

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Laclede Building

other names/site number Merchants-Laclede Building

2. Location

street & number 408 Olive Street [n/a] not for publication

city or town St. Louis [n/a] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county St. Louis (Independent City) code 510 zip code 63102

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this
[x] 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 [x] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered
significant
[] nationally [] statewide [x] locally.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO

Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date

[] 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
See continuation sheet [].

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

Noncontributing

1 buildings
 sites
 structures
 objects
1 0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing.

Number of contributing resources
previously listed in the National
Register.

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

COMMERCE/TRADE: business

COMMERCE/TRADE:

financial institution

Current Functions

COMMERCE/TRADE: business

COMMERCE/TRADE:

restaurant

7. Description

Architectural Classification

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY

AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial

Style

Materials

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

STONE

roof ASPHALT

other METAL

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ B removed from its original location.

☐ C a birthplace or grave.

☐ D a cemetery.

☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ F a commemorative property.

☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

ARCHITECTURE

Periods of Significance

1888

1906

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person(s)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Hatch, Steven Decatur.

Eames & Young (1906 addition)

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

#

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

#

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State Agency

☐ Federal Agency

☐ Local Government

☐ University

☒ Other:

Name of repository: Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References

Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing	A.
15	744790	4278980				
C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing	
						[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary M. Stiritz

organization Landmarks Association of St. Louis date February 1998

street & number 917 Locust 7th Floor telephone (314) 421-6474

city or town ST. Louis state MO zip code 62010-1413

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name 408 Olive, L.L.C. (Jan Comensky, contact)

street & number 2370 Schuetz Road telephone (314) 432-7000

city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63146

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Laclede Building
name of property
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
county and State

SUMMARY:

The eight-story, red brick Laclede Building was erected between 1886-1888 as a commercial office building with a ground floor bank. It is located on the southwest corner of Fourth and Olive Streets in downtown St. Louis. Architect Steven D. Hatch (New York) designed the building in a late-19th century Commercial Style displaying restrained ornamentation in pink sandstone and cast iron. The building features interior iron framing fireproofed with hollow tile blocks. Except for 1906 modifications, the exterior remains close to its original design.

ELABORATION:

Measuring approximately 127 feet by 116 feet, the building is nearly square, opened by a light well above the second story on the south elevation. The two-story base of granite piers establishes four bays on the east (Fourth Street) elevation and six bays on the north (Olive Street) side. Six-story red brick piers are carried up through the brick cornice which is fashioned out of recessed panels and corbeled arcading. The flat roof is edged by a metal overhang. A rounded seven-story turret defines the northeast corner of the building; it rises from a granite entablature and piers that originally framed a doorway. Since 1906, this entrance has been replaced by a window.

Lake Superior pink sandstone forms heavy moldings/belt courses, as well as sill and lintel courses that provide horizontal emphasis to the design. The lower edges of the flat window lintels are carved in five different patterns that vary by story level. Ornamental relief blocks or panels of varied and intricate designs accent the brick piers at the points of intersection with the spandrels; these blocks appear to be of sandstone. Decorative cast iron frames second-story windows.

Virtually all of the upper seven stories of office space have been remodeled over the years, including the installation of new glazing of double-hung sash. Although the elevator lobby of the Olive Street west entrance has been altered, it opens to an original seven-story cast-iron staircase with fine ornamental iron detailing and marble treads (Photo #4). A secondary (rear) stairway features less elaborated ironwork. A few simple cast iron interior support columns are visible on some floors.

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Laclede Building
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In 1906, the Merchants-Laclede Bank, which then owned and occupied the building, commissioned architects Eames & Young (St. Louis) to remodel (essentially classicize) both the interior and exterior of the building's first two stories. The renovation included smoothing down the original quarry-faced rustication featured on the two-story granite piers along the Fourth and Olive Street facades; the piers on the alley (west) elevation retain the original rustication (Photo #3). The original cast-iron framing of ground floor windows on Fourth Street and in the eastern bays along Olive Street was replaced by lighter metal-framed glazing; the original framing survives in the two western bays of Olive Street and in the alley elevation. The architects introduced a new recessed bank entrance on Olive Street marked by fluted Doric columns of Missouri pink granite with ornamental iron gates. The original revolving door and the flanking side doors are still operative; above the doors, transom windows feature metal grillwork. Inside the building, the entrance is classically detailed in white marble (Photo #5, top). The large, former banking room also retains classically detailed piers, a decorative plaster ceiling motif and two large vaults installed as part of the 1906 program (Photo #5, bottom).

Beyond the 1906 alterations, the only other changes noted in the building's exterior have been the removal (possibly also in 1906) of parapets and a pediment which originally punctuated the roofline, along with a conical roof that capped the corner turret.

