

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

TN 343

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

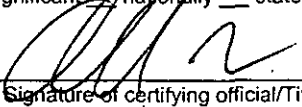
Historic name Georgia-Pacific Plywood Company Office  
Other names/site number Washington State Department of Game

### 2. Location

street & number 600 Capitol Way N. not for publication  
city or town Olympia vicinity  
State Washington code WA county Thurston code 034 zip code 98501

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

  
Signature of certifying official/Title

1/23/07  
Date

WASHINGTON STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet
- 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 (Check as many boxes as apply)

- Private
Public-local
[X] Public-State
Public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- [X] building(s)
district
site
structure
object

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

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Non-Contributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total. Values: 1, 0.

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

None

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade -Business

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Government - Government Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Modern -International Style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Concrete
Walls Wood: Plywood/ Weatherboard
Roof Asphalt
Other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

**8. Statement of Significance****Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

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

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

**INDUSTRY**

**ARCHITECTURE**

**Period of Significance**

1952 -1960

**Significant Dates**

1952, 1960

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation****Architect/Builder**

Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson

(Architect)

Wohleb & Wohleb (Architect)

Cawdrey and Vemo Inc. (Builder)

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property.)

**SEE CONTINUATION SHEET**

**9. Major Bibliographical References****Bibliography**

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

**SEE CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

**Name of repository:**

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 1.4 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM References on a continuation sheet.)

UTM grid with 4 rows and 3 columns of boxes for Zone, Easting, and Northing. Row 1: 10, 5 07 579, 52 10 562. Row 2: empty.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.) See Continuation Sheet

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.) See Continuation Sheet

11. Form Prepared By

Form fields for name/title (Rebecca Christie), organization, date (August 2006), street & number (312 17th Avenue SE), telephone ((360) 705-0701), city or town (Olympia), state (WA), zip code (98501).

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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

Form fields for Property Owner: name (Department of Fish and Wildlife, Dr. Jeffery Koenings (Director)), street & number (600 Capitol Way N.), telephone ((360) 902-2200), city or town (Olympia), state (WA), zip code (98501).

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OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON

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### **NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:**

Completed in 1952, the Georgia-Pacific Plywood Company Office in Olympia, Washington is modest two-story International Style office building which sits at the far northern edge of the downtown core. The building was originally built as operational offices for the Georgia-Pacific Plywood Company, Washington Veneer Division, and today houses offices for the real estate division of the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The building sits on the east side of Capitol Way facing west. Once a heavy industrial area, today the surrounding properties include an open-air farmers market building, parking lots and several multi-story office buildings. The structure is set back from the street and is fronted by lawn planted with large cedar trees in the southwest corner and a variety of foundation plantings. At the rear of the building is a surface parking lot, which abuts directly to the building. The building sits on an triangular shaped lot which has a rear angled lot line reflecting the route of a rail line that went along the rear of the tax lot to serve the various lumber manufacturing plants nearby. The rails have been removed.

The nominated building is an L-shaped structure approximately 172' long X 48' wide. In 1960, a 42' long X 48' wide addition was added to the southeast corner of the structure. The two-story building has a flat built-up roof, hidden by a simple parapet wall. True to the International Style, the building has a strong horizontal massing and window articulation. At first glance the structure appears to be a simple box, punctuated by bands of windows. However upon closer examination, the building is a well thought-out and highly articulated modern structure, which celebrates the newest plywood technology of the day and its innovative architectural applications.

The north and south elevations of the building serve as book ends by projecting walls that extend beyond the adjacent perpendicular walls. Further defining these ends are their solid nature, devoid of the banding of windows which is found on the west and east facades. The west elevation is articulated by a slight projection/overhang of the second floor, which is further accentuated by another outward projection of the eave line. Additional architectural detailing can be found at the entry. Here an attached projecting one-story wing, which serves as the main entry to the building, is juxtaposed at a 30 degree angle to the main mass of the building. Pulling visitors off the sidewalk and into the building is a simple flat entry canopy supported by slender steel columns.

Further architectural details are found with the application of a variety of exterior plywood siding types at different locations. The east and west facades boast board & baton siding. The walls underneath the first floor windows are flat sheets of plywood. The second floor

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walls are clad in horizontal laid plywood clapboards, while the entry/showroom boasts vertical layered plywood panels. The projecting northwest front element has overlapped vertical wood panels on the west face. The 1960 wing of the building is clad with plywood panels overlain with battens.

Windows on the east and west façade are grouped in continuous bands on the first and second floors. Each wood frame unit, twenty-eight on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the west façade, are divided into three parts. The center glazed section, which opens like an awning, is slightly larger than the top and bottom sections of the openings. Currently the windows have heat resistant reflective film applied to the glass. The rear or east façade has similar windows. Unique to the west façade is a two-story high bank of windows, which highlight the interior vertical circulation of the building.

Glazing at the main entry consists of large fixed panels of glass, which span from the floor to nearly ceiling height. The four bays of windows are capped with louvered transom vents. The north side entry allows for handicap access to the building. It has projecting flat roof with enclosed sides and is reached by a sloping, concrete ramp protected by a metal pipe railing. Other simple doors are found on the rear of the building.

The east facade of the main building has a small one-story, flat-roofed utility space, which projects approximately 10' out from the main façade of the building. The area contains a small solid core entry door and two large loading doors.

Inside the building's interior is arranged as a long double loaded corridor flanked by a variety of offices on the first and second floors. As a showpiece of plywood technology most of the interior walls are clad with different types of plywood. Plans for the building list the veneers finishes as: birch, cedar, white oak, Honduras, Philippine, and African mahogany, knotty pine, red gum, Douglas fir, western larch, beach, spruce, hemlock, walnut, redwood, cottonwood and Ponderosa pine. Explicit directions for the placement of the veneers were outlined in the architectural plans. As to be expected the executive offices on the second floor received the more unusual and exotic finishes. Per historic images, some of the offices supported built-in desks, credenzas, shelving and file drawers all made of veneered plywood.

Main entry to the building is through an open high ceiling, trapezoid shaped display lobby. This area features a curved plywood display wall (now painted) highlighted by recessed coved lighting and ceiling canister lights. The floor is covered with carpet. Entry to the office area is via a low set of stairs which rises to the first floor of the office spaces. The second floor is accessed via a serpentine style, dogleg staircase. The railing is oak railing and features a limited amount of balusters. Under the stairwell was a small terrarium

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planter area faced with a with a random range ashlar sandstone brick veneer. Part of the area today has been covered to office workroom space.

The first floor housed mainly open office space for the accounting department at the south end of the building (see attached floor plan). Towards the north end, were offices for the treasurer, auditor, office manager, chief engineer and his secretary, the log buyer and scaler and the log superintendent. The northeast corner housed a modest 14' x 16' drafting room. Two sets of bathrooms and mechanical space were also located on this floor.

The second floor housed the company executives including the president and vice president, the timber department manger, new products manager, traffic manager, and sales manager. The far south end of the second floor was home to four lumber buyer offices. On the north end, the full width of the building was dedicated to conference room/VP Office. With walls lined in Walnut veneer, this space could be divided by a folding curtain wall.

The 1960 addition, attached to the southeast corner of the building, originally housed the engineering department of the Washington State Department of Game. The space, planned as a future wing on the original 1951 drawings, contains a large open drafting room and four offices on the first floor. The second floor housed a large conference room, printing and photo workspaces, offices and a canteen—eight areas in all, off a central corridor. These office configurations appear to have been generally retained today. The interior finishes in the 1960s addition have low paint grade plywood veneer walls.

Alterations to the building are minimal. They include a new steel main entry door and the infill of a sidelight. The north elevation of the 1960s addition has some window replacements which include metal frame windows and at least one vinyl window. All replacement are within the original openings. Inside some offices have been covered with modern 1970's era paneling and a few walls have been added/removed, however the rhythm of offices and hallway space remains true to the original design.

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### **NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

The Georgia-Pacific Plywood Company Office is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criterion "A" as one of the last standing structures associated with plywood manufacturing in Olympia. The industry was a major part of the city's 20<sup>th</sup> century economic and manufacturing history. The building served as headquarters for a large and bustling plywood mill that was located just north of the structure and is the last extant structure associated with the Georgia-Pacific Company and its subsidiary, Washington Veneer. While home to Georgia-Pacific corporate office for just two short years, the building served as a unique marketing tool for the company by demonstrating the many uses of its products in a unique integration of plywood veneers for interior and exterior finishes.

As such the building is also historically significant under criterion "C" as an intact example of Modern architecture in Olympia, Washington. The building was designed by the prominent Seattle architectural firm of Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson (NBBJ). The local firm of Wohleb & Wohleb Architects served as supervising architects for the project. The period of significance begins in 1952, the date the building was completed and ends in 1960, the year of an addition to the rear of the building.

### **History**

The area where the Georgia-Pacific Plywood Co. Office is now located was primarily mud flats at the turn of the century. Major dredging of the harbor was done in 1910-11 through local and federal funding to create a deep-water port for the city. During the 1910-11 project (called the "Carlyon Fill" after its originator, P. H. Carlyon) the spoils from this dredging produced enough soil to extend the original Olympia peninsula northward for nearly a mile. In total the project moved nearly 2.3 million cubic yards of soil, which was contained by bulkheads built in the bay.<sup>1</sup>

Quickly the new expanse of waterfront land became a hub of industrial development. During the World War I era, a variety of shipyards were located on the fill.<sup>2</sup> In the 1920's the area became home to a variety of lumber related businesses including Washington Veneer. By 1940 there were 920 people employed by plywood veneer plants (out of a city population of 13,000) with a payroll of more than \$600,000. By 1950, the number had risen to 1,028 persons directly employed in the plywood industry in Olympia.

<sup>1</sup> Stevenson, Shanna. "Superior Shipping Service": A History of the Port of Olympia. Olympia, Wash.: Port of Olympia, 1982.

<sup>2</sup> H.W. McCurdy's Marine History of the Northwest, edited by Gordon Newell, Seattle: Superior Publishing Co., 1966.

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One of the most prominent lumber related companies at the waterfront site was the Washington Veneer Company, which was later purchased by the Georgia-Pacific Plywood Company. Olympia businessman J. L. Peters and experienced veneerman, Ed Westman, organized Washington Veneer Company in 1924. Initially the firm was a worker-owned cooperative, with the employees initially purchasing \$400,000.00 worth of stock. Quickly the company grew and by 1925, Washington Veneer was producing plywood at a rate of 65,000 board feet per day. A majority of their production was sold for floor boards it be used in buses and streetcars. Another large contract came when the Aircraft Plywood Corporation of Seattle diverted part of its contract with the Fisher Body Company (which built car bodies for General Motors) to Washington Veneer. With business booming, in 1926-27 Washington Veneer updated their plant and then added a millwork factory in 1928. In 1929 some of the Washington Veneer stockholders built a second competing plywood plant, Capitol Plywood, nearby. It was eventually purchased by Washington Veneer and became their Plant No. 2. In 1930, U.S. Plywood purchased the controlling interest in Washington Veneer.

An industry innovator, Washington Veneer began production of wallboard grade plywood in 1928 and began producing concrete form plywood in 1933. The firm is credited with the establishment of the standards for a sheet of plywood ( $\frac{1}{4}$ " thickness and 48" by 96" dimensions), and was the original manufacturer of embossed plywood panels. The company also perfected plastic overlaid plywood in the 1940s. Their product called "GPS" was widely used for concrete forms, industrial counter tops and food product containers. Additionally, Washington Veneer was one of the earliest firms to use waterproof soybean glue for plywood. Washington Veneer operated sporadically during the 1930s then recovered financially and eventually started another plywood operation in Springfield, Oregon in 1939.<sup>3</sup> That same year, the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company purchased U.S. Plywood and with it, the firm's Washington Veneer holdings. Nine years later in 1948, Weyerhaeuser sold its interests in Washington Veneer to the Georgia-Pacific Corporation.<sup>4</sup>

Georgia-Pacific was founded in Augusta, Georgia in 1927 by Owen R. Cheatham. For many years the Georgia Hardwood Lumber Company severed mainly as a wholesaler of hardwood lumber, however seeing the demand for building products after World War II, the firm

<sup>3</sup> Stevenson, "Superior Shipping Service."

<sup>4</sup> Cour, Robert M. The Plywood Age. Douglas Fir Plywood Association, Binford and Mort, Portland, OR. 1955. Devlin, C. E., "Twenty-five Years in Retrospect," Washington Veneer history monograph, ca. April 16, 1946. Files of the American Plywood Association Archives on Washington Veneer and Olympia Veneer. Plywood Pioneers Association, "Plywood in Retrospect: Washington Veneer Company" in a series of monographs on the history of west coast plywood plants, 1971.

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decided to move into plywood production. In 1947 they acquired their first West Coast mill, a plywood facility in Bellingham, Washington, which was managed by former Washington Veneer executive, Victor Olson. The next year they acquired the Washington Veneer Mill in Olympia and a mill in Springfield, Oregon from Weyerhaeuser. In 1949, the company was listed on the New York Stock Exchange and sales reached \$37 million. They changed their business name to Georgia-Pacific Plywood Company in 1951 and continued to acquire smaller lumber mills across the United States.

