

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Capitol Tower DRAFT

Other names/site number: Capitol Records Building

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 1750 N. Vine Street

City or town: Los Angeles State: CA County: Los Angeles

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

<p>_____ Signature of certifying official/Title:</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	

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

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ entered in the National Register
- ___ determined eligible for the National Register
- ___ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ___ removed from the National Register
- ___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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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 Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE / professional

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE / professional

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT / Mid-Century Modern

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: CONCRETE

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Narrative Description

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

Summary Paragraph

The Capitol Tower is a twelve-story Mid-Century Modern circular office tower over a one-story rectangular base with recording studio constructed in 1955-1956. It is located at 1750 N. Vine Street in Los Angeles, CA and is situated on the east side of Vine Street, south of Yucca Street, and north of Hollywood Boulevard in Central Hollywood. The building is 150 feet tall, which was the height limit in Los Angeles at the time it was built. The immediate area is characterized by a mix of low- to high-rise commercial and multi-family residential development. It is flanked to the west by Vine Street, to the north by the three-story H.L. Gogerty Building (1929), and to the east and south by surface parking lots. The building is less than a quarter of a mile south of the Hollywood Freeway (U.S. Route 101). The Capitol Tower retains all seven aspects of integrity from its period of significance (1955-1956) under Criterion A and Criterion C.

Narrative Description

The Capitol Tower is a twelve-story circular office tower set atop a one-story rectangular base with recording studio. It occupies the west side of a rectangular parcel and sits flush to Vine Street. The Hollywood Walk-of-Fame, with black terrazzo paving, runs north and south along Vine Street and is directly in front of the building. Various Capitol artists have their pink terrazzo stars near the front of the building. The recessed entry plaza is paved with black terrazzo flooring that marks the Vine Street entrance of the building and "THE CAPITOL TOWER" is spelled out in white terrazzo. There is a stepped concrete-edged planter bed between the Walk-of-Fame and the building. Below the surface parking lot just east of the building are eight subterranean reverberation chambers that service the recording studios.

The base of the building serves as a plinth for the circular tower. It has a rectangular plan, simple massing, and has an asymmetrical composition with a flat roof. Exterior walls are primarily smooth scored concrete. Fenestration is limited to the entrance bays on the west and east façades since most of the first story is used for recording studios and there is no need for windows. On the roof of the base, there is an exterior perimeter walkway following the footprint of the tower for access to the rooftop mechanical equipment. The west (primary) façade has the Vine Street entrance. The recessed entrance has floor-to-ceiling metal frame storefront windows and fully glazed frameless double doors. There is an opaque screen south of the entrance, and a suspended metal louver screen projects above the entrance. The metal framework has projecting supports that hold can-shaped lights. On the east façade, facing the rear parking lot, there is a one-story projecting addition that was constructed in 1996. It has floor-to-ceiling metal storefront windows with fully glazed double metal doors. A suspended canopy with the word "CAPITOL" projects above the rear entrance. The entire south façade has a ceramic tile mural titled "Hollywood Jazz: 1945-1972" by Richard Watt Jr. installed in 1990. The north façade, which faces an exterior courtyard, has climbing vines and a painted mural, which was added in the last ten years.

The circular tower was constructed to appear to be floating above the base and rises twelve stories for a 360-degree view of the City of Los Angeles. The tower is circular in plan with simple massing and a

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symmetrical composition. The roof is flat with a concrete parapet. Atop the roof is a two-story circular mechanical penthouse with a circular ring sign and perforated metal trylon. The equipment tower is enclosed with vertical louvered screens. Projecting from the equipment tower is a circular ring sign with internally lit projecting letters that spell out "CAPITOL RECORDS" repeated three times making the sign visible from all directions. The 82-foot perforated metal trylon is attached above the equipment tower topped with a red aviation beacon light that repeatedly blinks "H-O-L-L-Y-W-O-O-D" in International Morse Code. A 50-foot metal flagpole was added to the roof in 1989.

Twelve continuous concrete piers run the height of the tower and visually unite each level. Each floor of the tower is comprised of reinforced concrete spandrels surmounted by a band of fixed window units set into metal frames. Each semi-circular arc between the piers contains six windows. A horizontal concrete awning rings each floor of the tower, projecting beyond the plane of the vertical piers to visually create the sense of stacked floor plates raised up on the piers. Porcelain-enameled eyelid sunshades project at a 40-degree angle from the perimeter of each ring, further enhancing the building's circular form while also shading the office windows.

Interior

The base, or first story, of the Capitol Tower contains the east and west entrance lobbies, offices, engineering labs, three main recording studios, a mail room, storage spaces, and access to the underground reverberation chambers. The main lobby is located off the Vine Street entrance. It is a double-height space with metal beams that span the lobby storefront to the elevator bay. The space is flanked by two large concrete columns that support the tower. At the rear, are three elevators finished with stainless steel and a built-in mail drop. The north and south walls are clad with marble panels and the floors have non original porcelain tiles. Off the lobby is a corridor that leads to the recording offices, labs, storage spaces, mailroom, and recording studios. The corridors are typically narrow with smooth plaster walls, fabric wainscot and resilient sheet flooring. Some of the hallways have metal handrails. The offices, labs and storage spaces are in the northern portion of the base and the recording studios are in the southern portion.

The three recording studios are labeled A, B, and C. Studio A and B are adjacent to one another and are the largest of the three studios. Studio A has a geometric-shaped control room with three adjacent sound booths. The space was engineered for production with a shaped ceiling, acoustical wood wall cladding, and resilient floor tiles. Studio B also has a geometric-shaped control room with a mezzanine lounge and balcony. The space was also engineered for production with a draped ceiling and acoustical panels of birchwood and fiberglass arranged in a zig-zag pattern. Studio C is the smallest of the three and was designed as a mixing suite. It has a draped ceiling and acoustical wall panels. The interior finishes of the recording studios have been modified over the years as technology has advanced; however, original construction techniques remain intact. The floors of each recording studio feature a layer of concrete that floats upon a layer of cork to provides better insulation from sound vibration. Aside from resting upon this specially designed floor, the interiors of the studios themselves are their own enclosures, separated from the rest of the building by a one-inch gap with ten-inch thick concrete walls.

There is access to the underground reverberation chambers through a trap door in the floor of the mechanical room. There are a total of eight chambers built beneath the east parking lot. A corridor of board formed concrete walls and flooring lead to the eight chambers. The chambers are separated into two groups, the original four were constructed with the building, and four additional chambers were added in 1969. The chambers allow for the use of sound reverberation to add depth, texture and space to recorded music. Earlier music recordings often had a flat affect that reverberation chambers mitigate. The trapezoidal form combined with the sloped ceilings of the chambers present no parallel surfaces, which prevents the occurrence of echoes or sound flutter. The chambers are shock mounted to ten-inch thick

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concrete outer walls and like the studios, have concrete and cork floors to insulate them from outside sounds.

Access to the office tower is from the building's central core with three elevator bays and one stairwell (Stair 2). The main stairwell (Stair 1) is located off the Vine Street lobby in the northwest corner. Each floorplate has generally the same configuration with restrooms and storage spaces in the building's core and offices around the perimeter with a circular corridor between the two. The elevator lobby and Stair 1 are to the west of the core. Both stairwells have concrete stairs with a metal pipe railing. Interior wall and flooring finishes vary from floor to floor. Interior walls are typically smooth plaster and flooring is either carpet or resilient tile. Ceilings have acoustic tiles and there is a soffit around the outer perimeter above the windows.

ALTERATIONS

Alterations to the building's interior include the following. The recording studio's control rooms were enlarged in 1959. Four additional underground reverberation chambers were added in 1969. Studio B was remodeled in 1977 which included the addition of a mezzanine level. Studios A and B were remodeled in 1989, which included enlarging the control rooms and adding state-of-the-art recording technology. Restrooms on the first floor were upgraded for accessibility and a 50-foot flagpole was added to the roof in 1989. Life-safety upgrades were made in 1991, which included installing fire-doors in the elevator lobbies and adding a new fire sprinkler system. The restrooms on the upper floors in the building core were upgraded for accessibility in 2000. The interior of the office tower has undergone numerous tenant improvements as tenant turnover and interior design trends have precipitated modifications to office size, style, and use.

