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

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* 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.

1. Name of Property
Historic name: _Frederick Martin Hotel _____
Other names/site number: _____
Name of related multiple property listing**:**
_____N/A_____
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

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2. Location
Street & number: ___403 Center Avenue_____
City or town: _Moorhead_____ State: _MN_____ County: __Clay_____
Not For Publication: ☐   Vicinity: ☐

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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 level(s) of significance:

___**national**   ___**statewide**   ___**local**
Applicable National Register Criteria:
___**A**   ___**B**   ___**C**   ___**D**

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.
Signature of commenting official: **Date**
Title :   **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

__ entered in the National Register

__ determined eligible for the National Register

__ determined not eligible for the National Register

__ removed from the National Register

__ other (explain:) _____

_____

Signature of the Keeper   Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private: [X]

Public – Local   [ ]

Public – State   [ ]

Public – Federal   [ ]

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)   [X]

District   [ ]

Site   [ ]

Structure   [ ]

Object   [ ]

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

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register ____0_____

6. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
  DOMESTIC/hotel__

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
COMMERCE/business

_____
_____
_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
  _MODERN MOVEMENT / International Style___

  _____

  _____

  _____

  _____

  _____

  _____

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: CONCRETE
Walls: BRICK, GLASS
Roof: SYTHETICS

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe
contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that
briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style,
method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has
historic integrity.)

_____

Summary Paragraph

The Frederick Martin Hotel was designed in the International Style, by Minnesota-based
architectural firm Foss & Company (now Foss Architecture and Interiors of Fargo, ND). The
building is seven stories tall, nearly square in plan, has a flat roof, and is clad in red brick. The
property operated as a hotel from its opening in 1950 through 1974-1975, when each floor was
sold as a condo and the entire building was renovated as rental office space. Today, the building
is owned by a single entity and functions as rental office space.

The Frederick Martin Hotel is located at 403 Center Avenue in Moorhead, Clay County,
Minnesota (Figures 1 and 2). Center Avenue is within the historic commercial strip of Moorhead
and is one of the primary street connections between Moorhead and Fargo, ND. The Frederick
Martin Hotel property takes up the northwestern quarter of the city block bounded by Center
Avenue to the north, 5th Street North to the east, Main Avenue (Minnesota State Highway 10) to
the south, and 4th Street South to the east. The northern and southern halves of the block are
bisected by an active rail line.

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The Frederick Martin Hotel retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture for its representation of the International Style in Moorhead. The property's level of significance is local, and its period of significance is 1950.

Narrative Description

Setting

The Frederick Martin Hotel is built to the public right-of-way at the north and west and fronts a surface parking lot to the east and south. During the period of significance for the property, what is now the surface parking lot held Moorhead's old City Hall and Fire Station, a warehouse for the Frank McKone Beverage Company, and a portion of the Moorhead Segment of the Main Line of the Northern Pacific Railway Corridor (see Figure 3). Only the rail corridor is extant.

When the Frederick Martin Hotel was constructed, this area of Center Avenue was Moorhead's primary commercial district (Figure 6). The area has since been redeveloped, with the Moorhead Center Mall on the northern side of Center Avenue and a significant amount of recent, low-rise commercial development to the south and east of the hotel. To the west of the building is the Red River and the higher density development of downtown Fargo.

Exterior

The seven-story Frederick Martin Hotel is nearly square in plan, has a flat roof, and is clad in red brick (photos 1-5). During the building's period of significance, the first and second levels included the hotel's lobby and amenity spaces, levels three through six were guest rooms, and level seven was a restaurant and additional amenity spaces including a ballroom. Changes in the brick bonding pattern and variations in the building's fenestration from level to level allow these interior functions of the building to be read at the exterior. The building originally had U-shaped massing at levels three through seven. The interior of the U was centered on the rear (south) elevation and functioned as a light source for guest rooms (Figure 7). This space was infilled in 1974-1975 to provide an additional, code compliant egress stair for the new office use.

The primary elevation faces north toward Center Avenue; the architectural language of the primary elevation continues to the secondary (east and west) elevations (photos 1-3). At the primary elevation, the first and second levels of the building are expressed as a single block and anchored by the centrally located primary entrance (photo 5). The entrance has a two-story marble surround outlined in cast stone. Within the surround is a large, original, fixed three-lite window at the second level and a replacement storefront style entrance that includes double doors with sidelights and a transom at the ground level. A non-historic flat metal canopy is located above the doors. To either side of the entrance, the ground level has large banks of storefront style windows that are outlined in cast stone and stacked bond brick detailing. The storefront treatment wraps the full length of the west elevation, and the first two bays of the east

elevation. Historic images of the building (Figures 4 and 5) indicate that the storefront system has been altered over time, however it retains its location as defined by the cast stone surround. At the primary elevation, the second level includes two- and three-light punched window openings framed in cast stone. Three-light punched openings continue the length of both the west and east elevations.

Levels three through six have a banded appearance, with bands of cast stone creating continuous lintels and headers at each level's windows. Within each horizontal band of windows, brick is laid in stacked bond. Windows at the third through sixth levels include a combination of original, three-lite aluminum sash and replacement two-lite sash. Brick in the bands above and below window level is laid in running bond.

The seventh level includes a continuous band of ribbon windows, with a band of brick laid in running bond below and original corrugated metal paneling above (photo 17). Ribbon windows at the seventh level are original aluminum sash. Directly above the band of windows is an original aluminum track that originally held adjustable sunshades.

The architectural language of the primary elevation generally continues to the secondary (east and west) elevations; at levels three through six, the continuous cast stone lintels and headers stop after the first column of windows (photos 2-4). At the west elevation, the first level storefront system extends the entire length of the elevation. At the east elevation, the ground level the storefront system extends for two columns of windows. A non-historic secondary entrance (constructed c. 1975) is located below the third column of windows south of the north elevation.[1] The entrance is comprised of a pair of storefront style metal and glass doors protected by projecting brick side walls and a flat roof (photo 6).

The rear (south) elevation includes mechanical penetrations, and two banks of concrete and corrugated metal balconies (photos 3-4). The eastern bank of balconies includes a metal fire stair; holes in the floors of the western bank of balconies indicate that a fire stair has been removed. Many of the former openings to the balconies have been infilled with brick. At the ground level, a non-historic bank drive through lane (constructed c.1975) with a flat roof and brick supporting wall is located at the eastern end of the elevation.[2] At the east and west ends of the seventh level, the ribbon windows wrap onto this elevation for one structural bay.

The installation date of the rear elevation balconies is unknown. Hotel room layout drawings from c. 1950 and 1960 (Figures 7 and 8) indicate that at those dates recessed doors accessing fire escapes existed in the current balcony locations. The footprint of the fire escapes is not shown on the drawings – however, it is possible that balconies were present. It is assumed that the formerly recessed fire escape access doors were altered to be flush with the rest of the elevation in 1974, when other alterations were made to this elevation.

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[1] Foss Engelstad Foss, "F.M. Hotel – Moorhead Federal Parking Lot," Architectural Drawing, June 1975. Meeting Minutes, Moorhead Board of Adjustment, July 30, 1975.
[2] Ibid.

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Interior

During the building's period of significance, the lower level provided service spaces and housed a local radio station, the first level included the public lobby, two restaurant spaces, and back of house office and storage, the second level included guest rooms and a group dining room, levels three through six contained guest rooms arranged around a U-shaped double-loaded corridor, and the seventh level included a restaurant and ballroom.

Photographs of the interior that accompanied newspaper coverage of the hotel's grand opening indicate that finish materials were typical of the 1950s, including plaster walls and ceilings, wood paneling, linoleum floor tiles, parquet, terrazzo, and carpet (Figures 9-13). The building has been utilized as rental office space since 1975 and the interior has been altered over time. The building retains its vertical circulation and a limited amount of historic finish materials.

Today, the lower level remains utilitarian service space, with exposed concrete floors, concrete block walls, and exposed systems at the ceiling. Some areas of historic flooring - including parquet and linoleum tiles -are extant (photos 21 and 22).

The first level is organized with the public lobby just inside the main entrance, office space to the east and west of the lobby, and service space to the south of the lobby. This organization generally reflects the spatial organization during the period of significance, though demising walls have been added and the eastern wall of the lobby has been moved one structural bay to the west. The lobby has received modern finish materials including a dropped geometric ceiling detail, carpet, and an exposed column has been furred out to have a round profile (photo 7). A pair of elevators exist in the historic elevator location at the southern end of the lobby, and the original staircase is also extant at the southwest corner of the lobby. The staircase retains its original terrazzo at the lower and first levels (photo 19). The space to the east of the lobby was most recently occupied by a branch of U.S. Bank. The former bank lobby, bank offices, and back of house spaces are finished with carpeted floor, painted gypsum board walls, and a dropped acoustical tile ceiling (photo 8). Free standing columns in the bank lobby are square and finished with gypsum board.

Levels two through seven have been converted to rental office space (photos 9-16). They are generally finished with modern replacement materials including carpeting, paint, wallpaper, and dropped acoustical tile ceilings of various sizes. Demising walls have been relocated to serve tenant spatial needs and do not reflect the layout during the period of significance. Extant historic materials include the dumb waiters at the former second level dining room, tall, solid wood doors at the second level, a section of parquet flooring at the northeast end of the second level, and terrazzo in some parts of the stair (photos 9, 13, and 20). At levels three through six, exploratory removal of dropped ACT panels has revealed that historic plaster remains in some areas of the ceiling (photo 23).

