is located in northwest Portland, one block west of the Chinatown Historic District and five blocks south of Union Station. It is specifically situated at the southeast corner of NW Sixth Avenue and Everett Street. The building occupies Lots 6 and 7 of Block 39, Couch's Addition to Portland, Multnomah County--a 100' x 100' lot.

The hotel was designed by H. Hanselmann and was constructed by the Leonard Construction Company. Hanselmann also designed the Hoyt (1912), Mallory (1912), and Majestic (1911) Hotels. The Hoyt Hotel has since been demolished. The H-shaped, nine story, reinforced concrete Mallory Hotel was his largest and most elaborate project.

Adjacent to the hotel site on the east is a one story warehouse structure. South of the building is a parking lot. To the west is Sixth Avenue, and to the north is Everett Street.

Relation to Commercial Style

The New Houston Hotel is a 'Commercial Style' building, similar in appearance to earlier Chicago commercial style structures such as the Leiter Building I designed by the architect William Le Baron Jenney and built in 1879. Victor Steinbrueck states in Volume I of Space, Style and Structure, (pgs. 358-359), that these commercial style buildings were commonly intermixed with Victorian or pre-1900 structures in the old district of a city. He further states that the straight-forward, structurally-driven style of the early commercial style buildings is directly related to the skyscrapers that followed. Thus, the commercial style provides a bridge to what is the dominant building type in our cities today.

Of the hotel buildings constructed in the same time period and area of the city, the New Houston Hotel is unique. There were many nearby hotels, including: the Broadmoor Hotel, the

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Everett Hotel, the Biltmore Hotel, the Butte Hotel, and the Broadway Hotel. The Broadway Hotel is the only other commercial style hotel of the group. However, the heaviness of the details, piers, spandrels, and architrave make the Broadway a less successful example than the New Houston.

It should also be noted that in another historic context the New Houston Hotel is exceptional. The 1913 Architectural Yearbook of the Portland Architectural League features buildings in many styles. Thus it included Jacobethan and Collegiate Gothic buildings such as the University Club (in downtown) and Eliot Hall (at Reed College). In fact, the Yearbook shows buildings in the Tudor Style, the Swiss Chalet Style, the Mission Style, and the Stick Style. However, virtually no commercial style buildings were included.

Clearly, in the Portland Architectural League--and elsewhere--mannered buildings held sway over those that were more straightforward. Beaux Arts architects held dominance over the commercial style practitioners. It is worth noting that even in Whiffen's book, American Architecture Since 1780, the Jacobethan University Club (Portland) is located on the page adjacent to Leiter Building I (Chicago), the Beaux Arts even there co-existing with the commercial.

The year-end recapitulation of new structures in the February 24, 1913 edition of The Oregonian further demonstrates that few unadorned commercial style structures were built. Although the New Houston is shown, the larger hotels featured were more reminiscent of Richardsonian Romanesque or Sullivan-esque types than Chicago commercial style.

In fact, between 1909 and 1913 a fair number of hotels which had at least elements of the commercial style apparent in their design were built in Portland. However, in comparing the New Houston Hotel to the others built, it becomes apparent that the New Houston was distinctive. It is the simplest, most direct, and most typical of the commercial style buildings, as exemplified by its extremely stylized and geometric classical vocabulary. It accomplishes almost all of its ornamentation through the use of only one material: white brick. The simple window treatment and the spare base, pier and cornice building elements

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also reveal the unique lack of ornamentation, as compared to the other hotels of that period.

Architectural Description

The hotel is a four story (not including basement), U-shaped, unreinforced brick building with wood floor and roof framing. The wall construction at the ground floor storefront areas consist of steel columns with steel beams spanning to support the masonry above. According to the original plans, the columns at street level were to have been cast iron. In fact (perhaps at the builder's request for added lateral stability) steel built-up "I" columns and brick piers were constructed at the storefronts. The basement walls are of reinforced concrete and the basement floor is of plain concrete 3" thick with a standard cement finish. The original drawings and specifications called for the flat roof to consist of: "prepared roofing selected by the architect or a five-ply 'Barretts' specification tar and gravel roof."

The west (front) and north elevations are similar above the storefront level. The structural and classical decorative logic of the elevations is expressed through the use of pilasters of projecting brick and the spandrels between. The pilasters articulate six bays on the west elevation and five along the north. The bays on the north are larger than those on the west, and on both elevations the two end bays are wider than the interior bays. An entablature above the pilasters is marked by herringbone panels within a raised brick border above a corbelled architrave. The cornice of the entablature is formed by brick dentils above two rows of corbelled brick. The building's top is a geometrically simplified 3 part entablature. At each end of the north and west elevations there are corbelled parapet projections to further define the larger end bays. The ornament of the entablature according to the original drawings was to consist of rough cement plaster panels and medallions where there is now the herringbone brick patterns.

In each bay tripartite double-hung wood windows (still in reasonably good condition) are recessed behind the plane of the pilasters. Window openings are framed by a soldier course above

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on the second and third floors and a brick sill below. Above the fourth floor windows are narrow brick panels instead of soldier courses. Decorative linear raised brick panels are featured in the spandrels recessed between the pilasters on the third and fourth floor.

The base of the pilasters is formed by the continuous denticulated corbelled cornice meeting the brick sill at the base of the second floor window. There is a single header brick course defining the limit of the base at the pilaster. At the fourth floor window level on the pilaster, just below the continuous entablature above, is a simple herringbone brick panel within a raised brick border with raised brick sill and dentils below. This panel marks the top of the pilaster as the header course denotes the base of the pilaster.

