

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Willys-Overland Building

other names/site number Overland Automobile Co., American Fixture and Showcase Manufacturing Co, Weiss Fixture Co.

2. Location

street & number 2300 Locust Street [n/a] not for publication

city or town Saint Louis [n/a] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county St. Louis (Independent City) code 510 zip code 63103-1512

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)

Claire F. Blackwell 22 Nov 99
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO
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 Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Willys-Overland Building
Name of Property

St. Louis (Independent City), MO
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

n/a

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/business

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

COMMERCE/TRADE/warehouse

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

CONCRETE

roof ASPHALT

other CAST IRON

LIMESTONE

Narrative Description

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

Willis-Overland Building
Name of Property

St. Louis (Independent City), MO
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- 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

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1917-1932

Significant Dates

1917

1917-1932

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Mills, Rhines, Bellman and Nordhoff

Leonard Construction Company

9. Major Bibliographical 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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Record # _____
Wihys-Overland Building
Name of Property _____

St. Louis (Independent City), MO
County and State _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 1.5 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 [1] [5] [7] [4] [2] [6] [5] [0] [4] [2] [7] [9] [8] [1] [0]
Zone Easting Northing
2 [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []
Zone Easting Northing
3 [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []
4 [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []
[] 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 Karen Bode Baxter, Architectural Historian and Timothy P. Maloney, Research Associate
organization Karen Bode Baxter, Consultant date August 9, 1999
street & number 5811 Delor Street telephone (314) 353-0593
city or town Saint Louis state Missouri zip code 63109-3108

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the complete 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 SJI Properties LLC
street & number 1 Metropolitan Square telephone (314) 231-1331
city or town Saint Louis state Missouri zip code 63102-2702

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Willys-Overland Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Narrative Description

SUMMARY

Designed by Mills, Rhones, Bellman and Norhoff, an architectural firm from Toledo Ohio, and built by the Leonard Construction Company of Chicago, the six story, red-brown brick, curtain wall, flat roof, industrial, Willys-Overland Building dominates the southwest corner of the intersection of 23rd and Locust as it has since its construction in 1916, with open lots to the west and only one or two story structures across the alley and to the east on Locust. Across the street, however, are densely built commercial/industrial structures mostly two to three stories tall. Corner buildings in this area along Locust are taller, serving as bookends to their blocks, just like the Willys-Overland Building. The only other six story structure nearby is the Haas Building on the northeast corner of 23rd and Locust, opposite the Willys-Overland Building.

Utilizing stylistic details influenced by the Classical Revival designs popular in the early twentieth century following the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago each of the street facades of the Willys-Overland Building is divided into seven major bays by brick pilaster-like strips which extend to the parapet from the limestone, stylized cartouches that form a belt course with the concrete sills of the second floor windows. Most of these pilasters extend to the ground level, between display window and entry openings with alternating rows of brick and limestone (the top row of which forms a belt course that is the continuous lintel for all first floor doors/windows.) This motif is reminiscent of quoins in Classical Revival designs and of the smooth rusticated stone walls common on the lower facade of Neoclassical buildings. Additional Classical Revival influences can be seen on the interior with the use of simple Doric capitals on the first floor concrete support columns, the recess paneled square pilasters at each end of the north wall on the first floor, as well as the coffered ceilings on the first floor showroom/office area which spanned across the northern portion of the first floor. Even the exterior symmetry (i.e., three bays of storefront display windows each side of the corner and central main entry on Locust Street), the sparing application of ornamentation, the unadorned roof line, and the avoidance of moldings are indicative of Neoclassicism.

EXTERIOR

The upper levels of both street facades are identical. These curtain walls are divided into seven major bays by brick pilaster strips, with the outer bay on each corner further divided by a slightly smaller brick pilaster. Between these pilasters are steel framed, vertically divided, three over three, sashed windows. The interior five bays on each side have three counter-balanced window sashes grouped together between pilasters and the outer bays have a single counter-balanced sashed window either side of the narrower, dividing pilaster. Each window has a smooth concrete sill with the second floor window sills forming a broad belt course with stylized limestone cartouches at each end of the window bay.

While each of the street facades is similar on the first floor level, there are some distinctions that help identify the main entrance as Locust Street and the service or side street as 23rd Street. Across both facades, an additional limestone belt course forms the continuous lintel for the first floor openings. Alternating blocks of smooth-faced limestone and equally sized brick form the pilasters between display windows and entries, continuing in line with the upper floor brick pilasters, but the front facade (Locust Street) only has two such pilasters besides the corner pilasters and these flank the end bays while the 23rd Street facade has pilasters directly below all of the main upper floor pilasters except for the second bay from the corner with Locust since this is treated as a double display window (as is the one around the corner on Locust).

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Willys-Overland Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Narrative Description (continued)

Across the front facade and the first three bays (from the north) on the 23rd Street facade, there is a continuous band of transoms, which, along with the openings in each of these bays, is framed with a cast iron storefront molded with recessed rectangular panels (that are reminiscent of classical column and entablature treatments) and stylized torches (another classical motif) at each upper corner. Just below the transoms of these cast iron storefronts is a metal projecting drip edge that almost appears to be a covering for roll-out canvas awnings, although it lacks the artifacts of those mechanisms and no awnings appear in the one known historic photograph, the architect's original specifications and contracts, or in any building permits. The base is a course of smooth limestone, forming the kickplate for each of these openings as well as giving the appearance of a raised foundation course. Most of these bays had large plate glass display windows, with the exception of the center and the far west bays on the Locust Street facade which both have recessed entries. Each bay of plate glass was divided vertically into two panes of glass with metal framing (based upon the historic photograph and the one available original elevation drawing). The center bay is the main entry and it appears to have consisted originally of panes of glass framed in metal with sidelights and a single light entry door (based upon the historic photograph). The western bay on Locust is divided in half with a recessed paneled square column dividing a display window east of the recessed entry to the stairwell/elevator lobby (consisting of panes of glass with cast iron kickplates).

The four southern bays on 23rd Street reflect the service orientation of this facade. The first two bays from the south corner have three sashed windows (like the central upper bays) with additional alternating belt courses of limestone and brick (in line with the pilasters) which form the continuous sill for the first floor windows and the lintel of the basement windows (since the land slopes down to the south along 23rd). The next two bays originally had shorter profile, steel sashed, three over three, windows clustered in three window sets that functioned as a double transom above the garage door/ramp entries, although only the southern set survives intact above the opening to the basement ramp which has been converted into a loading dock while the northern set has been modified as a single row for a transom above a taller garage door entry.

The alley or south facade was similarly divided into seven primary bays with the corner bay at the east end carrying the street facade's treatment rather than the simpler alley treatment. This east end bay replicates the details of the corner bay on the south end of the 23rd Street facade, including the use of finish brick, limestone, and steel sashed windows. The first and third bays from the west were also subdivided with single steel sashed windows either side of an additional vertical division, to provide light to the stairwell and the two freight elevators on the interior. The wall area behind the east end bay leaves the reinforced concrete frame exposed and utilizes only a minimum of brick wall below the bands of standard warehouse windows, known as Brown folding flue windows. Above the third bay from the west is the freight elevator tower, which has a water tank on the top (an addition placed there in 1937 after the period of significance of this building).

The west side facade was built without any finish details, except that the brick veneer covers the reinforced concrete structural framework on the front bay. In the remaining six bays, this concrete frame is left exposed and infilled with brick, except for the recessed light shaft in the third bay from the front on the upper levels. This light shaft extends as deeply as the first concrete reinforcing beam running parallel to the west wall and each level has steel sashed windows (one on the north and south walls and a pair on the east wall). A simple brick chimney is visible on the roof near the back of the west

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Willys-Overland Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Narrative Description (continued)

wall. Also visible from this facade are the brick rectangular projections above the roof for the two stairwells and passenger elevator roof access.

INTERIOR

Interior features are kept simple with the most distinctive treatment to the first floor, which served as offices and showroom space. The interior of all levels is open, with no interior partitions, except for stairwells and elevator shafts. On the south wall, mid-building are a pair of large freight elevators, large enough to carry automobiles to the upper levels. A grid of columns, in line with the exterior bay divisions (six by six interior grid with flat pilasters one at each point along the walls of the upper level) supports the 12 inch thick poured concrete floors/ceilings. Except for the showroom/office area, the columns have mushroom capitals with flat slab panels to reduce the shearing stress. The showroom/office area on the first floor, which extended across the Locust Street facade and south along the 23rd Street facade to the concrete automobile ramps, was treated distinctively by utilizing Doric capitals on the concrete support columns (with the same positioning as the upper floor mushroom columns and pilasters), having three square paneled columns at the northwest corner and two on the west end of the north wall, by creating coffered ceilings (some of the elements probably disguise structural concrete beams), and covering the concrete floor with 6 inch square white tiles surrounded by narrow black tiles (the same pattern is used in the primary elevator/stairwell foyer floor). Two automobile ramps extend into the building on the east side with tall rounded concrete curbs on each side, although the lower ramp is now framed over with wood timbers as a loading dock. The primary stairwell/elevator shaft is enclosed in the northwest corner of the building, opening into a separate foyer which has a black and white tile floor and a separate exit door facing Locust Street. The staircase extends up the open shaft to the sixth floor and has wood banisters with square iron balustrades and square newel posts. Each level is treated identically (except for the ground floor lobby) with a steel paneled door providing access to that level, a three by six lighted, metal framed elevator door, and pipe railings in front of the transom windows at the landing. There is an additional enclosed stairwell, more simply detailed, extending from the basement to the top floor in the southwest corner. A third stairwell that is surrounded by brick walls in the center of the building extends from the first through third floors, with a small freight elevator (dumb-waiter) incorporated into that structure that continues on up to the top floor. North of the automotive ramp openings on the 23rd Street facade is an entry leading to a stairwell that only connects the first floor and basement.

ALTERATIONS AND INTEGRITY ISSUES

Alterations to both facades have not drastically impacted the overall visual integrity of the structure. Given the size of the structure, the original design (with its repetition of pilasters and steel sashed windows that form large curtain walls) as well as other distinguishing features (limestone details and cast iron storefronts) still dominate both street facades, with covered openings still reading as they did originally. Its two distinctive structural systems are still clearly visible: the reinforced exposed concrete frame on the west and south facade walls and the mushroom columns and panel-slab construction on the interior. The interior spaces have not generally been subdivided nor ceilings lowered. Besides the heavy duty structural systems, the thick concrete floors, the use of display windows, the automobile ramps, the large open interior spaces, as well as the giant freight elevator shafts all continue to distinguish this building as an automotive distributorship.

