

1775 JAMES AVENUE



HISTORIC RESOURCE REPORT

for

1775 JAMES AVENUE

MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA 33139

prepared by

ARTHUR J. MARCUS ARCHITECT P.A.

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION CONSULTANT

June 30, 2014

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1450 Lincoln Road #806

Miami Beach, Florida 3313

for the

CITY of MIAMI BEACH HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD

prepared for

1775 JAMES AVENUE LLC

1775 James Avenue

Miami Beach, Florida 33139

June 30, 2014

1775 JAMES AVENUE



AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH LOOKING SOUTH circa 1950 with 1775 JAMES AVENUE HIGHLIGHTED IN RED
Courtesy Florida Memory Archives

1775 JAMES AVENUE



AERIAL VIEW of COLLINS PARK NEIGHBORHOOD LOOKING NORTHEAST circa EARLY 1960's
with 1775 JAMES AVENUE HIGHLIGHTED IN RED
The Roney Plaza Hotel - which was demolished in 1968 - still proudly stands in the background.
Courtesy Florida Memory Archives

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT:

At the turn of the century, the expanded district was part of the coconut plantation owned by Esra Osborn and Elnathan Field of Red Bank, New Jersey. In the 1880's, Osborn and Field purchased a 65 mile strip of land along the ocean beginning at the Lum Plantation (approximately 14th Street) and extending north to present day Jupiter. When the initial attempts at coconut farming failed, John Styles Collins (a New Jersey farmer and investor in the Osborn/Field plantation) bought out Osborn for control of approximately 1675 acres of land north of present day 14th Street, ocean to bay. Collins and Field then utilized the property for the farming of avocados. In 1909 Field sold his percentage to Collins making him sole owner of the property. (1)

Collins proposed construction of a bridge connecting his farm to the Miami mainland. Needing funds to complete the bridge project, Collins borrowed \$10,000 from the Southern Bank and Trust Company (J.N.Lummus, President) and \$15,000 from the Bank of Bay Biscayne (J. E. Lummus, President) . When more money was needed, standard Oil Attorney, Frank Shutts, suggested his friend Carl Fisher loan Collins the money to complete the bridge. (2)

He received, as a bonus on the loan, 200 acres of Collins' land from present day 14th Street to 19th Street, ocean to bay. (3)

The expanded district includes the developments of Collins and Fisher, two of the most important pioneer developers of Miami Beach. The northern portion of the district was first platted by Collins' Miami Beach Improvement Company on February 10, 1916 (19th Street north to 27th Street). (4)

The first road through the expanded district was Collins Avenue (originally known as Atlantic Boulevard) , in 1913, paid for by Dade County, J.N. Lummus, and Carl Fisher. Lummus, Fisher, and Collins paid the Miami Electric Company to have the first electrical lines laid across Biscayne Bay..(5)



TOP: AERIAL PHOTO SHOWING GOLF COURSE WITH
1775 JAMES AS YET UN-BUILT...1928
LOWER PHOTO: LINCOLN ROAD LOOKING WEST
FROM JAMES AVENUE...circa 1940

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT:

The basic form and layout of the expanded district was established during the early platting of property between 1912 and 1916. The uniformity of plat seen in the Lummus developments south of Lincoln Road are to some degree, absent in the neighborhood surrounding Collins Park. Although still platted at right angles, blocks vary in size and shape and tend to be wider, allowing greater landscape setbacks and courtyards. (12)

Originally, in both the Fisher and Collins developments, Collins Avenue was predominantly single family. Photo aerials from 1921 and 1927 indicate the presence of large estate type residences north of 15th Street on both sides of Collins Avenue and to the west. (6)

The land area west of the district, now occupied by the Jackie Gleason Theater of the Performing Arts and the Miami Beach Convention Center, was originally the Alton Beach Golf and Country Club, a private golf course developed by Carl Fisher. The 21st street Community Center Clubhouse was built in 1916 as the golf course's clubhouse. The 21st Street Community Center site was designated a local historic site in 1984. (7)

Within the district, at James Avenue north of Lincoln Road, Fisher developed an indoor tennis complex within iron trusses supporting a glass roof. (8)

Further north, at Collins and 23rd Street, was Fisher's Miami Beach Bath and Beach Club, a bathing and entertainment complex which along with the golf course and tennis pavilion comprised recreation amenities of Fisher's development.(8)

TOP PHOTO: COLLINS AVENUE LOOKING NORTH FROM 20TH STREET 1941

LOWER PHOTO: COLLINS AVENUE LOOKING NORTH FROM 20TH STREET 1941



UPPER PHOTO: 1960 AERIAL PHOTO of
WASHINGTON + JAMES AVENUES
COURTESY FLORIDA MEMORY
ARCHIVES

LOWER PHOTO: FORMERLY EXISTING
LIBRARY IN COLLINGS PARK -
COURTESY FLORIDA MEMORY
ARCHIVES

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT:

In the 1930's, the development of property within the expanded district reflected the character of Miami Beach in the post-depression recovery period. Numerous small hotels and apartment buildings, designed in the Moderne style, were rapidly built to attract the growing numbers of middle class tourists. (9)

"Small investors, many of them Jewish businessmen who came south for health reasons, began their semi-retirement by building and operating small apartment houses. A nice building could be put up for \$50,000." (11)



NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT:

A major feature of the nominated district is Collins Park, containing the Bass Museum of Art... (originally the Miami Beach Library and Art Center)...The structure was designed by Architect Russell Pancoast, who was a popular architect and grandson of John Collins. (13)

The majority of the buildings within the expanded district were constructed after the land bust of 1926 and the depression of 1929. This second major period of construction lasted from 1930 through World War II up to 1948-49. During this period, as Miami Beach recovered from the bust, architectural design shifted from the traditional to the modern. (14)

Architectural design followed the public's fascination with machinery, and the simplified form and ornamentation were well suited to the new economic and social conditions in Miami Beach. Smaller buildings, catering to the more modest means of middle-class visitors and seasonal residents were constructed rapidly in great numbers to meet the increasing population of Miami Beach. (14)

This is the primary reason for the consistency of buildings in the nominated district. Of the 60 historic buildings in the expanded district, 45 (75%) were constructed between 1930 and 1949. Because so many buildings were constructed in so short a period of time, designed by so few architects, the nominated district is highly consistent in scale, architectural style, and design character. (14)

TOP PHOTO: BASS MUSEUM in COLLINS PARK by
ARTHUR MARCUS 2013
LOWER PHOTO: SOUTH BEACH HOTEL by
ARTHUR MARCUS 2013





1959 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH courtesy of CITY of MIAMI BEACH / PUBLIC WORKS

This two-story structure located at 1775 James Avenue was designed by the Architect Norman M. Giller as the James Court Apartments and constructed in 1948 at a cost of \$150,000. according to the Building Card obtained from the City of Miami Beach.

No original exterior building plans by Giller were found at the CMB. Interior Renovation Plans were retrieved from the CMB Building Department designed by Gerard Pitt Architect. And 1995 interior renovation drawings for what was then called the Orleans Apartments were designed by S.D.I. Architects.

The building is located in the Museum National Historic District. The building has been twice deemed as 'non-contributing' - first when the District was originally formed and then again when the District was re-assessed in 2000.

From review of the City's records available on the City's website (Historic Preservation Board webpage), the Museum Historic District was first created in 1990. In 1992, the City of Miami Beach expanded the boundaries to include the area west of Collins Avenue to Washington Avenue, from Lincoln Lane North to 23rd Street (including 1775 James Avenue).

