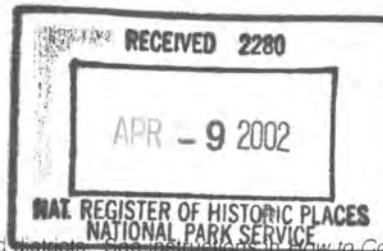


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



5

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 El Garces

other names/site number Needles Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Depot

2. Location

street & number 950 Front Street NA ☐ not for publication

city or town Needles NA ☐ vicinity

state California code CA county San Bernardino code 071 zip code 92363

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.)

K. McEllan  
Signature of certifying official/Title

4/8/02  
Date

California Office of Historic Preservation  
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 commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
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

[Signature]

Date of Action

5/17/02

El Garces / Needles Santa Fe Depot  
Name of Property

San Bernardino County, California  
County and State

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private  
☒ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

### Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

### Number of Resources within the Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1  
0  
0  
0  
1

0  
0  
0  
0  
0

buildings  
sites  
structures  
objects  
Total

### 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. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation: Rail-related

Commerce/Trade: Restaurant

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revival - Classic Revival

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Concrete

Walls Concrete

Roof Concrete roof slab

Other

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

(See Continuation Sheet)

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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Needles, San Bernardino County, California

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## 7. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

### *Summary*

Originally constructed as a passenger and freight depot with hotel and restaurant amenities, El Garces is located at 950 Front Street in the City of Needles, California. El Garces is on the original site adjacent to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe tracks and U.S. Route 66, and therefore maintains its original setting, association, and feeling. The site includes the historic railroad tracks, numerous transmission power poles, circa 1908, and a row of nine Mexican fan palms (*Washingtonia robusta*) original to the site. Original architectural plans drawn by Francis Wilson, and provided by the City of Needles, show the historic areas and uses of the building, as well the outlining the specific terminology used by the architect. This two-story Classical Revival style building is constructed of cast-in-place concrete building materials that form both the distinctive symmetrical facade, as well as the first and second floor loggias, and the supporting colonnade of modified Tuscan and Ionic columns, placed in pairs. Wilson clearly distinguishes between a portico and a loggia in the original plans: the covered main entrance is labeled a portico and the covered arcades around the perimeter of the building are referred to as loggias. The distinctive architectural style is further carried throughout the interior areas, as seen in the use of ornamental ceilings, and details such as intricate egg and dart and rope-work. The current building measures 365' long and 98'6" wide. A 1961 renovation demolished 146' of the original east wing, historic drawings and maps obtained from the City of Needles show that despite the alterations, El Garces retains its highly detailed exterior facade with only minimal and reversible changes to the extant portion of the building. Therefore, El Garces maintains a high degree of integrity from the 1908 original construction date through the end of the period of significance of 1949, when the Fred Harvey Company left the facility. (Refer to Photo 1)

Situated in an northwest-southeast direction that parallels the Burlington Northern Santa Fe tracks on the north, the Classical Revival two-story, cast-in-place concrete building maintains a horizontal orientation

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with first and second floor loggias supported by a colonnade of pairs of pre-cast modified Tuscan columns on the first floor, and pairs of modified Ionic columns on the second surrounding all sides of the building. The long track side elevation is comprised of distinctly designed receding and projecting bays as on the exterior, the full entablature extends around primary spaces including the Dining Room and Lobby area. The interior of the building includes existing ornamental ceilings complete with plaster formed coves, details of egg and dart, rope-work, and dental-work. The plaster formed styled capitals and pilasters continue the traditional design details of the Classic Revival style from the exterior to the interior. The scale of the Dining Room with original accommodations for 140 diners, Lunch Room for approximately 40 persons, as well as a Lobby with a small soda fountain, convey the stature of El Garces. The grand interiors of the El Garces, particularly the public spaces, are also typical of the Classical Revival style and are marked by simple wall surfaces with attention concentrated upon structural members and functional necessities, such as doorways, windows, and the centre-pieces of ceilings. The interiors are bold and dignified, composed of straight, strong lines with heavy detail. The walls are plain plastered surfaces.

El Garces is located on the original site adjacent to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe tracks and U.S. Route 66, and therefore maintains its original setting and feeling. The original site included a roundhouse with multiple bays, an oil tank, multiple machine shop buildings, on the opposite side of the tracks. Of these, only a few smaller buildings and the oil tank remain. Transmission power poles, circa 1908-1910, to the north and south side containing the original glass insulators are extant. (Refer to Photos 10 and 16) El Garces is currently unoccupied, and the door and window openings are covered with plywood for security. A stabilization program, with the help of State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds, was completed in July 2001. The work has also received Transportation Enhancement Activities for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21) funds and is currently being reviewed by Caltrans Environmental Cultural Studies and Local Assistance.



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## *Exterior*

The original symmetrical building with centered entry core measured 518' 2" long and 98' 6" wide. A 1961 renovation demolished a portion of the east end of El Garces leaving a rectangular plan that measures 365' and 98' 6" wide. The prominent north facade with the grand entry portico, faces the tracks and is accentuated by a line of nine Mexican fan palms (*Washingtonia robusta*). Historic research and photographic documentation determine the palms to be part of the original construction and landscape plan of El Garces. (Refer to H2, H6, and H7 and Photos 1, 2, 10, 11, 12, and 13) The brick pavers located on the north and south sides of the site are original to the 1908 construction, and are approximately 90% extant. The Santa Fe Park, and a portion of U.S. Route 66, both immediately adjacent to El Garces, continue to convey the overall stature of El Garces as a major transportation and commerce center for Needles and the region. (Refer to H9 and H10 and Photos 12-13) The Santa Fe Park is well-maintained by the City of Needles as the park is the location of regular community events and activities.

A broad, flat, continuous brow detail supported by a bracket above each pair of columns, wraps around the perimeter of the building at the roof line extending 5'2" from the exterior colonnade. This adds both a decorative element as well as offering protection to the building from the direct rays of the sun. The north facade that parallels the train tracks, opens to the passenger platform area and provides access to the hotel, Dining Room, and Lunch Room. (Refer to H2 and H4 and Photo 2) The main entry to this portion of the building is through a courtyard surrounded by an upper-story portico with pairs of modified Tuscan concrete columns on the first floor supporting an elevated walkway fronting the former fountain pool area. (Refer to Photos 2 and 5) Above the main entry portico the name "El Garces" is cast integral with the concrete. The traditional Santa Fe logo is cast on either side of the "El Garces." (Refer to Photo 3)

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The loggias on both the lower and upper levels of the north facade are open and maintain their original configuration and high level of architectural integrity. (Refer to Photos 7 and 9) The lower loggia walkway on the south facade contains approximately 80% of the original brick pavers. Originally this courtyard held a low pool and fountain, with the entire surface covered in brick pavers. (Refer to H3 and Photo 6) In one of the earliest renovations, the fountain was replaced with a newsstand in 1912, and a cast-in-place concrete slab was installed in 1947. Despite the early removal of the fountain, the historic foundations are extant.

Original existing cast iron guardrails bracketed by modified Ionic columns are found on the second level loggia on the north, south, and west facades. Along the north and central facades, regular "balconets" or small extensions on the second floor loggia are positioned in such a way as to allow a person to step out beyond the edge of the building at the north facade. (Refer to H7 and Photos 4 and 9). From this vantage point, a stunning view corridor is offered into the courtyard, down the tracks, and toward the Colorado River and the northern desert landscaping and mountains. The majority of the doors, windows, and screens are intact. (Refer to Photos 9 and 33)

In 1961, the Santa Fe demolished approximately 146' of the east wing and the Santa Fe moved into a portion of the former Harvey House areas for use as offices, and crew quarters necessary for overnight layovers. A 1961 concrete masonry wall was built to close-off the interior rooms on the second floor, and terminate the building at the breezeway. (Refer to Photos 16-17) The east facade, constructed of modern concrete masonry units to cover the portions of the original Harvey House Lunch Room, faces an asphalt parking lot. Portions of the east facade not impacted by the concrete masonry units are intact and retain a high degree of architectural integrity including the cast-iron railings, concrete columns, doors and windows. The east wing originally housed the Santa Fe offices, ticket and baggage area, and the Wells Fargo Office on the first floor and hotel rooms on the second floor. While the loss of this portion of the building is unfortunate, the large

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remaining portion of El Garces assures that the majority of the architectural elements are either intact, or identical replications are extant in other areas, as well as the complete retention of the significant Harvey House facilities. Much of these spaces involved later reversible remodels such as acoustical panel suspended ceilings to accommodate the office spaces. The railroad moved their offices to the Midwest, abandoning the site in 1988.

### *Interior*

Currently, El Garces is empty and unoccupied. Remnants of the Santa Fe offices such as, stud framed partitions, suspended ceilings, interior doors and windows, and electrical devices litter the east half of the interior spaces. (Refer to Photo 28) Site exploration revealed that with the removal of the non-historic 1960s elements, the original ceramic tile floors and ornamental ceilings are extant. These elements reveal the simplicity of the original design and spaces.

El Garces incorporates several passive shading and ventilation principles into the design, such as an open attic plenum to allow the wind to flow freely through the 4' space above the hotel room ceilings. Additionally, an evaporative air conditioning system was added due to the hot, dry climate of the desert region. Other design elements such as the open corridors or hallways allowed air to flow through the building, as well as the broad loggia to shade the exterior walls, aided in a temperature reduction within the building. The heavy mass of the concrete material provided a "heat sink" element, that allows radiation of the heat at night, while keeping the building cool during the day. A 1937 update to the cooling system included the addition of "a process of running drip water from a refrigerator car brought from the ice plant (located a mile to the east) and introduce it into the hotel's circulating system." According to Donald Duke, a known historian on the Santa Fe Railroad, this was the first Harvey House to be "air-conditioned." (Refer

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to Additional Documentation, Building Sections) The use of the water evaporation process, commonly known as a "swamp cooler," enabled the main public spaces, the Dining Room and Lunch Room, to be cooled during the hottest part of the day. This system effectively reduced the temperature approximately 15-20 degrees, significant in that the daytime temperature averaged 110-120°F, and 80-90° F at night during the summer months. Historic physical evidence of the "swamp cooler" system is seen in the girder trusses with wood supports between and ducts evident through some hotel rooms to the lunch and dining rooms below. However, the lack of historic ventilation ducts show the majority of the first floor and none of the hotel rooms had air conditioning until the 1930s. (Refer to Photo 18) After the Harvey House and hotel establishment left in 1949, the Santa Fe Railroad replaced the system with a more modern air conditioning system in the 1950s. Additions and modifications to the air conditioning system have been made over the years until 1988 as revealed by the ductwork located in the dropped hallway ceilings, vents through transoms, and exterior equipment, ducts and piping.

### First Floor

The 2,219 square foot central lobby of El Garces became the center of public activity during the 1908-1949 period of significance, and retains a high level of architectural integrity with the majority of the original historic fabric extant. The original 1908 painted concrete floor in the Lobby was overlaid with mosaic tile work in 1922, which is still extant. The 1/2"x1" mosaic tiles are arranged in 11" square black and white checkerboard floor pattern. (Refer to H11, H12, H13, H14, and Photo 21) The original 1908 tall double hung windows with divided lites and wood trim are intact. The windows are currently boarded up with plywood sheeting applied to the outside of the building for security purposes. (Refer to H13, H15, and H16) Still extant are the original ornamental ceilings complete with plaster formed coves, egg and dart, rope-work, and dental-work combined together for a complex ceiling coffering. (Refer to H11, H12, H13, H15, and Photo 20) Plaster formed stylized Corinthian capitals adorn the pilasters on the primary structural grid.

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(Refer to H13, H15, and Photo 20) The footprint of the original 1908 reception desk is distinctly marked in the ceramic tile floor by a concrete filler. (Refer to H11) The historic writing area has been converted to women's restrooms, however, the mosaic floor, plaster detailing including the ceilings, beams, and capitals are extant. (Refer to H14) At the east end of the Lobby, the 290 square foot historic soda fountain retains approximately 90% of the white marble wainscot and tapered "columns" along with the white mosaic tile flooring with a tile patterned border. (Refer to Photo 26) The Lobby also retains an open stairway leading to the hotel rooms on the second floor, although all of the wrought iron bannisters have been removed.

The east portion of the building contains the historic Harvey House Lunch Room. The Lunch Room, approximately 2,758 square feet plus a kitchen and storage of about 2,000 square feet in size, has undergone at least three remodels in 1912, 1922, and 1927. In 1922, Arts and Crafts style grey tiles were added to adorn the walls up to about seven feet. (Refer to H16, Photos 22-24) Distinctive panels with highly colorful and decorative ceramic tile occur at several key locations. Two of the decorative ceramic tile panels with hollow clay tile backing were removed from the wall and are stored in wooden crates on site. Four of the original eight historic plastered corbels are extant and are in good condition. The corbels were originally designed as light sconces but were later used to support electrical fans. (Refer to H16 and Photos 24 and 25) All of the historic 1922 mosaic floor with decorative border is extant in the Lunch Room, although mostly covered with a circa 1950s vinyl asbestos tile. In 1922, an additional horseshoe shaped lunch counter was included in the Lunch Room in order to better accommodate the increased number of customers. The historic lunch counters, cabinets, and light fixtures were removed by the Santa Fe Railroad after their 1950s-1960s conversion of this space into offices. Several solid and glazed dividing walls still bisect the original Harvey House Lunch Room space. The former kitchen was also cleared of all its equipment and converted to offices for the Santa Fe Railroad after the Fred Harvey Company left in 1949. Portions of the historic kitchen flooring and wall materials are extant under the newer finishes applied for the office environment. Several restrooms and changing rooms were added sporadically over time from 1950 to the 1980s to service the



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office personnel.

The west end of the Lobby contains the grand entry to the historic Harvey House formal Dining Room. (Refer to H11 and H13) The double doors are missing but the glazed transom and frame remains. The Dining Room is 2,630 square feet in size and has been divided several times with removable wood stud framing and drywall, circa 1950s-1960s, for use by the Santa Fe Railroad for offices. The Dining Room still retains the checkerboard ceramic tile floor and the coffered ceiling similar to the Lobby. (Refer to H15) The wall finishes and ceiling have maintained the overall feeling of the space conducive to the original design plan. The wood trim bordered panels and plaster formed pilasters with modified Ionic capitals remain and are in fair condition. The southwest corner of the Dining Room was infilled, circa 1950s, with walls to support air conditioning equipment. The ceramic tile floor is in excellent condition and is open to view, except under some small equipment pads. All surfaces have received multiple layers of wall covering and paint throughout the years.

The 3,300 square foot Kitchen is located directly to the west of the Dining Room. A 1995 fire charred a small portion of the former kitchen area and damaged a steel support column. The Kitchen and serving areas were converted in the 1950s to accommodate Santa Fe Railroad's baggage handling facilities. The original six inch square quarry tile floor of the Kitchen remains and is in good condition. The large metal vent approximately four feet square still remains revealing the location of the stove. The south half of the Kitchen area was elevated about two feet with a concrete floor to enable the roll-up doors to function as a loading dock in the 1950s to Front Street. A concrete ramp, constructed circa 1950s, overlays the floor which enabled baggage handling from the elevated area. Historic ceramic tile wainscot of the Harvey House kitchen remains near the stove location. Extant food coolers are located west of the kitchen. The coolers' cork filled walls and doors remain intact with their original hardware. A bakery was located north of the coolers. A large laundry, the largest room at the west end of the building, is adjacent to the bakery and food

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storage cooler rooms that originally serviced all of the Harvey Houses in Southern California. The fire doors, hardware and finishes, circa 1922, are original and intact.

The remaining 120' of the west wing (7,500 square feet), originally used as a laundry room for the Fred Harvey Company, is divided by wood framed infill walls. The now enclosed historic "interior service driveway" is located approximately 60 feet from the west end of El Garces and contains the original exterior windows and doors, which are in good condition.

## Second Floor

The second floor historically provided 64 guest rooms for hotel visitors and employees of the El Garces Hotel. The hotel rooms and hallways maintain their original configuration. The majority of the original doors, and windows are extant within the second floor space. All of the original restrooms and baths are extant and located at the landings of both original staircases. These restrooms were for shared use between all the rooms. The restrooms still contain original toilets, bathtubs, partitions, and toilet accessories such as soap dishes, towel racks, cabinets, and mirrors. A lavatory sink, originally provided in each hotel room, remain in approximately 80% of the rooms. Each room contains a double inward opening french door with a double outward opening screen door to the loggia for ventilation. Of these, approximately 70% of the french doors are extant. Fortunately, several sets of the missing french doors and panel doors are stored throughout the second floor corridors and rooms. Approximately 75% of the interior hallway access four panel doors are also extant. It is estimated that approximately 85%-90% of the doors are existing, either in their original location, or stored on-site.

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## CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION CHRONOLOGY OF EL GARCES

1906	Wooden depot burned down.
1908	Classical revival style depot design by architect Francis Wilson and built of concrete.
1912	Remodel: Newsstand replaced the fountain at the central portico. Lunch Room tiles added.
1922	Remodel of Lunch Room.
1927	Remodel of Lunch Room.
1943	Harvey House additions.
1947	Depot additions.
1949	Harvey House closes.
1950s	Santa Fe improvements to the Harvey House west wing and upper floors of the hotel.
1961	Demolition of east wing. Construction of asphalt parking lot.
1988	Santa Fe closes their offices and builds small building to the east of the parking lot.
ca. 1995	Fire at the Harvey House kitchen.
2000-2002	Stabilization.

### *Integrity*

The El Garces maintains a high degree of architectural integrity, as well as maintaining the location, setting, and the important track side facade. The extant historic site and landscape features include the 1908-1912 transmission poles, surrounding palms, and portions of the brick walkways. The original materials of the exterior are unchanged and unaltered. Despite the removal of over 146' of the east side of the building, overall, the integrity of the extant design is high. The workmanship of the exterior and interior remains intact. The historic feeling and association are also intact, as the building was utilized in a compatible and similar usage to its original use with the Santa Fe Railroad coming in as tenants and utilizing the lobby area

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for passenger services. The building retains much of the feeling of a combination depot, hotel, and restaurant. The interior public spaces retain the original configuration with many of the original features extant, including doors, windows, ornamental plaster detailing, ceramic tile, light fixtures, hardwood, toilet fixtures, stairways, and other decorative finishes.

## *Conclusion*

El Garces is the largest and most significant example of a Classical Revival style depot within the State of California. The exterior of the building is substantially intact with only a portion of the east wing demolished. Historic and contemporary photographs of the building, taken from both the track side and the park side, continue to support El Garces as a strong and familiar visual feature for the City of Needles. Historic maps and architectural drawings obtained from the City of Needles distinctly show the high retention level of the original elements, as well as the overall historical importance of El Garces as the most significant Classical Revival style depot in California.

