

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. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Scottish Rite Cathedral

other names/site number Scottish Rite Masonic Center; NEHRSI #: DO09:0124-007

2. Location

street & number 202 S. 20th Street not for publication

city or town Omaha vicinity

state Nebraska code NE county Douglas code 055 zip code 68102-1275

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

/s/ Michael J. Smith, SHPO 7-6-2011
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Director, Nebraska State Historical Society
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only one box.)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social/meeting hall

Social/meeting hall

Recreation and culture/theater

Recreation and culture/theater

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals /

foundation: Concrete/Brick Masonry

Neoclassical Revival

walls: Stone/Limestone

roof: Asphalt/Rubber

other:

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The 1912-14 Scottish Rite Cathedral occupies a 0.37-acre site in downtown Omaha, Nebraska (2006 est. pop. 419,545). The building occupies a corner lot with two primary facades – north and east. Both are clad in limestone. The main entrance façade faces north to Douglas Street. The east façade is set back 35 feet from the 20th Street sidewalk and the grade slopes down approximately eight feet from north to south. The south side of the building adjoins an alley, and the west side now connects to a 4-level concrete parking garage. Both secondary sides are buff brick. The steel-framed structure has three stories over a basement, and a stagehouse in the southwest corner that is 16 feet above the main roof.

The Scottish Rite Cathedral was on the west edge of Downtown Omaha. In 1914, the area was surrounded by residential duplexes and apartments to the west and north, with commercial buildings and hotels to the east and south. Immediately across Douglas Street to the north was the Omaha Club, a three-story Italian Renaissance Revival structure that was considered the most prestigious private club in Omaha. It was demolished in the 1960's and replaced with a new Omaha Club structure. Twelve years after completion of the Scottish Rite Cathedral, the Riviera Theater (now The Rose), a Moorish/Classical Revival structure, was constructed at 20th & Farman Street. These structures along with Central High School on 20th & Dodge Street, anchored the west edge of Downtown Omaha in the early years of the 20th century.

Narrative Description

Designed by John Latenser, Sr., the building is a rectangular Neoclassical Revival edifice consisting of three stories over the basement level. The measurements being 94 feet east-west x 124 feet north-south. Framing members are steel and the two primary façade walls and trim are Bedford oolithic limestone.

The main (north) façade is symmetrical, with the main entrance doorway framed by two freestanding three-story high Ionic columns and two large projecting pilasters, all supporting the portico surmounted by a full entablature, projected cornice with dentils and a parapet. The 18-inch high first story belt course creates a solid appearing base for structure. The columns and pilasters form five bays for large double-hung-appearing windows (not original) at each floor level. The original windows were wood, double-hung, replaced with anodized bronze aluminum and insulating glass to nearly match the original wood framed window. The windows are inset in punched openings with limestone lug sills. The third floor windows are shorter. The northeast east corner basement window is set in a well. Decorative rectangular limestone panels are found between stories in the 2nd and 4th bays. The main entry consists of a monumental pair of wood doors centered at the first floor level, with a projected limestone surround and large bracketed stone cornice four feet above the wood door opening with a horizontal, rectangular window above the cornice. Hand-carved in relief on each of the wood entry doors is the double-headed eagle insignia of the Scottish Rite. The exterior entry stairway rises a half level from the Douglas Street sidewalk. Two bronze lanterns and pedestals set on the stone platforms which flank each side of the stairway. The original lanterns were installed in 1919, and matched the architect's design. The fate the originals is unknown, but were replaced with the current lanterns. The building's cornerstone is at the northeast corner, and was laid October 2, 1912. Cornerstones have significant symbolism in Freemasonry, and the northeast corner is always the preferred location.

The east façade is also limestone and symmetrical about two Ionic columns set in antis, which effectively replicates the north façade and portico. An added window bay at the north and south ends of the building balance the elongated east façade. The windows are not original, but reflect the configuration of the original double-hung windows. Below the first story belt course are basement windows aligning with the fenestration above. The ground slopes down from north to south and the building's setback from the 20th Street sidewalk provided a landscaped area fronting the street. In 1968, this yard area was excavated, and a basement level plaza was constructed with stairs, a handicapped ramp and a new entry doorway to the building centered below the two Ionic columns. This has become the main accessible entrance to the building. The excavation exposed the brick masonry below the limestone. The brick was covered with Granolux, a marble and granite aggregate in a plastic binder, colored to blend with the limestone above. The plaza walls are cast-in-place concrete and have precast concrete caps. Large planter areas were created along the 20th Street sidewalk and at the

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south end of the plaza adjoining the alley. Trees and shrubbery have been placed in the planters. A circular concrete fountain was placed at the northeast corner of the site with a semi-circular low limestone wall serving as an eye-level sign identifying the building. Several years after completion of the plaza, a wrought iron fence and gates were installed to secure the facility.

A 35-foot long section of the west wall extending from the northwest corner is also finished in limestone and has two fenestration panels. The south and west sides of the building are both secondary and are constructed of buff brick. Service access doors and fire escapes are the only current penetrations to these walls.

In 1970, a 4-story, post-tensioned concrete parking garage was constructed adjoining 90 lineal feet of the west wall of the Scottish Rite Cathedral. There were no windows in this area of the west wall since the basement was storage and boiler rooms, the first floor was the windowless wall of the banquet hall, and the second and third floors were the windowless walls of the theater. The Scottish Rite had a basement exit door constructed that would enter directly into the garage. The Scottish Rite has no ownership in the garage.

The south elevation windows were replaced with brick infill in 1986, and the infill locations are still readily apparent. The infill windows included three large windows in the first floor banquet hall – the westernmost window was converted to an emergency exit doorway and was connected to the original fire escape from the theater backstage on second floor. The southeast first floor infill window is in the banquet servery area. The southeast second floor infill window is the backstage storage area. The southeast third floor infill window is a costume storage and makeup area. All basement infill windows are in the location of the kitchen. There were no other south wall windows since the second and third floors constituted the stage and fly loft for the theater.

The interior of the Scottish Rite Cathedral retains nearly all of its original functions and Neoclassical Revival detailing. All the original walls, ceiling and ornamental detailing are in plaster. The basic Neo-Classical motif employed in most corridor areas included pilasters with egg and dart molding “supporting” coffered ceilings that mimic entablatures; wide baseboards, sometimes of marble; elaborate door surrounds with heads that mimic ionic columns and entablatures. The corridor floors are terrazzo bordered with mosaic tile and marble. Twin flank staircases connect the first, second and third floors with stair treads of white and pink marble, wrought iron railings and wood handrails. The north passenger elevator connecting basement, first, second and third floors is original. The traction elevator was manufactured by Otis Elevator Company. The original cab was built of ornamental iron, later changed to solid metal to comply with current codes. Five brass molded double-headed eagle emblems are mounted on the cab’s walls. The original brass collapsing gate is still in use, but sliding fire doors at the floor stops were added in later years.

The **basement** was originally unfinished except for the twin flank main stairway and a small foyer finished to match the Neo-Classical detailing of the upper floors. The foyer provided access to the elevator, a large cloak room and a restroom. A large boiler room, fuel room and air handling equipment occupied most of the west end of the basement. The floor of the remaining basement was concrete slab-on-grade. Early uses included a kitchen, billiard room, bowling alley and shower baths. The basement has been altered several times since. A major renovation in 1968 created the east exterior courtyard and the new accessible entry to the building. A large lobby centered along the east wall of the basement, flanked by offices in the northeast corner and a large hydraulic freight elevator near the southeast corner. A large meeting/dining room was in the center of the basement and a large, full service kitchen was constructed along the south wall of the basement. The finishes were contemporary and commercial in character. In 1999, a full renovation of the basement was constructed to be more reflective of the character of the upper floors. The basement floor to first floor height is two feet shorter than the 15'-6" floor-to-floor dimension of the upper three levels, so the basement architectural detailing was simplified from that above. The color scheme, woodwork and stylized Neo-Classical detailing hinted at the historical building fabric, but used paneled ceilings and not coffered, modifications were made in the terrazzo patterns, dentil moldings were larger, and contemporary lighting was used.

The **first floor** has a large banquet hall (82 feet north-south and 56 feet east-west) with a maple floor, coffered ceilings and tall folding glass doors that separate the banquet hall from the meeting rooms to the east. The ladies parlor in the northwest corner has an ornate circular Neo-Classical relief plaster ceiling and decorative paneling. The floors in the meeting rooms and ladies parlor were originally carpeted and they are carpeted today. The original pendant mounted indirect light bowls on the first floor were removed in the 1968 renovation and replaced with glass chandeliers. The 2005 renovation of first floor replaced the chandeliers with new pendant bowl shaped fixtures.

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The **second floor** has a Masonic Lodge room (originally the candidates room) measuring 49-feet north-south, by 28-feet east-west. The decorative plaster is simplified from the more ornate egg and dart moldings in the public areas. The original pendant indirect lighting fixtures are in use in this room, and they are also in the second and third floor corridors, the theater and the third floor costume room. The pendant bowls were custom made for the building, cast of cement and plaster and equipped with reflectors manufactured by National XRay Reflector Company. The 33rd Degree Meeting Room (originally Secretary's Room) in the northeast corner of the second floor displays the photos of all 33° Scottish Rite Masons in Nebraska from 1897 to the present. The room was remodeled in 2000, and reflects the color scheme of The Supreme Council 33°, in Washington D.C. The decorative plaster moldings and the wood doors and surrounds are original. The Lodge room and the 33° room were originally carpeted and they are carpeted today. The original Smoking Rooms in the northwest corner of the second and third floors were renovated to women's restrooms in 2006. The men's restrooms were also renovated for compliance with accessibility codes. The small vault adjacent to the elevator has the original vault door and combination lock. The face of the steel door is painted in faux wood to match the woodwork of the building. The wood casework and shelving in the vault is original.

The **third floor** corridor provides access to the theater balcony. In the northeast corner of the third floor, the Library (originally the Candidates Room) has no pilasters and relatively minimal decorative plasterwork, but it does retain the large wood doors and surrounds. The upper sections of the walls have Lotus decorative stenciling inlaid with Fleur-de-lis. The shelving is not original to the building. The Property Room (originally the Lodge Room) has the same decorative motif as the original Candidates Room directly below. In the 1968 renovation, the casework for the costumes and other paraphernalia associated with the Scottish Rite rituals was relocated from the original Secretary's Room on second floor to the third floor Property Room. The Library and Property Room were both originally carpeted, and are carpeted today. The original drawings of the building by John Latenser indicated an Organ Space and Choir Room at the west end of the public Corridor. These were never constructed, and the Corridor now extends to the west wall of the building. However, except for the terrazzo floor bordered with mosaic tile and marble, this area is devoid of the basic Neo-Classical motif of egg and dart molding "supporting" a coffered ceiling.

