

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: O. P. Boyer's and Sons Funeral Home

Other names/site number: Boyer Mortuary

Name of related multiple property listing: NA

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

2. Location

Street & number: 609 W. Riverview Avenue

City or town: Dayton State: Ohio County: Montgomery

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

I hereby certify that this 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

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B X C ___ D

<i>Barbara Towen</i>		DSHPO/Dept Head for Inventory & Registration	5/6/2022
Signature of certifying official/Title:		Date	
_State Historic Preservation Office, Ohio History Connection_____			
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

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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

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Funerary/Mortuary – Funeral Home

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Vacant/Not in Use

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Second Renaissance Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: ___Brick_____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

O. P. Boyer's and Sons Funeral Home, commonly referred to as the Boyer Mortuary, is located at 609 W. Riverview Avenue, between Grafton Avenue and Central Avenue in the city of Dayton, Montgomery County, Ohio. It is situated on the north bank of the Great Miami River. It is located to the south of the residential Grafton Hill Historic District, characterized by late-nineteenth and early twentieth century single dwellings, and is adjacent to the contemporaneous Dayton Masonic Center and the Dayton Art Institute. The building was designed by architect Arthur Geyer and constructed in 1925. Of brick and concrete construction, Boyer Mortuary is a two story street-facing section designed in the Second Renaissance Revival style with a single story rear section of utilitarian design. The front section comprises the offices and public spaces of the mortuary, with an apartment on the second floor. The rear section is the work, garage, and storage area of the mortuary. A parking lot is located to the rear of the building. Currently not in use, the Boyer Mortuary retains its historic integrity.

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Narrative Description

Site

Boyer Mortuary is located at 609 W. Riverview Avenue, between Grafton Avenue and Central Avenue in Dayton, Montgomery County, Ohio (**Location Map, Maps 1-3**). The building is situated on the north bank of the Great Miami River. Monument Avenue Bridge, which connects that downtown street to W. Riverview Avenue is located to the south, across the street from the building. The building is about 250 feet north of the river, along which runs the Great Miami River Bike Trail. The main, Riverview Avenue façade is at about 750 feet above sea level, elevated by about 25 feet from the bank of the river. The site on which Boyer Mortuary is located slopes up to the north with the north façade at 760 feet above sea level, or, elevated by about 10 feet from the front façade. The property is two parcels, Parcel No. R72 06505 0004 (Lot 6668) on which the building stands and Parcel No. R72 06505 0005 (Lot 6674), which is a parking lot and alley located to the north of the building, for a total of approximately 0.3 acres (**Map 3**). The parking lot was built on a lot acquired by the Boyer Mortuary during the 1950s, was used by the mortuary during the period of significance, and has been part of the property since the time.

The location of the building is urban and primarily residential, with mid-twentieth century apartment buildings, five to seven stories in height and associated parking lots located to the north and west, including on the adjoining parcel. Two significant buildings, the Dayton Masonic Center and Dayton Art Institute are to the east. The construction of the Dayton Masonic Center commenced concurrently to Boyer Mortuary, with groundbreaking taking place in 1925. The Masonic Center opened to its members in 1928 and contributes to the Grafton Hill Historic District (NR No. 86001237, listed 1986). Dayton Art Institute, constructed 1930, is individually listed on the National Register (NR No. 74001579, listed 1974) and is also within the Grafton Hill Historic District. Grafton Hill is primarily a residential district to the north and east of Boyer Mortuary, comprising single dwellings constructed during the late-nineteenth century. Two other residential historic districts, Central Avenue Historic District (NR No. 82001476, listed 1982) and Dayton View Historic District (NR No. 84003787, listed 1984) are located to the north and northwest of the property. These, too, were developed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (**Map 2**).

As described in the National Register of Historic Places nomination forms for the aforementioned districts and discerned from Dayton's *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, 1918-1919, the parcels to the north, east and west of this property were heavily built up, comprising of detached single dwellings (**Figure 6**). To the south was the Riverside Park and a retaining wall, constructed by the Miami Conservancy District for flood protection on land donated by the estate of Dayton businessman Adam Schantz, Jr (**Figure 7**).¹ During the mid-twentieth century, when the Boyer Mortuary was active, those dwellings in the immediate vicinity were replaced by the larger apartment blocks that occupy the sites, and by parking lots and vacant land, some of which is now landscaped.

¹ "Schantz Estate Gives City Tract For Park," *Dayton Daily News*, Dec. 25, 1918, p. 1, Dayton, Ohio

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Historic and Current Appearance and Condition of the Building

The original/historic appearance and condition of the building is discerned from descriptions published in newspapers, depiction in *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps*, and historic photographs. A section on new construction in *Dayton Daily News*, May 1925, described the planned building thus: "The structure will be two stories [with] the second floor as living quarters. The building will have 45 feet frontage on Riverview Avenue, with a depth of 105 feet."² As constructed, the building has a 46 foot angled frontage, with uneven length side facades of 105 feet (west) and 96 feet (east). The rear façade is 45 feet wide.³

A second article published two months later provided a more detailed description of the building:

of brick and will be two stories in height in the front portion. By reason of ground elevation toward the north, the rear will be one story, although the roof will be integral to the whole building. Windows of special design as far as stone trimmings and iron ornamentation are concerned will add to the beauty of the building...Complete offices and funeral parlors for the Boyers will be contained in the first floor while there will be one large apartment in the second floor.⁴

The *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, 1932 (updated 1950) shows a tripartite building footprint, with a two story front section, a single story central section, and a single story rear section, marked 'A' which is an abbreviation for automobile garage. According to the map, the building had concrete floors and roof, brick walls and was of fireproof construction (**Figure 7**).

An undated photograph, possibly taken during the 1950s, shows its original front (south) and east facades (**Figure 8**). The Second Renaissance Revival style building is depicted in the photograph as having a two story section, three bays along both front and side facades. To its rear and facing the east is a single story, two bay wide section with its roof line aligned to the second level slab of the street facing section. Further to its north, and constructed on elevated ground, is a single story section. Because of the upward slope of the site, the roof of this section aligns roughly with the second story roof of the street-facing section to the south.

The two story section facing Riverview Drive is ornately embellished with stylistic elements. Containing the offices and casket display area, is effectively the public section of the building. On the other hand, the facades for the rear section, which comprised the garage and the embalming area, is treated with sparse embellishment, signifying a private, work area, not commonly accessible to the public.

Exterior (See Map 2 for Exterior Photograph Locations)

Front (South) Façade (Photographs 1 and 2)

The Boyer Mortuary building retains much of its character-defining historic features, as a comparison between the historic photograph and documentation and the present-day condition affirms.

² See *Dayton Daily News*, May 28, 1925, p.8.

³ The data is sourced from the Montgomery County Auditor website, www.mcauditor.org, retrieved March 20, 2021.

⁴ See *Dayton Daily News*, July 30, 1925, p.18.

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The historic photograph (Figure 8) depicts a brick building of English bond masonry with stone quoins. The building is on a concrete foundation, set back from the street, with a landscaped front bisected by a stepped path. The building has a symmetrical, three bay wide south façade. At the first floor level, is a central round arched doorway flanked on either side by a round arched window. A short flight of three steps leads to the full-light wood door with sidelights and topped with a multi-pane fan-light. The opening is elaborated with regularly spaced tabbed stone masonry on the sides, with a masonry pointed stone arch, an eclectic element of the Gothic style, rising above the springer. Each side of the door opening has a lamp attached to the wall. The full-height round arched windows on either side of the entry have stone surrounds and a pointed arch echoing that of the central doorway. The windows are triple mullioned, multi-light with side-hung panels. The windows are set above wood spandrels elaborated with decorative iron railings.

A simple horizontal belt course differentiates the first from the second floor of the front façade. In each of the west and east second floor bays, there is one triple mullioned twelve-light window with stone sills. A paired twelve-light window is in the center bay. The side-hung divided light windows are topped with triple light, operable transoms. A stone band, set two courses of brickwork above the windows, extends the length of the façade. A stone cornice marks the roof-line of the façade, and a brick parapet punctuated with stone balusters and topped with a stone coping rises above it.

In present day, the approach to the building has been modified, with a path connecting to the sidewalk that skirts the east face of the building replacing a portion of the front lawn. The front façade retains its overall symmetrical, three bay composition. The stone quoins, cornices and stone trims, characteristic of the style, are retained. The pointed arch stone surrounds for the windows and door at the first floor level remain in place, even as the window iron railings have been removed at an undetermined time. The entrance door is glazed wood-frame, and the windows have been boarded for security. Fanlights retain their original framing and remain in place in good condition. While not visible from the outside, the mullioned windows remain in place and can be observed from within the building. At the second floor level, all windows, with the exception of the central sash of the west bay, remain in place and in good condition. The opening for the missing window has been boarded up. The window sash has been removed for restoration and are in a fair to good condition. The transoms for the west and central wing retain their original frame. The transoms for the east bay window have been replaced with single panel frames fitted with translucent glazing. The original transoms, in good condition, are stored in the building. The balusters that punctuated the parapet have been replaced with recessed brick infill, so that the locations of the balusters can be discerned. Newer metal coping covers the stone coping atop the parapet.

Side Façade (East) (Photographs 2-4)

As seen in the historic photograph (Figure 8), the two story section of the east side façade is three bays wide. The south corner bay features a triple mullioned round arch window topped with a fanlight, fitted within brick round arch opening. While the opening is of the same size as that for the front façade windows, it is less elaborate, lacking the stone surround characterizing the main façade. The central bay features two smaller rectangular multi-light sash windows. The north bay of the section features a recessed brick round arch door opening, with a wood paneled

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door and sidelights. The door features a lamp on either side. A stepped path from the street leads up to this side entrance. The first and second floors are separated on the façade by a row of brick soldier course.

The second floor paired twelve-light side hung windows with three-light transom in the corner bays are identical in size and type with those of the front façade. A smaller six over six sash window is set in the central bay of the section. Above the windows and aligned with the stone cornice and trims of the front façade is a row of soldier course brickwork. The raised parapet is of brick with stone coping, featuring no stone balusters in keeping with the simple treatment of the façade.

The two bay wide central section of the building is one story tall with an accessible roof terrace. The façade is punctuated with two triple mullioned multi-light windows with stone sills and rowlock brickwork for lintels. An exterior metal stairway leads to the terrace, which has a raised parapet. A water collector and drain extends down between the two windows.

The rear section of the façade is three bays wide. At the southeast corner is a brick chimney shaft that gives evidence of the location of the furnace within. The section, built on sloping ground, stands on a visible concrete base that compensates for the elevation so that the floor is level with the rear section of the parcel. Three multi-light windows with stone sills and rowlock brick lintels, one for each bay, are set in this section of the façade. There is a small window at the ground level. The roof level is marked on the exterior by soldier-course brickwork, and the raised parapet has a stone coping.

The current condition of the east façade retains much of the primary exterior materials. The first floor windows and the side entrance door for the two story section have been boarded, with the fanlight for the corner window retained and visible from the interior. The fanlight over the side entrance is in good condition and is stored in the building, though the original doors are missing. Seen from inside, the window openings retain their original frames, while that for the door sashes have been removed. All the windows at the second floor level, including the transoms, retain their frames and sashes. The remaining first floor and ground level window openings have been walled with brick masonry. The exterior metal staircase remains in place, as does the downspout and water drain. A newer metal railing has been added above the stone coping (which remains in place otherwise unaltered) of the single story terrace.

