

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Roberts, Johnson & Rand/International Shoe Company Complex

and or common

2. Location

street & number Northwest corner of Mississippi & Hickory Streets not for publication

city, town St. Louis vicinity of

state Missouri code 29 county City of St. Louis code 510

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name 1. James C. Kesting & Robert A. Ondr 2. Edward & Viola Kirtogian

street & number 1107 Mississippi Avenue 1119 Mississippi Avenue

city, town St. Louis, vicinity of state MO 63104

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Louis City Hall

street & number Market Street at Tucker Boulevard

city, town St. Louis state MO 63103

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title 1. Architectural Survey of Lafayette Square and Environs has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date December 1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc.  
721 Olive Street, Room 1113

city, town St. Louis state MO 63101

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2. Missouri State Historical Survey  
June 1984  
Historic Preservation Program  
Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
P. O. Box 176  
Jefferson City,

State

MO 65102

Item #10, Verbal Boundary Description cont.

to the property line between 2107-09 and 2115-19 Hickory; thence northwardly along said property line approximately 283 feet to the dividing line between City Blocks 2277W and 2276W; thence eastwardly along said line approximately 487 feet to the western line of Mississippi Avenue; thence southwardly along said line of Mississippi to point of origin.

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Constructed between 1903 and 1922, the Roberts, Johnson & Rand/International Shoe Company Complex is a group of five red brick industrial buildings (one to five stories high) located on the northwest corner of Mississippi Avenue and Hickory Street in south St. Louis.

Measuring approximately 60 by 350 feet, the five story main block of the earliest building (1903) extends forty-eight bays along Hickory Street (south elevation) and six bays on the Mississippi Avenue (east) elevation where it meets a projecting stair tower articulated with piers ending in round-arched windows (Photo #1-left and Site Plan). A similar stair tower terminates the west end of the south elevation (Photo #2). Rising from a stone foundation, a one story section (originally an office) fills the southeast corner of the building; fenestration consists of gauged brick, round-arched windows with stone sills. Brick corbeling and a course of stone form a cornice on the one story section and on the primary (east) elevation of the main block (Photo #1-left). Double-hung rectangular windows of the main block are glazed with four-over-four lights and are headed with brick soldier courses; sills are stone. Fourth and fifth stories are separated by a stone sill course. On the north and south elevations, overhanging eaves are supported by wood brackets. A drawing of the building published in 1909 (Photo #5) reveals that the exterior is virtually unaltered. Plank and beam construction is employed on the interior.

In 1915, a four story annex was joined to the west end of the 1903 factory building. Its approximate dimensions are 111 by 111 feet (See Site Plan). Windows on all elevations are rectangular and have brick sills and soldier course brick lintels. The south elevation is fourteen bays long with an entrance at the west end; all windows are presently boarded (Photo #2-left). Most of the windows on the fourteen bay west elevation are also walled-up; the few that are open are double hung with six-over-six lights. The sixteen bay north elevation also employs six-over-six-light windows and has two receiving docks. The interior features plank and beam construction.

Located at the northwest corner of the property, a two story red brick power plant (constructed in 1903) features a gabled roof with skylight (Photo #3 and Site Plan). Five bays with inset panels corbeled out to the frontal plane extend along the south elevation; rectangular windows with shallow reveals are now boarded below two-light transoms; corbeled brick forms a cornice. The south ends of the east and west elevations employ large oculi installed with windows with deteriorated wood sash; both walls are opened with a large entrance and two rectangular, transomed windows with stone sills. The north one story ends of these elevations are not articulated except for a double window with multiple lights on the west elevation. The north elevation features three multi-paned openings and a corbeled brick cornice. The interior of the two story south end of the building employs a concrete first floor and concrete roof on an exposed steel truss. The one story north end employs a concrete floor and roof.

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Measuring approximately 100 by 100 feet, a one story brick warehouse (1906) is set on a high stone foundation (Site Plan). Visible elevations are simply articulated with small, irregularly spaced windows featuring brick row-lock segmental arches. Loading docks are on the north and west elevations. The interior features wood post construction.