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Laclede Building
name of property
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
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SUMMARY: The Laclede Building is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C and is significant in the area of ARCHITECTURE. Constructed 1886-1888, to the design specifications of prominent New York architect Steven Decatur Hatch, the Laclede Building is the earliest surviving example of St. Louis' formative skyscraper era, and is further distinguished as one of only a few noteworthy commercial buildings remaining from the body of Hatch's work. The building played a pivotal role in recasting the city's commercial architectural image in the pioneering period spanning the 1880's. The Laclede introduced the large tall office block which incorporated advanced structural/fireproofing systems and a new commercial design that drew upon parallel developments in New York and Chicago. The 1906 remodeling, designed by St. Louis architectural firm Eames and Young, is also significant, as the Classical Revival additions and alterations typify the new and changing attitudes of the architectural community at the beginning of the 20th Century. The building retains excellent integrity from its periods of significance.

NARRATIVE:

The decade of the 1880s opened a new era of architecture in St. Louis. Contemporary 19th century critics commented extensively on the period's artistic awakening to the latest national styles of architecture, and marveled at the trend toward larger, loftier business blocks featuring fireproof construction along with well-appointed interiors flooded with abundant light. St. Louis' flourishing economy and population growth (rising from 6th rank in 1880 to 5th rank nationally by 1890) brought a surge of building activity in the downtown core where the demand for business space intensified. This veritable renaissance inspired the publication in 1888 of the book, *Commercial and Architectural St. Louis*, which as the title suggests, highlighted the city's remarkable progress in those areas, and offered the following testimony:

Architecture in St. Louis has undergone a great change in the last few years, and is rapidly developing into modern and beautiful designs. . . . On the business thoroughfares a large number of the dingy, dark and gloomy buildings . . . has been removed and replaced with grand commercial palaces towering to an altitude of eight, nine and ten stories. . . . the stereotyped five story front office building . . . has now passed into our city's youthful history as relics of rickety firetraps, and their places are supplied by palatial office buildings of strictly fireproof construction.

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Laclede Building
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The most acclaimed office buildings of the 1870s followed the prevailing commercial styles of the postbellum period: the horizontally layered Italian palazzo mode or the more ornate Second Empire style capped by its signature mansard roof. Stone and cast iron were the preferred facade materials for these five- or six-storied structures in which hydraulic passenger elevators were a standard feature. A shift to a new office building paradigm appeared with the completion in 1884 of the Turner Building (demolished) which St. Louisans quickly acknowledged as the city's most prestigious business block. The celebrated building, designed by Boston architects Peabody & Stearns, introduced a vertical facade treatment featuring local red pressed brick (from the St. Louis Hydraulic Press Brick Co.) rather than the traditional stone front. The new vertical design emphasis was achieved by a system of continuous piers in the stories above a two-story arcaded base. The Turner Building also, reportedly, was the first fully fireproof office building in St. Louis although similar claims were made for earlier buildings. Yet the Turner, with a mid-block frontage of only 64 feet and rising just six and one-half stories, fell short of the overall size and height requirements of the evolving new office building ideal. The first effort apparently to break the seven-story height barrier was actually an 1885 addition to the original six of the 1874 St. Louis Life Insurance Building (demolished) which temporarily regained that building's status as St. Louis' tallest office building.

The increasing demand for first-class downtown business space soon attracted outside capitalists/speculative builders from the East and the Midwest who sought investment opportunity in the "New St. Louis." For some St. Louisans, outside capital offended local civic pride. But more enterprising citizens, such as realtor E. S. Warner, actively pursued such investors. In the mid-1880s, Warner negotiated contracts with Chicago and New York syndicates for what would become the city's two largest new office buildings: the Laclede Building and the Commercial Building (demolished) - the latter designed and partially financed by Chicago architect George H. Edbrooke. Both buildings towered a full eight stories and filled a quarter of a city block. Plans for the Laclede Building, the earliest project, were underway by the fall of 1885 when prominent Chicago realtor Andrew J. Cooper and New York architect Steven D. Hatch

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Laclede Building
name of property
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jointly obtained a 99-year leasehold on the building's parcel at the southwest corner of Fourth and Olive Streets. The deed, typical of the period, bound the lessees to pay a yearly rent of \$16,000, and to erect at their own expense, "one or more good and substantial buildings on said premises," costing "at least \$75,000 or upwards."