Rear Façade (North) (Photograph 4)

The current condition of the rear façade is symmetrical with a low slop gable roof with horizontal ends. The symmetrical façade originally provided access to vehicles via a central garage door type opening. Currently, a portion of this opening has been filled. A recessed glazed entrance and a metal bar security gate on the outside, fitted into the older entrance, provide access to the building. Two downspouts, one in each corner, allow for water from the roof to drain.

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Side Façade (West)

The current condition of the west side façade comprises of a blank, window-less brick wall, and is partly obscured by the apartment building located adjacent to the Boyer Mortuary. The façade does not appear to have undergone significant alterations since the construction of the building.

Terrace (Photograph 5)

The terrace roof is finished with newer adhered EDPM material. The north wall of the second story and the elevated single story south wall of the north section are visible. The second story wall features, from east to west, a single multi-light sash window, a door opening, paired mullioned multi-light sash windows, and a single sash window, set asymmetrically along the façade. The windows, which retain their original frames, are fitted on the exterior with protective mesh. The door opening, missing the door, has been boarded up. The north section south wall features two square window openings near the east and west corners, and a smaller metal frame window located roughly centrally on its face. The historic photograph shows a corner window to be a multi-light industrial type. However, all the larger window openings have brick infill. The smaller window is metal frame with six lights; one panel of glazing missing and the remaining painted over. This façade, which conceals a gable roof has a raised stepped parapet. The brick soldier course from the east facade wraps around this face, too.

Interior (See Figure 1 for Interior Photograph Locations)

The interior of Boyer Mortuary is organized in three distinct areas: the public area facing Riverview Avenue, which includes the offices, casket display, and public waiting and viewing/visitation areas located at the street level of the south and central sections; the garage and work area in the elevated single story north section; and the apartment at the second floor level of the south section.

Public Area, Main Floor, Street Level (Photographs 7-11, 14)

Chip Boyer's narrative, *The Door*, on the funeral of Orville Wright at the Boyer Mortuary in 1948 is useful in understanding the interior layout of the public areas during the period of significance. Looking from inside toward the entrance, the narrative describes the progress of visitors as they move from the main entrance to the casket viewing area and back, thus:

Each of the mourners entered Boyer's through its front door...into an entry hall...They would then have turned right into the main waiting room. (Off the entry hall to the left were the offices, and straight ahead was a hallway leading to the mortuary's first floor [the garage and work area]⁵. After signing the register they would [go on] into the viewing room adjacent to and open to the main waiting room. In the viewing room, placed on a bier, was Orville's casket...The mourners would have filed past the open

⁵ The location of the office is to the left, as viewed looking south to the main entrance; the location of the safe in this section of the building indicates the location of the office.

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casket, some stopped momentarily for reflection and prayer, before moving out into the hallway, and from there, down the hallway and back out through the front door...⁶

Drawing from the description above and site observations, the main entrance led to a hallway bisecting the building, to the staircase that led up to the garage/work area to the rear (**Photographs 7-11**). The walls have been partly removed. To the west of the hallway was a waiting room, while office spaces were located to the east and casket display room to the rear, north of the offices (**Photographs 8 and 11**). The viewing/visitation area was located along the west face north of the waiting room (**Photograph 10**). Even though partitions between the waiting and visitation rooms have been removed, the arrangement can be discerned in the present day from the location of the remaining hallway walls.

Portions of the hallway walls located near the main entrance remain in place. However, beams running laterally along the north-south walls the length of the space, iron I-Section columns supporting the beams, and remnants of the wall mortar on the floor mark the extent of the original walls. An opening in the hallway wall to the west leads to the former waiting room area. There is no wall separating the waiting room area from the visitation area, making for a large open space extending to the rear wall of this section of the building.

To the east of the main entrance, is an original paneled wooded door opening to a staircase accessing the second floor apartment. Further to the east and across from the waiting room entrance is another door that leads to the office area (**Photograph 8**). The southeast corner comprised the office occupied by members of the Boyer family. To its north and adjacent to the side entrance is a toilet. The walls have been removed. Although some fixtures and plumbing remain in place. The side entrance, which was likely used for visitors to the office and separate from mourners who used the front entrance, separated the owners' office from the remaining casket display area that extends to the north wall.

The exterior door of the side entrance has been removed and is stored in the building at the present time, to be reinstalled upon restoration. Doors connecting the hallway to the stairwell and the office, via a glazed wood door, remain in place. The conditions of many windows, boarded or walled in, becomes clear when seen from inside. All the windows, with the exception of two in the northeast casket display area which are filled in with brick masonry, retain their frames; for some windows, original sashes have been removed for restoration, and will be refitted once restored. An original safe, located in the Boyer office area, remains in place.

Throughout the space, plaster wall conditions vary and either remain, are partially removed, or entirely removed. The ceiling has been removed and the concrete slab is exposed. The terrazzo floor at the main entrance and the remaining floor is concrete.

Upper Level (Work Area/Garage) (Photographs 12 and 13)

Roughly centered in the rear wall of the public section of the building is the staircase leading up to the Upper Level First Floor, where the garage and embalming room were located. To the east of the stairs, at the lower level is the furnace room, where the original furnace is still in place.

⁶ Chip Boyer, *The Door: A Narrative and Commentary Concerning the Funerals of the Wright Brothers and of Other Wright Family Members, 1912-1948*. Dayton, 2002.

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This room corresponds to the location of the chimney stack on the east façade of the building. On the upper level, to the west of the straight flight of steps was the embalming room.⁷ The partition walls for the room have been removed, but its extent can be discerned by the green paint adorning the walls, contrasting with the remaining walls that are finished with brick and concrete blocks indicating the filled in windows (**Photograph 12**). Tucked into the southeast corner of the embalming room is an elevator shaft, which was added by the Cokesbury Book Store that occupied the building from 1979 to 1989. A staircase between the floor levels has replaced the elevator. A small toilet, to the east of the elevator shaft shares a wall with it.

The remainder of the room is an open space, originally used as a vehicle garage and for storage, and currently used to store construction equipment and materials (**Photograph 13**). The room features a concrete floor, and a metal truss supports the roof above. The embalming room had a dropped ceiling, and some of the hangers and wall attachments of the element remain in place. All window openings, except the vent for small toilet have been filled in with brick and concrete block masonry. As is visible on the exterior, the garage entrance has been partly filled in, and fitted with a metal-frame storefront window and glazed door.

Second Floor (Apartment) (Photographs 14 – 18)

The straight-flight staircase from the first floor hallway near the main entrance leads up to the second floor two-bedroom apartment. The staircase ends at a landing and a second floor hallway (**Photograph 14**). The hallway and stairs are centrally placed, and all the rooms comprising the apartment encircle it. Going counterclockwise around the central core, two bedrooms, which face Riverview Avenue to the south and the east façade are situated adjacent to each other, occupying the east and central bays (**Photograph 15**). Each bedroom has a built-in closet. A bathroom is located to the north of the east corner bedroom. Further north is another room, currently unfurnished, possibly used as a dining area/kitchen. Both, the hallway and this room lead to an L-shaped open space, enclosed by the terrace wall to the north, a blank wall to the west, and the west bay of the south wall (**Photographs 16 and 17**). Windows and a door opening, observable from the terrace, light the north side of this space. Walls marking the hallway have built in closets and storage areas (**Photographs 16**).

As described for the facades, most of the windows here retain their original frames and sashes and are operable, though some of the transoms have been removed for restoration (**Photograph 18**). The door to the terrace is missing and the opening is boarded up. The other paneled doors, including those for the closets, are in good condition and attached to their frames. The entire floor is terrazzo finished, with the material in good condition and clearly visible (**Photograph 14**). The two bedrooms feature dropped ceilings with wood trims at the wall corners that match the wood baseboard at the floor level. For the remainder of the apartment, the original ceilings have been removed to expose the wood joists that support the roof above. The original roof over the second floor was severely damaged when the building was in disuse and has been replaced with a newer roof supported with wood joists (**Photograph 18**). Near the core of the apartment, newer wooden posts and framework have been placed to provide added support to the roof above.

⁷ The mortuary did not include a crematorium.

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Integrity Assessment

Location and Setting

Boyer Mortuary stands on its original site and retains its integrity of location. The building was constructed in a primarily residential neighborhood, which in the present day include the Grafton Hill Historic District and Dayton View Historic district. Two institutional buildings in its vicinity, the Dayton Masonic Center and the Dayton Art institute, were constructed during the same period as the Boyer Mortuary. Some of the nearby single dwellings located to the north and east of the former mortuary were removed for the construction, mainly, of residential apartment buildings with interspersed commercial and health-care facilities. Most of these were constructed during the mid-twentieth century, during the period of significance. Riverview Park, on the bank of the Great Miami River has been integrated into the Great Miami Bike Trail and remains a green space in the present day. Considering that the area retains its historic residential and institutional character and that most of the newer buildings were constructed during the period of significance, the Boyer Mortuary retains its integrity of location and setting.

Design

Exterior: Boyer Mortuary retains its Second Renaissance Revival style characteristics and elements, particularly for the front and east side facades. It also retains the utilitarian character of the north section of the building continuing the contrast between that section and the more elaborately treated front, public section of the building. While some windows and doors have been boarded, most of the original sashes and doors either remain in place and are visible inside or have been stored on site to be reinstalled. Four rectangular windows located in the rear section of the east facade, of which two are in the rear garage and work section, are filled in. Some masonry associated with the east façade south corner window was removed following an automobile accident that caused some damage; the window has been boarded, while the masonry blocks remain on site. On the rear façade, the original garage door has been removed and replaced with a smaller glazed entrance and newer masonry. On the front façade, the balustrade that had been built into the raised parapet is bricked in. With the exterior alterations considered, the building nonetheless retains its architecturally significant details, overall massing and form, and the visual separation of the public and work sections of the mortuary demonstrated by variations in detail. It retains good integrity of design as evaluated based on its exterior features.

Interior: The configuration of the main entrance and foyer to the public areas, office, hallway, and stairs to the upper floor have been retained. While interior partition walls have been removed, the original spatial configuration and uses can be discerned from the location of columns along the hallway, as well as elements such as the original safe in the office area, with historical depictions providing the necessary context. The stairway connecting to the garage and work areas remain in place. Some partition walls have been removed in the work area, but the location of the embalming room and the parking areas can be discerned. The second floor apartment retains its configuration of rooms and overall circulation pattern. Newer wooden support struts have been installed to support a new roof over this section of the building. Thus, even as some of the walls in the building have been removed since its construction, the interior layout and circulation pattern can be gauged. The public, work, and living quarters that made up the plan can be identified. The interior of the building retains fair integrity. Considering the

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interior and exterior together, the building in its style, character, and layout remains relatable to its time of construction and its original use, and thus retains its integrity of design.

Materials and Workmanship

The Boyer Mortuary retains its exterior primary construction materials including brick, stone and wood windows. Inside, it retains its primary flooring materials – terrazzo in the public section and apartment, and concrete in the rear garage section. Portions of the original dropped ceiling and plaster and finish remain in place in the public area and in the apartment upstairs; at the first floor level public area, the structural concrete slab and beams are visible where walls and the plaster is missing. The original metal truss supporting the garage roof in the rear section of the building remains in place. A new roof supported on wood joists, installed to replace a severely damaged older one of similar structure and construction, covers the second floor of the building. The new roof does not detract from the older workmanship and construction of the building. As described above, most of the original windows and doors remain installed or are stored on site to be reinstalled. Taking into consideration later alterations, the building retains much of its original construction materials, and its original construction can be discerned in its present condition. The Boyer Mortuary retains its integrity of materials and workmanship.

