

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. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Sound 80
Other names/site number: Orfield Laboratories
Name of related multiple property listing: Prince, 1958-1987
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 2709 East 25th Street
City or town: Minneapolis State: Minnesota County: Hennepin
Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

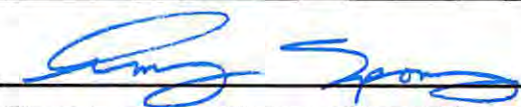
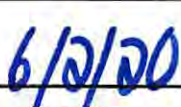
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

 Signature of certifying official/Title: Amy Spong, Deputy SHPO, MN Dept. of Admin	 Date
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	
In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

James Gabbert
Signature of the Keeper

8-3-2020
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

Structure

Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Recording Studio

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Sound Laboratory

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Modern

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Description

Sound 80¹, built 1970-1971 in the Seward neighborhood of Minneapolis, is located in a transition from industrial areas to the south and west to residential areas to the north and east. The minimalistic, one-story building is essentially rectangular in plan with two projecting bays angling out from the north façade at 45-degree angles. These bays are set off from the main rectangle to accommodate an entry vestibule on the east, which leads from a parking lot to a diamond-shaped interior lobby with a skylight. The concrete block structure has a partial basement under the western half of the building and a multi-level flat roof. Remnants of the original Granolux cladding remain in the vestibule and on portions of the eastern entryway and northeast wall of the eastern projecting bay. Recording studios and support spaces are located in the rectangular portion of the building and offices are located in the projecting bays. The interior of the building is also minimalistic to accommodate the performance and recording functions. The interior walls are constructed of acoustic materials that reduce noise transmission. The studios also feature acoustic ceiling tiles and sound locks with sound retardant doors, and plate glass windows separate the live rooms from associated control rooms.² Modest changes were made to the building in 1976 (during the period of significance) and in 1995, when an addition on the southeast corner filled in what was originally an L-shaped building (Figure 1). Despite the post period of significance changes (the 1995 addition and associated changes to the southern facade, the loss of much of the original Granolux cladding,

¹ While the business was incorporated as Sound 80, Inc. in 1969, it has historically been referred to as "Sound 80". Marketing materials from the time and most histories refer to the studio building with that moniker. After the studio closed in 1981, the name was purchased and is in use today for an audio and video recording and payroll services business located in downtown Minneapolis. This nomination applies only to the original recording studio and not the currently active business.

² A control room is where sound engineers operate recording and mixing equipment. A live room is a flexible space where instrumentalists and vocalists perform.

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

the removal of an interior wall in one of the smaller studios, and some minor changes to interior finish materials), the building has good integrity.

Narrative Description

Sound 80 is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of East 25th Street and 27th Avenue South in the Seward neighborhood of Minneapolis. It is situated on the edge of an industrialized area to the south and west, and residential areas to the north and east. Matthews Park is located to the north of the building across East 25th Street (see Location Maps in Continuation Sheets).

The building is set back approximately 20 ft. from the sidewalk along East 25th Street, and the setback area is planted with grass, shrubs and trees (Photo 1; Figure 2). The vegetation masks much of the building's façades; vines cover the north, east and west façades, and portions of the south façade (Photos 1-8). There are a few shrubs and trees in the north lawn and at the west side of the building; and juniper shrubs, a few deciduous trees, and arborvitae against the north and west façades (Photos 1-5). There is a bituminous parking lot and wood fence on the east and south sides of the building (Photos 5-8).

Exterior

Originally designed as an L-shaped building with bays projecting from the back of the "L" (the north façade of the building) (Figure 2), an addition was added to the southeast corner of the "L" in 1995, resulting in the current rectangular footprint (Figure 1). The foundation is made of concrete footings with concrete block walls. Only the western portion of the building has a basement (Figure 1).

The building's primary façade is the north façade along East 25th Street, which includes the two projecting bays (Photos 1-2, 4-5; Figures 1 and 2). The bays are set off from the main building to accommodate an entry vestibule on the east, accessed through a metal frame, plate glass door with a metal frame, plate glass sidelight (Photo 5). The sides of each bay have three sets of paired, fixed, metal casement windows, and the flat wall between the bays has a single, fixed metal casement window (Photos 1 and 2, 4 and 5; Figure 4).

The secondary façades are more simplistic in terms of design and materials. The western façade has a single, fixed metal casement window between the projecting bay and southern portion of the building; and the flat western facade has four single-pane, metal casement windows (Photo 3; Figure 4). The east and south façades are windowless (Photos 6-8). Originally, the southern wall of the southwest extension had three windows and the eastern wall had a door (Figure 4). The door is extant but now connects to the 1995 addition (Figure 1). The south façade includes a single bay garage door on the west and, immediately to the east of the garage door, a concrete staircase leading to the basement (including a pipe rail railing). A double metal door on the southeast corner leads to the 1995 addition (Photos 7 and 8)

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

The concrete block walls on all façades were originally covered with Granolux, a marble and granite aggregate in a plastic binder (Figures 5 and 6). The bond failed almost immediately and water gathered between it and the concrete block, causing the material to slough off over time. Today, the Granolux coating remains fully intact only inside the east vestibule (Photo 9), where it was protected from water, and on portions of the eastern entryway and northeast façade (Photo 10). Where the Granolux is gone, the concrete block is painted and exhibits a simple industrial aesthetic similar to that at the time the studio opened (Photos 1-8; Figure 6).

The flat roof has multiple levels, with the lowest covering the projecting bays (Photos 1, 4 and 5) and the westernmost third of the rectangular mass (originally the base of the “L”) and the highest covering the southeast corner (the eastern half of the 1995 addition) (Photos 4, 7 and 8). The roof is made of concrete precast panels covered with a rubber membrane. The entire roof is edged with a short parapet with metal coping, interrupted by metal scuppers and downspouts on both the original portions of the building and the addition (Photos 1-8; Figure 4)

Interior

The building’s interior is accessed on the east side through an exterior metal frame, plate glass door with a glass sidelight. The door leads into a vestibule with Granolux-coated walls and ceramic tile flooring. An interior metal frame, plate glass door leads into a central diamond-shaped lobby with a skylight (Photos 5, 9, and 11; Figures 1, 7-12). While renovation plans dated 1976 calls for the replacement of the doors (Figure 12 shows a door with plate glass side lights on both sides), based on their configuration (a door with a glass side light to the north) they are the original doors (Figures 7 and 10). A display of select recordings done at Sound 80 are on display on the western wall of the lobby (Photo 11).

Five offices and a copy room are located to the north of the lobby, labeled rooms 100 through 104 (from east to west) on the original architects plans (Figures 7 and 10).³ (Even though there were no physical changes to the rooms, they were renumbered on the 1995 plans, beginning with 101 on the east and including the copy room as 106, resulting in Rooms 101 through 106 [Figure 1]). Using the original room numbering, Rooms 100 and 101 are located in the eastern bay projection, and Rooms 102-104 and the copy room are located in the western bay projection and are accessed from a small hallway off the main lobby. Rooms 100, 102, and 103 are rectangular spaces; and 101, 104 and the copy room are square-shaped rooms. All rooms have carpeted floors, concrete block walls (covered with either vinyl or painted sheet rock), and acoustic ceiling tiles (Figures 7 and 10). Room 101, which served as the office for Sound 80 co-founder and president Herb Pilhofer, is the largest of the rooms. It is accessed from a small hall

³ Douglas A Baird, Minneapolis-based architect, and Robert Nelson, a nationally acclaimed acoustical architect, were hired to develop plans for Sound 80. The plan sheets show a more elaborate landscaping plan, a western vestibule, two studios in the space that ended up as Studio 3 (labeled Studios 3 and 5 on the Baird plans), recessed ribbon windows, and no southwestern extension. Pilhofer and Jung gave Baird’s plans to a contractor, ALM Construction and Engineering, who came up with a simpler version of the building and included the southwest extensions, which served as a mastering (post production) suite. The contractor’s plans reference several of the Baird sheets, which are included as figures in the continuation sheets. Note that the ALM plans are the “as built” plans.

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

off the north end of the lobby with a door to the east; and features a sunken area in the northern half of the room (Photo 12). Room 101 is the only one with wood paneling (installed on the northern and northwestern walls during the 1976 renovations; new vinyl coverings were installed at the same time on the southern and southeastern walls; Figure 12), and only the windows in room 101 and the hall leading to it have interior sliding metal louvers (Photos 10 and 12).

A carpeted hallway, with concrete block walls covered by painted sheet rock and an acoustical lay-in tile ceiling, leads to four of the studios off the south end of the lobby (Photo 13; Figures 1, 7, 10 and 12). The hallway is divided from the lobby by original paired, glass and aluminum doors (Figures 7 and 12). Studios 1 and 2 were the main studios for music recordings; Studio 3 for film mixing and editing; and Studio 4 for voice-over recordings and editing. Studio 5 was located in the basement and supported the post-recording production of albums.⁴ Large Arabic numbers painted on the hallway walls outside the four first floor studios with the corresponding studio number (Figures 13 and 14) were covered during renovations in 1976 when the hallway walls were covered with vinyl wall coverings (no longer extant) (Photo 13; Figure 12).

Studio 1 is accessed to the southeast off the hallway through a sound lock.⁵ Today, the live room is used as an auditorium, and the control room is an office. A utility space is located immediately to the west of Studio 1 at the southern end of the hallway; the room was labeled "Production" on the 1970 plan set (Figure 7). A door was cut into the concrete block wall at the southeast corner of the utility room to provide a door to the 1995 addition, which houses an anechoic chamber and reverberation chamber.⁶ Diagonally across the hallway from Studios 1 and the utility room to the northwest is Studio 2, also accessed through a sound lock. The live room is currently used as an acoustic lab, and the control room as an office (Figures 1 and 7).

The hallway turns to the west, and Studio 3 is located to the south. The room is accessed on the western end through a door (a door was also originally located at the east end of the room but was removed and filled in at an unknown time; Photo 13, Figures 1, 7, 10, 12 and 13). Today the space is used as an acoustic simulation laboratory (where controllable sound fields are created to test acoustical products).

⁴ None of the plan sets label any space in the building as "Studio 5" (Figures 7 and 12). Based on two advertisements from the early 1970s, however, the mastering lab in the basement was considered the fifth studio. A 1971 advertisement in Billboard Magazine stated there were "Five studios – one just for film tracks. Two 16 track music studios. Mastering lab with the new Neumann VMS-70 lathe", indicating that the room that housed the lathe was considered the fifth studio (Studio 4's voice-over focus was not highlighted; Figure 13). A 1973 advertisement, which listed the capabilities of each studio, stated: "Studio 5. In the Neumann stereo MASTERING studio, tape-to-tape transfers are handled through a specially designed console (Anderson 2020) ". A Neumann lathe is a machine that cuts the ceramic or lacquer disk from which vinyl pressings were made. Sound 80 was the first studio in the United States to install a Neumaan VMS-70 computer controlled lathe (Sutherland June 3 1972: 8).

⁵ An entranceway with highly absorptive walls and ceilings and a carpeted floor that reduces noise entering the studio from the hallway.

⁶An anechoic (meaning non-reflective, non-echoing or echo-free) chamber is a room designed to completely absorb reflections of sound. A reverberation chamber is the opposite, diffusing or reflecting sounds.

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

Continuing west down the hallway, on the north side is an L-shaped spaced originally used for storage, and next to it, Studio 4 extends to the north. The space includes a sound lock and the live room, which is today used as a conference room. At the far western end of the main hallway is a storage space (Figures 1 and 7).

On the south side of the main hallway from east to west are a small hallway heading south, a women's bathroom, a utility space, a men's bathroom, and a kitchen. The small hallway, located between Studio 3 and the women's bathroom, extends to the south through an interior glass doorway, which leads to a glass door to the east (originally an exterior door which now leads to a hallway between the original building and the 1995 addition), a hallway to the south leading to offices in the southwestern corner of the building, and an interior staircase to the west leading to a partial basement. At the base of the east-west oriented staircase is a landing. To the south and east is a large L-shaped storage room, and to the north is a hallway. Two bathrooms are located on the east side of the hallway. The hallway turns to the east leading to a door on the north and a door on the east. The eastern door leads to a series of three small offices, two of which are accessed via a small hallway. The door to the north leads to a sunken room which housed a Neumann lathe (which cut lacquer or ceramic disks from which vinyl recording pressings were made) used during Sound 80's operation; the room currently serves as a rehearsal space (Figure 1).

The studios, which are the most significant interior spaces to convey the building's significance, are described individually below.

Studio 1

Studio 1 is the largest of the Sound 80 studio spaces (Figures 1, 7-12). The rectangular-shaped room has a sound lock (Photos 14 and 15), control room (Photos 14-16), live room (Photos 14-16), and is the only studio with an isolation booth (used for isolating a vocalist or instrumentalist; Photos 14 and 16).⁷ The studio is accessed from the hallway to the southeast through a sound retardant metal door that opens to a carpeted sound lock (Photos 14 and 15). The door to the control room is to the southeast and the door to the live room is to the northeast (both doors are sound retardant, concrete-filled, wood doors) (Photo 15). The control room is located in the southwest corner of the studio and the isolation booth is located on the other side of the live room (to the northeast), providing the best sightlines between the musicians and engineers (Photos 14-16; Figures 1, 7, 13-18).

The floors in the live room and isolation booth are hardwood parquet (replaced in-kind in the 1990s). The control room floor has two levels to further maximize sightlines between musicians and engineers in the large studio space. Both floor levels in the control room are carpeted,

⁷ A photograph from the time of construction (Figure 15) shows two isolation booths located to the east of the control room; they are not extant. Neither the 1970 nor the 1976 renovation plans show booths in this area (Figures 7 and 12) and they appear to have been removed by 1974, based on studio session musicians and engineer's recollection of the live room set up for a session on Bob Dylan's album, *Blood on The Tracks* (Figure 17).

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

though the elevated portion was originally hardwood parquet (Photos 14-16; Figures 7, 10 and 13). The interior walls are concrete block covered in sheet rock and painted. The southern and southeastern walls are covered in red fabric and portable large acoustic fabric panels, while the eastern, northern and western walls have smaller fixed fabric acoustic panels (Photos 15 and 16). The studio walls had a distinctive paint scheme of wide stripes in blue, brown, red, gray and gold, which were painted over in the 1990s (Figures 13-18). The control room's large curving window, made of double ¼-inch plate glass, allows for a full panoramic view of the live room, allowing for maximum flexibility in how the musicians could be arranged in the space (Photos 14-16; Figures 13-18). The isolation booth originally had a ¼-inch plate glass window (Figure 18). The window was removed in the 1990s, and a projection screen was installed (Photos 14 and 16). The studio has numerous black pendant lights throughout the live room. The ceiling is covered with original acoustic asbestos tiles (Photos 14-16; Figure 13-18).

The interior spaces and the majority of materials in Studio 1 are intact from the period of significance, including the sound lock, sound retardant doors, plate glass window between the control and live rooms, two DI (direct input) boxes,⁸ acoustical asbestos ceiling tiles, acoustic wall coverings and panels, portable acoustic panels, and lighting.

Studio 2

Studio 2 is the second largest of the Sound 80 studios (Photos 17 and 18; Figures 7-12). The L-shaped room has a sound lock, control room, and live room. The studio is accessed off the hallway to the northwest through a metal sound retardant metal door into the sound lock. The door to the control room is located to the west, and the door to the live room is to the north (both doors are sound retardant, concrete-filled, wood doors). The control room is located in the southwest corner of the studio. An L-shaped window made of double ¼ inch plate glass is extant between the control room and live room.

The flooring is concrete subfloor (the original wood parquet floors were removed in the 1990s due to water damage). Red fabric covers the walls on the northern half of the studio, and acoustic fabric panels are present on the eastern walls (Photos 17 and 18; Figures 12, 16 and 19). The western wall of the live and control rooms is painted sheet rock in front of concrete block (Photo 18). Originally there were wood grille panels attached to the walls (Figure 16). The ceiling is composed of acoustic asbestos tiles (Photos 17 and 18; Figures 7-10). The lighting includes multiple black pendant ceiling lights and three wall-mounted sconces above the control room window (Photos 17 and 18; Figure 18).

The majority of interior spaces and materials in Studio 2 are intact from the period of significance, including the plate glass window between the control and live rooms, the sound lock, sound retardant doors, acoustic asbestos ceiling tiles, lighting, DI input (Photo 19), red wall

⁸A DI box connects studio equipment (microphones, instruments, etc.) via cables to the mixing console in the control room.

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

fabric and acoustic wall panels. The hardwood parquet veneer floors were removed in the 1990s due to buckling, leaving the concrete subfloor exposed (Photos 17 and 18), and the wood wall grilles as seen in Figure 16 are not extant (Figure 16).

Studio 3

Studio 3 is a rectangular room located on the south side of the main hallway and to the west of the utility room (Figure 1). The room is accessed through the metal door with light into the western side of the room. It is unclear when the door was added: it is not shown on the 1970 plans or the 1976 renovation plans, but it is sketched on the 1970 room finishing schedule (Figure 8). The original plans (Figure 7), 1976 renovation plans (Figure 12), and a photograph from a 1971 advertisement (Figure 13) show a door from the hallway on the eastern end of the room; it is not extant today and the opening has been filled in with sheet rock.

The room combines the original control room (located on the eastern side of the room) and live room (located on the western side of the room), which were previously separated by a wall and door (Figures 1, 7, 8 and 12). The flooring is carpeting, which replaced the hardwood parquet floors in the control room and the vinyl flooring in the live room. The walls and ceiling are covered with foam acoustic wedge panels to support its current use as a simulation room (Photo 20). While the interior spaces and materials for Studio 3 have compromised integrity from the period of significance, the exterior shape and dimensions of the studio's original footprint are intact.