In December 1885, Hatch and Cooper became majority shareholders of the Union Building Co., capitalized at \$350,000 for the purpose of constructing the Laclede Building. Of the 3500 shares offered and subscribed, Hatch and Cooper owned more than 3200; the remaining 264 shares were held by four St. Louisans and one New Yorker, Robert C. Darragh, who was involved in the building trades. In February 1886, the Union Building Co. purchased the leasehold on the parcel from Hatch and Cooper and began construction of a \$500,000 ten-story (later revised to eight stories) fireproof "bank and commercial office building" to front 127 feet on Fourth Street and 116 feet on Olive. Further progress on the building beyond the foundations, however, was delayed for a more than a year due to a failure to raise sufficient construction funds - a misfortune reported by the local press as "a monument to Chicago folly." In February 1887, a second building company was organized to finance the completion of the Laclede Building. This company, incorporated with a capital stock of \$350,000 under the name "Laclede Building Co.," boasted nine St. Louis shareholders, several of whom were officers and stockholders of the Laclede National Bank which would occupy the ground floor of the new building along with the Postal Telegraph & Cable Co. Architect Steven Hatch, nonetheless, remained the principal investor, holding 2583 shares of the 3500 total subscribed; New Yorker Robert L. Darragh (with 250 shares) was the second largest shareholder.

By the time Steven Hatch (1839-1894) became involved with the Laclede Building project, the architect had enjoyed a long and remarkably successful career, although few of his major works survive. Born in Swanton, Vermont, Hatch received his architectural training in the New York office of John B. Snook. In 1864, he opened his own New York office where he began to draw up plans for numerous important commercial buildings and hotels, three of which are listed in the National Register: the

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1868 Gilsey Hotel; 1870 Robbins & Appleton Building (home of the D. Appleton Publishing Co.); and the 1891 Fleming Smith Warehouse. A few of his works have also been designated by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. Hatch's career also included prestigious commissions for many upper-class residences in New York such as the 1868 Jay Gould House, and the William Rockefeller House (1876-1877), both demolished. Around 1879, L. Cass Miller, born in Fredricksburg, Virginia in 1856, joined Hatch's office after study with architect Henry R. Searle (Washington D. C.) and schooling in England. Miller served as Hatch's supervising architect and then business manager for the Laclede Building in St. Louis where he remained to practice architecture.

Hatch's commercial work of the 1860s and 1870s was executed chiefly in the popular Second Empire style. In the late 1870s, he abandoned this mode to follow the lead of other New York architects who were forging a system of design which emphasized the expression of structure rather than decoration, and which pointed toward the future vertical design solution of the tall office building. This new commercial style was reflected in Hatch's designs for the long-demolished Boreel Building (New York City) (Fig. 1), erected in 1878-79 at 115 Broadway for the Astor estate, and in the closely related Laclede Building (St. Louis) (Fig. 2), designed some seven years later. The architect achieved a more functional and structural appearance in both buildings through several means. He introduced a straightforward flat roof which provided more functional rental space than did the elaborated mansard or Queen Anne gable-front treatment. Both buildings clearly and directly expressed structure in their similar grid-like facade compositions established by strong horizontal moldings and vertical piers. The load-bearing, projecting granite and brick piers accented the vertical element of the designs, and organized the windows into multiple groupings. In the interests of overall structural effect, Hatch suppressed ornament. He confined decorative elements principally to structural elements, as in the shaped lintel courses that band the two buildings; in the Laclede building's small stone panels (of intricate and varied motifs) placed at points of structural stress, and in the Laclede's ornamental iron framing of the lower windows.

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Recent scholarship by Sarah Bradford Landau and Carl W. Condit (e.g. *Rise of the New York Skyscraper*, 1996) as well as others has identified this new wall treatment as the "commercial Neo-Grec" - a style emanating from French-trained architects who renounced the strict academic classicism of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. The authors cite Hatch's Boreel Building (where he retained offices) as one of New York's more prestigious yet typical Neo-Grec works. They add that the style quickly spread to Chicago where it was carried forward by "Chicago School" architects in their development of a commercial style. The Laclede Building's Late Victorian picturesque elements, such as the turret-like rounded corner (originally more pronounced before the removal of its conical roof), the angled corner entrance, together with certain detailing, were characteristic of the transitional, evolving new skyscraper style.

According to 19th century reports, the Laclede Building's progressive interior construction featured "wrought iron, filled in with patented fire-proof hollow blocks"; exterior walls were insulated with a lining of "hollow brick to protect the offices from heat and cold." The manufacturer of the patented fireproof blocks has not been identified. By that time, such clay tile blocks (used to encase the iron structural members and to form flat floor/ceiling arches that spanned the I beams) were in common use in New York and Chicago; firms in both cities held patents on various methods of hollow tile construction. (By 1887, Peter B. Wight's well-known Chicago fireproofing company had opened a branch office in St. Louis.) Other materials featured in the building were products of St. Louis's flourishing building trades. The Scherpe & Koken Architectural Iron Co., established in St. Louis around 1880, supplied the structural and ornamental iron. An unusually fine example of their ornamental iron work can be found in the well-crafted, elaborated central staircase (Photo #4). On the exterior, ornamental iron accents second story windows. Laid up with red mortar, the red pressed brick (manufactured by the St. Louis Hydraulic Press Brick Co.) provided a relatively inexpensive fireproof exterior cladding while conforming to the Neo-Grec style's preferred material.

