

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

JAN 06 1994

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name LeClaire Hotel  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number 19th Street and 5th Avenue [ ] not for publication  
city or town Moline [ ] vicinity  
state Illinois code IL county Rock Island code 161 zip code 61265

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

William L. Wheeler (SHPO) 12-20-93  
Signature of certifying official/Title

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register  
See continuation sheet [ ].
- determined eligible for the  
National Register  
See continuation sheet [ ].
- determined not eligible for the  
National Register.
- removed from the  
National Register
- other, explain  
See continuation sheet [ ].

Signature of the Keeper Guylaine Laporte entered in the National Register Date 2/4/94

### 5. Classification

#### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

#### Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

#### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not count previously listed resources.)

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

#### Name of related multiple property listing.

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

N/A

#### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

N/A

### 6. Function or Use

#### Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/hotel

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty stores

COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### 7. Description

#### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Style

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls stone

brick

roof asphalt

other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Narrative Description

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



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Description

Lying at the heart of Moline's central business district the historic LeClaire Hotel (built between 1921-22) embodies the spirit of early twentieth century civic development (Photo 1-2). The culmination of a decade-long effort to secure a downtown commercial hotel, the LeClaire is a tangible symbol of a community based undertaking prompted by Moline's desire to vie with other Quad-Cities communities in attracting business to a vibrant city center. The building, though lacking significant architectural distinction, still reflects the culmination of important progressive architectural innovations in design and construction manifested on the local level. An important element reflecting a pattern of events in Moline's early twentieth century urban development, this building's presence still has a substantial visual impact on even the casual viewer, its presence readily identifying the hotel area as part of the main business district of the town. Substantive aspects of integrity remain including location, setting, materials and workmanship, and the essentials of its architectural character remain. Most strongly, the aspects of feeling and association, chronicled in local newspapers, are intact, and have preserved the building despite several abortive attempts to revitalize its commercial prominence or adaptively use it. This section describes the architectural character of the one contributing building being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

Location and Setting

Downtown Moline obliquely faces the Mississippi River front on the south side of the river (Figure 1). In the nineteenth century the town site was seen as advantageous for impounding water for water-powered mills, hence the town's name, a corruption of the French *moulin*, or mill town (see Section 8, Statement of Significance). Today the Mississippi River immediately north of downtown branches around the north and south sides of easternmost Arsenal Island, forming the main river course and the Moline pool, a backwater impoundment formed by two small dams and Sylvan Island on the south side of Arsenal Island. This small impoundment drains into Sylvan Slough to the west of the dams and the water then returns to the Mississippi on the western end of Arsenal Island.

Moline's downtown plat aligns itself parallel the river course, with its avenues aligned along a southwest-northeast axis, and the streets along a southeast to the northwest orientation (Figure 2). Nowadays the orientation of this plat, dating to the original village plat laid out in 1843, is distinctly bounded by Fifth Street on the west, Seventh Avenue on the south and Twenty-third Street on the east, where an expanding grid oriented to the cardinal directions is subsequently found. The LeClaire Hotel is sited among the narrow rectangular lots of the eastern side of downtown Moline, immediately adjacent the raised overpass of Interstate-74 and proximate the trans-Mississippi Memorial Bridge. The hotel sits upon Lot 7 of Block 5 of Wood's Second

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Addition, on the northwest corner of the intersection formed by Fifth Avenue and Nineteenth Street (Figure 3). It lies within the NE¼ of Section 32, Township 18N-Range 1W (Davenport, Iowa-III 7.5' quadrangle). The hotel rises 168 ft from the its foundation mounted on the floodplain terrace (approx. elevation 575 ft) adjacent the river to a height surpassing the hilltops (approx. elevation 690 ft) flanking the south side of the river above the floodplain; thus, the building site and its height combine to make it a prominent visual landmark in the city. The setting of the building can be characterized as urban space, though the Moline commercial district has seen its share of demolition which has reduced the density significantly through time. When built the hotel was part of a nearly uninterrupted pattern of commercial properties lined along Moline's 5th Street (e.g. Figure 4). Due to demolition the building now sits on the peripheries of the eastern downtown. In this respect the hotel and neighboring John Deere Center on 19th Street form a logical boundary for the downtown; correspondingly, this tall multi-story building forms an anchor for the east side of the downtown commercial district (Figure 10).

Integrity of location is wholly intact. This is important to understanding why the building was sited here. It was closely tied to two important patterns of events; the transportation revolution and commercial development of downtown Moline. The railroad corridor traversing downtown Moline on a east-west axis was immediately north of the LeClaire (Figure 4). Two railroad stations, the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific, and the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy were one block west, and one block north, respectively, of the hotel. U.S. Route 6, a major highway linking Chicago and the greater Midwest ran down 19th Street to the Iowa-Illinois Memorial Bridge. The site was ideally suited for a hotel in a time when rail traffic still played a prominent role in American business travel and automobile travel was beginning to emerge as a viable alternative.

**Physical characteristics**

The LeClaire Hotel features a rectangular ground plan built on a standard size Moline commercial urban lot (80 ft x 150 ft); the building's exterior dimensions are 68'-6" by 150'. From ground level the building tower rises fifteen stories to a height of 168 feet. The hotel is a clear example of the three-part vertical block well described by Richard Longstreth (92-99). The LeClaire Hotel building can be classified as representing Commercial Style architecture. Actually, Commercial Style architecture is an identifiable type as opposed to an aesthetically recognizable style, with ornamentation (if any) and surface treatment applied as new elements or materials came into vogue (Panek 30-1; Whiffen 183). Normally ranging between five to twenty stories in height the Commercial Style building owed its existence to the development of iron, steel and reinforced concrete framing systems, fireproofing, high speed elevators, and progressive improvements in electrical, plumbing, heating and ventilation systems technology.

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The massing was characteristically in large multi-story blocks, towers or set-back towers, each class of this type respectively developing in sequence between the last quarter of the nineteenth and first quarter of the twentieth centuries. Commonly the multiple stories of Commercial Style buildings were arranged into a distinct set of tripartite zones, with base, shaft and capital segments. The LeClaire Hotel has a tower form, with a clearly defined three part vertical partition accented by contrasting materials, surface treatment, and fenestration. The tripartite division of the rectangular plan LeClaire tower was executed by separate expressions on the base, shaft and capital sections of the building.

The building historically has featured a stonework veneer on the ground story and mezzanine level, a symmetrical facade, rounded arch central facade entry with flanking arched windows, belt courses, deep projecting eaves with bracketing, and a flat roof. These features are characteristic of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Renaissance revival (1890-1930), though the building lacks other characteristics of the style (Foley 235-236; McAlester and McAlester 397-399). In this way the building epitomizes the tendency for subordinating ornament as an part of overall architectural character, a characteristic of Commercial Style architecture. The building was conceived as a commercial venture, and designed in accordance with prevailing hotel design preferences. This is an important example on the local level of building practice during a time of change, and was the collaboration of the St. Louis architectural firm of Kirsh and Kolb and developers Fred J. and Ben Cornwell. Its form as a multi-story commercial downtown building (the tallest of its time), its plan, and spacial configuration as a public accommodation and style are still clearly evident (Photograph 4).

Beneath the building a concrete foundation undergirds a reinforced concrete superstructure rising up to the building's full height. A full basement level contained the mechanical heating and ventilation systems in the northwest corner of the building. Evidence for this configuration is still visible by the tall and narrow flue chimney stack on the far northwest corner of the building. When built the basement level had a long and narrow service passage below grade on the west side of the basement level. This passage was shared with the LeClaire Theater (1923; demolished 1973) next door. The base level of the three elevator shafts, two for passenger service, one for freight, were located next to staircase at the center of the rear western side of the basement. Basements for three long, narrow, rectangular plan store spaces found on the south end of the first story filled most of the southern half of the basement. The remaining basement level housed a small public lobby in front of three elevators, a barber shop, bathing room and public rest room. Today the original room configuration closely mimics the original space configuration, albeit unfixed or semi-fixed room elements are no longer in place.

Overlying the foundation the ground floor and mezzanine level displays a characteristic hotel pattern, making provision for the such typical attributes as a double door lobby entrance, main

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lobby, two bay elevator, tavern, restaurant, and specialty storefronts on the lower level, and parlors, meeting rooms, reading rooms, and offices on the mezzanine (Figures 5-6). The basic configuration of both levels remains substantially intact to this day, although the northern half of the first floor commercial spaces has undergone alteration to accommodate changes in the ground floor restaurant, in its latest manifestation called the Prime Rib Room.

Slightly off center the ground level facade (east elevation) tall multi-light double-action swing doors provided access into a rectangular plan entry vestibule (Photograph 4). These multi-light double doors are topped with a transom and fanlight, and are flanked by two tall, rectangular side lights with raised panel transom bars and rounded top multi-pane fanlights and surrounding exterior trim molding with inset keystones. Across the southern and northern third of the base level facade large display windows with transom bars and mullions forming a 3/3 pattern were placed at ground level. These historic display windows were replaced with modern three pane windows in the 1960s. Several feet above these display windows the mezzanine windows are coupled double-hung sash set above the display windows. These original windows are still in place. Above this level the dominant pattern for windows to the twelfth story featured coupled 3/1 double-hung sash divided by a substantial mullion, and having stone lug sills and exhibiting soldier course lintels. The openings and exterior treatment for these windows remain intact, though the window openings now feature aluminum replacements set in 1966. These replacements are fixed, three light windows divided by a T pattern aluminum muntin. Smaller windows lighting the rooms baths are simple 1/1 divided windows with a single aluminum muntin.

On the ground floor the north and south elevations featured a total of five commercial spaces; three on the 5th Avenue side (south) of the building, two on the 4th Avenue A side (north) (Photographs 5-6). Each commercial space had flush center commercial entryway flanked by plate glass display windows. On the north elevation the two commercial spaces had an intervening central ground floor door and entry passage hall into the lobby. The display windows for the commercial spaces featured rectangular display windows divided by a transom bar and mullions to form a three-over-three divided window pattern. The ground floor and mezzanine level exterior are sheathed with a limestone veneer mimicking the appearance of coursed smooth faced ashlar. Above the wide display windows of the ground floor the limestone face is cut to suggest voussoirs with crossettes in place above the prominent display windows. The stone finish reaches from ground level up to the base of the first floor, where a cornice caps the base of this three-part commercial block. Above the limestone cornice topping the mezzanine level exterior the facade and west elevations have eight sets of double-hung sash windows (two per room) set off from the second through twelfth floors by a second stringcourse of stone on all but the west elevation. The subsequent ten stories of the hotel tower rise unobstructed until a similar stringcourse is found underlying the thirteenth floor,



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capping the shaft portion of the tripartite building pattern.

The partition of interior space on the ground and mezzanine levels remains substantially intact. Behind the main entry vestibule of the ground floor the open lobby, bank of passenger elevators, main desk area, and flanking commercial spaces are still in place (Photographs 12, 15-16). Interior elements such as the wood paneled pier supports, checkerboard patterned flooring, mezzanine stairway marble treads, newel posts, rails, balustrade ironwork, paneled wall woodwork, beamed ceiling and pilaster ornamental motifs executed by St. Louis artisan Fredrico Aquadro are still intact. As in the original spacial configuration, this public space is flanked on either side by the commercial spaces to the north and south of the main lobby.

On the north elevation two divided commercial spaces with an intervening entry hall incorporating public restrooms was built. The commercial spaces of this northern third of the first floor were reconfigured in an expansion of the first floor restaurant made in 1960, and subsequent remodeling in 1966 and 1971. The entry hall space was incorporated into the restaurant and a display window placed in the location of the entry hall. Care was taken to configure the new arrangement by placing the two dining room window openings in a pattern like that found on the south elevation, and to employ compatible exterior materials. The display window originally found on the far west end of north elevation was enlarged and blocked in, employing opaque glass block. On the interior the restaurant space was divided by a partition wall, the eastern portion of which was a large dining room, the western portion functioning as a coffee bar, to the rear of which were the serving and kitchen areas. On the exterior a fire escape has been set on the exterior ground level and extending up to the mezzanine levels. A doorway was cut into a mezzanine level window for access. Above the display windows a wrap-around sign identified the restaurant space as the Prime Rib Room.

The south elevation ground floor commercial spaces remain essentially configured as originally planned, though they have been remodeled on several occasions in their history, they remain three rectangular spaces housing the main hotel tavern and other commercial concerns. Only the westernmost space retains the historic pattern of having a flush center door set integrated into a large divided display window. The other entryways exhibit what are essentially cosmetic changes with the doors set to flush and to the side rather than centered. On the middle doorway a broken pediment has been set above the doorway and a pair of circular windows set into the front wall of the space.

The mezzanine level has a gallery overlooking the main lobby and multiple rooms which have characteristically housed meeting spaces, reading rooms and offices (Figure 6). The fenestration of the mezzanine level is consistent with the pattern exhibited with subsequent stories, and reflects the partition of the level into a circulation pattern of open public spaces in the middle

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and central hall corridors with flanking rooms on the far south and northern ends of the level. Dog-legged stairways from the lobby are set adjacent the elevator shaft, and a descending dog-legged stairway is located in the center rear of this level.

Despite changes to the north elevation, restaurant space, and mezzanine level, the main aspects of the building's historic base floor levels, the ground floor and mezzanine, retain essential aspects of integrity, or are only superficially masked behind non-bearing partition walls (cf. Figures 5-6, Figure 11). The interior configuration of spaces, circulation patterns, volumetric qualities, and interior finishes remain substantially intact. No change has been made in the qualities of the double door lobby entry and vestibule, in the tall, spacious qualities of the 2500 square foot lobby, or in the location of two door elevator bay arrangement. The mezzanine gallery with its ornamental balustrade, newel post and rails, and the grid pattern roof and pilaster capitals displaying the ornamental motifs applied by Fredrico Aquedro, are all still in place. Access to the mezzanine level and basement remains intact, as do subsidiary spaces arranged around the elevators and stairwells. Only some modification of entries into the southern tier of three commercial spaces is apparent, and no alteration of their size or spacial character is evident. The public areas of the lower level base of the hotel conform to a recognizably historic pattern.