In the early years, Georgia-Pacific struggled to sell plywood products since they were unfamiliar with the marketing networks for the product. Some reports even indicate that the entire financial structure of the company was in jeopardy in the early 1950s. On the advice of a management consultant, the firm re-organized their operations and decided to move the operational headquarters for the company to the west coast. Executives chose Olympia, Washington, the location of one the company's most successful manufacturing plants. By 1953, sixty percent of the company's assets were located in the Pacific Northwest. Owen Cheatham, President of Georgia-Pacific, selected the Olympia location himself. While the financial headquarters remained in New York City, executives including administrative President Cheatham and vice-president, Robert Pamplin, moved to Olympia. Victor Olson served as manager of Pacific Northwest operations for the firm.

Before the major move of the operations side of the company to the west coast could occur however, the company needed an adequate facility to house the various executives and staff. They also needed space to house lumber scalers and buyers that were associated with operation of the local plywood mill. Georgia-Pacific hired the prominent Seattle architectural firm of Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson (NBBJ) to design a modern facility, which would highlight the products of the growing lumber company.

Formed in 1943, the partnership of NBBJ was established by four architects; Floyd Naramore (1896-1985), William Bain Sr. (1886-1985), Cliff Brady (an engineer and associate of Naramore's, 1894-1963), and Perry Johanson (1910-1981). Initially, the partnership was loosely formed to take advantage of large federal contracts commissioned by the federal government during WWII. During this time the partnership capitalized on the individual skills of each partner, Johanson's skills at designing health care facilities, Bain's strong residential work, and Brady and Naramore's vast experience in designing schools.

By the end of the war, the partnership was solidified, emphasizing a "team" approach to design and a service approach to practice. In the early years a business style was developed that would build "a reputation for solid functional designs that would never set the architectural press on fire, but which would design structures which came in satisfactorily

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close to schedule and budget." The firm focused on institutional work in the 1940's with projects for a variety of school districts across Washington and Oregon. The 1950s were a period of evolution for NBBJ. Early in that decade they finished construction of their new headquarters at 904 Seventh Avenue, Seattle, in the First Hill Neighborhood. The building signaled a shift to more innovation and architecturally complex designs, which eventually brought the company national design awards and recognition.

Large scale projects included facilities at the University of Washington and Swedish Hospital, as well as two early downtown Seattle office towers; the Public Safety Building (1951) and the Washington Building (1960). In 1957, NBBJ secured the winning entry in an international competition held by the WWII Pacific Theater Memorial Commission. The Corregidor-Bataan Memorial in the Philippines, although never constructed, was a critical commission in the firm's development, bringing them international attention. Other work by NBBJ during the post war period of 1945 to the late 1950s includes designs for Ashworth School (1957), Clyde Hill Elementary School (1953), and Enatai School (1953) all in Seattle. Other projects include the King Co. Central Blood Bank (1951), the Susan B. Henry Library (1954), the University of Washington Health Sciences Building (1950), the Seattle Veteran's Hospital (1951), and the Invex Building (1956) in Seattle. The firm had a couple of previous commissions in Olympia, Roosevelt and McKinley Grade Schools both constructed in 1949, and a Foods Lab (1947) for the Olympia School District. All three aforementioned buildings in Olympia have been demolished.

NBBJ's Georgia-Pacific Plywood Company Office in Olympia is typical of many of the firm's designs during the 1950s. The building shows a strong sense of spacial divisions on the exterior by the utilization of a variety of cladding methods. The mass of office space is delineated by long banding of windows and horizontal laid plywood clapboards. Later this area was further emphasized by the use of fixed window awnings which ran the length of the building at each floor level. The long rectangular mass of the building is broken by the addition of an angled space on the northwest end of the building. Lower in height than the main building, this area served as the showroom for the company. Here, large single pane windows highlighted by transom vents, a flat entrance canopy and sawtooth laid vertical siding, distinguishes this area as the main entry to the building. The two masses of the building are joined by a full, two-story high glass window wall which denotes an interior staircase. Albert Ernest "Ernie" Hennessy, an associate with the firm of NBBJ, is credited with the design of the nominated building. The then 42-year old Hennessy, was a talented delineator with a BA in architecture from the University of Washington (1932) and a diploma

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from the Fine Arts School in Fontainebleau, France.<sup>5</sup> He was born October 8, 1910 in Ottawa, Ontario Canada and became a naturalized US citizen on June 14th, 1930. He studied abroad in Europe in 1930-31 and attended high school in Seattle. Assisting Hennessy and NBBJ in the construction of the building was the local architectural firm of Wohleb & Wohleb, who served as supervising architects.

The father and son architectural firm of Wohleb & Wohleb were well respected and well known both in Olympia and statewide. In fact, their project list includes several other buildings for Washington Veneer prior to their work on the nominated building. The elder Joseph Wohleb's designs dominate Olympia's commercial area in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and he is credited with the designs of several buildings on the Capitol Campus. Wohleb was born in Waterbury, Massachusetts and moved as a young man to San Francisco and later Vallejo, California. When he came to Olympia in 1911, he did not have any formal architectural education. Instead he apprenticed as a ships' carpenter and boat builder before becoming a self-trained architect. Wohleb began his architectural work in 1913 in Olympia. His first project was the Jeffers Studio, located on a prominent downtown corner. From here, Wohleb went on to design hundreds of homes, manufacturing facilities, businesses and other structures in Western Washington as well as breweries up and down the West Coast. He also served as school architect for Olympia School District and designed a number of buildings for the State Highways Department scattered across the state. Joseph Wohleb died in 1958.<sup>6</sup>

Joseph Wohleb's son, Robert, joined his father's architecture practice in 1946. The firm was renamed Wohleb & Wohleb in 1949. Robert was born in Olympia in 1916 and graduated from the University of Washington with a BA in Architecture in 1939. Like his father, he specialized in the design of breweries. His known projects include the Olympia City Hall (1966) and St. Michael's Catholic Church (1966). Reportedly he was also involved in the designs of many of the houses in Stratford Place development in Olympia. In 1966 Robert Wohleb died at the height of his career from a tragic boating accident.<sup>7</sup>

The Georgia-Pacific Plywood Company Office was completed in July of 1952 for \$200,000. The Seattle construction firm of Cawdrey and Vemo Inc. served as general contractors for

<sup>5</sup> Information from Washington State Department of Licensing Records.

<sup>6</sup> Olson, Fred, "Joseph Wohleb Left His Mark," Sunday Olympian, October 25, 1981. Maddox, Dawn, "Joseph Wohleb: resident architect of the state's Capital," Landmarks, Vol. IV, No. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Olympia Heritage Commission, Building a Capital City: Olympia's Past Revealed Through Its Historic Architecture. Written by Heather Lockman, Researched by Shanna Stevenson. Olympia: City of Olympia Community Planning and Development, 2000.

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the project. With its many plywood components, the building most likely was built to assist with the marketing of the company since it showcased the many specialty veneers produced by the company on the interior. Each office on the second floor boasts exotic plywood veneer walls and built-in cabinetry. On the exterior the design demonstrated how plywood could be applied in a variety of exterior applications.<sup>8</sup>

Olympia in the early 1950s was home to several lumber manufacturing facilities that had began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Eventually all would virtually disappear by the early 1970s because of the changing markets and supplies of available timber. In the 1950s, the city was also recovering from the destructive earthquake in 1949, which measured 7.1 on the Richter Scale. The quake toppled buildings and also destroyed the brick smokestack at Washington Veneer. Many damaged buildings were torn down and a variety of new buildings were built in the Olympia area during the period. The nominated building represents an important element in the development of the modern appearance of Olympia after the earthquake, introducing the International style to this important manufacturing area of the city.

The International Style has its roots in the Bauhaus movement in Germany, but came to refer generally to modern European architecture of the 1920s and 1930s and the subsequently architecture it influenced elsewhere for the next 30+ years. The term "International Style" itself was coined at a 1932 Museum of Modern Art exhibition of architectural photographs and models. Curators of the exhibit, American architectural historian Henry-Russell Hitchcock and American architect Philip Johnson, wrote the accompanying catalog *International Style: Architecture Since 1922*. Quickly the catalog became the defining work to which other architectural innovations were measured and became an educational tool for a generation of young architects.<sup>9</sup> By the end of WWII, the "International Style" evolved into the larger context of Modernism, which dominated commercial architecture through the 1970s.

Common characteristics of the International Style include a simplification of ornamentation, and the use of concrete, steel and glass as the preferred building materials. Most designs logically supporting the function of the building, and the construction itself embraces industrialized mass-production techniques. Specific details typical of the style include a square or rectangular footprint, a banding of windows running in long horizontal ribbons, poured and formed concrete slabs that accentuated horizontal planes, and occasional vertical elements that highlight the layered appearance of multi-storied buildings. The

<sup>8</sup> Information from Washington State Department of Licensing Records.

<sup>9</sup> "Modern Architecture," Microsoft® Encarta® Online Encyclopedia 2006. July 25, 2006.

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Georgia-Pacific Plywood Company Office is an excellent example of the manifestation of the style here in the Pacific Northwest.

In addition the unique architectural style, the building also signaled a new ownership of the veneer company. Upon their move to Olympia and the west coast, Georgia-Pacific in the early 1950s struggled to catch up with other Pacific Northwest timber companies such as Weyerhaeuser who had more integrated operations and large land holdings. To this end, Georgia-Pacific searched for mills to acquire that had timberland assets. One of their early acquisitions was the Inman-Poulsen Mill in Portland, Oregon, which they bought in 1954.

This acquisition, along with the discontent among executives of the firm, evidently spurred a decision to move their operational headquarters from Olympia to Portland, Oregon in 1954, just two years after arriving in Olympia. The company moved into the prestigious, multi-story Equitable Building (1948) at 421 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue. These more upscale surroundings also fit Owen Cheatham's personal style as well, according to John. R. Ross, Georgia-Pacific company historian.<sup>10</sup>

After the move to Oregon, Georgia-Pacific continued to grow and eventually expanded into other lumber and pulp by-products. The company built their first corrugated paper plant in Olympia in 1961, which continues to this day to operate in southeast Olympia in a building not associated with this site.

In 1958, the Simpson Timber Company of Shelton, Washington, acquired the original Washington Veneer Plant No. 1 from Georgia-Pacific and started production there after some renovation of the plant in January of 1959. They eventually closed the plant in 1967. Georgia-Pacific continued to operate the Washington Veneer Plant No. 2 until 1967. By 1965, the plant had an annual capacity of 60 million board feet.<sup>11</sup>

Not needing such a large space, in 1959 Georgia-Pacific sold the nominated office building to the State of Washington Department of Game. It was during the late 1950s that the growth of state employment began to supplant the manufacturing base of the city.<sup>12</sup> Part of this growth was precipitated by a lawsuit, *Lemon ex rel Langlie*, which was initiated by the Olympia business community. The case, decided by the Washington Supreme Court in 1954, resulted in the return of the headquarters of various state agencies to Olympia. That

<sup>10</sup> Ross, *Maverick*, pg. 138.

<sup>11</sup> *The Softwood Plywood Industry in the United States: 1965-1982*. USFS Bulletin FPL 13, pg 16.

<sup>12</sup> Lockman, Heather and Shanna Stevenson, *Building a Capital City: Olympia's Past Revealed Through Its Historic Architecture*, City of Olympia, 2000.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet –

GEORGIA-PACIFIC PLYWOOD COMPANY OFFICE  
OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON

Section number 8 Page 8 of 9

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decision spurred an influx of population to Olympia and the subsequent need for office space to house the returning agencies.<sup>13</sup> The Department of Game was one of the last agencies to comply with the order. The petitioners challenged the Game Department's compliance with the court's mandate contending that the department had not established a bona fide headquarters in Olympia. Consequently they asked Superior Court Judge Wright to hold the Department of Game's Director and members of the Game Commission in contempt of court. In a 1958 hearing Judge Wright concluded that the existing Game Department's office in Olympia was in fact a "sham, a fraud upon the court, and a calculated attempt to circumvent the lawful order of this court..." Despite this strong judicial language, the judge allowed the Game Department to purge the contempt by moving the department's headquarters to Olympia within four months.

Upon purchase of the building, the State Department of Game, asked the architectural firm of Wohleb & Wohleb to complete drawings for an addition to the rear southeast corner of the building. The addition was incorporated in the original NBBJ plans, and architectural commission records for Wohleb & Wohleb show that as early as 1956 they were working on the plans for an addition while the building was still under the ownership of Georgia-Pacific.<sup>14</sup> The addition was completed in 1960 and was constructed by Cascade Olympic Contractors. It is reflective of the original 1952 building and uses plywood on the interior and exterior.

In December of 1971, the Port of Olympia purchased the former Washington Veneer/Georgia-Pacific manufacturing site. Shortly thereafter they began dismantling the former plant to accommodate the area as a cargo hold for logs and other exports.<sup>15</sup> The last of the Washington Veneer/Georgia-Pacific facility, except for the nominated building, was demolished in 1993, ending a chapter in the industrial history and development of the city. The only remaining buildings from the plywood veneer industry in Olympia are the nominated Georgia-Pacific Plywood Co. Office, four manufacturing buildings and an office building from the Olympia Veneer/St. Paul and Tacoma/St. Regis operations. These other veneer industry-related Olympia buildings date from the 1940s to the 1960s and do not have the architectural qualities of the nominated building. The closures of the plywood plants were attributable to the decline of available timber in the area, the economics of cheaper

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<sup>13</sup> Nicandri, David and Derek Valley. Olympia Wins: Washington's Capital Controversies. Olympia, Wash.: Washington State Capitol Museum, 1980.