Integrity

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The Frederick Martin Hotel is an International Style building constructed to house a hotel in Moorhead, Minnesota. The Frederick Martin Hotel has not been moved and retains integrity of location. The Frederick Martin Hotel was designed in 1948 and constructed in 1950; it was the first tall International Style building to be constructed in Moorhead, Minnesota, and an early example of an International Style hotel in the state. The Frederick Martin Hotel is located on Center Avenue, which was the main commercial district of Moorhead at the time the building opened. Center Avenue has since been significantly redeveloped with the introduction of the Moorhead Center Mall across the street from the hotel and other new commercial construction replacing older buildings along the strip, however the street retains its commercial function and its status as a major thoroughfare connecting Moorhead with Fargo, North Dakota. The Frederick Martin Hotel was designed in the International Style, with the articulation of the building's façade exemplifying the popular International Style design adage "form follows function." While the rear elevation was altered in 1974-1975, overall, the building's exterior has changed very little, retaining its masonry and fenestration patterns, primary entrance location, and the clear articulation of interior function through exterior expression. The building also retains its original seventh level ribbon windows, corrugated metal cap, and some original lower-level windows. With its exterior design intact, the Frederick Martin Hotel retains integrity of its most important design statement and materials. At the interior, the building has been converted to office space. Selective demolition has revealed intact historic materials including terrazzo, linoleum, parquet flooring and areas of plaster ceilings above the dropped acoustical tile ceilings. The Frederick Martin Hotel retains the feeling and association as an early International Style building in Moorhead, Minnesota. The Frederick Martin Hotel retains sufficient integrity to convey its history from its period of significance, 1950.

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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.)

☐   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

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Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
____Architecture_____

_____

Period of Significance
___1950_____

_____

Significant Dates
___1950_____

_____

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

_____

_____

Cultural Affiliation

_____

_____

Architect/Builder
___Foss and Company (Architect)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Frederick Martin Hotel, located at 403 Center Avenue in Moorhead, Minnesota is locally significant under National Register of Historic Places Criterion C in the area of Architecture, for its representation of the International Style as applied to a tall building in Moorhead, Minnesota. There are no relevant local contexts. The property's level of significance is local, and its period of significance aligns with the year it was constructed, 1950.

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Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

"A Second-Rate Hotel Town"

Local real estate developer Martin Johnson "began thinking about a hotel for Moorhead in the fall of 1946."[3] He said that the idea for a hotel came from the late R.B. Bergland, Moorhead's former mayor, who had been "trying to organize a development corporation, saying Moorhead needed a hotel because there was no place for a gathering of any size."[4] Johnson described Moorhead as "strictly a second rate hotel town…so we thought we could get five or ten fellows as the nucleus of a firm to build a hotel."[5]

One of those "fellows" was local architect M.O. Foss, who had "already approached the Chamber of Commerce about the same goal."[6] Before World War II, Foss had designed a hotel for Al Breitbach that was going to be constructed in Fargo. When the war put all construction on hold, the Fargo hotel did not materialize. After the war, "Breitbach, still was thinking of the hotel, but [Foss] suggested that he put it in Moorhead which did not have a first-class hotel."[7] Fargo and Moorhead are less than two miles apart; separated by the Red River and the geopolitical border of North Dakota and Minnesota, the two cities are often understood as a single metropolitan area. Following World War II, Moorhead had the Comstock Hotel, which had not been updated in years, and neighboring Fargo had "two quite spacious and four smaller hotels," but neither city had a modern "first class" hotel that could accommodate conventions.[8]

Arthur P. Diercks, Secretary-Manager of the Moorhead Chamber of Commerce, introduced the parties and a "corporation was formed with Johnson the president, Breitbach vice president, Diercks secretary and A.E. Bergland treasurer. Johnson and Breitbach subscribed $50,000 each of the total $147,000 subscribed at the first meeting."[9] It was during the first meeting that the members of the corporation chose the name "Frederick Martin Hotel," which was the name of "Johnson's seven-months-old son."[10]

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[3] Lloyd W. Sveen," FM Hotel Was Catalyst for Moorhead Improvements," *The Sunday Fargo Forum*, September 3, 1961, C-8.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid, C-7.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Moorhead Area Chamber of Commerce, *Climate Architects: The Story of Moorhead and its Chamber of Commerce, 1927-1977* (Moorhead: Chamber of Commerce, 1977).
[9] Moorhead Area Chamber of Commerce, *Climate Architects: The Story of Moorhead and its Chamber of Commerce, 1927-1977* (Moorhead: Chamber of Commerce, 1977).
[10] Ibid.

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Plans for the building were publicly announced in April of 1947. M.O Foss was the architect, and, in December of 1947, Minneapolis-based Standard Construction was chosen as the contractor.[11]

The hotel was designed in the International Style and was to have six floors. "Foss had designed a seventh floor with glass walls, which the corporation had hoped to be able to finance after construction was started."[12]

Construction began in the spring of 1948, with Standard Construction under contract to construct "a six floor hotel for $340,000."[13] However "the corporation quickly ran into financial difficulties" when the insurance company that had given them "a verbal commitment" to finance the project pulled out. Additionally, "some of those who had pledged the original $147,000 did not pay."[14] The project had cash assets totaling $187,000.[15]

The hotel project was a significant one for Moorhead and, given that construction had started, community leaders came together to try to find a way to see it completed. As Thor Waldon, President of the Moorhead Chamber of Commerce, wrote "…this hotel is a much-needed community project and will contribute tremendously to the growth and economic welfare of Moorhead."[16] The Chamber of Commerce was so invested in seeing the hotel project come to fruition that in early 1949, "by unanimous vote of the membership," it committed to raising "a fund of $100,000 to ensure the completion of the Frederick-Martin Hotel."[17]

Construction continued, but contractors and suppliers were not being paid. The project reached a crisis point in April of 1949 when

> A brick and tile supplier filed a lien action in district court, asking a foreclosure sale. Standard Construction followed with another lien action five days later, asking for a judgment of $166,422, and other contractors followed suit.[18]

Rather than force foreclosure, the Standard Construction Company stepped in and entered the hotel business.

According to a profile of Donald T. Knutson, president of Minneapolis- based Standard Construction Company (later Knutson Construction), when the project "ran out of money" his

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[11] Sveen," FM Hotel Was Catalyst for Moorhead Improvements," *The Sunday Fargo Forum*, September 3, 1961, C-7.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Sveen," FM Hotel Was Catalyst for Moorhead Improvements," *The Sunday Fargo Forum*, September 3, 1961, C-7.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Solicitation letter from Thor Waldon, President of the Moorhead Chamber of Commerce, March 5, 1949, collections of Minnesota State University Moorhead Libraries.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Sveen, "FM Hotel Was Catalyst for Moorhead Improvements," *The Sunday Fargo Forum*, September 3, 1961, C-8.

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company "had a choice…of losing the $550,000 we had in the building or spending another $500,000 and betting that we knew how to run a hotel."[19] They took the bet.

The Frederick Martin Hotel

With the newly formed Knutson Hotel Corporation at the helm, lien holders were paid, and construction was back on track. According to Donald Knutson, "one of the first decisions we had to make after Dad decided to finish the hotel was if we wanted a rooming house or the best hotel in the state."[20] They chose the latter and decided to build the seventh floor.

Construction on the hotel rooms was completed for guests to arrive in May of 1950, with the seventh-floor restaurant, the Tree Top Room, completed in July of that year.[21] The manager was Ethan S. Brown, who was hired from the Minneapolis Radisson.[22] The formal grand opening was held in September of 1950 and the hotel opening was greeted with a great deal of fanfare at the local, state, and national level.

The hotel was featured in the "Art" section of the December 25, 1950, issue of *Newsweek*. According to the article, "There's a Small Hotel" - the title taken from a 1936 song by the famed Broadway duo Rodgers and Hart - the hotel was "Moorhead's tallest building" and

> One of the finest small-town commercial hotels in the United States, the 115-room F-M opened last May. Moorhead (population, 15,000) and Fargo, more than twice as big, had seen nothing quite like it.[23]

The article noted that "the F-M is very popular locally and also attracts many vacationers from out of town. Several dozen New Year's reservations are already being held for people from such big cities as Minneapolis and St. Paul, some 250 miles away."[24]

The hotel was very popular with Fargo-Moorhead area residents and convention visitors alike. In a 1951 article in *The Minneapolis Star*, columnist Virginia Safford wrote

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[19] David Lee, "Stringing Motels Seems a Game to this Three-Company President," *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 8, 1958, 55; after completing the Frederick Martin Hotel, which opened in 1950, Knutson would go on to organize the Knutson Hotel Corporation, which in addition to owning the Frederick Martin Hotel, expanded its "budding [hotel] chain" in 1954 when Knutson acquired control of "two major hotels in Minot, N.D." The "two major hotels" were the Clarence Parker and the Leland Parker, which Knutson planned to "remodel somewhat along the lines of the Frederick Martin." By 1958, when "hotel association figured show[ed] food and beverage sales at the Frederick Martin Hotel [were] seven times the national average for a hotel its size," the Knutson Hotel Corporation had set its sights beyond the American Midwest and was "playing a 10-million-dollar game with a possible string of hotels [that would] be built along a leg of the Pan American highway from Mexico to the Panama canal, after it is completed." While those hotels did not come to fruition, Knutson did operate "three hotels and four motor inns" in Glacier National Park (in both the United States and Canada) and one motor inn in Austin, Minnesota.
[20] Sveen, "FM Hotel Was Catalyst for Moorhead Improvements," *The Sunday Fargo Forum*, September 3, 1961, C-8.
[21] "Frederick Martin Hotel is opened on Partial Basis," *Moorhead Daily News* May 8 ,1950.
[22] "Manager Resigns from F-M Hotel," *The Bismarck Tribune*, November 14, 1952, 9.
[23] "There's a Small Hotel," *Newsweek*, December 25, 1950, 63.
[24] "There's a Small Hotel," *Newsweek*, December 25, 1950, 63.