Feeling and Association

The Boyer Mortuary is situated in a physical context that has retained important residential and institutional buildings concurrent with its period of significance. The building itself retains its integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, and together with the location and setting, it retains integrity of feeling and association.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

- 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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Social History

Commerce

Period of Significance

1925-1972

Significant Dates

1925

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Geyer, Arthur - Geyer and Neuffler Architects, Dayton, Ohio.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Boyer Mortuary (O. P. Boyer's Funeral Home) is significant at the local level under Criterion A, for its association with social and commercial history related to the development of mortuaries and funeral practices in Dayton, Ohio, during the period 1925-1972. It is also significant under Criterion C as a locally significant example of a purpose built mortuary property type in Dayton. Under Criterion A, the Boyer Mortuary exemplified changes in funeral practice during the first decades of the twentieth century, when funerals and wakes were organized and held at the home of the deceased to mortuary designed funeral related needs and services. The Boyer family were undertakers since the 1860s, and the building represents the historic evolution of funerary practice of which their firm was at the forefront in Dayton. The mortuary continued to operate at this location, family-owned and run from 1925 until 1979, after which it was used as a book-store and a psychologist's office.

Under Criterion C, the Boyer Mortuary is significant as the only remaining purpose built mortuary property type in Dayton from the period, in contrast with others that occupy repurposed Victorian homes. Commissioned by Louis Boyer and designed by architect Arthur Geyer, the Boyer Mortuary represents in its spatial arrangement funerary practices and technology of the period. The period of significance commences with the construction of the building in 1925 and ends in 1972, fifty years from the current date, and reflecting the fourth and last generation of exclusive Boyer family ownership. The building is currently unoccupied and retains its historic character and integrity.

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

The Boyer Mortuary (O. P. Boyer's Funeral Home) is significant for its association with the development of mortuaries and funeral practices during the period 1925-1972 (Criterion A), and as a significant example of a purpose built mortuary property type from the period (Criterion C). The Boyer undertaker business had well-established roots in Dayton, dating back to the 1860s. The undertaker and funeral business established by O. P. Boyer had thus witnessed the modernization of their business, including the development of embalming, the professional growth of the practice now led by the "funeral director" rather than the undertaker, and the establishment of the funeral home as the center of funerary practice and services.

The Boyer Mortuary building has an added significance. Most funeral homes from the period were located in former residential buildings that had been repurposed for the business. The Boyer Mortuary, on the other hand, was designed specifically to house and function as a modern funeral home. The interior spaces were designed and dedicated to specific uses – reception and visitation rooms, casket display rooms, embalming space, parking for hearses, and living quarters for a caretaker.

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Originally called O. P. Boyer's & Company, the undertaker business took on the name O. P. Boyer's and Sons after his two sons, Eugene and Charles, joined him. The firm remained in business for over 100 years, closing in 1979. During this period, it only changed its location once, in 1925, when it moved to the Boyer Mortuary building from its earlier location at 211 W. Third Street. The firm was thus witness to significant changes, particularly during the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when professional funeral directors took on an expanded role to be carried out in the funeral homes designed to house those functions. Factors that led to the expanded role of funeral homes included the societal endorsement of the practice of embalming and the expertise of the undertaker for the task; the impact of the advancement of modern medicine; and the gradual transformation of domestic space and displacement of the funeral from the dwelling to the mortuary. These changes impacted the design of new funeral homes, particularly Boyer's Mortuary, which were planned to house the expanded role that funeral directors gained in funerary practice.

The fact that the Boyer family had been in the business for over 60 years prior to this building's construction is significant. It provides a window into the developments of funerary practice in Dayton, from the activities of all associated rituals at the home of the deceased to the funeral home designed for the practice run by a professional funeral director. This experience helps explain the arrangement of spaces in the then new building type in effort to bring under one roof historical domestic funeral rituals such as visitation, commercial uses such as the offices and casket display, and technical skills of the professional funeral director, such as embalming.

The statement of significance first considers the development of funerary practice in Dayton as exemplified by the Boyer business. It then discusses the business as it was conducted at the Boyer Mortuary during the period 1925-1979 through the period of significance.

The Boyer Funeral Business in the Nineteenth Century

Prior to the establishment of his undertaker business, Oliver P. (O. P.) Boyer was a cabinet-maker, having followed his father William Boyer's trade. William Boyer settled in Dayton in 1824, when it was a small community, and O. P. Boyer was born three years later, in 1827. According to the United States Census, Dayton's population increased from 1000 to 2,950 between 1820 and 1830.⁸ From his earliest days in Dayton, William likely used his carpentry skills to also make caskets, engaging in multiple trades as was not uncommon during the early decades of that century in Dayton.⁹ His son, then, would have been exposed to the casket-making from an early age. O. P. Boyer followed his father in his trade, and by the 1850s, had a well-established business, regularly advertising in the city newspapers as a maker of "Plain and Fashionable Furniture."¹⁰ He operated his business in a building on Third Street between Perry and Wilkinson Street, adjacent to that of William Boyer, his father. The 1860 census identified

⁸ United States Census population data for Montgomery County, 1920 and 1930.

⁹ Chip Boyer, *The Door: A Narrative and Commentary Concerning the Funerals of the Wright Brothers and of Other Wright Family Members*, pp. i, 2002 (reprinted 2014), Chip Boyer and Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio.

¹⁰ See the advertisement, "New Ware Rooms," *The Daily Empire*, p.4, Sept. 17, 1859, Dayton, Ohio.

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Boyer as a cabinet-maker. In 1860, Boyer's cabinet and furniture showroom was removed to a new location at Fourth and Main streets.¹¹

Dayton's *Williams' Directory* continued listing him as such until 1863, when he was conscripted to join the Union Army during the Civil War.¹² Starting a year later in 1864, the city directory listed Boyer's profession as "undertaker".¹³ Through his career as an undertaker, Boyer lived at or close to his business establishment. *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps* and city directories for Dayton, show the location of the undertaker establishment at 211 W. Third Street, depicting it as a two story building with an attached two story wing to the rear. Dayton's 1878 city directory shows him living at 211 W. Third Street, with his father William Boyer residing in the adjacent dwelling at 217 W. Third Street (**Figure 5**). Both the buildings have since been demolished. In 1898, O. P. Boyer resided at his deceased father's former residence, while continuing to operate his funeral business at the building next door. City directories showed that Boyer's sons, who had joined the business by the 1880s, lived on S. Perry Street, only a block from the undertaker premise.¹⁴ Thus, as was typical for the profession, the undertakers were always close at hand to answer calls at any time in case their services were required. The tradition may have informed the design of the new Boyer Mortuary building, with the upper floor as a residential apartment. The resident, often a worker at the business, was available even after business hours to answer calls.

O.P. Boyer's As Exemplifying Changes in Funerary Practice

When Boyer opened his new business during the mid-nineteenth century, funeral rituals, on the cusp of change, continued to center on the family and the home of the deceased. The body of the deceased would be kept in the family parlor of the home for up to three days, a period known as wake. It was watched over by relatives and friends, as determining death was considered difficult prior to modern medical advances. The period allowed for the casket or the coffin to be readied, and for the burial arrangement made. The care of the dead was thus a personal, family practice.¹⁵

The Civil War was consequential in triggering changes leading up to the professionalization of funerary practice, in particular the legitimization of embalming the body of the deceased. Embalming had, until the Civil War, largely been confined to medical schools where bodies were prepared for the purpose of instruction. During the war, embalming allowed for the bodies of deceased Union soldiers to be returned home for burial without suffering from decay.¹⁶ The war was also a veritable training ground for a generation of undertakers who would incorporate the practice to their professions. The change in Boyer's main profession from cabinet-maker to

¹¹ "Time Is About Up!" [Classified Advertisement and Notice], *The Daily Empire*, p. 1, March 29, 1860, Dayton, Ohio

¹² U.S. Civil War Draft Registration Records, 1863-1865 for Oliver P. Boyer. Retrieved from ancestry.com, April 26, 2021.

¹³ *Williams' Dayton Directory*, various years, James Rickey, Dayton, Ohio and the Williams' Directory Company, Cincinnati, Ohio. Also see

¹⁴ *Williams' Directory, 1856-1857*, p. 87.

¹⁵ See "The History of Home Funerals," accessed at the website of the National Home Funeral Alliance, <https://www.homefuneralalliance.org/home-funeral-history.html>, retrieved July 14, 2021.

¹⁶ See Gary Lederman, *Rest in Peace: A Cultural History of Death and the Funeral Home in Twentieth Century America*, pp. 5-6, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 2003.

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undertaker following his conscription appears to be significant in its timing. Boyer was likely exposed to embalming during the war, and may have learned the skill, adding it to his years of experience in carpentry used for making caskets.¹⁷

Boyer's work comprised of both making caskets and embalming, the latter of which at the time was usually done at the home of the deceased, which is where the death would typically occur. Victorian homes typically had formal reception halls at the entrance to the building, and formal parlors located adjacent to the reception hall.¹⁸ Distinguished from the family or living room, the parlor was used only for formal occasions for guests, including the funeral. The body of the deceased would be kept at the parlor for the wake. As embalming became socially acceptable and a part of funerary rites, the undertaker would prepare the body in this parlor, in preparation for the visitation and the funeral. Chip Boyer writes in *The Door*, referring to the Boyer business, the traditional practice of hosting the funeral at home of the deceased continued through to the beginning of the twentieth century.¹⁹

When death occurred outside the home, it would fall under the purview of a physician or a public official such as a coroner, who would, after an investigation, often release the body to the undertaker for embalming and preparation for the funeral. The body would then be prepared at the undertaker's place of business, necessitating a space there dedicated for the purpose. At least since the 1880s, Boyer was called upon to take charge of the body to prepare it at his establishment for the funeral when death occurred away from home.²⁰ Advances in medicine led not only to lower mortality rates but also large hospitals, rather than homes, for the treatment of the sick. Hospitals such as St. Elizabeth's and Deaconess in Dayton, rather than the dwelling, increasingly became the place where patients died. There, a medical professional, rather than family members or priests, would be charged with ascertaining the death of the patient. The bodies would often be prepared by undertakers such as O. P. Boyer for the funeral. Considering that death increasingly occurred outside the home from the late nineteenth century, for which the Boyer firm was called upon, there was likely space for embalming and preparing the body at Boyer's establishment on West Third Street. Not surprisingly, a space would be dedicated to the practice in the Boyer Mortuary building.

A gradual transformation underway by the 1890s of domestic architecture with the elimination of the parlor contributed to the growing significance of the funeral home. Thomas Schlereth points out that changes in American domestic architecture were a consequence of a range of factors, including changing middle-class attitudes, a search for a more authentic American design, and a concern for a hygienic, germ-free dwelling.²¹ The modern "comfortable house" – a functional, family dwelling – was taking place of the spacious Victorian home. Inside, the formal, little-used parlor was swapped for the cozy, informal family or living room. This change can even be

¹⁷ According to *Neder's Directory of the City of Dayton*, 1876, Boyer was an undertaker and manufacturer of Hearses, Caskets, etc.

¹⁸ See Thomas J. Schlereth, "House Spaces: Public and Formal, Halls and Parlors," in *Victorian America: Transformations in Everyday Life, 1876-1915*, pp. 116-123, 1991, HarperPerennial, NY.

¹⁹ Boyer, *ibid.* p. 2

²⁰ See "The Funeral of Mrs. Aull," *Dayton Daily News*, March 11, 1885, p. 1; "Heart Disease Caused the Death of Wm L. Wright, October 19, 1898," *Dayton Daily News*, p. 8; and "Frightful: Plunge of Abraham Hershberg, Clothing Store Clerk," *Dayton Daily News*, June 15, 1899, p. 1.

²¹ Schlereth, *ibid.* p. 124.