Studio 4

Studio 4 is a small, rectangular space accessed off the main hallway to the north through a sound retardant, metal door into a sound lock. The studio is to the west, access through a sound retardant, concrete-filled, wood door. To the north is a small room labeled "Projection Room" on the 1995 plan (Figure 1; Photo 21). The room is not shown on the 1970 or 1976 plans (Figures 7 and 12), has a different door frame than all other doors in the building, and has an elevated floor; therefore, it was likely added after the period of significance. The floors in the sound lock and studio are carpeted (replaced in-kind). A projection screen is located on the eastern wall, and the coved ceiling has recessed lighting and an acoustical lay-in tile ceiling. The interior space in Studio 4 is intact from the period of significance; the addition of the projection room does not affect the configuration of the original studio.

Studio 5/ Basement Sunken Room

The sunken room is accessed through a sound retardant door and down a short staircase, and features a floor approximately 3 ft. below the depth of the rest of the basement. The rectangular-shaped room has a concrete floor, concrete-block walls and acoustic ceiling tiles. It also contains a concrete inertia block (Figure 1; Photo 22). The sunken foundation and inertia block protected the building from the vibrations created by the powerful Neumann lathe machine. Four electrical panels, including the original wiring, used to operate the machine are extant in the

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

concrete floor. The interior spaces and materials in the basement sunken room are intact from the period of significance.

Integrity

Changes to Sound 80 since the end of the period of significance (1971-1981) include:

- Painting over the paint designs on walls in Studio 1;
- Loss of wood parquet floors in Studio 2;
- Replacement of window in the isolation booth of Studio 1 with a projection screen, and the installation of a projection screen in the eastern wall of Studio 4;
- Loss of wood wall grilles in Studio 2;
- Addition in 1995 in the southeast corner of the building, including the cutting of a door in the concrete block wall in the southwest corner of the utility room; and
- Removal of wall and door between the live and control rooms in Studio 3, change of access to the studio, and installation of acoustical material on the walls and ceiling.

Even considering these changes, Sound 80 exhibits good exterior and interior integrity. The building overall maintains a high degree of all seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The building remains in its original location. The integrity of the immediate setting, illustrated by the transition from industrial to residential neighborhoods and the presence of Matthews Park immediately across the street, contributes to the building's integrity of feeling and association. Because the building is being nominated under Criterion A and B, these four aspects of integrity are especially important. The building also retains good integrity of design, materials, and workmanship to understand the building's original function as a recording studio. The overall exterior form of the building has been modestly changed by a small addition to the rear of the property. Despite the failure of the original exterior cladding material exposing the concrete block substrate and the addition to the rear of the building, the overall appearance of the primary exterior facades remains unchanged. Although some of the decorative painted surfaces have been covered and flooring has been replaced, the interior essentially retains its configuration and simplified architectural details from the period of significance. The most notable change is to the interior of Studio 3, but the original dimensions of the exterior walls of the studio remain intact. The most significant studios (1 and 2) are recognizable from the period of significance and maintain good integrity.

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
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.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Performing Arts: Music

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

Period of Significance

1971-1981

Significant Dates

1971 (Opening of Sound 80 building)

1976 (Building renovations)

1977 (Prince records demo tapes, and begins work on his debut album, *For You*)

1978 (Work with 3M on multitracking digital recording equipment)

1981 (Last recording in Sound 80; closing of building)

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Prince

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Baird, Douglas A./ ALM Construction and Engineering

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

During the 1970s and early 1980s, Sound 80 was widely recognized as the top recording location in the Twin Cities, and amongst the best recording studios in the nation. Using the latest in acoustic engineering to design the studio spaces; investing in top recording and musical equipment; and employing technical experts in the areas of composition, recording and editing, the studio quickly gained a local and national reputation for excellence in recording. The state-of-the-art facility drew internationally famous artists, such as Bob Dylan (portions of *Blood on the Tracks*, 1975⁹) and Cat Stevens (portions of *Izitso*, 1977), along with a diverse array of local musicians ranging from folk artist Leo Kottke (multiple recordings) to the R&B/funk bands The Lewis Connection (*The Lewis Connection* [sic], 1979) and 94 East (the singles “10:15” and “Fortune Teller”, 1977) to the punk rock bands The Suicide Commandoes (*The Legendary KQRS Concert*, 1976; and *Make A Record*, 1977) and The Flamin’ Oh’s (*Oh!*, 1981) to the disco/funk group, Lipps, Inc. (*Mouth to Mouth*), which included a single that would become the first Number One hit recorded in Minneapolis, “Funkytown” (1979) (Kenney and Saylor 2012;

⁹ All cited dates are release dates, not recording dates.

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

Pilhofer 2018, 2019). A young Minneapolis musician, Prince Rogers Nelson, spent time at the studio in 1977, honing his studio engineering expertise while writing, engineering, producing and playing all the instruments and singing on his demo tapes that landed him a major recording contract with Warner Bros. Recording Company (Warner Bros.) in June 1977 just after his nineteenth birthday. He also provided backing vocals and instrumentals on The Lewis Connection's song "Got To Be Something Here" and both 94 East singles listed above. Performing only under his first name as a Warner Bros. recording artist, Prince returned to the studio in September of 1977 to begin recording his debut album, *For You* (Kenney and Saylor 2013: 93-95; Prince 2019: 125, 260; Zschomler 2020). The studio was also heavily involved in the advancement of movie sound systems with Paramount Pictures, as well as digital recording through its partnership with 3M. In June 1978, The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra recorded *Appalachian Spring* by Aaron Copeland and *Three Places in New England* by Charles Ives using 3M's prototype multitrack digital recording system. The following year, the album became the first digital recording to win a Grammy award. 3M's 32-track Digital Audio Master System was released for use in late 1978 to only four studios nationwide, including Sound 80. Within a few short years, multitrack digital recording became the industry standard (Fine 2008: 9-11; Kenney and Saylor 2013: 96-98; Penschansky et al. 1978: 1, 92). The period of significance for the building is 1971 through 1981. These years span the time of active recording at the studio, and covers significant events as documented in the narrative statement of significance below, including key recordings by Prince in 1977 and other artists throughout the period.

Sound 80 is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A under Performing Arts: Music, with statewide significance for the property's association with the Minnesota music scene from 1971 through 1981 (dates of operation in the building; the business of Sound 80, Inc. operated from 1969-1981). The National Register of Historic Places Evaluation Criteria therefore requires the application of Criteria Consideration G, which requires properties achieving significance within the last 50 years to have exceptional significance. The historic context provided herein demonstrates the studio's national reputation, influence on the Minneapolis and national music scene of the 1970s through the recording of some of the most important and influential acts of the time, and significant contributions to the engineering arts through the studio's involvement in the advancements in digital and sound recording. Sound 80 not only helped put the Minneapolis music scene on the map, it was a key incubator for the new sonic landscape of the 1980s for which the city would become famous—the Minneapolis Sound and new wave/punk rock. Therefore, Sound 80 meets the requirements of Criteria Consideration G.

Sound 80 is also being nominated to the National Register for statewide significance under Criterion B as a Writing, Practice, and Rehearsal Location and a Recording Location for its association with Prince Rogers Nelson, a nomination supported by the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) *Prince, 1958-1987*. As noted on page 52 of the MPDF: "Recording Locations will be considered eligible for listing on the National Register under Criterion B if they have a direct association with Prince prior to and including 1987 and are well-

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

documented as to their use as a recording location for songs or albums important to the development of the Minneapolis Sound, for critically and/or commercially significant songs or albums, or for Prince's mastery of studio engineering techniques." The MPDF also states "Because Prince typically wrote the songs as an integral part of the recording process, by default Recording Locations also include the locations where the songs were written." Sound 80 meets this registration requirement as the key location where Prince mastered studio engineering techniques which allowed him to produce his first album (partially recorded at Sound 80) and to have complete control over creating what would become a new musical genre. Sound 80 is the only extant recording studio in Minnesota for any of Prince's professional recordings as a Warner Bros. artist covered in the time period of the multiple property listing. Without Prince's time at Sound 80 mastering studio engineering and becoming proficient with LinnDrum machines (electronic drum machines) and Polymoog synthesizers (polyphonic, two-handed synthesizers), which became a key component of his sound aesthetic, Prince would not have been able to have complete control over his sound at such a young age, allowing him to create "the Minneapolis Sound." Prince was the primary architect of the Minneapolis Sound, a blending of rhythm and blues (R&B), funk, rock and new wave, which dominated the airwaves throughout the 1980s, and continues to influence artists to this day. Therefore, Sound 80 meets the *Prince, 1958-1987* MPDF registration requirements as a Recording Location, as well as a Writing, Practice, and Rehearsal Location. The historic context provided in the multiple property listing demonstrates that Prince's international fame and influence on the Minneapolis and national music scene cannot be understated. Prior to and especially since the time of his passing, numerous books, articles, and documentaries have been released evaluating his importance and influence in music and popular culture. Exhibits on his legacy have been created in Minnesota, Melbourne, and Amsterdam, and scholarly conferences have been held in England, New York, Georgia, and Minnesota. These publications and conferences confirm Prince's exceptional importance due to his musical contributions and through the creation of an entirely new musical genre (Zschomler 2020). Therefore, Sound 80 meets the requirements of Criteria Consideration G for its association with Prince.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

In the mid-twentieth century, Minneapolis was not known for its music scene. Several regional hits were recorded in the city, and two locally recorded songs cracked the national Top 100 Charts (The Trashman's "Surfin' Bird," 1964; and The Castaway's "Liar, Liar." 1965), but the nation did not look to Minneapolis for the next best thing in music. From the 1960s through the 1980s, however, that started to change as new sounds emerged that would soon put Minneapolis on the music map.

In the 1960s and 1970s, folk artists such as Bob Dylan, Spider John Koerner, and Leo Kottke were honing their musical skills in the coffee houses and bars in the Cedar-Riverside area.

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

Funk, rhythm and blues, and rock were being combined by artists such as Sonny Thompson and Pepe Willie in Northside institutions like The Way and the Phyllis Wheatley community centers; and young artists including Prince Rogers Nelson, James “Jimmy Jam” Harris, and Terry Lewis were taking the roots of the Minneapolis Sound into Battle of the Band concerts throughout the city (Roise et al. 2017; Zschomler 2020). Live venues like Kelly’s Pub and Jay’s Long Horn Bar brought in national punk and rock acts that inspired “three young contrarians from Minneapolis’s western suburbs,” whose band, The Suicide Commandos, became the godfathers to the city’s successful alternative rock groups of the 1980s and 1990s like The Suburbs, The Replacements, and Soul Asylum (Kenney and Saylor 2012: 90). While these live venues were a key ingredient to the creation of the City’s emerging music scene, “a surprising amount of it developed in the rarified, almost corporate surroundings of a South Minneapolis recording studio called Sound 80. During its 12 years of operation,¹⁰ Sound 80 turned into a crossroads of sorts: a place where many of the Twin Cities’ best musicians came in search of vinyl-pressed glory (Kenney and Saylor 2012: 78).”

In the early 1960s, the record label and distribution company Soma and the studio Kay Bank were the top in the Cities, though the distinction was relative.

Kay Bank had no real competition, and serious musicians were well aware of its inadequacies. Its building, the old Garrick Theater on Nicollet Avenue, a movie house built in 1914, was showing its age by the late 1960s. (The sound of flushing toilets on both sides of the old movie screen was a regular annoyance.) Its three-track recording equipment was stuffed with vacuum tubes that missed, sputtered, and hummed at precisely the wrong times (Kenney and Saylor 2012: 80).

While Kay Bank’s physical space and equipment was lacking, it did draw some of the top music and recording professionals in the area. German-born composer-arranger-musician Herb Pilhofer had an office in the building, and over time became the studio’s resident arranger, preparing advertising scores for numerous corporate clients. Tom Jung was the studio’s sound engineer, who oversaw the recording of “Surfin’ Bird” at Kay Bank in 1963. Gary Erickson and Scott Rivard were “technical wizards with a knack for building sound equipment from scratch (Kenney and Saylor 2013: 81).” These top professionals grew increasingly frustrated with the less-than-professional standards at Kay Bank. Pilhofer in particular wanted to move to the next level.

By the late 1960s, Pilhofer was growing restless. He itched to move beyond what he called the “purist” or “set up the band, put up a microphone, and record the music” approach to recording that Kay Bank and its successor studio, Universal Audio, seemed content to offer. He wanted to experiment with sounds, to capture and combine them in new ways. To do

¹⁰ Sound 80, Inc. was in business from 1969-1981; the studio operated from 1971 through 1981. The business name was purchased and the new owner established an office in downtown Minneapolis.

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

that, he needed a recording studio that would allow him to manipulate audio in the same way that darkrooms helped photographers manipulate images (Kenney and Slayer 2012: 80).

Frustrated by the unwillingness of Kay Bank's owner to upgrade to better equipment, Pilhofer pitched the idea to Jung about starting their own studio. Jung insisted that he be able to hire the technical experts he wanted to staff the studio. Pilhofer agreed, saying his only criteria was: "to build the best damn recording studio in the world, and do it in Minneapolis (Kenney and Saylor 2013:81-82)."

Beginning in 1969, the Kay Bank ex-pats operated out of Pilhofer's living and dining rooms for several months, and invested in "top-of-the-line mixers, microphones, tape machines, and other basic components," while Rivard and Erickson built a console from scratch "using whatever resistors, capacitors, and transformers they could get their hands on." Jung recounted:

"I can remember doing [a session with] four French horns in the dining room and ten or twelve strings in the living room, Jung recalled. We had a Scully eight-track recorder. We had an echo chamber behind the couch. It was just amazing. And we were having more damn fun. And we were getting results. We were up four floors [in quality] from what we [were] getting out of the studio at Kay Bank because we just had better gear (Kenney and Saylor 2012:82-83)."

Even with their improved results, the group knew it wasn't sustainable to operate out of Pilhofer's house, nor did it offer ideal acoustics. After a brief stint at the Edina-based Empire Photosound, Inc. sound stage (extant, 4444 West 76th Street), the founders of the nascent company made the bold decision to build a new, state-of-the-art facility. Pilhofer says they all put on their best clothes and approached the bank and the City of Minneapolis with their idea. Pilhofer's enthusiasm combined with the team's technical skills were enough to secure them the necessary loan and to get a reasonable offer from the City for nine vacant lots in the Seward neighborhood at the corner of East 25th Street and 27th Avenue South (Pilhofer 2018). The new business wanted a catchy name. Sound 80 was suggested to Pilhofer by his advertising friend Brad Morrison, who also named Hormel's Cure 81 ham. "The number didn't mean a thing", Pilhofer later explained. "Eighty-one was already taken [by Hormel]. Eighty just sounded right and it looked good (Kenney and Saylor 2012: 83)".

In 1969, Sound 80, Inc. hired Minneapolis-based architect Douglas A. Baird and nationally renowned acoustical engineer Robert Hansen from New York City to design their dream studio (Pilhofer 2018). Plans for "Studio for Sound 80 Realty Co." were prepared by Baird and Hanson (Commission Number 207; November 14, 1969), with Meyer, Borgman & Johnson as structural engineers, Mechanical Design as the mechanical and electrical engineers, and Charles Wood Associates as landscape architects (Baird 1969). The building, however, was not built exactly to the Baird and Hanson plans. Instead, Pilhofer gave the plans to ALM Construction &

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

Engineering, a Minneapolis-based construction company, which created a pared-down, and likely cheaper, building (ALM plans 1970; Figures 2, 4, 7, and 8). While details like a western entryway, a dramatic landscaping plan with a bosque of 27 Skyline honey locust trees on the north lawn (Figure 9), and recessed ribbon windows were dropped, many of the acoustical elements were retained. The ALM plans reference the Baird and Hanson plans for acoustical finishing details (Figures 7-10). The building was designed based on the latest scientific standards for acoustics. The concrete block walls, sound locks with sound retardant doors, and acoustical ceiling tiles deadened outside sounds, meaning that the two main music recording studios (Studios 1 and 2), which were across the hall from each other, could have concurrent recording sessions with no sound cross contamination.

The foundation for building was permitted on July 6, 1970 by ALM Construction for \$5,000, and the superstructure on July 13 at a cost of \$150,000. The staff was apparently excited to record in the new building—a 1970 photo shows an impromptu recording session set up in the concrete block foundations while the building was still under construction (Figure 3). The total construction cost for permitted work was approximately \$230,000, and the studio opened in early 1971 (City of Minneapolis Inspector of Buildings Permit 0101 0390 0127 0017).

The Sound 80 team's (Figure 20) dream of building "the best damn studio" had come to fruition, and they let the world know about it through a full page advertisement in the international music trade publication, Billboard Magazine (November 6, 1971 edition, page RN-42; Figure 13). Along with images of staff and musicians working in Studios 1, 2, and 3, the advertisement stated:

MINNEAPOLIS IS 1.2 MILES FROM ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S SEVEN GREAT RECORDING STUDIOS

Until this year, Minneapolis wasn't a name that came up very often when producers and musicians talk about making records. But that's changing. Fast. A group of bright, young recording engineers and musicians who like the style of life in the area set out to build, from the ground up, one of the few places in the country designed exclusively for the art of recorded sound.

They named it Sound 80. Five studios – one just for film tracks. Two 16 track music studios. Mastering lab with the new Neumann VMS-70 lathe.¹¹ ARP synthesizers. Quad mix facilities. But mostly it's people. Producers, mixers, technicians, composers, arrangers – people who can give you the sounds and services you find in maybe three or four other recording centers.

¹¹ The two 16 track music studios were Studios 1 and 2; the film track studio was Studio 3, and the mastering lab is the fifth studio referenced. Studio 4, which was primarily used for voiceover work, is not highlighted in this advertisement.

