

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

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date entered

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

1. Name

historic

and or common Cupples Warehouse District

2. Location

street & number

not for publication

city, town St. Louis vicinity of

state Missouri code 29 county St. Louis City code 510

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Washington University

street & number Lindell & Skinker

city, town St. Louis vicinity of state Missouri 63130

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number Market Street at Tucker Boulevard

city, town St. Louis state MO 63103

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Historic Sites Survey for the St. Louis  
title Metropolitan Area has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date June, 1976  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc.

721 Olive Street, Room 1113

city, town St. Louis state MO 63101

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

The Cupples Warehouse District is a group of ten commercial warehouses located along a three block corridor just south of St. Louis' Central Business District. Constructed between 1894-1917, all are five to seven stories high and are faced with red pressed brick laid in red mortar; they are further unified by the use of piers and spandrels terminating in round arches. Except for one reinforced concrete building of 1917, the warehouses feature load bearing brick walls and mill construction on the interior. The buildings have survived with only minor alterations and approximately half are presently occupied. The only non-contributing structure is a small, one-story 1949 addition to 1030 Spruce (see Site Plan).

City Block 425 (Bounded by 9th Street, Clark Street, 8th Street and Spruce Street.):

#3 815-817 Spruce Street: (Photo #1 - right; Photo #2 - historical view; Photo #3 - left; Photo #5 - left)

# A comparison of the exterior of this structure today with its appearance circa 1910 (Photo #2) indicates that this warehouse is virtually unaltered. This 1895 five story, red brick warehouse features a one and one-half story brick base, and is articulated by raised piers, and terra cotta scrollwork on the fifth story. On the eight-bay Ninth Street (west) elevation, three moulded and paneled plate glass display windows are centered in the first story base. Flanking these windows are a round-arched entrance and a rectangular double-hung window. Corner bays on the upper stories of this elevation are projecting, and feature recessed spandrels between rectangular double-hung windows. Identical windows are also employed on the upper stories of the recessed inner six bays, excepting a round-arched tripartite window at the fifth story level. The inner six bays are capped by decorative scrollwork, a distinguishing feature of this warehouse.

The twelve-bay Spruce Street (south) elevation is articulated in a similar manner. Three sets of transomed tripartite display windows are employed on the lower story of this elevation, and rectangular double-hung windows are featured above. Corners are accented by wide pilasters; the two center bays on this elevation are also enframed by projecting pilasters. Windows are punched into one of these pilasters, and the remaining three are embellished by recessed panels. Three round-arched fifth story windows are featured on this elevation, as is similar stone scrollwork. A fire escape is installed on this elevation. The opposing north elevation is unarticulated.

E1 820-826 Clark Street: (Photo #1 - left)

This four story red brick warehouse is the only extant structure within the Cupples Station district that was not designed by the firm of Eames and Young. However, architect John L. Howard's 1905 design is characterized by the use of round-arched forms and the absence of historical ornament, as are the Eames and Young structures. The eight-bay primary (west) elevation is articulated by recessed spandrels interlaced with unembellished piers rising from a one and one-half story base. The lower story features rectangular receiving door openings with soldier course lintels and transoms above, excepting the north (entrance) bay which employs a heavily moulded stone surround, half-round pediment and paneled entrance door. Rectangular six-over-six sash windows are employed on the upper stories of the corner bays of the west elevation, and tripartite windows are seen on the central six bays. Fourth story tripartite windows are round-arched. Stone cartouches embellish each recessed spandrel on this elevation.

Contact: *Architectural Firm*

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The six-bay Clark Street (north) elevation is articulated in a similar fashion. Large rectangular receiving door bays are employed on the lower story of this elevation, and an identical pedimented entrance door is featured on the west bay. Tripartite windows are employed on the second, third and fourth stories, the fourth story windows being round-arched. Stone cartouches further embellish this elevation.

On the upper stories of the six-bay south elevation, paired four-over-four sash windows are employed in each rectangular opening. First story openings are large garage bays. A fire escape is also installed on this elevation.

808-818 Clark Street: (Photo #4 - right; Photo #1 - left rear)

6  
#10

This seven story red brick structure is unique to the Cupples Warehouse District in that it was framed in reinforced concrete. Constructed in 1917, the warehouse design features the characteristic pier and recessed spandrel system expressed in the very regular fenestration pattern of both the 8th and Clark Street elevations. The "L"-shaped plan of this structure is composed of two contemporaneous structures which are similarly detailed (Differences are only seen in the design of the one story base and cornice of each structure).

The fourteen-bay 8th Street (east) and eight-bay Clark Street (north) elevations employ transomed receiving door openings, or similarly scaled multi-paned windows, on the first story base. Above, twenty-five pane industrial windows with casement inserts are enframed by raised brick pilasters and paneled concrete spandrels. Decorative concrete capitals support concrete-framed multi-pane fan lights above seventh story attic windows. Many windows on the 8th Street elevation have been whitewashed from the interior. The upper story of this structure has been repaired with white mortar, in contrast to the red mortar employed in construction. A simple cavetto cornice caps these elevations.

The eight-bay Clark Street (north) elevation of the contemporaneous addition features a large basket-handle-arched tunnel through the structure. Above this four-bay entrance is a stone tablet inscribed with the title ("Cupples Station.") Flanking the arcaded entrance are rectangular window openings, and a pedimented entrance door. The body of this addition is articulated in an identical manner, featuring arcaded brick piers and paneled concrete spandrels. A large stone tablet embellishes the upper story of this elevation, and no cornice is employed.

The side and rear (west) elevations of the "L"-plan warehouse display the exposed concrete framing, and feature multi-paned fixed industrial windows.

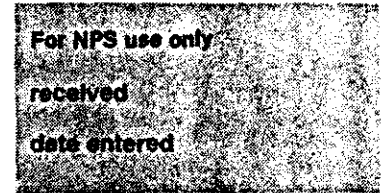
I  
9

315-325 South 8th Street: (Photo #3 - right; Photo #4 - left)

Constructed in 1911, this five story red brick warehouse is articulated in an identical manner on the two principal elevations: South 8th Street (east) and Spruce Street (south). The structure is divided into a base, shaft and attic story by corbeled brick banding, and expresses the arcaded pier and recessed spandrel system characteristic of the Cupples Warehouse District.

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Both the eight-bay east elevation and the five-bay south elevation are enframed by corner bays employing narrow double-hung windows on the lower four stories. The one story base on each elevation features large six pane display windows, and a single entrance door with a round-arched granite surround. Above, paired double-hung windows are employed in rectangular openings on the second and third stories, and in round-arched openings on the fourth story. All double-hung attic story windows are round-arched.

The rear (west) elevation of this structure employs segmentally arched receiving door openings on the lower story, and segmentally arched window openings with rectangular double-hung sash windows above. The attic story of this structure has been repaired with white mortar, in contrast to the red mortar utilized in construction. A simple banded cornice caps all three elevations.

City Block 427 (Bounded by 10th Street, Spruce Street, 9th Street and a highway ramp.):

J  
2  
900-910 Spruce Street: (Photo #5 - right) *Simmons Hardware Co.*

Corbeled brick banding defines the arcaded pier and recessed spandrel system employed on the primary (north) elevation of the seven story red-orange brick structure. Designed in 1895, the articulation of this structure served as an antecedant for three similarly styled warehouses in the Cupples Warehouse District: 1001-09 Spruce (1897), 1015-33 Spruce (1900) and 1014-30 Spruce (1907). The two story base of the six-bay facade features rows of round-arched tripartite windows. Paired, double-hung sash windows are utilized on the third through sixth stories, and sixth story windows are round-arched. Above, twelve round-arched double-hung attic story windows rest on bands of terra cotta, and are embellished by terra cotta imposts. A simple banded cornice caps these bays.

