

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

25

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1469

1. Name of Property

historic name W. K. Stewart Bookstore

other names/site number JF-CD-235

2. Location

street & number 550 S. Fourth Street not for publication N/A
city or town Louisville vicinity N/A state Kentucky code KY county
Jefferson code 111 zip code 40202

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 statewide X nationally locally.

David L. Morgan 10-21-02
Signature of certifying official David L. Morgan, SHPO Date

Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

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): _____

Daniel J. V. V. V. 3/24/03
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

W.K. Stewart Bookstore
Jefferson County, Kentucky

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Commerce/Trade Sub: Specialty Store

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Commerce/Trade Sub: Professional

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

 Beaux Arts

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone, Concrete, Brick

roof asphalt

walls brick

other

Narrative Description (See continuation sheets.)

W.K. Stewart Bookstore
 Jefferson County, Kentucky

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- 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

- 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 (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance 1928

Significant Dates 1928

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Hawes, Henry F. (Architect)

Narrative Statement of Significance (See continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References (See 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: Louisville Landmarks Office

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	
1	16	608 660	4234 250	Louisville West Quad

Verbal Boundary Description: the parcel proposed for listing corresponds to the Jefferson County Property Valuation Administrator (PVA) parcel #013E00540000, which is a 20.17' x 204' area of land in Downtown Louisville, Kentucky, corresponding with the address 550 South 4th Street.

Boundary Justification: This boundary encompasses the full extent of the significant resource, i.e., the architecturally significant building. The building covers the entire parcel proposed for listing. That parcel is identified in the Boundary Description by the PVA account number. The area proposed for listing has been occupied by the significant resource and is historically associated with that building. The footprint of the building and the dimensions of the parcel are the same, and historically were the same.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title C. Merrill Moter III
organization Joseph & Joseph Architects date 3/26/2002
street & number 550 S. Fourth St. telephone 502-583-8888
city or town Louisville state KY zip code 40202

Property Owner

name Downtown Development LLC; Polly Moter, Member
street & number 550 South 4th Street telephone 502-562-1969
city or town Louisville state KY zip code 40202

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W. K. Stewart Bookstore
Jefferson County, Kentucky

7. Description

The W. K. Stewart Bookstore (JF-CD-235) is in the center of the downtown business core of Louisville. The building is located at 550 South Fourth Street (until recently Fourth Avenue), facing east. The site is 1/2 block south of the historic Seelbach Hotel and 1-1/2 blocks north of the historic Brown Hotel. The site is comprised of a three story building, built on the property lines without a setback.

The W. K. Stewart Building has masonry and concrete foundation walls. Walls on the south side are coursed quarry-faced ashlar limestone, where they are exposed. The south foundation wall is covered with plaster over most of its surface. The east and west walls are concrete. The north foundation wall is brick where it is exposed, plaster elsewhere. The building was built in 1928 on the location of an earlier building.

The walls are brick bearing walls, covered with plaster applied directly to the interior surface. Some of the brick has been exposed in the interior in the 1984 renovation. First through third floors are framed with steel beams spanning east to west, approximately 20' apart. Wood joists approximately 16" on center span between the steel beams. Floors are wood decking subfloor and pine wood plank finished floor. Roof is wood deck on wood joists approximately 16" on center, spanning north to south, bearing on the brick walls (no steel beams). Roofing is an asphalt built-up roof, applied in the 1984 renovation. The roof is "flat", sloping about 1/4" in 12".

The Building maintains a good level of integrity. There are photos of the front of the building, including some that appear in a advertisement in the Courier-Journal newspaper on

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W. K. Stewart Bookstore

Jefferson County, Kentucky

July 8, 1928, announcing the opening of the new store.

The front façade, east elevation, is Flemish bond brick above the first floor display windows. The first floor display windows, stuccoed vestibule ceiling, and recessed entrance are intact. There is a glass door at the sidewalk side of the front vestibule, where there were originally no doors. Later photos show a pair of glass doors at the south edge of the front show window where this new glass door is located. There are two lantern type light fixtures that are original.

The display window mullions are brass, decorated with engraved edges. The windows wrap around the display area. The display area is on both sides of the entry vestibule. The vestibule has a rough stucco textured ceiling with an elliptical shape between the display windows. This forms a vaulted ceiling that leads to the interior entrance. The interior entry door has an elliptical head and beveled glass perimeter. There are also beveled glass semi-circular windows in the wall adjacent to the interior entry door.

The two end windows on the second floor have semi-circle windows above them. The original wrought iron balcony is beneath the center window of the second floor. The center window on the third floor has a semi-circle window above it. The details include brick arches over the semi-circle windows and flat brick arches over the rectangular windows. All the arches have stone keystones. Casement windows with eight panes are side by side.

The front of the building, east elevation, has a bracketed sheet metal cornice accenting the roofline. The cornice/parapet at the roof remain as in the original ad photos.

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Inside, the "mezzanine" floor (shown on the attached drawings as second floor) that overlooked the first floor sales area remains, including railing and supports. None of the original bookcases exist. The original light fixtures that hung over the sales area at the mezzanine level remain as shown in the ad photos.

The rear of the building has casement windows with semi-circle windows over the third floor windows. The first floor on the rear has been modified from the original design - there is an aluminum store front over a 3' high brick wall.

The previous changes to the building exterior consist of modifications to the rear (alley) door opening. The original rear of the building may have had a door to an elevator, there is a pit in the southwest corner of the basement, as well as a raised area on the roof above this pit. There are no areas in the rear elevation brick above the first floor where there is evidence of a different brick or different color mortar. The rear windows match those in the front.

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W. K. Stewarts Bookstore

Jefferson County, Kentucky

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8. Significance

W. K. Stewart Bookstore (JP-CD-235)

The W. K. Stewart Bookstore is significant under criterion C. The W. K. Stewart Bookstore is significant for its Beaux Arts style design. The buiding is significant within the historic context "Beaux Arts Style in Louisville, Kentucky, 1900-1930." This style originally saw use in monumental buildings of public, private residential, and commercial uses. In its later stages, architects found ways to adapt Beaux Arts styling to more modest structures, particularly to commercial buildings. The high integrity of the W.K. Bookstore gives great evidence to the way that its architects adapted the style for smaller commercial structures in Louisville.

Historic Context: Beaux Arts Style in Louisville, Kentucky, 1900-1930

The Beaux Arts style in America has its origins in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, in Paris, which "had an unrivaled reputation among schools of architecture" (Whiffen: 150). Among the Americans to attend were Richard Morris Hunt, Henry Hobson Richardson, Louis Sullivan, and Bernard Maybeck. The school had a competition for the Grand Prix de Rome, which assured the winner of many public commissions. The projects that won the prize were of grandiose nature and had elevation drawings "with plenty to look at in them" (Whiffen: 151). The style includes the design conventions recognized in that competition: balance and symmetry in architectural massing, Greek and

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Roman elements, combinations of columns and arches, grand stairways, paired columns, monumental attics, pronounced cornices, elaborate mouldings and statuary. As the style matured in America, it became more "sedate" (Poppeliers, et al.: 66).

Following its origin, the Beaux Arts style is usually associated with larger buildings, often monumental public buildings. This is also evident in Louisville - early examples are City Hall Annex (1905), Louisville Free Public Library (1908), Jefferson County Armory (1905). Private buildings include L&N Railroad Office Building (1900, 1930), Seelbach Hotel (1905), Inter-Southern Insurance Building (1912), and Atherton Building (1907). The style, however, started on the east coast a decade or two before its establishment in Louisville. By the time it begins to make a impact on Louisville, it is being used for town houses and country villas of the rich. Early Louisville examples include private residences such as Gardencourt and the Ferguson Mansion (1901). Again, although these are residences, they are grand residences for prominent families.

None of the Louisville buildings exhibit the elaborate statuary and mouldings of the structures built for the expositions such as the Administration Building of the Columbian Exposition in Chicago by Hunt (Whiffen: 152). However, Louisville buildings which employed the style early demonstrate a higher degree of detail in their columns, cornices, and pediments than those that follow. For example, Louisville Free Public Library has paired columns, a sculptured frieze, pediment and framed windows. City Hall Annex has paired Corinthian columns, framed windows, pronounced cornice and entablature.

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The style is adapted to a commercial building in the Fireproof Warehouse (1907). Here the architect simplifies the columns to articulated pilasters, does not frame the windows and makes a cornice line at the height of the adjacent Customs House's cornice. The style is made more "sedate" as the building function moves away from public and quasi-public buildings.

During the next decade the style is used in more and more buildings with a vertical composition - taller than they are wide. The YMCA (1913), YMHA -Young Mens Hebrew Association (1915), and the Inter-Southern show the buildings massed in layers - a base, a mid-section, and an entablature story with a bracketed cornice. The Inter Southern Insurance Building uses the columns on the lower floors as a base, continues to use a bracketed cornice at the roof with the brackets almost a story in height, drops the pediment and loses any detail at the windows in the mid-section. Nationally, the style became synonymous with the earliest phase of skyscraper construction, which might be why the style took on a vertical emphasis. As architects developed the Beaux Arts design, engineers began to employ steel frame construction to enable buildings to rise to new heights. Beaux Arts styling and steel frame construction saw frequent, if awkward, use in the first two decades of the twentieth century (Whiffen and Koeper: 264).

While the style, as used in commercial buildings in Louisville, varies with age and size, generally the later the building, the less detail is expressed. In all the Louisville examples, in buildings that are vertical (taller than they are wide, as a highrise), the composition is divided into layers. This has been compared to parts of a column: base, midsection(largest section), and capital.

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These parts have the elements of the Beaux Arts style: columns or pilasters in the base, which is often 2 or more stories in height; a middle section where windows are expressed with little detail; and the "capital", often 2 stories with a variety of different details - columns or pilasters, arched windows, framed windows, and/or decorative panels, then topped with a cornice.

Later the brackets at the roof become smaller as in the Brown Hotel (1925), where the upper 2 stories are paired and tied together with 2-story pilasters. The Breslin Building (1927) appears to have four layers as executed, but was designed for a nine story addition that never was built (National Register Nomination Form). It has a base as the Inter Southern, two stories on top of one story. The mid-section has windows that are not framed, but have a decorative panel between them. The roof has a modest cornice and parapet. A simplified Beaux Arts style is an appropriate choice for the W. K. Stewart Bookstore.

Architectural Analysis of the W.K. Stewart Bookstore

The W. K. Stewart Bookstore was patronized by the wealthy and by those who were interested in literature and the arts, as illustrated by a series of letters in the Readers' Forum, Courier-Journal Oct. 20, 1927. These people would have appreciated a building built in this style. W. K. Stewarts was a bookstore, stationary store, lending library, and had a public gallery for fine art and rare books (Courier-Journal ad, July 8, 1928).

The book store in 1928, already established on Fourth Avenue since 1915, and most recently had been located on Fourth between Liberty and Market Streets, needed a new location.

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Jefferson County, Kentucky

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The new location on Fourth was nearer to the movie palaces, between the two blocks bounded by the Seelbach Hotel and the Brown Hotel. Fourth Avenue, the most prominent commercial street in downtown was "Louisville's primary retail, corporate, and entertainment corridor throughout much of the nineteenth and Twentieth centuries." (Encyclopedia of Louisville: 316). The area included the most prominent hotels, restaurants, bars, dance halls, movie theaters, shops, and department stores.

By the time W. K. Stewart Bookstore was built, the Beaux Arts style was used in Louisville for three decades. The Beaux Arts style was, in 1928, appropriate for a prominent bookstore on a prominent commercial street. By the late 1920s in the city, the style came to be seen as appropriate for use in shorter buildings, and in a more simplified manner.

The Stewarts Bookstore building is just 20'-2" wide and three stories tall. It has three parts - a base, mid-section and entablature. The display windows/entry form the base with pilasters on either side, made from the brass storefront material. The display windows are made with very small mullions, no transoms, and extend from wall to wall. The entry has an elliptical arch, in the brass storefront material. This building demonstrates a recessed entrance with long displays on both sides that frame the entrance. The vaulted ceiling further defines the experience of entering the building. In a 1986 survey of the 500 block of Fourth, it is noted that of the structures in the 500 block, only W. K. Stewart has its store front intact(Weeter).

The middle section has windows arranged symmetrically, with brick and stone lintels. The arches are present over the outside windows on the second floor and the center window on

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the third floor. The second story center window has a fine wrought iron balcony. The lintels and arches over the windows have stone keystones. This is reminiscent of the arches over the windows in the Broadway Theatre (1915) or the stone highlights between the windows in the YMCA.

The entablature is the cornice and parapet. This is made entirely of sheet metal, from the brackets under the cornice to the molding at the top of the parapet. The brackets are modest, fitting the size of the structure. The detail on the parapet is a simple diamond and circle pattern breaking up the width into sections similar to the City Hall Annex.

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As the commercial importance of Fourth Avenue continued to grow, older buildings were torn down for new buildings or the old ones were modernized. W. K. Stewarts is one of the few examples remaining of the Beaux Arts style used on a small building. Of almost 40 buildings of that style on the National Register, there is only one other small building, the Almstead Brothers (1931).

The value of the building is confirmed by the views articulated by these professionals in the field of historic preservation. "As an unchanged example of 1930's commercial style architecture this building is significant and is certainly worthy of preservation" (Joanne Weeter, Louisville Preservation Officer, letter). "Many of the buildings of this style have been torn down or have been remodeled to a later period. In the 500 block only three buildings remain without significant alterations. Six buildings have significant façade changes, one has been torn down, and another is a non-historic structure" (Mary Cronan Oppel, former SHPO, memorandum). "It has one of the best preserved

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commercial facades in the Fourth Street area, and is therefore a very important property from a historical and architectural perspective" (Roy A. Hampton, Architectural Historian Ph.D. candidate, letter). The building remains today a product of its time and an opportunity for us to understand the development of Beaux Arts styling in Louisville.

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9. Bibliographic Resources

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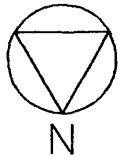
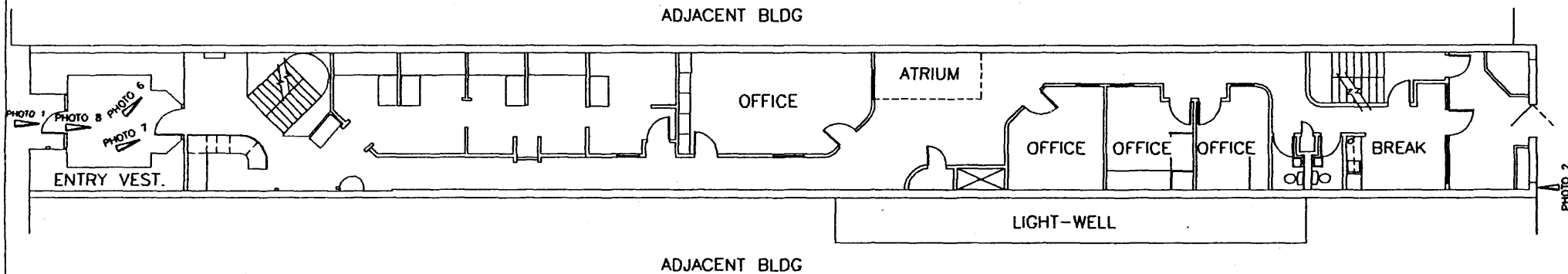
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1 1ST FLOOR PLAN
1/20TH SCALE

6/02

W.K. STEWART BOOKSTORE (JF-CD-235)

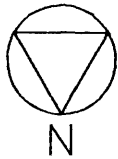
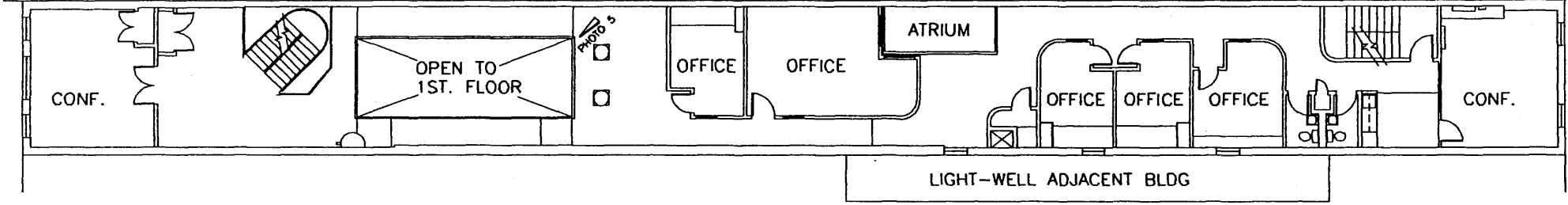
EXISTING FLOOR PLAN

550 SOUTH FOURTH STREET, LOUISVILLE, KY

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**JOSEPH
&
JOSEPH**
ARCHITECTS SINCE 1900

ADJACENT BLDG



1 2ND FLOOR PLAN
1/20TH SCALE

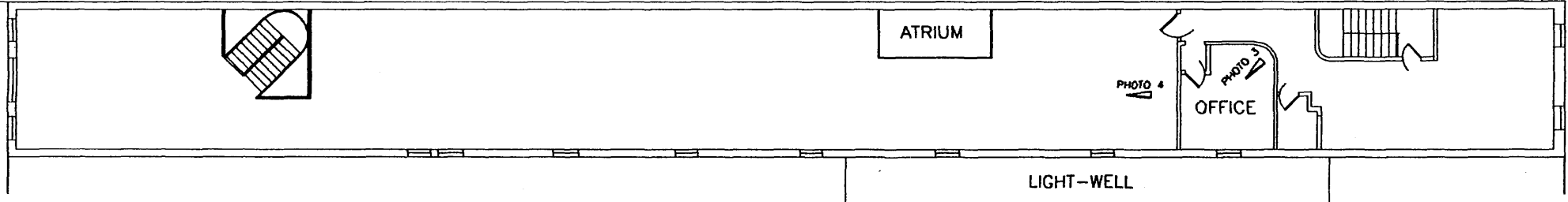
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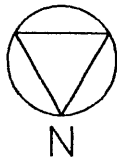
W.K. STEWART BOOKSTORE (JF-CD-235)
EXISTING FLOOR PLAN
550 SOUTH FOURTH STREET, LOUISVILLE, KY

**JOSEPH
& ARCHITECTS SINCE 1908
JOSEPH**

ADJACENT BLDG



ADJACENT BLDG



1 3RD FLOOR PLAN
1/20TH SCALE

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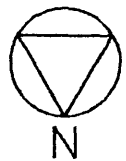
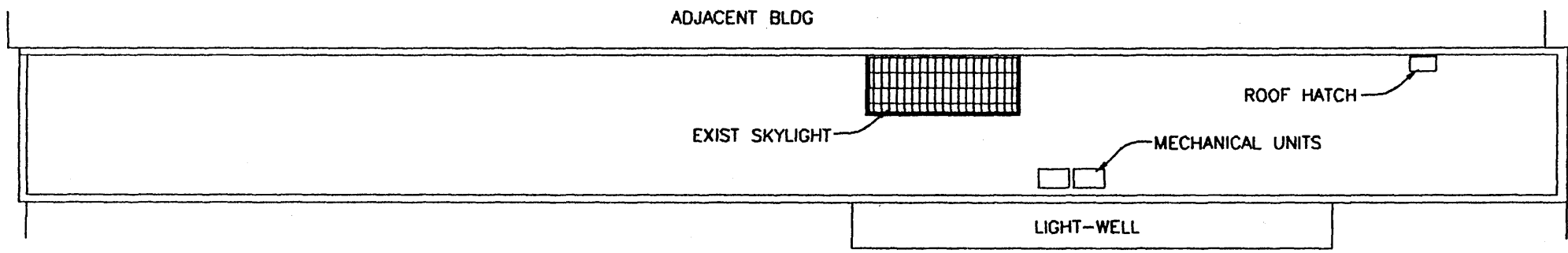
W.K. STEWART BOOKSTORE (JF-CD-235)

EXISTING FLOOR PLAN

550 SOUTH FOURTH STREET, LOUISVILLE, KY

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**JOSEPH
& ARCHITECTS SINCE 1908
JOSEPH**



1 ROOF PLAN
1/20TH SCALE

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EXISTING ROOF PLAN
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JOSEPH
& ARCHITECTS SINCE 1900
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