

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Scuggs-Vandervoort-Barney Warehouse

and or common 917 Locust Building

2. Location

street & number 917 Locust Street _____ not for publication

city, town St. Louis _____ vicinity of

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

3. Classification

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

social service

4. Owner of Property

name See Continuation Sheet

street & number

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state

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 Missouri 63103

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Architectural Survey of the Central Business District, St. Louis has this property been determined eligible? yes no

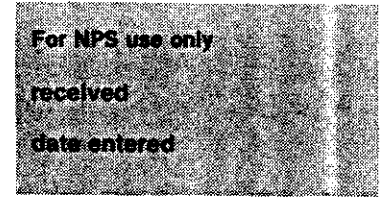
date October, 1975; revised April 1977; February 1982 _____ federal _____ state _____ county local

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

city, town St. Louis state Missouri

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Continuation sheet 917 Locust, St. Louis, MO

Item number 4

Page 1

1. Greenberg, Robert G. and Maureen S.
11906 Manchester Road - Suite 304
St. Louis, MO 63131
2. Greenberg, Lawrence H. and Sandra
4950 Lindell
St. Louis, MO 63108
3. McKee, Paul J. Jr. and Marguerite A.
11552 New London
St. Louis, MO 63141
4. Laplante, Michael F. and Patricia C.
6236 Devonshire
St. Louis, MO 63109

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The building at 917 Locust in St. Louis' Central Business District is a twelve-story reinforced concrete commercial warehouse of light buff brick trimmed with light buff terra cotta. Built in 1913, the building was designed by St. Louis architect Harry F. Roach.

The south (primary) elevation is four bays wide; dramatic use is made of the mere 45' width by articulating the seven-story shaft with uninterrupted brick piers which terminate in arches (Photo #1). A terra cotta cornice with a row of lion heads and metal dentilling mark the beginning of the two-story attic. An imposing metal cornice dominates the roof line. At the base of the shaft, heavy terra cotta brackets highlight a cornice of the same material; another row of lion heads appears immediately beneath (Photo #2). Chicago-style windows articulate the principal elevation; two of the three components of these windows have movable wooden sash. The second story features a row of twelve adjoining rectangular windows, every third one hinged, that substantially illuminates the interior.

The east and west (side) elevations are unarticulated except for paired double-hung sash windows in the upper stories (Photo #1). The north (rear) elevation is relieved by two rows of rectangular windows and a first-floor loading dock.

The interior of the building has an open floor plan; each floor is supported by four, large, round concrete pillars with mushroom capitals. Hard maple floors are all intact and nearly all are in good to excellent condition. No significant architectural features exist in the interior.

Although no historical photograph could be found, small contemporary sketches indicate that the building is virtually unaltered on the exterior; only the application of a stucco-type material to the first story modifies the original appearance. Interior alterations have been primarily confined to the first two floors in the form of room dividers and wall and ceiling coverings.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1913 Builder/Architect Harry F. Roach

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The building at 917 Locust is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C and is significant in the following areas: ARCHITECTURE: Designed in 1913 by St. Louis architect Harry F. Roach, the building is a well-preserved representative example of an early twentieth century commercial warehouse with a facade articulated in a Classical Revival style. The building exhibits fine terra cotta ornament. COMMERCE: Founded in 1850, the small dry goods suppliers who evolved into the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney Dry Goods Company paralleled the growth of St. Louis as a regional dry goods center. The firm achieved an early and unique reputation for quality merchandise which was sustained for over a century. The construction of the Scruggs warehouse at 917 Locust Street reflected the need for more space during an exceptionally prosperous period of expansion for the firm and the St. Louis dry goods market.

