

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only  
received JUN 11 1984  
date entered JUL 12 1984

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Caperton Block  
and/or common Guthrie-Coke Building

## 2. Location

street & number 564-574 Fourth Avenue NA not for publication  
city, town Louisville NA vicinity of ~~Congressional District~~  
state Kentucky code 021 county Jefferson code

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<u>na</u> district	<u>na</u> public	<u>x</u> occupied	<u>na</u> agriculture	<u>na</u> museum
<u>x</u> building(s)	<u>x</u> private	<u>na</u> unoccupied	<u>x</u> commercial	<u>na</u> park
<u>na</u> structure	<u>na</u> both	<u>na</u> work in progress	<u>na</u> educational	<u>na</u> private residence
<u>na</u> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<u>na</u> entertainment	<u>na</u> religious
<u>na</u> object	<u>na</u> in process	<u>x</u> yes: restricted	<u>na</u> government	<u>na</u> scientific
	<u>na</u> being considered	<u>na</u> yes: unrestricted	<u>na</u> industrial	<u>na</u> transportation
		<u>na</u> no	<u>na</u> military	<u>na</u> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name See Continuation Sheet  
street & number NA  
city, town NA NA vicinity of state NA

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Jefferson County Courthouse  
street & number 517 W. Jefferson Street  
city, town Louisville state Kentucky

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Kentucky Survey Historic Sites has this property been determined eligible? NA yes X no  
date February, 1984 na federal X state na county na local  
depository for survey records Kentucky Heritage Council  
city, town Frankfort state Kentucky

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<u>na</u> excellent	<u>na</u> deteriorated	<u>na</u> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<u>na</u> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<u>na</u> moved	date <u>NA</u>
<u>na</u> fair	<u>na</u> unexposed			

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Caperton Block is a four-story brick and stone building at the northwest corner of Fourth Avenue and West Chestnut Streets. The Building is strategically located in the heart of Louisville's central business district and is in close proximity to other buildings listed on the National Register including the Speed Building (May 1983) and Loew's United Artist Theatre (March 1978).

The Caperton Block, built in 1883-1885, is a commercial building anchoring the northwest corner of Chestnut Street and Fourth Avenue. The building is rectangular, four stories in height and eleven bays wide. It is of brick and stone construction and is topped by a shed roof. The first floor, and a portion of the second, have undergone considerable modern store front additions. Each serves as commercial space for four separate businesses. No. 574 is the corner business and wraps around the Chestnut Street side. It, as well as Nos. 570-566, are flush with the street. Nos. 572 and 564 have recessed entrances and large display windows to one side. Nos. 570-566 have had marble veneer added to its lower portion. On the second floor above both Nos. 574 and 572, large squares of masonry veneer have been added and wrap around the Chestnut facade of the building. (See photos 1 & 2)

The fenestration consists of windows with segmentally arched tops and brick arches with masonry keystones bearing carved masks. The third and fourth story windows have segmental arches. The arrangement of windows varies. Beginning at the corner, there are two groups of three windows, then paired windows, then a single window, and finally, another group of three. The second and third stories are divided by a decorative molding course with a stylized flower motif. A simple stone stringcourse separates the third and fourth stories. The cornice is supported by brackets and the roof is shed. Windows on the Chestnut Street facade have segmental arches. Larger arched openings on the first floor were bricked in many years ago, but could have been early entrances to the upper floors. (See photos 3 & 4)

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
na_ prehistoric	na_ archeology-prehistoric	na_ community planning	na_ landscape architecture	na_ religion
na_ 1400-1499	na_ archeology-historic	na_ conservation	na_ law	na_ science
na_ 1500-1599	na_ agriculture	na_ economics	na_ literature	na_ sculpture
na_ 1600-1699	x_ architecture	na_ education	na_ military	na_ social/ humanitarian
na_ 1700-1799	na_ art	na_ engineering	na_ music	na_ theater
xx_ 1800-1899	na_ commerce	na_ exploration/settlement	na_ philosophy	na_ transportation
na_ 1900-	na_ communications	na_ industry	na_ politics/government	na_ other (specify)
		na_ invention		

<b>Specific dates</b>	1883-1885	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	Unknown
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## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Caperton Block was constructed in 1883-1885 in the Renaissance Revival style and is one of the best local examples of that style, particularly on such a grand scale. The Caperton Block was first owned by Mary E. Caperton, daughter of the prominent Louisvillian James Guthrie. The structure is recognized as an integral part of Louisville's central business district and is an important element in the streetscape of the Fourth Avenue-Chestnut Street intersections.

The Caperton Block is eleven bays wide, four stories in height and presently houses four separate commercial storefront businesses. Characteristic of the Renaissance Revival Style, the Caperton Block has bold cornices, arched windows and little unbroken wall surface. (The owner is currently planning a comprehensive rehabilitation of the building which will include restoration of altered second floor). Several examples of the Renaissance Revival Style dating from the same time period can be found in the Louisville area including the West Main Street National Register District (April 1980 and March 1974). The Caperton Block is of particular significance due to the quality and scale of the design. In addition, the structure serves as an essential element to the Fourth Avenue-Chestnut Street streetscape, anchoring the northwest corner of that intersection.

The site of the Caperton Block was owned prior to 1866 by James Guthrie, Louisville Financier, Lawyer, Secretary of the United States Treasury (1853-1857) and president of the L&N Railroad (1860-1868). Upon Guthrie's death, Mary E. Caperton, his daughter inherited the property. The Caperton Block is sometimes referred to as the Guthrie-Coke Building, so called because Richard Henry Coke was married to the former Mary Guthrie. She later married John Caperton who served as manager to his wife's estate.

The Caperton Block was built in 1883-1885 by an undetermined architect. However, its architecture and building style are similar to structures designed during this time period by Henry Whitestone and D. X. Murphy. The Burdorf Building located at the corner of Sixth and Main Streets was designed by Murphy in 1883 and is similar, in many respects, to the Caperton Block. In addition, according to receipts and notes in the Guthrie-Caperton papers located at the Filson Club, Whitestone did extensive work for John Caperton in the 1860s and 1870s. An attribution of the Caperton Block design to Whitestone and/or Murphy is therefore frequently made.

The Caperton Block is reminiscent of the grand commercial structures which once lined Fourth Avenue, many of which have been lost in recent years. Its style and architectural excellence are significant to Louisville as a representative example of the Renaissance Revival Style, and as a landmark in the heart of the central business district.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property approx.. .25 acre

Quadrangle name Louisville West

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UMT References

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Zone Easting Northing

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

City of Louisville Block 13-E part of lot 51. (See attached Sanborn Map)

The building occupies the front portion of the lot with a parking area to the rear. Three of the building's foundation walls rest on property lines. The building only is being nominated.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state NA code NA county NA code NA

state NA code NA county NA code NA

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Joanne Weeter, Researcher

organization Louisville Landmarks Commission

date February, 1984

street & number 727 W Main

telephone (502) 587-3501

city or town Louisville

state Kentucky 40202

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Mary Bowman Appel*

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date May 24, 1984

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the National Register

date 7/12/84

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Caperton Block, Louisville, Jefferson, County, Kentucky

Continuation sheet

Item number 4

Page 2

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Mr. William G. Coke, Jr.  
5612 South Stanford Court  
Nashville, Tennessee 37215

Dr. Esther U. Coke  
52 Fells Rd.  
Verona, New Jersey 07044

Mrs. James Guthrie Coke, III  
7353 Myrna Blvd.  
Twin Lakes  
Kent, Ohio 44240

Mrs. James Killebren  
Cameron Mill Rd.  
LaGrange, GA 30240

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
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Caperton Block, Louisville, Jefferson County, Kentucky

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Continuation sheet

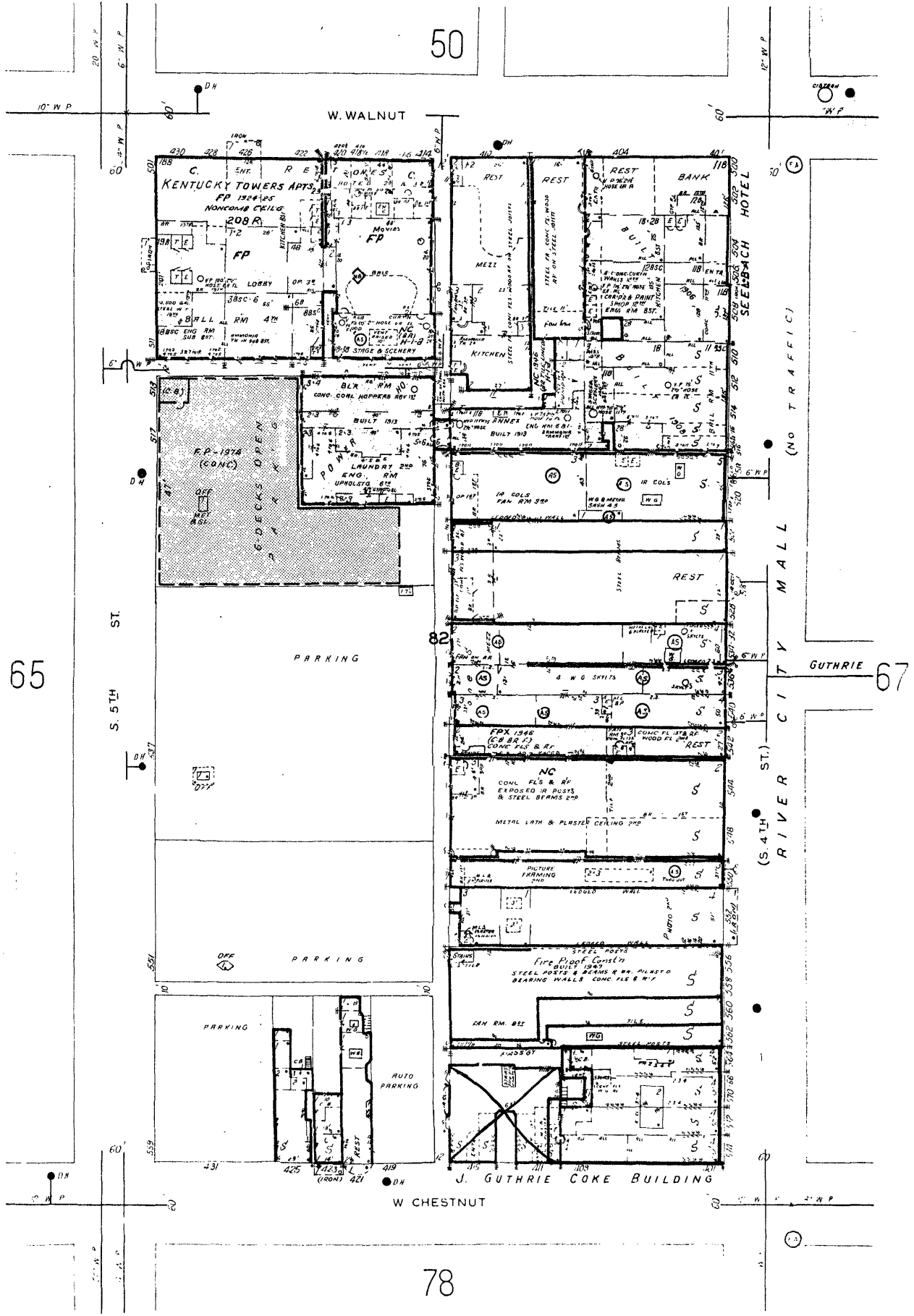
Item number 9

Page 1

Caron Annual Directories of the City of Louisville, Jefferson County (KY) Deed Books.  
1880-1909

City of Louisville Tax Assessment Books, 1863-69, 1883-87, State Archives, Frankfort, KY  
Jefferson County (KY) Will Book 23, p. 235 (1900; Book 23, p. 538 (1901).

Guthrie-Caperton Papers, Manuscript Collections, The Filson Club, Louisville, KY

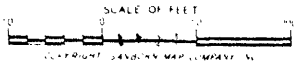


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Caperton Block  
546-574 Fourth Avenue  
Louisville, Jefferson Co., KY  
Sanborn Map  
Sanborn Map Co.  
Pelham, NY 1974