

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number SLR Page       

America Fore Building

Name of Property

Cook County, IL

County and State

N.A.

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

NRIS Reference Number: 160000383

Property Name: America Fore Building

County: Cook

State: IL

Multiple Name: N.A.

This property was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Barbara Wyatt  
Signature of the Keeper

2-6-19  
Date of Action

**Amended Item in Nomination**

This SLR is issued to correct the following point:

Section 8, Period of Significance

**Supplementary Listing Record for the America Fore Building, 844 North Rush Street**

This Supplementary Listing Record is prepared to correct the period of significance for the America Fore Building in Chicago. Instead of 1923, the period of significance should be 1923-1929. An explanation follows.

The American Fore Building, built in 1923, was the northernmost office building in the North Central Business District projected in the 1909 *Plan of Chicago*. Refinements to the plan in 1919 established building height, form, and use in the Michigan Avenue commercial corridor. America Fore reflected these new recommendations. However, in 1923 the city of Chicago passed a zoning ordinance that changed the face of new development again. Building heights soared; the Straus Building, completed in 1924, was the first completed under the new code in the North Central Business District. Others followed in the 1920s, but Chicago was hard hit by the Great Depression and major building ceased in 1929, marking the end of the early twentieth century building boom that gave this part of Chicago the character it has today.

America Fore is the last major construction in the North Central Business District not influenced by the 1923 zoning code, and it marks the culmination of the implementation of the 1909 plan and the refinements made by the North Central Business District Association. With its pivotal location in the North Central Business District, it makes an important contribution to the planning initiatives that unfolded in the first few decades of the twentieth century, and temporarily

ended in 1929. This lull persisted until the end of World War II. The America Fore Building is representative of 1920s planning and development initiatives. Thus the period of significance begins with its date of construction, 1923, and extends to the last year of the decade.

The State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

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**Distribution**

National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

RECEIVED 2280 383

MAY 6 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

## 1. Name of Property

historic name America Fore Building  
other names/site number United States Railroad Retirement Board Building; William O. Lipinski Federal Building

## 2. Location

street & number 844 North Rush Street  not for publication  
city or town Chicago  vicinity  
state Illinois code IL county Cook code 031 zip code 60611

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this  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  meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

[Signature]  
Signature of certifying official

5/3/2016  
Date

Federal Preservation Officer  
Title

U.S. General Services Administration  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

[Signature]  
Signature of commenting official

3-25-16  
Date

Deputy SHPO  
Title

IL Historic Preservation Agency  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register  
 \_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_ removed from the National Register  
 \_\_\_ other (explain:)

*By Barbara Ogall*  
Signature of the Keeper

6-21-16  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private  
 public - Local  
 public - State  
 public - Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)  
 district  
 site  
 structure  
 object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
1	0	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

- COMMERCE/TRADE/Business  
 GOVERNMENT/Government Offices

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

- GOVERNMENT/Government Offices

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> AND 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN  
MOVEMENTS

Commercial Style

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Brick

walls: Limestone

Brick

roof:

other:

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

**Summary Paragraph**

The America Fore Building is located in the North Central Business District north of the downtown Chicago Loop at 844 North Rush Street. It is a 12-story office building constructed of concrete and steel with granite, limestone, and brick exterior cladding, designed and built during 1922-1923 by the Leonard Construction Company under contract with a group of insurance companies known as the America Fore Group. Architecturally, the building exhibits a clean commercial style that evokes late nineteenth-century Chicago office buildings; it expresses a modest classical influence, mainly in the division of the facades into a base, mid-section, and top. The attic story is detailed with two story piers set between deeply recessed window openings on the top two stories and a slightly projecting corbelled parapet. The significant characteristic of the America Fore Building, however, is its massiveness. The building encompasses an entire city block, and is clad in brick to present a solid structure, with cliff-like walls rising from the sidewalks. All these features illustrate the building's association with the expansion of substantial, mid- and high-rise commercial buildings in the North Side Business District during the 1920s. Although alterations have been completed in the decades after the United States Public Building Administration (later the U.S. General Services Administration) acquired the building in 1942, the America Fore Building retains the characteristics that contribute to its historic significance.

**Narrative Description**

See Continuation Sheets 7.1 through 7.2

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**Setting**

The America Fore Building is located in the Near North Side neighborhood of Chicago, one block west of the city's renowned "Magnificent Mile," in an area dominated by high-rise commercial and residential buildings. It occupies the entire block bounded by Wabash Avenue and Rush, Pearson, and Chestnut streets. The site and the building are trapezoidal in plan. The building's setback from the street on all sides is the width of the sidewalk, and as a result, landscaping is limited to freestanding planters and street trees in tree pits abutting the curb. Beyond the building itself, there are no structures, objects or landscape that contribute to the building's historic characteristics.

**Exterior**

The America Fore Building has a single volume massing, and all four façades have similar spatial arrangements and architectural detailing, although the south and north façades are narrower than the east and west façades due to the trapezoidal shape of the site. The two pedestrian entrances are on the south and east façades and provide access to the main lobby. A third pedestrian entrance on the north façade provides access to first-floor commercial space only.

The predominant material of the exterior curtain wall is red brick, although the first story is clad in smooth-dressed limestone above a polished granite base. The limestone extends to the top of the double-height first story and terminates in a slightly projecting limestone cornice. The spatial arrangement of all façades is similar: a double-height first story, a transitional second story, a third through tenth story mid-section, and a two story top.

Terra cotta veneer and trim at the eleventh and twelfth floors was removed and replaced with brick in 1954. The brick curtain wall was replaced in 1999-2001, with care taken to replicate the original bonding pattern. All stonework is original to the date of construction (1923).

**First Floor.** On the first floor, each façade has regularly spaced 14-by-18-foot storefront windows, separated by limestone piers. The windows have non-original fixed aluminum sash divided by muntins. The north, south, and east facades each have an off-center entrance with a non-original double-leaf door, with sidelights and ornamental metal work. The west elevation has three service bays; two have non-original rollup doors, one has been enclosed with a granite-finished wall and fitted with a metal louver and metal pedestrian door .

