

239-249 N. ROSE STREET (Commercial Building)  
Kalamazoo  
Kalamazoo County  
Michigan

HABS No. MI-348

HABS  
MICH  
39-KALAM,  
10-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS  
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39-KALAM,  
10.

239-249 N. Rose St. (Commercial Building) HABS No. MI-348

Location: 239-249 N. Rose St., Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo  
County, Michigan

USGS Kalamazoo Quadrangle  
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:  
16.616640.4683110

Present owner: Kalamazoo Downtown Development Authority  
141 E. Michigan Avenue  
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007

Present Occupant: Vacant.

Significance: This building was occupied for much of its  
existence (1906-1980) by the Kalamazoo  
Laundry Company. Occupying almost one-half  
of a city block, the structure dominated the  
north side of Arcadia Creek, and provided a  
home for the laundry operations, as well as a  
cigar maker and a dry goods store. The  
building was actually constructed in sections  
from 1874 to 1911, and combines a variety of  
industrial styles in the design. The three-  
story elevations fronting on Rose and Eleanor  
streets are finished with corbeled parapet  
walls and articulated into regular bays  
typical of the commercial application of the  
Italianate style. Several styles of  
skylights provided natural light to the  
interior of the large building block,  
including a raised clerestory, sawtooth roof  
construction, and pyramidal skylights.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. **Date of erection:** 1873 to 1911. The sections of 239-249 N. Rose were built over a period of years as individual buildings, which were then combined from 1906 to 1911 into one large building to house the operations of the laundry company. The complete detail of the evolving structure is given in the section entitled "Original and subsequent owners."

2. **ARCHITECT:** Not known.

3. **Original and subsequent owners:**

References to the Chain of Title to the land upon which 239-249 N. Rose St. stands are in the Office of the County Clerk, County Register of Deeds, 102 West Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

The legal description of the property is contained in three parts:

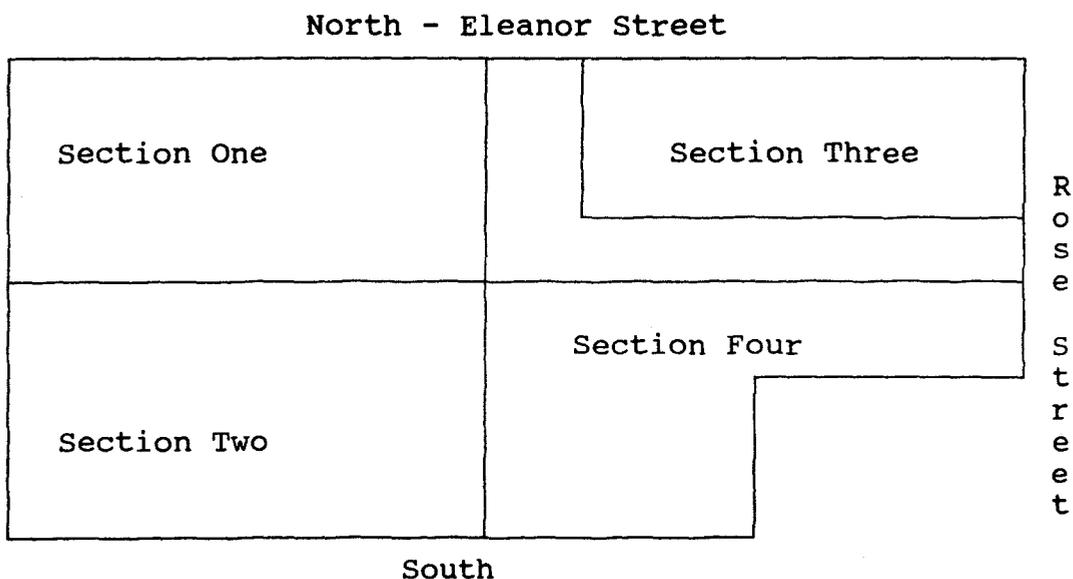
a. Lots 1,2,3,4 of Block 4 of the Plat of Town of Kalamazoo, excepting the South half of the South half of Lots three (3) and four (4) and also excepting a piece of land 40 ft North and South by 122 ft East and West out of the Northeast corner of said Lots three (3) and four (4).

b. The South half of the South half of Lots three (3) and four (4) of Block Four of the Plat of Town of Kalamazoo.

c. A piece of land 40 ft North and South by 122 ft East and West out of the Northeast corner of said Lots three (3) and four (4) of Block Four of the Plat of Town of Kalamazoo.

