

General Ice Cream Corporation Building
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
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.)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	_____
	buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
1	_____
	total

Name of related multiple property listings
(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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION:

Manufacturing Facility

COMMERCE/TRADE

Warehouse

Specialty Store

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN

MOVEMENTS - Commercial Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other CONCRETE, METAL, BRICK

Narrative Description

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

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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.)

Property is:

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation 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 36) 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 #

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- ARCHITECTURE
- COMMERCE
- ENGINEERING
- INDUSTRY

Period of Significance

1915-1958

Significant Dates

- 1915: Building constructed
- 1928: Consolidated w/ General Ice Cream Corp.
- 1930: General Ice Cream Corp. (Dolbey Div.) & Dolbey Ice Cream Co. both occupy building

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository
Rhode Island Heritage & Preservation Commission

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.54

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	9	0	2	9	6	0	4	9	4	6	3	1	7	3	8
	Zone		Easting						Northing							
2																

3																
	Zone		Easting						Northing							
4																

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 Elizabeth Porterfield, Architectural Historian

organization PAL date February 2008

street & number 210 Lonsdale Avenue telephone (401)728-8780

city or town Pawtucket state RI zip code 02860

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 Family Life Center

street & number 841 Broad Street telephone (401)781-5808

city or town Providence state RI zip code 02907

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 amend 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 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, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

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DESCRIPTION

Summary

The General Ice Cream Corporation building at 485 Plainfield Street in the Silver Lake neighborhood of Providence, Rhode Island was constructed in 1915 for the Dolbey Ice Cream Company manufacturing and wholesale business. The 2- and 3-story brick building features both a metal cornice with dentils (west section) and a brick corbelled cornice (east section), a round-arch opening over the entrance in the west section, grouped segmental-arch window openings with brick lintels and continuous projecting concrete sills, an interior brick chimney, and a freight bay with hoist beam at the northeast corner of the structure. The building abuts the southwest corner of its paved parking lot, which extends from Plainfield to Whittier Street with chain link fence on two sides. The building is located within a primarily residential neighborhood of triple-deckers with some commercial infill. The General Ice Cream Corporation building is located at the southwest corner of the property fronting Plainfield Street to the south. All machinery and equipment has been removed from the building. The General Ice Cream Corporation building is in fair condition and retains a high degree of structural and functional integrity related to ice cream manufacturing, although no machinery remains.

Exterior

The General Ice Cream Corporation building is a rectangular 5-bay east-west by 4-bay north-south, brick, pier-and-spandrel building with a slightly-pitched flat roof and concrete basement. The building consists of two sections: a 2-story, 3-bay by 4-bay west section and a 3-story, 2-bay by 4-bay east section. The two sections appear to have been constructed in separate phases within approximately three years. By 1918, the building footprint is identified on the Hopkins Atlas, and the 1921 Sanborn map shows the existing footprint and current configuration including both a two-story and three-story section (Hopkins 1918; Sanborn 1921). The bays are separated by projecting brick piers on the façade. The east section of the south front facade has a corbelled brick cornice at the third floor, while the west section has a metal cornice with dentils on the second floor facade. There is evidence that the metal cornice originally extended across the east section of the second floor. The north rear elevation features a continuous metal cornice with dentils at the second floor spanning the length of the building, while the third floor has a simple wood cornice. The main entrance is located at the west end of the facade beneath a round-arch opening with keystone that has been enclosed with brick. The entrance consists of a replacement metal and glass door with a modern projecting metal hood and is accessed by a set of concrete steps with a metal rail. An interior brick chimney is located near the west elevation.

Fenestration on the first floor consists of tall, grouped rectangular openings and segmental-arch transoms with triple-course brick lintels and continuous projecting concrete sills that extend across each spandrel. Most of the

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first floor openings have been enclosed with brick or concrete block, while some contain modern plate glass windows. Fenestration on the upper floors consists of smaller, grouped segmental-arch openings. Some of the second floor openings have been enclosed with brick, and the majority of windows on the south front and north rear elevations are modern replacements. Many of the original two-over-two, double-hung, wood sash windows remain along the side elevations of the second floor. All of the historic two-over-two, double-hung, wood sash windows remain on the third floor. The basement window openings are square with single soldier-course lintels and all have been enclosed with brick. The north bay of the east elevation is a freight bay with a steel hoist beam over the third floor and historic wood double doors at the second floor.

The building features an original loading dock spanning the length of the rear elevation. A small, one-story, concrete block addition has been incorporated at the rear of the building. Three modern concrete loading piers have been added to the original loading dock and are sheltered below a modern metal pavilion. A detached, square, exterior concrete vent with a metal grate is located at the northwest corner of the building and appears as an electric pump on a 1921 Sanborn Map.

Interior

The interior structure of the building is typical of early-twentieth-century, fire-resistive construction and was specifically designed for ice cream manufacturing. The structure consists of painted brick walls with engaged brick piers and rows of columns supporting steel and wooden beams. The east and west sections of the building are divided by a brick wall that is punctuated by segmental-arch window openings and sliding metal fire doors, suggesting that the sections of the building may have been constructed in two phases. The window openings between the two sections of the building have been enclosed with painted brick. The fire doors remain operable and may have been incorporated later during the construction of the second half of the building. The east section of the building contains one north-south row of columns on each floor. Some modern partitions exist, but the original structure of the building is intact. Fenestration on each floor features bull-nosed brick along the interior window openings. An original freight elevator is located along the north rear wall between the east and west sections of the building.

The first floor is double height and consists of two large open spaces with brick interior walls, metal columns supporting concrete clad beams, a concrete ceiling, and brick and concrete floors. Enclosed drains are located within the floor of the west section of the building, and an aisle of the floor along the north wall near the loading dock is composed of textured cast-iron panels. A concrete block room is located along the center wall in the east section of the building. A raised concrete platform occupies the majority of the first floor in the west section of the building, but is likely associated with later jewelry-making operations. The east section of

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the building was originally used for ice cream packing, and the west section was used for ice cream making, packing, and storage.