The brick exterior found from the ground floor up on the west elevation and between the second through twelfth stories on the other elevations featured a modified form of American common bond wire-cut brick coursing. The pattern features six courses of stretchers between intervening stretcher-header-stretcher courses. This brick veneer employs polychromatic earth tone bricks for contrast. The shaft of the three part vertical block has traditionally housed transient rooms between the first and seventh floors (third through ninth stories). The upper portion of the shaft between the eighth and eleventh floors (tenth through fourteenth stories) has suites and efficiency apartments (Figure 9). A consistent fenestration pattern is found across the facade and rear on the transient room floors, with each of the rooms set across the facade and rear elevations having coupled sash. On the efficiency apartment levels and alternating pattern of coupled and single double-hung sash was maintained; the single windows lighting the efficiency dining room, the coupled sash the living room. In the transient guest rooms rectangular plan rooms each had its own bathroom set into the corner closet the long central corridor running the full length of the floor. Fifteen equal sized rooms and a larger sample room were located on the facade side; twelve rooms with a sample room along the rear elevation, The stairways, elevator shafts and service hall filled the interstices between the rooms on the rear center portion of the floor. A second stairwell was located at the northern end of the central corridor. The fenestration pattern of the south and north elevations reflected the placement of the bathrooms and central corridor. Small sash divided by a single full-size sash are located between the two coupled sash lighting the end rooms located on these

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elevations.

From the eighth to twelfth floors the 1922 hotel developers provided efficiency apartments for longer term tenants. Eight efficiencies were placed along the facade elevation, six across the rear, with an additional guest room and utility room immediately adjacent the elevators and staircases at the rear center of these floors. The efficiencies contained an entrance hall, closet spaces and bathroom as one entered the front half of the apartment and living room, kitchen and dining space in the rear half lighted by the exterior windows. The basic circulation pattern found on the lower floors remained consistent through these floors. In 1960 the decision was made to add a set of suites on different floors by combing corner rooms to accommodate increased demand by patrons. The most famous of these was the Red Carpet Suite, which combined rooms 727-729-731, which housed several notable guests. Suites were also distributed by remodeling rooms 524-526 (the Iowa), and rooms 529-531 (the Illinois).

Above the stringcourse line capping the twelfth floor (thirteenth story) exterior is what was originally referred to as the roof garden and the banquet hall facilities (Figure 9). This level formed the capital of the three part vertical block, and was sheathed with the same limestone veneer employed on the ground floor level. A large rectangular, eastward oriented, roof garden room with a fifteen foot high ceiling was set along the facade elevation; the smaller sub-rectangular banquet room was oriented towards the north, providing a panoramic view of the east-west trending Mississippi. In the center rear were the stairways, elevator banks, rest rooms and check room. It was this floor's high sky-line rooms which provided the unparalleled view of the Mississippi Quad-Cities which made such a distinct impression on the hotel's patrons. The rooms were lighted by tall, narrow multi-light sliding windows, replaced by picture windows in the 1966 remodeling of the windows. The window's cruciform-pattern mullion and transom bar divided two rows of three, four pane sash to provide 24 panes on each of the sixteen windows set along the facade and rear elevations, and seven windows set across the south and north elevations. Combined with the building's height the affective visual quality of the sky-line room was dramatic.

The flat asphalt roof of the hotel was enclosed with a four-and-one-half-foot tall cornice with wide eaves, bracketing, and terra cotta coping on the top. This cornice distinctively capped the top of the capital segment. This element was retained on the building until its removal between 1946-1949, based on examination of historic photographs. The cornice retains its corbel pattern brick parapet set flush with the exterior wall plane. A rectangular plan set of office, service, and utility rooms with six double-hung sash oriented westward was built on the center rear of the roof level, above the sky-line rooms of the fifteenth story. These service rooms are set immediately above the elevator shafts and main stairwell of the hotel and provided access to the roof.



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**Summary Evaluation and Preservation Values**

The LeClaire Hotel has undergone change through time, modifying the appearance of the hotel from this primarily "as built" description. The integrity of the hotel as it currently exists has been straightforwardly addressed in this description. Substantive aspects of integrity are retained and the essential architectural character of the building has not been compromised. The LeClaire Hotel is easily identifiable as an example of early twentieth century Commercial Style architecture on the local level. To those who served as patrons and operators of the hotel it continues to evoke strong feelings as a local landmark and a myriad of historic associations. The hotel serves as an anchor to the eastern side of Moline's downtown commercial district and forms an important linchpin in the plans of the community development office and civic organizations spearheading an effort to preserve the historic character and economic vitality of the downtown. After several efforts in the last decade to rehabilitate the hotel for viable adaptive use this represents the last best chance for a building now vacant for over a decade. Its survival depends on the recognition of its significance as an important local landmark. The building is the sole surviving example of its type in the city, dating to a period of dynamic change in town, and embodying methods of construction done on a scale previously unknown in the city. With its loss an important chapter in the development of commerce and architecture in Moline would be irrevocably lost. In a larger city the LeClaire Hotel might not be worthy of serious consideration; clearly, here it represents a distinguishable entity worthy of preservation.

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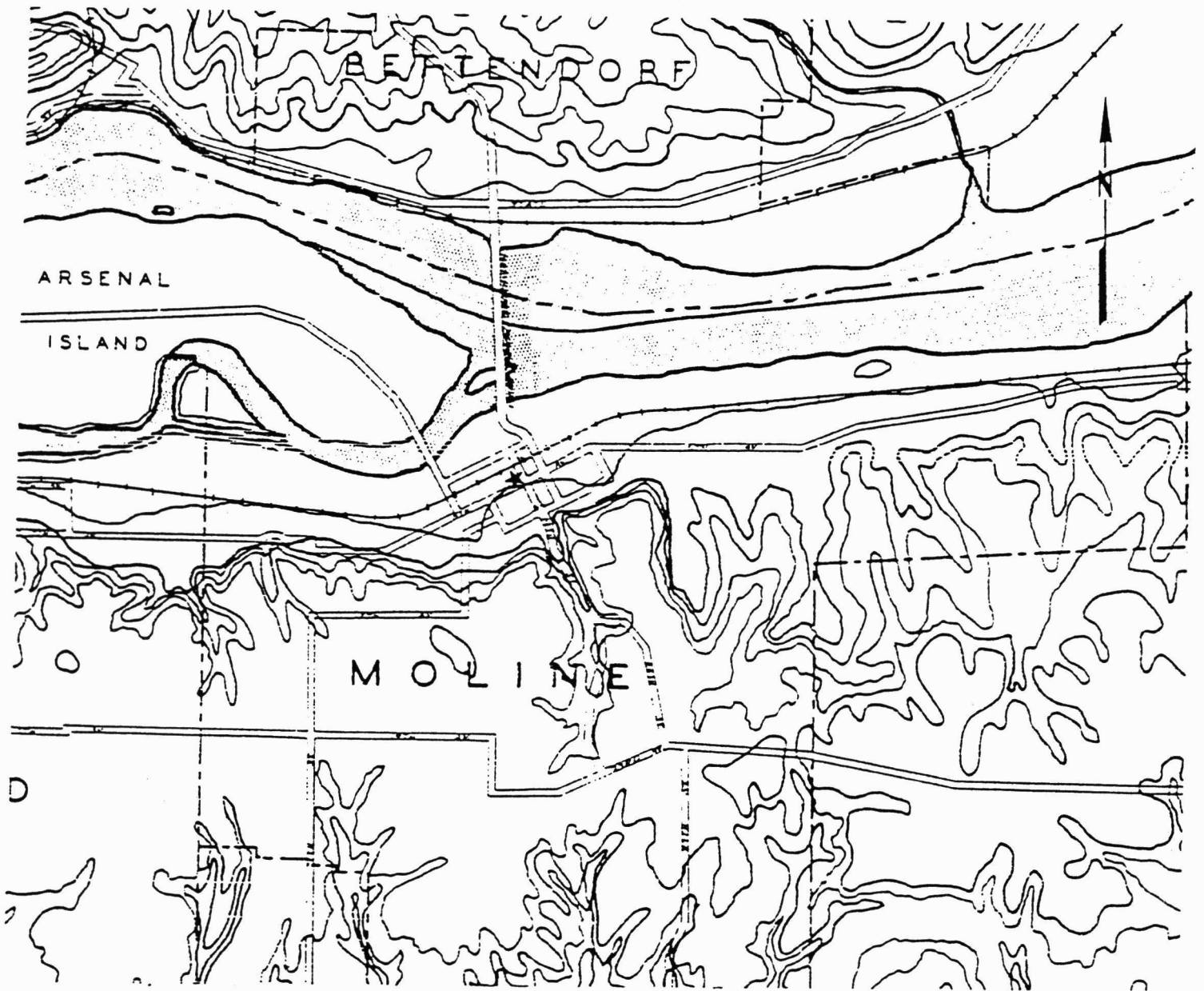


Figure 1. Topographic map of the Quad Cities; location of LeClaire Hotel is marked (Espenshade 1944).

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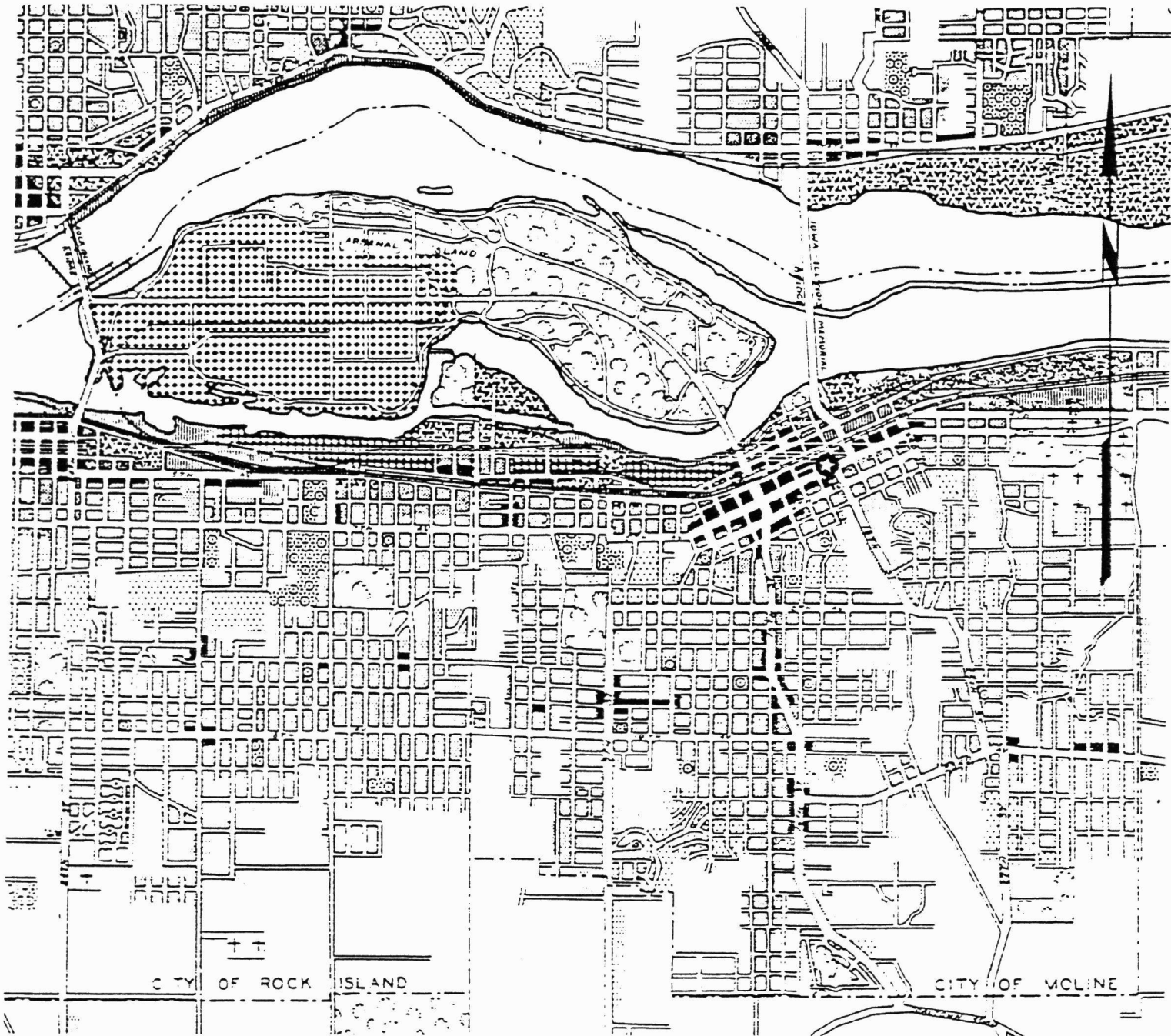


Figure 2. Commercial heart of Moline ca. 1940 (Espenshade 1944). Blackened areas are commercial land use.

