NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: 511 Akard Building
Other name/site number: Relief and Annuity Board of the Baptist General Convention Building; CityWalk@Akard
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 511 N. Akard
City or town: Dallas State: Texas County: Dallas
Not for publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☑ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☑ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:
☐ national ☐ statewide ☑ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: ☑ A ☐ B ☑ C ☐ D

State Historic Preservation Officer
Signature of certifying official / Title **Date**

Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting or other official **Date**

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register.
___ removed from the National Register
___ other, explain: _____

Signature of the Keeper **Date of Action**

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

X	Private
	Public - Local
	Public - State
	Public - Federal

Category of Property

X	building(s)
	district
	site
	structure
	object

Number of Resources within Property

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: Commerce/Business

Current Functions: Commerce/Business, Domestic/Multiple Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification: Modern Movement: Skyscraper

Principal Exterior Materials: Brick, Stone/marble, Glass, Metal/copper

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 7 through 9)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

Criteria Considerations: A

Areas of Significance: Commerce, Architecture

Period of Significance: 1958-1964

Significant Dates: 1958

Significant Person (only if criterion b is marked): NA

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion d is marked): NA

Architect/Builder: Thomas, Jameson & Merrill Architects (Thomas, Arthur Elliott; Jameson, Robert Olin; Merrill, Walter Ralph); Inge-Hayman, Inc., Contractor

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 10 through 14)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheet xx)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

x State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission*, Austin)
_ Other state agency
_ Federal agency
_ Local government
_ University
_ Other -- Specify Repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 0.893

Coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 32.783941° Longitude: -96.801068°

Verbal Boundary Description: Block A/230 LTS 1 & 2

Boundary Justification: This is the legally recorded parcel number, and includes all of the property historically associated with the building.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Jay Firsching (with Gregory Smith, National Register Coordinator)
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Date: 7/25/2013

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheets 16 through 20)

Additional items (see continuation sheets 21 through 31)

Photographs (see continuation sheets 5 and 6)

Photographs

511 Akard Building
Dallas, Dallas County, Texas
Photographed by Jay Firsching, June 24, 2013

Image 1 of 19
Oblique looking northwest – Akard Street façade.

Image 2 of 19
East storefront looking west – Akard Street façade.

Image 3 of 19
Oblique looking southwest

Image 4 of 19
Oblique looking southwest – detail of two-story wing

Image 5 of 19
Oblique looking south

Image 6 of 19
Oblique looking southwest – Detail of north façade of two-story wing

Image 7 of 19
Oblique looking southeast

Image 8 of 19
West façade of two-story wing looking east

Image 9 of 19
Oblique looking north

Image 10 of 19
Detail of paving along Akard Street looking north

Image 11 of 19
Roof terrace looking northwest toward fountain

Image 12 of 19
Roof terrace looking southeast.

Image 13 of 19
Roof terrace detail of gathering space exterior looking south

Image 14 of 19
1st floor entrance lobby looking west from Akard Street with fountain on right

Image 15 of 19
1st floor elevator lobby looking west

Image 16 of 19
2nd floor elevator lobby and reception looking east

Image 17 of 19
2nd floor elevator lobby and reception looking west

Image 18 of 19
2nd floor gathering space looking north

Image 19 of 19
2nd floor gathering space, detail of fireplace

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Narrative Description

The 511 Akard Building is a 15-story office tower within the northwest portion of the Dallas central business district, approximately three blocks north of the Dallas Downtown Historic District (NR 2006). While its main entrance is at 511 N. Akard, the building's location at the intersection of two opposing street grids makes it an important visual landmark from most directions, though this has been diminished slightly by the towering postmodern buildings near it today. The building sits in an area marked by striking modernist buildings of the 1950s and 1960s including George Dahl's First National Bank Building (1961) to the south, the Fidelity Union Life Building (1952) to the southeast, and Republic Center (1954-64) and Thanksgiving Square further to the southeast. It also lies just one block from Dallas's massive First Baptist Church. The 511 Akard Building is a striking modernist composition in its use of contrasting materials such as patterned brick, porcelain enamel panels and natural stone. The interior includes the original main elevator lobby, and the second and third floor lobbies of the building's original owner, the Baptist Annuity Board. Their third floor offices included a beautiful communal gathering space and a rooftop terrace, both of which survive today. The majority of the building, once dedicated to speculative office space, was recently converted to affordable housing. Rehabilitated under the guidance and review of the Federal Historic Preservation Tax incentives Program, and retaining the majority of its character-defining features, the building retains a high degree of integrity.

The 511 Akard Building consists of two masses, a 15-story tower, and a 2-story wing to its north. The architecture of the building takes advantage of the intersecting street grids to create visual interest with the tower roughly aligned to the cardinal points like the original downtown grid, and the lower wing shifted 45-degrees to align with the streets to the north. Functionally, the two masses were designed to meet the needs of the Dallas Annuity Board, whose offices occupied the expanded floor-plate of the second floor, and third floor with its roof terrace and gathering space. The first floor of the northern wing provided, as it does today, service and loading areas from San Jacinto Street. To the north, the unusual shape of the lot and the positioning of the two building masses creates a V-shaped open court with its open end facing due north. To the south and west the building is directly adjoined by a large concrete parking garage (under separate ownership).

While important visually from many angles on the downtown street grid, 511 Akard's main façade is arguably that facing Akard Street, both as the building's identifying address and as the historic entry to the building's first floor retail and tower elevator lobby. The main 14-story mass of this west facing façade is set apart from the first floor storefront, creating visual drama. Comprised of three bays, two large columns, clad in Carrera marble flank the storefront's central bay, with thinner columns of Dakota Mahogany granite defining the northern and southern ends of the storefront. This arrangement along with recessed entries within the north and south bays creates the visual impression that the main mass of the building is supported by the two larger central columns. Each recessed entry includes central revolving doors flanked by swinging doors, all in glass and aluminum. Above the storefront, the main mass of the building is framed along its perimeter by an outer band of Carrera marble, and an inner, projecting band of porcelain enamel in a light bronze color. Floors are articulated by equal and alternating bands of Carrera marble spandrels and windows of aluminum and glass. In order to disguise the column grid and eliminate visually the three bays articulated at the first floor, the architects cleverly employed the use of geometric porcelain-enamel panels. Where the bands of windows cross in front of a column, the structure is hidden by an enamel panel (two per floor). On the alternating spandrel bands are placed three equally-spaced enamel panels. This creates a loose checkerboard pattern that camouflages the structural grid. The enamel panels themselves are pyramid shaped with the outermost 1/3 of the pointed end turned inward to create a stylized coffer. The porcelain enamel is a light bronze matching the perimeter band of the façade.

The tower's north façade, while not the location of the primary entry, is as important architecturally as the east. Here a related but strikingly different composition exists with the eastern three-quarters of the façade composed of

patterned brick in two shades of red and the western quarter composed of glass and spandrel similar to the Akard facade. The lighter field brick is separated by vertical and horizontal bands of darker brick run in running bond and stack bond. The horizontal bands are set to align with the alternating bands of spandrels and windows on the western end of the façade. Within the rows of squares of the brick grid that align with the windows, every other square is ornamented with a small, centrally-placed Greek cross, a reference to the core mission of the Baptist Annuity Board. The large, windowless brick mass creates a dramatic effect and also serves to conceal the buildings core of restrooms, stairs and elevators. At the top of the wall the central portion projects an extra level upward to cover the elevator penthouse. On this projection is mounted one of the building's identification signs: "511" in large surface-mounted box numbers. The penthouse is further mounted by three flagpoles. The composition of the glass, marble and enamel on the western quarter of the façade is similar to that of the east façade. However, the overall composition is made much lighter with the elimination of the perimeter band of Carrera marble. This is most dramatically apparent at the corner, where the entire composition turns to partially wrap the west façade. As with the front façade, the enamel panels hide the structural columns, and also bend to turn the corner. This portion of the façade is interrupted by the intersection of the lower wing. A new, compatibly-designed entry with projecting vestibule was installed as part of the rehabilitation and is placed at the intersection of the tower and wing.

The west façade of the 511 Akard Building differs from the north only in its proportion of brick to stone and glass. Here, only the southern third of the façade is of brick. Here, a single window has been carefully added to each floor as part of the rehabilitation.

The south façade of the tower consists entirely of brick composed in the same pattern described earlier. A large concrete parking structure conceals the first five floors of the building. At the remaining floors, nine windows per floor were carefully added as part of the rehabilitation of the building. These windows were placed so as not to disrupt the Greek cross and grid pattern of the brick. In the upper east corner of the façade is the building's second large sign, also articulated in surface-mounted box letters.

The lower wing of the building is clad in brick matching that of the main tower. However, the vertical bands of the patterned brick are eliminated. The north façade of the wing was the only one with fenestration, with three sets of aluminum-framed windows at the third floor. The double-height first floor of this façade was penetrated by four large openings to accommodate trucks. The northeast façade was historically devoid of windows but several sets were compatibly added as part of the recent rehabilitation. The upper parapet of this façade features an unusual central gable, which seems out of place until its purpose is made clear, to conceal the gabled roof of the rooftop gathering space. The southwest façade matches the northeast with the exception of the central gable.