<sup>14</sup> Copies of the original drawings of the 1952 building and 1960 addition from the files of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Wohleb and Wohleb Commission Records are available at the University Washington Special Collections in Seattle which is the repository for the Joseph and Robert Wohleb Architectural Drawings.

<sup>15</sup> Port of Olympia Commissioner Minutes, Washington State Archives.

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet –

GEORGIA-PACIFIC PLYWOOD COMPANY OFFICE  
OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON

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labor in other parts of the country, and the changes in demand for logs instead of finished lumber for export markets.

The Georgia-Pacific Plywood Company Office remains one of the best examples of Modern architecture in Olympia, Washington. The building also represents the early work of the prominent Seattle architectural firm of Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson (NBBJ), whose impact on the post WWII built environment spreads to the entire state of Washington and beyond. While home to Georgia-Pacific corporate office for just two short years, the building represents Georgia-Pacific's growth years and their transition from the southeast to the Pacific Northwest. Additionally the structures unique integration of plywood veneer as an interior and exterior finish shows the various applications and finishes of plywood as a building material which gained hold to the general public in the 1950s.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet –

GEORGIA-PACIFIC PLYWOOD COMPANY OFFICE  
OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON

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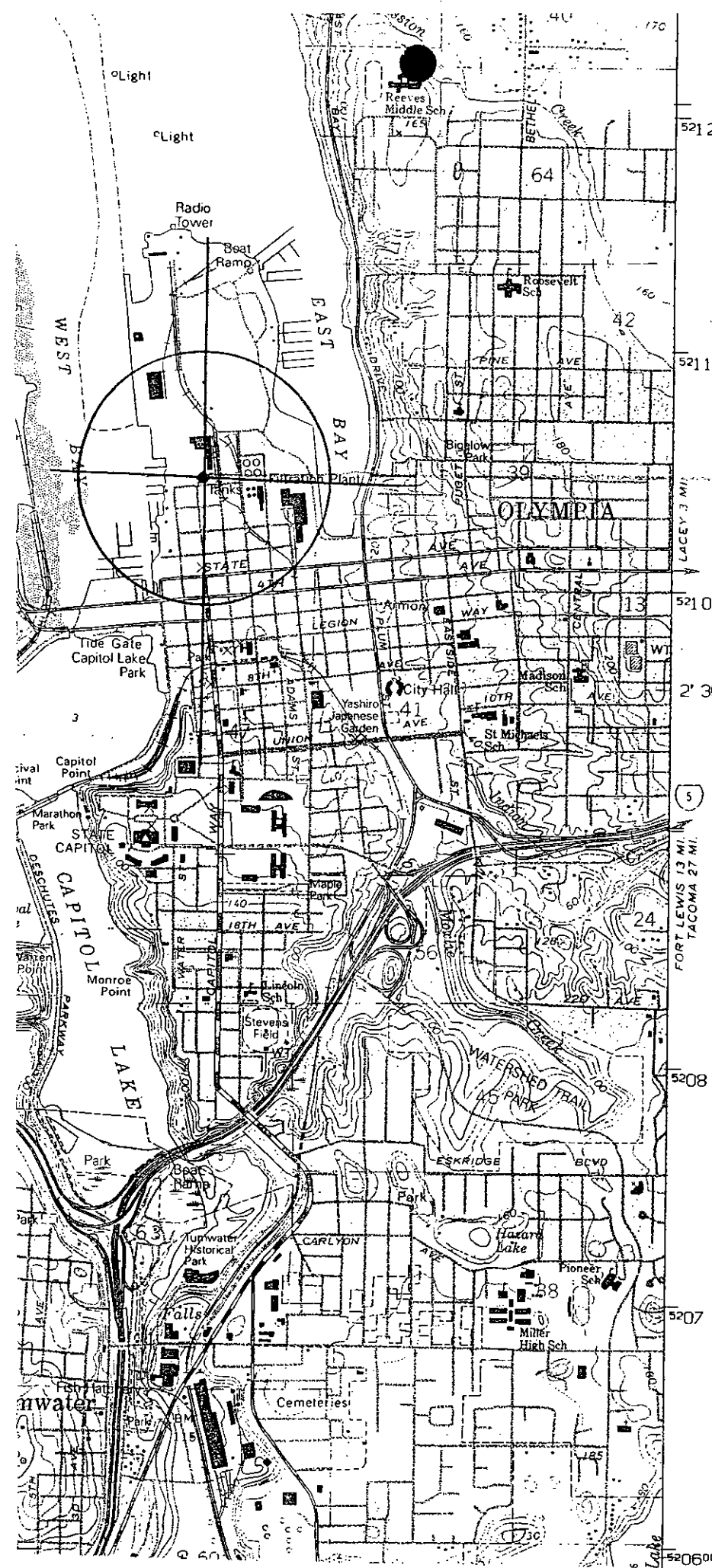
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### **VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The nominated are is located in the Section 14, Township 18N, Range 2 West of the Willamette Meridian, in Thurston County, Washington and is legally described as the First Class Tidelands of the City of Olympia Block 28 PT COM N84-07F33-E 7F FROM SW COR N 84-07F33-E 227. 06F N41. It is otherwise known as Tax Lot 91001500000 at the said location.

### **BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

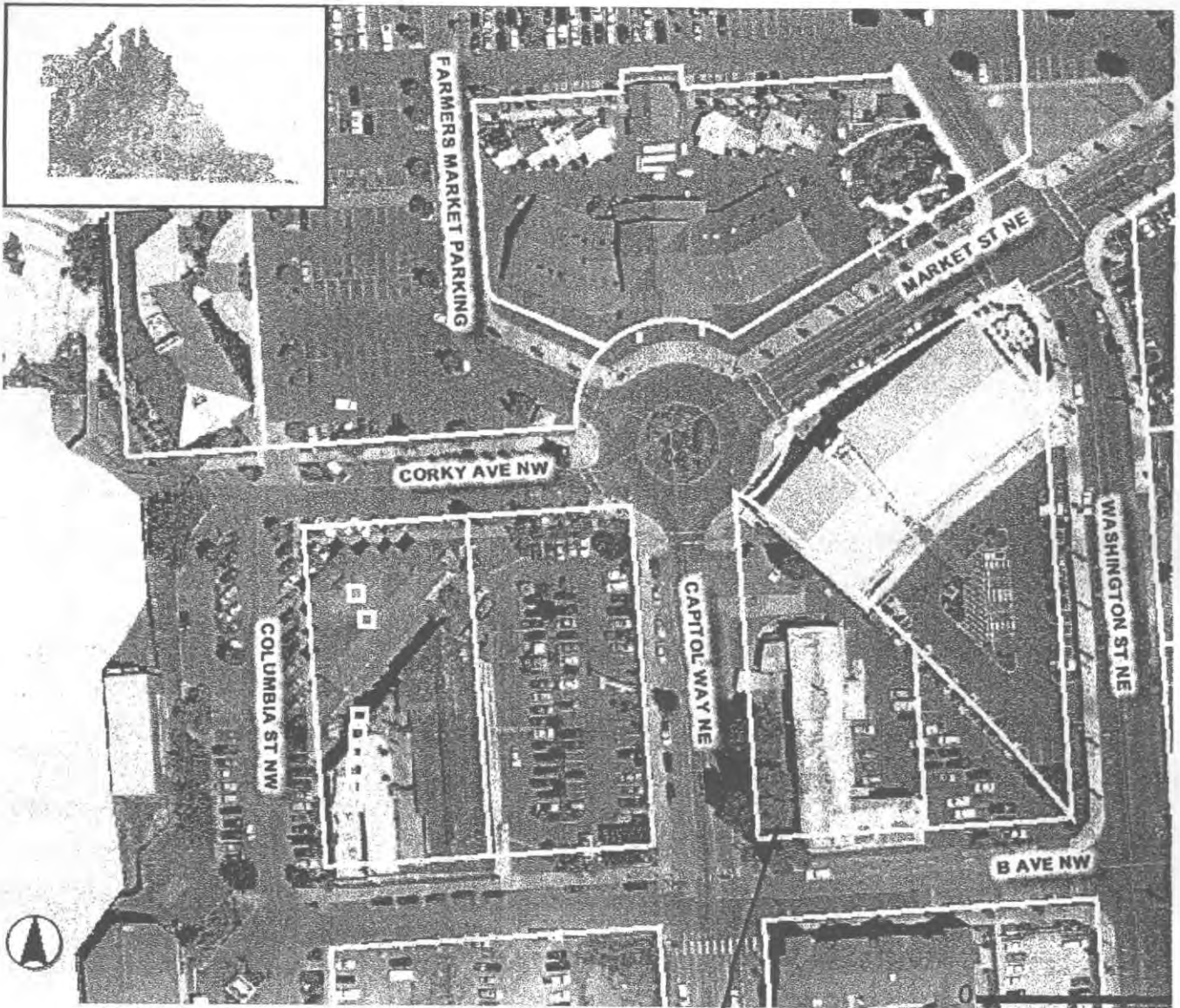
The nominated property encompasses the entire urban tax parcel that is currently occupied by the Georgia-Pacific Plywood Company Office. This includes the front landscaping area and the rear parking area.



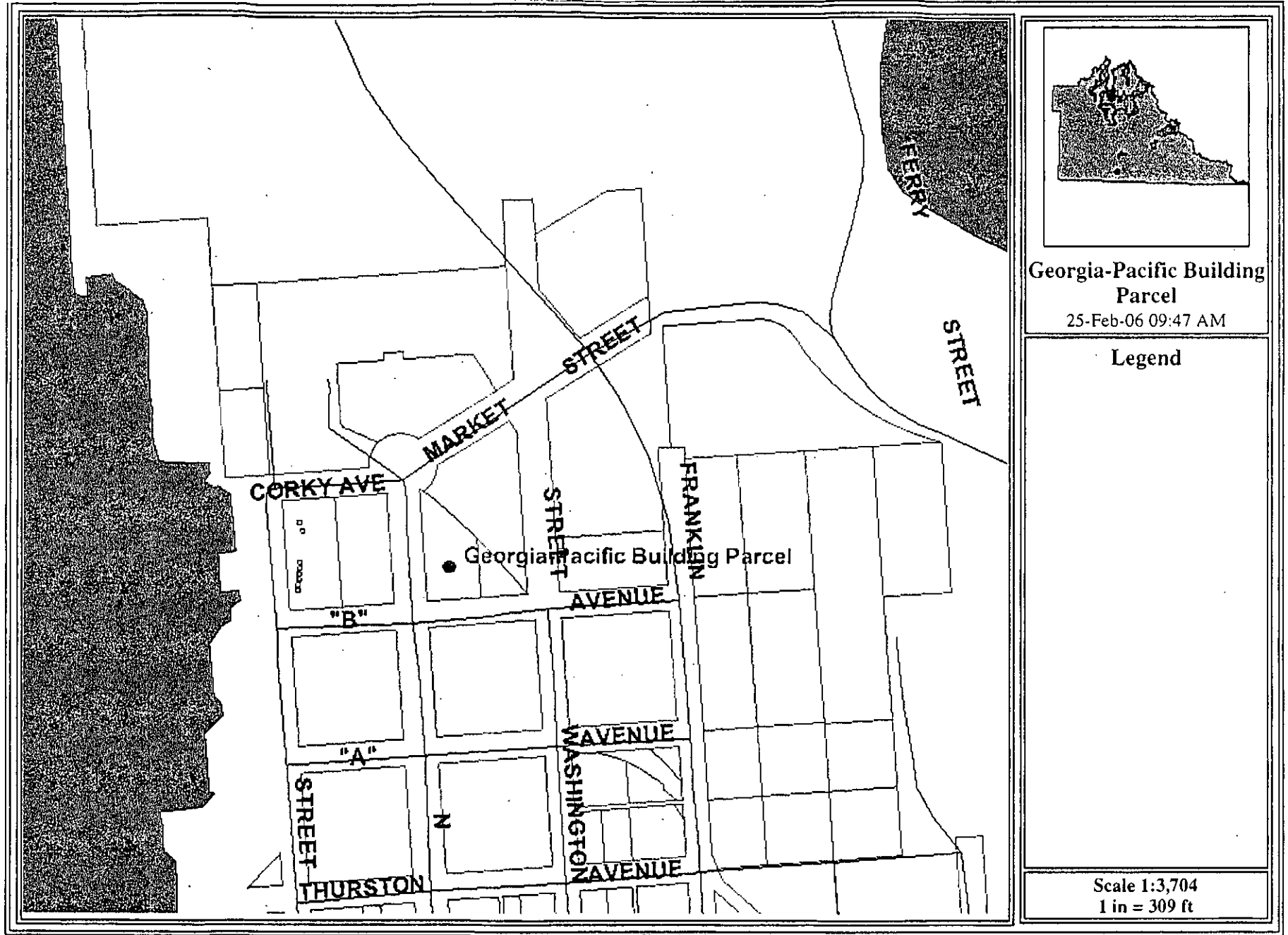
General Pacific  
 Plywood Division  
 600 N. Capitol  
 Thurston County  
 Olympia, WA

