

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

956

OCT 16 2009

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Daylight Building
other names/site number Daylight Block

2. Location

street & number 501-517 Union Avenue N/A not for publication
city or town Knoxville N/A vicinity
state Tennessee code TN county Knox code 093 zip code 37902

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 for 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 nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

E. Patrick Nix October 5, 2009
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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:)

Edson W. Beall 11-25-09
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Daylight Building
Name of Property

Knox County, Tennessee
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

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

Historic and Architectural Resources of
Knox County, TN

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

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: business

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: 20th Century Commercial

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Rubber Membrane

other Concrete, Glass, Copper

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 N/A

(Mark "x" in all 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Government

Period of Significance

1933-1959

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more 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: _____

Daylight Building
Name of Property

Knox County, Tennessee
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 0.40 acres Knoxville 147 NW

UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>17</u>	<u>236622</u>	<u>3983935</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	See continuation sheet	

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ann K. Bennett, Senior Planner
organization Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission date April 15, 2009
street & number Suite 403, City-County Building telephone 865-215-2500
city or town Knoxville state TN zip code 37902

Additional Documentation

submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO) or FPO for any additional items

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name David Dewhirst
street & number 123 Gay Street telephone 865-971-3137
city or town Knoxville state TN zip code 37902

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 listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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Daylight Building
Knox County, TN

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Daylight Building was constructed in 1926-27 by local real estate developer Benjamin Howard Sprankle. It was one of seven or eight buildings constructed by Sprankle along a two block distance of Union Avenue in downtown Knoxville. The Daylight Building was used for commercial and office space. The two story, brick building features a decorative metal canopy and original multi-pane metal windows. The interior has a large open space on the first floor and a double-loaded corridor with offices on the second floor.

The Daylight Building is a two story brick building with a raised foundation in the rear (north elevation). Nine bays wide, it is marked on the south (front) elevation by a metal canopy with Art Deco embellishment, secured to the building by substantial iron chains, that extends over the sidewalk to cover the building's storefront entrances. Transoms appear over the storefronts and entry doors and have been painted or covered over. Limestone bulkheads appear below each storefront window.

Brick columns on limestone bases divide the first story of the south facade into nine storefront bays. The storefront bays generally conform to one of two patterns. Four of the bays have three single-pane glass panels with a recessed entry to one side. The other bays contain two single-pane glass panels with a central recessed entry. The westernmost bay contains a single glass panel with a metal double door entry that accesses the building's main stairwell. A corbelled beltcourse visually separates the first and second story. Each bay on the second floor contains two eight-pane metal window units with stone sills. The only exception is the westernmost bay which contains a single twelve-pane window. Slightly recessed rectangular panels are located above the second story windows.

The east (side) elevation contains six bays, each separated by brick columns and limestone bases similar to those found on the façade. Each bay on the first story contains three original single-pane windows, painted glass transoms, and stone bulkheads similar to the storefronts on the south elevation. No entry doors are found on this elevation. The brick beltcourse separating the first and second stories and the recessed panels above each second story window are continued on this elevation. The second story contains two eight-pane and four sixteen-pane metal window units with stone sills.

The west (side) elevation contains only second story windows presently, although there are three bricked in window openings below them. It is not known when these openings were bricked in. The second floor has three eight-pane and one twelve-pane metal window units. A central brick flue is also found on the west elevation.

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Daylight Building
Knox County, TN

The north (rear) elevation of the building is three stories in height, due to the change in topography found north of Union Avenue. Even though it is three stories the elevation appears to have four stories due to an extra row of windows on the second story. Windows are found at the basement, first, and second story levels. On the west end of the rear elevation are several bricked in window openings. The basement level contains several wood and glass entry doors and metal multi-light windows. The second story contains two rows of three pane metal windows. The third floor contains eight-pane metal windows similar to those found on the front facade.

The roof is flat, with stepped parapet walls and metal flashing. The building was originally built with a raised central clerestory on the roof; its glass windows lighted the second floor interior and provide the building's name – Daylight Block. That rooftop feature was removed a number of years ago. Although it is not known when it was removed, an image from the East Tennessee Historical Collection shows a portion of the clerestory windows still in place in the 1940s.

The interior of the Daylight Building retains most of its original features on the second floor. The first floor has been modified since the building's construction by the removal of interior separating walls. Although the façade was originally divided into nine bays, it is not known how many individual tenants were originally housed on the first floor. The alterations that are now in place were probably accomplished fairly early in the building's existence, and were primarily done to house the Tennessee Valley Authority's Engineering staff.

