

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

8,15,

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED AUG 15 1979
DATE ENTERED OCT 1 1979

**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 *McCurdy Building (Sears, Roebuck and Company Building)*
HISTORIC **McCurdy-Sears, Roebuck and Company Building**
AND/OR COMMON **Sears Store Building**

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER **101 N.W. Fourth St. (Corner of 4th & Sycamore Sts.)**
CITY, TOWN **Evansville** VICINITY OF _____ CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT **8**
STATE **Indiana** CODE **18** COUNTY **Vanderburgh** CODE **163**

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME **Sycamore 4th Co.**
STREET & NUMBER **101 N.W. Fourth Street**
CITY, TOWN **Evansville** VICINITY OF _____ STATE **Indiana**

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. **Vanderburgh County Recorder**
STREET & NUMBER **City-County Building, Civic Center**
CITY, TOWN **Evansville** STATE **Indiana**

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE **Indiana Historic Sites & Structures Inventory**
DATE **1977** _____ FEDERAL STATE _____ COUNTY _____ LOCAL _____
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS **State Historic Preservation Office, Dept. of Natural Resource**
CITY, TOWN **Indianapolis** STATE **Indiana**

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The old Sears, Roebuck and Company store is a 110,000 square foot commercial structure in downtown Evansville. It is actually made up of three separate buildings, attached to one another by common walls.

The original store, constructed in 1920, is located on the corner of Fourth and Sycamore Streets and until 1937 was a free-standing rectangular structure of four stories with four bays on the Fourth Street side and seven bays on the Sycamore Street side. In 1937 a two-story addition was attached facing Fourth Street; two more stories were added to this in 1946, so that the two buildings appeared as one with seven major bays on each side.

The first floor is characterized by large display windows flanked by limestone piers and pilasters, which are continued in brick on the upper floors. Each bay originally contained large double-hung windows, which have been bricked-in on the second and third floors and replaced on the fourth. The main entrances on Fourth Street and Sycamore Street have been changed from their original locations. The flat roof with its stone coping was originally trimmed in dentil molding, probably of pressed metal that has since been removed.

The interior of the building features poured concrete floors, with octagonal reinforced concrete columns under a twelve foot high ceiling. There are stairs on the east side of the building, and a staircase in the center of the building going to the basement, which is also used for display. There are elevators servicing all floors, including the basement. A mezzanine was added on the south and east walls of the 1937 addition surrounding the first floor, with an aluminum and glass railing and stairways on the east and north walls.

The building known as The Annex was added in 1943 next to the 1937 addition. This two-story building is faced with limestone, and its four major bays continue the first floor display windows, with large windows on the second floors. An entrance through an arch at the north side leads to a flight of stairs to the second story with a wrought iron railing and slate stairs. The second floor occupies only the front half of the building. There are skylights in the rear half of the building allowing natural light to flood the first floor. The main loading docks are located in the rear of the Annex building, and also the freight elevator, which serves the original building on all floors.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK 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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	___EDUCATION	___MILITARY	___SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
___1700-1799	___ART	___ENGINEERING	___MUSIC	___THEATER
___1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	___EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	___PHILOSOPHY	___TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	___COMMUNICATIONS	___INDUSTRY	___POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	___OTHER (SPECIFY)
		___INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1920-1947

BUILDER/ARCHITECT unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The old Sears Store stands as a landmark in American commercial history. Its conversion as the company's first retail outlet in 1925 marked the very hegemony of city life. Admittedly, the transition from a rural to an urban nation was a far larger phenomenon than the establishment of a retail store by a firm theretofore catalogue-only. Yet 1920 was the first Federal census tipping the balance of population to cities, and buying habits clearly underscore that trend.

In addition to commercial importance, however, the old Sears Store building shares in a significant midwestern architectural development. By 1920, when the building was actually erected, several shipping and manufacturing concerns--notably John Deere--had pioneered the construction of reinforced concrete warehouses and salesrooms. Large buildings--vaguely Chicago School in their ahistoricism--housed farm equipment and hardware in spaces unhindered by complex structural systems and supported by stout concrete floors. Buyers could shop free of pretentious ornament and equipment could be easily moved or rearranged.

Research into the Fourth and Sycamore buildings origin bears out this democratic appeal. Known first as the McCurdy Building, it served as the site of the Hercules Corporation, manufacturers of a gas engine and owned by the building's namesake, Colonel William McCurdy. Until Sears' occupation, McCurdy also rented space to two hardware and automobile accessories companies.