From the time the Laclede Building opened in mid-1888, and for many years

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Laclede Building
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afterwards, highest praise was lavished on its design and on the pioneering role the building played in introducing the tall, fireproof office building to St. Louis. Its influence immediately could be seen with the construction of two smaller imitators: the 1890 Legg-O'Day Building (demolished) and the Meyer-Bannerman Building (1888-89) on the southeast corner of Lucas and Sixth Streets (listed in the National Register.) Moreover, the Laclede Building's monumental presence greatly enhanced the prestige of the Laclede and the Merchants banking houses which leased the ground floor space. Gradually other financial institutions gravitated to Fourth Street so that by the turn of the century, "the Street" (as it was called in financial vernacular) had become St. Louis' Wall Street (Fig. 3).

In 1905, the Merchants-Laclede National Bank (formed by an 1895 consolidation of the old Laclede and Merchants banks) purchased the building from the Laclede Building Company for the sum of \$750,000. The following year the bank commissioned noted St. Louis architects William Eames and Thomas Young to extensively remodel the inside and outside of the banking room in order to satisfy a new 20th Century bank image that sought a more open and "inviting" atmosphere. Judged to be too forbidding and somber, the rugged rusticated granite piers that framed the building's two story base were smoothed down to a more refined surface. Heavy window casings were replaced by more open metal skeletal frames filled with expanses of plate glass to admit more light. The picturesque angled corner entrance became a large window in the new scheme. On the Olive Street elevation, the architects designed a distinctive new Classical Revival bank entrance, marked by fluted Doric columns of Missouri pink granite with ornamental iron gates. The entrance opened to a monumental new banking room, detailed in white marble and plaster. Most of this impressive interior remains intact, including the large vaults (Photo #5). Eames and Young was one of the most prolific of St. Louis architectural firms at the turn of the century, having designed over eighty residential and commercial buildings in the metropolitan area, including the Frisco Building (NRHP 1983), the Lincoln Trust Building (NRHP 1982, demolished 1983), and the Hargadine-McKittrick Building (now Lammerts Furniture, NRHP 1982).

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Laclede Building
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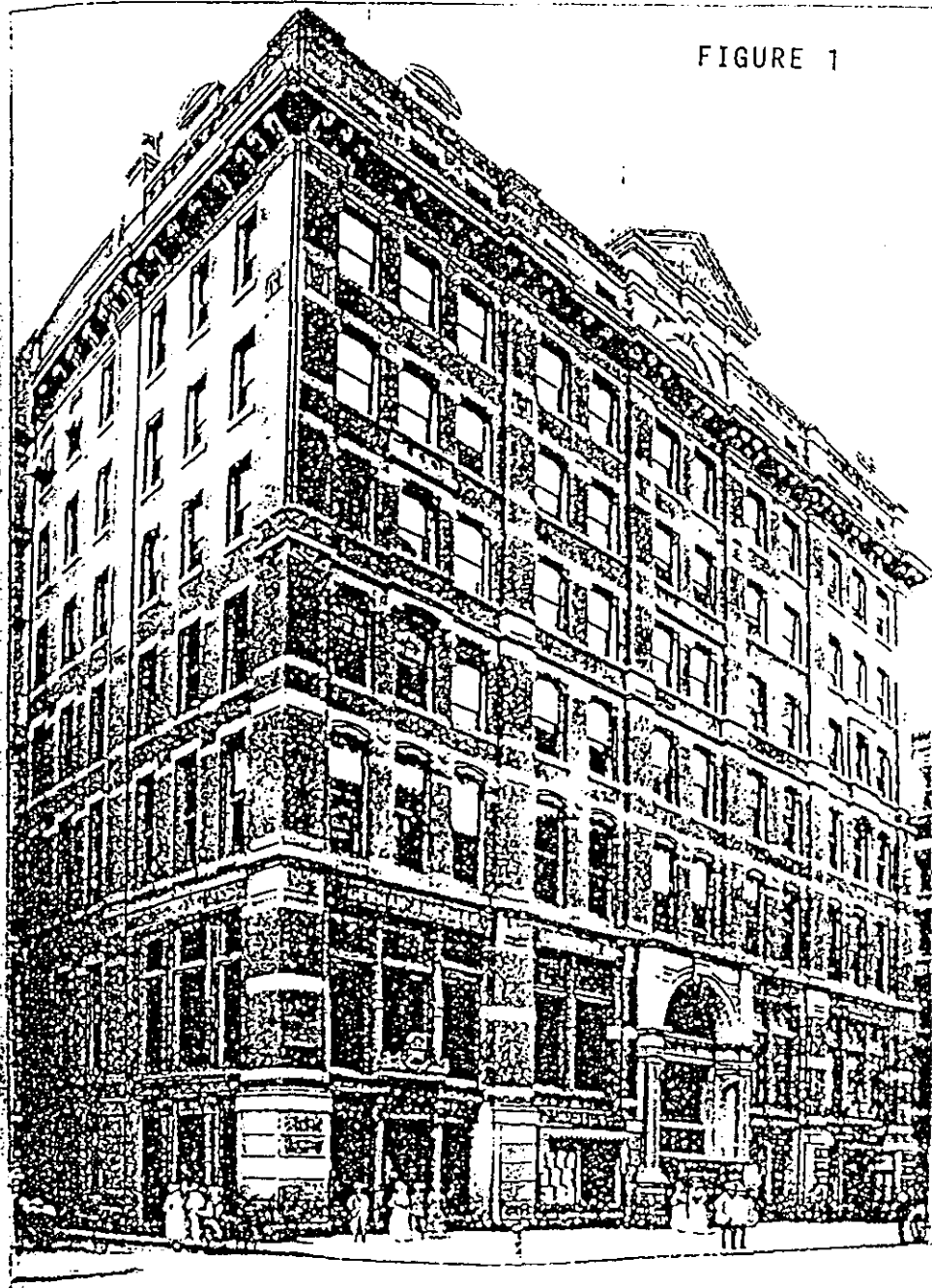
The bank remained in the building until it was liquidated in 1929. The building continued to carry the name, "Merchants-Laclede," and over the years it provided space to a large number of legal firms along with other professional and business tenants. In more recent years, however, the occupancy rate dropped significantly when tenants were lured to new office construction. Currently, plans are underway to redevelop the building as loft apartments.

