

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Century/Syndicate Trust Building

other names/site number Century and Century Annex; Scruggs, Vandervoort & Barney

2. Location

street & number full block bounded by Locust, Ninth, Tenth, and Olive streets [n/a] not for publication

city or town St. Louis [Independent City] [n/a] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county St. Louis [Ind. City] code 510 zip code 63101

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [])

Claire F. Blackwell 2 August 02
Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [])

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet [].
- determined eligible for the
National Register
See continuation sheet [].
- determined not eligible for the
National Register.
- removed from the
National Register
- other, explain
See continuation sheet [].

Signature of the Keeper

Date

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
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(See continuation sheet for additional comments [])

Claire F. Blackwell 2 August 2002
Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [])

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date
[] entered in the National Register See continuation sheet [].	_____	_____
[] determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet [].	_____	_____
[] determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
[] removed from the National Register	_____	_____
[] other, explain See continuation sheet [].	_____	_____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	2	0 building
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	0	0 sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	0 structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0 objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	2	0 total

Name of related multiple property listing.

(n/a)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register. 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

COMMERCE: business
COMMERCE: department store
CULTURE: theater

Current Functions

VACANT
COMMERCE: specialty store

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Beaux Arts

see continuation sheet [].

Materials

foundation Stone: marble
walls Brick
Stone: marble
roof Unknown
other Terra Cotta

see continuation sheet [].

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet [x]

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

Property is:

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location

C a birthplace or grave

D a cemetery

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

ARCHITECTURE

Periods of Significance

1896-1912

Significant Dates

1896

1906

1912

Significant Person(s)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Raeder, Coffin & Crocker

Roach, Harry

Hill-O'Meara Construction Company

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other:

Name of repository _____

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form
Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.4 acres

UTM References

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
<u>15</u>	<u>744 260</u>	<u>4279 380</u>			
C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lynn Josse
organization Landmarks Association of St. Louis date February 10, 2002
street & number 917 Locust Street, 7th floor telephone (314) 421-6474
city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63101

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name LCRA
street & number 1015 Locust Street Suite 1200 telephone (314) 622-3400
city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63101

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Summary

The Century/Syndicate Trust Building occupies the full city block bounded by Olive Street on the south, 9th Street on the east, Locust Street on the north, and 10th Street on the west in downtown St. Louis, Missouri. Constructed in two sections, with some later additions, the building is one of only a few historic full-block office complexes in the downtown core. The Century Building, constructed in 1896, is ten stories high. Its pattern of trabeated sections at the base, third story, and eighth story alternates with windows in multi-story arches at the fourth through seventh and again at the crowning ninth and tenth floors. The Century Annex or Syndicate Trust Building is 16 stories high and was constructed in 1906. Originally it connected to the Century at the first and second stories. Its organization is similar to the original Century: the first three stories are set off from an arcaded shaft eleven stories high, which is topped with a two-story crown. The Century Building has a marble exterior (now painted); the Syndicate Trust uses brick and terra cotta. In 1912, the E-shaped upper floors of the Century were filled in to the height of at least six stories to allow for the expansion of the department store within the Syndicate Trust. The exterior of the complex retains integrity. First floor storefronts have been altered and the Century is coated with gray paint, but most other original elements are intact (including cornices and windows, both relative rarities for downtown buildings). The complex is currently vacant except for a Walgreen's drug store located in the southeast storefront. Access to the interior of the complex is not available. Eyewitness reports indicate that after years of remodeling, there are few historic features left inside. Nonetheless, the building's exterior conveys its historic significance with almost perfect clarity.

Site

The Century/Syndicate Trust building is located in the center of the downtown core of St. Louis, Missouri. It occupies a full city block. To the east, the National Historic Landmark Old Post Office (11/22/1968), constructed 1872 - 1884, occupies an entire city block. Immediately south, an intact wall of buildings is anchored by the Frisco Building (NR 3/29/1983) at the east end and the Bell Telephone of Missouri Building (NR 8/5/1999) at the west. On the block to the west, a surface parking lot is south of the alley and the five-story Delany Building (NR pending) is at the north end. Across the street to the north are a number of smaller-scale buildings uninterrupted by gaps or parking lots. Of particular note are the narrow 12-story Scruggs Warehouse (NR 2/21/1985) and Isaac Taylor's stately Board of Education Building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Sidewalks surround the building on all four sides. A plywood fence currently is built at the sidewalk line.