The first floor contains a large open space with a dropped ceiling and floor coverings that appear to date from the 1960s or 1970s. Metal posts support the second story and may mark original interior separations. Variations in floor heights also indicate some original interior separations. At the east and west ends of the first story are second floor access stairways, with original banister and trim and an original encaustic floor tile entry. The stairwell on the west end is separated from the rest of the first floor space and is accessed from metal double doors on the south facade. It features historic marble wainscoting. The landing on the second floor has an historic wood railing with a square post balustrade.

The second story space in the Daylight Building is marked by an original double-loaded circulating hall that separates an interior bank of office spaces from spaces along the exterior walls. Original wooden doors mark the entry into each set of offices, and much of the original wood door trim and baseboards remain. The typical office has carpeted floors, plaster walls, and wood baseboards. The offices along the exterior walls generally have two sets of multi-pane metal windows.

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Daylight Building
Knox County, TN

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Daylight Building is being nominated to the National Register under Criterion A. The Daylight Building served as the initial headquarters for the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) Engineering Staff, Training and Education programs, and Soil Erosion and Reforestation offices. The Engineering Staff remained in the Daylight Building for much of the first fifty years of TVA's history. The Tennessee Valley Authority was established by Congress in 1933 as part of President Roosevelt's "New Deal" program during the Great Depression. The Daylight Building is the last remaining building representing the early, formative years of TVA in Knoxville that retains its architectural integrity.

The Tennessee Valley Authority was created when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the TVA Act on May 18, 1933. The purpose of the Tennessee Valley Authority, as set out in the act, was "to improve the navigability and to provide for the flood control of the Tennessee River; to provide for reforestation and the proper use of marginal lands in the Tennessee Valley; to provide for the agricultural and industrial development of said valley; to provide for the National defense."¹ The legislation creating TVA was shepherded by Senator George W. Norris (Nebraska) in passing Congressional measures advocating government control of the nitrate plants and Wilson Dam in Alabama, upon which Roosevelt based the TVA Act.²

The Tennessee Valley is an area of approximately 41,000 square miles, including parts of seven states – Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, although most of the area lies in Tennessee. In the creation of TVA, the Wilson Dam and power house and two nitrate plants in Alabama, a project begun under the National Defense Act of 1916, were transferred to TVA. Wilson Dam, built 1918) was one of a system of dams designed to maintain a navigation channel from Paducah, Kentucky to Knoxville, Tennessee, as well as to manage seasonal flooding and provide hydroelectric power to the TVA region. Phosphate fertilizers were researched and produced at Muscle Shoals. An extensive agricultural outreach program assisted farmers in becoming more productive, while reforesting heavily eroded farmland. Electric power was distributed to cities and rural locations throughout the valley.

The Tennessee Valley was in very poor condition in 1933. The land in the valley had been farmed so intensively that the soil fertility, which began as poor, rocky, mountain soil, was largely destroyed or eroded. The valley was also subject to devastating floods that occurred when winter and early spring rains came before the native vegetation had leafed out and was able to retard the runoff. The Tennessee River had also long been a navigation impediment to economic development in its region. The river was only navigable for brief periods when the water was higher; most of the year, its shallow, rocky shoals made river transportation difficult. The

¹ TVA Act, U. S. Congress, May 18, 1933.

² www.legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com, Tennessee Valley Authority

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Daylight Building
Knox County, TN

Tennessee Valley Authority was created to develop an integrated approach to solving all these problems.

Roosevelt's Tennessee Valley Act authorized a corporation owned by the Federal government. Initially, there were three members of the TVA Board of Directors – David Lilienthal, Harcourt A. Morgan and Arthur E. Morgan. Arthur Morgan, who served as the first chairman of the board, was President of the University of Tennessee before he was appointed to the TVA Board. He lived in Knoxville. The other two appointees were from other locations.

In his best-selling book *Inside USA*, John Gunther wrote that, "quite possibly the TVA idea is the greatest single American invention of this century, the biggest contribution the United States has yet made to society in the modern world." Not only did it serve as the Federal government's first and largest regional planning agency, it has also served as a model for development for Third World countries.³

The early projects of TVA- dams, locks, bridges and power plants – were designed by TVA's Engineering Staff in the Daylight Building in downtown Knoxville. These projects were among the most complex, ambitious, and successful engineering projects ever undertaken, and many of the resultant facilities remain essential and in wide use today. TVA quickly began an ambitious plan of designing and building numerous power plants. By the early 1940s 12 hydroelectric plants and one steam plant were being built employing 28,000 people. Today TVA remains one of the country's largest suppliers of electricity. About 8.5 million people use power supplied by TVA.⁴

