NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

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

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Humble-Exxon Building
Other name/site number: Humble Building, Exxon Building, ExxonMobil Building, 800 Bell Street, 1616 Milam Street, 1602 Milam Street
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 800 Bell Street and 1616 Milam Street
City or town: Houston State: Texas County: Harris
Not for publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐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 levels of significance:
☐ national ☐ statewide ☑ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: ☑ A ☐ B ☑ C ☐ D

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer — 12/20/24
Signature of certifying official / Title **Date**

Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official **Date**

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register.
___ removed from the National Register
___ other, explain: _____

Signature of the Keeper **Date of Action**

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

x	Private
	Public - Local
	Public - State
	Public - Federal

Category of Property

x	building(s)
	district
	site
	structure
	object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
3	0	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: NA

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: COMMERCE/TRADE: Business; TRANSPORTATION: Road Related (Vehicular); OTHER: Subterranean Tunnel

Current Functions: VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification: MID-CENTURY MODERN NON-RESIDENTIAL: International Style, New Formalism; SKYSCRAPER

Principal Exterior Materials: GLASS, STONE, METAL

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 7-17)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Criteria Considerations: NA

Areas of Significance: Commerce, Architecture (*local*)

Period of Significance: 1962-1975

Significant Dates: 1962**,** 1973

Significant Person (only if criterion b is marked): NA

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion d is marked): NA

Architect/Builder: Welton Becket & Associates (architects); Golemon & Rolfe Associates and Pierce and Pierce (consulting architects); Bishop and Walker (landscape architects); W.S. Bellows Construction Corporation (builder)
Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 18-43)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see pages 44-51)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):
X preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. Part 1 approved December 15, 2023 (Project # 47250)
___ 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 #

Primary location of additional data:
___ State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission*, Austin)
___ Other state agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other -- Specify Repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Approximately 2.93 acres

Coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. 800 Bell Street
Latitude: 29.753724°N Longitude: -95.369369°W

2. 1616 Milam Street
Latitude: 29.753384°N Longitude: -95.370993°W

Verbal Boundary Description: The boundary is comprised of two discontiguous legal parcels divided by an urban intersection. The Humble-Exxon Building and parking garage serves as a functionally-related complex that was historically and is currently connected by an underground tunnel. The boundary includes all property totaling approximately 2.93 acres specifically the eastern parcel identified as LTS 1 THRU 12 BLK 336 SSBB (1.447 acres; Account # 0020540000001), the western parcel identified as LTS 1 THRU 12 & TRS 13 & 14 BLK 353 SSBB (1.435 acres; Account # 0020710000001), and the tunnel (approximately 0.05 acres), Houston, Harris County, Texas as recorded in the Harris Appraisal District. Data accessed March 8, 2024 (Map 6).

Boundary Justification: The boundary consists of two discontiguous legal parcels containing the property associated with the Humble-Exxon Building and parking garage, and includes the historic connecting tunnel.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Amanda Coleman (Senior Consultant), Anna Mod (Director), Britain Eggleston (Consultant), and Marie Martinsen (Intern)
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Date: March 2, 2024

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheets 52-57)

Additional items (see continuation sheets 58-120)

Photographs (see continuation sheets 5-6, 121-148)

Photograph Log

Name of Property: Humble-Exxon Building
City or Vicinity: Houston
County: Harris County
State: Texas
Date: June and September 2023, October 2024
Photographer: Amanda Coleman

All photographs accurately depict property conditions. No changes nor significant deterioration has occurred since the photos were taken in June and September 2023 and October 2024.

Photo 1
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0001
North and east elevations, view west

Photo 2
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0002
West and south elevations, view northeast

Photo 3
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0003
North elevation, view south

Photo 4
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0004
East and south elevations (southeast corner), view northwest

Photo 5
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0005
South elevation, view north

Photo 6
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0006
South and west elevations (southwest corner), view northeast

Photo 7
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0007
West elevation (southwest corner), view northeast

Photo 8
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0008
Sun shades, west and south elevations (southwest corner), view northeast

Photo 9
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0009
Light well/sunken courtyard, north elevation plaza, view southwest

Photo 10
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0010
North ground floor lobby, view west

Photo 11
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0011
East ground floor lobby (former Humble Touring Service desk), view southeast

Photo 12
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0012
South ground floor lobby, view west

Photo 13
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0013
Ground floor lobby elevator bank, view north

Photo 14
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0014
Ground floor lobby elevator bank, view northwest

Photo 15
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0015
South ground floor Lobby, view south

Photo 16
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0016
2nd floor elevator bank, view south

Photo 17
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0017
2nd floor, northwest corner, view northwest

Photo 18
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0018
9th floor (Mechanical), south corridor, view west

Photo 19
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0019
11th floor, corner office, view southeast

Photo 20
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0020
11th floor, south corridor, view west

Photo 21
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0021
35th floor, east side, view northwest

Photo 22
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0022
42nd floor, executive level elevator bank, view north

Photo 23
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0023
42nd floor, executive level conference room, view southeast

Photo 24
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0024
43rd floor, Petroleum Club elevator bank, view southwest

Photo 25
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0025
43rd floor, Petroleum Club, Petroleum Room, view northeast

Photo 26
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0026
43rd floor, Petroleum Club, Petroleum Room, view northeast

Photo 27
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0027
45th floor, exterior of observation platform, view east

Photo 28
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0028
45th floor, interior observation room, view east

Photo 29
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0029
Concourse, level C, escalators, view south

Photo 30
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0030
Concourse, level C, light well/sunken courtyard, view north

Photo 31
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0031
Concourse, level C, cafeteria, view north

Photo 32
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0032
Concourse, level C, tunnel entry to garage, view west

Photo 33
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0033
Concourse, level C, tunnel entry to garage, view south

Photo 34
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0034
Garage, south and east elevations, view northwest

Photo 35
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0035
Garage, southeast corner, view northwest

Photo 36
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0036
Garage, south and west elevations, view northeast

Photo 37
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0037
Garage, north and west elevations, view southeast

Photo 38
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0038
Garage, north elevation, view south

Photo 39
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0039
Garage interior lobby, view north

Photo 40
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0040
Garage interior, view northeast

Photo 41
TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0041
Garage interior, view west

Narrative Description

The 1962 Humble-Exxon Building is a 44-story corporate modern skyscraper with International Style and New Formalist influences. The building is connected to the original 6-story parking garage by an original subterranean tunnel.[1] The building is located at 800 Bell Street and the garage is located at 1616 Milam Street in the southwestern portion of downtown Houston, Texas. The property was designed by Welton Becket & Associates with Golemon & Rolfe Associates and Pierce and Pierce as consulting architects. W.S. Bellows Construction Corporation was the general contractor. Both the skyscraper and garage occupy entire city blocks. Opening in the spring of 1963, it served as the corporate headquarters for the Humble Oil & Refining Company (Humble). Humble became part of Exxon Corporation in 1973. The skyscraper's composition follows a Classical three-part configuration with a monumental base, central shaft, and cornice. The skyscraper is characterized by a distinctive profile, steel-frame, rectangular plan, abstracted cornice, recessed roof-top observation level, sub-grade concourse and sunken courtyard, and two basement levels. Prominent design elements include the uniform structural composition, vertical and horizontal emphasis, ground floor piloti, aluminum framed glass curtain wall with Mo-Sai spandrel panels, flat roof, projecting sun shades, floor plan with modular flexibility, and the retention of some historic materials in some public spaces.[2] The square plan garage has six-stories with ground floor commercial space, two sublevels for drive-up unloading and storage, and connection to the underground tunnel. It features a pre-cast concrete structure, front entrance clad in tan travertine panels, glazed curtain walls, original silver geometric metal screens with fine projecting fins applied in front of "T" beam structure, and circular ramps. Despite changes over the years, the Humble-Exxon building, tunnel, and garage are all contributing resources and retain a high degree of integrity.

Site

The Humble-Exxon property is located in the southwestern portion of downtown Houston (Maps 1-4). The northeastern end of downtown includes a concentration of late nineteenth- and early-twentieth century commercial buildings, many within the Main Street/Market Square National Register Historic District (NRHP 1983, update 1992). Early and mid-twentieth century buildings outside of the district have been individually NR-listed including City Hall (NRHP 1990), the Houston Bar Association (NRHP 2017), the Texas Company (NRHP 2003), Melrose Building (NRHP 2014, Figure 56), Stowers Building (NRHP 2015), and 500 Jefferson (NRHP 2019, Figure 53) and demonstrate commercial development southward. When it was completed in the early 1960s, the Humble-Exxon Building stood tall and visually distinct from the concentration of downtown buildings to the north; since then, Houston's Central Business District (CBD) has grown steadily southward. The easy access to adjacent freeways has contributed to this growth (Figure 31).

The boundary is comprised of two discontiguous legal parcels divided by the Milam Street/Leeland Street intersection. The functionally-related Humble-Exxon Building and parking garage are positioned diagonally from one another above ground and were historically and are currently connected via a subterranean utility and pedestrian tunnel (Figure 4). The 44-story skyscraper is located at 800 Bell Street, the six-story parking garage at 1616 Milam Street, and the subterranean tunnel is positioned diagonally connecting the two (Maps 5-6). Local custom establishes plan north at the intersection of Main Street and Buffalo Bayou (true north is skewed to the northwest).[3] Following this tradition, the

[1] The recessed observation level is sometimes referred to as the 45th floor.
[2] Mo-Sai panels are a type of architectural pre-cast concrete.
[3] The N-S axis of the main building is tilted about twenty degrees towards the east. The façade is referred to as the north elevation, facing Bell Street. The rear (south elevation) faces Leeland Street. The east side elevation faces Travis Street, and the west side elevation faces Milam Street. The garage follows the same rule with the north elevation facing Leeland Street, south elevation facing Pease Street, east elevation facing Milam Street, and west elevation facing Louisiana Street. This is also referred to as the "Plan View."

skyscraper faces north onto Bell Street and the block is bounded by Travis Street to the east, Milam Street to the west, and Leeland Street to the south. The garage block is bounded by Leeland Street to the north, Milam Street to the east, Louisiana Street to the west, and Pease Street to the south. The tunnel runs from the skyscraper southwest to the garage under the Milam Street and Leeland Street intersection. The setting is urban and both buildings are surrounded by perimeter sidewalks with urban street trees. The immediate setting is populated with surface parking lots, similarly sized skyscrapers, and early twenty-first century residential high-rise infill buildings (Maps 4-7).

Plaza

The Humble-Exxon skyscraper is set back approximately 80 feet from Bell Street behind an elevated hardscaped plaza (Figure 4, 7, Photo 4). On the primary (north) elevation, flagpoles flank the top of wide, low-rise stairs leading to the raised plaza or podium at three and a half feet above the sidewalk (Figure 7, Photo 3). These entry stairs have an "H" motif on the metal handrails (a recent addition that repeats in the lobby balustrade and elevators, (Photo 3). The plaza has a wide central stone paved walkway with a perpendicular smaller path leading to small grass seating areas. At the northwest side there is a large rectangular light well with views to a sunken courtyard (Photo 9). Also in the plaza, there is an oval shaped skylight that illuminates the concourse level below. The central entry path, aligning with bays five and six, leads to the main building entrance: two sets of paired revolving doors set into a double height, aluminum framed glass curtain wall. A perimeter walkway surrounds the building exterior and is sheltered by original cantilevered sun shades on the upper floors.[4] There are two additional stairs from the plaza level to the street on the east and west elevations (four total) (Photos 4, 7).

Two vehicular entrance ramps run parallel to Leeland Street at the rear (south) elevation of the building with curb cuts and access from Milam to Travis (Photo 6). One ramp slopes up and provides access to the rear ground entrance of the building (probably designed for executives and people of interest), and the other slopes down to the shipping and receiving area on the concourse level (Figures 6, 7). The ramps are edged by raised stone planter boxes which buffer the ramps from Leeland Street. Additional planter boxes in the same material run along the right of way parallel to the side elevations on Milam and Travis Streets with breaks for stairs at the corner entrances (Photos 4, 7).

Skyscraper Exterior

Designed with International Style and New Formalist influences, the Humble-Exxon Building is a 44-story, steel-framed, rectangular plan skyscraper with a recessed roof-top observation level, a sub-grade concourse and sunken courtyard or light well, and two basement levels (Figures 12, 32, 59, 74, Photo 1).[5] It is sited on the southern two-thirds of a raised plaza on a full city block. Structurally, the corporate modern building has a regular nine-by-five column grid with the long elevations facing north and south (250 by 115 feet). It encompasses over one million square feet of interior space. The Miesian elements include the uniform structural composition, vertical and horizontal emphasis, ground floor piloti, aluminum framed glass curtain wall with Mo-Sai spandrel panels, flat roof, and original projecting sun shades.[6] New Formalist influences are seen through the building's symmetry and subtle ornament on a projecting cornice.[7]

The skyscraper's composition follows a Classical three-part configuration with a monumental base, central shaft, and cornice all executed in an unornamented steel, glass, and stone vocabulary. The physical composition translates to the

[4] Sun shades are also referred to in different sources as sunshades.
[5] Figure 66 is an architectural drawing showing the south (rear) elevation. The north elevation drawing was not available.
[6] Mo-Sai panels are a type of architectural pre-cast concrete.
[7] Marcus Whiffen, "The New Formalism" in *American Architecture since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1992), 261-266; Whiffen, "Miesian" in *American Architecture since 1780: A Guide to the Styles*, 255-259.

three-part use of the building: ground floor public area at the base and concourse, offices in the shaft, and executive and club floors at the top. Nine monumental, square columns or *piloti* define the ten bay composition of the north and south elevations. Floors two through 42 cantilever over the monumental ground floor lobby/mezzanine and engage with the structural columns that continue as pilasters up the shaft of the building. The pilasters and a regular pattern of slightly recessed aluminum framed single lite windows with lower Mo-Sai spandrel panels give the building a strong vertical emphasis; this is strongly countered by the dominant horizontality of the projecting fin-like sun shades that continuously wrap all elevations (Photos 3, 8).[8]

The windows and Mo-Sai spandrel panels are regularly grouped between the pilasters (six per bay) with irregular sized windows at the cantilevered corners on the north and south elevations (Photos 6, 8). These corner groupings on the north and south elevations are distinctive compositions with a larger central window and panel and two irregular sized side panels; the result is a narrow mitered corner window. The horizontal emphasis of the shaft transitions at the 43rd and 44th floors, which comprise the cornice, where large floor to-ceiling glass creates a distinctive "jewelry box" or crown for the building (Photo 1). Houston's Petroleum Club was the tenant of these top two floors. Above, there is a glass enclosed observation penthouse on the roof (Photo 27).

Base, Monumental Ground Floor (Lobby and Mezzanine)
Compositionally, the building is ten by three bays. The ground floor or base (lobby and mezzanine) is defined by nine piloti on the north and south elevations with two visible on the side elevations (three additional structural columns are encased on the side elevations, Figure 60). The base is a double-height, perimeter aluminum framed glass window wall recessed beneath the cantilevered upper shaft. The ground floor *piloti* are clad with salt-and-pepper granite panels (a c.1990 alteration from the original marble) (Photos 1-7). The recessed ground floor aluminum framed window wall facing Bell Street is set back approximately nine feet from the *piloti* and divided into three vertical sections. The *piloti* on the east and west side elevations create a slightly asymmetrical A-B-A composition with a projecting solid granite masonry center bay flanked by a floor-to-ceiling window wall.

The main entrance in bays five and six faces north onto the plaza with two sets of glazed, paired revolving doors with flanking single lite entry doors (Figure 20, Photo 3). The rear doors are a mirror image of the front entrance and lead to the vehicular ramp. A triangular trussed, white-metal canopy was added above the rear entry during the 1990s renovation (Photo 5, 15). Single revolving doors and single lite doors are also located on the west and east side elevations.

Shaft, Floors Two through 42
The nine, ground floor *piloti* transition to pilasters and define the regular bays on the north and south elevations from the second to 42nd floors (Figures 12, 74, Photos 1-2). These define the repetitive rhythm of the building shaft. The two outer, or corner bays have a slightly irregular composition as the system meets and turns the corner. The eight central bays within each pilaster are uniform, and the composition is arranged in an A-B-B-B-B-B-B-B-B-A pattern with the narrower outer "A" bays flanking the eight repetitive central "B" bays. The pilasters above the ground level are clad with U-shaped white coated metal panels (another c. 1990 alteration from their original marble cladding).[9] The two end or side elevations (east and west) have a continuous window/spandrel composition with no pilaster interruption.

The shaft's curtain wall is composed of clear anodized aluminum frames and tinted windows (solar glass) with "self-cleaning Texas dolomite" precast Mo-Sai spandrel panels below.[10] Vertical aluminum mullions between

[8] Mo-Sai panels made of Texas dolomite.
[9] Conversation with Daron Hester, P.E (TX)/Managing Principal, Director of Operations, Diagnostics group at Walter P Moore, 7/18/23.
[10] Stephen Fox, "Space City" lecture – date unknown; L. Edwin Garner. "Mineral Resources and Mining." *Texas State Historical Association*

window/spandrel panels and corners are recessed from pilasters by 1½-feet. There are 6,241 fixed-glass windows in the building.[11] The Texas dolomite precast Mo-Sai spandrel panels measure 4'-8" wide.[12] The regular rhythm of the curtain wall amid pilasters is vertically oriented yet the building has a rigorous horizontality due to fin-like sun shades, also called a *brise soleil*, that project 7'-6" from the building from the second to 42nd floor (Photos 6-8). These finned sun shades have a metal frame with inlaid white 14-gauge porcelain and aluminum panels (white on the bottom, gray on top). The sun shades allow for maintenance workers to walk on them; they were designed to carry a 200-pound dead load and withstand winds of up to 150 miles per hour.[13]

The ninth, 21st, and 33rd floors are primarily mechanical floors and have metal louvers on the exterior in lieu of the curtain wall. These floors are regularly spaced, and their placement is clearly integrated into the overall design of the building (Figure 12).

Cornice – Petroleum Club
The 43rd and 44th floor cornice (Petroleum Club) projects out approximately three feet from the shaft of the skyscraper (Figures 12, 18, 21, Photo 1). The curtain wall here shifts to a double height and an enhanced vertical emphasis, executed by a doubling of the vertical mullions of the aluminum fins and floor-to-ceiling spandrelite and plate glazing, creates a geometric enhancement at the cornice (Figure 14).[14] At the top, there is a recessed observation deck with curtain wall, glass, and spandrel panels with a flat roof (Photo 27).

Structural Elements, Foundation, and Subfloors
The building has a high-strength steel frame engineered for hurricane stresses with solid poured-in-place concrete beams, exterior (clad) columns, and a seven-foot-thick plastiment concrete mat slab foundation (Figure 27).[15] Interior structural columns and girders were sprayed with concrete. Intermediate beams were constructed with a coating of vermiculite plaster.[16] Floors were constructed with cellular metal decking to hide and provide access to electrical and communication cables and covered with 2½" layer of lightweight concrete.[17] There are three subfloors including a concourse that housed the former cafeteria, auditorium, and sub-surface pedestrian passage/tunnel to the garage (Figures 18, 21). Two basement levels were used for storage and print facilities. Primary mechanical equipment is located on the roof of the garage, connected to the skyscraper by a shaft running alongside the pedestrian tunnel.

Tunnel and Garage
The skyscraper is connected to the original 1962 garage via a subterranean pedestrian tunnel and utility shaft from the southwest corner of the concourse level (Figures 4, 18, 67). The subterranean tunnel crosses Milam Street diagonally, sloping down to the garage's northeast corner. The original garage is six-story, square in plan, and built to lot line. There are several storefront retail spaces, now abandoned or partially removed, and vehicular curb cuts on Milam

Handbook of Texas. Published 1976, Updated: January 19,2019. Accessed September 7, 2023. https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/mineral-resources-and-mining. And Dudley William Hunt, *Total Design: Architecture of Welton Becket and Associates*, (Houston: McGraw Hill, 1971), 203, And Stacy & Skinner engineers.

[11] "Design Against Sun and Glare." *Architectural Record* 10 (October 1963): 173–78.

[12] "Design Against Sun and Glare,"173–78.

[13] "Design Against Sun and Glare,"173–78.

[14] Spandrelite or spandrel glazing is opaque instead of transparent, vision glass.

[15] Hunt, *Total Design*, 203; Murray Erick & Associates, Stacy & Skinner engineers. And Plastiment concrete was a water retarding ad-mix that created density in the Houston soil/sand base from Silka Chemical Corporation of Passaic, NJ represented locally by Concrete Specialties Inc. *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement*, April 14,1963, Courtesy Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library, pg. 88.

[16] Vermiculite plaster is made with gypsum or Portland cement used for excellent insulating capacity and is not suitable for external applications or damp areas exposed to moisture. The Vermiculate Association, *Vermiculite Gypsum Plasters,* 2015.

[17] Hunt, *Total Design*, 203., Murray Erick & Associates, Stacy & Skinner engineers.

(one), Pease (two), Louisiana (two), and Leeland (two) Streets. Mid-growth trees line Leeland Street. The garage exhibits additional New Formalist features with the detail and subtle ornament of the metal screens.[18]

Skyscraper Interior

Lobby
The lobby is a monumental, 29-foot, double-height space with a 200-foot-long overhanging mezzanine open to the north and south sides of the building (Figures 5, 8, 21, 47, 61, Photos 10-15). The layout is asymmetrical, radiating around the central elevator bank layouts. The first floor elevator banks are partially enclosed with a clear security wall with card key access. Offices, closets, and built-in fixtures dating to the 1990s are located on the east and west sides and are clad in stone and smooth wood paneling. Towards the northwest side, there is a "clipped" crescent shaped floor cutout that overlooks the concourse level below. Four interior elevator banks arranged back-to-back with an additional single bank to the west for a total of 28 elevator shafts, are located slightly off-center (Photos 13-14). Three service elevators are in the southeastern corner of the building. Egress staircases are located to the east of the service elevators and in the northwest corner near escalators to the concourse subfloor level. The acoustical tile ceilings have recessed can lighting; these elements as well as the stone flooring and elevator lobby cladding are all replacements dating to c. 1990. Original Taconic White Marble column cladding from Vermont is extant only in the lobby area.[19]

Mezzanine
The mezzanine is inset from the perimeter at the north and south sides and has a continuous balustrade that overlooks the lobby below (Figure 8, Photo 11). The balustrade is not original and is composed of wood panels (in replacement of the original angled bronze) and a replacement metal "H" motif handrail. The motif is part of alterations done during the time of the c.1990 plaza "refresh," that included updated public elevators in the complex. The walls have been reclad in stone in the mezzanine elevator lobby and service core to match the front plaza and lobby; the flooring is a mix of carpet and tile. Offices at this level have floor-to-ceiling glass walls or have been partially removed with some drywall on the east and west sides. Bathrooms, mechanical rooms, and service areas are present on this floor with replacement tile and concrete flooring.

Upper Floors - Typical Floorplans
Typical office floors are two through 41 with exception of mechanical floors at the ninth, 21st, and 33rd levels (Figures 18, 21, Photo 18). Typical office floors consist of a movable modular system and circulation has concentric rectangular "doughnuts" with access to shared amenities such as restrooms, elevators, and egress stairs in the statis, repetitive central utility building core (Figure 62). Most elevator lobbies retain original Rapolana Travertine (cream/tan) wall cladding and have non-historic etched metal elevator cabs (Photo 16). In elevator lobbies, some levels have original recessed rectangular lighting, while others are replaced/reconfigured with non-historic carpeting, tile, or has been removed. Hallways have a variation of ceiling tile/lighting layouts and metal walls – these were intended to be dynamic, designed to be altered as needed; same as typical office/conference spaces (Photo 20).

Historically the office floors were designed in 4'-8" "modules" that aligned with exterior spandrel Mo-Sai panels (Figure 15).[20] These office modules surround a central utility core; fragments of the early modules remain, and some floors are completely open in plan or partially renovated with more recent ceiling tiles and wood built-ins c.1990 (Photos 17, 21). Most floors are carpeted (with remnants of c. 1960s and 1970s vinyl/linoleum flooring visible in select areas) and some have exposed concrete base flooring. Typical offices have original and replacement ceiling tiles, non-

[18] Whiffen, "The New Formalism," 261-266.
[19] S. W. Stone, *Building Stones in the Humble Building*, 15 June 1963, 2.207/J60 [SRH1230004528], ExxonMobil Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, Austin, Texas: 1.
[20] "Design Against Sun and Glare," 173–78.

historic recessed can lighting, and historic recessed, rectangular fluorescent light fixture tiles with slot diffusers for air conditioning (Photo 19). Module remnants can be seen throughout the building in various configurations. The ceiling and metal modular wall systems were designed to be easily movable. The metal partition walls have been removed on some floors and are replaced with drywall. Electrical and communication lines/connections run up from the floor within each module as needed. Part of the west side of the 31st floor was the location of a small medical clinic for employees but most of the floor still retains modular partition walls same as all other typical floors. The east and southeast sides of the 37th floor have been altered, modules have been removed, and new ceiling tile and extant lighting probably date to the c. 1990 renovation.

Executive Floor (42nd) and Petroleum Club (floors 43-44)
Floors 42-44 were designed as executive and club levels with additional exclusive elevators. The top two floors, at the crown of the building, were the Petroleum Club (Figures 18, 21, 65-66). Portions of the 43rd floor are double height. Spatially, the executive 42nd floor has larger individual offices, and some private bathrooms/sinks remain throughout with original Perlato D'Italia Marble.[21] Overall, the floor plan has been altered to suit changing executive demands and public bathrooms have been added over time. Walls vary from wood paneling to drywall with wallpaper. There is a noticeably larger mail room on this level (in comparison to typical floors which have mail slots) and additional windowless interior conference rooms. Original Botticino Marble is extant on elevator lobby walls; the elevator lobby on the 42nd floor has replacement travertine tile floor (Photo 22). Select conference rooms/hallways have some inlayed stone carpet borders otherwise the floor is carpeted (Photo 23).[22] Elevator lobby has replacement travertine tile flooring on the 42nd floor. Ceilings have replacement tiles, recessed can lighting, and fluorescent light tiles.

The double-height 43rd floor and 44th floor mezzanine comprises the primary Petroleum Club floors which has an aluminum framed floor-to-ceiling curtain wall (plate and spandrel glass) on all four sides. This level includes the main lobby and main dining room/ballroom (the Petroleum Room), a series of lounges (reception, cocktail, and president's), and the former Wildcatters Bar and Grill, which are partially remaining (Figure 10). The primary floor of the Petroleum Club (43rd floor) retains intricate, geometric oak and aluminum interior detailing at the top curtain windows in public spaces, with a focus on corner articulation (Photo 26). There is a men's and women's bathroom flanking either side of the elevator bank. Two additional elevators for executive floors and observation level are located on the south end of the eastern most public elevator bank (Photo 24). Various stone materials are extant on the 43rd floor such as: Roman Travertine (cream/grey) for elevator lobby and some club room walls and columns, Wausau Granite (red) and Imperial Black Marble detailing/flooring in elevator lobby and the club, and Norwegian Rose Marble in the ladies' room.[23] The Petroleum Room (ballroom) is located on the southeast side, occupying the entire space north to south with a double height volume (Photo 25). Some original oak paneling remains but has been painted, original ceiling tile and can lighting is extant; and flooring is replacement carpet. Evidence of the former room partitions remains on the ceiling (below footprint of the 44th floor) with extant bulb lighting and tray features. New openings have also been made. About a third of the space on the south side of the 43rd floor is "back-of-house" with an extensive full-service kitchen and storage area with tile flooring. It is largely intact with stainless steel appliances/counters and includes a back-of-house staff locker room. Walls and ceiling are plaster or have acoustic tile. A food service elevator is also located here for service transport to the 44th floor.

The 44th floor consists of private meeting rooms (Figure 11). The level is additionally served by stone stairs and two small executive or service elevators with some original elevator lighting elements. Original Wausau Granite (red), wood, and brass staircase from the 43rd floor to the 44th floor is extant and now enclosed with drywall. The mezzanine

[21] S. W. Stone, *Building Stones in the Humble Building*, pg 1.
[22] S. W. Stone, *Building Stones in the Humble Building*, pg 1.
[23] S. W. Stone, *Building Stones in the Humble Building*, pg 1. Some Radio Black, Noir D'Izeste, and Verde Antique Marble may still be extant in the men's rooms on the 43rd and 44th floors.

(44th floor) overlooking the double-height space has an oak balustrade above the elevator lobby and Juliet balcony in the northwest corner with the same design. There are telephone booths/rooms scattered throughout the floor. Some parquet flooring and diagonal hardwoods are extant.

Observation Level (Penthouse)
The observatory level has a small public area with some private meeting spaces and mechanical rooms (Figures 18, 21). Off the single elevator with full height transom, there are original terrazzo stairs that lead up to the observation windows. The original balustrade is extant (aluminum balusters with a walnut hand rail) although the balusters have been filled in with plexiglass and faux stone (Photo 28). The small lobby at the elevators is clad in Roman travertine panels. Some original terrazzo flooring is extant in the elevator lobby; other flooring is carpeted. A built-in stone planter remains in the public space near the elevator and stair. Some rooms have wood veneer walls; ceilings are replacement acoustic tile. Short stairs lead out to the roof on the north and south sides and were accessed by maintenance crew only.

Mechanical Floors (9, 21 and 33)
The mechanical floors do not have windows and are masked by metal louvers on the exterior (Figure 21, Photo 1). The ninth floor only has service elevator openings. The 21st and 33rd floors have additional access to the central elevator bank because there was a former coffee bar/food service area on those floors. Mechanical floors have an open plan with some corridors and corrugated metal partitioning and metal cages. Historic-age mechanical equipment is located throughout with some contemporary machinery. Floors are concrete and ceilings are unfinished with exposed mechanical, plumbing, and electrical lines (Photo 18).

Subfloors
There are three subfloors including a concourse (floor C), floor B, and floor A (in descending order) (Figures 12, 18, 21). Subfloors A and B are mostly spaces for storage and mechanical infrastructure; these floors are currently not accessible.

Concourse, below first floor (Floor C)
The concourse level can be accessed publicly from the first-floor lobby by escalators (Figures 6, 21, Photo 29), one public elevator on the west side, service elevators, and stairs (two public, one back-of-house). The concourse consists primarily of open space and houses a cafeteria, serving area, kitchen, auditorium, and sub-surface passage/tunnel to the garage building that were altered c.1990. The cafeteria and serving area include curvilinear stainless-steel counters and service stations altered from the original floorplan and are not original (Photo 31). There is also one former retail/food market space in the southwest corner.

The gutted auditorium (former 474-seat capacity) is located west of the lightwell or sunken courtyard and has little historic fabric remaining; ceiling and floors have been removed and built-in wood office booths are on the west side of the entrance. The auditorium width was reduced, and space was taken from the sunken courtyard or lightwell to create rooms between the courtyard and auditorium (Photo 30). Window walls look into the sunken courtyard on three sides (north, south, east). The courtyard has been altered from the original design/materials and reshaped into a ziggurat form with stone planter beds/walls, overgrown, climbing plants, and shrubbery with two double glass access doors (south and east sides). To the east of the pedestrian tunnel on the southwest corner, there was a retail shop/market. There is a service dock on the south side west of the kitchen with truck docking and staging and a roll-up door.

Pedestrian Tunnel
The pedestrian tunnel connecting the concourse to the lowest or second sub-floor of the garage slopes down towards the garage's lowest sublevel (the tunnel crosses diagonally under Milam Street). The materials have been altered or covered up and new cladding may have masked former recessed display cases (Figures 21, 24, 67). A series of non-

original murals and company timeline note some dates on Standard Oil and ExxonMobil from 1860 to 2000. Lighting in the tunnel is all replacement; some project onto murals and others are fluorescent (Photos 32-33).

Garage

The square plan garage is six-stories and includes the now abandoned ground floor commercial space, and two sub levels for drive-up unloading, storage, and connection to office building tunnel (Figures 68-70). The garage is bound by Pease Street to the south, Leeland Street to the north, Milam Street to the east, and Louisiana Street to the west and has a separate street address, 1616 Milam Street. The garage consists of ten bays on Leeland and Pease Streets and four bays on Milam and Louisiana Streets (Photo 34). Each bay is defined by pre-cast concrete "T" beams (Figure 27).[24] Beams are exposed on the north and south sides and all four corners are recessed or "clipped" towards the interior with curtain walls and/or doors, except for the northeast which is travertine. First floor front entry on Leeland Street is clad in tan/cream travertine panels with glazed curtain walls/entry doors at the street level (Photo 38). Curtain walls are extant on Leeland Street (some tinted replacement glass and plywood cover curtain walls/doors). Interior facing walls are cement plaster and tile. The balance of the exterior first floor is enclosed in non-original black/silver geometric screens. Upper floors have original white/silver geometric metal screens with fine projecting fins applied in front of "T" beam structure. Upper floor corners have a small gap with metal detail/railing instead of continuous screens (Photo 35-37).

The garage was originally designed for parking about 1,200 cars. Other spaces originally included: commercial/office on the corner of Milam and Leeland Streets (a bank, extant but altered into office space), and a service station on the corner of Milam and Pease Streets (removed c. 1995, see Figure 23). The garage spaces are currently in use and an attendant booth is centrally located within the first floor of the building. Several entrances/curb cuts remain that represent these changes. Existing curb cuts are located on Milam (one), Pease (two), Louisiana (two) and Leeland (two) Streets for entry and exiting of cars. Large air conditioning units for building and garage retail are highly visible on the garage roof, and there is a recessed seventh floor mechanical penthouse for other mechanical units and maintenance office with elevator and service stair access.

The lobby walls off Milam Street and some interior office spaces are clad in the same travertine and aluminum/glass curtain walls/doors as on the exterior (Photo 39). Lobby flooring is original Magnetite and Dolomite Terrazzo (black/grey/white). Office spaces have replacement acoustic tile ceiling and carpeting; some of the office floorplan has been altered and full height, early wood doors with aluminum and glass side lites. An open stair with narrow, walnut balustrade (same material in observation level of skyscraper) leads to the B sublevel, former site of the bank vault and office space. The B subfloor spans the entire block and can be driven into and up from the elegant corkscrew ramps at the northwest and southwest corners (Photo 41, Figure 68).[25] The traffic pattern of the circular ramps is separated by up and down (Photo 41). The northwest ramp circulates up and the southwest circulates down. The ramp has a horizontally spaced metal railing. The lowest level or A subfloor has a much smaller footprint than other floors at approximately 25%.

Alterations

Plaza

Alterations to the front plaza likely date to the 1990s and include the infill of the pool/water feature, a redesign of the sunken garden and new stone planters (Figure 5, 7).[26] The original terrazzo podium and Bethel White Granite stairs/curbing have been removed. The plaza fountain sculptures were removed, and pool was drained before 1971 due

[24] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement*, 77.
[25] These ramps are similar in design to those of the Welton Becket & Associates garage design at 500 Jefferson (NRHP 2019)
[26] See *Building Stones* document for types of plaza stone removed. S. W. Stone, *Building Stones in the Humble Building*, pg 1.

to "frequent Texas winds" that would spray water all over the plaza.[27] Original Water Oaks *(Quercus nigra)* planted in tree cells along the pedestrian sidewalks at around the skyscraper and garage have been replaced with new plantings and at-grade planter boxes/tree cells.[28]

Skyscraper Exterior
Originally, the monumental first-floor *piloti* were clad with white marble (with quirk-mitered corners); these were reclad on the ground level with salt and pepper granite, along with east and west elevation masonry walls. These changes occurred in the 1990s.[29] On Leeland Street (rear elevation), the triangular canopy over the vehicular entrance was also added during this time (original flat canopy removed, Figure 28, Photo 5).

Additional exterior modification projects were designed by Walter P. Moore and planned, constructed, and installed between 1998 and 2007.[30] Scope of this construction work included:

- Lifeline on each level for cleaning and inspection of exterior.
- Structural, waterproofing, and restoration consultation.
- On upper floors, marble pilaster facing was replaced with U-shaped white coated metal panels to mimic the same appearance due to cupping and failure of the original stone (Figure 49).[31]
- Leeland Street (rear elevation) triangular canopy over vehicular entrance.

Skyscraper Interior

Most alterations appear to have occurred c. 1990.

- First-floor lobby floors, ceiling/lighting, columns, built-ins, and elevator cabs/signage have been replaced or reclad. It is unclear if any original material remains below/behind recladding.
- Mezzanine balcony balustrade and railings have been replaced.
- Concourse floor plan, cladding, and tunnel flooring/ceiling elements altered.
- A suite on the 37th floor has been altered on the southeast corner; modules have been removed. New ceiling tile, lighting and wood built-ins are extant. Applied inconsistently on various typical floors.
- Executive Level at 42nd floor has been altered in plan and materials to suit changing leadership (Figure 42, Photo 23).
- Petroleum Club: repainting, recarpeting, re-wallpapering, some partitions for lounges/bar/grill removed, new drywall installed, and some new openings created. Chandelier/ suspended lighting is replacement (Figures 40-43).

Before the current owners purchased the property, alterations were made between 2014 and 2022 and included:

- "White box" of 35th floor (Photo 21).
- Some repainting/painting of the Petroleum Club levels, most evident on floor 43.
- Carpeting and flooring has been replaced.

[27] Hunt, *Total Design*, 202-203.
[28] The tree species has a short life span. bplant.org. "Water Oak (Quercus Nigra)." Accessed November 6, 2023. https://bplant.org/plant/190.
[29] Historic architectural drawings c. 1960 Courtesy CMI Developers, from Welton Becket & Associates.
[30] Walter P Moore. "800 Bell," June 15, 2015. https://www.walterpmoore.com/800-bell. And Conversation with Daron Hester, P.E (TX)/Managing Principal, Director of Operations, Diagnostics group at Walter P Moore, 7/18/23.
[31] Historic architectural drawings c. 1960 Courtesy CMI Developers, from Welton Becket & Associates.

Pedestrian Tunnel Alterations
The subterranean tunnel interior has been reclad and relit but retains its original configuration and location and is an important aspect of the functionally-related complex. Alterations occurred at unknown dates. Water damage has caused removal of some materials c. 2017.

Garage Alterations:
The garage is in good condition and retains most original historic-age exterior material (Photos 34-38).

- Most of the original tan travertine panels on the exterior (facing Leeland Street) and first-floor lobby/office remain, but some exterior panels have been replaced.
- Subfloors A/B and upper-floor elevator and elevator lobbies match c.1990 alterations within the skyscraper.
- Some of the glazed and aluminum curtain walls are boarded; some of the clear glass has been replaced with tinted glass or solar film has been added; other areas are covered with plywood.
- The original Humble service station has been removed (c.1995) from the corner of Milam and Pease Streets, curb cuts and interior structural remains reflect this change.[32]
- Interior office spaces have replacement acoustic ceiling tile and carpet.

Integrity

The Humble-Exxon Building and garage retain a high level of historic integrity with location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The building is clearly recognizable as the work of architect Welton Becket and the firm's design vision for their client. Alterations do not detract from the overall integrity, and it remains one of the most prominent examples of 1960s corporate modern architecture in Houston.

Both the skyscraper and garage remain in their original locations. The downtown business district setting has grown to include additional corporate tower infill anticipated within the architects' design for the Humble-Exxon Building (evidenced by the deep setback of the front plaza and side/rear elevations).[33] The Sanborn maps show the area was formerly associated with automotive sales and service lots consisting of large parking areas (for auto sales). The surrounding area has retained numerous surface level parking lots and parking garages in the direct vicinity. Despite the loss of the automotive sales businesses to make way for high rises as downtown expanded, the continued existence of large parking lots indicates a partially intact historic setting.

The intact design of the Humble-Exxon Building is reflected in the historic form, plan, structure, and style of the property. Spatial organization, proportion, scale, ornamentation and materials in the interior and exterior are mostly original or have been replaced to align with the original in the case of upper floor replacement column cladding on the skyscraper. The character-defining sun shade materials/technology, Texas dolomite Mo-Sai panels, curtain walls, and detailed cornice are intact on the skyscraper. The garage's exposed precast "T" beam supports, travertine panels, curtain walls, and metal screens on upper floors are all original design features and materials. The visual relationship between the two buildings is maintained through contrast of design features. The skyscraper is distinctly taller with a horizontality achieved through sun shades and the garage is drastically shorter with verticality expressed in exposed structure, metal screens and slim fins. On the interior of the skyscraper, alterations have occurred in the lobby and concourse, but architectural forms/spatial planning around the central utility core is the same. Typical upper floors have original modular flexibility with moveable walls, acoustic tile ceilings, and utilities with original stone on elevator lobbies. The executive, Petroleum Club and observation levels retain much of the original organization of space, ornamentation, and materials. The mechanical and HVAC design technology is still extant with primary systems

[32] Confirmation from former Exxon employee, Elaine Matte Mut, November 2023
[33] Welton Becket, "The Concept Was a Challenge," *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement*, April 14, 1963, Courtesy Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library: 70.

located on the roof of the garage which flow through the tunnel and service the entire office tower. The original interior space of the garage offices/lobby is extant with travertine, terrazzo, and curtain walls. Original materials are intact or replaced in a similar pattern or configuration consistent with the historic design with a few exceptions and do not detract from the overall integrity. Alterations to the design and removal of original historic materials (granite, slate, terrazzo etc.) on the front plaza has resulted in diminished integrity. However, the plaza maintains the historic spatial organization reflected in the setback at front elevation, sunken lightwell/courtyard, and raised elevation from street preventing a "skyscraper canyon" consistent with the original design. Despite changes in materials and the loss of the murals, the underground tunnel retains its original configuration allowing for continued access between the skyscraper and garage.

The construction techniques associated with the foundation for moisture prevention, structural engineering, and modular utilities contribute to the high-level of workmanship in a building of this scale. The original, custom designed pre-cast Mo-Sai panels and T beams, stone, character defining porcelain sun shades, and curtain walls are all evidence of skilled labor and construction throughout the property. The intact features of the Humble-Exxon Building and garage reinforce the feeling of a 1960s corporate modern office complex. The property is no longer associated with the Humbe or Exxon corporations.