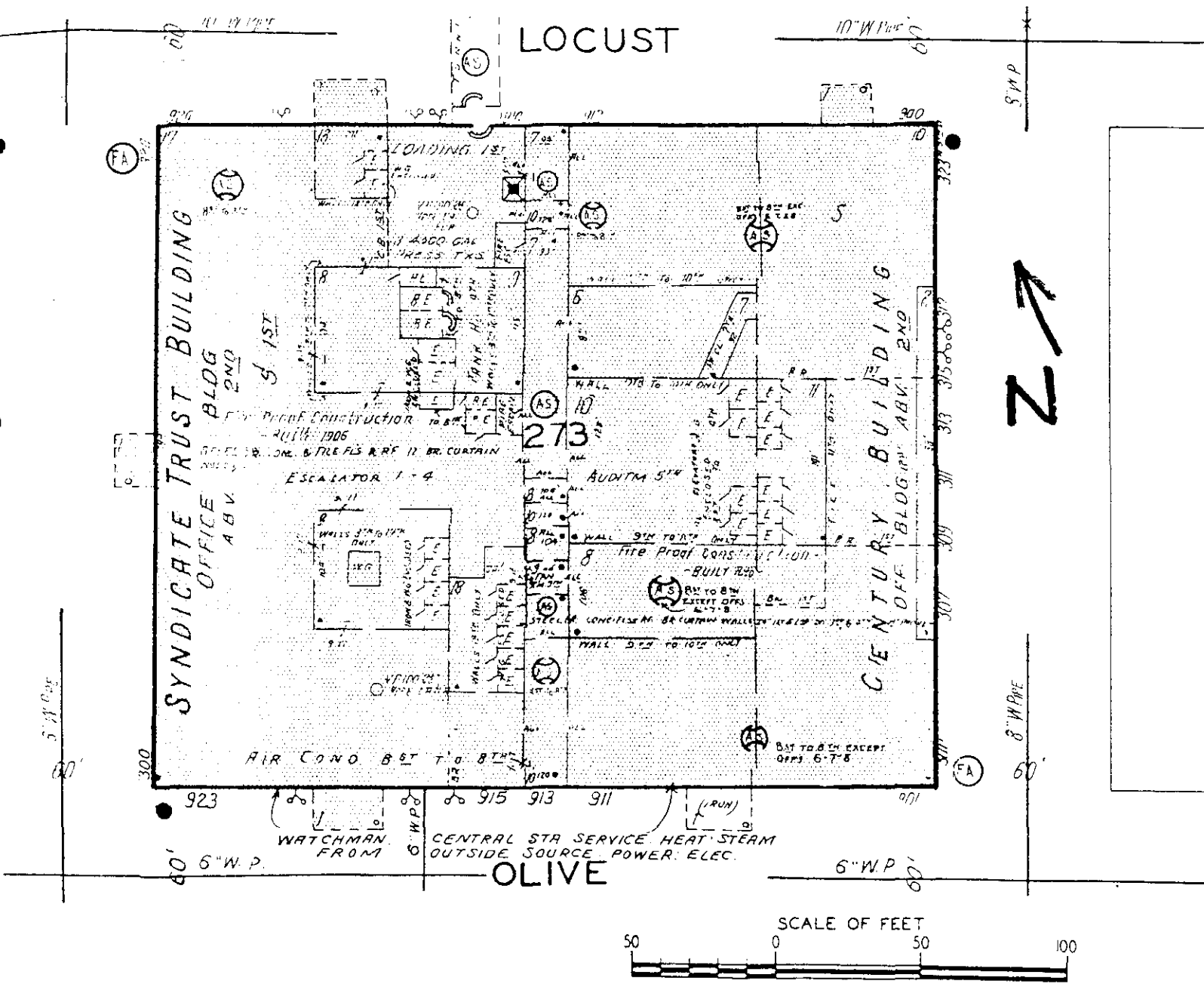


Figure 1: From Sanborn Map Company, 1968

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 3

Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Century block

Raeder, Coffin & Crocker's 1896 design for the Century Building rides the neoclassical wave that was introduced to St. Louis around 1890. The entire exterior is Georgia marble.

The east elevation is 14 bays wide. Three bays at either end of the façade push forward from the eight center bays. At the two-story base, a formal entrance at the east elevation is the focal point. The first two stories at this side project from the wall above them, flush with the projecting outer bays. The two-story arch (two bays wide, now filled in with glass windows) defining the entrance is flanked by fluted Corinthian order pilasters. Between these and a second set of pilasters to either side are pedimented secondary entrances at the first floor and rectangular niches at the second. At the roofline of the second story center projection are limestone blocks which appear to have once anchored a balustrade.

Three-bay projecting volumes at either side of the façade (bays 1-3 and 12-14) are defined by heavy piers at each end. An alteration of unknown 20th century date has sheared off the once deeply rusticated block faces, leaving a slightly rough-faced surface.

The third story is set apart from those above and below it with projecting courses of dentils and heavy molding. One-over-one wood frame sash windows, two per bay, are separated by pilasters at the outer volumes.

Windows on floors four through seven are paired 1/1 sash windows. Most are set in vertical arcades terminating in arches at the seventh story. The two bays at either end of the center volume (bays 4-5 and 10-11) are rectangular pairs. At floors four through six they are connected vertically within a three-story frame; at the seventh story they are set into the wall surface.

Quatrefoil flowers in roundels are set within the spandrel areas between the seventh-story arch tops at the three outer bays. The eighth story, separated from the seventh by a thick stone cyma recta molding, is organized with one-over-one sash windows and is similar to the third story (although not as tall). A formal cornice sets off the top two stories. The composition appears heavier here, as the piers which define the projecting sections are enhanced with rectangular windows at the ninth floor and blind ovals at the tenth. Two-story Corinthian columns are set between the arcades at the three outer bays; pilasters are

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 4

Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

between bays at the center volume. At the projecting outer bays, the top story windows are round-arched; paired rectangular windows are used at the other bays. A stone cornice projects, with a parapet wall above it.

The north and south elevations are organized in a similar manner. These are narrower elevations (only nine bays wide), and the projecting bays at either end of the elevation project only very slightly. The fenestration pattern is similar, but scaled down: the projecting outer bay volumes are only two bays wide; the center section is five bays wide, with narrow bays of single one-over-one windows (rather than pairs) to either side of the three bays of arcades.

Syndicate Trust (Century Annex) block

The blond brick and terra cotta Syndicate Trust Building, although more ornamented, is a simpler composition with a straightforward base, shaft and crown without the rhythm changes and projections of the Century. The north and south elevations are ten bays wide; the west elevation is 18 bays.

The base has been altered. The first floor is largely boarded. The second floor windows have been replaced with a row of fixed-pane windows which cover any separation that may have existed between bays. Between the first and second stories is a course of decorative panels, overscaled versions of the wreath panels in the same position on the original side of the building (the Century).

The upper stories employ Chicago-style windows (narrow one-over-ones to either side of a wide fixed pane). At the third floor, the windows are set within individual terra cotta frames on bracketed sills. This story is set off from the floors above by a projecting course supported on stylized brackets and overscaled dentils.

The fourth through 14th floors form the shaft of the building. The arcaded example of the Century is followed, but here the vertical window strips are paired to establish rhythm. Each vertical unit is defined by its own 11-story terra cotta molding; the pairs are created by varying the space between the arcades. Within pairs, only a small space of brick shows; between pairs, enough brick is exposed to form the impression of a pier rising up the side of the building. The 14th story windows are round-arched units. Recessed brick spandrel panels bear terra cotta shields.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 5

Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

A wide dentil course sets off the top two stories. The fifteenth story windows are set back deep in terra cotta surrounds; the piers between window pairs are wide, banded brick and terra cotta topped with a triglyph design.

The sixteenth floor recedes from this display, setting its windows simply on top of the frames of the lower story. An attic story offers nine terra cotta circles for every two bays (some blind, some open). The terra cotta cornice projects strongly, supported on foliated modillions.

Connection

The first three stories of the connector between the two units of the building match the Syndicate Trust side of the building. A fourth story is similar to the Syndicate Trust; above this, additional stories are plain brick.

Interior

Eyewitnesses report that modern office use and subsequent demolition by the current owner has eradicated most historic features from the interior of the building. Access is currently not possible.