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Laclede Building
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri



Boreel Building, New York City, 1878-79 (demolished)
Steven D. Hatch, architect
King's Views of New York (Boston, 1895)

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National Park Service

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Laclede Building
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri

FIGURE 2

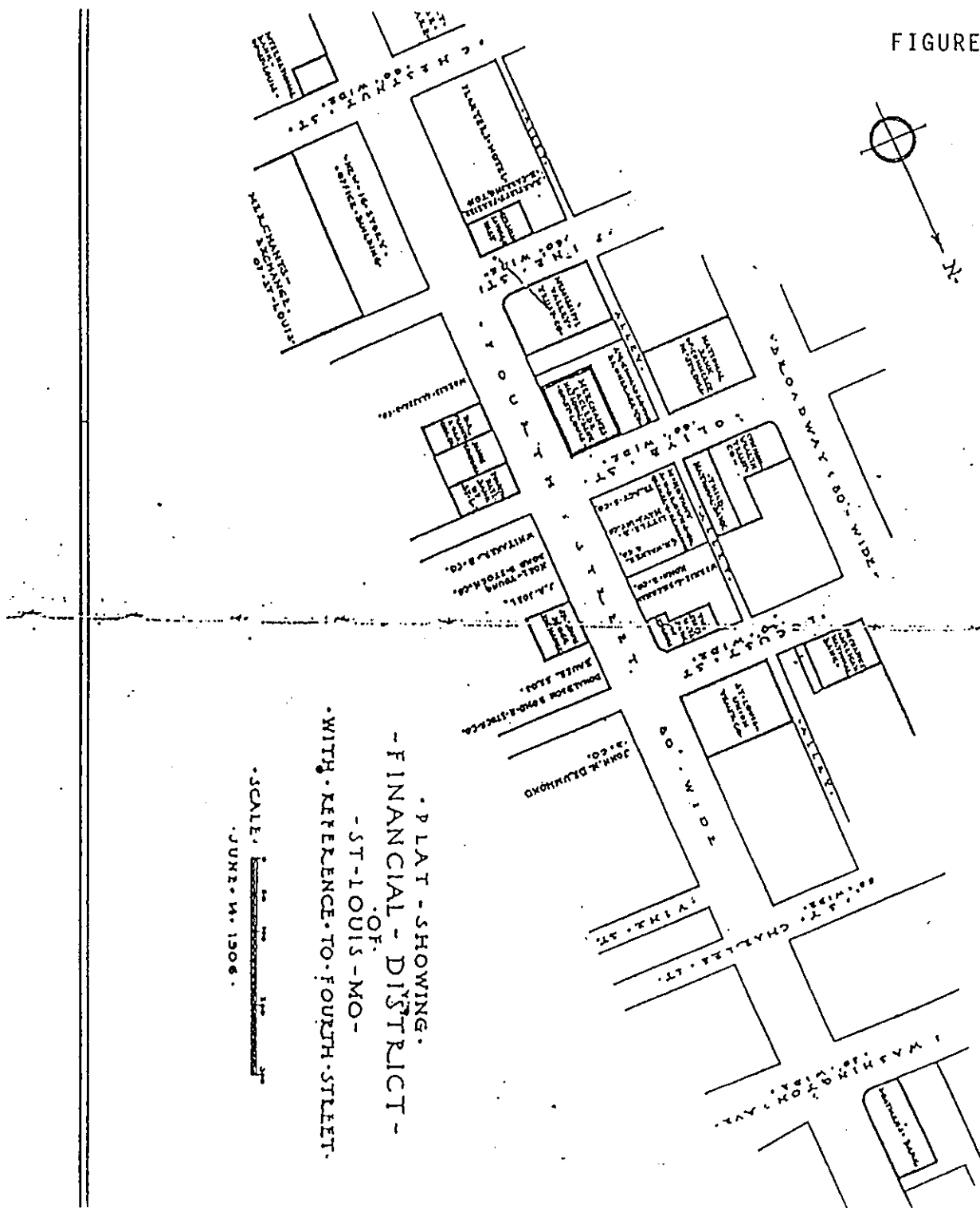


Laclede Building, St. Louis, 1886-1888
Steven D. Hatch, architect
Photo circa 1890 : St. Louis Public Library Collections

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Laclede Building
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri

FIGURE 3



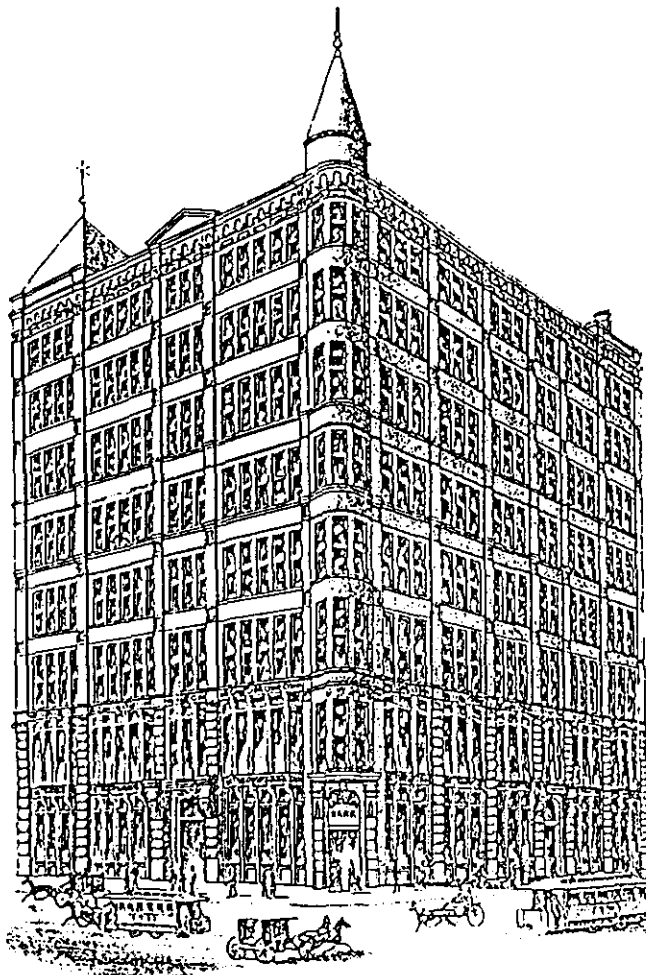
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Laclede Building
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri

Fig. 4



Laclede Building, in Shewey's Pictorial St. Louis, 1892

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SECTION 9

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Cox, James. *Old and New St. Louis.* St. Louis: Central Publishing Co., 1894.

Landau, Sarah Bradford. "Richard Morris Hunt: Architectural Innovator and Father of a 'Distinctive' American School," in Stein, Susan R., ed. *The Architecture of Richard Morris Hunt.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Merchants-Laclede National Bank of St. Louis. St. Louis: Merchants-Laclede Bank, 1906.

New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. Biographical information on Steven D. Hatch.

Weisman, Winston. "A New View of Skyscraper History," in Kaufmann, Edgar J. *The Rise of an American Architecture.* New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art/Praeger Publishing, 1970.

SECTION 10

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the property is defined by the dark broken line on the accompanying map entitled "Boundary Map, Laclede Building."