The complications afforded by such a large building with several sections built over a period of years produces a Chain of Title that is best reviewed in the light of the sections of the building illustrated below. (N.B. The sections of the building do not correspond to the numbering of the lot, which substantially increased the

challenge of tracing ownership.) The entire building was in place by 1911 with only a small storefront on the South half of the South half of Lot three (3), which was most likely added in 1938 (Liber 373, Deeds and Mortgages, p. 558 - Hodgman et al to Kalamazoo Laundry Co. - Mortgage recorded for \$7,000 to "erect a building upon same property".)



Section One Chain of Title:

- 1873 Mortgage, Liber 20, p. 116.  
Kimball and Austin Manufacturing Company mortgaged property to build first structure which was to become the laundry building.
- 1878 Mortgage, Liber 1, Lis Pendens, , p. 166.  
Mortgage foreclosed: assigned to E. Trask.  
Deed, Liber 45, p. 631.  
Deed purchased by A. Ford.
- 1891 Deed, Liber 77, p. 393.  
Ford Estate to Kalamazoo Foundry and Machine Co.

- 1906 Deed, Liber 131, p. 192.  
Kalamazoo Foundry and Machine Co.  
to the Kalamazoo Laundry Co.
- 1983 Deed, Liber 1188, p. 531.  
Kalamazoo Laundry Co. to Kalamazoo  
Downtown Development Authority.

Section Two:

- 1874 Mortgage, Liber 20, p. 155.  
Lawrence and Chapin Iron Works takes out  
\$35,000 mortgage to build second part of  
structure which was to become part of the  
laundry building.
- 1897 Deed, Liber 88, p. 577.  
Buildings and land assigned to  
Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Co.  
in foreclosure.
- 1902 Deed, Liber 109, p. 474.  
Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Co.  
obtains permission to enclose and build  
over Arcadia Creek which attaches sections  
one and two of the building.
- 1903 Deed, Liber 114, p. 449.  
Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Co. to  
William Shakespeare Jr. and Stephen B.  
Monroe.
- 1904 Deed, Liber 122, p. 185.  
Stephen B. Monroe to William Shakespeare  
Jr.
- 1906 Deed, Liber 134, P. 130.  
William Shakespeare Jr. to Kalamazoo  
Laundry Company.
- 1983 Deed, Liber 1188, p. 531.  
Kalamazoo Laundry Co. to Kalamazoo  
Downtown Development Authority.

Section Three:

- 1888 Deed, Liber 67, p. 346.  
Thomas Buckley et al to Kalamazoo Foundry  
and Machine Company who build the third  
section of the building.
- 1905 Deed, Liber 121, p. 519.  
Kalamazoo Foundry and Machine Company to  
Sylvester Quinn, who substantially  
rebuilds this section.
- 1911 Deed, Liber 110, p. 73.  
Quinn Estate to Kalamazoo Laundry Company.
- 1983 Deed, Liber 1188, p. 531.  
Kalamazoo Laundry Co. to Kalamazoo  
Downtown Development Authority.

Section Four:

- 1886 Deed, Liber 41, p. 356.  
Nathaniel A. Balch to Henry Hodgman, who  
then builds fourth section of the  
building.
- 1906 Deed, Liber 131, p. 156.  
Hodgman grants common wall rights to  
Kalamazoo Laundry Company, for expansion  
with infill between the two buildings.
- 1938 Deed, Liber 373, p. 558.  
Hodgman Estate to Kalamazoo Laundry  
Company.
- 1983 Deed, Liber 1188, p. 531.  
Kalamazoo Laundry Co. to Kalamazoo  
Downtown Development Authority.

