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Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

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: 600 Building
Other name/site number: Upper 600 Building
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 600 Leopard Street
City or town: Corpus Christi State: Texas County: Nueces
Not for publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐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

Mark Wolfe State Historic Preservation Officer 1/25/16
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: _____

for **Signature of the Keeper** 3/22/2016 **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	-	buildings
-	-	sites
-	-	structures
-	-	objects
1	0	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: NA

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: Commerce/Trade: business = office building

Current Functions: Commerce/Trade: business = office building

7. Description

Architectural Classification: Modern Movement: Skyscraper

Principal Exterior Materials: Concrete, Brick, Glass

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 6 through 10)

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: NA

Areas of Significance: Commerce, Architecture

Period of Significance: 1963

Significant Dates: 1963

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

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

Architect/Builder: Jenkins and Hoff (architects; T.J. Bettes Corp. (developer)

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 11 through 16)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheets 17-18)

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: Less than one acre

Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

Latitude: 27.796479°
Longitude: -97.396654°

Verbal Boundary Description: The legal description for the property as recorded by the Nueces Central Appraisal District is "BLUFF LTS 1 & 2 BK 4" (Property ID 196776).

Boundary Justification: The nomination includes all property historically associated with the building.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Michael Whitehead
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Date: June 25, 2015

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheets 19-20)

Additional items (see continuation sheets 19-27, and 52-60)

Photographs (see continuation sheets 28-51)

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.

Photographs
600 Building, Corpus Christi, Nueces County, TX
Photographed by Michael Whitehead, March 2015

Photo 1
Elevation of east façade
600 Building center (Wells Fargo Building, right, and Wilson tower, left)

Photo 2
Oblique of northeast corner
Camera facing southwest

Photo 3
Oblique southeast corner
Camera facing

Photo 4
Oblique southwest corner
Camera facing northeast

Photo 5
West elevation with surrounding buildings
Camera facing east

Photo 6
Oblique northwest corner
Camera facing southeast

Photo 7
Ground floor of south façade and entryway
Camera facing north

Photo 8
Ground floor of east elevation
Camera facing west

Photo 9
Entryway south elevation
Camera facing north

Photo 10
Close-up precast concrete sunshade

Photo 11
Close-up pair of precast concrete sunshades

Photo 12
Close-up oblique, southeast corner
Camera facing northwest

Photo 13
Ground floor lobby
Camera facing north

Photo 14
Ground floor lobby facing out to Leopard Street
Camera facing south

Photo 15
Typical parking garage floor

Photo 16
Typical garage elevator lobby

Photo 17
Typical office floor elevator lobby

Photo 18
Typical office floor corridor

Photo 19
Typical office floor corridor

Photo 20
Typical office entry door from corridor

Photo 21
Typical interior window
Camera facing east

Photo 22
Typical interior window
Camera facing southeast

Photo 23
Interior of office space

Photo 24
21st floor lobby

Description

Completed in 1963, the 21-story 600 Building is a prominent landmark on the edge of the upper bluffs in downtown Corpus Christi, Texas. The architectural firm Jenkins and Hoff of Houston (with associate architect Richard Colley of Corpus Christi) melded Meisian, Brutalist, and Neoformalist design components to create an eclectic skyscraper with an unmistakable profile. Designed to meet the demand for office space during the postwar surge of oil and gas development in South Texas, the building's 3-part façade composition reflects the primary function of each vertical section, consisting of a street-level lobby topped with a 5-floor parking garage with a vertical concrete grill, a set-back brick and concrete office tower with projecting precast concrete window shades, and a penthouse. The interior features a central elevator core and is characterized by open floors plans designed to be reconfigured to meet the needs of individual tenants. The building is being rehabilitated for commercial use following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

The 600 Building is located at the southeast corner of Leopard Street and North Upper Broadway in Corpus Christi, TX in the center of Corpus Christi's commercial district. Within immediate vicinity of the building are office buildings of similar scale. Directly to the east is the Broadway Bluff Improvement, a pedestrian walking area listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which connects the area between the water and the bluff to the businesses above. Six blocks to the east is Corpus Christi Bay, with access to the water along the seawall and marina. The area on the lower portion of the bluff, between Broadway and Water Streets, contains small scale two and three story buildings developed in the early part of the 20th century. The area is currently occupied by commercial businesses and a few residential buildings. Along Shoreline Drive there are several high-rise hotels facing the water. Throughout the downtown area and on the lower portion of the bluff, the 600 Building is highly visible, contributing to Corpus Christi's skyline.

The 600 Building is situated at the southeast corner of the block outlined by Leopard, N. Upper Broadway, Antelope and Carancahua with the remaining portion of the block occupied by the Wells Fargo complex. The neighborhood on top of the bluff where the 600 building is located was originally developed as a residential neighborhood. Homes were built above the flood plain on the bluff in an area that became known as "uptown". Businesses developed on the "downtown", lower portion of the bluff near the water where commerce was taking place. The bluff itself was a dividing line between the two areas with a forty foot high cliff, making transportation between the two difficult.[1] Following trends of the City Beautiful Movement, improvements were made to the bluff starting in 1914 to connect the uptown and downtown areas. The building is located directly along the Broadway Bluff Improvement, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988.[2] The bluff improvements, which included building a promenade, stairs and fountain, created a connection between the "uptown" and "downtown" areas. This connection allowed a cohesive business district to form in Corpus Christi that incorporated the new office buildings on top of the bluff with the lower ones.

The site on top of the bluff where the 600 Building is located was originally a home built in the 1850s. The neighborhood was primarily a residential area at the time, with a church directly adjacent to the north and another residential property across Leopard Street. In 1916 and 1919, the "downtown" area near the bay was devastated by storms. During this same time, the cotton trade was flourishing which developed a need for office space. Following the bluff improvements which allowed for easy access between the "uptown" and "downtown" areas, a series of storms that flooded the "downtown" area and the increase in local commerce, larger commercial buildings began to take the place of the houses in the "uptown" area. The home that stood across Leopard street was torn down and replaced in

[1] National Register of Historic Places, Broadway Bluff Improvement, Corpus Christi, Nueces, TX, National Register # 88001829.
[2] Ibid.

1927 with the 12 story Nixon Building, which was occupied by primarily cotton brokers.[3] Maston Nixon, who developed the Nixon Building, acquired the land where the 600 Building stands today. The house which stood on the land was moved to the Spohn Hospital to house nursing students, and in 1929 the 14 story Plaza hotel was built in its place.[4] The major investors in the Plaza Hotel were the Driscoll family, and Jack White who operated the hotel. When Jack White tried to sell the building in the depression, the Driscoll's opposed. The issue was finally settled in court in White's favor. After the ordeal Jack White changed the name to White Plaza Hotel; in 1942 the Driscoll's built The Driscoll hotel directly next door to the north where the Presbyterian church was located.[5]

Several larger scale office buildings currently surround The 600 Building. The Wells Fargo complex, completed in the early 1970s, is made up of a two story modernist structure, a parking garage and the former Driscoll Hotel. Local Corpus Christi architect Walter Wisznia was responsible for the design of the two story modernist structure and the renovation and recladding of the Driscoll Hotel. To the south of the 600 Building, across Leopard Street, is The Wilson Plaza building (Nixon Building), built in 1927 with a twenty story addition added in 1947. The remaining buildings in the direct vicinity on the upper level of the bluff are large scale office buildings and parking structures.

The 600 Building is 21-stories with an additional below grade basement with parking. The 21-stories includes ground floor commercial space, five floors of parking, fourteen floors of offices, and a 21st floor office penthouse. The ground floor has 4,650 square feet of commercial space and 1,450 square feet of circulation. Each floor above contains approximately 9,800 gross square feet. Each floor has a height of approximately 11 feet with the exception of the ground floor (13 feet), the 21st floor (17 feet) and the 6th floor of the parking garage (7 feet). The building's ground floor is set back slightly, with the building's massing on the lot lines.

The frame is constructed of steel encased in concrete, with a poured-in-place concrete on metal decking floor. The procedure of constructing the frame was described in the Corpus Christi Caller newspaper in using the following method:

> "A guy derrick is put up on every other floor as it is built. A 'headache boom' is operated from this derrick, being lowered over the side to raise material. A detail crew then plumbs and bolts the steel together, welders follow to weld the joints and a decking crew then lays aluminum alloy flooring." (CCC, 1962)[6]

The exterior of the building features exposed concrete beams and columns, which follow the Brutalist theme of displaying rough structural elements.

The 600 Building has the appearance of three masses, the first 6 floors of ground floor retail and parking form the base which occupies the entire lot footprint excluding the ground floor setback, office floors 7-21 which occupies the south two-thirds of the building footprint and a windowless service wing along the north façade which runs from floors 7 through 21.

The building arguably has two main faces, along Leopard Street (south façade) and Upper Broadway St. (east façade), with its main lobby entrance along Leopard Street. The south elevation ground floor features floor to ceiling fixed-

[3] Givens, Murphy. "Tall Buildings on Bluff Changed the Look of Corpus Christi." *Corpus Christi Caller Times.* Caller times. 9 February 2011. Web. 8 October 2015.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Skelton, Max. "Structural Steelwork on New Building Completed" *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, December 23, 1962,sec. A., p. 8.

glass windows set back from the columns. It contains three bays (listed east to west) an open air exit from the basement parking garage, a glass door entrance to the restaurant, the main entrance with three glass doors set back further than the rest of the ground floor and another single glass door. Floors 2-6 are open air parking levels, which are faced with vertical pre-cast concrete fins that create alternating voids and solids. The concrete fins have cracked due to corrosion of the metal supports and are being replaced with pvc pipes. Floors 7-20 are faced with multiple wythes of brick between the exposed concrete frame. The mortar joints are flush, and match the color of the brick which creates a flat surface when viewed from the ground. Each floor of the south façade contains 12 windows, with openings measuring approximately 6'5" in height by 4'6" wide. The windows are pre-cast concrete sunshade elements which are a defining design feature of the building. "Pitched 17^0, precast-concrete window reduces glare of sun as well as air-conditioning costs, gives sculptural aspect to the façade."[7] The 21st story contains floor to ceiling glass set in and supported by aluminum frames. The glass and aluminum framing is set back from the face of the building, creating negative space between the six openings of the frame.

The east façade(N Upper Broadway) is similar to the south with floor to ceiling fixed glass windows and two open air garage entryways on the ground level. Floors 2-6 are parking, faced with pre-cast concrete fins. The 7th through 20th floors are also faced with brick, filled in between the frame. Each floor contains six windows each, with the pre-cast sunshade elements matching the south façade. On the 21th floor, there are three openings between the frame which contain floor to ceiling glass set back from the face of the building.