Sears entered the picture through its contract with Hercules. McCurdy produced engines sold under the Sears aegis. For some reason, however, Sears was dissatisfied with the contract and sent General Robert E. Wood to negotiate its termination. When shown McCurdy's building, Wood was told that if Sears would place a retail store there, then the contract would be cancelled. Wood agreed and sold the inexpensive solution to his fellow executives in Chicago. On October 5, 1925 the building opened as site of the first Sears store to operate as a direct retail business independent of a catalogue department.

The early Sears period was one of growth and marketing experimentation. The Evansville employees were responsible for building the personality of the store and for establishing many policies which eventually became an integral part of the national retail organization. By the mid-1930's the store was cramped for space, and an expansion program was started. However, little had been accomplished before 1937 and the disastrous Ohio River flood put a halt to construction. After the flood, though, work resumed in earnest. A new two-story building was completed on an adjacent parking lot in late 1937, and a two-story annex was erected in 1943 to house farm equipment. Finally, two more floors were added to the 1937 addition. By 1943 the Sears store had grown to three times its original size.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Condit, Carl W., American Building (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 240-50.

Evansville, Indiana, City Directories: 1919-26.

(continued on continuation sheet)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approximately one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,6	44,977,5	4202730
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Original Plan, Lots 209, 210, and 211

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Morton Snitzer

ORGANIZATION

Sycamore 4th Co.

DATE

July 7, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

101 N.W. Fourth Street

TELEPHONE

(812) 425-5485

CITY OR TOWN

Evansville

STATE

Indiana

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

Joseph D. ... Aug 10, 1979

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Carol Skell

DATE

10-1-79

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

William H. ...

DATE

9-24-79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE

In the early 1950's, with new lines of merchandise--such as televisions--demanding an increasing amount of space, the store again looked to expansion. The warehouse was moved to new and larger quarters, and The Farm Store took over that space. Then it became necessary to move automotive supplies into larger quarters, and a complete new service station was opened in 1955. The old service station site was converted into a parts department, and repair shop.

On Tuesday, October 4th, at 4:00, 1960, a bronze plaque was unveiled by Clarkes F. Kellstrout, Chairman of the Board of Sears, at the building marking Fourth and Sycamore as the site of the first Sears retail store. This bronze plaque was moved to its new home in the Sears Tower in Chicago on January 27, 1976, and was installed in a permanent display build especially for it on the 40th floor of the world's tallest building. The company asked that the plaque be removed to Chicago because it said it believed it deserves a place of honor in the company's history archives. The downtown Evansville Sears store was closed in December, 1976.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE

Evansville, Indiana, Courier, 1 January 1920; 4 November 1934; 9 January, 1938.
Leonore Swoiskin, Sears Archivist, to Mort Snitzer, 25 May 1978.

RECEIVED
AUG 15 1979
NATIONAL REGISTER



ON THIS SITE ... IN OCTOBER, 1925
SEARS, ROEBUCK AND CO.
UPGRADED ITS
**FIRST RETAIL
DEPARTMENT STORE**

THE FIRST SEARS STORE TO BE LOCATED
WITHIN A MAIL ORDER BUILDING, THUS
LAUNCHING AN ENTERPRISE WHOSE GROWTH
AND SERVICE TO THE
AMERICAN CUSTOMER
HAS BEEN UNIQUE IN THE ANNALS OF
MERCHANDISING



DEDICATED BY THE EMPLOYEES
ON OCTOBER 4, 1966 TO
GENERAL ROBERT E. WOOD
WHO CONCEIVED AND BUILT
THE SEARS RETAIL ORGANIZATION

*The Executive Staff and Employees
of Sears, Roebuck and Company
request the pleasure of your company
at a plaque dedication at the
corner of Fourth and Sycamore
Tuesday, October 4th, at 4 o'clock
on the occasion of the
thirty-fifth anniversary of the*

*first Sears Retail Store
opened in Evansville at*

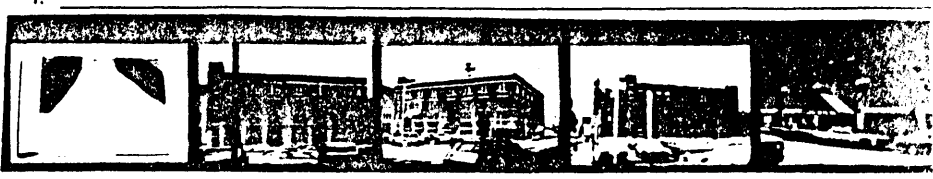
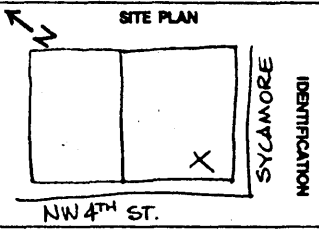
*101 N. W. 4th Street
on October 5, 1925*