Statement of Significance

The Humble-Exxon Building (also known as the Humble Building, Exxon, and ExxonMobil) is a 44-story high rise building at 800 Bell Street with an original parking garage located at 1616 Milam Street in the southwestern end of downtown Houston. The Humble Oil Company was founded in 1911 in Humble, Texas. In 1921, Humble built their first dedicated Houston headquarters, the Humble Oil Building, a nine-story office building at 1212 Main Street. By the 1950s, Humble Oil & Refining Company was a leader in Texas gasoline production and sales. By the time the new complex was planned, growth accelerated, and the company promoted itself as "America's Leading Energy Company" operating in 45 states with 30,000 dealers and 23 ocean tankers. It held the largest reserves of crude oil and natural gas in the United States. Completed in 1962, the skyscraper and garage were designed as the corporate headquarters for Humble Oil by Welton Becket & Associates with Golemon & Rolfe Associates and Pierce and Pierce as consulting architects. The general contractor was Houston-based W. S. Bellows Construction Corporation. Humble became part of Exxon Corporation in 1973.

The Humble-Exxon Building is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Commerce at the local level of significance for the tremendous impact Humble Oil had on the petroleum industry and economy of mid-and-late-twentieth century Houston. The property is also nominated under Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level as an excellent example of early 1960s corporate modernism with International Style and New Formalist influences. The skyscraper's unmistakable profile characterized by distinctive modernist design elements including projecting sun shades, aluminum framed glass curtain walls with Mo-Sai spandrel panels, and an original parking garage with glazed curtain walls and silver geometric metal screens made it a recognizable part of Houston's skyline. It also serves as a good example of the work of Welton Becket & Associates in the city and is an early and representative example of the firm's concept of "Total Design." Humble Oil & Refining Company, Exxon U.S.A, and ExxonMobil occupied the property until the new suburban campus was built in Spring, Texas in 2014. The period of significance is 1962, the year of construction, to 1975 adhering to the NPS 50-year cutoff.

Houston's Early Twentieth Century Oil and Gas Economy

In the late nineteenth century, John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company (Standard Oil) dominated the quickly expanding oil industry in the United States and routinely partnered with new smaller companies nationwide. At this time, Texas exploration was concentrated near known oil and gas seeps, or when fossil fuel was accidentally discovered when drilling a water well. This all changed in 1901 when the Lucas Geyser, an oil well at the Spindletop oilfield near Beaumont, positioned Houston and Texas in the forefront of the global petroleum era. This oil gusher significantly shifted the state's economy to rely on petroleum and positioned Houston to become a major player in the global oil and gas industry.[34] The area surrounding the Spindletop oilfield became a boom town almost overnight and was the founding location of major global oil corporations such as The Texas Company (Texaco), Magnolia Petroleum, Gulf Oil, Humble (later Exxon) and the expansion of established companies such as Standard Oil of New Jersey. As the growth of these corporations expanded and the boom town matured, oil company executives looked for a larger city with Gulf Coast port access, an established transportation infrastructure, neighborhoods, schools, and cultural amenities. Joseph S. Cullinan is credited for establishing the trend for new oil companies to relocate from Beaumont to Houston when he moved The Texas Company (Texaco) to Houston in 1908.[35]

[34] Anna Mod and Gregory W. Smith. "The Texas Company Building, National Register of Historic Places Nomination," Texas Historical Commission, 2002.
[35] Anna Mod and Gregory W. Smith. "The Texas Company Building," National Register of Historic Places Nomination.

Early Years of Humble Oil & Refining Company

The Humble Oil Company was founded in 1911 in Humble, Texas, a small town 25 miles northeast of Houston. The town's namesake was Pleasant S. Humble, a pioneer settler and Justice of Peace for North Harris County.[36] In 1912, the company was operating a small refinery there to process crude oil. The company's founding was at the time of a significant market shift where the demand for gasoline (once a discarded by-product of kerosene) surpassed the demand for kerosene, used for lamps and industrial lubricant.[37] In 1917, the company was reorganized and incorporated as the Humble Oil & Refining Company with Ross S. Sterling as its first president; officers included Walter William Fondren, Robert L. Blaffer, and William Stamps Farish.[38] This charter and incorporation consolidated numerous smaller independent oil companies including the Paraffine Oil Company, Blaffer and Farish, Schulz Oil Company, Ardmore Oil Company, and Globe Refining Company.[39] Humble Oil's daily crude oil production at this time was 9,000 barrels with 217 wells.[40] Ross S. Sterling served as president from 1917-22 and in 1919, under his leadership, 50% of the company's stock was sold to John D. Rockefeller's Jersey Standard; this was after the 1911 landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision to break up Standard Oil of New Jersey into 34 separate unrelated companies.

During World War I, high oil prices prompted offshore drilling in Goose Creek on Galveston Bay, the first offshore drilling location in Texas.[41] Humble completed its major refinery there in 1921 and named the plant and town Baytown. They bought the Southern Pipe Line Company route from field to docks and wharves on the Houston Ship Channel.[42] In 1918, Humble hired their first geologist, Wallace Everette Pratt (1885-1961), a board member of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey at the time.[43] His research proved a better way to search for oil through analysis of geology (Pratt is now considered the pioneer of the petroleum geology field).[44] The company's Houston operations were based in the Old Goggan building on Main Street between Capitol and Rusk Streets (now demolished).[45] In 1921, Humble built their first dedicated Houston headquarters, the Humble Oil Building, a nine-story office building at 1212 Main Street (NRHP 1998). Subsequent Humble presidents included William Stamps Farish from 1922-33, Robert Lee Blaffer from 1933-37, Harry Carothers Wiess from 1937-48, and Hines H. Baker, Sr. from 1948-57.

Humble Oil & Refining Company After World War II

Humble Oil expanded to become the largest domestic producer of crude oil from the 1940s until the 1950s. Competitors included Mobil, Gulf, Shell, Phillips, Texaco, Conoco, Sinclair, among others. Contributing to Humble's growing legacy, their Baytown, Texas refinery began the world's first commercial production of alkylate in 1938; this alkylation process allowed for the manufacturing of iso-octane, a blending agent that was used in 100-octane (high) aviation gasoline.[46] The company's refineries also produced toluene chemicals for explosives, Butyl rubber and butadiene for synthetic rubber in support of the war effort.[47]

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[36] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement*, 7.
[37] Anna Mod and Gregory W. Smith. "The Texas Company Building," National Register of Historic Places Nomination.
[38] Anna Mod and Gregory W. Smith. "The Texas Company Building," National Register of Historic Places Nomination.
[39] James A. Clark and Mark Odintz, "Exxon Company, U.S.A.," *Texas State Historical Association, Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed September 28, 2023, https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/exxon-company-usa.
[40] James A. Clark and Mark Odintz,"Exxon Company, U.S.A." *Texas State Historical Association.* Published 1976, Updated August 25, 2015, Accessed September 7, 2023. https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/exxon-company-usa
[41] Priscilla Myers Benham. "Goose Creek Oilfield." *Texas State Historical Association Handbook of Texas*. Published 1952, Updated January 1,1995, Accessed November 1, 2023. https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/goose-creek-oilfield.
[42] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement*, 9 and 97.
[43] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement*, 94
[44] ExxonMobil. "Our History." Accessed August 10, 2023. https://corporate.exxonmobil.com/who-we-are/our-global-organization/our-history.
[45] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement*, 5.
[46] ExxonMobil. "Our History."
[47] James A. Clark and Mark Odintz, "Exxon Company, U.S.A."

With the national focus shifting from the war effort to post-war domestic economic expansion, Humble built additional Texas pipelines as well as a refinery in San Antonio. By 1949, daily crude production was 275,000 barrels with 9,928 active wells and natural gas production was 15,900 barrels, and the Humble Pipe Line Company subsidiary was the largest transporter of crude in the nation. The company was involved in crude oil production in Louisiana, New Mexico, Alabama, and California. In the 1950s, the importance of petrochemical enterprises expanded globally as did demand for gasoline.[48]

As a leader in gasoline production and sales in Texas, the company was the first to issue gasoline credit cards to Texas consumers in the 1950s.[49] Beyond serving the American consumer, the company grew into a global player in the industry, resulting in a complex network of affiliates, divisions, brands, companies, and partnerships. Standard Oil of New Jersey became a majority owner in 1954 with the purchase of 88% of the company's stock; four years later this was increased to 98%. Standard Oil began to consolidate affiliate U.S. operations such as Esso Standard and the Carter Oil Company, into Humble.[50]

In 1959, during the planning and construction for the new site at 800 Bell Street, the company became a Delaware based corporation with a home office in Houston. Effective in 1960, Humble Oil & Refining Company took over the domestic operations of Jersey Standard and went nationwide into 45 states employing 39,000 people. In 1960, the company began to reorganize, hundreds were notified of transfer, and employees started moving to Houston.[51]

At the time, Humble Oil & Refining Company divisions were mapped into three exploration and production regions with five marketing sectors for ENCO (the Humble product brand name); the manufacturing and research sectors each had their own division. Affiliates included Humble Pipe Line Co., Enjay Chemical Co. and Humble Gas Transmission.[52]

During this period, the company was called "America's Leading Energy Company" by the *Houston Chronicle*; although the company was a significant leader in the industry, this title was probably self-promotion, and the claim was not able to be verified. Humble continued operations in 45 states with 30,000 dealers and 23 ocean tankers. They held the largest reserves of crude oil and natural gas in the United States. Humble Oil & Refining Co. was the number one refiner of petroleum products. The company was a leader in "offshore drilling, unitized drilling rigs, and permanent completion processes." Oil fields of the Houston era included: Goose Creek, Tomball, Friendswood, Grand Isle, Stratton, Conroe, Mexia, Hennessey, Smackover, Haynesville, Hobbs, Sunniland, and Four Corners.[53]

In the 1950s and 60s, Humble expanded into offshore oil drilling in the Gulf of Mexico, Alaska, and California and the extraction of natural gas. The company expanded their Baytown refinery and added additional refineries in Alabama, California, and Montana and acquired other oil, chemical, and fuel product companies resulting in a doubling of its profits by 1965. In the 1960s, Humble had 21,000 square miles of land under lease for exploration and 24,000 wells in 21 states with crude production of 600,000 barrels per day. In the United States, approximately seven million barrels were produced per day during this period.[54] Humble's refineries processed 800,000 barrels a day in their six refinery locations and 2.6 billion cubic feet of natural gas.[55]

[48] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement*, 96.
[49] James A. Clark and Mark Odintz, "Exxon Company, U.S.A."
[50] James A. Clark and Mark Odintz, "Exxon Company, U.S.A."
[51] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement*, 5 and 96.
[52] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement*, 28.
[53] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement*, 97.
[54] Areppim, "Crude Oil Production Total," Accessed October 9, 2023, https://stats.areppim.com/stats/stats_oilprod_1960x09.htm.
[55] James A. Clark and Mark Odintz, "Exxon Company, U.S.A."

The Houston Landscape – Skyscraper Design and Construction

Houston grew in the late nineteenth century due to its established port and railroad network that efficiently exported agricultural goods, namely cotton, lumber, and cattle to the larger Gulf Coast ports, such as New Orleans, and to New York, and Central and South America. Reflective of this growth, tall buildings began to appear in the 1890s.[56] The early tripartite revival style skyscrapers were I-plan, U-plan, L-plan, H-plan, or E-plan so that each office had windows for natural light and cross ventilation prior to the invention of air conditioning and were typically designed by out-of-town architects.[57] The most prolific were Texas based Sanguinet & Staats of Fort Worth, and Mauran, Russell and Garden of St. Louis, Missouri as well as those firms from farther away including D. H. Burnham & Company of Chicago (1909, Scanlan Building, 405 Main Street), Jarvis Hunt of Chicago (1911, Southern Pacific Building/ Bayou Lofts, 915 Franklin Avenue), and Warren & Wetmore of New York (1915, Texas Company Building, 720 San Jacinto Street).[58] Sanguinet & Staats' C. F. Carter Building (now the J.W. Marriott, 1910/1925, 806 Main Street) was the tallest building in Texas for a few months after its construction and the tallest building in Houston until 1926.[59] Construction of new skyscrapers slowed and halted leading up to and during World War I and by the early 1920s, tastes had shifted and the country looked towards new modern styles for tall buildings.[60]

Houston's Early 20th Century Skyscrapers

With the new oil economy well underway by the end of the first decade and the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century, the city experienced significant population increases which prompted new residential neighborhood development and downtown commercial buildings in the new modern styles. This is stylistically referred to as the first wave of modernism where traditional and revival styles are stripped down and ornament was stylized and flattened. Buildings were known or named for/by their major tenant and early oil and gas companies began to pop up downtown amidst the traditional bank-branded building.[61]

Examples of petrochemical and energy buildings in Houston pre-World War II:

- The Texas Company (Texaco) Building (built c. 1915) at 720 San Jacinto Street. 13-story building designed by Warren & Wetmore with Classical features/Classical Revival.[62]
- Humble Oil Building (built c. 1921, NRHP 1998) at 1212 Main Street, designed by Clinton & Russell in the Classical Revival style. [63]
- Houston Post-Dispatch Building/Shell Building (associated with Magnolia Oil, built c. 1926, NRHP 2002) at 1100 Texas Avenue. Designer by Carl Staats of Sanguinet, Statts, Hedrick and Gottlieb in the Classical Revival style (now Magnolia Hotel).[64]
- The Petroleum Building (built c.1927, NRHP 2019) at 1314 Texas Street, designed by Alfred C. Bossom, Maurice J. Sullivan, and the firm of (Birdsall P.) Briscoe & Dixon. Built by Joseph S. Cullinan as a 21-story Art Deco skyscraper it originally housed 20 associated oil companies under the umbrella of American

[56] Amanda Barry, Hannah Curry-Shearouse, Anna Mod, "500 Jefferson Building, National Register of Historic Places Nomination" Texas Historical Commission, 2019.
[57] Amanda Barry et al., "500 Jefferson Building, National Register of Historic Places Nomination."
[58] Amanda Barry et al., "500 Jefferson Building, National Register of Historic Places Nomination."
[59] Amanda Barry et al., "500 Jefferson Building, National Register of Historic Places Nomination."
[60] Amanda Barry et al., "500 Jefferson Building, National Register of Historic Places Nomination."
[61] Amanda Barry et al., "500 Jefferson Building, National Register of Historic Places Nomination."
[62] Stephen Fox, et al., *Houston Architectural Guide, 65.*
[63] Stephen Fox, et al., *Houston Architectural Guide, 40.*
[64] Sue Winton Moss, Scot A. Cameron, Monica Penick and Gregory Smith. "Houston Post-Dispatch Building, National Register of Historic Places Nomination." Texas Historical Commission, 2002. https://atlas.thc.state.tx.us/NR/pdfs/02000072/02000072.pdf.

Republics Corporation and the Tejas Club (also called Great Southwest Life Building, currently Cambria Hotel). Designed in the Modern/Art Deco style with Mayan influences.[65]

- Gulf Building (built 1929, NRHP 1983) at 712 Main Street. The 36-story skyscraper was designed by Alfred C. Finn, Kenneth Franzheim, and J.E.R. Carpenter with Art Deco details.[66]

Alfred Finn's design of the Gulf Building developed by Jesse Jones was Houston's first Art Deco skyscraper.[67] It was the tallest building in Houston at approximately 426 feet for 31 years until the Humble-Exxon Building at 800 Bell Street surpassed it during construction in 1960 (completed 1962) (Figure 19).[68] Houston's development cycles followed and continues to follow the boom-and-bust nature of the oil industry.

Houston Petro-Chemical, Energy Corporate Buildings and High-Rise Campuses

In the 1930s and 40s, the oil industry surpassed cotton in Texas and Houston was emerging as the "Oil Capital of the World" or "The World's Biggest Oil Can" because 61% of the petroleum produced in the United States flowed through the city. Two million dollars a day or 500,000 barrels of refined and crude oil representing "new wealth" ran through Houston in 1939 and around one thousand oil companies and affiliated industries had offices in the city, employing about 55,000 out of 250,000 population.[69] Six major oil companies had offices in Houston by 1940 and the city would solidify its title as the world's energy capital.[70] Along with Humble Oil, the Gulf Oil Corporation, Magnolia Petroleum Company (later Mobil), Shell, and the Texas Company (Texaco), would have headquarters in Houston as well as pipeline companies such as Transcontinental Energy Company (Tenneco, Figure 57), United Gas, and later the Enron. Humble was part of the "old majors" or "Big Oil" as part of the largest, founding oil companies such as Gulf and the Texas Company. Later, the major oil companies would become known as the "seven sisters" by outsiders and included Mobil, Standard Oil of California, Texaco, Gulf Oil, Royal Dutch Shell, and British Petroleum.[71] In 1973, after Humble became part of Exxon, the international company was the "largest and most profitable" of the seven.

Houston Skyscraper Development After World War II

Art Deco and Moderne styles lingered after the war and the example of First City National Bank at 1001 McKinney (NRHP 2000) seems caught in an earlier pre-war design trend. This can be explained by the design having been completed before the war and shelved only to be resuscitated and quickly completed in 1946 to meet the need for new office space downtown.[72] Houston's first post-war modern style skyscraper was a multi-tenant, twenty-one story office building called the Melrose Building (1952, NRHP 2014; now Le Méridien, Figure 56) and named for the two developers Melvin A. Silverman and Bennett Rose, who hired the Houston architectural firm Lloyd & Morgan to design it. The steel framed building retained a classical three-part composition, yet it is abstracted, the ornamentation

[65] Adam Jones and Alyssa Gerszewski. "The Petroleum Building, National Register of Historic Places Nomination." Texas Historical Commission. 2019.; Stephen Fox, et al., *Houston Architectural Guide, 60;* And Tara Worthey, "The Petroleum Building Landmark Designation Report." Houston Archeological and Historical Commission, 2017.

[66] Stephen Fox, et al., *Houston Architectural Guide, 55.*

[67] Sally S Victor, "Gulf Building National Register of Historic Places Nomination." Texas Historical Commission, 1983, 3.

[68] *"*Going Up," *Houston Chronicle*, December 14, 1960, 1.

[69] *Houston Chronicle* (Houston, Texas), December 30, 1939: 57. NewsBank: America's News – Historical and Current. https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=image/v2%3A14DB39C1C40322B4%40EANX-NB15F1794DDAF6B242%402429628-15F17666A26DB7B6%4056-15F17666A26DB7B6%40.

[70] Lynn Edmunsun and Bruce Jensen, "National Register of Historic Places Nomination for the Humble Oil Building," Texas Historical Commission, 1998. The claim of Houston as the energy capital of the world has not been verified.

[71] Joseph A. Pratt and William E. Hale, *Exxon: Transforming Energy, 1973-2005*, First edition, Austin, Texas: Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas, 2013, 1.

[72] Anna Mod, *Building Modern Houston*, (Arcadia Publishing, 2012), 20.

reduced to turquoise colored concrete spandrel panels beneath ribbon windows.[73] It is also the first downtown building to employ sun shades.[74]

Bank buildings continued to dot the skyline in the 1950s and many had large banking lobbies with double height ceilings accessed via a ceremonial escalator ride from the ground floor. The two Kenneth Franzheim-designed buildings, South Texas National Bank from 1955 and Bank of the Southwest in 1956, exemplify this trend. Outside of downtown, Skidmore Owings and Merrill (SOM) designed their first Houston building, Medical Towers (NRHP 2016) in 1956, along with associated architects Golemon & Rolfe in the Texas Medical Center about three miles southwest of downtown. Bank branded buildings remained dominant through the 1960s and First City National Bank, SOM's first downtown building and Houston's first purely abstract exoskeletal skyscraper, had an adjacent and elegant double height banking pavilion at 1021 Main Street.[75]

The 1960s began a shift as smaller independent oil and gas companies and suppliers left downtown offices and built smaller suburban headquarters in a newly extended portion of Richmond Avenue and West Alabama west of Kirby Drive. Downtown, new larger buildings on the skyline were named for the city's new dominant industry: the 1963 Tennessee Gas Building (Tenneco, later El Paso Energy and now Kinder Morgan) designed by SOM (Figure 57); the Humble-Exxon Building, and the Electric Tower of 1968 for the city's electric utility.[76] This enthusiasm continued through the 1970s with the construction of One Shell Plaza (SOM, 1971) and Pennzoil Place before the energy crisis of the late 1970s ended construction downtown until the next boom a decade later.

Examples of petrochemical and energy company buildings in Houston post-World War II:

- Tennessee or Tenneco Building (built 1963) at 1001 Louisiana/1010 Milam Street. 33-story building designed by Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill in Modern/Miesian style with exo-skeleton.[77]
- Electric Tower for Houston Lighting & Power Company (built 1968) at 611 Walker Street. 27-story building designed by Wilson, Morris, Crain & Anderson with Robert O. Biering in Modern/International Style, corporate modern with articulated concrete frame.[78]
- One Shell Plaza (built 1971) at 910 Louisiana Street. 50-story building by Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill Modern/International Style, corporate modern.[79] Once completed, the skyscraper was the tallest reinforced (lightweight) concrete building in the world and developed by Gerald D. Hines.[80]
- United Gas Building (built 1972) at 1201 Louisiana Street, designed by Lloyd, Morgan & Jones. Built by Century Development Corporation. 35-story building, first skyscraper in Houston to be clad in mirror-finished glass, Modern/corporate modern style.[81]
- Tenneco and Prudential Insurance Company of America Building (built 1973) at 1110 Milam Building/1111 Louisiana Street. Designed by Koetter, Tharp & Cowell, Caudill Rowlett Scott and Neuhaus & Taylor, 47-story skyscraper (now CenterPoint Energy Plaza) in the Modern/International Style, corporate modern.[82]

[73] Grace Cynkar, Anna Mod, and Gregory Smith, "Melrose Building," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Texas Historical Commission's Texas Historic Sites atlas, https://atlas.thc.state.tx.us/NR/pdfs/14000627/14000627.pdf, (accessed July 3, 2018).
[74] Cynkar, Mod, and Smith, "Melrose Building National Register of Historic Places Nomination."
[75] Mod, *Building Modern Houston*, 33-40.
[76] Mod, *Building Modern Houston*, 91-98.
[77] Stephen Fox, et al., *Houston Architectural Guide, 18.*
[78] Stephen Fox, et al., *Houston Architectural Guide, 19. And bears a strong resemblance to the CBS Building in New York City by Eero Saarinen;* Carole Rifkind, *A Field Guide to Contemporary American Architecture*, New York: Penguin, 2001, 287.
[79] Stephen Fox, et al., *Houston Architectural Guide, 18.*
[80] Carole Rifkind., *A Field Guide to Contemporary American Architecture* (New York: Penguin, 2001), 288.
[81] Stephen Fox, et al., *Houston Architectural Guide, 15.*
[82] Stephen Fox, et al., *Houston Architectural Guide, 16.*

- Two Houston Center-Texas Eastern Transmission Corporation Development (natural gas pipeline company, built 1974) at 909 Fannin Street. Part of a 33 square block plan that was never fully realized. 44-story building, designed by William L. Pereira Associates and Pierce Goodwin Flanagan, Modern Skyscraper/corporate modern.[83]
- Pennzoil Place (built 1976) at 711 Louisiana Street. Two 36-story almost-touching towers designed by Johnson/Burgee Architects and S.I. Morris Associates. Designed by Philip Johnson and developed by Gerald D. Hines Interests, Modern/corporate modern.[84]
- Texas Commerce Tower in United Energy Plaza (built 1981) at 600 Travis Street. Designed by I.M. Pei & Partners and 3D International. 75-story skyscraper built by Gerald E. Hines Interests. Modern/International Style influences, corporate modern.[85]
- Exxon, later ExxonMobil Chemical Company Complex (built 1980) at 13501 Katy Freeway designed by Pierce Goodwin Alexander in Late Modern/corporate modern style (located in Energy Corridor) .[86]
- The Amoco Center (built c. 1983) 501 Westlake Park Boulevard (outside of downtown Houston- Energy Corridor). 28-story tower with light green solar glass designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. Late Modern/corporate modern (later home to BP).[87]

Humble Oil & Refining Company Site Selection

With the post-World War II corporate expansion and growth, the multiple alterations and new buildings at Humble's Main Street headquarters campus were inadequate for the company's spatial needs. Additionally, the company leased space in ten other Houston buildings and the new location offered an opportunity to create efficiency and reduce costs.[88] Planning began for a new corporate headquarters in 1957 under the presidency of Morgan J. Davis.[89] Born in Anson, Texas in 1898, Davis earned a bachelor's degree in geology from the University of Texas and began working at Humble in 1934. He served in multiple positions such as chief geologist, chairman of the board, and president.[90] It was under Davis's leadership that the manager of the company's General Services Department, John Craddock was selected to be the primary contact between the company and Welton Becket & Associates, and the consulting architects.[91]

The Humble-Exxon Building at 800 Bell Street is sited two blocks south of the company's earlier headquarters at 1212 Main Street. The skyscraper and garage were strategically placed close to existing and planned freeways that would surround the city's downtown. *The Houston Post* announcement for the building and brochures in clipping files at the Houston Metropolitan Research Center (HMRC) in the Houston Public Library, refer to the area a having a "circle of convenience"[92] with the location close to major traffic arteries (Figures 17, 22). A stretch of Interstate 45 (I-45), locally called the Pierce Elevated, is four blocks to the south and curves around and heads north as it passes in front of the western boundary of the downtown skyline. Planning for Pierce Elevated was completed in 1960 and construction was

[83] Stephen Fox, et al., *Houston Architectural Guide, 44-45.*
[84] Stephen Fox, et al., *Houston Architectural Guide, 21.*
[85] Stephen Fox, et al., *Houston Architectural Guide, 22.*
[86] Stephen Fox, et al., *Houston Architectural Guide,529.*
[87] Stephen Fox, et al., *Houston Architectural Guide, 529.*
[88] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement,* 74, 96.
[89] James A. Clark and Mark Odintz, "Exxon Company, U.S.A."
[90] Samuel P. Ellison Jr., "Davis, Morgan J," *Texas State Historical Association,* Published December 1, 1994, Updated December 9 , 2016, Accessed September 12, 2023, https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/davis-morgan-j.
[91] Hunt, *Total Design,* 210.
[92] "The New Humble Building,", Courtesy Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library, 2.

completed in 1967, only four years after the building's debut.[93] Interstate 69 (I-69), formerly US-59 North, locally known as the EastTex Freeway, runs north-south approximately ten blocks east of the building site (Figure 31).

The Humble-Exxon Building

Designed and built from 1959-1962, and opened in spring of 1963, the Humble-Exxon Building is an important example of a corporate skyscraper with International Style and New Formalist influences and representative of the company's and Houston's newfound growth and stature in the global energy economy (Figures 18, 20, 21, 25, 32). Originally known as the Humble Building, the project was announced in a *Houston Chronicle* Special Supplement called "The Humble Story" on Sunday, April 14th, 1963 (Figure 26):

> Humble and Houston are wedded: By the thousands who work in one and live in the other, by a landmark that can be seen towering into the blue from any approach to the city, and by a pride. It is the company's pride in Houston, and the pride of Houstonians in a structure that symbolizes the dynamism of their hometown, the sixth city in a great nation, and the throbbing heart of the Gulf Coast. A sweeping 44 stories, a $32 million home for one of the nation's largest domestic oil-producing firms– it's all of this. But without the people that breathe life into the glass and steel shell, it's nothing.[94]

The collaborative design team, led by head designer Louis Naidorf and project coordinator Richard R. Sikes, Jr., both of Welton Becket & Associates, worked closely with Humble Oil & Refining Company from 1958 until 1962 through a process called "Total Design." The "Total Design" is an evolution of *gesamtkunstwerk* or "total work of art," a pre-industrialization arts and design concept popularized by Britain's Arts and Crafts movement and Belgium and France's Art Nouveau where design of furniture, interiors, graphics, and accessories shared a cohesive "visual unity."[95] The economic expansion of the post-war years and the expansion of American corporations provided architects the opportunity to design new headquarters and incorporate corporate ideas and ideals into these buildings and campuses at a time when modern architectural expression was at its peak.[96] An early example of "Total Design" is the first International Style skyscraper in the United States, the PSFS Building from 1932 in Philadelphia where architects Howe and Lescaze designed not only the building and finishes but also its furniture, waste cans, ash trays, shelving, clocks, lamps, telephone booths, grilles, umbrella stands, and coat hooks.[97] The success of the PSFS and the success of modern architecture convinced business leaders that modernism was not only aesthetically desirable but would also be cost effective and convey their forward looking corporate ideals.[98]

Welton Becket & Associates advertised themselves as a client-driven architectural firm with a combined architecture and engineering approach and was familiar with the design of corporate headquarters. Many of their buildings are distinctive in appearance, and in the case of the headquarters for the Capitol (EMI) Records Building (1956) in Hollywood, California, served as an advertisement of the goods the company sold (the cylindrical building is designed to look like a stack of vinyl 45 records (Figure 51). Thus, Capitol's corporate identity is reflected in the now iconic design of the building.[99] The Humble-Exxon Building relied on architectural cues to identify its corporate power in the Houston skyline at the time, being the tallest building around. Humble's corporate legacy focused on an optimism for the future given the scale and detail of the design provided by collaboration with Welton Becket's design team.

[93] Erik Slotboom. *Houston Freeways: A Historical and Visual Journey*, S.l.: O.F. Slotboom, 2003, 117-125.
[94] *Houston Chronicle, NewsBank: America's News*, April 14, 1963: 180.
[95] Grace Ong Yan, *Building Brands: Corporations and Modern Architecture* (London: Lund Humphries, 2020), 16.
[96] Yan, *Building Brands: Corporations and Modern Architecture*, 7, 8, 13.
[97] Yan, *Building Brands: Corporations and Modern Architecture*, 62.
[98] Yan, *Building Brands: Corporations and Modern Architecture*. 76.
[99] Robert Venturi. et al, *Learning from Las Vegas*, Facsimile edition, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2017).

Their predecessor firm, Wurdeman and Becket, designed the midrise corporate headquarters for the General Petroleum Company (later called the Mobil Building; NRHP 2004), in 1949 in Los Angeles, California. This rectangular plan building has recessed ribbon windows faced with closely spaced vertical fins allowing shaded light into the interior (Figure 50). Becket's firm also designed the Beverly Hilton Hotel (1952) in Beverly Hills, California, and the Contemporary Resort Hotel (now Disney's Contemporary Resort) in Orlando, Florida (1971). Another example is the Los Angeles Music Center for Performing Arts (now the Los Angeles Music Center Dorothy Chandler Pavilion), Los Angeles (1964-69), which is a glass cube surrounded by a masonry New Formalist exoskeleton with a cantilevered cornice.

The Humble-Exxon Building was designed with a slim, rectangular footprint occupying only 40% of block with distinctive 90-degree projecting sun shades on all four sides of the office tower. The front plaza and setbacks of the skyscraper were designed to avoid a "dank, dark, skyscraper canyon "in perpetuity, anticipating that other high-rises would soon be developed near the property site. In 1963, the architects had just finished construction on the Southland Center in Dallas (then the tallest building in Texas) and the 28-story arch-shaped Kaiser Industries building in Oakland, California. With 800 Bell Street, Becket stated they created a "warm, friendly building inside and out, with a feeling of buoyance and spontaneity." The buoyant attribute is related to the iconic sun shades and use of light with curtain walls throughout the building. Natural light was a major consideration in the design of the building, as evidenced by the architect's "sunshade studies" and write up in *Architectural Record* from 1963 (Figures 13-14). The architectural feeling described by the architect would be coupled with artwork selection, public programming, and "urban responsibility" supported by Humble Oil & Refining Company.[100] Becket goes on to say:

> An undertaking of this scope is far beyond the capability of any one man. Although the popular version of the architect would have the public believe I leaped out of bed one night and in a burst of sudden inspiration sketched the present building on a handy scrap of paper, such was hardly the case. The project represents five years of closely coordinated labor between a team of Humble officials led by vice-president Ray Horton and John Craddock, manager of general services and our own teams, …Since the work began in our Los Angeles office, we invited two Houston architectural firms to associate with us, Goleman & Rolfe and George Pierce and Abel B. Pierce. These firms were most helpful to us in establish close regional rapport. [101]

The tower was intended to be a source of pride, but "human, not superhuman or overbearing."[102] Richard R. Sikes Jr. of Welton Becket described the first design for Humble was on the entire block at 18 stories; they soon discovered that large individual offices requested by the company were not easily accommodated at this size. The second wave design proposal referenced the First City National Bank on Main with a tower and annex, but this design only allowed for ground level vehicular traffic and was also abandoned. The final concept was developed around the idea of a "light and airy building with the illusion of space" on the exterior and accessibility for vehicles and pedestrians. The sun shades would appear as if floating and help protect against glare and aid window washers. Final design iterations would ensure sun shades were wind tunnel tested and relieve tension on the main structure. Sikes reflected that the hardest part of the project was finding experienced craftsmen.[103] With the construction overseen by W.S. Bellows, the project would not see any human casualties, which was rare for a building of this size at the time.

The lack of large-scale signage was intentional and its absence itself distinctive, a point agreed upon by Humble and the architects because the "entire building would say Humble Oil."[104] The sheer scale and form spoke to the

[100] Welton Becket, "The Concept Was a Challenge," *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement*, 70.
[101] Becket, "The Concept Was a Challenge," *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement,*70.
[102] Hunt, *Total Design,* 183.
[103] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement*, 72-73, 38.
[104] Hunt, *Total Design*, 209.

importance of the company and reflected modern ideals. The only exterior logos related to Humble would be small and located in the service station within the garage (Figures 23, 71). The Humble design team used the impact of the architectural features (sun shades and curtain wall configurations) and materials (stone, pre-cast dolomite panels) to express corporate identity. Because the building was designed around the concept of "Total Design," the corporate character flowed into the interior with additional stone materials and earth tones throughout referencing the geological resources associated with oil (Figures 38, 40). In the Petroleum Club, there was even a tapestry depicting a cross section of geologic formations (Figure 42). Inside and out, the Humble Building is an excellent example of corporate modernism expressed through visual cues.[105]

The skyscraper at 800 Bell was the tallest building west of the Mississippi from 1962 to around 1965 with a height of just over 600 feet.[106] Newspapers of the time congratulated Humble for this achievement (Figure 29). This claim was confirmed by the documented height and date built of other taller skyscrapers west of the Mississippi. The Humble Building was overtaken by the 628 foot tall First National Bank Tower in Dallas in 1965.[107] The Humble-Exxon Building would remain the tallest building in Houston until 1971 when it was eclipsed by One-Shell Plaza.[108] At that time, One-Shell Plaza would bring the title of tallest building west of the Mississippi back to Houston.[109]

In the *AIA Houston Architecture Guide* from 1999, Stephen Fox describes the building as follows:

> At 600 Feet in height, the 44-story Humble Building, headquarters of the Humble Oil & Refining Company (now Exxon Mobil Corp.) was briefly the tallest building west of the Mississippi River. Becket's designer, Louis Naidorf, sought to give the slender tower a pronounced regional identity-within the context of mid-20th-century corporate modern architecture- by emphasizing sun control. The tiers of horizontal aluminum sunshades encircling the building, together with the oversailing bands of aluminum fins at its summit, succeed in giving the tower a light, graceful appearance from a distance, although at close range the curtain wall is finicky in detail. The Humble Building gave Becket its first opportunity to exercise what it described as "total design." Another innovative feature was the architecturally coordinated 1,300 car Humble Garage at 1602 Milam.[110] This carries the air-conditioning equipment for the tower, leaving the top of the Humble Building free for the 2-story Petroleum Club and observation deck that has been closed since 1971, when One Shell Plaza out-topped Humble.[111]

While many features and attributes contribute to the building's unique presence, its impact is in large part due to the scale and distinctive sun shades. The sun shades were well considered by the architects to control solar radiation and initially to help reduce the air-conditioning load. While sun shade design was projected to improve energy efficiency, nothing published confirms the success of that portion of the design and so, the building was not renowned for this aspect, as can be observed from Fox's synopsis above.[112]

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[105] Rebecca Wallish, "First Wichita National Bank," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Texas Historical Commission, 2023; Yan, *Building Brands*, 9, 141, 184.

[106] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement*, 38.

[107] Jeff Seidel, "Interfirst Corporation," *Texas State Historical Association*, Published February1,1995, Accessed October 3, 2023, https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/interfirst-corporation. And William Sheshunoff and Alex Broyles, "How First National Passed Republic," *Texas Monthly*, May 1, 1974, https://www.texasmonthly.com/news-politics/how-first-national-passed-republic/.

[108] "Major Works- One Shell Plaza," Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering – Princeton University, Fazlur Khan Structural Artist of Urban Building Forms, 2011. http://khan.princeton.edu/khan/khanOneShell.html.

[109] Tyler Priest, "Shell to Houston," *The Houston Review*, Volume 3, Number 1, Fall 2005, 10, https://houstonhistorymagazine.org/wpcontent/uploads/2012/10/Shell-to-Houston.pdf.

[110] Current address is 1616 Milam.

[111] Stephen Fox, Gerald Moorhead, and Joel Warren Barna, *Houston Architectural Guide*. Second Edition. (Houston: American Institute of Architects, Houston Chapter, 1999) 14.

[112] "Design Against Sun and Glare," 173–78.

Architectural Historian Kathryn O'Rourke further described the skyscraper in her book *Home Heat Money God: Texas and Modern Architecture:*

> From a distance, the sunshades read as a kind of gridded filigree and mark the building decisively as a modernist skyscraper in a sunny place…The Humble skyscraper belonged to an urban ensemble that included a rather narrow plaza and, fittingly, a parking garage, which stored both cars and the air-conditioning machinery for the tower. The six-story garage has its own distinct brise-soleil pattern—a densely patterned grille that visually is a kind of "solid" to the tower's "voids." Inside is a spectacular, rather thrilling multistory concrete ramp. Parking garages such as this signaled the triumph of the automobile in the United States, on which Humble's business depended. It presaged the fundamental reordering of downtowns to accommodate them and the suburbs to which they were driven each evening.[113]

Building Details, Associated Contractors, Companies, and Original Materials

Construction for 800 Bell Street began February 16, 1960, and lasted eleven months and eleven days to build with two million man hours of work (not counting overtime or offsite fabrication).[114] The project employed 126 people at its peak including architects, job captains, specification writers, cost estimators, project decorators, interior designers, and economists.[115] The skyscraper at 800 Bell alone is over 1.4 million square feet, and the connected six-story garage adds an additional 340,000 square feet. Construction required 21,000 tons of structural steel and 82,000 gallons of water was pumped from the site daily to construct and cure the foundation.[116] The building had over 2,700 rooms (mostly modular) and 250 keys for operable windows leading to sun shades. To maintain the building, there were 140 workers on staff and 100 contracted cleaning employees. There was even an onsite carpentry shop.[117]

The plumbing, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, automatic sprinklers, and fire protection was part of the "Mechanical Heart" of the building from Sam P. Wallace & Company of Houston.[118] Air conditioning units located on the roof of the garage were fueled by natural gas. The three gas fired boilers generated 40,000 pounds of steam which ran four turbines that triggered 41,050-ton refrigeration compressors for both buildings.[119] The telephone system was created for seven thousand occupants and was called the "Centrex System." It was the first for Humble in the Southwestern Bell territory. The hub for the system was located on the 8th floor and had a "5,200 straight line capacity." It took Western Electric six months to install with 350,000 separate connections and 10,000 miles of wire.[120] Conference rooms were outfitted with the latest technology in audio visual systems, notably on the executive level or 42nd floor for media that included slides, motion picture projections and large screen televisions.[121]

Project engineers were Murray Erick and Associates, Stacy and Skinner (later acquired by Welton Becket & Associates).[122] Landscape architects from Houston were the firm of Bishop and Walker.[123] The Houston-based general

[113] Kathryn E. O'Rourke and Ben Koush, *Home Heat Money God: Texas and Modern Architecture* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2024) 107.
[114] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement,* 74 and 96.
[115] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement,* 72-73.
[116] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement,* 99.
[117] Gilles Swinkles, "Houston's Busiest Housekeeper," *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement,* 82.
[118] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement,* 71
[119] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement,* 71 and 99.
[120] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement,* 90-91.
[121] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement,* 82.
[122] Hunt, *Total Design,* 202.
[123] Robert B Walker, "Houston Collaboration: Humble High-Rise," *Landscape Architecture* 54, no. 3 (1964): 200–201. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44665380.

contractor was W.S. Bellows Construction Corporation.[124] The sun shades were installed by Crescent Erection Co. of St. Louis, Missouri.[125] Over 120 manufacturers and suppliers from around the nation and globe contributed to the Humble property.[126]

Texas and Pennsylvania

W.H. Branson Company (WHB Co. since 1923) of Houston installed the foundations with eight inch sheets of plastic butyl rubber produced by Humble Oil & Refining Company's Baytown facility.[127] Cement was produced in Houston and plastiment concrete was a result of a collaboration with Concrete Specialties Inc. of Houston in coordination with Silka Chemical Corporation of Passaic, NJ. The seven- and-a-half-foot pad of plastiment concrete was created with a retarding ad-mix for density and stability in Houston's moisture ridden soil and sand mixture.[128] Steel, originating from Pennsylvania, was fabricated by Peterson Brothers (now Peterson Beckner Industries, Inc) and erected by Mosher Steel Company, both of Houston.[129] Mosher Steel was also involved in the construction of New York City's World Trade Center which began in 1962 and was completed in 1973.[130] Texas dolomite was used for the Mo-Sai panels on the exterior curtain walls. Texas State Tile & Terrazzo, Inc. supplied the terrazzo[131] And the Binswanger Glass Co. of Houston installed the glass which was fabricated in in Pennsylvania.[132]

Other U.S. States
California suppliers produced the original, character-defining sun shades designed by Welton Becket & Associates. Stone was quarried in Vermont, Georgia, Tennessee, Wisconsin, and Missouri. The modular metal office partition systems were fabricated in Virginia.[133] The original drapes for the building were the largest consolidated installation in the world, according to the *Houston Chronicle* ad and consisted of 70,000 yards of fabric. Imperial Draperies, Inc. of Los Angeles made a material from *Nevamar* of Saran fiber by National Plastic of Maryland. Painting and decorating were accomplished by Nathan Feagin Painting and Decorating.[134] Sargent of Connecticut created all finished hardware for doors and closures with an association with Peden Iron & Steel.[135]

Original Design Features and Artwork

The Humble-Exxon Building is an excellent example of a corporate modern skyscraper in Houston. Its character defining features include the rigorous and repetitive grid of the exterior, the monumental *piloti*, the building's set back from the street, its steel and glass material palette, and the strong horizontality of the sun shades. The garage exhibits a similar sense of "architecture as volume" in a different, vertical direction with fine metal fins.[136] The architects and landscape architects considered art, light and space in key features and plantings for the building.