Exterior alterations include the addition of the ceramic tile mural on the south façade in 1990 and the one-story lobby addition of the east (rear) façade in 1996.

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

Exterior character-defining features of the Capitol Tower include, but are not limited to:

- 13-story building consisting of a 12-story circular tower rising from a one-story rectangular base
- Rectangular reinforced concrete base with flat roof
- Central recessed entry plaza from Vine Street with suspended louvered panel
- Stepped concrete planter beds
- Black terrazzo paving with "THE CAPITOL TOWER" spelled out in white terrazzo
- Circular tower with concrete piers, flat roof and mechanical penthouse
- Horizontal bands of windows set between concrete piers on each floor
- Concrete awnings at each floor
- Porcelain-enamel sunshades ringing each floor
- Rooftop perforated metal trylon with a beacon light blinking "H-O-L-L-Y-W-O-O-D" in International Morse Code
- Rooftop concentric ring sign with internally lit block letters spelling out "CAPITOL RECORDS"

Interior character-defining features of The Capitol Tower include, but are not limited to:

- Vine Street lobby with stainless steel elevators, marble wall panels, and storefront windows
- Central core with three elevators and stairwell
- Location and configuration of recording studios, A, B, and C
- Backlit recording studio signage for Studio A
- Acoustic panels in Studio B

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- Underground reverberation chambers
- Configuration of tower floorplates with elevator lobbies and circulation around central core

INTEGRITY

The Capitol Tower retains a high degree of integrity from its period of significance 1955-1956 under Criterion A and Criterion C. The Capitol Tower remains on its original site and therefore retains integrity of location. It retains exterior character-defining features of its original Mid-Century Modern design by architectural firm Welton Becket and Associates, and some interior features; it therefore retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Although the area around the building is constantly being redeveloped, the building retains its historic setting through its location on Vine Street in Central Hollywood. Because the property retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship, it continues to convey its historic use as a 1950s Mid-Century Modern recording studio and office tower, and therefore retains integrity of feeling; and it continues to convey its direct link to Capitol Records as the original occupants, and therefore retains integrity of association.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Criterion A COMMERCE

Criterion C ARCHITECTURE

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Period of Significance

1955-1956

Significant Dates

1955-1956

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Welton Becket and Associates

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

The Capitol Tower is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of commerce and under Criterion C in the area of architecture. The Capitol Tower was built as the headquarters for Capitol Records, the first major recording label on the West Coast and the site of pioneering recordings by artists such as Frank Sinatra and Nat King Cole. It was completed in 1956 and its unique circular form was designed by important Los Angeles architecture firm Welton Becket and Associates who were responsible for innovative structures that successfully melded Modernism with rational design principles. Under both criterion A and C, the period of significance is 1955-1956, reflecting the date of construction.

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

The Capitol Tower is significant under Criterion A because, as a company, Capitol Records was a significant contributor to the music industry and was the first major recording label on the West Coast. The talent represented by Capitol Records includes legendary figures of the pop and rock music genres, and the building was the site of pioneering recordings made by artists such as Frank Sinatra and Nat King Cole. The Capitol Tower has become the very symbol of the company itself; bold, innovative, unconventional, and modern.

The Capitol Tower is significant under Criterion C as an important example of Mid-Century Modern architecture as applied to an office building in Hollywood in the 1950s, and it was designed by noted architecture firm Welton Becket and Associates. It was one the first circular office towers and was the first high-rise built in Hollywood after World War II. It was a groundbreaking modern design in a city, and at a time, when groundbreaking modern design was at its peak; however, it stands in contrast to the sharp precision of rectilinear modern design that swept Southern California in the 1950s.

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

Capitol Records was established in 1942 by Johnny Mercer, Glenn Wallichs, and Buddy DeSylva. Mercer was a nationally known singer and songwriter, Wallichs owned the largest music store in Los Angeles called Wallichs Music City, and DeSylva was a songwriter and a producer at Paramount Pictures. DeSylva fronted the initial \$25, 000 to fund the endeavor. Capitol Records was the first notable record label to set up on the west coast and was seen as competition to the major east coast record labels; RCA-Victor, Columbia, and Decca, all based in Manhattan. Capitol's first offices were located at 1483 Vine Street and in 1946 were moved above Wallichs Music City located at 1507 Vine Street. In the 1940s this area was the hub of Hollywood's nightclub life.

The company used rented studios until 1948, when Capitol purchased its first studio at 5515 Melrose Avenue. During this period the company became a leader in sound technology. Capitol was the first label to use tape machines rather than acetate disks, allowing for higher recording quality. Capitol was also the first of the major labels to fully exploit echo chambers, specially designed rooms that in correspondence with the microphone and speaker placement within them captured a richer sound. The company grew rapidly and signed popular early acts in the 1940s such as Stan Kenton, Jo Stafford, Louis Prima & Keely Smith, Les Baxter, Alan W. Livingston (creator of "Bozo the Clown"), Mel Torme, and Nat King Cole. Having sold 15 million records by 1952, Cole's success is credited with vaulting Capitol Records into the

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same pantheon of east coast labels. In 1955, the British company EMI, Inc. purchased Capitol Records, an \$8.5 million price tag that was at the time the costliest transaction in the history of the recording industry.

With success came the resources to expand into new headquarters, and Capitol commissioned local architectural firm Welton Becket and Associates to design new recording studios and offices. Within the Becket firm, 24-year-old project designer Louis Naidorf was given the task of designing the new office in 1954. Welton Becket and Associates was known for buildings that were distinct and technologically innovative in their design, amenities, and construction.

Naidorf did not know the identity of the client when he proposed his circular design, and the spire was a redesign of what was to be a derrick-like antenna that Capitol wanted placed atop the tower. Initially, Capitol had hoped to have its own radio station broadcast from the facility, but the FCC rejected this idea. Upon viewing the round-towered model, Capitol founder Glenn Wallichs, fearing the “stack of records” jokes to come, demanded a rectangular design, which Becket provided. After accepting Becket’s cost arguments and after Wallichs’ own insurance company recommended the round tower over the rectangular model, only then did Wallichs endorse the unique yet highly efficient shape.

The circular shape of the office tower was not just distinctive and experimental but was primarily intended to be cost-efficient. The shape required less outer wall than a rectangular structure, which saved on construction costs. Because of reduced heat loss and gain through the glass, less wall space made climate control easier and more affordable. In addition, light was more evenly distributed in a round building. The circular floorplan provided the optimum amount of space needed for the work occurring within the tower, and the circular shape allowed for a smaller more compact central core.

The Capitol Tower became the first high-rise in Hollywood after World War II. Furthermore, the design was reportedly the world’s first circular office building. The building included the highest technical amenities of its time including an automated elevator system, Hollywood’s first fully air-conditioned office tower, and a very early use of backlit signage that is now the region’s earliest remaining example of such signage atop a corporate high-rise. The three recording studios were the first anywhere designed for the purpose of high-fidelity recording, and the underground reverberation chambers were a relatively rare development.

Innovator and guitar pioneer, Les Paul was commissioned by Capitol to design the original four reverberation chambers for its then-new studios. Located thirty feet under the building beneath the parking lot, each trapezoidal-shaped room, complete with uneven ceilings to avoid any parallel surfaces, was designed to have a different sound. The different dimensions, speaker choices, placements, and microphone selections and locations resulted in an individualized sound for each chamber. Built out of concrete and finished with a highly reflective hard lacquer of a type used on pipe organs, the reverberation chambers proved so popular that four additional chambers were added in the 1960s.

