

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Sealy, J. L., Building

Other name/site number:

Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 801 S. Main Street

City or town: Fort Worth State: Texas

County: Tarrant

Not for publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐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 ☒ localApplicable National Register Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Mark Wolfe State Historic Preservation Officer 6/24/13
 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: _____

Don Edson H. Beall 8.20.13
 Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

J. L. Sealy Building, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

☒	Private
☐	Public - Local
☐	Public - State
☐	Public - Federal

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: Commerce/Trade: Specialty Store; Domestic: Multiple dwelling

Current Functions: Vacant/Not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification: Other: Two-Part commercial block

Principal Exterior Materials: Brick

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 7-6 through 7-8)

J. L. Sealy Building, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

Criteria Considerations: NA

Areas of Significance: Architecture

Period of Significance: 1916

Significant Dates: 1916

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

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

Architect/Builder: Messer, C.H. (builder)

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 8-9 through 8-13)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheet 9-14)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☒ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

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

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: less than one acre

Coordinates (latitude/longitude coordinates)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 32.736380° Longitude: -97.325610°

Verbal Boundary Description: Block 29, Lot 1, Tucker Addition, Fort Worth

Boundary Justification: The nomination includes all of the property historically associated with the building.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Susan Allen Kline, Historic Preservation Consultant, for Richard N. and Linda H. Claytor

Organization: NA

Street & number: 2421 Shirley Avenue

City or Town: Fort Worth

State: Texas

Zip Code:

76109

Email: sskline@sbcglobal.net

Telephone: 817-921-0127

Date: February 2013

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheet Map-15 through Map-17)

Additional items (see continuation sheets Plan 18 through Plan 20; see continuation sheets Figure-21 through Figure-23)

Photographs (see continuation sheet 5)

J. L. Sealy Building, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Photographs

J. L. Sealy Building

Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Photographed by Susan Allen Kline, April 13, 2012 (except as noted)

Digital Files at the Texas Historical Commission, 1511 Colorado, Austin, TX 78701

Photo 1

Photographer: Steve Kline

Description of Photograph: North elevation (left) and west façade (right), camera facing southeast

Photo 2

Date: February 7, 2013

Description of Photograph: North elevation (left) and west façade (right), camera facing southeast

Photo 3

Date: February 7, 2013

Description of Photograph: West elevation (façade) parapet, camera facing east

Photo 4

Description of Photograph: North elevation, camera facing south

Photo 5

Description of Photograph: Detail of porch on north elevation, camera facing southwest

Photo 6

Description of Photograph: Rear (east) elevation (building on right) with a portion of the east end of the second story of the south elevation showing; camera facing west/northwest

Photo 7

Photographer: Steve Kline

Description of Photograph: South elevation, camera facing north

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

J. L. Sealy Building. Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Narrative Description

The 1916 J. L. Sealy Building is a two-story, brick 2-part commercial block building at the southeast corner of South Main Street and East Leuda Street in south Fort Worth. It was designed with retail and apartment spaces on the first floor and apartments or rooms for rent on the second. This duality of functions is particularly evident on the façade as the first floor contains public spaces consisting of two storefronts separated by a centered entrance that provides access to stairs leading to the second floor. The north elevation is unusual among other extant 2-part commercial block buildings in Fort Worth in that it has an integral porch at its northeast corner that provided access to the building's living spaces. The exterior has been painted white and both the exterior and interior have suffered from deferred maintenance. The building is being rehabilitated for commercial use, utilizing federal preservation tax credits. The NPS approved Part 1 of the tax credit application in June 2012, determining that that building was eligible for listing in the National Register.

South Main Street is one of only two thoroughfares that provide direct access from the South Side to Fort Worth's Central Business District. It follows a slight incline as one travels south. From Vickery Boulevard on the north to Magnolia Avenue on the south, it is mostly lined with 1-part and 2-part commercial block buildings constructed between 1909 and the early 1950s. The South Main Historic District (NR 2009) in the 100 and 200 blocks of South Main Street feature good representations of these styles. Some of the buildings along the street, such as those on the west side of the 700 block of South Main Street, have been altered with the application of metal skins or stucco on the exterior. The east side of the 700 block of South Main Street (immediately to the north of the Sealy Building) has only one building and it is currently vacant. It is one-story, faces South Main Street, and was constructed c. 1939. Formerly, the blocks to the east of the Sealy Building generally were filled with one- and two-story wood-framed houses constructed in the late 1800s-early 1900s. All of the houses on the half block facing Bryan Avenue have been removed with the exception of the c. 1900 one-story Folk Victorian house at the south end. All of the buildings on the blocks between Bryan Avenue, East Terrell Street on the south, Crawford Street on the east and East Cannon Street on the north have been removed. A few single and multiple-family residences remain in the blocks to the west of South Main Street, especially in the vicinity of the Leuda-May Historic District (NR 2005), centered on the 300 block of West Leuda Street between St. Louis and May streets. South of Leuda, South Main Street has several one-story buildings constructed after World War II. One house located across the street on the west side of South Main Street has been converted to a restaurant. At the south end of that block is a large parking lot used for a dairy located in the 900 block of South Main Street.

Façade (west elevation), Photos 1, 2, 3

The façade of the Sealy Building faces west and is approximately 50 feet wide. The first floor is composed of two storefronts. The right (south) storefront has a centered recessed entry with a non-original flush wood door. The bulkheads of the storefront are wood panels. The storefront windows have been boarded over as have the clerestories. A pilaster of brick separates this storefront from the centrally placed pedestrian entrance. A flush wood door covers the opening and the transom above is boarded over. Another brick pilaster separates this entrance from the storefront to the left (north). This storefront also has wood paneled bulkheads and its storefront windows and clerestory are boarded over. But instead of having a centrally placed recessed entrance, it has an entrance at the beveled corner at its north end. This entrance is recessed below the clerestory and second story overhang. The door is a temporary flush wood door. A triangular-shaped concrete stoop fronts this entrance. At its apex is a round cast iron column that supports the second story overhang. The ceiling above the entrance is of wood boxcar siding.

