

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

1. Name of Property

historic name Columbia Building

other names/site number Greenstreet Warehouse Building

2. Location

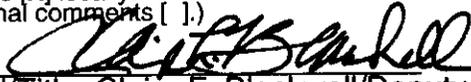
street & number 2006-2012 Wyandotte Street [n/a] not for publication

city or town Kansas City [n/a] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Jackson code 095 zip code 64108

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 [].)



30 March 2010

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	0
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	0	0
		0	0
		0	0
		1	0

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

Name of related multiple property listing.

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
Commerce: business
Commerce: warehouse
Commerce: specialty store

Current Functions
Commerce: business
Commerce: warehouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements: Commercial Style

Materials
foundation STONE
walls BRICK
roof OTHER
other CONCRETE

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.

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

Areas of Significance

COMMERCE

Periods of Significance

1920-1926

Significant Dates

1920

Significant Person(s)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Braecklein, J. G./ Bowling, George E.

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other:

Name of repository: The Kansas City Public Library

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	4327780	362785			

C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing
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[] 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 see continuation sheet

organization _____ date _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state MO zip code _____

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 Thomas W. Levitt, Levitt Enterprises, Inc.

street & number P.O. Box 414740 telephone 816/474-2244

city or town Kansas City state Missouri zip code 64141

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Columbia Building
Jackson County, MO

SUMMARY

The Columbia Building, constructed in 1920, is a brick, three-story, approximately triangular-shaped building located at 2006-2012 Wyandotte Street, Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri. The building rests on a stone foundation with masonry units and structural clay tile clad in rugface brick with reinforced concrete trim. The building is located on the west side of Wyandotte Street, directly north of Union Station in a district made up largely of warehouse buildings from the same era. The building, designed by architect J. G. Braecklein and built by George E. Bowling & Son Construction Company, is a right triangle, approximately 140'x 150'x 212'. The 140-foot east façade faces Wyandotte Street, the 150-foot south façade faces a parking lot, and the 212-foot northwest façade faces an alley. Ends of the long axis are truncated and contain corner entrances. The main entrance is in the northeast corner below a pediment. The truncated rear corner is wider, with a loading dock. Originally, the building served as a regional warehouse, showrooms, and district offices for the Columbia Graphophone and Dictaphone Company. The first level housed a warehouse for the Columbia products. A showroom was located on the second level, and Columbia's district offices were located on the third level of the building. Very few alterations have been made and, consequently, the Columbia Building retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

ELABORATION

The primary (east) elevation of the Columbia Building fronting on Wyandotte contains most of the building's architectural elaboration. The building's horizontality is emphasized by continuous bands or courses of concrete which divide the façade into visual layers and wrap into the truncated north corner with the primary entrance. Vertically, the first floor is divided into seven bays, six of which are equal in size. The seventh bay, located at the north end, is shorter in order to accommodate the corner entrance within a 10-foot façade intersecting the east and northwest walls. Bricks on the two other long elevations and the secondary truncated corner are laid in a semi-Flemish bond. Bricks on the two other long elevations and the secondary truncated corner are laid in common bond.

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First floor bays are divided by slightly protruding brick pilasters with decorative, nine-inch-tall insets of concrete between every eighth course of bricks. Pilasters are capped with flush pieces of concrete arranged in the shape of a "T" with serifs. With the exception of the two end bays, each bay contains an original 32-pane metal frame industrial-type window. The northernmost bay contains an original 16-pane metal frame industrial type window. The southernmost bay contains an original freight door with a small loading dock, which is centered and flanked by multi-pane, metal frame industrial windows. A canvas awning with a quarter-round shape covers this bay. A metal fire escape, which also provides roof access, is near the center of the façade.

Additional concrete in the east elevation includes a wide band or course above the pilasters, in effect a continuous lintel; narrow bands below the second and third floor windows, in effect a continuous lugsill; and another continuous wide band/lintel above the third floor windows. Narrow concrete lugsills also underline the first floor windows but are not continuous because of the pilasters. Second floor windows are within arched openings with radiating voussoirs and concrete keystones. The keystones function as another horizontal element. The voussoirs consist of alternating rows of two bricks set lengthwise and edgewise, edgewise and lengthwise.