Through the years there were slices of property,  
water rights, alleys, and access rights that were  
also recorded at the Register of Deeds Office.  
Most of these transactions had little effect on  
the ultimate shape of the building, but one  
particular episode is worth noting.

In 1868, a slice of Section Two was subdivided and mortgaged to a syndicate of 24 individuals and couples for the purchase of a horse named Vermont Hero. There are no subsequent entries as to his record, but it was noted that the mortgage was discharged three years later.

**4. Builder, contractors, suppliers:**

The primary information about the builders, contractors, and suppliers for 239-249 N. Rose St. comes from a list of mechanic's liens filed against the Kalamazoo Laundry Company during the construction of the new facade of the combined buildings and the infill spaces between the various existing parts of the building.

a. Builder: Fred O. Barker Construction Company (according to the Ross Collier Index, File No. 10, located at the Western Michigan University Archives and Regional History Collection). Barker was awarded the contract on February 2, 1906.

b. Contractor: Zeeland Brick Company (according to a mechanic's lien filed in March of 1907 recorded in the Title and Abstract of Mortgages and Deeds - 239-249 N. Rose St. Kalamazoo, Michigan). Zeeland Brick supplied all the brick for the facade and labor for the installation.

**5. Original Plans and Construction:** There are no original plans and construction documents available, perhaps because of the unique nature of the development of the building from four original segments.

**6. Alterations and Additions:** After 239-249 N. Rose St. was assembled from 1906 to 1911 into the building that now exists on the site, there was only one significant addition.

In 1938, a small storefront was added to the building on the South half of the South half of Lot Three, which faces Rose Street. Referring to the diagram included in the section on "Original and subsequent owners", the location is in Section Four. This addition is recorded in Liber 373,

Deeds and Mortgages, p. 558 - Hodgman et al to Kalamazoo Laundry Co. - Mortgage recorded for \$7,000 to "erect a building upon same property".

#### B. Historical Context

The site of 239-249 North Rose Street was a prime location for early commercial development in Kalamazoo, Michigan, because of the availability of water from Arcadia Creek and the accessibility to a rail system to ship goods to all parts of the country. Much of the stimulus for this growth can be attributed to the arrival of the Michigan Central Railroad in 1846, and the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad in 1870.

As was indicated earlier, 239-249 North Rose Street was built in four sections over a number of years, and housed a variety of manufacturing operations. When the Kalamazoo Laundry Company was incorporated in 1899 from consolidation of five laundries and dry cleaners, the new partnership immediately decided to purchase the various portions of this building and assemble them into one good downtown location to serve their customers. The operation on Rose Street was also ideally located near several stable and blacksmith concerns, which was convenient for the Laundry Company, as they maintained a substantial fleet of horse-drawn wagons to pick up and deliver their customers' goods.

By the time of the development of the Laundry Company's operations, the area had already attracted inventors such as William Shakespeare, Jr., and Oscar M. Allen, two men who held an assortment of patents on such diverse items as a retractable fishing reel and a movable glass window in a casket. The Laundry Company was joined in the immediate neighborhood by other service industries, retail sales operations, and recreational facilities (primarily saloons). The Masons, the Salvation Army, and the City Rescue Mission were also located in the neighborhood.

From the day of its official opening on June 19, 1907, until the building was sold to the Kalamazoo Downtown Development Corporation in 1983, the

Kalamazoo Laundry Company operated a steady service business, unremarkable for any particular incident, except a fire in 1914, which did \$40,000 worth of damage.

The architecture of the area reflects the diversity of the enterprises and displays a range of commercial architectural styles that were popular from the middle of the nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century. This eclectic combination of buildings, enterprises, industries, and activities in the Arcadia Creek area has always been a significant and enduring factor in the history of Kalamazoo.