Integrity

The exterior of the building possesses an unusually high level of integrity compared to most other downtown office buildings. Above the second story, in fact, most historic features are intact and convey the historic significance of the style, massing and ornamentation of the building. The Century side of the building is painted, but this is a reversible change.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 6

Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Summary

The Century/Syndicate Trust Building is locally significant under National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The Century Building was constructed in 1896; its annex, known as the Syndicate Trust Building soon after its construction, followed in 1906. The building is an important anchor in one of the few sections of downtown St. Louis that retains good density of historic high-rises. Read as a unit, the Century/Syndicate Trust offers an extraordinary lesson on two extremes of the Classical/Renaissance revival styles as applied to tall office buildings: the Century uses a complex organizational scheme with fairly academic ornament, while the Syndicate Trust shows a simpler, vertically-oriented organization bedecked with a wide range of exuberant decorative motifs creatively mixed from the classical vocabulary. The "Beaux Arts" style classification is chosen to reflect the complex's roots in both classical and renaissance tradition and the symmetry of the facades. Additionally, the Century Building side is one of the few known examples of a commercial building of this scale clad entirely in Georgia marble. In c.1906 the building was promoted as "the only marble office building in the West."¹ Both halves of the building have good exterior integrity, although the Century is painted and the significance of its marble exterior is therefore obscured. There are alterations at the storefronts and some windows. Interior integrity is uncertain but is believed to be poor; the Criterion C argument applies to the exterior of the buildings. It is enhanced by the relative rarity of intact, surviving examples of the style in downtown St. Louis. The period of significance, 1896 – 1912, represents the time span during which the complex was constructed. 1912 is the date that the connection between the Century and Syndicate Trust was enlarged to connect the buildings more completely.

Neighborhood Background

Downtown St. Louis grew up along the riverfront and was reluctant to leave it. Even into the 1860s, the commercial area was largely east of Fifth Street. The Washington, D.C. decision to build a new Federal building on Olive Street between 8th and 9th Streets in St. Louis provoked derision and outrage among the local populace. Business interests considered the location too far west. Opposition was equally firm from neighborhood residents who correctly viewed the new building as a formidable encroachment in their snug community. But in spite of the clamor, condemnation proceedings were instituted on June 4, 1872. The total project, plagued with lawsuits and quicksand, ran over six million dollars. Not completed and fully occupied until March of 1884, the impregnable structure housed the Post Office, Custom House, Court House

¹ "Century Block" brochure (c. 1906, np), collection of Landmarks Association of St. Louis.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 6

Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Summary

The Century/Syndicate Trust Building is locally significant under National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The Century Building was constructed in 1896; its annex, known as the Syndicate Trust Building soon after its construction, followed in 1906. The building is an important anchor in one of the few sections of downtown St. Louis that retains good density of historic high-rises. Read as a unit, the Century/Syndicate Trust offers an extraordinary lesson on two extremes of the Classical/Renaissance revival styles as applied to tall office buildings: the Century uses a complex organizational scheme with fairly academic ornament, while the Syndicate Trust shows a simpler, vertically-oriented organization bedecked with a wide range of exuberant decorative motifs creatively mixed from the classical vocabulary. The "Beaux Arts" style classification is chosen to reflect the complex's roots in both classical and renaissance tradition and the symmetry of the facades. Additionally, the Century Building side is one of the few known examples of a commercial building of this scale clad entirely in Georgia marble. In c.1906 the building was promoted as "the only marble office building in the West."¹ Both halves of the building have good exterior integrity, although the Century is painted and the significance of its marble exterior is therefore obscured. There are alterations at the storefronts and some windows. Interior integrity is uncertain but is believed to be poor; the Criterion C argument applies to the exterior of the buildings. It is enhanced by the relatively rarity of intact, surviving examples of the style in downtown St. Louis. The period of significance, 1896 – 1912, represents the time span during which the complex was constructed. 1912 is the date that the connection between the Century and Syndicate Trust was enlarged to connect the buildings more completely.

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¹ "Century Block" brochure (c. 1906, np), collection of Landmarks Association of St. Louis.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 7

Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

and Subtreasury with additional offices for the Collector of Internal Revenue, lighthouse and steamboat inspectors and the United States Army Engineers.

Soon after the Post Office's completion, new tall office buildings began to rise nearby. Its first new commercial companion was 8th Street's Charles H. Turner Building (designed by Peabody & Stearns) constructed between 1883-85. Three more office buildings appeared in 1888; two (now replaced) were across the street from the main entrance to the Post Office on Olive Street. The only extant building from 1888 is the Phipps-Wallace Building at 312 8th Street (NR 11/22/2000).

Tall office buildings were new to St. Louis in the 1880s; the form found a much fuller, less experimental expression in the 1890s. Several of the buildings from that decade survive to help establish the high standard of design excellence in the district surrounding the Post Office: the 1891 Public Library/Board of Education Building by Isaac Taylor (northwest corner of 9th and Locust); the 1896 Chemical Building by Henry Ives Cobb directly across the street from the Post Office on 8th; and the Century Building. Most of the 19th-century buildings that encircled the Post Office are no longer extant, including two of the best from the 1890s: Isaac Taylor's 1892 Columbia Building (reduced to two stories); and Adler & Sullivan's St. Nicholas Hotel (1892-93), now a surface parking lot at the northwest corner of Locust and 8th Streets.

Development of the Century and Syndicate Trust Buildings

The Century Building was constructed in 1896 at an approximate cost of \$1,350,000, replacing a group of smaller buildings. The most notable among these was Pope's Theatre, a converted church which faced south on Olive and presented its broad side to the Old Post Office immediately east. Most of the rest of the block was occupied by small-scale residential buildings. The Century was one of the first large projects to push downtown's commercial district west of the Post Office.

This is the only known St. Louis work of the Chicago architects Raeder, Coffin & Crocker. Although all three principals' names are on the building permit, Benjamin Crocker left the firm in 1895. Raeder & Coffin established a short-lived St. Louis office in the Century Building immediately after its completion. The partnership practiced in Chicago until 1904.²

² Margery Blair Perkins, *Evanstoniana: An Informal History of Evanston & Its Architecture* (Evanston, Illinois: Evanston Historical Society, 1984).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 8

Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

While the firm is not well-known in St. Louis, the quality of its work is indisputable. Raeder, Coffin & Crocker offered up a complex Classical Revival design in the best tradition of what Koeper refers to as "the Beaux Arts decades."³ This period begins with McKim, Mead & White's seminal work in a nationwide revival of academic classicism. The firm's Boston Public Library, 1886, was inspired by Italian Renaissance villa forms, and displayed a sober formality which caught the national architectural fancy. The trend caught on as more and more American architects returned from training at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, which emphasized formal planning and did not promote innovation in styles beyond the classical vocabulary the students found throughout Paris.

