

NOV 06 2015

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Nomination 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 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, 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 American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building

other names/site number American Republic Insurance Company National Headquarters Building, American Enterprise Group

2. Location

street & number 601 6th Avenue not for publication _____

city or town Des Moines vicinity _____

state Iowa code IA county Polk code 153 zip code 50309-1605

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide X locally. (____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Steve King

3 NOV 2015

Signature of certifying official

Date

State Historical Society of Iowa

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 commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

Elson H. Beall 12-22-15

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building
Name of Property

Polk County, Iowa
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property
(do not include previously listed resources in count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	objects
<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Business

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Business

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls CONCRETE
GLASS
roof SYNTHETIC
other METAL/steel

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(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 a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1965

Significant Dates

1965

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

Bunshaft, Gordon, FAIA

Arthur H. Neumann & Bros., Inc.

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

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

Name of repository: # _____

American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building
Name of Property

Polk County, Iowa
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acree of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>15</u>	<u>447885</u>	<u>4604450</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jennifer I. James, MAHP

organization Jennifer James Communications, LC date October 7, 2015

street & number 4209 Kingman Boulevard telephone 515/250-7196

city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50311

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps: A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs: Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name American Republic Insurance Company (c/o: Medha Johnson, Assistant Vice President)

street & number 601 Sixth Avenue telephone 515/245-2247

city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50309

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 the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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7. Narrative Description

Summary:

Located in Polk County, Iowa, in the capital city of Des Moines, the American Republic Insurance Company occupies a half block of land on the north edge of the main western central business district. The corporate office building is an 8-story 1965 Modern Movement work located on the northeast corner of Sixth Avenue and Watson Powell Jr. Way. (Note: Watson Powell Jr. Way was formerly Keosauqua Way; the City of Des Moines renamed the street in 2000 to commemorate the second president of American Republic Insurance Company.) The building rises to a height of nearly 124 feet. As designed by the New York office of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) under architect Gordon Bunshaft, FAIA, the rectangular building's primary mass (tower from third to eight floors) measures 185 feet long (north-south) by 98 feet wide (east-west); the building base (first and second floors), which includes with a front enclosed "entrance court" with second-story open terrace above, measures 253 feet long (north-south) by 81 feet wide (east-west). (Skidmore et al.: A-1, A-2) The cast-in-place concrete-and-glass exterior structure consists of 153,400 gross square feet, which contains 102,630 usable square feet of interior space. (Kempton)

The primary mass of the building—the six-story tower of concrete and glass—is sited on the north two-thirds of the site and is larger than the first two floors; this primary mass is supported on "Steel Hinge Units," which are in turn supported on cast-in-place concrete columns. The east and west load-bearing walls are solid cast-in-place reinforced concrete; the north and south walls contain continuous rows of large windows—warm gray glass specified to match Pittsburgh Plate Glass warm gray Solar Bronze—that are shielded by 6-foot projecting floor slabs. The freestanding ground floor is comprised of monolithic cast-in-place concrete walls that extend the full length of the site, with the nearly square in plan front entrance courtyard accessible via approximately 12-foot-square openings penetrating the east and west walls. To distinguish the floating primary upper mass, the second-floor is enclosed in a continuous ribbon of glass; this light-filled space serves as an architectural feature as well as the employee cafeteria and lounge. This second-floor employee lounge opens to the rooftop terrace.

Over the decades, the building has been impeccably maintained inside and out, with its character-defining features retained including most interior finishes and fixtures, plus much of the original artwork and key pieces of custom-designed furniture — and thus its high degree of integrity strongly conveys its original location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. On the exterior, changes have been minor, and include the addition of bar grate in front of the recessed narrow ribbon of windows on the north first-floor level due to security issues; replacement of the white Vermont marble slabs on the courtyard floor with concrete pavers due to failure of the heated-floor system and to improve safety due to slip-and-fall hazards on the slick marble when precipitation was present; and replacement of the courtyard sculpture twice, with the current globe sculpture installed in circa 1999 along with additional structural support in the basement to support the sculpture's weight. (Busick; Johnson) These minor changes have not diminished the original architecture. In sum, the building clearly expresses its original Modernistic design as an early SOM/Gordon Bunshaft concrete corporate headquarters building. The company undertook a rehabilitation

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of the building following U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, using state and federal historic tax credit programs, with work approved by both the State Historic Preservation Office and National Park Service; worked was completed in summer 2015.

Setting

The building site is situated on a ridge that is one of the highest points within the downtown west side central business district. (Figures 1-2) During the twentieth century, the ridge developed into something of an insurance district, with several other large national insurance company headquarters/buildings located nearby. Directly cross the street to the north is the Des Moines Scottish Rite Consistory Masonic temple (519 Park Street; NRHP 1983) and kitty-corner is a 1993 parking ramp owned and created by American Republic; to the immediate south is a narrow strip of vacant land and kitty-corner is the former Polk County Convention Center (501 Grand Avenue; soon to be renovated into a YMCA with an addition on the vacant strip); directly to the west is the 1936 St. John's Lutheran Church with 1951 and 1965 additions (600 Sixth Avenue; potentially historic) and directly to the east across a vacated public alley is a sculpture garden with rear parking lot owned and created by American Republic in 1993, and east across Fifth Avenue is the circa-1953 Central Life Assurance Company Building (611 Fifth Avenue; potentially historic). (Polk County Assessor's Office)

Site

As originally built, the headquarters building occupies a prominent sloping half block that consists of Lots 5,6,7, and 8 in Block L of Grimmel's Addition, bounded by Sixth Avenue on the west, the former public alley on the east, Park Street to the north, and Watson Powell Jr. Way to the south (formerly Keosauqua Way). (Figure 24) These lots had been assembled as the former site of the Victoria Hotel, which American Republic purchased and demolished in circa 1962 to provide a building site for the headquarters building. The American Republic site slopes downward from north to south. The building with courtyard is built into the slope and fully occupies its historic site, abutting the public sidewalk on the north, south, and west sides. On the east side the building abuts what was a public alley in the 1960s; circa 1993, the alley was vacated. The vacated alley is now a concrete sidewalk to the south and a driveway for service access to the north.

Objects are counted by type. The Skidmore, Owings & Merrill plans show two flagpoles off of Sixth Avenue – these appear to still remain in place (painted black) and are counted as one contributing object type in the National Register nomination. In the entrance courtyard of the building is an original marble bench, which is counted as one contributing object type. In the same courtyard is a non-original sculpture by Arnaldo Pomodoro installed in 1999; this is counted as one non-contributing object type. On the exterior, to the east of the building and near the edge of the American Republic SOM site plan and historic boundary, are three additional types of objects, all of which are non-original and date to 1993, thusly counted as non-contributing types: concrete aggregate cylinder trash receptacles, concrete aggregate benches, and concrete aggregate planters. (Croese-Gardner; Engineering Design Services).

The American Republic SOM site plan boundary is also the National Register boundary. Just outside this eastern boundary line is the former alley, vacated in 1993 and now owned by American Republic. To the

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east of the former alley is a 1993 parking lot to the north and a 1993 sculpture garden to the south. In the early 1960s when SOM designed the American Republic building, the alley divided the city block in half, with the American Republic building site to the west and the State Auto Insurance Association building to the east. (See Figure 19 for circa-1965 view of the two buildings.) American Republic purchased the auto insurance building in the early 1970s in order to control ownership of the whole block, and converted it into rental office suites. (See Figure 23 for 1973 view of the two buildings.) In circa 1993 the rental building was torn down and replaced by the sculpture garden. (Busick; Johnson; Polk County Assessor; Crose Gardner & Associates; American Republic, c. 1972)

Integrated Structural and Mechanical Systems, and Exterior Design

The structural elements of the American Republic Insurance Company Building also serve as the main architectural elements, and these elements flow from exterior to interior. This section will look at these elements and focus on the exterior design. (See Figures 25-27 for SOM 1963-64 elevations.) Overall, the structure remains as built by general contractor Arthur H. Neumann & Bros., Inc., of Des Moines, as designed by structural engineer Paul Weidlinger of New York City. (American Republic c. 1964: 3)

The building is built of cast-in-place and precast prestressed concrete structure that features an interior freestanding cast-in-place reinforced concrete central core that braces the building and absorbs lateral loads. (See Figures 14-15 for 1968 views of the exterior.) The concrete foundations of the building extend 45 feet below the sidewalk. The first story and the tower's structural exterior east and west sidewalls (floors three through eight), as well as interior central core walls, are constructed of cast-in-place reinforced concrete; these walls feature large-size gap-graded granite aggregate that has been sandblasted per the SOM plans to create the effect of a rough-hewn granite walls. The granite is from Canyon City, Colorado.

The first floor is nearly solid, with entrance from the public sidewalk offered through the west, nearly square opening in the entrance court wall, facing Sixth Avenue. The current name of the American Republic Insurance Company's holding company, American Enterprise Group, in black lettering, is mounted here, and the two streets (Sixth Avenue and Watson Powell Jr. Way) are identified in black lettering mounted at the southwest corner of the entrance court. (The company's name is also affixed to the east elevation at the northeast corner.) The only other openings in the first story half-block perimeter are a second small entrance opening into the courtyard on the east side, recessed service entrance doorway farther north on the east elevation, and recessed window opening on the north wall that has been covered with bar grate and windows behind infilled since the 1970s. (Busick; Kruse)

The continuous window walls on the second story provide near-complete transparency. Custom aluminum frames hold large rectangular panels of twin-ground clear polished plate glass (all but two or three panels are original; replacements were made after glass was shot out). Above, are notched panes of glass infilling ceiling beams through which exposed mechanical ductwork from the interior flies through; rubber gaskets secure the round, painted perforated-metal ductwork with top-mounted lighting.

Outside the window walls is a small ledge-type area originally used as a planter on the east, west, and north

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with non-original rain leaders at the corners of the building terminating here; this planter ledge continues to the south, edging the open terrace (above the courtyard), and contains a new code-compliant clear glass railing. (The original design featured a narrow line of greenery planted in these continuous integrated planters and around the terrace, the plants were to serve as "green" railings; however, keeping plants growing in this out-of-reach area proved difficult, given the harsh weather extremes of typical Des Moines, Iowa, winters and summers and life-safety code no longer permitted use of the terrace due to lack of physical railings. (Busick; Johnson)) The terrace at its center contains an inner square opening that overlooks the entrance courtyard; this opening is surrounded by a railing made of granite slabs set atop granite posts with a non-original approximately 8-inch-tall curb, installed at date unknown, to bridge a code-deficient gap between the granite rail and terrace floor (granite pavers).

The building's upper floors appear to float over the glass-walled second floor. The tower's solid east and west walls were designed to reduce solar glare and solar heat gain, thereby reducing cooling costs. These walls were also designed to function as load-bearing walls for the precast prestressed concrete beams and to provide the outside wall of the plenums that contain interior ductwork for intake and return air. At the bottom, these concrete walls are 4 feet wide; they taper as they increase in height and the floor loads decrease, measuring 1 foot 9 inches at the rooftop. The integrated mechanical systems (located between the exterior concrete walls and interior CMU-plastered walls) taper downward as the duct sizes decrease, creating circulation of warm or cool air as the season dictates. The performance of this experimental system will be discussed further below.

The east and west tower walls are each supported at four points by concrete columns and "Steel Hinge Units," as called out within the original SOM construction documents, used to describe a structural steel pinned connection, or flexible joint, that allows for movement and resists the shear forces or the weight of the building. As described by Paul Kempton, AIA, an architect from the firm BNIM that worked on the 2015 rehabilitation: The American Republic Building includes fixed connections located at the top of the eight concrete pier columns and at the bottom of the cast in place concrete load bearing walls. The hinge, or pinned connection, is located at the transition between these fixed connections and the two steel bearing plates. These steel bearing plate surfaces are in constant contact and transfer the building load into the eight concrete columns. Within the steel bearing plates is a vertical steel pin that is used to resist any lateral forces while still allowing for any relative rotation around the pin's axis caused by any differential movement and/or thermal expansion in the concrete. This flexible joint greatly reduces the potential for the cast in place concrete to crack at the structural transfer joint between the bearing wall and the concrete piers. (Kempton, Sandaker: 274)

On the tower's north and south elevations, projecting precast prestressed concrete floor beams/ceiling beams are supported by recesses in the east and west sidewalls. In between the projecting beams are precast prestressed concrete T members. Suspended between the T members are encased tubular exposed painted perforated aluminum ductwork with top-mounted fluorescent bulbs. This system is used both on the exterior and interior of the tower. Recessed window walls are located on the north and south elevations, third through eighth floors; this window placement provides natural light to the main interior north

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and south work areas, with glare controlled by the projecting beams, as well as the use of tinted glass and interior vertical blinds. Post-rehabilitation, the upper stories contain uniform replacement warm gray glass panels specified to match the original Pittsburgh Plate Glass warm gray Solar Bronze. (The original sheets of tinted glass were annealed glass—also known as untreated glass, which shatters, unlike contemporary tempered and heat-strengthened glass—, contained within rubber zipper gaskets. Some of the oversize window glass panes had been replaced over the years with glass in different tints, creating a patchwork effect due to the variety of glass types and tints installed; the variety in tint occurred in part due to the original plans not listing the actual glass tint used. (Powell: 8; American Republic 1965: 1; Busick; Johnson; Howe; Kruse; PPG))

On top of the tower walls is the roof structure of the eighth floor; the open ends of the precast concrete beams are infilled with repeating painted aluminum panels and louvers that conceal the HVAC ductwork that serves the top floor. The elevator penthouse and cooling tower are integrated within this level, and the penthouse rises slightly above in a painted concrete housing. (Skidmore et al, 1963-64; Howe; Busick; American Republic 1965: 15)

Interior Floor Plan and Design

The interior floors are laid out around the central mechanical/service core, which contains four elevator shafts, two exit stairs, mechanical and electrical risers, restrooms, and service areas. (See Figures 27-30 for SOM 1963-64 floor plans.) On each floor this core is bisected by a central corridor that provides access to the elevators, the stairs, and either one or both of the restrooms—and connects the wide expansive spaces on the north and south ends of the building. Due to the engineering of the building, these character-defining workspaces are clear span and are uninterrupted by columns.

Ceilings in the workspaces and second-floor lounge unless otherwise mentioned are exposed concrete structural members arranged in a gridded pattern with integrated HVAC and lighting; in the central corridor, ceilings are lower and smooth plaster. As described by American Republic CEO Watson Powell Jr., “[R]aw structure creates the [gridded] ceiling, the light fixture, the air supply and return, and sound control.” (Powell Jr.: 10) In general, walls are exposed aggregate or are plastered and painted a uniform white. (Exceptions are noted in the floor-by-floor descriptions below.) The white walls serve as a gallery-type backdrop for the company’s rotating collection of original modern art that largely dates to the period of initial construction of the building (1963-1965); a more expansive description of the artwork is included in Section 8. On floors two through seven, original carpeting in the elevator lobbies has been changed to marble tile.

First Floor

Entrance to the building occurs through small square openings in the east or west concrete walls of the “entrance court” also referred to as the atrium. (Pocketed sliding metal gates on the courtyard openings were designed to close off the courtyard after business hours; however, because the front entrance is one of only two life-safety exits, the eastern opening now is left open at all times. The gates may be modern replacements.) The courtyard is partially open to the sky, with a 47-foot-square opening through the second-floor terrace. A sphere sculpture takes pride of place in the center of the courtyard; American

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Republic acquired the current sculpture in 1999, and it is the third sculpture to grace the courtyard; the original sculpture was a work by Alexander Calder. An original long marble bench, with 2005-added skateboard deterrents, resides in front of the basement egress stairs, which exit into the courtyard; the basement door is not original. (Busick; Johnson; Kruse)

An aluminum-framed glass revolving door and two non-original metal-framed glass swinging doors provide entrance into the lobby, but otherwise the south wall of the lobby is essentially a wall of glass that allows the courtyard and open lobby to seamlessly flow together through the replication of materials in both spaces. A note about the glass window wall: It contains replacement glass that dates to the 1980s, when a floor-cleaning device shattered a glass panel. The federal safety glazing law and local code no longer permitted plate glass in that area, and safety glass was not available in the original extra-large size, so mullions were added within the original frame. (Busick) (See Figure 16 for view of original window window wall.)

The continuation of exterior and interior design elements includes the white-painted concrete coffered ceiling in the courtyard and lobby, a cast-in-place concrete post-tensioned system on a 4-foot square grid, with each square containing an incandescent light that glows within the coffer. (Figure 9 shows the ceiling under construction, circa 1964.) The south courtyard wall is clad in Woodbury white granite; this same granite continues inside the lobby, cloaking the north lobby wall and central elevator corridor. Originally the smooth Vermont marble slab floor continued from courtyard into lobby; marble slabs remain in the lobby, but have been changed out twice in the entrance court due to the need to provide a safe walking surface during cold weather when snow and ice build up in the courtyard. The current precast concrete pavers date to the 2000s. The original smooth marble slab floor was slick when wet despite an underground heating system, which rusted and leached rust stains into the stone. (Busick; Johnson; Kruse)

Behind the lobby's north granite walls is the central corridor, also clad in granite. It has a smooth plastered ceiling with rimless can lights. The four elevators open here. On either side of the central corridor are two office areas accessed via east and west secondary corridors; original coffered ceilings continue in the office areas, and original marble slab flooring continues in the corridors. The eastern office area contains three original offices with tall two-panel sliding (translucent) glass doors. Located beyond the eastern offices is the service exit. On the other side is a corridor to the rear. It should be noted that behind the lobby, the ceiling light fixtures change but as in the lobby are unobtrusive and retain the overall character-defining "glowing" coffer effect. The central corridor terminates at the vestibule to the former computer server room, originally configured to run massive IBM computer equipment; this area was reconfigured in the 1990s and has been rededicated as a training room. (See Figure 17 for 1965 view of computer room.)

Second Floor

Wrapped in window walls, this light-filled floor offers views of downtown Des Moines' central business district. As discussed above, two or three of the oversize glass pieces were replaced after bullets shattered them in the mid 1990s; because the replacement large-format plate glass did not meet federal safety glazing law and local code, a continuous aluminum railing was installed just inside the window plane. (Busick) As with the first-floor lobby and entrance court, interior and exterior treatments are seamless. The

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exposed painted prestressed precast structural ceiling with exposed tubular perforated-aluminum ductwork continues on the exterior. The ductwork is also located outside the windows and includes lighting mounted on top. Original white ceramic half-inch-diameter mosaic tile defines the majority of the floor material on this floor, with the employee lounge to the south and dining room to the north overlaid with carpeting. (Kruse)

Modifications are minimal: The lounge looks out over the terrace. In the cafeteria area, some original laminated freestanding furniture cases that held telephone booths and vending machines for snacks and cigarettes remain but have been modified; Watson Powell Jr. had another redundant furniture piece (case for telephone booths and special-event coat storage) removed from the lounge area in the 1990s. (Busick)

Third - Seventh Floors

On floors three through seven, the central core stands at the center of the floor plan and is bisected a main corridor that connects north and south workspaces. These workspaces measure 90 by 66 feet, and the main character-defining feature is the exposed painted prestressed precast structural ceiling with exposed painted tubular ductwork. Natural light from the north and south window walls fills the workspaces, augmented by the lights that glow on top of the ducts. Secondary corridors on the east and west facilitate traffic flow; in the rehabilitation, these corridors were fully re-opened and on floors four through seven, new glassed offices/conference rooms installed in the location of original glass-doored offices that had been removed in 2000.

Eighth Floor

Conceived of as an executive and mechanical floor, the eighth floor differs from the others. The elevators and stairs exit into a long, dramatic central carpeted corridor lined with white laminate (Formica); the plaster ceiling is inset with rimless can lights. The laminate cloaks near-hidden doors (set flush and unlabeled) to the central core uses (restrooms, pantry, stairs) and extra-large mechanical rooms that primarily house massive mechanical equipment. Views at the ends of the corridors are centered on large works of art hanging on plastered walls at either end. The central corridor connects north and south executive office, support staff, and conference room areas, which together form an elongated H. (See Figure 18 for 1965 view of current board room, formerly the office of Watson Powell Jr., company president.)

Penthouse

The penthouse contains the elevator service room. Separate exterior flights of stairs extend from the eighth floor to this area. The cooling tower is located to the east of the penthouse in a partial well. This area was not open for inspection.

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Basement

The basement extends under the courtyard atrium. Major mechanical equipment is housed on the north end, with the south end reserved for non-original conference rooms, offices, storage, and kitchen. Columns exist here, creating a very different look than the open spaces in the upper floors.

Elevators and Stairs

The four elevator cab shells feature a mixture of brushed metal and white laminate panels. The central corridor elevator lanterns (indicator lights) are original. The two main sets of stairs feature concrete-fill steel pan stairs with an added non-original floor covering, which is also on landings. The railings are continuous shaped steel pipe rail. (Busick; Kruse)

Mechanical System

The integrated mechanical system was one of the experimental design aspects of the building. The equipment was literally built into the building, with little to no access to parts of the mechanical system. In the basement, massive boilers and chillers were installed behind concrete block walls. On the eighth floor, giant air handlers and the sunken cooling tower reside behind finished concrete-block walls bordering the executive offices and central corridor. Connecting these systems, the exterior east and west poured-concrete tower walls and interior east and west plastered-concrete block walls together serve as the plenums for HVAC air circulation. The building had one main thermostat that (poorly) controlled the temperature for most of the building. The mechanical system did not perform well from the beginning, according to Busick, the retired American Republic executive who oversaw the physical plant and maintenance employees, among other duties during his more than thirty years at the company. The mechanical engineering firm Syska & Hennessy, Inc., was called back to consult on how to improve heating and cooling performance and made several trips. The firm recommended replacing the manual dampers with powered dampers, a fix that would have required removing the interior concrete-block east and west walls. "It would have been a very expensive and intrusive retrofit," Busick recalled. Instead, American Republic applied a "Band-Aid," and installed electric baseboard heaters on third and eighth floors, as well as cubicle-mounted heaters on third floor. These smaller units did not work well, required a special insurance exemption, and "played havoc" with the art collection. (Busick) The rehabilitation addressed these issues and updated the mechanical system.

Art Collection and Original Furniture

The company has retained much of the original art collection that dates to the construction of the building, along with key pieces of furniture selected and/or designed in concert with the building. These are all removable contents. With the rehabilitation of the building, the company has reinstalled the art collection, which encompasses nearly 400 pieces by Andy Warhol, Claus Oldenberg, Michael Pavlosky, Frank Gardner, Ivan Chermayeff, Peter Chinni, Jack Youngerman, John Salt, and Jean Arp, among others. Furniture pieces that remain include sofas, chairs, and tables in the lobby, second floor lounge, and eighth-floor executive suites, plus cabinetry in the dining area, and desks and cabinetry on the eighth-floor. Standard employee furniture desks and chairs have changed over time; the original uniform desks, which employees were required to clear nightly in 1965, did not take into consideration how people did their jobs:

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for example, copywriters, underwriters, and clerical workers had varying needs for paper storage and team collaboration. Over time, the problems grew and sound control became a big issue as communications with customers, potential customers, and sales staff changed from mostly written (mailed) to mostly telephone based by the late 1970s along with introduction of personal computers. Varying removable furniture cubicle systems have been used since the 1980s. (Busick; Johnson)

Alterations

Few of the significant character-defining features of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters building have changed, either on the exterior or the interior. Three exceptions are noted below:

- 1. Courtyard flooring:* The original courtyard flooring had been smooth marble, as in the lobby, with an underground heating system to melt away ice and snow. However, the underground system began to rust due to water infiltration, staining the marble, which remained slippery when wet. The marble was replaced with concrete pavers in the 1980s, and then precast concrete pavers in the 2000s.
- 2. Exterior glass:* The SOM design intent regarding windows was to create transparency with clear plate glass on first and second floors, and homogenous tint with annealed glass—specified as warm gray solar bronze tint to match a specific PPG tint—on the ribbons of windows on the third through eighth floors. The building was constructed in the early Modernism era, a time of experimentation with emerging technologies and building systems including windows—and before enactment of the 1977 federal safety glazing law, written as a corrective against deaths and injuries caused by non-safety glass when used in locations where people could impact against glass. (Hansen; Paschel n.d.; Paschel 2009) Window problems of various types have occurred with other seminal Modern Movement experimental architectural works, including SOM's Lever House, Air Force Chapel, and Sears Tower. Because much of the original glass used in the American Republic headquarters building did not meet the 1977 federal safety glazing law, replacement of broken oversize glass panels resulted in smaller pieces of glass and mullions being used in the lobby area, and on upper levels, glass with an unintentional variation of tints had been installed over time, resulting in a patchwork of colors (this due to the original plans not including full tint specifications). The narrow band of windows on the first-floor north elevation (set at sidewalk level due to the slope of the site), which illuminated the computer room, was enclosed on the interior and exterior in the 1970s to improve security of the early computer equipment, and bar grate was installed flush with the exterior wall. (Johnson) In the rehabilitation, new code-compliant insulated glazing units to match the original homogenous tint were installed on the third through eighth floors, once again providing a unified tint to the windows as intended by Bunshaft/SOM.
- 3. Sliding-glass-panel offices:* The first-floor eastern office area contains three original offices with tall two-panel sliding (translucent) glass doors. Other sliding glass panel-fronted management offices on first through seventh floors were removed (but many outer plaster walls remained) in 2000 due to the inability to control heating/cooling within the offices and the lack of privacy for managers due to sound traveling up and over the office walls. The original offices on first floor have been retained and new glassed

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offices/conferences have been added back into original locations in the rehabilitation.

Integrity Assessment

The American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building exhibits a high degree of integrity, indicative of the original owner still occupying the building and taking care over the years to honor the original design intent even as insurance industry practices and procedures have evolved along with technology. Examining the American Republic headquarters building according to the seven aspects of integrity—location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association—as defined in the *National Register Bulletin No. 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, requires understanding the property's significance within the continuum of American history, time, and place. This examination, which follows, finds the building retains excellent historic integrity in six aspects and very good historic integrity in one aspect.

Location: The American Republic Headquarters Building remains at its original site on the ridge on the north edge of downtown Des Moines. With regard to location, its integrity is excellent.

Design: As a resource considered eligible under Criterion C, integrity of design and materials are of particular importance. The SOM/Gordon Bunshaft Modern Movement design continues to reflect the headquarters historic function as a prominent corporate headquarters/office building with building technologies that were cutting edge and at times experimental. The integrated structural system; the use of precast, prestressed concrete and glass; the arrangement of interior spaces; and the overall functionality of the design remain unique expressions of SOM/Bunshaft's early 1960s design work. In these ways, the American Republic Headquarters Building retains its full (excellent) integrity of design.

Setting: Overall the integrity of setting is very good. The building's setting on its site, which is nearly fully occupied by the building, remains unchanged. Its setting in relationship to the other half of the block has changed with the acquisition of a pre-existing building and 1993 creation of a sculpture park, wherein more of the company's art collection is displayed. Surrounding the headquarters building are several historic or potentially historic buildings that pre-existed American Republic; some other nearby buildings have been replaced with newer structures.

Materials: The integrity of materials is very good to excellent; the headquarters exterior remains nearly unchanged from when it was originally constructed and the condition of materials remains high. The condition of the concrete and exposed aggregate that predominates is very good, with no spalling and limited cracking. Regarding windows: all window openings remain intact. The original design intent of clear glass on first and second floors and tinted on upper stories remains. The entrance court doorways and original revolving front door remain in place, and while the side service door and two metal-framed glass-panel entrance doors have been replaced to meet code, the openings and functions remain intact. The public areas—the entrance court, lobby, and second-floor lounge/dining room—retain the majority of their original finishes and interior layouts. Most interior changes have taken place in out-of-public-eye office areas, with changes being driven by failure of the existing heating and cooling systems, technological

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changes, and modern office needs.

Workmanship: The integrity of workmanship is excellent. As will be discussed below, the high quality of finished product demanded by American Republic and SOM/Bunshaft is clearly expressed throughout the exterior and interior in the concrete work and stonework—and on the interior, with the tile work, plaster work, and overall seamless construction that has withstood continual use.

Feeling: The integrity of feeling is excellent. The American Republic building stands apart from other Modernistic buildings in Des Moines for its unique concrete and glass design. The exterior and the interior readily convey its historic character as a pioneering Modernistic structure that sought to break new ground for a corporate headquarters.

Association: This unique building retains its association to the highest degree with American Republic Insurance Company and with the work of SOM/Gordon Bunshaft. As will be discussed below, the building received an AIA Honor Award, in 1967, in recognition of its excellence in design and craft. (SOM) And the building has been recognized in various scholarly works about SOM and Gordon Bunshaft as an expression of the firm's and its chief designer's pioneering work in re-imagining the corporate headquarters building and developing new technologies for working with concrete and glass designs.

Summary of Character-Defining Features

The following architectural features are among those that contribute to the character of the building.

Exterior:

Solid poured-in-place reinforced concrete east and west walls (third through eighth floor), with sandblasted exposed gap-graded granite aggregate

Concrete columns that support the weight of the upper-story tower (floors three through eight) on steel hinge units

Solid sandblasted exposed gap-graded aggregate concrete first floor walls with enclosed entrance court

Transparent second floor with floor-to-ceiling window walls

Recessed window walls on third through eighth floors, north and south walls, with homogenous warm gray solar bronze-tinted glass

Precast prestressed concrete roof structure featuring regularly spaced painted aluminum panels and louvers

Interior:

Enclosed entrance court with centered sculpture and view of the sky through pierced square opening to

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upper terrace

Transparency: Between court and lobby via a window wall and repeated materials (granite walls, aggregate walls, coffered gridded ceiling); between second floor lounge and terrace; between window walls and continued ceiling treatment on second through eighth floors.

Central core, first through seventh floors: Freestanding reinforced concrete central core with central corridor flanked by secondary corridors to the east and west; ceilings within central corridor on second through seventh floors have floating plaster ceiling with cove lighting.

Precast concrete beam ceilings with exposed ductwork, north first and full second through eighth floors: Structural beams are painted and the round ductwork is perforated painted aluminum with top-mounted lighting. Concrete beams and ductwork continue on the exterior as noted on plans.

Lobby and first-floor offices: Court-lobby flow as described above, warm-glowing coffered gridded ceiling, and exposed aggregate walls; central core as described above with granite walls and plastered ceiling with rimless can lights.

Second-floor lounge and dining room: Central core as described above, uninterrupted clear-span space lounge on the south and dining room on the north, glass walls, beam ceilings as above, and south terrace.

Third through seventh floors: Central core as described above, uninterrupted clear-span workspaces on the north and south ends of the building, ribbons of glass windows on north and south ends, solid plastered walls on east and west sides, beam ceilings as above.

Eighth floor executive offices and mechanical rooms: Central core differs here with laminated walls in the extra-long corridor, H-shape floor plan to accommodate mechanical rooms plus uninterrupted clear-span workspace with a mixture of enclosed offices/conference rooms and open areas, ribbons of glass windows on north and south ends, solid plastered walls on east and west sides, beam ceilings as above.

Elevators: Elevator lobby areas within each floor's core, original SOM-designed indicator lights.

Stairs: Corridors, metal pipe railings, SOM-designed exit signs.

Basement: Columns, egress stairs up through entrance court.

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8. Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary

The American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building in Des Moines, Iowa, is locally significant under National Register Criterion C—Architecture. The building also complies with Criterion Consideration G as a property that has achieved significance within 50 years. Its period of significance, 1965, marks the date of completed construction of the building—with design by the renown and highly influential architectural firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM). The building is significant under the category of Architecture for its association with Modern Movement design and the work of a master architecture firm and master architect, Gordon Bunshaft, FAIA, chief designer of SOM in the firm's New York office. In Des Moines, the American Republic building stands as likely the first concrete and glass Modernistic corporate office building constructed in the city—and nationally as one of the early SOM/Bunshaft corporate concrete and glass commissions. SOM has been recognized as the leading corporate architectural design firm of the post-World War II era, and thus the building's associations with SOM further elevate its significance. The building's design innovations include an upper-story tower supported on steel hinge units that appears to float over a clear-glass second-story; 90-foot prestressed precast reinforced T beams that are expressed on the tower's exterior and on the interior create clear-span workspaces for improved working conditions and efficiency; and on the tower, solid east and west concrete walls with recessed tinted window walls on the north and south elevations to reduce glare and air-conditioning loads while providing ample nature light within the large workspaces.

Soon after its completion, the American Republic Headquarters Building received a National Honor Award from the American Institute of Architects, in 1967—one of only two new office buildings to win the award that year—as well as an Award of Merit from the Prestressed Concrete Institute in 1963. (SOM; Powell Jr.: 11) The Des Moines community has recognized the building as a key addition to the architectural heritage of the city, via continuous press coverage wherein the building was highlighted as one of the two most important additions to downtown Des Moines in the early and mid 1960s; via 20,000 visitors to the building during its first two years of operation; and via inclusion in Iowa architectural books such as the American Institute of Architects, Iowa Chapter's *A Century of Iowa Architecture, 1900-1999*, where the building is one of 50 important works. (*Des Moines Register*: September 24, 1965; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, October 31, 1965; Powell Jr.: 11, 27; American Institute of Architects, Iowa Chapter: 74-75)

The National Park Service has recognized the importance of post-World War II Modern Movement architecture, and specifically the "exceptional impact" of ground-breaking corporate expressions of Modernism designed by SOM including the Lever House building, designed by SOM/Bunshaft (1952; New York; NRHP 1983); BMA Tower, designed by SOM/Bruce Graham (1963; Missouri; NRHP 2002); and The Republic newspaper office and plant, designed by SOM/Myron Goldsmith (1971; Indiana; NHL 2012). (Sherfy and Luce: X. Examples) Furthering its significance under Criterion Consideration G, a number of scholars and architectural historians have highlighted the importance of the American Republic Headquarters Building within SOM and Gordon Bunshaft's body of work, as well as within Modern

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Movement architecture of this period, as will be discussed below. With further research, the building may prove to be significant at a state or national level.

Period of Significance and Significant Dates

The period of significance, 1965, for the SOM-designed American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building marks the completion of construction.

History of American Republic Insurance Company

The American Republic company began in spring 1929, founded by insurance executive Watson Powell Sr. (1891-1971). He left his former position as vice president of Southern Surety company to launch American Republic as a mutual legal reserve company specializing solely in health and accident insurance. A *Des Moines Register* article about the newly state-chartered insurance company's founding stated:

Des Moines took on added importance Thursday as the insurance capital of the west, with announcement of organization of the American Republic Insurance company (sic lower case)....

Mr. Powell is widely known in national health and accident insurance circles. He is president of the Health and Accident Underwriters conference, a national organization of health and accident companies.

He established the health and accident department of the Southern Surety company and development the department until it ranks among the largest in the country. It had a premium income of more than \$2,000,000 last year and it now has fifty employes (sic) at the head office here.

Discussing his plans for the new company, Mr. Powell said, "We hope to build up a real institution in Des Moines. This city, with its prestige in the insurance world, is the ideal headquarters for such a company...."

Organization of the American Republic Insurance company makes a total of three home office insurance companies launched in Des Moines within the last thirty days. (*Des Moines Register*, est. April 11, 1929, as reproduced in an American Republic advertisement in the April 9, 1972 edition of the *Register*)

Of his new company, Powell Sr. was president, E. H. Mueller of Madison, Wisconsin vice president, J.E. Atwood of Des Moines secretary-treasurer, with F.E. Maginity of St. Louis and J.E. Powell of Des Moines rounding out the board of directors. The company's home office was based out of the Royal Union Life building (nonextant), a downtown location also home to Southern Surety's health and accident department. (*Des Moines Register*, est. April 11, 1929, as reproduced in April 9, 1972) The first year, Powell Sr. wrote 200 charter policies. (American Republic 1966:12) But the October 1929 stock market crash ushered in a decade of hardship that Watson Powell Jr. recounts as "a nightmare" for his father. "There was no money for salary for him for the first six years. He said he had so often taken to the bank a life insurance policy he owned to borrow on its cash value to pay rent and salaries and keep the company alive, it could have been difficult to read it." (Powell Jr.: 3) The company weathered the Great Depression by staying small and carefully nurturing its honest reputation. (Chermayeff and Geismar: 60) Watson Powell Jr. (1917-2000) joined his father and stepmother at the company in 1944. By the late 1940s, in the postwar boom, the

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company's hospital, surgical, and medical insurance became popularly salable and the company began expanding operations outside of Iowa. Life insurance was added, and the company grew rapidly during the 1950s. Powell Jr. was executive president of American Republic Insurance Co. by 1955, when it merged with another insurance company he managed, National Benefit Insurance Co. (*Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, January 9, 1955) In 1959, Powell Sr., then 67 years old, began succession plans that culminated at the June 1, 1960, board of directors meeting in he and all the board members resigning and leaving the company. (Powell Jr.: 3)

Powell Jr. succeeded his father as president and chairman. He selected a new leadership team and began plans for the company's future, including expansion into a standalone headquarters building. "In the early 1960s a new generation of executives began expanding American Republic's operations across the country," recount the principals of Chermayeff & Geismar, an internally renown New York-based design firm that in the early 1960s American Republic asked to redesign the company brand logo for use in multiple advertising platforms. (American Republic still retains the Chermayeff & Geismar trademark: double American flag stars-cum-eagles, smaller nestled within larger representing a protective relationship for a company known for its life and health insurance policies.) (Chermayeff and Geismar: 60) In looking at future growth and expansion, Powell Jr. and his executive team realized the need for modernized facilities designed to accommodate computerized and mechanized operations. A recounting of how Powell Jr. engaged Skidmore, Owing & Merrill in the design and construction processes of the American Republic headquarters building, as well as its significance, will be discussed below.

In this brief encapsulation about the company's history, it is important to note that during Powell Jr.'s decades at the helm of American Republic, he was known for his leadership both in Des Moines civic work and in the insurance world. Among numerous public service rendered, Powell Jr. was elected head of the Greater Des Moines Partnership in 1971, served on the Great Des Moines Committee, and served on boards of arts organizations including the Des Moines Art Center. (*Des Moines Register*, October 10, 1976, January 1, 2000; Elbert: 122) A 1976 *Des Moines Register* story about power brokers named him among the 25 most influential people within the greater Des Moines metro area. (*Des Moines Register*, October 10, 1976) He continued leadership at American Republic until he retired in 1996 as chairman. (In 1983, Watson Powell III succeeded his father as president of the company; in 1989 Powell III was elected vice chairman of the board and chief executive officer. In 1988, Michael E. Abbott was elected president and chief financial officer; he became chairman of the board and chief executive officer in 1996, and continues in all four roles as of 2014.) Shortly following Powell Jr.'s death in 2000, the Des Moines City Council renamed a portion of Keosauqua Way (the street that borders the south front façade of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters building) Watson Powell Jr. Way, in honor of his many contributions to the city and larger community. The ordinance reads in part: "Watson Powell Jr. was a prominent citizen of the City of Des Moines known for his contributions to development of the downtown business district, to the cause of human and civil rights, and to the growth of American Republic Insurance Company and to the Iowa insurance industry" (City of Des Moines)

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Today American Republic is one of the member companies of American Enterprise Group, Inc.; the parent company is based in Des Moines in the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building. The company continues to be involved in health-based insurance and operate out of the headquarters building. (American Republic 2014)

Design and Construction of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters

Reimaging 601 Sixth Avenue: From Victorian Hotel to Modernistic Offices

The northeast corner of Sixth Avenue and Keosauqua Way was platted as part of Dr. F.C. Gimmel's Addition to Fort Des Moines in 1857. (Dixon: 253) Gimmel, a medical doctor and strong supporter of early Des Moines expansion, built a residence for his family on this corner, then named Sixth Avenue and Chestnut Street, in the mid to late nineteenth century. The house gave way to a large hotel, the red brick Victoria Hotel, completed in 1900 by real estate, insurance, and railroad magnate F.M. Hubbell and his son, with a subsequent addition added sometime after 1907. The ornate turreted 6-story residential hotel was an elegant addition to the northern edge of downtown and popular with the city's high society. In April 1962 American Republic Insurance Company announced it had purchased the hotel from F.M. Hubbell and Son Co. for \$200,000 for its headquarters site. ("A History of Early Des Moines," pages 38-39; *Des Moines Daily News*, October 8, 1900; October 8, 1907; *Des Moines Register*, Gatti, n.d.)

Design of American Republic Headquarters

In 1960 when Watson Powell Jr. assumed the lead of American Republic Insurance, the company and various branches occupied five downtown locations. (Busick) The main base of operations occupied two cramped floors in the Liberty Building, Sixth and Grand avenues, constructed in 1923 by Bankers Life Insurance. Operations involved labor-intensive systems such as printing premium notices using an addressograph machine using metal plates punched on a graphotype, and posting payments on record cards that were filed in metal tubs. Powell Jr. and other executives began planning for a new building in which they could centralize management of employees and streamline operations via computers, mechanized equipment, and other technological advances. Seeking an architecture firm to conceptualize a new headquarters, in early 1962 Powell contacted Skidmore, Owing & Merrill, whose design for the Air Force Academy Chapel captivated Powell during a visit. (Powell Jr.: 4-5) Architectural historian and New York University professor Carol Herselle Krinsky in her biography of Gordon Bunshaft attributes a trip Powell made to Connecticut General Life Insurance Company (a 1957 ground-breaking SOM/Bunshaft corporate campus) with sparking interest in the firm for designing a "clerical factory." (Krinsky: 147) In a 1999 oral history video about the headquarters building and art collection, Powell Jr. recollected his introduction to SOM:

Knowing little about architecture, no, knowing practically nothing about the subject, I called the firm in New York. I was passed over to a man named Bill Brown, the man who would become the member of the firm who would be the full-time architect between the designer, the design team, and me. I initially asked him to send me a sample standard set of plans along with design details we could consider for our more than 400 people. That proves how architecturally stupid I was at the

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time. He voiced the need to visit us and soon he made the trip. (Powell Jr.: 5)

Brown and Powell Jr. toured potential sites located some four miles south of downtown, one at Fleur Drive and Bell Avenue (current site of American Institute of Business) and another at Park Fleur and Park Avenue (current site of Park Fleur condominiums), both with enough land to accommodate a suburban-style corporate campus. Ultimately Powell Jr. rejected those sites after a SOM employee survey revealed many would have to resign due to transportation (carpool) problems with a remote site outside of downtown. Then the Victoria Hotel site became available. Despite the tight site, Bunshaft—the project head for the American Republic headquarters building and the in-house team he led, including administrative partner William S. Brown, project manager/job captain Walter A. Rutes, and senior designer Roger Radford—agreed a headquarters could be designed there. SOM thoroughly studied the insurance company's needs and incorporated Powell's design stipulation: "wide open work spaces for our clerical operations, unimpeded, not interrupted by walls, columns, and posts." The physical appearance was initially left to the architectural firm. Powell Jr. recounts how American Republic, via its design team of Powell Jr., Robert Harper, and Chester Estell, began to interface with the design process:

Robert Harper, then our top vice president, my wife and board member, Louise, and I began our trips to New York to see what was developing. Some design features we liked; some we rejected. We did not want the large fountain that had been designed for the entry area or atrium. Later we would commission the world-renowned sculptor Alexander Calder to design for us a monumental stabile sculpture for the area. We did not like the columns with they heavy splayed bases shown here on one of the preliminary models. We did not want windows on the building's side walls....

On our trips to New York, we had often admired Lever House... SOM had designed the structure and the designer had been the world-famed Gordon Bunshaft. He would be the designer of our building. Preliminarily, we felt we would have a glass curtain-wall building.... On our trips we soon learned that ours would be a building composed of concrete strengthened by vast members of iron reinforcing rods. Early on, I had made a trip through Washington, D.C., and was routed out of Dulles Airport. Its concrete building had been designed by the Finnish architect Eero Saarinen. The concrete of the building showed form marks, holes, in the concrete. Although these marks were uniformly spaced, in my eyes they were unsightly and detracted a great deal from the building's appearance. Also, in a distressing number of places, the concrete was cracking. This disturbed me since it was a recently constructed building. Immediately when I got off the plane in Des Moines, I called SOM and firmly announced we would not approve a concrete building. At that point I learned SOM was very willing to defend its design decision. Gordon Bunshaft, the designer, was adamant.

As a result of many battles and talks, I visited the Portland Cement Association in Chicago. For two days, assisted by their top people, I learned a great deal about what makes concrete.... I also learned about the surface treatments, such as water or acid washing to expose the stone aggregate. In the case of our building, the aggregate would be exposed by sandblasting. I learned that cracking could be controlled by properly placed expansion joints and by the required exceptional care during construction. After seeing samples of blasted concrete, we decided that the

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matrix would be of local sand, local cement, and of course, water. The aggregate would be granite pieces, broken up from large quarried boulders, and crushed and then screened. We built two large slabs with different stone and different matrix on our parking lot. It was decided the granite aggregate would come from Canyon City, Colorado, since it provided the finish color and appearance we desired. (Powell Jr.: 6-8)

Krinsky notes that Bunshaft and Powell Jr. "did not get on well, but during Powell's frequent visits to New York, administrative partner William Brown and senior design Roger Radford made sure that he understood the project." (Krinsky: 147) Brown became an Iowa-registered architect; his registration mark is stamped on the SOM plans. (Skidmore et al., 1963-64) There was much for Powell Jr. and his American Republic team to understand, as the building involved complex and experimental building technologies. Thus models were made to test various aspects of the design. Powell Jr. recalled that during the design consideration phase, a small building was constructed in Scranton, Pennsylvania, to test the integrated plenum design and air circulation function. A small mockup of the integrated structural/mechanical ceiling treatment was constructed in Des Moines. Sample aggregate panels were made to verify preference of the concrete mixture. And two 90-foot T beams were taken to destruction to test their strength. (Powell Jr.: 10)

The design itself sought to meld efficiency with Modernistic ideals of functional beauty to better serve customers and grow the American Republic insurance business. "No distinction was made between function and beauty since a good architectural solution is the synthesis of both," noted a circa-1965 brochure filled with 196 questions and answers about the American Republic building, titled "Perhaps you have questions about our building... our employees did and here is how we tried to answer them!" (American Republic 1965:7) To that end, the character-defining features of the north and south recessed window walls with warm gray bronze tinted glass on the upper floors, with solid east and west side walls, provided a glare-free work environment. The wide open work spaces which allowed the company to better organize its staff and processes, were made possible by extra-long concrete T-beams that also created the exposed ceiling. The ceiling, notes Bunshaft biography Krinsky, was "a new type of coffered ceiling system, the most distinctively new feature of this building and a substantial advance in visual and functional integration over the honeycomb baffles at Reynolds, the exposed ceiling at Connecticut General, and Union Carbide's suspended ceiling.... The system creates an attractive pattern on the ceiling, relieving the monotony of long, exposed beams and providing an impression of height and openness." The mechanical engineering consultants designed the horizontal cylindrical ducts from perforated aluminum that allows air to flow through, while glass fiber insulation inside the ducts absorbs sound; fluorescent lights mounted on top of the east-west running ducts deflect light upward. (Krinsky: 149)

American Republic emphasized the connection between the Modernistic design by SOM and providing better service for customers in a July 1963 two-page advertisement in *Life* magazine. (Figure 5) The ad featured a photograph of a three-dimensional model of the new building:

American Republic has just passed its 34th birthday. It has just completed the biggest year in its history. Now licensed in 43 states and serving nearly a million Americans, American Republic is

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recognized as one of the fastest-growing firms in the fast-growing insurance industry.

It is to even better serve its ever-growing family of policyholders that American Republic is constructing its new National Headquarters building shown above. This building was specifically designed by the world-renowned architectural firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill to provide the most modern and efficient facilities for fast, accurate, yet personalized service to policyholders. At the same time, it is a structure of unusual grace and beauty. Many consider it a near-perfect blending of the practical and the aesthetic." (American Republic advertisement 1963: 76)

Speaking at the dedication ceremony in May 1965, Powell Jr. connected the building's open concept design with anticipated improvements in efficiency:

We hope the building's massiveness and strength will symbolize the security and strength of the company. But the design was arrived at more for its function than for its appearance.

The column-less areas inside the building allow us to arrange our work force efficiently. The insurance business is essentially an assembly-line process and the clear-span rooms allow us to organize the work most effectively. (*Des Moines Register*, May 29, 1965)

The SOM design for American Republic made the front page of the *New York Times* Real Estate section in September 1963, with the headline "'Box' on Legs to Hold Insurance Company's Offices." (Figure 6) The story included a photograph of the same three-dimensional model (but from a different angle) and highlighted what are many of the character-defining features of the building. The story also appears to show one or perhaps two design elements that changed before final construction (see imbedded notes):

A massive, box-like building that at first glance resembles a series of shelves has been designed for the national headquarters of the American Republic Insurance Company in Des Moines, Iowa.

The building, which rests on *four legs* [note: perhaps design changed? built with eight columns] has the impact of a huge concrete block, but the architects, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, had more in mind than architectural effect.

Since an insurance company's basic activity is clerical, the first objective was to provide large column-free areas for the company's office force of 600 [note: building built for expansion of up to 600 employees]. At the same time, the architects wanted to make the east and west walls solid to control glare and to minimize the air-conditioning needed.

The architectural firm's solution was to design large "T" beams for the structure, giving each floor two large "rooms," in effect, separated by a central core.

Beneath the building's main mass is a low, independent base. This floor will contain an entrance court and fountain [note: fountain not built; sculpture used instead], a reception area, elevator lobby and computer room.

The walls will display a granite aggregate, sandblasted to bring out the sharp-faceted stones. The walls will taper as they rise and as the floor loads they must carry diminish.

The exposed beams on the building shade the recessed glass windows and serve, at the same time, as platforms for window-washing.

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At the end of the building the floor beams are notched into the side walls. (emphasis and notes added; *New York Times*, September 22, 1963)

By the date of the *New York Times* article, construction had already begun.

Construction of American Republic Headquarters: 1963-1965 and 1969-1970

By March 1963, the site had been cleared and construction of the basement had begun. However, unforeseen delays slowed work. Early on, unstable soil conditions caused by underground water required 800 yards of concrete to be added under the northwest corner of the building for support, requiring 160 five-yard trucks full of concrete to be poured in one continuous pour day and night. Further delays occurred with a sheet metal strike, winter weather conditions, and longer time spent on concrete finishing and prestressed work. An thus the advertised 1964 completion date stretched to 1965 as the project took twenty-six months to complete. (A July 1963 two-page advertisement in *Life* magazine featured the new building under construction and gave the completion date of late 1964.) (American Republic 1965: 4-5; Powell Jr.: 9; American Republic advertisement: 76)

Powell's concerns about the still experimental use of poured concrete for finished walls were realized in late November 1963, when the steel forms around the northeast corner of the first floor wall were removed, revealing visible pooling, or "stripes" in the poured concrete. Powell recalled:

I called Gordon Bunshaft and told him he had to come to Des Moines right away and that we had not contracted for a striped building. He came the next day, but he was livid. It was the time of Jack Kennedy's funeral and he was a great Kennedy supporter. It was decided the stripes were caused by the forms, and in the future all forms were to be faced by large sheets of plywood. The faulty concrete was torn down, was re-poured, and we do have a stripe-less building. (Powell Jr.: 10)

Local labor and local supplies accounted for much of the project. Major contractors involved with the project include the following:

- General contractor Arthur H. Neumann & Bros., Inc., remains a long-established construction company based in Des Moines. In a 2012 centennial history of the Neumann company, American Republic Insurance is listed as one of five premiere projects built during the second generation of Neumann family leadership of the firm. (Neumann Brothers)

- Penn-Dixie Cement Corp., with eight plants in eight states including one in West Des Moines, Iowa (a suburb of Des Moines), contributed to the American Republic construction project. The cement corporation's 1965 annual report cited four major building projects, with American Republic being one, that used concrete and concrete products in contemporary architecture. In particular, the report listed prestressed concrete beams and solid cast-in-place concrete walls. (*Des Moines Sunday Register*, March 20, 1966)

- Iowa Sheet Metal, which called itself the nation's largest sheet metal contractors, counted American Republic as one of its major jobs as of a 1967 newspaper story covering its expanded offices on Bell Avenue in Des Moines. Others major projects cited: the Astrodome in Houston, the new Smithsonian

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Institution building in Washington, D.C., and the Central National Bank and Home Federal buildings in Des Moines. (*Des Moines Sunday Register*, May 14, 1967)

• Pittsburgh-Des Moines Steel Company manufactured the steel hinge units. As described in an oral history by American Republic CEO Watson Powell Jr., "The hinges were constructed in two parts: Two identical members were placed atop concrete columns or piers. They were made in 3-inch-thick steel plates in 16 parts and are fanned out from a 4-inch-thick base plate. Each weld was x-rayed. Any hinge failure could cause untold damage.... The union between the top and bottom halves had to be perfect. The two parts were put together using a very thin sheet of copper to be certain they seated properly..." (Powell Jr.: 9)

American Republic paid for the design and construction using surplus funds from the company. Upon its dedication, company president Watson Powell Jr. said the building was a "wise and prudent investment of funds' as a keystone to future company growth," with two of the eight stories left open and unfinished for future growth. (*Des Moines Register*, May 29, 1965) The additional space afforded the company the flexibility to compete and enter new areas of business, such as the company's December 1965 application to become an intermediary to administer the Medicare program in Iowa and eight other states. Company president Powell Jr. said space was available in the new building to accommodate personnel and equipment for the program. (*Des Moines Register*, December 16, 1965) The built-in expansion plan for the building was called into action relatively quickly. American Republic returned to SOM for the design of floors six and seven by 1969. And construction on the floors was completed in 1970. (Skidmore et al. 1969; City of Des Moines Building Permit Log) (See Figures 31-32 for SOM 1969 plans.) Under SOM's 1969 plans, the sixth floor followed the same layout and detailing as floors three through five, including the gridded ceiling with integrated ductwork and two large open workspaces to the north and south of the core; however, this floor contained extended rows of glass-doored management offices on the east and west walls, extending from the southern edge of the core north to the north window wall (original offices nonextant). SOM's 1969 plans for the seventh floor divided in half the north workspace, with the western side used for office purposes and the eastern side dedicated to video scanning; scanning technology changed and the space was no longer needed for this work by the mid 1970s, at which time the partition walls were removed. The 1969 plans for the south workspace created in-house sales training rooms with supporting video production studio, video control room, and storage; these areas had lower ceilings and partition walls. By the mid-1970s, sales training had moved to in the field, and the training rooms became conference rooms. These redundant rooms have been removed in the rehabilitation. (Busick; City of Des Moines Building Permit Log; Howe; Johnson; Kruse; Skidmore et al. 1963-1964, 1969) In 2000, the company added some infill walls within some secondary corridors to create conference rooms to meet business needs; most glass-walled private offices were removed at this time due to problems with heating/cooling and sound insulation within these offices. These changes allowed the company to remain at the downtown building instead of moving to new office space in the suburbs, according to Dave Busick, retired American Republic vice president of human resources (1970-2004), whose duties included overseeing building maintenance and maintenance employees as well as the art collection. The 2015 rehabilitation removed these non-original walls (conference rooms) and restored the original floor plan.

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American Republic Art Collection

A discussion of the American Republic headquarters building requires mention of the art collection. SOM partner and head designer Gordon Bunshaft was an ardent supporter of modern art and friend of a number of prominent artists include Le Corbusier and Miro. Bunshaft was instrumental in guiding Chase Manhattan Bank's (modern) art collection and in the company's use of the renown graphic design firm Chermayeff & Geismar in crafting a new modern brand mark; Bunshaft would again make these same recommendations to American Republic. Chase chairman David Rockefeller, Bunshaft, and directors and curators of key New York art museums served on the bank's seven-member art collection committee, founded in 1959. American Republic president Watson Powell Jr. toured the Chase Manhattan headquarters, completed in 1961 with interiors designed by SOM (one of the firm's first interior design projects) and decorated with modern art, as well as Chase branch banks—and decided to collect modern art to use as decoration within the new American Republic headquarters building. American Republic's art collection included works by some of Bunshaft's artist friends, including a Le Corbusier tapestry and work by Miro, by the 1970 publication of the 160-page *Collection of American Republic Insurance Company* catalogue. (Krinsky: 12, 73-77; Powell Jr.: 12; American Republic 1970) Powell Jr., in the collection catalogue's introduction, explains why the modern art collection was acquired to decorate the new headquarters building:

Why has American Republic Insurance Company acquired an extensive contemporary art collection? We feel we have interesting answers.

Our National Headquarters Building, by the awards it has received, is acknowledged as one of the world's best examples of the manner in which the fine art of architecture can be applied with imagination and courage. It is an inspiring statement of contemporary artistic creativity. It follows that we acknowledge the architect's work of art by installing in his structure other works of art to enhance it.

The work of the capable, professional artist of today inspires stimulating thought. While he is a serious student of the lessons of the masters of the past, this artist is no imitator. Rather, he is an innovator....

As we live with it, we can both appreciate the beauty of the work of this artist and be inspired by its originality. His created object can help impress upon us that in our business lives, we, too, must ever be creative and innovative. Understanding the business lessons of the past, we can react to the continuing necessity to explore and experiment with new business concepts and new business methods. We need to search to find more simple and more refined ways to better serve those who depend upon us.

...We knew, and we have seen proven, that the "taste" for contemporary art must be developed and conditioned. Its forms and abstractions are often broad departures from traditionally accustomed expressions of esthetic creation.... The acceptance of the beauty of contemporary art, and to any degree, the understanding of its meanings and its messages, require a change in attitude resulting from an imposed educational process. Understanding this we were not surprised when most of our people first failed to enthusiastically hail the unfamiliar art that surrounded them when we moved into our new National Headquarters Building.

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That which we hoped would happen, however, has happened, indeed! Living with the art, our people have become interested in it. Initially, more than fifty of our folks, one out of every eight of us, voluntarily learned about the art to explain it as they helped guide the nearly thirty thousand visitors, from countries throughout the world, who visited our building in the first several years of its existence.

Those who work with us now accept that which may not formerly have been acceptable. And all of us have learned once more that all bias, all prejudice, and all bigotry result from ignorance and that bias, prejudice and bigotry diminish—and even disappear—with knowledge and with understanding.

The lesson we learned from the art—to criticize from knowledge rather than from ignorance—we can carry into our personal and business lives. We can regard and respect each other as individuals, not as members of races and groups. The new and unfamiliar no longer need frighten us. We can accept, yes, even welcome the changes that will make us better people and a better business endeavor.

Our working lives are spent in an environment of beauty. And the art that surrounds us helps teach us that it is the individual, not the establishment, this is of primary importance. While for efficiency we must be mechanized, computerized, and automated in the corporate world in which we live, we are constantly reminded [by the art] of the necessity to first regard human values. (American Republic 1970: 2-3)

National and Local Reaction During Design and Construction: 1963-1965

The building design made the front page of the *New York Times* Real Estate Section, as noted above. Locally, during construction, the daily *Des Moines Register* newspaper covered progress on the building with regular updates. The *Des Moines Register* gave the American Republic Headquarters project high-profile coverage throughout construction, dedication, and occupancy during the 1960s. For example, in late August 1964, *Register* photographers captured ironworkers and carpenters at work in a two-page photo spread in the *Sunday Register Picture* magazine. (Figures 7-8) Readers learned about engineering aspects of the project, in which “[s]implicity and ‘clean lines’ are emphasized.” (*Des Moines Register*, August 30, 1964; typical coverage also includes January 10, 1964 and June 3, 1964) The incomplete building even appeared as a backdrop to a fashion story that highlighted new women’s wear and three new Modernistic buildings in Des Moines. (*Des Moines Sunday Register*, March 1, 1964)

Meanwhile, American Republic used the planned building as a selling point for purchasing insurance, advertising nearly nationwide such as in its 1963 *Life* magazine advertisement described above. The company also used the new building as a selling point for hiring new employees, such as this April 1965 want ad: “Clerk-Typist needed immediately. Intelligent young woman 18-40 who can type a minimum of 50 WPM, to work in *beautiful new National Headquarters Building of American Republic Insurance Company.*” (emphasis added; *Des Moines Register*, April 21, 1965) The four-day May 1965 dedication of the American Republic Headquarters Building included a ceremony with Governor Harold Hughes and a public open house. (Figure 11) The story with large photograph states: “The star of the entire weekend has to be the

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building itself. The massive structure, which weights in at 50 million pounds, is made almost entirely out of concrete...." (*Des Moines Register*, May 29, 1965)

Skidmore, Owing & Merrill and Gordon Bunshaft, FAIA: Impact on Modernistic Architecture

The United States-based architectural-engineering firm Skidmore, Owing & Merrill (SOM) has been credited with advancing and popularizing the Internationalist style of architecture along with French architect Le Corbusier and German/Chicago architect Mies van der Rohe. (Adams) The firm began as Chicago-based Skidmore & Owing comprised of architects Louis Skidmore and Nathaniel A. Owings (engineer/architect John O. Merrill joined in 1939). Together, the brothers-in-law had headed the design of the Chicago Century of Progress Exposition of 1933-1934. In the depths of the Depression, in 1936 they began their own firm and quickly expanded to a New York office under Skidmore's direction. Architectural historian and Vassar College professor Nicholas Adams in his book *Skidmore, Owings & Merrill: SOM since 1936*, explains how architect Gordon Bunshaft came to the firm: "[Skidmore] soon hired the architects, 'Skid's boys,' they were called, who would run the New York office for the next thirty years: Robert W. Cutler (1905-1993), a specialist in hospitals; J. Walter Severinghaus (1905-1987), who had three years experience with Adams & Prentice in the area of housing; William S. Brown (1909-1999), an expert in pre-fabricated housing; and the designer, Gordon Bunshaft (1909-1990). They were young, energetic, and efficient." (Adams: 21) Of the four, Adams identifies Bunshaft as "the dominant design personality at Skidmore & Owings, and later at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, for forty-two years." (Adams: 22)

Bunshaft was born in Buffalo, New York, and received his architectural education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (B.Arch, 1933; M.S., 1935). Two fellowships allowed him to travel Europe from 1935 to 1937: MIT Honorary Traveling Fellowship and the Rotch Traveling Fellowship. He joined the newly organized Skidmore & Owings in New York in 1937, then served in World War II with the Army Corps of Engineers from 1942 through 1946. He returned to the firm's New York office to participate in the post-war building boom and made a partner in 1949. Bunshaft was admitted to the American Institute of Architects, New York Chapter, in 1947 and elected to the College of Fellows of the AIA in 1958. Throughout his career, Bunshaft's work garnered awards from the American Institute of Architects and other such organizations—including American Republic's headquarters building. He also was awarded the first ever Arnold W. Brunner Memorial Prize for architecture (1955), the Gold Medal from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters (1984), the Medal of Honor from the New York chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and the Pritzker Architecture Prize (1988). He remained at SOM until his 1979 retirement.

Adams calls Bunshaft "[t]he central design figure in both New York and Chicago.... He was *primus inter pares* [the first among equals]." Until the early 1960s, when other designers became partners, Gordon Bunshaft controlled design at all SOM offices. (Ibid: 22, 24; Krinsky: xiii) (It should be noted that the firm did not release the names of its designers, only attributing designs to the firm as a whole.) Adams examines Bunshaft's design approach, which influenced the firm as a whole:

Bunshaft's critical educational experiences came from his classmates and from the library.

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Le Corbusier was his particular interest. When he moved to Chicago in 1939 to direct work for SOM on the Stevens Hotel [1939] and the Great Lakes [Naval Training Center] Hostess Center [1942], he stimulated a wave of interest in Le Corbusier among the younger staff.... Yet there was nothing doctrinaire about Bunshaft. He approached architecture with the instincts of a fox, drawn from scent to scent.... His training at MIT had disposed him toward Scandinavia, but he expressed his real love in terms of [Romanesque] architectural style.

What did he draw out of these experiences, a remark, recollected by [SOM Chicago office chief of design] Ambrose Richardson (who met one of Bunshaft's MIT classmates) helps explain his apparent indifference to close study and provides a key, if second-hand, insight into his subsequent design method:

"He said, 'Gordon was the kind of guy who would walk around'—and I can just see him—'and look at everybody else's scheme. He didn't necessarily steal your scheme, but he stole the best of every scheme.' When I saw 'stole,' I use his words: 'He stole the best of every scheme, and then he'd put it together and win the prize.' Gordon had a wonderful knack for sifting out."

For Bunshaft, close study was counterproductive. What counted were breadth, variety, and a range of stimuli.... (Adams: 22)

Although Bunshaft's post-war borrowings included superficial samplings from Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier, Bunshaft forged his own architectural vision. Bunshaft biographer Krinsky observes: "Bunshaft was preeminent among the pioneers who made prewar dreams and isolated experiments into a new vernacular. He remained true to this optimistic vision well into the following decade [1960s], although his use of a greater range of materials and his increasing independence from Le Corbusier and Mies allowed him a broader architectural scope." (Krinsky: 77) Adams also finds Bunshaft to be independent of Miesian design: examined Bunshaft's diversion from strict Miesian design:

But whatever the occasional stylistic affinities, Bunshaft was not a Miesian. Unlike Mies, for example, Bunshaft was never dedicated to the idealized values of the modern vernacular. At Lever house, New York (1952), for instance, base and tower are on two grid systems rather than integrated as one. In the Owens-Corning Fiberglas Corporation headquarters, New York (1949), there are (sic) a plethora of materials and texture and, as in the Vinegar Warehouse, a richer color aesthetic. More importantly, perhaps, SOM's clients (trained by Skidmore and Owings at the expositions and fairs) came to SOM for something entirely original to express their ideals and goals and sell their products, rather than a sense of building for the ages. Bunshaft played the role of the gruff, no-nonsense executive pushing clients hard in his direction. (Adams: 27)

SOM's close coordination with corporate clients reflected the firm's postwar interest in pursuing both modern architecture and American organizational methods, according to Adams:

SOM and Bunshaft were especially popular in postwar America's resurgent industry: Owens-Corning (1949); H.J. Heniz (1950); Borden Company (1951); Lever Brothers (1952); Hilton Hotels (1955); Ciba-Geigy (1956, 1958, 1961, 1965); General Electric (1955, 1960); Connecticut General (1957); Reynolds Metal Company (1958); Pepsi-Cola Company (1960); Union Carbide (1960); Delta

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Ai Lines (1960); First City National Bank (1961)... Bunshaft's designs not only expressed business's symbolic modernity, but ... SOM's buildings made good economic sense. Businessmen could spend money to save money! This might entail reorganizing a manufacturing process, as in the Sawyer Biscuit Company, Melrose Park, Illinois (1945)... SOM's approach could also mean applying assembly-line practices to the processing of insurance contracts, as at Connecticut General (1957). Or it might just be good advertising to have a building by SOM, as at Lever House. In this case, direct economic benefits of the design came first and foremost from its use as a tool for recruiting and retaining staff. But there was also the value of Lever House as advertising an appropriate "corporate image." This form of advertising, one public relations expert estimated in 1959, had been worth between \$7 and \$25 million a year. And the effects were even greater in small cities... where the construction of a SOM building was an occasion for celebration. (Adams: 27-28)

In each project, Bunshaft worked to create something new, according to Krinsky: "No matter how successful a building was, Bunshaft never simply repeated a formula when a comparable commission came to SOM." (Krinsky: 62) In the pursuit of new solutions, in the early 1960s, Bunshaft and SOM began to shift in materiality, experimenting with concrete construction. Bunshaft's groundbreaking corporate concrete building was completed in 1963 for glass manufacturing equipment company Emhart Corporation's office and research building (non-extant; note that this building was purchased in 1977 by Connecticut General Life Insurance and later owned by CIGNA; demolished circa 2003). (Rappaport: 32) Set on a pastoral suburban ridge, the symmetrical Emhart building used concrete structurally—including massive precast concrete columns—and decoratively—by acid-etching the gray quartz aggregate. Recessing the aluminum-framed gray glass windows controlled light, provided a window-washing platform, and emphasized the concrete structure—approaches later explored and refined on American Republic's building. Krinsky describes the importance of Emhart: "It was the earliest of his American buildings to be designed in concrete, although others were finished first; its material and formality are characteristic of this moment in Bunshaft's career. This was his first important collaboration with structural engineer Paul Weidlinger. For earlier projects, Bunshaft had postponed extensive collaboration with engineers until the design was well advanced, but from this point on he recognized the desirability" [of early collaboration]. Weidlinger also engineered American Republic. (Krinsky: 138, 140)

Bunshaft also explored concrete in his own early 1960s house (non-extant; see Figures 3-4), as noted by Krinsky as well as *Architectural Record* editor James S. Russell, AIA (now FAIA) in a 2005 story on Bunshaft's house being threatened by demolition:

Gordon Bunshaft was at the height of his powers in 1963, when he designed an elegant weekend pavilion at the edge of Georgica Pond in East Hampton.... [H]is work on projects like the Emhart Corporation, in Bloomfield, Connecticut, and the IBM headquarters, in Armonk, New York, defined a technologically progressive image of the American corporation as it relocated to lush suburbs.

The house Bunshaft built for himself and his wife, Nina, reflected ideas he was working out in corporate and institutional projects. Massive concrete walls faced in travertine marble supported 5-

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foot-wide, precast-concrete double-T beams. A broad glass plane opened to a picturesque vista across the pond, dune, and crashing ocean waves in the distance. It was also, as [Architectural] record noted in 1966, an ideal setting for the couple's art collection. (Russell)

Bunshaft's house reflected the same materials, engineering concepts, and integration of artwork as the architect was pursuing in corporate commissions during the 1960s, including American Republic's headquarters building in Des Moines.

American Republic's building came to the drawing boards as Emhart and the Bunshaft house were nearing completion, and the Des Moines headquarters building incorporates elements of these now-non-extant buildings. Given that those two key early concrete works by Bunshaft have been demolished, this elevates the importance of those that remain including American Republic Insurance Company's headquarters building.

In the 1970 AIA directory, Bunshaft listed his top five principal works as Lever House (New York, 1952), Connecticut General Life Insurance Company (Bloomfield, Connecticut, 1957), Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University (New Haven, Connecticut, 1963), Emhart Corporation (Bloomfield, Connecticut, 1963), and Banque Lambert headquarters (Brussels, Belgium, 1965). (Gane: 120) These projects broke the mold for corporate design, first with Lever House's curtain walls of glass adhered to steel, then with Connecticut General's pastoral suburban campus, and later with Emhart Corporation's concrete and glass form. As noted by the Pritzker Prize: Bunshaft "has been credited with opening a whole new era of skyscraper design with his first major design project in 1952, the 24-story Lever House in New York. Many consider it the keystone of establishing the International Style as corporate America's standard in architecture, at least through the 1970s. In recent years, it has been declared a historic landmark, New York's most contemporary structure to hold that distinction." ("Gordon Bunshaft, 1988 Laureate, Biography")

Bunshaft took the same approach in Lever House as in his other projects, finding rational solutions to twentieth-century architectural challenges. The consistent although never stagnant approach to Modernism employed by Bunshaft and SOM created an identifiable body of work, according to art and architectural historian and architect Stanford Anderson in a forward to Krinsky's Bunshaft biography:

Throughout the Bunshaft years, there is recognizable in the vast production of SOM a sufficient coherence that one might identify a corporate agenda: a commitment to the inventions and abstract formal constructs of modernism; a will to serve, unstintingly, the large corporate institutions through rationalized and often innovative planning; and an unswerving pursuit of available technology. These were accomplished technocrats. Other large architectural firms of the period—Harrison and Abramovitz, Hellmuth, Obata and Kassabaum, Welton Becket, and Vincent Kling, for example—do not reveal such consistency.... Other large firms rarely matched SOM in formal control or inventive execution. (Stanford Anderson in Krinsky: xi)

Echoing Anderson's assessment on the consistent greatness of SOM's body of work under Bunshaft's direction, the international Pritzker Architectural Prize, awarded to Bunshaft in 1988, recognized his

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contributions to architecture. Bunshaft was named a Pritzker Laureate along with fellow Modernistic architect Oscar Niemeyer of Brazil. In an essay for awarding the prize, architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable summarized:

Gordon Bunshaft has defined the corporate headquarters building, a structure as important for our commercial culture as the palace and the church were for an earlier royal or religious age, with consummate art and skill. If we demur at the symbolism we deny reality; it does not make these suave skin skyscrapers and stunning office palazzi less dazzling achievements.... Together, these two architects summarize and signify the range and character of the modern movement. They have helped define and shape the century's art and institutions. ..." (Huxtable)

Huxtable's recognition of Bunshaft as a leader in re-imagining corporate headquarters buildings bears particular weight in regard to the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters building, given that it was one of Bunshaft's and SOM's early concrete corporate headquarters designs and is a rare surviving and intact extant example of this pioneering work. In this way, the building bears particular significance, likely on a national level, given further research.

To recap, Bunshaft has personally received many distinguished architecture awards, as have his 38 SOM projects for which he was lead designer. For his body of work he was awarded the Gold Medal of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. In total, Bunshaft's designs for which he was partner in charge of design won twelve First Honor Awards from the American Institute of Architects—including for the American Republic Headquarters Building; the list below shows the project name, location, and year that the AIA First Honor Award was given:

- Lever House, Lever Brothers Company Headquarters, New York City: 1952
 - Manufacturers Trust Company, Fifth Avenue branch, New York City: 1956
 - Connecticut General Life Insurance Company, headquarters, Bloomfield, Connecticut: 1958
 - Pepsi-Cola Company, headquarters, New York City: 1961
 - Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York: 1963
 - Emhart Corporation, headquarters, Bloomfield, Connecticut: 1964
 - Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut: 1964
 - **American Republic Insurance Company, headquarters, Des Moines: 1967**
 - Banque Lambert, headquarters, Brussels, Belgium: 1967
 - American Can Company, headquarters, Greenwich, Connecticut: 1973
 - Hajj Terminal, King Abdulaziz International Airport, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: 1983
 - National Commercial Bank, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: 1987
- (Krinsky: xiii, 335-339; SOM)

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**Significance of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building as a
Bunshaft/SOM Design**

Potential National Significance

Bunshaft's designs have garnered numerous awards, the American Republic Insurance Headquarters being no exception, winning the American Institute of Architects' 1967 National Honor Award, one of two new office buildings (along with Eero Saarinen's CBS headquarters building) to receive the award that year. (*Des Moines Register*, May 16, 1967; Powell Jr: 11). The American Republic building also received the 1963 Award of Merit from the National Prestressed Concrete Institute. These awards recognized the American Republic building among its peers (other buildings of its time).

The building received other honorary recognition via national and local press. The February 1966 issue of *Progressive Architecture*, a leading periodical covering modern architecture, featured the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building on its cover and detailed the building in full feature story. (Figure 20) In the story, Powell Jr. stated: "We are a better insurance firm for working with SOM on this. They're tough for a client to work with, but clients wind up more efficient for the experience." (*Progressive Architecture*, as quoted in Krinsky: 149)

An in-depth July 1966 *Life* magazine story about the CBS Saarinen-designed New York City headquarters and American Republic SOM-designed Des Moines headquarters highlighted the integration of efficiency and artwork within American Republic design. (Figures 21-22) The article also detailed the positive bottom line impacts it had for the Des Moines firm in a section titled "Iowa edifice with pop art, 'no fat':"

Like the CBS headquarters in the East, one of the most thoroughly integrated buildings of recent times has become the talk of the Midwest. It is the Des Moines, Iowa, headquarters of the American Republic Insurance Co. whose activities involve extensive processing of papers by an assembly line of employes (sic). To provide for—and dramatize—these operations, the architectural firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill designed a bold and succinct structure with vast glass-walled areas, running the entire width of the building.

Because of its trim appearance—"there is no fat on this building," says one of its architects—most of the interiors were restricted to subdued tones and discreet modern furnishings, selected or specially designed to "follow the architecture exactly." But President Watson Powell Jr., a zealous champion of contemporary art, enlivened the walls with more than a hundred paintings and prints by American and foreign artists....

The bulk of the company's business is handled in gigantic rooms, 66x90 feet, which are filled with rows of desks that line up with the modules of the walls. Every clerical desk in the building is of the same design so that, says Watson Powell, instead of a mélange of furniture, establishing status by décor, the people themselves become the important feature, the decoration. But art share the limelight with the people. Chosen over the past three years by Powell and his wife and the executive vice president, it appears on almost every wall—"not just in officer country."

The impact of the building has been decisive. More than 10,000 visitors have flocked to see

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it. The president reports that, since moving into the building last year, his business volume has increased 47%, mostly owing to the surging morale of employees. "Our people look different; they dress differently. The increase in efficiency has been just terrific." Even the "imposed discipline" which prohibits personal knickknacks on desks or walls has not diminished the enthusiasm. "We came from chaos," Powell declares, "to this unique and elegant building where people are permitted to work in the most beautiful, most dignified, quietest working conditions in America." (Welles: 54-56)

In the closing section of the feature, titled "How it feels to live in Total Design," Powell Jr. detailed the reasons behind the Des Moines headquarters design decisions:

.... In overseeing their building's design, top executives at CBS and American Republic had public image very much in mind. Blending of exteriors with interiors would help put across their companies' concern with art, culture and good taste and make it part of a strong "corporate identity." They excitedly embraced the view of architects that the once-prosaic office building could become an integrated art form.

.... Integrated-art-form people say stern rules do not restrict the individual. They liberate him, improve him. Says Watson Powell, Jr., whose company hums with the latest computers and mechanizations "Taking care of the individual's office frees him from meaningless petty considerations. A wonderful thing happens. He is free to express himself as never before." The "thinking environment" of bold, contemporary art at American Republic, he says, "inspires intellectual thought, gives people courage to innovate, shocks the unwashed into extending their horizons."

.... Finally, it seems, the integrated-art-form helps the individual blend into the organization. "Nobody works as individuals," says Powell. "This is a team effort. People need to feel the team idea."

Though many admit that the new control concept takes getting used to, reaction by CBS and American Republic employes (sic) to the new buildings is generally very favorable. Compared to their old drab quarters, most agree the new structures are better lit, more decorative and more comfortable. Many American Republic workers show up early for work to drink a leisurely cup of coffee in the spacious art-and-greenery filled lounge...." (Welles: 59)

On a national level, American Republic has continually been recognized as a watershed work, receiving recognition within the architectural world at the time of construction and after. In bestowing the Honor Ward of the American Institute of Architects, the awards jury described the building thusly: "A powerful integration of utility, structure, and mechanical systems. There is a delightful sequence of scale and space as one enters the court; it is unique to this size building in an urban setting." (*Des Moines Register*, May 16, 1967)

As discussed above, architectural critics and historians including Huxley, Adams, and Anderson have credited Bunshaft with creating new Modernistic design aesthetics for corporate buildings—first in glass and steel, then concrete and glass, and later post-1970 work for which this nomination does not focus. Bunshaft biographer Krinsky points to Bunshaft's elegant solutions to practical design as an attraction point for corporate clients, including American Republic: "Bunshaft is a master at achieving

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inventiveness within a dignified framework, an important consideration for clients who are leaders in business and industry. Sometimes he emphasized advanced aesthetics, as at Lever House. At other times, he concentrated on the integration of aesthetic and mechanical features as at Connecticut General and **American Republic Life.**" (emphasis added; Krinsky: 262) Krinsky also addressed the steel hinge units as a unique feature of the building. The original 1965 SOM construction specifications, under Section 8A – Steel Column Hinges, included details noting zero-tolerance between the faying (bearing) surfaces of the hinge plates and also called out for the bearing plates to have a coating of grease for the prevention of rust and installed prior to the erection of the final "Steel Hinge Unit". This "Steel Hinge Unit" was a common structural element that SOM and Gordon Bunshaft used in his buildings around this time period, including Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, 1963, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut; Banque Lambert, 1965, Headquarters, Brussels, Belgium; and International Business Machines Corporation, 1964, Headquarters, Armonk, New York. (Kempton)

In a 1989 oral history interview with the Chicago Art Institute, Bunshaft spoke of his shift from designing glass and metal buildings—what he called "precision buildings like Lever or Chase or Pepsi-Cola.... [a]nd Connecticut General"—to working with concrete—including the early concrete corporate headquarters building for American Republic Insurance Company:

The big change occurred when we did the Emhart Building [Connecticut; nonextant]. It's a little building that floats. The big change there was we went to concrete. We wanted a building that would float, and we therefore needed ... these mushroom columns or tree columns underneath, and that could only be done in concrete, which gives you more flexibility. So from then on, we got involved with concrete, and that gives you different design aesthetics, a different weight of elements.... Going from one material to another, you do a different solution. We got into big spans for office spaces. We did a building in Des Moines [**American Republic Insurance Co. headquarters building**] where there were hundred-foot* spans. We integrated the mechanical with it, and those were technical developments that led to what I felt was an interesting design. That was further explored on American Can [1970], which had sixty-foot spans and had the exposed duct works that were aesthetically right and served as light fixtures, acoustics, and air conditioning. (emphasis added; *actual spans of American Republic measure 90 feet; Bunshaft: 202-203)

It is important to note that SOM has designed only two buildings in Des Moines: American Republic (1965) and Capital Square (1984), an office building and skywalk hub with interior eight-story atrium court characterized as an example of hygienic early 1980s Modernism. (Gebhard and Mansheim: 202)

Local Significance

Even before the building was completed, it was hailed as a boon for downtown and the city of Des Moines as a whole. (*Des Moines Tribune*, May 13, 1964) In September 1965, architectural historian and University of California at Berkeley professor Allan Temko, surveyed the city from the air and ground. Among other findings, he praised two new downtown buildings: SOM's American Republic headquarters and van der Rohe's Home Federal Savings & Loan Association. "These two building are great assets to downtown Des

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Moines," he said. "The American Republic Building is a prodigious civic contribution, and in the Home Federal building you have the dignity of Mies which is magnificent." (*Des Moines Register*, September 24, 1965)

In an October 1965 *Des Moines Sunday Register* Picture magazine cover story about the importance of Modernistic architecture in Des Moines, art and architecture critic George Shane retraced the steps of modernism in Des Moines and singled out American Republic—calling it "a work of art containing works of art"—as one of two key new buildings downtown:

In a time when seemingly, no street or city can be saved for the joy of the past, the inventory of Des Moines' mid-twentieth-century growth seems well on the credit side. What had begun at the Des Moines Art Center [Eliel Saarinen design, 1948] continued at Drake University. The Eero Saarinen building brought new beauty to the school's postwar growth.... Harry Weese & Associates continue with a pleasing variation of the Saarinen concept.

There is also at Drake, Meredith Hall, a new [Ludwig Mies] van der Rohe school of journalism, and then downtown van der Rohe's Home Federal Savings and Loan Association building. Up Sixth Avenue from the van der Rohe building is the **American Republic Insurance Co. building, a Skidmore, Owings & Merrill creation.**

An astute architectural observer said these two buildings give Des Moines "a new axis of beauty—the van der Rohe Black Temple on the lower downtown level and the White Temple of Skidmore up the street—and in a way, not unlike the building pattern of the Acropolis." (emphasis added; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, October 31, 1965)

At the time of American Republic's construction (1963-1965), downtown was in the midst in one of the largest construction surges on record. The coming of the Interstate 235 freeway system north of downtown and the availability of urban renewal funding resulted in local government and business leaders literally scraping away acres of the central core of Des Moines, particularly the northern edge of downtown near the freeway, near the American Republic site. (Figures 12-13) Upon this cleared and leveled land were built many Modernistic structures in the 1950s and 1960s. A consistent theme with newspaper reporting and downtown Des Moines booster advertising on these construction projects is the repeated inclusion of American Republic Insurance Company as an outstanding example of what was then-called "contemporary architecture." (Figure 10, typical example; other typical examples include *Des Moines Tribune*, May 13, 1964; *Des Moines Register*, October 1, 1964; *Des Moines Register*, June 6 and June 20, 1967)

In a variety of other local records and lists, American Republic has been noted as an architecturally important building. These include a 1974 architectural windshield survey of Des Moines, focused on historic preservation, which recorded American Republic's headquarters despite it not even being a decade old. (Elmets) Krinsky assessed the building's importance in her 1988 biography of Bunshaft: "Two decades of construction have introduced taller and more imposing buildings to Des Moines, but the intelligently conceived, ingenious ... insurance headquarters remains one of the finest examples of commercial architecture in the city." (Krinsky: 149-150) The 1993 Society of Architectural Historians book *Buildings of*

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Iowa includes the building in its survey of important architecture in the state, stating "Bunshaft perfectly translated into concrete, glass, and steel the client's ideal of creating a 'clerical factory'" with six drawer-like stories suspended over a walled compound. (Gebhard and Mansheim: 201) The American Institute of Architects, Iowa Chapter, selected the building as one of 50 most important projects of the twentieth century built in Iowa, in its book *A Century of Iowa Architecture, 1900-1999*. (American Institute of Architects, Iowa Chapter: 74-75)

American Republic also received much press about and tens of thousands of visitors to see the building and its art collection. A January 1965 column covered the exhibit at the Des Moines Art Center of the "magnificent" American Republic collection of art that would hang in the new headquarters building once it was complete. (*Des Moines Sunday Register*, January 10, 1965) Once opened, the art collection became a major public relations opportunity to engage the public and press. The company offered free Sunday afternoon tours open to the public plus special group tours, accommodating some 20,000 visitors its first two years. (Powell Jr.: 27) In a June 1965 arts column about free tours open to the public of the American Republic building and art collection, the arts and architecture critic described the experience of the new building:

With the great proliferation of contemporary architecture it is now difficult, at times, to tell a bank from a church. Churches are no longer neo-Gothic and bank have rejected the massive stone wall exteriors and teller cages in favor of light airy rooms.

Now, right here in Des Moines, we have an insurance company headquarters that looks like an art museum. This is all to the good and proof is to be found in the new American Republic building at Sixth avenue and Keosauqua way.

The American Republic building, a creation of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, is open for business—and guided tours. Everyone in this city who looks at downtown Des Moines now is familiar with the exterior of the building. But a tour through the interior is a rewarding experience.

As one enters the outer court, where Alexander Calder's stabile, "Spunk the Monk," stands, the visitor may be convinced he must be in some avant-garde art museum. In the lobby and the other rooms, there is nothing to dispel this illusion—unless the eye strays from the paintings to the employees at their desks.

There are many things which may be said about the décor—everywhere there has been every effort to achieve the closest approach to perfection and the effort continues. For example, there are 16 exposed screw heads on one wall panel. Although the screw heads are smaller than the end of a lead pencil, they will be recessed and become invisible.

The contemporary works of art on the walls give the building its high art museum status. There is a tapestry by Le Corbusier and an oil painting by Hans Hofmann, and work by many other artists with international reputations. Requests have been made to borrow works from the collection for future exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum in New York, N.Y., the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C., the Tate Gallery of London, England, and the Bienal of Sao Paulo, Brazil.

As we toured the new building, we heard one woman say: "I now feel like I have caught up

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with the space age.”

....Tours will continue on Sundays from 1:30-4 p.m. as long as requests are received.” (*Des Moines Sunday Register*, June 13, 1965)

Nearly two years after its opening, groups continued to take tours such as the Des Moines Chapter of the Brandeis University National Women’s Committee, which ran a news brief about its back-to-back tours of the Des Moines Art Center and the American Republic Insurance Building in a mega-day of art. (*Des Moines Sunday Register*, March 7, 1967) And students toured as part of classes, such as an Ankeny High School art class in December 1967. (*Des Moines Register*, December 2, 1967)

The company used the completed building liberally in its advertisements and promotional materials, such as the 1966 “Americare” four-color 16-page brochure that showed demonstrating the foresight and forward-thinking nature of the company as a bid to attract business in a competitive marketplace. (American Republic 1966) Use of the building within marketing and publicity materials continued at least until the late 1980s. (Busick) American Republic continues to make its art available to the public via loans to museums and limited tours. Building-wide tours have been suspended in order to comply with the 1996 federal HIPPA health privacy and security regulations, in order that American Republic as a health insurance provider can protect the confidentiality of individually identifiable health information. (Johnson)

In summary, the Des Moines community recognized the American Republic Headquarters Building as an important addition to the downtown skyline from the time of its announced construction onward.

Conclusion

The American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building is a locally significant example of Modern Movement corporate architecture. Nearly fifty years after the original structure was completed, it remains a standout on the Des Moines skyline. The eight-story building appears larger than life due to its location on a ridge, with its strong bright white exposed concrete aggregate exterior with dramatically recessed gray-bronze tinted window walls suspended on black steel hinges atop slender concrete columns—all hovering over the clear glass second story. Efficient in detailing, with no extraneous decoration, the concrete and glass design was crafted to promote efficiency of the workers within. Through collaborative and innovative engineering and experimental use of materials, along with integration of artwork, the building’s chief designer, architect Gordon Bunshaft, and the team he led achieved a new style of corporate headquarters in Des Moines—and one of the first of its kind wrought by Bunshaft and Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM).

As one of the first partners at SOM and the chief designer for the entire firm through 1960, Bunshaft singlehandedly shaped and reshaped the firm’s body of work. Through pioneering commissions for corporate clients in particular, Bunshaft forged a third way between the ideals of Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe that ushered in a new midcentury era of corporate headquarters buildings such as American Republic Insurance Company’s.

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Even before construction was completed, the American Republic Headquarters Building became a symbol for the remaking of downtown Des Moines. The company and its parent company, American Enterprise Group, continue to reside in the headquarters building, which is mostly intact and strongly exhibits as a SOM/Bunshaft work. The high level of integrity of historic materials inside and outside the building reflect the pride in and careful maintenance of the building, as well as the company's and building's strong and continued relevance to downtown Des Moines.

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10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters is located at 601 Sixth Avenue, constructed on Lots 5, 6, 7, and 8 in Block L of Grimmel's Addition to Fort Des Moines.

Boundary Justification

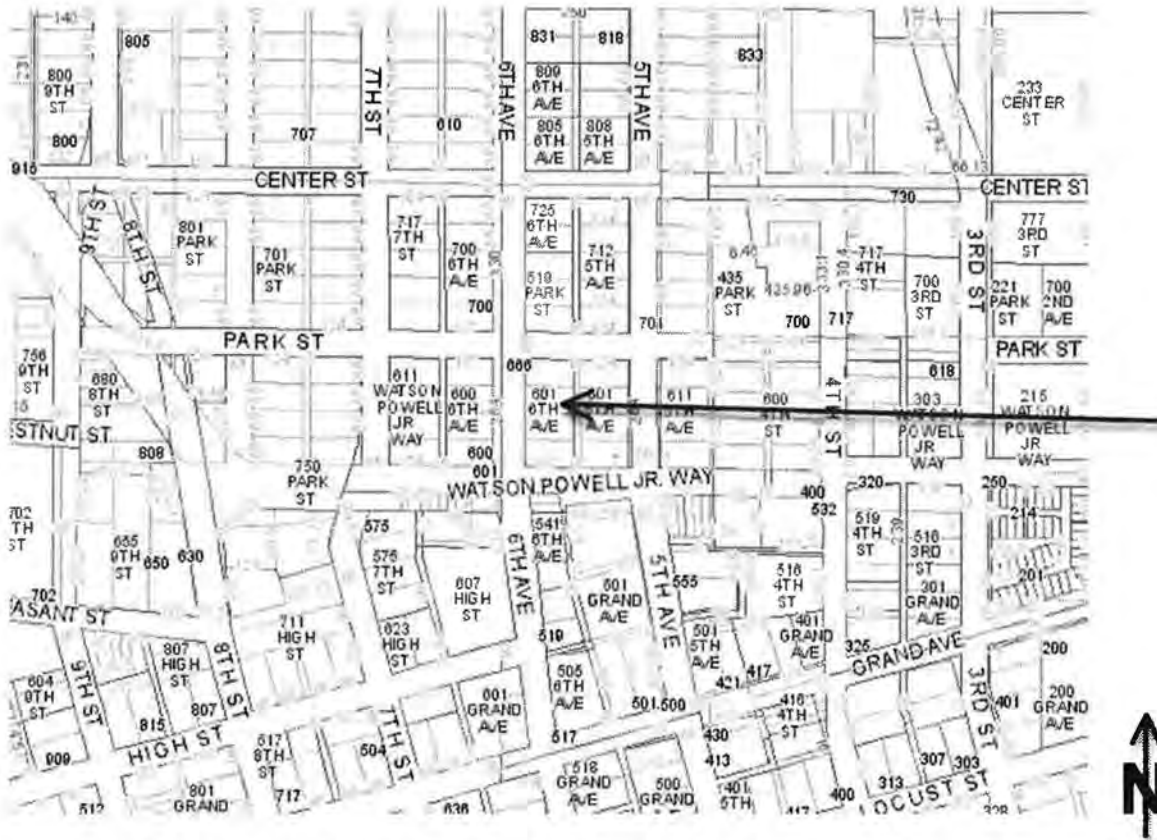
The boundary includes the headquarters building on its original parcel historically associated with the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building.

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Figure 1. Parcel Map, 2014



(Source: Polk County Assessor's Office, <http://web.assess.co.polk.ia.us>, accessed May 2014)

The horizontal arrow points to the location of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building, 601 Sixth Avenue, Des Moines.

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Figure 2. Downtown Des Moines Commercial District Map, 2014



(Source: Google Map via Polk County Assessor's Office, <http://web.assess.co.polk.ia.us>, accessed May 2014)

The horizontal arrow points to the location of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building, 601 Sixth Avenue. The Des Moines River is to the east (right side of the map), with main east-west arterials crossing via bridges. Interstate 235 is to the north (at the top) with north-south arterials intersecting and crossing via bridges; Sixth Avenue is one such downtown commercial district arterial.

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Figures 3-4. Gordon Bunshaft and his house, Travertine House



(Source: Carol Herselle Krinsky, *Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill*. New York/Cambridge, Massachusetts: Architectural History Foundation and MIT Press, 1988: pp. 135-136)

Architect Gordon Bunshaft, FAIA, and wife, Nina, at their Long Island, New York, house while it was under construction, 1962. The house, sometimes called Travertine House, was Bunshaft's only residential design. It was completed in 1963 and demolished in circa 2005. Note the ceiling beam treatment and glass wall in the photo at right.

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Figure 5. American Republic Headquarters design, *Life* magazine advertisement, July 1963



**BUILDING FOR
THE FUTURE...
"THE AMERICAN WAY"**
New National Headquarters Building
of American Republic Insurance
Company, Des Moines. When completed
in late 1963, it will be the new home of
one of the fastest growing, most
thriftful health insurance companies
in America today.

**A Thought-Provoking Statement About
Health Care "The American Way"**

The American Way of life is full of time-honored traditions.

Imagine America without baseball... 4th of July celebrations... apple pie... Sunday School... the fishing season... the circus... cowboy and Indian... Thanksgiving dinner. Traditions like these are dear to our hearts. It is also an American tradition that our loved ones are entitled to hospital and medical care, without having to give up their well-being.

That's what over 120 million Americans are counting on their own money, and money and peace of mind by investing in private health care protection.

That's the American way... to own his own freedom... and their ability -- to own his own assets.

American Republic Insurance Company is proud to play a part in this great American tradition. We are proud to provide the kind of health insurance and service to our policy holders that has come to be known as "The American Way."

What is this way? What is it that has made American Republic a living, breathing part of nearly a trillion lives, well-wishing American people?

One big reason, we think, is that we believe in people -- not just "policy." We believe that the people who depend on us are entitled to the most modern protection and the most modern service that we can provide.

And the second reason that they believe in us. Last year alone, we at American Republic resolved thousands and thousands of "What

you" letters from our policyholders, expressing their appreciation for the Company's prompt, fair payment of claims.

Yes, let the record show that in the last 5-year period (1958-62) inclusive, among the top 45 insurance companies writing individual accident and health policies, American Republic RANKS FIRST in percent of premium dollars paid to policyholders to claim benefits. We are proud to offer health insurance that pays.

Our reason for the people who are our policyholders has led us to be a little more particular in our dealings with them -- to feel a little more responsible for their well-being -- to be a little bit different in the way we do business.

We believe that every one of our policyholders has such basic rights as:

1. **The RIGHT to know and understand the full provisions of his policies.** (A simple, complete explanation is included with every American Republic policy.)
2. **The RIGHT to file a claim the minute he needs to do so.** (A claim form and a pre-arranged return envelope are included right with our policies, and a new claim form is sent with each claim payment.)
3. **The RIGHT to fast, worry-free claim service.** You will find no "claim adjusters" at American Republic. We have Claim Payors, and their instructions are to PAY claims -- not to "adjust" or "settle."
4. **The RIGHT to flexible protection--not an inflexible, rigid policy designed to fit an "average" family in an "average" community in "average" essential circumstances.** (Instead, American Republic provides **TAILORCUT** Protection Plans--a selection of modern, standardized

protection "units" that can be put together like building blocks to provide the hospital, medical, surgical, nursing and doctor care benefits needed to protect each specific individual or family.)

In the ways you have just read, and in others as well, American Republic offers to the American people the opportunity, the freedom and the ability to care for their own -- and of most, really cost.

This, we submit, is the American tradition in action.

American Republic has just passed its 100th birthday. It has just completed the biggest year in its history. Now, increased to 43 states and serving nearly a million Americans, American Republic is recognized as one of the fastest growing firms in the fast growing insurance industry.

It is to be sure, better serve its ever-growing family of policyholders that American Republic is constructing its new National Headquarters building shown above. This building was specifically designed by the world-renowned architectural firm of Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill to provide the most modern and efficient facilities for fast, accurate and personalized service to policyholders. At the same time, it is a masterpiece of unusual grace and beauty. Most consider it a most perfect blending of the practical and the aesthetic.

If your own insurance coverage has not kept pace with today's higher health care costs, we invite you to read the facts now about "The Secret of Buying Hospital Insurance That PAYS!" They are on the page at the right, which also tells about American Republic's new Special Whole Life Insurance.

Copyright © 1963, American Republic Insurance Company

(Source: American Republic Insurance Company, advertisement: "A Thought-Provoking Statement About Health Care 'The American Way,'" *Life* magazine, July 5, 1963: 76; viewed on Google Books, accessed May 2014)

American Republic used the headquarters design by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill for public relations and marketing purposes. This July 1963 advertisement in *Life* magazine specifically references the advantages the building will bring to company performance and service. The image may be a photograph of a three-dimensional model, and depicts the north and west elevations.

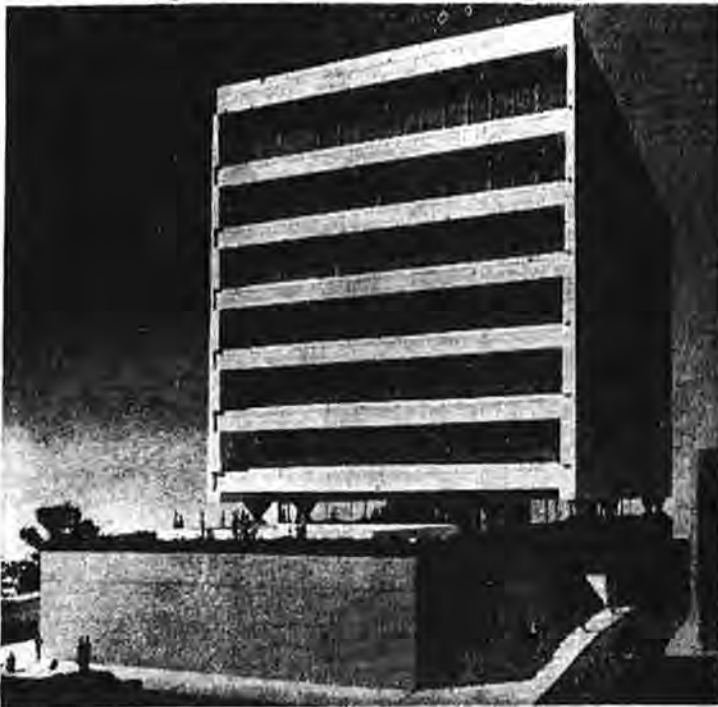
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Figure 6. American Republic Headquarters design announcement, *New York Times*, September 1963

'Box' on Legs to Hold Insurance Company's Offices



A massive, box-like building that at first glance resembles a series of shelves has been designed for the national headquarters of the American Republic Insurance Company in Des Moines, Iowa. The building, which rests on four legs, has the impact of

a huge concrete block, but the architects, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, had more in mind than architectural effect. Since an insurance company's basic activity is clerical, the first objective was to provide large column-free areas for the company's office force of 600. At the same time, the

architects wanted to make the east and west walls solid to control glare and to minimize the air-conditioning needed. The architectural firm's solution was to design large "T" beams for the structure, giving each floor two large
Continued on Page 10, Column 8

The New York Times
Published September 22, 1963
Copyright © The New York Times

('Box' on Legs to Hold Insurance Company's Office," *New York Times*, September 22, 1963: Section 8 (Real Estate) pages 1, 10. viewed on nytimes.com, accessed May 2014)

The Skidmore, Owings & Merrill design made the front page of the *New York Times* Real Estate Section in this September 1963 story. The image may be a photograph of a three-dimensional model, and depicts the south and east elevations. Note the alley, shown to the right of the building.

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Figures 7-8. American Republic summer construction coverage, *Des Moines Register*, August 1964



("Patterns of Progress in a Summer Sky," *Des Moines Sunday Register*, August 30, 1964, *Picture* magazine: 18-19.)

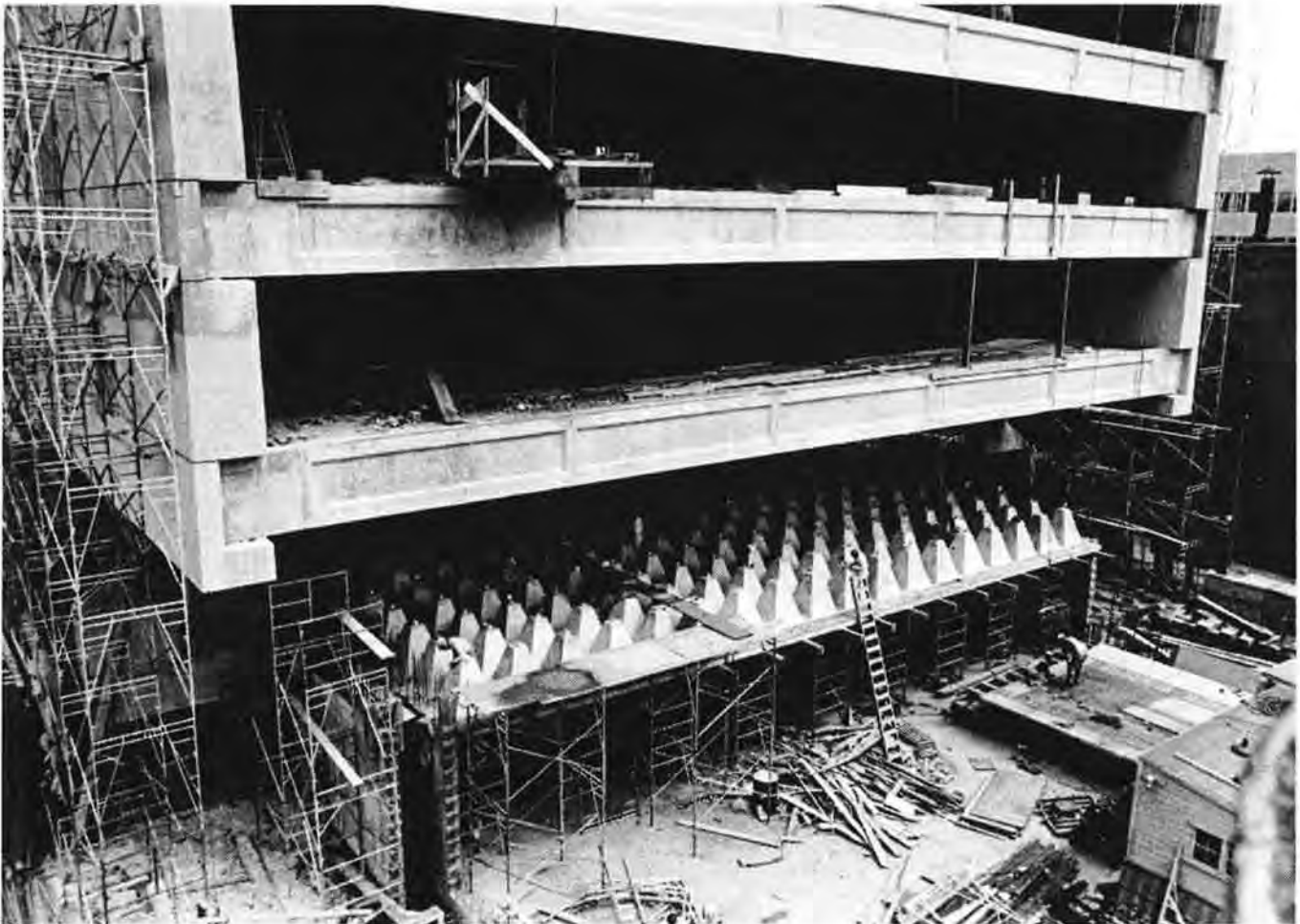
The *Des Moines Register* gave the American Republic Headquarters project high-profile coverage throughout construction, dedication, and occupancy during the 1960s. Here is a typical example: August 1964, photographers captured ironworkers and carpenters at work, in a two-page photo spread in the *Des Moines Sunday Register Picture* magazine. The *Register* had strong Iowa-wide distribution during this era, so readers throughout the state followed the construction project.

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Figure 9. American Republic construction, circa 1964



(Historic photograph in the collection of American Republic Insurance Company archives.)

This circa-1964 construction photograph shows work in progress on all levels of the building, including the coffered ceiling on the first floor (resembles an egg carton).

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Figure 10. American Republic as symbol of downtown progress, *Des Moines Register*, January 1965



("Forward! Des Moines," *Des Moines Sunday Register*, January 10, 1965: 16B.)

Numerous Des Moines booster advertisements included the American Republic headquarters building as an example of the new, modern face of the downtown. A typical example: This full-page Des Moines Chamber of Commerce ad in the *Des Moines Sunday Register* shows eight Modernistic newly built, under-construction, and yet-to-be-built projects. The caption for American Republic reads: "Not yet completed, this structure dominates the 601 Sixth Avenue landscape."

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Figure 11. American Republic dedication, *Des Moines Register*, May 1965



American Republic Dedicates 'Home'

Employees of American Republic Insurance Co. walk through employee lounge in the new building at Sixth avenue and Kossuth way, Friday after dedication of the building by President Watson

Powell, Jr. A series of special events for company representatives is scheduled this weekend. Open house for the public will be Sunday, June 13, with public tours after that on request.

DEDICATE NEW BUILDING HERE

The American Republic Insurance Co., the nation's eleventh ranked health and accident insurance underwriter, Friday dedicated its new \$13 million headquarters building in Des Moines.

Gov. Harold Hughes and firm vice president Watson Powell, Jr. led the short dedication service on the lobby of the new structure, which is supported almost entirely by eight massive steel columns.

Hughes said simplicity and the impressive building was indicative of the "streamlined style" Iowa has made in recent years in industrial and cultural growth.

The ceremony was the highlight of a full day of dedication activities which opened by that the firm had submitted the building plan to the state board of health and health insurance.

The star of the entire weekend has to be the building itself. The massive structure, which weighs in at 50 million pounds, is made almost entirely of concrete.

...and strength will give the security and strength of the company. But, the design was arrived at more for its function than for its appearance.

"The columnless area inside the building allows us to arrange our work force efficiently, Powell said the building is functionally on assembly-line process and the clean-up rooms also help to organize the work most effectively."

The structure is paid for from surplus funds of the company. Powell said the building is considered a "wise and prudent investment of funds" as a hedge against inflation.

As soon as the year was completed, Senate leaders promptly filed their bills, largely by word of mouth, to Congress.

He had thought his "bill" was "in" in order to file a resolution to reconsider.

The House was considering the \$150-million yearly appropriation to the State Board of Health for operation of its institutions.

The new method for computing amounts essential for health

SENATE ROW ON MENTAL COSTS

By Alan Bruckner
An adopted amendment had opponents said would increase state cost by \$12,000 for operation of its four mental hospitals and four mental hospitals caused early adjournment of the Iowa Senate Friday afternoon.

The amendment, passed 25-17, would drop to 20 per cent, rather than 30 per cent, the amount of state funds to be allocated to mental hospitals.

As soon as the year was completed, Senate leaders promptly filed their bills, largely by word of mouth, to Congress.

He had thought his "bill" was "in" in order to file a resolution to reconsider.

The House was considering the \$150-million yearly appropriation to the State Board of Health for operation of its institutions.

The new method for computing amounts essential for health

Report Railroad To Buy Veliscol

A North Western spokesman said he could neither confirm nor deny the report of the regulations. Jim F. Kirk, executive vice-president of Veliscol, expressed amazement "at the way these stories get around. You have misinterpretation," he said.

However, according to a usually reliable source, directors of the North Western are expecting a meeting to be called for June 15 in des Moines — and possibly vote on — the acquisition.

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("American Republic Dedicates 'Home'," *Des Moines Register*, May 29, 1965: 13.)

The four-day May 1965 dedication of the American Republic Headquarters Building included a ceremony with Governor Harold Hughes and a public open house. The story states: "The star of the entire weekend has to be the building itself. The massive structure, which weights in at 50 million pounds, is made almost entirely out of concrete...." The lobby appears to be pictured, although the caption states employee lounge.

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Figure 12. Historic downtown aerial photograph, circa 1965



(Source: Iowa Department of Transportation's Historic Archives Digital Collections, AERIAL VIEWS-16064850.jpg, photo ID HA12.043.0112; <http://historicalphotos.iowadot.gov/Main.aspx>, accessed May 2014)

This circa-1965 photograph shows Interstate 235 and the central business district to the south (top of photo), looking south. The horizontal arrow points to the location of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building, 601 Sixth Avenue, Des Moines.

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Figure 13. Historic downtown aerial photograph, circa 1965



(Source: Iowa Department of Transportation's Historic Archives Digital Collections, AERIAL VIEWS-16064850.jpg, photo ID HA12.043.0112; <http://historicalphotos.iowadot.gov/Main.aspx>, accessed May 2014)

This detail of the circa-1965 aerial in the previous figure (looking south) shows the then-new American Republic Headquarters building, with the public alley separating the building from another insurance company's building to the east (left).

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Figure 14. Historic exterior photograph of American Republic Headquarters Building, 1968



(Source: Imageworks, Art, Architecture and Engineering Library, University of Michigan, "American Republic Insurance Company, Southwest," 35 mm film type, filing number 1U59 2 D39 8.2 A64e, gift of Edward Olencki. Available at http://quod.lib.umich.edu/u/ummu/x-05-04471/05_04471, accessed May 2014.)

This historic view of the southwest corner of the building shows an exterior that looks nearly identical to the 2014 view of the building. Note the "tight site," given the previously existing building to the east of the American Republic headquarters.

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Figure 15. Historic exterior photograph of American Republic Headquarters Building, 1968



(Source: Imageworks, Art, Architecture and Engineering Library, University of Michigan, "American Republic Insurance Company, Southwest," 35 mm film type, filing number 1U59 2 D39 8.2 A64e, gift of Edward Olencki. Available at http://quod.lib.umich.edu/u/ummu/x-05-04470/05_04470, accessed May 2014.)

This historic view of the northwest corner of the building shows an exterior that looks nearly identical to the 2014 view of the building. Note the recessed window opening on the first floor level (near the sidewalk).

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Figure 16. Historic American Republic interior photograph, lobby/entrance court, circa 1965



(Source: Undated photograph in the collection of American Republic Insurance Company archives.)

This historic view of the lobby, looking south out into the entrance court, shows two spaces that look nearly the same in 2014. The character-defining elements of these spaces remain intact, including the seamless coffered ceiling, window wall, marble lobby floor, and granite and aggregate walls in both spaces.

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Figure 17. Historic American Republic interior photograph, computer room, circa 1965



(Source: Undated photograph in the collection of American Republic Insurance Company archives.)

This historic view of the computer room looks west. The narrow ribbon of windows on the north wall is visible on the left side of the photo; these windows were covered from the interior in the 1970s due to security concerns. Although the IBM equipment for which this specialty room was designed to accommodate no longer exists, the room has continued to house computer servers.

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Figure 18. Historic American Republic interior photograph, president's office, circa 1965



(Source: Undated photograph in the collection of American Republic Insurance Company archives.)

This historic view of the eighth-floor president's office (Watson Powell Jr.'s personal office) shows a space that looks nearly the same in 2014, at which time the room is used as a conference room. The window wall in this room looks south over the downtown commercial district.

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Figure 19. American Republic as seen from the northeast, circa 1965



(Untitled, undated newspaper clipping, thought to be a 1965 *Des Moines Register* image, posted on Lost Des Moines website.)

The photo shows American Republic's building (arrow) on the east and north elevations from Fifth Avenue, perhaps at Center Street or slightly north. The double-arrow points to the adjoining half-block (600 Fifth Avenue) later acquired by American Republic.

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Figure 20. American Republic as Progressive Architecture cover story, February 1966



(Source: *Progressive Architecture*, "No Corn in Iowa," Issue 47, February 1966: 144-151.)

The Gordon Bunshaft's design of the American Republic Headquarters Building made the front cover of the February 1966 issue of *Progressive Architecture*. The columns and hinges pictured front Sixth Avenue.

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Figure 21. Architectural design is covered in *Life* magazine, April 1966



(Source: Welles, Chris. "Total Design on a Grand Scale" (story about AIA Honor Award office buildings CBS and American Republic headquarters), *Life* magazine, April 29, 1966: 54. Available online from Google books; accessed April 2014.)

Life magazine profiled two AIA Honor Award-winning office buildings, American Republic's Des Moines headquarters and CBS's New York headquarters (designed by Saarinen) in an in-depth 1966 story.

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Figure 22. Architectural design is covered in *Life* magazine, April 1966



(Source: Welles, Chris. "Total Design on a Grand Scale" (story about CBS and American Republic headquarters buildings), *Life* magazine, April 29, 1966: 55. Available online from Google books; accessed April 2014.)

The caption reads in part: "Brilliantly illuminated all night, American Republic shows off its wide sweep of working space. North and south side of the building have glass walls, and the east and west are solid concrete. But the recessed reception area on the ground floor and the employees' cafeteria directly above it are totally encased in glass...."

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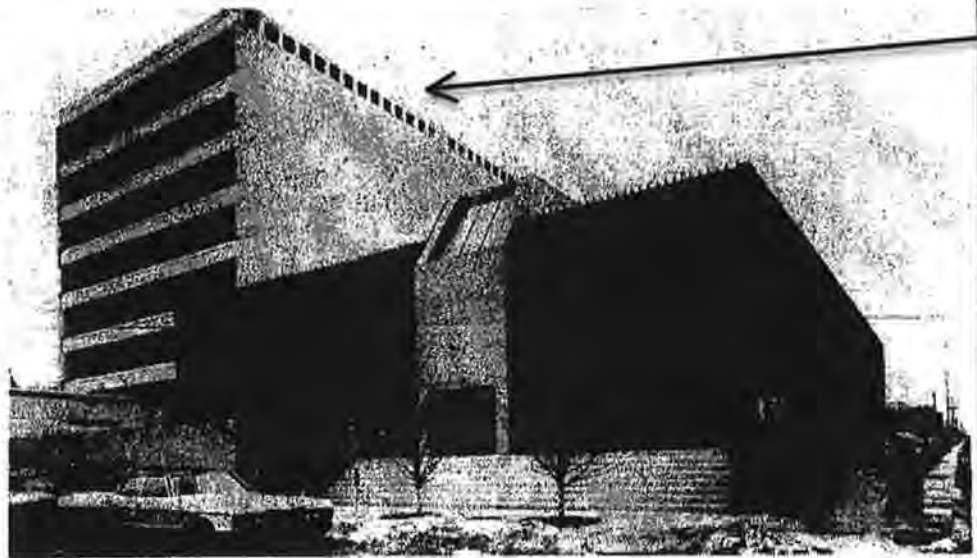
Figure 23. American Republic's historic site, February 1973

BUSINESS *Des Moines Sunday Register* **INDUSTRY**
Feb. 4, 1973 ★ 7-F

**A NEW OFFICE
CONCEPT HERE**

The newest downtown Des Moines office building is actually about 20 years old. American Republic Insurance here purchased the former State Auto Insurance headquarters and spent more than a year on interior remodeling and a modern exterior facelift.

The building now is ready for lease, on a monthly basis, and 25 per cent of the 108 offices in the two-story structure have been rented so far, according to



600 Fifth Avenue Plaza, at Fifth and Keosauqua Way, with American Republic to the left.

("A New Office Concept Here," *Des Moines Sunday Register*, February 4, 1973: 7F.)

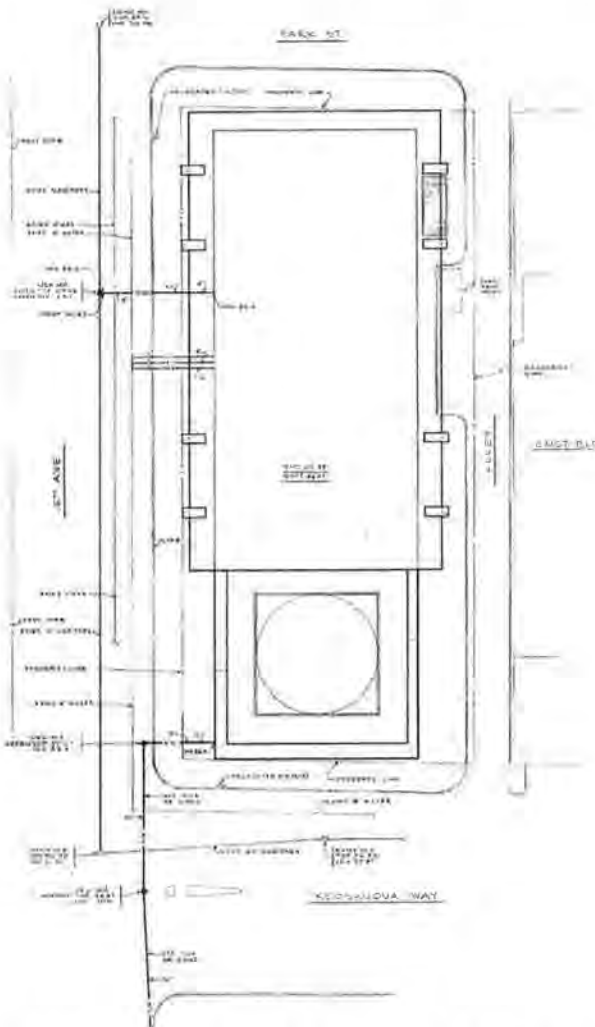
The photo accompanying a story about American Republic purchasing the adjoining half-block and pre-existing building (600 Fifth Avenue, located across the alley from the headquarters building) illustrates the "tight site" on which Bunshaft/SOM worked (arrow).

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Figure 24. Historic SOM site plan for American Republic, 1963



(Source: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, 1963, in the collection of American Republic Insurance Company archives.)

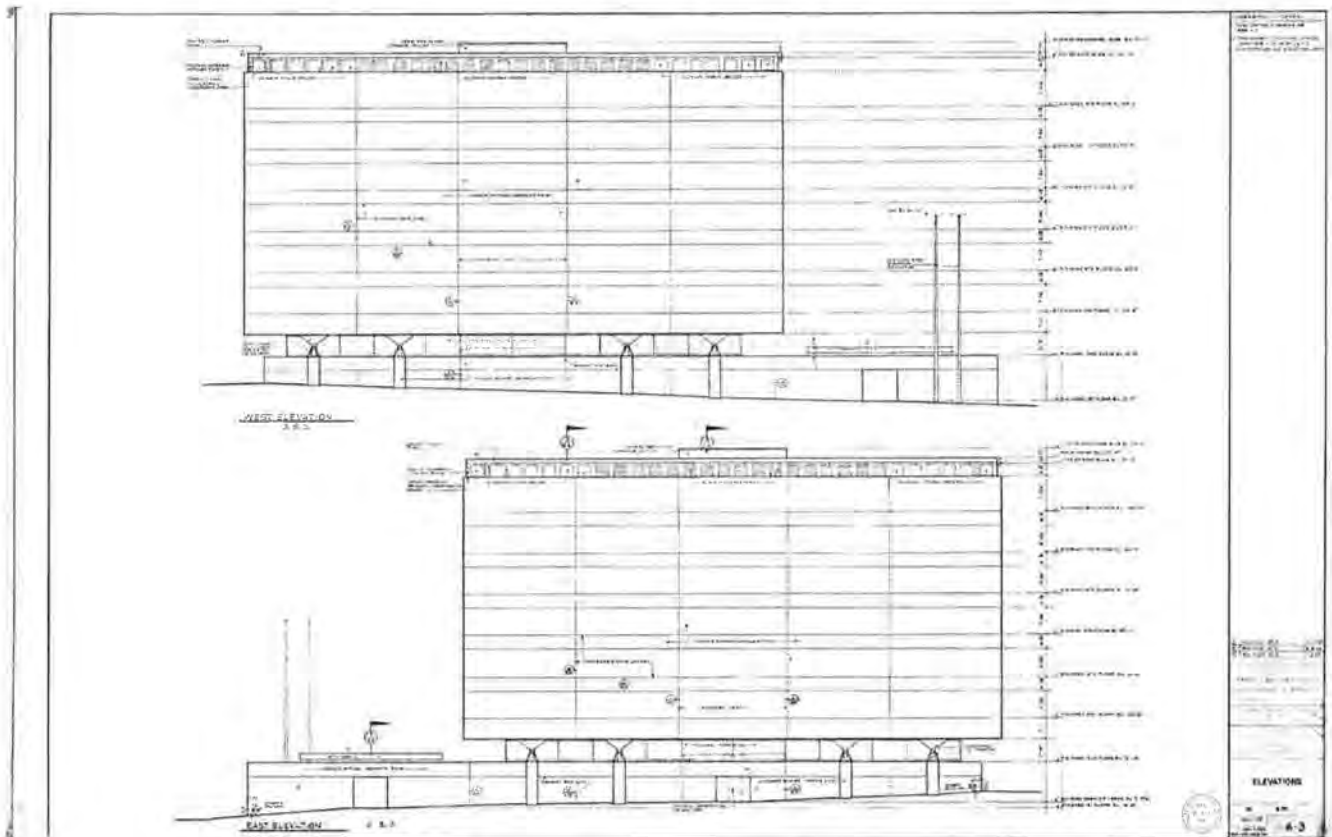
This close up of the site plan (from P-001 site plan and symbol list page) rendered by SOM shows the half-block "tight site" on which the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building was constructed. The historic site was bounded by Park Street to the north, the public alley to the east, Keosauqua Way to the south, and Sixth Avenue to the west. The building's footprint occupies nearly the entire site, with concrete sidewalks ringing the building.

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Figure 25. Historic SOM architectural drawings for American Republic, 1963-1964



(Source: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, 1963-1964, in the collection of American Republic Insurance Company archives.)

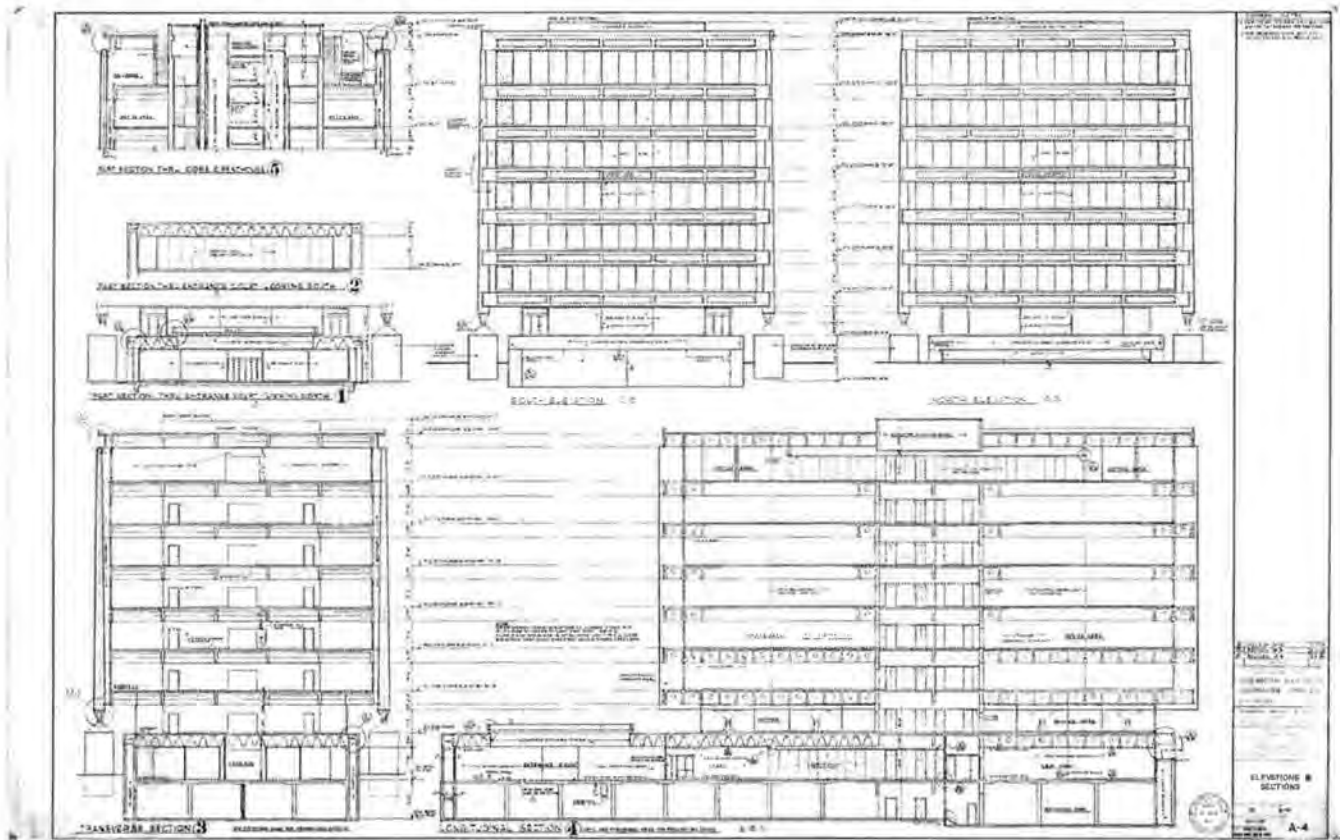
These elevations rendered by SOM show the east and west (mostly solid) exterior walls of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building.

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Figure 26. Historic SOM architectural drawings for American Republic, 1963-1964



(Source: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, 1963-1964, in the collection of American Republic Insurance Company archives.)

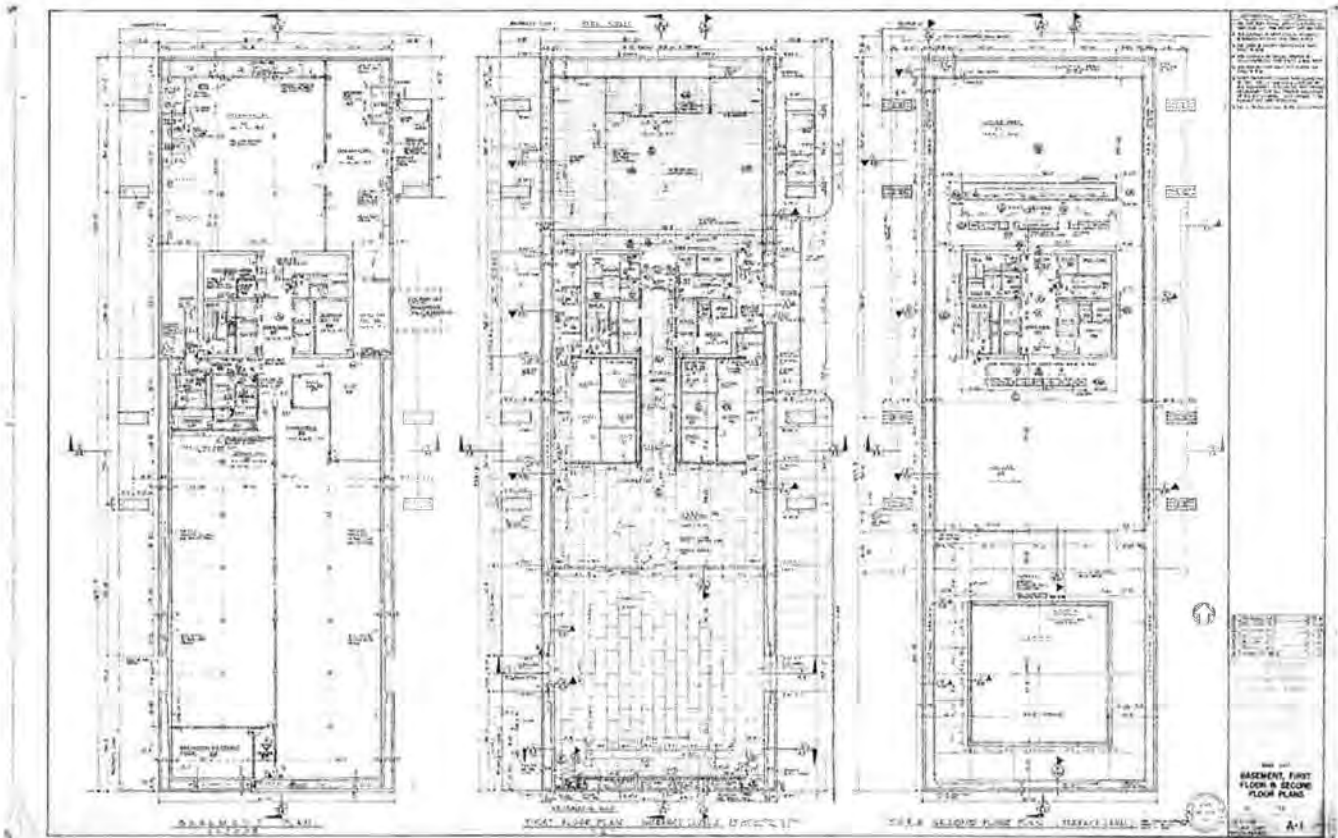
These elevations rendered by SOM show the north and south window walls of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building.

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Figure 27. Historic SOM architectural drawings for American Republic, 1963-1964



(Source: Sheet A-1, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, 1963-1964, in the collection of American Republic Insurance Company archives.)

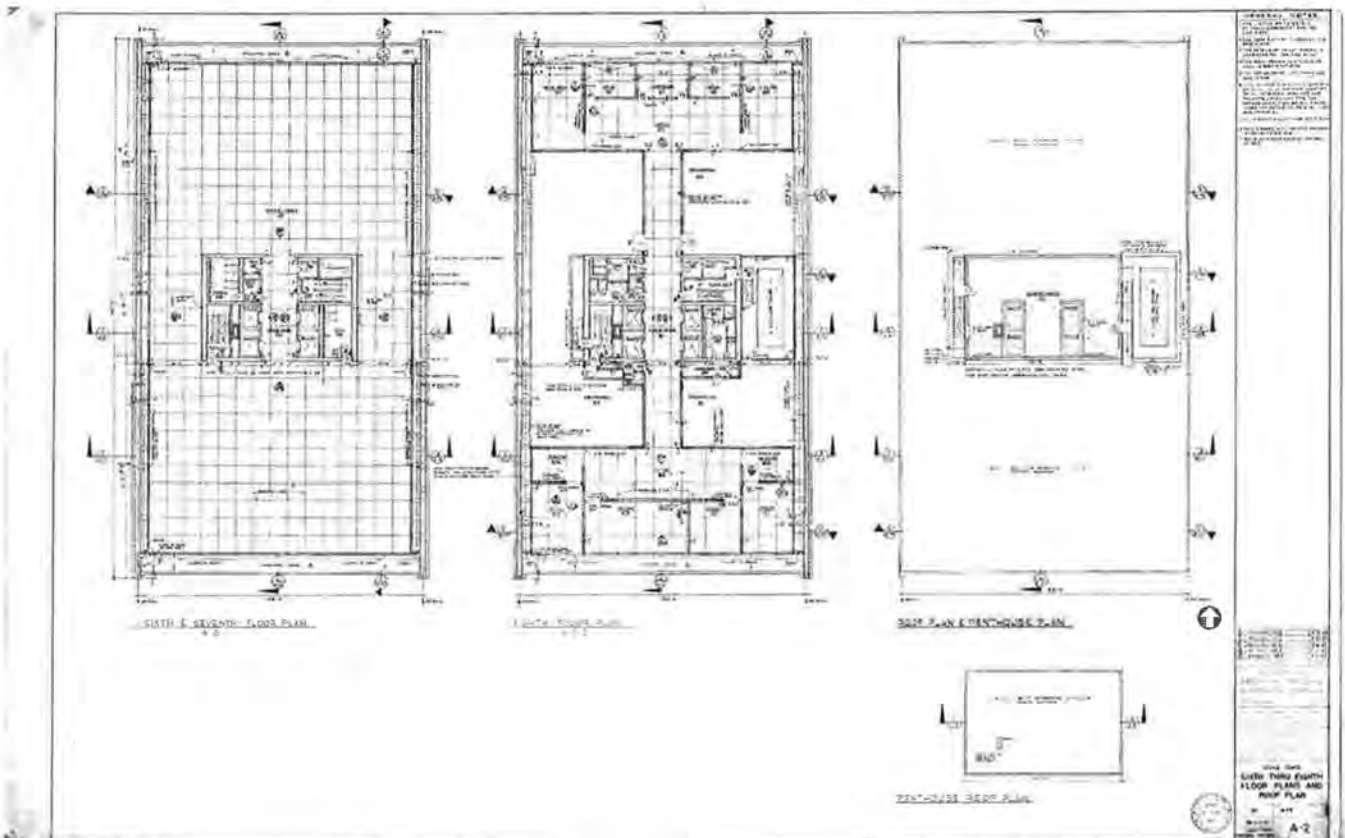
These drawings rendered by SOM show, from left to right, the basement, first floor, and second floor plans for the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building.

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Figure 28. Historic SOM architectural drawings for American Republic, 1963-1964



(Source: Sheet A-2, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, 1963-1964, in the collection of American Republic Insurance Company archives.)

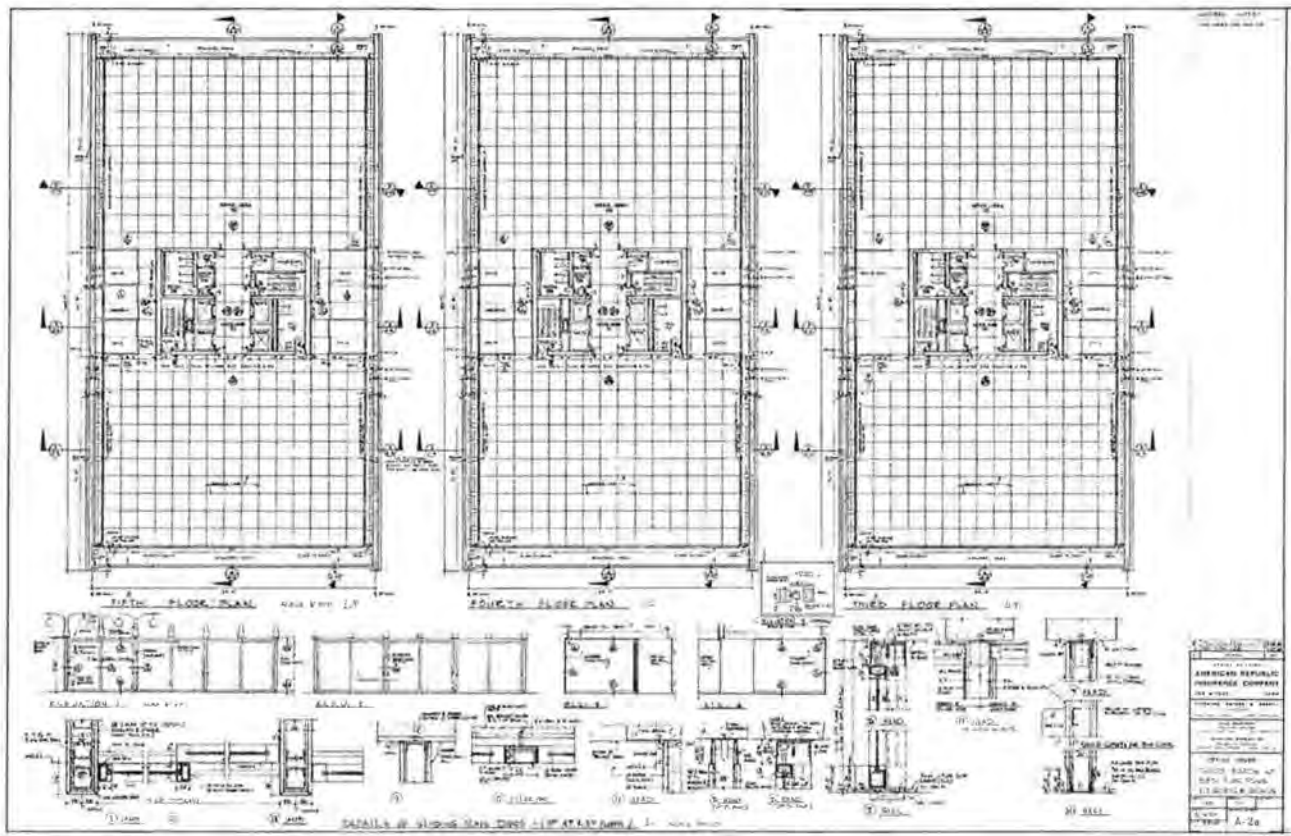
These drawings rendered by SOM show, from left to right, the sixth/seventh floors, eighth floor, and roof/penthouse plans for the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building. Note that the sixth and seventh floors were reserved (left vacant) for future expansion, which was realized in 1969-1970.

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Figure 29. Historic SOM architectural drawings for American Republic, 1963-1964



(Source: Sheet A-2a, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, 1963-1964, in the collection of American Republic Insurance Company archives.)

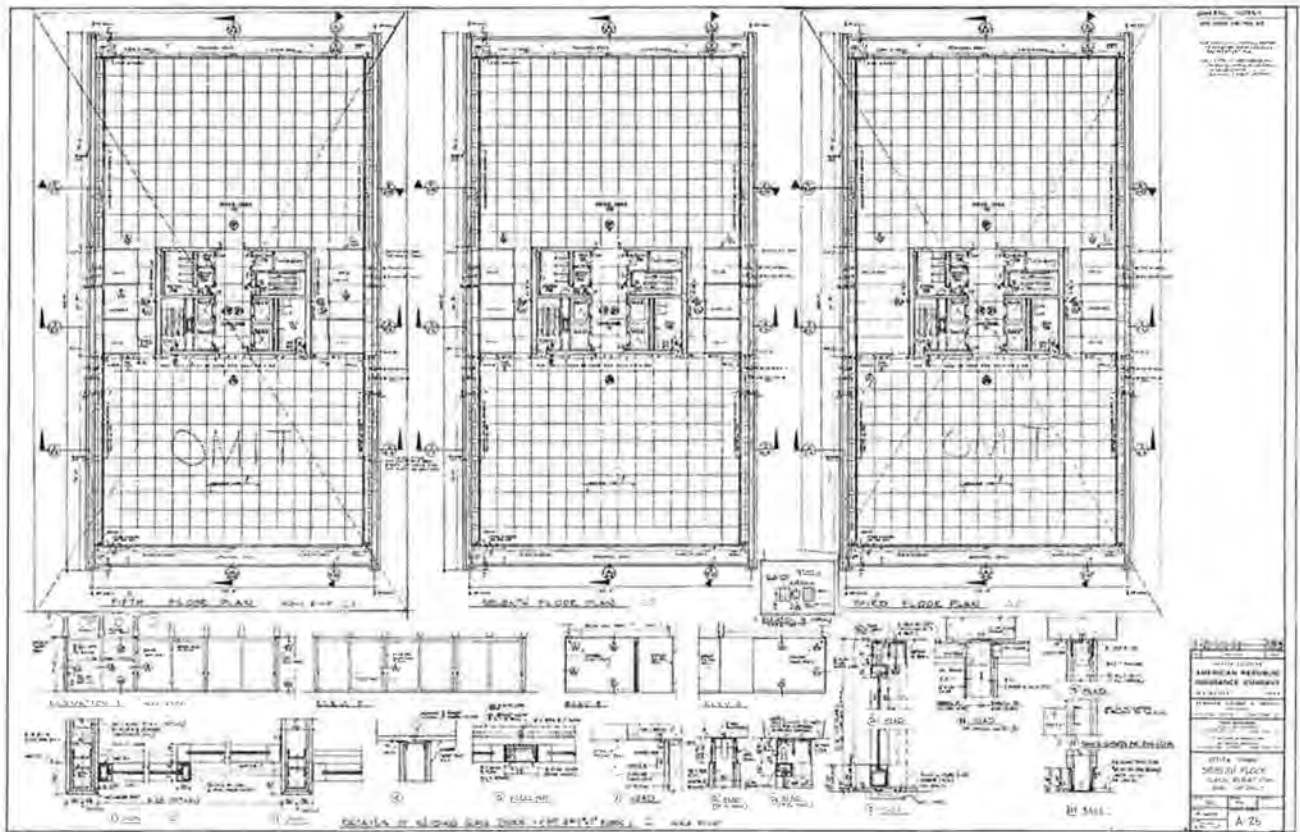
These drawings rendered by SOM show, from left to right, the fifth, fourth, and third floor plans for the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building.

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Figure 30. Historic SOM architectural drawings for American Republic, 1964



(Source: Sheet A-2b Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, 1963-1964, in the collection of American Republic Insurance Company archives.)

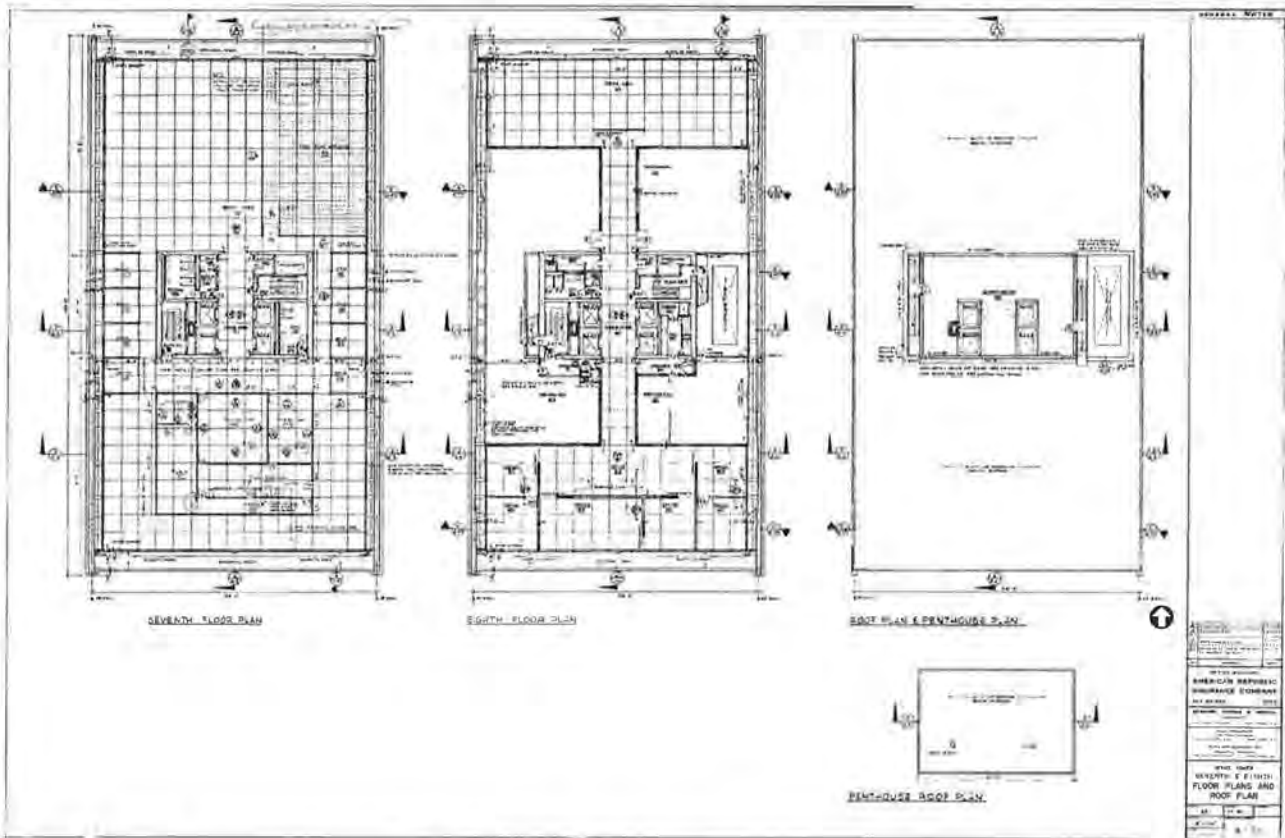
This page shows drawings rendered by SOM, two of which are crossed out and labeled "OMIT." The center plan, for the seventh floor, shows three glass-door offices on each side of the core; at this time it is not known if these were constructed as shown; all but three glass-door offices were removed from the building circa 2000 due to problems with heating/cooling and sound control. See the next figures for further revisions to floor seven plans made in 1969.

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Figure 31. Historic SOM architectural drawings for American Republic, 1969



(Source: Sheet A-2b, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, 1969, in the collection of American Republic Insurance Company archives.)

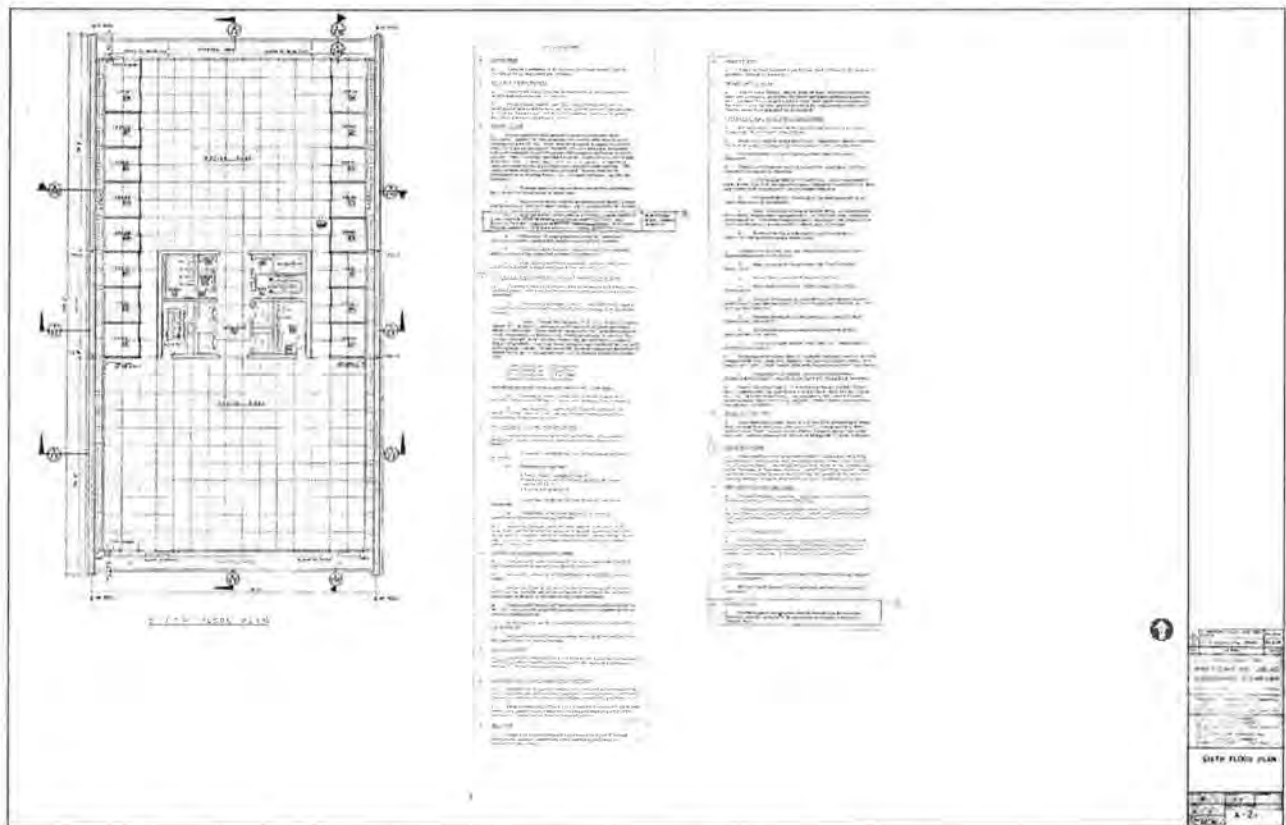
These drawings rendered by SOM show, on the left, the 1969 plan for building out the seventh floor to include film production facilities and training rooms in the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building. The seventh floor plan was designed to accommodate two operations that were in use in the early 1970s but then discontinued: paperless video scanning on north end (walls removed in 1970s) and in-house training rooms with video studio (training rooms converted to conference rooms mid-1970s).

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Figure 32. Historic SOM architectural drawing for American Republic, 1969



(Source: Sheet 2-c, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, 1969, in the collection of American Republic Insurance Company archives.)

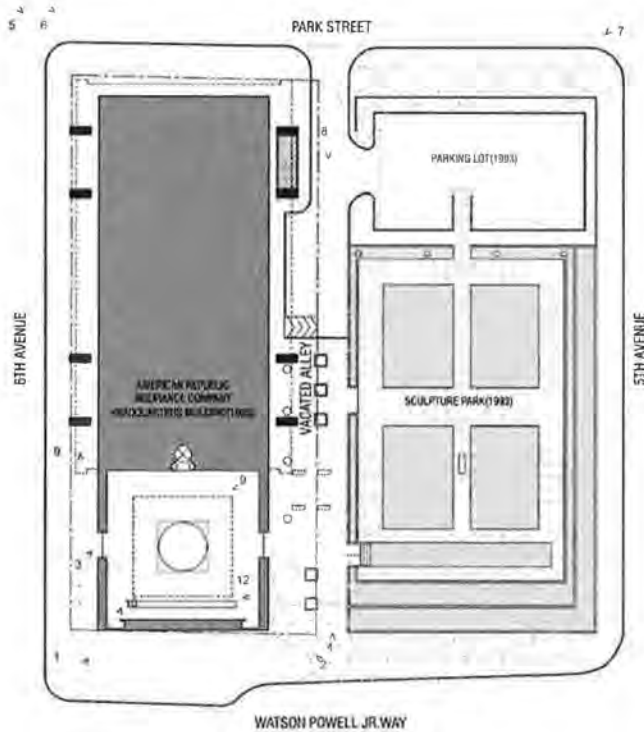
This 1969 drawing rendered by SOM shows the plan for building out the sixth floor to include eight glass-door management offices on the east and west walls from the core north. Scarring on walls, floors, and the window demonstrated that these offices were built as drawn. (Kruse)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Photos Page 72 Property name American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building
County and State Polk County, Iowa

Sketch map – Site plan and photo key, 2014



AEG - AMERICAN REPUBLIC INSURANCE HEADQUARTERS BUILDING | EXISTING SITE PLAN
© 2014 BNIM architects, Des Moines office

(Source: BNIM architects, Des Moines office)

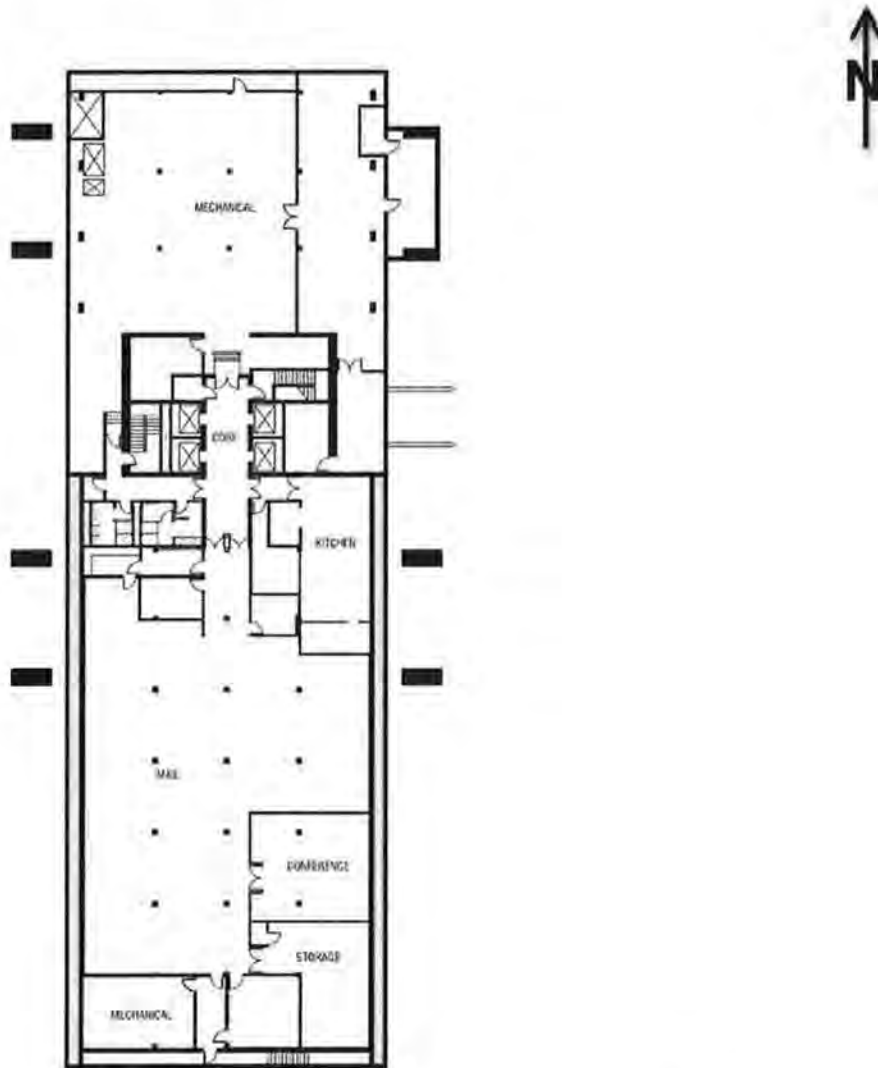
The National Register boundary follows the dotted line of the original building site. Original flagpoles = dots. Noncontributing 1993 objects: squares = planters, rectangles = benches, circles = trash receptacles.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Photos Page 73 Property name American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building
County and State Polk County, Iowa

Sketch map – Basement floor plan, 2014



AEG - AMERICAN REPUBLIC INSURANCE HEADQUARTERS BUILDING | EXISTING BASEMENT LEVEL

117 8th Avenue, Suite 100 Des Moines, IA 50319 | 515.281.1100 | www.bnim.com

Aug 1, 2014

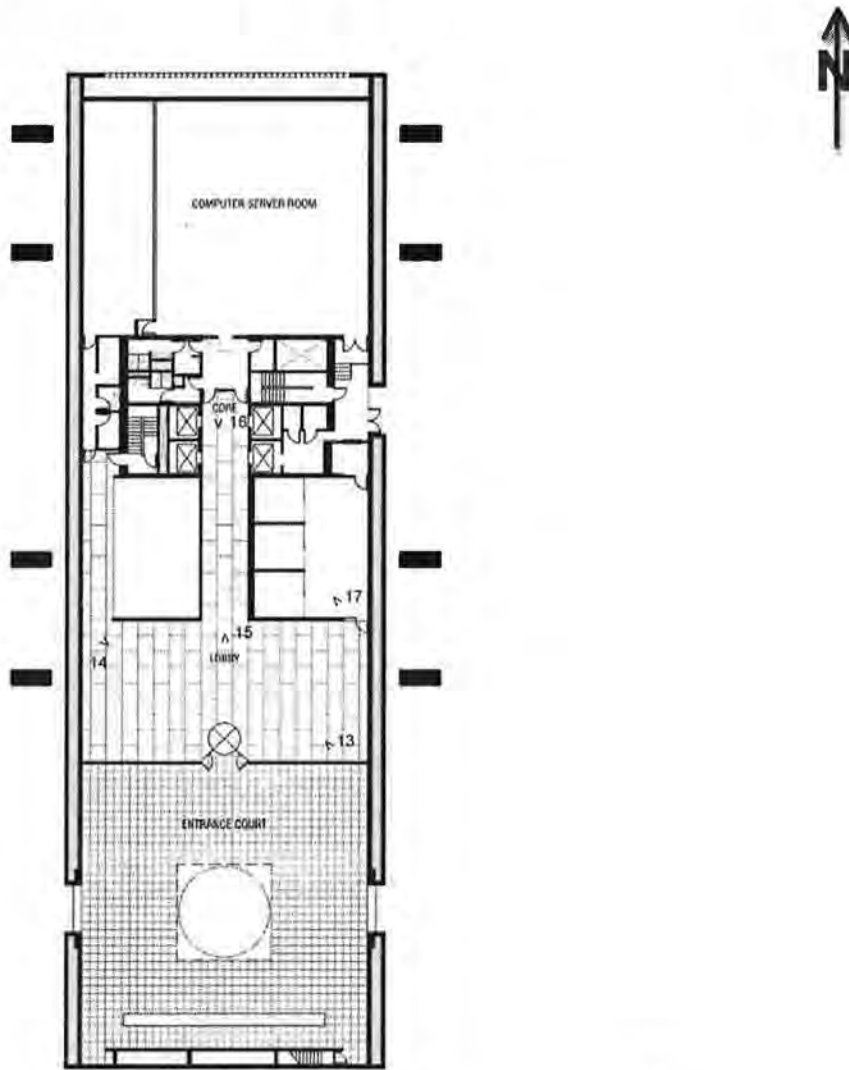
(Source: BNIM architects, Des Moines office)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section Photos Page 74 Property name American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building
County and State Polk County, Iowa

Sketch map – First floor plan and photo key, 2014



AEG - AMERICAN REPUBLIC INSURANCE HEADQUARTERS BUILDING | EXISTING LEVEL ONE

317 5th Avenue Suite 100 Des Moines IA 50319 5727420700 2042749610 441432 000414

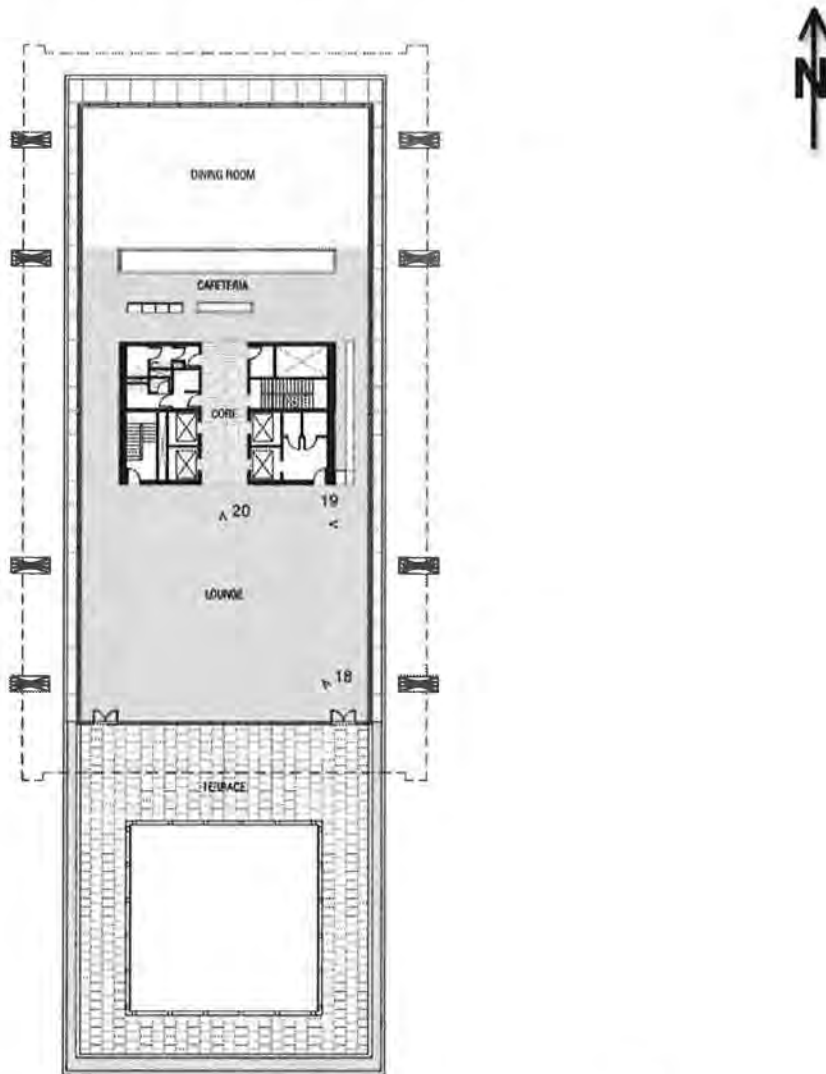
(Source: BNIM architects, Des Moines office)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Photos Page 75 Property name American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building
County and State Polk County, Iowa

Sketch map – Second floor plan and photo key, 2014



AEG - AMERICAN REPUBLIC INSURANCE HEADQUARTERS BUILDING |

EXISTING LEVEL TWO

5000 140991-01 04/22/14 11:00 AM 11/11/14 217 518 Avenue S Suite 100 Des Moines IA 50309 STATE/FEDERAL | BNM Project No 1401900 | 06/24/14

(Source: BNIM architects, Des Moines office)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Photos **Page** 76 **Property name** American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building
County and State Polk County, Iowa

Sketch map – Third floor plan, 2014



AEG - AMERICAN REPUBLIC INSURANCE HEADQUARTERS BUILDING

EXISTING LEVEL THREE

Division of Cultural Resources, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20540

(Source: BNIM architects, Des Moines office)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Photos **Page** 77 **Property name** American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building
County and State Polk County, Iowa

Sketch map – Fourth floor plan and photo key, 2014



(Source: BNIM architects, Des Moines office)

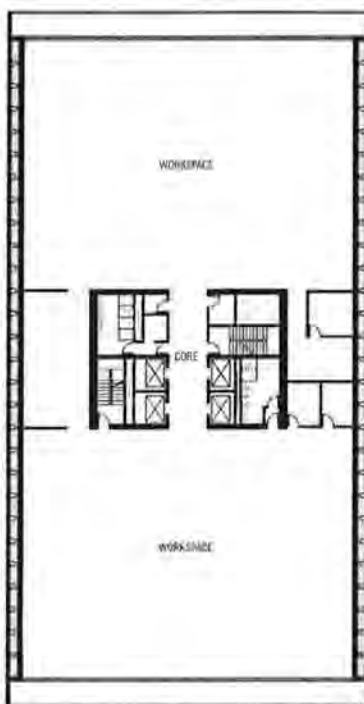
**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Photos **Page** 78 **Property name** American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building

County and State Polk County, Iowa

Sketch map – Fifth floor plan, 2014



AEG - AMERICAN REPUBLIC INSURANCE HEADQUARTERS BUILDING

EXISTING LEVEL FIVE



(Source: BNIM architects, Des Moines office)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Photos **Page** 79 **Property name** American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building
County and State Polk County, Iowa

Sketch map – Sixth floor plan and photo key, 2014



AEG - AMERICAN REPUBLIC INSURANCE HEADQUARTERS BUILDING

EXISTING LEVEL SIX

AMERICAN REPUBLIC INSURANCE COMPANY HEADQUARTERS BUILDING, 311 10th Street, Des Moines, IA 50319 STATE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT 1000-00 000014

(Source: BNIM architects, Des Moines office)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Photos **Page** 80 **Property name** American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building
County and State Polk County, Iowa

Sketch map – Seventh floor plan and photo key, 2014



AEG - AMERICAN REPUBLIC INSURANCE HEADQUARTERS BUILDING

EXISTING LEVEL SEVEN

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE 1615 N. MEADOWS BLVD. SUITE 100 DES MOINES IA 50319 (515) 281-9700 FAX (515) 281-9701

(Source: BNIM architects, Des Moines office)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section Photos Page 81 Property name American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building

County and State Polk County, Iowa

Sketch map – Eighth floor plan and photo key, 2014



AEG - AMERICAN REPUBLIC INSURANCE HEADQUARTERS BUILDING

EXISTING LEVEL EIGHT

2014-01-15 10:00 AM 117 8th Avenue Suite 142 5th Floor IA 50319 STAFFORD | BEN PARRIS 140300 | 8/2/14

(Source: BNIM architects, Des Moines office)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Photos **Page** 82 **Property name** American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building
County and State Polk County, Iowa

Sketch map – Penthouse plan, 2014



AEG - AMERICAN REPUBLIC INSURANCE HEADQUARTERS BUILDING | EXISTING PENTHOUSE LEVEL

127 407 Avenue A, Suite 100, Des Moines, IA 50319 | 515.281.2222 | www.aeg.com | aeg@desmoines.com | 2014

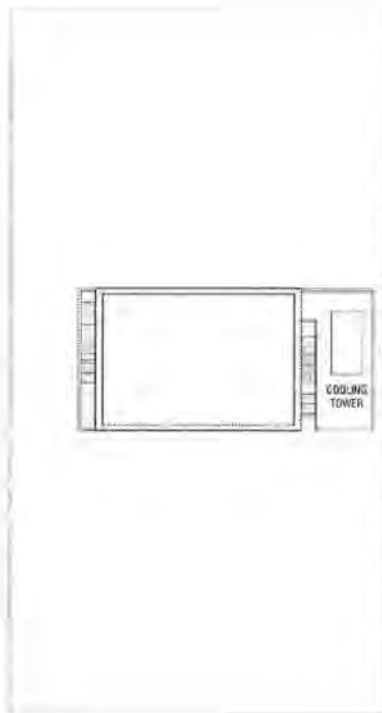
(Source: BNIM architects, Des Moines office)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Photos **Page** 83 **Property name** American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building
County and State Polk County, Iowa

Sketch map – Rooftop plan, 2014



AEG - AMERICAN REPUBLIC INSURANCE HEADQUARTERS BUILDING

EXISTING ROOF



(Source: BNIM architects, Des Moines office)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section Photos **Page** 84 **Property name** American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building

County and State Polk County, Iowa

Photo Log

American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, Polk County, Iowa.

All photographs taken June 2, 2014, by Jennifer James, Jennifer James Communications, LC, Des Moines, Iowa. Photographs printed commercially by Christian Photo, Urbandale, Iowa, on archival paper.

A CD-ROM of all images will be on file with the property owner and the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office. CD image numbers will be added after first draft review with SHPO.

1. View of south elevation and southwest corner of entrance court of American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking northeast from Sixth Avenue at Watson Powell Jr. Way.
2. View of north elevation and southeast corner of entrance court of American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking northwest from the Watson Powell Jr. Way.
3. View of south elevation and west wall of entrance court of American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking northeast from Sixth Avenue sidewalk.
4. View of north and east elevations of American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters—and the former public alley, looking north from the Watson Powell Jr. Way sidewalk.
5. View of west and north elevations of American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking southeast from Park Street.
6. View of north elevation of American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking south from Sixth Avenue sidewalk near Park Street.
7. View of east elevation of American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking west from Park Street sidewalk near Fifth Avenue.
8. View of east elevation of American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters—and the former public alley, looking south from the former alley near Park Street.
9. View of west elevation column with steel hinge on American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking north from the Sixth Avenue sidewalk.
10. View of entrance court and lobby beyond of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking northeast from the entrance court.
11. View of entrance court with marble bench of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking south from the entrance court.
12. View of entrance court marble bench of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking west from the entrance court.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Photos **Page** 85 **Property name** American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building
County and State Polk County, Iowa

13. View of lobby of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking northwest from the lobby.
14. View of lobby of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking southeast from the lobby.
15. View of first-floor elevator corridor of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking north from the lobby.
16. View of first-floor elevator corridor of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking south from the elevators.
17. View of first-floor original glass-front offices of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking northwest from the office area.
18. View of second-floor lounge of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking northwest from the lounge.
19. View of second-floor lounge and central core wall of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking west from the lounge.
20. View of second-floor elevator corridor of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking north from the lounge.
21. View of typical upper floor elevator corridor of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking south from the north workspace on fourth floor.
22. View of typical workspace of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking north from the south workspace on the sixth floor.
23. View of seventh-floor 1970 training room/film production area outer wall (to the right) and open office space of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking south from the south core wall.
24. View of eighth-floor Formica-covered walls in central corridor of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking north from the corridor.
25. View of eighth-floor southern executive office area of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking east.
26. View of eighth-floor southern executive offices (former Watson Powell Jr. office on the left is now used as a conference room) of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking south.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

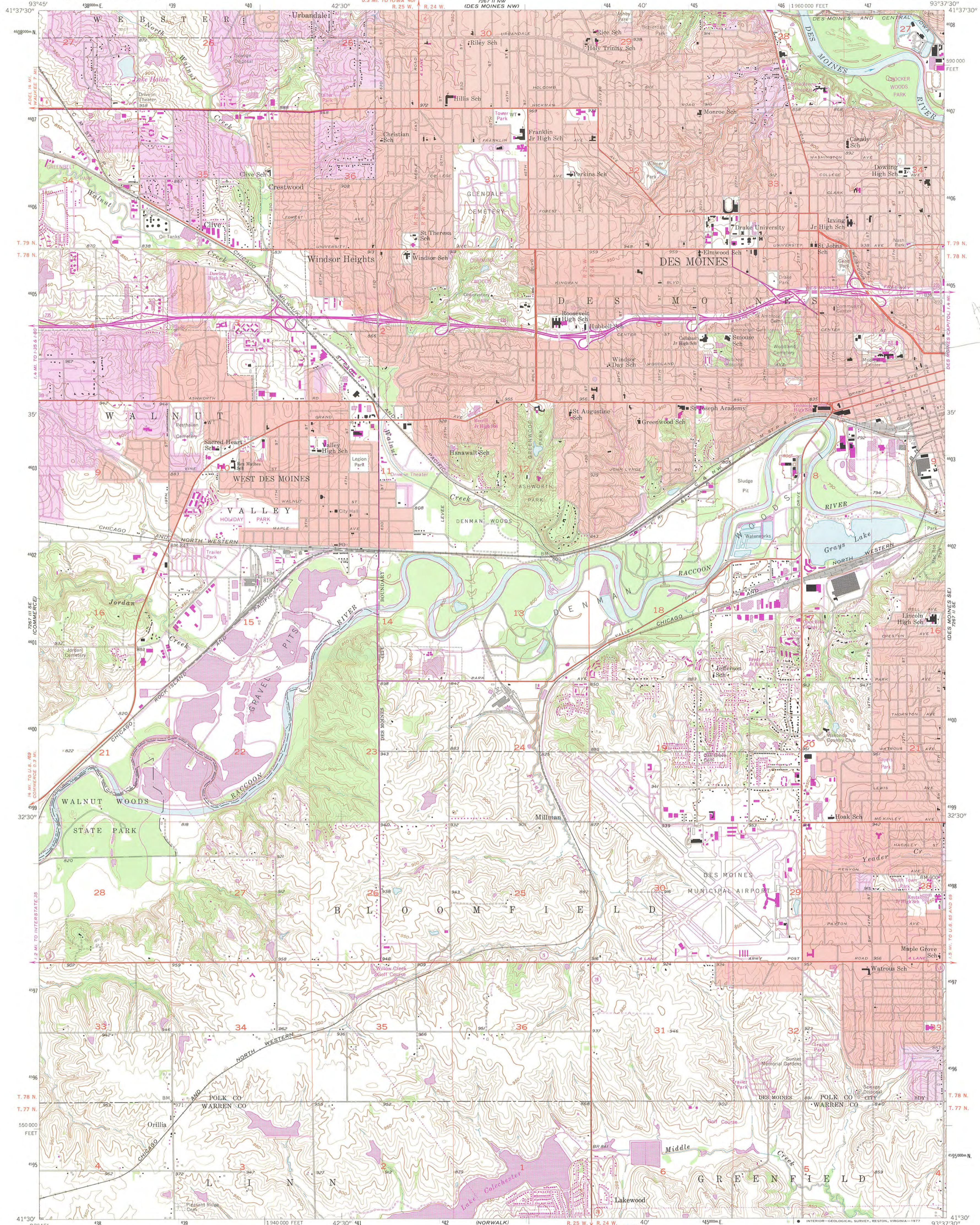
**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Photos **Page** 86 **Property name** American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building
County and State Polk County, Iowa

27. View of eighth-floor northern executive office and outer conference room of the American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters, looking north.

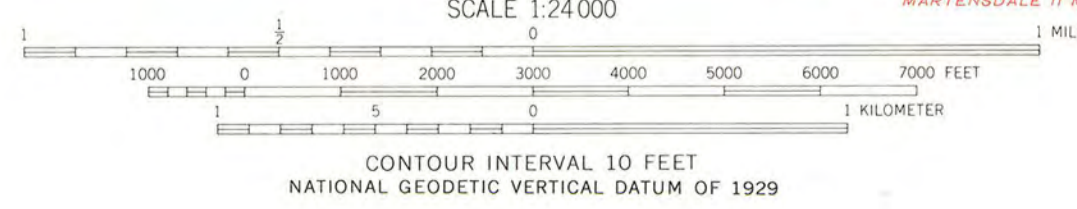
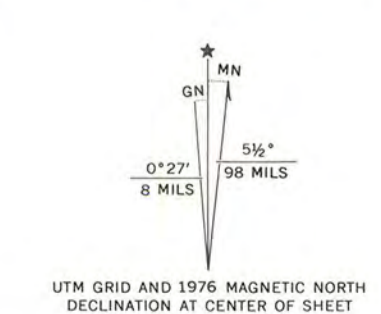
287 1/2 SE
(POLK CO.)

287 1/2 NE
(DES MOINES NE)



*Armed Forces
Institution
601 S.W. Ave.
Des Moines
Iowa*

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey in cooperation with Polk County and City of Des Moines
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Iowa Geodetic Survey
Topography from aerial photographs by Kelsch plotter
Aerial photographs taken 1956. Field check 1956
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Iowa coordinate system, south zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
City boundaries of Des Moines, West Des Moines, Clive, Urbandale, and Windsor Heights are in litigation
Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1967, 1971, and 1976. This information not field checked
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

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

DES MOINES SW, IOWA
SW/4 DES MOINES 15' QUADRANGLE
N4130—W9337.5/7.5
1956
PHOTOREVISED 1967, 1971, AND 1976
AMS 7267 II SW—SERIES V876

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND IOWA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, IOWA CITY, IOWA 52240
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

CLAWNING
7267 1/2 SE

SCOTT HIDEPIE
7267 1/2 NE



6th Avenue

Watson Power







American Enterprise
GROUP INC.
601 6th Avenue



















































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: IOWA, Polk

DATE RECEIVED: 11/06/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/30/15
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/15/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/22/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000917

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 12-22-15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF
CULTURAL AFFAIRS

MARY LEWIS, DIRECTOR
CHRIS RAMBER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

TERESA BRAEBURN, GOVERNOR
KIM REYNOLDS, U.S. GOVERNOR

RECEIVED 2280

NOV 06 2015

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

November 3, 2015

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief
National Register and National Historic Landmarks
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Fl.
Washington D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

The following National Register nomination(s) from Iowa are enclosed for your review and listing if acceptable.

- L. Harbach & Sons Wholesale Furniture Warehouse and Factory Complex, 300-316 SW 5th Street, Des Moines, Polk County
- American Republic Insurance Company Headquarters Building, 601 6th Avenue, Des Moines, Polk County
- West Liberty Fairgrounds Historic District, 101 N. Clay Street, West Liberty, Muscatine County

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Foster Hill

Elizabeth Foster Hill
National Register

