

Property Type: 619

Utah State Historical Society

Site No. 16

Historic Preservation Research Office

BATCH KEY  
1801050437

Structure/Site Information Form

IDENTIFICATION

Street Address: 00132 S MAIN

UTM:

Name of Structure: Kearns Building

12/424810/4512960  
T. 01.0 S R. 01.0 W S. 01

Present Owner: STANDARD BUILDINGS, INC.  
P O BOX 951

Owner Address: OGDEN, UTAH  
84402

Year Built (Tax Record):

Effective Age:

Tax #: 01 2518

Legal Description

01 Kind of Building: OFFICE OR CLINIC

COH 17 FT S FR NE COR LOT 8 BLK 69 PLAT A SLC SUR W 201 FT N 7 FT W 13 1/2 FT N  
10 FT E 13 1/2 FT N 77 1/2 FT E 36 FT N49 1/2 FT E 53 FT S 25 FT E 12 FT S 1/2  
FT E 100 FT S 118 1/2 FT TO BEG LESS R OF W 10 X 165 FT BET KEARNS & DAYNES

STATUS/USE

Original Owner: Thomas Kearns

Construction Date: 1909-11 Demolition Date:

Original Use: commercial

Present Use: commercial

Building Condition:

Integrity:

Preliminary Evaluation:

Final Register Status:

- Excellent
- Good
- Deteriorated

- Site
- Ruins

- Unaltered
- Minor Alterations
- Major Alterations

- Significant
- Contributory
- Not Contributory

- Not of the  
Historic Period

- National Landmark
- National Register
- State Register
- District
- Multi-Resour
- Thematic

Photography:

Date of Slides:

Slide No.:

Date of Photographs: fall-  
spring, 1978-1979

Photo No.:

Views:  Front  Side  Rear  Other

Views:  Front  Side  Rear  Other

Research Sources:

- |  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abstract of Title           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sanborn Maps               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Newspapers                    | <input type="checkbox"/> U of U Library |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plat Records/Map | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> City Directories           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utah State Historical Society | <input type="checkbox"/> BYU Library    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tax Card & Photo | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biographical Encyclopedias | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Interviews                      | <input type="checkbox"/> USU Library    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building Permit  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Obituary Index             | <input type="checkbox"/> LDS Church Archives                      | <input type="checkbox"/> SLC Library    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sewer Permit     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County & City Histories    | <input type="checkbox"/> LDS Genealogical Society                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other          |

Bibliographical References (books, articles, records, interviews, old photographs and maps, etc.):

Salt Lake County Records.  
 Salt Lake City Building Permit, October 15, 1909, #2129.  
 Salt Lake City Sanborn Maps.  
 W. L. Polk and Company, Salt Lake City directories, 1911-1940.  
 "Thomas Kearns."

Street Address: 132 South Main

Site No:

Architect/Builder: Parkinson and Bergstrom

Building Materials: Concrete; terra cotta tile; brick

Building Type/Style:

**Description of physical appearance & significant architectural features:**

(Include additions, alterations, ancillary structures, and landscaping if applicable)

The Kearns Building is significant architecturally as an excellent example of the Sullivaneseque Style. When the rising cost of land in the later 19th Century city made commercial buildings of more than six stories desirable, and the passenger elevator made them practicable, architects were at a loss as how to give unity to elevations for which there were no historical precedents. It was Louis H. Sullivan, "Father of the Skyscraper," who solved the problem, demonstrating his solution for the first time in the Wainwright Building in St. Louis, designed in 1890. Although modern in its verticality, Sullivan's works were based on the classicist principle that every work of art should be a finite object with a beginning, middle and an end.

Designed by architects Parkinson and Bergstrom of Los Angeles, the Kearns Building has all of the characteristics of a classical Sullivaneseque work. Built as a retail and office building, the ten-story Kearns Building utilizes reinforced concrete, "fireproof" construction with white terra cotta tile facing on the front facade and brick veneer on the side and rear elevations. Like Sullivan's Guaranty Building (Buffalo, New York, 1895), the facade of the Kearns Building is organized into vertical bands between piers that rise unbroken through the greater part of the elevation and are linked at the top by round arches. The building form is simple, clear-cut, and is terminated with a flat roof and boldly projecting cornice. The spandrels under the

**Statement of Historical Significance:**

**Construction Date: 1909-1911**

The Kearns Building is significant for two reasons: it is one of the purest and best preserved Sullivaneseque buildings in the Intermountain West and it is associated with a major figure in Utah's history, Thomas Kearns, who as a mining entrepreneur, U.S. Senator from 1901 to 1905, and part owner of the Salt Lake Tribune newspaper from 1901 until his death in 1918.

The building was constructed between 1909 and 1911 for Thomas Kearns. He was born in Ontario, Canada, in 1862. As a young man he worked in mining camps throughout the west, and in 1883 came to Park City, Utah. There in 1889 he discovered the Mayflower Mine and in the next decade made a fortune from it. In 1901 Kearns was elected to the United States Senate. The story of his career as senator illustrates much about the political situation in Utah at the time. In the early 20th Century no candidate for national political office in Utah could be elected without the support of Mormon Church authorities. However, because the Church wanted to avoid antagonizing local Gentiles and because they did not want to give national politicians any basis for asserting that the Mormon Church controlled political affairs in Utah, it was understood that one Senate seat would always be filled by a Mormon and one by a non-Mormon. As a Catholic, Kearns was a member of a church that had stood aloof from the bitter crusade against the Mormon Church that had characterized the last third of the 19th Century, and, personally, he had never been conspicuous as an anti-Mormon. Thus, he had the support of Mormon authorities in seeking the Senate seat in 1901 and he was elected. Kearns established a respectable record during his term in the Senate. For reasons that are unclear, however, Mormon authorities refused to support his re-election. Therefore reversing his original decision, he did not run for re-election in a race that he knew he could not win.

In 1901, while serving in the Senate, Kearns had purchased a part interest in the Salt Lake Tribune newspaper. Upon his return from Washington

## 4. ARCHITECTURE (continued):

windows are recessed behind the plane of the face of the piers. Relief ornament of terra cotta appears under the cornice, over the arched windows and in the form of figurines at the base of the piers above the first floor. Since the destruction of the Dooly Building, Sullivan's only Utah work, the Kearns Building, ranks with the McIntyre Building as one of the purest and best preserved examples of this important skyscraper style in the Intermountain West.

## 5. HISTORY (continued):

D.C., in 1905, and until his death in 1918 he had much to do with the direction of the newspaper, and his tenure was an important period in its history. Prior to his direction, the Tribune was an aggressive, partisan, often intemperate voice on one side of a bitter conflict between Mormons and Gentiles that encompassed economic, political and social differences. Under Kearns, it became a more temperate advocate of cooperation among diverse economic, political, and religious groupings in the state.