The north Façade is faced with brick and the exposed concrete frame on the floors 1-6. There is an opening on the ground level, overlooking the parking entrance, which is partially filled in with masonry blocks. The western half of the façade abuts directly against the Wells Fargo building for the first six levels. The service wing of the building extends from the center of the façade on the 7th through 21st levels and contains restrooms. The wing connected to the building through a narrow portion with windows facing east and west, then widens to a windowless block structure. Floors 7 through 21, are similar to the east and south facades with brick infill between the exposed concrete frame. There are nine windows on each floor, each with a pre-cast concrete sunshade. The 21st floor features aluminum framed floor to ceiling windows set back from the frame of the building.

The west façade of the building contains only one opening, which overlooks the garage exit. The remaining façade contains brick with flush mortar between the exposed concrete frame. The 21st floor features stucco panels, with large lettering reading "600 Building" in the center frame opening.

The roof of the building contains a mechanical room that extends 17 feet above the main tower. It is positioned on the center of the west façade, and is clad with brick. The roof surface is covered in a modern vinyl material. Built as an office tower, the 600 Building contains basement parking, ground floor retail, five floors of parking and fifteen floors of office space. With the exception of the 3rd and 5th garage floors, all floors are accessed through four elevators in the lobby.

The main lobby entry, located on Leopard Street, is recessed back one structural bay at the center column of the building. There are currently three non-original aluminum framed glass entry doors placed on either side of a structural column (two doors on the east side and one door on the west). As you enter the lobby, through two sets of doors, the flooring material continues inside from exterior sidewalk with terracotta colored tile. The entry doors are not original, but were replaced with similar aluminum and glass units (see plans page A23).[8] The lobby walls are currently covered in wood paneling with a band of glass surrounding the entire lobby. The original lobby walls were clad with face brick surrounding the elevators and formica on the remainder of the walls (see plans A14). The current ceiling is a

[7] "Offset Concrete Window." Progressive Architecture Magazine, February 1, 1964, 84.
[8] Telephone interview with Jay Soloiz.

dropdown acoustic tile grid which was laid over the original acoustic plaster (see plans A8).[9] The remaining space on the ground floor is a leasing office, a convenience store and a sandwich shop.

Floors 2 through 6 are open parking areas, accessed by a car ramp and the central elevator core (except floor 3 and 5). The interior finishes of parking garage areas remain unchanged. The original lobbies on the parking floors contained rough finishes of concrete block walls, resilient floor tile and no finish on the ceiling. Currently the walls are clad with gypsum and the ceiling is covered with a drop down acoustic tile (see plans A8 and A14). The lobbies and common areas on the office floors, 7th -20th, are all very similar with original brick walls surrounding the elevators and gypsum on the remaining walls. The ceiling on these floors are currently dropdown acoustic tile, originally it contained acoustic plaster (See plans A8). The plans specified (page A8) for all office floor corridors to be clad with brick. There is not any evidence to suggest that this is what was originally built. The doors along the office floor corridors are mostly intact with side light and mail slot (see plans TD1). Each floor plate, beyond the corridors have been built to each tenant's specifications. The 21st floor, which contains higher ceiling heights, was renovated in the late 1980s with wood paneling with a drop down acoustic tile ceiling.[10] According to the plans (page A8) the 21st floor lobby was specified to be covered with brick, the ceiling with acoustic plaster and floors with resilient tile. Historic interior photos were not available. Extensive research was conducted at the Corpus Christi A&M library, the Corpus Christi public library and internet searches. A telephone interview was conducted with Jay Soloiz, who has been an employee of the building since 1970 and has witnessed firsthand changes to the interior.

The windows, which are a main feature on the building's exterior, are integral to the internal building layout. The windows are much larger than they appear from the outside, measuring approximately 6'5" by 4'6", allowing great views of Corpus Christi Bay. The exterior of the building remains mostly intact as it was originally constructed, with the exception of the ground floor and 21st story exterior walls. In 1970, Hurricane Celia damaged a large portion of Corpus Christi. The 600 Building's concrete and brick exterior was able to withstand the hurricane's winds, but the ground floor and 21st floor were completely destroyed along with other areas in the building where the large windows were broken.

Integrity

The 600 Building maintains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship feeling and association. The building is significant under Criterion A, commerce, and Criterion C, architecture. The association with the local economy is tied to the economic boom of the oil industry in Texas and its need for office space. Constructed as an office building, the interior uses were designed to fluctuate with the tenant. The exterior details, massing and form, all which have remained unchanged, are what retains the buildings historic architectural values. The building's location remains intact, as it is in its original location. The design, workmanship and materials have been retained on the exterior of the building. Jenkins' and Hoff's original design remains completely intact. The exposed structural frame, pre-cast sunshades, fins and brick have all been retained. The replacement glass on the ground floor, 21st floor and office levels have been replaced with similar materials in scale to what was originally installed. The changes to the interior do not affect the significance of the building due to the transient nature of office leases and malleability of the floor plate. The acoustic tile drop down ceiling, floor and wall finishes do not negatively impact the interior to the extent of it not being recognizable as the interior of an office building. The setting of the building is intact. The Wilson Plaza building, to the south, and the Driscoll Hotel (now the Wells Fargo building), to the north, were standing when the 600 building was constructed and are in scale with the newer office towers. The Broadway Bluff improvement, which connected the upper bluff to the area below is still intact and remains in use. The building's original design elements are completely intact, which convey a sense feeling of the time period it was built. The building's design is

[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.

directly linked to the modernist movement in the state and on the national level though Jenkins' and Hoff's direct association with the movement in Houston and Yale University. In addition to being associated with an architectural style, the building is tied to the oil and gas boom that was happening in Texas at the time. The 600 building was the one of the first large office towers constructed in Corpus Christi, and the majority of its tenants originally and for most of its life were tied to the oil industry.

Statement of Significance

Completed in 1963, the 21-story 600 Building in downtown Corpus Christi was designed by Jenkins and Hoff of Houston, with local architect Richard Colley, for the T.J. Bettes Corporation. It was built to meet the demand for office space in the growing oil and gas industry of south Texas. The firm Jenkins and Hoff utilized modernist design principals such as a rectilinear plan, exposed structural elements, and decorative elements limited to symmetrically-placed precast concrete box window shades. At its completion, the building was at the forefront of modern taste and style in Corpus Christi. The 600 Building embodies distinctive characteristics of skyscraper design in the early 1960s, melding components of Meisian, Brutalist, and New Formalist design in its three-part façade composition, consisting of a ground-floor lobby and 5-floor parking garage, a set-back office tower with distinctive precast concrete window shades, and a penthouse. The building represents the work of the firm Jenkins and Hoff, and is nominated under Criterion C in area of Architecture at the local level of significance. In addition, the building is associated with the economic prosperity of the postwar oil boom and the resulting development of office towers in the central business district, and is nominated under Criterion A in the area of Commerce at the local level of significance.

Oil Industry in South Texas

After World War II and through the 1960s, the United States was experiencing an economic boom. Industry and cities were expanding, which created a demand for oil and new petroleum products. Texas and particularly the Gulf Coast played a role in the refining, production and exploration. Within Texas, the petrochemical industry, "grew dramatically as national demand for products grew at a rate of 10 percent a year into the 1960s."[11] The 600 Building, constructed during this time of an expanding petrochemical industry, housed tenants that were mostly involved with the oil, gas and chemical industry.

The growth of the petrochemical refining and production in Texas was a direct response to the large amount of oil and gas available within the state.[12] In the latter half of the 1950s there were advances with the management of oil production, a diversification of the products refined from oil, and new natural gas wells found.[13] The new products refined from oil for consumer and industrial uses included styrene, butadiene, polypropylene, benzene and larger quantities of synthetic rubber and ammonia. The demand for these products on the US market helped expand the number of refineries. Texas' large supply of oil and gas, its proximity to refineries and the increased demand in the late 1950s and early 1960s helped generate the economic drivers needed to expand the economy. Many jobs were created in Texas and along the Gulf Coast for the exploration, production, refining and transportation of oil.

Corpus Christi developed as a large petroleum and petrochemical hub. Its proximity to oil wells, large supplies of natural gas and its port helped solidify the industry. Based on an economic report from the mid-1950s, of the 25 counties in south Texas the 8 that surround Corpus Christi produced 58% of the crude oil, with a large portion of this and additional production brought into the city to be refined and shipped.[14] The increased oil exploration of the 1950s, and the demand in the early 1960s set the stage for economic expansion.[15] According to a 1963 article in the Corpus

[11] Roger M. Olien, "OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY," Handbook of Texas Online (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/doogz), accessed April 18, 2015. Uploaded on June 15, 2010. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Harland Bartholomew and Associates. Comprehensive Plan for the Corpus Christi Area. Saint Louis, Missouri: Harland Bartholomew and Associates, 1953.
[15] Roger M. Olien, "OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY," Handbook of Texas Online (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/doogz), accessed April 18, 2015. Uploaded on June 15, 2010. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

Christi Caller titled, "Crude Demand Forecast Get Upward Boost," it outlined that there was a, "strong demand for oil; even with record refinery production levels the excess inventories are still being used."[16] The national economy in 1963 was benefiting the oil industry, "from a continuing rise in business activity and consumer spending," which included, "pickup in industrial output and new car sales."[17] At this time petroleum's demand growth rate was at its highest since 1955.[18] The growing jobs in all sectors of the economy, particularly with oil and gas, caused the demand for office space in Corpus Christi to be high.[19] According to a 1963 report, there was a marked increase in the total value of the commercial building permits issued.[20] Developers responded to the needs of the market by constructing office towers in downtown Corpus Christi. In the early 1960s Corpus Christi's economic future looked promising, with the demand for oil forecasted to remain high and plans to expand the port to allow for supertankers.[21]

The 600 Building, completed in 1963, was built as a direct response to the need for modern office space. At the time, this was a major construction project for Corpus Christi. "It helped change the city's skyline. Along with three other high rise structures downtown- the Guaranty Bank Building and additions to the Petroleum Tower and Corpus Christi State National Bank - several hundred thousand square feet of office space were added to the city in 1963"[22] Each of these buildings are all still extant. The Petroleum tower and the Guaranty Bank building both utilized a more Miesian approach with curtain wall construction. The Corpus Christi State National Bank building, originally constructed in 1960 with renovations in 1964 was built in the International Style. With the 600 Building's eclectic modern design, and integrated parking it stands out among the other early 1960s office buildings in Corpus Christi. The developer, the TJ Bettes Corporation, was a large mortgage company based in Houston. The company was taking advantage of the opportunity of the expanding need for office space in Texas.