St. Louis was a boom town of the westward movement in 1850, the year that Richard M. Scruggs and M. V. McClelland came to town to set up a dry goods establishment on Fourth Street. Scruggs was born in 1822 in Virginia. He worked in dry goods stores from the age of fifteen until his departure for Alabama at age twenty-five. Scruggs eventually found his way to New Orleans where he met M. V. McClelland whose uncle offered to set the pair up in business either in Memphis or St. Louis. Upon seeing St. Louis, they decided to try their luck in business there. Charles E. Barney came to St. Louis in 1859 and joined the firm in 1860. The son of a Maine furniture manufacturer, Barney began clerking in Massachusetts at age sixteen and worked in New York for Lord & Taylor for seven years before coming west. His specialty was in the area of management. McClelland, about whom little is known, retired in 1868 and Scruggs became President of the firm. About 1870, William L. Vandervoort and C. E. Barney joined the firm as partners.¹ W. L. Vandervoort brought a special sophistication and knowledge to St. Louis that eventually made Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney the city's main caterer to the carriage trade. Born in 1830 in Baltimore, Vandervoort was the product of an old Knickerbocker merchant family in business in the United States since the 1700s. He began working in dry goods stores at the age of twelve, ultimately going to the prestigious A. T. Stewart & Company in New York. When he joined with Scruggs and Barney, he traveled abroad extensively as the buyer of silks, fine housewares and foreign goods. Vandervoort, unlike the other members of the partnership, chose not to make St. Louis his home preferring to visit once or twice a year and to live in New York.

Despite the setbacks of the Civil War and the financial panic of 1893, the firm moved into the twentieth century with a reputation for fine goods, integrity, service, courtesy and quality rather than for bargain prices. Their patrons included the wealthy elite of the city, and the dry goods store was often linked with cultural and charitable events. By 1904 the original partners of Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney

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had died. Now owned by New York interests, the company expanded and moved to their final location in 1907: the first eight floors of the new Syndicate Trust Company Building at 915 Olive (Fig. 1). This move was regarded as daring by the business community who predicted failure for the firm because it was located too far west of the downtown shopping area.

By 1913 St. Louis was claimed to be the "best dry goods market west of the Alleghenies"² with well over five hundred dry goods merchants listed in the city directory. Nearly thirty of these were in or near the downtown area, and at least nine were major retailers. The Annual Statement of the Merchants' Exchange in 1913 reported a significant dry goods boom in the area:

"The aggregate volume in dry goods alone is estimated at \$65,000,000... As a distributing point for dry goods, silks, notions and allied lines, St. Louis is easily holding her place in the front rank, and the volume of business in these lines showed an increase of from 7½ to 10 per cent over that of 1912."³

In the rosy glow of financial security, Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney expanded its operations to the first seven floors of the adjacent Century Building (circa 1896) in mid-1913. That year the trade journal, Dry Goodsman, devoted a large section of an issue to Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney, saying of the company that it was "at once a commercial establishment and a social institution. The average St. Louisan feels a certain pride in association with the store, is glad to be seen there, likes to refer to his purchases as having been made there. To have a charge account at Vandervoort's by many is felt to be a badge of respectability."⁴ In testimony to the store's reputation for fine service, The Western Architect noted in 1916 that the "skill, taste and promptness" Scruggs exhibited in furnishing interior decorations for the prestigious new Missouri Athletic Club proved the "value of an organization equipped to handle the largest order and look after the minutest detail."⁵

In a contract dated May 1, 1913, the Arlington Investment Company agreed to build a twelve-story warehouse with a basement and heating tunnel, designed by Harry F. Roach. Roach's plans had been approved by officials of the store prior to the agreement, wherein Scruggs would rent the building from the presumed time of its completion (January 1914) until June 1, 1929. A yearly rental for the first three years was specified to be \$11,000 and \$11,500 thereafter. The investment company was responsible for the building's maintenance, while the store provided its own steam heat and lights. The building was to be used by Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney "as a part of its Department Store and for warehouse purposes"; "nuisance in any form" was strictly prohibited. Use of the building by other department stores or similar businesses through subletting was permitted by the lease and did, in fact, occur routinely through the years as the store rented the ground floor space to a series of small businesses. Built by the John Hill Construction Company, the warehouse was completed for an estimated cost of \$130,000.