**Upper Floors.** The second through tenth floors have regularly spaced punched window openings with original limestone sills and non-original aluminum sash windows installed in 1990. The second story at all facades is differentiated from the stories above with paired windows separated by a brick pier. The corner bays of the upper floors maintain this paired-window-and-pier arrangement, effectively anchoring the corners of the building. Some windows, particularly on the west facade, have been replaced with metal louvered vents, an alteration associated with mechanical work in the 1960s. A slightly projecting limestone band separates the tenth and eleventh floors. The window openings between the end bays on the eleventh and twelfth stories are deeply recessed and separated by two-story brick piers that extend from the limestone band to the top of the window openings. All façades terminate with a slightly projecting, corbelled parapet capped with limestone coping.

**Interior**

The interior spaces of the America Fore Building are organized around a central elevator lobby, and the lobbies on each floor retain their original spatial configuration and much of their original materials.

On the first floor, the lobby is laid out in an irregular L-shape that is accessed from the east and south entrances. Originally, the lobby was also served by the entrance at the north facade, but that area has been closed off since

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1960 for use as tenant space. The first floor lobby was remodeled c. 2014 with wood paneling that encapsulates the original white marble walls topped by a slightly corbelled marble banding with a marble crown. The original ornamental plaster ceiling was removed in the 1960s when air-conditioning was installed in the building. The floor is finished with original marble floor tiles with a green marble base.

The second through twelfth floors' lobbies are finished with original white marble floors and wainscots with green marble bases. Above approximately eight feet, the walls are plaster, as are the ceilings.

On all floors, there are four passenger elevators each at the east and west side of the lobby; the east elevators are flanked by enclosed stairwells. The stairways retain much of their original configuration and detail: steel stringers, treads, risers, railing and balustrade, oak handrails and painted plaster walls. An exception to this is at the first to second floor, where the stair is finished with marble landings, treads and wainscot, also original. Modern metal fire doors have been installed within the original framing.

The lobbies are surrounded on all sides by office spaces that generally have open floor plans with modern cubicle-type partitions, while enclosed offices are located along the exterior walls. The window openings generally retain their original wood sills. The interior spaces have been remodeled periodically to suit the needs of tenants, including the first floor commercial spaces and the upper floor office spaces, occupied by the United States Railroad Retirement Board (USRRB) since 1942. To accommodate air conditioning and other mechanical equipment, all original ceilings were covered by acoustical tile drop ceilings in the early 1960s. A few of the enclosed offices along the south and east sides of the eighth floor and the northwest corner of the twelfth floor retain original interior windows, doors, and transoms with stained wood frames. The basement and attic spaces house storage, shops, and mechanical equipment.

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- 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**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning and Development  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1923  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1923  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Herman Hanselmann  
Leonard Construction Co.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The America Fore Office Building represents a short period of time in the implementation of the 1909 *Plan of Chicago* and the North Side Central Business District Association's guidelines for property development in the North Michigan Avenue Corridor. Therefore, the period of significance is 1923, representing the year the building was completed during an important period in the development of the Near North Side of Chicago.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

N/A



**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

The America Fore Building is significant under Criterion A for community planning and development at the local level as being representative of early expansion of Chicago's central business district as recommended by the seminal *1909 Plan of Chicago* and the consequent North Central Business District Association guidelines for the Near North Side. The building's form and height is representative of (1) a transition from the typical Chicago office building of the 1900 to 1914 period to those with central service cores rather than light courts and (2) the height recommended in the growing North Central Business District for mid-rise office buildings. The America Fore Building reflects the mandates of city planning for the North Central Business District and as such represents a distinct time and place in Chicago's urban development.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

The America Fore Office Building represents the development of the North Michigan Avenue corridor as projected by the *1909 Plan of Chicago* and North Side Central Business District Association Plan for property development. The America Fore Building, at the time it was completed, was the northernmost office building in the North Central Business District. It offered more floor area than the contemporary Wrigley Building and represented the recommended building height for the expanding North Michigan Avenue commercial corridor. The building's height and form, as well as its first-floor commercial arcade, is representative of many characteristics typical of Chicago office buildings during a period of transition from the forms of the 1900 to 1914 building period and those of the post-1923 Zoning Ordinance building boom of the 1920s.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

See Continuation Sheets 8.1 through 8.8

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**Historic Context**

**The Central Business District Extends into the Near North Side**

The town of Chicago was platted in 1830, and by the time the city was incorporated in 1837, its population had reached 4,170. After the Civil War, Chicago developed into the largest commodities market in the country for grain, lumber, and meat, as farmers, ranchers, and lumbermen fanned out into the lands to the west and northwest. Chicago was also at the center of the country's transportation network. It was the main connecting point between railroads based in the eastern United States and those in the west, as well as between shipping points on the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River watersheds. Chicago quickly became a major metropolis as numerous wholesale and manufacturing firms established operations in the city.<sup>1</sup>

By 1900, Chicago was a manufacturing, industrial, and commercial center second only to New York City. Chicago led the country in producing agricultural implements, bicycles, and railcars, and its important industrial sectors included meatpackers, steel mills, foundries, and machine shops. Chicago dominated the country's midsection in wholesale commerce, and, through mail order giants Sears, Roebuck & Company and Montgomery, Ward & Company, the city extended its retail commerce nationally. In addition, Chicago had developed as a major financial center with banks, commodities exchanges, stock traders, and insurance companies headquartered in the city. With this rapid growth, building design and construction had also become important industries in Chicago.