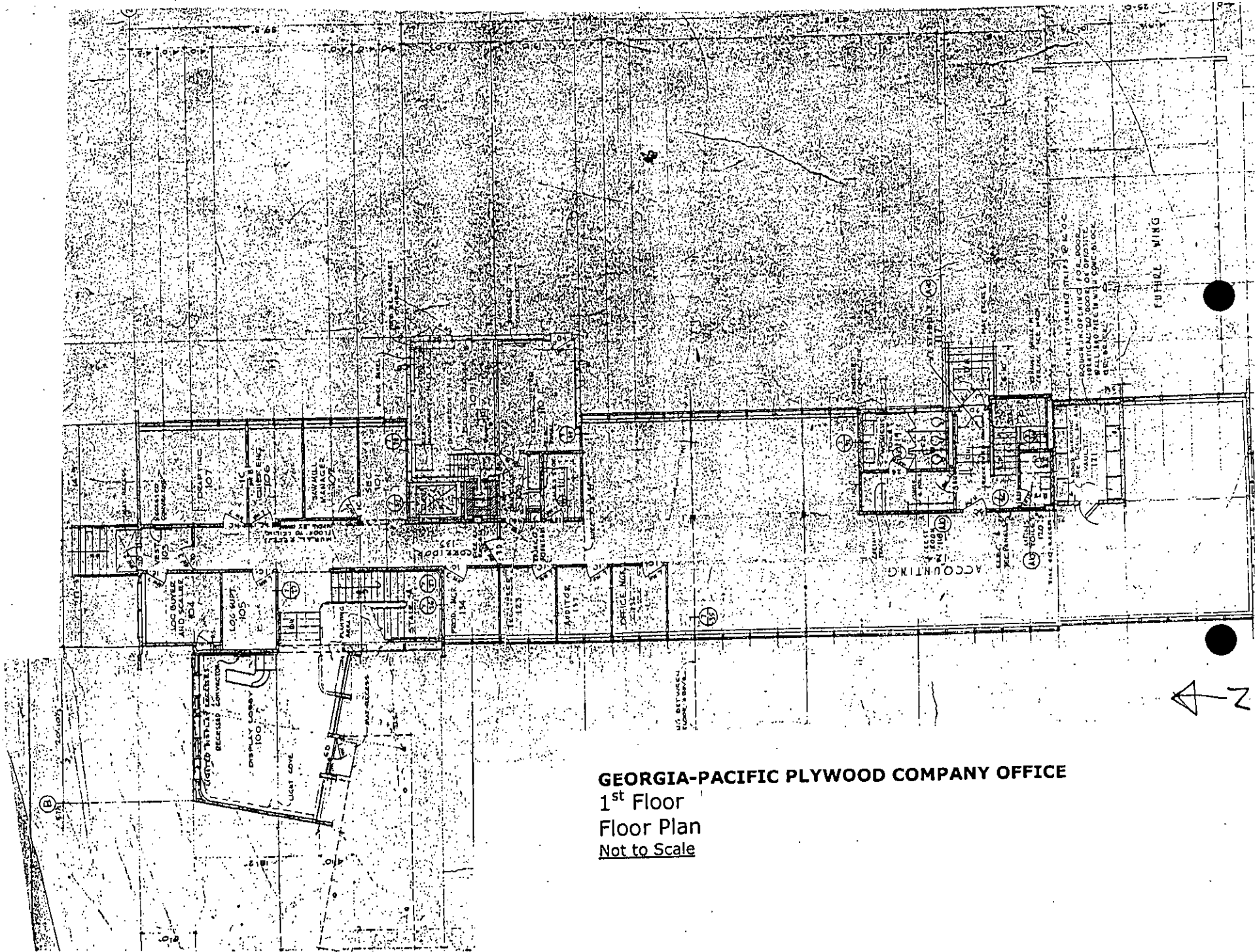
Zone 10  
 Easting: 507579  
 Northing: 5210562

LACEY 3 MI  
 5212  
 5211  
 5210  
 2' 30"  
 5  
 FORT LEWIS 13 MI  
 TACOMA 27 MI  
 5208  
 5207  
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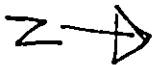
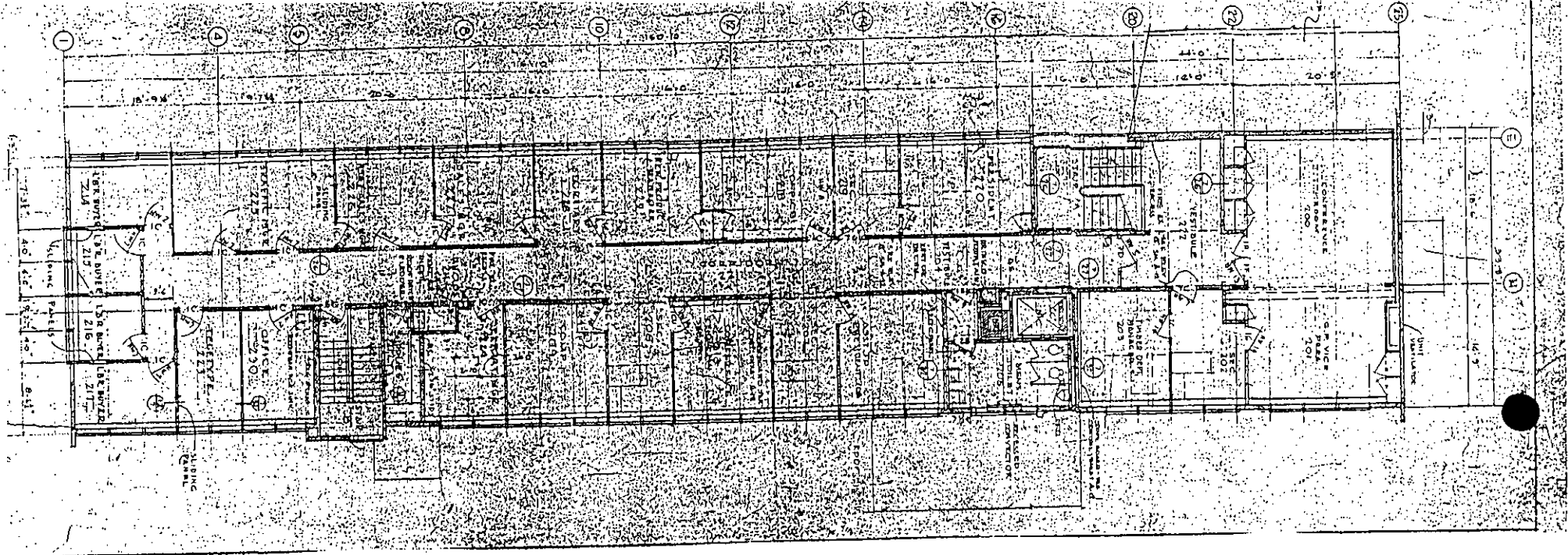


Georgia-Pacific Bldg  
Assessor's Map



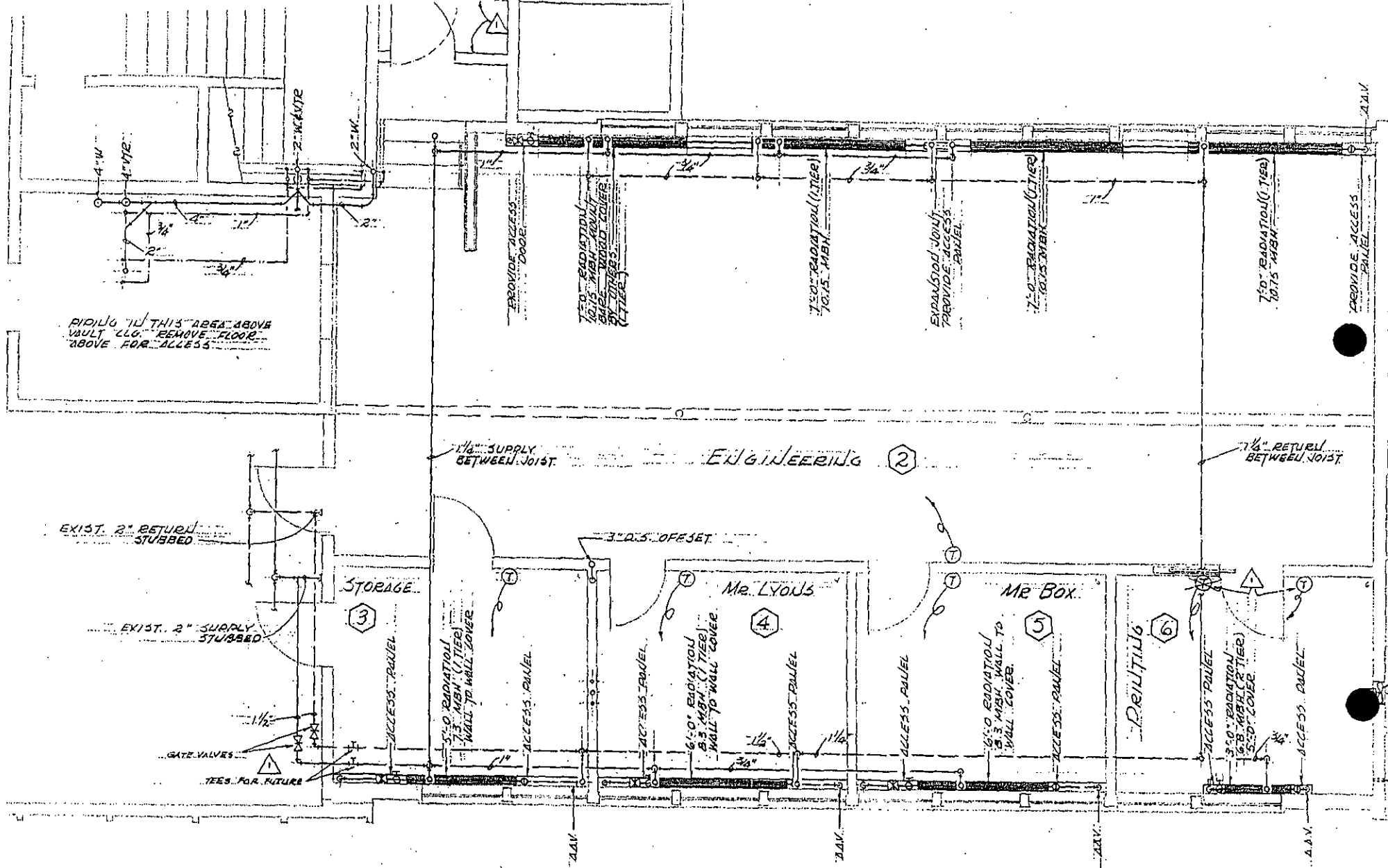


**GEORGIA-PACIFIC PLYWOOD COMPANY OFFICE**  
 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
 Floor Plan  
 Not to Scale



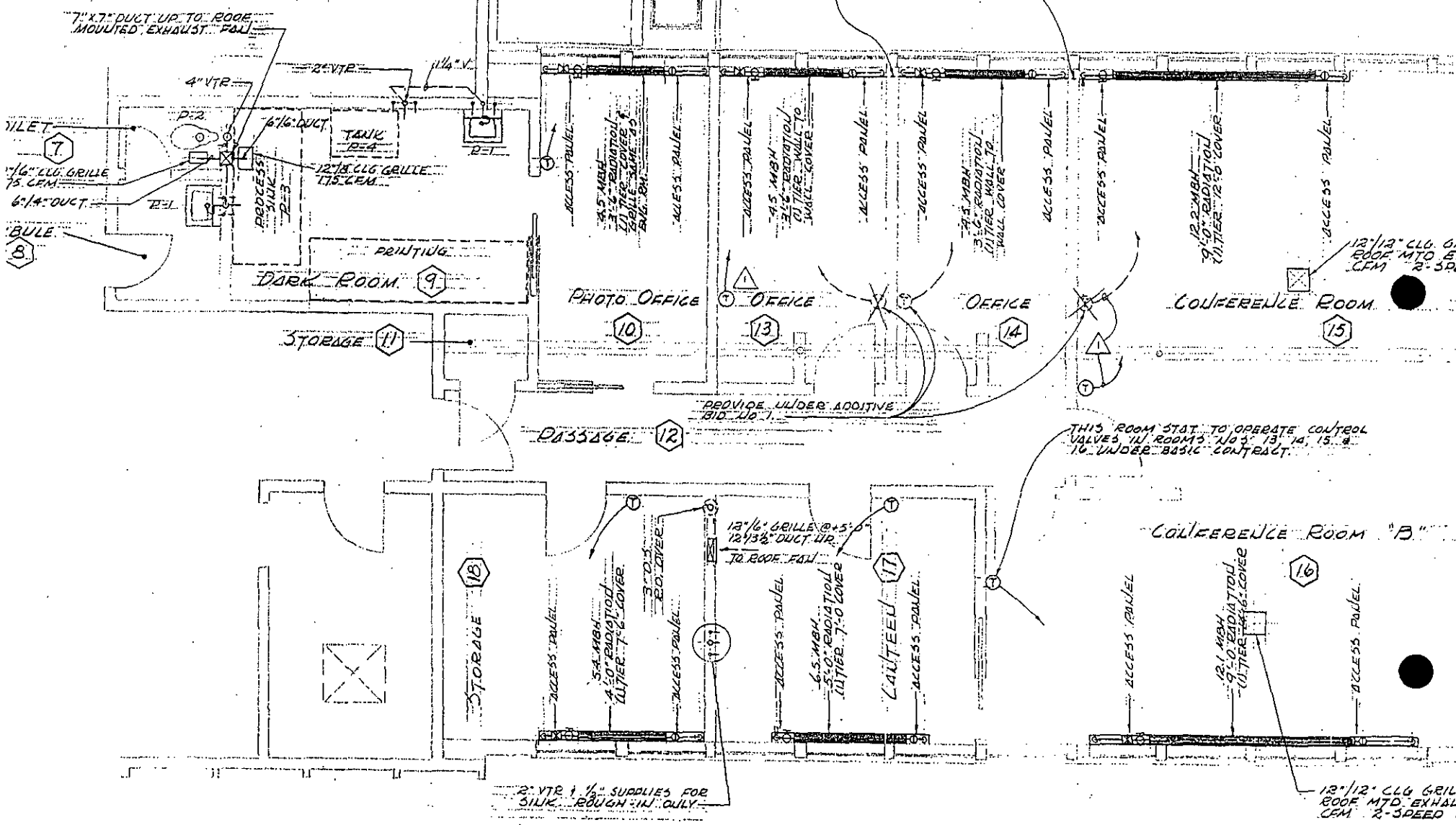
**GEORGIA-PACIFIC PLYWOOD COMPANY OFFICE**  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
 Floor Plan  
 Not to Scale