The building advertised amenities such as air conditioning, integrated parking and high speed elevators, which would have been uncommon for office buildings in Corpus Christi at the time.[23] The original nine tenants of the building included six companies that were involved with all aspects of the oil and gas industry. There were refining, drilling, petroleum engineers and geologists.[24] By the 1970s half of the tenants were involved with geology, and with so many companies in one building from the same industry the geologists, "banded together to each collect and operate pooled libraries of oil and gas drilling reports," which still exists today.[25]

Throughout the 600 building's history it has mostly housed tenants involved with the oil and gas industry. Presently the building is suffering from low occupancy and a fire in 2014 that damaged the electrical system. Even though Corpus Christi currently is still involved with refining, production and shipping of oil and gas the business workforce has been concentrated to Texas' bigger cities.

Architectural Significance

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[16] Skelton, Max. "Crude Demand Forecast Get Upward Boost." Corpus Christi Caller Times, 1963.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Roger M. Olien, "OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY," Handbook of Texas Online (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/doogz), accessed April 18, 2015. Uploaded on June 15, 2010. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.
[20] Burt C Blanton Company. Technical Survey Portraying Present and Future Industrial Advantages and Potentialities of The Corpus Christi Metropolitan Area. Dallas, Texas: Burt C Blanton Company 1963
[21] Harland Bartholomew and Associates. Comprehensive Plan for the Corpus Christi Area. Saint Louis, Missouri: Harland Bartholomew and Associates, 1953.
[22] Beeghly, Art. "Building Houses Much Activity." Corpus Christi Caller Times, 1973.
[23] Full Page Advertisement. Corpus-Christi Caller-Times, May 19, 1963, 3F sec.
[24] Original Document. Collateral Assignment of Leases. 600 Building files. January 31, 1964.
[25] Beeghly, Art. "Building Houses Much Activity." Corpus Christi Caller Times, 1973.

The 600 Building, built in 1963, is an example of a building with influences from several modernist schools of thought. It was designed by Jenkins and Hoff, an architectural firm with a direct line to the forefront of national architectural movements. Modern architecture during the early 1960s did not have a clear transition from one style to the next. These transitions spawned hybrid buildings which utilized components of multiple styles. In the case of the 600 Building, Jenkins and Hoff designed a building with Neoformalist and Brutalist details exhibited through sculptural forms and rough-finished materials.[26]

The International Style developed in Europe in the 1920s and brought to America in the 1930s and 1940s. The PSFS Building in Philadelphia (Howe & Lescaze, 1932) is widely regarded at the first International Style high-rise in the United States, completed the same year as Phillips Johnson's influential Museum of Modern Art exhibit *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition*. The style grew out of multiple factors: fatigue of building designs, the need to construct a large number of buildings rapidly for expanding cities, new construction technology and a desire to create a style of architecture for the "modern" world.[27] The design philosophy fit well into post war America with its booming economy; the architects of the time who promoted the style strived to design a building that utilized modern economic materials. The style "became synonymous with corporate modernism" from the mid-1950s to the1970s.[28]

Architect Mies van der Rohe has been credited with "perfecting of a system of construction and its derivative architectural form, the highrise"[29] which was best suited to the changing demands of the American business world in the mid-20th Century. Buildings inspired by Mies typically have "rectilinear forms; light, taut plane surfaces that have been completely stripped of applied ornamentation and decorations; open interior spaces; and a visually weightless quality…by the use of cantilever."[30] The 600 Building's basic concept inherent in its massing can be drawn from International Style buildings, but the repeating precast concrete elements and protruding large sunshades on floors two through six mixes in aspects of Brutalism and New Formalism with an increase in complexity, sculptural forms, and rough materials. The 21st floor returns to a reflection of the International Style, with unadorned rectilinear forms and setback floor to ceiling glass curtain walls. The building is a good example of how modernist styles merged during this period, which makes architectural classification difficult.

The Brutalist movement evolved in Europe as a design philosophy and not so much as a style, "from principals set forth by Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe."[31] Adherents of the philosophy "advocated the return to functionalist principles—in services, materials, and structure."[32] The term "Brutalism" derives from the French word for rough concrete, "Benton Brut" which is demonstrated though use of exposed concrete, which is often left unfinished.[33] The aesthetic principals of modernist architecture grew from rigid, calculated rectilinear systems based on the structural logic of steel and glass technology. Within the United States, "New Brutalism was assertive, non-decorative and anti-suburban….it represented an alternative to corporate formalism, and to kitsch."[34] Brutalism was used mostly in

[26] Fox, Stephen. "The New Brutalism: The Houston Interpretation." Cite 40, The Architecture and Design Review of Houston (Winter 1997-1998): 21.
[27] "International Style of Modern Architecture Origins, Development, Characteristics (c.1920-70)" Encyclopedia of Art and Design. Accessed June 17, 2015. http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/architecture/international-style.htm
[28] Ibid.
[29] Curcic, Slobodan. "The New Brutalism: Ethic or Aesthetic." Journal of Aesthetic Education 3, no. 2 (1969): 171-73.
[30] Encyclopædia Britannica Online, s. v. "International Style", accessed June,17 2015, http://www.britannica.com/art/International-Style-architecture.
[31] Curcic, Slobodan. "The New Brutalism: Ethic or Aesthetic." Journal of Aesthetic Education 3, no. 2 (1969): 171-73.
[32] Encyclopædia Britannica Online, s. v. "New Brutalism", accessed April 8, 2015, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/411216/New-Brutalism.
[33] "Brutalism:1960-1975." Docomomo WEWA. January 1, 2015. Accessed April 8, 2015. http://www.docomomo-wewa.org/styles_detail.php?id=35.
[34] Fox, Stephen. "The New Brutalism: The Houston Interpretation." Cite 40, The Architecture and Design Review of Houston (Winter 1997-1998): 18-23.

America as an addition of sculptural forms and rough materials to facades. Although Brutalism looked coarse, "it symbolized sophistication and class,"[35] and was considered high style in the 1960s.[36]

In the United States, Brutalism was closely associated with the Yale School of Architecture, spread through to the students by visiting lecturers and permanent professors such as Louis Kahn, "whose work during the 1950s was aligned with New Brutalist tendencies."[37] It was the larger cities in Texas where Corpus Christi looked to for modern trends in urban planning and Architecture.[38] Howard Barnstone and Burdette Keeland, both graduates of Yale, were faculty at the University of Houston, and "the most publicized young Houston architects of the 1950s."[39] The pair was influential in bringing high-style modern architecture to Houston.[40] "Barnstone and Keeland asserted stylistic leadership by reproducing an architectural trend associated with Yale, Kahn and British sources not seen in Houston before."[41] The lead architect for the 600 Building was William Jenkins, a graduate of the College of Architecture at the University of Houston and a student of Barnstone and Keeland.[42]

Postwar America was in a period of change in terms of its cities. Due to increased economic prosperity, a rise in car ownership and changing socio-political ideals, population began shifting to the suburbs. In Texas, the oil industry was prospering in the early 1960s; increased industrial activity created the demand for office space.[43] As job opportunities grew in the oil industry in Texas, population grew in suburban areas outside of the urban core. The existing stock of office buildings became inadequate, as they did not accommodate the 1960s office worker who commuted to the city. Modernism was a reaction to this movement, accommodating suburban lifestyle while bringing European socialization and urbanization to modern engineering.[44] The 600 Building's integrated parking, high speed elevators and air conditioning were at the forefront of office space in 1963.

Architect William Jenkins was born in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1925. After his parents' divorce, his mother remarried and as teenager his stepfather moved the family to Houston. Jenkins graduated high school in 1943, after which he joined the U.S. Navy and served in Brazil during World War II.[45] He began his architectural studies in 1947 at the Rice Institute and completed his degree in 1951 at the University of Houston where he studied under Barnstone and Keeland. Jenkins' first job as a draftsman was under William Floyd, who described him as "a genius with details".[46] During his time with Floyd, Jenkins designed mostly residences in the expanding Houston Suburbs. In 1956, he began his teaching career at The University of Houston as a lecturer in design. During this time he formed a new firm with William Hoff, which later expanded to Jenkins Hoff Oberg Saxe.[47] "It was during Jenkins' partnership with William B. Hoff…that he achieved his most important large-scale architectural projects…including the twenty-one story 600

[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Fox, Stephen. "The New Brutalism: The Houston Interpretation." Cite 40, The Architecture and Design Review of Houston (Winter 1997-1998): 18-23.
[38] Lessoff, Alan. Where Texas Meets the Sea: Corpus Christi & Its History. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2015.
[39] Fox, Stephen. "The New Brutalism: The Houston Interpretation." Cite 40, The Architecture and Design Review of Houston (Winter 1997-1998): 18-23.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Lessoff, Alan. Where Texas Meets the Sea: Corpus Christi & Its History. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2015.
[44] Fox, Stephen. "The New Brutalism: The Houston Interpretation." Cite 40, The Architecture and Design Review of Houston (Winter 1997-1998): 18-23.
[45] Smith, Jason A., and Stephen Fox. 1951-1958, High Style in the Suburbs: The Early Modern Houses of William R. Jenkins. Houston: Houston Mod, 2009.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.

Building on the Bluff in downtown Corpus Christi."[48] Jenkins became the dean of the University of Houston College of Architecture in 1968, and served as head of the department for almost 20 years.[49] He never fully ceased his personal practice, but during his tenure he focused his time on the university, and along with Burdette Keeland successfully commissioned Philip Johnson to design the new Architecture Building of the University of Houston. Jenkins served as dean until 1988 and passed away the following year. The architecture library at UH was renamed shortly after his death the William R. Jenkins Architecture Library as a memorial to his contributions to University and his architectural legacy.[50]

Architect William Hoff was born in Seguin, Texas in 1930. He received his architecture degree in 1955 from The University of Texas. After college he served in the in the U.S. Air Force as a fighter pilot. In the late 1950s he formed a partnership with William Jenkins. In 1985 he founded Hoff Architects. The firm became nationally recognized, and contributed significantly to Houston's built environment.[51]

The large scale projects undertaken by the leading architects in Houston utilizing modernist ideals, "Were at the forefront of modern taste in the 1960s."[52] The buildings Jenkins, Barnstone, Keeland and other architects were producing, "were not pastiches… they rigorously explored a set of constructional, material and spatial precepts to produce works of architectural value."[53] Jenkins' large scale projects include a pair of residential towers in Houston, the Park IV (1963) and Parc V (1965), Hillcroft Professional Building (1964-66), Cummins Lane Apartments, Oaks of Beverly Hills and the 600 Building in Corpus Christi (1963).