During the late nineteenth century, the Loop portion of downtown Chicago, the area set off by the elevated transit lines (the EI) that were completed in 1897, became the central business district. The Loop had excellent local transportation due to the EI and was surrounded with the stations of regional railroads. The development of real estate in the Loop, mainly office buildings, was strong and steady during the first 15 years of the twentieth century. Between 1912 and 1914 over one million square feet of office space was added to the Loop. Due to a combination of factors, including the adoption of a new limit on building heights in 1914, the economic effects of World War I, and the recession that followed in 1919 and 1920, construction was brought nearly to a halt until 1923. However, with the roaring economy of the 1920s, between 1923 and 1929 the amount of office space square footage in Chicago nearly doubled. The buildings that produced this increase were located in the Loop and also outside of it in a newly expanded central business district that included the Near North Side, or North Central Business District, flanking North Michigan Avenue.<sup>2</sup>

During the era when the Loop was equivalent to the central business district, the Chicago River cut off the area to the north, known as the Near North Side. The Near North Side had been devastated by the Chicago Fire of 1871 and rebuilt; the western edge of the area was filled with factories, warehouses, and working-class housing. Further east, important institutions were built, including the Newberry Library (1891) and the Chicago Historical Society (1892). The North Michigan Avenue area of the Near North Side was a run-down warehouse district. Rooming houses and other older buildings separated the city's upper-class residential "Gold Coast" on Lake Michigan from the slums in the western part of the area. The two lane Rush Street Bridge was the main traffic link across the Chicago River.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company 1991); "Available City Population Data: Population History of Selected U.S. Cities," accessed online at:

<http://physics.bu.edu/~redner/projects/population/cities/chicago.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Carol Willis, *Form Follows Finance: Skyscrapers and Skylines in New York and Chicago* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1995), 169-170.

<sup>3</sup> John W. Stamper, *Chicago's North Michigan Avenue: Planning and Development, 1900-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 18-19.

Commission on Chicago Landmarks and Chicago Department of Planning and Development, "Near North Side," in *Chicago*

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The *Plan of Chicago* (1909) prepared by Daniel Burnham and Edward H. Bennett addressed the need to expand the central business district and improve connections north across the Chicago River. The plan suggested that the central business district would extend across the Chicago River and as far north as Chicago Avenue within a few years. Michigan Avenue was identified as the major connecting link between the Loop and the area north of the Chicago River, and the plan called for extending and widening the avenue, as well as for constructing a prominent bridge over the river. The plan also identified Michigan Avenue as a major commercial corridor and a major north-south route that, once widened, would relieve traffic congestion. An aerial view of North Michigan Avenue that appeared in the plan depicted the blocks flanking Michigan Avenue's blocks with buildings of the same type and height as those fronting the wide avenue.<sup>4</sup>

### The Development of the North Central Business District

The North Central Business District Association (Association) was founded in 1913. This same year the city council passed the ordinance that would fund the widening of Michigan Avenue and the construction of the bridge. In 1918, the Association developed recommendations to limit the height of buildings to ten stories, with a continuous base cornice line (referred to as a "balcony" line in the plan) between the second and third floors of buildings lining the avenue to create a uniform base of two stories. The Association also made recommendations for land use along Michigan Avenue with the goal of creating a commercial corridor similar to Upper Fifth Avenue in New York City. The Association recommended the construction of office buildings, banks, hotels, and shops rather than automobile showrooms, saloons, warehouses, and industrial buildings. The owners of property along Michigan Avenue voluntarily agreed to limit the uses of buildings to the suggested list and to use the architectural guidelines. It is likely that the owners of property close to Michigan Avenue looked to the recommendations concerning building types and heights as a means to extend the projected corridor of high-value property outward, as the illustration in the *Plan of Chicago* suggested.<sup>5</sup>

These guidelines, intended to develop North Michigan Avenue as a European-inspired boulevard lined with the amenities of a grand commercial avenue with uniform architecture, was short lived. In 1923, Chicago adopted its first comprehensive zoning ordinance and the North Michigan Avenue area became part of the "fifth volume district," the one that allowed the greatest height. Suddenly there were no limits to the height of towers on buildings, although they were still limited to 25 percent of the lot area. The new zoning ordinance and the much greater potential volume of buildings had the effect of negating the planning efforts of the Association. North Michigan Avenue was developed in a different, more organic manner with buildings with a variety of heights. Many of these were architecturally distinguished.<sup>6</sup>

The Michigan Avenue Bridge over the Chicago River and the widening of Michigan Avenue, completed in 1920, were heralded as the "New Gateway of the Greater Chicago." The bridge opened up the Near North Side for redevelopment as an extension of the central business district and made it easily accessible, though the post-World War I recession and building slump slowed the transformation. The office buildings erected in the North Central Business District tended to be in two broad categories: substantial, mid-rise buildings, occupied by both owner and rental tenants, and tall buildings that became iconic representatives of prominent firms.<sup>7</sup>

During the 1920s, North Central Business District mid-rise office buildings typically rose to a height of seven stories and were known by the company's name or location. The construction of the seven story office building at

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*Historic Resources Survey: An Inventory of Architecturally and Historically Significant Structures*, 1996, 65-66.

"Near North Side" in *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, accessed online at:

<http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/876.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Stamper, *Chicago's North Michigan Avenue*, 5-9.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 21-25.

<sup>6</sup> Stamper, *Chicago's North Michigan Avenue* 25-27.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

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Ohio Street and Fairbanks Court, announced in 1916, was considered an important project in the North Central Business District. The 1921 Cass-Superior Office Building at 720 N. Wabash Avenue and the 1922 Popular Mechanics Building at the corner of St. Clair and Ontario streets were both seven stories in height. The 1923 America Fore Office Building, located on North Rush Street was the tallest of this mid-rise group, at twelve stories.<sup>8</sup>

The more iconic buildings included the Wrigley Building, the Chicago Tribune Building, and the Palmolive Building, which were all built at the south and north ends of Michigan Avenue within the North Central Business District. William Wrigley, Jr. was one of the first businessmen to develop an important property on the north side of the Chicago River. Wrigley acquired the property at the most prominent site in the North Central Business District, the northwest corner of the Michigan Avenue Bridge and erected a building in 1922 as a corporate headquarters. Eleven stories of the 17 story building were a small tower. The Chicago Tribune Tower, designed in response to a high-profile design competition and completed in 1923, occupied another highly visible location on the southern end of North Michigan Avenue. The 1929 Palmolive Building at 919 N Michigan Avenue was a full mile north of the Loop and was the first tall office building, at 37 stories with a set-back form, within the North Central Business District.<sup>9</sup>