DETAILS OF COUNTERS, DESKS, INFORM/ DESK AND CABINETS.			
OFFICE BUILDING FOR <b>GEORGIA-PACIFIC PLYWOOD COMPANY</b> AND SUBSIDIARY, WASHINGTON VENEER CORPORATION OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON			
NARAMORE, BAIN, BRADY & JOHANSON ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERS, SEATTLE, WASH. A. E. HENNESSY WOHLER & WOHLER ASSOCIATE SUPERVISING ARCHITECTS			
SHEET NO. (REV) APPROVED <b>SUPPL #2</b> APPROVED <b>A-14</b>	JOB NO. <b>399</b>	DRAWN <b>A.E.H.</b>	CHECKED <b>A.E.H.</b>
		DATE <b>OCT 16 - 51</b>	

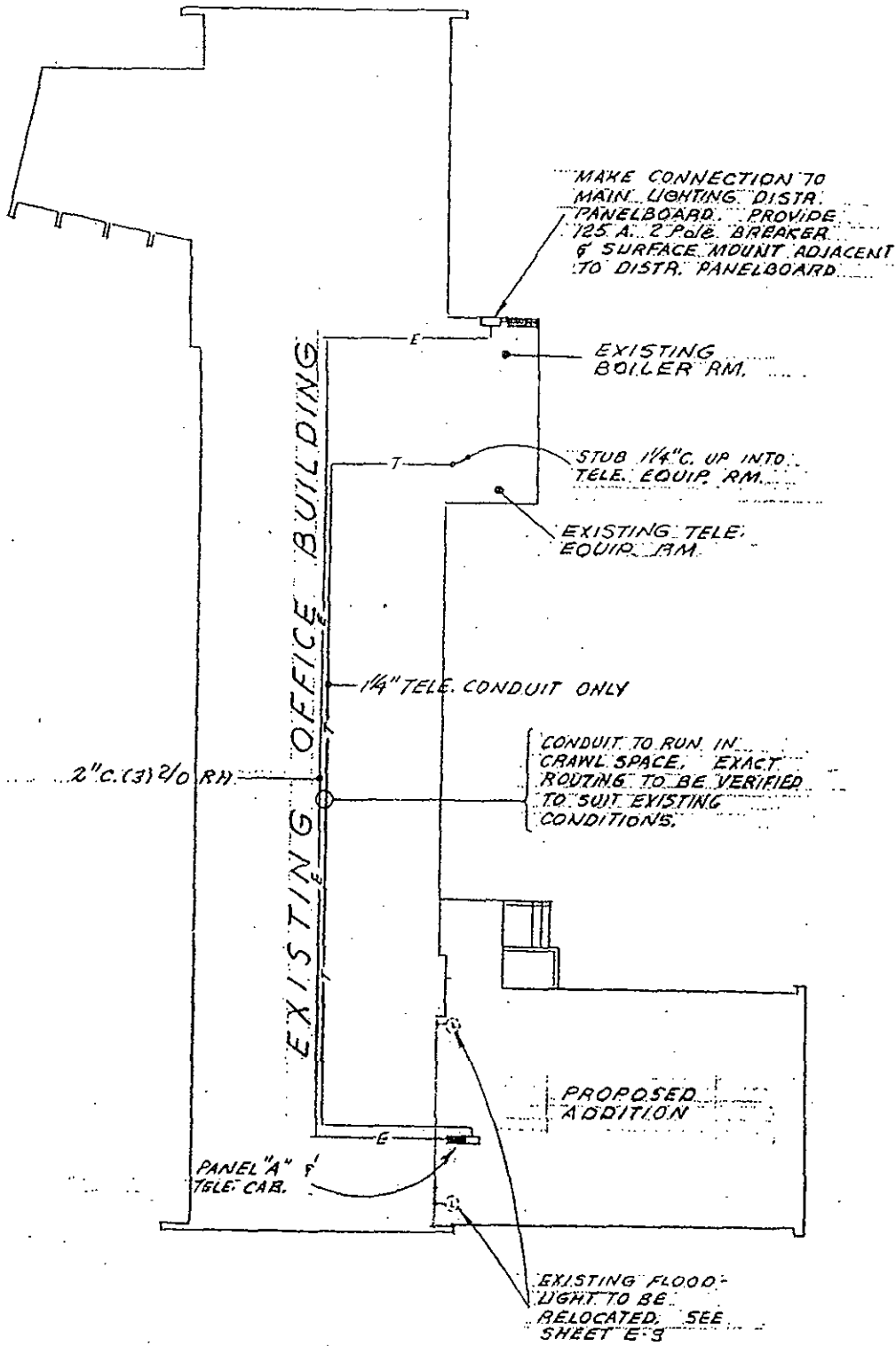


GEORGIA-PACIFIC PLYWOOD COMPANY OFFICE  
 1960 Addition  
 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
 Floor Plan  
 Not to Scale

PROVIDE ROUGH-IN ONLY FOR DARK ROOM EQUIPMENT REQUIRING PLUMBING CONNECTIONS LOCATE AS REQUIRED BY EQUIP.

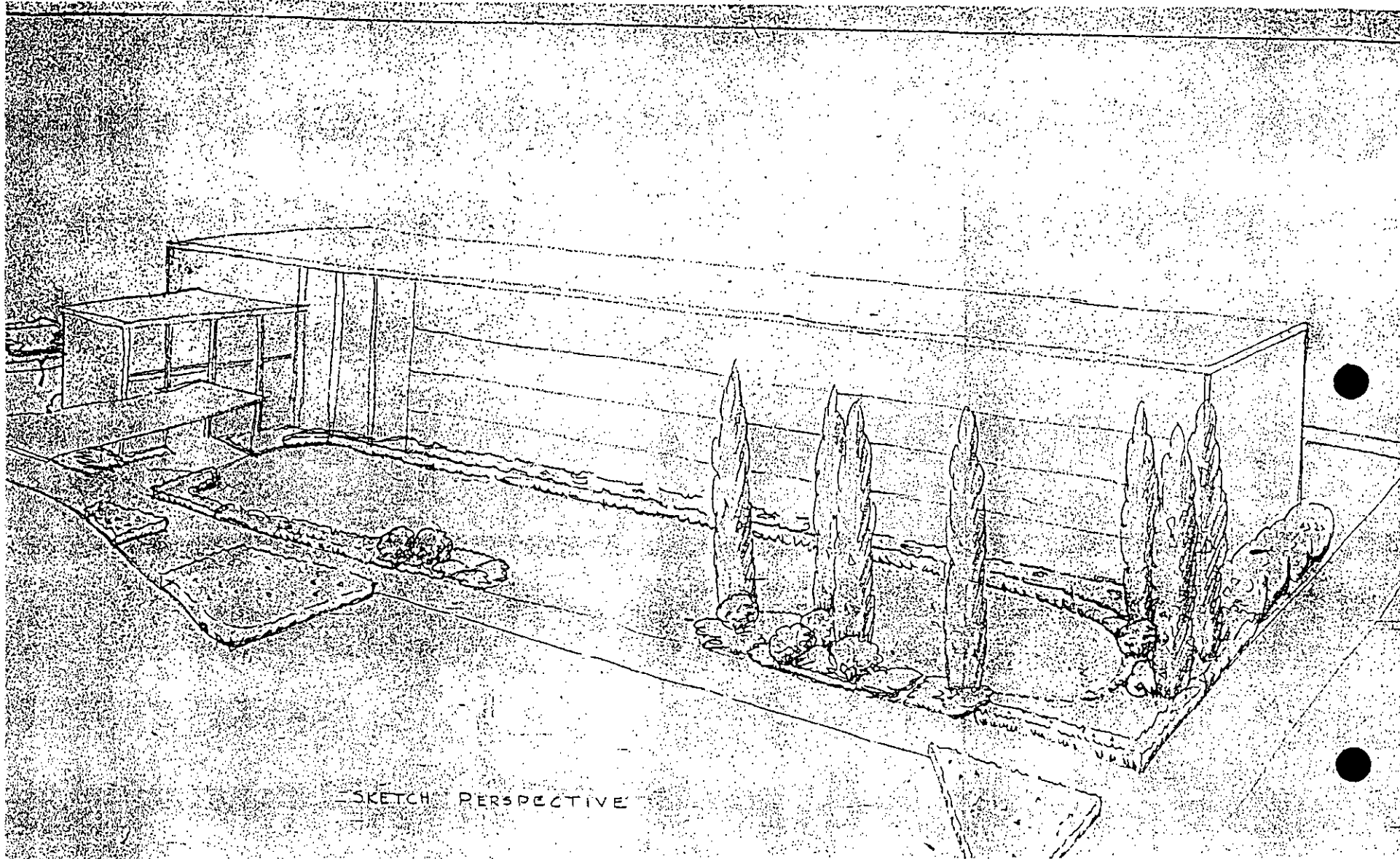


**GEORGIA-PACIFIC PLYWOOD COMPANY OFFICE**  
 1960 Addition  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
 Floor Plan  
 Not to Scale



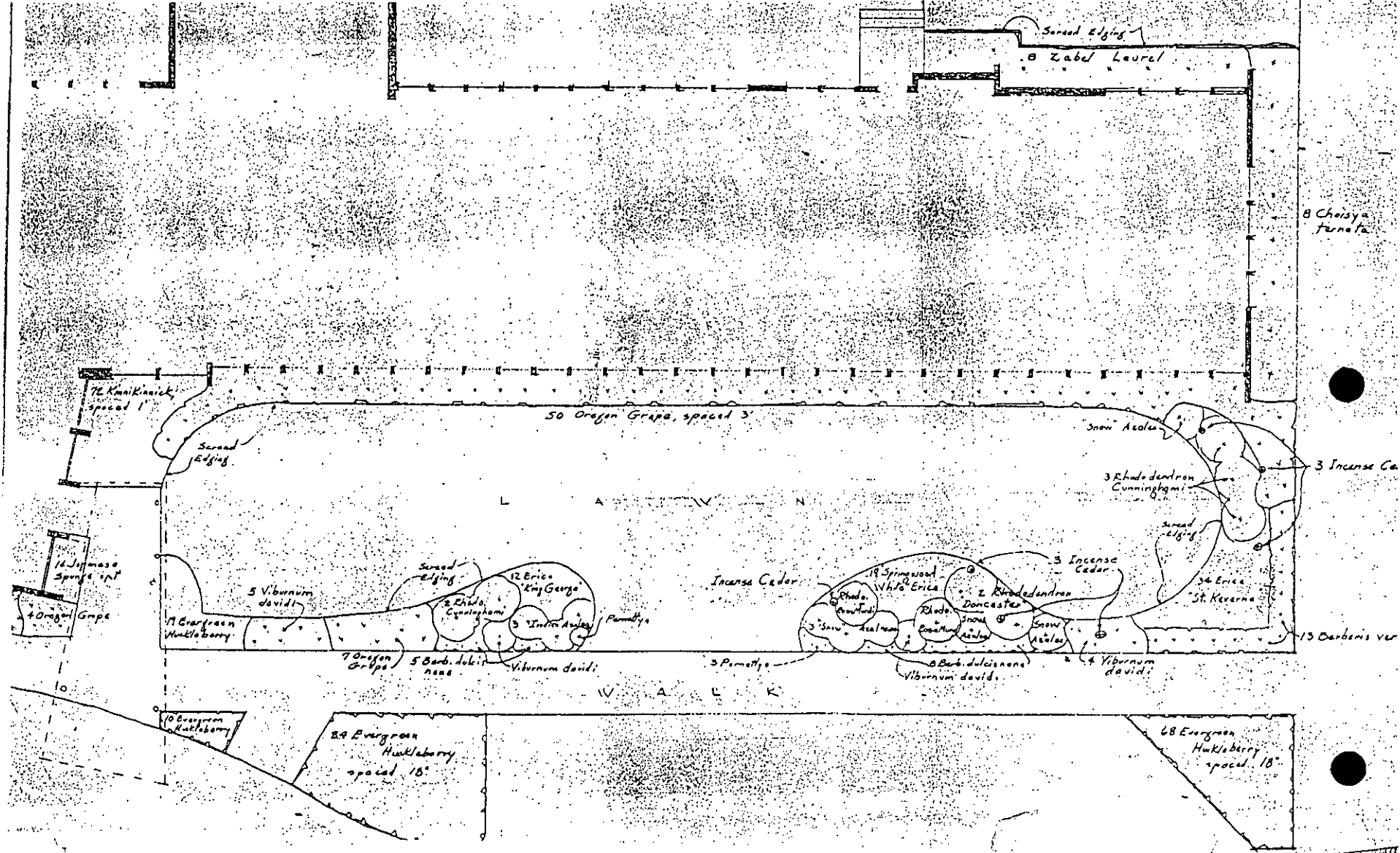
MECHANICAL • ELECTRICAL PLOT PLAN •

SCALE • 1" = 20'-0"