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Figure 3. Plat area and streets around LeClaire Hotel. Grey shading shows outline of Woods' Second Addition in relation to LeClaire Hotel

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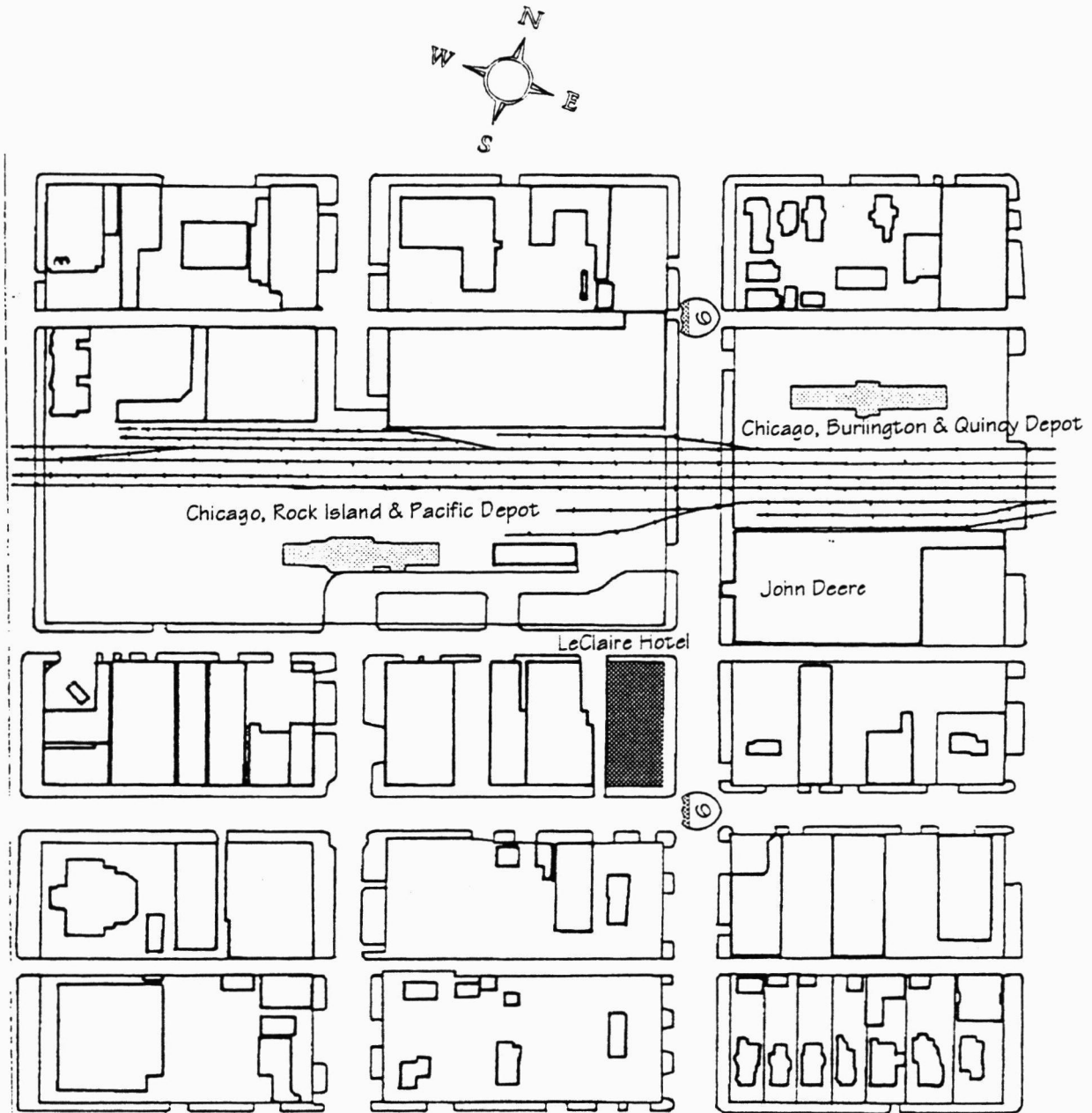


Figure 4. Downtown Moline in 1954 (Kincaid et al. 1954).

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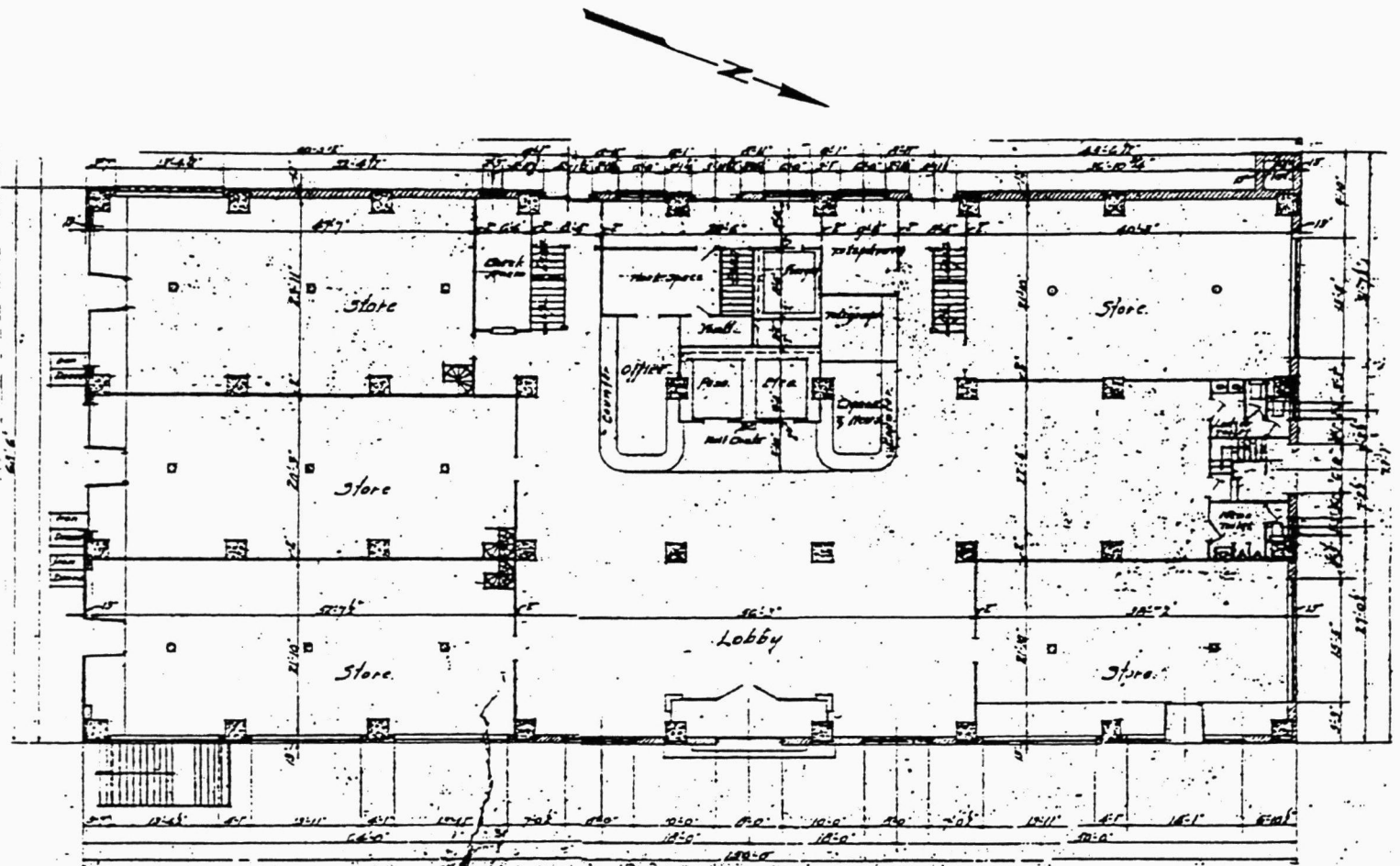


Figure 5. Plan of ground floor, LeClaire Hotel.



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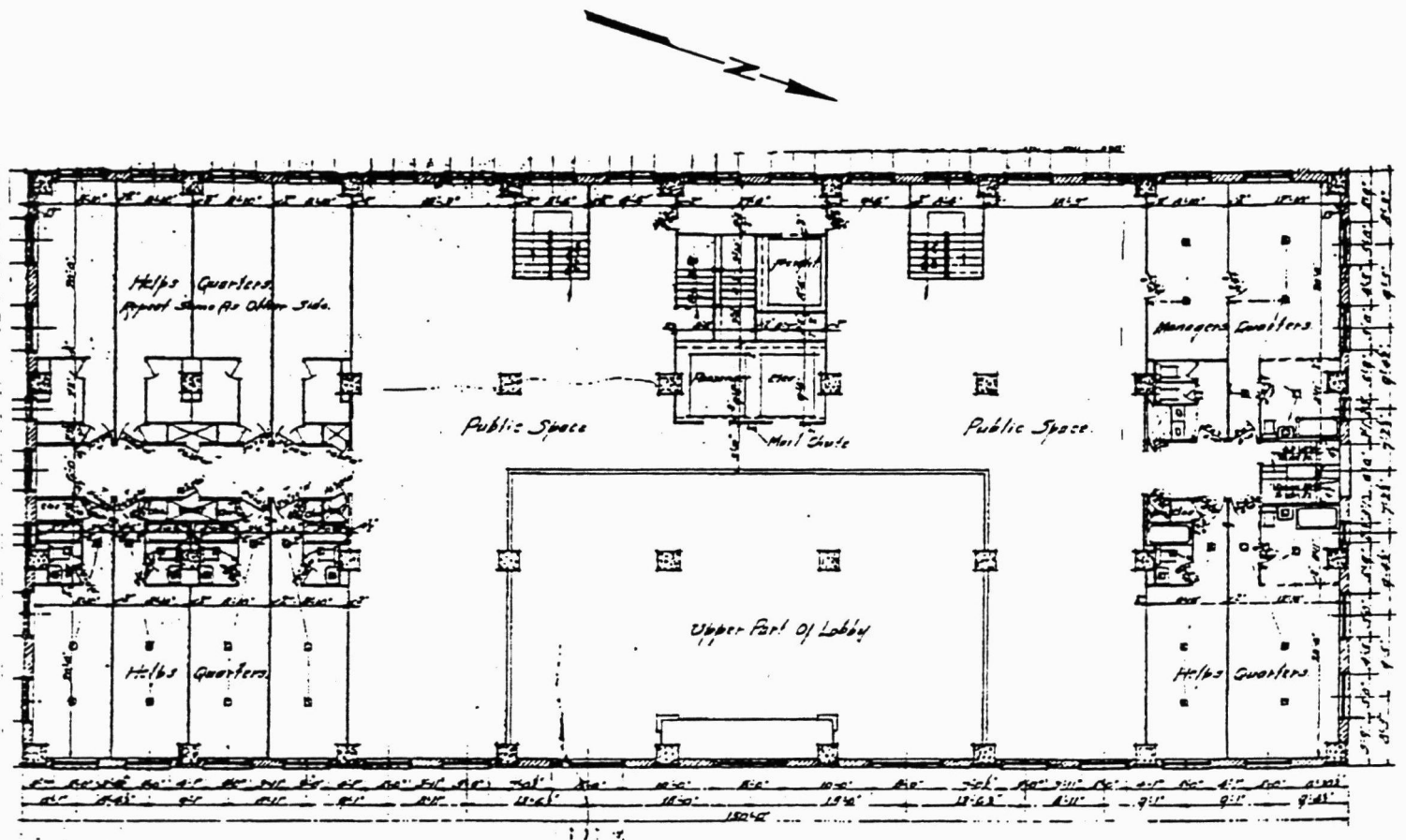


Figure 6. Plan of mezzanine level, LeClaire Hotel.



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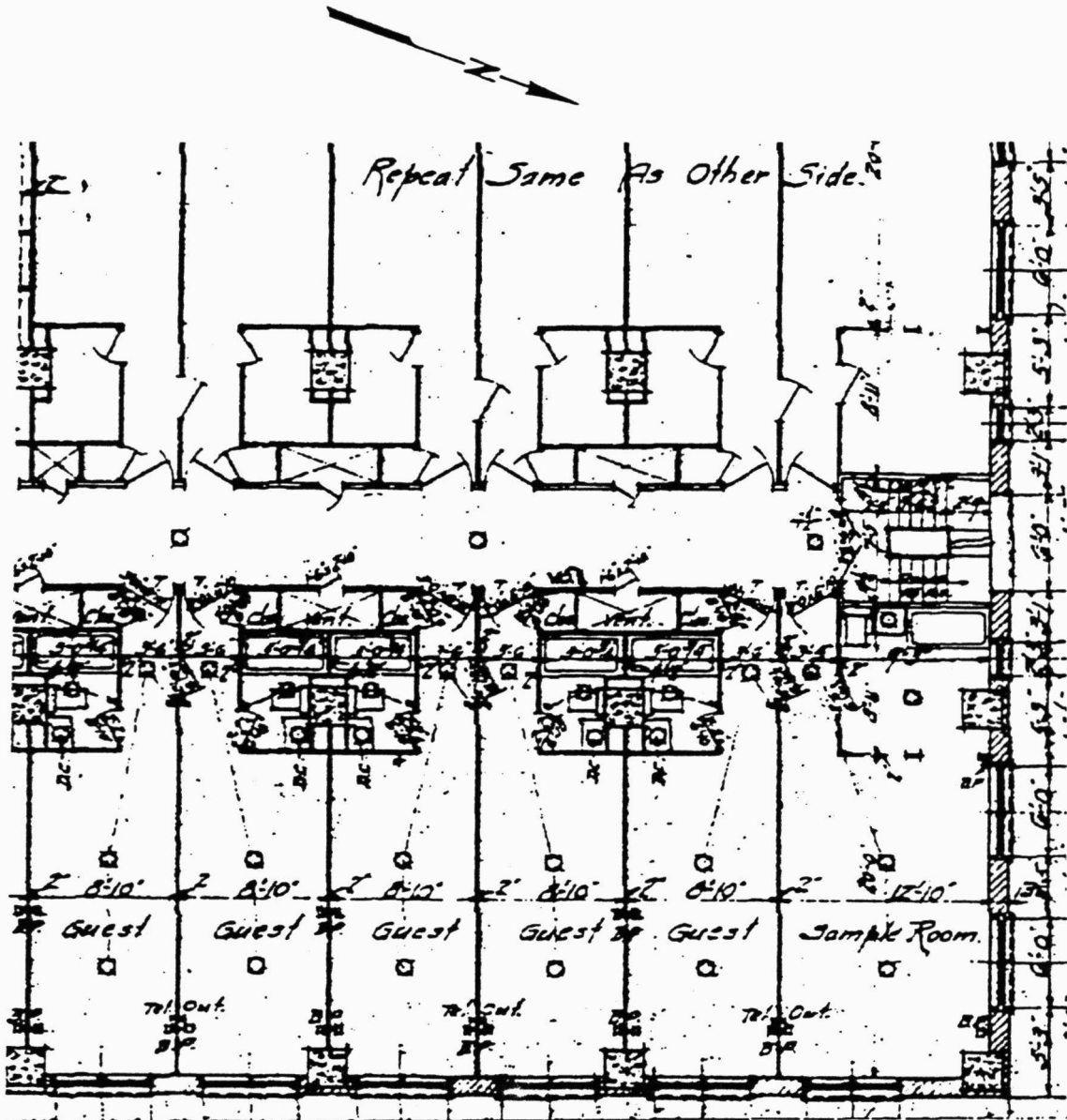