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[124] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement,* 6.
[125] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement,* 25.
[126] "Construction of a Colossus," *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement, 74*.
[127] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement,* 63.
[128] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement,* 63.
[129] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement,* 99.
[130] "Mosher Steel Company Records on the World Trade Center, 1966-70 | Avery Drawings & Archives Collections | Columbia University Libraries Finding Aids." Published November 1, 2017, Accessed November 9, 2023. https://findingaids.library.columbia.edu/ead/nnc-a/ldpd_12915729.
[131] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement,* 80. And S. W. Stone, *Building Stones in the Humble Building,* pg 1.
[132] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement,* 5 and 80.
[133] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement,* 5. And S. W. Stone, *Building Stones in the Humble Building*, pg 1.
[134] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement,* 14 and 97.
[135] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement,* 94.
[136] Henry-Russel Hitchcock and architect Philip Johnson introduced a book and exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York that

The plaza originally included a dramatic architect-designed 80 foot long reflecting pool with Vermont Green Slate at the base of pool and three sculptural mosaic fountains.[137] The original light well with sunken garden and pool that consisted of two bridges made of Murphy Marble Terrazzo and west wall of Carrara Marble have been removed (Figure 35). The garden area was once used for public events including fashion shows.[138] The first-floor mezzanine (measuring six feet high by 200 feet long) was designed to capture and reflect light with uneven, angled bronze panels designed by the architects. The building itself was also featured for a light show called, "Light Up the Sky" and was advertised as the largest of its kind in Texas (see building at night in Figure 25).[139] The Houston firm of Bishop and Walker were the landscape architects for the project. They also created the master plan for Houston's Intercontinental Airport (now Bush Intercontinental Airport).[140]

The Humble Oil & Refining Company spent $250,000 on artwork throughout the building.[141] The lobby, concourse, and executive level had gallery spaces where artwork rotated between the three locations. The concourse cafeteria had the largest tapestry of its type in the United States called "Wonderful World" by John Smith which depicted a modern life cycle of fish feeding into streams and growth of urban spaces (seven feet high and 100 feet long, Figure 45, lower image to left). Behind the desk of Humble Touring Service in the first floor lobby, Welton Becket and Associates created a photographic travel "mural" depicting a trip through the United States (Photo collage, Figure 37). On the west side of lobby, a large abstract mural expressing energy was created by E. M. (Buck) Schiwetz, a Texas artist. Unfortunately, these pieces were removed at an unknown date.

Interior Color Schemes

Part of the architect's design concept was to marry the interior and exterior elements. As an extension of the exterior plaza, the first floor lobby brought the outdoors inside with consistent terrazzo flooring, 29 foot tall curtain walls, potted landscaping, bronze, and mezzanine panels, and burnt and deep red orange furniture and carpet accepts (Figures 35-38). The earth toned theme referencing Humble's corporate identity would continue throughout the building with tan carpeting and travertine or marble in most public elevator and hallway spaces for upper floors (Figure 38). The lobby color scheme was brightened in the concourse cafeteria and auditorium with upholstered red seating, and tapestry artwork (Figure 45). The executive 42nd Floor was designed in coordination with individual executives and the board of directors, common spaces were thoughtfully more neutral in color and private spaces exhibited more pops of color based on the desire of each executive (Figure 39).[142] The Petroleum Club Levels were also designed with earth tones, specifically related to geological resources (Figure 40-42).

Building Organization and Tenants

The building was designed as the United States corporate administrative headquarters for the Humble Oil & Refining Company and was financed by the Humble Employee Relations Fund as an investment venture.[143] The east side of the

presented the European style of modern architecture to an American audience in 1932 with three main principles. "International Style." Chicago Architecture Center. Accessed November 14, 2023. https://www.architecture.org/learn/resources/architecture-dictionary/entry/international-style/.

[137] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement*, 98 and S. W. Stone, *Building Stones in the Humble Building*, pg 1.

[138] "Humble Club Models Present Fashion Safari Style Show." *Humble in Houston 1966*, December 1966. Pg. 3. Courtesy Briscoe Center for American History, Exxon-Mobile Collection. 2.207/L15E. Humble in Houston. Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin

[139] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement*, 19.

[140] "Calvin T. Bishop | TCLF." The Cultural Landscape Foundation. Published 2001-2024, Accessed November 8, 2023. https://www.tclf.org/pioneer/calvin-t-bishop.

[141] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement*, 80-81.

[142] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement*, 84.

[143] Hunt, *Total Design*, 210.

ground floor lobby was home to the Humble Touring Service, a supporting service established in 1933 and aided in the planning of motor trips. Services included developing strategic routes, information on speed limits, toll rates, locations for airports, and even hiking trails for each patron's itinerary. In 1962, the only other touring offices were in New York, New Orleans, and Chicago. The Humble Touring Service offices passed out 250,00 roadmaps to 125,000 customers and answered 28,000 phone calls in 1962 alone.[144] The building originally had only a few non-Humble support tenants including the Brass Rail Cafeteria, drug store, barber, and shoeshine station all on the concourse subfloor. The Brass Rail Cafeteria was a public restaurant with locations throughout the nation primarily for offices and plants. The company provided for fast and low-cost dining options and accommodated private parties, wedding receptions and meetings for up to 850 people.[145]

The exclusive leasing agent for tenants was John I. Hill.[146] McCann Erickson, an American-based global advertising agency, had an office on the 22nd floor. Interviews with former employees who worked in the building confirmed there were law firms located on the tenant floors. Tenant and typical floors were open plan without enclosed corridors for flexibility. Most or all floors were designed in this way for single floor business tenants. Garage tenants included a small Fidelity Bank and Trust branch office and an ENCO service station (a Humble Oil & Refining Company and Standard of New Jersey brand, Figure 23).

Typical office floors were designed for "modular flexibility" to suit business needs (Figures 15-16, 62). The open plan was called a "loft" on the historic drawings and these floors were configured and reconfigured in various ways throughout the decades. Typical upper floors (second floor and up) have travertine wall and flooring in the main elevator banks and elevator lobby areas; remnants of this original material are extant and scattered throughout. Corridors and offices are usually carpeted or have exposed concrete base floor. There is a wide range of office configuration changes over time and some of the historic-age modular office space has been removed. Floors two through eight, ten through 18, 19 and 20, 22-30, 31 and 32, and 34-41, respectively, share commonalities in floor plan and materials exemplified by elevator openings and typical offices on the perimeter.

The planning document found in the Houston Metropolitan Research Center at the Houston Public Library archives lists how various departments of the Humble Oil & Refining Company were organized in the building; it is not known how many of the allocated tenant floors were actually leased (Figure 21):[147]

Houston Area:

- First Floor/Mezzanine: Lobby, Touring Service, and Mechanical
- Second Floor: Administration, Touring Service, Area Production
- Third Floor: Law, Administration, Employee Relations, Marketing, Exploration
- Fourth Floor: Houston Area Exploration

Humble Pipe Line Company:

- Fifth Floor: Communication, Engineering, Planning & Economics
- Sixth Floor: Treasury, Tax, Controller's, Aviation
- Seventh Floor: Management Humble Pipe Line Company

Southwest Region:

- Eighth Floor: Message Center, Traffic, Telephone Communications, Computing

[144] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement*, 20.
[145] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement*, 3.
[146] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement*, 95.
[147] Extracted from "New Humble Building Open House" Brochure, courtesy Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.

- Ninth Floor: Mechanical (note metal louvers on exterior)
- Tenth Floor: Computing Center, Marketing, Accounting

11th Floor: Controller's, Treasury

- 12th Floor: Exploration and Production Accounting
- 13th Floor: Supply Accounting and Division Order
- 14th Floor: Systems Controller's Marketing
- 15th Floor: Marketing, Accounting, Credit
- 16th Floor: Marketing
- 17th Floor: Law, Ad Valorem Tax Purchasing
- 18th Floor: Exploration, Employee relations
- 19th Floor: Management, Public Relations, Controller's, Law, Production
- 20th Floor: Engineering

Tenants:

- 22nd through 30th Floors for Tenants [it is not known how many floors were actually leased].

Corporate Headquarters:

- 31st Floor: Aviation, Medical, General Services, Employee Services (Originally included 9,000 square foot clinic with five physicians, three nurses, two hygienists and two X-ray technicians)[148]
- 32nd Floor: Research, Tax, Exploration
- 33rd Floor: Mechanical (note metal louvers on exterior) and Snack Bar
- 34th Floor: Marine
- 35th Floor: Supply and Transportation
- 36th Floor: Manufacturing and Treasury
- 37th Floor: Marketing
- 38th Floor: Marketing, Law
- 39th Floor: Exploration, Production, Economics and Planning
- 40th Floor: Controllers, Natural Gas
- 41st Floor: Public Relations, Employee Relations, Secretary's
- 42nd Floor: Directors and Officers

Petroleum Club:

- 43rd and 44th Floors

Observatory and Mechanical:

- recessed 45th level

In 1966, the *Houston Chronicle* published an updated image for the building design with essentially the same floor programming as above.[149] It is unclear how the distribution of space changed when the company became Exxon U.S.A. in the early 1970s. Former employees have confirmed that tenants occupied multiple upper floors well into the 1980s. Other major architectural changes to the building lobby and plaza within the complex occurred in the 1990s. The service station was removed c. 1995. It is unclear when the bank vacated the space at the Milam Street garage. The

[148] *Humble Story, Houston Chronicle Special Supplement*, 99.
[149] "Building Design." *Humble In Houston 1966*, February 1966, 8. Courtesy Briscoe Center for American History, Exxon-Mobile Collection. 2.207/L15E. Humble in Houston. Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

office space is currently reconfigured on the interior for Tellepsen Builders Field Office and appears to be in the process of vacating. Existing signage supports that Energy Capital Credit Union occupied the space at one time along with Active Record Center (operated by Gref) on the B sublevel probably in the former vault space.[150]

Petroleum Club

Texas' first Petroleum Club was established in Dallas in 1934 with the intent of providing a lunch venue for deal-making oil executives. Twelve years later, Houston's Petroleum Club was built from the ideas of Wilbur Gunther, Howard Warren, and Harris Underwood who in collaboration with the other oil tycoons of Frank Donohue, Ford Hubbard, A. W. Waddill, Vernon W. Frost, B. A. Killson, Howard C. Warren, and E. E. Pickering Jr. set out to create one of the nation's top fraternities of business.[151] By the efforts and generosity of Robert E. (Bob) Smith and Marlin Sandlin, Houston's Petroleum Club was established in 1946 at the club's first residence, the upper floors of the Rice Hotel (NRHP 1978) downtown.[152] The club became known as the space with the best food and, possibly, the best social scene in the city.[153] It was a successful continuation of the long-standing convention of closed door handshake deals based solely on the honor system located in the bayou city as it gained recognition from other similar clubs throughout the petroleum industry.[154] Members of the Houston Petroleum Club were granted access to seven other exclusive petroleum clubs in other cities including Denver, Los Angeles, and Guatemala City.[155]

While the club was originally created solely for leaders of the oil field, a percentage of memberships were allocated to other industries. To accommodate this, the club had designated rooms for different functions including a club within the club such as the "The Doctor's Club Room." According to the bylaws, in 1970 59% of the memberships were granted to oil, gas, sulfur producers, refiners, transporters, marketers, professional consultants, and drilling contractors, 22% were oil and gas equipment supply men and service companies, 3% were oil and gas lease brokers and royalty owners, 7% oil and gas lawyers, and the final 9% being other board authorized individuals such as clergymen. This exclusive membership system garnered the club the prestige and desire from onlookers which allowed it to become the venue of handshake integrity deals greatly influencing the course of Houston and the oil industry for decades.

Houston's Petroleum Club has a namesake book, *The Finest in the Land*, by Jack Donahue, which highlights the prominence and importance of this Houston club and the essential forum it provided for international decision-making in the oil industry. As early as 1959, the club's representatives including Lynton Upshaw (manager of the club) and Donald L. Connelly (director), were in talks with then Humble President Morgan Davis and Executive Vice-president Carl Reistle, Jr. about the 40,000 square feet space on the upper floors of their new skyscraper. A twenty-year lease was negotiated at $165,000 a year. Humble would have 1,800 square feet of exclusive space and be required to have at least 50 company memberships.[156] Upon opening, the club had at least 500 members. The Petroleum Club was a members-only organization and was also used for non-member events such as member family weddings and high school proms. The 45th floor observation level was open to the public.[157] The Petroleum Club operated in the building until 2014 when it moved to the 35th floor penthouse of Total Plaza at 1201 Louisiana.[158]

[150] Other occupants of the garage between the most recent and original are unknown, after research on the subject.
[151] "Building Design." *Humble in Houston 1966.* and Willard Gill. *Petroleum Club of Houston 1960-61.* Exxon-Mobile Collection. Briscoe Center for American Research. Austin, Texas. 11.
[152] Joseph Nocera. "Texas Primer: The Petroleum Club," *Texas Monthly*, November 1, 1985, https://www.texasmonthly.com/beingtexan/texas-primer-the-petroleum-club/; Petroleum Club of Houston. *Petroleum Club of Houston 1964.* Exxon-Mobile Collection. Briscoe Center for American Research. Austin, Texas. 1.
[153] Nocera. "Texas Primer: The Petroleum Club," *Texas Monthly*.
[154] "History - Petroleum Club of Houston." Petroleum Club of Houston. Accessed May 23, 2023. https://www.pcoh.com/history.
[155] George K. Harcourt. *Petroleum Club of Houston 1969-1971.* Exxon-Mobile Collection. Briscoe Center for American Research. Austin, Texas. 11.
[156] Jack Donahue. *The Finest in the Land: The Story of the Petroleum Club of Houston.* Houston: Gulf Publishing Co, 1984. 129-137.
[157] Conversation with William Franks, August 2023.
[158] "History - Petroleum Club of Houston."

Petroleum Club Design

Oil from its geological history to its discovery and production was the design inspiration for the club. George Pierce, FAIA, of George Pierce-Abel B. Pierce, designed the interior architecture including floors, ceilings, finishes, and cabinetry. William Parker McFadden Associates designed the interior furnishings and decoration. Richard Kelly of New York was the lighting consultant. Bolt, Beranek & Newman of Boston was hired for acoustics. The club itself was inspired by the moody wood paneling and maze of drawing rooms or lounges associated with San Francisco's Pacific Union Club, the University Club of New York, and The California Club in Los Angeles.[159]

Suppliers Included:

Chairs: Johannes Hansen
Tables: Chicago Hardware and Foundry
Cabinet: William Schieffer Studio
Leather: Garden State Tanning, Inc.
Carpet: V'Soske
Floor: Stonecrafters, Inc.
Chandeliers: Tombacker Lighting Corp.
Lamps: Winston Ironcraft Studios
Planters: Architectural Pottery
Ballroom floor: Stanley Floor Covering
Leather panel installation: Triump Storecrafters
China: Shenago China Co.
Table linen: James G. Hardy
Silver: The International Silver Co.
Crystal and Glassware: Louie Glass Co.
Cork: Bickley Brothers

Petroleum Room:
Tapestry: Real Fabrica de Papices, Madrid, hand screened block design on drapery: McKenzie Studios
Chest: William B. Schieffer Studio
Dance Floor (ebony and dark oak with carpeting strips): Stanley Floor Covering, Houston
Oak paneling: Triumph Storecrafters, Inc.[160]

Welton Becket & Associates

The namesake of the company, Welton Becket, founded the firm after the death of his former colleague Walt Wurdeman in 1949 (formerly Wurdeman & Becket, 1938-1949). Born in Seattle in 1902, Becket received a Bachelor of Architecture at the University of Washington with Wurdeman. Later, Becket studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Fontainebleau and in his early years designed in the popular classical and revival styles. He and his firm are best known for their modern-era West Coast practice. The firm's primary offices were in Los Angeles with others added gradually throughout the country such as Chicago, New York, and Houston.[161]

[159] George F. Pierce and William Parker McFadden, *Interiors*: 1963, 88.
[160] Pierce and McFadden, *Interiors*, 88.
[161] Michael Houser, "Welton D. Becket," Washington State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP), Published March 2012, Accessed May 23, 2023. https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/research-and-technical-preservation-guidance/architect-biographies/bio-for-welton-d-becket.

Becket and his associated firms designed not only corporate office towers like Humble, but also housing, hotels, shopping centers, educational facilities, medical buildings, and destinations for entertainment, recreation, and culture in the United States and internationally. The firm received awards at the local, national, and international level for their designs. In 1952, Becket was one of the youngest architects to receive the honor of a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects (FAIA).[162] The firm was the largest U.S. architecture firm in the 1960s and prided themselves on a consistent architectural product delivered by "Total Design."[163] The concept embraced client-driven and site-specific design, as opposed to the artist-architect methodology. While the firm's modern designs were elegant and creatively considered, they grew out of a careful consideration from a myriad of factors and functionality. The Humble Building commission was an early realization of the firm's intentions and methodology of "Total Design." So successful was Humble as a representative example that the firm recommended it be used as the primary case study in William Dudley Hunt's book *Total Design*. The term is defined by the author "..the phrase connotes both architectural philosophy and practice that embrace all of the services required to analyze any architectural problem, perform the necessary studies and research to solve the problem, and translate the solution into a building or group of buildings complete down to the last detail of furniture, sculpture, and other art, landscaping, and furnishings, even to ashtrays, menus, and matchboxes."[164]

Studies and preliminary work on the Humble Building began in the late 1950s. The project was awarded to Becket's firm once the land was acquired in 1958. Traffic and economic reports of the area began as early as 1959, influencing openings and programming for the building. The site was south of the more developed downtown Houston and lacked amenities (Figures 31-32). To service employees and potential tenants, a cafeteria, auditorium, and retail shops were proposed for the building. At first, Humble Oil requested a more modest fifteen-story building to replace all the scattered offices throughout Houston, but the design soon shifted towards a more comprehensive project that would provide space for over 3,300 employees and additional tenants for a total of about 7,000. The building was intended as an income producing property that could also provide the company additional space for future growth.[165] The auditorium was utilized for employee meetings and trainings for up to 500 people.

Architect Louis Naidorf of Welton Becket & Associates was lead designer for the Humble-Exxon Building.[166] He was also responsible for the Capitol Records (1956), a cylindrical building in Los Angeles, which employs similarly distinctive sun shades **(**Figure 51). At the time of the design and construction of the Humble Building, Welton Becket & Associates was also the architect of 500 Jefferson Street (NR 2019, Figure 53) and 501 Jefferson Street (originally Hotel America and later Crowne Plaza, now known as The Whitehall Hotel).[167] Welton Becket died in January of 1969 in Los Angeles. His nephew, MacDonald, took over the firm and it continued to operate under his family name until 1987 when it merged with Ellerbe Associates and the name changed to Ellerbe Becket Inc.[168] Ellerbe Becket joined AECOM in 2009 and since 2011 it has been absorbed into the latter international architectural and engineering firm.[169]

[162] Ann Harrison, "Finding aid for the Welton Becket architectural drawings and photographs, 1913-2009, bulk 1930-1969," Online Archive of California. Accessed February 28, 2024. https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c8639v5d/entire_text/.
[163] Bruce Emerton, "Built by Becket," The Los Angeles Conservancy Modern Committee, 2002.
[164] William Dudley Hunt, *Total Design: Architecture of Welton Becket and Associates*, (N/A: McGraw-Hill, 1971), pg 4.
[165] The writers have not been able to identify any tenants other than the few listed in this document. Interviews with former Exxon employees confirm that there were no tenants (beyond the cafeteria) after 1995.
[166] Hunt, William Dudley. Total Design; Architecture of Welton Becket and Associates. pg 183.
[167] Amanda Barry et al., "500 Jefferson Building, National Register of Historic Places Nomination."
[168] Washington State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP). "Welton D. Becket." Accessed May 23, 2023. https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/research-and-technical-preservation-guidance/architect-biographies/bio-for-welton-d-becket.
[169] The Journal of the American Institute of Architects. "Ellerbe Becket." Accessed May 30,2023. https://www.architectmagazine.com/firms/ellerbe-becket.; Amanda Barry et al., "500 Jefferson Building, National Register of Historic Places Nomination." And Harrison, "Finding aid."

Below is a partial list of notable Welton Becket & Associates buildings:

California

- General Petroleum Building – Mobil Oil (c.1949), Los Angeles (at the time largest office building in Southern California and included a parking garage (NRHP 2004, Figure 50)
- The Beverly Hilton (c.1952-55), in Beverly Hills
- Capitol (EMI) Records (c.1956), Hollywood (Figure 51)
- The Music Center for the Performing Arts (1964), Los Angeles[170]
- Los Angeles International Airport with William Pereira, Charles Luckman, and Paul R. Williams (1959 and later)[171]
- Equitable Life Building (1969), Los Angeles (Figure 55)[172]
- UCLA various buildings (1948-1970), Los Angeles

United States

- Ford Division Offices (1957) in Dearborn, Michigan.
- Canyon Village (1957) Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming.[173]
- Southland Center (1959-1960) in Dallas (Figure 52).[174]
- Cullen Center and 500 and 501 Jefferson Buildings (1963) in Houston. (Figure 53)
- Phillips Petroleum Building (1964) in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. [175]
- First State Bank (1966) in Clear Lake City, Texas for Del E. Webb Corp and Humble Oil & Refining Co.[176] (c.1966) (1155 Bay Area Blvd, demolished, Figure 54). [177]
- Gulf Life Tower (1967) in Jacksonville, Florida.[178]
- Hartford National Bank Building (1967) Hartford, Connecticut.[179]
- The Contemporary (1971) and Polynesian (1971) resorts in Walt Disney World.[180]
- Grand Ole Opry House (early 1970s) in Nashville Tennessee.[181]
- John F. Kennedy Education, Civic & Cultural Center (Nassau Coliseum, early 1970s) in Mineola, Long Island, New York.[182]
- Medical Field Service School, Brooke Army Medical Center (early 1970s) in Fort Sam Houston, Texas (Figures 72-73).[183]
- Pittsburgh National Building (early 1970s) in Pittsburgh, PA.
- Shell Information Center, Shell Oil (early 1970s), Houston, TX.[184]

[170] "Music Center | Our History." Accessed May 23, 2023. https://www.musiccenter.org/about/about-us/our-story/our-history/.
[171] Emerton "Built by Becket."
[172] Hunt, *Total Design*, 238.
[173] Hunt, *Total Design*, 238.
[174] Hunt, *Total Design*, 10-15.
[175] Hunt, *Total Design*, 240.
[176] Hunt, *Total Design*, 238.
[177] "First State Bank of Clear Lake City in Clear Lake City, TX." Accessed September 21, 2023. http://www.bankencyclopedia.com/First-State-Bank-of-Clear-Lake-City-19259-Clear-Lake-City-Texas.html.
[178] Hunt, *Total Design*, 238.
[179] Hunt, *Total Design*, 238.
[180] Chuck Schmidt,. "The Disney-Welton Becket Connection." silive, January 11, 2012.
[181] Hunt, *Total Design*, 238.
[182] Hunt, *Total Design*, 239.
[183] Hunt, *Total Design*, 239.
[184] Hunt, *Total Design*, 240.

- Master plan for Plaza del Oro for Shell Oil Co, Houston TX (1970s-1980s).[185]

More analysis on Welton Beckett & Associates Texas projects at the end of this section.

Consulting Architects: Golemon & Rolfe

The firm of Golemon & Rolfe was established by Walter Thomas Rolfe and Albert S. Golemon in 1946 in Houston. It was one of the largest architectural firms operating in the Southwest in the mid-twentieth century. Rolfe and Golemon studied at Kansas State College and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology at different times in the 1920s. Golemon also studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Fontainebleau, France. He met Golemon while teaching at Auburn University in Alabama. Both architects were very active in American and International architectural organizations, taking on various roles with the AIA, UNESCO, Texas Society of Architects, and the Texas Architectural Foundation. Rolfe also taught at the University of Texas in Austin in the 1930s and 40s. Golemon went on to work at Lloyd, Morgan & Jones, Harry Golemon Architects, Inc., and STOA/Golemon/Bolullo Architects.[186] Golemon & Rolfe were the associate architect with Skidmore Owings and Merrill (SOM) in 1956 for the design of Medical Towers at 1709 Dryden Road in Houston (NRHP 2016). A sampling of the firm's buildings includes:[187]

- 1950 – St. Frances Cabrini Hospital, Alexandria, Louisiana
- 1955 – Bellaire Senior High School, Houston, Texas
- 1957 – Medical Towers, Houston, Texas; Skidmore, Owings and Merrell (SOM), design architects
- 1957 – Jack Tar, Orange House Hotel, Orange, Texas; Holabird, Root & Bergee, design architects
- 1958 – Federal Reserve Branch Bank, Houston, Texas; Phelps, DeWees & Simmons, design architects
- 1958 – Union Carbide Office Building, Houston, Texas
- 1960 – Houston Public Library, Oak Forest Branch, Houston, Texas
- 1963 – Reagan State Office Building, Austin, Texas; with Brooks, Barr, Graeber & White
- 1969 –Intercontinental Airport Houston, Terminal A, Houston, Texas (later renamed George Bush Intercontinental Airport); with George Pierce-Abel B. Pierce
- 1972 – Houston International Hospital (Kindred Hospital Houston), Houston, Texas
- 1976 – University of Houston Clear Lake Campus Bayou Building, Houston, Texas; with S.I. Morris Associates and Pitts, Phelps & White
- 1978 – Mabee Teaching Center, University of Houston, Houston, Texas
- 1978 – Cullen Science Center, Houston Baptist University, Houston, Texas
- 1982 – George Bush Intercontinental Airport Terminal C, Houston, Texas; with Pierce Goodwin Alexander
- 1983 – Cullen College of Engineering North Annex, University of Houston, Houston, Texas
- 1983 – Warwick Towers, Houston, Texas; with Werlin, Deane & Associates
- 1987 – George R. Brown Convention Center, Houston, Texas; with John S. Chase, Molina & Associates, Haywood Jordan McCowan and Moseley Associates
- 1979-1983 – Ashford Place Office Park, Houston, Texas

[185] Hunt, *Total Design*, 240.
[186] Delaney Harris-Finch, Anna Mod, and Hannah Curry-Shearouse. "Medical Towers, National Register of Historic Places Nomination," Texas Historical Commission, 2016.
[187] Harris-Finch, et al., "Medical Towers, National Register of Historic Places Nomination."

Consulting Architects: Pierce and Pierce Associates

George F. Pierce and Abel B. Pierce (of no relation) were exclusively responsible for designing the interior architecture of the Humble-Exxon building's Petroleum Club on the penthouse levels with Neal Lacy, Jr. as the project architect from Becket & Associates. They collaborated with William Parker McFadden of William Parker McFadden Associates for interior furnishings and decoration.[188] George F. Pierce, originally from Dallas, studied at Southern Methodist University and Rice University in the 1940s. He was also a professor of architecture at Rice University. Abel B. Pierce from St. Paul, Minnesota, and Blessing, Texas was also a graduate of Rice in 1930 and two years later received a degree in architecture from the University of Pennsylvania.[189] Before World War II, Abel B. Pierce worked for Nunn and McGinty Architects in Houston and was a naval architect with Brown Ship Building Co. in Houston. After the war, they founded Pierce and Pierce in 1946; their legacy firm, PGAL, is now international and one of Texas' largest architectural firms.[190]

Pierce and Pierce were also involved in designing the Houston State Psychiatric Institute at 1300 Moursund Avenue (1962) in the Texas Medical Center and the Keith-Weiss Geology Laboratory Building at Rice University (1959) and the Anderson Biological Laboratories (1958).[191] Abel B. Pierce, also known as Abel "John Henry" Brown Pierce retired in the early 1970s and passed away in 2003 at the age of 93.[192] The local consulting architects Golemon & Rolfe, Pierce, and Pierce Associates would team up with each other again to design the Continental Airlines Terminal C in 1982 at the Intercontinental Airport Houston (now George Bush Intercontinental Airport).[193] Pierce and Pierce Associates would evolve into the Houston based firm PDR in 1977. The firm continues and has offices in Houston, Austin, and Dallas.[194]

General Contractor: W.S. Bellows Construction Corporation

The W.S. Bellows Construction Corporation was founded in Canada in 1914 and relocated to Kansas City, Kansas and Oklahoma City before moving permanently to Houston in 1936. The move to Houston was prompted by their successful contract for the construction of the San Jacinto Monument in nearby La Porte that commemorated the Battle of San Jacinto (the battleground and monument are now a State Historic Site operated by the Texas Historical Commission).[195] W.S. Bellows was also the general contractor for 500 Jefferson, also designed by Welton Becket & Associates (Figure 53). The firm is a leader among Houston's general contractors and is responsible for the construction of significant Houston buildings including One Shell Plaza (1971), the Wortham Theater Center (1987), as well as many projects in the Texas Medical Center. The company was started by Warren Sylvanus Bellows and succeeded by his sons Warren, Jr. and George, and then by his grandson, Tom Bellows. Tom Bellows died unexpectedly in 2007 and his widow, Laura Bellows is now President and Chair of the Board.[196]

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[188] Pierce and McFadden, *Interiors*, 88-95.

[189] "Pierce, George S." Houston Mod. 2003-2024, Accessed May 26, 2023. https://www.houstonmod.org/architect/pierce-george-s/.

[190] "The Firm," PGAL. Accessed October 4, 2023. https://www.pgal.com/about-pgal.

[191] "Keith-Wiess Geology Laboratory Building." Houston Mod. 2003-2024, Accessed May 23, 2023. https://www.houstonmod.org/home/keith-wiessgeology-laboratory-building/; "Construction at Rice: The First 100 Years." Facilities | Rice University. Accessed May 30, 2023. https://facilities.rice.edu/construction/the-first-100-years.

[192] Tony Freemantle. "Deaths: Abel 'John Henry' Brown Pierce, Architect of Houston Landmarks." *Houston Chronicle,* July 7, 2003. https://www.chron.com/news/houston-deaths/article/deaths-abel-john-henry-brown-pierce-architect-2128525.php.

[193] Gerald Moorhead et al., "George Bush Intercontinental Airport (Houston Intercontinental Airport)", [Houston, Texas], SAH Archipedia, eds. Gabrielle Esperdy and Karen Kingsley, Charlottesville: UVaP, 2012—, http://sah-archipedia.org/buildings/TX-01-HN127.

[194] Katherine Freser, "PDR architecture firms opens Dallas office." *Houston Chronicle,* February 27, 2020, https://www.houstonchronicle.com/business/real-estate/article/PDR-architecture-firm-opens-Dallas-office-15086944.php.

[195] Amanda Barry et al., "500 Jefferson Building, National Register of Historic Places Nomination."

[196] "History: W.S. Bellows Construction Corporation," W.S. Bellows Construction Corporation, http://www.wsbellows.com/about/history (accessed July 3, 2018). And as of September 2023, Laura Bellows remains the President, CEO, and Chairman.

Humble and Brand Transitions

Upon the opening of the building at 800 Bell Street in 1963, Humble was known as the nation's largest domestic oil company under new president Carl E. Reistle, Jr. The company's marketing slogan during the 1960s was "Happy Motoring" in tune with the county's post-war economic expansion, increase in car ownership, and the increase in disposable income for travel and tourism. Internally, articles in the *Houston Chronicle* at the same time, describe a company whose "employees find, produce, transport, manufacture (refining), and market oil and oil products." The company's footprint in Houston and the surrounding area included its Baytown Refinery, a Clear Lake campus, the Research Center on Buffalo Speedway (demolished 2019), as well as oil tankers in the Houston Ship Channel, and offshore rigs in the Gulf of Mexico.[197]

In 1960, Humble introduced the ENCO or Enco ("Energy Company") brand for filling stations and products in select states after a legal ruling against using Standard Oil of New Jersey's ESSO or Esso trademark. Enco and Esso had identical products with advertising under different brand names.[198] In the late 1950s, Humble and the parallel Enco and Esso brands adopted the "Put a Tiger in Your Tank" advertising campaign. Esso had been a trademark in the United States and abroad since the Standard Oil Supreme Court antitrust case of 1911. The diffused brand names could not easily compete with the nationwide branding of Texaco, who marketed consistently in all fifty states. In the late 1960s, the Humble and Standard teams began to look at a more competitive and consistent nationwide rebranding.[199]

Also in the 1960s, Humble would see further growth by inventing 3-D seismic technology. The development would change how the global industry locates oil and gas resources. This technology was a product of the advanced (parallel) computer engineering of the era. The seismic imaging sped up the time it took geologists to find resources and reduced costs.[200] The technology would propel the company back into a leader in the industry over the next few decades. The Enco and Esso branding practice would last until 1972 when all Humble-Standard entities would combine under the name Exxon, or Exxon USA nationwide.[201]

Exxon

Jersey Standard and Humble Oil & Refining Company officially changed all its affiliate names internationally to Exxon Corporation on January 1, 1973. The name change was approved by Jersey Standard shareholders in a special shareholders' meeting. Humble Oil itself would become Exxon Company, U.S.A., a division of the Exxon Corporation.[202] Nationwide, this change included the rebranding of the company's 25,000 retail gasoline service stations as well as identification logos for credit cards and graphics for wells, tankers, barges, trucks, stationery, and attendants' uniforms.[203] Standard hired Harrison, Abramovitz & Harris to design their New York City headquarters in the 1960s at 1251 Avenue of the Americas in Rockefeller Center between 49th and 50th Streets; completed c. 1972 it would assume the Exxon name.[204] The Humble Building in Houston would operate as a regional headquarters for

[197] *Humble Story*, *Houston Chronicle Special Supplement*, 11.
[198] Auke Visser, "HUMBLE Oil - History in Short." Accessed September 6, 2023. https://www.aukevisser.nl/others/id886.htm; "Enco Commercial, No. 3 (1968)." Texas Archive of the Moving Image. Accessed September 6, 2023. https://texasarchive.org/2011_01404.
[199] Visser, "HUMBLE Oil - History in Short."
[200] "Our History." ExxonMobil. Accessed August 10, 2023. https://corporate.exxonmobil.com/who-we-are/our-global-organization/our-history.
[201] Visser, "HUMBLE Oil - History in Short." And Jordan Blum. "The March from Humble Oil to Exxon Dates Back More than a Century." *Houston Chronicle*, May 25, 2016. Accessed February 28,2024. https://www.chron.com/local/history/economy-business/article/The-march-from-Humble-Oil-to-Exxon-dates-back-7943392.php.
[202] "Our History." ExxonMobil.
[203] "Our History." ExxonMobil. And William D Smith. "And Now the Esso Name Is History." *The New York Times*, October 25, 1972, sec. Archives. https://www.nytimes.com/1972/10/25/archives/and-now-the-esso-name-is-history-the-esso-name-is-history-now.html.
[204] "1251 Avenue of the Americas" Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat. The Skyscraper Center. Accessed September 7, 2023.

Exxon's domestic operations. During the 1970s, Exxon produced plastic, synthetic rubber and chemical products alongside their crude oil and refining operations.[205]

Humble's last president from 1966 to 1973, Myron A. Wright, succeeded as Exxon U.S.A.'s first president from 1973 to 1976. He was followed by Randall Meyer (1976 to 1988), William D. Stevens (1988 to 1992), Harry J. Longwell (1992 to 1994), and Ansel L. Condray who began in 1995 until the merger with Mobil in 1999 when the company became ExxonMobil.[206] In 2014, the company would move out of the building at 800 Bell Street, leaving it vacant until present day.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Arab members placed an embargo on oil export to the United States in October of 1973 due to support of Israel and caused an energy crisis lasting until the 1980s. Prices surged and Exxon's stake in the international market was nationalized in Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Iran. Exxon's production of crude oil went from 6.8 million barrels a day in 1973 to 1.6 million by 1985 (three percent of global supply). Instead of drilling for oil through international leasing, large oil companies like Exxon became contractors and purchasers of crude oil. Exxon began to pivot into businesses outside oil and search for resources without OPEC association. After the embargo, they created the first system for ranking international prospects instead of by individual nation/region and changed the global management structure to reflect Rockefeller's (Standard Oil) innovation of vertical integration. Management was organized by function: "downstream operations (refining, marketing, and transportation), exploration, development, production, and chemicals."

The energy crisis of the 1970s prompted Exxon to develop technical advancements on their search for profitability and efficiency such as: new seismic methods for more detailed underground maps utilizing computer tech, location and production technology to find oil in deeper offshore and Artic waters, created "cleaner-burning gasolines, chemical products and cleaner and more fuel-efficient refineries and petrochemical plants."[207] Other hurdles of the 1970s for Exxon included regulation associated with creation of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. New laws regulated the mandatory removal of lead from gasoline, air and water quality standards, workplace safety, and environmental impacts. The company would attempt to establish the Exxon brand as a name synonymous with ethical anti-bribery standards in the 1970s after a corruption scandal in Italy. They focused on the integrity of technological advancement, their existing investment capital, and access to global markets. However, in later years they would be plagued by multiple environmental disasters such as *Exxon Valdez* oil spill in 1989 and refinery explosions. In reaction, the company created Operations Integrity Management System (OIMS) in the 1990s to improve internal regulation on safety, health, and the environment.

In 1979, the company opened the Exxon Chemical campus between Memorial Drive and the Katy Freeway as part of Houston's Energy Corridor. Exxon's headquarters was in New York City's Rockefeller Center until 1989 when they moved to Irving, Texas.[208] After merging with Mobil in 1999, land for a new corporate campus was purchased in 2008 (later called City Place) to consolidate Houston operations, creating a second energy corridor north of Houston. In

https://www.skyscrapercenter.com/building/1251-avenue-of-the-americas/1126. And "The 'X Y Z' Buildings." The Skyscraper Museum, Published 1997-2015. Accessed November 13, 2023. https://old.skyscraper.org/EXHIBITIONS/BIG_BUILDINGS/CONTENT/jumbos/j_08.htm.

[205] James A. Clark and Mark Odintz, "Exxon Company, U.S.A."

[206] Jordan Blum. "The March from Humble Oil to Exxon Dates Back More than a Century."; James A. Clark and Mark Odintz, "Exxon Company, U.S.A."

[207] Joseph A. Pratt, Exxon and the Control of Oil, *Journal of American History*, (Volume 99, Issue 1, June 2012): 145–154. https://doi.org/10.1093/jahist/jas149.

[208] Amanda Drane. "Exxon Mobil has deep roots in Houston area." *Houston Chronicle*, February 1,2022 https://www.houstonchronicle.com/business/article/Exxon-Mobil-has-deep-roots-in-Houston-area-16820661.php

2014, ExxonMobil signed a lease for office towers to be developed near the Woodlands and in later 2021 the company's operations would be consolidated in Spring, Texas.[209]

Humble Oil & Refining Company Real Estate Development

Humble was a pioneer of oil companies investing in real estate and was the first oil company to do so. The company had purchased the West Ranch in southeastern Harris County the 1930s from James Marion West (1871-1941). In 1958, Humble donated part of the land to Rice Institute's, now Rice University, geology laboratory. Two years later, additional land was granted which was later passed to NASA for the Manned Space Center, renamed the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center in 1973.[210] The company partnered with Del E. Webb Corporation in 1962 to build residential and industrial properties on 15,000 acres of the West Ranch land, which led to the establishment of the Friendswood Development Company and the development of Friendswood, a Houston suburb.[211]

Supplemental Architectural Analysis

Comparable Designs by Welton Becket & Associates in Texas[212]

Completed in 1963, just after the Humble Building, the 500 Jefferson Building and garage were also designed by Welton Becket & Associates in the International Style with New Formalist elements (NRHP 2019, Figure 53). While the Humble Building sits on an elevated plaza, the entrances to the 500 Jefferson Building sit level with the street; 500 Jefferson is further defined by skybridges at the second floor level connecting to the garage and to two adjacent buildings. Both buildings feature a recessed base footprint, which is more pronounced at 500 Jefferson Building, and a shaft defined by curtain walls and supported by double-height concrete *piloti*. The *piloti* at 500 Jefferson are expressed on all elevations and unclad, whereas the Humble Building's granite clad *piloti* are primarily expressed on the north and south elevations. The corkscrew ramps of the Humble Building's screened garage are concealed within the interior footprint of the garage, while the 500 Jefferson Building garage has exposed corkscrew ramps that sit outside the main garage footprint. Though both garages are screened at upper levels, that of the Humble Building is more permeable and less visually heavy when compared to the dark, opaque screen of the 500 Jefferson garage. The 500 Jefferson Building's garage is also accessed via skybridge in contrast to the Humble Building's underground tunnel. The 20-story building at 500 Jefferson has an understated symmetrical design with geometric features, but is differentiated with an elongated rectangular footprint, garage connected via skybridge, and exposed corkscrew garage ramps. This contrasts with the Humble-Exxon Building's 44-story vertical presence and screened-in garage with interior circular ramps.[213] Additionally, 500 Jefferson was designed to be part of the Cullen Center campus, although never realized, whereas the Humble Building was meant to be a stand-alone corporate icon.[214]

Like the Humble Building, the First State Bank building in Houston (Clear Lake City, demolished) built in 1966 had a recessed base and horizontality; however, the First State Bank was further defined by New Formalist characteristics such as a projecting roof slab and inverse arches formed by the building's tapered columns (Figure 54).[215] Though

[209] Drane. "Exxon Mobil has deep roots in Houston area."
[210] James A. Clark and Mark Odintz, "Exxon Company, U.S.A."and Amy Bacon, " The West Ranch: From Cattle to Space City*." The Houston Review* 17. (No. 2, 1995): 67-88. Accessed February 28,2024. https://houstonhistorymagazine.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/17.2-The-West-Ranch-From-Cattle-to-Space-City-Amy-Baon.pdf
[211] James A. Clark and Mark Odintz, "Exxon Company, U.S.A."
[212] This section is a sampling of buildings for basic comparisons and not intended to be exhaustive. Please also refer to section on *Houston Skyscraper Development After World War II.*
[213] Amanda Barry et al., "500 Jefferson Building, National Register of Historic Places Nomination."
[214] Stephen Fox, et al., *Houston Architectural Guide.* 13.
[215] Hunt, *Total Design*, 238.

reminiscent of the Humble Building's *piloti*, First State Bank's columns are less frequent and do not contrast the building's low, horizontal mass.