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

If you're within 1,000 miles of Minneapolis, it's worth checking out Sound 80. Chances are you'd have to go a lot further to get anything better.

When RCA closed their Chicago studio in 1972, the Sound 80 team was quick to remind the region and beyond, through an announcement in Billboard Magazine's Sound Tracks section, that their studio could fulfill any mastering needs.

Jung notes that the Sound 80 Record Mastering Center is designed around the first Neumaan VMS-70 computer controlled lathe ever installed in this country (in January, '70).¹² It's tied into a transfer console of Sound 80's own design and manufacture, offering two complete EQ channels on preview and program, eight equalizers, EMT or AKG reverb, preview and program limiting, Dolby and Berwin noise reduction (Sutherland June 3, 1972: 8).

The studio's most secure income stream came from Pilhofer's corporate clients, such as 3M, General Mills, Exxon, American Motors, and Northwest Orient Airlines, for whom he composed music for advertisements.¹³ The Sound 80 team was also hired in 1973 to produce tourism commercials for the State of Minnesota, with Pilhofer composing the music (Sutherland 1973: 16). A steady stream of school choir and band recordings, as well as voice over recordings in the smaller studios, provided a constant income base that allowed the team to take on more creative side projects (Kenney and Saylor 2012: 85).

A review of Billboard magazines from the 1970s shows that Sound 80 was considered on par with high-end studios in Los Angeles and New York City. Pilhofer, Jung, fellow sound engineer Paul Martinson, and producer Tom Voegeli were frequently called out in Billboard's articles or in its Studio Track section, which reported on key recordings occurring throughout the nation. The Studio Track section of the August 3, 1974 magazine, for example, reported on the recording of Fleetwood Mac's self-titled 1975 album at Angel City Sound and Randy Newman's work at Burbank Studios, both in Los Angeles. The same article provided the following summary of activities at Sound 80.

At Sound 80, Inc., in Minneapolis, Leo Kottke has started his next LP for Capitol, with Paul Martinson working the control boards. The Band of Thieves are cutting a soul oriented set with Herb Pilhofer doing some sweetening and Tom Jung doing the engineering (Kirsch 1974: 18).

¹² While the Billboard article includes an installation date of January 1970, since construction on the building did not begin until June 1970, the correct installation date for the Neumann lathe was January 1971.

¹³ The studio housed Northwest Orient's world-famous gong, used in many of their commercials at the time (Pilhofer 2018).

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

No other Twin Cities-based studios from the era are referenced in articles in the magazine, except one passing mention in 1977 of Cookhouse Studios beginning a newsletter (McCullaugh 1977: 48).^{14, 15}

Through word of mouth and the frequent references to the studio in Billboard, Sound 80 saw more prominent recording artists using their space (see Prince section below and Other Key Recording section further below for details on the various artists who recorded at Sound 80).¹⁶ Their reputation also secured them a place in the development of digital recording. The studio was the first to record on 3M's prototype digital multi-track recording system, and using that system, to create the first ever digitally recorded album to win a Grammy Award from the Recording Academy. Sound 80 was also one of only four studios nationwide to receive the final 3M 32-track digital system.

Prince

See *"Prince, 1958-1987" Multiple Property Documentation Form for full historical context on Prince.*

Prince Rogers Nelson, who performed under only his first name or, for a seven-year period between 1993 and 2000, under his Love Symbol (a symbol developed by him and Sotera Tschetter with no pronunciation), was a local Minneapolis musical prodigy. He mastered the piano by age eight, song writing a few years later, taught himself the guitar and formed a band in his early teenage years, and began learning studio recording techniques in 1976 at Moon Sound Studio at 4937 28th Avenue South near Lake Nokomis. Even with Prince's immense talent, Moon was unable to land him a recording contract. Moon contacted Owen Husney, a music and advertising industry executive in Minneapolis, who became his first manager (Thorne 2016: 31–32). Husney set up time for Prince to record demo tapes at Sound 80, where Husney's former bandmate, David Rivken (aka David Z), was a sound engineer (Nielsen 1999). In late 1976, Husney hired photographer Robert Whitman to do photo shoots of the young artist at Sound 80 (Figure 23), in new Moon Sound's studio at 2828 Dupont Avenue South, and famously in front of the Schmidt music mural in Minneapolis (Whitman 2017).

¹⁴ Cookhouse Studios was located in the same building as Kay Bank Studio and Audio Creation Studio, at 2541 Nicollet Avenue South in Minneapolis (extant).

¹⁵ Other studios are listed as operating in the state, but their services, equipment capability and staff did not garner enough attention or interest to be highlighted in an article or in the Studio Track section as was Sound 80.

¹⁶ Many sources state that one of Minneapolis's pioneering punk rock bands, The Suburbs, also recorded at Sound 80. However, according to their producer Paul Stark: "Technically, The Suburbs never recorded at Sound 80. The double album *Credit in Heaven* was recorded in various locations around Minneapolis with the mobile recording unit that I owned along with my cousin, Tom Mudge (who did work at Sound 80). When all the recording was done I took the tapes and rented 'after hours' the rear room at Sound 80 to mix the album (likely Studio 4). I spent two weeks there, basically mixing one song per evening, starting each day after 5:00 PM and ending around midnight. The band, or mostly, one or two members, were usually hanging around with me helping. They all heard the mixes in progress and would make their suggestions on what they would like changed/ emphasized, often running out to our cars to hear how they sounded on the car stereos. I remember Herb [Pilhofer] coming in one evening to check out what was going on in his 'electronic studio' and just shaking his head ...have no idea if he was pleased or offended by the music.... (Stark 2018)."

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

Between approximately December 1976 and April 1977, Prince worked at Sound 80 to record his demo tapes with no backup band (Nilsen 1999: 260).¹⁷ He sang all of the parts and played all the instruments himself. Rivkin, who worked with Prince at Sound 80, explained the process:

We'd have everything set up, drums in one corner, piano in the next, guitar in the next. He'd play the drum part on his cassette machine and he'd sit down and play the drums. Then when it came time to play the bass, he had a separate part that he hummed into the machine, played the bass part in his ear, and he played the bass part. He did the same thing to all of the horns¹⁸, synths, guitars – he had them all. He hummed them into the cassette machine. It was kind of interesting because he played everything, so he needed to arrange it in his head ahead of time, have the parts laid down on this little cassette machine, so he could remember what they were (Kenney and Saylor 2013:93).

Working with the state-of-the-art equipment at the premier Minneapolis studio also gave the young artist the opportunity to “get hip to Polymoogs”, which he used as the main keyboard on several songs on his first album and became a key sonic element in “the Minneapolis Sound,” which he developed and which dominated the airwaves during the 1980s (Carr 1978).

As Prince was leaving Sound 80 after a long day of recording, one of his mentors, Pepe Willie, was coming in with his band 94 East to record. Prince asked if he could sit in on the session, to which Willie readily agreed. Willie said, “He never even went home after his session, he just hung out with us in the studio and played guitar on ‘10.15’ and ‘Fortune Teller.’” Prince also contributed background vocals and guitar on another Sound 80 recording from the time, “Got to be Something Here,” by the Lewis Connection with Sonny Thompson. Thompson was a huge musical influence on Prince (they met at the Northside institution, The Way Community Center, where Thompson led the house band and Prince went to jam with the older musician) and he would later join Prince’s New Power Generation band in the 1990s (Grow 2016; Thorne 2016: 33).

Prince recorded five tracks at Sound 80, including the song “Soft and Wet,” co-written with Moon (the titles of the other tracks are unreported in available sources). Rivkin said the music did not fit into one musical category (pop, funk, etc.) but said, “The kid’s music was really just well-made rock and roll.”

¹⁷ Morris Day (who grew up with Prince on Minneapolis’s Northside and played drums in the band Grand Central after the departure of Prince’s cousin and first drummer Charles “Chazz” Smith, and would later go on to fame as the flamboyant front man for Prince’s side project band, The Time) claimed in his 2019 autobiography that the demo tapes were of Grand Central, with him on drums, André Cymone on bass, and Prince on vocals, keyboards and guitar (Day 2019:30-31). No other books over the past several decades or individuals who were in the studio with Prince have ever claimed that anyone but Prince performed on the demo tapes. Rivkin, Moon, and Husney all state that Prince did the demo tapes alone.

¹⁸ Although the demo tapes are not available to refute Rivkin’s claim that Prince played horns, it does seem unlikely. Most sources state that Prince only played the saxophone briefly in junior high. It also seems unlikely that he brought in horn players, since most sources state that he played all the instruments on his demos.

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

Prince asked Herb Pilhofer and Tom Jung, the owners of Sound 80 studio, if they would sign him to a recording contract. The studio had previous unsuccessful experience trying to market albums, but they agreed to meet with Prince. Jung came away awestruck:

I sat down with him, and he had a cassette... I listened to it with him and I thought. 'Holy s***!' It was the one time that I felt I was really out of my element. The first thought I had when I heard a few bars of it was Stevie Wonder, somebody who was on a level with Stevie in terms of writing and playing. ...I recognized the talent instantly. I guess I felt, you know, I'm probably not the guy to work with him because I know he's a monster talent... I was probably instrumental in making this decision to say "Look, I don't think we can help you. I think you need to be with a major label" (Kenney and Saylor 2013:95).

With the Sound 80 tapes, Husney was able to shop Prince around to several major recording studios. In addition to paying for Prince's housing and studio time, Husney created deluxe press kits to accompany the demo tapes that eventually created strong interest by several major labels (Thorne 2016: 33). Husney recalled this effort in two separate interviews.

We put together 15 press kits and sent out seven or eight to the major labels. The first marketing move was I put his age back a year. I knew if he was worth so much at 18, he was worth that much more at 17. I knew that he was shy, so the second marketing move was that "less is more." I didn't want any press clippings or 8 million pictures. I just wanted one line [of copy]. The music would speak for itself. We also wanted to be different. L.A. at that time was jeans; open, untucked shirts, and cowboy boots. We were all wearing three-piece suits; we had one made for Prince, too. And we sent the tape on a silver reel - it was reel-to-reel, not cassette (*Star Tribune* 2016).

It was really something to be a part of. We got romanced. I mean, one record company offered us three homes in Beverly Hills for the duration of the contract. I wish I would have taken that now. I mean, they were falling over themselves to make deals. We had three labels in a bidding war, which were A&M, CBS, and Warner Bros. records (Goldberg 1988).

Prince eventually signed a contract with Warner Bros. on June 25, 1977, after just turning nineteen, even though Husney sold him as being seventeen (Berman 2016: 23–24; Ro 2016: 22). Biographer Ronin Ro details the terms of the contract:

His contract reportedly called for three albums in twenty-seven months, the first to be recorded within six months. The three were to cost \$180,000—the usual \$60,000 per disc allocated to acts like the Ramones. If he submitted them by September 1979, Warner could renew the contract for two years (for another three albums) and an additional advance of \$225,000. If Warner wanted a second option period after this—in September 1981, for a year and two more albums—the company would advance him yet another \$250,000.

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

Husney called it perhaps the most lucrative contract ever offered to an unknown. “Well over a million dollars,” he said. Another time, he said it set a precedent and was “the biggest record deal of 1977” (Ro 2016: 22).

The state-of-the art equipment and professionalism at Sound 80 provided Prince with the tools he needed to demonstrate his remarkable musical abilities to the world and to launch his career to the next level. Prince’s later career in the 1990s was famously marked by conflict with his record label over what he saw as unfair practices regarding control and ownership of his masters, leading him to change his name to the unpronounceable Love Symbol in an attempt to void the recording contract Warner Bros. had with “Prince.” However, Prince’s first battle with the recording industry came shortly after signing with the company.

As to be expected, Warner Bros. wanted the young, untested artist to work with a seasoned producer and suggested Maurice White of Earth, Wind & Fire fame or his brother Verdine to mentor Prince and help produce the album. Warner Bros. did not doubt Prince’s musical and studio abilities, but they wanted someone with “record sense”—that is, the ability to recognize a hit—to be involved. Prince rejected the notion, saying that Earth, Wind & Fire’s horn heavy music did not align with the musical aesthetic he was trying to create. He feared too much involvement from others could regulate his music to an R&B audience instead of the crossover to white audiences he sought. He informed Husney, “I gotta do my own album. Maurice White is not producing. You go tell the chairman of Warner Bros. that I’m producing.” Prince also confronted Warner Bros. executive Lenny Waronker, saying, “Don’t make me black. My idols are all over the place.” Waronker was taken aback but resolved that they “shouldn’t mess around with this guy”. A compromise was eventually reached. After putting Prince through the wringer and having him produce numerous demos to further demonstrate his ability to compose, perform, record and engineer the music on his own, they agreed to let him produce the album, making him the youngest producer ever for Warner Bros. at the time. However, they insisted on the involvement of veteran engineer Tommy Vicari, who previously worked with Santana, one of Prince’s many idols (Ro 2016: 22–23; *Star Tribune* 2016).

Prince returned to Sound 80 to begin work on his debut album in the second half of 1977 (Figure 24). According to the notes in his partially completed, posthumously released autobiography, which included notes on photographs written by the book’s editor Dan Piepenbring:

He [Prince] briefly began work on *For You* at Sound 80—and in the comfort of his hometown, where he hoped to remain—before he was forced to relocate. He’d convinced Warner Bros. that he could produce the album himself, but they’d compromised by sending Tommy Vicari, an industry veteran, to oversee the engineering of the record. Sound 80 had recently installed a new studio console—so new, in fact, that Vicari felt it would take months

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

to work the kinks out of it. Rather than lose time, Prince and the label agreed to move production to the Record Plant, in Sausalito (Prince 2019: 260).

Prince described his studio process at the time to *Insider* magazine:

For me, there's nothing like working in a recording studio. It's satisfying. It's like painting. You begin with a conception and keep adding instruments and laying tracks down. Soon, it's like the monitors are canvases. The instruments are colors on a pallet, the mikes and board are brushes. I just keep working it until I've got the picture or rather the sound that I heard inside my head when it was just an idea (Schneider 1978).

Prince's early recordings with Warner Bros., therefore, showed his musical virtuosity, and they included the soon-to-be common credit "produced, arranged, composed and performed by Prince," a remarkable feat for such a young artist. Throughout his almost 40-year career, the majority of his albums were solo efforts, which he composed, performed and engineered. The foundational studio time and experience he gained at Sound 80 were crucial in his development into an accomplished studio engineer.

Prince would go on to international success and stardom in the 1980s, and was the principal architect of "the Minneapolis Sound," a blending of R&B, jazz, funk, new wave, punk, and rock 'n' roll. Prince's exposure to R&B, funk, and rock growing up in Minneapolis, along with his integration of music trends (punk and new wave) in the late 1970s and early 1980s, led to his development of a new musical genre that defined the sonic landscape of the 1980s. Prince is cited as a major influence by wide-ranging artists today, such as Lizzo, Lady Gaga, Questlove, D'Angelo, Brittany Howard, Beck, Janelle Monáe, and St. Vincent. Over his career, Prince sold over 100 million records worldwide, received an Oscar for Best Original Song Score for the music in *Purple Rain* (recorded at First Avenue), and won seven Grammys, two for *Purple Rain*. Prince's discography consists of thirty-nine studio albums, five soundtrack albums, four live albums, five compilation albums, seventeen video albums, and twelve extended plays, plus a collection of hundreds, if not thousands, of unreleased songs, videos, and other recordings. Prince was a spectacularly prolific artist, collaborator, music, and business innovator. He left a lasting legacy on music, culture, and the recording industry (Zschomler 2020).

Digital Recording

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, numerous advancements in analog recording occurred. Beginning in 1877, sound recordings were acoustical, with the sound preserved through a mechanical process. Sound was directed into the large end of a horn, and on the other tapered end, a cutting stylus cut spiral grooves into thick wax on a cylinder or disk based on the varying frequency and amplitude of the captured vibrations. Such recordings had limited dynamic range and did not produce high fidelity of the original sound. In 1925, electrical recording was introduced, whereby sounds were captured through a microphone and the vibrations were converted into an analogously varying electrical signal. The signal was amplified and applied to

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

a stylus which cut a spiral groove in a waxed or (later) lacquered disc (Yale University Libraries 2006). The early recording systems played at 78 revolutions per minute (rpm) resulting in approximately five minutes of playing time per disk side. A new magnetic taping processes developed in the 1940s cut with a “microgroove” stylus at 33 1/3 rpm, resulting in approximately 20 minutes of playing time per side. The “long playing” or “long play” vinyl record format was introduced by Columbia in 1948 and quickly became the industry standard, with the use of the term “album” applying to these “LP” disks. By the 1970s, a new process was developed to transfer live sound directly to the disc, creating what many believed was a purer audio capture (often call “audiophile” recordings). Musicians would play 15 minute sets, which were recorded and mixed live and then transferred immediately to an analog disc cutting head, or lathe, which directly grooved the vinyl or lacquer disc. From a pure sound perspective, the “direct-to-disc” method was touted as superior, since it eliminated the transfer to tape, which produced a background “hiss” when played back. The direct-to-disc method often captured the spontaneity of performances and a purer sound (Sound 80, Inc. 1978), but it also recorded all the errors and mistakes and provided no opportunity for the overdubbing or corrections that could be achieved through multitrack recording, where each instrument or vocal performance could be separated, corrected or manipulated.