El Garces / Needles Santa Fe Depot  
Name of Property

San Bernardino County, California  
County and State

## 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

•Transportation  
•Architecture  
•Commerce/Trade

### Period of Significance

1908-1949

### Significant Dates

1908

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Wilson, Francis W. / Architect

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more sheets.)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 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 Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ California Point of Historical Interest

### Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other
- California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) database



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## 8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### *Summary*

El Garces is historically significant at a State level under Criterion A in the context of transportation and commerce, and under Criterion C at a State level for its architectural design significance, both through its long association with the railroad, and as an architectural landmark in the City of Needles. Since construction in 1908, it has been the single most important structure within the community employing nearly 85% percent of the local residents for the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad or under the Fred Harvey Company management. Historic area maps and architectural drawings provided by the City of Needles, show El Garces as a prominent building, located in the center of Needles, from the construction date of 1908 through the present. El Garces also reflected the growing national transportation trends as related to the extensive Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad and Harvey House establishments, as well as the close proximity and economic tie to U.S. Route 66. The period of significance is based on the years of usage as a railroad depot offering service to recreational tourists, via the railroad lines or U.S. Route 66, and in conjunction with a Harvey House Hotel and eating establishment. From the construction date in 1908 until 1949 when the Fred Harvey Company left the building, El Garces provided a great economic service to the City of Needles through the use of the local working population, as well as providing the critical link for the transfer of freight from the Arizona line to the California line. After World War II, the popularity of the Harvey House restaurants and hotels significantly declined due to the increased dependence on the automobile as the major means of travel.

El Garces was recognized as one of the ten most endangered depots in the United States by the Great American Station Foundation in 2000. Built in the Classic Revival style, an adaptation of the Greek and Roman temple designs employing modified details of the Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, or Tuscan orders. The large spanned loggias of El Garces are typical of this classical style along with its surrounding columns and light plastered walls.<sup>1</sup> While the design and workmanship are mimicked by the Redlands Atchison Topeka

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& Santa Fe Depot, the only other depot built in the Classical Revival architectural style in California, Redlands lacks the scale, attention to detail, grandeur, and important economic association with both the Fred Harvey Company, and national freight lines of El Garces. Additionally, the location, setting, materials, feeling and association of El Garces are unsurpassed.

### *Historical Background*

In 1883 the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad at Needles established a West Coast link for the critical railroad freight line, and founded the City of Needles.<sup>2</sup> One of the first buildings erected was the original Southern Pacific Railroad depot, considered to be a major stop on their Mojave to San Francisco line. Conducive with the design parameters of other first generation railroad depots, the depot was a single story wood frame construction. Often there was little distinction between the design of a depot and other auxiliary buildings used throughout the railroad lines, so the design primarily reflected the utilitarian and functional spaces dictated by the usage. In 1884, the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad line bought the rights to the Southern Pacific Railroad line through Needles, as part of their Arizona line, and the Southern Pacific Railroad discontinued its service along that portion of the line. Once established, the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad added second story hotel rooms and a Harvey House to the original building in 1898. The need for a significant number of hotel accommodations stemmed from the steady stream of weary travelers, as well as the permanent staff of the Harvey House and hotel.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, the wooden buildings such as these were particularly susceptible to fire and often destroyed by errant sparks or cinders from the steam-powered locomotives. The original depot in Needles followed the fate of many others, as it was destroyed by fire on September 6, 1906.

As the wood construction depots were eventually rebuilt or replaced, the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad turned toward architectural tradition for their design inspiration. The image of the railroad depot began to change from that of a utilitarian structure to an important public building. As passenger rail travel increased, many travelers embarked on recreational trips and were therefore able to see towns and locations

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that were previously inaccessible to them. Accordingly, these towns wanted to make a good first impression and so, wanted a prominent railroad depot. "There was a time in the not so distant past, before buses, planes, and trucks replaced railroads as the principle transporter of travelers, freight, and mail, when the railroad depot was considered an important building in the community as was the city hall, general store or post office."<sup>4</sup>

Intent on constructing a new depot that would propagate the desired new image of the city as a major transportation route, as well as an unparalleled destination on the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe line, the railroad spared no expense on the new Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad depot.<sup>5</sup> El Garces opened in 1908 at a cost of \$250,000.<sup>6</sup> (Refer to H1) The first built, and grandest of only two Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe "combination depots" in the State of California,<sup>7</sup> El Garces became known as the culmination of advanced architectural design, modern construction materials, and amenities dedicated to luxury, comfort, and cultural interests.

Considered to be the finest on the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad lines for its time, it was also the first concrete depot built by the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad.<sup>8</sup> (Refer to H2) "All structures were of frame construction except the newer 1908 reinforced concrete depot and Harvey House built at Needles."<sup>9</sup> The local Mojave tribes supplied the majority of the labor in building El Garces, many of whom climbed the tall ladders to place concrete into forms for the walls.<sup>10</sup> The building was named after Padre Francisco Garces, a noted Spanish priest, who journeyed through the area in the mid-1770s and first contacted the Mojave tribe. His name is found on the prestigious north facade (track side) and is visible to travelers as their trains stopped to load and unload.

Architect Francis Wilson designed El Garces, as well as four other railroad depots during his career. The first of his designs was the 1905 Southern Pacific Station in Santa Barbara.<sup>11</sup> El Garces was the first of three Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad depots designed by Wilson.<sup>12</sup> The other three depots; the Casa

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del Desierto in Barstow, the Fray Marcos Hotel and Depot in Williams, Arizona, and the Grand Canyon Depot also in Arizona, were completed after El Garces. Each of the five railroad depots designed by Francis Wilson were of varying architectural styles, as was the emerging custom for the railroad industry. The 1905 Santa Barbara Southern Pacific Station was designed in the Mission Revival style; the 1911 Casa Del Desierto was a blend of Spanish and Moroccan elements; the 1910 Grand Canyon Station, adjacent to the El Tovar Hotel, was of a log construction using Ponderosa pine from local sources, and the 1908 Fray Marcos was Italian Renaissance style. Both the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad and Francis Wilson envisioned a depot architecturally and aesthetically unique to the expanding commerce district of Needles.

Due to the formal nature of the style, the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad did not commonly use the Classical Revival style for any of their depots or ancillary buildings within the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad Arizona or California lines.<sup>13</sup> Most depot designs followed the then current design trends that, in California, emphasized one of the Mission or Spanish-influenced styles, and in Arizona leaned toward southwest styles based on Native American design principles. From the beginning, the style choice and classical lines of El Garces embodied a distinctive and expressive ideal, and placed it firmly within the context of American railroad history as one of both national quality and excellence.

The Classical Revival style, considered to be an expression of progressive ideals, experienced a resurgence of popularity due to the influence of the nationwide City Beautiful Movement of the early Twentieth Century.<sup>14</sup> The City Beautiful Movement heavily influenced many east coast railroad stations during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries such as the Pennsylvania Station in New York City and Union Station in Washington, D.C.<sup>15</sup> A direct and visible expression of the belief in the creation of a moral and civic virtue in the urban population by early reformers, the City Beautiful leaders, mostly made up of upper-middle class, white males, believed the emphasis should be made on creating a beautiful city, which would in turn inspire its inhabitants to moral and civic virtue. "The reform movement in America, which had largely been concerned with corruption in local government, exploitation of the laboring classes by big

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business, improvement in housing conditions in large cities, and other social causes, quickly embraced the concept of the city beautiful as an American goal.”<sup>16</sup> The choice of Classical Revival style for El Garces, furthered the prominent reputation of the small town of Needles that might otherwise be seen as a cultural backwater when compared to other larger towns up and down the railroad.<sup>17</sup> The May 1908 issue of *Santa Fe Magazine* announced the facility’s grand opening:

*El Garces, the new Santa Fe hotel at Needles, was opened for business on April 3. It was erected at a cost of almost a quarter of a million dollars and is one of the finest station hotels on the Santa Fe. It is constructed of reinforced concrete and is 518 feet long and two stories high, the architecture being colonial. It will be managed by Mr. Riley, who will have almost 150 employees to help him. Mr. Riley is one of the youngest and most popular of the Harvey hotel managers and is fully capable of doing El Garces justice.*<sup>18</sup>

Primarily used as a dining house for the passenger trains passing through, the dining facilities at El Garces were considered to be the most beautiful on the rails and had both a large lunch room and dining area. “The dining room was first class, with linen table cloths, real silver, and finger bowls.”<sup>19</sup> Not only was the Dining Room elegant, but boasted of being the largest in the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad line with a total dining capacity of 140.<sup>20</sup>

According to Donald Duke in *Santa Fe...The Railroad Gateway to the American West*, the distinctive architecture of the depots that contained Harvey House facilities were important factors for the Fred Harvey Company and their reputation as the “Civilizer of the American Southwest.” Frederick Henry Harvey (1835-1901) formed the Fred Harvey Company in 1876 and began what proved to be a long time agreement to provide quality food to the passengers of the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad.<sup>21</sup> Beginning with a small lunch room in Topeka, Kansas, the company grew west along the new rail lines. In Arizona and California, the Fred Harvey Company began by taking over the “saloon-like” establishments located in or



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near a railroad depot, and, as the newer and larger depots were built, incorporated their modern and elegant dining and lunch rooms into the design. Their choice to establish the largest and most opulent Fred Harvey restaurant and hotel at Needles directly attributed to the scale and elegance of its architecture and design. As the most noteworthy of the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe's hotels, it was labeled the "Crown Jewel" along the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe line.<sup>22</sup>

The Hotel and Harvey House, both ran by the Fred Harvey Company, employed over 150 workers. The majority of which, were the famous "Harvey Girls." Hired to work as waitresses, they were between the ages of eighteen and thirty, single, white, and largely from the east coast or mid-west. Over one hundred thousand young women followed the railroad west to work for Fred Harvey over the years.<sup>23</sup> The large laundry, located in the west wing of the Harvey House, was in charge of washing and ironing all of the linens for the Harvey Houses and the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe on the West Coast, and employed an additional 15-45 people to run the laundry.<sup>24</sup> At the height of popularity of railroad travel through Needles, the majority of the locals were employed either by the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe to work at the depot, roundhouse and shops, or by the Fred Harvey Company.<sup>25</sup>

Viewed as a highly cultured environment, El Garces remained popular among the Harvey Girls. "Josephine worked in Hutchison for two and half years before asking for a transfer to Needles, which, she remembers, was much like going to Europe today."<sup>26</sup> "Several Harvey Houses--those at the Grand Canyon, the Castañeda in Las Vegas, and El Garces in Needles, California--had the reputation of being enjoyable communities in which to work and live. Requests for work positions at these houses were frequent, and employees often remained for years."<sup>27</sup> (Refer to H10)

The Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad line and Fred Harvey carefully cultivated the image of the southwest and the indigenous people. Intent on providing the tourists with a true "southwestern" experience, many depots in conjunction with the Fred Harvey Company, hired the local indigenous people to give

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demonstrations on weaving and basketry for the tourists. Many local Mojave Indians, including those who helped in the actual construction of El Garces, provided their famous beadwork for sale to travelers at the Depot.<sup>28</sup> (Refer to H7 and H8) "Needles station was remembered far and wide for the brightly dressed Mojave ladies who brought artistic beadwork to the platform to offer for sale to passengers when trains stopped for dinners at El Garces Hotel."<sup>29</sup>

Initially, the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad line to Needles was part of the Arizona line, not the Los Angeles Division as it is today. El Garces is the only Classical Revival style depot built on the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad line through Arizona. Seen as the "gateway" to California on the rail lines for both tourists and freight, the close proximity to State Route 66 automatically increased the stature of Needles as a tourist destination. Many who traveled by automobile across country on Route 66, as well as by rail, planned in advance a stay at El Garces for a much needed break from their travels. With the increase of El Garces' popularity and reputation of opulence grew, the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe built the Redlands Depot in 1910, in the neighboring Los Angeles Division hoping to enjoy success similar to that of El Garces. While the design mimics the same Classical Revival elements, the Redlands Depot lacks the size, grandeur, and interesting architectural vocabulary of the El Garces. By way of comparison, the unique design and scale of El Garces juxtaposed against the Redlands Depot serves as a blatant reminder as to El Garces' prestige as the last stop in Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe's Arizona line as it entered California and ventured through the Cajon pass to California.<sup>30</sup>

The town of Needles remained self sufficient prior to World War II, largely due to the positive influence of El Garces and the Fred Harvey Company. "It was a major railroad town, with plenty of people surrounding the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, but it had little contact with other nearby communities."<sup>31</sup> As a result of this, the railroad was seen as the "angel" to the community of Needles providing comfortable housing, and a recreation center where many different functions were held.<sup>32</sup> El Garces was commonly thought of as a desirable destination, or travel landmark, for rail and highway travelers as well as the local

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population. Similar to many other small western towns, it was the most respectable place to dine for both travelers and the local citizenry.<sup>33</sup>

In order to weather the Depression years, the Harvey Houses actively found ways to reduce costs. Most employees, including the Harvey Girls, incurred a substantial pay decrease. During World War II, the Fred Harvey system faced the challenge of feeding service men who were on their way to the Pacific. The Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe lacked the dining car facilities to serve all the special military trains, so the Harvey House restaurant experienced a happy revival.<sup>34</sup> Thousands of troops enjoyed lunch and dinner at the Harvey House Dining Room and Lunch Room in El Garces during the World War II era. Due to the influx of the constant "troop trains" passing through Needles, the Fred Harvey Company hired local high school girls to help serve their meals, which also helped sustain the local economy.

The ice cream room/soda fountain was very popular with the soldiers who came through on the many troop trains and by those camped in the surrounding desert for desert exercises. General George S. Patton, in the area conducting the war games which were believed to have made victory possible in the African part of World War II, often checked in at the Harvey House on weekends. For relaxation, he is said to have played poker with some of the local "card sharks."<sup>35</sup>

After World War II, automobile and airplane travel became the primary mode of transportation in American society. As passenger travel dwindled on the railroad, so did the customer demand at Harvey House hotels and eating houses. The houses that reopened during World War II closed again. By 1949, many of the large elegant houses -- El Garces in Needles, El Vaquero in Dodge City, and the Castañeda in Las Vegas -- all declined and then permanently closed.<sup>36</sup> Although the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad continued to occupy El Garces, its former grandeur was lost when Fred Harvey closed its doors. In 1988, less than 380 employees were working for Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe compared to almost 2,400 in the area during the 1940s.<sup>37</sup>

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*"Standing at the Santa Fe passenger station in Needles, California, one afternoon, I looked with interest at a large, impressive building that dwarfed the small ticket office and waiting room. The massive structure was built in the style of the old neoclassical Greek, with a plaster exterior, wide outside verandas and a partly enclosed courtyard. The shadows beginning to invade the courtyard had already crept across its fountain, but sunlight still struck the sign reading El Garces. At that moment the Santa Fe streamliner, the Chief, arrived from the west at 3:15 p.m. for its three-minute Needles stop to change train and engine crews. As the Chief began to pull out of the station, someone on the platform stated: "They served good meals here at one time." Another passenger went on to say: "The El Garces was one of the finest hotels in the country in the old days." <sup>38</sup>*

The main working and public spaces of El Garces that contributed to the overall transportation and commerce history of Needles, the significant role of the Fred Harvey Company, the early automobile culture of U.S. Route 66, as well as the national tie to the strong railroad freight route, are extant and in excellent condition. Despite the demolition of a portion of the east wing and other minimal renovations, El Garces retains a high degree of its architectural integrity, as well as continuing to convey its overall importance through the location, setting, materials, feeling and association.

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### Endnotes

1. Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000, 183-184.
2. Barbara Babcock and Marta Weigle, Eds. *The Great Southwest of the Fred Harvey Company and the Santa Fe Railway*, Phoenix, AZ: The Heard Museum, 1996, xii.
3. Donald Duke and Stan Kistler. *Santa Fe ... Steel Rails Through California*. San Marino, CA: Golden West Books, 1963, 15.
4. Lee Gustafson and Phil Serpico. *Coast Line Depots: Los Angeles Division*. Palmdale, CA: Omni Publications, 1992, 21.
5. The first depot was built in 1883 by the Southern Pacific Railroad. The depot later transferred its ownership to the Santa Fe in 1894. The wood framed depot also included hotel and restaurant facilities which were subsequently taken over by the Fred Harvey Company.
6. Donald Duke, *Santa Fe...The Railroad Gateway to the American West*, vol. 2, *Passenger and Freight Service, the Fred Harvey System, Steam and Diesel Locomotives, Signals, Communications, and the Santa Fe Emblem*, San Marino, CA: Golden West Books, 1997, 390.
7. A combination depot combines a depot, ticket counter, baggage areas, as well as a hotel and eating facilities. The second, located in Barstow, was not as grandiose.
8. *San Bernardino Valley Centennial*, n.d., 98. The 1911 Barstow Santa Fe Depot was the only other Santa Fe Depot that included dining and hotel accommodations in California.
9. Gustafson and Serpico, 27.
10. Needles Regional Museum Association, "Seventh Annual Historical Calendar." (1993)
11. Janet Greenstein Potter, *Great American Railroad Stations*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1996, 418.
12. Francis Wilson is known for the varying architectural styles on public and residential buildings in Santa Barbara, CA. Patricia Gardner Cleek. "Francis W. Wilson, Architect." *Noticias*, vol. 30, no. 5, Fall 1985. Francis Wilson was also responsible designing the home of Santa Fe's president. Refer to



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Janet Greenstein Potter, *Great American Railroad Stations*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1996, 418.

13. The more popular image of the Santa Fe at the time the El Garces was built was the Mission Revival style of architecture.

14. There is no true indication as to who chose the style for El Garces.

15. The City Beautiful Movement was a "nationwide planning concept that sought to rectify the clutter and ugliness of gritty American cities." Janet Greenstein Potter, *Great American Railroad Stations* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1996), 18. "The City Beautiful advocates sought to improve their city through beautification, which would have a number of effects: 1) social ills would be swept away as the beauty of the city would inspire civic loyalty and moral rectitude in the impoverished; 2) American cities would be brought to cultural parity with their European competitors through the use of the European Beaux-Arts idiom; and 3) a more inviting city center still would not bring the upper classes back to live, but certainly to work and spend money in the urban areas." Julie K. Rose, "The City Beautiful," *City Beautiful: The 1901 Plan for Washington D.C.* (Virginia: University of Virginia, Spring 1996); available from <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~cap/citybeautiful/dchome.html>; accessed February 7, 2001. The Penn Station was demolished in the 1960s and is currently being reconstructed. See Anne Matthews, "End of an Error," *Preservation*, vol. 51, no. 2, March/April, 1999.