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discerned in the mass-produced Sears & Roebuck catalogue homes. Those published and sold during the early 1910s included a “parlor” in their plans; a decade later, when the company had a showroom in Dayton, the parlor space dedicated for funerals, was replaced by a living room.²²

New funeral homes and mortuaries were now equipped with their own parlors and visitation rooms. Not surprisingly, early twentieth century funeral homes in Dayton, such as the National Register listed Westbrook Funeral Home (NR Ref. No. 88000205) at 1712 Wayne Avenue operated from former Victorian homes, retaining the character of domesticity and equipped with a ready funeral parlor. When the Boyer family built their new mortuary, it included both a reception room and a parlor or viewing room, thus bringing into its fold those spaces that were originally associated with funerals at the home of the deceased.

O. P. Boyer's & Sons Company

When O. P. Boyer died in 1903, his obituary in the *Dayton Daily News* described him as a “respected and well-known funeral director.”²³ The term funeral director had gained currency at the first national meeting of undertakers in 1882. According to Lederman, undertakers “began to see themselves as ‘funeral directors’ who attended to the details of the death...like other essential experts who had cultural authority in confusing, often highly stressful experiences in life...and could charge for their services accordingly.” By the end of the nineteenth century, undertakers would take care of “an assortment of responsibilities, including locating a casket, notifying friends and relatives, arranging the funeral service, contacting the appropriate religious leader, coordinating the burial with the local graveyard, and preparing the corpse.”²⁴ As the obituary indicates, Boyer was recognized with the title, not just in his own estimation but by the Dayton community for the important part that he and his firm had in arranging funerals.

Upon his death, Boyer's sons, Eugene and Louis, took over the company, renaming it O. P. Boyer's and Sons. After the death of Eugene Boyer in 1909, the business was run by Louis and Charles B. Boyer, son of Eugene. Charles Boyer was a graduate of the Cincinnati School of Embalming, one of the Nation's earliest, and thus likely the first in the family to have received formal education in that practice.²⁵ Charles Boyer's grandson, Chip Boyer writes that the brothers continued to follow late-nineteenth century traditions particularly when death occurred at home. Embalming was done at the home of the deceased while the funeral directors prepared for the service and burial, as in the case of Wilbur Wright, who died in 1912.²⁶ They nonetheless provided the broad range of services that funeral directors were equipped for and as described by Lederman.

West Third Street, where the Boyer business was located, was devastated during the Great Flood of 1913. As a consequence, early mortuary records of the firm were destroyed and do not form part of the extensive Boyer Mortuary record archives at Wright State University in Dayton. Mortuary records from the early 1920s through to 1978 show a continuity in the broad range of

²² Katherine Cole Stevenson and H. Ward Jande, *Houses By Mail: A Guide to the Houses of Sears, Roebuck and Company*, 1986, John Wiley & Sons, New York.

²³ *Dayton Daily News*, January 15, 1903, p.10.

²⁴ Lederman, *ibid.* p. 5.

²⁵ “C. Boyer Sr. Rites Friday,” *Dayton Daily News*, p. 36, June 1, 1960.

²⁶ Boyer, *ibid.* p. 4.

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services provided by the mortuary, before and after the construction of the new building. The itemized bills show a range of in-house services that could be provided, including Casket, Embalming, Shaving, Funeral Car, Transferring Remains, Apparel, Slippers, Shipping, Outer case for cemetery, and chairs. The funeral directors could also arrange for newspaper notices, flowers and wreaths, acknowledgement cards, and the preparation of the grave (**Figures 2 and 3**). While O. P. Boyer made wooden caskets during the nineteenth century, this practice had certainly ended by the 1920s. Records show that metal caskets, which had become popular by the time were obtained from other manufacturers, most commonly the nearby Springfield Metallic Casket Company located in Springfield, Ohio. The Springfield Metallic Casket Company building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2016, identified as one of that city's prominent industries (NR Ref. No. 16000040). As funeral directors, O. P. Boyer's sons had thus shifted away from manufacturing caskets to all services associated with arranging funerals. The mortuary kept caskets made by others such as the Springfield-based company, which necessitated a space dedicated to casket display at their new premises.

The Construction and Use of the New Building at 609 W. Riverview Avenue

By the 1920s, Lederman writes, "funeral homes...became the primary location for carrying out the responsibilities associated with burial in many large populated towns and urban areas..."²⁷ These funeral homes were both fitted into older Victorian dwellings and constructed as new buildings to house rooms for a range of functions – embalming, reception and visitation, casket display, parking garages for hearses, and office space. In Dayton, the aforementioned Westbrook Funeral Home moved to the National Register listed Victorian home in 1922. The present-day Glicker Funeral Home at 1849 Salem Avenue has occupied, at least since the 1950s, a Craftsman-style building constructed as a dwelling in 1926. The demolished two story brick building for the Smith Funeral Home, at 368 Broadway Street became home to the mortuary after it moved from a former dwelling at 1025 W. Fifth Street during the mid-1940s. Only the Boyer Mortuary, constructed in 1925, stands as an example of a building designed during the period for this purpose. The move to a building planned as a funeral home demonstrated the success of the decades old business – one that had grown both in clientele and reputation over time, providing service to important Daytonians such as Wilbur Wright (1912), Paul Laurence Dunbar (1906), and John H. Patterson (1922).

The location for the new building appears to have been carefully selected for protection from flooding. The older location on W. Third Street, was situated in a low lying area highly susceptible to flooding. As evidenced from the loss of mortuary records prior to the flood, and discerned from the *1913 Flood Area Map*, Third Street was fully inundated (**Figure 4**). On the other hand, W. Riverview Avenue, which was set at a higher elevation, was largely spared from flooding. Additionally, by 1919, retaining walls for flood protection were constructed along the river, on the south side of Riverview Avenue, as well as the new Schantz Park, doubling as a buffer zone between the River and the built-up areas to the north (**Figure 7**). The new building is thus situated on well-protected, elevated land.

The new building was situated at the southern end of the recently developed, well-regarded Grafton Hill and Dayton View neighborhoods. As had the Boyer business, so also well-to-do

²⁷ Lederman, *ibid.* p. 22.

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residents from areas vulnerable to flooding had moved to elevated ground, such as the neighborhoods north of the Great Miami River. The historic, well-established Boyer Mortuary had thus chosen a highly regarded section of the city to construct their building. That institutions such as the Dayton Art Institute and the Masonic Temple would also be constructed along the street during the same time period meant that the Boyer Mortuary would share the neighborhood with esteemed Dayton institutions.

The Boyer Mortuary building was commissioned under the leadership of Louis Boyer and designed by Arthur Geyer of Geyer and Nueffer Architects. Geyer was born in Dayton in 1884. Prior to starting his own architectural design and construction firm in 1923, Geyer had worked for Louis Lott, the master architect for the National Register listed Schantz Park neighborhood (NR Ref. No. 92001492), after which he joined Joseph E. Lowes Company, a construction engineering firm.²⁸ Built only two years after Geyer and Nueffer opened for business, the Boyer Mortuary was among the firm's early projects. Geyer and Nueffer had a successful practice that lasted until Arthur's death in 1953, with the firm responsible for the design and construction of the University of Dayton Fieldhouse (now Frericks Center), North Town Shopping Center (extant), Xenia Avenue Shopping Center (extant), the Highview Grade School (demolished), and several industrial plants in Dayton. Geyer had also designed several buildings in the states of North Carolina and Georgia. Upon his death, his funeral services were performed at the Boyer Mortuary building that he had designed.²⁹

The new building appears schematically similar to the earlier one at 211-213 W. Third Street. The Third Street premises, as described earlier, comprised a two story street-facing building connected via a single story section to a two story building located to the rear of the parcel. It is likely that the street facing building was the public face of the building, where the offices and casket display areas were located, while the rear building was the work area, where caskets were made and stored, hearses parked, and possibly, a space was dedicated for embalming if it were to be carried out at the place of business. Living in the adjacent building, Boyer himself was close at hand in case called upon to arrange a funeral. The Riverview Avenue building was designed to house all three functions – a publicly accessible office and display area facing the street, a work and parking area located to the rear, and a residence at the second floor level. During the decades prior to World War II, officials working at the Boyer Mortuary typically resided in the apartment above, available on-call day or night. Later, when other tenants resided there, they too were responsible to take calls after office hours.³⁰ The public section of the building, designed in the Second Renaissance Revival style in contrast with the utilitarian rear section, also included reception and visitation rooms, signaling the broadening service role of the funeral home during the twentieth century.

²⁸ See *Schantz Park Historic District Self-Guided Walking Tour*, Oakwood Historical Society, Oakwood, Ohio; and the National Register Nomination for the *Schantz Park Historic District*. In his World War I draft registration card, 1917-1918, Geyer listed Lott as his employer. Also see "Arthur Geyer, Architect, 68, Is Dead Here," *The Journal Herald*, p. 1, February 13, 1953.

²⁹ "Arthur Geyer, Architect, 68, Is Dead Here," *The Journal Herald*, p. 1, February 13, 1953.

³⁰ *Williams' Directory*, various years; Chip Boyer, the grandson of Charles Boyer, recollected that during the 1950s, a firefighter renting the apartment would take calls for the funeral home.

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In 1926, one year after the construction of the new building, the Boyer firm had filed for incorporation, with Louis Boyer as president and his son, Charles, assuming the roles of Vice-President and Treasurer. The funeral home continued its successful run under the leadership of Louis Boyer from 1903 to 1949, and then that of Charles B. Boyer from 1949 to 1978. Louis Boyer retired from the business in 1949, leaving it for Charles Boyer and his son, Charles (Bud) Boyer to manage. Louis died three years later in 1953. His obituary in the *Journal Herald* was focused on his profession, pointing to his over 50 year association with the Boyer Mortuary, referring to its storied history. Before his death, according to the article, Boyer had taken on an active role in promoting his profession, and was a member of several associations, including the Montgomery County Funeral Directors Club, Ohio Funeral Directors Association, and the National Funeral Directors Association.³¹

A year before his retirement Louis Boyer oversaw the funeral of Orville Wright, which was extensively covered by local and national media. The coverage included photographs of the stream of visitors entering and leaving the Boyer Mortuary. The funeral is also a subject of Chip Boyer's book on the funeral home, *The Door*. Devoting an entire chapter to the funeral, Chip Boyer describes the funeral process for Orville Wright. Chip Boyer illustrates the key role the Boyer Mortuary played in the funeral, as the place for embalming and preparing the body and one where the casket was kept for visitation. In describing the funeral process and the journey of mourners as they made their way through the building, its reception room and parlor, he also depicts the interior arrangement of rooms there and how they were used, as described in Section 7, above.³²

During the 1950s, the Boyer Mortuary purchased a lot to the north of the building to make room for additional parking, a testament to the continued growth of the business and private car ownership. Before his death in 1960, Charles B. Boyer acted as the funeral director for other prominent Daytonians, including Harold Talbott (1957), James M. Cox (1957), and Charles Kettering (1958). As notices in Dayton's newspapers, which mention the services of Boyer Funeral Home, show, the funerals of prominent citizens only highlighted a broadly felt regard for the Boyers. Charles's son, Bud Boyer, who had been working alongside his father took on the role of Funeral Director in 1960, making the Boyer Mortuary a business that had grown and thrived through four generations of family ownership.