Digital sound recording had its origins in the 1930s, when Bell Laboratories invented digital pulse-code modulation (PCM). By 1962, Samuel Stockham Jr., a student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), made digital audio tapes using a computer and an analog-to-digital (A/D) converter. Digital afforded a purer sound capture, since the audio is transferred to tape as binary data, meaning it is not subject to distortions such as hiss/noise and “wow and flutter” (a type of sound distortion caused mainly by irregularities in tape drive speeds during recording or reproduction). While digital promised “sample accurate editing, copying, flat frequency response, and seemingly indefinite storage options (Barber 2012),” early digital systems did not provide multi-tracking capabilities. Analog recording had multitracking through the use of magnetic tapes, which could be divided into two or more tracks that allow multiple sounds recorded at different times to be played together. Such multitracking was an industry standard for most professional music recordings, so by the 1970s, numerous entities were attempting to create a multitrack digital recording and mastering system.

Minnesota-based company 3M, in partnership with the British Broadcasting Company (BBC), developed one of the earliest such systems and, in 1978, they chose Sound 80 as the studio to test their first two-track (stereo) prototype. The equipment (which resembled the robot R2-D2 from the popular *Star Wars* movie [1977], and was affectionately nicknamed “Herbie” in reference to Pilhofer by the Sound 80 staff) was used to record two albums that summer in Studio 1, one by the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra (SPCO) (Figure 18 and 21) and the other by local jazz group, Flim & The BB’s. SPCO musicians Bill McGlaughlin recalled the session.

“[SPCO had] done a number of direct-to-disc sessions with Sound 80, and this session was intended to be direct-to-disc as well, but at the last minute the boys from 3M showed up with

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

a digital machine ... which they asked to try out in parallel ... (we) did three takes of each (work), and on the [Aaron] Copland [Appalachian Spring] there was one take that did not go well, and the other two had technical problems with the cutter [the Neumann lathe] (Barber 2012).

The album liner notes for the album touted the digital system's superior sound system as its primary benefit, and almost imply that the direct-to-digital approach was planned.

This landmark recording represents the unique combination of "direct-to-disk" recording philosophy with the exciting new digital recording technology. Recorded on the 3M Digital Audio Mastering System, which offers vastly superior storage capabilities, these performances are also completely spontaneous and unedited—played in "real time" (including the pauses between movements)—as though recorded directly onto the master disk. The result is a record which combines the integrity and spontaneity of performance implicit in direct-mastered recordings with the audio advantages of digital technology: "Direct-to-Digital".

How does digital recording work? It's an adaptation of computer technology to audio. Current analog recording systems must play back an analog representation of complex musical waveforms along with the wow-and-flutter, distortion and noise inherent in the tape recording process itself. The result is *reproduction* of the original sound and unwanted diminution of audio quality. With digital recording, however, the recording system stores only the computer language (digital code) necessary to direct the equipment to *reassemble* the original sound. Since only a numerical code need be recorded to accomplish this conversion of analog information to digital "words" or "bits" and back again, the digital technique avoids the reproduction difficulties of analog recording. The digital tape is played back to reproduce the code, not the analog storage of the signal along with additional noise and loss of fidelity. The 3M Digital Audio Mastering System used for these recordings has a dynamic range in excess of 90 db and virtually unmeasurable wow-and-flutter and harmonic distortion. The system's ability to handle complex waveforms and peak transients is unparalleled.

We're pleased to present a record which helps to introduce this new recording technology while retaining the immediacy of direct-mastered recording. The 26-minute, single-take recording of *Appalachian Spring* is a testament to the outstanding musicianship of the orchestra. The Ives score [*Three Places in New England*] receives an excellent interpretation here, too—a recorded integration impossible in the concert hall. The details of the complex musical fabric are articulate and clear without sacrificing the rich, dense sound appropriate to a "misty" ambience, distant traditional melodies, and competing brass bands. We hope you enjoy the record. Tom Voegeli (Sound 80, Inc. 1978).

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

While the liner notes for both the SPCO and Flim & The BB's album praise the system, Sound 80 engineer Tom Jung's recollection of the reality of working with the prototype was not as glowing.

There was no editing whatsoever. We were doing direct-to-disc projects anyway, so that wasn't a problem for us. And it was unbelievably unreliable. If you rolled the machine a little bit, it might not work. It stood about 3½' or 4' tall and had a big instrumentation transport. Tape speed was 45ips. They wanted to put 32 channels on 1" tape, so individual track widths were pretty narrow, but they used only two of the 32 channels. There were trays and trays of electronics, all prototype circuit boards that were wire-wrapped; nothing was soldered. Herbie was a machine with a mind of its own. You just hoped that if you recorded a good tape it would play back without glitches, but sometimes it didn't. Oftentimes it would just make a horrible noise in the middle of a playback, so you'd have to start over (Lander 2004).

Regardless of the technical problems operating the equipment, the superior sound quality generated by the system created substantial interest by musicians and other studios, leading 3M to complete development of a 32-track model later that year. As with their prototype, the company selected Sound 80 as one of the incubators for the new system.

3M identified four top national recording studios to test their new equipment, which was the result of "almost six years of research and development by 3M and a joint, two-year research project with the British Broadcasting Corp." The selected studios included The Record Plant in Sausalito, California; A & M Records and Warner Bros. Records in Los Angeles; and Sound 80 in Minneapolis. Bob Brown, marketing director for 3M Mincom Division stated "If we had arbitrarily selected the studios to be first, these would have been early choices because of their excellent reputations for success and innovation." The studios were also selected for their proximity to 3M facilities (Mincom division's manufacturing facilities in Camarillo, California; and 3M's St. Paul research facilities). The units were projected to cost \$150,000, but 3M rented a unit to each of the studios to "share responsibility for the introduction of the new technology (Penchansky et al. 1978: 1)."

A few months after receiving the 32-track digital system, Sound 80 President Herb Pilhofer was interviewed by Billboard Magazine where he shared his thoughts about the future of digital recording.

... I think it will be a year before there is any substantial amount of product available. We've already had a number of inquiries from labels about booking projects for the system, however.

We are focusing on specialty markets with digital. We've already done a few digital records and the response, quite frankly, has been phenomenal. One by the St. Paul Chamber

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

Orchestra is being touted as the finest recording on the market today. And that's not touting us on the back. It's the superiority of the equipment.

I think a couple of products have to come out which dramatically illustrate the superior quality of the recording. That way people won't be asking what digital is.

The effects are overwhelming. You won't have a wall of sound anymore but an infinity of sound. I'm damned excited about it. We will be the only studio East of Los Angeles with a digital system initially (Billboard 1978: 55).

By 1980, Billboard noted how many key artists were using digital, from Bruce Springsteen to Fleetwood Mac to Barbara Streisand to Heart. They stated that even with the "lack of digital standards thus far and the still high costs of the technology," digital recording was generally seen as "the format of the future (McCullaugh 1980: 66)." The innovations in digital recording that 3M, Sound 80 and the other studios began in 1978 quickly took root in the industry and dominate it to this day.

Sound 80 was also involved in other technological advances in sound engineering. Douglas Trumbull was a Hollywood director and special effects expert who was working on the film *Close Encounters of The Third Kind*. Trumbull came to Minneapolis in 1978 to work with Pilhofer and other Sound 80 studio staff to develop an experimental process to improve the sound quality of films. The system they developed proved to be too complicated for most theaters to implement in time for the release of the movie, but did lead to the advancement in surround sounds used in theaters today (Pilhofer 2018; Figure 22).

Sound 80 had one final major accomplishment to close out the 1970s—the recording of the first Number One hit to come out of Minneapolis. Minneapolis-based Lipps, Inc. (pronounced "lip-synch") recorded the song "Funkytown" in Studio 2 in 1979. By March of 1980, it was Number One in 28 countries around the world. The song relied on the technology that the studio was known for—drum machines, synthesizers, and a precursor to auto-tune to robotize Northside Minneapolis-based singer Cynthia Johnson's voice in portions of the song (Swensson 2014).

Even while these accomplishments solidified Sound 80's national reputation, by the end of the studio's first decade of operation, the end was near. Jung and Pilhofer had different visions for the studio's future.

Pilhofer yearned to write and produce film scores, using every technical trick available. Jung, on the other hand, had soured on the kind of intricately engineered, multitrack, and overdubbed music that Sound 80 was so good at producing. He believed that multitrack recording had become a "crutch" and a "liability to music making." By the late 1970s, he was looking for a place where he could concentrate on faithfully reproducing the sounds generated by live performances. It was hard to see how Sound 80 would survive if Pilhofer

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

and Jung, the studio's majority shareholders and driving creative talents, decided to split up (Kenney and Saylor 2012: 96).

Jung quit Sound 80 in 1981 to take a job in New York City and the business was taking too much of Pilhofer's time so he closed the studio in the Seward neighborhood. Sound 80 business manager Jan Erickson purchased the business name and opened a new business in downtown Minneapolis, where it now specializes in talent payroll services, broadcast commercial trafficking and audio and video production service (Lander 2004; Black 2005).

AVC Systems operated a professional audio contracting company from the building in the 1980s. In 1990, current owner Steve Orfield purchased the building, where he now operates Orfield Laboratories, a perceptual and analytical research laboratory. The Eckel Industries-designed anechoic chamber (built 1966) was installed in the rear addition of the building in the late 1990s. It previously held the distinction of being certified by the Guinness Book of World Records as "the quietest place on Earth." In 2006, Guinness also certified the building as the "the world's first multitrack digital recording studio (Guinness World Record 2005)."

Other Key Recordings

Bob Dylan – *Blood on the Tracks*, 1974

After strong acclaim and commercial success with his original albums in the early 1960s, by the last half of that decade and into the early 1970s, Bob Dylan's releases were not charting well, and his work often baffled his fans and critics. Also, by the early 1970s, Dylan's marriage to Sara Lownds Dylan (née Shirley Noznisky) was failing. The notoriously private Dylan not only kept his personal life hidden from the press, his songs rarely revealed anything about the singer/songwriter. A new wave of "confessional" style folk singers, such as Joni Mitchell, Leonard Cohen, and Jackson Browne were on the rise in the early 1960s and 1970s, and as Dylan embarked on his next album, he appears to have been influenced by these factors. The songs he wrote for his next album "set a new benchmark for confessional songwriting, with an album whose personal revelations would remain half-hidden behind a screen of fiction, the truth only occasionally glimpsed amid the welter of characters, allegories, and shifting time scales. It would prove to be a landmark both in popular music and in his own life (Gill and Odegard 2004: 28)."

Dylan first recorded the songs for his album, which would be titled *Blood on the Tracks*, in September 1974 at A&R Studios, at 799 Seventh Avenue, in New York City (also designed by the same acoustical engineer who designed Sound 80, Robert Hansen; demolished). Dylan hired seasoned professionals, including Eric Weissberg, who had recently gained notoriety for his work on the instrumental "Dueling Banjos," made famous from its inclusion in the movie *Deliverance* (1972). The session musicians describe Dylan's non-traditional recording style, stating that he would go through a track once, maybe twice with them. There was no score, so each musician scrambled to try to come up with some type of charting. Dylan would change keys, rhythms, lyrics on the spot, often leaving them to figure out what they should play on the

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

fly. Session guitarist Charlie Brown said Dylan was trying to capture the immediacy of the moment, so he didn't care if there were mistakes or a less polished sound. The musicians, however, were frustrated and not pleased with the number of mistakes in the recordings (Williams 2015). The tracks were recorded over the course of four nights. The majority of the recordings with the full band were completed on the first night and by the final night, only Dylan and bassist Tony Brown were left, doing "Shelter from the Storm." The other musicians simply gave up or were not called back by Dylan.

Whatever his reasons for his unique approach in New York, by the time Dylan listened to the final acetate, he knew something was missing and that his efforts (or lack thereof) did not pay off the way he had hoped. The material was solid, some of his best in years, but the immediacy he was trying to capture did not come through "and the songs seem to just lie there, inert (Gill and Odegard 2004: 91)." While at his Crow River farm in Minnesota, Dylan played the acetate for his young brother David Zimmerman. He agreed with Dylan's assessment that the songs needed more than just overdubbed orchestration or re-engineering. Zimmerman set to work finding a location and backing musician's to help his older brother capture the sounds he was seeking. Dylan also wanted a specific guitar for the session: "a rare 1937 0042 Martin, the compact, small-bodied acoustic known in folk music circles as the 'Joan Baez' model, because of her long-term patronage of it." Zimmerman contact a musician he previously managed, Kevin Odegard, to see if he knew where he could find such an instrument in the Twin Cities. Odegard called Chris Weber who owned the Dinkytown-based music shop, The Podium, and inquired if he had such an instrument in his inventory. Weber was curious what Odegard wanted the instrument for, but Odegard kept his client's identity secret. Weber had just taken in a similar model a few days prior—a 1934 0042G. "The G means gut-string model setup, so it wasn't exactly the guitar Bob requested. The neck was a little bit wider, and it wasn't really designed for steel strings, although it was strong enough to support them. ... A smaller-bodied acoustic guitar was a better recording instrument because it had fewer overtones, and so it got cleaner sound through the big tube Neumann microphones (Gill and Odegard 2004: 105-106)."

With the guitar secured, Zimmerman asked Odegard to help him assemble session musicians. While Odegard advocated for some friends to provide the rhythm section, Zimmerman insisted on using the Sound 80 house rhythm section of Billy Peterson (bass) and Bill Berg (drums). The duo were known as the region's premier rhythm section, playing everything from jazz to pop to rock, including extensive work with local folk artist Leo Kottke. Berg noted:

"Leo Kottke put us into the frame of mind of what we play and what we did not play being equally important," explains Berg. "When to lay back and let the lead man do his thing—especially Leo, who was not the most verbal virtuoso in the business, but just an amazing talent. We didn't know, and neither did he, how he played as well as he did, but we did learn to support him in a way that seemed to work. That was the best training Billy Peterson and I had for the Dylan sessions (Gill and Odegard 2004:108-109)."

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

Gregg Inhofer was tapped to play keyboards, and Odegard played guitar. Zimmerman called Sound 80, and asked if they could do a session at the studio the next day, December 27, 1974. He simply said that his brother wanted to record a few songs.

Paul Martinson was the house engineer at Sound 80 and oversaw the session. Martinson too came to the session with folk *bona fida* under his belt—he oversaw four of Kottke’s recordings at the studio. His experience was not limited to folk music, however, having worked on everything from “classical music, all the way through pop and rock, down to local polka bands and school choirs.” He was also well trained by the studio’s sound engineers, Tom Jung and Scott Rivard. “All of my initial training on how to use the rooms and baffles and so on was from Tom. From Scott I learned about circuits and tape heads, tape transports, and electronics (Gill and Odegard 2004: 111).” Martinson set up the live room for the recording session as illustrated on Figure 17.

Weber, protective of his guitar, insisted on presenting it himself to Dylan. While the studio was being set up, Weber and Dylan went into the isolation booth in Studio 1 so Weber could show him what the guitar could do. Weber played one of his original songs, and Dylan was impressed with his playing. Dylan then played the song “Idiot Wind” for Weber, who picked up the tune quickly. Dylan realized he could use Weber as a go-between with the musicians—he could teach Weber the chords and progressions, who could then take it to the other musicians. That way, Dylan could avoid over-rehearsing and keep his desired feeling of immediacy.

“He must have had enough confidence in my playing that he asked me if I would learn a song and teach it to the bass player, drummer, and keyboard player,” says Weber, “Because he wanted to keep it fresh and didn’t want to have to keep going over it. So he laid down a C minor chord, asked me the name of the chord, and I identified it as C minor; he said, ‘Yup, that’s where it starts.’ He proceeded to teach me the progression of the song ‘Idiot Wind,’ which I had not heard—and no one else had heard, to the best of my knowledge. In a few minutes we worked out the song. I suggested an A minor seventh chord instead of the A seventh chord that he had been playing, and he said, ‘Leave that in there; that sounds nice.’ I learned the song, we left the booth, and I went out and taught it to the band (Gill and Odegard 2004: 116-117).”

The session began and Dylan asked Weber, much to his surprise, to play guitar on the first song, “Idiot Wind,” on the 1934 0042G. After five or six takes, mainly due to technical delays on Martinson’s set up, Dylan was satisfied with the recording. Odegard described it as “breathtaking and beautiful at the same time, a striking throwback to an earlier Dylan sound, circa 1965, and it was like the snarling, spitting Dylan of a decade earlier was in the room with us, throwing an agonizing poetic tantrum.” Martinson mixed the song right away, in typical Sound 80 fashion, and Dylan was impressed with what he heard, telling the sound engineer, “You have a nice way of picking things up here. (Gill and Odegard 2004: 119; 120).”

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

Dylan decided to re-record “You’re a Big Girl Now” next, *sans* bassist Peterson, who had to get to another gig. In a similar manner to Weber’s chord change suggestion on “Idiot Wind,” keyboardist Inhofer suggested chording changes to the song that Dylan liked and incorporated into the song. Dylan did some overdubbing on the song, adding the flamenco guitar part, and the session wrapped up. Martinson created safety mixes when he “hooked the Ampex machine up to a two-track Revox recorder and copied the rough mixes of the two songs down onto more manageable Tapes reels, which could be played on domestic reel-to-reel tape machines. Dylan took the recordings away with him to consider at his leisure (Gill and Odegard 2004:122).”