The **theater** is accessed from the second floor has a 494-seat (now 403-seat) house with a balcony, stage and a 60-foot high fly loft with historic painted scenery drops. The 40-foot wide by 22-foot high proscenium arch has egg and dart and spiral Aaron's rod molding, surrounded by a series of circular lights, and at its peak, a cartouche featuring olive branches and the double-headed eagle emblem. The curved balcony front has a pattern of large Roman leaves in plaster relief. The pilasters, coffered ceiling and original pendant indirect light fixtures match the Neo-classical motif found throughout the building. The main floor of the theater has a shallow slope for the seating area and the entire floor up to the stage curtain was originally carpeted. The 2010 renovation removed the carpet and the floor was refinished with dark-stained hardwood oak to provide better natural acoustics in the space. The original wood floor in the balcony is still in place. The original seats for the theater were manufactured by American Seating Company and were wood with leather seat and back panels, ornamental cast iron standards, and each seat had a metal wire under the seats to hold the theater patrons' hats. One hundred and eighty five of the original seats are still in place in the balcony. The original main floor seats were replaced in the 1970's with contemporary seating. In 2010, those seats were removed and 217 new seats were installed that respect the character of the theater. The original theater scenery drops were painted by artisans at the M.C. Lilley & Company in Chicago, manufacturers of Military & Society Goods, Masonic Supplies, Lodge Furniture, Banners and Flags. Nine distinctive scenes were provided. In 1994, the drops were becoming worn and the Scottish Rite had the opportunity to purchase a full set from a Scottish Rite facility that was vacating a building in Kansas City, Kansas. These drops were painted by Don Carlos DuBois during the years 1951-3, based on sketches done by Thomas Moses in the period of 1910-30. Both of these artists were renowned for their theatrical and mural paintings. The installation of these drops required a complete replacement of the original rigging system in Omaha. In 1926, the Scottish Rite purchased a three manual pipe organ to be installed in the theater. It was manufactured by George Kilgen & Sons, Inc., of St. Louis, Missouri. A wall on the third floor east of the theater had to be moved three feet to accommodate the pipes, and a large grille for the choir organ chamber was cut into the east wall of the theater. Ornamental show pipes measuring 7-feet wide by 13-feet high were installed on each side of the theater. In 1929, an additional console for the organ was placed in the balcony. In 2010, the theater was repainted, a new wood floor installed, a new sound and light booth constructed at the rear of the theater, a new light truss installed with all new theatrical lights, a new sound system, and insulation was placed beneath the stage floor to improve the acoustics.

Integrity and Condition

The Scottish Rite Cathedral is in excellent condition largely because the building has been under the same ownership since its design and construction and the functions in the building have essentially remained the same, although some

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spaces were converted to new uses over the years. The Cathedral Board has kept detailed records of improvements and modifications to the building since its original construction. Overall, the integrity of the building is good. The 1986 window replacements on the two primary facades (north and east) reflect the same pattern as the original windows, and the infill windows on the south brick façade facing the alley did not compromise the use or appearance of any functional spaces in the building. The connected parking garage on the west adjoined the brick secondary façade of the building and did not block any existing windows or doors. The 1968, sunken courtyard on the east side of the building was essential to provide an accessible entrance to the building while not compromising the original north entrance façade. Architecturally, the courtyard entrance provides a subtle, yet identifiable point of entry while not detracting from the Neo-Classical detailing of the original structure.

The 1968 basement renovation and courtyard entry provided a much larger gathering space for members and visitors, and also provided for larger administrative office areas which helped preserve the integrity of the original spaces on the upper floors. The 1999 basement renovation used stylized Neo-Classical elements to reflect the character of the upper floors, but clearly differentiated from original building detailing. Major HVAC renovations in 1993 utilized many of the existing mechanical chases for distribution, and where necessary, used secondary areas such as service corridors to install new ductwork. The 2005 remodel of the first floor constructed a new wall on the west side of the Banquet Hall that, in addition to concealing exposed ductwork, provided storage area for tables and chairs and accommodated a small platform stage and sound system for the Banquet Hall. In 2006, the original Smoking Rooms on second and third floors were not utilized, but were remodeled to provide women's restrooms on each level. The style and finish of the restrooms is clearly differentiated from the original building motif, but very complementary and does not detract from the integrity of the building.

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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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social History

Architecture

Period of Significance

1914 - 1961

Significant Dates

1914

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

John Latenser, Architect

F.P. Gould & Sons, General Contractor

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance lasts from the building's completion in 1914 until 1961, which is 50 years from the present. While membership and influence fluctuated, the Scottish Rite always maintained an important role in Omaha's social and associational history during the entirety of its historical existence as defined by the National Register. 1914, the year the Scottish Rite Cathedral was complete, represents the building's architectural significance and is considered a significant date.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) N/A

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Scottish Rite Cathedral is significant at the local level under Criterion C as a monumental Neoclassical Revival structure designed by John Latenser, Sr., one of Omaha's most famous and productive architects during the late 19th and early 20th century. Latenser's work incorporated many of the popular styles of that period including Renaissance Revivals, Richardson Romanesque, Gothic Revival, and Commercial styles, but Latenser's design, both exterior and interior of the Scottish Rite Cathedral, reflect his mastery of the formal Neoclassical Revival style.

The Scottish Rite Cathedral also figures prominently in Omaha's social/fraternal history during the early years of the 20th century. Membership nationwide in the Scottish Rite peaked during this period as it did in Omaha, enabling the construction of the prominent structure. Many of Omaha's business and community leaders were active in the organization. The large ballroom and proscenium theatre in the Omaha Scottish Rite Cathedral accommodated many social and fraternal gatherings. Therefore, this property is also significant under Criterion A at the local level in the area of Social History.

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

Criterion C: John Latenser, Sr., Omaha's Master of the Neoclassical Revival

The 1912-14 Scottish Rite Cathedral is architecturally significant to Omaha and Nebraska as an outstanding example of refined Neoclassical Revival architecture. Neoclassical Revival became a dominant style for public and institutional buildings nationwide between 1900-1940s. It was directly inspired by the Beaux-Arts style and the Columbian Exposition (Chicago World's Fair, 1893). The style tends to include the features of classical symmetry, full-height porch with columns and temple front, and various classical ornaments such as dentil cornices. Basically, this is the revival of the Greek Revival style that dominated the first half of the 19th century. The architect for the Scottish Rite Cathedral, John Latenser, Sr., was a prolific designer of public, educational and cultural buildings in Nebraska and Iowa. The Scottish Rite Cathedral figures importantly for its simple yet refined application of Neoclassical Revival detailing and featuring of the Ionic columns that are significant in Freemasonry's symbolism.

John Latenser, Sr. was born in Nendeln, Liechtenstein in 1858. He studied architecture and engineering in Stuttgart, Germany where he graduated. He had studied art as well as stone-cutting and carving. He came to America in 1879, and was first employed in a professional capacity on the capitol building at Indianapolis, Indiana. He worked in Chicago, then to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and finally to Omaha in 1887. His early commissions in Iowa and Nebraska were producing cottage designs, and his first major public facility in Omaha was Webster Street School, a contract he won over 18 established competitors. A turning point in Latenser's career came in the early 1890's when he devised a successful method for correcting the faulty foundation of the Federal Post Office in Chicago. As a result, in 1893, President Grover Cleveland appointed him Superintendent of Construction for the new Post Office building in Omaha at 16th & Dodge Streets. During the William McKinley administration, he was appointed a Superintendent of Public Buildings, and was assigned to the Central Western States District, with offices in Omaha.

Over a dozen of the buildings designed by John Latenser, Sr., are included on the National Register of Historic Places. Latenser's sons, John Jr. and Frank, joined him in practice in later years and the firm became John Latenser & Sons. In the 1930's, 89 of 98 blocks in Downtown Omaha contained at least one building designed by John Latenser and Sons. Significant Downtown Omaha buildings designed by Latenser in the general time period of the Scottish Rite Cathedral include the J.L. Brandeis Building (1906), and Omaha Central High School (1900-12), both Second Renaissance Revival styles; Douglas County Courthouse (1912) French Renaissance Revival; Rialto Theater (1915) Classical Georgian Revival; Omaha Athletic Club (1918) Neoclassical Revival; and Sanford Hotel (1916) Chicago School - Commercial. Other significant projects included the Temple Building, Memorial Stadium and Schulte Field House at the University of Nebraska

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in Lincoln. John Latenser, Sr. had a mastery of many of the Revival styles of the period, but the Scottish Rite Cathedral is one of the finest examples of Neoclassical Revival architecture in Omaha. Latenser's earlier Neoclassical Revival designs, such as the Saunders School in 1899, employed both Roman and Greek classical styles, and his façade design for the Brandies Building in 1906 (Second Renaissance Revival) displayed an exuberance of detail and a variety of stone finishes. But in the Scottish Rite Cathedral, Latenser employs restrained classical enrichments and symmetrical, monumental proportions resulting in a building of noble simplicity and calm grandeur – prime qualities of Greek art. Latenser's dedication to the basic principles of Greek classicism, and his consistency and quality of Neoclassical detailing on the exterior and interior of the building places the Scottish Rite Cathedral as the pinnacle of his works in the Neoclassical Revival style.

Major renovations to the Scottish Rite Cathedral in 1968 were designed by Latenser Sr.'s successor firm, John Latenser & Sons.

Criterion A: Omaha's Social and Fraternal History, 1914-1961

The Scottish Rite is an appendant body of Freemasonry and was formally organized in 1801 in Charleston, South Carolina. The Scottish Rite was first organized in Omaha on July 1, 1867. Among the very first members were Robert C. Jordan (first Grand Master of Masons in Nebraska), Harry Deuel (prominent railroad executive, namesake of Deuel County, and Grand Master of Masons in 1869), James E. Boyd (politician – future Mayor of Omaha and Governor of Nebraska), Champion Chase (Mayor of Omaha, Nebraska's first Attorney General, and namesake of Chase County), and James Megeath (Omaha pioneer, real estate developer, and one of the donors of land for today's Hanscom Park). The Scottish Rite Charter was re-issued in 1881, and soon boasted of Omaha's most prominent men as members, including Mayors, Congressmen, US Senators, Judges, and important businessmen. (1) A partial list of these prominent members is in the ***Developmental history/additional historic context information*** section.

By the turn of the 20th century, the Scottish Rite membership reflected the affluence of Omaha. Land was acquired in 1906 on the southwest corner of 20th & Douglas Street for a new building befitting the grandeur of the organization, and ground was broken June 5, 1912. Under the direction of Scottish Rite Trustee President William Rhoades (executive, US National Bank), plans were formally adopted on April 8, 1912 by the Trustees. The building was constructed by F.P. Gould & Son, General Contractor, James Corr Electric Company, and Western Heating and Plumbing Company. Orchard & Wilhelm Company provided interiors and special furnishings, and M.C. Lilley & Co. of Kansas City, Missouri and Chicago, Illinois, provided the large number of painted scene drops for the theater.

Among the 164 members of the Dedication Reunion of Scottish Rite Masons joining in November, 1914 were H. H. Henningson, founder of Henningson, Durham, and Richardson (HDR, Inc), Nathan P. Dodge (NP Dodge Realty), John Petrow, (founder of Petrow's Candy Kitchen - later Petrow's Restaurant), and Lloyd Denslow (President, Gering State Bank). (2)

Freemasonry increased its prominence in the fabric of Omaha society by the 1916 construction of the 105,000 square foot, seven story Masonic Temple at 19th and Douglas Street (demolished in 1997), designed by Freemason and Architect, Georg Prinz. The general prosperity of the 1920s was a time of great growth for fraternal organizations, and Scottish Rite membership experienced extraordinary growth, increasing nationally 57% between 1919 and 1920 after soldiers began returning from the War. (8) The Omaha Scottish Rite class size exploded to over 700 new members joining in 1920. For the remaining years of the 1920's the average annual class size was 170.