Architect Harry F. Roach (1871-1929) attended the St. Louis Manual Training School and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology joining his father in a successful partnership from 1890 to 1900; afterward, he practiced independently. Their

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firm designed numerous commercial and residential buildings in St. Louis including the A. D. Brown Building at Tucker and Locust (listed in the National Register) and several factories. Both men were known for individual achievements in their field as well as for their collaborative efforts. The Syndicate Trust Company Building (formerly the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney Dry Goods store) designed in 1907 by Harry F. Roach shares several design elements with the warehouse at 917 Locust across the street, indicating an effort to relate the two stylistically. The primary facades of both buildings are formally articulated with rusticated brick piers at the base and attic stories and with piers terminating in arches in the shaft, thereby establishing identical vertical compositions. Similar terra cotta ornament (lion heads, consoles, classical moldings) is employed along the major horizontal divisions (Photos #1 and 2).

The unusually narrow width of the building departs from typical late nineteenth and early twentieth century warehouse building dimensions in St. Louis. One possibility regarding the size of the building is suggested in the 1913 Annual Statement of the Merchants' Exchange:

"St. Louis jobbers have encouraged retailers to buy on the hand-to-mouth principle, and this sort of buying has been going on for the past five or six years, completely to the satisfaction of retailers who have made the discovery that a small active stock is infinitely better from the profit standpoint than a large stagnant one...Reports are coming in since the end of the year [1913] inventory of the smallest stocks carried for years, and this applies even to men's clothing and women's garments..."⁶

This new strategy in retailing perhaps influenced the company's decision to commission a rather small storage facility.

Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney used the building for storage at least as late as 1950; since then it has been largely under-utilized, particularly the upper ten stories. Most recently, the building has been used as a senior citizens' center on the first two floors with miscellaneous storage on a few of the upper floors. Current plans for the building call for a first-floor facade similar to the original and rehabilitation of the upper stories for office space.

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FOOTNOTES

¹Although there is no record of the original incorporation, the partnership name of Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney was instituted at that time and remained until the company closed in the late 1960s.

²Eugene Smith, Annual Statement of the Trade and Commerce of Saint Louis, for the Year 1913, Reported to the Merchants' Exchange of St. Louis (St. Louis: Press of R. P. Studley & Co., 1914), p. 30.

³Smith, p. 35.

⁴The Dry Goodsman and General Merchant, 15 November 1913, p. 37.

⁵The Western Architect, June 1916, vol. 23, p. 99.

⁶Smith, p. 56.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Granite City, IL/MO

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	5	7	4	4	2	16	10	4	12	7	19	2	12	10
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification The 917 Locust Building is located in City Block 272 and fronts approximately 45 feet along the north side of Locust Street and 112 feet along the western property line of 913 Locust Street and the eastern line of 919 Locust Street to a public alley.

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

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

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

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

name/title Cynthia Hill Longwisch, Researcher Mary M. Stiritz, editor

organization Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc. date October 4, 1984

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

city or town St. Louis state Missouri 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

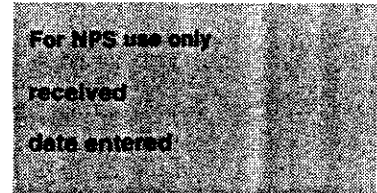
Attest:

date _____

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation sheet 917 Locust, St. Louis, MO Item number 9

Page 1

The Dry Goodsman & General Merchant, 15 November 1913.

Leonard, John W., ed. The Book of St. Louisans. St. Louis: The St. Louis Republic, 1912.

St. Louis, Missouri, Missouri Historical Society. St. Louis Corporations Papers.

Reedy's Mirror, 18 December 1914.

Scruggs, Vandervoort & Barney Dry Goods Company. An Event of Civic Interest. n.p., 1920.

----- . St. Louis and Vandervoort's, Yesterday and Today 1850-1940. n.p., 1940.

----- . Vandervoort Topics. n.p., 1950.

Smith, Eugene. Annual Statement of the Trade and Commerce of Saint Louis, for the Year 1913, Reported to the Merchants' Exchange of St. Louis. St. Louis: Press of R. P. Studley & Co., 1914.