*By General Robert E. Wood,
founder of Sears Retailing.*

R. E. W. P.

STATE OF INDIANA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
INDIANA HISTORIC SITES AND STRUCTURES INVENTORY

1. HISTORIC NAME SEARS, ROEBUCK & CO. (McCURDY BLDG.)
 2. OWNERSHIP: PUBLIC PRIVATE
 NAME Sycamore + Fourth Co.
 ADDRESS (Richard Lipsick / North Snitzer)
 3. LOCATION NOTES Original Plan 209-210
 4. VISIBLE FROM PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY: YES NO
 5. USE PRESENT PAST
 Residential (sing.)
 Residential (mult.)
 Commerce
 Industrial
 Agriculture
 Transportation
 Organization
 Military
 Political
 Unknown
 Vacant
 Other
 6. CATEGORY
 DISTRICT
 BUILDING(S)
 STRUCTURE
 SITE
 OBJECT
 7. ACCESSIBLE
 YES/RESTRICTED
 YES/UNRESTRICTED
 NO
 8. ENDANGERED
 NO
 YES/BY WHAT
 9. DATE 1920
 10. ARCHITECT/BUILDER RUSSELL GARGIS, Architect
 11. PERIODS: PREHISTORIC 17TH/18TH CEN. 1800-1899 1861-1899 1900-PRESENT
 12. AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE
 Archeology-Prehistoric Conservation Law Sculpture
 Archeology-Historic Economics Literature Social/Humanitarian
 Agriculture Education Military Theater
 Architecture Engineering Music Transportation
 Art Exploration/Settlement Philosophy Other (Specify)
 Commerce Industry Politics/Government FIRST ORIGINAL SEARS
 Communications Invention Religion RETAIL OUTLET
 Community Planning Landscape Architecture Science
 13. STYLE
 Federal
 Greek Revival
 Gothic Revival
 Italianate
 Second Empire
 Stick Style/Eastlake
 Queen Anne
 Romanesque Revival
 Colonial Revival
 Neo-Classical
 Bungalow
 Vernacular
 Other (Specify) NONE
 14. CONDITION
 EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR
 DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED
 15. ALTERATIONS
 UNALTERED
 MINOR
 MAJOR
 16. SITE INTEGRITY
 ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE
 17. OUTBUILDINGS/SECONDARY STRUCTURES
 NO
 YES 82-196-220 WAS PART OF STORE
 18. IN ESTABLISHED HISTORIC DISTRICT
 YES/NAME
 19. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT (NATURAL AND MAN-MADE) DOWNTOWN. THIS STORE WAS SEARS, ROEBUCK'S FIRST RETAIL OUTLET ANYWHERE
 20. INFORMATION SOURCES PIGION TOWNSHIP ASSESSOR, NAT'L REGISTER NOMINATION, NEWSPAPERS
 21. PREPARED BY NANCY J. LONG 22. DATE 10/5/77



6. _____
 7. _____
 8. FOUR STORIES. FIRST FLOOR HAS LARGE DISPLAY WINDOWS
 9. FLANKED BY LIMESTONE PIERS & PILASTERS WHICH ARE
 10. CONTINUED IN BRICK ON UPPER FLOORS. FLAT ROOF W/
 11. STONE COPING HAD METAL CORNICE AT ONE TIME. UPPER
 12. STORY WINDOWS HAVE BEEN BRICKED IN OR REPLACED.
 13. INTERIOR HAS CONCRETE FLOORS + COLUMNS, MEZZANINE.
 14. _____
 15. (AS OF AUGUST 1978, BLDG. IS BEING REMODELED AS "THE
 16. COMMERCE FORUM," AND HAS BEEN NOMINATED TO THE
 17. NATIONAL REGISTER.)
 18. _____
 19. BUILT BY W.C. McCURDY for
 20. HOUSE VANPICKEREL HARDWARE CO.
 21. _____
 22. NATIONAL REGISTER - 1 October 1979.
 23. _____
 24. Building 1980 on contract to sell to
 25. an antique car dealer; however, con-
 26. tract sale not consummated. Dealer
 27. broke agreement. The building now
 28. stands empty. (10/81)
 29. _____
 30. _____
 31. _____
 32. _____
 33. _____
 34. _____
 35. _____

Architectural Information

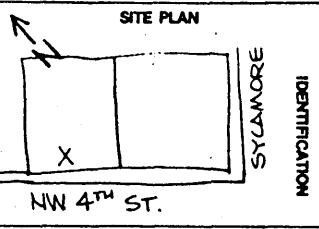
DESCRIPTION

34
 A. NAME OLD SEARS' STORE
 B. COUNTY Vanderburgh
 C. NUMBER 82-196-0221
 D. ADDRESS 101 N. W. Fourth Street
 E. TOWN/CITY Evansville
 F. QUAD SHEET Evansville South
 G. SITE STRUCTURE N.H.L. N.R.
 H. _____
 I. UTM Reference CENLUS 16
 J. TRACT # 19
 K. _____
 L. _____
 M. _____
 N. _____
 O. _____
 P. _____
 Q. _____
 R. _____
 S. _____
 T. _____
 U. _____
 V. _____
 W. _____
 X. _____
 Y. _____
 Z. _____