In 1915, the Scottish Rite Women's Club was founded with 200 charter members. They were the wives, daughters, mothers and sisters of the consistory members. By 1922, the club had grown to 1,225 members, making it the largest women's fraternal club in the state. They provided significant financial support to Boy's Masonic Home of Omaha (Omaha Home for Boys), Girls and Boys Home of Fremont (Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children), the Masonic Home at Plattsmouth and they provided furnishings for the YWCA Girls Home in Omaha. The Scottish Rite Women's Club remained active until the 1970's. (4)

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As with many fraternal organizations, the Scottish Rite experienced membership decline during the Great Depression and early years of world War II. Classes declined to about 40 to 50 men joining per year, with the lowest point being 24 men joining the Scottish Rite in 1933. During this same period, the Knights of Columbus were forced to sell their beautiful headquarters at 20th and Dodge Street, (today's Scoular building) (9).

As World War II ended, the decline of membership in Freemasonry also ended. Men joining Scottish Rite Masonry remained sluggish through mid-1942 when classes more than doubled from 22 men in April, 1942 to 59 in December 1942, and 72 in April 1943 to 113 in December 1943. After World War II, and through 1961, the average annual class size had rebounded to 234, demonstrating the continued strength and relevance of Masonry in men's' lives as well as the prosperity of post-War Omaha.

The Scottish Rite Cathedral has been consistently used for Scottish Rite and Masonic purposes since the building was completed. Members of the Omaha Scottish Rite, including Dr. and Mrs. William H. Mick, created the International Order of Job's Daughters in 1920, a Masonic organization for girls. The second Chapter of the Order of Demolay, a Masonic organization for boys, met in the Scottish Rite ballroom.

The Omaha Scottish Rite has benefitted the community through numerous philanthropic initiatives. Its primary charity is funding treatment for children with aphasia – speech and language disorders. The program is now part of a nationwide Scottish Rite initiative called RiteCare. Other philanthropies include the Omaha Home for Boys, Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children, Plattsmouth Masonic Home (a care facility for the elderly), scholarships to University of Nebraska at Omaha students, an Almoners Fund helping those in need or distress.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

The Development of Theater in Scottish Rite Buildings

Unlike Masonic Lodges, where the initiation for membership is personalized for each candidate, Scottish Rite bodies across the country commencing the 1880's began to replace this old style ritual with spectacular theatrical performances. Members and initiates became performers and audience respectively, and as the appeal of this method increased, so did the number of members. Large theaters were constructed within Scottish Rite facilities to present these elaborate initiation ceremonies. (5,6) Each degree would be a separate performance and all together, a couple hundred members serving as actors, stagehands, and costumers would be required to present these initiation ceremonies. These initiations on a grand scale became very popular at a period when commercial theater was also reaching its peak. Social and fraternal gatherings in the large ballroom and performances in the proscenium theater would often be several hundred members and guests at a time. The Omaha Scottish Rite Cathedral was constructed in the peak years of construction of Scottish Rite facilities nationwide. The headquarters building of the Scottish Rite in Washington D.C., designed by John Russell Pope, was in the period of 1910-1916. Huge facilities in Dallas, Indianapolis, Detroit, Kansas City and many, many other cities date in the period of 1910 to the late 1920's.

Prominent Members of the Omaha Scottish Rite Cathedral 1910 - 1961

A very select list of prominent Scottish Rite Masons during the 1910-1920's, included:

Charles Saunders - State Senator, son of Governor Alvin Saunders
Henry Clay Akin – Imperial Potentate (1902)
George Prinz, Architect (Flatiron Building, Livestock Exchange Building)
Harry P. Deuel - railroad executive, namesake of Deuel County
David Mercer - Congressman
Nathan P. Dodge - real estate investor and broker
Abraham Baker - founder of Baker's Grocery store
Frank Moores - Mayor of the City of Omaha

Narrative of Developmental History continued on next page.

Scottish Rite Cathedral

Douglas, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State

Albert Wohlner - founder of Wohlner's Grocery Store
Tinley Combs - jeweler, Chamber of Commerce executive, founder of Omaha Home for Boys
Charles and Gould Dietz - prominent lumber dealers, namesake of Dietz Methodist Church
Clarence H. Walrath, prominent businessman, President, Chamber
Howard Kennedy - attorney, namesake of Howard Kennedy School
Everett Buckingham - Stockyards Executive, King of Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben
Charles Kountze – Banker
Irvin Stalmaster – State Supreme Court Judge
Roy Towl – Engineer, future Mayor of Omaha
John Yates - prominent businessman, one of the founders of the Woodmen of the World
Henry Monsky - prominent attorney, National President of B'nai B'rith (Jewish service organization)

Prominent Scottish Rite Masons during the 1930-1961 period included:

Peter Kiewit – Peter Kiewit & Sons Construction Co, and philanthropist
Carl Renstrom – founder of Tip Top Products
James Paxton, Jr. - Paxton-Mitchell Steel Company
Charles Leeman - Mayor of Omaha
Edgar Barnhart - Barnhart Press
James Paxson – president Standard Chemical Company
Nels Swanson - Crosby, Burket, and Swanson Funeral Home
Donald Brodkey - Nebraska Supreme Court justice
Theodore Maenner - former president, National Association of Realtors
Harry Trustin – city councilman, City of Omaha
Alexander V. Sorensen – Mayor of Omaha
Charles Ostler – Omaha Police Chief
Robert Lueder - Lueder Construction Co.
Milo Bail - President of Omaha University
Roman Hruska – U.S. Senator
Floyd Kalber – news broadcaster
General Curtis E. LeMay – head of Strategic Air Command

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

- (1) J. Sterling Morton, *Illustrated History of Nebraska*, Volume II. 1906.
- (2) *Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry Dedication Volume*, Omaha November, 1914
- (3) *Omaha Bee News*, Dec. 7, 1936, Obituary of John Latenser, Sr., p. 2
- (4) *Omaha World Herald Magazine Section*, February 12, 1922, *Scottish Rite Woman's Club* by Eugene O. Mayfield
- (5) *Theatre of the Fraternity – Staging the Ritual Space of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, 1896-1929*, Conceived and curated by C. Lance Brockman, Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum, University of Minnesota. University Press of Mississippi 1996
- (6) C. Lance Brockman, *Catalyst for Change: Intersection of the Theater and the Scottish Rite; Heredom: The Transactions of The Scottish Rite Research Society*, Volume 3, 1994.
- (7) *Archives and minutes of Cathedral Association*, Omaha Scottish Rite Cathedral Association
- (8) Fox, William L. The Lodge of the Double-Headed Eagle and analysis of 1920 – 1929 class pictures
- (9) <http://www.nebraskakofc.org/kc652/centen.htm>

Scottish Rite Cathedral
Name of Property

Douglas, Nebraska
County and State

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: Omaha Scottish Rite Cathedral

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.371702

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>831520.901</u> Easting	<u>14998776.569</u> Northing	3	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>831510.153</u> Easting	<u>14998662.461</u> Northing
2	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>831613.261</u> Easting	<u>14998772.428</u> Northing	4	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>831606.262</u> Easting	<u>14998656.161</u> Northing

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

The property is on the southwest corner of 20th & Douglas Street in Omaha, Nebraska. The north boundary follows Douglas Street 144 feet from east to west, and the east boundary follows 20th Street 132 feet north to south. The south boundary follows the alley 119 feet east to west, and adjoins a concrete parking garage at the west boundary of the property. The west boundary follows the adjoined parking garage 132 feet south to north.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes all of the property historically Associated with the Scottish Rite Cathedral during its period of significance.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title W. Larry Jacobsen, AIA, Restoration Architect
organization The Schemmer Associates Inc. date March 31, 2011
street & number 1044 N. 115th Street, Suite 300 telephone 402-493-4800
city or town Omaha state NE zip code 68154
e-mail ljacobsen@schemmer.com

Scottish Rite Cathedral
Name of Property

Douglas, Nebraska
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
 - Copies of original Scottish Rite Cathedral drawings by John Latenser (1912) – 4 floor plans, 4 building elevations and 2 building sections
 - Copies of current floor plans (2011) – 4 floors
 - Exterior Photo Key – 1 aerial photograph
 - Interiors Photo Key – 3 floor plans

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

National Register Nomination Photograph Log Page

Name of Property:	Scottish Rite Cathedral
City of Vicinity:	Omaha
County:	Douglas County
State:	NE
Name of Photographer:	William L. Jacobsen
Date of Photographs:	December, 2010 & January, 2011
Location of Original Digital Files:	202 S. 20 th Street, Omaha, NE, 68102
Number of Photographs:	#1 through 14
Name of Photographer:	Tom Kessler
Date of Photographs:	March, 2011
Location of Original Digital Files:	4216 Poppleton Ave. Omaha, NE 68105
Number of Photographs:	#15 and 16

Photo #1 (NE_DouglasCounty_ScottishRiteCathedral_0001)
North façade, camera facing south

Photo #2 (NE_DouglasCounty_ScottishRiteCathedral_0002)
East façade (left) and north façade (right) camera facing southwest

Photo #3 (NE_DouglasCounty_ScottishRiteCathedral_0003)
South façade (left) and east facade (right) camera facing northwest

Photo #4 (NE_DouglasCounty_ScottishRiteCathedral_0004)
North façade (left) and west façade (right) camera facing southeast

Photo #5 (NE_DouglasCounty_ScottishRiteCathedral_0005)
North entrance door, camera facing southwest

Photo #6 (NE_DouglasCounty_ScottishRiteCathedral_0006)
North entrance door wood relief detail, camera facing south

Photo #7 (NE_DouglasCounty_ScottishRiteCathedral_0007)
East courtyard and entry door, camera facing west

List of Photographs continued on next page

Scottish Rite Cathedral
Name of Property

Douglas, Nebraska
County and State

- Photo #8 (NE_DouglasCounty_ScottishRiteCathedral_0008)
Basement entry lobby (current entry level) camera facing northwest
- Photo #9 (NE_DouglasCounty_ScottishRiteCathedral_0009)
First floor ballroom, camera facing southeast
- Photo #10 (NE_DouglasCounty_ScottishRiteCathedral_0010)
First floor lounge beam/column moldings
- Photo #11 (NE_DouglasCounty_ScottishRiteCathedral_0011)
Second floor lodge room, camera facing south
- Photo #12 (NE_DouglasCounty_ScottishRiteCathedral_0012)
Second floor lodge room beam/column moldings
- Photo #13 (NE_DouglasCounty_ScottishRiteCathedral_0013)
Second floor central stairway, camera facing northeast
- Photo #14 (NE_DouglasCounty_ScottishRiteCathedral_0014)
Second floor corridor corner beam-to-ceiling moldings
- Photo #15 (NE_DouglasCounty_ScottishRiteCathedral_0015)
Second floor theater, camera facing southwest
- Photo #16 (NE_DouglasCounty_ScottishRiteCathedral_0016)
Second floor theater and third floor balcony, camera facing north