TVA has always maintained its principal executive and engineering offices in Knoxville, Tennessee. Over the years, there has been speculation about why the principal offices of TVA were located in Knoxville. In a recent conversation, Mr. Ed Best, retired Librarian for TVA, offered several reasons why that decision might have been made.⁵ Mr. Best explained that Arthur Morgan did not want to leave Knoxville. In addition, there was one land grant university within the Tennessee Valley, and that was the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. The University had an extensive record of agricultural outreach and teaching, which were essential if TVA was to correct some of the agricultural problems present in the Valley. In addition, as TVA began to hire engineers and others to fill professional level positions, Knoxville was more urban, provided more entertainment, had a wider range of housing stock, and was generally better able to serve as a positive recruiting device. Another major emphasis of the Board of Directors was developing a regional library, and Mary U. Rothrock, a local librarian, had expertise and knowledge in developing a regional library; Ms. Rothrock was from Knoxville and had no desire to leave.

³ Tennessee Valley Authority. www.tva.com/heritage. Web site accessed June 2, 2009.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Personal Interview with Mr. Ed Best, Retired TVA Librarian, March 29, 2009.

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Another factor in determining where the majority of TVA's employees would be housed, regardless of the language in the TVA Act, might have been that Knoxville's local business community, including Benjamin Sprankle, was very encouraging towards TVA's location in Knoxville. One goal set very early in TVA's establishment was the necessity to attract one of the region's major cities as a purchaser of TVA electricity. Birmingham, Alabama rejected the bond issue that would have established a city-wide utility linked to TVA's electric supply in late 1933. It was the city of Knoxville who became the first municipal subscriber to TVA electricity.

Construction of The Daylight Building began in 1926 and was completed in 1927. Built by Benjamin Howard Sprankle, an influential real estate developer in Knoxville, it joined a two block area on Union Avenue that housed Sprankle's general headquarters for over fifty years. Initially, the Daylight Building housed retail space on the ground floor and office space on the second floor. It also housed the studio of prominent photographer Robin Thompson. By 1934, The Daylight Building was primarily occupied by offices of the Tennessee Valley Authority. The NewSprankle/Pembroke Building located across the street housed the majority of TVA's offices. However, the New Sprankle was renovated and no longer retains its historic integrity. Other buildings on Union Avenue developed by Sprankle included the Old Sprankle (1909), the Park Hotel, the Evans Building, and the Western Union Building (all demolished), the New Sprankle/Pembroke (altered) and the Union Building (NR 12/20/84).

Benjamin Sprankle was born at Spruce Creek, Pennsylvania. Sprankle moved to Newark, Ohio when he was 25, and three years later, in 1887, he moved to Knoxville. He first owned a store that sold paint, wallpaper and allied supplies located in the 600 block of Gay Street (since demolished). Sprankle went on to be an influential developer in Knoxville. He was responsible for the construction of several buildings along Union Avenue as well as suburban development in South Knoxville and Bearden.⁶

There was abundant office space along Union Avenue in downtown Knoxville in the New Sprankle and the Daylight Building. These two buildings housed the whole of TVA's Knoxville employees for many years. As the number of its employees expanded, TVA eventually came to occupy space in the other Sprankle-developed buildings on Union Avenue, many of which were vacated with the construction of the TVA Towers on Wall Avenue north of Market Square. Even after the completion of the Towers in 1976, TVA continued to house employees in the Daylight Building into the 1980s.

The Daylight Building saw the creation of plans for TVA's physical improvements to the Tennessee Valley. The Daylight Building housed TVA's engineering, soil conservation, and training staffs, as well as some internal services for the agency. From the Daylight Building came the oversight and

⁶ Jack Neely. "Sprankle Flats" Metro Pulse online. http://monkeyfire.com/mpol/dir_zine/dir_2001/1113/t_secret.html. Web site accessed 7/21/2009.

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Daylight Building
Knox County, TN

design for many of the dams and power plants constructed by TVA, as well as their land reclamation efforts, all of which changed the face of the Tennessee Valley.

By the mid-1990s, TVA had finally consolidated its Executive and engineering offices in two buildings at the north end of Market Square in downtown Knoxville. The Daylight Building has never been completely filled since that time and retains much of the interior configuration and materials that were associated with TVA's tenure with the building.