An update to the National Register listing for the Miami Beach Architectural District was accepted by the National Register in 2000, and expanded the period of significance through 1950. The existing building at 1775 James Avenue was originally classified as a "non-contributing" structure. It continues to be classified today as "non-contributing" on the City's historic property database.

While the structure is similar in size and scale to the other contributing buildings on the east side of the block, it nonetheless lacks any defining architectural detailing which highlights the more notable buildings in the neighborhood (Culver Apartments, Lincoln Arms, Claremont Hotel and Cadet Hotel)

This structure also does not acknowledge its special corner site in the architectural manner of the neighboring Lincoln Arms or Cadet Hotel. It appears as a mid-block building that happened to be plunked down at the corner.

And although this building was designed by noted Architect Norman Giller - it however contains none of his special vocabulary of mid-century forms often utilized by the architect in his other creations - such as wiggles and woggles and cheese-holes and bean-poles and angled forms and other popular MiMo conventions. The clean lines and roof overhangs are quite typical of this era. However this is a once novel building type that has become so common that it is now virtually invisible in the built environment.

Since its initial construction taller buildings have been built all around 1775 James Avenue. Although the courtyard remains in good condition, it has been cut off from James Avenue with un-friendly burglar-bars and gates; thus altering the original circulation intent.

The interior corridors do not currently meet minimum standards for life safety and egress due to sub-standard corridor width. There does not appear to be any original flooring and/or wall material currently existing. We concur that this is a 'non-contributing' building.

On the following pages are photographs of the existing Hotel18 at 1775 James Avenue:





NORTH FACADE (18TH STREET)



Hotel 18 existing signage



West facade facing James Avenue



NORTH FACADE (18TH STREET)



WINDOWS FACING JAMES AVENUE



EXISTING CORRIDOR (NOT TO CODE)



EXISTING COURTYARD



ENTRY TO COURTYARD (JAMES AVENUE)



GATE TO ALLEY (JAMES AVENUE)



Interior Courtyard facing East



Interior Courtyard from second level



Existing exterior staircase



Existing exterior staircase



STEPS TO SECOND LEVEL GUEST ROOMS



GATE ENTRY TOWARD ALLEY FACING 18TH STREET

NORMAN M. GILLER ARCHITECT (1918 - 2008)

Norman Giller was a quiet innovator in MiMo Architecture long before Morris Lapidus moved to Miami Beach. ...Giller designed a remarkable range of buildings - and created one of the most widely imitated building types in the United States - the two story motel....a building type that became so common it is virtually invisible in the built environment. (15)

He was one of the first to introduce air conditioning to south Florida..and PVC plumbing piping...and the introduction of space-saving flat-slab concrete construction. In 1957 his practice was ranked by *Architectural Forum* as the 10th largest architectural firm in the country by volume..” (16)

He had six offices in Central and South America, traveled throughout Canada and Europe and worked from Pensacola to Key West in Florida. By his own count, he designed 11,000 buildings in all, worth more than \$100 million. (18)

Born in Jacksonville in 1918, Giller pieced together a patchwork education in architecture, including correspondence school, a stint in the navy, a semester at the University of Florida studying with Florida’s first licensed female architect, Marion Manley, and finally a degree from the University of Florida in 1945 (17)

In the early 1940’s he apprenticed for Henry Hohauser and Albert Anis. Giller recalls working in Anis’s penthouse office at 420 Lincoln Road: ” He lived in part of the facility and the other part was his office and the drafting room. I would sit there and the ocean was in the background. There were no buildings between Washington Avenue and the ocean, so it was a clear view...(18)

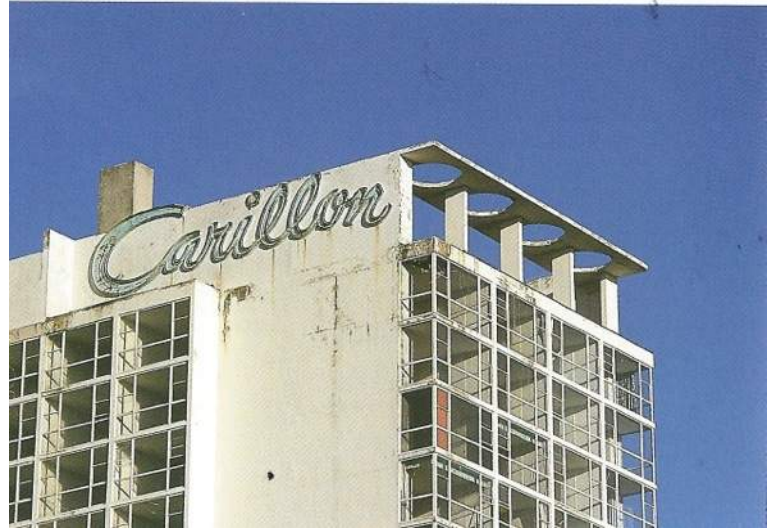
He drafted one of the first redevelopment plans for South Beach and was later instrumental in having Miami Beach create its own Design Review Board, on which he served as chairman. (20)

ABOVE: CARILLON HOTEL

photo by THOMAS DELBECK from MIMO REVEALED

below: NORTH SHORE BAND SHELL

photo by ARTHUR MARCUS



"He was a big part of creating the style of Miami Modern," ..Giller doesn't wear a cape, like Frank Lloyd Wright; he doesn't pretend to change the world through architecture, like Mies van der Rohe; and he doesn't dwell theatrically on perceived slights, like Lapidus, his friend and longtime Miami Beach rival. All Giller has done is design one building after another, and from time to time the lines on his blueprints became magic. (19)

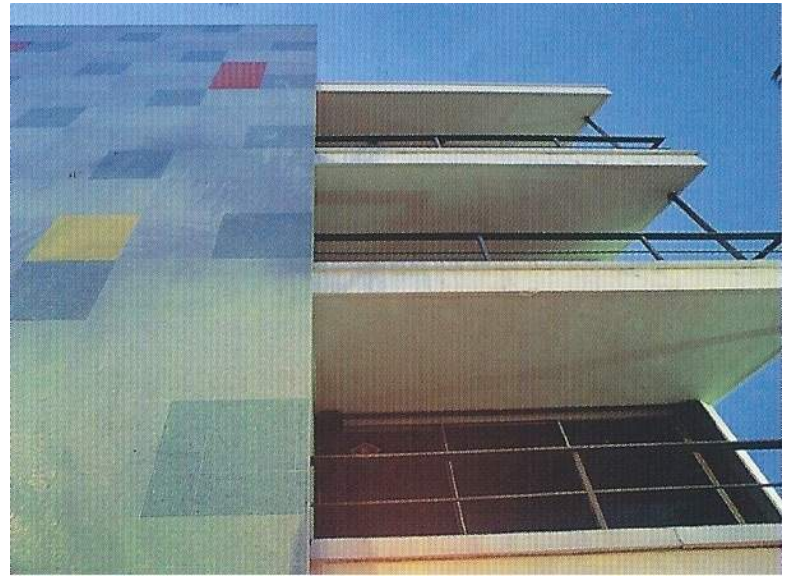
SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS

Carillon Hotel Miami Beach, FL (altered)
 Diplomat Hotel Hollywood, FL (demolished)
 Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce
 Miami Beach, FL 2001
 Ocean Palm Motel, Sunny Isles, FL 1951
 Bombay Hotel aka Golden Sands
 Miami Beach 1951
 Monterrey Motel aka the Standard
 Miami Beach 1953
 Thunderbird Motel Sunny Isles 1955
 (demolished)
 Driftwood Motel Sunny Isles, 1952 (demolished)
 Singapore Hotel Bal Harbour
 Suez Motel, Sunny Isles, 1954 (demolished)
 Giller Building Miami Beach, FL 1957
 North Beach Elementary School
 Miami Beach
 Cadillac & Quittner Building Additions 2001
 Miami Beach
 Jewish Museum of Florida, Miami Beach, FL
 Davis Motel Miami, FL 1953
 North Shore Band Shell, Miami Beach 1957