The façade is notable for its decorative brickwork. Brick soldier courses form the lintels above the storefronts and vertical columns of stretcher bricks line the pilasters. At the intersections of the soldier and stretcher courses are small blocks of limestone to add decorative detail. On the second story are three sets of evenly spaced window openings. Within each opening are two 1/1 windows (boarded over). Around each window are the same soldier and stretcher courses and limestone blocks as used on the first floor. Above the center windows is an inset limestone block engraved with the name

J. L. Sealy Building. Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

“J. L. SEALY.” There is a rounded-arched parapet directly above this name block. Set within the arch is a limestone block with the date “1916.” At the north and south ends of the second story are brick pilasters that rise above the roof’s parapet. The outer edges of the pilaster are lined with stretcher courses and terminate with the small stone blocks as used elsewhere on the facade. Decorative brickwork at the top center of each pilaster forms an elongated rectangle that is pierced on the bottom by a block of limestone (the design resembles a squared “Q”).

North elevation, Photos 1, 2, 4, 5

The side elevations are approximately 95 feet long. The north elevation faces East Leuda Street, an asphalt topped street with no curb along the 100 block. The first floor is characterized by the integral porch at the east end and the storefront at the west end that contains a clerestory, narrow storefront window and bulkhead. The porch at the east end of this elevation is several feet above grade and is defined by two square brick columns surmounting a cast stone cap over brick piers. These frame the concrete steps that access the concrete porch floor. Beneath the porch ceiling are one window opening, an entrance that provides access to the first floor, and an entrance that provides access to the stairs to the second floor (all boarded over). On the wall above the porch is an embedded stone block with the name “OCTAVIA” engraved in it. At the first floor level between the porch and the west storefront is one door opening that has been boarded over and two short rectangular window openings (boarded over) that are placed high up on the wall (at the level of the clerestory). The second floor has six window opening filled with paired 1/1 windows (boarded over). A brick header course serves as a continuous sill below the windows. The sides and lintels around the windows are trimmed with the same soldier and stretcher courses found on the façade but without the limestone blocks at the corners. The parapet is trimmed with brick coping and has a step-down above the third window from the east.

East elevation (rear), Photos 4, 6

The rear elevation reveals that the second floor along the south elevation recedes from the first floor a few feet. As a secondary elevation originally facing an alley, the rear of the building lacks the decorative brickwork found on the façade and south elevation. The first floor has two large window openings and an entrance (all boarded over). The second floor has three window/door openings (all boarded over).

South elevation, Photos, 6, 7

As mentioned, the second story wall of this elevation is receded back from the wall of the first story (across all but the southwest corner of the building). This was done to create a light well along the second story should another multi-story building be constructed to its south. The first floor is constructed of brick. It has three window openings of various sizes. The wall of the second story window well was originally covered with iron cladding (according to Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps). It now appears to be covered with asbestos shingles. The second story has five window openings with paired 1/1 windows (boarded over).

Interior

The first floor is divided into two storefronts along the western two-thirds of the building. At the center of the building and leading from the street entrance is a wooden staircase that provides access to the second story (Figure 2). There are openings in the center partition that provide access to either half of the building. The original flooring in the two storefronts has been removed and replaced with concrete. Pressed-tin ceilings are found in both storefronts (Figure 1). Some plaster along the outer walls has been removed exposing the brick. There is a restroom at the rear of the north storefront. The eastern third of the building roughly corresponds to the location of first floor apartments that are shown in the 1926 and 1951 Sanborn Maps. This area is at a higher elevation than the western two-thirds of the first floor. Extending from the southern storefront and encroaching into this area is an open space that resembles a stage although its

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origins have not been determined. The remainder of the eastern portion of the first floor is divided into rooms of various sizes that include a kitchen and a restroom. These spaces have dropped or sheetrock ceilings and wood veneer paneling covers many of the walls. The floor in some areas is covered with linoleum. An enclosed stairwell is located off of the westernmost door under the porch. It provides access to the second floor.

The second floor is characterized by a center corridor that is framed by apartment units on all sides (Figure 3). There are two skylights in the ceiling above the corridor (these are currently boarded over and there is much ceiling damage in this area). There are two shower rooms that encroach into the corridor with a French door leading to each room (glass panes are painted). To the south of the shower rooms is a common bathroom.

At the west end of the corridor is the stairwell that leads to the first floor's South Main Street entrance. Framing it on the south side is a simple wood balustrade. The wood balustrade that would have been on the north side of the stairwell has been removed. Northeast of the shower rooms is the stairwell that provides access to the Leuda Street entrance. It is lined by the same simple wood balustrade as that used for the west stairway.

Because some units have multiple rooms, the exact number of units varies but currently they are arranged as eight units. Each typically has a small corner sink but no bathroom facilities (Figures 4 and 5). The northwest unit has a kitchen with metal cabinets. Ceilings are plaster on lathe. There are plaster on-lathe interior walls and the outer walls have plaster applied directly to the brick. There are places where the brick walls are exposed. The walls of some units have been sheathed with wood veneer paneling.

Alterations

A 1926 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map reveals that the building had a fixed awning across the façade that also wrapped around to north elevation. By 1951, this awning had been removed. It is known that South Main Street was widened c. 1929-1930 and it may be that the awning was removed at that time.¹ That same map indicates that the light well on the second story of the south elevation was originally covered with iron cladding. It is now sheathed with asbestos shingles.