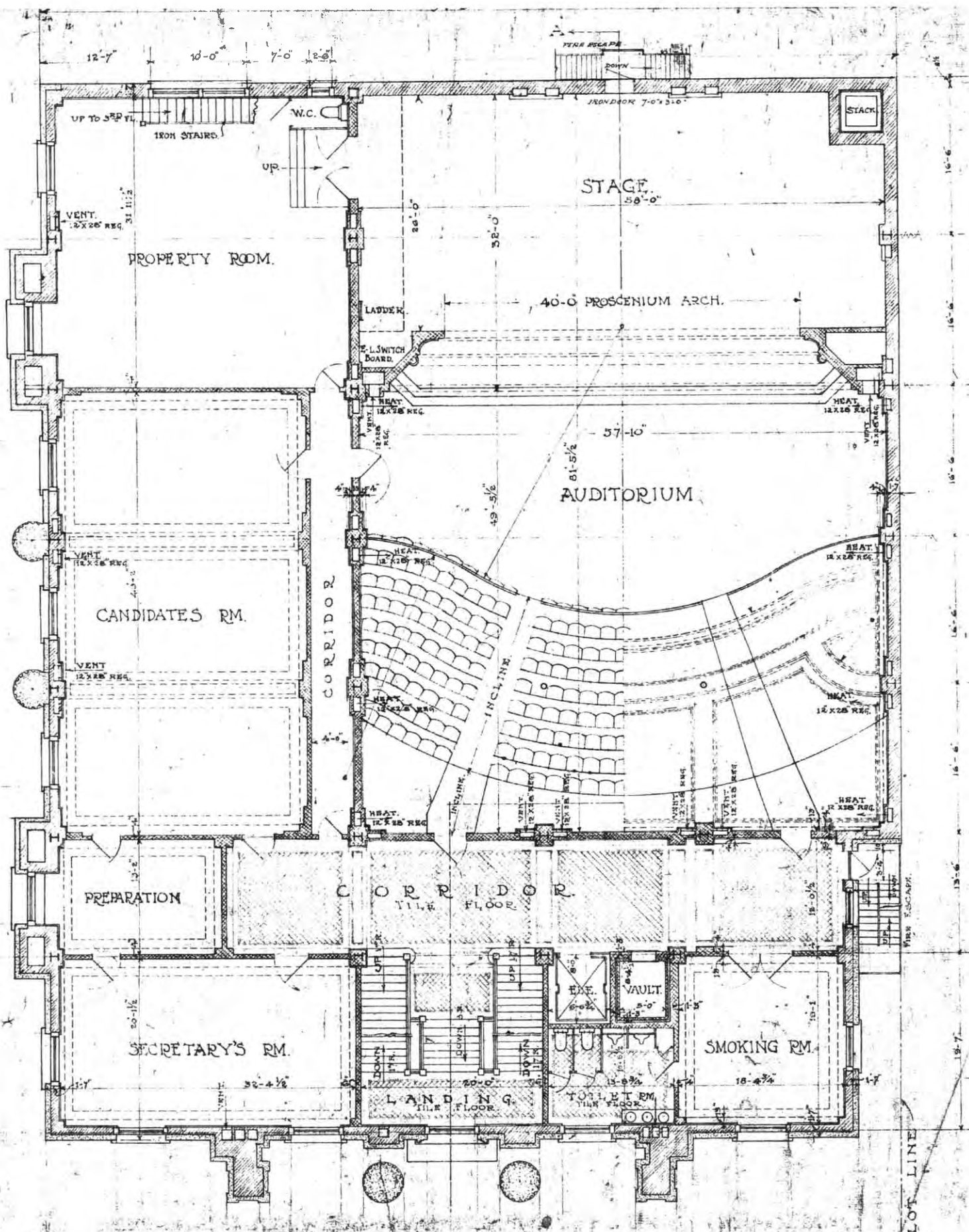
Property Owner:

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

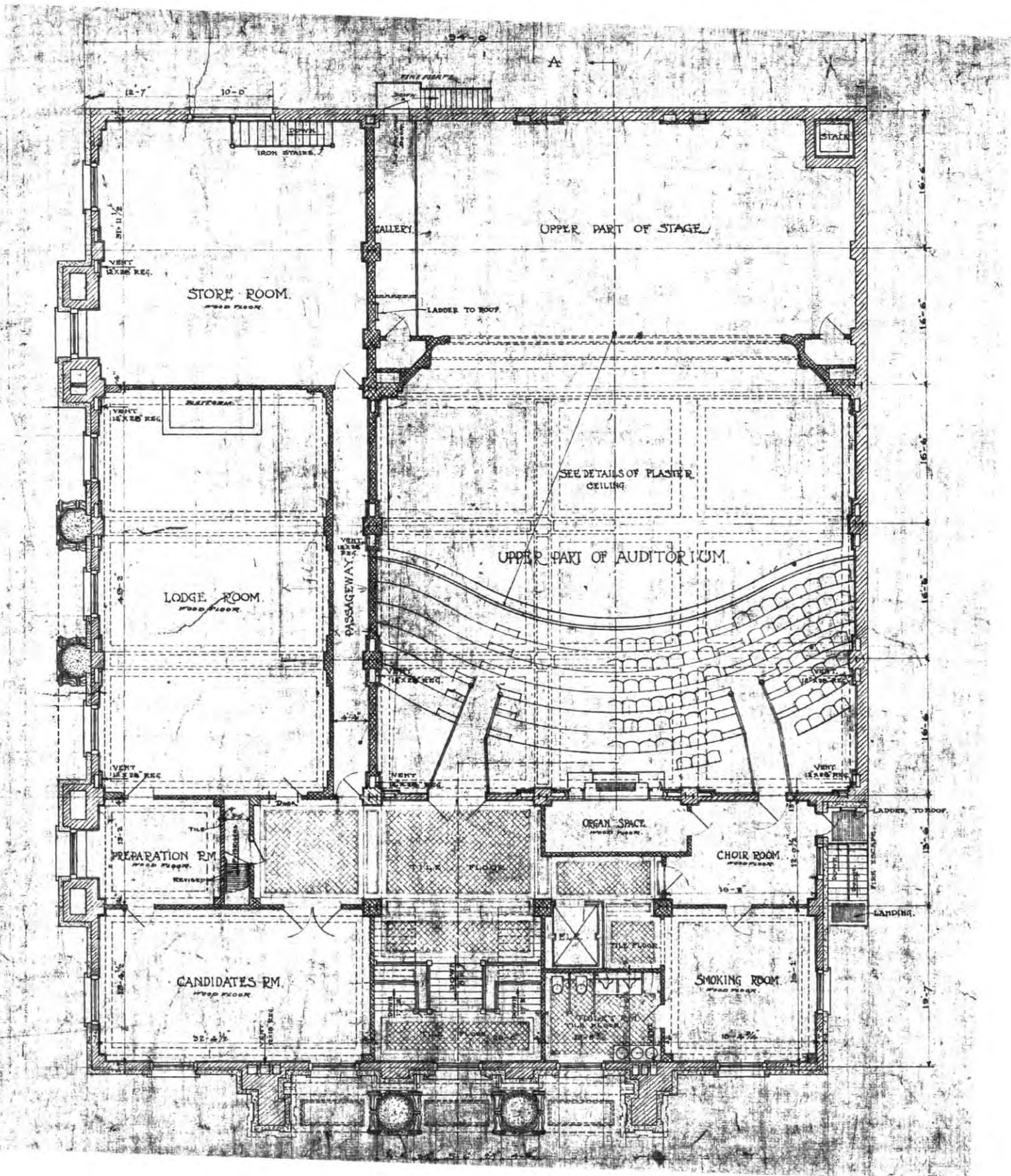
name Scottish Rite Cathedral Association
street & number 202 S. 20th Street telephone 402-342-1300
city or town Omaha state NE zip code 68102

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

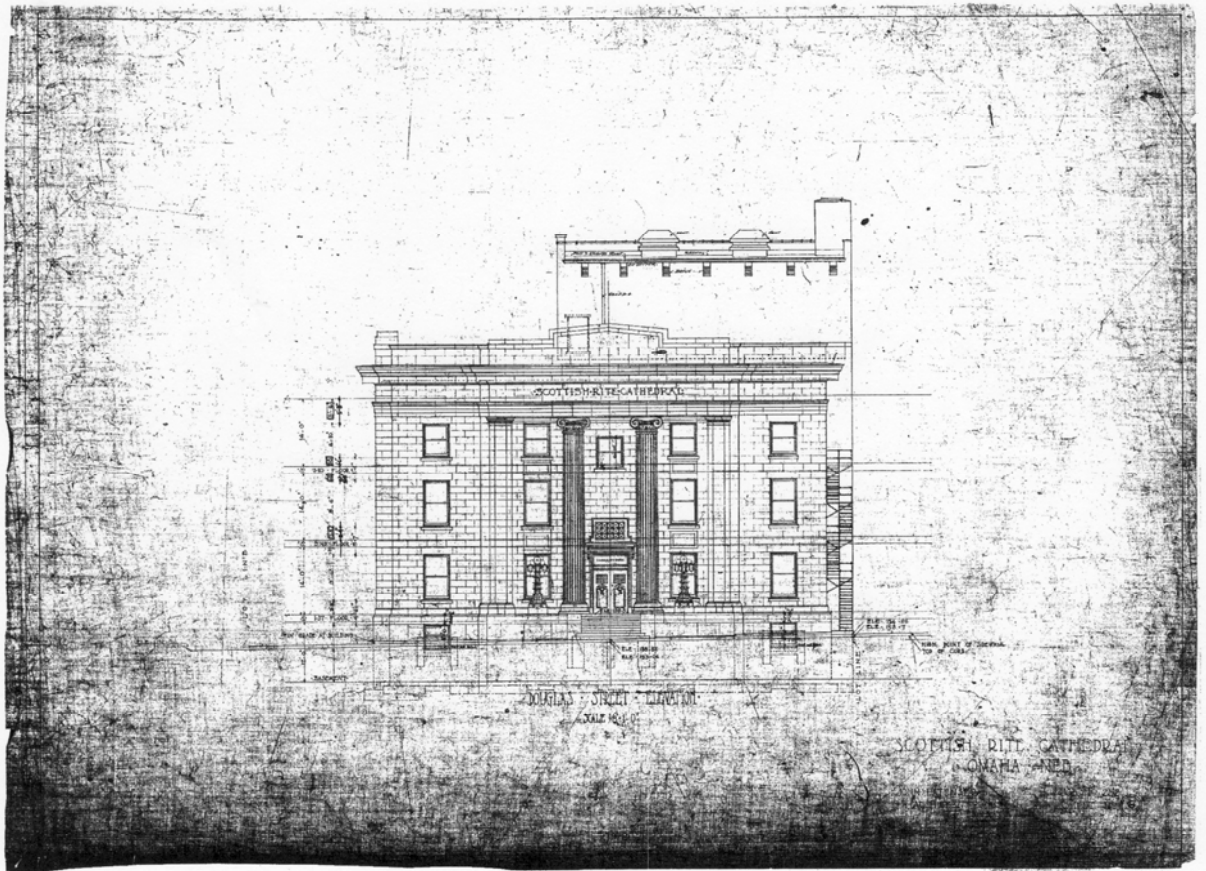
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