Use of the revival style did not spread immediately to St. Louis. Koeper writes:

The return to classical discipline was initially an East Coast phenomenon. Chicago and the Midwest were strongholds of Richardsonian architecture, but they soon surrendered after what has been variously regarded as a salutary or pernicious event, the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago. The grandiloquent scenery of its aligned facades projected classicism onto the national scene.⁴

At the close of the 1880s, local commercial architecture was following a generally Richardsonian trend which was already disappearing on the East Coast. Isolated examples around 1890 stepped outside of the vocabulary of historical revivals to attempt an expression of the building's structure; notable among these are the groundbreaking Laclede Building by New York architect Stephen Hatch with L. Cass Miller (1886-88, NR 1998) and the buildings of Chicago architect Louis Sullivan.

Perhaps the first example of the newly revived classical vocabulary applied to a tall St. Louis building was the Security Building, 1890-92, by Peabody, Stearns & Furber of Boston (NR 2/10/2000). Isaac Taylor's 1891 design for the Public Library/Board of Education Building soon followed. In 1892, Boston's Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge designed the Mallinckrodt Building on Washington Avenue, a block away from the library. All three displayed a typical tripartite division of sections, using arcades to organize the center (shaft) section.

Soon, the new classicism became a preferred style for large commercial buildings. The Century Building is one of St. Louis' few extant examples from before 1900. Its simple formality and symmetry marks it as a good example of Beaux Arts classicism.

³ Frederick Koeper, *American Architecture* v. 2: 1860-1976 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: the MIT Press, 1983). 281

⁴ Koeper, 273

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 9

Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Gould's 1898 Business Directory reveals a wide range of early tenants, including insurance companies, medical offices, caterers, publishers, loan companies, the Frisco railroad (before it moved into its namesake building across the street to the south), and the Kinloch Telephone Company (before it moved into its own building just northwest). Of architectural interest were the offices of Theodore Link, the Winkle Terra Cotta Company, and Raeder & Coffin. (Another leading firm, Barnett, Haynes & Barnett, also moved here in the early years.) The Bryant & Stratton Business & Shorthand College occupied the third floor; the 1600-seat Century Theatre occupied a large multi-story space. Unlike some large single-tenant or major-tenant buildings in downtown's financial center further east, the Century bustled with small businesses.



Century Building, St. Louis, U. S. A.

*Music of Ice is on the
eighth floor of this building*

figure 2: Postcard c. 1900-1905

Despite the apparent success of the new address, the owners were forced to sell the building in a sheriff's sale of 1902. New owners, the Syndicate Trust Company, developed plans for an enormous annex. Designed in 1906 and completed by 1907, the Century Annex (later known as the Syndicate Trust Building) was 16 stories tall and cost an estimated \$1.8 million. Architect Harry Roach⁵ devised a much simpler organizational scheme than the Century. Straightforward

⁵ Architect Harry F. Roach was trained in St. Louis and Boston, gaining his early experience in the office of his father (H. E. Roach & Son). The Syndicate Trust may be his largest individual design; other highlights from his

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 10

Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

base, shaft and crown divisions, unrelieved by the space-defining vertical units found on the earlier building, emphasize the building's height rather than its mass. The simple organization of the building is livened up by an eclectic array of decorative motifs. Roach's ornamental program rejects the search for classical and Renaissance authenticity, embracing instead the wonderful decorative possibilities of mixed motifs. Some of the terra cotta panels are enlarged versions of the Century's, but the imaginative sculpture also includes shields, triglyphs oddly disembodied from any appropriate Doric order entablature, orderly rows of lions' heads and foliated modillions. If the Century was a proper dowager, the Syndicate Trust was her tall, bejeweled daughter. Read together, they provide a remarkable lesson on the extremes of classical and Renaissance revival styles applied to large commercial buildings at the turn of the last century.

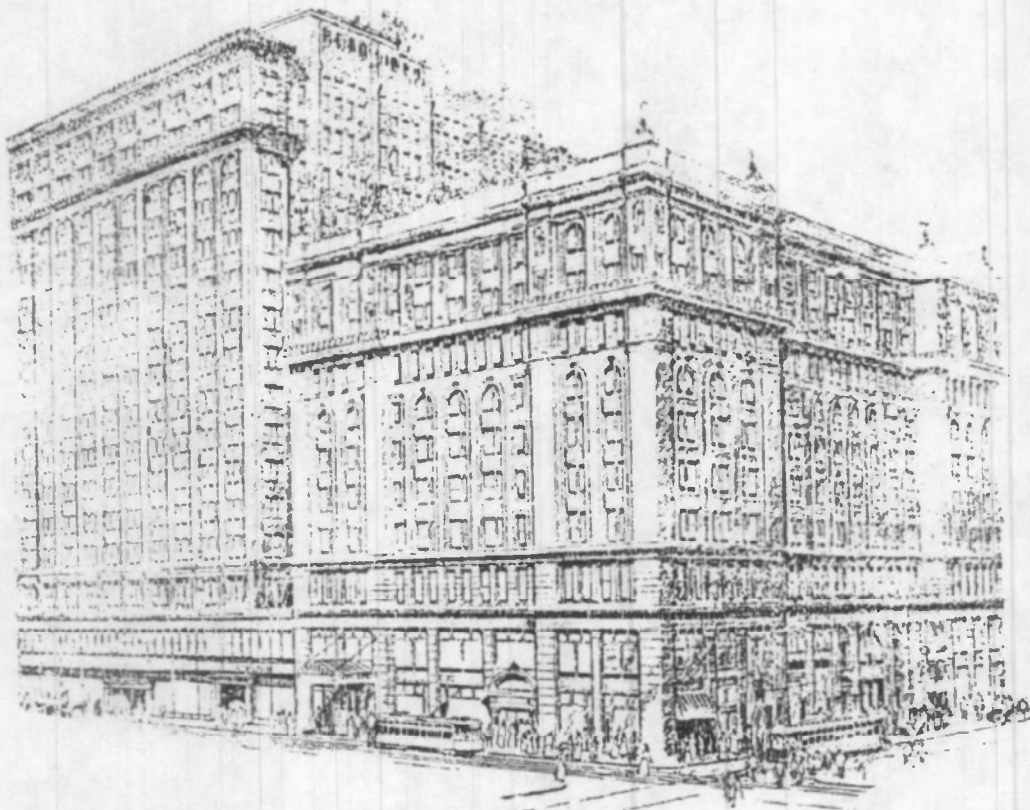


Figure 3: from the *Realty Record and Builder*, 1906

career in St. Louis include the Buckingham Hotel and the spectacular James LaPrelle mansion (both demolished). Roach moved his office into the Syndicate Trust after completion.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 11

Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri



Syndicate Trust Building (Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney),
St. Louis, Mo.