Carefully balancing the continuous entablature and parapet at the top of the building above the pilasters is a decorative continuous spandrel above the storefront bays. Narrow brick columns hiding the steel channel columns that support the spandrel beams visually connect the ground floor to the spandrel and pilasters above. The decorative brickwork of the spandrel (including raised and recessed brick courses forming dentils and corbels supporting the window sills) echo the entablature above.

Although the north and west elevations of the New Houston Hotel lack elaborate or varied materials, the architect and builders were playful with the use of their single material: the white brick. The patterning, projecting, and corbelling of the brick, which define and articulate both the formal design of the building and create areas of light and dark, have produced cleverly ordered elevations with lively, textured surfaces.

The original specifications state that "common brick will be used for brick backing and in light courts, party walls, and in such places as are otherwise shown on plans." All exterior walls of the hotel, save the street facing walls which have face brick, meet these specifications. The galvanized steel double-hung windows on these elevations are original and in generally repairable condition. They were specifically designed as fireproof windows with textured wire glass panes, metal sash chain, and soldered corners. They were made by the Kalamein Window Company and are excellent examples of this type of metal fireproof window common-

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ly used throughout the United States for decades. The window sills are also common brick.

The ground floor of the hotel along Sixth Avenue originally had a central arcade with three storefronts to the south and two storefronts to the north. The Everett Street side had three additional storefronts, one of which was a restaurant and another a barber shop. The two southernmost storefronts along Sixth Avenue remain substantially as per their original design, and the central arcade and adjacent storefront were later renovated to create a single new enclosed hotel lobby. The original location of some of the plate glass windows at the base of the storefront that served a basement corridor are still evident. The arrangement of the original storefront elements such as awning box and stationary windows above is equally evident. There also was a marquis at the open arcade entrance of the Sixth Avenue elevation, however this does not remain. However, the storefronts in the north half of the building were completely demolished when the Acropolis Lounge was installed.

The ground floor arcade was a cleverly planned entrance leading to the interior hotel vestibule doors, lobby, and main desk. It is proposed that the remaining north arcade wall (now covered on one side by lath and plaster) be restored. The original terrazzo floor from the arcade, vestibule, and original hotel lobby are intact and can be retained. The specifications also called for "terrazzo in the men's public toilet of the Hotel lobby and in the barber shop and is to be of a plain pattern satisfactory to the architect," although these do not appear to exist today.

On the interior, much of the original plan remains unchanged. An old hotel desk remains but is reversed in its position from the original plans. It is not known if the desk is original. Four skylights are located over the ground floor hotel lobby and five skylights are located over the original restaurant/kitchen area. The hotel lobby plan was greatly altered at the time the arcade was closed off. The configuration of the supporting spaces for the hotel lobby were also changed, in part due to the elimination of the hotel entrance arcade.

Above the first floor the plans are generally identical, as indicated in the drawings for the hotel. The structural system

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of steel columns and beams supports the U-shaped plan of the upper levels. The interior rooms are arranged around the central southern-oriented light court allowing each room to face "outside". The elevator and stairs are located north of and adjacent to the light court.

The upper floors each have 34 rooms, except that there are 33 at the second floor, due to the location of a stairwell. Thus there is a total of 101 rooms. The interior finishes and details are described very completely in the architect's original drawings on Sheets 11, 12, 13, and 14. The rooms and corridors retain much of the simple original trim, including picture moulding, classical door surrounds, transoms, and wood bases in the individual rooms and additional chair rails in the corridors. The wood trim is in good condition. The corridor wall is painted to appear as if there is a wainscot. The floors are fir. The room doors' paneling appears to match the door types shown in the original drawings. The rooms are small single-person occupancy type, however there are doors at all party walls, allowing an unlimited number of rooms to be interconnected. Larger rooms with private baths face Everett Street, rooms with shared private baths face Sixth Avenue, while smaller rooms without private baths occupy the remainder of the floor.

There are two wooden stairs in the building which are largely intact and characteristically simple in design. One stair has decorative turned balusters, railing and newel post. The other has simple rectangular stair elements.

### Past & Future Building Modifications

During the decades leading up to the building's current condition, we know that some modifications of the building occurred. Thus today the old arcade no longer exists and in fact the spaces to the north (including 3 retail spaces, a barber shop, and a restaurant) were largely gutted out and turned into a lounge (The Acropolis). During this remodeling, all of the historic storefront materials were demolished and replaced with stucco on metal lath. At some point the arcade and the adjacent retail space to the south were combined to create a new hotel lobby and the entry was relocated to its current position at the



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building exterior. The three upper residential floors have survived generally intact. The layout of corridors, rooms, elevator, and public restrooms and showers appears to be as originally designed.

Design is currently under way for a major renovation of the building to occur during the next 8 months. Although there are some revisions to the floor plans, every attempt is being made to retain original elements of the building to the greatest extent possible. Thus the two south retail bays are being retained and restored to their original condition, and the retail and arcade space which was modified to become a hotel lobby will be re-used as a single retail space under the new scheme. The storefront elevations along the north half of the Sixth Avenue elevation, and all of the north elevation along Everett Street, are to be rebuilt in a manner compatible with the original design.

The hotel entry and lobby will be relocated to the mid-block position on Everett Street. This is in large part a response to the fact that the entire Sixth Avenue storefront has the highest value for retail use since Sixth Avenue will soon be rebuilt as an extension of the City's transit mall. The northwest corner of the building will be returned to retail uses as per the original usage floor plan.