The site is largely devoid of character-defining features with the exception of the paving along Akard Street. The concrete paving here is poured in a harlequin pattern of alternating red and white, which aligns with the building structure.

At the primary lobby entry on Akard Street, large panes of glass set in aluminum frames allow a visual connection between the recessed vestibule and the building interior. A crate-like ceiling grid extends through the storefront and into the lobby, connecting the two spaces. The immediate entry lobby is clad in Carrera marble with an accent wall of a second, highly-patterned, book-matched marble. This accent wall supports a triangular, projecting water fountain (not currently functioning) which originally emptied into a raised basin along the north wall. The north wall also features a triangular projection which appears to have been a planter placed a few feet above the basin. The entry lobby ceiling is primarily of plaster in a heavily stylized wave pattern. Rows of linear stainless steel light fixtures project light onto the curves of the ceiling, providing indirect lighting. Here, the terrazzo floor is first visible. Contrasting bands of brown and tan terrazzo angle inward, drawing the eye toward the narrower elevator lobby beyond.

Within the elevator lobby, squares in the floor accent the entrances to the three elevators. Vertical banding of contrasting Rojo Alicante and Carrera marbles define the elevator bays. Stainless steel jambs form the perimeter of the elevators. The doors themselves are aluminum or stainless textured and anodized in a basket-weave pattern. The ceiling consists of a grid of translucent panels lit from above. The lobby retains its original stainless steel mail chute and directory boards. The first floor features an extended lobby to accommodate the new building entrance. The lobby features compatible new finishes including terrazzo flooring that is differentiated slightly from the original in color and pattern.

The second and third floor elevator lobbies, though simplified, also employ similar materials. Book-matched marble panels clad the vertical surfaces and stainless steel elevator doors are defined by alternating bands of matte and polished finishes. Ceilings are contemporary suspended acoustical compositions. At the third level, the same composition of materials extends through to a reception area at the south end of the lobby. A built-in reception desk is also clad in marble. The lobby's north end becomes more simplified, with vinyl flooring or carpet and simple but contemporary wall coverings. Directly to the north, glass and aluminum storefronts lead to the roof terrace. To the east blond millwork including double doors and built-in cabinetry marks the entrance to the Community Room. This room contrasts sharply with the other interiors, with a vaulted ceiling, blond wood finishes and flagstone giving it a domestic atmosphere. The stone fireplace features an inscription on the mantel reading: "It warms him twice who cuts his own wood." The room's function as a gathering space is supplemented by an attached kitchenette, audiovisual capabilities and access to the roof deck.

Outside, the hip of the sloped metal roof projects outward to intersect a covered walkway at the roof-terrace. The perimeter of the terrace is buffered by angular brick planters. Fieldstone-clad steps lead to a decorative fountain. Predominately granite, the fountain's wall-mounted basin is accented by a backdrop of marble. Three spouts flow from decorative floral medallions into the basin below. The spouts carry the labels "Church," "Pastor," and "Convention." A symbolic gesture, the fountain illustrates the board's mission of collaboration.

While most of the significant features of the building present themselves at the first and third floors, several other interesting and unique features mark the building. The second floor, which was the site of much of the day-to-day work of the Baptist Annuity Board, includes` a women's bathroom, covered in pink tile that is twice the size of the men's bathroom. In a time before gender equity was a topic of discussion this disparity can only be seen as a nod to the predominately female work force that the Baptist Annuity Board employed.

With the exception of the new entrance and fenestration described above, the exterior of the building is largely in its original condition. In the interior the significant public spaces of the first, second and third floors, which were used by the Baptist Annuity Board itself, remain intact. Floors four through fifteen, which were built by the Baptist Annuity Board as speculative office space and remodeled many times over the life of the building, retain their original elevator lobbies and central core, while the remainder of those floors are compatibly rehabilitated for residential use.

Statement of Significance

The 15-story 511 Akard Building in downtown Dallas was built by the Relief and Annuity Board of the Baptist General Convention in 1958 to house its headquarters and produce revenue through office leasing. The Relief and Annuity Board, whose leadership was comprised of major Dallas Baptist figures, was established to provide pension and disability benefits to retired Baptist ministers, their widows and orphans. Under the leadership of the Board, the assets of the organization grew steadily, providing financial leverage and investment opportunity for the organization, and retirement security for Baptist workers in several states. The actions of the Relief and Annuity Board shaped the face of downtown Dallas and, in conjunction with the First Baptist Church and the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT), which developed properties in a large downtown district that became known and "Baptistville." The 511 Akard Building lies at the western edge of this district and is emblematic of the rapid growth of the church and the related assets of the Board. An investment comprised primarily of speculative office space, it served as the home of the Relief and Annuity Board for 25 years and of the BGCT for 11 years. The Board is still in operation today as Guidestone Financial Services, an organization with $8.8-billion in assets as of 2009. The building is nominated under Criterion A in the area of Commerce for its association with the Board's financial investments, and Criterion C in the area of Architecture, as a good local example of late 1950s modern skyscraper design in downtown Dallas. The building meets Criteria Consideration A (Religious Properties) because it represents the secular business investments of the Baptist General Convention, not only as the location of the Relief and Annuity Board on two of its floors, but also as a property constructed primarily to produce revenue through leasing. The period of significance begins in 1958, the year of its completion, and continues to 1964, marking the 50-year point from the time of this nomination.

American Baptists and the Establishment of the Southern Baptist Convention

The history of the Baptist Church in America can be traced to the 17th century, when Baptist colonists fleeing persecution by the Church of England established their first church in 1682 at Charleston, South Carolina. The Baptist church grew steadily, particularly in the south where Baptist evangelical preachers travelled widely, converting white and black alike. While the church promoted the participation of blacks in the church, racial issues would come to divide and define the church as a national organization.

In 1814, Baptists organized nationally under the Triennial Convention, so named because the organization met once every three years. Based in Philadelphia, the organization was intended to allow various independent congregations to coordinate in efforts to support missions both foreign and domestic. The convention was not intended to control or set guidelines for individual congregations whose independence is a basic principal of the Baptist Church. Divisions over the administration of missions would test this principal.

In the north, Baptist churches generally frowned on slavery and, as with Quakers and Methodists, ministers promoted the idea of freeing slaves. On the other hand, in the south ministers promoted the idea of slavery as being biblically-supported and, while blacks were allowed to attend services in the church, their attendance was segregated. These divisions lead to conflict when the Triennial Convention was called upon to make various mission appointments. While officially neutral on the issue of slavery, the Convention refused to permit the appointment of slave owners as missionaries, an act seen by southern congregations as a violation of their congregational sovereignty. In May 1845 at a meeting in Augusta, Georgia, southern Baptists officially withdrew from the national Baptist organization and formed the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

The establishment of the SBC was not the end of racial conflict within the Baptist Church in the south. Member churches continued to preach slavery as a biblically-supported institution. Black congregations were not allowed to practice without white supervision, and worship services were segregated. Upon emancipation, this lead to a mass

exodus of black Baptists, who formed their own organizations. White southern Baptist churches generally continued their support of segregation and disenfranchisement through Reconstruction and the civil rights movement of the 20th century.

The Baptist General Convention of Texas

Under Spanish Rule and later under Mexico, non-Catholic religious worship was prohibited. Attempts to establish the Baptist church in Texas can be traced to the 1820's when Baptists ministers such as Joseph Bays, Freeman Smalley and Thomas J. Pilgrim entered the state to preach sermons. These early attempts to spread the faith in Texas were suppressed by Mexican authorities until freedom was finally offered to Texas settlers in 1834.

By 1840 at least five Baptist congregations existed in Texas. Two schools of thought emerged from these early churches and were the source of some conflict. Daniel Parker, an anti-missionary preacher believed strongly in congregational independence and denounced efforts at congregational cooperation in mission societies. Zachariah N. Morrell, another early church leader, promoted such cooperation in the spirit of the Triennial Convention. These philosophical divisions were particularly acute in the 1830s and 40s, with intense evangelism from both camps promoting rapid growth in the church as a whole.

Eventually, Morrell's philosophy of congregational cooperation began to dominate the Baptist church in Texas. Local associations were formed to perform missionary work and by 1848 began to merge in an effort to broaden their influence. The first of these was the merger of four local associations into the regional Baptist State Convention of Texas at Anderson. In 1885, five regional bodies merged to form The Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT) which remains the largest association in the state. By 1906, Baptists became the predominant church in Texas and by 1980 church membership surpassed 4,500,000 with more than half of Baptist churches being affiliated with the BGCT.