16. Julie K. Rose, "The City Beautiful," *City Beautiful: The 1901 Plan for Washington D.C.* Virginia: University of Virginia, Spring 1996; available from <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~cap/citybeautiful/dchome.html>; accessed February 7, 2001.

17. Hans and April Halberstadt, *The American Train Depot and Roundhouse*, Osceola, WI: Motorbooks International Publishers and Wholesalers, 1995, 67.

18. From Bob Schuster, "Forged in Steel: The Railroad Town of Needles is Born." *The Needles Desert Star* (1988). Also from the *San Bernardino Valley Centennial* page 98, "...nine hotels including the famous El Garces Harvey Hotel that cost \$250,000, the finest in the Santa Fe lines...."

19. Bill Claypool, "Challenges of History," *Needles Desert Star*, (July 6, 1988). There is no indication of Mary Colter's involvement at the El Garces Hotel/Needles Santa Fe Depot. She is, however, known for her collaboration on the Casa del Desierto in Barstow with architect Francis W. Wilson. See the 1974 Casa del Desierto National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form.

20. Gustafson, 23 and 28.

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21. Babcock and Weigle, xii.
22. Lee Gustafson and Phil Serpico, *Coast Line Depots: Los Angeles Division*, Palmdale, CA: Omni Publications, 1992, 23.
23. Lesley Poling-Kempes, *The Harvey Girls: Women who opened the West*, New York: Marlowe & Company, 1991.
24. Claypool. The laundry closed with the Harvey House in 1948. The laundry served all of the Harvey House restaurants in Southern California.
25. The Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe no longer used the roundhouse at Needles as of 1948 when these services were done at the Barstow Depot. The auxiliary buildings were demolished in 1988.
26. Leslie Poling-Kempes, *The Harvey Girls: Women Who Opened the West* New York: Marlowe & Company, 1991, 74.
27. Ibid., 92.
28. A local citizen recalled that life in Needles "revolved either around the Harvey House and Santa Fe Depot, where the slower trains stopped long enough for the passengers to alight and eat...." Bob Schuster, "Growing Up in Early Needles: Turn of the Century Railroad Town was Brimming with Adventure." *The Needles Desert Star Presents Our People Our Past 1888-1998*, A-6.
29. Maggie McShan, Untitled (January 26, 1983).
30. Needles was formerly attached to the Arizona Division until its abolishment on August 1, 1949. "Employee timetable No. 138, dated April 2, 1950, was the first to indicate that Needles to Barstow line had become a part of the Los Angeles Division." Gustafson, 27.
31. Ibid., 125.
32. Maggie McShan, "History of Needles," (Needles: Needles Chamber of Commerce, 1986).
33. Duke, 377.
34. Duke, 388.
35. Maggie McShane, "General Patton Slept Here," *Footprints*, vol. 28, no. 1 (January-May, 2000), 24. A historical photo shows one of the rooms on the second floor was a scene of the Patton poker games.

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36. Duke, 389. Although most references to the close of the El Garces Hotel and Harvey House as 1948, a January 16, 1988 letter addressed to Ms. Maggie McShan, Needles historian, from Ms. Virgie Johns, former Needles Harvey Girl, states that the "official posted date for the closing was 11:59 p.m., September 14, 1949."

37. Claypool.

38. Duke, 369.

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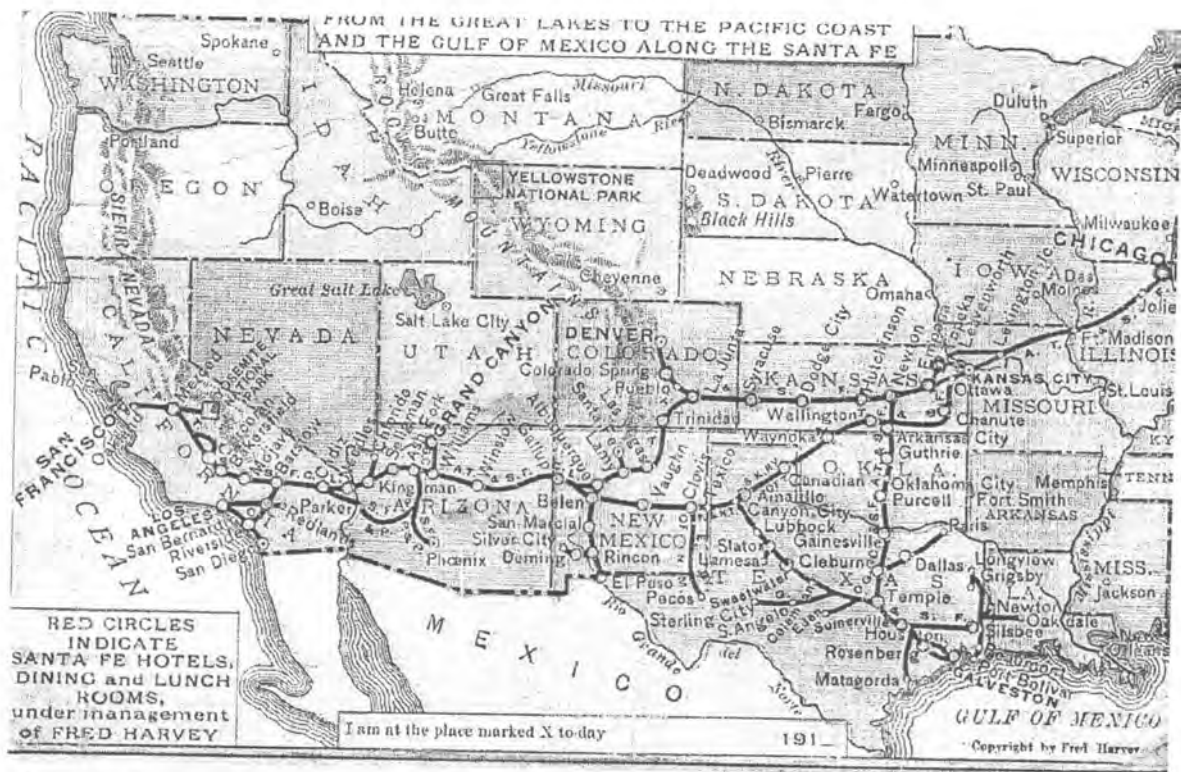


Figure 1: Postcard showing locations of the Harvey House restaurants, ca. 1910. (Courtesy of Architect Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA historic postcard collection)

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## Santa Fe Meal Service

(Management Fred Harvey)

The dining-car, dining-room, and hotel service of the Santa Fe is managed by Fred Harvey. It is the best railway meal service in the world. All through passenger trains, which do not carry dining cars, are scheduled to stop at dining stations, placed at convenient points along the line. Ample time is allowed for meals.

All dining cars are equipped with electric lights and electric fans. A ventilating device in the kitchen removes all odor of cooking. Meals a la carte.

Below is given a list of stations at which dining rooms and lunch rooms will be found:

### DINING ROOMS

Albuquerque, N. M.  
Amarillo, Tex.  
Arkansas City, Kan.  
Ash Fork, Ariz.  
Bakersfield, Cal.  
Barstow, Cal.  
Canadian, Tex.  
Clovis, N. M.  
Dallas, Tex.  
Deming, N. M.  
Dodge City, Kan.  
Emporia, Kan.  
Ft. Worth, Texas.  
Gallup, N. M.

### DINING ROOMS

Hutchinson, Kan.  
La Junta, Colo.  
Lamy, N. M.  
Las Vegas, N. M.  
Merced, Cal.  
Needles, Cal.  
Newton, Kan.  
Purcell, Okla.  
Rincon, N. M.  
Syracuse, Kan.  
Tempe, Tex.  
Topeka, Kan.  
Trinidad, Colo.

### DINING ROOMS

Wellington, Kan.  
Williams, Ariz.  
Winslow, Ariz.  
Ferry Steamers "San Pablo" and "San Pedro," San Francisco.  
Dearborn Station, Chicago, and Union Depot restaurant, El Paso, are also managed by Fred Harvey.

### LUNCH ROOMS

Albuquerque, N. M.  
Amarillo, Tex.  
Arkansas City, Kan.  
Ash Fork, Ariz.  
Bakersfield, Cal.  
Barstow, Cal.  
Belem, N. M.  
Canadian, Texas  
Chasante, Kan.  
Cleburne, Texas.  
Clovis, N. M.  
Colorado Springs, Colo.  
Dallas, Tex.  
Deming, N. M.  
Dodge City, Kan.  
Emporia, Kan.  
Ft. Worth, Texas.  
Gallup, N. M.  
Gainesville, Texas.  
Galveston, Texas.  
Guthrie, Okla.

### LUNCH ROOMS

Houston, Tex.  
Hutchinson, Kan.  
Kingman, Ariz.  
La Junta, Colo.  
Lamy, N. M.  
Las Vegas, N. M.  
Los Angeles, Cal.  
Merced, Cal.  
Mojave, Cal.  
Needles, Cal.  
Newton, Kan.  
Purcell, Okla.  
Rincon, N. M.  
Rosenberg, Texas.  
San Bernardino, Cal.  
San Marcial, N. M.  
Seligman, Ariz.  
Silabee, Texas.  
Slaton, Texas.  
Somerville, Texas.  
Sweetwater, Texas.

### LUNCH ROOMS

Syracuse, Kan.  
Tempe, Texas.  
Topeka, Kan.  
Trinidad, Colo.  
Vaughn, N. M.  
Waynoka, Okla.  
Wellington, Kan.  
Wichita, Kan.  
Williams, Ariz.  
Winslow, Ariz.  
Ferry Steamers "San Pablo" and "San Pedro," San Francisco.  
Dearborn Station restaurant, Chicago, Union Depot restaurant, El Paso, and Union Station Lunch Room, Houston.

### Hotel Accommodations are provided at:

Albuquerque, N. M.  
Ash Fork, Ariz.  
Barstow, Cal.  
Clovis, N. M.  
Deming, N. M.  
Dodge City, Kan.  
Emporia, Kan.  
Grand Canyon, Ariz.  
Hutchinson, Kan.

La Junta, Colo.  
Lamy, N. M.  
Las Vegas, N. M.  
Needles, Cal.  
Newton, Kan.  
Rincon, N. M.  
San Marcial, N. M.  
Seligman, Ariz.

Somerville, Tex.  
Syracuse, Kan.  
Tempe, Tex.  
Trinidad, Colo.  
Vaughn, N. M.  
Wellington, Kan.  
Williams, Ariz.  
Winslow, Ariz.

\* Closed temporarily.

The most noteworthy of the Santa Fe hotels are:

	CAPACITY	
	DINING GUEST ROOMS	ROOMS
THE BISONTE, at Hutchinson, Kansas	110	70
THE EL VAQUERO, at Dodge City, Kansas	108	43
THE SEQUOYAH, at Syracuse, Kansas	80	14
THE GRAN QUIVIRA, at Clovis, New Mexico	68	21
THE LOS CHAVES, at Vaughn, New Mexico	No Dining Room	9
THE CARDENAS, at Trinidad, Colorado	101	26
THE CASTAÑEDA, at Las Vegas, New Mexico	96	43
EL ORTIZ, at Lamy, New Mexico	12	9
THE ALVARADO, at Albuquerque, New Mexico	131	60
THE FRAY MARCOS, at Williams, Arizona	39	24
EL TOVAR, at Grand Canyon, Arizona	170	23
THE ESCALANTE, at Ash Fork, Arizona	140	26
EL GARCES, at Needles, California	100	16
THE CASA DEL DESIERTO, at Barstow, California		

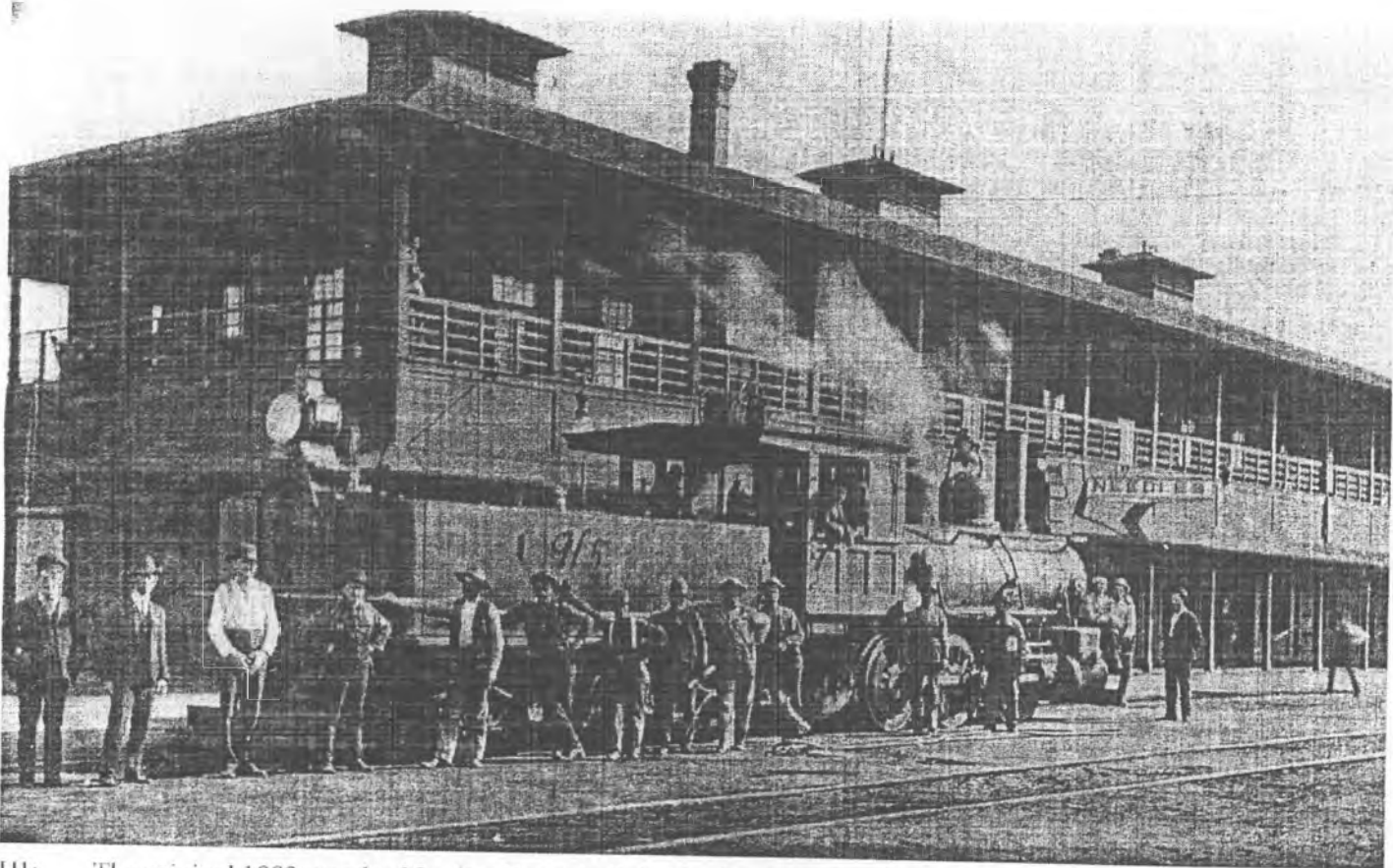
Figure 2: Santa Fe Route slip including all Harvey House restaurants and hotel establishments. Note that the El Garces Hotel/Needles Depot contains the largest dining room. (From *Coast Lines Depots*)



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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 16 El Garces  
San Bernardino, California



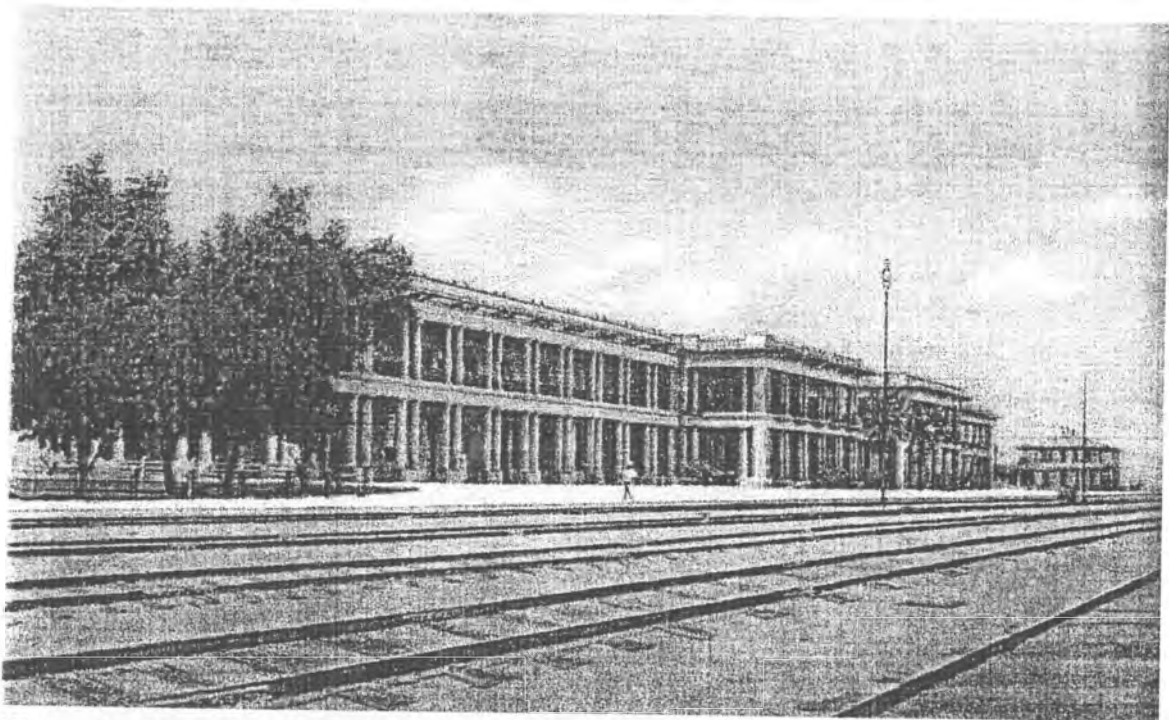
HI: The original 1883 wooden Needles Depot built by the Southern Pacific Railroad. An extension was made to the second floor by the Santa Fe Pacific in the late 1890s. In 1906, fire swept through the Depot claiming two lives.

