

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Guth, Edwin F. Company Complex
other names/site number St. Louis Brass Manufacturing Co., Brascolite Co., Luminous Unit Co.

2. Location

street & number 2615 Washington Avenue [n/a] not for publication
city or town St. Louis [n/a] vicinity
state Missouri code MO county St. Louis [Independent City] code 510 zip code 63103

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 [].)

Mark A. Miles 06/09/04
Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles / 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

	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
I hereby certify that the property is:		
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register See continuation sheet [].	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet [].	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, explain see continuation sheet [].	_____	_____

USD/NPS NRHP Registration Form
Guth, Edwin F. Company Complex
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

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)	4	1 building
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	0 sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0 structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	0	0 objects
		4	1 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: warehouse
INDUSTRY: manufacturing facility
OTHER: invention

Current Functions

COMMERCE: business
COMMERCE: warehouse
INDUSTRY: manufacturing facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

LATE 19th & EARLY 20th CENTURY AMERICAN
MOVEMENTS
OTHER: Daylight Factory Buildings

Materials

foundation Limestone
Concrete
walls Brick
Concrete
Metal
roof Asphalt
other

see continuation sheet []

see continuation sheet []

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet [x]

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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

COMMERCE

INDUSTRY

INVENTION

Periods of Significance

1907 to 1954

Significant Dates

1884

1907

1919

1948

Significant Person(s)

Guth, Edwin F., Sr./Inventor

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Wees, John Ludwig/architect

Jungling, Rudolph J./architect

William B. Ittner, Inc./architect

Wedemeyer & Hecker/architect

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: _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property under 1 acre

UTM References

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
<u>15</u>	<u>742 540</u>	<u>4279 980</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 Matthew Bivens/Researcher
organization Landmarks Association of St. Louis date January 16, 2004
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 George E. Walsh Building LLC (City of St. Louis Property Assessor's Database)
street & number 8135 Forsyth Blvd, Suite #222 telephone _____
city or town Clayton state MO zip code 63105

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

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Guth, Edwin F. Company Complex
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Summary

The five buildings of the Edwin F. Guth Company Complex at 2615 Washington Avenue (labeled A-E on the site map on page 18), just west of the boundary of the St. Louis Central Business District, occupy most of city block 930 bounded by Jefferson Avenue to the east, Samuel Shepard Drive (also Lucas Avenue) to the north, Beaumont Street to the west and Washington Avenue to the south. Two main buildings (buildings B, C), designed by St. Louis architects John L. Wees (building B, built 1907) and Rudolph J. Jungling (building C, built 1919), contain the most architectural detail; these three and five-story Commercial style buildings are trapezoidal and rectangular in footprint. The 1907 building (building B) has four total bays across the facade with recessed window bays containing single and tripled windows; windows are covered with fiberglass panels. A brightly colored Modernistic facade surrounds a ceramic tiled and recessed primary entrance. The 1919 building (building C) has an intact terra cotta cornice above five bays of segmental arched windows. Five first floor bays contain original wooden multi-light windows with transoms above; an entrance with a bracketed cornice is in the center bay. The remaining three buildings (buildings A built in 1884, D built in 1948 and E built in 1963) have modern or contemporary architectural detail and have few facade bays ranging from one to three per building. The Edwin F. Guth Company Complex is in good condition and retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. One 1884 building (building A), one 1907 building (building B), one 1919 building (building C) and one 1948 building (building D) count as four contributing resources. One 1963 building at the west counts as a non-contributing resource. A 1962 addition, connected at the rear of the 1919 building (building C), is separated from the nominated complex by a permanent interior wall built approximately thirty feet into the addition (see site map, page 18). Most elevations of all five buildings are painted light gray.

Exterior

The Edwin F. Guth Company Complex totals five adjoined buildings; four are contributing and one is non-contributing. The buildings range in size from one-story to five-stories, in footprint from rectangular or square to trapezoidal and in date from 1884 to 1963. All five buildings were originally built as separate buildings but are now inter-

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connected; inconclusive building permits do not state exactly when buildings were open to one another. Most exterior elevations are painted light gray. (photo 1) Buildings will be described beginning at the far eastern boundary at Jefferson Avenue, facing south on Washington Avenue, and are labeled A through E. (see site map, page 18)

The first building (building A) corresponds to an 1884 building permit issued to Nathan Cole for five adjoining two-story brick dwellings and stores costing \$12,500; the building counts as one contributing resource. Originally spanning 2601-03-05-07-09 Washington Avenue; the building housed numerous individual residences and local businesses throughout its sixty-year history prior to Guth's acquisition about 1944. The building's original front façade was altered; inconclusive building permits suggest the alteration was probably completed in 1944 (during the period of significance and acquisition) and included the present arrangement of closures and new window openings. The eastern-most section (numbers 2601 and 2603 Washington Avenue) was lost to the widening of Jefferson Avenue in the 1950s; a building permit to erect a new wall on the east side of 2605 was issued to Guth in 1958. Although the facade of the remaining section of the 1884 building has been altered, some of the original architectural detail is extant: an original segmental arch can be seen at the second story south façade; limestone bases support slightly projecting brick pilasters at individual building ends; the rear contains the original segmental-arched window and entrance bays (boarded). (photos 1, 2)

Building A is painted light gray and divided into three bays at the front façade. Each of the three bays project slightly from the next one; projecting brick pilasters with limestone bases mark the division of each section. The center and left façade bay contain a thin band of fixed industrial sash windows at the first story; windows are paired and contain two lights each for a total of eight lights per bay. The second story left bay contains a slightly taller band of hinged industrial sash windows containing five divisions of four lights each; an original bricked-in segmental arch can be seen above the altered window bay. The second story center bay contains the same height band of hinged industrial sash windows, but contains two divisions of four lights each. The right bay is solid brick with no openings; the painted surface appears to cover black-glazed brick below. (photo 1) The rear is intact and features typical segmental arched doors and window bays (with limestone sills) of the 1884 period of construction. (photo 2)

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Building B (to the west of building A), was the first building constructed for the St. Louis Brass Manufacturing Company at 2611 Washington Avenue.¹ (photos 1, 3) Edwin Guth's father, Frederick, commissioned notable St. Louis architect, John Ludwig Wees (FAIA) to design this building as a factory, warehouse and salesroom in 1907. A permit for the three-story portion cost \$5,000; the five-story portion cost \$7,000. This three and five-story brick Commercial style building counts as one contributing resource.