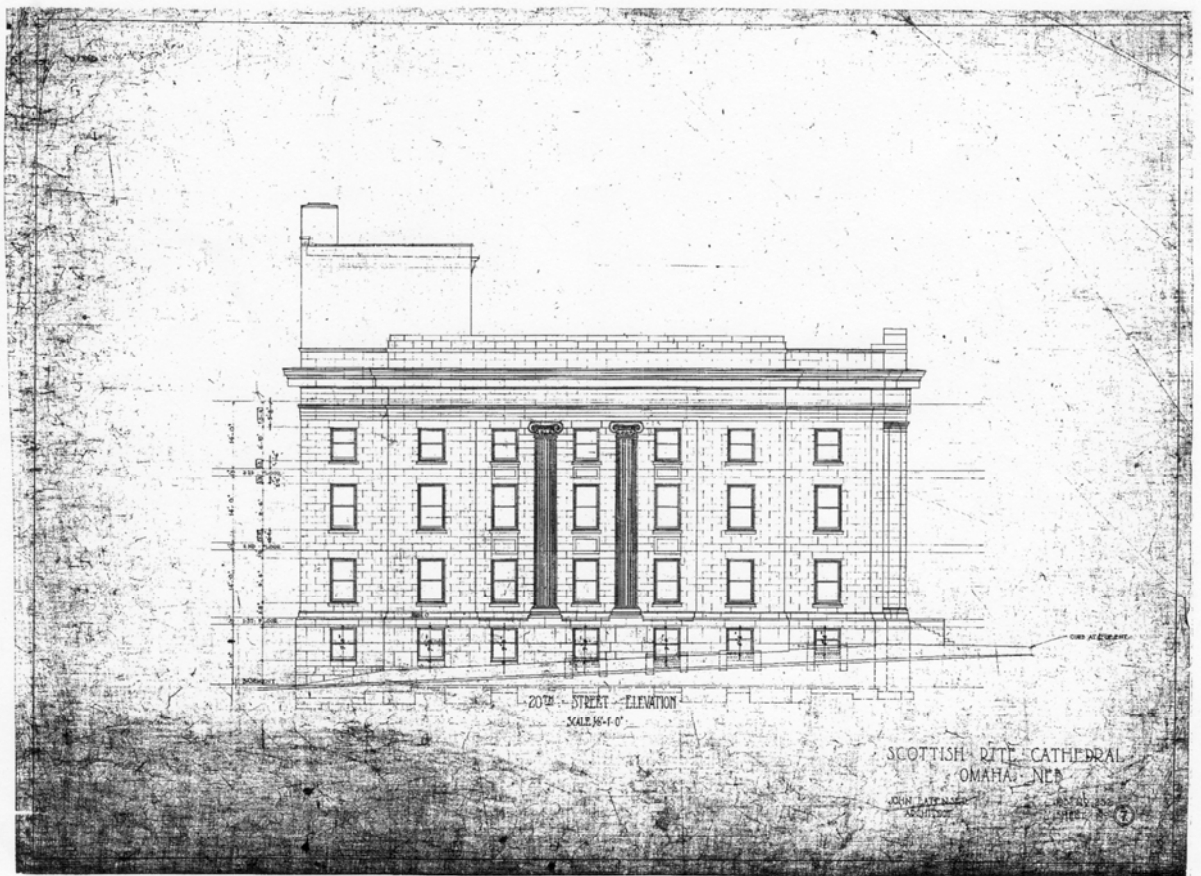
SECOND FLOOR PLAN ORIGINAL 1912
SCOTTISH RITE CATHEDRAL



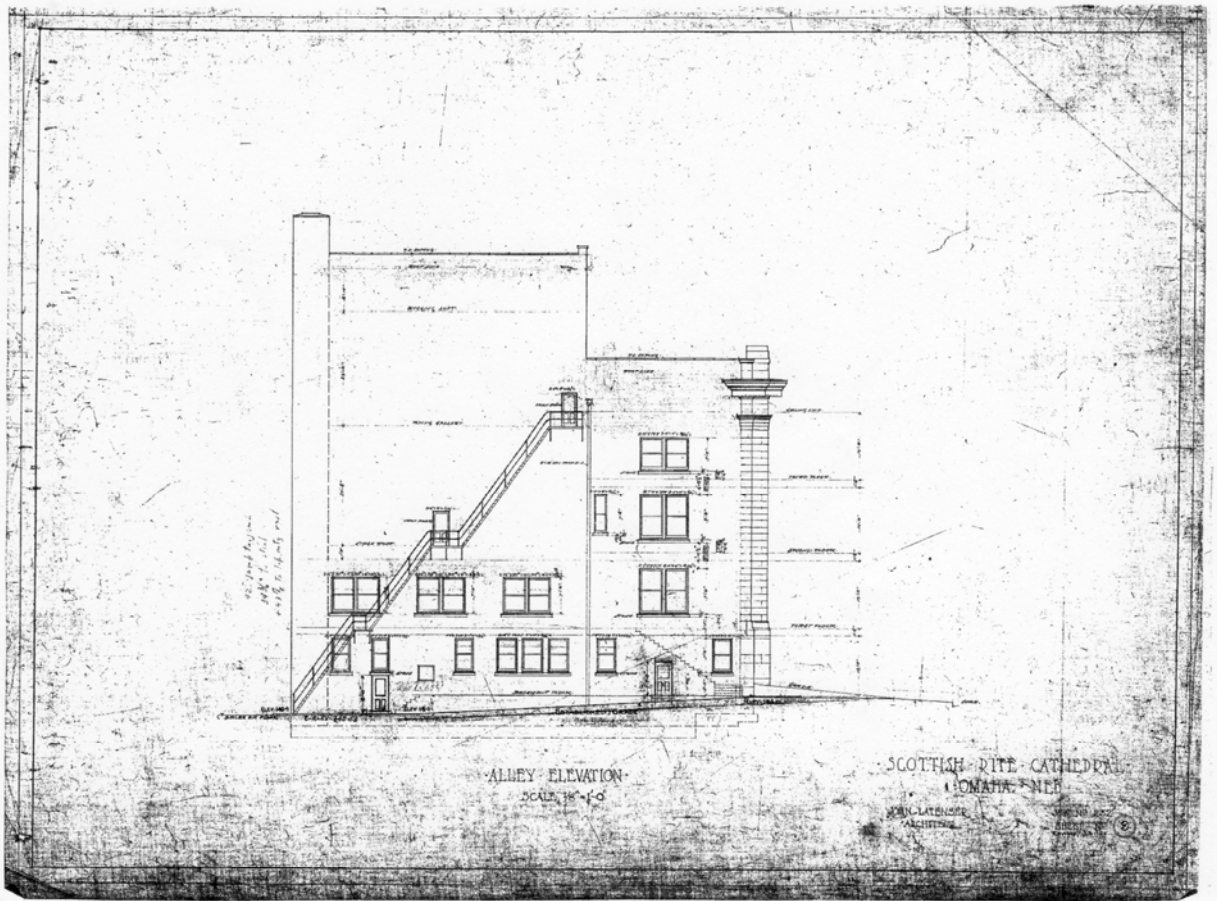
THIRD FLOOR PLAN - ORIGINAL 1912
SCOTTISH RITE CATHEDRAL



