United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Date listed 5-15-2014
NRIS No. 14000181
Oregon SHPO

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Oregon City Municipal Elevator

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 610 Bluff Street ☐ not for publication

city or town Oregon City ☐ vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Clackamas code 005 zip code 97045

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ **national** ___ **statewide** X **local**

Signature of certifying official/Title 3-5-14 Date

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Oregon City Municipal Elevator
Name of Property

Clackamas, OR
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- [ ] private
- [X] public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [ ] public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

- [ ] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [X] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
		district
		site
1		structure
		object
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

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION: pedestrian-related

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION: pedestrian-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

OTHER: Futurist

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: CONCRETE

roof: CONCRETE

other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraphs

The Oregon City Municipal Elevator is a 130-foot-tall, public elevator tower rising from an underground tunnel in downtown Oregon City to connect with the city's second level atop a bluff to the east. The elevator is a Modern, reinforced concrete structure designed by Gordon E. Trapp (1915-2009) of the engineering firm, Stevens & Thompson of Portland, Oregon. It was constructed by the Portland engineering firm, James & Yost in 1955. The elevator was designed to be futuristic in style and to incorporate minimal ornament.

From downtown, the elevator is accessed through a tunnel aligned with the intersection of 7th Street and Railroad Avenue or via a tunnel that that runs east under the Union Pacific railroad tracks at the base of Singer Hill. Metal elevator doors are embedded in the tunnel's eastern wall. These doors access a staffed Otis elevator that rises through the elevator's narrow, cylindrical shaft into the center of an observatory. The horseshoe-shaped observatory has canted walls and large windows offering unobstructed views of the city below, including the Willamette Falls to the south. From the observation deck, pedestrians exit east to the paved McLoughlin Promenade, a linear park with a concrete pathway that runs north and south along the edge of the bluff.

The elevator is backed by the natural vegetation and basalt outcroppings of the bluff, and is constructed of reinforced lightweight concrete. Routine maintenance has occurred over the years, but the tunnel, shaft and observation deck retain excellent integrity of design, materials, workmanship, site, location, feeling and association. In 2008, the City of Oregon City installed a permanent, non-contributing art exhibit designed by artist Michael Asbill. The observation deck's floor was painted with a map of Oregon City, and the tunnel and observation deck walls were hung with framed historic images of Oregon City.

Narrative Description

Setting

The elevator's downtown entrance sits at the eastern terminus of 7th Street where it intersects with Railroad Avenue. The site is highly visible as the elevator rises against the city's dramatic bluff, which is approximately 110-feet tall. To the north, south and west of the elevator, Oregon City's historic downtown fits on a narrow basalt river bank bordered by the Willamette River on the west and the bluff on the east.

From downtown, the elevator is accessed through a tunnel that begins at grade, then dips underground and runs below the Union Pacific Railroad tracks that are cut into the foot of the bluff. The tracks, installed in 1869, pre-date the elevator and are still used today by commercial and passenger rail. The basalt cliff that rises behind the elevator shaft is partially covered by mature trees, shrubs and grasses. Outcroppings of basalt are visible. To the north of the elevator is the Grand Staircase and Singer Creek Falls, two stone and concrete structures constructed between 1936 and 1939. The staircase was constructed along a historic footpath between downtown and the bluff that was once used by Native tribes trading on the Willamette River. The stairs run alongside the Singer Hill Creek Falls. The waterfall includes a series of five, manmade shelves with ten-to-twelve foot drops between them. They are constructed of concrete and stone. The Grand Staircase terminates at a concrete stair that leads underground to the elevator's entrance.

At the top of the bluff, the elevator's observation deck connects to the cliff and a wide, paved plaza with non-contributing, metal benches for public seating. The McLoughlin Promenade, a walking path, runs north and south along the top of bluff, passing directly in front of the elevator. From the elevator, pedestrians can turn north and access Singer Hill Road, the primary route down into the historic downtown, or they can turn south

and follow the Promenade along the bluff's edge. Pedestrians heading east will connect with 7th Street, the primary east-west corridor atop the bluff. Public walkways allow pedestrians to pass safely from the elevator to Seventh Street, and to the McLoughlin House Museum, the first National Historic Site in the west, which is located northeast of the elevator.[1] Other nearby destinations include City Hall and Oregon City's Carnegie library.

The elevator shares the bluff with the McLoughlin Conservation District, which runs east from the bluff to Van Buren Street, and runs north and south between Clinton and 14th streets.[2] The McLoughlin Conservation District includes a mix of residential and commercial buildings from the late-19th and 20th centuries. Directly east of the elevator are mid-20th century commercial buildings. To the south, commercial buildings give way to residences dating from as early as the 1870s.

The elevator is the primary means of pedestrian travel between the historic downtown and the McLoughlin Conservation District.

Physical Description: General

The elevator is constructed of more than 751 tons of concrete and steel set deep into the foot of the bluff and rising against its sheer cliff to meet the bluff's edge. The elevator is 130-feet tall, and ascends from downtown to the bluff in 15 seconds. The elevator's observation deck is cantilevered over downtown. It is constructed of a lightweight concrete known as Haydite, provided by the Smithwick Concrete Product Company.[3] Haydite achieves its lightweight character from its aggregate, which is produced "by heating carefully selected shale in a rotary kiln to a 2200 degree temperature. Gases within the shale then expand forming air cells, which are retained upon cooling."[4] This expanded shale is less dense, and therefore lighter, than traditional aggregate and is used to produce a lighter-weight structural concrete.

The elevator was designed by Portland architect Gordon E. Trapp. It was constructed by the Portland firm of James and Yost. The elevator and cage were provided by Otis Elevator Company, which also provided the cage and machinery for the first municipal elevator, which operated at this site between 1915 and 1955. The elevator is made up of three distinct elements: the downtown entrance with its tunnel below the railroad tracks; the elevator car and its surrounding cylindrical shaft; and the observation deck, which is wrapped around the elevator shaft where it meets the bluff.

The elevator was referred to as "ultra-modernistic" in early newspaper articles. With its rounded reinforced concrete forms, minimal ornamentation, and smooth, concrete surfaces with large expanses of glass, it reflects both the city's desire for a modern municipal elevator and is an early example of post-war futurist architecture in the U.S.

Elevator Exterior

At the intersection of 7th Street and Railroad Avenue, a wall was constructed against the bluff. The wall is 12 feet tall and slightly concave. Its surface is fluted and it is topped by a metal hand rail and flanked by concrete canted wing walls. The wall faces a shallow concrete plaza. On the plaza is a non-contributing metal trash can, two metal benches installed ca 1993, and two metal bollards installed in 2013 to protect the entrance from

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[1] Gregory P. Shine, "McLoughlin House Unit of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site," The Oregon Encyclopedia http://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/entry/view/mcloughlin_house_unit_of_fort_vancouver_national_historic_site/ [Accessed July 12, 2013].

[2] The McLoughlin Conservation District was designated in 1986, after residents began to fear for the historic building stock in the neighborhood atop the bluff. It includes many city landmarks, including the McLoughlin (1846) and Barclay houses (1849), which sit together on a National Historic Site, and the Ermatinger House (1845). These three buildings were moved up to the bluff from their original locations in downtown. A map of the district and details concerning a possible future National Register District are available on the city's website, currently accessible at http://www.orcity.org/planning/mcloughlin-conservation-district.

[3] Staff, "Lightweight Concrete in Tower," *Enterprise-Courier Elevator Dedication Edition*, May 5, 1955.

[4] Staff, "Lightweight Concrete in Tower," *Enterprise-Courier Elevator Dedication Edition*, May 5, 1955.

vehicular traffic.[5] The concave concrete wall is painted gray, but the flutes, which are the primary ornamental detail incorporated into the elevator's design, are painted blue. Individual metal letters, installed on the panels between the flutes, spell out "Oregon City Municipal Elevator." In the center of the wall is an eight-foot-tall, square opening surrounded by polished granite. This is the elevator's pedestrian street entrance.[6]

Railroad tracks cut into the foot of the bluff run above the tunnel entrance and behind them, the elevator shaft rises out of the base of the cliff. The shaft (approximately 13'6" in exterior diameter) is minimally ornamented, and constructed of fluted, smooth concrete. There are no openings on the shaft. Near the top of the bluff, the shaft rises through the bottom of a horseshoe-shaped observation deck and continues through the roof of the observation building. The deck is approximately 30 feet in diameter.

The bottom of the deck, visible from the street, includes three concentric concrete rings that appear to radiate from the shaft. The deck's floor ranges in thickness from 30 inches at the shaft to six inches at the outer wall. The exterior of the observatory is otherwise minimally ornamented. The observation deck's walls are canted with large, fixed, metal-framed windows providing a more than 180-degree view of Oregon City's downtown and the Willamette River. The observation deck is not entirely round. Tangential lines extend from the rounded deck to provide a squared connection to the bluff. A roll-down aluminum door can be used to close off access during non-operating hours. The observatory's roof is flat. The shaft and its concrete panels terminate in petal like forms below the shaft's stainless steel coping. The reinforced concrete shaft's walls vary in thickness from 16 inches at the base to 12 inches at the top.[7]

Elevator Interior

Though the elevator's exterior is smooth, minimally-adorned concrete, interior spaces are more highly ornamented.

The elevator's downtown tunnel includes a ramped floor of smooth, painted concrete. The walls are covered in large, rectangular, ivory ceramic tiles, and are hung with lenticular prints of historic images that show the evolution of the elevator's construction. Lenticular printing uses lenses to change an image as it is viewed from different angles. Here, each individual print incorporates three historic images that become visible, one after the other, as the viewer moves past them. These framed prints were added to the tunnel walls as part of Michael Asbill's 2008 art installation and are non-contributing. Metal railings are installed on both walls of the tunnel. The ceiling is hung with white ceiling panels identified in the plans as "cork tile" and a series of seven overhead fluorescent lights with plastic covers.

The tunnel is L-shaped. It leads east to the elevator and then north to a set of concrete stairs that meet the Grand Staircase, constructed independently on the bluff. The tunnel leading to the stair is also clad in ivory tiles and has painted concrete floors, lenticular historic photos on the walls, cork ceiling panels, and fluorescent lights above. This section also includes metal handrails.

Along the east wall of the pedestrian tunnel is the entrance to the elevator car. The car is approximately 8 by 5-½ feet. A pair of metal elevator doors set into the eastern wall of the tunnel is flanked by two convex walls. These shallow, rounded wall forms are covered in small, square ivory tiles. Three multi-colored tile stripes divide each wall into horizontal sections. Within each of the convex wall forms is a metal pedestrian door that leads elevator staff to private utility sink and spaces around and below the elevator car for maintenance. Each

[5] The exact date of the bench installation is unknown, but a newspaper article entitled "Study: Municipal Elevator pulls in public," was published on November 18, 1993 in the *Portland Oregonian*. The articles states that a 1993 readership survey called for benches to be installed either downtown or at the top of the municipal elevator. The article further stated that the City of Oregon City expected that benches could be installed within weeks of the article's publication.

[6] Construction details are drawn from the original plans prepared by Gordon E. Trapp of Stevens and Thompson Engineers. The plans are on file with the City of Oregon City.

[7] Staff, "Elevator Statistics Impressive Figures," *Enterprise-Courier Elevator Dedication Edition*, May 5, 1955.

door includes metal vents, signs and metal handles. They are painted to match the tile. Call buttons are on the south wall along with a wall-mounted, bullet-shaped, metal ashtray.