Built in the early 1960s, Southland Center in Dallas was a building complex which originally consisted of two International Style skyscraper towers situated perpendicularly to each other: the 42-story Southland Life Building (then the tallest building in Texas, Figure 52), and the 28-story Sheraton Dallas hotel.[216] A third tower was constructed at the north end of the complex's shared base in the early 1980s, slightly asymmetrically framing the central Southland Life Building with two perpendicular towers of similar style and design. The complex occupies the full city block, with the base concealing a parking garage screened by triangular, geometric panels constructed of concrete at the upper floors; like the Humble Building's garage, the ground floor has storefronts. Though both the Humble Building and the three Southland Center towers have smooth curtain walls with spandrel panels, the shorter side elevations of the three Southland Center towers are fully clad in precast concrete panels; this design element is echoed by the granite panel clad side elevations of the recessed base of the Humble Building. A notable differentiation between the two buildings is that the Southland Center relied on its branding, with monumental signage reading "Southland Life" defining the cornice. The Humble Building remains defined by its sun shades and a lack of overt signage.

After moving to Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, the Medical Field School completed a new campus in 1972 (Figures 72-73).[217] Currently known as the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence (formerly Brooke Army Medical Center; Medical Field Service School) and the Academy of Health Sciences, the two buildings are positioned one in front of the other, creating a visual A-B-A symmetry when viewed from the front. The rear building (Academy of Health Sciences) has a rectangular footprint, while the front building (U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence) is square. Both buildings are ornamented by vertical fins which draw the eye up and contrast the otherwise low-slung and horizontal stature. The cornice of the rear building projects over the base, drawing on New Formalist influence. Like the Humble Building, the Medical Field School buildings sit on an elevated base with recessed ground floor and expressed *piloti* supporting upper floors. The two buildings are connected by an elevated outdoor plaza; the Academy of Health Sciences building has another raised plaza with exterior loading dock centered at its rear elevation, and two square lightwells with expressed columns. Windows of the Academy of Health Sciences building are screened by solid panels accented by vertical fins, except just below the cornice where a narrow row of windows remains visible. This screening is reminiscent of the solid, opaque garage screen panels seen at Southland Center in Dallas and 500 Jefferson Building in Houston, but different from the metal garage screens at the Humble Building which are transparent and airier. With their low, horizontal mass and emphasis on vertical ornament, the Medical Field School buildings are in a sense the opposite of the Humble Building, which stands tall with its defining horizontal sun shades.

Other Comparable Post-War Designs

In Houston, the Melrose Building was the first International Style skyscraper in the city and the first to employ cantilevered sun shades of cast concrete (Figure 56).[218] Located at 1121 Walker Street, designed by Lloyd & Morgan and built in 1952 at 21 stories, it was one of the first local high-rises to incorporate modern, regional design features on the exterior to physically accommodate for heat and light.[219] Although air conditioning was part of the climate engineering in both this building and the Humble Building, the additional sun shades, or brise soleil, helped to offset the effects with "amplified external volume." Another modern design technique to offset glare and light was the use of inset glass curtain walls within a projecting "exo-skeleton," as Skidmore, Owings & Merrill referred to it. An example

[216] Hunt, *Total Design,* 10-15. And John Rogers. [Southland Life skyscraper and Sheraton], photograph, [1959.1960]
[217] Lewis L. Barger III. "Medical Field Service School," Published November 26, 2019, Updated October 11, 2021. Texas State Historical Association Handbook of Texas.
[218] Cynkar, Mod, and Smith, "Melrose Building National Register of Historic Places Nomination."
[219] Michelangelo Sabatino. "Heat and Light Thematised in the Modern Architecture of Houston." *The Journal of Architecture 21,* no. 4 (May 18, 2016): 500–523. https://doi.org/10.1080/13602365.2016.1192423.

of this type is seen in Houston's Tenneco building at 1001 Louisiana Street (1963) where the structure protrudes like a cage (Figure 57).[220] Other buildings of the post-war era relied even more on air-conditioning and interior features (curtain/drapes) with flush, clean curtain walls like the Medical Towers Building (1956) or the Gibraltar Building by Greacen & Brogniez at 3202 Fannin Street (1959) where insulated solar gray glass was used (Figure 58).[221]

The American General Building at 2727 Allen Parkway in Houston designed by Lloyd, Morgan & Jones was completed in 1965. The building was also designed to be part of a larger complex or campus. While in the International Style with New Formalist influences, it is differentiated from the Humble-Exxon Building notably through the pre-cast concrete grid that floats beyond the curtain wall and programmatically through the integrated garage plinth, as opposed to projecting sunshades and a separate garage building connected through a tunnel.[222] The Willowick residential building at 2200 Willowick Road in Houston designed by Neuhaus & Taylor and developed by Gerald Hines was completed in 1962 has concrete floor slabs that act as balconies and sun shades. The recessed all-glass curtain walls have a similar buoyancy to that of the Humble-Exxon Building.[223] However, the Willowick's protective railings and pickets ground the building and it has a more complex, perhaps weightier exterior.

While at a smaller scale, the 12-story Southwestern Bell Telephone Company Building at 3100 Main Street in Midtown Houston designed by George Pierce-Abel B. Pierce and Wilson, Morris, Crain & Anderson shows similarities to the Humble-Exxon Building.[224] Completed c. 1965, the office building is a shorter interpretation of the abstracted three-part composition. It also employs sun shades but has a higher frequency almost like the cornice of the Humble-Exxon Building. The Southwestern Bell Building has a higher degree of ornament with fine metal fins draping over the entire building's projecting sun shades.

One Main Place in Dallas completed c. 1968 and designed by SOM with Hardwood K. Smith & Partners, subtly emphasizes the concrete skeletal frame.[225] The skyscraper at 1201 Main Street is described in the National Register of Historic Places nomination as being in the International style with New Formalist influences which include the plaza and use smooth masonry surfaces, symmetry, and rhythmic repetition of openings (NRHP 2015).[226] However, the building's impression is bolder, relying more on concrete mass and weight, as opposed to the buoyancy and light associated with the Humble Exxon Building.

Conclusion

The Humble-Exxon Building is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Commerce and Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The period of significance is 1962 to 1975.

[220] Stephen Fox, et al., *Houston Architectural Guide.* 18; Sabatino, Michelangelo, "Heat and Light Thematised in the Modern Architecture of Houston."
[221] Michelangelo Sabatino, "Heat and Light Thematised in the Modern Architecture of Houston."
[222] Stephen Fox, et al., *Houston Architectural Guide*, 106.
[223] Stephen Fox, et al., *Houston Architectural Guide*, 425.
[224] Stephen Fox, et al., *Houston Architectural Guide*, 118.
[225] Rifkind, *A Field Guide to Contemporary American Architecture*, 283.
[226] Jay Firsching, Sr. and Drew Whatley, "One Main Place," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Texas Historical Commission, 2015.

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Maps

City Map Viewer (City of Houston)

Google Earth Pro

Bing Maps

Harris County Appraisal District (HCAD)

Architectural Drawings

Welton Becket & Associates. Historic architectural drawings c. 1960, Courtesy CMI Developers.

MAPS

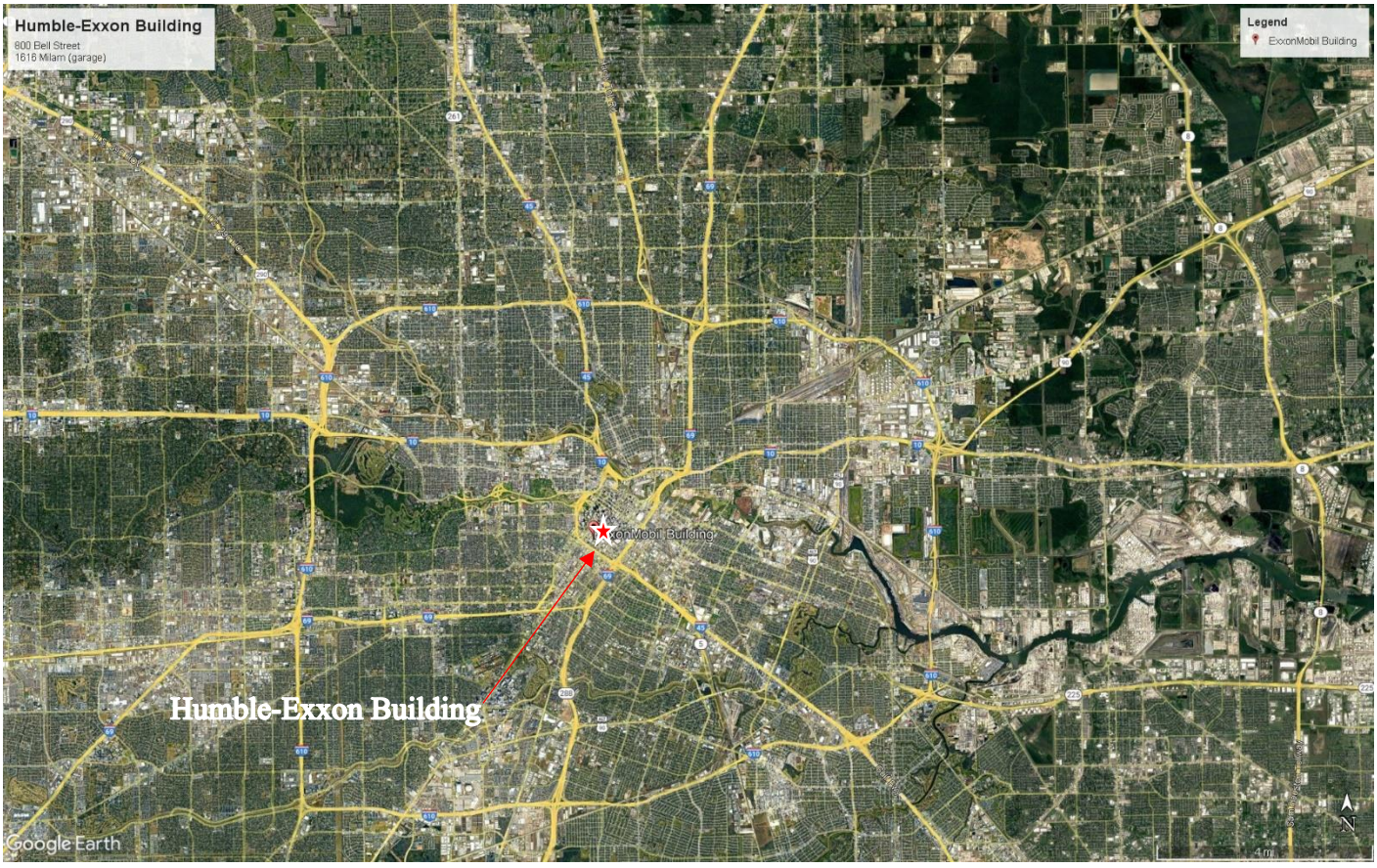
Map 1

Harris County Map

Map 2

Current Houston Map
(Courtesy of Google Earth Pro)

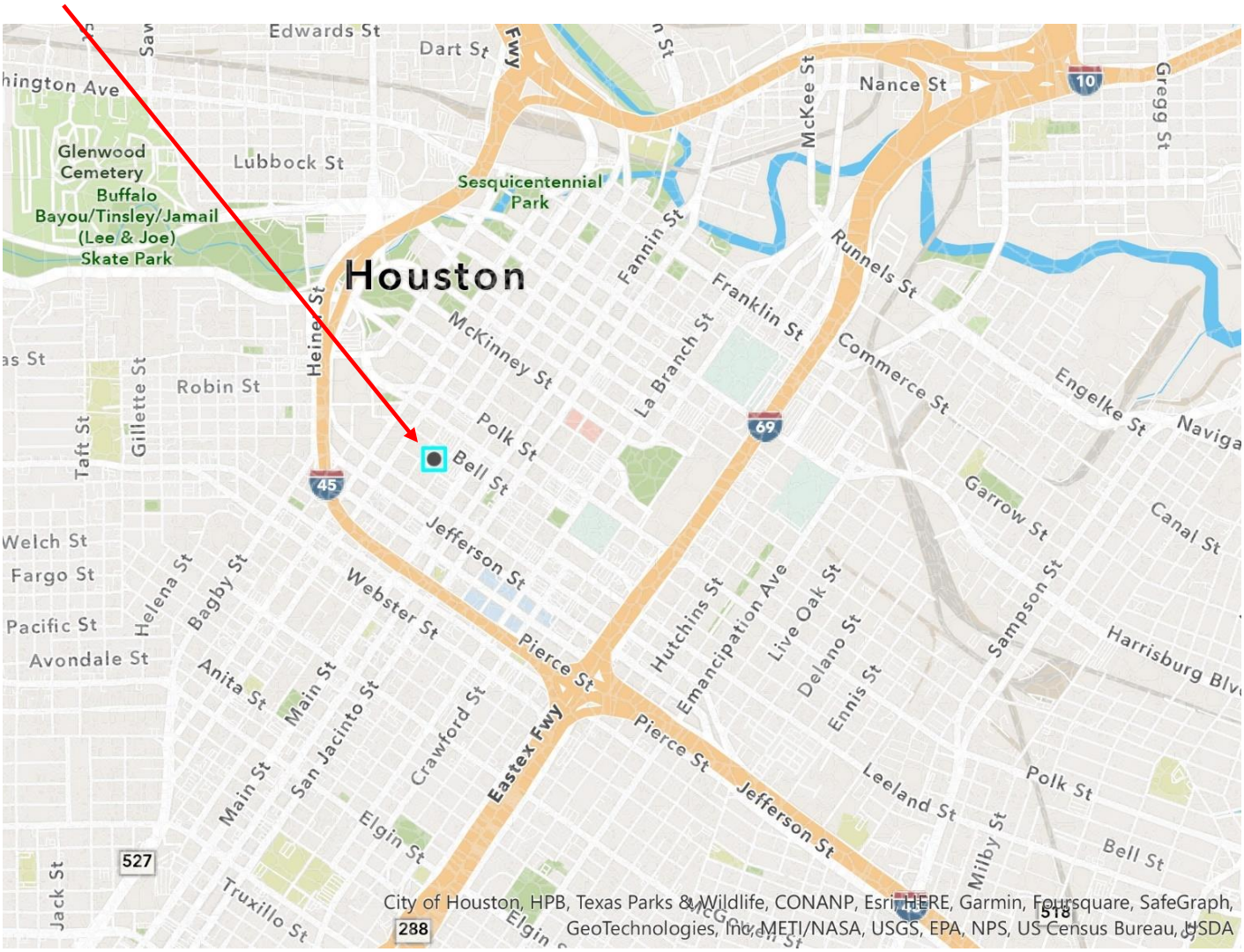
True N



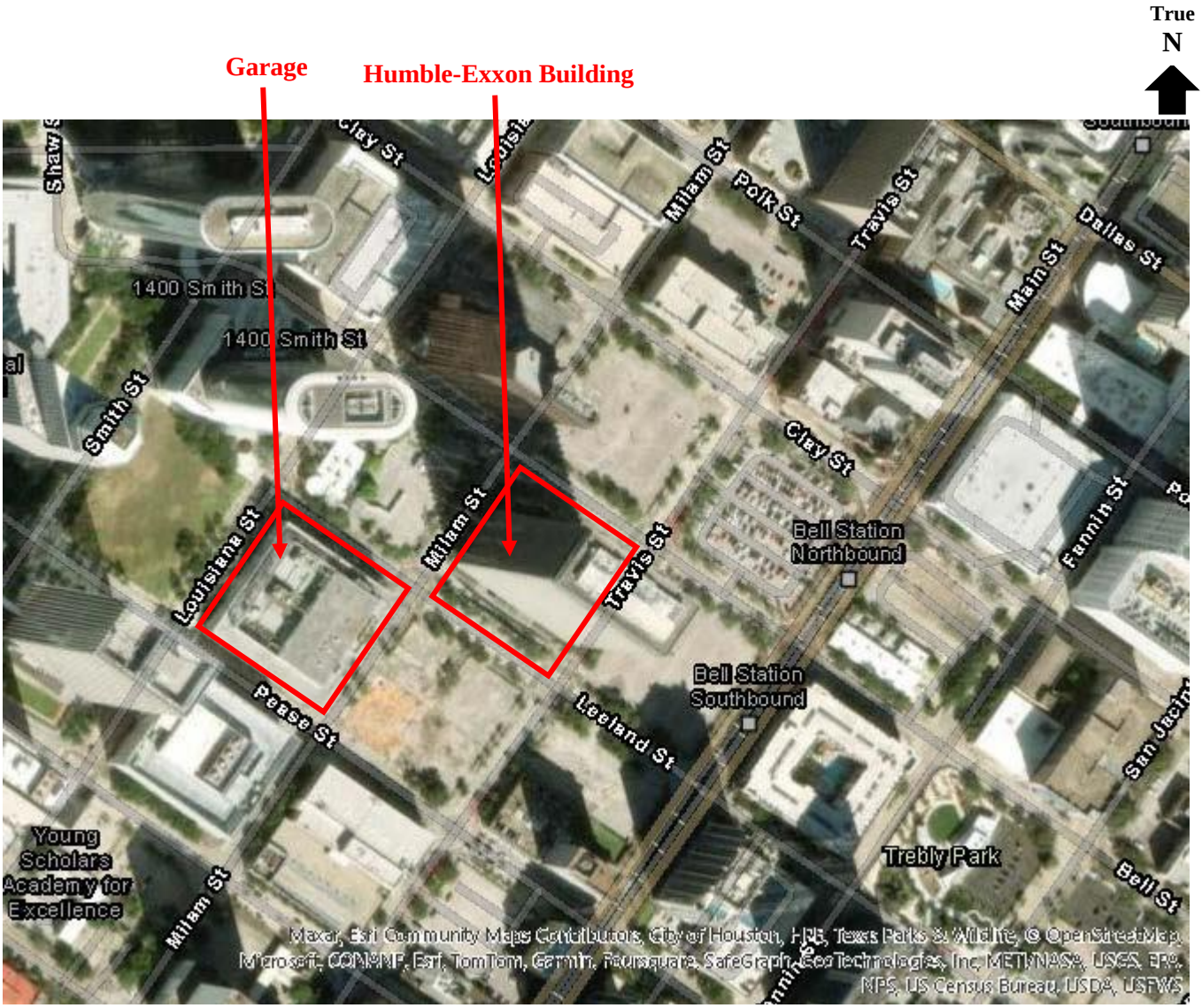
Map 3
Property Location, Houston, Harris County, Texas
(Courtesy: City of Houston Map Viewer)

True N

Humble-Exxon Building

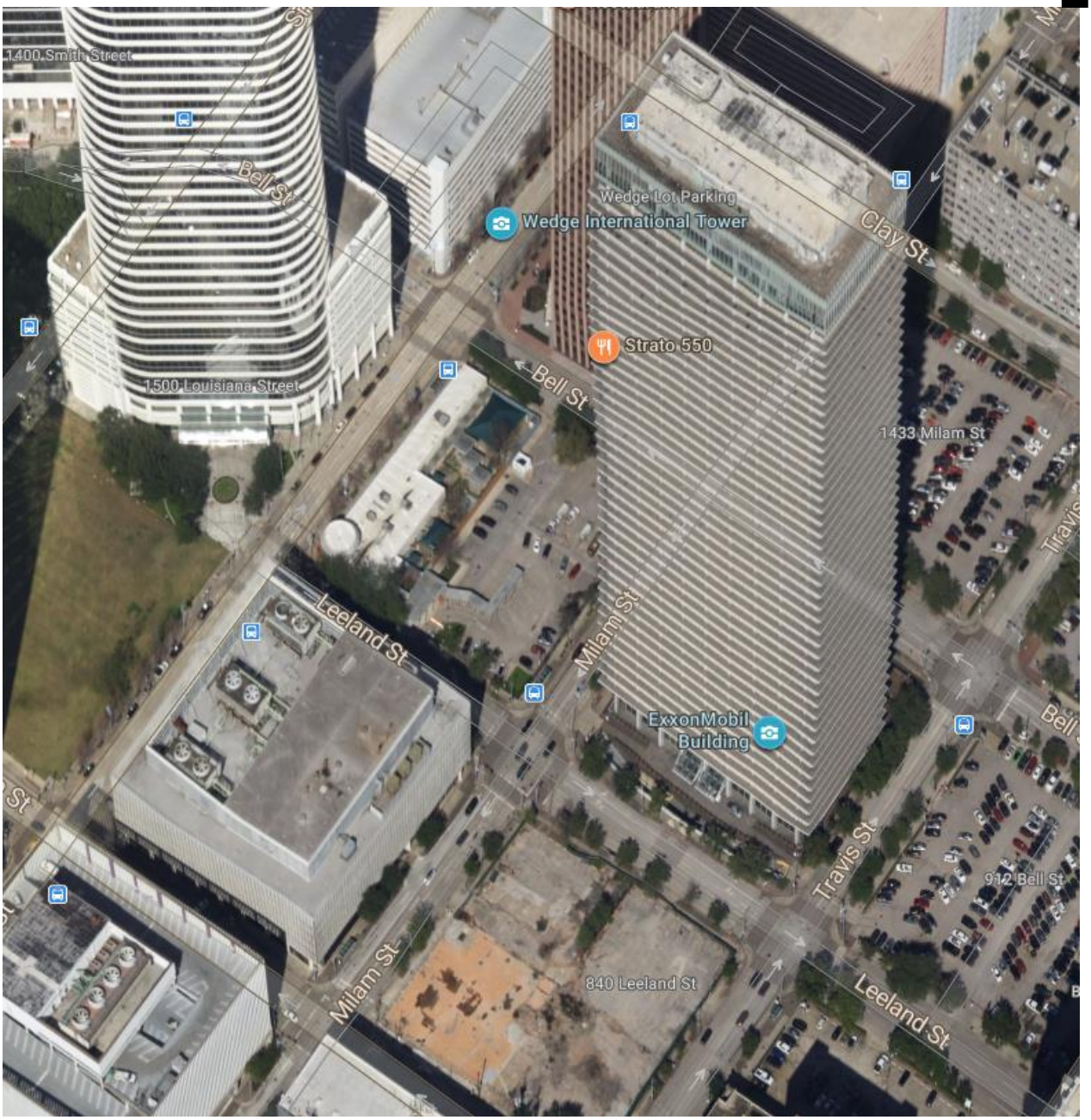


Map 4
Property Location, Houston, Harris County, Texas
(Courtesy: City of Houston Map Viewer, accessed February 26, 2024).



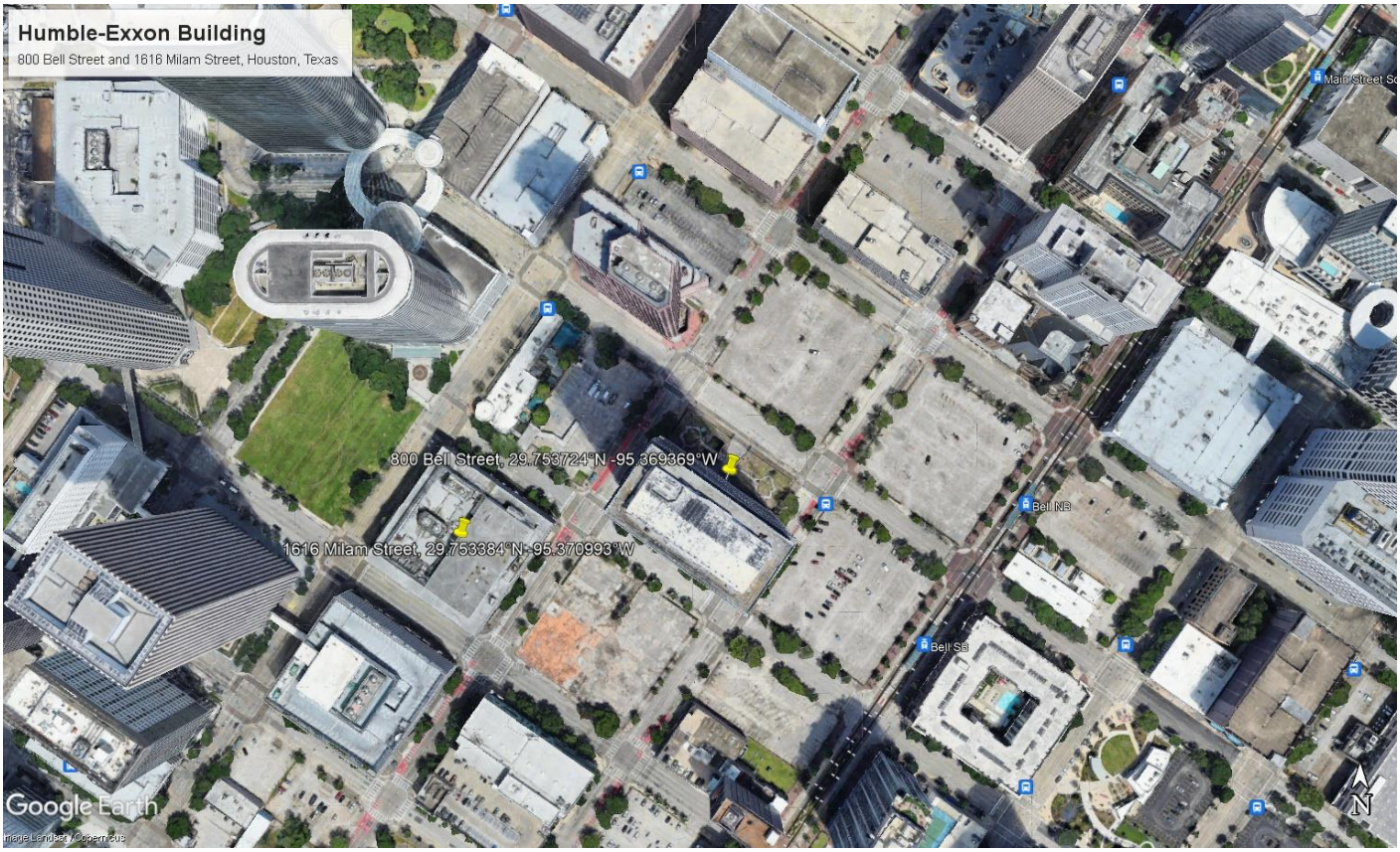
Map 5
Bing Map showing Humble-Exxon Building and Garage, looking north. Accessed July 27, 2023.

True
N



Map 6
Property Tracts Map, Tiled from 5357D4, 5457C1, 5357D8, January 2023
(Courtesy: Harris Central Appraisal District/HCAD)

Map 7
Google Earth Map, accessed March 11, 2024



1. 800 Bell Street
Latitude: 29.753724°N Longitude: -95.369369°W

2. 1616 Milam Street
Latitude: 29.753384°N Longitude: -95.370993°W

FIGURES

Figure 1

Photographs of presentation by Welton Becket and Consulting Architects Albert Goleman and George Pierce to Humble Oil company officials John Croddock and Roy Horton. 1960
(Image from: *Total Design*, Pg 195)

Three photographs made at the time of the major presentation of the Humble Oil Building to company officials are shown here. At the time of this presentation, the major design aspects of the building as it was to be constructed had all been made and it was at this time that top company officials approved these aspects. Across page are shown the major drawings that were part of this presentation; top photograph shows (left to right) John Croddock and Roy Horton of Humble, Welton Becket and Consulting Architects Albert Goleman and George Pierce: center shows same individuals who are joined in the bottom photograph by other Humble officials.

Figure 2
Aerial View for Site Planning for Humble-Exxon Building and Garage, c.1958
(Image from: *Total Design*, Pg 180)

Plan View
N

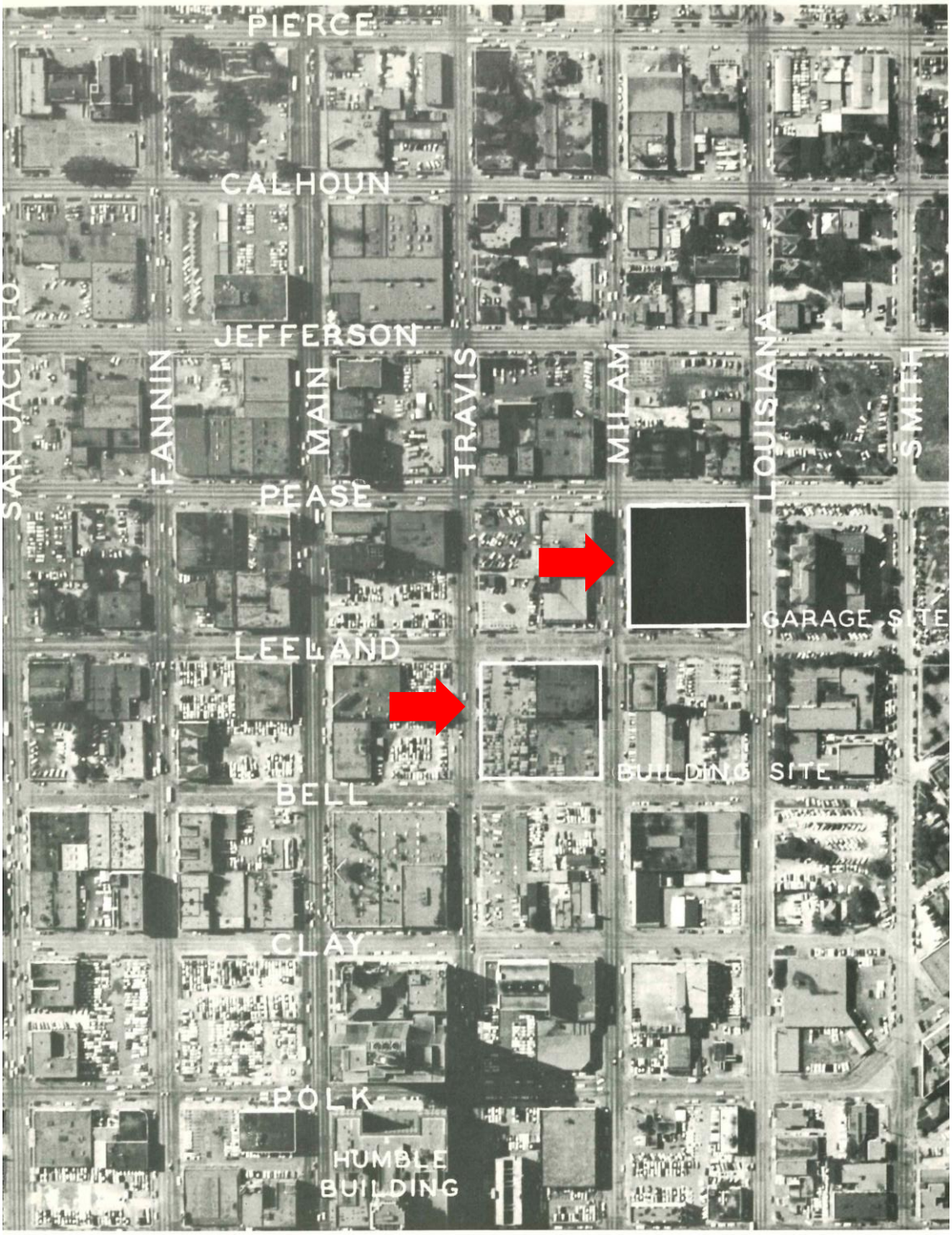


Figure 3
Map of Site Research for Humble Oil & Refining Co. Office Building and Parking Garage. 1960
(Image from: *Total Design*, Pg 174)

Plan View
N

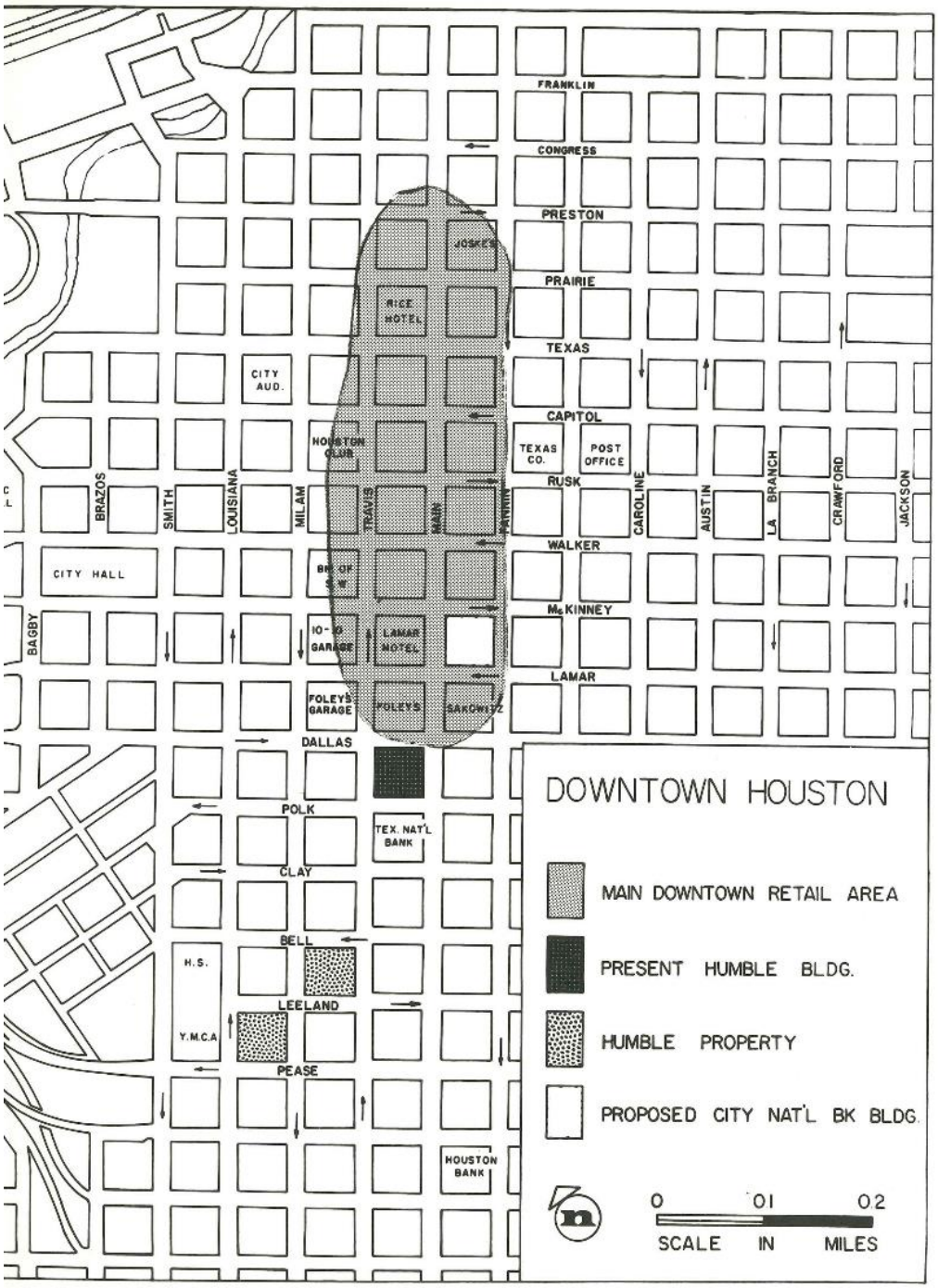


Figure 4
Site Plan of Humble Oil & Refining Co. Office Building and Parking Garage, c. 1960
(Image from: *Total Design*, Pg 194)

Plan View
N

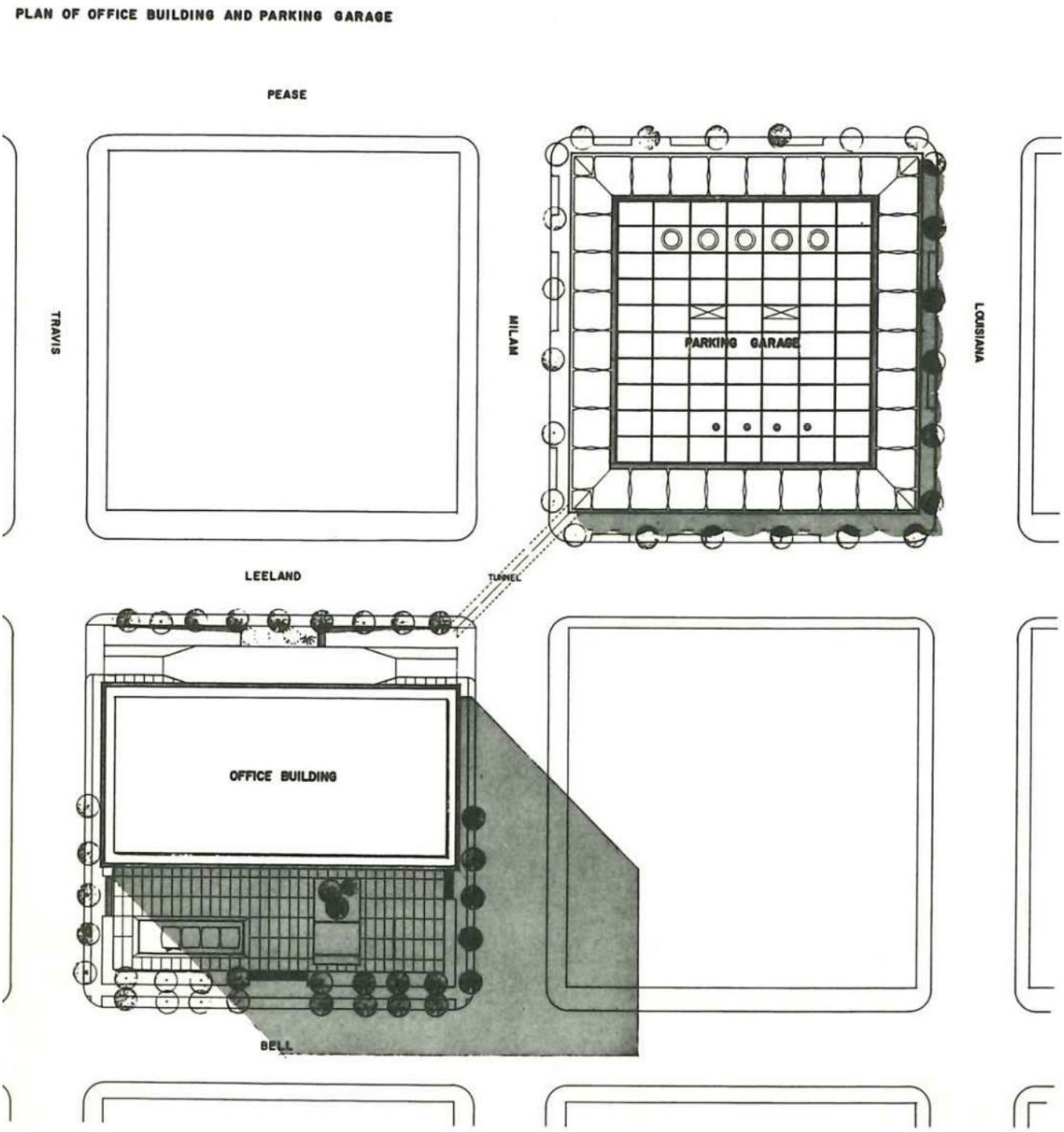


Figure 5
Site and First/Ground Floor Plan of Humble Oil & Refining Co. Office Building c. 1960
(Image from: *Total Design*, Pg 203)