Figure 4: Syndicate Trust postcard c. 1920

The combination of formal simplicity and decorative exuberance made an impressive home for a prestigious tenant. Plans called for eight stories to be occupied by the Scruggs, Vandervoort & Barney dry goods firm. The company was founded in 1850 by Richard Scruggs and M. V. McClelland. William Vandervoort and C. E. Barney became partners in the Fourth Street firm in about 1870. The partners parlayed their extensive experience in the finest east coast mercantile houses into a successful mercantile company serving the growing city of St. Louis. Despite the setbacks of the Civil War and the financial panic of 1893, the firm moved into the 20th century with a reputation for fine goods, integrity, service courtesy and quality. Their patrons included the wealthy elite of the city, and the store was often linked with cultural and charitable events. By 1904 the original partners had died and the store had moved to its third location, the largest

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 12

Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

yet. Now owned by New York interests, the company expanded and moved to the Syndicate Trust Building in 1907.

The move was regarded as daring by the business community, which predicted failure for the firm because it was located too far west of the downtown shopping area. But Scruggs attracted customers with "the most modern and beautiful fixtures that can be installed," fifteen high-speed elevators, and an innovation so new that it had to be explained: "escaladors (moving staircases)." The company prospered in its new location. In 1912 additional floors were added to the connection between the Century and its annex; in 1913, the store expanded into seven floors of the Century Building.⁶ In that year the trade journal *Dry Goodsman* devoted a large section of an issue to the store, saying that it was "at once a commercial establishment and a social institution. The average St. Louisan feels a certain pride in association with the store, is glad to be seen there, likes to refer to his purchases as having been made there. To have a charge account at Vandervoort's by many is felt to be a badge of respectability."⁷

By 1940 the company also operated an off-site furniture division, two warehouses, and a 500-car parking garage (demolished in the late 1990s for surface parking). An average of 1500 employees kept it all going. The store remained a downtown fixture until 1967.

Above the department store, the Syndicate Trust Building was one of downtown's large office centers with a variety of commercial and institutional tenants. Suite 1024 was the first home of the Equal Suffrage League, the city's leading force agitating for women's right to vote. During its tenure in the Syndicate Trust from 1912 – 1918, the League put together a suffrage referendum in 1914 (which was defeated by a considerable majority) and organized demonstrations which included up to 7000 female participants. The Equal Suffrage League later moved into the Century Building, and was there when women finally won the right to vote.

Georgia Marble

Although the Century/Syndicate Trust Building is eligible under Criterion C as a good example of its style, the building's significance is enhanced by the fact that the Century's exterior is made entirely of Georgia marble. The case for significance does not rest on the use of this material, since it is currently painted; nonetheless, the fact that the building was constructed of one of the most expensive materials available is worth further explanation.

⁶ *St. Louis and Vandervoort's "Yesterday and Today"* (St. Louis: np, 1940).

⁷ *The Dry Goodsman and General Merchant*, 15 November 1913, p. 37.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 13

Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

The state of Georgia's marble deposits had already been worked for half a century when the Marietta & North Georgia Railroad reached them in 1885 and made the material commercially available in the North for the first time. Within a decade, Georgia produced more marble than any other state besides Vermont. The United States Geological Survey of 1894 reported that Georgia accounted for about 23% of the nation's marble output (in dollar value).⁸ Most of the product was quarried by the Georgia Marble Company, incorporated in 1884 in Pickens County.

Prized for its beauty and durability, Georgia marble was also an expensive choice that was usually limited to civic buildings and sculpture. It was chosen as the exterior material for McKim, Mead & White's Rhode Island State House and the Girard Trust Bank in Philadelphia. It was used in federal buildings such as the Department of Agriculture and the Federal Reserve, and cultural institutions such as the Folger Shakespeare Library (Washington, DC), Sam Rayburn Library (Bonham, Texas), Joslyn Museum (Omaha), Shedd Aquarium (Chicago), the Cleveland Museum of Art, and the Cleveland Public Library. In a controversial decision, it was not chosen for the exterior of the Georgia State Capitol – it was too expensive.

The prestige of the Century Building was enhanced by using a material which was more typical of public buildings than commercial ones. The choice, according to an 1897 article, was dictated by the material's strength and durability as well as its beauty:

By a judicious use of the three natural tints of this marble, the white, gray and amethyst, a remarkably beautiful effect is produced. The darker shades form the lower courses of stone, the lighter shades the middle courses and the lightest the topmost, so that, beginning with darker shades at the bottom, the building lightens naturally as the top is reached. This is rendered possible because the Georgia Marble Company's three principal quarries, though furnishing a material essentially the same in microscopic structure, differ greatly in color. The Kenesaw marble is pure white; the stone from the Etowah quarry is tinted a faint shade of amethyst, and the Creole quarry produces a banded or gray color. In all three varieties there is a very high degree of solidity and polarity combined, which renders the stone capable of sustaining an enormous crushing strain as compared

⁸William C. Day, *16th Annual Report of the United States Geological Survey, Part IV – Mineral Resources of the United States 1894, Nonmetallic Products*. Vermont produced almost 50% of the total.

United States Department of the Interior
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 14

Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

with any of the granular marbles, and also enables it to resist the action of the air perfectly.⁹

No other commercial examples of the use of this material exist in St. Louis. The rarity of Georgia marble (or any marble, for that matter) in Midwestern commercial buildings is indisputable, but no systematic study of building materials has been found that would identify whether the Century Building is unique or if other examples exist. In approximately 1906, a brochure published in connection with the construction of the Syndicate Trust proclaimed that the Century was at that time "the only marble office building in the West."¹⁰

Later neighborhood developments

Within a few years after the Century's construction, the blocks around the Old Post Office filled in as a fully-established, dense high-rise commercial district. The Frisco Building of 1902 (directly south of the Century) and the Wright Building of 1906 represented the first decade of the 20th century. Later office blocks in the neighborhood replaced earlier ones: Tom P. Barnett's 1916 Arcade Building directly south of the Post Office, and the adjacent Paul Brown Building (Preston J. Bradshaw, 1925 – directly southeast of the Century).

More than three-quarters of a century after the Old Post Office neighborhood's last historic building was constructed, the area's buildings are largely vacant and awaiting redevelopment. The good news is that nearby residential conversions, both complete and underway, promise to restore activity to the streets and commerce to the storefronts. According to a variety of studies, the Century and Syndicate Trust Buildings hold great potential for residential development.

Integrity

The exterior of the Century/Syndicate Trust Buildings is highly intact above the first two stories. Replacement of first and second story windows is generally reversible; most of the first floor piers between the windows are intact. At the Century Building, however, the rusticated blocks

⁹ "Technical Review: Century Theater and Office Building, St. Louis," *Inland Architect* v. XXX no 1, August 1897. Special Supplement (unpaged).