Inside the elevator car, the walls and doors are brushed metal with polished stone panels adhered to the walls. Corners are generally rounded. Lighted panels are inset into the ceiling. The car includes an operator's station against the north wall, which consists of an operating panel and a stool set off from the rest of the elevator by a rounded Plexiglas barrier. The elevator is staffed during operating hours.

The elevator car rises through the round, reinforced concrete shaft and into the center of a concrete oval in the middle of the observatory. Flanking the flat elevator doors, which face west, are two projecting convex walls that make the transition from the shaft to the doors. These walls shelter two utilitarian rooms with curved walls, a washroom and machine room, accessible only to staff. A simple metal callbox is mounted on the southern wall. An overhead light illuminates the entry. The oval elevator shaft's eastern wall faces the bluff. It includes two sets of four vertically oriented photographic panels adhered to the wall. Between them, a historic plaque tells the history of the elevator. Below the plaque is a metal water fountain which echoes the rounded forms found throughout the structure. It appears on original drawings and in the earliest historical photographs. On the south wall of the shaft is a metal door that leads staff to the utilitarian rooms located on either side of the elevator car.

The larger surrounding observation deck is a horseshoe-shaped structure that allows pedestrians to circumnavigate for a view of Oregon City. The concrete walls of the round observatory are neatly divided. On the top of the canted wall is a ribbon of thirteen six-foot-tall, fixed, steel-frame windows that provide excellent views. Beneath these windows is a concrete wall with a row of 68 lenticular photographs in simple wood frames. These were installed in 2008 and are non-contributing. Signs describe the historic and modern views represented and tell the story of the current art installation. The floor of the deck was also painted in 2008 to resemble a historic map of a portion of Oregon City. Streets, blocks and the river are represented by different colors. Street names are engraved in the concrete. The observation deck's ceiling is made up of concentric concrete rings lit by LED light tape that was recently added. The concrete roof of the observatory tapers from 19 inches at the shaft to six inches at the outer edge. A florescent light illuminates the eastern entry. The observatory's concrete floor meets the bluff and leads to walkways along the cliff.

Alterations

Alterations to the municipal elevator have been minor, and most have occurred within the 21st century. At some point (n.d.), the metal letters that spell out the name of the elevator on the downtown pedestrian entrance were replaced. The name was changed from "Oregon City Passenger Elevator" to "Oregon City Municipal Elevator." The original sans-serif letters were replaced at that time with new letters with serifs.

A ridership survey in 1993 called for the installation of benches on the plaza before the elevator's 7th Street tunnel. These have subsequently been installed, along with non-contributing trash cans. Other recent renovations include a 2001 elevator modernization project performed by Centric Elevator Corporation. An article in the *Portland Oregonian* claimed that the repairs brought the elevator in line with health and safety codes and improved energy-efficiency. "The ride is also now ten seconds faster."[8] In 2008, the permanent art installation designed by Michael Asbill was completed. The lenticular prints replaced a series of 16 murals painted directly onto the walls of the observatory in the 1980s. These had deteriorated over time due to dampness. The tile in the pedestrian tunnel was also replaced in 2008 due to deterioration. Additional lighting was added, along with security cameras.

In 2013 minor changes were made to the elevator. The metal letters at the downtown entrance were replaced for the second time."[9] This involved replacing the metal letters and setting them on pins to provide a more

[8] Staff, "Oregon City's elevator back after months of upgrades," *Portland Oregonian*, January 15, 2002.

[9] These changes were found by the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office to have no adverse effect on the historic character of the elevator. Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, *Oregon SHPO Clearance Form for Municipal Elevator*, revised

sculptural effect. They are larger than the previous letters (12" tall), but approximately the same font. The pedestrian entrance was also partially lit by a wash of blue light from above. The blue LED light tape on the ceiling in the observation deck was replaced with a more muted version of the same. Tunnel lighting was also corrected as it is considered too yellow. The exterior of the elevator was also painted.

Conclusion

The Oregon City Municipal Elevator, constructed in 1955 to replace an earlier elevator, displays excellent integrity. It retains integrity of location, design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and association. Minor alterations have occurred over time, and artwork has been installed on the elevator to help interpret its history and enhance its design qualities. However, these installations do not affect the ability of the structure to convey the reasons for its significance, nor affect the design qualities for which it is known. The structure continues to fulfill its purpose as a means of transportation, a local attraction that enhances the recreation and entertainment opportunities of Oregon City, and a unique structure that represents a point in time in Oregon City's design history.

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.)

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

Criteria Considerations

(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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

CRITERION A: Transportation
CRITERION A: Entertainment/Recreation
CRITERION C: Architecture

Period of Significance

1955 - 1963

Significant Dates

1955, Date of construction

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Trapp, Gordon E.: Architect
James & Yost, Inc.: Builder

Period of Significance (justification)

The elevator was completed in 1955 and dedicated to public use at that time.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Municipal Elevator is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a locally significant structure, eligible under Criterion A: Transportation, as an ingenious solution to a topographical challenge. Oregon City was built on a series of three bluffs. The first and the second levels are separated by a sheer basalt cliff. A railroad track hugs the base of the cliff. This elevator was designed to swiftly move passengers between one level and the other while helping them cross safely below the railroad tracks. The elevator is therefore a unique and highly practical response to the city's dramatic landscape and its intrinsic challenges for pedestrians. Furthermore, the elevator is eligible under Criterion A: Entertainment/Recreation. The elevator's observation deck was designed to be a public attraction, as well as to provide unparalleled views of the city below and the Willamette River.

The elevator is also eligible under Criterion C: Architecture as an intact and unique example of a Modern, futuristic approach to design in Oregon City. The elevator uses modern materials like lightweight concrete to create the illusion that its observatory is hovering in space, providing sky-high views of the city below. The elevator's designer, Gordon E. Trapp, broke with historic architectural traditions to create a new, sleek, Modernist icon for Oregon City.

The Municipal Elevator retains a very high level of integrity in design, workmanship, materials, location, site, and setting, feeling and association.

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

Criterion A: Transportation

Oregon City's Municipal Elevator was designed for the City of Oregon City to help pedestrians travel between the city's two levels. Oregon City's site along the riverbank was chosen by Dr. John McLoughlin of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1829 because of the great power of the Willamette Falls, which is the second largest falls in the U.S. in volume. These falls are less than a mile south of the elevator. However, Oregon City soon outgrew the narrow shelf of the riverbank and expanded atop the surrounding bluffs. Development along the first bluff began as early as the mid-19th century, providing transportation challenges to those who lived on one tier and worked, shopped, or attended church on the other. Moving between levels was further complicated by the existence of railroad tracks that ran north and south along the bluff's lower edge. Pedestrians had to move between tiers, but they also had to safely cross the tracks. Residents devised a series of solutions to these topographical challenges. The first included foot paths, later improved by the construction of wood stairs. In 1915, the city's first municipal elevator was constructed at this site, but by 1954 it had deteriorated and needed to be replaced. The current Oregon City Municipal Elevator not only improved on the speed and reliability of the first elevator, but its futuristic design made it a popular tourist attraction and local icon.

The Oregon City Municipal Elevator incorporates a high-speed Otis elevator car, allowing passengers to move swiftly between levels. It also provides a destination, unloading passengers into the futuristic observatory that seems to hover above the city, providing sky-high views of Oregon City's most distinctive assets, the

Willamette Falls, the historic, commercial downtown, the bridges over the Willamette River, and the industrial center, which has supported Oregon City with goods and jobs since the early-1800s.

Since its completion in 1955, the elevator has been celebrated as an effective transportation enhancement that greatly improves connectivity between the city's two primary districts, thereby facilitating social and commercial interaction among city residents. The elevator has become a city icon and tourist attraction, shuttling approximately 120,000 riders between levels annually.

Criterion A: Entertainment/Recreation

The Municipal Elevator is also eligible under Criterion A: Entertainment/Recreation. The elevator was constructed primarily as a means of transportation. However, the construction of the observation deck, designed to provide nearly 360-degree views of Oregon City and the Willamette River, raises the structure above its utilitarian function. The observation deck, which is not functionally necessary, has only a single purpose: to provide access to views and to celebrate Oregon City's unique topography. Located on the banks of a river, near an impressive water fall, the city is an aesthetic gem. The observation deck, with canted windows that allow the viewer to lean forward and look down into the city below, was specifically designed to share the qualities of the location with the viewer, and provide a thrilling opportunity to get a bird's-eye view of the city and river below.

Though the elevator was constructed as a utilitarian structure, its current iconic popularity speaks to its dual use.

Criterion C: Architecture

Oregon City's Municipal Elevator also meets eligibility requirements for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C: Architecture. The elevator is not only a practical solution to a transportation challenge. It was also designed to replace an aging, utilitarian elevator of 1915 with a sleek, Modern tower and observatory that addressed topographical challenges while celebrating Oregon City's dramatic landscape, providing unobstructed views of the city's primary assets. Its futurist form was made possible by the incorporation of one of the new materials from the early-20th century that helped free architecture from its pre-modern roots: lightweight concrete. The Municipal Elevator's design reflects a post-war interpretation of early 20th-century futurist principles, which it shares with other buildings and structures of the era. Among its features is an observation deck, an asset that has appeared in other landmark buildings, many of which also incorporate aerodynamic, space age forms similar to that of the Oregon City Municipal Elevator. The Oregon City Municipal Elevator is unique, however, in that it is first an elevator, and only secondly a Modern observation tower. It reflects Oregon City's desire, at the time, to celebrate its industry and build a modern tower that spoke to its future, while continuing to move people from the lower levels to the upper levels of the city.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Oregon City on Two Levels

Oregon City was settled on the east bank of the Willamette River, where native tribes had long fished and traded near the Willamette Falls. Early residents relied on a series of footpaths to transition between levels. These were later improved with five sets of wooden stairs that helped pedestrians traverse the bluff. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some of these stairways were constructed with rises so shallow that they could accommodate horses as well as pedestrians.[10] By 1888, an early road led up the bluff at the current site of Singer Hill Road, but the city needed safer, more permanent solutions for pedestrians.[11]

The City of Oregon City began to consider a passenger elevator early in the 20th century. Citizens supported an elevator in theory, but emerging plans were challenged by numerous residents. One homeowner on the

[10] Laura Terway, planner with the City of Oregon City, interviewed by author, Oregon City, OR, February 9, 2013.
[11] The 1888 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map is the first to show a road between downtown and the bluff.

bluff did not want to see her views diminished by the addition of a tower. The city's water board did not want to support plans put forth by the Oregon Bridge and Construction Company for a new water-powered elevator because they feared it might diminish the city's water pressure when the elevator was in use. These issues were eventually resolved through a series of court cases and the first mechanized elevator was constructed at the intersection of 7th Street and Railroad Avenue and completed in 1915. It was constructed with $12,000 in bonds. The elevator was made up of a steel and wood tower that rose to the height of the bluff. The tower was placed west of the railroad tracks so riders would cross a thirty-five-foot catwalk high above the ground to reach the bluff's edge. The first elevator was originally water-powered, but was converted to electricity in 1923. The original elevator's primary function was to shuttle mill workers from their job sites on the river up to their homes on the bluff, but as Oregon City grew to the east, the elevator became a popular and necessary point of access for the general public