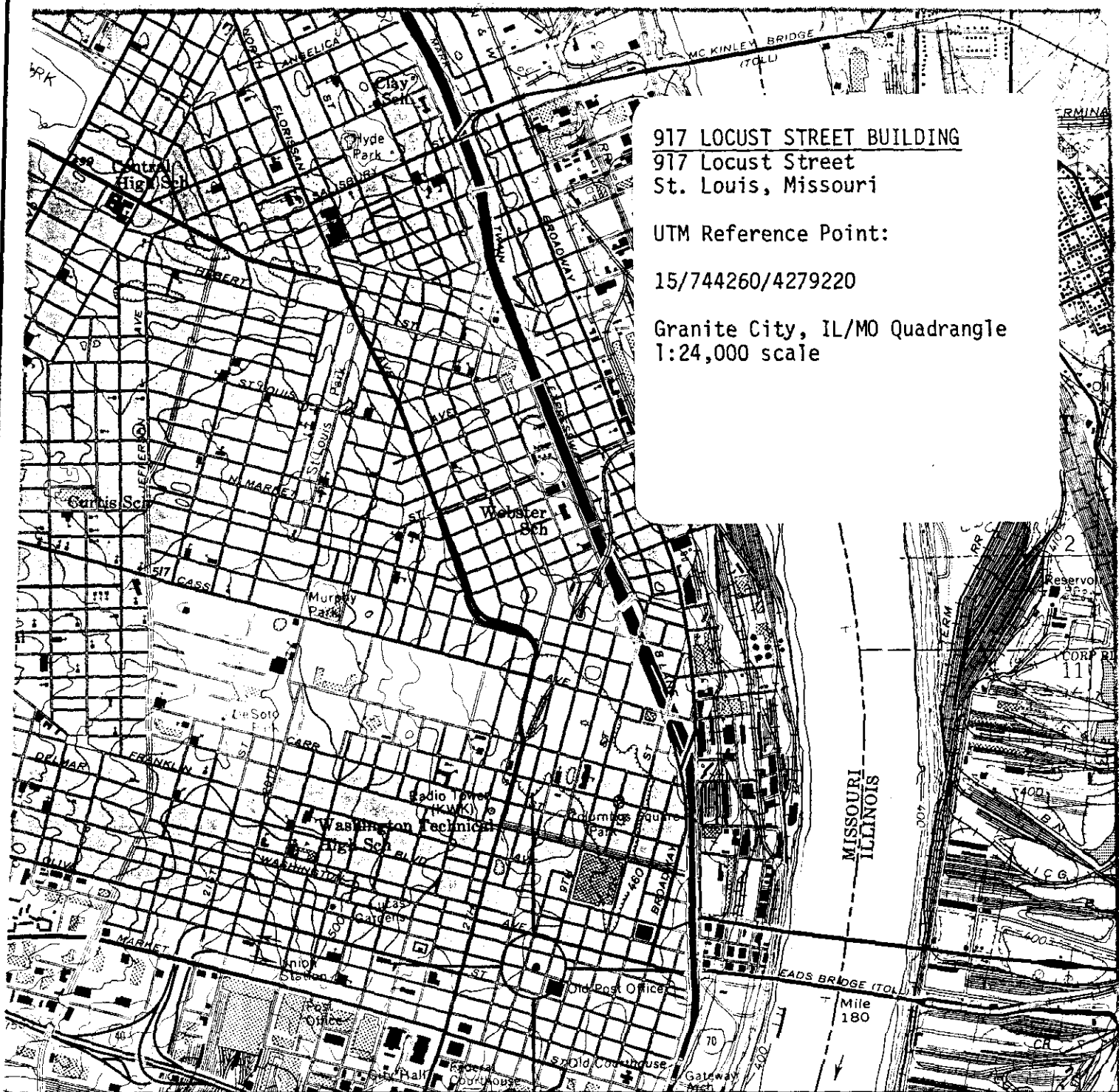
The Western Architect, vol. 23, June 1916.

