

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *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 an 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 W. W. Griest Building

other names/site number Lancaster Federal Building (Common Name); PP&L Building

### 2. Location

street & number 8 North Queen Street  not for publication

city or town Lancaster  vicinity

state Pennsylvania code PA county Lancaster code 071 zip code 17603

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Burt D. Jones 5/20/99  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other. (explain: \_\_\_\_\_)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

W. W. Griest Building

Lancaster County, PA

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

- building(s), district, site, structure, object

Contributing Noncontributing buildings sites structures objects Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Business

Commerce/Business

Commerce/Financial Institution

Commerce/Professional

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revival/Italian Renaissance

foundation Stone/Granite

walls Stone/Limestone

Terra Cotta

roof Synthetics/other

other Asphalt

Narrative Description

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

W. W. Griest Building  
Name of Property

Lancaster County, PA  
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.)

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 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

#### Period of Significance

1924 - 1925

#### Significant Dates

N/A

#### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

#### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

#### Architect/Builder

Urban, C. Emlen

#### Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Historic Preservation Trust of Lancaster County  
~~Lancaster County Historical Society~~

W. W. Griest Building  
Name of Property

Lancaster County, PA  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property Less than One Acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 8	3 8 8 5 2 0	4 4 3 2 6 0 0
	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 Christopher Dawson, AIA

organization Hammel Associates, Architects date December 22, 1997

street & number 26 W. Orange Street telephone (717) 393-3713

city or town Lancaster state PA zip code 17603

**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 \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**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 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.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

### **W.W. Griest Building Lancaster County, PA**

#### Description

The Griest Building, designed by C. Emlen Urban, is fourteen stories and is Lancaster's only skyscraper. The building is located at the heart of the city on Penn Square's northwest corner (Photo #1). The Griest Building's east façade fronts North Queen Street and is in excellent condition, as are all other facades. The north façade is the only one that is not freestanding at the base; yet the facade quickly rises above its nondescript three-story neighbor (Photo #2). The Griest Building's west façade together with The Central Market, a Romanesque Revival building, define the south end of William Penn Way, a brick paved pedestrian alley that connects Market Street with Penn Square. Old City Hall (currently, The Heritage Center Museum) and the Griest Building's south facade define the northwest corner of the Square. Old City Hall, a three-story brick structure built between 1795 and 1797, is Lancaster's only remaining Georgian government building. The original entrance was in the principal façade on the south side that fronted Penn Square. At 14 stories and 187' the Griest building is Lancaster's most visually prominent landmark. The approximately 3600 sf/floor (66'x55') steel frame skyscraper was constructed during 1924 and 1925. The building's skin is comprised predominantly of Indiana limestone with a granite base and terra cotta at the thirteenth and fourteenth floors. Emerging from the ground on the east, south, and west facades is a granite plinth that visually supports two-story Corinthian pilasters. The north and south facades are comprised of a five bay ordering system while the east and west facades are limited to four bays.

Penn Square, in front of the Griest Building, is the symbolic center of Lancaster with a statue of William Penn at the center around which the traffic of King and Queen Streets is routed. Penn Square is also fronted by the four-story modernist Mellon Bank to the southeast, the four-story Watt and Shand Department Store to the southwest, and the neo-New England colonial four-story Fulton Bank to the northeast. The Griest Building's three closest neighbors are approximately three-stories, as are the majority of Lancaster City's downtown buildings.

The ground floor is deeply penetrated with sunlight through intermediate large arched windows and entrances. Above the arched windows a sculpted band with a floral motif wraps the building between the pilasters (Photo #3 & 4). The band is a

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

## **W.W. Griest Building Lancaster County, PA**

### Description

base for each bay's pair of double-hung sash windows. The two-story Corinthian pilasters support a continuous entablature that is a plinth for a story of pilasters (Photo #5 & Fig. 20). The shafts of these pilasters feature ornate sculpted panels (Fig. 21) and are separated by double-hung sash windows. A limestone-clad midsection has solid continuous vertical elements with infill fenestration, carved panels, and double-hung sash windows. The terra cotta top is comprised of Corinthian pilasters and large windows with arched pediments and sculpted panels (Fig. 22). An attic story above the pilasters supports a balustrade. A penthouse set back from the building's perimeter is cloaked in pilasters supporting an entablature. The superior design and craftsmanship of the architectural details have made the Griest Building the most prestigious professional address in the city of Lancaster.