Designing the Oregon City Municipal Elevator

The current municipal elevator was designed to replace the purely utilitarian steel and wooden structure as it became increasingly unreliable in the late 1940s. The Otis Elevator Company addressed the city commission in March of 1949 and asked them to replace the aging elevator car. As the city commission minutes show, their remarks included an argument for modernization: "The existing elevator was installed in 1924, a quarter of a century ago, and has seen increasingly heavy usage ever since its installation.[12] During the period that this elevator has been in use, the population of Oregon City has nearly doubled."[13]

The Commission responded by asking the City Manager to "investigate the feasibility of placing a new elevator between the Bluff and the railroad tracks and to secure an estimate of cost."[14] The city commission began viewing plans for a proposed new elevator as early as 1951 and held much discussion about its future location.[15] During a meeting in December 1951, the commission decided to locate the elevator "as close to the bluff as possible on the east side of the railroad tracks and directly in line with the north sidewalk on Seventh Street in the downtown section, such that people approaching and leaving the elevator would pass through a tunnel under the railroad tracks directly in line with the above mentioned sidewalk."[16] The current Oregon City Municipal Elevator was designed to these specifications. The commission also laid out their preferences for a Modernist design, noting that "the elevator structure itself should be as plain as possible without ornament."[17]

In May, 1952, voters authorized $175,000 in bonds to build the new elevator. Bids were received in November 1953; however, the low bid was over $200,000 so all bids were rejected. At a 1954 meeting of the commission, Gordon Trapp and Loren Thompson of Stevens and Thompson presented new preliminary designs for an elevator that could be constructed within budget. The design also met the needs of citizens who were concerned that an underground tunnel would be too dark and dangerous for women and children. As the designers explained, "The tunnel would be well-lighted, would be covered with white tile for good reflective ability, and the elevator operator would see the entire length of the tunnel."[18] The plans were approved that evening. Trapp's vision was put into action and the new elevator was constructed east of the original. For a brief time, the two co-existed side by side (see Figure 7). The new elevator was dedicated on May 5, 1955. According to the Oregon City website, "At that time, 2,000 elevator passes were printed. Even though the

[12] This quote from an Otis Elevator representative notes that the elevator car in use in 1949 was installed in 1924. It is possible that the original elevator car was replaced with a newer model in 1924 after the elevator was converted from water to electric power in 1923.

[13] Oregon City Commission, Minutes for March 22, 1949, Oregon City, OR. Archived minutes are held by the City of Oregon City.

[14] Oregon City Commission, Minutes for April 6, 1949, Oregon City, OR. Archived minutes are held by the City of Oregon City.

[15] Oregon City Commission, Minutes for December 11, 1951, Oregon City, OR. Archived minutes are held by the City of Oregon City.

[16] Oregon City Commission, Minutes for December 11, 1951, Oregon City, OR. Archived minutes are held by the City of Oregon City.

[17] Oregon City Commission, Minutes for December 11, 1951, Oregon City, OR. Archived minutes are held by the City of Oregon City.

[18] Oregon City Commission, Minutes for January 6, 1954, Oregon City, OR. Archived minutes are held by the City of Oregon City.

elevator ride has always been free, the distribution of these passes as a keepsake has continued as a City tradition."[19]

Since then, the elevator has shuttled passengers between the city's two primary levels as planned. It has since become a tourist attraction and a defining landmark for Oregon City.

Architect Gordon Trapp

The designer of the Municipal Elevator, architect Gordon Earl Trapp, was born in Colorado Springs, CO on January 7, 1915.[20] He received an AA degree from Los Angeles City College in 1937 and then a BA from the University of California, Berkeley in 1940. He returned to Los Angeles for further training in 1942 and 43. Trapp served during World War II, both for the U.S. Air Force and for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, from 1942 to 1946. He then moved to Portland and worked as a draftsman and designer for well-known Portland architect Pietro Belluschi from 1946 to 1948. He also worked for Barrett and Logan (1948-53) and Donald W. Edmundson (1950-52) before joining the firm of Stevens and Thompson in 1952. He is known for his work on the municipal elevator, as well as for the elevator he constructed for the Sea Lion Caves in Florence, Oregon.[21] He also designed modern public swimming pools, including the Natatorium in Oregon City (1966), a pool in North Bend, and another in Mountlake Terrace that won an award for design excellence from *Swimming Pool Age Magazine* in 1968.[22] Trapp worked on a 100-unit housing project with the Army Corp of Engineers in Clackamas County (1962). He served as a planning commissioner for Clackamas County from 1958 to 1968.[23]

Trapp was both a registered architect and a licensed engineer in the state of Oregon.[24]

The firm of James and Yost, which built the elevator, has a significant history with innovative engineering and industrial construction projects in Oregon. They worked on three significant dam projects. They installed vertical lift gates at Bull Run for the water bureau of Portland, and they raised the height of the Powerdale Dam on Hood River on behalf of Pacific Power and Light. They also built a fish ladder for the Powerdale Dam. For the Big Sandy dam, James and Yost constructed a fish screen and flume for PGE. Additional projects included the construction of the Carson Heights sewage pumping plant and an intake structure for Portland's number five reservoir.[25]

Oregon City's Futurist Elevator

Trapp's design for the Oregon City Municipal Elevator, with its horseshoe-shaped observation deck, canted walls and swift mechanical lift, has roots in the principles and ideals of futurism as it was conceived in the early 20th century in Italy.[26] As noted by historian Sigfried Giedion, futurism emerged out of a scientific theory, that space and time existed on a continuum, and that neither could be separated from the other. Movement became the subject and the object of a new art form developed by Italian youth that looked beyond the Renaissance classics encased in museums. As Giedion writes, "The futurists were a reaction against this quietness; they felt ashamed that Italy had become simply a refuge for those seeking to escape from the demands and realities of the present… 'Life' was their cry – explosive life, movement, action, heroism."[27] As with all Modernists, the futurists wanted to break with classical forms, transcend tradition, and create a new aesthetic to reflect a new age. To achieve their goals they turned their attention to technological innovations in

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[19] Oregon City Public Works Department, http://www.orcity.org/publicworks/municipal-elevator [Accessed July 29, 2013].

[20] *The AIA Historical Directory of American Architects,* "Trap, Gordon E.," in the 1956 American Architects Directory. http://communities.aia.org/sites/hdozz/wiki/Wiki%20Pages/ahd1045355.aspx [Accessed July 28, 2013].

[21] Gordon E. Trapp Obituary, *Portland Tribune,* September 16, 2009.

[22] "Pavilion's 'Design Excellence' Noted," *Lynnwood Enterprise,* Vol. 11, No. 36, May 7, 1969.

[23] *The AIA Historical Directory of American Architects,* "Trap, Gordon E.," in the 1956 American Architects Directory. http://communities.aia.org/sites/hdozz/wiki/Wiki%20Pages/ahd1045355.aspx [Accessed July 28, 2013].

[24] *The AIA Historical Directory of American Architects,* "Trap, Gordon E.," in the 1956 American Architects Directory. http://communities.aia.org/sites/hdozz/wiki/Wiki%20Pages/ahd1045355.aspx [Accessed July 28, 2013].

[25] *Enterprise Courier*, May 5, 1955, *Elevator Dedication Edition.*

[26] www.solarflarestudios.com/demosites/architecture/futurist.htm.

[27] Sigfried Giedion, Space, Time and Architecture [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967]: 444.

speed, travel, and technology of all kinds. As the poet Marinetti proclaimed, "The splendor of the world has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed."[28] This explosive interest in movement led painters and sculptors to try to present the world as it is, in movement. Giedion notes many examples, including Marcel Duchamp's Nude Descending a Staircase (1912), in which, he says, "movement is dissected mathematically."[29]

In architecture, Giedion notes, the futurists tried to use movement as an aesthetic design principle, to be integrated into the planning of cities. Antonio Sant'Elia's became one of the great writers of this period, and though he died by 1916, before his ideas could shape the future of architecture, he left behind a manifesto that continued to inspire designers. Giedion describes him as demanding "an architecture imbued with the utmost elasticity and lightness, utilizing all the newly developed elements of construction from iron and ferroconcrete to composite materials made by chemical processes, including textile fiber and paper."[30]

In 1914, Sant'Elia called for a "futurist architecture of calculation, bold audacity and simplicity; the architecture of reinforced concrete, of iron, of glass… and of all those substitutes for wood, stone and brick which make possible maximum elasticity and lightness."[31] In what became known as a Futurist Manifesto, Sant'Elia and his colleagues claimed emphatically that "oblique and elliptical lines are dynamic by their very nature and have an emotive power a thousand times greater than that of perpendicular and horizontal lines," and that "decoration, as something imposed upon architecture, is an absurdity."[32]

Coincidentally, or perhaps presciently, Sant'Elia even wrote about elevators and modern cities:

> *We must invent and rebuild our modern city like an immense and tumultuous shipyard, active, mobile and everywhere dynamic, and the modern building like a gigantic machine. Lifts must no longer hide away like solitary worms in the stairwells, but the stairs, now useless, must be abolished and the lifts must swarm up the facades like serpents of glass and iron. The house of cement, iron and glass, without carved or painted ornament, rich only in the inherent beatify of its lines and modeling, extraordinarily brutish in its mechanical simplicity, as big as need dictates, and not merely as zoning rules permit, must rise from the brink of a tumultuous abyss: the street which itself will no longer lie like a doormat at the level of the thresholds, but plunge stories deep into the earth, gathering up the traffic of the metropolis connected for necessary transfers to metal cat-walks and high-speed conveyor belts . . we can best attain that . . . by digging out our streets and piazzas, by raising the level of the city, by re-ordering the earth's crust and reducing it to be the servant of our every need and our every fancy.*[33]

Trapp and other mid-century American designers were inspired by many of the same ideas. In fact, Pietro Belluschi, Trapp's one-time employer, was first exposed to Modernism through the work of the early futurists as a youth in Italy.[34] The futurists' aesthetic was made possible by new materials, nonlinear forms, and the ability to transcend gravity and move into space appears to emerge in the design of the municipal elevator, which relies on the versatility of reinforced concrete for the "lightness" of its cantilevered observation deck, which appears to hover above the ground.[35] Its shape is defined by its oblique and elliptical lines. The elevator is also a very plain, unadorned structure when compared to earlier 20th century designs. The designer refrained from obscuring the aerodynamic curves of the structure with added exterior ornament. As the futurists insisted, the form and expression of materials was ornament enough.

Parallel to an infatuation with technology and movement, mid-century American designers aspired to formal expressions of function. This led at times to a "machine aesthetic," where the machine – also admired by the

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[28] Sigfried Giedion, Space, Time and Architecture [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967]: 444.
[29] Sigfried Giedion, Space, Time and Architecture [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967]: 445.
[30] Sigfried Giedion, Space, Time and Architecture [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967]: 447.
[31] Antonio Sant'Elia, "Futurist Architecture," *Futurism, an Anthology* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 209]: 201.
[32] Antonio Sant'Elia, "Futurist Architecture," *Futurism, an Anthology* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 209]: 201.
[33] Kurt Rowland, *A History of the Modern Movement Art Architecture Design* [New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1973]: 136.
[34] Meredith L. Clausen, *Pietro Belluschi, Modern American Architect* [Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994]: 10.
[35] For a brief history of innovations in reinforced concrete, see: "Reinforced Concrete," *Encyclopedia of Modern Architecture* [New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Publishers, 1964].

Italian Futurists – became the inspiration for form. This can be seen in Buckminster Fuller's Dymaxion House as early as 1927 and is echoed in renowned architect Le Corbusier's statement that 'a house is a machine for living in.'[36] Functionalism, as it became known, was above all considered a solution in form to a problem. This attitude toward modern architecture was directly expressed by Trapp's former employer, Pietro Belluschi, considered one of the preeminent modern architects of his day.[37] "*... I have come to believe that everything is the result of having thought through a problem until the right solution emerges...I still believe that style comes from understanding all the elements of a problem: space, access, view, sun, scale, intimacy, even love . . . If you're aesthetically oriented, aesthetics will come out, not by preconceived things or something you have seen or by copying some kind of feature which may have caught your eye.*"[38] This interpretation of functionalism would come to be seen in such romantic, mid-20th-century, Futurist structures as John Graham Jr. and Victor Steinbrueck's Space Needle (Seattle, 1960-62) and John Lautner's Chemosphere (Los Angeles, 1960). Writer Scott Timberg has noted that Lautner, a protégé of Frank Lloyd Wright, didn't see the house as a flying saucer, which it closely resembled, but as a sensible solution to a topographical problem.[39]

In the United States at the mid-20th century, an infatuation with speed and the space age was also seen in playful Googie forms that appeared along roadsides, at coffee shops, and throughout dynamic automobile-dominated cities like Las Vegas and Los Angeles.[40] But the municipal elevator does not go that far. It incorporates bold, curvilinear shapes and smooth aerodynamic lines, but refrains from adding starbursts and neon, oversized, jutting roof forms and other pop culture references.[41] In this sense it reflects the melding of futurism and functionalism as discussed above.

Observation decks built since the 1960s also incorporate futuristic forms and many of them are defined by their flying saucer shapes, as is Oregon City's elevator. But this was not the case for earlier municipal elevators. The Oregon City Municipal Elevator calls itself one of only four in the world. Other well-known outdoor elevators include the Santa Justa in Lisbon, a Neo-Gothic tower often compared to the Eiffel Tower;[42] the Elevador Lacerda in Brazil, built in the 1920s;[43] and the Hammetschwand Lift in Switzerland, completed in 1905.[44] All are square structures more similar in shape to the utilitarian elevator that was built in Oregon City in 1915. None of them could be called futurist.

Observation Decks and Viewing Platforms

In the last half of the 20th century, futuristic observation decks celebrated speed, power, technological mastery, and advanced engineering. Good examples include the Space Needle, built for the 1962 World's Fair in Seattle. Like Oregon City's municipal elevator, the Space Needle includes a round observatory similar to the iconic UFO. It is placed atop a narrow elevator shaft that has been compared to an hourglass. The Astro-View Observation Towers are another example. These were built for the 1964 World Fair in New York. They include three slender towers topped by round observation decks. These too have been compared to flying saucers. The shape speaks both to the function of observation platforms – to see 360 degree views – and to the mid-century interest in futuristic space age forms. The design was said to be inspired by the "buildings of Krypton in the Superman comics."[45]

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[36] Wolfgang Pehnt, Editor, *Encyclopedia of Modern Architecture* [New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1964]: 111.

[37] Meredith L. Clausen, *Pietro Belluschi, Modern American Architect* [Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994]: viii.

[38] Pietro Belluschi, architect, interviewed by Meredith Clausen, August 22-September 4, 1983. Oregon City, OR, February 9, 2013. On file, Archives of American Art, http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-pietro-belluschi-11614. Accessed July 2013.

[39] Scott Timberg, Landmark Houses, "John Lautner's Chemosphere," *Los Angeles Times,* 23 July 2011.

[40] The "Space Age" was effectively launched when President Dwight D. Eisenhower's established NASA in 1958. Americans' imagination was captured when the Soviet Union accomplished the first moon landing in 1959, following by the United States in 1962.

[41] Alan Hess, *Googie Redux, Ultramodern Roadside Architecture* [San Francisco: Chronicle Books LLC, 2004].

[42] For pictures and general information on this elevator, visit www.golisbon.com/sight-seeing/santa-justa.html

[43] For pictures and general information on this elevator, visit http://brazilgeeks.com/brazil-travel-info/elevador-lacerda-salvador-brazil/

[44] For pictures and general information on this elevator, visit http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hammetschwand_Elevator

[45] For pictures and general information on the Astro View towers, visit www.conlab.org/acl/thereallybigmap/exhibit/astroView.html

While futurism embraced space age forms, the round, aerodynamic shapes also had a practical use. The shape of Oregon City's observation deck appears specifically designed to allow the best views of the river, the falls and the city below. And the cant of the walls improves these views. Sheltered under an eave and facing downward, the glazing does not catch the glare of the sun. The look of the walls, although modern and futuristic, has the practical advantage of improving the structure's function.

The elevator has a functional goal. It moves people from one level to another. But this function could have been performed by a square tower similar to the 1915 version it replaced. Instead, it appears to make a statement on the 20th century's ability to overcome traditional forms of construction. This elevator's observation deck emphasizes how modern materials like Haydite made it possible to hover over open space. This elevator was also designed to be fast, cutting the ride time down to 15 seconds. The elevator's observation platform was also designed to celebrate the views from the bluff. Here we move away from simply moving people and focus on what people see when they arrive at their destination. The windows, which cover only a portion of the exterior wall, face south, west, and north. The views provided by these windows were carefully chosen. To the south is the industrial development on the river, the mills and the great Willamette Falls, the primary power-generator for early Oregon City. To the west is downtown Oregon City, the commercial center, and to the north are Oregon City's primary bridges. All these landmarks speak to the historic success of industry in Oregon City. These views emphasize not just the city's history, but the source of its success.

There are numerous examples of viewing platforms designed to showcase our engineering prowess in the mid-20th century. The Grand Coulee Dam Visitor Center was built in the late 1970s to resemble a generator rotor.[46] It looks out to the enormous dam. The Vancouver Lookout (1977) provides views from another saucer-like observation deck. At its opening ceremony, astronaut Neil Armstrong cut the ribbon. The Stratosphere Tower Observation Deck in Las Vegas opened in the 1990s, but very much resembles the Space Needle.[47] It too has a rotating restaurant with a 360-degree view. Observation decks with their sky restaurants, however, tend to be more entertaining than practical, unlike the Oregon City Municipal Elevator. The Oregon City Municipal Elevator stays true to its primary mission of moving people from one level of the city to another.

Materials

The Municipal Elevator is significant for its use of modern materials to improve upon the preceding elevator and to ensure that the structure and its cantilevered observation deck were stable and functional. Among the structure's engineering innovations was the use of an extra lightweight concrete made from an expanded aggregate known as Haydite, which was patented by Stephen Hayde in the early 20th century. Haydite was found to be half the weight of regular aggregate and when mixed with concrete, was found to increase its strength. A promotional article in a trade magazine from 1919 claimed that "haydite is a light-weight aggregate made from clay or shale. It is of a bloated or swelled nature caused by the gases and vapor generated by the decomposition of the clay when subjected to high heat. The expanding gases not only bring out this form but fill the burned clay product with a series of non-connecting holes causing a light sponge-like material to be formed."[48] The process of decreasing the weight of the aggregate and using it to produce a lightweight concrete was so successful that in the early 20th century, it was used in the hulls of Liberty ships in both the First and Second World Wars. It also became important to the greater vertical development of high-rise buildings.

When the locally quarried shale, provided by the Smithwick Concrete Products Company, was chosen for the project, Haydite had recently been used in the decks of the 1950 Tacoma Narrows Bridge and the Interstate bridge at The Dalles.[49]

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[46] For pictures and general information, visit www.usbr.gov/pn/grandcoulee/gcvc/visitorcenter.html

[47] For an introduction to the Stratosphere, visit www.vegas.com/attractions/on_the_strip/stratospheretower.html.

[48] "What Next! Dyed-in-the-Wool Brick Man Takes to Promoting New Concrete Aggregate—But, Hush! Soft-pedal, It's Made of Clay," *Brick and Clay Record*, Vol. 55, November 18, 1919, 951.

[49] "Smithwick Products Plant Dedication Considered Boon to Vernonia Industry," *Portland Oregonian*, August 11, 1957.

The history of Haydite in Oregon was summarized in a state publication in 1956, which noted that expanded shale was first used in Oregon in the mid-1940s. [50] Smithwick, which provided Haydite for the municipal elevator, was the second Oregon producer, with a kiln in Portland that began producing lightweight aggregate in 1950. According to the publication, the raw shale was quarried in northern Washington County, "a few miles south of Vernonia." In the late 1950s, after many years of quarrying shale from the site, a suitably level space remained and the company's Portland kiln was moved to this location.[51]

Conclusion

The Municipal Elevator is significant as an ingenious solution to the pedestrian challenges associated with Oregon City's unique site, but its design has elevated the structure's stature to that of a futurist icon. Oregon City's elevator was designed to emphasize the speed and power of modern day technology and of modern materials like lightweight concrete, but it was also designed to inspire awe, to offer users a unique perspective on the city center and its partnership with the Willamette River. The elevator's large windows frame sweeping views of the landscape, turning the viewer's attention to the commercial and industrial core of the city. Though critics compare its aerodynamic form to a flying saucer, the elevator is also a very practical design solution appropriate to its function.[52] The Oregon City elevator appears to be one of the earliest futuristic observation towers, and perhaps the only futuristic outdoor elevator of its time. It predates futuristic observation towers that now populate the west, like the 1962 Space Needle and it breaks from the classical traditions found in its predecessors around the world.

Integrity

The elevator was constructed during the historic period on behalf of visitors and residents of Oregon City and retains all its important associations. The elevator qualifies for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C: Architecture, as a unique, modern example of futurist and functionalist ideals. It is also eligible under Criterion A: Transportation, as it continues to function as an innovative solution to the challenges of a city developed on multiple levels. The elevator is also eligible under Criterion A: Recreation/Entertainment for its value as an observatory. It continues to celebrate Oregon City's historic industrial tradition by providing unrivaled views of the Willamette Falls and the industrial and commercial sections of downtown.

The structure also retains excellent integrity of design, materials and workmanship. The elevator retains all three of its key components: its underground tunnel, its minimally-adorned shaft, and its horseshoe-shaped observation deck. These elements retain their original design; are still clad in their original, or in-kind, materials; and the elevator retains key original amenities, including the Otis elevator car, the bullet ashtray, the original drinking fountain, and the canted windows that encircle the observation deck. The elevator retains integrity of location and setting, in that it is still in the location of the city's first elevator, and it is still surrounded by the natural vegetation of the bluff, within site of the phenomenal power of the Willamette Falls. The elevator also retains integrity of feeling and association. It retains its original function, continuing to provide free public access between the city's two primary levels. The elevator was constructed for public use and remains accessible to the public. Finally, the association of feeling is preserved by the design integrity of the elevator.

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[50] State of Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, "Expanded Shale Industry Takes Step Forward," *The Ore . – Bin*, Vol.19, No.8, August 1957 Portland, Oregon.

[51] State of Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, "Expanded Shale Industry Takes Step Forward," *The Ore . – Bin*, Vol.19, No.8, August 1957 Portland, Oregon.