The five story factory at 1105 Mississippi (constructed in 1912) repeats the regular fenestration pattern of the 1903 factory building (Photo #4). Measuring approximately 50 by 225 feet, the building extends six bays on the east elevation and thirty-one bays on the north elevation. A cornice line is established by brick corbeling on the east, west and south elevations. Rectangular windows with brick sills and soldier course lintels are employed on all elevations. The interior features wood post construction.

Sited between the 1903 and 1912 buildings is a one story red brick building constructed in 1922 (Photo #1-center and Site Plan). It measures approximately 50 by 250 feet. Rising from a high cement foundation, the primary (east) facade is seven bays wide and is crowned with a brick parapet coped with white terra cotta. Rectangular windows (boarded) on the north, south and east elevations are headed with brick soldier courses and have brick sills. Three windows with six-over-six lights and an entrance articulate the west elevation. The interior features wood post construction.

No significant interior architectural features exist in any of the buildings. The exteriors of all buildings appear to be virtually unaltered except for boarded or walled-up windows.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below					
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)		

Specific dates 1903-1922

Builder Architect Theodore C. Link, Architect

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Roberts, Johnson & Rand/International Shoe Company Complex is eligible for listing in the National Register according to criteria A and C and is significant in the following areas: ARCHITECTURE: Constructed between 1903-1922, the shoe factory complex is a well-preserved example of early twentieth century industrial architecture featuring functionally efficient design and fine red brick masonry construction. The 1903-1912 portion of the complex was designed by prominent St. Louis architect Theodore C. Link. INDUSTRY: The buildings are associated with a significant period of growth of St. Louis' leading early twentieth century industry, boots and shoes. Between 1900 and 1922, St. Louis evolved from a distribution center for eastern-made shoes to the nation's foremost center of shoe manufacturing. Within this period, the Roberts, Johnson & Rand/International Shoe Company emerged as the largest single shoe manufacturing company in the country and an important contributor to St. Louis' economy.

At the time the Roberts, Johnson & Rand Shoe Company was incorporated in 1898, the St. Louis boot and shoe industry was already launched on a course of rapid expansion. New companies were being founded every year and older firms were turning from wholesale jobbing of eastern-made shoes to local manufacturing. All five incorporators of Roberts, Johnson & Rand had previous experience in the business and brought a sound background in shoe merchandising to the new undertaking. The brothers Oscar and Jackson Johnson and their cousin Edgar E. Rand had been partners in a prosperous Memphis wholesale firm from 1892 until 1898 when they moved to St. Louis to escape recurrent epidemics of yellow fever. John C. Roberts and his nephew Eugene E. Roberts both worked in sales for St. Louis' Hamilton-Brown Shoe Company and were well acquainted with local buyers and distribution. At first, Roberts, Johnson & Rand was involved only in the wholesale jobbing of shoes, but by the end of their first year, the company had branched into manufacturing under its trademark, Star Brand, after acquiring a shoe company in Hannibal, Missouri. In 1899, the company's first factory (razed) was constructed in St. Louis at Thirteenth and Mullanphy Streets and the upper two floors of their jobbing house (razed) at Tenth and Washington Avenue were used for manufacturing.<sup>1</sup>

In January, 1903, Roberts, Johnson & Rand announced plans to increase production fifty percent with construction of three new factories (estimated to cost \$500,000) on a large parcel at Mississippi and Hickory near Lafayette Square in south St. Louis. The parcel formerly had been the site of Schnaider's Garden, a fashionable nineteenth century summer resort, where St. Louisans were entertained with music and drama and clinked glasses of refreshment from Schnaider's Brewery adjoining the Garden to the north. The transformation of the site to industrial sounds of the "whirr of machinery" was auspiciously reported by the press as an indicator of the "progress