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> [The] most talked about thing in Moorhead today is the new Frederick Martin hotel [sic].
> People will tell you, 'It's the best thing that has happened to Moorhead.' The hotel
> opened with great fanfare last December, deserving the national publicity it got. In my
> travels I've found nothing to beat it, except possibly in size. It's not just a hotel… but a
> personality as distinct as my old dog Fritz.[25]

Safford was particularly impressed with the hotel's restaurants. The Barn was a coffee shop
staffed by "girls from the town's college campuses" "dressed in dark blue denim jumpers with
white blouses."[26] Across the lobby from The Barn was The Skol Room, "gay and informal, with
organ music and the biggest glass popcorn bowl in existence."[27] And on the top floor, the elegant
Tree Top Room, the hotel's main restaurant, and the Top O' the Mart "a ballroom that can be
divided into two sections for joint meetings or meal functions."[28]

Within two years the Frederick Martin had been touted in "national magazine[s] as 'America's
finest small town hotel.'"[29] In 1957 it "was hailed…as one of the nation's 10 best small hotels by
the American Hotel Association."[30]

By 1961, the Knutson Hotel Corporation was experiencing financial difficulties and elected to
sell the Frederick Martin. In an article announcing the sale, the hotel was described as "a catalyst
for Moorhead improvements." Specifically,

> The hotel has been so important to Moorhead…the FM Hotel has been the catalyst for
> far-reaching changes to the community. 'I have always said that next to the railroads the
> hotel is the biggest thing that has happened to Moorhead business,' said Arthur P.
> Diercks, who was secretary-manager of the Chamber of Commerce in the post-war years
> when the idea of a hotel was formulated…People saw what could be done to make
> Moorhead a modern city.'[31]

The article goes on to say:

> …the hotel did more than give Moorhead a skyline…it accelerated modernization of
> existing buildings. Today there are few if any buildings on Center Avenue which have
> not been renovated at least to the extent of a new front, and the hotel's success has helped
> attract many new businesses to Moorhead.[32]

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[25] Virginia Safford, Column, *The Minneapolis Star*, May 14 ,1951, 23.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Virginia Safford, Column, *The Minneapolis Star*, May 14 ,1951, 23.
[29] "Manager Resigns from F-M Hotel," *The Bismarck Tribune*, November 14, 1952, 9.
[30] "Bittinger to Manage Park Hotels," *Hungry Horse News* (Columbia Falls, MT), February 12, 1960, 9.
[31] Lloyd W. Sveen," FM Hotel Was Catalyst for Moorhead Improvements," *The Sunday Fargo Forum*, September 3,
1961, C-7.
[32] Lloyd W. Sveen," FM Hotel Was Catalyst for Moorhead Improvements," *The Sunday Fargo Forum*, September 3,
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In 1962 the hotel was sold to Rochester Minnesota's Kahler Corp., which was "Minnesota's largest hotel company" with hotels in Rochester, Owatonna, Mankato, and Moorhead.[33]

Kahler operated the hotel until 1971, when it was sold again to a local consortium organized as the F-M Hotel of Moorhead, Inc., which planned to "restore the hotel to its former lustre [sic]" by undertaking a "refurbishing campaign" and "refinements in all departments – food and beverage service and rooms."[34] The endeavor was short lived; in May 1973 the hotel closed with ownership noting that they "were unable to devote any more time or money to the hotel, which [had] been in financial difficulties."[35] The property "was taken over by Moorhead Federal [Bank]" and in 1975 the building re-opened as an office building, "FM Center," with the bank at the ground floor tenant.[36]

International Style and the Frederick Martin Hotel

The architectural language that would eventually be called the "International Style" emerged in Europe in the 1920s as architects sought to develop a system of rational design as a response to the chaos and destruction of World War I. While the style would not gain traction in the United States until after World War II, it was introduced to American audiences by Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock's 1932 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art – "Modern Architecture: International Exhibition" – and the accompanying book, *The International Style: Architecture in 1922*. The International Style is characterized by horizontal lines, rectangular volumes, flat roofs, strip or ribbon windows, regularity of openings, and a lack of applied ornament.

The first International Style tall building in the United States was the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society (PSFS) building in Philadelphia, which opened in 1932. Construction across the country then slowed during the Great Depression and World War II, with an influx of new International Style buildings cropping up post-war. The International Style was highly adaptable, with architects employing it for everything from office buildings and hotels to government buildings and housing. The first International Style hotel in the country, the Terrace Plaza Hotel, was designed by Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill (SOM) and opened in Cincinnati in 1948.[37]

The Frederick Martin Hotel was designed by the local architectural firm Foss & Company (now Foss Architecture and Interiors of Fargo, ND). During the mid-century period, Foss became a regional leader in modern architectural designs. [38]

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[33] "Kahler Motel in City Called 'Imminent,'" *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, January 23, 1962, 6.

[34] "Bittinger Plans to Restore F-M's Image to 'Nations Finest Small Town Hotel', *Howard Binford's Guide* 3, No. 12 (June 1971), 10.

[35] "F-M Hotel May Close Saturday at Midnight,," *The Forum (Fargo)*, Friday May 4, 1973, 1.

[36] Transcript of Oral History Interview with Dewey Bergquist by Agnes Hornbacher for the Heritage Education Commission, May 15, 1985.

[37] Shawn Patrick Tubb and Beth Sullebarger, Terrace Plaza Hotel, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2017.

[38] Norwegian immigrant A.H. Foss first opened his architectural and construction firm in Minneapolis in 1898, designing revival style buildings across southern Minnesota. In 1919, Foss moved his practice to St. Cloud, Minnesota and "renamed the firm Foss & Foss because his son Magnus O. Foss joined the firm as principal

Foss's exterior design for the Frederick Martin featured all the hallmarks of the International Style – simple rectangular massing, ribbon windows and regular fenestration patterns, clear expression of internal program, and a complete lack of applied ornament. At the same time, the design was rendered in red brick, a common material in local construction, allowing the building to maintain a dialog with its neighbors. At the time of its construction, the Frederick Martin Hotel was the only tall International Style building in Moorhead.

Use of the style was typically associated with innovation and modernity. Architectural historian Leland Roth notes that "the years immediately after the war, which Americans had decisively won, were characterized by a buoyant confidence and a desire to get on with the business of progress," and that "Commercial architecture became an increasingly important form of public relations. International Style Modernism, originally conceived as an efficient design and construction methodology to solve social problems, was now co-opted by corporate America as a form of advertisement and aggrandizement."[39]

While Roth's observations were specifically in regard to corporate headquarters buildings, they are still relevant here, as the Frederick Martin's development consortium certainly sought to improve Moorhead's image by bringing a "first-rate" modern hotel to town and chose an International Style building to do so. Further, the community capitalized on the innovative design language, which garnered national press coverage. The property was profiled in the "Art" section of the December 25, 1950, issue of *Newsweek* which heralded the building's "contemporary design" and noted that

> The Moorhead office of Foss & Co., architects for the building's exterior, produced a structure with straightforward lines typical of such fine contemporary architecture as the spectacular new Terrace Plaza Hotel in Cincinnati.[40]

The article concludes, praising the building as "an encouraging design of what smalltown public-building design can be…"[41]

Twenty years later, when the Moorhead Chamber of Commerce published a book celebrating its fifty-year anniversary, the construction and long-term impact of the Frederick Martin Hotel featured prominently in the book. The Chamber wrote of the Frederick Martin Hotel, "so unusual was the design among hotels, particularly hotels in smaller American cities, that *Time* magazine soon was to carry an illustrated feature story on the hotel and its setting overlooking

---

architect, younger son Alonzo as draftsman, and daughter Eva as the company stenographer."[38] Magnus acquired ownership of the firm in 1922, moving its headquarters back to Minneapolis and in 1928 to Fergus Falls, MN. By the 1930s, Foss was experimenting with modern architectural styles, designing a number of Moderne style private homes and government buildings across northern Minnesota.[38] The firm temporarily closed while Foss served in the military during WWII and reopened in 1946. During the mid-century period, Foss became a regional leader in modern architectural designs, with notable commissions including the Frederick Martin Hotel (1950), the Federal Building and Post Office in Fargo (1969), the Fargo National Bank headquarters (1971), and Moorhead City Hall (1972). "History," Foss Architecture + Interiors, https://fossarch.com/purpose/history/ last accessed April 2024.
[39] Leland Roth, *American Architecture: A History*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001), 412-413.
[40] "There's a Small Hotel," *Newsweek*, December 25, 1950, 63.
[41] "There's a Small Hotel," *Newsweek*, December 25, 1950, 63.

both cities."[42] The Chamber described the modern "swank" of the hotel as "climaxing the other new public construction projects in Moorhead of the past several years, it turned the eyes of Fargo upon its neighbor to the East for almost the first time since the early days."[43]

Conclusion

The Frederick Martin Hotel is a distinctive example of International Style architecture in Moorhead, Minnesota. The building embodies the design principles of the International Style and pioneered its use in the northern Minnesota city. The Frederick Martin Hotel retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance.

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[42] Moorehead Area Chamber of Commerce, *Climate Architects: The Story of Moorhead and its Chamber of Commerce, 1927-1977* (Moorehead: Chamber of Commerce, 1977).
[43] Ibid.

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Frederick Martin Hotel   Clay County, MN
Name of Property   County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

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Roth, Leland, American Architecture: A History, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001).

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"There's a Small Hotel," *Newsweek*, December 25, 1950.

Tubb, Shawn Patrick and Beth Sullebarger, Terrace Plaza Hotel, National Register of Historic
        Places Registration Form, 2017.

Transcript of Oral History Interview with Dewey Bergquist by Agnes Hornbacher for the
        Heritage Education Commission, May 15, 1985.

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 # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

__x_ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government

__X__ Other
        Name of repository: Ramsey County Historical Society; Moorehead State University

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): __CY-MHC-00272_____

<u>Frederick Martin Hotel</u>   <u>Clay County, MN</u>
Name of Property   County and State

10. Geographical Data

 Acreage of Property <u>_0.026_____</u>

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)
1. Latitude: Longitude:

2. Latitude: Longitude:

Or
UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927   or   ☒ NAD 1983

1. Zone: 14T   Easting: 669660   Northing: 5193665

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property boundary includes one tax parcel – PID 585750150. The parcel has the
following legal description:

North 80' of the West 8.03' of Lot 8, North 80' of Lots 9-11 & North 80' of the East ½ of
Lot 12, Block 6, Original Moorhead Townsite.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The legal parcel encompasses the historic footprint of the Frederick Martin Hotel Building.

Frederick Martin Hotel   Clay County, MN
Name of Property   County and State

_____

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: _Laurel Fritz and Tamara Halvorsen, Principals_____
organization: __Pigeon Consulting_____
street & number: _2395 University Avenue West, Suite 206_____
city or town:_Saint Paul_____ state: _MN_____ zip code:_55114_____
e-mail_laurel@pigeonconsulting.com_____
telephone:___651-340-5665_____
date:__2/19/25_____

_____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Frederick Martin Hotel
City or Vicinity: Moorhead
County: Clay   State: Minnesota
Photographer: Laurel Fritz, Tamara Halvorsen, and Chris Van Hal
Date Photographed: January 2024, April 2024, November 2024

Frederick Martin Hotel   Clay County, MN
Name of Property   County and State

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 23. (MN_Clay County_Frederick Martin Hotel_0001)
Exterior, north elevation, camera facing south.