Upstairs bays are not clearly defined, but on each floor, groups of three rectangular double-hung 1/1 windows are arranged above six of the pilaster-divided first floor bays. Groups of two windows are above the smaller northernmost bay. Main floor industrial windows are original. Second and third floor windows are 1988 replacements in original openings. Original second floor windows were double-hung 4/4s. Original third floor windows were double-hung 6/6s. Because the first floor windows are intact and the replacements occupy original openings, sufficient integrity is retained. The exterior of the building is otherwise relatively unaltered.

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Columbia Building
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The entrance (northeast) façade, though only approximately 10 feet wide, continues the elements of the main (east) façade on the second and third levels. The first level contains double glass and wooden entrance doors capped with an overstated Greek Revival cornice and pediment which is supported by brick pilasters flanking the door. The same concrete banding continues around the corner and terminates at the pilaster. It resumes on the other side of the northern pilaster continuing to the edge of the building. Two glazed terra cotta plaques containing a logo similar to a coat of arms accentuate each entry pilaster. The second level of the entrance façade contains a pair of double-hung windows within an arched opening with radiating voussoirs and a concrete keystone. The third level has the same window arrangement, but with a flat arch. Concrete trim continues around the corner from the main façade, reinforcing the horizontal orientation and wrapping slightly into the northwest façade. A contemporary metal sign is attached to the building between the pediment and second floor window opening. The sign bears the building's current name and address, "Greenstreet Warehouse, 2012 Wyandotte."

The northwest façade faces an alley and consequently contains little ornamentation. This façade has six bays. Except for the easternmost, each bay contains four double-hung windows on each floor. The easternmost bay contains one double-hung window on the first floor near the corner. Another double-hung window, which illuminates a stairwell, is between the first and second levels at the western side of the bay. The second level contains two double-hung windows toward the east side of the bay. Finally, the third level contains four double-hung windows in the same configuration as those of the other typical bays. All of the openings have projecting brick lugsills and segmental arched openings made up of three rows of headers set vertically.

The 17-foot west façade, which connects the northwest and south façades, faces Ft. Scott Avenue and is considered the rear of the building. At ground level, a concrete loading dock spans the length of the façade. A wide entrance capped with a segmental brick arch is off-center toward the south wall. The entrance contains an overhead door made of wood with panels. The original loading dock is covered by

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a wood and metal shed roof supported by two narrow wood posts and two cables attached to the brick façade. The second and third levels of this façade contain openings aligned above the entrance. Each opening contains a pair of double-hung windows capped with a brick segmental arch. Each arch consists of four rows of header bricks. Lugsills consist of slightly projecting headers set vertically. At some point, a very small opening in the second floor wall appears to have been infilled with brick.

The south elevation has no ornamentation. The expanse of brick wall is punctured by five window openings on the second level. These openings are slightly lower than those on the second level of the main façade. There are two sets of paired double-hung windows, two single double-hung windows and two small double-hung windows, all within segmental arched openings. Each arch consists of four rows of header bricks set vertically, except those over the small double-hung windows which have three rows of headers. About 50 feet from the west façade, the parapet steps down approximately one foot. About 50 feet from this is a raised portion of brick that shields an elevator penthouse unit on the roof.

There have been relatively few alterations to the building. A clear protective coating has been applied to the east foundation and to some decorative elements, in particular the concrete trim. Additionally, windows on all elevations have been replaced (within their original openings) except for the industrial style windows on the first level of the east façade. In the rear wall, a very small opening appears to have been sealed. Overall, the exterior building maintains a high degree of integrity.

The interior of the Columbia Building is also largely intact. Few alterations have been made to its historic fabric. All three floors have an open plan with both steel and wood columns, arranged in a grid configuration. The first floor has a concrete surface. The second floor, which housed the showrooms, has oak, maple and pine flooring. The third floor office space has pine flooring. An entrance vestibule in the northeast corner of the first floor houses a straight-run wood stairway to the second level. The south wall of the vestibule contains a set of double doors opening into a spacious room, originally used to fill

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Columbia's regional warehousing needs. An original freight elevator, mechanical room, and receiving room fill the southwest area of this floor. The south wall consists of painted structural clay tiles and intermittent rows of bricks. The second level is generally similar to the first, although this floor was utilized primarily as the product showroom and consequently had a higher level of finish including oak, maple and pine flooring. While joists and bracing are exposed on the first and third floors, panels are between the joists in the second floor ceiling. Walls are original plaster and are painted. The third floor has the same open plan as the other floors. The stairway is in the northeast corner and the freight elevator is in the southwest corner. The original plaster walls are painted.