In revising the location of the hotel entry and lobby, the elevator is rotated 180° and shifted slightly from its current position. In fact, a major change to the elevator would be required in any case to meet current handicap access requirements. Also, the main hotel stair is revised for its last run of five treads to allow compatibility with the revised lobby location to the east.

In revising the ground floor layout, a Building Code requirement for at least one approved exitway was provided. In all cases, existing walls are substantially retained and protected throughout the renovation work. The existing black terrazzo floor of the old arcade, vestibule, hotel lobby, and entryways to existing retail historic bays will be retained and protected, although not necessarily re-used as the finish floor surface.

The north wall of the old arcade is still in existence. On its south side it has been painted over, but on the north side

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metal lath and plaster were applied over the entire surface. During the renovation work, the lath and plaster will be removed and the old arcade wall restored to its original condition if at all possible.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
Commerce  
Social History

Period of Significance

1912  
1912-1940

Significant Dates

1912  
1912-1940

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Hanselmann, H., architect

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

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property 0.23 acres Portland, Oregon-Washington 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	0	5	2	5	3	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

5	0	4	1	1	3	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

B 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

C 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated area is located at the corner of NW Sixth Avenue and Everett Street and is legally described as Lots 6 and 7 of Block 39, Couch's Addition to Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, a parcel of 100 x 100 feet.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated area of just under a quarter of an acre corresponds with the legally recorded lot lines of the property historically developed for the Goode Estate and occupied by the New Houston Hotel from 1912 onward.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Alan J. Soller/Architectural Historian and Carl Abbott/Historian  
 organization for Portland Development Commission date July 26, 1990  
 street & number 1120 SW Fifth, Suite 1102 telephone (503) 795-5300  
 city or town Portland state Oregon zip code 97204

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The New Houston Hotel occupies a quarter block (100 x 100 feet) at the southeast corner of the intersection of NW Sixth Avenue and Everett Street adjacent to the New Chinatown/Japantown Historic District in downtown Portland, Oregon. It was completed in the Commercial style in 1912 from plans signed by H. Hanselmann, architect of several mid-range and first-class hotels in Portland, including the Mallory, Hoyt and Majestic hotels. The investor was Edith Goode, widow of utility executive Henry Goode, who had presided over the corporation that launched the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition and Oriental Fair in 1905 that, in turn, triggered a dramatic growth response in hotel and apartment building.

The New Houston Hotel currently is the object of a publicly-funded housing rehabilitation project sponsored by the Portland Development Commission.

Early in its historic period (1912-1940), the hotel was linked by streetcar lines on Fifth Avenue and Broadway to the central business district on the south and Union Station on the north. In architectural terms, the building is outstanding among the commercial class hotels that grew up along this access corridor in response to a growing railroad clientele. It meets National Register criterion A in the context of Portland commerce and social history. It also is locally significant under Criterion C as the largest and most fully-developed example of Commercial style architecture among the field of comparable hotels in the neighborhood north of West Burnside referred to as the North Burnside district. At the height of a hotel boom in the growth period that followed the Fair, the New Houston offered intermediate-priced accommodations that ranged between large, first-class hotels in the business and financial district and the cheapest working class accommodations. In time, this middle-class, middle-market hotel served a melting pot society on the fringe of what had become Portland's vice district. It was designed to be modern, fire-proof and convenient, but by 1940 it was subject to decline in status and clientele. Originally, it catered to tourists on a budget, traveling salesmen and people working in the downtown who were seeking low-cost housing. The hotel's advertising clearly was aimed at mid-scale market and highlighted "modern facilities." In the 1930s, as the skid road crime area

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shifted from the riverfront toward Broadway, the hotel managed to keep one notch above the prostitution and criminal activity that grew up around it.

The New Houston is a distinctive and generally well-preserved representative of its class. Briefly characterized, the hotel is a four-story building of reinforced concrete construction having a U-shaped configuration above the ground story to provide an interior light court, an indispensable feature of the type and period. The building presents its major frontage of six wide bays on Sixth Avenue; five bays on Everett. The street facades convey distinctly the influence of the Chicago School in the expressed structural bays, in the conventional three-part vertical organization recalling divisions of the Classical column, and in the tripartite Chicago School window assemblies composed of double-hung wood sash. In exterior treatment, the hotel compares favorably with the contemporary department store of Olds, Wortman and King, although, of course, it is more modest in scale. As was typical, ground story bays were originally retail shop fronts. Cladding of white brick was similarly influenced by Chicago School architecture which initiated the trend toward glazed white terra cotta. The brickwork is notably well crafted, incorporating, in addition to a ground story dentiled belt course and raised spandrel panels, a lively upper facade ornamented by a stylized frieze built up of corbelling and rectangular panels outlining herringbone-patterned brick. Decorative pilaster strips are pendant from the frieze. The Classical cornice is surmounted by dignified rectangular parapet crests at the corners.

While the ground story was renovated after the historic period, as the character of the surrounding neighborhood changed, elements of the lobby finish work remain, and the circulation corridors and guest rooms of its upper stories are intact, conveying the hierarchy of larger rooms with bath on the Everett Street front, and the economy rooms in the wings on either side of the light court.