The publication and success of Jessica Mitford's book, *The American Way of Death*, critical of the American Funeral industry, led to significant media attention to funeral homes and their business practices including those in Dayton.³³ Lederman writes that the funeral industry had been subject to criticism regarding the commercialization of its practices since the 1920s, and had, through its advocacy, journals, and public outreach, been able to confront its detractors.³⁴ In contrast, the industry was unprepared for the reaction to Mitford's book and its depiction of funeral directors as unscrupulous in taking advantage of grieving families for profit. The image of the funeral industry presented by Mitford became part of the public imagination. National publications, such as *Time* and *Newsweek* published articles critical of the industry, and its

³¹ "Louis P. Boyer Dies; Funeral Aid 50 Years," *The Journal Herald*, September 14, 1953.

³² Chip Boyer, *ibid*.

³³ Jessica Mitford, *The American Way of Death*, Simon & Schuster, NY, 1963.

³⁴ Lederman, "Chapter II: Explaining the American Funeral, 1918-1963," *ibid*. pp. 45-82.

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detractors and defenders were featured on television shows through the 1960s and later.³⁵ Even local newspapers began to consider funeral homes and the cost of the funeral in their communities. In Dayton, the *Dayton Daily News* published an article in 1971 highlighting the high costs of a funeral in the city, which, it said, averaged \$1,800. Bud Boyer was interviewed for the article as suggesting that for his mortuary, charging less than the starting price of \$800 for the funeral was not feasible. Boyers' service was more expensive than most surveyed by the newspaper.³⁶ However, neither the article nor the broad public criticism of the industry appear to have had a significant impact on Boyer's business.

Bud Boyer died in 1977. His obituary in the *Dayton Daily News* was focused on his thirty year contribution to the funeral industry, and on the longevity of the business, which had lasted over 100 years, in service of Dayton's residents.³⁷ Following his death, the funeral home was run by his wife Eleanor Boyer for a brief period. In 1978, Boyer's merged with the George Miller and Son Funeral Home in Dayton, to be called the Boyer-Miller Funeral Home located at 850 S. Main Street. Eleanor Boyer was the president of the Boyer-Miller Funeral Home until her death in 1985. The George Miller Funeral Home, later called George Miller and Son, had been in business at the location from at least 1930 and was a competitor to Boyer's Mortuary during the period of significance.³⁸ That funeral home has since been demolished, and the site is currently a parking lot.

Vacant for about a year, the Boyer Mortuary became home to the Cokesbury Book Store, a division of the United Methodist Church. The bookstore operated there until 1987. It then moved to Dayton's Oregon neighborhood in 1988. From 1989, the Boyer Mortuary building was used as office space for psychological services. By 2016, the building was vacant, in serious disrepair, especially its roofing system. During the same year, the current owners, Potamoose Partners LLC of Dayton, acquired and stabilized the building, with the intention to restore and rehabilitate it.

Boyer Mortuary as Compared with other Dayton Mortuaries and Funeral homes

Unique in its historic association with Dayton, the Boyer Mortuary Building stands out as the only remaining one of the era that was designed purposefully to house a mortuary. The Smith Funeral Home, which stood at 368 S. Broadway Street in Dayton, was also likely stationed in a building designed for its purpose. That funeral home, which was established during the 1910s, had previously occupied other buildings, including one at 1025 W. Fifth Street until about 1945, when it moved to Broadway Street. Both the Fifth Street and Broadway Street buildings have since been demolished. The George Miller and Sons Funeral Home at 850 S. Main Street, with which Boyer Mortuary merged in 1978, operated from a late-nineteenth century dwelling that has since been demolished. Three other funeral homes, the Westbrook Funeral Home, Schlientz & Moore Funeral Home, and the Glicker Funeral Home, all competitors of Boyer from the early twentieth century, provide a comparative framework. Still in business, the Westbrook Funeral Home was founded in 1892, and moved into the National Register listed Victorian dwelling at

³⁵ Ibid. pp. xxi-xxxi.

³⁶ "Shopping Turns Up \$400 Funeral," *Dayton Daily News*, August 27, 1961, p. 20.

³⁷ "Funeral Director Charles Boyer Dies," *Dayton Daily News*, August 2, 1977, p. 21.

³⁸ Funeral Notices in Dayton's newspapers mention the funeral home from about 1930 to its merger with Boyer's Mortuary. The funeral home is no longer in operation.

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1712 Wayne Avenue in 1923. The dwelling was built by Samuel Edgars in 1863 for his older daughter Margaret.

The Schlientz-Moore Funeral Home was established in 1921 and moved to its present building at 1632 Wayne Avenue, adjacent to Westbrook, in 1935. The building was constructed also by Edgars in 1865 as a home for his younger daughter, MaryAnn. The Glicker Funeral Home was established in 1913. While its original business location is not known, the business, under different names, operated from various homes adapted to the business at least since the early 1950s. One of these homes was the Craftsman-style dwelling at 1849 Salem Avenue, constructed in 1926, which remains home to the business in the present day.³⁹

Among funeral homes of the period, the Boyer Mortuary building stands out as an exception in that it is the only remaining building in the city that was purposefully designed for funerary functions. Unlike the demolished Smith Funeral Home, a modest, commercial building on a commercial street, the Boyer Mortuary was designed in the Second Renaissance Revival style and located in the vicinity of other prestigious institutions, such as the Dayton Art Institute, retaining its prestige even while not operating out of an opulent Victorian dwelling. Compared to other mortuaries and funeral homes in Dayton, the Boyer Mortuary thus occupies a unique place and significance in the history of funeral homes associated with Dayton.

The last home to a family business that ran from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, the Boyer Mortuary is thus significant at the local level under Criterion A, for its association with historical events related to the development of mortuaries and funeral practices during the period 1925-1972. Further, it is significant under Criterion C, as a locally significant example of a purpose built mortuary type. The only remaining building from the period of construction in Dayton to be designed a dedicated mortuary, the Boyer Mortuary exemplifies spatial arrangement and form funeral practices needed during the first decades of the twentieth century, when mortuaries and funeral homes became central to the business. The Second Renaissance Revival style building is currently unoccupied and retains its historic character and integrity.

³⁹ For Westbrook Funeral Home, see <https://www.westbrockfuneralhome.com/who-we-are/> (retrieved July 10, 2021); for Schlientz & Moore Funeral Home, see <https://www.schlientzandmoore.com/our-story> (retrieved July 10, 2021); for Glicker Funeral Home, see <https://www.glickerfuneralhome.com/about-us/> (retrieved July 10, 2021).

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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O. P. Boyer's and Sons Funeral Home
Name of Property

Montgomery, Ohio
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O. P. Boyer's and Sons Funeral Home

Name of Property

Empire, Dayton, Ohio.

Montgomery, Ohio

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March 29, 1860. "Time Is About Up!" [Classified Advertisement and Notice]. The Daily Empire, p. 1, Dayton, Ohio.

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June 15, 1899. "Frightful: Plunge of Abraham Hershberg, Clothing Store Clerk," Dayton Daily News, p. 1, Dayton, Ohio.

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O. P. Boyer's and Sons Funeral Home
Name of Property

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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
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.2973

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 39.763742 Longitude: -84.203759
2. Latitude: Longitude:
3. Latitude: Longitude:
4. Latitude: Longitude:

Or

O. P. Boyer's and Sons Funeral Home
Name of Property

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UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 16 | Easting: 739526 | Northing: 4405059 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |

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

The boundary of the Boyer Mortuary includes all of parcels R72 06505 0004 (Lot 6668), on which the building stands, and R72 06505 0005 (Lot No. 6674), where a ten car parking lot is located. From Lot no. 6674 is excluded an approximately 21 feet wide strip that is appropriated by the City of Dayton for widening of Central Avenue, and also a strip 11 feet wide alley by parallel lines off of the east end, which is to be kept open and used in common by adjoining owners (**Figures 3 and 4**).

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes all parcels that were associated with the Boyer Mortuary during the period of significance. The mortuary building was erected on Lot 6668 in 1925, marking the beginning of the period of significance. Lot 6674 was acquired by the Boyer Mortuary during the 1950s to provide for added parking area for the business and was used as such until 1979 when the business closed. Areas appropriated by the City of Dayton for the widening of Central Avenue and set aside for common use are excluded from the boundary.

O. P. Boyer's and Sons Funeral Home
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Samiran Chanchani, Principal
organization: HistoryWorks, LLC
street & number: PO Box 42586
city or town: Blue Ash state: Ohio zip code: 45242
e-mail historyw@historyworks.us
telephone: 513 265 8493
date: November 12, 2021

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: O. P. Boyer's and Sons Funeral Home/Boyer Mortuary

City or Vicinity: Dayton

County: Montgomery

State: Ohio

Photographers: Samiran Chanchani, Lorka Daugherty (Photographs 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9 only)

Date Photographed: January 8, 2021, November 8 and 9, 2021 (Photographs 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9)

O. P. Boyer's and Sons Funeral Home
Name of Property

Montgomery, Ohio
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Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photograph Number	Description
1	Boyer Mortuary front facade, looking northwest from W. Riverview Avenue
2	Boyer Mortuary front facade, looking north from W. Riverview Avenue
3	Boyer Mortuary, looking northwest at the front (south) and east facades from W. Riverview Avenue
4	Boyer Mortuary, looking across side alley at the east facade, facing southwest
5	Boyer Mortuary, looking southwest across alley at the north and east facades
6	Boyer Mortuary, First Floor, looking northeast from the terrace of the building
7	Boyer Mortuary, First Floor, main entrance looking east-southeast from the reception area
8	Boyer Mortuary, First Floor, looking northeast at the entrance foyer, with the entrance to office (front) and the doorway to staircase (left)
9	Boyer Mortuary, First Floor, looking south from the Visitation area (right) to the office (left) and main entryway (front)
10	Boyer Mortuary, First Floor, looking northwest from the Casket Viewing Area toward the hallway and visitation area, demarcated by the columns; the stairs to the Work Area are to the rear.
11	Boyer Mortuary, First Floor, looking north from the Offices towards the Casket Area
12	Boyer Mortuary, Work Area looking south towards Embalming space, marked with green paint
13	Boyer Mortuary, Work area, looking northwest toward rear entrance
14	Boyer Mortuary, Second Floor landing, looking north, showing terrazzo floor detail
15	Boyer Mortuary, Second Floor, looking southeast at Bedroom 1
16	Boyer Mortuary, Second Floor, looking west-northwest at Living/Dining area; the access to terrace, currently boarded up , is visible to the right
17	Boyer Mortuary, Second Floor, Living/Dining Area, looking south
18	Boyer Mortuary, Second Floor, Living/Dining Area, transom and roof detail, looking southeast

United States Department of the Interior
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O. P. Boyer's and Sons Funeral Home