Figure 7. Transient room plan



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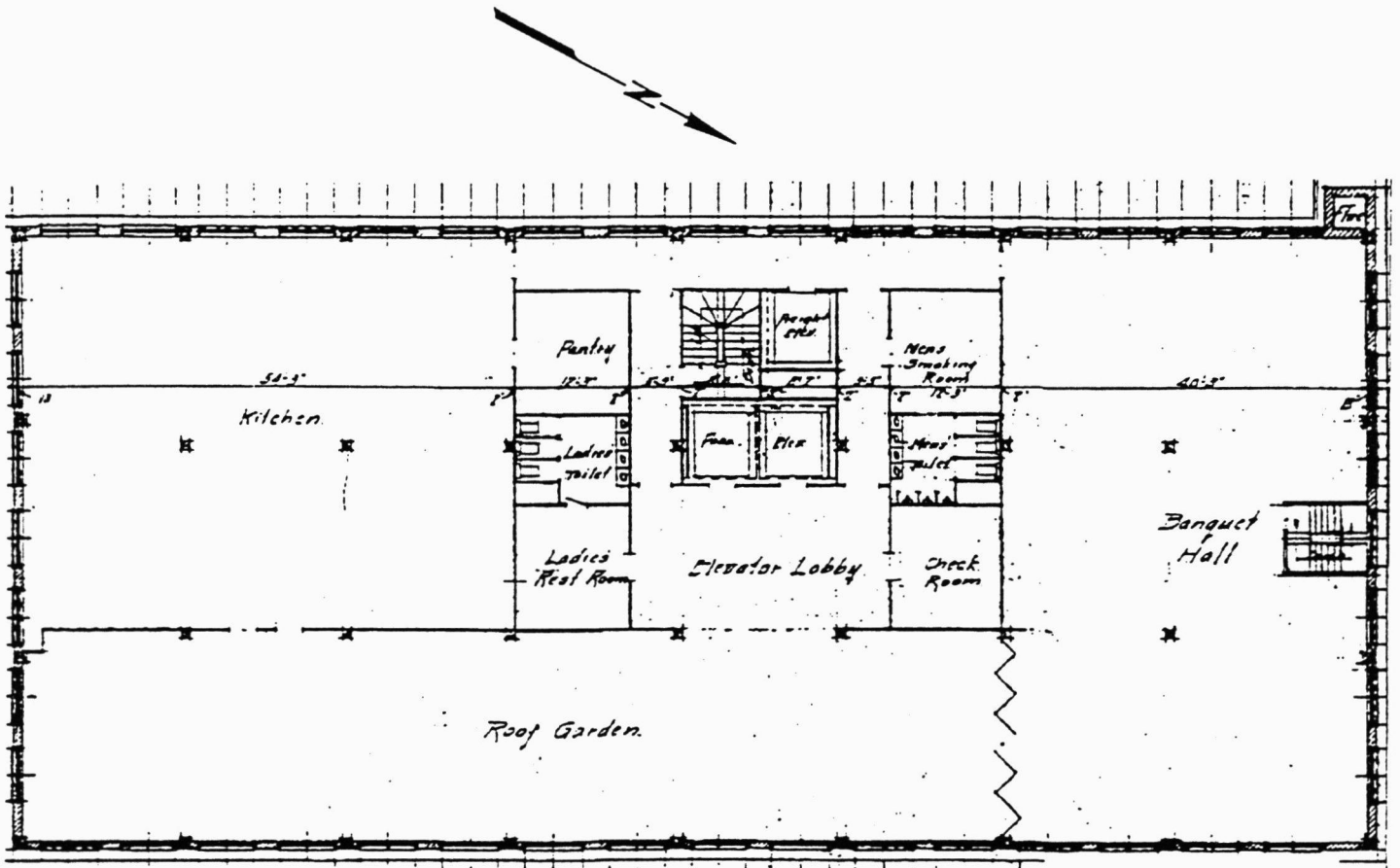


Figure 9. Sky-line floor plan

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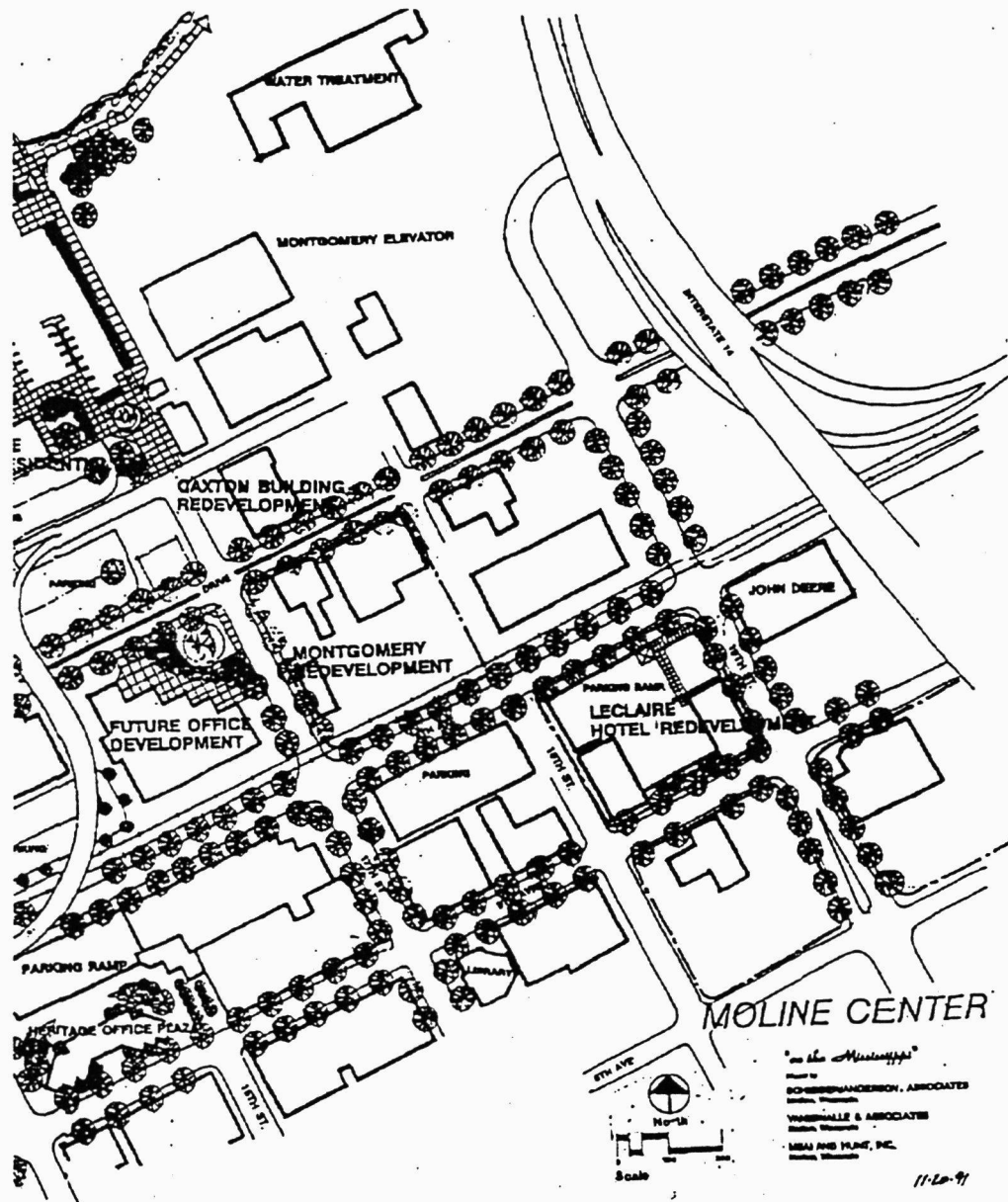


Figure 10. Modern planning map of downtown Moline showing proposed redevelopment project.

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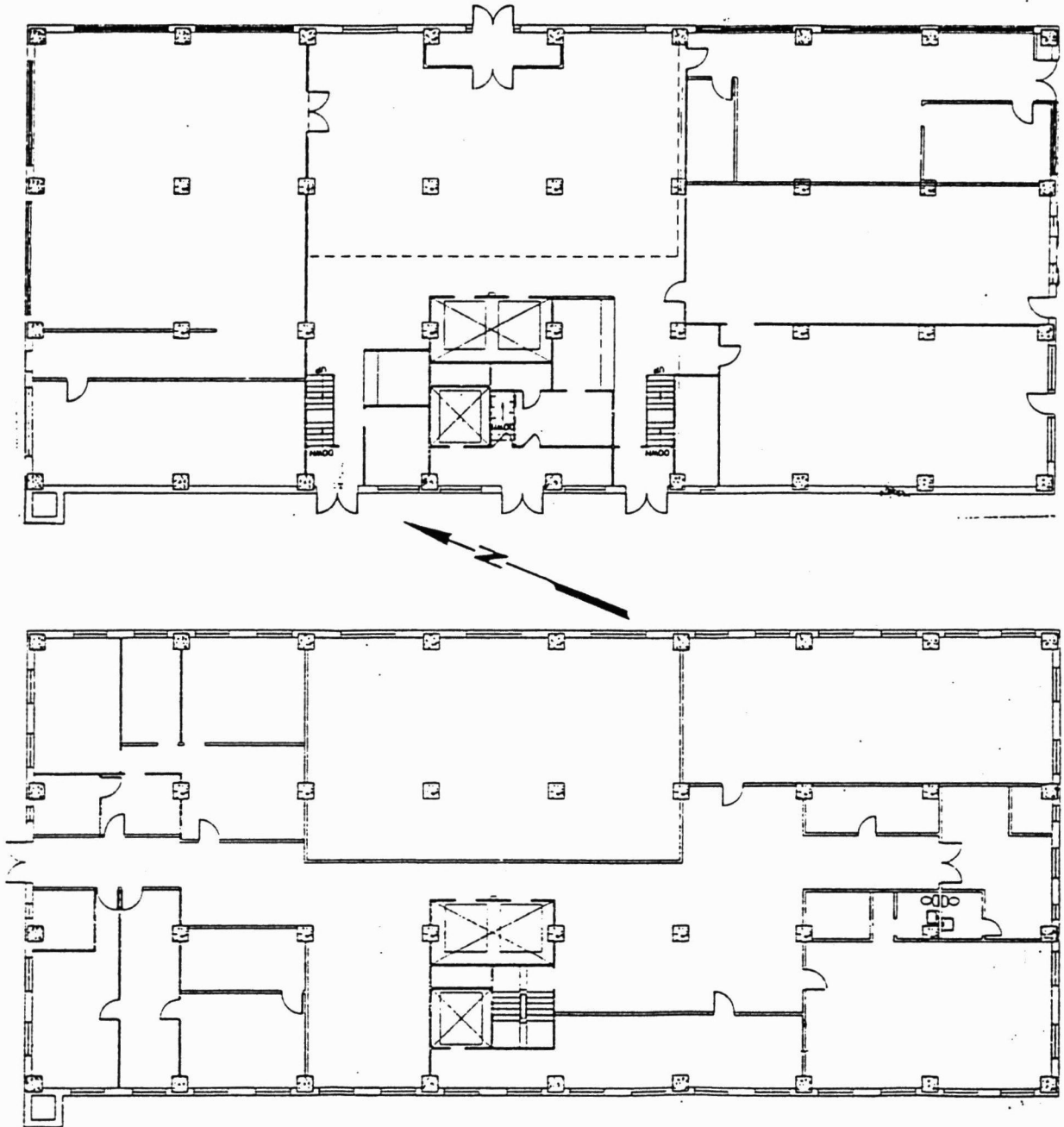


Figure 11. Current (1993) floor plans of lobby (top plan) and mezzanine levels (bottom plan), LeClaire Hotel.