A c. 1985 photograph reveals that the north corner of the building was enclosed instead of having the cast iron column and beveled corner entrance that is there now. The photograph suggests that the first floor wall that enclosed the northwest corner (where the beveled entrance currently is) was not of brick, suggesting that it was a later alteration. The brick walls were not painted at the time of the photograph. The building had been painted and the storefronts revealed by the time the current owners purchased it in 1998.

The J. L. Sealy Building is a good local example of a 2-part commercial block building. Although it is boarded up, the exterior has been painted, and the interior is in a deteriorated condition, it retains a high degree of integrity, including the attributes of location, materials, design, workmanship, and feeling. Its location remains the same but its setting has changed with the demolition of buildings immediately behind it and in the general vicinity but the surrounding area retains a mixture of commercial and residential buildings as it did in 1916 (the year it was constructed). As a vacant building, it lacks an association with its historic function but this can be remedied with its rehabilitation. Many of the original materials remain as well as the details of its design and workmanship, partially on the exterior and the second floor. These details contribute to its sense of feeling as a historic building.

¹ "South Main" file, Star-Telegram Clippings Files, File #AR406-7-61-69, Special Collections Division, University of Texas at Arlington Library, Arlington, Texas.

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Statement of Significance

The Sealy Building is nominated to the National Register at the local level of significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a good local example of a 2-part commercial block building in the near South Side of Fort Worth, Texas. The building was constructed in 1916 and displays the characteristics of this building type: a multi-story building (in this case, two-story constructed of brick) with a differentiated façade reflecting the private and public uses of the building. Contractor C. H. Messer constructed the building for J. L. Sealy, a butcher, who operated a grocery in one of the façade's two storefronts. The storefronts are separated by a centered entrance that leads to the second story. The second story was used for apartments or as a transient hotel. This private function is reflected through the use of smaller window openings that were filled with 1/1 wood windows. The rear of the first floor was also used for apartments. A unique feature is an integral porch on the east end of the north elevation that provided access to the first floor apartments and a stairwell that leads to the apartments on the second floor. The building is located on South Main Street, less than a mile from the Central Business District. The period of significance is 1916, the year the building was constructed.

Fort Worth is at the confluence of the Clear and West Forks of the Trinity River in North Central Texas. The confluence was chosen as a strategic location for a military camp in 1849. Although initially established by the river, the fort was soon relocated to the bluff overlooking the river. The military stayed until 1853 when the army moved westward with the ever-expanding Anglo-American frontier. The remnants of the outpost known as Fort Worth became home to a hardy bunch of immigrants who had established a settlement on its periphery. In 1856, Fort Worth became the county seat of Tarrant County following the outcome of a questionable election. Fort Worth's title of county seat was reaffirmed in another election in 1860. By that year, the city had a population of 450. But as the Civil War enveloped the nation, the community's population dropped to half of that figure. Following the war, Fort Worth re-established its footing and developed into a cattle trading center as the community benefitted from its proximity to Indian Territory. As cowboys, gamblers and drifters took root in Hell's Half Acre, a multi-block area home to saloons and brothels (centered in the area of today's Convention Center), Fort Worth gained a reputation as one of Texas's wildest towns. Even after the cattle drives ended and with numerous reform efforts, many of these establishments survived into the early years of the Twentieth Century.²

Fort Worth was incorporated as a city in 1873. By then, the Texas & Pacific Railway line was within 24 miles of the city. Fort Worth's population had grown to 3,000. Telegraph lines reached the city and the publication of its first newspaper began that year. Because of the ensuing financial crisis, the railroad line did not reach the city until 1876. By the turn of the Twentieth Century, the city had a population of 26,000 and was crossed by a web of railroad tracks. Access to distant markets contributed to an expanding economic base.³

Fort Worth's Near South Side

Fort Worth's physical development was greatly influenced by its geography. The Central Business District and early neighborhoods were mostly contained within an area defined by the Clear Fork of the Trinity River on the west and the Trinity River on the north and east. The biggest barrier to expansion to the south was the Texas & Pacific Railway reservation but it proved to be surmountable. Residential development south of the tracks began to pick up in the 1880s.

² Carol Roark, *Fort Worth Central Business District: Tarrant County Historic Resources Survey* (Fort Worth: Historic Preservation Council for Tarrant County, 1991), 5; Richard F. Selcer, "Hell's Half Acre, Fort Worth," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hph01>), accessed July 16, 2012. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

³ "Fort Worth, Texas," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hph01>), accessed August 20, 2008. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

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Through three major annexations in 1890 and 1891, the city's southern limits were expanded to Jessamine Street, now the southern boundary of Fort Worth's largest historic district, the Fairmount-Southside Historic District (NR 1990 with a boundary increase in 1999).⁴

The city experienced a great economic boon with the establishment of the Swift and Armour packing plants in North Fort Worth in 1902. By 1910, the city's population had increased to 73,312, including residents of North Fort Worth as that community was annexed into the city in 1909. Although the stockyards were located in North Fort Worth, a complimentary growth occurred in southern sections of the city. South Side neighborhoods were served by streetcar lines, including a line that traveled from the Central Business District down Main Street and across the Texas & Pacific tracks. From there, it continued down South Main Street to Magnolia Avenue (five blocks south of the nominated property) where it turned west. The line then continued approximately one mile to Henderson Street and then north to West Daggett Street, and then east to Jennings Avenue where it connected with another line from the Central Business District. Other branches took travelers further south.

Early Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps indicate that South Main Street was largely residential. But with the growth of the South Side, businesses began to pop up along the major transportation routes, including South Main Street. Most of these early buildings were of frame construction and were generally one-story. They were later replaced by more substantial one-, two-, or three-story buildings typically constructed of brick.

On April 3, 1909, a twenty block area on the city's South Side was destroyed by fire. Rebuilding began immediately with many of the buildings, both commercial and residential, built of brick. This included a commercial area centered on South Main Street (and approximately six blocks north of the nominated building). The new construction likely influenced property owners south of the fire district to improve their buildings in order to remain competitive and contributed to the further transformation of South Main Street from residential to commercial.