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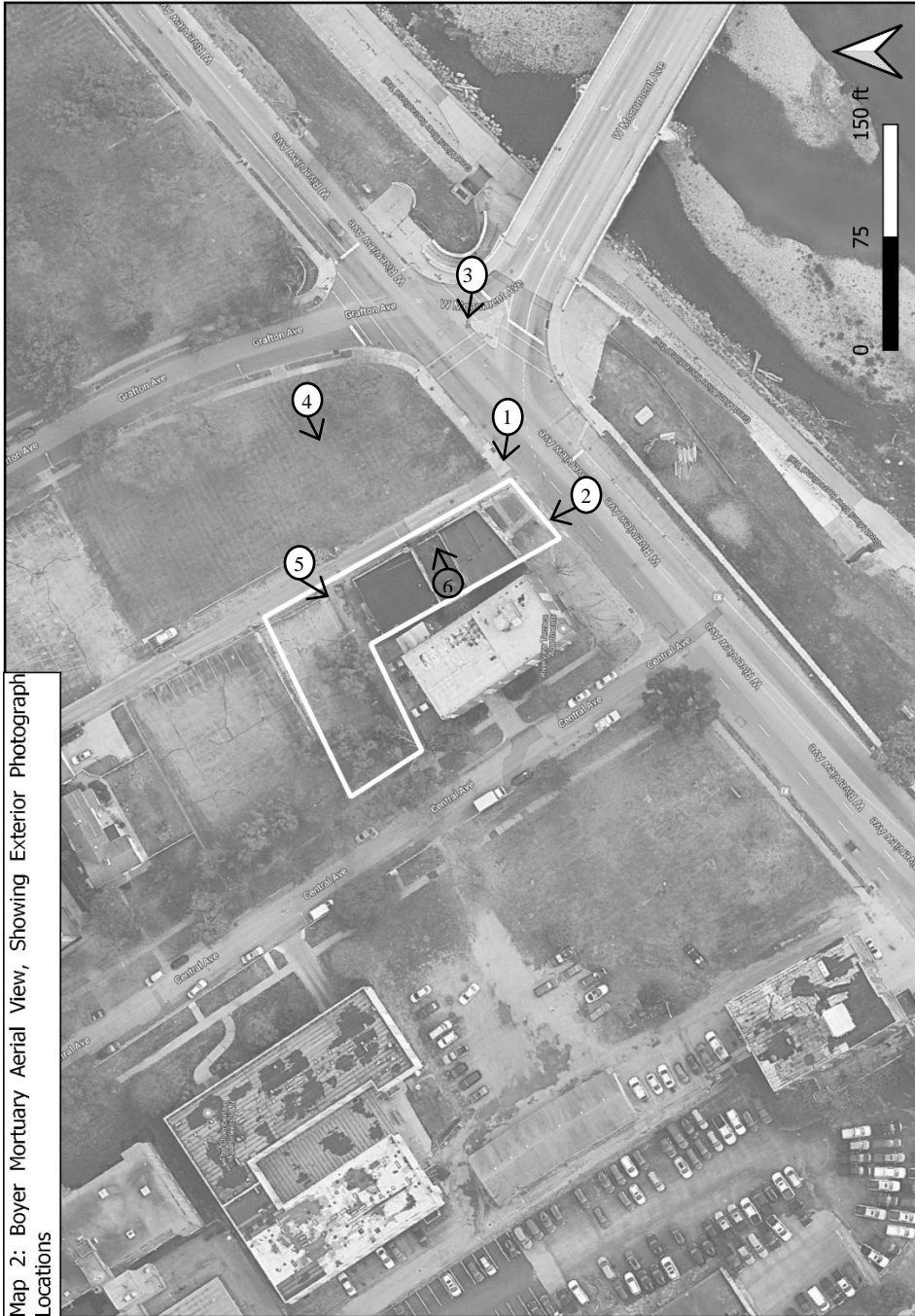
County and State

NA

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Map 1: Aerial View of Boyer Mortuary, showing exterior photograph locations (Base Map: Google Satellite Hybrid)

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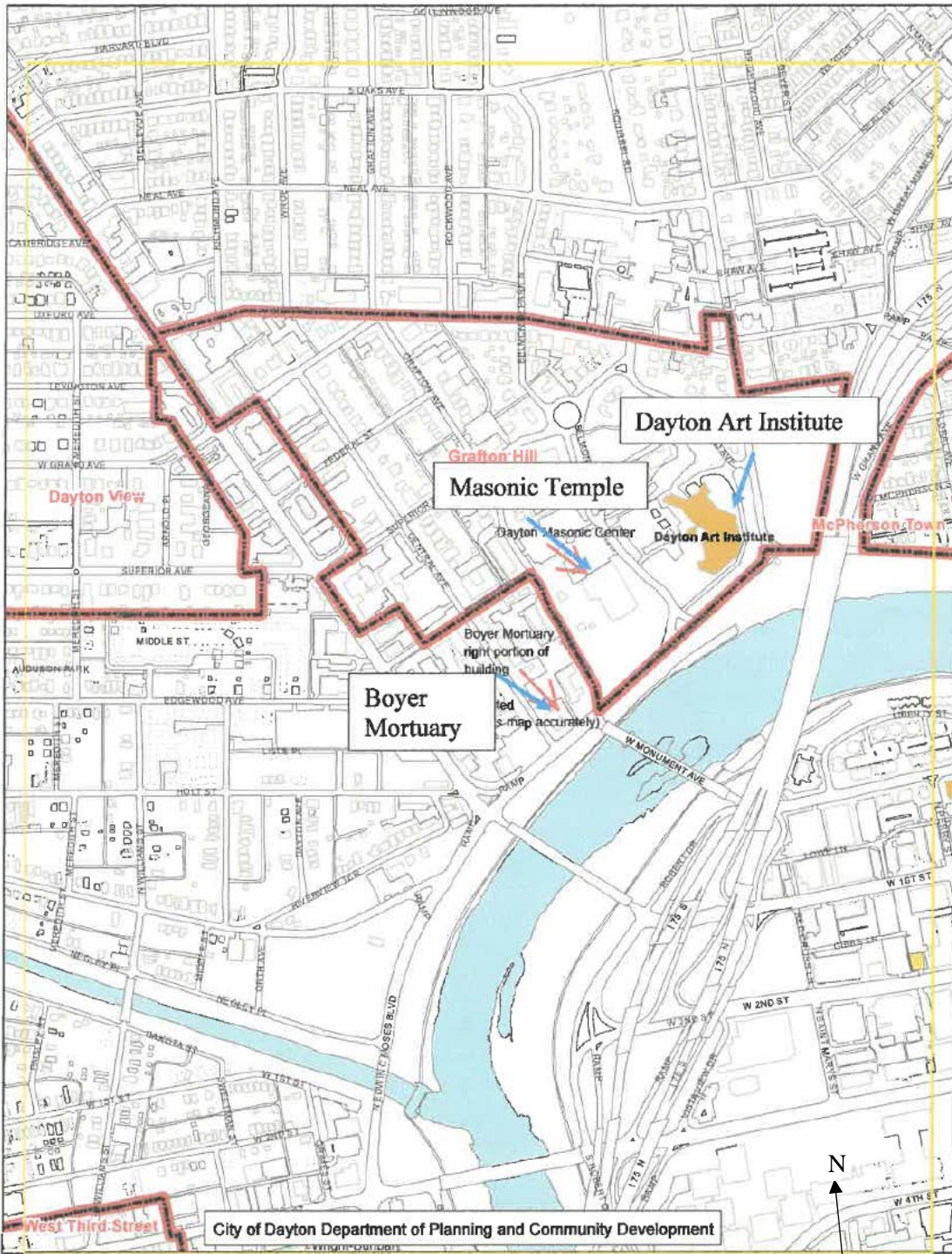
County and State

NA

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Map 2: Montgomery County Map showing the Boyer Mortuary and neighboring historic districts and institution buildings

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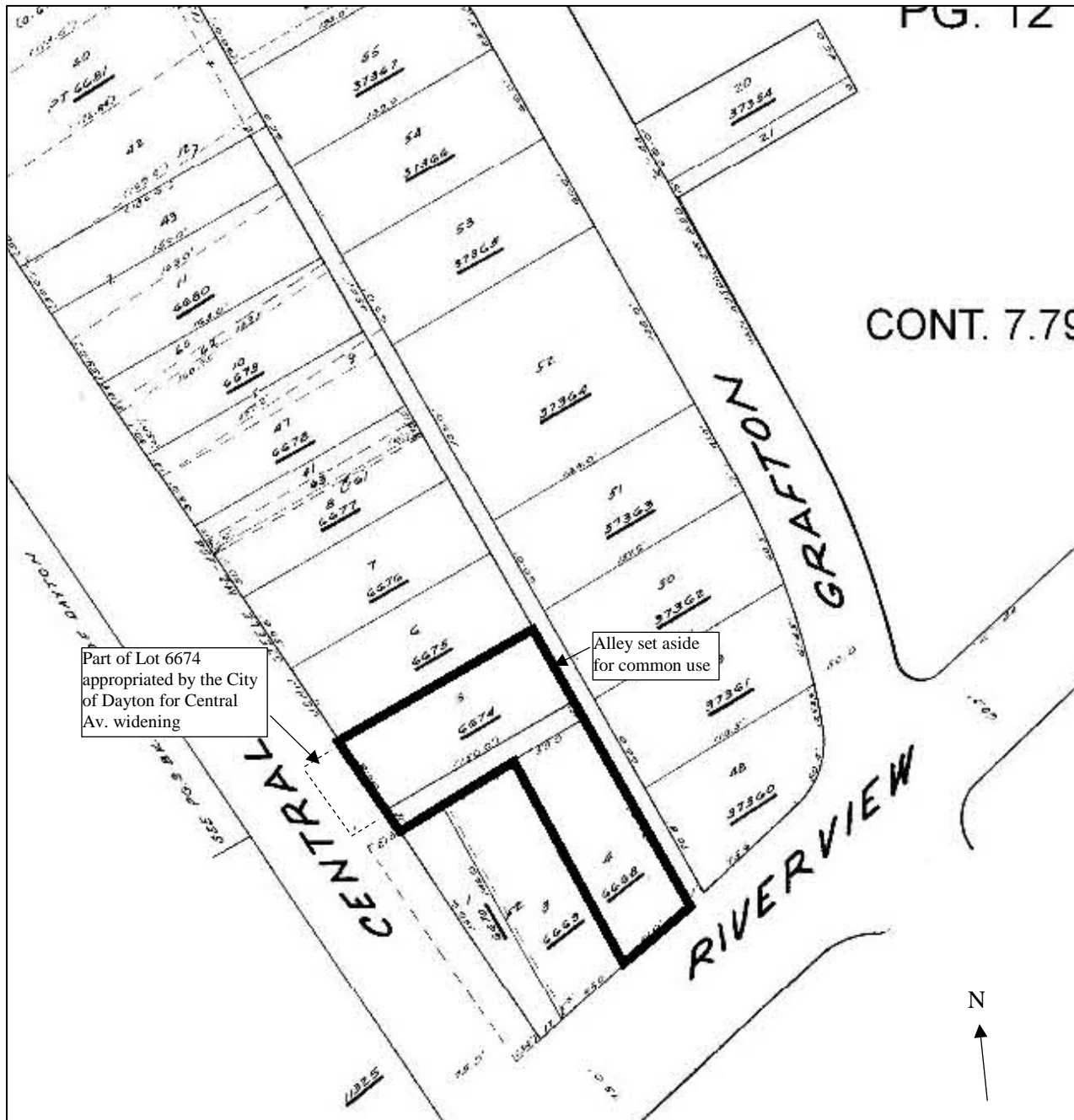
Name of Property
Montgomery County, Ohio

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Map 3: Montgomery County Map showing the historic (property) boundary of the Boyer Mortuary. Map does not indicate the exclusion of a part of Lot 6674 appropriated by the City of Dayton for widening of Central Avenue (approx. 21 ft wide), and also a strip 11 feet wide by parallel lines off of the east end (alley), kept open and used in common by adjoining owners.