The three south bays of the lower two stories of the east and west elevations are open to permit passage of railroad cars through the structure. This particular warehouse is distinguished as the only structure through which railroad tracks run directly in the Cupples Warehouse District. The roof of this train passage is composed of steel framed and reinforced concrete vaults. Over the train shed, five half-floors, or mezzanine levels, are featured in addition to the regular (five) full floors. On the eleven-bay east elevation, tripartite windows are employed in round-arched lower story openings, and transomed paired, double-hung windows are seen on the upper five stories. Segmentally arched, paired double-hung sash windows are utilized on the opposing thirteen-bay west elevation, and on the upper stories of the six-bay rear (south) elevation. The arcaded first story of the south elevation is open to the railroad car unloading shed. The structure is supported on an irregularly coursed, rusticated stone foundation.

City Block 434 (Bounded by 11th Street, Spruce Street, 10th Street and railroad tracks.):

E  
#1  
1006-1010 Spruce Street: (Photo #6 - left; Photo #7 - historical view) *Patrock - Hawley Iron Company*

Constructed in 1894, this six story red-orange brick structure is the earliest extant structure in the Cupples Warehouse District. Both the Spruce Street (north) and 10th Street (east) elevations feature a one-story brick base with corbeled cavetto cornice, and elevations are also articulated by the characteristic arcaded pier and recessed spandrel system. The eight-bay north, or primary, elevation employs round-arched openings at every level. First story receiving doors are transomed, as are paired double-hung sash windows

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in openings above. Round-arched two-over-two attic story windows rest on corbeled brick banding. The ten-bay east elevation is virtually identical to the north elevation; however, two corner bays employing segmentally arched double-hung sash windows flank the arcaded central bays. A simple corbeled cavetto cornice caps these two elevations.

The south and west elevations of this structure are also virtually identical. Segmentally arched receiving doors are employed on the lower stories of the nine-bay south (rear) and ten-bay west elevation. Above, segmentally arched four-over-four sash windows with brick lintels and wood sills are utilized on each elevation. The structure is borne upon an irregularly coursed rusticated stone foundation.

1014-1030 Spruce Street: (Photo #8 - right; Photo #9 - far right)

D  
#8

Designed in 1907, this seven story red-orange brick structure is very similar to two earlier structures in the Cupples Warehouse District: 1015-33 Spruce (1900) and 1001-09 Spruce (1897), in that the primary elevation is divided into a base, shaft and attic story by corbeled brick banding, and is articulated by arcaded piers and recessed spandrels. The twelve-bay primary (north) elevation features a one and one-half story base. First story receiving door openings have been altered on this elevation. Currently, two fixed plate glass panes are enframed within green ceramic tile in each opening. Narrow corner bays with single six-over-six sash windows flank ten slightly recessed bays employing paired four-over-four windows on the upper six stories of the north elevation.

Segmentally arched receiving door openings are employed on the lower story of the east and west elevations of this structure. The seven-bay east elevation features a very regular fenestration pattern expressed by segmentally arched windows housing paired, four-over-four sash windows. The west elevation is defined by six full bays and two half bays; however, it employs identical windows. Segmentally arched openings with paired four-over-four sash windows are also utilized on the upper six stories of the twelve-bay south (rear) elevation. Many of the original warehouse receiving door openings are obscured by a one story red brick addition to this elevation, completed in 1949. The addition was executed in white mortar, in contrast to the red mortar utilized in construction of the warehouse. This nine-bay addition features rectangular eighteen-pane fixed windows and three garage-style bays.

City Block 435 (Bounded by 11th Street, Clark Street, 10th Street and Spruce Street.):

1015-1033 Spruce Street: (Photo #8 - left; Photo #9 - middle; Photo #10 - right)

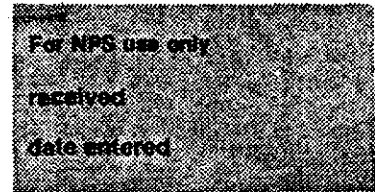
B  
6

This seven story red brick warehouse was constructed in 1900. In this example, the twelve-bay south elevation fronting Spruce Street expresses the arcaded pier and recessed spandrel system characteristic of many of Eames and Young's designs for the Cupples District

Pedimented entrance doors at the east and west corners flank round-arched, transomed, multi-paned windows on the lower story of the primary elevation. This one story base is capped by a cavetto cornice. Corner bays on the upper stories employ single four-over-four sash windows, and inner bays feature paired four-over-four windows in each rectangular opening on the second through fifth stories. Sixth story windows are round-arched.

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Attic story windows are also round-arched, and rest on bands of raised brick. A cavetto cornice terminates this elevation.

Segmentally arched first story receiving door openings and upper story window openings are employed on the north, east and west elevations of this structure. Articulated by five full bays and two half-bays, the seven-bay 11th Street (west) elevation features paired six-over-six sash windows in each full opening, and single six-over-six sash windows in each half-bay. Though identical, attic story windows are shortened in height. Similarly, paired and single four-over-four sash windows are employed on the upper stories of the twelve-bay north elevation. The east (alley) elevation is identical to the west elevation of this structure, featuring transomed, paneled wood receiving doors on the lower story and six-over-six sash windows in segmentally arched openings above.

C  
# 4  
1001-1009 Spruce Street: (Photo #6 - middle; Photo #10 - left; Photo #11 - historical view);  
and 1004-1008 Clark Street: (Photo #6 - right) *Rest of Dupont Circle Warehouse No. 9*

Constructed in 1897, the principal elevations of these adjacent six story orange brick structures are identical. Featuring the characteristic arcaded pier and recessed spandrel system, the eight-bay 10th Street (east) elevations of the contemporaneous structures employ six large, round-arched tripartite windows on each one and one-half story base. Cavetto cornices cap the lower stories. Above, narrow corner bays employing two-over-two sash windows flank arcaded brick piers. Paired four-over-four sash windows are utilized in rectangular openings on the second through fourth stories of the inner bays, and in round-arched openings on each fifth story. Two-over-two attic story windows are round-arched.

A  
S  
The opposing Spruce Street (south) elevation of 1001-09 Spruce and the Clark Street (north) elevation of 1004-08 Clark are also identical. Each six-bay facade features round-arched tripartite windows on the one and one-half story base. Flanking the lower story windows are pedimented entrance doors at the outer corners of each elevation. Above, four-over-four sash windows identical to those seen on the 10th Street facades are employed. Two-over-two attic story windows are again round-arched. A simple cavetto cornice terminates the principal elevations.

The fourteen-bay west elevation of 1001-09 Spruce utilizes segmentally arched receiving door openings on the lower story, and segmentally arched window openings housing six-over-six rectangular sash windows on the upper story. The west elevation of 1004-08 Clark is unarticulated. A small one story concrete and brick addition (Photo #10) has been constructed along the west wall of this structure. The north elevation of the former structure, 1001-09 Spruce, also employs segmentally arched receiving door openings on the lower story, and segmentally arched, two-over-two sash windows above.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1917	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1894-1917 **Builder/Architect** Eames & Young and John L. Howard

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Cupples Warehouse District is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A and C and is significant in the following areas: ARCHITECTURE: Constructed between 1894-1917, the ten District buildings are a group of warehouses of singular importance distinguished by a sophisticated expression of a round-arched facade motif which draws upon the Commercial, Romanesque and Renaissance Revival styles. The unusually fine brick masonry is exploited for maximum effect through a spare use of ornament. All but one building was designed by St. Louis architects Eames & Young who unified the complex through use of the arcaded, continuous pier and spandrel system, fenestration patterns, and similar scale, proportions and materials. COMMUNITY PLANNING: The District developed as a unique, planned warehouse center which offered tenants greater efficiency in shipping transactions through a central clearinghouse. The buildings were planned to connect directly to railroads by a system of tunnels and spur lines which eliminated drayage and provided convenience and economy in labor. The complex was the first in the nation to develop such an advanced system of freight distribution.

