

1201 Madison Avenue: White Castle

1201 Madison Avenue was a modern White Castle hamburger restaurant with a porcelain enamel tiled exterior, large plate glass windows, and corner location with ample on-site parking (Figure 1 - Figure 4). White Castle is America's oldest fast food chain, the first restaurant opening in Wichita, KS in 1921.¹ Their buildings are a good example of "place-product-packaging," with their distinctive trademark crenelated castle-like profile.² In spite of variations in the design and appearance of White Castle's buildings over time, all are instantly recognizable as White Castle restaurants, going back to the very first example, which was constructed of stone-face concrete blocks. This particular example was probably constructed in the 1970s or early 1980s. Historic maps show that the property was vacant until a house appears there on the 1894 Sanborn map (Figure 6). The 1949 Sanborn shows the site as a vacant lot, and the 1954 Sanborn shows it with two small buildings and indicates it was used at that time as a used car sale lot (Figure 5).



Figure 1: 1201 Madison Ave. White Castle from North East.

¹ <http://www.whitecastle.com/company/fun-facts>

² See John A Jakle & Keith A Sculle, *The Gas Station in America* (Baltimore: the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 45-47 for a discussion of the concept of place-product-packaging.



Figure 2: 1201 Madison Ave. White Castle from North.



Figure 3: 1201 Madison Ave. White Castle from East.



Figure 4: Google Earth screen shot of the White Castle site.

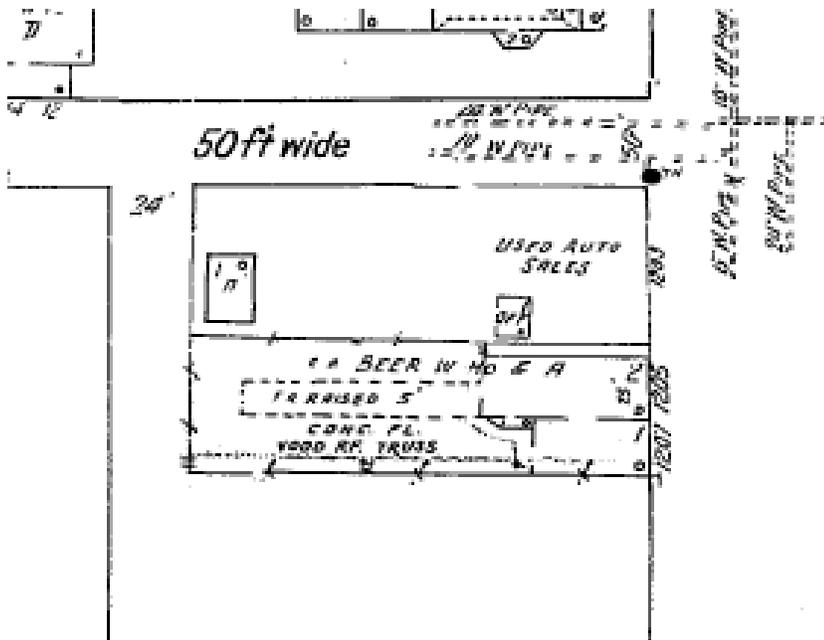


Figure 5: 1954 Sanborn map showing a used car lot at the site.

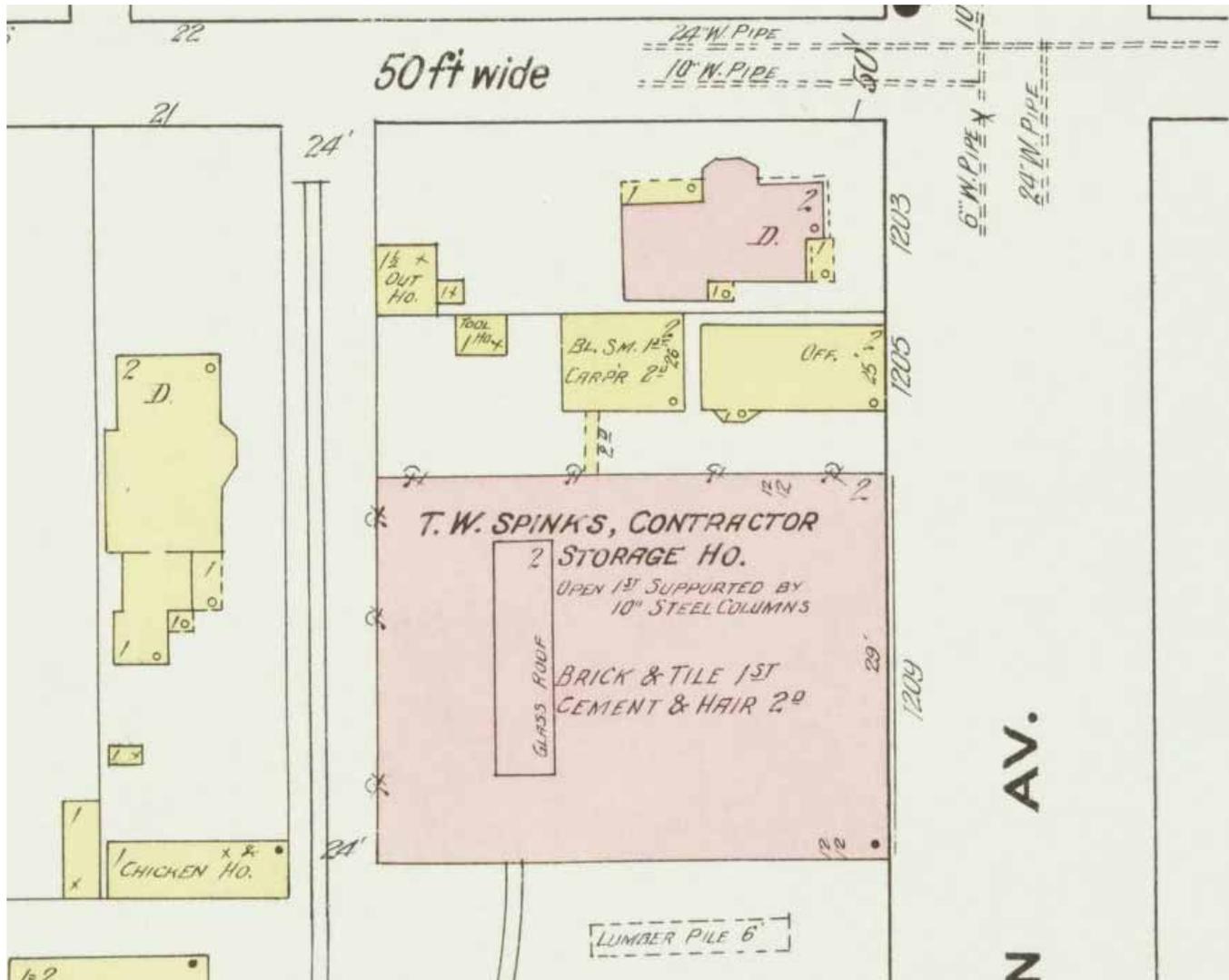


Figure 6: Detail of the 1909 Sanborn map showing the house at the White Castle Site, which first appears in the 1894 Sanborn, and other buildings in the space that White Castle's parking lot later occupied