Ground was broken in September 1954 and the Capitol Tower opened in April 1956 with the appearance of Leila Morse, the granddaughter of Samuel Morse, who activated the red “H-O-L-L-Y-W-O-O-D” beacon via telegraph. The opening of the Capitol Tower was also an attempt to revive downtown Hollywood. By the 1950s, what had once been a thriving entertainment district was on the slow decline. Just like young families moving to the suburbs, film and television production were also moving out of Hollywood to the San Fernando Valley and Burbank. However, the new Capitol Records headquarters bucked the trend and instead focused on innovation in the rapidly changing high-tech recording industry and embraced the sleek unconventional form of their new building which also symbolized a new way of doing business and a new popular culture.

During these years Capitol Records executives signed a variety of artists whom others had perceived as in decline. These included Judy Garland, Bing Crosby, Peggy Lee, and perhaps most notably, Frank Sinatra.

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On April 22, 1956, it was Sinatra who conducted the first recording in the Capitol Records studios. In Studio A, Sinatra conducted Nelson Riddle's 56-piece orchestra through "Tone Poems in Color." In this same studio, Sinatra would go on to record some of his most memorable songs and albums, including "The Lady is a Tramp," "Night and Day," "Witchcraft," "Chicago," "Something's Gotta Give" (written by Johnny Mercer), "Embraceable You," and "Nice 'n' Easy" among many others. During this period, Sinatra's friend Dean Martin would record at these facilities, as would Nat King Cole. Capitol's three studios: A, B, and C, located at the base of the tower, were the first in the industry designed specifically for high-fidelity recording.

By the mid-1960s, Capitol Records became a powerhouse in the music industry. Though founded with a focus on a smooth, melodic, pre-rock 'n' roll style sensibility, Capitol shifted with the trends of the decade, and hired young music producers. In part as a result of this, its label included two of the truly stratospheric pop bands of the decade: The Beatles and The Beach Boys. Based out of Hawthorne, CA., the Beach Boys were the first youth-oriented rock band to sign with Capitol. By their third album, "Surfer Girl," the Beach Boys would become the first self-produced rock group. Brian Wilson would become the first rock musician from a group to release a solo single, titled "Caroline, No" in 1966. The group would also become the first rock band to get their own custom label (Brother Records) distributed by Capitol. For the Beatles, Capitol Records was the primary American distributor and marketer of their music from December 1963 until the band's breakup in 1970. By 1965, the Beatles and the Beach Boys provided 56% of Capitol Records' entire revenue.

Since the 1960s, among the acts that have recorded within the Capitol studios are Bobby Darin, Lou Rawls, Natalie Cole, Linda Ronstadt, Nancy Wilson, Whitney Houston, MC Hammer, and Prince. In addition, Capitol has continued to sign other significant, platinum-selling pop acts including The Band, Pink Floyd, Duran Duran, Tina Turner, Garth Brooks, Bonnie Raitt, The Beastie Boys, and Radiohead. Under the leadership of EMI, Capitol Records continued to thrive adapting to the technological advances in the music industry from the 8-track to the compact disc to downloadable singles and albums to providing content to streaming services.

In 2007, EMI restructured and merged Capitol Records and Virgin Records America to form Capitol Music Group. Five years later in 2012, EMI sold their recorded music operation to Universal Music Group, who made the Capitol Records Building their world headquarters. Today, the Capitol Tower is home to Capitol Music Group, which is comprised of Capitol Records, Blue Note Records, Astralwerks, Harvest Records and Capitol Christian Music Group, as well as Virgin Music Label and Artist Services.

WELTON BECKET AND ASSOCIATES

In partnership as Plummer, Wurdeman and Becket (1933-1939), and then as Wurdeman and Becket, Welton Becket (1902-1969) was responsible for the design of several mid-century Modernist landmarks in Los Angeles. Wurdeman and Becket's most prominent buildings include the Pan-Pacific Auditorium (1935), Bullocks Pasadena (1947), and Prudential Square (1948; now Museum Square) on Wilshire Boulevard. Welton Becket and Associates was established upon the death of Walter Wurdeman and was the successor firm to Wurdeman and Becket. Two of the firm's most visible and distinctive works are the Capitol Tower (1956) and the Cinerama Dome (1963). Both buildings are located in Hollywood and represent Mid-Century Modern architecture. In each example, the building's circular plan infuses a flamboyance appropriate to the entertainment industry, a record company headquarters and a motion picture theater. Welton Becket and Associates was also responsible for the design of the Music Center in downtown Los Angeles (1964-1969), which included the Mark Taper Forum, a playhouse with a circular plan. The distinctive circular shape of each of these buildings illustrates the experiments that Becket's firm undertook within the context of a larger conservative style. The simple components of the buildings,

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with functional and structural elements providing the articulation and decoration, are hallmarks of Mid-Century Modernism. These identifying marks of the style include bands of windows, sunscreens, concrete frame, and the hard smooth finish materials of the entry plazas and interior lobbies, including terrazzo, polished metal, and large amounts of glass.

The firm was responsible for many iconic buildings in Los Angeles including the Theme Building at LAX (1962, with Pereira & Luckman and Paul R Williams), the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium (1959), and the Los Angeles Music Center (1964-1969). By the 1960s, Welton Becket and Associates was the largest architectural firm in the country, and Becket's work extended around the world including a U.S. embassy in Warsaw, numerous Hilton Hotels, plus the Ford and General Electric Pavilions at the 1964 New York World's Fair.

Welton Becket and Associates was an established firm with corporate and government clientele; however, there was a visionary aspect to their work. The firm was known for buildings that were distinct and technologically innovative in their design, amenities and construction. Optimism about technology and its effect on the architectural climate of Los Angeles can be considered a major factor guiding the sensibilities of Welton Becket and Associates.

CONCLUSION

The Capitol Tower is nominated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of commerce and under Criterion C the area of architecture.

The Capitol Tower was completed in 1956 as the headquarters for Capitol Records, the first major recording studio established on the West Coast and the site of pioneering recordings by Frank Sinatra and Nat King Cole, among many others. The Capitol Tower is architecturally significant as an important example of Mid-Century Modern architecture designed by Los Angeles architecture firm Welton Becket and Associates, known for buildings that were distinct and technologically innovative in their design, amenities, and construction. Capitol Tower's circular shape was not just distinctive and experimental but was primarily intended to be more cost-efficient than a more traditional rectilinear design. The building's unique design has come to represent Capitol Records and it has become one of the most recognizable examples of modern architecture in Los Angeles.

The Capitol Tower has been found eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under criterion A and C (1997) and is listed in the California Register of Historical Resources. In addition, it is designated a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM No. 857, 2006).

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

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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 # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Approximately 1 acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 34.10314 | Longitude: -118.32636 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

LAND DESC IN DOC 1453831,970917 POR LOT 1 TR NO 18237 AND POR LOT 12 M B 6-144 (APN 5546-030-028)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Los Angeles County Assessor's legal description.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Paul Travis, Managing Principal & Laura Janssen, Senior Architectural Historian
organization: Historic Resources Group, LLC
street & number: 12 S. Fair Oaks Ave., Suite 200
city or town: Pasadena state: CA zip code: 91105
e-mail: paul@historicresourcesgroup.com / laura@historicresourcesgroup.com
telephone: (626) 793-2400
date: February 14, 2024

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photographs

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

Photo Log

Name of Property: Capitol Tower
City or Vicinity: Los Angeles
County: Los Angeles
State: California
Photographer: Historic Resources Group
Date Photographed: June 2022

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

Photo 1 of 24

Description: Contextual view along Vine Street
View: Northeast

Photo 2 of 24

Description: Contextual view from adjacent south parking lot
View: Northwest

Photo 3 of 24

Description: West (primary) façade
View: Northeast

Photo 4 of 24

Description: East façade
View: Southwest

Photo 5 of 24

Description: Detail of windows and sunshade on east façade
View: West

Photo 6 of 24

Description: Detail of rooftop signage and trylon
View: Southwest

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Photo 7 of 24

Description: West (primary) façade along Vine Street
View: Southeast

Photo 8 of 24

Description: Detail of Vine Street entrance
View: Southeast

Photo 9 of 24

Description: Interior, 1st floor, Vine Street lobby with view towards elevators
View: Southeast