The interior of the building has been significantly altered from its original design (Photo #6-16). The large two-story lobby had Tennessee marble floors with Italian marble railings and wall bases, and fresco covered plaster walls and ceilings. The Lobby had cashier booths on the north side with a U-shaped mezzanine above. Immediately inside the entrance was a grand stair that led to basement display rooms. These design elements were obscured with the 1973 branch bank renovations which included the division of the two-story lobby space into a one-story lobby and a full floor mezzanine level, and a reorganization of the interior partitions at the ground floor and mezzanine levels. It is not known whether some of the original materials and detailing remain beneath the new finishes.

The north bays of the building contain the elevators and stairs which are accessed from an east/west corridor on most floors. In 1955 one of the three elevator shafts was converted to an HVAC shaft permitting the addition of a central air-conditioning system. In 1973 new elevators were installed. In 1989 a gas-fired boiler was installed in the basement replacing the coal-fired furnace. All of the office spaces on floors two through twelve have been altered (many, numerous times) to suit tenant needs. The twelfth floor, frescoed in green and gold, was originally a large two-story auditorium, with the capacity to seat 300 people and included a mezzanine on the north side. In 1976 the auditorium was converted into office space with a thirteenth floor added at the previous mezzanine level and

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### **W.W. Griest Building Lancaster County, PA**

#### Description

all the original architectural detail elements removed. The west stair tower has retained more of the original character of the space than any other interior element. The east stair tower was modified as part of the 1973 ground floor entrance renovations. These renovations included, *new marble stairs up to the mezzanine level with a new guardrail and handrail system.*

A tower, on the roof, was added in 1976 and represents the most significant alteration to the exterior. The 53' tower is still in place including the four 10' diameter communication dishes. In 1985 the branch bank located on the ground floor added a large metal commercial sign to the southeast corner of the building, above new storefront entrance doors. The bank sign disrupts the classical balance of the building at the ground floor, but the scale of the building is enough to counteract the intrusion. The two previous south entrances at the second and fourth bays were replaced with windows and wall panels similar to the adjacent bays. The south façade's most easterly bay was converted into an entrance with a new commercial storefront. The two North Queen Street entrances were also replaced with commercial storefronts.

Renovations to the Griest Building have stripped it of its most impressive interior spatial experiences, but the exterior of the building exists much as it was designed and constructed in 1924-1925.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

## **W.W. Griest Building Lancaster County, PA**

### Statement of Significance

The Griest Building is Lancaster's preeminent building and the city's only skyscraper. The construction of such a building in 1924-25 was a major event signaling the modernization of Lancaster through the explosive growth of the trolley, electricity, and fuel industries during the early part of the twentieth century. Designed in the Italian Renaissance Revival style, the building's facade possesses a scale, rhythm, and coherent classical details that provide the skyscraper with a palatable monumentality and represents architect C. Emlen Urban's (1863-1939) most mature work. Buildings designed by Urban, Lancaster's most prominent architect, are scattered throughout Lancaster, but the Griest Building became his best known. The preservation of the original exterior design, including the craftsmanship of the sculpted architectural elements, qualifies the building for a National Register listing under Criterion C for Architecture.

### History

William Walton Griest, to whom the building is dedicated, was head of the Lancaster Public Utilities. The Griest Building was designed and constructed to house offices for The Conestoga Traction Company, The Edison Electric Company, and The Lancaster Gas Light and Fuel Company in response to the rapid growth the Utilities experienced under W.W. Griest's leadership. W.W. Griest was elected president of the Utilities for 23 years straight and served in the U.S. House of Representatives for the 10<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania District (1909-1929). Lancaster County is historically a Republican stronghold and W.W. Griest was in the powerful position of being the leader of the Lancaster County Republican Party. He was able to unilaterally control the progress of Lancaster's public works projects through political appointments in the police, fire, streets, and water departments, as well as positions in the public utilities.

