DATE

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Washington

CITY, TOWN

19th-Century Architecture Theme:

CODE

__MUSEUM ___PARK

---OTHER:

___PRIVATE RESIDENCE ___RELIGIOUS __SCIENTIFIC _TRANSPORTATION

60680

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

	STER OF HISTOR		DATE ENTERED	
SEE	NSTRUCTIONS IN HOW 7 TYPE ALL ENTRIES	COMPLETE NA	ATIONAL REGISTER FORM	S
1 NAME				
HISTORIC	I Building			
AND/OR COMMON	1 building			
Sears, R	loebuck and Company			
2 LOCATION	J			
STREET & NUMBER				
	of South State Stre	et and East Co	Ongress_Stor FOR PUBLICATION	
CITY, TOWN			CONGRESSIONAL DIST	RICT
		VICINITY OF	7th COUNTY	CODI
Illinois		CODE	Cook	CODI
3 CLASSIFIC	OWNERSHIP	STATUS XX.occupied	PRES AGRICULTURE	
_XBUILDING(S)	XXPRIVATE	UNOCCUPIED	XXCOMMERCIAL	PARK
STRUCTURE	вотн	—WORK IN PROGRE		PRIVA
SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE		
OBJECT	IN PROCESS BEING CONSIDERED	YES: RESTRICTED		SCIEN
	BEING CONSIDERED	NO	MILITARY	TRANS
4 OWNER OI NAME Mr. Dear STREET & NUMBER	F PROPERTY n A. Swift, President	(312-8	75-2500)	
	Roebuck and Company,	Sears Tower		
CITY, TOWN			STATE	• •
Chicago			Illind	ois 6
5 LOCATION	N OF LEGAL DESCR	RIPTION		
COURTHOUSE. REGISTRY OF DEEDS,	ETC. Cook County	Recorder's O	ffice	
STREET & NUMBER				
CITY, TOWN Chicago		<u> </u>	STATE Illino:	is
	TATION IN EXIST	ING SURVE		

Library of Congress

Historic American Buildings Survey, OAHP, National Park Service, Dept. of Interior

XFEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

STATE

D.C.



CONI	DITION	CHECK ONE	CHECK C	DNE
EXCELLENT XGOOD FAIR	DETERIORATED RUINS UNEXPOSED	UNALTERED	X <u>X</u> original Moved	SITE DATE

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The dimensions of the building were stupendous for the period. It is 144 feet deep on Van Buren and Congress and 402 feet long on State Street. It is 132 feet high, eight stories in height, each floor had 16 foot ceilings when constructed it was one of the largest buildings in the world in floor area and cubic volume.

There are no bearing walls, all the weight of the floors and walls are carried by fireproofed metal columns to spread foundations of beam and rail grillages and concrete. The floors were left open to be subdivided by tenants. The nine-bay west front (143 feet, 9 inches) and the three bay south and north flanks (133 feet, 13-1/4 inches) are light gray Maine granite divided by Romanseque colonettes filled with large panes of plate glass. The windows are one-over-one light double-hung sash, the floors vaulted tile. The roof is flat with a very simple, shallow cornice below. The interiors have been extensively remodeled and in 1940, caissons to hardpan were built under the west wall prior to construction of the State Street Subway.

"The building is of straight warehouse construction. The interior at any point reveals a great sweep of open space divided into broad avenues marked off by ranks of high, slender columns. No other department store can quite match the Sears Roebuck in this respect."¹

Leiter II honestly and clearly states its "cellular" construction--a strong testimony in the union of engineering and art.

¹Condit, Carl; The Rise of the Skyscraper, University of Chicago Press, 1952; page 135.





PERIOD	AF	REAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	IECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW	
PREHISTORIC	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION
1400-1499	ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	LAW	SCIENCE
1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE
1600-1699	X_ARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER
<u>XX</u> 1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	TRANSPORTATION
1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	XXINDUSTRY INVENTION	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	OTHER (SPECIFY)
SPECIFIC DAT	ES 1889-1891	BUILDER/ARC	HITECT Major William	m Le Baron Jenny

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The second Leiter building was a proto-skyscraper that represents the highest achievement of William Le Baron Jenny. His first triumph was the Home Insurance Company Building of 1884-1885. (demolished 1931). This earlier structure evolved with the help of Jenny's engineering assistant, George B. Whitney, and was a triumph in large scale urban construction utilizing the new building materials and techniques. What Carl Condict called "the major step in the conversion of a building from a crustacean with its armor of stone to a vertebrate, clothed only in a light skin."² Jenny's engineering skills earned him a great reputation but the ornament and detailing was derivative until he designed the Leiter II which demonstrated his ability to combine the structural with the aesthetic.

Leiter II was orginally built for Seigel, Cooper and Company but was not occupied by them for more than seven years. Levi Z. Leiter was originally in partnership with Marshall Field and the Leiter name can still be seen on the State Street facade. The present occupants are the home office of the firm founded in 1886 by Alvah Roebuck and Richard Sears. A contemporary publication of 1891 (Industrial Chicago) the building is discussed: "It has been constructed with the same science and all the careful inspection and superintendence that would be used in the construction of a steel railway bridge of the first order [the Eads bridge had impressed Chicago architects]... designed for space, light, ventilation and security, the Leiter Building meets the object sought in every particular.... A giant structure.... healthy to look at, lightsome and airy while substantial, was added to the great houses of a great city.... A commercial pile in a style undreamed of when Buonarotti erected the greatest temple of Christianity."

For the first time, in this building, the steel and wrought-iron skeleton were the structural as well as the architectonic elements that produced a new fully developed and logical structure. "The interior frame furnishes

²Condit, Carl; The Chicago School of Architecture; The University of Chicago Press 1964; page 83.



(1832 - 1907)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Condit, Carl, The Chicago School of Architecture; The University of Chicago Press 1964.

Condit, Carl; The Rise of the Skyscraper; The University of Chicago Press 1952.

Randall, Frank A.; <u>History of the Development of Building Construction in Chicago</u>, Urbana, The University of Illinois Press, 1949.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY ______

A 1 16 4 4 7 9 4 0 4 16 3 16 0 3 0	
ZONE EASTING NORTHING	ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Subdivision lots 1 to 3 in subdivision of lots 2 and 3, lot 6 except Street, lot 7 except Street and lot 10 except Street in block 10 in fractional section 15-39-14.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER DATE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	LIST ALL STATES A	ND COUNTIES FOR PROPERT	IES OVERLAPPING ST	ATE OR COUNTY BOUM	NDARIES
11 FORM PREPARED BY NAME / TITLE Carolyn Pitts, Architectural Historian ORGANIZATION DATE Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service July 25, 1975 STREET & NUMBER TELEPHONE 1100 L Street NW. STATE CITY OR TOWN STATE Washington D.C. 23 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), 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. FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE TITLE DATE OR NPS USE ONLY I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER DATE DIRECTOR. OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	STATE	CODE	COUNTY		CODE
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KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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Leiter II Building

CONTINUATION SHEET	ITEM NUMBER	8	PAGE	2

the dominant accent of the street elevations--the pattern of large, open rectangles into which the outer walls are divided....The long west elevation is developed directly out of the structural system behind it, much as the isolated buttresses of the Gothic cathedral serve as primary visual elements in its indissoluble unity of structure and form"²

Jenny, in his later buildings, reverted to an overlay of ornament, not trusting his instincts so beautifully realized in Leiter II.

²Ibid., p. 90