With offices in Downtown Dallas, the BGCT is located at the heart of a sizeable district in Dallas often referred to as "Baptistville." At the heart of this district is The First Baptist Church of Dallas. Founded in 1868, the congregations purchased its first building on Akard Street in 1872, and laid the cornerstone of its historic sanctuary building in 1891. Under the leadership of long-serving pastors such as Dr. George Truett (served 1897-1944) and Dr. W. A. Criswell (served 1944-1990) the church underwent substantial growth. Under Criswell, the downtown campus of the church expanded to a five block area and membership increased to more than 28,000 by 1990, making it the largest church congregation in the world at the time. With a membership of more than 11,000 in 2013, the church dedicated a new $130-million campus next to its 1891 building in 2013.

The Relief and Annuity Board

The Relief and Annuity Board was organized by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1918 and chartered on July 13, 1918. At its meeting in Hot Springs, Arkansas, and under the leadership of Dr. William Lunsford, the SBC resolved to establish a fund for the benefit of "Soldiers of the Cross," which aided aged ministers or widows with inadequate income, and returning chaplains from World War I. Through the Lunsford Commission, the Board secured an initial investment of $1-million from John D. Rockefeller, Sr.

Dallas was an obvious choice as the location for the new board. The city offered the strength and growth of the First Baptist Church and the BGCT. In addition, Dallas had won a hard fought campaign as the location of the Federal Reserve Bank of the 11th District, establishing it as a major regional financial center. The Annuity Board is one of the four major boards of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and the only Board of the SEC to have its headquarters west of the Mississippi River.

In its first year, the Relief and Annuity Board paid out $1,390.00 in benefits to retired and disabled Baptist ministers and their widows. In 1928 the Board announced a new funding structure in which pastors participating in the fund would be required to pay 3% of their salaries into the fund with a matching 3% provided by their congregation. The SBC would provide an additional 2%. Based on this structure, upon retirement at age 65, each pastor would receive a benefit of $500.00 per year. Benefits were further expanded in 1932, when 5000 pastors, their widows or orphans were promised an annuity of 50% of the pastor's average annual salary. With contributions from pastors, the SBC and member churches, and wise investments of the Board, the fund continued to grow. While it faced the same challenges as all financial institutions during the Great Depression, the fund was buoyed by the strength in numbers of Baptist Church membership. By its 30th anniversary, the Board paid out almost $1.2-million in benefits on assets of $13.9-million.

In 1940, the financial strength of the Annuity Board was leveraged to purchase a new building at the northeast corner of Ervay and Pacific Streets. The purchase and remodeling costs for the three-story building totaled approximately $100,000, with the building serving as the headquarters of the board and providing additional space for at least 20 Baptist organizations such as the Baptist Foundation, the BGCT, and the Baptist Standard Publishing Company among others.

In 1950, plans were announced to sell the building, which was to be demolished to make way for the new $15-million Republic National Bank Building. From its temporary headquarters on Harwood Street and utilizing some $1-million it received on the sale, the Board oversaw the construction of its new headquarters building at the corner of Ervay and San Jacinto. Completed in 1952, the new 4-story building was constructed directly across the street from the new $1.1-million activities center of the First Baptist Church, Inge-Hayman, Inc. was the contractor for both buildings. In 1950 the Board controlled some $22-million in retirement investments benefitting 20-thousand members.

Dedicated in 1952, the new building would not serve the Relief and Annuity Board for long. As its assets continued to grow, so did the Board's ambitions. By 1956 the fund had grown to include assets of more than $42-million, with gains of $7-million in 1955 alone. At its annual meeting in 1957, the SBC announced plans for the construction of a new 15-story office tower with a two-story wing. The building was to cost approximately $3.5 million, with the headquarters of the Relief and Annuity Board on floors 2 and 3. The remainder of the building was to serve as speculative office space to benefit the 20,000 investing shareholders of the Board.

The building was designed by the firm of Thomas, Jameson and Merrill of Dallas and constructed by Inge-Hayman, Inc. The 511 Akard Building was 90% leased upon its completion in 1958. The *Dallas Morning News* reported on the building's plans, publishing an architect's sketch in June 1957, but the paper acknowledged that in this period of rapid growth and construction downtown, the building garnered relatively little fanfare. In fact, the *Dallas Morning News* failed to release an article upon the building's dedication, with the only mention being a photograph of Board members pointing at the un-pictured building as part of coverage of the 1958 SBC annual meeting in Dallas.[1] One article about the new construction activity by the Baptist Relief and Annuity Board was dismissively titled "Another Building."[2]

The 511 Akard Building was a venue for the actions and contributions of many significant persons and organizations in the Dallas area. Among these were Dr. Wallace Bassett, pastor of the Cliff Temple Baptist Church in Dallas and Board member for over thirty years; Dr. R. Alton Reed, Board President from 1955-1972 and former

[1] "Baptist Annuity Board Reveals Building Plans," *Dallas Morning News*, June 16, 1957, p. 2.
[2] "Another Building," *Dallas Morning News*, June 3, 1957, p. 2.

pastor of the Park Cities Baptist Church; and Dr. Donald H. Morgan, board President from 1972-1987. The building served as the home of the BGCT for 11 years and the Relief and Annuity Board itself for 25 years. The Board agreed to the sale of the 511 Akard Building property to Lincoln Properties for $12 million in 1984. The significant profits from the sale were placed into the pooled assets of the shareholders. The organization's offices were relocated to new quarters north of downtown.

The 511 Akard Building fell victim to the decline of the central business district, sitting vacant for a number of years before becoming the focus of a major rehabilitation project under the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program. CityWalk@Akard, which opened in 2010, is a mixed-use development that includes 206 residential units. CitySquare (previously known as Central Dallas Ministries) was the organization that formed CityWalk@Akard's nonprofit developer, the CDCDC (Central Dallas Community Development Corporation). CitySquare offices inside the building and provides resources onsite to the residents of the building.

Architectural Significance

The building at 511 Akard is a representative local example of midcentury modern design inspired by the European International Style of the 1920s and 30s, combined with the emergence of new building technologies during the postwar economic boom that began in the late 1940s. This slick and functional style of modern architecture became standard for office buildings throughout the United States. Henry Russell Hitchcock and Phillip Johnson first used the term "International Style" in the catalog for a 1932 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York that highlighted the work of Walter Gropius and Le Corbusier, among others. The style is generally understood as a response to the widespread practice of applying decoration from various architectural periods to contemporary buildings, and the recognition of how advances in structural technologies (such as glass, steel, and reinforced concrete) could be honestly expressed in modern buildings. In general, it was thought that architectural form should follow the function of the building, and that form itself should express the construction technology. International Style characteristics include rectilinear massing, planar surfaces, ribbon windows, curtain walls, and open plans.

The first International Style skyscraper in the United State was the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society (PSFS) building in Philadelphia (Howe & Lescaze, 1929-32), featuring a steel frame sheathed in granite, glass, limestone and brick. The Equitable Building in Portland, Oregon (Pietro Belluschi, 1944-48), was the first skyscraper to be sheathed in glass and aluminum. Both of these influential buildings featured flat exterior surfaces, with no applied decoration, and served as models for numerous buildings nationwide through the postwar period. Modern architecture of the postwar period, however, was not limited to the austere characteristics championed by proponents of the International Style, as new modes of geometric ornament found its way onto skyscrapers of the 1950s and 1960s, often stamped into metal panels. The Alcoa Building in Pittsburgh (Harrison & Abromowitz, 1953) was the first building to be completely sheathed in aluminum panels, which were stamped with an X-shaped design beneath each integrated window opening. Harrison & Abramowitz also designed the Republic National Bank Building in Dallas (1954-55, NRHP 2005) with a similar façade composition, also expressed in aluminum panels.

While early adherents of the International Style eschewed nonessential decoration in favor of sleek surfaces of steel, glass and concrete, with a mix of ribbon windows and solid planes, by the late 1950s, mid-rise and high-rise office buildings became even more expressive, with the introduction of multicolored stamped metal panels, colorful spandrels, and rich stone veneers. The late 1950s was a period of record construction, nationally and in Dallas, and while the planning and construction of the 511 Akard Building received attention in the pages of the *Dallas Morning News* in 1957 and 1958, an article titled simply "Another Building" sums up a prevailing attitude in the growing city, noting that

> Dallas has reached a size and a rate of development where another 15-story building is no longer front page news. More significant than that is the fact that the Southern Baptist business stake in Dallas as a religious capital of the Southwest is so substantial that a 15-story office building for the Baptist Relief and Annuity Board is a matter of surprise to nobody.[3]

The construction of the 511 Akard Building closely followed prevailing architecture and development trends, with a design that combined a stark windowless wall on the north elevation, with bright and expressive window walls on the east elevation and northwest corner. The finish out on the interior was lavish, with a high level of rich and colorful terrazzo floors and stone wall veneers in the lobby and public spaces. The building is reminiscent of office buildings constructed at this time in other parts of the United States, with examples on a larger scale in Dallas that include the Republic Bank Building (1954) and Statler Hilton (1956).