J. L. Sealy and the Construction of the Sealy Building

J. L. (James Larkin) Sealy was the son of Jane and Samuel Sealy, early pioneers of the city. He was born on August 15, 1868 in a two-room log cabin off of the old Mansfield Road approximately twelve miles south of the Central Business District. As a young man, he delivered newspapers for the *Fort Worth Gazette* (published in the morning) and the *Fort Worth Democrat* (published in the evening) and later delivered newspapers for the *Fort Worth Star* (a morning paper) and the *Fort Worth Telegram* (published in the evening). He was then employed as a delivery man for a meat market. He established his own meat market c. 1896.⁵

On November 13, 1899, Sealy purchased a portion of Block 29 of the Tucker Addition from Jerry F. Ellis for \$600. This parcel was located at the southeast corner of South Main Street and what is now East Leuda Street. The price suggests that there were no substantial improvements on the property at that time. The 1911 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map depicts three buildings on the lot. The north structure was a one-story commercial building with an awning or fixed canopy across the front. Its address was listed as 801 S. Main Street (previously considered 901 S. Main Street) and it was from this location that Sealy operated his meat market. Behind it was a one- and one-half-story barn or stable which likely housed Sealy's delivery vehicle and any associated livestock. South of the store was a narrow one-story dwelling with an address of 803

⁵ "Mrs. Sealy, Widow of Pioneer Builder, Dies," *Dallas Morning News*, August 7, 1929; "Meat Market Sold Buffalo Back in 1885," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, October 30, 1949 (morning edition) and Delbert Bailey, "Resident, 90, Believes He's Oldest City Native," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, March 2, 1958 (evening edition), Fort Worth Star-Telegram Clippings Collection, Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington Library, Arlington, Texas.

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S. Main Street. A city directory indicates that Sealy lived at this address in 1914. All three of these buildings were likely constructed of wood.⁶

On April 19, 1916, J. L. Sealy and his wife, Mattie (or Martha), executed a Mechanic's Lien with contractor C. H. Messer for the construction of a "two story brick business and apartment building" at the South Main Street location for a cost of \$12,500. The document stated that the building was to be completed by July 20, 1916. The *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* posted a building permit for 801 S. Main Street for a "Two-story brick rooming house and store" on May 10, 1916. From these two records, it is clear that the intended function included a residential component.⁷

As mentioned, Fort Worth experienced a dramatic population growth in the early decades of the Twentieth Century, causing a demand for more housing. Using the upper stories of commercial buildings on South Main Street for apartments or hotels was a common occurrence (such as in the South Main Historic District located six blocks north). However, the Sealy Building is a unique example in Fort Worth's near South Side in that the residential use of the building is also emphasized through the use of the integral porch on the East Leuda Street (north) elevation. This porch provided access to the living spaces on both the first and second floors. Engraved in a stone block above the porch is the name "Octavia." The apartments/hotel at this location operated under such names as Hotel Octavia, Greendale Inn, and Dyer Hotel.

Advertisements for rooms for rent in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* provide clues as to how the living quarters were used. An ad from February 23, 1917 reads "Nicely furnished room, with or without board, hot and cold water in all rooms, price reasonable. 801½ South Main." Another ad from August 2, 1917 reads "The Octavia Apartment at 801½ South Main is now open for roomers and boarders. Every room is an outside room with hot and cold water in every room. All we ask is to give us a trial. Mrs. M.O. Sealy, Prop." In 1919, the hotel was called the Greendale Inn and an ad for it stated "Attention transient or weekly, nice cozy outside rooms with hot and cold running water in a homey apartment hotel; just thoroughly renovated, operating under new management, walking distance. Dollar a day, five a week." Another ad for the Greendale Inn mentioned that it provided "a comfortable home for ladies and gentlemen." By 1921, the name "Hotel Octavia" was in use. Room and board could be had for ten dollars a week with home cooking available and hot biscuits offered three times a day. Residents had the benefit of a street car passing every five minutes.⁸

The Seals owned the completed building for a short period, selling to the United Benevolent Association on August 25, 1917 for \$10,492.35. A few months later the association sold it to C. R. Eversburg for \$11,396.40. The property moved through a rapid succession of owners through the 1920s. In late 1920, Lon W. Evans purchased the building from N. M. and Kittie Gay. Evans moved his Cash Drug Store from 514 S. Main Street to this location. The *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* reported that "The new corner location and thoroughly modern fixtures places the store among the most progressive on the South Side." Evans sold the store to Frank Stangl later that spring but retained ownership of the building until he sold it for \$25,000 to M.W. Hovenkamp in July 1922.⁹

⁶ Jerry F. Ellis to J. L. Sealy, Warranty Deed, Volume 96, Page 391, November 13, 1899, Tarrant County Clerk's Office, Fort Worth, Texas; Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1911, Volume 2, Sheet 145; Notations on occupants of 801 and 803 S. Main taken from city directories published by Morrison and Fourmy, 1905-1906 to 1932, located in "801 S. Main Street" file, Tarrant County Historic Resource Survey, Preservation Resource Center, Historic Fort Worth, Fort Worth, Texas [hereafter cited as "801 S. Main Street" file].

⁷ J. L. Sealy to C. H. Messer, Mechanic's Lien Contract, executed April 19, 1916, Volume 34, Page 565, Tarrant County Clerk's Office, Fort Worth, Texas; *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, May 10, 1916.

⁸ *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, February 23 and August 2, 1917, March 26 and May 16, 1919, May 14, 1921. The frequent changes to establishment names may attest to volatility in the operation of such a business. Mrs. M. O. Sealy may have been J.L. Sealy's wife, Martha (or Mattie). Perhaps her middle name was Octavia.