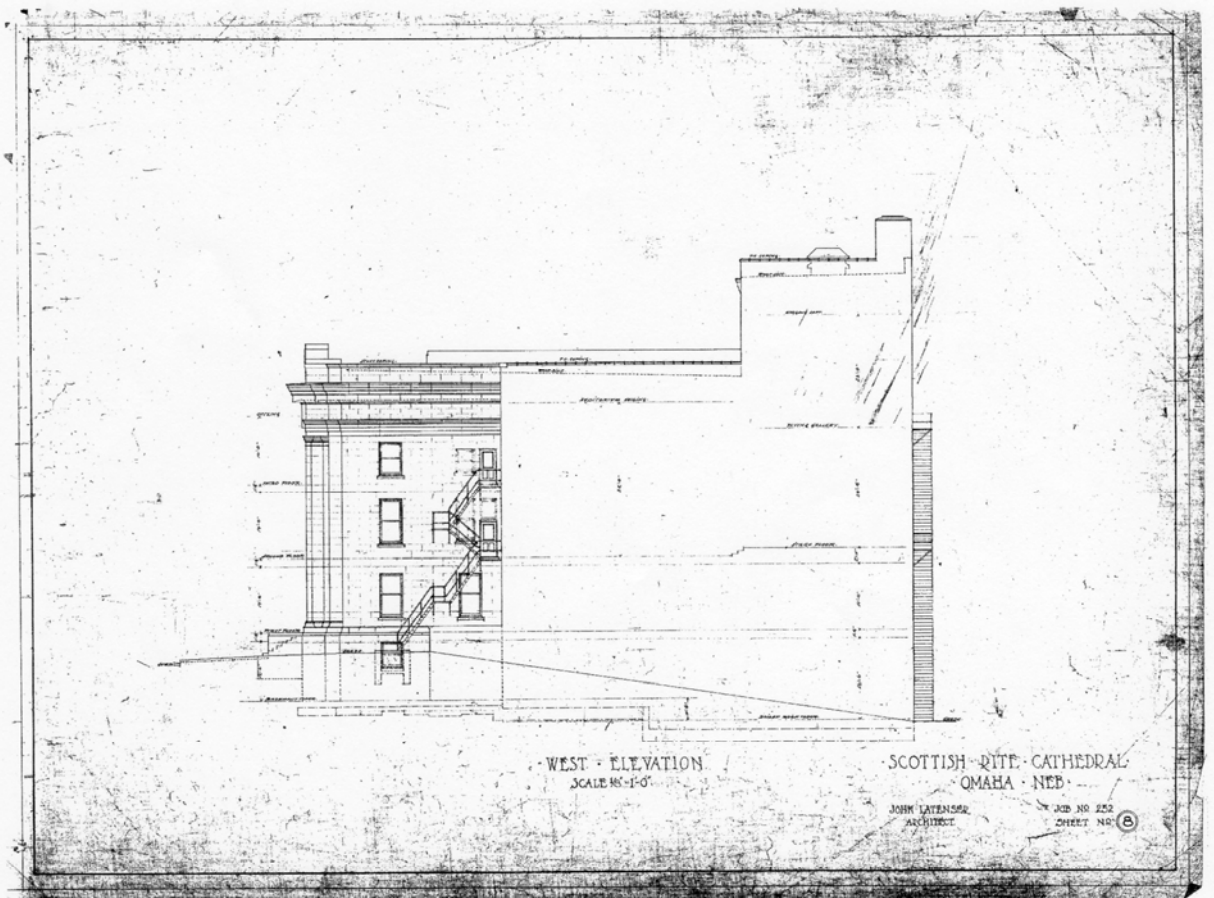
NORTH ELEVATION



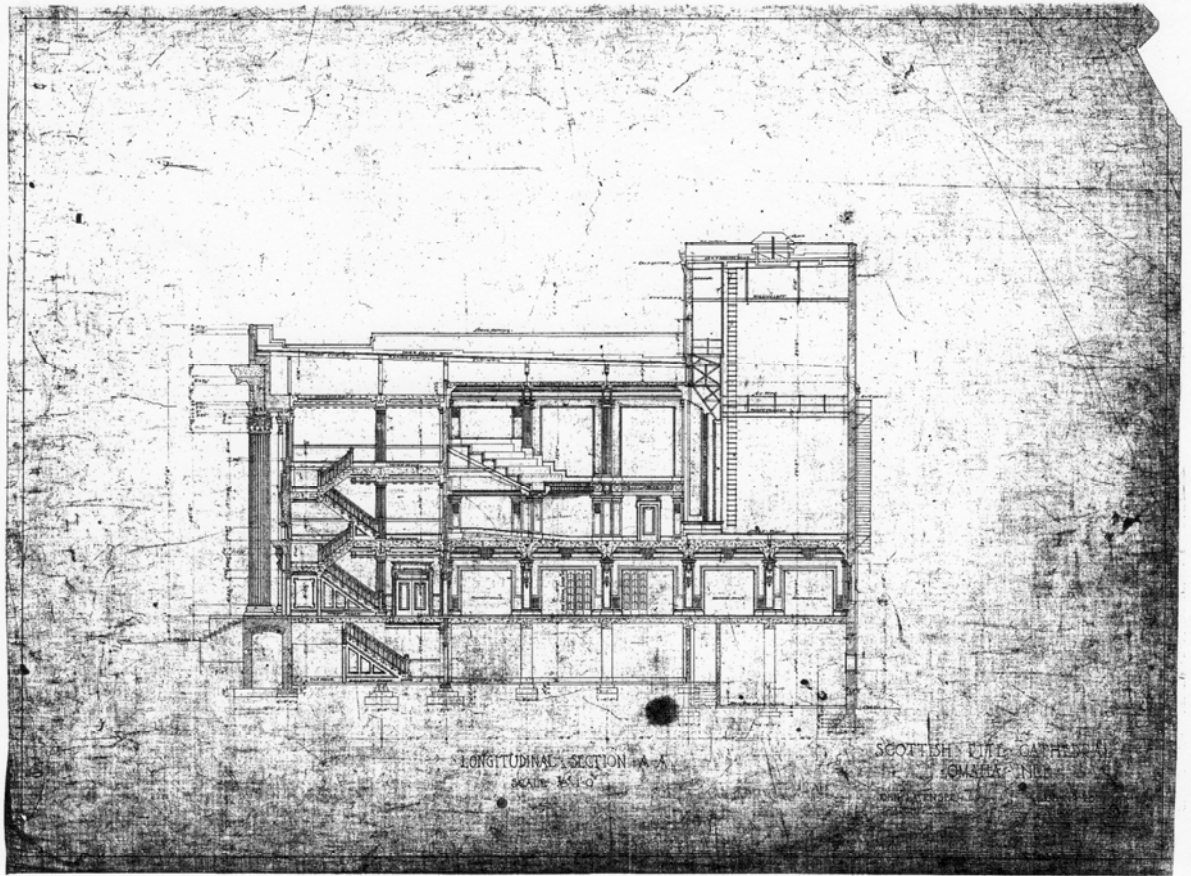
EAST ELEVATION



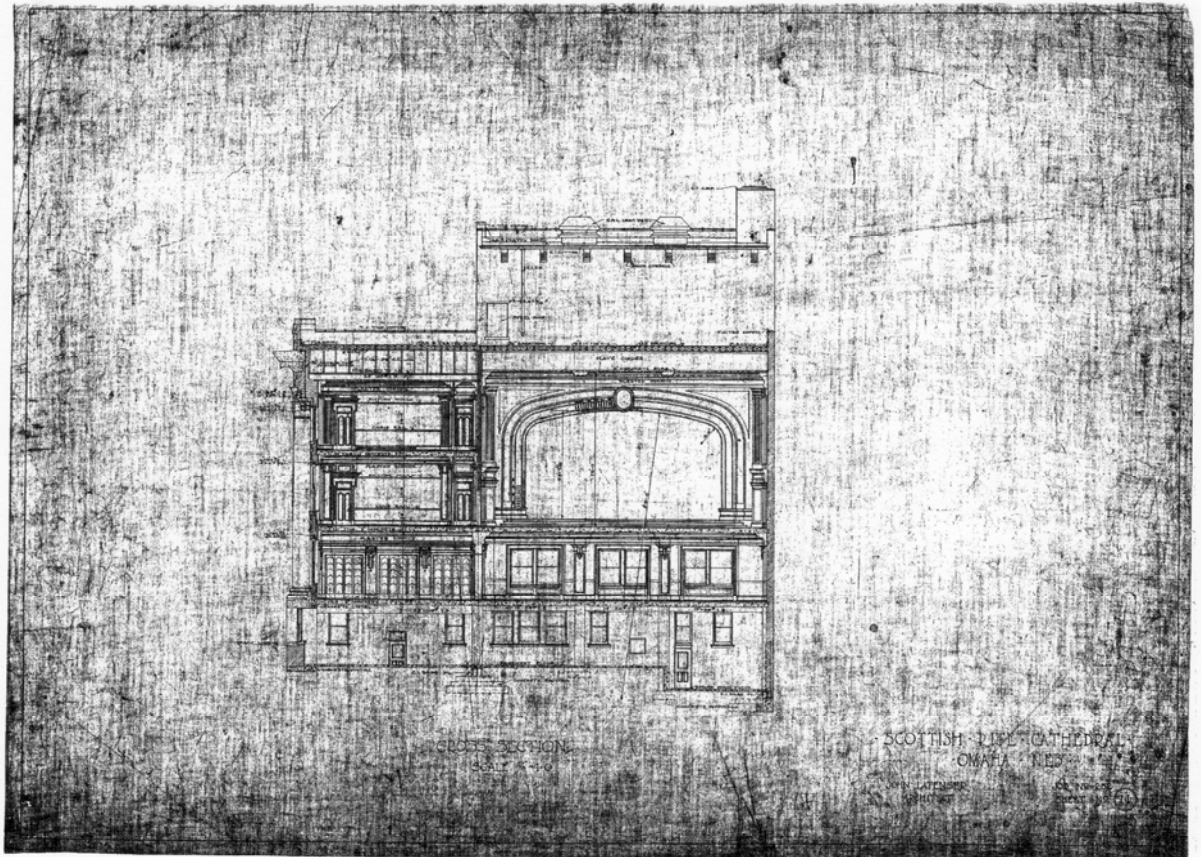
SOUTH ELEVATION



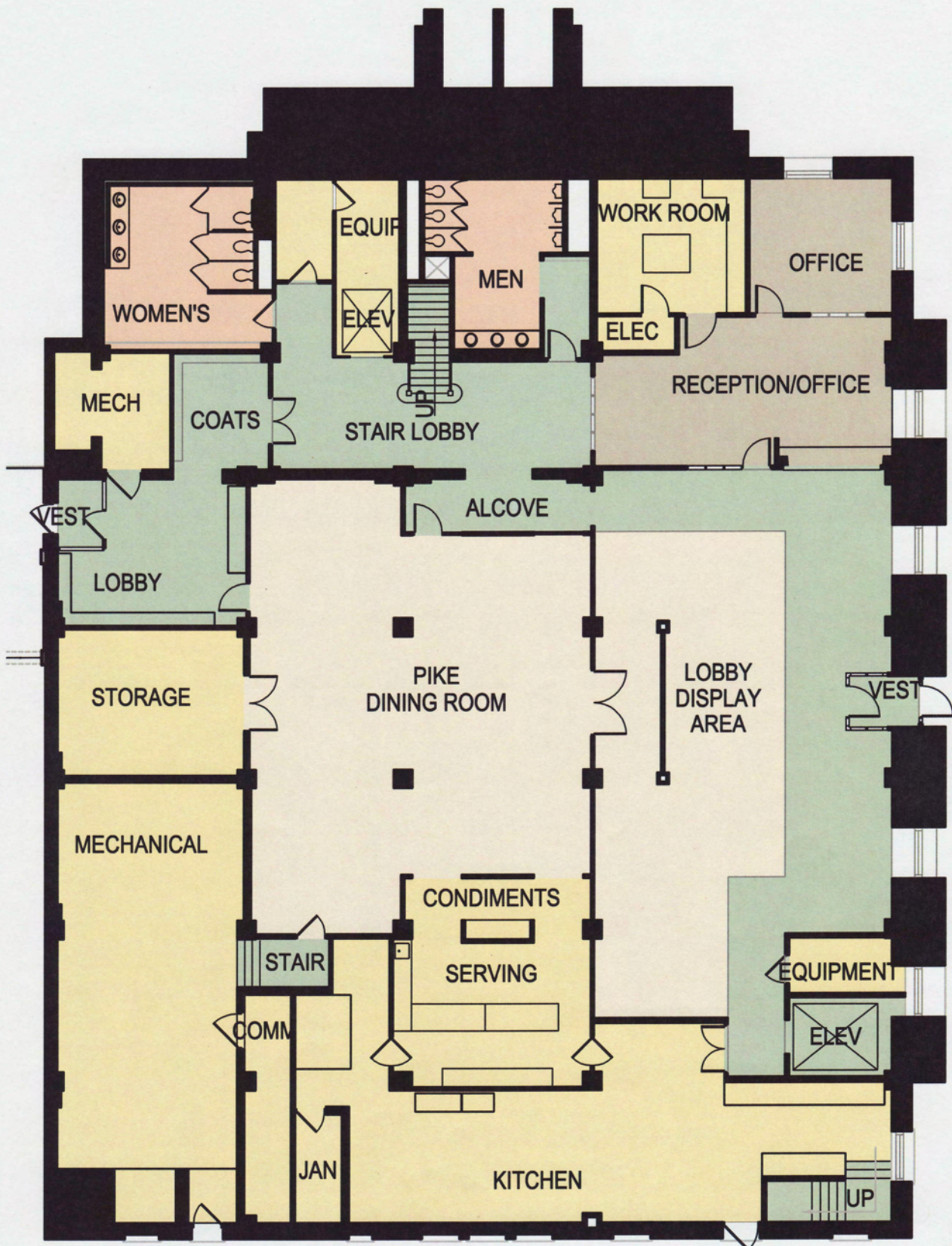
WEST ELEVATION



NORTH-SOUTH SECTION

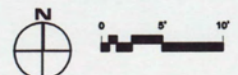


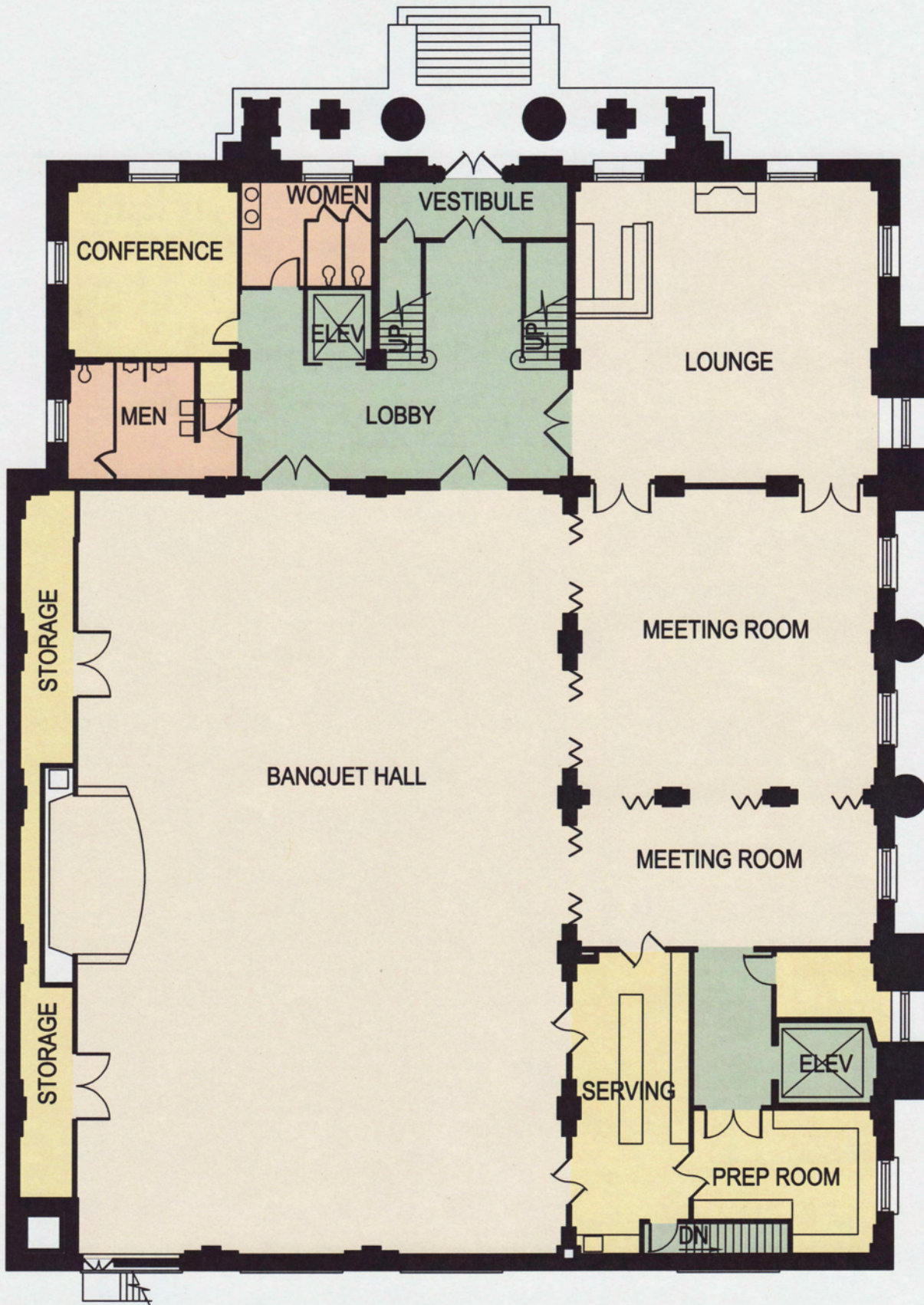
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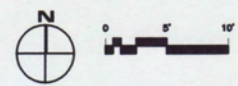
CURRENT FLOOR PLAN (2011)
 SCOTTISH RITE MASONIC CENTER
 FIRST FLOOR ORIGINAL BASEMENT

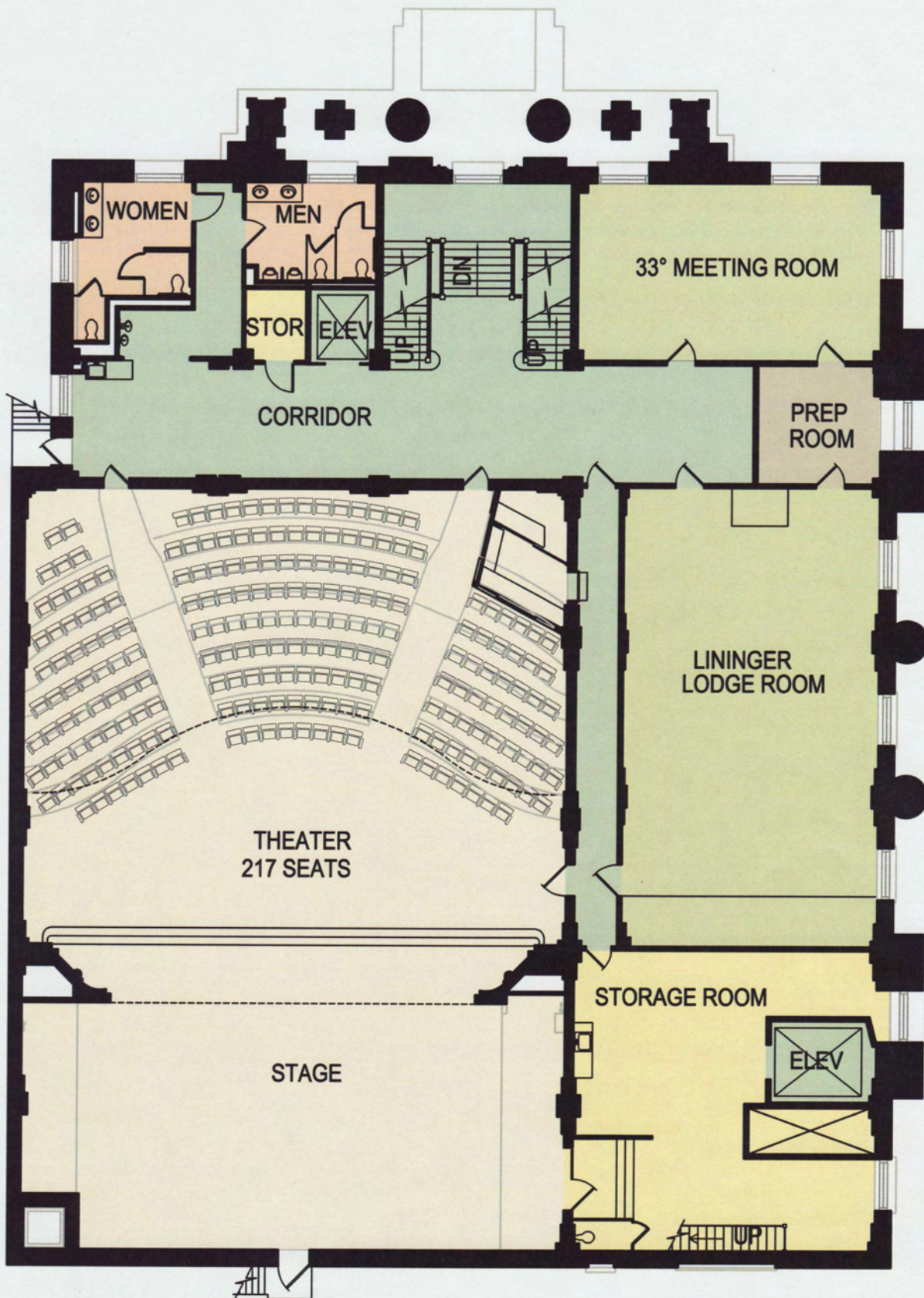
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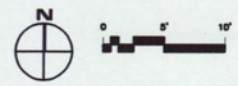