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National Park Service

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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San Bernardino, California

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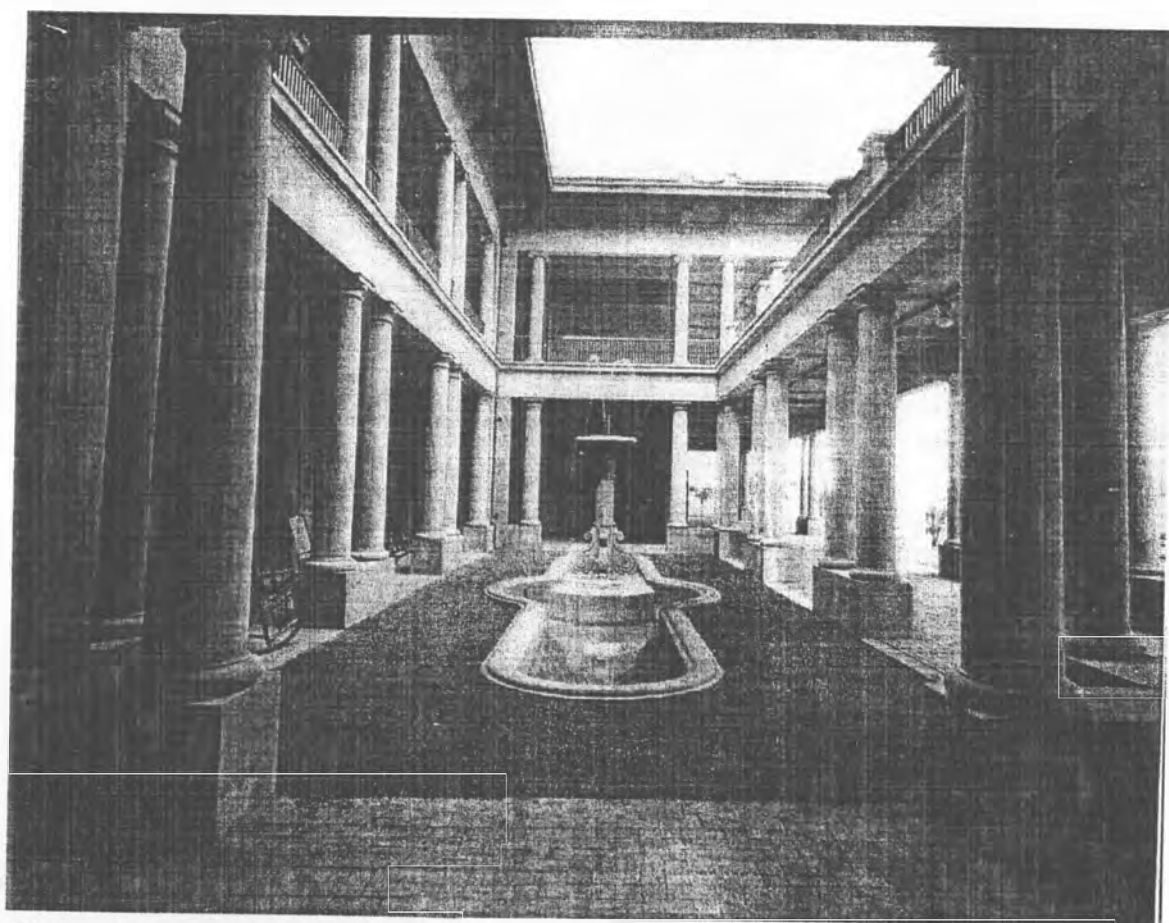
H2: Looking west towards the El Garces Hotel/Santa Fe Depot. The \$250,000 Greek revival style depot opened in May 1908. It contained the largest Harvey House Dining Room of all the Santa Fe Depots nationwide capable of seating up to 140 persons. (Courtesy of Architect Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA historic postcard collection)

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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San Bernardino, California

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H3: This historic fountain located at the central portico in 1908 was removed and replaced with an outdoor newsstand in 1912. (Courtesy of the Arizona State University, Fred Harvey Collection)

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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San Bernardino, California

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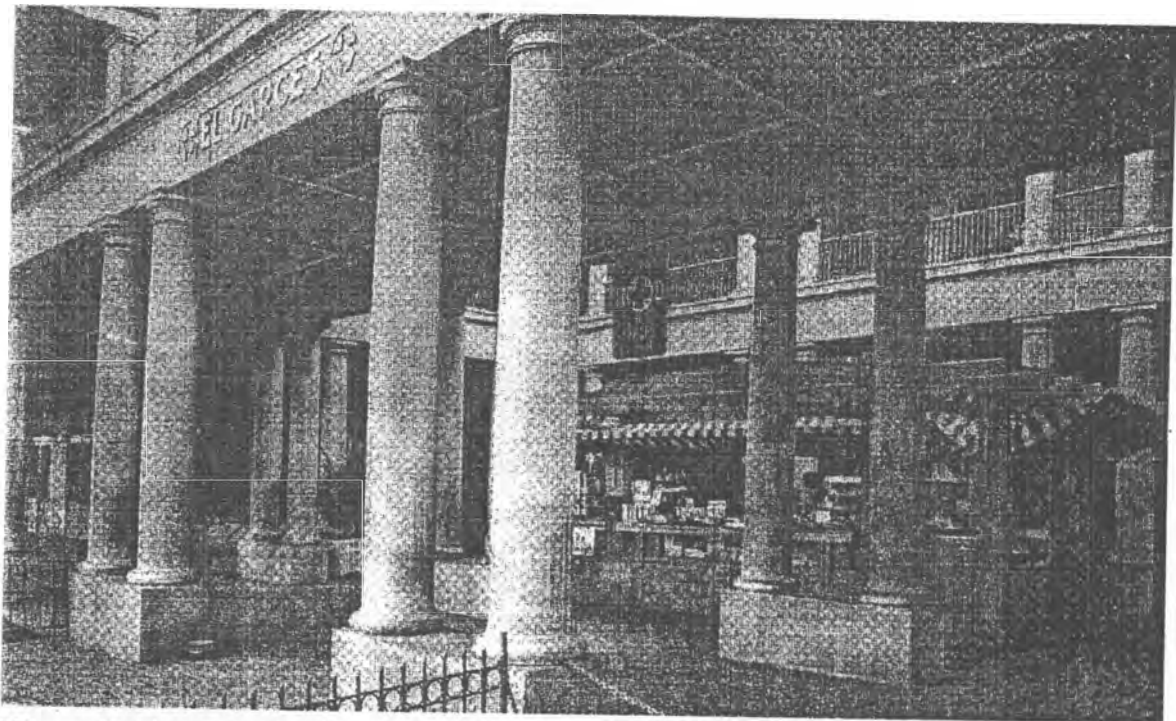
H17: Central portico of the Depot showing the Harvey House Lunch Room and Dining Room signage welcoming incoming passengers from their trains, ca. 1912. (Courtesy of Architect Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA historic postcard collection)

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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San Bernardino, California

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H5: Outdoor newsstand at the central portico, ca. 1912. (Courtesy of Architect Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA historic postcard collection)

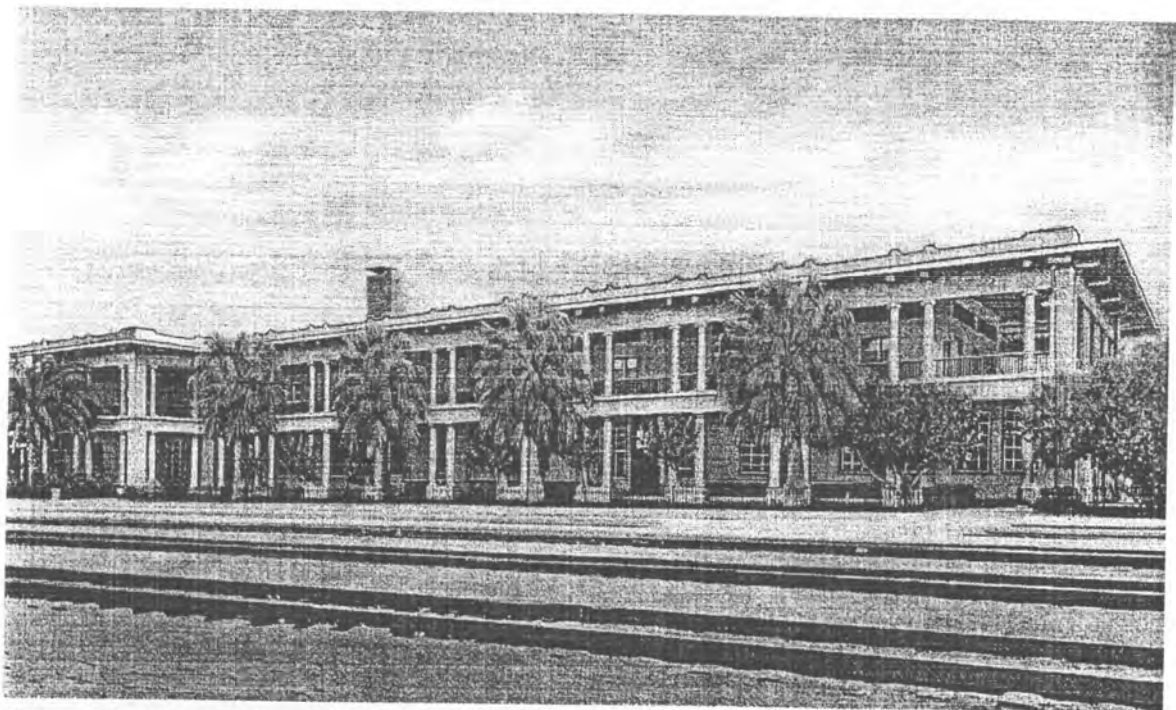


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National Park Service

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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San Bernardino, California

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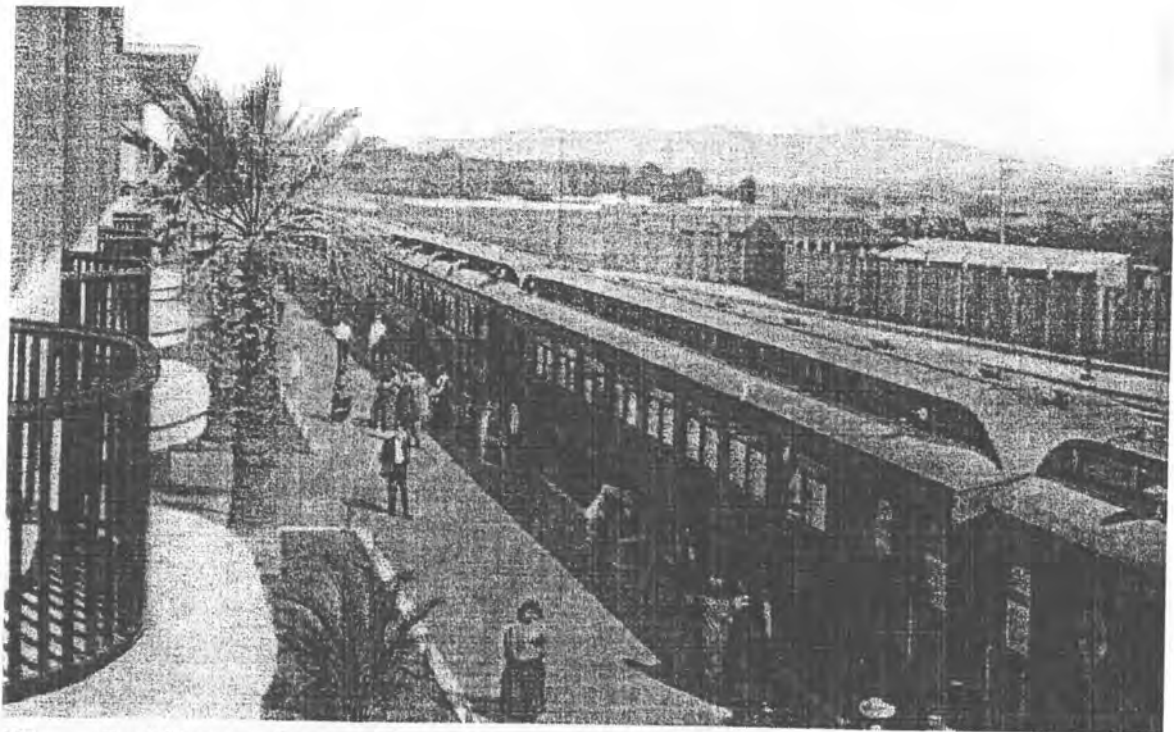
H6: Northwest Wing of the El Garces Hotel/Needles Depot, ca. 1912 showing the stately palms and manicured gardens surrounded by a wrought iron fence. (Courtesy of Architect Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA historic postcard collection)

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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San Bernardino, California

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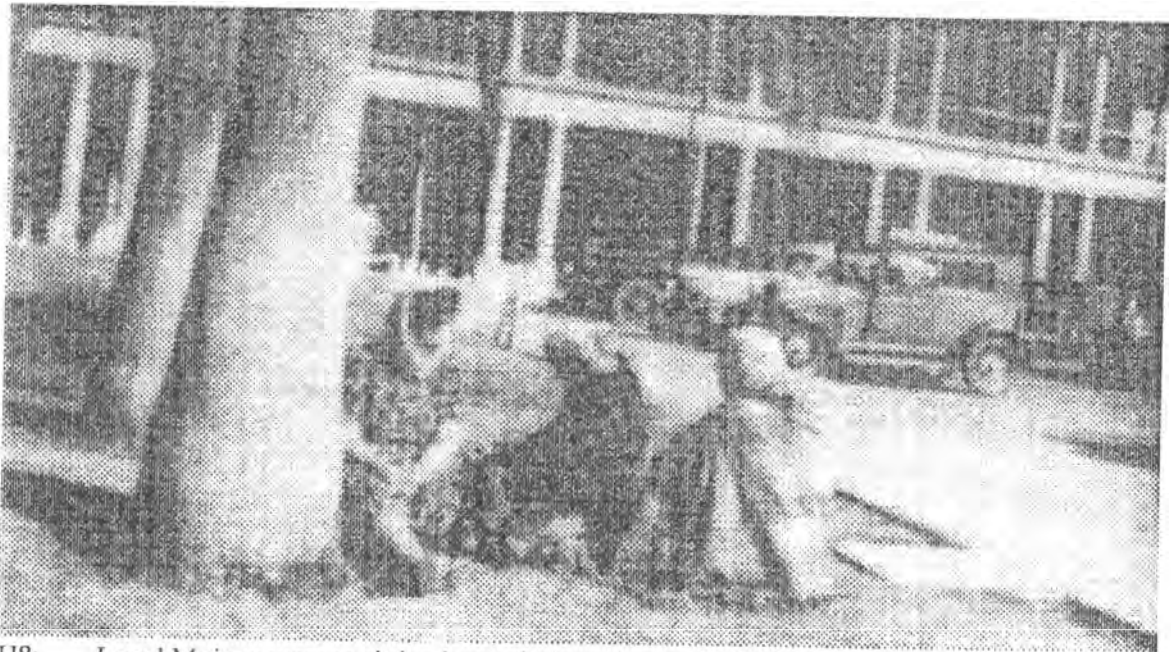
- H7: Fred Harvey often used local Native Americans to portray the southwest image he was promoting along the Santa Fe line. In the New Mexico and Arizona area, Navajo Indians were seen making native jewelry, blankets, and garments. Needles was no exception. Fred Harvey utilized the local Mojave Indians, as seen in this postcard, to continue this tradition into California. (Courtesy of Architect Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA historic postcard collection)

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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San Bernardino, California

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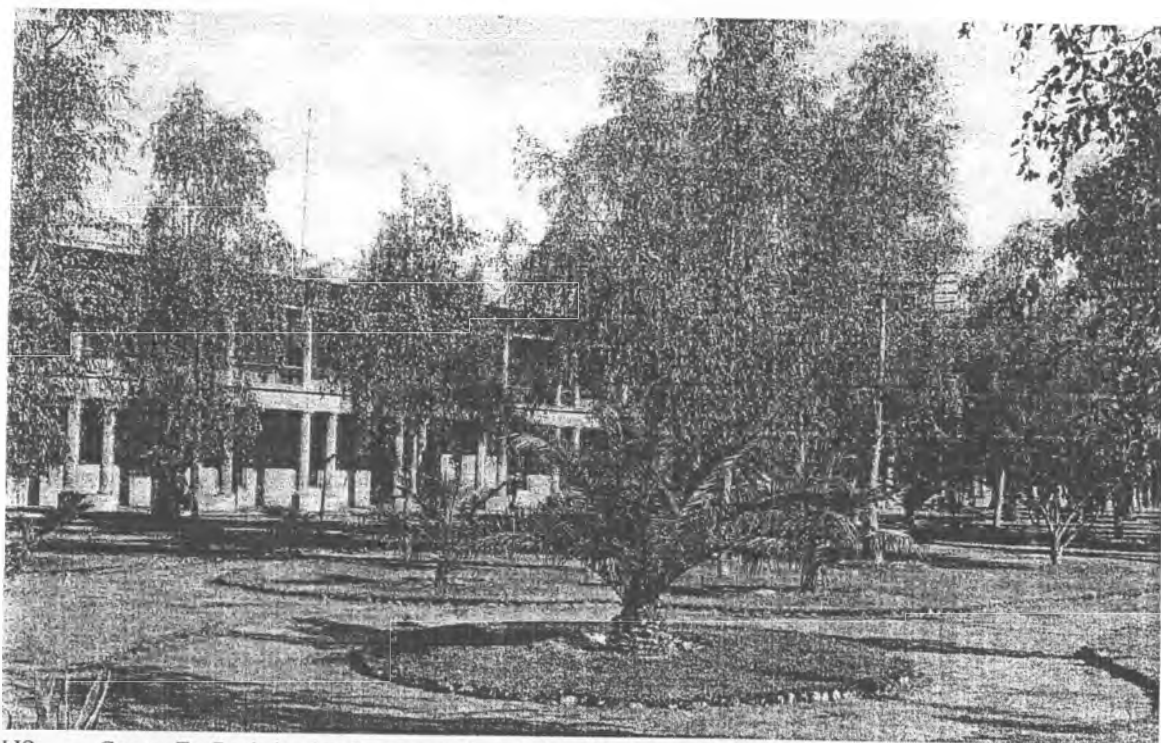
H8: Local Mojave women sitting beneath the palms at the Santa Fe Park with Alma Obob, missionary, ca. 1920s. Mojave Indian women traditionally sat flat on the ground in Santa Fe Park and practiced the art of beadwork. The El Garces Hotel/Needles Depot is in the background. (Courtesy of the Needles Regional Museum Association)

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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San Bernardino, California

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H9: Santa Fe Park in the foreground and the El Garces/Needles Depot at the background, ca. 1910. (Courtesy of Architect Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA historic postcard collection)