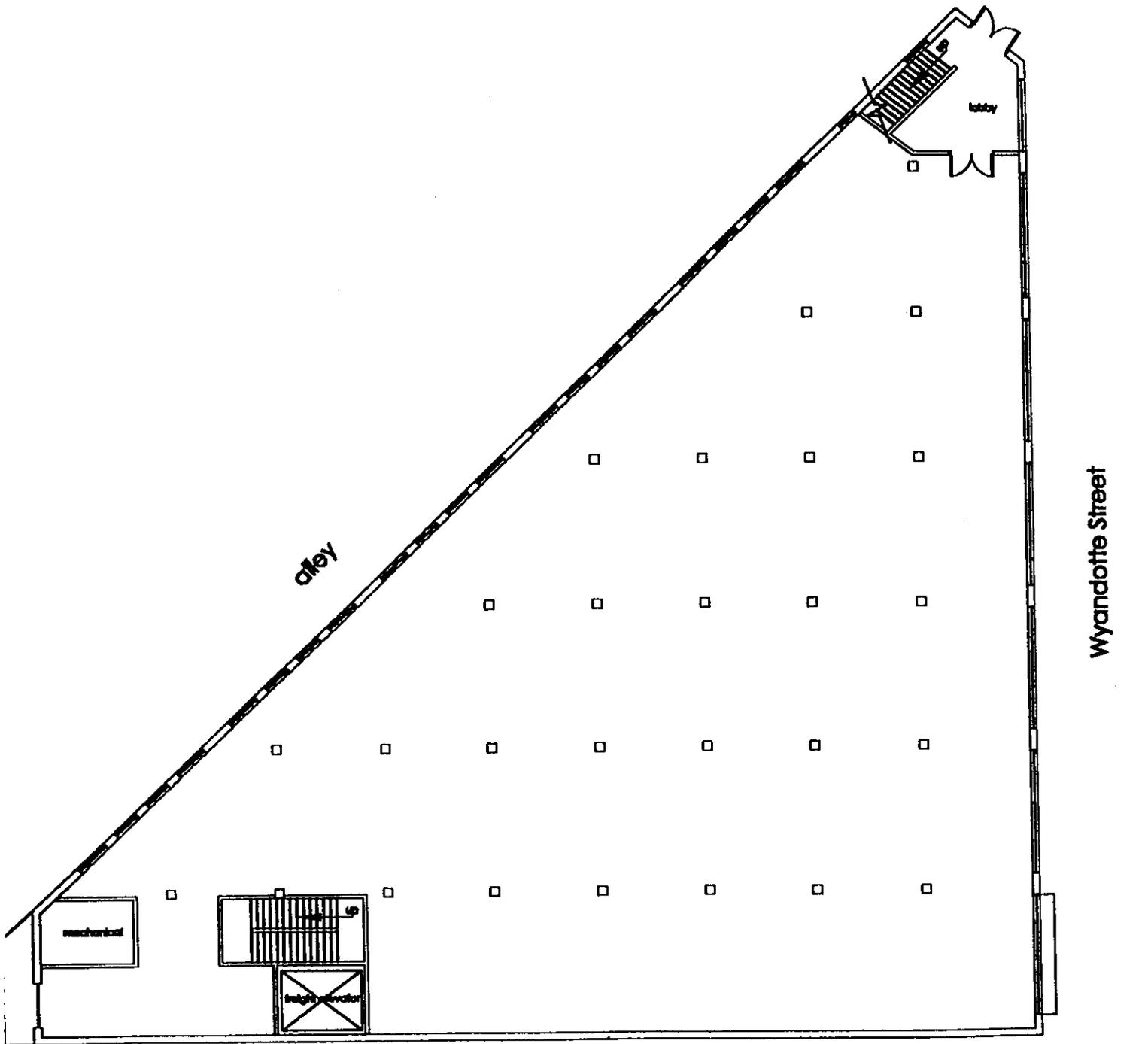
Alterations have been minimal with the exception of replacement windows on the upstairs floors. The first floor windows are original, the basic structure and most historic material are intact and the few alterations made on this building are reversible.