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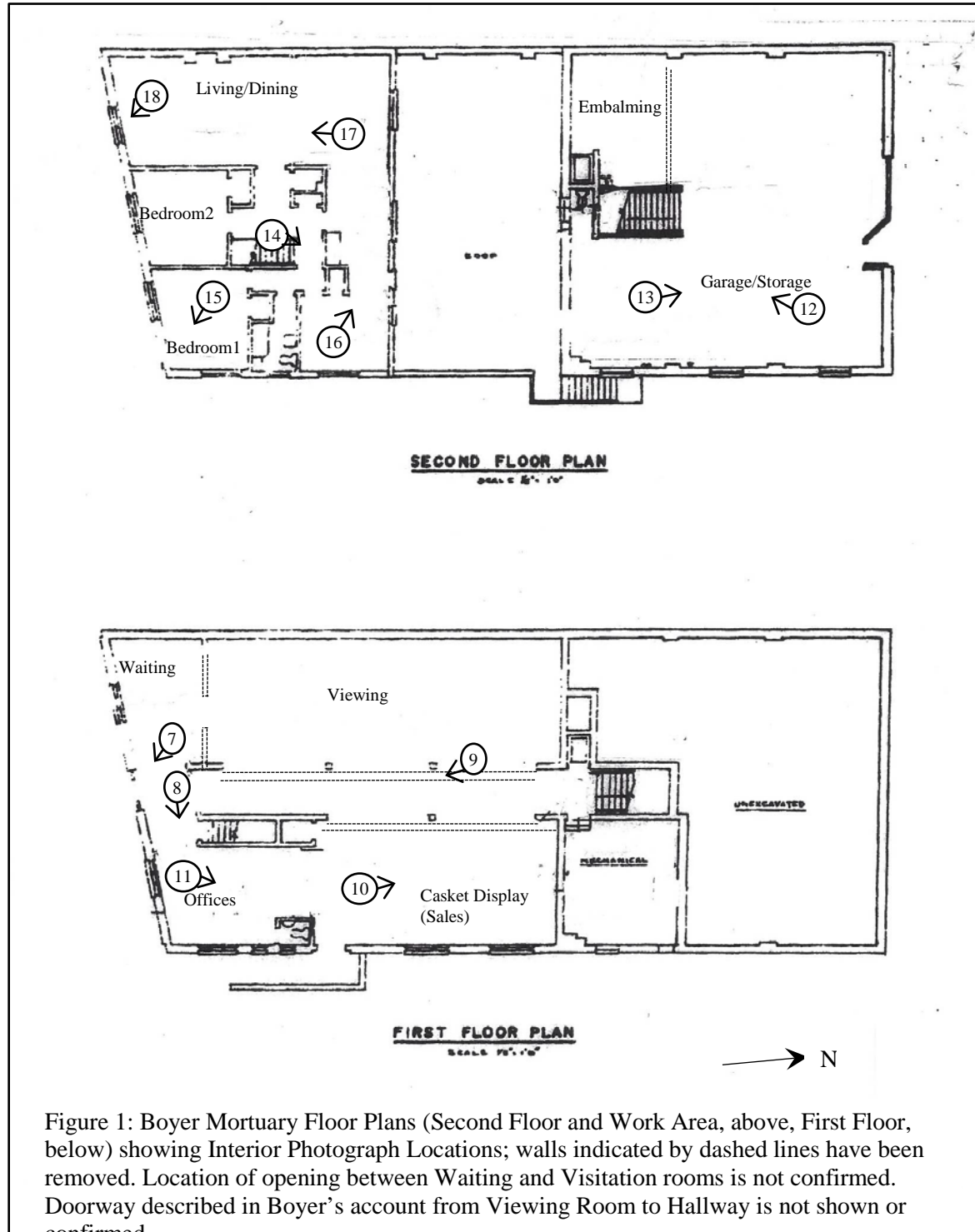


Figure 1: Boyer Mortuary Floor Plans (Second Floor and Work Area, above, First Floor, below) showing Interior Photograph Locations; walls indicated by dashed lines have been removed. Location of opening between Waiting and Visitation rooms is not confirmed. Doorway described in Boyer's account from Viewing Room to Hallway is not shown or confirmed.

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SERVICE RENDERED		
Casket	550 00	
Professional services		
Embalming	25 00	
Shaving—dressing		
Funeral car		
Funeral car—Service—To station	8 00	
Transfer remain from		
Apparel		
Slippers		
Shipping case		
Outer case for cemetery		
Chairs	2 25	
		610 25
CASH DISBURSED		
Limousines		
Funeral car—By		
Flower car		
Door emblem	6 00	
Wreath		
Flowers		
Underwear, hose, etc.		
Acknowledgment Cards		
Services of minister		
R. R. Transportation		
Newspaper notices—Herald—News—Journal		
Cemetery; Grave—Lining—Chapel		
Out-of-town service		
		616.50
Total		616.50

Date of birth	Aug. 10-1955	
Date of death	Mar. 5-1924	
Age: Years	69	Months 6
		Days 25
Cause of death	Angina Pectoris	
Attending physician	Dr. McGann	
Place of Death	20 W. Burton Ave.	
Place of funeral	Same	
Place of interment	Mar. 7-1924	
Date of interment		
Place of shipment	Parkersburg W. Va.	
Date of shipment	Mar. 7-1924	
Minister		
Grave		
Size		
Casket; No.	Noah	Factory Spr.
Description	Gun metal grey cloth	137 00
	"Armo" gun metal handles, nameplate	
	Mess. silk interior, gun metal sealer	
Handles No.	1/2 glass	
Lining set No.		
Dress		
Suit		
Total	616.25	Mar. 11-1924
Credit	316.25	
	300.00	2% Discot.
	12.21	
	287.79	Mar. 31-1924
	287.79	

Figure 2: Boyer Mortuary Funeral Record, 1924, itemized for services rendered, for a burial prior to the construction of the mortuary building in 1926 (Source: Wright State University Archives).

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Funeral Service Order and Agreement -	3500.00
Sales Tax -	52.50
Shipped in for Burial	
Funeral Car for Funeral, Transfer from Depot, Flower Car, Service Car, Use of Chapel, Police Escort -	
Cash Expenditures	
Limousines -	
Funeral Car -	
Flower Car -	
Flowers -	
Apparel, underwear, hose	
Acknowledgment cards 500, -Style B-	45.45
Services of minister - Working 1, -No	
R. R. Transportation -	
Border -	
Newspaper notices -	
Cemetery charges -	
Shipping case -	
Metal vault -	
Concrete vault -	
Professional pall bearers & car -	15.00
Slumber blanket -	
Cremation -	
Telegrams--Telephone -	
Miscellaneous expenses -	
Sales tax -	1.26
A&L, Inc. Jan. 30/48 Tr. -	
Feb. 2/48 Tr. -	
2 Tr. & FC. -	
2 Tr. & FC. -	
Total	3614.31

Services directed by:	
L.P.B., C.B.B., C.B.B., Jr.	

Casket No. Arthur	Factory Spr. Met.
Description 6/8X Bronze, Stat Bronze Full Length	
Sealer, Oval Glass No Holes for Top Catches,	
No Top Catches & No Lifts on Inner Top.	
Eggshell Veray Int. No Lock Puffing. Detachable	
Straps, Foot Pillow, 2590 3xl Hlds. State Bronze	
Factory No. 5864755	No. 204 Comfort
1369 Visitation	

Complete funeral -	\$ 3614.31
Discount -	\$ 70.00
Balance -	\$ 5544.31
Credit - Feb. 11, 1948 -	\$ 3544.31

Payments

James K. Owen, Nat'l Cash Register Co.
Flower Cards Delivered to him 2/3/48

Figure 3: Boyer Mortuary Funeral Record, 1948, itemized for services rendered, for a burial following the construction of the mortuary building (Source: Wright State University Archives).

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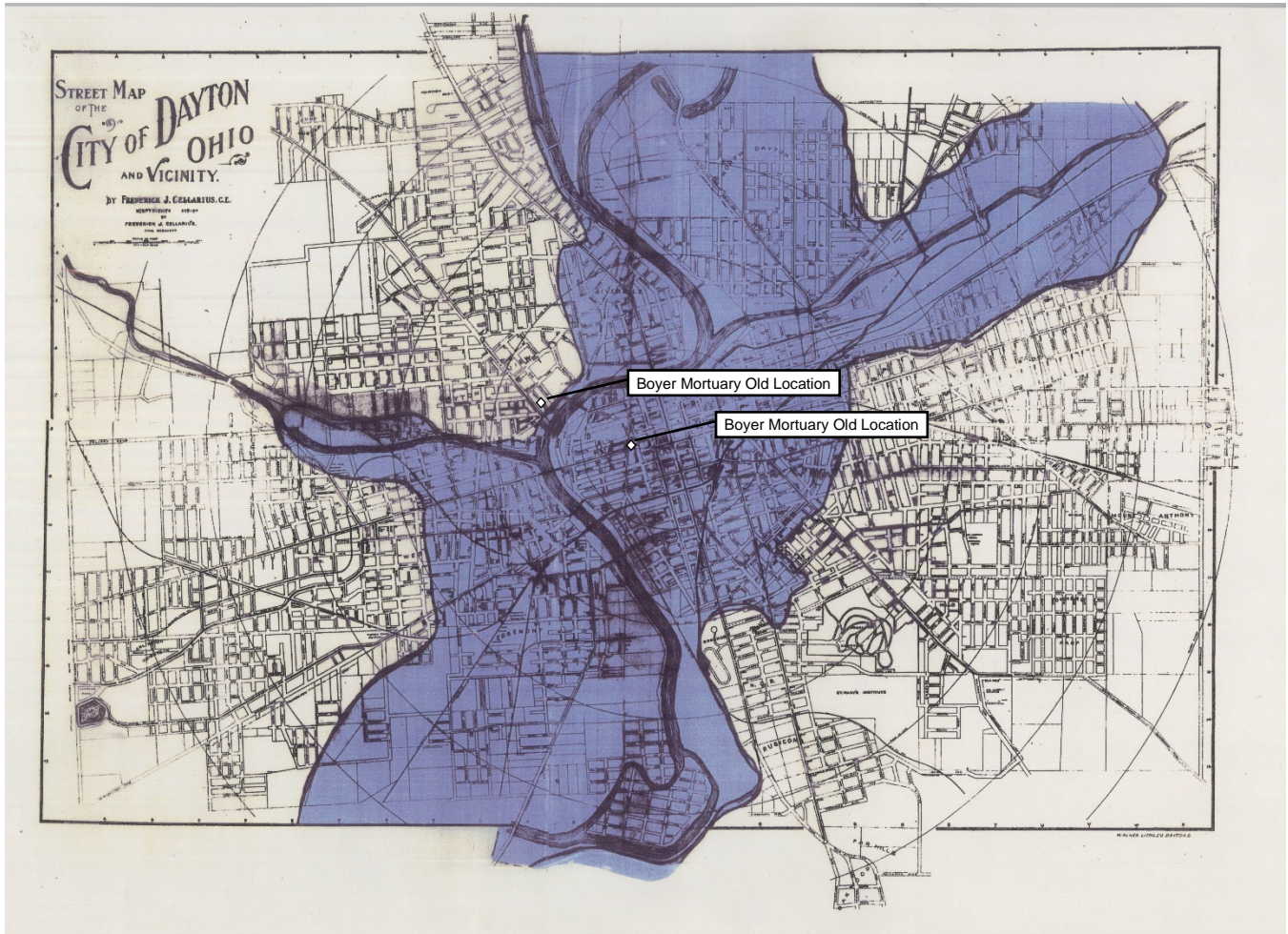


Figure 4: Map of Dayton, showing extent of the 1913 Flood, with the old and new locations of the Boyer indicated.

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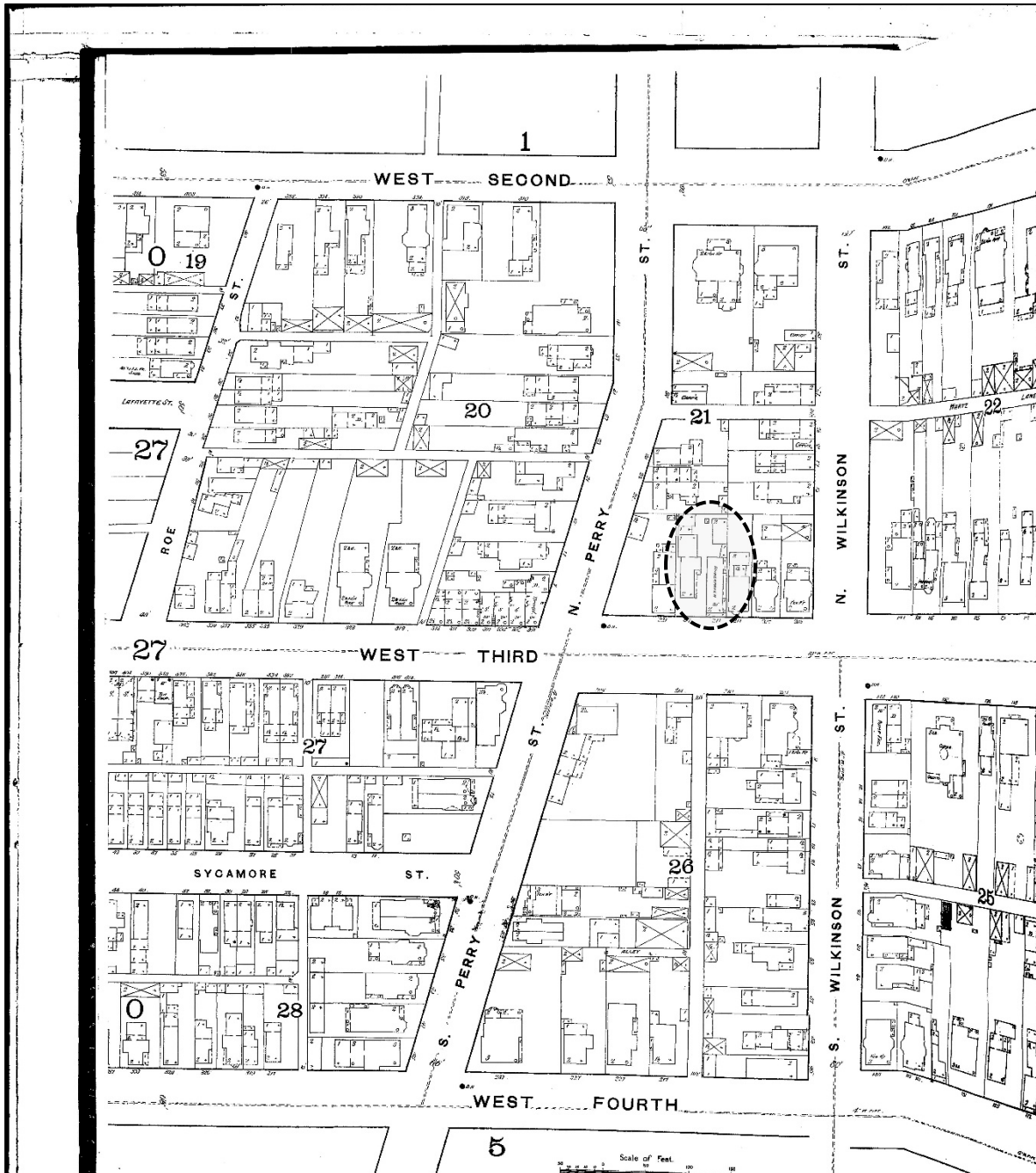


Figure 5: *Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map of Dayton, Ohio, 1898, showing the former location of O. P. Boyer's undertaker business at 211 W. Third Street.*

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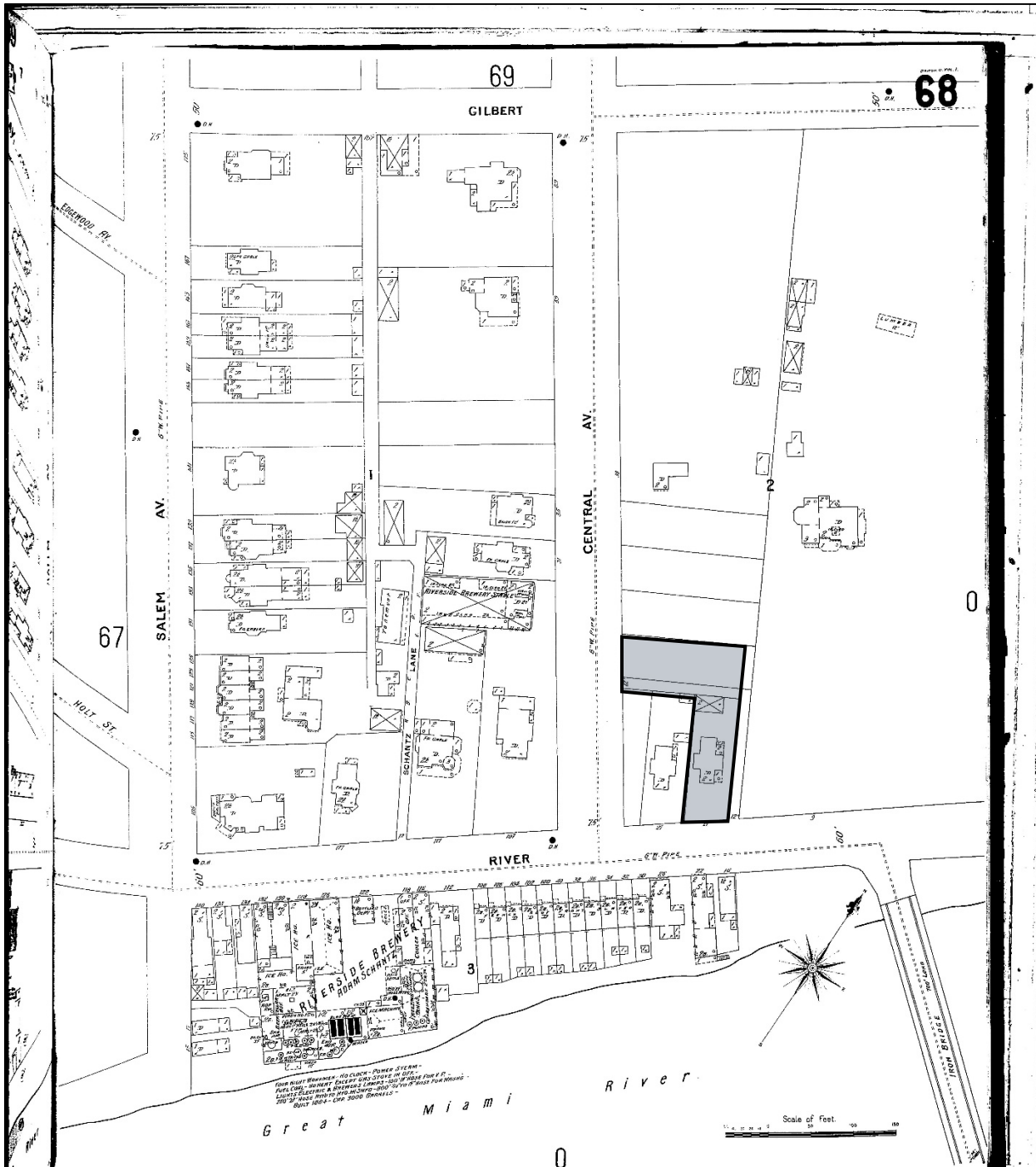


Figure 6: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map of Dayton, Ohio, 1918, showing the situation of at W. River Avenue prior to the construction of Boyer Mortuary. The Boyer property is highlighted.

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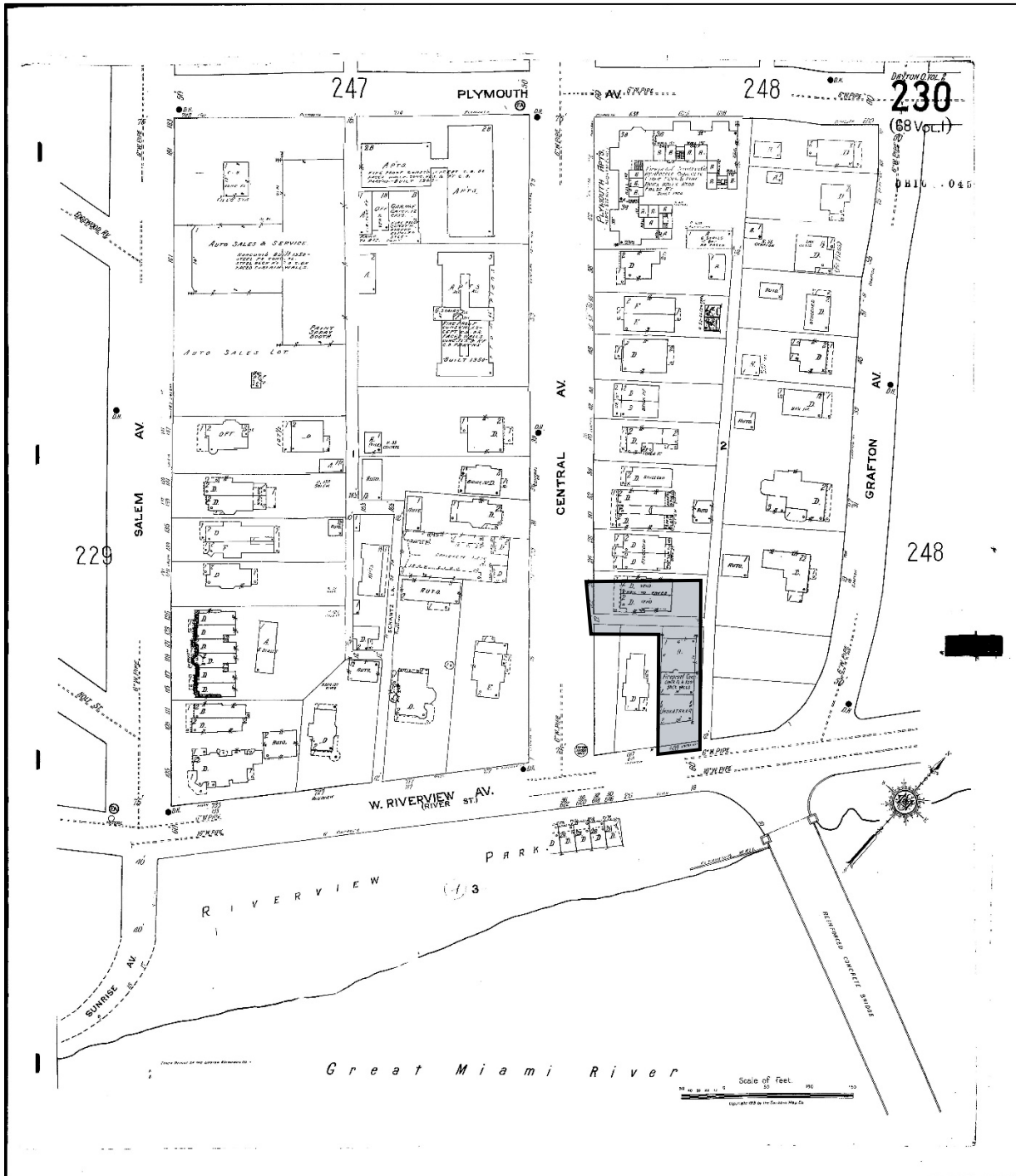


Figure 7: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map of Dayton, Ohio, 1932, showing the situation of at W. River Avenue during the mid-twentieth century. The Boyer property is highlighted.

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Figure 8: Boyer Mortuary Building (undated photograph) likely taken c. 1950s.