Prepared by: Victoria Hardy  
Title: Principal  
Affiliation: ArtSoft Management Services  
Date: October 14, 1990

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. **Architectural character:** Built as four or five separate buildings for separate owners and separate occupancy types, the complex evolved over a period of 64 years to become one complex for industrial use by the Kalamazoo Laundry Company. The predominant architectural style is characteristic of late 19th century commercial and industrial buildings.
2. **Condition of the fabric:** Vacant for ten years, the buildings have deteriorated to a condition that is currently unsafe for any occupancy. Several roofs areas have collapsed, water has saturated structural framing, and exterior brick bearing walls are cracked. Openings at the roof and at windows has allowed birds, primarily pigeons, to enter and soil large areas at the interior. Equipment pertaining to original uses has been removed.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. **Overall dimensions:** Each of the separately constructed buildings is formed by basic rectangles and infill construction to fill the half block between Rose St. and Church St. and from Eleanor St. south to the alley. The overall dimensions of the block are 133 feet by 268 feet. The buildings fronting on Rose St. are three stories; all other construction is two stories, except some infill construction which is one story. Basements and sub-basements exist under some of the spaces, but are not connected to each other. The original buildings were constructed with Arcadia Creek exposed as it ran through the middle of the block, but later infill construction covered the creek.
2. **Foundations:** Where visible, the foundations were constructed of brick. Thickness and water-table are unknown. Windows, now blocked up, were located in walls along the creek and at the exterior walls of the block.

3. **Walls:** Bearing walls, 13" thick, are of red common brick, painted, and laid in a running bond pattern. The middle facade fronting Rose St. is divided into three bays and has a corbeled brick and paneled parapet wall. The corner facade at Rose and Eleanor Streets has three bays of two windows each along Rose St. and four bays of four windows each along Eleanor St. and has a constant height parapet wall with corbeling at the top of each recessed bay and at the top of the wall. The other exterior brick walls are all plain brick with no distinguishing detail.
4. **Structural systems, framing:** All of the original buildings were constructed with exterior brick bearing walls 3 wythes thick. It is assumed from historic entries in the record books of the County Register of Deeds office that steel beams span the openings for the storefronts. Interior wood columns support wood beams at the oldest structure in the southwest corner of the lot. Plain round steel columns support steel beams in the other buildings. Some original exterior walls have been removed and the openings spanned with newer steel beams. Wood joists, sheathing, and hardwood flooring are used throughout the buildings at the upper floors and at ground floors over basements.
5. **Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads:** None.
6. **Chimneys:** None.
7. **Openings:**
  - a. **Doorways and doors:** The facades fronting on Rose St. have storefront openings the full width of each building, with supporting columns at each bay. The centered entrance is recessed at an angle to a single door. All other doors provide utilitarian access to the various parts of the buildings. Door openings at the rear buildings have flat arch lintels.
  - b. **Window and shutters:** All of the windows are double-hung wood sash with no shutters, trim, or hardware. Number of

lights varies at the different facades, with many original sash having been altered and many openings covered with plywood or infilled with bricked. Predominant windows at the Rose St. and east half of Eleanor St. facades are simple one-over-one light double-hung sash in rectangular openings with stone sills and lintels. All other openings have rectangular frames in brick openings with flat arch brick lintels.

8. **Roof:**

- a. **Shape, covering:** Most of the buildings have flat roofs with built-up asphalt coverings, sloped to drain to the interior of the block through a series of gutters and downspouts. Several areas have skylights designed to provide natural light at the interior. Steel-framed pyramidal skylights are used at the one-story infill roofs. A raised clerestory, not visible from the street, runs along the middle structure fronting Eleanor St. Behind that, in the middle of the block, is an industrial sawtooth roof.
- b. **Cornice, eaves:** None.
- c. **Dormers, cupolas, towers:** Elevators were provided at three locations and two overrun shafts project several feet above the adjacent roof and wall height. A sheet metal-enclosed drying tower extends several feet above the main roof along Church St.

C. **Description of Interior:**

1. **Floor plans:** Sketch plans are provided which show the general layout of the buildings at the three levels above grade. No drawings are provided for the various basements.
2. **Stairways:** Two stairways to separate basements were located in the storefronts along Rose St.

Stairways to the second floor were found at six locations, only three of which were safe enough to use. Two stairways lead to the third floor, only one of which was safe enough to use. All of the stairways were framed in wood with no balusters or ornamental features.