[52] Though the elevator's design reflects the ideals of the futurist movement, it was constructed after the movement emerged in the early 20th-century. It is worth noting that the late 20th-century version of this architectural aesthetic is sometimes called retro-futurist, as the larger movement is said to have died in 1944 with one of its proponents.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
____previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
_X_Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository: City of Oregon City

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
(Follow similar guidelines for entering the lat/long coordinates as describe on page 55, How to Complete the National Register Registration Form for entering UTM references. For properties less than 10 acres, enter the lat/long coordinates for a point corresponding to the center of the property. For properties of 10 or more acres, enter three or more points that correspond to the vertices of a polygon drawn on the map. The polygon should approximately encompass the area to be registered. Add additional points below, if necessary.)

Datum if other than WGS84: NAD 83
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 45.357125 Longitude: -122.607733
2. Latitude: Longitude:
3. Latitude: Longitude:
4. Latitude: Longitude:

UTM References

Oregon City Municipal Elevator
Name of Property

Clackamas, OR
County and State

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	10	530723	5022700	3			
2				4			

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

The elevator has an unusual relationship to the surrounding landscape, as it is primarily a vertical structure that connects two levels of the city. For the purpose of the Nomination, the property is bound by the structure's footprint, which includes the entrance wall and small plaza downtown, the tunnel running underground east from 7th Street to the elevator doors, and the tunnel and stairs running north to meet the historic Grand Staircase near Singer Creek Falls. This footprint encompasses all elements of the elevator's construction.

On the bluff, the observation deck meets the historic McLoughlin Promenade. The Promenade is the subject of a separate National Register nomination.

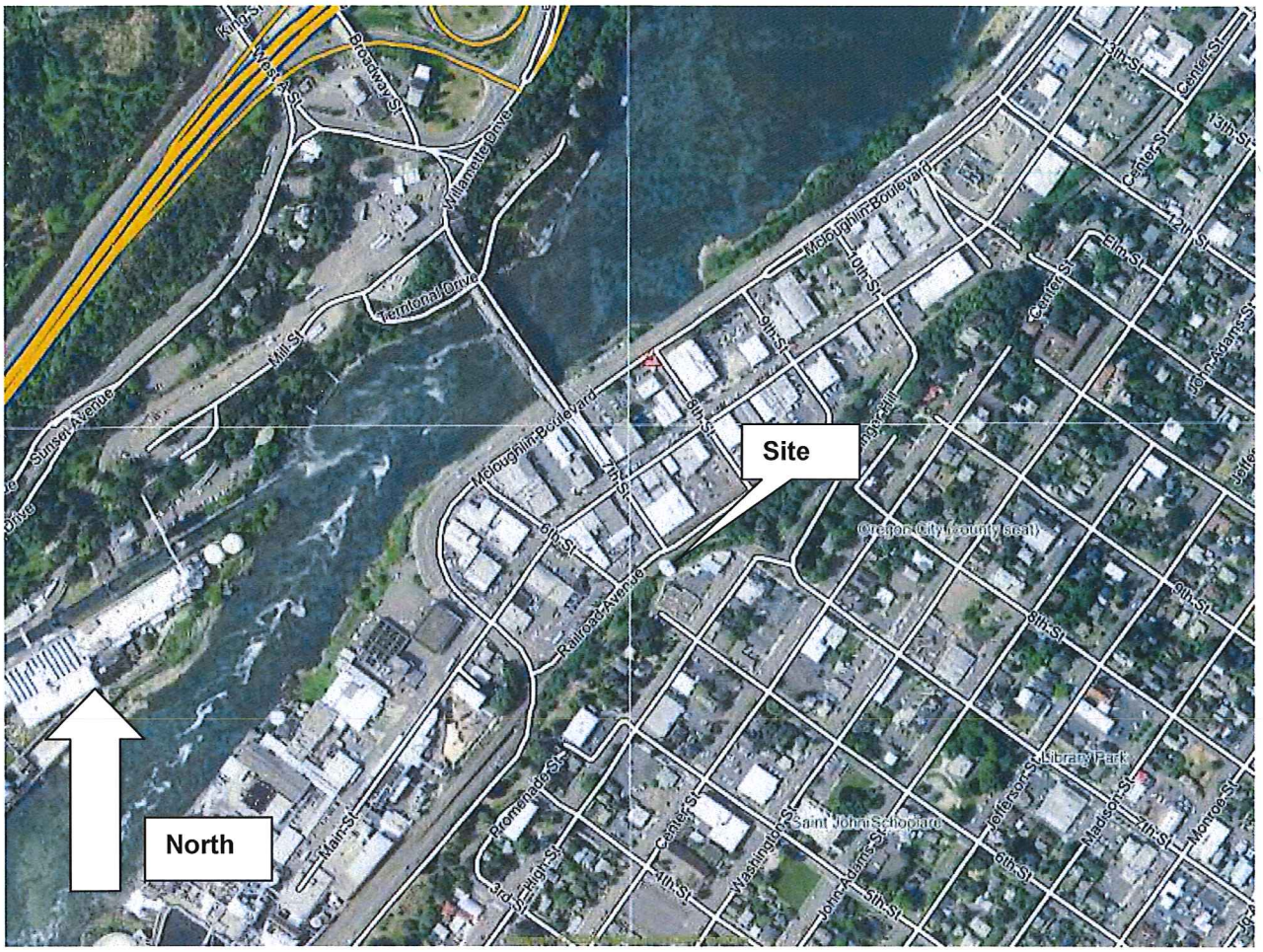
Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

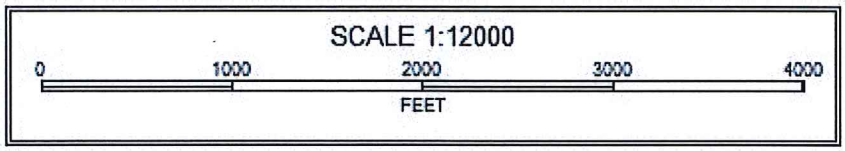
The structure was constructed to bypass the Union Pacific Railroad tracks with an underground tunnel and stairway leading to an elevator designed to lift and lower residents and visitors from one elevation to the other. The elevator's character defining features are included within this boundary, but surrounding resources, including the railroad, the city streets, and the historic Grand Staircase were not part of the construction project and are excluded from the boundary.

Oregon City Municipal Elevator
Name of Property

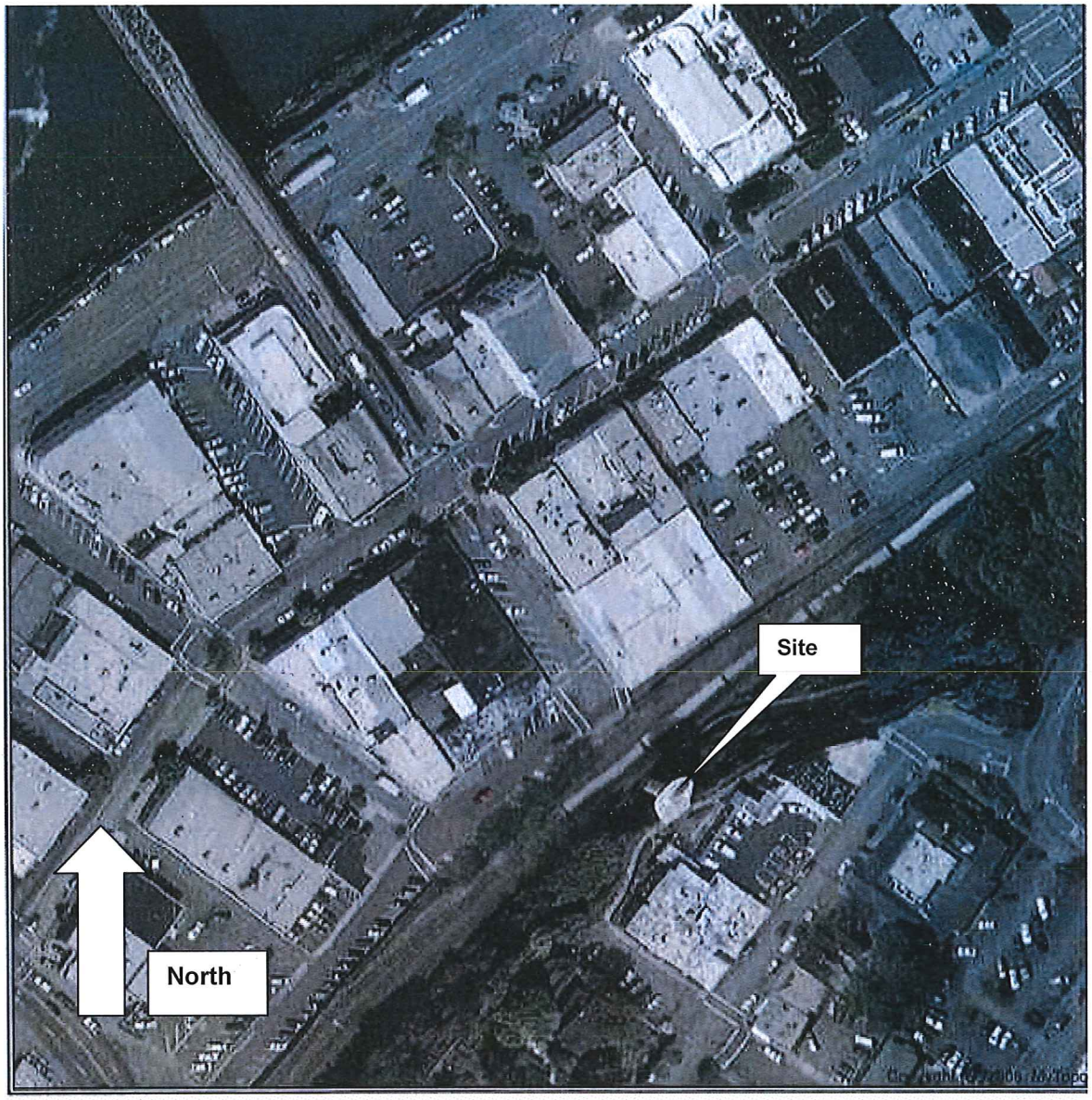
Clackamas, OR
County and State

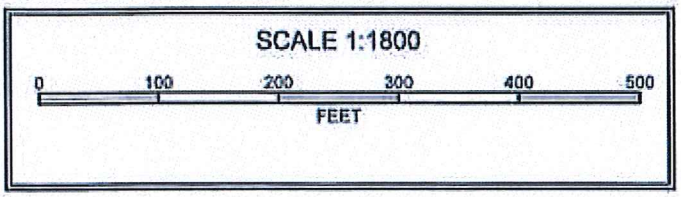
Map 1: General vicinity map, Latitude/Longitude Coordinates: 45.357125 / -122.607733





Map 2: Site map, Latitude/Longitude Coordinates: 45.357125 / -122.607733





11. Form Prepared By

name/title Chrisanne Beckner, Architectural Historian

organization Sole Proprietor date June 1, 2013

street & number 1307 Jasper Ave. NE telephone (360) 878-5335

city or town Olympia state WA zip code 98506

e-mail chrisannebeckner@earthlink.net

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Oregon City Municipal Elevator

City or Vicinity: Oregon City

County: Clackamas **State:** Oregon

Photographer: Chrisanne Beckner

Date Photographed: August 3, 2011 – July 20, 2013

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

Photo 1 of 9 OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityMunicipalElevator_001
Municipal Elevator, Downtown Underpass, Looking Northeast

Photo 2 of 9 OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityMunicipalElevator_002
Municipal Elevator, Downtown Underpass, Looking East