Photo 10 of 24

Description: Interior, 1st floor, Vine Street lobby with view towards entry doors
View: Southwest

Photo 11 of 24

Description: Interior, 1st floor, corridor from lobby to recording studios
View: South

Photo 12 of 24

Description: Interior, 1st floor, Studio A entrance with original signage
View: Southwest

Photo 13 of 24

Description: Interior, 1st floor, Studio A
View: Northeast

Photo 14 of 24

Description: Interior, 1st floor, Studio B entrance
View: Southwest

Photo 15 of 24

Description: Interior, 1st floor, Studio B with acoustic wall panels
View: Southwest

Photo 16 of 24

Description: Interior, 1st floor, corridor to Studio C
View: Northwest

Photo 17 of 24

Description: Interior, 1st floor, Studio C
View: Northwest

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Photo 18 of 24

Description: Interior, 2nd floor, typical elevator lobby
View: South

Photo 19 of 24

Description: Exterior, 2nd floor, exterior corridor overlooking roof of building base
View: Southwest

Photo 20 of 24

Description: Exterior, 2nd floor, exterior corridor with detail of windows
View: West

Photo 21 of 24

Description: Interior, 9th floor, typical office/conference room configuration
View: Northwest

Photo 22 of 24

Description: Interior, 13th floor, typical circular corridor
View: Southwest

Photo 23 of 24

Description: Tower roof with mechanical penthouse and ring sign structure
View: South

Photo 24 of 24

Description: Tower roof with detail of ring sign with internally lit letters
View: Southwest

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

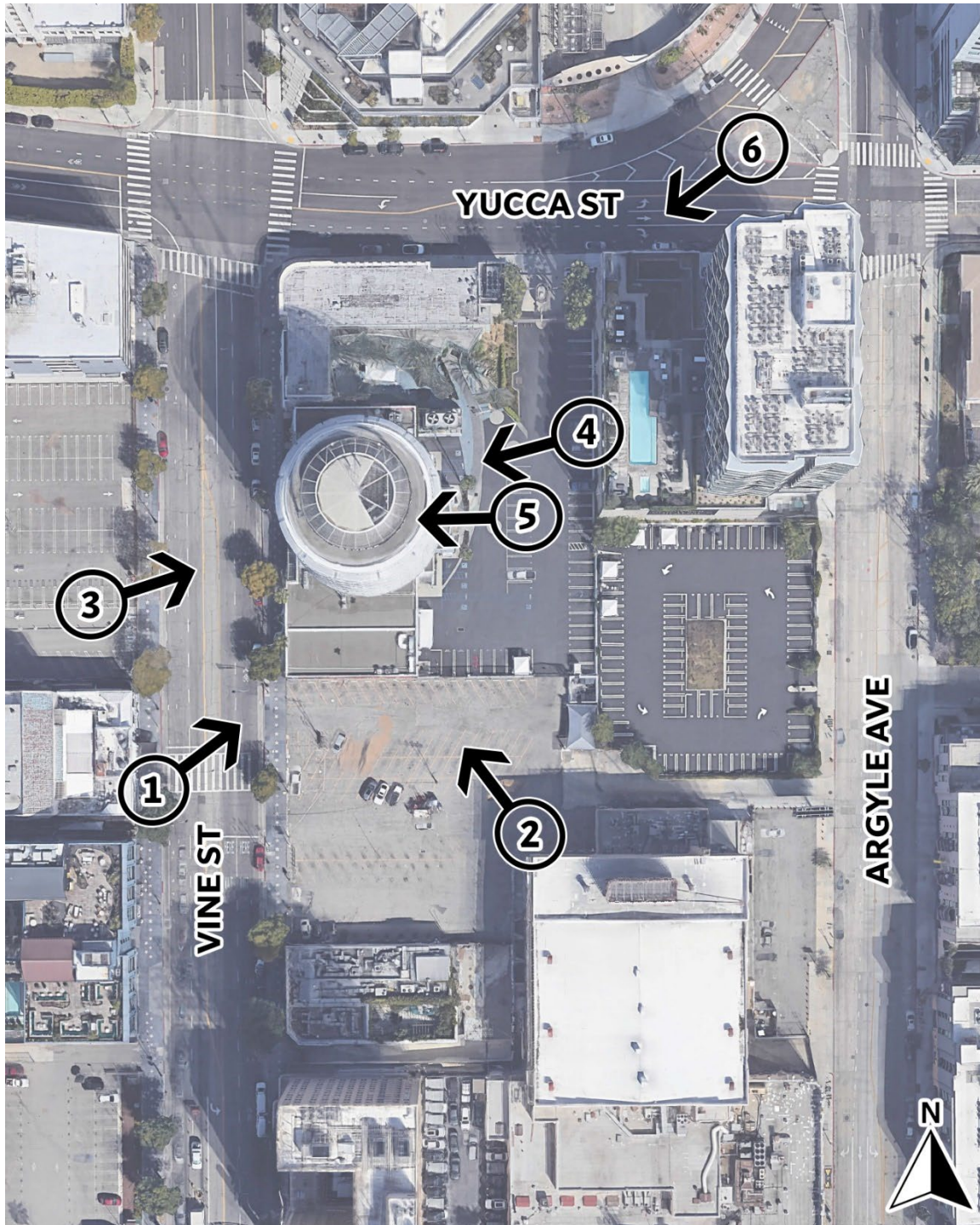
- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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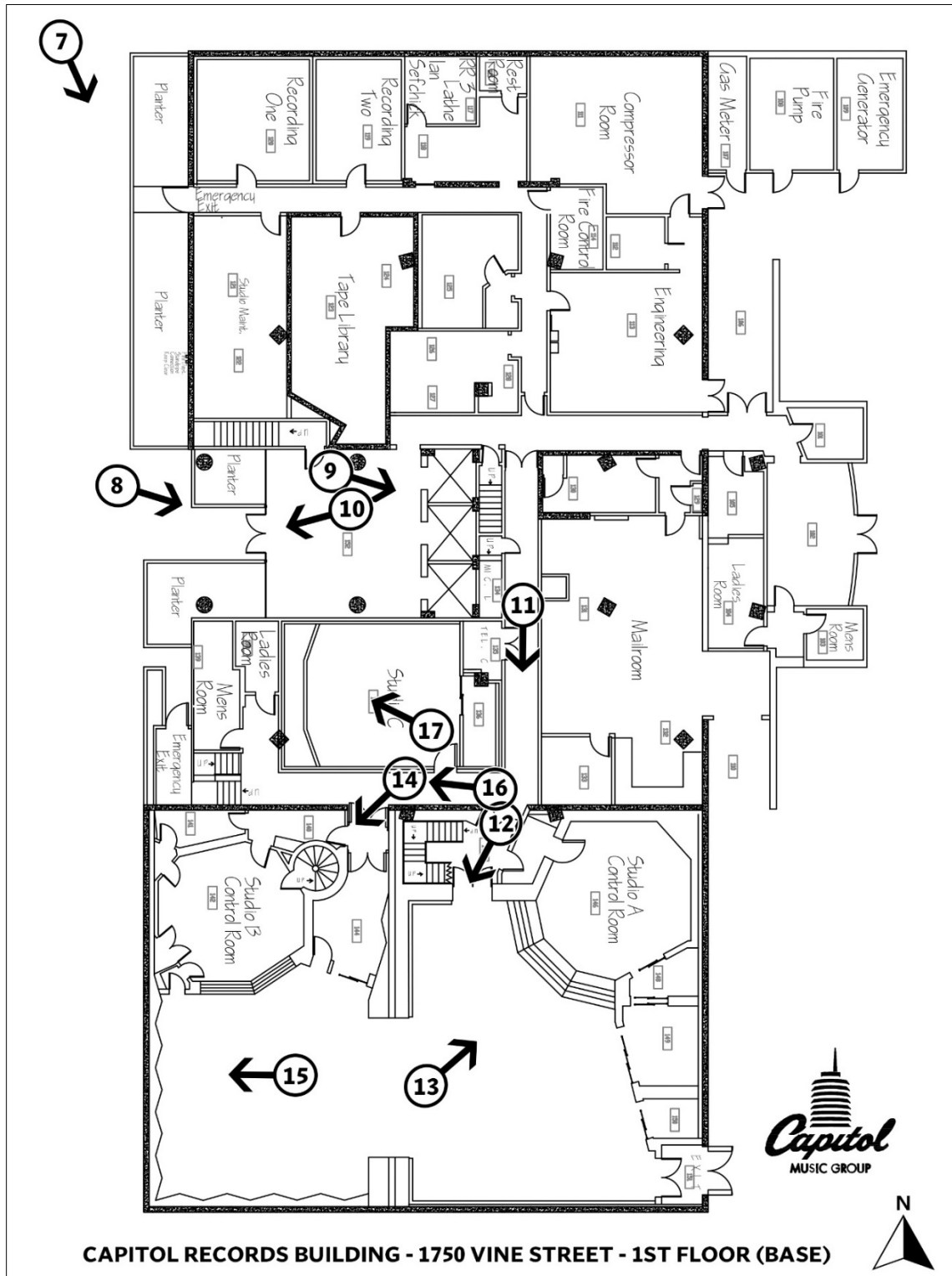
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SKETCH MAP/KEY PLANS