⁹ Deed Records, Volume 533, Page 275, August 25, 1917 and Volume 534, Page 379, November 16, 1917; Deed Records, Volume 696, Page 533, December 15, 1920; "Cash Drug Store Moves," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, April 16, 1921; Deed Records, Volume 698, Page 515-16. Mr. Sealy continues to operate a grocery store/meat market at various locations after the sale of 801 S. Main Street.

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A later owner of the building was Dr. George T. Veal (1861-1944). Veal was a charter member of the Dallas County Medical Society. He later moved to Roswell, New Mexico where he served as mayor and as a member of the state legislature. He then moved to El Paso County, Texas and lived there until his death.¹⁰ In 1930, ownership of the Sealy Building transferred to Veal's wife, Minnie Slaughter Veal, the daughter of cattleman C. C. Slaughter. Mrs. Veal was a well-known figure in numerous Baptist organizations. She contributed to many church-related institutions, including a gift of forty thousand dollars that she and her three sisters gave for the construction of the Col. C. C. Slaughter Chapel at the First Baptist Church of Dallas. She died in Dallas in 1955 at the age of 91. Shortly after her husband's death in 1944, Mrs. Veal sold the property to Walter and Deloris Inez Lewis. The Lewises sold it to George L. and Mary Vitek in 1974. The Viteks sold the property to Thomas N. Baker in 1985.¹¹

Over the years, tenants of the storefronts have included Sealy's Market (its proprietor, J. L. Sealy, was the building's namesake and was responsible for its construction), Stangl Drugs, Young Drugs, Lehr System Signs, Publix Cleaners and Dyers, and Watson Furniture and Stove Company. A later tenant fondly remembered by many was Vitek's Kolache Bakery. The Viteks had purchased the building in 1974 and operated the bakery in the rear of the building until 1985 when the building was sold.¹² The present owners purchased the building in 1998.¹³ It is currently vacant.

Architectural Significance of the Sealy Building

The J. L. Sealy Building is an excellent local example of a 2-part commercial block building. Constructed in 1916, the building was conceived and executed as a multi-purpose structure with commercial (public) and residential (private) functions. Facing South Main Street and situated at a corner location, the building's commercial and residential functions are very evident through its composition.

As defined by architectural historian Richard Longstreth in his book *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture*, the 2-part commercial block is the most common building type used for small and medium sized buildings between the 1850s and 1950s. Typically two to four stories in height, these buildings are noted for a horizontal division of two distinct zones. This division reflects a differentiation of the inside use of the building. At street level, the first floor is used for public spaces such as retail establishments. The upper floors are used for private functions such as offices, hotel rooms and apartments, or meeting halls.¹⁴ The Sealy building displays this duality of functions with storefronts on the façade and paired 1/1 windows on the second floor corresponding with individual apartment units. However, the building is unique for the incorporation of an integral porch on a secondary elevation, further highlighting the residential (or private) use of the building. Windshield surveys of the Near South Side underscore its rarity as no extant 2-part commercial block buildings with the same feature have been encountered.

Little information has been found on the building's contractor, C. H. (Charles Harvey) Messer. He was born on April 21, 1879 in Texas. Information in the 1910 and 1920 U.S. Census lists his occupation as a carpenter (the general nature of his occupation was listed as "House.") Fort Worth city directories also identify him as a carpenter. References to several

¹⁰ "Dr. G. T. Veal, Pioneer Here, Dies at Fabens," *Dallas Morning News*, April 23, 1944, http://infoweb.newsbank.com/gbnl/newspapers/doc/v2%3A0F99DDB671832188%40GBL_... (accessed October 4, 2012).

¹¹ Affidavit dated October 19, 1944, Deed Records, Volume 1672, Page 306, copy found in "801 S. Main Street" file; "Mrs. Minnie S. Veal, Baptist Leader, Dies," *Dallas Morning News*, October 21, 1955, http://infoweb.newsbank.com/gbnl/newspapers/doc/v2%3A0F99DDB671832188%40GBL_... (accessed October 4, 2012); Tarrant County (Texas), Assessor's Abstract of City Property, Tucker Addition, City of Fort Worth, Lot 1, Block 29.

¹² Madeline Williams, "'Kolache Lady' Closes Her Store and FW Hostesses Mourn Loss," *Fort Worth News-Tribune*, April 12, 1985, article found in "801 S. Main" file.

¹³ Tarrant Appraisal District Records for 801 S. Main St, Fort Worth, available at www.tad.org (accessed November 28, 2012).

¹⁴ Richard Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture* (Washington, D.C.: Preservation Press, 1987), 24.

J. L. Sealy Building. Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

building permits have been found for projects with which he was associated. In the spring of 1915 he was listed as the contractor on a building permit for a brick garage for Frank Matringa in the 400 block of Lipscomb Street at a cost of \$4,000. Also in 1915, he was the contractor for a nine-room, two-story wooden residence at 1633 Washington Avenue for Felix Z. Gaither at a cost of \$3,000. It's also believed that Messer took out a building permit for repairs to his own residence around the same time a permit was issued for the Sealy Building. Messer died on August 6, 1930 at the age of 51.¹⁵

The Sealy Building was designated as a City of Fort Worth Historic and Cultural Landmark in 1999, in part, for its architectural and historical significance as an example of a commercial building on the city's South Side. In 2000, the Texas Historical Commission rendered an opinion that the building was eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a good example of a 2-part commercial block. In 2012, the National Park Service approved a Part 1 application for the Federal Investment Tax Credit for the rehabilitation of the building. Rehabilitation plans for the building have been placed on hold.

As an excellent local example of a 2-part commercial block building, the J.L. Sealy Building is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The period of significance in 1916, the year it was constructed.