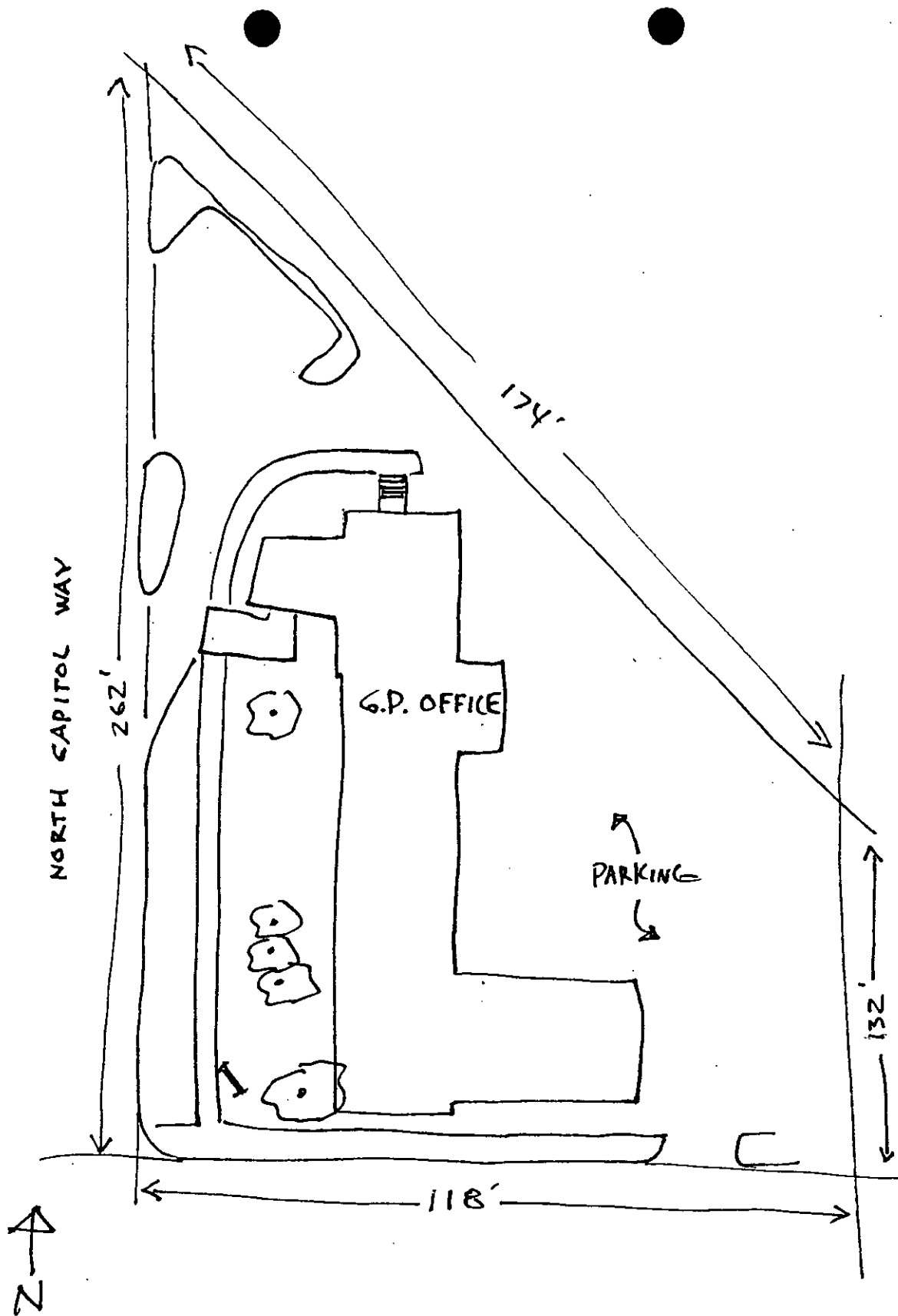


SKETCH PERSPECTIVE

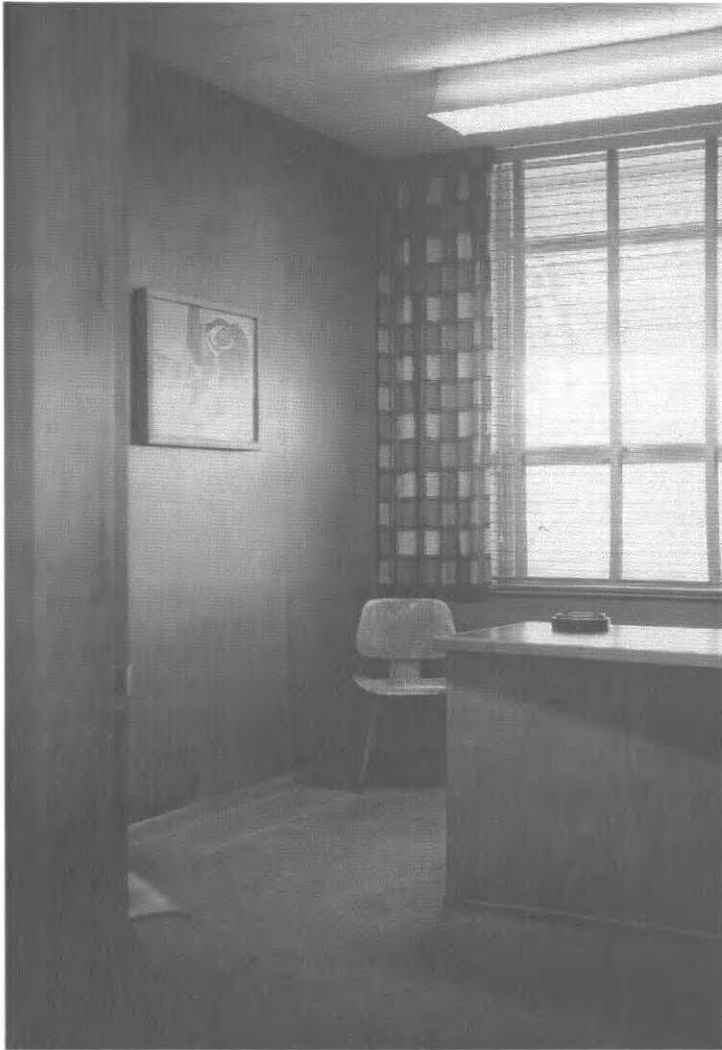
**GEORGIA-PACIFIC PLYWOOD COMPANY OFFICE**  
Architect's Rendering  
C. 1950



**GEORGIA-PACIFIC PLYWOOD COMPANY OFFICE**  
 Landscaping Plan  
 Not to Scale



**GEORGIA-PACIFIC PLYWOOD COMPANY OFFICE**  
Site Plan  
Not to Scale

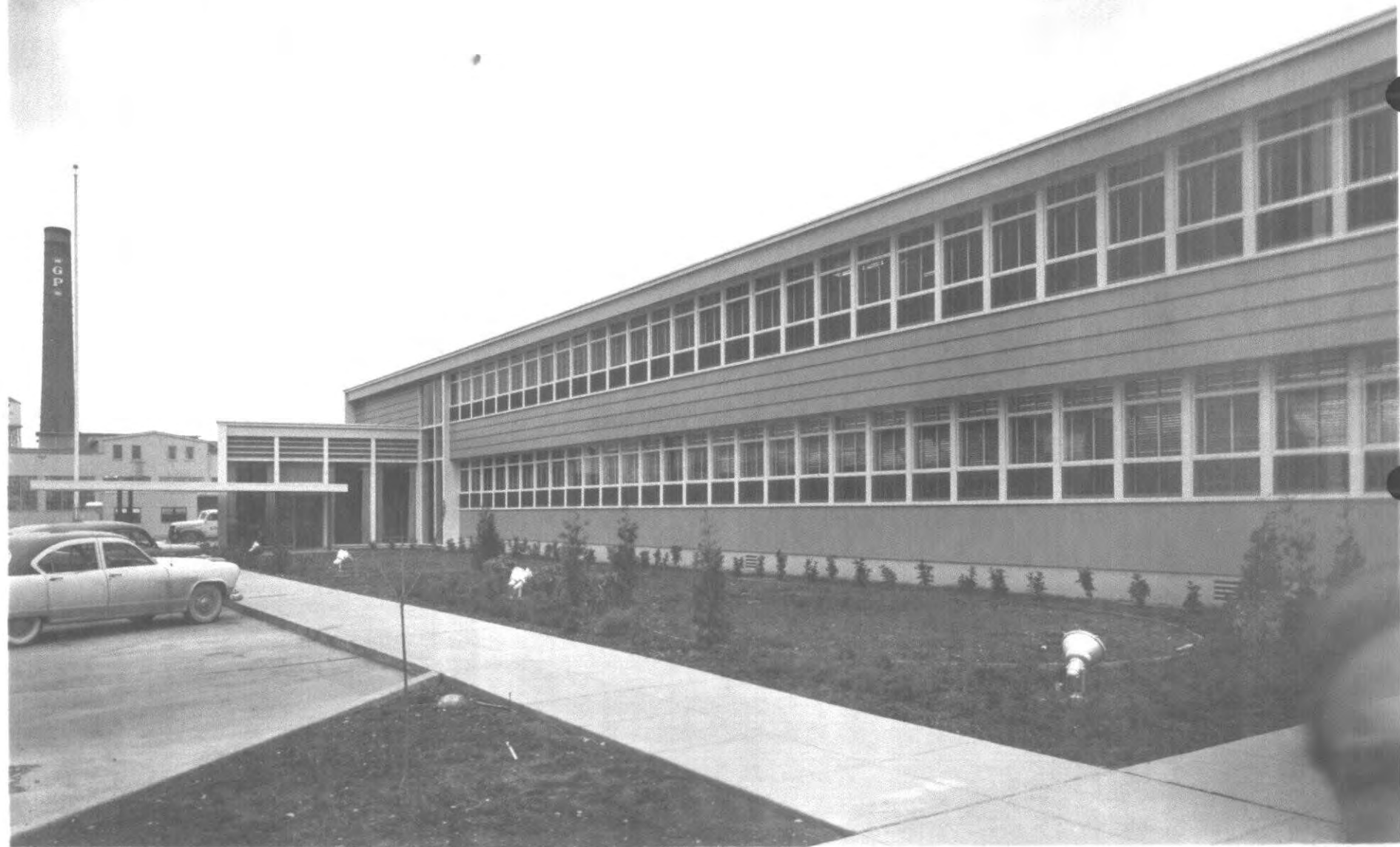


Typical second floor office.  
Image property of Dept of Fish & Wildlife



Entrance lobby stair to second floor  
executive offices and conference room.  
Image property of Dept of Fish & Wildlife

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Exterior southwest corner of Georgia-Pacific Plywood Co. Office looking north. Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio Collection #A67006-1. 5-23-52.



Night view of main entry of Georgia-Pacific Plywood Co. Office. Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio Collection #A64769. 2-16-52.



View of first floor accounting office space of Georgia-Pacific Plywood Co. Office. Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio Collection #A64769-35. 2-16-52.



Exterior northwest corner of Georgia-Pacific Plywood Co. Office - Manager Meeting. Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio Collection #D88778-2. Feb-1955.