The body of work of Thomas, Jameson and Merrill (1945-1963) is largely in the modern vernacular. Their expansion project for the Park Cities Baptist Church (1950) in the Georgian Style is one of few examples of a departure from modernism. Among their first commissions were as supervising architects for the Farmers' Market, and the Trinity Universal Life Insurance Company Building, both constructed in Dallas in 1945. The firm designed the Smith County Courthouse (Tyler, Texas, 1955), the Blue Cross and Blue Building (1958, Dallas), and the major expansion of the Southwestern Bell Headquarters (1959, Dallas). They were also part of the three-firm collaboration responsible for the 50-story Republic National Bank expansion in 1961. The firm's history gained some attention in 2013 as part of the expansion of the University of North Texas campus in the Harwood Historic District of Downtown Dallas. The firm was responsible for a major expansion of the Tiche-Goettinger Department Store in 1954, the design of which included a massive 49-ton, carved limestone cartouche. Despite public outcry, the façade of this downtown landmark, including the cartouche, was largely removed as part of the expansion.

Thomas Jameson and Merrill's relationship with the Baptist church was established early in the firm's history. The firm is responsible for two core buildings on Dallas's Baylor Hospital Campus, the 1947 George W. Truett building, and the matching Women and Children's Hospital Building constructed 10 years later (now Roberts Hospital). They were also responsible for the 1952 Activities Building of the First Baptist Church in 1952.

While modern in its design, the interior of the 511 Akard Building exhibits some Art Moderne flourishes as exemplified in its patterned terrazzo flooring and marble compositions. This is perhaps reflective of the influence of Arthur Elliott Thomas. Having graduated from the University of Texas architecture school in 1916, Thomas established a practice in 1927 with Curtis Thomas. Though short-lived, the relationship did result in designs for the Rusk County Courthouse (1928) in Henderson, Texas, and the Art Deco Liberty County Courthouse (1931) in Liberty, Texas. Thomas designed the Art Moderne Falls County Courthouse in 1939. Thomas was in two more partnerships before the establishment of Thomas, Jameson and Merrill in 1945.

[3] "Another Building," *Dallas Morning News*, June 3, 1957.

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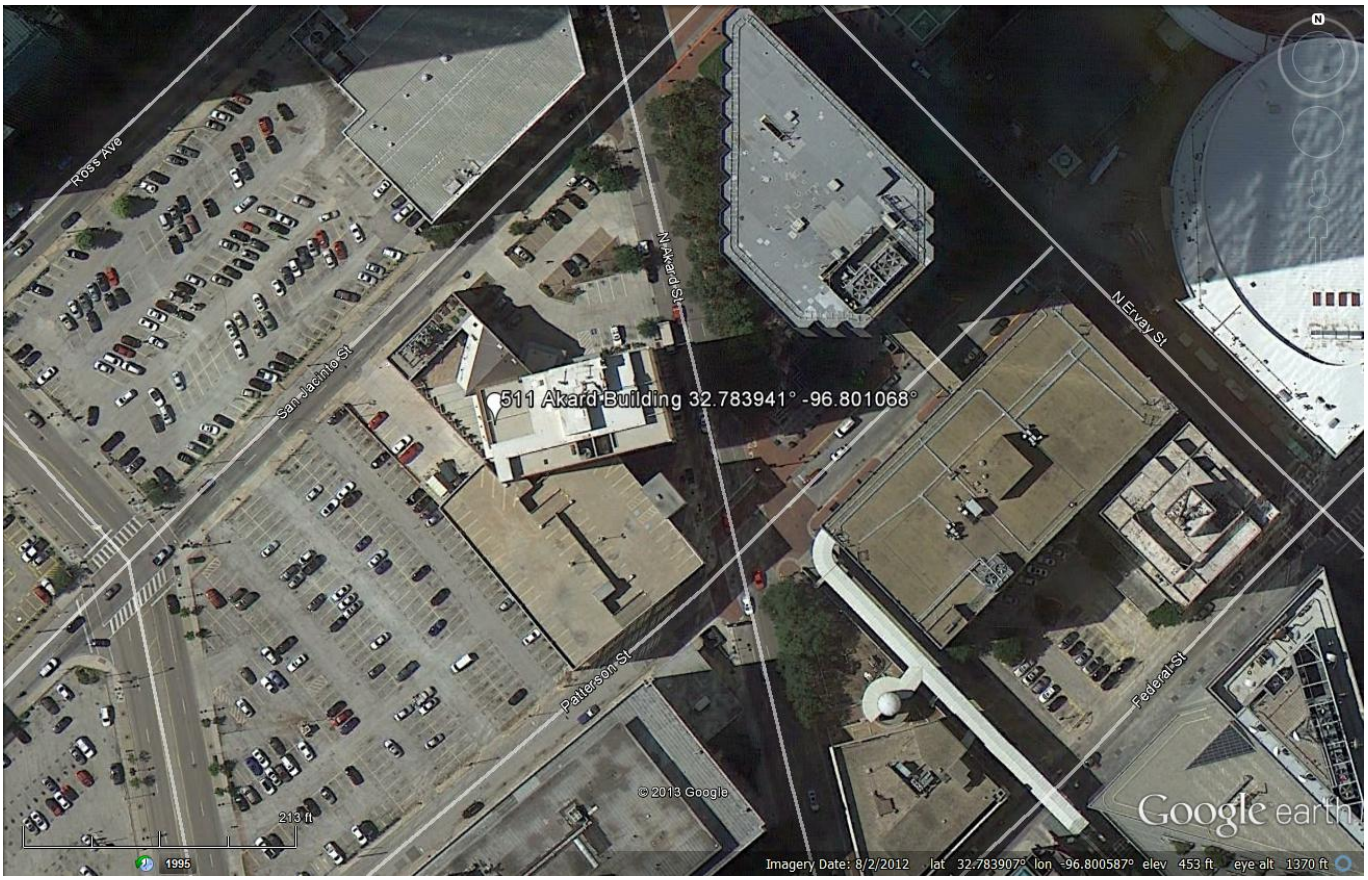
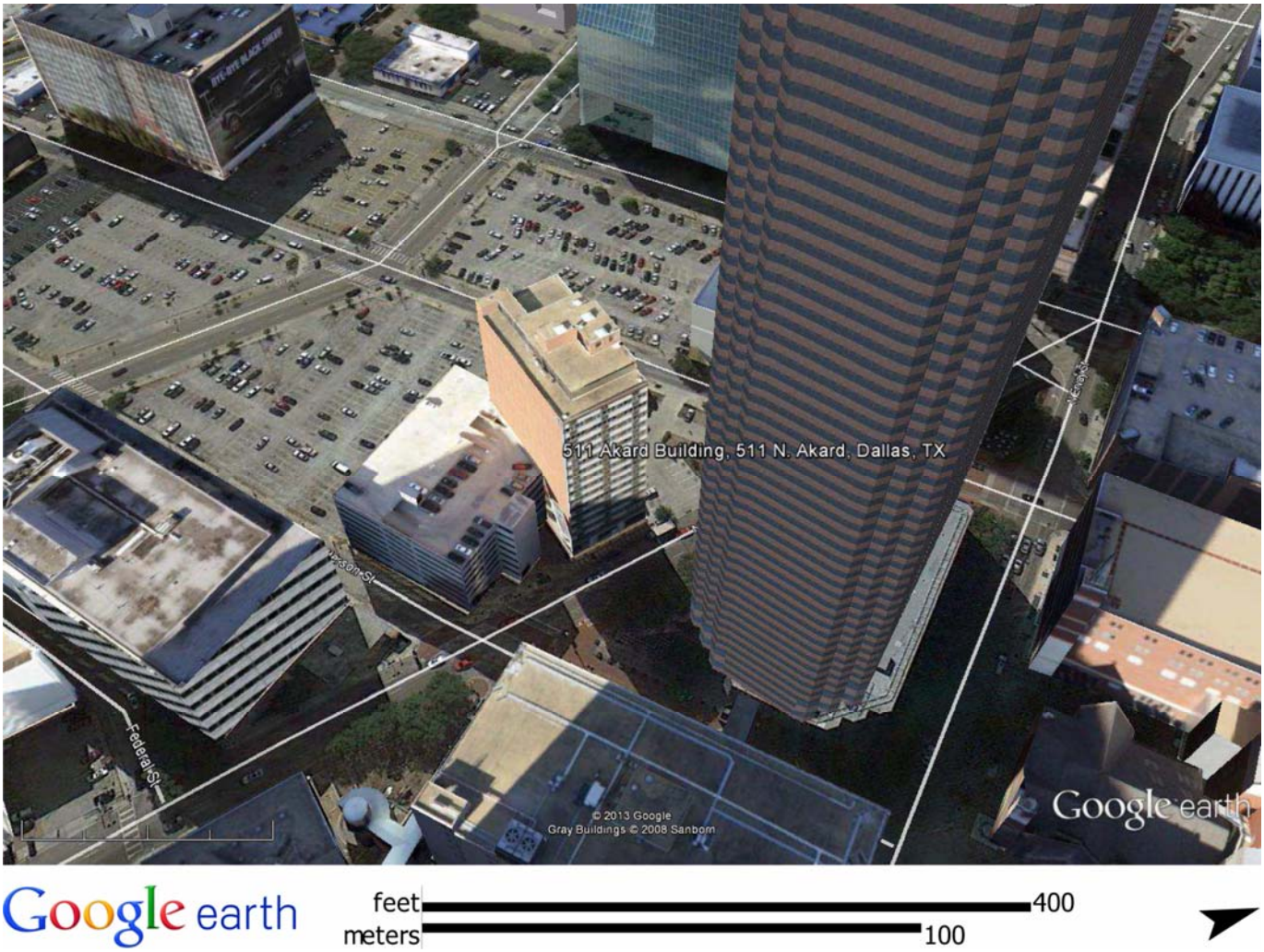
511 Akard Building Location Map.
Source: Goole Earth (*accessed August 7, 2013*).