3. **Flooring:** First floor spaces had carpeting at the former storefronts along Rose St. Other spaces had exposed concrete floors, either on fill or as a topping on wood framing. Second and third floor spaces had predominantly wood flooring.
4. **Wall and ceiling finish:** The storefronts had painted plaster walls and the rear industrial spaces had exposed painted brick walls. Some interior partitions had masonite or plywood paneling on wood studs.
5. **Openings:**
  - a. **Doorways and doors:** Most doorways had been significantly altered from original design, with few remaining doors or trim. Many newer openings had been cut for the laundry operation but were not finished.
  - b. **Windows:** Most windows had been significantly altered from original design, and there was no interior trim. Many windows had plywood covering the openings. Interior masonry walls which were exterior walls of the original buildings had their original windows still place.
6. **Decorative features and trim:** None.
7. **Hardware:** None.
8. **Mechanical equipment:**
  - a. **Heating, air-conditioning, ventilation:** Ventilation of the drying rooms at the rear building was accommodated by vents in the floor and through the roof.

- b. **Lighting:** No original lighting.
- c. **Plumbing:** The original laundry boiler fills a large room 26' wide by 44' long. The controls are in an adjacent room.

9. **Original furnishings:** None.

D. **Site:**

- 1. **General setting and orientation:** The group of buildings comprising the Kalamazoo Laundry Company fills the entire site to the sidewalk except at the southeast corner which is open. This open corner has historically and currently been used for parking, originally for horses and now for cars. The facade of the building block fronting on Rose St. faces east, but orientation had no apparent bearing on original building design.
- 2. **Historic landscape design:** None.
- 3. **Outbuildings:** None.

Prepared by: Ilene Tyler, AIA  
Title: Associate Architect  
Affiliation: Quinn/Evans Architects  
Date: October 14, 1990

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. **Architectural drawings:** There are none available. A thorough search was done of the City Clerk's Office and Records, the County Clerk's Office and Records, and the Western Michigan University Regional History Archives and Collection, and no documents were discovered.
- B. **Historic Views:** There are none available. A thorough search was done of the aforementioned sources as well as the Kalamazoo Gazette morgue and archives, and no photographs were discovered.
- C. **Interviews:** There were no interviews conducted. The original owners have left the area, and the building has been vacant with no businesses and/or employees since 1983.

D. **Bibliography:**

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Title and Abstract of Mortgages and Deeds - 239-249 N. Rose Street. County of Kalamazoo, Michigan, County Clerk's Office. Currently held in the offices of Downtown Kalamazoo, Inc., 141 Michigan Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

County Register of Deeds. County Clerk's Office, 102 West Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo, Michigan. Deed Books, Liber 41, p. 356; Liber 45, p. 631; Liber 67, page 346; Liber 77, p. 393; Liber 88, p. 577; Liber 109, p. 474; Liber 110, p. 73; Liber 114, p. 449; Liber 121, p. 519; Liber 122, p. 185; Liber 131, p. 192, p. 156; Liber 134, p. 134; Liber 1188, p. 531.

County Register of Deeds. County Clerk's Office, 102 West Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo, Michigan. Mortgage Books, Liber 20, p. 116, p. 155; Liber 373, p. 558.

County Register of Deeds. County Clerk's Office, 102 West Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo, Michigan. Lis Pendens Book, Liber 1, p. 166.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Massie, Larry, B. Kalamazoo: The Place Behind the Products. Windsor, Ontario, Canada: Windsor Publications, 1981.

Western Michigan University Archives and Regional History Collection. The Kalamazoo City and County Directory. Kalamazoo: Ihling Bros. and Everard Co., Volumes 1904, 1905, 1906, 1908, 1909-11, 1912, 1913-14, 1915, 1916-22, 1924, 1926, 1927-33, 1934, 1935-55, 1956, 1957-62, 1963, 1964-76, 1977, 1978.

Collier, Ross, The Kalamazoo Laundry Company - The Ross Collier Index. File No. 10, Western Michigan University Archives and Regional History Collection.