### Chicago Office Buildings: Characteristic Urban Forms

Office buildings in Chicago had several prominent characteristics during the period between 1893 and 1923. The City's limitation on height to 130 feet in 1893 was raised several times during this period. Chicago office buildings had a solid, rectangular form. The taller buildings were tall and narrow, and sometimes quite long. Because office buildings wider than 70 to 80 feet required a light court to admit enough light and air into interiors, this building form utilized light courts. Shorter office buildings were typically cube-like blocks with a hollow core or a U-plan to provide the needed light court at the center of the building. Some properties erected after 1900 had elongated cubic forms as the city allowed taller buildings. Offices were placed on a double-loaded corridor around the light court. It was common to roof over the central space at the second floor to create a commercial arcade lined with shops and services; above this roof the light court was open to the sky. The shopping arcade was an important part of an office building's revenue, as the rental rate for commercial space was five to six times higher than that for the office space above. Many buildings had arcades that cut through the building and connected to two or more streets.<sup>10</sup>

After the 1923 zoning ordinance was passed and taller buildings were erected, the advantages of placing elevator banks and utilities in the darker center portion of the building became evident. The hollow core form fell out of favor, although the need for light courts persisted. The America Fore Building, with a 225-foot frontage on Rush, 215-foot frontage on Wabash, 160-foot frontage on Pearson, and 90-foot frontage on Chestnut, was slightly larger than the dimensions that triggered the use of an internal light court. However, the office floors of the building were designed with a central service core, as were most of the buildings of the 1920s.<sup>11</sup>

### Development of the America Fore Building

Many insurance companies, including fire insurance, had regional offices in Chicago. This was the case for a group of four companies united by the same leadership and known as the America Fore group. Henry Evans, who became president of the Continental Insurance Co. in 1903, began assembling the group circa 1910 and

<sup>8</sup> Frank A. Randall, *History of the Development of Building Construction in Chicago* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1949), 303-304, 306, 314.

<sup>9</sup> *Chicago Daily Tribune*, "Stanley Field Purchases Site on Ohio Street," 18 May 1916.

<sup>9</sup> Stamper, *Chicago's North Michigan Avenue*, 32-39, 91-93; Willis, *Form Follows Finance*, 123.

<sup>10</sup> Willis, *Form Follows Finance*, 59-64.

<sup>11</sup> Willis, *Form Follows Finance*, 83, 112.; Leonard Engineering Company, plans of the America Fore Building, 1922.

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managed them from headquarters in New York City. Evans formed the Fidelity Fire Insurance Co. in 1906 and took control of the Phoenix Fire Insurance Co. in 1909 and merged the two firms. In 1915 Evans formed and became president of the American Eagle Fire Insurance Co. and became president of Farmers' Insurance of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. By the 1920s, the America Fore group of fire insurance companies had combined case assets that exceeded those of any similar group of fire insurance firms under the same management. In 1924, after Evans' death, his successor operated the firms under one set of executive managers.<sup>12</sup>

The America Fore Building project brought together the Chicago regional offices of the America Fore firms in a modern office building. An irregularly shaped site in the North Central Business District near the Michigan Avenue corridor was selected for the project, filling a block bounded by Rush, Pearson, and Chestnut Streets and Cass (now Wabash) Avenue, a site north of Chicago Avenue and west of Michigan Avenue. The Leonard Construction Co. acted as architect, engineer, and general contractor for the project. The Leonard Construction Co. was a prominent Chicago firm whose work included the construction of the Rockefeller Memorial Chapel at the University of Chicago (1928, in association with Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue) and the Lakeside Press Building (1928, in association with Howard Van Doren Shaw). It also worked in regional cities, including Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota.<sup>13</sup>

Herman Hanselmann served as the Leonard Construction Co. architect for the America Fore Building. Hanselmann designed the America Fore Building in a 1920s commercial style that had its origins in earlier Chicago buildings. The cliff-like walls of the building rise from a storefront base in the tripartite shaft formula, but without any overt historical references or applied ornament

In 1942, the federal government Office of Decentralized Service purchased the America Fore Building to house the USRRB, the federal agency established in the mid-1930s to administer retirement/survivor and unemployment/sickness benefit programs for railroad workers and their families.. The relocation of the USRRB from Washington, D.C. to Chicago was part of the effort to decentralize non-defense-related government agencies and to make room in the capital for war-related offices. The America Fore insurance companies, which occupied 60,000 square feet of their building, moved to rented space in the Field Building in the Loop. Groups of the USRRB's over 1,700 employees began the move to Chicago in April 1942. An office of the local draft board moved into the America Fore Building in February 1943 and the Ninth Naval District Civil Readjustment office opened a service office in the building in 1946 to help veterans adjust to civilian life.<sup>14</sup> The building still serves as the national headquarters of the USRRB today. In 2011 the building was named to honor former U.S. Rep. Bill Lipinski.

### Representing the Vision of the 1919 North Central Business District Association

City plans are implemented through the construction of civic infrastructure, such as the widening of Michigan Avenue and the construction of its Chicago River Bridge, and the construction of individual buildings that conform to the land use and architectural forms described in the city's plans. The 1909 Burnham and Bennett *Plan of Chicago* was reinforced and expanded by the study sponsored by the North Central Business District Association in 1919. Though this study focused on North Michigan Avenue, it set the land use, design, and building form for the corridor flanking the avenue. The vision for lining North Michigan Avenue with buildings ten stories tall that included a prominent base cornice framing the pedestrian streetscape reflected a devotion to the Parisian ideal

<sup>12</sup> *The Insurance Almanac and Encyclopedia* (New York: Underwriter Printing and Publishing Co., 1923), 599.

*The Insurance Almanac and Encyclopedia* (New York: Underwriter Printing and Publishing Co., 1929), 35-36, 68, 73.

<sup>13</sup> Randall, *History of the Development of Building Construction in Chicago*, 306.

Emporis Website, Buildings Summaries, accessed online at: <http://www.emporis.com/en/bu/>.

<sup>14</sup> *Chicago Daily Tribune*, "America Fore Building Sold to Government." 7 February 1942; "Another Tenant to Quit America Fore Building." 18 February 1942; "Chicago Office Is Opened in U.S. Agency's Shift." 10 March 1942; "Transfer First U.S. Workers to Chicago April 2." 26 March 1942; "Draft Board 64 Moves Offices to 844 Rush Street." 28 February 1943.

