

# **ALAMO PLAZA EXISTING BUILDINGS**

**SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

## **HISTORICAL ASSESSMENT**



**JOHN G. WAITE ASSOCIATES, ARCHITECTS PLLC • SEPTEMBER 2020**



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**SEPTEMBER 2020**

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*prepared for the*  
**ALAMO TRUST, INC**

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The Crockett Block, Palace Theater Arcade, and Woolworth Building. JGWA, 2019.

# INTRODUCTION

**THE CROCKETT BLOCK** at 317-323 Alamo Plaza, the Palace Theater Arcade at 327 Alamo Plaza, and the Woolworth Building at 518 East Houston Street are located on the west side of the Alamo Plaza, facing the Alamo in downtown San Antonio, Texas. All three buildings are listed as contributing elements of the Alamo Plaza National Register Historic District and are part of the Alamo Plaza Local Historic District. The three properties were acquired by the State of Texas in 2015 for incorporation into new plans for an improved visitor experience of the Alamo historic site.

Because of differences of opinion over whether the buildings should be preserved or not, John G. Waite Associates, Architects (JGWA) was contracted by the Texas General Land Office on behalf of the Alamo Trust, Inc. in January 2019 to undertake an historical assessment study to determine the significance and level of integrity of each of the three buildings, together and individually. This work required that an extensive and thorough investigation of each building be undertaken to assess the amount of historic building fabric that survived and document its condition; the investigation resulted in a listing of the three buildings' surviving character-defining features. Concurrently, primary-source research outlined the construction history of each building and documented changes made to each of the structures over time; this information supplemented a review of all available previous studies documenting the three buildings. Discussions were also held over the past year with representatives of the Alamo Trust, San Antonio Conservation Society, City of San Antonio Historic Preservation Office, Texas General Land Office, and National Park Service.

The various historical designations that affect the three buildings, ranging from the international San Antonio Missions World Heritage Site designation to the recent local efforts to recognize the Woolworth Building as a Texas State Antiquities Landmark, have been summarized. In addition to documenting and evaluating the current official designations, JGWA was asked to undertake an

independent review of the buildings' significance and integrity, and render an opinion as to whether each of the three buildings meets current criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Additional research was also compiled to document the complex developmental history of Alamo Plaza from 1965-1984, including the construction of the Alamo Plaza-Paseo del Rio Linkage Project immediately south of the Crockett Block.

At the outset of the project, JGWA recommended that an historian who is an authority on the African-American civil rights movement be engaged by the Alamo Trust to prepare an assessment of the significance of the San Antonio Woolworth Building within the specific context of local and national desegregation struggles and integration accomplishments in the 20th century. Dr. Carey H. Latimore's subsequent report *Civil Rights in San Antonio: WWII to Mid-1960s* has provided valuable new insights into the collective and peaceful integration of a group of downtown commercial establishment lunch counters near the Alamo.

Participating with JGWA in analyzing the three buildings' history, significance, and current condition was a team of architectural historians, structural engineers, and building systems engineers. This report to the Texas General Land Office is a compilation of the team's findings. In addition, the report includes a range of examples of the successful reuse, by world-class museum institutions, of historic commercial and industrial buildings that share some similar configurations and characteristics with the three Alamo Plaza properties. The information in this report will inform larger discussions about the future of the Alamo site within its existing urban context, and its historical and cultural interpretations for generations to come.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## HISTORY

In the early nineteenth century, Mission San Antonio de Valero, now known as the Alamo, was outside of the village of San Antonio. After the 1836 battle the few buildings of the Alamo, as well as the surrounding area, were in ruins. The site was largely deserted and only a few adobe structures were located along the west side of the Alamo plaza. When Texas was admitted to the Union in 1845, the federal government took over the grounds of the mission and it became a major supply depot for the U.S. Army.

With the establishment of the government depot, the area west and south of the Alamo developed into the commercial center of San Antonio. William A. Menger, a German immigrant, constructed a hotel and brewery just south of the Alamo. In 1882-1883, William H. Maverick and Albert Maverick constructed four similar and adjacent three-story limestone commercial buildings fronting on Alamo Plaza at approximately the same location as the original west wall of the mission. Now known as the Crockett Block, this group of buildings was designed by Alfred Giles (1853-1920), the most prominent architect in San Antonio at the time.

Originally occupied by a series of mercantile stores on the ground floor, by the 1890s the second and third floors were modified for use as a hotel. Since its original construction, the Crockett Block has been continuously occupied for commercial use. In 1983, as a result of a federal Historic Preservation Tax Act project, the exterior of the block was restored to its historic appearance and the interior was rehabilitated to accommodate modern commercial uses while retaining all historic, character-defining features.

Directly north of the Crockett Block is the Palace Theater Arcade, designed by architect George Rodney Willis, who had worked in Frank Lloyd Wright's office, and constructed in 1922-1923. It formed one entrance to the Palace Theater which

was constructed in the middle of the block between Alamo Plaza and Losoya Street. When it opened, the Palace Theater was called "the finest theater in the Southwest." It was also said that the "Arcade will be a big feature of the Palace Theater" and "there is nothing like it in San Antonio." The Palace Theater was constructed with a reinforced concrete structural system and the main facade of the Arcade, facing Alamo Plaza, consisted of terra cotta and glazed bricks.

The theater proper was demolished in 1954, but a portion of the three-story structure, including the public Arcade, survives with its original decorative first floor intact; the upper commercial spaces retain their form as well. Long associated with Louis Santikos, an important Texas theater entrepreneur, the Arcade was restored and rehabilitated in 1983 along with the Crockett Block. In 1992, the Arcade was purchased by P.J. Schneider, a local businesswoman, and a new addition was constructed above the third floor as a "top-flight penthouse."

The Woolworth Building was built in 1920-1921 and was designed by the prominent San Antonio architectural firm of Adams & Adams. With a reinforced concrete structural system and terra-cotta trimmed facades facing Alamo Plaza and East Houston Street, the department store was built under the direct supervision of the construction department of the F. W. Woolworth Company. It was described as having "as modern quarters as any merchandising establishment in the city" "with an abundance of daylight and fresh air." The original lunch counter and soda fountain was described as a "new idea." Located at the rear corner of the store, the lunch counter was renovated several times, once in 1937 and again in the 1950s.

The urban context of the three Alamo Plaza buildings experienced significant change between 1965 and 1984, when the development of downtown San Antonio was influenced by the 1968 World's Fair, the construction of the Hyatt Regency Hotel, and the Alamo Plaza-Paseo del Rio Linkage Project.

In 2000, Service Life and Casualty Company, which already owned the Crockett Block and Palace Arcade, purchased the Woolworth Building. Areas within the Woolworth Building were to be used for the Guinness World Records Museum as well as Ripley's Haunted House attraction. Over the next fifteen years, various modifications occurred, including the installation of a new unenclosed elevator with related steel framing and changes to the ground floor storefronts.

In 2015, the Texas General Land Office purchased the Crockett Block, the Palace Theater Arcade, and the Woolworth Building as part of the effort to establish a new twenty-first-century visitor experience for the Alamo and its surrounding context.

## BUILDING CONDITIONS

In 2015, AECOM of Baton Rouge, LA, prepared a Baseline Property Condition Assessment on the three buildings. The study reported that the basic condition of all three buildings was generally average to good condition. Those elements rated as critical to poor condition were primarily sub-components of the electrical, HVAC, and fire alarm systems that would be replaced as a matter of course with any new program for reusing the building. None of the existing systems are historic.

In the inspection and analysis carried out by the JGWA consultant team in 2019, it was found that the buildings were generally in good to very good condition. The Crockett Block exhibits localized problems at the exterior stone walls, which are constructed of local limestone. This deterioration is normal for a building of its age and is easily addressed using modern building conservation techniques. Other problems, such as the deterioration of the Woolworth Building roof coverings, are the result of either a lack of maintenance or the natural aging of a component that requires periodic replacement.

Neither AECOM nor the JGWA team found any violations of current building codes in the three buildings. All of the buildings are structurally sound, and a preliminary structural analysis indicates that all three buildings have the capacity to meet modern structural loading standards, with minor augmentation of some structural elements in the Crockett Block. The floor to floor heights of all three buildings range from 12 to 18 feet, and two of the buildings—the Palace Theater Arcade and the Woolworth Building—are of fire-resistant construction.

While the configuration of the historic exterior wall assemblies varies between the three buildings, the insertion of new, energy-efficient building systems can balance the needs of contemporary climate control for public assembly without significant compromise to the material qualities of the historic building facades. Where sensitive collections require controlled environmental conditions, micro-climates within display cases can provide required temperature and humidity controls for conservation standards associated with museum loan agreements.

The adaptive use of these buildings for new functions is an inherently sustainable act, where building reuse and retrofit can retain embodied energy and excess carbon production can be limited. This more comprehensive and performative approach to sustainability can reduce construction waste as well as the manufacturing and transportation impacts associated with new construction materials, and can be coupled with the insertion of new, high-performance building systems to reduce operational energy usage.

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION DESIGNATIONS

The various levels of historic preservation designations for the three Alamo Plaza buildings and the Alamo itself were reviewed and evaluated. It was determined that all agencies with historic preservation authority, from UNESCO to the City of San Antonio, have acknowledged the importance of the three Alamo Plaza buildings—either individually or as part of a historic district. Our research indicates that no historic preservation agency has questioned the architectural and/or historical significance of any of the three properties. In fact, over the past forty-two years the importance of the Crockett Block, Palace Theater Arcade, and Woolworth Building as contributing buildings to the Alamo Plaza National Register Historic District has been reaffirmed several times, particularly during federal Section 106 and Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit reviews. Even the UNESCO World Heritage Site designation for the San Antonio Missions cites the importance of the Alamo Plaza National Register Historic District buildings as a buffer zone for the adjacent World Heritage Site.



More recently, the Woolworth Building has also been recognized for its role in mid-twentieth-century African-American civil rights history. Both the Texas Historical Commission State Antiquities Landmark designation of May 2019 and the 2020 World Monuments Watch highlight this aspect of the building's history, and in particular its role as one of the first public lunch counters to be peacefully integrated in downtown San Antonio. For comparison purposes, information was collected about other Woolworth buildings that are on the National Register. Information was also included on the 2004 National Historic Landmark theme study, *Civil Rights in America: Racial Desegregation of Public Accommodations* and subsequent programs under development by the National Park Service. These programs provide a framework for the evaluation of structures and sites associated with civil rights history in the United States, an important time period that will continue to reveal new meaning and significance for the historic preservation of the built environment.

In addition, JGWA was asked to undertake a new review of the three buildings and offer an opinion as to whether they meet the most recent criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This independent analysis carried out by JGWA determined that there is no question that all three buildings meet current criteria for listing in the National Register, particularly Criterion A regarding association with significant historical events and Criterion C regarding distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.

## EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE AND INTEGRITY

The Crockett Block, the Palace Theater Arcade, and the Woolworth Building all retain significant amounts of historic building fabric, and the exterior and interior character-defining features of the buildings are largely intact, especially in areas that were and are accessible to the public.

The exterior form, shape, massing, and exterior materials of all three structures are remarkably intact, and in the case of the Crockett Block have been carefully restored following unsympathetic mid-twentieth-century modifications. Later additions constructed at the rear (west) elevation of the Crockett Block and at the Palace Theater Arcade

building do not contribute to the historic character of the structures but have not significantly compromised the physical form, materials, or structure of these two buildings. Because of its prominent siting, the Woolworth Building, with the inset entrance configuration at the corner of Alamo Plaza and East Houston Street and its prominent wrap-around canopy, retains nearly all of its exterior historic integrity.

In some cases, the remaining interior character-defining features within spaces that are accessible to the public have been obscured by recent tenant construction, particularly for amusement uses that currently exist within both the Palace Theater Arcade and the Woolworth Building. Evidence of the configuration and interior finishes of the public lunch counter in the Woolworth Building remain, despite the current use of the space for storage. The interior public spaces of the Crockett Block include more retained and restored historic building fabric than originally assumed, and non-historic internal partitions and insertions have been constructed in a manner that obscures some of the remaining historical elements and finishes.

## FINDINGS

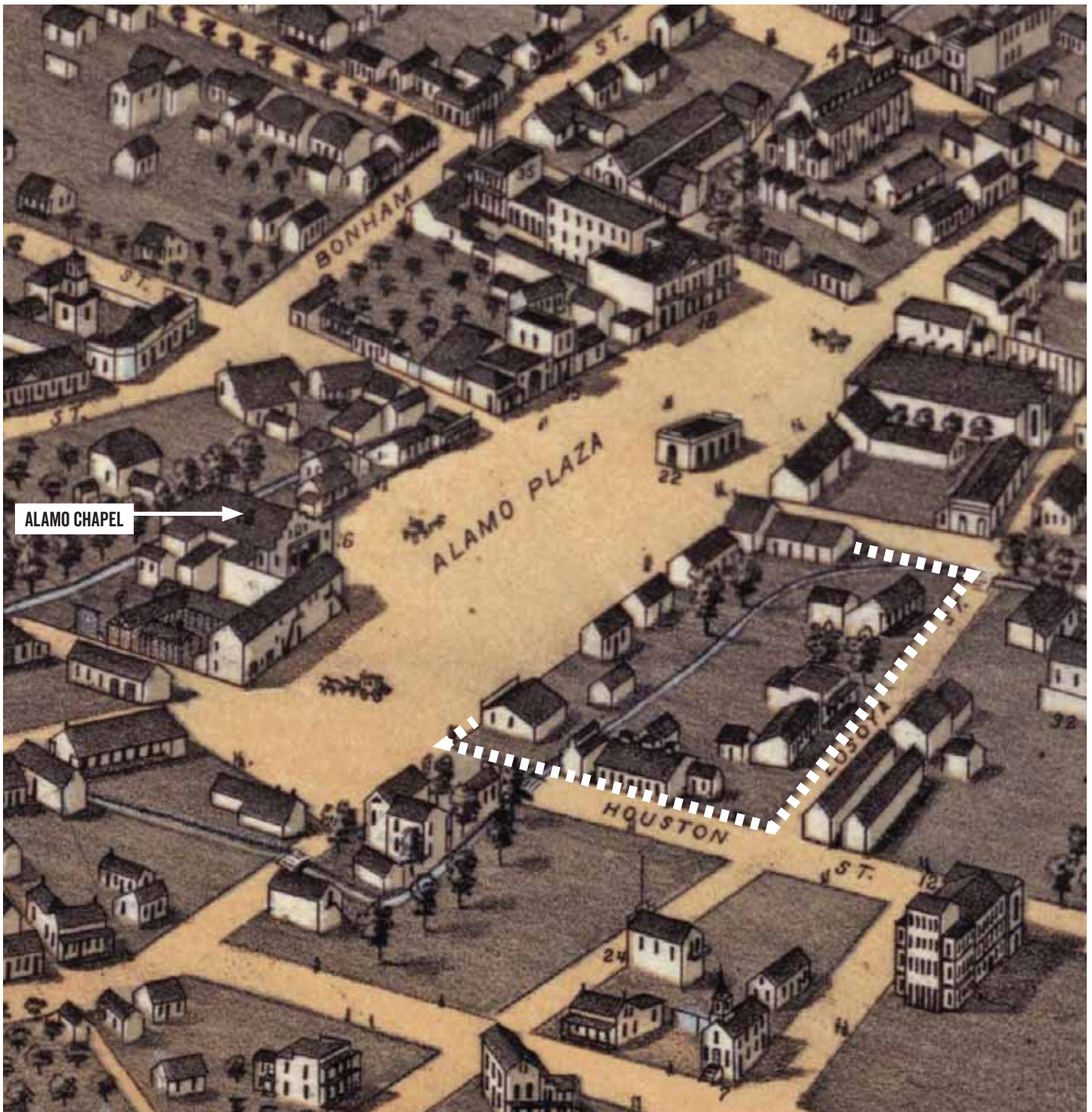
The Crockett Block, Palace Theater Arcade, and Woolworth Building have a strong potential for continued use for a variety of new public and administrative museum spaces and functions for the Alamo Trust. If properly developed, in conjunction with adjacent new construction, all three buildings can act together as an appropriate physical and interpretive connection between the multiple layers of historic context represented by the Alamo and the downtown commercial core of San Antonio.

Recent international trends in museum design and development have emphasized the reuse and transformation of historic industrial and commercial buildings for interpretive programming, providing stronger links between complex layers of history and dynamic visitor experiences. Through the historic preservation treatments of exterior restoration and interior rehabilitation, these three buildings on Alamo Plaza can provide the opportunity for a unique twenty-first century museum experience that is innovatively housed within some of San Antonio's most historically significant commercial architecture of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

# EVOLUTION OF ALAMO PLAZA







Detail from an 1873 panoramic view of San Antonio, looking southeast. The dashed line outlines the future site of the Crockett Block, Palace Theater Arcade, and Woolworth Building. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Old\\_map-San\\_Antonio-1873.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Old_map-San_Antonio-1873.jpg) (retrieved June 19, 2019).



# EVOLUTION OF ALAMO PLAZA

**WHAT IS NOW** the Alamo Plaza National Register Historic District includes the Alamo church, the public plaza that was part of the mission courtyard, and the surrounding late nineteenth and early twentieth-century commercial structures that grew up around the Alamo, including the Crockett Block, the Palace Theater Arcade, and the Woolworth Building.

## EARLY DEVELOPMENT

In the eighteenth century, the walls around the Mission San Antonio de Valero and its outbuildings enclosed the north area of the current plaza. After the 1836 Battle of the Alamo in the Texas War for Independence, the buildings of the mission and surrounding area were in ruins; by 1840, there were only a few adobe-style structures along the west side of the largely deserted Alamo site. In 1841, the Republic of Texas passed an act granting the Alamo church to the Roman Catholic Church. When Texas was admitted to the Union as the 28th state on December 29, 1845, the Catholic Church leased the property to the federal government, which took over the grounds of the mission for quartermasters purposes. In order to accommodate the U.S. Army occupation, the remaining Alamo structures were repaired and renovated. A new roof was constructed for the chapel and its west façade was partially rebuilt, adding the campanulate (bell-shaped) ornament that signifies its iconic west gable. During this time, those few structures on the west side of the Alamo had grown to a full row of gable-roofed buildings.

At the same time as Texas achieved statehood, political turmoil in Germany inspired thousands of Germans to immigrate to San Antonio, making it the largest town in Texas by 1860. One of these immigrants, William A. Menger, built the first major commercial buildings near the plaza: a brewery and a hotel at the south end of the site.

## THE DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL CENTER

The arrival of the steam train in 1877 brought a burst of economic growth—industrial, commercial, and tourist-related—to San Antonio. The State of Texas purchased the Alamo church from the Catholic Church in 1883, preserving what remained of the Alamo complex for future generations. At this same time, two sons of Samuel Maverick hired Alfred Giles to design and oversee construction of the Crockett Block across from the Alamo church. By the early 1900s, members of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas purchased the Long Barrack and later took over the care of the complex.

These changes made way for leading businesses to establish stores around the plaza as San Antonio continued to grow. By 1920, it was still the largest city in Texas, and the earliest chain stores and national businesses looked to build at the heart of the downtown. After an invitation from a local realtor, the F.W. Woolworth Company built what the company claimed was “the handsomest and best equipped” store in the Southwest at the corner of Alamo Plaza and East Houston Street. The store opened in 1921. Just two years later, the Palace Theater and its Arcade (constructed between the Woolworth Building and the Crockett Block) opened, and significant infrastructural work was in the very early planning stages to alleviate flooding of the San Antonio River nearby.

With the commercial center established, the area around the Alamo was again transformed in 1936, as part of Texas’ celebration of 100 years of independence. Money was allocated for improvements throughout Texas, including at and around the Alamo church and plaza. The U.S. Texas Centennial Commission gave money to create a cenotaph, “The Spirit of Sacrifice” by the architectural firm of Adams and Adams with sculptures by Pompeo Coppini, one of forty-five monuments commissioned for the centennial.

The Cenotaph was dedicated in 1940 as a memorial to those that died defending Texas during the 1836 Battle of the Alamo. It was positioned at the west end of the Alamo site, placing it directly across from the plaza's commercial buildings.

In 1952, the Crockett Block's historic façade was covered with aluminum false fronts. Two years later, most of the Palace Theater was demolished and replaced with a parking lot, but the Arcade portion of the building remained untouched.

## REDEVELOPMENT AND RESTORATION

San Antonio hosted HemisFair '68, the official World's Fair, coinciding with the 250th anniversary of the founding of San Antonio in 1718. Construction for the fair changed a large region of downtown. Several new structures were built including the Tower of the Americas, and San Antonio's River Walk was extended for a quarter mile to the site of the HemisFair at the southeast edge of the downtown area. The event brought a renewed interest in redevelopment around Alamo Plaza and multiple urban renewal plans were under consideration after the HemisFair and throughout the 1970s. These plans would later culminate in a large and extensive urban development project that included the creation of a new pedestrian linkage between the River Walk and Alamo Plaza. Named the Alamo Plaza-Paseo Del Rio Linkage Project, it also involved the construction of the Hyatt Regency Hotel and a nearby municipal parking garage. Construction began in the late 1970s and was largely completed in 1981.

During this time of redevelopment and reinvestment in downtown San Antonio, Alamo Plaza's historic significance was given greater attention in many ways. Archaeological investigations were conducted as the sites of the new hotel and Paseo del Rio were excavated, and a portion of the original west wall of the Mission San Antonio de Valero was discovered and preserved for public exhibition. Four structures to the south of the Crockett Block located at 309-315 Alamo Plaza were demolished to form a notch-like connection to the Paseo del Rio, and allow further archaeological investigation of the history and structure of the Alamo.

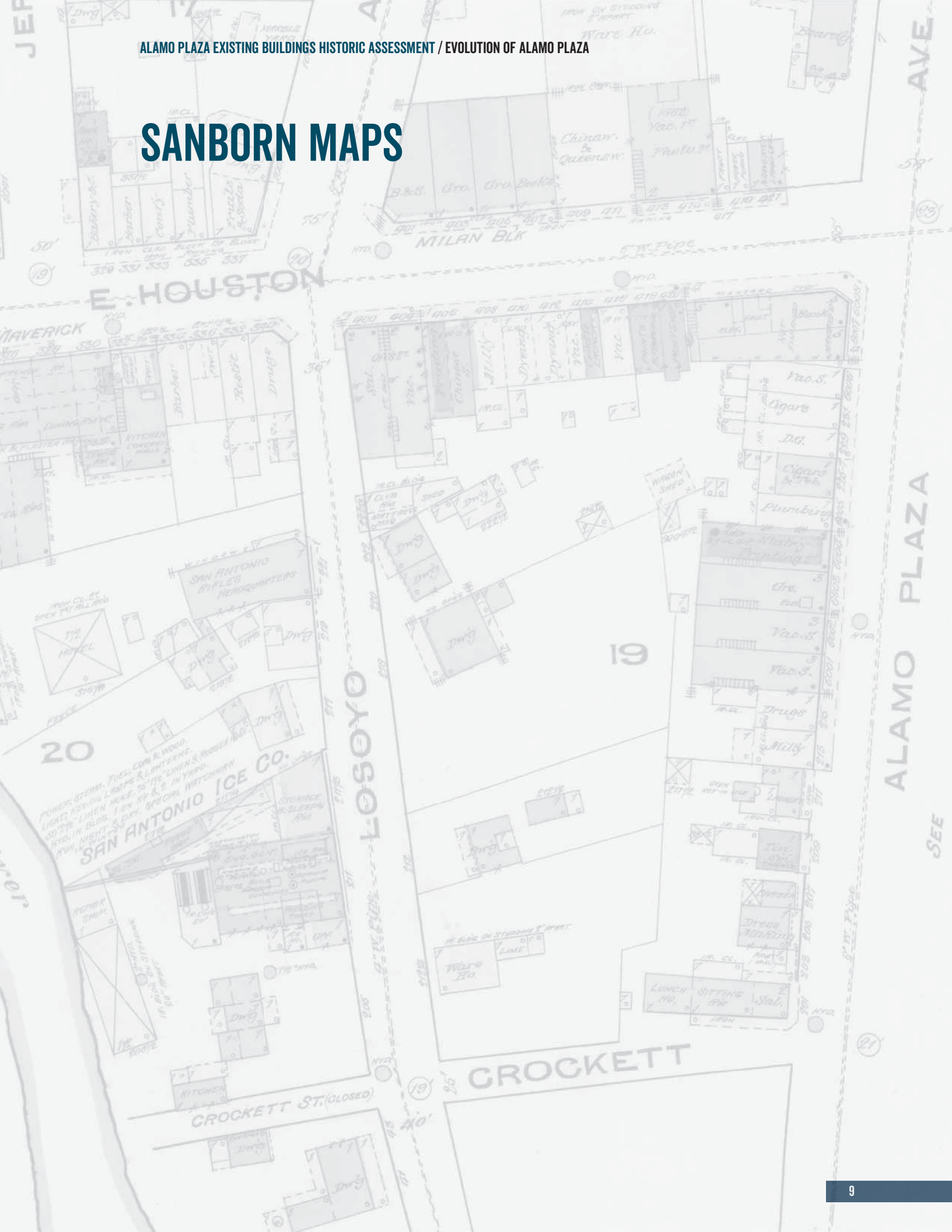
Alamo Plaza was designated a National Register Historic District in 1977 and a Local Historic District in 1982, which emphasized the significance of the downtown commercial center and identified several structures as contributing to its historic significance.

While the linkage project was facilitated by the demolition of certain buildings that contributed to the historic district, federal funding required the restoration of the historic facades of commercial buildings that faced the Alamo. Conditions were stipulated in the Memorandum of Agreement signed in 1980 by the city manager, the Texas Historic Preservation Officer, and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The agreement was required to mitigate the adverse effects the redevelopment work would have on the historic district as reviewed and determined by the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. In addition to research and preservation of archaeological findings, the agreement called for a design review process between the city and the Texas State Historic Preservation Office for proposed new construction and restoration work to ensure compatibility between new work and cultural properties associated with the historic district.

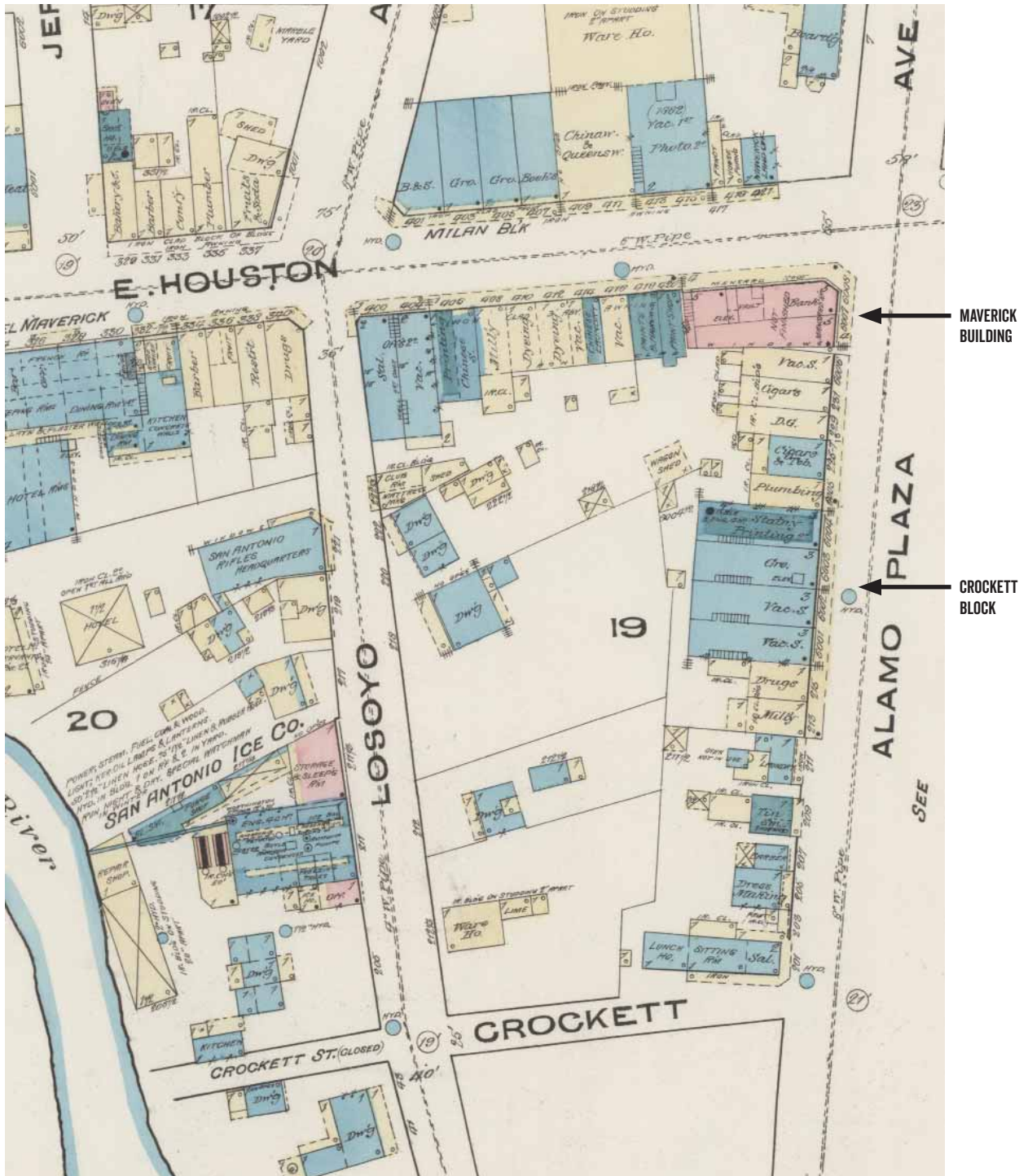
Among others, the National Register of Historic Places lists the Crockett Block, the Palace Theater Arcade, and the Woolworth Building as contributing structures along with the buildings at 309-315 Alamo Plaza that were demolished. The Crockett Block and Palace Theater Arcade were both included in the restoration effort and their facades were greatly revitalized. The Crockett Block had an especially large restoration campaign as it formed the northern edge of the entrance to the Paseo del Rio and the historic street edge of Alamo Plaza. The exterior improvements to the Crockett Block were carried out in 1983 and completed in 1984 to make way for a new phase of commerce in Alamo Plaza.

## RECENT HISTORY AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

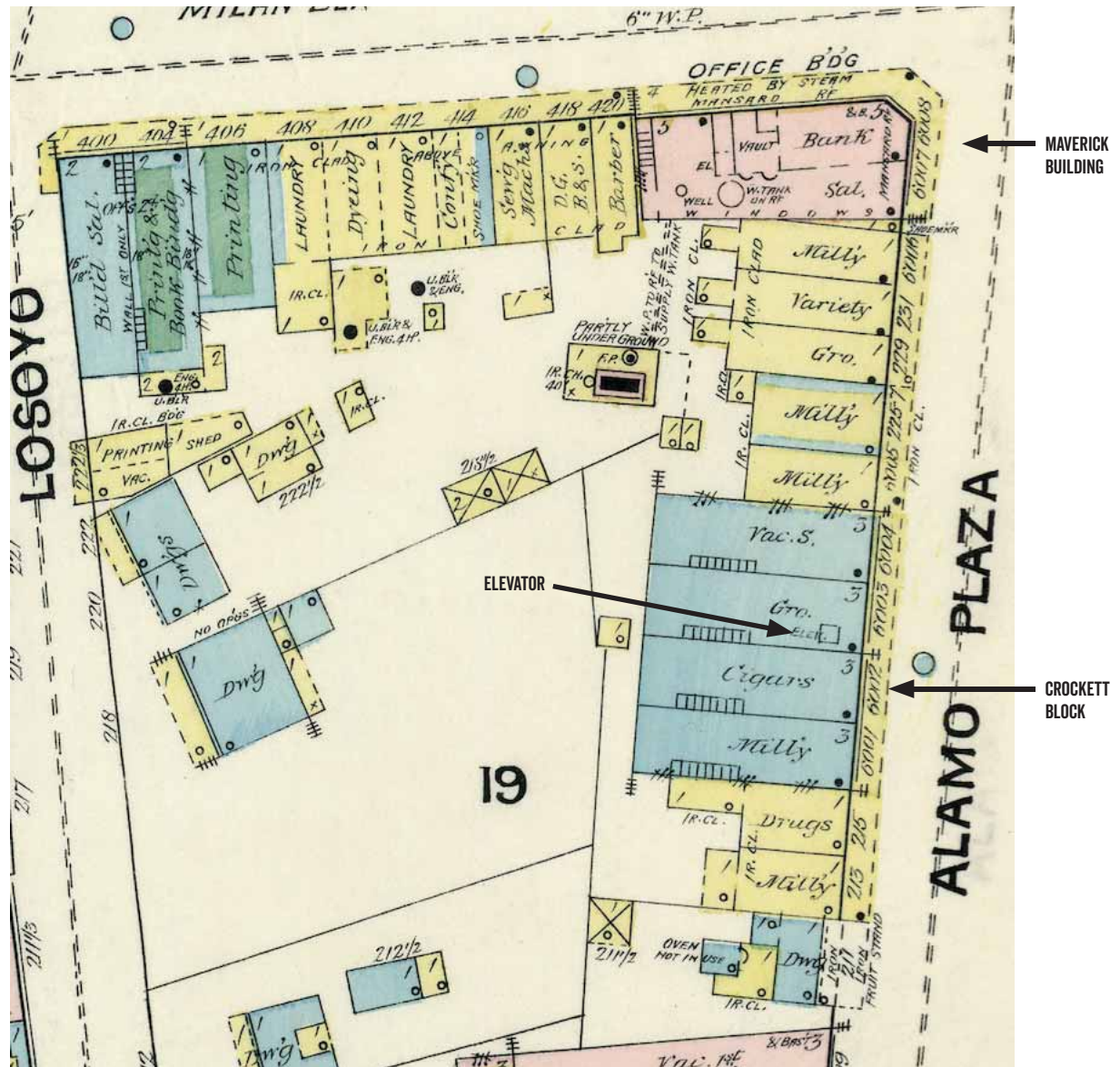
By 1991, the businesses located within the Crockett Block and the Palace Theater Arcade, including the San Antonio Visitor Center and Sosa & Associates, the largest Hispanic advertising agency in the country, were thriving. Ownership of the three structures along the west side of Alamo Plaza was consolidated a decade later, and new entertainment uses and attractions that catered to tourism were introduced. By 2015, the Texas General Land Office purchased the properties, and planning was underway to establish a new 21st century visitor experience for the Alamo and its surrounding context.





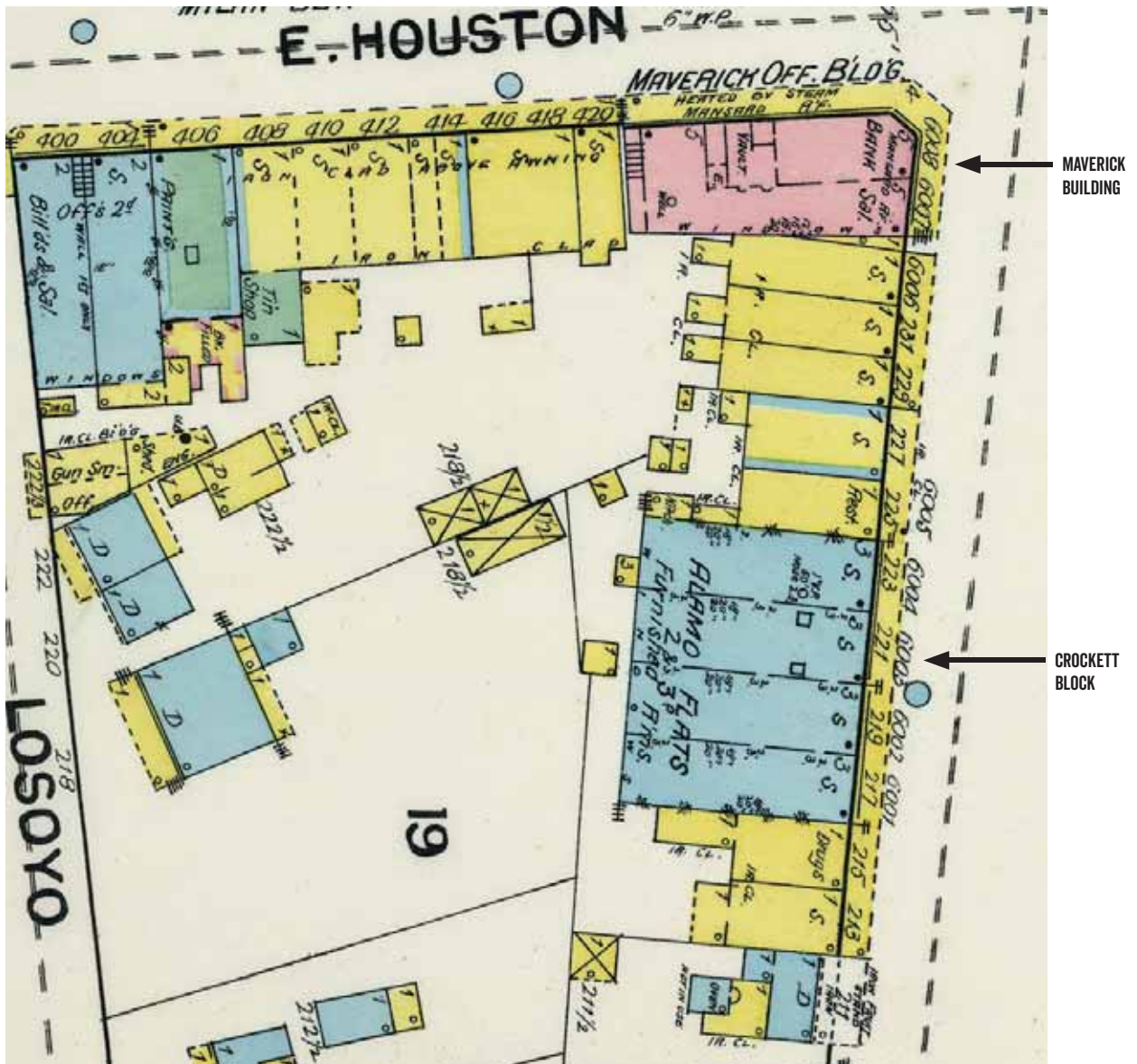


1885 Sanborn map, showing the block surrounded by Alamo Plaza, East Houston, Losoya, and Crockett Streets. Each unit of the Crockett Block includes an internal stair against the south wall. The Maverick Building is under construction. Library of Congress.

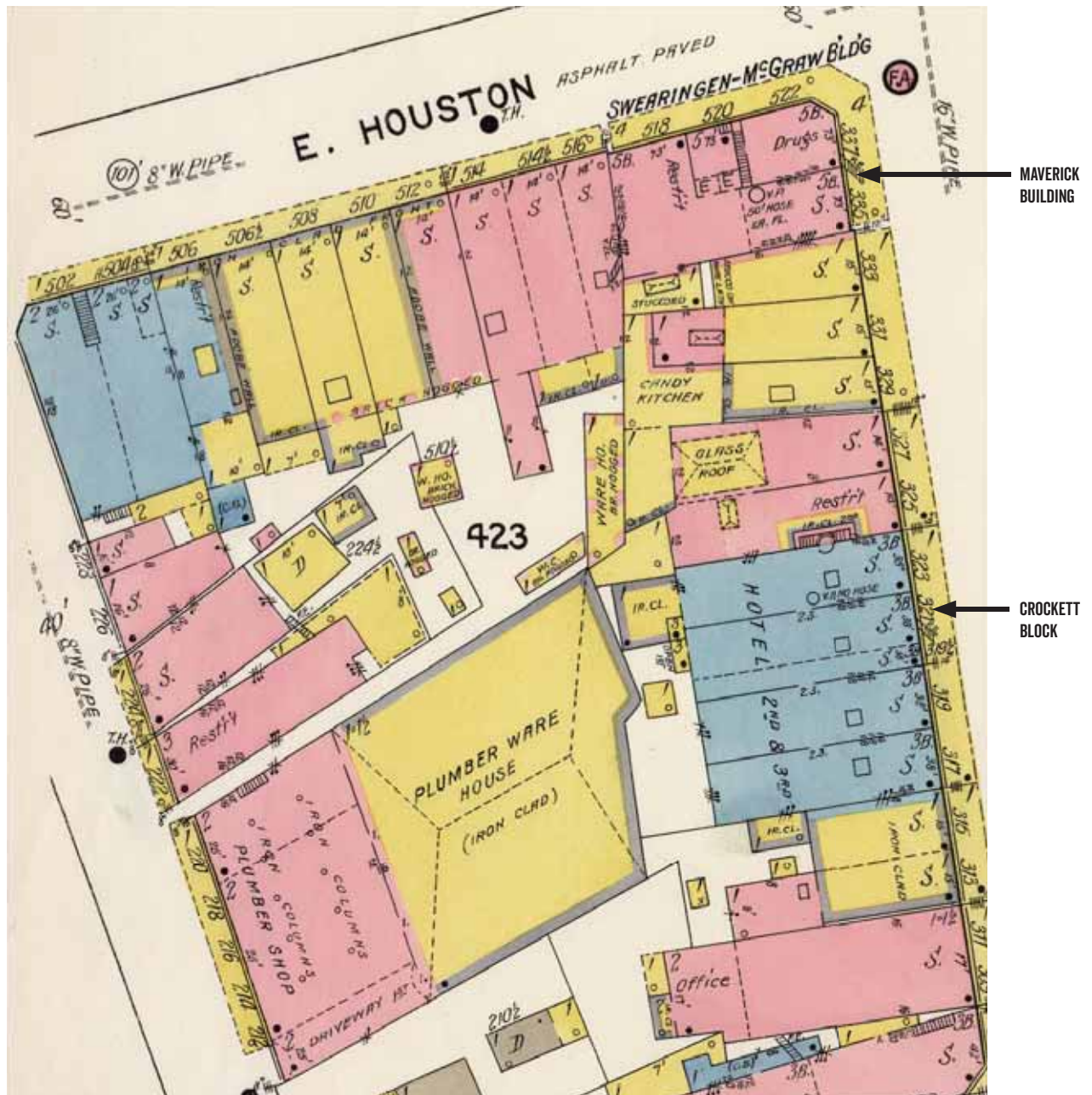


1888 Sanborn map. The Maverick Building is shown completed. Note the elevator shown in #6003 of the Crockett Block. Library of Congress.



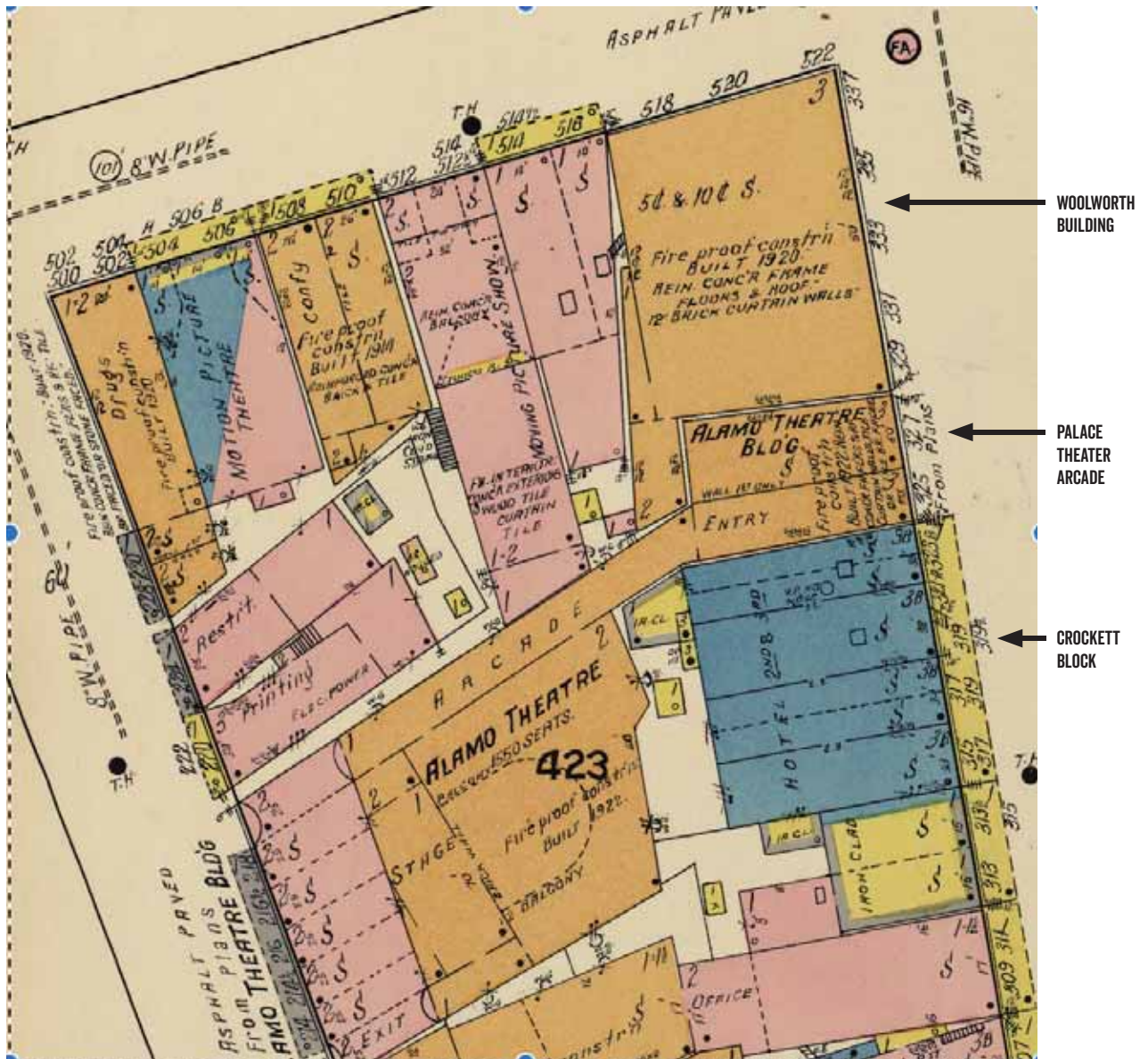


1892 Sanborn map. The Crockett Block now includes stores on the first floor and the Alamo Flats Furnished Rooms on the upper floors. The Maverick Building and the three one-story buildings immediately to the south form the site of the future Woolworth Building. Library of Congress.



1912 Sanborn map. The site behind the Crockett Block is filled with a large structure that houses a plumber shop and warehouse. This will become the site of the Palace Theater auditorium. Library of Congress.



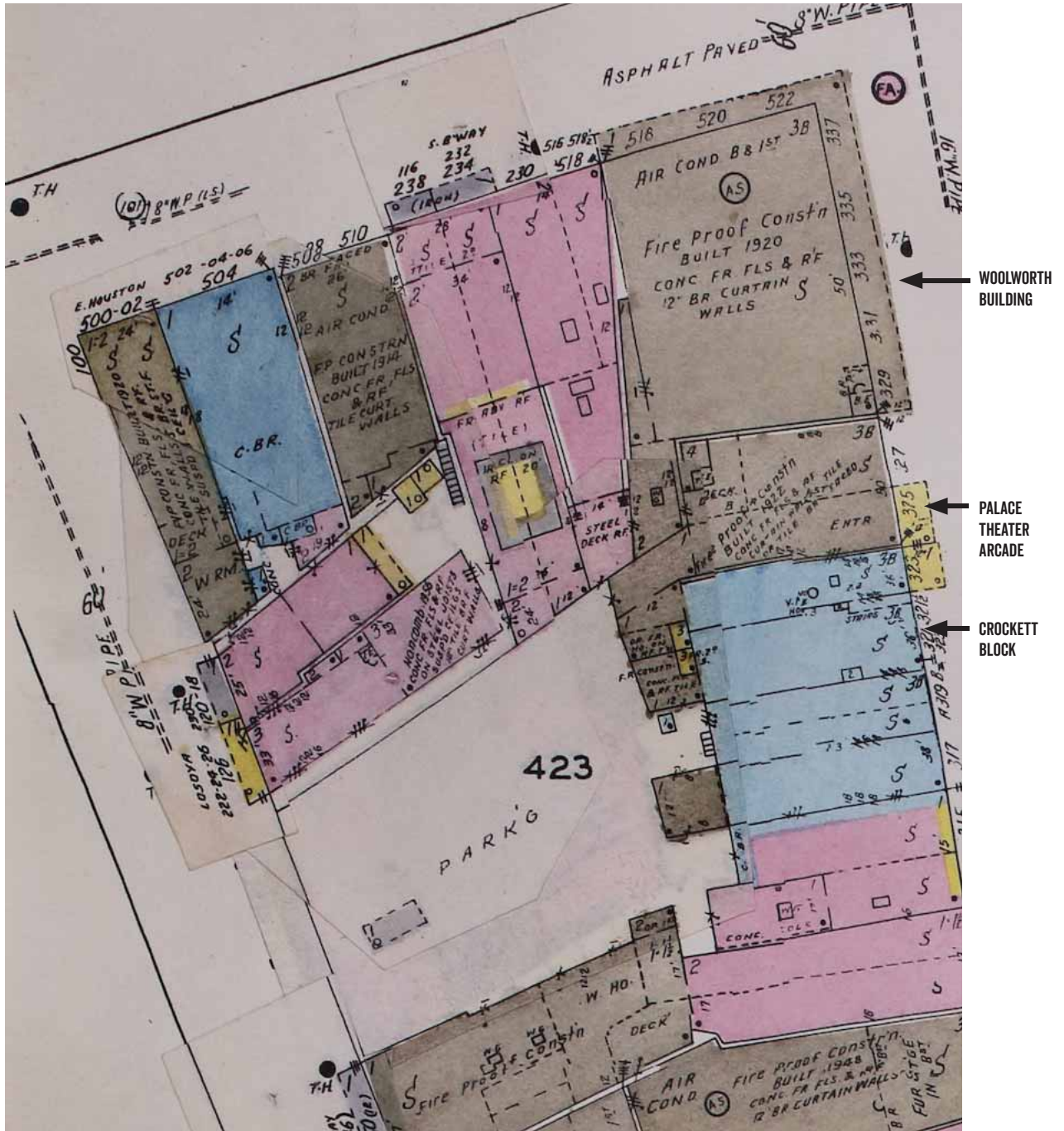


1922 Sanborn map. North and west of the Crockett Block are the Palace Theater from 1922 and the Woolworth Building from 1920. The theatre auditorium fills the exact site of the plumber warehouse. Library of Congress.