In the early 1880s, Robert Brookings, partner and Vice-President of the Samuel Cupples Woodenware Co., began purchasing parcels just south of St. Louis' Central Business District with a view towards relocating the company's headquarters from its river-front location at Second and Olive Streets to a site about one-fourth mile west at Seventh and Spruce. To many, the site seemed less than desirable--part of a generally unimproved area filled with lumber yards, old warehouses and an abandoned city market; for Brookings, it held great potential and appeared well suited to the firm's needs. Situated near the mouth of the Terminal Railroad Association tunnel at Eighth and Spruce Streets, the property adjoined tracks on the south which connected to all major rail lines on both sides of the Mississippi. The location of the land suggested the solution to a problem vexing not only Cupples, but all of the city's large wholesalers who annually dispersed enormous sums for hauling merchandise back and forth between their warehouses and the rail freight station some blocks distant. The site was further enhanced by its proximity to City Hall, the proposed Union Station, the retail and office center of the city and the heavy Washington Avenue jobbing trade.<sup>1</sup>

Initially, it was Brookings' plan to improve the parcel with a single, large warehouse designed for the exclusive use of the Cupples Company. In time, however, he conceived of a far more ambitious scheme which would transform the city's warehouse business.

One day, standing over the entrance of the railroad tunnel, watching the freight trains coming and going, the full picture flashed on his

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mind. Not one warehouse only, a dozen, twenty, fifty! Not the Cupples Company only; all the heavy shippers of the city, now choked with freight and drays on First and Second Streets, concentrated around one vast freight terminal above a web of intersecting tracks. There was nothing like that in the world. Such a station could handle not only carload freight but smaller lots. That would mean further reduction in costs to the consumer, a wider market, a quicker overturn, increased profits.<sup>2</sup>

With this in mind, Brookings set out to acquire for the Samuel Cupples Real Estate Co. (incorporated in 1883) all of the available land along a four-block corridor extending from Seventh to Eleventh Streets between Clark on the north and Poplar on the south. By 1889, the Cupples Co. owned substantial property in this area and plans were announced to begin construction of the first warehouse. The man responsible for this bold venture, Robert S. Brookings (1850-1932), had earned a prominent position in St. Louis business and financial circles following his meteoric rise from receiving clerk to partner in the Cupples Co. which he had built into the nation's largest woodenware company.

In preparation for this undertaking, Brookings negotiated with city officials for closing and widening of streets and alleys; he secured assistance from the railroads in designing spur lines to serve the buildings and in working out a centralized shipping and receiving schedule. Building design was another matter requiring special study. In order to lure the city's leading firms to the new district, Brookings' warehouses would have to offer every amenity and safety feature while meeting requirements for facilitating distribution. The project was entrusted to St. Louis architects Eames & Young, a partnership formed in 1885 that had recently designed a house for Robert Brookings on Lucas Place.

After graduating from the St. Louis School of Fine Arts in 1878, William E. Eames (1859-1915) studied in Paris and Rome before serving as Deputy Commissioner of Public Buildings for St. Louis from 1883-85. Thomas C. Young (1858-1934) was educated at Washington University's School of Architecture, l'École des Beaux Arts in Paris and the University of Heidelberg in Germany. Before forming a practice with Young, Eames worked in the offices of Ware & Van Brunt and E. M. Wheelwright in Boston. Both Eames and Young became Fellows of the American Institute of Architects in 1890. Prior to the Cupples commission, the firm's work consisted chiefly of large private houses.

Of primary concern to prospective tenants were the buildings' strength and fire resistant properties--factors which directly influenced insurance costs. The architects devised a type of slow combustion construction which significantly improved upon conventional St. Louis methods of the day and received endorsement of the St. Louis Board of Fire Underwriters and the Commissioners of Public Buildings. Employing slow-burning, long-leaf Georgia pine that provided general strength "far in excess of similar buildings in the city," the buildings also substantially reduced fire insurance costs through introduction of other features such as brick enclosed stairways and elevator shafts, iron doors and sprinkler equipment supplied by roof tanks.<sup>3</sup>



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Eames & Young's design for the first warehouse (demolished), constructed in 1889 at the southwest corner of Seventh and Spruce established a model for warehouse design that would gain national recognition for its architectural expression as well as for its functional and mechanical features. The sparsely ornamented facade, articulated by a tripart horizontal division and continuous arcaded piers with recessed spandrels, set a design precedent that was sustained in various ways throughout the eighteen-year building period of the Cupples warehouses. The strong Romanesque Revival forms of Building #1 indicated a mastery of H. H. Richardson's commercial work (Fig. #1). Filling over half a City Block with a frontage of 400 feet on Seventh Street and a depth of 125 feet on Spruce and Poplar, the massive seven-story brick warehouse (housing eight firms) was indebted in conception to Richardson's Marshall Field wholesale warehouse (1885-87) but bore a closer resemblance in elevation to his Ames Building (1886-87) in Boston. Locally, the new warehouse was admired for its "simplicity and straightforwardness," and its careful attention to the "practical requirements of utility and construction" with "nothing subordinated to artificial decoration or forced ornament."<sup>4</sup>

By 1895, ten warehouses had been built or were under construction in the Cupples District. Three of the buildings are still standing (see Site Plan). The city's wholesale businessmen, it was reported, were now convinced that the district was indeed the "legitimate trade territory for heavy wholesale business and will be the area in which the bulk of such business is destined to be transacted in the future."<sup>5</sup> Indication that the Cupples complex was gaining attention outside St. Louis appeared in 1895 with two articles in Engineering News that noted that Cupples' 52 hydraulic elevators were perhaps the "largest single installation in the world" and the shipping process which served the various warehouses was "probably the most successful effort along these lines in this country...well worth a visit from any engineer who may have the opportunity."<sup>6</sup>

The design of the new warehouses continued along lines established by Building #1, exploiting the brick masonry with strong, simple forms relieved by little or no historical detailing, but with refinements to the arcaded pier and spandrel system (Photos #5, #7). As architects Eames & Young explained:

No single style of architecture has governed the treatment of the entire group but the motives have been generally taken from the Romanesque and Renaissance, as being the styles most susceptible of adaptation for buildings of this character; selection of the styles in each instance being governed by location, size and function of each separate building.

Clients also occasionally influenced design as some wished to project an individual identity within the group of firms leasing the Cupples' blocks. 815-817 Spruce, erected in 1895 for the St. Louis Glass & Queensware Co., appears to be such a case with its distinctive ornamental scrollwork at the cornice and the paneled piers (Photo #2).

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The seven-story warehouse built in 1895 for the Simmons Hardware Co. at 900-10 Spruce (Photo #5 - right) was singled out for praise by critics in both The Brick-builder and The Architectural Record. Writing for the last named journal, Russell Sturgis approvingly noted the frank presentation of the fire escape, a dream of every "realistic designer," and the "pleasing disposition of the openings...in a building kept severely plain and not even resorting to novel experiments in the way of design." He summed up the building's unusually fine qualities by saying:

Nowhere is there a more sedate piece of fenestration than in this severe pile of brickwork, with its effect of mouldings got by mere breaks in square alternations of bricklaying, and a proportioning of openings and solids almost classical in its restraint.<sup>7</sup>

The design solution reached in the Simmons building was also satisfying to the architects for they employed its general features in almost all of the warehouses which followed.