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

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America Fore Building
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seldom seen in American cities. The America Fore Building, a mid-rise office building erected one block west of North Michigan Avenue on Rush Street, was designed as a twelve story office building with a tall base, midsection, and attic stories. It was considerably shorter than many of the office buildings erected prior to World War I, which were typically 16 to 20 stories. The height of the America Fore Building appears to have been influenced by its northern location in the newly developing and still unproven North Central Business District and by the Association's recommendations for Michigan Avenue. The building, at just two stories above the ten mandated for Michigan Avenue, would have been a compatible structure in height and massing to those expected to be erected in the commercial corridor. Its architectural expression was similar to that prescribed for Michigan Avenue, its tall ground story replacing a two story base. Its ground story was clad with limestone and marble and had large show windows in accordance with the design that other office and commercial buildings were establishing for the area.

The America Fore Building was erected in the short period between the opening of the Michigan Avenue Bridge over the Chicago River in 1920 and the city adopting the Zoning Code of 1923. The building has a blocky, cubic form that characterizes many Chicago office buildings of the 1893 to 1923 era, although it has a central service core instead of a light court. The building was noted for the square footage that it offered for offices, an area that exceeded the nearly contemporary Wrigley Building (the first tall building erected north of the river on North Michigan Avenue). A rendering of the America Fore Building in its North Central Business District setting depicts it towering over the older nearby buildings. Only the Drake Hotel, the Davis Hotel, and other buildings on the shore of Lake Michigan approached the scale and height of the America Fore Building at the time it was built.<sup>15</sup>

**Summary of Historical Significance**

The America Fore Building represents the beginning stage of implementing the North Central Business District Association plan for the Near North Side. The building's form and height represent a transition from the typical Chicago office building of the 1900 to 1914 period to those with central service cores rather than light courts and the lowered height used in the North Central Business District for mid-rise office buildings. Its crisp architectural expression and lack of historicizing ornament draws both on the tradition of the Chicago commercial style and on early 1920s trends in commercial architecture. The form and appearance of the America Fore Building reflect the mandates of city planning for the North Central Business District and the financial returns expected for an office building that was partially occupied by its owners. It represents a distinct time and place in Chicago's urban development and is significant in the area of community planning and development as a representative of the 1920s building boom of Chicago's Near North Side.

**Statement of Significance**

The America Fore Building meets Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development. The property, erected as the America Fore Office Building, represents a short period of time in the implementation of the 1909 *Plan of Chicago* and the North Side Central Business District Association's guidelines for property development in the North Michigan Avenue Corridor. The period of significance is 1923, representing the year the building was completed during an important period in the development of the Near North Side of Chicago. The building retains sufficient integrity, and it meets National Register Criterion A at the local level.

The America Fore Building represents the development of the North Michigan Avenue corridor as projected by the 1909 *Plan of Chicago* and North Side Central Business District Association's guidelines for property development. The America Fore Building, at the time it was completed, was the northernmost office building in the North Central Business District. It offered more floor area than the contemporary Wrigley Building and represented the recommended building height for the North Michigan Avenue commercial corridor. The building's height and

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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
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America Fore Building

Name of Property

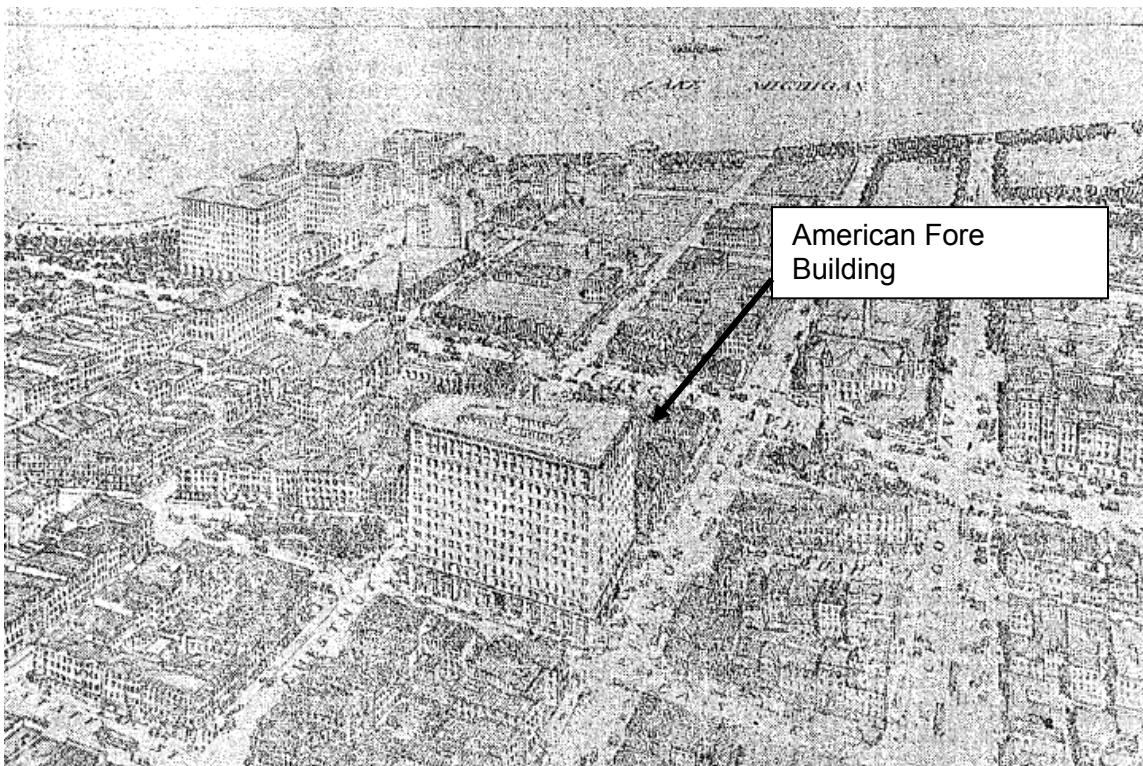
Cook County, Illinois

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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form, as well as its first-floor commercial arcade, represent many characteristics typical of Chicago office buildings during a period of transition from the forms of the 1900 to 1914 building period and those of the post 1923 Zoning Ordinance building boom of the 1920s. The building, occupied by the Railroad Retirement Board and other government agencies since 1940, represents a distinct time and place in Chicago's urban development and is a significant representative of the 1920s building boom of Chicago's Near North Side.