Dylan liked what he heard as he studied the tapes over the next several days, and decided to regroup the musicians on December 30 to redo three additional songs from the album—“Lily, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts,” “If You See Her, Say Hello,” and “Tangled Up in Blue,” which became one of Dylan’s most popular songs and a concert staple (Figure 17). As before, the Minnesota musicians helped Dylan elevate the song to another level. Originally recorded in the key of G, Odegard suggested that “Tangled Up in Blue” as written was “passable” but suggested moving their capos up to A. Dylan took the guitarist’s suggestion, though he just adjusted his fingering instead of using a capo, and had to elevate his voice, creating more intensity, urgency, and intrigue. Weber, who brought a twelve-string guitar to the session also created the song’s “ring-a-ding-ding” figure in the intro and in front of each verse. “Bill Berg’s delicate but sprightly snare and hi-hat work here is quite extraordinary, a true will-o-the-wisp spirit at the heart of the song, and Billy Peterson has a ball embellishing the instrumental breaks with melodic bass figures that he would later regard as among his finest recorded work (Gill and Odegard 2002: 128).”¹⁹ Weber knew Dylan wanted to get back to his folk music roots, so he invited mandolinist Peter Ostroushko and banjoist Jim Tordoff to be on standby in case Dylan wanted to add in these traditional instruments. Ostroushko, in what was his first-ever professional recording session, contributed the mandolin part on “If You See Her, Say Hello”, though “Dylan played the fast flat-picking pattern on the high end” that the young musician could not quite master (Gill and Odegard 2004: 135).

The musicians were not the only major contributors to Dylan finally being able to achieve the sound he wanted. Martinson and the equipment at Sound 80 were a key ingredient.²⁰

It wasn’t just the musicians who had an affinity for Dylan and his music, though; a large part of the credit for the impact of these recordings must go to engineer Paul Martinson, whose fastidious choice and placement of microphones were matched by his instinctive grasp of the appropriate weight and balance of the various elements of the performances.

“I knew what my setup would be,” Martinson explains. “I knew virtually all the players, I knew what microphones I wanted to use, and I had a lot of confidence in the room and the

¹⁹ Both the New York and Minneapolis recordings of “Tangled Up in Blue” have been released so are available for comparison. The differences between the two versions is notable.

²⁰ For a complete list of the exact equipment Martinson used, see Gill and Odegard 2004: 130-132.

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

equipment we were using. Sound 80 [Studio 1] was designed so the room would have very good sightlines between the players, and also between the control room and the players, so the engineer and producer could see everyone (Figure 17) (Gill and Odegard 2004: 131).

Martinson's contributions were not limited to the studio set up and equipment selection, but also in the manner in which he mixed the songs immediately after the sessions. While Martinson, Dylan, and Zimmerman met on January 2, 1975 to mix the five cuts, the more Martinson edited them, the less Dylan like it. "Dylan loved Paul's live studio mix of 'Tangled Up In Blue' so much that he refused to mix it or process it in any way", Odegard said. "That song went straight to the pressing plant just as he heard it, and remains today the most-played song in Dylan's entire recorded catalog (Bream 2012)." As Gill and Odegard summarized Martinson's role, "In a remarkable testimony to Martinson's engineering and fly-mixing capabilities, that's how the Minneapolis tracks of *Blood on the Tracks* arrived at the pressing plant, with four of the five songs virtually untouched live two-track safety mixes (Gill and Odegard 2004: 139)."

The album was widely praised and heralded at the time as Dylan returning to his roots, though Rolling Stone critic Jon Landau posited that "much of the critical enthusiasm for *Blood on the Tracks* is really a sigh of relief that he's shaken off the role of contentment that (fellow critic) Jonathan Cott also has found never rang true (Landau 1975)." *Blood on the Tracks* was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2015 and, forty years after its release, is one of Dylan's most critically acclaimed and top-selling studio albums of his career. It consistently ranks high on various "Best Albums" lists, including coming in at 16 on *Rolling Stones* "The 500 Greatest Albums of All Time (2003)." Five songs from the Sound 80 sessions ended up on the final release of the album, including the album's highlight, "Tangled Up in Blue," although none of the Minneapolis musician's names were included. The Sound 80 session occurred weeks before the album went to market, and the album sleeves had already been printed with the names of the New York session musicians. Even though Zimmerman had assured the Minneapolis musicians that their names would be included in future printings and Billboard magazine stated, "The players missed credits on the first cover run, but will get their names mentioned the second time around (Kirsch 1975: 38), all subsequent releases continued to leave off the Minnesota musicians. It was not until October 2018, when *More Blood, More Tracks – the Bootleg Series Volume 14* was released that the names of Bill Berg, Billy Peterson, Kevin Odegard, Chris Weber, Peter Ostroushko, Gregg Inhofer, and Paul Martinson were included (Bream 2018)."

Cat Stevens – *Izitzo*, 1977

Born Steven Demetre Georgiou in London, Cat Stevens recorded melodic, pop-folk songs throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, such as "Morning Has Broken" and "Peace Train." After a bout with tuberculosis that nearly killed him in 1969 and almost drowning while swimming in the Pacific Ocean in 1975, Stevens extensively studied various religious and philosophical beliefs, eventually converting to Islam and changing his name to Yusuf Islam in July 1978. His

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

album *Izitso* was the last album he released under his stage name (Rock & Roll Hall of Fame 2014).

By 1977, Sound 80 had developed a national reputation in two areas: its high-end, state-of-the-art musical equipment that Herb Pilhofer invested in, and the work of its head sound engineer, Paul Martinson. Martinson had a national reputation as an excellent recording engineer and collaborator, and his work was highlighted several times in the international music magazine, *Billboard* (Kirsch 1972 and 1975). According to Pilhofer, it was for these two reasons that Stevens came to Minneapolis to record three tracks for the *Izitso* album (Pilhofer 2018).

Typically classified as an acoustic folk singer, Cat Stevens' 1977 release *Izitso* was a dramatic departure from his previous work, namely through the extensive use of synthesizers and electronic machines. In addition, his experimental instrumental "Was Dog A Doughnut?" recorded in Copenhagen and included as the album's fourth song on side 2, is considered a "B-boy classic" that "wound up being a staple in the hip hop world" according to Questlove (Kikaire 2015). When first released, critics did not necessarily see that song as ground breaking, though the album's innovations were well received (Walter 1977).

Stevens' techno-pop sounds that were made possible through these new music sequencers proved to be a precursor to the 1980s electric music genre of "Synth-pop" (synthesizer pop, a sub-genre of new wave that heavily incorporates synthesizers). In a fascinating coincidence, the elder singer/songwriter was at the studio at the same time as the new, up-and-coming singer/songwriter Prince Rogers Nelson, who was also experimenting with the studio's new music sequencers and working with sound engineer David Rivkin, who recounted the experience.

It just so happened that while Prince was recording in Sound 80's Studio 2, Cat Stevens and his curry-wafting entourage were working next door, in tapestry-covered Studio 1, on the *Izitso* album. Prince peeked in on Stevens during breaks and studied the older musician's work habits. He liked what he saw. "We were all really impressed," Rivkin said later of the *Izitso* sessions. "Everything [Stevens recorded] had to sound beautiful. He was really an impressive artist. He was really good . . . It kind of made us work harder because we saw how meticulous he was (Kenney and Saylor 2913: 95)

It is interesting to wonder how much the new sounds with which Stevens was experimenting influenced or inspired Prince, who would soon become the King of Synth-pop in the early 1980s with his "Minneapolis Sound (Sheffield 2017)."

Suicide Commandos, *The Legendary KQRS Concert, 1976* and *Make a Record, 1977*

The Suicide Commandos are a Minneapolis-based trio that formed in 1975. Chris Osgood (guitar), Steve Almaas (bass), and Dave Ahl (drums) premiered at the Blitz Bar in Minneapolis in September of that year. They performed original songs that were "delivered with the raw energy

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

that once had fueled the fabled Twin Cities garage-rock scene of the 1960s when bands like the Litter, the Underbeats, and the Trashman ruled the roost (Swartz 2017).” Kenney and Saylor summarized the band’s genius:

The Suicide Commandos, three young contrarians from Minneapolis’s western suburbs, were among the first Twin Cities musicians to play the new kind of music that was going over so well at Oar Folk [record store Oar Folkjokeopus, Minneapolis] and the Longhorn [Jay’s Long Horn Bar, Minneapolis]. “We were bored with dumb, pompous, commercial rock and roll,” guitarist Chris Osgood explained, referring to chart-topping bands like Yes, Foreigner, and Styx. “That music to us sounded so contrived. We were like, ‘F*** contrived. Let’s have fun! Let’s go crazy!’ That’s what rock and roll is.” The Commandos were part of a larger national and international new wave movement that was developing haphazardly during the mid-1970s, with only occasional cross-pollination among bands in different cities. Other early punk bands included the Clash and the Sex Pistols (London); the Ramones (New York); and Devo (Kent and Akron, Ohio). Minneapolis Tribune staff writer Chris Carr described the Commandos’ music as “maniac, hectic, all-stops-out rock ‘n’ roll, custom made for spontaneous dancing.” The band’s relentless “Complicated Fun” served as a kind of unofficial theme song for the local new wave movement.

The new wave is the old wave
‘Cause we know it all by heart.
We’re looking for an anthem
That we haven’t torn apart.
We gotta have fun.” (Kenney and Slater 2012: 90)

The Suicide Commandos recorded two of the key recordings at Sound 80, including a live performance to be aired on KQRS which ushered in the era of new wave recordings in the Twin Cities.

During the summer of 1976, Chris Osgood and his Commandos bandmates, bassist Steve Almass and drummer Dave Ahl, showed up at Sound 80 to record a KQRS studio concert with David Rivkin. Rarely in Sound 80’s short history had the studio hosted such an amalgam of disparate musical cultures. Herb Pilhofer and Tom Jung kept their distance. “I think we just baffled them,” Osgood laughed. Even [David] Rivkin, with his rock and roll bona fides, wasn’t sure what to make of the music these punk rockers from the western suburbs were banging out. “My whole history, I had never done anything like that,” Rivkin later recalled. “It wasn’t something I delved into, but I liked it. The resulting album was *The Legendary KQRS Concert 1976*, the first new wave recording to come out of the Twin Cities (Kenney and Saylor 2013: 91).

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

In 1977 and now under contract with Mercury Records, the band returned to the premier studio to record their only full-length studio album of the era²¹, *Make a Record*. Tom Munge, the studio's newest engineer who brought experience working with other rock bands, and his cousin, producer Paul Stark, worked with the band to record the 15 songs. Although the band had limited releases and sales, they are considered pioneers in the Twin Cities punk rock music scene, which went on to include acts such as The Suburbs, the Replacements, Soul Asylum, Babes in Toyland, and Hüsker Dü (Kenney and Saylor 2013: 93; Swartz 2017).

Lipps, Inc., “Funkytown”, 1979

In the summer of 1980, one song dominated the airwaves—“Funkytown.” Recorded by Lipps, Inc. (pronounced “lip synch”) at Sound 80 in 1979, the song combines the declining disco genre with the upcoming new-wave sound, along with some old-school R&B. In the same way that Prince Rogers Nelson combined the diverse musical elements of his hometown, Minneapolis-based Lipps, Inc. founder, producer and musician Steven Greenberg blended black and white music of the time to “create a crossover hit that knew no musical, racial or gender barriers (funkytown.com).”²²

Lipps Inc, ‘Funkytown’ expresses a simple, repetitive yearning for the pulse of a bigger city, goosed by a killer ten-note synth riff. ‘Gotta make a move to a town that’s right for me,’ sings [co-band member] Cynthia Johnson in a robotic, vocoderized voice (a precursor to the Auto-Tune sound) before busting out an unmodified, soulful wail, pleading for a trip to the party destination of her dreams. Released in 1980, ‘Funkytown’ came late to the disco party, but gave it a jolt of electricity (Feldman 2018).”

Greenberg recounts the experience of recording at Sound 80.

Sound 80 was the greatest thing ever. First of all, it was beautiful. [Co-owner] Herb Pilhofer probably had a decorator do it, because he was that kind of guy; a very elegant person, and he liked beautiful things around him. Including his Bozendorfer piano, which was a piano I often played at Sound 80, which was awesome. I recorded in Studio 2 there, which was the smaller room, and it was a beautiful room to record in. And that’s where I recorded “Funkytown.” (Swensson 2014).

“Funkytown” is not only the most commercially successful song to have been recorded at Sound 80, it is one of the most successful singles of all time and the first song recorded in Minnesota to chart at Number One. It was Number One in 28 countries in 1980, and has reached certified platinum status in the United States and four other countries. According to music journalist Andrea Swensson, “‘Funkytown’ has earned a place in the Rock ‘n’ Roll Hall of Fame, spent

²¹ The trio reunited to record *Time Bomb* in 2017.

²² Ironically, the song laments about wanting to leave Minneapolis for a funkier place—New York City—and was recorded at the same time Prince was creating a new, funky sound in Minneapolis that would dominate music in the 1980s and make the city a major music center.

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

four weeks at #1 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart, and become one of the most ubiquitous songs of the advertising and licensing world, appearing in everything from *Shrek 2* to *South Park* to the NBC drama *Parenthood*.”

Conclusion

Sound 80 was widely recognized as the top recording location in the Twin Cities, and amongst the best recording studios in the nation during the period of significance (1971 through 1981). Designed and built using the latest acoustical engineering specifically for music recording, and employing technical experts in the areas of composition, recording and editing, the studio had a local and national reputation for excellence in recording. The studio was also heavily involved in the advancement of movie sound systems and digital recording through its partnership with 3M. As illustrated by the historic context herein, Sound 80 is historically significant under Criterion A in the area of Performing Arts: Music, as well as under Criterion B for its association with Prince.

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

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County and State

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): HE-MPC-19504

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.69

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

Latitude: 44.957036 Longitude: 93.23269923065203

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

1. Zone: 15

Easting: 481646.04

Northing: 4978204.10

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Lots 21, 22, 23, and 24 in Block 11, Morrison & Lovejoy's Division.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary is based on the city lots that have been historically associated with the property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kristen Zschomler, Historian; contributions by Barbara Howard, Stonebridge Learning

organization: Sound History, LLC

street & number: 1386 Idaho Avenue West

city or town: Falcon Heights state: MN zip code: 55108

e-mail: kristenzschomler@gmail.com

telephone: 763-276-3761

date: February 4, 2020

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Sound 80

City or Vicinity: Minneapolis

County: Hennepin State: Minnesota

Photographer: Daniel R. Pratt, ARCH³, LLC

Date Photographed: February 17, 2018 (exteriors); February 19, 2018 and November 25, 2019 (interiors)

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

All digital images labeled as follows: MN_Hennepin County_Sound 80_0001, etc.

- 1 of 22. North façade from across East 25th Street, facing southeast.
- 2 of 22. North façade with western bay projection, facing southeast.
- 3 of 22. West façade, facing northeast.
- 4 of 22. North façade showing bay projections, facing south.

Sound 80
Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN
County and State

- 5 of 22. East façade showing entrance and eastern-most bay projection, facing west.
- 6 of 22. East façade, facing northwest.
- 7 of 22. South façade, facing northwest.
- 8 of 22. South façade, facing northeast.
- 9 of 22. Granolux coating inside vestibule, facing south.
- 10 of 22. Granolux coating on northeastern bay projection, facing south.
- 11 of 22. Lobby with skylight, facing northwest. Note key recording display (left).
- 12 of 22. Room 101, former office of Sound 80 President and co-founder Herb Pilhofer, facing northeast. Note wall paneling and louvers.
- 13 of 22. Hallway, with door to Studio 1, utility room, and Studio 3 on left; door to Studio 2 on right, facing southwest.
- 14 of 22. Studio 1 control room, with sound lock to the left and the live room to the right, facing northeast. Note isolation booth in the distance to the right.
- 15 of 22. Studio 1 live room, facing southwest, with control room and sound lock in the background.
- 16 of 22. Studio 1 live room, with control room (left) and isolation booth (right), facing north.
- 17 of 22. Studio 2 control room (right), sound lock leading to the hallway (center left), and original acoustic wall panels (far left), facing south.
- 18 of 22. Studio 2 live room, facing northwest. Note original red fabric wall covering, DI input (lower right side) and lighting.
- 19 of 22. DI input (top), multi-pin din input (blue circle), and two speaker/audio monitor plus for stereo monitoring (red inputs at bottom), and red fabric wall coverings detail, facing north.
- 20 of 22. Studio 3, facing east. Note acoustic wedges on walls and ceiling.
- 21 of 22. Studio 4 live room with sound lock on right, facing east. Note projection screen, which was installed after the period of significance.
- 22 of 22. The sunken room in northwestern corner of basement, facing south. Note concrete inertia block (left) and electrical panels in flooring, which supplied power to the Neumann lathe.

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.).

