

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Wainwright Building

AND/OR COMMON Wainwright Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 709 Chestnut Street

CITY, TOWN St. Louis VICINITY OF _____ — NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT _____
STATE Missouri CODE 29 COUNTY St. Louis CODE 510

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME State of Missouri (Office of Administration, Division of Design and Construction)

STREET & NUMBER State Capitol Building
CITY, TOWN Jefferson City VICINITY OF _____ STATE Missouri 65101

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. City Hall, Assessor's Office

STREET & NUMBER Room 114, 12th and Market Streets
CITY, TOWN St. Louis STATE Missouri 63103

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE 1940 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Library of Congress/Annex, Prints and Photographs Division
CITY, TOWN Washington STATE D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Wainwright Building is a ten-story office building constructed 1890-91 and designed by Louis Sullivan. The first two floors are faced in brown sandstone, severely plain; the next seven stories rise in continuous red brick piers, those on the corners three times the width of those between the windows. The set-back windows are alternated with spandrel panels of red terra cotta decorated with ornate foliage reliefs, varied at each floor in design and scale. The tenth story is a frieze of intertwined leaf scrolls framing circular windows, and is capped with Sullivan's characteristic overhanging roof slab, its edge also decorated.

All the technical elements that had become standard features of Chicago office buildings in the late 1880's are present for the first time in Sullivan's designs with the Wainwright: raft footings of reinforced concrete, the braced and rivetted steel frame, the wall bays carried on spandrel shelf angles, the fireproof-tile covering of all structural members, and movable interior partitions. Above the skylighted ground floor, the U-shaped plan provides an outer exposure for each office.

The quality of height in the Wainwright is emphasized through the use of a system of closely ranked pierlike bands that give the street elevations their forceful vertical thrust. False piers between each pair of true piers reinforce the image of a powerful upward movement.

Recently a surplus of office space in downtown St. Louis threatened the Wainwright Building with demolition. The National Trust for Historic Preservation purchased the structure's lease late in 1973, and later sold it to the State of Missouri. The Missouri Division of Design and Construction had determined to renovate the Wainwright Building and construct additional, compatible, office space on the remainder of the same city block. A design competition was held and won by the firm of Mitchell and Giurgola from Philadelphia, in association with Hastings and Shivetta of St. Louis (an artist's conception of the winning design is enclosed in this file). By February, 1975, the State had purchased all the property on the Wainwright city block and was ready to implement plans for demolishing all other structures there. Authorization had been given to go ahead with the renovation of the Wainwright itself, though funds for the additional office space were still awaiting legislative approval.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input 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 1890-91

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Louis Sullivan

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Wainwright Building was the first Adler and Sullivan commission involving the use of completely iron and steel framing. The structure was built between 1890 and 1891 for Ellis Wainwright, a wealthy St. Louis brewer with a wide range of aesthetic interests. The resulting design represents Sullivan's most thorough attempt to create a special form appropriate to the multi-story office block.

"Sullivan explained in an essay, "The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered," that the appearance of an office building should reflect the activities within. First, the entrance should be obvious. The main floor shops need large windows for advertising their wares. Above, the identical office floors are designed to be subdivided in many different ways; thus, their windows should be identical, none more important than any other. Finally, the attic story terminates the building visually and houses mechanical equipment and service spaces. This internal arrangement is clearly expressed in the exterior of the Wainwright Building.

"Why is this building probably the greatest work of architecture of the Nineteenth Century? How does it differ from one of the neighboring buildings of the same time? Architecture is not decoration; it is far more. It is essential not to mistake surface for substance. Prior to the Wainwright Building, steel frame structures had been covered with architectural cliches and trappings which bore no relation to the revolutionary new frame-work type of construction. They were covered with ill-fitting clothes borrowed from load-bearing types of construction. Sullivan not only conceived an original solution to the new problem of the steel frame, but an architectural expression hardly surpassed since. The Wainwright Building was not the first steel frame skyscraper; rather it is the first architectural solution, the first architectural expression of the high rise skeleton construction office building as such. It is architecturally the father of all contemporary office buildings. It is great because all elements, light and shadow, solids and voids, color, texture, materials, decoration, proportion and rhythm, work in concert expressing Sullivan's IDEA of a modern high rise office building. The neighboring buildings may or may not be pleasant, but they lack the unity, the internal harmony the coherence present in this great work of art."

....from an essay by W. Philip Cotton, Jr., AIA, St. Louis Architect and Preservationist, discussing the architectural significance of the Wainwright Building.

(Continued)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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"When he brought the drawing board with the motive for the Wainwright outlined in profile and elevation upon it and threw the board down on my table, I was perfectly aware of what had happened.