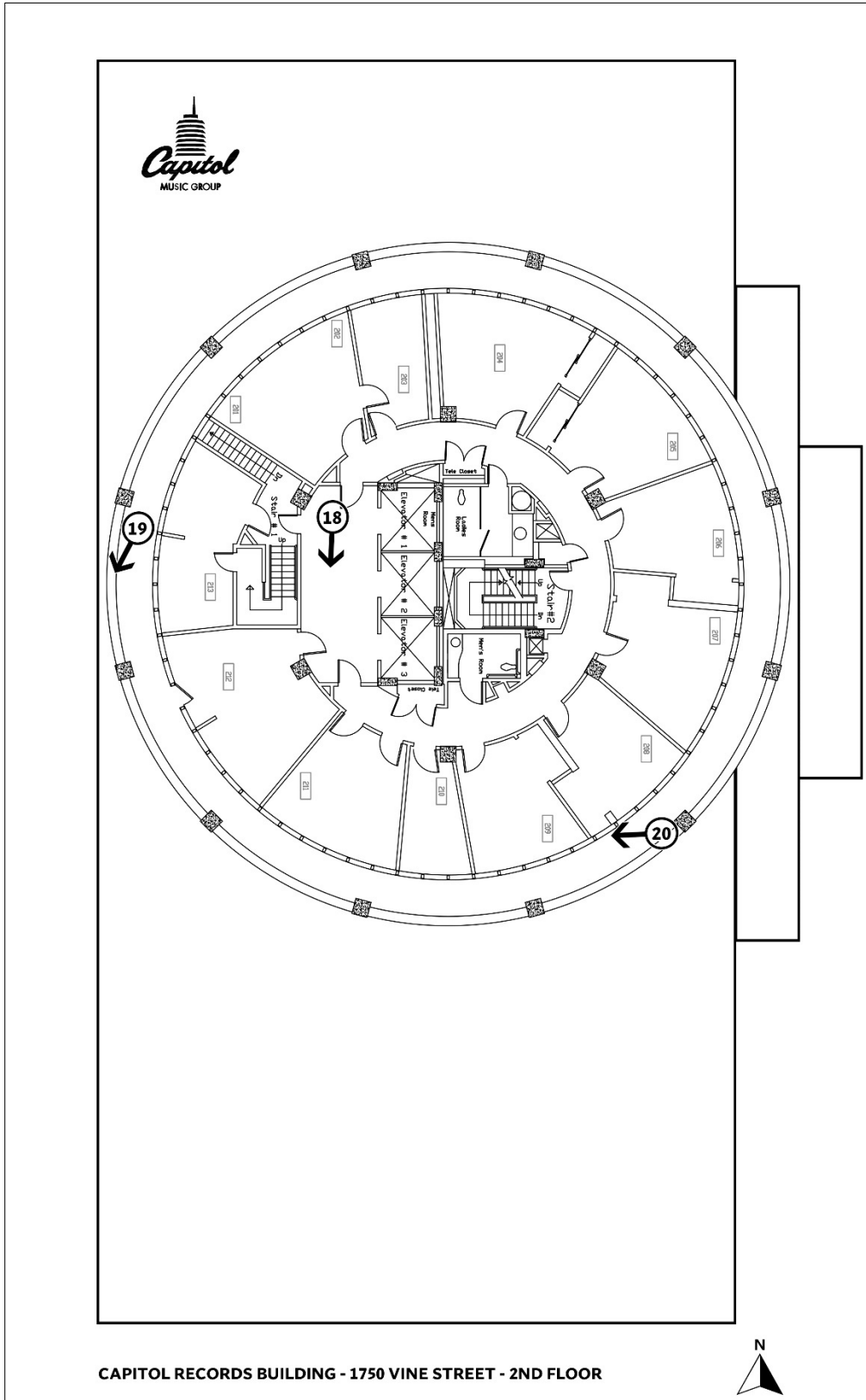
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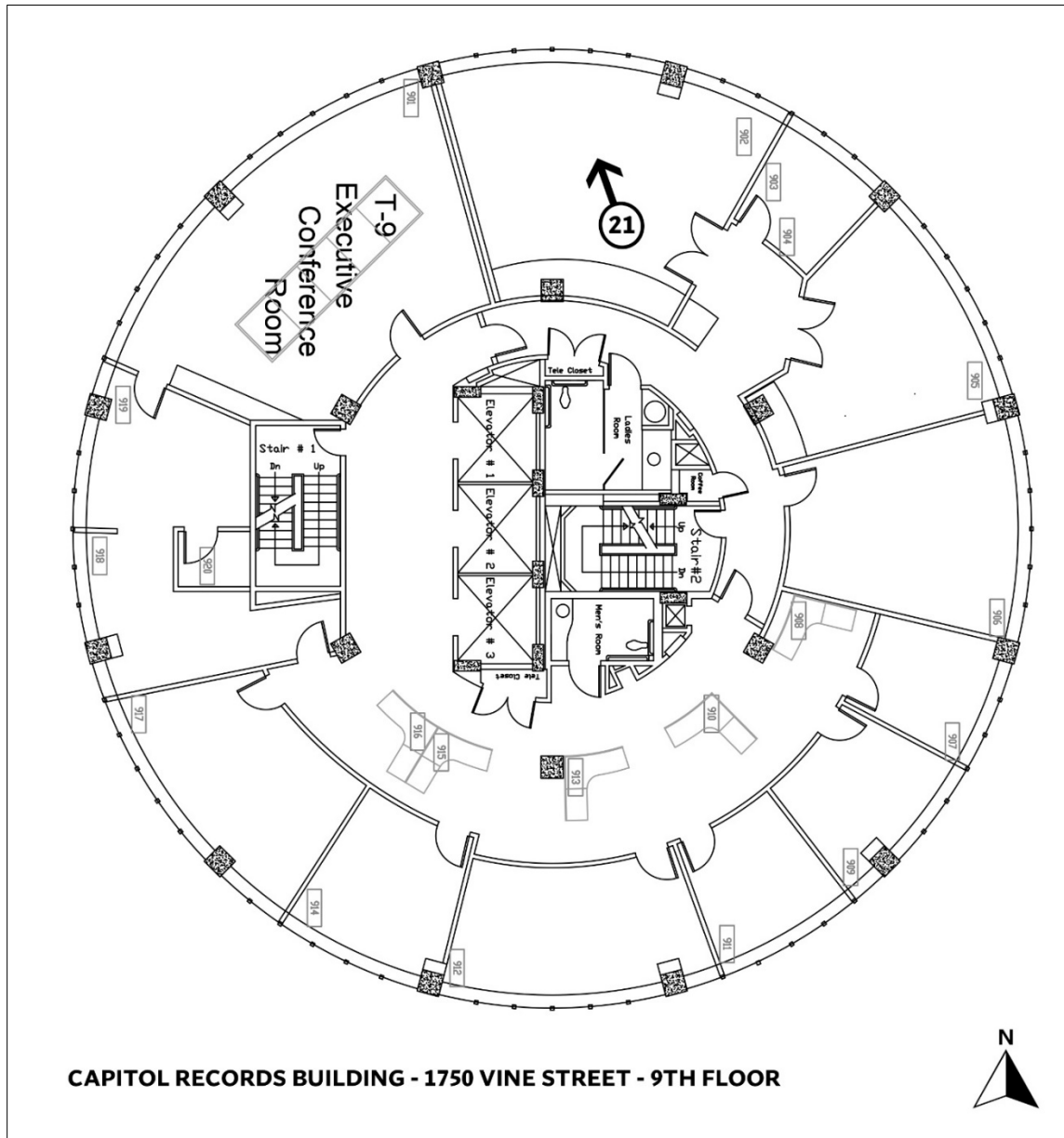
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