- E. **Likely sources not yet investigated:** Additional information about the Arcadia Creek development and the district that it encompasses may be available from the City Planning Department, City of Kalamazoo, Michigan. This department also has a copy of an unsubmitted National Register of Historic Places Registration Form which contains general information about the downtown area. The Kalamazoo Public Library also contains a number of books and references materials about the early development of Kalamazoo and the surrounding county. Much of this material is secondary, but may be of interest for a general overview of the region.
- F. **Supplemental Information:** There is no supplemental information to submit.

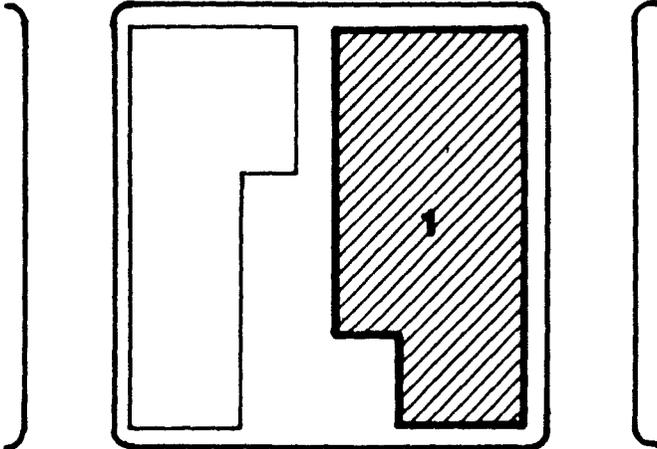
PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This recordation is being conducted as a requirement of the Memorandum of Agreement reached July 24, 1990, among the various partners in the redevelopment of downtown Kalamazoo, Michigan. The "North Central Business District Development Project" is being partially funded through a urban development action grant from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. The site developers are the City of Kalamazoo, the Downtown Development Authority, and Downtown Tomorrow, Inc. The private sector participants are First of American Bank Corporation, Upjohn Corporation, First Healthcare Corporation, Kalamazoo Valley Community College, and the law firm of Scott, Doerschler, Messner, and Gauntlett.

This recordation was conducted and prepared from August 15, 1990 to October 16, 1990 under the direction of Victoria Hardy, Principal in the firm of ArtSoft Management Services, Rockford, Michigan.



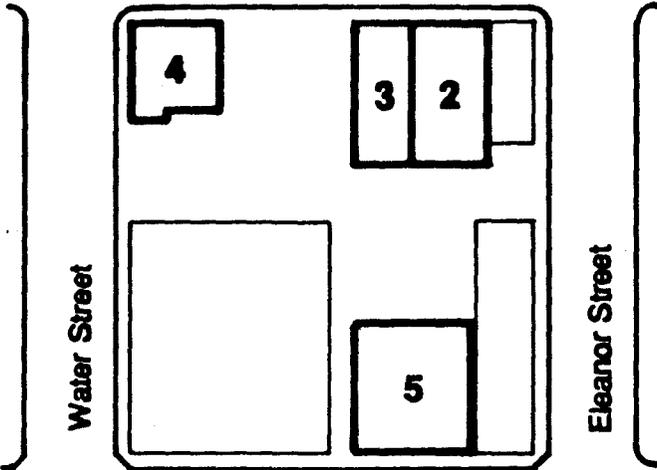
Church Street



**Building Key:**

- 1. 239-249 N. Rose Street
- 2. 240 N. Rose Street
- 3. 230 N. Rose Street
- 4. 202-208 N. Rose Street
- 5. 239-243 N. Burdick Street
- 6. 224-228 N. Burdick Street