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Columbia Building
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parking lot



Columbia Building First Floor Plan

Scale: 1" = 20'-0"

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SUMMARY

The Columbia Building, an approximately triangular-shaped building located at 2006-2012 Wyandotte Street, Kansas City, Missouri, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and is locally significant in the area of Commerce. Constructed in 1920 and occupied for six years by the Columbia Graphophone and Dictaphone Company, the building originally housed one of several showrooms opened across the country by the firm for displaying its line of sound reproduction products including the Dictaphone, the company's new brand of dictating machine. As the company's regional headquarters from 1920-26, the locally significant Columbia Building was central to the trading of goods and services throughout the Kansas City area and was representative of changes within the increasingly volatile sound industry. In addition to the plush second floor showrooms, the three-story building housed Columbia's regional offices on the top floor and a warehouse on the first level. The development of showrooms and other marketing strategies represented the company's efforts to cope with lagging phonograph sales resulting from the burgeoning popularity of radio during the Jazz Age. In a retrenchment, the company left Kansas City in 1928 after divesting itself of the business machine branch and reclaiming its earlier name, Columbia Phonograph Company. Undaunted, the firm eventually became a giant of the music industry, the Columbia Record Company. The Columbia Building stands as a reminder of the period when the developing company was part of Kansas City's warehouse complex near the newly-constructed Union Station, striving to make its products more accessible to the buying public. The period of significance represents the company's six years of occupancy.

ELABORATION

With the advent of recorded sound machines in the 1880s, new companies began forming for the purpose of developing and selling the devices. One such company was the Columbia Phonograph Company, which temporarily made Kansas City a regional center. Warehouses, offices and showrooms were needed as the firm grew and in 1920, a three-story building with 140 feet of frontage was designed to house all three functions under one roof at 2006-2012 Wyandotte Street. According to a 1920 newspaper report,

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“The 3-story structure will have a floor space equal to that of an ordinary 6-story building on a 50 foot frontage.”¹ The site of the Columbia Building was a warehouse district directly north of the then-recently-constructed Union Station, already the third largest rail terminal in the United States. Proximity to Union Station, of course, meant that products delivered by train need not be transported great distances for storage. The Columbia Building’s location was especially convenient in that it was located near both the train depot and a main traffic thoroughfare, as was deemed necessary for a showroom. This thoroughfare, Southwest Boulevard, was one of the main roads leading west to Kansas. It provided easy accessibility for traveling salesmen and visitors from Kansas and beyond, who perhaps would return home with or after placing orders for goods and products displayed in the company’s Kansas City showroom. The location was also convenient for transport by truck of products from the warehouse to destinations throughout the region.

Incorporated by Edward D. Easton on January 15, 1889, the Columbia Phonograph Company would eventually become one of the largest phonograph and recorded music companies in the world. The Columbia Phonograph Company originated from stockholders in the American Graphophone Company including Easton, general manager of the American Graphophone Company, and others in a group solely granted the selling rights to Washington, D.C., Virginia, and Delaware. Columbia, licensed by the North American Phonograph Company, was to operate in the Washington, D.C., area.² Their products would be both Graphophones, which would reproduce recorded music, and Dictaphones, office machines designed to record and reproduce the spoken word..³

Easton and a business partner, R.F. Cromelin, another stockholder in the American Graphophone Company, were court reporters for the U.S. Supreme Court. Many of the American Graphophone stockholders were lawyers, a fact which perhaps made them quickly grasp the potential of the Dictaphone

¹ “Columbia Building A Triangle,” *The Kansas City Star*, 2 May 1920, p.13A.

² Walter L. Welch and Leah Brodbeck Stenzel Burt, *From Tinfoil to Stereo, the Acoustic Years of the Recording Industry: 1877-1912* (University Press of Florida, 1994), p.27.

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for stenography and general office purposes.⁴ They also realized the economic potential, and their law backgrounds undoubtedly proved fruitful for their complicated business ventures.

A fiercely competitive businessman, E. D. Easton found and used legal loopholes to keep competitors from encroaching on what he considered his market and once even filed a lawsuit against his own company in order to further his business interests. As general manager of the American Graphophone Company which had allegiance to Volta Lab, Easton filed a lawsuit against Columbia Phonograph Company which sold Edison's phonographs, a direct competitor of Volta Lab, in order to prohibit Columbia from selling anything produced by Edison. The courts ruled against Columbia, which reinstated Volta Lab's original Graphophone patent over Edison's phonograph. Edison was then required to share patents with Easton, which allowed him to produce and sell Edison-type cylinders under the Graphophone name through the Columbia company.⁵ Consequently, Easton obtained an improved product without infringing on patents. The success of tactics such as this undoubtedly was among the reasons that Columbia became one of the world's three largest and most prominent early phonograph companies, along with the Edison Phonograph Company and the Victor Company.

The company's business-minded leaders achieved even greater success when they began marketing recorded music. By 1890, Columbia offered a one-page list of musical selections with John Philip Sousa, the well-known Marine Band director among the artists. The list grew into a catalog which, by the end of the century, consisted of several pages and 5000 selections.⁶

3 Andre Millard, *America On Record, A History of Recorded Sound* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.40.

4 Ibid.

5 "Charles Sumner Tainter & the graphophone" (website) <http://ac.acusd.edu/History/recording/graphophone.html>, 1999.
Accessed 25 October 1999.

6 "A Thumbnail History of Sony Music," *World of Sony Music*, (website) www.Sonymusic.com/world/aboutus/history.html.
Accessed 5 November 1999.

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By 1895 Columbia Phonograph Company had merged with American Graphophone Company and soon after, the Columbia Phonograph Company, General was acquired. The American Graphophone Company became a manufacturing company only, and Columbia Phonograph Company and Columbia Phonograph Company, General became distributors of its machines.⁷ Meanwhile, the company was opening new showrooms in cities across the country and abroad. By 1899 Columbia had branches in Paris and London to oversee its European operations.⁸ The showrooms effectively introduced the general population to the company's machines. The Graphophone was especially popular because of its affordable price, availability, and wide selection of music cylinders. In 1903, predating the Columbia Building by 17 years, Columbia Phonograph, General opened a showroom in Kansas City, Missouri, at 1016 Walnut Street.

Product improvement was continuously sought by Columbia and its competitors. By 1900 Columbia had popularized the disc phonograph over the cylinder, and in July 1906 Columbia introduced the "Velvet Tone thin and flexible laminated shellac record with paper core."⁹ This was an improved record in that it produced less background noise than the heavier disc-type records that preceded it. The Velvet Tone disc was considered ahead of its time by more than a decade, since comparable silent-surface records were not made available by Columbia's competitors until the 1920s.¹⁰

The following year, 1907, the Columbia Phonograph Company sold its office machine division to create the Dictaphone Corporation, a separate business entity.¹¹ Business continued through the decade but by 1911, the North American Phonograph Company--the parent company of the Columbia Phonograph Company--had failed due to a legal dispute. After appropriate measures, the Columbia Phonograph

⁷ Welch, *op cit.*, pp. 40-41.

⁸ Millard, *op cit.*, p. 68.

⁹ Steve Shoenherr, *Recording Technology History* (website) <http://ac.acusd.edu/History/recording/notes.html>, 1999, p. 4.
Accessed 25 October 1999.

¹⁰ "A Thumbnail History of Sony Music," *op cit.*, p. 2.

¹¹ Shoenherr, *op cit.*

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Company came to an end but reappeared almost immediately as the Columbia Graphophone Company, which was essentially the same firm.¹² E. D. Easton was still the president, and the company remained one of the three largest producers of phonographs. Probably the most noticeable difference was in the technology. Columbia Graphophone Company stopped manufacturing music cylinders for use on older-style machines. Instead, the company concentrated on producing discs for the newer types of phonographs. "By 1919, Americans were buying more than 25 million 78 rpm records every year, and the industry reported annual sales of \$150 million."¹³

Columbia entered the dictation machine business for the second time in 1920, this time as the Columbia Graphophone and Dictaphone Company. Larger buildings were deemed necessary in order to house and properly display the new equipment. It was at this time, 1920, that the Columbia Building was constructed at 2006-2012 Wyandotte Street.

The Columbia Building was part of the burgeoning development taking place at the time in Kansas City in the area directly north of Union Station. The designer was John G. Braecklein, a prominent Kansas City architect who claimed to have designed more than 3,000 buildings. Born in 1865, Braecklein was educated at Harvard and Yale. He began as a draftsman in the early 1880s, then started his own local architectural practice in 1887. Braecklein became well known in both Kansas City, Kansas and Kansas City, Missouri for his residential projects, apartment flats, and commercial buildings. One of Braecklein's most noted works was the seven-story Heist Building, constructed in 1889 at 724 Main Street in Kansas City, Missouri, and considered the city's first skyscraper. No particular style was attributed to Braecklein. His designs were described as "eclectic but polished."¹⁴ Braecklein's long career spanned 70 years, mostly in the Kansas City area.¹⁵

¹² Welch, *op cit.*, p. 46.