1951 Sanborn map. The Palace Theater is still shown. The auditorium and part of the Arcade would be demolished in 1954. Library of Congress.

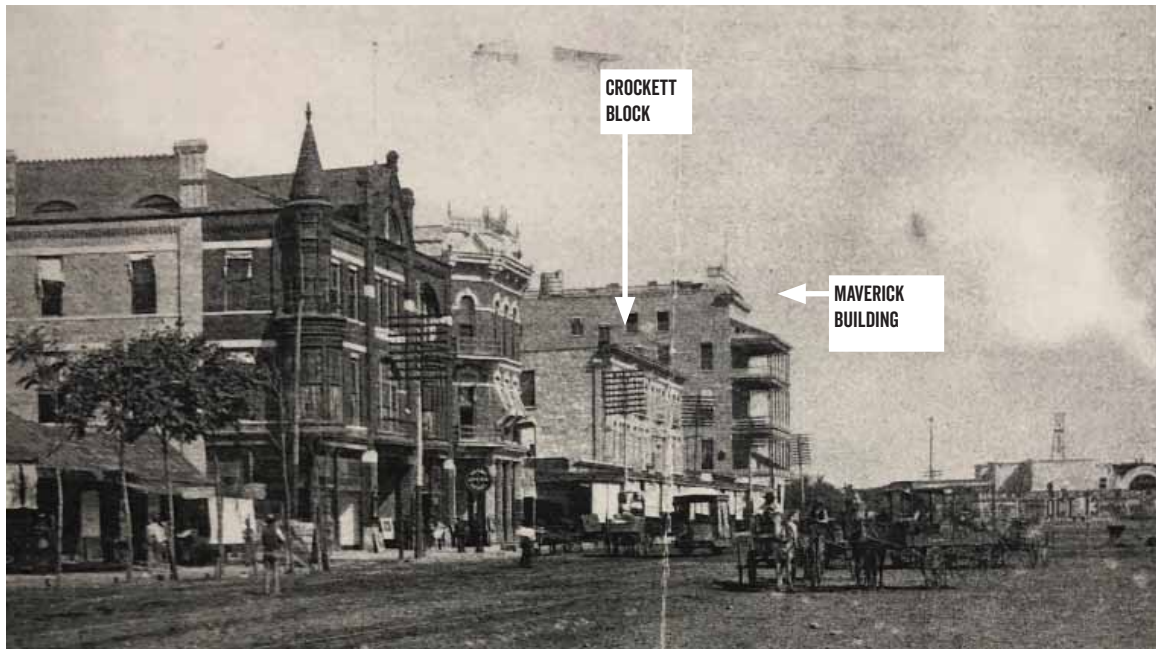


1971 Sanborn map. Only the east office building portion of the Palace Theater Arcade remains after the theater's demolition in 1954. The site of the theater is shown as a parking lot. Library of Congress.



# HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS OF ALAMO PLAZA





The west side of Alamo Plaza in 1888. The Crockett Block is seen at the center of the image. There are no windows in the east end of the south elevation. Note the five-story Maverick Building with its porches; that structure was demolished to build the 1921 Woolworth Building. UTSA Institute of Texas Cultures.



Alamo Plaza, looking north after 1890. Note the two added window openings in the south elevation of the Crockett Block. The impressive structure at the north end of the Plaza is the Federal Building-Post Office completed in 1890. San Antonio Conservation Society.



Alamo Plaza, looking south in 1898. Note the sign for the Alamo Hotel on the north side of the Crockett Block. Awnings shade the sidewalk in front of most of the buildings. As shown in Joan Marston Korte and David L Peché, *Images of America: Downtown San Antonio*, p. 23.



The west side of Alamo Plaza, looking south in circa 1902. The five-story Maverick Building appears at the right. UTSA Institute of Texas Cultures.





Colorized postcard of Alamo Plaza, looking north circa 1907. JGWA collection.







This 1927 photograph, taken from the roof of the Medical Arts Building, shows the roof surfaces of the Palace Theater and the Crockett Block. Note the concrete piers on the roof of the theater building and the curved roof of the theater auditorium behind the Crockett Block. UTSA Institute of Texas Cultures.

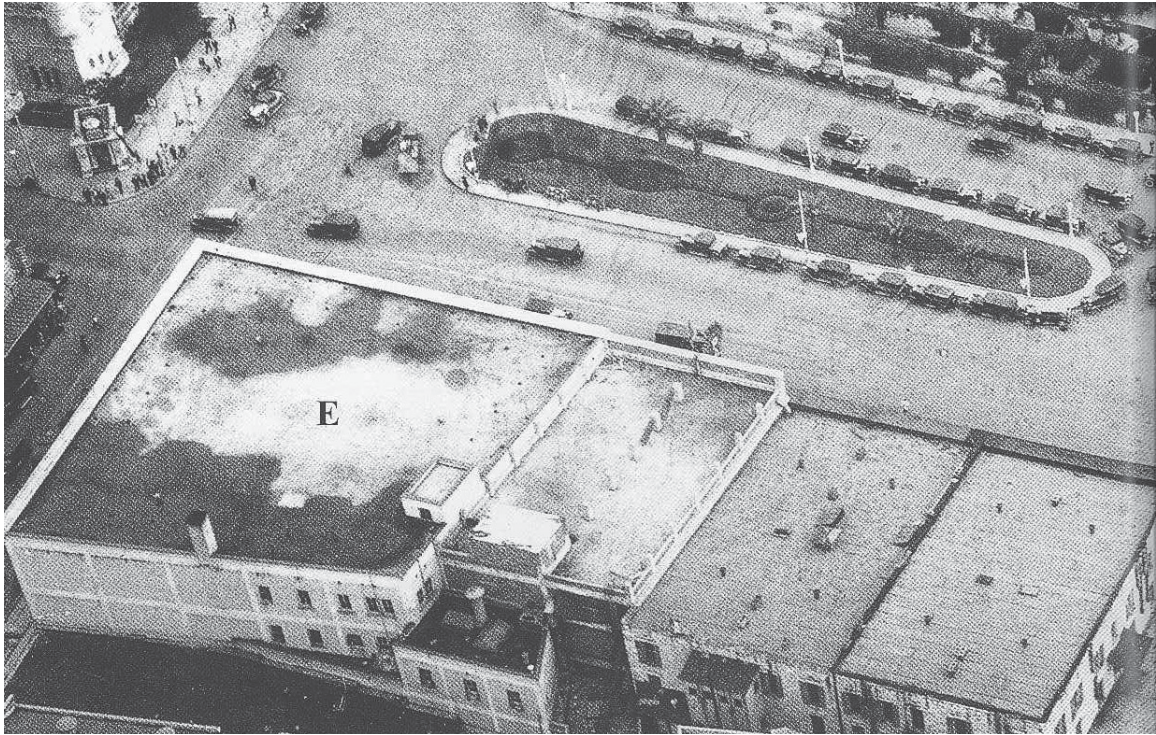


This 1927 photograph shows the roof surface of the Woolworth Building. The small structure at the southwest corner of the roof is still in place today. UTSA Institute of Texas Cultures.



Two views of the west side of Alamo Plaza, looking southwest. The Crockett Block can be seen to the right, and 315-309 Alamo Plaza at the center. UTSA Institute of Texas Cultures.





This 1931 photograph records the rear west elevation of the Woolworth Building. Note the location of the various windows. The structure on the Palace Theater roof housed an elevator and stair. UTSA Institute of Texas Cultures, as shown in George Nelson, *The Alamo, An Illustrated History*, p. 20.



Looking west from the roof of the Crockett Hotel in 1937. The "Alamo" is seen at the center of the image. Note that the small structure constructed on the southeast corner of the Woolworth roof is not yet in place. UTSA Institute of Texas Cultures.





This September 22, 1943 photograph from *The San Antonio Light* collection records Alamo Plaza, looking southwest. The Cenotaph seen at the left of the image was dedicated on November 11, 1940. UTSA Institute of Texas Cultures.



Circa 1945 view of Alamo Plaza looking west, with Crockett Block at right and 315-309 Alamo Plaza at left. University of North Texas.

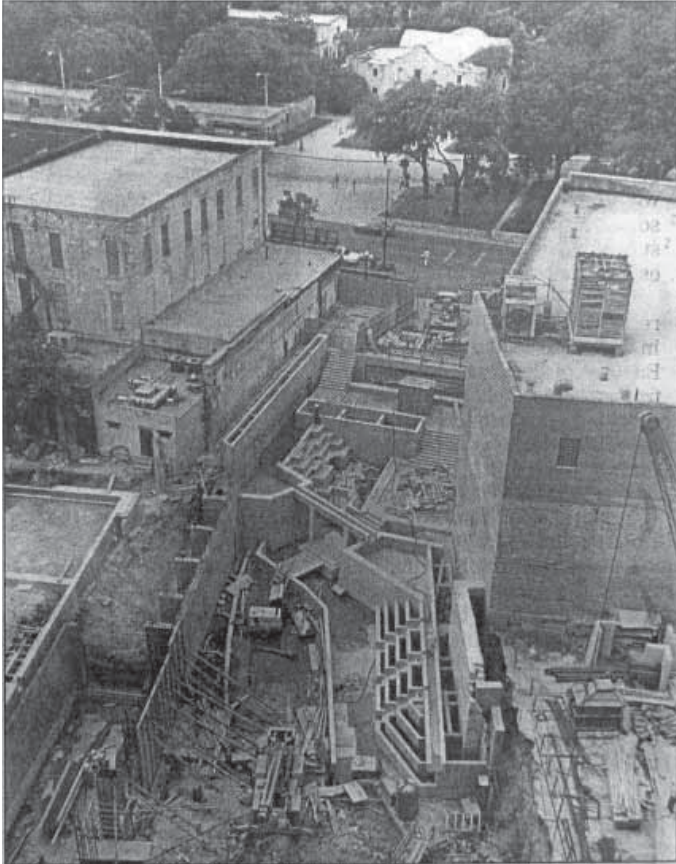


West side of Alamo Plaza, showing the Crockett Block and 309-315 Alamo Plaza from left, November 1976. University of North Texas.



This circa 1976 photograph records the various modifications made to the three buildings on the west side of the plaza. Note the simplified red painted edge of the Woolworth canopy. UTSA Institute of Texas Cultures.





Aerial view of the east end of the Paseo del Rio under construction with the Remember the Alamo building still in place. This circa 1981 photograph was reprinted in Scott Huddleston, "Then & Now: Paseo del Alamo," *San Antonio Express-News*, May 25, 2003.



This 1997 photograph records the rear elevations of the three buildings. Compare this image with the similar view from 1931 (see page 23). From George Nelson, *The Alamo, An Illustrated History*, p. 6.



# BUILDING EXAMINATIONS



# KEY BUILDING EVENTS



**1882-1883**

Crockett Block, consisting of four similar adjacent buildings, is constructed on a site previously occupied by several circa 1848 adobe flat-roofed buildings.



**1885**

Maverick Bank Building is constructed

**1890-1891**

Crockett Block's second and third floors are fit out for occupancy by Alamo Flats hotel (also named Hotel Alamo)



**1921**

San Antonio Woolworth Building is constructed on the site of the demolished Maverick Bank Building

**1923**

Palace Theater and Palace Theater Arcade are constructed

**1931**

Crockett Block's second and third floors are unoccupied after Hotel Alamo closes

**1937**

Woolworth Building remodels and updates their lunch department



**1950s**

A portion of the Crockett Block's original façade is concealed by the installation of an aluminum façade

**1954**

Palace Theater is demolished; Palace Theater Arcade is spared

**1960 MARCH**

Woolworth Building is one of seven downtown commercial establishments to peacefully integrate its lunch counter after meeting with local civil rights organizers

**1960s**

Palace Theater Arcade's penthouse is constructed but left unfinished

**1977**

Alamo Plaza Historic District is officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places; Crockett Block, Palace Theater Arcade, and Woolworth Building are listed as contributing buildings

**1982 JULY**

Alamo Plaza Local Historic District is certified by the Southwest Region of the National Park Service; Crockett Block, Palace Theater Arcade, and Woolworth Building are identified as "buildings contributing to the district"

**1982-1983**

Crockett Block's application for Historic Preservation Certification begins; Part I and Part II documentation is prepared for and approved by the State Historic Preservation Office

**1983-1984**

Crockett Block and Palace Theater Arcade exterior and interior are restored and a modern rear addition is constructed at each building

**1993**

Palace Theater Arcade's existing penthouse is renovated

**1997**

The Woolworth Corp. closes its remaining stores, including the San Antonio Woolworth Building

**2015**

State of Texas purchases the Crockett Block, Palace Theater Arcade and Woolworth Building and management of each property is transferred to the Texas General Land Office





# BUILDING CONDITIONS

## PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT BY OTHERS

IN 2015 AECOM OF BATON ROUGE, LA prepared a Baseline Property Condition Assessment of Alamo Plaza Buildings, 317-325 Alamo Plaza, 327-329 Alamo Plaza and 518-522 E. Houston Street, San Antonio for the Texas General Land Office (GLO). The structures were described as “three historic buildings located near the southwest corner of Alamo Plaza and E. Houston Street in San Antonio.”

The purpose of the study was to “observe the major aspects of the subject property and evaluate their condition.” Original construction drawings, construction inspection records, or field test results were not available. The study was carried out by architects and engineers of AECOM’s Baton Rouge office.

The following components of each building were described and evaluated:

- exterior walls and roofs
- interiors
- structural elements
- HVAC systems
- plumbing systems
- electrical systems
- fire alarm/life safety system

The components of each building were accessed and assigned to the following categories:

- 1. FAILED/CRITICAL CONDITION:** Major repair or replacement is required to restore function and/or safety.
- 2. POOR CONDITION:** Significant defects noted, but complete replacement of component is generally not required.
- 3. AVERAGE CONDITION:** Moderate defects and/or deterioration noted. Maintenance type repairs may be required.
- 4. GOOD CONDITION:** Minor defects and/or deterioration noted. Components are well maintained and require little repairs.
- 5. EXCELLENT CONDITION:** Components appear to be like new. No repair necessary.

The following is a summary of the conditions of each building as evaluated by AECOM:

### CROCKETT BLOCK

exterior walls and roofs	3 to 3.5
interiors	2 to 4
structural	2 to 3
HVAC	2
plumbing	3
electrical	2 to 5
fire alarm/life safety	2 to 5

### PALACE THEATER ARCADE

interior walls and roof	3 to 3.5
interiors	2.5 to 4
structural	3
HVAC	2 to 3
plumbing	3
electrical	4 to 5
fire alarm/life safety	1.5 to 5

### WOOLWORTH

exterior walls and roofs	2 to 4
interiors	2.5 to 3.5
structural	2 to 3
HVAC	2 to 3
plumbing	3
electrical	3.5 to 5
fire alarm/life safety	2 to 5

## CONCLUSIONS

The AECOM report concludes with the statements “This assessment has revealed no evidence of code violations” and “the buildings and the surrounding building site appear to be in compliance with the ADA and the local codes in effect at the time the buildings were constructed [SIC].” The report also recommends that “a historical architect be contacted for further study.”

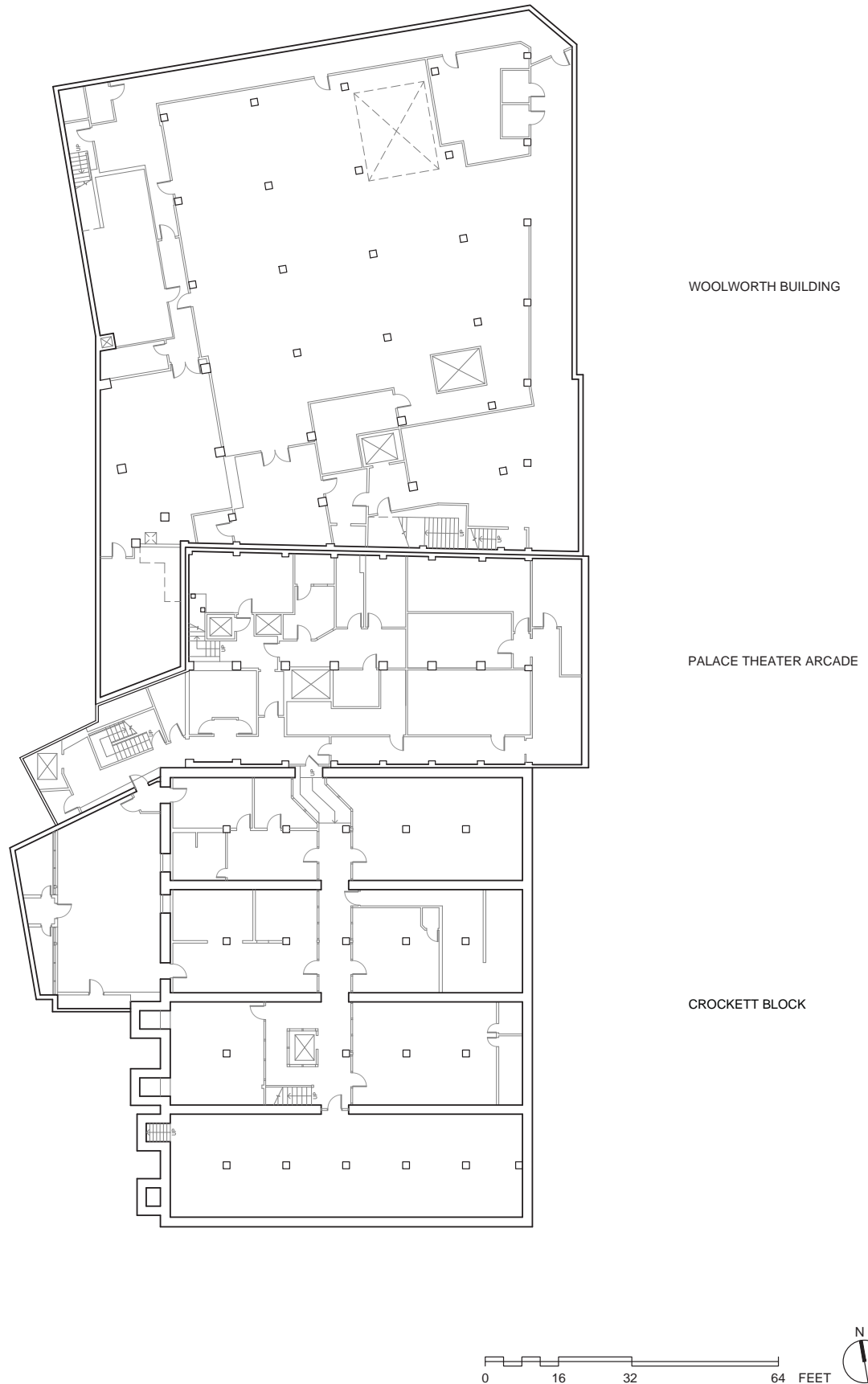
The structural section of the AECOM conditions assessment did not include the loading capacity of each floor. This information is needed to evaluate the potential reuse of the three buildings.

From April through June of 2019, John G. Waite Associates Architects, along with Kohler Ronan (building systems engineering) and 1200 Architectural Engineers (structural engineering) conducted a thorough examination of all three buildings assessing the condition of each building element and its historical evolution and significance. Generally, it was found that the physical condition of the historic building fabric of each building was better than evaluated in the AECOM report, probably because JGWA used standards and nomenclature that are more commonly used for historic buildings.

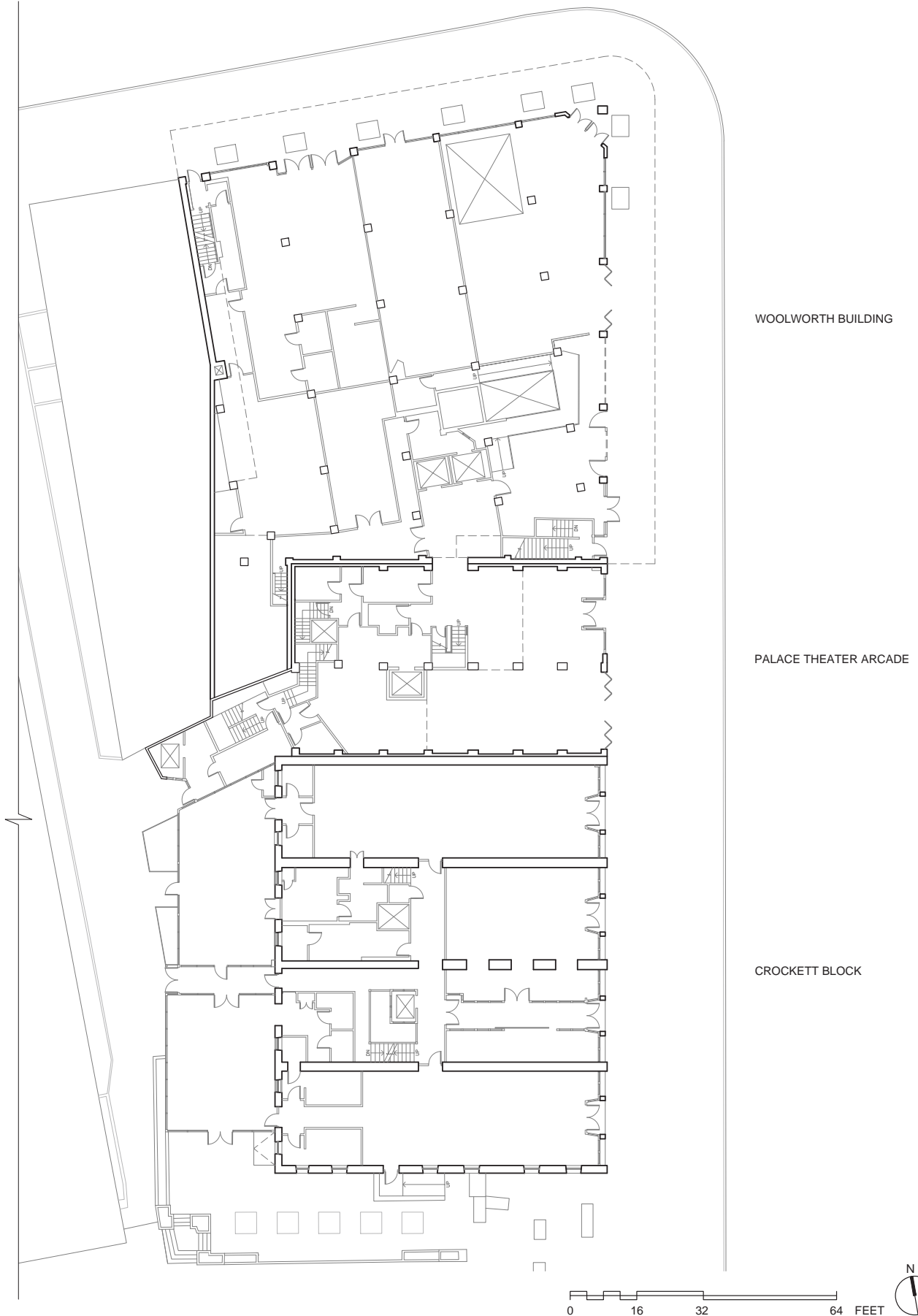


# OVERALL PLAN DRAWINGS: EXISTING CONDITIONS



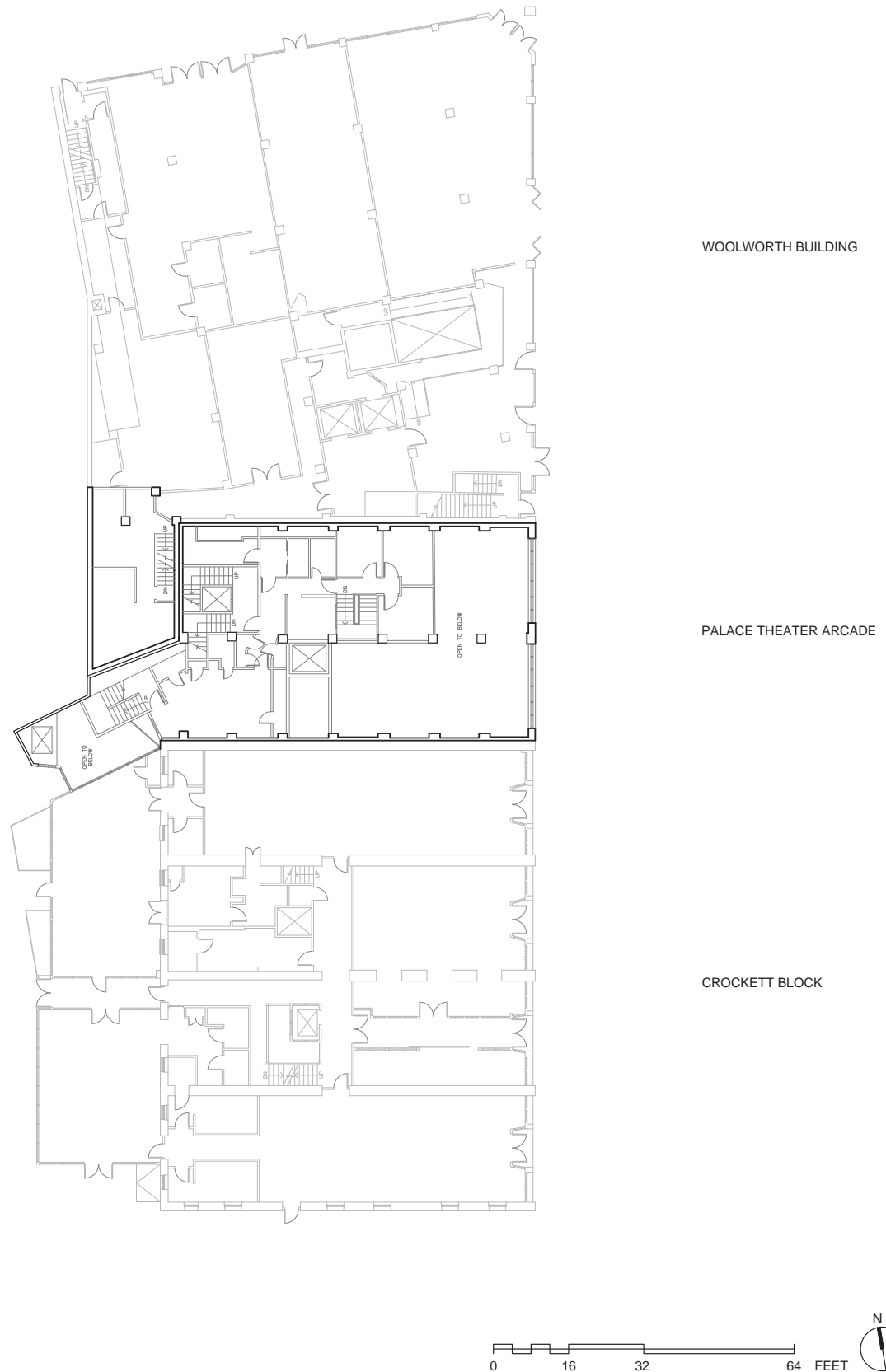


Basement Floor Plan: Crockett Block, Palace Theater Arcade, Woolworth Building. JGWA, 2020.



First Floor Plan: Crockett Block, Palace Theater Arcade, Woolworth Building. JGWA, 2020.



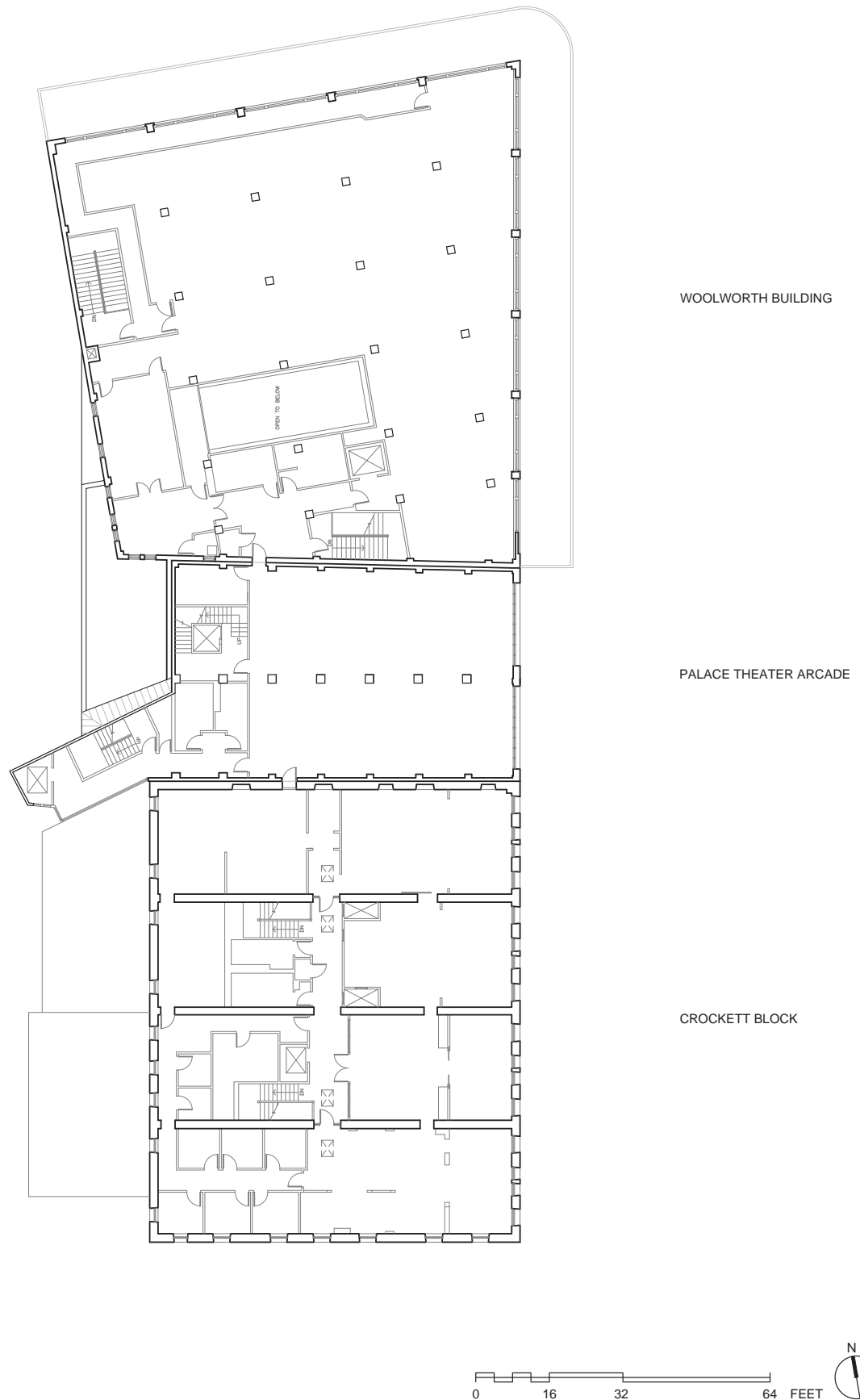


Mezzanine Floor Plan: Crockett Block, Palace Theater Arcade, Woolworth Building. JGWA, 2020.

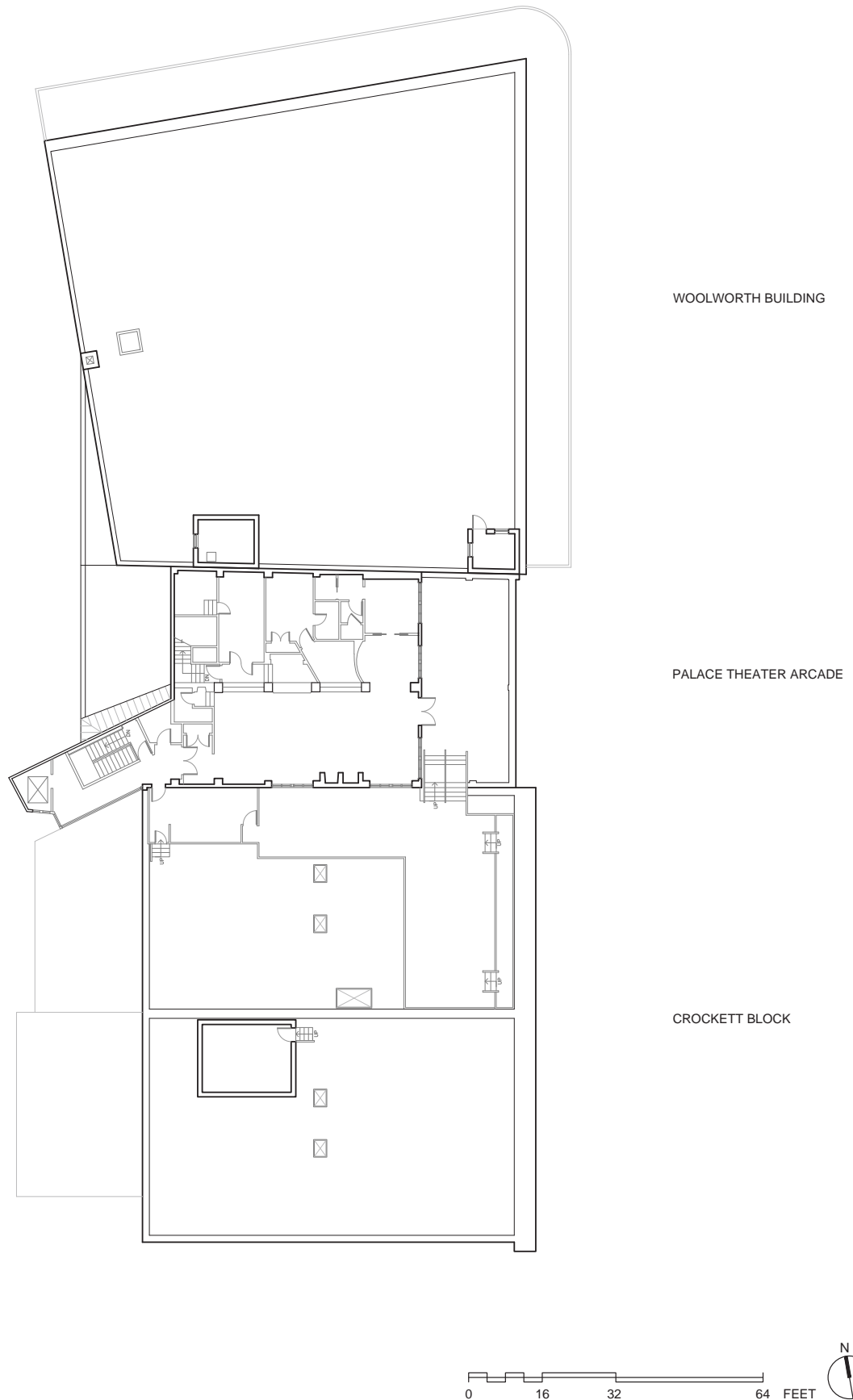


Second Floor Plan: Crockett Block, Palace Theater Arcade, Woolworth Building. JGWA, 2020.





Third Floor Plan: Crockett Block, Palace Theater Arcade, Woolworth Building. JGWA, 2020.



Penthouse and Roof Plan: Crockett Block, Palace Theater Arcade, Woolworth Building. JGWA, 2020.



# CROCKETT BLOCK

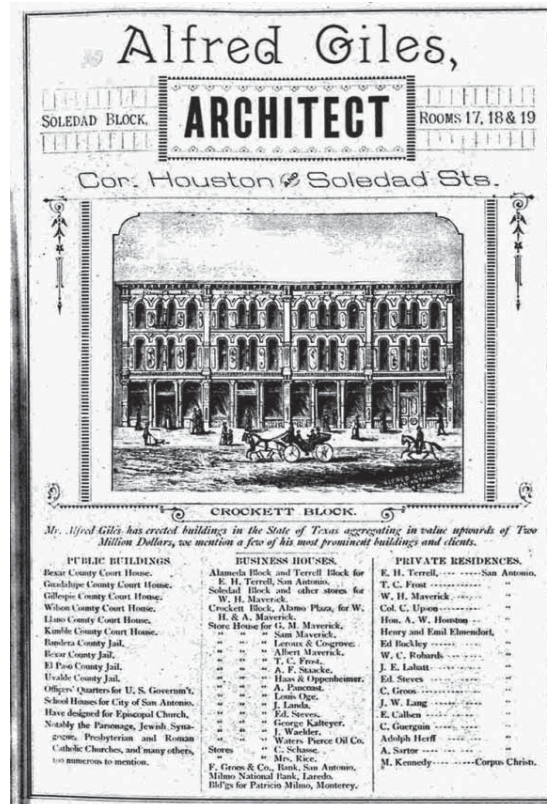
*Note: the following street numbers were used in this report: 317, 319, 321, 323 Alamo Plaza.*

**THE CROCKETT BLOCK** was constructed in 1882-1883 for brothers William H. Maverick and Albert Maverick, who were Texas real-estate developers and the sons of Texas land baron and legislator Samuel Maverick. The block was built on a site previously occupied by several circa 1848 adobe flat-roofed buildings, and consists of four three-story limestone (*san geronomo*) buildings fronting on Alamo Plaza, all executed in an ornamented classical style and surmounted with a pressed sheet-metal cornice.<sup>1</sup>

The architect, Alfred Giles (1853-1920), emigrated to the U.S. in 1873 and set up his own architectural firm in San Antonio in 1876; by 1885 he was a prominent and successful architect who had "... done so much to modernize what a few years ago was an antiquated city..."

Construction of the Crockett Block was instrumental in stimulating other development of the area surrounding Alamo Plaza. For the first several years, the ground floor of the Crockett Block was occupied by a series of mercantile stores, while the upper levels were left unfurnished as large open rooms. By the 1890s, the second and third floors were modified by Giles and furnished for occupancy as The Alamo Flats, a hotel use that continued for several decades and was also known as The Hotel Alamo.

Minor interior and exterior modifications and rear additions were subsequently made throughout the years, and a fire escape was added to the front of the building as early as 1912. By 1934, these upper floors are noted as unoccupied, and very few changes were made to the building until the mid-1950s, when aluminum façade cladding (slipcovers, false fronts) was installed over the limestone facades of 319 and 321 in two separate campaigns. By 1972,



Alfred Giles' advertisement in the 1885 San Antonio City Directory features the Crockett Block.



This early 1940s photograph of the Crockett Block records the extensive modifications made to the storefronts. Note the fire escape at the north end of the block. UTSA Institute of Texas Cultures.

1. Mary Caroline Hollers George, *The Architectural Legacy of Alfred Giles* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 2006), 50.

all original storefronts at the first floor had been removed.

In 1976, a National Register Historic District nomination was submitted for Alamo Plaza; the district was listed in 1977. The Crockett Block was identified as one of the buildings that contributed to the district at this time, and was again noted as such in July of 1982, when the National Park Service certified the Alamo Plaza Local Historic District as proposed by the City of San Antonio's Office of Historic Preservation.

That same year, a development group purchased the property, along with the adjacent Palace Theater Arcade structure, and submitted an application to the National Park Service for historic preservation tax credit certification. These same investors had signed a 30-year lease with the City of San Antonio for the space associated with the Visitor Information Center, and intended to restore the four facades to their original condition and revitalize the interiors with shops, restaurants, and offices designed by San Antonio architect Humberto Saldaña in a contemporary style.

In 1983, the National Park Service certified that the Crockett Block contributed to the Alamo Plaza Historic District and was a "certified historic structure for purposes of the Tax Reform Act of 1976."<sup>2</sup> In approving the design work for the rehabilitation, the Texas SHPO stated that "the ground floors of all four buildings have been substantially altered through the years and the storefronts will be restored as a part of this work. The upper floors contain a significant amount of original / early fabric and most of this is being preserved in the rehabilitation. Overall, this is a very high quality project."<sup>3</sup>

Construction began soon after, and included remediation of water and fire damage throughout, removal of the false facades at 319 and 321 to enable masonry restoration, as well as the construction of new stairwells and an elevator to connect all four levels to meet building code standards for fire safety.

Most of the surviving partitions, doors, and hardware on the second and third floors were retained in place, the pine floors were refinished, and all



The Crockett Block as it appeared in June 1951. At no. 321, the upper floors are occupied by the Central Boot Company. Note the fire escape on the facade of no. 323. UTSA Institute of Texas Cultures.



By 1976, the facade of the Crockett Block was extensively modified. The Palace Theater sign was replaced by a large vertical sign for the Southern Jewelry Company. University of North Texas Special Collections.



The east facade of the Crockett Block, during and after the extensive restoration of that building. The Palace building is unoccupied, and the Southern Jewelry Company sign has been removed. UTSA Institute of Texas Cultures.

2. De Teel Patterson Tiller, [National Park Service], to Texas Historical Commission, March 14, 1983, file at Texas Historical Commission.
3. William B. Schlansker, Giles Associates, Historic Preservation Certification Application, Part 2," [July 1983].





Crockett Block. East elevation. JGWA, 2019.



Crockett Block. Entrance to no. 317 (the southernmost storefront), looking southeast. JGWA, 2019.



Crockett Block. Entrance to no. 319, looking west. JGWA, 2019.

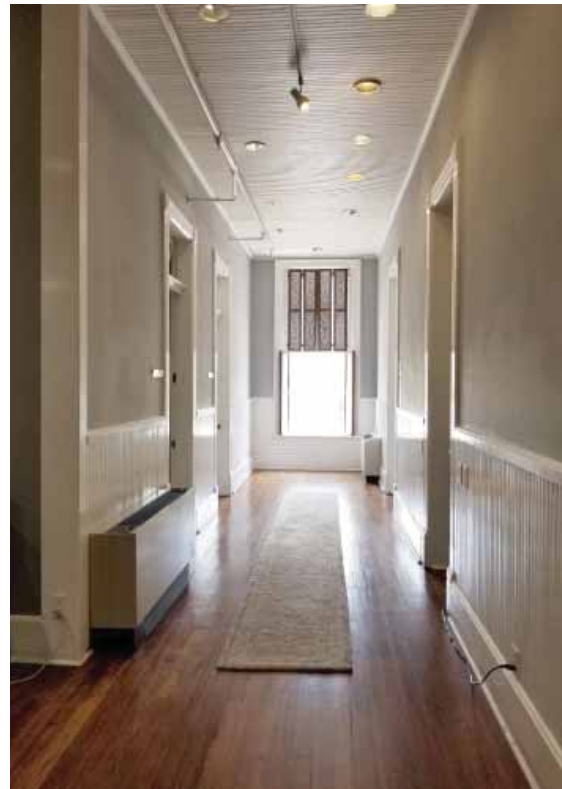




Crockett Block. Basement hallway, looking south (above); and deteriorated stone pier supporting first-floor framing (left). JGWA, 2019.



Crockett Block. Second-floor hallway, looking south. Note the elevator shaft and stairway constructed during the 1983 renovations. JGWA, 2019.



Crockett Block. Second-floor office hallway, looking east. JGWA, 2019.

remaining plaster was restored; modern electrical, plumbing, and HVAC systems were installed throughout the Crockett Block. The Texas Historical Commission noted in a 1985 report that the project had made a dramatic improvement to the visual unity of Alamo Plaza, and a city commission ranked the historic significance of the Crockett Block as exceptional.

For the next 30 years, the Crockett Block had a variety of tenants and saw very little modifications to the interior or exterior of the buildings. In 2015, the General Land Office purchased the property.

## CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

Constructed in 1882-1883 from a design provided by architect Alfred Giles, the large four-building commercial structure has experienced generations of different uses resulting in modifications to the exterior and interior. The ground floor commercial tenants changed over the years and the upper floors, which were initially large open warehouse-like spaces, were modified to function as a hotel in the late nineteenth century. This was followed by use as office space and more recently a restaurant on the third floor. Throughout these transformations, significant amounts of historic building fabric survived. In 1983-84 the façade of the Crockett Block was carefully restored and the interior was transformed while preserving significant historic features and fabric.

### EXTERIOR CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

#### SETTING

- The physical position of the Crockett Block forms the earliest surviving portion of the 19th century commercial development along the west boundary of what is today described as Alamo Plaza.

#### FORM, MASSING, AND HEIGHT

- The historic 1882-83 rectangular three-story structure with full basement survives intact. The historic flat roof structure (pitched down to the east) retains the location of several skylights.

#### MATERIALS AND DETAILS

- The historic stone walls that enclose the four-unit building.



Crockett Block character-defining features: typical window trim (upper image); wood flooring (center); hotel-era hardware on a pair of sliding doors (lower image). JGWA, 2019.



Crockett Block. Second-floor office in no. 319, looking east (upper image) and north (above). Note the historic stone wall of the front façade and the historic stone wall that divides no. 319 from no. 321. JGWA, 2019.



Crockett Block. Second-floor southeast room, looking southwest. JGWA, 2019.



Crockett Block. Existing lightwell, looking up from a second-floor office. Interior windows at the third floor are character-defining features that provided daylight into the central spaces of the buildings. JGWA, 2019.



Crockett Block. (Upper image) Third-floor restaurant (1718 Steakhouse) dining room, looking east within no. 317. The hotel-era doorways with their transoms are character-defining features throughout the third floor. The lower image shows the third-floor restaurant kitchen in the northwest corner of no. 323, looking west. JGWA, 2019.



- The carved tooling and detailing of the stonework, including lintels, sills, ornamental elements, and construction details.
- The window and door openings in various locations, particularly most window openings in the four outer walls. For the north elevation (block #323) the window recesses survive but the openings were infilled when the Palace Theater Arcade was constructed.
- The wood and glass window sash and trim, of which approximately 40% are original.
- The ornate upper sheet metal cornice and the restored cast iron, fiberglass, wood and glass storefronts and entrance doors.
- The two decorative iron railings fronting the third-floor windows.

### INTERIOR CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

- The division of the interior into four separate units by the three east/west stone walls and the later (hotel era) arched lintel openings in those walls.
- The stone piers in the basement that support the floor framing.
- The stone-lined window wells and basement access stair in the west foundation wall of block #317.
- Wood framing of the floors and roof.
- The wood floorboards at each floor level.
- Doors, transoms, and trim in various locations and the pairs of sliding doors in situ and in storage in the basement. Some of these doors were moved about as part of the work carried out in 1983-94.
- Door and window hardware in various locations. The ornate late-nineteenth century cast-bronze hotel era hardware consists of hinges, knob roses and keyhole escutcheons and ceramic knobs. The sliding doors retain cast-bronze hand grips.
- Light wells and skylight locations in the second and third floor ceilings.
- Surviving partitions and door openings that define the early modifications of the hotel-era plan layout in various second and third floor locations.



**Crockett Block.** South entrance to the rear (west) addition, constructed during the 1983 renovations. This one-story metal and glass addition is a non-contributing feature of the building's exterior. JGWA, 2019.



**Crockett Block.** First-floor north room in the rear (west) addition, looking southeast. JGWA, 2019.

### NON-CONTRIBUTING FEATURES

- The west addition constructed in 1983-84.
- The two recent internal stairs and the elevator, including its rooftop penthouse.
- First-floor retail store fittings and recent office and restaurant partitions on the upper floors, including the commercial kitchen.
- The current roof surface and the rooftop HVAC units and associated equipment.



Crockett Block. Deteriorated base of stone pier on east elevation. JGWA, 2019.



Crockett Block. Roof, looking south. An original skylight location is visible in the center of the photograph. JGWA, 2019.



Crockett Block. Deteriorated stone wall in basement, indicating a problem with rising damp. JGWA, 2019.



Crockett Block. West elevation. Note the staining at the top of the stone wall. JGWA, 2019.



Crockett Block. Third-floor east window balcony, with iron rail. The reproduction belt course installed during the 1983 renovations appears to be fiberglass. JGWA, 2019.

## ARCHITECTURAL

In general, the restoration work performed during the 1983 renovations of the Crockett Block was of high caliber, and both exterior and interior materials and detailing have performed well since that time. Typically, original materials that remain are more durable in most situations, while the insertions and additions to the building exhibit problems to be expected after more than 40 years of continuous use.

The limestone of the exterior and interior bearing walls is in good condition overall, with localized areas of spalling, cracking, loss of mortar, and atmospheric staining. Some causes of cracking may be associated with steel reinforcement repairs performed during the 1983 façade restoration; these locations will require careful evaluation before development of appropriate repair methodologies.

The mortar loss is actually most pronounced at the interior basement level, where capillary action and water vapor migration associated with the presence of a high water table are likely the cause of the loss of binder in the mortar. This problem has probably been exacerbated by the 1983 renovations, when archival documents indicate the basement floor level was lowered approximately 18" below the historic basement floor construction. Atmospheric soiling can be found primarily on the upper portions of the south and west walls, where parapet cap flashing details are not providing a sufficient drip edge and mortar joints between coping stones are deteriorated or missing.

Decorative trim at the building exterior is both historic (cast iron columns and wrought iron balconettes) and replacement material (fiberglass cornice and trim elements). The fiberglass material is beginning to show evidence of deterioration, and the iron elements exhibit minor corrosion due to lack of maintenance repainting.

The fenestration of the building is generally in good condition: much of the window sash, glass, and trim of the upper floors appears to be historic, and exhibit very little deterioration. Glazing techniques have varied with more-recent maintenance campaigns, and most of the third-floor windows have been fixed shut and no longer operate. The majority of the ground floor doors appear to be replacements, were constructed of durable materials when fabricated and installed, and are in well-maintained condition.

The roof is reported to have been recently replaced; however, there are a few areas where the insulation beneath may be deteriorated, and further investigation at these locations and other areas where past fire damage to roof framing has been noted should be performed. The historic skylight locations remain; there are no reported leaks at these locations, despite the age of the replacement skylights.