¹⁵ Standard Certificate of Death #41678, August 9, 1930, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Texas State Department of Health; Messer, Chas. H. (1910 U.S. Census), Texas, Tarrant, 5-WD Fort Worth; Series T624, Roll 1591, Page 128 and Messer, Charlie H. (1920 U.S. Census), Texas, Tarrant, 5-WD Fort Worth, Series T625, Roll 1849, Page 80, both records courtesy Heritage Quest Online (<http://persi.heritagequestonline.com>); 1918 Morrison & Fourmy Fort Worth City Directory; *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, May 30 and October 21, 1915, May 10, 1916.

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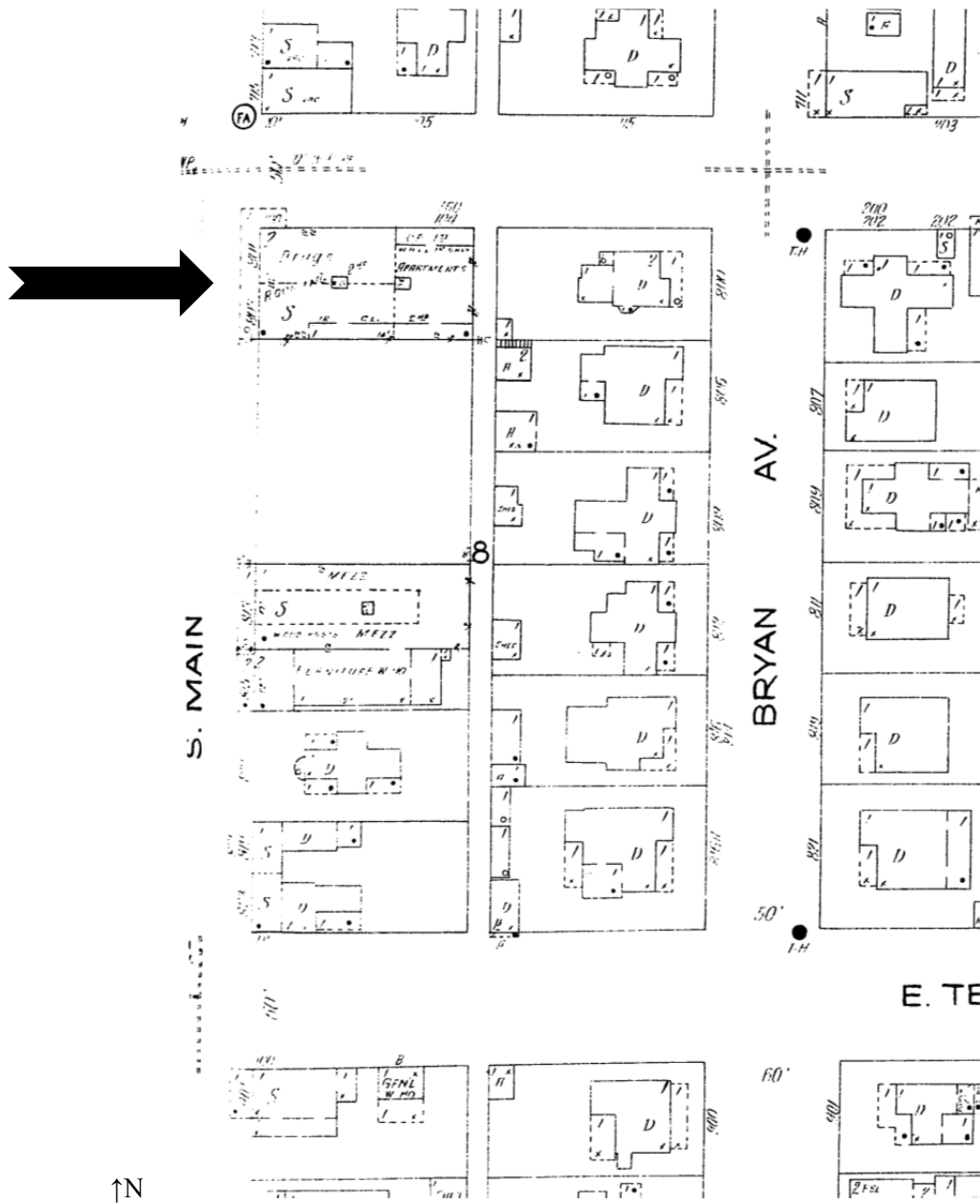
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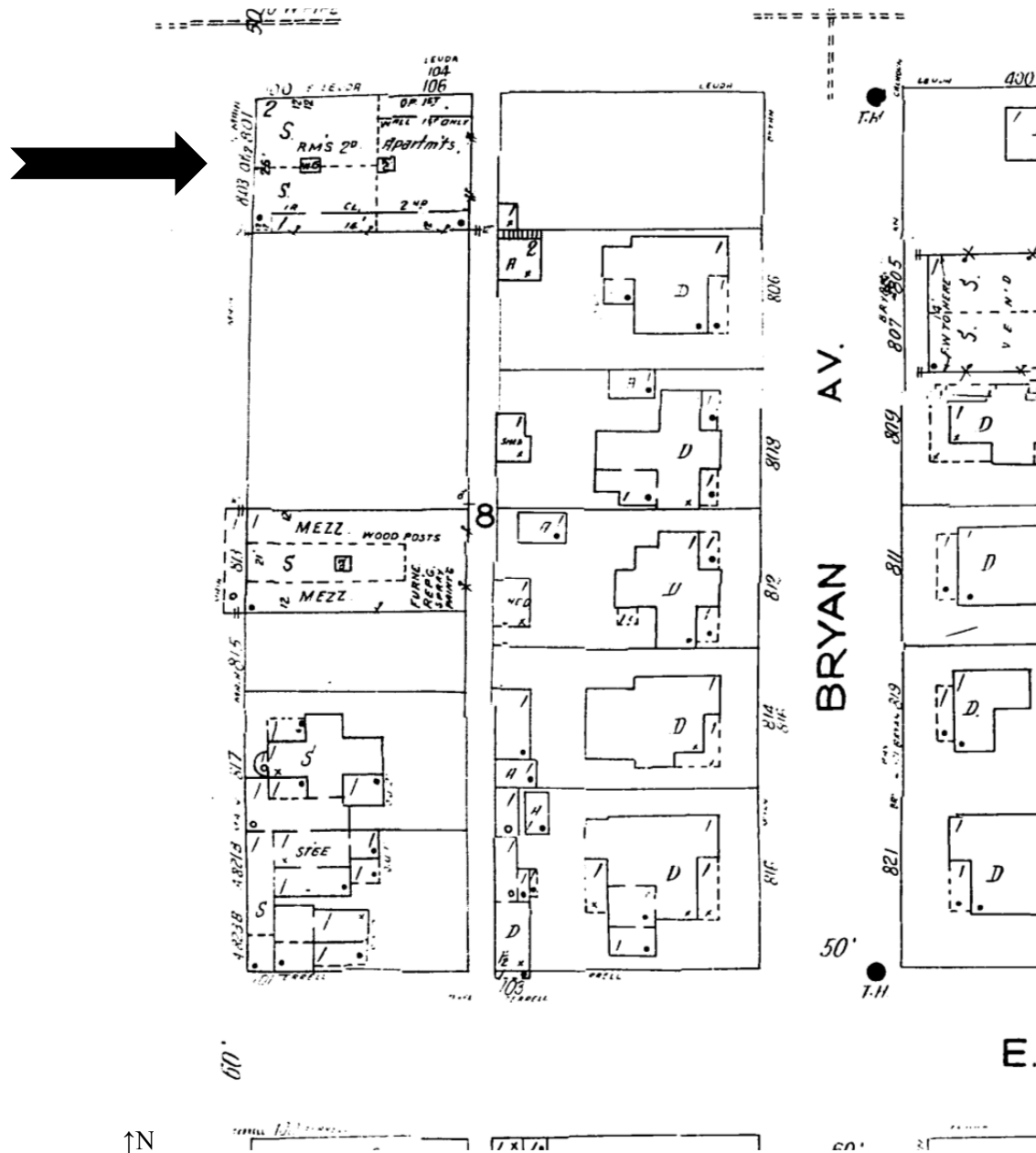
Map 1: 801 S. Main Street, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas 76104. Courtesy Google Earth.