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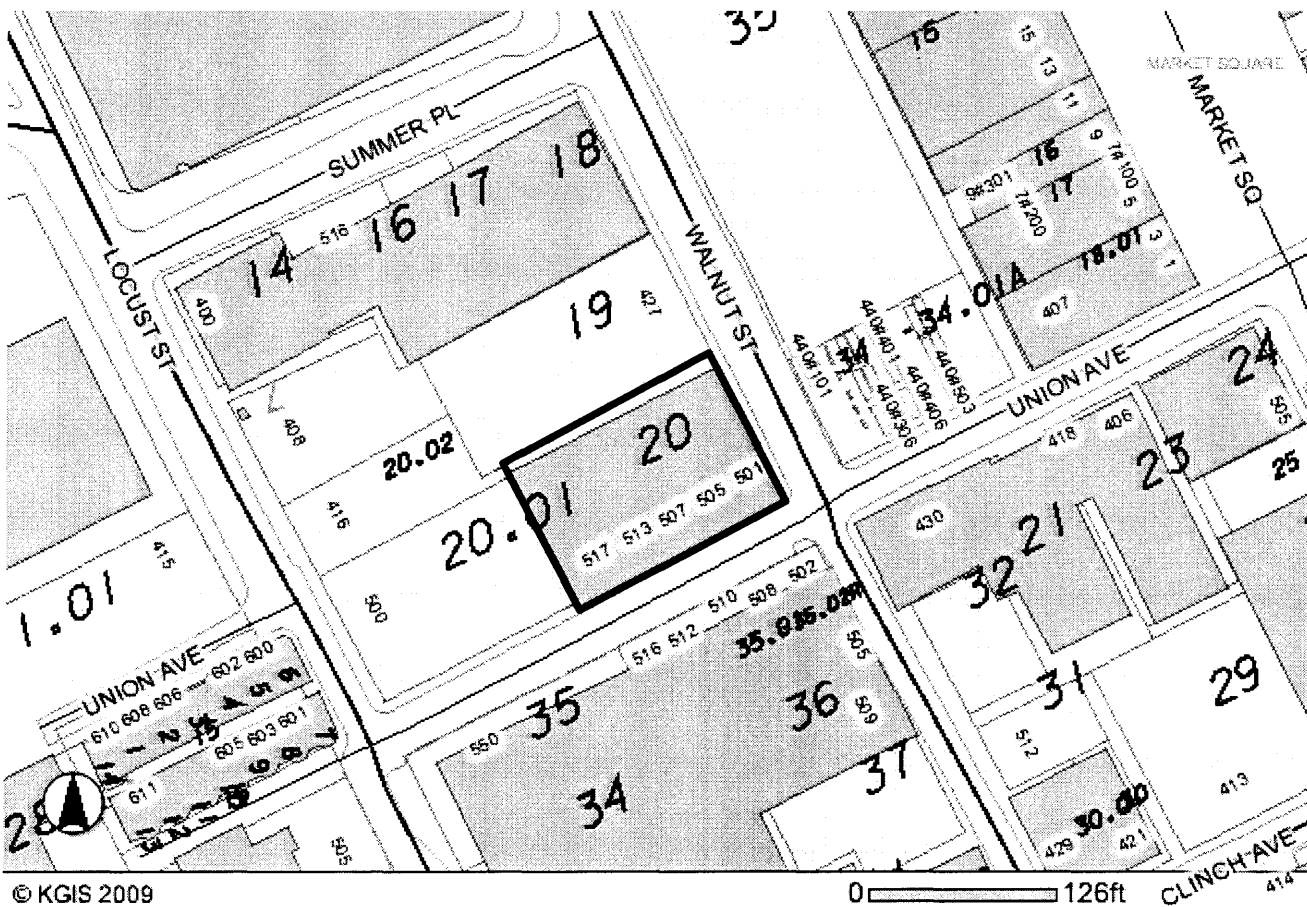
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Daylight Building
Knox County, TN

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

The boundary is defined as parcel ID 094LH020 as outlined on the following map. This represents the property currently and historically associated with the Daylight Building.