"This was a great Louis H. Sullivan moment. The tall building was born tall. His greatest effort? No. But here was the 'skyscraper': a new thing beneath the sun, entity imperfect, but with virtue, individuality, beauty and all its own. Until Louis Sullivan showed the way, high buildings lacked unity. They were built-up in layers. All were fighting height instead of gracefully and honestly accepting it. What unity those false masonry masses have that now pile up toward the big city skies is due to the master mind that first perceived the high building as an harmonious unit--its height triumphant."

....Frank Lloyd Wright was working in the office of Adler and Sullivan and apparently was the chief draftsman when Sullivan conceived the Wainwright Building. Later Wright wrote of the birth of the Wainwright Building in Genius & the Mobocracy which is the source of the above quotation."

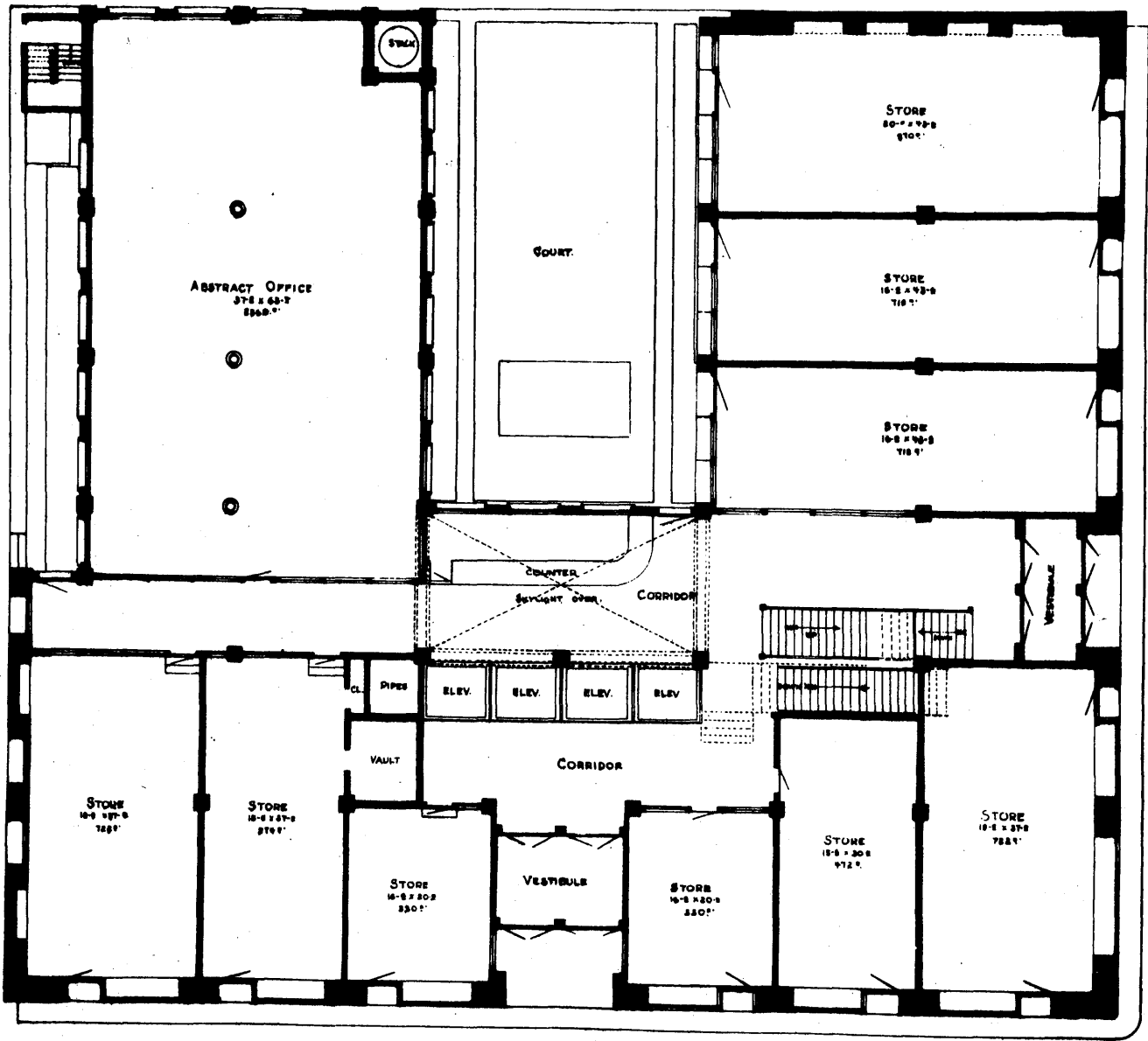
From "announcement of an architectural competition for the design of the Wainwright Office Complex," State of Missouri Division of Design and Construction, Jefferson City, Missouri, 1974.