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 SCOTTISH RITE MASONIC CENTER
 SECOND FLOOR ORIGINAL FIRST FLOOR

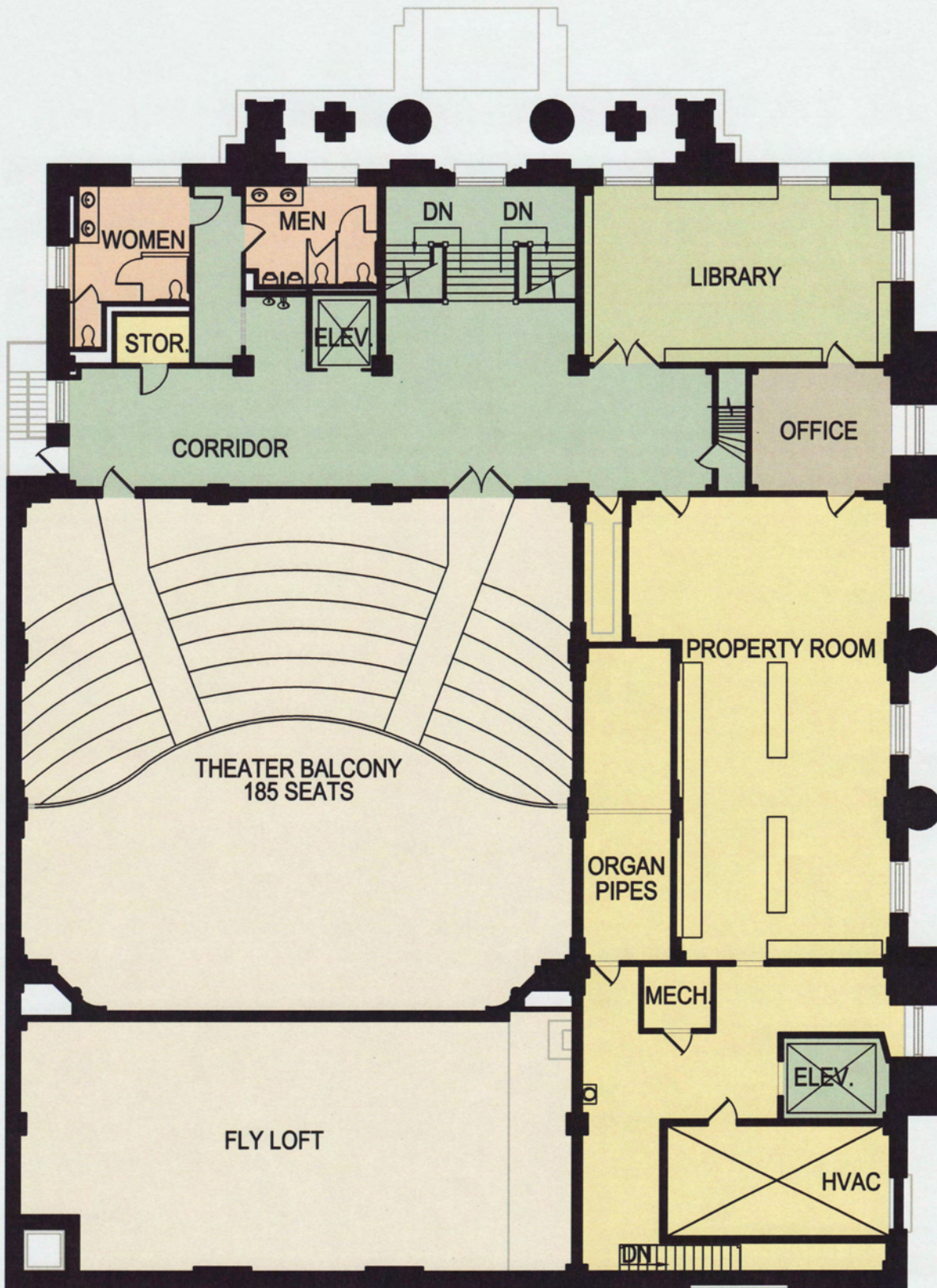




CURRENT FLOOR PLAN (2011)
 SCOTTISH RITE MASONIC CENTER
 THIRD FLOOR ORIGINAL SECOND FLOOR

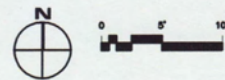
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CURRENT FLOOR PLAN (2011)
 SCOTTISH RITE MASONIC CENTER
 FOURTH FLOOR ORIGINAL THIRD FLOOR

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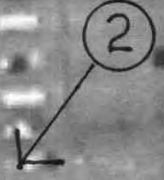
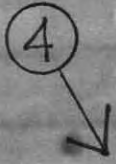