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Willys-Overland Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Narrative Description (continued)

The building is currently under rehabilitation utilizing *the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings* and under review by the National Park Service as part of a Historic Preservation Certification Application with all modifications made only after receiving approval by the National Park Service. Alterations that are easily reversible, since they were applied rather than replacing original features, are in the process of being removed as part of the rehabilitation project. These non-historic elements are being removed: the projecting metal sign on the corner (a recent addition that reads "Weiss Fixture Co."), the huge water tank on top of the freight elevator, and the wood paneling infilling the openings of the first floor cast iron storefronts (placed within the cast iron frames as a security measure but leaving the distinctive cast iron framing exposed). Both recessed entries have replacement steel doors, but within what appear to be the original openings. In 1966 the east ramp leading to the basement was converted into a loading dock, the ramp leading up to the first floor interior had its opening heightened and the ramp from the first floor to the alley was also removed and its alley wall opening blocked in. Both of the ramp openings on 23rd Street have newer style roll-up metal doors and the doorway to the north had brick infilled in the area previously filled by the double transom. The non-historic loading dock is currently being disassembled so that the east ramp to the basement can be rebuilt along with the ramp to the alley. Although the original upper floor steel sashed windows were generally intact when the rehabilitation project began, they were in extremely poor repair, nonfunctional, modified, structurally unsound, and extremely unsafe. They are being replaced with aluminum framed windows designed to match the profiles of the original design. The standard warehouse windows in some cases were even in worse repair with the frames bowing and the flue window hanging only by one hinge point. These too are being replaced with aluminum framed windows to match the profiles of the original design. Work is progressing rapidly with the intention of returning the exterior to its appearance when it housed Willys-Overland, Inc.

Only a few alterations are not simply cosmetic. Although the parapet height appears to approximate the original, it was rebuilt in matching red-brown brick in 1955, omitting a narrow limestone continuous lintel and the brick pilaster capitals with projecting stone disks (probably to symbolize the "O" in Overland) and stone caps. The next year, a canopy was removed from the front of the building, presumably the flat projecting canopy over the main entry similar to the artist's rendering of the building included in 1920 telephone directory advertisement; although it is not evident in the early photograph of the building, it was apparently added by Willys-Overland in 1927 (according to building permit records). The alley facade is the most altered, but given it is not a primary or even secondary facade, and since the alterations usually were limited to infilling some of the openings (not changing the dimensions or making additions to the structure or brick walls), these do not seriously impact the historic integrity of the structure and most of these are being reopened as part of the rehabilitation project. At some point, brick infilled areas that may have been original window openings on the west facade but this elevation was always predominantly structural framing and brick. Besides, this was not designed as either the primary or secondary facade and the infill does not seriously impact the integrity of the structure and may actually have been infilled while Willys-Overland was still utilizing the structure since this area would have been adjacent to a one-story building completed around 1927 and utilized by Willys-Overland for their used car showroom. In 1966, a one story, six bay loading dock addition was added at the rear of the west facade, but it is obviously outside the original building envelope as well as diminutive in comparison with the monolithic brick wall on that facade.

On the interior, alterations appear to have been minimal. The cast iron storefront area has been covered with sheetrock in recent years as a security measure, but is being removed as part of the rehabilitation. It appears that there were originally few interior partitions, except the wall that used to divide the showroom from the back of the first floor area and

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Willys-Overland Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Narrative Description (continued)

a new wall, similarly located will once again divide these areas when this rehabilitation is complete. In 1946, there were alterations made to the interior partitions (those are still evident along the south and west walls of the third and fourth floors, mostly of sheetrock with wood stud walls, but some of brick and concrete block). In 1977, offices were partitioned off in the northwest corner of the first floor. All of these later walls have already been removed as part of the rehabilitation project. Two large garage doorways on the west wall appear to have been original but the overhead door on the south was altered when the loading dock addition was added in 1966, while the north opening was filled in with concrete block. The smaller overhead door/doorway was cut through the wall at the south end of the west wall either with the 1966 or 1977 alterations to the loading dock addition. The only other noticeable alteration on the interior was the addition of hanging fluorescent light fixtures on the first floor. It is unclear if the holes between the first floor and basement are original or part of an alteration made after Willys-Overland left the building (possibly for the large crane added in 1944). In general, the interior retains its distinguishing features—the stairwell and elevator shafts and the open expanse on each level with unobstructed views to each exterior wall except for the repetition of the mushroom capital columns supporting the flat slabs and concrete ceilings/floors.

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Wilys-Overland Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Map of City of St. Louis, MO
Locating Property



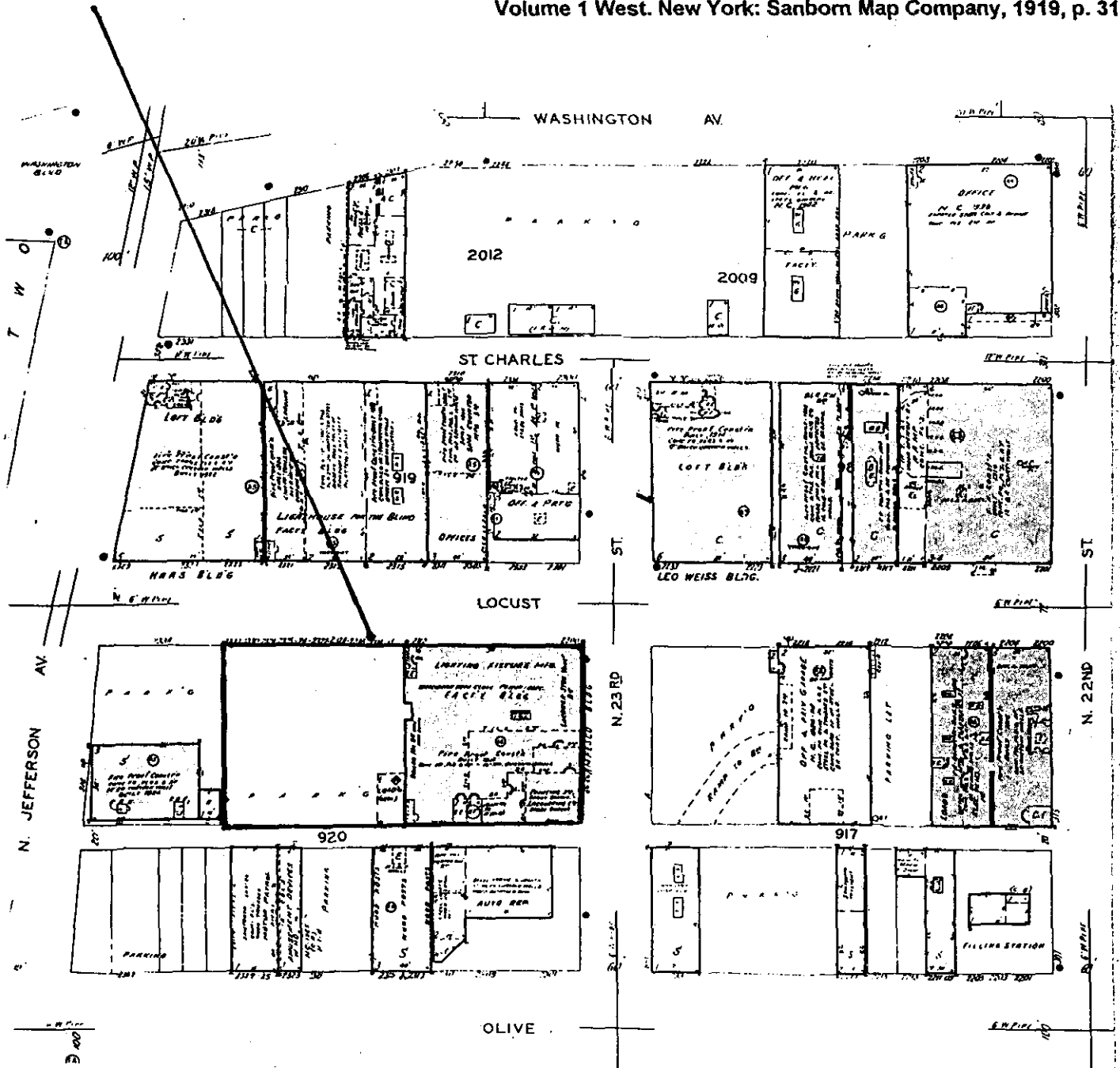
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Willys-Overland Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Site Plan of Property taken from
"Insurance Map of Saint Louis, Missouri,"
Volume 1 West. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1919, p. 31.



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Section number 8 Page 8

Willys-Overland Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Willys-Overland Building at 2300 Locust, Saint Louis [Independent City], Missouri, is significant for its role in the commercial development of the automotive industry in Saint Louis under Criterion A in the area of commerce.

SUMMARY

The Willys-Overland Company was the second largest automobile manufacturer in the country for most of the period of significance of this building, 1917-1932. Besides selling more cars than every company except Ford, the Willys-Overland Company was also the only major manufacturer to use the superior Knight sleeve-valve motor. Its Overland model cars fell into the price bracket just above the Model T and was one of the most popular automobiles of its time. In addition, the Willys-Overland Company was the first to offer payment plans allowing people to purchase cars on credit, providing an affordable option other than the Model T (which dominated the low-priced automobile market). Willys-Overland operated its regional distributorship from the Willys-Overland Building at 2300 Locust Street in Saint Louis from 1917 to 1932, when the manufacturer reached its peak of popularity and success nationwide. It was one of the largest automotive distributorships in the Saint Louis area at that time. This building was the largest building in the four blocks east of Jefferson on Locust Street, an area of the city known for its car distributorships and dealerships prior to the Great Depression. Besides being the largest building in the area used as a distributorship, in 1917 the just completed Willys-Overland Building hosted the Saint Louis Auto Show, the first time the show moved indoors, which was symbolic of the importance of the Willys-Overland distributorship in Saint Louis and the prominence of the new building within the automotive district along Locust Street.

BUILDING HISTORY

Designed by the Toledo architectural firm of Mills, Rhines, Bellman and Nordhoff, the Willys-Overland Building at 2300 Locust became the distributorship for the Saint Louis sales region when it was completed in February 1917.¹ In an area that 8 years earlier had been primarily residential, Willys-Overland constructed their new building on what had been the site of a lumberyard.² While not the first example in Saint Louis, the use of flat-slab concrete supported by mushroom columns (with poured concrete floors/ceiling and the brick curtain walls around the reinforced concrete grid frame) on the Willys-Overland Building was the largest example of this modern construction method utilized in this rapidly developing district of automotive and industrial distributorships, constructed primarily between 1913 and 1924.³ Constructed quickly, with the building permit issued June 15, 1916,⁴ and first occupied for the Saint Louis Auto Show on February 17, 1917,⁵ the Willys-Overland Building apparently had some interior details on the upper levels finished in early 1918⁶ although the building was already in use by that time.