"THE NORTH SIDE'S NEWEST AND LARGEST – IN POINT OF FLOOR AREA – OFFICE BUILDING"  
*Chicago Daily Tribune*, 20 November, 1921.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form)  
See Continuation Sheets 9.1 through 9.2

**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: General Services Administration

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 0.6  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>16</u> Zone	<u>448019</u> Easting	<u>4638635</u> Northing	3	<u>                    </u> Zone	<u>                    </u> Easting	<u>                    </u> Northing
2	<u>                    </u> Zone	<u>                    </u> Easting	<u>                    </u> Northing	4	<u>                    </u> Zone	<u>                    </u> Easting	<u>                    </u> Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (describe the boundaries of the property)

The America Fore Building is located in the parcel identified as the Cook County Assessor's Parcel Identification Number 17-03-224-001-0000. The parcel is bounded by Rush Street, Pearson Street, Wabash Avenue, and Chestnut Street.

**Boundary Justification** (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The nomination consists of the property historically associated with 844 North Rush Street, Chicago, Illinois.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Andrew J. Schmidt/Senior Architectural Historian

organization Summit Envirosolutions, Inc., Date September 2010  
for the U. S. General Services Administration

street & number 1217 Bandana Blvd. N. telephone 651-842-4202

city or town St. Paul state MN zip code 55108

e-mail [aschmidt@summite.com](mailto:aschmidt@summite.com)

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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
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America Fore Building
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Section number 9 Page 1

**Major Bibliographic References**

"Available City Population Data: Population History of Selected U.S. Cities." Accessed online at:  
<http://physics.bu.edu/~redner/projects/population/cities/chicago.html>.

Boland, Beth M. *National Register of Historic Places Bulletin 13: How to Apply National Register Criteria to Post Offices*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1994. Electronic document accessed online at: <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb13/>.

*Chicago Daily Tribune*. "Stanley Field Purchases Site on Ohio Street." 18 May 1916.

\_\_\_\_\_. "North Side's Newest and Largest Office Building." 20 November 1921.

\_\_\_\_\_. "America Fore Building Sold to Government." 7 February 1942.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Another Tenant to Quit America Fore Building." 18 February 1942.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Chicago Office Is Opened in U.S. Agency's Shift." 10 March 1942.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Transfer First U.S. Workers to Chicago April 2." 26 March 1942.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Draft Board 64 Moves Offices to 844 Rush Street." 28 February 1943.

Commission on Chicago Landmarks and Chicago Department of Planning and Development, "Near North Side," *Chicago Historic Resources Survey: An Inventory of Architecturally and Historically Significant Structures*, 1996.

Cronon, William. *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1991).

Leonard Engineering Company, "America Fore Building," unpublished 1922 drawings available at the United States Railroad Retirement Board Building maintenance office, Chicago, Illinois.

"Near North Side" in the *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/876.html>.

Randall, Frank A. *History of the Development of Building Construction in Chicago* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1949).

R. L. Polk and Company, *Chicago City Directory, 1928-1929*, Chicago Historical Society website accessed online at: <http://www.chsmedia.org/househistory/polk/Menus/PolkA.pdf>.

Ross and Brown Real Estate Map of Chicago 1928, in *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, accessed online at: <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/10608.html>.

Stamper, John W. *Chicago's North Michigan Avenue: Planning and Development, 1900-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

*The Insurance Almanac and Encyclopedia* (New York: Underwriter Printing and Publishing Co. 1923 and 1929).  
U.S. Railroad Retirement Board, "An Agency Overview", accessed online at:  
[http://www.rrb.gov/opa/agency\\_overview.asp](http://www.rrb.gov/opa/agency_overview.asp).

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

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America Fore Building

Name of Property

Cook County, Illinois

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 9 Page 2

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Whiffen, Marcus. *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1969).

Willis, Carol. *Form Follows Finance: Skyscrapers and Skylines in New York and Chicago* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1995).

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

**Name of Property:** America Fore Building

**City or Vicinity:** Chicago

**County:** Cook

**State:** Illinois

**Photographer:** Mariah McGunigle

**Date Photographed:** March 2016

**Description of Photograph(s) and number:**

IL_Cook_County_America_Fore_Bldg_0001	N and E FACADES
IL_Cook_County_America_Fore_Bldg_0002	GROUND FAÇADE TYP.
IL_Cook_County_America_Fore_Bldg_0003	N and W FACADES
IL_Cook_County_America_Fore_Bldg_0004	S FACADE
IL_Cook_County_America_Fore_Bldg_0005	S and E FACADES
IL_Cook_County_America_Fore_Bldg_0006	ENTRANCE TYP.
IL_Cook_County_America_Fore_Bldg_0007	INTERIOR LOBBY EAST
IL_Cook_County_America_Fore_Bldg_0008	INTERIOR LOBBY SOUTH
IL_Cook_County_America_Fore_Bldg_0009	INTERIOR LOBBY CENTRAL