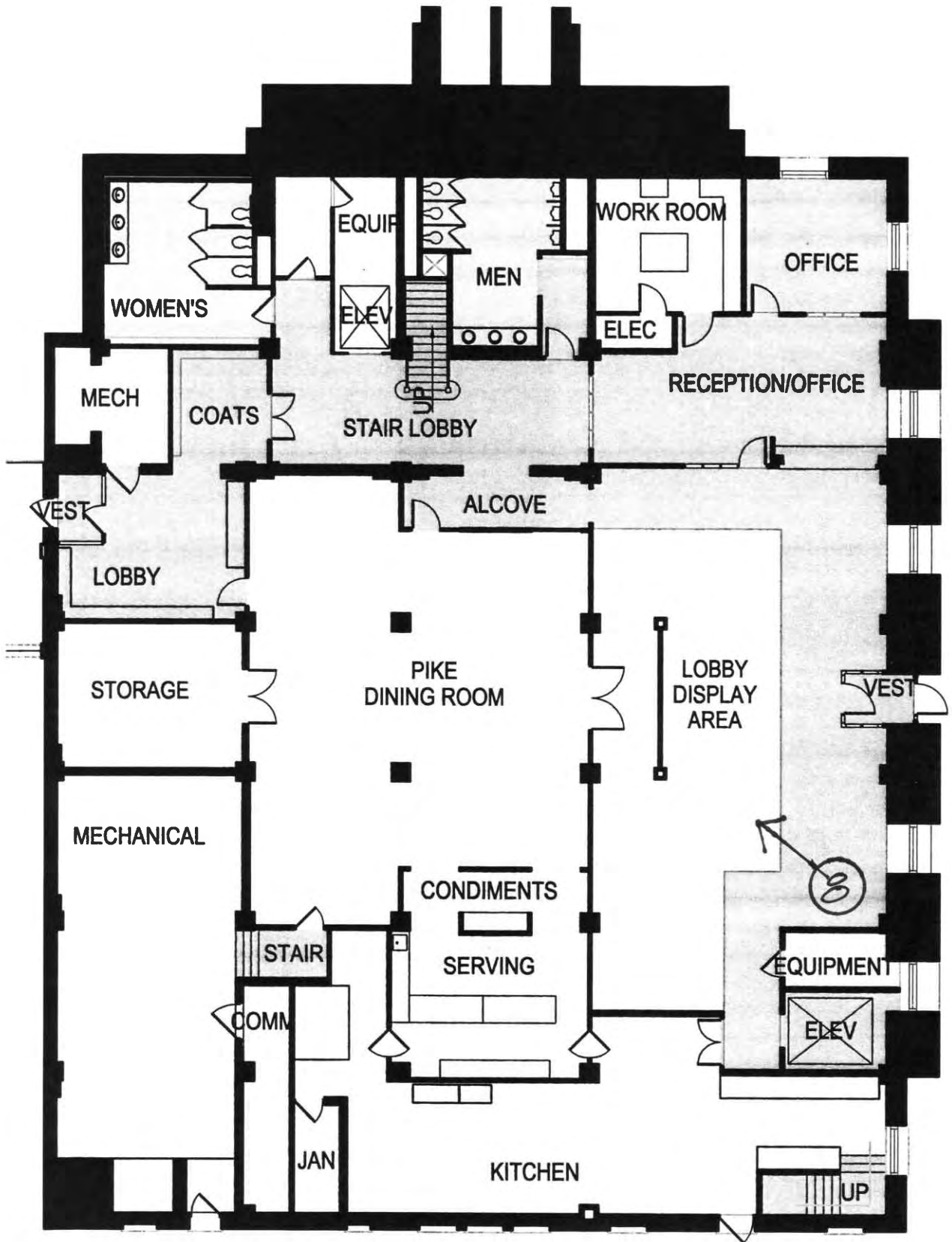
NORTH

DOUGLAS STREET

20TH STREET



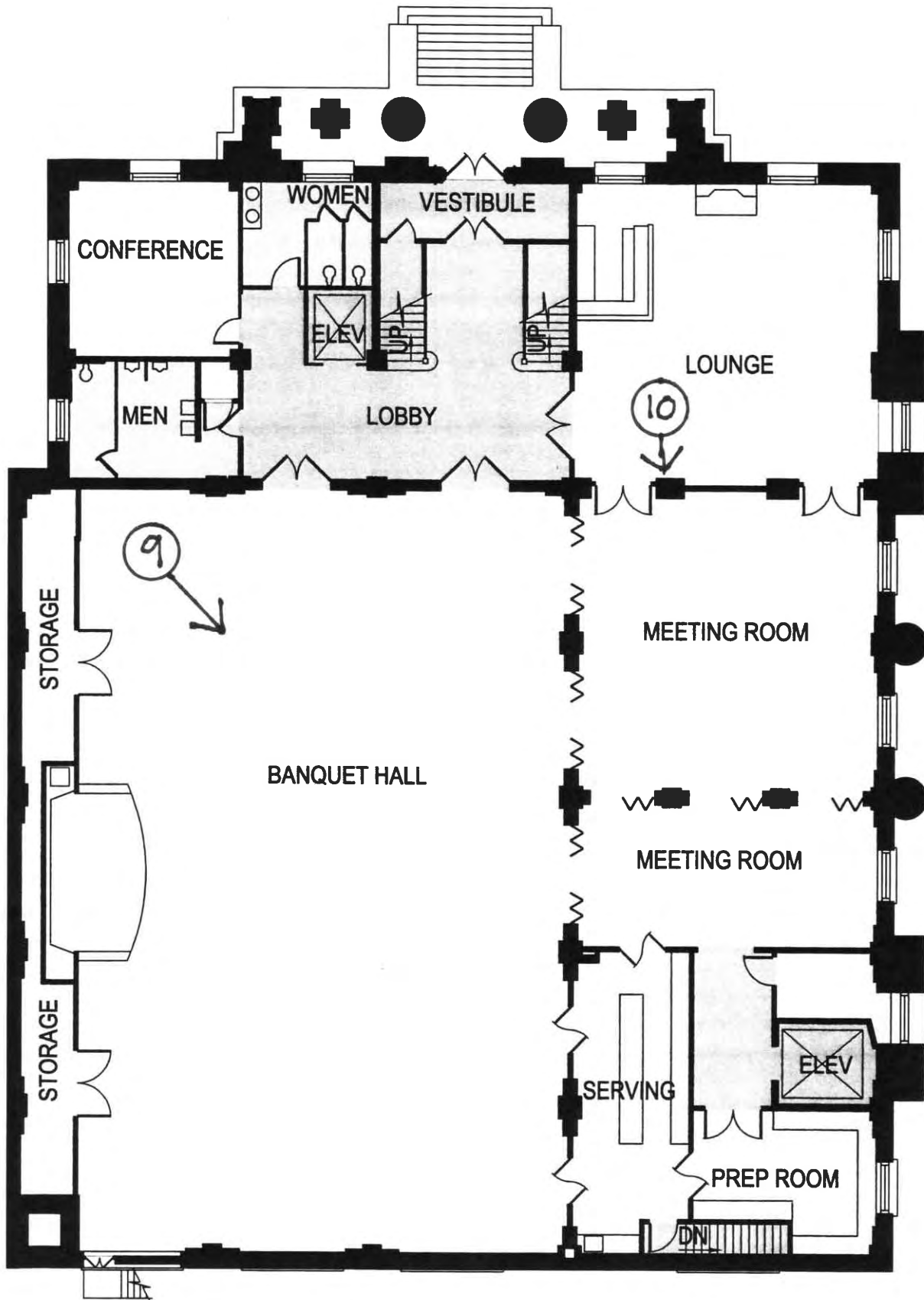
EXTERIOR PHOTO KEY



INTERIORS PHOTO KEY

CURRENT FLOOR PLAN (2011)
 SCOTTISH RITE MASONIC CENTER
 FIRST FLOOR ORIGINAL BASEMENT



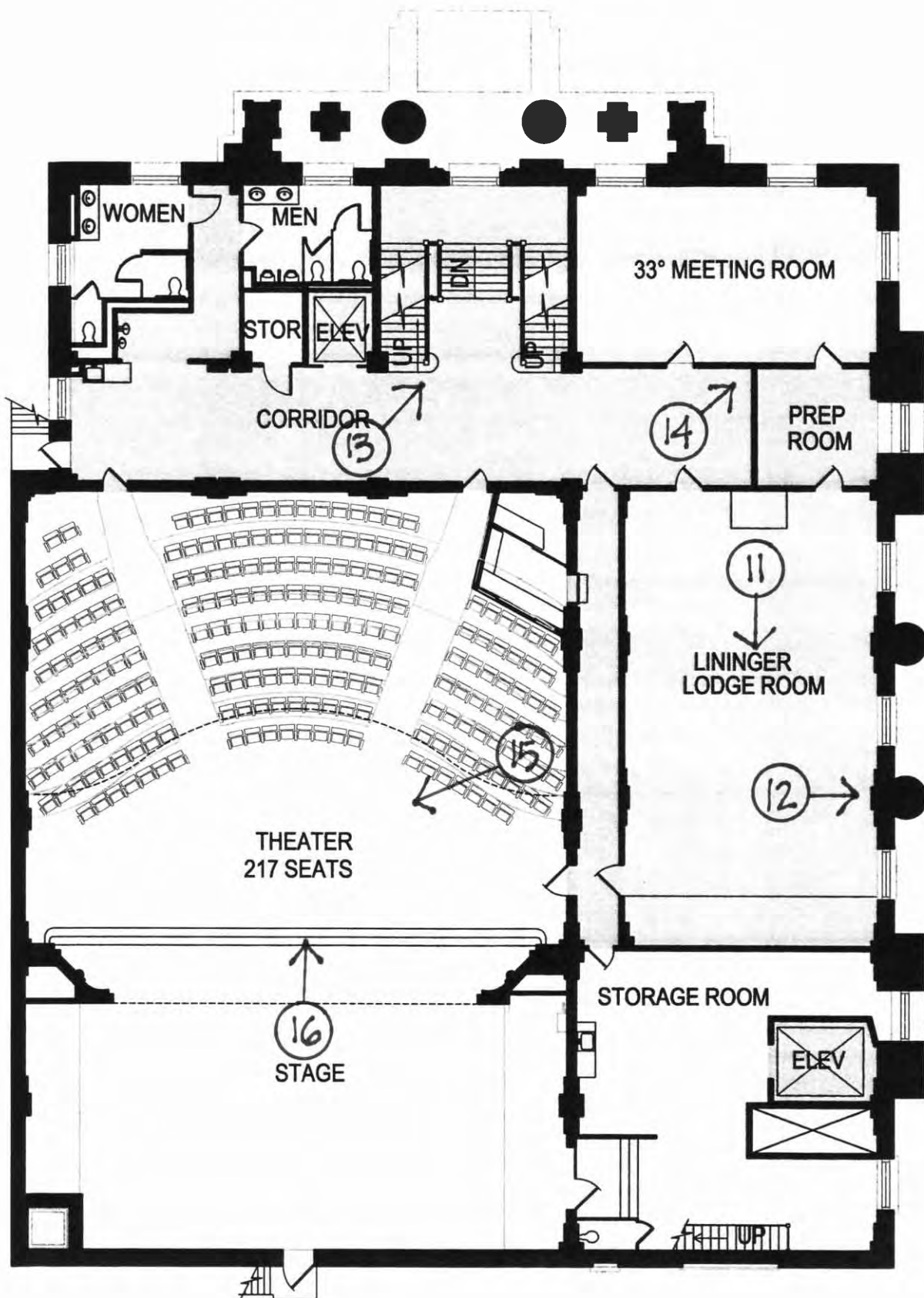


INTERIORS PHOTO KEY



CURRENT FLOOR PLAN (2011)
 SCOTTISH RITE MASONIC CENTER
 SECOND FLOOR ORIGINAL FIRST FLOOR

SCHEMMER
 ARCHITECTS | ENGINEERS | PLANNERS



INTERIORS PHOTO KEY

CURRENT FLOOR PLAN (2011)
 SCOTTISH RITE MASONIC CENTER
 THIRD FLOOR ORIGINAL SECOND FLOOR