917 LOCUST STREET BUILDING
 917 Locust Street
 St. Louis, Missouri

UTM Reference Point:

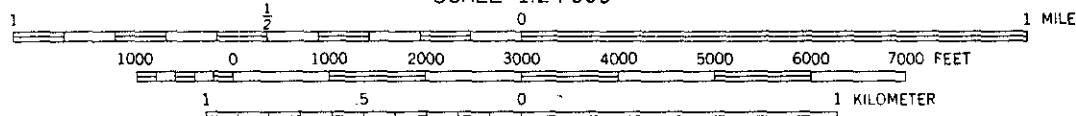
15/744260/4279220

Granite City, IL/MO Quadrangle
 1:24,000 scale



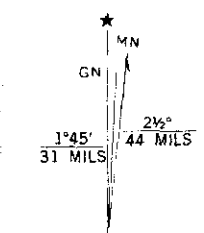
42 12'30" 1.1 MI. TO I-70 744 (CAHOKIA) 0.3 MI. TO I-55 746 10' 2961 II SW 1.8 MI. TO JUNC. I-55 & 70

SCALE 1:24 000



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
 DASHED LINES REPRESENT 5-FOOT CONTOURS
 NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
 FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092,
 STATE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, URBANA, ILLINOIS 61801,
 AND THE DIVISION OF GEOLOGY AND LAND SURVEY
 MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, ROLLA, MISSOURI 65401
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



GRID AND 1982 MAGNETIC NORTH
 CLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

may be private inholdings within
 undaries of the National or
 eservations shown on this map