**Property Owner:**

(complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

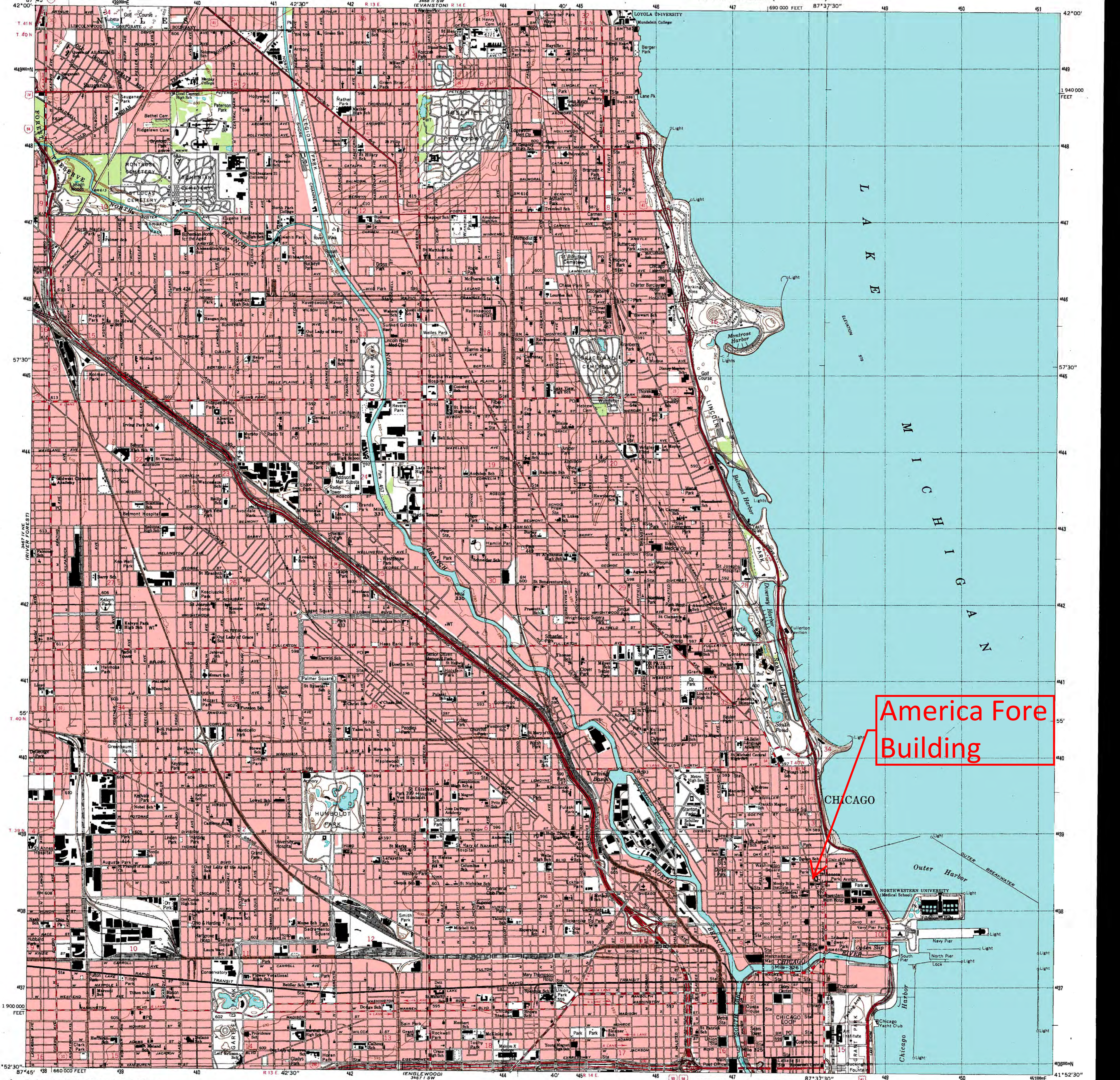
name U. S. General Services Administration, Region 5

street & number 230 South Dearborn Street, Suite 3700 telephone 312..353.5395

city or town Chicago state IL zip code 60604

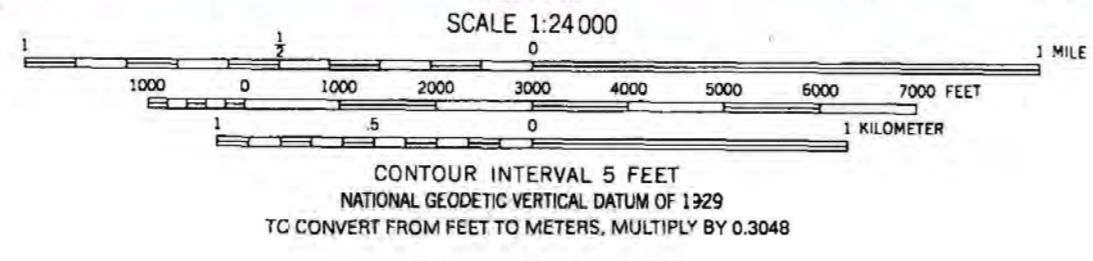
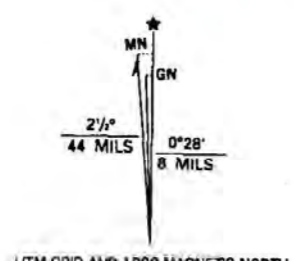
**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



America Fore Building

Produced by the United States Geological Survey... Derived from imagery taken 1988 and other sources... North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27)...