STATE OF INDIANA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
INDIANA HISTORIC SITES AND STRUCTURES INVENTORY

A. NAME SEEDKEN LANDMARK BUILDING
D. ADDRESS 111 N. W. Fourth Street
G. SITE STRUCTURE H. NHL NR
B. COUNTY Vanderburgh
E. TOWN/CITY Evansville
I. UTM References 16 449760 4202790
C. NUMBER 82-196-0220
F. QUAD SHEET Evansville South

1. HISTORIC NAME SEARS, ROEBUCK & CO. ANNEX
 2. OWNERSHIP: PUBLIC PRIVATE
 NAME Sycamore + Fourth Company
 ADDRESS (Richard Klupsch + Marlon Snifgen)
 3. LOCATION NOTES Original Plan Lot 211
 4. VISIBLE FROM PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY: YES NO
 5. USE PRESENT PAST
 Residential (sing.)
 Residential (mult.)
 Commerce
 Industrial
 Agriculture
 Transportation
 Organization
 Military
 Political
 Unknown
 Vacant
 Other
 6. CATEGORY DISTRICT
 BUILDING(S)
 STRUCTURE
 SITE
 OBJECT
 7. ACCESSIBLE YES/RESTRICTED
 YES/UNRESTRICTED
 NO
 8. ENDANGERED NO
 YES/BY WHAT _____
 9. DATE 1943
 10. ARCHITECT/BUILDER _____
 11. PERIODS: PREHISTORIC 17TH/18TH CEN. 1800-1880 1881-1899 1900-PRESENT
 12. AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE
 Archeology-Prehistoric Conservation Law Sculpture
 Archeology-Historic Economics Literature Social/Humanitarian
 Agriculture Education Military Theater
 Architecture Engineering Music Transportation
 Art Exploration/Settlement Philosophy Other (Specify)
 Commerce Industry Politics/Government
 Communications Invention Religion
 Community Planning Landscape Architecture Science
 13. STYLE
 Federal EXCELLENT ORIGINAL SITE
 Greek Revival GOOD MOVED DATE _____
 Gothic Revival FAIR
 Italianate DETERIORATED
 Second Empire RUINS NO
 Stick Style/Eastlake UNEXPOSED YES
 Queen Anne
 Romanesque Revival
 Colonial Revival
 Neo-Classical
 Bungalow UNALTERED NO
 Vernacular MINOR YES/NAME _____
 Other (Specify) MAJOR (1970-WINDOWS)
 14. CONDITION
 15. ALTERATIONS
 16. SITE INTEGRITY
 17. OUTBUILDINGS/SECONDARY STRUCTURES
 18. IN ESTABLISHED HISTORIC DISTRICT
 19. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT (NATURAL AND MAN-MADE) DOWNTOWN WAS ~~FARM EQUIP.~~
DEPT. OF SEARS, ROEBUCK
 20. INFORMATION SOURCES PIGEON TOWNSHIP ASSESSOR
 21. PREPARED BY NANCY J. LONG 22. DATE 10/5/77



IDENTIFICATION
CLASSIFICATION/DATE
SIGNIFICANCE
Architectural Information
DESCRIPTION

5. _____
 6. _____
 7. TWO STORIES, LIMESTONE FACED. LARGE DISPLAY
 8. WINDOWS ON 1ST FLOOR, DOUBLEHUNG SASH ON
 9. SECOND SECOND FLOOR OCCUPIES ONLY FRONT HALF
 10. OF BLDG. ENTRANCE AT LEFT SIDE LEADS TO STAIR-
 11. WAY. STONE HAS SOME CLASSICAL DETAILING.
 12. _____
 13. _____
 14. (AS OF AUGUST 1978, THE BUILDING IS BEING RE-
 15. MODELED FOR OFFICE SPACE AND RENAMED "THE
 16. LANDMARK," IN CONJUNCTION WITH DEVELOPMENT OF
 17. THE ADJACENT SEARS BLDG. AS "THE COMMERCE
 18. FORUM." THE BUILDINGS HAVE BEEN NOMINATED
 19. TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER.)
 20. _____
 21. NATIONAL REGISTER 10-1-79
 22. _____
 23. _____
 24. _____
 25. _____
 26. _____
 27. _____
 28. _____
 29. _____
 30. _____
 31. _____
 32. _____
 33. _____
 34. _____
 35. _____