¹³ "A Thumbnail History of Sony Music," *op cit.*, p. 2.

¹⁴ Larry Hanks, "John G. Braecklein, Architect" Biography, bibliography, and partial list of works, Archives of the Wyandotte County (Kansas) Museum.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

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Kansas City at this time was about to become a booming city, reflecting the optimism of the nation at the end of World War One. As Henry C. Haskell Jr. wrote, "The complete faith in Kansas City's future was never greater than in the 1920s. Men who talked about the city of a million talked with apparent facts...The expanding economy had increased the dollar volume of the wholesale and jobbing business to many times the volume at the time of the city's widest trade territory."¹⁶ Evidence of this economic growth could be found everywhere, and *The Kansas City Star* found it in the new Columbia Building: "Added evidence of jobbing growth here was in the announcement yesterday of the new building to be started this week on Wyandotte street, south of Twentieth street to house the wholesale warehouse and district offices of the Columbia Graphophone Company."¹⁷

The Columbia Graphophone and Dictaphone Company's new building was designed for multiple functions. The main level was used as the company's warehouse, the second level was a showroom for presentation of the company's products to out-of-town salesmen, and the third floor housed the Kansas City district offices.¹⁸ The showroom was set up as a series of small parlor areas displaying Graphophones exactly as they might be seen within a home setting.¹⁹ Most details are gone, but some evidence of this arrangement is still visible on the second floor where, for example, the floor woods are maple and walnut rather than the pine typically used in local warehouse buildings. The windows are placed relatively low in the walls, as in a home rather than a warehouse. The showroom was primarily for salesmen, who would in turn sell the machines in their own stores or, perhaps, to other retail stores throughout the region. Dictaphones, it is virtually certain, were similarly promoted, presumably in an office setting on the second floor.

¹⁶ Henry C. Haskell, Jr. and Richard B. Fowler, *City of the Future: The Story of Kansas City 1850-1950* (Kansas City: Frank Glen Publishing Co., Inc. 1950), pp.126, 128.

¹⁷ "Columbia Building a Triangle," *op cit.*

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Some of this information was provided by Thomas W. Levitt, current owner of the Columbia Building.

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The first half of the Roaring Twenties was particularly “roaring” for the recorded music industry: “By 1920 more than 200 manufacturers had taken advantage of lapsed phonograph patents and went into production.”²⁰ Columbia maintained its status as one of the “big three” companies, along with Victor and Edison, signing musicians and increasing their catalog of records during a prolonged period of national prosperity which enabled more and more people to purchase Graphophones and Dictaphones for their homes and offices. Regional centers with showrooms, warehouses and offices such as Kansas City’s Columbia Building brought the machines physically closer to the buying market. These buildings served as the main distribution points for each region, providing the various communities with access to Columbia’s products.

The average American home had a Graphophone or some type of phonograph in the early 1920s when phonographs were a primary source of family entertainment. As the popularity of radio increased, phonograph sales decreased. Eventually of course, radio’s popularity was used to the advantage of the recording industry. Many listeners were interested in buying the recorded music they were exposed to over the radio. By concentrating primarily on recorded music, Columbia was able to achieve continued success. Electronic recording was introduced in 1925, giving recorded sound a new clarity and sparking another surge of enthusiasm for recorded music that increasingly complemented the growth of radio. Numerous radio-phonograph combinations were marketed successfully during the industry’s early years of competition with radio.²¹

In 1926, the Columbia Graphophone and Dictaphone Company sold its office machine division to again become the Columbia Phonograph Company, concentrating primarily on phonographs and recorded music. Because less space was needed, the offices for Columbia’s Kansas City operation were moved from the Columbia Building after only six years. The new location, which would be for an even shorter

²⁰ Geoffery Rubenstein, Jones Telecommunications & Multimedia Encyclopedia, *The Phonograph* (website), <http://www.digitalcentury.com/encyclo/update/phono.html> 1999. Accessed 25 October 1999.

²¹ Ibid.