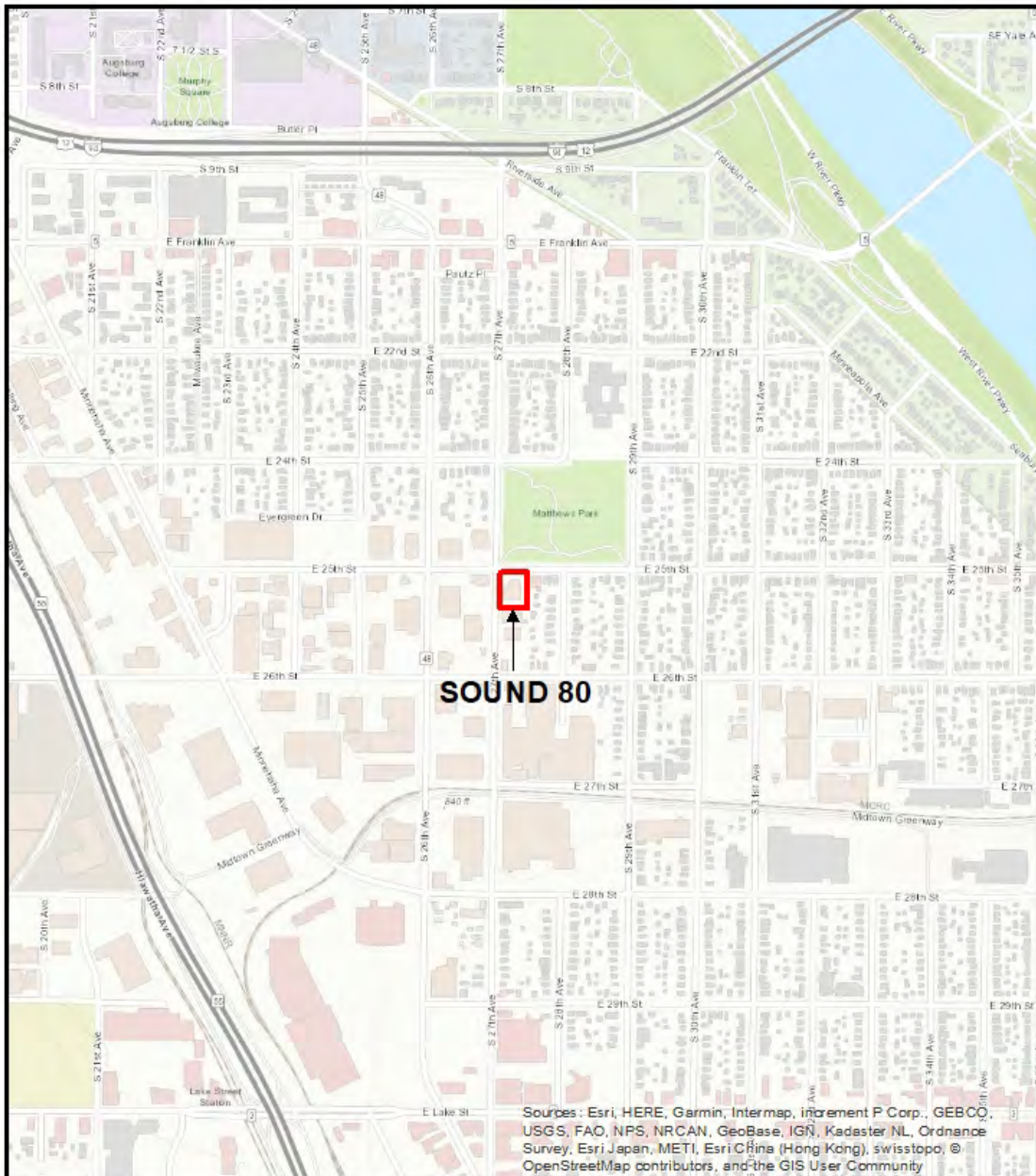
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

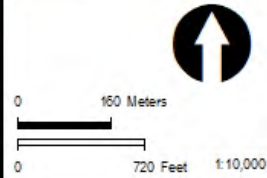
Section number Additional Documentation Page 47

Sound 80
Name of Property Hennepin County, MN
County and State Prince, 1958-1987
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

USGS West St. Paul Quad
NAD 1983
Easting 481646.04
Northing 4978204.10



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Sound 80
Name of Property Hennepin County, MN
County and State <i>Prince, 1958-1987</i>
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 48



Source: Google Earth

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Documentation Page 49

Sound 80
Name of Property
Hennepin County, MN
County and State
Prince, 1958-1987
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

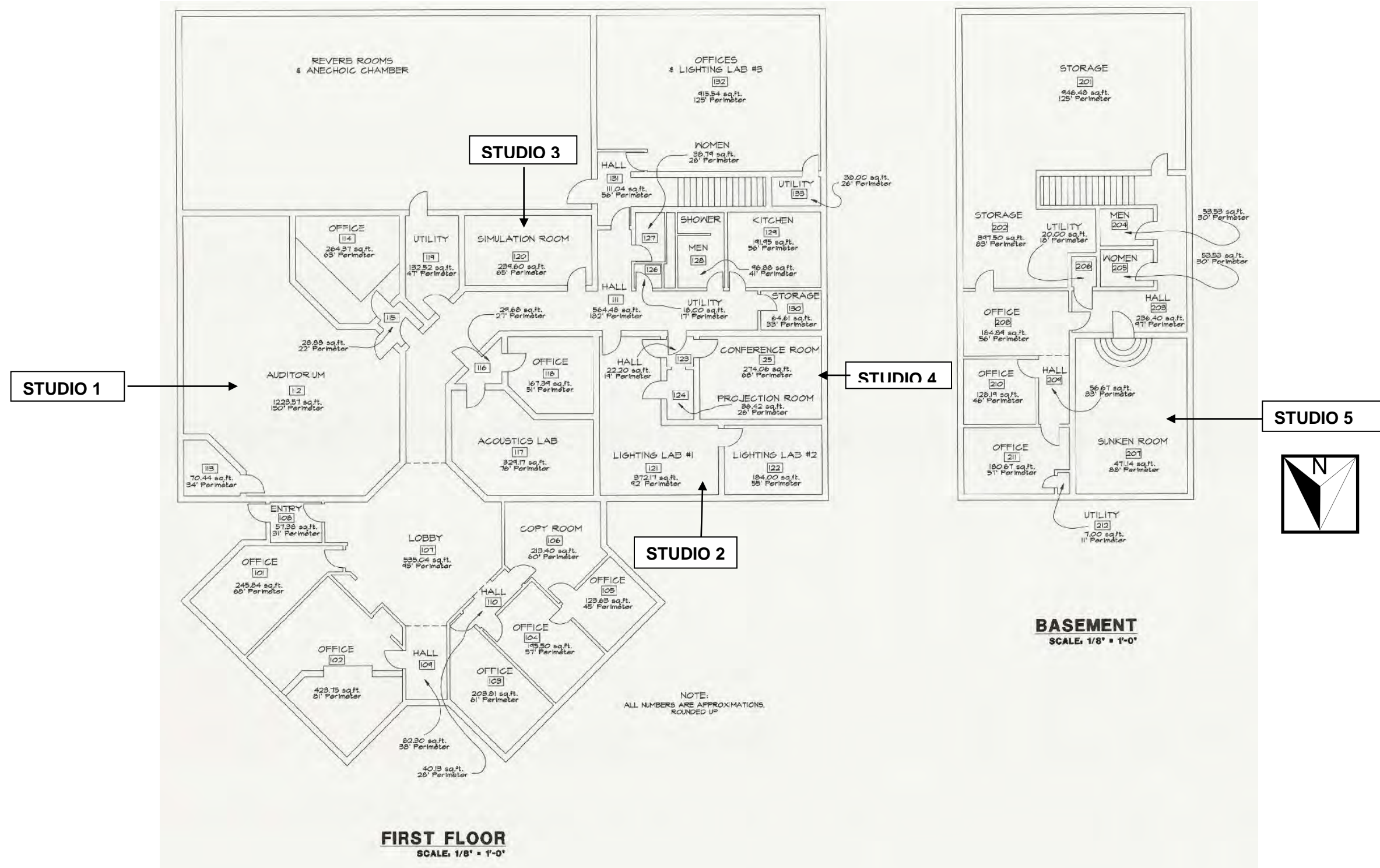


Figure 1. Floor Plan, Orfield Laboratories in Sound 80 building, 1995.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Documentation Page 50

Sound 80
Name of Property
Hennepin County, MN
County and State
Prince, 1958-1987
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

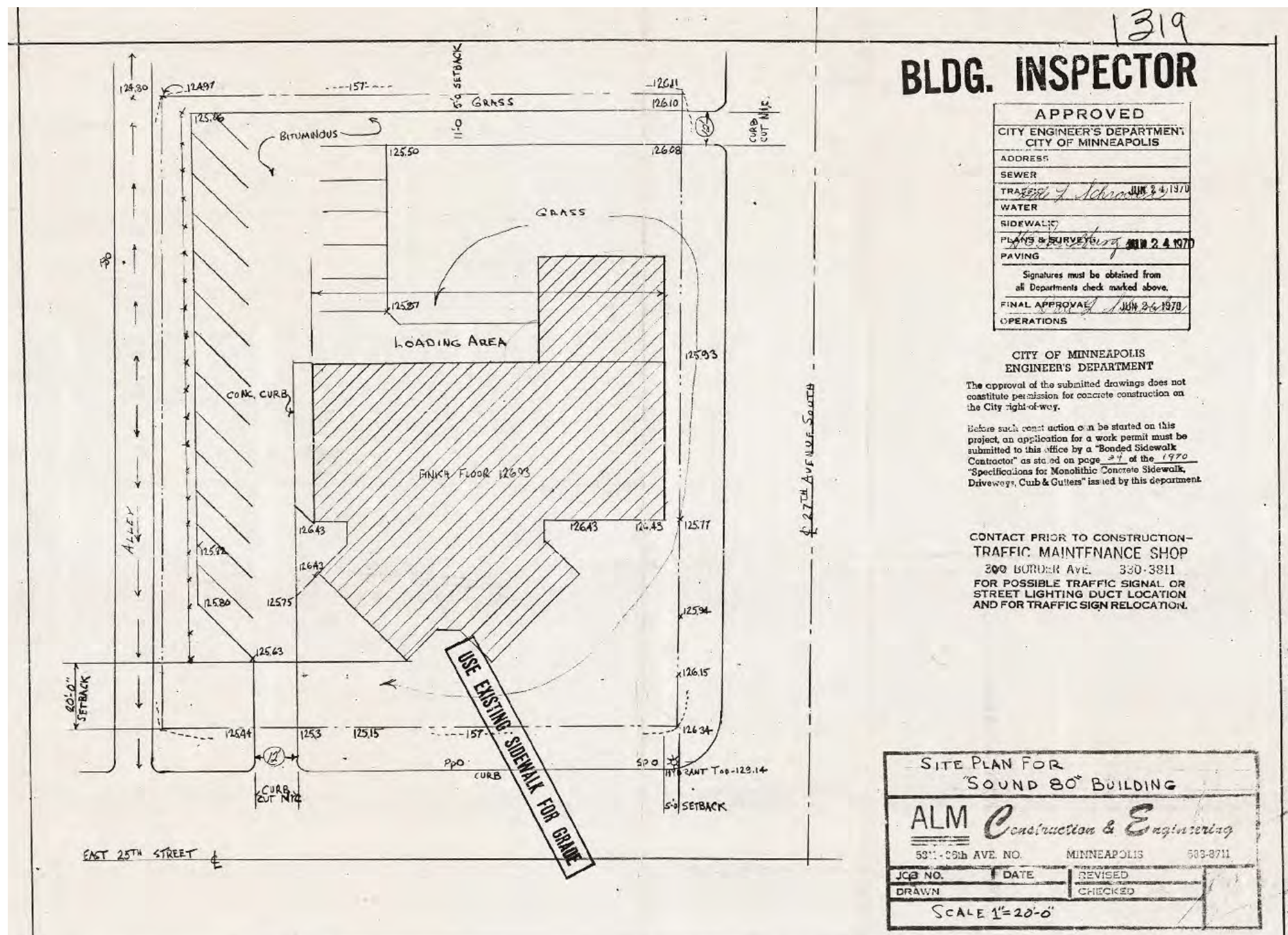


Figure 2. Site Plan, 1970.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Documentation Page 51

Sound 80
Name of Property Hennepin County, MN
County and State <i>Prince, 1958-1987</i>
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



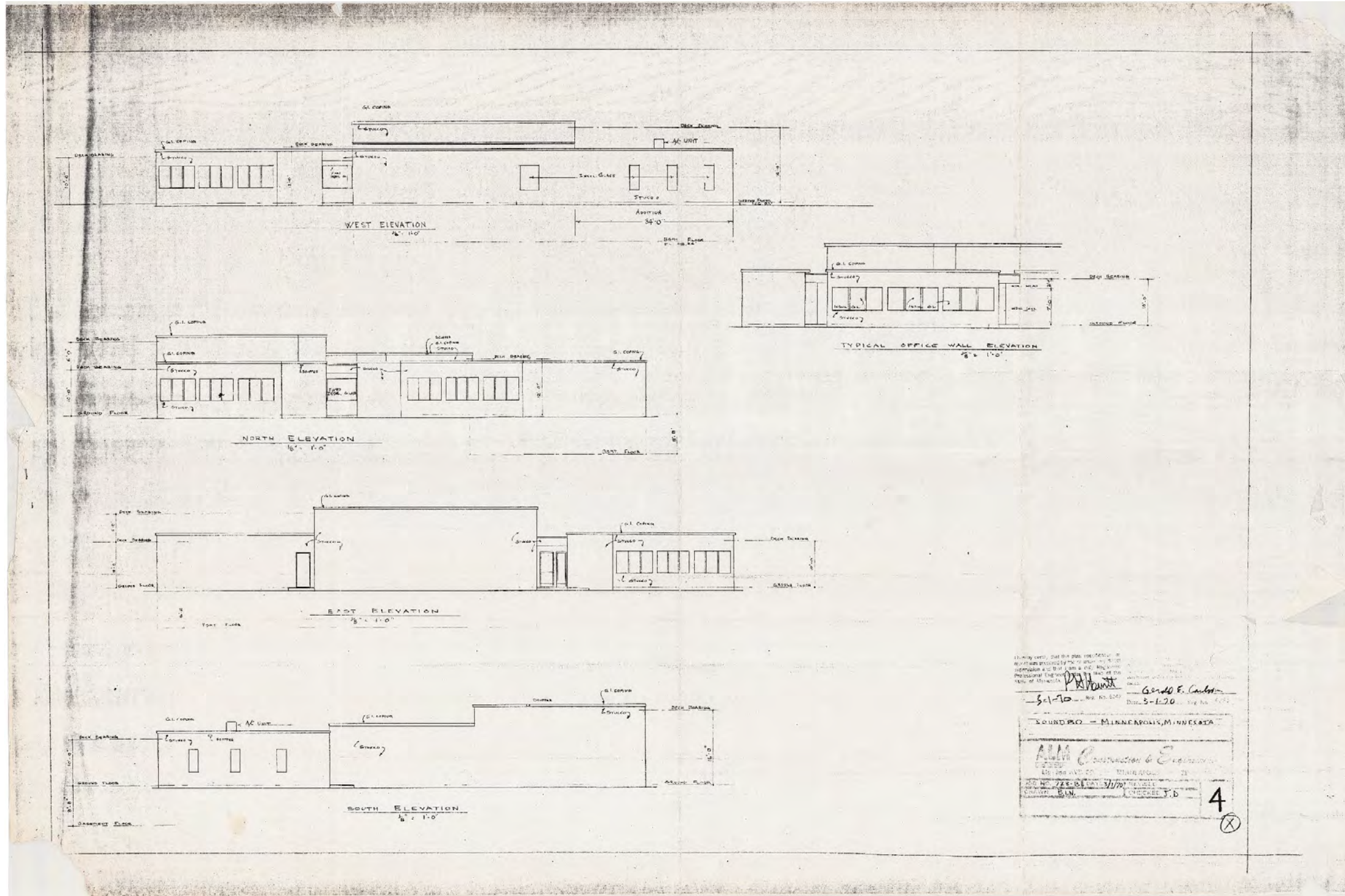
Figure 3. Sound 80 Co-founder and sound engineer Tom Jung (far left) recording the first recording session in the new Sound 80 building, 1970, with the band, The Batch. Note the foundation walls (Arne Fogel collection, as posted on Old Minneapolis Facebook page, August 1, 2019).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Sound 80
Name of Property
Hennepin County, MN
County and State
Prince, 1958-1987
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 52



I hereby certify that this plan was prepared by me or under my direct supervision and that I am a duly registered professional engineer in the State of Minnesota.
 Date: 5-1-70
 GORDO E. CARLSON
 License No. 4245
 MINNAPOLIS, MINNESOTA
 GORDO E. CARLSON
 License No. 4245
 MINNAPOLIS, MINNESOTA
 4

Figure 4. Elevation, 1970.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Sound 80
Name of Property Hennepin County, MN
County and State <i>Prince, 1958-1987</i>
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 53



Figure 5. Keith Abler (center), who recorded his album *Pilgrim* at Sound 80 in 1974, and two unidentified men at the Sound 80 entrance on the building's east side. Note the Granolux wall covering and Sound 80 sign (<https://www.sunblindlion.com/gallery>).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Documentation Page 54

Sound 80
Name of Property
Hennepin County, MN
County and State
<i>Prince, 1958-1987</i>
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



Figure 6. Sound 80 after completion of construction, circa 1971, facing south showing westernmost bay projection. Note coating, sign and windows.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Sound 80
Name of Property
Hennepin County, MN
County and State
Prince, 1958-1987
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 55