Plan View
N

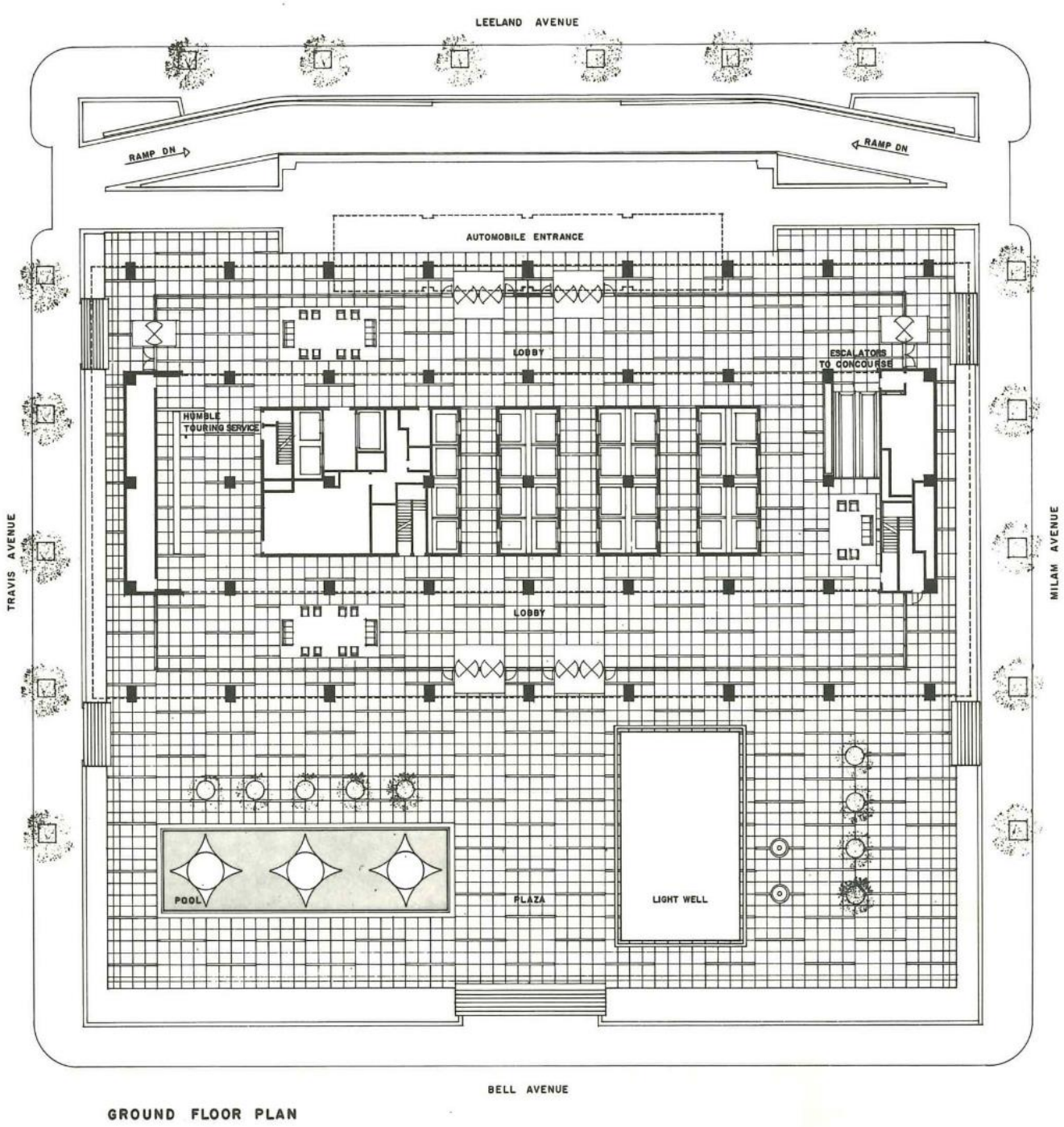
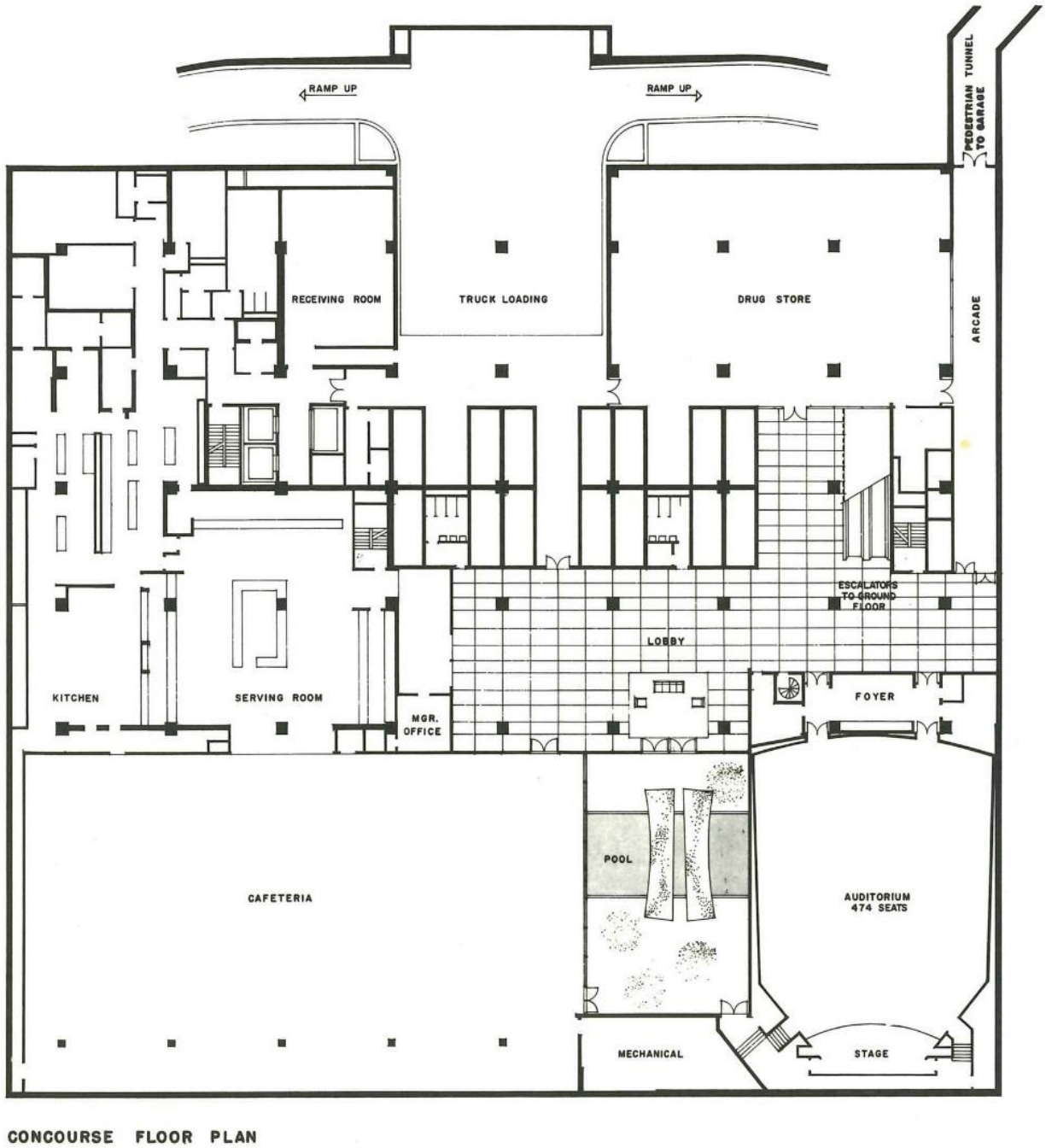


Figure 6
Concourse Floor Plan of Humble Oil & Refining Co. Office Building, c. 1960
(Image from: *Total Design*, Pg 202)



Plan View
N

Figure 7
Landscape Architect's Site Development Plan, Bishop and Walker, c.1960
(Image from: Walker, Robert B. "Houston Collaboration: Humble High-Rise. *"Landscape Architecture* 54, no. 3 (1964): 200–201. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44665380.)

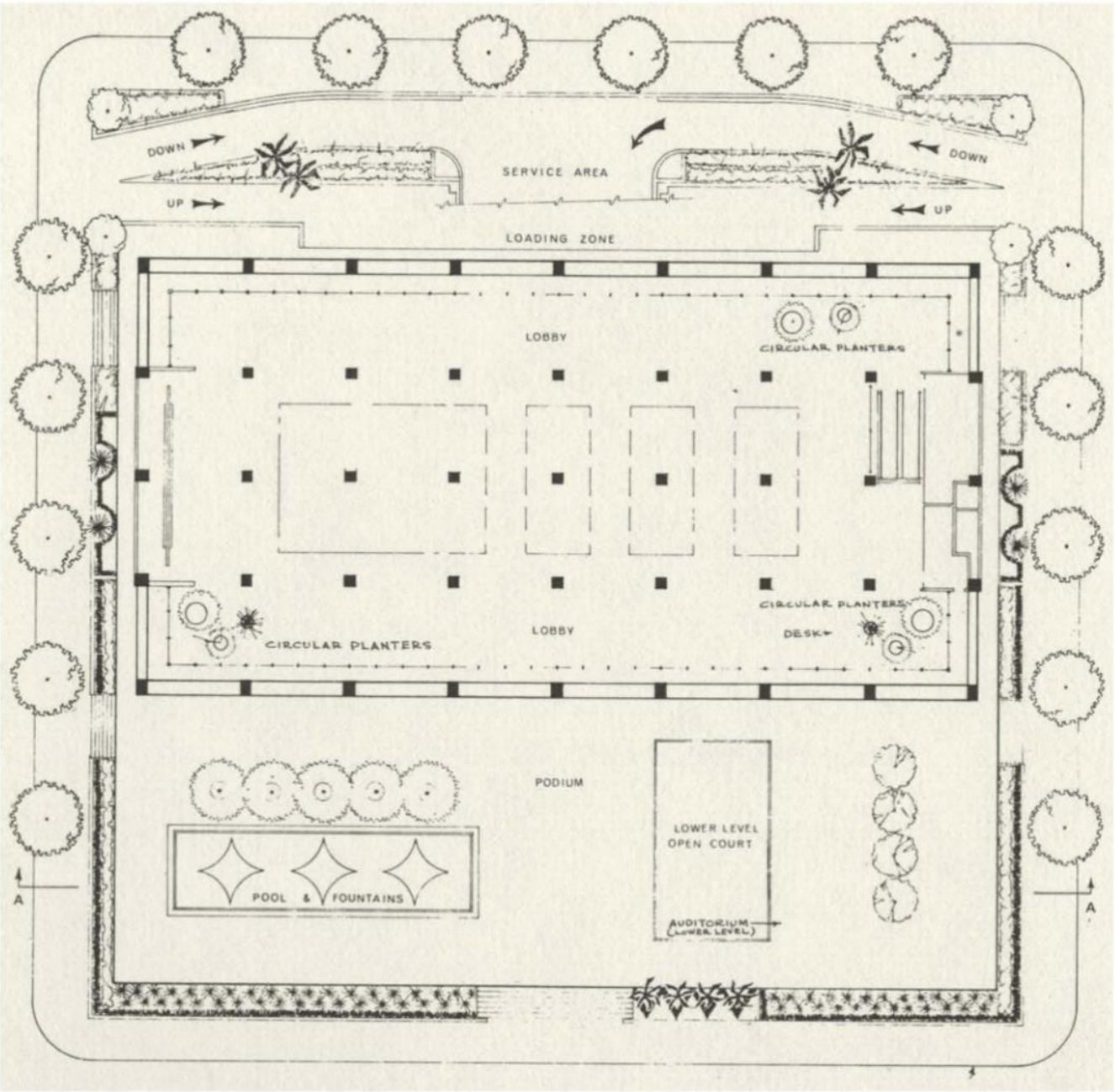


Figure 8
Mezzanine Floor Plan of Humble Oil & Refining Co. Office Building, c. 1960
(Image from: *Total Design*, Pg 204)

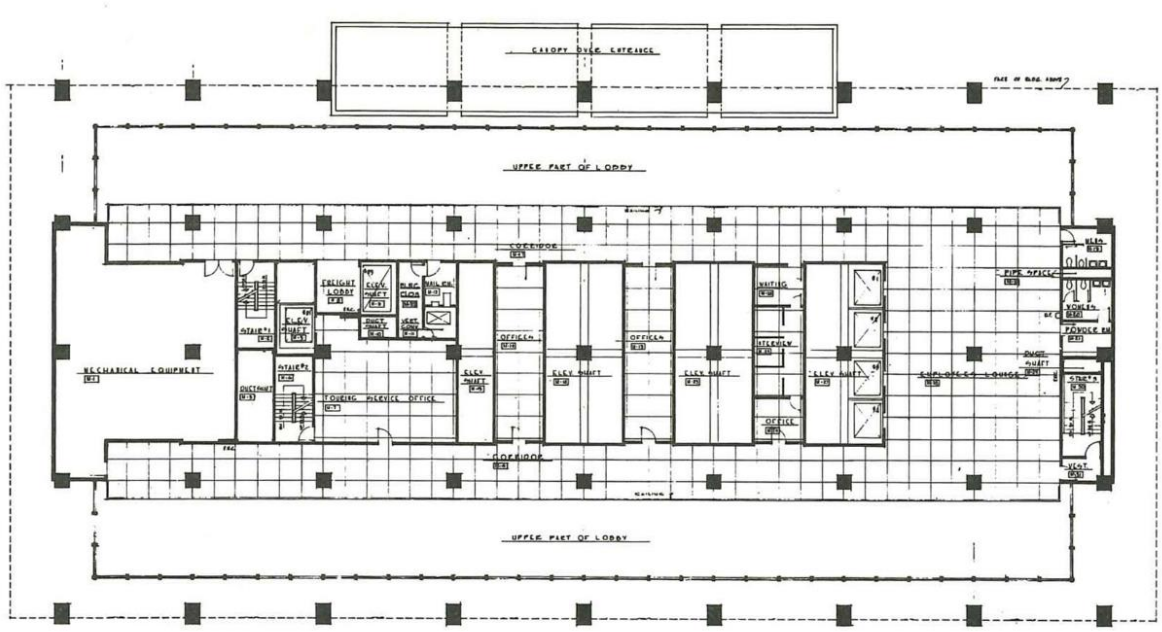
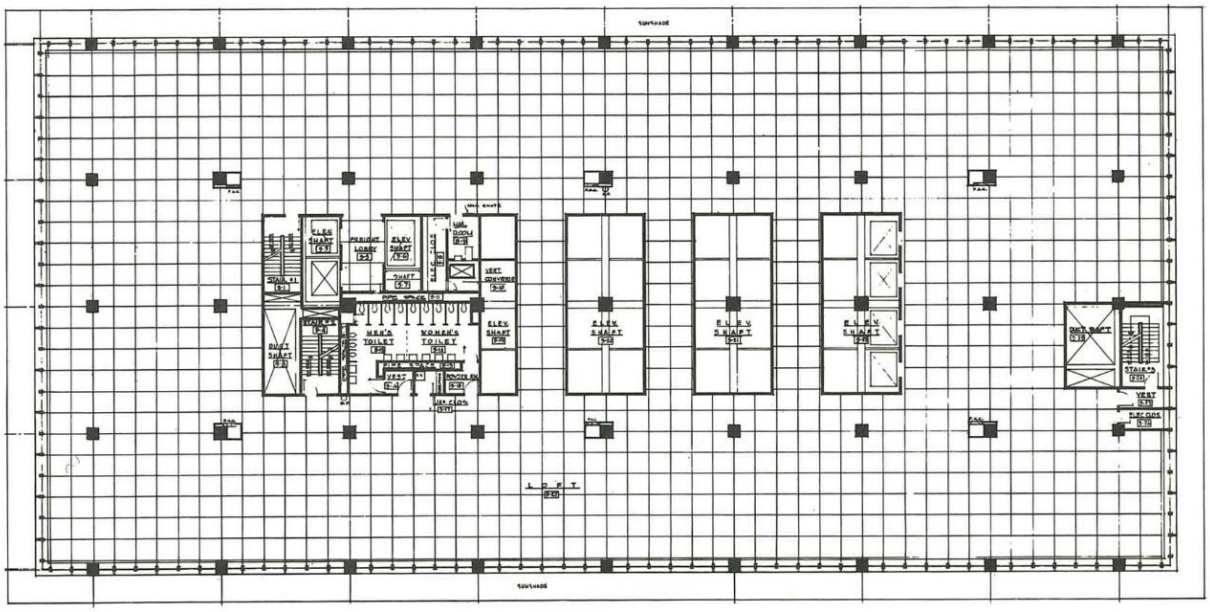


Figure 9
Second Floor Plan (Typical Floor Plan) of Humble Oil & Refining Co. Office Building, c. 1960
(Image from: *Total Design*, Pg 204)



Plan View
N

Figure 10
Petroleum Club Simple Plan View, 43rd Floor, September 1963
(Image from: Pierce, George F. and William Parker McFadden. "Houston's Petroleum Club" September 1963 *Interiors*; Pg 88)

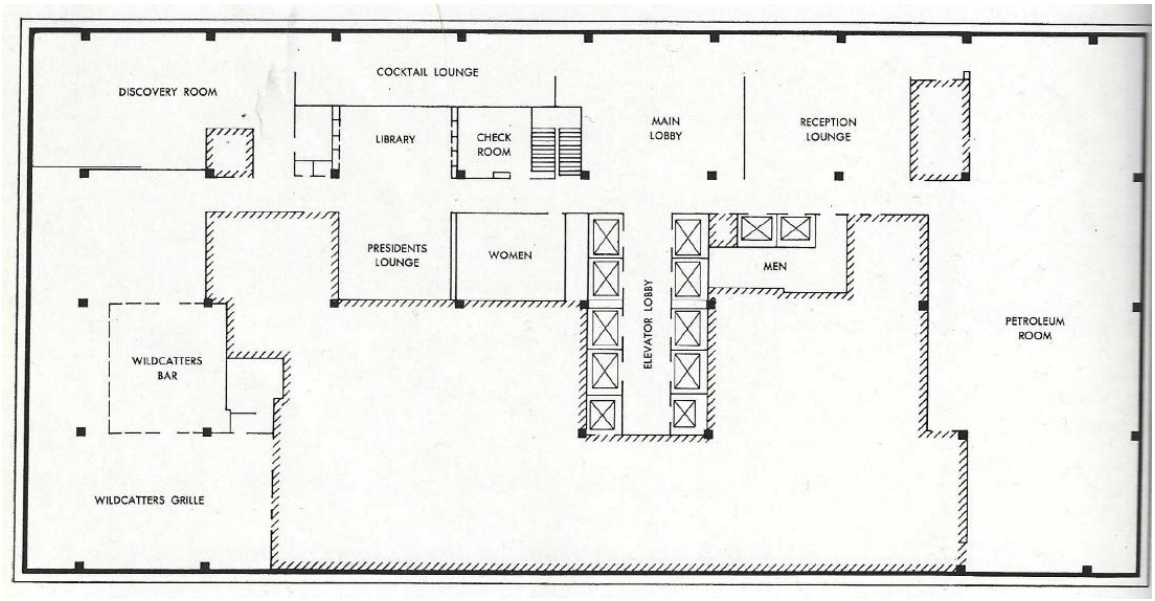


Figure 11
(Image from: *Petroleum Club of Houston 1969-1971*. Collection: Exxon-Mobile Collection. Box No.: 2.207/G105. Title: Petroleum Club of Houston. Briscoe Center for American Research. Austin, Texas. Pg 239)

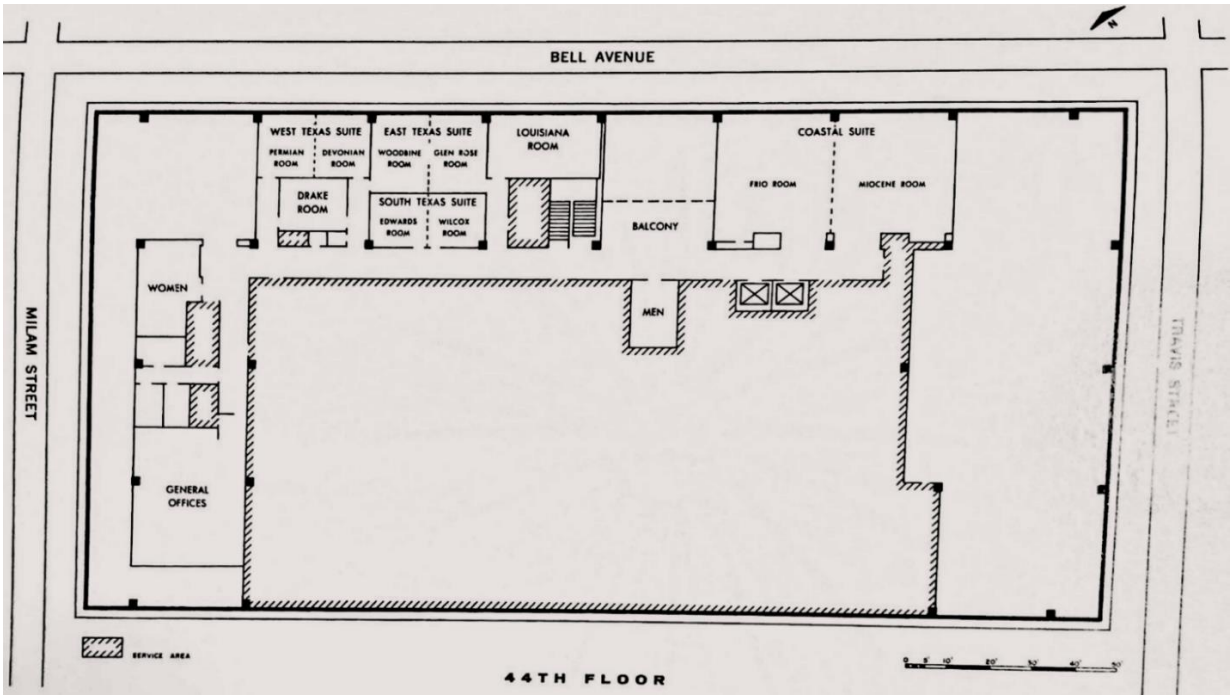
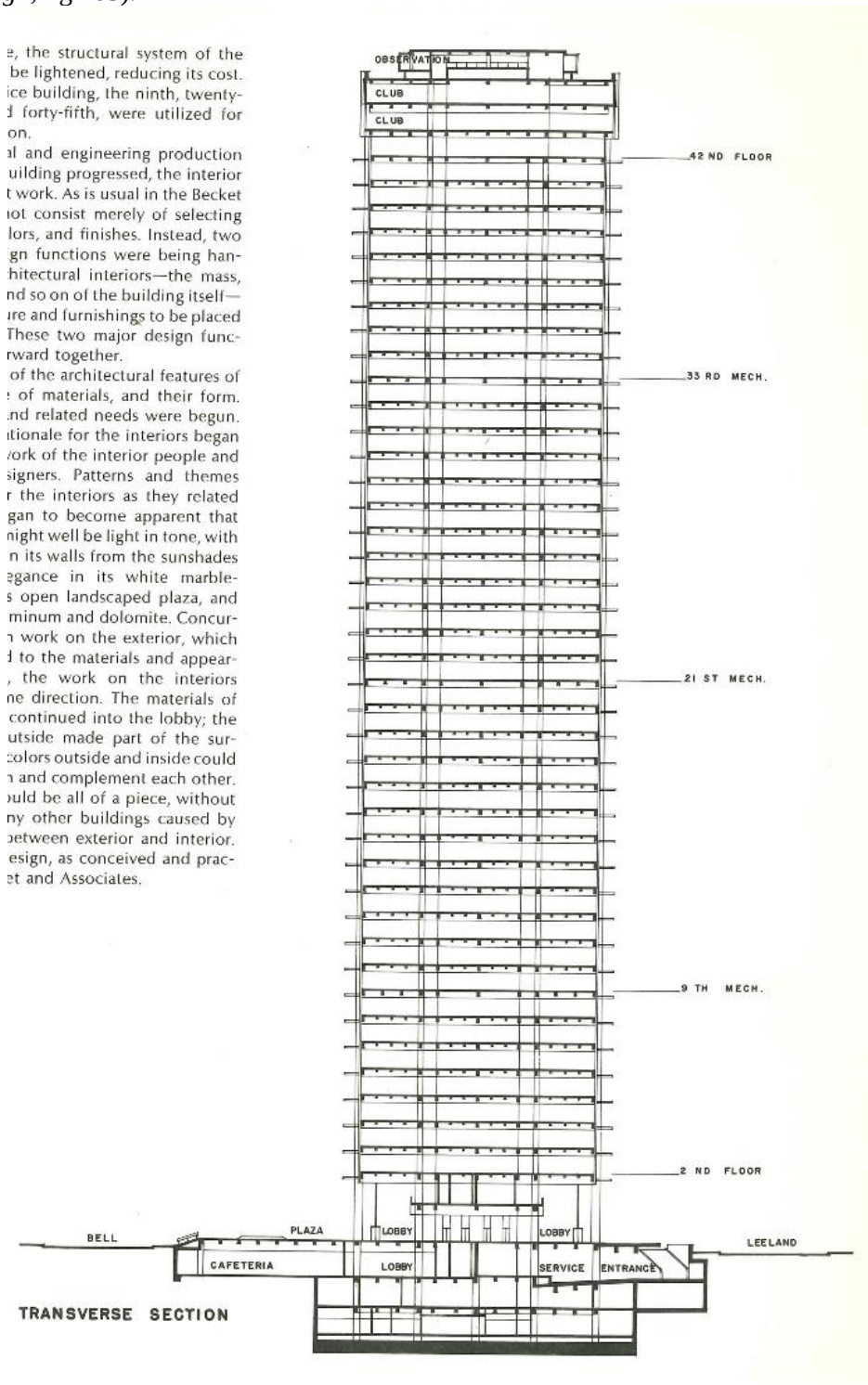


Figure 12
Transverse Section (View east) of Humble Oil & Refining Co. Office Building, c. 1960
(Image from: *Total Design*, Pg 205).



e, the structural system of the be lightened, reducing its cost. ice building, the ninth, twenty- d forty-fifth, were utilized for on.
al and engineering production uilding progressed, the interior t work. As is usual in the Becket iot consist merely of selecting lors, and finishes. Instead, two gn functions were being han- hitectural interiors—the mass, nd so on of the building itself— ire and furnishings to be placed These two major design func- rward together.
of the architectural features of of materials, and their form. nd related needs were begun. itionale for the interiors began ork of the interior people and signers. Patterns and themes r the interiors as they related gan to become apparent that night well be light in tone, with n its walls from the sunshades egance in its white marble- s open landscaped plaza, and minum and dolomite. Concur- n work on the exterior, which d to the materials and appear- , the work on the interiors ne direction. The materials of continued into the lobby; the utside made part of the sur- colors outside and inside could n and complement each other. ould be all of a piece, without ny other buildings caused by between exterior and interior. esign, as conceived and prac- et and Associates.

Figure 13
Sunshade Studies, Humble Oil & Refining Co. Office Building, c. 1960
(Image from *Total Design*, Pg 206).

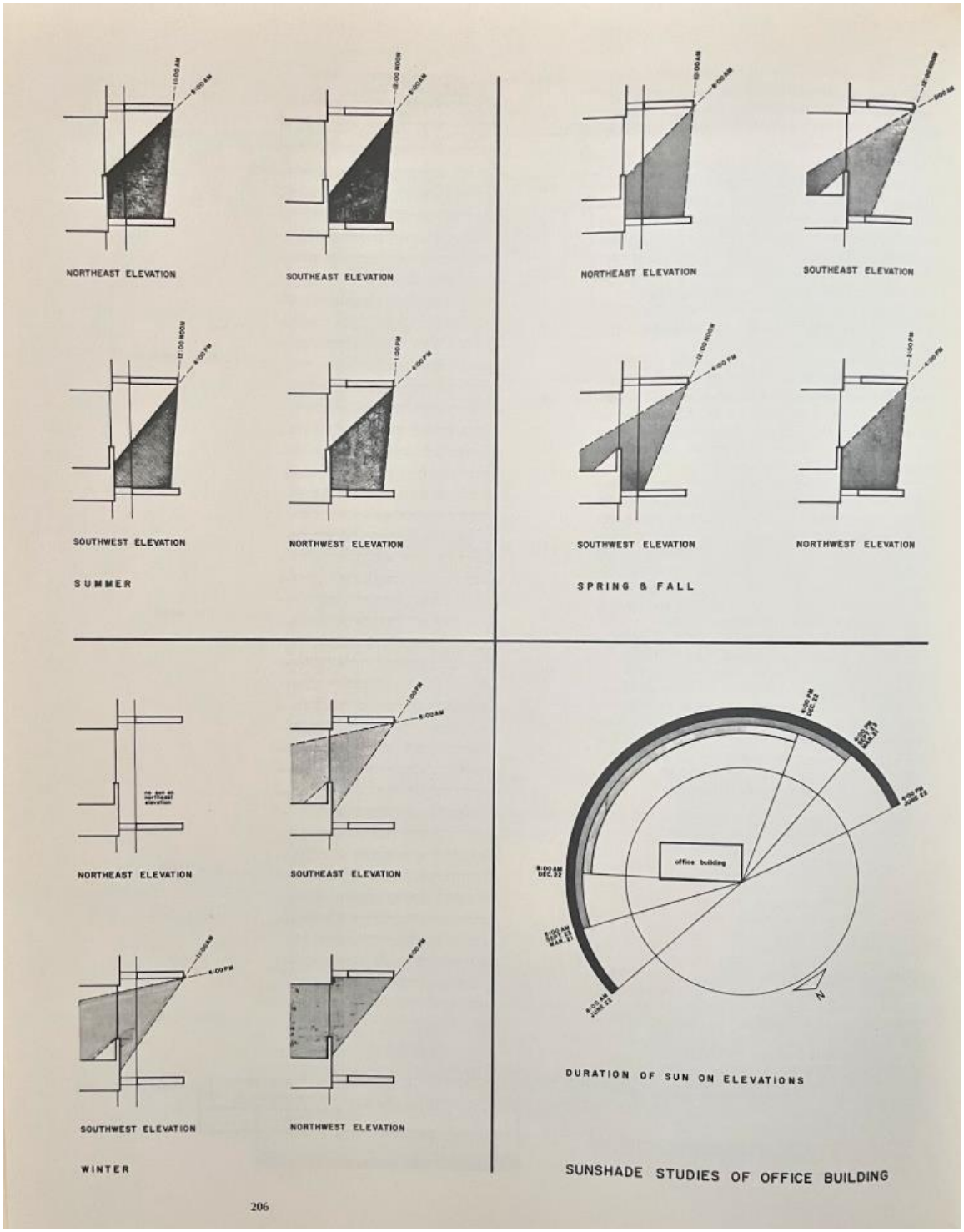
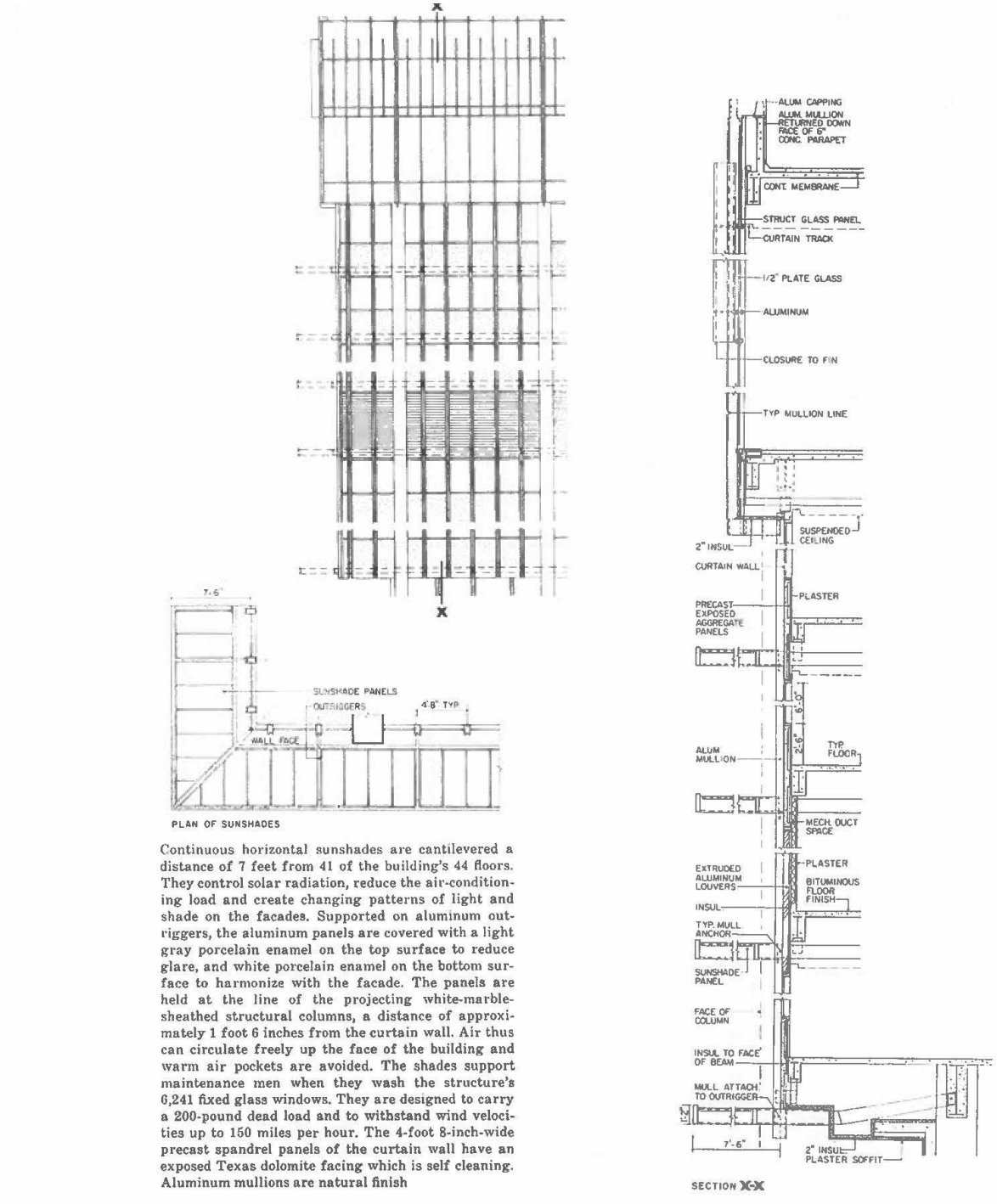


Figure 14
Sunshade Drawings, Welton Becket & Associates, Humble Oil & Refining Co. Office Building, c. 1960
(Image from *Architectural Record* "Design Against Sun and Glare," Pg 176)



Continuous horizontal sunshades are cantilevered a distance of 7 feet from 41 of the building's 44 floors. They control solar radiation, reduce the air-conditioning load and create changing patterns of light and shade on the facades. Supported on aluminum outriggers, the aluminum panels are covered with a light gray porcelain enamel on the top surface to reduce glare, and white porcelain enamel on the bottom surface to harmonize with the facade. The panels are held at the line of the projecting white-marble-sheathed structural columns, a distance of approximately 1 foot 6 inches from the curtain wall. Air thus can circulate freely up the face of the building and warm air pockets are avoided. The shades support maintenance men when they wash the structure's 6,241 fixed glass windows. They are designed to carry a 200-pound dead load and to withstand wind velocities up to 150 miles per hour. The 4-foot 8-inch-wide precast spandrel panels of the curtain wall have an exposed Texas dolomite facing which is self cleaning. Aluminum mullions are natural finish

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Figure 15
Interior Modules, 800 Bell, 1963
(Image from "Design Against Sun and Glare." *Architectural Record*, Vol 10, October 1963, Pg177.)

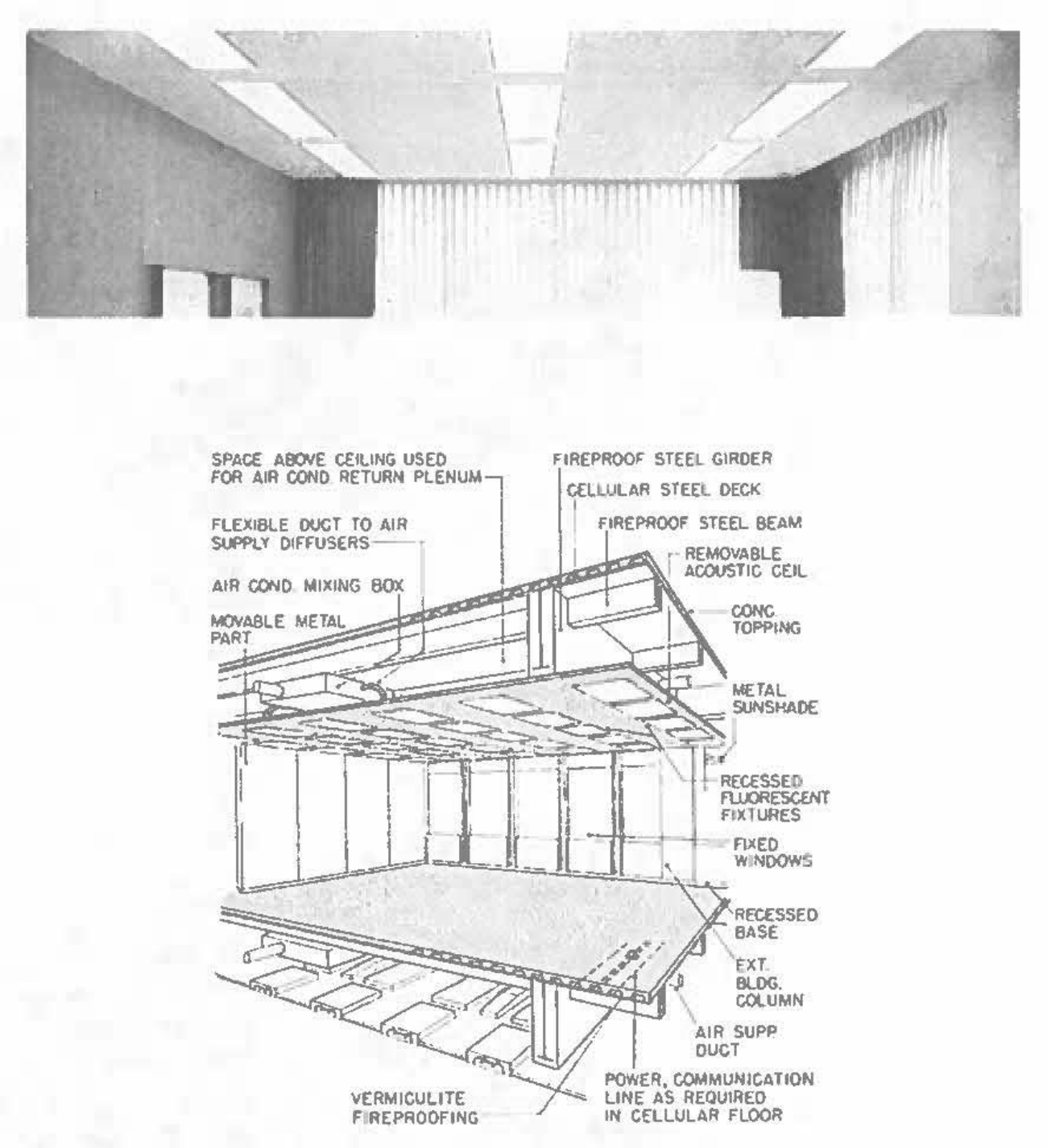


Figure 16
Interior Modules, 800 Bell, c.1960
(Image from "New Humble Building," Pre-opening Brochure, c.1960. Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library; Pg. 4)

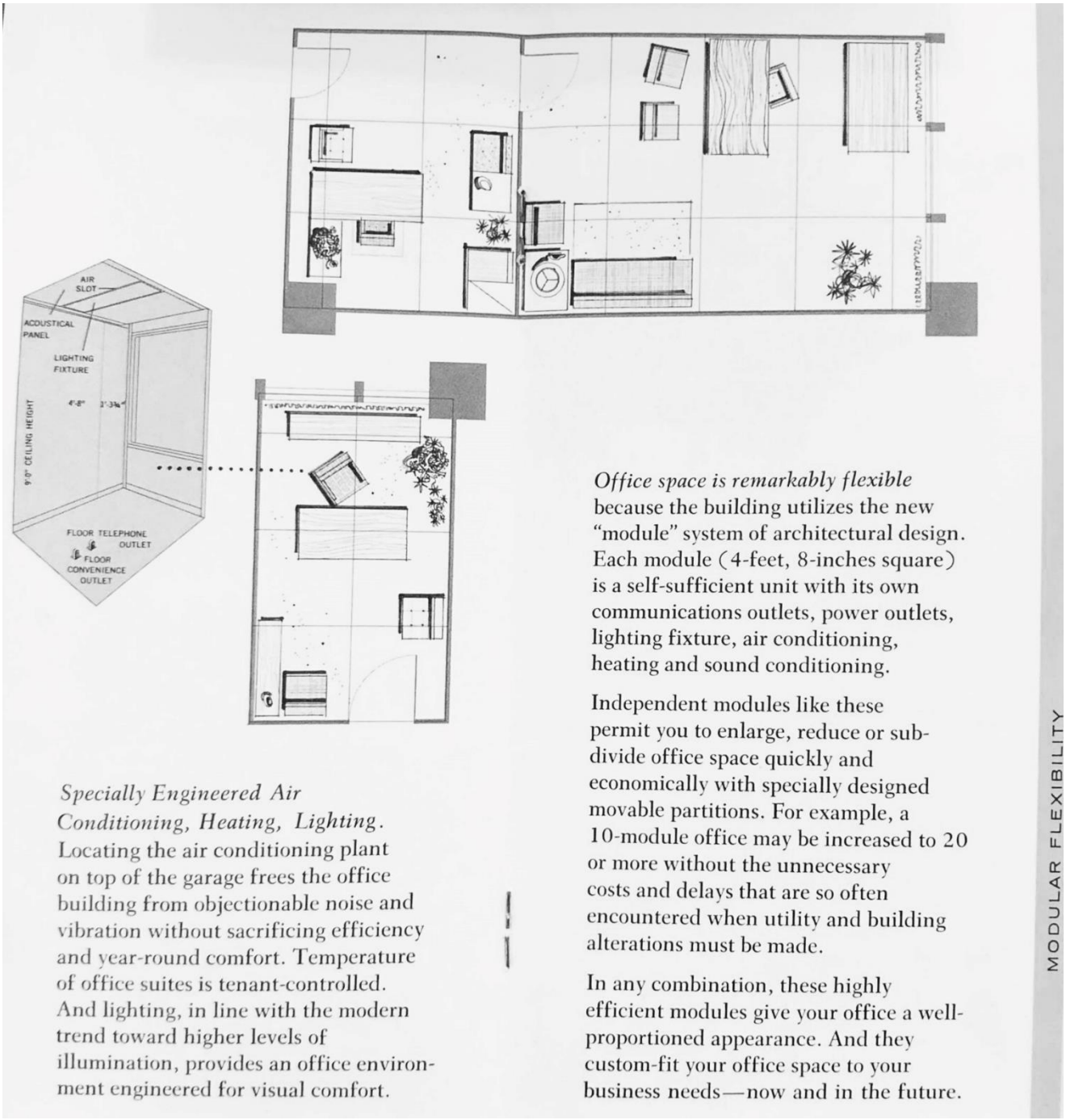
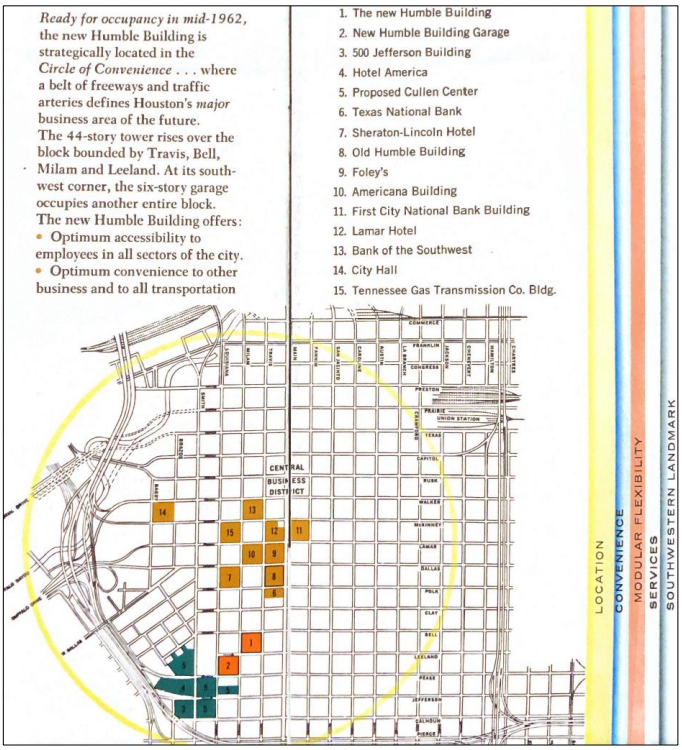