The east section of the second floor is an open loft space with metal columns, wood and steel beams, a plank ceiling, painted brick walls, and a painted brick over concrete floor. A floor aisle is composed of textured cast-iron panels. The floor slopes toward a drain in the center of the room, which originally provided drainage for ice cream mixing operations (Sanborn 1921). The specialized floor extends approximately 15 feet into the west section of the building, at which point the floor level decreases 2 feet. A portion of the wall between the east and west section of the building is clad with white glazed brick. An original fire door separates the east and west sections of the building, and an original freight elevator door, gate, and stair door remain in place. The original double doors of the hoist bay are located along the east side wall. The west section of the second floor has been divided into multiple rooms by modern wood partitions with acoustical tile drop ceilings, wood paneling veneer, and synthetic floors. Original features include wood beams, a wood plank ceiling, and square concrete columns (only one of which is still visible). The west section of the building was originally used for ice cream packing, a laboratory, and storage (Sanborn 1921). It is likely that the laboratory was located in the center of the building where the specialized floor of the mixing room extends into the west section of the building.

The third floor of the building has slim metal columns, wood beams, a low plank ceiling, and a painted wood plank floor. The interior walls are clad with soft painted concrete brick in poor condition. Small partitioned rooms are located at the center of the north wall and at the northeast corner, but do not extend to the ceiling. The third floor was originally used as a storage room, which is reflected by its low height, openness, and access to the hoist bay and a freight elevator (Sanborn 1921).

The basement of the east section originally served as an icebox and retains massive concrete walls and round concrete columns (Sanborn 1921). Smaller metal columns appear to have been retrofitted. The walls, ceiling, and floor were originally lined with thick layers of cork for insulation. A non-historic concrete block enclosed staircase has been incorporated along the east side wall. The west section of the basement originally housed one 40-ton and one 20-ton ice machine (Sanborn 1921). This section features large square, chamfered concrete columns, a corbelled concrete cornice, and areas of replacement concrete block walls. A boiler room is located at the northwest corner of the building.

Circulation space consists of original pedestrian staircases in both sections of the building, an original freight elevator at the northeast corner of the west section of the building, and the original hoist bay at the northeast corner of the east elevation. In the west section of the building, a metal staircase leads from the main entrance along the west wall to the second floor. It features recessed panels on the risers and a square metal railing with

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a square newel post. A second, wood stairway is located in the northwest corner of the first floor of the west section of the building and leads to the basement. In the east section of the building, wood stairs are located in the southwest and northwest corners. The northwest stairway extends from the first to third floor and contains molded treads, turned columns supporting a simple wood railing, and square newel posts with a spherical cap. The southwest stairway extends between the second and third floor. It has plain plank treads and a simple wood railing attached to the brick exterior wall. The freight elevator extends from the basement, above the roof of the west portion of the building to the third floor. This elevator is original and retains its mechanical equipment and gates. Original metal fire doors enclose the freight elevator on each floor.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The General Ice Cream Corporation building is significant as a representative example of an early-twentieth-century commercial and manufacturing building specifically designed, and used from 1915 to the 1960s, for ice cream production. The building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under Criteria A and C and is significant in the areas of architecture, commerce, engineering, and industry. Under Criterion A, the General Ice Cream Corporation Building possesses historical associations with the early development of ice cream manufacturing and distribution in Rhode Island, as well as technological improvement in the regional ice cream industry, enabling the transition of ice cream manufacturing from a home business to commercial manufacturing. Under Criterion C, the building exemplifies the layout and structure of an early-twentieth-century specialized facility purposely designed for ice cream manufacturing. The period of significance begins in 1915, the approximate date of construction, and ends in 1958, the current National Register eligibility cutoff date.

Historical Significance

Development of Silver Lake and Plainfield Street Area

Plainfield Street (State Route 14) is located within the Silver Lake neighborhood in the West Side of Providence. Plainfield Street, originally the Providence-Norwich Turnpike, was completed in 1714 and provided an early thoroughfare between Providence and Plainfield, Connecticut. Although originally part of Providence, the area was annexed to the Town of Johnston in 1759. Because of annexation and its distance from the commercial center of Providence, the area remained undeveloped and largely agricultural well into the nineteenth century, with multiple farms and dairies. Many early farms were established along this important east-west route. Early textile industrial development in the mid-nineteenth century along the Woonasquatucket River brought immigrants, primarily Italians, to provide labor for the mills. Despite the textile industry, the area remained relatively isolated until the late nineteenth century (RIHPC 1976:1-6).

The 1882 construction of the Plainfield Street Trolley provided a direct link to Providence and spurred rapid development of the area. In 1898, the neighborhood was re-annexed from Johnston to Providence, prompting further urbanization. Many of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century farms were subdivided by land companies into the existing street grids of today. Although suburban development efforts were attempted as early as the mid-1800s, few plans were actually implemented until the last two decades of the nineteenth century. With mass transportation provided by the trolley system, commercial establishments and multi-family housing were

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erected close to transportation routes in the section of Silver Lake closest to Providence. Italians continued to dominate the neighborhood into the early twentieth century (Woodward 1986:29). Today, the surrounding neighborhood consists primarily of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century multi-family residences and commercial infill.

Dolbey Ice Cream Company and General Ice Cream Corporation

Construction of the General Ice Cream Corporation Building in 1915 by Sam Dolbey coincided with a period of significant growth in the national ice cream industry. A healthy, local dairy farm business, transportation improvements, and developments in artificial ice production and refrigeration technology were instrumental in the initiation and success of the business (see narrative sections below).

Sam Dolbey (1875–1947), founder of the Dolbey Ice Cream Company, was born in Yorkshire England and came to Rhode Island with his family in 1881 at age six. After attending school, Mr. Dolbey worked in a cotton mill and later as a clerk for a book and stationary store (Bicknell 1920:317). He resided in Providence’s Elmwood neighborhood in 1918 at 249 Hamilton Street and had relocated to 782 Hartford Avenue slightly northwest of Plainfield Street by 1930 (Ancestry.com 1918; Dept. of Commerce 1930). Neither house is standing today. Sam Dolbey is buried in Pocasset Cemetery in Cranston (RIHCTP 2006).