The penthouse construction for the 1983 interior elevator addition is in poor condition, and both the stucco exterior finishes and the wood stair framing are deteriorated. The rear (west) one-story steel framed addition incorporates what appears to be a custom or proprietary curtain wall assembly, and does not have adequate detailing for movement tolerances or moisture management; most of the sealant joints are in very poor condition, and water infiltration is a concern. The ballasted roof system over this rear addition is in fair condition, but the Kalwall skylight elements have deteriorated with decades of exposure to sunlight.

On the interior, the historic plaster walls and wood doors and trim that remain are in good condition, as is the wood flooring where extant and exposed throughout. Many of the ceilings are not historic; suspended acoustic ceilings have been installed in some locations and have a worn appearance. The stair and elevator construction installed during the 1983 renovations is well-maintained and in good condition, but there is some evidence of water infiltration where new shaft materials meet the historic finishes, particularly at the third floor. Water infiltration is also evident at some locations adjacent to the stone masonry wall construction at the east half of the building, suggesting that roof drainage and/or flashings may require repair or replacement at these intersections.

## STRUCTURAL

The Crockett Block is a three-story stone masonry building with wood floor and roof framing. Three main interior masonry walls separate the structure into four bays, which have been altered in some areas to accommodate modern stair and elevator insertions. At the basement level, periodic stone masonry piers provide midspan support for the main wood framing. The four exterior stone walls, three of which remain exposed, were restored in the early 1980s. A modern story rear (west) addition to the Crockett Block is framed in steel, with concrete on form deck slab systems spanning between steel joists and beams. The



roof and floor construction are supported at the perimeter of the structure and at discrete locations at the interior by isolated steel columns. Below grade, the perimeter steel frame transitions to concrete block construction.

Additional observations and conditions are outlined as follows:

**BASEMENT:** during the 1983 work, the basement floor was lowered approximately 18", and stone piers were removed and replaced or augmented with steel bearing plates. Mortar loss at the base of the stone masonry walls suggests rising damp may be a concern.

**FIRST FLOOR:** Some primary east-west timber framing has steel plates installed at each side, and steel framing has been installed at the floor openings at the elevator/stair core locations at the north and south.

**SECOND FLOOR:** A steel beam has been installed along the west façade for open web steel truss roof framing support at the single-story contemporary addition to the west. Connections to the Palace Theater Arcade building have taken advantage of the original window openings, and do not appear to have modified the structure of either building.

**THIRD FLOOR:** Cracks within the exterior stone façade construction were observed, particularly along the south elevation and at the east elevation of the southernmost bay (no. 317), primarily at window openings, jambs and lintels.

**ROOF:** The exterior stucco and wood stairs of the elevator penthouse construction are in poor condition. Fire damaged joists at the middle of the north central bay are located below existing mechanical equipment, and the existing wood deck, walls, and railings are in poor condition.

The International Building Code prescribes the following load requirements for a change of use to museum functions:

- general non-permanent loads: 100 psf live load capacity
- heavy storage/library research: 150 psf live load capacity
- office or similar ancillary use: 50 psf live load capacity
- roof: 20 psf live load capacity

Based on visual observations and the assumption that the existing wood framing is Southern Pine

with a commercial grade of Number 2, the existing joists in general appear adequate for a 150 psf live load capacity and therefore adequate for proposed museum use. The existing wood beams, where unreinforced, are currently adequate for a 70 psf live load capacity and would therefore require reinforcing to meet a higher live load requirement if needed. Because the existing structure is currently taking the applied loads without failing and is performing adequately, the material properties of the wood may be better than those assumed. These live load capacity assumptions can be confirmed with physical probes, materials testing, and visual grading.

## SYSTEMS

### MECHANICAL

No historically significant mechanical systems, components, or equipment remain within the Crockett Block.

The existing building is served by local fan coil and air handling units that utilize chilled water coils, multiple rooftop direct-exchange units, and split systems of varying age for cooling. All heating is accomplished via electric heating coils located either within the fan coils, rooftop, or air handling units, or within the ductwork. Air is distributed to each of the spaces directly from exposed fan coil units, via minimal overhead ductwork from fan coil units, and by fully ducted systems with concealed ductwork. Zoning is typically arranged by floor, except at the first-floor level where individual tenants have separate zones.

Chilled water is generated by two 100-ton air cooled chillers located on the roof. These chillers are manufactured by Trane, and are at least 10 years old; the condensing units serving the third floor restaurant are at the midpoint of their service life. Much of the supporting structure for the rooftop units is in good condition, but many of the current piping support methods are not recommended and are in poor condition. Piping is insulated and therefore not visible for inspection, but exposed valves appear rusted and deteriorated.

In general, the mechanical equipment type, limited interior ductwork distribution, and equipment age render the current systems not suitable for future use in maintaining museum quality temperature and humidity within the Crockett Block.

## ELECTRICAL AND FIRE ALARM

The Crockett Block's electric service originates from an underground utility distribution system maintained by CPS Energy and located within the east sidewalk of Alamo Plaza. The service terminates into a 2,000 amp., 208/120 volt, 3-phase 4-wire main fuse switchboard located in a basement electrical room. The switchboard energizes panelboards for lighting, receptacles, equipment, the elevator, central HVAC units, and the fire alarm system serving the public spaces within the building. The switchboard also serves ten tenant/owner sub-meters with service disconnect switches; seven of these sub-meters are active.

The electrical equipment within the Crockett Block appears to be a mix of antiquated distribution equipment, much of it abandoned, with local panelboards lacking labels for circuit breakers, disconnect switches, and raceways, among other code deficiencies. Electrical equipment serving the rooftop mechanical units is at the end of its service life. Wiring where exposed appears in good condition, but raceways are often missing covers and rusting due to age; the quantity and location of receptacles does not meet the programming needs of the spaces, and surface-mounted distribution has been added to compensate. Light fixtures are not historic, lamping is inconsistent, and simple switches are located throughout the interior for lighting control, except at the Visitor's Information Center which is equipped with occupancy detectors and photocell for lighting control of the space. Emergency light fixtures are missing or non-functional in some locations. In general, energy conservation measures are not evident for the electrical systems.

The fire alarm panel for the Crockett Block is located in the main hallway of the first floor; it is manufactured by Silent Knight. The fire alarm raceways appear to be a mixture of cable and conduit, and fire alarm pull stations, smoke detectors, strobes and horns are installed throughout.

## PLUMBING AND FIRE PROTECTION

The Crockett Block is served by a 4" combined domestic water/sprinkler service from Alamo Plaza, which enters the building at the basement level; the entering water pressure is approximately 80 psi, which is adequate to supply the entire building off street pressure. The domestic service does not have

a backflow preventer, but the strainer and water meter appear in good condition.

Distribution piping is a mix of copper, galvanized steel, and plastic in some locations. Fixtures are typically in good condition, with manual valves and faucets throughout; none of the fixtures or fittings appear to be high-efficiency in terms of water use, and not all distribution piping is insulated.

Domestic hot water is generated by point-of-use storage system heaters, which are primarily electric, except for a 50-gallon gas-type water heater associated with the kitchen in the third-floor restaurant. There is no hot water circulation system.

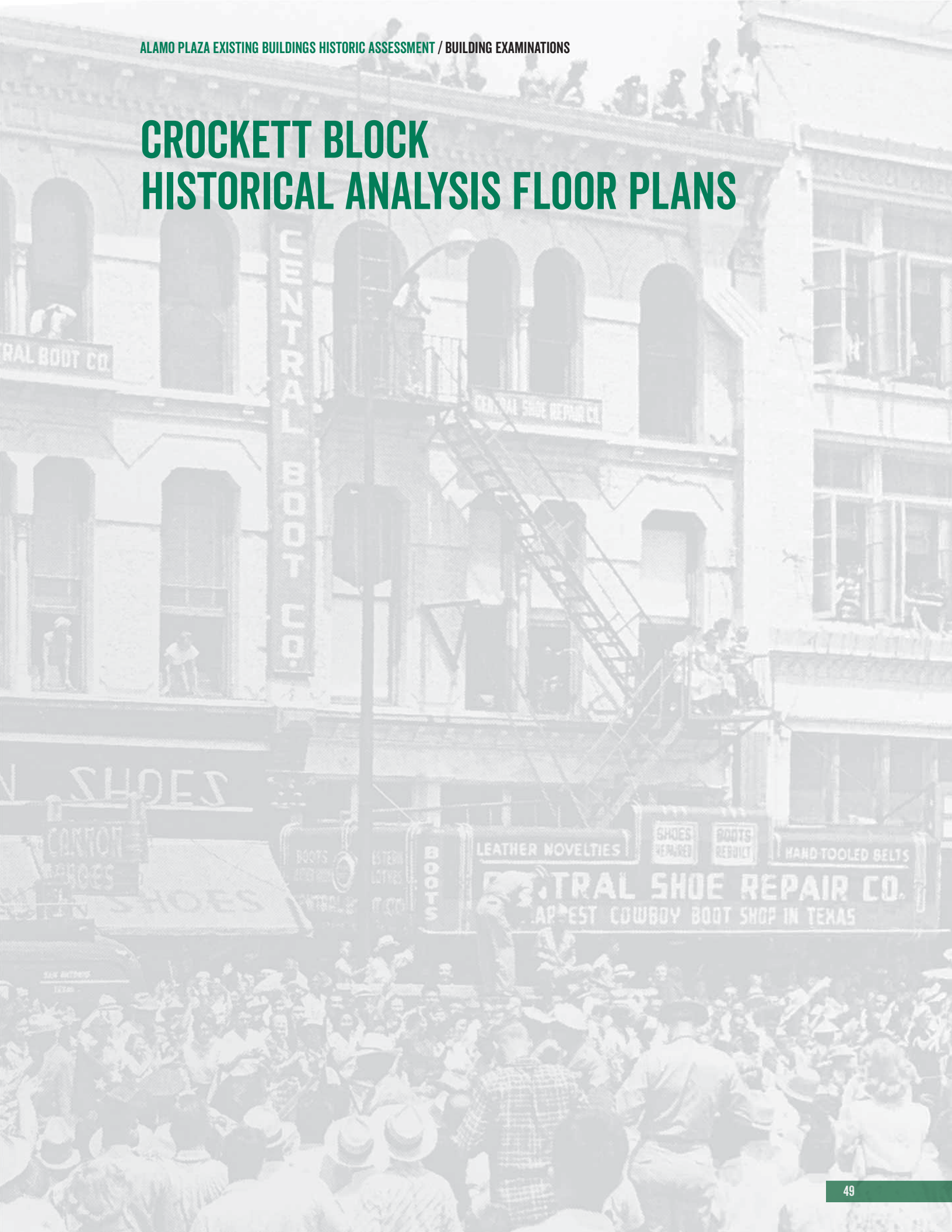
The Crockett Block's sanitary waste is collected in the basement level via gravity and exits the building on the west side to a 5" sewer in the alleyway; the basement sanitary system is piped to a duplex sewage ejector, which also connects to the 5" sewer in the alleyway. The sanitary piping is a mix of no-hub cast iron and PVC piping, most of which is associated with the commercial kitchen installation at the third floor. There is also an exterior grease trap located in the western alleyway which is associated with the kitchen.

The storm system at the Crockett Block consists of exterior leaders that spill to grade at the southeast corner of the front façade and along the west elevation into the alleyway. Currently, rooftop HVAC unit condensate discharge is also using the southeast exterior leader.

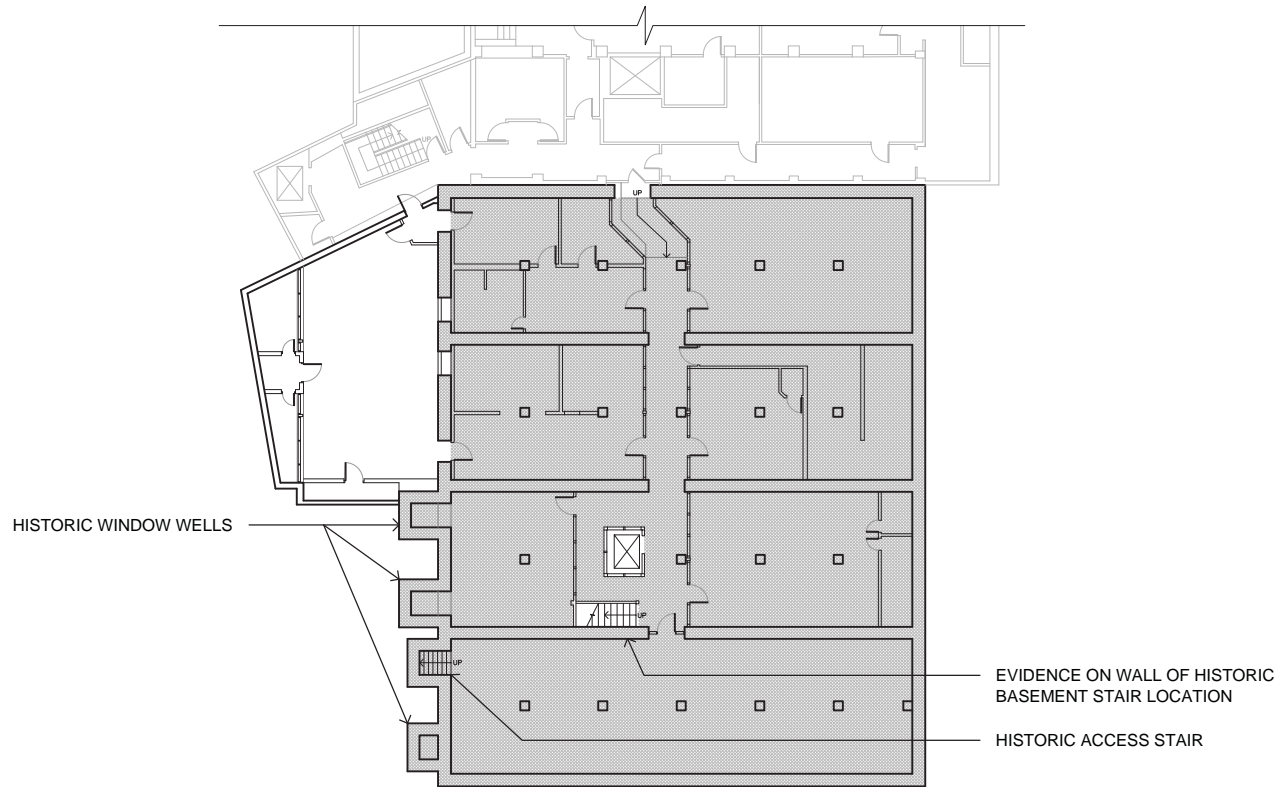
The Crockett Block is supplied with a 1-1/2" high-pressure gas service that enters the basement from Alamo Plaza; the service is fitted with a regulator which supplies one meter, with two valves for future meters. The gas distribution (black steel pipe) appears to only serve equipment associated with the third-floor kitchen; the kitchen appliance manifold is piped through a solenoid valve which is connected into the hood's Ansul system.

The sprinkler service is split within the basement of the Crockett Block, with two 4" alarm valve assemblies with tamper switches and flow switches; one of these serves the Crockett Block, and the other serves the Palace Theater Arcade structure. Sprinkler coverage is throughout all floors of the Crockett Block. A fire department connection is located on the east side of the building along Alamo Plaza; there is no standpipe on the interior of the building.

# CROCKETT BLOCK HISTORICAL ANALYSIS FLOOR PLANS









#### CROCKETT BLOCK NOTES

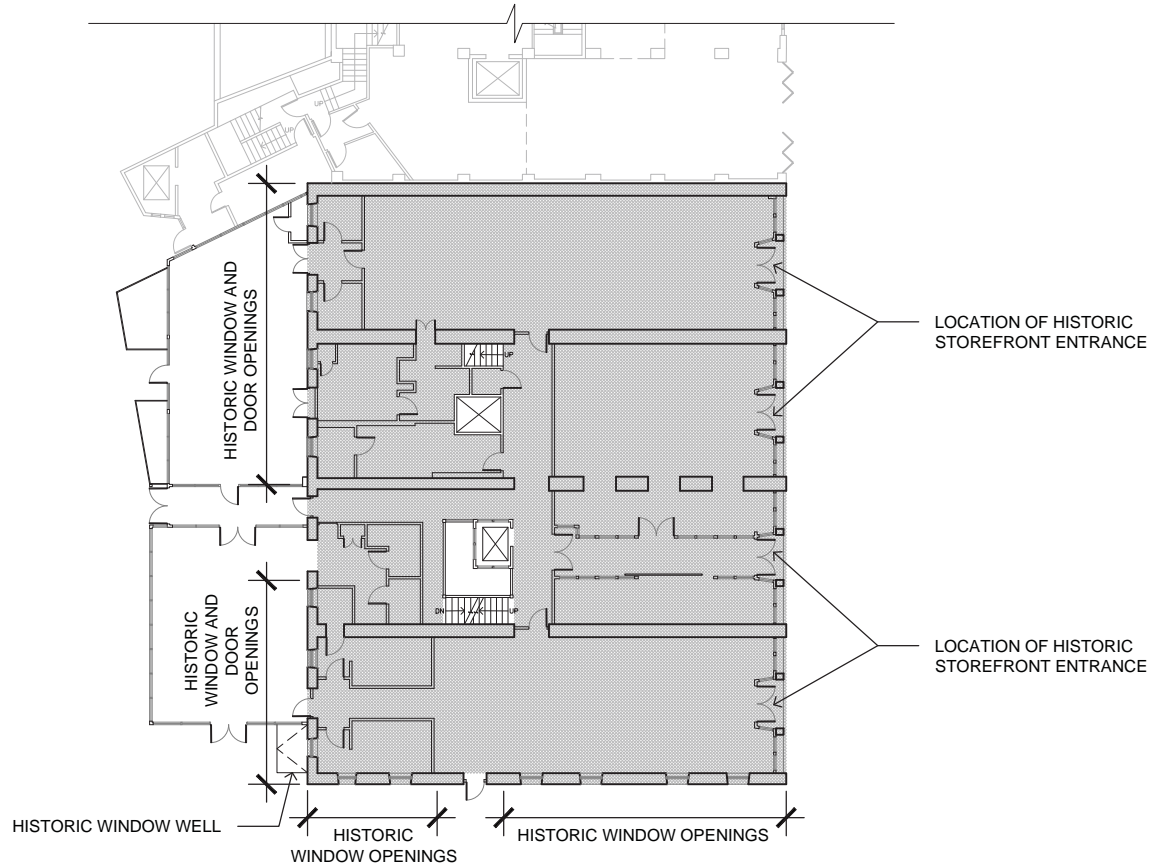
1. PARTITION WALLS ARE NON-HISTORIC UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
2. EXTERIOR DECORATIVE STONE FACADE ELEMENTS, ORNATE SHEET METAL CORNICE, AND IRON RAILINGS AT THIRD FLOOR WINDOWS ARE HISTORIC.
3. EXTERIOR STONE WALLS AND INTERIOR STONE WALLS WITH ARCHED LINTEL OPENINGS ARE HISTORIC.
4. STONE FOUNDATION AND PIERS AT BASEMENT FLOOR ARE HISTORIC.
5. WOOD FLOOR BOARDS THROUGHOUT FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD FLOOR ARE HISTORIC.
6. ROOF FRAMING AND FLOOR FRAMING THROUGHOUT ALL FLOORS IS HISTORIC.
7. DOORS, HARDWARE, AND TRIM AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS ARE HISTORIC.
8. PENTHOUSE DECK AT ROOF IS NON-HISTORIC.

#### LEGEND

-  EXISTING PRIMARY BUILDING FABRIC IS HISTORIC
-  EXISTING PRIMARY BUILDING FABRIC AND MAJORITY OF FINISHES ARE HISTORIC





Crockett Block Basement Floor Plan. JGWA, 2020.



#### CROCKETT BLOCK NOTES

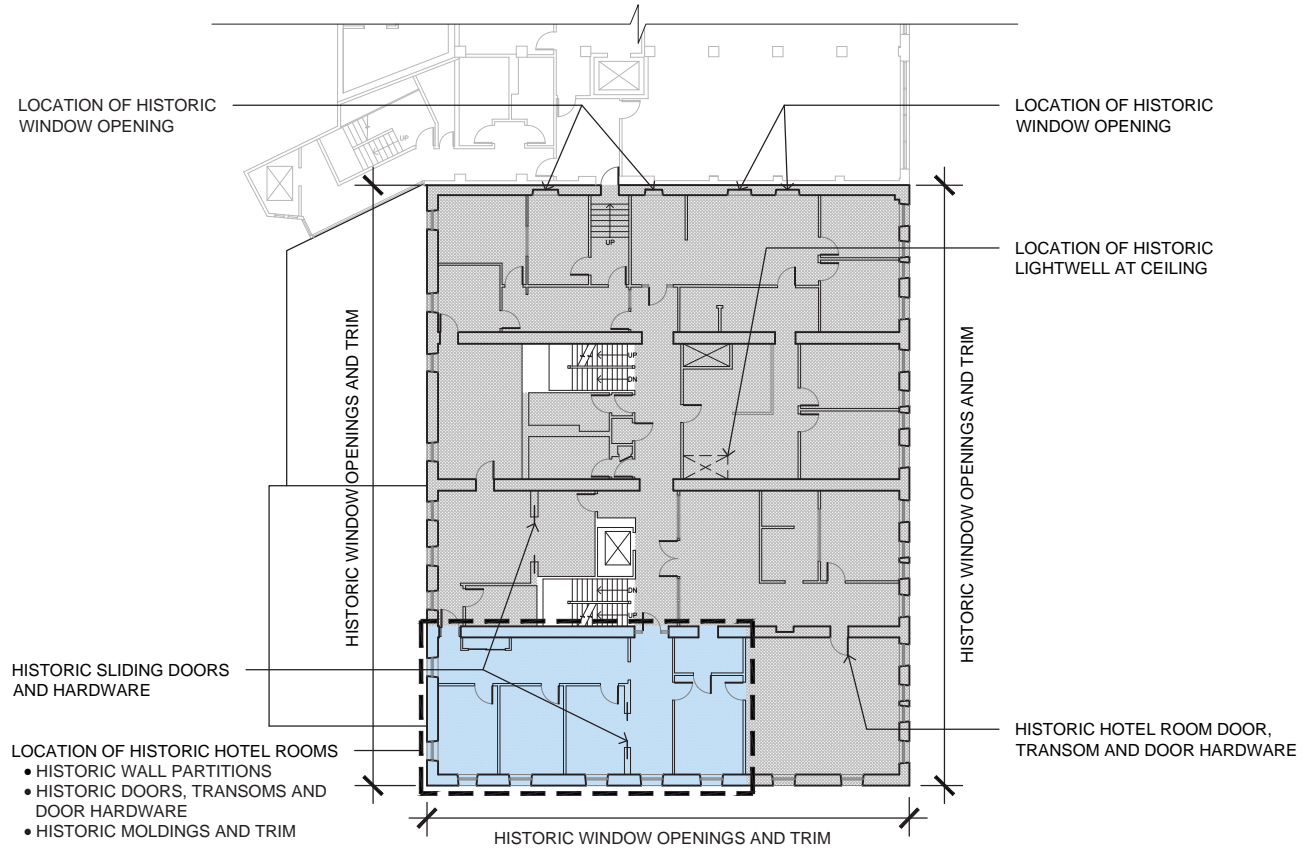
1. PARTITION WALLS ARE NON-HISTORIC UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
2. EXTERIOR DECORATIVE STONE FACADE ELEMENTS, ORNATE SHEET METAL CORNICE, AND IRON RAILINGS AT THIRD FLOOR WINDOWS ARE HISTORIC.
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4. STONE FOUNDATION AND PIERS AT BASEMENT FLOOR ARE HISTORIC.
5. WOOD FLOOR BOARDS THROUGHOUT FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD FLOOR ARE HISTORIC.
6. ROOF FRAMING AND FLOOR FRAMING THROUGHOUT ALL FLOORS IS HISTORIC.
7. DOORS, HARDWARE, AND TRIM AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS ARE HISTORIC.
8. PENTHOUSE DECK AT ROOF IS NON-HISTORIC.

#### LEGEND

-  EXISTING PRIMARY BUILDING FABRIC IS HISTORIC
-  EXISTING PRIMARY BUILDING FABRIC AND MAJORITY OF FINISHES ARE HISTORIC



Crockett Block First Floor Plan. JGWA, 2020.



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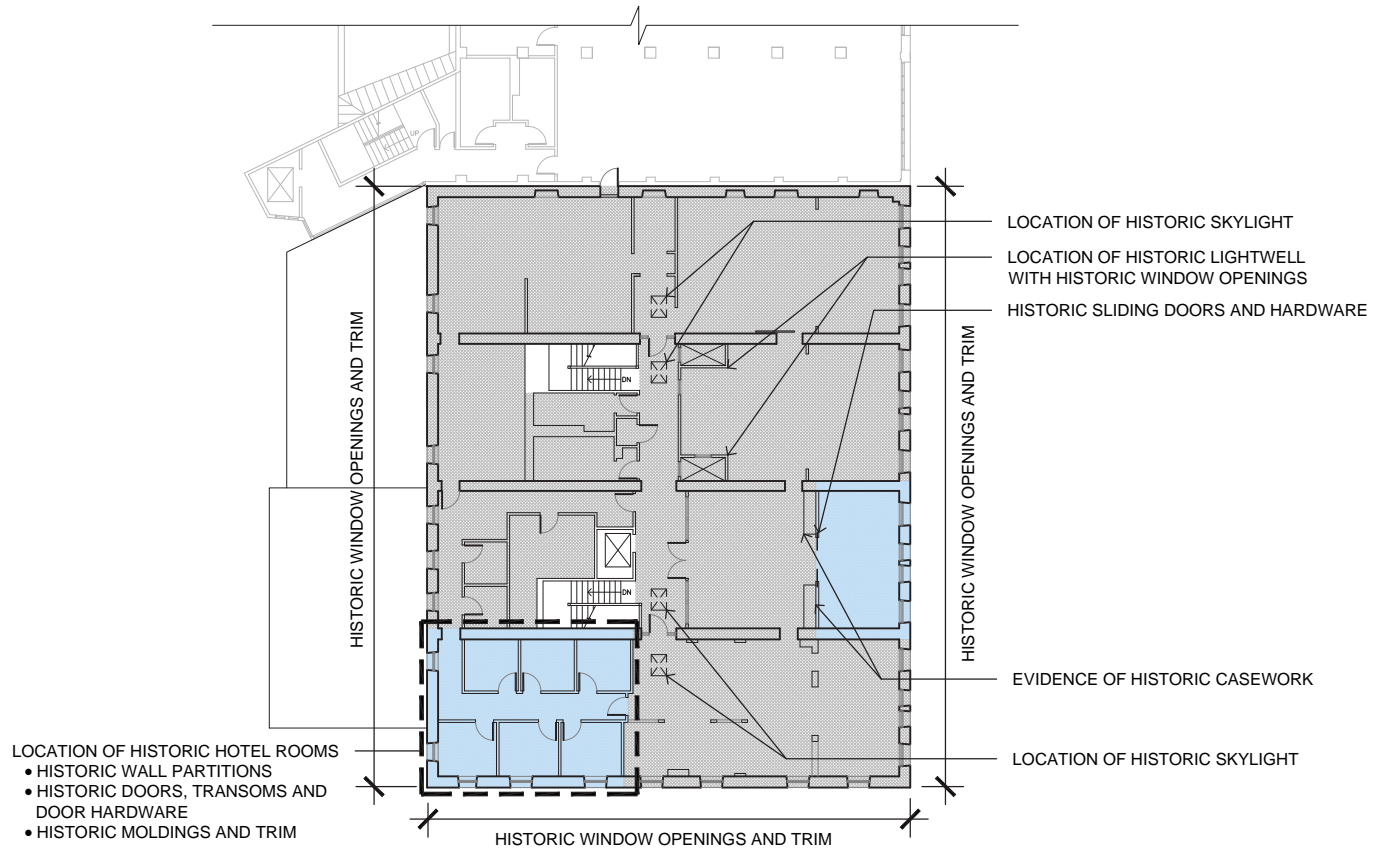
#### LEGEND

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Crockett Block Second Floor Plan. JGWA, 2020.







#### CROCKETT BLOCK NOTES

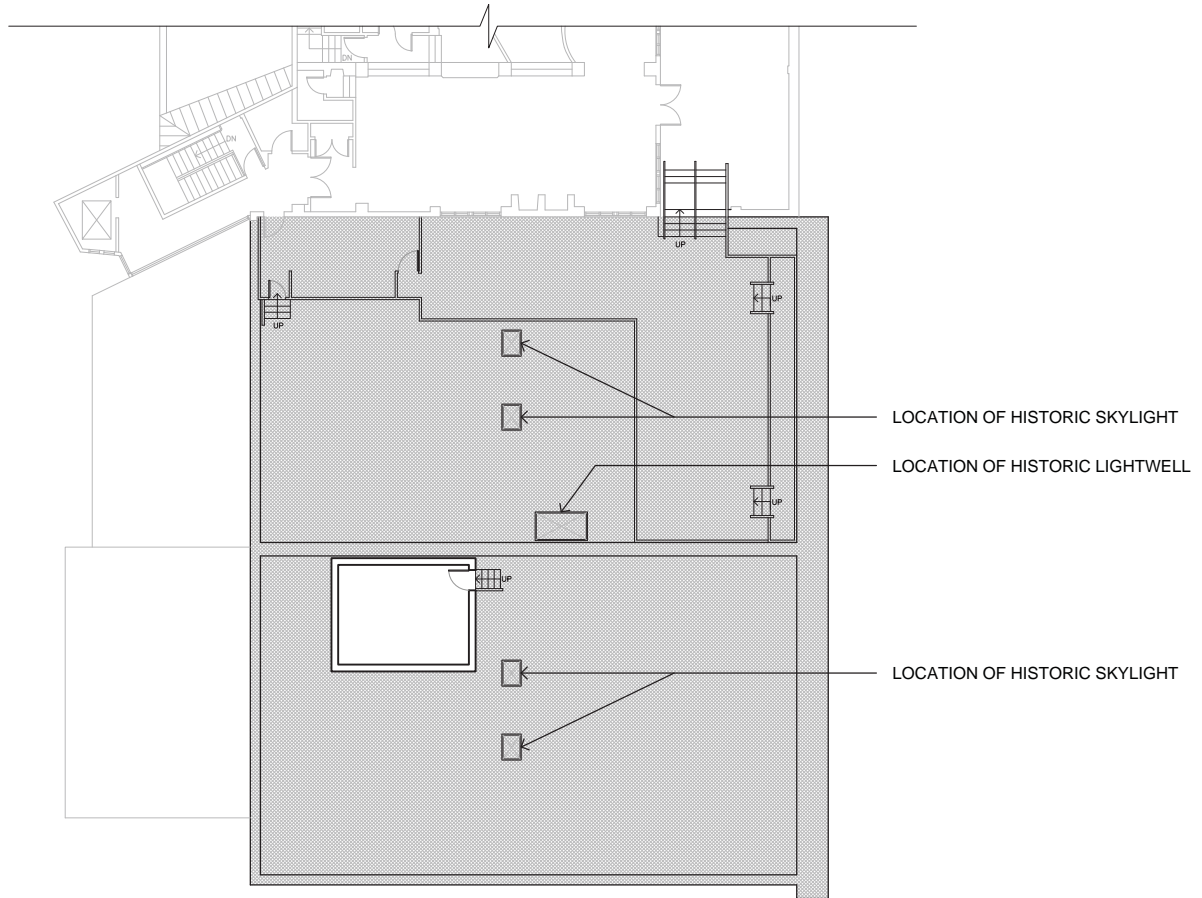
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
Crockett Block Third Floor Plan. JGWA, 2020.



CROCKETT BLOCK NOTES

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**Crockett Block Penthouse and Roof Floor Plan. JGWA, 2020.**

# PALACE THEATER ARCADE

**THE SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS** reported on Friday, March 2, 1923, that the new Palace Theater was “in the final stages of completion” and would open with a gala event the next evening. The governor, the mayor, and “numerous prominent citizens of San Antonio” were expected to attend. The Palace was said to be “the finest theater in the Southwest” and was “hailed as a notable addition to San Antonio’s list of playhouses.” The theater itself was expected to seat 2,400 people, with 1,500 on the lower floor of the auditorium.

The March 2, 1923, newspaper article pointed out that the unusual location of the theater—in the middle of a city block—offered “an opportunity to construct an arcade running through from Alamo Plaza to Losoya Street, with exits, entrances and ticket offices at both ends.” This arrangement was seen as a feature that would also facilitate “the quick emptying of the theater” as shows ended and offer “an unusually attractive proposition to motorists,” who would “have plenty of parking space on the Plaza or Losoya Street.”<sup>4</sup>

The novelty and design of the Arcade was highlighted in contemporary accounts, with one writer stating that “there is nothing like it in San Antonio.” Another headline read “Arcade Will Be Big Feature of Plaza Theater.” Plans called for the Arcade to “be trimmed in a color scheme of white and cream with large arches above.” There were to be “display windows along the side from one end to another.” One account announced that the Arcade would “provide a promenade for pedestrians throughout the year from the main entrance to the theater on the plaza directly through to Losoya Street,” predicting that “cool breezes will wisp through the Arcade during the hot summer months.”

The architect of the Palace Theater and its Arcade was George Rodney Willis, who had been born in Chicago in 1879. A biographical account states that “in his last year of school,” Willis worked as



The east facade of the Palace Theater Arcade in 1937. The store located in the north half of the building sells linens and laces. Note the penthouse added to the roof of the Woolworth Building in 1937, and the bricked-in window openings at the second and third floors of the Woolworth Building. UTSA Institute of Texas Cultures.

draftsman for four years in the Oak Park, Illinois, studio of Frank Lloyd Wright,” eventually becoming head draftsman. Willis opened his own architectural practice in San Antonio in 1917; in addition to the Palace Theater, he designed many commercial and public buildings in San Antonio, including the Milam Building, which, when built in 1928, was “among the tallest reinforced-concrete buildings in the world.” Willis died in 1960.<sup>5</sup>

4. “Palace Theater Ready for Saturday Opening,” *San Antonio Express*, March 2, 1923.

5. Stephanie Hetos Cocke, s.v. “Willis, George Rodney,” in *Handbook of Texas Online*, published by the Texas State Historical Association, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fw93>, accessed May 4, 2019. *San Antonio Express*, March 4, 1923. Laytha Sue Haggard Kothmann, “George Willis, Prairie School Architect in Texas,” M. Architecture, thesis, University of Texas at Austin, Aug. 1988, 43.



The general contractor was the H. N. Jones Construction Co. of San Antonio and Houston. The building was described as being constructed of “solid concrete and iron construction, modeled along the lines of America’s newest theaters in the Eastern cities.”<sup>6</sup> Other contractors included Louis Bauml for plain and decorative plastering, and “Alamo” Portland Cement from the San Antonio Portland Cement Co.’s plant in Cementville, Texas. The “entrance building on Alamo Plaza” was faced with “white terra cotta tile and ornament.”

The theater building itself was three stories high but was said to have been designed to carry six additional floors and “originally planned to be part of a nine story pair of buildings, with another 9 story building next door and 6 more floors added to the Palace Theater Arcade Building,” but “this plan was never carried out.”<sup>7</sup>

During its early years of operation, Louis Santikos was the first general manager of the Palace Theater; initially, he leased the theater, and later became its owner. Santikos, who had been born in Greece, emigrated to the United States and became an important theater entrepreneur in Texas. Upon his arrival in San Antonio, he “began by operating the Rialto Theatre on Houston Street and then opened the Palace Theatre on Alamo Plaza—San Antonio’s first ‘movie palace’ and the forerunner of the Majestic, Aztec and Texas theatres.” With his son John, Louis Santikos established a new Santikos theater company after the end of World War II, which would become the “largest movie theater company in Texas.”

Changes were made early and often to the Palace Theater building. In 1925, air-conditioning was added, and by 1927 the building was reported closed again for renovations; by 1929 live acts were performing there exclusively. Just one year later, changes in use were made again; by 1930, the “Dallas-based Interstate Amusement Co. had acquired the Palace, and the theater switched back to showing films,”<sup>8</sup> with sound capabilities added.



The Palace Theater Arcade looking west toward the Losoya Street entrance in 1945. Note the candy counter to the right and the opening to the auditorium to the left. UTSA Institute of Texas Cultures.



The Palace Theater Arcade in 1945, looking east from the Losoya Street entrance. Note the floor that ramps upward to the concession stand, and the entrance to the auditorium to the right. This reflects the slope of the floor within the auditorium. UTSA Institute of Texas Cultures.

Photographs of the Palace Theater Arcade, circa 1945, indicate that the theater was still in operation, with the architectural form and details of the pedestrian Arcade intact. In March of 1954, however, the theater was purchased with a group of other structures along Losoya Street, and within a matter of months the majority of the theater structure was razed and replaced by a parking lot. The three-story eastern entrance structure of the Arcade, fronting onto Alamo Plaza, was spared, but appears to have been in marginal use for several decades afterwards.

Around the time of the designation of the Alamo Plaza Historic District designation in 1977, *The San Antonio Light* reported that “Property owners of the buildings on the West Side of the plaza banded together last year and formed the Alamo Plaza

6. “Arcade Will be Big Feature of Plaza Theater,” unidentified newspaper clipping, ca. 1922, 1.4.4.
7. “Mammoth Building Planned Beside Big Palace Theater,” *San Antonio Express*, March 4, 1923. [Crockett Center Fact Sheet, Giles Associates, Ltd., ca. 1984.]
8. Yantis, “Palace Theatre,” *San Antonio Theatres: Now and Then* website. “Passing through the Palace,” *San Antonio Express-News*, Feb. 20, 2011.

Association.” The group had “done some lobbying for public dollars and is attempting to bait private investors to spend money on or near the plaza.”<sup>9</sup>

According to a newspaper article of November 12, 1982, “Developer Bill Schlansker and 17 investors” had acquired the Crockett Block and the Palace Theater Arcade building (then known as the Southern Jewelry building). The investors, known as Giles Associates Limited, planned “to rejuvenate the buildings and fill them with shops, restaurants, and offices.” “All facades” were to “be completely restored to their original condition,” but interiors were to “bear more modern tastes.” The “beige brick façade of the Southern Jewelry building” was to “be stripped to its original 1920s appearance.”

Architect Humberto Saldana was “preparing preliminary designs for the interior[s] and conferring with various groups which oversee restoration of buildings in scenic and historical areas.”<sup>10</sup> Construction was to “begin in early 1983 and be completed by next summer.” Shortly after completion of this work, which was certified as a Historic Preservation Tax Act project and included work at the Crockett Block, the Alamo Plaza Study Committee rated the historic significance of the remaining sections of the old Palace Theater Arcade as “exceptional,” as did the Central City Cultural Resources Inventory of 1983-1986.

By 1988, the Palace Theater Arcade Building and the Crockett Block then made up the Crockett Center. The Alamo Plaza entrance to the former theater was at that time “occupied by a retail store and a restaurant is in the other original retail space.”

In 1992, P.J. Schneider, a local businesswoman purchased the Palace Theater Arcade, which at the time had “a 2,500 square-foot unfinished penthouse suite” on the fourth floor. An article in the *San Antonio Express-News* stated that Schneider planned “to renovate the top floor of the Palace as a top-flight penthouse where even President-elect Bill Clinton might like to stay.”<sup>11</sup> Renovations were com-

pleted in 1993; Irby Hightower of Alamo Architects was involved with the project.<sup>12</sup>

Service Life and Casualty Company of Austin became the owner of the Palace Theater Arcade by 2000; by this time, the company also owned the Crockett Block and the Woolworth Building, and their intension was to open a Guinness World Records Museum in the Palace Theater Arcade building.<sup>13</sup> The following year, the owners requested a certificate of appropriateness from the Historic and Design Review Commission to modify the Alamo Plaza façade of the Palace Arcade Building by removing “the front building facade at street level in one bay of the building, creating an open air space at first floor with ticket booth at the entrance.” The second phase of the project would involve modifying “one bay of the Woolworth building, also opening it to open air display.”<sup>14</sup>

Proposed renovations to the exterior roof spaces associated with the penthouse of the Palace Theater Arcade were undertaken shortly thereafter, according to plans prepared by the Marks Design Group. The changes included the present wood deck and railing construction that exists at the roof of the Palace Theater Arcade and the Crockett Block. In 2002, the staff of the HDRC recommended approval of the above work, commenting that the changes were “architecturally and esthetically compatible with their settings” and would “improve safety and access” without having an adverse impact. Minor changes to signage, lighting, and other modifications to the entrance storefronts along Alamo Plaza have been made since that time.

In 2015, the Palace Theater Arcade Building was purchased by the General Land Office.<sup>15</sup>

9. “Alamo Dream Rekindles Downtown Hope,” *The San Antonio Light*, Feb. 27, 1977.

10. “Alamo Plaza Buildings to be Restored,” *San Antonio Express News*, Nov. 12, 1982.

11. “Crockett/Palace Buildings Purchased by Local Investor,” *San Antonio Business Journal*, Jan. 8, 1993, 1.4.4. “Crockett, Palace Buildings Bought,” *San Antonio Express News*, Jan. 16, 1993, 1.4.4.

12. Cathy Smith, “Suite Success – Alamo, S.A. inspire Lone Star Palace,” *San Antonio Express News*, Dec. 26, 1993.

13. Elizabeth Allen, “Guinness Museum planned downtown,” *San Antonio Express News*, Aug. 12, 2000.

14. Historic and Design Review Commission, meeting minutes, July 18, 2001, case 2000-243.

15. Dietel and Reed, “Also conserve interiors of Alamo Plaza buildings,” March 26, 2017, My San Antonio website, <https://www.mysanantonio.com/opinion/commentary/article/Also-conserve-interiors-of-Alamo-Plaza-buildings-11026401.php>, accessed June 24, 2019.



Palace Theater Arcade. East elevation. JGWA, 2019.



## CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

The Palace Theater was constructed in 1922 from a design provided by architect George Rodney Willis on a building site that included two simple one-story structures facing Alamo Plaza and a large Plumbing supply warehouse situated behind the Crockett Block and facing Losoya Street. The unique feature of the theater's plan was the long tunnel-like arcade that extended from Alamo Plaza to Losoya Street providing two very separate entrances to the theater.

The two entrances were incorporated into large buildings facing the two street locations. A large two-story structure, which no longer exists, faced Losoya Street and an impressive three-story building faced Alamo Plaza. The structure of the east building was designed to accommodate the addition of six more floors. The theater auditorium and the Losoya Street entrance were demolished in 1954 but the handsome Alamo Plaza structure survives remarkably intact.



Palace Theater Arcade. Historic stair to mezzanine level. JGWA, 2019.

## EXTERIOR CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

### SETTING

- The position of the Palace Theater Arcade forms an important part of the 19th century commercial development along the west boundary of what is today described as Alamo Plaza.

### FORM, MASSING, AND HEIGHT

- The east portion of the historic 1922 theater complex survives and consists of a rectangular three-story concrete framed structure with a full basement that extends beneath the sidewalk. The flat concrete roof structure includes a small penthouse associated with the original elevator shaft and stairway.

### MATERIALS AND DETAILS

- The three-story and basement reinforced concrete structural frame, floor and roof slabs, and infill walls of structural clay tile and brick.
- The concrete elevator shaft and surrounding stair in the northwest corner of the plan.
- The white terra cotta façade facing Alamo Plaza and the ornate detailing of the molded and glazed terra cotta elements.



Palace Theater Arcade. Arcade entrance, with historic ornamental plaster ceiling. JGWA, 2019.

- The second and third floor window openings with wood and glass sash and trim.

### INTERIOR CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

- The division of the interior into two sections (north and south) by a series of six concrete piers that exist at each level (basement to third floor).
- The concrete floor slabs that form each level.
- The basement area that exists beneath the side-walk.
- The mezzanine level between the first and second floor levels and the related stairs with tile flooring and an ornate wrought iron and wood handrail on the north side of the building.
- The paneled and ornamented vaulted plaster ceiling and related wall pilasters and other detailing that form the surviving east end of the Arcade.
- The concrete stair that wraps around the concrete elevator shaft in the northwest corner of the floor plan.
- The wood window trim of the second and third floor east windows.
- Remnants of ceramic tile and wood flooring and other surviving details in the large open office spaces of the second and third floor.

### NON-CONTRIBUTING FEATURES

- The large penthouse situated on the roof and related deck and screen walls.
- The rear west addition that includes an elevator and stair, and the elevator within the original spaces of the Arcade.
- The current first-floor storefront, canopy, and the various interior fittings for the current tenant.

## ARCHITECTURAL

The exterior east façade of the Palace Theater Arcade was restored during the 1983 renovations and is in very good condition overall. Minor cracks and spalls were observed at terra cotta trim elements at the belt course below the second-floor windows and at the parapet; the glazed brick masonry is in very good condition. The second and third floor windows are in good condition, but require repainting, reglazing, and adjustments to hardware to be



Palace Theater Arcade. Historic mezzanine stair with tile floors and ornamental railings, looking southeast. JGWA, 2019.



Palace Theater Arcade. Plaster detailing of historic vaulted Arcade ceiling. JGWA, 2019.



Palace Theater Arcade. (Upper left) Historic second-floor elevator shaft in the northwest corner of the building.

(Lower left) Historic concrete stair that wraps around the elevator shaft. JGWA, 2019.

(Above) Evidence of historic floor tile finishes near the historic elevator.



fully operational. The ground floor storefronts are in fair shape, but their materials and configuration detract from the overall appearance of the exterior of the building. The rear wall of the Arcade retains evidence from the demolition of the Palace Theater itself; as such, it appears that the materials used to infill gaps in the building enclosure at this location may not be intended for a weathertight construction, and long-term water infiltration in this location adjacent to the historic stair and elevator at the rear of the north half of the building is evident. The rear (west) steel and glass stair and elevator addition are similar to the Crockett Block additions, both in materials and condition; water staining is present on adjacent interior wall and ceiling surfaces at most floor levels.

The penthouse construction on top of the historic roof of the Palace Theater Arcade is not historic, and appears to represent two construction campaigns, one unfinished in the 1960s and another completed in the early 1990s. The brick veneer of the exterior wall construction is beginning to separate at the northeast corner from the concrete masonry unit back-up wall construction; this should be investigated further to determine if the problem is a localized or pervasive failure condition. The ballasted roof system of the penthouse construction is in fair condition, with a very small gravel stop and drip edge at the roof perimeter. The associated wood deck assembly is in fair condition, and the metal railing is beginning to corrode and is not sufficiently anchored.



The interior of the Palace Theater Arcade retains some character-defining elements and details throughout. The first floor is in good condition, but much of the historic building fabric that does remain is covered over by later modifications to support the current entertainment and amusement functions of the spaces. The decorative railings and historic floor finishes exposed on the mezzanine level are in very good condition; recent interior partitions in this area are not substantial and are worn in some locations. The second and third floors have been vacant for some time, and exposed finishes are worn where extant; the modern bathroom facilities on these floors are in fair condition but are inactive. Water infiltration has caused localized areas of plaster failure at the northeast and southeast corners at the second and third floors, possibly associated with the construction of the wood deck at the penthouse level.

## STRUCTURAL

The Palace Theater Arcade is a three-story reinforced concrete structure with a penthouse and deck at the roof level. The structure consists of concrete slabs spanning to concrete beams which are supported by three lines of concrete columns. At the perimeter frame lines, walls are infilled with structural clay tile construction. Some alterations to the slab-beam construction have been made to allow for the insertion of an elevator that connects the first and basement levels, and to accommodate alterations for MEP systems. The three story elevator and stair construction at the west elevation of the building is steel-framed, with detailing similar to the rear additions of the Crockett Block. The east façade is glazed brick, with terra cotta trim and coping elements.

**BASEMENT:** The outer reinforced concrete columns are battered, while the central columns are square. A steel pipe has been added below the line of the east façade at mid-span, where the basement extends underneath the sidewalk; the exterior wall footing is not confirmed in this location.

**FIRST FLOOR:** The elevator, steel framing, and metal deck/floor slab construction of the added mezzanine construction is visible at the southwest corner of building, where the exterior stone wall of the Crockett Block is also exposed.



Palace Theater Arcade. Arcade entrance, looking west, at the entrance to the "Guinness Book of World Records" attraction. JGWA, 2019.



Palace Theater Arcade. View looking north from the Arcade into the Woolworth Building. JGWA, 2019.

**SECOND FLOOR:** The eastern portion of the building, where the reinforced concrete structural frame is exposed, does not exhibit any signs of structural distress.

**THIRD FLOOR:** Evidence of past water damage along the central east-west column line may pre-date the current penthouse construction.

**PENTHOUSE:** The brick veneer is separating from the CMU block wall construction along the northern half of the east elevation of the penthouse construction, which has a reinforced concrete slab floor and roof construction.

The Palace Theater Arcade building is in good structural condition, with the exception of later additions that have not proven to be as durable in materials and detailing. Without testing the existing reinforced concrete structural system, it is difficult to give exact live load capacities for the existing floor and roof systems as the existing steel reinforcing size and spacing within the concrete structure cannot currently be verified. However, based on the past and current use of the structure, and archival accounts that it was constructed to take (6) additional floors, it is likely that it would be adequate to carry the anticipated loads for a change to museum use. To quantify live load capacities, a combination of destructive material testing with non-destructive investigation is recommended.

## SYSTEMS

### MECHANICAL

No historically significant mechanical systems, components, or equipment remain within the Palace Theater Arcade.

The building is served by local fan coil units and air handling units utilizing chilled water coils of varying age; these units have exceeded their useful service life expectancy. The first floor, which houses some of the entertainment attractions, has limited exposed rigid galvanized ductwork connected to suspended fan coil units within the space and an air-handling unit within the basement space below. The second and third floor spaces of the Palace Theater Arcade are largely unoccupied; the penthouse is served by an air handling unit located within a mechanical closet in the space, and overhead, concealed ductwork and ceiling-mounted supply grilles provide distribution.



Palace Theater Arcade. Basement hallway with concrete foundation piers. JGWA, 2019.