Boundary Justification

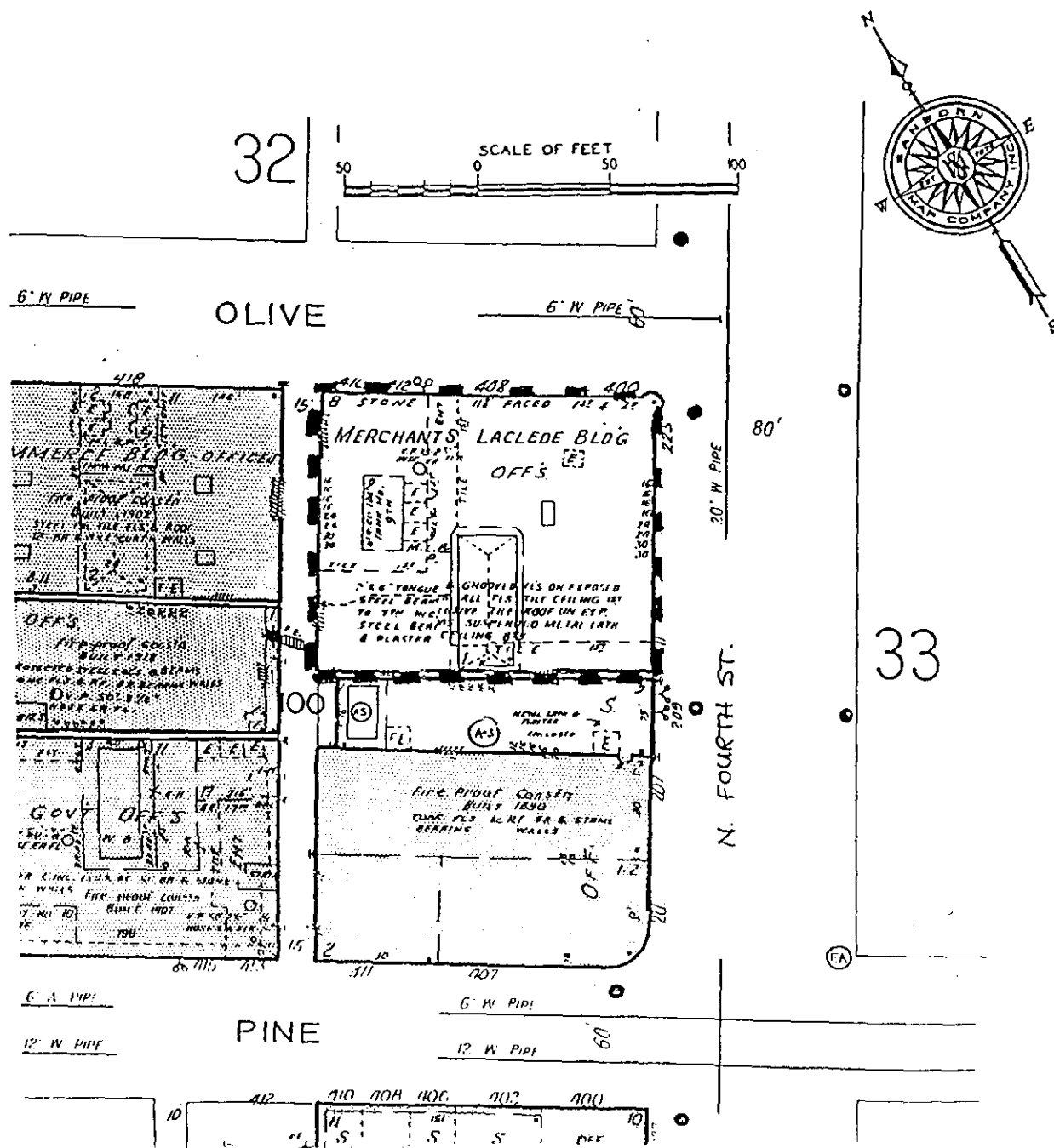
The boundaries encompass the entire original parcel that is historically associated with the building.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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Laclede Building
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri

BOUNDARY MAP, LACLEDE BUILDING
St. Louis (Independent City), MO



0868LZH \ 06LHHL \ 51

N3837.5—W9007.5/7.5

Heavy-duty Light-duty
Medium-duty Unimproved dirt
 Interstate Route  U.S. Route  State Route

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

INTERVAL 10 FEET
PRESENT 5-FOOT CONTOURS
VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

1 MILE

0 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET

1 KILOMETER

0

RAL RESOURCES, ROLLA, MISSOURI 65401
APS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



LACLEDE BUILDING

408 OLIVE STREET

ST. LOUIS (INDEP. CITY) MO

PHOTO BY CYNTHIA LONGWISCH

APRIL 1998

NEG. LANDMARKS ASSOC. OF ST LOUIS, MO.