Modernist design principals are demonstrated throughout the 600 Building. The ground floor of the building originally contained Corpus Christi Savings and Loan Association and Massey's Apparel for men.[54] The ground floor walls were set back to allow for covered sidewalks and pedestrian access to the retail space.[55] The unadorned rectilinear forms and set back of the ground and top floors draws upon modernist ideals. Floors two through six contains an integrated parking garage, which allowed for easy parking access for the buildings' tenants. It was described at the time as, "parking convenience is yours at the 600. As you step from your car, you're inside…no matter what the weather, you and your car are under cover." This appealed to the office workers who lived in the growing suburbs. The exterior of the parking garage was built with pre-cast fins that create a repeating pattern of voids and structural elements. The design of the exterior fins allow air and light into the parking levels of the building. The integration of parking into the building explored the modern idea of bringing urban socialization to a suburbanizing American city. Floors seven through twenty features exposed structural concrete with brick in-fill, and each floor contains repeating pre-cast concrete sunshades. An advertisement of the building from 1963 stated that, "large precast concrete window frames reduce heat and glare from the sun, yet permit an uninterrupted view."[56] Similarly, the building exhibits some characteristics of New Formalism, though the rigidity of the design defies the one intent of New Formalism which was the softening of modernist design through the application of classical forms. Nonetheless, the building possesses a New Formalist flavor due to its focus on structure, sense of monumentality, rhythmic repetition of fenestration and window shades, and emphasis on mass, weight, and texture. The sunshades provide a passive way of cooling the

[48] Ibid
[49] Ibid
[50] Ibid
[51] Obituary. Digital File from person records of David Hoff.
[52] Fox, Stephen. "The New Brutalism: The Houston Interpretation." Cite 40, The Architecture and Design Review of Houston (Winter 1997-1998): 18-23.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Nelson, Georgia. "600 Building Sold To Firm Headed By Local Realtor." Corpus Christi Caller Times, April 10, 1969, sec. A., p. 4.
[55] Full Page Advertisement. Corpus-Christi Caller-Times, May 19, 1963, 3F sec.
[56] Ibid.

building in response to the sunny climate of Corpus Christi, and may have been inspired by the work of California architect Wayne McAllister, most notably his Fremont Hotel and Casino (1956) in Las Vegas. The rough finish and large scale of the sunshades give the center of the building a heavy massing, which is a departure from the ground and top floors. The 21st floor, with setback floor to ceiling curtain walls, returns to the simple unadorned space.

Jenkins and Hoff's design of the 600 building was an execution of modernist design principals with regional variations. The delineation of modern styles during this period was blurred, which resulted in buildings that used a collection of influences, making it difficult it was categorize modern architecture built during this period. The transmission of modernist ideas to Jenkins and Hoff was a direct lineage from those at the forefront nationally and internationally, which can be seen in their work. The building was constructed during a period when there was a demand for office space in a booming economy along with a changing city structure. The design directly represents this period through its use of economical construction methods, integrated parking and high style modern design with regional variations.

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Jay Soloiz (Building employee since 1970) in discussion with the author, June 2015

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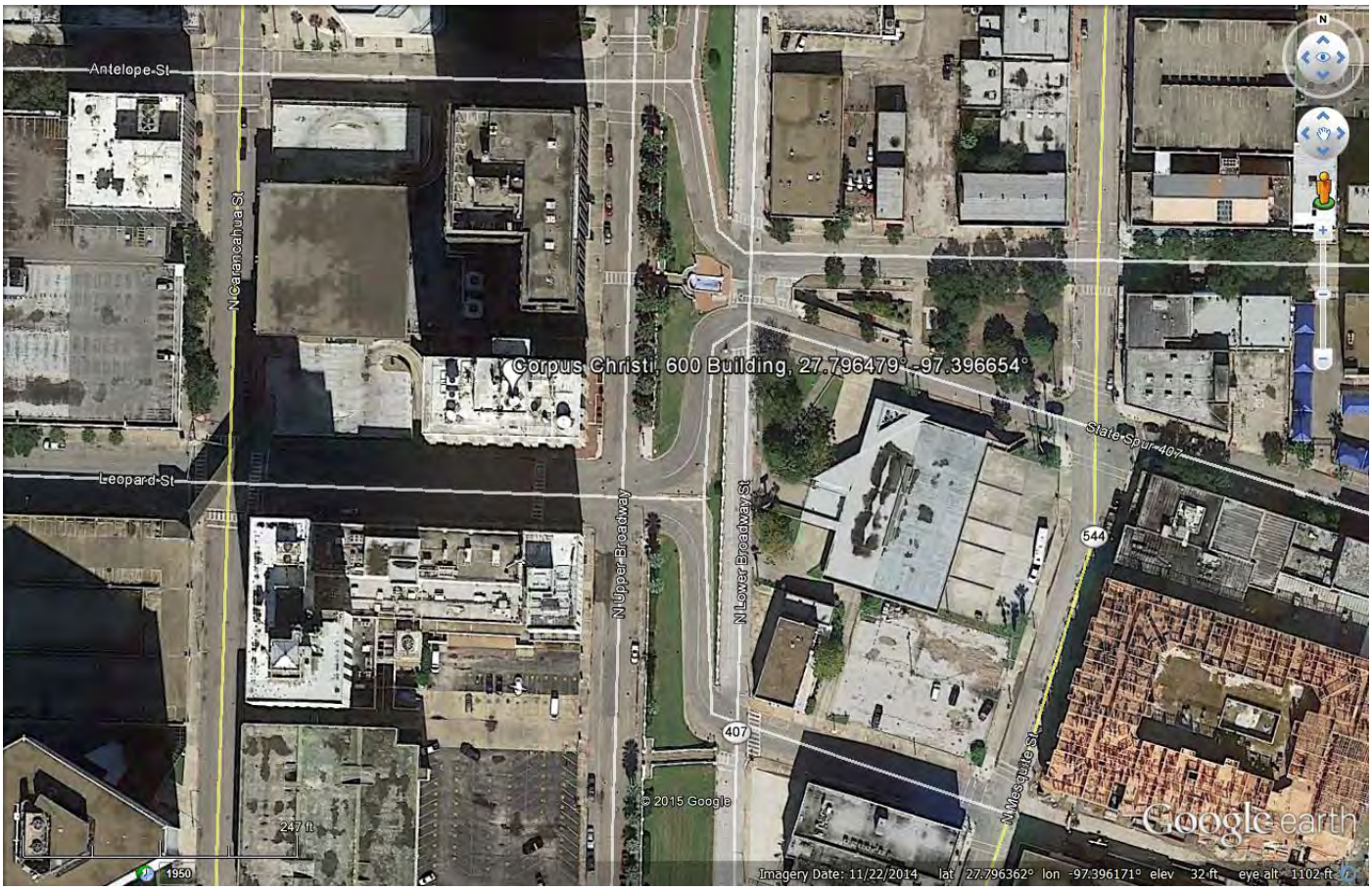
600 Building
600 Leopard Street
Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas

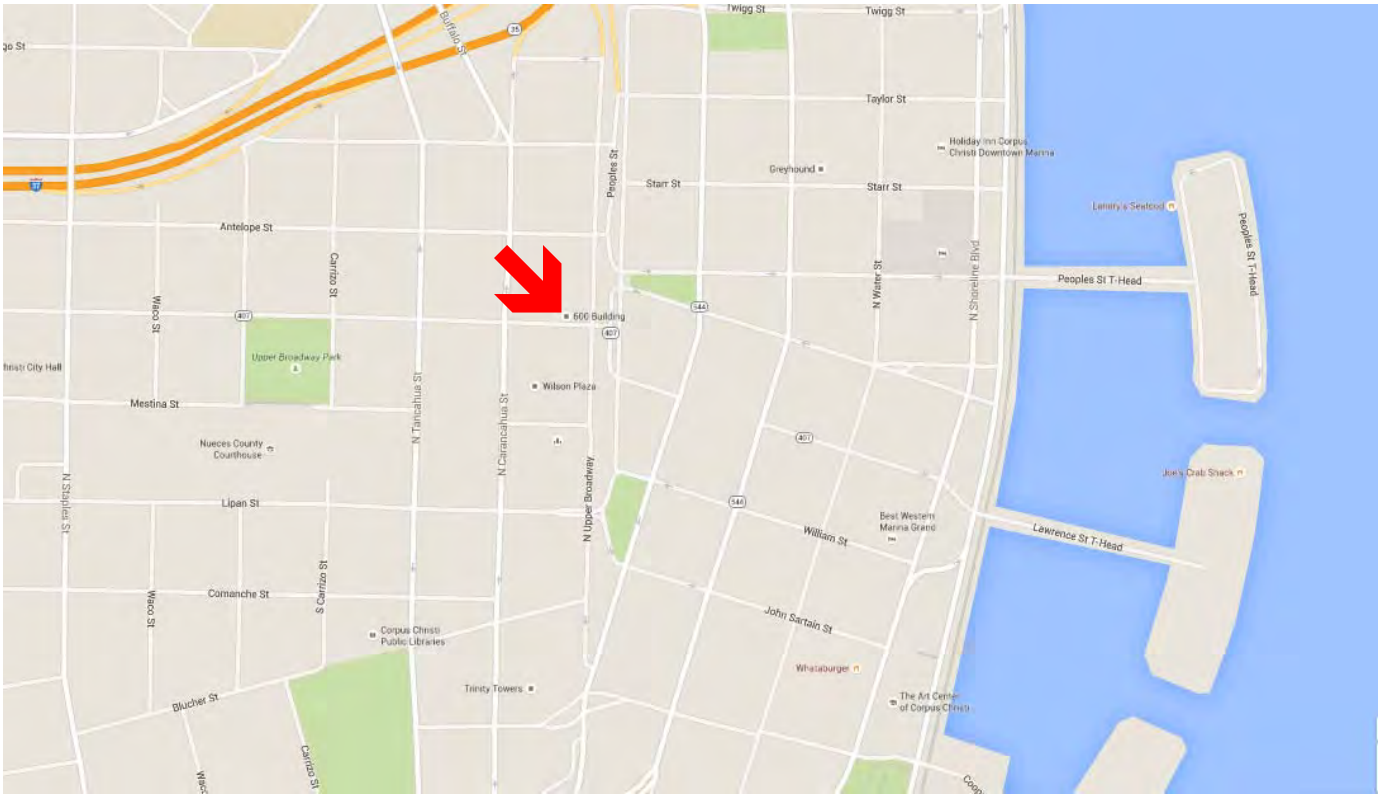
Source: Google Earth, accessed June 25, 2015