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period, was in the Kansas City Life Building. Records could be distributed through catalogs, and slower machine sales suggested that a change of strategy was in order. Once Columbia decided that fewer salesrooms and warehouses were needed to display and store its home and office machines, thereby abandoning the marketing strategy that it had launched only a few years earlier, the Columbia Building became expendable. The Kansas City location of the Columbia Phonograph Company closed its doors, finally, in 1928. The building continued to function over the years as a warehouse, primarily, and it remains a warehouse today.

Columbia, of course, was hardly finished as a company. After a 1926 takeover of the Otto Heinemann Phonograph Corporation (Okeh), the Columbia Phonograph Company gained even more artists for its catalog. In 1934, American Record Company-Brunswick Record Company (ARC-BRC) bought the Columbia Phonograph Company and Okeh and in turn was purchased by William Paley's Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS).²² This turned out to be a very good business deal in that it merged two extensive catalogs with such recording artists as Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman, Fred Astaire and many others. In 1948, the company introduced the 33 1/3-rpm LP (long playing) record "which revolutionized the industry and soon became the accepted standard for sound reproduction. By 1955, 78 rpm disc production had ceased."²³ More recently, the company's role in the development of the compact disc also was significant and the simultaneous introduction of music videos became a revolutionary marketing approach. In 1988 the CBS Records Group was bought by Sony Corporation and is now known as Sony Music Entertainment, Inc.²⁴ Today, one of the four record companies within the Sony Corporation still carries the Columbia name as the Columbia Records Group.

From its beginnings in 1889, the Columbia company in its various forms has been at the forefront of sound technology. Through its role in bringing recorded sound into the parlors of many families, the old

²² "A Thumbnail History of Sony Music", *op cit.*, p. 3.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

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**Columbia Building
Jackson County, MO**

Columbia Phonograph Company/Columbia Graphophone Company helped revolutionize the way Americans were entertained. The Columbia Building at 2006-2012 Wyandotte played an important role in the regional distribution of Columbia products and bolstered the company name throughout the Kansas City area from 1920-1926. Regional showrooms such as were represented locally by the Columbia Building played an important role in the development of the phonograph as a common household amenity and of the establishment of the Dictaphone as a vital component of the American business office. The technology dispensed from properties such as the Columbia Building helped musicians reach a worldwide audience and allowed individual citizens to become consumers of their products, whether for entertainment or edification.

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Columbia Building
Jackson County, MO

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Columbia Building
Jackson County, MO

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The Columbia Building property occupies all of Lots 16, 17, and 18 of Block 18 of the Goodrich Addition in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries encompass the entire original parcel that is historically associated with the property.

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Columbia Building
Jackson County, MO

Photograph Description

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Columbia Building

Kansas City

Jackson County, Missouri

Photographer: Wilborn & Associates

Date: November 1999

Negatives located at Wilborn & Associates, 3101 Mercier, Kansas City, Missouri 64111

#1. Primary entrance in northeast façade, taken from intersection of Wyandotte Street and alley, looking southwest. (Negative # 98-40-23)

#2. South and east (primary) façades, taken from Wyandotte Street, looking northwest. (Negative # 98-40-20)

#3. West (rear) and south façades, taken from Fort Scott Avenue, looking northeast. (Negative #98-40-22)

#4. West (rear) façade, taken from intersection of Fort Scott Avenue and alley, looking east. (Negative #98-40-21)

#5. First floor view, looking northeast along east elevation. (Negative #98-40-25)

#6. First floor view, looking southeast at freight door. (Negative #98-40-27)

#7. First floor view overall, looking northwest. (Negative #98-40-42)

#8. First floor ceiling detail, with sprinkler system. (Negative #98-40-28)

#9. Freight elevator in southwest portion of first floor. (Negative #98-40-29)

#10. First floor entrance lobby. (Negative #98-40-30)

#11. Second floor overall, facing northwest. (Negative #98-40-38)

#12. Second floor facing northeast. (Negative #98-40-39)

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Columbia Building
Jackson County, MO

- #13. Second floor window detail. (Negative #98-40-40)
- #14. Staircase leading from second to third floor. (Negative #98-40-41)
- #15. Third floor overall, looking northeast. (Negative #98-40-32)
- #16. Third floor , looking north. (Negative #98-40-34)
- #17. Third floor, looking northeast. (Negative #98-40-35)
- #18. Third floor, looking northwest. (Negative #98-40-36)
- #19. Third floor, structural clay tiles in south wall. (Negative #98-40-37)



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