East Elevation
Source: Google Earth (*accessed August 6, 2013*).



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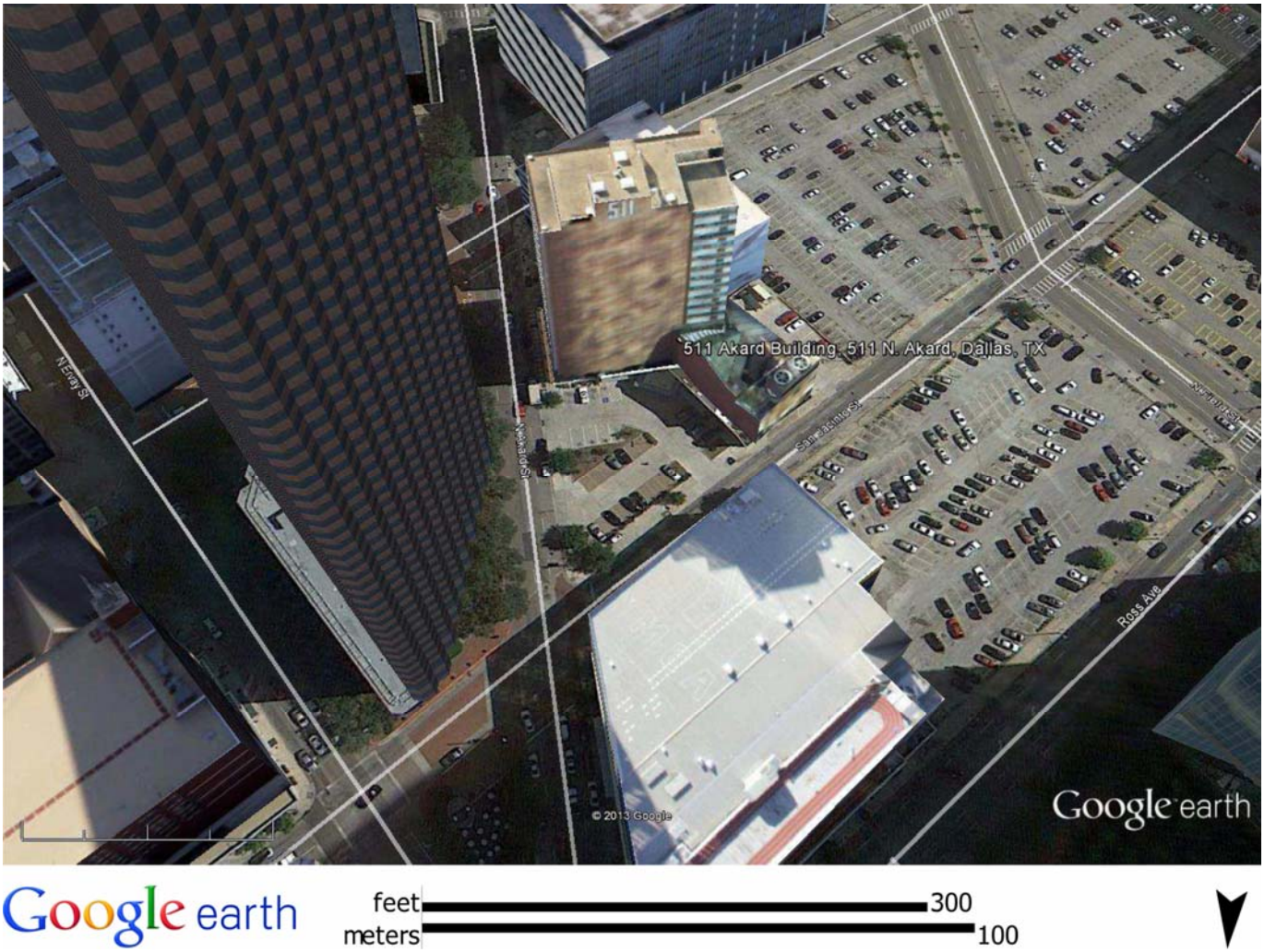

South Elevation
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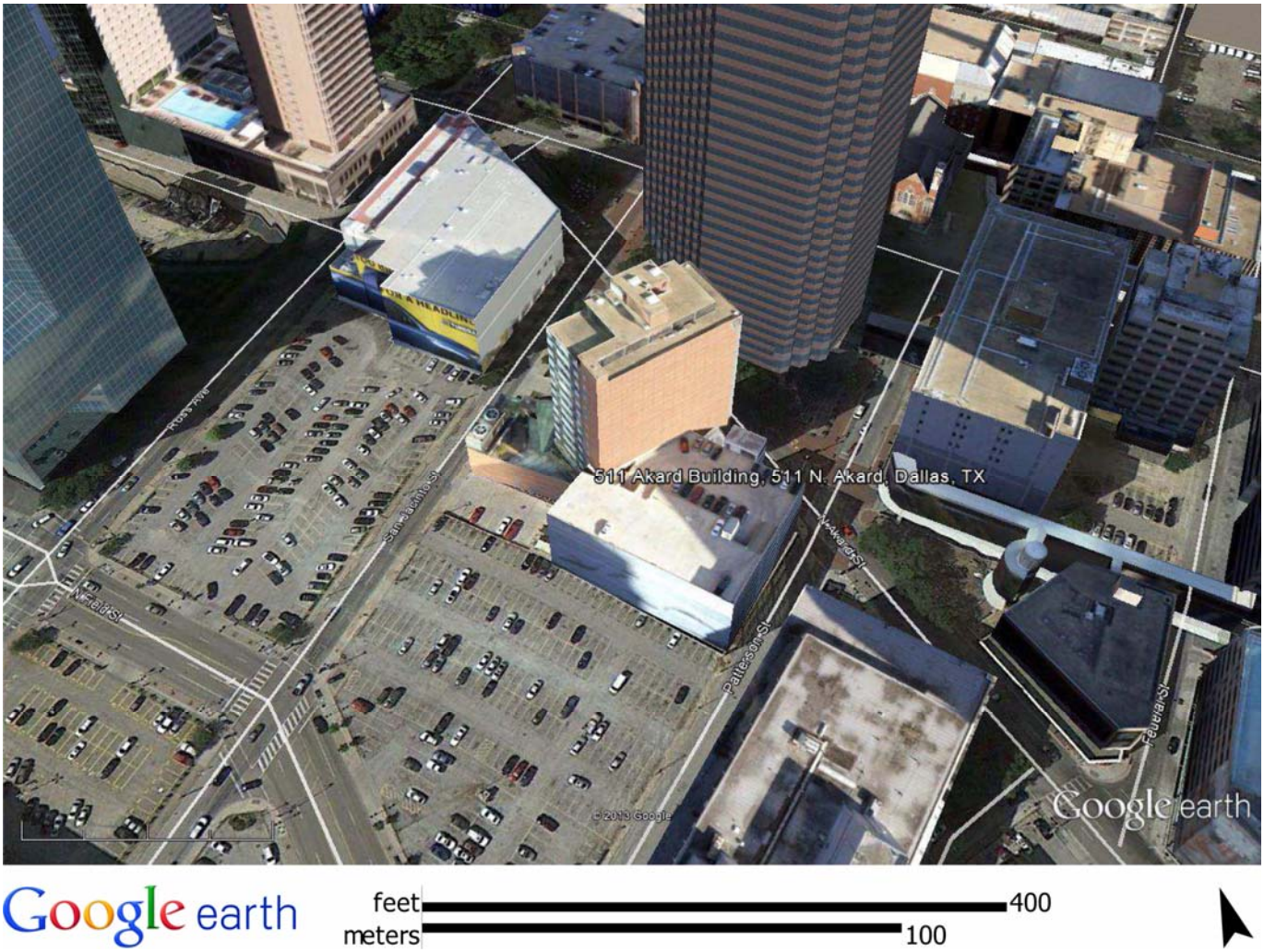