This 6 story, with full basement, industrial building utilized Classical Revival design details on the brick pilaster-like strips (that separated the bays of industrial steel sashed windows on the two street facades) as well as on other decorative details, from the stylized cartouches, belt courses, and quoin-like corners of the exterior to the showroom's Doric columns and coffered ceilings. From the files of Mills, Rhines, Bellman and Nordhoff now archived at the Toledo Public Library,⁷ as well as visual inspections of the current building, it is evident that the building originally had a display showroom on

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Willys-Overland Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

the first floor across the north side of the building with the main entrance on that side facing Locust Street where the columns have Doric capitals and the concrete ceilings are coffered. It also has two stairwells at each end of the west wall and within the front stairwell, on Locust Street, is the passenger elevator. Centered on the south wall are a pair of freight elevators and ramps enter the first floor and basement from the 23rd Street side and one ramp originally exited through the alley or south wall. Upstairs had been utilized for storage as is still evident by the bolts and hooks imbedded in the poured concrete ceilings where automobile bodies could be hoisted for storage during the off season (since initially cars had different bodies for summer and winter) while awaiting repainting and repairs. Advertisements show that the building housed a large parts department and a body repair facility as well as a paint shop, a common need at a time when automotive paints were not long lasting.⁸ The freight elevators and the open expanses of the upper floors (permitted by the use of the flat slab concrete on mushroom columns which supported the nearly 1 foot thick poured concrete ceiling/floors) allowed for easy maneuvering of the large automobiles.

Leonard Construction Company of Chicago served as the general contractor on this job, as it did on many other Willys-Overland building projects with the major subcontracts on the Saint Louis project given to:

- Ornamental Wire and Iron Company of Missouri for the stairs, pipe rails, ladders, display windows, wheel guards, brass thresholds, and other metal components on the building
- David Lupton's Sons Company for the steel sashed windows
- William A. Corrao Electric Company for the electrical wiring
- American Luxfor Prism Company for the sidewalk lights
- J. W. O'Connel Paint Company for the painting and decorating
- Pickel Stone Company for the cut stone exterior details
- American Steel Window Company for the slide up exterior garage doors
- General Fire Extinguisher Company for automatic sprinkling system
- H. T. Kilpatrick Plumbing Company for the plumbing and draining system
- Otis Elevator Company for the 2 freight and 1 passenger elevators
- R. K. Fleming for cleaning and tuckpointing the brick⁹

Mills, Rhines, Bellman and Nordhoff was historically a major firm in the Toledo area and Bauer, Stark, and Lashbrook (the successor firm) currently is the largest and oldest architectural firm in Toledo, Ohio.¹⁰ At the time of the St. Louis commission, the firm of Mills, Rhines, Bellman and Nordhoff worked primarily on industrial buildings and they became the primary architects for the many Willys-Overland Company building projects both in Toledo and around the nation. When John Willys bought the Toledo plant, he commissioned the firm to make additions necessary for the expansion of the Willys-Overland Company. Over the next decade, Mills, Rhines, Bellman and Nordhoff designed and oversaw the construction of 167 commissions for the Willys-Overland Company throughout the United States.¹¹

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Willys-Overland Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

This firm had already been involved with a number of large projects in the Toledo area including factories for Bunting Brass, Libbey Glass, Haughton Elevator, and Champion Spark Plug.¹² Soon after the completion of the Willys-Overland Building in Saint Louis early in 1917, the architectural firm began to receive contracts from the government for the war effort. Drawings for sixty-three buildings were developed, including the Western Cartridge Plant Extension in Alton, Illinois. Besides working with the government and Willys-Overland, the firm also extended itself outside of Ohio, including work for the Continental Baking Company among other clients.¹³ In addition to the impressive array of work the firm did throughout the country both as part of the war effort and for private companies, one of the partners, George Rhines, developed the widely used building process of "flat slab" concrete supported by mushroom columns, a technique that was used on the Willys-Overland Building in Saint Louis.¹⁴

The building at 2300 Locust was not the firm's only connection to Saint Louis, either. George Mills grew up in Saint Louis after his parents emigrated from London when he was four. He then attended Washington University before moving to Toledo to teach in the Toledo Manual Training School, soon after which he began his architectural career, including the long and fruitful connection with Willys-Overland Company.¹⁵

WILLYS-OVERLAND COMPANY HISTORY

The construction of the Willys-Overland Building and the expansion of the Willys-Overland Company in Saint Louis coincided with John N. Willys' involvement in the Overland Company. Up until 1907, John Willys was a bicycle salesman who also ran an Overland dealership. The panic of 1907 hurt the Overland Company to the point where they were unable to fill their orders. Upon learning that he had contracts for more cars than the Overland Company could deliver, Willys went to Indianapolis from his dealership in Elmira, New York and learned that the Overland Company was \$80,000 in debt and was about to enter into receivership. Rather than being left with a car dealership that did not have any cars, Willys used emergency measures to keep the company afloat long enough for him to convince the creditors to take stock options from the Overland Company and to make him the president of the company. By 1909, Willys had acquired the Pope Factory in Toledo, moved the company there, and renamed the company the Willys-Overland Company.¹⁶ By the end of 1910, Willys had begun to expand the Pope factory while maintaining the Garford plant in Indianapolis, which converted to the production of the Willys-Knight car. This car was the only car produced by a major manufacturer to use the Knight engine, a sleeve-valve engine that was much quieter, more powerful and more fuel efficient than the poppet-valve engines used on most cars at that time.¹⁷

The expansion of the Overland Company into the Willys-Overland Company and the addition of the Willys-Knight car to the company line allowed the Willys-Overland Company to grow until it was second only to Ford in production from 1913-1920.¹⁸ The majority of this production was achieved not by trying to compete with the Ford Model T, but rather by becoming one of the dominant producers in the \$500-\$1000 range of cars immediately above the Model T in price. This competition strategy meant that by 1913, Willys-Overland was selling 37,000 of the 461,500 cars produced that year, compared to the 202,000 turned out by Ford, and 9,000 more than the 28,000 produced by the third largest company, Buick.¹⁹ The national prominence of the Willys-Overland Company also allowed them to claim the first choice of space at the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce's auto shows in New York and Chicago from 1914-1918. The space at

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their auto shows was based on the sales for the previous year and Willys-Overland had the greatest volume in sales in the year prior to each of these shows (with the exception of Ford, which was excluded from the competition for floor space by the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce).²⁰

During this period, John Willys began to diversify the holdings of the company and eventually formed the Willys Corporation in 1917, just as the Willys-Overland Building was being completed in Saint Louis. This corporation owned the Electric Auto-Lite Company, the New Process Gear Company, and the Duesenberg Motors Company and one third of the common stock in the Willys-Overland Company while Willys himself gained control of the Fisk Rubber Company. In the ensuing years, Willys controlled these properties either through the Willys Corporation or as a private individual but they were never consolidated into a single entity. The inefficient organization of the company left Willys-Overland ill-prepared for the depression of 1920 and the company was facing receivership again when the creditors brought in Walter Chrysler to save the company in 1921.²¹

By the end of 1923, John Willys was able to regain control of Willys-Overland, now Willys-Overland Incorporated and despite its financial problems it was still third in the country in the number of cars sold, behind Ford and Chevrolet.²² In part, its continued popularity was due to the introduction of the very popular Whippet, a four-cylinder car (they later added a six-cylinder model to the line) designed to compete with other economy class cars. During the 1920s, unlike some other automobile manufacturers, Willys-Overland Inc. recovered from the depression of 1920, partly due to Chrysler's efforts and partly due to the success of the Whippet. By 1930, with what appeared to be a successful, stable company, John Willys retired and sold his stock in Willys-Overland Inc. and took President Hoover's offer to become ambassador to Poland. However, with the onset of the Great Depression, over the next two years the company dropped the Whippet from its line to concentrate on larger six and eight cylinder cars, a business move that hurt the company since people could no longer afford the larger cars. John Willys returned from his ambassadorship to try and save the company, which had entered receivership by 1933. His guidance helped turn the company around and the recovery continued after his death in 1935, so that by 1938 Willys-Overland was again turning a profit, but it never regained its dominance in the passenger car market that it had held during the late 1910s and 1920s.²³ As it happened, the use of the Willys-Overland Building in Saint Louis from 1917 through 1933, coincided with the heyday of the Willys-Overland Company as a national automotive leader.

As the national economy recovered, the preparations for the United States' entrance into World War II offered a new opportunity to Willys-Overland Inc. In 1940, the United States Army was holding a competition to design and build prototypes of a light four-wheel drive vehicle. In the end, Willys-Overland won the competition and received a contract for an order of 16,000 "MA ¼ ton 4 x 4 trucks," better known as the Jeep.²⁴ With the Jeep contract, Willys-Overland became the first automotive manufacturer to devote a plant to military production during World War II. After the war, the line was continued not only for the military model, but also with modifications for a civilian model while the company also developed other innovations like the first all-steel station wagons, a design soon copied by many other manufacturers. In 1953, the company changed names to Willys Motors Inc., after Henry J. Kaiser's interests purchased the company, then in 1963, the name was changed once again to Kaiser Jeep Corporation, which in turn was acquired by the American Motors Corporation in 1970.²⁵

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SAINT LOUIS AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Saint Louis became one of the leading manufacturing centers for the most important product of the Industrial Revolution, the automobile, a status that would shortly be eclipsed by Detroit's developing dominance as the automobile manufacturing capital of the United States. But in the 1910s and 1920s the young automobile industry was still attracted to Saint Louis, now as a distribution center, and the area east of Jefferson along Locust Street became the focus of the development of Saint Louis into an automotive distribution center, with the Willys-Overland Building being the largest distributorship to be located in that area.

The early automotive industry was not a unified industry with most companies competing in the same way. None of the early manufacturers could claim to have built a car completely within the framework of their own company. Instead, the rapid growth of the industry, combined with the varied ways in which companies got their start, including the expansion of bicycle or wagon/carriage manufacturers into automobile companies, allowed the automotive industry to grow quickly, if haphazardly, even within the history of most individual companies. This early development was characterized by numerous companies, which were able to remain independent from one another in structure and competitive within the market place.

The development of large automobile companies from small companies that had been in other businesses also allowed some early manufacturers to enter the business with less risk than would otherwise be faced by a company presenting a new product to the consumer market. Although many of the first cars were sold to the public direct from the factory, the owners of these companies saw the need to increase their ability to sell to a larger market. In order to do this, they quickly turned to franchised dealers along the lines similar to those that were commonly employed for bicycle and horse-drawn carriage manufacturers. As the industry was starting the risks for the dealer were not unreasonably high, and the main problem the dealer faced was supplying the cars to customers since production had trouble keeping up with the demand. The dealers/distributors more often had to worry about getting enough cars from the producers than about selling the cars since consumers usually purchased through orders rather than inventoried stock. John Willys' dealership in Elmira New York was an ideal example of this phenomenon in 1907 when he sold more total cars than the Overland Company had produced that year, leaving him with customers for whom he could not deliver cars.²⁶ Especially prior to 1920, dealerships were primarily an outlet for a consumer to order a car and very few dealers had much of a showroom, which was usually just enough space for a few, if any, display automobiles in one corner of what was primarily an automotive service garage. As a consequence, the ability to fill orders from a supplier was paramount. In the early days of the automobile industry, brand loyalty had not developed, even among the dealers. Rather, keeping a good working relationship between the supplier and the dealer was far more important to these dealers who might readily switch to another manufacturer.