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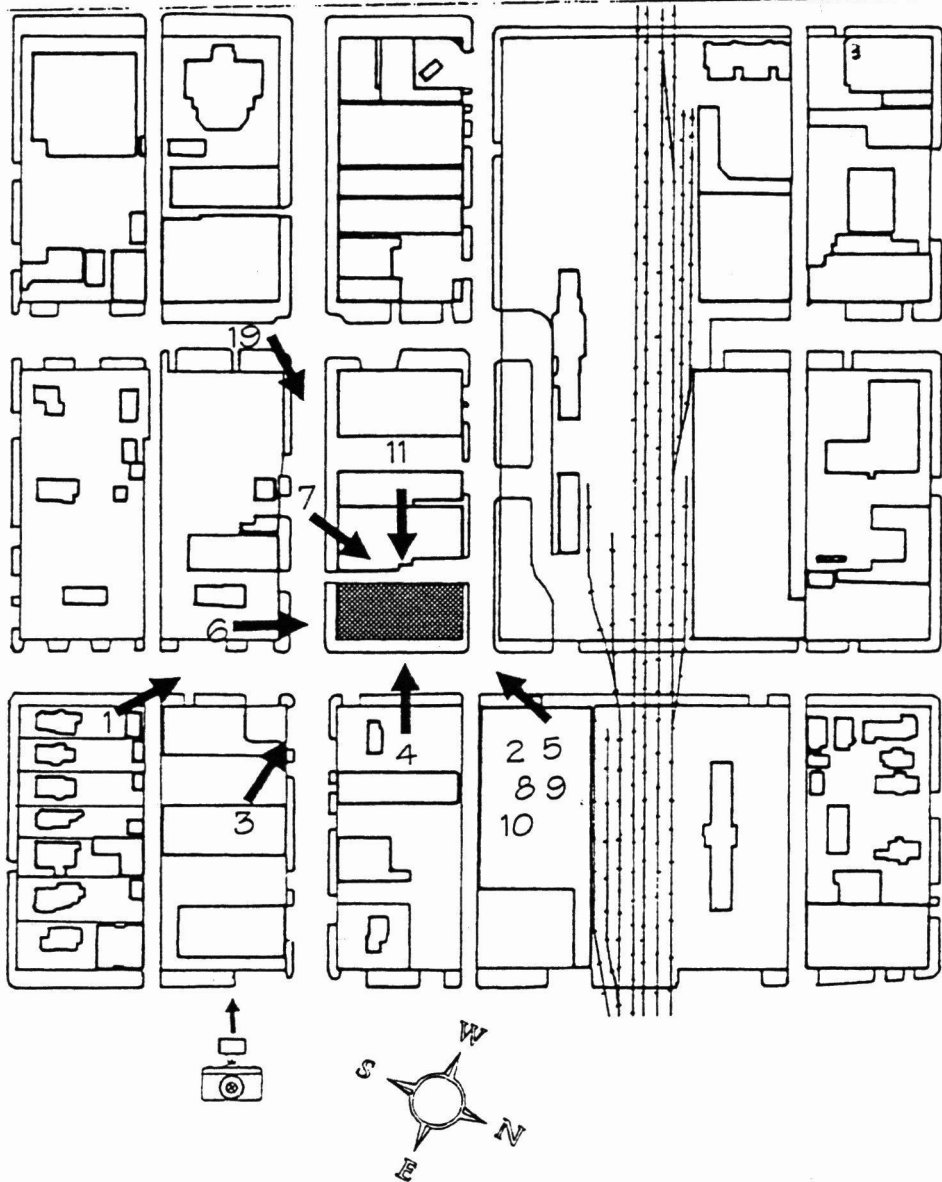


Figure 12. Photograph location and direction (see Photograph continuation pages).

### 8.Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

**A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

**B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

**C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

**D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

#### Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

**A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

**B** removed from its original location.

**C** a birthplace or grave.

**D** a cemetery.

**E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

**F** a commemorative property.

**G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

#### Periods of Significance

1922-1943

#### Significant Dates

1922

#### Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).

N/A

#### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

#### Architect/Builder

Kirsch & Kolb, Architects

Fred L. Cornwell, Builder

#### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

#### Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other:

Name of repository:

Rock Island County Historical Society, Moline, IL



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Statement of Significance

The historic LeClaire Hotel (1922) embodies the spirit of early twentieth century civic development, and was the culmination of a decade-long effort of Moline's Chamber of Commerce to secure a downtown commercial hotel. In a time when civic sponsored architecture defined the affluence and progressiveness of a community, the LeClaire objectified commercial prosperity on the local level. As a commercially significant building the hotel served as a focal point in the downtown, providing lodging, meeting and dining space, and fulfilling a critical role in the community's social, business and political life for over two decades (1922-1943). Built between September 1921 and December 1922, the LeClaire represented the introduction of design elements and building methods theretofore unseen in the community. Although lacking true architectural significance, the building represented a readily distinguishable entity which had an impact on building practice on the local level. Importantly, the building also represents important trends in the architectural community, where the design and construction of the small city commercial hotels was being increasingly referenced in the professional literature. In part a reaction to a national trend in commercial hotel development, the architectural community responded to the demand by advocating efficiencies in design and cost commensurate with client's needs. These dictates executed on the local level created buildings capable of becoming significant architectural and community reference points in small cities like Moline. The LeClaire Hotel substantively fulfills criterion A in the area of COMMERCE.

Historic Background

Historically, as late as the 'teens, Davenport, Iowa, Rock Island and Moline comprised the Tri-Cities; as early as the 1930s, Rock Island, Moline and East Moline comprised, with Davenport, Iowa, what came to be called the Quad-Cities (Federal Writers Project 375). Moline was the product of riverside development dating to the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The town sprang from the impoundment of a subsidiary branch of the Mississippi (Sylvan Slough) between 1837-1841 (Bateman and Selby 671-72). David B. Sears and associates development of the water power potential between Arsenal Island and the Illinois shore shaped the character of the new town; it would thereafter be linked to industrial improvement. The original town plat surveyed in 1843 entailed about twenty blocks, its location now bounded by the river (north), Twelfth Street (west), Fifth Avenue (south), and Eighteenth Street (east). Moline's situation did not lend itself to exploiting the high level of nineteenth century river traffic, with rapids separating the townsite from the main channel of the Mississippi. This impediment to navigation was mitigated by the excellent quality the town site had for mill seats, a factor quickly exploited by the construction of mills and manufacturing enterprises (Espanshade 60-61). In the mid-nineteenth century the proliferation of water-powered mills led to the town's naming as Moline, a slight corruption of the French *moulin*,

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or mill town (Bateman and Selby 672). The town was first incorporated as a village under Illinois law in 1848; its later incorporation as a city was completed in 1872 (*ibid.* 672).

Through the mid-nineteenth century the character of Moline took shape. A central business district formed along the wide northeast-southwest oriented boulevard called Main Street (now Third Avenue). By the 1880s this thoroughfare was lined with hotels, banks, shops and public buildings (Moline Preservation Society 1992:i). In the last quarter of the nineteenth century an increasingly industrial character overtook the area, and led prominent businessmen to establish a second enclave to the south on Fifth Avenue, as is detailed below. Both commercial districts were sustained by clients dependent on the growing industrial base of the town. In the second half of the nineteenth century new industry sprang up along the mill strewn riverside, and it attracted manufacturing entrepreneurs, the most notable being John Deere, whose manufacturing enterprises came to play such a prominent role in the community's progress. Deere was drawn from his home in Grand Detour to this emerging industrial center in 1847. Credited with fabricating the first steel moldboard plow, Deere's farm implement business was officially incorporated as Deere and Company in 1864 (Bateman and Selby 763). Deere's business expanded, picking up numerous subsidiaries, and Deere and Company branched out into wagon building and plow and farm implement manufacturing. Moline's overall manufacturing sector grew as well, aided by the arrival of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad and Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad in the second half of the nineteenth century. By the end of the first decade of the new century it was said:

"[Developments]...have placed Rock Island County among the leading manufacturing counties of the state and, according to population, one of the greatest in the U.S. This development has been confined primarily to the cities of Rock Island, Moline and East Moline. Of these Moline may be called the manufacturing giant of the county..." (Bateman and Selby 761).

A host of manufacturers joined Deere and Company to play a prominent role in Moline community affairs including Montgomery Elevator, Veile Motor Vehicle Company, and Root & Vandervoort engine company, to name a few. Reorganization of Deere and Company in 1911 placed numerous subsidiaries and affiliates under its control and began a period when Deere would rise to international status as a business concern. By the early 'teens Moline stood poised for more dramatic changes as the central business district shifted from the railroad tracks and industrial buildings set along Third Avenue to a point two blocks south; a phenomenon eventually culminating in the building of the LeClaire Hotel.

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COMMERCE

The LeClaire Hotel embodies the maturation of local commerce. The culmination of a decade long effort, the building of the LeClaire Hotel marked an important stage in the emergence of Moline as a commercial center with increasing local prominence. The hotel also exhibits how the Fifth Avenue corridor solidified into the city's commercial heart, and marked the eastern extension of the downtown area. For over two decades the LeClaire fulfilled an important role in the commercial and social life of the city; no other surviving historic downtown building possesses the unique historic associations accorded the LeClaire by area residents, chronicled in the local press and elsewhere (e.g. Moline Dispatch 1948; Moline Dispatch 1968; Fasick 5-9, 13-15; Quad-City Times 1983; Moline Dispatch 1987). Like many other period downtown hotels the LeClaire fulfilled its creator's dreams, acting as a *de-facto* civic center before the advent of modern specialized facilities like Moline's newly constructed *The Mark* civic center. As such, the LeClaire represents a significant commercial building in the life of this Illinois member of the Quad-Cities.

The LeClaire Hotel was envisioned by community leaders as early as 1912. The local chamber of commerce, dominated by businessmen operating in the riverside central business district, strove to gain a transportation hotel for the burgeoning Fifth Avenue commercial corridor. This was to be the crowning event in solidifying Fifth Avenue as the commercial heart of this Tri-City community. The chamber, originally formed in 1895 as the Moline Commercial Club, became the agents of change eventually responsible for bringing this effort to fruition (Moline Preservation Society 1993, 21, 32).

The prominence of Fifth Avenue as the main corridor of commercial prosperity began in the 1890s through the first quarter of the twentieth century. When railroads and industrial development along the commercial corridor on Main Street (later Third Avenue) became congested, and posed a danger to pedestrian traffic, merchants pulled out of the old district. Increasingly, the retailers and office owners moved across the mid-town tracks two blocks south to establish Fifth Avenue venues (Espenshade 25; Moline Preservation Society 1992:i; 1993:i). Amongst what had been blocks dominated by elegant residences, a series of two-part commercial block and small vertical block commercial buildings began to appear along Henry Street (later designated Fifth Avenue). In succeeding years an eastward drift of increasingly commercial character occurred along this avenue, from the corner of Twelfth Street and Fifth Avenue, all the way to Nineteenth Street; a development provided a strong impetus by the expansion and improvement of Fifth Avenue all the way to Nineteenth Street in 1910 (Moline Dispatch 1948).

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the town's commercial interests were primarily served by the revamped Manufacturer's Hotel on the intersection of Sixteenth Street and

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Third Avenue (demolished 1940). In 1899 a major renovation and expansion of the Manufacturer's into a 85 room, four story building provided at least one major downtown hotel among a number of smaller hotel operations. In 1913 what was called a "typical...modern, small hostelry," the Campbell Hotel, was built on Sixteenth Street, providing 50 rooms for travelers (Moline Dispatch 1922). Still, local business leaders felt a much more substantial hotel was needed if Moline were to vie for commercial prominence.

Within the chamber of commerce H.E. Lundt, the chamber's head, and commercial jeweler Carl I. Josephson, among others, spearheaded an effort to secure a developer for a first-class downtown hotel. Year after year efforts to achieve the right combination of financing, developmental know-how, and outside investment failed. Meanwhile, the emergence of Fifth Avenue as the city's main commercial corridor solidified as the Swedish Olive Hall-I.O.O.F. Building (1909), Berglund Building (1915), Peoples Bank Building (1911), Reliance Building (1912), Chase Block (1912), Leedy Building (1912; home of the chamber of commerce), and an assortment of small scale multi-story buildings and commercial blocks rose in tandem with public buildings such as the Carnegie Library (1903) and Y.M.C.A Building (1912). Streetscape photographs show a dense, almost continuous, strip of multi-story commercial improvements along the east-west axis of Fifth Avenue during the 'teens (Moline Preservation Society 1993, 34). In anticipation of obtaining a developer the chamber began purchasing lots within proximity of the avenue to locate a hotel. One effort to transfer the Manufacturer's Hotel to a site on 1400 block of Fifth Avenue was stillborn (Moline Preservation Society 1993, 10). The work of the chamber had still not born fruit by the end of the 'teens.

Finally, in July 1921, the chamber representatives contacted Fred J. Cornwell, Sr., a St. Louis native. Cornwell (1856-1934), son of an Oxford educated English immigrant, was for years associated with St. Louis's Gas Company, and later entered into the contracting and building business (Missouri Historical Society). Marrying Julia Moore of Kirkwood in 1884, Cornwell later founded a realty company, formally designating it the Frederick J. Cornwell Realty Company shortly after the turn of the century. Later, Cornwell entered into partnership with his sons Alexander and Fred, Jr., to form the company of A.M and F.J. Cornwell Real Estate Company, Inc. The firm gained particular notoriety as developers and managers of apartment and hotel properties including the Melbourne and Forest Park Hotels of St. Louis, Whitehall Hotel of Daytona Beach, Florida, and Bellerive Hotel in Kansas City (Lewis Historical Publishing Company 1967, 118).