In 1901, with a 3-gallon ice cream freezer, Sam Dolbey opened a retail ice cream store on Manton Avenue northwest of Olneyville Square in Providence (PBTJ 1926a:324). He continued there for approximately two years before relocating to a larger structure on Rye Street (a small street perpendicular to Plainfield Street directly opposite the 485 Plainfield Street building), where he included a wholesale ice cream department. The business continued to flourish, and Dolbey again relocated to a larger two-story facility at 479 Plainfield Street (Bicknell 1920:317). This building was located immediately east of number 485 and appears, from an early photograph, to have been of wood construction (WHS 1922). Dolbey remained there for 12 years and was listed as an Ice Cream Manufacturer in the 1910 *Providence Business Directory* under the company name of Sam Dolbey. The business officially became the Dolbey Ice Cream Company in 1911 with three officers: Sam Dolbey, James F. Kelley, and Mary Dolbey (likely his mother) (Bicknell 1920:317). These early entrepreneurial years of Dolbey’s business reflected the organization and challenges of the nascent ice cream industry nationwide as it shifted from using natural to artificial ice, created a year-round market demand, and instituted industry standards.

In 1915, during a period of major national growth in the ice cream industry, a new facility was constructed next door at 485 Plainfield Street for the Dolbey Ice Cream Company. The extant structure existing today was described as “a modern brick building . . . planned especially for their own business use” (Bicknell 1920:317).

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Undoubtedly, the building contained the latest production and packaging equipment and machinery, and a loading dock at the rear of the building maximized distribution. The company reportedly grew within five years to become “the largest ice cream business in Rhode Island,” with distribution of various ice creams locally as well as throughout Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut (Bicknell 1920:317). It appears that the two sections of the building were constructed in separate phases because of window openings within the central interior wall. This would have occurred between 1915 and 1918 when the building was identified in a Providence plat book with what appears to be its current footprint (Hopkins 1918). A 1921 Sanborn map shows the existing building configuration with both a two-story and three-story section (Sanborn 1921). The apparent enlargement of the facility within three years of initial construction reflects the significant growth and development of the company during the early twentieth century.

The former 479 Plainfield building continued under the ownership of Dolbey’s Ice Cream Company (and later company consolidations) and remained within the legal property boundary of the 485 building parcel through at least 1956. It was utilized as a storehouse during this time but is no longer standing today (Sanborn 1921; 1956).

In 1925, Eastern Dairies, Inc. was established by the merger of Dolbey Ice Cream Company with three additional companies. Sam Dolbey was vice president and one of the directors of Eastern Dairies in 1926, whose operations included more than 60 ice cream plants and creameries in New England and New York (PBTJ 1926a:324). Eastern Dairies, Inc. consolidated with the General Ice Cream Corporation in 1928 (New York Times Archives 1928). The General Ice Cream Corporation was the ice cream manufacturer occupying the building at 485 Plainfield Street by 1930 (Sampson and Murdock 1930:1453). The 1930 city directory also listed a separate entry for Dolbey Ice Cream at 5 Bowen’s Wharf in Newport, which may have been one of the earliest summer resort retail outlets in Rhode Island (exact relationship to Sam Dolbey undetermined) (Sampson and Murdock 1930:1576).

Significant technological improvements of the 1920s that supported industry growth in this period included the direct expansion freezer, which improved temperature control and reduced freezing time, in the early part of the decade; the continuous process freezer in approximately 1926, which enabled mass production; and refrigerated delivery trucks. Sanitation methods and laboratories for quality control were also introduced (ICTJ 1955b). The Dolbey Ice Cream Company/General Ice Cream Corporation building featured a laboratory on the western half of the second floor (Sanborn 1921). In the 1920s and 1930s, promotion of ice cream as a nutritious food, novelty products, and retail outlets helped expand markets (ICTJ 1955b and ICTJ 1955c). The introduction of the paper ice cream can in the 1930s, pioneered by the General Ice Cream Company at a facility in Maine, revolutionized distribution (ICTJ 1955h:94). In 1933 General Ice Cream Corporation offered the first commercially produced ice cream pie (ICTJ 1955d:132).

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General Ice Cream Corporation continued to occupy the 485 Plainfield Street plant through the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s with Sam Dolbey as manager through at least 1944 (RICD 1940, 1942, 1944). Sam Dolbey died in 1947, and in 1951, the facility remained occupied by General Ice Cream Corporation (Dolbey Division) as well as Sealtest Ice Cream Company, providing evidence of further consolidation (General Publishing Company 1951). The Sealtest Foods Division of the National Dairy Products Company (affiliated with Kraft-Phenix Cheese Corporation, later known as Kraft Inc.) occupied the building circa 1960 (PPS 2002). Sealtest ice cream had been introduced in 1935 by National Dairy and was named for a dairy quality-control system (Kraft Foods Inc. 2007).

By the 1960s, industry trends toward modernization and consolidation of facilities in a soaring market appear to have rendered 485 Plainfield Street old and outmoded. The structure was vacant by 1967 when the United Pearl Company acquired it and operated facilities there. Until approximately 1990 the building was used by a variety of companies for jewelry manufacturing (PPS 2002). The building is currently vacant.