Lat: 27.796479°
Lon: -97.396654°



Nueces County, Texas
Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nueces_County,_Texas

Location Map
Source: Google Maps



600 Building under construction, c.1963
Corpus Christi Libraries Digital Archives

East elevation, October 1964
Corpus Christi Libraries Digital Archives

Looking north, July, 9 1964
Corpus Christi Libraries Digital Archives

View from Corpus Christi Marina, 1960s
Corpus Christi Libraries Digital Archives

Damage to 21st floor of 600 Building after Hurricane Celia, August 1970
Corpus Christi Libraries Digital Archives

Fremont Hotel and Casino (1956)
Las Vegas, Nevada
Architect: Wayne McAllister
https://roomcritic.wordpress.com/2012/06/14/12-vintage-hotels-and-the-postcard-pictures-that-made-them-awesome/

Parc IV and V Apartments (1963-66)
3600-3614 Montrose Boulevard, Houston, Texas
Architects: Jenkins Hoff Oberg Saxe

Photographs
600 Building, Corpus Christi, Nueces County, TX
Photographed by Michael Whitehead, March 2015

Photo 1
Elevation of east façade
600 Building center (Wells Fargo Building, right, and Wilson tower, left, both not included in nomination)

Photo 2
Oblique of northeast corner

Photo 3
Oblique southeast corner

Photo 4
Oblique southwest corner

Photo 5
West elevation with surrounding buildings

Photo 6
Oblique northwest corner

Photo 7
Ground floor of south façade and entryway

Photo 8
Ground floor of east elevation

Photo 9
Entryway south elevation

Photo 10
Close-up precast concrete sunshade

Photo 11
Close-up pair of precast concrete sunshades

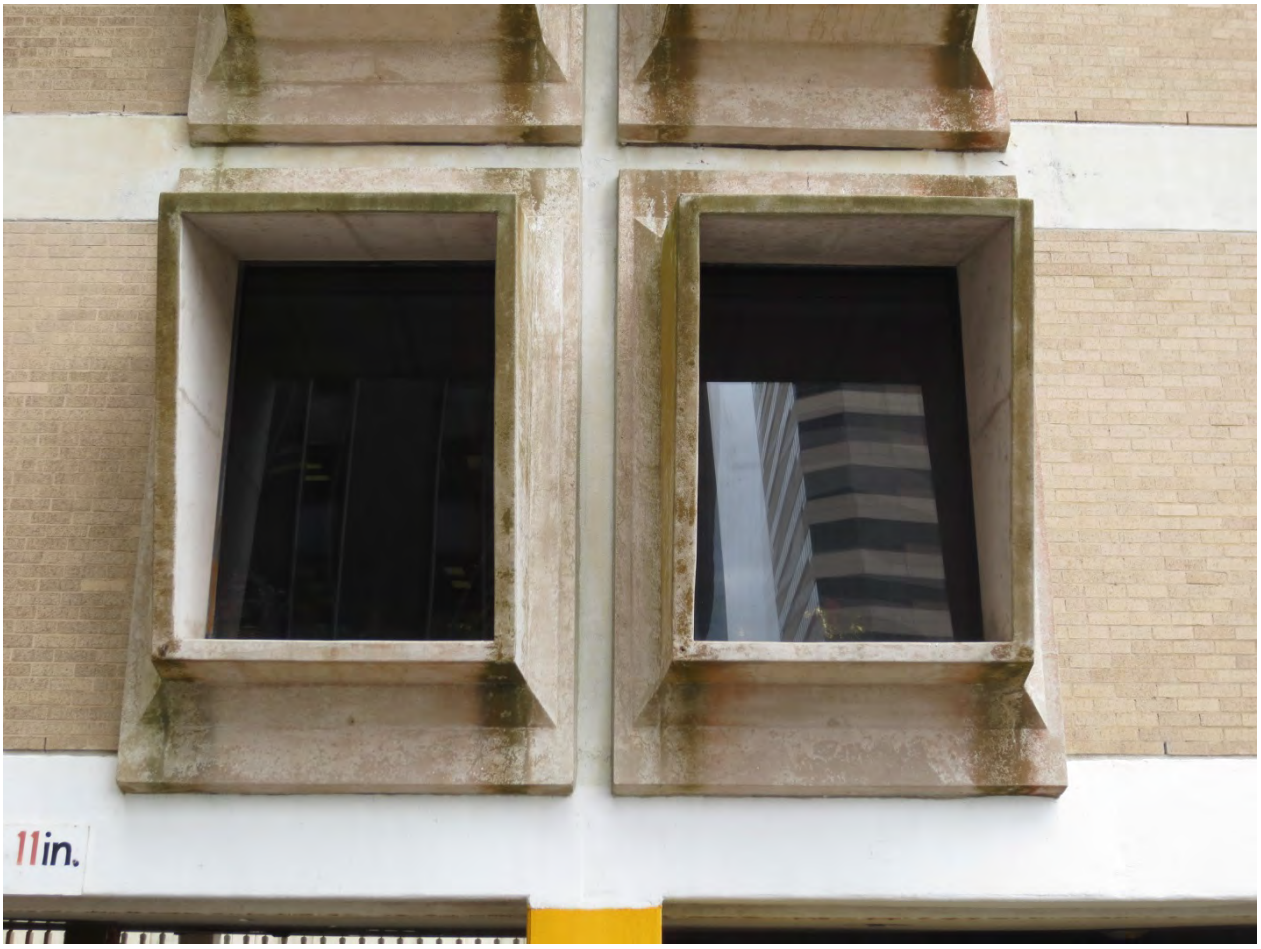