TOP PHOTO: GILLER & GILLER BUILDING

MIDDLE PHOTO: SUEZ MOTEL

LOWER PHOTO: DIPLOMAT HOTEL
 PORTE-COCHERE RENDERING



18

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- (1) Museum Historic District - Expanded District Designation Report by City of Miami Beach Department of Historic Preservation and Urban Design - May,1992 pp. 3-4
- (2) Ibid, p. 4.
- (3) Ibid.
- (4) Ibid.
- (5) Ibid.
- (6) Ibid., p.5.
- (7) Ibid.
- (8) Ibid.
- (9) Ibid., pp. 5-6
- (10) Ibid.
- (11) Miami Beach Art Deco Guide”, by Miami Design Preservation League, 1987, pp. 5-6.
- (12) Museum Historic District - Expanded District Designation Report by City of Miami Beach Department of Historic Preservation and Urban Design - May,1992 p. 8.
- (13) Ibid.p. 6.
- (14) Ibid., pp. 8-9.
- (15) MiMo - Miami Modern revealed by Eric P. Nash & Randall C.Robinson Jr. 2004, pp. 90 + 92
- (16) Ibid., p.92
- (17) Ibid., p.93
- (18) Ibid.,
- (19) “Meet the Man Who Made Miami Modern”, Ft. Lauderdale SunSentinel, November 4, 2001
- (20) “Renowned MiMo architect Giller Dead at 90” Miami Herald May, 2008

THE JAMES COURT APTS, INC. #230 10th St
 Owner
 Lot 11 - 12 Block 27 Mailing Address
 General Contractor Herman Popkin
 Architect Norman M. Giller
 Zoning Regulations: Use RE Area 14
 Building Size: Front 90' Depth 125'
 Certificate of Occupancy No. 968 (12-20-48)
 Type of Construction #3 CBS Foundation Spread footing Roof Flat Date May 15, 1948

Permit No. 27259 Cost \$ 150,000.
 Subdivision FISHER'S FIRST Address 1775 James Avenue
 Board No. 3818 230-18th St
 Engineer

Lot Size 100 x 150
 Height 21' Stories 2
 Use APARTMENT HOUSE 30 units (14-1 bedrm-1 bat
 (16-1 bedrm-2 bat)

Plumbing Contractor # 26613 Fixxit System Date May 17, 1948
 Plumbing Contractor # 26712 Fixxit System Date June 3, 1948
 Water Closets 46 Bath Tubs 46
 Lavatories 46 Showers
 Urinals Sinks 30
 Gas Stoves Gas Heaters
 Gas Radiators Gas Turn On Approved
 Septic Tank Contractor
 Oil Burner Contractor
 Sprinkler System

Electrical Contractor # 26589 B. & W. Electric Date June 22, 1948
 Switch 162 Range 29 Motors
 OUTLETS Light 244 HEATERS Water 3
 Receptacles 216 Space 46
 Refrigerators 29
 Irons 29
 Electrical Contractor

No. FIXTURES 244
 FINAL APPROVED BY Woodmansee Date of Service November 29, 1948
 ELECTRICAL PERMIT # 26498 B. & W. Electric: (Partial)- 64 centers of distribution, 1 equipment
 Alterations or Repairs—Over service June 10, 1948

BUILDING CARD #1

ALTERATIONS & ADDITIONS

Building Permits: # 28810 Pole sign - (on owner's property) Tropicalites Co: \$ 250....Nov. 15, 1948
 # 32555 Concrete slab - 10 x 20 - no roof over- Owner \$ 100....May 15, 1950
 no plans # 37846 Air condit ioning- window units- Lyon Electric Co. \$ 6,720..Jan. 15, 1952
 OK, Plaag 4/11/1956 47714 Appliance Consumer Service: Install 1 - 3/4 ton A. C. Unit \$ 200 June 6, 1955
 48578 by owner: Painting outside \$ 280.00 Sept. 9, 1955
 OK, Plaag 6/12/56 49927 Appliance Consumer Service: Install 1 - 3/4 ton Unit \$ 200..Mar. 12, 1956
 OK, Plaag 4/11/1956 50104 Appliance Consumer Service: Install 2 - 3/4 tons and 2 - 1 ton A. C. Unit: \$ 800 Apr. 9, 1956
 OK, Plaag 8/27/1956 50718 Appliance Consumer Service: Install 1 - 1 ton A. C. Unit \$ 200..4/12/1956
 # 50873 Appliance Consumer Serv. Install 2 - 1 ton Units \$ 400.00 June 29, 1956
 # 27322 Fixzit System: 1 lavatory (not to be used for any business) - Oct. 11, 1948
 Plumbing Permits: # 37044 Amber Fuel Oil Company: one oil burner, and one boiler May 4, 1955

Electrical Permits: # 27658 Tropicalites: 2 neon transformers - Nov. 15, 1948
 # 29840 Astor Electric: 2 Light outlets, 2 Fixtures, 10/19/1949 OK Meginniss 10-26-49
 # 35962 Lyon Electric Co.: 48 appliance outlets- Jan. 15, 1952 ok 5-1-52 HOR
 # 39187 Lyon Electric Co.: 2 Switch Outlets, 7 Light Outlets, 7 Fixtures, 1 Center of Distribution: Apr 20, 1953 OK, H. Rosser, 4-23-53
 # 44622 Jefferson Stores: one television antenna May 31, 1955
 46915 B & W Electric: one motor March 6, 1956 OK, Flaag 4/11/1956
 47343 B & W Electric: two motors May 2, 1956 OK Flaag 6/12/56
 47729 B & W Electric: two motors June 14, 1956 OK, Flaag 8/27/1956
 47960 B & W Electric: three motors July 10, 1956 OK, Fidler 7/12/1956
 48117 B & W Electric: four motors July 31, 1956 OK, Fidler 7/30/1956
 48243 B & W Electric: one motor August 15, 1956 OK, Flaag 8/27/1956

[illegible]

LOT 11912 BLOCK 27 SUBDIVISION 5036 (LOST CARD) ADDRESS 238 182nd
INCL. IN BLDG. WITH MAIN ADDRESS
ALTON BEACH
ALTERATIONS & ADDITIONS
1775 JAMES AVE.

Building Permits:

#14079-Se-Go Industries d/b/a Security Windows-Replace old windows with new windows-\$6000-10-27-78

#14114-Acolite Sign-Detached sign on existing pole-\$1000-11-3-78

#56721 - Peoples gas System - 1 meter gas - 12/1/78

#14517-C and S Construction- Concrete driveway-\$1200-1-19-79

*Board of Adjustment File #1252-A - Variance request: Applicant requests increasing the degree of non-conformity by building an accessory apt. office addition to an existing apt. bldg. Said structure constitutes a non-conformity as to the bulk requirement. 6/1/79 Denied As requested.

Plumbing Permits:

#56550-Pitsch Plumbing- hot water piping-10-17-78

#56634-Pitsch Plumbing- 1 gas piping-11-7-78

6/18/80 cap kitchen #58566 S & R Plumbing

Electrical Permits:

#75127-Acolite Sign-4 sign tubes-11-2-78

#5851-County Wide Electric- 1 telephone booth-11-13-79
 2-25-81/#76978/telephone booth/County Wide Electric Inc/\$10

*Board of Adjustment File #1252-A - Variance request: Applicant requests increasing the lot coverage area by 413.65 sq. ft. The existing lot coverage of 53.29 percent to 56.04 percent brings the total lot coverage to 8,408.83 sq. ft. 6/1/79 Denied as requested.