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Introduction

The New Houston (Athens) Hotel is proposed for the National Register of Historic Places because of its local and statewide significance under Criteria A and C. Designed by H. Hanselmann, the hotel's construction during 1911-12 was part of the climax year of a hotel building boom that followed the Lewis and Clark Exposition of 1905 and the rise of rail-based business travel and tourism in early twentieth century Oregon. The location of the New Houston Hotel at the southeast corner of Northwest Sixth Avenue and Everett Street helped to define an access corridor between Union Station (1896) and the growing retail-finance-theater district of downtown Portland. The hotel is evaluated in terms of its social and commercial significance relative to Portland's role as the economic and transportation center for Oregon. During its period of significance from 1912 to World War II, the hotel reflected: (1) the changing nature of business and personal travel; (2) the shifting focus and character of Portland's nationally prominent "tenderloin" or "skid road" district; (3) the working class and melting-pot character of transitional districts on the fringe of downtown Portland; and, (4) the changing character of the hospitality industry in a growing western city. It is also evaluated as a leading example of commercial style architecture in early twentieth century Portland.

The New Houston/Montana Hotel, 1912-30

Since its opening in 1912, the career of the New Houston Hotel embodied or touched on the major trends in the evolution of Portland's North End or North of Burnside district. In turn, the growth of that district and its hotels was tied directly to the role of Portland as the leading transportation center and labor market for the rapidly growing state of Oregon. In particular, the New Houston helped to define a hotel type in early twentieth century Portland intermediate between the large downtown hotels and cheap workingmen's accommodations. It also mirrored the ambiguous status of the Sixth/Broadway corridor in the evolution of twentieth century Portland.

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The New Houston Hotel was constructed during 1911-12 and opened for business in the spring or summer of 1912. The owner was Mrs. Edith Fairclough Goode, widow of prominent utility executive Henry Walton Goode. Mr. Goode had worked in Portland from 1892 until his death in 1907, rising to become general manager of the Portland General Electric Company and then the consolidated Portland Railway, Light, and Power Company. He also served in 1904-1905 as president of the corporation that mounted the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition and Oriental Fair in northwest Portland in 1905. Mrs. Goode was socially prominent in Portland in the early 1900s and died in Salem, Oregon, in 1937.

In 1911, Mrs. Goode invested a portion of her husband's estate in two modern hotels. One was a six-story building at the southeast corner of Sixth and Hoyt streets, now demolished. The other was a four-story structure of white brick at the southeast corner of Sixth and Everett streets. This is the structure now known as the Athens Hotel. Construction on the Sixth and Everett building began in 1911, and work had advanced to the second story level by December of that year (Oregon Journal, Dec. 3, 1911). Newspaper reviews of real estate activity described the hotel as "about completed" by February (Oregonian, Feb. 18, 1912) and as finished by April (Oregon Journal April 3, 1912). Final building inspections were completed by May 1912. The hotel first appears in city directory listings for 1913 as the New Houston Hotel, a name which it carried until 1922.

Both of the Goode estate hotels were built under the supervision of C. K. Henry, a prominent real estate agent and manager. Henry was involved as well in the simultaneous construction of the Mallory Hotel for the Mallory estate and in the development of the upper middle class Laurelhurst neighborhood during the same years. The architect for the New Houston, Hoyt, and Mallory hotels was H. Hanselmann. Little more is known about Hanselmann, who was apparently in business in Portland for only one year.

The New Houston Hotel is a 'Commercial Style' building, highly derivative of the Chicago School style. The building is especially similar, at least formally, to the Leiter Building I, Chicago, Illinois, designed by architect William Le Baron Jenney in 1879. As originally designed, the New Houston Hotel was to have cast iron columns set against the brick piers of the facade,



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as in the Leiter Building I. The number, type, and proportion of the windows in each bay are also similar. Both buildings are block-like structures with flat roofs and a terminating cornice and parapet. In both buildings the ornamentation is simple and geometric, based upon classical orders and logic. The base, pier, spandrel, and cornice arrangement of parts are also similar. In both buildings, the ground level was devoted to commercial use. The New Houston Hotel in its simplicity and proportion was very close to the Leiter Building I, arguably the building that marked the beginning of the commercial style architecture period. Of all the hotels built in Portland during that era, it was and remains the purest example of the commercial style. The most similar hotel, the Broadway at 2-16 NW Broadway, is a heavier, more ornate, and less rigorous version of the commercial style.

The location for the hotel was carefully chosen. Heavy and growing traffic from Union Station (1896) could most easily reach Portland's expanding central business district by a streetcar line that ran on Fifth Street as early as 1902, by another line that ran on Broadway (Seventh) by the 1910s, or by foot and/or cab along Sixth. Union Station itself was the transportation focus of Oregon from the turn of the century until the widespread use of automobiles after 1925. Trains from the Southern Pacific, Northern Pacific, and Union Pacific systems converged from the Willamette Valley, southern Oregon, and California, from the Puget Sound cities, and from the Columbia Basin and points east. The majority of business and tourist travel for the state therefore passed within three blocks of the New Houston. Persons bound for Portland as a destination or laying over in the city passed within one block of the hotel. In addition, proximity to both the Willamette River wharves and to the railroad system made the area north of Burnside street the most convenient location for temporary residence by farm, forest, railroad, and construction workers.

The location of the hotel was also related to the Greater Portland Plan of Edward Bennett. This classic product of the City Beautiful era of urban planning was presented in 1911. It was funded by prominent civic and business leaders with whom Mrs. Goode was undoubtedly acquainted, and it received extensive and positive publicity in the city's newspapers. Portland voters in November 1912 approved Bennett's proposals as the official plan

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for the city, to guide the actions of the City Council insofar as practical and reasonable. The Bennett Plan proposed Broadway and the North Park Blocks (Eighth) for development as a grand boulevard linking Union Station to the heart of the city. Had the plan been carried out, the New Houston Hotel would have benefited from the definition of this north-south axis for intracity circulation without suffering the direct disruption of construction and street alterations.

