

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

844



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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, refer only to categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Edward Wren Company Building
Other names/site number: Farmers National Bank; Kaufman Building; McAdams Building
Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 31-37 E. High Street
City or town: Springfield State: Ohio County: Clark
Not For Publication: na Vicinity: na

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 at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local
Applicable National Register Criteria:
X A ___ B ___ C ___ D

Barbara Power DSHPO for Inventory & Registration October 19, 2016
Signature of certifying official/Title: _____ Date
State Historic Preservation Office, Ohio History Connection
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.
Signature of commenting official: _____ Date
Title : _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

for Edison H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

12.13.16
Date of Action

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE: Department Store

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19th & Early 20th Century American Movements: Commercial/Chicago

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, Limestone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Edward Wren Co. building is a 5-story brick edifice constructed in 1920-21. The building was significantly remodeled in 1931, during an expansion campaign for the department store company. Situated in Springfield, Ohio's commercial center, the nominated building is of reinforced concrete construction expressed in the Commercial/Chicago style. The Edward Wren Co. building maintains historic integrity: except for storefront and some window alterations exterior materials, details, fenestration pattern, and overall massing are intact, storefront configuration is evident, the fenestration pattern for the building is intact, and upper floor open space on the interior.

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Narrative Description

Located in downtown Springfield, the Edward Wren Co. building remains in a similar commercial setting as it was historically. The building is situated at the sidewalk and parking lots are to the rear of the building on the west and south. This portion of downtown Springfield is a mixture of buildings dating from the late 19th to late 20th centuries. The Wren Co. building is across the street from the c.1970 Springfield City Hall and its associated landscaped plaza. Late 20th century buildings are on the east corners of High and Limestone streets. The early 20th century Regent Theater is on S. Limestone Street, just south of the Wren Co. building. A cluster of late 19th century buildings are a block away, to the east, including the 1890 Warder Library.

Exterior

The Edward Wren Co. building was completed in March 1921. Although a single building, the High Street façade appears as two individual buildings, as the upper stories have different bricks and roofline cornices. (Photo 1) The building was constructed of reinforced concrete, supported by a grid of mushroom columns. The storefronts were altered with replacement materials, c.1950s and the late 20th century. Most of the storefront openings were infilled with stone panels, but their overall configuration is still evident on the two facades. The transom openings are intact, although the glass has been replaced with sheets of corrugated plastic. The upper story window openings maintain their tripartite or paired configuration with wood mullions, but the window sash was removed, date unknown. The window openings have plain stone sills.

The building exhibits characteristics of the Commercial/Chicago style, which was popular in Ohio c.1890-1910. The building has the base, shaft, and capital arrangement common to the style. The 1st and 2nd floors are emphasized by stone facing, a pier and spandrel pattern is present for the shaft, and an emphasized cornice for the capital is at the roofline. The original configuration of the storefronts made both building sections symmetrical, another commonality of the style. The corner section, in particular, illustrates the Chicago style with its tripartite windows. A centered, fixed window pane, with an operable one-over-one window on each side, was a key element of the style. So much so, that this window configuration is often called a Chicago window.

The Edward Wren Co. building's corner siting gives it two primary elevations, facing E. High and S. Limestone streets. The 1st and 2nd floors are faced with large stone blocks and topped by a decorative cornice, containing egg and dart in relief and a band of fretwork. (Photo 8) A stone entablature is above the 5th floor, including a row of carved acanthus leaf detail.

The E. High Street façade is six bays wide, with three bays being in each of the two building sections. (Photo 1) The narrower building section, at present day addresses 31 and 33 E. High, initially housed the Farmers National Bank. It is faced with yellow brick, has paired window openings on the upper stories, and has a stone parapet wall at the roof. The parapet wall has four even-spaced keystones and historic images indicate that a stone balustrade was between them

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originally, instead of the solid stone sections that are currently present (date of alteration unknown). The entrance at 31 E. High has a small display window and recessed paired doors. This entrance is a late 20th century aluminum storefront system, with quarry tile flooring and bases, and has a modern canopy over it. (Photo 2) The storefront at 33 E. High is wider than its neighbor, but has a matching storefront system and use of quarry tile. A display window divided by three mullions is on the west side of the recessed, paired doors and a single display window is on the opposite side. The storefront's 1931 transom window has been covered with plywood and two vents are situated within the space. This building section was altered considerably at the 1st and 2nd floors during the 1931 remodel. The original symmetrical storefront featured a centered door flanked by double-height window openings. The stone storefront had four embedded pilasters, with Corinthian columns, framing each window. The double-height windows likely corresponded to an interior volume-space banking hall.

The corner building section has three storefront openings and three window bays in the upper stories. The upper story windows are of a tripartite arrangement, consisting of a fixed middle window and 1-over-1 sash framing it. This section is faced with reddish brick. Today, the entrance is at the easternmost storefront, but it was at the west bay after the 1931 remodel, making it centered on the two combined building sections. The corner entrance, at present day 37 E. High Street, has a shallow recess and has a single door with flanking sidelights. (Photo 3) Like the other entrances to the building, it has a late 20th century aluminum storefront system and quarry tile flooring. A display window divided by a single mullion is to the west of the door.

The S. Limestone Street façade has five window bays. (Photos 4-5) This elevation has the exact same storefront and fenestration pattern as the E. High Street elevation. A single door entrance, with sidelights, is within the northernmost bay, at the corner. It is slightly recessed and consists of the same late 20th century materials as the entrances on the High Street façade. A secondary entrance is in the southernmost storefront bay. This single door is three steps above grade. It is an older wood door that once had a large pane of glass, set within a wood frame. A metal fire escape stair is at the south end of the elevation.

The concrete grid of the building's construction is visible on the south elevation. (Photo 6) The voids within the grid have been infilled with concrete or tile blocks. Most of the elevation has been painted or parged. The south elevation historically abutted a neighboring building and was not visible.

The west elevation historically abutted a neighboring building and was not visible. (Photo 7) This elevation now exposes the building's concrete and brick construction, which has been painted. Three infilled openings are present, likely corresponding to interior connections with the previous building that abutted it.

Interior

On the interior, the 1st floor is divided into three separate spaces. Partition walls are a combination of plaster, drywall, and concrete block. The space corresponding to 31 E. High Street functions as a lobby to access the upper floors and is essentially a corridor extending the

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depth of the building. (Photo 9) The lobby has a ceramic tile floor, appearing to date to the late 20th century, which is ramped up from the street level. Paired doors are several feet beyond the entrance doors. They appear to be older and likely date from the mid-20th century. The corridor angles around the stairwell and elevator shafts. The metal staircase is utilitarian in appearance. (Photo 10) The elevators are south of the enclosed stairwell. The lobby corridor is in deteriorated condition.

The commercial space at 33 E. High Street is an open space of irregular shape. As with the neighboring lobby, the entrance floor is ceramic tile and slopes upward from the street grade. A second set of doors is inside the entry doors, providing a weather barrier. The entrance system is glass enclosed. This storefront has a wood floor. (Photo 11) A set of stairs leading to a mezzanine level was constructed on top of the enclosed basement staircase. Wallpaper remnants, dating to c.1960 and depicting fashions through the 20th century, are extant in the basement stairwell. A rear entrance connecting the space with the elevator lobby is in the southwest corner of the room.

The commercial space at 37 E. High Street is the largest and is divided into smaller spaces by several partition walls. (Photos 12-14) It is accessed by the northeast corner entrance. The entrance vestibule has paired doors on the interior for a weather barrier. The vestibule floor has mosaic tiles and appears to date from the mid-20th century. Plaster ceiling remnants are visible above the drop ceiling in this storefront. A kitchen, basement stairs, and bathrooms are grouped at the southeast corner of the space.

The 2nd through 5th floors are identical. (Photos 15-20) The upper floors maintain an open floor plan with exposed columns. The concrete columns are octagonal with mushroom capitals. The floors are wood or poured concrete. Some wood window trim and wood baseboards are intact. The ceilings are plaster. Continuing up from the 1st floor, the stairwell and elevators are tucked into the southwest corner at each floor level. Doors on to the fire escape stairs are in the southeast corner.

Property Evolution

The nominated building is the surviving building associated with the Wren Dept. Store complex, which once consisted of four separate buildings. See Historic Images: Figure 1. Although now a single building, the nominated building represents the 1931 Wren Store remodeling campaign, which combined multiple buildings into one large commercial space. The nominated building represents the remaining portion of this rambling former department store. The paragraphs below provide a detailed explanation and history of the nominated building's site and the evolution of its development.

In the 1880s, John W. Bookwalter constructed a three-story commercial building at the southwest corner of High and Limestone streets, replacing an older Episcopal Church on the site. Bookwalter owned the nationally important James Leffel & Co. firm and several parcels of land in this portion of downtown. In 1881, just south of the Bookwalter Block, he also constructed the Grand Opera House.

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Completed in 1903, a new building, at 23-31 E. High St., replaced a grouping of small extant commercial properties that abutted the Bookwalter Block. See Historic Images: Figures 2-3. Constructed by Robert Johnson, a local capitalist and developer, the department store building's first occupant was the Edward Wren Co.¹ Robert Johnson was vice president of Superior Drill Co., at the time, and was instrumental in the formation of many of Springfield's important manufacturing enterprises. This building is often referred to in later histories as the Johnson Building, but the 1908 county history simply calls it the Wren Department Store and mentions a different Johnson Building on West High Street. The name Johnson Building, in association with this building, doesn't seem to appear until 1930s' newspaper articles. The new Wren Co. Department Store building took up half of the block (no longer extant).

In the mid-1910s, the Wren Co. leased a three-story building at 111-115 S. Limestone. Later referred to as the King Building, the building was known as The Annex. In addition to providing more space, it gave the department store a presence on two streets.

The Bookwalter Block was demolished in 1920, making way for the construction of a new corner building. The Farmers National Bank building and Kaufman Building were completed by March 1921 (these two buildings comprise the presently nominated building). See Historic Images: Figures 4-5. With an address of 35 E. High, the Farmers National Bank occupied the lower portion of the building, while the Kaufman Department Store occupied the upper stories. The banking hall section of the building appears to have been completed first, as the Farmers National Bank shows up at this location in the 1921 city directory. By publication of the 1922 directory, the Kaufman Department Store is listed. A venture of Mickler & Sons, the store was constructed by building contractor, J.A. Poss. The architect for the building is unknown.

In 1924, the Edward Wren Co. entered a long term lease on the corner building, as the Kaufman Department Store was already falling into receivership. Two years later, the Wren Co. leased the former banking section of building, which separated the two Wren's buildings facing E. High Street. The Wren Department Store then occupied all of the buildings at the southwest corner of E. High and S. Limestone streets. See Historic Images: Figures 6-7.

From May to November 1931, the Edward Wren Co. undertook a \$100,000 modernization project for its three corner buildings. At this time, the storefront on the old Farmers National Bank was modified, with the removal of the double-height window bays, to appear more like the corner building's 1st and 2nd stories. The massive 1931 remodel project also included the neighboring King Building, which had 4th and 5th floors added to it at that time. See Historic Images: Figures 8-9. On the interior, the buildings were unified as well, giving the department store state-of-the-art retail space. Old elevators in the corner building were removed, and a bank of elevators on the west side of the former Farmers National Bank was installed during the 1931 project. Also, "many of the present walls and partitions will be removed to provide an

¹ Rockel, William M. *20th Century History of Springfield, and Clark County, Ohio* (Chicago, Illinois: Biographical Publishing Co., 1908), p.365 & 398. Later accounts name a Charles Johnson as the builder, but this is inaccurate.

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unobstructed view throughout each floor of the building.”² See Historic Images: Figure 10. The remodel design was completed by Lloyd J. Zeller, Inc. Zeller, a Springfield native, began his architectural practice in 1914. An AIA member, he went on to form Zeller and Hunter Architects, retiring in 1964. J.A. Poss again served as contractor for the building.

The Johnson Building was vacated by the Wren Co. after completion of the modernization project. However, by 1936, the Wren Co. already needed more room, and again leased space in the old Johnson Building. A remodeling project was undertaken on the 4th and 5th floors, which was completed in January 1937. Known as the West Section, this remodel project gave the Wren Co. an additional 30,000 square feet for its growing furniture departments.³ By the late 1930s, the Sears, Roebuck & Co. was leasing the lower floors of the Johnson Building, and the two department stores were then sharing the same building. See Historic Images: Figure 11.

Despite the additional space in the Johnson Building, the Edward Wren Co. was quickly in need of more and the store was relocated to E. Main Street. Subsequently, after the 1939 relocation, the Wren Co. Store at High and Limestone was vacant in 1939 and 1940. In 1941, it housed the New Home Store, a department store, but by 1942, it was a warehouse for the Edward Wren Co. Store. The building was again vacant from 1944 through 1948. In 1949, the Royal Luggage Shop was a primary storefront occupant, remaining into the 1950s. See Historic Images: Figure 12.

The nominated former Wren Co. Department Store building became known as the McAdams Building in 1950 and was remodeled for use as offices thereafter. According to the 1950 city directory, the 2nd and 3rd floors were vacant, indicating that the building’s office conversion was just being finalized. Typical offices in the McAdams Office Building included real estate agents, insurance agents, attorneys, accountants, physicians, and tailors. State offices, such as the State Division of Aid for Aged and the Bureau of Workmen’s Comp, were there in the 1950s and 60s. The local United Automobile Workers of America chapter and the Girl Scouts of Springfield and Clark County Council were among the other specialty organizations housed in the building during the era.

Sears, Roebuck & Co. remained in the old Johnson Building until the late 20th century. In the 1990s, the building was demolished. The King Building, once known as the Wren Annex at 111-115 S. Limestone, was also demolished in the late 1900s. The standing corner building, still known by its 1950 McAdams building moniker, is the last remaining representation the Edward Wren Company’s early 20th century significance. The nominated building is currently vacant.

Historic Integrity

The Edward Wren Co. building maintains historic integrity. It continues to reflect the basic elements of its architectural style, the Commercial/Chicago style. These elements include tripartite window configuration, elevation arrangement into base, shaft, and capital, and a pier

² “Work to Start on Improvements,” *The Springfield News*, July 9, 1931.

³ “Wren Co. Leases Additional Space To Expand Store,” *The Springfield News*, December 9, 1936.

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and spandrel fenestration pattern. The building contains its overall architectural fabric, such as window openings, wood trim, and floor plan. Early 20th century materials and workmanship, illustrated by the stone relief carving in the cornices, is still present. Additionally, it has not had any major exterior alterations, such as additions.

On the interior, the Edward Wren Co. building retains some historic fabric, such as wood baseboards and window trim. The building's grid of exposed mushroom columns, on the upper floors, is unbroken. Exposed interior columns are in keeping with a large scale building of the 1910s-20s, and they coincided with the rise of steel skeleton and reinforced concrete construction. In combination with large windows, they allowed for more natural light to flow through the interior and were commonly seen in factories built during this time period. The column grid was also favored by department store owners for its visual impact. "Massive interior columns were typical in department stores...the columns supplied a stately quality as well as a convenient backdrop for holiday decorations...columns were a sign of modernism and had the effect of visually highlighting the store's size and spaciousness."⁴ This feature in the Edward Wren Co. building is intact, reflecting both its construction method and department store design preferences of the era.

During the 1931 remodel, a "battery of three modern department store elevators"⁵ was installed on the west wall, within the former Farmers National Bank portion of the building. At Wren's remodeled and updated store, the elevators and stairs were located in the opposite corner of the store's two entrances, and this was likely a deliberate choice. The ground floor of a department store was the most profitable, and "there a store established its personality, dazzled its customers, made half its sales transactions, and tallied up one-third of its sales dollars. Retailing wisdom dictated it should be reserved for high-profit impulse items, while...utilitarian merchandise that customers would seek out, could be put in the basement and on upper floors."⁶ By having the elevators located in the far corner, Wren's management ensured that customers would have to walk through the 'impulse' area of the ground floor. Serving the five floors of the department store, the elevator shafts, along with a metal staircase, remain in that same location, thus conveying the store's interior circulation pattern.

Although there are late 20th century buildings and parking lots adjacent to the Edward Wren Co. building, its historic setting is still evident. There are nearby buildings, also constructed at the turn of the 20th century, and the city's commercial downtown setting is largely intact. The property's scale and presence on the streetscape continues to convey its early 20th century appearance and the importance of Springfield's commercial history. A sense of time and place is present for the former Edward Wren Co. Department Store.

⁴ Whitaker, Jan. *Service and Style: How the American Department Store Fashioned the Middle Class* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006), p.85.

⁵ "Work to Start on Improvements."

⁶ Whitaker, Jan. *Service and Style*, p.193.

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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.)

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce

Period of Significance

1924-1939

Significant Dates

1924
1931

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Zeller, Lloyd J.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Edward Wren Co. Department Store building meets Criterion A and is being nominated for its association with local commerce. It continues to reflect its early 20th century downtown commercial history and significance. Established in 1883, the Edward Wren Co. was Springfield, Ohio's largest and most prominent department store for over a century, during a time of development and prosperity for the city. The Period of Significance is 1924, when the company first occupied the nominated building, to 1939, when the department store was moved to another site. The period of significance reflects a major period of growth and expansion for the local department store.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

In 1877, Edward Wren joined the Kinnanes (his father-in-law and three brothers-in-law) in establishing a dry goods business. Called the Kinnane, Wren and Co., it was located at 19 S. Limestone, in the Commercial Building. Constructed in 1875, the Commercial Building was considered the most modern building in Springfield at the time and became the "principal office building of the town...In this building Kinnane & Wren first opened up their dry goods store."⁷ The business was dissolved in 1883, with the three brothers restarting as the Kinnane Brothers. They moved to the newly completed Bushnell Building, while Edward Wren continued to operate in the original storefront, under the name Edward Wren Company.

In 1903, Edward Wren moved the store to the just completed building at 21-29 E. High Street, at Primrose Alley. Moving his twenty year old business, located just off of Main Street, to the newly constructed Johnson Building, signified a shift away from Main Street for major Springfield businesses. "Some stores did well by striking out into virgin retail territory, betting correctly that they were slightly ahead of the drift."⁸ The Johnson Building was built specifically for the Edward Wren Co. and was Springfield's first department store building.⁹ The 1908 *20th Century History of Springfield* described the building as a magnificent brick structure and the first steel skeleton building in Springfield.¹⁰

Before the relocation to High Street, the Edward Wren Co. was listed in the 1901 city directory as an 'importer and Dealer in Dry Goods, Carpets and Wall Paper.' After the move to the larger building, the company added house furnishing goods, millinery, shoes, and furniture to its advertised offerings. Although the Wren Co. was one of eight dry goods stores in 1904, it was the most dominant. The 1908 history of Springfield states that "at present the dry goods trade is

⁷ Rockel, *20th Century History of Springfield, and Clark County, Ohio*, p.395.

⁸ Whitaker, *Service and Style*, p.80.

⁹ Rockel, *20th Century History of Springfield, and Clark County, Ohio*, p.398.

¹⁰ Rockel, *20th Century History of Springfield, and Clark County, Ohio*, p.566.

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largely controlled by two establishments.”¹¹ The two businesses were the Kinnane Brothers, Wren’s former partners, and the Edward Wren Co. However, Wren’s new location in a five-story department store building indicates that the Edward Wren Co. was operating on a much larger playing field than its competitors, and it continued to do so in the ensuing decades. The Edward Wren Co. had extensive growth during the early 20th century, first expanding into the adjacent King building, around the corner at 111-115 S. Limestone, in 1913.

Although Edward and Josephine Wren retained a connection to their residence at 1115 N. Limestone Street, the couple moved to Far Rockaway Beach, New York in 1912. Despite the relocation, Edward Wren remained the president and treasurer of the company. By 1908, James K. Wren, Edward’s son, had joined the company, serving as vice president. James Johnson, Jr., a long-time associate, was also a vice president during the 1910s. On October 23, 1917, Edward Wren died at his New York home. Subsequently, Mrs. Josephine Wren was the department store’s president until 1920.

In 1920, Elroy C. Denton assumed the presidency of the Edward Wren Co. A resident of Ft. Thomas, Kentucky, Denton was a businessman, who owned a women’s and children’s clothing store in Cincinnati. In early 1931, Denton moved his residence to Springfield. Under his direction, the Edward Wren Co. department store was expanded and modernized several times at its E. High Street location.

In 1924, the Edward Wren Co. acquired the extant southwest corner building, formerly occupied by the Kaufman Store, expanding into the space. Upon the closure of the Kaufman Department Store, Wren’s was then one of only two department stores listed in the city directory: the Boston Store, 30-32 S. Limestone, being the other. Two years later, the company leased the extant Farmers National Bank space in the building. The Wren Company Department Store began 1927 in celebration of its Golden Jubilee and occupying the entire corner of High and Limestone streets. See Historic Images: Figure 13.

Although the company was continually adding new departments and reconfiguring its space, it was not enough to meet the company’s vision of a modern department store. “Officials of the Edward Wren Store began planning for a new and modern store structure at the time of the purchase of the corner building [1924].”¹² The company hired the Grand Rapids Store Equipment Corporation to complete a multi-year study of the store’s requirements. “The departmental arrangements in the new Edward Wren Store is the result of scientific analysis of the store’s volume of business, probable future growth and customer convenience...To those who are familiar with the former Wren Store and its inconveniences in traffic arrangement and customer comfort, the new store arrangement comes as a welcome improvement.”¹³

After the in-depth retail and architectural analysis, the company was ready to take action. In 1931, the Edward Wren Co. embarked upon a major modernization project. (See Section 7 for

¹¹ Rockel, *20th Century History of Springfield, and Clark County, Ohio*, p.427.

¹² “Wren Store Was Opened in 1877,” *Springfield Daily News*, November 3, 1931, p.8.

¹³ “Wren Store Was Opened in 1877.”

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more detail) Designed by Springfield architect, Lloyd J. Zeller, the remodel project gave the Wren Department Store 90,000 square feet of retail floor space.¹⁴ The Johnson Building, where the store had been located since 1903, was vacated. An annex across S. Limestone, at 116, was retained to house furniture repair and carpet workrooms.

As the Edward Wren Co. embarked upon its substantial remodel and modernization project, it was listed in the 1930 city directory as one of six department stores. The Boston Store was still extant and the locally owned Home Store had been established, but the other three department stores were national chains. Montgomery Ward, J.C. Penney Co., and the Sears, Roebuck & Co. were all present in Springfield. Additionally, the national discount department stores of S.S. Kresge Co. and the F.W. Woolworth Co. were present in Springfield.

At a stockholders meeting in March 1939, Denton predicted greater profits for the fiscal year. With this in mind and regardless of the additional space garnered in a 1936-37 remodel, the decision was made to relocate the Wren Department Store to larger quarters. That same year, Denton, along with a group of associates from Cincinnati, purchased the Bushnell Building on E. Main Street. Then known as the Fahien-Tehan Building, the former office building and Masonic Hall had been remodeled into a department store for the Home Store. The Denton Co. also purchased the Home Store in 1939 and subsequently liquidated it. Edward A. Tehan, president of the Home Store, was invited to be a vice president of the Edward Wren Co. during the acquisition proceedings.

In the fall of 1939, the Edward Wren Co. Store was relocated to the extant Bushnell Building¹⁵ on E. Main Street, following a \$650,000 remodel and expansion project. By this period of the company's lifetime, the controlling interest in the Edward Wren Co. was held by the Denton Company, Inc.¹⁶ This company was an evolution of Denton's investment in clothing and dry goods stores. In 1928, Elroy Denton formed the E.C. Denton Stores Co., based in Cincinnati, and enlarged his extant women's clothing store to include dry goods, furs, and accessories. Additionally at the same time, he established a men's clothing store, haberdashery, and golf goods store, called the E.C. Denton & Co in Springfield. This store, located at the northwest corner of Main and Limestone streets, existed until 1932-33. By 1939, as E.C. Denton was preparing to relocate the Edward Wren Co., the Denton Co. also owned department stores in other cities. These included the John Ross Co., Middletown, Ohio, the Robinson Schwenn Co., Hamilton, Ohio, and the Denton Co., Lexington, Kentucky.¹⁷

The Denton Co., including the Edward Wren Co., became an autonomous subsidiary of the Allied Stores Corp. of New York in 1952. Although management remained local, Wren's was

¹⁴ "Work to Start on Improvements."

¹⁵ The Bushnell Building was listed as part of a grouping of three commercial buildings, in the Main Street Buildings National Register Nomination, 1979, (Bushnell Building Amendment, 2000). It was listed under Criterion C for architecture.

¹⁶ "Work of Remodeling Edward Wren Store Is Started Monday," *Springfield News Sun*, August 25, 1953.

¹⁷ "Denton Sees Improvement During 1939," *Springfield News Sun*, March 15, 1939.

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acquired by Allied Stores in 1958, ending decades of local ownership.¹⁸ The Wren Co. Store was merged with the Block Company, of Indianapolis, in 1985. At this point, the store name was changed to Block's, and after 102 years, the Wren Co. name ceased to exist. In 1987, the downtown department store was permanently closed.

Springfield - Commerce History

“Founded in 1801, Springfield had steady population growth during the 19th century. Its early growth can be attributed to being named the Clark County seat in 1818 and the arrival of the National Road (the United States’ first federally funded highway) in 1838. By the late 1840s, the railroad had reached Springfield, and two lines were operating there by 1851. Springfield was designated a city in 1850, with a population of 5,100.”¹⁹

Beginning in 1850, Springfield became an important industrial city, producing a wide array of agricultural implements. “Other late 19th and early 20th century manufacturing concerns included production of piano plates, motors, incubators, electric signs, and tires. Many of these companies had nationwide distribution, such as the Kelly-Springfield Tire Company, which began production of pneumatic automobile tires in 1900. The International Harvester Company took over the Warder, Bushnell, and Glessner Company in 1902, switching from production of agricultural implements to trucks in 1908.”²⁰ Many of the city’s manufacturing concerns had not only a national presence, but were internationally known as well. Among the companies doing international business were James Leffel & Co., manufacturers of turbines and the Crowell-Collier Publishing Company, publishers of several well-known magazines and the largest magazine publisher in the world by the early 1920s.²¹

During the 19th century and much of the 20th century, Springfield had a vibrant downtown that matched its thriving, diverse industrial sector. The city was a seat of county government, an important industrial center, and the location of a well-known Lutheran liberal arts college. A multitude of churches, public buildings, and commercial enterprises were located in the downtown’s dense streetscape.

With respect to commerce, Springfield eventually became a regional center. Shortly after the settlement reached village status in 1827, a newspaper reported on the village’s statistics, denoting fourteen stores (not including groceries).²² The National Road traversed Springfield along Main Street, and this cemented the street’s prominence for business locations after the 1830s. In 1832, there were sixteen dry goods stores in the village.²³

¹⁸ “Wren’s Plans Celebration,” *Springfield News Sun*, May 15, 1977.

¹⁹ Wright, Nathalie. *Springfield Metallic Casket Company National Register of Historic Places Nominations*, 2016, p.8-24.

²⁰ Wright, *Springfield Metallic Casket Company*, p.8-25.

²¹ *Springfield, Ohio: In the Heart of the Mad River Valley*, Springfield (Ohio): Chamber of Commerce, 1924. p.29.

²² Rockel, *20th Century History of Springfield, and Clark County, Ohio*, p.373.

²³ Rockel, *20th Century History of Springfield, and Clark County, Ohio*, p.374.

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By 1856, the newly designated city had eleven dry goods stores, all but one located on Main Street.²⁴ With a little over 5,100 inhabitants, the city was also supporting twelve churches, eleven physicians, sixteen lawyers, two banks, seven hotels, three drug stores, five hardware stores, forty-three groceries, three bakeries, nine tailors, three jewelries. Additionally, a multitude of skilled trades, such as wagon shops, blacksmiths, cooper shops, tin and stove shops, saddle and harness shops, and cabinet shops were represented.²⁵

The 1881 county history reported that Springfield experienced a population and commercial boom immediately following the Civil War. In 1868 and 1869 alone, 438 new buildings were constructed in the city, including two prominent downtown structures: an opera house and a large hotel. Numerous business and manufacturing enterprises were established after the war and then in the late 1870s, after a brief economic panic occurred in the early 1870s. Population reached 12,652 in 1870, a 75% increase over 1860, and 20,730 in 1880.²⁶ It was during this climate of growth that the Edward Wren Co. could trace its roots.

In 1905, Springfield had a population of 45,000.²⁷ The city's street railway had been electrified and expanded in the early 1890s. Winding its way through downtown on the primary streets, such as Fountain, Main, Limestone, High, and Washington, an electric streetcar line was located on High Street, passing in front of the new Edward Wren Co. Department Store. The streetcar rails are clearly visible in a 1905 photo of the building. By 1908, the central transfer station for the street car lines was located at the corner of High and Limestone streets.²⁸

The strategic placement of the street car lines on High Street, probably had much to do with the decision to relocate the Wren Store away from the traditional Main Street business section. "In 1903 the first department store was erected in Springfield, principally by Robert Johnson. To make way for the new building some old buildings were demolished... This entire building is now occupied by the Wren Department Store."²⁹ The 1904 city directory indicates that the Wren Store was one of eight dry goods stores that year, as the company settled into its new home.

During the 1910s and 20s, as the Edward Wren Co. was expanding into the neighboring buildings, Springfield was still in a period of growth. Eight hotels were in the downtown, commercial enterprises were thriving, and financial institutions were expanding. "Springfield's industrial diversity and strength continued to be reflected in its population growth in the early 20th century. Population figures had the largest jump in a single decade from 46,921 in 1910 to 60,840 in 1920. The 1910s and 1920s were just as important to Springfield's industrial and overall growth as the earlier farm implements era had been. 'The increase in value of manufactured goods was dramatic between 1914 and 1919.' As a result, in slightly less than 30

²⁴ *Sketches of Springfield in 1856*, Springfield, Ohio: Daily Nonpareil Office, 1856.

²⁵ Rockel, *20th Century History of Springfield, and Clark County, Ohio*, p.375.

²⁶ *The History of Clark County, Ohio* (Chicago: W.H. Beers & Co., 1881), p. 482-83.

²⁷ *Springfield: The Great Manufacturing City* (Springfield, Ohio: The Commercial Club, 1905), p.5.

²⁸ Rockel, *20th Century History of Springfield, and Clark County, Ohio*, p.176.

²⁹ Rockel, *20th Century History of Springfield, and Clark County, Ohio*, p.398.

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years the city's range almost doubled from 6 square miles in 1894 to 11.55 square miles in 1922."³⁰

As evidenced by a 1916 Chamber of Commerce publication, Springfield had reached 60,000 inhabitants by then and had been judged by a collective of real estate experts to be "The Best 60,000 City in America." Further elaborating on the title, the Chamber noted, "We have compared her material growth in population, her increased bank clearings and deposits, her constantly broadening fields of industrial activity and the happiness of her people with those of other cities of like population. In no instance has Springfield suffered by the comparison."³¹ Established in 1910, the Farmers National Bank was one of Springfield's successful banks of the 1910s and 20s. It was located at 11 S. Limestone until 1921, when its building was completed on E. High Street. The bank was merged with the First National Bank in 1927, vacating its building, which allowed for the Edward Wren Co. lease of it.

"Because it was well diversified, Springfield's industrial base remained fairly stable during the Great Depression. And, 'by 1938 Springfield was doing well and had ten firms employing more than 200 each. Agricultural machinery went down to sixth place in value. Motor trucks, magazines, electrical machinery, steel products, auto bumpers, road rollers, incubators and brooders, engines, and metallic caskets brought the greatest amount of business and activity to the city...' Manufacturing was still healthy in the early 1960s, with nearly 230 firms operating in the city. Having had a presence in Springfield for many decades, International Harvester was the largest company and employer. However, the loss of Crowell-Collier's 2,000 jobs in 1956 signaled a gradual decline in Springfield's manufacturing base.' Like many other industrial cities in the late 20th century, Springfield began to struggle with the challenge of keeping businesses in the central city and maintaining a healthy downtown."³²

Department Stores – Background History

The concept of the modern department store, as it is known today, did not exist until the late 19th century. Generally forming in the 1890s, author Jan Whitaker defines department stores as "stores that began as one-of-a-kind, independently owned businesses located in cities and selling a wide range of goods from three major groups: dry goods, clothing, and household goods. They had a characteristic form of organization in which each department was run by its own buyer as though it was a small shop, while the umbrella organization – 'the store' – provided services such as advertising, window displays, and delivery. Profits and losses were figured by department. Departmental organization was a defining feature of the department store and distinguished it sharply from the old-time general store, even one that segregated its goods... Always closely engaged with consumers, producers, society, and the world, department stores were in a perpetual process of change and adaptation."³³

³⁰ Kane, Kathy Mast and Nathalie Wright. *North Side Historic District National Register of Historic Places Nominations [Draft]*, 2009, p.8-3.

³¹ *Springfield, Ohio* (Springfield, Ohio: The Commercial Club, 1916), p.17.

³² Wright, *Springfield Metallic Casket Company*, p.8-25.

³³ Whitaker, Jan. *Service and Style*, p.2.

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Commonly, department stores evolved from small dry goods businesses, and they simply began with merchants continually expanding their lines of merchandise. At the time, customers patronized multiple stores to acquire specific items. Competition was stiff among these small businesses, and in the pre-Civil War years, expanding beyond one's merchandise realm was often negatively perceived as being aggressive. The war itself contributed to department store development.

Before the Civil War, clothing was either tailor made for wealthier people or homemade in lower economic households. However, the Civil War created an urgent need for massive numbers of military uniforms, which could not be met under that system. As the manufacturing sector responded to the uniform crisis by establishing factories to quickly produce them, utilizing the government's new standardized measurements for men, a precedent was set for men's ready-to-wear clothing and entire garment industries sprang up. "After the war, the expertise gained through the mass production of military uniforms was applied to the manufacture of ready-to-wear 'gent's furnishings.' ...Men began to favor looser-fitting garments that did not require precise tailoring."³⁴ As such, tailors, along with manufacturers, fabricated pre-made men's garments that they sold to dry goods stores for retail sales. Because some women's clothing items (for example, a corset) might be present in a mercantile store, "a common belief among retailers was that male customers were reluctant to patronize a store that offered women's clothing."³⁵ Thus, the need for separate clothing departments began to arise.

During the economically competitive commercial market of the 1890s, merchants expanded their wares. "By the late nineteenth century, big dry goods retailers were already more than halfway to becoming department stores."³⁶ As these burgeoning department stores developed, they outgrew their confines. "Many companies that had grown higgledy-piggledy built their first really major stores in the period from 1900 to World War I."³⁷ The Edward Wren Co. certainly reflects this trend, relocating to the Johnson Building, which was constructed specifically for it, in 1903 (no longer extant). The Wren Store was in good company, as Macy's constructed its first major store in 1902 and Marshall Field constructed its in 1902-07, and it was four years ahead of regionally prominent Lazarus, in Columbus.

The real explosion in department store development was the introduction of women's ready-to-wear clothing, coming nearly five decades after men's. "Women's ready-to-wear apparel was the engine that would transform the old-fashioned dry goods emporium into the modern department store and propel it through much of its long life...Not until around 1915 did most stores contain departments with a full range of ready-to-wear clothing for women...This marked the end of the department store's days as an inflated dry goods store."³⁸ Suddenly, department

³⁴ Meyers, David & Beverly and Elise Meyers Walker. *Look to Lazarus - The Big Store* (Charleston, S.C.: The History Press, 2011), p.21-22. Aside from mass-produced items, such as hoop skirts, cloaks and corsets, women's clothing did not translate into the ready-to-wear phenomenon for several more decades.

³⁵ Meyers, *Look to Lazarus - The Big Store*, p.34.

³⁶ Whitaker, *Service and Style*, p.189.

³⁷ Whitaker, *Service and Style*, p.16.

³⁸ Whitaker, *Service and Style*, p.53.

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stores were concerned with fashion and popular trends. A focus on women's clothing also meant new and larger departments, such as jewelry, handbags, shoes, hats, and neckwear, to accompany the changing fashions now showcased in local department stores. This profusion of new, or expanded, stylish departments reached a zenith during the 1920s.

The Great Depression of the 1930s impacted department stores, naturally, and many across the country did not survive. The ones that did saw significant losses in retail sales. The survivors did so by cutting unprofitable product lines and/or employees. It was also during this decade that department stores honed their reputation as a civic institution or leader. With the coming of World War II, the American economy improved, translating into more financial stability for department stores. After the war, national chain stores became more ubiquitous, providing stronger competition for locally-owned stores. Also post-war, suburban shopping malls posed a new type of competition to the traditional department store, pulling customers away from the downtown location. In response, many companies maintained their downtown flagship store, while opening suburban branches. Independent, locally-owned department stores have largely disappeared from the American commercial landscape. Through closures or corporate mergers, they began to vanish in the late 20th century.

Historic Significance

The Edward Wren Co. building exemplifies the flourishing years of this former department store, when it grew dramatically from a store with basic merchandise to a progressive urban store with multiple specialty departments. It meets Criterion A as a significant early 20th century commercial property, representing an important local business and the history of department stores. In January 1927, the *Springfield Daily News* reported on the store's upcoming 50th anniversary, noting that "The Edward Wren Co. has recorded decided progress and expansion until today it stands forth comparable to any similar retail establishment in the country... nearly 50 years ago, department stores such as the Edward Wren Co. of today were unknown. Nevertheless the small store of that day kept pace with the march of progress and slowly but steadily came the development into the remarkable institution which today stands at High and Limestone streets, as a monument to good faith and fair policies."³⁹

The Edward Wren Co. reflects the broad patterns of department store growth. The two most prominent illustrations of this are the company's continuous addition and reorganization of departments and the utilization of multiple buildings. As Wren's headed into its golden anniversary, the *Springfield Daily News* described the store's offerings. "Department after department has been added in recent years by this store until practical every personal and home need is available to the public with the walls of the buildings which go to make up the home of The Edward Wren Co. of today. From home furnishings to notions, nothing has been overlooked, and there are departments devoted to individual members of the family as well as to the family as a whole."⁴⁰

³⁹ "Edward Wren Company Opens Golden Jubilee Year," *The Springfield Daily News*, January 1, 1927, p.5.

⁴⁰ "Edward Wren Company Opens Golden Jubilee Year," p.5.

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The Edward Wren Co. continued to increase its retail offerings, creating new departments in its assemblage of buildings. In March 1928, the *Springfield Daily News* profiled a new department at the Wren Store. The article had an accompanying photo, and the caption read, "The Edward Wren Co. now occupies the entire building shown in this photo having established a new hosiery and shoe department in the building formerly occupied by The Farmers National Bank."⁴¹

In 1936, the company opened Wren's Home Appliances, which specialized in General Electric refrigerators, ranges, dishwashers, ironers and washers, in the 116 S. Limestone annex (no longer extant). This relocation of the appliance department allowed for the 5th floor of the store to be completely dedicated to the furniture department. The Wren Company's furniture department proved to be very successful, resulting in the management again leasing space in the Johnson Building. Remodeling the 4th and 5th floors of that building in 1936-37, Elroy Denton, Wren Co. president, boasted that "when finished, the new section will be given over to one of the most modern furniture departments in America."⁴² The appliance store was then brought back underneath the roof of the main store.

The Edward Wren Co. store very much followed the typical growth pattern of department store buildings. As detailed in the Property Evolution discussion in the Narrative Description, Wren's expanded from its 1903 building by creating an annex in a nearby building. The company then acquired a neighboring vacant department store, located on a busy corner, and then acquired the bank building that separated the two store buildings. See Historic Images: Figure 6. Wren's 1920s' expansion into neighboring buildings coincided with the surge of women's ready-to-wear clothing departments. This type of mishmash physical expansion was the norm for department stores in the early 20th century.

"To occupy a single building with architectural identity was a goal that most department stores found hard to attain or to enjoy for long. An aggressive store that started off as a single unit would soon find that its business success demanded expansion. Usually this meant extending horizontally by taking over the building next door, then another, and another... Most stores, however, grew in all directions, going up and out and sometimes downward by adding a second basement. The modular mode of growth in the early twentieth century often left stores with scattered, noncontiguous buildings connected by bridges and tunnels, as well as unfortunate features such as mismatched fronts, floors at different levels, and unremovable bearing walls between once separate buildings."⁴³ These types of arrangements were seen across the country, including big name stores like Macy's. In central Ohio, Columbus' well-known Lazarus Department Store had acquired seven adjacent buildings by 1900, all combined with interior wall openings.

Sometimes, stores started all over with another new building, once its assortment of buildings was too unwieldy. Other times, a remodeling campaign was undertaken to unify its puzzle-piece

⁴¹ "Wren Co. To Open New Unit," *The Springfield Daily News*, March 11, 1928.

⁴² "Wren Co. Leases Additional Space To Expand Store"

⁴³ Whitaker, *Service and Style*, p.87.

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collection. "As an alternative to erecting a new building, some stores that had grown horizontally by annexing adjacent buildings covered them with facades that gave an initial impression of a unitary modern building. This was soon dispelled when the visitor entered and noticed odd floor plans and contorted aisles."⁴⁴ The Edward Wren Company's 1931 remodel is an example of such modernization and unification schemes. However, the company was careful to also unify the interior spaces, including the removal of several walls and partitions, as well as evening out the floor levels.

As evidenced by the Wren Company's modernization project in 1931 and then the relocation to a larger building in 1939, Springfield and the Edward Wren Co. weathered the Great Depression well. "Denton said that the company's increase in sales during 1936 had kept well ahead of the average gains in business throughout Ohio and that he expected still further increases."⁴⁵ Of the Denton Inc.'s five stores in the late 1930s, the Wren Co. was considered the 'Mother Store.'⁴⁶ Upon its relocation to another building in 1939, the Edward Wren Co. was Springfield's largest retail store.⁴⁷ It even surpassed the national chain competitors for dominance on its home turf.

At the formal opening of the new location, in front of an audience of distinguished guests that included an Ohio Supreme Court judge, Wren Co. president, Elroy Denton praised the achievements of the Wrens and the memory of Edward Wren. Denton declared that "Edward Wren, founder of the business, was a great merchant of his time. Mr. Wren evidently heard the admonition of Horace Greeley, for he came west and located in Springfield. His business was small in the beginning, but he grew with Springfield and his business prospered."⁴⁸ Edward Wren had elevated his business from a typical 19th century small dry goods store to Springfield's first full-fledged department store. Similarly, Elroy C. Denton raised the profile of the already venerable store by moving it to a prominent corner location and continually modernizing it.

The nominated Edward Wren Co. building stands as a reminder of the Wren Company's retail significance in the early 20th century and the era when locally owned department stores ruled regional merchandising commerce. "The five and dime stores, movie theatres, retail stores, and banks all combined in the 1920s and beyond to give Springfield a lively and viable downtown. Of all the retail, the oldest, largest, and most prestigious was the locally owned Wren's Department Store, which in the 1920s was located on E. High Street, south of Limestone, and across from the Bookwalter Hotel."⁴⁹

The nominated Edward Wren Co. building is also a significant illustration of downtown Springfield commercial buildings from the era. Upon the building's completion, the newspaper described it as "One of the important improvements in the central district of the city is the five-

⁴⁴ Whitaker, *Service and Style*, p.88.

⁴⁵ "Wren Co. Leases Additional Space To Expand Store."

⁴⁶ "Junior Executives Named For Edward Wren Store," *Springfield News Sun*, September 28, 1938.

⁴⁷ "Large Department Store Will Change Location in Autumn," *Springfield News Sun*, date unknown, 1939.

⁴⁸ "Views Of New Edward Wren," *Springfield News Sun*, November 12, 1939.

⁴⁹ Dunham, Tom. *Springfield, Ohio: A Summary of Two Centuries* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2012), p.123-24.

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story business building at High and Limestone streets...⁵⁰ Designed in the Commercial style, a very suitable style for department stores with its large Chicago windows, the Edward Wren Co. Department Store building expresses retail construction practices of the 1920s. The Edward Wren Co. Building is the last extant early 20th century department store building in Springfield.

⁵⁰ "Five Store Business Block in Central District Will Be Completed in March," *The Springfield Daily News*, February 27, 1921.

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Archives

Clark County Public Library
201 S. Fountain Ave., Springfield, Ohio 45506
Subject Files: The Edward Wren Co.

Websites

Kitchen, Kristina. <http://www.springfieldohiohistory.net/>, 2009. Accessed May 13, 2016.

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 0.20

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

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Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 17 | Easting: 259941 | Northing: 4422770 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated boundary includes all of Parcel #3400700034111003, as defined by the Clark County Auditor. See Attachment A – Maps.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated boundary includes the property historically associated with the Edward Wren Co. Building, during the Period of Significance, 1924-1939. In 1939, the Wren Co. Store was relocated to the old Bushnell Building, which was National Register listed in 1979, as part of a grouping of three commercial buildings, in the Main Street Buildings National Register Nomination (Bushnell Building Amendment, 2000). The Bushnell Building was listed under Criterion C for architecture and not for its association with the Wren Department Store.

11. Form Prepared By

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date: August 15, 2016

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Photographs

Photographer: Nathalie Wright

Date Photographed: November 23, 2015 and June 17, 2016.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1. E. High Street façade, looking south
2. E. High Street façade, storefronts, looking east
3. E. High Street façade, storefronts, looking west
4. S. Limestone Street elevation, looking west
5. S. Limestone Street elevation, storefronts, looking north
6. S. Limestone Street and south elevations, looking northwest
7. E. High Street façade and west elevation, looking southeast
8. E. High Street façade, window and decorative detail, looking south
9. Interior, 31 E. High, corridor, looking south
10. Interior, 31 E. High, stairs, looking north
11. Interior, 33 E. High, looking north
12. Interior, 37 E. High, looking north
13. Interior, 37 E. High, looking north
14. Interior, 37 E. High, looking northeast
15. Interior, 2nd floor, looking southeast
16. Interior, 2nd floor, looking southwest
17. Interior, 3rd floor, looking east
18. Interior, 3rd floor, looking north
19. Interior, 4th floor, looking southwest
20. Interior, 4th floor, column detail, looking southwest
21. Interior, 4th floor, window bays, looking northeast
22. Interior, 5th floor, looking south
23. Interior, 5th floor, looking east

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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County, State

Attachment A – Maps

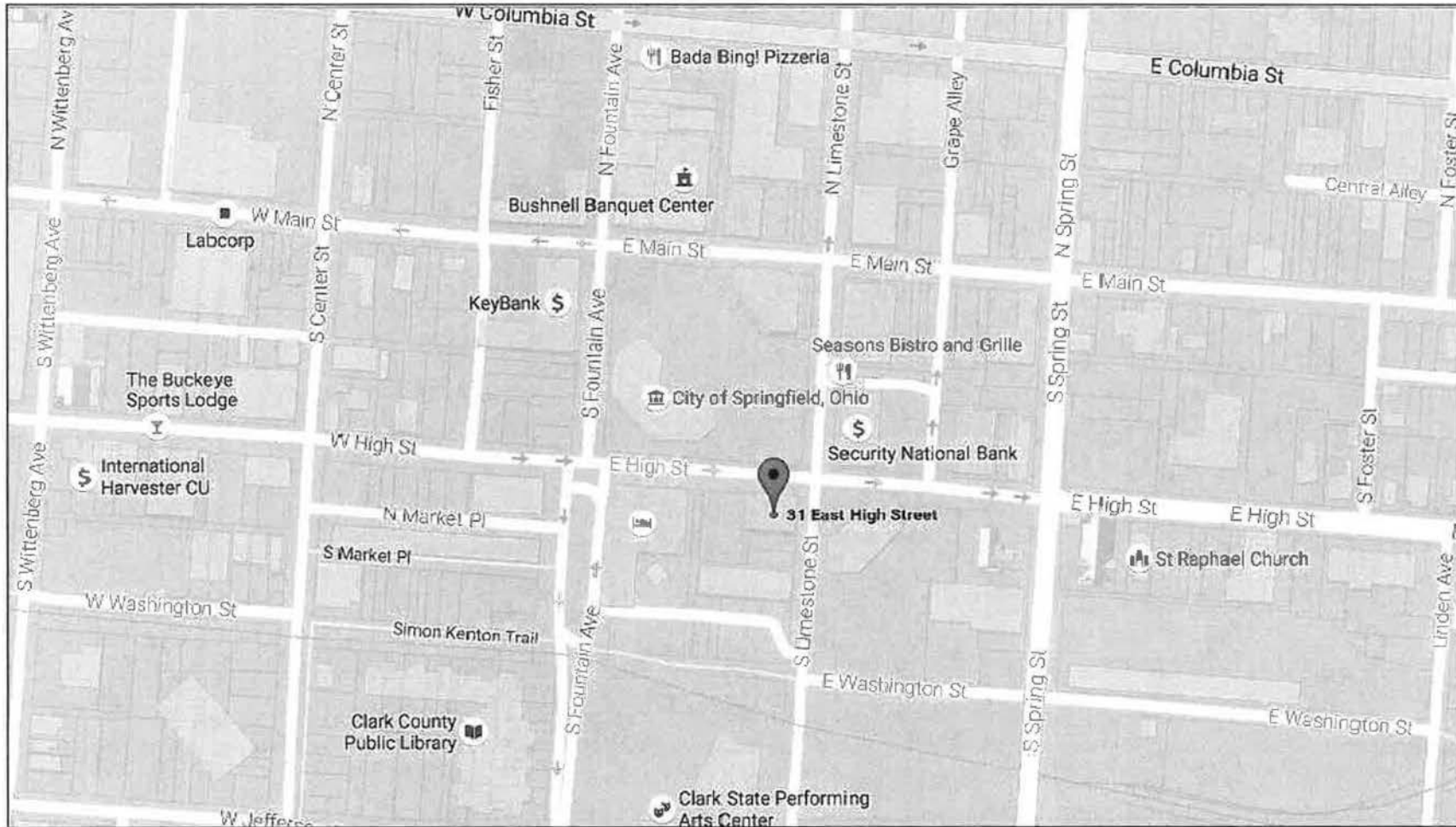


Parcel Map - 31-37 E. High Street, Springfield, Ohio. From: Clark County Auditor

Edward Wren Co. Building
Name of Property

Clark, Ohio
County, State

Attachment A – Maps

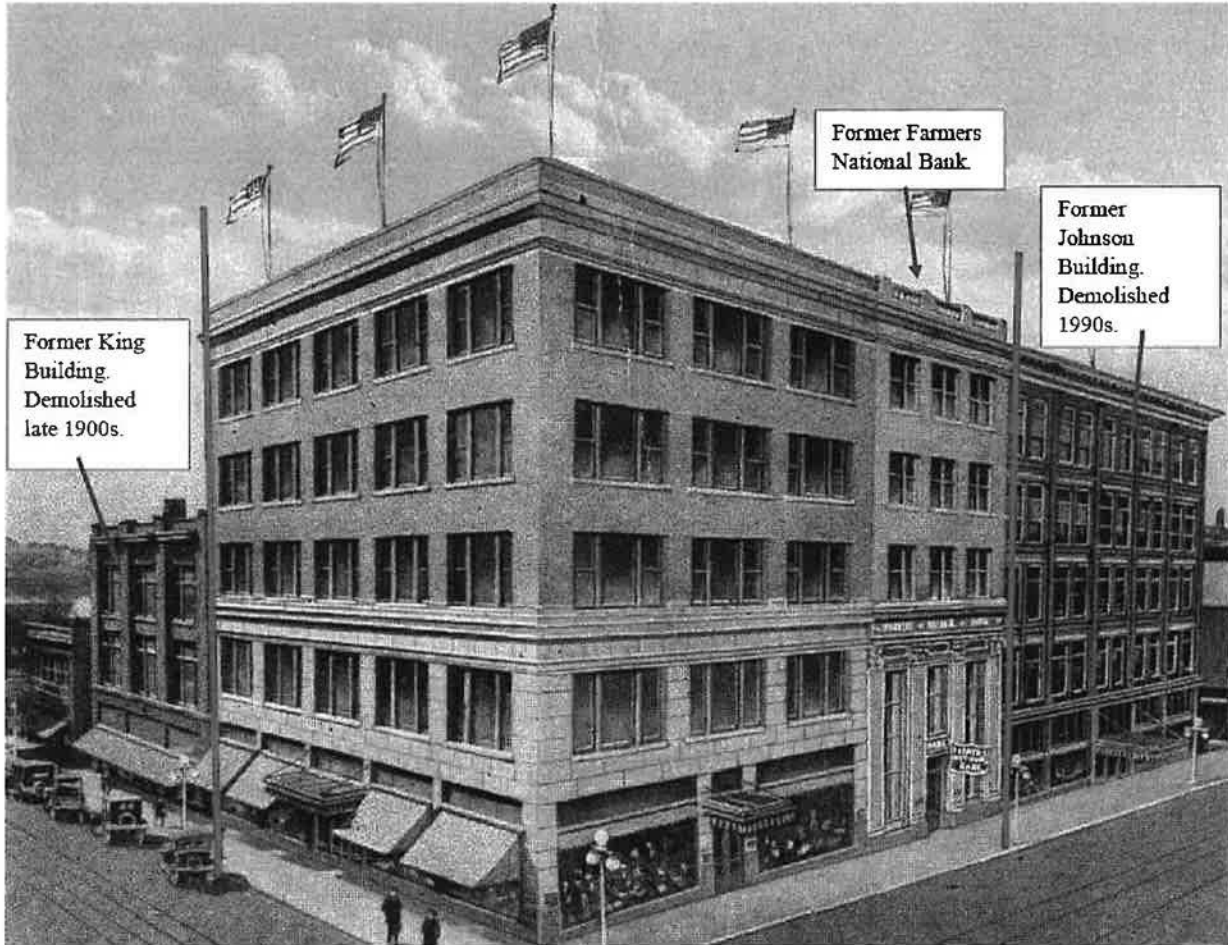


Locational Map - 31-37 E. High Street, Springfield, Ohio. From: Google Maps

Edward Wren Co. Building
Name of Property

Clark, Ohio
County, State

Attachment B – Historic Images



1. Although the Wren Co. Store once occupied all four of the buildings shown above, only the building between the red lines is extant and being considered for NR nomination.



2006. Courtesy Kevin Rose

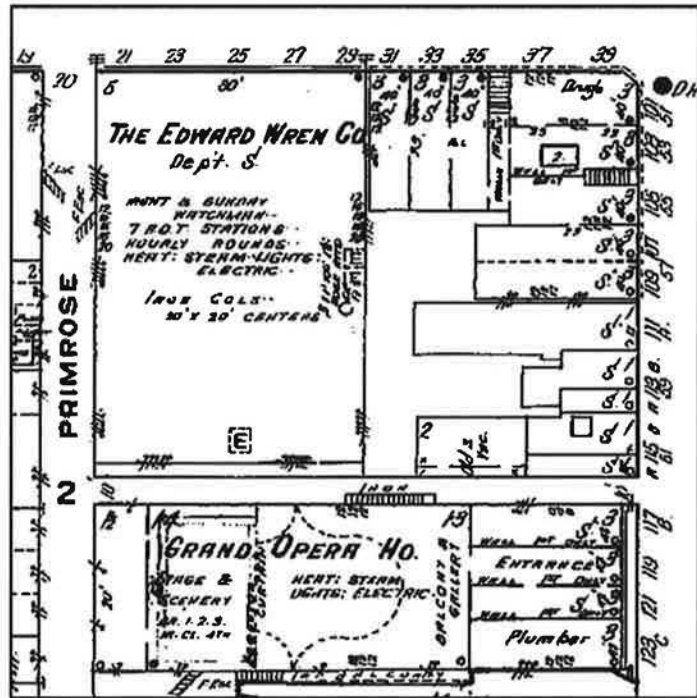
Edward Wren Co. Building
Name of Property

Clark, Ohio
County, State

Attachment B – Historic Images



2. Johnson Building, 1905, and the 3-story Bookwalter Block, seen in the far left of the photo, from *Springfield: The Great Manufacturing City*.



3. 1910 Sanborn

Edward Wren Co. Building
Name of Property

Clark, Ohio
County, State

Attachment B – Historic Images



4. 1921 Image. From "Five Store Business Block in Central District Will Be Completed in March," *The Springfield Daily News*, February 27, 1921. The three-story King Building can be seen to the far left.

Edward Wren Co. Building
Name of Property

Clark, Ohio
County, State

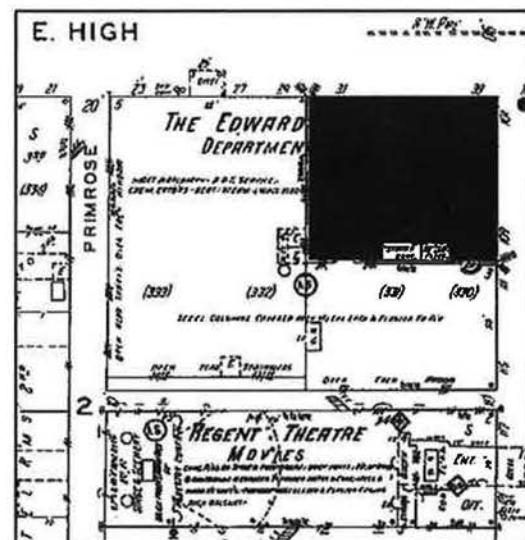
Attachment B – Historic Images



5. 1920s streetscape view. On the left is the 1921 corner building, the Farmers National Bank in the middle, distinguished by its double-height storefront, and the 1903 Johnson Building. From Kitchen, <http://www.springfieldohiohistory.net/>.



6. The entire Edward Wren Co. collection of buildings after acquisition of the Farmers National Bank, 1926. From Kitchen, <http://www.springfieldohiohistory.net/>.

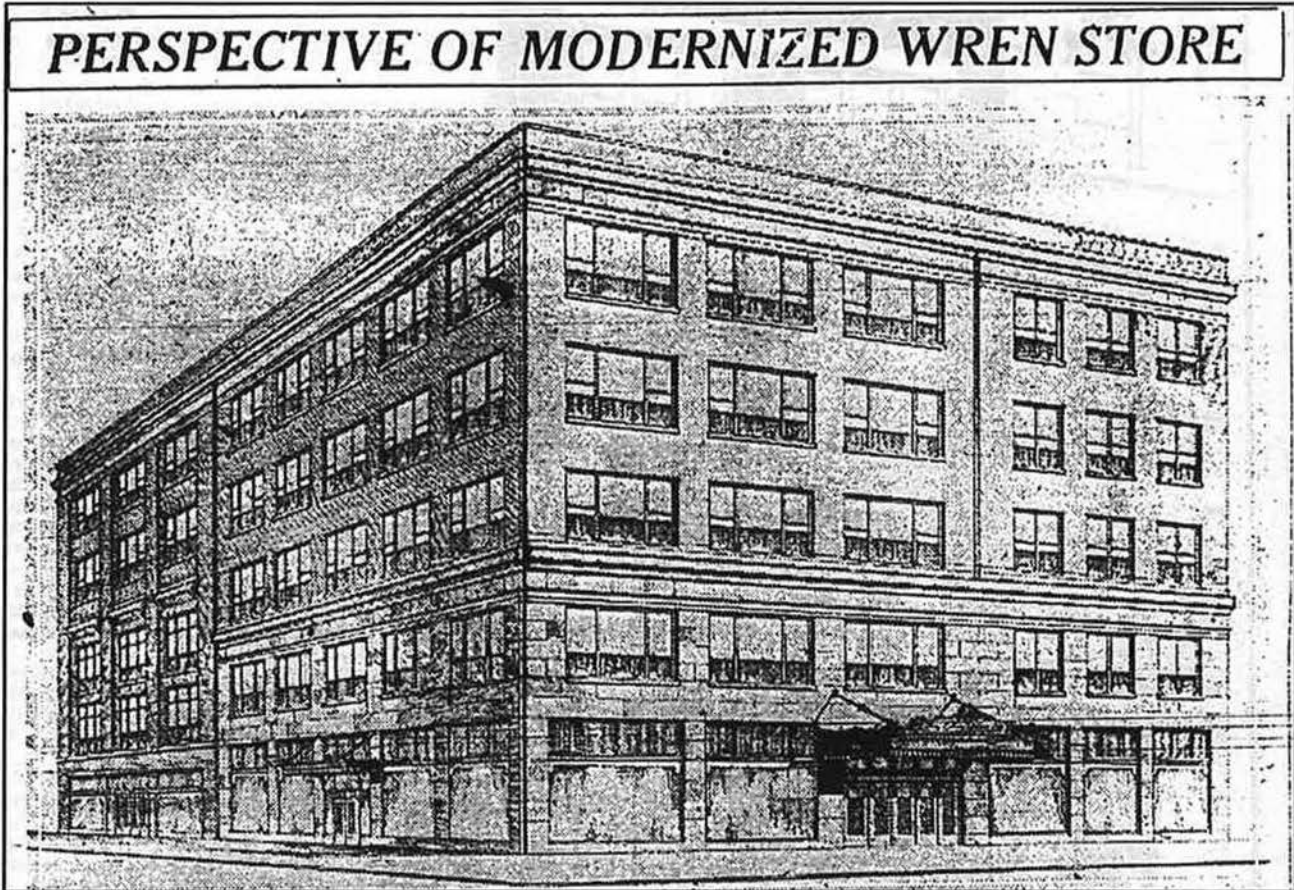


7. 1928 Sanborn map, showing that the Wren Store occupied the entire northeast quadrant of the city block bounded by High, Limestone, Washington, and Fountain streets.

Edward Wren Co. Building
Name of Property

Clark, Ohio
County, State

Attachment B – Historic Images



8. From "...\$100,000 Modernization," *Springfield Daily News*, April 30, 1931

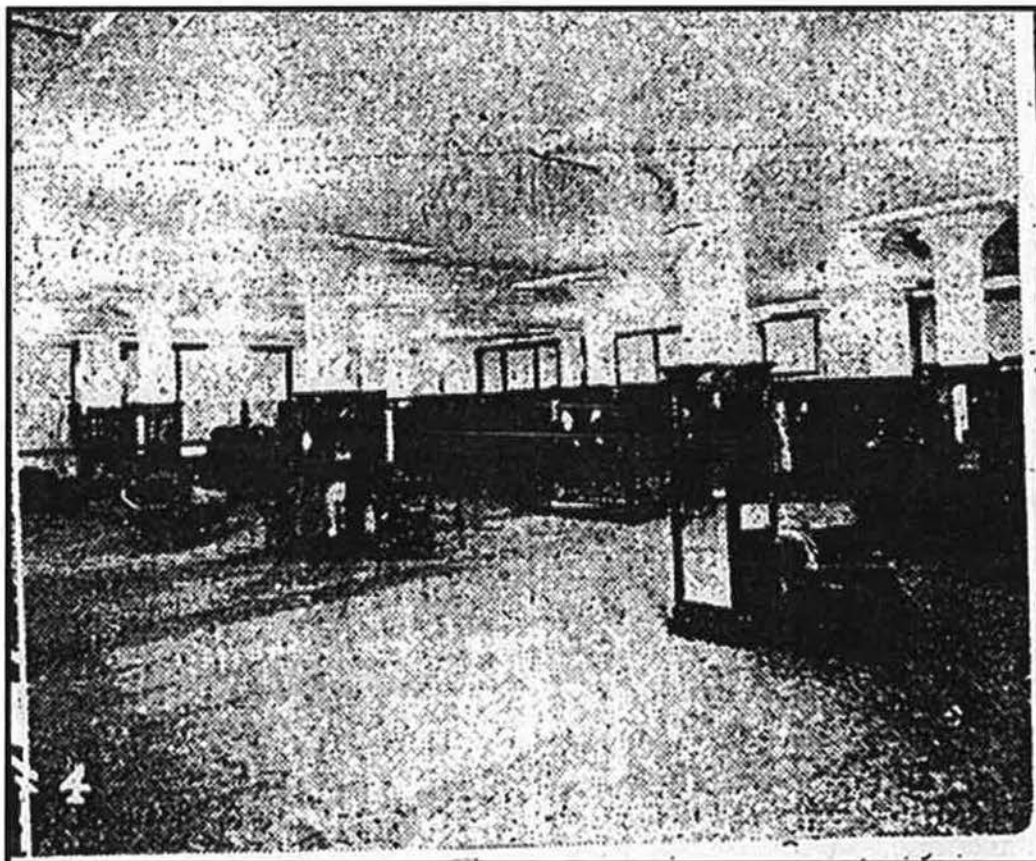


9. Wren Co. Department Store, 1937, from *Springfield*, Harry C. Laybourne, p.24.

Edward Wren Co. Building
Name of Property

Clark, Ohio
County, State

Attachment B – Historic Images



10. Interior view, showing typical open space and exposed columns as currently seen on the upper floors of the building. "Wren Store Was Opened in 1877," *Springfield Daily News*, November 3, 1931.



11. Wren Co. Department Store, late 1930s, from *Springfield*, Harry C. Laybourne, p.35.

Edward Wren Co. Building
Name of Property

Clark, Ohio
County, State

Attachment B – Historic Images

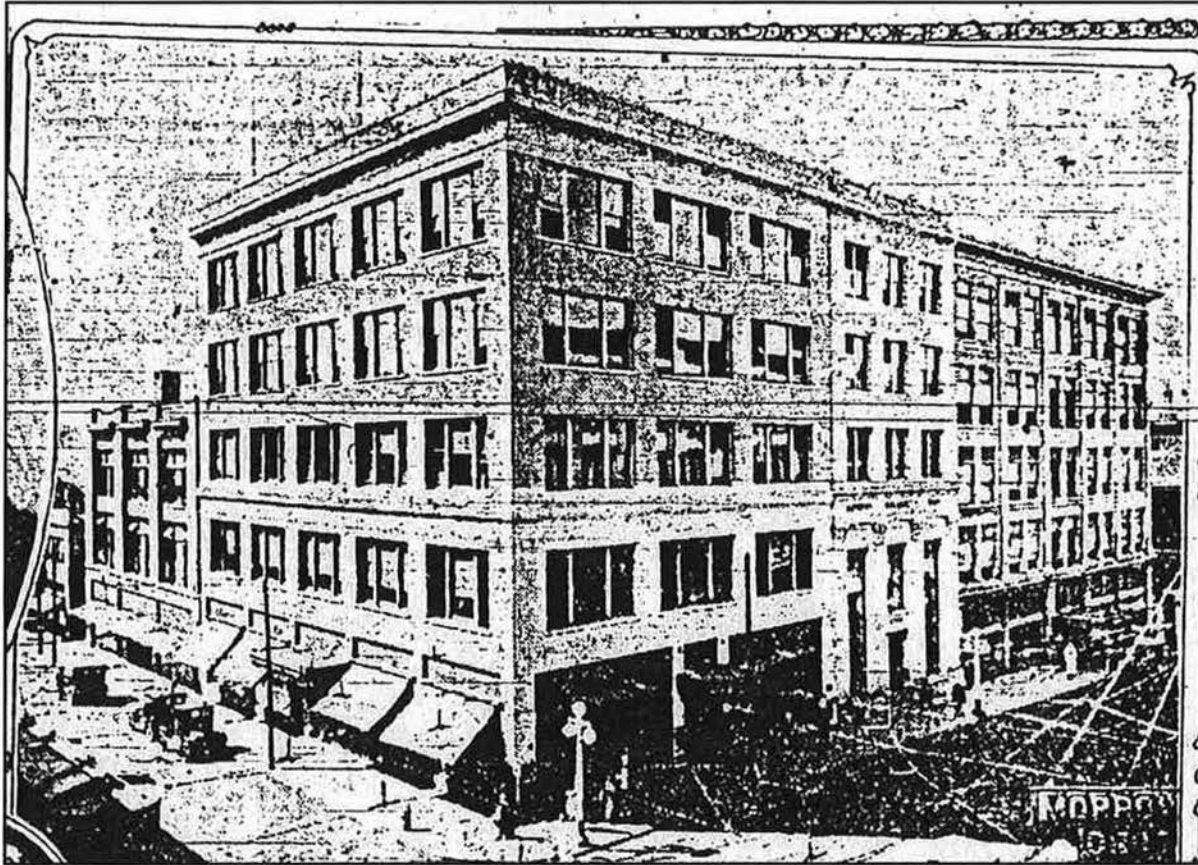


12. Former Wren Co. Building on right, 1949. From *The Springfielder*, Springfield Chamber of Commerce.

Edward Wren Co. Building
Name of Property

Clark, Ohio
County, State

Attachment B – Historic Images



13. "Edward Wren Company Opens Golden Jubilee Year," *The Springfield Daily News*, January 1, 1927.



14. As the Edward Wren Co. was expanding into the nominated building, Wren's was advertised as Springfield's Greatest Store and as a "good store in a good city." From *Springfield, Ohio: In the Heart of the Mad River Valley*, Springfield (Ohio): Chamber of Commerce, 1924.

EDWARD WIKEN CO.
CLARK CO., OH

E. HIGH STREET

98'-0"

S. LIMESTONE STREET

DRAWING NOTES

- 1 EXIST FIRE ESCAPE
- 2 FLOOR OPENING
- 3 EXIST ELECTRIC LOAD CENTER

PARTITION LEGEND

- EXISTING CONSTRUCTION TO REMAIN
- EXISTING DEMISING PARTITION

AREA SUMMARY

7,733 SQ FT NET SQ. FT.

Gossman
group design & planning

8549 Montgomery Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45236
P. 513 . 218 . 2990

ISSUES AND REVISIONS

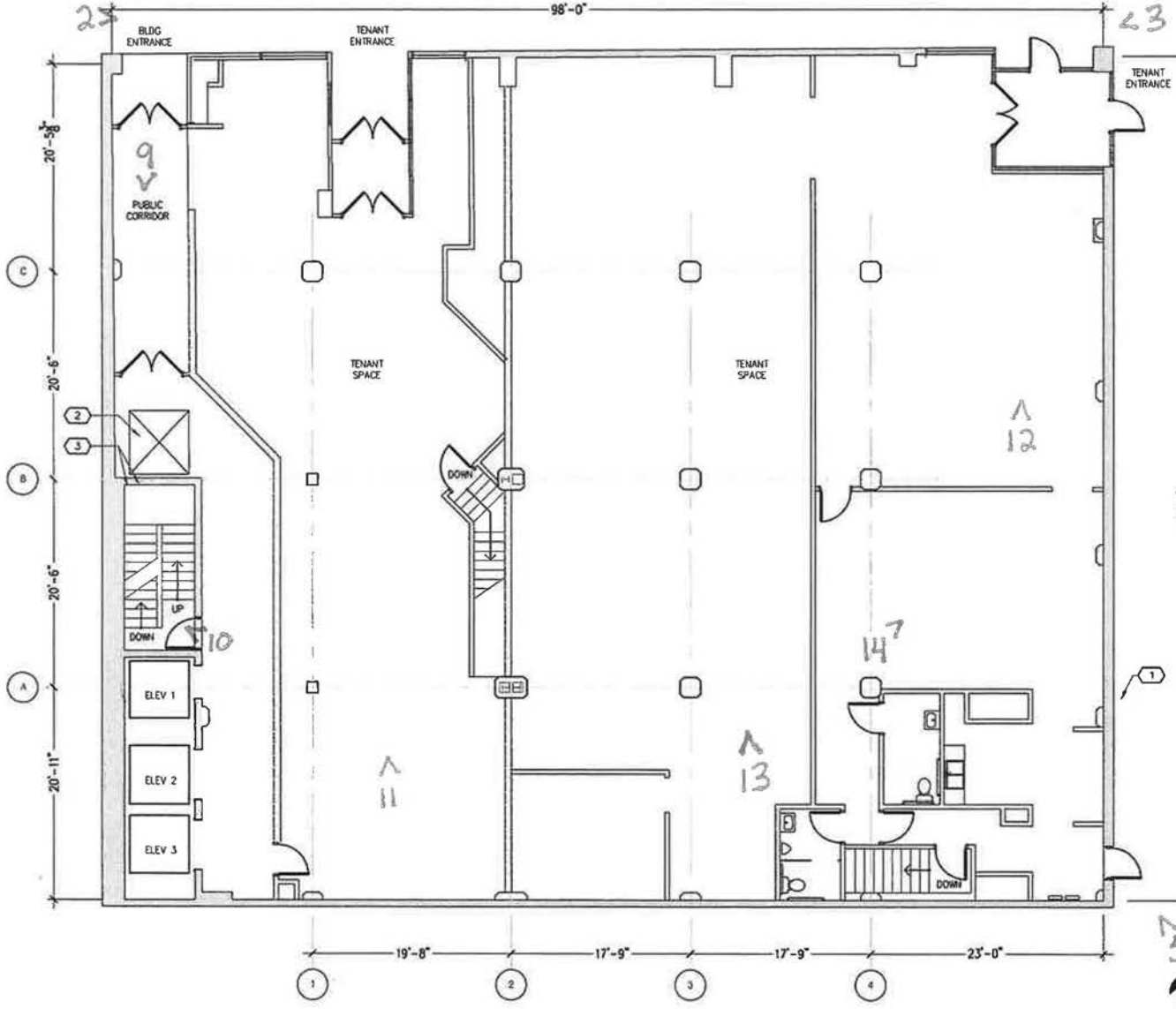
McADAMS BUILDING
INTERIOR ALTERATIONS
SPRINGFIELD OHIO

1ST FLOOR PLAN

A101

1st FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 3/32"=1'-0"



EDWARD WREN CO.
CLARK CO., OH

Gossman
group design & planning

8549 Montgomery Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45236
P. 513 . 218 . 2990

ISSUES AND REVISIONS

McADAMS BUILDING
INTERIOR ALTERATIONS
SPRINGFIELD OHIO

2ND FLOOR PLAN

A102

DRAWING NOTES

- ① EXIST FIRE ESCAPE
- ② FLOOR OPENING
- ③ EXIST ELECTRIC LOAD CENTER

PARTITION LEGEND

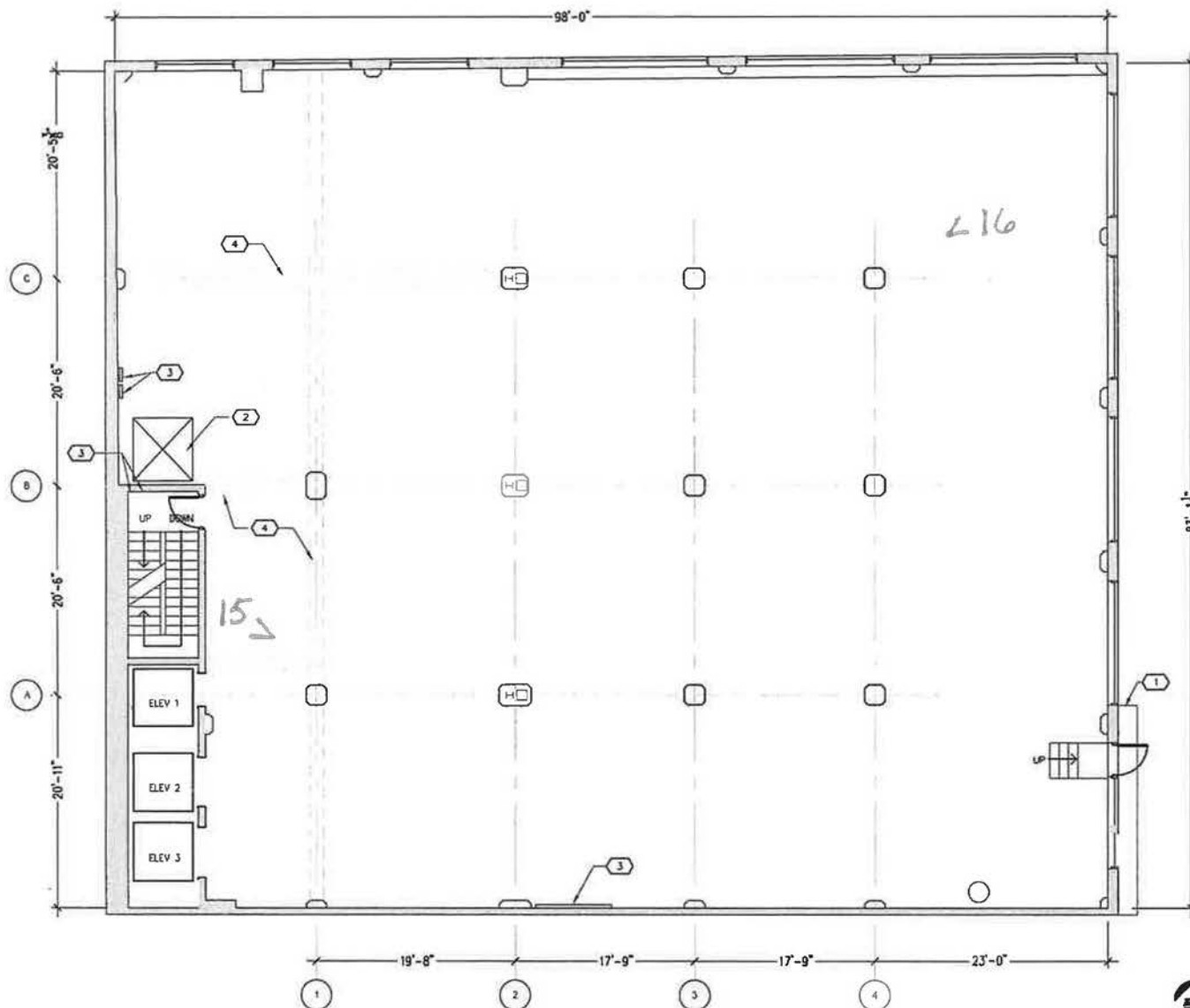
-  EXISTING CONSTRUCTION TO REMAIN
-  EXISTING DEMISING PARTITION

AREA SUMMARY

7,733 SQ FT NET SQ. FT.



2nd FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 3/32"=1'-0"



EDWARD WREN CO.
CLARK CO., OH

Gossman
group design & planning

8549 Montgomery Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45236
P. 513 . 218 . 2990

ISSUES AND REVISIONS

McADAMS BUILDING
INTERIOR ALTERATIONS
SPRINGFIELD OHIO

3RD FLOOR PLAN

A103

DRAWING NOTES

- 1 EXIST FIRE ESCAPE
- 2 FLOOR OPENING
- 3 EXIST ELECTRIC LOAD CENTER

PARTITION LEGEND

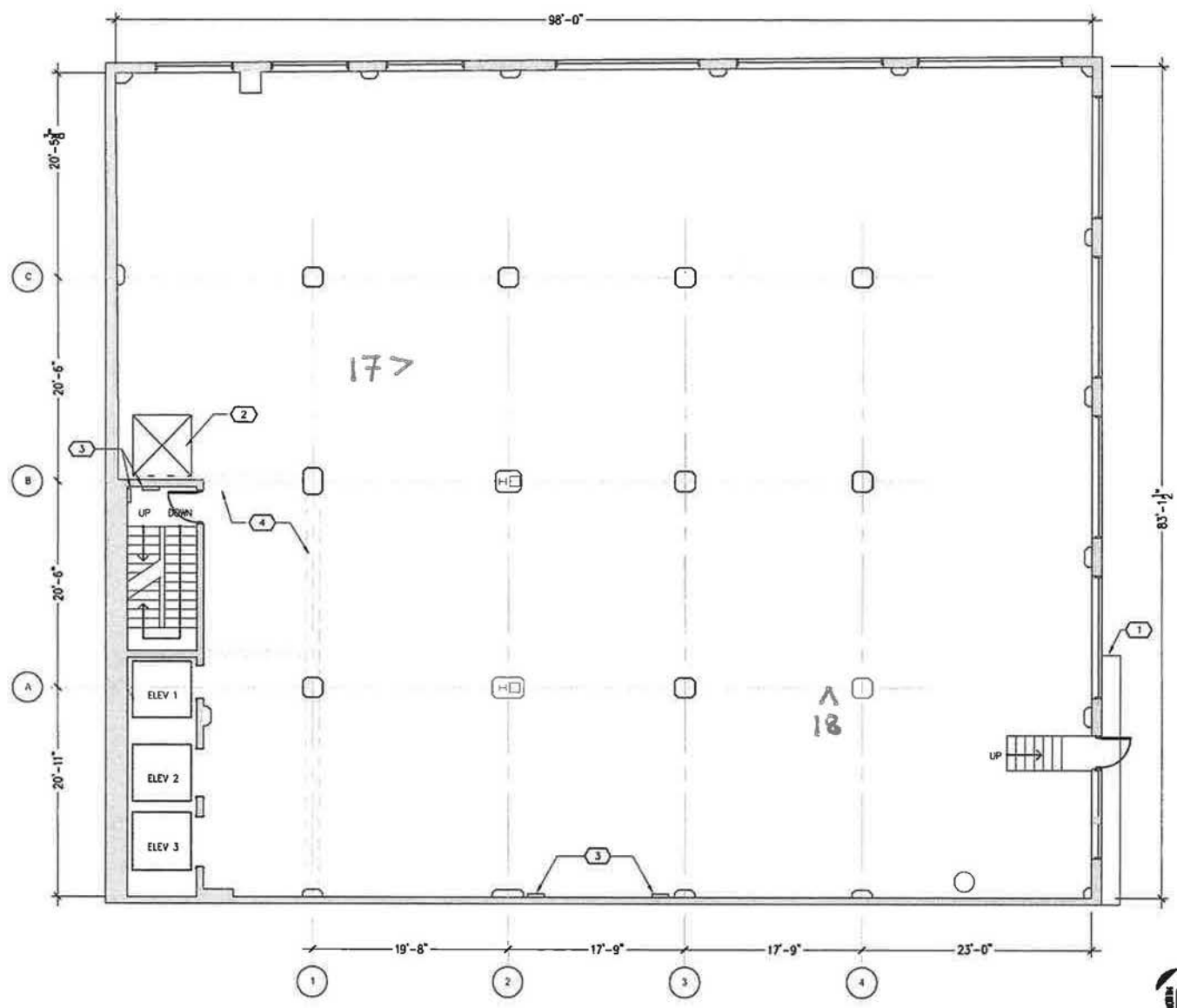
-  EXISTING CONSTRUCTION TO REMAIN
-  EXISTING DEMISING PARTITION

AREA SUMMARY

7,733 SQ FT NET SQ. FT.



3rd FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 3/32"=1'-0"



EDWARD WREN CO.
CLARK CO., OH

Gossman
group design & planning

8549 Montgomery Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45236
P. 513 . 218 . 2990

ISSUES AND REVISIONS

McADAMS BUILDING
INTERIOR ALTERATIONS
SPRINGFIELD OHIO



4TH FLOOR PLAN

A104

DRAWING NOTES

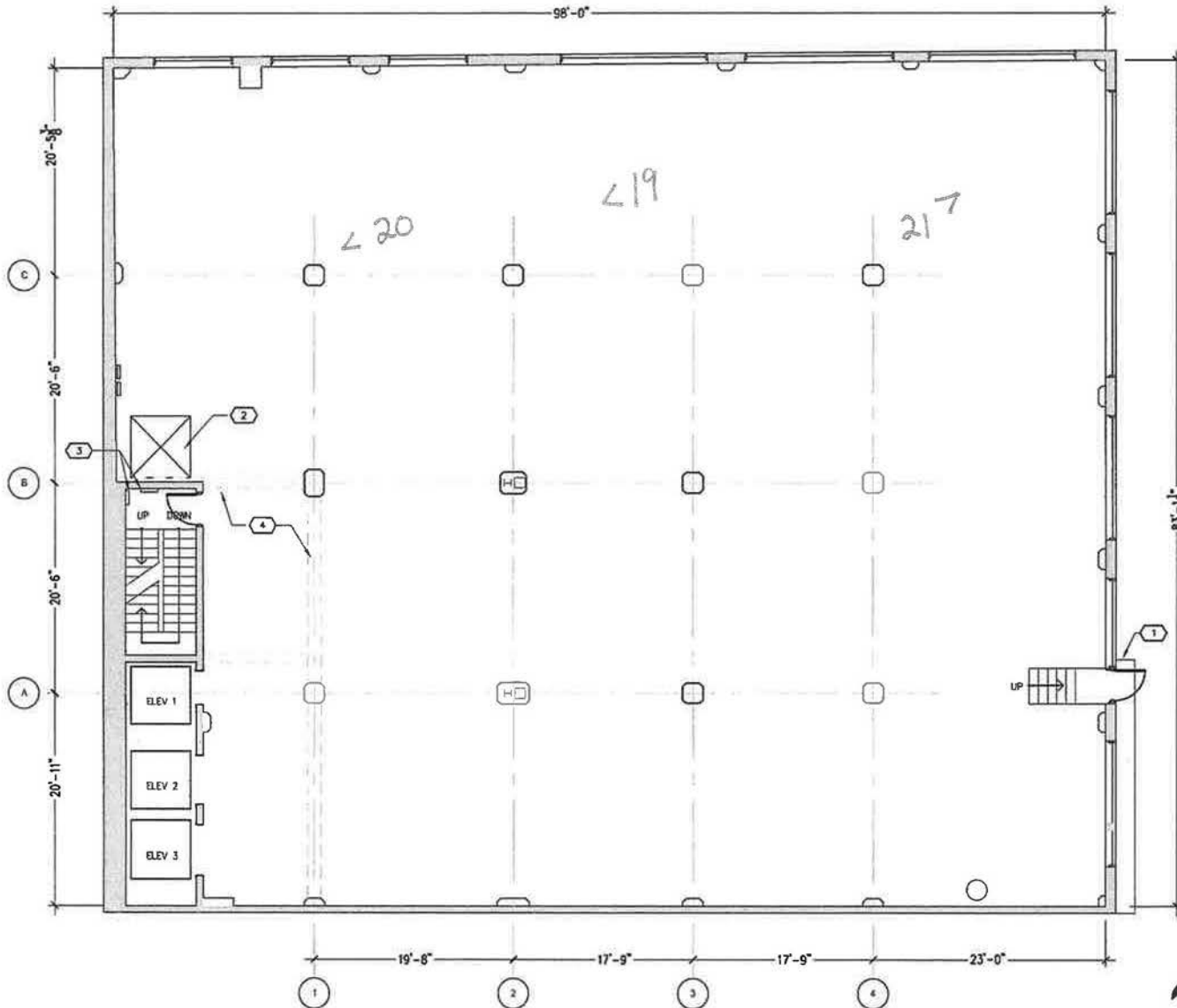
- ① EXIST FIRE ESCAPE
- ② FLOOR OPENING
- ③ EXIST ELECTRIC LOAD CENTER
- ④ STRUCTURAL BEAM ABOVE SHOWN DASHED

PARTITION LEGEND

-  EXISTING CONSTRUCTION TO REMAIN
-  EXISTING DEMISING PARTITION

AREA SUMMARY

7,733 SQ FT NET SQ. FT.



4th FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 3/32"=1'-0"

EDWARD WREN CO.
CLARK CO., OH

Gossman
group
design & planning

8549 Montgomery Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45236
P. 513 . 218 . 2990

ISSUES AND REVISIONS

MCADAMS BUILDING

INTERIOR ALTERATIONS
SPRINGFIELD OHIO



5TH FLOOR PLAN

A105

DRAWING NOTES

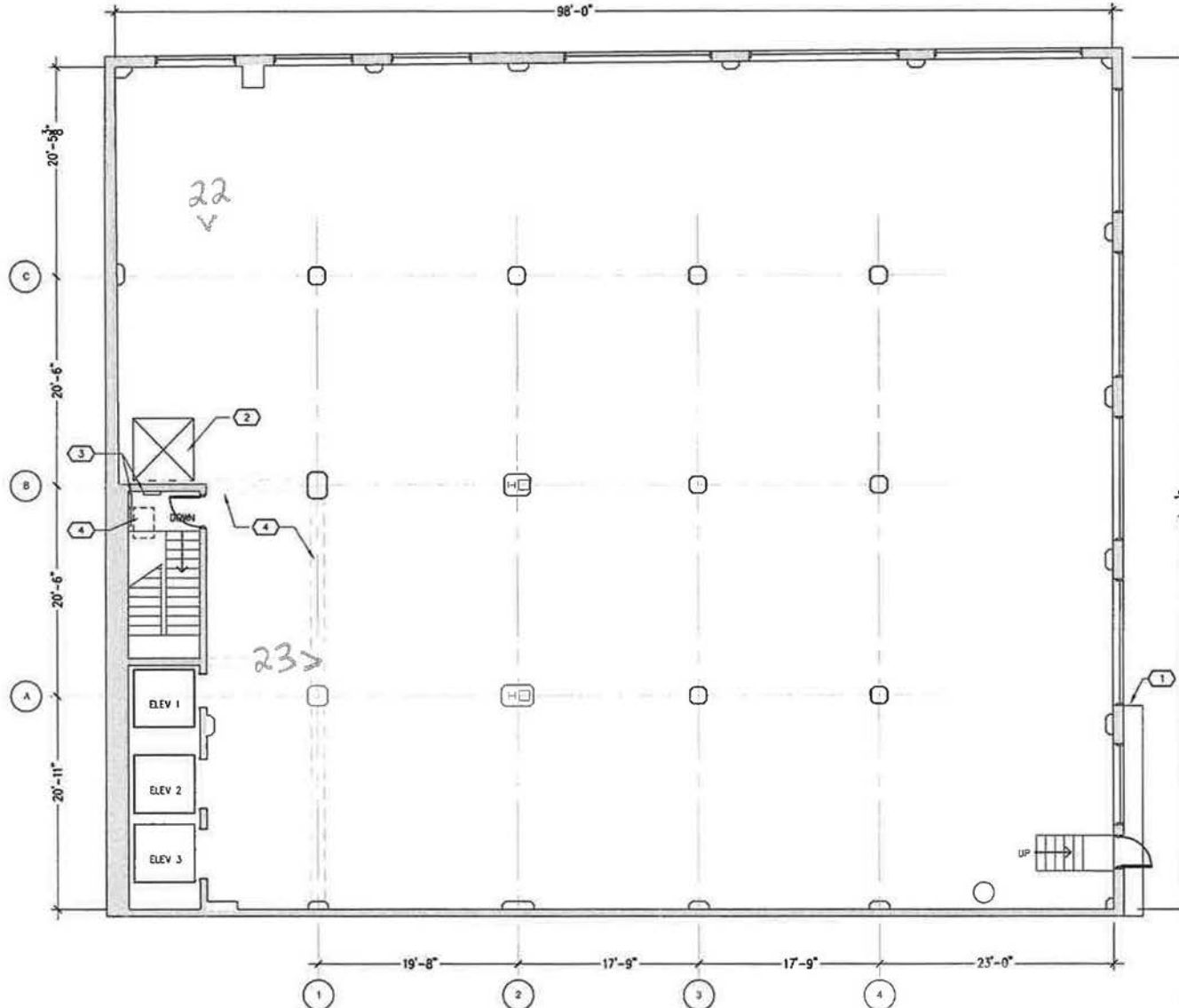
- ① EXIST FIRE ESCAPE
- ② FLOOR OPENING
- ③ EXIST ELECTRIC LOAD CENTER
- ④ ROOF LADDER & ACCESS SCUTTLE

PARTITION LEGEND

-  EXISTING CONSTRUCTION TO REMAIN
-  EXISTING DEMISING PARTITION

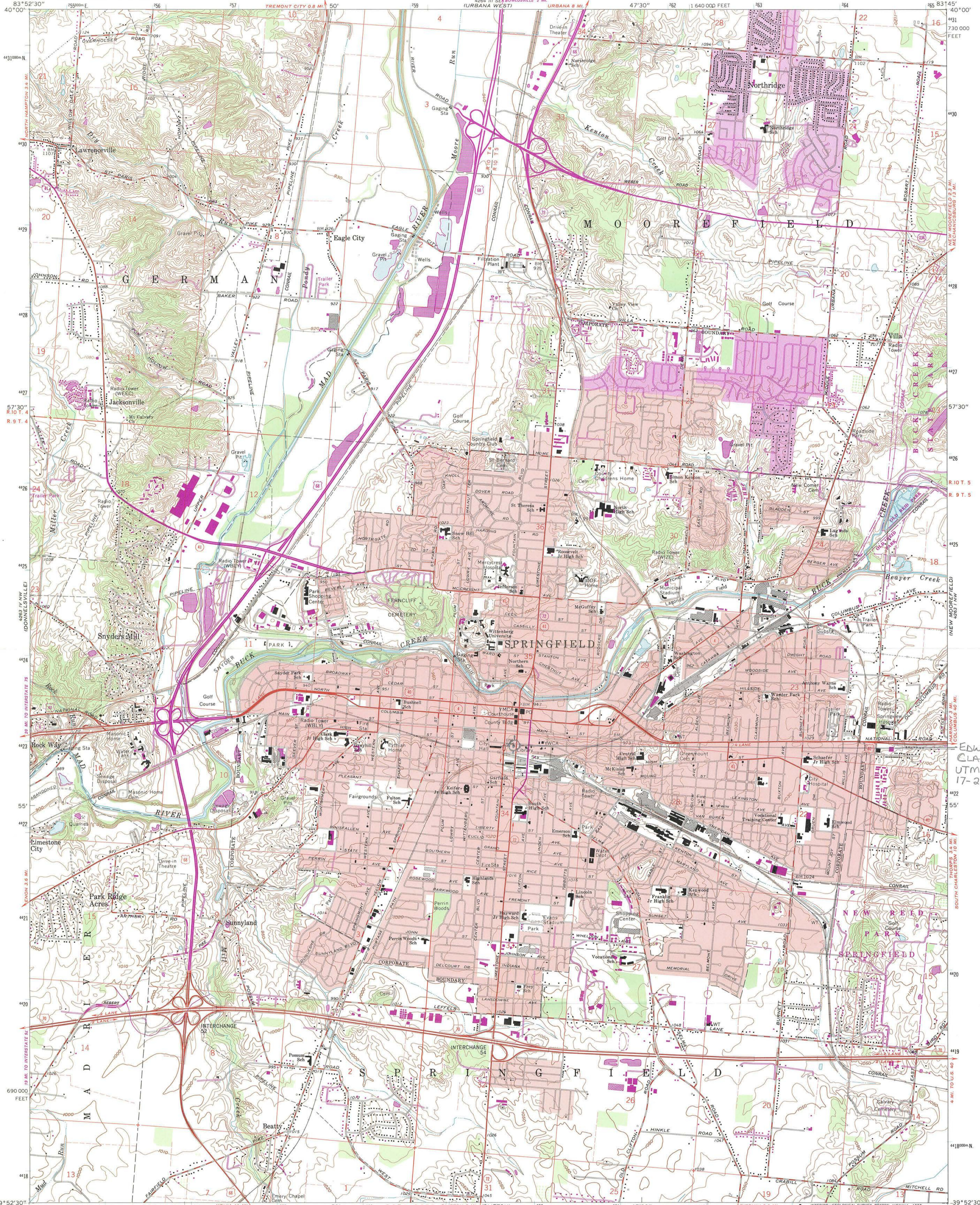
AREA SUMMARY

7,733 SQ FT NET SQ. FT.



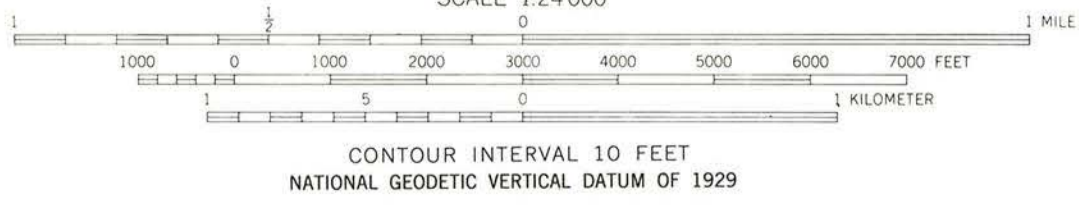
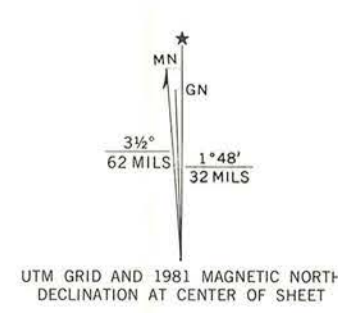
5th FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 3/32"=1'-0"



EDWARD WREN CO.
CLARK CO., OHIO
UTM:
17-259941-4422770

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey in cooperation with Defense Mapping Agency Revised in cooperation with State of Ohio agencies Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1954. Field checked 1955. Revised 1966
Polyconic projection. 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Ohio coordinate system, south zone. 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 17, shown in blue. 1927 North American Datum. To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 2 meters south and 7 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information un-checked
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Entire area lies within the Between the Miamis
Land lines based on the Great Miami River Base
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

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

SPRINGFIELD, OHIO

39083-H7-TF-024
1966
PHOTOREVISED 1981
DMA 4263 IV NE-SERIES V852

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Regions shown in purple and woodland compiled in cooperation with State of Ohio agencies from aerial photographs taken 1979 and other sources. This information not field checked
Map edited 1981
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



31 EAST HIGH

31 EAST HIC

Mc

County Natl Est

St. Paul





37







 *Rose City*
FINE JEWELRY & LOAN, LLC
323-LOAN



































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: _____ Date of Pending List: _____ Date of 16th Day: 12/13/2016 Date of 45th Day: 12/13/2016 Date of Weekly List: 12/22/2016

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 12/13/2016 Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments:

Recommendation/
Criteria:

Reviewer Patrick Andrus Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2218 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NPS TRANSMITTAL CHECK LIST

OHIO HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
800 E. 17th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43211
(614)-298-2000

The following materials are submitted on Oct. 21, 2016
For nomination of the Edward Wren Co. to the National Register of
Historic Places: Building, Clark Co, OH

- Original National Register of Historic Places nomination form
 Paper PDF
- Multiple Property Nomination Cover Document
 Paper PDF
- Multiple Property Nomination form
 Paper PDF
- Photographs
 Prints TIFFs
- CD with electronic images
- Original USGS map(s)
 Paper Digital
- Sketch map(s)/Photograph view map(s)/Floor plan(s)
 Paper PDF
- Piece(s) of correspondence
 Paper PDF
- Other _____

COMMENTS:

- Please provide a substantive review of this nomination
- This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- The enclosed owner objection(s) do _____ do not _____
Constitute a majority of property owners
- Other: _____



October 21, 2016

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief, National Register
and National Historic Landmark Programs
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Fl. (2280)
Washington D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

Enclosed please find four (4) new National Register nominations for Ohio. All appropriate notification procedures have been followed for the new nominations submission.

NEW NOMINATION

Edward Wren Company Building
Fenway Hall
Del Monte Apartments
Eastern Hills Young Men's Christian Association

COUNTY

Clark
Cuyahoga
Franklin
Hamilton

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for the following: Del Monte Apartments, Franklin County, OH.

If you have questions or comments about these documents, please contact the National Register staff in the Ohio Historic Preservation Office at (614) 298-2000.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lox A. Logan, Jr." with a flourish at the end.

Lox A. Logan, Jr.
Executive Director and CEO
State Historic Preservation Officer
Ohio History Connection

Enclosures