As the automotive industry grew, it quickly became apparent that the manufacturers needed another means of distributing automobiles, rather than direct factory orders by each dealer and a system which could build a regional dealership network. As a consequence, the development of a distribution system became an important component in the marketing of automobiles. Initially, distributors were independent operators whose tie to a particular manufacturer was

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much the same as the dealers, rather than being a part of the manufacturing company's operating structure. These independent distributors focused on creating a loyal bond with the dealers who bought cars from them, a situation which gave the distributor a great deal of power since he could always switch to a different manufacturer and take most of the dealers away from the first manufacturer.

The Willys-Overland Company was one of the first manufacturers to incorporate the distributors into the company structure, ensuring both their product loyalty and the ability to maintain the relationship with dealers in a more efficient network. Other manufacturers would soon follow and in Saint Louis the area around 23rd and Locust Street became known as the city's automotive center because many of these new automotive distributors (including Willys-Overland, Packard, Hudson and many others) located there in the 1910s and 1920s.²⁷

The same transportation advantages that were making Saint Louis one of the major industrial cities in the United States (its central location, extensive rail connections, and navigable river network), also made it an excellent distribution point for manufactured products, including automobiles. The relatively untapped automotive consumer base to the south and west of Saint Louis also attracted automotive distributors. Manufacturers in the 1910s were just beginning to utilize independent distributors to market a manufacturer's automobiles to dealers (rather than promoting dealership and sales orders directly from the manufacturing site). For the manufacturer, this was an attractive financial alternative that helped raise capital while shifting some of the financial risk from the manufacturer to the distributor, encouraging an increase in the number of dealerships. Thus, during the 1910s, as was true across the United States, the number of automobile dealerships and brands mushroomed in Saint Louis with 76 dealers, representing 100 different makes of automobile in 1913, multiplying to over 200 dealers by 1930. The territory for Saint Louis distributorships generally extended across the eastern half of Missouri, Southern Illinois, and Western Kentucky and Tennessee, with some of the distributorship territories stretching south all the way to the Louisiana coast, across into Texas, and up through Oklahoma and Kansas.²⁸

HISTORY OF WILLYS-OVERLAND IN SAINT LOUIS

The Willys-Overland Company (later Willys-Overland Incorporated) achieved success in Saint Louis, because they employed a system that used their branch office in Saint Louis as a distributorship as well as a dealership. The operation of what was originally the Overland Motor Car Company (the name of the locally owned distributor's company in Saint Louis) began in 1911 and the operation grew rapidly, reaching its zenith in the 1920s. It had quickly outgrown its earliest locations and the construction of the new building in 1917 at 2300 Locust and its use by Willys-Overland Incorporated as its regional distributorship through 1932²⁹ coincided with the transition of Willys-Overland into the second largest automobile company in the United States. The success of the Willys-Overland Company in Saint Louis was confirmed in May 1920 when the Saint Louis distributor boasted to its dealers that Saint Louis was fifth overall in returning the largest number of retail certificates to the company, behind only Detroit, New York, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles and that the manufacturer was second in sales to Ford.³⁰ By 1927, Saint Louis was one of at least thirteen Willys-Overland distributorships nationwide, including: New York City, Buffalo, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Indianapolis, Chicago, Minneapolis, Atlanta, Kansas City, Omaha, Portland, and San Francisco, among others. The Saint Louis distribution territory extended to cover eastern Missouri, southern Illinois, northeastern Arkansas, and western Kentucky.³¹

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Willys-Overland initially operated through a single dealership in Saint Louis, the Overland Motor Car Company, at 3907-3911 Olive, which operated for about two years, from 1911 through 1912.³² Although it is unclear whether or not it was the same business or a new operation, in 1913, the city directory listing for Overland, which was now listed as the Overland Automobile Company, opened at 3210 Locust, (utilizing a warehouse at 436 S. Theresa Avenue), but by the next year it had moved to its newly finished 3 story, 50 foot front commercial building at 2309-2311 Locust. At this time, the local Overland Automobile Company had its own president, T. L. Hausmann, and this independent distributor worked as a part of the division of the Willys-Overland Company, known as the Overland Stores, which had built their new building.³³ Thus, within 3 years of starting a Saint Louis outlet, Willys-Overland had already established their distributorship in a prime location in what was just becoming known as Saint Louis' automotive center. The Overland Automobile Company remained in operation until 1920, as the corporation's Overland and Willys-Knight distributor as well as serving as their only Saint Louis dealership, although the designation "Distributors" is not found (in available historical records) until 1916.³⁴

Within 3 years of the Overland Automobile Company moving into their new location at 2309 Locust, Willys-Overland Inc. opened its own offices in Saint Louis, operating from 611 Olive between 1916 and 1919 and apparently responsible for the distribution of the "Light Commercial Line" (delivery trucks, etc.) of Willys-Knight automobiles.³⁵ By 1916, Saint Louis' role as a major Willys-Overland distribution center had already outgrown their 2309 Locust building and the Overland Stores Company, the branch of the Willys-Overland Company responsible for construction of distribution facilities, began construction of a new and much larger building at 2300 Locust Street, directly across the street from the Overland Automobile Company's existing operation. Since technological advancements made it possible for them to now build a taller building, and with land available just across the street on a corner lot where they would have 300 feet of street frontage, Willys-Overland built its new 6 story building at 2300-2312 Locust.³⁶ Although Willys-Overland built this new (and 6 times larger) building for their local distributor, the Overland Automobile Company (a private company), in 1917, the distribution and sales of Willys-Knight "Light Commercial Line" was not consolidated (under the Overland Automobile Company) with the Overland products in the new Willys-Overland Building at 2300 Locust until 1919.³⁷

The success of the company on the local level was symbolized by the addition of the Willys-Overland Building at 2300 Locust, which was the largest building in the automotive district of Saint Louis. Its visual prominence, its 7 floors of open space available for display, as well as its use of modern technologies in its design (such as large freight elevators capable of carrying automobiles to display on upper floors) encouraged organizers of the annual Saint Louis Auto Show to negotiate for its use as their exhibition hall just as the building was being completed. The Willys-Overland Building actually had 500 square feet more floor space on one floor alone (a total of 22,500 square feet per floor) than the next most spacious exhibition building in town, the Coliseum, which was only a few blocks away. It was also more appropriate for a winter auto show than the venue of previous years because the previous site had been an outdoor venue at the Forest Park Highlands. The new building's construction was rushed to completion (having a goal of being enclosed by January 15) to allow it to be the site for the Saint Louis Auto Show in February of 1917 just before the Overland Automobile Company moved into the building.³⁸ Undoubtedly, the location, in the midst of many of the automotive distributorships was viewed as an added plus, since their advertisements for the show could, and did, often refer to their nearby sales offices.³⁹

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As part of the advertising for the auto show, the Willys-Overland Building, and the Willys-Overland products as a consequence, received extensive coverage in the newspapers and a prime location at the Saint Louis Auto Show, the first floor on both sides of the main entrance for their automobiles and at the back of the first floor (by the large freight elevators) for their trucks (besides having sales office exhibit space still available directly across the street).⁴⁰ In addition, "a series of motion pictures of the Overland factory, including some specially designed of a humorous nature"⁴¹ along with a revolving platform to display the Overland "Ninety" were promoted as features of the Saint Louis Auto Show. Oil paintings made by American artists for reproductions in national magazines by Overland were also be shipped to Saint Louis for the show. Automobile accessory exhibits were assigned the second floor and "as many floors above the second as may be necessary will be used for the pleasure car exhibits."⁴² On the front page of the special section promoting the opening of the Saint Louis Auto Show in the Sunday, February 18, 1917 edition of the *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, an artist's rendering of traffic congestion (implying due to the show) portrayed the new Willys-Overland Building looming like a monument on the skyline⁴³ (which with artistic license showed only a 4 not a 6 story building) and the boxed article on this first page, beginning with the banner headline, "All Shadows Eliminated in Show Building" and in expansive terms, described the Willys-Overland Building for the public:

The structure in which the St. Louis Automobile Show, which opens tomorrow night, will be held was erected by the Overland Automobile Company, and will be occupied after the show by that company. It is six stories high, covering a lot 150 x 150 feet. The building is of re-enforced concrete, sprinkler equipped and fireproof, so that the rate of insurance for the exhibits is so low as to be negligible. It is at Twenty-third and Locust Streets.

Each floor above the second provides a clear area with no obstruction except six rows of pillars, each 2 feet in diameter. Two giant, speedy electric automobile elevators, each capable of carrying fifty persons at a time, are at the southern wall of the building. These elevators will run without a stop between the ground floor and the top and will carry no passengers down.

"Not a shadow can be discerned in the building, said Joseph A. Schlecht, the show committee chairman."
"The lights are so disposed that the pillars cast no shadows."⁴⁴

The auto show was considered a tremendous success at the Willys-Overland Building, with attendance records and the value of orders placed both breaking records for the Saint Louis Auto Show.⁴⁵ Many hotels reported being fully booked for the show,⁴⁶ and news reports noted that "Every automobile salesman in St. Louis will have a very busy life for weeks and months to come, working on the prospects secured at the show."⁴⁷ Several of the distributors continued the celebratory atmosphere by continuing their exhibits at their own showrooms after the show closed.⁴⁸ The show had propelled the Saint Louis distributor and the Willys-Overland's products into a regional spotlight, recognition which would not have been possible without the use of the Willys-Overland Building for the St. Louis Auto Show and such publicity enhanced sales for years to come. In addition, it enhanced Saint Louis' credibility and prominence as a major automotive center by providing the first indoor venue for the annual automobile show, an impressive, modern building (rather than an

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outdoor location), which was symbolic of the presence and prestige that the automotive industry in Saint Louis had now attained.