The New Houston Hotel was part of the intensification of land uses in the transition zone north of Burnside Street. It and neighboring buildings of the Lewis and Clark Expo boom were built on land that was vacant or in low intensity use for storage. Specifically, the site of the New Houston was utilized by a one-story garage and two sheds. Nearby structures were a mixture of one-story to three-story buildings in both frame and brick. As a four-story brick building, the New Houston Hotel stood out among its surroundings as a "downtown" style structure. In physical terms, Fifth, Sixth, and Broadway between Burnside Street and Union Station matched the concept of a "zone in transition" being developed by urban sociologists such as Robert Park and Ernest W. Burgess. On the basis of systematic observation of growing American cities, they observed that such zones on the fringes of central business districts contained a mixture of low-cost housing, light industry, warehousing, and under-utilized land. The expansion of central business cores, however, often had the effect of displacing such lower-intensity and lower-rent uses with more intensive commercial and public buildings. The construction of the U. S. Customs House at Broadway and Everett in 1901 and the U. S. Post Office at Broadway and Glisan in 1918 were indicators of the transitional pressures in the district of the New Houston Hotel. Indeed, proximity to the Post Office became one of the hotel's advertising emphases during the 1920s.

The New Houston Hotel was also part of a substantial hotel boom in Portland. The Lewis and Clark Exposition had capitalized on a rising regional prosperity after 1900 and had ushered in a massive real estate boom that lasted from 1905 to 1912, before the onset of a business and real estate recession that lasted from 1913 to 1917. During the 1905-12 period, every statistical indicator told the same story of sustained economic growth. Population jumped by as much as 20,000 per year, with an estimated total of 111,000 in 1905 eclipsed by a census figure of

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207,000 in 1910. The value of new building permits in the city rose by 400 percent between 1905 and 1910-1911. The city's growth was based on the development of forest and agricultural resources in the interior of Oregon and Washington and on the completion of a second rail line up the Columbia River. Much of Portland's new employment was in the category of transportation, trade, and finance. Sales agents, insurance brokers, bankers, stenographers, and clerks filled new downtown office space (which grew from 900,000 square feet in 1900 to 2,000,000 in 1910 and 2,900,000 in 1920).

A hotel boom was part of the reconstruction of the core, for rentable rooms were in demand by business travelers, a growing contingent of tourists visiting the scenic West, and unmarried office workers of both sexes. The 1910 Census records that 5874 Portland women worked as salespersons, clerks, telephone and telegraph operators, bookkeepers, messengers, stenographers, and typewriters. By 1920, the total was 12,455, of whom 9714 were unmarried. New hotels located south of Burnside Street that are now listed on the National Register included the Franklin (1906), the Calumet (1907), and Cornelius (1908), and the Seward (1909). 1911-12 brought three more first class downtown hotels--the huge \$2 million Multnomah, the Oregon (Benson), and the Congress (now demolished). One notch down the prestige scale and a few blocks further from the business core were the new Ordway, Carlton, Mallory, Hoyt, and New Houston hotels. These last two named--the Goode Estate hotels--enjoyed the advantage of a location directly between the state's transportation hub and its leading theater district in downtown Portland.

The New Houston Hotel opened in 1912 under the management of David Lowry Houston, who from 1907 to 1909 had operated the Houston Hotel, on the west side of Sixth at the corner of Davis. Born in 1859 in Trenton, Missouri, Houston had attended the University of Oregon for one year before going to work on the Southern Pacific Railroad, first as a brakeman and then as a conductor. After many years of work with the railroad, he left to run a hotel at Shipherds Mineral Springs. Returning to Portland, he operated the Houston Hotel for three years before selling at a profit and moving to Hillsboro, where he was elected to the city council. He later told a newspaper interviewer that he went broke as proprietor of the New Houston Hotel in less than two years.

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In what the contemporary newspapers called "North Portland," the New Houston Hotel joined a very mixed set of existing hotels. At one end of the socio-economic scale, a number of small and inexpensive hotels and rooming houses served the seasonal working class population of Portland's developing skid road district. A number of other hotels largely served the members of the city's substantial Chinese and Japanese immigrant populations (for example, the Minnesota or Center Hotel of 1909 on Fifth between Everett and Flanders). The Golden West Hotel, at Broadway and Everett, played a special role in the lives of African-American Portlanders who found much of their employment with the railroads. Several new hotels, however, aimed at the combination of permanent and transient customers who wanted a respectable but economical hotel located conveniently to transportation and to downtown Portland. An excellent indicator of such hotels was whether they found it worthwhile to advertise in the annual city directory and/or the Portland Hotel News (later the Northwest Hotel News). This latter publication was distributed free to passengers on trains arriving in Portland, carrying both hotel advertisements and stories about new hotels. On this basis, the better class of North Portland hotels included the Rainier (1910, 6th and Glisan), Hoyt (1912, 6th and Hoyt), the Broadway (1913, Broadway and Burnside), and the Royal Palm (1914, 3rd and Everett) as well as the New Houston (Appendix A).

The New Houston stood at the geographical center of this set of hotel structures associated with the 1905-1912 boom. It advertised in 1914 as offering free phones and a choice of rooms with bath (\$1.50) or without (\$.75-1.00). In 1928, now renamed the Hotel Montana, the former New Houston emphasized that it was "strictly fireproof and modern" with steam heat, free telephone, hot and cold water in each room, and ELEVATOR SERVICE. It also emphasized a location three blocks from the new Post Office, four blocks from Union Depot, and six blocks from the entertainment and shopping districts. In short, the New Houston Hotel was the decent, economical choice of the thrifty traveler.