The demolition of the former Hirsh Building on the building site commenced April 4, 1924. The foundation for the skyscraper was completed by July 7, 1924, and the exterior was nearly complete by February 1, 1925. The skyscraper's construction during the Roaring Twenties was a beacon of Lancaster City's commercial growth at the center of the predominately rural Lancaster County. The public utilities



## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### **W.W. Griest Building Lancaster County, PA**

#### Statement of Significance

occupied the building as planned with 40% of the tenant spaces on floors five through nine rented prior to the building's dedication on September 22, 1925. The area's growth was interrupted by the Stock Market crash in 1929 and subsequent Depression. The change of fortunes and urban development philosophies secured the Griest Building's position as Lancaster's tallest building. Pennsylvania Power and Light purchased the building August 29, 1934 and in 1956 began to call the building the PP&L Building. When George Friedland purchased the building June 13, 1962 he immediately reinstated the dedicated name. Gross Realty was the next owner as of June 9, 1972 and in 1977 the building became known as the Lancaster Federal Building after the main tenant. Wilson Associates purchased the building on September 29, 1982 and once again the original building name was reinstated in 1985. The building has been owned by Robert and Ruth Ecklin since June 1, 1995.

Lancaster's most prominent architect, C. Emlen Urban, was born in Conestoga Township's Conestoga Center on February 26, 1863 to Barbara Hebbie and Amos S. Urban. After graduating from The Lancaster High School in 1880, C. Emlen Urban began his professional pursuits in the Scranton office of E.L. Walter for a period of eighteen months and then in the Philadelphia office of Willis G. Hale until 1885. Next, C. Emlen Urban returned to Lancaster and established his own architectural practice. His father's business partner Henry Burger was integral, as a member of the Southern Market Building Committee, in C. Emlen Urban being awarded his first large scale commission. Subsequent important buildings designed by C. Emlen Urban include: Lancaster's Watt and Shand Department Store, Y.M.C.A., Steven's High School, Harold's Building, Kirk Johnson Building, and Unitarian Church. A close friendship with chocolate's Milton S. Hershey resulted in C. Emlen Urban designing Hershey's Community Building, Residence, Trust Company Building, and the original Chocolate Plant.

C. Emlen Urban's designs are eclectic with stylistic influences ranging from French Renaissance to Gothic Revival. He respected and studied the architecture of Palladio, Nicolas Francois Blonde, Jules Hardouin Mansart, and McKim, Mead, and White. Urban's stature and success were products of the skill he continued to

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### **W.W. Griest Building Lancaster County, PA**

#### Statement of Significance

develop for applying historical architectural styles to modern building types until his death at age 76 in 1939.

Within the context of works by C. Emlen Urban, the Griest Building can be compared to Lancaster's Southern Market and Hager Building. The Southern Market was designed very early in Urban's career in the Queen Anne style. Comprised of a three-story headhouse and a two-story markethouse, it presents a seven bay symmetrical east façade to the city. This façade is anchored by a projected wood awning at street level, a central pediment, and pyramidal corner towers. The detailing of the east façade wraps the north and south facades for the length of three bays extending the corbeled and ornamental brickwork and molded wood cornice. The west façade features an extraordinary arched wood cornice. The interior of the markethouse is defined by a system of arched wood trusses that are the main interior architectural feature. Despite programmatic changes, early signs of C. Emlen Urban's skill of organizing large scale architectural programs into a cohesive whole are demonstrated in the Southern Market's design and foreshadow the Architect's lifetime of design development that culminates with the Griest Building.

The Hager Building (1910-11), an earlier Beaux-Arts based design with French Renaissance Revival details. In the Hager Building Urban attempted less successfully to organize a large modern building type with classical architectural devices. The five-story brick and terra cotta department store is directly west of the Old Town Hall and Central Market Building and is distinguished by very elaborate cornices and details. The proportions of the Hager façade typical bay, the window to wall ratio, and the excessively elaborate sculpted elements result in comparatively flat façades with the exception of the heavy-handed cornices that seem out of step. The Griest Building's facades being designed near the end of Urban's career are more elegant in their relationships and imply greater depth. His development as a designer is revealed in the secondary architectural layers of the building's mass, articulated with a refined ease in the vertical bays and horizontal bands. The elaboration of these devices on the simple rectangular parti generates a layering of stable and symmetrical architectural elements. The graceful proportions of the building's fenestration, pilasters, base/shaft/capital organization, and the

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**W.W. Griest Building  
Lancaster County, PA**

Statement of Significance

finely sculpted ornamental panels represent the culmination of a career's worth of architectural design refinements and are unmatched in Lancaster.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