¹⁰ "Century Block" brochure (c. 1906, np), collection of Landmarks Association of St. Louis.

United States Department of the Interior
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 15

Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

that are visible in the original drawing were chipped down to create a flush, gently mottled surface sometime in the 20th century. The Century's monumental main entrance is filled in with a glass wall and modern doors, another reversible change. The fact that both buildings retain their historic cornices is noteworthy. Despite these changes, most significant features of the buildings' massing and ornamentation are intact. While the fine marble of the Century Building is obscured under one or more layers of paint, this change is also reversible.

The interior is believed to retain few historic features. Because the interior is not accessible for an inspection and the amount of historic fabric is uncertain, the building is only being evaluated for Criterion C significance relating to the fine design of the exteriors.

United States Department of the Interior
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 9-10 Page 16

Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 9-10 Page 17

Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is in the City of St. Louis and consists of the entirety of City Block 273 (bounded by Olive Street on the south, Locust Street on the north, Ninth Street on the east and Tenth Street on the west).

Boundary Justification

The boundaries reflect all of the property historically associated with the nominated resource.



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

H32(2280)

OCT 16 2002

Mr. Stephen Mahfood
Missouri State Historic Preservation Officer
State Department of Natural Resources
205 Jefferson, P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

Dear Mr. Mahfood:

The National Register has now concluded its review of two nominations: Century/Syndicate Trust Building and Syndicate Trust Building, both in St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri. The Register received the first nomination, for the Century/Syndicate Trust Building, on August 5, 2002, and subsequently received an appeal to extend the review period, lengthening our review until October 16, 2002. The second nomination, for the Syndicate Trust Building alone, arrived at the National Register on September 5, 2002. Based on the documentation in the nominations, additional materials submitted during the review period, and information collected during an onsite inspection and meeting, I have listed the Century Building and Syndicate Trust Building together and am returning the nomination for the Syndicate Trust Building.

As you know, by law the Keeper is required to consider nominations in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 470) and its implementing regulations (36CFR60), which establish Criteria for Evaluation that must be used to judge the eligibility of nominations to the National Register. In the case of the Century/Syndicate Trust nomination, experts who have evaluated the nomination at various levels in the process have endorsed the historic significance of the Century and Syndicate Trust buildings. The local preservation organization that prepared the nomination (the Landmarks Association of St. Louis), the City of St. Louis Preservation Board, the State review board of experts, and the staff of the State Historic Preservation Officer, have all gone on record that both buildings included in the Century/Syndicate Trust Building nomination meet the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The State Historic Preservation Office endorsed the property as meeting the National Register Criteria for Evaluation when it submitted the Century/Syndicate Trust Building nomination to the National Register. In July 2002, I sustained an appeal to nominate the Century/Syndicate Trust Building, because the nomination demonstrated that the buildings appeared to meet National Register Criteria for Evaluation.

During the last two months, we have carefully reviewed both nominations and also all of the subsequent correspondence, comments, and additional documentation submitted by the City of St. Louis and others. Based on both the original nomination and other documentation, as well as information gathered by Beth Boland of the National Register staff during an onsite inspection on October 8, 2002, I have concluded that both the Century Building and the Syndicate Trust Building meet National Register Criterion C, and I have listed the property as such.

Because through most of the history of these buildings they have been joined together by a connector that is 10 stories on the south side and 7 stories on the north and because the buildings have shared a common use and have been interconnected through these floors, they should be nominated together. The National Register recognizes that the buildings were constructed separately and will identify two buildings in the resource count of the nomination form. National Register policy has consistently required that buildings so interconnected on their exterior and interior be nominated together. Also, the National Register does not accept nominations with boundaries that slice through exterior and interior walls and open spaces that clearly connect two buildings. In the case of the Syndicate Building, the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney company joined the Syndicate Trust Building and the Century Building into one functional department store in the early 20th century, and they have remained interconnected ever since.

For these reasons, we have accepted the first nomination, which nominated the Century and Syndicate Trust buildings together, but have listed the property under the name Century Building and Syndicate Trust Building in recognition of the historically-separate origins of the two buildings. Enclosed is a copy of the Supplementary Listing Record correcting the name and other information in the Century/Syndicate Trust nomination. The Syndicate Trust Building is listed in the National Register along with the Century Building. We are amending the nomination to make corrections and clarifications based on the additional documentation submitted to us. We are returning the nomination for the Syndicate Trust Building alone.

We note that the nomination for the Syndicate Trust Building provided information that was very helpful to our review. The documentation made a good case for the individual and separate origins of the Syndicate Building before it was connected to the Century Building, and included important information concerning the nature of the connection between the two buildings. Based on the information provided, the Syndicate Building possesses a historical individuality and its own architectural significance under Criterion C. If the building were to stand alone and maintain its integrity while no longer connected to the Century Building, it would continue to meet National Register Criterion C and remain listed. Should the Syndicate Trust Building stand alone in the future, your responsibility will be to notify the National Register, provide updated information, and request a boundary reduction or other appropriate action by the National Register. The documentation in the Syndicate Trust Building nomination will likely provide most of the required information, including boundaries.

Please be assured that in coming to this conclusion, we have carefully and thoughtfully considered not only the nominations, but all of the additional comments, information, and materials submitted during the course of our review.

Sincerely,



Carol D. Shull
Keeper of the National Register
of Historic Places

Enclosures

cc: Carolyn Toft
Landmarks Association of St. Louis
917 Locust, 7th Floor
St. Louis, Missouri 63101-1413

Honorable Francis G. Slay
Mayor of St. Louis,
City Hall
1200 Market Street
St. Louis, Missouri 63103-2877

Ms. Barbara Geisman
Executive Director for Development
City Hall - Room 200
1200 Market Street
St. Louis, Missouri 63101-2877

Honorable Bob Holden
Governor of Missouri
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Honorable Christopher S. Bond
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-2503

Honorable Richard Gephardt
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2503

Mr. W. Thomas Reeves
Executive Director
Downtown Now!
1533 Washington Avenue
St. Louis, Missouri 63103



RECEIVED

OCT 28 2002

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF ST. LOUIS
MISSOURI

STATE HISTORIC
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October 14, 2002

Ms. Carol Shull
Keeper of the National Register of
Historic Places
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, N.W.—8th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Ms. Beth Boland
National Register Historian
Office of the Keeper of the National Register
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, N.W.—8th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

**RE: Opposition: Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places:
Century/Syndicate Trust Building, bounded by Locust, Ninth, Tenth & Olive Streets
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
Reference Number 02001054**

Dear Ms. Shull and Ms. Boland:

First of all, we would like to thank Ms. Boland for visiting St. Louis on Tuesday, October 8, 2002, and touring the Century Building, the Syndicate Trust Building, and Old Post Office. We very much appreciate the attention that both of you and the entire National Park Service are giving to this very important matter for the City of St. Louis. We very much enjoyed meeting everyone who came to St. Louis.