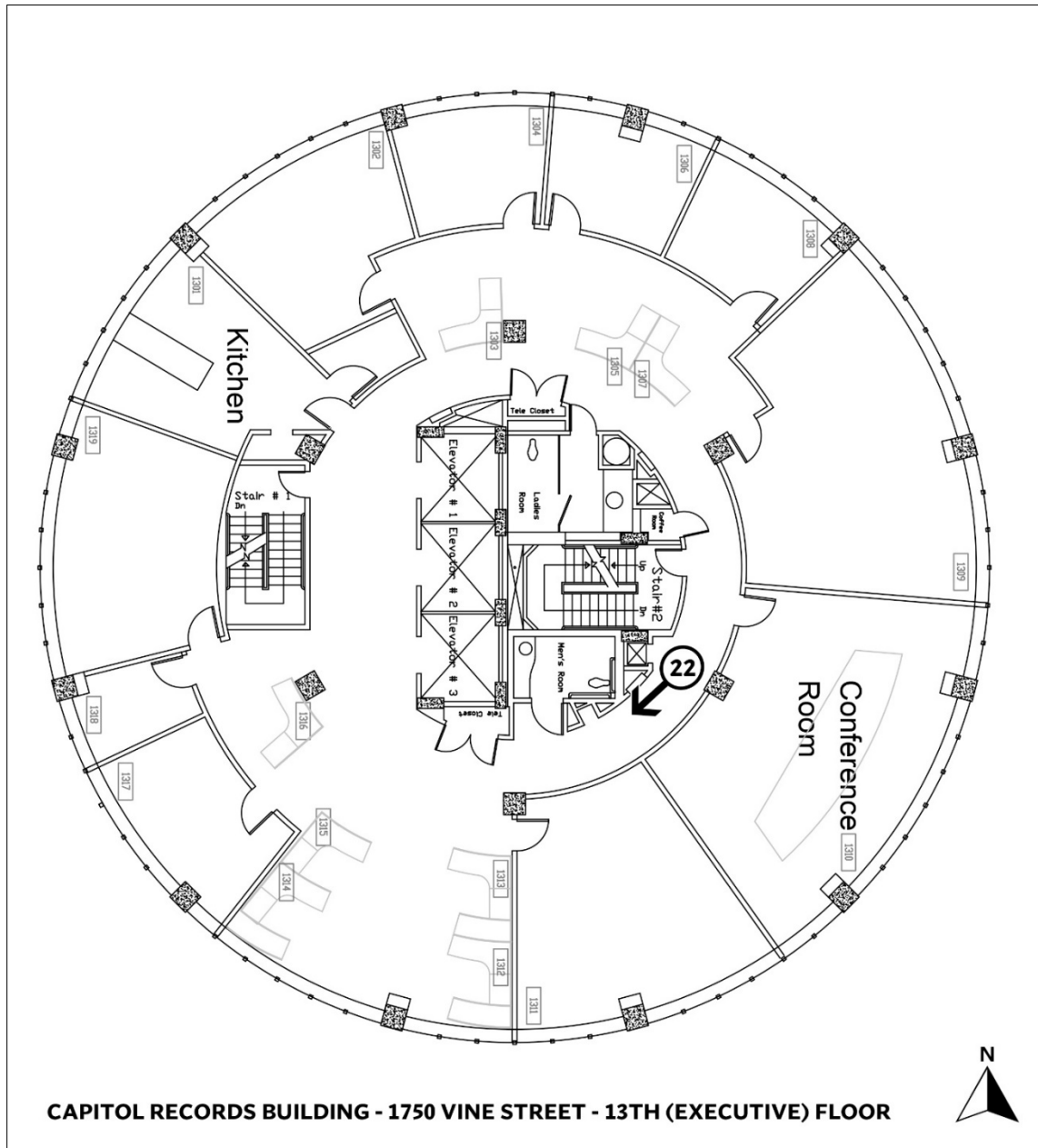
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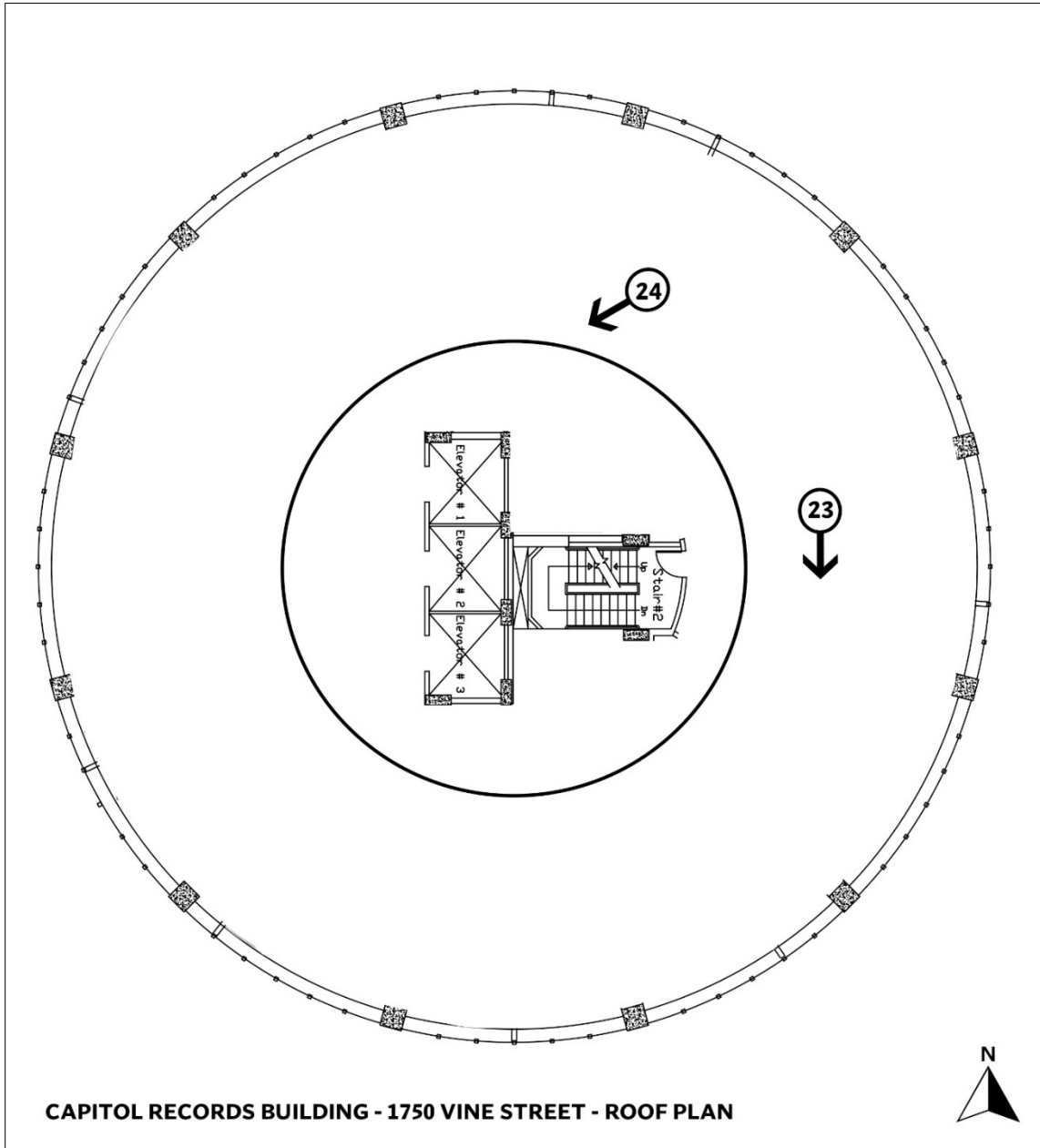
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Photo 1