Photo 3 of 9 OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityMunicipalElevator_003
Elevator Observation Deck at Promenade, Looking North

Photo 4 of 9 OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityMunicipalElevator_004
Observation Deck Meets Promenade, Looking West

Photo 5 of 9 OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityMunicipalElevator_005
Downtown Elevator Entrance, Looking East

Photo 6 of 9 OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityMunicipalElevator_006
Observation Deck, McLoughlin Area, Looking West

Photo 7 of 9 OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityMunicipalElevator_007
Stair from Underpass to Grand Staircase, Looking North

Photo 8 of 9 OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityMunicipalElevator_008
Elevator Interior, Observation Deck, Looking East

Photo 9 of 9 OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityMunicipalElevator_009
Municipal Elevator, Downtown Underpass, Looking Southeast

Property Owner: (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Oregon City

street & number City Hall, 625 Center Street telephone (503) 657-0891

city or town Oregon City state OR zip code 97045

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

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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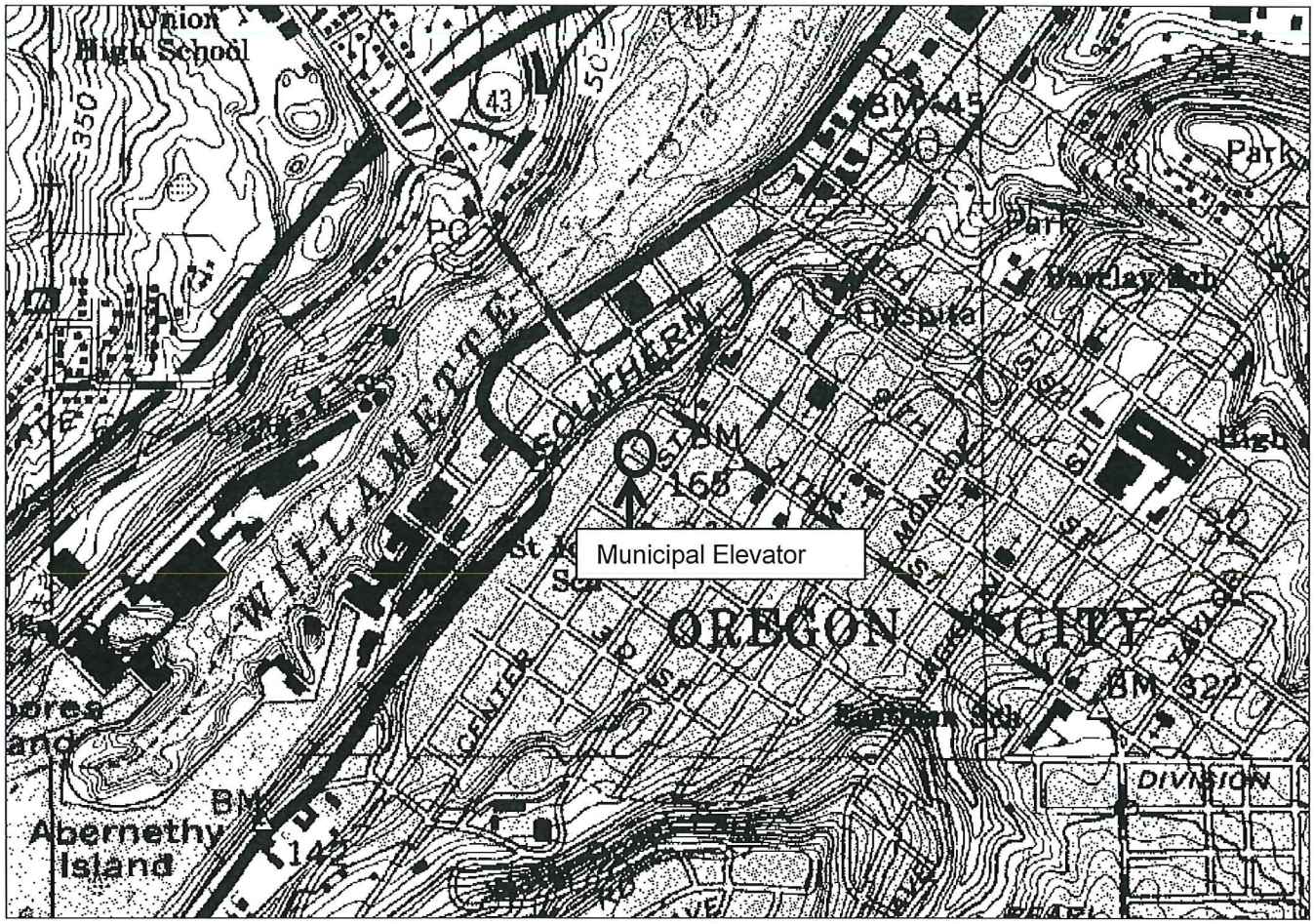

Figure 1: Topographic Map of Oregon City

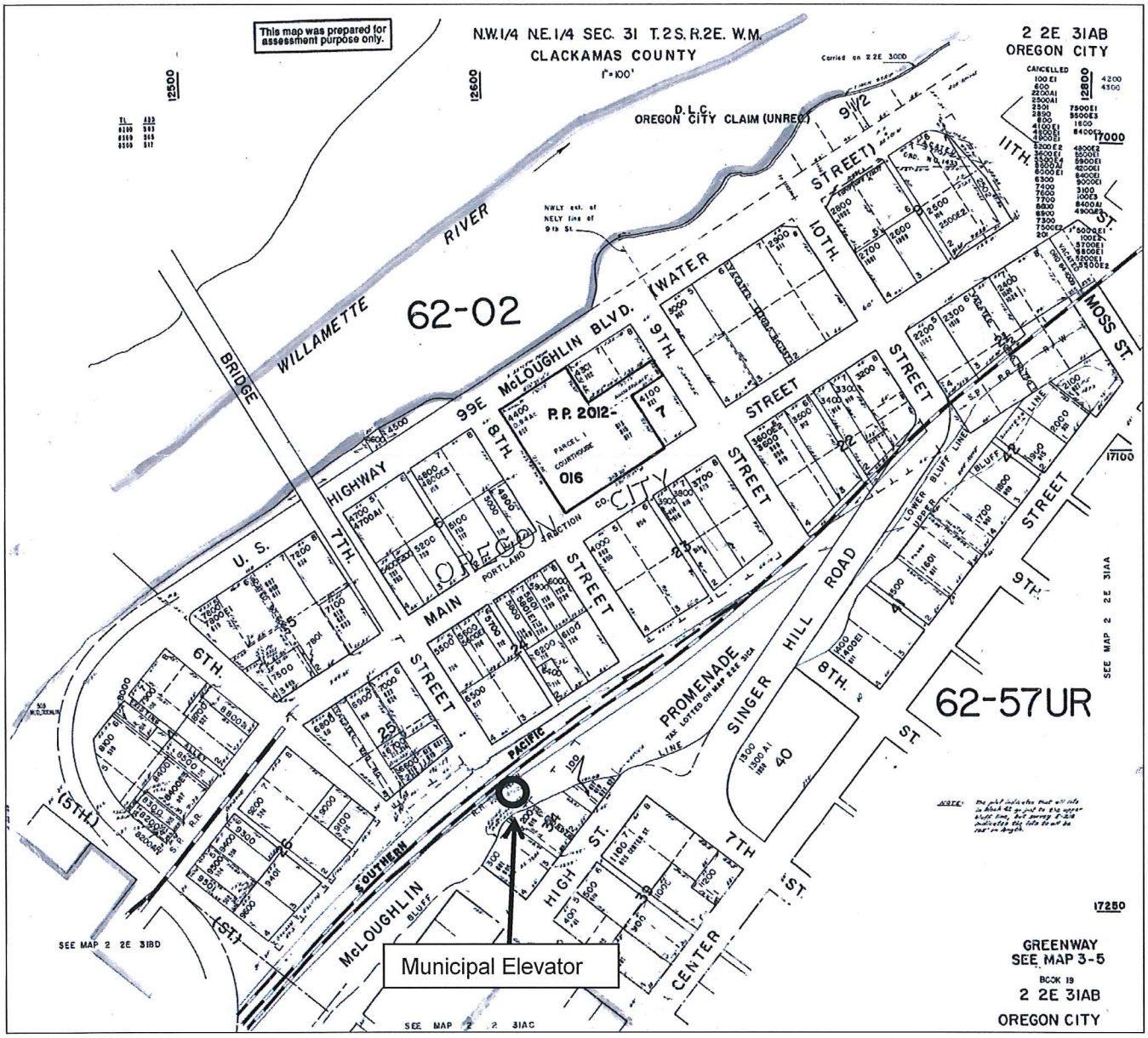

Figure 2: Tax Lot Map

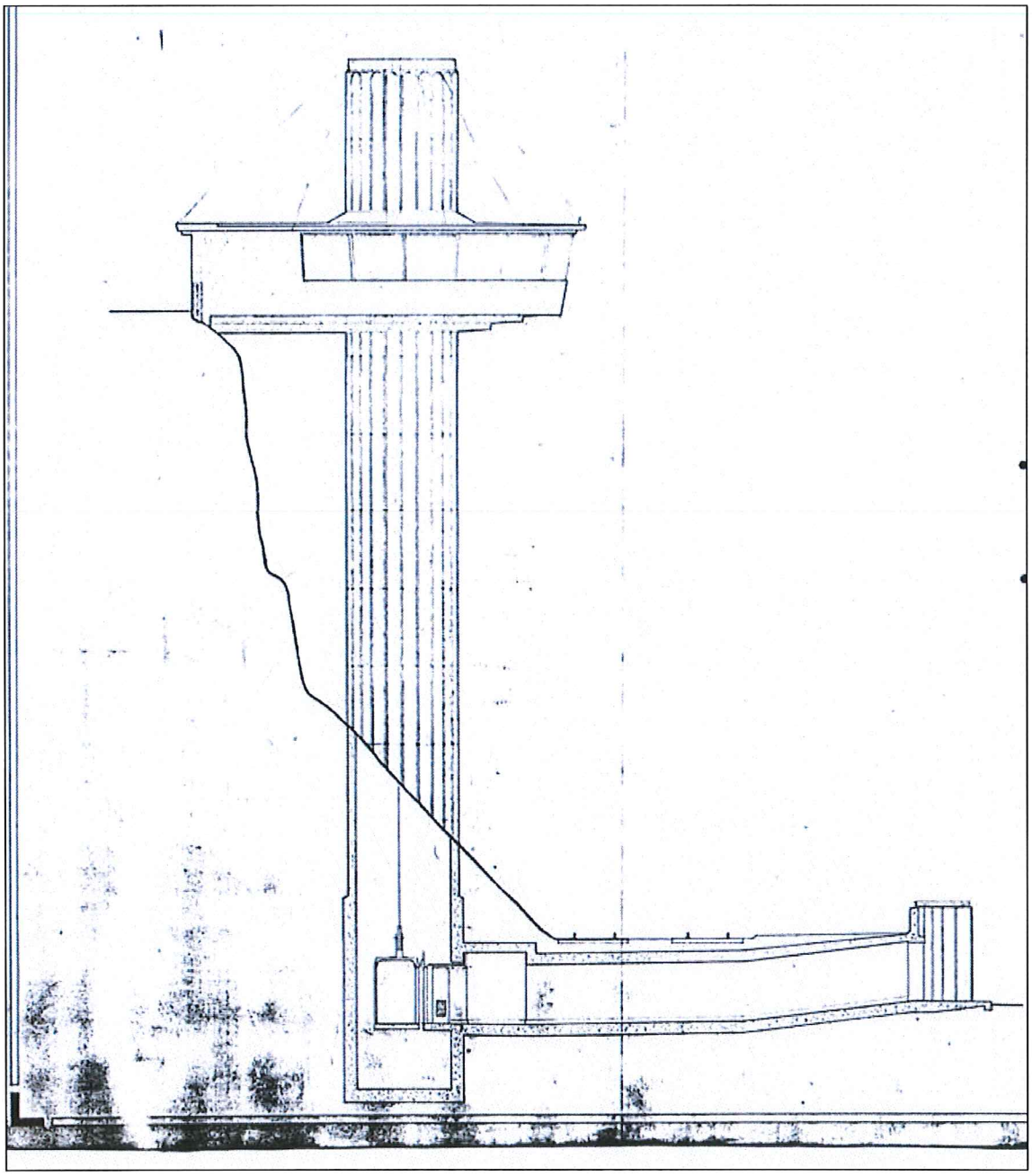

Figure 3: Elevation Drawing of Municipal Elevator, with Elevator Car, Foundation and Entrance Tunnel. Drawn by Gordon E. Trapp, ca. 1955.

