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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JUL 12 1988

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Kresge-Groth Building
other names/site number 003 215 2670

2. Location

street & number 914 South Calhoun Street N/A not for publication
city, town Fort Wayne N/A vicinity
state Indiana code IN county Allen code 003 zip code 46802

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.
[Signature] 6/23/88
Signature of certifying official Date
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. Patrick Andrews 8/25/88
 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:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
COMMERCE/TRADE: department store

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)LATE 19th and 20th CENTURY REVIVALS:
OTHER: Spanish Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls BRICK
STONE: Limestone
roof ASPHALT
other GLASS

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Kresge-Groth Building is located between Wayne and Washington Streets on the west side of Calhoun Street in downtown Fort Wayne. Starting in the late nineteenth century and well into this century, Calhoun Street was the principal shopping area in the city's central business district; today Calhoun Street is a transit mall open only to pedestrians and buses, and most retail activity in the area is dependent upon the office workers who have largely replaced shoppers as the area's principal users.

The Kresge-Groth Building is a three story Spanish Colonial Revival design. The tapestry brick of the upper facade is punctuated by three round-topped wall arches, each of which contains two bays of fenestration. These bays are separated within each arch by smooth limestone engaged columns which rise two stories to terminate in cushion caps, from which spring the smaller round arches that top the third floor windows. Diaper panels decorated with rosettes enrich the spandrels above the flat-topped second floor windows, and all the sash are original one-over-one double-hung elements. The tops of the panels between the wall arches each sport a projecting limestone gargoyle, and the facade is capped by a band of machicolations with stepped stone corbels beneath a pent roof of green Spanish tiles (photo 1). Comparison of the present building with a period view (photo 2) shows that with the exception of the remodelling on the first floor, which dates from 1974, the facade is intact. The original five bays of the first floor had two pairs of entrance doors separated by display windows; the present facade has three bays and a central entry. The end piers, the former transom area, and the later center piers have all been clad in aggregate-faced concrete. Of the original first floor facade, only the dentilled limestone cornice along the top of the first floor is still visible. The side and rear elevations of the building are made of yellow pressed brick, including a fourth floor mechanical room at the rear. Large openings with steel sash are used across the back wall on each of the upper floors (photo 3).

The first floor of the building consists of a single large display room (photo 4). At the rear (southwest) corner, stairs with a wrought iron handrail and marble treads descends to the basement beneath a large Palladian window (photo 5). Accounts of the original construction noted that a similar stair was once located near the front of the first floor. Both the basement and the first floor are finished with a ceiling that consists of panels of pressed metal ceiling in bays defined by large panelled beams which open the width of the building (photos 6, 7). Access to the upper floors is made not only by a modern elevator placed midway down the south side of the building, but by a freight elevator just behind (west of) it, and by an original platform stair located in the northwest rear corner. This stairway has a colonial style goose-neck rail, plain square balusters, and panelled newels, this stair extends the full height of the building, including the rooftop mechanical penthouse (photo 8).

 See continuation sheet

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2 Kresge-Groth Building

The second floor, originally described as a storage area, was remodelled into a display area in 1933 by the addition to it of a coffered plaster ceiling done in the Art Deco style (photo 9). The coffers are long, narrow rectangles across the front third of the room, square at the midpoint, and a single lozenge-shaped panel is centered on the remaining rear area, in front of the enclosed stairwell and the freight elevator. The rear ceiling beams feature bands of stylized floral ornament; those at the front have lateral bands of parallel half-round moldings. The area across the front of the second floor has been partitioned into offices, and it has a plaster ceiling dropped below the coffering. The offices have colonial style chair rails, window casing, and picture moldings (photo 10).

The third floor is a single large room with plain plaster walls (photo 11). The windows inside the facade have plain sill and apron trim, but no casings (photo 12). Here and throughout the building, the steel sash in the rear wall are set in plain plaster reveals.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
1926

Significant Dates
1933
1974

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Holmes, Harold
Strauss, Alvin M.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Kresge-Groth Building is primarily of local architectural significance as one of the largest commercial examples of the Spanish Colonial Revival style to be found in Fort Wayne. The original 1926 design, built by the S. S. Kresge Company to house its downtown dimestore, was the work of Harold Holmes, a Detroit architect. Both the Embassy Theater/Indiana Hotel and the Chamber of Commerce Building were built in the same style two years later, and they remain its largest local exemplars. But the majority of the other local commercial structures in this style were on the much smaller scale used for neighborhood stores and service stations. This is still true of the majority of local examples of this style surviving today.

When the Kresge company sold the property in 1933, the building became the quarters for the Earl Groth Company. This was a local department store originally known as Rurode Dry Goods from the 1860's until its relocation to this site. Earl Groth, who had joined Rurode as general manager in 1920, purchased the firm in 1930, and renamed the company when he moved it out of its former quarters and into this building in 1933. Before moving the store Groth had the new location remodelled by Alvin M. Strauss, one of the most prolific commercial architects then practicing in Fort Wayne (Strauss was noted above). Though the Groth remodelling included store fixtures and a first floor facade, only the Art Deco ceiling on the second floor remains as tangible evidence of the Groth Company's occupation of the building. The Groth Company remained at this location until its demise in 1961, thus making it one of the most long-lived of downtown Fort Wayne's commercial institutions.

The building's later history was symptomatic of the decline of downtown Fort Wayne as a shopping district. From 1964 to 1971, Walgreen Drugs used the building, before relocating to a suburban mall. Demolition of its long-time location in a building on the opposite side of Calhoun Street (for the sake of the construction of a bank tower) caused another venerable Fort Wayne retailer, Fishman's, to purchase this building in 1974. Though Fishman's gave the building its present first floor facade treatment and chemically cleaned the upper facade, they, too, departed for the suburbs in 1979. The Kresge-Groth Building has stood vacant ever since.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Newspapers (in chronological order)

- "S. S. Kresge Building Completed," Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette, March 20, 1927, page 43.
- "Groth Store, Successor to Rurode's, Opens Its Doors," Fort Wayne News-Sentinel, January 31, 1934, page 1.
- "Groth's to Add to Store Building," Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette, October 16, 1935, page 1.
- "Groth's Celebrating 80th Year in Dry Goods Trade," Fort Wayne News-Sentinel, October 8, 1948, page 28.
- "Alan Cahen Buys Groth Store Here," Fort Wayne News-Sentinel, February 14, 1961, page 1.
- "Earl Groth's Receivership Suits Stayed," Fort Wayne News-Sentinel, March 16, 1961, page 1.
- "Downtown Walgreen's Going South," Fort Wayne News-Sentinel, July 21, 1971, page 1B.
- "Fishman's Buying Downtown Site," Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette, February 21, 1974, page 1B.

See continuation sheet

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

Specify repository:

Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property Less Than 1 acre

UTM References

A 1 6 6 5 6 3 0 0 4 5 4 8 8 7 0
 Zone Easting Northing

C

B
 Zone Easting Northing

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

All of Lots 5 and 6 of Wolke's Subdivision of Lots 485, 486, 487, and 488 of Hanna's addition to the City of Fort Wayne, plus the portions of a vacated alley and of Lot 8 Wolke's Addition that are directly west of Lots 5 and 6

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

This constitutes the historic boundary of the property

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Craig Leonard, Historic Preservation Consultant

organization _____ date December 1987

street & number 521 West Market Street telephone (219)-824-4010

city or town Bluffton state IN zip code 46714