J. L. Sealy Building. Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas



Map 2: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, Fort Worth, Texas, Volume 2, Sheet 257, 1926.

J. L. Sealy Building. Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas



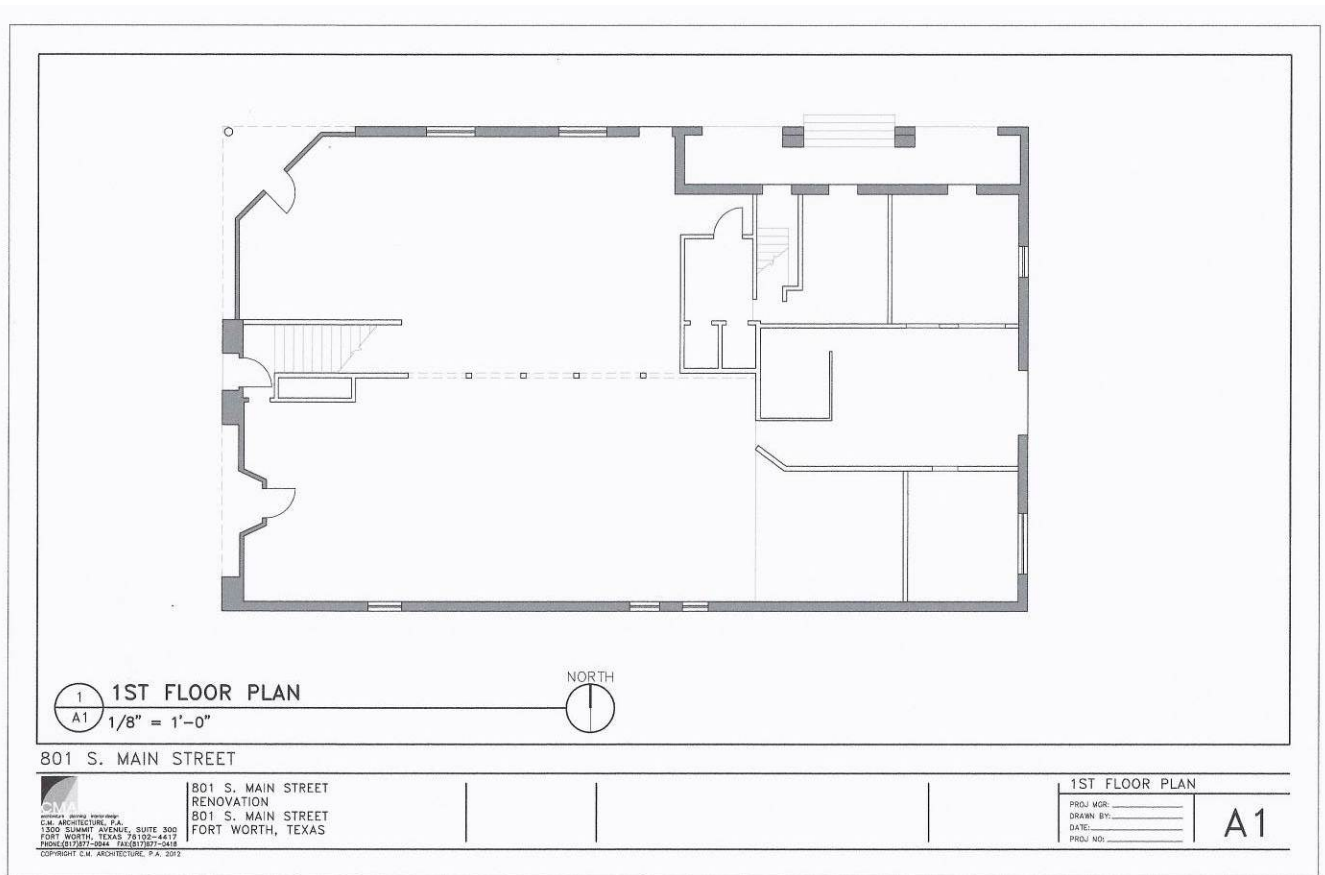
Map 3: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, Fort Worth, Texas, Volume 2, Sheet 257, 1951.