Palace Theater Arcade. Second-floor office space, looking west. JGWA, 2019.



Palace Theater Arcade. Third-floor office space, looking southeast. JGWA, 2019.



Palace Theater Arcade. Penthouse, looking east. The interior of this space was renovated in 1993 in the “Texas chic” style. JGWA, 2019.



Palace Theater Arcade. Penthouse terrace, looking north towards the roof of the Woolworth Building. JGWA, 2019.



Palace Theater Arcade. Band of terra cotta, forming a cornice between the first and second stories of the east facade of the building. JGWA, 2019.

All heating is accomplished via electric heating coils within local fan coil units, air handling units, and ductwork. The building systems are controlled by pneumatic controls, with an air compressor located in the basement of the building. Chilled water distribution for the Palace Theater Arcade is provided from the Crockett Block chilled water plant.

In general, the mechanical equipment type, limited interior ductwork distribution, and equipment age render the current systems not suitable for future use in maintaining museum quality temperature and humidity within the Palace Theater Arcade.

### ELECTRICAL AND FIRE ALARM

The electrical service for the Palace Theater Arcade originates from an underground utility distribution system within the east sidewalk of Alamo Plaza, and enters into the main electrical room at the basement level. The electrical service is a 208/120 volt, 3-phase, 4-wire system, and sub-feeds four tenant/owner meters with service disconnect switches. Three of these sub-meters energize local lighting and power panelboards on upper floors; the basement is served by a 225A panelboard in the main electrical room, while the penthouse is served by a 500A main circuit breaker distribution panelboard located in an electrical room within the penthouse.

Except for the panelboards in the penthouse and on the first floor serving the Guinness World Records Museum, most of the electrical equipment for the Palace Theater Arcade appears to be antiquated equipment that is in poor condition.

Wiring where exposed in the Palace Theater Arcade appears in good condition, but raceways are often missing covers and rusting due to age; the quantity and location of receptacles does not meet the programming needs of the spaces, and surface-mounted distribution has been added to compensate. Light fixtures are not historic, lamping is inconsistent, and simple switches are located throughout the interior for lighting control, except at the Guinness World Records Museum which has a centralized theatrical dimming system. Emergency light fixtures are missing or non-functional in some locations. In general, energy conservation measures are not evident for the electrical systems.

The fire alarm panel for the Palace Theater Arcade is located in the west hallway of the first floor and is interconnected with the fire alarm panel for the





Palace Theater Arcade. Stair and elevator tower addition constructed during the 1983 renovations, with Crockett Block to the right. JGWA, 2019.



Palace Theater Arcade. South elevation of stair and elevator tower addition constructed during the 1983 renovations. JGWA, 2019.



Palace Theater Arcade. Interior of the stair and elevator tower addition, facing east towards the rear (west) exterior wall of no. 323 of the Crockett Block. JGWA, 2019.



Palace Theater Arcade. Hallway in stair and elevator tower, looking west. JGWA, 2019

Woolworth Building. The two fire alarm panels are interconnected because one sprinkler system is used for both the Palace Theater Arcade and Woolworth Building, while the Crockett Block is provided with a dedicated service. The fire alarm raceways appear to be a mixture of cable and conduit, and fire alarm pull stations, smoke detectors, strobes and horns are installed throughout.

erage is only in the basement level of the building, and there is no standpipe.

## PLUMBING AND FIRE PROTECTION

The Palace Theater Arcade is supplied by a 1-1/2" domestic water service as well as a 3/4" domestic water service; both originate from Alamo Plaza, entering the building in the basement level. Both services are fitted with a water meter but not a backflow preventer; there is also an abandoned 3/4" service that terminates in a hose bib. The piping is primarily copper and appears to be in fair condition; domestic water is supplied throughout the building off street pressure. Domestic hot water is generated by electric storage type heaters, which are typically located adjacent to fixture locations and are in good condition. Plumbing fixtures are generally in good working order, with manual flush valves and faucets. It is assumed that all of the fixtures are not of the high-efficiency, water-saving type.

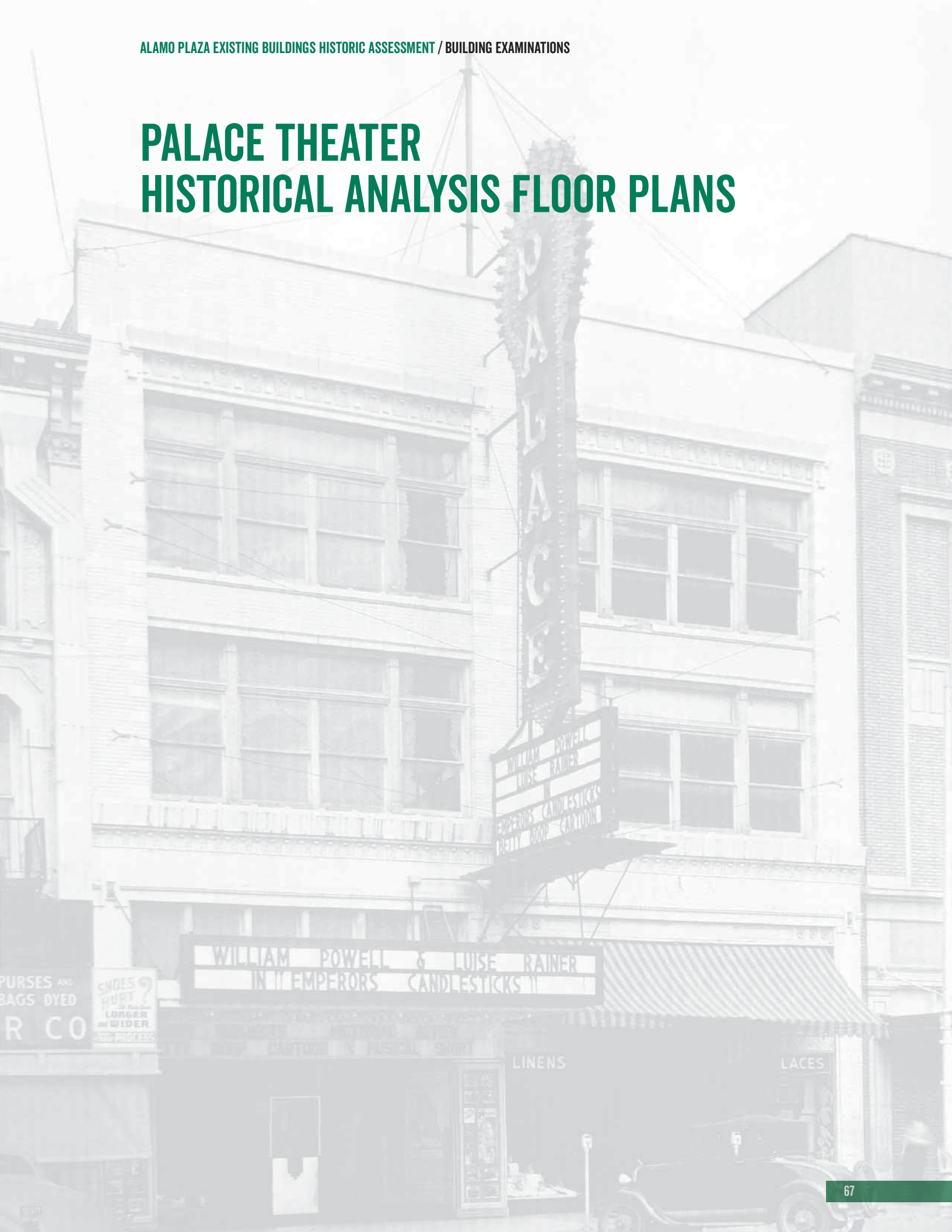
The sanitary waste is collected in the basement of the Palace Theater Arcade via gravity and exits to the west into a sewer in the alleyway; basement fixtures are piped to a duplex sewage ejector located on the west side of the basement, which also exits to the west alleyway. The piping material is mostly no-hub cast iron. There is an abandoned grease trap in the basement, and the first-floor concession area drains into a simplex pump and basin.

The storm drainage system for the Palace Theater Arcade consists of interior roof drains and leaders, which are collected in the basement level via gravity and discharged to the municipal storm main. There are no known issues with this system.

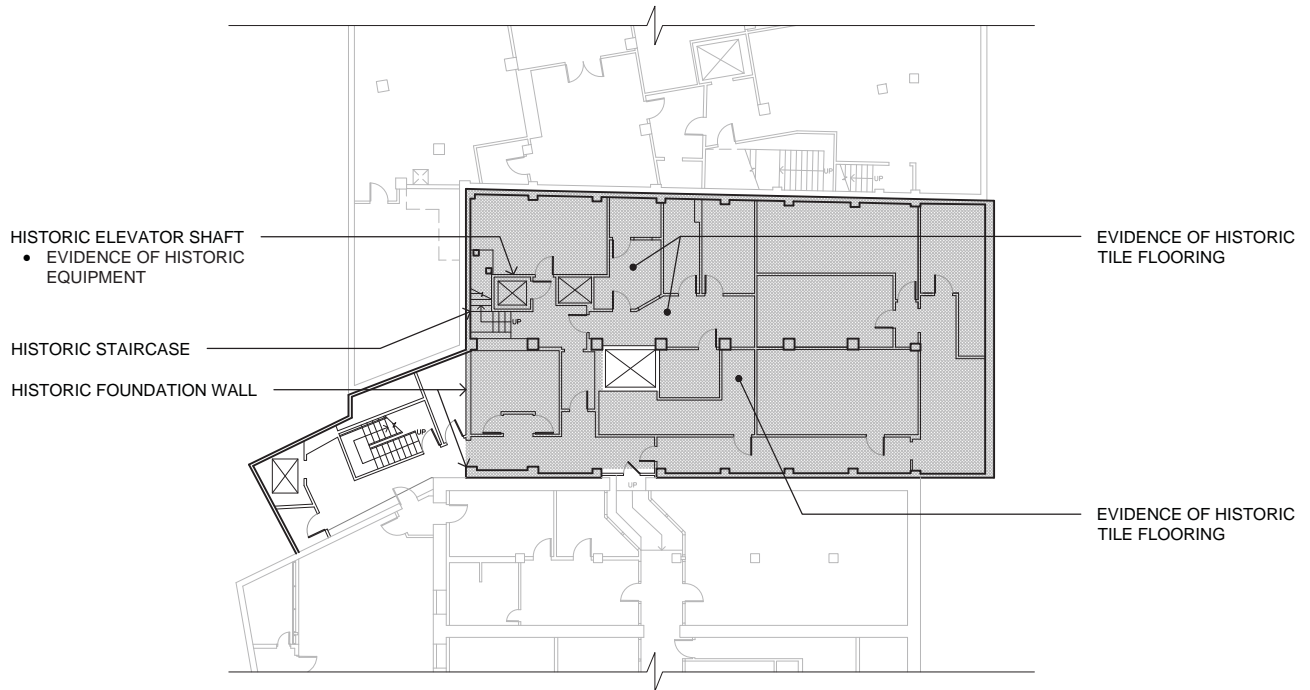
The Palace Theater Arcade is supplied with a 1-1/2" high pressure gas service entering the basement from Alamo Plaza. The service is fitted with a regulator but no meters; there are two valved outlets for future meters. There is no gas distribution piping in the building.

The Palace Theater Arcade is supplied by the water service and alarm valve assembly that is located in the basement of the Crockett Block. Sprinkler cov-

# PALACE THEATER HISTORICAL ANALYSIS FLOOR PLANS







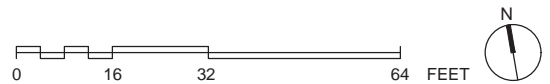


#### PALACE THEATER ARCADE NOTES

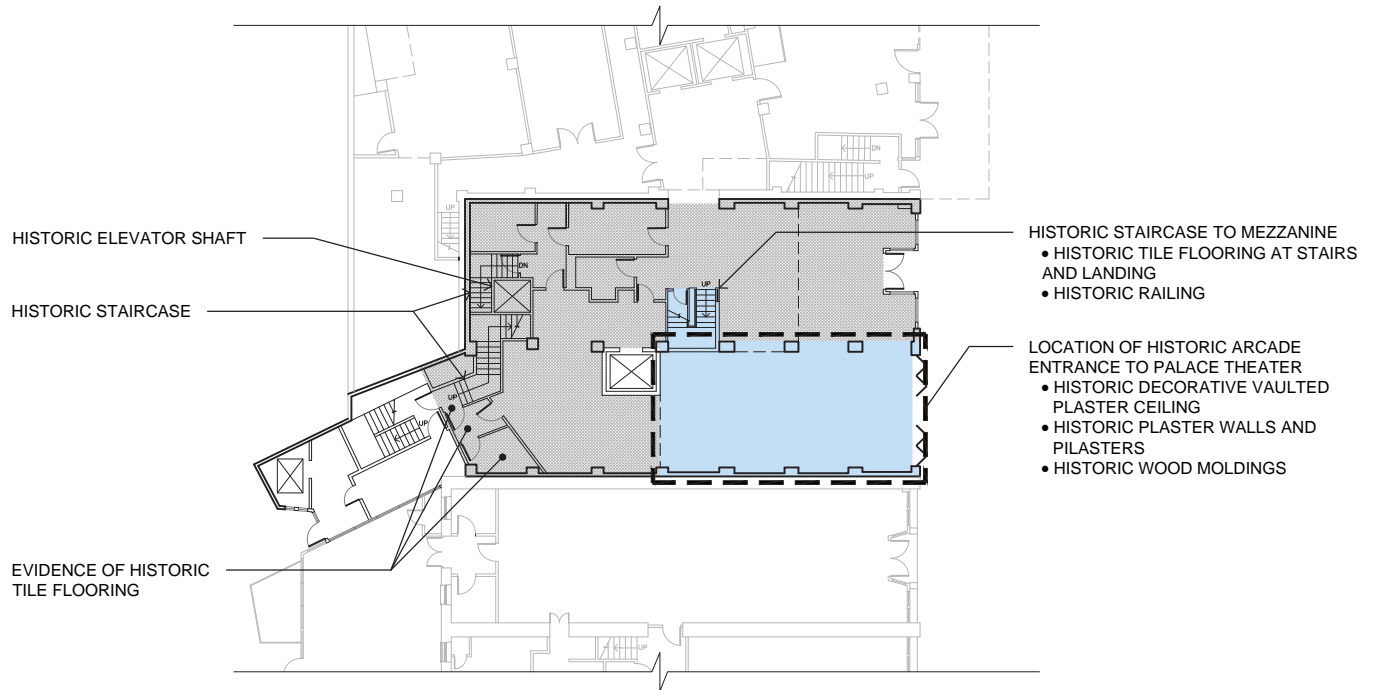
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2. CONCRETE COLUMNS, FLOORS AND CEILINGS AT BASEMENT, FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD FLOORS ARE HISTORIC.
3. TAPERED CONCRETE PIERS AT BASEMENT FLOOR ARE HISTORIC.
4. CONCRETE STAIR AT BASEMENT, FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD FLOORS IS HISTORIC.
5. MASONRY FACADE ELEMENTS AND TERRA COTTA WINDOW SILLS AND COPING STONES ARE HISTORIC.
6. BUILDING FABRIC ABOVE THIRD FLOOR CEILING IS NON-HISTORIC.

#### LEGEND

-  EXISTING PRIMARY BUILDING FABRIC IS HISTORIC
-  EXISTING PRIMARY BUILDING FABRIC AND MAJORITY OF FINISHES ARE HISTORIC





Palace Theater Arcade Basement Floor Plan. JGWA, 2020.



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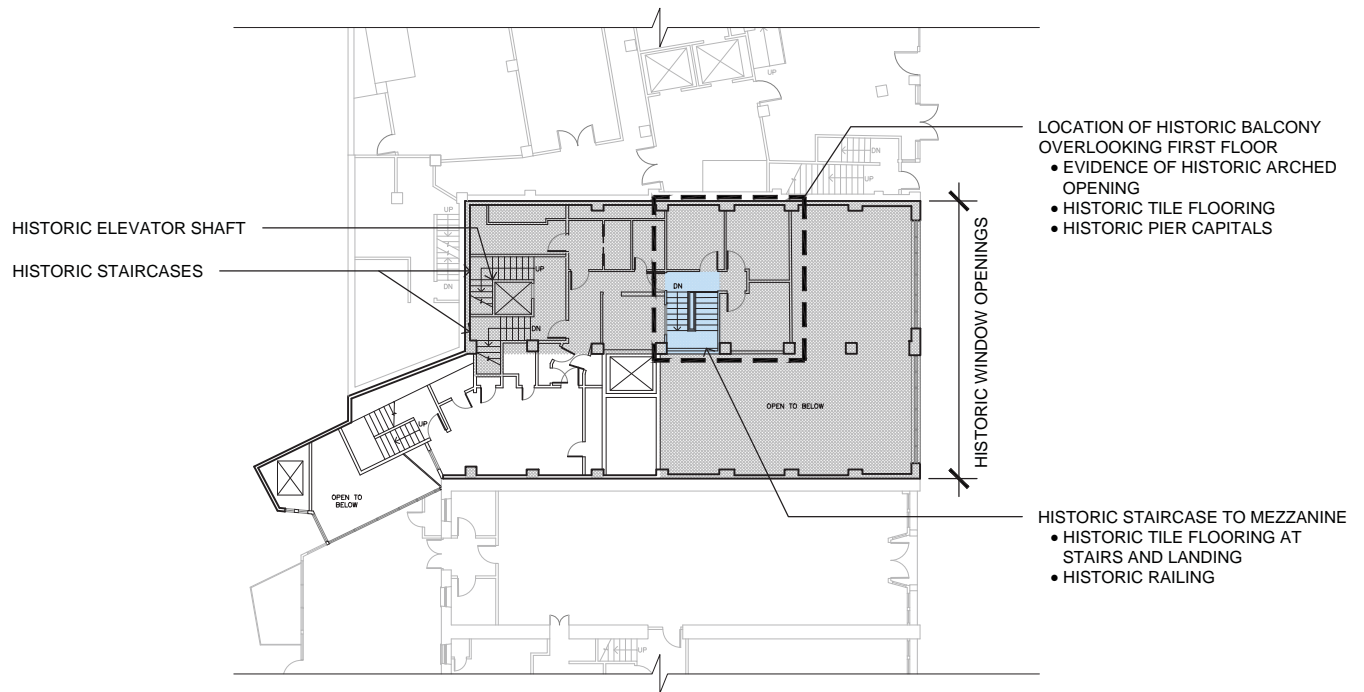
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Palace Theater Arcade First Floor Plan. JGWA, 2020.

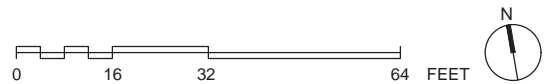


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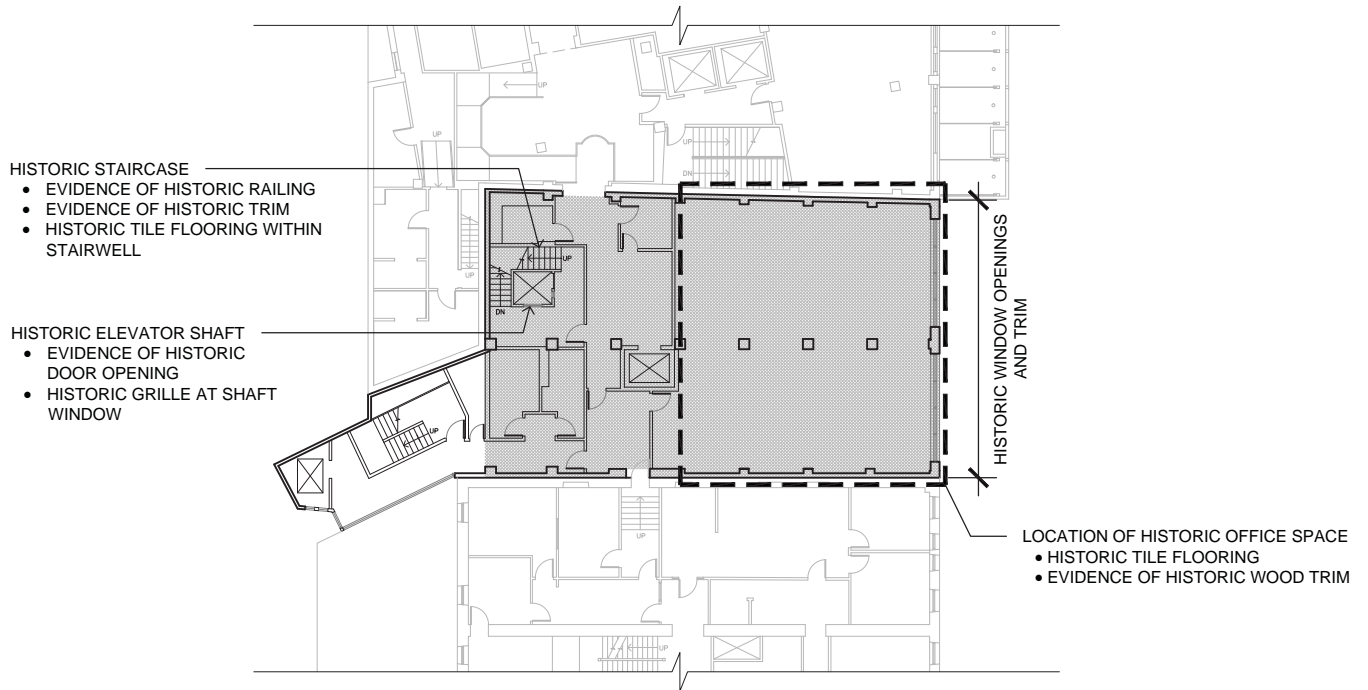
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Palace Theater Arcade Mezzanine Floor Plan. JGWA, 2020.





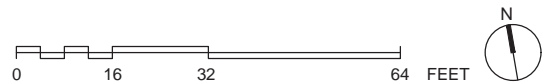


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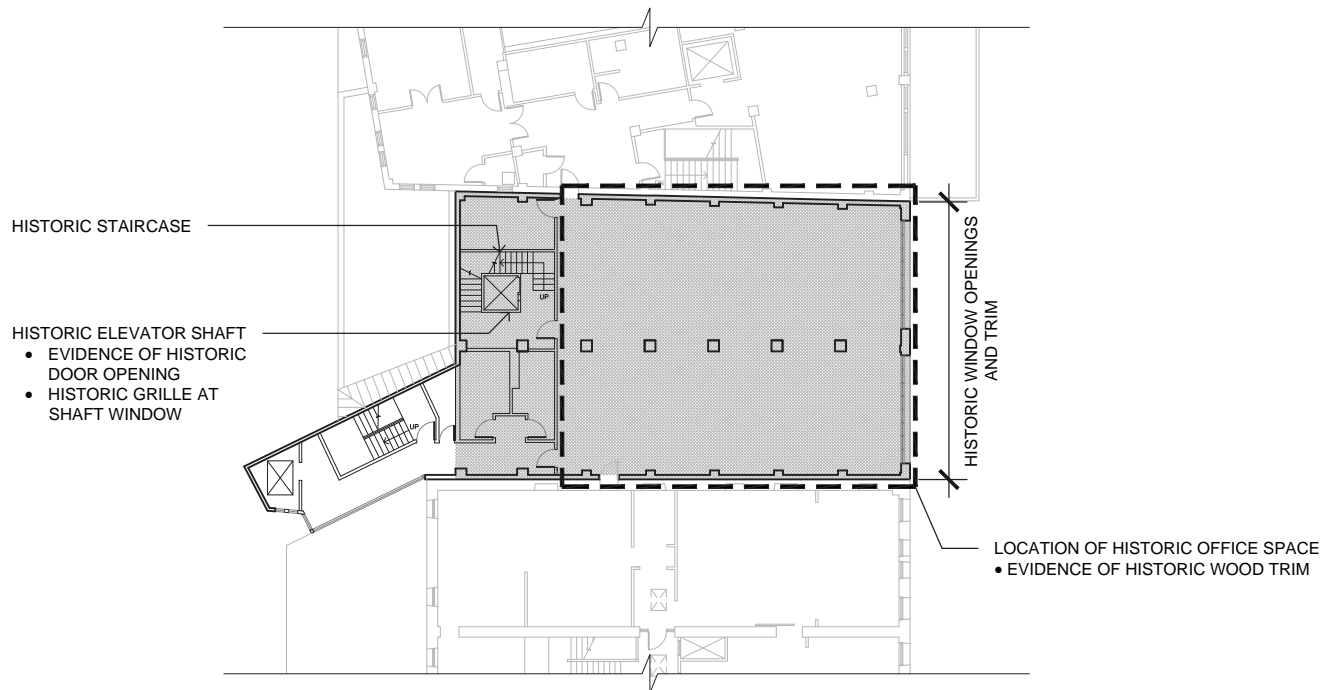
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Palace Theater Arcade Second Floor Plan. JGWA, 2020.



PALACE THEATER ARCADE NOTES

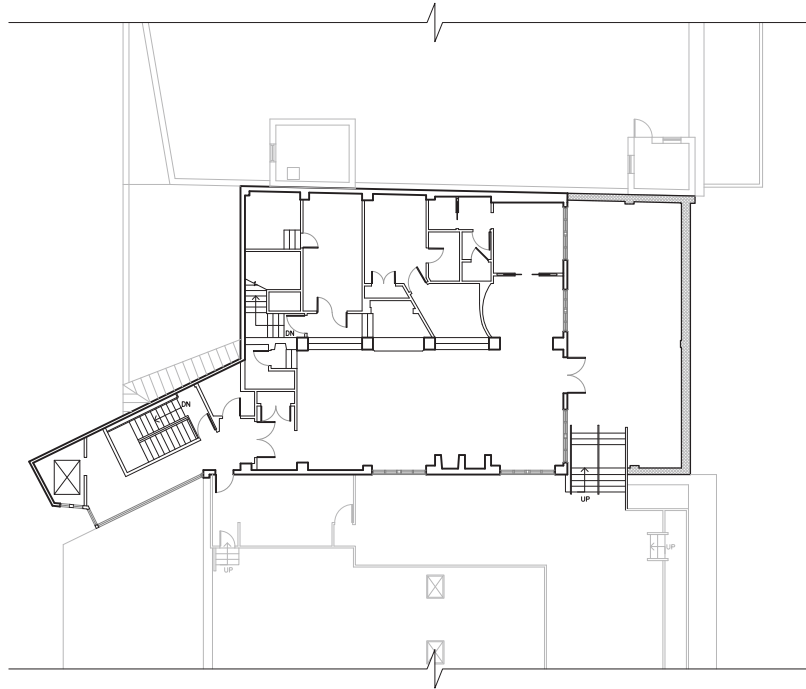
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Palace Theater Arcade Third Floor Plan. JGWA, 2020.

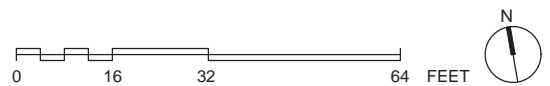


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LEGEND

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Palace Theater Arcade Penthouse Floor Plan. JGWA, 2020.



# WOOLWORTH BUILDING

**THE F. W. WOOLWORTH COMPANY** was founded in 1912, the same year that the company opened its store number 650 in an existing building in San Antonio. In the fall of 1919, Russell C. Hill, a San Antonio realtor, “made a trip to New York to try to interest the Woolworth Company in the purchase of their own building site in San Antonio.” “As a result of this trip, a representative of the Woolworth people visited San Antonio,” and the company purchased the site at the corner of Alamo Plaza and East Houston Street, long “occupied by the Swearingen estate,” and San Antonio’s most prominent corner, for about \$320,000.<sup>16</sup>

The architectural firm of Adams & Adams was commissioned in March of 1920 to design the new building on the corner of East Houston Street and Alamo Plaza in 1920. The firm had been established in San Antonio in 1909 by Carl C. Adams and his nephew Carleton W. Adams, who was born in Nebraska in 1885 and was the son of a real-estate developer in San Antonio. After Carl Adams’ death in 1918, Carleton Adams became the senior partner in the firm, with Max C. Frederick as an associate. Among many other local commercial, public, and residential commissions, the firm also designed the Cenotaph to the Heroes of the Alamo, located on Alamo Plaza.<sup>17</sup>

By August of that same year, the general construction contract for the Woolworth Building, in the amount of \$169,000, was awarded to Coleman & Jenkins of San Antonio. The structure was to be three stories, plus a “full basement,” and was to be constructed of brick and terra cotta supplied by the Atlantic Terra Cotta Company. Plans called for



Construction of the Woolworth Building involved the demolition of the Maverick Bank Building, the city’s first five-story building, designed by Alfred Giles and erected in 1885. In this 1918 postcard, the Maverick Bank Building is seen on the left. UTSA Special Collections.



The Woolworth Building soon after its opening in 1921. The display windows are well stocked with merchandise. A sign for the Hotel Alamo is seen on the north side of the Crockett Block. San Antonio Public Libraries.

16. *San Antonio Express*, June 3, 1921.

17. Christopher Long, “Adams & Adams,” *Texas Architect* (Nov.-Dec. 1989), 42. “Carleton W. Adams,” Handbook of Texas Online, [www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fad25](http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fad25), accessed May 22, 2019. Adams & Adams, Carleton W. Adams, Application for Membership, American Institute of Architects, [www.aiahistoricaldirectory.atlassian.net](http://www.aiahistoricaldirectory.atlassian.net), accessed May 23, 2019.

Woolworth's to occupy the first floor and basement and for "some other mercantile concern or concerns" to rent the second and third floors; a kitchen, lunch counter, and soda fountain was planned.

G. Beltz, who was "head of the construction department for the Woolworth Company . . . supervised the construction of the building" in San Antonio.<sup>18</sup> The work did not always go smoothly. At the time of the opening in June of 1921, the Express noted that the project had moved forward "in spite of labor troubles, freight congestion and a tie-up of materials."<sup>19</sup>

The F. W. Woolworth Company placed a full-page advertisement in the San Antonio Light inviting the public to the formal opening, emphasizing that the company had "spared neither pains nor expense to make it the handsomest and best equipped" store in the Southwest.

An article in the San Antonio Express also mentioned that the "lunch counter and soda fountain in the rear of the store" was "a new idea." The kitchen had "the most modern and most sanitary equipment possible to buy." The "lunch counter and stools are in white enamel; and the entire department gives promise of withstanding the most rigid inspection."<sup>20</sup>

This same advertisement, published over the signature of H. E. Rowe, the local manager, also announced that Woolworth's had "added a number of new features to our service—but the one which you will appreciate most is our Soda Fountain and Lunch Counter." "This is the last word in sanitary equipment," the notice continued, and "the largest in San Antonio," where "Nothing but the best of refreshments and foods will be served."<sup>21</sup>

The San Antonio Light described the store as having "as modern quarters as any merchandising establishment in the city" and was "the last word in construction."<sup>22</sup> The San Antonio Express was similarly enthusiastic about the new Woolworth's, praising it as a "handsome new building" and "one of the best equipped, best ventilated business houses in the city." An article in the San Antonio Evening News described the building permit as "huge" and

the building as "immense." With its corner location, the interior enjoyed "an abundance of daylight and fresh air." It was "finished in the bright color tones characteristic of Woolworth stores everywhere."

The mechanical systems were also admired. The Express commended the "electric lighting system" as being "particularly attractive and satisfactory": the "concealing globes" deflected "the sharp glare of the direct rays," yet still displayed a brilliant lighting effect."<sup>23</sup>

The 1922 Sanborn fire-insurance map depicts the Woolworth Building as it was built: three stories tall and of fireproof construction, with reinforced-concrete frame, floors, and roof, which was covered with composition roofing. The height is indicated as 50 feet; the brick curtain walls were 12 inches thick. There was a fire escape on the west wall. Running along that wall on the west side of the building was a narrow, one-story wing that continued as a two-story wing beyond the south wall of the building and extended behind the office portion of the Palace Theater building.

In 1937, a full-page newspaper advertisement announcing the grand reopening of the Woolworth Building states that the store had been enlarged and was "perfectly AIR COOLED" and had "MODERN EQUIPMENT thruout." Included was a photograph of the "NEW MODERN SANITARY LUNCH DEPARTMENT," which was described as "A Downtown Oasis for the Hungry and the Thirsty." The advertisement explained that "This store has long enjoyed a reputation for high quality foods at popular prices and that the lunch department had been "enlarged" and "fitted throughout with modern fixtures and equipment." The seats were "spacious and comfortable, and the atmosphere . . . perfectly AIR COOLED."<sup>24</sup> Based on decorative evidence remaining within the building, it is likely that the lunch counter was remodeled and updated again at some point in the 1950s, with a color scheme of red and gray.

The lunch counter at the Woolworth Building on Alamo Plaza, along with those at six of seven other downtown stores, began serving black patrons for the first time on March 16, 1960. Nationally, the F.W. Woolworth Company chain of department stores had a total of "1,763 luncheonettes and 19

18. *San Antonio Express*, June 3, 1921.

19. *San Antonio Express*, June 3, 1921.

20. *San Antonio Express*, June 3, 1921.

21. Advertisement, *San Antonio Light*, June 2, 1921.

22. *San Antonio Light*, June 2, 1921.

23. *San Antonio Express*, June 3, 1921.

24. "F.W. Woolworth Co., Corner Houston and Alamo, Grand Reopening Sale," *San Antonio Light*, July 2, 1937.



This July 2, 1937 advertisement in *The San Antonio Light* announced the reopening of the renovated and air conditioned Woolworth store. The photograph shows the lunch counter located in the southwest corner of the first floor, looking north. Four “U”-shaped counters are shown in this image. The sloped underside of the northwest stair to the second floor is seen at the far end of the lunch counter. UTSA Institute of Texas Cultures.

in-store and separate cafeterias in all 50 states serving an average of 750,000 persons daily in 1960.<sup>25</sup> Notably in San Antonio, the integration of lunch counters at downtown stores was accomplished peacefully, without sit-ins or other demonstrations, the result of strong strategic activism by the city’s religious leaders, local organizers associated with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and other groups and individuals working in concert with business leaders.

In 1976, a National Register Historic District nomination was submitted for Alamo Plaza; the district was listed in 1977. The Woolworth Building was identified as one of 24 structures that contributed to the district at this time, and was described as follows:

Woolworth’s is a three-story brick building erected in the 1920’s to replace the old Maverick Bank Building. Divided into six wide bays on the Alamo Plaza façade the second and third floors utilize fenestration typical of the Commercial Style. Each unit contains a broad central light of plate

25. *San Antonio Light*, Sept. 17, 1961. There were four Woolworth’s in San Antonio by 1960 at these locations: Alamo Plaza, 715 West Commerce Street, 905 McCreless Shopping City, and 254 Wonderland Shopping Center; email, Beth Standiford to Diane Welch et al, April 11, 2019.





On March 16, 1960, the Kress store was one of seven local San Antonio businesses to quietly integrate its lunch counter. This image, taken by newspapers to record the event, was long mis-attributed to the Woolworth Building. Based on a 2019 investigation of the Kress store, no physical evidence remains for its lunch counter. UTSA Special Collections.



An interior view of the Woolworth Building lunch room where a corner of the U-shaped lunch counter is visible. The date of the photograph is unknown; it appeared in the March 31, 1960 issue of Jet Magazine.



This 1976 photograph records the west side of Alamo Plaza. The edge of the Woolworth canopy has been modified, probably in the 1950s. Contemporary color images show that it was painted red. The Woolworth name has been removed from the upper facade. University of North Texas Special Collections.

glass, fixed, and narrow side lights with an opening sash. Each of these lights contains a transom. A frieze and slightly projecting cornice terminate the building.<sup>26</sup>

The building was again noted as a contributing structure in July of 1982, when the National Park Service certified the Alamo Plaza Local Historic District as proposed by the City of San Antonio's Office of Historic Preservation. And again in 1985, the historic significance of the Woolworth Building was rated by the Alamo Plaza Study Committee as "significant".

By 1986, the old coffee shop within the Woolworth Building was slated for removal, and a Burger King restaurant was to be constructed on the ground floor. Locating Burger Kings within Woolworth stores was part of Woolworth's national strategy "to utilize its space for the best sales volume possible per square foot."<sup>27</sup>

The Woolworth Corporation announced in July of 1997 that it would soon be closing its remaining 400 U.S. stores, including its store on Alamo Plaza. A headline in the Express-News stated that Alamo Plaza was "losing one of its landmark stores to death of [the] dime-store era." The Alamo Plaza store was "considered one of the oldest surviving in the Woolworth chain." The Woolworth Corp. planned to convert some of its properties to Foot Locker stores, one of the company's holdings that was more profitable.<sup>28</sup> At this time, Foot Locker representatives were reported working with the Historic and Design Review Commission, and while the store did open it was closed shortly thereafter in 2000.<sup>29</sup>

In 2000, Service Life and Casualty Company of Austin, which by this time also owned the Crockett Block and Palace Theater Arcade Building, had purchased the Woolworth Building.<sup>30</sup> According to an article in the Express News, a Guinness World

26. "Alamo Plaza Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form, submitted 1976.

27. Michael Gardenswartz, "Woolworth's Making Room for Burger King." *San Antonio Light*, Dec. 18, 1986.

28. Beth Standifird, "A Brief History of the Woolworth Building," *La Voz de Esperanza* 32, number 1 (Feb. 2019), 5. *New York Times*, July 18, 1997. "Woolworth Store Closing Doors." *San Antonio Express News*, July 18, 1997.

29. Beth Standifird, "A Brief History of the Woolworth Building," *La Voz de Esperanza* 32, number 1 (Feb. 2019), 5.

30. "Guinness Museum Planned Downtown," *San Antonio Express News*, Aug. 12, 2000.

Records Museum was to open in the Palace Theater Arcade. The museum would also occupy the top two floors of the Woolworth Building and a small section of its ground floor. The upper two floors were vacant.<sup>31</sup>

For the next 15 years, minor modifications to the ground floor storefronts and other façade elements were made occasionally, and always in consultation with the Historic and Design Review Commission; submissions were made by architect Lloyd Walker Jary and the Marks Design Group to make changes associated with the Guinness Book of World Records and Ripley's Haunted House attractions located within the building. This included the modifications to install a three-story inclined elevator, which necessitated the removal of an area of reinforced concrete floor structure on the first, second, and third floors, and the installation of new steel support framing to accommodate the dynamic loading of the elevator.

The Woolworth Building was purchased by the State of Texas in December 2015. It would be managed by the General Land Office.<sup>32</sup>

## CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

Constructed in 1920-21 from a design provided by architects Adams & Adams, the building is one of the larger and more impressive of the many Woolworth Buildings constructed across the country. It faces Alamo Plaza at the corner of East Houston Street. The site previously included the five-story Maverick Bank Building and three single-story commercial structures to the south.

The Woolworth store occupied the first floor and a portion of the basement while the upper two floors were rented to other tenants consisting of offices or other businesses. Access to the upper floors was via private stairs situated at the southeast and northwest corners of the plan. The plan of the upper floors probably varied over time depending on the tenants. Similarly, the character of the interior of the store at the first floor and basement levels changed over time as part of Woolworth's remodeling campaigns. One campaign was carried out in

1937 when air-conditioning was installed and the lunch counter area was remodeled.

## EXTERIOR CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

### SETTING

- The position of the massive Woolworth Building forms an important part of the west boundary of what is today described as Alamo Plaza. The corner siting of the building serves as a landmark in this commercial downtown area.

### FORM, MASSING, AND HEIGHT

- The overall handsome character and proportions of the two street facades is an outstanding example of Prairie School influenced design. The large corner building consists of a rectangular three-story and basement structure with a small two-story extension at the southwest corner that is partially situated behind the north half of the Palace Theater Building. The north and east areas of the basement extend under the sidewalk. The exterior of the building includes a visually dominant canopy that partially covers the sidewalk on the north and east sides of the structure. The flat concrete roof slab includes a small concrete and brick penthouse in the southwest corner and a later, circa 1937, smaller penthouse in the northeast corner. This structure housed the compressor for the air conditioning system installed in that year.

### MATERIALS AND DETAILS

- The three-story and basement reinforced concrete structural frame, concrete floor and roof slabs and infill walls of brick.
- The finely detailed east and north facades composed of well-laid beige brick and molded and glazed terra cotta ornament and details.
- The classically detailed cornice and entablature and the inset terra cotta motifs flanking the upper sign locations on the east and north façade.
- The two levels of windows and transoms in a double tier vertical arrangement, including wood sash and plate glass.
- The inset entrance configuration at the corner of Alamo Plaza and East Houston Street.
- The horizontal surface above the canopy on both facades that featured the red and gold lettering of the F. W. Woolworth Co. sign. The exact word-

31. "Guinness Museum Planned Downtown," *San Antonio Express News*, Aug. 12, 2000.

32. Beth Standiford, "A Brief History of the Woolworth Building," *La Voz de Esperanza* 32, number 1 (Feb. 2019), 5.



Woolworth Building. View from the northeast. JGWA, 2019.



Woolworth Building. East entrances. JGWA, 2019.



Woolworth Building. Historic canopy at the northeast corner. The concrete patch in the sidewalk is the location of a historic glazed vault light that provided illumination into the basement. The free-standing column was historically clad in terra cotta. JGWA, 2019.



ing of the sign changed over time. Currently the surface is devoid of signage.

- The “Woolworth Building” signs above the entrances to the northwest and southeast stairs.
- The iron canopy frame and iron rod supports. The detailing of the outer edge of the canopy changed over time. The current appearance is a recent attempt to duplicate the original appearance of that feature.
- The historic “WOOLWORTH’S” lettering set in the terrazzo pavement at the northwest entrance.
- Evidence in the sidewalk paving for the positions of the glazed vault lites in that surface that provided natural light to the basement area beneath the walk.

### INTERIOR CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

- At each of the four levels, the interior space is defined by the grid of the square concrete columns that support the concrete floor slabs and roof.
- Each of the columns features an integrally cast pseudo-capital.
- The rubble stone foundation forming the north end of the west foundation wall may survive from the foundation of the Maverick Bank Building, formerly on the site.
- The historic iron and slate stairs located in the northwest and southeast corners of the plan and extend from the basement to the third floor.
- The remains of a concrete and terrazzo stair situated in the basement area behind the southeast stair. This stair may have joined the Woolworth retail areas at the first floor and basement levels.
- The historic coffered ceiling panels found throughout the first-floor ceiling. They were arranged within the grid set up by the column spacing.
- Remnants of woodwork found in various first-floor locations including wood moldings on the columns and wall panel detailing set with composition ornament seen in the southwest area of the first floor.
- Remnants of historic ceramic tile and terrazzo floor finishes found in various first-floor locations, and wood flooring found on the third floor.
- The location of the impressive lunch counter arrangement and associated kitchen spaces



Woolworth Building. Historic north entrance location with terrazzo sidewalk. JGWA, 2019.



Woolworth Building. The “Ripley’s Haunted Adventure” attraction, looking west up the inclined elevator to the third floor. JGWA, 2019.



Woolworth Building. The “Tomb Raider” ride in the basement; the ride penetrates the first-floor concrete floor structure at the northeast corner of the building. JGWA, 2019.



Woolworth Building. Historic stairway from the basement to the first floor at the northwest corner of the building. JGWA, 2019.



Woolworth Building. Historic terrazzo stair tread detail, at the stairway from the basement to the first floor at the southeast corner of the building. JGWA, 2019.



Woolworth Building. Northwest corner of the third-floor, with historic wood flooring and trim. JGWA, 2019.



Woolworth Building. West wall of the second floor, where interior finishes have been removed but historic exterior window sash remain. JGWA, 2019.





Woolworth Building. Evidence of the historic lunch counter remains in the southwest corner of the first floor. The doorway in the south wall (upper right image) led to the kitchen. The lunch counter area retains remnants of the historic wall treatment, with painted plaster walls surfaces, applied wood trim to create "panels", and composition swag (lower right image). The outline of the counter can be seen on the floor (lower left image). The red tiled area marks the serving area inside of the counter. Round holes along the perimeter of the counter show the location of the stools. JGWA, 2019.





Woolworth Building. Original northwest stair, looking down towards first floor. Note the painted original interior window, which would have provided borrowed daylight from the second-floor spaces into the stairway. JGWA, 2019.



Woolworth Building. Main chimney stack against the west wall. It is possible that the stone foundation wall survives from the Maverick Building, which was demolished for the construction of the Woolworth Building. JGWA, 2019.

situated in the southwest corner of the first floor. This includes the outline of the complex counter arrangement and seating positions, as well as remnants of ceramic wall tiles and a red and gray stripe paint scheme.

- At the third floor, the windows of the north wall retain historic trim.
- Metal window sash and wire glass remain in the historic south and west window openings, most of which have been infilled from the exterior with masonry.
- An historic office space complete with wood flooring and wood trim survives in the southwest corner of the third floor.

### NON-CONTRIBUTING FEATURES

- The recently installed ground floor storefronts, doors and other features. Some of these insertions conceal evidence of historic conditions such as floor finish.
- The interior fittings installed by the current tenants including gypsum board partitions, doors, ramps, lighting and other features.
- The elevators serving multiple floors, including the inclined elevator associated with the current entertainment use of the building.
- The large amount of mechanical equipment located on the roof.

## ARCHITECTURAL

The exterior of the Woolworth Building is in very good condition, with very little deterioration of the brick masonry and minor failure in localized areas of the terra cotta ornament at the cornice and the parapet. The projecting canopy construction appears to be in fair condition, but the workmanship of the replacement decorative metal ornament at the leading edge is of poor quality and not durable. The fenestration of the second and third floors on the north and east elevations is historic and in very good condition, despite a lack of maintenance repainting. The ground floor storefronts are in fair shape, but their materials and configuration on the east elevation in particular detract from the overall appearance of the exterior of the building. The upper surfaces of the rear (west) wall of the building exhibit atmospheric soiling, and loose and/or

deteriorated brick masonry can be seen adjacent to the historic chimney and above recent utility penetrations on this side of the building. Standing water was observed in areas of roofing, and the underlying layer of insulation in these locations may have deteriorated.

The large open spaces of the Woolworth Building and the major structural elements (floors, columns) are in very good condition throughout the interior, and do not show any signs of deterioration. Modifications to the floor slabs for the insertion of elevators does not appear to have compromised the adjacent structure. Remaining historic features and finishes at the interior are in good condition where extant and visible; much of the interior surfaces are concealed by contemporary finishes that are associated with the current entertainment and amusement uses of the building. No evidence of water infiltration at the building perimeter was observed. The stairs are in fair condition, with modifications to the partitions enclosing them and infill of most of the interior windows.

## STRUCTURAL

The Woolworth Building is a three-story framed reinforced concrete structure with two penthouses at the roof level. The reinforced concrete framing consists of concrete slabs spanning (two way) to a grid of concrete beams and columns. Reinforced concrete beams are wide and shallow, spanning in both the north-south and east-west direction. Reinforced concrete columns are characterized by a flared capital element. The column grid consists of six bays of framing on the north-south axis and five bays of framing on the east-west axis. At the perimeter frame lines above the foundation level, walls are infilled with structural clay tile construction. Some alterations to the slab-beam construction have been made to allow for the insertion of modern elevators and steel-framed stairs, to accommodate alterations for building systems, and to construct an inclined elevator running from the basement floor level up to the third-floor level for current tenant use.

**BASEMENT:** The basement extends below the sidewalk of East Houston Street, and the north wall of this area is battered; there is evidence of sidewalk vault lights that have been infilled, and there is localized deterioration of the reinforced concrete framing at the northwest corner of the site.



Woolworth Building. First-floor concrete pier with applied profiled wood trim, supporting the coffered plaster ceiling. JGWA, 2019.



Woolworth Building. Third-floor north hallway, looking east. Historic finishes, including painted surfaces, remain in this location. JGWA, 2019.



**Woolworth Building.** The second floor of the building, where the “Guinness Book of World Records” attraction is also located. JGWA, 2019.

Portions of the earlier Maverick Building foundations, including a chimney, remain and have been incorporated into the electrical room.

**FIRST FLOOR:** Steel columns and framing have been added in locations surrounding non-historic floor openings that extend the full dimension of a structural bay at the south end of the building. These modifications extend up through the third floor to support the inclined elevator used for the Ripley’s Haunted Adventure. A large area of metal deck infill floor framing is located opposite the building’s historic entrance off East Houston Street, and is adjacent to a current floor opening that has been made to accommodate the current amusement ride attractions that emerge from the basement in the northeast corner. A large opening was created to connect the ground floor of the Palace Theater Arcade to the Woolworth Building, but the concrete structural frame of both buildings was not altered.

**SECOND FLOOR:** Structural modifications to the reinforced concrete floor slabs include the openings for passenger elevators as well as the removal of floor construction within two bays to accommodate the inclined elevator and associated steel structural framing.



**Woolworth Building.** “Ripley’s Haunted Adventure” attraction on the third floor. In the lower photograph, the room retains historic windows and finishes that have been incorporated into the backdrop for the attraction. JGWA, 2019.



Woolworth Building. Structural deterioration of the reinforced concrete beam at the northwest corner of the basement, below the sidewalk above. JGWA, 2019.



Woolworth Building. The rear (west) configuration of the building, looking north. The rear (west) elevation of the Palace Theater Arcade is on the right. JGWA, 2019.



Woolworth Building. Historic penthouse structure at southwest corner of roof. JGWA, 2019.



Woolworth Building. Looking north down at the structural support rods and roof surface of the historic canopy over the sidewalk. JGWA, 2019.



Woolworth Building. Terra cotta parapet at the north facade, with failed sealant at many joints between units. JGWA, 2019.

**THIRD FLOOR:** The small, non-historic opening connecting the Woolworth Building to the Palace Theater Arcade at this level has no lintel, and the brick exterior wall construction of the Woolworth Building and the structural clay tile infill wall of the Palace Theater Arcade are unsupported and loose at this area. Loose bricks are visible above an area of pipe penetrations through the exterior masonry wall on the west elevation of the Woolworth Building, and there are minor cracks and spalls at the terra cotta ornament of the cornice and parapet.

**ROOF:** There is significant steel dunnage for building systems raised up on concrete piers at the roof level, just west of the modifications made to the building's structure for the inclined elevator.

Without testing of the existing structural system, it is difficult to give exact live load capacities for the existing floor and roof systems of the Woolworth Building, as the existing steel reinforcing size and spacing within the concrete structure cannot currently be verified. However, based on the past and current use of the structure, it is likely that it would be adequate to carry the anticipated loads. To quantify live load capacities, a combination of destructive materials testing with non-destructive investigation is recommended.

## SYSTEMS

### MECHANICAL

No historically significant mechanical system, components, or equipment remain in the Woolworth Building.

Building cooling is provided in the Woolworth Building by local fan coil units and air handling units utilizing chilled water coils, multiple rooftop direct-exchange units, and split systems of varying age. All heating is accomplished via electrical heating coils within these units or within the limited ductwork distribution. Nearly all units have exceeded their useful life expectancy.

Several first-floor tenant spaces within the Woolworth Building have suspended air handling units with exposed spiral ductwork and drum louvers; second and third floor tenant spaces are similar, with either round or rectangular exposed ductwork.

Chilled water is generated by two 100-ton air-cooled chillers located on the roof of the Woolworth Building. The chillers are manufactured by

Daiken, and their steel supporting structure is in good condition. Chilled water is circulated by two pumps located in the basement; the supply and return mains are insulated and distributed throughout the building to air handling units and fan coil units. Exterior piping at the rooftop is insulated and jacketed, and could not be visually observed; however, the handles and locking quadrants of the exposed isolation valves were rusted and deteriorated. Several fans and abandoned condensing units from former tenants remain on the roofs.

The building systems within the Woolworth Building are controlled by an open protocol direct digital control system manufactured by Distech.

The mechanical equipment type, limited ductwork distribution, and equipment age render them not suitable for their future use in maintaining museum-quality temperature and humidity within the Woolworth Building.

### ELECTRICAL AND FIRE ALARM

The Woolworth Building's electrical service originates from an underground utility distribution system within the north sidewalk of East Houston Street. The service conductors enter the north side of the Woolworth Building and terminate into a 4,000A, 208/120 volt, 3-phase, 4-wire main fuse switchboard located in the main electrical room at the basement. The service switchboard section, which is approximately 15 years old, shows signs of water damage from piping running above, and should be serviced or replaced if required.

A separate 800A service is provided to energize a distribution panelboard for indoor mechanical equipment as well as back-of-house lighting, receptacles, elevators, and the fire alarm system. A separate exterior weatherproof 1,200A panelboard energizes the mechanical equipment installed on the roof. The electrical equipment and wiring for the Woolworth Building appears to be in good condition, although abandoned equipment and raceways were observed throughout the building.

Lighting fixtures are a mixture of decorative, track lighting, troffer and utility fixtures with a variety of lamp types; emergency/egress lighting and exit signage was observed to be non-functional in several spaces. The spaces that house the attractions within the Woolworth Building are all equipped with centralized theatrical dimming systems.

The fire alarm system in the Woolworth Building appears to be in good condition and was manufactured by Siemens. The fire alarm panel is located near the southeast corner of the first floor, and is interconnected with the first alarm panel of the Palace Theater Arcade. The panel also contains interconnections with the AV/IT and amusement ride systems for remote shutdown during fire activities. The fire alarm raceways appear to be a mixture of cable and conduit, and fire alarm pull stations, smoke detectors, strobes and horns are installed throughout.

The Woolworth Building is supplied by a 6" fire service from Alamo Plaza, which enters the building in the basement level. Sprinkler coverage is throughout the building. A fire department connection is provided at the corner of Alamo Plaza and East Houston Street; there does not appear to be a stand-pipe in the building.

### PLUMBING AND FIRE PROTECTION

The Woolworth Building is supplied by a 2" domestic service from East Houston Street; the water meter is located in a sidewalk vault, and the service enters at the basement level where it is fitted with a double check valve backflow preventer. There are two sub-meters for the first-floor tenant spaces. Water pressure is approximately 70 psi, which is adequate to supply the entire building off street pressure. Domestic water piping appears to be all copper and is in good condition. Domestic hot water is generated by electric point-of-use storage system heaters; there is no hot water circulation system. Fixtures are typically tank or manual flush valve, and fittings are manual; none appear to be high-efficiency, water saving fixtures.

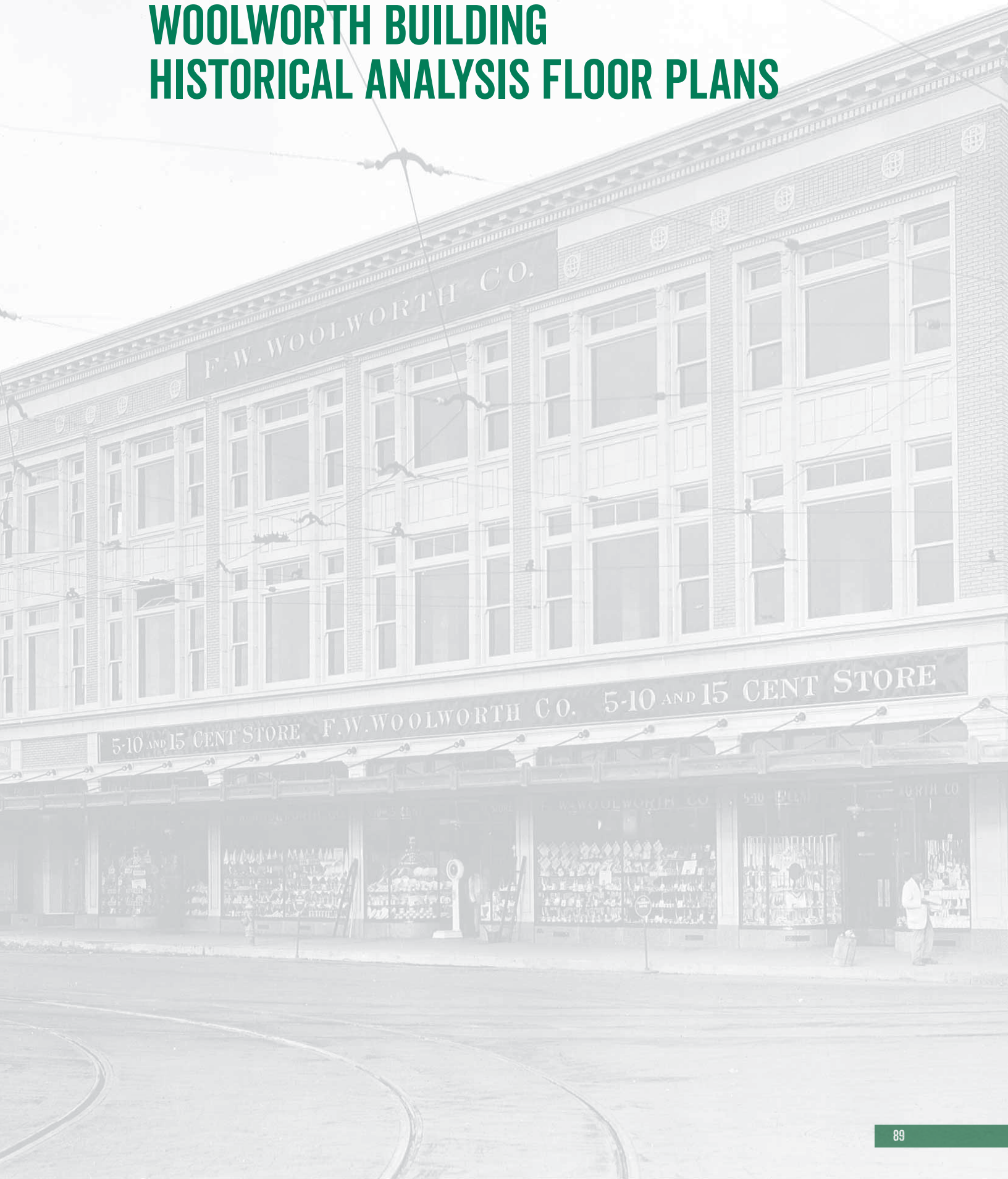
The Woolworth Building's sanitary waste is collected in the basement level via gravity; it appears to exit the building both to the west alleyway and also on the east side of the building through a 4" service to the municipal main in Alamo Plaza. The sanitary piping is a mix of hub and spigot cast iron and no-hub cast iron; there is a sump pump in the basement, primarily for condensate.

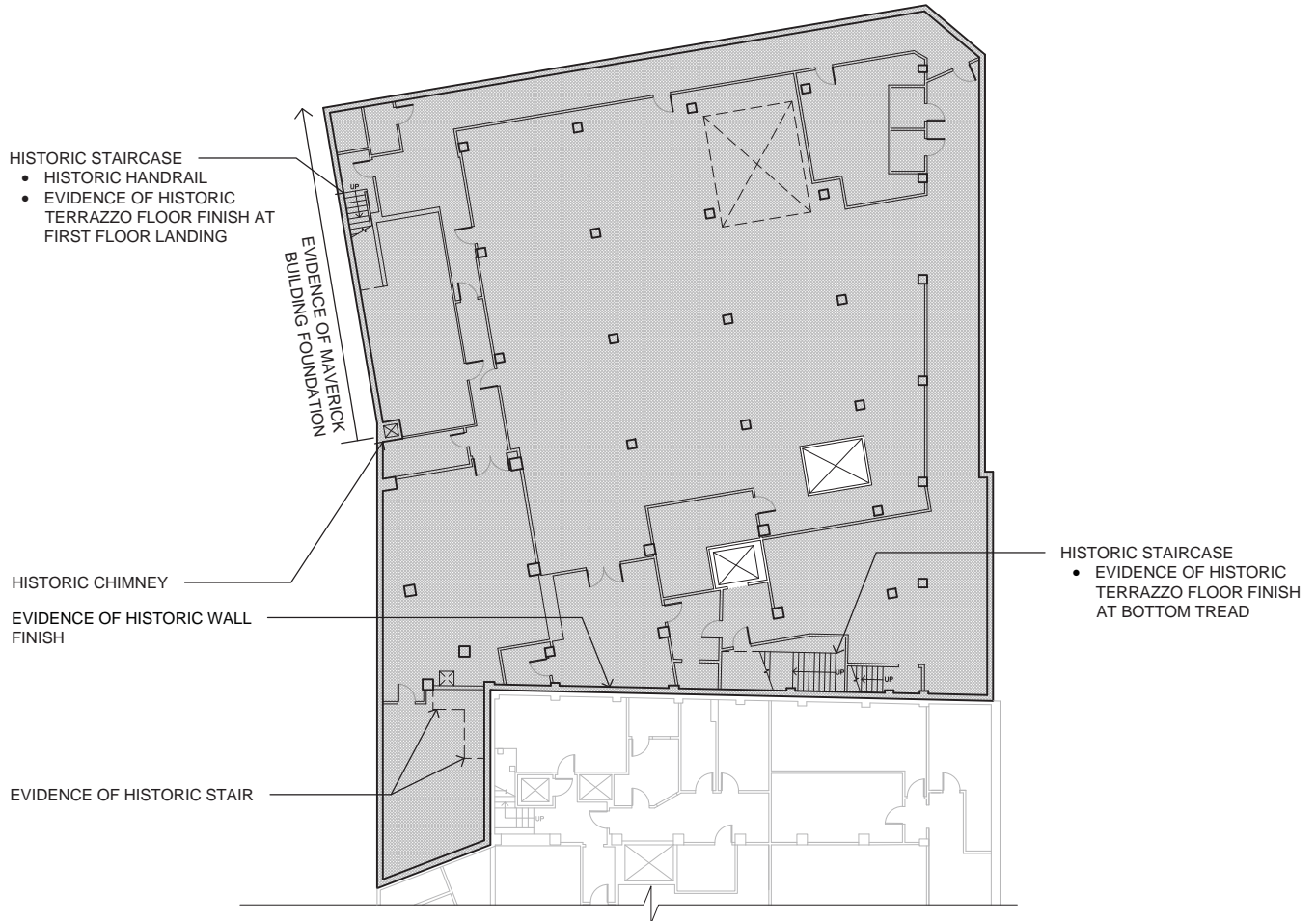
The storm drainage system for the Woolworth Building consists of five roof drains connected to two leaders located on the north side of the building. These leaders are collected in the basement level via gravity and discharged to the municipal main.

The Woolworth Building is supplied with a 2" high-pressure gas service entering the basement from East Houston Street. The service is fitted with a regulator and one meter; two valved outlets exist for future meters. The gas serves the rooftop mechanical equipment; the piping is black steel and in fair condition.



# WOOLWORTH BUILDING HISTORICAL ANALYSIS FLOOR PLANS





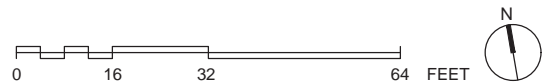


#### WOOLWORTH BUILDING NOTES

1. PARTITION WALLS ARE NON-HISTORIC UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
2. CONCRETE AND STONE FOUNDATION WALLS ARE HISTORIC.
3. CONCRETE FLOORS, CEILINGS AND SQUARE COLUMNS ARE HISTORIC.
4. DECORATIVE COFFERED CEILING, CEILING TRIM, AND COLUMN CAPITALS THROUGHOUT FIRST AND THIRD FLOORS ARE HISTORIC.
5. DECORATIVE MASONRY FACADE ELEMENTS AND TERRA COTTA ORNAMENTAL DETAILS AND COPING STONES ARE HISTORIC.
6. LOCATION OF EXTERIOR "F.W. WOOLWORTH CO." WALL SIGN IS HISTORIC.
7. EVIDENCE OF HISTORIC PRISM SKYLIGHT OPENINGS INTO BASEMENT LEVEL AT SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF NORTH AND EAST FACADES.
8. WOOD FLOORING AND TRIM THROUGHOUT THIRD FLOOR IS HISTORIC.

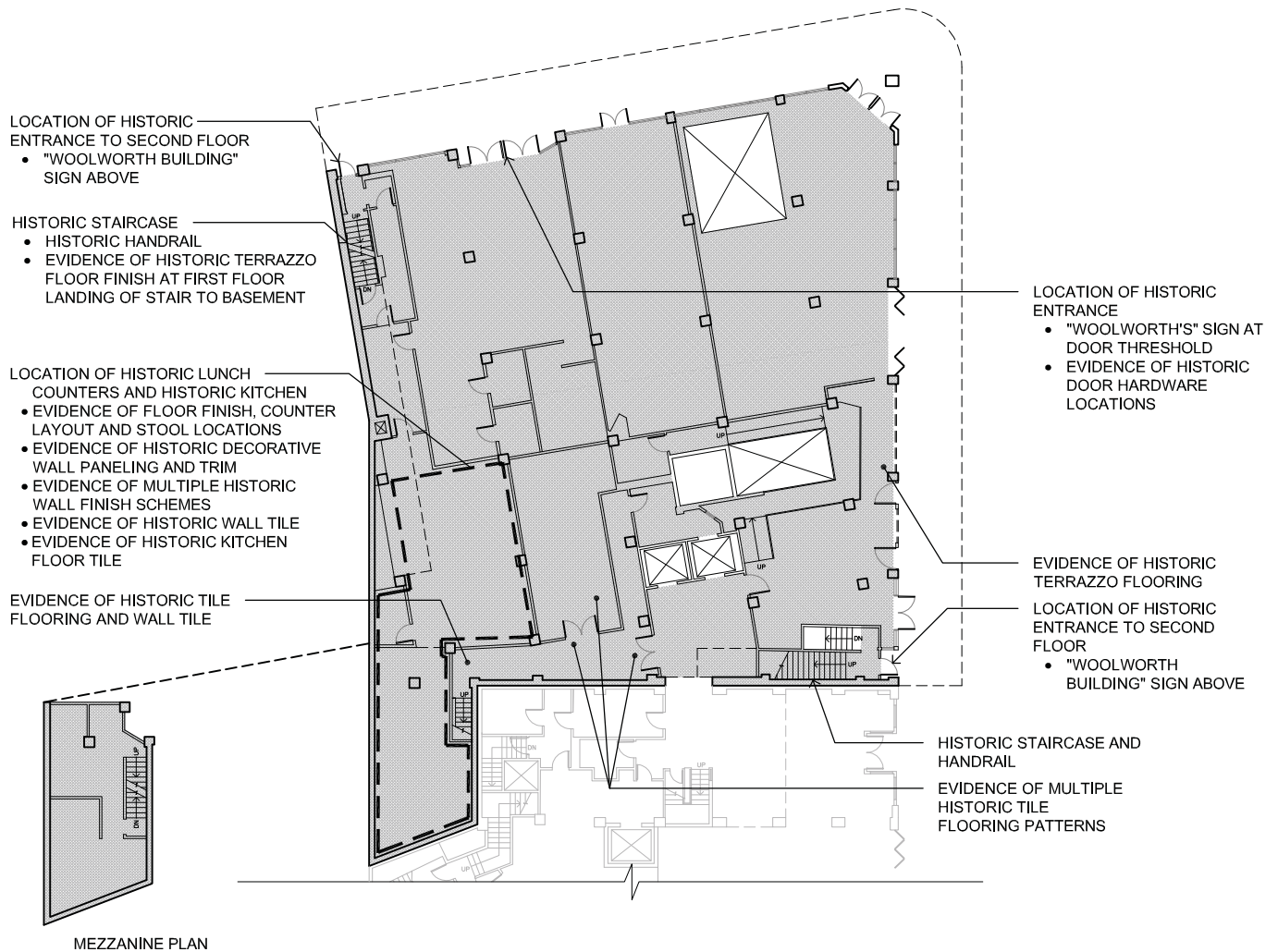
#### LEGEND

-  EXISTING PRIMARY BUILDING FABRIC IS HISTORIC
-  EXISTING PRIMARY BUILDING FABRIC AND MAJORITY OF FINISHES ARE HISTORIC



Woolworth Building Basement Floor Plan. JGWA, 2020.







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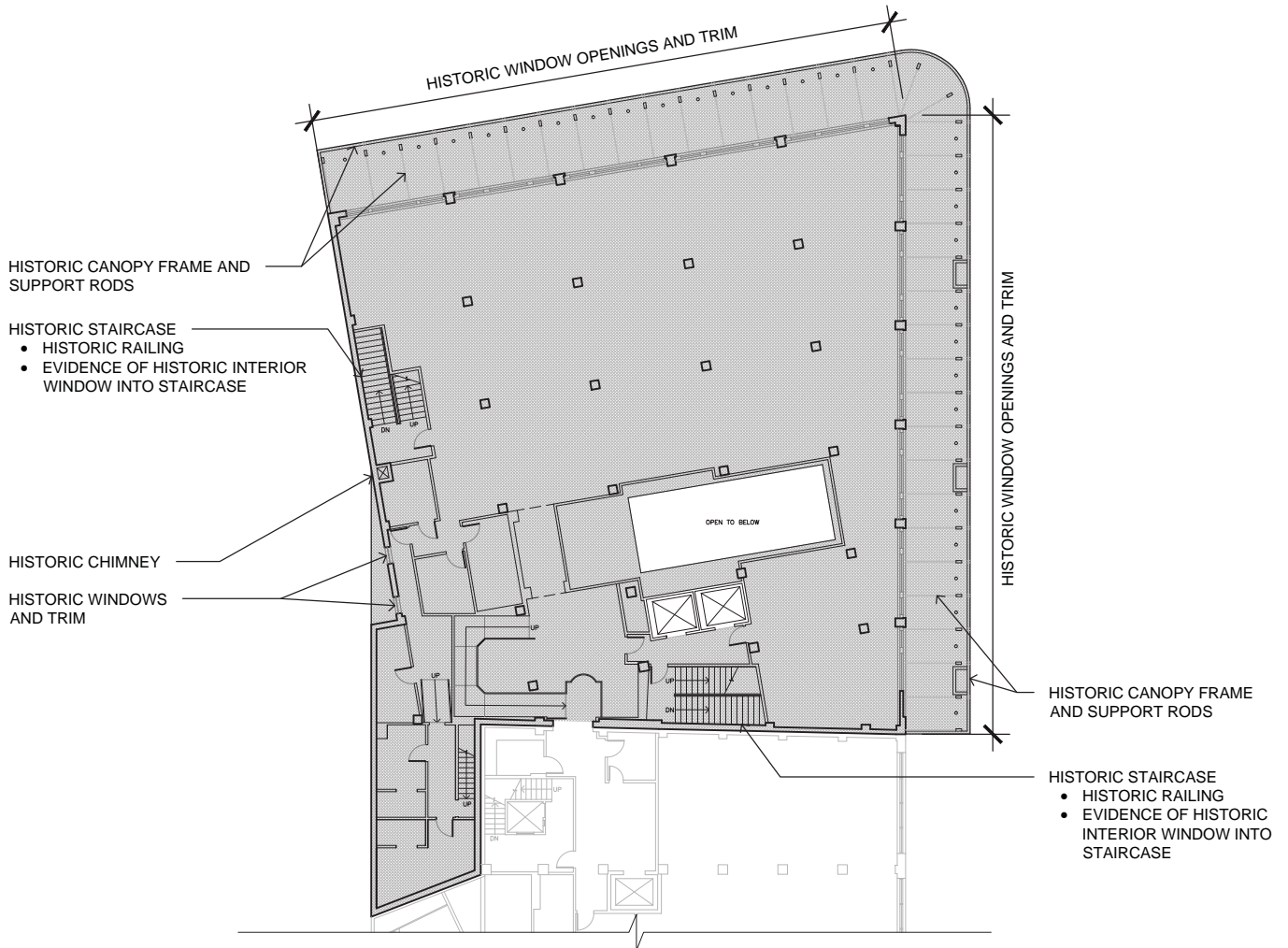
#### LEGEND

-  EXISTING PRIMARY BUILDING FABRIC IS HISTORIC
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Woolworth Building First Floor and Mezzanine Plan. JGWA, 2020.





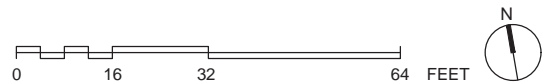


WOOLWORTH BUILDING NOTES

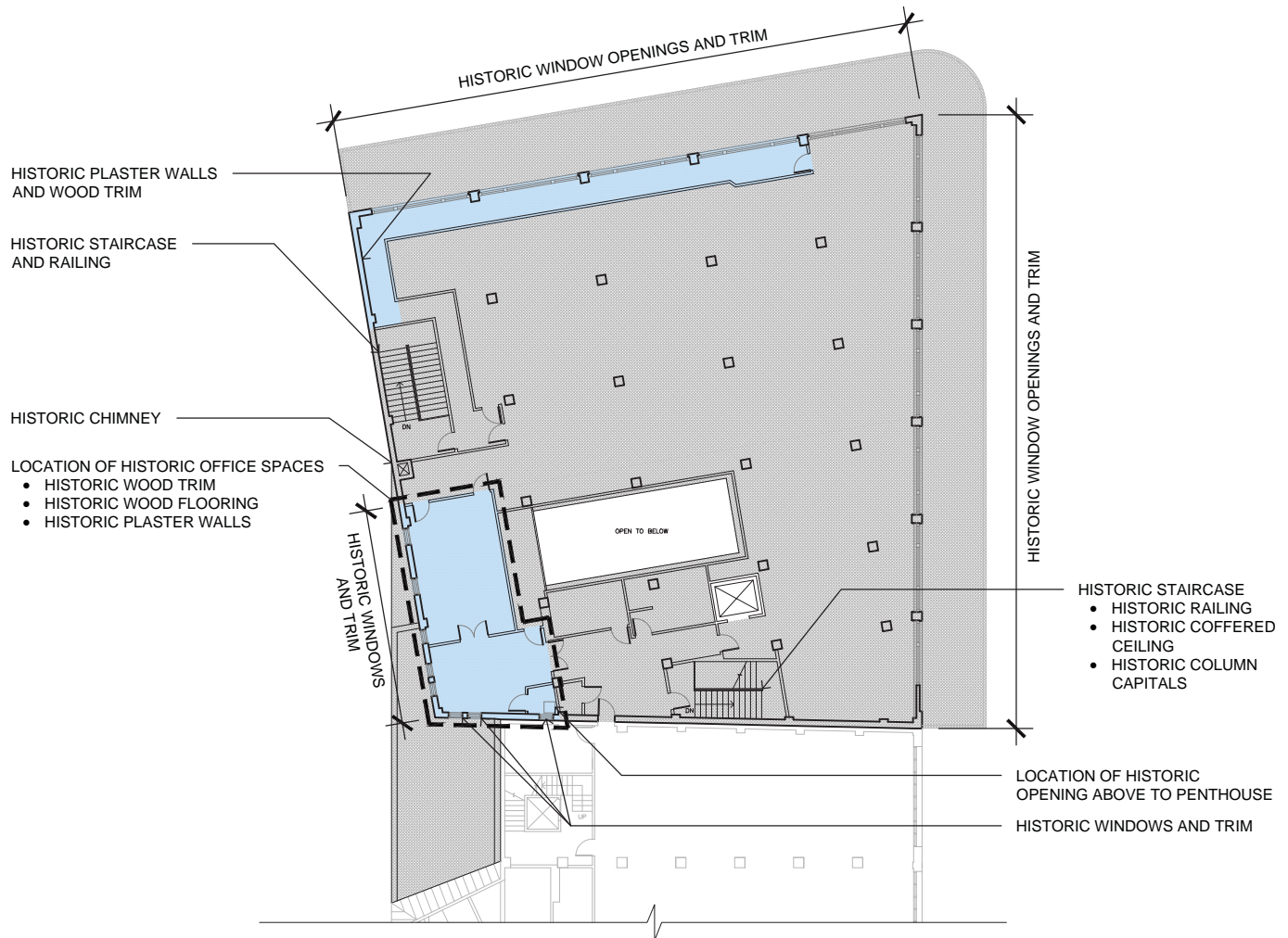
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Woolworth Building Second Floor Plan. JGWA, 2020.



#### WOOLWORTH BUILDING NOTES

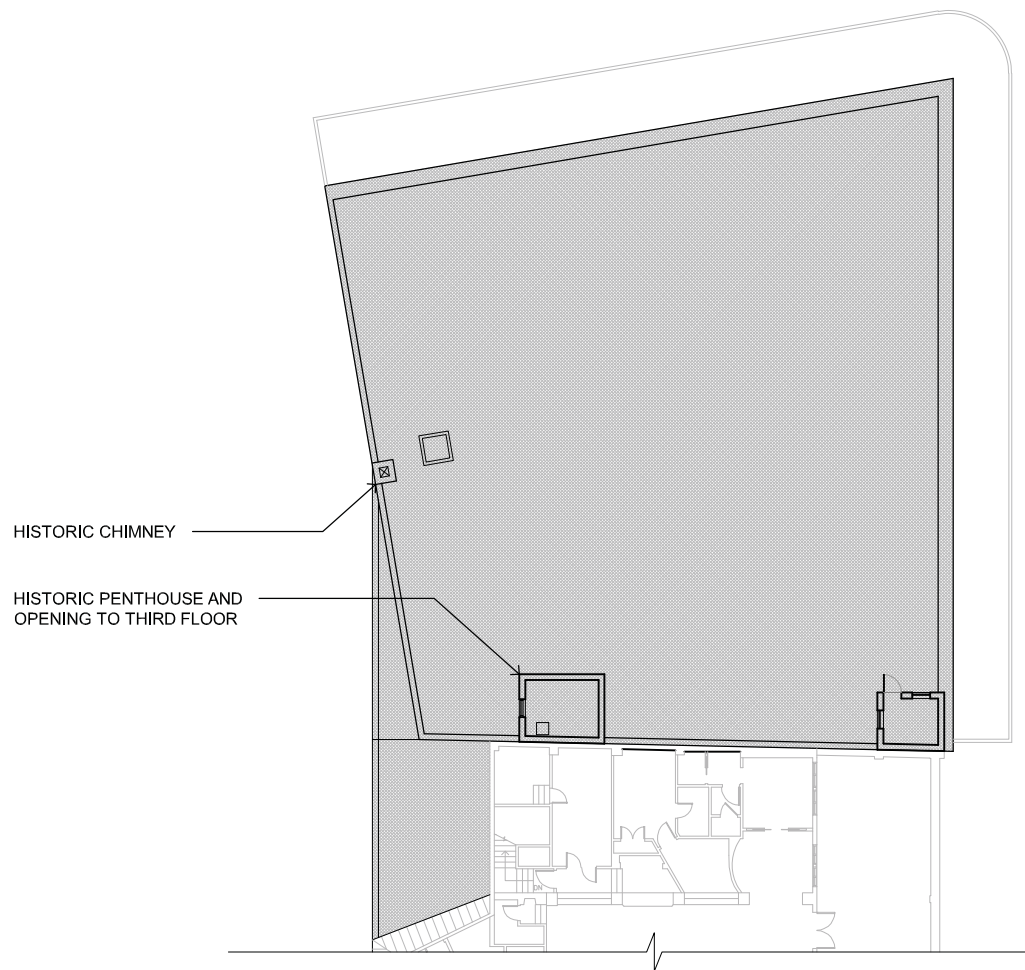
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Woolworth Building Third Floor Plan. JGWA, 2020.



#### WOOLWORTH BUILDING NOTES

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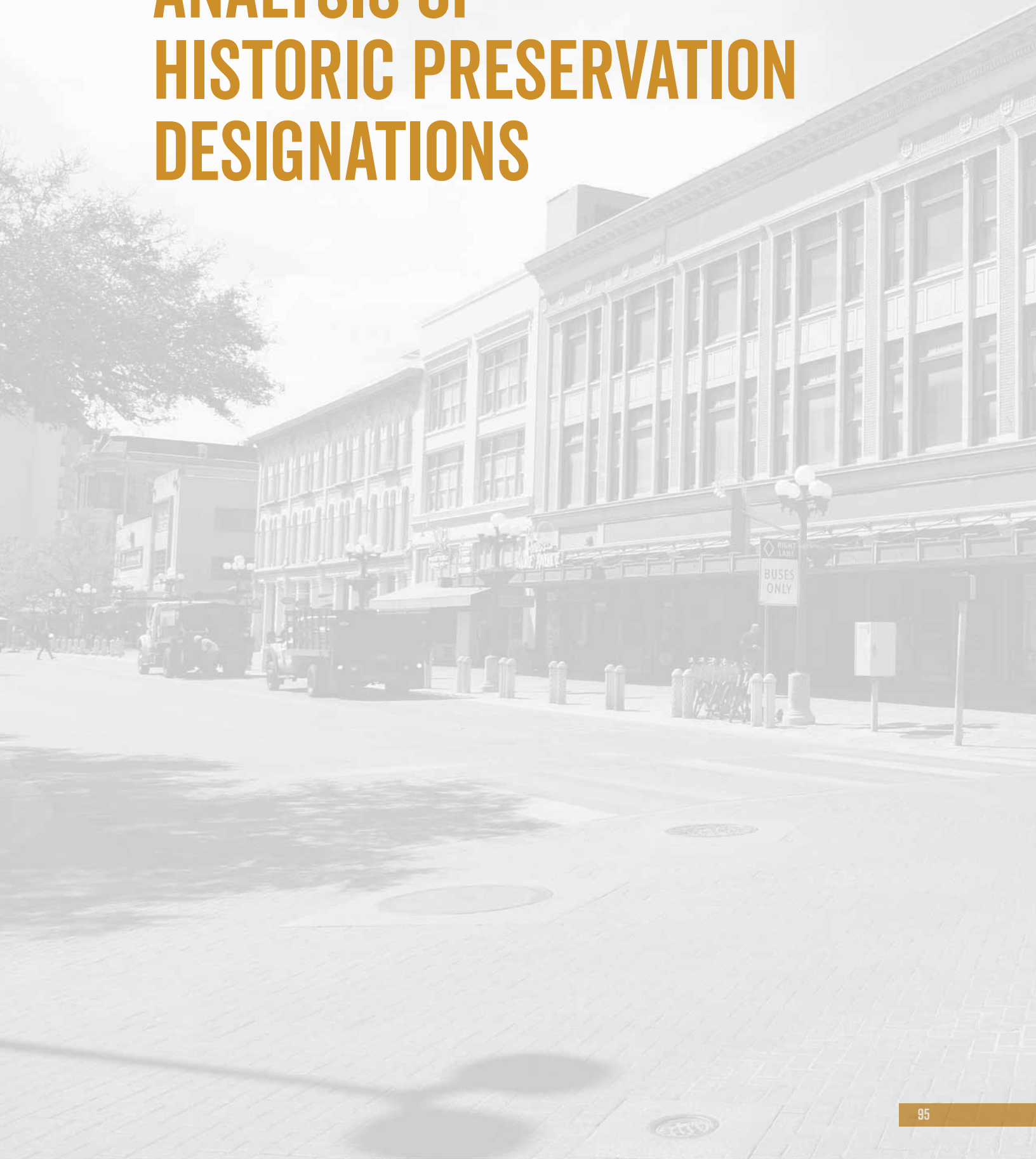
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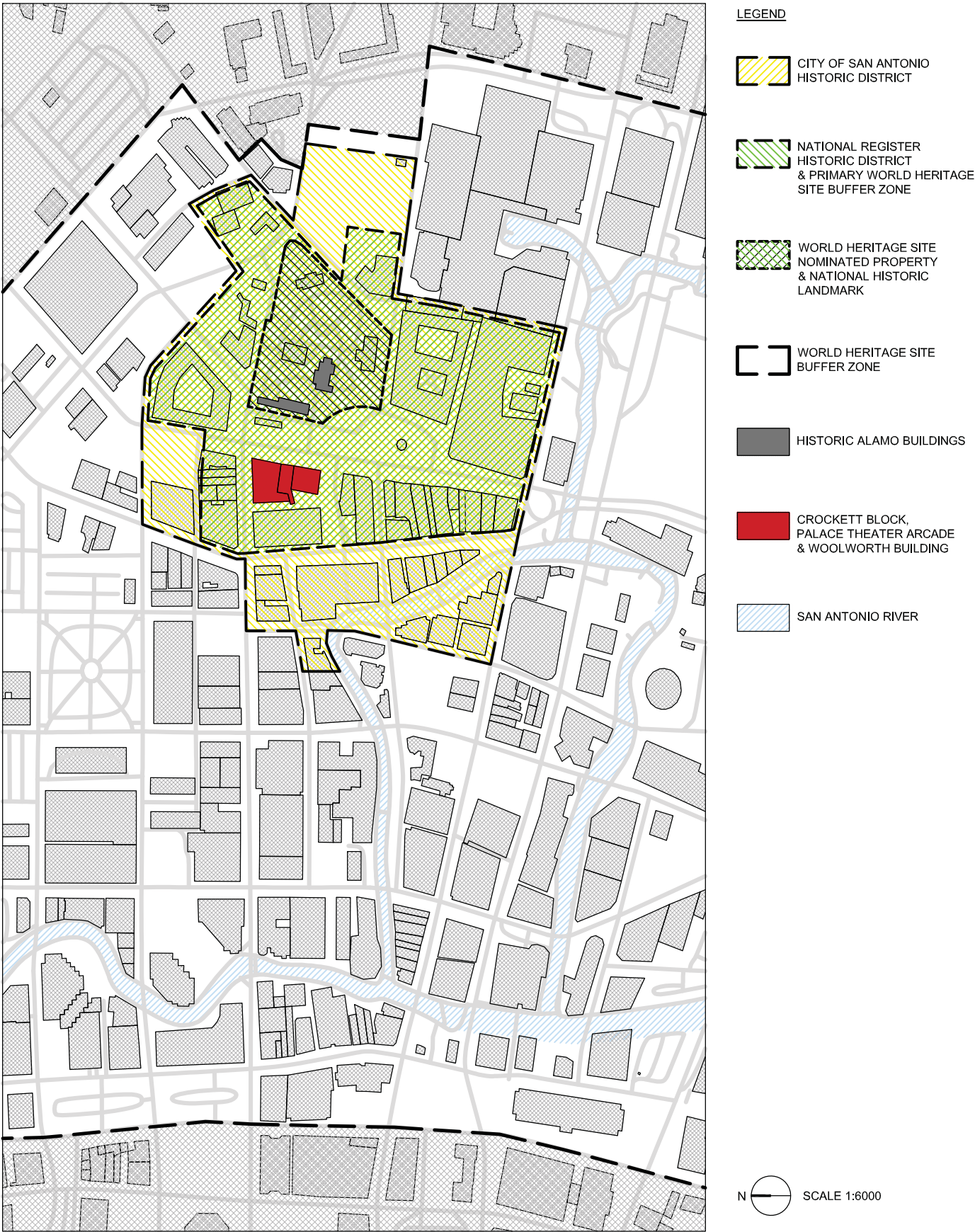


Woolworth Building Penthouse and Roof Plan. JGWA, 2020.



# ANALYSIS OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION DESIGNATIONS





Historic Preservation Designations. JGWA, 2020.



# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

**UNTIL 1935, HISTORIC PROPERTIES** of national significance were individually designated by the U.S. Congress. In the Historic Sites Act of 1935, congress “declared that it is a national policy to preserve for public use historic sites, buildings and objects of national significance for the inspiration and benefit of the people of the United States.” Prior to this, the Antiquities Act of 1906 authorized the President to designate national monuments on government land to protect “antiquities” of historic or scientific importance.

Under the Historic Sites Acts of 1935, the Secretary of the Interior was directed to inventory properties of national historical and archeological significance in a “National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings.” Just prior to the 1935 Act, the National Park Service established the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1933 to document significant examples of American architecture. This program employed architects, historians, and photographers during the height of the Great Depression.

In 1960, the National Park Service established the current National Historic Landmark program utilizing the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings. Designated properties had to meet criteria associated with important events in American history or associated with persons of national importance, or that represent some great idea or ideal of the American people, or that embody the distinguishing characteristics of an important architectural type, or that are integral parts of a significant environment but which do not warrant individual recognition, or which have yielded or are likely to yield information of major importance.

Designated properties are categorized into broad historic themes relating to important movements in American History. These studies are carried out by the staff of the National Park Service.

National Historic Landmarks are designated by the Secretary of the Interior after recommendation by the National Park System Advisory Board consisting of recognized experts in the field.

Currently, there are approximately 2600 National Historic Landmarks in the United States.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The Alamo was recorded by the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1936 and again in 1970-71.

The Alamo was designated a National Historic Landmark on December 19, 1960 when it was included in the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings as one of seventy additional sites declared eligible for Registered National Historic Landmark status. The sites are organized into six theme studies covering major periods of human history in America. The National Historic Landmark theme that the Alamo is included in is Westward Expansion and Extension of the National Boundaries to the Pacific, 1830-1898, with the sub-theme, The Texas Revolution and The War with Mexico, 1820-1853. Included in this sub-theme are nine sites:

1. The Alamo, Texas
2. San Jacinto Battlefield, Texas
3. Fort Brown, Texas
4. Palo Alto Battlefield, Texas
5. Resaca de la Palma Battlefield, Texas
6. Monterey Custom House, California
7. Larkin House, California
8. Sonoma Plaza, California
9. Palace of the Governors, New Mexico

It wasn't until 1975 that the nomination form for the Alamo was prepared by Patricia Heintzelman, Architectural Historian of the Landmark Review Project of the Historic Sites Survey of the National Park Service. The property was certified as a National Historic Landmark on March 4, 1977 by William Murtagh, Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places.

The boundary of the Alamo was listed as North-Houston Street; South-East Crockett Street; West-North Alamo Street; and East-Nacogdoches Street (later renamed North Bonham). The bound-



ary was certified on March 4, 1977 and it does not appear that the boundary has been revised.

The 1977 designation form states “Only the Alamo itself and the remaining section of original wall are part of the landmark...The library and museum are recent additions and do not contribute to the significance of the landmark...The mission church of San Antonio de Valero, later called the Alamo, was begun in 1744 and finished in 1757...The chapel in its present form appears as it did in 1849.”

## CONCLUSIONS

According to the 1977 National Historic Landmark designation, only the Alamo church and the remaining section of original west wall of the convent (now part of the long barracks) are described as part of the landmark. The library and museum are indicated as recent additions that do not contribute to the significance of the landmark.

The National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings identifies the Alamo as possessing exceptional value for the purpose of commemorating and illustrating the history of the United States. Reference is made to the establishment of the San Antonio de Valero Mission in 1718 by Franciscan Friars as well as the Battle of the Alamo in 1836 with notable defenders James Bowie and David Crockett. In the same year that the Alamo’s National Landmark designation was officially certified, Alamo Plaza was designated by the National Register of Historic Places as a national historic district and the Alamo was listed as a contributing building to the district. Because of the inclusion of National Historic Landmarks in the National Register of Historic Places, which was established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, there is an interconnected relationship between the Alamo and the Alamo Plaza Historic District including protective measures for both properties. In particular, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires review of federal projects and programs that may adversely affect historic properties, including National Landmarks and properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

**THE ALAMO PLAZA NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT** “is the commercial area that grew up around Texas’ most famous shrine, The Alamo.” The Historic District contains the Alamo church, a public plaza once part of the mission courtyard, and the surrounding commercial structures built mainly in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Alamo Plaza National Register Historic District includes the Crockett Block (317-323 Alamo Plaza), the Palace Theater Arcade (327 Alamo Plaza), and the Woolworth’s Department Store (518 East Houston) as buildings that contribute to the district.

The nomination form was prepared by staff members of the Texas Historical Commission and after review by the Commission members was submitted to the National Park Service on December 13, 1976. It was entered into the National Register of Historic Places by the National Park Service on July 13, 1977, after a review by the National Park Service’s National Register Staff.

A Section 106 mitigation procedure was undertaken in 1980-81 to mitigate the adverse effects of the Alamo Plaza-Paseo Del Rio Linkage Project on the Alamo Plaza Historic District. The project utilized a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Action Grant.

The Memorandum of Agreement was signed by the Advisory Council of Historic Preservation, the City of San Antonio, and the Texas State Historic Preservation Officer. Among the provisions of the Memorandum Agreement was that the project area not on the National Register was to be surveyed “to identify districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects” that may meet the criteria for listing in the National Register to expand the existing Alamo Plaza Historic District.

In 1983, the Crockett Block was the subject of a federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Certified Rehabilitation project. At that time a Part I appli-

cation was prepared that affirmed that the property was a contributing element of the Alamo Plaza Historic District. In May 2019, the Texas Historical Commission designated the Woolworth Building as a State Antiquities Landmark, reaffirming the 1977 National Register designation that the building meets Criteria A & C.

## SIGNIFICANCE

**“The Alamo Plaza is located in the center of downtown San Antonio and has always been an important focal point of the city. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century leading business firms began establishing stores in the area and the majority of buildings within the historic district date from this period.” All of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial buildings “conform in scale and use to the district and maintain the streetscape. The only non-conforming intrusion located within the boundaries is a filling station of the northeast corner of the district adjacent to the Turn Verein building.”**

**The Alamo Plaza National Register Historic District’s period of significance extends from the 18th century to the present-day. Its areas of significance include architecture, commerce, community planning, military, religion, and transportation.**



National Register map of Alamo Plaza Historic District.



# **BUILDINGS ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER MAP OF THE ALAMO PLAZA HISTORIC DISTRICT**

- 1. Dullnig Building, 101-103 North Alamo.**
- 2. Scholz Palm Garden, 105-109 North Alamo**
- 3. Old Joske's Building, 111-115 North Alamo**
- 4. Dreiss, Thompson and Company Building, 117 North Alamo**
- 5. Vance Building, 207-209 Alamo Plaza**
- 6. 211-215 North Alamo**
- 7. Reuter Building, 217-219 North Alamo**
- 8. Old Chamber of Commerce Building, southeast corner Broadway and Crockett**
- 9. H.L. Green's Department Store, 301-305 Alamo Plaza**
- 10. 307 Alamo Plaza**
- 11. 309-315 Alamo Plaza**
- 12. Crockett Block, 317-323 Alamo Plaza**
- 13. Palace Theater Arcade, 327 Alamo Plaza**
- 14. Woolworth Building, 518 East Houston**
- 15. Moore Building, northeast corner of Houston and Broadway**
- 16. Gibbs Building, 521 East Houston**
- 17. Post Office and Federal Building, 615 East Houston**
- 18. Old Medical Arts Building (Landmark Building), 705 East Houston**
- 19. San Antonio Turn Verein**
- 20. Cenotaph, north end of the Plaza**
- 21. Bandstand, south end of the Plaza**
- 22. The Alamo**
- 23. Lady Bird Johnson Fountain**
- 24. Crockett Hotel, 201 East Crockett**
- 25. Menger Hotel, 204 Alamo Plaza**
- 26. Joske's Department Store, Commerce at Alamo**
- 27. St. Joseph's Church and Rectory, 623 East Commerce**

## WOOLWORTH BUILDINGS INCLUDED IN NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

An initial review indicates that at least ten Woolworth buildings that functioned as a department store are listed in the National Register, including the one in San Antonio. Six of these are individually listed and the remaining four are included as part of a district. The following is a summary of these buildings:

### WOOLWORTH BUILDINGS LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

LOCATION	YEAR COMPLETED	LISTING	AREA OF SIGNIFICANCE*	YEAR OF LISTING
Nashville, TN	1913	District	Architecture/Commerce	1983
San Antonio, TX	1921	District	Architecture/Commerce	1977
Fort Worth, TX	1926	Individual	Architecture/Commerce	1994
Kansas City, MO	1927	Individual	Commerce	2005
Greensboro, NC	1929	District	Architecture/Commerce**	1976
Wilmington, DE	1940	Individual	Architecture	1987
Lexington, KY	1948	Individual	Commerce	2002
Renton, WA	1954	Individual	Architecture/Commerce	2015
Jacksonville, FL	1955	District	Architecture	1987
Clarksdale, MS	1959	Individual	Architecture/Commerce/Social History	2009

\*For historic districts, this includes the area of significance only as it pertains to the Woolworth Building listed as part of the district.

\*\* This designation form for the historic district mentions the Feb. 1960 sit-in. The building is now the International Civil Rights Center and Museum. The original lunch counter is now in the Smithsonian, and a replica exists within the museum.

San Antonio's Woolworth Building is one of the oldest currently listed on the National Register. In reviewing the other Woolworth buildings listed in the National Register, it compares well with the others that were individually designated because of their architectural significance. They have all qualified under Criteria A (for commerce) and/or Criteria C (for architecture).

One notable exception is Clarksdale, Mississippi, whose Woolworth Building is also considered significant for social history, namely civil rights. The Greensboro Woolworth Building's nomination also contains a passing reference to its civil rights

importance. This is likely due to the year it was prepared (1982), which would have placed its civil rights events later than the fifty-year threshold required by the National Register for historic significance. The same may be true for the 1977 nomination of a building as a contributing structure within the Alamo Plaza National Register Historic District.

A closer review has been given to Woolworth Buildings in three locations: Fort Worth, TX, Clarksdale, MS, and Greensboro, NC.



## FORT WORTH, TEXAS

Constructed in 1926, Fort Worth's Woolworth Building was individually listed in the National Register in 1994, and it is the most similar to San Antonio's in terms of age, form, and commercial history. Fort Worth's building is located in the historic commercial center of downtown. Completed five years after San Antonio's, it also reflects the period of development and expansion of the F.W. Woolworth Company, and it would remain open through the twentieth century. It was designed by Wiley G. Clarkson, a locally prominent architect in Fort Worth. This continues Woolworth's philosophy of employing local architects to design buildings suited to their area, one that, according to their nomination, resulted in many Woolworth buildings being "significant and unique buildings in their community, including this one in Fort Worth."

While the Fort Worth and San Antonio buildings have three stories and a basement level, the Fort Worth building's structure was initially designed to accommodate a ten-story building. Both buildings exemplify the Chicago Style of architecture with Art Deco and classical detailing, including a *piano nobile*, decorative medallions at the upper cornice,

and a three-window fenestration pattern organized by the internal column spacing.

Inside, both buildings exhibited a standard open grid layout with two main stairways in opposite corners. The main stairs of the Fort Worth building also have Art Deco details in their stair treads that match those of the San Antonio building. Fort Worth's building underwent interior alterations as part of a larger modernization program begun by the company in the mid-twentieth century. According to their 1994 nomination form, the remaining building fabric, including façade, materials, and embellishments, has not been "damaged or altered in any irreversible way."





## CLARKSDALE, MISSISSIPPI

One of the more recent designations, the Woolworth Building in Clarksdale was individually listed in the National Register in 2009. It was built in 1955 to succeed an earlier Woolworth building down the block in Clarksdale's Yazoo shopping district, and was considered to be one of the most modern Woolworth stores. Unlike the San Antonio Woolworth Building, Clarksdale's is designed in the International Style, and represented an era of mid-twentieth century modernization in Woolworth's history.

In addition to architecture and commerce, the Clarksdale Woolworth Building is considered significant for the role the building played in the civil rights movement "as an example of resistance to the integration of public accommodations." While other demonstrations had occurred at the Clarksdale Woolworth Building in 1960, Woolworth's chose to close and completely remove their signature lunch counter in 1963 rather than allow a sit-in demonstration.

Though the removal of the lunch counter occurred eight years after the building's construction and less than 50 years before the building's inclusion in the

National Register, this event was considered locally and exceptionally significant to the civil rights movement. Reference is made to the Woolworth Building in Greensboro and the National Historic Landmark theme study conducted by the National Park Service in 2004 to evaluate civil rights-related sites (see "Greensboro, North Carolina" in the following section for more information). While the lunch counters no longer exist, their nomination states that "the fact that the lunch counter is no longer present does not adversely affect the significance of the place since the loss of the lunch counter to all citizens is the story the building tells."



## GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Like San Antonio, Greensboro's Woolworth Building was included in the National Register as part of the Downtown Greensboro Historic District. The district was first listed in 1982 and an amendment was approved in 2004 to extend the district's period of significance to account for its continued commercial development. The building is considered to meet the standards of Criteria A (for commerce) and C (for architecture), representing Greensboro's commercial architecture and urbanization.

The Woolworth Building is categorized as a "pivotal" building as opposed to contributing or noncontributing (National Register terminology has since been updated). It is one of several buildings in Greensboro designed by Charles Hartman, considered an influential architect of the mid-twentieth century. In addition to its classical and Art Deco style ornamentation, the building is referenced in the context of Greensboro's growing downtown development where "elaborate architectural detailing was employed to transfer the energy and vitality of the city into its built environment."

The narrative ends with a brief description of the sit-in demonstration and its national impact, indicating major southern cities that would later take part. The sit-ins and the Woolworth Building are notably mentioned in the assessment of the district relative to Criterion A, considering them to be especially significant to the urbanization of the city.

It is worth noting that Greensboro's Woolworth Building was also a subject of the 2004 National Park Service National Historic Landmark Theme Study, *Civil Rights in America: Racial Desegregation of Public Accommodations*. The study is part of a larger framework under development by the National Park Service to evaluate buildings associated with civil rights. The Greensboro Woolworth building is included in their final Study List, which indicates properties recommended by the National Park Service for further evaluation as they may be considered eligible for a National Landmark nomination.

# CITY OF SAN ANTONIO OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

**THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO** historic preservation program provides for the City Council to designate by zoning ordinance areas as historic districts and places, buildings, objects, sites, structures or clusters of properties as historic landmarks.

Persons owning property within the proposed district, the City Historic Preservation Officer, the Historic and Design Review Commission, the Zoning Commission or the City Council may initiate the designation process. The designation application is first reviewed by the City Historic Preservation Officer. The application is then referred to the Historic and Design Review Commission for subsequent review and approval. Upon recommendation by the Historic Design and Review Commission, the application is forwarded to the Zoning Commission and the City Council for processing.

In order to be eligible for designation, the districts and landmarks are evaluated in accordance with the following criteria;

1. Its value as a visible or archaeological reminder of the cultural heritage of the community, or a national event;
2. Its location as a site of a significant local, county, state, or national event;
3. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community, county, state, or nation;
4. Its identification as the work of a master builder, designer, architect, or landscape architect whose individual work has influenced the development of the community, county, state, or nation;
5. Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, type, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials;
6. Its historical, architectural or cultural character as a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian structure, including, but not limited to, bridges, acequias, gas stations, transportation shelters, or other commercial structures;
7. Its unique location or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature;
8. Its historical, architectural, or cultural integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship;
9. Its character as a geographically definable area possessing a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of historically, architecturally or culturally significant sites, buildings, objects or structures united by past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development;
10. Its character as an established and geographically definable neighborhood, united by culture, architectural style or physical plan and development;
11. It is distinctive in character, interest or value; strongly exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, ethnic or historical heritage of San Antonio, Texas or the United States;
12. It is an important example of a particular architectural style or specimen;
13. It bears an important and significant relationship to other distinctive structures, sites, or areas, either as an important collection of properties or architectural style or craftsmanship with few intrusions, or by contributing to the overall character of the area according to the plan based on architectural, historic or cultural motif;
14. It possesses significant archaeological value that has produced or is likely to produce data affecting theories of historic or prehistoric interest;
15. It represents a resource, whether natural or man-made, which greatly contributes to the character or image of a defined neighborhood or community area; or
16. It is designated as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark or State Archeological Landmark, or



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is included on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1982, the San Antonio City Council appointed the Historic Sites and Structures Task Force who conducted an inventory of cultural resources in the Central City and made landmark designation recommendations to Council for its approval. The Task Force was staffed by the City Historic Preservation Officer. A Task Force vote would rate each resource as Exceptional, Significant or Not Significant. Properties already listed on the National Register individually or as contributing buildings in an historic district were assumed to be valuable resources and were automatically placed on “the City’s list of valuable cultural resources.”

The city of San Antonio defines Exceptional and Significant historic landmarks as the following:

#### EXCEPTIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

1. Those buildings, objects, sites, site improvements, appurtenances or structures of the highest and most unique historical, cultural, architectural or archaeological importance and whose demolition or destruction would constitute an irreplaceable loss to the quality and character of San Antonio; and
2. Those inventoried interior spaces designed or intended to be occupied as part of the structure or which are accessible to the public.

#### SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC LANDMARK

1. Those buildings, objects, sites or structures of historical, cultural, architectural or archaeological importance whose demolition or destruction would constitute a serious loss to the quality and character of San Antonio; and
2. Inventoried interior spaces designed or intended to be occupied as part of the structure or which are accessible to the public.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The Alamo Plaza Local Historic District was designated by the City of San Antonio in 1978.

In 1982, the San Antonio ordinance that established the Alamo Plaza Local Historic District was certified by the Southwest Region of the National Park Service, as authorized by the Tax Reform Act of 1976 and amended in the Economic Recovery Tax

Act of 1981. This enabled property owners of depreciable buildings within the Alamo Plaza district to apply for Federal tax incentives. Owners could qualify by submitting Parts I and II of an Historic Preservation Certification Application to the State Historic Preservation Officer.

The Southwest Region of the National Park Service notes in their 1982 certification letter that rehabilitation had already begun on many buildings following the beautification of the San Antonio River prior to World War II and restoration has continued since with several properties adapted for reuse in the 1960s in conjunction with redevelopment for Hemisfair 1968. Although a few properties have been altered, they note that most properties retain significant details which depict the history of the city’s commercial development in the Alamo Plaza District.

A more recent analysis of the Crockett Block, Palace Theater Arcade, and Woolworth Building was performed by the City of San Antonio Office of Historic Preservation and outlined in September of 2018 with a current assessment of significance for each building. Their assessment has determined that the buildings meet the following criteria of significance:

#### CROCKETT BLOCK

- local significance for Maverick family association
- state significance for architect/architecture

#### PALACE THEATER ARCADE

- local significance for Louis Santikos association
- local significance for architect/architecture

#### WOOLWORTH BUILDING

- local significance for architect/architecture
- state significance for commerce
- national significance for civil rights movement

## CONCLUSIONS

The Crockett Block, Palace Theater Arcade, and Woolworth Building are designated individually as local landmarks and as contributing buildings of the Alamo Plaza Local Historic District by the City of San Antonio. The city criteria for designation are congruent with those of the National Register.

# WORLD HERITAGE SITE

**THE WORLD HERITAGE SITE PROGRAM** was established by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The member states adopted the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural History consisting of “sites of universal value” which are “extraordinary examples of our cultural and national heritage”. New sites are inscribed by the World Heritage Committee of international experts.

The San Antonio Missions site was approved for designation by UNESCO on March 12, 2015. It is a serial nomination of five frontier mission complexes situated along a 12-kilometer stretch of the

San Antonio River Basin as well as a geographically detached ranch founded by Franciscan missionaries in the 18th century. The missions include Valero/ the Alamo (or Mission San Antonio de Valero as referred to in the Alamo National Historic Landmark designation), Concepcion, San Jose, San Juan, and Espada. All of the properties are managed by the National Park Service, with the exception of the Alamo, which is managed by the Alamo Trust. The four mission churches are owned and operated by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Antonio. The State of Texas owns the property of Mission Valero/The Alamo.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The World Heritage Site designation states that the property is of Outstanding Universal Value:

**This ensemble is the most complete and most intact example of the Spanish Crown’s efforts to colonize, evangelize, and defend the northern frontier of New Spain during the period when Spain controlled the largest empire in the world. These missions were the center of efforts to evangelize the area’s indigenous population into converts loyal to the Catholic Church; they also include all the components required to establish self-sustaining, socio-economic units comprised of Spanish-speaking subjects loyal to the Crown. The**

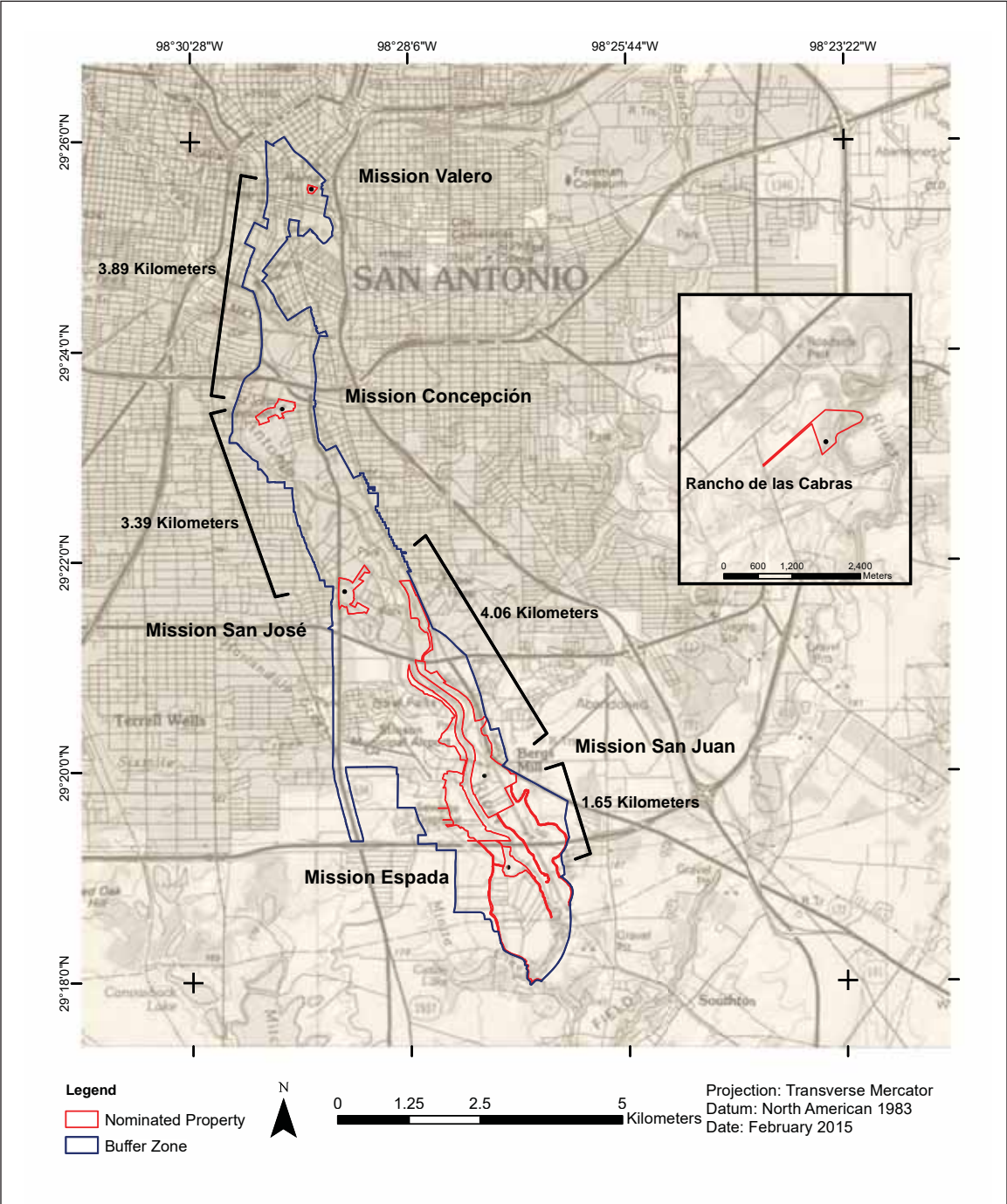
**missions’ more than fifty standing structures, archeological resources, and landscape features include labores, a rancho, residences, a grist mill, granaries, workshops, wells, lime kilns, churches, conventos, and perimeter walls for protection. The ensemble of missions includes extensive irrigation systems of acequias (one operating continuously for more than 265 years), dams, and an aqueduct that enabled agricultural independence. These water distribution systems are a clear demonstration of the exceptionally inventive interchange that occurred between indigenous peoples, missionaries, and colonizers that contributed to a fundamental and permanent change in the cultures and values of all involved, but most dramatically in those of the Coahuiltecans and other indigenous hunter-gatherers who, in a matter of one generation, became successful settled agriculturalists. The enclosed layout of each mission complex and their proximity to each other, the intensive communal activities such as construction and farming undertaken there, the widespread sharing of knowledge and skills among their inhabitants, and the early adoption of a common language and religion resulted in a people and culture with an identity neither wholly indigenous nor wholly Spanish that has proven exceptionally persistent and pervasive.**

The property meets the following UNESCO criteria for designation:

**Criterion (ii): The substantial remains of the extensive water distribution systems construction to irrigate the labores at the San Antonio Mission complexes eminently illustrate an exceptionally important interchange between indigenous peoples, missionaries, and colonizers that contributed to a fundamental and permanent change in the cultures and values of all involved, but most dramatically in those of the Coahuiltecans and other indigenous hunter-gatherers who, in a matter of one generation, became successful settled agriculturalists.**

**Criterion (iii): The rapid interweaving of diverse peoples and cultures from two continents was advanced by the physical layouts of the five San Antonio Missions, which are inward-focused and located in close proximity to**





World Heritage Site map.

each other; the intensive communal activities such as construction and farming undertaken there; the widespread sharing of knowledge and skills among their inhabitants; and the early adoption of a common language and religion; all of which resulted in an identity neither wholly indigenous nor wholly Spanish that has proven exceptionally persistent and pervasive.

**Criterion (iv):** These five closely located eighteenth-century mission complexes, whose more than fifty standing structures, archaeological resources, and landscape features are unmatched in number and diversity among surviving Spanish colonial missions, is the most complete extant example of the Spanish Crown's global effort to colonize, evangelize, and defend its colonial empire, the largest in the world at that time. An outstanding illustration of a significant stage in human history, the San Antonio Missions fully and evocatively illustrate Spain's goal of creating secular, self-supporting communities of Spanish subjects loyal to the Crown and to the Roman Catholic Church.

The statement of significance does not contain any mention of the 1836 battle at the Alamo.

## CONCLUSIONS

The San Antonio Missions site has been clearly designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO because of its significance as “the most complete and most intact example of the Spanish Crown's efforts to colonize, evangelize, and defend the northern frontier of New Spain during the period when Spain controlled the largest empire in the world.” Collectively the six components of the World Heritage Site exhibit outstanding integrity and authenticity which are protected by buffer zones adjacent to the designated site. These buffer zones include the Alamo Plaza National Register Historic District, which surrounds and includes the Mission San Antonio de Valero. Therefore, the contributing historic buildings included in the Historic District have additional importance because of the protection they afford the Alamo property from modern development.

The World Heritage Site designation does not mention the 1836 battle at the Alamo.

# TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION STATE ANTIQUITIES LANDMARKS

**THE STATE ANTIQUITIES LANDMARKS** program (SAL) was established in 1969 with the enactment of the Antiquities Code of Texas. Archaeological sites and historic buildings on public (non-Federal) lands that are designated State Antiquities Landmarks are protected by the Texas Historical Commission, which must be consulted on any proposed changes including destruction.

In order for a building to be designated a State Antiquities Landmark, the following conditions must be met:

1. The property meets at least one of four criteria. These criteria are congruent with the criteria used by the National Register of Historic Places.
2. The property retains integrity at the time of the nomination, as determined by the executive director of the commission.
3. The property must be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, either individually, or as a contributing property within a historic district.

Initially, designations were made by the Texas Antiquities Committee, but in 1997 legislation was passed to make the Texas Historical Commission the custodian of the Antiquities Code.

## DESIGNATION

Based on information provided by the San Antonio Conservation Society, The Texas Historical Commission designated the Woolworth Building a Texas State Antiquities Landmark in May 2019. While only one of the four criteria must be met for the state's designation, the Woolworth Building State Antiquities Landmark nomination applies both Criteria A and C:

**CRITERION A:** The property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

**CRITERION C:** The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represents the work of a master, possess high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

The following are excerpts from the Supplemental Documentation of the Woolworth Building State Antiquities Landmarks Nomination Form prepared by the San Antonio Conservation Society in 2018. It should be noted that the nomination form was written prior to the research undertaken in 2019 by historian Dr. Carey Latimore and documented in his subsequent report *Civil Rights in San Antonio: WWII to Mid-1960s*.

**CRITERION A: ASSOCIATED WITH EVENTS THAT HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE BROAD PATTERNS OF OUR HISTORY.**

Woolworth's, a popular national discount store, first came to San Antonio in 1912 and opened a store on E. Houston Street. The company soon prospered enough to erect a new three-story building "on San Antonio's most prominent corner." In June of 1921, the F. W. Woolworth Company opened its 5, 10, and 15 cent store at the intersection of E. Houston and Alamo Streets on Alamo Plaza, where the Maverick Bank Building once stood.

The \$225,000 building had been designed by Adams and Adams. This local architectural firm designed other noteworthy structures in Texas, including San Antonio's Jefferson High School, the Hall of State for the Texas Centennial in Dallas, and the Alamo Cenotaph, featuring Pompeo Coppini's sculptures. The newspaper ad announcing Woolworth's formal opening boasted that, "We have added a number of features to our service – but the one which you will appreciate most is our soda fountain and lunch counter." This lunch counter, touted by the local manager as the largest in the city, later catapulted San Antonio into civil right history.



On March 16, 1960, Woolworth's became one of seven local stores that peacefully desegregated their lunch counters. No sit-in demonstrations were held, thanks to the cooperation of church leaders, store managers, and members of the NAACP, who orchestrated the policy change behind the scenes. The San Antonio Register, a local African-American newspaper, noted that, although Oklahoma City beat San Antonio for the distinction of becoming "the first southern, or southwestern, city to desegregate eating facilities....San Antonio [was] the first, however, to act without demonstrations, by resolving the issue in interracial conference."

The Woolworth Building became part of the Alamo Plaza National Register Historic District in 1977. Inclusion in the city's local landmark district followed in 1978. Woolworth's lunch counter continued to operate until 1986 and the store was considered one of the oldest surviving in the Woolworth chain before it closed in 1997. Express-News Senior Critic Mike Greenberg opined in July of 1997 that, "If Woolworth's decides to sell the building, city officials and downtown interests say it has strong potential for beefed-up retail use or as a visitor center and museum... With 45,000 square feet of space on four levels, including a basement..."

#### CRITERION C: DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF TYPE, PERIOD, AND METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION

Designed by the prolific local firm Adams and Adams for the Woolworth's department store, the 1921 structure embodied the early 20th-century Commercial Style prevalent throughout cities across America and pioneered in Chicago. Exemplifying the style often referred to as the Chicago School, this concrete frame and brick building consists of three levels and eleven prominent window bays containing stacked "Chicago windows" delineated by subtly ornamented neoclassical stone transoms and string courses that contrast the surrounding brick. A metal awning stretches the full façade of the Woolworth's building, providing shade to passersby while visually softening its corner on Alamo and Houston. The building is capped by a slightly protruding, dentilated cornice. The material, program, fenestration pattern as well as the level and method of ornamentation make the Woolworth Building a prime example of the Commercial Style/Chicago School. The building's location on the most prominent corner and plaza in the city stands as a reminder of the role commercial enterprises can service in forwarding the cause of civil rights.

While the building's interior has been heavily altered, the exterior of the Woolworth Building maintains a high

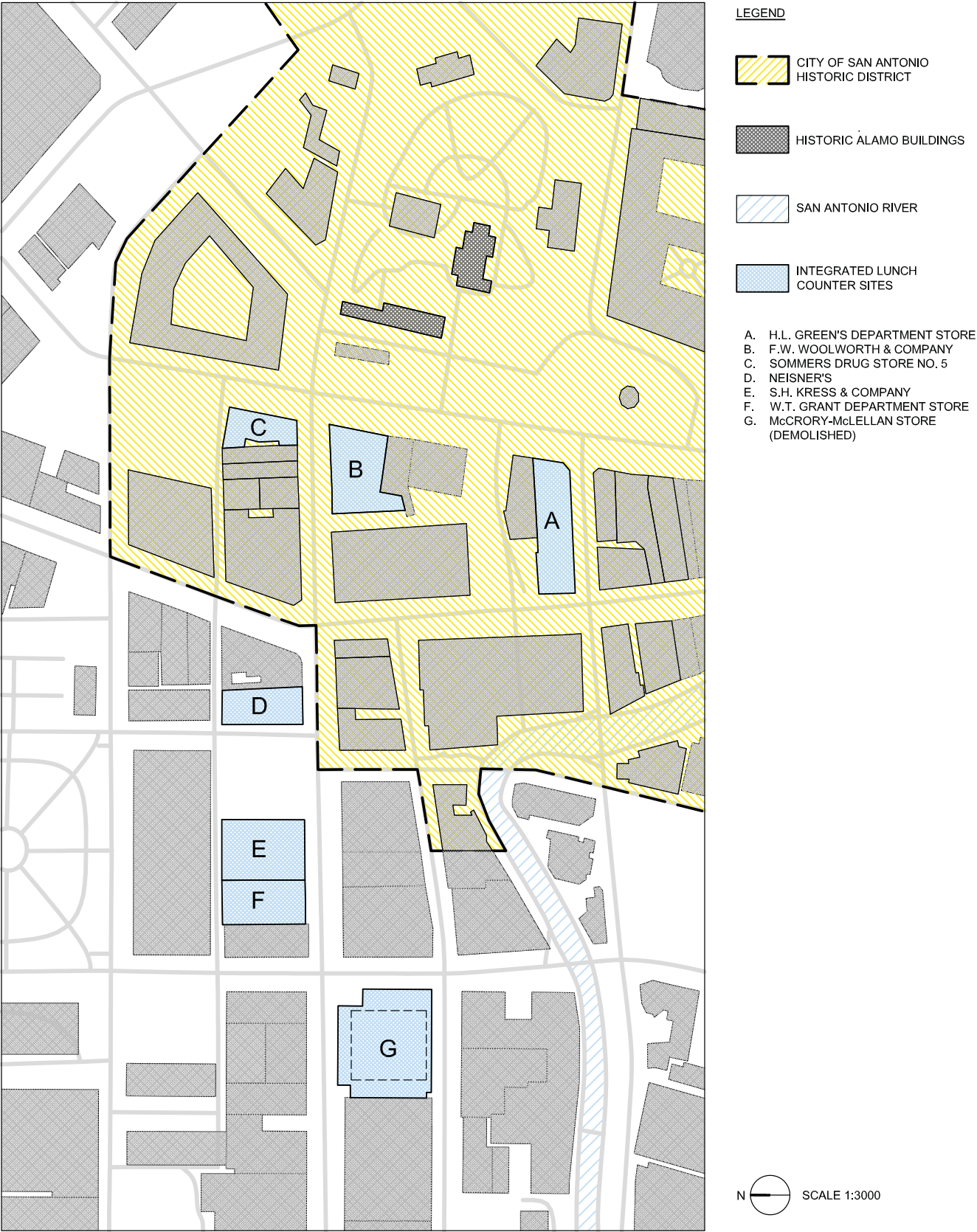
degree of its architectural integrity, including spaces for the original signs, awning and ornamentation. The Woolworth Building exemplifies the work of Adams and Adams, a prolific local firm with work spanning from high end residential, to commercial and civic buildings. Some of their most notable works in San Antonio are listed on the National Register and include City Hall (redesign in 1927), Thomas Jefferson High School, and the Stowers House, among many other homes in and around Alamo Heights.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Woolworth Building's Texas State Antiquities Landmark designation in May 2019 confirms its listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing building within the Alamo Plaza Historic District. The building's listing is one of several conditions required to qualify for the state's designation.

The Texas Historical Commission's acceptance of the State Antiquities Landmarks designation of the Woolworth Building in 2019 thereby re-affirms the 1977 National Register designation of the Alamo Plaza Historic District. The Commission acknowledges that the exterior of the Woolworth Building remains largely as it appeared at the time of its National Register designation and that the building is a good example of commercial buildings of its type, meeting the conditions necessary to be designated a State Antiquities Landmark.

It should be noted that some of the information submitted with the nomination form appears to have been incorrectly attributed to the Woolworth Building, in particular on photograph that was actually taken in the Kress Building. The interior view [E-0006-17-04] on page 13 of the nomination shows the Kress building's historic basement cafeteria with its "Sights of San Antonio" photomural panels behind the lunch counters. The Kress Building is one of the seven local restaurants, including the Woolworth Building, that agreed to quietly and collectively integrate their lunch counters on March 16, 1960. The Kress building was visited by JGWA in May 2019 while interior fit-out construction was underway for a new tenant space. Access to the building was limited, but the exterior façade appears to retain much of its historic character while evidence of the counters or historic finishes on the interior was not found.



San Antonio March 16, 1960 Downtown Lunch Counter Integration Sites. JGWA, 2020.

# WORLD MONUMENTS WATCH

**ALTHOUGH NOT A DESIGNATION PROCESS** like the others included in this report, the World Monuments Watch is a list published every two years by the World Monuments Fund to draw international attention to cultural heritage sites around the world that are threatened by neglect, vandalism, conflict, commercial development, natural disasters, and climate change. The at-risk sites are nominated by international and local preservation groups and professionals, including local authorities, and represent everything from iconic monuments to sites of social justice. An independent panel of international experts reviews and selects the sites that make up the list.

Founded in 1965, the World Monuments Fund is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of historic architecture and cultural heritage sites around the world. Headquartered in New York, the WMF is highly regarded internationally and works closely with UNESCO and other international and national historic preservation agencies and organization.

At the end of 2019, prior to the release of historian Dr. Carey Latimore's report *Civil Rights in San Antonio: WWII to Mid-1960s*, the World Monuments Fund released its 2020 World Monuments Watch. Included among the twenty-five properties named in the Watch was the San Antonio Woolworth Building, described as follows: "A Texas building that contributed to the African-American Civil Rights Movement is threatened by the extension of Alamo visitor resources."

Other properties included in the 2020 Watch are Notre-Dame of Paris, Sacred Valley of the Incas in Peru, Bears Ears National Monument in Utah, and Mam Rashan Shrine in Iraq.

The following is the World Monuments Fund 2020 Watch statement on the Woolworth Building.

**On February 1, 1960, four African-American students sat down at a segregated lunch counter at Woolworth's department store in Greensboro, North Carolina,**

**refusing to give up their seats after being denied service. The sit-in inspired dozens of similar demonstrations that were often met with police scrutiny, arrests, and violence. But on March 16, 1960, Woolworth's in San Antonio, Texas, made history by joining six other local stores that peacefully desegregated their lunch counters without resistance. The city's interracial cooperation among church leaders, store managers, and members of the NAACP was credited with the achievement. Baseball legend Jackie Robinson called it "a story that should be told around the world."**

Nearly 60 years later, the Woolworth Building's African-American Civil Rights contribution has faded from public memory, due perhaps in part to its famous neighbor. The building, which today houses entertainment venues including Ripley's Haunted Adventure, anchors the northwest corner of Alamo Plaza, overlooking the historic mission where the Battle of the Alamo took place. The Woolworth Building is now owned by the Texas General Land Office, which has partnered with local Alamo groups on a master plan to improve the plaza's visitor experience. A 2017 plan included repurposing Woolworth into a museum that would tell the story of the Alamo, but a 2018 version excluded the building from its site renderings, promising only to "study the significance" of the structure. The official window for public input closed in October 2018, and the selection of an architect to design the museum prior to a professional assessment of the building's structure and significance threatens to limit the building's feasibility for reuse. The state does not have to abide by local historic ordinances should it decide to demolish the Woolworth Building, which has been designated both a city and state antiquities landmark.

Concerned preservationists, historians, and activists representing the community recently joined forces to advocate for preservation of the building as a visible link to Alamo Plaza's little-known African-American history. They argue that together, the Alamo and the Woolworth Building reinforce a richer, more inclusive historical narrative that extends from the 1836 battle to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, expanding the sites' cultural relevance to a more diverse audience. The

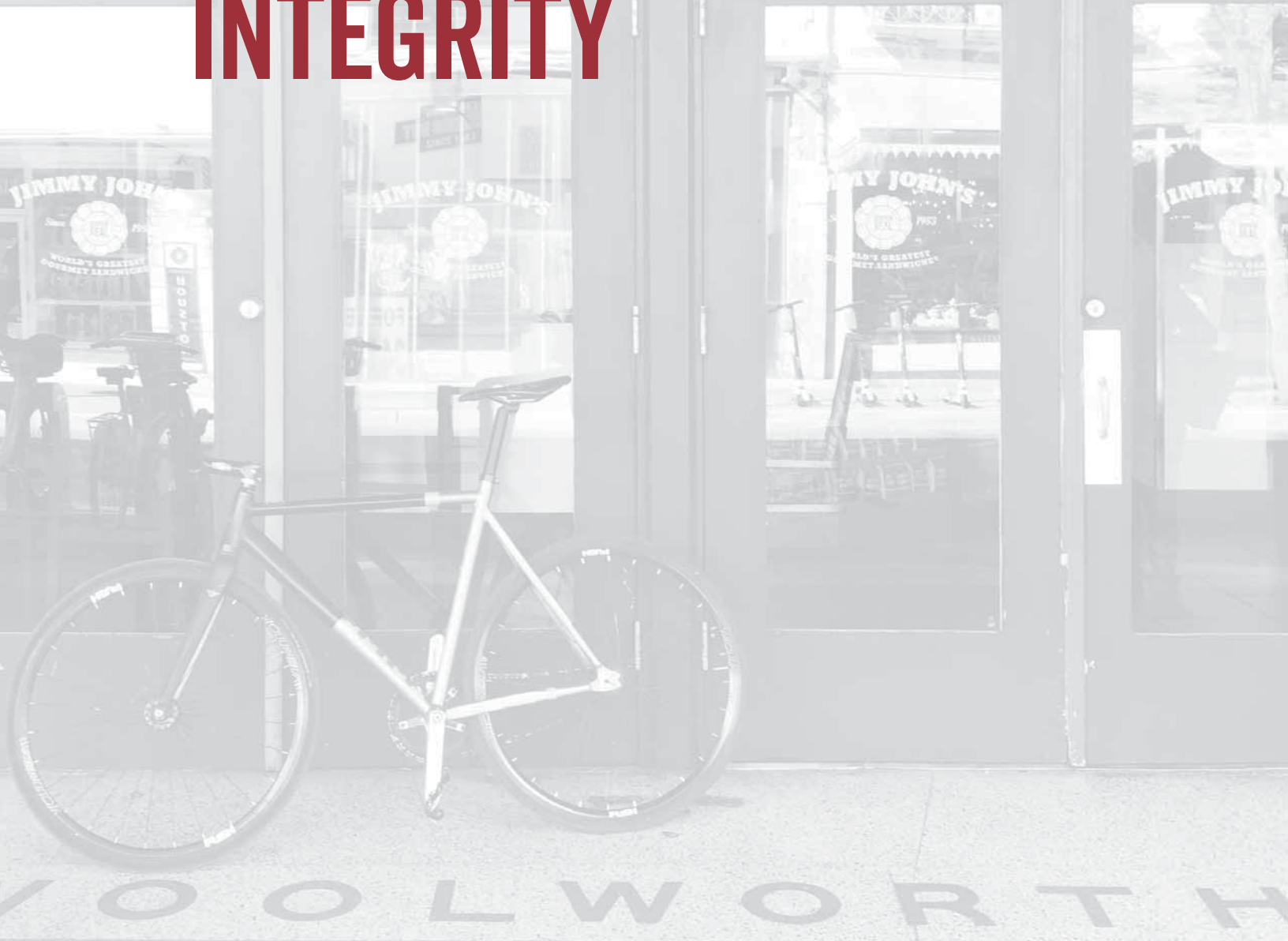


**Woolworth Building's proximity to the Alamo provides an ideal setting to explore how local populations interacted, both positively and negatively, in ways that reshaped the United States over three centuries.**

**By expanding public outreach, seeking influential allies and available legal protections, and offering an alternative vision for the site, the coalition aims to demonstrate that different stakeholder goals can both coexist and thrive within the existing building. Inclusion of the Woolworth Building on the 2020 World Monuments Watch seeks to encourage diverse participatory voices in decision making surrounding the site and reinforce the importance of spatial equity for heritage sites with underrepresented narratives.**

Further statements by the World Monuments Fund include the belief that “while The Alamo holds great historical significance, there is room to preserve other meaningful stories that happened on that plaza” and the hope that “all voices are heard and there is an inclusive and transparent process in the construction of the new museum”.

# EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE AND INTEGRITY



# EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE AND INTEGRITY

## CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS IN THE ALAMO PLAZA HISTORIC DISTRICT

**OVERLAPPING A PORTION OF** the historic location of the Alamo in the center of downtown San Antonio, Alamo Plaza is an important focal point in the city. The Alamo Plaza Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977, and the Crockett Block, Palace Theater Arcade, and Woolworth Building are identified as three of the National Historic District's twenty-four contributing structures. They preserve the uniformity in scale of the majority of the district's buildings as well as the late 19th and early 20th century architecture that define many of the commercial buildings built during its burst of economic growth. Together, the Crockett Block, Palace Theater Arcade, and Woolworth Building form the western wall of the plaza and maintain the commercial streetscape.

Since its National Register designation, the Alamo Plaza Historic District has seen only minor change with its most notable changes occurring in the same period as its historic designation. In 1977, an urban renewal plan known as the Alamo Plaza-Paseo Del Rio Linkage Project was put forward to revitalize the downtown area, and it would make several changes to the historic district. In the same year, the city of San Antonio applied for an Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Renewal that would be used to fund the project.

A key feature of the plan included a new pedestrian pathway that would directly link Alamo Plaza to San Antonio's River Walk. In order to create this linkage, several buildings would need to be demolished to allow a notch-like opening through the western edge of Alamo Plaza to the river.

The buildings that would be demolished included a series of one-story structures housing three small shops and a theater attraction for Alamo visitors.

Located at 309-315 Alamo Plaza, these structures were directly south of the Crockett Block and considered to be contributing structures to the historic district (refer to map on page 100). The National Register nomination form collectively describes them as being "possibly the same buildings which are visible in early photographs of the Plaza" despite having modern facades. 309, 311, and 313 Alamo Plaza were demolished early in the project while the theater attraction at 315 Alamo Plaza was originally designated for rehabilitation. By 1983, plans had evolved and 315 Alamo Plaza was also demolished due to the demolition of the adjacent structures which left the south side of the building exposed and in poor condition, but also led to the archaeological discovery of the original west wall of the Mission San Antonio de Valero. Without a basement, the theater was removed to excavate the last remaining portion of the western wall of the mission, which was preserved and made viewable for the public.

The project also called for a new parking garage that would be constructed within the plaza directly behind the Crockett Block and Palace Theater Arcade. Construction of the garage required the demolition of buildings along Losoya Street (formerly South Broadway) and East Houston Street, which were not identified as contributing structures. These buildings were considered by the National Register nomination to be "not significant architecturally or historically, but they are compatible in scale and use."

In order for this redevelopment work to occur within a National Register Historic District and with the UDAG funding, the project was required to undergo review by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires federal agencies to consider the effects on historic properties of projects they carry out, assist, fund, permit, license, or approve throughout the country. The



Section 106 review process determined that the linkage project would have adverse effects on the Alamo Plaza Historic District, which was echoed by the Texas State Historic Preservation Officer in consultation with the city.

In accordance with Section 106 proceedings, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was established to mitigate adverse effects on the Alamo Plaza Historic District. The MOA was signed in 1980 by the San Antonio city manager, the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the Texas State Historic Preservation Officer representing the Texas Historical Commission. Among other stipulations, the MOA required a design review process between the City of San Antonio and the Texas State Historic Preservation Office for proposed new construction and restoration work to ensure design compatibility between new work and cultural properties associated with the Alamo Plaza Historic District.

While the Alamo Plaza-Paseo Del Rio Linkage Project removed one of the historic district's contributing buildings, the Urban Development Action Grant also called for the restoration and rehabilitation of several other historic buildings within the district. The application submitted by the city in 1977 proposed additional improvements to the plaza's existing buildings, including the restoration of historic building facades that faced the Alamo. Restoration efforts were later continued by private owners, including in 1983, when Parts 1 and 2 of an application for federal historic preservation tax credits were submitted to the Texas State Historic Preservation Office in accordance with the Tax Reform Act of 1976. This work included a substantial rehabilitation effort that restored the façade and interior spaces of the Crockett Block.

Altogether, the restoration of the buildings in this area would greatly renew the historic character of Alamo Plaza and reinforce the western boundary that the Crockett Block, Palace Theater Arcade, and Woolworth Building have maintained.

## CURRENT REVIEW OF NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

Recently, it has been suggested, but not by the Alamo Trust, that the Crockett Block, Palace Theater Arcade, and Woolworth Building may not meet the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, and thus were not contributing buildings in the Alamo Plaza Historic District. Therefore, a fresh and independent analysis was undertaken by JGWA to determine if all three buildings met the National Register Criteria. The following are the current National Register Criteria for Evaluation:

**A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.**

**B. Associated with lives of persons significant in our past.**

**C. Embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or**

**that represent work of a master**

**or**

**that possess high artistic values**

**or**

**that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distribution.**

**D. Have yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.**

**Property must possess significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering or culture when evaluated within the historical context of a relevant geographical area.**

In addition to historic significance, properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places must possess historic integrity. National Register guidelines as outlined in the *National Register Bulletin: How to Complete the National Registration Form*, define historic integrity as “the authenticity of a property’s historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property’s prehistoric or historic period.” The National Register identifies seven aspects of integrity:

- Location
- Design
- Setting
- Materials

- Workmanship
- Feeling
- Association

Integrity is evaluated against a property's significance, and thus certain aspects will be of greater importance than others. In order to demonstrate integrity, a building should possess at least several of the seven aspects.

The following is JGWA's analysis.

## CROCKETT BLOCK

### SIGNIFICANCE

Historic functions of the Crockett Block include use as a hotel and commercial uses consisting of office spaces, a restaurant, a department store, and specialty shops. Currently, the building still serves multiple commercial functions for specialty stores, business offices, and a restaurant. It also serves as government office space for the Texas General Land Office.

The architectural style of the Crockett Block may be classified as Italianate, which would fall within the NRHP category of Late 19th and 20th Century revivals styles. Principle exterior materials include local limestone, cast iron façade details at window openings, and wood windows.

The Crockett Block meets the requirements of Criteria A and C of the National Register's Statement of Significance with areas of significance in commerce and architecture. Because of its association with the history of commerce over the past century and a half in San Antonio, it meets Criterion A. During that time, the area near the Alamo became the commercial center of the city which in turn became a major commercial and transportation hub of the Southwest. The Crockett Block also meets Criterion C because of its association with Alfred Giles, a significant early regional architect. It embodies a high level of architectural quality and incorporates important building technology of the period. It is also a significant example of commercial architecture of the period.

The Crockett Block's period of significance starts from the year of its construction in 1882 through its rehabilitation and restoration completed in 1984. Significant dates would include the year it was constructed as well as the period in which it served as a

hotel to Alamo Plaza (first as Alamo Flats and then as Hotel Alamo) from 1891-1931.

### INTEGRITY

The Crockett Block has retained a great amount of integrity and possesses most, if not all, of the aspects that are required for National Register listing. The Crockett Block has maintained its historic location fronting Alamo Plaza. The façade's historic materials (local limestone and cast iron) have been well-preserved where original. Careful work has been done to restore and replicate historic materials where previously altered or removed.

Workmanship is exhibited in the carved stone and wrought iron railings on the exterior and in the finishes, framing, doors, windows, and door and window hardware on the interior. These aspects together convey the Crockett Block's historic character or feeling, and reinforce its significance in the architectural and commercial development of San Antonio.

The design of the Crockett Block, including its interior spaces, has been well maintained, and its setting, and association are also intact. Where modifications have occurred, such as the recent addition to the back of the building, they are easily reversed and the basic design of the building survives. Where new interior finishes were installed as part of the 1983-1984 rehabilitation, including damaged or missing door and window trim, the historic elements that had not survived were replicated.

In 1985, the rehabilitation work, which had been funded by historic tax credits in accordance with the Tax Reform Act of 1976, was certified by the National Park Service following the recommendation of the Texas State Historic Preservation Office. After field inspecting completed work, the Texas Historical Commission noted that most of the surviving second and third floor partitions, doors and hardware were retained in place, floors were refinished, and all other plaster finishes were otherwise restored. Overall, the rehabilitation work was considered very good, making a "dramatic improvement to the visual unity of the Alamo Plaza."

## PALACE THEATER ARCADE

### SIGNIFICANCE

Because the Arcade served as a means of circulation and access to the Palace Theater, the building's

historic function would be primarily considered commercial and theater. Later functions include commercial use because it was converted into multiple specialty stores over time with business offices on its second and third floors. Its current functions include commercial uses with offices on the mezzanine level, and specialty retail on the ground floor. Only more recently has the building also served a recreational function as a museum space and a domestic function with a rentable penthouse dwelling.

The architectural style of the Palace Theater Arcade is a combination of the Commercial Style on its exterior and Classical Revival for its ornate plaster ceiling and wall details within the historic Arcade space. Principle exterior materials include a concrete structure, terra cotta facade, and wood windows.

The Palace Theater Arcade meets the descriptions of Criteria A and C of the National Register's Statement of Significance with areas of significance in commerce, architecture, and entertainment/recreation. It represents almost a century of San Antonio's commercial history and is an architecturally distinctive building of its period with much of its original first-floor public spaces and building fabric intact. It also meets Criterion C because of its association with George Willis, a local architect of the period, who was an apprentice in the office of Frank Lloyd Wright. He was known as "one of Wright's best beloved draughtsman."

The Palace Theater Arcade's period of significance starts from its year of construction in 1923 through 1954 when the theater was closed. Significant dates would include the year it was constructed as part of the Palace Theater along with the year the theater was officially closed.

#### **INTEGRITY**

The integrity of the Palace Theater Arcade is evaluated separately from the demolished theater auditorium. The remaining Palace Theater Arcade possesses the aspects of location, design, materials, workmanship, and feeling, which substantially convey its significance. The aspect of design is reflected on both its exterior and in its interior spaces.

While its west connection to Losoya Street (formerly South Broadway) no longer exists, the Palace Theater Arcade maintains its historic Alamo Plaza entrance location. The building's historic materials (terra cotta, concrete, plaster) remain on both the exterior and interior where visible. Workmanship

is shown in the glazed terra cotta elements of the front façade and in the historic finishes visible on the interior, a key example being the vaulted ornamental plaster ceiling and wall details. Workmanship is exhibited on the second and third levels where there is evidence of historic tiling on the floors, ornamental metal grilles within the historic elevator shaft, and in the exposed tapered beams in the ceiling. The historic mezzanine level contains exposed structural arches running between the columns and framing the location of the historic balcony opening that overlooked the ground floor. Together with other key elements that have been retained, including the historic main stair and elevator shaft, these architectural features contribute to the building's design and feeling and provide greater understanding of the Arcade's function as a prominent pedestrian pathway and commercial building.

### **WOOLWORTH BUILDING**

#### **SIGNIFICANCE**

Historically, the Woolworth Building has served commercial functions as a department store, restaurant, and specialty stores. Only recently has the building's functions included recreational uses with a museum space shared by the Palace Theater Arcade and other floors serving amusement rides and attractions. The ground level still serves a commercial function with several specialty stores.

The Woolworth Building is a prime example of the Chicago Style of commercial architecture. Principle exterior materials include a concrete and stone foundation, brick and terra cotta walls with terra cotta coping stones, wood windows, and an iron entrance canopy.

The Woolworth Building meets the descriptions of Criteria A and C of the National Register's Statement of Significance with areas of significance in commerce and architecture. Not only is it an important component of San Antonio's downtown commercial center dating back almost a century, but it is also closely associated with the development of the F.W. Woolworth department store empire. It is one of the oldest remaining Woolworth buildings in the United States and its design was overseen by the corporate headquarters in New York City. It meets Criterion C because it is an unusual and fine example of a Woolworth building which was designed by Adams and Adams, one of



the most prominent architectural firms in San Antonio during the early twentieth century. Architecturally, it is a fine example of an early 20th century commercial building.

The Woolworth Building's period of significance starts from its year of construction in 1921 through 1997 when it closed as a Woolworth store. Significant dates also include the years it was occupied by the F.W. Woolworth Company, which covers its entire period of significance..

The Woolworth Building may also be considered significant for its role in social history. Based on the historical context as recounted and studied in Dr. Carey H. Latimore's report, *Civil Rights in San Antonio: WWII to Mid-1960s*, the desegregation of the Woolworth Building's lunch counter on March 16, 1960 meets Criterion A for significance in social history. The Woolworth Building was one of seven local restaurants in San Antonio that agreed to quietly and collectively integrate their lunch counters without protest at a time when sit-ins and other protests were occurring and gaining widespread attention throughout the south. This agreement received national recognition in 1960 when it was reported in the New York Times and praised by Jackie Robinson, declaring it "a story that should be told around the world."

Similar to the National Register-listed Woolworth Building in Clarksdale, Mississippi, the desegregation of the San Antonio Woolworth Building's lunch counter can be considered within the context of the national civil rights movement, a subject to which the National Park Service has recently given greater attention. In 2000, Congress directed the National Park Service to prepare a nationwide theme study of civil rights identifying and assessing significant sites associated with the movement for the possibility of designation as a National Historic Landmark. In their 2004 publication, *Civil Rights in America: Racial Desegregation of Public Accommodations*, they address properties such as hotels, motels, restaurants, and theaters, including sites associated with organized campaigns for equal access to public accommodations.

## INTEGRITY

The Woolworth Building most clearly possesses the aspects of location, design, materials, workmanship, and feeling. Its historic corner location at Alamo Plaza and East Houston Street remains unchanged. Historic materials (brick, concrete, terra cotta, iron)

have been well-preserved, and its street façades are largely unaltered. A high degree of workmanship can be found on its exterior, including terra cotta detailing, historic signage at its entrances, and the restored monumental canopy. Likewise within the building's interior spaces, decorative column capitals and coffered ceilings on the first floor and remnants of historic finishes and trim further distinguish the Woolworth Building as a significant structure. Design elements (massing, proportion, style, and fenestration) are clearly expressed on each of its elevations, and exterior modifications to the building have been minimal. Other preserved design elements, including historic stairways and exterior facade windows, along with evidence of historic light wells, wood trim and plaster detailing altogether help to underscore the Woolworth Building's historic feeling, character and greater significance.

Iconic lettering and remnants of distinctive paint and terra cotta motifs not only distinguish the San Antonio Woolworth Building, but also link it to other store locations and the pioneering F.W. Woolworth Company nationally. Association is another aspect of the Woolworth Building's integrity. It was a cornerstone of San Antonio's early 20th century commercial development as well as its connection with the city's civil rights movement of the 1960s. This is especially evident in the location of the original lunch room where the desegregation of its lunch counter historically took place. The existing fabric that remains of its lunch room provides a direct link to this event, most importantly in the footprints of the historic lunch counter and its stools that have been well preserved. The lunch room also contains a great amount of evidence of historic finishes, including wall and floor tile and painted detailing.

# FINDINGS





This circa 1930 colorized postcard image of the Plaza looks north toward the Federal Building. The tall Medical Arts Building behind the Alamo was completed in 1926.



# FINDINGS

**AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENTAL REVIEW** for more than 40 years, the Crockett Block, the Palace Theater Arcade, and the Woolworth Building have enjoyed consistent support for their recognition, designation, and preservation as individual historic structures having local, state, and national significance as part of an historic district. These three buildings are representative examples of the nineteenth and twentieth century commercial development of downtown San Antonio.

A fresh evaluation of the criteria used to determine eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and a close examination of original and restored building fabric has confirmed the integrity of important character-defining features of the exteriors of the buildings and their interior public spaces. The Crockett Block, the Palace Theater Arcade, and the Woolworth Building are all in sound structural condition and do not currently exhibit any significant deterioration or code compliance issues.

As a result, all three buildings have a strong potential for continued use for new museum spaces and functions in a manner similar to many other internationally-significant museums located in historic buildings. If properly developed, the Crockett Block, the Palace Theater Arcade, and the Woolworth Building can act together as an appropriate physical and interpretive connection between the multiple layers of history represented by the Alamo and the downtown commercial core of San Antonio.

The preservation of the Crockett Block, the Palace Theater Arcade, and the Woolworth Building, along with the Alamo site as representative of the multiple layers of history in Alamo Plaza, is an approach that is completely compatible with national and international historic preservation standards. Under the World Heritage Site designation for the San Antonio Missions, the preservation of the three buildings is acknowledged as a needed buffer between the Alamo site and new development.

The three Alamo Plaza buildings approximately define the west boundary of the historic Alamo site. Technically, they and two other contributing buildings within the National Register district are built in a location that overlaps the original footprint of the Alamo mission complex. However, it is not possible to physically recreate the 1836 appearance of the Alamo because many of the original buildings have been removed, and the church itself has been greatly altered. The iconic bell gable of the church did not exist and was not constructed until 1848, and only part of a wall survives from the barracks that existed during the 1836 battle.

Recent international trends in museum design and development have emphasized the reuse and transformation of historic industrial and commercial buildings and surrounding urban fabric for interpretive programming, providing stronger links between complex layers of history and dynamic visitor experiences. Through the historic preservation treatments of exterior restoration and interior rehabilitation, these three historic buildings on Alamo Plaza can provide the opportunity for a unique twenty-first century museum experience that is innovatively housed within some of San Antonio's most historically significant commercial architecture of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Relocation of any or all of these structures, while technically feasible albeit very challenging, would diminish their meaning and significance once disassociated from the site and setting opposite the Alamo, the ruins of which enabled the formation of the commercial heart of San Antonio in the mid-nineteenth century. Similarly, the retention of only the buildings' facades conflicts with national and international preservation charters and guidelines.

Comparative analysis of other purpose-built Woolworth department stores listed in the National Register of Historic Places provided context for further evaluation of the Woolworth Building on Alamo Plaza. Its architectural quality and contributions to San Antonio's commercial development was and

is still clear. Additionally, the understanding of the significance of the San Antonio Woolworth Building as one structure among a diverse collection of sites across the country noted for both organization and protest relative to the national African American Civil Rights movement will continue to evolve as this perspective of history develops.

Because of the significance of the three buildings and their contextual surrounds, any work to adapt the Crockett Block, Palace Theater Arcade, and Woolworth Building for new museum uses should be done in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic properties. Review by the Texas Historical Commission and the preparation of Historic Structure Reports for each of the three buildings should be required to guide any design and construction work in each building.

# RESOURCES FOR ALAMO PLAZA RESEARCH

## ALEXANDER ARCHIVES

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The University of Texas at Austin  
Contact: Nancy Sparrow

## AVERY ARCHITECTURE & FINE ARTS LIBRARY

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Avery Drawings & Archives  
Columbia University  
Online search

## CITY OF SAN ANTONIO MUNICIPAL ARCHIVES & RECORDS FACILITY

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Contact: Nat Norton, Archivist

## CITY OF SAN ANTONIO OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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Contact: Jenny Hay, ScoutSA Program Manager

## DAUGHTERS OF THE TEXAS REPUBLIC ARCHIVES AT A&M SAN ANTONIO

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Contact: Leslie Stapleton, Archives and Special Collections Manager

## NATIONAL BUILDING MUSEUM

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Contact: Laura Hicken, Assistant Registrar

## SAN ANTONIO CONSERVATION SOCIETY

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Contacts: Vincent Michael, Executive Director  
Beth Standifird, Research Librarian  
Susan Beavin, former President (2017-2019)

## SAN ANTONIO PUBLIC LIBRARY TEXANA COLLECTION

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Contact: Sylvia Reyna, Librarian

## THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO LIBRARIES

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Architecture and Historic Preservation  
Contact: Gary Woods, Librarian



## **THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO LIBRARIES**

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Special Collections, Institute of Texan Cultures  
Contact: Tom Shelton, Curator

## **WORLDCAT**

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Online search

## **GARY YANTIS**

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San Antonio Theater Historian  
Email communication

## **MARY CAROLYN HOLLERS GEORGE**

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Author, *The Architectural Legacy of Alfred Giles*  
Email and telephone communication

**COMPILED BY FRANCES GALE AND CASEY GALLAGHER JORDAN • MARCH 2019**

# APPENDIX A: EXAMPLES OF MUSEUMS IN REHABILITATED BUILDINGS





# REHABILITATION OF COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS AS MUSEUMS

**JOHN G. WAITE ASSOCIATES, ARCHITECTS** was asked to consider the feasibility of reusing the Crockett Block, Palace Theater Arcade, and the Woolworth Building for the purposes of a new museum. In addition to the examination of current conditions in the existing buildings and their ability for reuse, the following buildings presented here demonstrate a variety of examples where a former commercial or industrial building has been successfully reused to house a new museum.

In recent years there has been a growing trend internationally to locate high profile museums in historic commercial and industrial buildings. Many of these institutions are highly regarded, and the buildings themselves have received historic recognition, landmark status or in certain cases, designation as a world monument site. The build-

ing's history and original function is, in most cases, unrelated to the new museum, and instead it is selected for its iconic or intrinsic cultural value. Their inherent physical characteristics also make them desirable for reuse as many commercial and industrial buildings share similar architectural features, including higher ceilings, regular bay spacings, and fire-resistant or slow-burning construction.

From the Cincinnati Museum Center to the Tate Liverpool to the anticipated Academy Museum of Motion Pictures, many of these buildings have architectural elements similar to the Crockett Block, Palace Theater Arcade, and Woolworth Building, and have faced similar creative challenges and opportunities. They lead the trend of rehabilitating historic commercial and industrial buildings without loss to their historic character or integrity.



## ACADEMY MUSEUM OF MOTION PICTURES – LOS ANGELES, CA

300,000 SQUARE FEET

**NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION**, the official museum for the Academy of Motion Pictures will be located in the landmark 1939 May Company Building. The former department store was originally designed by architect Albert C. Martin with Samuel A. Marx as associate architect, and is considered a Los Angeles historic and cultural monument. The museum's highly acclaimed design by architect Renzo Piano,

in collaboration with Gensler, provides for careful restoration of the exterior May Company Building and rehabilitation of the interior, retaining the original columns and large spacings, for use as galleries and support spaces. To accommodate the museum's monumental theater, a spectacular new spherical building is being constructed separately and will be connected to the historic department store.



## MUSEUM OF LONDON DOCKLANDS

### LONDON, UK

110,000 SQUARE FEET

**THE MUSEUM OF LONDON'S DOCKLANDS** is located in a former sugar warehouse in West India Docks on the Isle of Dogs. Constructed in 1802, the building is one of London's oldest surviving warehouses and is listed as Grade I, the highest national historic preservation designation in the U.K. The warehouse was restored by Purcell Miller Tritton with

exhibitions designed by Haley Sharpe Associates. Completed in 2003, the museum retains the original brick walls, interior framing and bay spacings to accommodate twelve galleries as well as offices, a restaurant, a lecture theater and classrooms dedicated to the history of the River Thames and London's docklands.





## STAATLICHES MUSEUM FÜR ARCHÄOLOGIE CHEMNITZ

CHEMNITZ, GERMANY

183,000 SQUARE FEET

**THE CHEMNITZ LOCATION** of the German department store, Kaufhaus Schocken, was converted to the Staatliches Museum für Archäologie Chemnitz in 2014. Designed by Erich Mendelsohn and constructed in 1930, Kaufhaus Schocken in Chemnitz is one of the great early monuments of modern architecture and was designated a state historic monument. The building was restored by Auer Weber Architekten with Knerer Und Lang and exhibition designer, Atelier Bruckner. The team took two distinct approaches, carefully recon-

structing its iconic ribbon window façade while respectfully redesigning the interior and working within the original spaces. A multi-level ramped stairway added to the rear of the building provides an additional transitional experience while moving through exhibits. Exhibition walls are designed to be completely detached and independent from the 20-by-20 foot column grid, making exhibit spaces larger and more flexible while maintaining the original building's architectural features.



## MUSEUM INDUSTRIEKULTUR – NUREMBERG, GERMANY

65,000 SQUARE FEET

**LOCATED IN A 1920s SCREW FACTORY** associated with the Julius Tafel iron works complex built in 1876, the Museum Industriekultur was developed in the mid-1980s. The museum deals with technical, cultural, and social history using Nuremberg as an example

of the industrialization of Germany. Exhibition areas house a wide range of exhibits, including a steam engine hall, a printer's workshop, and a motorcycle museum located within the original spaces.





## MADISON CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

### MADISON, WI

44,000 SQUARE FEET

**THE 1930s MONTGOMERY WARD** department store located on a prominent block near the Wisconsin State Capitol now serves as the area's expanded children's museum. Designed by Kubala Washatko Architects and completed in 2010, the museum includes a variety of interactive exhibits and other attractions, including features that utilize cutouts in the building's floor plates for taller displays that extend over multiple levels.





**TATE LIVERPOOL**  
**LIVERPOOL, UK**  
 129,000 SQUARE FEET

**THE ALBERT DOCK** was designed and built by the engineer Jesse Hartley and opened in 1846. The site has been called “the most important surviving group of nineteenth-century warehouses in the world” and has been designated a World Heritage Site. The Tate Liverpool is just one rehabilitated structure within a larger complex of historic buildings that have been successfully adapted for multi-purpose cultural uses, including museums. Long derelict, it was threatened with demolition until the largest warehouse was taken over by the Tate to house the “National Collection of Modern Art in the North of

England.” Designed by Sir James Sterling, the museum first opened in 1988, and was expanded twice in 1998 and 2007 due to increasing demand. The building’s monumental brick and stone exterior has been mostly preserved while its signature cast-iron columns and bay configuration are incorporated throughout the museum’s gallery spaces and other program elements, including a café, bookshop, and an education suite.



## INTERNATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS CENTER AND MUSEUM – GREENSBORO, NC

30,000 SQUARE FEET

**GREENSBORO'S WOOLWORTH BUILDING** was converted into a museum in 2010 to commemorate the February 1, 1960 sit-in demonstration at its lunch counter. The building was originally designed by Charles C. Hartmann for the F.W. Woolworth Company, opening its doors in 1929. The architect of the museum was Philip Freelon of Freelon Group Architects with exhibitions designed by Eisterhold Associates. Working with the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, the architects identified character-defining features that were to be preserved and restored. This included the art deco

staircase that leads to the gallery space and lecture hall on the lower level, the plaster coffered ceilings and the terrazzo floors. The department store's historic lunch counter was partially rebuilt because part of the original counter was donated to the Smithsonian Institute. The museum also features a series of immersive exhibits and an archival and research center. Newly constructed elements of the project, while clearly differentiated from the existing architecture, complement and support the historic building.





## CINCINNATI MUSEUM CENTER

### CINCINNATI, OH

504,000 SQUARE FEET

**CINCINNATI UNION TERMINAL** was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1972 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1977. The building was designed by Alfred Fellheimer and Steward Wagner with French-born architect Paul Phillippe Cret, and since the terminal's grand opening in 1933, it remains a premier example of Art Deco architecture. In the 1990s, the Museum of Natural History & Science and the Cincinnati History Museum brought new life to the terminal, which had closed most of its platforms, but continues to serve Amtrak and freight trains along its remaining rail lines. The Duke Energy Children's Museum and Cincinnati History Library & Archives would later join the two museums to form the Cincinnati Museum Center, the largest cultural institution in Cincinnati.

The terminal's storage and service spaces were carefully and creatively repurposed to house museum facilities in spaces where ceiling heights range from twelve to twenty feet. A dinosaur exhibit makes creative use of the unique curvilinear layout of the original vehicular ramps while the historic cafeteria maintains its original use as it continues to provide food services for visitors. Lower level spaces were rehabilitated to house a wide range of interactive exhibits and traveling exhibitions along with its archives and research center. With the support of historic tax credits, a \$212 million-dollar restoration effort was completed in 2018 to preserve the terminal's historic exterior and primary spaces while updating building systems, museum services and exhibits.





## TENEMENT MUSEUM

### NEW YORK, NY

27,000 SQUARE FEET

**COMPRISED OF TWO RESTORED** tenement buildings, the Tenement Museum has become one of the fastest growing cultural institutions in New York City. Built in 1886 and 1888 respectively, the tenements at 97 and 103 Orchard Street were the homes of thousands of immigrants in the iconic Lower East Side neighborhood, and the museum preserves the stories and experiences of its residents. The museum was founded at 97 Orchard Street in 1988 and designated a National Historic Landmark six years later. Due to growing popularity, the museum began a massive expansion in 2007 just three doors

down at 103 Orchard Street. As owner and exhibit designer, the Lower East Side Tenement Museum commissioned Perkins Eastman to oversee the museum design as part of a twenty-year, five-phase master plan. Its renovation takes an integrated approach, blending portions of apartments into continuous exhibit spaces. The design required careful modification and stabilization of masonry bearing walls, but it retains original cast iron columns and uses other historic elements to inspire its reconstructed interpretations.

# APPENDIX B: ALAMO PLAZA 1965-1984





# ALAMO PLAZA 1965-1984

## DEVELOPMENT OF DOWNTOWN PLANS FOR A HOTEL, PARKING GARAGE, AND PASEO DEL RIO

In November 1965 San Antonio became the official site for the 1968 World's Fair. Called the HemisFair, the project was undertaken with a combination of public and private funds, and its implementation changed a large area of downtown San Antonio. Several iconic HemisFair structures were erected, including the Tower of the Americas and the Institute of Texan Cultures. The River Walk was extended for a quarter mile to the HemisFair site, located at the southeast edge of downtown San Antonio.<sup>1</sup> Following the HemisFair, there was renewed interest in the River Walk, and "plans for a major hotel prompted local leaders to consider building a parklike walkway from the Alamo to the river."<sup>2</sup>

The 1970s saw many plans being developed for the area around the Alamo. A "central city district plan" was developed in 1972; it was a "refinement" of the Del Alamo Plan, an urban renewal plan dating from 1965-1967, which "was used as a vehicle for development for the Convention Center, Hemisfair, [and] the Riverwalk." The Del Alamo Plan "also included a recommendation for a pedestrian linkage from Alamo Plaza to the Riverwalk."<sup>3</sup> The Central City District Plan stressed the "need for City owned parking, urban design control and historic resource protection."<sup>4</sup> In 1973 plans were developed for an Alamo Plaza Urban Renewal Plan, which was described as an "urban renewal plan for redevelopment of three city blocks directly across from the Alamo shrine." The "plan called for con-

struction of a large hotel, banking facilities, office and retail space, parking and open space linkage from Alamo Plaza to the river."<sup>5</sup> It was an "integrated plan addressing design review, development controls and criteria, streets, pedestrian walks, open spaces, landscaping, loading facilities, parking and signage." Construction of a new convention hotel was an important component. In 1976, the Texas Historical Commission had prepared the nomination of Alamo Plaza for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, and the following year an amendment to the renewal plan supported "stronger historic-preservation policy stressing reuse of important historic resources and re-establishing the historic cohesiveness the area once had."<sup>6</sup> In July of 1977, the National Park Service entered the Alamo Plaza National Historic District into the National Register of Historic Places.

Some of the other 1970s plans also called for a historic preservation component. The River Corridor Plan, dating from 1973, "addressed the entire upper river corridor and emphasized the importance of tourists to Alamo Plaza and Paseo del Rio." It "stressed restoration of significant sites, use of urban design control, perimeter parking, shuttle buses, pedestrian linkages and open spaces, especially along the downtown river and on Alamo Plaza."<sup>7</sup>

Alamo Plaza was revamped for the Bicentennial, beginning in 1975.<sup>8</sup> A news story about archeologists' unearthing part of the south wall of the Alamo compound included a statement that "the dig or survey is required by the state before improvement can be made on any historic site or property."<sup>9</sup>

1. Hemisfair Park Area Redevelopment Corporation, "History of Hemisfair," Hemisfair, <https://hemisfair.org/visitor-information/history/>.

2. "Paseo del Alamo," *San Antonio Express-News*, May 25, 2003.

3. San Antonio Office of Historic Preservation files. "River Walk-Alamo Passage Proposed," *San Antonio Light*, Nov. 11, 1976.

4. City of San Antonio, Office of Historic Preservation, Alamo Plaza files.

5. City of San Antonio, Office of Historic Preservation, Alamo Plaza files.

6. City of San Antonio, Office of Historic Preservation, Alamo Plaza files. San Antonio Development Agency, "History of Urban Renewal in San Antonio," ca. 1978.

7. City of San Antonio, Office of Historic Preservation, Alamo Plaza files.

8. "Alamo Plaza Due for a Facelifing," *San Antonio Express*, June 18, 1975.

9. "Alamo Wall is Dug Up," *San Antonio Express*, July 10, 1975.

In the summer of 1975 the City Council formally approved the creation of a Centro 21 task force and “authorized its start on programs to enhance central city growth and improvement.”<sup>10</sup> In the fall of 1976 Centro 21 “endorsed the concept of a \$2 million Alamo Plaza renovation proposed by plaza business spokesmen.” The proposal needed to be reviewed by various agencies and then by the City Council. A newspaper account stated that “the plan calls for demolition of two small plaza structures to allow construction of a pedestrian walkway linking the Alamo with the San Antonio River at Crockett Street and South Broadway.” The president of the San Antonio Conservation Society, Nancy Negley, expressed “some concern for demolishing the two buildings.” “Her worry,” the reporter wrote, “is that any demolition will prompt additional destruction of other buildings, thus eroding the plaza feeling of the area.” The two buildings proposed for demolition at that time were 313 Alamo Plaza, occupied by Radio Shack, and 315 Alamo Plaza, occupied by the Remember the Alamo theater.<sup>11</sup> A new city manager, Thomas Huebner, from California, was hired in August 1976, and he would play a large role in the construction of the hotel, the parking garage, and the Paseo del Rio.<sup>12</sup>

In the spring of 1976 the City Council voted to build a parking garage downtown, but disagreements delayed a decision on its location. The parking structure “was needed to support an increased retail market and to help” the Daughters of the Republic of Texas “with their problem of parking for the Alamo.”<sup>13</sup> The San Antonio Conservation Society “asked that the garage be constructed with a cut limestone façade.”<sup>14</sup>

In May 1977 the City Council unanimously ordered a “one-year demolition freeze for all buildings in the Alamo Plaza urban renewal area.” The freeze had been initiated by plans to demolish the Dullnig Building, a major historic structure at the corner of Alamo Plaza and Commerce Street, which the owner wanted to replace with a parking lot. In 1976, the

Texas Historical Commission had already determined that the Dullnig Building was a contributing building to Alamo Plaza in their review of the historic district for National Register nomination. The director of the city’s development agency told the City Council that “time is needed to determine what effect demolition of buildings in Alamo Plaza will have on the plaza and the proposed walkway.”<sup>15</sup> By July 1977, the Alamo Plaza National Register Historic District, including the Alamo and its surrounding nineteenth and twentieth-century commercial structures, were approved by the National Park Service for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Finally, on December 9, 1977, a “group of Atlanta developers” announced a “\$40-million development package for the Alamo Plaza-River Walk area downtown, anchored by a \$25 million, 14-story hotel with 500 rooms.” The hotel would occupy a vacant lot “bounded by Crockett and College streets, Broadway and Presa Street. The plan also called for a parking garage to be constructed at Houston Street and Broadway.” A newspaper account stated that the City Council had already “given the concept its blessing and is preparing to apply for a federal grant to help finance it.” It was this scheme that became the focus of the city’s December 1977 UDAG application.<sup>16</sup>

The president of Centro 21 called the plan “the most exciting proposal in San Antonio since HemisFair.” One of the developers from Atlanta said “the development team was attracted to San Antonio because of the great work already done toward preserving historic structures and redeveloping the inner city.” The architects for the project were listed as Thompson, Ventulett and Stainback of Atlanta and the San Antonio firm of Ford, Powell and Carson.<sup>17</sup>

10. “Park, Ride Loop Project Initiated,” *San Antonio Express*, Aug. 1, 1975.

11. “Plaza Plan Endorsed,” *San Antonio Light*, Nov. 11, 1976. “River Walk-Alamo Passage Proposed,” *San Antonio Light*, Nov. 11, 1976.

12. “’76 S. A. Budget a Record at \$136 Million,” *San Antonio Light*, Jan. 2, 1977.

13. “Alamo Dream Rekindles Downtown Hope,” *San Antonio Light*, Feb. 27, 1977.

14. “Hotel Plan Imperiled,” *San Antonio Light*, Aug. 10, 1976.

15. “Demolition Freeze Ordered,” *San Antonio Light*, May 27, 1977.

16. “Hotel, Garage Planned,” *San Antonio Light*, Dec. 10, 1977.

17. “Hotel, Garage Planned,” *San Antonio Light*, Dec. 10, 1977.

## LISTING THE ALAMO PLAZA HISTORIC DISTRICT ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES, 1976-1977

On November 12, 1976, Truett Latimer, executive director of the Texas Historical Commission and the Texas state historic preservation officer, submitted to William Murtagh, keeper of the National Register of Historic Places in Washington, D.C., what Latimer described as a “preliminary submittal for the Alamo Plaza Historic District Nomination.” A notification of the proposed district had been published in the *San Antonio Express* and the *San Antonio Evening News* on July 22, 1976. The nomination “was approved on August 3, 1976,” after a meeting of the Texas Historical Commission on that day.<sup>18</sup>

Within a month, staff at the Texas Historical Commission had completed the formal nomination form for listing the Alamo Plaza Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places. Since some buildings within the district were threatened with demolition, Latimer requested that the nomination be reviewed “as soon as possible.”<sup>19</sup> The district was entered on the National Register on July 13, 1977.<sup>20</sup>

The accompanying map and narrative describe the boundary of the district as follows:

Beginning at the southwest corner of the Alamo Plaza Historic District the boundary extends north along south Broadway [formerly Loyosa Street] across Houston street to include the buildings on the north side of Houston. The northern boundary follows the alley [sic] behind the 500 block of east Houston for a block, travel[s] north along Alamo Plaza to Travis street, continues east and southeast along Travis street for a block and a half and then turns northeast to an alley to include the Turn

Verein Building (19) at 411 Bonham. The boundary continues southeast along the alley beside the Turn Verein building to Bonham street, follows Bonham street southwest, jogging east to include the Crockett Hotel (24) built in 1909 at 301 East Crockett, extending east and south around the property line of the Crockett hotel, the boundary then continues south to Commerce street. At the south the district line continues along Commerce from Bonham to South Broadway.<sup>21</sup>

On the accompanying map, the Woolworth Building, the Palace Theater Arcade Building, the Crockett Block, and the four buildings at 309, 311, 313, and 315 Alamo Plaza were all shown as “buildings that contribute to the district.” The other buildings on the block were designated as “Buildings that are compatible with the district.”<sup>22</sup>

## THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT ACTION GRANT (UDAG), 1977-1981

Meanwhile, in December 1977, the City of San Antonio submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Renewal a “Preliminary Application” for a “First Quarter Urban Development Action Grant,” or UDAG, for \$6.5 million. Its purpose was to “trigger” a proposed \$54 million “public/private revitalization project in the area surrounding the historic Alamo in the city’s central business district,” and it would be “known as the Alamo Plaza-Paseo del Rio Linkage Project,” which had been “first proposed in the early 1960s.”<sup>23</sup>

By the time that the city filed the UDAG application, city officials and Centro 21 had “obtained commitments” from owners of properties around the plaza, “private investors and a joint venture development team with considerable experience in developing and financing large-scale center city projects.” The application stated that the San

18. Truett Latimer to William Murtagh, Nov. 12, 1976. Newspaper clipping and certification statement, July 28, 1976, Cynthia E. Coe, *San Antonio Light* and *San Antonio Evening News*.

19. Truett Latimer to William Murtagh, Dec. 13, 1976.

20. Texas Historical Commission, National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form for Alamo Plaza Historic District, Dec. 10, 1976; a stamp on page one indicates it was listed on July 13, 1977.

21. Texas Historical Commission, National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form for Alamo Plaza Historic District, Dec. 10, 1976.

22. Texas Historical Commission, National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form for Alamo Plaza Historic District, Dec. 10, 1976.

23. City of San Antonio, Preliminary Application to the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development for a First Quarter Urban Development Grant, Alamo Plaza-Paseo del Rio Linkage Project, Dec. 1977.



Antonio project would “generate an estimated 1,500 new jobs and retain that many existing jobs for San Antonio.” The new jobs were expected to be “largely in the hospitality, convention and tourism fields,” which were “San Antonio’s major economic activities after that related to the military. The jobs to be retained were being in the commercial retail fields which are in danger of being lost due to the possible closing of several major retail stores if the decline of the central business district of San Antonio is not arrested.”<sup>24</sup>

It was an ambitious project that would encompass six downtown city blocks. Its components included the following:

- a \$25 million “luxury convention hotel of 500 rooms.” The city had signed a long-term contract with the Hyatt Corporation in the late summer of 1977. The hotel would be “built on a block bounded by College and Crockett Streets on the north and south, South Presa Street and the San Antonio River on the west, and South Broadway on the east.”<sup>25</sup>
- “construction of the long proposed linkage of the Riverwalk from the San Antonio River to Alamo Plaza”
- a municipal parking garage for 500 cars that would “serve the Alamo Plaza, the hotel and related retail shops”
- an “11,600 square foot entertainment and shopping mall along the new linkage to serve the major tourist attractions of the Alamo Plaza and Paseo del Rio”
- a “contraflow bus lane in Alamo Plaza”
- more than \$8 million “in additional improvements to be carried out by private property owners in the area, including housing rehabilitation and historic façade restoration for commercial structures facing the Alamo.” The housing component included the development of 92 units in the upper stories of existing buildings as condominiums using Community Development Block Grant funds; private funds totaling \$825,000 for commercial rehabilitation had been committed. The F. W. Woolworth

Company was among those “committed to remain at their present locations and to undertake major improvements when the Alamo Plaza Paseo del Rio Linkage Project” was completed.<sup>26</sup>

The UDAG application also included a component for restoring historic facades of commercial structures, noting that the “older structures have lost much of their integrity as architectural examples of their respective periods.” Cornices, awnings, and balconies had been removed, and “false facades usually of metal cover the original building material and, in many cases, the first floors have been re-modeled in totally different styles from the masses of the buildings.” To correct this situation, “restoration of the historic façade of significant buildings especially those which face the Alamo” would be undertaken. The application noted that this approach was “seen as a critical alternative to proposals, now rejected by City Council, for widespread clearance and new construction.” Funding would come from \$570,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds “for a revolving loan fund to be available to property owners for façade restoration.” The city was also submitting an application to the Economic Development Administration for \$1.3 million in “Section 204 funds for the restoration of the two most historically significant blocks of the Plaza on the west side of Alamo Street.”<sup>27</sup>

Construction of the new hotel was a very important part of the project, because, according to the UDAG application, there were “no new hotels” in the city, and “the old ones have not improved.” With the recently constructed \$20 million convention center, San Antonio could accommodate “99 percent of all types of conventions and meetings held in the United States.” However, without a large new luxury hotel facility to accommodate conventioners, the city was losing out on significant convention business.<sup>28</sup> According to the UDAG proposal, the “private development team” from Philadelphia

24. City of San Antonio, Preliminary Application to the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development for a First Quarter Urban Development Grant, Alamo Plaza-Paseo del Rio Linkage Project, Dec. 1977.

25. “Details on Hyatt Hotel Due to be Told Today,” *San Antonio Light*, Sept. 28, 1978.

26. City of San Antonio, Preliminary Application to the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development for a First Quarter Urban Development Grant, Alamo Plaza-Paseo del Rio Linkage Project, Dec. 1977.

27. City of San Antonio, Preliminary Application to the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development for a First Quarter Urban Development Grant, Alamo Plaza-Paseo del Rio Linkage Project, Dec. 1977.

28. City of San Antonio, Preliminary Application to the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development for a First Quarter Urban Development Grant, Alamo Plaza-Paseo del Rio Linkage Project, Dec. 1977.

and Atlanta that was behind the construction of the hotel and retail components had been working with the Mexican American Unity Council, which was a Community Development Corporation in San Antonio that was “funded by the Community Services Administration and the Ford Foundation.” The council would have a major “direct equity ownership in the hotel complex.”<sup>29</sup>

The UDAG application included a bird’s-eye view showing the hotel, parking garage, and the roofs of some buildings on the west side of Alamo Plaza. The drawing listed Ford, Powell and Carson of San Antonio and Thompson, Ventulett Stainback & Associates as the Associated Architects. Ford, Powell and Carson were primarily responsible for the design of the garage.<sup>30</sup> A 1977 map prepared by the city’s Department of Planning for the proposed Alamo Plaza-Paseo del Rio Linkage Project shows the proposed sites for the hotel and parking garage.

The UDAG application also described the proposed five-story parking garage, which would be “adjacent to the hotel” and would accommodate 500 cars. It was intended to “serve hotel guests for both rooms and special functions” but would “also provide needed parking for visitors to the Alamo and the Riverwalk”; in addition, it would serve shoppers “in the retail area of Houston Street which is in need of retail support.” Elevators would be located in two areas—“adjacent to Houston Street for the shopper and adjacent to the Riverwalk to serve visitors to the Alamo and the River and hotel guests.” The garage would also have “approximately 7,500 square feet of retail facilities along Houston Street and Broadway and space for public toilets, an office for the Riverwalk Superintendent and a refreshment stand/café on the Riverwalk side.” The garage would be “constructed of concrete with a special textured finish to match the hotel.” Site acquisition and construction costs were estimated at \$4,409,000.<sup>31</sup>

The UDAG application recognized that archeological investigations would be needed at the sites of both the hotel and garage and the River Walk

extension. The Center for Archaeological Research at the University of Texas at San Antonio would undertake “archeological testing to assess possible subsurface archeological resources,” and an archeologist would “be on hand to observe the removal of buildings and paved surfaces.” The Center had already prepared a budget of \$68,126 for this work. At its December 10, 1977, meeting, the City Council approved a contract with the Center “for historical research for the river linkage project.”<sup>32</sup>

Accordingly, in December 1977 the Center signed a contract with the city to assemble a history of the area that would be affected by the Alamo Plaza-Paseo del Rio Linkage Project, which proposed the removal of several buildings and the construction of the hotel and parking garage. The archeologists’ report on the history of the area, issued in 1979, was intended to “be used as a basis for planning archaeological excavations in the area to be disturbed by construction.” Included in the Center’s report was a map showing the locations of significant historical features in the area. The report called for the Center to “conduct a systematic investigation by first monitoring the demolition and removal of structures” on the site.<sup>33</sup>

The city manager, Tom Huebner, announced plans on December 10, 1977, for what was now being billed as a “\$40-million development package for the Alamo Plaza-River Walk area downtown, anchored by a \$25 million, 14-story hotel with 500 rooms.” A newspaper story stated that “a group of Atlanta developers is proposing the project, which also would include a 400-to-600-car parking garage, all part of the city’s own plan to link Alamo Plaza with the river.” The hotel would occupy a vacant lot; the garage “would be built at Houston Street and Broadway.” These plans were, however, “still subject to federal participation in the amount of \$5 million to \$7 million.”<sup>34</sup>

The city received word early in April 1978 that its UDAG proposal for the \$6.5 million program would be funded. The city’s Historic Preservation

29. City of San Antonio, Preliminary Application to the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development for a First Quarter Urban Development Grant, Alamo Plaza-Paseo del Rio Linkage Project, Dec. 1977.

30. Interview of Boone Powell by Martha Doty Freeman, July 23, 2008, San Antonio River Authority Oral History Project, Phase II.

31. City of San Antonio, Preliminary Application to the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development for a First Quarter Urban Development Grant, Alamo Plaza-Paseo del Rio Linkage Project, Dec. 1977.

32. City of San Antonio, Preliminary Application to the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development for a First Quarter Urban Development Grant, Alamo Plaza-Paseo del Rio Linkage Project, Dec. 1977. “Hotel, Garage Planned,” *San Antonio Light*, Dec. 10, 1977; this article states that the contract for the archeology report was only \$6,000.

33. Anne A. Fox and James E. Ivey, Historical Survey of the Lands within the Alamo Plaza-River Linkage Development Project, Center for Archaeological Research, Archaeological Survey Report No. 17, 1979.

34. “Hotel, Garage Planned,” *San Antonio Light*, Dec. 10, 1977.

Office issued an announcement on April 7, 1978, stating that a “grant of extreme importance to preservationists” had been received. San Antonio was the only city in Texas to have received a UDAG and only one of twenty in the country; furthermore, the announcement stated, “this project is the only one in the United States built around preservation of a city’s historic resources.” The project had “been designed to preserve and enhance the important historic resources on Alamo Plaza, South Broadway and along this portion of the Paseo del Rio.” Historic buildings on those two streets were to be restored. Also included was “an extensive archeological investigation,” which might include uncovering the “original outer walls of the Alamo and a major section of the Acequia Madre,” an irrigation system constructed in the eighteenth century.<sup>35</sup>

The announcement also stated that “in addition \$570,000 [had] been committed by the city for façade loans for the Alamo Plaza buildings and another \$1.3 million has been requested by the city from EDA for a new historic restoration fund for the project area.” Coordination of these projects was being handled through the San Antonio Historic and Cultural Heritage Officer.<sup>36</sup> The city was also successful in winning a federal grant to be used “to help renovate commercial buildings along Alamo Plaza and other nearby downtown structures.”<sup>37</sup>

According to its October-November 1978 newsletter, word about the federal grant was received “with tremendous elation” by the San Antonio Conservation Society. A story in the organization’s newsletter stated that the “project will have an enormously beneficial impact on the area; most particularly it will spark the much-needed re-furbishing of Alamo Plaza and its periphery.” This article began with a statement that the Society was an “avid advocate of downtown redevelopment and has hailed with much enthusiasm every project aimed at achieving a vital central city,” adding that “at the same time, the Society’s role is to preserve historic buildings and regional customs because they are essential to the uniqueness and charm of San Antonio—they too bring people downtown.” However, this story

did not mention the demolition of any historic buildings that would result.<sup>38</sup>

## ADJUSTMENTS TO THE LOCAL ALAMO PLAZA HISTORIC DISTRICT, 1978-1981

Meanwhile, in 1974 the City Council had passed a revised historic districts and landmarks ordinance and hired the city’s first historic preservation planner, Patricia Osborne, who became part of the Planning and Community Development Department. She was a journalist and longtime San Antonio Conservation Society activist.<sup>39</sup> In 1978 the San Antonio City Council approved a local historic district for the plaza and surrounding area. It was hoped that rezoning would provide tax incentives that would stimulate property improvements under *The Secretary of the Interior’s Guidelines for Rehabilitation*.<sup>40</sup>

In 1981 the city’s historic preservation coordinator submitted documentation to the Texas Historical Commission for certification of the existing local Alamo Plaza Historic District in accordance with the requirements of the federal Tax Reform Act of 1976. The boundaries of the local historic district, approved in 1978, and those of the National Register district were not the same, because initially a separate Paseo del Rio nomination to the National Register had been planned. In October 1981, with the additional documentation completed, the commission forwarded the city’s request for certification to the National Park Service’s Regional Office in Albuquerque, New Mexico.<sup>41</sup>

35. City of San Antonio, Historic Preservation Office, [press release?], April 7, 1978.

36. City of San Antonio, Historic Preservation Office, [press release?], April 7, 1978.

37. “Details on Hyatt Hotel Due to be Told Today,” *San Antonio Light*, Sept. 28, 1978.

38. “San Antonio Conservation Society,” *The Newsletter*, Oct.-Nov. 1978. This article contains details about the parties involved in the project.

39. Lewis F. Fisher, *Saving San Antonio: The Preservation of a Heritage* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 2016), 347-348.

40. “Alamo Plaza Group to Consider Rezoning to Historic District,” *San Antonio Commercial Recorder*, June 21, 1978.

41. Kirsten Mullen to Patricia E. Osborne, April 9, 1981; Patricia E. Osborne to Joe Opperman, March 23, 1981; Peter Flagg Maxson, Oct. 30, 1981. “Alamo Plaza Group to Consider Rezoning to Historic District,” *San Antonio Commercial Recorder*, June 21, 1978.



## THE UDAG PROJECT MOVES FORWARD

A story in the *San Antonio Light* in late January 1979 announced that the City Council had agreed that the city, through the San Antonio Development Agency, could begin using the federal UDAG funding to purchase the land for the hotel and the parking garage. The land would be leased to the builders of the hotel and garage. UDAG funds were also to be used for land acquisition for the walkway linking the River Walk and the Alamo. Private partners included the Mexican-American Unity Council, South Texas businessman B. K. Johnson, and the Ira H. Hardin Company of Atlanta, the developer.<sup>42</sup> By late April 1979 the city had acquired nearly all of the land in the project area.<sup>43</sup>

Apparently in late April 1979, the San Antonio Development Agency approved a contract with Jones Demolition, Inc., “to clear two properties along South Broadway” (later renamed Losoya Street), the proposed location for the garage. The agency also approved “contracts to buy four other properties in the area”; settlement for the one remaining parcel of land remained to be settled in court.<sup>44</sup> By August 1979 contractors had “cleared the site” of the hotel.<sup>45</sup> The National Register form identified the Gibbs Building, located on the north side of East Houston Street at number 521, as a contributing building but also noted that the “remainder of the buildings along Houston between Alamo Plaza and Broadway, as well as the buildings along Broadway behind the 300 Block of Alamo Plaza, are not significant architecturally or historically, but they are compatible in scale and use.”<sup>46</sup>

42. “Hotel Funds Okayed: Land Acquisition Next,” *San Antonio Light*, Jan. 26, 1979. “Council Clears Way for \$30 Million Hotel,” *San Antonio Light*, Jan. 26, 1979. James M. Parker, a former San Antonio city attorney, filed a lawsuit in 1979, asking that the city be prohibited from proceeding with a plan to purchase property that would be leased to developers for construction of a hotel and parking garage. Parker claimed that the city’s plan violated the Texas Constitution. Despite the lawsuit, the project moved forward, and Parker’s suit was later dismissed. “End Sought to City’s Plan to Buy Land,” *San Antonio Light*, April 25, 1979. San Antonio Development Agency, “History of Urban Renewal in San Antonio.”

43. “Hotel, Garage Land Deadline Workable,” *San Antonio Light*, April 27, 1979.

44. “End Sought to City’s Plan to Buy Land,” *San Antonio Light*, April 25, 1979.

45. “Hyatt Regency Site Ready,” *The News-San Antonio*, Aug. 2, 1979.

46. National Register form, item 7, page 5.

## ADVERSE EFFECTS, MITIGATION MEASURES, AND THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT, 1980

On May 30, 1980, three days after the Fine Arts Commission’s meeting and determinations, the city attorney issued an advisory statement to the City Council, advising them that “any UDAG project which the City undertakes which is located in an area listed on the National Register must be submitted to the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation for review and clearance as to its effect on the historical aspects of the area.” By the time this statement was issued, the Advisory Council had already determined that the Alamo Plaza/Paseo del Rio Linkage Project would have an adverse effect on the Alamo Plaza Historic District, which had been listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977.<sup>47</sup>

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the San Antonio city manager, Thomas Huebner, signed a three-party memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Texas State Historic Preservation Officer (representing the Texas Historical Commission) on June 6, 1980, the day after the City Council had authorized him to sign the agreement.<sup>48</sup> The purpose of the MOA was “to mitigate adverse effects that the Alamo Plaza/Paseo del Rio Linkage Project will have on the Alamo Plaza Historic District.”<sup>49</sup>

By the time that the city manager signed the MOA, the “Texas State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), in consultation with City,” had already “determined that this undertaking as proposed would have an adverse impact on the Alamo Plaza Historic District.” The Advisory Council, the Texas SHPO, and city officials had “consulted and reviewed the undertaking to consider feasible and prudent alternatives to avoid or satisfactorily mitigate the adverse effect.” The MOA stated that they

47. Jane H. Macon to City Council, May 30, 1980.

48. Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Texas State Historic Preservation Officer, City of San Antonio, Memorandum of Agreement, certified by the chairman of the Advisory Committee on July 21, 1980.

49. City Council, City of San Antonio, Ordinance 52283, enacted June 5, 1980.

had “mutually agreed that the undertaking” would “be implemented in accordance with the following stipulations to satisfactorily mitigate any adverse effect” on the district:

1. A design review process will be established between the City and the Texas SHPO permitting the latter to review and comment on proposed new construction or restoration work within the project in order to ensure design compatibility between new work and cultural properties associated with the Alamo Plaza Historic District. The opportunity to review and comment on design proposals will be afforded the Texas SHPO at a reasonable time prior to undertaking the work.
2. As a previously undiscovered element of the historic fabric of Mission San Antonio de Valero (the Alamo), the remnants of the adobe compound walls will be disturbed as little as possible during the project undertaking. The location of the below grade wall remnants will be indicated at ground surface, for purposes of public interpretation, by constructing new masonry walls of low height; compatible in design to the character of the district and subject to Texas SHPO review and comment in accordance with Stipulation 1.
3. The City will, via its contract with the University of Texas at San Antonio Center for Archeological research, and in coordination with its demolition and construction contractors, undertake a program to protect and recover archeological resources within the project area. This program will include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:
  - a. Extensive historical and archival research leading to the production of a detailed history of the project area from prehistoric times to the early twentieth century.
  - b. Testing of parking areas to locate undisturbed cultural deposits.
  - c. The protection, recording and recovery of cultural resources discovered during building removal.
  - d. The recovery of archeological data where the project requires destruction of all or part of an archeological resource (e.g., basement or foundation excavation, terracing a slope, etc.).
  - e. Designing features to exhibit cultural properties for purposes of public information.
  - f. Analysis and preservation of the artifacts and data recovered; and, curation of these materials through the Laboratory of the University of Texas at San Antonio Center for Archeological Research.
  - g. Production of a final report which will provide the results of the Center’s historical and archeological research.
  - h. Provision of copies of the final report to the Texas SHPO, the Council and Interagency Archeological Services, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, in accordance with 36 CFR Sec. 66.4.
4. Failure to carry out the terms of this Agreement requires that the City again request the Council’s comments in accordance with 36 CFR Part 800. If the City cannot carry out the terms of the Agreement, it shall not take or sanction any action or make any irreversible commitment that would result in an adverse effect with respect to National Register or eligible properties covered by the Agreement or would foreclose the Council’s consideration of modifications or alternatives to the Alamo Plaza/Paseo del Rio Linkage Project that could avoid or mitigate the adverse effect until the commenting process has been completed.<sup>50</sup>

## COMPLETION OF THE HOTEL AND PARKING GARAGE, 1981

At a meeting on June 27, 1980, the San Antonio Fine Arts Commission had approved “design development plans only for the parking garage,” not the final plans. Several stipulations were put forth:

50. Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Texas State Historic Preservation Officer, City of San Antonio, Memorandum of Agreement, certified by the chairman of the Advisory Committee on July 21, 1980.

- adding a portal “to front of garage all along the Houston Street side.
- including “trees and landscaping” along Losoya Street.
- plans for the garage were “to be brought back to the FAC prior to final working drawings going out to bid.” At that time, “review of retail and lease space arrangement in final layout “ was “to be provided.”<sup>51</sup>

At the same meeting, the Fine Arts Commission approved the final plans for the Paseo del Rio Linkage project.<sup>52</sup>

An article in the *San Antonio Light* in March 1981 discussed the work underway for the Hyatt Regency Hotel and adjacent parking garage. The project cost was given as \$40 million, with \$2.7 million coming from the city, \$6.5 million from the UDAG, and the remainder from private investors.<sup>53</sup>

By May 1981 much of the hotel construction had been completed. The site of the garage had been cleared, and its construction was “popping up above ground level.”<sup>54</sup> Mayor Henry Cisneros presided at the official dedication of the Paseo del Alamo, the hotel, and the garage in December 1981.<sup>55</sup>

## THE PASEO DEL RIO LINKAGE PROJECT

The concept of a pedestrian linkage between the River Walk and the Alamo was “first officially proposed in the 1960s,” then “refined over the years through a series of planning activities.” A 1962 plan “envisioned meandering, quaint walkways and plazas creating a European village character.” Three years later, “a large Spanish-style plaza surrounded by commercial structures” was proposed. In the early 1970s “a second river extension in conjunction with a major hotel and retail complex devel-

opment” was put forth. In 1976 Centro 21, the downtown revitalization task force, chose the linkage proposal “as an official project.” In 1976, with help from the University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture and the city’s planning department, the overall “redevelopment project evolved into a blend of historic preservation and new construction focusing on the need for retail revitalization and luxury hotel development.” Along with the new hotel and parking garage, the linkage project was a major component of the city’s successful 1977 UDAG application.<sup>56</sup>

The proposed linkage project was described as follows in November 1978: the lowest level of the hotel interior would be “part of the River Walk linkage to Alamo Plaza. Gardens and platforms are terraced up from the River Walk providing a lushly-landscaped environment for the hotel’s approximately 30,000 square feet” of ballroom and convention facilities, “a gourmet restaurant seating 125, a 200-seat coffee stop and an atrium bar to serve 80 people.”<sup>57</sup>

The creation of the Paseo del Rio would result in the demolition of five structures adjacent to the linkage walkway: the Senate Bar and Grill at 158 South Broadway, number 309 Alamo Plaza, 311 Alamo Plaza, the Radio Shack building at 313 Alamo Plaza, and the Remember the Alamo theater at 315 Alamo Plaza. The buildings at 309 and 311 Alamo Plaza were demolished early in the project, sometime after November 1977, perhaps after the lifting of the demolition ban, which started in May 1977; their removal provided the initial access through the block to Alamo Plaza.

The National Register of Historic Places nomination form included photographs of the west side of Alamo Plaza in 1976. In a view looking north from Crockett Street, the building at 313 Alamo Plaza was occupied by a Radio Shack store. A second photograph, also dating from November 1976, shows just the north bay of the facade of number 315; its facade appears to be covered with stucco and had small square holes at the top of its false front, perhaps in an attempt to fit in with the appearance of the Alamo itself. At this time, number 315 was occupied by the Remember the Alamo the-

51. San Antonio Fine Arts Commission, Minutes, June 27, 1980.

52. San Antonio Fine Arts Commission, Minutes, June 27, 1980.

53. “River Walk Work Continues,” *San Antonio Light*, March 22, 1981.

54. “Hyatt Regency Taking Shape,” *San Antonio Light*, May 24, 1981.  
“River Walk Work Continues,” *San Antonio Light*, March 22, 1981.  
“Work Steps Up on Hyatt Regency as Preview, Opening Dates Near,” *San Antonio Light*, Dec. 7, 1981.

55. “Paseo del Alamo a Vital New Link,” *San Antonio Express*, Dec. 18, 1981.

56. “Project Will Link Alamo and River for Pedestrians,” *Paseo del Rio Showboat*, Nov. 1, 1978. Over the years the project was also called Paseo del Alamo.

57. “Project Will Link Alamo and River for Pedestrians,” *Paseo del Rio Showboat*, Nov. 1, 1978.



ater, and the photographer caught a few letters of a signboard on the upper part of its facade, which read “LAMO.”

In the 1976 National Register nomination form, the buildings at 309-315 Alamo Plaza were listed as “Buildings that contribute to the district” and described as part of “a series of one-story buildings.” The form also stated that “Although the main facades are modern, the structures are possibly the same buildings which are visible in early photographs of the Plaza.”<sup>58</sup>

An article published in the *San Antonio Light* in February 1977 commented that “\$2.5 million would enable the city to acquire” the three buildings at 311-315 Alamo Plaza, which would be torn down “to build a ‘notch’ to the river that would go under Broadway Street.”<sup>59</sup>

However, a map prepared by the city’s Department of Planning for the proposed Alamo Plaza-Paseo del Rio Linkage Project in November 1977 indicated that the three commercial buildings at 309, 311, and 313 Alamo Plaza were on the project site and presumably to be demolished. The Remember the Alamo theater building, at 315 Alamo Plaza, immediately south of the Crockett Block, was designated for rehabilitation.

## ARCHEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AND DEMOLITION OF THE RADIO SHACK BUILDING, 1979-1980

In April 1978 the city received word that its UDAG proposal for the \$6.5 million program would be funded, and over the next year the city acquired the land needed for all parts of the project. Archeologists had begun work at the site of the new hotel in June 1979, and they were planning to soon “dig on the location of the Radio Shack store, 313 Alamo Plaza in hopes of uncovering the west wall of the Alamo.” By June 1979 the city had determined that

the Radio Shack building at 313 Alamo Plaza would be demolished for the linkage project.<sup>60</sup>

During the excavations at the Radio Shack site, the archeologists uncovered “important details about the history and structure of the Alamo.” The “most significant,” according to Jake Ivey, research associate in the University of Texas at San Antonio Archaeology Department, were the “actual location, size and construction of the West wall of the Alamo Compound.” The wall was constructed of “adobe bricks about 21” x 9” x 4” in size”; it was “almost exactly 33” thick.” The section being excavated was located “about 290’ from the front” of the Alamo and “aligned about a degree west of magnetic north.” Also among the “most interesting findings” were “the arches of caliche stone which fronted what is now Alamo Plaza.” Adobe walls of structures that had been built up against this wall extended to the east, dividing the space into two rooms. Midway through the excavation, Ivey believed that the wall was “probably the original wall of the compound, built (in this area) about 1750.” The excavations had begun on July 13, 1979.<sup>61</sup>

An interim report by archeologist Jake Ivey on the excavations, written in December 1979, included a description of the two adobe rooms on the Radio Shack site:

The rooms themselves continued in use as houses until about 1870 in the case of the Radio Shack...The Radio Shack portion was torn down in 1870, and a wooden store built in its place. This was modified in 1875, and continued in use, with further modifications, until today. Most of the 1875 store was still standing as part of the Radio Shack when the excavations began.<sup>62</sup>

In January 1980 a member of the UTSA archeology team told a reporter from the *Express-News* that the “unearthed west wall of the Alamo” that had been discovered would be “sealed, protecting it from the atmosphere, and placed on public exhibition as part

58. Alamo Plaza Historic District nomination, received Dec. 17, 1976, and entered July 13, 1977.

59. “Alamo Dream Rekindles Downtown Hope,” *San Antonio Light*, Feb. 27, 1977. “Project Will Link Alamo and River for Pedestrians,” *Paseo del Rio Showboat*, Nov. 1, 1978.

60. “Hotel Funds Okayed; Land Acquisition Next,” *San Antonio Light*, Jan. 26, 1979. “Site of New Hotel Yields Remnants of Early Homes,” *San Antonio Light*, June 14, 1979.

61. Jake Ivey, “Excavations at the Western Wall,” [Dec. 11, 1979], reprint from 1979-1980 newsletter of Alamo Lore and Myth Organization. “Original Alamo Adobe Wall Soon to be Given Place in Texas History,” *San Antonio Light*, June 12, 1980. “Despite Rains, Hotel on Target,” [*Express News*], May 22, 1980.