By 1921, the business at 2300 Locust in Saint Louis had been renamed Willys-Overland Incorporated (as had the Willys-Overland Company, following the corporate restructuring by Walter Chrysler that saved the manufacturer from bankruptcy), becoming a part of the Willys-Overland corporate structure, rather than a separately owned company leasing the Willys-Overland Building. Willys-Overland, Inc. in Saint Louis assumed the role of distributor and dealership for all of the company's products (Willys-Knight, Overland, and the new Whippet lines), and operated under a branch manager of the corporation (with 5 different individuals in that position during the 1920s).⁴⁹ The business in the Willys-Overland Building continued to grow and by 1927, retail sales had risen enough that the used car portion of the business had to move next door (to the west in a 100 foot front building that has since been demolished).⁵⁰ Although initially this was the only dealer of Willys-Overland products in Saint Louis, by 1928 the number peaked at 12 dealers, a symbol of the growing popularity and success of the corporation, but the Saint Louis regional distributorship (and its dealership) remained in the corporation's branch office in the Willys-Overland Building.⁵¹

In 1930, the distribution system of the Willys-Overland again changed and again it was an indication of the economic conditions of the corporation, in this case the financial difficulties brought on by the Great Depression. While the Saint Louis office of Willys-Overland Incorporated remained in the building that year, a private company, E. J. Johnson Autos Incorporated, opened in the same location as the official distributor (and dealer) for Willys-Overland products. While Johnson's business managed to survive at least until 1932 at this location, it apparently was one of many victims of the Great Depression and the building was vacant in 1933 and 1934.⁵²

Thus, 1932 marked the end of the association of the 2300 Locust building with the Willys-Overland automobiles, just as it marked the end of the heyday of the corporation as a leading passenger car manufacturer. It also marked the end of the corporation's experiment with a company-owned regional distribution system and while distributors remained in Saint Louis throughout the 1930s, the business owner and location changed frequently,⁵³ never again reaching the stature of the corporate operations at 2300 Locust. In 1935, Willys-Overland sold their building at 2300 Locust to the American Fixture and Manufacturing Company which operated there until 1963. Since 1963, a number of small businesses have occupied the first floor but the upper stories were rarely if ever utilized.⁵⁴ The sale of the Willys-Overland Building coincides with the decline of the Willys-Overland corporation itself. Although it once again achieved some success with the Jeep, its presence in Saint Louis was no longer as important as it had once been. Instead of having the branch office and a regional distributorship in Saint Louis for what had been a leading passenger automobile manufacturer, after the sale of the Willys-Overland Building the only presence the company had in Saint Louis was through the existence of a few and declining number of dealers in the city.

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During the period of Willys-Overland's greatest success in Saint Louis, the building at 2300 Locust was its local headquarters. As the offices of the regional distributorship, it allowed the company to service its entire sales region centered on Saint Louis. It is also one of the few remaining examples of Saint Louis' rich heritage in the early days of the automobile and its growing importance in most of modern America and it is representative of the era when automotive manufacturing matured enough to experiment with a distribution system. The architectural firm that designed the building itself had ties to the Saint Louis community and utilized innovations that made the Willys-Overland Building distinctive and impressive at the time of its construction (as seen by its selection as the site of the Saint Louis Auto Show), especially by using the "flat-slab" concrete on mushroom capital columns, a technique designed by the firm. Once the building was complete, Willys-Overland continued growth through the 1920s contributed to the commerce and economy of Saint Louis not only as one of the major automotive distributors, but also by bringing prestige to the city both through its association as one of the largest automobile companies in the country and through the use of their imposing building for special events that brought more publicity to the city, most notably the 1917 Auto Show that was hosted in the Willys-Overland Building.

ENDNOTES

¹Specifications and Contracts for Commission Number 2180, Bauer, Stark and Lashbrook Collection, Local History and Genealogy Department, Toledo-Lucas County Public Library, Toledo, Ohio; Building Permit I10192, 15 June 1916, City Block 920, Building Plans/City Block Cards, Microfilm Room, City of Saint Louis, Saint Louis, Missouri; "Building News," *Saint Louis Daily Record*, 16 June 1916, 3; "Saint Louis Auto Show," *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, 18 February 1917, Special Section, 1.

²"Insurance Map of Saint Louis, Missouri," Volume 2. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1909, 31.

³"Insurance Map of Saint Louis, Missouri," Volume 1 West. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1979, 31; *Landmarks Association of Saint Louis, Architectural Survey of the Central Business District West. Architects and Dates*, September 1986 [map].

⁴Building Permit I10192, 15 June 1916.

⁵"Saint Louis Auto Show," 1.

⁶Specifications and Contracts for Commission Number 2180.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ralph Atchison (Horseless Carriage Club of Missouri), telephone interview by Karen Bode Baxter, 28 August 1998; "The Home of the Overland" [advertisement], *Classified Directory, St. Louis and Suburban Bell Telephone Directory, Spring 1920*, n.p.: Southwestern Bell Telephone company, 1920, p.12.

⁹Specifications and Contracts for Commission Number 2180.

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¹⁰Donna Christian (Toledo-Lucas County Public Library Archivist), interview by Karen Bode Baxter, 20 October 1998.

¹¹Patricia K. Appold, "Bauer, Stark and Lashbrook, 1982: Ninety Years of Architecture in Toledo," (Master's Thesis, The University of Toledo, 1982), 50.

¹²Ibid., 59.

¹³Ibid., 31.

¹⁴Ibid., 30.

¹⁵Ibid., 24.

¹⁶John Bell Rae, *American Automobiles Manufacturers: The First Forty Years*, (Philadelphia and New York: Chilton Company- Book Division Publishers, 1959), 49.

¹⁷Ibid., 49-50.

¹⁸Jeep Corporation, "Its Heritage, Its Current Products, Its Future," (Detroit: Jeep Corporation, Public Relations Department, n.d.), 1; "Willys May Have Been a Visionary, but He Couldn't Run a Car Company," *Wheels Auto Seller-Memory Lane* [electronic journal], 17 February 1998, 2.

¹⁹Enzo Angelucci and Alberto Bellucci, *The Automobile: From Steam to Gasoline* (Saint Louis: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1974), 120.

²⁰[Advertisement], *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, 29 October 1916, 9b.

²¹Floyd Clymer, *Treasury of Early American Automobiles, 1877-1925* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1950), 202.

²²"Willys May Have Been a Visionary," 2.

²³Ibid., 3; Rae, *American Automobile Manufacturers*, 195.

²⁴Angelucci and Bellucci, 193-194.

²⁵Jeep Corporation.

²⁶Rae, *American Automobile Manufacturers*, 16-19, 45-51.

²⁷Ralph Atchison interview.

²⁸Merchants' Exchange of St. Louis, *Annual Statement of the Trade and Commerce of St. Louis for the Year 1913*, (Saint Louis: Studley & Company, 1914), 48-49; George P. Dorris, et.al., *Four Wheels, No Brakes: A History of the Early Development of the Automobile in St. Louis* (Saint Louis: Von Hoffman Press, Saint Louis Society of Automobile Pioneers, 1930), 260.

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²⁹ *Gould's St. Louis (Missouri) City Directory* (Saint Louis: Polk-Gould Directory Company, Publishers, 1912-1922, 1928-1934); *Polk-Gould St. Louis Directory* (Saint Louis: Polk Gould Directory Company, Publishers, 1923-1927).

³⁰ *The Overlander* (Overland Automobile Company in Saint Louis), May 1920, [3, 8].

³¹ "Willys-Overland District Dealers in Conference Here," *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, 30 January 1927, Sec. 4, p. 3, Globe-Democrat Clipping Files Collection, Mercantile Library, Saint Louis.

³² *Gould's St. Louis Directory for 1911*, 1528; *Gould's St. Louis Directory for 1912*, 1574.

³³ *Gould's St. Louis Directory*, 1913-1918; *Landmarks Association of Saint Louis, Architectural Survey of the Central Business District West*; *The Overlander*, May 1920, [1].

³⁴ *Gould's St. Louis Directory for 1918*, 1802; *Gould's St. Louis Directory for 1919*, 159, 1820, 2472; *Gould's St. Louis Directory for 1920*, 165; *The Overlander*, May 1920, [1]. "St. Louis' Greatest Automobile Show," *Auto Review; Official Paper Automobile Club of St. Louis*, 8 (October 1913), 1, 7; "Model 75 and 75 B Series of Overlands Shatter All Selling Records—63,000 in Use," *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, 22 October 1916, 12b; [Advertisement] *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, 29 October 1916, 11b; [Advertisement] *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, 21 January 1917, 7b; [Advertisement] *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, 11 February 1917, 10b; [Advertisement] *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, 25 February 1917, 8b; [Advertisement] *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, 4 March 1917, 12b.

³⁵ *Gould's St. Louis Directory for 1916*, n.p.; *Gould's St. Louis Directory for 1919*, 2472.

³⁶ *Gould's St. Louis Directory for 1917*, 1670; Building Permit I10192.

³⁷ *Gould's St. Louis Directory for 1916*, n.p.; *Gould's St. Louis Directory for 1919*, 2472.

³⁸ "St. Louis Dealers Pushing Plans for Coming Auto Show," *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat* 17 December 1916, 10b.

³⁹ [Advertisement] *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat* 18 February 1917, Special Section, 8.

⁴⁰ "St. Louis Dealers Pushing Plans," 10b.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ [Illustration] *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat* 18 February 1917, Special Section, 1.

⁴⁴ "All Shadows Eliminated in Show Building," *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat* 18 February 1917, Special Section, 1.

⁴⁵ "Automobile Show Closes Its Doors After Great Week," *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat* 25 February 1917, 8b.

⁴⁶ "Rental Terms Secret," *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat* 18 February 1917, Special Section, 1.

⁴⁷ "Automobile Show Closes," 8b.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Gould's St. Louis Directory*, 1921-1922, 1928-1930; *Polk-Gould St. Louis Directory*, 1923-1927).

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Narrative Statement of Significance Endnotes (continued)

⁵⁰[Clipping with no title] *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, 6 February 1927, Section 4, p. 8, Globe-Democrat Clipping Files Collection, Mercantile Library, Saint Louis.

⁵¹*Gould's St. Louis Directory*, 1911-1922, 1928-1934; *Polk-Gould St. Louis Directory*, 1923-1927; *Greater St. Louis Bell Telephone Directory*, n.p.: Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, December 1928; *Greater St. Louis Telephone Directory*, n.p. Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, June 1932, February 1933, July 1934, March 1935, November 1935, June 1936, December 1937, December 1938, June 1939, June 1940, June 1941, December 1942.

⁵²*Gould's St. Louis Directory*, 1930-1932; *Greater St. Louis Telephone Directory*, , June 1932, February 1933, July 1934, March 1935, November 1935.

⁵³*Gould's St. Louis Directory*, 1932-1942; *Greater St. Louis Telephone Directory*, June 1932, February 1933, July 1934, March 1935, November 1935, June 1936, December 1937, December 1938, June 1939, June 1940, June 1941, December 1942.

⁵⁴"Exhibit B: Chronological List of Deeds of Conveyance and Leases Affecting the Property, January 1, 1920 to July 1, 1998," Clayton, Missouri: Title Insurers Agency, Inc., 19 August 1998.