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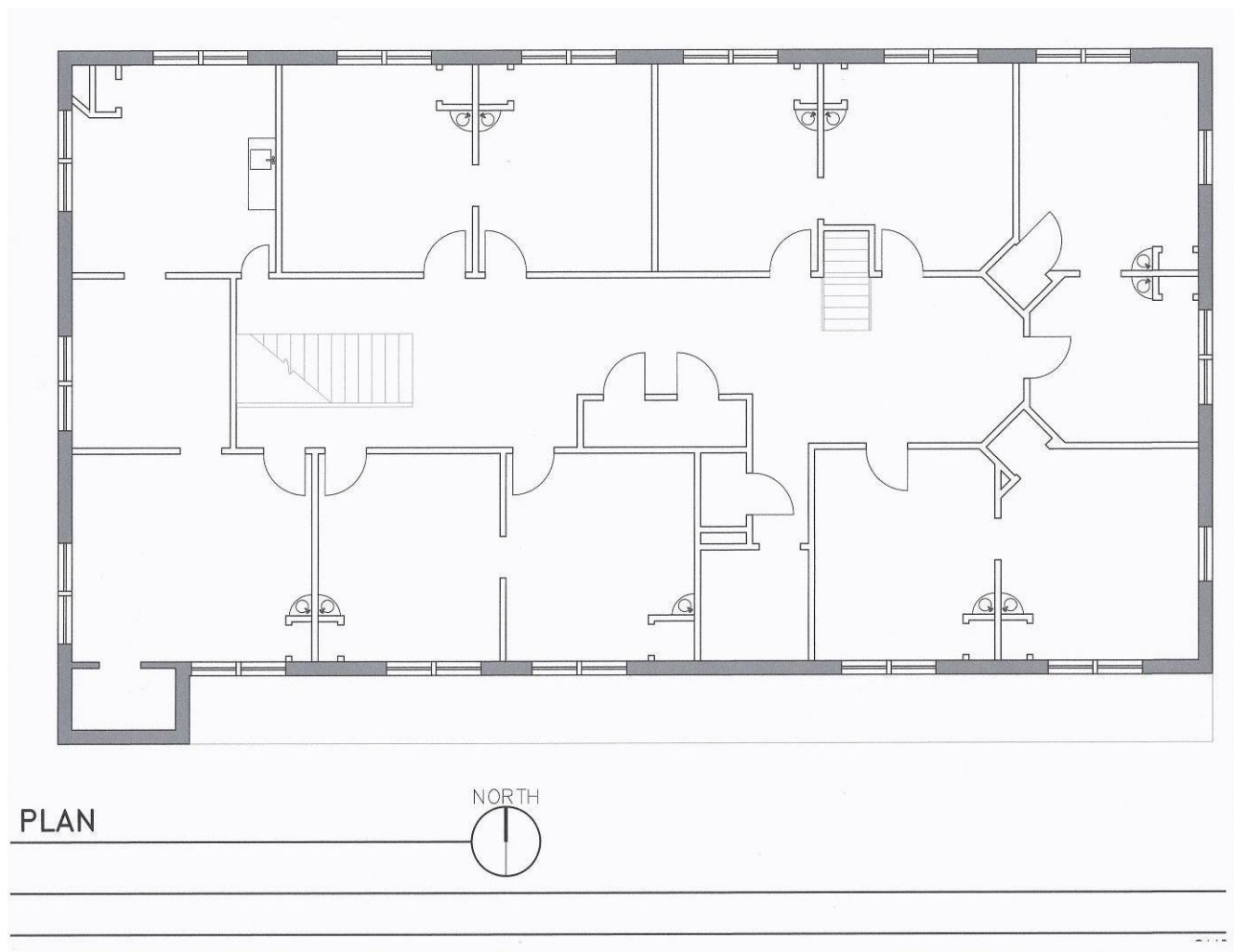
Plan 1: Sealy Building, 801 S. Main Street, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas, Exterior Elevations. *Courtesy CMA Architecture.*

J. L. Sealy Building. Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas



Plan 2: Sealy Building, 801 S. Main Street, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas, First Floor Interior. *Courtesy CMA Architecture.*

J. L. Sealy Building. Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas



Plan 3: Sealy Building, 801 S. Main Street, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas, Second Floor Interior. *Courtesy CMA Architecture.*

J. L. Sealy Building. Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas



Figure 1: Interior, first floor, north storefront looking west toward beveled entrance. Photographer: Steve Kline, April 13, 2012.



Figure 2: Interior, west stairs to second floor. Photographer: Kris Calvert, CMA Architecture, November 2009.

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Figure 3: Second floor, central hall, looking west. Photographer: Kris Calvert, CMA Architecture, November 2009.



Figure 4: Second floor, typical apartment unit. Photographer: Kris Calvert, CMA Architecture, November 2009.

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Figure 5: Second floor, typical apartment unit. Photographer: Kris Calvert, CMA Architecture, November 2009.



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