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Daylight Building
Knox County, TN

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs by: Mark Heinz
Dewhirst Properties
Knoxville, Tennessee
July 2009

Digital Files: Tennessee Historical Commission, Nashville, TN

Southeast corner, photographer facing northwest.
1 of 16

South facade, photographer facing north.
2 of 16

Southwest corner, photographer facing northeast.
3 of 16

West elevation, photographer facing east.
4 of 16

Northwest corner, photographer facing southeast.
5 of 16

North elevation, photographer facing south.
6 of 16

North elevation, photographer facing south.
7 of 16

East elevation, photographer facing west.
8 of 16

First floor interior, photographer facing southwest.
9 of 16

First floor interior, photographer facing south.
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Daylight Building
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First floor interior, photographer facing north.
11 of 16

Main staircase to second floor, photographer facing north.
12 of 16

Second floor stair landing, photographer facing south.
13 of 16

Second floor hallway.
14 of 16

Second floor hallway.
15 of 16

Second floor office space.
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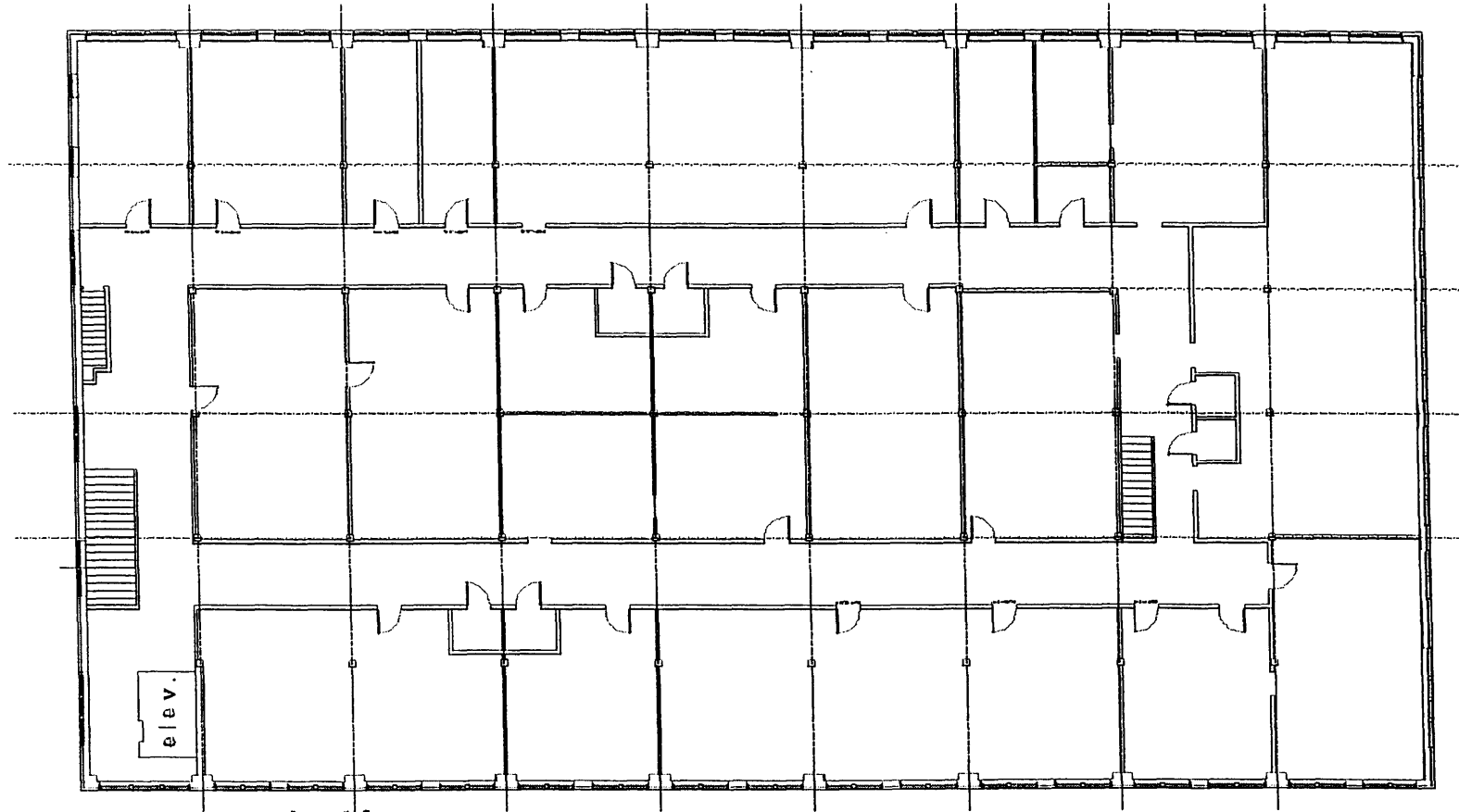
Daylight Building
Knox County, TN



Figure 1. Historic undated photo of Daylight Building showing rooftop clerestory.



Figure 2. Undated photo of Daylight Building



second floor Existing Office Layout

Union Ave

Walnut Street

Daylight Building
501 Union Ave. Knoxville TN.



Jan. 2009