Owner	1800 Collins Ave. Corp.	
Lot-2-3	Block 2	Sub
General Contractor	Flink Cone, Corp.	

Subdivision Fisher's 1st Sub.
of Alton Beach

Permit No. 84285

Address 1800 Collins Avenue

Bond No.

Engineer
Bliss & Nyitray, Inc.

Lot Size 147' x 211'

86 units

19 2 Bed- 2 bath
67 1 Bed- 1½ bath

102 parking spaces

10

1

Subdivision

Block

Lot

ALTERATIONS & ADDITIONS

Building Permits:	#1598 - Amber Fuel Oil - hot water boilers	1	85 gal	5/27/71

#86946 - Youngblood Roof. - roof repair	\$125.00	6/21/71
---	----------	---------

Account Number	Description	Amount	Date
#00180	- Youngblood Co. - reroof built up	\$5,800.00	12/6/77

#08835-Jimmys Painting Co.-Exterior Paint, pressure clean-\$1600-3-30-76

#3861-Amber Boiler- hot water boiler 120.00o BTU-1-26-77

Plumbing Permits:

Amber Boiler-repair piping-x2x 1-27-77

Electrical Permits:

ORLEANS HOTEL 230 18th Street
1775 James Avenue

Subdivision FISHER'S FIRST

Lot 11 & 12 Block 27

ALTERATIONS & ADDITIONS

OK, Plaag 8/27/1956

Building Permits: #50923 Appliance Consumer Service: Install 1 - 1 ton and 1 - 3/4 ton A. C. Units
May 14, 1957 OK 1-6-58 Plaag \$400.00...July 9, 1956

#53273 Appliance Cons. Service Co: 17-3/4 ton, 4-1 ton, 1-2 ton window air conditioners - \$4600.00 -

#57764 Cesar Mori: Exterior painting - \$625.00 - Nov. 3, 1958

#57888 Owner: Erect concrete garbage bin 17'4"x2', install glass & aluminum front door - \$1000 - Nov. 18, 1958

#64916 Ray Boone Air Cond., Inc.: 1 - 1 h.p. window unit air conditioner - \$200. - May 22, 1961

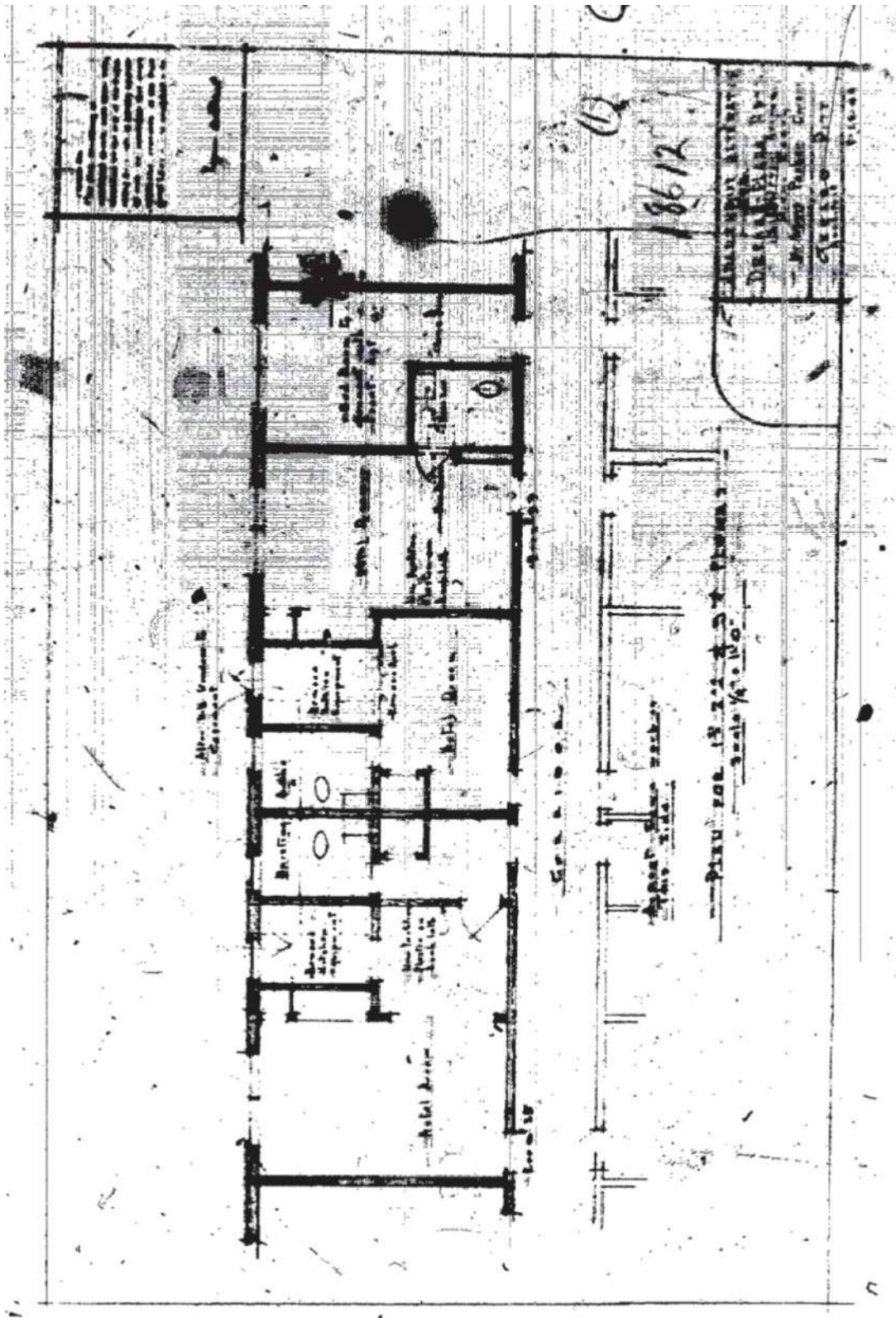
8/4/80--#18612--Owner--Fix brick craik(Plaster) put bars on windows--\$2,000.00

#20072--Owner--Replace existing Don & repair steps, paint lobby--\$500.00--4/13/81