2 of 23. (MN_Clay County_Frederick Martin Hotel_0002)
Exterior, north and west elevations, camera facing southeast.

3 of 23. (MN_Clay County_Frederick Martin Hotel_0003)
Exterior, west and south elevations, camera facing northeast.

4 of 23. (MN_Clay County_Frederick Martin Hotel_0004)
Exterior, south and east elevations, camera facing northwest.

5 of 23. (MN_Clay County_Frederick Martin Hotel_0005)
Exterior, primary entrance at north elevation, camera facing south.

6 of 23. (MN_Clay County_Frederick Martin Hotel_0006)
Exterior, secondary entrance at east elevation, camera facing west.

7 of 23. (MN_Clay County_Frederick Martin Hotel_0007)
Interior, view of public lobby including access to vertical circulation, Level 1, camera facing southeast.

8 of 23. (MN_Clay County_Frederick Martin Hotel_0008)
Interior, view of bank lobby including secondary entrance, Level 1, camera facing northwest.

9 of 23. (MN_Clay County_Frederick Martin Hotel_0009)
Interior, view of office space with parquet flooring, Level 2, camera facing east.

10 of 23. (MN_Clay County_Frederick Martin Hotel_0010)
Interior, view of corridor, Level 3 (Levels 2-6 typical), camera facing north.

11 of 23. (MN_Clay County_Frederick Martin Hotel_0011)
Interior, view of office space, Level 5 (condition typical of office spaces on Levels 2-6), camera facing east.

12 of 23. (MN_Clay County_Frederick Martin Hotel_0012)
Interior, view of office space, Level 4 (condition typical of office spaces on Levels 2-6), camera facing south.

13 of 23. (MN_Clay County_Frederick Martin Hotel_0013)
Interior, view of dumb waiters, Level 2, camera facing north.

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Frederick Martin Hotel   Clay County, MN
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14 of 23. (MN_Clay County_Frederick Martin Hotel_0014)
Interior, view of ribbon windows, Level 7, camera facing northeast.

15 of 23. (MN_Clay County_Frederick Martin Hotel_0015)
Interior, view of Level 7, camera facing north/northwest.

16 of 23. (MN_Clay County_Frederick Martin Hotel_0016)
Interior, view of Level 7, camera facing south.

17 of 23. (MN_Clay County_Frederick Martin Hotel_0017)
Exterior, view of Level 7 sunshade track, corrugated metal paneling, and ribbon windows, south elevation, camera facing east/northeast.

18 of 23. (MN_Clay County_Frederick Martin Hotel_0018)
Interior, view of typical original aluminum window, Level 4, camera facing east.

19 of 23. (MN_Clay County_Frederick Martin Hotel_0019)
Interior, view of terrazzo staircase connecting Level 1 and Lower Level, camera facing west.

20 of 23. (MN_Clay County_Frederick Martin Hotel_0020)
Interior, view of door at Level 2, camera facing west/northwest.

21 of 23. (MN_Clay County_Frederick Martin Hotel_0021)
Interior, view of parquet flooring in Lower Level, camera facing southeast.

22 of 23. (MN_Clay County_Frederick Martin Hotel_0022)
Interior, view of linoleum tile in Lower Level, camera facing west.

23 of 23. (MN_Clay County_Frederick Martin Hotel_0023)
Interior, view of extant ceiling plaster and wall locations above dripped ceiling on Level 4.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

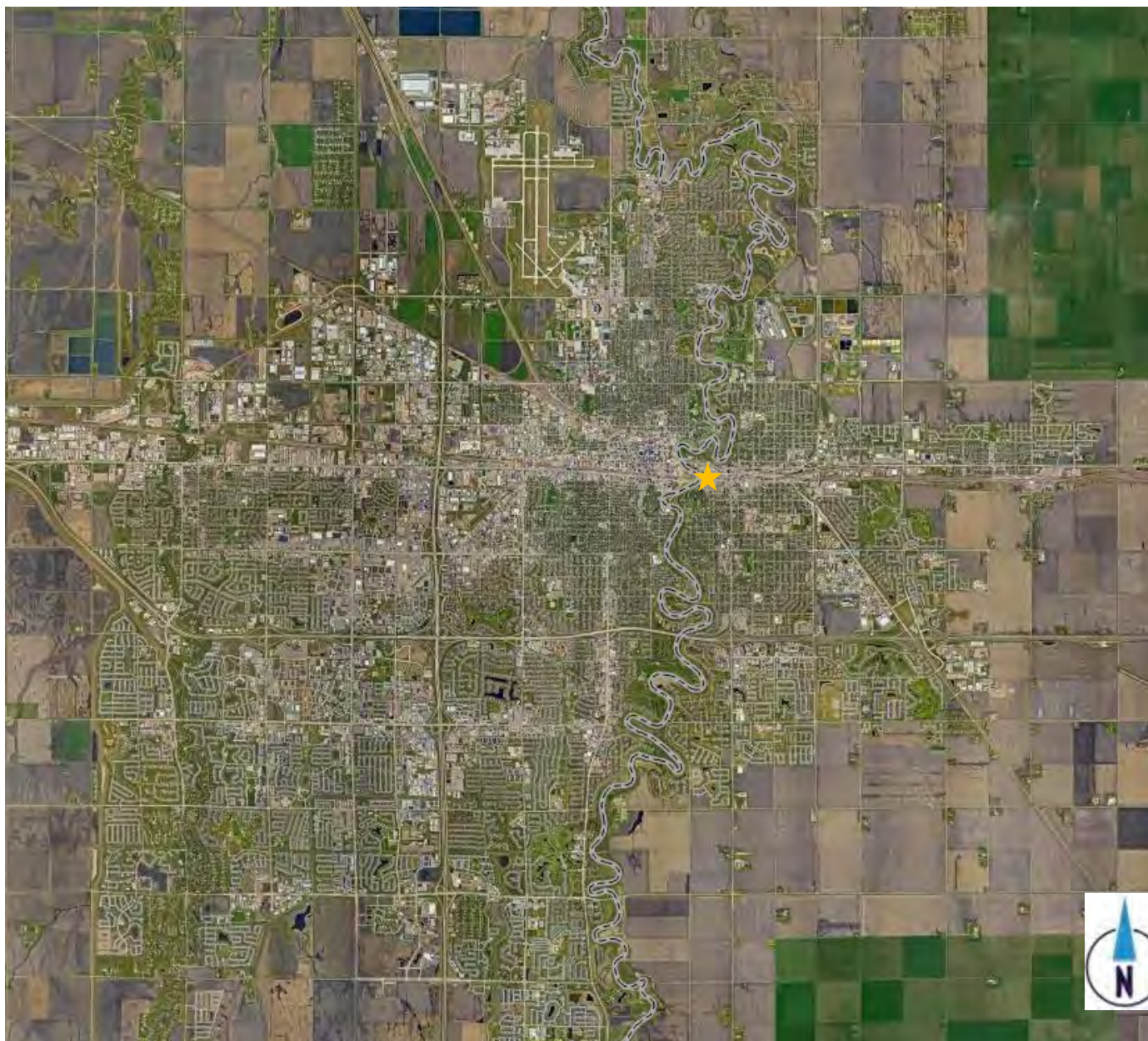| Frederick Martin Hotel |
|---|
| Name of Property |
| Clay County, Minnesota |
| County and State |
| |
| Name of multiple listing (if applicable) |

Section number <u>Additional Documentation</u>　　　　　　Page 　　　1　　　

Figure 1.

Site map showing Moorhead, MN, Fargo, ND and the Frederick Martin Hotel. Background map courtesy MNSHIP

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Continuation Sheet**

Frederick Martin Hotel
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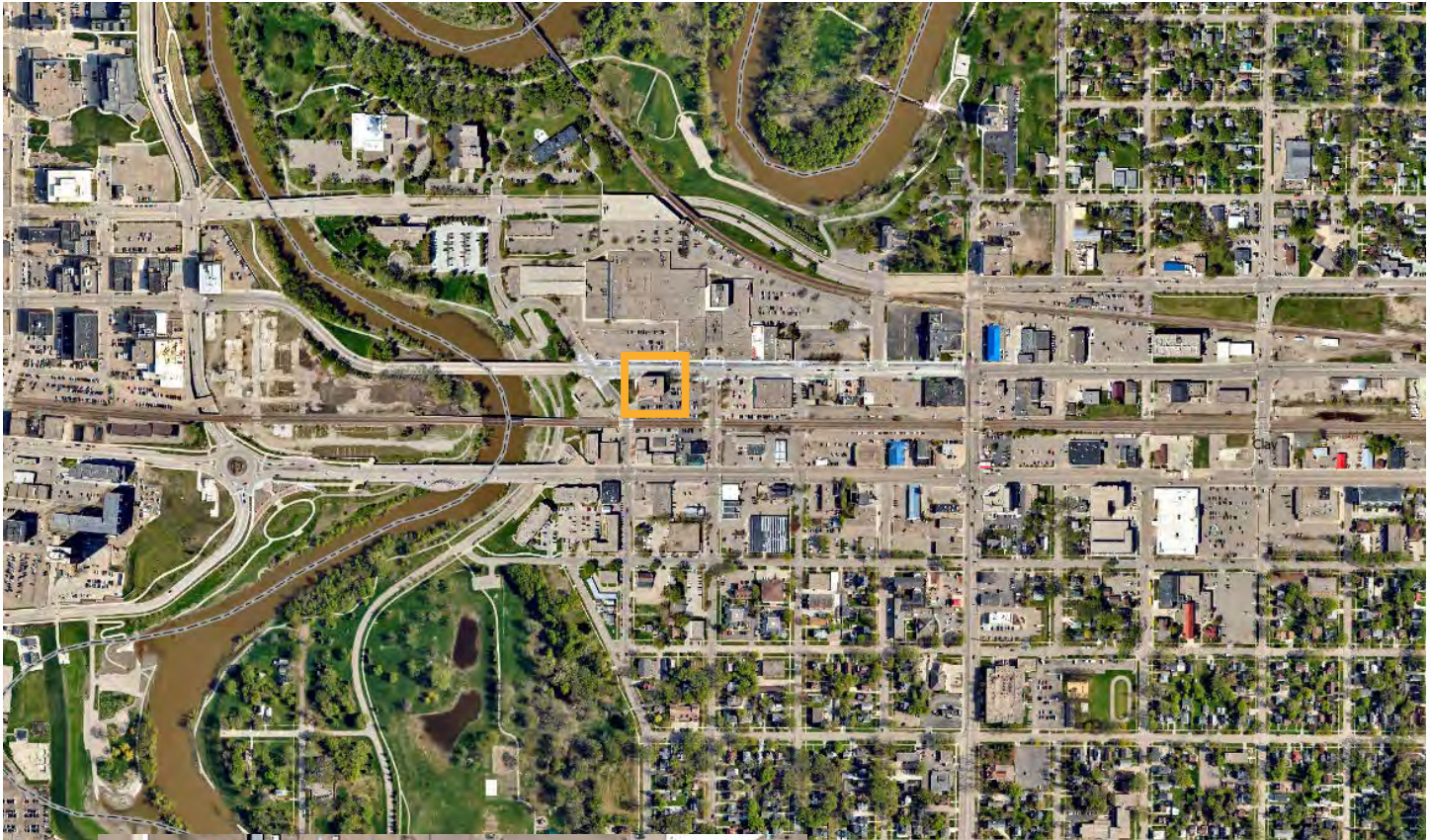

Figure 2.
Site maps showing the Frederick Martin Hotel.
Background maps courtesy MNSHIP.