Local Ice Cream and Related Dairy Industries

The town of Johnston to the west of Dolbey Ice Cream/General Ice Cream Corporation remained primarily rural area at the time of the building's construction and may have influenced the selection of the building's location. Johnston had many farms, some of which were dairy operations, such as the Neutaconkonut Dairy on Plainfield Street, and the direct route along Plainfield Street may have provided for easy distribution of milk and dairy products needed in ice cream manufacturing. Many dairy product dealers significant to the ice cream industry were also located throughout the Silver Lake and surrounding neighborhoods within a 1.5-mile radius of the building between 1910 and 1951. These resources included cream dealers/creameries (2), milk dealers (18), and retail dairy product dealers (3). Other dealers within the 1.5-mile radius during the first half of the twentieth century included additional ice cream manufacturers (31), ice dealers (17), wholesale ice dealers/ice manufacturers and wholesalers (1), and one ice cream cone manufacturer (Sampson and Murdock 1910, 1930, 1931; Dunham 1931; General Publishing Company 1951; R.L. Polk and Co. Pub. 1951). In addition to Dolbey's Ice Cream Company, one other ice cream manufacturer, Rich Hubert, was located at 373 Plainfield Street in 1910 (Sampson and Murdock 1910:734). In 1930, Rich Hubert and two additional ice cream manufacturers were also in business on Plainfield Street: Progress Ice Cream Company at 140 Rear, and Wellington Ice Cream Company at 610 Plainfield (Sampson and Murdock 1930:1452). Wellington Ice Cream was still in operation at the same location on Plainfield in 1951 (General Publishing Company 1951:125). The buildings, however, no longer appear to be standing today.

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Ice Cream Manufacturing Process Summary

Ice cream is a frozen combination of milk or milk products, sugar or other sweeteners, water, eggs or egg products (optional), flavorings, stabilizers, and emulsifiers (Arbuckle 1972:1). Ice cream manufacturing involves a multi-step process that has been streamlined and automated over the course of the last century. Milk is pumped into large blenders where it is combined with other ingredients such as eggs, sugar, and additives. After pasteurization (heating to reduce microorganisms) and homogenization (breaking down of fat molecules to prevent separation of cream) flavorings are added, and the mixture is pumped into continuous freezers where it is quickly frozen. As it freezes, air is forced into the mix to provide the adequate texture and consistency. After freezing, condiments such as fruits, nuts, or candy are added. Machines automatically fill a predetermined amount of ice cream into packages, add lids, and seal the containers. The ice cream containers are then sent to a hardening room on a conveyor belt where they are circulated back and forth in cold temperatures until completely frozen (McNulty 2007). Before automation in the early twentieth century, the filling, packaging, and sealing operations were done by hand, which was far more time consuming and labor intensive.

Ice Cream Industry Historical Summary

Although ice cream, in some form, has been available throughout the world and in America for several centuries, its development into a large-scale commercial industry did not occur until the early twentieth century. Ice cream most likely was brought to America by European settlers. A New York caterer advertised the first American ice cream in 1774, and Dolly Madison served ice cream to White House guests in 1811 (Arbuckle 1972:425). A patent was granted to Nancy Johnson in the 1840s for the invention of a small, hand-cranked, revolving ice cream freezer. At this time, ice cream was produced locally by small retail establishments, peddlers, or individuals at home. In 1851, however, Jacob Fussell of Baltimore, MD opened the first wholesale ice cream company in the United States, later expanding operations to Boston, Washington, New York, St. Louis, Chicago, and Cincinnati. William Breyer began selling ice cream from a horse-drawn wagon before opening the first Breyer's Ice Cream Store in Philadelphia in 1882 (Marshall 2003:3; Turback 2002:24–25). The ice cream soda reportedly debuted in the 1870s, and although no specific vendor is credited with its creation, the ice cream cone is said to have originated at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904 (Arbuckle 1972:426; Marshall 2003:4).

Developments that were ultimately responsible for the phenomenal growth of the ice cream industry in the early twentieth century include improvements in mechanical refrigeration, the direct expansion freezer, the continuous process freezer, and advances in transportation, electricity, packaging, and ingredient quality (Marshall 2003:3, 7). The United States was undergoing rapid industrialization, urbanization, and population growth, which supported the emergence of a new national ice cream market (ICTJ 1955a).

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The years between 1905 and 1915 were a time of basic industry organization. *The Ice Cream Trade Journal* was introduced in 1905. Many associations formed, including the National Association of Ice Cream Manufacturers in 1906 (by a merger of the Central States Wholesale Ice Cream Manufacturers' Association) and the New England Association of Ice Cream Manufacturers in 1910. Problems faced by the fledgling commercial ice cream industry during this period included periodic shortages of cream and other ingredients, the cost of ice harvesting and artificial ice production, slow sales during the colder months, and lack of standardization and quality control (ICTJ 1955a).

The following decade, 1916 to 1925, was touted by *The Ice Cream Trade Journal* as the "most fabulous years of the ice cream industry" when many improvements were made in technology and mechanization including the direct expansion freezer, the continuous process freezer, and refrigerated delivery trucks. This time period was also dubbed "the era of the million gallon capacity plants" as numerous mergers and acquisitions took place. Borden Ice Cream of Chicago incorporated in 1914 and H.P. Hood and Sons of Boston bought several small ice cream plants in the early 1920s. Sanitation became a greater priority as pasteurization techniques improved, stainless steel equipment was incorporated, and improved cleaning and preparation methods were employed (ICTJ 1955b). Many ice cream plants installed laboratory facilities for maintenance of quality control (Tracy 1955:250). Ice cream packaging became an important component of production, and companies such as Mojonner Brothers and Sealright developed the first ice cream filling and packaging machines. In the early 1920s, novelties such as the Eskimo Pie, Popsicles (originally called Epsicles), and Good Humor "suckers" made their debut (Marshall 2003:5). However, the majority of ice cream production throughout the early 1920s continued to be in wholesale bulk quantity (ICTJ 1955f:87). Prohibition (1918–1933) also contributed to a marked increase in ice cream sales as soda fountains and ice cream parlors replaced saloons and many breweries converted to ice cream or malted milk production (ICTJ 1955b:6; Turback 2002:55).

The years from 1926 to 1935, although marked by the stock market crash of 1929 and the resulting Great Depression, reflected a continued era of consolidations and mergers. National Dairy Products Corporation purchased Breyer's Ice Cream Company. Borden Ice Cream Company continued to play a leading role within the industry. In 1928, Eastern Dairies merged with General Ice Cream Corporation, in a reported \$20 million venture. A national education program was initiated in 1927 aimed at promoting the nutritious value of ice cream. During the depression, retail ice cream stores rapidly developed, and many wholesale manufacturers opened their own retail establishments to compete (ICTJ 1955c and 1955d).