In the opening rounds of negotiating a proposal with Cornwell the Moline chamber faced two challenges. First, finding a suitable location for the development was settled by the purchase of the site on Fifth Avenue and Nineteenth Street from residents Henry Bierman and George Watt (Fasick 1). Secondly, Cornwell's group expected more substantial financial assistance for the project on the community level. The second problem was addressed by Fifth Avenue merchants; first, by subscribing towards a fund employed to buy the building site; second, by obligating themselves and



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investors to a \$250,000 bond issued on a second mortgage basis. With financing in place construction of the projected "million dollar hotel" could begin (Moline Dispatch 1948, 1968). By August 3rd negotiations between Cornwell and the chamber were successfully completed, plans drawn up, and by September 20th groundbreaking activities were held (Moline Dispatch 1922).

The LeClaire Hotel building was constructed within an architectural context as well as a commercial one. Though lacking significant architectural distinction, the building still reflects the culmination of important progressive architectural innovations in design and construction manifested on the local level. An important element reflecting a pattern of events in Moline's early twentieth century urban development, this building's presence had, and retains, a substantial visual impact, even on casual observation; its presence readily identifies the hotel as part of the main business district of the city. After substantial improvements were made to Fifth Avenue by widening and paving in 1910, the time was ripe to build new commercial venues. In a period between 1910 and 1922 a succession of single buildings and business blocks sprang up along the avenue. For the most part the scale and massing of these buildings seldom departed from the two-part, one to three story, commercial block building type. During this time a small number of properties displayed more verticality. The five story, six bay Reliance Building (1912), designed by local architect Olaf Cervin, the six story Peoples Bank Building (1911), and four story Y.M.C.A. Building (1912) displayed greater vertical emphasis, and the influence of the Chicago school, steel frame construction, and Renaissance revival style, respectively.

The Fifth Avenue buildings came in the wake of the Tri-Cities first skyscraper, Davenport, Iowa's eight story Putnam Building built in 1910 (Carrol 54; Espanshade 107). Davenport had seen its own progressive architectural development in the first two decades of the new century, with the building of the nine story, U-plan Hotel Davenport (1907), the twelve story Blackhawk Hotel (1914), and the massive ten story Kahl Building (1919-20) among the more prominent new buildings (Carrol 55-57; Svendsen and Bowers 5/5-7,6/6-10). Despite Moline's rise as a viable commercial center, Davenport's size, diverse economy, larger service region, and capital resources enabled it to outstrip its southern neighbors in commercial and architectural preeminence (Carrol 57; Espanshade). This makes it even more startling Moline's commercial leaders drew together the resources which would bring about the construction of the fifteen story LeClaire. With some exceptions aside, noted above, Moline entrepreneurs in the 'teens exhibited a consistent preference for building stylized two-part commercial blocks in the downtown. Only imagination and sustained united action could bring about something as dramatic as a fifteen story, reinforced concrete skyscraper towering over the downtown. Nonetheless, despite a lack of vertical scale, the Moline downtown was showing signs of progressive architectural development mirroring Davenport's, albeit on a smaller scale. This, coupled with the advent of a nation-wide trend towards building high amenity hotels in the smaller cities, would bring the LeClaire to Moline.

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The demands of commerce and architecture were synthesized in the building of the early twentieth century hotel. A trend towards building hotels in the smaller cities during the first quarter of the twentieth century was reflected in the professional literature. In a special issue of the *Architectural Forum* dedicated to hotel architecture John McEntee Bowman prefaces the other contributions with a forceful advocacy of retaining architects as designers for the modern American hotel. Bowman championed making good architecture a requisite for new hotel construction:

"Apart from his direct contribution of knowledge in respect to planning and equipment, the highest talent of the designer is called upon today in increasing measure to create hotel exteriors and interiors which attract and hold interest, establish correct impressions, and create memories which insure recurring patronage and recommendation....Good architecture possesses the inherent faculty of molding public taste....In varying degrees the modern hotel demands atmosphere which fundamentally appeals to the senses." (Bowman)

Professional architects had increasingly become aware that a modern hotel could become a hallmark of small city architecture. Perhaps the advocacy for the small city hotel was no better elucidated than in the work of New York architect Robert L. Stoddart, who appears to have made a career of designing these buildings, and articulated his ideas in articles in the *Architectural Forum* (Stoddart 1923, 1926).

"The hotel is definitely a national quite as much as it is a local institution, for one hotel follows another in an unbroken chain across the continent...Much of life in this country, both socially and commercially, is lived in the hotel, and the smaller the town the more keenly is the modernity of its best hotel regarded as an index of measure of the progressiveness and prosperity of the community."

Stoddart thus expressed the need build hotels worthy of their status in the community; this is where the town was on display to a wider world, it was also a locus in community affairs. The proper role for the progressive architect in small city hotel design was correspondingly placed in wider context. Stoddart advised architectural design balance practical and aesthetic concerns in hotel design, but foremost in Stoddart's consideration were practical circumstances. He acknowledged most small town hotels were community undertakings, and raised by the business interests of the city (Stoddart 1923, 245). In his articles Stoddart was able to draw from his considerable experience to articulate the requisites of the small city hotel, having executed numerous successful small city hotel projects which dotted his article's pages. Foremost among his suggestions was site proximity to transportation networks, particular railway depots, streetcar lines, and highways; an obvious factor to us today. Patronage from such travelers might be obvious, but Stoddart also accented the potential business from, "the townspeople themselves and

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the stimulus that a new hotel will provide the city's commercial and social activities..." (Stoddart 1923, 245). Correspondingly, locating the new hotel in proximity to retail districts was also advocated (Stoddart 1926, 111). Thereby the possibilities of ground floor commercial space rental would be significantly enhanced, and this factor was considered critical to garnering revenues outside of providing accommodations. From the standpoint of economy multiple floors with replicated floor plans were critical to holding down costs. Sample rooms to accommodate commercial travelers had to be considered for corner room blocks. Though custom demanded commodious public spaces such as a lobby and mezzanine, Stoddart advocated making every effort towards minimizing these "unproductive" areas. Small lounges, coffee shops and concession stands were to be placed in otherwise under-utilized space on the base floors. If there was some guarantee that such space might prove profitable, dining rooms, ballrooms, meeting rooms and other ancillaries might be considered, but they should be built with multiple uses in mind. Stoddart strongly recommended against a roof garden if the hotel's function was primarily commercial in nature. Aesthetically, Stoddart again cautioned frugality, preferring what he called Georgian Colonial style, and restrained ornamentation employing modern materials for exterior and interior surfaces. Chief among his concerns were stylistic elements capable of being modified by economy when conditions dictated without too much loss of effect (Stoddart 1926, 112).

The hotel design evident in the LeClaire Hotel plans appeared to follow the dictates articulated by Stoddart, though there is no evidence the architects Kirsh and Kolb did so directly. Stoddart's written work, nonetheless, evidences a widely shared set of precepts which architects drawn to hotel work commonly exercised. This is evidenced on the local level not only in the design of the LeClaire, but in the attributes of the Hotel Davenport (1907), Blackhawk Hotel (1914), and Rock Island's Fort Armstrong Hotel (1926) (Svensen and Bowers 1983, 5/6-7; Carrol 55; Ohrlund 1991, 11). The heyday of the luxury and smaller scale small city hotel had come, and reached new heights during the immediate post-World War I period (Lattin 7-10). When the decision to build the LeClaire was made the chamber of commerce, Cornwell, and their associates could comfortably adapt prevailing designs built in accord with Stoddart's views. The resemblance between the LeClaire and other small city hotels was marked. This was not surprising, given the fact that some small change in the restrained ornament of most any small city hotel one could make them interchangeable with those of any other community. What was important on the local level was how the hotels became community architectural reference points, a point recognized by Stoddart, as quoted above. In this case the LeClaire had no peer in the Tri-Cities matching its scale or prominence on urban skyline. While large scale reinforced concrete building had appeared previously on the local level, in the East Moline John Deere plant (1913) (Bateman and Selby 765-66), and first introduced to the Tri-Cities in the construction of Davenport's Putnam Building (1910) (Carrol 54), it had theretofore never been applied to a larger vertical tower, leading skeptics to doubt the building could stand. This led to an recurring apocryphal story of LeClaire workmen carrying sacks of concrete to the higher stories to test the strength of the building's skeletal framework during



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construction (Moline Dispatch 1968). Despite the skeptics, the building technology employed was capable of undergirding the fifteen stories. The use of the tripartite system of external surface treatment, leaving the base and capital joined by a plane brick surface, accented the verticality of the building in a way no other previous Tri-City building could.

The construction of the hotel consumed fifteen months. Between September 1921 and December 1922 the hotel construction was overseen by Fred Cornwell's brother Ben Cornwell. At times skeptical Moliners, seeing construction grind to a halt in winter, doubted the hotel would be completed. However, by the late fall of 1922 it became apparent even to the most skeptical that a new visual landmark would punctuate the Tri-Cities skyline. Over 1,700,000 polychrome bricks from the Hydraulic Press Brick Company of Shale City, Illinois were used in construction. The local Herman Nelson Company provided the 500-plus radiators and entire heating system for the building. High speed lifts for the skyscraper were manufactured by Montgomery Elevator, another Moline concern. Two hundred and twenty rooms, each with its own bathroom, would house the patrons, including those renting the seventy efficiency apartments. Nowhere within the Tri-Cities was there a more imposing building, skying a full six stories above all previous rooftops in the downtown area, and surmounting the bluffs rising above the Mississippi River floodplain to the south of downtown. Conditions for the hotel's success seemed auspicious. The name for the hotel was chosen to honor pioneer negotiator, entrepreneur and Davenport, Iowa co-founder Antoine LeClaire, who once held interests on the Illinois side.

With the opening of the LeClaire Hotel on December 22, 1922 one chapter in Moline's commercial history closed, while a second chapter opened. The hotel developed into a significant commercial venture for the ensuing two decades and even into the late 1940s was cited as a "community center," and "city within itself" (Moline Dispatch 1948, 1987). A critical factor in the hotel's importance to community development was that it would have ready access to railroad depots. The prominently displayed sign straddling the top of the hotel was oriented towards the depots through the 'forties, announcing its amenities to the traveling public for over two decades. The proximity of the federally-designated interstate highway network--via U.S. 6--had a limited impact initially, but was substantially increased with the construction of the Public Works Administration sponsored Iowa-Illinois Bridge in 1936 (Espenshade 44). Increasingly, Moline downtown's commercial predominance in relation to outlying Illinois communities and Moline's hinterlands played an important role in sustaining the hotel as well. Quadrupling in area size during in the first third of the twentieth century, Moline developed what was characterized by one observer as the most modern of the Quad-Cities commercial districts, by then complete with a modern hotel (Espenshade 25, 44, 111). The coeval development of paved streets, modern hard paved roads, and well-established trucking service increased commercial traffic in all of the Quad-City communities, and Moline enjoyed a large share of this traffic (*ibid.* 111). A pattern of sustained commercial development throughout the decades of the LeClaire's prominence made Moline reach

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equity with Davenport in per capita retail sales (*ibid.* 30).

Correspondingly, the LeClaire was the beneficiary of the overall commercial viability of downtown Moline. In addition, its proximity to the national headquarters of John Deere and Company and other Moline-based manufacturing concerns brought a steady stream of customers. On the local level, it housed a host of civic and business associations, including the community's Sitzmachers, Rotary, and Kiwanis, and the hotel set the standard for elegance in a community previously lacking the amenities of a major downtown lodging and meeting facility. The foremost public spaces in the hotel included the two ground floor commercial spaces, housing the "Jug" Tavern, a prosperous downtown gathering spot noted for its service and informality, and the Lewis Drug Store, still in service by the end of the 1930s, its space later converted into the local United Airlines agency. The mezzanine provided reading and meeting rooms, and casual seating for guests debarking trains at depots immediately north of the hotel. Meeting rooms in the LeClaire often served for intense negotiation sessions between the United Auto Workers and the major local industries (Quad-City Times 1983). The fine dining available in what became known as the Top Hat restaurant and parquet floored Ski-Hi Ballroom on the fifteenth floor set the standard for the town, with the first chef, Anton Peters, coming from New York's Ritz-Carlton (Moline Dispatch 1987). The ground floor coffee shop (later converted into the Prime Rib Room) provided another, less formal, dining experience. In the 1940s an estimated 1,200-1,500 people traveled within the confines of the hotel daily, a level of activity heightened during the war years (1941-45), when several floors of efficiencies were pressed into service for transient guests (Fasick 7).

The roof garden and banquet rooms of the uppermost story provided both an unparalleled view of the river and Tri-City skyline, but was also a popular luncheon, banquet and entertainment venue, used by a multitude of formal social occasions including balls, celebrations, receptions and conventions, often featuring noted Big Band entertainers (Moline Dispatch 1948, 1968, 1987; Quad-City Times 1983). That the LeClaire was a significant entity in the commerce of Moline is exhibited in the numbers of transient lodgers housed in twenties, nearly 24,000 in 1923, over 49,000 in 1929. A severe slump in guests and hotel patrons marked the thirties, when the original hotel owners went bankrupt, but recovery in the late thirties brought up to an average of 300 transient guests per day through the 1940s (Moline Dispatch 1948). The guest list was replete with names of the famous including John Wayne, Jack Benny and Rochester, Alice Faye, Howard Keel, Chill Wills, Roy Rogers, Harry James and Kay Kyser (Quad-City Times 1983). This does not take into account the additional importance of the hotel in providing what was perceived as luxurious housing to over seventy tenants housed in efficiencies between the eighth and twelfth floors from its opening through the 'forties.

Certainly the construction and opening of the LeClaire Theater in 1923 played a prominent role in the hotel's success. Immediately west of the hotel, the theater was designed by Kirsh and Kolb,

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the same architectural firm responsible for the LeClaire. Between 1923 and 1957 the large capacity theater was an important entertainment venue in downtown Moline. However, the profitability of the theater waned well before its final closing, in its last years operating as a movie theater. The theater building was razed in 1973.