62. Jake Ivey, “Excavations at the Western Wall,” [Dec. 11, 1979], reprint from 1979-1980 newsletter of Alamo Lore and Myth Organization.

of the pedestrian walkway linking Alamo Plaza to the River Walk.” The exhibition was scheduled to be completed late in 1981. “Most of the wall” was to be “sealed in concrete, but a portion” would be “encased in clear plastic so it can be viewed.” Then, “to give visitors an idea of the size of the original wall, an adobe-stone replica” would be “constructed on part of the concrete-sealed portion, showing the wall as it was in 1836, at the time of the Battle of the Alamo.” The excavated remains were described as the “actual wall the Mexican army had to get over when they stormed the Alamo.”<sup>63</sup>

The archeological excavations continued until June 1980. Another description of the work stated that the “foundation of the western wall of the Alamo as well as adobe buildings and an acequia channel were uncovered and recorded. In all, almost half of the site was excavated by archaeologists before bull dozers were allowed to raze the building. The exposed features were later reconstructed above ground in the park.”<sup>64</sup>

Demolition contractors started to tear down the Radio Shack building soon after the archeologists had completed excavating the grounds of the building site. After the building was demolished, they continued to dig, locating “more than 100 musket balls” under its concrete floor, as well as “bowls, plates and other ‘debris.’”<sup>65</sup>

Construction of the new walkway began later in 1980, and in October preservationists became concerned about the possibility of contractors damaging the adobe wall. However, Boone Powell, the architect for the linkage project, told the *San Antonio Light* on October 31 that he “believed very little of the newly discovered wall has been damaged although current excavation” for the new walkway was “close to the historic wall.” “We may have touched a little of the wall, but we’ll probably have to have an analysis to see how much. I believe very little, if any, of the original wall has been touched.” Nevertheless, the contractors were taking

“precautionary measures” in order “to ensure that no more of the wall is damaged.”<sup>66</sup>

The next day a city representative reported that the “linkage project has damaged a portion of one of the original garrison walls of the Alamo,” with “some damage” having been “done to the outer facing of the westernmost wall.” To protect the remains temporarily, they were “covered with sand and plastic,” and construction “work in the area” was “halted except for hand digging.”<sup>67</sup> When the UTSA archeologists examined the site a few days later, they reported that “most of the walls...remained unharmed,” but “a portion of an outer wall was destroyed.” Only hand digging was to be allowed in the area in the future, and the contractor was “cautioned about using heavy, vibrating equipment in the area.”<sup>68</sup> A plan to seal the adobe walls and enclose one portion in plate glass was proposed.<sup>69</sup>

Meanwhile, at its June 27, 1980, meeting, the city’s Fine Arts Commission had approved the final plans for the Paseo del Rio Linkage project.<sup>70</sup>

## DEMOLITION OF THE SENATE BAR AND GRILL, 1980

Almost immediately after the city manager had signed the Memorandum of Agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Texas Historical Commission on June 6, 1980, the city requested an amendment to the MOA to allow for the demolition of the Senate Bar and Grill, located at 158 South Broadway. In late June 1980, Patricia Osborne, the city’s historic preservation officer, along with the city’s director of building and zoning, submitted to the city manager a detailed report on the steps that the city would need to take in order to demolish this building. Since the structure was listed in the National Register form as a “compatible” building, the city would face “additional constraints” in securing agreement for demolition. “Strict procedures to meet federal regulations”

63. “Alamo Wall to be Sealed,” *Express News*, Jan. 26, 1980. “Alamo Wall Defended,” *San Antonio Light*, Oct. 31, 1980.

64. “Excavations in the Radio Shack Building, Southwest Corner of the Alamo Compound,” Overview of Alamo Archaeology, Alamo Studies Forum, accessed Dec. 2, 2019, <http://alamostudies.proboards.com/thread/300/overview-alamo-archaeology>; his source says that an archeological report of this project has not been published.

65. “Despite Rains, Hotel on Target,” *Express News*, May 22, 1980.

66. “Alamo Wall Defended,” *San Antonio Light*, Oct. 31, 1980.

67. “Work Damages Part of Original Alamo Wall,” *Express News*, Nov. 1, 1980.

68. “Experts Say Alamo Wall Destroyed,” *San Antonio Light*, Nov. 4, 1980.

69. “Experts Say Alamo Wall Destroyed,” *San Antonio Light*, Nov. 4, 1980.

70. San Antonio Fine Arts Commission, Minutes, June 27, 1980.

would need to be followed, and a formal amendment to the MOA would probably be required.<sup>71</sup>

In August 1980, within a month of the federal certification of the MOA, the city manager wrote to Truett Latimer, the state historic preservation officer, explaining that “as final plans for construction of the actual walkway linkage from Alamo Plaza to the San Antonio River level have evolved, it has become clear that another structure within the project area must be removed.” The building in question, known as the Senate Bar and Grill, had been constructed in 1921 and was identified as being a “compatible building” on the National Register nomination form. The building had been “attached improperly to the wall of the next [adjoining] building,” the Goodwill building, which had been “removed earlier in the project,” and the resulting conditions were causing “a very real hazard.”<sup>72</sup>

“During actual construction of the linkage, no guarantee can be made that the Senate Bar Building will not collapse,” Huebner warned, and the inclusion of this property was essential to the project. Stabilization would be very expensive. Furthermore, he argued, since the building did not have a basement, its demolition would “afford an opportunity for archeologists to investigate the earlier history of the area” and “provide a far greater more important opportunity for historians” than its continuing physical presence. The Texas Historical Commission sent a staff member to inspect the property, and the agency agreed that the building could be removed; as mitigation, its staff recommended photographic recording of the exterior, archeological investigation, and provision for review and comment by the commission of “preliminary design concepts and schematics” of its replacement.<sup>73</sup>

Meanwhile, a representative of the San Antonio Conservation Society testified before the review board in favor of the city’s application for a demolition permit for the structure, adding a statement that the Society “would like to go on record as strongly urging the city to use the site of the Senate

Bar and Grille for a much needed park (green space) area.” Earlier in the summer, the Fine Arts Commission, at its June 27, 1980, meeting, had “encouraged” the demolition of the Senate building. After “lengthy discussion,” the three parties to the MOA agreed that it “should be removed.”<sup>74</sup>

Finally, on August 18, 1980, the city’s historic preservation officer wrote to the historic review board, formally recommending that the Senate Bar and Grill be demolished. Although it was “listed as a compatible property” within the National Register historic district, “due to size and scale, the property” had “been determined to have minimal architectural and historic importance.” Furthermore, she wrote, “due to the nature of the adjacent archeological site and the fact [that] this building has no basement which has left the ground relatively untouched, removal of the building will afford another opportunity for archeologists to investigate the lands of the Alamo.”<sup>75</sup>

## DEMOLITION OF THE REMEMBER THE ALAMO THEATER, 1981-1983

In its August 1980 testimony before the historic review board supporting the proposed demolition of the Senate Bar and Grill, the San Antonio Conservation Society had also urged the city “to allow no more demolition in the Alamo Plaza area.”<sup>76</sup>

Nonetheless, in October 1981 the city manager appealed to the Texas Historical Commission for permission to demolish another building within the National Register historic district—the Remember the Alamo theater, which was located at 315 Alamo Plaza, abutting the south facade of the Crockett Block.<sup>77</sup> The Radio Shack building, at 313 Alamo Plaza, which had originally abutted the south wall of the theater, had been demolished in 1980 to provide a wider opening to Alamo Plaza for the linkage project. A newspaper article about the completion

71. Patricia E. Osborne and George D. Vann Jr. to City Manager, June 25, 1980, Historic Design and Review Commission, Case 1337 files, Aug. 18, 1980, meeting.

72. Thomas Huebner to Truett Latimer, June 30, 1980, Historic Design and Review Commission, Case 1337 files, Aug. 18, 1980, meeting.

73. Thomas Huebner to Truett Latimer, June 30, 1980; Alton K. Briggs to Louis Wall, Aug. 7, 1980; Jane Macon to City Council, Aug. 7, 1980, Historic Design and Review Commission, Case 1337 files, Aug. 18, 1980, meeting.

74. Loyce Ince, testimony regarding demolition of Senate Bar and Grill, Aug. 18, 1980, Historic Design and Review Commission, Case 1337 files, Aug. 18, 1980, meeting.

75. Patricia E. Osborne to Historic Review Board, Aug. 18, 1980, Case 1337 files, Aug. 18, 1980, meeting.

76. Loyce Ince, testimony regarding demolition of Senate Bar and Grill, Aug. 18, 1980, Historic Design and Review Commission, Case 1337 files, Aug. 18, 1980, meeting.

77. Thomas E. Huebner to Truett Latimer, Oct. 7, 1981, Historic Design and Review Commission files.



of the overall project published in December 1981 had noted that the theater might be “razed in the future for additional street-level plaza space.”<sup>78</sup> Huebner told the *San Antonio Express* that he was “painfully aware of a jagged side” of the building, which had resulted from the earlier demolition of the Radio Shack building, and hoped “to do something about it.” He called it “a mess.”<sup>79</sup>

In his letter to the Texas Historical Commission, Huebner explained that when the city was acquiring property for the linkage project, it had “purchased half a structure on Alamo Plaza which housed on one side the Remember the Alamo Theater and on the other a Radio Shack Store.” This property, he continued, was “the only structure on Alamo Plaza without a basement, and when the Radio Shack portion was demolished, archeologists from the University of Texas at San Antonio located beneath its floor remains of the outer wall of the Alamo complex.”<sup>80</sup>

Now, in October 1981, “as work has progressed,” Huebner continued, “it has become increasingly apparent that the project would be greatly enhanced if the remaining half of the structure, currently the Remember the Alamo Theater, is demolished.” The theater would be relocated to the two south sections of the adjoining Crockett Block that the city had recently purchased and planned “eventually to restore its portion of the building.” The city had already “reached an agreement with the owners of both the property and Remember the Alamo Theater to relocate the theater in the Crockett Block and lease the property on a long term basis.” The city was now proposing to demolish the theater building, at 315 Alamo Plaza, and then extend its “agreement with the UTSA Center for Archaeological Research to continue excavation of the Alamo walls (which they have already determined exist beneath the floor slab) and include the property in the Linkage project as public open space.”<sup>81</sup>

As it had done in justifying demolition of the Senate Bar and Grill, the city once again used the consequences of the prior demolition of an adjoining

building and the prospect of successful archeological investigations to justify its appeal to demolish another building:

The theater building is a one-story timber frame structure constructed in 1875. As it now stands, it is an eyesore, its south wall being the former interior of Radio Shack. In addition, it blocks a full restoration of the south wall of the Crockett Block. While we realize the building is identified in the Alamo Plaza National Register Historic District as a compatible structure, its value to the district has been greatly diminished in that half of it has been demolished. Accurate restoration is therefore impossible. Demolition, on the other hand, will allow an archaeological investigation of the last remaining portion of the western wall of the Alamo complex, with a subsequent continuation of the interpretive treatment now being constructed on the Radio Shack site.<sup>82</sup>

Huebner argued that the city needed a quick answer from the commission on mitigation, since the Linkage project was “to be dedicated in mid-December [1981], and we would like to have demolition of the structure completed so as not to interfere with public access to and enjoyment of this important new element of the Alamo Plaza area.”<sup>83</sup> Developers acquired the Crockett Building in 1982, and the city was negotiating with the owner of the theater building to lease the land under the building.<sup>84</sup>

The Remember the Alamo theater building “was quietly scheduled for demolition,” according to a March 1982 newspaper story. The city had offered \$30,000 to the theater operator, R. Jay Casell, but he was reluctant to move. Huebner, the former city manager, had “targeted the building as an eyesore” and wanted it razed to create a landscaped mini-plaza adjacent to the new Paseo del Alamo. Casell claimed that the building’s foundations dated to 1835 and were “on the site of the Alamo’s original artillery command post.” Patricia Osborne, the city’s historic preservation officer, told the newspaper that “demolition would have to be preceded

78. “S. A. to Mark Completion of River Project,” *San Antonio Light*, Dec. 12, 1981.

79. “Huebner: Wall on Hyatt-Alamo Linkage a Mess,” *San Antonio Light*, [June 9?], 1981.

80. Thomas E. Huebner to Truett Latimer, Oct. 7, 1981, Historic Design and Review Commission files.

81. Thomas E. Huebner to Truett Latimer, Oct. 7, 1981, Historic Design and Review Commission files.

82. Thomas E. Huebner to Truett Latimer, Oct. 7, 1981, Historic Design and Review Commission files.

83. Thomas E. Huebner to Truett Latimer, Oct. 7, 1981, Historic Design and Review Commission files.

84. “Alamo Plaza Buildings to be Restored,” *San Antonio Light*, Nov. 12, 1982.

by official city Historic Review Board approval of a formal demolition permit.” She “said the building is historic, but she has not done any detailed research on its origins.”<sup>85</sup> A rendering of the west side of Alamo Plaza that was published in November 1982 showed all four buildings—309, 311, 313, and 315 Alamo Plaza—as having been demolished. The caption explained that the Remember the Alamo building at 315 Alamo Plaza was still standing but that the new owners of the Crockett Block would want to demolish it and “carry through plans for a more-spacious entry to the Paseo del Alamo walkway.”<sup>86</sup>

In April 1983 the City of San Antonio filed an application with the Board of Review for Historic Districts and Landmarks for a permit to demolish the Remember the Alamo theater. The owner of the building apparently was Schandler Interests, represented by Frank Van Delden, who also filed for a permit, saying that the purpose of the demolition was “for City S.A. Park & Recreation.” The application was approved by the review board and by the city’s historic preservation officer on April 11, 1983.<sup>87</sup> A news story from May 27, 1983, reported that the building “was demolished a few weeks ago.”<sup>88</sup>

In May 1983, at about the time that the theater was demolished, the city signed a fifty-year lease for \$130,000 with Vienna Maverick for the land on which the theater had stood. Special projects coordinator Frank Perry estimated that the Paseo del Alamo expansion onto this site would cost between \$100,000 and \$200,000.<sup>89</sup>

In December 1981, as the city celebrated the culmination of the overall project, the *San Antonio Express* had noted in an editorial that the “Paseo del Alamo creates something long sought: A link

between the city’s two major tourist attractions, the Alamo and Paseo del Rio.”<sup>90</sup>

Ford Powell and Carson received a merit award from the Texas Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects in 1984 for the landscape design of the Paseo del Alamo.<sup>91</sup>

85. “Razers’ May Cut Down Remember the Alamo,” *San Antonio Light*, March 31, 1982.

86. “Alamo Plaza Buildings to be Restored,” *San Antonio Light*, Nov. 12, 1982.

87. City of San Antonio, Board of Review for Historic Districts and Landmarks, application to demolish 315 Alamo Plaza, April 11, 1983, case file 1938. Frank Van Delden, Application for permit to demolish structure located at 315 Alamo Plaza, April 11, 1983, case file 1938.

88. “City Studies Changes for Paseo del Alamo,” *San Antonio Light*, May 27, 1983.

89. “City Studies Changes for Paseo del Alamo,” *San Antonio Light*, May 27, 1983.

90. “Paseo del Alamo a Vital New Link,” *San Antonio Light*, Dec. 18, 1981.

91. “Winning Design,” *San Antonio Light*, April 24, 1984.



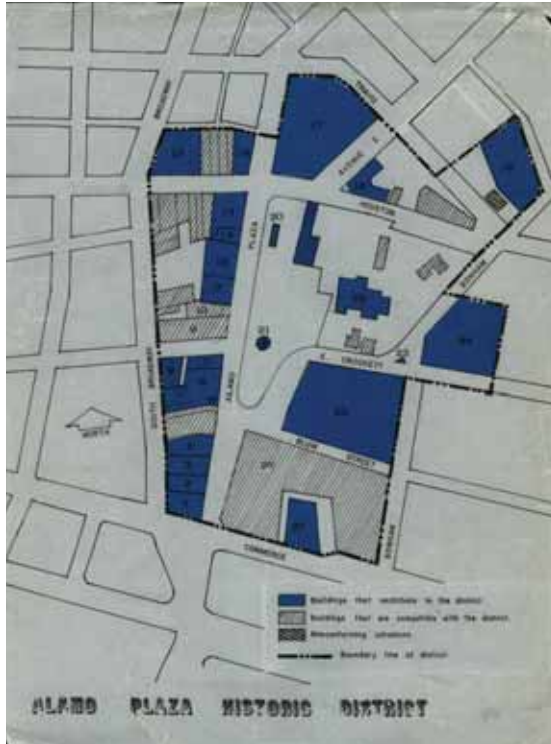
Fire-insurance map from 1971 showing the buildings on the block bounded by Houston Street, Alamo Plaza, Crockett Street, and South Broadway at that time.

Sanborn Map Company. San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas, 1971. New York: Sanborn Map & Publishing Co., 1971.



Recent aerial view of the same block. Google Maps, accessed Nov. 14, 2019.





Map showing the boundaries and status of buildings within the National Register of Historic Places Alamo Plaza Historic District, 1976. The blue indicates buildings that contribute to the district. Texas Historical Commission, National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form for Alamo Plaza Historic District, Dec. 10, 1976.



View looking southeast along west side of Alamo Plaza, 1902. The Crockett Block is the large building in the center of the photograph; numbers 315–309 Alamo Plaza are to the left. 1902, Institute of Texan Cultures, UTSA Special Collections 93-10.



Aerial view, from right, of Crockett Block and 315–309 Alamo Plaza, 1927.  
1927, Institute of Texan Cultures, UTSA Special Collections 083-0507.



View looking east toward the Alamo, with the roofs of 315–309 Alamo Plaza visible below, 1927.  
View of roofs of Alamo Plaza buildings, 1927, Institute of Texan Cultures, UTSA Special Collections 99-531.





View looking southwest along the west side of Alamo Plaza, showing the Crockett Block at right and 315-309 at center of photograph, 1944.  
View of roofs of Alamo Plaza buildings, 1944, Institute of Texan Cultures, UTSA Special Collections 99-531.



View of Alamo Plaza looking west, with Crockett Block at right and 315-309 Alamo Plaza at left, ca. 1945.  
ca. 1945, University of North Texas.





View looking northwest along the west side of Alamo Plaza, November 1976.

Texas Historical Commission, National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form for Alamo Plaza Historic District, Dec. 10, 1976.



View of west side of Alamo Plaza, showing a small portion of the facade of 315 Alamo Plaza at the far left, November 1976.

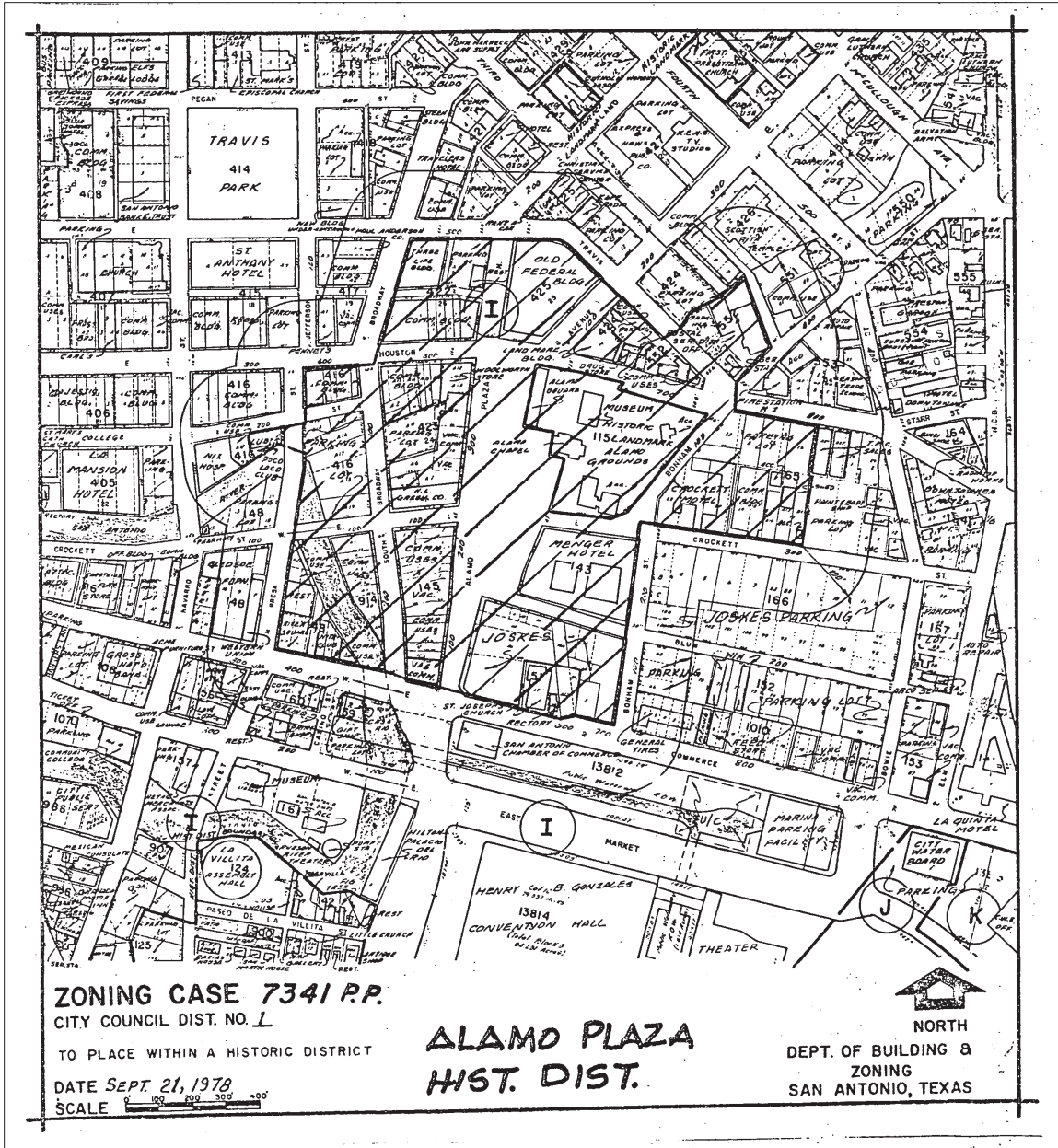
Texas Historical Commission, National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form for Alamo Plaza Historic District, Dec. 10, 1976.



West side of Alamo Plaza, showing, from left, 309-315 Alamo Plaza, November 1976.  
c. 1976, University of North Texas.

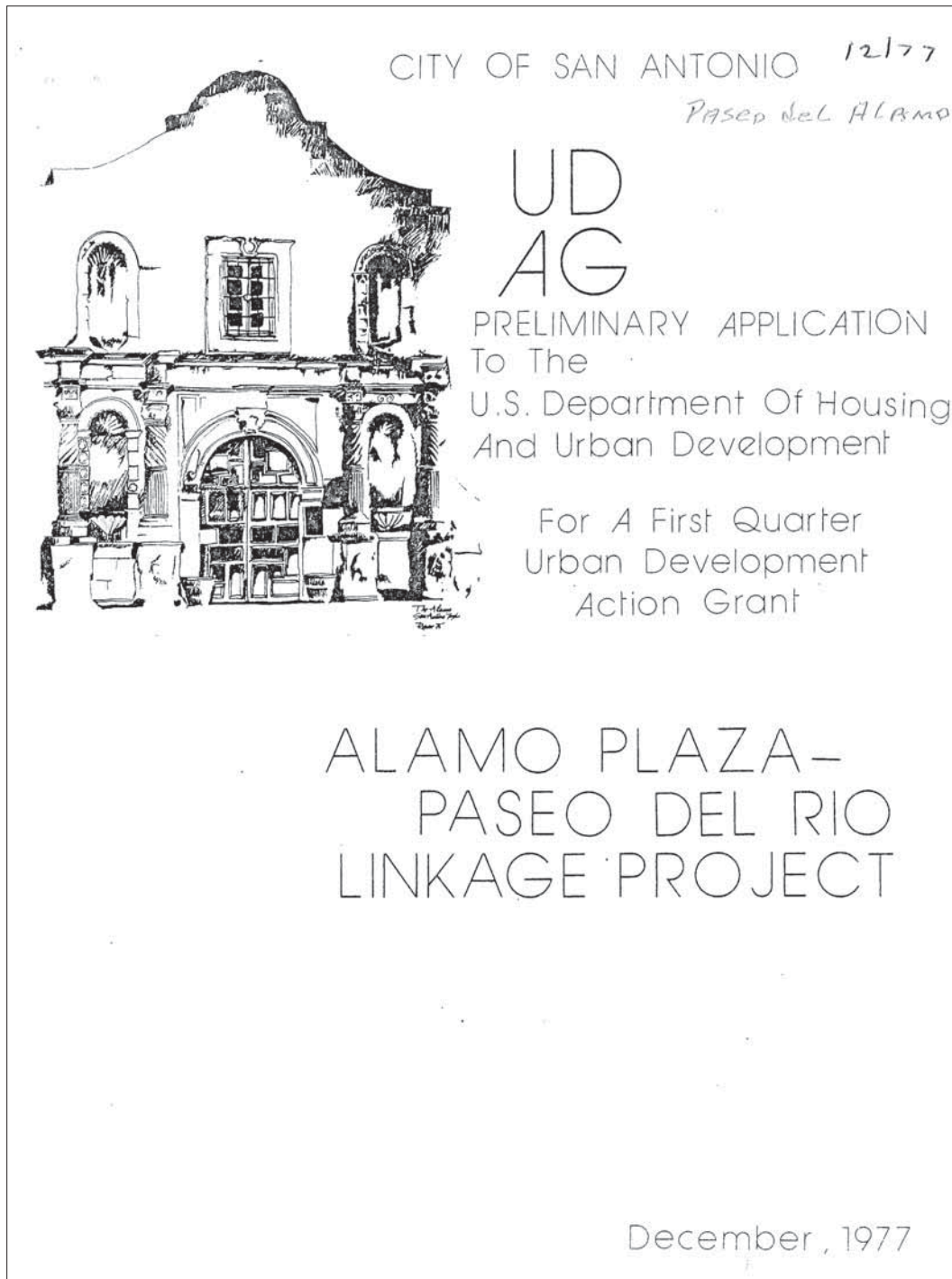


West side of Alamo Plaza, showing, from left, 309-315 Alamo Plaza, ca. 1978, before Butler's Shoes was demolished.  
c. 1978, Institute of Texan Cultures, UTSA Special Collections 107-1704.



Map showing boundaries of San Antonio's local Alamo Plaza Historic District, ca. 1970s.  
San Antonio Alamo Plaza Historic District certification files.



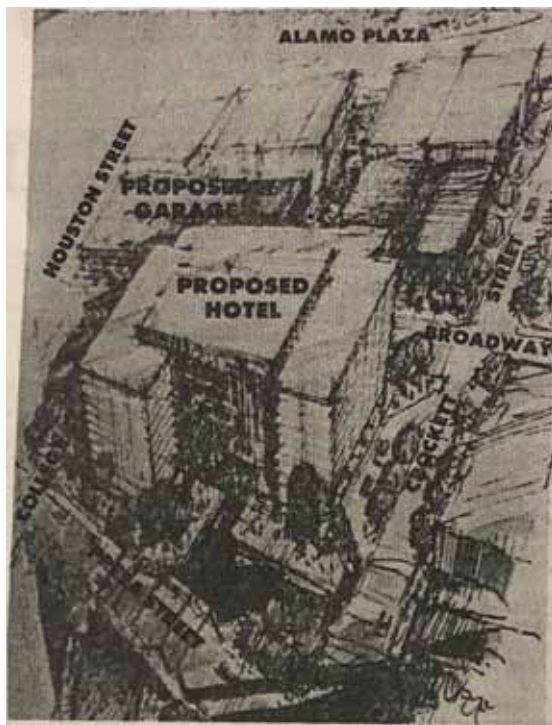


Cover of the Urban Development Grant (UDAG) proposal submitted by the City of San Antonio in December 1977 for the Alamo Plaza-Paseo del Rio Project.

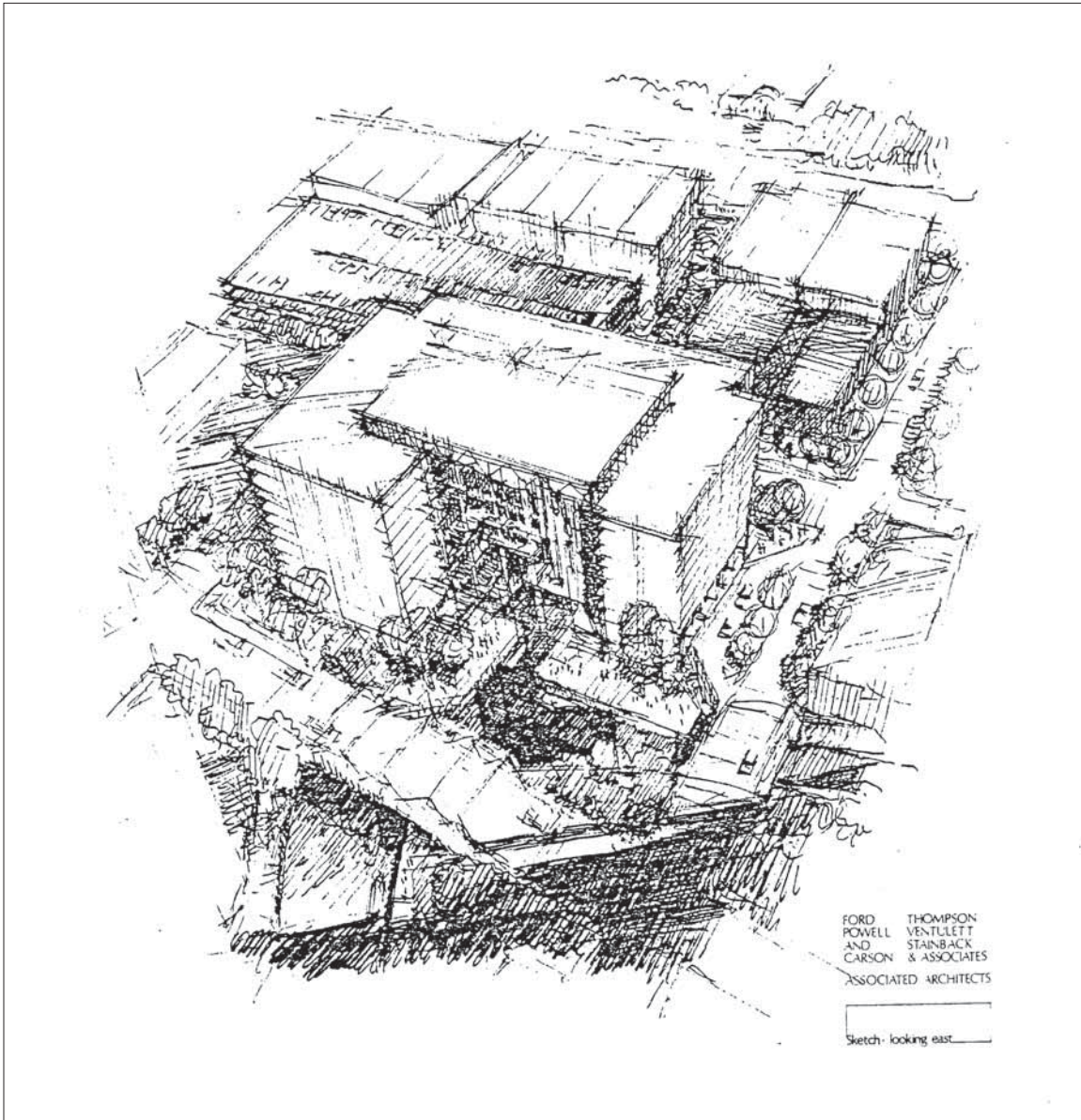
City of San Antonio, Preliminary Application to the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development for a First Quarter Urban Development Grant, Alamo Plaza—Paseo del Rio Linkage Project, Dec. 1977.



Map showing boundaries of the proposed UDAG project, November 1977.  
City of San Antonio: Department of Planning. Alamo Plaza—Paseo del Rio Linkage Project, Nov. 1977.

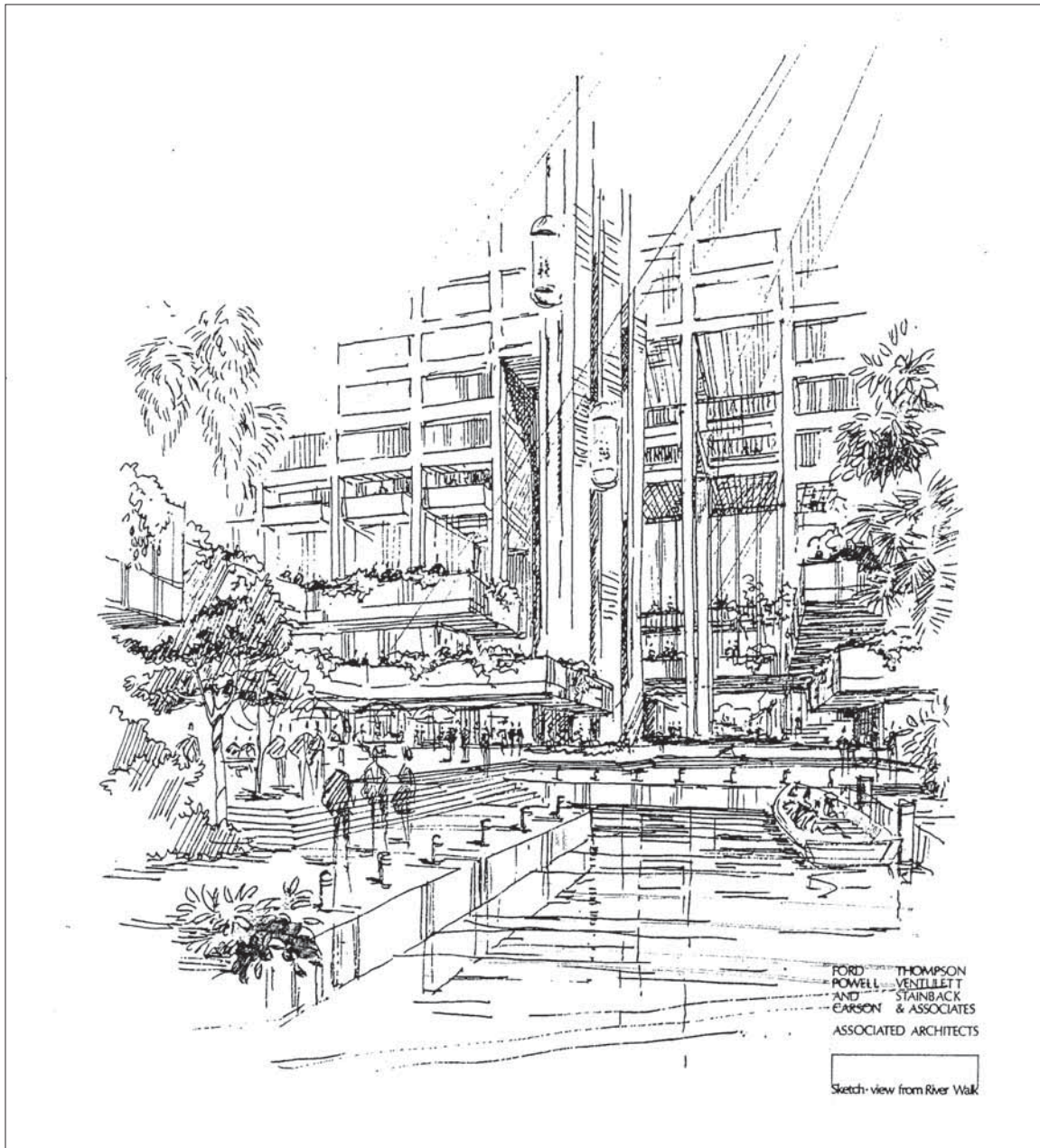


Rendering, looking northeast, identifying the various components of the proposed UDAG project, December 1977.  
"Hotel, Garage Planned," *San Antonio Express*, Dec. 10, 1977.

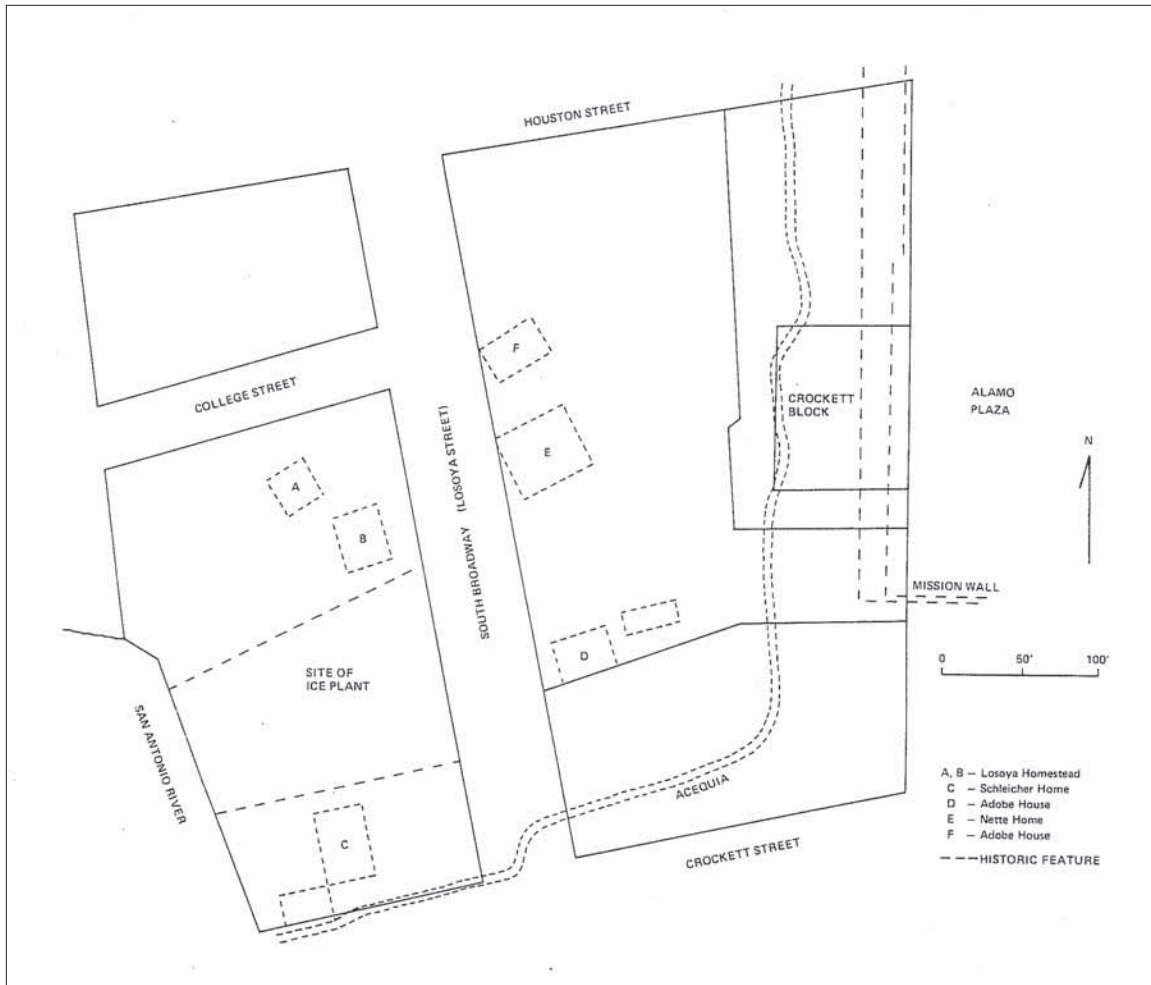


Architects' rendering, looking northeast, showing the proposed hotel, parking garage, and Paseo del Rio. This rendering was part of the UDAG application. City of San Antonio, Preliminary Application to the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development for a First Quarter Urban Development Grant, Alamo Plaza—Paseo del Rio Linkage Project, Dec. 1977.





Architects' rendering of the Paseo del Rio within the atrium of the proposed Hyatt Hotel, 1977. This rendering was part of the UDAG application. City of San Antonio, Preliminary Application to the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development for a First Quarter Urban Development Grant, Alamo Plaza—Paseo del Rio Linkage Project, Dec. 1977.



Archaeologists' site plan showing selected historic areas within the project area, 1979.

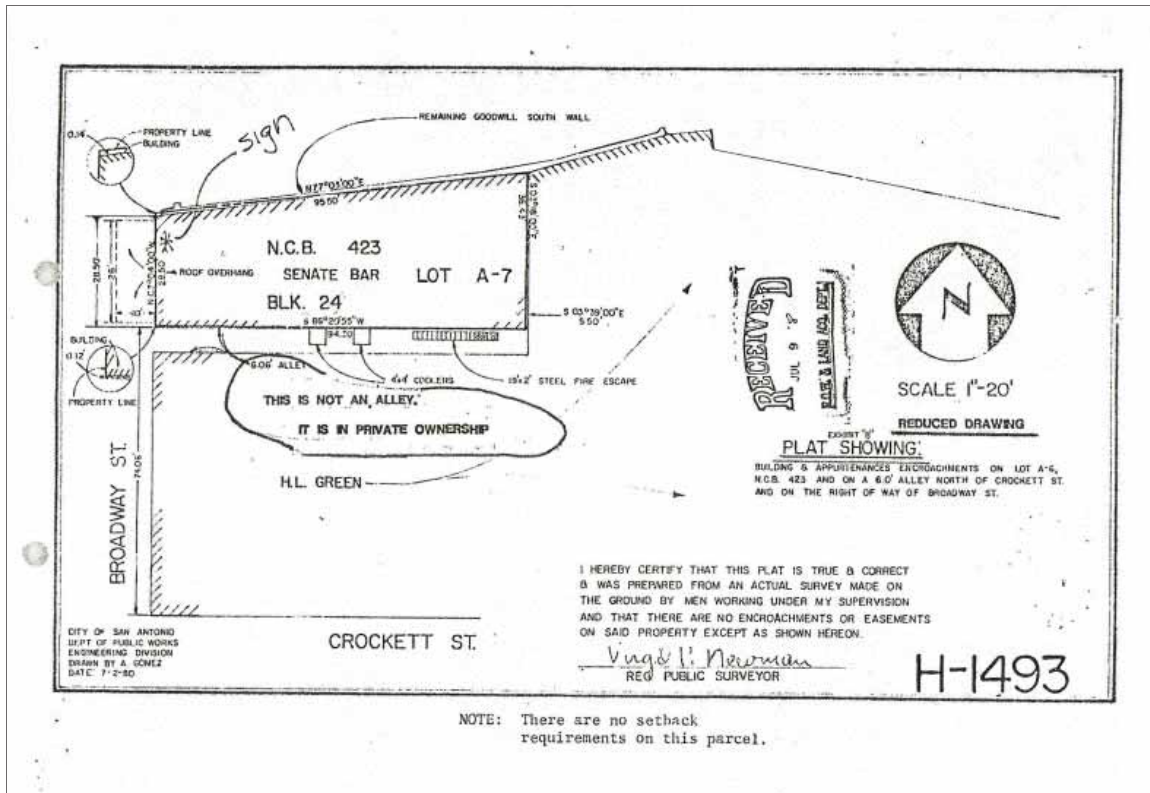
Anne A. Fox and James E. Ivey, Historical Survey of the Lands within the Alamo Plaza—River Linkage Development Project, Center for Archaeological Research, Archaeological Survey Report No. 17, 1979.



Aerial view looking east showing progress of construction of hotel and some of the buildings, east of Broadway, still on the site of the garage, August 1979.

"Hyatt Regency Site Readied," *The News-San Antonio*, Aug. 2, 1979.





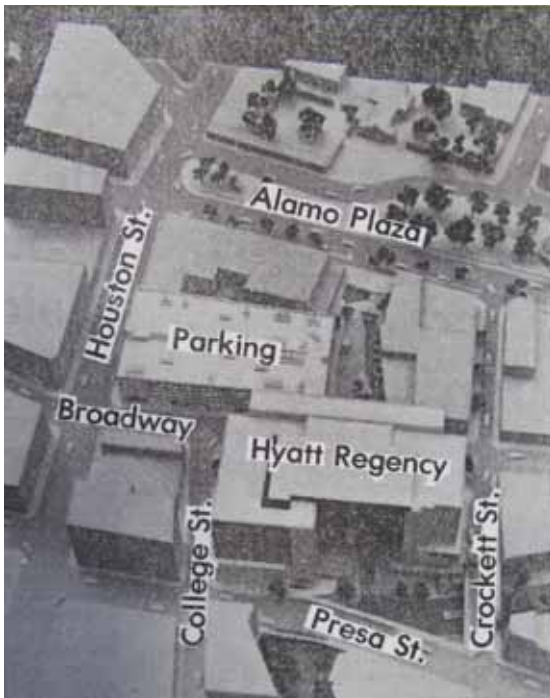
Site plan of the Senate Bar and Grill, which was demolished.  
Historic Design and Review Commission, Case 1337 files, Aug. 18, 1980, meeting.



View looking north along Alamo Plaza as the Radio Shack building was being demolished, ca. 1980.  
Demolition of Radio Shack building in progress, San Antonio municipal files.



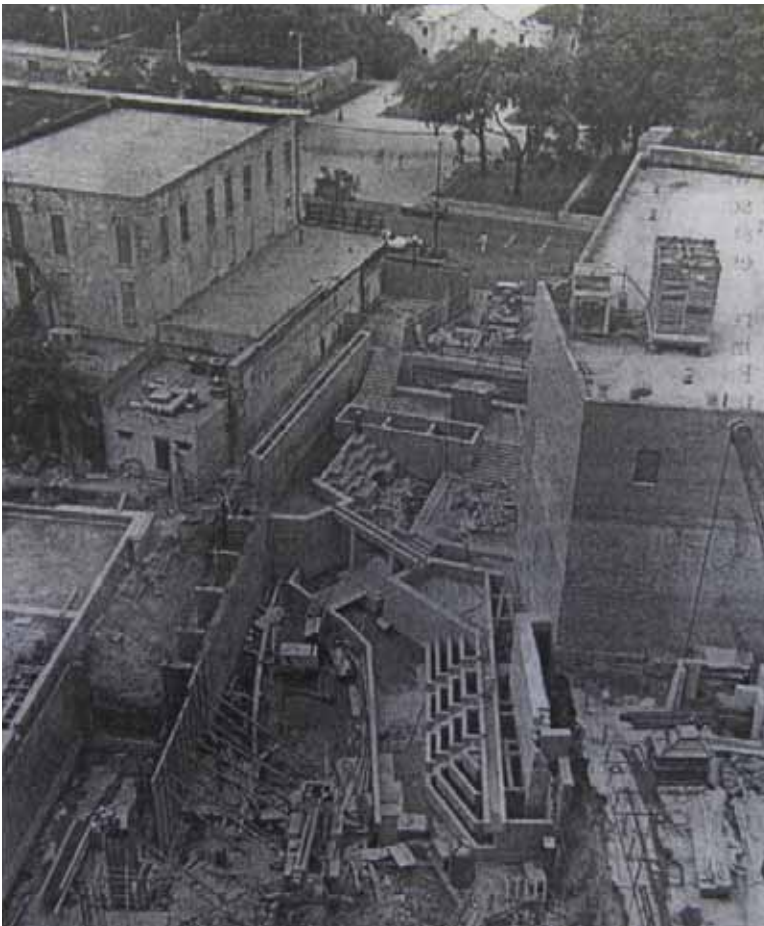
Adobe wall uncovered by archeologists during excavations in 1979-1980; photograph dated June 10, 1980. 1980, archeology investigations after demolition, Institute of Texan Cultures, UTSA Special Collections E-0062-099-21.



Model of the UDAG project, published in 1980. *San Antonio Light*, Aug. 16, 1980.

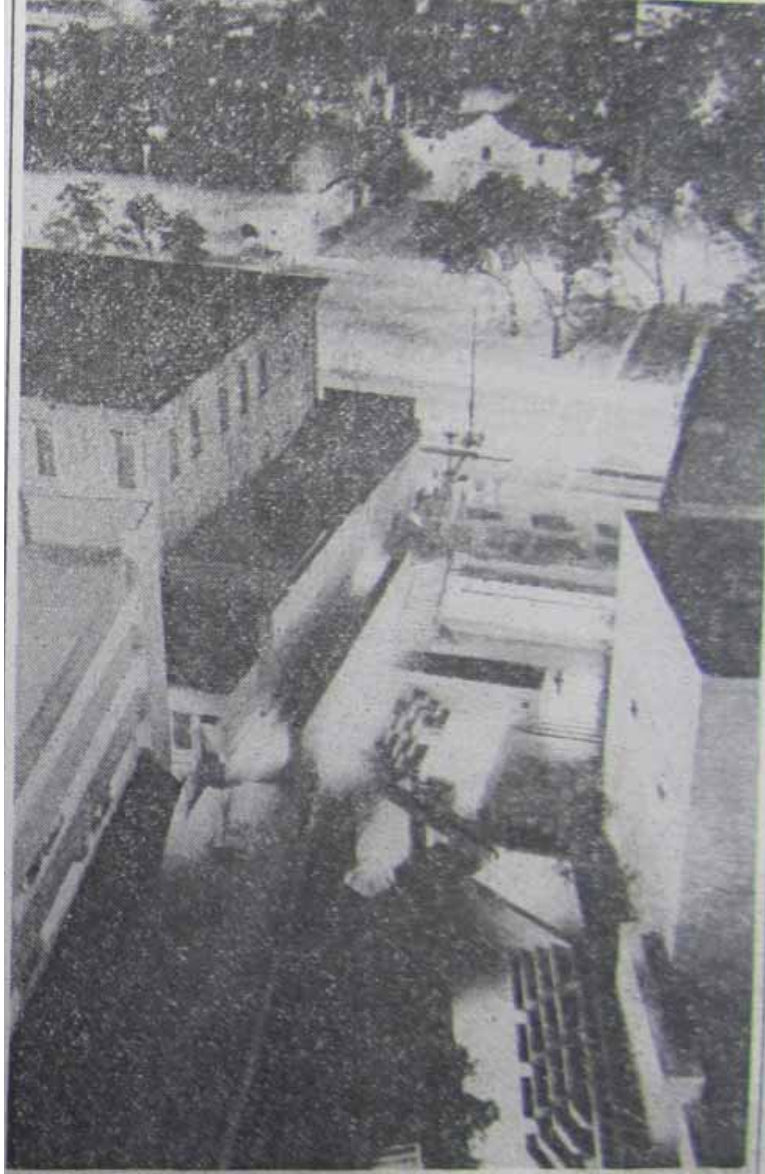


Aerial view of the project in July 1981, when the hotel was nearly complete and the garage and linkage project were underway.  
*San Antonio Express*, July 9, 1981.



Aerial view of the east section of the Paseo del Rio under construction, ca. 1981.  
1981, reprinted in Scott Huddleston, "Then & Now: Paseo del Alamo," *San Antonio Express-News*, May 25, 2003.





Aerial view of the east section of the completed Paseo del Rio, with the Remember the Alamo building still in place, ca. 1981.

Cecil Clift, "Four Ceremonies Open Paseo del Alamo Projects," *San Antonio Express*, Dec. 19, 1981.



Rendering of the west side of Alamo Plaza, showing 309–315 Alamo Plaza as having been demolished, 1982.  
Anne Pearson, “Alamo Plaza Buildings to be Restored,” *San Antonio Express*, Nov. 12, 1982.



Photograph of similar view of the west side of Alamo Plaza, ca. 2019.  
Google Maps, accessed Nov. 14, 2019.