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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San Bernardino, California

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H10: Harvey staff at the El Garces/Needles Depot, ca. 1910. (Courtesy of Architect Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA historic postcard collection)

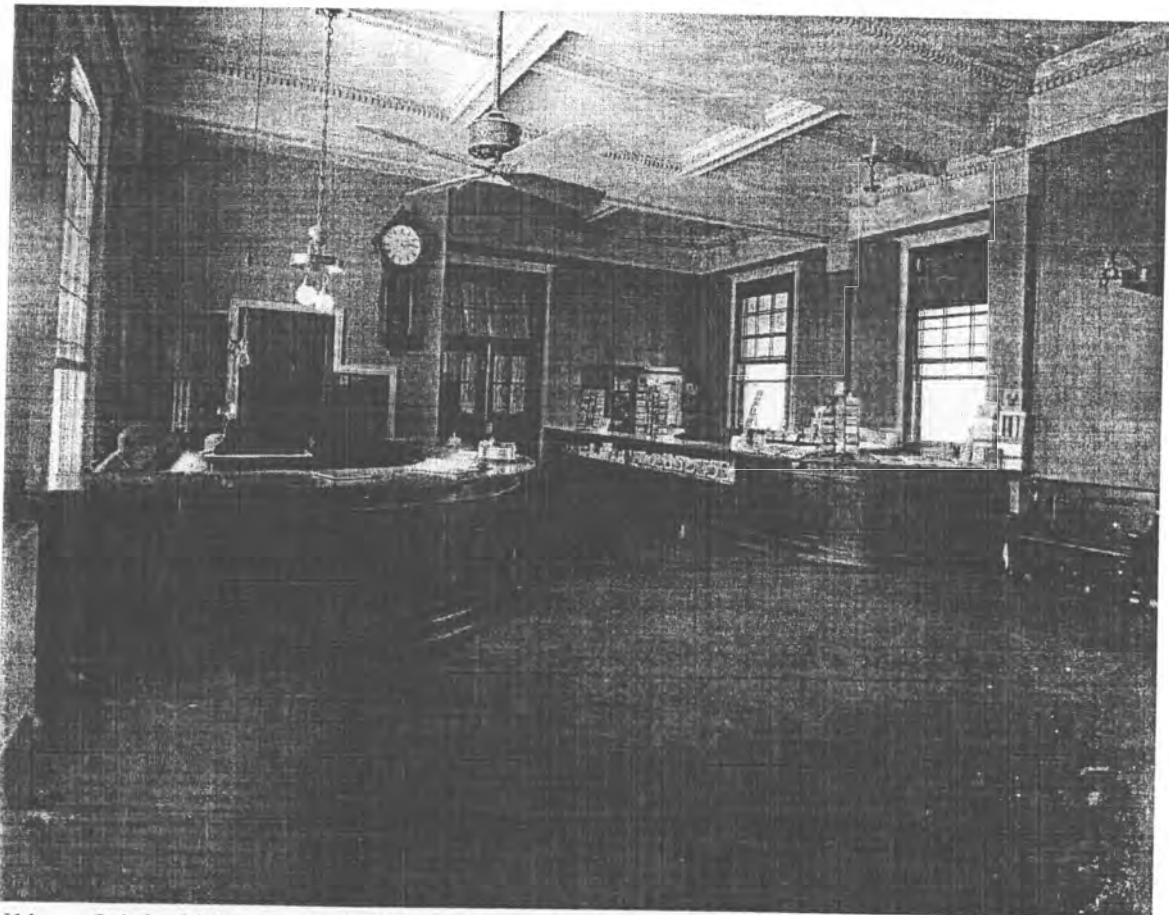


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National Park Service

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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San Bernardino, California

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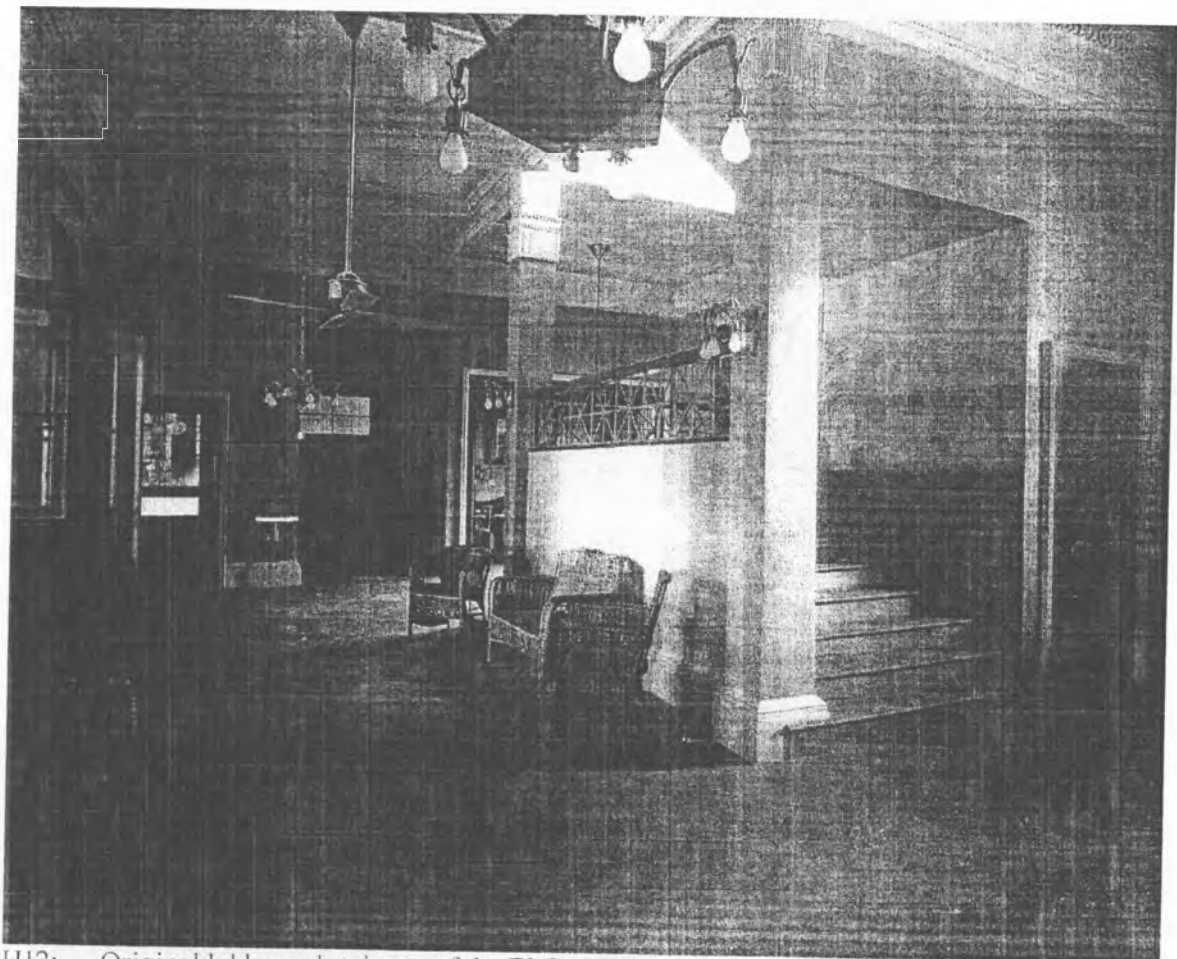
H11: Original lobby area of El Garces Hotel in 1908. The newsstand desk was replaced in 1912 when it was moved outdoors at the central portico. (Courtesy of Arizona State University, Fred Harvey Collection)

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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San Bernardino, California

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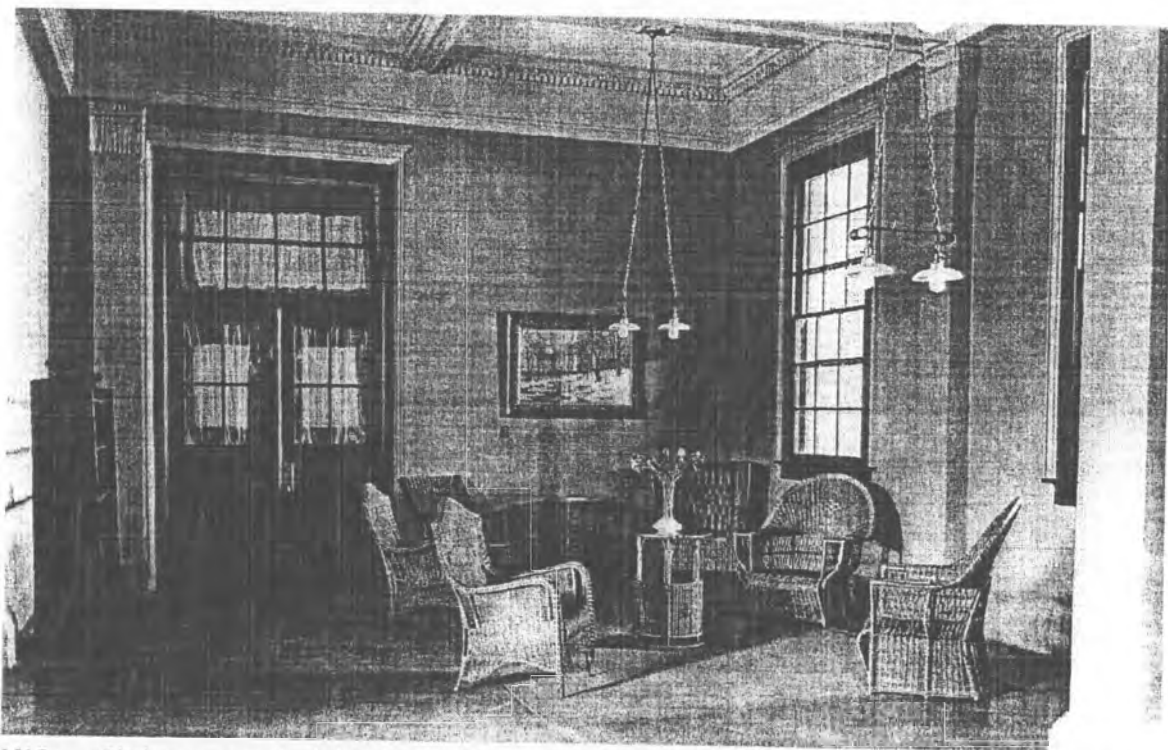
H12: Original lobby and stairway of the El Garces Hotel, 1908. Note the open stairway.  
(Courtesy of Arizona State University, Fred Harvey Collection)

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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San Bernardino, California

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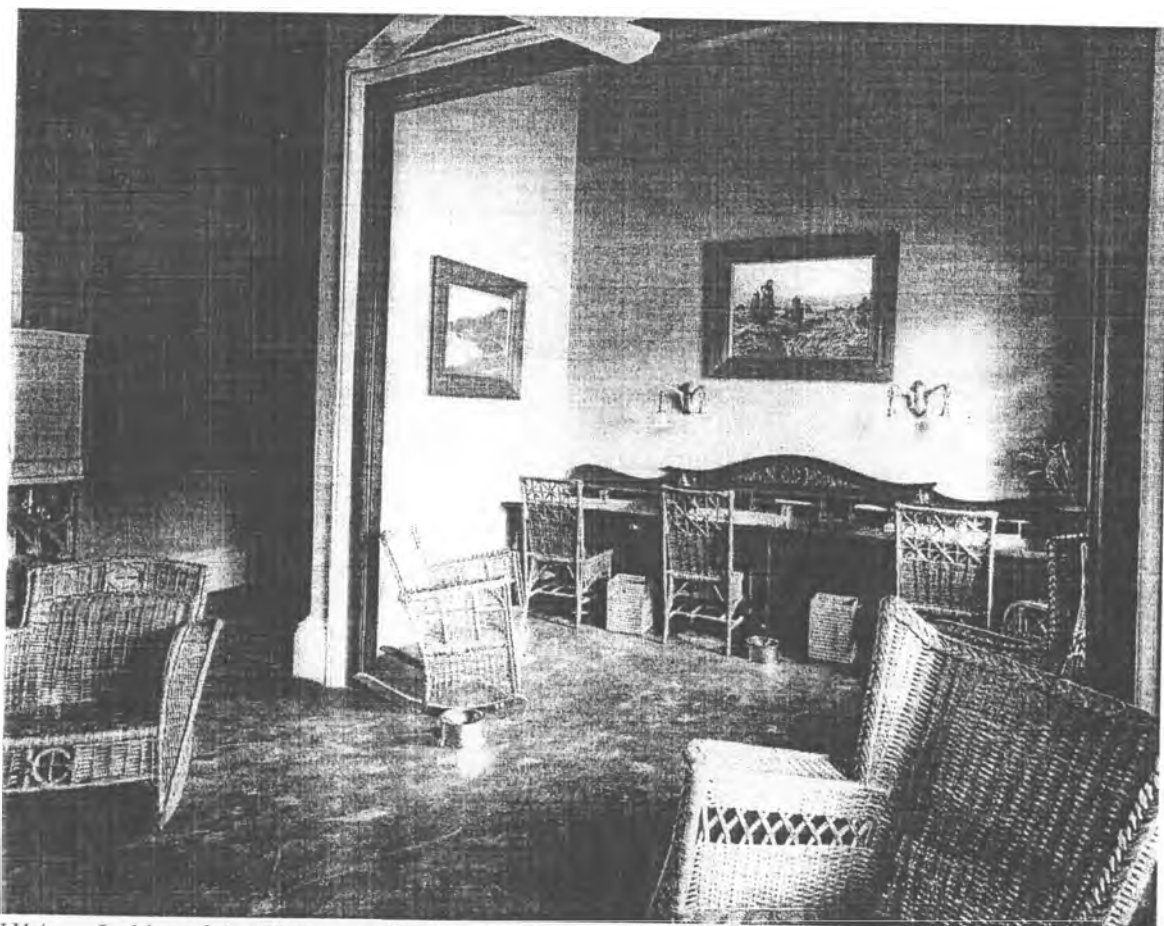
H13: Sitting area at the lobby of the El Garces Hotel replacing the newsstand, 1912. (Courtesy of Arizona State University, Fred Harvey Collection)

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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San Bernardino, California

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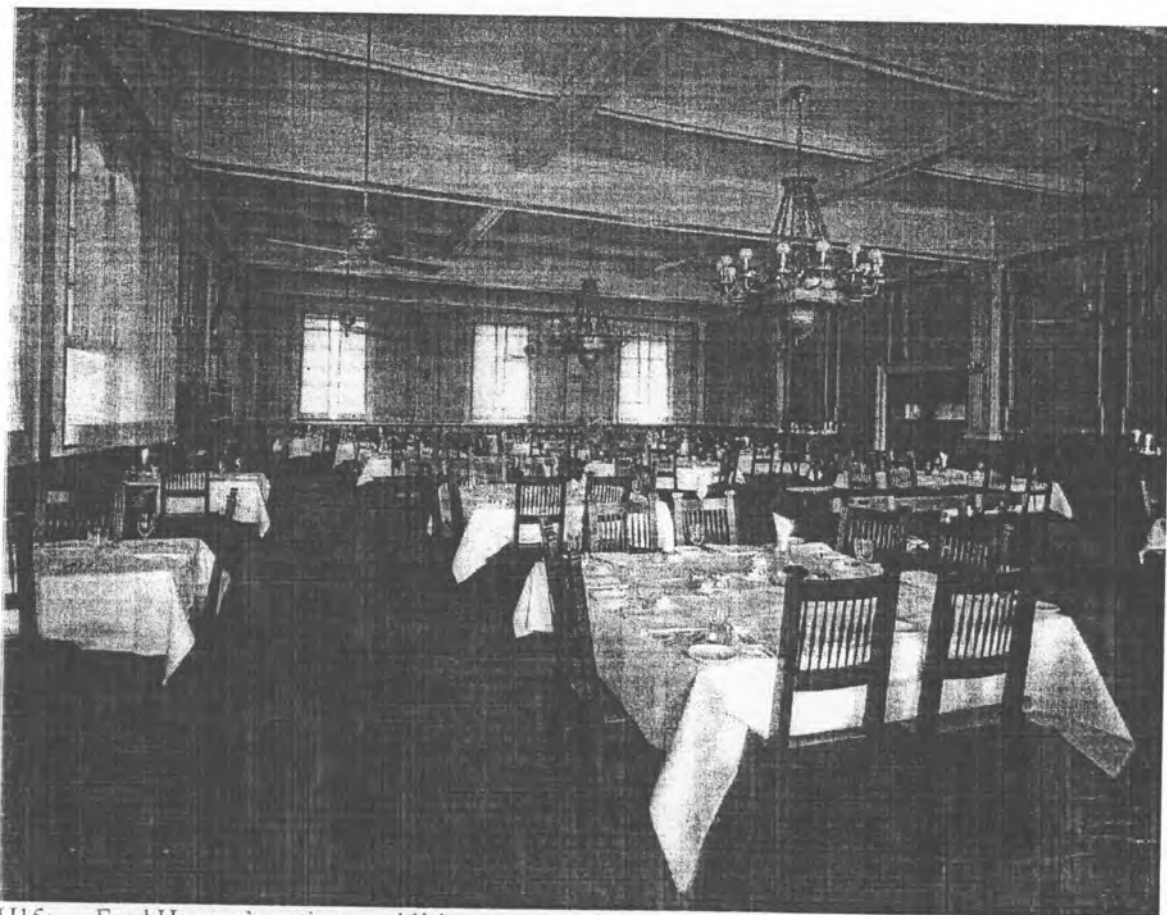
H14: Lobby of the El Garces Hotel, ca. 1912. (Courtesy of Arizona State University, Fred Harvey Collection)

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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San Bernardino, California

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H15: Fred Harvey's eating establishments were known throughout the country for their exceptionally high standards and impeccable service. The Harvey House Dining Room at Needles was the largest of all Santa Fe's Harvey House restaurants nationwide, ca. 1912. (Courtesy of Arizona State University, Fred Harvey Collection)