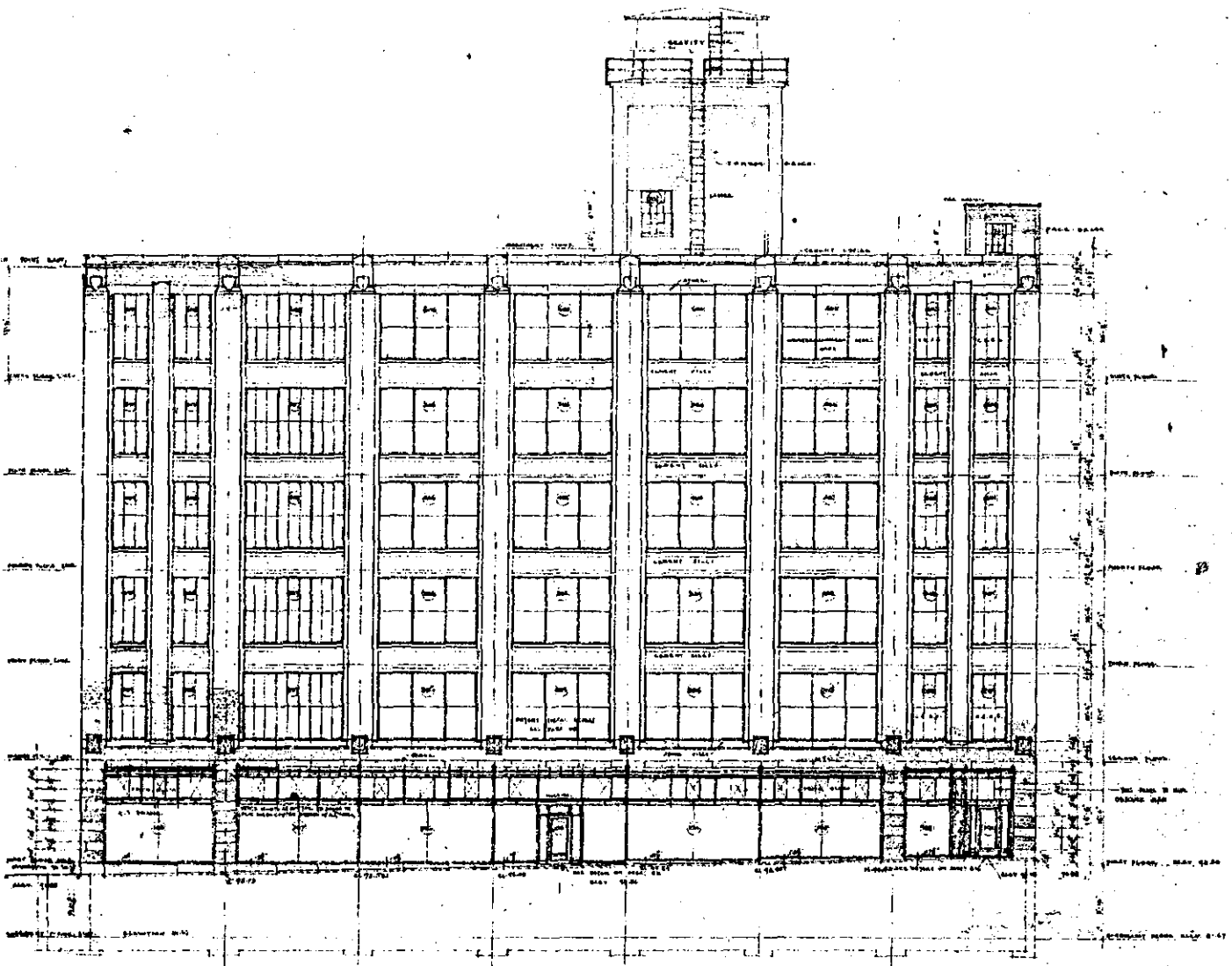
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Willys-Overland Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Locust Street Elevation, Rev. 5/28/1917
Mills, Rhines, Bellman and Nordhoff, Architects, Toledo Ohio
Bauer, Stark and Lashbrook Collection, Toledo-Lucas Public Library



SERVICE STATION AT LOUIS MO

THE OVERLAND STORES COMPANY

MILLS, RHINES, BELLMAN AND NORDHOFF ARCHITECTS TOLEDO OHIO

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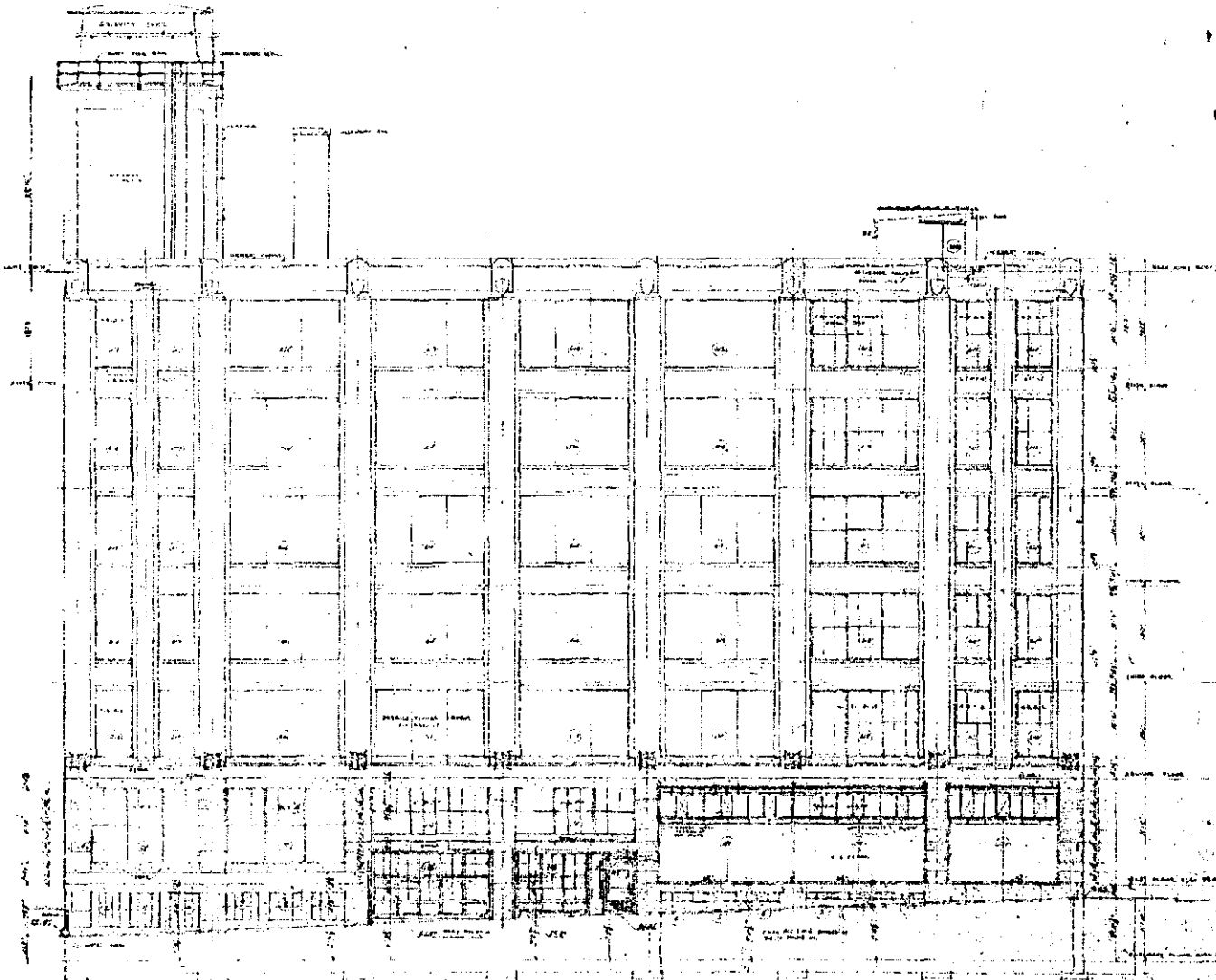
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Willys-Overland Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Twenty Third Street Elevation, Rev. 5/28/1917
Mills, Rhines, Bellman and Nordhoff, Architects, Toledo Ohio
Bauer, Stark and Lashbrook Collection, Toledo-Lucas Public Library



TWENTY THIRD STREET ELEVATION
SCALE 1/8\"/>

SERVICE STATION ST. LOUIS, MO
THE OVERLAND STORES COMPANY
MILLS, RHINES, BELLMAN AND NORDHOFF, ARCHITECTS, TOLEDO, OHIO

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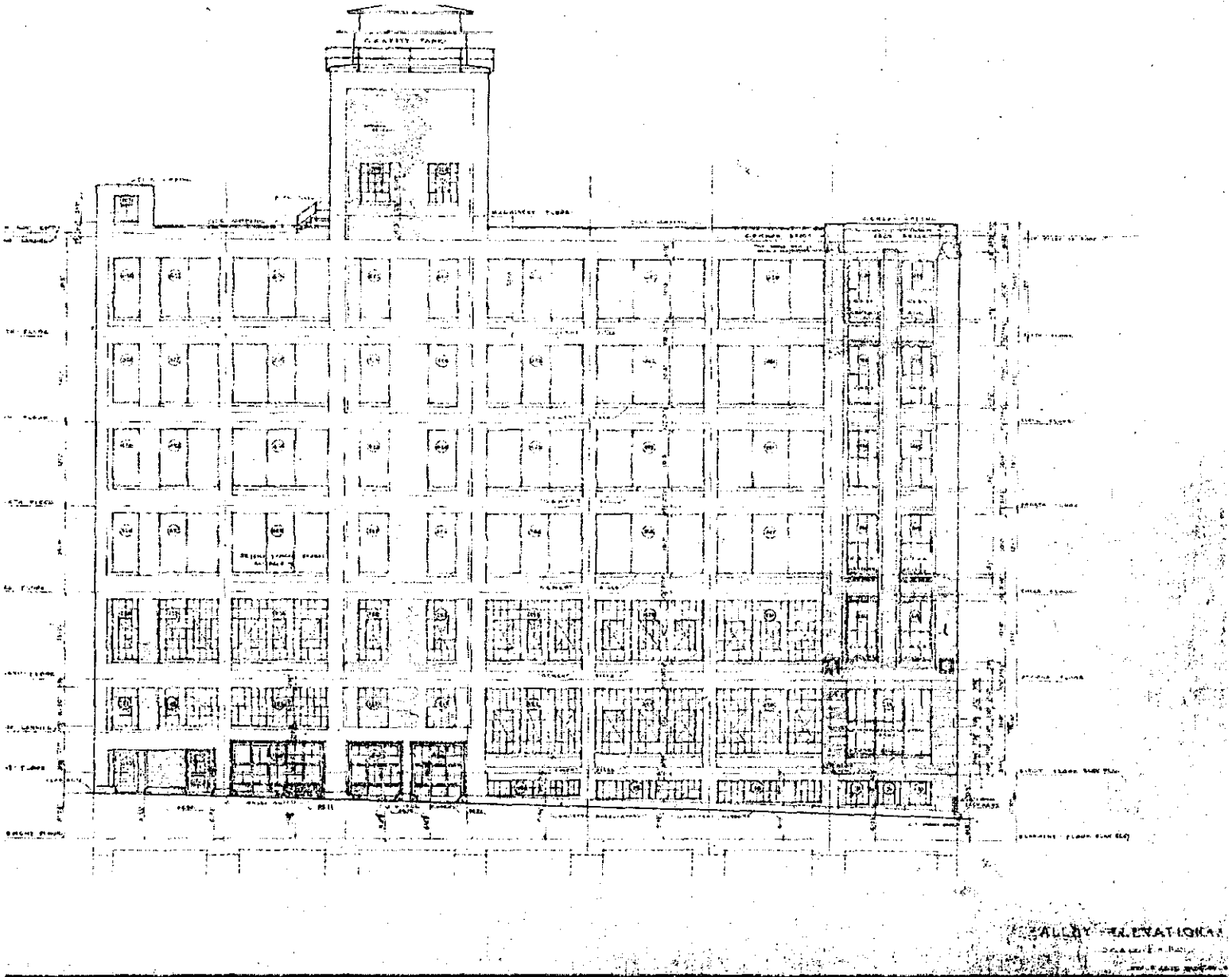
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National Park Service