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Figure 3.   1956 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing Frederick Martin Hotel site with buildings on the area that is currently surface parking.

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Figure 4.   Frederick Martin Hotel, 1950. Photograph courtesy of Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County.

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Figure 5.   Postcard of the Frederick Martin Hotel, c. 1960, courtesy of LakesnWoods.com. The postcard shows that "Frederick Martin" was often stylized as "FM," which also refers to the greater Fargo-Moorehead metropolitan area. It is unknown if the storefront windows at the east elevation were actually removed and infilled with brick at this time, or if this is an inaccuracy in the postcard art.

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Figure 6.   Postcard of Center Avenue including the Frederick Martin Hotel, c. 1960, courtesy of ebay.com. The postcard shows the hotel in its context of late 19th and early 20th century commercial construction.

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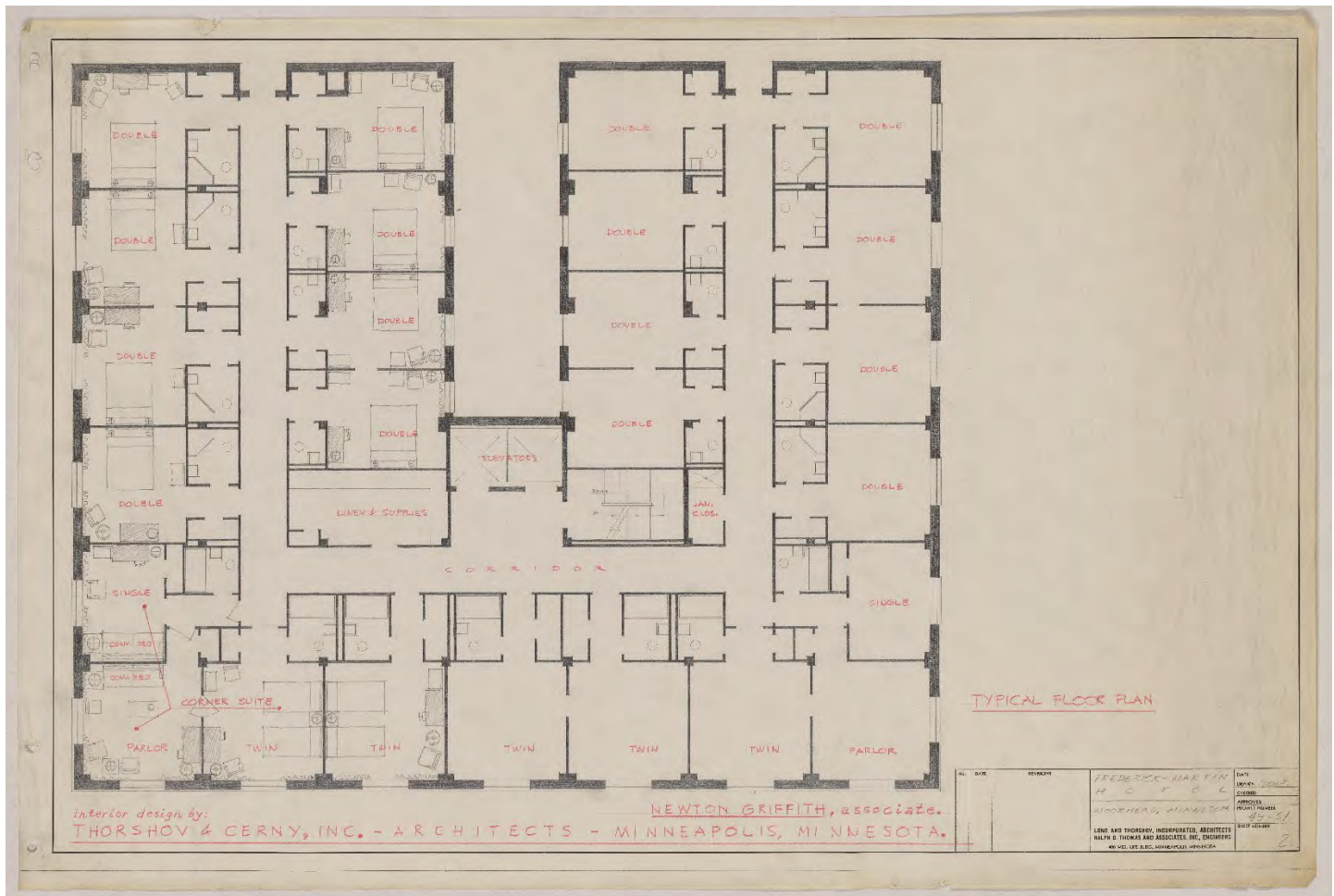Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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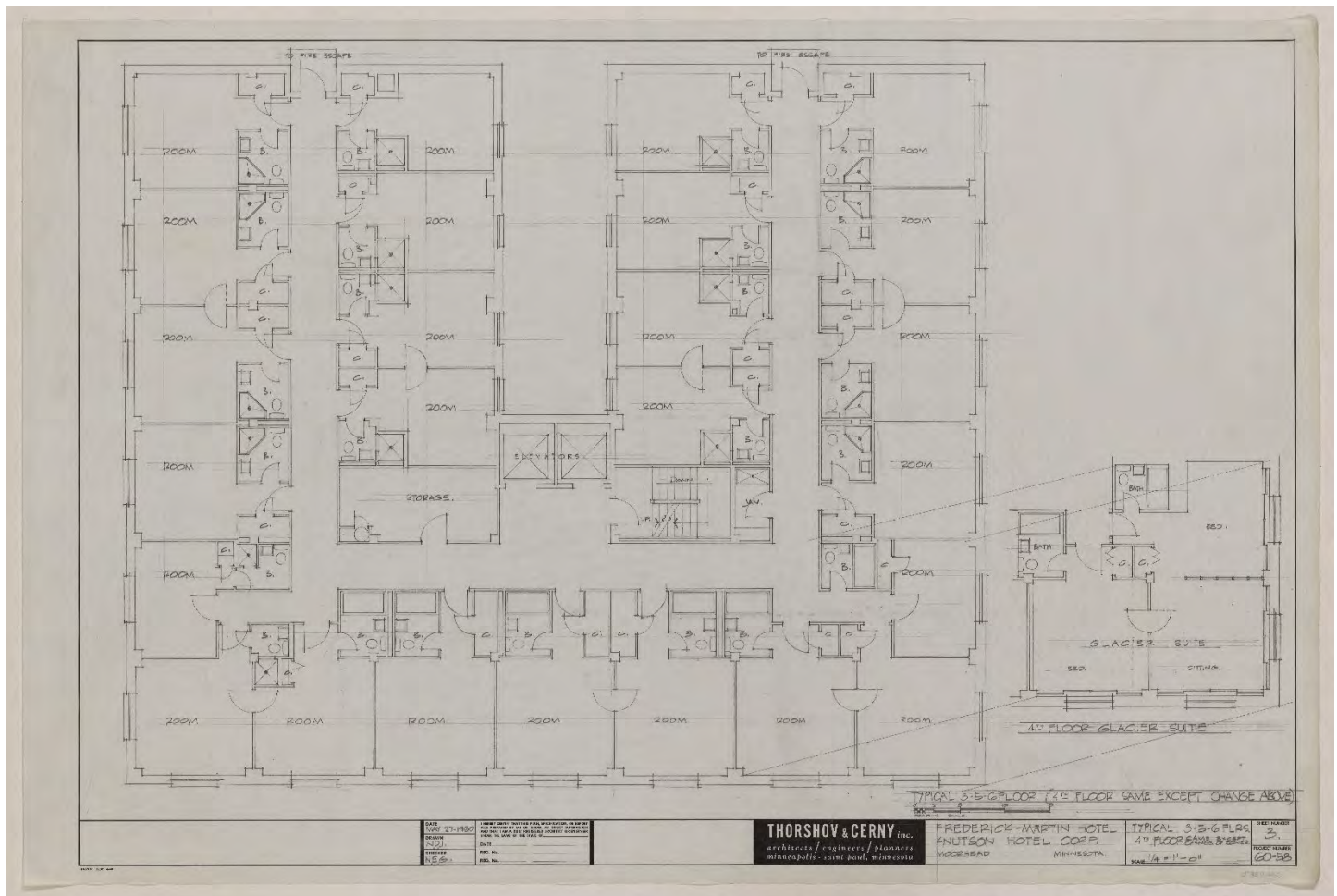

Figure 7.   Architectural drawing showing hotel room layouts. Thorshov & Cerny, Inc., c. 1950, courtesy Mutchler Bartram Architects.

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Figure 8.   Architectural drawing showing hotel room layouts. Thorshov & Cerny, Inc., 1960, courtesy Mutchler Bartram Architects.

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Figure 9.   Frederick Martin Hotel, August 4, 1950. View of lobby, first floor.