By all accounts the LeClaire fulfilled the role envisioned by its builders: it was without peer in Moline in providing first class accommodations, meeting spaces and entertainment to the city's citizenry and the traveling public. It now remains the sole vestige of a time when commercial downtown hotels acted as *de-facto* civic centers for a wider community. As such, the LeClaire fulfilled more than a functional role, it remained significant from its opening to the end of the 1940s. By the end of this decade, however, forces which had previously been held at bay by the war changed the stature enjoyed by downtown hotels throughout the country. The preeminence of automobile travel, the decline in railroad passenger traffic and move to the development of motels aligned along major roads combined to lessen the significance of downtown hotels. Fruitless efforts to make downtown hotels into motel-like properties usually did little more than make cosmetic changes to the buildings. Remodeling and renovations tried to keep pace with customer preferences, and the desirability for large suites and meeting spaces were accommodated by hotels like the LeClaire. However, the significance of most downtown hotels as a community focal point declined through the second half of the twentieth century. The LeClaire was periodically remodeled through the sixties and early seventies, and enjoyed some measure of success in sustaining a customer base. However, by the early 1980s its viability as a commercial venture had ended and it closed its doors in 1983. Since this time the hotel has remained vacant.

The LeClaire remained the tallest Tri-City building until the construction of Davenport's fourteen story American Commercial and Savings Bank in 1927 (Carrol 60-61). The LeClaire spurred nearby Rock Island to develop its own downtown hotel, the Fort Armstrong in 1926, and Davenport gained the Mississippi Hotel and RKO Theater in 1930. By the beginning of the 'thirties the area had more hotel and theater space than demand could sustain. The Great Depression accentuated the problem. The original developers, the Cornwells, slipped into receivership, and the larger debt holders took possession of the hotel. Today the descendants of those receiving the hotel during the Depression still preserve it, despite ten years of vacancy. As a historic building it still has the ability to evoke strong feelings and associations among Moliners, who remember its commercial prominence and can still see and treasure its tangible architectural qualities.

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 9

LeClaire Hotel, Moline, Rock Island Co., IL

Page 33

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Newspaper Articles

(Copies on file: Rock Island County Historical Society, Moline; Moline Public Library [microfilm];  
Moline *Dispatch* Library)

*Davenport Democrat & Leader* December 23, 1923

<i>Moline Dispatch</i>	December 21, 1922 [LeClaire Hotel Opening]	
	December 22, 1922	
	January 18, 1940	
	Fred Klann, <i>Off the Beaten Path</i>	December 7, 1949
	"	October 9, 1948
	"	December 10, 1948
	July 6, 1950	
	August 30, 1968	
	May 1, 1979	
	Marlene Gantt, <i>Images of the Past</i>	June 6, 1987
	"	June 13, 1987
<i>Quad-City Times</i>	February 13, 1983	
<i>Rock Island Argus</i>	December 21, 1922	
	December 22, 1922	
	December 20, 1981	
	July 8, 1983	
	September 20, 1986	

**10. Geographical Data**Acreage of Property less than one acre**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

A. Zone	<u>15</u>	<u>707700mE</u>	<u>4597990mN</u>	B. Zone	Eastings	Northings
		Eastings	Northings			
C. Zone	Eastings	Northings	D. Zone	Eastings	Northings	

[ ] See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Hugh Davidson, Public/Architectural Historian (see cont. page, Item 11)  
 organization N/A date October 1, 1993  
 street & number 1532 44th Street telephone 309/793-6289  
 city or town Rock Island state Illinois zip code 61201

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets****Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional Items**

(Check with the SHPO or FOP for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FOP.)

name Moline Consumers Company  
 street & number 1701 5th Avenue date October, 1993  
 city or town Moline state IL zip code 61265

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10

LeClaire Hotel, Moline, Rock Island Co., IL

Page 34

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Geographical Information

Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

The UTM coordinates for the property are Zone 15 707700mE 4597990mN. The boundaries for this nomination are restricted to the historical block and lot upon which the building stands, property currently under single ownership by the Moline Consumers Company of Moline, Illinois. The LeClaire Hotel features a rectangular ground plan built on a standard size Moline commercial urban lot (80 ft x 150 ft). The hotel sits upon Lot 7 of Block 5 of Wood's Second Addition, a plat addition added to the original town plat in 1852. The building sits on the northwest corner of the intersection formed by Fifth Avenue and Nineteenth Streets, and lies within the NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 32, Township 18N-Range 1W (Davenport, Iowa-III 7.5' quadrangle). The lot is less than one acre and the boundaries are restricted to property historically associated with the hotel.



United States Department of the Interior  
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National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 11

LeClaire Hotel, Moline, Rock Island Co., IL

Page 35

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Form Prepared By:

Hugh Davidson  
Public/Architectural Historian

Assistance with the completion of this  
registration form is gratefully acknowledged:

Matthew Meier  
Alexander Company, Inc.  
Madison, WI

Mimi Stirtz  
Architectural Historian  
St Louis, MO

Richard & Alderman Barbara Sandberg  
Moline Preservation Society  
Moline, IL

Joanne Parmley  
Librarian  
*Moline Dispatch*  
Moline, IL

Nancy K. Mulcahey  
Economic Development Coordinator  
City of Moline  
Moline, IL

Larry L. Fells  
Supervisor, Off Premise  
Deere & Co.  
Moline, IL

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photo

LeClaire Hotel, Moline, Rock Island Co., IL

Page 36

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All photographs field checked for accuracy upon date of nomination submittal.

Name: LeClaire Hotel

Location: Moline, Rock Island County, Illinois

Photographer: Hugh Davidson

Date: September 16, 1993

Location of negatives: On Deposit with Alexander Co., Inc., Madison, WI

Description: General view to northwest

Photograph No.: #1

Name: LeClaire Hotel

Location: Moline, Rock Island County, Illinois

Photographer: Hugh Davidson

Date: September 16, 1993

Location of negatives: On Deposit with Alexander Co., Inc., Madison, WI

Description: General view to southwest

Photograph No.: #2

Name: LeClaire Hotel

Location: Moline, Rock Island County, Illinois

Photographer: Richard Sandberg

Date: September 23, 1993

Location of negatives: In possession of owner, R. Sandberg, Moline, IL

Description: Pre-1945 historic view of LeClaire Hotel

Photograph No.: #3

Name: LeClaire Hotel

Location: Moline, Rock Island County, Illinois

Photographer: Hugh Davidson

Date: September 16, 1993

Location of negatives: On Deposit with Alexander Co., Inc., Madison, WI

Description: Facade main entry and flanking windows; view west

Photograph No.: #4

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photo LeClaire Hotel, Moline, Rock Island Co., IL

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Page 37

Name: LeClaire Hotel

Location: Moline, Rock Island County, Illinois

Photographer: Hugh Davidson

Date: September 16, 1993

Location of negatives: On Deposit with Alexander Co., Inc., Madison, WI

Description: North elevation ground floor; view southwest

Photograph No.: #5

Name: LeClaire Hotel

Location: Moline, Rock Island County, Illinois

Photographer: Hugh Davidson

Date: September 16, 1993

Location of negatives: On Deposit with Alexander Co., Inc., Madison, WI

Description: South elevation ground floor; view north

Photograph No.: #6

Name: LeClaire Hotel

Location: Moline, Rock Island County, Illinois

Photographer: Hugh Davidson

Date: September 16, 1993

Location of negatives: On Deposit with Alexander Co., Inc., Madison, WI

Description: West elevation ground floor; view northeast

Photograph No.: #7

Name: LeClaire Hotel

Location: Moline, Rock Island County, Illinois

Photographer: Hugh Davidson

Date: September 16, 1993

Location of negatives: On Deposit with Alexander Co., Inc., Madison, WI

Description: Lower floors of shaft segment of hotel; view southwest

Photograph No.: #8

Name: LeClaire Hotel

Location: Moline, Rock Island County, Illinois

Photographer: Hugh Davidson

Date: September 16, 1993

Location of negatives: On Deposit with Alexander Co., Inc., Madison, WI

Description: Upper floors, sky-line room and cornice; view southwest

Photograph No.: #9

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photo

LeClaire Hotel, Moline, Rock Island Co., IL

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Name: LeClaire Hotel

Location: Moline, Rock Island County, Illinois

Photographer: Hugh Davidson

Date: September 16, 1993

Location of negatives: On Deposit with Alexander Co., Inc., Madison, WI

Description: Detail view of capitol segment of the hotel and cornice; view southwest

Photograph No.: #10

Name: LeClaire Hotel

Location: Moline, Rock Island County, Illinois

Photographer: Hugh Davidson

Date: September 16, 1993

Location of negatives: On Deposit with Alexander Co., Inc., Madison, WI

Description: Upper floor features of west elevation; view east

Photograph No.: #11

Name: LeClaire Hotel

Location: Moline, Rock Island County, Illinois

Photographer: Hugh Davidson

Date: September 25, 1993

Location of negatives: On Deposit with Alexander Co., Inc., Madison, WI

Description: General view of lobby entry; view northeast

Photograph No.: #12

Name: LeClaire Hotel

Location: Moline, Rock Island County, Illinois

Photographer: Hugh Davidson

Date: September 23, 1993

Location of negatives: On Deposit with Alexander Co., Inc., Madison, WI

Description: North lobby and Prime Rib Room entry; view north

Photograph No.: #13

Name: LeClaire Hotel

Location: Moline, Rock Island County, Illinois

Photographer: Hugh Davidson

Date: September 23, 1993

Location of negatives: On Deposit with Alexander Co., Inc., Madison, WI

Description: Lobby ceiling on north side of lobby; view northwest

Photograph No.: #14

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photo

LeClaire Hotel, Moline, Rock Island Co., IL

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Name: LeClaire Hotel

Location: Moline, Rock Island County, Illinois

Photographer: Hugh Davidson

Date: September 23, 1993

Location of negatives: On Deposit with Alexander Co., Inc., Madison, WI

Description: Elevator bank and main desk area; view west

Photograph No.: #15

Name: LeClaire Hotel

Location: Moline, Rock Island County, Illinois

Photographer: Hugh Davidson

Date: September 23, 1993

Location of negatives: On Deposit with Alexander Co., Inc., Madison, WI

Description: South lobby area; view southwest

Photograph No.: #16

Name: LeClaire Hotel

Location: Moline, Rock Island County, Illinois

Photographer: Hugh Davidson

Date: September 23, 1993

Location of negatives: On Deposit with Alexander Co., Inc., Madison, WI

Description: Mezzanine level; view south

Photograph No.: #17

Name: LeClaire Hotel

Location: Moline, Rock Island County, Illinois

Photographer: Hugh Davidson

Date: September 23, 1993

Location of negatives: On Deposit with Alexander Co., Inc., Madison, WI

Description: Prime Rib Room interior; view southwest

Photograph No.: #18

Name: LeClaire Hotel

Location: Moline, Rock Island County, Illinois

Photographer: Richard Sandburg

Date: September 29, 1993

Location of negatives: In possession of owner, R. Sandberg, Moline, IL

Description: Pre-1945 historic view of LeClaire Hotel

Photograph No.: #19



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: LeClaire Hotel

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ILLINOIS, Rock Island

DATE RECEIVED: 1/06/94      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/18/94  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/03/94      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/20/94  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 94000025

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N    DATA PROBLEM: N    LANDSCAPE: N    LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N    PDIL: N    PERIOD: N    PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N    SAMPLE: N    SLR DRAFT: N    NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    2/4/94 DATE    Entered in the National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_  
REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_  
DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

---

**CLASSIFICATION**

count       resource type

---

**STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION**

---

**FUNCTION**

historic       current

---

**DESCRIPTION**

architectural classification  
 materials  
 descriptive text

---

**SIGNIFICANCE**

Period      Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates      Builder/Architect  
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

summary paragraph  
 completeness  
 clarity  
 applicable criteria  
 justification of areas checked  
 relating significance to the resource  
 context  
 relationship of integrity to significance  
 justification of exception  
 other