A major transformation in the ice cream industry occurred in the 1930s with the introduction of the disposable paper ice cream can. Prior to this time ice cream was distributed in metal cans that were heavy to transport, required facilities for washing and storage, and necessitated the laborious task of returning empty cans to the

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plant. Improvements in sanitation and the widespread adoption of the technical advances of the past decade occurred in the era before and after World War II, from 1936 to 1945. Retail ice cream sales continued to overshadow wholesale business. Advances continued in refrigeration and refrigerated trucks for delivery and distribution (ICTJ 1955h)

Ice cream sales continued to climb throughout the 1950s as large-scale supermarkets became the main venue for ice cream distribution. Statistics in the mid 1950s indicate that consumption of ice cream was 80 times greater than it was at the turn of the century. By the 1950s, in addition to a large variety of novelty treats, ice cream was available in the standard, automated, prepackaged, half-gallon and pint sizes of today (ICTJ 1955f).

Transportation and Distribution

Transportation technology played a pivotal role in the growth of the ice cream industry both in retail and wholesale operations. Early retail peddlers operated carts or horse-drawn wagons for door-to-door delivery. The industry grew to include bulk distribution, with horse-drawn wagons delivering to cold storage houses and retail stores, using salt and ice as refrigeration. Routes remained limited, however, because of slow travel speeds, heavy weight loads, and the limited freezing capacity of ice and salt before it melted. Railroad cold-storage cars allowed for distribution over greater distances. Trucks began to appear by 1911, and in the early 1920s the first enclosed van body trucks were developed, which protected ice cream from the heat of the sun. Before mechanical refrigeration, however, the ice and salt used for chilling the ice cream led to frequent rust and vehicle damage. The first mechanically refrigerated ice cream delivery truck debuted in 1926 and was designed by GMC with a Frigidaire cooling unit. Over the next two decades, technological advances brought changes in ice cream truck design, and mechanical refrigeration gradually eliminated the use of salt and ice for cooling. Mechanically refrigerated trucks allowed for larger distribution areas, greater carrying capacity, and lower operating costs (ICTJ 1955i).

The General Ice Cream Corporation was ideally suited for ice cream distribution because of its location on the major east-west route of Plainfield Street, with direct access to downtown Providence. In 1900 the Providence and Springfield Railroad crossed Plainfield Street approximately 0.5 miles northwest of the building, near the current intersection of State Route 6 (Sanborn 1900). The New York, New Haven, & Hartford Railroad (now the Amtrak/Providence & Worcester Railroad) was also located approximately 0.7 miles west of Plainfield Street and merged with the Providence and Springfield Railroad as they continued west into Providence. By 1950, the Providence and Springfield Railroad had been acquired by the NY, NH, & H Railroad, with both tracks still in operation (Sanborn 1950). Although no rail spur was connected directly to the ice cream building, the proximity of the nearby railroad lines may have provided an easy mechanism for shipment of ice cream throughout Rhode Island and New England. The rail lines convened at Union Station in downtown Providence,

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with connections to railroads throughout the region, and they traversed the dense warehouse facilities north of the city's central business district (currently identified as the Provisions Warehouse Historic District), where buildings such as the Merchant's Cold Storage and Warehouse Company (1894, et. seq.) may have provided early cold storage facilities prior to distribution.

Very little information about ice cream distribution has been identified during the early years of the Dolbey Ice Cream Company. Earliest delivery would have been conducted by horse and wagon. It is likely, however, that the Dolbey Company was already utilizing trucks for local ice cream delivery when the building was constructed in 1915. A single circa 1922 photograph of a Dolbey's Ice Cream truck was identified (WHS 1922). Photographed on the street near the southeast corner of the building, the truck was a McCormick-International Harvester model L-101 featuring an enclosed cab and a flat bed with two large, wood plank, lidded crates separated by a wooden barrel. The crates were loaded one behind the other and spanned the width of the truck bed. Two small wooden buckets were hung behind the truck below the frame. The crates would have been for transporting ice cream in metal containers and packed with ice and salt as refrigerants.

The loading platform along the length of the building's rear elevation was likely utilized with these early trucks for loading of bulk ice cream for distribution and appears to be original to the building (Sanborn 1921 and 1956). In addition, the Sanborn maps indicate the presence of a 500 gallon underground gasoline tank at the northeast corner of the loading platform, which was likely used to refuel delivery vehicles. The existing concrete loading docks that extend perpendicularly from the rear elevation below the metal pavilion have been added after 1956, and it is unclear whether they were incorporated by the ice cream manufacturing facility or by a later jewelry manufacturing occupant. These modern loading docks appear to be have been used with side-loading trucks.

Architectural/Engineering Significance

The General Ice Cream Corporation building was constructed at a time when technology and mechanization were revolutionizing the relatively new commercial ice cream manufacturing industry. The building's structure, layout, and design exemplify the specific needs of an early-twentieth-century ice cream manufacturing facility. The third floor was utilized for storage; the second floor included mixing facilities, a laboratory, and additional storage; the first floor featured making, packing, and further storage space; and the basement housed an ice box and both a 20-ton and 40-ton ice machine (Sanborn 1921 and 1956). The freight elevator and hoist bay allowed for easy conveyance of materials throughout the structure, and the rear loading dock facilitated transport of finished product outside the facility. The vertical arrangement of space provided a systematic method for efficient "top-down," gravity-assisted ice cream production and distribution.

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Specific features incorporated within the building that directly relate to ice cream manufacturing include the glazed and painted brick walls and painted brick floors, which provided sanitary, easy to clean, non-absorbent surfaces well suited to the wet and sticky environment of an ice cream plant. The sloping floors and drains allowed for frequent cleaning and removal of spills. The textured cast-iron floor panels provided additional weight bearing capacity and traction for moveable equipment or carts on slippery floor surfaces. The massive construction of the concrete columns and walls of the basement and the larger metal columns of the first floor were designed to support heavy, dense raw materials, finished products, and substantial equipment that agitated, blended, rotated, and processed ice cream in its various stages. The cork insulation on the walls, ceiling, and floor of the east section of the basement provided cold storage space. These combined elements express the specialized engineering function of the structure.