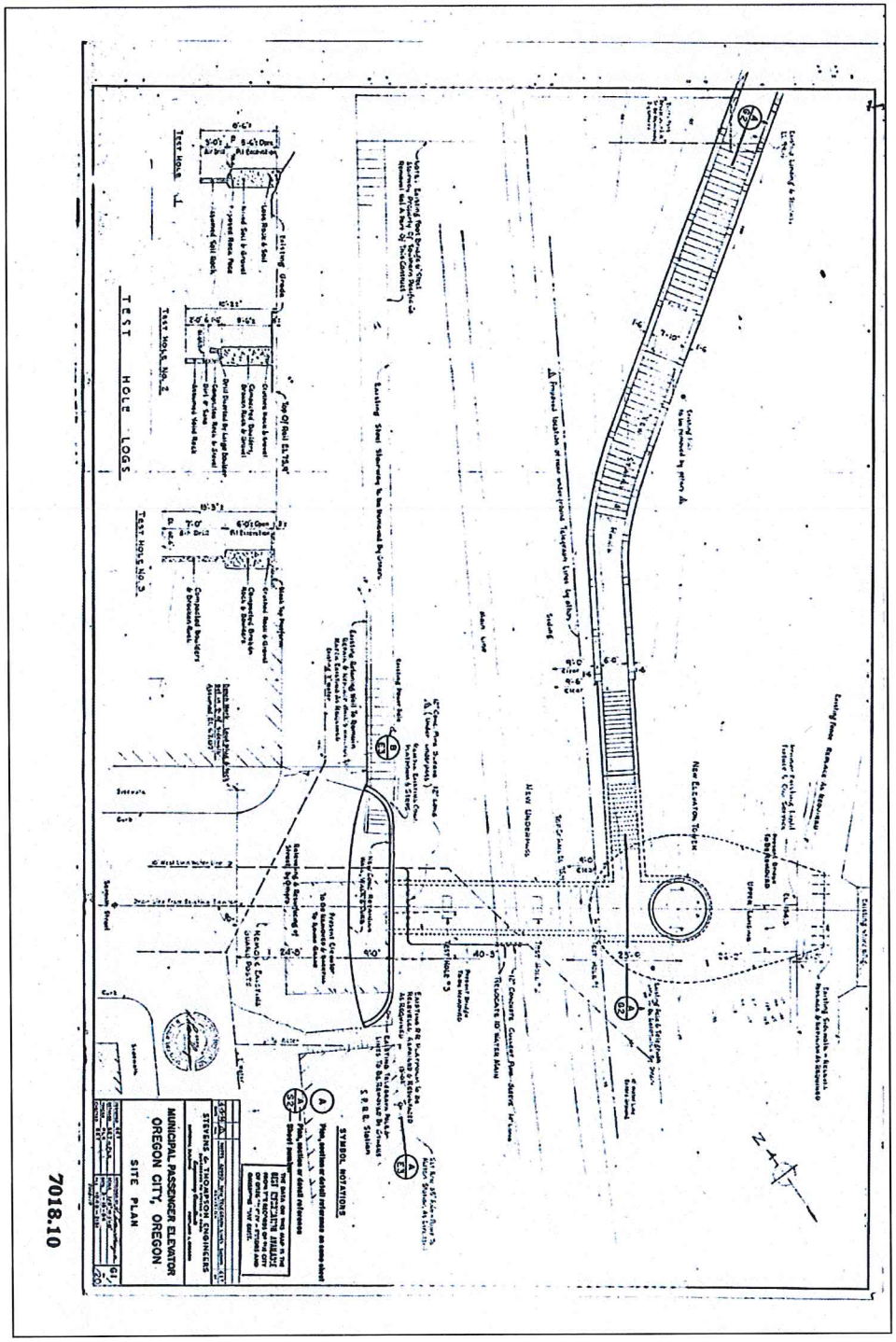

Figure 4: Historic Site Plan. Drawn by Gordon E Trapp, ca. 1955

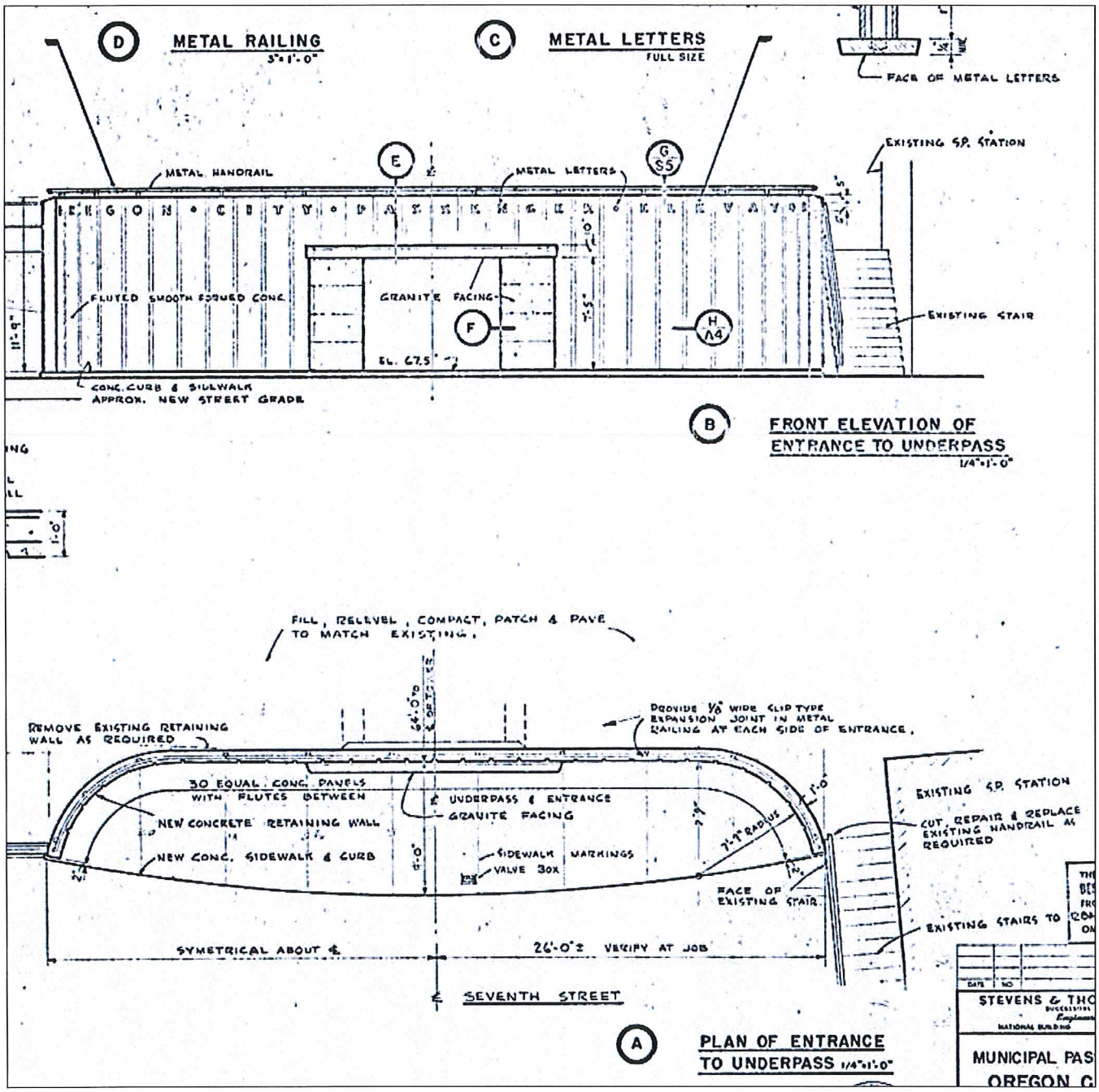

Figure 5: Historic Plans for Downtown Entrance. Drawn by Gordon E. Trapp, ca. 1955.