In fact, Sixth Avenue was a difficult place for the management of the New Houston Hotel to consistently tap the respectable transient trade. Only a few blocks to the southeast lay the heart of Portland's vice district, with its concentration of saloons and prostitution. An exhaustive study of the evolution of the city's skid road has identified Second, Third, and Fourth Avenues

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between Burnside and Davis as the center of the city's vice district from the mid-1890s into the first decade of the twentieth century. This district was supported by Portland's unusually large population of transient and seasonal railroad, maritime, farm, and forest workers who utilized the city as a labor market for securing jobs throughout Oregon and the Northwest.

In the early twentieth century, the vice district exerted strong pressures on blocks to the west--that is, on Sixth Avenue and Broadway. In effect, there was a competition within this North Portland subarea between respectable uses oriented to the Union Station-downtown corridor and disreputable uses oriented to the north waterfront saloon and lodging house district. Indeed, in 1908, 50 businessmen located between 5th, Broadway, Couch, and Flanders petitioned city council for help in removing prostitutes and other undesirable persons in an effort to secure the family and tourist trade (Sawyer 144). This is the area, of course, in which Mrs. Goode located the New Houston Hotel four years later.

In 1912, the Portland Vice Commission performed a thorough and detailed examination of prostitution in Portland. Using a generous definition of immoral behavior (which included sexual relations between consenting unmarried adults as well as prostitution for money), the Vice Commission found that the vast majority of Portland hotels either "countenanced" or "encouraged" use of their premises for immoral behavior. Only a few hotels were totally pure, and a few others totally given over to prostitution. The Commission provided a number of case studies of hotel management attitudes, with hotel name and address suppressed but other information retained. On the basis of ten points of internal evidence, it can be concluded that the Vice Commission's Hotel B-58-1 was the New Houston (see Appendix B for a tabulation of the points).

In summary, the Vice Commission reported that the proprietor of Hotel B-58-1 encouraged use of his rooms for immoral purposes out of business necessity. The hotel supposedly rented rooms to known "sporting women." In addition, the Commission reported that there were "a number of women and girls living in this house who work during the day and sport at night, having men in their room either part of the night, or, as I was told, 'all night if they desired.'" Conversely, male tenants were observed to take women to their rooms to drink beer. The landlord reportedly was

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well connected with the police department and commented that it was impossible to run a hotel in Portland without letting customers do what they pleased (see Appendix C). Assuming that this was indeed the New Houston Hotel, it is not clear whether this policy helped to stave off or to precipitate the bankruptcy of David Houston.

Although there is a gap in available information, the 1928 city directory shows that what was now called the Montana Hotel had continued to seek tourist clientele through the 1920s. The 1930 directory indicates that its street level storefronts were occupied by an oyster house, a soft drink shop, and a tailor. Two years later, the Montana was not included in a list of brothels prepared (but not published) by the Oregon Social Hygiene Society, although a number of sets of "rooms" and smaller hotels on Sixth were included (such as the West and Butte hotels).

The Montana/Belmont Hotel: 1930-1942

By the end of the 1920s, the New Houston (Montana) and similar hotels were experiencing the problems of a fundamental decline in customer base. As detailed by sociologist Norman Hayner, the rise of chain stores in the 1920s had brought a consequent decline in the number of traveling salesmen who had supplied steady business for hotels located near rail terminals. In addition, the spread of automobiles and the improvement of highways (especially following creation of a national highway numbering system in 1925) shifted a large portion of tourist travel away from railroads and hotels in favor of automobiles and automobile camps located on the outskirts of cities. The declining demand for middle-priced rooms was felt especially in Portland, which according to the 1930 Census had the third highest ratio of hotel rooms to population among all the nation's cities. Only Seattle and San Francisco surpassed Portland's ratio of 47.6 hotel rooms for every 1000 residents. In such a highly competitive situation, any decline in the demand for hotel rooms would tend to push individual hotels down the socioeconomic status ladder in their search for customers.

At the same time, what was now the "Montana Hotel" faced the expansion of skid road institutions westward to Broadway. State and national prohibition from 1916 to 1932 destroyed the saloon

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cluster around Second and Third as an anchor for skid road. Institutions such as missions and employment agencies began to appear on Sixth and Broadway. A reduction in the number of the very cheapest flophouses and lodging houses in the 1920s and 1930s also shifted their residents into single hotel rooms and helped to push older hotels in the north of Burnside area toward lower status.

In the 1930s, the New Houston/Montana Hotel took on its third name as the Belmont Hotel (1935-58). Available evidence suggests that the Belmont helped to house businesses and perhaps individuals from Portland's immigrant community. Judged on the basis of names, storefront tenants between 1930 and 1940 included a Chinese (Sing Low Lee), a Scandinavian (Isaac Norgard, tailor) and two Eastern European Jews (Mardo Menasche, auto accessories, and Morris Goldblatt Salvage Goods). In addition, the hotel manager in 1940 and 1941 was Noby Minami, a Japanese. This latter role is typical of the hotel business in Portland, Seattle, and other west coast cities, where Japanese-Americans had increasing prominence as hotel proprietors or managers until the wartime deportations of 1942. Soon after the end World War II, a returning Japanese-American established the Tsunenaga Photo Studio in one of the hotel's storefronts.