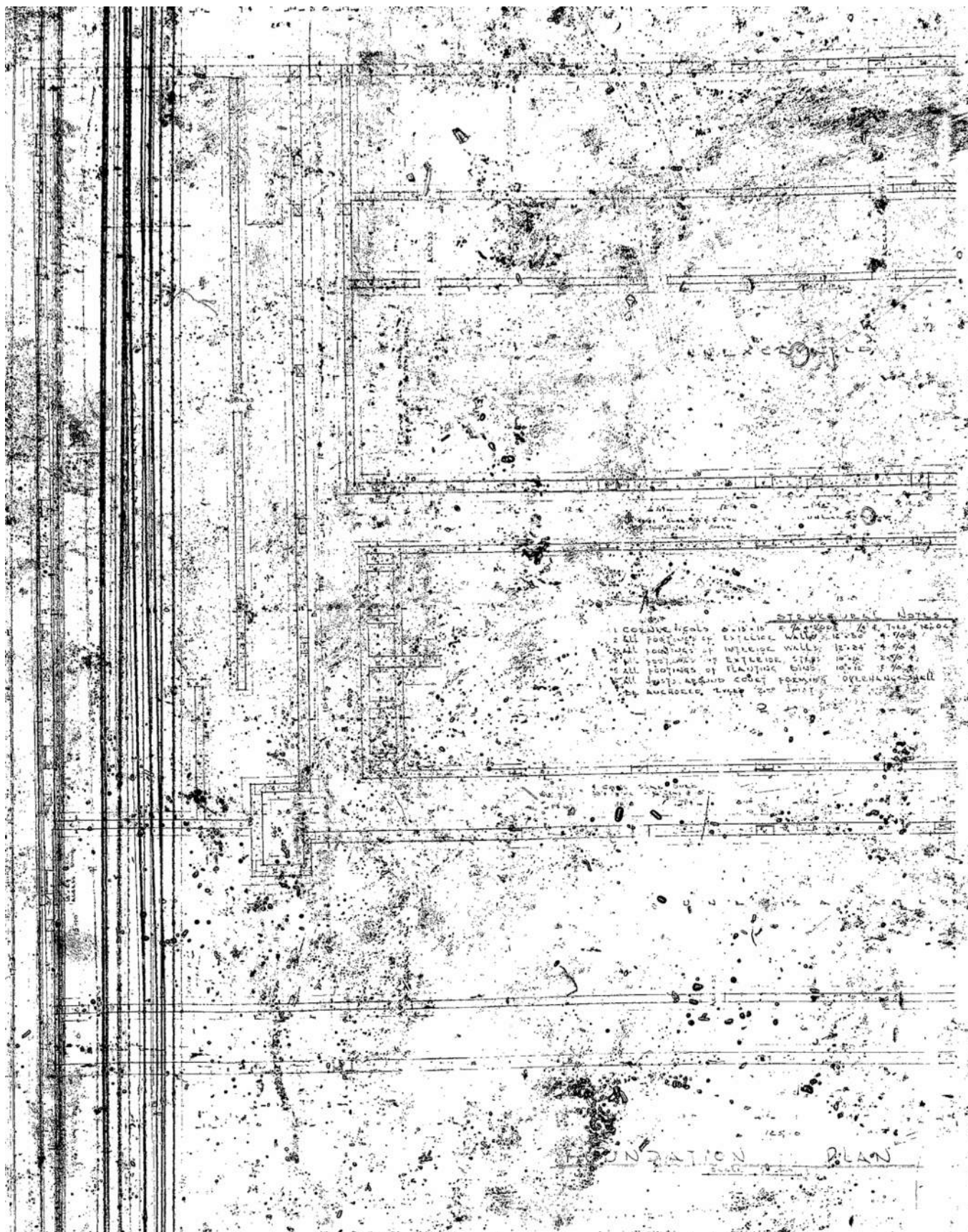
Plumbing Permits:

Electrical Permits:

#49768 B & W Elec: 12 Motors (LHP)- April 26, 1957 OK 4/25/57 Rosser

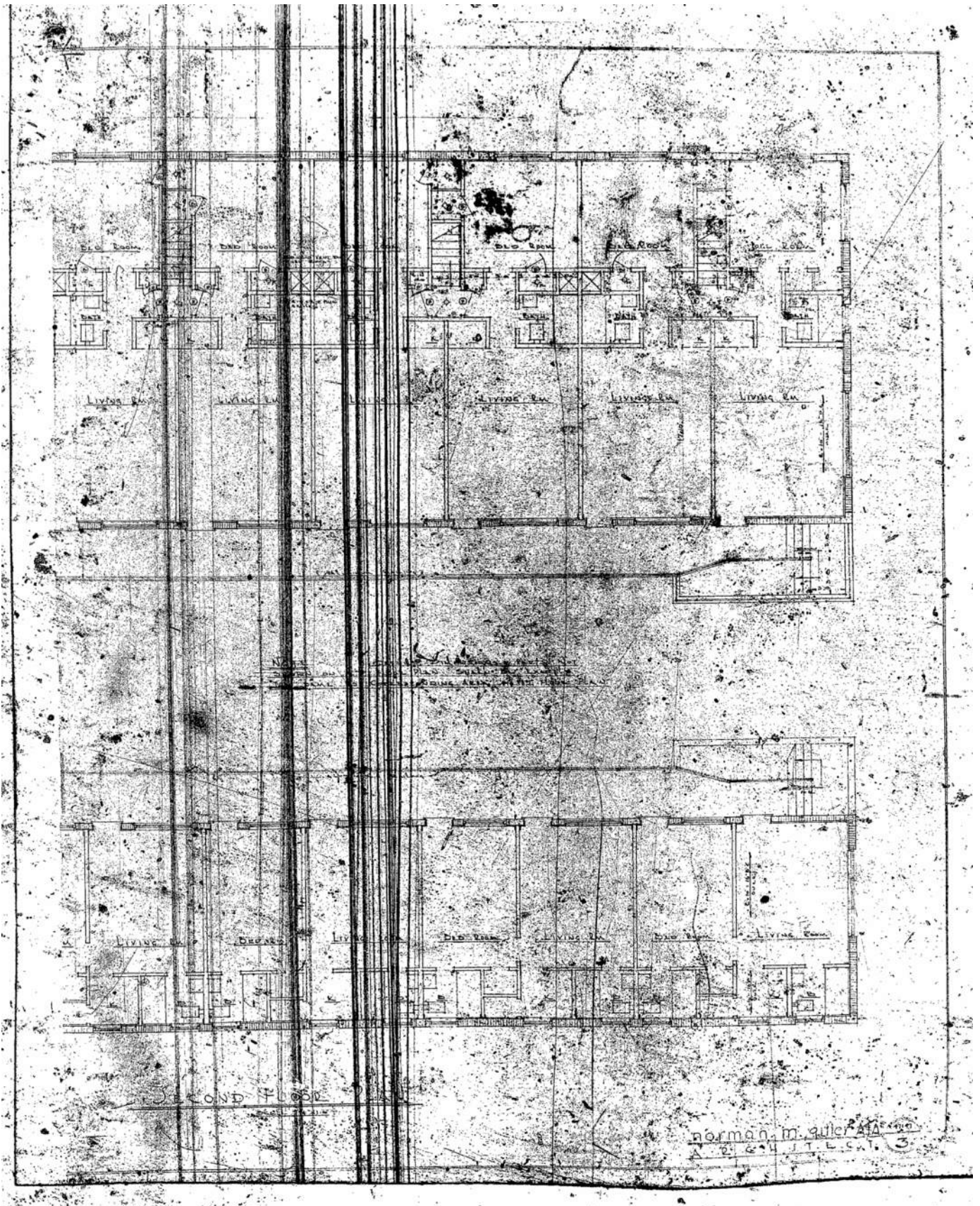


INTERIOR RENOVATIONS by GERARD PITT ARCHITECT

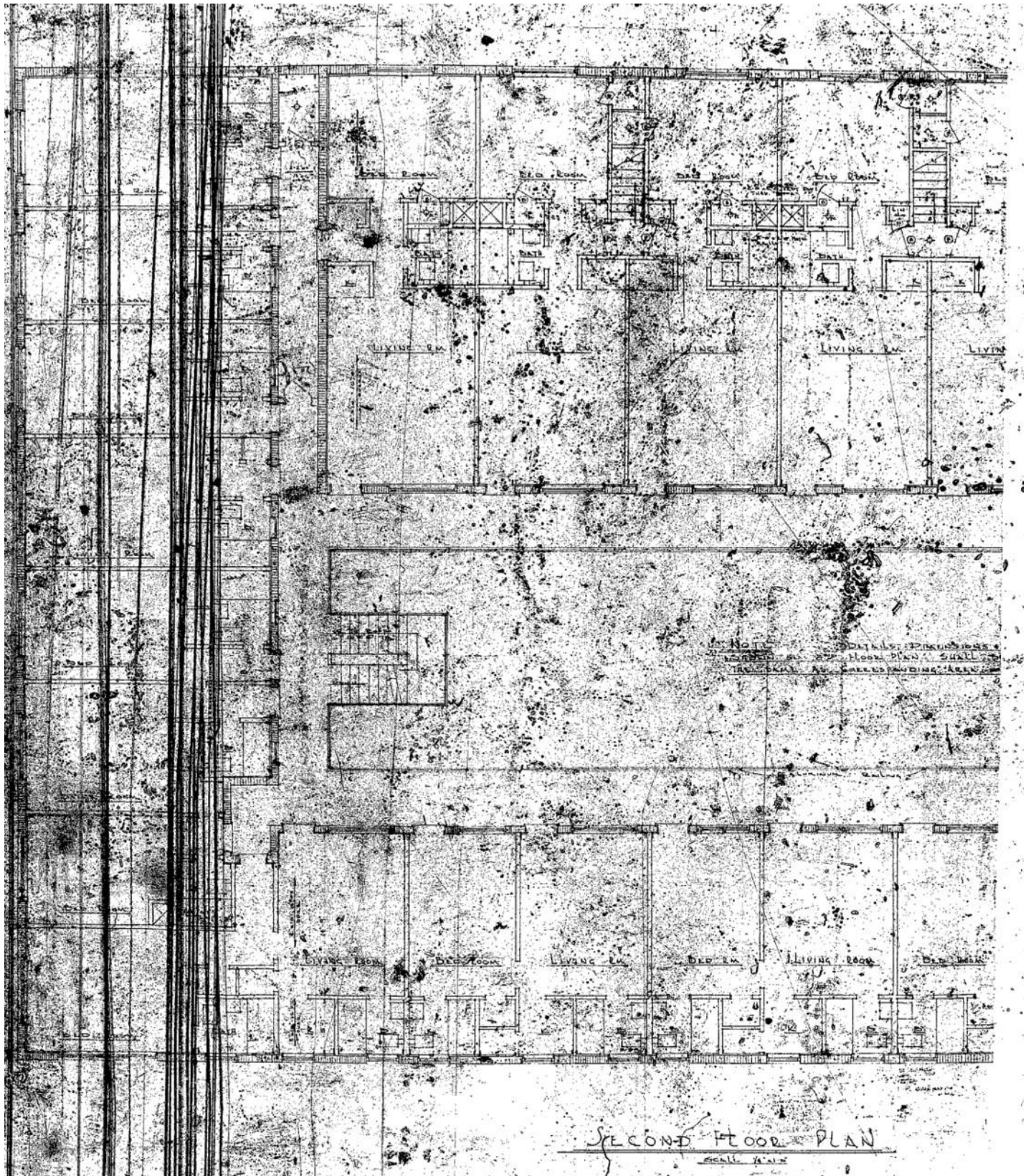


FOUNDATION PLANS by NORMAN GILLER ARCHITECT

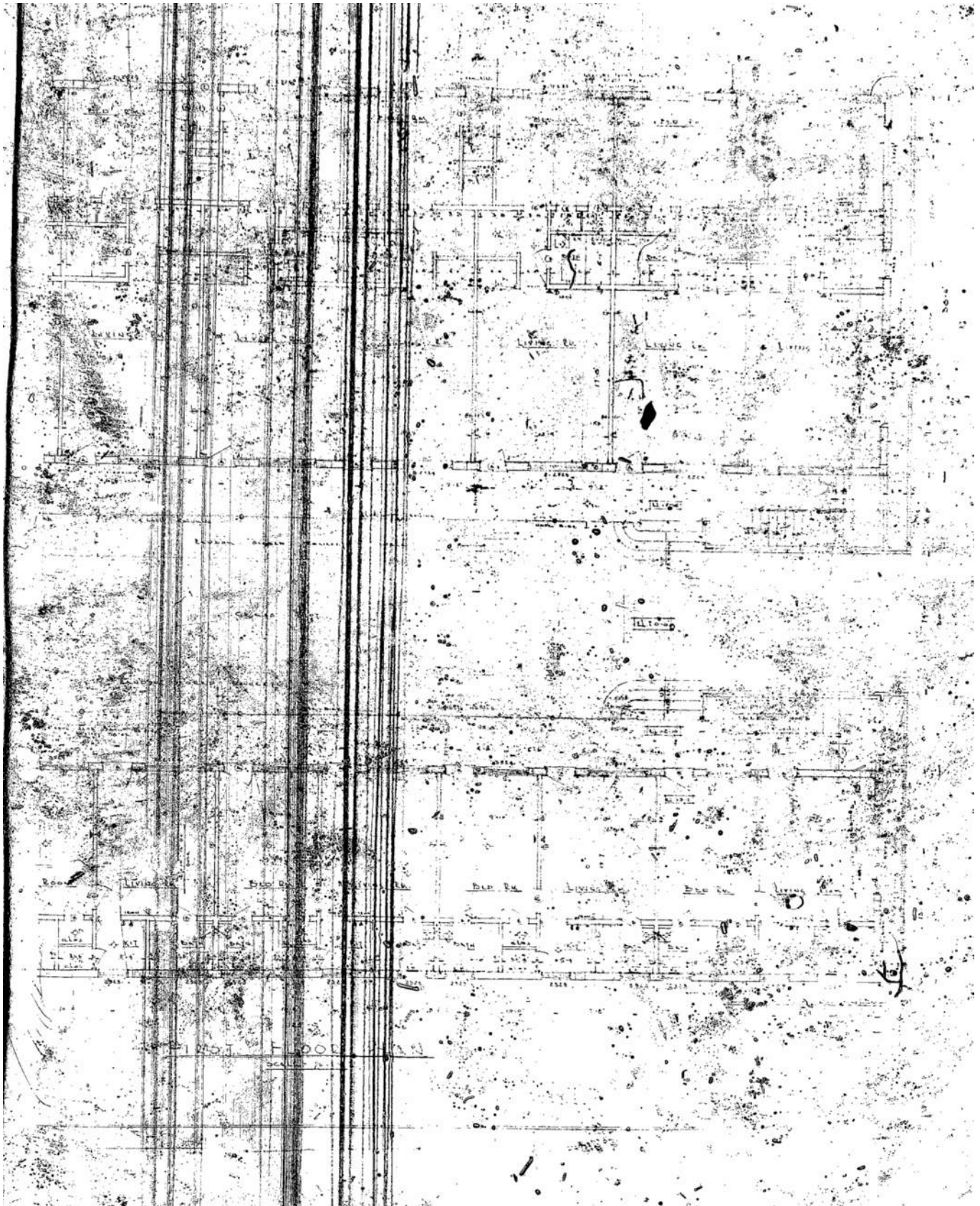
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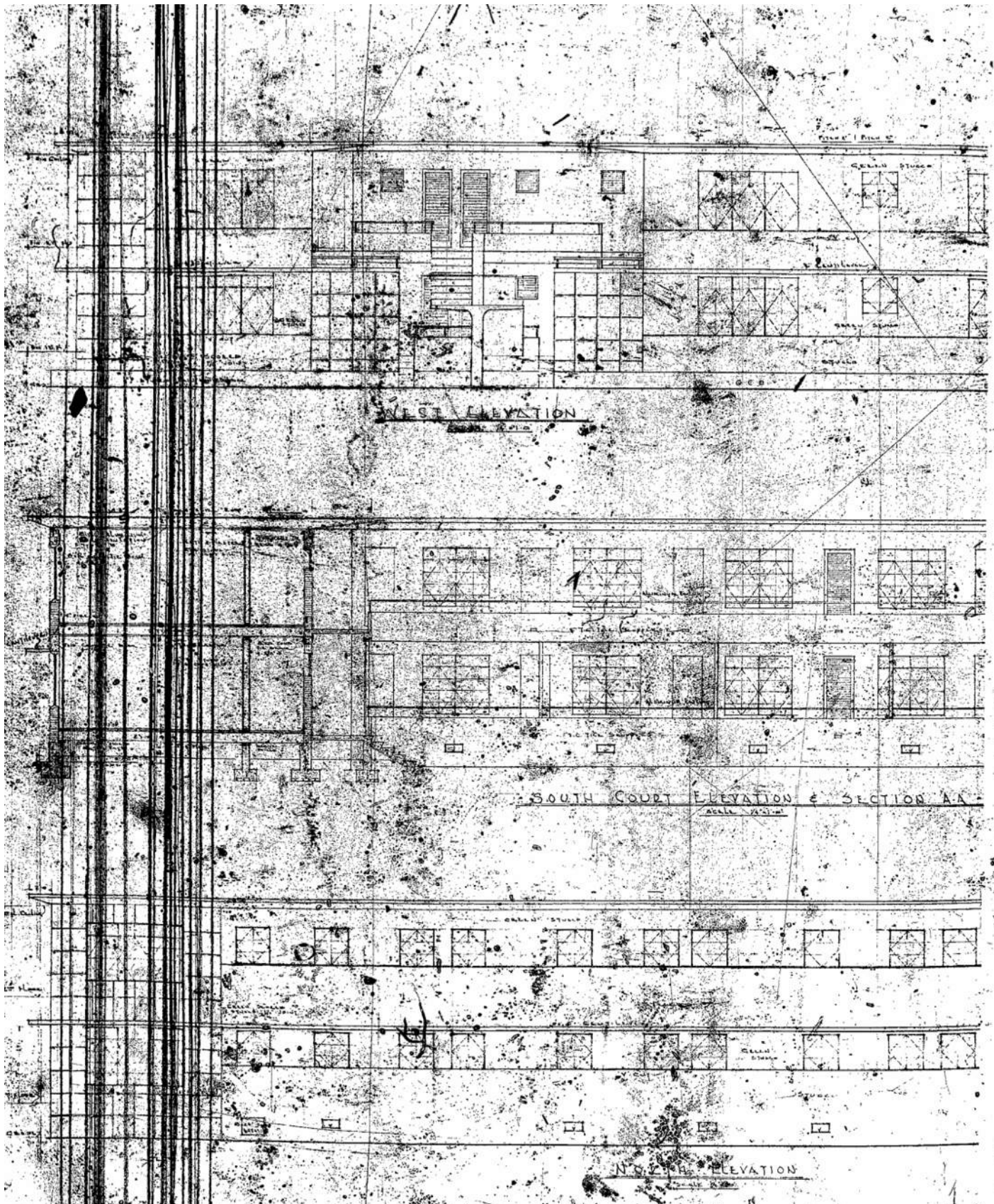
FIRST FLOOR PLANS by NORMAN GILLER ARCHITECT