Photo 2



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Photo 3



Photo 4



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Photo 5



Photo 6



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Photo 7



Photo 8



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Photo 9



Photo 10



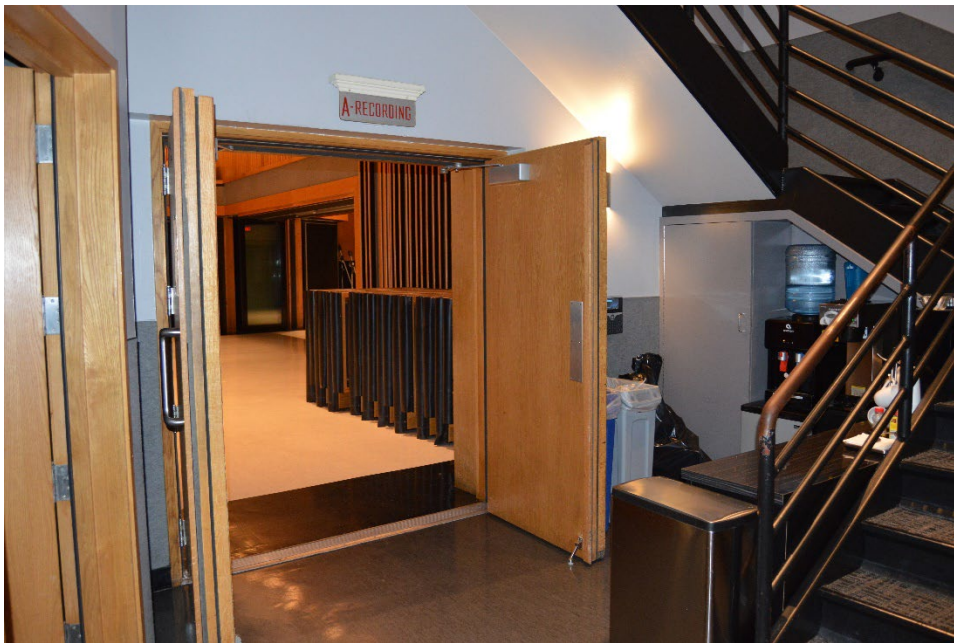
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Photo 11