Revisions show
 from aerial ph
 Map edited 19
 Purple tint inc

917 LOCUST STREET BUILDING

917 Locust Street

St. Louis, Missouri

Figure #1 of 1 General Plan

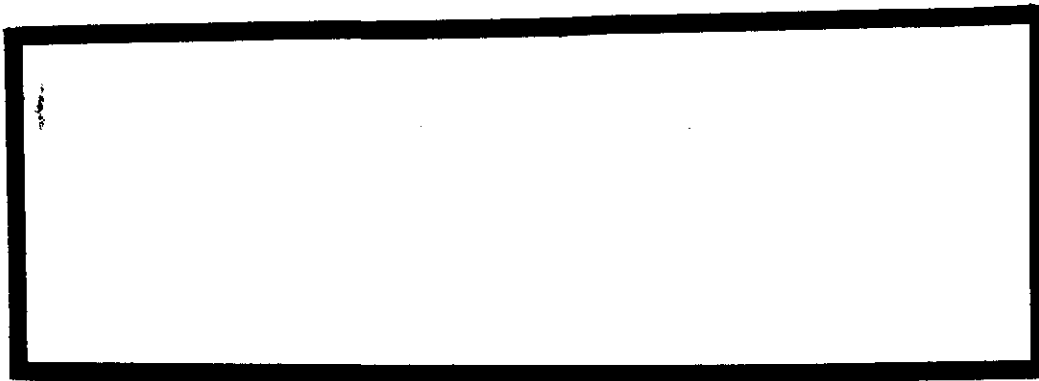
900 Block of Locust Street

St. Louis, Missouri

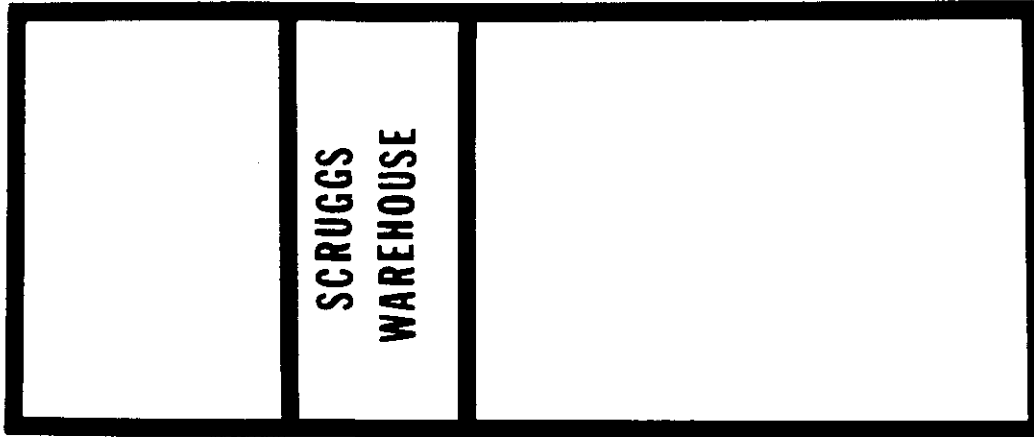
Drawn by: Cynthia Longwisch

Date: September 1984

**GENERAL PLAN:
900 BLOCK
LOCUST STREET,
ST. LOUIS, MO.**



ALLEY **CB 272**



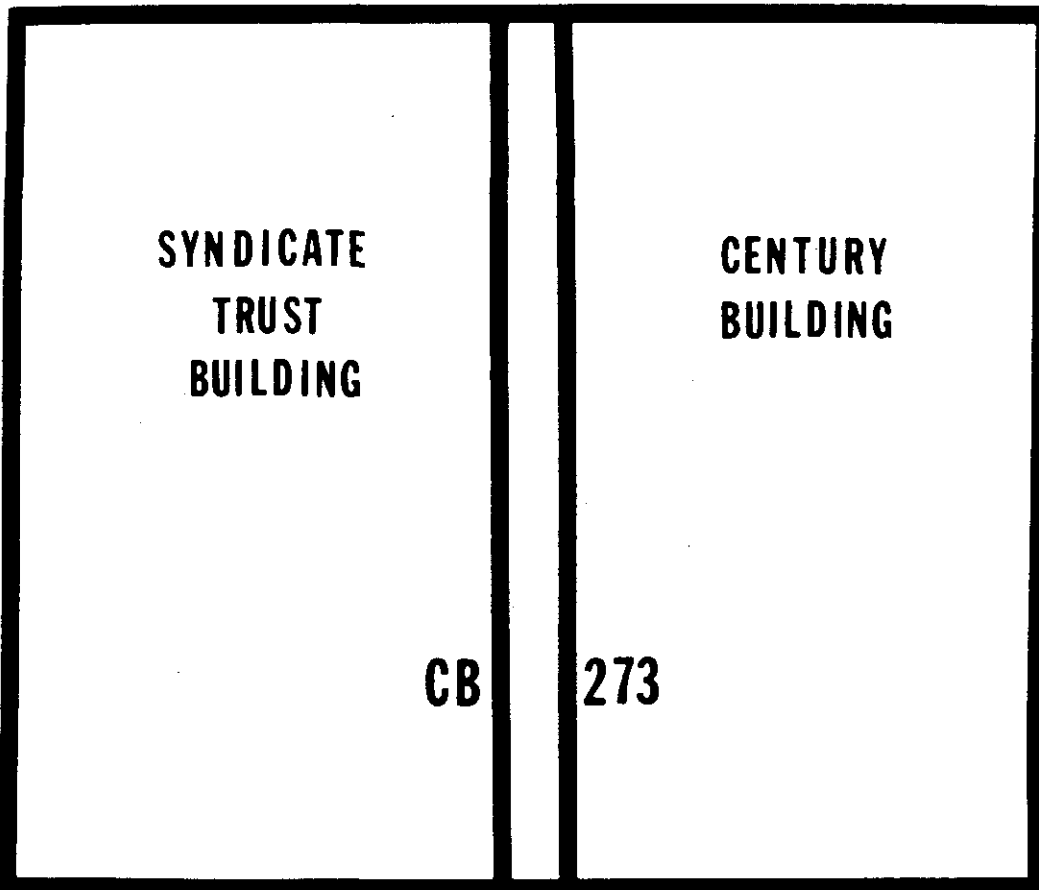
**SCRUGGS
WAREHOUSE**

917

LOCUST ST.

10th ST.

9th ST.



**SYNDICATE
TRUST
BUILDING**

**CENTURY
BUILDING**

CB 273

OLIVE ST.



1" = 50'

FIG. 1

917 LOCUST STREET BUILDING

917 Locust Street

St. Louis, Missouri

#1 of **3** South (primary) elevation

Photographer: Cynthia Longwisch

Date: September 1984

Negative: Landmarks Association
of St. Louis, Inc.