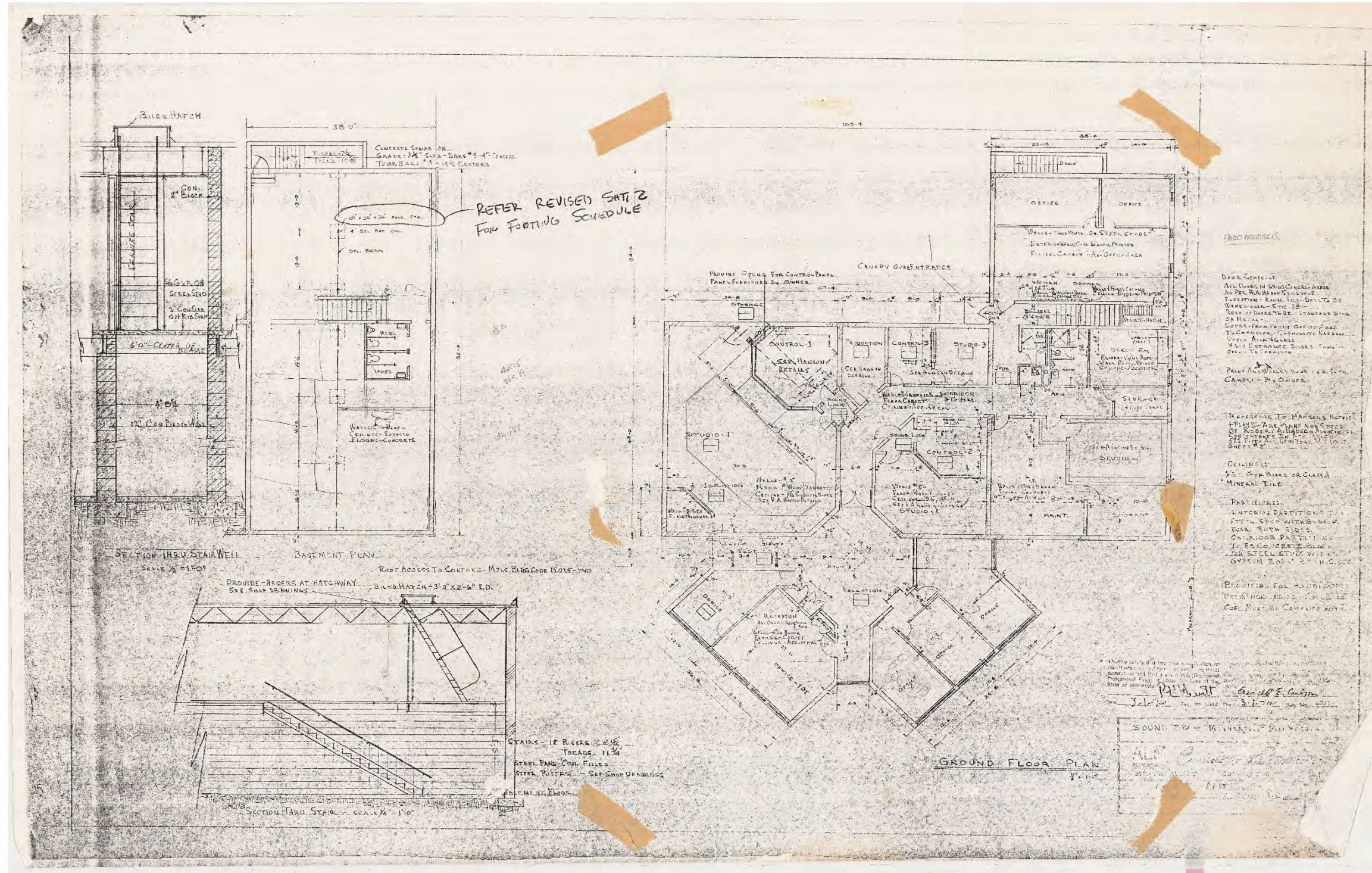


Figure 7. Ground Floor Plan, 1970.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Documentation Page 56

Sound 80
Name of Property
Hennepin County, MN
County and State
Prince, 1958-1987
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

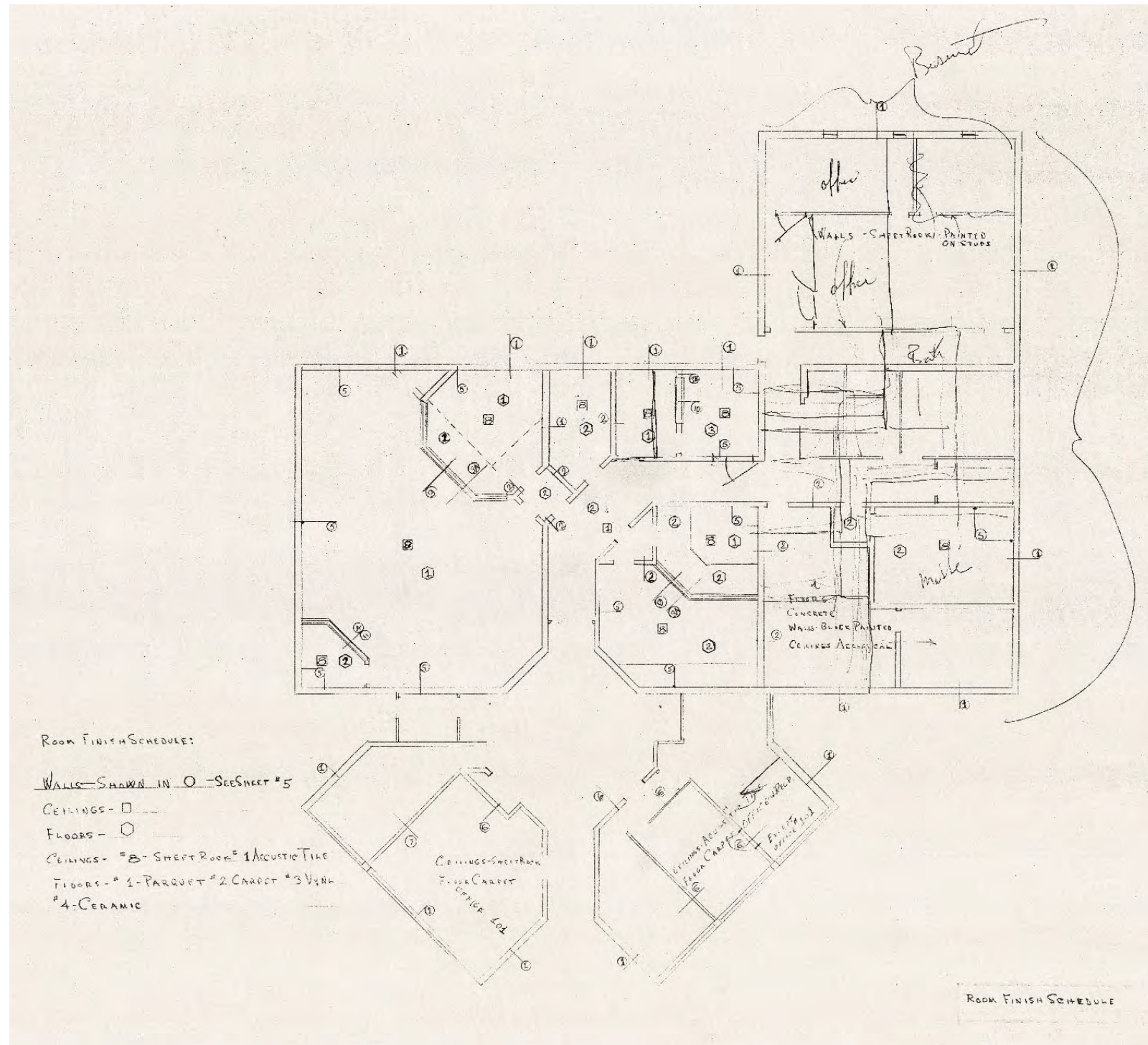


Figure 8. Room Finishing Schedule, 1970.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Documentation Page 57

Sound 80
Name of Property
Hennepin County, MN
County and State
Prince, 1958-1987
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

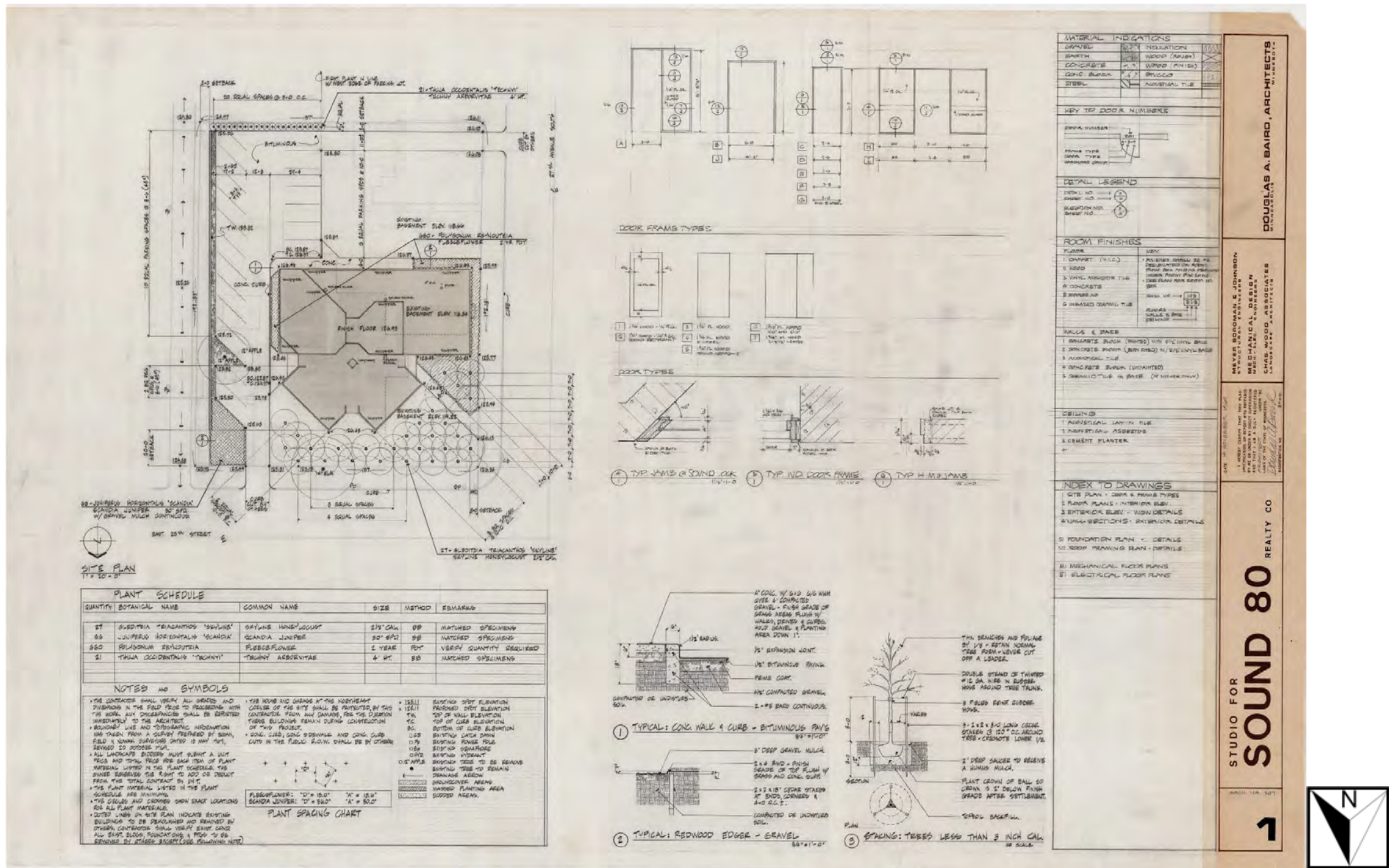


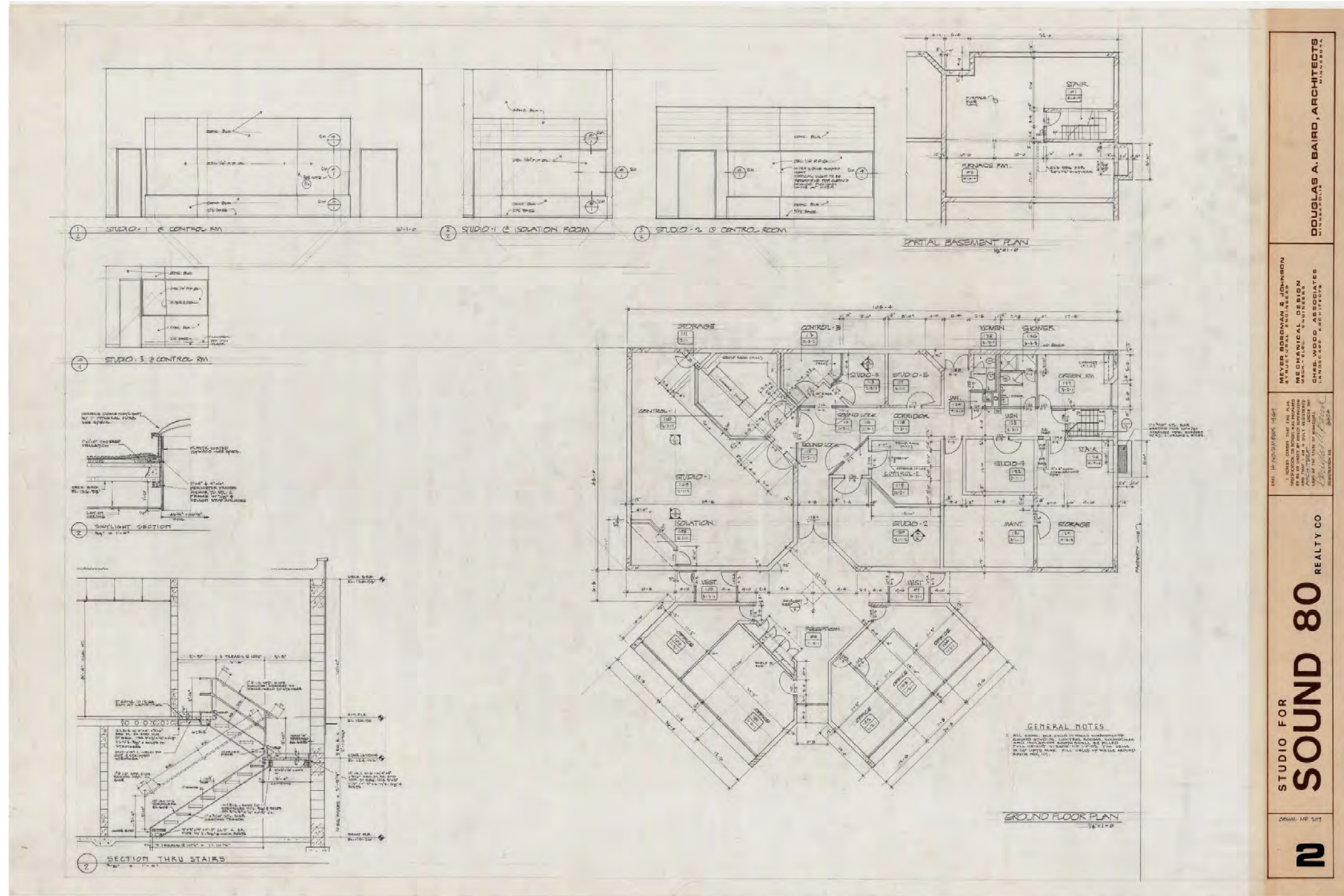
Figure 9. Landscaping plan (left; not implemented) and room finishing key (right) from Baird plans, November 14, 1969.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Documentation Page 58

Sound 80
Name of Property
Hennepin County, MN
County and State
Prince, 1958-1987
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



DOUGLAS A. BAIRD, ARCHITECTS
 1715 BROADWAY, MINNEAPOLIS, MINN. 55416
 MECHANICAL DESIGN
 CHAR. WOOD, ASSOCIATES
 1000 WOOD AVE., MINNEAPOLIS, MINN. 55414

NOV 14 1969

STUDIO FOR
SOUND 80
 REALTY CO

OSWALD 102 507



Figure 10. Room finishing schedule, Baird plans, November 14, 1969.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Documentation Page 59

Sound 80
Name of Property
Hennepin County, MN
County and State
Prince, 1958-1987
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

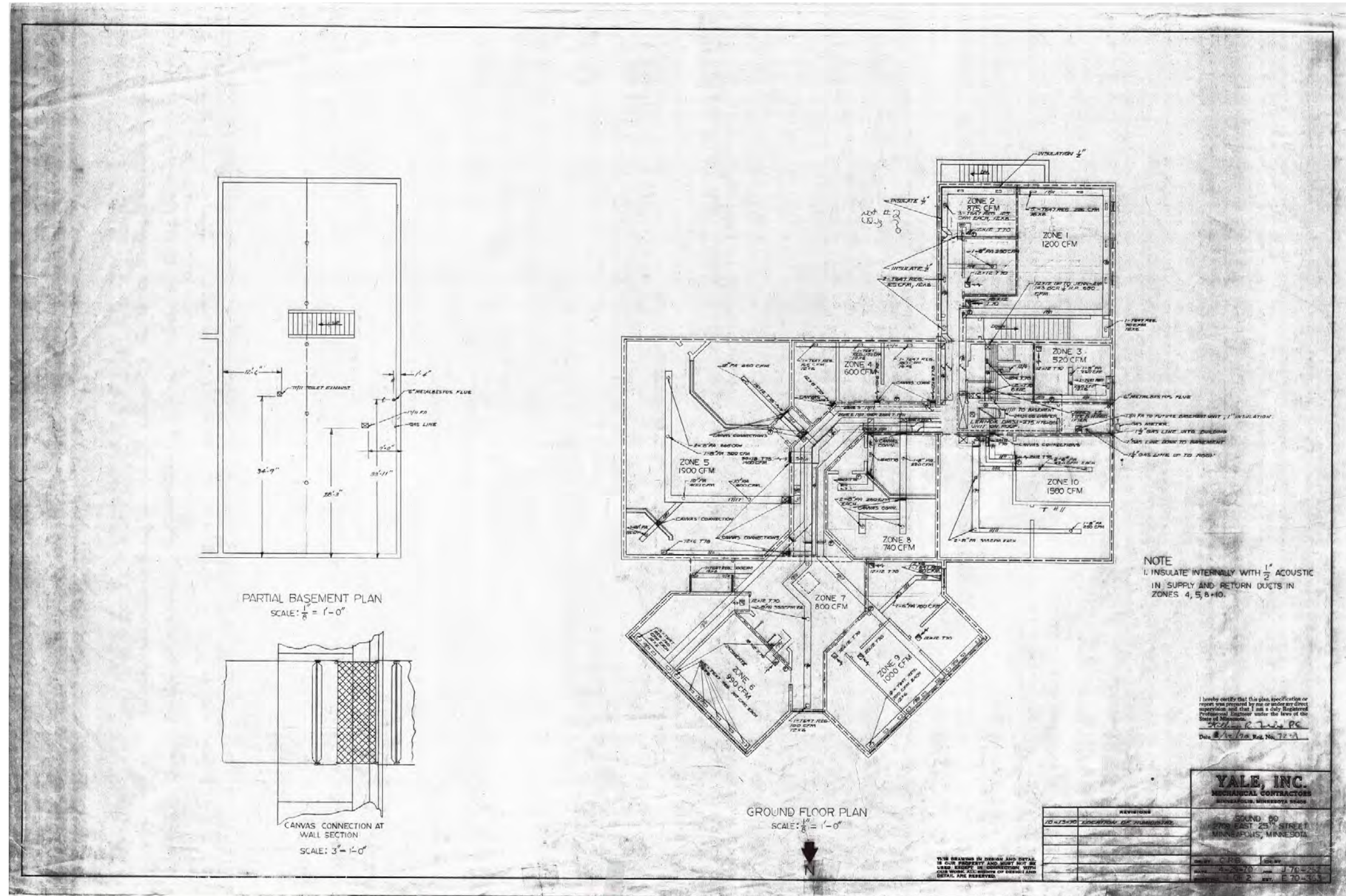


Figure 11. Mechanical, 1970.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Documentation Page 60