The Belmont/Libbey/Athens Hotel: 1942--

Immediately after World War II, the hotel's storefronts provided affordable space for start-up businesses. The picture studio previously mentioned, a printing shop, and an elevator sales and/or service firm were all listed in the 1949 city directory (the first available after 1943). As late as 1948, the hotel was still respectable enough to be used as an election polling place.

From the late 1940s through the 1970s, however, the variously named Belmont Hotel (1935-58), Libbey Hotel (1959-69), and Athens Hotel (1970--) continued its transition from a mixed residential and tourist hotel to a single room occupancy hotel for pensioners. A beer parlor (1949-65) and pawnshop (1949-62) appeared among the street level businesses in the 1940s. A tattoo parlor later appeared in 1977-84. The hotel also housed the offices of labor unions that drew their membership from

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periodic waterfront residents associated with the transient housing of skid row. These labor organizations included the National Maritime Union (1949), the National League of Marine Cooks and Stewards (1950-56), the Sailor's Union of the Pacific (1952-56), and the Maritime Firemen's Union (1957-60).

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, what was now the Athens Hotel suffered precipitate deterioration. Years of low rental income and deferred maintenance at the Athens now led to serious code violations. By 1984, loss of heat, rupture of the waste disposal system, and related problems were blamed for the deaths of three tenants. The hotel was closed in mid-1984 after Burnside Projects, a local social service agency, determined that it could not be operated as safe and decent housing with available funds.

#### Summary

The New Houston Hotel originated as one of a distinct set of hotels built in the years around 1910 along the transportation corridor between Union Station and the central business district of Portland. Although smaller and simpler than the grand hotels built in downtown Portland during the same years (especially the Multnomah and the Oregon [Benson]), these hotels were appreciably larger and more substantial than many of the smaller hotels built between First and Sixth during the preceding twenty years. This size factor was a visible evidence of their aspiration to serve a middle class clientele. Along with the Union Station itself and the large federal buildings on Broadway, these hotels represented an effort to define the Union Station access corridor as an extension of the central business district rather than part of the nearby skid road district. This effort to create a "respectable" northward extension of downtown was keyed to the expansion of Portland as a center of regional business and recreational travel, especially during the boom years of 1905-12.

In timing of construction (1911-12), in size (four stories rather than the more common three), and in exterior design and finish, the New Houston Hotel represents the climax of this pattern of land use development. Its Commercial Style is reminiscent of Chicago School buildings with its wide expanse of windows in a three-part style. The use of light brick and the



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exterior detailing also distinguished the hotel among its earlier neighbors. On the interior, the hotel was designed for a mixed market. Relatively large rooms with baths faced Everett Street. Smaller rooms without private baths occupied the two wings which ran parallel to Sixth. All rooms, however, were provided with the basic modern conveniences of running hot and cold water and telephones. An indication of the hotel's status at the time of its construction is the fact that it was included with major downtown buildings in reports and reviews of real estate activity. Both in physical appearance and social status, it can be contrasted with the Hood Hotel (1905) and the Butte Hotel (1912), located on blocks adjacent to the New Houston/Athens but competing for a different clientele.

The hotel's use pattern gradually but inexorably changed from the 1930s to the 1980s under the varied pressures of economic depression, the substitution of automobile for train travel, and the westward expansion of skid road institutions and population. Especially during the 1930s and 1940s, the hotel's historic functions touched many aspects of the life of Portland's marginal populations, including recent immigrants, maritime workers, and pensioners. In historical perspective, the hotel has played a role in almost every important facet of the social history of the North of Burnside district since 1912. In architectural perspective, it is the most distinguished and "modern" structure among the survivors of its type and era.

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## Hotels in North of Burnside District, 1900-1915

Middle Class Market Orientation

Rainier [demolished]	1910	6th and Glisan	3 stories
Hoyt [demolished]	1912	6th and Glisan	6 stories
NEW HOUSTON	1912	230 NW 6th	4 stories
Broadway	1913	2-16 NW Broadway	4 stories
Royal Palm (Chinatown Historic District)	1914	331-37 NW 3rd	3 stories

Strong Minority Ethnic Orientation

Golden West	1905	301-09 NW Broadway	5 stories
Yamaguchi (Chinatown Historic District)	1905	340 NW Glisan	3 stories
Palley (Chinatown Historic District)	1908	231-39 NW 3rd	2 stories
Chuo Hotel (Chinatown Historic District)	1909	338 NW 5th	3 stories

Workingclass Orientation

Arlington	1903	323-37 NW 6th	3 stories
Hood	1905	302-10 NW 6th	3 stories
West	1905	121-27 NW 6th	3 stories
Medford	1907	506-10 NW 5th	3 stories
Butte	1912	129-37 NW 6th	3 stories

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Uncertain Status

Barr	1911	418-26 NW 6th	3 stories
Everett	1914	310 NW Broadway	3 stories

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## APPENDIX B

### Identification of New Houston Hotel with Hotel B-58-1 in 1912 Vice Commission Report

#### HOTEL B-58-1

Recently opened  
(August 1912)

110 rooms

Some rooms with  
bath, some not

All rooms with  
telephones

Manager aged 60

Manager experienced  
hotel keeper

Hotel rented via  
prominent real  
estate agent

Hotel leased from  
prominent estate

Manager well connected  
with police

Cafe will open soon  
in the hotel

#### NEW HOUSTON HOTEL

Finished by April 1912

101 rooms

Some rooms with  
bath, some not

All rooms with  
telephones

Manager D. L. Houston  
aged 54

Houston managed two  
previous hotels

Hotel rented through  
C. K. Henry

Hotel leased from Goode  
estate

Mrs. Houston a Multnomah  
County bailiff

Restaurant facility  
included in plans

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Jan. 19 and 20, Feb 19 and 22, March 9, July 19, 1984