Figure 17
"New Humble Building," Pre-opening Brochure, c.1960 (Cover, Convenience, Southwestern Landmark)
(Images from Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library, Cover, pg 2, 9-10)



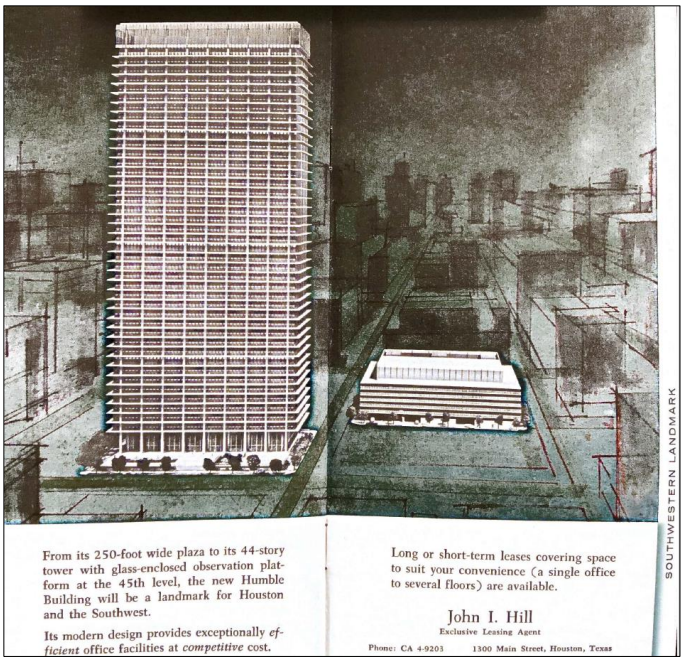
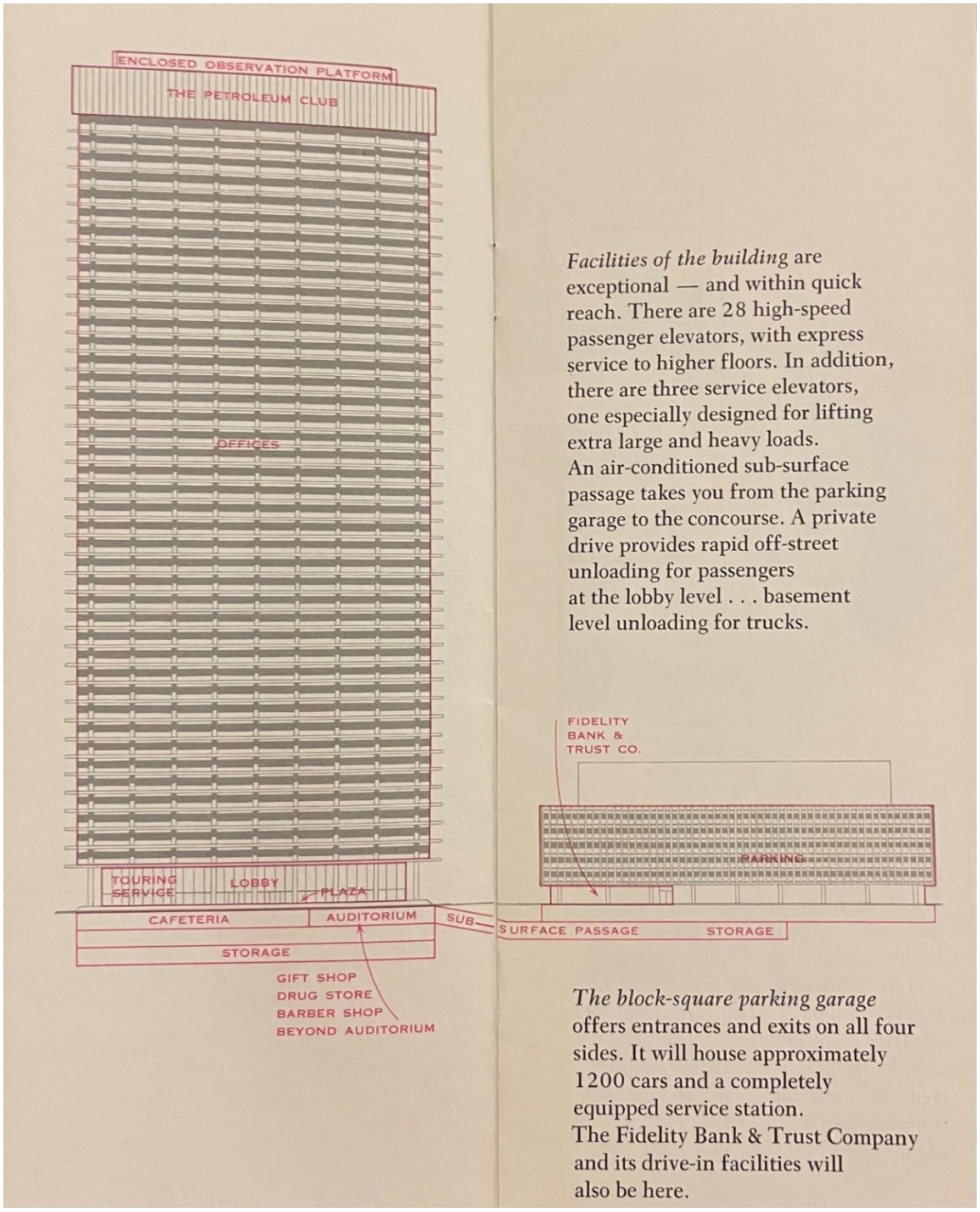


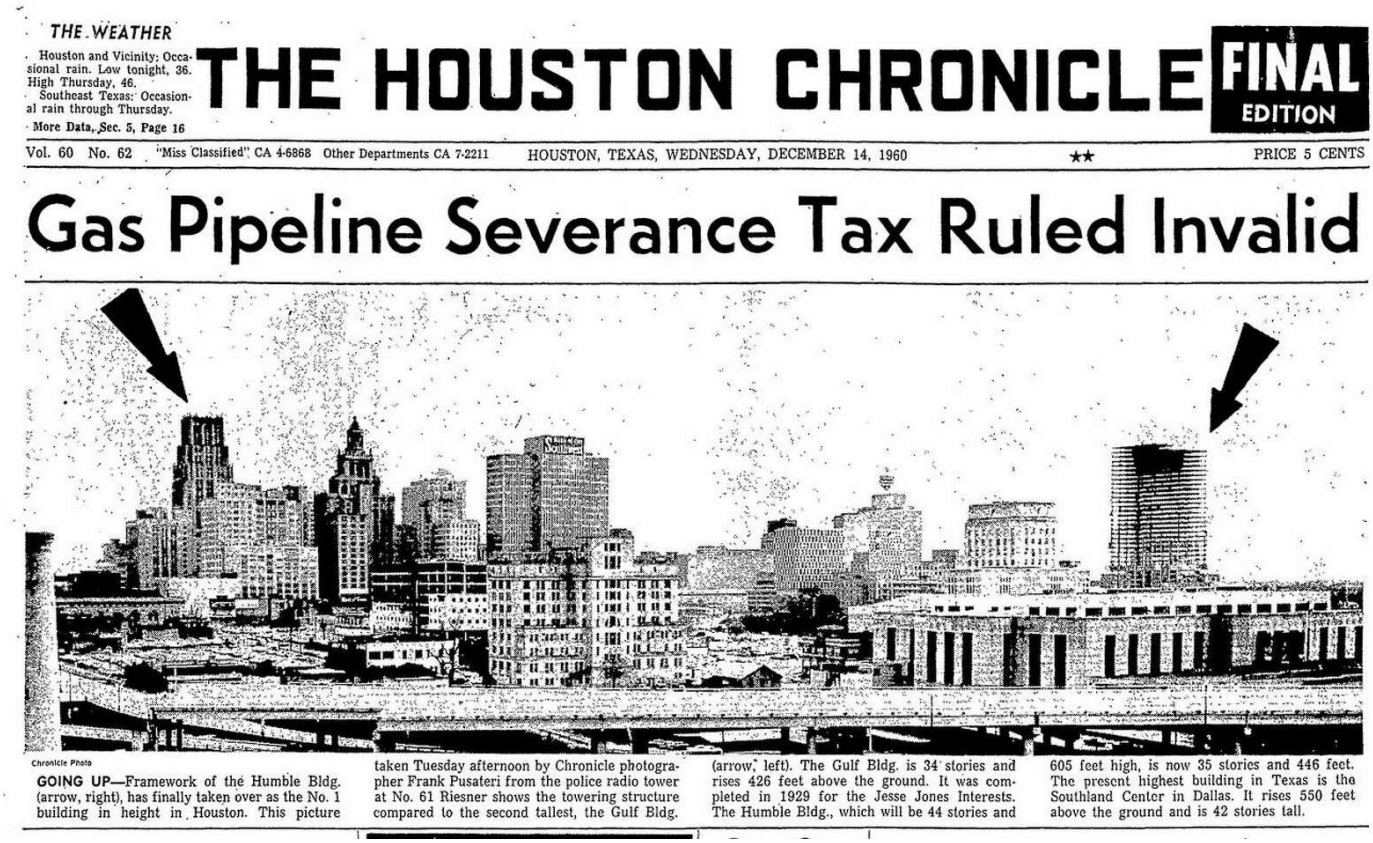
Figure 18
"New Humble Building," Pre-opening Brochure, c.1960
(Image from Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library; pg. 3-4)



Facilities of the building are exceptional — and within quick reach. There are 28 high-speed passenger elevators, with express service to higher floors. In addition, there are three service elevators, one especially designed for lifting extra large and heavy loads. An air-conditioned sub-surface passage takes you from the parking garage to the concourse. A private drive provides rapid off-street unloading for passengers at the lobby level . . . basement level unloading for trucks.

The block-square parking garage offers entrances and exits on all four sides. It will house approximately 1200 cars and a completely equipped service station. The Fidelity Bank & Trust Company and its drive-in facilities will also be here.

Figure 19
Houston Chronicle Photo of Humble Building construction compared to Gulf Building in Houston,
(Image from: "Going Up," *Houston Chronicle*, December 14, 1960, https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/bayou-city-history/article/This-day-in-Houston-history-Dec-14-1960-17651950.php, pg. 1)



THE WEATHER
Houston and Vicinity: Occasional rain. Low tonight, 36. High Thursday, 46.
Southeast Texas: Occasional rain through Thursday.
More Data, Sec. 5, Page 16

THE HOUSTON CHRONICLE FINAL EDITION

Vol. 60 No. 62 "Miss Classified" CA 4-6868 Other Departments CA 7-2211 HOUSTON, TEXAS, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1960 ★★ PRICE 5 CENTS

Gas Pipeline Severance Tax Ruled Invalid

Chronicle Photo

GOING UP—Framework of the Humble Bldg. (arrow, right), has finally taken over as the No. 1 building in height in Houston. This picture taken Tuesday afternoon by Chronicle photographer Frank Pusateri from the police radio tower at No. 61 Riesner shows the towering structure compared to the second tallest, the Gulf Bldg. (arrow, left). The Gulf Bldg. is 34 stories and rises 426 feet above the ground. It was completed in 1929 for the Jesse Jones Interests. The Humble Bldg., which will be 44 stories and 605 feet high, is now 35 stories and 446 feet. The present highest building in Texas is the Southland Center in Dallas. It rises 550 feet above the ground and is 42 stories tall.

Figure 20
"New Humble Building Open House," Brochure, Cover, March 1963
(Image from Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library)

Figure 21
Office Tower Programming "New Humble Building Open House," Brochure, pg1, March 1963
(Image from Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library)

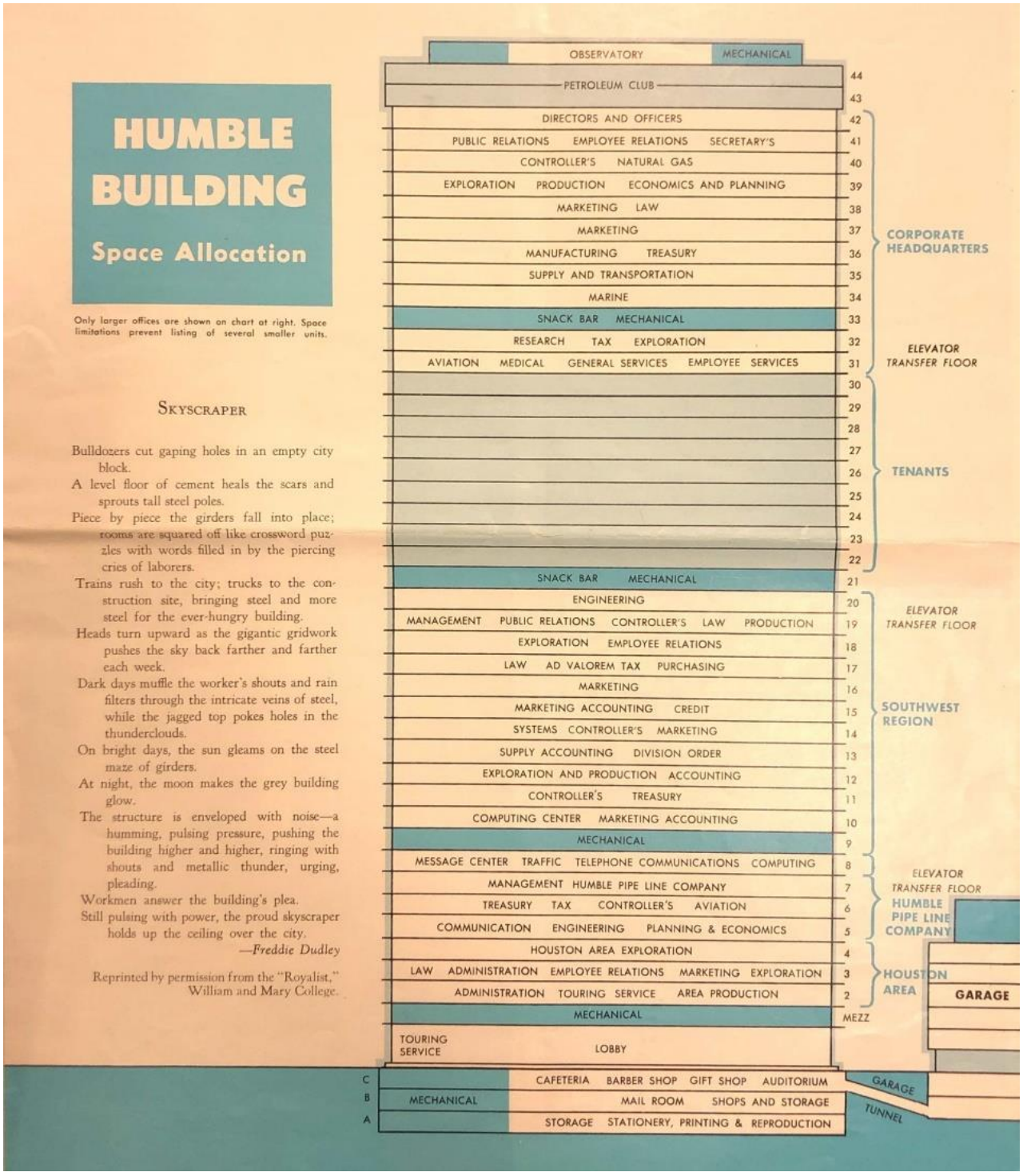


Figure 22
Houston Post Announcement for Humble Building: Circle of Convenience and Space City, 1963
(Image from "The New Humble Building," *Houston Post,* Houston: Courtesy Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library, March 1963, Section 10, cover/back cover).

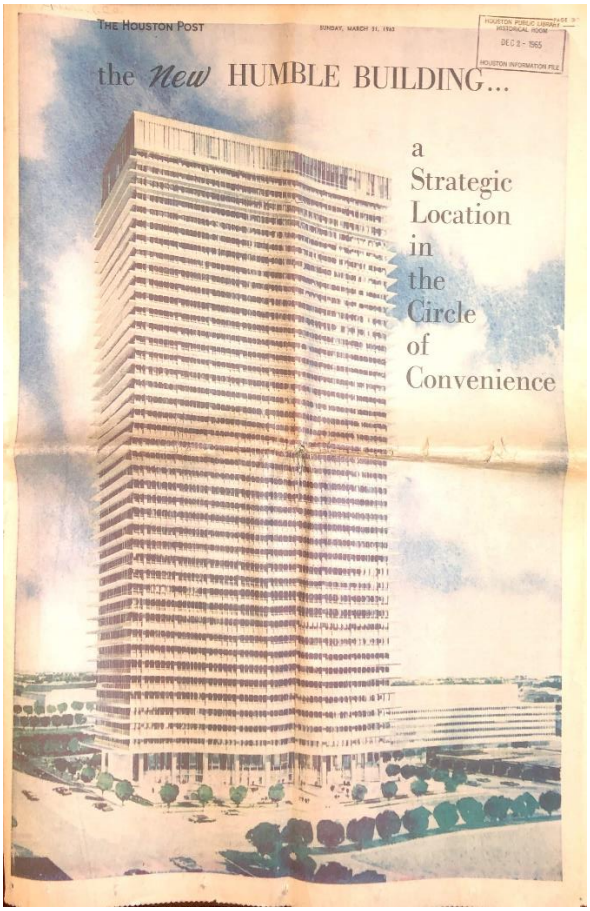
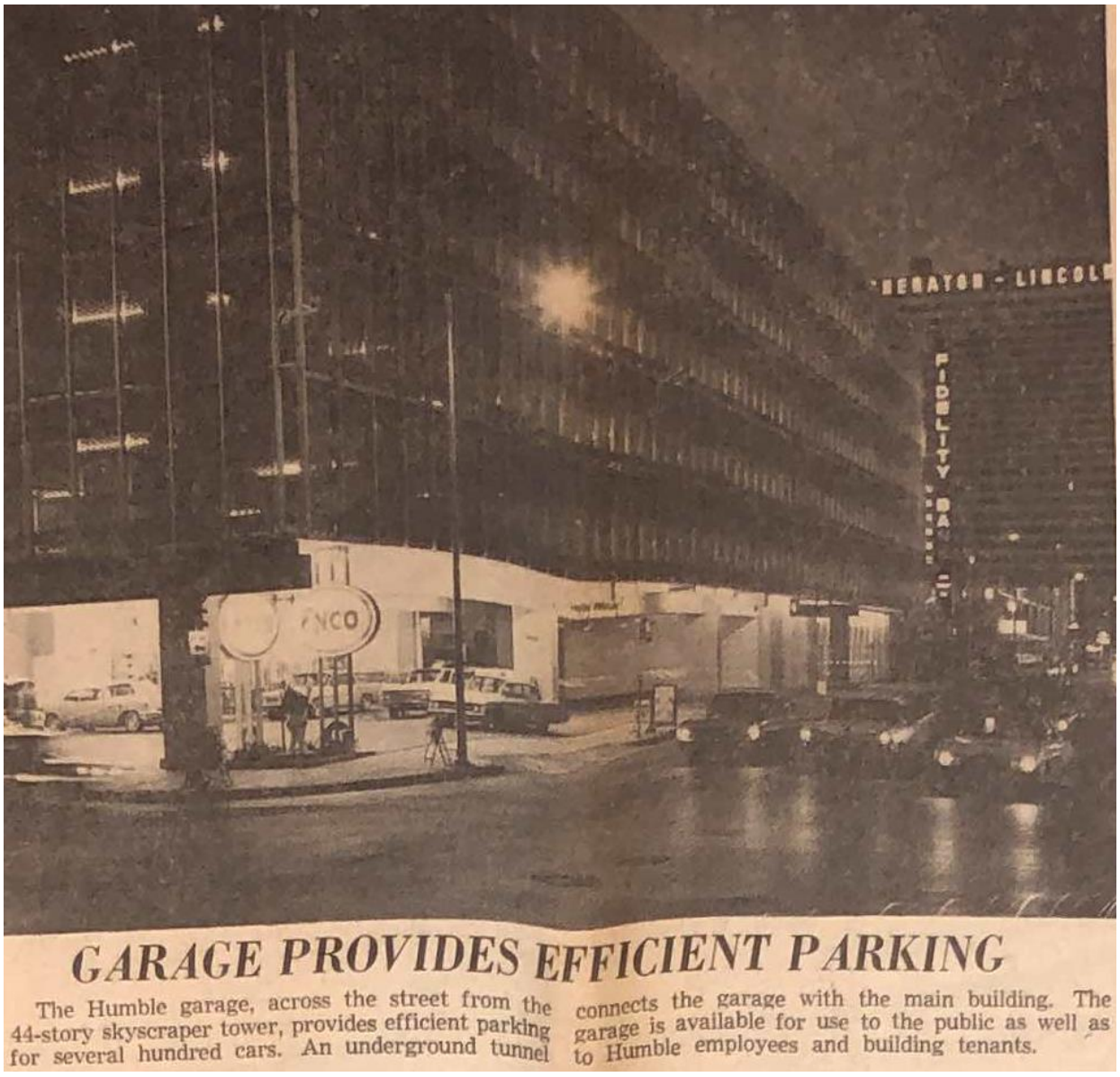


Figure 23
Garage Service Station (ENCO) and Fidelity Bank Photo, 1963
(Image from "Garage Provides Efficient Parking," *Houston Post,* Houston: March 31, 1963, Section 10, page 6, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.)



GARAGE PROVIDES EFFICIENT PARKING

The Humble garage, across the street from the 44-story skyscraper tower, provides efficient parking for several hundred cars. An underground tunnel connects the garage with the main building. The garage is available for use to the public as well as to Humble employees and building tenants.

Figure 24
Pedestrian Tunnel and Board Room, Executive Level/ 42nd floor at 800 Bell, 1963
(Images from "Tunnel Leads from Garage and Where Humble Directors Meet," *Houston Post*, Houston: March 31, 1963, Section 10, page 23, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.)

THE HOUSTON POST SECTION 10, PAGE 23
SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 1963

TUNNEL LEADS FROM GARAGE

An underground tunnel connects the 44-story Humble Building and the Humble Garage across the street. The tunnel allows a visitor to park in the garage and enter the skyscraper without getting out from under a roof.

WHERE HUMBLE DIRECTORS MEET

The board of directors of the Humble Oil & Refining Co meets in this handsome board room on the 42nd floor of the new Humble Building. The paneling at the rear conceals part of the board room's elaborate projection and sound systems. At the touch of a button the panels slide back to reveal the equipment.

Figure 25
The Humble Building at Night, 1963
(Image from Pamphlet cover of "WELCOME OPEN HOUSE," Houston: March 1963, Cover, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.

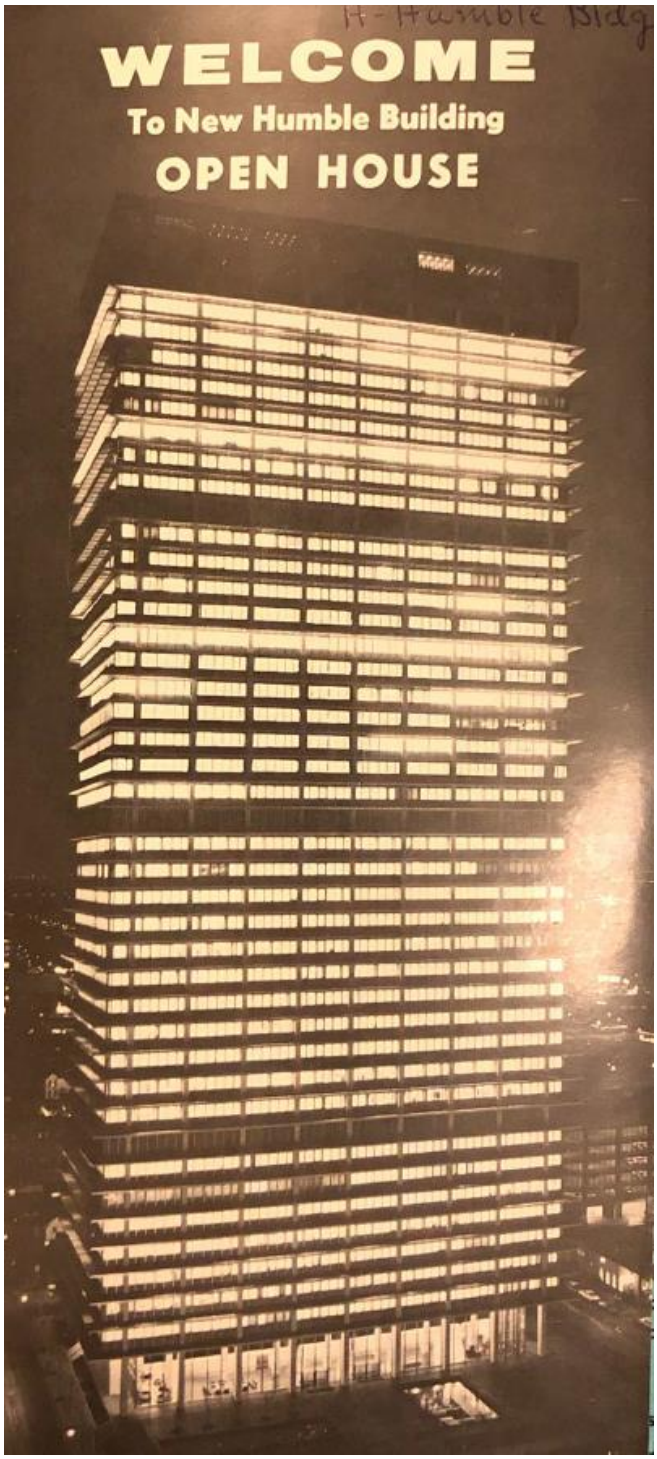


Figure 26
Cover of "The Humble Story - A Houston Chronicle Special Supplement" 1963
(Image from The Humble Story - A Houston Chronicle Special Supplement," *Houston Chronicle*, (Houston: April 14, 1963), Cover, Courtesy Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library).

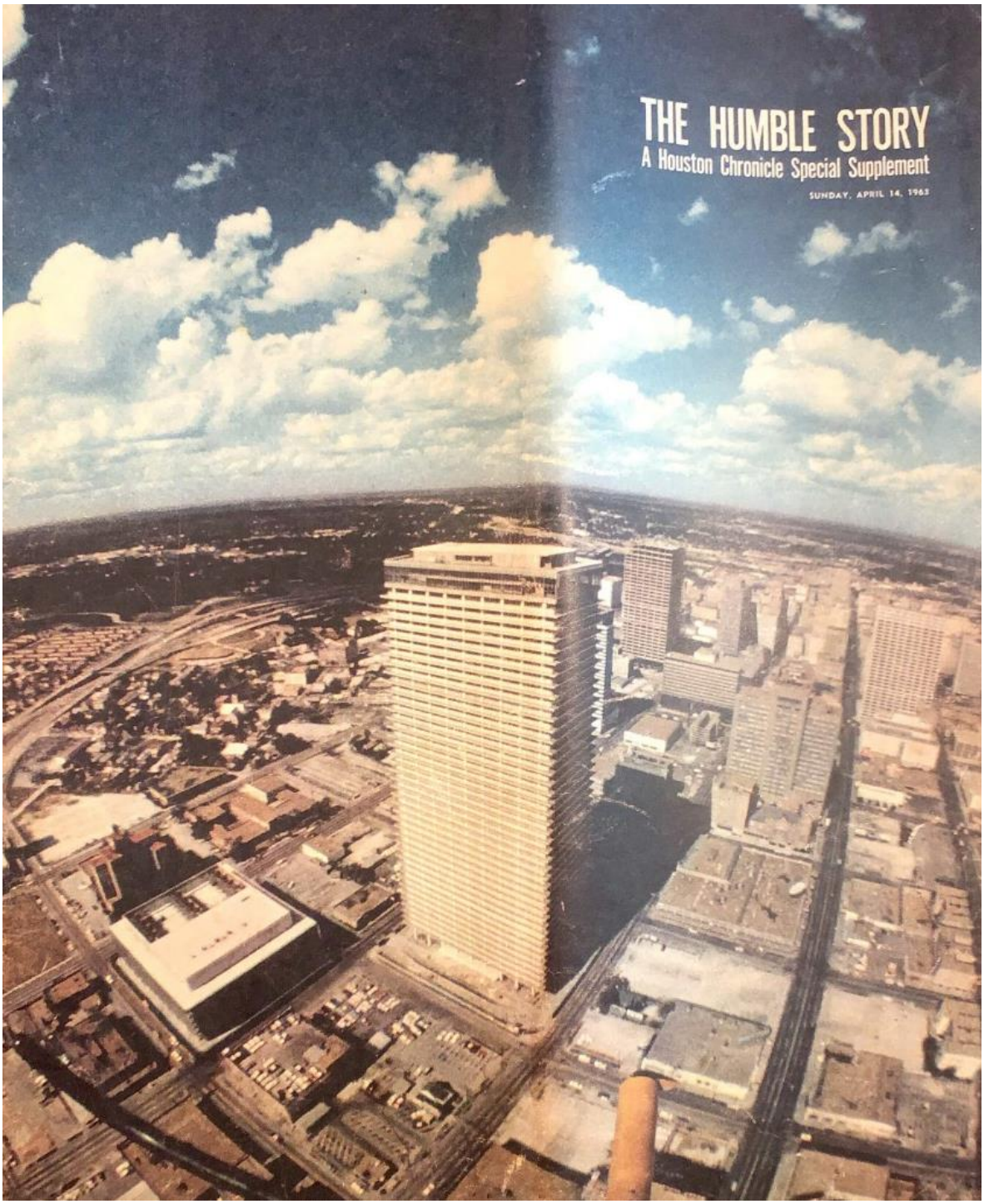


Figure 27
Garage "T" Beams and 800 Bell in Construction
(Image from *Houston Chronicle, "The Humble Story - A Houston Chronicle Special Supplement,"* Houston: April 14, 1963, Pg 77, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.)

Figure 28
Rear Canopy Historic View,
(Image from "The Humble Story - A Houston Chronicle Special Supplement," *Houston Chronicle*, Houston: April 14, 1963, Pg 81, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library).

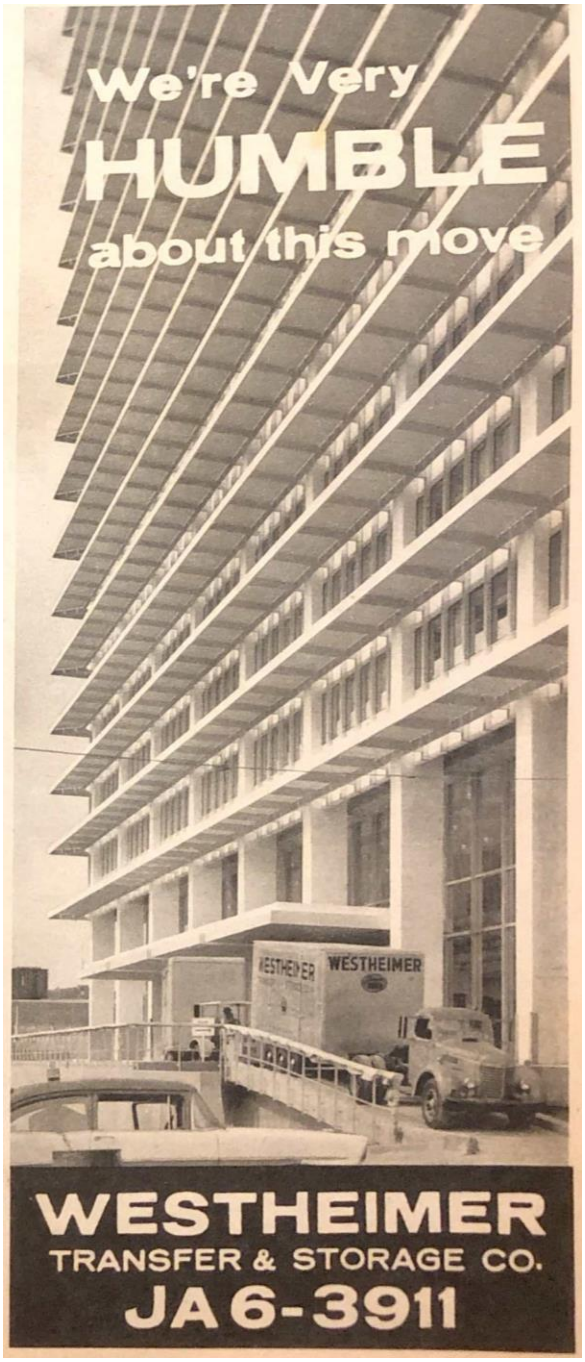


Figure 29
Air France Congratulatory Ad on building the highest building west of the Mississippi
(Image from "The Humble Story - A Houston Chronicle Special Supplement," *Houston Chronicle*, Houston: April 14, 1963, Pg 38, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library).

Figure 30
Postcard: Houston Skyline, 800 Bell Street/1616 Milam Street, Houston, Harris County, Texas, c. 1963
(Courtesy: Anna Mod)

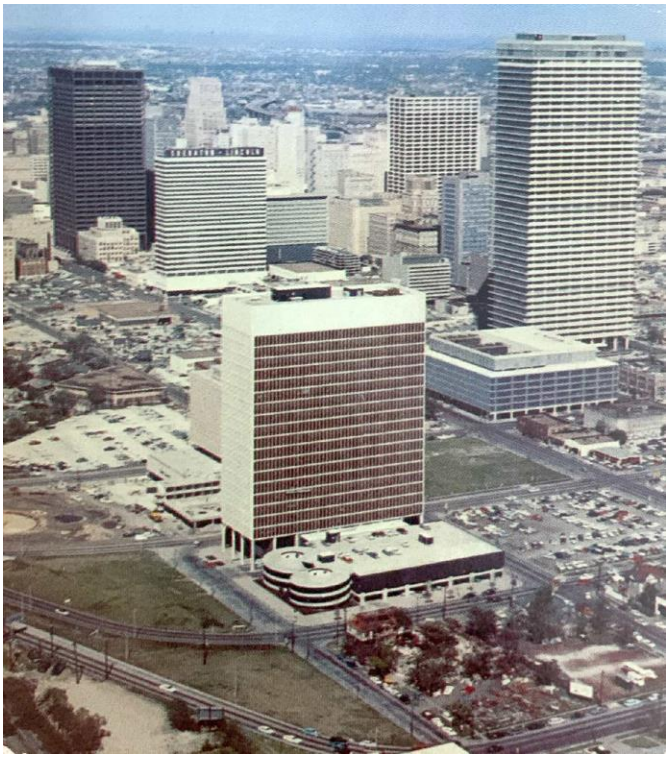


Figure 31
Postcard: Houston Freeways, 800 Bell Street/1616 Milam Street, Houston, Harris County, Texas, c. 1967
(Courtesy: Anna Mod)

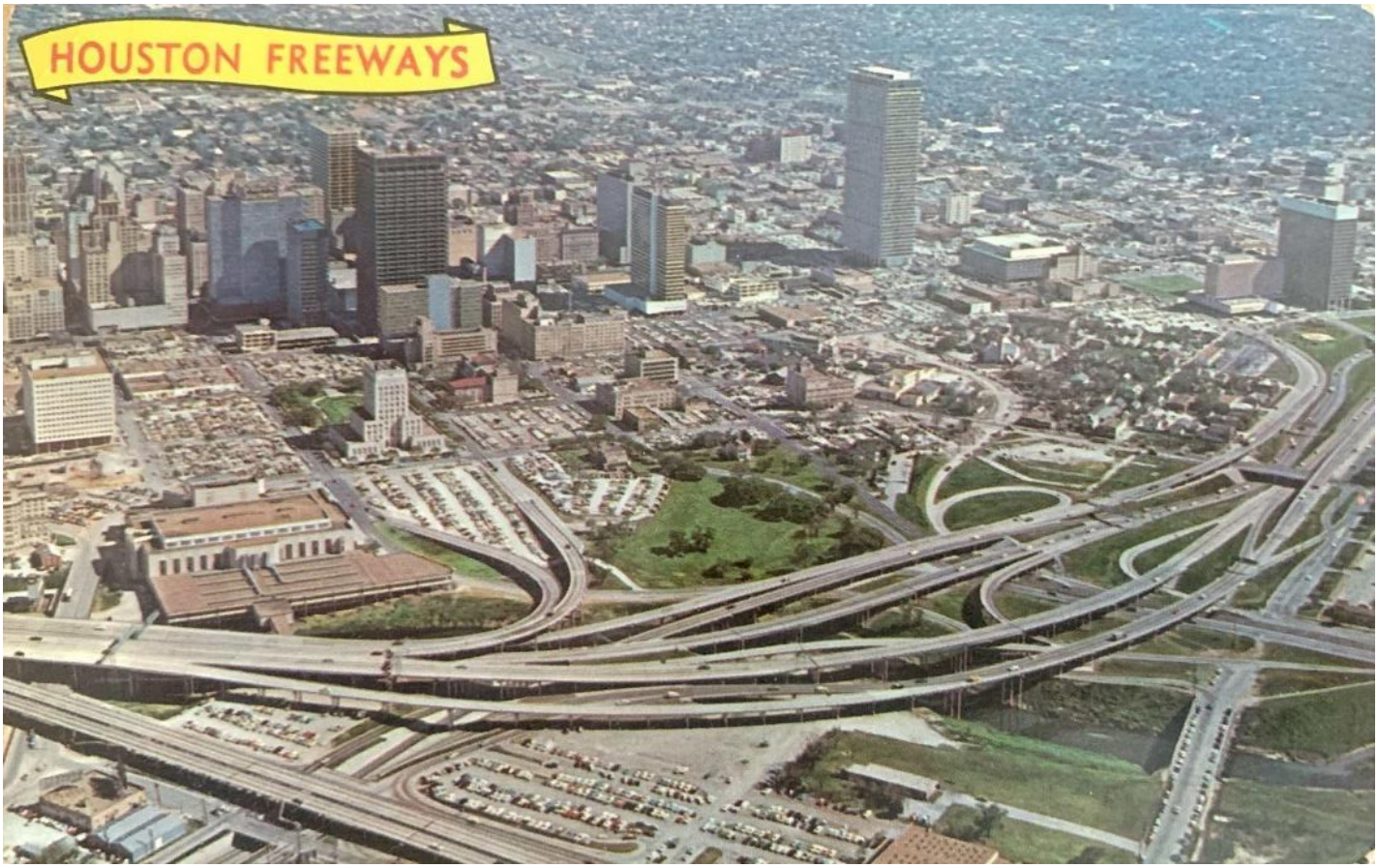


Figure 32
Photo of Humble Oil & Refining Co., Building and Garage, c.1970
(Image from: *Total Design*. Pg 198)

Figure 33
Photo of Light Well in Front Elevation Plaza, Humble Oil & Refining Co. Building, c. 1970
(Image from *Total Design,* Pg 166)

Figure 34
Photo Front Elevation Plaza/Pool & Sculptural Fountains, Humble Oil & Refining Co. Building, c.1970
(Image from *Total Design,* Pg 182)

Figure 35
Photo of Light Well in Front Elevation Plaza Humble Oil & Refining Co. Building, c.1970
(Image from *Total Design*; Pg 199)