Camera facing northeast.



etro
231-5025

BIRBA TRVOVREDDA V SCUC

10TH ST

917 LOCUST STREET BUILDING

917 Locust Street

St. Louis, Missouri

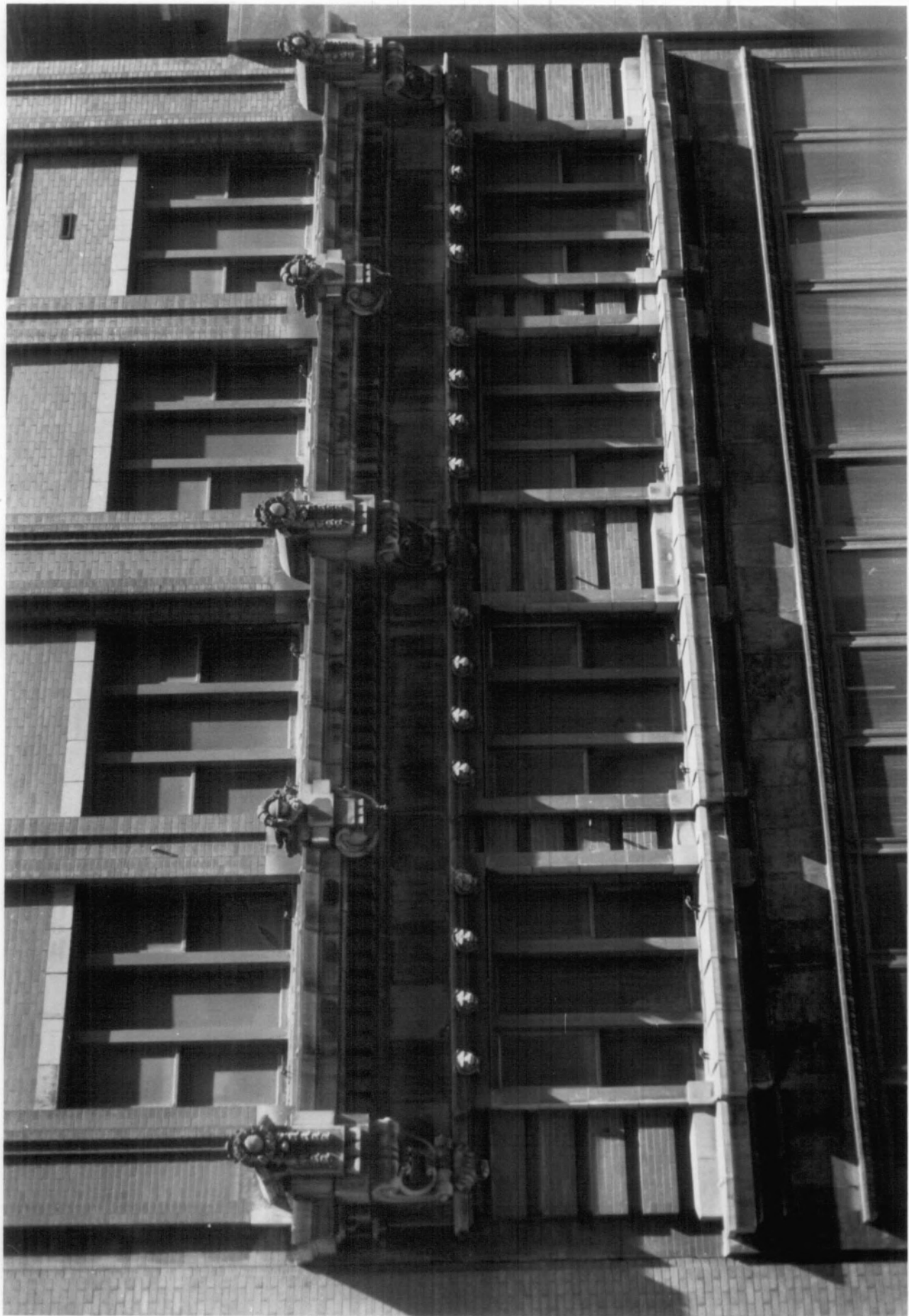
#2 of **3** Detail of cornice,
south (primary)
elevation.

Photographer: Mary M. Stiritz

Date: August 1984

Negative: Landmarks Association
of St. Louis, Inc.

Camera facing northeast.



917 LOCUST STREET BUILDING

917 Locust Street
St. Louis, Missouri

#3 of 3 north (rear) elevation

Photographer: Cynthia Longwisch

Date: November 1984

Negative: Landmarks Association
of St. Louis, Inc.

Camera facing southwest.