Direct testimony of the advantages offered in the Cupples district is provided by an account of the Simmons Company's decision to contract for the new building at 900-10 Spruce so that it was connected to the firm's other Cupples facility on Poplar Street by an extended 270 foot iron bridge:

One object in moving was need of more room and to be on the railroad tracks, and while the rent was high [\$71,581.08 for both buildings] we expected to save a large part of what we had been paying out for drayage. Our drayage account in 1895 amounted to \$15,933.40.

In addition to this, the track facilities, through the tracks running into our Poplar St. Warehouse, very largely expedited the handling of goods.

Also, the lessors furnished heat for the buildings and power for the elevators, which items we had to furnish for ourselves at the old location at Ninth and Washington Avenue.<sup>8</sup>

An innovative feature of the new warehouse was the location of railroad tracks in a passageway which tunneled through the south end of the building above grade instead of entering into the basement as was the case in some of the earlier buildings. A reinforced concrete arch system supported the span of the upper stories across the tracks.

At the turn of the century, the Cupples Station complex was handling 1000 tons of merchandise daily, exceeding shipments of any railway freight station in the nation. Brookings' success in founding the district was widely recognized as being "worth more to the commercial interests of St. Louis than any other business enterprise attempted

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by the men of this generation."<sup>9</sup> Scientific American appraised the complex as having been "worked out on a scale of elaborateness with a perfection of detail unequalled by any similar institution in the world," its features of organization and economy representative of the "most complete development of a typically American idea."<sup>10</sup> The centralized network of warehouses, interconnected by underground tunnels, was served by railroad switches allowing goods to be expeditiously loaded directly from train cars to hand trucks or carts which delivered the merchandise to the various tenants in a single handling of the freight. In addition to the physical plan and arrangement of the buildings and tracks, the success of the Cupples system was dependent upon a superbly coordinated shipping process which performed as if it were the "operations of a single organization."

All the loading, unloading, and handling of goods is done, not by the shippers and receivers, but by the employes [sic] of the Station management. They unload the cars, move the trucks, and deliver the goods at the consignee's door. When a firm is shipping freight, it need only place it on the truck. It is moved to the cars and placed on board by the station employes, who also attend to the bills of lading and all such matters. The expense of this work is assessed pro rata on the different tenants according to the extent of their shipments. This makes possible further economies in the loading and movement of cars.<sup>11</sup>

The architectural treatment of the buildings continued to elicit high acclaim in national journals as well as in the local press. The Cupples group was described by a writer for The Inland Architect in 1900 as having "brought warehouse design to a point where little improvement is possible." The unifying and characteristic features of the buildings--tripart horizontal divisions, deep reveals in the openings, strongly accented, continuous piers, and corbeled brick cavetto cornices--were found to be expressive of their purpose, making "little demand upon precedent" as possible. The writer concluded with an invitation to those "searching the heavens for an unaffected indigenous style of American Architecture to turn their telescopes Westward."<sup>12</sup>

In 1900, Samuel Cupples and Robert Brookings, Corporate President since 1895 of the Board of Directors of Washington University in St. Louis, endowed the institution with all of their stock in the Cupples Station property. The gift, valued at some \$3000,000, provided the school with a net annual revenue estimated at \$125,000 in 1901. Under the direction of Brookings, the University built three additional warehouses in the district between 1907 and 1917, all designed by Eames & Young in the manner of the earlier buildings. The last building, however, utilized reinforced concrete construction. A warehouse erected in 1905 at 820-26 Clark Street by the Columbia Transfer Co. was purchased by the University in 1919. Designed by St. Louis architect John L. Howard, the building was consistent with the handling of forms and materials in the Eames & Young warehouses (Photo #1 - left). According to one source, the Cupples warehouse

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**National Register of Historic Places  
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plan was widely adopted and "revolutionized the handling of freight" in many of the country's large cities. The Bush Terminals in New York, the Pittsburgh Terminal Warehouses and the central manufacturing and warehouse district in Chicago were cited as examples influenced by the St. Louis project.<sup>13</sup>

The Cupples District continued to thrive as a center of warehousing and distribution until, in more recent years, truck and air transportation began to supplant rails as the principal means of shipping. After several buildings were demolished by fire and for construction of ramps extending from Highway 40, the Society of Architectural Historians passed a resolution in 1968 urging that the remaining buildings be preserved as "outstanding elements of our national heritage," citing the uniqueness of design, construction and function.

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FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>St. Louis Republic, 19 May 1889.

<sup>2</sup>Hermann Hagedorn, Brookings: A Biography (New York: The McMillan Co., 1936), p. 112.

<sup>3</sup>St. Louis Republic, 19 May 1889, 5 May 1895.

<sup>4</sup>St. Louis Republic, 19 May 1889.

<sup>5</sup>St. Louis Republic, 5 May 1895.

<sup>6</sup>Engineering News, 14 November 1895, p. 331.

<sup>7</sup>Russell Sturgis, "Some Recent Warehouses," The Architectural Record, May 1908.

<sup>8</sup>A. E. Dann, "History of the Simmons Hardware Co.," unpublished typescript, 1921. Collections of the Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri.

<sup>9</sup>World's Fair Bulletin, Dec. 1901, p.8.

<sup>10</sup>Scientific American, 29 August 1903.

<sup>11</sup>Scientific American, 29 August 1903.

<sup>12</sup>Inland Architect and News Record, May 1900.

<sup>13</sup>Hagedorn, Brookings, p.117.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property Approximately 7 acres

Quadrangle name Cahokia, IL/MO

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

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

B 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

C 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** Beginning at the point of intersection of the south line of Spruce Street and the west line of 8th Street; thence westwardly along said line of Spruce Street to its point of intersection with the west line of 9th Street; thence southwardly along said line of 9th Street to its point of intersection

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

state	code	county	code

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

name/title Mary M. Stiritz, Research Associate, Sec. 8; Barbara Lang, Researcher, Sec. 7

organization Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc. date April 16, 1985

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

city or town St. Louis state MO 63101

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

For NPS use only

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

date \_\_\_\_\_

Keeper of the National Register

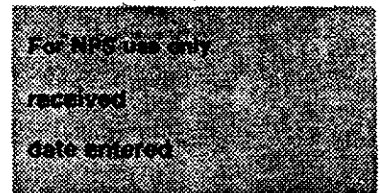
Attest:

date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Cupples Warehouse District Item number 9

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Inland Architect and News Record, May 1900.

St. Louis Republic, 5 May 1895; 19 May 1889.

Scientific American, 29 August 1903.

Sturgis, Russell, "Some Recent Warehouses," The Architectural Record, May 1908.

World's Fair Bulletin, December 1901.

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with the south line of the building at 900-910 Spruce Street; thence westwardly along said building line to its point of intersection with the west line of said building; thence northwardly along said line of building to its point of intersection with the north line of railroad tracks; thence westwardly along said line, crossing all intervening streets and alleys to its point of intersection with the east line of the rear projection of the building at 1014-1030 Spruce Street; thence southwardly along the irregular east line of said rear projection to its point of intersection with the south line of said rear projection; thence westwardly along said line to its point of intersection with the east line of 11th Street; thence northwardly along said line, crossing all intervening streets to its point of intersection with the north line of the building at 1015-1033 Spruce Street; thence eastwardly along said line, crossing the intervening space to its point of intersection with the north line of the building at 1001-1009 Spruce Street; thence northwardly, crossing the intervening space to its point of intersection with the west line of the building at 1004-1008 Clark Street; thence northwardly along said line to its point of intersection with the north line of said building; thence eastwardly along said line to its point of intersection with the west line of 10th Street; thence southwardly along said line to its point of intersection with the north line of Spruce Street; thence eastwardly, crossing all intervening streets and alleys to its point of intersection with the east line of 9th Street; thence northwardly along said line to its point of intersection with the south line of Clark Street; thence eastwardly along said line to its point of intersection with the west line of 8th Street; thence southwardly along said line to its point of intersection with the point of origin.

The Cupples Warehouse District is bounded on the west by buildings neither built as warehouses nor used as part of the Cupples complex, on the north by cleared land and new construction, and on the east and south by cleared land and U.S. Highway 40 and its attendant ramps.



STATE OF MISSOURI  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY AND WATER RESOURCES

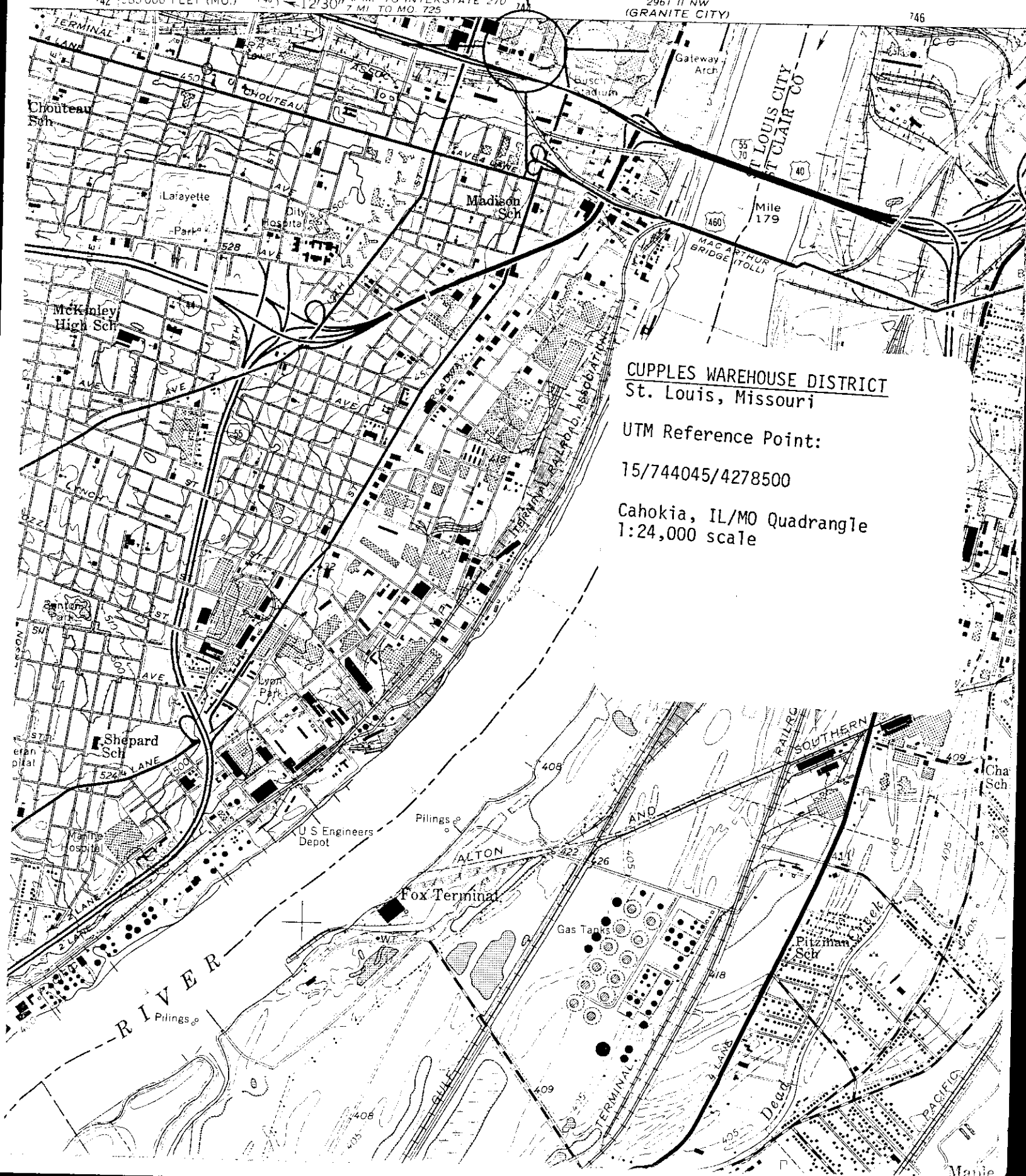
STATE OF ILLINOIS  
DEPARTMENT OF REGISTRATION  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

742 1:630 000 FEET (MO.)

12'30" 1/3 MI TO INTERSTATE 270  
7 MI TO MO. 725

18 MI. TO INTERSTATE 270  
2961 ft NW  
(GRANITE CITY)

746



CUPPLES WAREHOUSE DISTRICT  
St. Louis, Missouri

UTM Reference Point:

15/744045/4278500

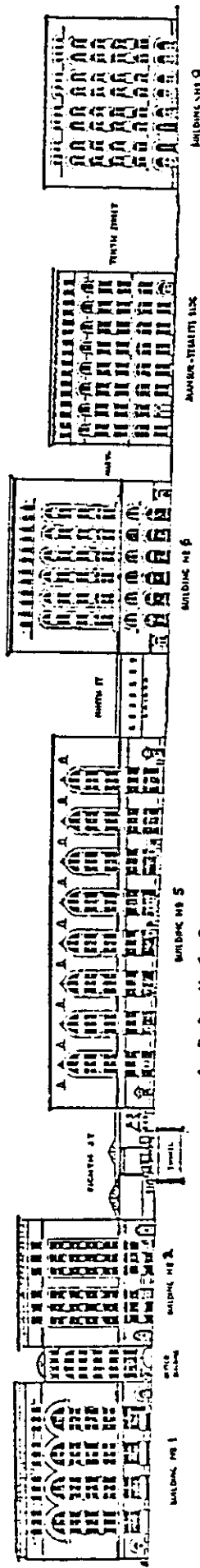
Cahokia, IL/MO Quadrangle  
1:24,000 scale

CUPPLES WAREHOUSE DISTRICT  
St. Louis, Missouri

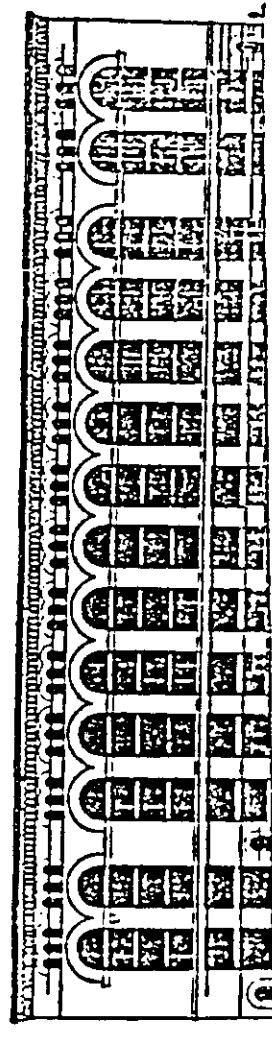
Figure 1 of 1

Source: St. Louis Republic,  
May 5, 1895

Figure 1



S P R U C E S T R E E  
ELEVATIONS OF WAREHOUSES, CUPPLES DISTRICT.

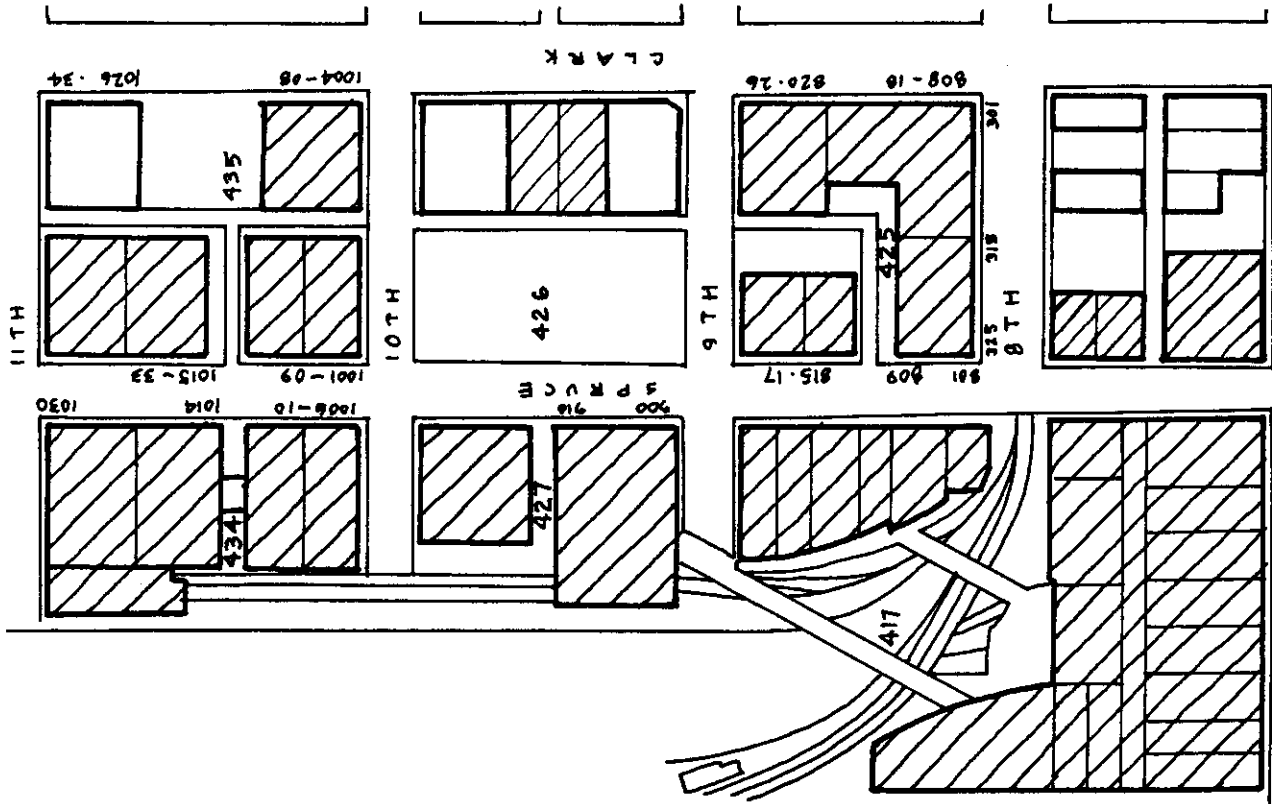


BUILDING NO 1  
SEVENTH STREET

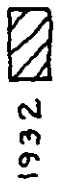
CUPPLES WAREHOUSE DISTRICT  
St. Louis, Missouri

Site Plan With Photo Angles

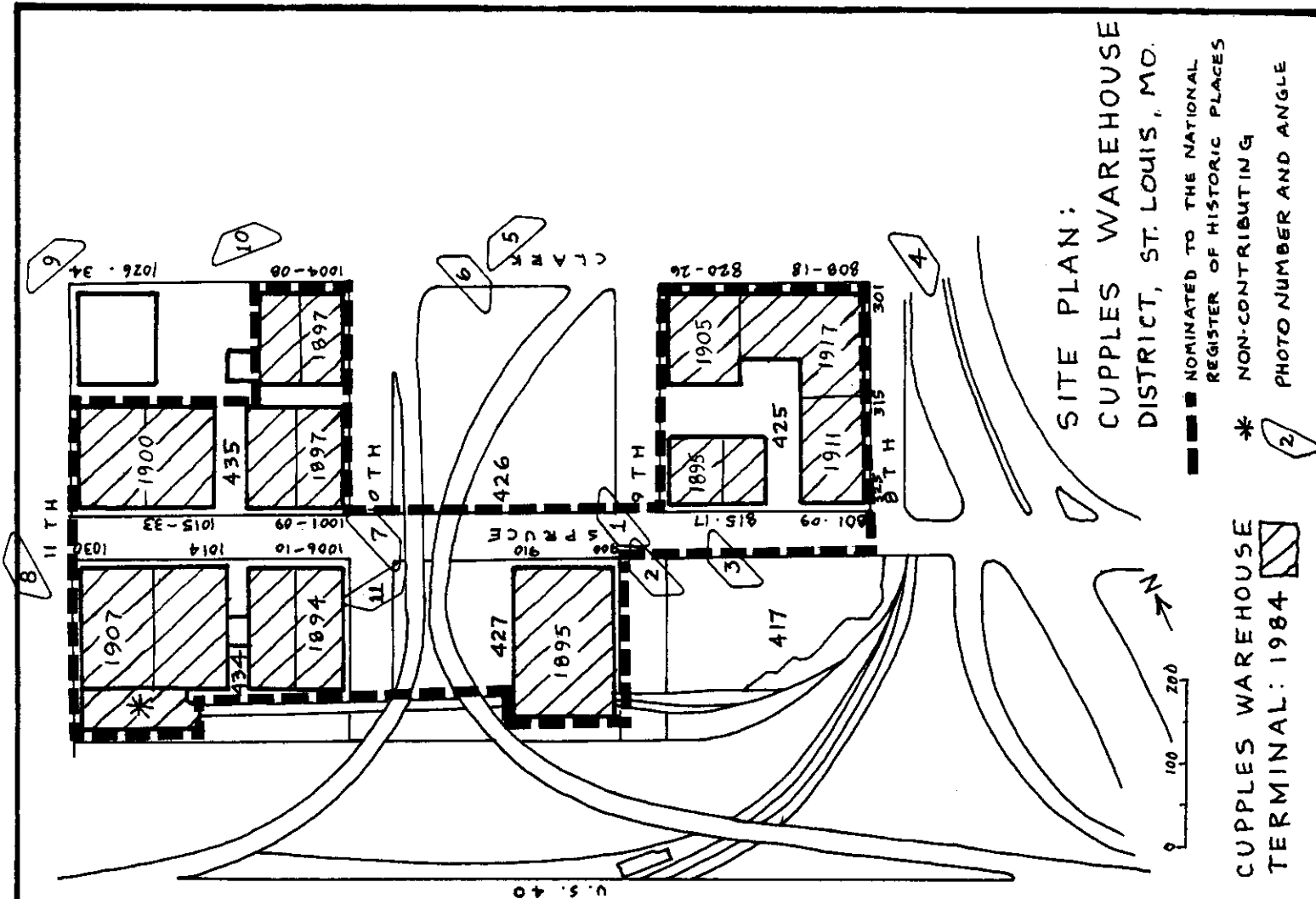
Drafted by Pat Hayes Baer, 1984



CUPPLES WAREHOUSE TERMINAL: 1932



1932



SITE PLAN:  
CUPPLES WAREHOUSE  
DISTRICT, ST. LOUIS, MO.

- NOMINATED TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
- \* NON-CONTRIBUTING

CUPPLES WAREHOUSE  
TERMINAL: 1984



1984

CUPPLES WAREHOUSE DISTRICT

City Block #425, west elevations;  
815-17 Spruce Street at right

#1 of 11

Photographer: Cynthia Longwisch

Date: January 1985

Negative: Landmarks Association  
of St. Louis, Inc.

Camera facing east



CUPPLES WAREHOUSE DISTRICT  
south & west elevations, 815-17  
Spruce Street

#2 of 11

Photographer: Unknown

Date: circa 1900

Negative: Landmarks Association  
of St. Louis, Inc.

Camera facing east





CUPPLES WAREHOUSE DISTRICT  
south elevation, 815-17 Spruce  
Street (left)

#3 of 11

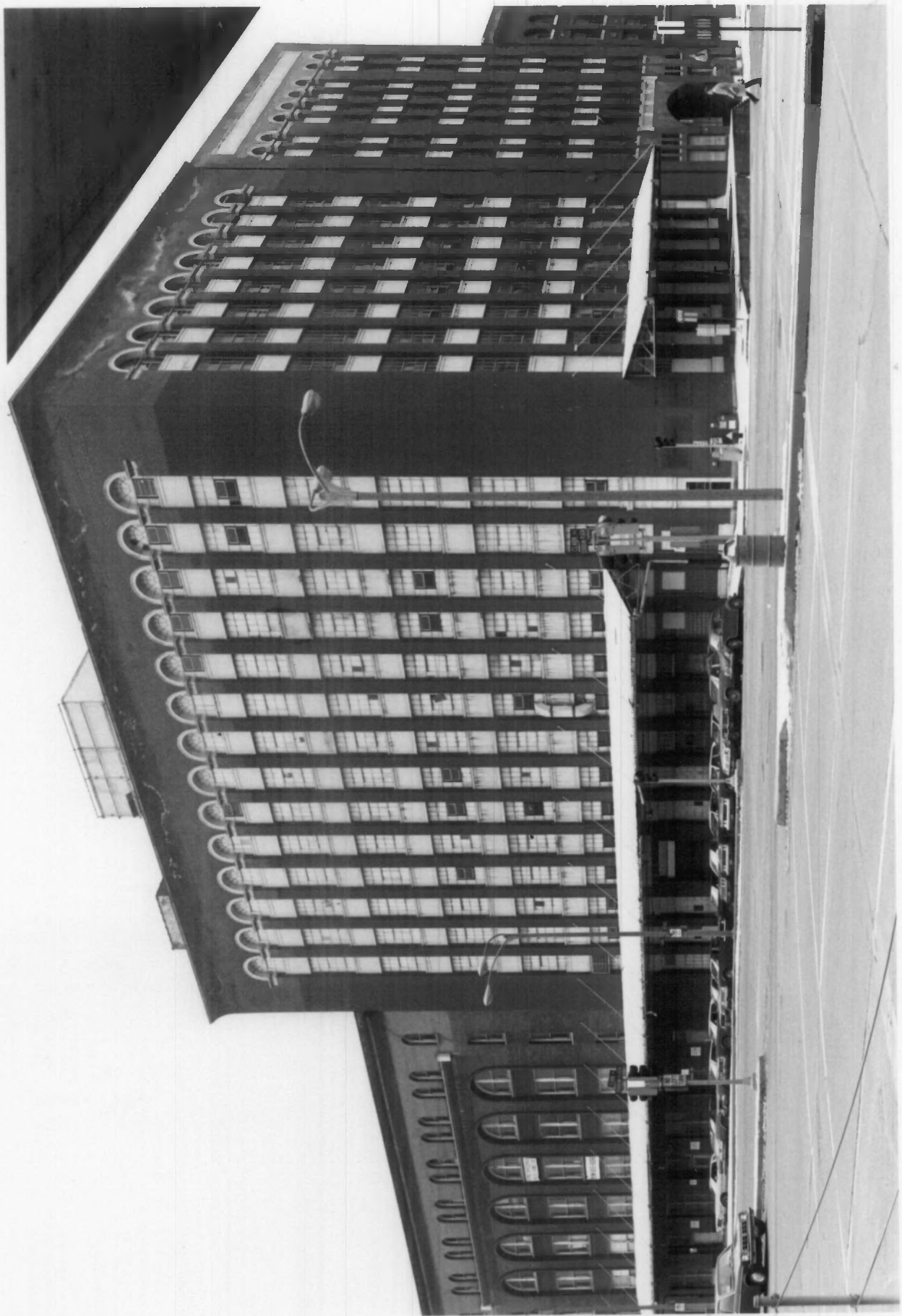
Photographer: Cynthia Longwisch  
Date: January 1985  
Negative: Landmarks Association  
of St. Louis, Inc.  
Camera facing east



CUPPLES WAREHOUSE DISTRICT  
south & east elevations, (l to r)  
315-01 8th Street/808-18 Clark St.

#4 of 11

Photographer: Cynthia Longwisch  
Date: January 1985  
Negative: Landmarks Association  
of St. Louis, Inc.  
Camera facing west



CUPPLES WAREHOUSE DISTRICT

west elevation, 815-17 Spruce (L)  
and north elevation, 900-10 Spruce  
Street (R)

#5 of 11

Photographer: Cynthia Longwisch

Date: January 1985

Negative: Landmarks Association  
of St. Louis, Inc.

Camera facing south



CUPPLES WAREHOUSE DISTRICT  
east elevations, (l to r)1006,1001  
Spruce Street, 1004 Clark Street

#6 of 11

Photographer: Cynthia Longwisch  
Date: January 1985  
Negative: Landmarks Association  
of St. Louis, Inc.  
Camera facing west





CUPPLES WAREHOUSE DISTRICT  
north & east elevations, 1006-10  
Spruce Street

#7 of 11

Photographer: Unknown  
Date: circa 1900  
Negative: Landmarks Association  
of St. Louis, Inc.  
Camera facing west

*Building #10*



CUPPLES WAREHOUSE DISTRICT

Spruce Street from 11th Street;  
1030 Spruce Street at right

#8 of 11

Photographer: Cynthia Longwisch

Date: January 1985

Negative: Landmarks Association  
of St. Louis, Inc.