Building B's primary entrance, numbered 2615 Washington Avenue, is located in the three-story portion. The primary entrance is recessed into the building and is reached by steps; it is surrounded with multi-colored ceramic tiles, sheltered under a cloth awning and surrounded by an angular Modernistic ground-level façade. The Modernistic façade was the result of a later exterior alteration; inconclusive building permits suggest the alteration was either from 1940 or 1958. The Modernistic façade contains four window bays and two entrance bays; one entrance being the primary one described above. The second entrance is to the left of the main entrance and contained within the five-story portion of the building; this slightly recessed entrance has boarded glass but the door appears functional. In between the two entrances is a thin band of fixed industrial sash windows containing three divisions with two lights each. Above are three taller bays of hinged industrial sash windows containing three divisions of three lights each. Surrounding these bays, the angular Modernistic façade contains light blue metallic square panels framed by a projecting darker blue metal band. (photos 1, 3) The building's far left bay (outside the Modernistic façade) contains a thin band of fixed industrial sash windows containing three divisions with two lights each at the first story; a taller bay of hinged industrial sash windows containing three divisions of three lights each is above. (photos 1, 3)

The second story of building B contains three single wide recessed window bays at the five-story portion; the center bay is slightly smaller. One wide recessed window bay is in the three-story portion. The third story of the five-story portion contains two tripled window bays with one single recessed window bay in the center; the center window matches the one below. One tripled window bay is in the three-story portion. The fourth story of the five-story portion contains two tripled window bays with one single

¹ When the building was completed after August 1, 1907, Guth's first company, the St. Louis Brass Manufacturing Company, moved from its former location at 1112-1120 Market Street (demolished) to its second and permanent home on Washington.

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segmental arch recessed window bay in the center; again the center window matches the one below in width. The fifth story contains three tripled and recessed window bays. All windows are covered with fiberglass panels and are on brick sills. The building's five-story portion has a slightly projecting central bay up to the fourth story; it contains narrower window bays, described above, from the second through the fourth stories. The bay's second story window has a projecting brick surround; subtle in nature, it frames the window and contains quadrants of a circle at either end just above the sill. The cornice is unadorned. (photos 1, 3)

The east side of the three-story portion of building B contains nine segmental-arched double-hung windows on brick sills with two-over-two lights; windows are original to the building. The east side of the five-story portion of building B contains two segmental-arched double-hung windows on brick sills with two-over-two lights at the fifth story and four identical windows at the fourth; again windows are original. (photos 1, 2) The rear elevation (north) contains an entrance at ground level at the three-story portion and two segmental-arched double-hung windows on brick sills with two-over-two lights at the second and third stories; an additional window opening is just below the second story. The five-story portion contains two double-door loading docks slightly above ground level; above are five segmental-arched multi-light windows on brick sills. The second and third stories contain five segmental-arched double-hung windows on brick sills with two-over-two lights. The fourth story contains four double-hung windows on brick sills with two-over-two lights; a fifth window is bricked-in. The fifth story contains two segmental-arched windows on brick sills with two-over-two lights. A metal fire escape was installed at the right of building B's rear; each landing spans the width of two windows (the escape at the fifth spans one window). (photo 2) The west side of building B is attached to a five-story 1919 building (building C).

A two-story addition, at the west of the five-story portion of building B, was built circa 1909; inconclusive building permits do not point to the original date but the building appears on a circa 1909 Whipple map and a building permit for an interior alteration to the building was issued late in 1909. No demolition permits were found for the site; a street numbering certificate was issued to the addition in 1921. The addition's brick façade is painted light gray to match the other buildings. (photos 1, 3) A band of slightly recessed tripled two-over-two double-hung windows is above ground level; a triple bay at the second story is boarded. The cornice is unadorned. The building is sandwiched

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between the 1907 building to the east (building B) and a 1919 building (building C) to the west; it terminates at the north by a portion of the 1907 building.

In 1916, just west of building B, Guth commissioned St. Louis architect Rudolph J. Jungling to design a five-story brick and concrete "first-class factory" at 2621 Washington Avenue for \$20,000 (building C).² The building was not actually built until a second permit from 1919 was issued for \$40,000.³ This Commercial style building counts as one contributing resource. (photos 1, 4)

Although the façade of building C is painted light gray, brass-colored glazed brick is intact underneath; these glazed surfaces cover the entire façade. The first story of the building contains a central entrance bay. The boarded entrance has multi-light sidelights above wooden panels; a bracketed lintel slightly overhangs above. Above the lintel, three transom windows with four lights each are in between double-hung windows with four-over-four lights. All windows have engaged columns with Tuscan capitals in between and at the ends; a solid wood sill course above supports five four-light transom windows with engaged baluster columns. (photo 5) Two right side bays contain five double-hung windows with four-over-four lights; engaged columns with Tuscan capitals are at the sides of the end windows. A solid wood sill course above supports five four-light transom windows with engaged baluster columns. (photos 3, 4) Two left side bays contain identical double-hung windows with four-over-four lights at the ends only; engaged columns containing Tuscan capitals are intact. Between the double-hung windows at the left two bays are fixed multi-light windows. Again, a solid wood sill course above supports five four-light transom windows with engaged baluster columns. (photo 4)

The first and second stories of building C are separated by a slightly projecting sill course. The second through the fourth stories have intact multi-paned industrial sash windows with spandrel panels across five wide bays; windows are covered with semi-transparent fiberglass panels. The fifth story window bays are identical except that they have segmental-arched heads. Window bays are slightly recessed; vertical bands act as pilasters in between and at the building ends. A second sill course is set near the middle

² This building is briefly described in *A Preservation Plan for St. Louis* (1995) "Industrial and Manufacturing Buildings" in section "World's Fair City and the Automobile: 1904-1940."

³ A street numbering certificate for 2625 Washington issued in 1919 (#62533) agrees with the later permit.

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of the fifth story window bays and spans across the façade. A dentilled terra cotta cornice is above. (photo 4) A portion of building C's east elevation can be viewed past the front façade; it contains numerous bays of tripled double-hung two-over-two windows or fiberglass-paneled window bays from the second story up.

The rear elevation, or north, of building C has a double-door loading bay sheltered under a metal awning opposite a 1962 building addition. (photo 2) A band of four-over-four industrial sash windows are on a brick sill to the left of the loading doors; above the awning are three double-light windows. The second and third stories have three bays of double-hung four-over-four windows on brick sills containing three, five and then four joined windows; the third story center bay is covered with a wide fiberglass panel. Window bays at the fourth and fifth stories are also covered with fiberglass panels. (photo 2) The remaining portion of the rear elevation at the furthest west of the building is one of only two sections that are unpainted brick. The exposed second through the fifth stories contain three bays of four double-hung four-over-four windows; concrete framing can be seen over the window heads. (photo 2) The second unpainted portion is facing west at this elevation where near full width bands of industrial sash windows span the wall; the fourth and fifth stories are covered with fiberglass panels. The west elevation of building C contains four window bays per floor from the second through the fifth stories. Containing four double-hung four-over-four windows at each bay, few on the second and third stories are individually covered with panels or altered for vents; the fourth story contains three paneled window bays and the fifth story window bays are all covered. (photo 4)

A one-story 1962 building addition (attached at the rear of building C) was designed by St. Louis architects William B. Ittner, Inc., and Wedemeyer & Hecker; it faces Samuel Shepard Drive (Lucas Avenue). This column-less metal building has a low-gabled roof; the east elevation contains numerous loading dock bays and entrance doors. (photos 2, 7) Only three loading bay doors and a single entrance at the south end of the addition belong to the Guth Company today; the majority of the building is separated permanently and is presently owned by another company (access is by two entrances on the east façade). Inconclusive building permits do not state when a permanent interior wall was installed to partition the addition from the nominated Guth Complex approximately thirty feet inside the addition. (See site map, page 18)

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Building D, a one-story 1948 brick and concrete block factory building (joined at the west to building C) was designed by St. Louis architect Robert McMahon; it counts as one contributing resource. The building is also painted light gray. Inconclusive building permits do not specify when building D was opened (via wall openings) to buildings C and E. The unarticulated south façade has three louvered vents at the right bay, an entrance is in the center bay and three large window bays containing three joined multi-paned louvered windows are at the left bay. (photos 4, 6) The north elevation is hidden behind the 1962 addition to building C, the west portion is attached to a 1963 building (building E). (photo 6)

Building E, a one-story 1963 concrete block warehouse and factory building (joined at the west to building D) was designed by St. Louis architect Wesley Wedemeyer; it counts as a non-contributing resource. The building is also painted light gray. Inconclusive building permits do not specify when building E was opened to building D. The façade is simple; a Guth Lighting sign is installed on a paneled wall at the right bay, a wide band of multi-paned industrial sash clerestory windows is at the left bay. (photo 6) The rear elevation, or north, is partially exposed; its concrete block construction is visible. A wide band of multi-light industrial sash clerestory windows is at the right side of the rear elevation. The west elevation of the building has exposed and unpainted concrete block construction; two entrances are located there, one at each end of the building.

Interior

Significant features in the interior of building A include original exposed hardwood flooring and tin ceilings on the first floor in one of the three divided spaces (photo 8); these materials are extant under a linoleum floor and above a drop ceiling in a second space. The third space in building A, closest to building B, has been renovated to provide a presentation/conference room equipped with working Guth lighting displays (original materials may be extant behind renovations). The divisions inside building A reflect the building's original footprint. Significant interior features of the 1907 building (building B) include hardwood floors and exposed brick walls on all stories; the main floors are still used for manufacturing and shipping products; the upper floors are for storage. The main entrance, contained at the front of building B, leads into a renovated lobby and hall; remodeled partitioned offices are to the west.

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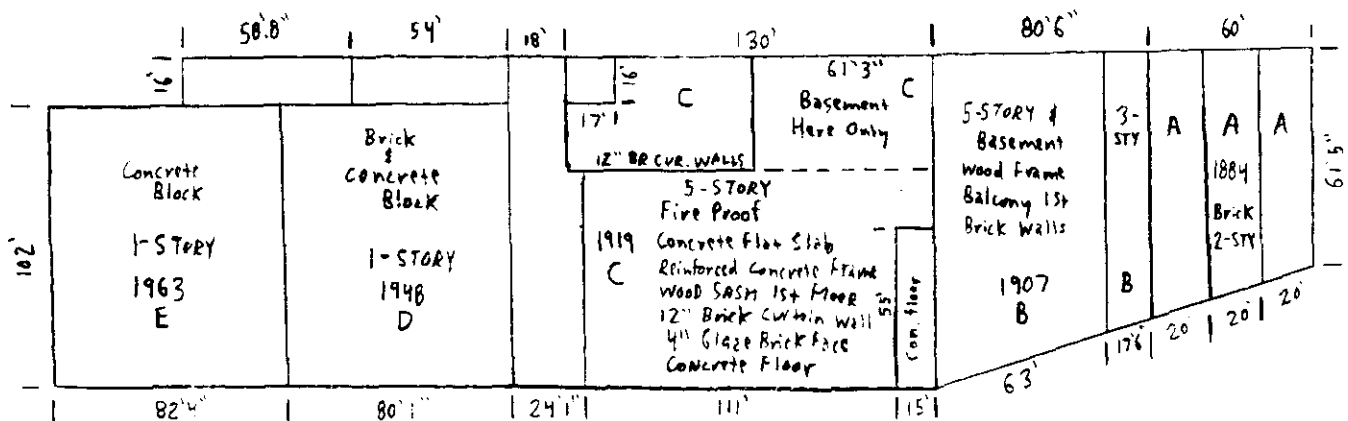
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Significant interior features of the 1919 building (building C) include original exposed concrete framing and flooring. The fifth story of building C is open and used for storage. (photo 9) Interior stairs and freight elevators are located near the sides of each building. Most interior spaces reflect each building's original purpose; spaces have been used for manufacturing, storing and distributing Guth lighting products for almost one hundred years. Interior transition from building's A through E is achieved either through framed doorways or large open walls; inconclusive building permits do not state when each building was opened to the next. Access to the 1962 addition to building C is now strictly limited to a small portion extending approximately thirty feet north of building C (covering three loading bays and an entrance) by approximately one-hundred and fifty feet, running east and west; a permanent interior wall was installed to separate most of the 1962 addition from the nominated Guth Complex. (see site map, page 18)

Integrity

Minor alterations, including painted surfaces, a Modernistic entrance facade (has become historic itself) and fiberglass paneled window bays are reversible and do not detract from the Edwin F. Guth Company Buildings' industrial significance. A non-contributing 1963 building (building E— later attached to building D) is a non-competitive structure at the far west of the complex and maintains a subtle position there. Most of the 1962 addition to building C has been permanently separated from the nominated Guth Complex by an interior wall built approximately thirty feet into the addition. The Edwin F. Guth Company Buildings retain integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Four buildings count as contributing resources and one building counts as a non-contributing resource.

Figure 1: Edwin F. Guth Company Complex first floor plan



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Summary

The Edwin F. Guth Company Complex, located at 2615 Washington Avenue just west of the boundary of downtown St. Louis, is eligible for National Register listing under Criterion A for COMMERCE, INDUSTRY and INVENTION. The buildings gain additional significance under Criterion B due to their association with important local electrical light and fixture inventor, Edwin F. Guth, Senior. This five-building complex, designed from 1884 to 1963, is associated with four Guth-related electrical light and fixture manufacturing companies: the St. Louis Brass Manufacturing Company, the Edwin F. Guth Company, the Brascolite Company and the Luminous Unit Company. Edwin F. Guth, Sr., a local inventor, held 160 U. S. patents relative to the nation's lighting industry before his death in 1962; most of which were issued during the period of significance. One of his earliest lighting fixture inventions was the "Brascolite" in 1910. Guth lighting products were invented, designed, manufactured and distributed world-wide from the buildings at 2615 Washington Avenue as early as 1907, when the first building for the company was built. The buildings retain integrity; minor alterations including painted surfaces, a Modernistic façade bay and fiberglass paneled window bays do not detract from the buildings' commercial or industrial significance. The period of significance spans from 1907, when the first Guth-related building was completed, to 1954, the arbitrary 50-year cut-off.

Background

Edwin F. Guth, Sr., was born in St. Charles, Missouri in 1875. According to the 1906 and 1912 *Book of St. Louisans*, he began his business career in 1893 with the Interstate Electric Company. Nine years later, Guth and three associates (including his brother, Oscar) formed the St. Louis Brass Manufacturing Company in May of 1902; the company was incorporated in that year with a capital of \$50,000. The company designed, engineered and manufactured electrical light innovations and lighting fixtures in addition to brass and bronze castings for hand rails, mantels, andirons and grates. At the time of incorporation, Edwin F. Guth, Sr., was treasurer, his brother Oscar was a salesman. Two associates, George S. Watts and Charles M. Wempner served as president and vice-president.⁴ Within eighteen months of incorporation, the firm's assets

⁴ After 1903, Edwin, Sr., was president and Oscar was treasurer; Watts was listed as vice-president and Wempner as secretary.

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were gone.⁵ Shortly before the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition (1904 St. Louis World's Fair), Watts and Wempner lost interest in the company and Edwin, Sr., bought them out with assistance from his father, Frederick. Guth soon won a contract for 20,000 feet of polished brass hand rails for the Fair. In addition, Guth's specially designed electric lights with hand-wrought light fixtures lit the Tyrolean Alps exhibit building at the Fair. This particular project of the Swiss government was daring in construction and lighting treatment for the time.⁶ Apparently, the job was so successfully executed that it resulted in Guth securing a similar lighting contract at the Fair for an exhibit for the Brazilian government.

Due to the demands of the Fair and prospects of future business, Guth's company was running to full capacity and soon outgrew its original manufacturing facility at 1112-1120 Market Street (demolished). In the 1906 *Book of St. Louisans*, Guth was credited with building up the largest chandelier business west of Chicago.

Elaboration: The Guth firm

In 1907, Edwin's father, Frederick, commissioned St. Louis architect John L. Wees to design a three and five-story factory, warehouse and salesroom at 2611 Washington Avenue (later changed to 2615) for the St. Louis Brass Manufacturing Company's second and final home. Three years later, Guth began a fifty-two year career in electrical light and lighting fixtures in St. Louis with the St. Louis Brass Manufacturing Company—"the largest manufacturer of lighting fixtures in the U.S.A." (see figure 2)

In 1910, Edwin F. Guth, Sr., invented the first of over one-hundred influential lighting products that would influence the lighting industry forever—the "Brascolite." (figure 2) The decorative, yet functional Brascolite, introduced commercially in 1912 and patented in 1913, sold in the millions for the next eleven years.⁷ The invention was an early semi-indirect light combined with a glass bottom bowl; the unit was delivered ready to be wired onto the lighting circuit. It was the first such self-contained packaged unit in the

⁵ *St. Louis Commerce*. (St. Louis: July 1959) v 33, p 22.

⁶ "Guth Lighting: Enlightened Solutions for 100 Years." (St. Louis: JJI Lighting Group, 2002).

⁷ "Brascolite" lighting fixture. Patent #1,076,418. Oct. 21, 1913. Annual Report of the Commissioner of Patents for 1913, p. 199. And U. S. Patent Office Gazette, v. 195, p. 685.

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lighting industry.⁸ The Brascolite was so successful that it led to the formation of a subsidiary company, the Brascolite Company; the company was incorporated in 1914 with a capital of \$2,000, Edwin F. Guth was listed as president. Also in 1914, Guth founded the Luminous Unit Company to handle electrical supplies; the company was incorporated in Missouri in 1914 with a capital of \$2,000.⁹


Figure 2: From *Gould's St. Louis Red-Blue Book* (1921)

ST. LOUIS BRASS MFG. CO.

Phones
Kinloch, Central 1980
Bell, Bismont 3200

2615 Washington Ave.

Manufacturers
of the
"BRASCOLITE"



**Largest Manufacturers of Lighting
Fixtures in the U. S. A.**

We are also prepared for the following on a large scale:
**Deep Drawing and Stamping, Porcelain Enameling, Metal Spinning,
Polishing and Plating, Bronze Grills, Brass Rail
and Machine Shop**

Numerous lighting inventions continued up to 1912 when Guth and an internationally known local surgeon, Dr. Willard Bartlett, Sr.,¹⁰ invented the "Noshodolite" (also known as the Bartlett "Noshodolite"). This invention eliminated hand shadows during surgery by combining a series of eight reflectors giving 360 degrees of illumination. A 1921 Guth publication, *Brascolite Bulletin for Hospitals*, contained a list of 36 hospitals representing eighteen states and three countries that endorsed the Noshodolite's medical superiority. Further, in 1929, the Noshodolite was advertised as "the most scientifically designed fixture for the illumination of the surgical operative field that has ever been offered the medical profession."¹¹

⁸ *St. Louis Commerce*. (St. Louis: July 1959) v 33, p 22.

⁹ Both companies listed the same officers (per St. Louis Brass Mfg. Co. incorporation) in the same positions except Charles M. Wempner and George S. Watts were listed as VP and secretary respectively.

¹⁰ *Missouri Historical Society Bulletin*. July 1950, v. VI, n. 4, p. 556. Dr. Bartlett, Sr., (1868-1950) a founding member of the American College of Surgeons, past president of the Southern Surgical Association (1920) and vice-president of the American Medical Association (1922) was the first American to teach pathology at the University of Berlin. While in Berlin, Dr. Bartlett, Sr., proved for the first time that cerebral hemorrhage was caused by the rupture of a blood vessel in the brain (ironically it killed him).

¹¹ Guth, Edwin F. Co. "The New Noshadolite." Catalogue # 24. Missouri Historical Society collection.

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In 1923, the St. Louis Brass Manufacturing Company (merging with the Brascolite Company) changed its name to the Edwin F. Guth Company to honor the original founder and brilliant inventor. (figure 3) In that year Guth invented his "Guthlite," a thin blown glass globe used with a perforated enamel reflector for both upward and downward light. The invention of the "Guthfan," followed in 1928. This patented Guthfan Conditionaire was considered the first real improvement in fan design and principle since 1898 and the only fan that scientifically provided complete cooling, refreshing air circulation and good lighting in one complete unit.¹² The fan's ability to draw cool air from the floor and circulate it throughout the room without disturbing hot upper air was then an entirely new principle.¹³ Guth's fan earned the first patent on a fan in thirty years and was a prototype of today's ceiling fans. Hotels, architects, businesses, restaurants and hospitals from New York to Kansas City endorsed the superiority of the Guthfan well into the mid-1930s.

Figure 3: From *Gould's St. Louis Directory* (1927)

Brascolite	Aglite	Gulhlite
The EDWIN F. GUTH COMPANY DESIGNERS - MANUFACTURERS <i>Lighting Equipment</i> ST LOUIS, U.S.A.		
PHONE JEFFERSON 3200		WASHINGTON AT JEFFERSON

A joint venture of the General Electric Company and the individual utility companies during the early 1930s, known as the "Better Light— Better Sight" campaign, kept the Edwin F. Guth company busy during the Depression. Of the eight companies listed as lighting equipment manufacturers in the 1930 Gould's St. Louis city directory, three companies were Guth-owned and operated; only the Edwin F. Guth Company was listed as a lighting fixture manufacturer.¹⁴ During this period, Guth announced his latest

¹² Guth, Edwin F. Co. Catalogue # 6, 1935. Missouri Historical Society Business Catalogue Collection.

¹³ *St. Louis Commerce*. (St. Louis: July 1959) v 33, p 22.

¹⁴ The Edwin F. Guth Company was the only company listed in the 1929 *Gould's Classified Business Directory of the City of St. Louis* under lighting equipment. In 1931, three of seven lighting equipment manufacturers were Guth-related. In 1932, one of two was Guth-related and out of eleven lighting

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invention, the "Super Illuminator" which provided indirect light with a luminous exterior glow. Shortly thereafter in 1937 came his "Optilux," another indirect lighting fixture. The "Optilux" had an enclosed top of prismatic glass effective in reducing brightness in normal viewing angles in schoolrooms. One year later in 1938, he invented the "Diagonal Spectral Assimilation" fixture, a lamp that combined the efficiency of a mercury-vapor lamp with an incandescent lamp for both direct and indirect lighting units.

The first fluorescent lamp was introduced at the 1939 New York World's Fair; an instant success, it ensured the coming of the fluorescent light era of the 1940s. Guth's version (his 1940 "Jackknife Guthlite") included a light fixture hinged downward so it could be serviced from the floor. During World War II he invented "The Cadet." Six thousand and six hundred of these four-foot long units, each limited by the government to three pounds of steel, were installed in the U. S. Military Academy at West Point.¹⁵ Guth continued to develop incandescent and fluorescent lighting fixtures through the 1970s, expanding the company into the institutional and industrial lighting markets.

In 1950, Guth revolutionized the food industry with "Plascolume." For the first time, a one-piece PVC gasket was integrated into the stainless steel lens frame to achieve the ultimate seal of FDA approval.¹⁶ Still in 1952, Edwin F. Guth, Sr., announced his "Gratelite Louver Diffuser," a 3/8-inch cube plastic molding that shielded lamps and hid them from all normal angles. By 1959 his "Prismoid Louver" appeared on the scene to permit a two-fold prism control of light. This complicated louver was made of plastic with tiny apertures on one side flaring out to larger openings on the other; with the apex up, a concentrated distribution of light was achieved and turned over, a wide beam of light resulted.

While many companies were leaving downtown St. Louis for St. Louis County during the 1960's, Guth chose to remain in the city, and expand his business there. On its sixty-year anniversary (January 22, 1962) the Edwin F. Guth Company broke ground on a new 100,000 square foot addition (addition to building C). Designed by St. Louis architects, William B. Ittner, Inc., and Wedemeyer and Hecker, the column-less "60th Anniversary

equipment dealers, two were Guth-related. In 1933, one of three lighting equipment manufacturers was Guth-related; two of eight lighting equipment dealers were Guth-related. In 1935 and 1936, three of six lighting equipment manufacturers were Guth-related.

¹⁵ *St. Louis Commerce*. (St. Louis: July 1959) v 33, p 22.

¹⁶ "Guth Lighting: Enlightened Solutions for 100 Years." (St. Louis: JJI Lighting Group, 2002).

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Building" cost \$800,000. In a press release on the ground breaking ceremonies, Mr. Guth stated:

"The new Guth plant addition is built with faith in the continued growth of the city of St. Louis... at a time when St. Louis has lost many businesses it is important to reaffirm our belief that downtown St. Louis has tremendous business potential."¹⁷

This addition housed new production machinery and finishing equipment; smaller adjoining buildings housed paint mixing facilities, baking ovens, and storage. With the new addition, The Edwin F. Guth Company had a total of 350,000 square feet of productive manufacturing area. The addition was recently separated from the Guth complex by the installation of a permanent interior wall approximately thirty feet inside the addition. (see site map, page 18)

Edwin F. Guth, Sr., died on January 31, 1962 with 160 U. S. Patents in the lighting industry field to his name; most of which were issued during the period of significance.¹⁸ In addition to his accomplishments as an inventor, Guth was included in the Gould's Blue Book, a social registry of the city's most prominent citizens, as early as 1905. He held a number of important local company directorships including: Celotex Corp., National Gypsum Co. and the Jefferson Bank. Guth was also a member of the Shrine and he held active memberships in the Liederkrantz Club, Missouri Athletic Club, Latin American Club, Algonquin Country Club, Rotary and the St. Louis Metal Trades Association. He was awarded the "Modern Pioneer" award by the National Association of Manufacturers around 1959 which honored him for being "a Modern Pioneer on the frontier of American Industry." The award was given in recognition of "distinguished achievement in the field of science and invention which has advanced the American standard of living."¹⁹

After his death, Guth's son Edwin F., Jr., took over as president. Remaining true to his father's desire to stay in the city of St. Louis, in 1963 Jr., commissioned a second production building. This 8,000 square foot building (building E) at the west, was built to house a new Hi-Production Hydroform machine (a product of the Cincinnati Milling

¹⁷ Edwin F. Guth Company. Press Release, January 22, 1962. Missouri Historical Society Collection.

¹⁸ Donald Hencke. Edwin F. Guth Company, News release. January 31, 1962. Also confirmed in *Salute to St. Louis Industry*, 1963. Landmarks Collection.

¹⁹ *St. Louis Commerce*. (St. Louis: July 1959) v 33, p 22.

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Machine Company). Frank Currans, one of the six original engineers who developed the machine, was in charge of the Guth Company's Hydroform operations. This machine enabled Guth Lighting to fabricate extremely intricate reflector designs that had not yet been considered cost-effective. The machine was so versatile that Ford sent Guth molds and had the company form some of the tail light assemblies used on the 1965 Ford Mustang.²⁰

Guth lighting illuminates the Missouri State Capitol, the Soldier's Memorial, Kiel Auditorium, the St. Louis Police Headquarters, the Scottish Rite Cathedral, the Civil Courts Building, and the Municipal Opera. Nationally, the Government Printing Office at Washington was relit three times with Guth lights (before 1959). Nearly 20,000 Guth fixtures were installed in Chicago's U. S. Post Office. Numerous other projects (before 1959) included the Presidential News Conference Room in Gettysburg, twenty-eight Steam Plants of TVA, the Philadelphia National Bank, the First National Bank of Mobile, the Glenn L. Martin Company drafting room, and the Cooper-Bessemer Corporation drafting and design room in Mount Vernon, Ohio.

The Edwin F. Guth Company's immeasurable contribution to the American lighting fixture industry extended over sixty years; from 1907 onward, products were invented, designed and manufactured by his firms at 2615 Washington Avenue. The company remained under Guth ownership until it was sold to JJI Lighting Group in 1966 (after the period of significance); Guth Lighting remains in business at this same address today, bears the Guth name and continues to manufacture and distribute Guth products worldwide. Today, Guth's parent company, JJI Lighting Group, is the largest privately-held lighting manufacturer in the country and the ninth largest worldwide.²¹

²⁰ "Guth Lighting: Enlightened Solutions for 100 Years." (St. Louis: JJI Lighting Group, 2002).

²¹ *Sorkins Directory of Business & Government*, St. Louis Region Edition, 2003. v 2, p 817.

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St. Louis Daily Record. St. Louis Public Library, microfilm department.

St. Louis Globe-Democrat. "Edwin Guth is Still an Inventor at 85" (Oct 31, 1960); "Lighting Firm Starts \$800,000 Addition" (Jan 23, 1962); "Lighting Equipment Outlook Bright for '63" (Jan 5, 1963); "Success—A Father and Son Tradition" and "Guth Firm to Hold Sales Conference" (Feb 23, 1963); "Guth Starts Building New Hydroform Plant" (Oct 19, 1963); "E. F. Guth Lighting Company" (Jan 9, 1971).

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Boundary Description

The nominated building is known as 2615 Washington Avenue on City Block 930 in St. Louis, Missouri. The building is legally known by the Assessor's Office as parcel number 09300000160. This irregular-shaped building is 317.40' x 134.33' x 89.62' by PT VAC ALLEY (453.58') x 134.69', BND east by Jefferson Avenue. Total 1.2914 acres (per accessor, with entire addition). U. S. Survey 2472, Beaumont's Addition, Survey by Meyer's (not recorded) and Lot B of the Guth SUBN (Pt Bk 69, pg 41). The nominated property is indicated by a dashed line on the accompanying map entitled "Edwin F. Guth Company Complex Boundary Map."

Boundary Justification

The nominated parcel includes all of the property historically associated with the Edwin F. Guth Company Complex.

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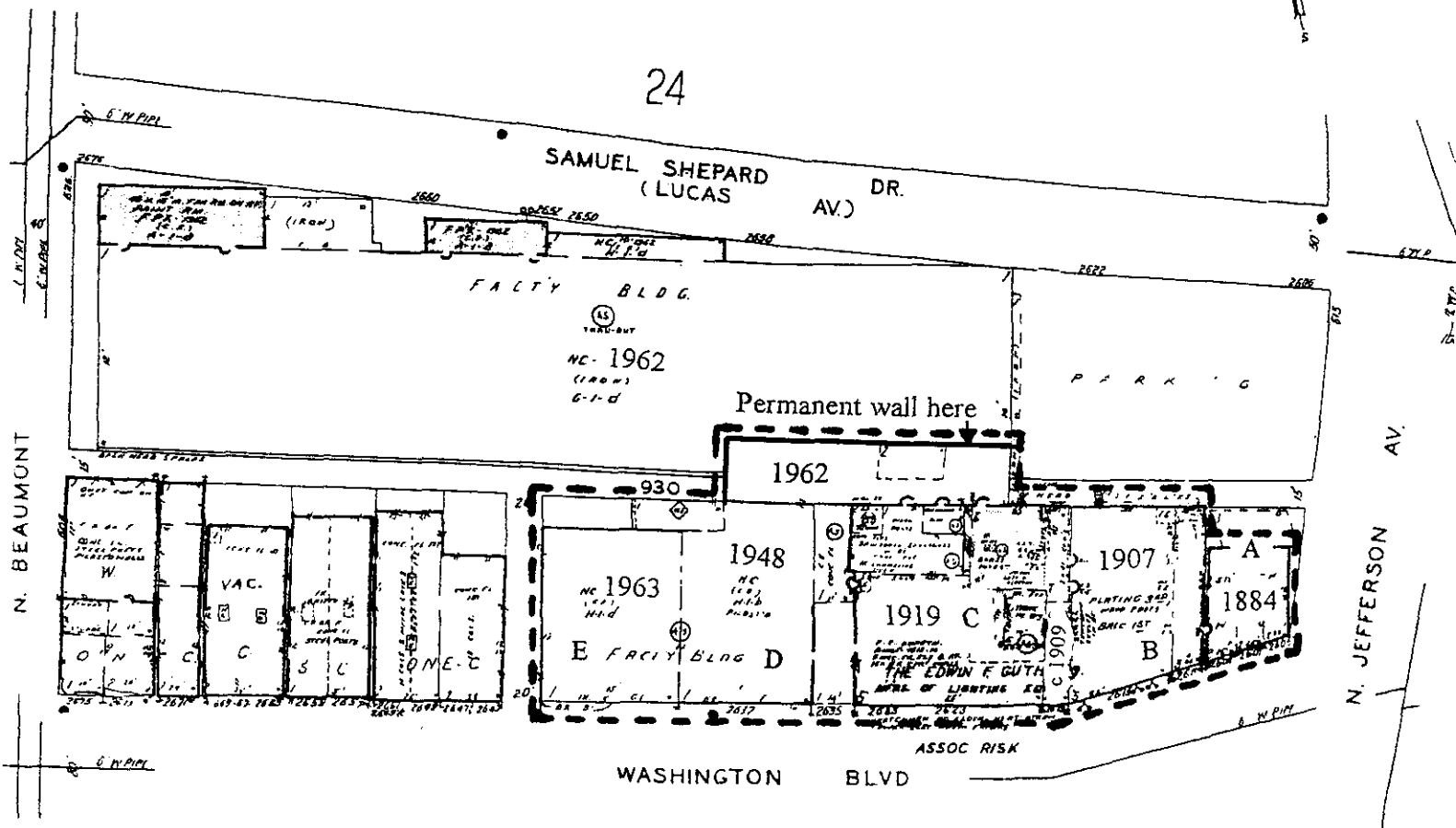
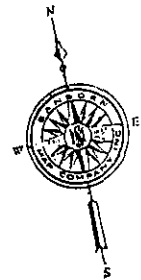
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Guth, Edwin F. Company Complex
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Edwin F. Guth Company Complex Boundary Map

Source: Sanborn Map Company, v 2, p 33, circa 1996



Guth, Edwin F. Company Buildings
2615 Washington Ave.

St. Louis [Independent City], Mo

Matt Bivens

1/2004

Landmarks Association of St. Louis

S Elevation / camera N

1

Roll 9113



Guth, Edwin F. Company Buildings
2615 Washington Ave.

St. Louis [Independent City], MO
Matt Bivens

11/2004

Landmarks Association of St. Louis

N Elevation/camera S

2

Roll 9113



Guth, Edwin F. Company Buildings
2615 Washington Ave

St. Louis [Independent City], Mo

Matt Bivens

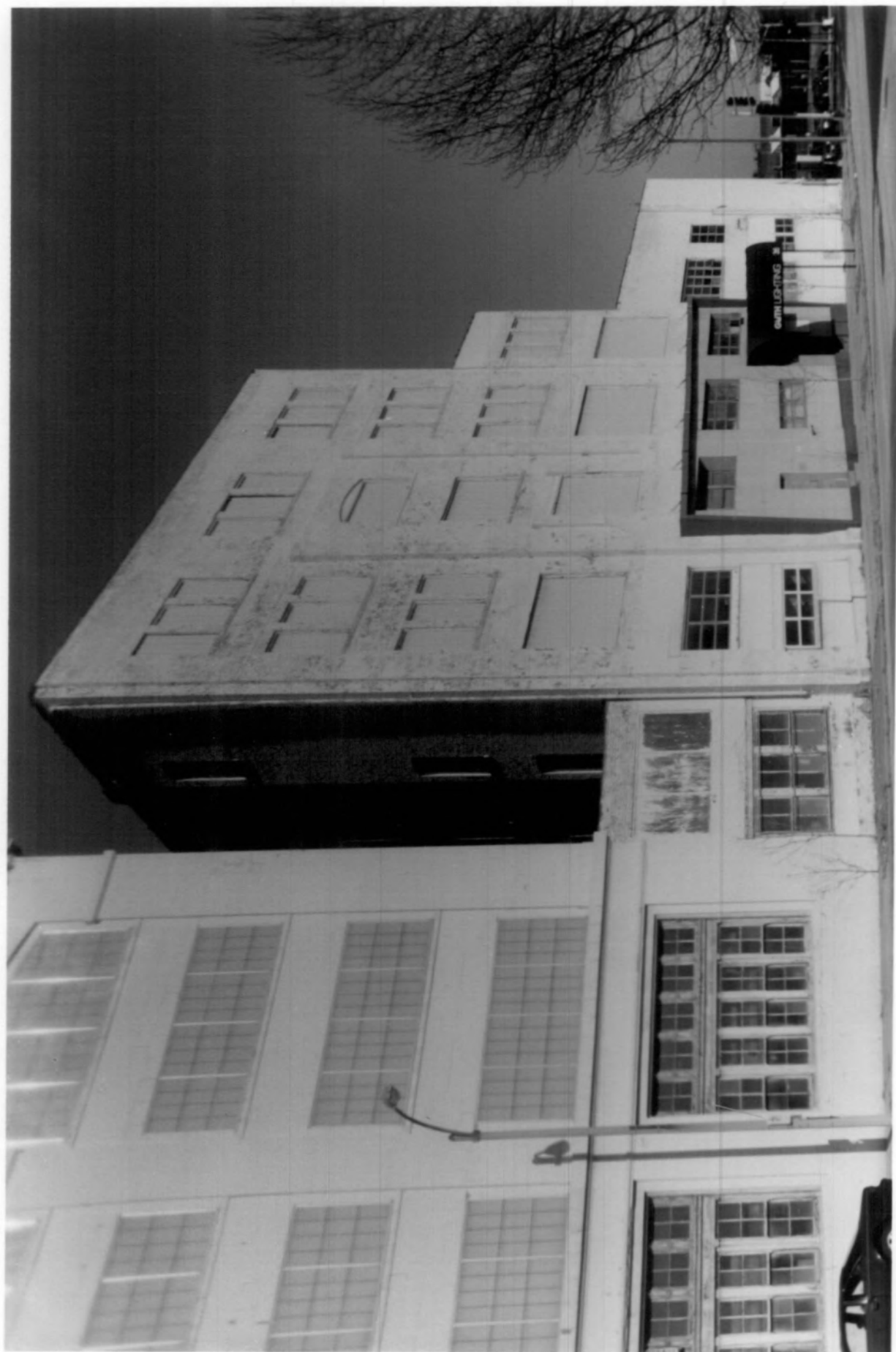
11/2004

Landmarks Association of St. Louis

S Elevation / Camera NE

3

Roll 9113



Guth, Edwin F. Company Buildings
2615 Washington Ave.

St. Louis [Independent City], MO
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1/2004

Landmarks Association of St. Louis
SW Elevation / Camera NE

#4

Roll 9113



Guth, Edwin F. Company Buildings
2615 Washington Ave.

St. Louis [Independent City], MO

Math Bigons

1/2004

Landmarks Association of St. Louis

S Elevation (Detail) / Camera N

5

Roll 9113



Guth, Edwin F. Company Buildings
2615 Washington Ave.

St. Louis [Independent City], Mo
Matt Bivens

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Landmarks Association of St. Louis
S Elevation / Camera NW

#6



Guth, Edwin F. Company Buildings
2615 Washington Ave.
St. Louis [Independent City], MO
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11/2004

Landmarks Association of St. Louis
NE Elevation / Camera SW

#7

Roll 9113



Guth, Edwin F. G. Buildings

2615 Washington Ave.

St. Louis [Ind. City], Mo.

Matt Bivens

1/2004

Landmarks Association of St. Louis

Interior / building A / Facing N

#8



Guth, Edwin F. Co. Buildings
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St. Louis [Ind. City], Mo.
Math Bivens

1/2004

Landmarks Association of St. Louis
Interior, building C / camera 5
#9