Ramsey County Historical Society, Everett Kroeger Photography Collection, 1970.1.0167.

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Figure 10.   Frederick Martin Hotel, August 4, 1950. The Barn restaurant, first floor.

Ramsey County Historical Society, Everett Kroeger Photography Collection, 1970.1.0157.

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Figure 11.   Frederick Martin Hotel, August 4, 1950. Tree Top Room, seventh floor.

Ramsey County Historical Society, Everett Kroeger Photography Collection, 1970.1.0159b.

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Figure 12.   Frederick Martin Hotel, August 4, 1950. Ballroom, seventh floor.

Ramsey County Historical Society, Everett Kroeger Photography Collection, 1970.1.0154.

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Figure 13.   Frederick Martin Hotel, August 4, 1950. Typical hotel room with double bed.

Ramsey County Historical Society, Everett Kroeger Photography Collection, 1970.1.0171.

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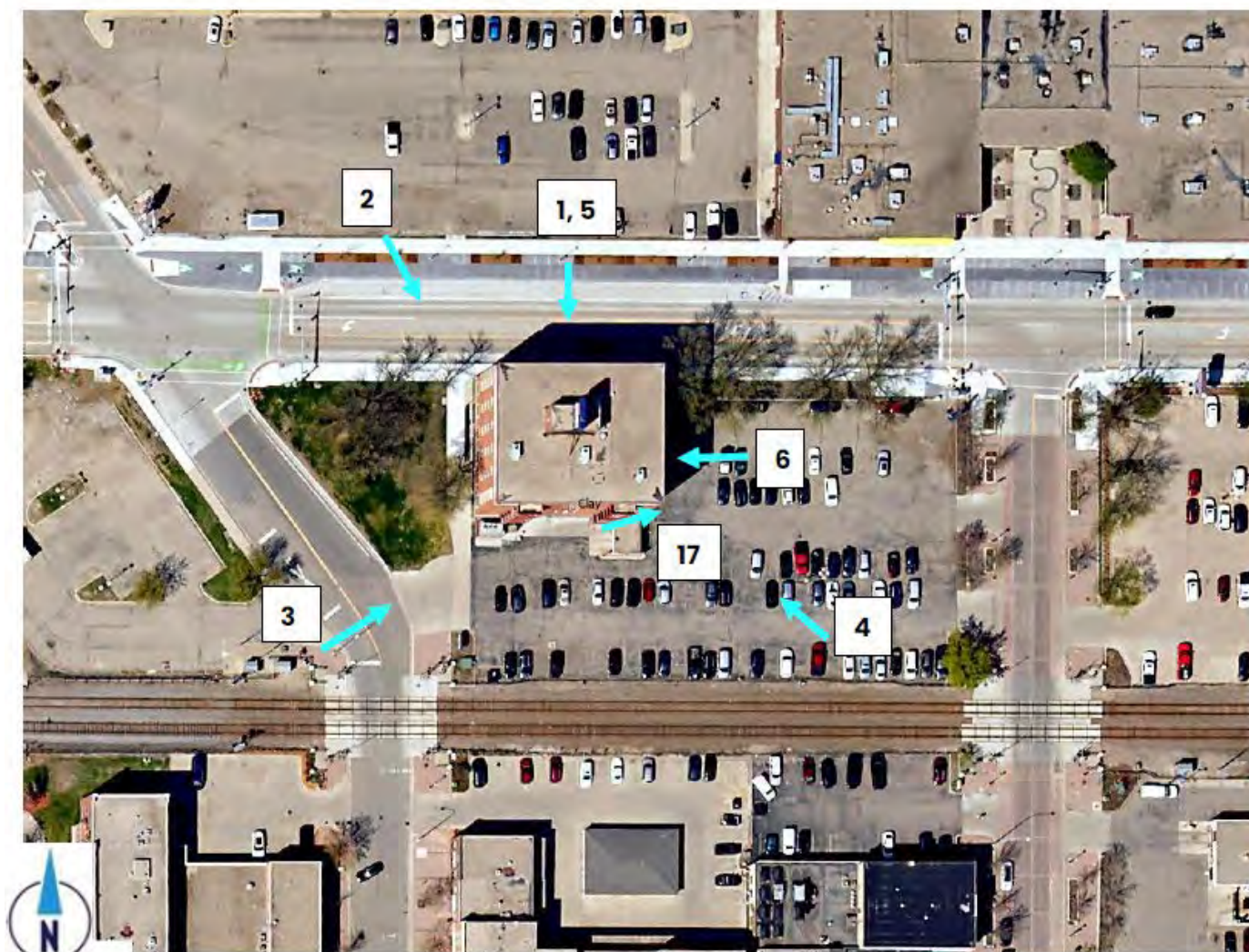

Figure 14.

Frederick Martin Hotel – Exterior Photo Key

Background Image via MNSHIP

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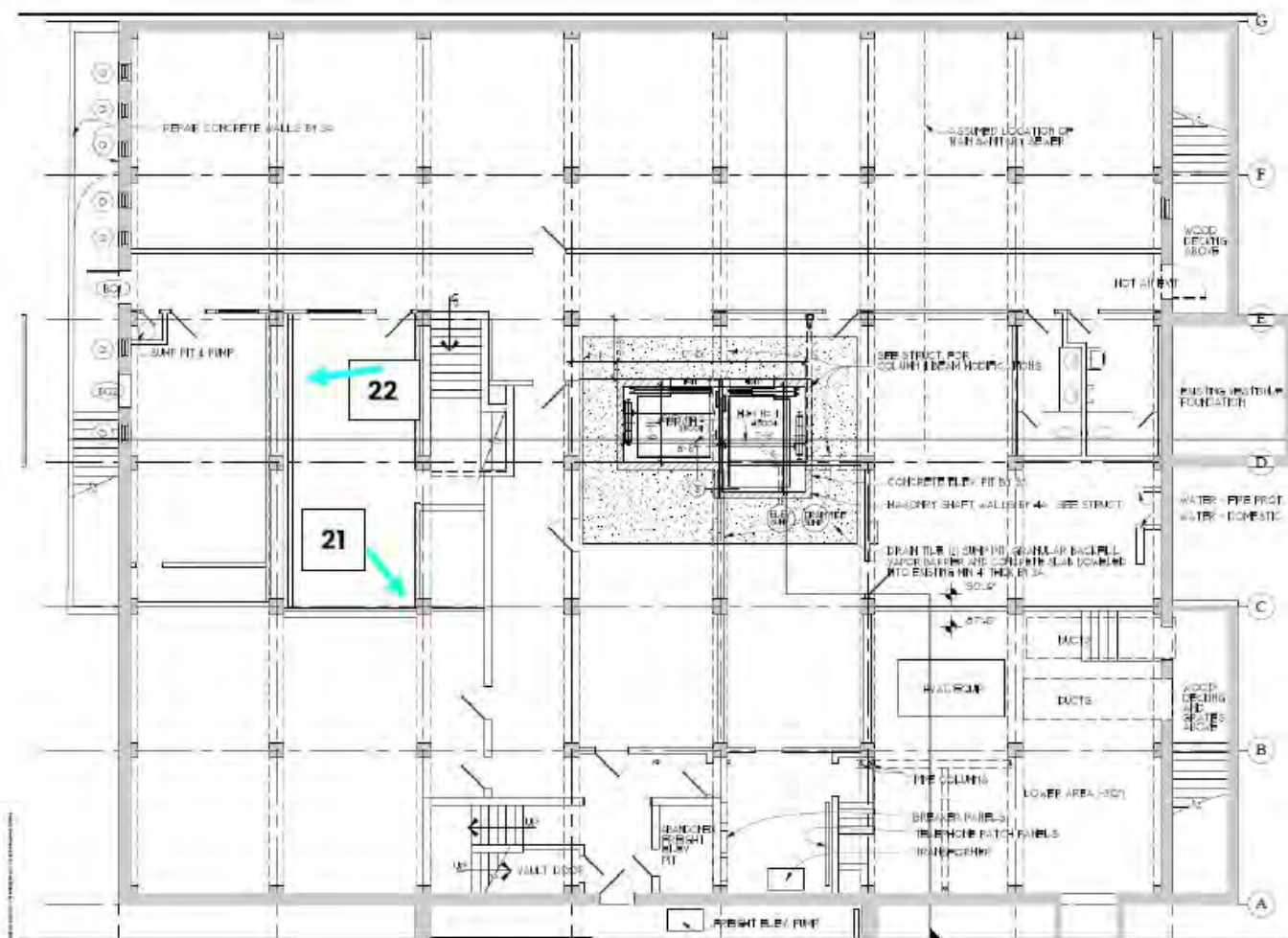Section number Additional Documentation_____   Page _____

Figure 15.

Frederick Martin Hotel – Lower Level Photo Key

Architectural Plan Courtesy Mutchler Bartram Architects

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Figure 16.

Frederick Martin Hotel – Level 1 Photo Key

Architectural Plan Courtesy Mutchler Bartram Architects

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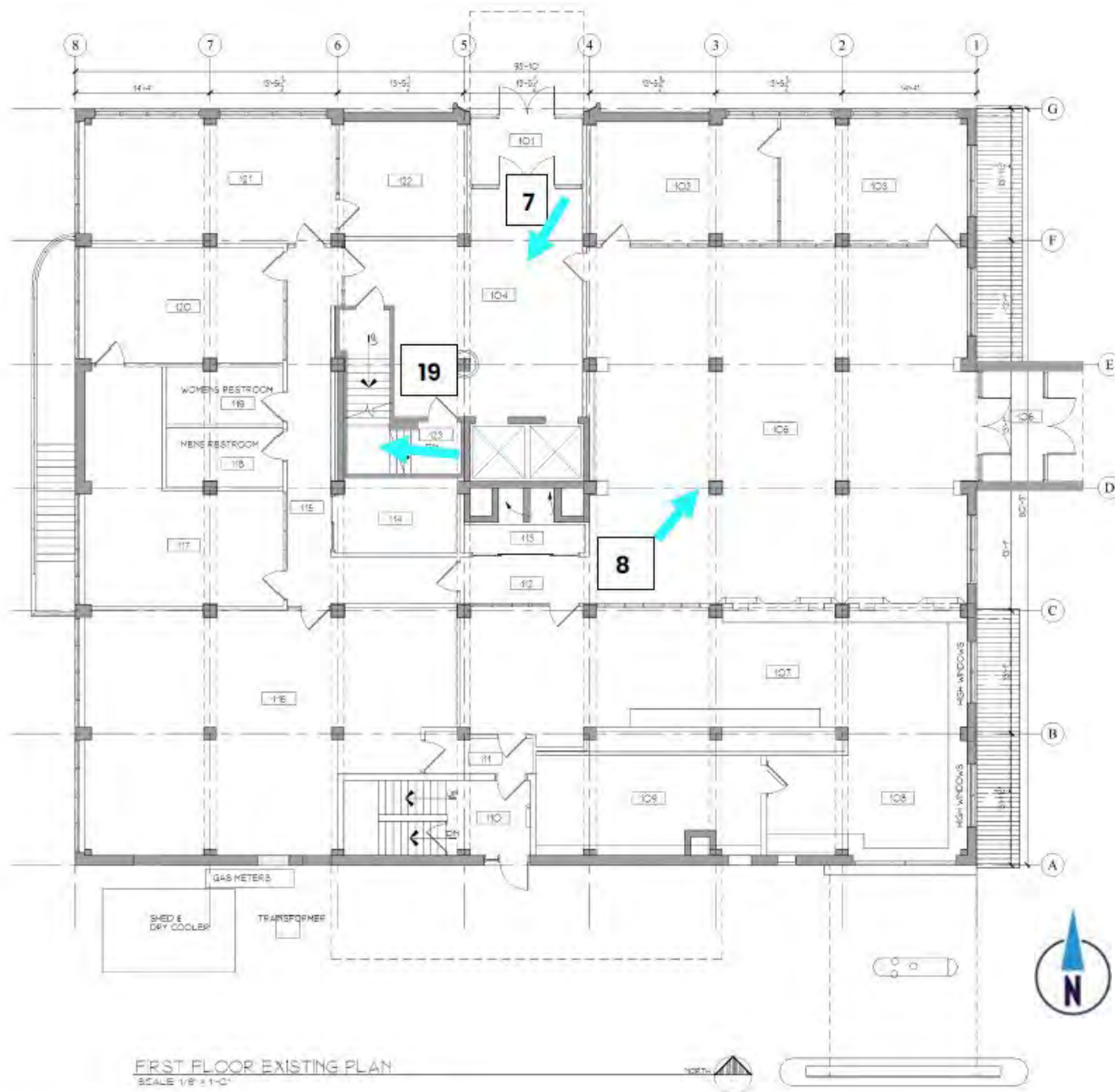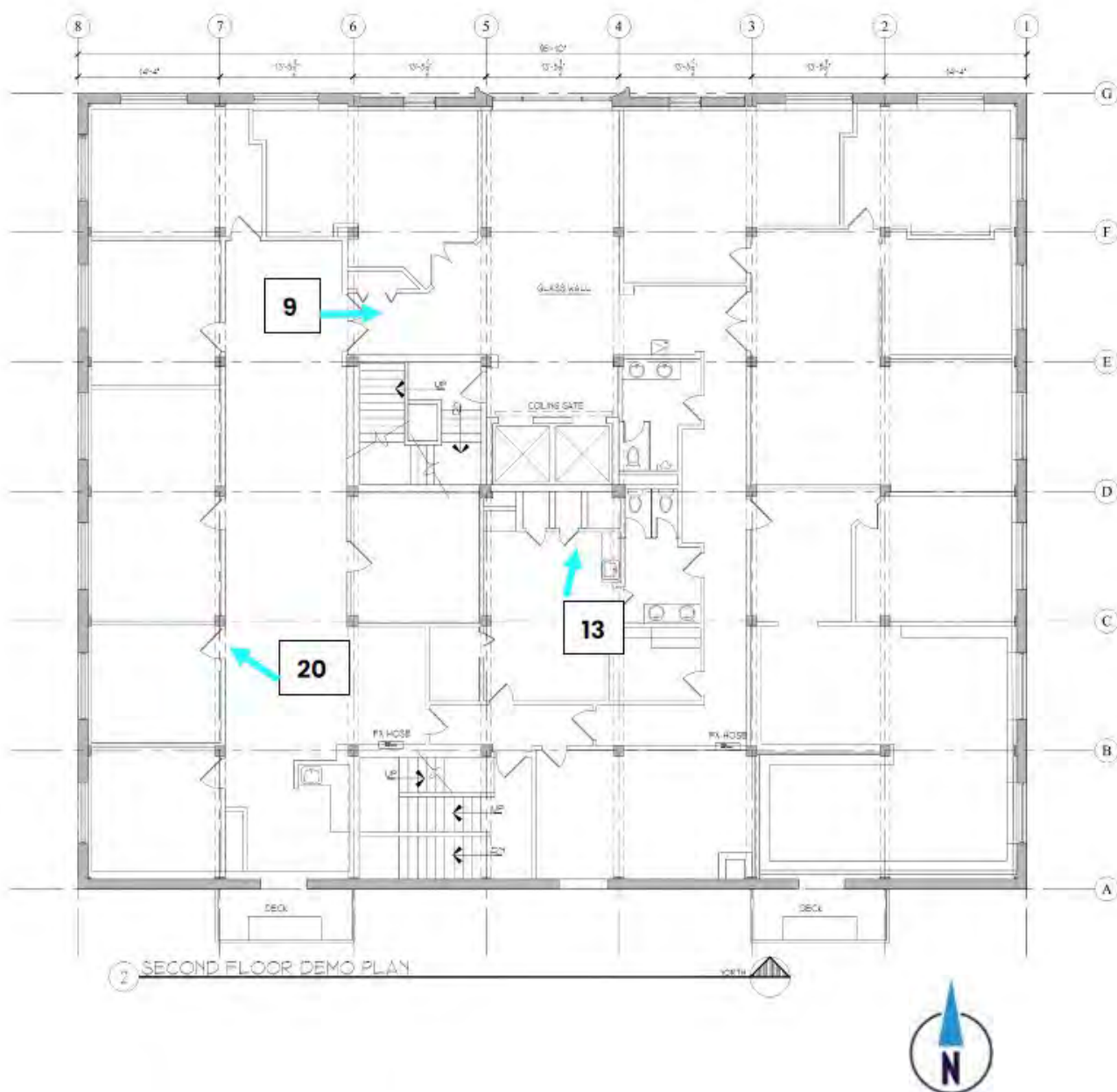Section number Additional Documentation_____   Page _____

Figure 17.

Frederick Martin Hotel – Level 2 Photo Key

Architectural Plan Courtesy Mutchler Bartram Architects

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County and State

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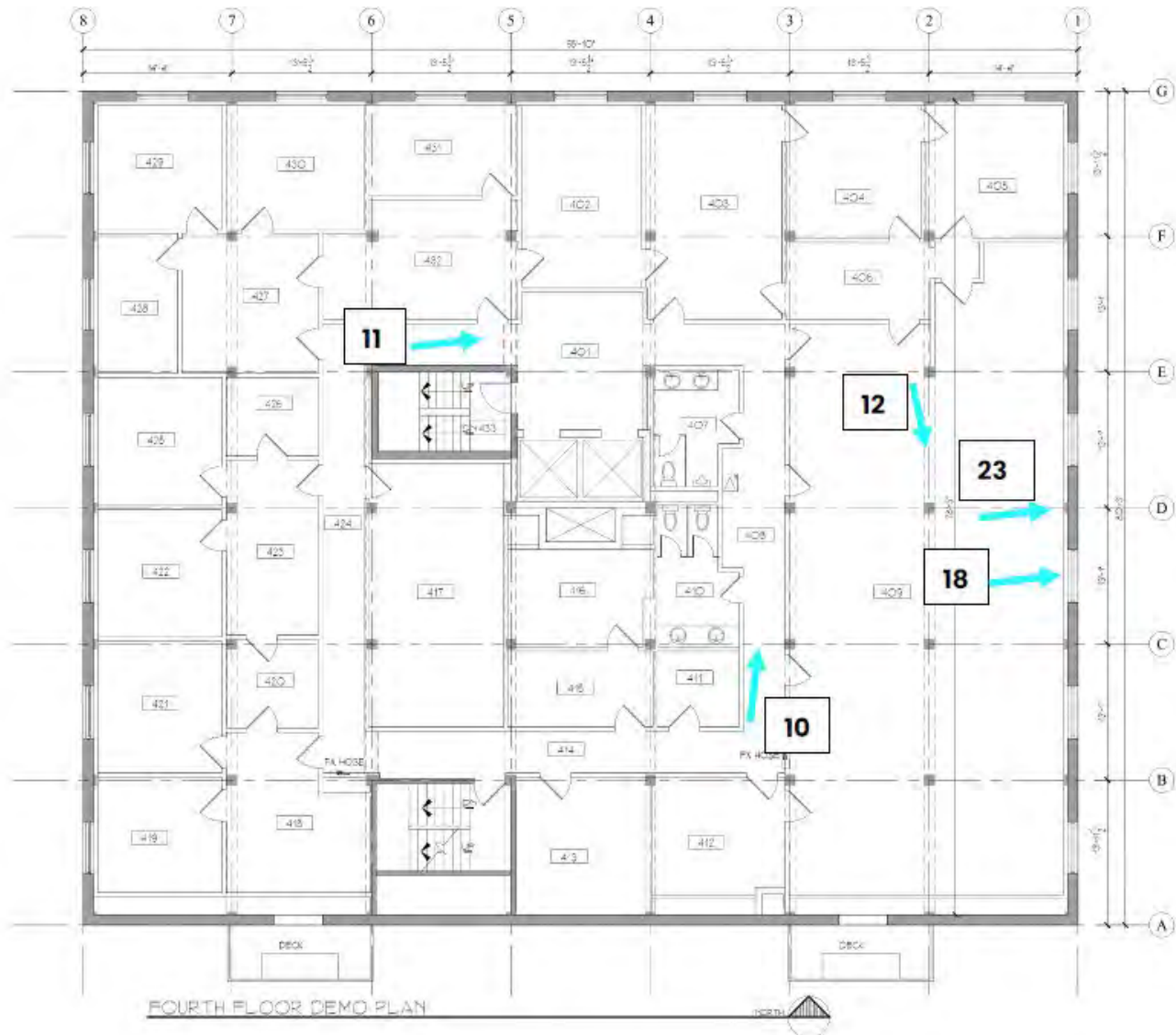Section number Additional Documentation_____   Page _____

Figure 18.

Frederick Martin Hotel – Level 3-6 Typical Photo Key.

Background drawing depicts existing conditions on Level 4 – exact locations of demising walls and office doors vary by floor but finish materials, vertical circulation locations, and the general conditions are typical.

Architectural Plan Courtesy Mutchler Bartram Architects

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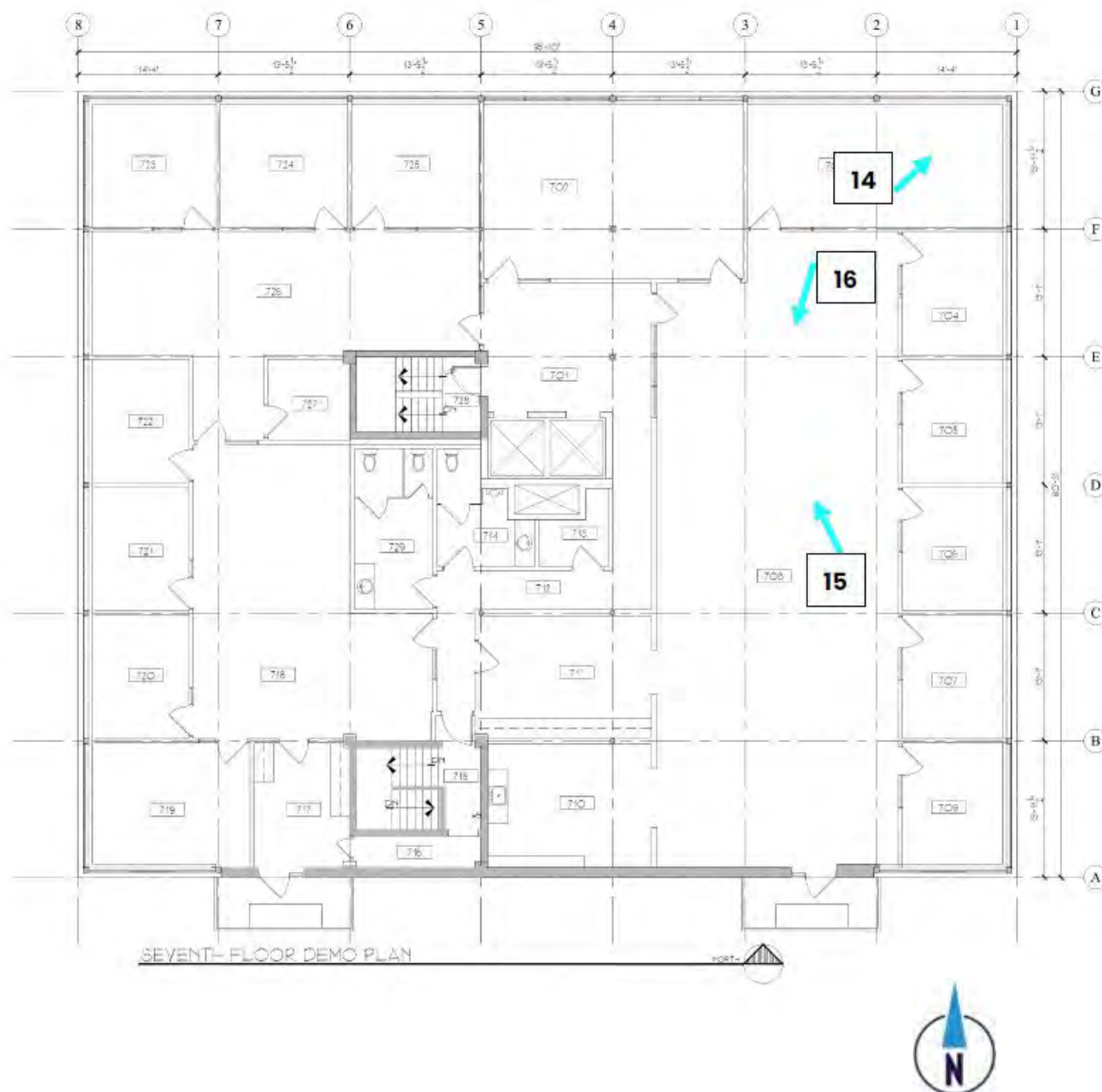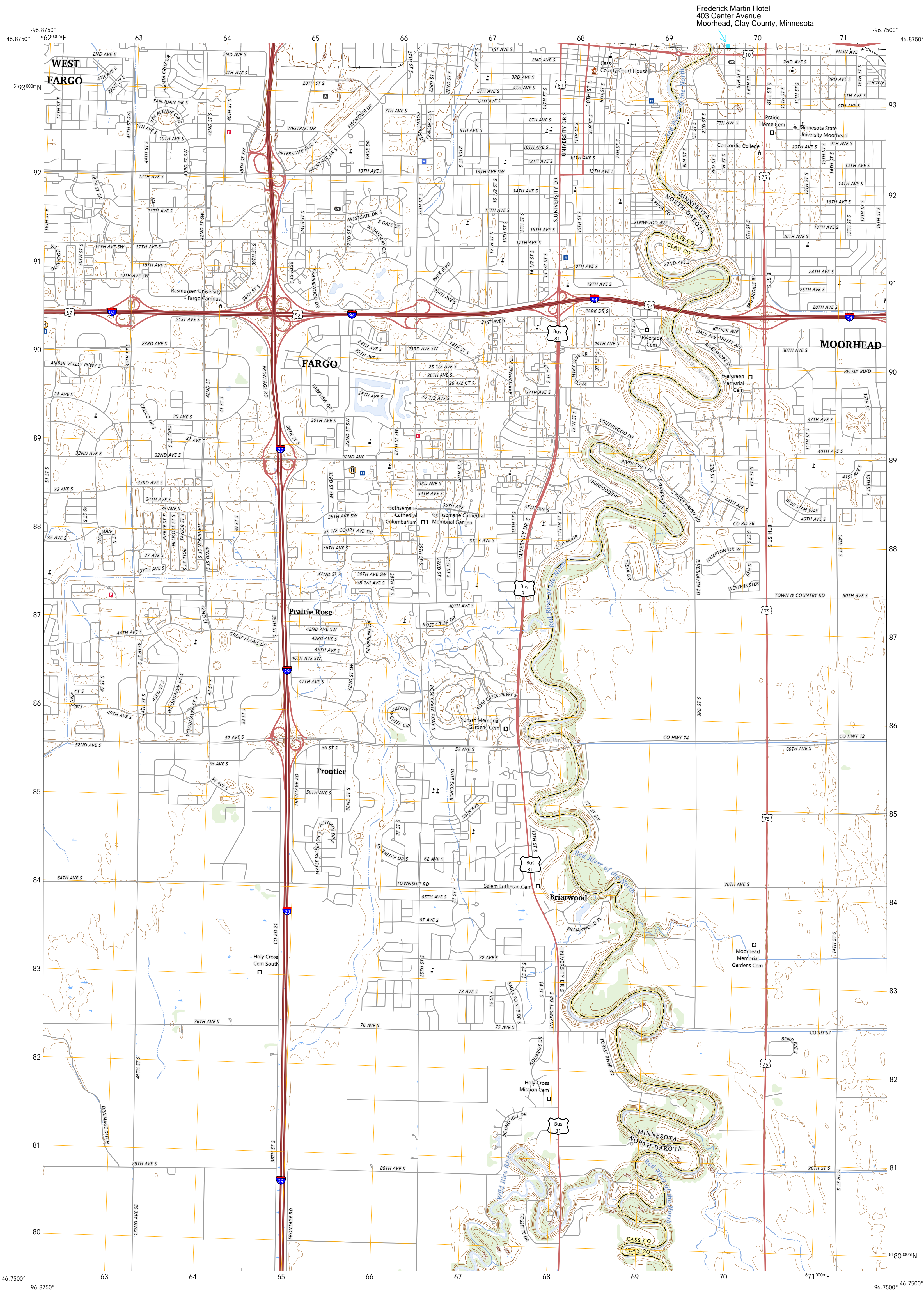Section number Additional Documentation_____   Page _____

Figure 19.

Frederick Martin Hotel – Level 7 Photo Key

Architectural Plan Courtesy Mutchler Bartram Architects

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

USGS
science for a changing world

The National Map
US Topo

FARGO SOUTH QUADRANGLE
NORTH DAKOTA - MINNESOTA
7.5-MINUTE SERIES

Frederick Martin Hotel
403 Center Avenue
Moorhead, Clay County, Minnesota

WEST FARGO

FARGO

MOORHEAD

Prairie Rose

Frontier

Briarwood

MINNESOTA
NORTH DAKOTA

CASS CO
CLAY CO

Red River of the North

Concordia College

Minnesota State University Moorhead

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)
World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84). Projection and
1 000-meter grid:Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 14T
This map is not a legal document. Boundaries may be
generalized for this map scale. Private lands within government
reservations may not be shown. Obtain permission before
entering private lands.

Imagery.....................NAIP, August 2017 - July 2020
Roads......................U.S. Census Bureau, 2016
Names.....................GNIS, 1995 - 2023
Contours..................National Elevation Dataset, 2011
Hydrography..............National Hydrography Dataset, 2004 - 2023
Boundaries...............Multiple sources: see metadata file 2021 - 2022
Public Land Survey System....BLM, 2018 - 2020
Wetlands.................FWS National Wetlands Inventory 1982 - 1982

SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET
NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM OF 1988

This map was produced to conform with the
National Geospatial Program US Topo Product Standard.

U.S. National Grid

UTM GRID AND 2023 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Expressway   Local Connector
Secondary Hwy   Local Road
Ramp   4WD

Interstate Route   US Route   State Route

NORTH DAKOTA

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ADJOINING QUADRANGLES
1 West Fargo North
2 Fargo North
3 Dilworth
4 West Fargo South
5 Sabin
6 Norman
7 Hickson
8 Comstock

FARGO SOUTH, ND, MN

2024

NSN 7643016379809
NGA REF NO.USGSX24K14993