In addition to its purely functional features, the structure is an example of a more embellished, stylistically conscious manufacturing building typical of early-twentieth-century food production facilities such as breweries, bottling plants, or public utility plants, as opposed to a purely utilitarian heavy manufacturing facility. Architectural details such as the dentiled and corbelled cornices, the abundance of grouped two-over-two double-hung sash windows, the arched door surround with keystone, and the overall commercial or institutional feel of the building, indicate that care was taken to integrate the building into a dense urban environment.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the General Ice Cream Corporation Building encompass Lots 573 and 574 on Plat Map 107, which contains a total land area of 0.54 acres within Providence, Rhode Island.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries include, and are the historic lot lines associated with, the extant General Ice Cream Corporation Building and the site of Dolbey's former retail and wholesale ice cream building at 479 Plainfield Street, which was in operation as a storehouse until at least 1956. The boundaries follow legally recorded property lines between Plainfield Street to the south and Whittier Avenue to the north.

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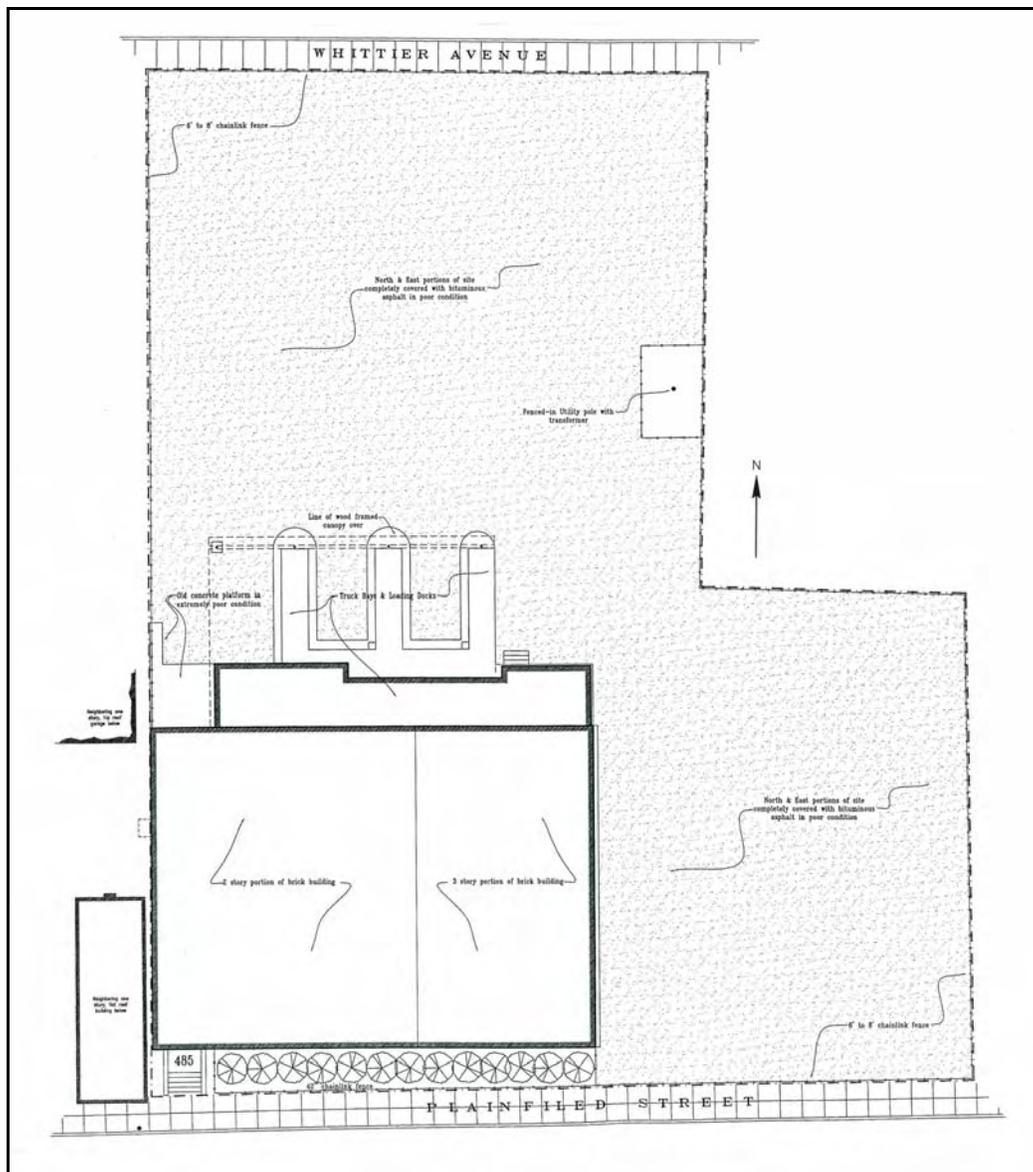
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Site Plan, PAL 2008 (shown on plan by Elton & Hampton Architects)



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PHOTOGRAPHS

1. General Ice Cream Corporation Building
2. Providence, Providence County, Rhode Island
3. Matthew Kierstead
4. October 2007
5. PAL
6. Southwest corner of façade, looking northeast from Plainfield Street
7. Photo 1 of 8

Items number 1-2 and 5 are the same for all subsequent photographs.