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Willys-Overland Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Alley Elevation, Rev. 5/28/1917
Mills, Rhines, Bellman and Nordhoff, Architects, Toledo Ohio
Bauer, Stark and Lashbrook Collection, Toledo-Lucas Public Library



SERVICE STATION ST. LOUIS MO
THE OVERLAND STORES COMPANY
MILLS, RHYNES, BELLMAN AND NORDHOFF ARCHITECTS TOLEDO OHIO

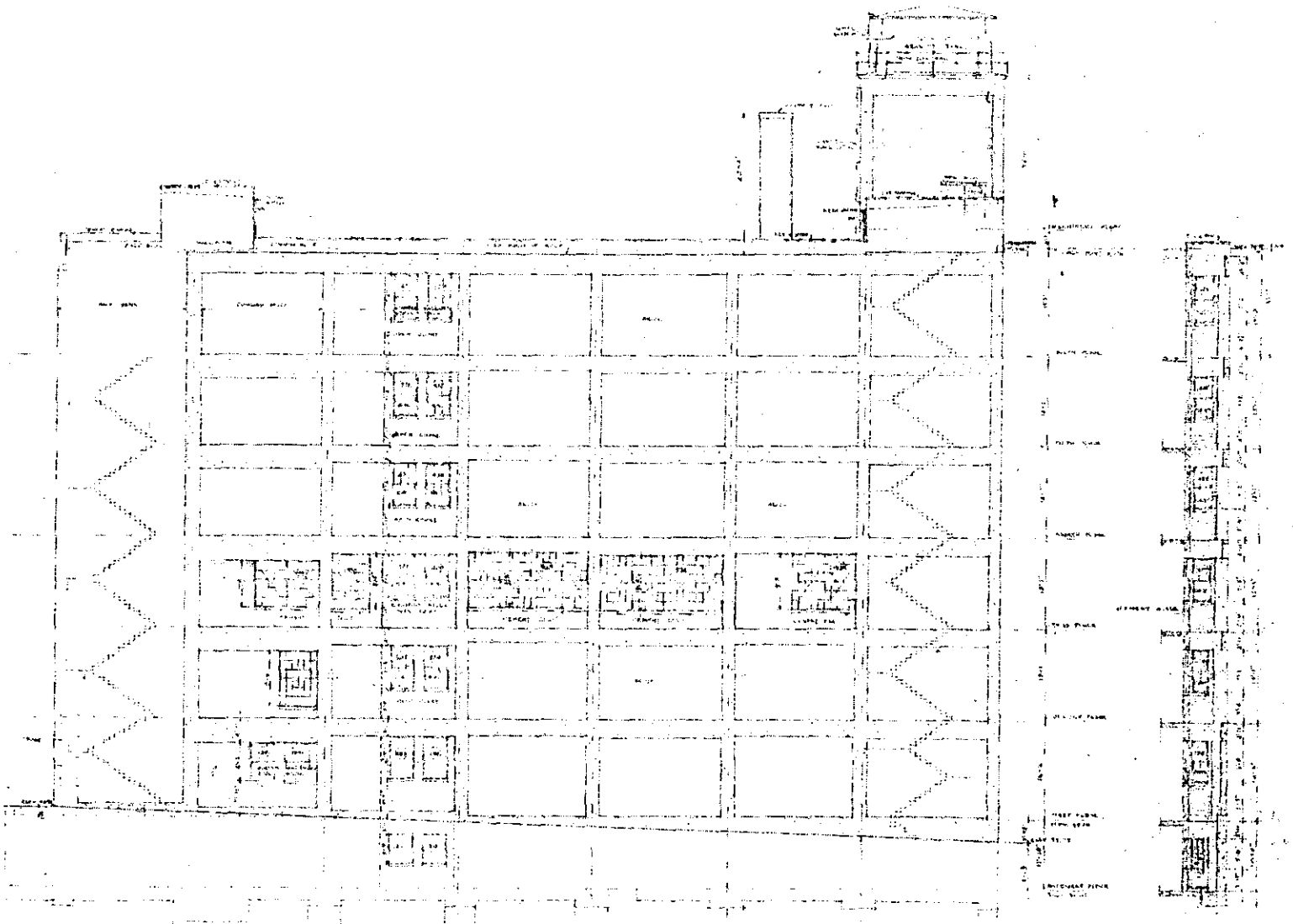
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Willys-Overland Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

West Elevation, Rev. 5/28/1917
Mills, Rhines, Bellman and Nordhoff, Architects, Toledo Ohio
Bauer, Stark and Lashbrook Collection, Toledo-Lucas Public Library



SOUTH ELEVATION OF LIGHT COURT

WEST ELEVATION

SERVICE STATION THE OVERLAND STORES COMPANY ST. LOUIS, MO
MILLS, RHINES, BELLMAN AND NORDHOFF ARCHITECTS, TOLEDO, OHIO

DATE	BY	SCALE	2180

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

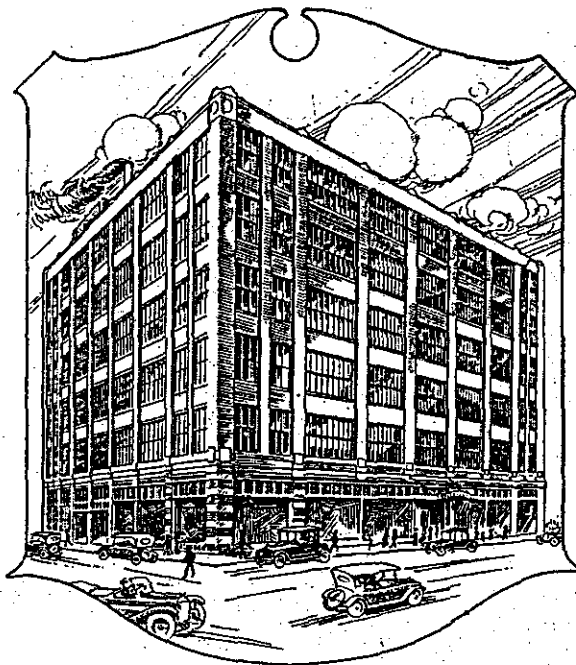
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Willys-Overland Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Advertisement for the Overland Automobile Company
St. Louis and Suburban Bell Telephone Directory, Spring 1920,
n.p.: Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, 1920,
Classified Directory, p. 12.

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PAINTING THE BIGGEST AUTOMOBILE
SHOP IN ST. LOUIS. WE ES
ON YOUR JOB. THERE IS A REASON WHY
SHOULD BRING YOUR CAR TO US.

REPAIRS AN EXTENSIVE REBUILDING
ALL OVERLAND PARTS IN
MECHANICS FAMILIAR WITH YOUR CAR.
EIOUS TREATMENT.

TRIM SHOP FOR ALL PURPOSES OF
SHOP IS THE BEST. BRING
UPHOLSTERY AND TOP TROUBLES TO US
WORKMEN AND THE FINEST OF MATERIAL

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Willys-Overland Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Illustration Showing the Building
for the 1917 St. Louis Auto Show
In the *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*,
18 February 1917, Special Section, p. 1.

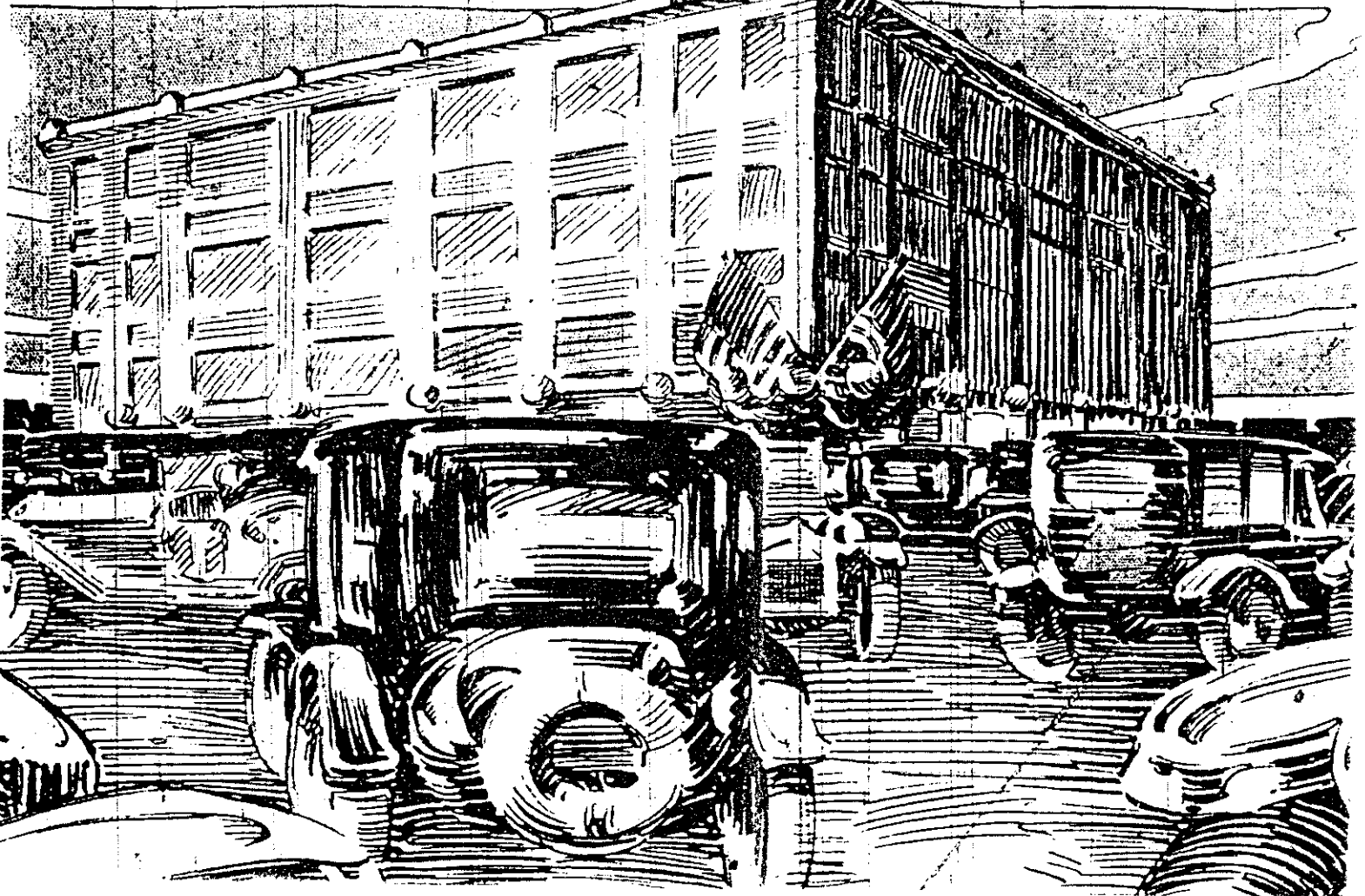
Special Train of Autos.