West Elevation
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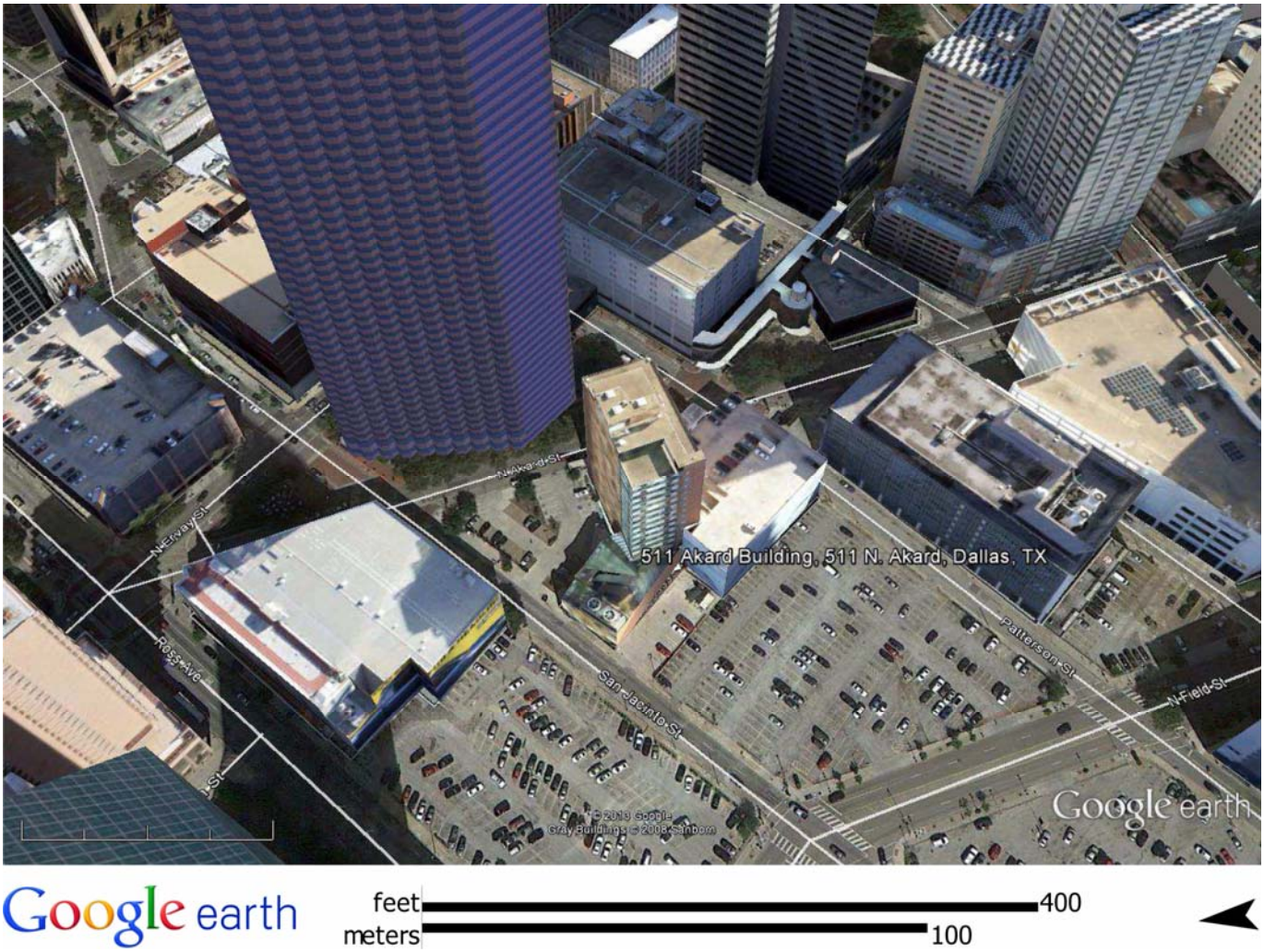

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Under construction, 1958
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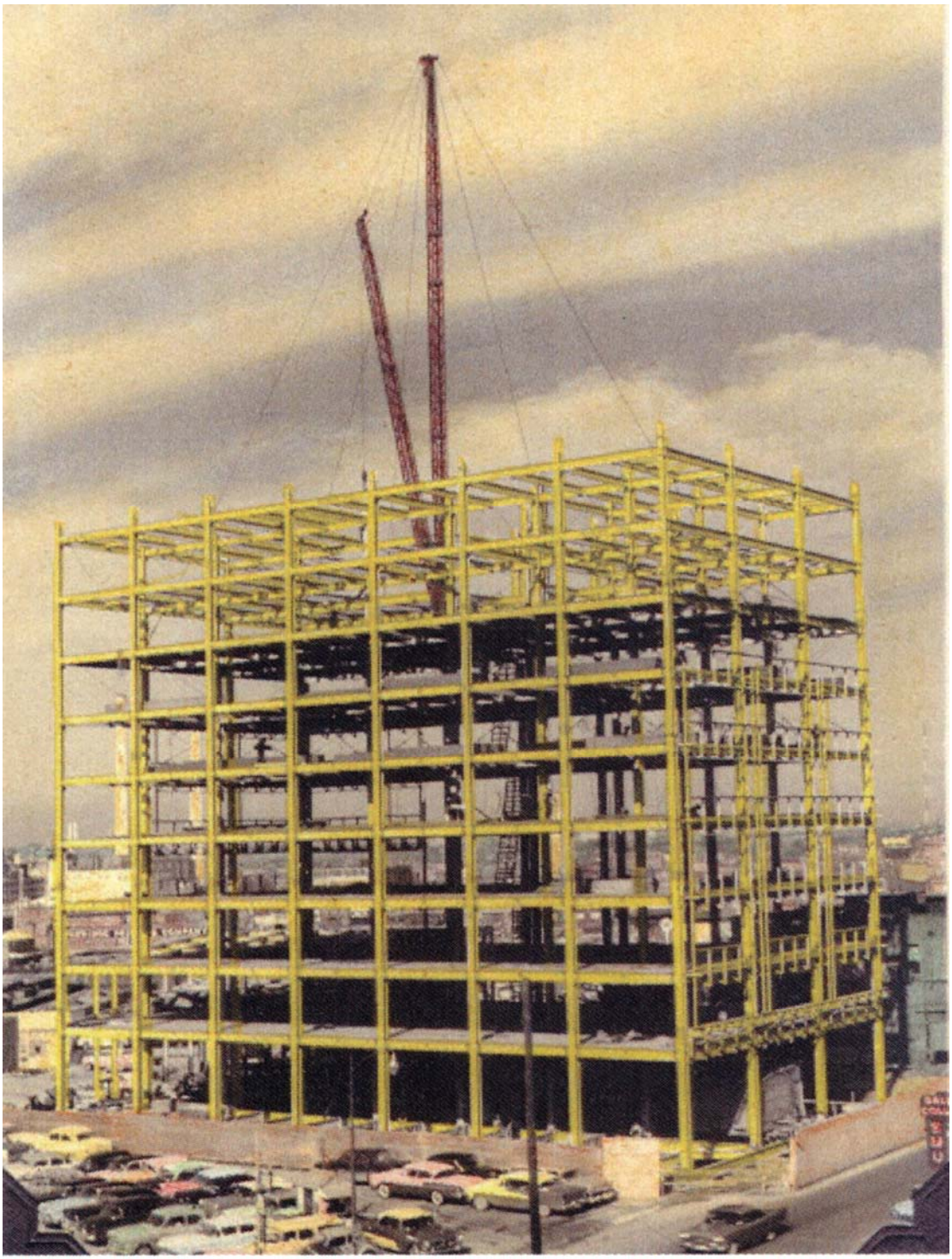