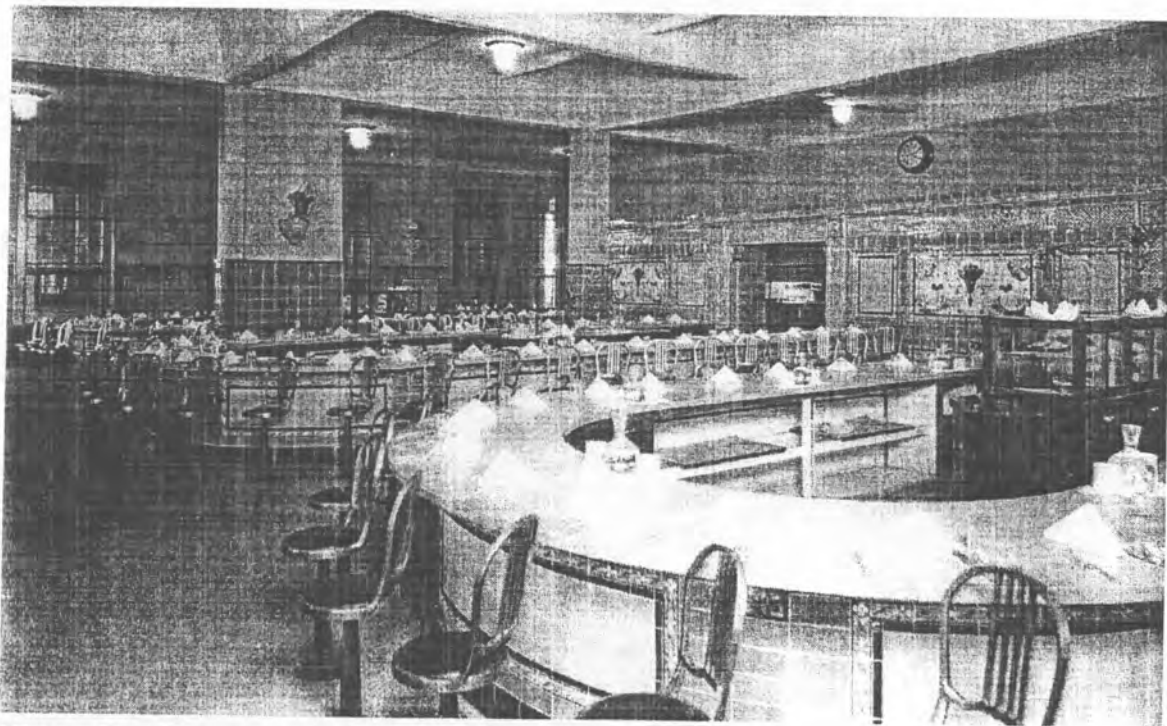


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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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San Bernardino, California

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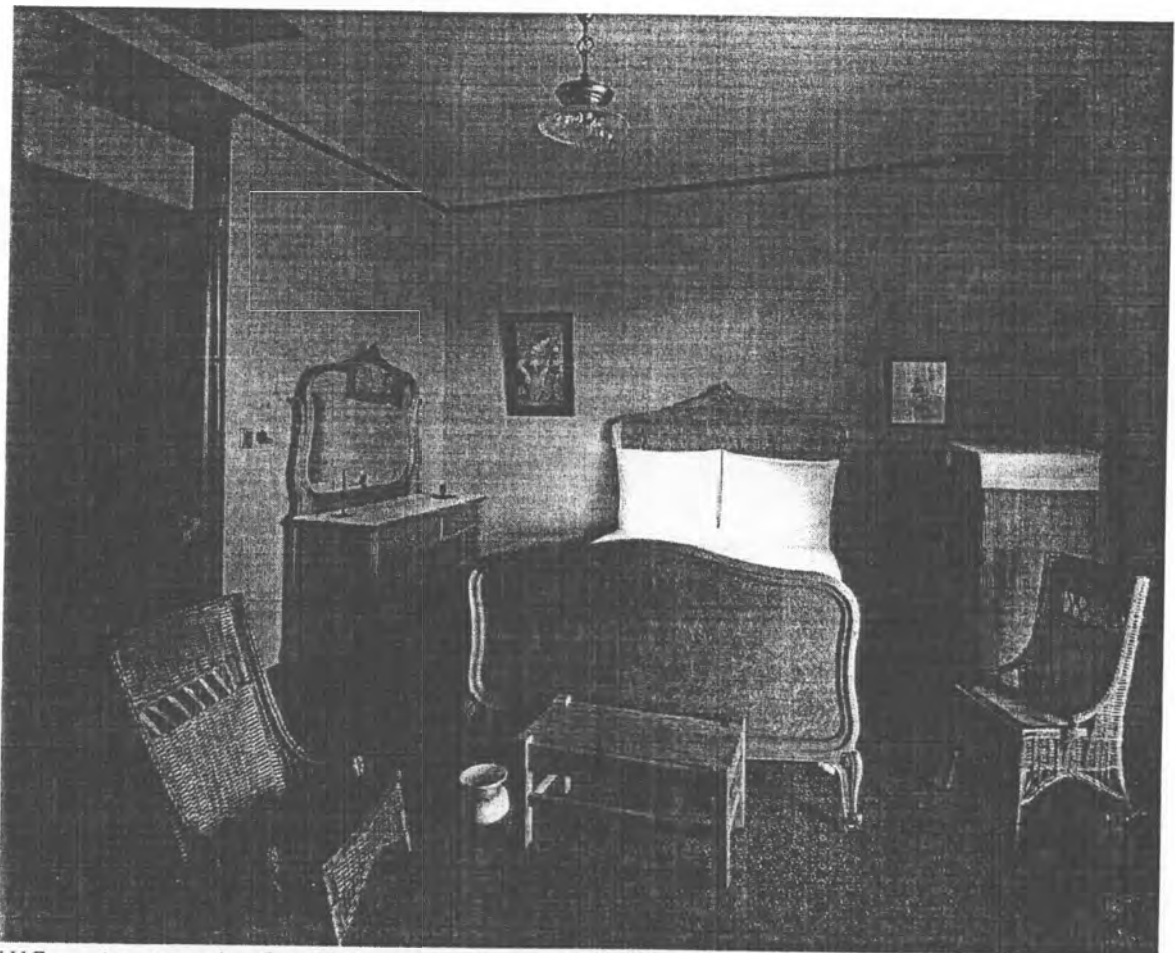
H16: Fred Harvey Lunch Room featured three large horse shoe counters, ca.1927. Courtesy of Arizona State University, Fred Harvey Collection)

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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San Bernardino, California

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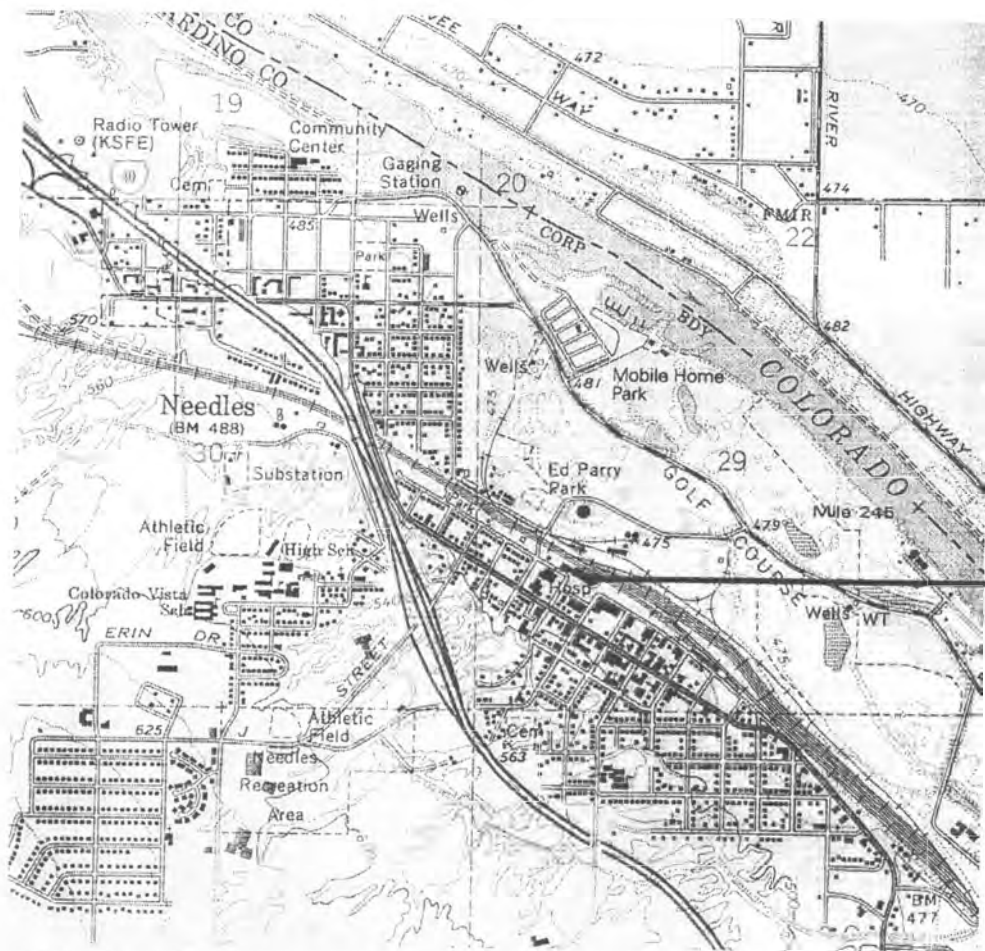
H17: An example of an El Garces hotel room featuring wicker furniture which is cool to sit on during the hot 120° summer months. (Courtesy of Arizona State University, Fred Harvey Collection)

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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Needles, San Bernardino County, California

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION: MAPS



El Garces Hotel/  
Needles Santa  
Fe Depot

1975 USGS Map. Needles, California-Arizona. Needles Quadrangle California-Arizona 7.5 minute series.



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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section \_\_\_\_ Page 1

El Garces  
Needles, San Bernardino County, California

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## ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION: PHOTOGRAPHS

The following information applies to all current photographs of El Garces.

1. Name: El Garces  
950 Front Street  
Needles, CA 92363
2. County, State: San Bernardino County, CA
3. Photographer: Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA
4. Dates of Photograph: August 2-3, 2000
5. Location of Negatives: Architect Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA  
530 Sixth Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92101

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National Park Service

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Section 9 Page 1 El Garces  
Needles, San Bernardino County, California

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Needles, San Bernardino County, California

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Needles, San Bernardino County, California

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## Drawings

Map of Needles, December 28, 1898.

"Proposed Recreation Building," December 22, 1905.

Site Plan, December 21, 1906.

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National Park Service

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 5 El Garces  
Needles, San Bernardino County, California

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"Sheet Number 2, First Floor plan," circa 1908.

Exterior Newsstand Plan, May 25, 1912.

Details, July 20, 1912.

Proposed Alterations in Lunch Room, September 21, 1912.

Lunch Room Remodeled Floor Plan #2, May 25, 1922.

"Needles Station Grounds," June 1, 1934.

"A. T. & S. F. Track arrangement," December 27, 1944.

"Santa Fe yards and Vacated City Sub-Division layout between tracks and river," September 20, 1949.

El Garces / Needles Santa Fe Depot  
Name of Property

San Bernardino County, California  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.85

1 1 1 7 1 8 9 4 0

3 8 5 7 8 0 0

Zone

Easting

Northing

2

☐ See continuation sheet.

## Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

## Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Wayne Donaldson, Historian / Eileen Magno, Historian / Page Harrington, Historian

organization Architect Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA

date January 2002

street & number 530 Sixth Avenue

telephone (619) 239-7888

city or town San Diego

state CA zip code 92101

## 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 SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Needles Contact: Mr. Richard Rowe, Interim City Manager

street & number 817 Third Street

telephone (760) 326-2113

city or town Needles

state CA

zip code 92363

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127; and the Office Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.



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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 1 El Garces  
Needles, San Bernardino County, California

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## 10. Verbal Boundary Description

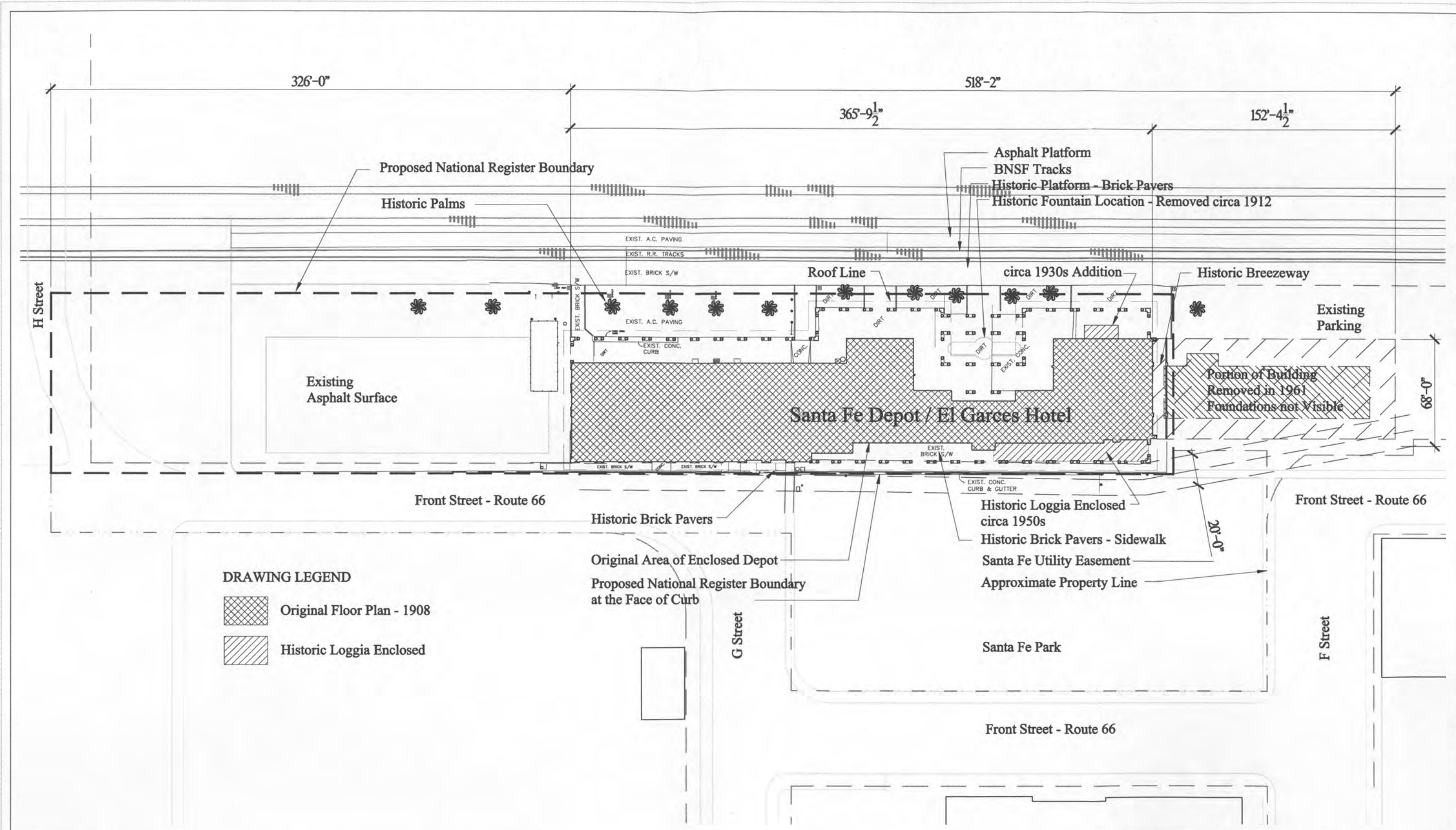
The property is bounded by tracks on the north, H Street on the west, the Santa Fe Park on the south, and an existing Santa Fe asphalt parking lot on the east.

The property is described as a parcel of land lying in the southwest quarter of Section 29 of the township 9 north, range 23 east of the San Bernardino Meridian in the City of Needles, County of San Bernardino, State of California as recorded in Book 548 page 29 and Book 556 page 219 of Deeds at the San Bernardino County Recorder's Office.



## Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the land encompassing the Depot and its immediate surroundings. The City of Needles is the owner of the Depot within the boundary and is solely responsible for the nomination of the Depot. To expand the boundary would also require the consent of the various property owner for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Refer to Additional Documentation, Site Plan.



**DRAWING LEGEND**

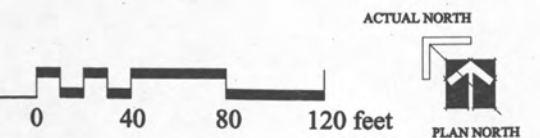
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-  Historic Loggia Enclosed

# EL GARCES

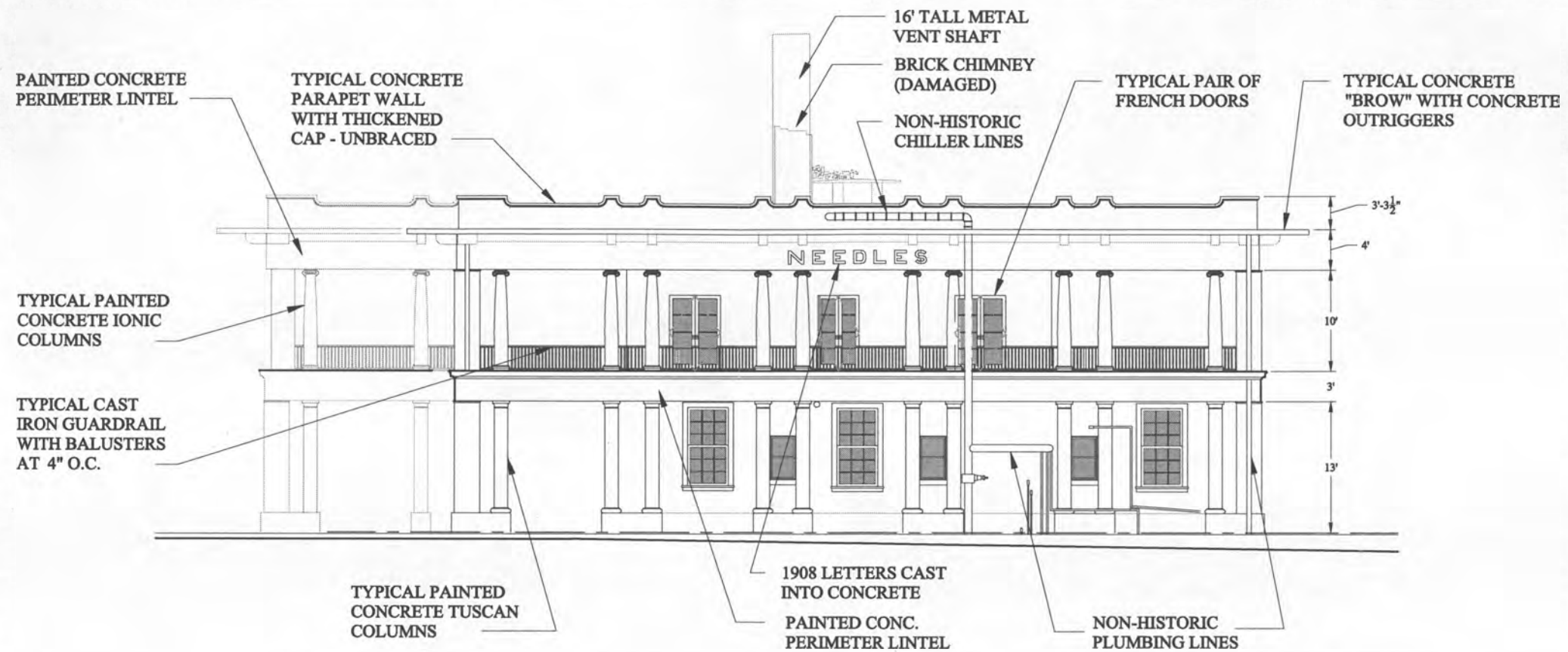
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