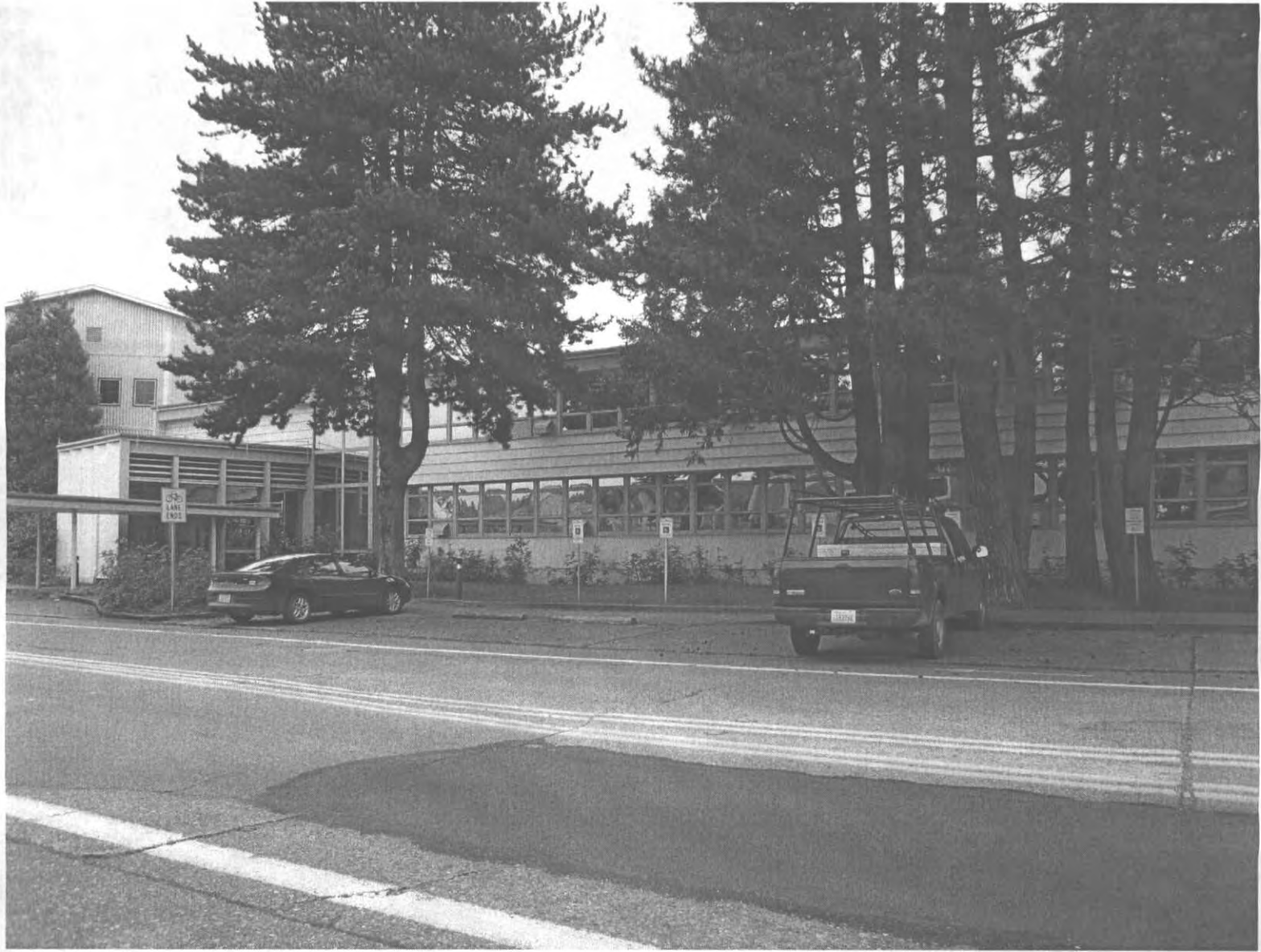


Exterior main entrance through plywood showroom space. Circa 1953,  
Image property of Dept of Fish & Wildlife