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of the new St. Louis" for it was contended that the shoe industry "contributed more than anything else toward making the city what it is in the manufacturing world." Civic pride was further aroused by the prospect that the new Roberts, Johnson & Rand facilities would help St. Louis gain a competitive edge in its rivalry with eastern manufacturers. As E. E. Rand explained: "The most important feature of this extension is the fact that we will manufacture everything we use. Heretofore, we have used certain supplies from the East. Now we are cutting off from the East entirely. Other Western manufacturers are adopting this plan, and the result will be to make St. Louis even a greater leader than it already is in the shoe markets of the world."<sup>2</sup> Although only one of the three projected factories was completed in 1903, it nonetheless embodied a progressive approach to manufacturing techniques and factory design which became the basis for the company's future growth and success.

Among the key factors responsible for establishing Roberts, Johnson & Rand (along with other St. Louis shoe companies) in the forefront of the industry was a highly efficient production system which maximized volume of output and lowered production costs through a division of labor and centralization of processes. To increase economy in machinery, space, and labor each Roberts, Johnson & Rand factory specialized in the manufacture of a single type of shoe or a particular production process.<sup>3</sup> Part of the Hickory Street factory, for example, produced women's fine shoes such as the Star, Quaker and Mayflower brands; another part specialized in the cutting and grading of sole leather for all of the other specialty shoe factories.<sup>4</sup>

The Hickory Street plant was also noteworthy as one of the earliest St. Louis factories specifically designed for shoe manufacturing purposes. Ample floor space and the high frequency of large windows which afforded good ventilation and light were features that indirectly increased production by creating favorable working conditions.<sup>5</sup> With such importance placed on design, it is not surprising that the company early obtained the services of leading St. Louis architect Theodore C. Link, F.A.I.A. (1850-1923). Born in Germany, Link received training in engineering in Heidelberg and studied architecture in London and the École Centrale in Paris. After emigrating to the United States in 1870, the architect worked for railroads in Texas before moving to St. Louis in 1874 to work in the Bridge and Building Department of the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad Co. After serving as Superintendent of Public Parks, Link left St. Louis to practice in New York, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia; returned to the city in 1883 where he opened an architectural office. Although he designed many distinguished churches, commercial and residential buildings, the architect's most celebrated St. Louis work is Union Station (1891-94) a National Historic Landmark. Unlike typical shoe factories of the period, the Hickory Street building demonstrated Link's ability to combine a functionally efficient plan with artistic attention to detail as illustrated in the

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arcaded one-story office section and four-story stair tower repeated at the west end of the building (Photos #1, 2, 5). Projecting eaves supported by wooden brackets on the east and west elevations also served both as functional and decorative elements. (In addition to factories, Link drew plans in 1909 for Roberts, Johnson & Rand's corporate offices on Washington Avenue in downtown St. Louis.)

Between 1900 and 1905, St. Louis leaped from the nation's fifth to the third largest shoe manufacturing city and its aggressive, rapidly growing industry was posing a serious challenge to New England's hegemony.<sup>6</sup> Already competing for top place in local production, Roberts, Johnson & Rand expanded in 1906 with a warehouse addition to the Hickory Street plant (see Site Plan). By 1909, boot and shoe production was the city's leading industry and its twenty-six companies employed the largest number of men and women.<sup>7</sup> Although by 1911, Roberts, Johnson & Rand was St. Louis' single largest manufacturer of shoes, the fierce rivalry among the city's major shoe firms led to an innovative merger. Following the national trend towards consolidation, Roberts, Johnson & Rand and the Peters Shoe Company of St. Louis combined in December 1911 to form the International Shoe Company. In an unusual type of merger, each kept its individual corporate identity and sales branches in order to promote a competitive spirit within the larger parent corporation. Four additional shoe companies were acquired by International Shoe in 1912 under the same arrangement.<sup>8</sup>