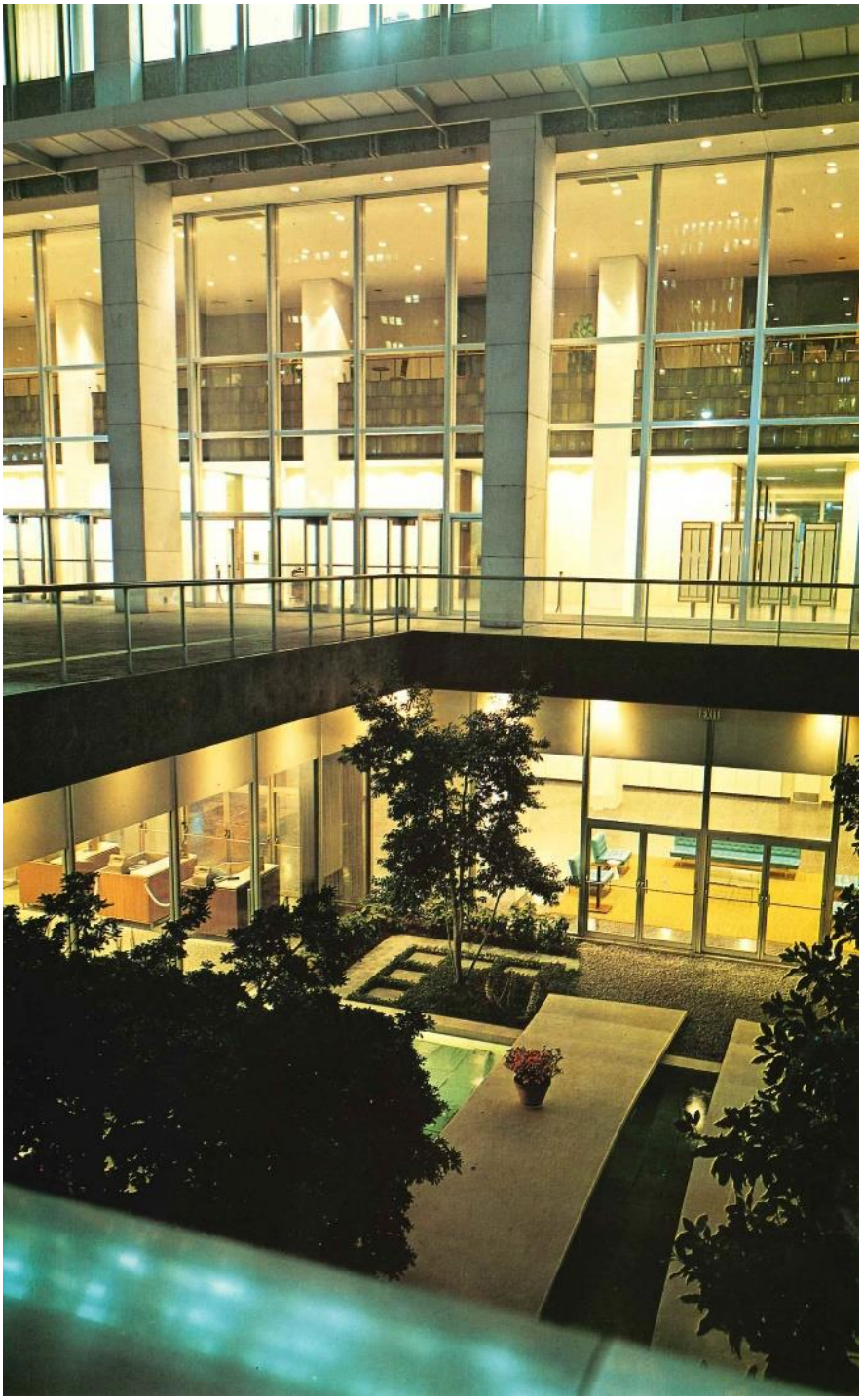


Figure 36
Interior Photo of Lobby, Humble Oil & Refining Co. Building, c.1970
(Image from *Total Design*, 1971. Pg 181

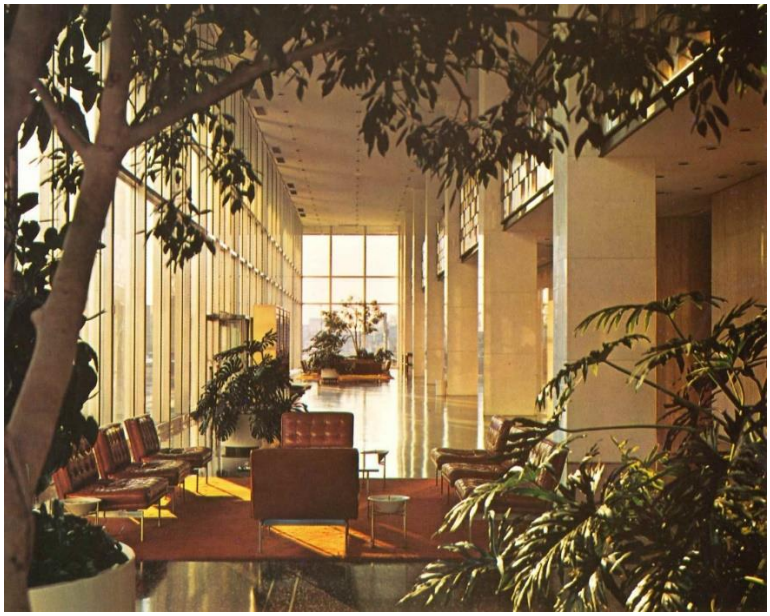


Figure 37
Interior Photos of Ground Level Elevator Bank and Humble Touring Service Desk., c.1970
(Image from *Total Design*, 1971. Pg 208)

Figure 38
Interior Photo of Humble Oil & Refining Co. Building, c.1970
(Image from: *Total Design;* Pg 181)

Figure 39
Interior Photo of Executive Meeting Room Humble Oil & Refining Co. Building, c.1970
(Image from: *Total Design;* Pg 214)

Figure 40
Discovery Room, Petroleum Club 43rd Floor, Humble Oil & Refining Co. Building, c.1970
(Image from *Interiors* Article: "Houston's Petroleum Club" September 1963, article courtesy owner, from: Pierce, George F. and William Parker McFadden. Interiors; 1963. Pg 89)

Figure 41
Petroleum Club, 43rd Floor, Humble Oil & Refining Co. Building, c.1970
(Image from *Interiors* Article: "Houston's Petroleum Club" September 1963, article courtesy owner, from: Pierce, George F. and William Parker McFadden. Interiors; 1963. Pg 91)

Figure 42
Petroleum Room, Petroleum Club, 43rd Floor, Humble Oil & Refining Co. Building, c.1970
(Image from *Interiors* Article: "Houston's Petroleum Club" September 1963, article courtesy owner, from: Pierce, George F. and William Parker McFadden. Interiors; 1963. Pg 92)

Figure 43
Reception Lounge, Petroleum Club, 43rd Floor, Humble Oil & Refining Co. Building, c.1970
(Image from *Interiors* Article: "Houston's Petroleum Club" September 1963, article courtesy owner, from: Pierce, George F. and William Parker McFadden. Interiors; 1963. Pg 95)

Figure 44
Concourse Auditorium, Humble Oil & Refining Co. Building, c.1970
(Image from: *Total Design;* Pg 215)

Figure 45
Concourse Cafeteria, Humble Oil & Refining Co. Building, c.1970
(Image from: *Total Design;* Pg 216)

Figure 46
JFK's motorcade passing the Humble Building November 21, 1963
(Image still from: *JFK Library, video "The Last Two Days"*)

Figure 47
January 1966, "Building Design," *Humble In Houston*
(Image From "Building Design." *Humble In Houston 1966*, February 1966, pg 8. Courtesy Briscoe Center for American History, Exxon-Mobile Collection. 2.207/L15E. Humble in Houston. Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin).

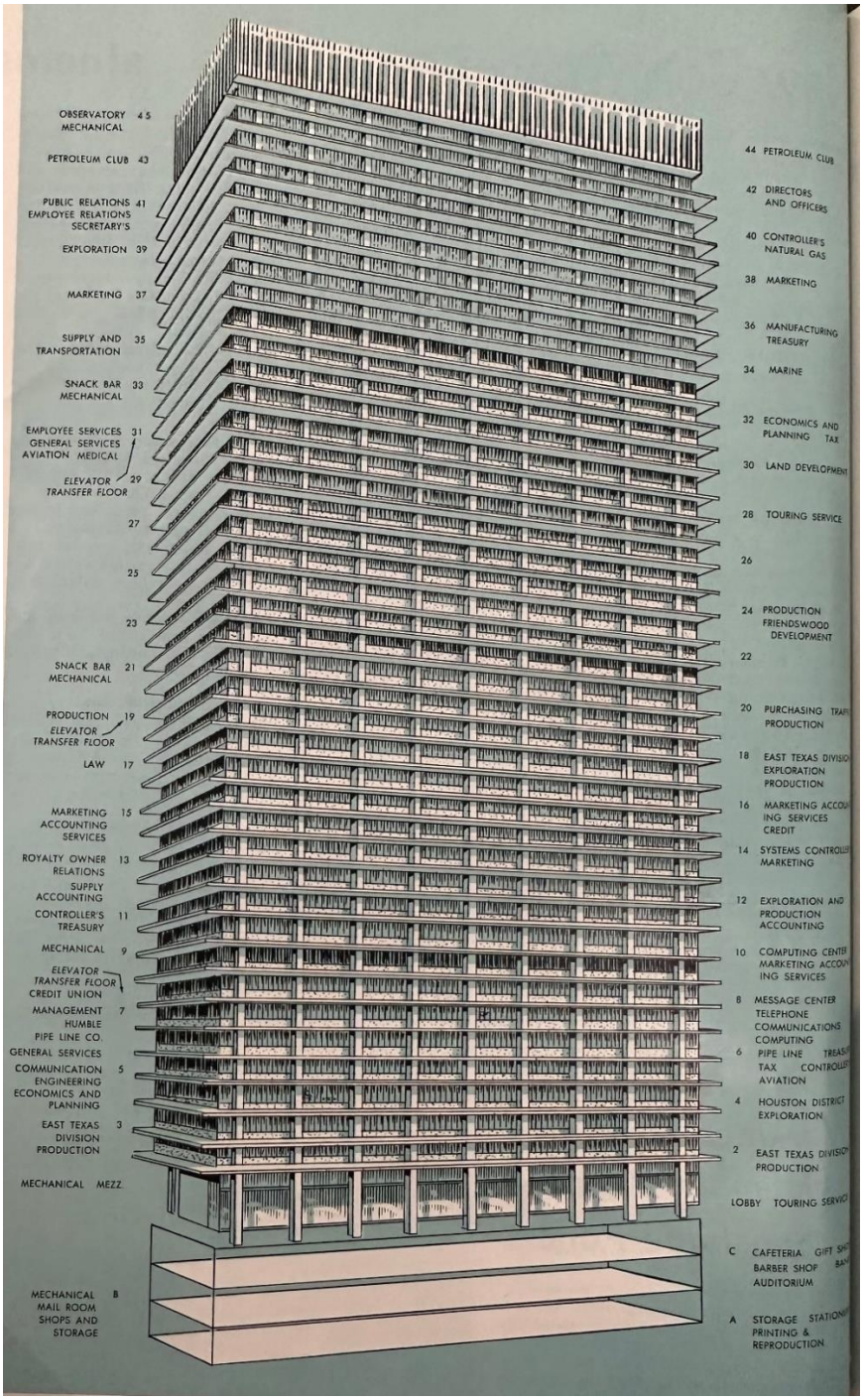


Figure 48
Front Plaza, Exxon Sign, 800 Bell, 1981
(Image from "John Simoneaux has 50 years with Exxon." *HQ Houston 1981*. January 1981. Pg. 4, Courtesy Briscoe Center for American History, Exxon-Mobile Collection. 2.207/L15E. Humble in Houston. Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin)

Figure 49
Photos before repair and recladding of columns 800 Bell, c. 2000
(Images courtesy Daron Hester, Walter P Moore)

Figure 50
General Petroleum Building, Welton Becket & Associates, Los Angeles, CA, c. 1947
(Images from *Built by Becket* Pg 19)

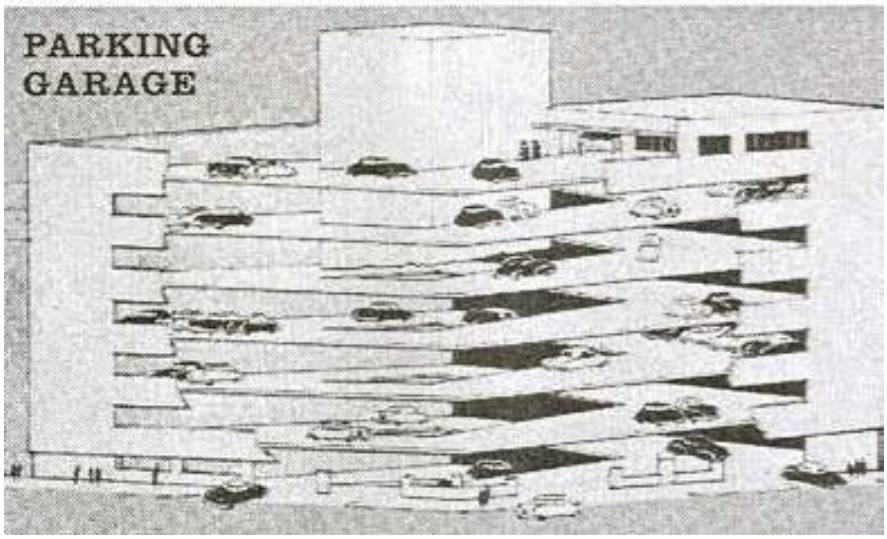


Figure 51
Capitol Records Building, Welton Becket & Associates, Los Angeles, CA, c.1955
(Images from *Built by Becket* Pg 26)

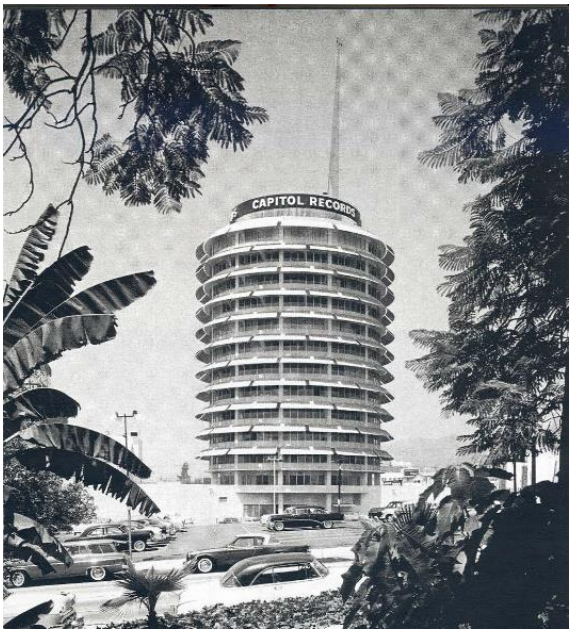


Figure 52
Southland Center, Welton Becket & Associates Dallas, c.1960
(Image from *Total Design*, Pg 15)

Figure 53
Cullen Center: 500 Jefferson, Welton Becket & Associates, Houston c.1963
(Image from "1962 Press Photo Work at the 500 Jefferson Building in the Cullen Center" Courtesy of Houston Chronicle via Historic Images (eBay)- From 500 Jefferson National Register Nomination)

Figure 54
First State Bank, Welton Becket & Associates, Clear Lake City, TX, c.1966
(Image from *Total Design,* Pg 44)

Figure 55
Equitable Life Building, Welton Becket & Associates, Los Angeles, CA, c.1969
(Image from *Total Design*, Pg 44)

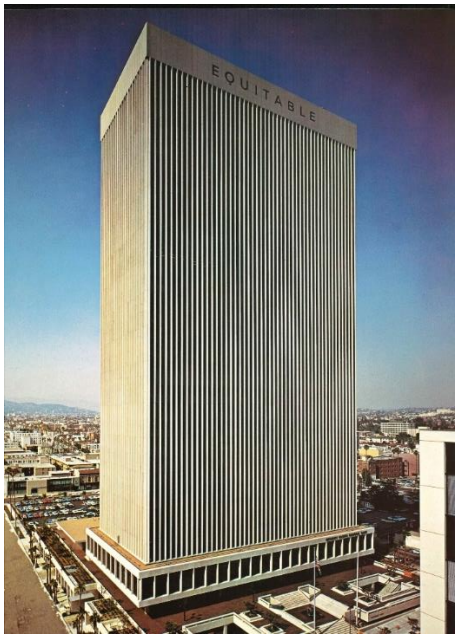


Figure 56
Melrose Building, Houston, c.1952
(Image from "Heat and Light Thematized in the modern architecture of Houston," Pg 714)

Figure 57
Tenneco Building, Houston, c.1963
(Image from "Heat and Light Thematized in the modern architecture of Houston," Pg 717)

a

b

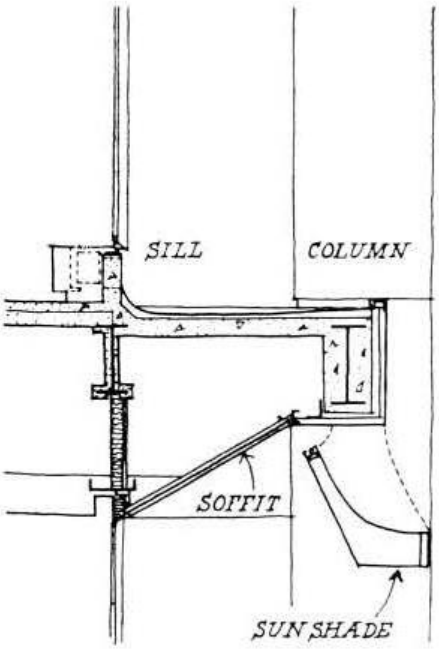


Figure 13a. Tenneco Building, Houston, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, 1958 63 (photograph by Ezra Stoller).

Figure 13b. Tenneco Building, Houston, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, 1958 63 (detail drawing).

Figure 58
Gibraltar Building c. 1959 (bottom), Houston
(Images from "Heat and Light Thematized in the modern architecture of Houston," Pg 715)

Figure 10. Medical Towers Building, Houston, 1956, Golemon & Rolfe with Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (photograph by Paul Dorsey, *Progressive Architecture*, 38 [June, 1957], p. 192).

Figure 11. Gibraltar Building, 1959, Greacen & Brogniez and J. V. Neuhaus, III, Houston (photographer unknown).

Figure 59 **front elevation not available*
South Elevation (Rear, Leeland Street), Humble Oil & Refining Co. Office Building, c. 1960
(Image Courtesy Owner: Welton Becket and Associates, 31-2)

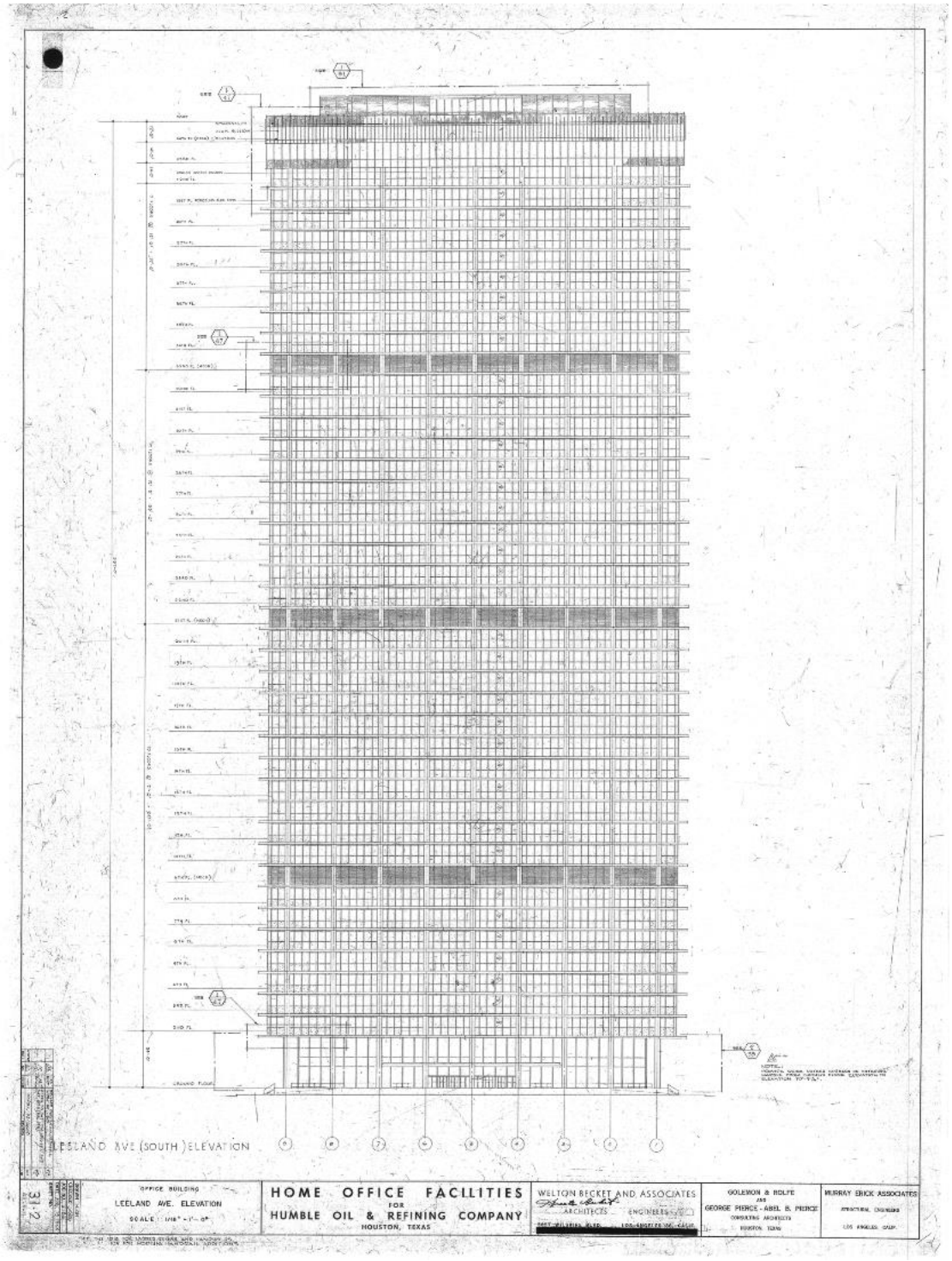


Figure 60
West Side Elevation (Milam Street), Humble Oil & Refining Co. Office Building, c. 1960
(Image Courtesy Owner: Welton Becket and Associates, 30-2)

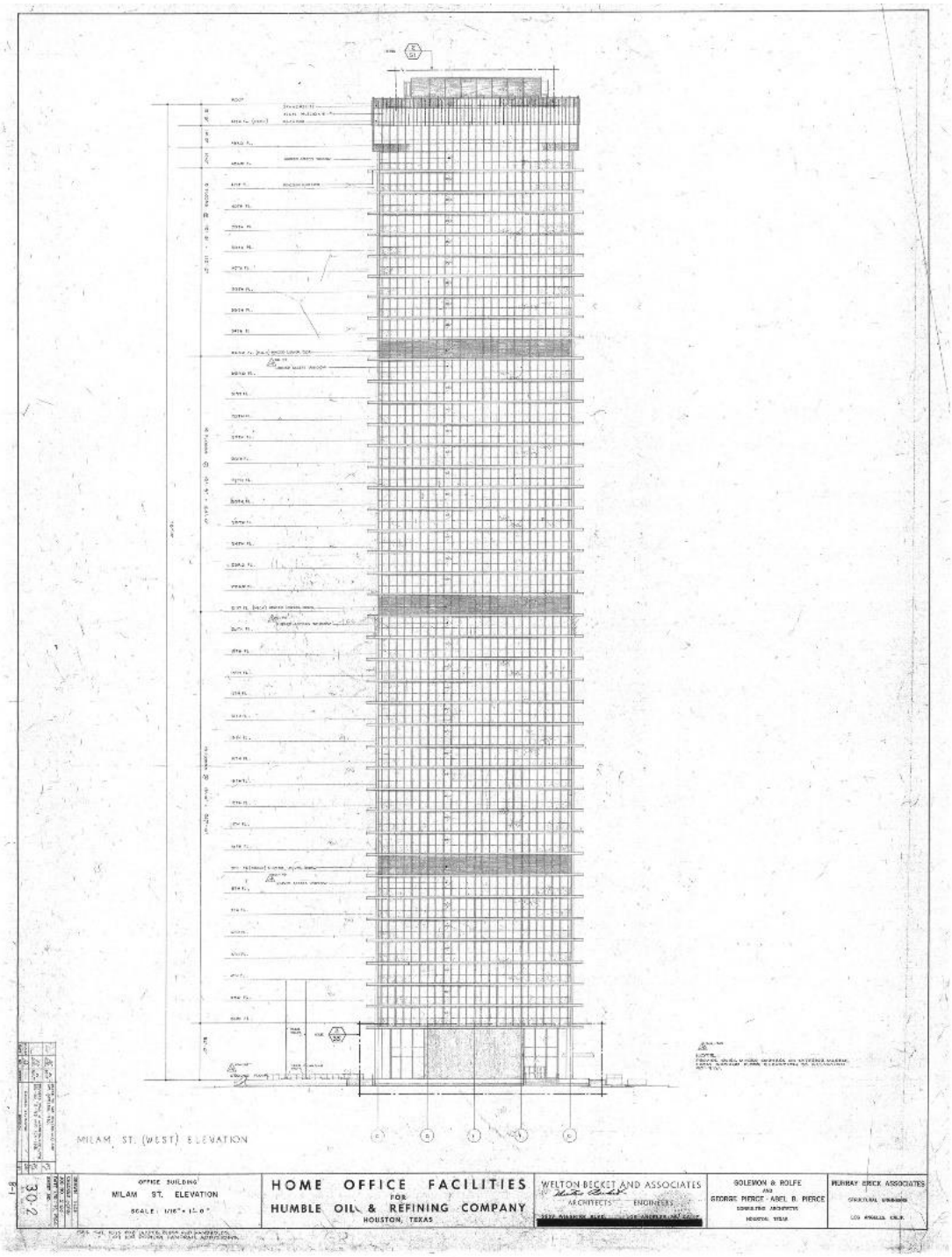


Figure 61
Plaza and Ground Floor Terrazzo Plan, Humble Oil & Refining Co. Office Building, c. 1960
(Image Courtesy Owner: Welton Becket and Associates, 95-3)

Plan View
N

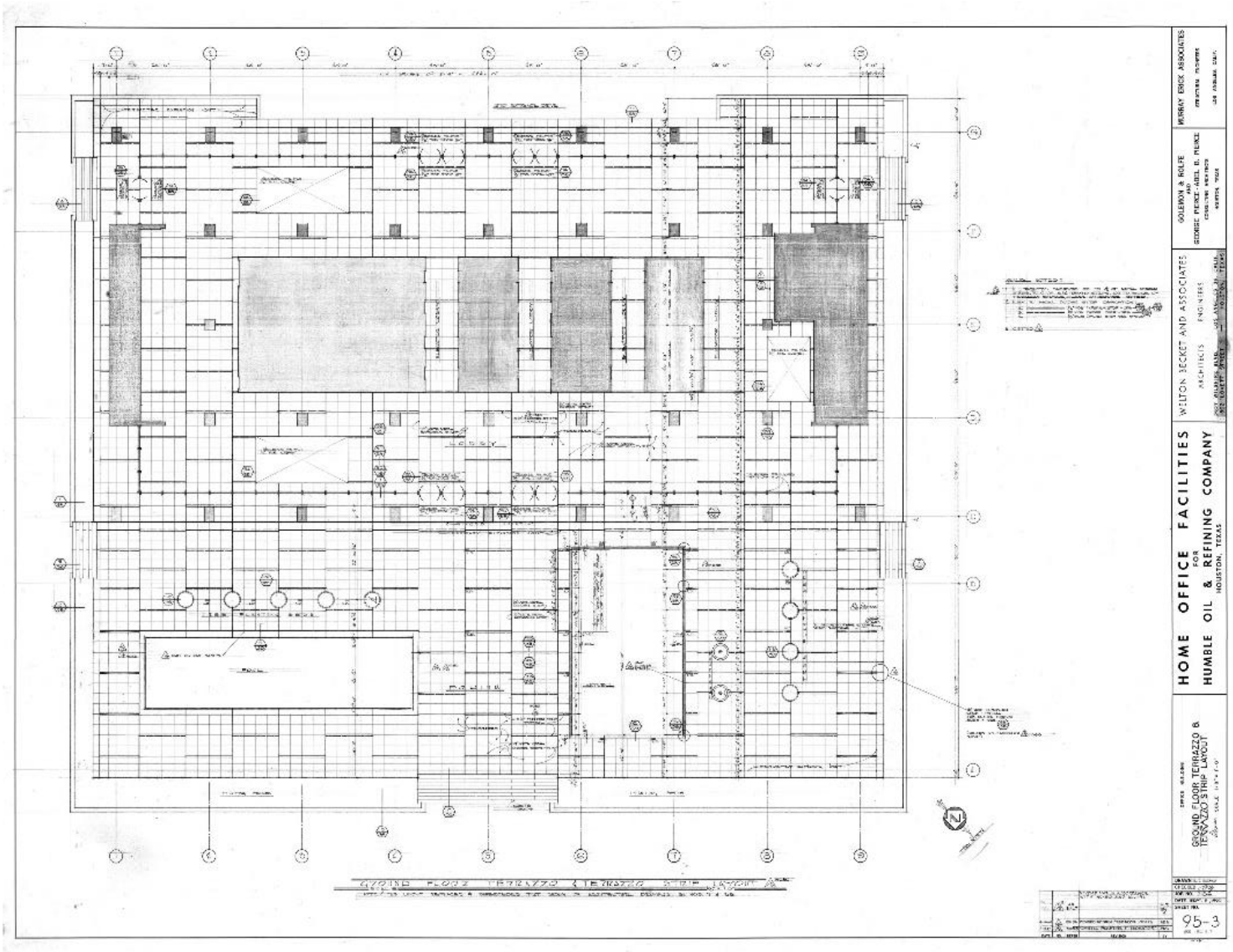


Figure 62
Typical Office Floor Plan, Humble Oil & Refining Co. Office Building, c. 1960
(Image Courtesy Owner: Welton Becket and Associates, 14-2)

Plan View
N

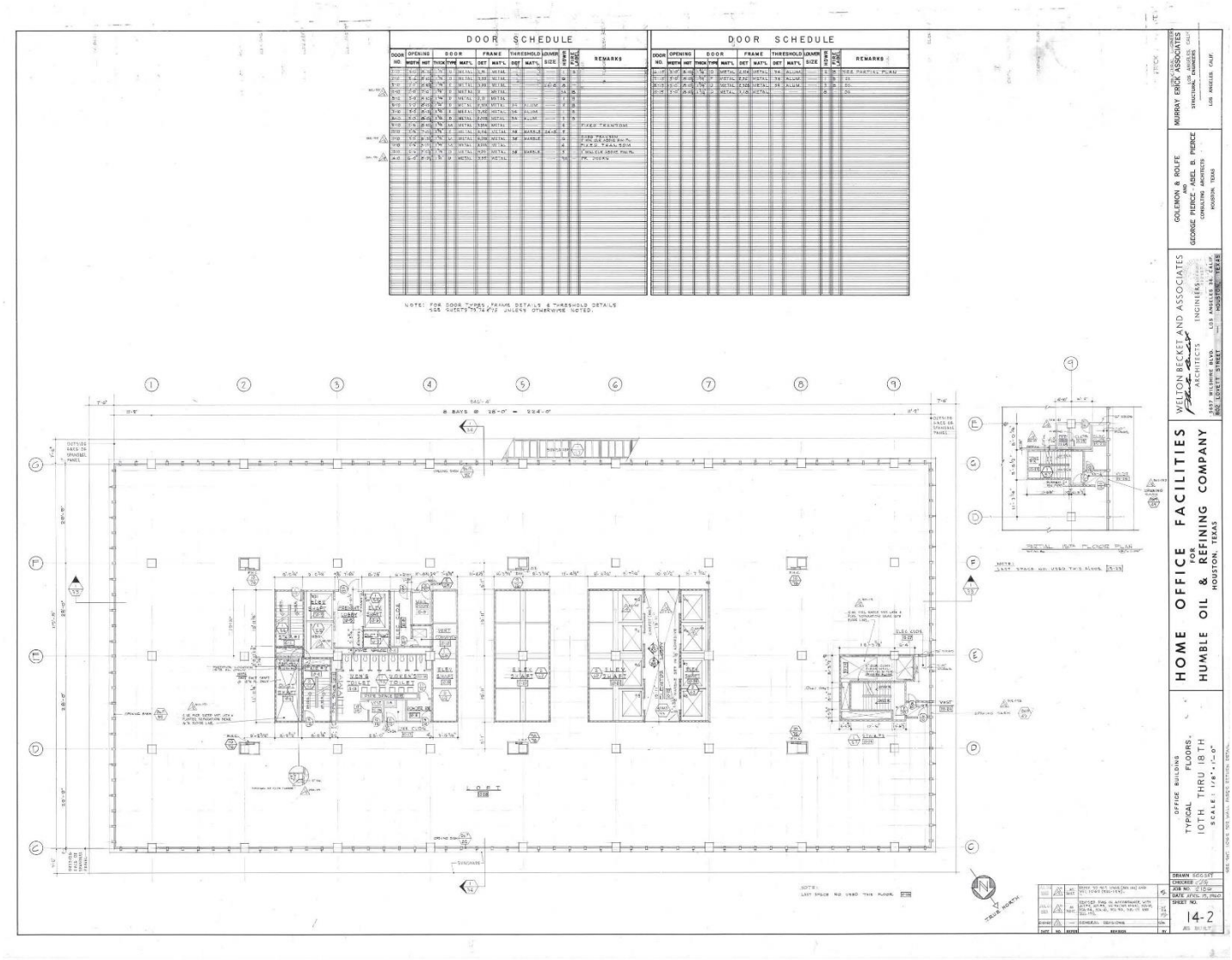


Figure 63
Typical Mechanical Floor Plan, Humble Oil & Refining Co. Office Building, c. 1960
(Image Courtesy Owner: Welton Becket and Associates, 21-3)

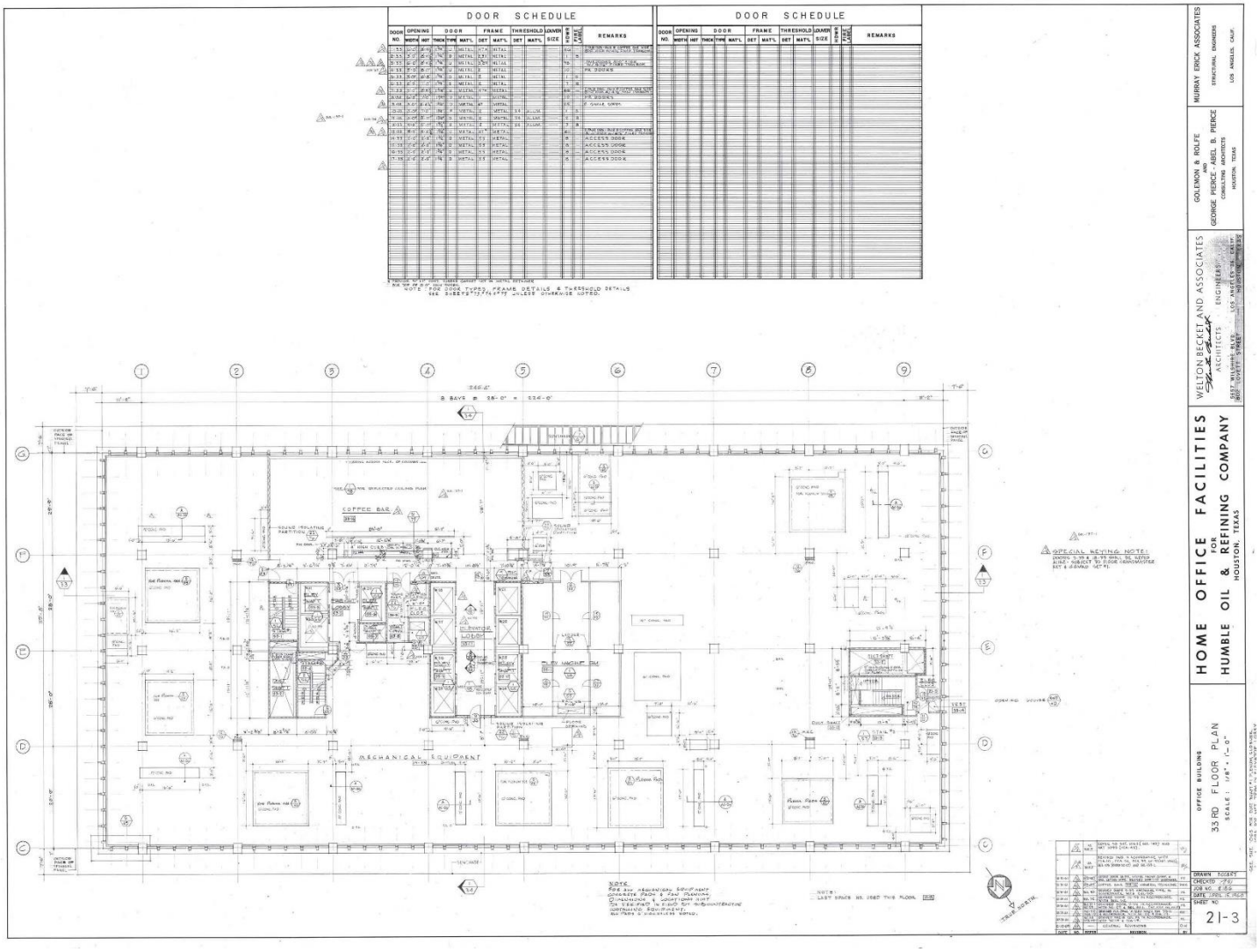


Figure 64
Typical Partition Layout and Typical Reflected Ceiling Plan,
Humble Oil & Refining Co. Office Building, c. 1960
(Image Courtesy Owner: Welton Becket and Associates, 78-1)

Plan View
N

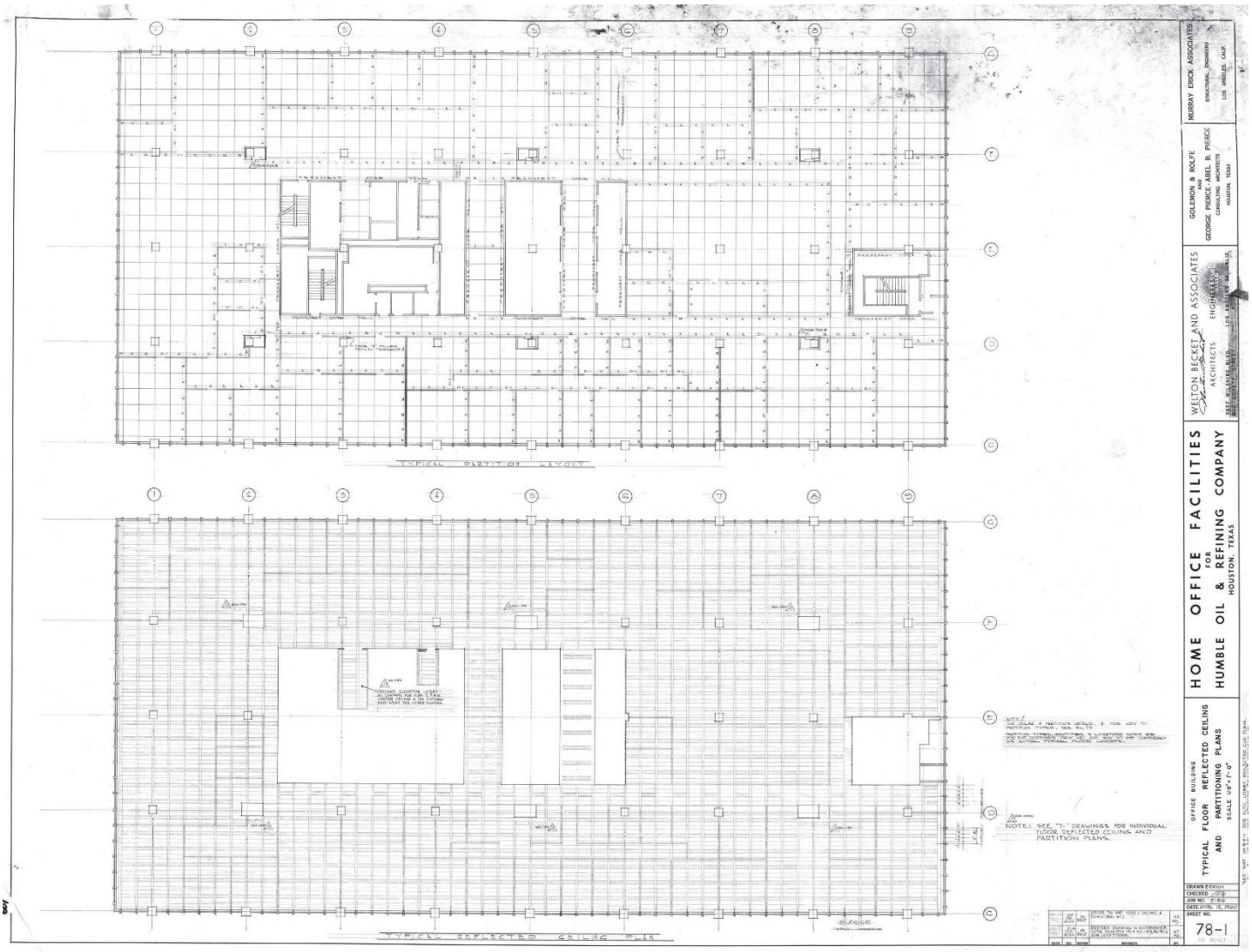


Figure 65
Petroleum Club, 43rd Floor Plan, Humble Oil & Refining Co. Office Building, c. 1960
(Image Courtesy Owner: Welton Becket and Associates, 26-4)