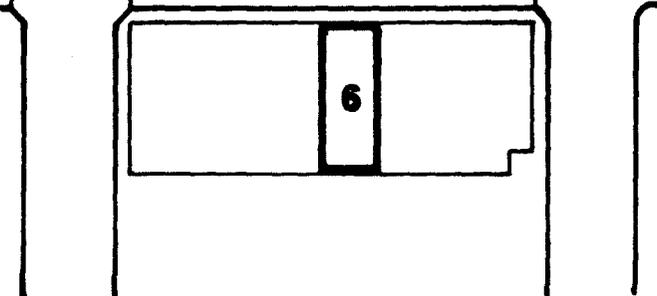
Rose Street



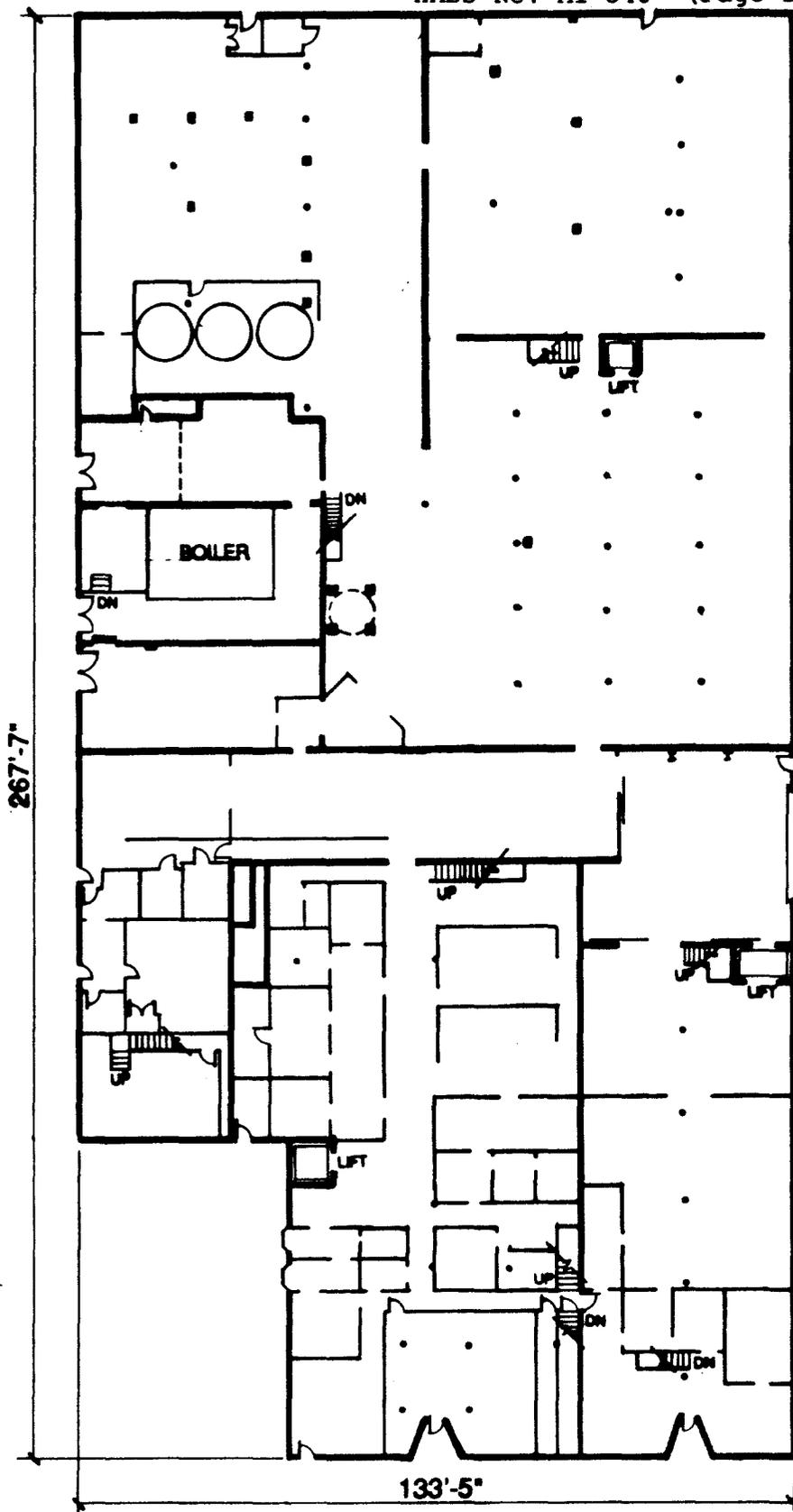
Water Street

Eleanor Street

Burdick Street