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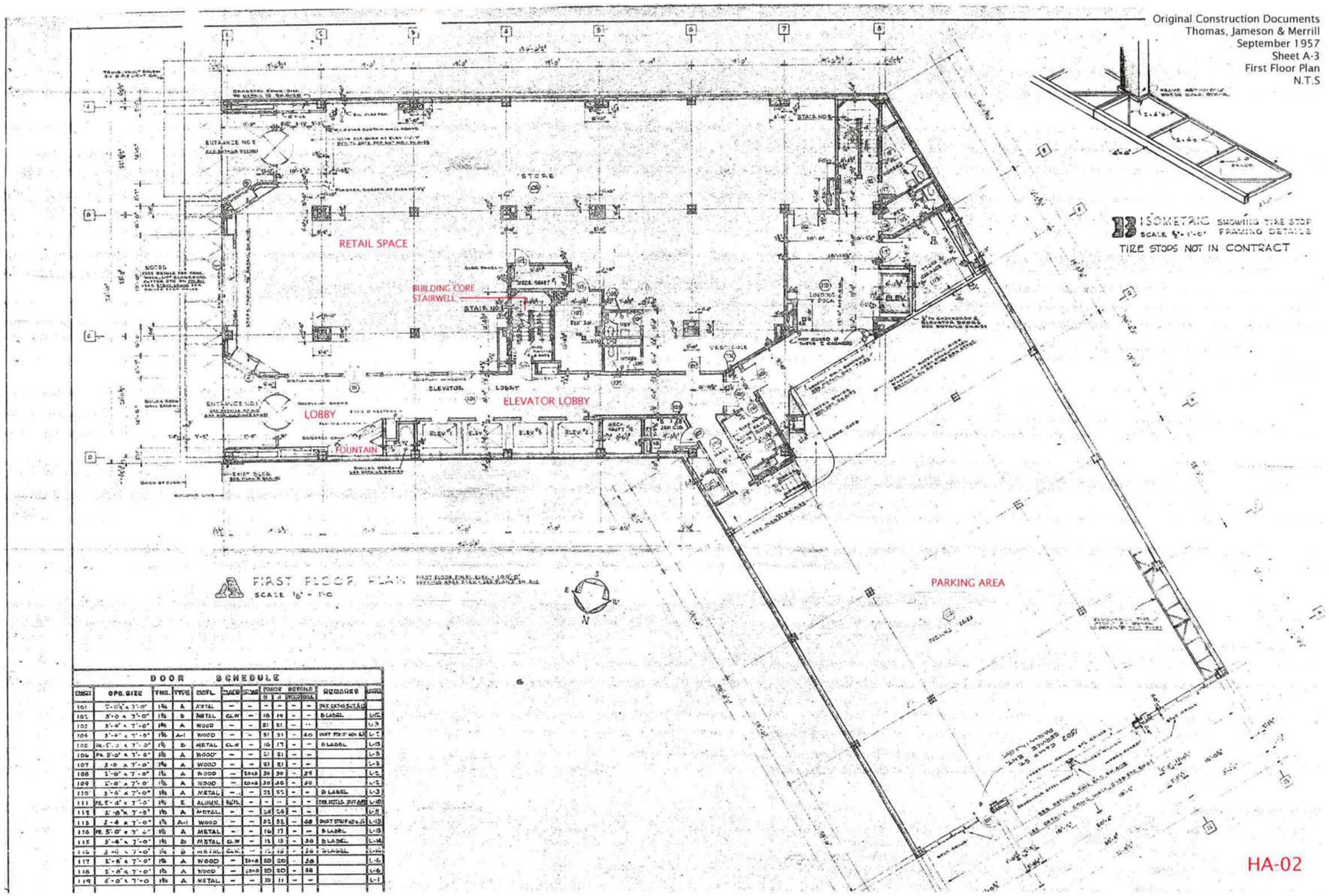

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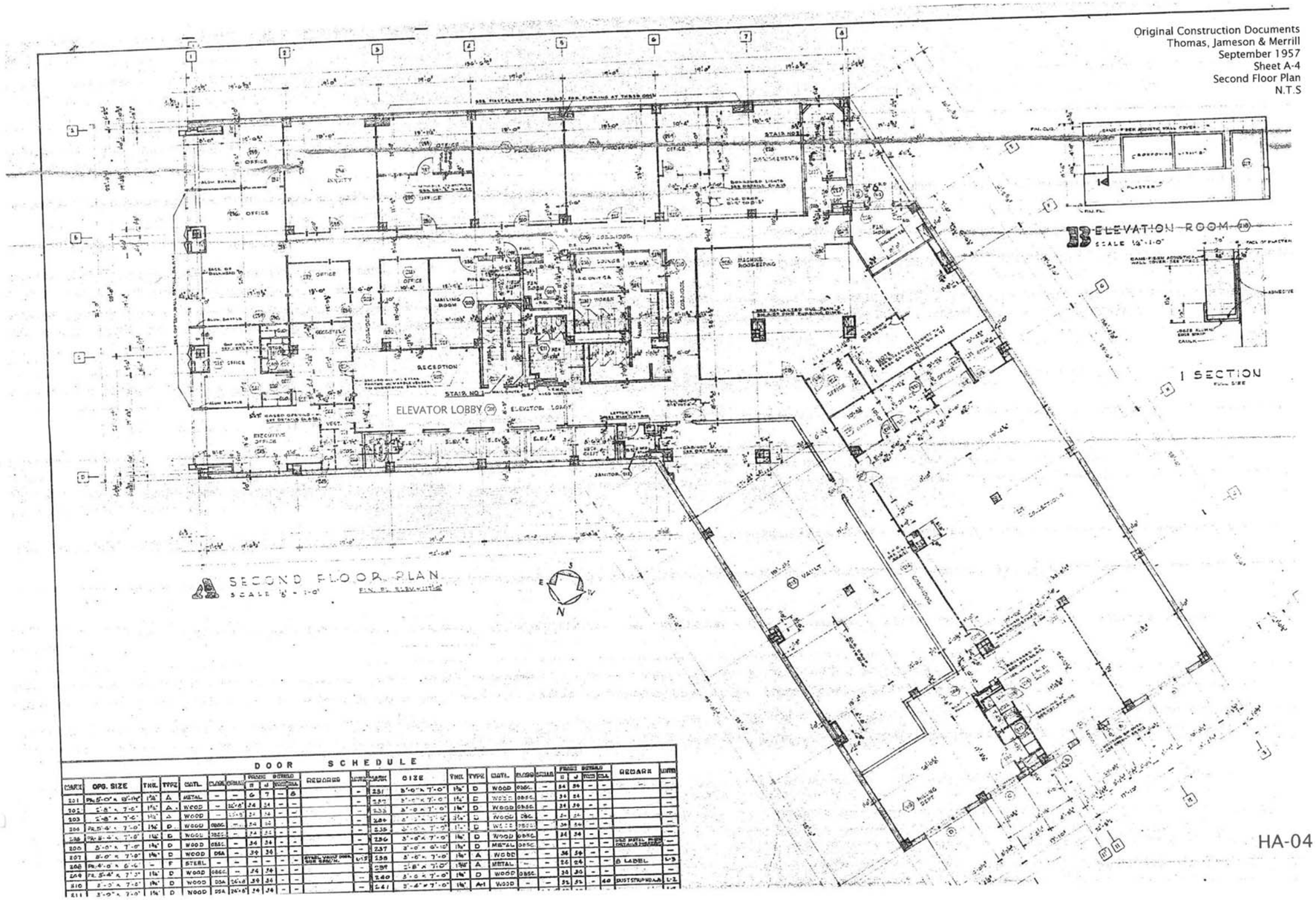

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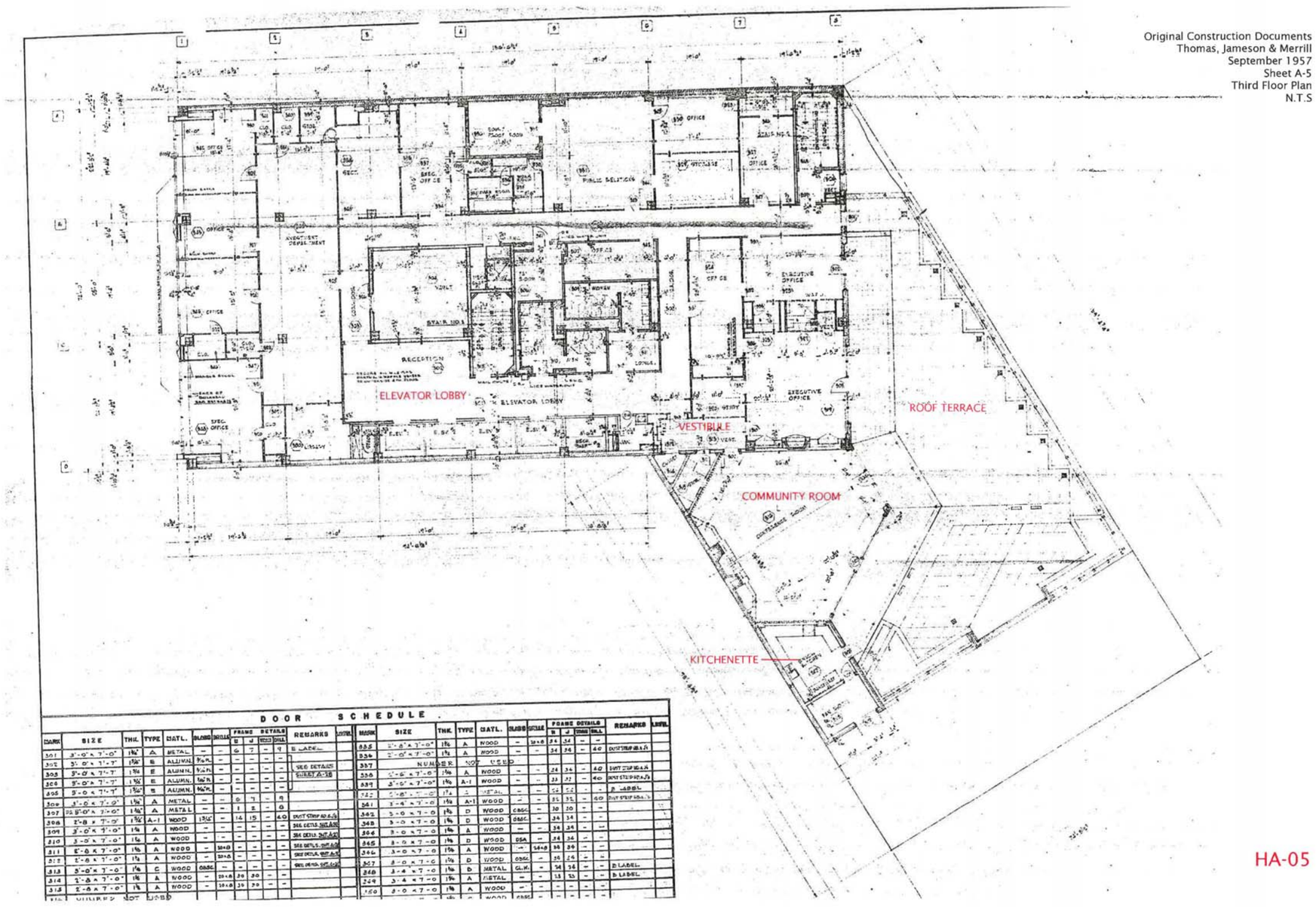