Plan View
N

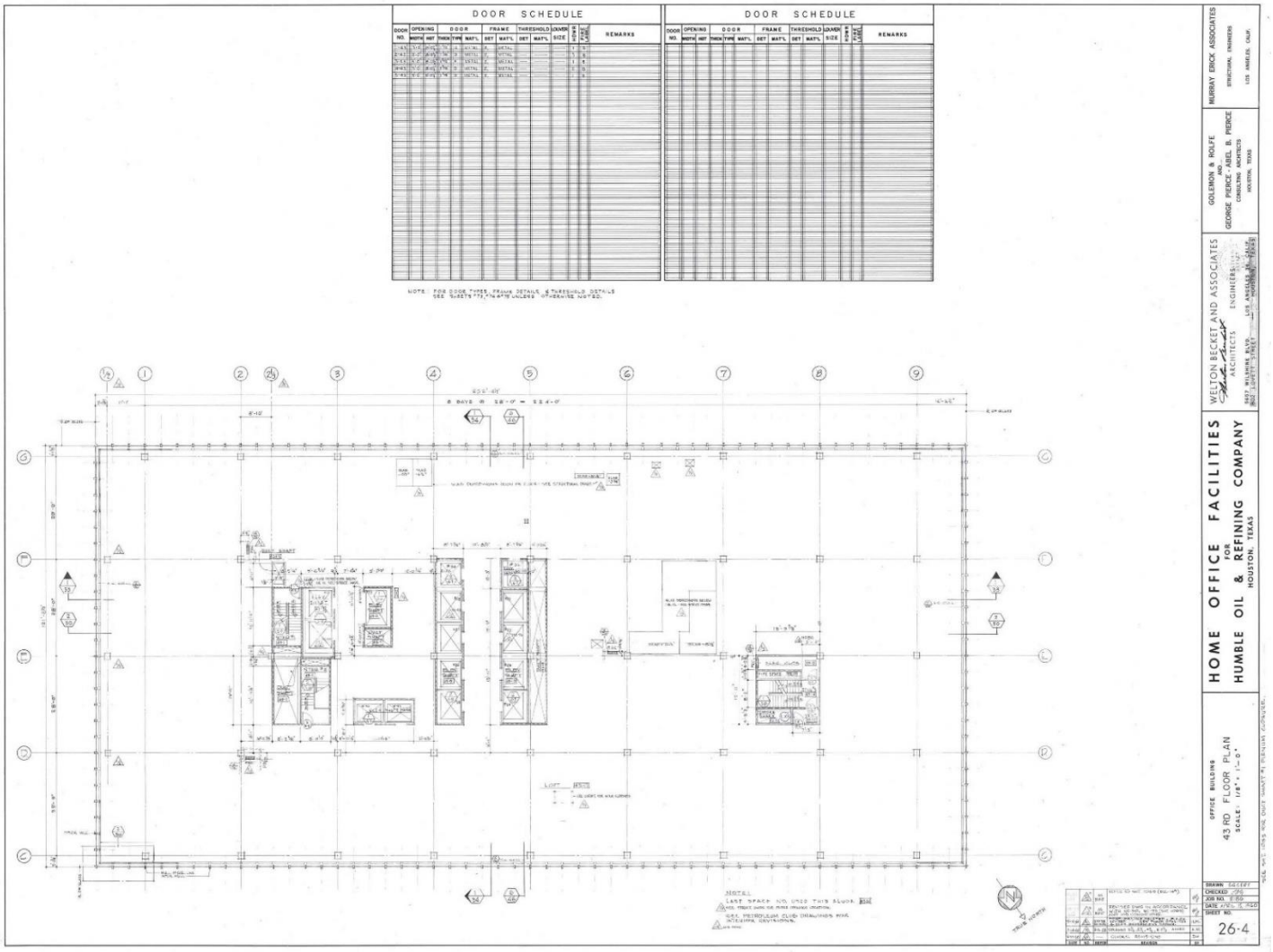


Figure 66
Petroleum Club, 44th Floor Plan, Humble Oil & Refining Co. Office Building, c. 1960
(Image Courtesy Owner: Welton Becket and Associates, 27-5)

Plan View
N

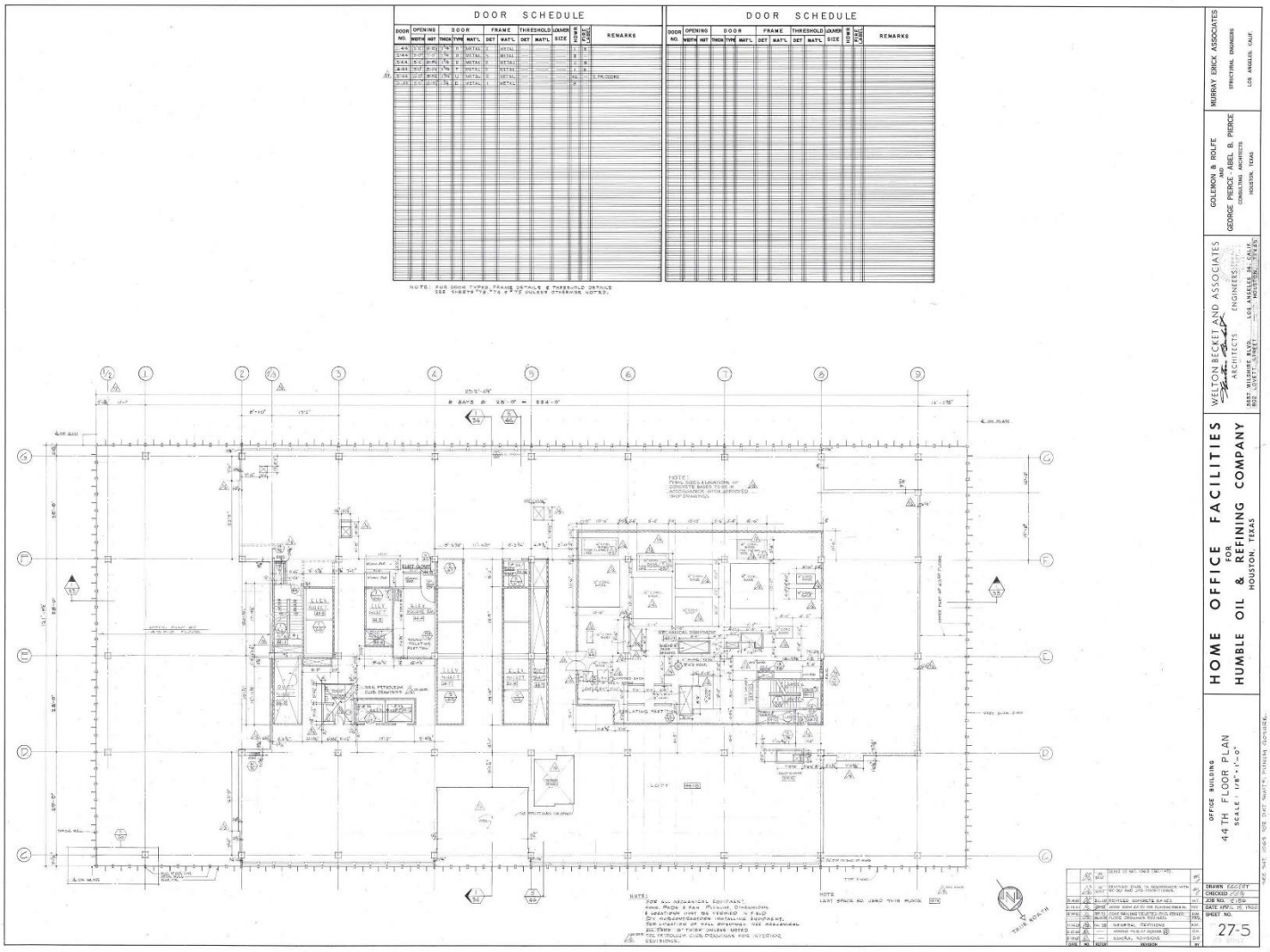


Figure 67
Subterranean Tunnel Plan Views, and Wall Section, Humble Oil & Refining Co. Garage, c. 1960
(Image Courtesy Owner: Welton Becket and Associates, 5-3)

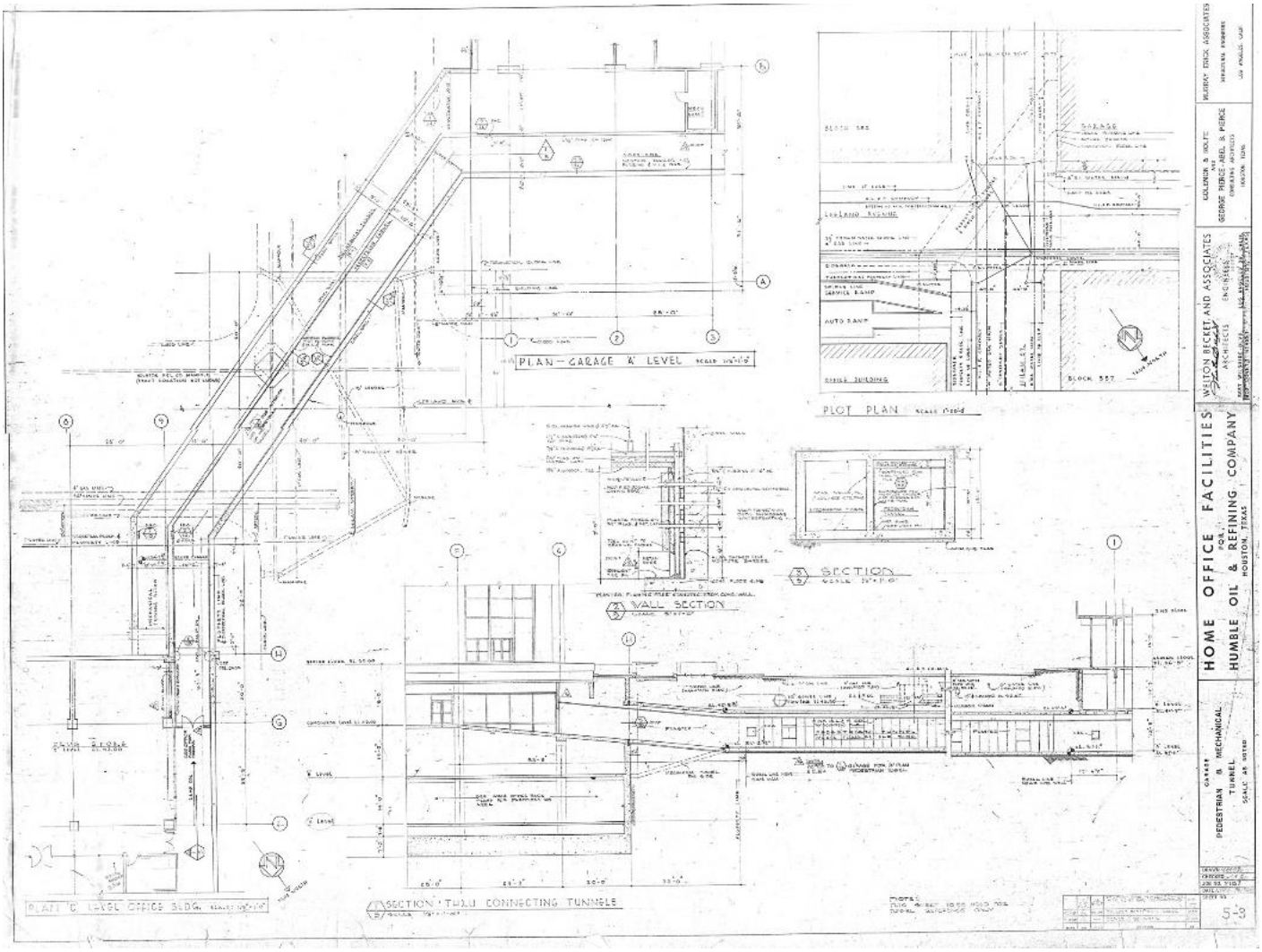


Figure 68
Garage Subfloor A, B, and Typical Upper Floor Plan Humble Oil & Refining Co. Garage, c. 1960
(Image Courtesy Owner: Welton Becket and Associates, 3)

Plan View
N

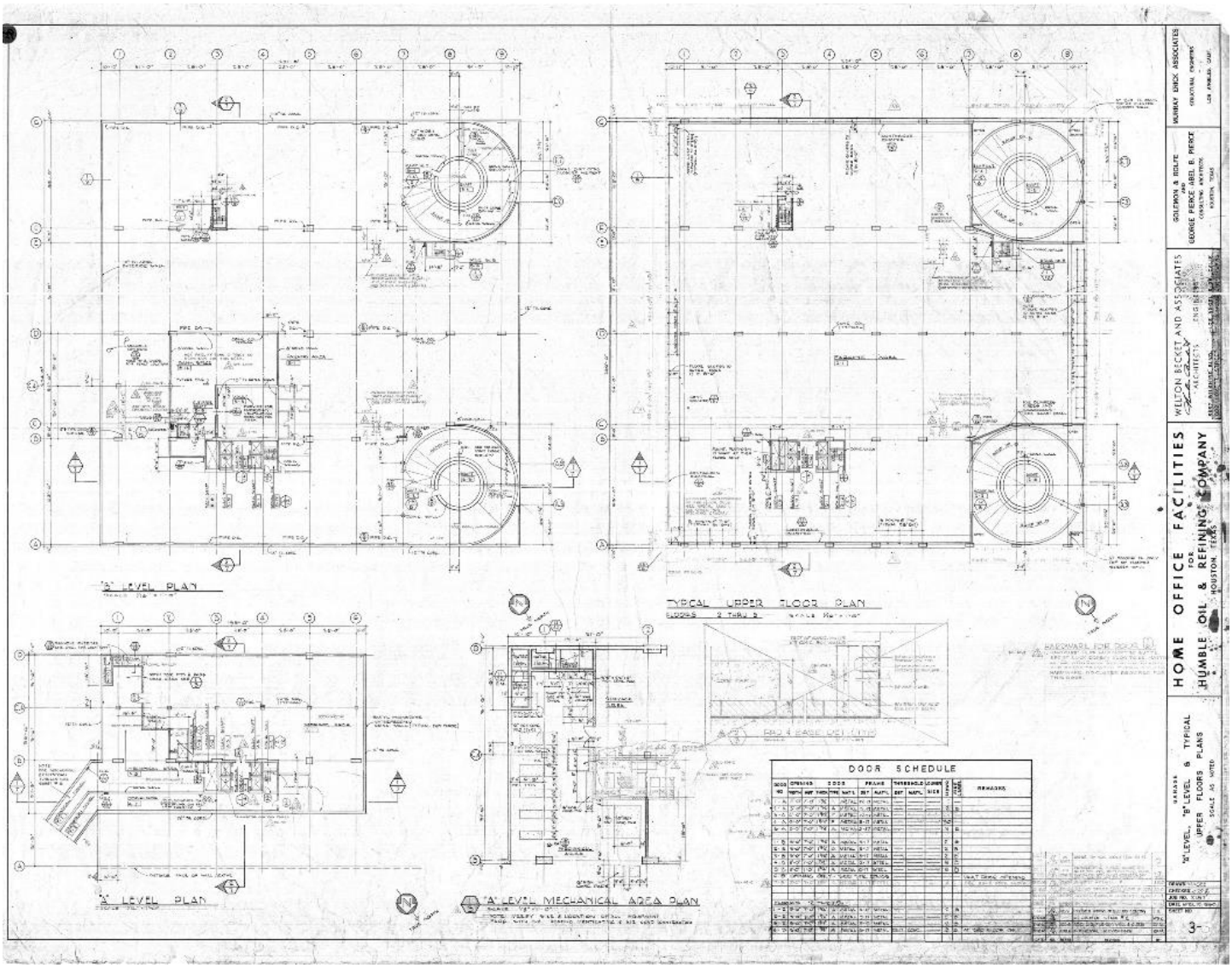


Figure 69
Garage Cross section, Humble Oil & Refining Co. Garage, c. 1960
(Image Courtesy Owner: Welton Becket and Associates, 7)

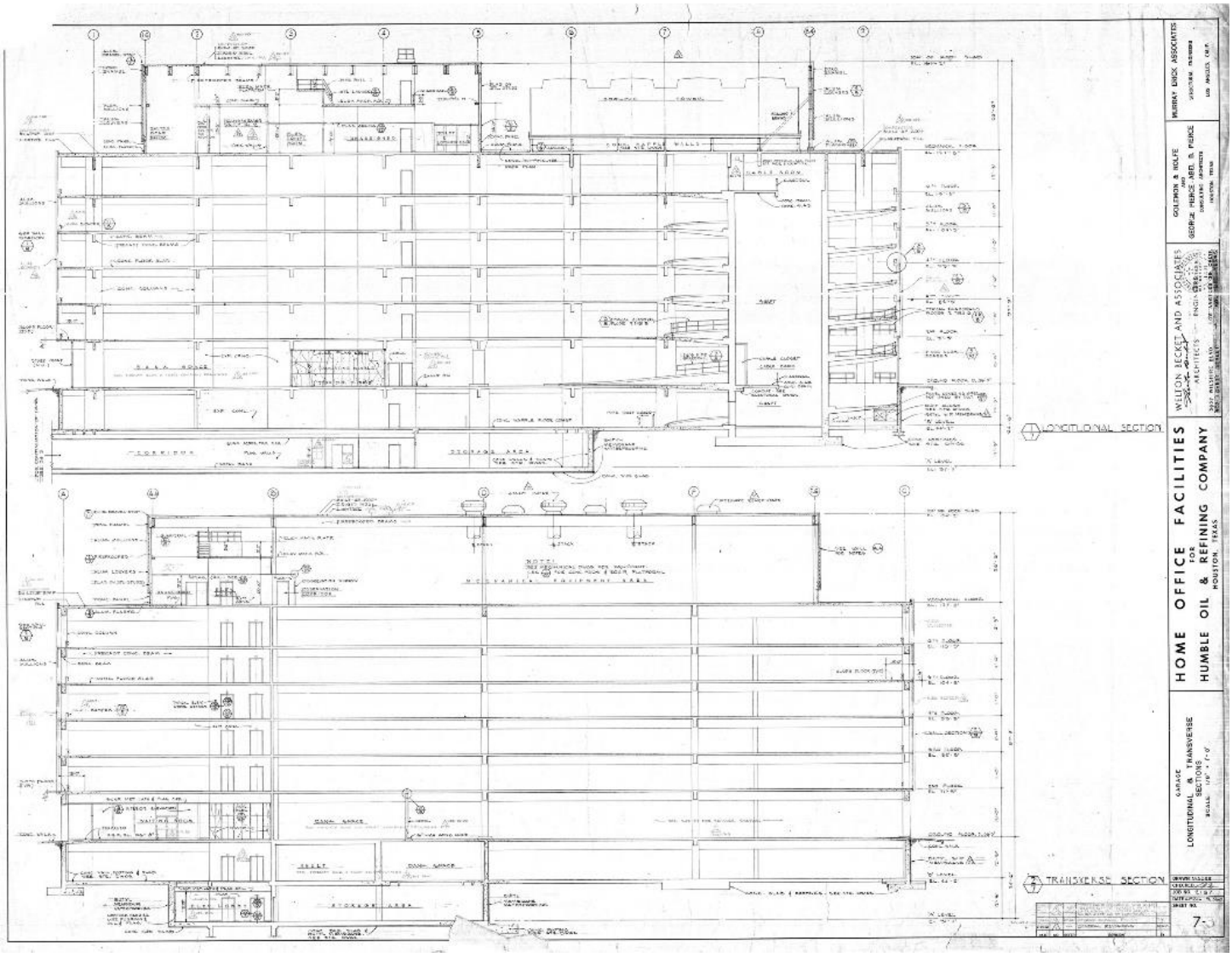


Figure 70
Garage Elevations, Humble Oil & Refining Co. Garage, c. 1960
(Image Courtesy Owner: Welton Becket and Associates, 6-4)

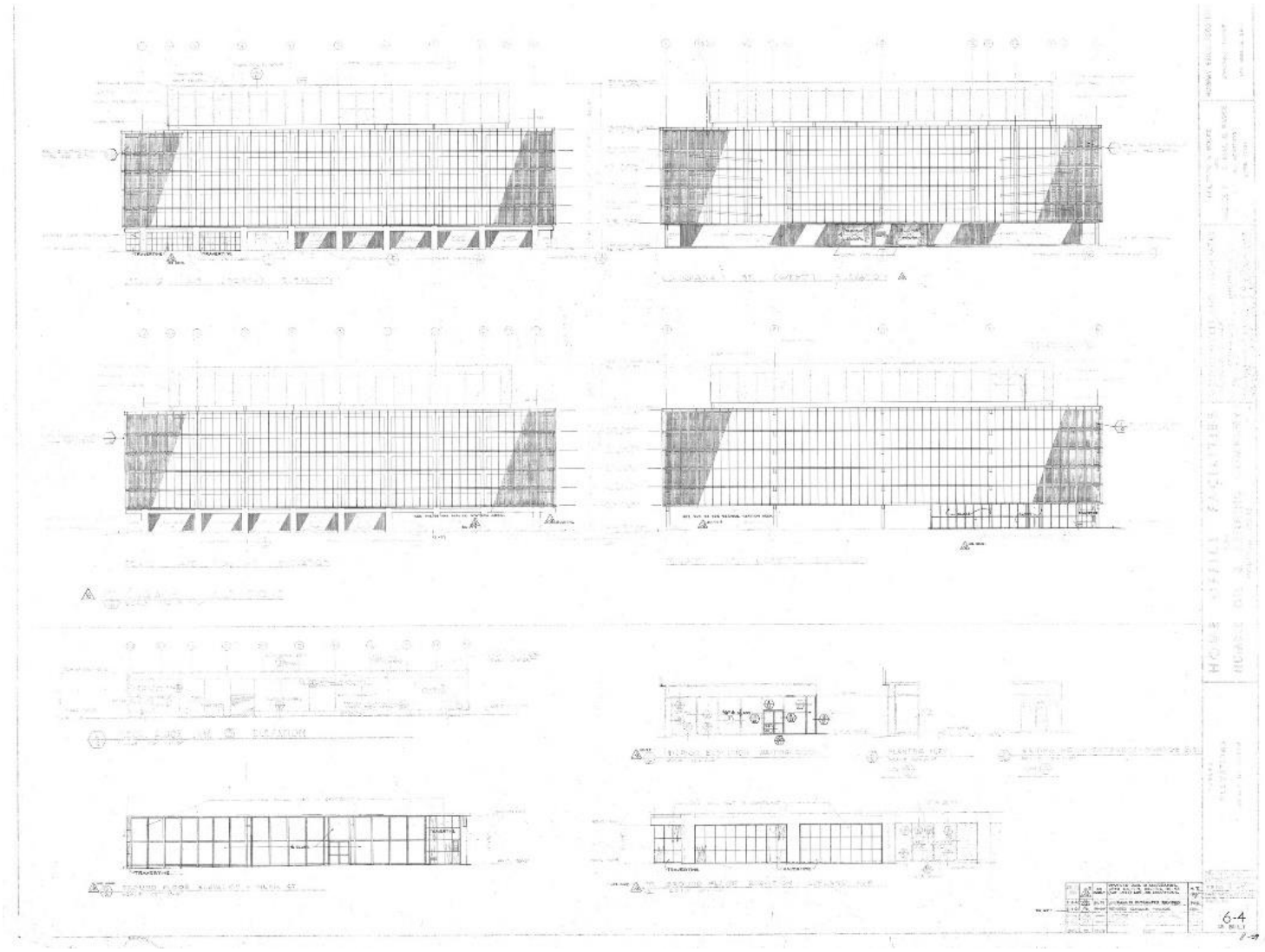


Figure 71
Service Station Details, Humble Oil & Refining Co. Garage, c. 1960
(Image Courtesy Owner: Welton Becket and Associates, 25-1)

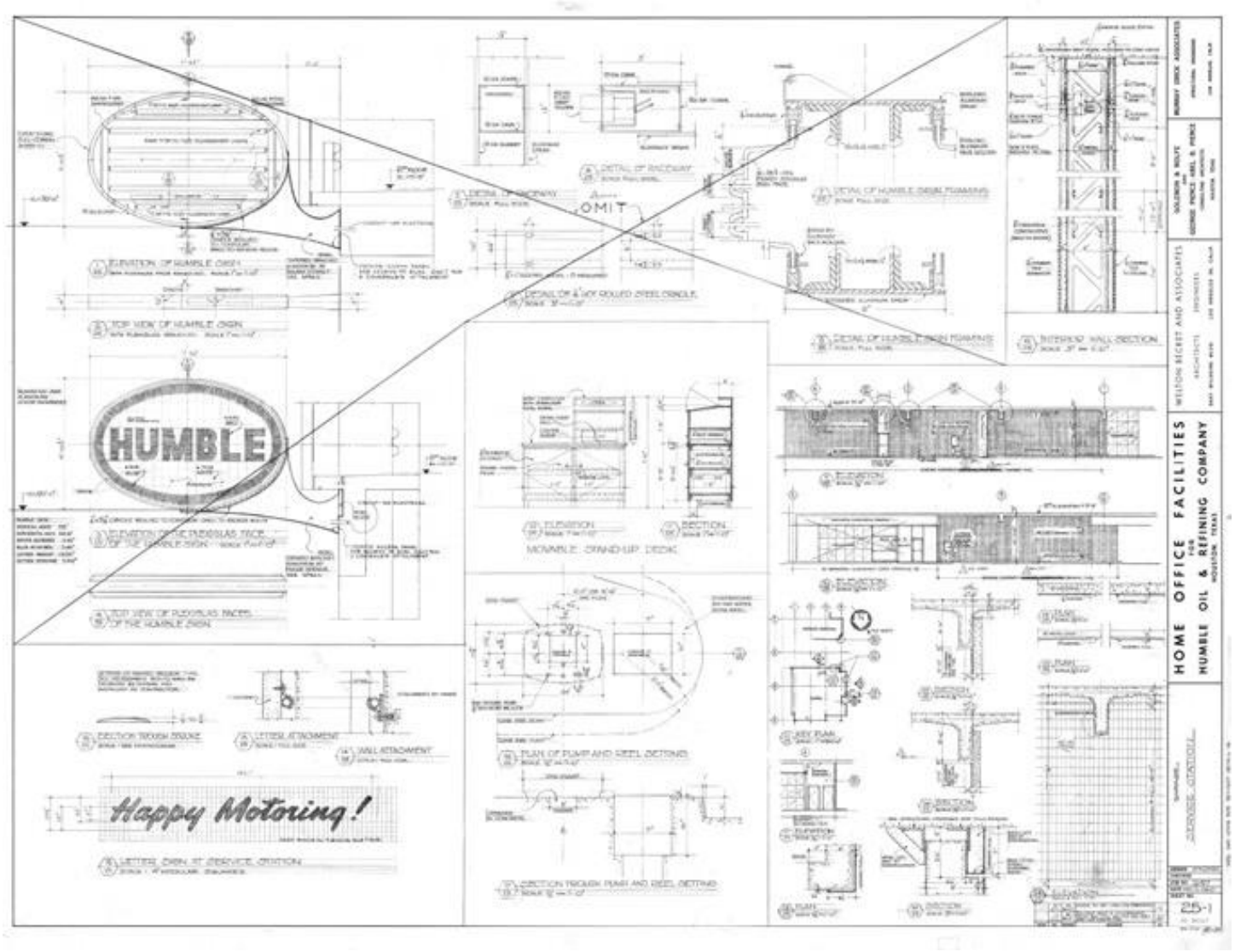


Figure 72
Medical Field School at Fort Sam Houston (San Antonio)
Medical Field Service School, Brooke Army Medical Center (early 1970s) in Fort Sam Houston, Texas.
Courtesy UCLA Library Special Collections.

Figure 73
Medical Field School at Fort Sam Houston (San Antonio)
Medical Field Service School, Brooke Army Medical Center (early 1970s) in Fort Sam Houston, Texas.
Image Courtesy Wikipedia

The headquarters and primary instructional facility of the **AMEDDC&S, HRCoE**, located on the Military Medical Education and Training Campus, Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA) Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Figure 74
South and east elevations, view northwest, photo by Leonid Furmansky, c. 2021.

PHOTOS

Photo 1 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0001)

North and east elevations, view west

Photo 2 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0002)
West and south elevations, view northeast

Photo 3 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0003)
North elevation, view south

Photo 4 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0004)
East and south elevations (southeast corner), view northwest

Photo 5 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0005)
South elevation, view north

Photo 6 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0006)
South and west elevations (southwest corner), view northeast

Photo 7 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0007)
West elevation (southwest corner), view northeast

Photo 8 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0008)
Sun shades, west and south elevations (southwest corner), view northeast

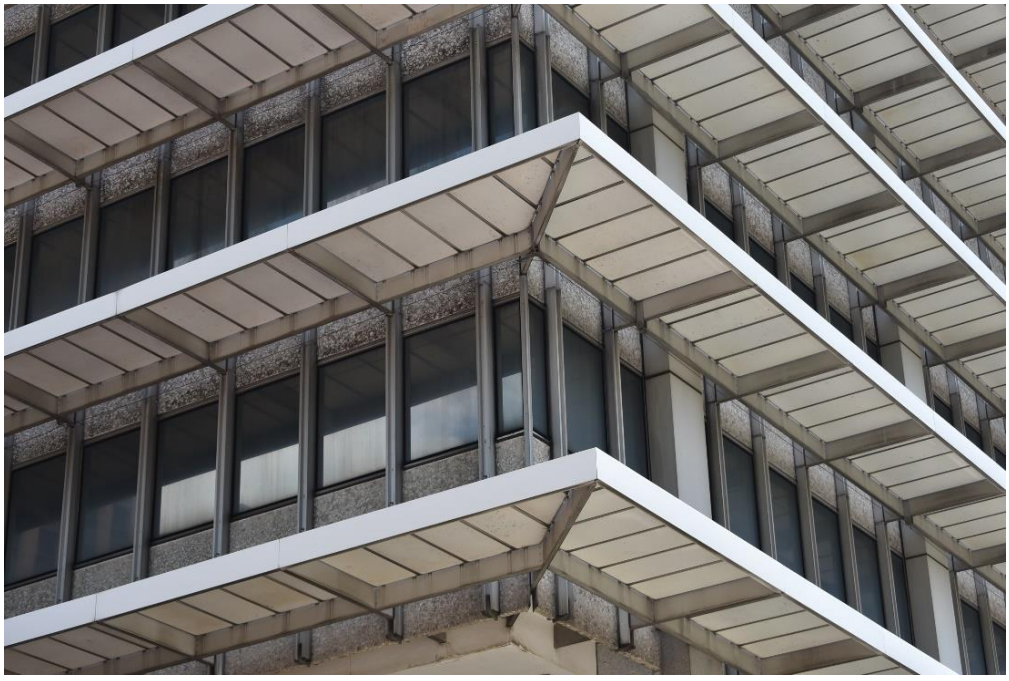


Photo 9 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0009)
Light well/sunken courtyard, north elevation plaza, view southwest

Photo 10 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0010)
North ground floor lobby, view west

Photo 11 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0011)
East ground floor lobby (former Humble Touring Service desk), view southeast

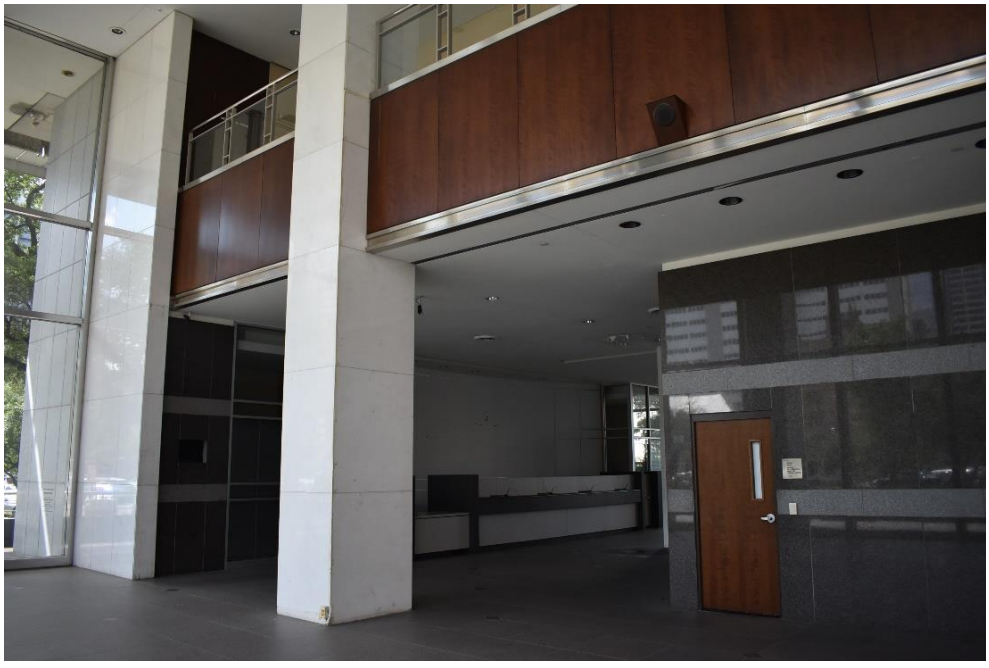


Photo 12 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0012)
South ground floor lobby, view west

Photo 13 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0013)
Ground floor lobby elevator bank, view north

Photo 14 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0014)
Ground floor lobby elevator bank, view northwest

Photo 15 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0015)
South ground floor lobby, view south

Photo 16 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0016)
2nd floor elevator bank, view south

Photo 17 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0017)
2nd floor, northwest corner, view northwest

Photo 18 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0018)
9th floor (mechanical), south corridor, view west

Photo 19 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0019)
11th floor, corner office, view southeast

Photo 20 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0020)
11th floor, south corridor, view west

Photo 21 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0021)
35th floor, east side, view northwest

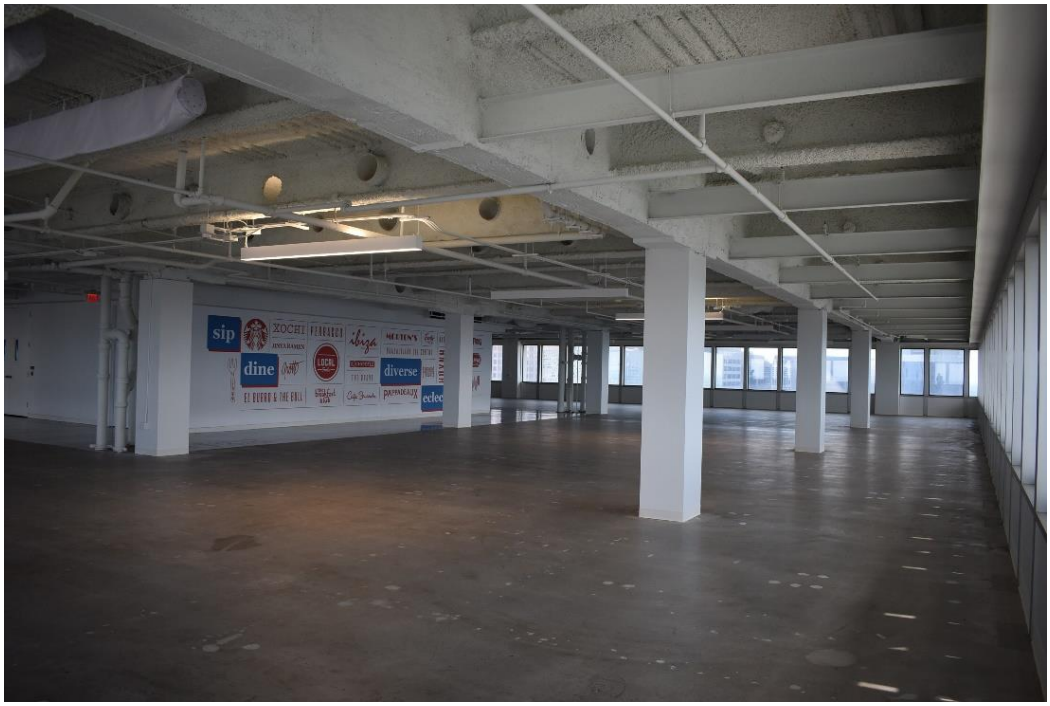


Photo 22 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0022)
42nd floor, executive level elevator bank, view north

Photo 23 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0023)
42nd floor, executive level conference room, view southeast

Photo 24 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0024)
43rd floor, Petroleum Club elevator bank, view southwest

Photo 25 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0025)
43rd floor, Petroleum Club, Petroleum Room, view northeast

Photo 26 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0026)
43rd floor, Petroleum Club, Petroleum Room, view northeast

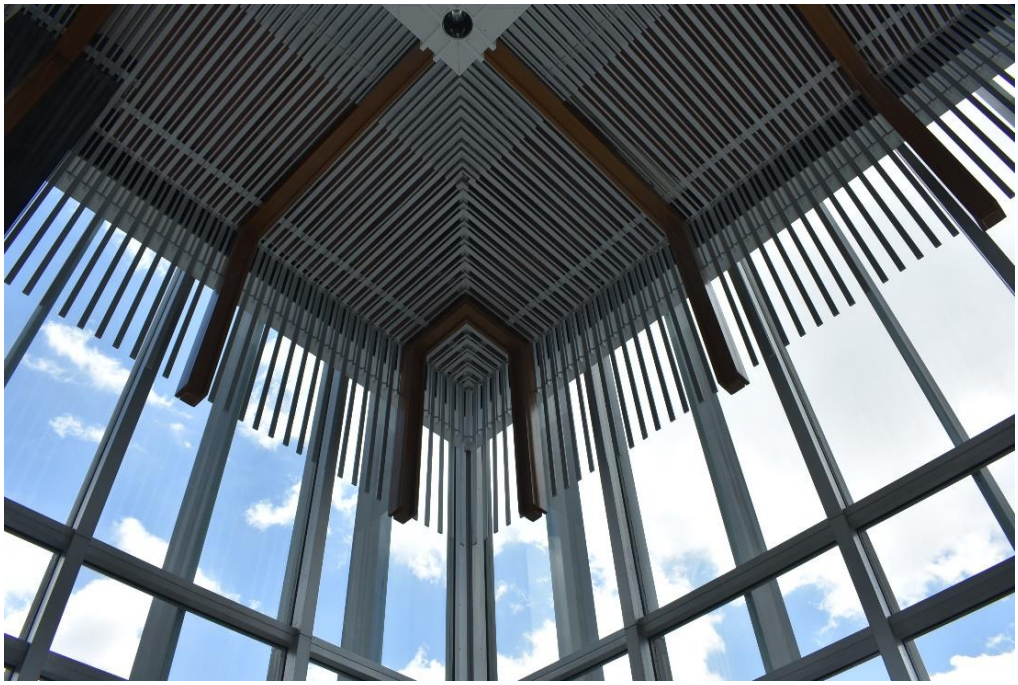


Photo 27 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0027)
45th floor, Exterior of Observation Platform, view east

Photo 28 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0028)
45th floor, Interior Observation Room, view east

Photo 29 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0029)
Concourse, level C, escalators, view south

Photo 30 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0030)
Concourse, level C, light well/sunken courtyard, view north

Photo 31 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0031)
Concourse, level C, cafeteria, view north

Photo 32 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0032)
Concourse, level C, tunnel entry to garage, view west

Photo 33 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0033)
Concourse, level C, tunnel entry to garage, view south

Photo 34 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0034)
Garage, south and east elevations, view northwest

Photo 35 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0035)
Garage, southeast corner, view northwest

Photo 36 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0036)
Garage, south and west elevations, view northeast

Photo 37 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0037)
Garage, north and west elevations, view southeast

Photo 38 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0038)
Garage, north elevation, view south

Photo 39 (TX_HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0039)
Garage interior lobby, view north

Photo 40 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0040)
Garage interior, view northeast

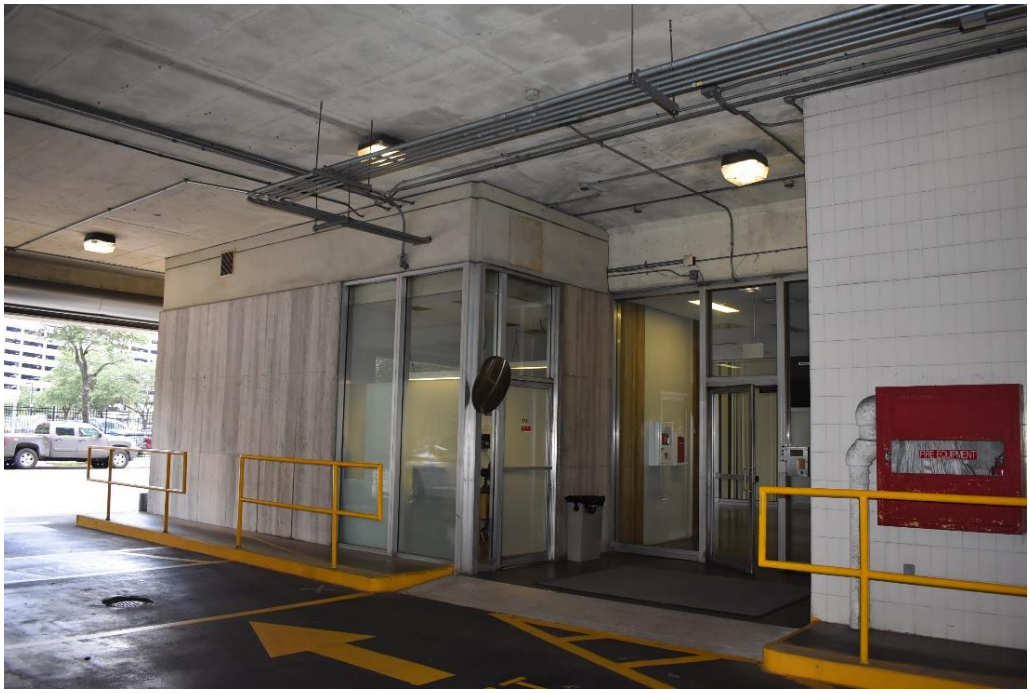


Photo 41 (TX_ HarrisCounty_HumbleExxonBuilding_0041)
Garage interior, view west