## **W.W. Griest Building Lancaster County, PA**

### Bibliography

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

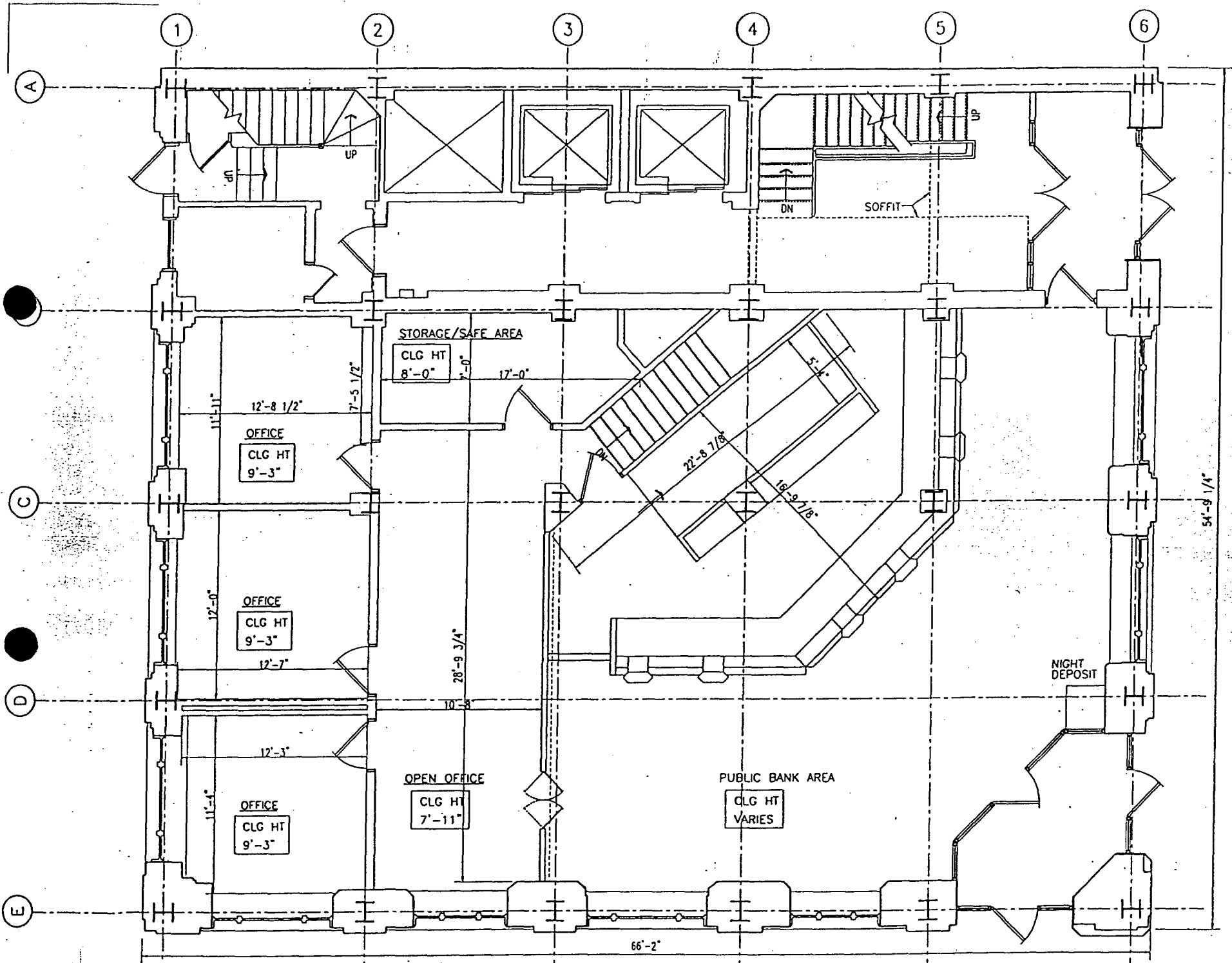
**W.W. Griest Building**  
**Lancaster County, PA**