Photo 12
Close-up oblique, southeast corner

Photo 13
Ground floor lobby

Photo 14
Ground floor lobby facing out to Leopard Street

Photo 15
Typical parking garage floor

Photo 16
Typical garage elevator lobby

Photo 17
Typical office floor elevator lobby

Photo 18
Typical office floor corridor

Photo 19
Typical office floor corridor

Photo 20
Typical office entry door from corridor

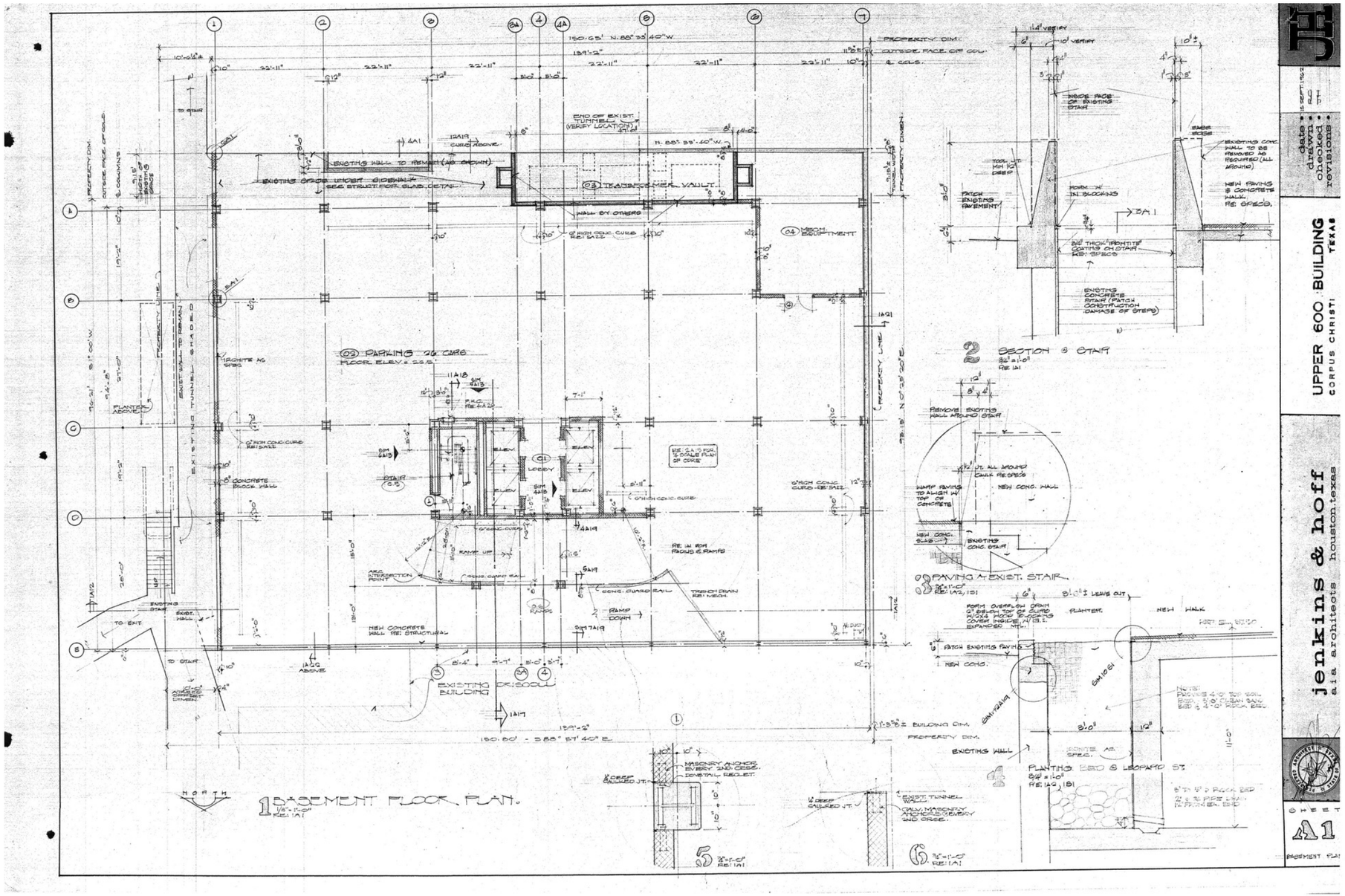
Photo 21
Typical interior window

Photo 22
Typical interior window

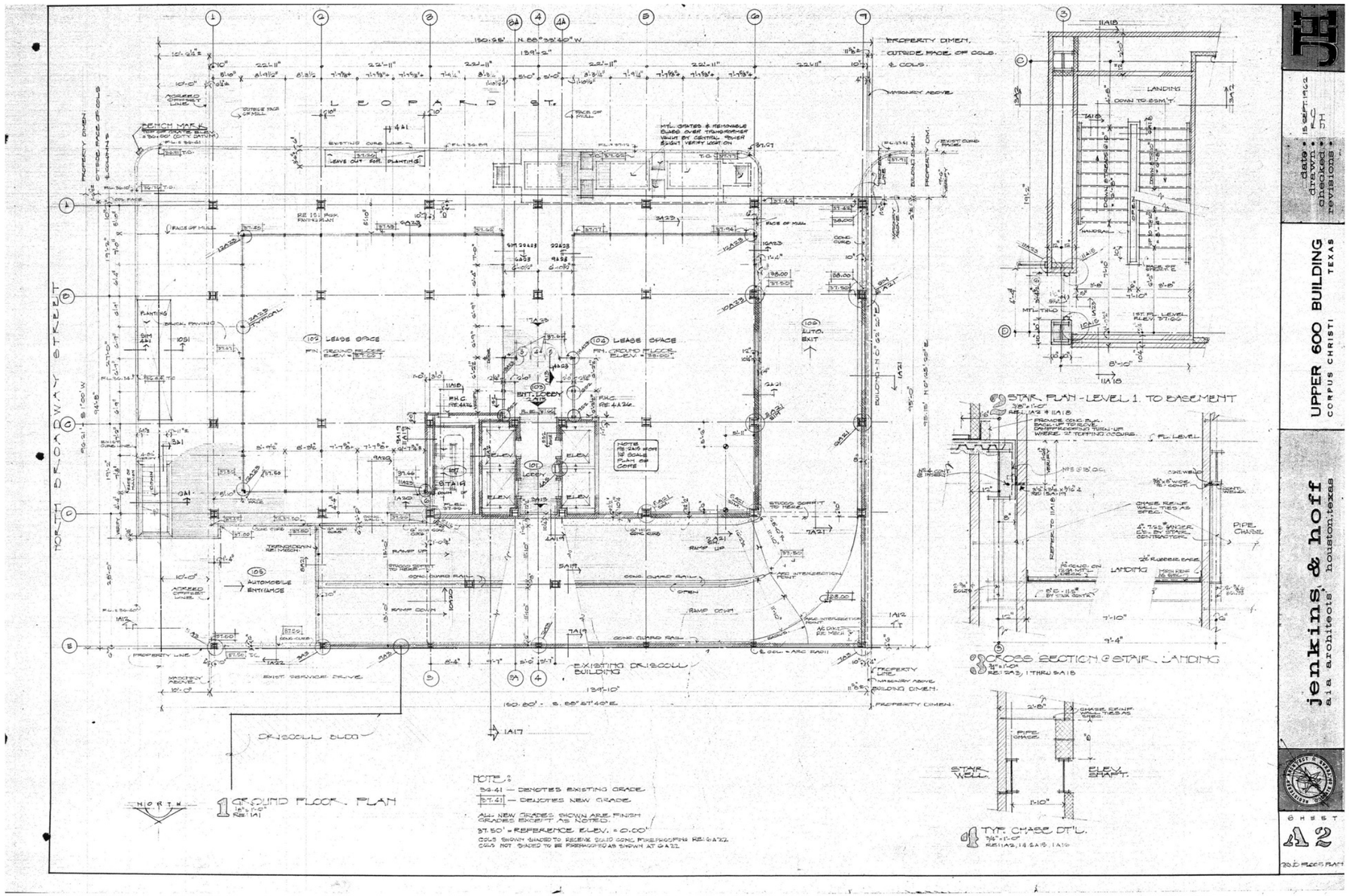
Photo 23
Interior of office space

Photo 24
21st floor lobby

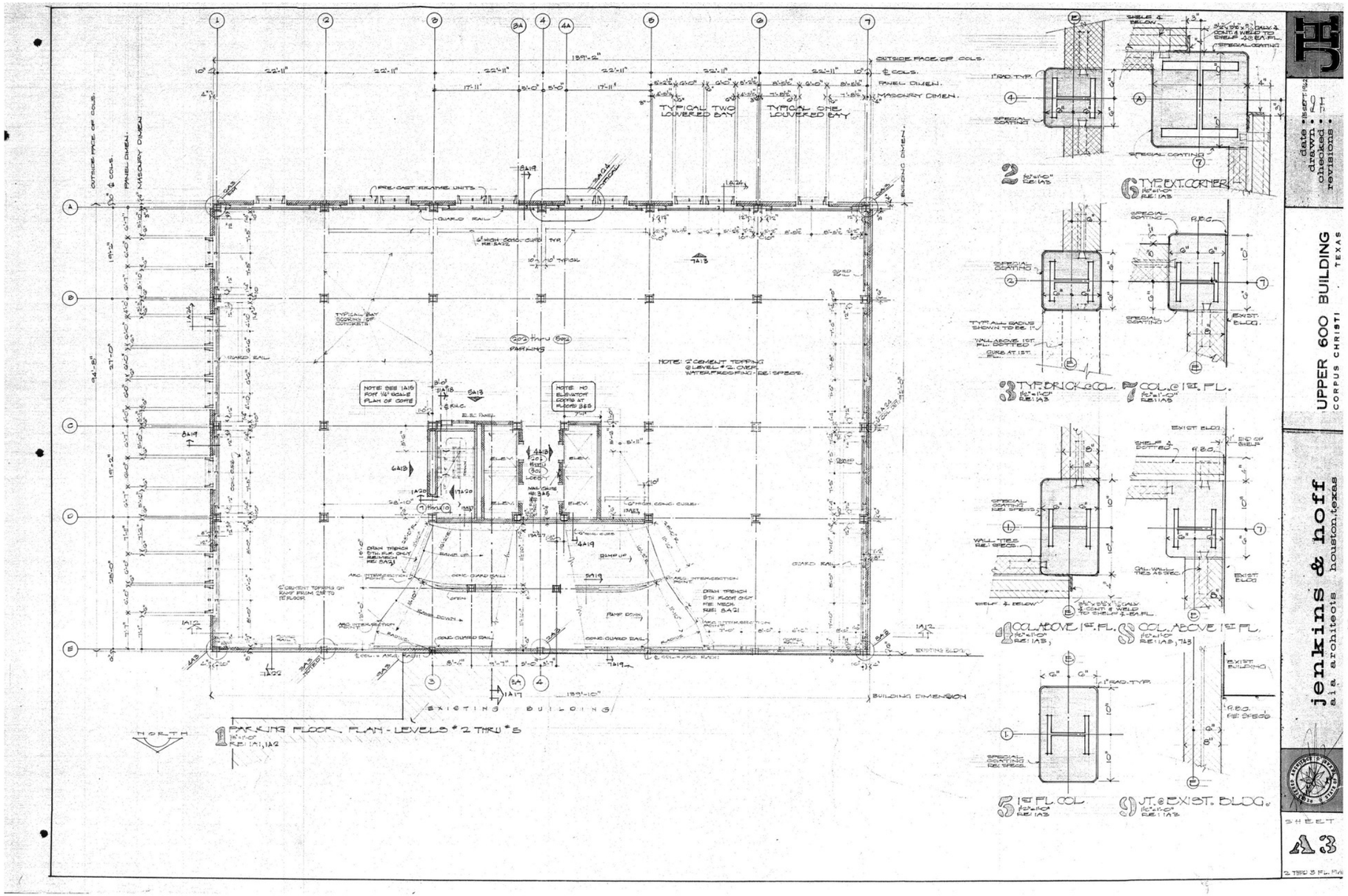
Original Plans – Basement



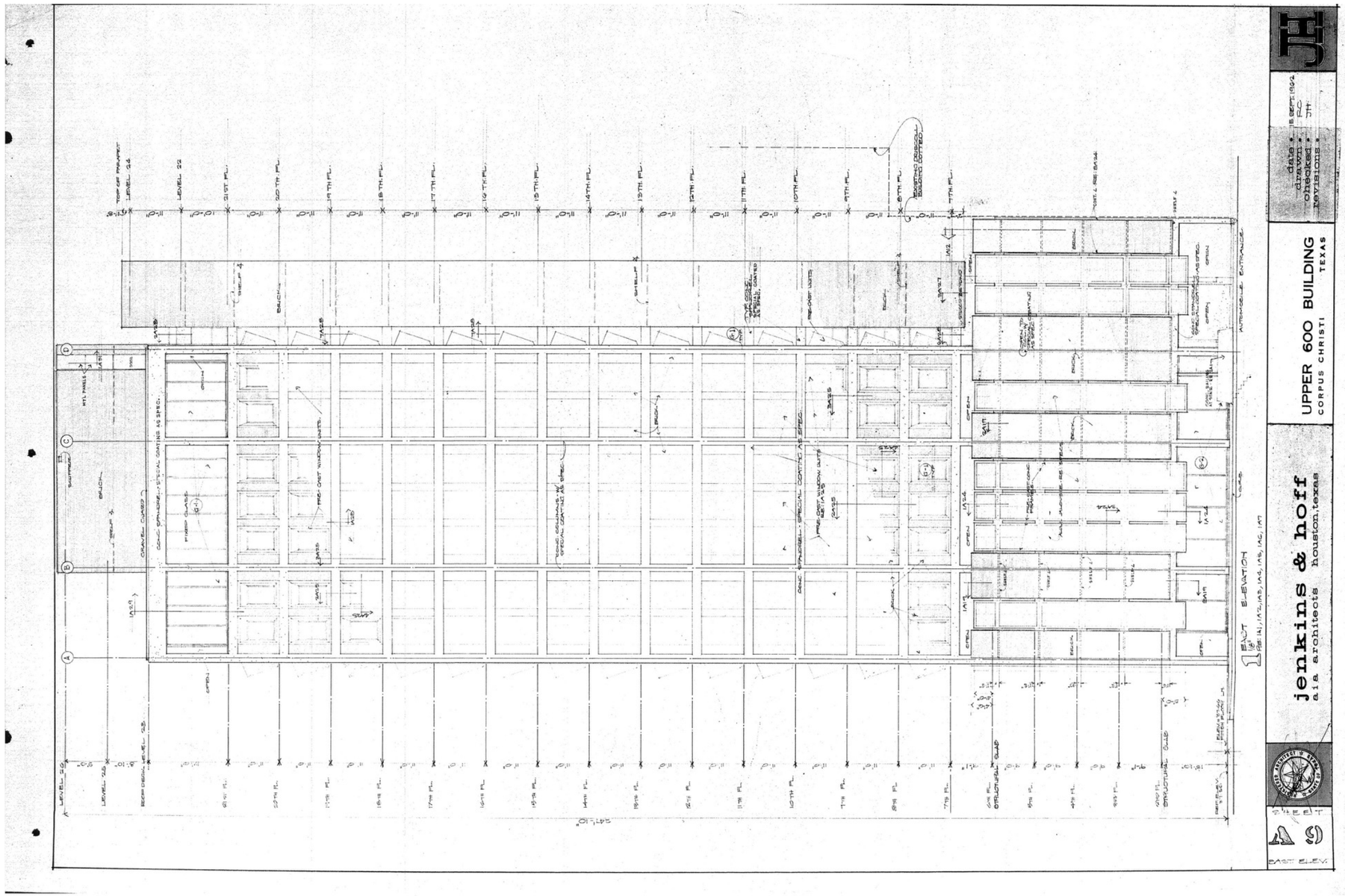
Original Plans –Ground



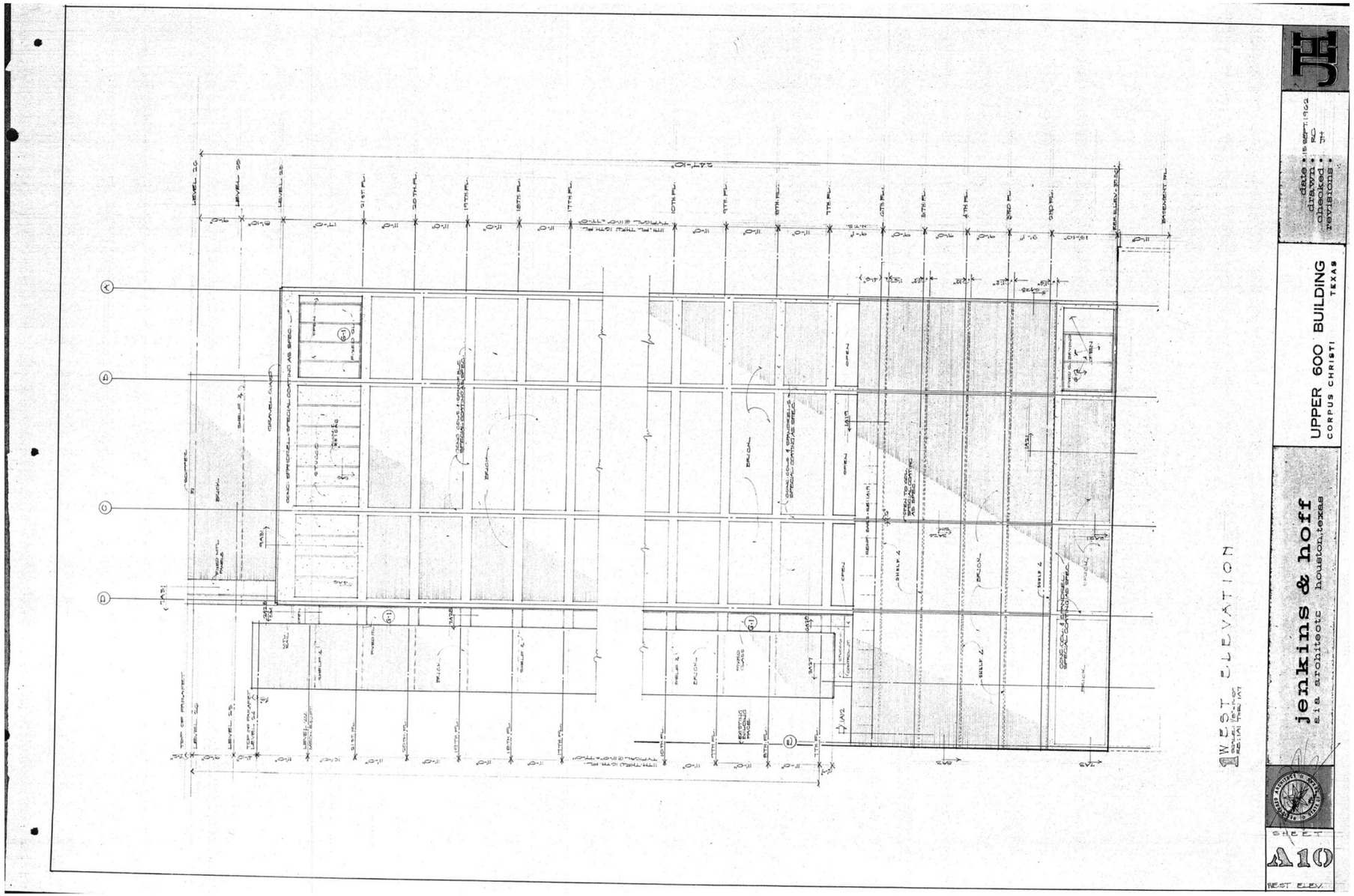
Original Plans –Parking 2 through 6



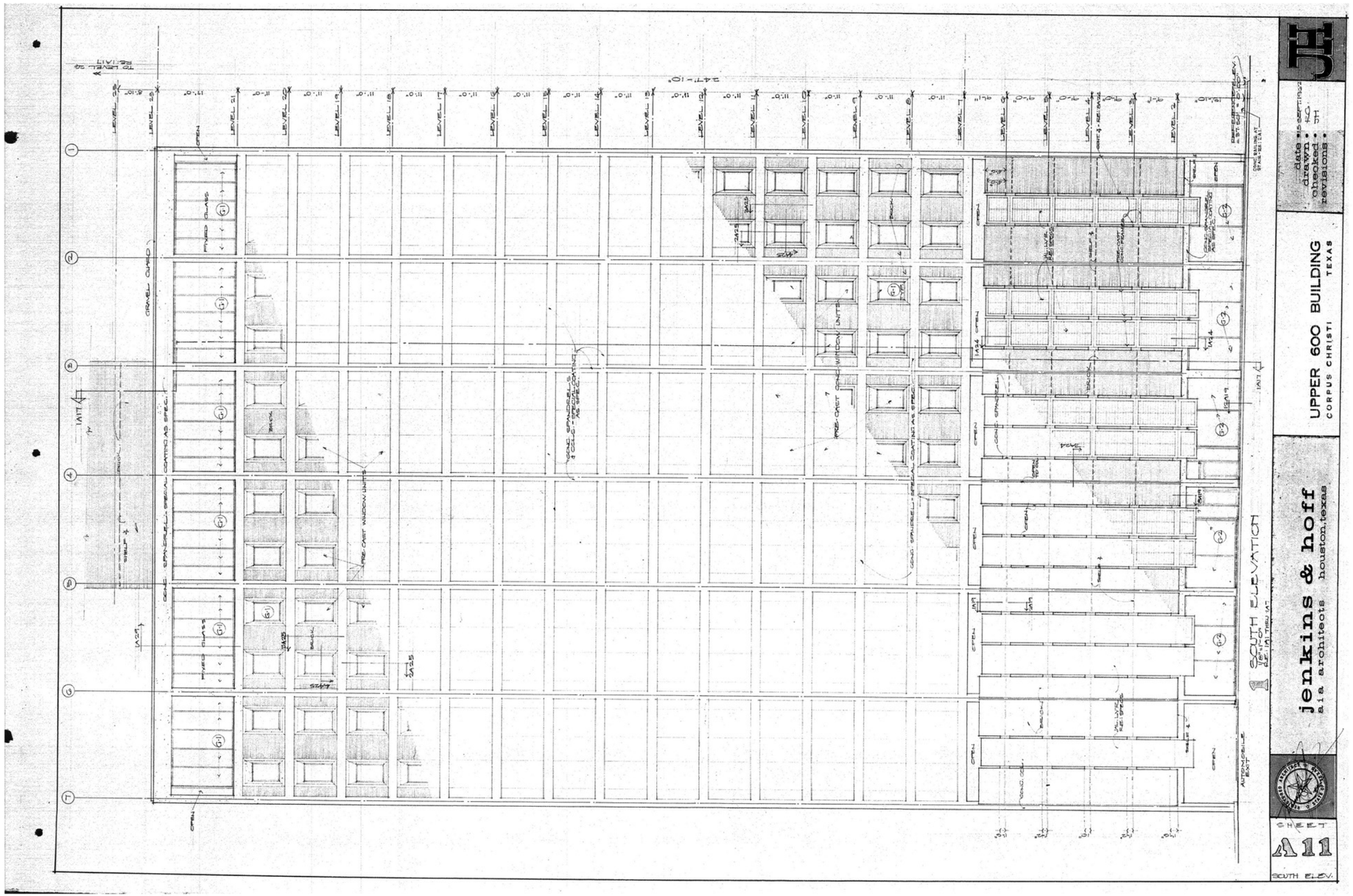
Original Plans – East Elevation



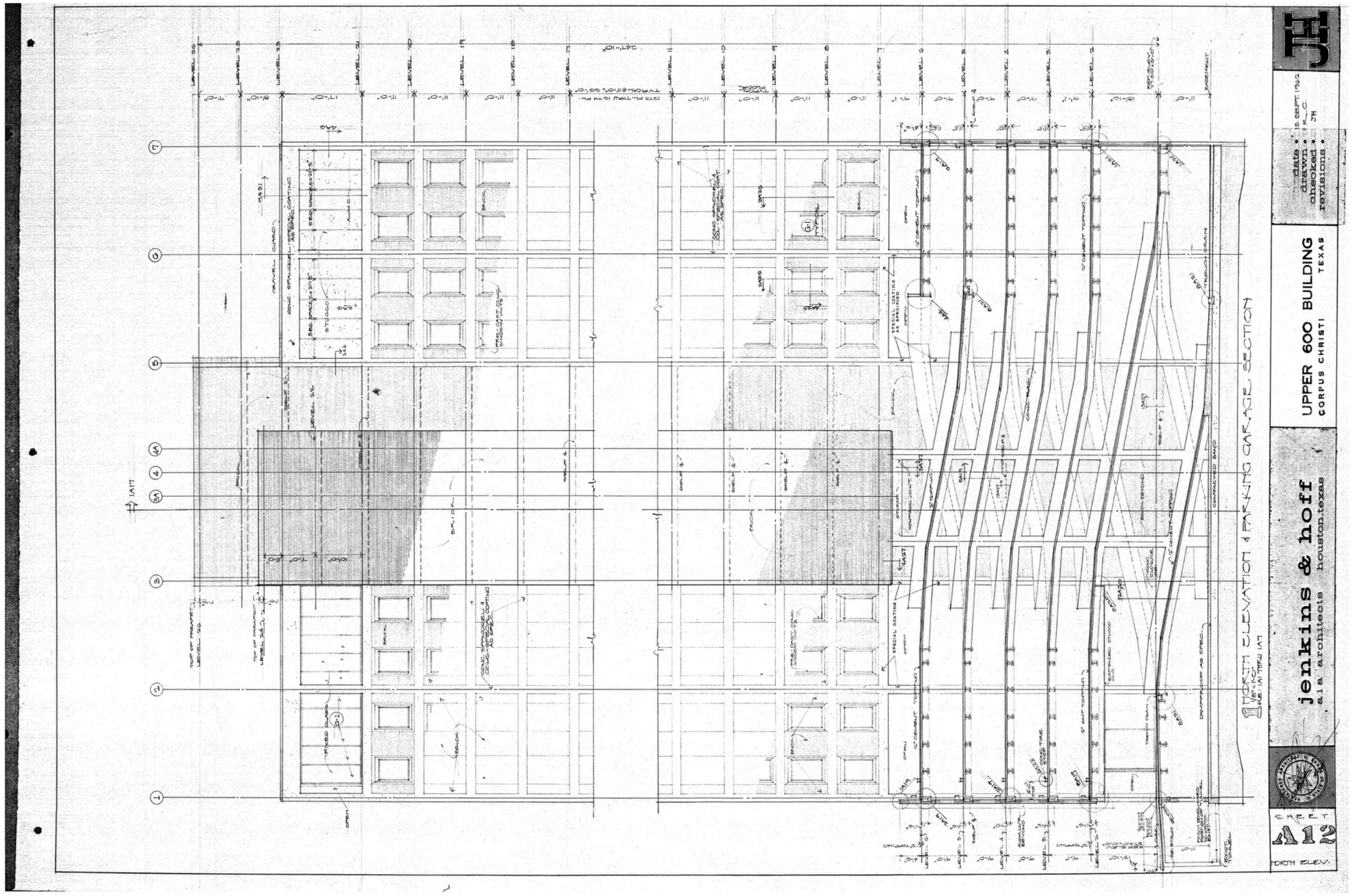
Original Plans – West Elevation



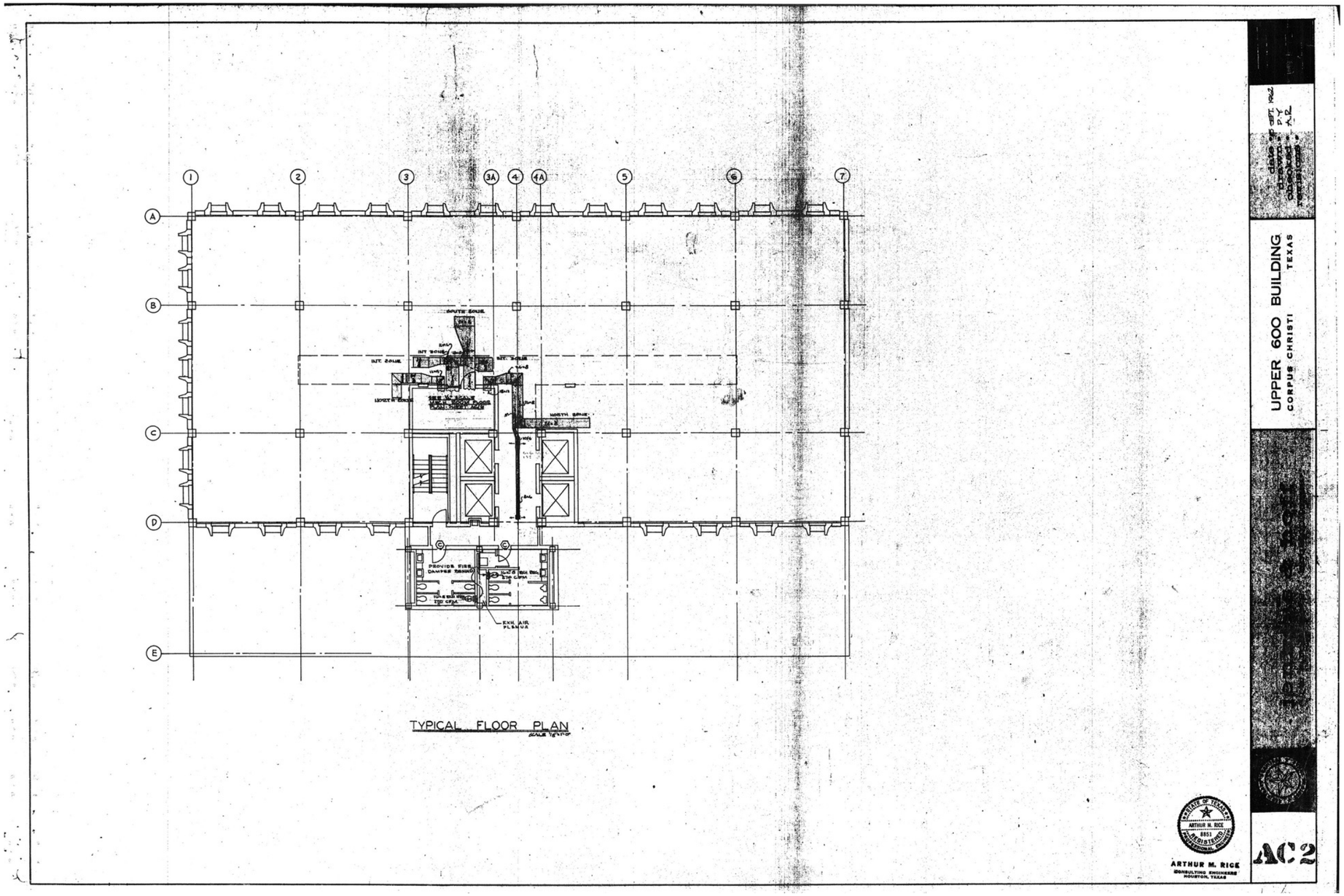
Original Plans – South Elevation



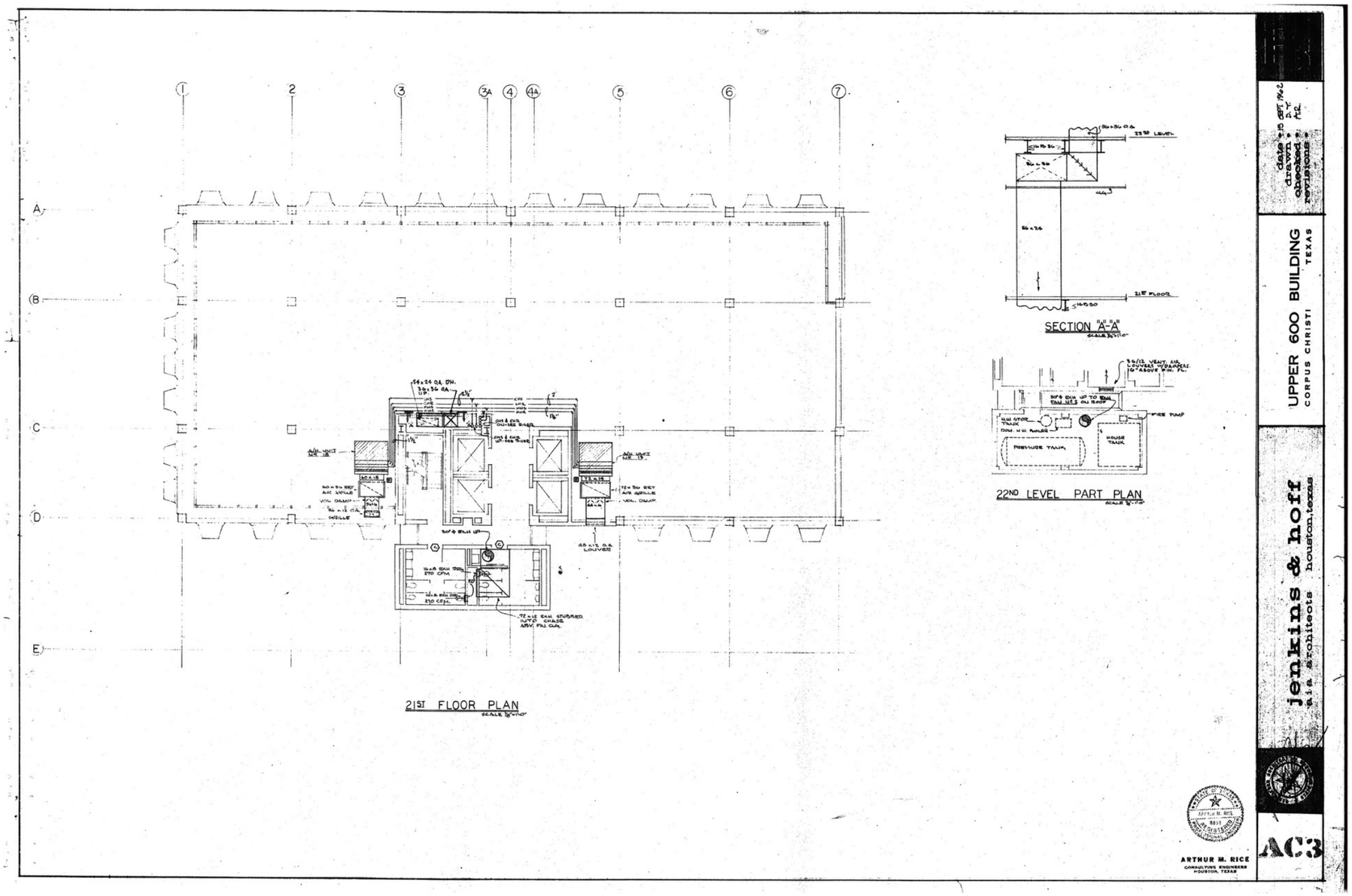
Original Plans – North Elevation



Original Plans – Typical Floor



Original Plans – 21st Floor



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600
1

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600
Building
4

WELLS FARGO
600
Building

FARGO
600
Building
WELLS FARGO
WELLS FARGO
6

600 Building
coming soon
horeline
facebook.com/
Shoreline
sandwich
The 600 Building
LEASING OFFICE

8

600
BUILDING

11in.
11

15

CAUTION
WET FLOOR

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2100S
2100W