## SITE PLAN



January 30, 2002



# EL GARCES

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

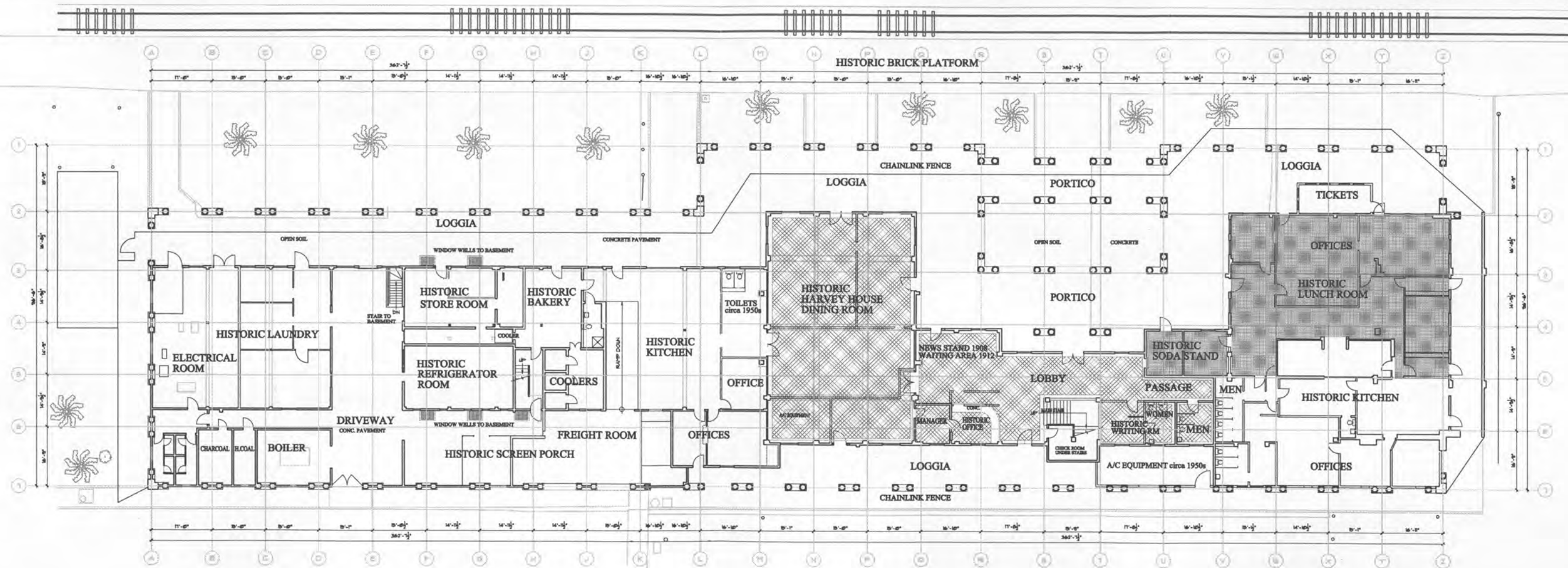
ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

## WEST EXTERIOR ELEVATION



January 30, 2002





### LEGEND

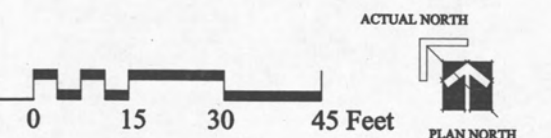
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**EL GARCES**

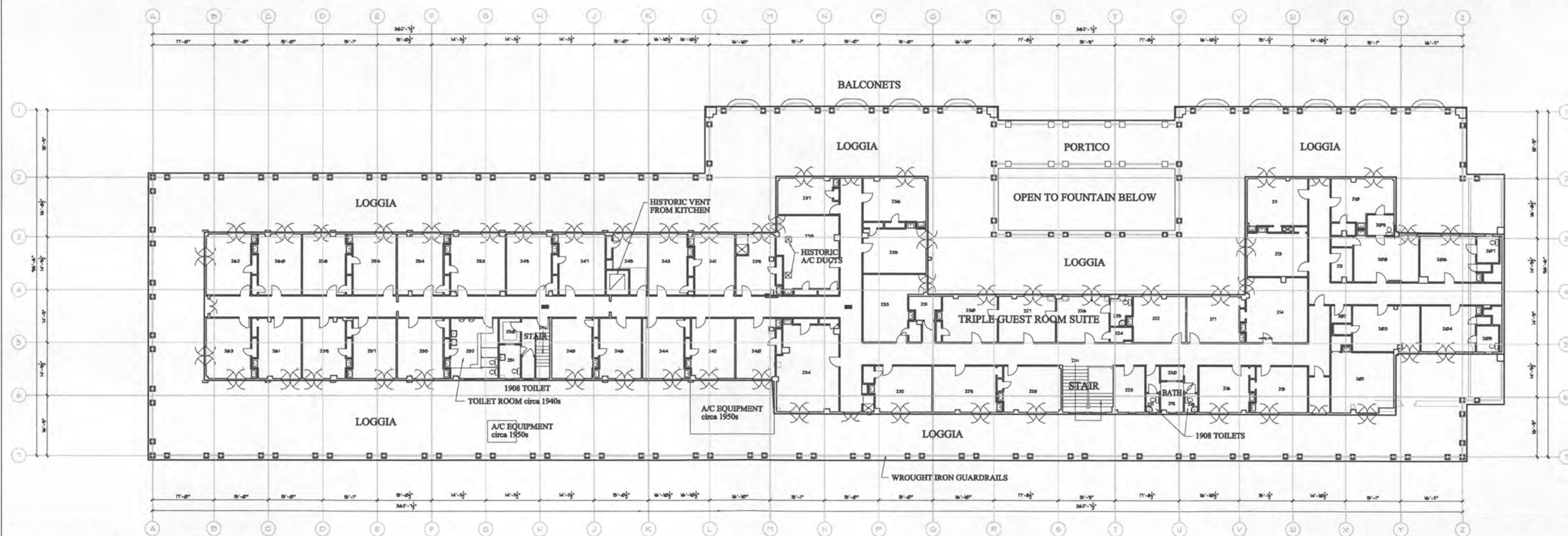
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

**FIRST FLOOR PLAN**



January 30, 2002

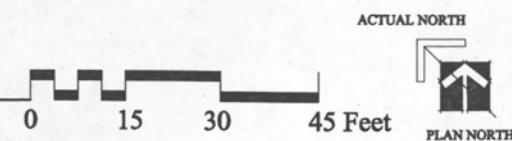


# EL GARCES

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

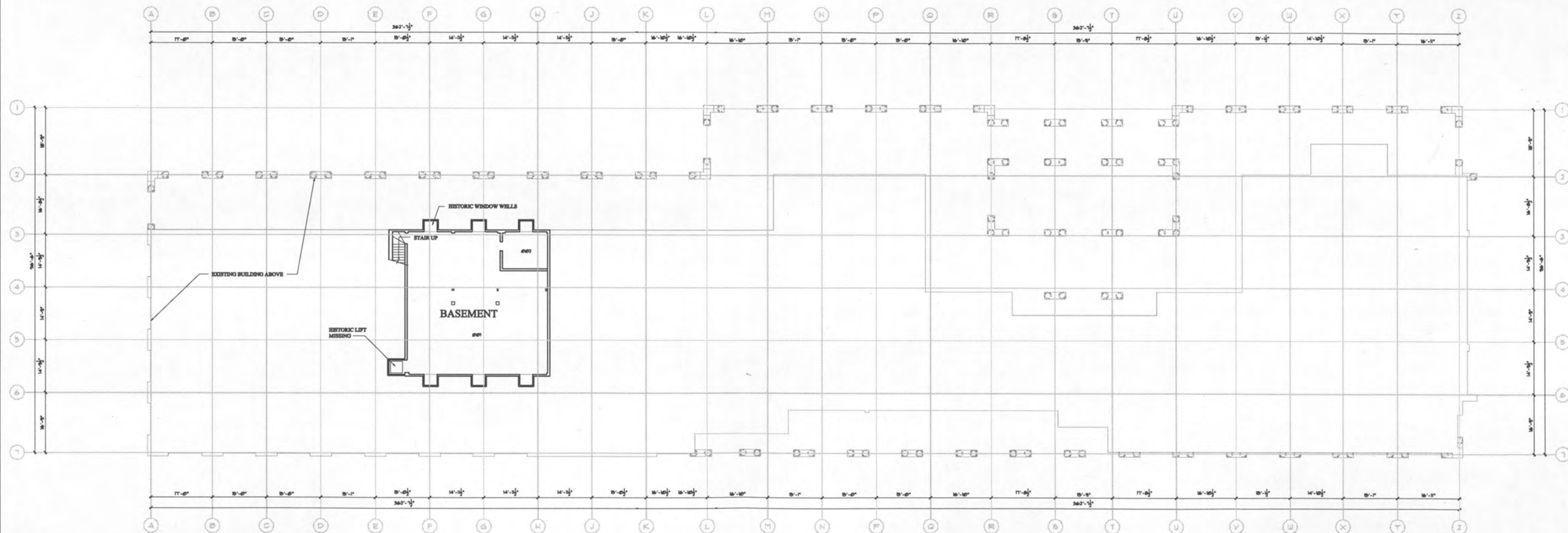
ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

## SECOND FLOOR PLAN



January 30, 2002



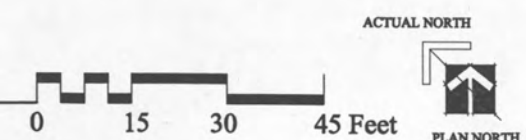


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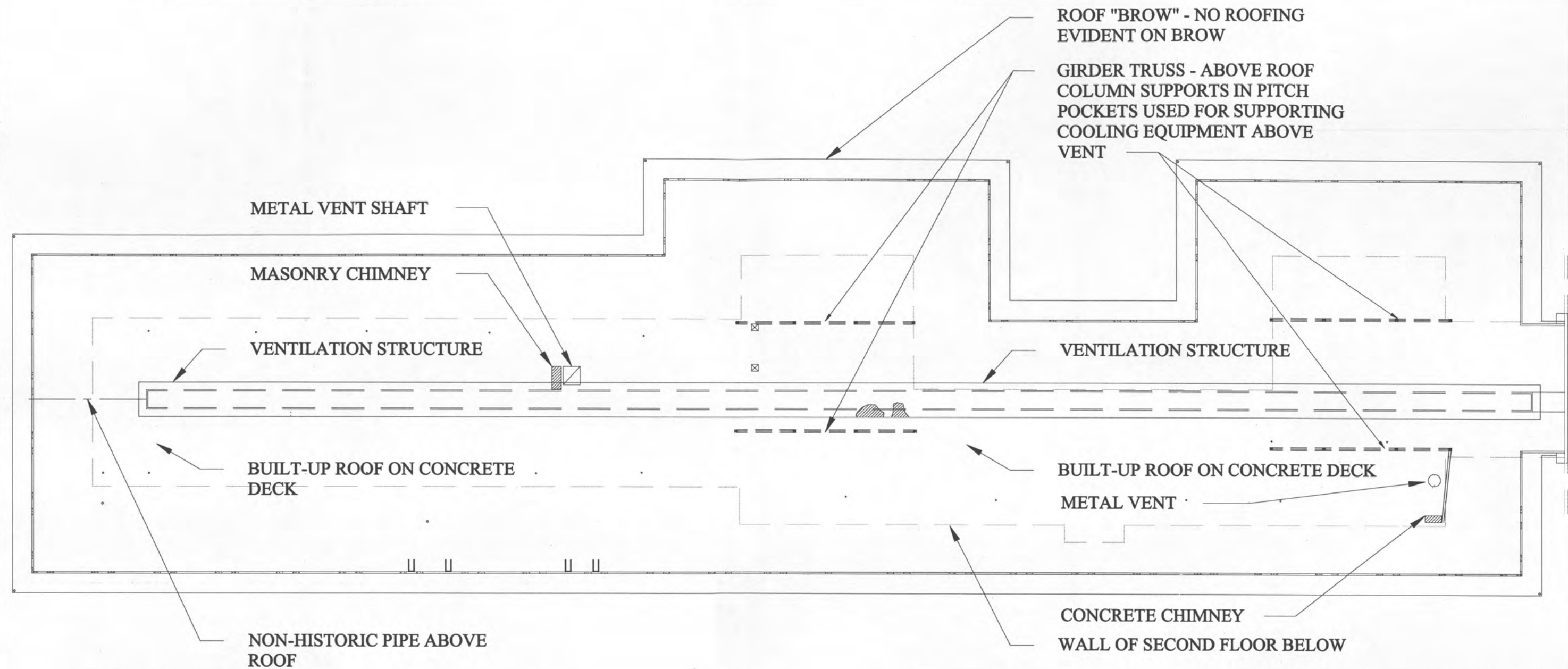
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

**BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN**



January 30, 2002

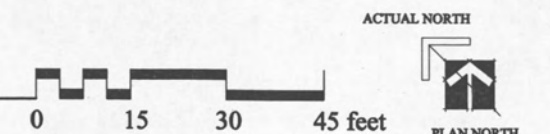


# EL GARCES

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

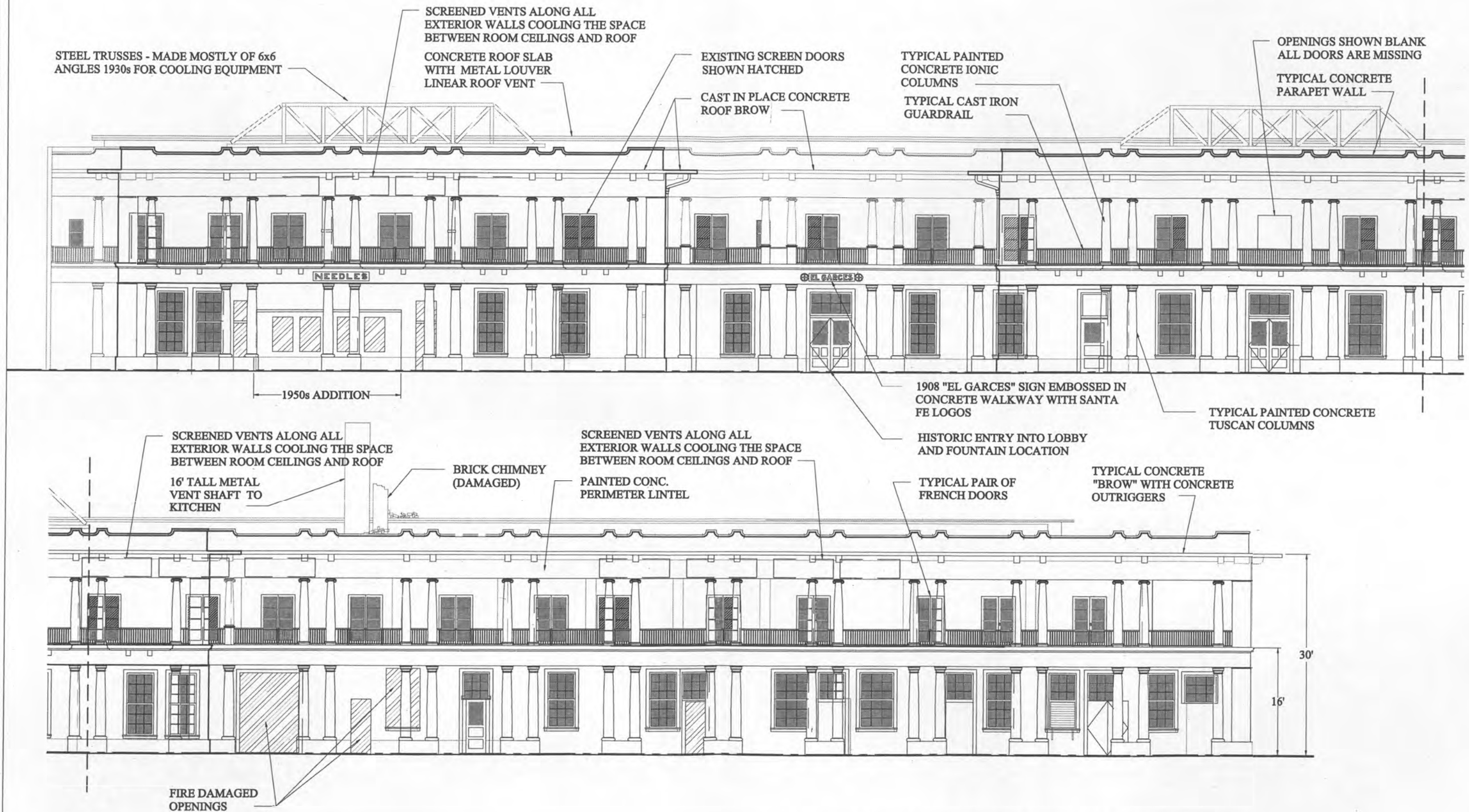
ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