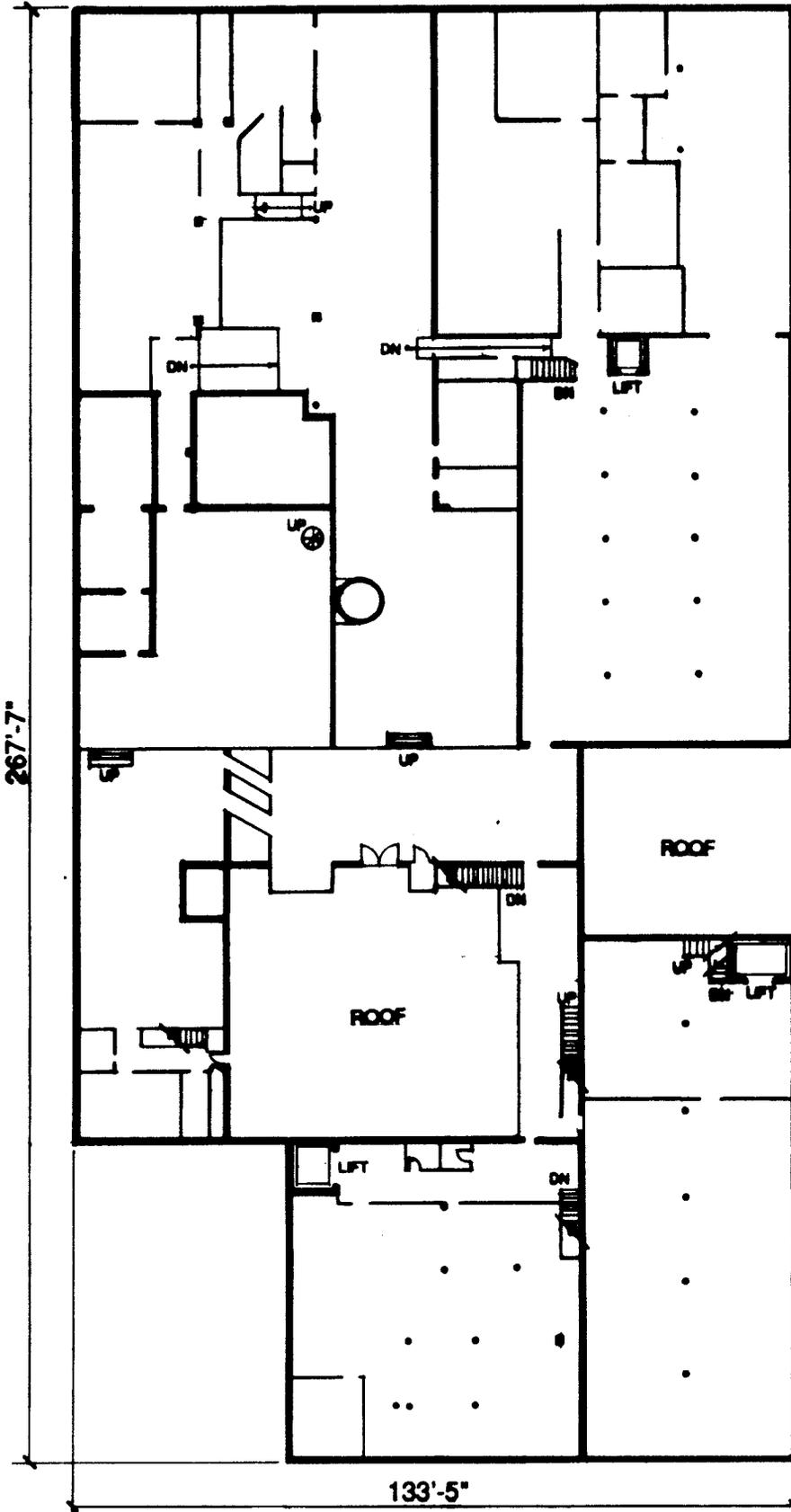


**Location Map**



First Floor  
Plan

239-249 N. Rose Street



Second Floor  
Plan

239-249 N. Rose Street