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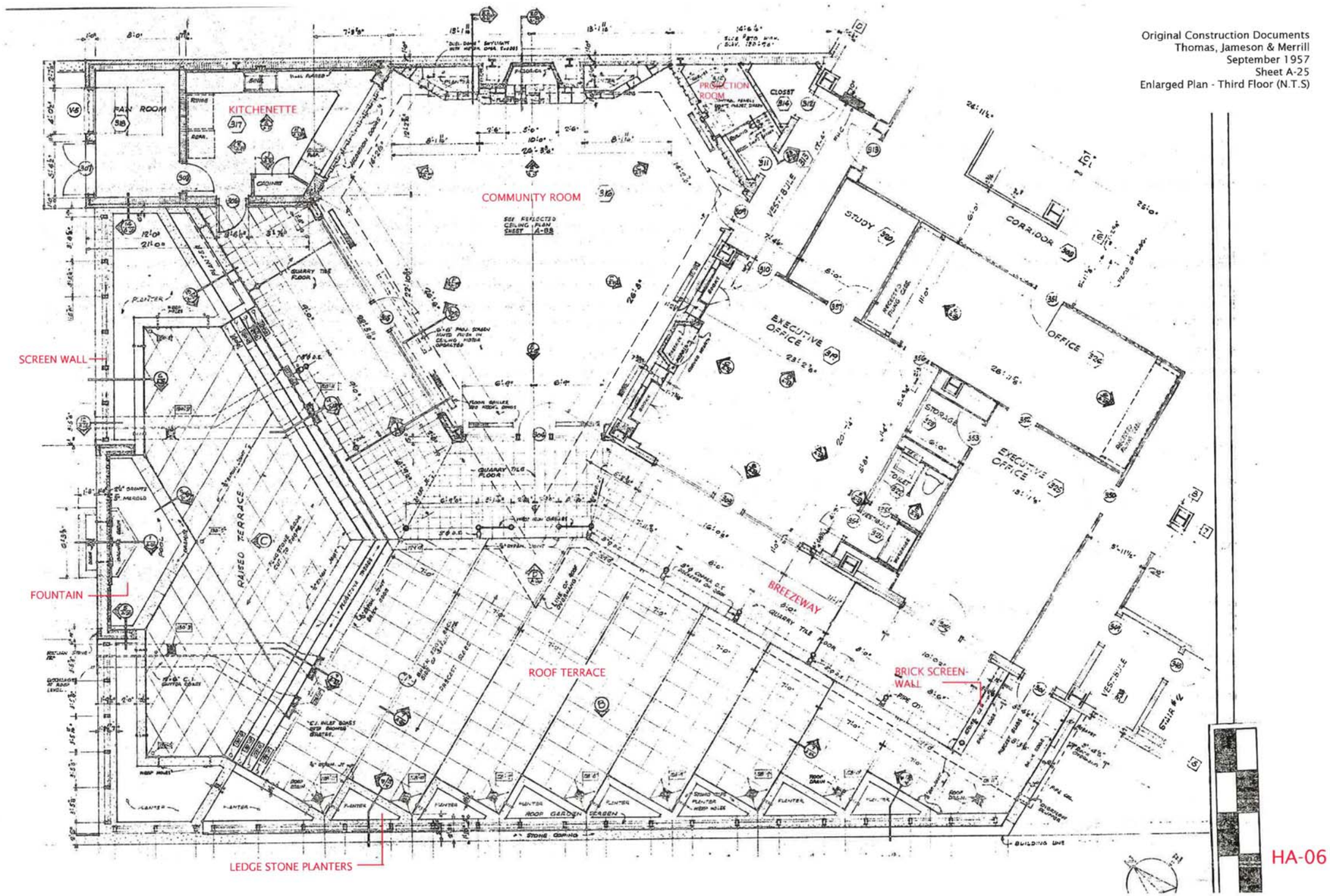
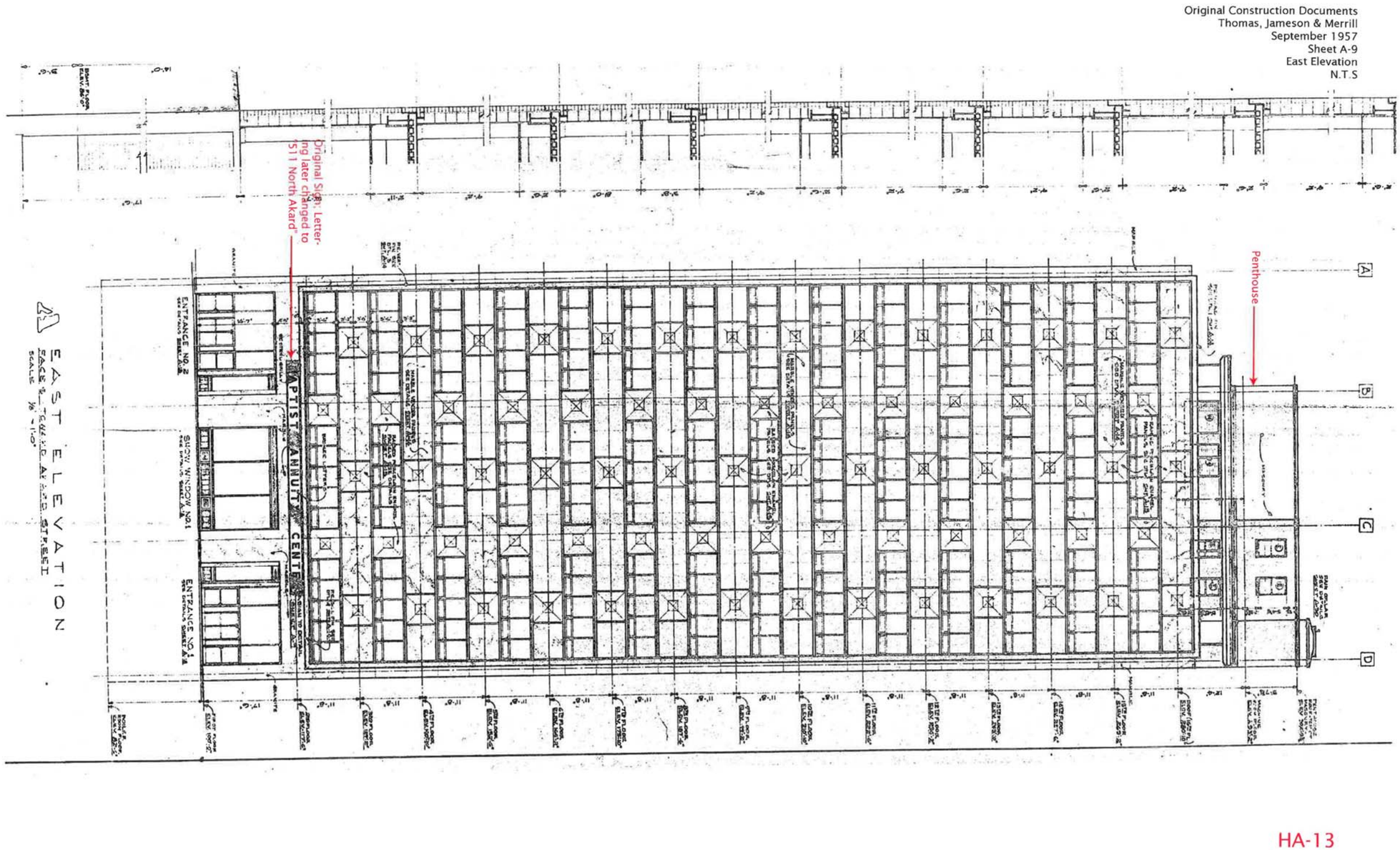
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