3. Matthew Kierstead
4. October 2007
6. South façade, looking northwest from Plainfield Street
7. Photo 2 of 8

3. Matthew Kierstead
4. October 2007
6. South façade and east side elevation, looking northwest from Plainfield Street
7. Photo 3 of 8

3. Matthew Kierstead
4. October 2007
6. North rear elevation, looking south from rear of property
7. Photo 4 of 8

3. Alyssa Wood
4. June 2006
6. West section first floor interior, looking northwest
7. Photo 5 of 8

3. Alyssa Wood
4. June 2006
6. East section first floor interior, looking north
7. Photo 6 of 8

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-
3. Alyssa Wood
 4. June 2006
 6. East section second floor interior, looking northeast
 7. Photo 7 of 8

3. Alyssa Wood
4. June 2006
6. East section third floor interior, looking southwest
7. Photo 8 of 8

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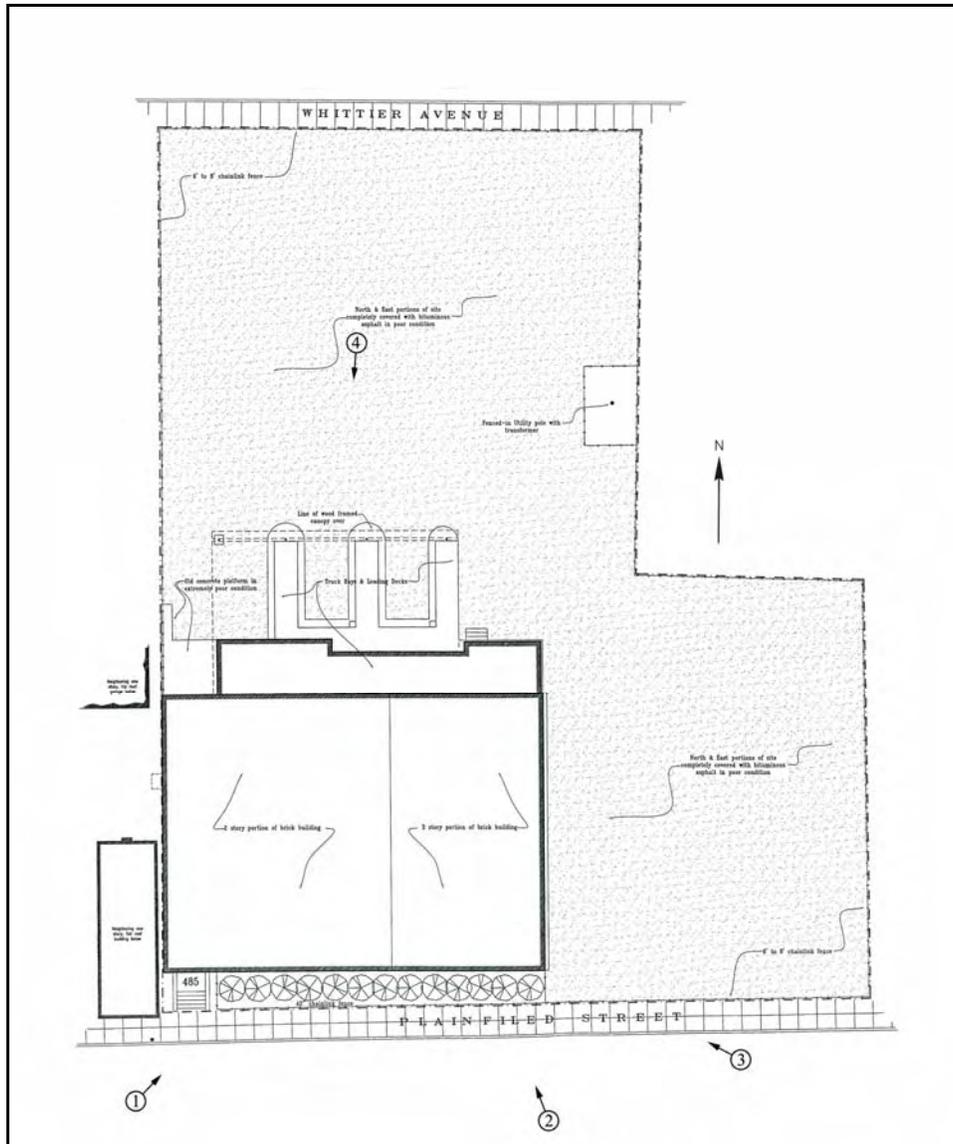
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Exterior Photo Key, PAL 2008 (shown on plan by Elton & Hampton Architects)



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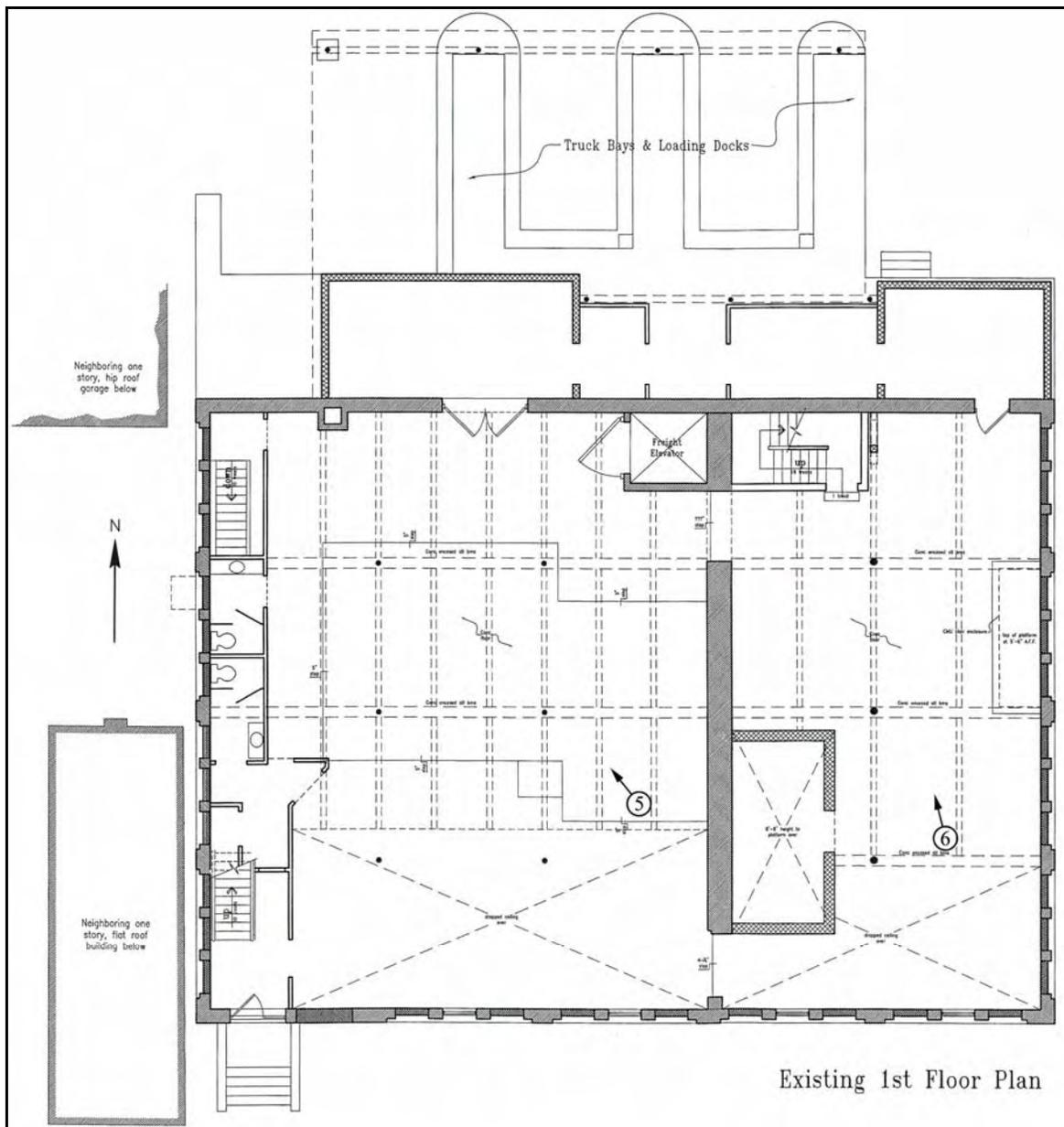
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1st Floor Photo Key, PAL 2008 (shown on plan by Elton & Hampton Architects)