## ROOF PLAN



January 30, 2002



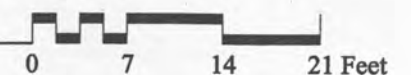


**EL GARCES**

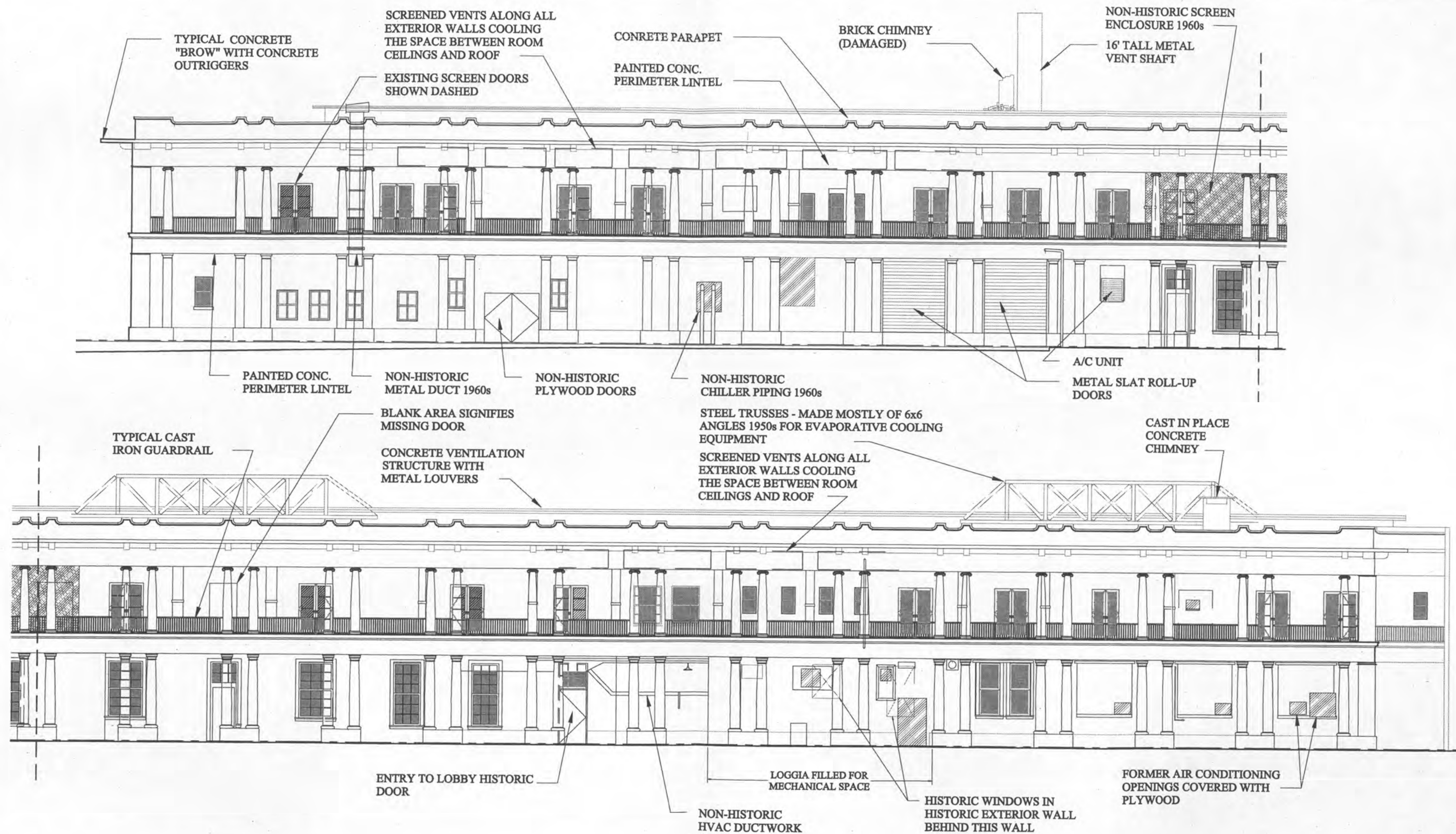
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

**NORTH EXTERIOR ELEVATION**



January 30, 2002

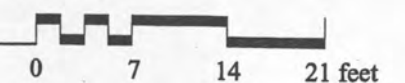


# EL GARCES

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

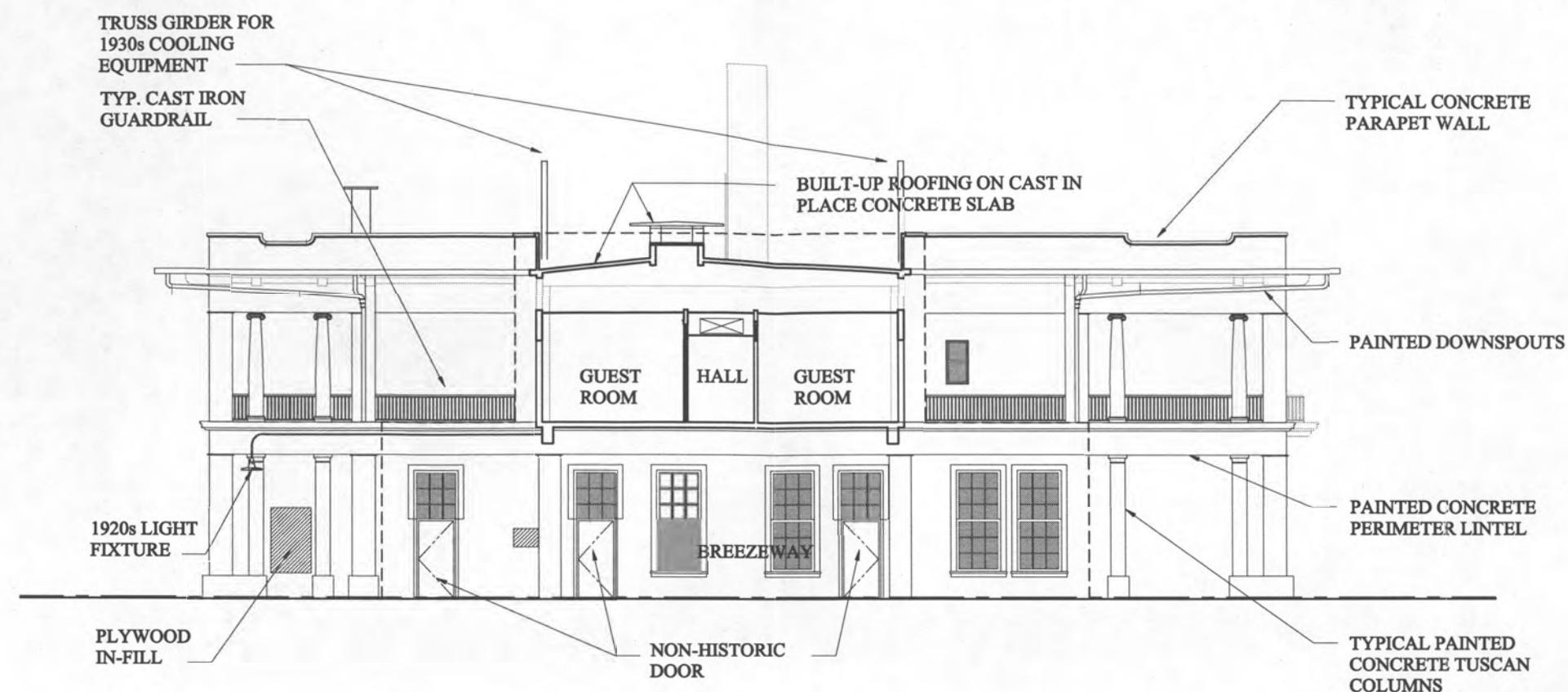
ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

## SOUTH EXTERIOR ELEVATION

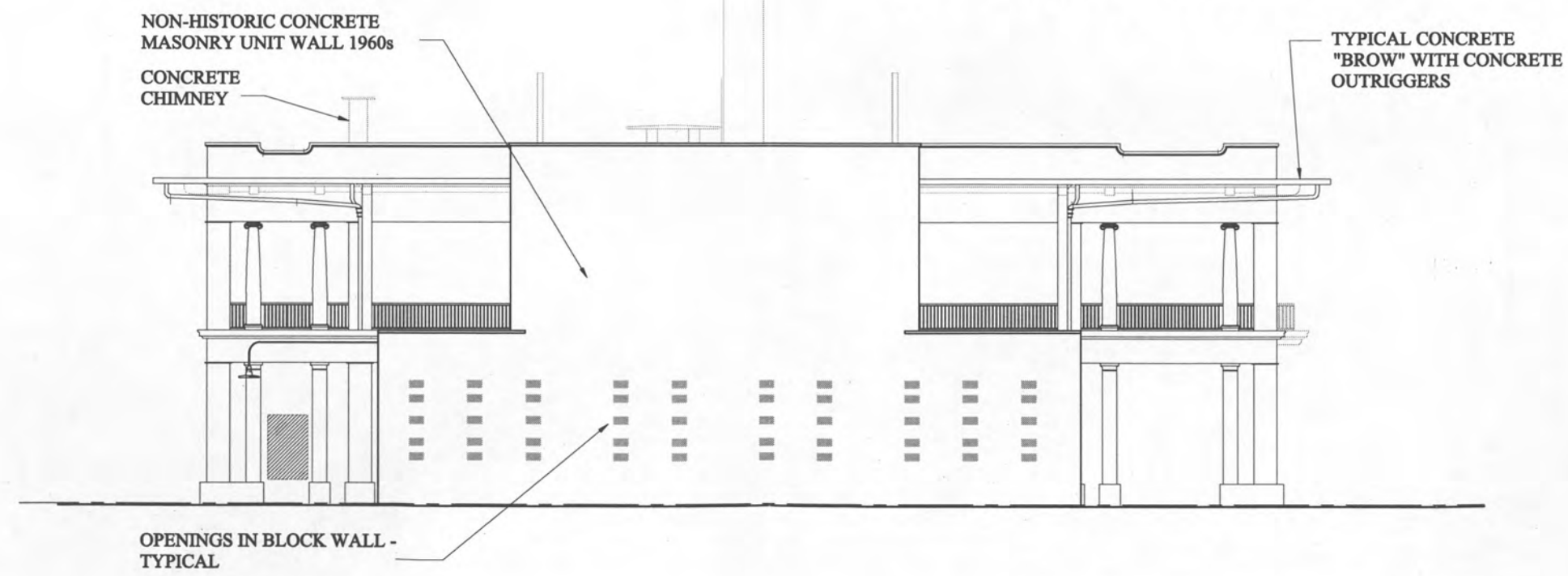


January 30, 2002





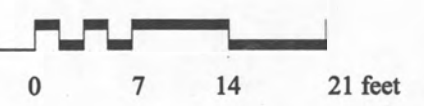
# SECTION BEHIND CMU WALL



**EL GARCES**  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

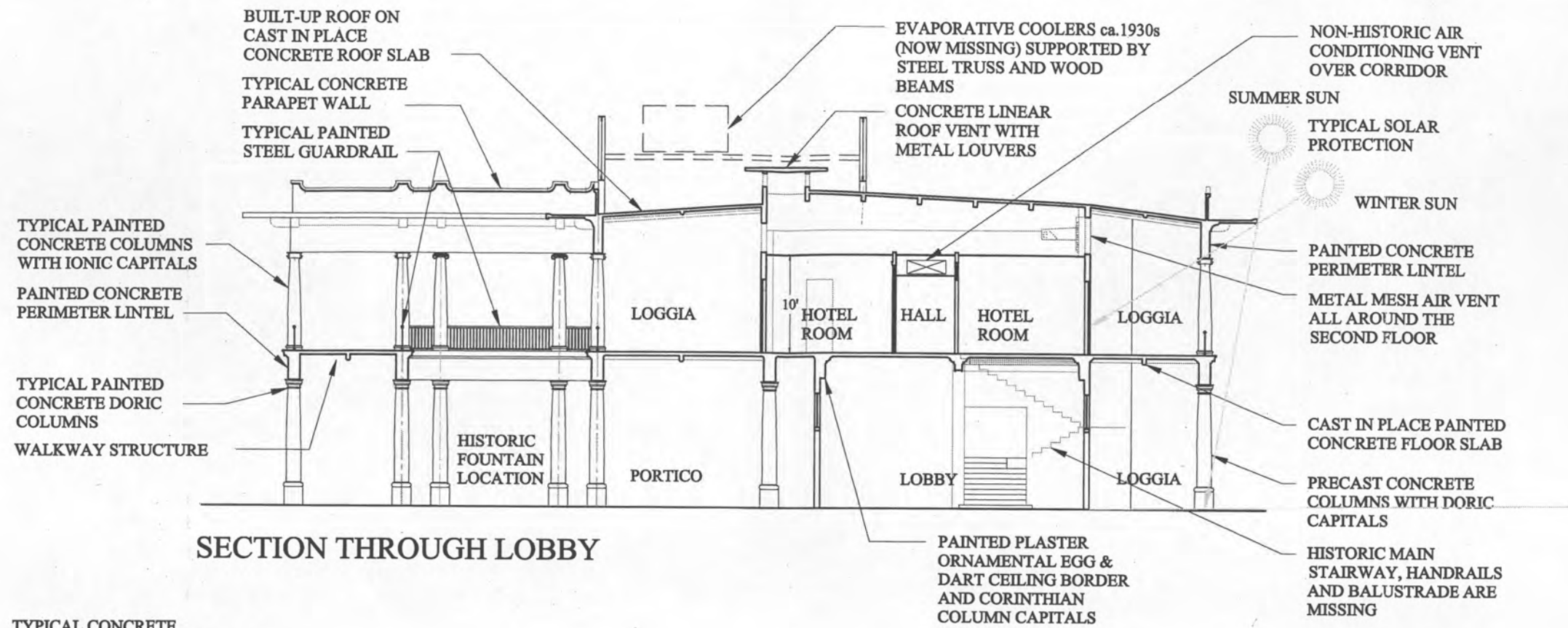
ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

# EAST EXTERIOR ELEVATION

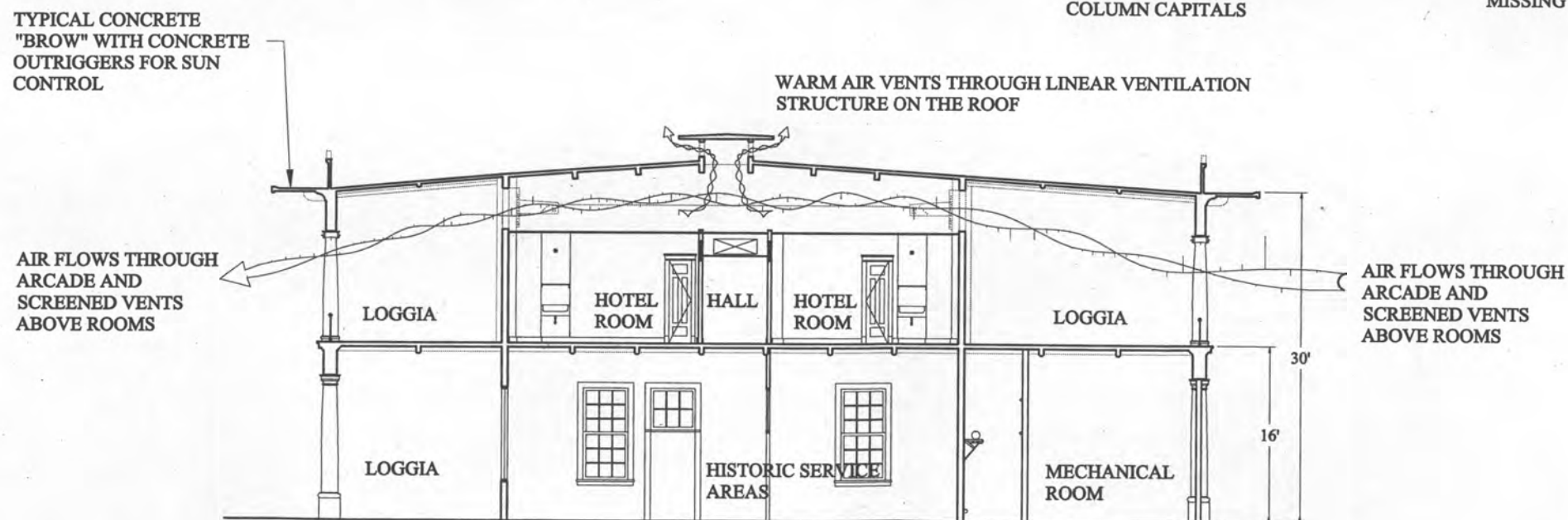


January 30, 2002





SECTION THROUGH LOBBY



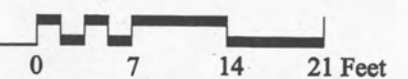
SECTION NEAR WEST END

EL GARCES

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

BUILDING SECTIONS



January 30, 2002

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY El Garces  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: CALIFORNIA, San Bernardino

DATE RECEIVED: 4/09/02 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/24/02  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/10/02 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/24/02  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 02000537

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL:	N	DATA PROBLEM:	N	LANDSCAPE:	N	LESS THAN 50 YEARS:	N
OTHER:	N	PDIL:	N	PERIOD:	N	PROGRAM UNAPPROVED:	N
REQUEST:	Y	SAMPLE:	N	SLR DRAFT:	N	NATIONAL:	N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

\_\_\_ACCEPT \_\_\_RETURN \_\_\_REJECT \_\_\_\_\_DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

The El Garces is significant under National Register Criteria A and C in the areas of Transportation, Commerce, and Architecture. Completed in 1908, the combination railroad station and hotel/dining complex is a fine example of early twentieth-century Classical-styled commercial (rail-related) design. The depot was a substantial addition to the expanding Sante Fe Line transportation network in the Southwest, and served as an important gateway to California. Operated by the Fred Harvey Company, the depot, hotel, and dining rooms became an important component of the firm's growing national network of tourist-related resources.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept Criteria A & C

REVIEWER Paul Lusignea DISCIPLINE HISTORIAN

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE 5/17/02

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N





A black and white photograph of a building's facade. At the top, there is a balcony with a dark metal railing. Below the balcony, a horizontal stone band features the name "EL GARCES" in large, raised, serif capital letters. The name is flanked by two circular medallions, each containing a cross-like symbol. Below this band, the facade is supported by several large, fluted columns. The image is in high contrast, with strong shadows and highlights.

EL GARCES





A black and white photograph of a building entrance. The entrance is framed by two large, weathered columns. Above the entrance, there is a balcony with a dark metal railing. A sign with the word "NEEDLES" in bold, capital letters is mounted on the wall above the entrance. In the foreground, there is a chain-link fence with a metal post and a diagonal support wire. The building's facade shows signs of wear and tear.

**NEEDLES**























NEEDLES

















































**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

P.O. BOX 942896  
SACRAMENTO, CA 94296-0001  
(916) 653-6624 Fax: (916) 653-9824  
calshpo@ohp.parks.ca.gov



April 8, 2002

Ms. Carol D. Shull, Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
US Department of the Interior  
PO Box 37127  
Washington, DC 20013-7127

Subject: **El Garces**  
Needles, San Bernardino County, California  
National Register of Historic Places

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the **El Garces** nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. This property is located in Needles, San Bernardino County, California and was conditionally approved for listing in the National Register by the California State Historical Resources Commission on May 17, 2001. The Commission requested a number of minor revisions regarding the period of significance, physical description, and statement of significance. These changes have been made.

If you have any questions regarding this nomination, please contact Cynthia Howse, of my staff, at (916) 653-9054.

Sincerely,

Dr. Knox Mellon  
State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosures