

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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store
Other names/site number Sears Crosstown
Name of related multiple property listing N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & Number: 495 North Watkins Street/North Cleveland Street
City or town: Memphis State: Tennessee 38104 County: Shelby
Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

Claude A. Stapp 10/21/13
Signature of certifying official/Title: Date
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of Commenting Official: Date

Title: State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store

Shelby County Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

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:)

Jon Eason H. Beall
 Signature of the Keeper

12.18.13
 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	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store

Shelby County Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/department store

COMMERCE/warehouse

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Moderne: Art Moderne

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

BRICK; CONCRETE; ASPHALT

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store

Shelby County Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

Narrative Description

The Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store is a ten-story, reinforced concrete frame building in the Art Moderne style designed by George C. Nimmons (1865-1947) of Chicago and built in 1927 with a central tower that extends the equivalent of six stories above the main block. It is situated on a 16 acre site at 495 North Watkins (a.k.a. 495 North Cleveland) that is bound by Autumn Avenue on the south and the former Louisville and Nashville Railroad right of way on the north. The original 1927 footprint of the building was roughly U-shaped in the first floor plan, with a two-story wing containing a portion of the retail store located on the south and west, and the building's original power plant and railroad receiving docks located in a two-story wing on the north. The second floor was L-shaped, while the third floor and above were I-shaped. The main block of the building's frontage extended 20 bays in width along North Watkins Street, and originally ran 15 bays deep. The building contained an aggregate of 650,000 square feet of space at this time, 53,000 of which was dedicated to the building's retail function. An addition in 1929 provided for 80,000 square feet of additional retail space, making the 133,000 square foot store the largest single-tenant retail space developed in the city of Memphis prior to World War II. Other additions to the building were constructed on the south and west side of structure in 1937, 1941, 1965, and 1967 to increase the warehouse capacity and merchandise handling capability of the property. At the end of the 1967 building phase, the massive structure contained 1.365 million square feet, making it one of the largest, if not the largest building under one roof in Memphis even today.

The massing of the Memphis building is set upon a two-story high base that projects forward of the front (east) and side (north and south) facades of the original 1927 building block, and the base contains entrances expressed on the south, east and north facades. The bulk of the building rises from the base seven stories to a plain flat parapet. The tenth floor of the building is then set back from this parapet on the three facades. The four-bay wide tower on the front (east) facade projects forward of the main building block and its base by two full bays; flanking the tower on the main block are one bay wide and deep "shoulders" that extend to a height of eleven stories, and thus accentuate the forward and upward thrust of the tower itself. The entrance at the base of the tower is set in a projecting entablature fabricated of smooth-faced cast stone blocks, with a parapet set back from the top edge of the entablature detailed with Art Moderne pylons and foliated motifs. The tower itself is detailed with expressed, plainly-finished corners that flank a vertical recess that is four window bays in width. Each window bay is separated by a pilaster or pylon that extends upward beyond the line of the tower's parapet.

The exterior façades of the building are clad in load-bearing and veneered buff-colored brick masonry, with cast stone elements used on the principal facades of the original building block in belt courses, lintels, acroteria, pylons, parapets and other key decorative elements. The windows of the building are steel-frame casements in a variety of sizes and configurations, including, among others: nine-light, bottom sash hopper casements; eleven-light, center sash awning casements; twelve-light, double center sash awning casements; sixteen-light, double center sash awning casements; and, twenty-five light, double center sash awning casements, some in pairs but most in groups of three.

The south ell of the building extends west from the main block at a uniform height of ten stories and then drops to a wedge-shaped, two-story section appended to the building in 1965 to provide additional truck loading docks to replace the facility's original railroad-based shipping and receiving area. The ell is decorated only by the expressed exterior pilasters that separate window bays, and the grid made up of the large voids containing windows. The north ell of the building was separated from the south ell by a railroad

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store

Shelby County Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

siding that ended at the main block of the building. The north ell contained the building's original two-story powerhouse and heating plant. A portion of the rail spur was filled, roofed over and enclosed, and the north loading docks and bay doors were walled-in ca. 1964-65 when railroad deliveries to the facility were discontinued completely in favor of deliveries by tractor trailer trucks to the southern ell. The northern shipping and receiving area was used as a storage area thereafter.

The interior of the building is made up largely of vast open warehouse spaces on the third through tenth floors, with the character of the space defined only by the grid of cylindrical or square cast concrete support piers that have flared or flange-shaped "capitals." The open space areas are partitioned into administrative and employee support services in the main 1927 block of the structure on the second, third, fourth, fifth, eighth, and eleventh floors; most of these spaces have dropped ceilings and non-historic partition walls installed ca. 1965 through ca. 1985. Retail and catalog sales areas were concentrated on the basement, first, and second floors of the main 1927 block and its 1929 addition. Both the retail areas and the administrative supporting spaces have seen periods of alteration over time, including the complete renovation of the retail store area in 1969. The movement of partition walls and the replacement of doors, trim and other features were complete enough so that only a handful of pre-1960 doors and other features remain in all of these spaces.

The greater balance of the building was either used for the storage of merchandise, or for the organization, collection, sorting and shipping of catalog merchandise through a maze of chutes, conveyors, elevators and other mechanisms. Much of this machinery remains in place but it appears that all of the original sorting apparatuses were replaced ca. 1964-65. The building was organized to provide storage on floors three and above for 35,000-plus products once offered in the Sears catalog. Merchandise pulled from the shelves on each floor was sent down an enclosed spiral slide, which then emptied out on a conveyer on the building's second floor. There, the customer's entire order would be assembled together, packaged, and delivered to the building's first floor for shipping.

An interesting set of spaces in the building are contained in the tower of the structure above the eleventh floor level, the most notable of which is the three-story tall "tank room", which contains the building's 70,000 gallon water tank and secondary tanks that pressurized the fire sprinklers.

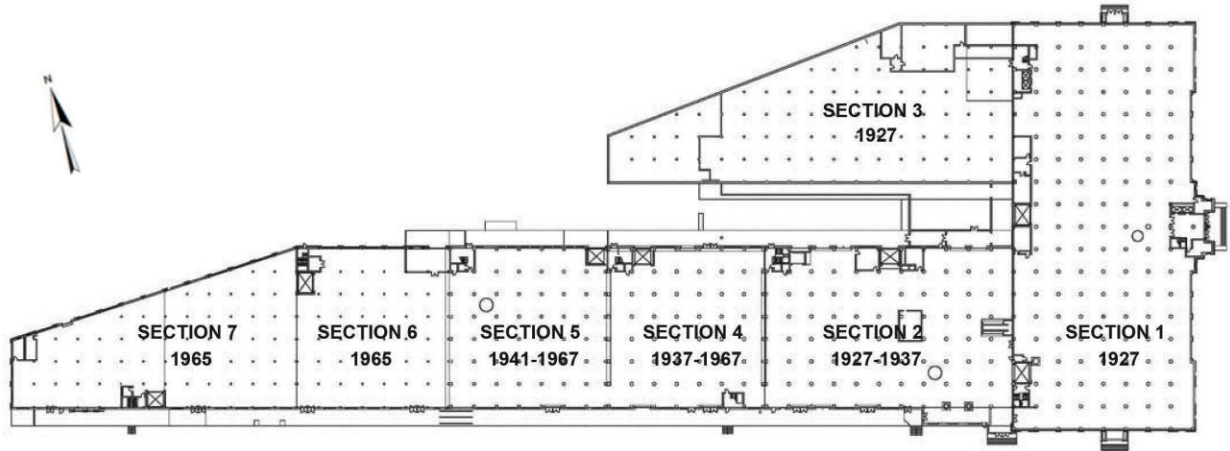
The only other historic resource surviving on the property today is the parking garage, a reinforced concrete, five-level building covered with bands of alternating lozenge-and-rectangular-shaped pre-cast concrete panels. The 1,200 car garage was built in 1964 to designs prepared by architect F. E. Davidson. The garage is considered a contributing resource.

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store

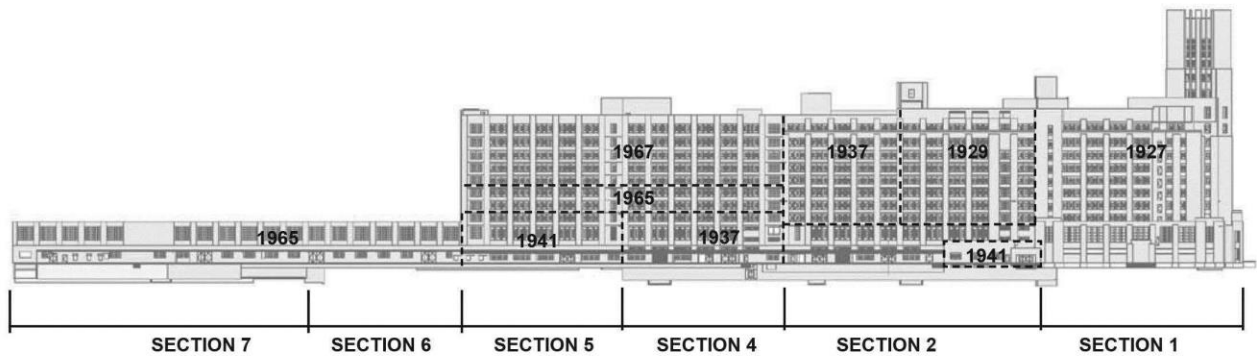
Shelby County Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State



Schematic First Floor Plan of Additions 1929 to 1964-65



Schematic South Elevation of Additions 1929-1967

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store

Shelby County Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

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 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.)

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1927-1967

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Nimmons, George C., and Company
Davidson, F.E.

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store

Shelby County Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

Statement of Significance Summary

The Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store (Sears Crosstown or Crosstown) is eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of commerce as a representative of an important phase in the development of one of America's major retailers, during which Sears dramatically changed the way it served customers. The building's period of significance extends from its construction in 1927 to 1967, shortly after the detached garage was built and the Crosstown building was at its peak, with over 2,000 employees. Around 1958, the importance of the Sears Crosstown store was starting to be eclipsed as a retail center by Sears' newer store at Laurelwood on Perkins Extended at Poplar Avenue. Construction of the garage in 1964 was an effort to retain the Crosstown store's importance for retail sales. Although the period of significance extends a few years past the fifty-year age limit, it reflects a more accurate timeframe, encompassing the main building and the garage, and shows the efforts the Sears company made for several years to maintain the viability of the Crosstown store.

Sears Roebuck & Company began to develop retail stores for the first time beginning in 1925, most in combination with regionally based mail order warehouses, and the Memphis facility in 1927 was one of the last three catalog centers to be opened prior to the onset of the Great Depression (The final facility, a catalog-only warehouse, was developed in Greensboro, NC in 1947.). While Sears had developed similar catalog distribution warehouses in Chicago (1905), Dallas (1910), Kansas City (1913), and Seattle (1915) prior to World War I, it was the 1925 shift to the development of direct retail stores that made Sears' expansion campaign hugely successful-- quickly making Sears Roebuck & Company the nation's largest retail merchant by the mid-1950s. The retail operations at the Crosstown building ceased in 1983.

The building is also eligible for listing under Criterion C in the area of architecture as an early and noteworthy local example of the Art Moderne style that maintains its historic and architectural integrity. The vocabulary of the Art Moderne style was introduced to Memphis with the construction of this building and the high-rise Farnsworth Building (E. L. Harrison and Noland Van Powell, architects; 88 Union Avenue, part Gayoso-Peabody Historic District, NR-listed 5/7/1980), both completed in 1927. Both buildings share qualities as skyscrapers in their height; they share plain, flat surfaces and crisp edges; and, their decoration, while limited in scope, is made up of stylized geometric and foliated patterns-- all of which are hallmarks of the Art Moderne style. However, George C. Nimmons' design for the Sears Roebuck building also employs other iconic traits, such as the stepped set back of the building's mass as it rises from its base, and the employment of ribbed pylons that extend through the roof to further emphasize the building's height, unencumbered by the weight of a cornice or parapet. E. L. Harrison was by far Memphis' most prolific architect who worked in the Art Moderne style, and he went on to design others like the Keithley Pie Factory (1928, now demolished, 2265 Young Avenue, Cooper-Young Historic District, NR-listed 6/22/1989); the Memphis Light Gas and Water Gas Meter Division building (1928, 826 Beale Street); and, Fairview School (1930, 750 East Parkway, NR-listed 10/25/1990), but his work never reached the comparable height of the Art Moderne expression as Nimmons' design for the Sears Roebuck building. The only other building designed in the Art Moderne style that came close in its qualities is Kimbrough Towers, designed by Herbert Burnham and completed in 1939, at a time when the Art Moderne style was waning in popularity in favor of Modernism. The Sears Roebuck Catalog Distribution Center & Retail Store is an exemplary illustration of Art Moderne in Memphis and it maintains its historic and architectural integrity.

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store

Shelby County Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Rise of a Retail Giant

The history of Sears Roebuck & Company is legendary, as is its place in American life. Begun in 1886 in Minnesota by Richard W. Sears (1863-1914) and joined later with his partner, Alvah C. Roebuck (1864-1948), Sears Roebuck & Company grew to become one of the world's largest companies at its peak in the 1970s. The foundation of the retail giant was in sales from its mail order catalog, the first copy of which was printed in 1889, though it was not until the company moved to Chicago in 1893 that the Sears Roebuck & Company catalog was published annually (Worthy 1984:21).

Sears's original sales strategy was simply to target a largely rural farm audience who had only limited access to a variety of retail outlets, and offer well-made, low-priced goods that might otherwise only be found in the largest cities. Thus, the company took on the role as "buyer for the American farm", as they proudly proclaimed (Worthy 1984:28). The convenience of shopping by mail from home was made even more attractive through the company's iron-clad money back guarantee, and the ability to acquire parts and service for anything from a cast iron plow to a gold pocket watch. With these standards in hand, Sears's sales skyrocketed from just over \$1.0 million in 1895, to \$10.0 million in 1900 (Ibid.).

The logistical problems brought about by such rapid growth required the company to seek a new way of efficiently processing orders and moving goods to a focal point in the shipping department. Employing the proceeds from the first public sale of stock in the company in 1906, Sears built its first headquarters warehouse and distribution center in Chicago (Sears Roebuck & Co. Complex, 925 Hoffman Avenue, NHL 6/2/1978). In this 3.0 million square foot building and its adjoining administrative campus designed by Nimmons and Fellows, Sears developed the means to efficiently move goods via overhead and belted conveyors, slides, tracked trolleys, pneumatic tubes and many other devices to fill the thousands of orders that came into the company each day. Sears also opened its first satellite distribution center in Dallas in the same year (now "Southside on Lamar" apartments, 1409 South Lamar Street), reflecting the rapid growth seen in the South and Southwest at this time. A West Coast distribution center was opened in Seattle in 1910 (now Starbuck Corporation Headquarters, 2465 Utah Street), followed by a Midwest center in North Kansas City in 1913 (715 North Armour Road, NR-listed 5/9/1997). The year 1920 saw the construction of a distribution center in Philadelphia to serve the East Coast (Nimmons 1921:119-132; demolished 1994).

By the early-1920s, Sears's sales were beginning to lag, in large part because the farm audience for Sears' products were becoming increasingly more mobile as rural roads improved and the car became a more common way to get to town than the horse or the train. At the same time, urban areas were growing, with retail sales in urban department stores growing along with them. Sears and mail order rival, Montgomery Ward, were slow to recognize the trend. Sears reacted first by opening a retail store in Chicago in 1925, adding seven others over the next year -- four of which were located in the regional catalog centers in Philadelphia, Seattle, Dallas and Kansas City (Emmet and Jeuck 1950:339-341). By the end of 1928, Sears had opened 192 stores that added a \$107 million in annual sales volume. The addition of retail stores put new pressures on the company's distribution network, and so new centers containing retail

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store

Shelby County Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

stores were opened in Atlanta (1926; 675 Ponce de Leon Ave. NE), Memphis (1927), Minneapolis (1928; 2929 Chicago Avenue, South, NR-listed 7/29/2005), Boston (1928; 309 Park Drive and 201 Brookline Avenue, NR-listed 1/15/1991), and finally Los Angeles (1928; 2650 Olympic Boulevard, NR-listed 4/21/2006) [The final distribution center in the Sears' supply chain was built as a free-standing building in Greensboro, N.C. in 1947.] See Figure 1.

The development of new distribution center stores and stand-alone stores was only one part of the revolutionary strategy being carried out by Sears in conjunction with the opening of the Memphis store. Another key element was to select locations for Sears stores in suburban areas, rather than in the central business districts of cities where competing department stores were located, including new retail stores opened by Montgomery Ward. This radical strategy recognized the developing impact that the automobile was having on retail sales, and Sears stores accommodated the automobile by providing large, paved parking lots -- and in the case of the largest stores, service stations where gas could be purchased and new tires changed when purchased in the store. This effectively became the model leading to the suburban retail center or shopping mall containing a major tenant as an anchor, which became commonplace across America after World War II. It was likely not a coincidence, then, that the location of the Memphis Sears on North Watkins/North Cleveland Street between Poplar Avenue and North Parkway placed the store at the center of the city's eastern suburbs of the 1920s. The location of the store just off of North Parkway also meant easy access for the driving public.

Development of the Memphis Hub

The construction of the Memphis Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store building is a remarkable story that clearly demonstrates Sears's ability to "move heaven and earth" to accomplish its goals, for the entire Memphis building project -- from land acquisition to ribbon cutting to open the 650,000 square foot building -- required only a little more than eight months to complete. The site was selected by Sears's executives early in January of 1927, and their decision to select the North Watkins site was made in part on the location of the site adjacent to the Louisville & Nashville Railroad, which was a major shipper of Sears's goods. Acquisition of the 16 acre site was first announced to the public on January 30th of 1927; rezoning of the site from residential to commercial use was approved by the City Council on February 15th; and, groundbreaking for the building occurred on February 22nd (*Commercial-Appeal* August 26, 1927; *Press-Scimitar* August 27, 1927). See Figure 2.

Over the next six months, hundreds of workmen were employed in the project day and night, six days a week, with employment swelling to more than 2,000 at the peak of construction. The \$5.0 million project met the goals of the company to have the retail store and catalog center up and running well in advance of the 1927 Christmas season. In support of the company's investment, the City of Memphis in turn spent \$100,000 in the development of a new streetcar line, running past Sears' front door, connecting Poplar Avenue with Faxon Avenue, and completed its construction in 84 days (the north-south line connected two other street car lines "across town," thus giving birth to the place name of Crosstown to the area surrounding Sears.). The inaugural run of the trolley line took place on the morning of August 26, 1927 in conjunction with the opening of the new Sears building. Following remarks by Mayor Rowlett Payne and Julius Rosenwald, then Chairman of the Board of Sears Roebuck & Company, the new store

Name of Property

County and State

and catalog plant were opened for inspection by the public (Ibid.). Not everyone chose to ride the new trolley to come to the new store, and instead drove there, parking in the paved 1,500 space parking lot adjacent to the building on the south, itself something of a revolutionary idea. By the end of the day, it was reported that more than 47,000 people had taken up the invitation to tour the new store and the operations of the catalog center (*Commercial-Appeal* May 7, 1958). See Figure 3.

George C. Nimmons, Architect

George C. Nimmons (1865-1947), the architect for the Memphis center, was a prolific designer of industrial, warehouse, and mercantile buildings in America, including most, if not all major buildings constructed for Sears Roebuck & Company from ca. 1905 through ca. 1955. Nimmons began his career in the office of Burnham and Root in Chicago in 1887, and one of his notable contributions that bringing attention to his abilities was his interior design for the Great Northern Hotel, designed by Burnham and built 1890-92 in anticipation of the Chicago World's Fair. In 1897, Nimmons broke off from Burnham to form his own firm with William K. Fellows (1870-1948), but then in 1910, broke with Fellows to form his own firm, George C. Nimmons & Company. Nimmons' was considered a leader in the field of structural design for industrial and warehouse buildings, particularly in the use of reinforced concrete structural frames (*Western Architect* January 1916:1). He took on partners George W. Carr and Clark C Wright in 1933, and remained senior partner in the firm of Nimmons, Clark and Wright until his retirement in 1945.

Apart from his work with Sears Roebuck, Nimmons's firm was responsible for many other notable Chicago-area projects, including the Arthur Dixon Building (1908, 411 South Wells Street, no longer extant); the Reid, Murdoch & Company Building (1914, 325 North LaSalle Street, NR 8/28/1975); the C. P. Kimball & Company automotive factory (1914, Michigan Avenue, no longer extant); the New Franklin Building (1912, South Dearborn Street); the American Furniture Mart (1924, 666 North Lake Shore Drive); the Commonwealth Edison Service Building (1926, now Pilsen Industrial Center, South Throop Street); Richard Sears' summer home in Gray's Lake, Illinois; and, Julius Rosenwald's residence in Chicago, among others.

His success at blending architectural design and industrial function caused Nimmons to be awarded the A.I.A.'s 1921 Gold Medal in Industrial Design for his design for the "Eastern Store" of the Sears Roebuck & Company, a catalog distribution center built in Philadelphia in 1920 (demolished 1994); the same qualities in design that he was able to deliver in the Philadelphia project were also carried on to each of his other buildings for Sear Roebuck. From a functional standpoint, Nimmons also had to meet the rigorous demands of Sears Roebuck in their use of the building. Each of the distribution centers he designed for Sears beginning in 1906 were built in reinforced concrete to support the massive loads of merchandise to be stored in each, using a grid of structural piers spaced 20 feet on center. This standardized approach to the structural design permitted Sears's industrial engineers to design modular equipment for the movement and sorting of merchandise that could not only fit into any work space within the building, but also be able to fit into any work space in every other Sears catalog distribution warehouse in its network. Each of the centers was also designed with expected additions, to be constructed in seamless integration with the rest of the structure without disrupting on-going operations.

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store

Shelby County Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

The exterior architectural character of the Memphis distribution center was similar in design and massing to that of each of the Art Moderne buildings designed by Nimmons and constructed during the latter half of 1925-1929 Sears expansion program, including the centers at Minneapolis (1927-28), Boston (1928-30), and Los Angeles (1928). Earlier centers constructed in Atlanta (1925) and Kansas City (second building, 1925) were somewhat similar in massing, but designed in a form of the Industrial Gothic Revival design. A feature of all of the Sears distribution centers and many of its early stand-alone retail stores is a central tower placed at the front of the building that was sometimes designed to include clock faces. The real purpose for the tower, though, was to hide a large water tank that was used to charge the building's sprinkler and plumbing systems by gravity feed. In the Memphis building, the tower also contained the elevator cores that serve the first eleven floors.

The Rise and Fall of the Crosstown Store

The Memphis Distribution Center and Retail Store had an immediate and immense impact on the Memphis retail environment. More than 1,000 people were employed to staff the original 53,000 square foot retail store and to process the 45,000 orders that came into the catalog center each day (*Commercial-Appeal* August 26, 1927). Sears's rapid-fire response to entering the business of retail sales caused growing pains and confusion, resulting in a company-wide reorganization. The management of the retail stores was separated from the operations of the regional distribution centers, and the number of regions reduced from ten to four -- headquartered in Chicago, Philadelphia, Seattle, and Memphis. The Memphis region included oversight for the distribution centers in Kansas City, Atlanta, and Dallas. The states for which the Memphis center was specifically responsible for catalog orders were Arkansas, Louisiana, Eastern Texas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Western Alabama, and Kentucky (*Press-Scimitar* September 14, 1961). See Figures 4 and 5.

The profitability of the Memphis facility was highly touted by Sears's officials, hence the short succession of major additions to the building in 1929, 1937, 1941, 1964-65, and 1967. At its peak, ca. 1967, the Sears catalog center and retail store provided employment for more than 2,000 people (*Press-Scimitar* August 26, 1977).

A service station was originally developed in 1927 and expanded in 1936 on-site at the corner of Autumn and Cleveland; this facility was demolished in 1984. The "Sears Farm Store" that exclusively sold agricultural goods was also developed off-site on the east side of North Watkins in 1944; it remained open until 1977. The parking garage on the property, first offered free parking to Sears' customers beginning in 1964. It was designed by Francis Edmond Davidson of Atlanta, Georgia. Davidson was born in Chicago in 1916 and worked as an engineer for Chrysler Corporation from 1940-45. He established F.E. Davidson, Architect, in 1945. In the 1962 AIA directory he was listed as being the Chief Architect for Sears Roebuck's southern territory since 1945. See Figure 6.

The Sears catalog distribution center began to see subtle changes beginning immediately following World War II. In October of 1945, Sears opened a new distribution warehouse complex designed by Nimmons, Carr & Wright located in a part of the former American Car Company complex at 2520-2594 Broad Avenue, which removed "large items" (carpeting, appliances, farm equipment, etc.) from storage in the Crosstown

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store

Shelby County Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

building. The new warehouse was served by the Illinois Central Railroad, not the Louisville & Nashville. Another Memphis distribution warehouse facility was developed in the new Alcy Johnson Freight Yard of the Illinois Central rail line in 1961 (*Press-Scimitar* September 14, 1961); this, in turn, was replaced by a 3.0 million square foot warehouse at Panama and Meyers streets, adjacent to the Alcy Johnson Yard that consolidated three other warehouses for catalog merchandise (*Press-Scimitar* August 3, 1972). Whether a direct result of Sears's move towards the Illinois Central or not, the Louisville & Nashville Railroad spiraled down over the post-War period: eventually abandoning its Memphis right-of-way in 1982. Delivery service to the Sears Crosstown center had earlier switched completely to deliveries by tractor-trailer truck in 1964-65.

The Sears Crosstown retail store began to lose its viability as a retail location with the opening of the city's interstate system in the 1960s and the rapid development of new subdivisions around the peripheral interstate loop. After World War II, the demographics of Memphis had changed, and the residential areas that originally attracted Sears to its Crosstown site were by then seen as areas of the inner city. The first new suburban location opened at 906 South Third Street (a.k.a.: U.S. Highway 61; *Press-Scimitar* April 24, 1954). The next blow to the viability of the Crosstown store occurred with the opening of the Sears store at Laurelwood on May 7, 1958 (*Commercial-Appeal* May 8, 1958). Other new Sears stores were opened in suburban shopping malls developed in the 1970s and 1980s, and by then, sales at the Crosstown store were beginning to lag. Sears invested in a new parking garage in 1964 and then gave the store a "complete remodeling" in 1969, said to have been for the "first time in 42 years" (*Press-Scimitar* October 6, 1969). The new image given the store by the remodeling helped the store to soldier on, but business gravitated to the outlying stores as suburbanization continued. The Crosstown store was shifted in focus to the sale of surplus goods in early 1983; the retail store closed entirely in September of the same year (*Commercial-Appeal* August 9, 1983; September 30, 1983). The catalog distribution function of the building remained in use until 1993, when all catalog sales nationwide at Sears were discontinued (*Commercial-Appeal* September 16, 1993). Operations were relocated to newer warehouse facilities in other parts of the city, and the building was abandoned. It has remained vacant since.

Name of Property

County and State

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

Emmet, Boris, and John E. Jeuck

1950 *Catalogues and Counters: A History of Sears, Roebuck and Company*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Herndon, Joseph L.

1975 "Architects in Tennessee until 1930." Unpublished Master's Thesis, Columbia University, NY.

Johnson, Eugene J. and Robert D. Russell

1990 *Memphis: An Architectural Guide*. University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville.

McLean, Robert Cralk

"The Modern Factory as Illustrated in the Works of George C. Nimmons", *Western Architect*, Vol. 23, No. 1, January 1916.

Memphis Commercial-Appeal

January 30, 1927; August 26, 1928; August 27, 1927; August 28, 1927; March 11, 1930; February 18, 1937; March 23, 1937; October 23, 1955; September 14, 1956; May 6, 1958; May 7, 1958; May 8, 1958; October 16, 1964; August 24, 1980; August 9, 1983; September 30, 1983; September 16, 1993.

Memphis Press-Scimitar

February 15, 1927; August 27, 1927; October 18, 1945; April 24, 1954; July 9, 1955; September 14, 1961; August 1, 1964; October 6, 1969; August 10, 1970; August 3, 1972; February 27, 1975; August 26, 1977.

Nimmons, George C.

"The Eastern Store of Sears Roebuck & Co. at Philadelphia", *Architectural Record*, Vol. 50, August 1921.

Sigafoos, Robert A.

1979 *Cotton Row to Beale Street*. Memphis State University Press, Memphis.

Worthy, James C.

1984 *Shaping an American Institution: Robert E. Wood and Sears, Roebuck*. University of Illinois Press, Chicago.

United States Department of the Interior
 National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
 NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store

Shelby County Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

Previous documentation on file (NPS):		Primary location of additional data:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	State Historic Preservation Office
<input type="checkbox"/>	previously listed in the National Register	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other State agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	previously determined eligible by the National Register	<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	designated a National Historic Landmark	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local government
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #	<input type="checkbox"/>	University
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #	Name of repository: Memphis Public Library	
Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):			

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store

Shelby County Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 16 acres USGS Quadrangle Northwest Memphis TN-AR 404 NE

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 35.151083 | Longitude: -90.012510 |
| 2. Latitude: 35.148789 | Longitude: -90.013044 |
| 3. Latitude: 35.149220 | Longitude: -90.016989 |
| 4. Latitude: 35.150217 | Longitude: -90.016878 |

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store

Shelby County Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

Verbal Boundary Description

The property in nomination is an irregular lot formed by the former right of way of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad (later Seaboard Systems) on the north; the curving right of way of North Watkins/North Cleveland Street on the east; the right of way of Autumn Avenue on the south; and, on the west, by an imaginary line extending from Autumn Avenue northeast to the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, as outlined in a heavy dashed line on the attached Shelby County Tax Map 131G.

Boundary Justification

The boundary for this nomination contains all of the historic land currently associated with the Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store from the time of its construction in 1927.



Map Courtesy of Google Earth

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store

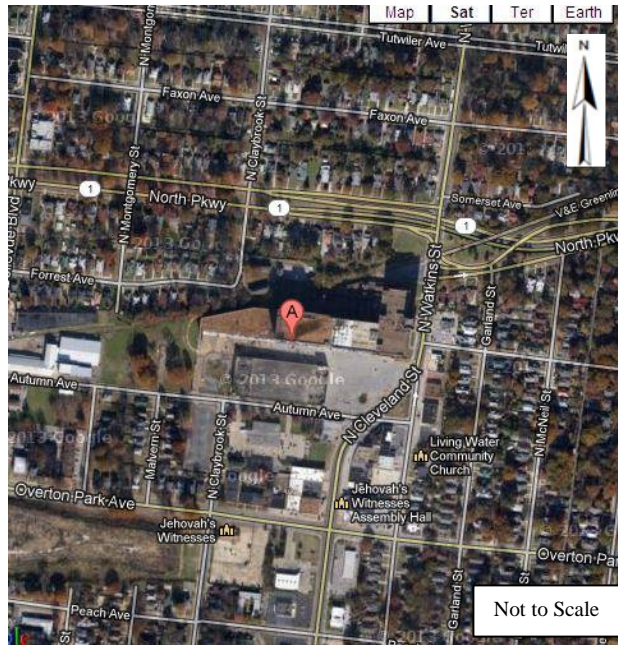
Shelby County Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State



Map Courtesy of Google Earth



Map Courtesy of Google Maps

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store

Shelby County Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

11. Form Prepared By*

Name John Linn Hopkins; Anthony E. Pellicciotti (AIA, CDT LEED AP BD+C); Antonio R. Bologna (FAIA)

Organization LRK Inc.; Bologna Consultants

Street & Number 175 Toyota Plaza, Suite 500

Date January 2013

City or Town Memphis

Telephone 901/521-1440; 901/337-6800

E-mail tpellicciotti@lrk.com

State TN Zip Code 38103

*The initial nomination was prepared by the late John Hopkins in 2008 and updated in 2013.

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to map.
- **Photographs** (refer to Tennessee Historical Commission National Register *Photo Policy* for submittal of digital images and prints)
- **Additional items:** (additional supporting documentation including historic photographs, historic maps, etc. should be included on a Continuation Sheet following the photographic log and sketch maps)

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 100 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.

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store

Shelby County Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

Photographs

Sears Roebuck Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store
495 North Watkins/North Cleveland Street
Memphis, Shelby County, TN

Photographer: John Linn Hopkins
Date: December 2007
Digital files: Tennessee Historical Commission

Photo 1 of 81: View of the side (north) and front (east) façades of the building, looking southwest across North Watkins Street.

Photo 2 of 81: View of the tower. The scaffolding attached to the top of the structure was installed ca. 1941 to hold large neon letters that spelled "Sears" on three of four faces.

Photo 3 of 81: View of the front entrance, showing its distinctive design and current conditions.

Photo 4 of 81: View of the parapet on the third floor above the entrance, showing its pylons decorated with foliated motifs.

Photo 5 of 81: View of the side (south) façade and the building's tower, looking north along North Watkins Street.

Photo 6 of 81: View along the side (south) façade of the building, looking northwest.

Photo 7 of 81: View along the side (south) façade looking east, with the employee's entrance in the middle ground, and the south public entrance at right (white metal canopy).

Photo 8 of 81: View of the typical configurations and conditions of the steel casement windows on the building's south façade.

Photo 9 of 81: View of the loading docks of the shipping and receiving area, and the two-story addition made in 1965 to the west end of the south wing.

Photo 10 of 81: View of the long, deep back-sloped canopy that covers the loading docks of the shipping and receiving area on the building's south side.

Photo 11 of 81: View to the east along the side (south) façade of the building.

Photo 12 of 81: View of the rear (west) façade of the 1965 addition.

Photo 13 of 81: View along the north (side) façade of the 1965 addition, looking northeast along the Louisville and Nashville Railroad right of way.

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store

Shelby County Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

Photo 14 of 81: View along the former Louisville & Nashville Railroad right of way and the siding that served the building, looking east with the power house at left and the rail shipping and receiving loading docks at left and right.

Photo 15 of 81: View of the rear (west) façade of the main 1927 block of the building, looking east.

Photo 16 of 81: View of the (side) north wing of the main 1927 block of the building, looking southwest.

Photo 17 of 81: View of the parking garage built on the south side of the property in 1964, looking west.

Photo 18 of 81: View of the south (side) façade of the garage, looking northwest along Autumn Avenue.

Photo 19 of 81: View of the west (rear) façade of the garage, looking generally east.

Photo 20 of 81: View of the garage looking west across the surface parking lot on the property. The area in the foreground was the site of the building's original gas station, and later, its larger Car Care Center.

Photo 21 of 81: View of the reception desk, and stair inside of the building's entrance lobby off of North Watkins Street.

Photo 22 of 81: View of the former first floor retail area, looking north to the north entrance to the building.

Photo 23 of 81: View of the typical conditions of the former first floor retail area, and showing a partitioned dressing room area built ca. 1969.

Photo 24 of 81: View of the first floor retail area looking south to the south entrance to the building.

Photo 25 of 81: View of the catalog sales area of the first floor located on the south side of the building, altered with dropped ceilings, partition walls and other finishes ca. 1969.

Photo 26 of 81: View of the truck shipping and receiving area located on the south side of the building.

Photo 27 of 81: View in the shipping and receiving area in the 1965 addition.

Photo 28 of 81: View of the former rail-based shipping and receiving area in the north wing of the building.

Photo 29 of 81: View of the mechanical equipment, boilers and etc. in the powerhouse located at the west end of the north wing.

Photo 30 of 81: View of the typical conditions of the retail sales area of the basement level, looking east to the escalators leading to the first floor.

Photo 31 of 81: View of the ca. 1964 tunnel leading from the basement to the parking garage located to the south of the building.

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store

Shelby County Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

Photo 32 of 81: View of the second floor retail area, looking northeast towards the elevator lobby located in the tower.

Photo 33 of 81: View into the employee's cafeteria located on the second floor in the southeastern corner of the original 1927 block.

Photo 34 of 81: View of the extensive catalog merchandise sorting areas of the second floor, looking west.

Photo 35 of 81: View of some of the complex sorting machinery that delivered orders from the warehouse spaces on the upper floors to packaging and shipping areas on the second floor.

Photo 36 of 81: View of individual work stations in the order packaging area.

Photo 37 of 81: View of other portions of the sorting and packaging machinery.

Photo 38 of 81: View into the second floor of the 1965 addition to the south wing of the building, showing its structure and typical conditions.

Photo 39 of 81: View of the secretarial pool in the administrative section of the third floor, located in the southern portion of the original 1927 core of the building, looking southwest.

Photo 40 of 81: View of the warehouse area of the third floor, looking west from the 1929 addition to the fire wall separating it from the later additions.

Photo 41 of 81: View of the warehouse area of the third floor looking southwest.

Photo 42 of 81: View of the elevator lobby of the fourth floor and one of the few original doors (1927) doors remaining in the building.

Photo 43 of 81: View along a corridor in the administrative offices of the fourth floor looking north from the area of the elevator lobby.

Photo 44 of 81: View of administrative offices located to the south of the elevator lobby on the fourth floor.

Photo 45 of 81: View of the warehouse area in the 1929 addition to the fourth floor, looking east to the fire wall that separates it from the original 1927 core of the building.

Photo 46 of 81: View in the warehouse area of the fourth floor looking northwest.

Photo 47 of 81: View of the administrative offices located on the north side of the original 1927 block of the fifth floor.

Photo 48 of 81: View of the warehouse space on the south side of the 1927 core, looking southeast.

Photo 49 of 81: View of the warehouse space on the fifth floor in the 1929 addition, looking southwest.

Name of Property

County and State

Photo 50 of 81: View of a typical metal clad self-closing fire door used to seal off the original core and various additions from one another in the event of fire.

Photo 51 of 81: View of the northern half of the 1927 core of the sixth floor, looking northwest.

Photo 52 of 81: View of the southern half of the 1927 core of the sixth floor, looking southeast.

Photo 53 of 81: View from the 1929 addition to the sixth floor through to the west.

Photo 54 of 81: View of the north side of the 1927 core of the building on the seventh floor, looking northwest.

Photo 55 of 81: View of the south side of the 1927 core of the building on the seventh floor, looking southeast.

Photo 56 of 81: View from the 1929 addition to the seventh floor to the west.

Photo 57 of 81: View of the south side of the 1927 core of the building on the eighth floor, looking northeast towards the elevator lobby.

Photo 58 of 81: View from the 1929 addition to the eighth floor, looking west to the west.

Photo 59 of 81: View of the administrative area of the eighth floor located on the north side of the 1927 core of the building, looking northeast.

Photo 60 of 81: View of the north side of the 1927 core of the ninth floor, looking southeast towards the elevator lobby at center.

Photo 61 of 81: View of the south side of the ninth floor in the 1927 core, looking southeast.

Photo 62 of 81: View from the 1929 addition to the ninth floor to the west.

Photo 63 of 81: View of the north side of the tenth floor of the 1927 core, looking northwest.

Photo 64 of 81: View of the north side of the tenth floor of the 1927 core of the building, looking northeast.

Photo 65 of 81: View of the south side of the tenth floor of the 1927 core of the building, looking southeast.

Photo 66 of 81: View from the 1929 addition on the tenth floor to the west.

Photo 67 of 81: View of the employee's lounge area on the eleventh floor, looking northwest from the elevator lobby.

Photo 68 of 81: View of another portion of the employee's lounge located on the south part of the eleventh floor.

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store

Shelby County Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State

Photo 69 of 81: View of a parts storage area that takes up the twelfth floor in the tower of the building.

Photo 70 of 81: View of the elevator equipment room that occupies the thirteenth floor of the building.

Photo 71 of 81: View of the three-story "tank room" on the fourteenth floor of the tower, looking north.

Photographer: Looney Ricks Kiss
Date: 2013
Digital files: Tennessee Historical Commission

Photo 72 of 81: East façade, facing west.

Photo 73 of 81: Partial south elevation, facing north.

Photo 74 of 81: South elevation of building and east corner of garage, facing northwest.

Photo 75 of 81: South elevation, facing north.

Photo 76 of 81: North elevation and east facade, facing southwest.

Photo 77 of 81: View of north elevation, facing southwest.

Photo 78 of 81: View of north elevation, facing southeast.

Photo 79 of 81: West elevation, facing east.

Photo 80 of 81: South elevation of building and north elevation of garage, facing northwest.

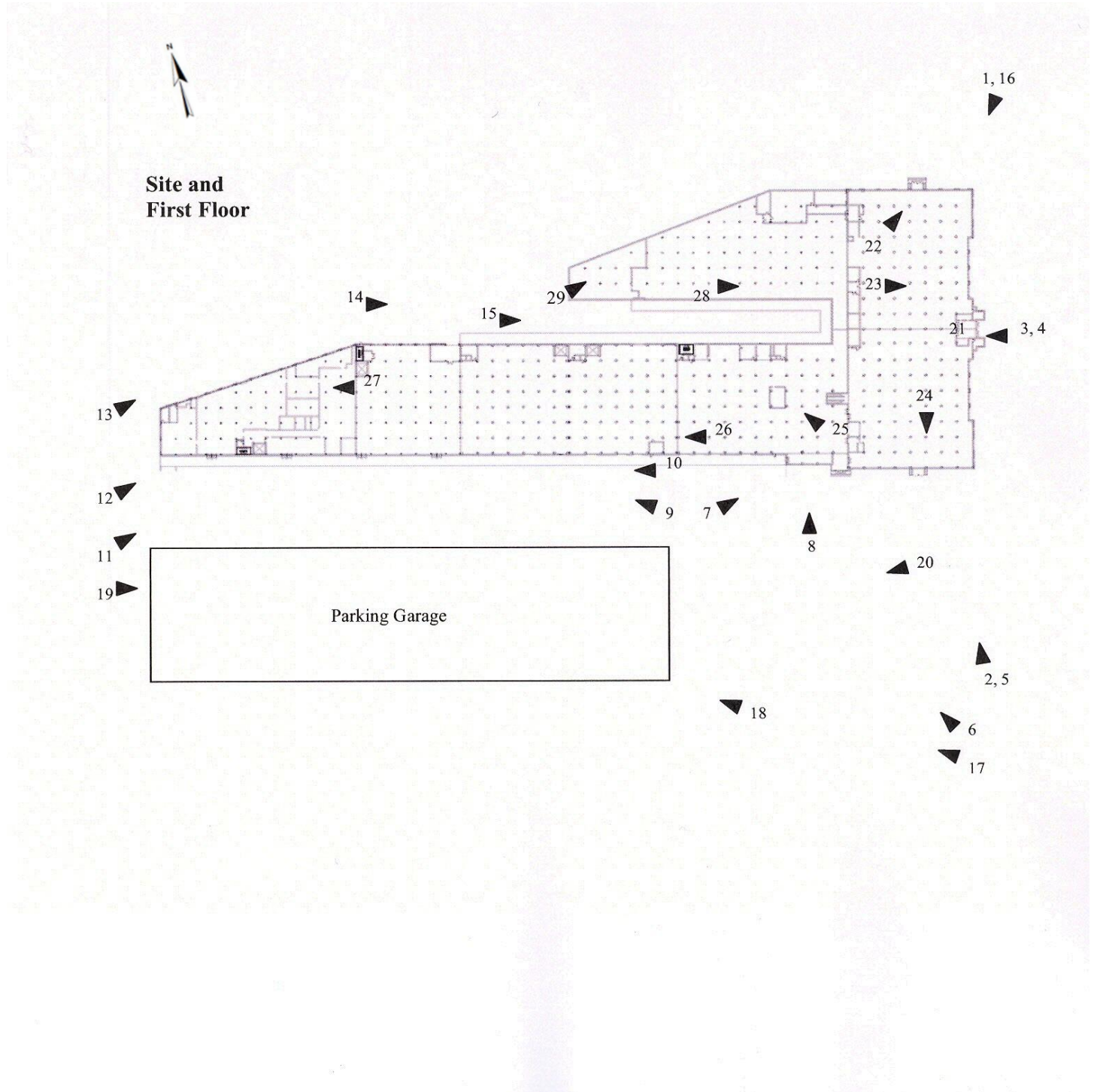
Photo 81 of 81: View facing southeast.

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store

Shelby County Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State



Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store

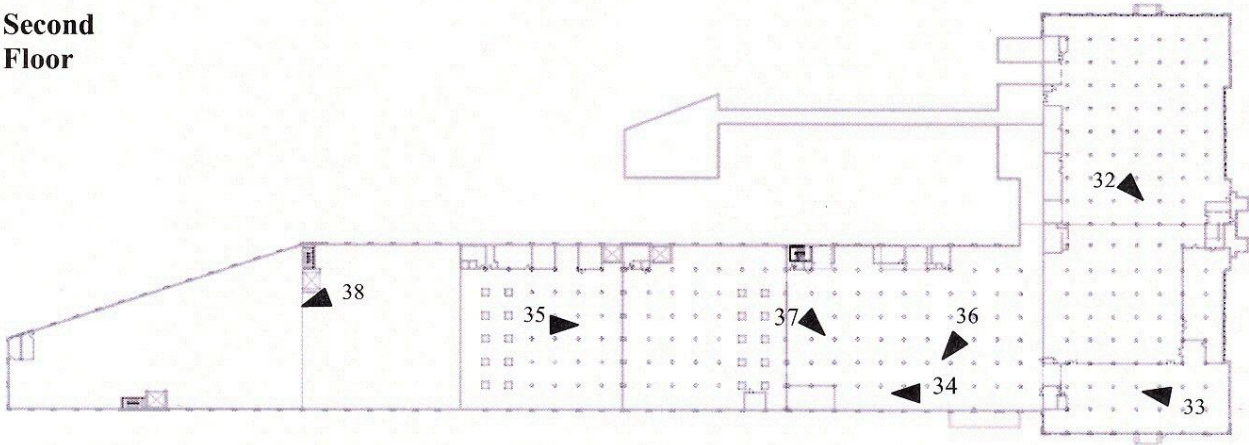
Shelby County Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State



**Second
Floor**

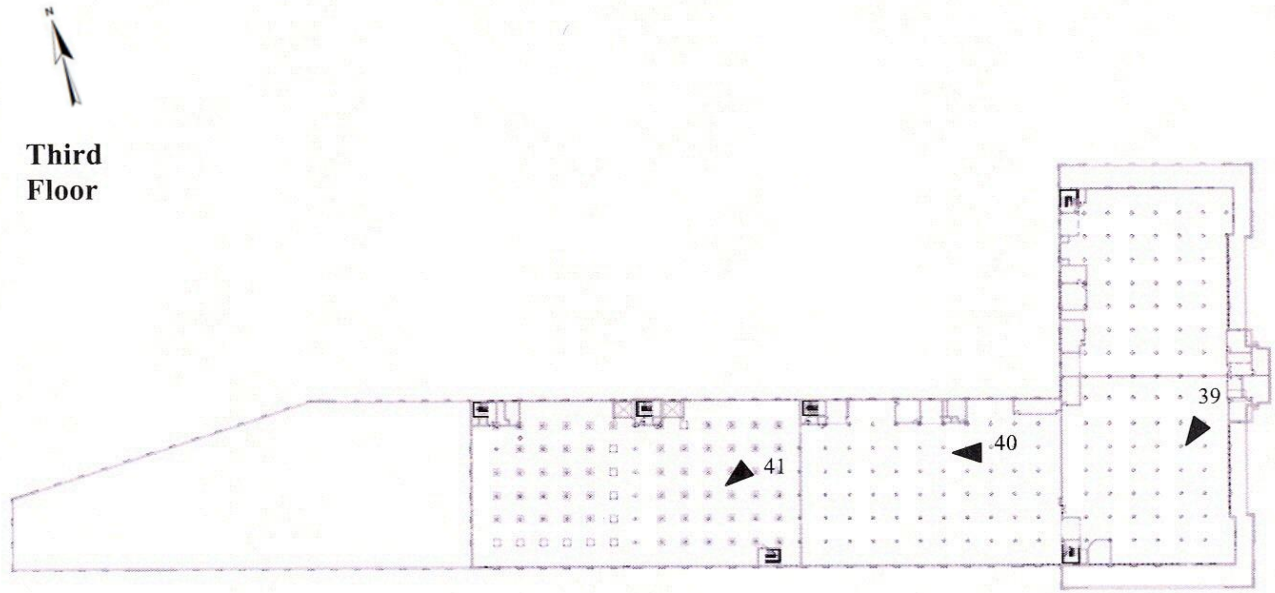


Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store

Shelby County Tennessee

Name of Property

County and State



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store
Name of Property
Shelby County Tennessee
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number figures Page 28



Figure 1.

The Memphis catalog distribution center and retail store, shown after its completion in 1927. *Courtesy of the Sears Holdings Historical Archives.*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store
Name of Property
Shelby County Tennessee
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number figures Page 29



Figure 2.

A group of Memphis dignitaries was photographed outside of the new Sears Roebuck building after arriving on the inaugural run of the Crosstown street car line. Mayor Rowlett Payne is the tall man standing at center in the light colored suit. *Courtesy of the Sears Holdings Historical Archives.*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store
Name of Property
Shelby County Tennessee
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number figures Page 30

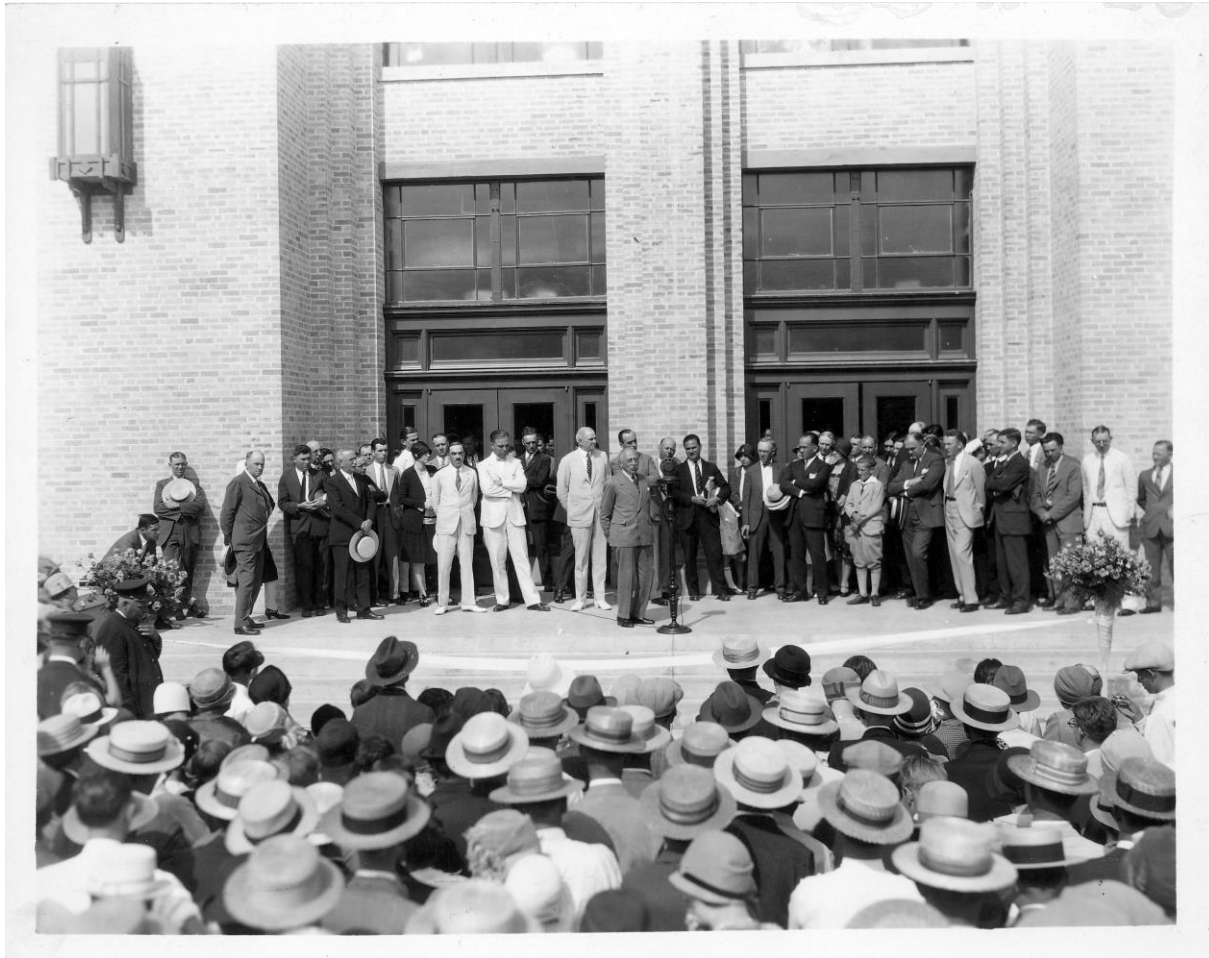


Figure 3.

Julius Rosenwald, Chairman of the Board of Sears Roebuck, was in attendance and addressed the crowd at the grand opening of the Memphis catalog center and retail store. *Courtesy of the Sears Holdings Historical Archives.*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store
Name of Property
Shelby County Tennessee
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number figures Page 31



Figure 4.

View of the Hat Department in the Memphis Sears Roebuck Store, taken prior to opening the doors to the public on August 27, 1927. *Courtesy of Sears Holdings Historical Archives.*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store
Name of Property
Shelby County Tennessee
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number figures Page 32



Figure 5.

View of the Snack Counter, also taken on opening day in 1927. *Courtesy of Sears Holdings Historical Archives.*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store
Name of Property
Shelby County Tennessee
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number figures Page 33



Figure 6.

This postcard of the Sears building is undated, but it does show the addition made to the building in 1929 and the neon sign added in 1941. *Courtesy of the Sears Holdings Historical Archives.*





















SHIPPING EMPLOYEES
Allowed On Dock













ONE WAY

ONE WAY

ONE WAY

ONE WAY

NO LEFT TURN





















EXTINGUISHER

SIO

FC





HOSE







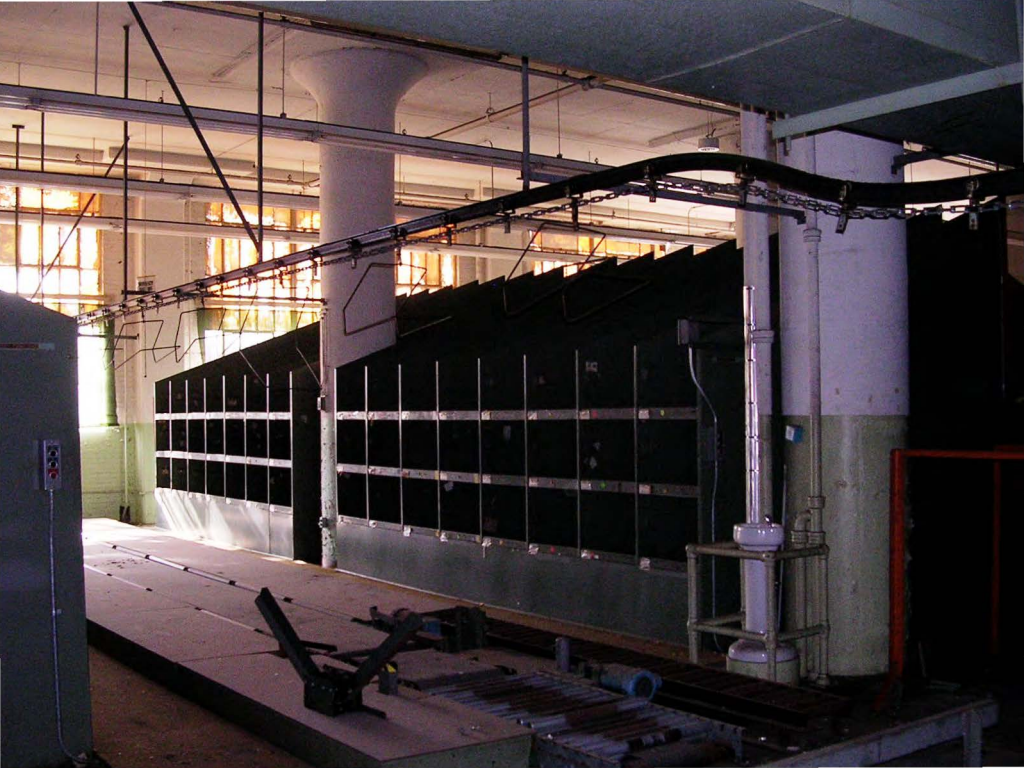


























CMDC D-1910













23















































A Guys Grill
and Grocery

STOP

P

Play
Mall









STOP
HERE ON
RED
←







UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Sears, Roebuck and Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TENNESSEE, Shelby

DATE RECEIVED: 11/01/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/25/13
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/10/13 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/18/13
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000954

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: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 12.18.13 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

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.



Shelby County Government

RECEIVED
AUG 21 2013
TN. HISTORICAL
COMMISSION

MARK H. LUTTRELL, JR.
MAYOR

August 15, 2013

Mr. E. Patrick McIntyre, Jr.
Executive Director and State Historic Preservation Officer
Tennessee Historical Commission
2941 Lebanon Road
Nashville, Tennessee 37214

Dear Mr. McIntyre,

Thank you for notifying me about the recent request of Crosstown LLC to include the former Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store on the National and Tennessee Registers of Historic Places.

The Sears building has been an icon in the Memphis area for many decades. Its stature in the heart of our city and the unique plans underway for the building's renovation are worthy to take note of.

As such, I'd like to join the many other citizen groups and preservation agencies in our community to urge this building to be on the National and Tennessee Registers of Historic Places.

Thank you, Mr. McIntyre, for this opportunity to offer this endorsement in preparation for the historic places hearing on September 25, 2013. Please contact me at (901) 222-2000 if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Mark H. Luttrell, Jr.
Mayor

CC Mr. Todd Richardson, PhD., Crosstown LLC

CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT NATIONAL REGISTER REVIEW

CLG: Memphis
PROPERTY: Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store
ADDRESS: 495 North Watkins Street

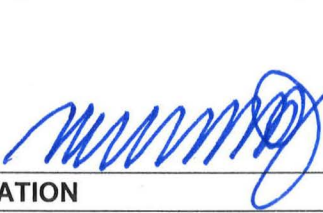
CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL EVALUATION

NAME OF OFFICIAL:
TITLE:
 ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER

REASONS FOR ELIGIBILITY OR NON-ELIGIBILITY:

Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store is an important structure in Crosstown Memphis. I agree with the Memphis Landmarks Commission vote on August 22, 2013 in supporting the nomination of the Sears Crosstown building and the detached parking garage to the National Register of Historic Places.

SIGNATURE:
TITLE:



DATE: 9/3/13

THC STAFF EVALUATION

ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER

REASONS FOR ELIGIBILITY OR NON-ELIGIBILITY:

The main building (Crosstown) and detached garage are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A in the area of commerce as being representative of an important phase in the development of one of America's major retailers, during which Sears dramatically changed the way it served customers. The building's period of significance extends from its construction in 1927 to 1965, the year after the detached garage was built and the year the Sears Crosstown building was at its peak, with over 2,000 employees. The building is also eligible for listing under criterion C in the area of architecture as an early and noteworthy local example of the Art Moderne style that maintains its historic and architectural integrity.

SIGNATURE: 
TITLE: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE: 7/17/13

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN BEFORE: September 25, 2013

RETURN FORM TO:

**CLAUDETTE STAGER
TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION
2941 LEBANON ROAD
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37214**

CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT NATIONAL REGISTER REVIEW

CLG: Memphis
PROPERTY: Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store
ADDRESS: 495 North Watkins Street

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION EVALUATION

NAME OF COMMISSION: MEMPHIS LANDMARK COMMISSION
DATE OF MEETING: AUGUST 22, 2013
HOW WAS THE PUBLIC NOTIFIED OF THE MEETING? MAIL OUT PUBLIC NOTICES
 ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER

REASONS FOR ELIGIBILITY OR NON-ELIGIBILITY:
THE MEMPHIS LANDMARKS COMMISSION AND STAFF AGREED WITH MS SAGER'S ASSESSMENT, THE CROSTOWN + DETACHED GARAGE ARE ELIGIBLE FOR LISTING UNDER CRITERION A + C FOR SEARS ROEBUCK'S DOMINANCE + INNOVATION IN DISTRIBUTION OF CUSTOMER SERVICE AND AS A NOTEWORTHY LOCAL EXAMPLE OF ART MODERNE STYLE OF ARCHITECTURE.
SIGNATURE: *Claudia Stager*
TITLE: MEMPHIS LANDMARKS COMM MANAGER
DATE: 8/22/2013

THC STAFF EVALUATION

ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER

REASONS FOR ELIGIBILITY OR NON-ELIGIBILITY:
The main building (Crosstown) and detached garage are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A in the area of commerce as being representative of an important phase in the development of one of America's major retailers, during which Sears dramatically changed the way it served customers. The building's period of significance extends from its construction in 1927 to 1965, the year after the detached garage was built and the year the Sears Crosstown building was at its peak, with over 2,000 employees. The building is also eligible for listing under criterion C in the area of architecture as an early and noteworthy local example of the Art Moderne style that maintains its historic and architectural integrity.

SIGNATURE: *Claudia Stager*
TITLE: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
DATE: 7/17/13

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN BEFORE: September 25, 2013

RETURN FORM TO:
CLAUDETTE STAGER
TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION
2941 LEBANON ROAD
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37214



TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
2941 LEBANON ROAD
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37214
OFFICE: (615) 532-1550
www.tnhistoricalcommission.org
E-mail: Claudette.Stager@tn.gov
(615) 532-1550, ext. 105
<http://www.tn.gov/environment/history>



October 21, 2013

Carol Shull
Keeper of the National Register
National Park Service
National Register Branch
1201 Eye Street NW
8th floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the documentation to nominate *Sears Roebuck & Company Catalog Distribution Center and Retail Store* to the National Register of Historic Places.

If you have any questions or if more information is needed, please contact Christine Mathieson at (615) 532-1550, extension 125 or Christine.Mathieson@tn.gov.

Sincerely,

Claudette Stager
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

CS:cm

Enclosures(4)