Photo 12



Capitol Tower
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Photo 13



Photo 14



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Photo 15



Photo 16



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Photo 17



Photo 18



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Photo 19



Photo 20



Capitol Tower
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Photo 21



Photo 22



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Photo 23



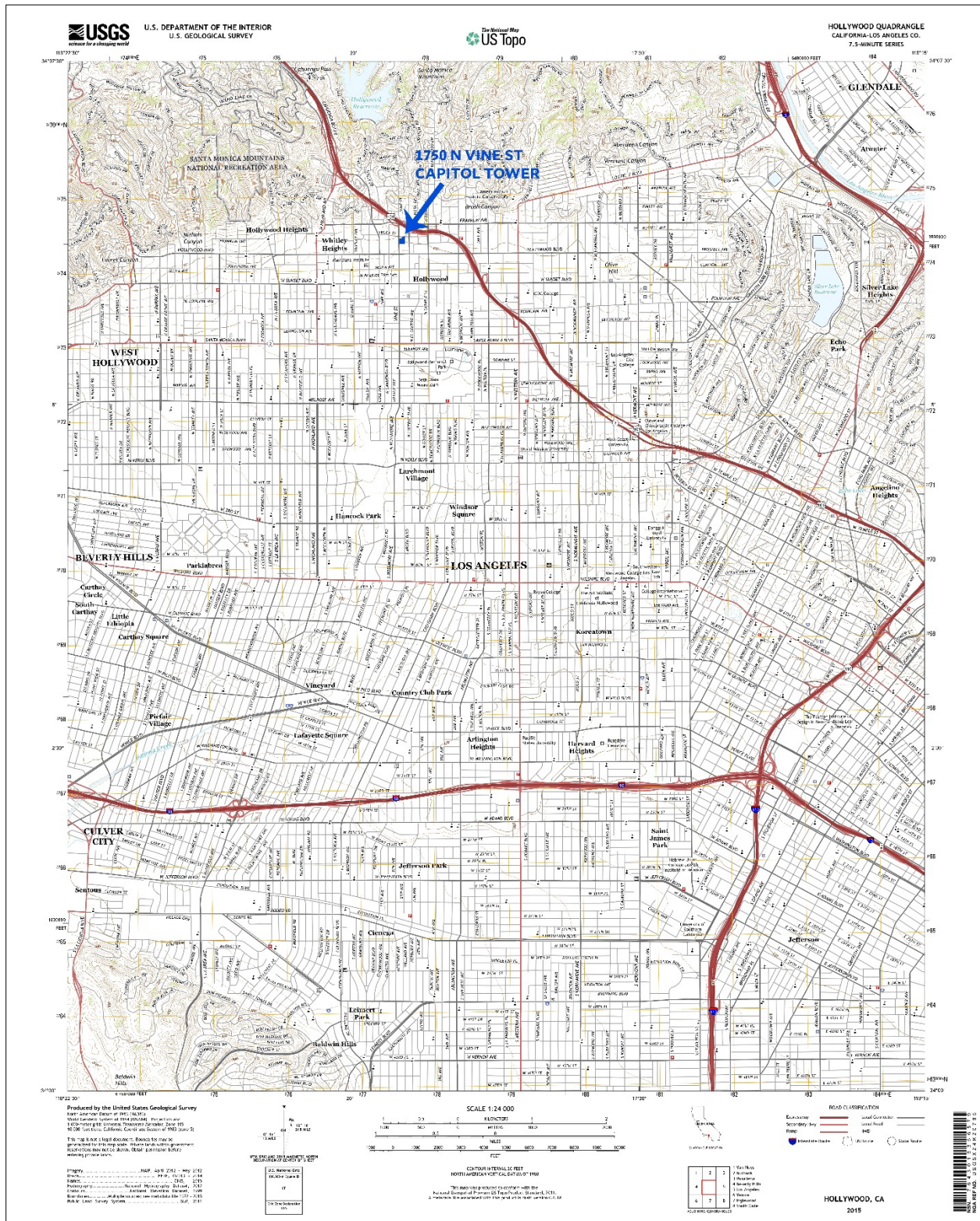
Photo 24



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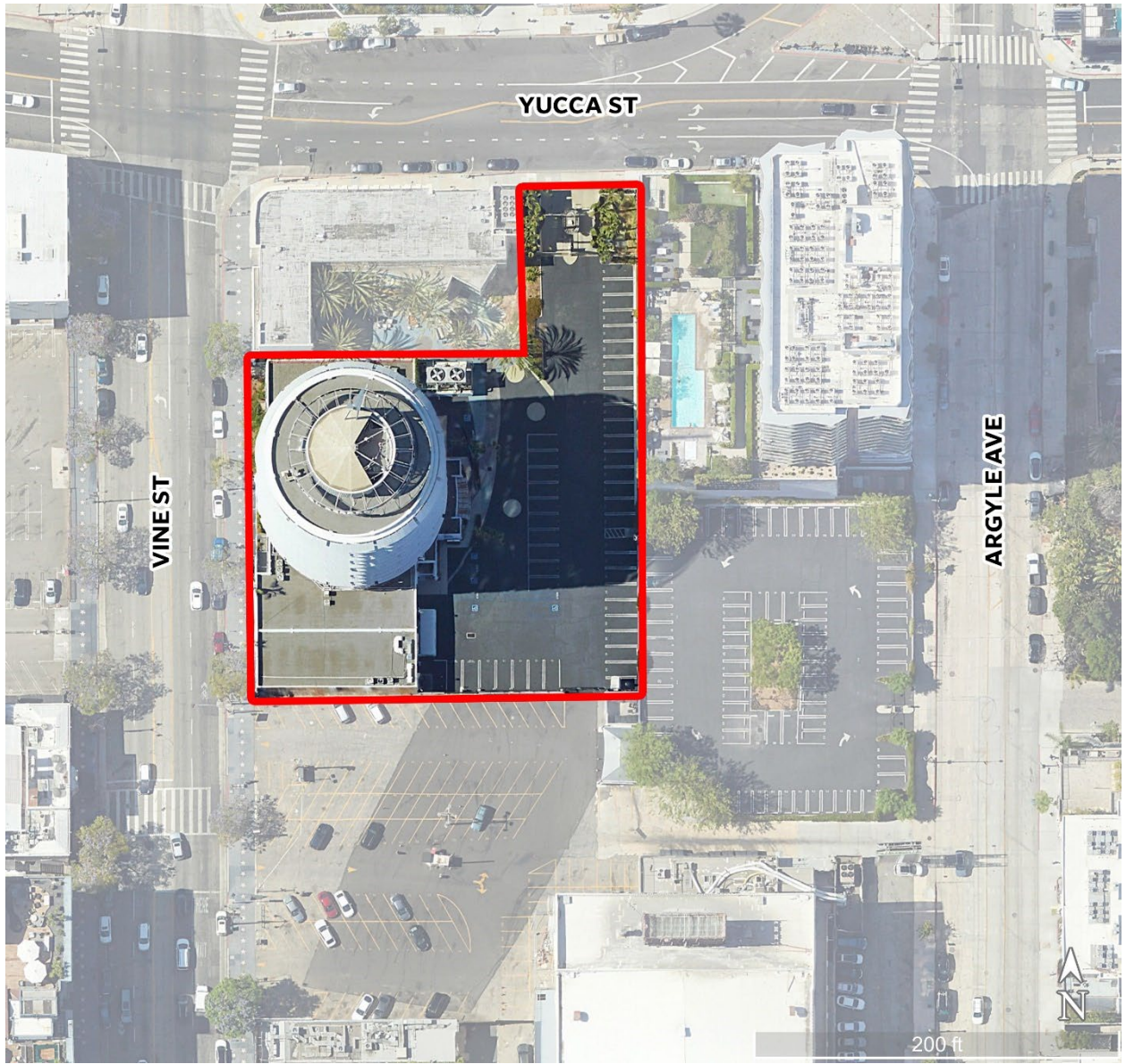
USGS MAP



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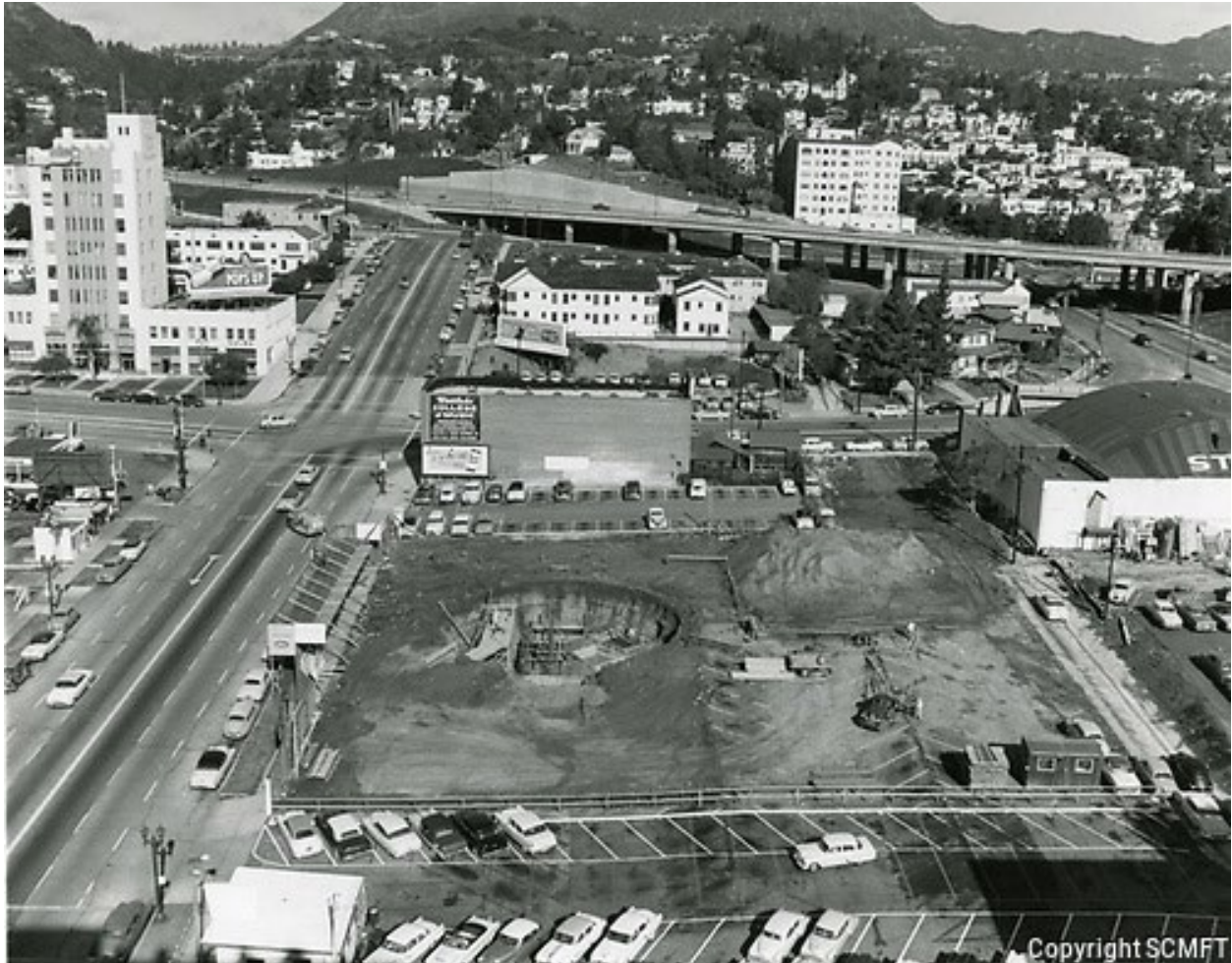
LOCATION MAP



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Figure 1: Excavation of Capitol Tower site, 1954. (SCMFT)



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Figure 2: Base of Capitol Tower under construction, view looking north, 1955. (SCMFT)



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Figure 3: Capitol Tower under construction, view looking southwest from Yucca and Vine Streets, 1955. (Water and Power Associates)



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Figure 4: Capitol Tower under construction, view looking northeast from Vine Street, 1955.
(Water and Power Associates)



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Figure 5: Capitol Tower near completion, view looking northeast from Vine Street, 1956.
(Water and Power Associates)



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Figure 6: Completed Capitol Tower, 1956. (USC: California Historical Society Collection)



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Figure 7: Aerial view of newly completed Capitol Tower, 1956. (Water and Power Associates)



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Figure 8: Capitol Tower, view looking northeast from Vine Street, 1956.
(Water and Power Associates)



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Figure 9: Rear of Capitol Tower, view looking west from Argyle Avenue, c. 1958.
(Water and Power Associates)



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Figure 10: Capitol Tower at night, view looking southeast, c. 1958.
(Water and Power Associates)



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Figure 11: Beach Boys with Capitol Tower in background, 1962. (Water and Power Associates)



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Figure 12: Capitol Tower from Hollywood (US101) Freeway, view looking southwest, 1967.
(Water and Power Associates)