WAINWRIGHT BUILDING.
ST. LOUIS MO

ARTHUR SULLIVAN CHICAGO
CARROLL FRANKLIN ST. LOUIS ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS



1. Original perspective of the Wainwright Building



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

2. Original First Floor Plan from
Rental Brochure of 1891

This is a xerox of the
glossy print that actually
accompanied the nomination.

WAINWRIGHT BUILDING: SITE PLAN

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PINE STREET

EIGHTH STREET

PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION

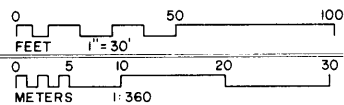
PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION

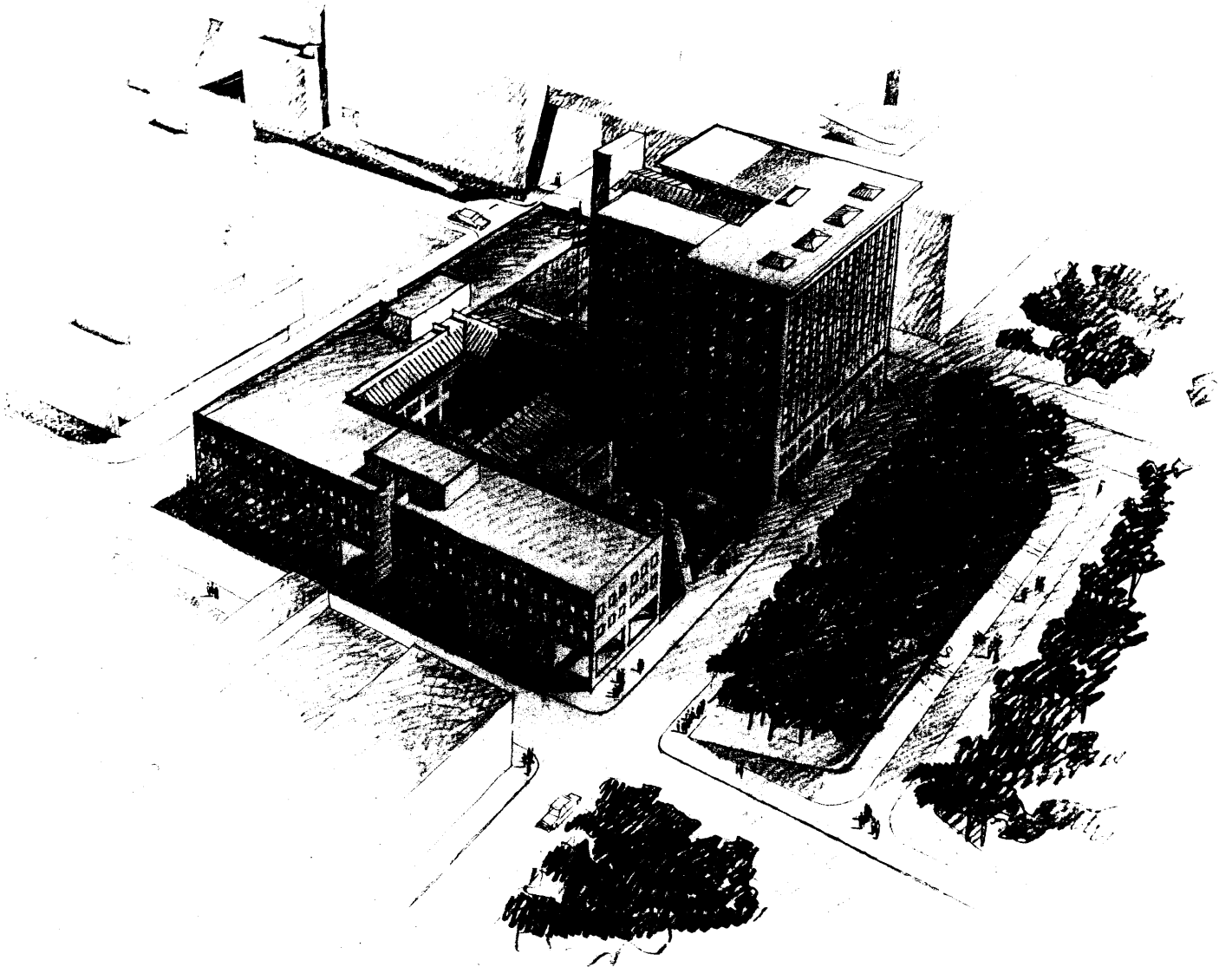
PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION

WAINWRIGHT BUILDING

SEVENTH STREET

CHESTNUT STREET













and 5' 9 1/4"

6' 0 1/4"



Under 7th Street Line

T.C. Pauls

Wainwright Blvd

and
CLR } a.a.

April 1911





9. Detail of a Shopfront Doorplate:

