

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM
FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Louisiana
COUNTY: Orleans Parish
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
United States Custom House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
423 Canal Street

CITY OR TOWN:
New Orleans

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
2

STATE:
Louisiana

CODE
22

COUNTY:
Orleans

CODE
071

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

4. AGENCY

General Services Administration - Public Buildings Service

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)
Area Manager, Federal Building

STREET AND NUMBER:
600 South Street

CITY OR TOWN:
New Orleans

STATE:
Louisiana

CODE
22

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Civil Courts Building

STREET AND NUMBER:
421 Loyola Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
New Orleans

STATE:
Louisiana

CODE
22

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1963 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Division of Prints and Photographs

STREET AND NUMBER:
Library of Congress

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington

STATE:
D. C.

CODE
11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
(Check One)			(Check One)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered			<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		
			<input type="checkbox"/> Moved		
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The United States Custom House fills a large trapezoidal block bounded by Canal, North Peters, Iberville and Decatur Streets. Begun in 1848, its massive, four-story walls were completed and temporarily roofed when construction was interrupted by the Civil War. When work was resumed the design was altered by the elimination of a central dome and the simplification of the roof and cornice which were completed in 1881.

Alexander Thompson Wood was the architect. James Gallier, Sr., in his autobiography, described Wood as a murderer and ex-convict who pirated elements of Gallier's custom house plans submitted to the Secretary of the Treasury in the last months of the Tyler (Whig) administration. Thomas K. Wharton served as resident supervisory architect through much of the 1848-62 period of construction; Major G. T. Beauregard was superintendent of construction.

Architectural drawings published by the Secretary of the Treasury in 1857 correspond exactly to the present appearance of the exterior walls; the Quincy granite is extremely resistant to change. Except for the rounded corner at the acute intersection of Canal and North Peters Streets, the four elevations are similar. Centered in each is a slightly projecting, pedimented pavilion having four, fluted, engaged columns with open papyrus capitals, the only Egyptian element in the design. Near the ends of each facade are pavilions of minimal projection having flat pilasters and no pediment. The columns or pilasters of the pavilions rest on the smooth rusticated base which constitutes the ground story. There, semi-circular arched niches ornament the pavilions and the original decorative metal gates screen the cart ways. The continuous cast iron cornice has wide-spaced triglyphs below a band of dentils.

The General Business Room or "Marble Hall" is the most important interior space. Its central skylighted portion is defined by 14 Corinthian columns supporting a full entablature. Alternate column capitals are ornamented with heads of Mercury and Luna. Bas reliefs by A. Defrasse depict a pelican feeding her young, Bienville, and Jackson. Counterwork dates from extensive interior remodeling in 1915. At that time the principal stair from the Canal Street entrance to the Marble Hall was completely rebuilt. Although many of the interior spaces have been rearranged, some of the major offices still contain original or early cabinets and furniture. The General Services Administration is planning extensive restoration of the interiors, more appropriate lighting, and adaptation of the unfinished attic spaces to modern office use.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1848-81

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi- | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | losophy | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | itarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Of strategic importance in American history, the port of New Orleans links our greatest river system to overseas markets. In such a setting a customs house is a building of major prominence. When new, the New Orleans Custom House was, among Federal buildings, considered second only to the United States Capitol in size. It occupies the site of an 1819 custom house designed by Benjamin Buisson to replace Benjamin H. Latrobe's custom house of 1807. A late 18th-century Spanish custom house occupied a site across Iberville Street.

Excellence of design and construction is especially evident in that unstable soil, high humidity, occasional hurricanes, and periods of lax maintenance have left the Custom House exterior unmarred. The Marble Hall is a Greek Revival interior of notable originality and monumentality.

Henry Clay participated in the cornerstone ceremonies on February 22, 1849.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		29°	57'	06"
NE	° ' "	° ' "		90°	03'	59"
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **2.33 acres**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

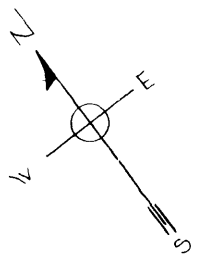
11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Paul Goeldner, Architect, Historic Sites Survey		DATE: 7/3/74
BUSINESS ADDRESS: Division of Historic and Architectural Surveys National Park Service		
STREET AND NUMBER: 1100 L Street N.W.		PHONE:
CITY OR TOWN: Washington	STATE: D. C.	CODE: 11

12. CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION **NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

<p>State Liaison Officer recommendation:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p>_____</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>State Liaison Officer Signature</i></p> <p>In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Liaison Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The recommended level of significance is <input type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Local</p> <p>_____</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Federal Representative Signature</i> <i>Date</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Title</i></p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p>_____</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</i></p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p>_____</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Keeper of The National Register</i></p> <p>Date _____</p>
---	--

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

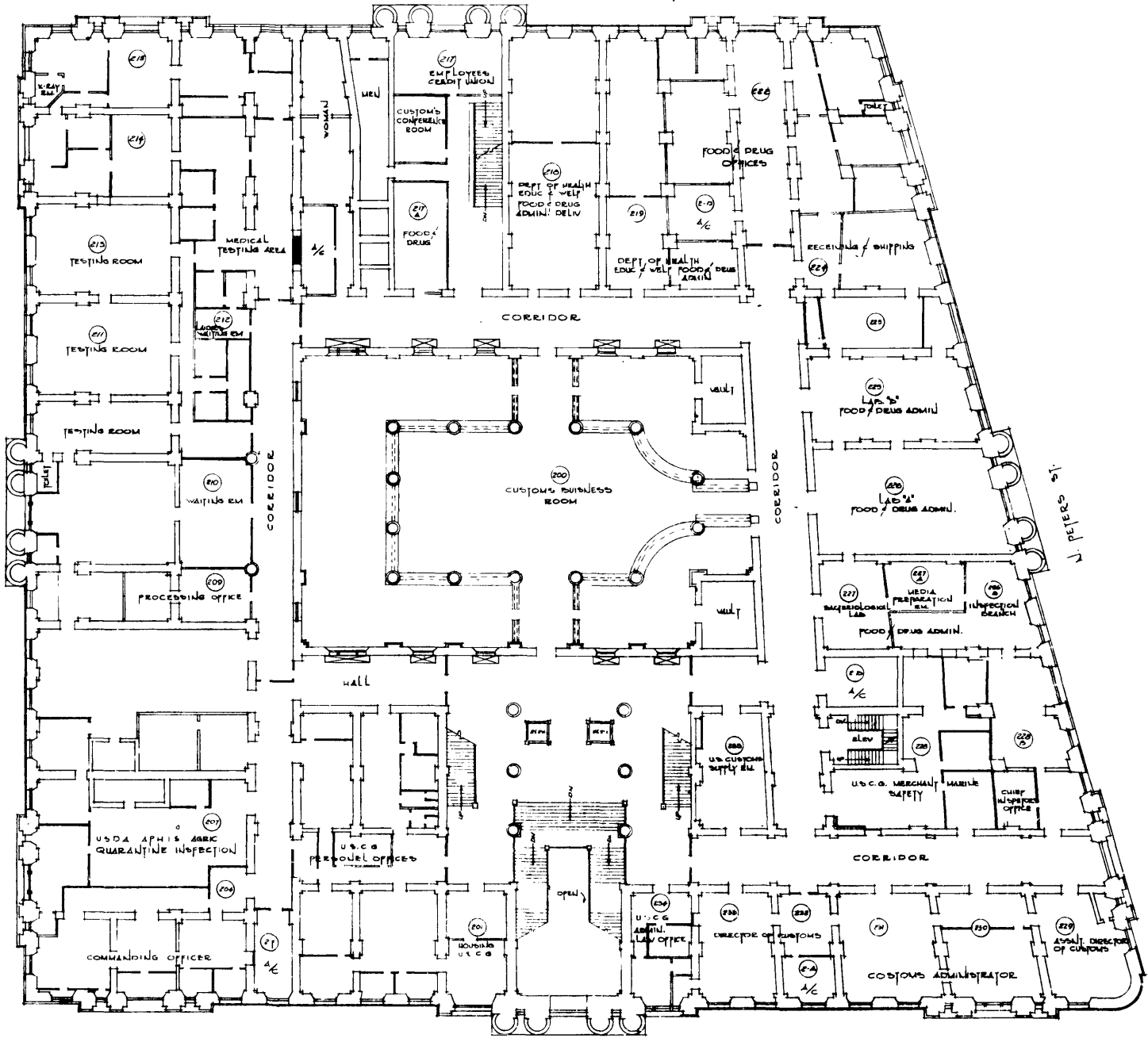
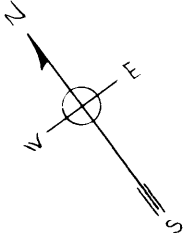


FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

IBERVILLE ST

DECATUR ST

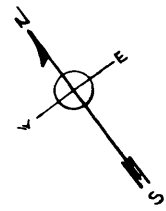
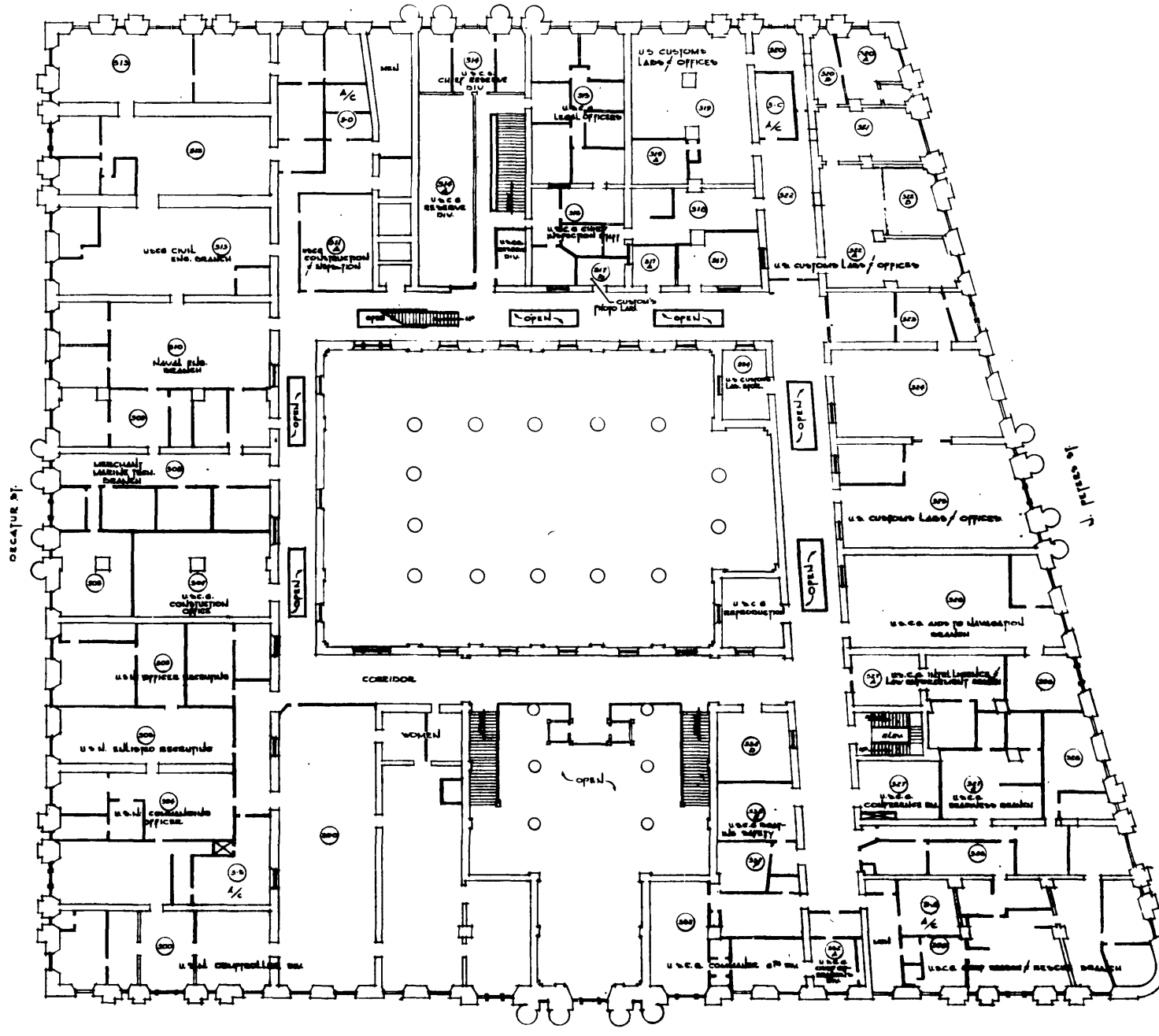
N
PETERS ST



CADAL ST

SECOND FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

Derbyville St

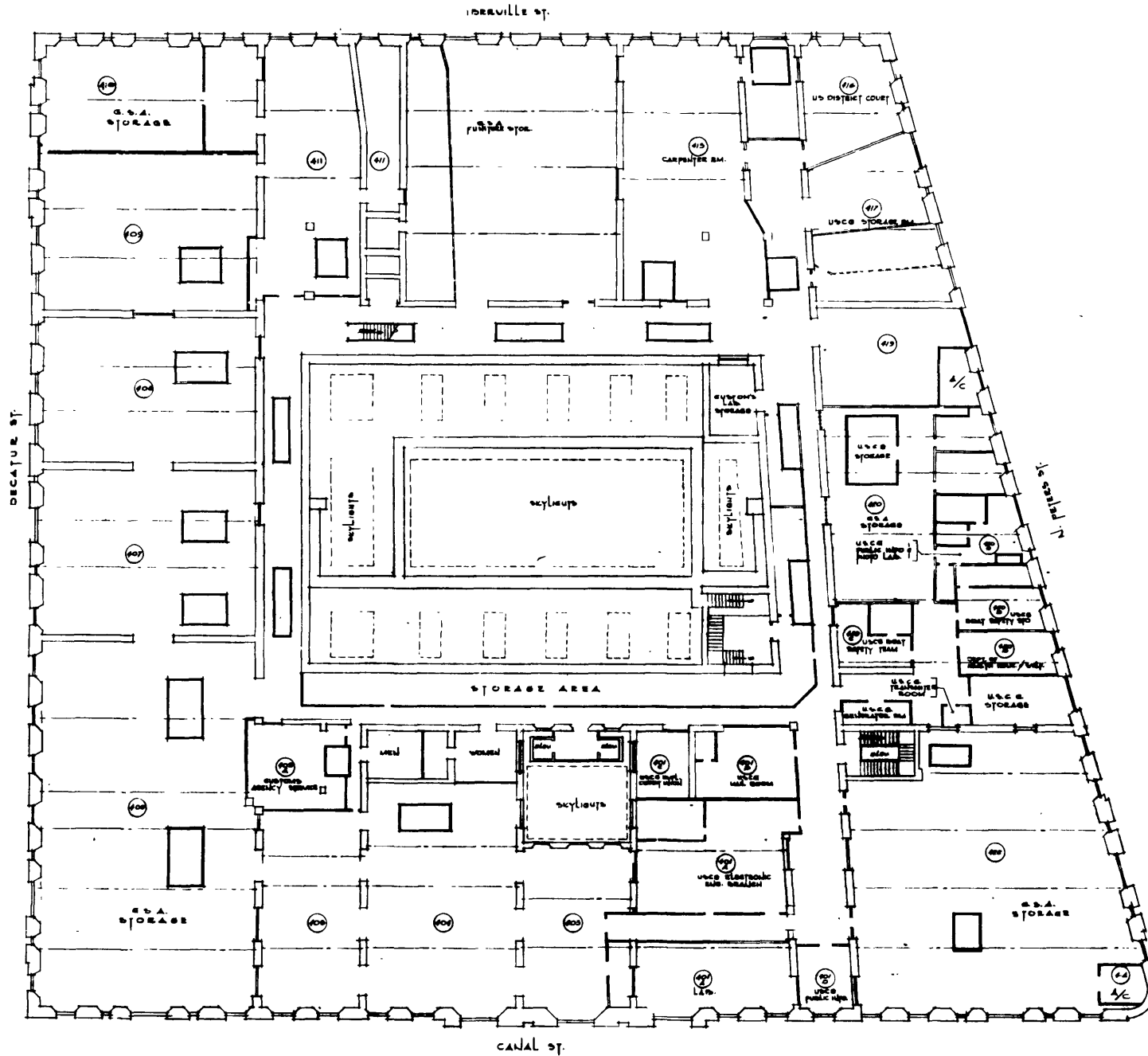


DECATUR ST

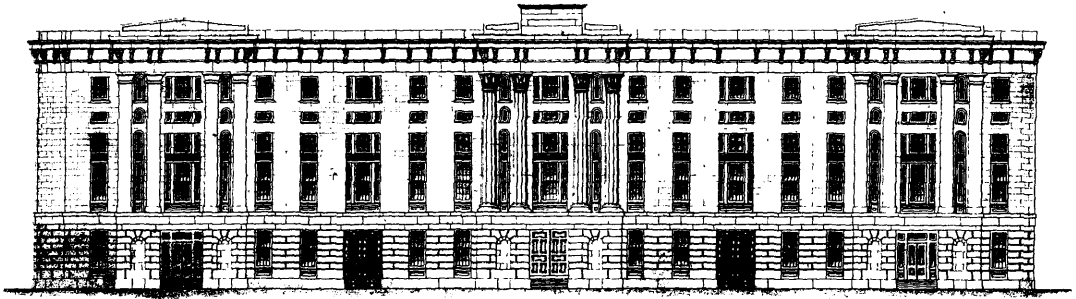
to Canal St

CANAL ST

THIRD FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

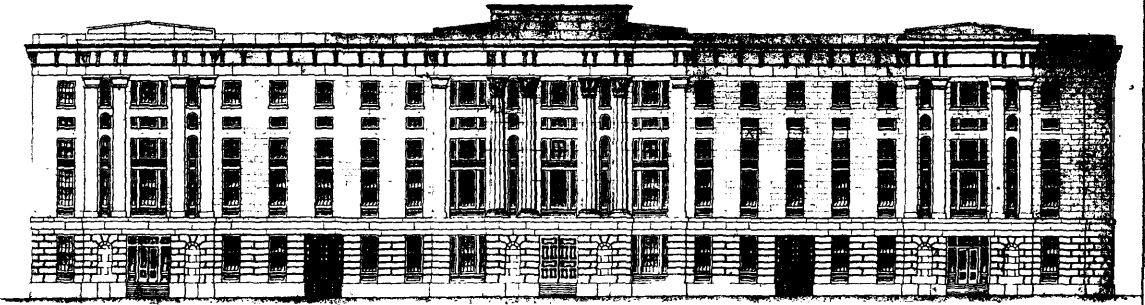


FOURTH FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"



ELEVATION ON NEW LEVEE STREET

Scale 3/4" = 10' 0" 1/2" Prof.



Designed by J. F. Wood, Esq.

NEW CUSTOM HOUSE at NEW ORLEANS, LA

ELEVATION ON CANAL STREET.

*Wm. B. Schaffers,
Chief of Engineers U.S. Army,
Department of Construction*

29



Designed by J. F. Wood, Esq.

Eng'g by William B. Schaffers, Esq.

NEW CUSTOM HOUSE at NEW ORLEANS, LA

SECTION FROM CANAL STREET TO CUSTOM HOUSE STREET.

*Wm. B. Schaffers,
Chief of Engineers U.S. Army,
Department of Construction*

29