As you are aware, the City of St. Louis has objected to the nomination of the Century Building and the Syndicate Trust Building as one property, has requested a substantive review of the above-referenced nomination, and has requested an extension of the comment deadline for the nomination as provided in Section 60.12, paragraph (a) of 36 CFR Part 60. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with additional documentation for your review and consideration in making your final determination on this matter. This information consists of the following:

- ♦ A copy of the complete presentation by Mimi Stirtz, a noted local architectural historian with twenty-five years of experience in National Register nominations, that documents the stylistic and contextual differences between the Century Building and the Syndicate Trust Building (**EXHIBIT A**).
- ♦ A narrative by Mimi Stirtz, that documents the stylistic and contextual differences between the Century Building and the Syndicate Trust Building (**EXHIBIT B**).

Both of these presentations indicate that a number of structures in St. Louis are both individually listed in the National Register as well as listed as parts of National Register district.

- ♦ Research provided by Mimi Stirtz documenting the existence of a tunnel between the Syndicate Trust Building and the Scruggs Annex to the north, and noting that the Scruggs Annex was placed on the National Register as a single site notwithstanding the historic existence of this tunnel (**EXHIBIT C**).
- ♦ Additional information presented to Ms. Boland and other National Park Service representatives at our meeting on October 8 (**EXHIBIT D**). New information presented in the attached materials includes the following:



- Information on the condition of the Century Building's façade.
- Information on the timing of construction of the "connector structure", including photographs and historic documentation describing the differences between the detailing of the connector structure and the detailing of the adjacent Syndicate Trust Building.
- Information gathered on interior and exterior site visits of the property.
- Information on other single site National Register listings of attached structures in the City of St. Louis.

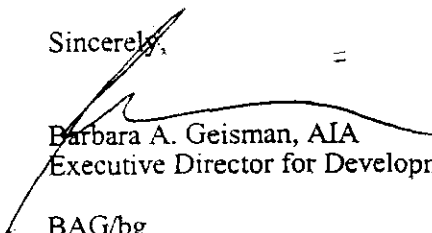
Since Ms. Boland's viewing of the actual buildings and in light of the above-referenced information, we hope that you agree with the city's belief that the monumental size and significant design of the Syndicate Trust Building outweigh the impact that the small, fifteen-foot-wide connector might present to evaluating the eligibility of the Syndicate Trust Building for individual listing in the National Register. It is the city's strong belief that the Syndicate Trust Building is worthy of the same type of recognition and official listing as a single site in the National Register that far more modest downtown buildings have received through individual listing—witness the individual listing of the actual Scruggs Annex across the street from the Syndicate Trust Building.

The Scruggs Annex (917 Locust) is an example of a more modest building in footprint that was individually listed, as is the 5-story Delaney Building (1000-06 Locust) that was individually listed within the past two years—truly modest buildings in architectural character and size of these structures in comparison to the Syndicate Trust Building, a true 16-story skyscraper. There are other similar examples. While we applaud the Register for listing these modest buildings individually, we believe that the larger, more architecturally significant Syndicate Trust Building certainly deserves equal status. The attached materials note also that the Scruggs Annex was connected to the Syndicate Trust Building by a tunnel, yet was individually listed nonetheless, as were a number of other attached structures in the City of St. Louis.

We understand from Ms. Boland's comments at the October 8 meeting that you expect to make a determination on this matter very soon. We look forward to your determination and hope that you will take the desire of the City of St. Louis and other interested parties for an individual listing of the Syndicate Trust Building as presented in my recent nomination and the opposition of the City of St. Louis and other interested parties to the listing of both the Century Building and the Syndicate Trust Building as one property into account as you make your decision.

We look forward to hearing from you. Thank you again for your attention to this important matter for the City of St. Louis.

Sincerely,


Barbara A. Geisman, AIA
Executive Director for Development

BAG/bg

ATTACHMENTS:

- Exhibit A: Mimi Stirtz Presentation—Contextual and Stylistic Comparison
- Exhibit B: Mimi Stirtz Narrative—Contextual and Stylistic Comparison
- Exhibit C: Mimi Stirtz Research—Scruggs Annex Tunnel
- Exhibit D: Materials Presented at October 8 Meeting

Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis (independent city), MO

Lynn Josse

Nov, 2001

Landmarks Assoc. of St Louis

View to W/SW

#1



Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis (Independent city), MO

Lynn Josse

Nov. 2001

Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis

View to E/NE

#2



Century / Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis (Independent city), MO