Camera facing east



CUPPLES WAREHOUSE DISTRICT

rear elevation, 1015-33 Spruce St.  
(middle); 1026-34 Clark, foreground

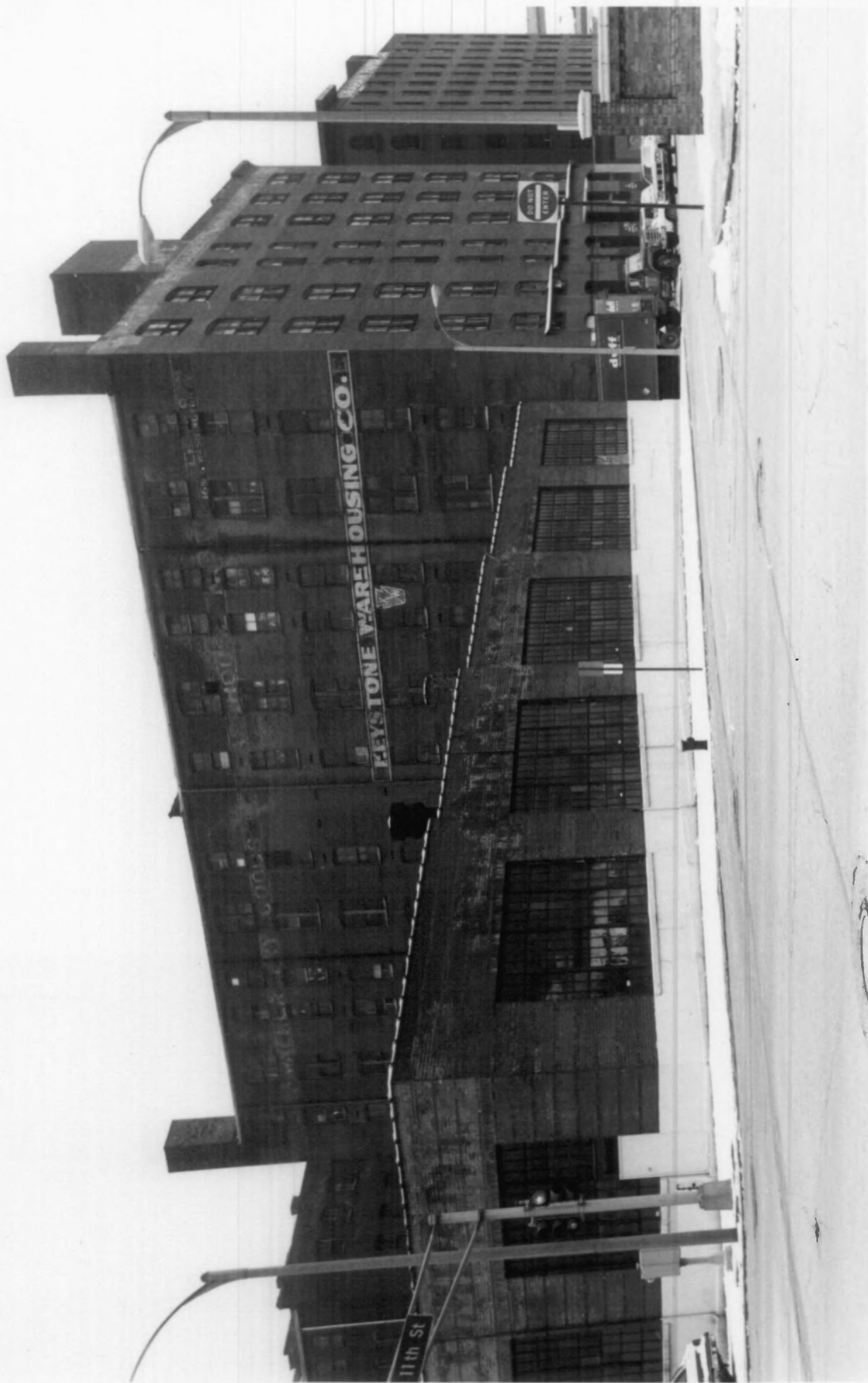
#9 of 11

Photographer: Cynthia Longwisch

Date: January 1985

Negative: Landmarks Association  
of St. Louis, Inc.

Camera facing south

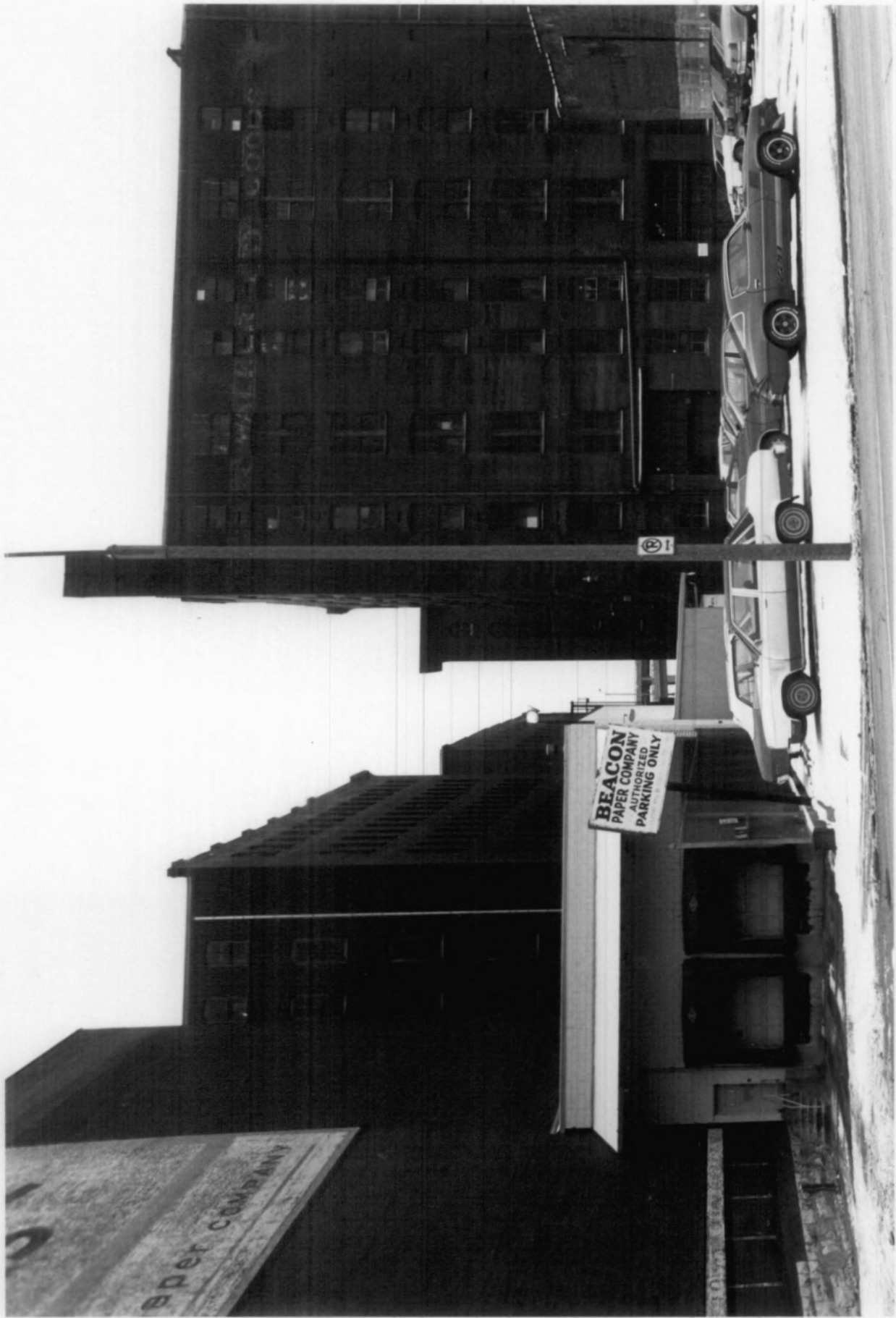


CUPPLES WAREHOUSE DISTRICT  
north & west (rear) elevations,  
1015-33 Spruce Street (right)

#10 of 11

Photographer: Cynthia Longwisch  
Date: January 1985  
Negative: Landmarks Association  
of St. Louis, Inc.  
Camera facing south





CUPPLES WAREHOUSE DISTRICT  
west & south elevations, 1001-09  
Spruce Street

#11 of 11

Photographer: Unknown  
Date: circa 1900  
Negative: Landmarks Association  
of St. Louis, Inc.  
Camera facing north