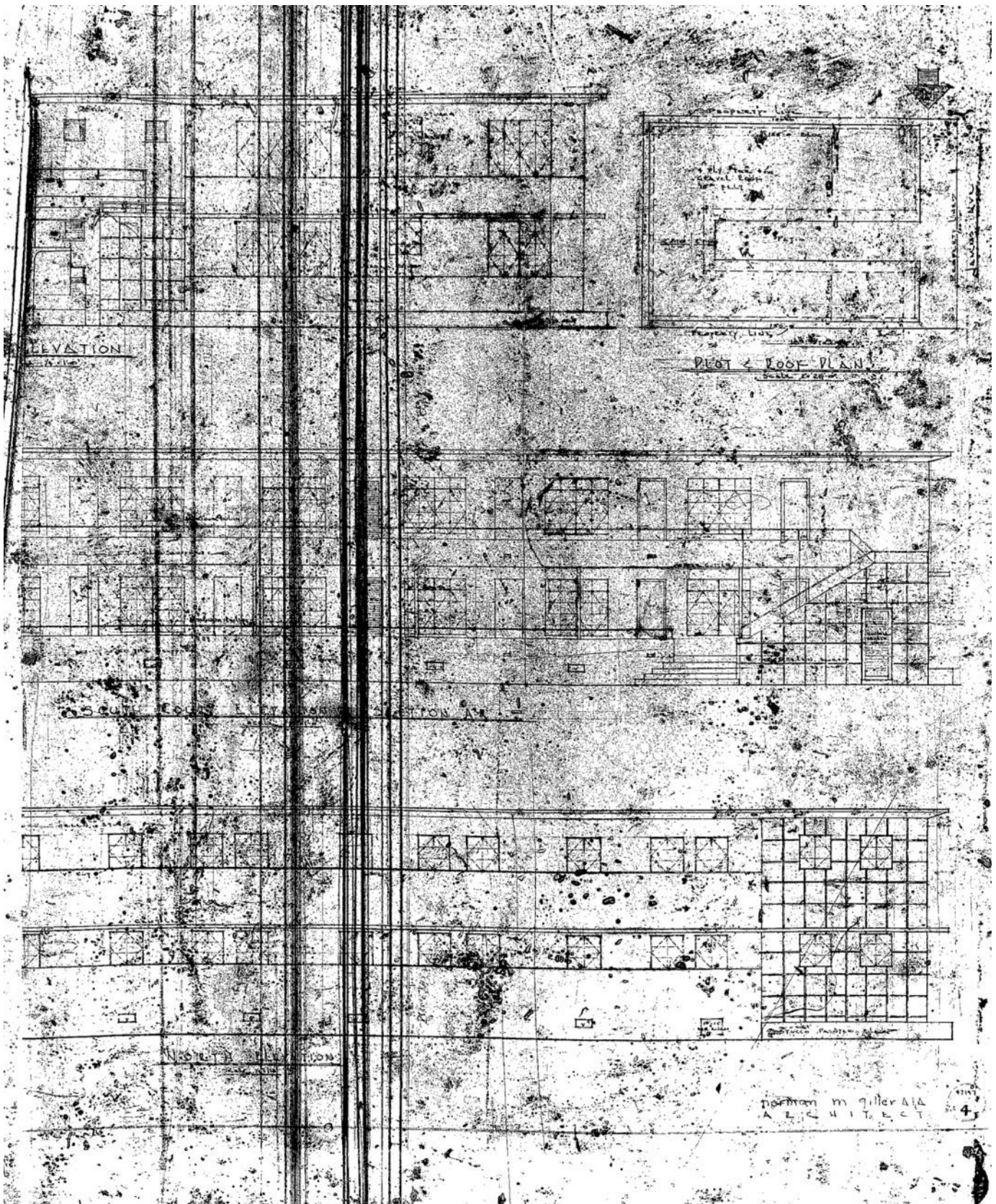
FIRST FLOOR PLANMS II by NORMAN GILLER ARCHITECT