Sound 80
Name of Property
Hennepin County, MN
County and State
Prince, 1958-1987
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

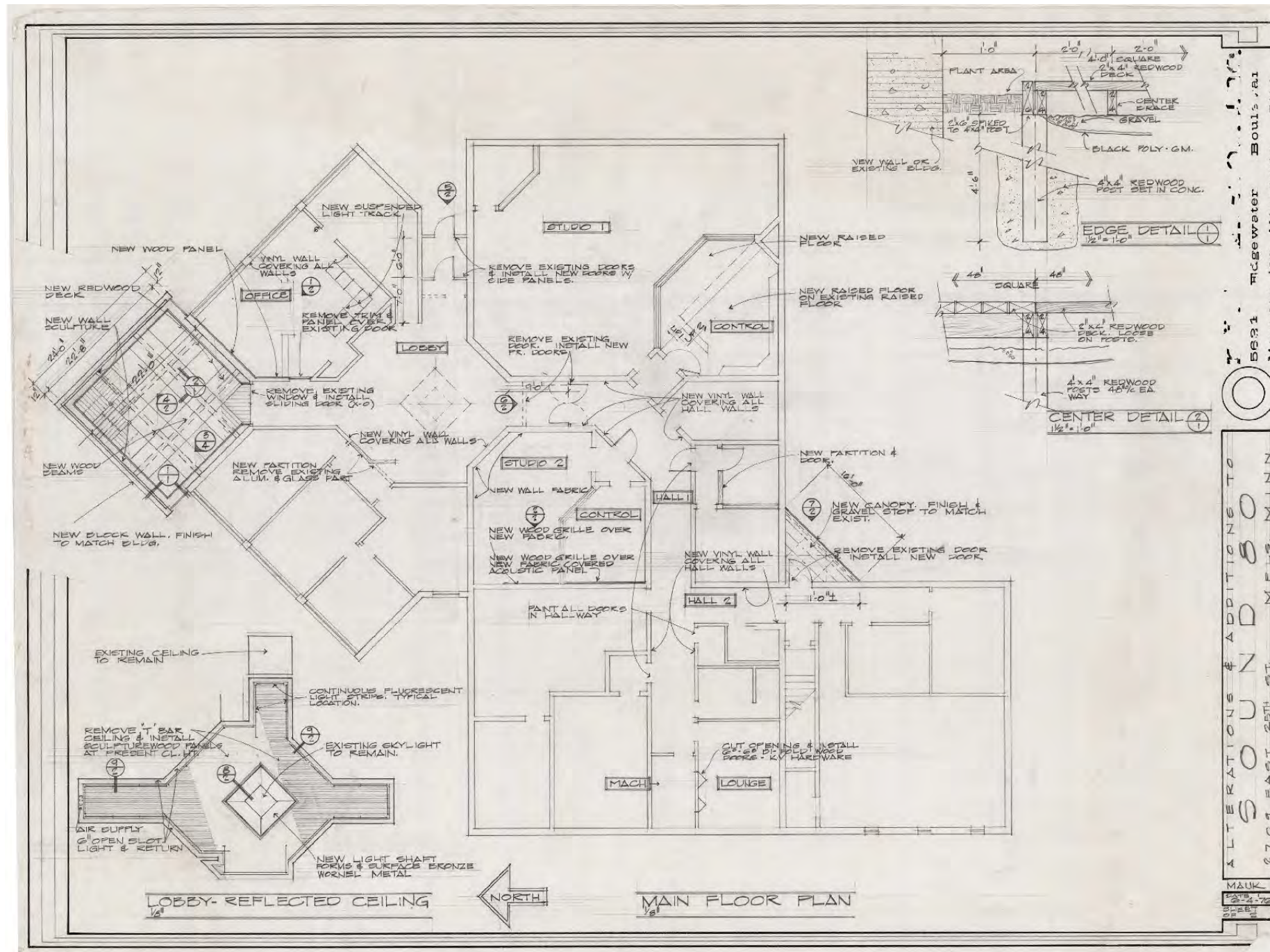


Figure 12. 1976 Alterations, Orfield Associates. Note the redwood deck proposed for the north façade was not built.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Sound 80

Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN

County and State

Prince, 1958-1987

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number _____ Additional Documentation Page 61

Figure 13. Interior of Studio 1 (c. 1971) showing exterior of control room. Note the isolation booths on the left are not extant, and were likely removed by 1974 (see Figures 16 and 17) (facing southwest) (Orfield 2018).

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Sound 80

Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN

County and State

Prince, 1958-1987

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number _____ Additional Documentation Page 62



Figure 14. Studio 1 (c. 1971) showing isolation booth in northeast corner of the room and Direct Input (DI) box on lower right side (facing northeast) (Orfield 2018).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Sound 80

Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN

County and State

Prince, 1958-1987

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number _____ Additional Documentation Page 63

MINNEAPOLIS
IS 1.2 MILES FROM ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S SEVEN
GREAT RECORDING STUDIOS

Until this year, Minneapolis wasn't a name that came up very often when producers and musicians talked about making records. But that's changing. Fast. A group of bright, young recording engineers and musicians who like the style of life in the area set out to build, from the ground up, one of the few places in the country designed exclusively for the art of recorded sound.

They named it SOUND 80. Five studios — one just for film tracks. Two 16 track music studios. Mastering lab with the new Neumann VMS-70 lathe. ARP synthesizers. Quad mix facilities.

But mostly it's people. Producers, mixers, technicians, composers, arrangers — people who can give you the sounds and services you find in maybe three or four other recording centers.

If you're within 1,000 miles of Minneapolis, it's worth checking out Sound 80. Chances are you'd have to go a lot further to get anything better.

Contact Chief Engineer Tom Jung, (612) 721-6341
SOUND 80, 2709 East 25th Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55406

Figure 15. Sound 80 advertisement in Billboard Magazine, November 6, 1971. Note the Arabic numbering of studios on hallway walls (third photo from the top right).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Sound 80

Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN

County and State

Prince, 1958-1987

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number _____ Additional Documentation Page 64



Figure 16. Sound 80 advertisement from April 1973 (Anderson 2020). Clockwise from top left: Room 101 (Herb Pilhofer's office); Studio 1 showing control room and red wall fabric in southeastern corner; hallway with Studio 2 to the left; Studio 1 control room looking out on live room); Neumann lathe; Studio 2 (note red wall fabric [extant] and wood wall panels on west and north walls [not extant]); unidentified equipment, and green room (now a kitchen).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Sound 80
Name of Property
Hennepin County, MN
County and State
Prince, 1958-1987
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number _____ Additional Documentation Page 65

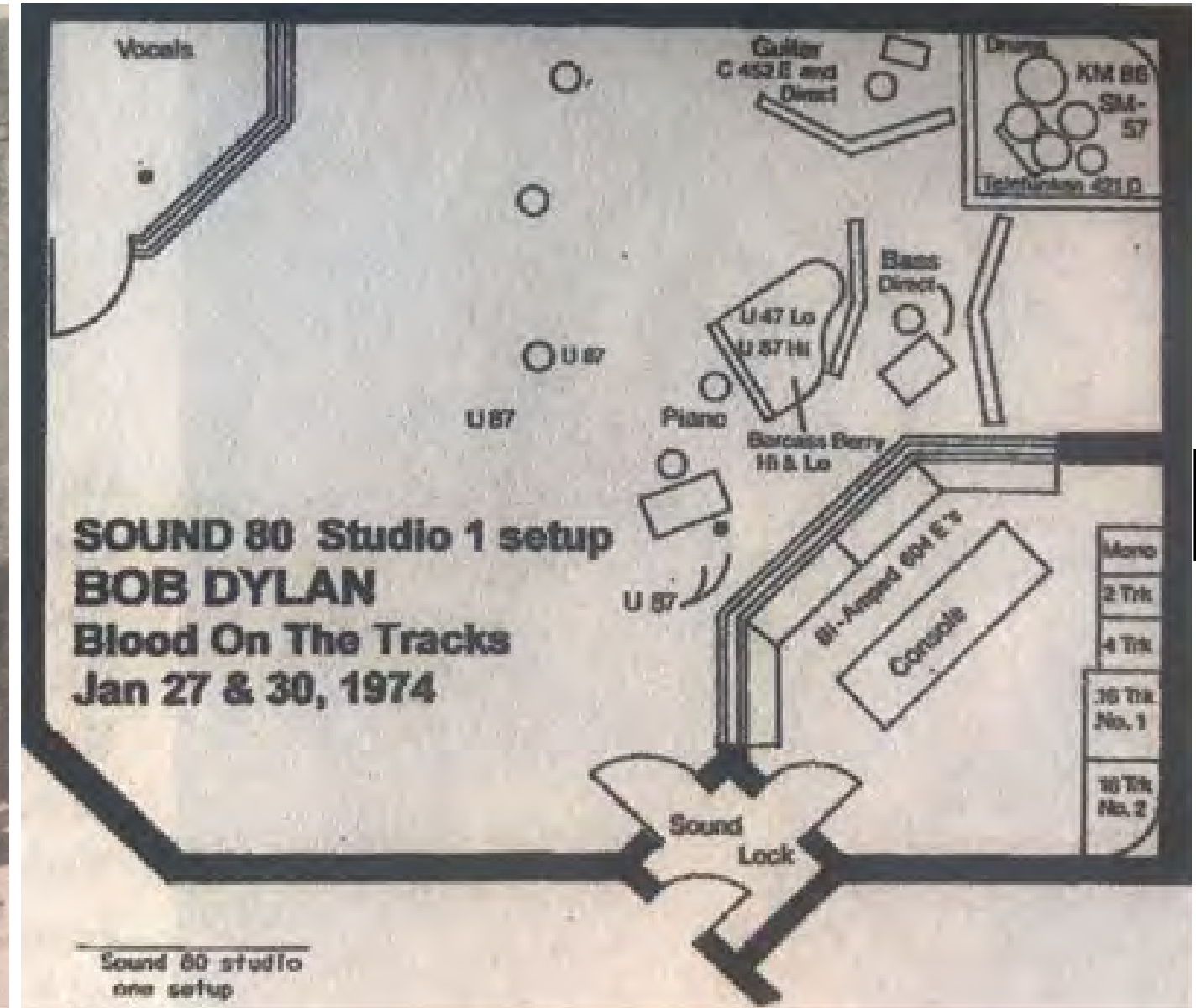


Figure 17. Drummer Bill Berg's sketch of the recording of "Lily, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts" in Studio 1 (from southeast corner of room facing north; note control room on left and isolation booth in the center) left; and the Studio 1 setup for recording of five songs on Bob Dylan's *Blood on the Tracks*, right (Gill and Odegard 2004). The images demonstrate the flexibility in setting up the space and the ability of the engineers in the control room to view the entire live room and isolation booth (date is erroneously listed as "Jan 27 & 30, 1974"; recording occurred December 27 and 30, 1974). Note absence of isolation booths and the use of portable acoustic panels in the area east of the control room (compare to Figure 14).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Sound 80

Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN

County and State

Prince, 1958-1987

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number _____ Additional Documentation Page 66



Figure 18. Dennis Russell Davies conducting the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra in Studio 1 in June 1978 (facing north with isolation booth on the right). Note the flooring, paint scheme, and lighting. The session was recorded with 3M's pioneering multi-track digital recording equipment. The resulting album, *Copland: Appalachian Spring / Ives: Three Places in New England*, was the world's first multi-track digital recording and the first digital recording to win a Grammy Award (Meyer 2016).

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Sound 80

Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN

County and State

Prince, 1958-1987

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number _____ Additional Documentation Page 67



Figure 19. Interior of Studio 2 (c. 1971) showing red fabric wall covering (Orfield 2018).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Sound 80

Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN

County and State

Prince, 1958-1987

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number _____ Additional Documentation Page 68



Figure 20. Sound 80 co-founders (from left) Herb Pilhofer and Tom Jung, sound engineer Gary Erickson, business manager Jan Erickson, and sound engineer Scott Rivard, early 1970s (Kenny and Saylor 2013: 79).

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Sound 80

Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN

County and State

Prince, 1958-1987

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number _____ Additional Documentation Page 69



Figure 21. Sound engineer Scott Rivard in the Studio 1 control room recording the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, 1978 (Wurzer 2013).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Sound 80

Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN

County and State

Prince, 1958-1987

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number _____ Additional Documentation Page 70



Figure 22. Hollywood film director and special effects pioneer Douglas Trumbull (far right) working at Sound 80 with Herb Pilhofer, Tom Jung, and an unknown staff member (right to left) to develop an experimental process to improve the sound quality of films, 1978 (Kobersteen 1978).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Sound 80

Name of Property

Hennepin County, MN

County and State

Prince, 1958-1987

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number _____ Additional Documentation Page 71



Figure 23. An eighteen-year-old Prince Rogers Nelson playing piano and drums in Studio 1 at Sound 80 while recording his demo tapes that landed him a contract with Warner Bros., first half of 1977 (Whitman 2017).

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Sound 80
Name of Property
Hennepin County, MN
County and State
Prince, 1958-1987
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number _____ Additional Documentation Page 72



Figure 24. A nineteen-year-old Prince (recording only under his first name) in Studio 1 at Sound 80 in September 1977 recording his debut album for Warner Bros., *For You* (Prince 2019: 125; 153)





Orfield
Laboratories
Inc.
2709 East 25th Street









































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 6/18/2020 Date of Pending List: 7/7/2020 Date of 16th Day: 7/22/2020 Date of 45th Day: 8/3/2020 Date of Weekly List: 8/7/2020

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 8/3/2020 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria:

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

May 8, 2020

Amy Spong
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office
50 Sherburne Avenue – Administration Building 203
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Sound 80 – 2709 East 25th Street, Minneapolis
National Register of Historic Places Nomination – CLG Comments

Dear Amy Spong,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nomination for Sound 80 located at 2709 East 25th Street in Minneapolis. These comments are being submitted as an interested party by staff of the Minneapolis Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) on behalf of the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission who considered the nomination during a meeting on May 5, 2020. The Commission voted unanimously to move forward the CPED staff recommendation that is outlined here:

Staff recommends the Heritage Preservation Commission adopt this CPED report, approve the National Register nomination for Sound 80 at 2709 East 25th Street, and direct staff to transmit a letter summarizing the report to the State Historic Preservation Officer.

The Commission supports the nomination and concurs that Sound 80 meets National Register Criteria A for Performing Arts: Music, for its statewide importance and association to the Minnesota music scene from 1971-1981, as well as Criteria B for statewide significance for its association with Prince as a writing, practice, rehearsal and recording location for the artist, and related development of the Minneapolis Sound. Given the documented importance of the property's significance under both Criteria A and Criteria B, the Commission agrees that the property meets requirements to be considered for nomination under Criterion Consideration G. The Commission provided the following comments on the nomination:

1. Multiple commissioners commented that the nomination was well done and that they were excited to see the property come through as a NRHP nomination.
2. The Commission noted that it was great to see a property that was outlined in the 2018 *Minneapolis Music History, 1850–2000: A Context* move forward toward NRHP listing.
3. The Commission expressed preliminary support for the property owner potentially nominating the building for local landmark designation.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or require further clarification.

Sincerely,



Rob Skalecki
City Planner, Historic Preservation
Community Planning and Economic Development
250 S. Fourth St. Room 300
Minneapolis, MN 55415
(612) 394-7951
robert.skalecki@minneapolismn.gov

Cc: Kristen Zschomler, Sound History, LLC

Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office
50 Sherburne Ave., Suite 203, St. Paul, Minnesota 55155
651.201.3292

TO: Joy Beasley, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Denis Gardner
National Register Historian
MN SHPO

DATE: 6/18/2020

NAME OF PROPERTY: Sound 80

COUNTY AND STATE: Hennepin County, Minnesota

SUBJECT: National Register:
 Nomination
 Multiple Property Documentation Form
 Request for determination of eligibility
 Request for removal (Reference No.)
 Nomination resubmission
 Boundary increase/decrease (Reference No.)
 Additional documentation (Reference No.)

DOCUMENTATION:

Original National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
 Multiple Property Documentation Form
 Continuation Sheets
 Removal Documentation
 Photographs
 CD w/ image files
 Digital Map(s)
 Sketch map/photo key
 Correspondence
 Owner Objection
 The enclosed owner objections
 Do Do not constitute a majority of property owners

STAFF COMMENTS:

Correspondence was received from Rob Skalecki, City Planner, City of Minneapolis, MN supporting the nomination.

Images included in electronic submission include: #2, 4, 5, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, and 22

A full set of the documentation and photos will be provided once all are back at their respective offices and normal work routines.