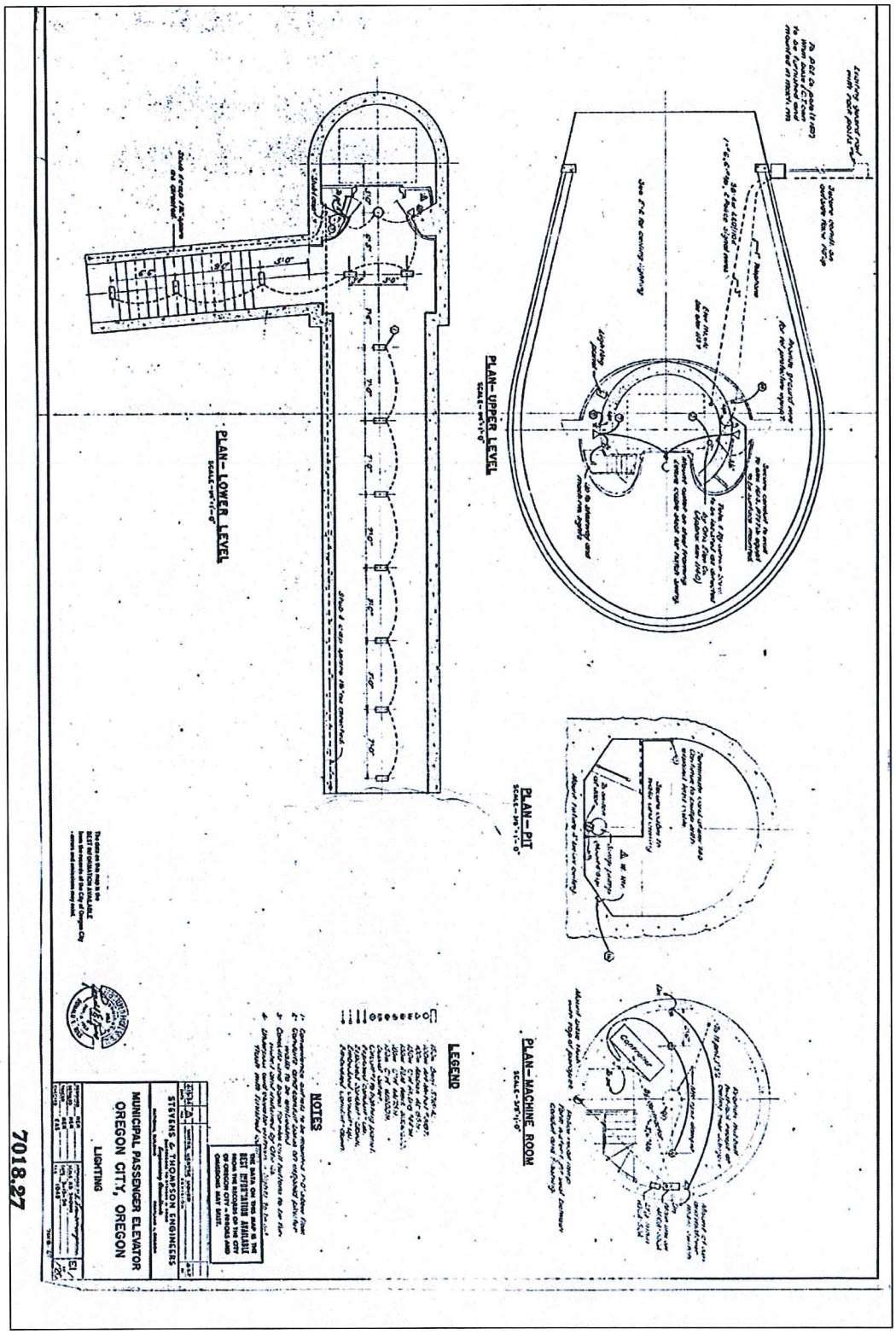

Figure 6: Observation Deck and Plan of Downtown Entrance with Connection to Grand Stair. Drawn by Gordon E. Trapp, ca. 1955.

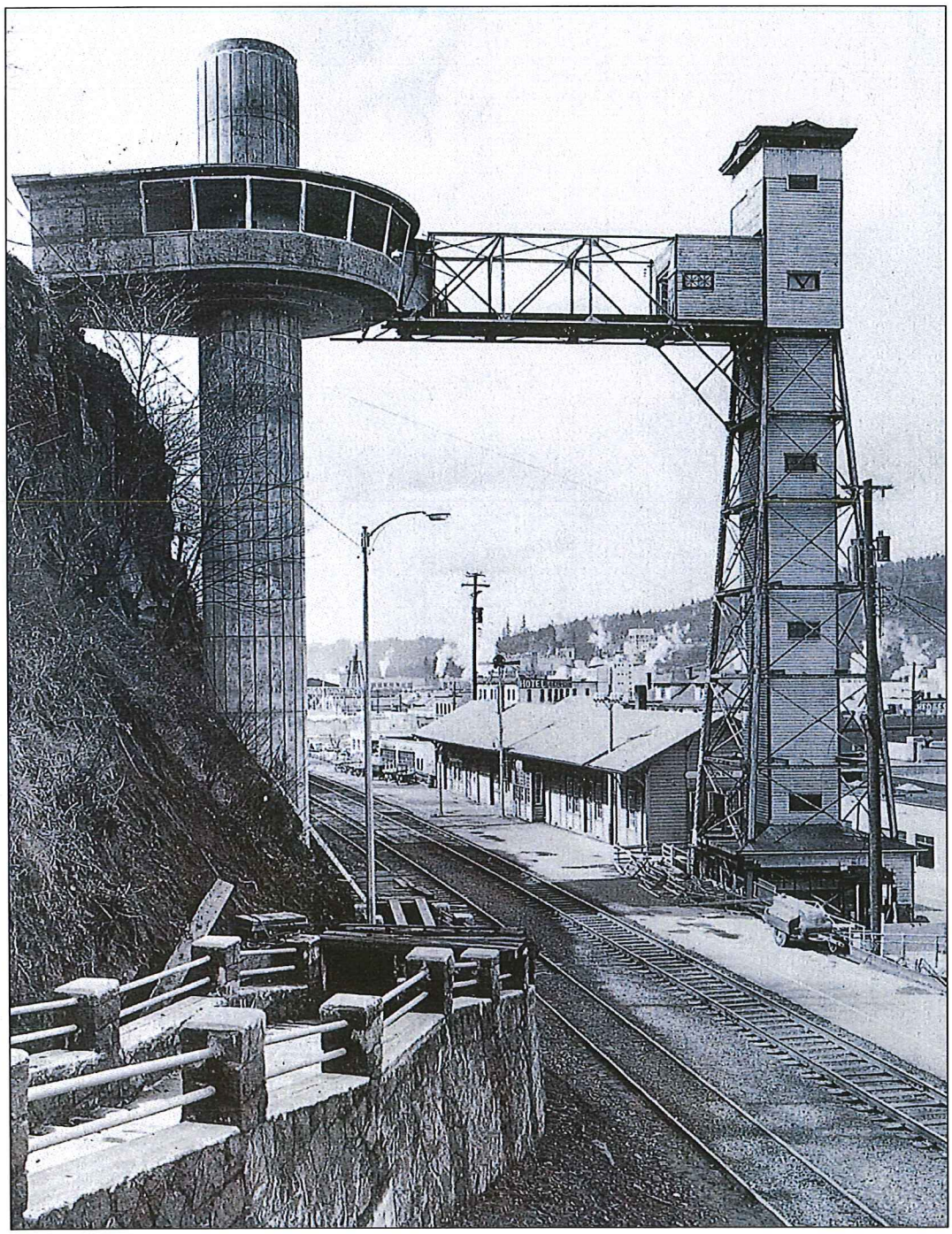

Figure 7: Historic Photo of the Original Elevator (1915) and the New Elevator (1955)

Oregon City Municipal Elevator
Oregon City, Clackamas Co.

Photo 1 of 9
OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityMunicipalElevator_001
Municipal Elevator, Downtown Underpass, Looking Northeast

Photographer: Chrisanne Beckner
Date: July 20, 2013

Oregon City Municipal Elevator
Oregon City, Clackamas Co.

Photo 2 of 9
OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityMunicipalElevator_002
Municipal Elevator, Downtown Underpass, Looking East

Photographer: Chrisanne Beckner
Date: July 20, 2013

Photo 3 of 9
OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityMunicipalElevator_003
Elevator Observation Deck at Promenade, Looking North

Photographer: Chrisanne Beckner
Date: July 20, 2013

Photo 4 of 9
OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityMunicipalElevator_004
Observation Deck Meets Promenade, Looking West

Photographer: Chrisanne Beckner
Date: July 20, 2013

Photo 5 of 9
OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityMunicipalElevator_005
Downtown Elevator Entrance, Looking East

Photographer: Chrisanne Beckner
Date: July 20, 2013

Photo 6 of 9
OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityMunicipalElevator_006
Observation Deck, McLoughlin Area, Looking West

Photographer: Chrisanne Beckner
Date: July 20, 2013

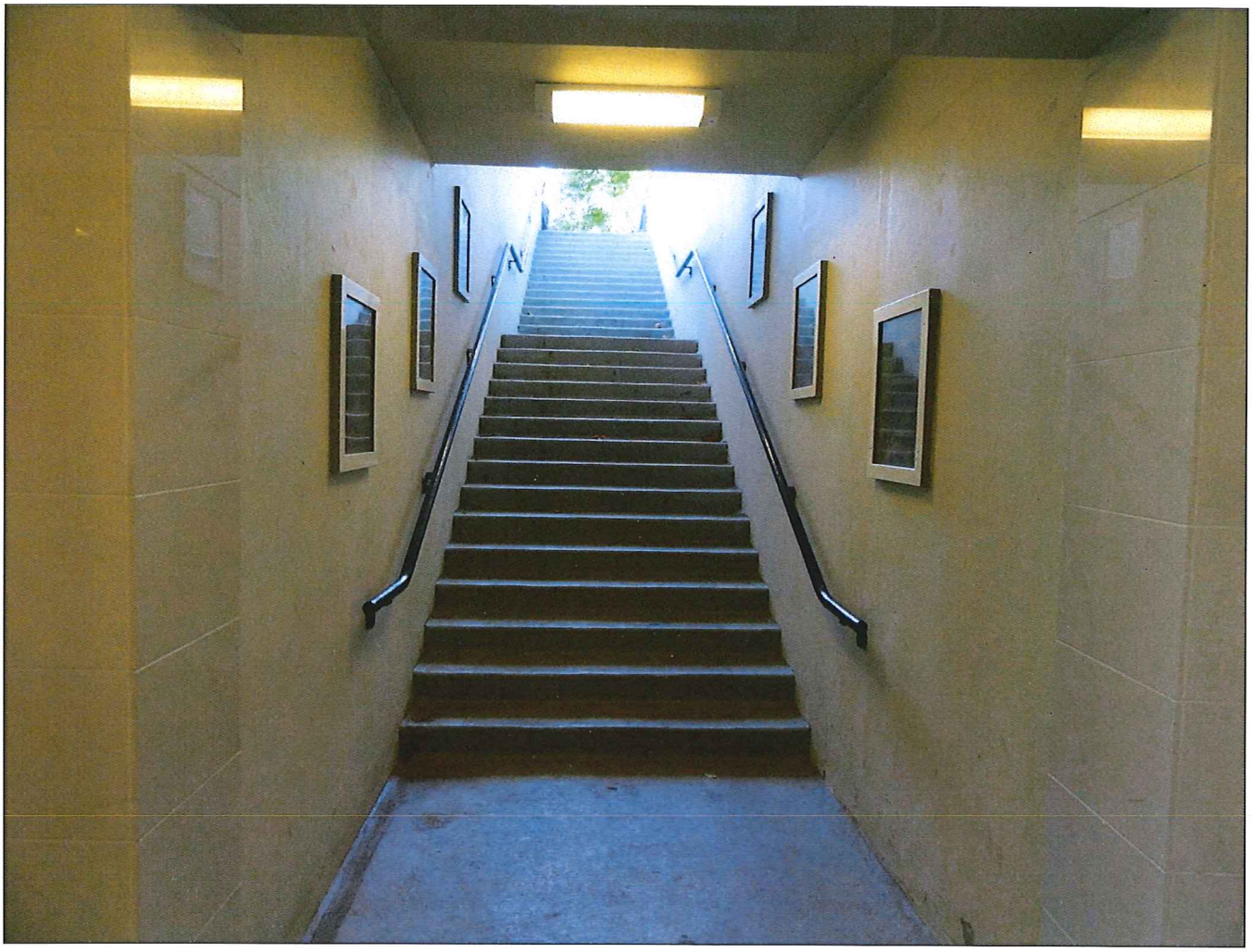

Photo 7 of 9
OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityMunicipalElevator_007
Stair from Underpass to Grand Staircase, Looking North

Photographer: Chrisanne Beckner
Date: July 20, 2013

Oregon City Municipal Elevator
Oregon City, Clackamas Co.

Photo 8 of 9
OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityMunicipalElevator_008
Elevator Interior, Observation Deck, Looking East

Photographer: Chrisanne Beckner
Date: July 20, 2013

Oregon City Municipal Elevator
Oregon City, Clackamas Co.

Photo 9 of 9
OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityMunicipalElevator_009
Municipal Elevator, Downtown Underpass, Looking Southeast

Photographer: Chrisanne Beckner
Date: July 20, 2013