The announcement in August 1912 of plans for a \$50,000 five-story heel factory to be constructed by the Roberts, Johnson & Rand Branch of the International Shoe Company was given sizable notice by the St. Louis press. The new building was designed by Theodore Link and, like the earlier structures on the site, it was constructed by the James Black Masonry & Contracting Company, a prominent St. Louis builder. The heel plant introduced advances in production specialization and efficiency in keeping with the boast that the company was the "most economical shoe manufacturing organization in the world." Adjoining the 1903 sole leather plant, the new factory produced heels from the small pieces of raw material left over from the cutting of soles next door.<sup>9</sup> As the single supplier of heels to all other International Shoe factories, the plant produced a wide variety of heel sizes and grades needed for particular lines of shoes. In 1914, the sole and heel factories were reported the largest of their kind in the world.<sup>10</sup> The increase in business soon required construction in 1915 of a four-story annex to the Hickory Street sole factory (Photo #2, left) and in 1922, a one-story addition to the heel factory (Photo #1, center and Site Plan).

By the mid-1920s, International Shoe was recognized as the country's largest manufacturer of shoes with forty-three specialty shoe factories and thirty-two subsidiary plants located in states scattered from Missouri to New England. At this time, the Hickory and Mississippi Street complex was one of International's three

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principal plants producing "bottom stock" for the assembly of shoes in all forty-three specialty factories. Considered the most important part of a shoe, bottom stock consisted of the sole, counter, box toe, heel, welting and rands.<sup>11</sup>

The Hickory Street plant continued to produce bottom stock for the next three or four decades although parts of the complex were eventually turned over to receiving, shipping and storage. In 1968, the buildings were transferred to new owners who partially utilized the space for warehousing. The shoe complex's sound structural system, fine craftsmanship, quality of space and convenient access to the city center make it a prime candidate for plans currently under discussion to adaptively re-use the facility as housing.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Maxine Faye Fendelman, "Saint Louis Shoe Manufacturing." (M.A. thesis, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, 1947), pp. 36-41.

<sup>2</sup>St. Louis Republican. 17 January 1903.

<sup>3</sup>Herbert J. Vogt, "Boot and Shoe Industry of St. Louis." (M.A. thesis, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, 1929), pp. 76-78.

<sup>4</sup>The Shoe and Leather Gazette. 1 September 1909.

<sup>5</sup>Vogt, p. 79.

<sup>6</sup>David Rodnick, "The Economic Development of St. Louis and the Surrounding Area: 1764-1914." St. Louis, 1944. Missouri Historical Society Collections (Mimeographed.)

<sup>7</sup> The Drygoodsman and General Merchant. 4 December 1909.

<sup>8</sup>Fendelman, pp. 46-47.

<sup>9</sup>St. Louis Globe Democrat. 15 August 1912.

<sup>10</sup>Reedy's Mirror. 18 December 1914.

<sup>11</sup>International Shoe Company, Shoe Tips. (St. Louis: International Shoe Company, 1926), pp. 32-33.



## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Attached

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property Approximately 3 acres

Quadrangle name Cahokia, IL/MO

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

1	5	7	4	2	6	4	0	4	2	7	8	0	2	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

C 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

D 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

E 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

F 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

G 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

H 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The Roberts, Johnson & Rand/International Shoe Company Complex occupies all of City Block 2277E and .745 acres of City Block 2277W. The boundaries are as follows: Beginning at the northwest corner of Mississippi Avenue and Hickory Street, continue westwardly 478 feet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

## 11. Form Prepared By © 1984, Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc.

1.  
name/title Mary M. Stiritz, Research Associate

organization Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc. date June 1984

street & number 721 Olive Street, Room 1113 telephone (314) 421-6474

city or town St. Louis, state MO 63101

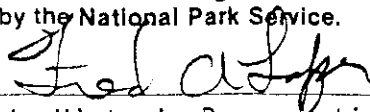
## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



Fred A. Lafser, Director and State Historic Preservation Officer, Department of Natural Resources

date 7/10/84

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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The Drygoodsman and General Merchant, 20 November 1909, 4 December 1909.

Fendelman, Maxine Faye, "Saint Louis Shoe Manufacturing," M.A. thesis,  
Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, 1947.

International Shoe Company, Shoe Tips. St. Louis: International Shoe Company,  
1926.

Reedy's Mirror, 18 December 1914.

Rodnick, David, "The Economic Development of St. Louis and the Surrounding Area:  
1764-1914." St. Louis, 1944. Missouri Historical Society Collections  
(Mimeographed.)

St. Louis Globe Democrat, 15 August 1912.

St. Louis Republican, 17 January 1914

Shoe and Leather Gazette, I September 1909.

Vogt, Herbert J., "Boot and Shoe Industry of St. Louis." M.A. thesis,  
Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, 1929.

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2. Jim Denny, Chief, Survey & Registration  
and State Contact Person  
Department of Natural Resources  
1915 Southridge Drive  
Jefferson City

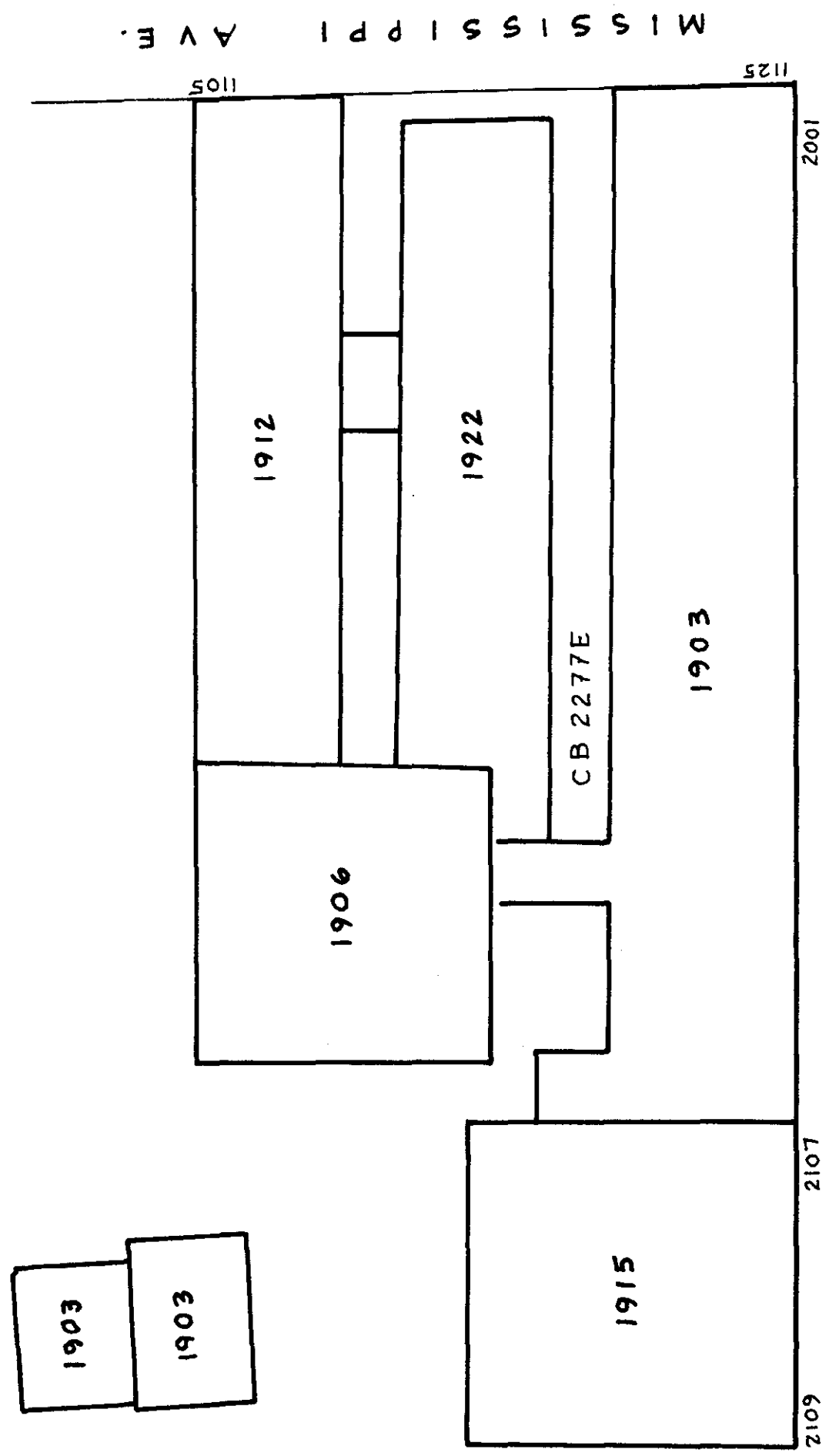
June 1984  
(314) 751-4096  
Missouri 65101

ROBERTS, JOHNSON & RAND/INTER-  
NATIONAL SHOE CO. COMPLEX  
Mississippi & Hickory Avenues  
St. Louis, Missouri

Site Plan

June 1984

SITE PLAN: ROBERTS, JOHNSON & RAND/  
 INTERNATIONAL SHOE CO. COMPLEX  
 ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI



HICKORY

MISSISSIPPI AVE.

ZK

1" = 50'

STATE OF MISSOURI  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY AND WATER RESOURCES

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
DEPARTMENT OF REGISTRATION AND  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY DIVISION

1:24,000 12/30/74 INTERSTATE 744 2961 II NW (GRANITE CITY) 746 10'



Roberts, Johnson & Rand/  
International Shoe Co. Com-  
plex

Hickory and Mississippi  
streets  
St. Louis, MO

UTM Reference Points:  
15/742640/4278020

Cahokia, Ill.-MO Quadrangle  
Scale, 1:24,000

ROBERTS, JOHNSON & RAND/INTER-  
NATIONAL SHOE CO. COMPLEX  
Mississippi & Hickory Avenues  
St. Louis, Missouri

#1 of 5: South (Hickory) & East  
(Mississippi) elevations.

Photographer: Mary M. Stirtz

Date: May 1984

Negative: Landmarks Association  
of St. Louis, Inc.

Camera facing northwest.





ROBERTS, JOHNSON & RAND/INTER-  
NATIONAL SHOE CO. COMPLEX  
Mississippi & Hickory Avenues  
St. Louis, Missouri

#2 of 5: West end of South  
(Hickory) elevation.

Photographer: Mary M. Stirtz  
Date: May 1984  
Negative: Landmarks Association  
of St. Louis, Inc.

Camera facing northwest.



ROBERTS, JOHNSON & RAND/INTER-  
NATIONAL SHOE CO. COMPLEX  
Mississippi & Hickory Avenues  
St. Louis, Missouri

#3 of 5: South & East elevations  
of power plant.

Photographer: Mary M. Stiritz  
Date: May 1984  
Negative: Landmarks Association  
of St. Louis, Inc.

Camera facing northwest.



ROBERTS, JOHNSON & RAND/INTER-  
NATIONAL SHOE CO. COMPLEX  
Mississippi & Hickory Avenues  
St. Louis, Missouri

#4 of 5: East and North eleva-  
tions of 1105 Mississippi

Photographer: Mary M. Stiritz

Date: May 1984

Negative: Landmarks Association  
of St. Louis, Inc.

Camera facing southwest.



ROBERTS, JOHNSON & RAND/INTER-  
NATIONAL SHOE CO. COMPLEX  
Mississippi & Hickory Avenues  
St. Louis, Missouri

#5 of 5: Drawing of 1125 Missis-  
sippi, circa 1909.

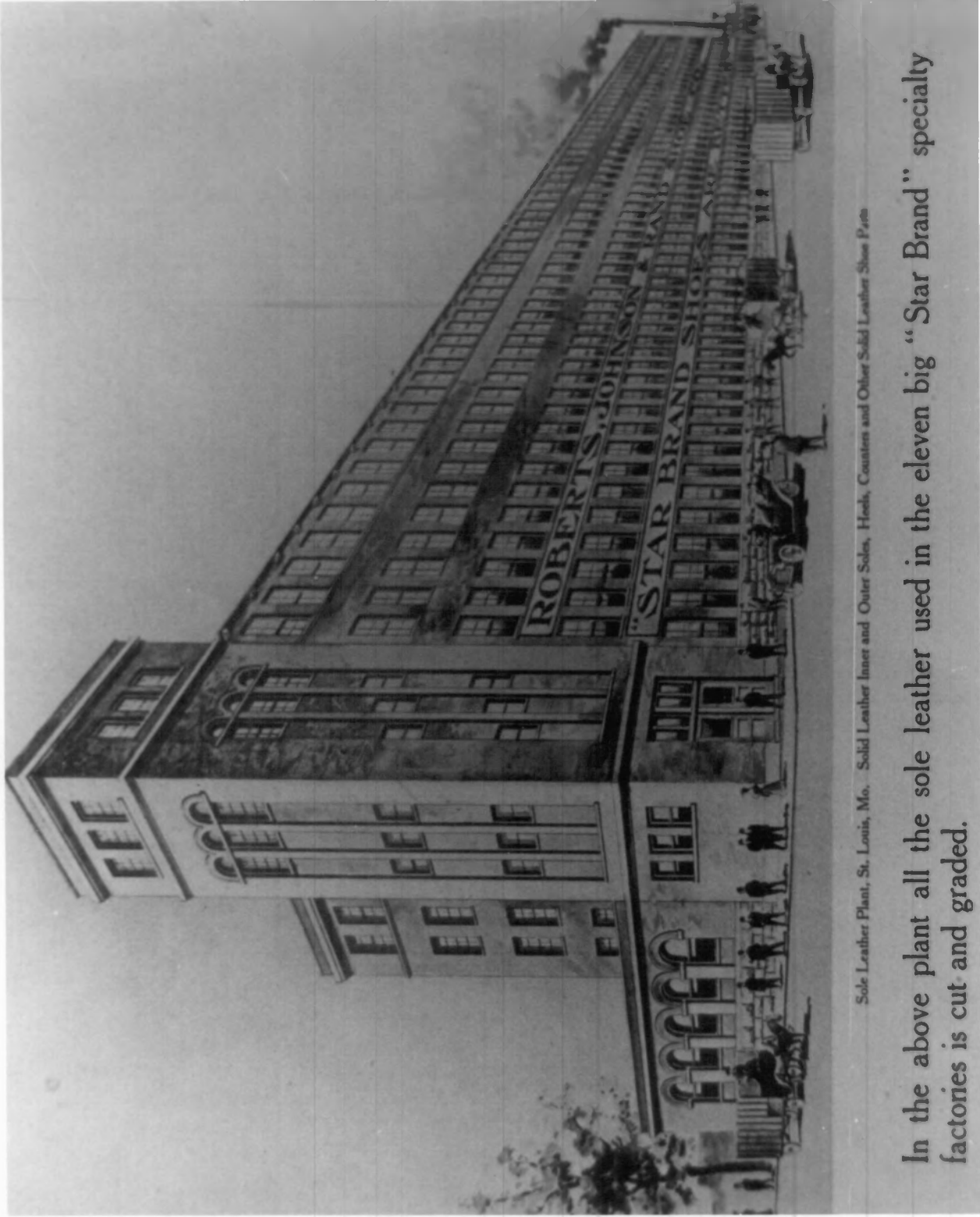
Photocopy from Shoe & Leather Ga-  
zette, 1909

Photocopy by Mary M. Stiritz

Date: May 1984

Negative: Landmarks Association  
of St. Louis, Inc.

North & east elevations.



Sole Leather Plant, St. Louis, Mo. Solid Leather Inner and Outer Soles, Heels, Counters and Other Solid Leather Shoe Parts

In the above plant all the sole leather used in the eleven big "Star Brand" specialty factories is cut and graded.