FACING SW

#1 OF 5



LACLEDE BUILDING

408 OLIVE STREET

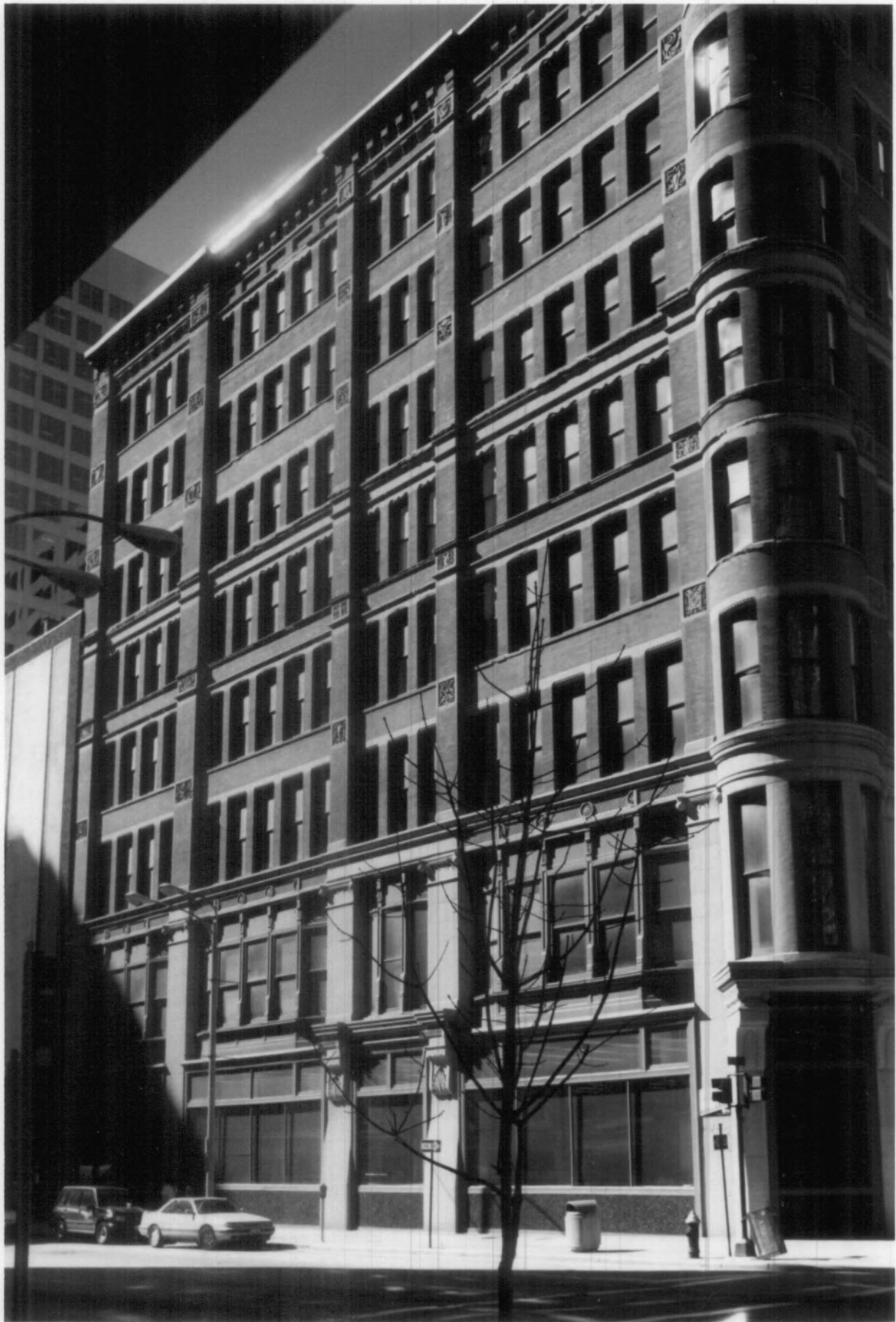
ST. LOUIS (INDEP. CITY) MO

PHOTO BY CYNTHIA LONGWISCH APRIL 1998

NEG: LANDMARKS ASSOC. OF ST. LOUIS, INC.

FACING SW

2 OF 5



LACUEDE BUILDING

408 OLIVE STREET
ST. LOUIS (INDEP. CITY) MO

PHOTO BY: CYNTHIA LONGWISCH

APRIL 1998

NEG: LANDMARKS ASSOC. OF ST. LOUIS, INC.
FACING SOUTH (REAR ELEVATION)

#3 OF 5



LACLEDE BUILDING

408 OLIVE STREET

ST. LOUIS (INDEP. CITY) MO

PHOTO BY MARY M. STIRITZ

APRIL 1998

NEG: LANDMARKS ASSOC OF ST. LOUIS, INC.

MAIN STAIRWAY

#4 OF 5



LACLEDE BUILDING
408 OLIVE STREET
ST. LOUIS (INDEP. CITY) MO
PHOTOS BY MARY M. STIRITZ

APRIL 1990

NEGS: LANDMARKS ASSOC. OF ST. LOUIS, INC.
TWO VIEWS INSIDE THE BANKING ROOM (1ST FLOOR, NE CORNER)
TOP: ENTRANCE SURROUND (FACING NORTH)
BOTTOM: LENGTHWISE VIEW FACING NORTH-ENTRANCE IN PHOTO
ABOVE AT BACK

#5 OF 5