GEORGIA-PACIFIC PLYWOOD Co. OFFICE

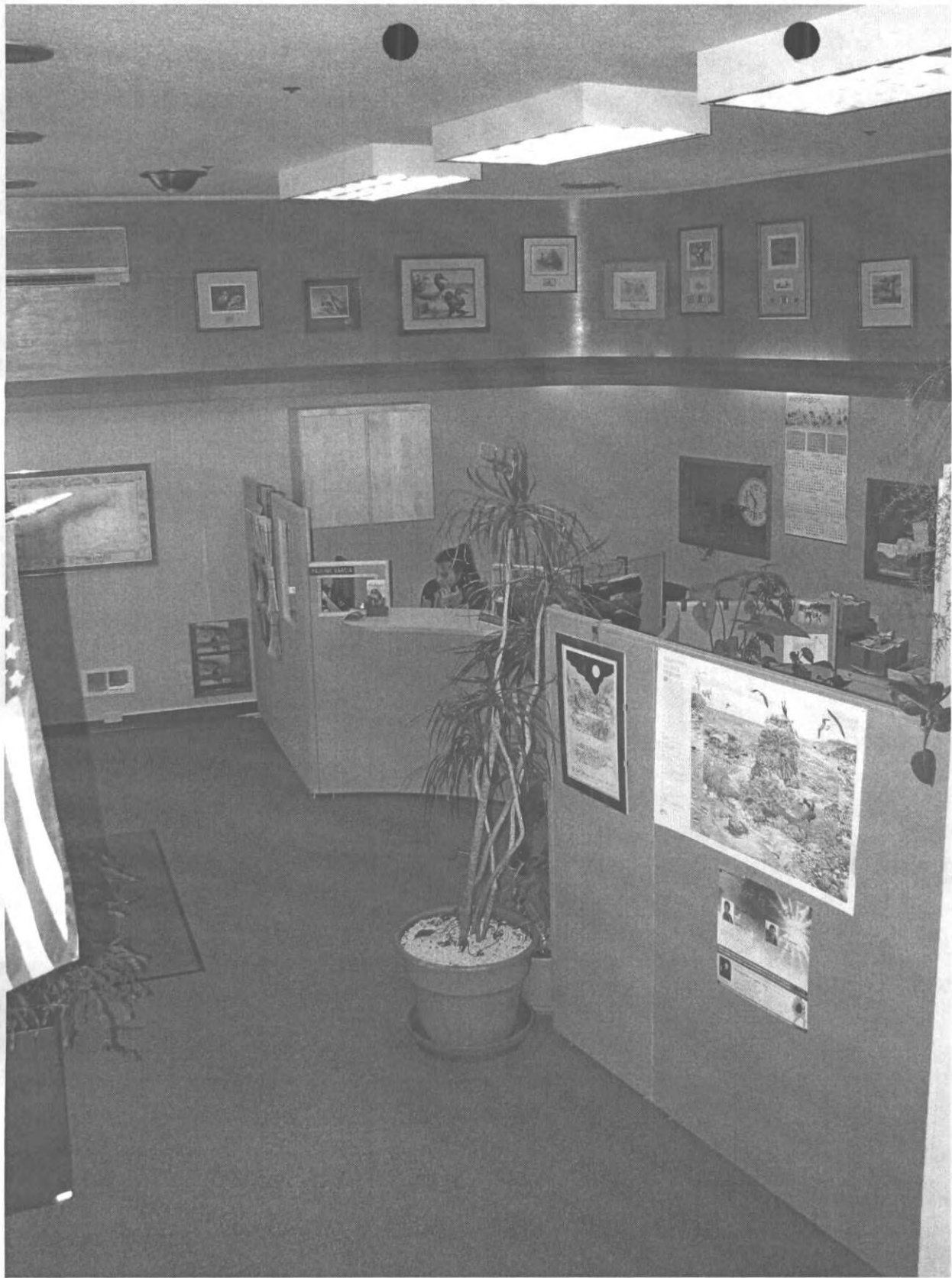


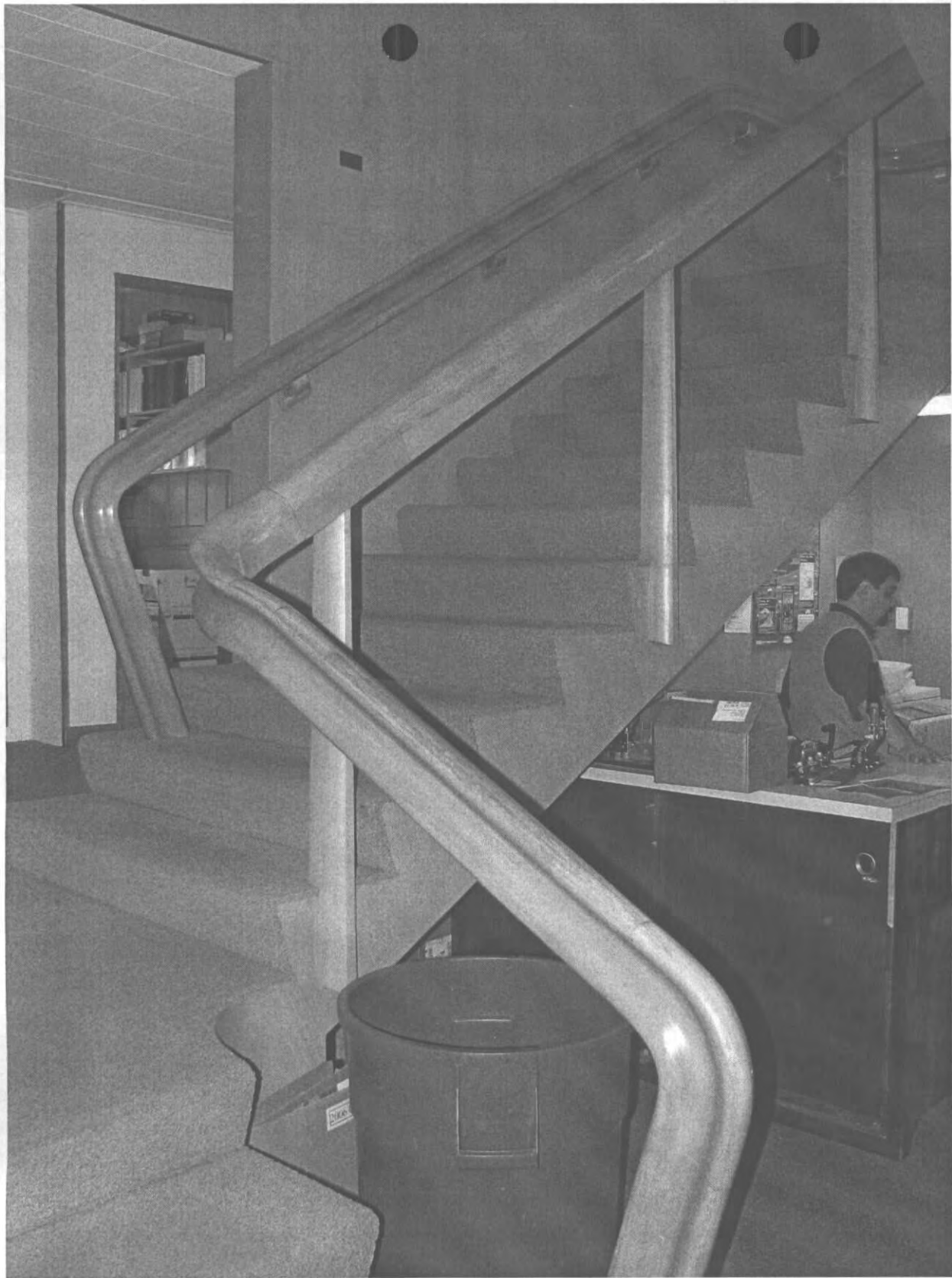


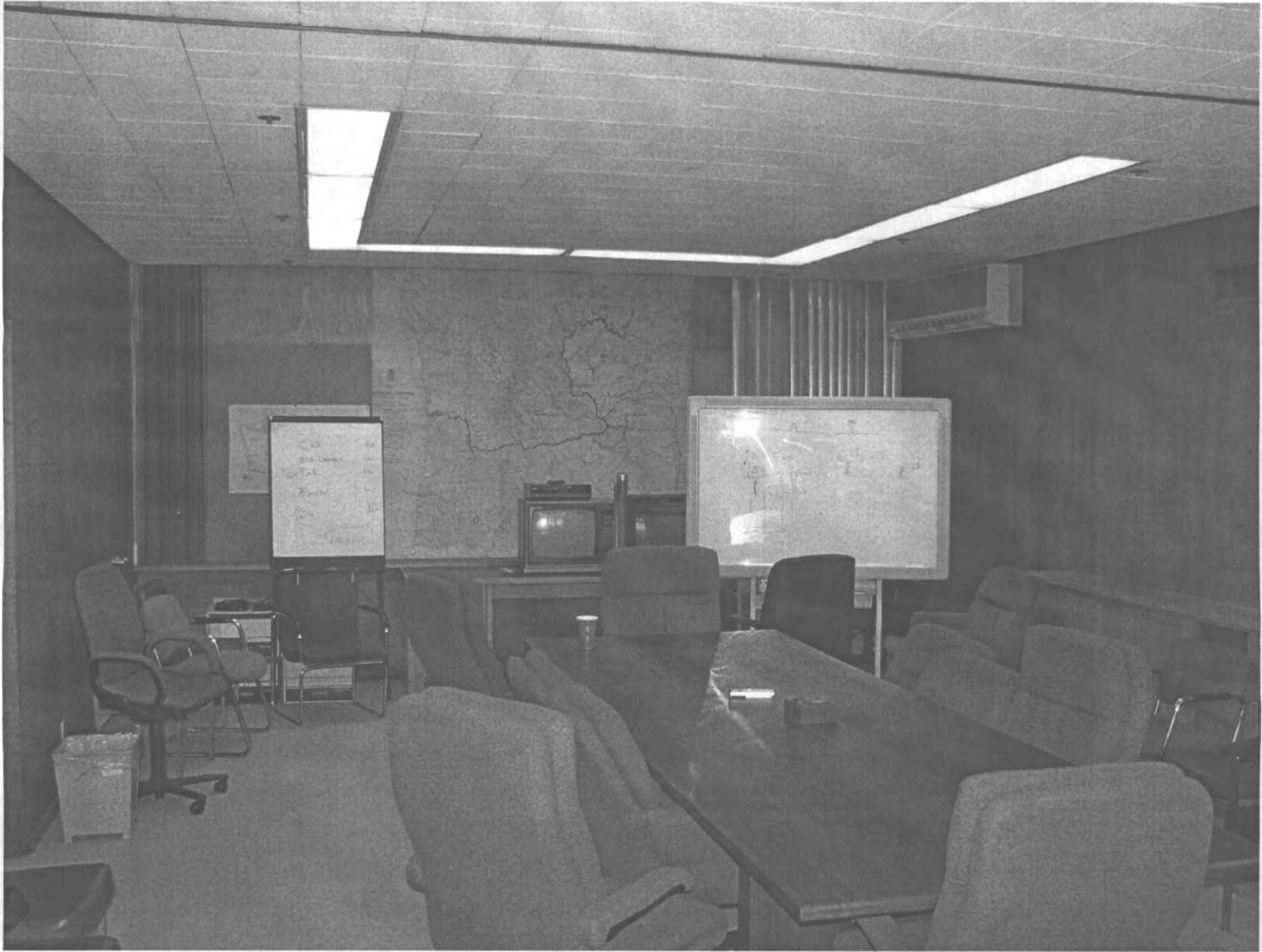


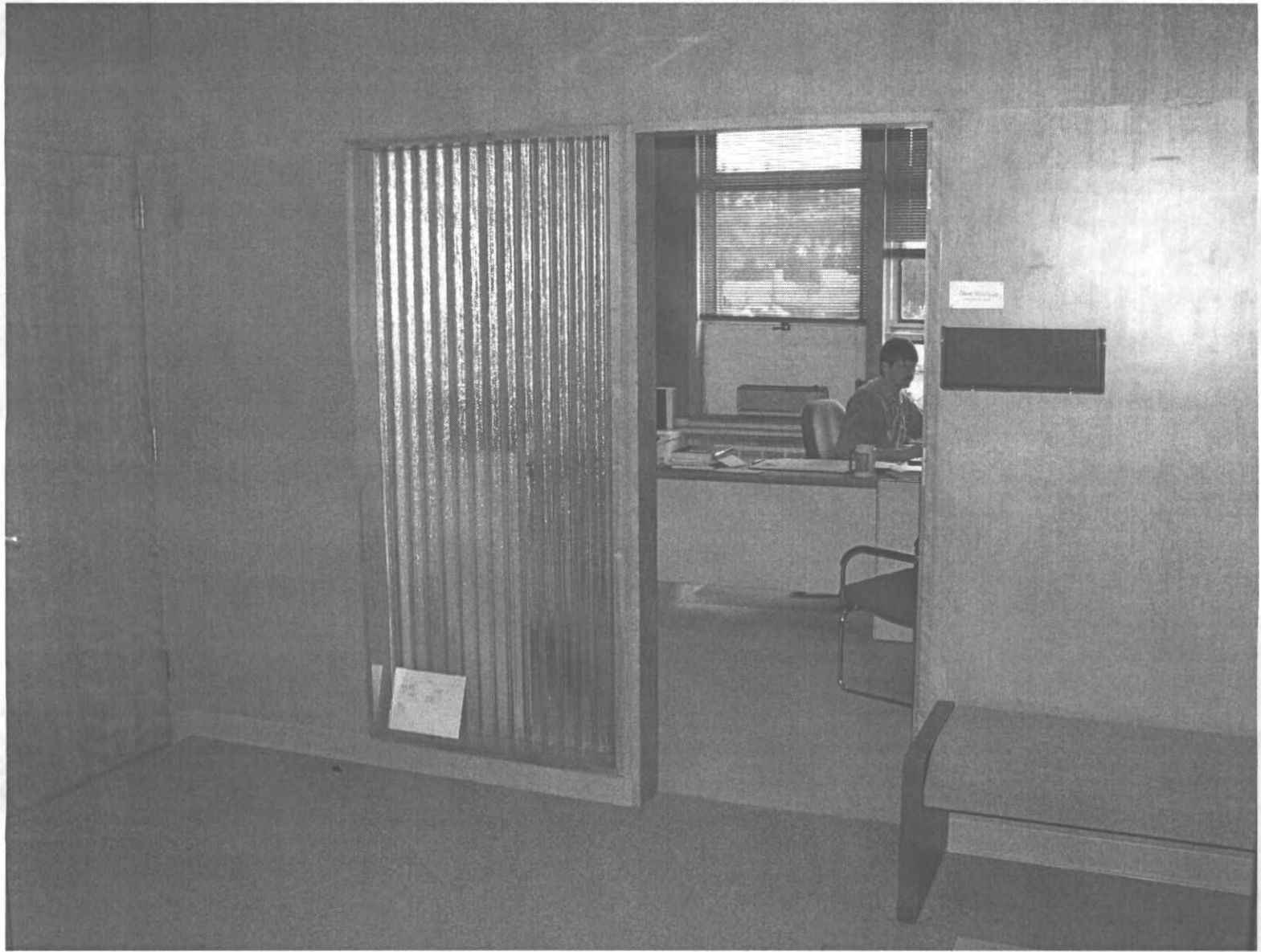














SLICED VERTICAL GRAIN

WESTERN LARCH



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Georgia-Pacific Company Bldg - Washington Veneer Office  
600 N. Washington  
Olympia, Thurston, Washington  
Shanna Stevenson  
February 2006  
Entry Wing, facing south  
Photograph 1



University of California  
FISH and WILDLIFE  
Department of Fisheries and Wildlife

0147000 Don' W Camera

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Georgia-Pacific Company Bldg - Washington Veneer Office  
600 N. Washington  
Olympia, Thurston, Washington  
Shanna Stevenson  
February 2006  
Front Facade, facing west  
Photograph 2



6169524 Don's Camera  
0047 074 N N N N -- 2135.6/100.0

Georgia-Pacific Company Bldg - Washington Veneer Office  
600 N. Washington  
Olympia, Thurston, Washington  
Shanna Stevenson  
February 2006  
North Facade  
Photograph 3



VISITORS PLEASE USE  
LOBBY ENTRANCE

6169124 Don's Camera  
0017074 N N N N - - 2135.6/100.0

Georgia-Pacific Company Bldg - Washington Veneer Office

600 N. Washington

Olympia, Thurston, Washington

Shanna Stevenson

February 2006

North Entry

Photograph 4



6160024 Don's Camera  
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Georgia-Pacific Company Bldg - Washington Veneer Office  
600 N. Washington  
Olympia, Thurston, Washington  
Shanna Stevenson  
February 2006  
East Facade, main building  
Photograph 5



6169524 Don's Camera  
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Georgia - Pacific Company Bldg - Washington Veneer Office  
600 N. Washington

Olympia, Thurston, Washington  
Shanna Stevenson

February 2006  
North; East Facades, 1959 wing  
Photograph 6



6169524 Don's Camera  
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Georgia-Pacific Company Bldg. - Washington Veneer Office  
600 N. Washington  
Olympia, Thurston, Washington  
Shanna Stevenson  
February 2006  
South Facade, 1959 wing  
Photograph 7



6169524 Don's Camera  
90-17 074 N N N N--- Z135.6/100.0

Georgia-Pacific Company Bldg - Washington Vaneer Office  
600 N. Washington  
Olympia, Thurston, Washington  
Shanna Stevenson  
February 2006  
Upper Floor Conference Room  
Photograph #8

EXIT >



Several framed notices or certificates are posted on the wall to the left of the hallway entrance.

0169524 Don's Camera  
0047 074 N N N N - - 2135.6/100.0

Georgia-Pacific Company Bldg - Washington Veneer Office  
600 N. Washington  
Olympia, Thurston, Washington  
Shanna Stevenson  
February 2006  
First Floor Corridor  
Photograph 9

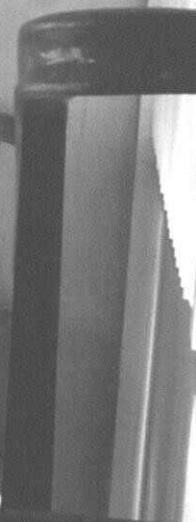
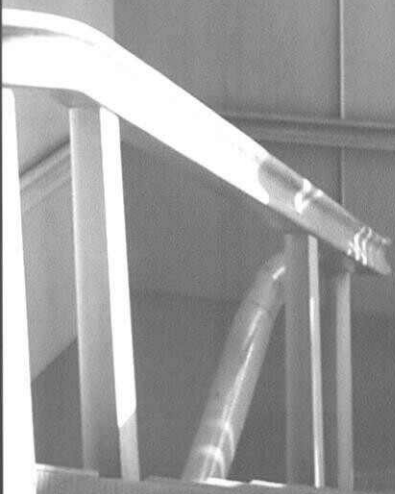


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Georgia-Pacific Company Bldg - Washington Veneer Office  
600 N. Washington  
Olympia, Thurston, Washington  
Shanna Stevenson  
February 2006  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Corridor  
Photograph 10

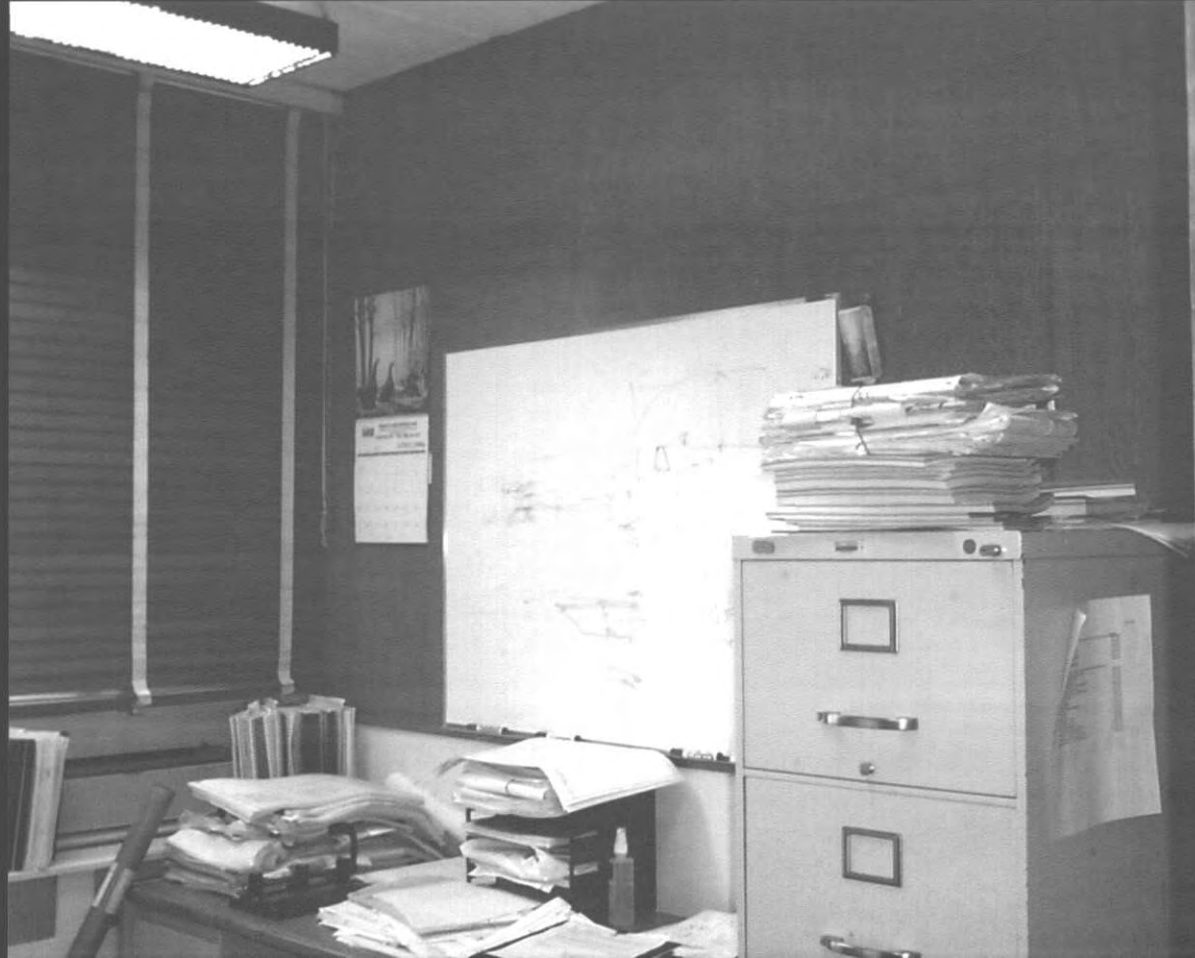
**WAL EATON**  
**WORTHEN**

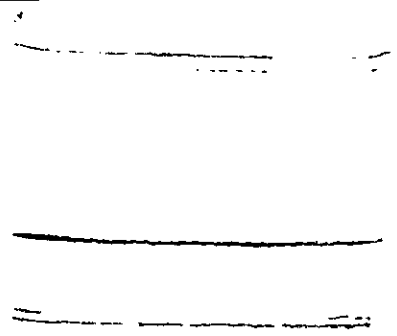
Chief Executive  
Chief Operating  
President  
Chief Financial  
Manufacturing & Sales  
Product Development & Design



6147800 Don's Camera  
0142 074 N N N N---- 2135.6/100.0

Georgia-Pacific Company Bldg - Washington Veneer Office  
600 N. Washington  
Olympia, Thurston, Washington  
Shanna Stevenson  
March 2006  
Stair Landing  
Photograph 11





6169524 Don't Camera  
0047 074 N N N N - 2135, 6-100.0

Georgia-Pacific Company Bldg - Washington Veneer Office  
600 N. Washington  
Olympia, Thurston, Washington  
Shenna Stevenson  
March 2006  
Office Interior  
Photograph 12



6169524 Don's Camera  
0017 074 N N N N-- - 2135.6/100.0

Georgia-Pacific Company Bldg - Washington Veneer Office  
600 N. Washington  
Olympia, Thurston, Washington  
Shanna Stevenson  
March 2006  
Office Interior  
Photograph 13