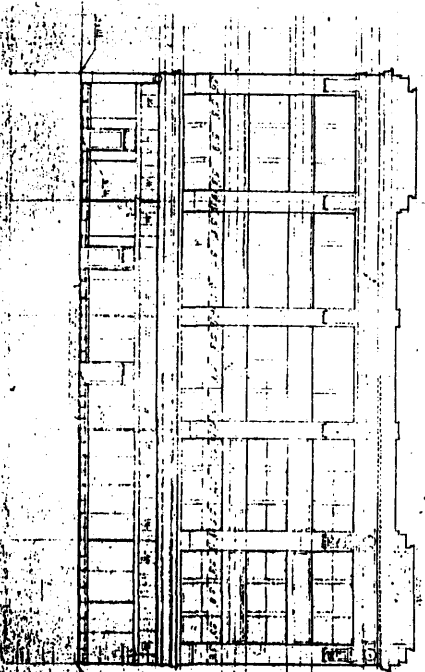
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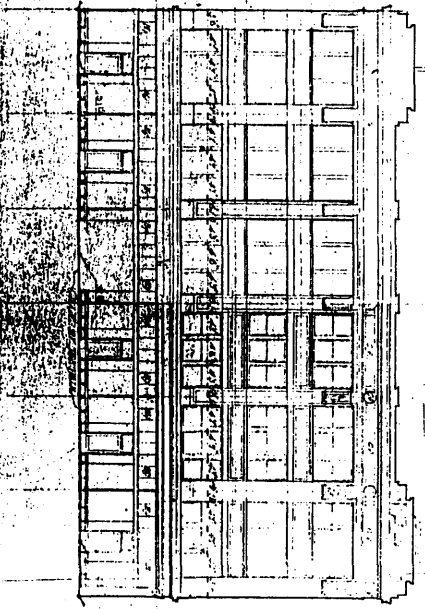
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FIFTH STREET ELEVATION



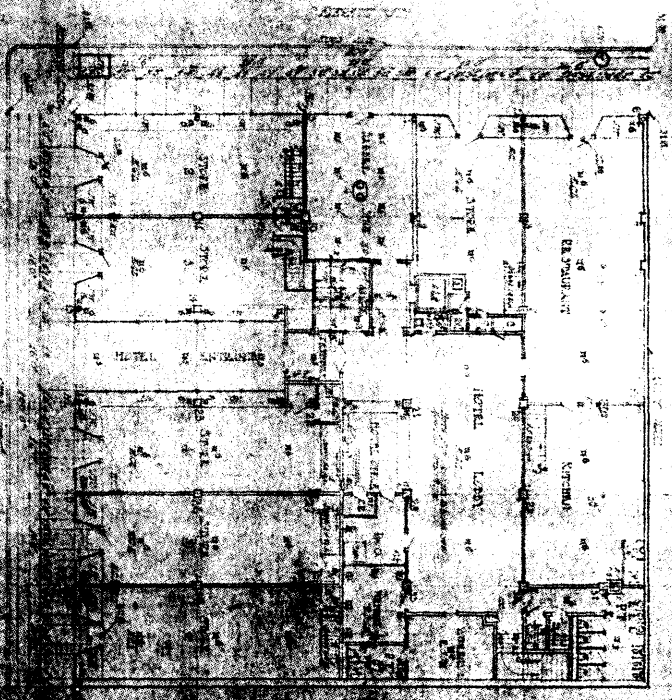
SIXTH STREET ELEVATION

EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS

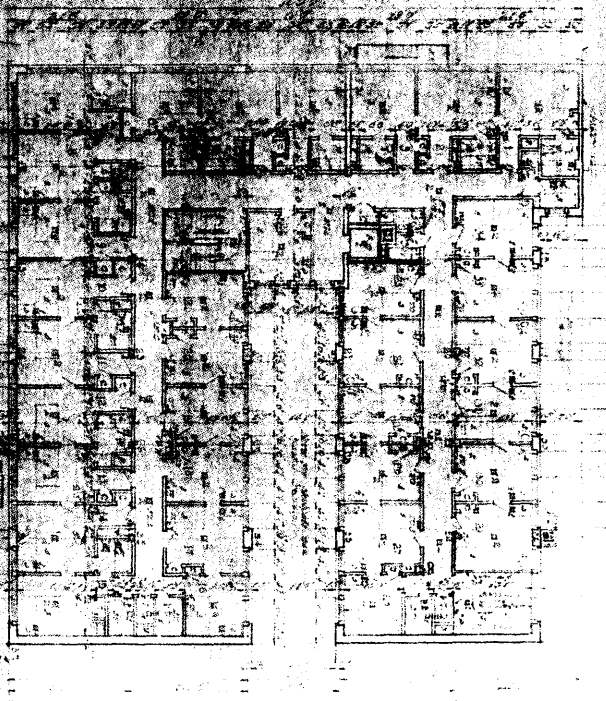
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

HOTEL BUILDING FOR  
MRS. E. F. GOODE 2.  
DESIGNED BY  
LANSBURY & COMPANY ARCHITECTS  
CORPORATION  
100 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y.





FIRST FLOOR PLAN



TYPICAL UPPER FLOOR PLAN

ST 2ND 3RD & 4TH FLOOR PLANS.

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