A LARGE number of the standard and
whimsy were at the Chicago and New
Sheets will be brought to the St. Louis
Kansas City show, which closed last night
of seven rail-road cars loaded with
tubs will leave Kansas City via the Missou
rail, at 2 p. m. today, coming on passen

Continued on Second Page

Twenty-Third and Locust Streets

New Overland Building



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Willys-Overland Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Cover of *The Overlander* published by the
Overland Automobile Co. in St. Louis, May 1920

MAY *The* 1920

Overlander

PUBLISHED BY
OVERLAND AUTOMOBILE CO.
IN ST. LOUIS.

SUMMER SEDAN NUMBER

"THE OVERLAND ROAD TO PROSPERITY"



Mr. W. L. Hershey, Manager of the Operating Department
and the Overland stock Sedan that ran 26.3 miles
on one gallon of gasoline on official test.

REAL ECONOMY

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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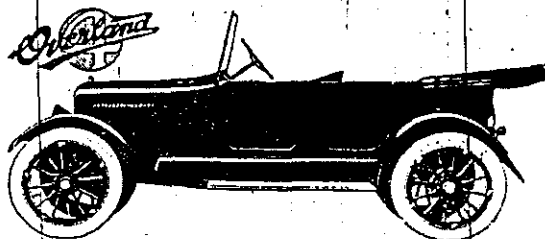
Willys-Overland Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Advertisement for the Overland Automobile Company
in the *Gould's St. Louis (Missouri) City Directory*,
Saint Louis: Polk-Gould Directory Company,
Publishers and Wholesalers, 1920, p. 165.

165

AUTOMOBILE DEALERS

The Car With The Triplex Springs



Economical Operation and Riding Ease, combined with Light Weight---1800 pounds actual weight.

The Largest Paint and Trim Shop in St. Louis. Call us. We will send a man to make estimate of work without obligation to you. Call for your Car and deliver it to you.

"Promptness of Delivery"

From Any of Our Repair Shops is Our Slogan

Overland Automobile Company

DISTRIBUTORS OF
WILLYS-KNIGHT AND OVERLAND AUTOMOBILES

LOCUST AT TWENTY-THIRD

Bomont 78

Central 4119

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Willys-Overland Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Willys-Overland Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

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St. Louis (Independent City), MO

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Willys-Overland Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

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Verbal Boundary Description

A lot in Block 920, City of St. Louis, having a front of 300 feet on the South line of Locust Street by a depth southwardly between parallel lines of 155 feet to the North line of an alley; bounded on the East by the West line of 23rd St.

Boundary Justification

These boundaries incorporate all of the land that is included within the current property's legal description. Although the historic building and lot only extended about 150 feet from the corner of 23rd Street along Locust Street, the loading dock addition extends beyond the original building lot on the west side. In addition, what is now a parking lot, to the west of the building, at one time had a one story structure that extended nearly the remaining 150 feet and was built for and used by Willys-Overland Inc. for their used car showroom from 1927 through 1932.

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National Park Service

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Section number _____ Add'l Page 33

Willys-Overland Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Photo Log

Photographer: W. C. Persons
c. 1925

Negative with Missouri Historical Society, P.O. Box 11940, St. Louis, MO 63112-0040

Photo #1: Exterior view ca. 1925, looking southwest

Photographer: Karen Bode Baxter
August 1998

Negatives with photographer: Karen Bode Baxter, 5811 Delor Street, St. Louis, MO 63109

Photo #2: Exterior, east and north facades looking southwest

Photo #3: Exterior, south elevation, looking northwest

Photo #4: Exterior, north and west elevations, facing southeast

Photo #5: Exterior, north façade west end entry to stairwell/elevator lobby, facing southwest

Photo #6: Interior, northwest stairwell, looking up from landing between 5th and 6th floors, facing north

Photo #7: Interior, 4th floor, facing southeast from northwest corner

Photographer: Karen Bode Baxter
September 1998

Negatives with photographer: Karen Bode Baxter, 5811 Delor Street, St. Louis, MO 63109

Photo #8: Interior, freight elevators on 6th floor, looking southwest

Photo #9: Interior, detail of ceiling on 6th floor, looking up from 2nd bay from west near north wall

Photo #10: Interior, 6th floor, looking southeast from northwest corner

Photo #11: Interior, 5th floor, looking northwest from southeast corner

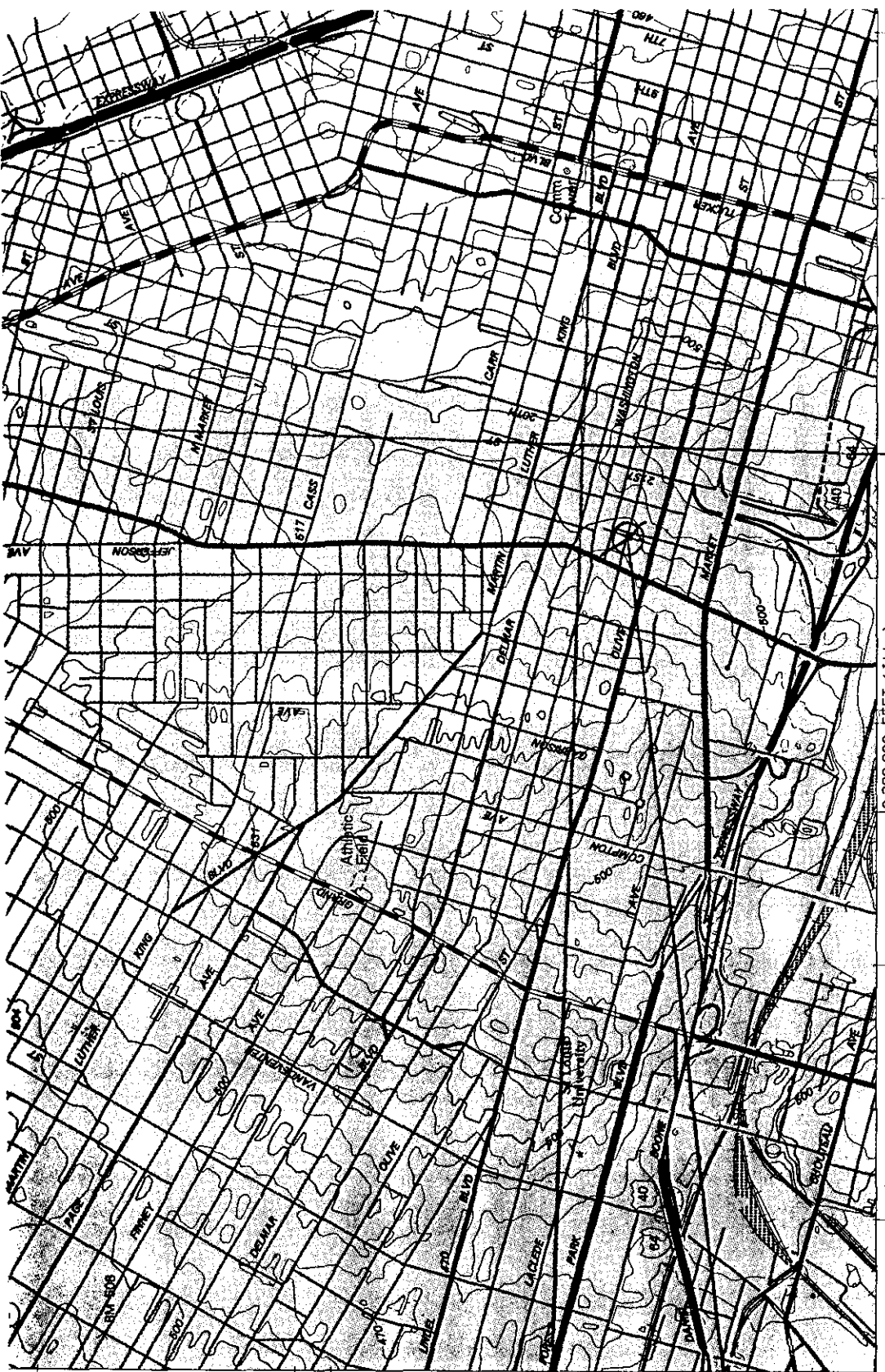
Photographer: Karen Bode Baxter
June 1999

Negatives with photographer: Karen Bode Baxter, 5811 Delor Street, St. Louis, MO 63109

Photo #12: Interior, 1st floor, east half of original showroom, looking northeast from center of building

Photo #13: Interior, 1st floor, west half of original showroom, looking northwest from center of building

Photo #14: Interior, 1st floor, southeast corner of building looking south from top of ramps



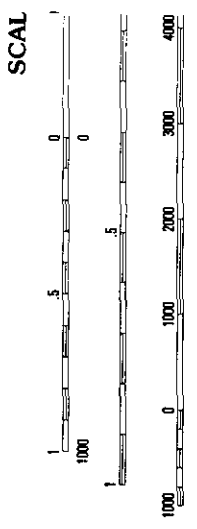
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WILLYS-OVERLAND
BUILDING
ST. LOUIS (INDEPENDENT
CITY), MO
UTM REFERENCE
15/742650/4279810

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
in cooperation with U.S. Corps of Engineers

Compiled by planetable surveys 1930 and 1933. Revised from imagery dated 1952. PLS checked 1954. Revised from imagery dated 1993. PLS and survey control current as of 1954. Map edited 1996. Contours not revised. Contours that conflict with revised planimetry are dashed. North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). Projection and blue 1000-meter ticks: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 15. 10 000-foot ticks: Illinois (west zone) and Missouri (east zone) Coordinate Systems of 1983

North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 83 and NAD 27 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software. There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map



CONTOUR II
SUPPLEMENTARY CC
NATIONAL GEODETIC

FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER
ILLINOIS GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
AND DIVISION OF GEOLOGY
MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Photo

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