Lynn Josse

Nov. 2001

Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis

View to NW

#3



Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis (independent city), MO

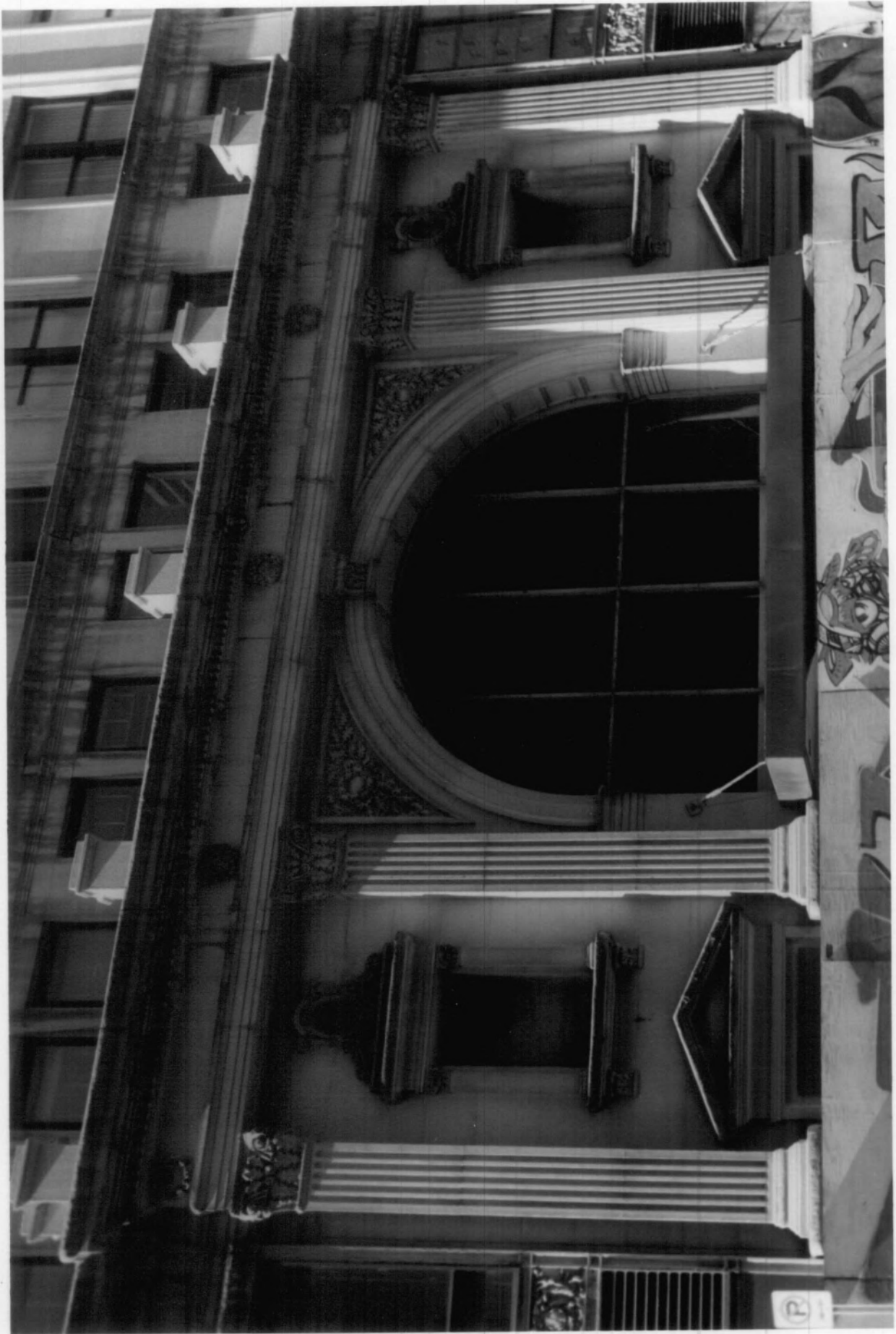
Lynn Josse

Nov. 2001

Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis

View to NW

#4



Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St Louis (independent city), MO

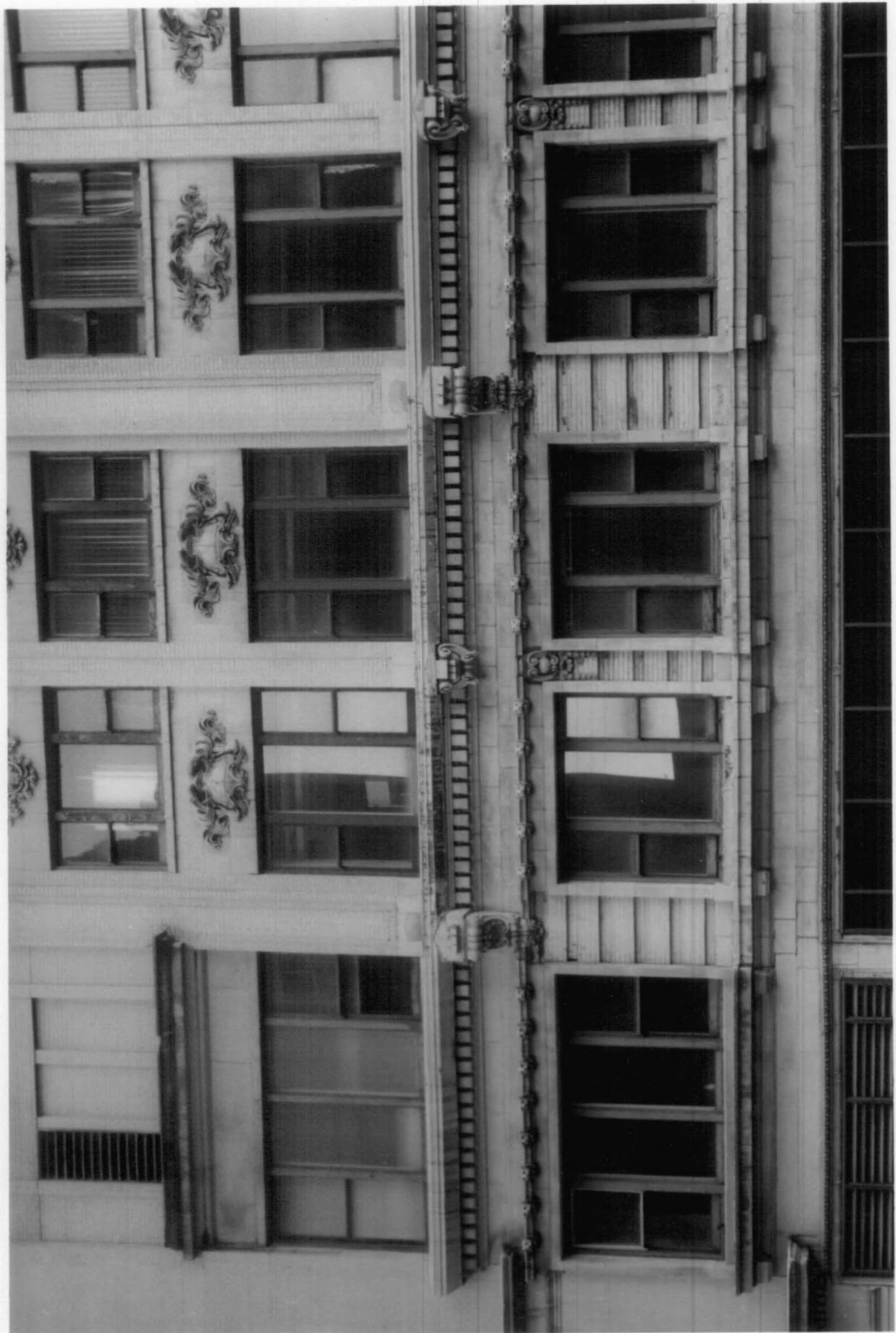
Lynn Jesse

Nov 2001

Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis

View to S

#5



Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis (independent city), MO

Lynn Josse

Nov., 2001

Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis

View to W/SW

#1



Century/Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis (Independent city), MO

Lynn Josse

Nov. 2001

Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis

View to E/NE

#2



Century / Syndicate Trust Building
St. Louis (Independent city), MO

Lynn Josse

Nov. 2001

Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis

View to NW

#3



Century/Syndicate Trust Building

St. Louis (independent city), MO

Lynn Josse

Nov. 2001

Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis

View to NW

#4



Century/Syndicate Trust Building

St. Louis (independent city), MO

Lynn Josse

Nov. 2001

Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis

View to S

#5