### Verbal Boundary Description

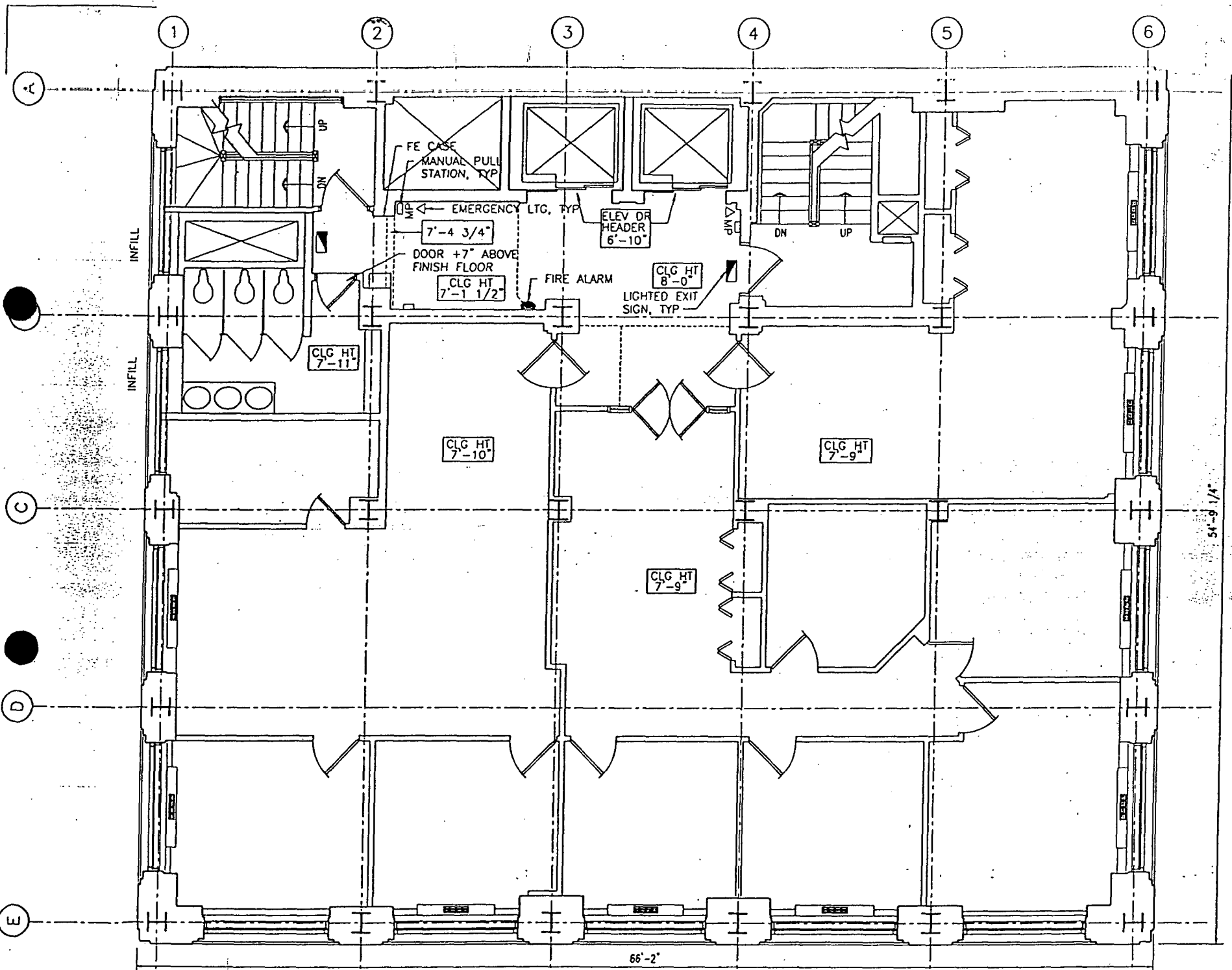
The boundary of the Griest Building is described on the city tax map as 13K1D2-2-14.

### Boundary Justification

The boundary is the original property lines purchased for the construction of the Griest Building in 1924.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



FE CASE  
MANUAL PULL  
STATION, TYP

EMERGENCY LTC, TYP

7'-4 3/4"

DOOR +7" ABOVE  
FINISH FLOOR

CLG HT  
7'-1 1/2"

ELEV DR  
HEADER  
6'-10"

FIRE ALARM

CLG HT  
8'-0"

LIGHTED EXIT  
SIGN, TYP

CLG HT  
7'-11"

CLG HT  
7'-10"

CLG HT  
7'-9"

CLG HT  
7'-9"

54'-9 1/4"

66'-2"

MEZZANINE PLAN







GREENLAND 1.4 MI.  
PHILADELPHIA (CIVIC CENTER) 81 MI.

SMOKE TOWN 2.5 MI.  
INTERCOURSE 7.5 MI.

SOUDESBURG 3.3 MI.  
COATESVILLE 7.3 MI.

THE GUEST  
EMERSON  
LANCASTER  
COUNTY, PA  
LANCASTER  
GUMFANGEL

11 382 520  
4432 600

4431

4430