

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 Montgomery Ward and Company General Merchandise Warehouse

other name/site number Tension Envelope Company Building; Southwest Warehouse Building

2. Location

street & town 819 East 19th Street N/A not for publication

city or town Kansas City N/A vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Jackson code 095 zip code 64108

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mark A. Miles
Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO

May 25, 2010
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 Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

☐ 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:) _____

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National Register.
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Register.
- ☐ other, (explain:) _____

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

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.)

Railroad Related Historic Commercial and
Industrial Resources in Kansas City, Missouri

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE / Warehouse

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION / Manufacturing Facility

Current Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE / Warehouse

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION / Manufacturing
Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS / Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

STONE

roof ASPHALT

other

Narrative Description

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

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

8. Description

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.)

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
Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1908 - 1960

Significant Dates

1908

1910

Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

McKecknie, John W. (Architect)

Gloyd, Flemmon E. (Builder)

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other Name of repository:

Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library

Tension Envelope Company Archives

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.3 acres

UTM References

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 1/5 3/6/3/9/2/7 4/3/2/7/9/0/0
Zone Easting Northing

2 / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

3 / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

4 / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

801-19 E 19TH ST VINEYARDS ADD ALL LOTS 1 THRU 8 & 11 THRU 18 BLK 4 EXC W 5 FT OF S .5 FT LOT 7 & EXC W 5 FT LOT 8 ALSO PRT LOTS 9 & 10 BLK 4 BEG ON N LI SD LOT 9 5 FT E OF NW COR TH E ALG SD N LI & ELY PROLONG 170 FT TH E ALG N LI SD LOT 10 160 FT TO NE COR SD LOT TH S ALG E LI 25FT TH S 88 DEG 48 MIN 06 SEC W 100.09 FT TH S 86 DEG 10 MIN 17 SEC W 75.94 FT TO E LI SD LOT 9 TH S 79 DEG 03 MIN 39 SEC W 158.86 FT TO E LI CHARLOTTE ST TH N 62 FT TO BEG ALSO ALL VAC N/S ALLEY LY WITHIN SD TRACT

Property Tax No. JA29510190300000000

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary for the nominated property includes the parcel of land historically associated with the resource.

☐ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth Rosin, Principal, and Rachel Nugent, Associate
organization Rosin Preservation, LLC date March 2010
street & number 215 W. 18th Street, Suite 150 telephone 816-472-4950
city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64108

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

name/title Camelotte Co.
street & number 819 E. 19th Street telephone 816-471-3800
city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64108

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 Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Number 7 Page 1

Montgomery Ward and Company General Merchandise Warehouse
Jackson County, Missouri

Railroad Related Historic Commercial and Industrial Resources in Kansas City, Missouri MPDF

SUMMARY

The Montgomery Ward and Company General Merchandise Warehouse (Montgomery Ward Warehouse) at 819 East 19th Street, Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri is a massive red brick Three-Part Vertical Block that occupies half of a city block. The Montgomery Ward Warehouse retains many of the characteristic elements that identify the building as a Commercial Distribution Office and Warehouse, a property type defined in the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) "Railroad Related Historic Commercial and Industrial Resources in Kansas City, Missouri." Constructed in the heart of the industrial area that developed around Union Station, the south edge of the lot abuts the tracks of the Kansas City Suburban Belt Railroad. The nine-story rectangular building has a reinforced concrete frame and a flat roof. The walls are clad in red brick with limestone trim. The north and east facades express the three-part base-shaft-cap configuration of the property type as well as decorative elements associated with the Classical Revival style. Simple details include horizontal banding at the base, engaged columns at the shaft, and a plain cap. The building was constructed in two phases. The north half of the building was completed in 1908. The footprint of this section was nearly square. The south half, mirroring the design of the 1908 east facade, was constructed in 1910. The formal pedestrian entrance is on the north elevation, facing 19th Street, while the main freight entrance is on the south elevation, closest to the railroad tracks. The original design allowed the railroad spur to enter the building on the ground floor. While some windows have been replaced, the window openings and fenestration patterns remain unchanged. The building retains the open floors and exposed concrete structure that identify it as a Commercial Distribution Office and Warehouse, and a majority of the building's historic form, features, and materials are intact. The Montgomery Ward Warehouse retains sufficient integrity of location, design, and materials to communicate feelings about and associations with its period of significance. Although some of the windows have been replaced, this common alteration does not diminish the overall integrity.

ELABORATION

SETTING

The Montgomery Ward Warehouse dominates the southwest corner of the intersection of 19th and Campbell Streets. With a footprint measuring roughly 160 feet by 360 feet, the rectangular building occupies almost half of a city block. The north elevation abuts the concrete sidewalk of 19th Street. Campbell Street runs along the east elevation but stops at the railroad tracks that form the southern boundary of the lot. A narrow paved alley separates the Montgomery Ward Warehouse from the one-story brick building immediately to the west. The remainder of the lot south of the building is paved. The flat lot has no landscaping. A concrete barrier and a steep embankment separate the lot from the depressed railroad tracks that run east-west into Union Station, about one-half mile to the west.

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Section Number 7 Page 2

Montgomery Ward and Company General Merchandise Warehouse
Jackson County, Missouri

Railroad Related Historic Commercial and Industrial Resources in Kansas City, Missouri MPDF

A standard grid of city streets defines the surrounding blocks. Nearby buildings are much smaller than the Montgomery Ward Warehouse, both in height and in footprint. Many function now or were constructed for industrial and commercial purposes. These buildings form a core of manufacturing and warehouse facilities straddling the tracks of the Kansas City Suburban Belt Railroad. Open lots are paved for surface parking. One block east of the Montgomery Ward Warehouse is the six-lane overpass for US 71.

EXTERIOR

The short front and rear elevations of the Montgomery Ward Warehouse face north and south respectively. The north façade and the east façade, facing Campbell Street, are the most richly embellished (*see Figures 1-3 and photo #1*). Horizontal bands of limestone and recessed areas of the façade obscure the regular pattern of fenestration on each elevation. The line between the 1908 and 1910 sections of the building is clear on the east and west elevations (*see photo #3*). The north and east façades express the three-part base-shaft-cap organization that exemplifies the Classical Revival style.

Fenestration defines eight bays on the north elevation. Here the three-story base includes the raised basement and the first and second stories. The brick piers separating the window openings rest on low limestone plinths. Narrow, horizontal slabs of limestone alternate with the red brick to ornament the piers. Large window openings separated by stucco spandrels fill the spaces between the piers. The piers at the center of the façade are narrower than the outer piers, creating wider bays of windows. Windows in the center bays are tripartite, while those in the outer bays are paired. The basement windows that begin at ground level match the height of the limestone plinths.

A copper cornice with a simple profile separates the base from the five-story shaft. The pattern of bays in the base continues in this middle section. The outer piers of the base become wide expanses of brick wall, and the narrow center piers become simple pilasters that rise the full height of the shaft. The pilasters have limestone bases and capitals. The capitals have egg-and-dart ornament. The four recessed bays on either side of the narrow center piers contain window openings and limestone spandrels. Continuous limestone beltcourses form the sills and lintels of the windows in the outer bays.

Another simple copper cornice separates the shaft from the cap. The two-story cap contains very little ornament. The same areas are recessed and non-recessed as in the stories of the shaft. Ornamental brickwork frames the central bays and creates a beltcourse above the uppermost window openings. Limestone coping caps the parapet, which is crenellated above the central bays.

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Montgomery Ward and Company General Merchandise Warehouse
Jackson County, Missouri

Railroad Related Historic Commercial and Industrial Resources in Kansas City, Missouri MPDF

The placement of the main entrance to the east of center within the four central bays adds an asymmetrical element to the otherwise symmetrical main façade. A series of stone steps rises to the recessed entrance. The opening contains a pair of double doors flanked by single doors. A three-part arched transom window caps the entire entrance. The limestone surround has engaged pilasters flanking the opening and a simple molded detail outlining the frieze panel and framing the transom window (*see photo #7*).

The east elevation has eighteen bays. The two distinct sections of the building are readily visible, although the ornament of the north half (1908) is identical to the south half (1910). The ornament of each half also replicates the design of the north elevation (without the crenellated parapet), although the central section has five recessed bays instead of four. The first story contains several loading docks and freight openings.

The west elevation is a wide expanse of brick wall, rhythmically punctuated by single window openings. Each opening has a limestone sill and a simple structural steel lintel. The ornamental limestone banding from the north elevation wraps around to the first two bays on the west elevation. The northernmost bay on this elevation contains a window only in the top floor. A visible seam in the brick marks the division between the north and south halves of the building. Toward the south end of the elevation painted lettering is visible on the brick spandrels between floors (*see photo #8*). It reads, "MONTGOMERY WARD & CO./QUALITY/GOOD SERVICE/LOW PRICES."

On the south elevation, the exposed concrete structural grid divides the façade into eight irregular bays. Each bay contains one window opening set within brick in-fill. Three bays on the first floor are open to the interior of the building. These openings are the original entrances for the railroad spurs. A small concrete elevator penthouse, one bay wide, rises above the roofline on this elevation (*see photo #2*).

The Montgomery Ward Warehouse has several different types of windows. Some are historic and some are non-historic. Windows on the north and east elevations are mostly four-over-four double-hung wood sashes. Some of the openings have non-historic fixed windows that simulate the appearance of triple-hung windows. The west elevation windows have a three-over-three configuration with operable hopper sashes and shallow segmental arches on the interior. The south elevation has a mixture of three-over-three double-hung sashes and multi-light fixed replacement windows. All of the openings have stone sills.

INTERIOR

The majority of the Montgomery Ward Warehouse has open floor plans that are used for warehouse and storage (*see Figure 8 and photo #17*). Production occurs in portions of the first, fifth, and sixth floors and company offices are on the third, fourth, and fifth floors. Concrete fire walls with large steel fire doors divide each floor

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Section Number 7 Page 4

Montgomery Ward and Company General Merchandise Warehouse
Jackson County, Missouri

Railroad Related Historic Commercial and Industrial Resources in Kansas City, Missouri MPDF

into four sections from north to south. There is a small, simple lobby at the north end of each floor (*see photos #13 and 14*). The two passenger elevators at the south end of the lobby are opposite an open concrete staircase with a metal handrail. Entrances at the east and west sides of the lobby access the main floor area. These doors are paneled wood on the lobby side and metal fire proofing on the warehouse side. Interruptions on each work floor include a grid of reinforced concrete columns, set roughly twenty feet on-center, and circulation cores at the center, front and back of each block. The columns grow from twelve inches in diameter on the ninth (top) floor to three feet in diameter in the basement to support the enormous weight of the building, equipment, and materials above.

The interior finishes of the warehouse are sparse. Brick walls, concrete floors, ceilings and columns, and mechanical, electrical, and plumbing ductwork and conduit are all exposed. The pattern of the wood planks used to form the concrete floors is visible in the ceiling of the story below. There are small differences between the north (1908) and south (1910) blocks of the building. In the north block, the concrete columns are square and the concrete beams are canted where they meet the columns. In the south block, the columns are octagonal up to the eighth floor, and the beams are narrower and square at the point of intersection with the columns.

The building's four circulation cores contain a total of eleven elevators and three stairwells. There is a circulation core centered in each block (north and south) of the building. A third circulation core occupies the bay aligned with the main entrance. There is also a single elevator along the south wall of each block. Except for the two passenger elevators at the north end of the building, the elevators are strictly designed for freight. Most have wood gates, although a few have been retrofitted with metal doors that slide vertically. Metal fire doors are suspended from the ceiling above each elevator. In the event of a fire, they will slide down a track and cover the entrance to the elevator shafts (*see photo #16*). Fire doors also secure the entrances to the stair towers in the central circulation cores. The stairs at the north end of the building are open to the elevator lobbies on each floor. A single run open staircase also leads from the second floor to a small mezzanine level (*see photo #12*). This stair has a decorative railing and baluster with painted wrought iron scrollwork.

The south block of the Montgomery Ward Warehouse, constructed in 1910, doubled the size of the original structure to about 575,000 square feet. This becomes clear on the interior where the two structures meet. The northernmost columns of the south block abut the south wall and southernmost columns of the north block. The concrete beams of the 1910 structure do not align with those of the 1908 structure. The adjacent columns are exposed on the first floor, although the older north columns on the upper floors were often encased in the brick fire wall (*see photo #18*).

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Montgomery Ward and Company General Merchandise Warehouse
Jackson County, Missouri

Railroad Related Historic Commercial and Industrial Resources in Kansas City, Missouri MPDF

The most refined space in the building is the first floor lobby. The main entrance on the north elevation opens into a wide vestibule with stairs that rise to a small lobby on the first floor. Opposite the entrance are two original hand-operated elevators (*see photo #15*). The elevator doors as well as the remaining lobby finishes date to a 1960s renovation. The eastern passenger elevator may be Kansas City's only remaining manually-operated elevator. A small superintendent's office with original stained wood trim and hex-tile flooring is east of the lobby along the north wall (*see photo #11*).

The path of the railroad spurs that entered the building remains visible inside the building (*see Figure 7 and photo #19*). Where they entered the building at the southeast corner the spurs curved. They straightened out along the west wall in the earlier north block of the building. This curved path disrupts the regular pattern of columns. In order to properly transfer the load of the upper floors down to the foundation, there are large concrete walls on the second floor (*see photo #20*). These walls span the path of the rails spurs and distribute the weight from the stacked columns on the upper floors to the irregular columns on the first floor.

Portions of the third, fourth, and fifth floors currently function as offices. Finishes in these areas are non-historic and include dropped ceilings, painted and paneled partition walls, and replacement windows.

INTEGRITY

The Montgomery Ward Warehouse retains integrity of location, design, setting, and materials and is readily identifiable as an example of Commercial Distribution Office and Warehouse, a property subtype defined in the MPDF "Railroad Related Historic Commercial and Industrial Resources in Kansas City, Missouri." The building sits adjacent to the railroad tracks of the Kansas City Suburban Belt Railroad, and a curved concrete path through the first floor indicates the original location of two spur lines that traveled into the building to load and off-load goods. This feature is highly indicative of the Distribution Warehouse property type. While the building interior is highly utilitarian, Classical Revival elements, such as engaged pilasters and tripartite façade organization, ornament the primary facades of the Three-Part Vertical Block form.

Alterations include the application of stucco over several concrete spandrel panels in the recessed bays on the north elevation and replacement of some windows, particularly on the south elevation. All window openings remain unaltered, and many of the original wood and metal windows are extant. Changes to the interior have been few and are largely limited to the addition of partition walls and finishes (particularly in office areas) during periods of renovation for particular tenants. The majority of the open floor plates remain undivided. All of these alterations are described in the MPDF as typical for historic railroad-related buildings in Kansas City and do not impact the ability of the building to communicate information about its associations or its property type. Elements of the Classical Revival style, the interior layout, and proximity to the railroad clearly express the

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Montgomery Ward and Company General Merchandise Warehouse
Jackson County, Missouri

Railroad Related Historic Commercial and Industrial Resources in Kansas City, Missouri MPDF

original function and subsequent use of the Montgomery Ward Warehouse as an Industrial Facility and Commercial Distribution Building.

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Section Number 8 Page 7

Montgomery Ward and Company General Merchandise Warehouse
Jackson County, Missouri

Railroad Related Historic Commercial and Industrial Resources in Kansas City, Missouri MPDF

SUMMARY

The Montgomery Ward and Company General Merchandise Warehouse (Montgomery Ward Warehouse) at 819 East 19th Street, Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri is locally significant under National Register Criterion A for the area of COMMERCE and under Criterion C for the area of ARCHITECTURE. As defined in the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) "Railroad Related Historic Commercial and Industrial Resources in Kansas City, Missouri," the Montgomery Ward Warehouse possesses the distinct characteristics of the Industrial Facility and Commercial Distribution Building property type, specifically the Commercial Distribution Office and Warehouse subtype. The design and massing of the Montgomery Ward Warehouse clearly express this historic function. Erected in two phases (1908 and 1910) as the westernmost distribution center for Montgomery Ward and Company, the building sits adjacent to the tracks of the Kansas City Suburban Belt Railroad, which provided connections to the many major rail lines radiating through the city. The nine-story structure is an early example of reinforced concrete frame construction technology. It was the third building erected in Kansas City using this method, and by far the largest. The design by Kansas City architect John W. McKecknie, a pioneer in the use of reinforced concrete, cloaked the innovative structural system in a traditional façade of red brick and classical details. Open floor plans punctuated by concrete columns and an internal spur line facilitated the transfer of goods. Montgomery Ward and Company occupied the building for seven years before moving to an even larger facility on St. John Avenue in 1915. When the building opened to tenants in 1916, the Tension Envelope Corporation began producing envelopes in a small area of the building. Eventually, the company grew to occupy the entire building. The Montgomery Ward Warehouse continues to function as a manufacturing plant, warehouse and distribution facility and remains an excellent example of its property type. The period of significance is 1908 to 1960, beginning with the date of construction and ending with the fifty-year closing date for periods of significance where activities begun historically continue to have importance but no more-specific date can be defined.

ELABORATION

As described in the context "Commercial and Industrial Businesses Located near Rail Freight Facilities, 1859-1950," Kansas City had evolved into a major hub for the distribution of goods by the early twentieth century. Located at the center of the country, Kansas City was ideally situated for collecting and transporting produce, livestock, and raw materials to Eastern markets as well as importing and distributing manufactured goods to communities of the western frontier. Rail lines originating in St. Louis, Chicago, and major cities on the East Coast all stopped in Kansas City before heading west. The Montgomery Ward Company was one of many businesses who found the ready access to both new markets and suppliers attractive, and it factored heavily into the selection of Kansas City as the location for the company's western distribution warehouse.

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

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Montgomery Ward and Company General Merchandise Warehouse
Jackson County, Missouri

Railroad Related Historic Commercial and Industrial Resources in Kansas City, Missouri MPDF

New York native Arthur Stilwell founded the Kansas City Suburban Belt Railway (Belt Line) in 1887. Completed in 1890, the line skirted the southern edge of Kansas City's commercial center, connecting Independence, Missouri and the Argentine District of Kansas City, Kansas through a cut in the bluffs at the southern edge of the West Bottoms.¹

By the end of the nineteenth century, the growing city placed ever increasing demands on the available railroad lines. The context "Evolution of Kansas City Railroad Freight Industry, 1859-1950" describes how the limited space in the West Bottoms and the area's proclivity to flooding prompted the railroad companies to seek a new location when it became clear that Kansas City needed a much larger train station that could better to accommodate the transfer of passengers and freight. The most attractive proposal, announced in 1906, was to utilize 44 acres of undeveloped land around the tracks of the Belt Line. After much deliberation and several construction delays, Union Station opened on October 30, 1914 at Main and 23rd Streets.

While a few businesses constructed facilities along the Belt Line before 1907, following the announcement of plans for Union Station there was a dramatic increase in the number of commercial and industrial facilities flanking this central artery. While facilities associated with the livestock and grain industries remained concentrated in the West Bottoms near the stockyards, companies locating along the Belt Line were mostly warehouses, factories, and specialized businesses, such as sign manufacturers and sheet metal shops. The Belt Line provided smaller industrial plants with convenient access to major rail lines for importing raw materials and exporting finished products.

Kansas City's access to raw materials and western markets appealed to the Montgomery Ward company, and near the Belt Line there was plenty of undeveloped land with ready access to the railroad for shipment of goods. Early in the second wave of construction along the Belt Line, Montgomery Ward built an enormous new distribution facility. Taking full advantage of the rail access afforded by the property, the company constructed two spurs that ran from the main Belt Line, across the property, and into the first floor of the building.

In the early-twentieth century, industrial and warehouse buildings commonly adapted elements of popular architectural styles to functional exterior forms. As the MPDF context "Commercial and Industrial Buildings and Structures, 1900-1950" describes, architects cloaked these utilitarian buildings in elements of historical revival architecture to communicate solidity and permanence. The simple form and features of the Classical Revival style were particularly popular. On buildings over four stories this idiom was often expressed through visual

¹ "History of Kansas City Southern," Kansas City Southern Line, <http://www.kcsouthern.com/en-us/KCS/Pages/History.aspx> (accessed 18 February 2010).

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Montgomery Ward and Company General Merchandise Warehouse
Jackson County, Missouri
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association with the three-part façade arrangement of base, shaft, and cap that developed from the Chicago School.

The Montgomery Ward Warehouse is an excellent example of this trend. The reinforced concrete structure is visible in most of the interior spaces. Decorative finishes are limited to a very small entrance lobby on the first floor, and even these finishes are sparse. The exterior communicates the building's minimal architectural style. In addition to its base-cap-shaft organization, Classical Revival elements of the Montgomery Ward Warehouse include a series of engaged pilasters at the center of the south and east elevations. Limestone accents create horizontal bands in the building base and articulate the bases and capitals of the pilasters. But more than any applied features, it is the symmetry and formal organization of the facades that communicate the building's classical styling. Typical of industrial buildings from the period, these elements imbue the utilitarian Montgomery Ward Warehouse with a dignified and substantial public image.

MONTGOMERY WARD AND COMPANY²

After a tentative start in the 1860s, in 1872 Aaron Montgomery Ward of Chicago found success in the mail-order business. By appealing directly to rural farmers and delivering goods by rail, he saved his customers money by eliminating the middleman, the retailer. Just two years later the Montgomery Ward Company (Montgomery Ward) boasted a catalog 100 pages long and had sales exceeding \$100,000. The business grew exponentially through the end of the nineteenth century, despite increased competition from department stores, such as Sears & Roebuck, John Wanamaker, and Jordan Marsh & Company. In 1889 Ward incorporated with his brother-in-law, George Thorne, and the company erected several large buildings in downtown Chicago to house its headquarters and its main warehouse.³

In order to coordinate the delivery of vast quantities of merchandise to remote rural areas, Montgomery Ward had to build regional distribution centers. The company chose Kansas City as the location of its westernmost distribution center because it was a major rail hub. The city was also surrounded by the rural towns and farms whose residents were the core patrons of Montgomery Ward. Opened in 1905, the distribution center at 15th and Liberty Streets soon became too small. Over the next three years, the company moved into successively larger spaces at 9th and Locust Streets and in a six-story warehouse on Broadway before deciding to construct a new building to house their local offices and distribution center.⁴

² Unless otherwise noted, information about the history of Montgomery Ward and Company, Inc., comes from "Montgomery Ward & Co., Incorporated," Funding Universe online database: <http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/Montgomery-Ward-amp-Co-Incorporated-Company-History.html> (accessed 5 January 2010).

³ The Montgomery Ward Company Complex in Chicago was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on 2 June 1978.

⁴ "For Ward & Co., 9 Stories," *The Kansas City Star*, 22 January 1907, 1, Microfilm, Kansas City, Missouri Public Library.

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In 1907, Montgomery Ward struck a deal with Flemmon E. Gloyd. Gloyd had established a career as owner of the Gloyd Lumber Company of Kansas City. By 1907 he had retired to try his hand at being a builder. Through his deal with Montgomery Ward, Gloyd purchased the lot at the corner of 19th and Campbell Streets, adjacent to the tracks of the Kansas City Suburban Belt Railway, built the nine-story distribution warehouse, and leased it to Montgomery Ward for twenty years at a cost of about \$38,000 per year.⁵ Kansas City architect John W. McKecknie designed the building.

Within two years of completion, however, the company outgrew the new facility. The Kansas City distribution center serviced a broad territory that included rural areas of the West and Southwest, but company officials had grossly underestimated the volume of business the facility would be asked to meet. Catalog sales in the Pacific Northwest nearly matched those in the Southwest, and Montgomery Ward again needed more space.⁶

F. E. Gloyd and his brother A. M. Gloyd hired McKecknie to design an addition to the Montgomery Ward building. The result was a near duplicate of the original constructed to its south. The addition doubled the size of the distribution facility to 575,000 square feet and now filled nearly half of a city block. The rent Montgomery Ward paid to Gloyd also doubled.

Montgomery Ward outgrew the enlarged facility at 19th and Campbell Streets three years after the addition was completed, and the company commissioned McKecknie to design another brand new facility. Built in two stages between 1913 and 1918, the new Montgomery Ward warehouse and distribution center offered nearly twice the space as the Campbell Street facility. The new 1.25 million square foot warehouse was located at 6200 St. John Avenue in Northeast Kansas City. This site was much further east of downtown Kansas City closer to the interchanges of the major rail lines. Montgomery Ward began vacating the building at 19th and Campbell to occupy the new St. John facility in 1915. The St. John Avenue warehouse closed in the 1980s, and the building stands vacant today.

Throughout the early twentieth century, Montgomery Ward was in constant competition with Sears & Roebuck for mail-order business. As the century progressed, both companies had to adapt to the changing economy and the rise of the suburbs. The popularity of the automobile and construction of suburban shopping centers further weakened the mail-order business. Still trying to cater to their primary demographic, farmers, Montgomery Ward began opening modest retail and catalog shops in small town commercial districts. After periods of redefining the company in the face of new technologies and changing competition, Montgomery Ward continues to operate in a

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ "More Space for Ward & Co." *The Kansas City Star* 14 December 1909, 3. Microfilm, Kansas City Public Library.

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manner that varies little from its original model. It continues to be a mail-order company, albeit with a strong internet presence.

The Montgomery Ward warehouse and distribution centers in Kansas City are among the company's earliest extant facilities outside of Chicago. Research identified five other distribution centers, all built in the 1920s. These are located in Portland, Oregon (1921), Oakland, California (1923), St. Paul, Minnesota (1924-5), Baltimore, Maryland (1925), and Fort Worth, Texas (1928).⁷

BERKOWITZ & COMPANY / TENSION ENVELOPE CORPORATION

Kansas City city directories first list brothers William and Maurice Berkowitz in 1885 as bookkeepers for small local companies. The following year, William Berkowitz worked as a stenographer. By the end of 1886, the brothers founded a print shop called Berkowitz and Company. Located at 612 Broadway, the company produced "popular advertising novelties and business stationary."⁸ According to company history, in 1894 Berkowitz and Company was the first business west of the Mississippi River to mechanically produce envelopes. By 1900, the company specialized in printing and producing envelopes and changed their name to Berkowitz Envelope Company.

As the business grew, the company moved around downtown Kansas City. Over a thirty year period they occupied six locations, each further south than the previous one. When Montgomery Ward moved to its new facility on St. John Avenue by 1918, they renamed the old Montgomery Ward Warehouse the Traders Building and leased space to multiple tenants. The Berkowitz Envelope Company rented space on the fifth floor.

In 1937, the highly successful Berkowitz Envelope Company acquired another successful envelope company based in New York City. This company invented the Tension Tie Envelope in the 1880s. The tension tie envelope derived its name from the tension created by looping a string around buttons located on the body and the flap of the envelope. This provided a secure means of sealing third and fourth class mail that met the approval of the postal service. The invention was so popular that the manufacturer changed its name to the Tension Envelope Company. By the 1930s, it was a widely recognized brand name. When the Berkowitz Envelope Company

⁷ The Montgomery Ward Warehouse and Retail Store in Baltimore, Maryland was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on 14 September 2000. The Montgomery Ward and Company Building in Fort Worth, Texas was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on 19 November 1998.

⁸ "Our Tradition of Excellence Began Over 120 Years Ago," Tension Envelope Corporation website, 2009 <http://www.tension.com/html/traditn.htm> (accessed 4 January 2010).

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merged its sales and manufacturing operations with Tension Envelope in 1944, the new consolidated company also adopted the moniker "Tension Envelope Corporation."⁹

Tension Envelope Corporation grew steadily over the next decades. By 1950, the company expanded its operations from the fifth floor of the Traders Building into the fourth and seventh floors as well. In 1960, a group of investors associated with the Tension Envelope Corporation purchased the Traders Building from the Kansas City Power & Light utility company, who had purchased the building in 1930.¹⁰ Despite plans to occupy the basement and first four floors while leasing the upper floors, the Tension Envelope Corporation soon filled the entire building. The third and fourth floors became offices; the fifth and sixth floors were used for production; and the remainder of the building provided storage. While the railroad spur tracks no longer enter the building, Tension Envelope utilizes the original freight openings on the south end of the building for loading and unloading tractor trailer trucks.

For over 130 years, Berkowitz Envelope/Tension Envelope has been a family owned and operated business. The sons of founder William J. Berkowitz, E. Bertram and Walter J. Berkowitz, joined the company in 1915 as vice president and secretary, respectively. Bertram Berkowitz became president in 1920. William Berkowitz's grandson, Bert Berkley became president and CEO in 1962, and great-grandson Bill Berkley assumed control of Tension Envelope Corporation in 1988. Tension Envelope Corporation expanded greatly at the end of the twentieth century, opening over thirty sales offices in major U.S. metropolitan areas as well as operating manufacturing plants across the country and around the globe. The corporate headquarters have remained in Kansas City, in the same building since 1918.

REINFORCED CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION

In the early years of the twentieth century, reinforced concrete became the material of choice for building large commercial and industrial buildings. The Montgomery Ward Warehouse was only the third building in Kansas City to be erected with a reinforced concrete structure, and it was significantly larger than its predecessors. Although new in its application to buildings this large, the material had been around for centuries.

Early civilizations used various types of naturally occurring cement as a construction material. The Romans invented the man-made substance "concrete" by combining an aggregate (sand or gravel) with water and a bonding agent (volcanic ash and lime mortar). Early concrete was used to build monuments, such as the Coliseum and the Pantheon. Concrete technology was almost lost during the Middle Ages due to the widespread

⁹ "How Tension Got Its Name," Tension Envelope Corporation website, 2009, <http://www.tension.com/html/century.htm> (accessed 4 January 2010).

¹⁰ "A Big Utility Unit is Sold," *The Kansas City Star*, 19 April 1959, 1, Microfilm, Kansas City, Missouri Public Library.

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preference for stone buildings. In the last quarter of the eighteenth century, English engineer John Smeaton experimented with different raw materials (quicklime) to produce a better concrete product. His successes led to an increased use of concrete as a building material and paved the way for other advances in the technology. Fifty years after Smeaton's first big discovery, British bricklayer Joseph Aspdin produced the first Portland cement, a much harder cement product made by burning finely ground chalk and clay in a kiln.¹¹ Portland cement remains the most widely used ingredient of concrete.

A French gardener invented the concept of reinforced concrete. In a quest to develop more durable flowerpots, Joseph Monier reinforced some of his existing pots with iron mesh. By combining the tensile strength of metal with the compression strength of concrete, Monier created a composite material able to withstand both horizontal and vertical stresses. Monier received a patent for his invention in 1867, which he exhibited at the Paris Exposition the same year.¹²

The concept opened the door for numerous engineering applications, and it was not long before the building industry adopted this new technology. Reinforced concrete was particularly useful because it could be used for horizontal beams as well as vertical columns. In 1884, Ernest Ransom advanced the industry with an idea for reinforcing concrete with twisted rods rather than mesh.

Shortly after the turn of the century, buildings of varying heights began to adopt reinforced concrete technology. In 1903 alone, several notable buildings were built. The United Shoe Machinery Company built a reinforced concrete factory in Beverly, Massachusetts; an apartment building designed by August Perret at 25 Rue Franklin in Paris had concrete ornament as well as a reinforced concrete frame; and the Ingalls Building in Cincinnati, Ohio, by Elzner and Anderson, became the first reinforced concrete skyscraper.¹³ Kansas City's first reinforced concrete building was McKecknie's Gumbel Building, which was erected just one year later in 1904.

As with all new building technologies, skeptics wondered early on whether tall buildings constructed solely of reinforced concrete would collapse under their own weight. The successful completion of several buildings dispelled this notion, and reinforced concrete was embraced as an economical as well as stable building material. As the concrete structural members were poured and hardened they provided the formwork for the next set of members. Construction projects required much less scaffolding, which saved money and space.¹⁴ Over the next

¹¹ "History of Concrete," *Concrete Contractor* online database, <http://www.concretecontractor.com/concrete-history/> (accessed 27 January 2010).

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Piland, 5.

¹⁴ Ibid.

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several decades, steel eventually surpassed concrete as a cheaper and easier framing material, especially for constructing very tall buildings, but reinforced concrete was still widely used for floor slabs and circulation cores.

The Montgomery Ward Warehouse was erected during a peak period of reinforced concrete use, and it demonstrates the substantial size and durability of this construction material. These were important qualities in 1910 when, for reasons unknown, someone set off two charges of dynamite on the first floor of the south addition to the Montgomery Ward Warehouse while it was still under construction. The charges were placed against two of the columns at the southwest corner of the building. Although the resulting explosion created a three foot by five foot hole in the brick wall and several holes in the concrete floor, the thirty-six inch columns sustained only slight damage.¹⁵

JOHN W. McKECKNIE - ARCHITECT

John McKecknie was born in 1862 in Clarksville, Ohio. His formal education included two years at Wilmington College in Wilmington, Ohio; four years of classical study at Princeton University; and two years of architectural coursework at the Columbia School of Mines in New York City. While in New York, McKecknie also studied in the office of Cady, Berg, and See, designers of the Museum of Natural History and the Metropolitan Opera House. In the ten years following his graduation from Columbia, McKecknie worked for various architects in New York City, formed his own firm for three years, taught evening courses at the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, and spent half a year in Europe studying historic architecture. He moved to Kansas City, Missouri in 1898, where he worked for Huckle and Sexton Contracting and Building Company until starting his own design firm in 1900.

From the start McKecknie enjoyed great success in Kansas City. He is credited with designing over 120 buildings in the Kansas City area before his death in 1934. His works included office buildings, industrial complexes, apartment buildings, and high-end residences in every area of Kansas City. Many of these are notable and well-recognized buildings, such as the Grand Avenue Temple, the Gumbel Building at 8th and Walnut Streets, the University Club at 918 Baltimore, the Tureman residence at 5235 Oak Street (now the Toy and Miniature Museum of Kansas City), and over a dozen colonnaded apartment buildings on West Armour Boulevard.¹⁶

¹⁵ "Dynamite Shot to Destroy Building?" *The Kansas City Journal* 53, no. 61, 10 August 1910, 1. Microfilm, Kansas City Public Library.

¹⁶ The Grand Avenue Temple and the Grand Avenue Temple Building were listed in the National Register of Historic Places on 8 May 1985. The Gumbel Building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on 25 January 1979. The University Club is located in West Ninth Street-Baltimore Avenue Historic District listed 7 November 1976. McKecknie or McKecknie & Trask designed thirteen apartment buildings located in the Armour Boulevard Multiple Resource Area listed 28 July 1983.

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In addition to designing great works of architecture, McKecknie led the way in utilizing a new building technology -- the reinforced concrete frame. Concrete was certainly not a new material to the building industry, and the practice of reinforcing the concrete with metal bars started in France in the 1890s. At the turn of the century, the process of forming a building's entire structural frame from reinforced concrete was just beginning to make its way to the United States. McKecknie's six-story Gumbel Building (1904) was Kansas City's first reinforced concrete building, and the Gloyd Building (1912) was Kansas City's first reinforced concrete skyscraper.¹⁷ The Gloyd Building, a twelve-story office building erected for the Gloyd Lumber Company, tested the spanning capabilities of reinforced concrete as the fifty-foot-wide building had no interior columns.¹⁸

The Gloyd Building was the second of three structures McKecknie designed for Flemmon E. Gloyd. The first was the 1908-1910 Montgomery Ward Warehouse at 19th and Campbell Streets. While the Montgomery Ward Warehouse is not as tall as the Gloyd Building, it is much larger in footprint and volume, and at the time of its completion was the tallest reinforced concrete structure in Kansas City. To accommodate the storage and warehousing needs of the occupant, McKecknie gave the Montgomery Ward Warehouse a more massive structure than his reinforced concrete office buildings. The Montgomery Ward Company was pleased with the building McKecknie designed and, through F. E. Gloyd, commissioned McKecknie to design their enormous warehouse and distribution facility on St. John Avenue in 1913.

In 1914, McKecknie formed a partnership with one of his long-time employees, Frank Trask. Trask began drafting in McKecknie's office in 1903, after graduating from the Columbia School of Architecture. Trask continued his practice after McKecknie died in 1934, working into the 1960's until his own death in 1968.¹⁹

¹⁷ The Gloyd Building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on 25 July 1985 (demolished).

¹⁸ Donald L. Hoffmann, "Early Concrete Construction in Kansas City," *Skylines* 15, no. 1, 1965, 13-15, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City, Missouri Public Library.

¹⁹ Sherry Piland, "John McKecknie, Architect: 1862 – 1934," (Kansas City: Landmarks Commission of Kansas City, Missouri, 1981), 4-5.

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PHOTOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Photographer: Brad Finch
F-Stop Photography
Kansas City, Missouri

Date of Photographs: January 2010

Digital images submitted with nomination on CD-ROM

Photograph Number	Description	Camera View
1.	North and East elevations	SW
2.	South and West elevations	NE
3.	East elevation	W
4.	North elevation in neighborhood context	S
5.	South and East elevations with railroad tracks	NW
6.	North elevation detail – base of building	SE
7.	North elevation detail – main entrance	S
8.	West elevation detail – ghosting	E
9.	Main entrance detail	N
10.	First floor – east hallway	E
11.	First floor – superintendent's office	E
12.	Second floor – historic lobby stair	SE
13.	Eighth floor (typ.) – front lobby stair and door to warehouse	NW
14.	Elevator lobby	SW
15.	Elevator cab with manual operator	NE
16.	Freight elevator with overhead fire door	SW
17.	Ninth floor warehouse space with slender columns	SW
18.	Basement columns	NE
19.	Curved alignment of former spur	NW

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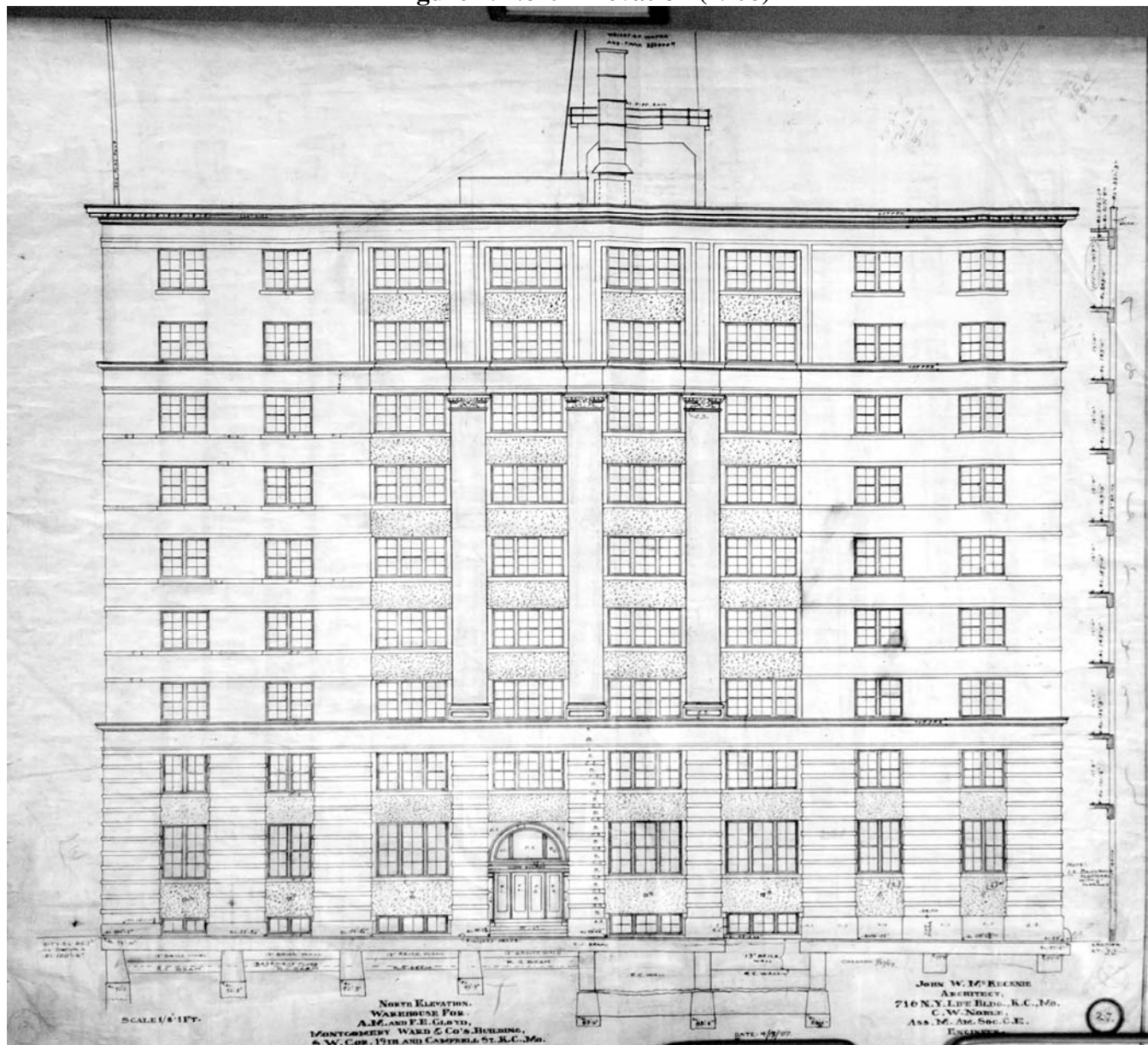
Photograph Number	Description	Camera View
20.	Columns and reinforced walls on second floor above spurs	SW

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Figure 1. North Elevation (1908)

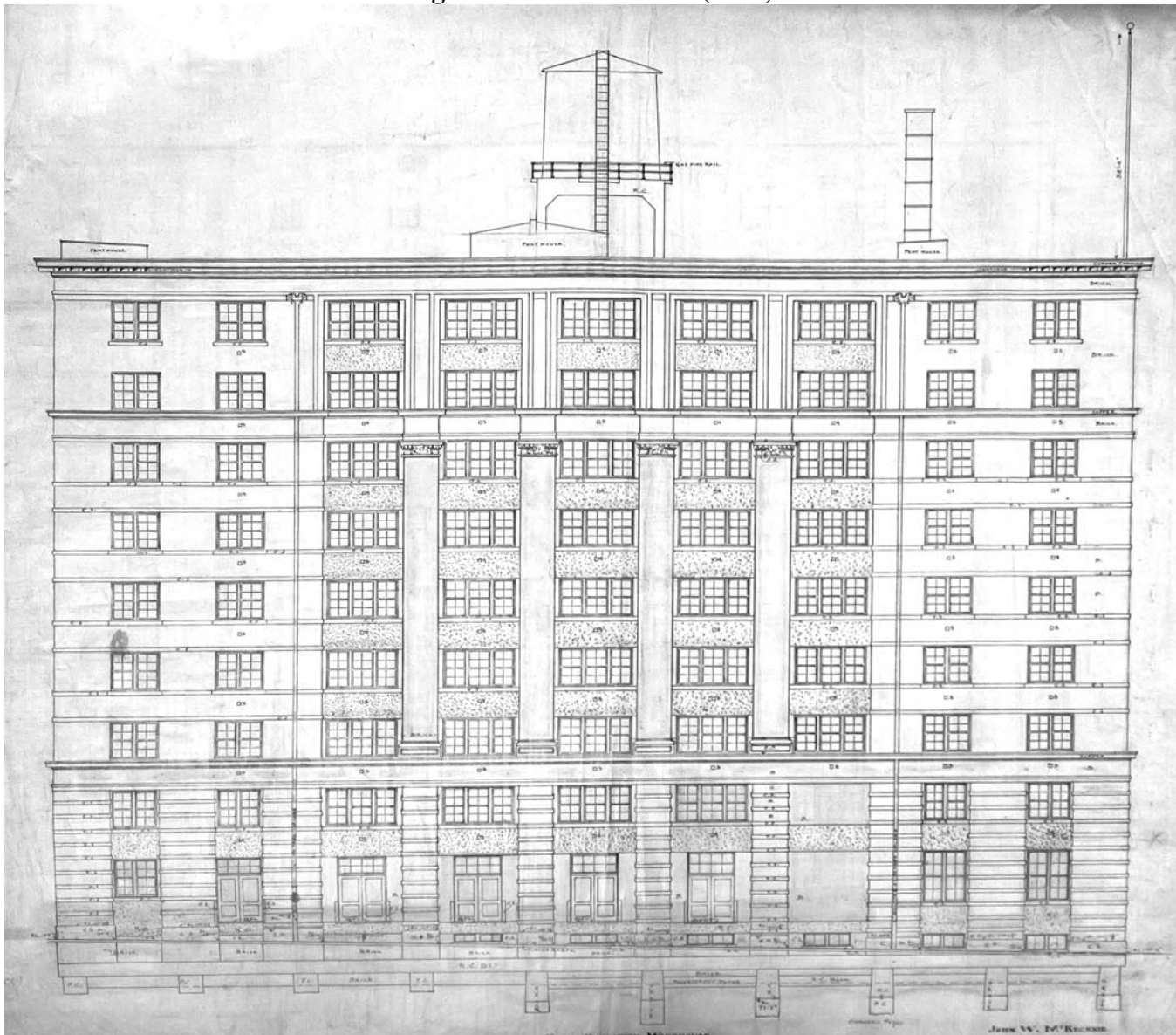


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Figure 2. East Elevation (1908)

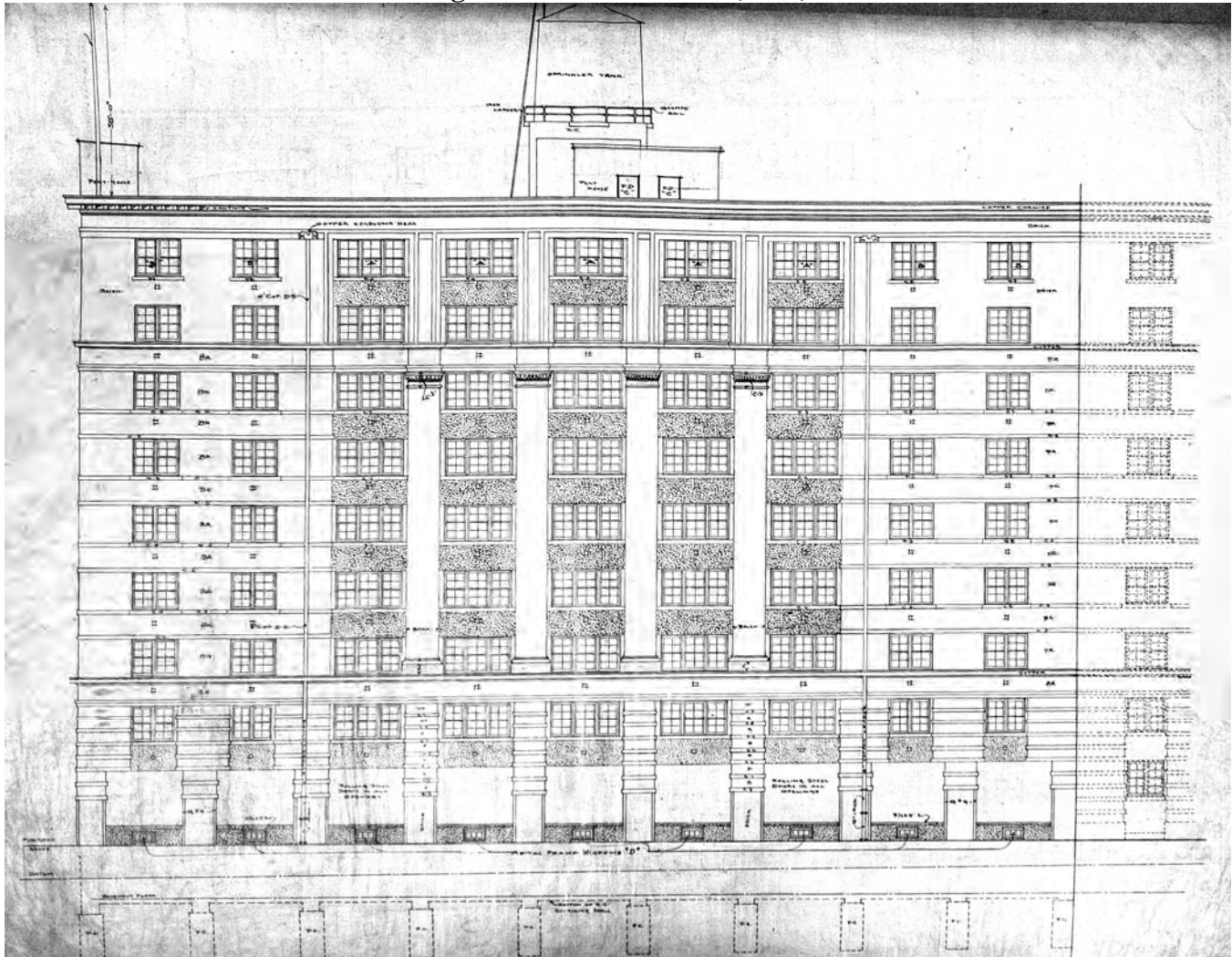


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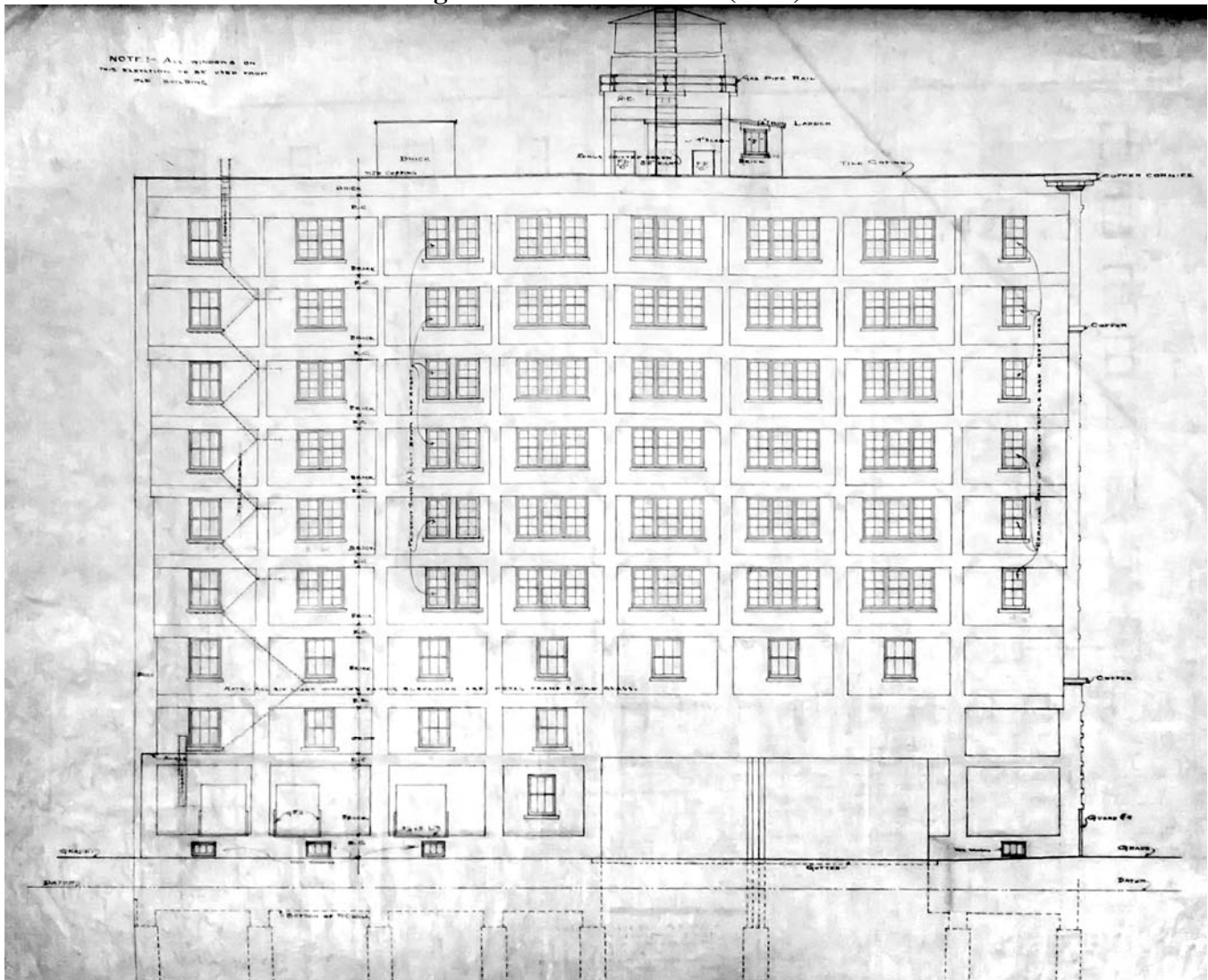
Figure 3. East Elevation (1910)



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Figure 4. South Elevation (1910)

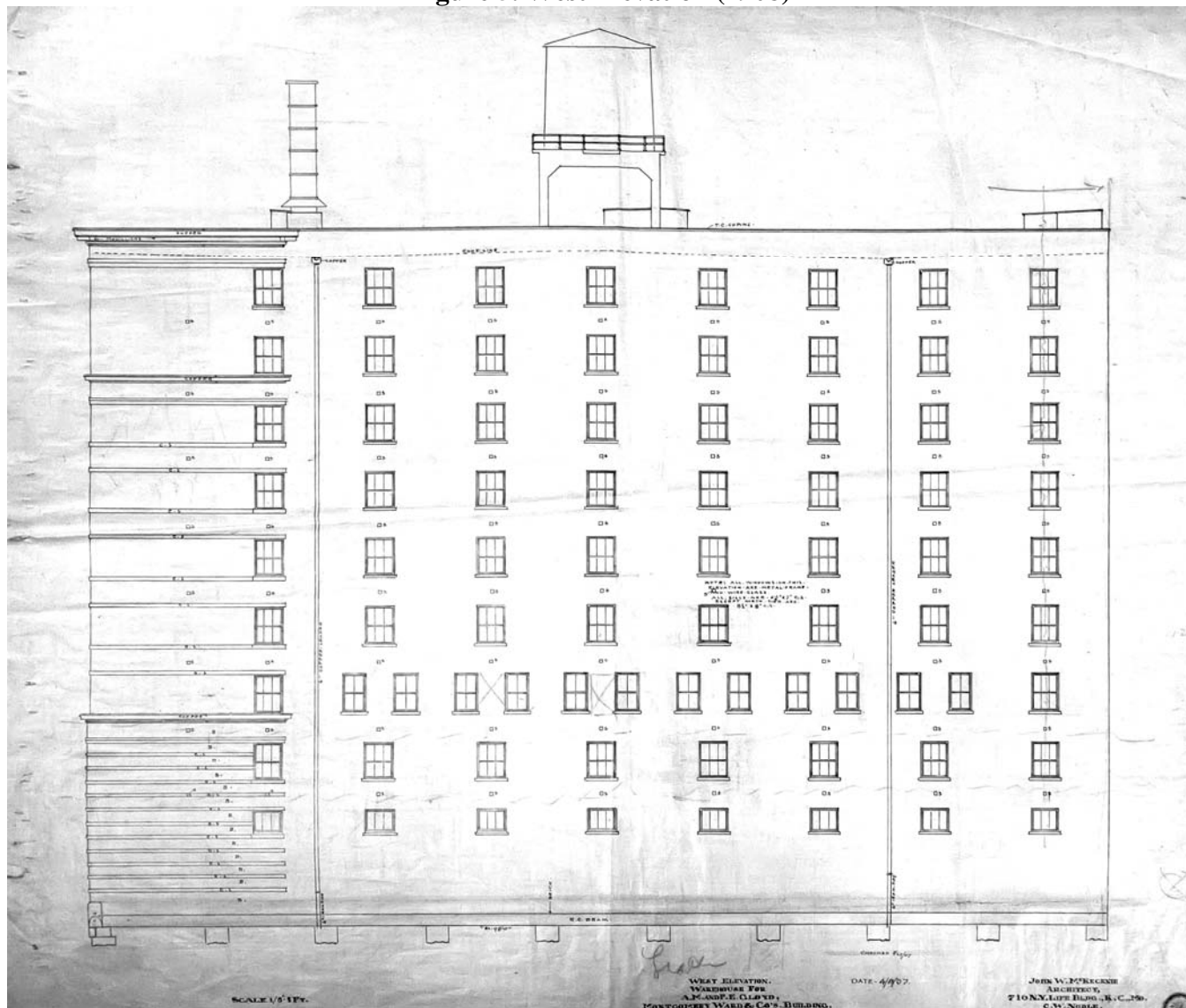


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Figure 5. West Elevation (1908)

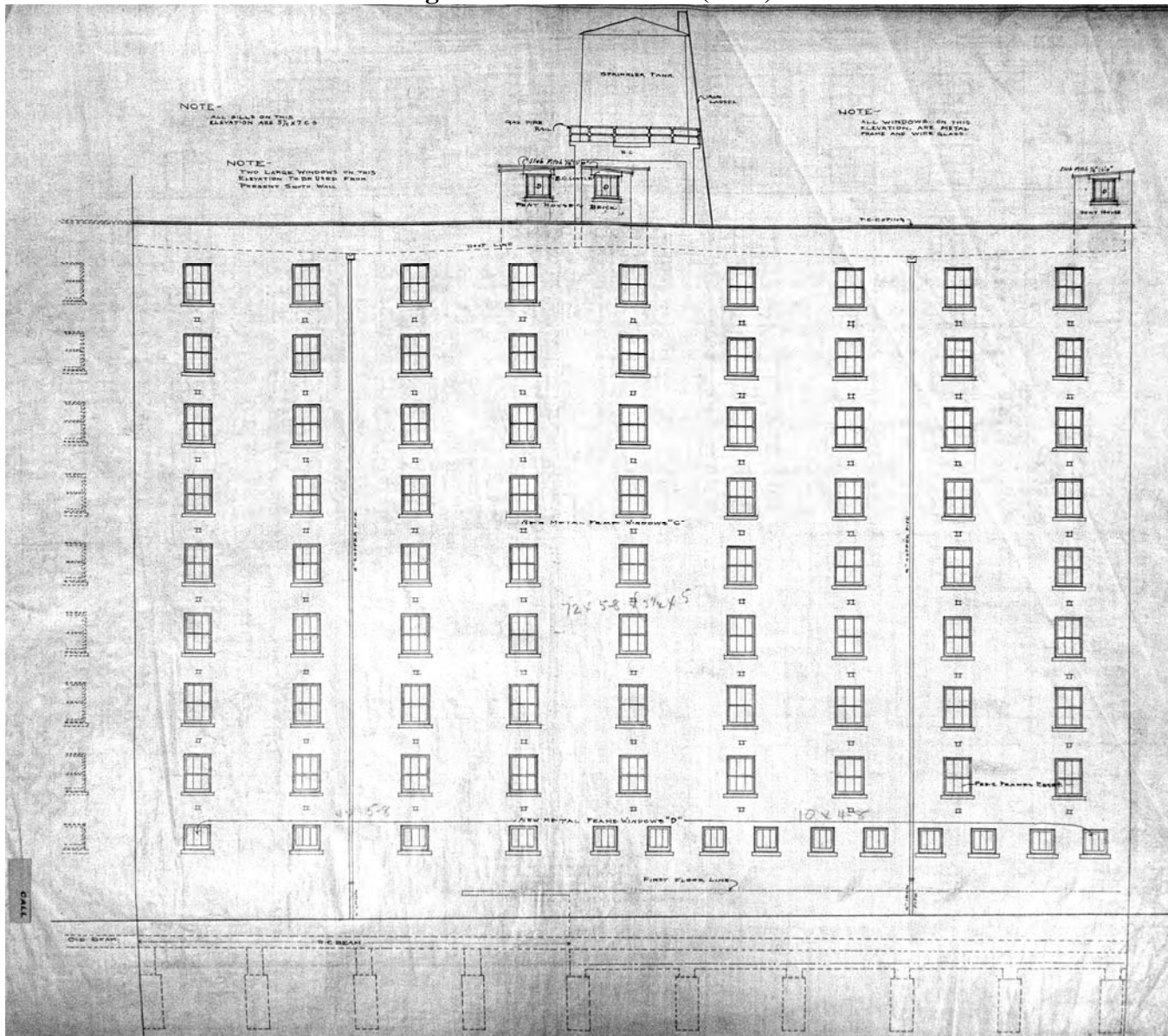


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Figure 6. West Elevation (1910)

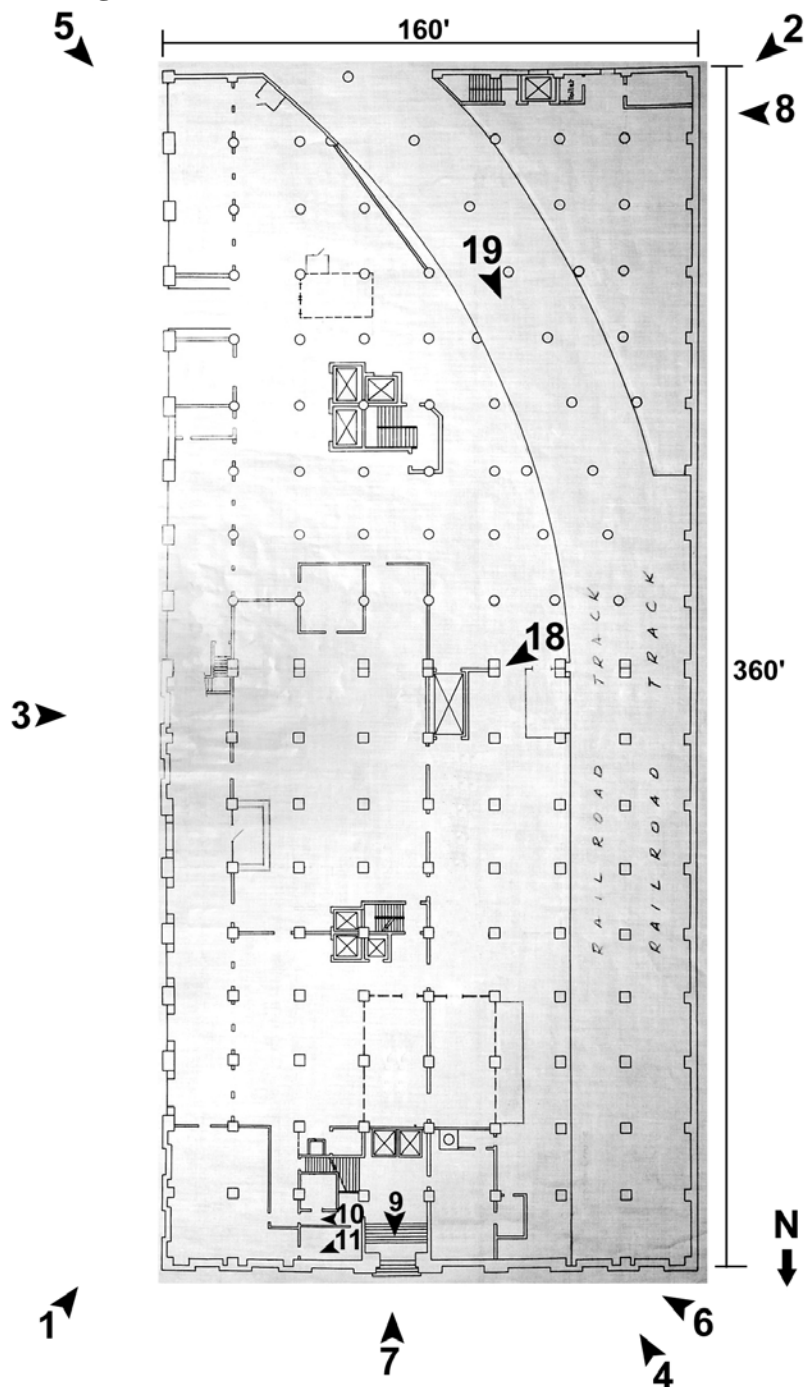


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Figure 7. First Floor Plan (1950) with Photo Views

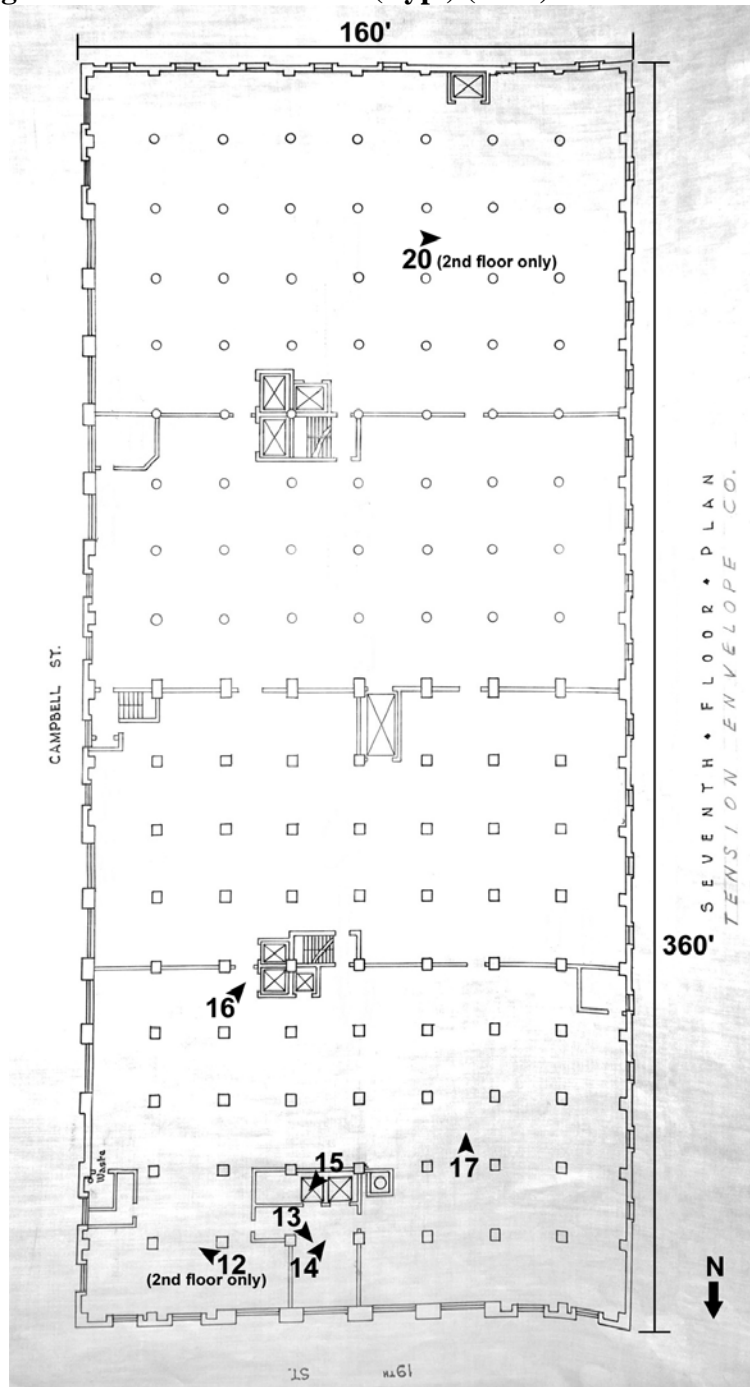


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Figure 8. Seventh Floor Plan (Typ.) (1950) with Photo Views



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