---

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

---

**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

acreage       verbal boundary description  
 UTM's       boundary justification

---

**ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION**

sketch maps     USGS maps     photographs     presentation

---

**OTHER COMMENTS**

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# LE CLAIRE HOTEL



Le Claire Hotel

MOULINE, ROCK ISLAND CO., IL

#1





LE CLAIRE HOTEL

LE CLAIRE HOTEL

PRIME RIB ROOM

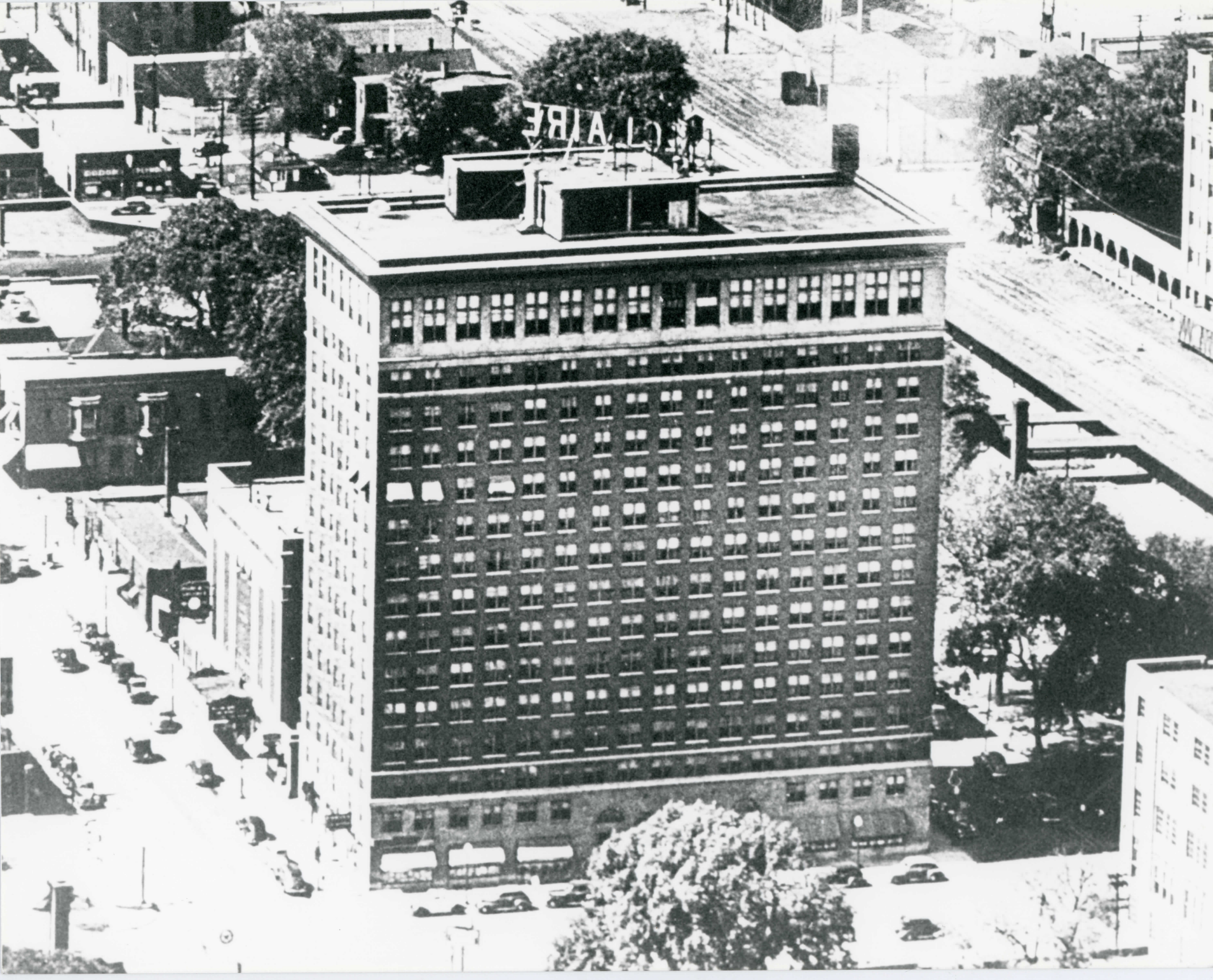
PRIME RIB ROOM



LE CLAIRE HOTEL

MOLINE, ROCK ISLAND CO., IL

#2



LE CLARE HOTEL

MOLINE, ROCK ISLAND CO., IL

# 43





LE CLAIRE HOTEL

MO LINE, ROCK ISLAND CO., IL

#4





LECLAIRE HOTEL

NO LINE, ROCK ISLAND CO., IL

#5





LE CLAIRE HOTEL

NO PARKING  
ANY TIME

LECLAIRE HOTEL

MOULINE, ROCK ISLAND CO., IL

#6







LECLARÉ HOTEL

MOHNE, ROCK ISLAND, CO IL

#7

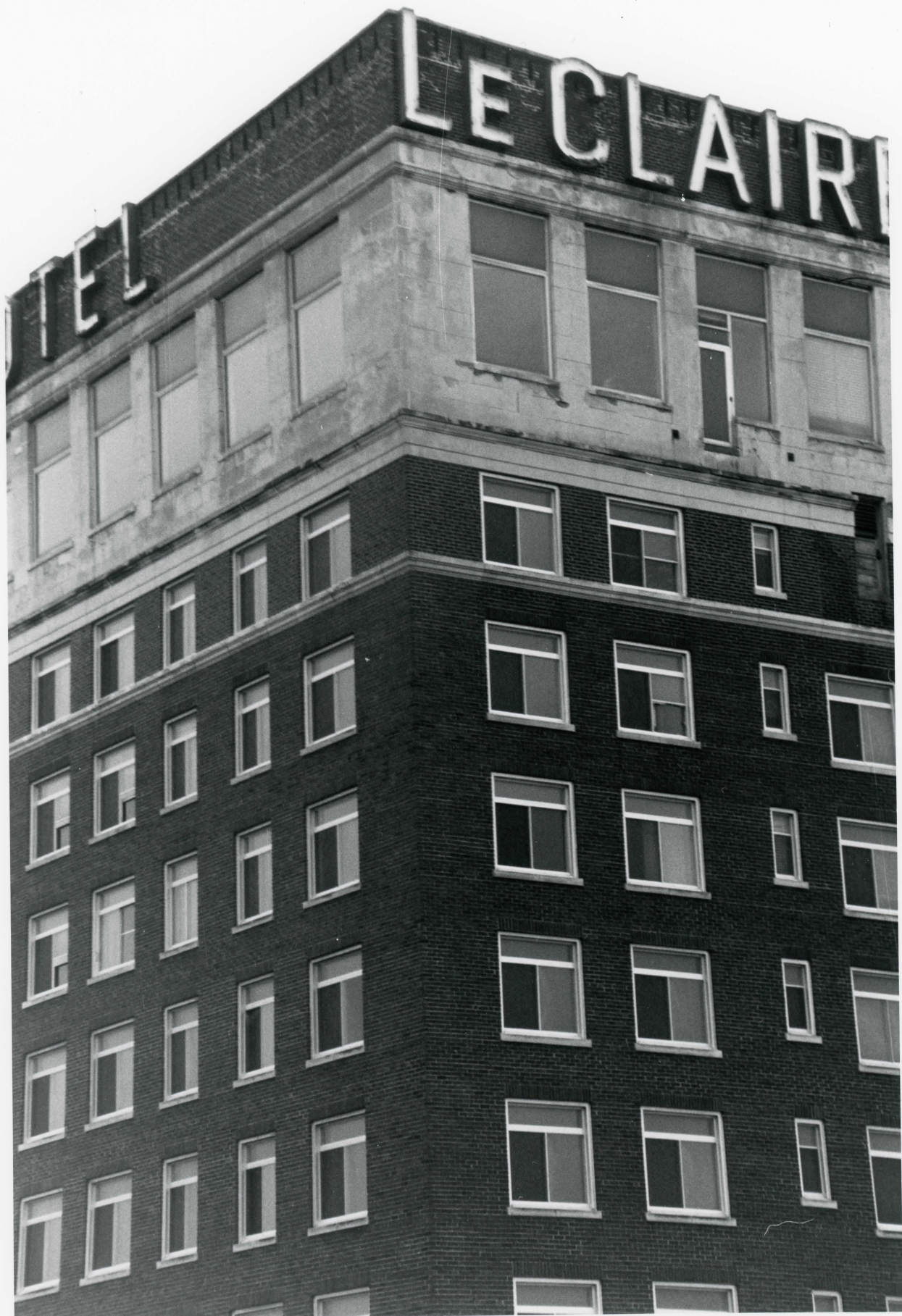


LECLARE HOTEL

MOBILE, ROCK ISLAND CO., IL

# 8





LECLAIRE HOTEL

MOULINE, ROCK ISLAND CO., IL

# 9





LECLARE HOTEL

INDIAN, ROCK ISLAND CO., IL

#10





LECLARE HOTEL

MDLINE, ROCK ISLAND CO., IL

# 11





LECLAIRE HOTEL

MOLINE, ROCK ISLAND CO., IL

#12



LECLAIRE HOTEL

MOBILE, ROCK ISLAND CO., IL

#13







LECLAIRE HOTEL

MOLINE, ROCK ISLAND CO., ILL

#14



LECLAIRE HOTEL

MOLINE, ROCK ISLAND CO., IL

#15







LECLAIRE HOTEL

MOULINE, ROCK ISLAND CO., IL

#16



LE CLARE HOTEL

MOULINE, ROCK ISLAND CO., IL

#17





LECLAIRE HOTEL

MOLINE, ROCK ISLAND CO., IL

#18



*Le Claire*  
THEATRE  
SINGING  
TALKING  
PICTURES

GARAGE

JURL TRAI  
USES 1  
YELLOW CAB  
PHONE MOL 99

RESTAURANT

CHRYSLER  
Plymouth

INSURE WITH  
SHEARER  
REAL ESTATE

CARS

USED CARS

LEE BOWMAN ROGER  
PACIFIC BEND YOUS  
ENTERTAINMENT MAN ROGER

LAURE GARAGE  
WASH REPAIRING

DRUGS  
F SOGA

150  
TRAFFIC SIGNAL  
STOP 15 S.E.C.

YELLOW CAB

STORAGE  
HEATZ  
RENTAL

TICKETS  
BICKETS

1934

1934

1934

1934

1934

1934

LECLAIRE HOTEL

MOLINE, ROCK ISLAND CO., IL

#19





Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Compiled from aerial photographs taken 1986  
Field checked 1988. Map edited 1991

Projection: Iowa coordinate system,  
south zone (Lambert conformal conic)

10,000-foot grid ticks: Iowa coordinate system,  
south zone and Illinois coordinate system, west zone

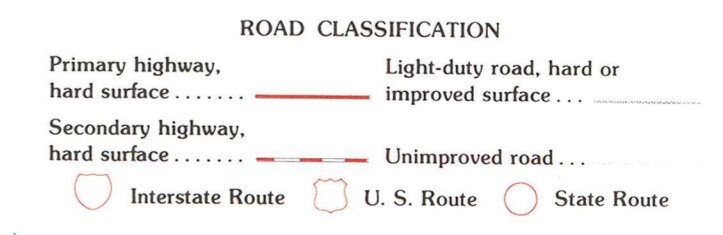
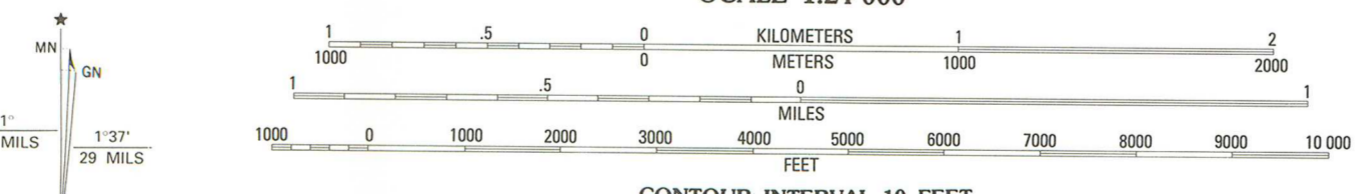
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15  
1927 North American Datum

The difference between 1927 North American Datum and North  
American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) for 7.5-minute intersections  
is given in USGS Bulletin 1875. The NAD 83 is shown by  
dashed corner ticks

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of  
the National or State reservations shown on this map

Gray tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fences and field lines where  
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



DAVENPORT EAST, IOWA-ILL.  
41090-E5-TF-024

1991

DMA 7867 II SE-SERIES V876



RECEIVED

NOV 04 1993

PRESERVATION SERVICES

October 29, 1993

Ms. Ann Swallow  
National Register Coordinator  
Illinois Historic Preservation Agency  
1 Old State Capital Plaza  
Springfield IL 62701-1507

Re: Letter of Support  
LeClaire Hotel National Register Designation, Moline, IL

Dear Ms. Swallow:

As Mayor of Moline, I wholeheartedly support local efforts to ensure national landmarking for this important component of Moline's history.

The LeClaire Hotel played an important role in the commercial and social life of our central business district. Its presence continues to have a substantial visual impact, and its presence readily identifies it as part of the central business district skyline in Moline.

I strongly urge your favorable consideration of our desire to have this historic landmark designated on the national registry.

Sincerely,



Stanley F. Leach  
Mayor

lm

October 29, 1993

Ms. Ann Swallow  
National Register Coordinator  
Illinois Historic Preservation Agency  
1 Old State Capital Plaza  
Springfield IL 62701-1507

Re: Letter of Support  
LeClaire Hotel National Register Designation, Moline, IL

Dear Ms. Swallow:

I am providing you this letter to further support local efforts to ensure national landmarking for this important component of Moline's history.

The building not only represents the close ties with historic patterns of transportation, i.e., proximity to early 20th Century passenger rail facilities; but it also serves as a reminder to younger generations that the facility once functioned as an important center for social and civic related activities.

I, therefore, strongly urge your favorable considerations in this matter, and your support of our community's effort to retain and enhance this central feature of our central business district.

Sincerely,

  
Alan L. Efflandt  
City Administrator

ALE/lm



**Illinois Historic  
Preservation Agency**

Old State Capitol • Springfield, Illinois 62701 • (217) 782-4836

---

December 22, 1993

Beth Boland  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Register Section  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
800 N. Capitol Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20002

**RECEIVED**

**JAN 06 1994**

**NATIONAL  
REGISTER**

Dear Beth:

Enclosed please find the National Register nomination forms and accompanying documentation for the following properties that were recommended for nomination to the Register by the Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council, and nominated by the State Historic Preservation Officer:

- ✓ LeClaire Hotel, Moline
- L. Haas Store, Carmi
- Kamp Store, Kampsville
- Wabash Railroad Station and Railway Express Agency, Decatur
- Beall-Orr House, Mt. Carmel
- "Peace" and "Harvest", Peoria
- University of Illinois Experimental Dairy Farm Historic District, Urbana (Round Barns of Illinois MPS)

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Ann V. Swallow  
Survey & National Register  
Coordinator

encl.