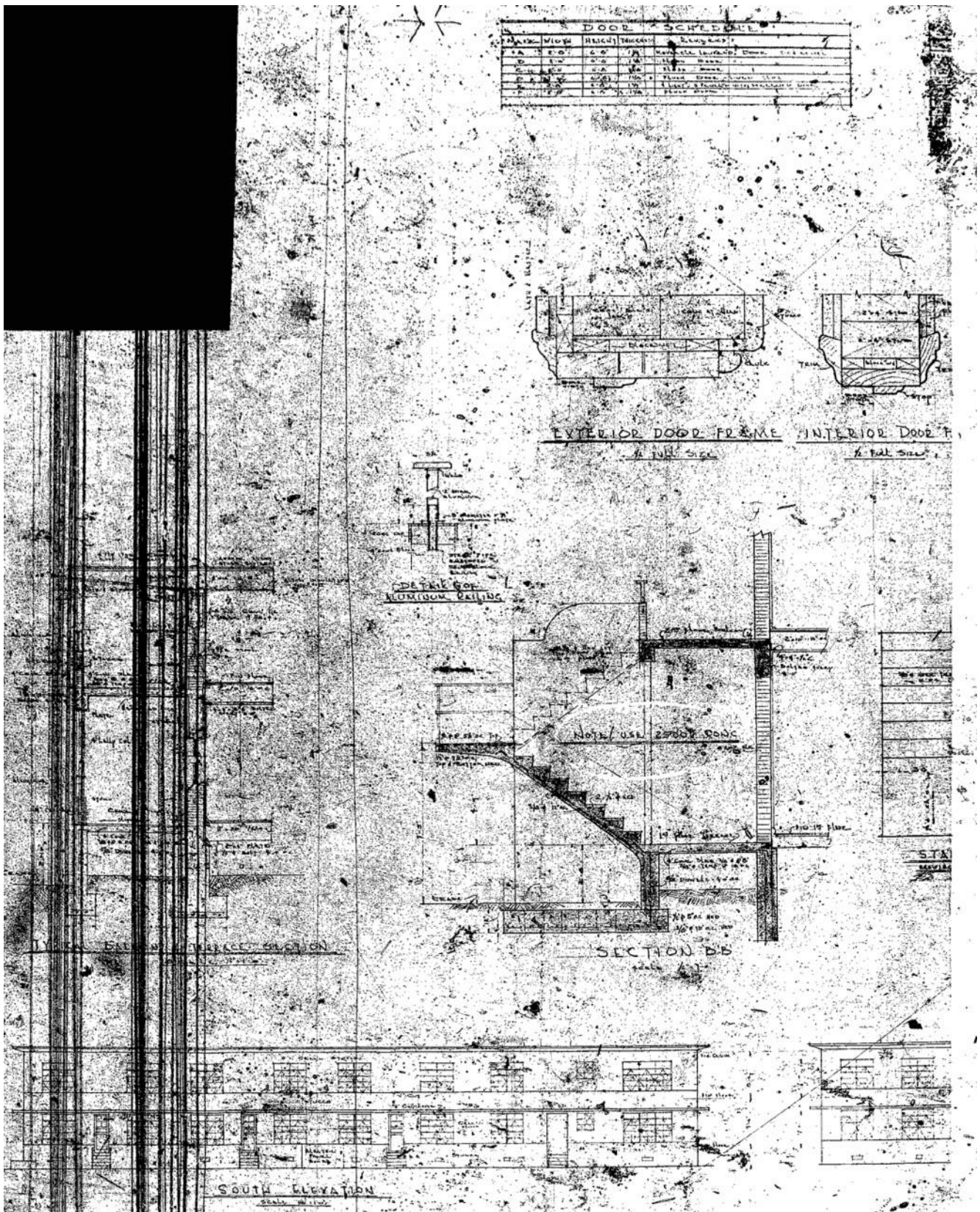
PARTIAL SECOND FLOOR PLANS by NORMAN GILLER ARCHITECT



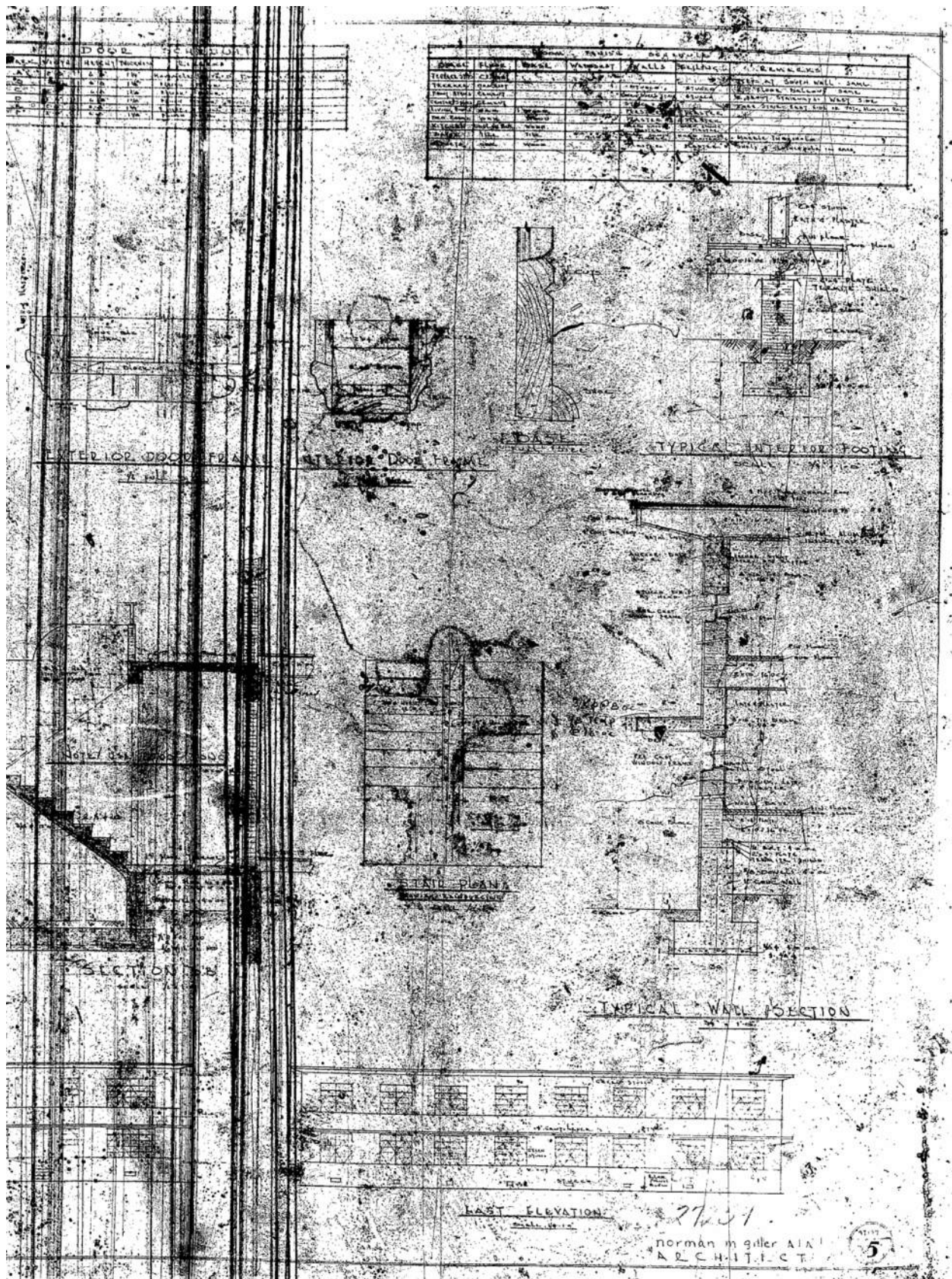
ELEVATIONS by NORMAN GILLER ARCHITECT



ELEVATIONS II by NORMAN GILLER ARCHITECT



ELEVATION + DETAILS by NORMAN GILLER ARCHITECT



ELEVATION + DETAILS II by NORMAN GILLER ARCHITECT