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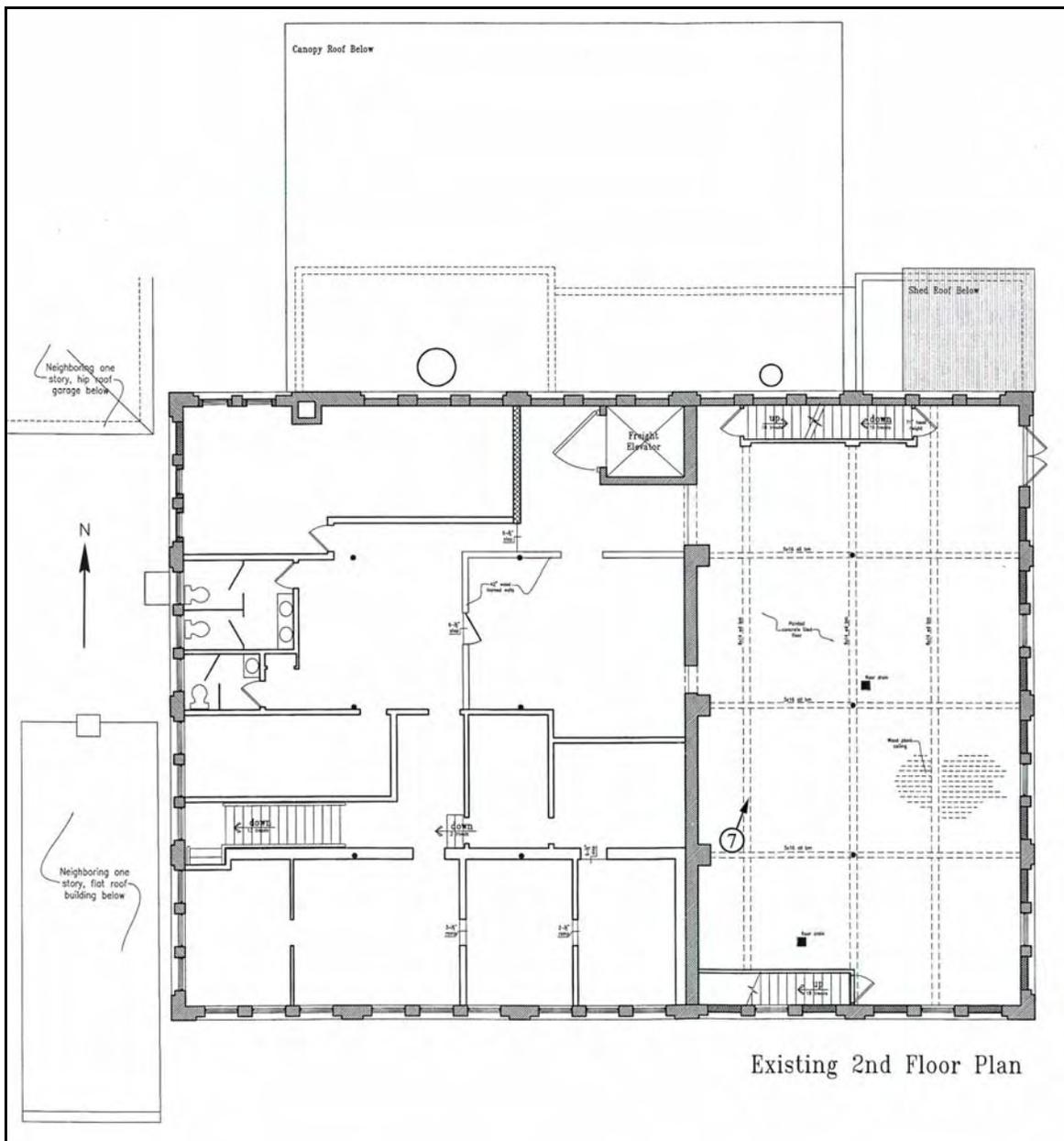
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2nd Floor Photo Key, PAL 2008 (shown on plan by Elton & Hampton Architects)



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3rd Floor Photo Key, PAL 2008 (shown on plan by Elton & Hampton Architects)