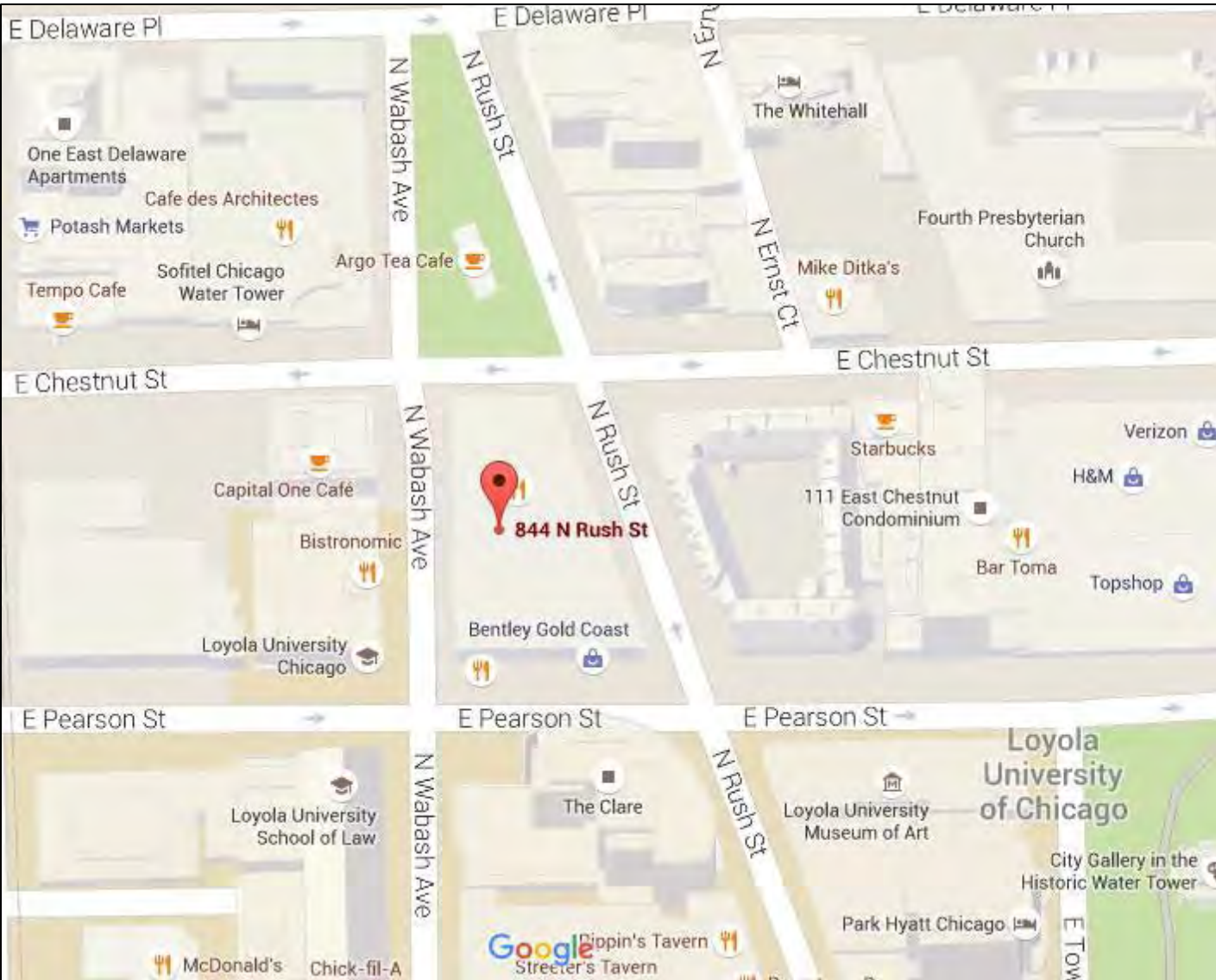
ROAD CLASSIFICATION table with symbols for primary, secondary, and light-duty roads, and icons for interstate, U.S., and state routes.

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS... A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

CHICAGO LOOP, ILL. 1997

NIMA 3467 I NW-SERIES V863





America Fore Building

Cook County, Illinois

UTM: 16.448019.4638635



1" = 100'



MCCORMICK & SCHMICK'S  
SEAFOOD & STEAKS

MCCORMICK & SCHMICK'S  
SEAFOOD & STEAKS

MCCORMICK & SCHMICK'S

MCCORMICK & SCHMICK'S

ONE WAY  
→

FREE PARKING



Adventure Beckons



MCCORMICK & SCHMICK'S  
SEAFOOD & STEAKS

MCCORMICK & SCHMICK'S  
SEAFOOD & STEAKS

MCCORMICK & SCHMICK'S

MCCORMICK & SCHMICK'S

ONE WAY

PALET PARKING



MCCORMICK & SCHMICK'S  
SEAFOOD & STEAKS

ONE WAY  
→

DO NOT  
ENTER

ONE WAY  
→

MCCORMICK & SCHMICK'S

MCCORMICK & SCHMICK'S

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MCCORMICK & SCHMICK'S







**EPIC**  
SURGERY  
**DELICIOUS BURGER**

**WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI  
FEDERAL BUILDING**





EXIT



NO FIREARMS  
OR WEAPONS  
ALLOWED ON  
THIS PROPERTY

Informational sign with text, partially obscured and difficult to read.

EXIT

FIRE  
COMMAND  
CENTER  
124

  
NO FIREARMS  
OR WEAPONS  
ALLOWED ON  
THIS PROPERTY

EXIT





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: America Fore Building

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ILLINOIS, Cook

DATE RECEIVED: 5/06/16 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/25/16  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/09/16 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/21/16  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000383

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 6-21-16 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

The America Fore Building is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development as a representative example of the expansion of Chicago's central business district according to the *1909 Plan of Chicago*. The form and height of the building exhibits a transition from the typical light courts to a central service core, and its commercial arcade at the first floor shows a comparable development. When completed, it was the northernmost office building in the North Central Business District.

RECOM./CRITERIA A  
REVIEWER B. Wyatt DISCIPLINE Historian  
TELEPHONE 202-354-2252 DATE 6-21-16

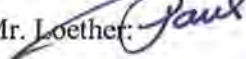
DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



May 3, 2016

Mr. Paul Loether  
Chief, NRHP & NHL Program  
1201 Eye Street, NW (2280), 8th Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether: 

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is pleased to nominate the America Fore Building, located at 844 North Rush Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611, for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

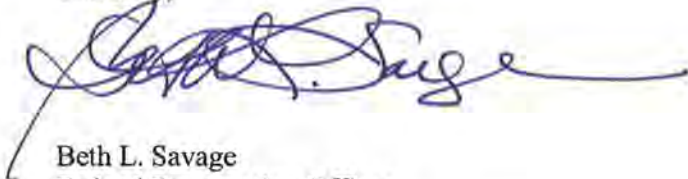
The following materials are enclosed for your review:

- A signed copy of the first page of the nomination
- "Disk 1" containing the true and correct copy of the nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for the America Fore Building in Chicago, Illinois, and
- "Disk 2" containing the .tif image files for the above referenced nomination.

We look forward to the nomination of this historic property to the National Register. If for any reason these materials need to be returned to GSA, please do so by a delivery service as items returned to our offices via regular mail are irradiated and the materials severely damaged.

Should you need further information regarding the nomination package, my contact for this matter is Ms. Sherry Frear at (202) 297-0812 or [sherry.frear@gsa.gov](mailto:sherry.frear@gsa.gov).

Sincerely,



Beth L. Savage  
Federal Preservation Officer  
Director, Center for Historic Buildings

Enclosure

cc: Regina Nally, Regional Historic Preservation Officer, Region 5  
Mariah McGunigle, Historic Architect, Region 5



need to fix  
POS to reflect  
criteria A  
as is 1914 construe  
date