

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED MAR 31 1980
MAY 31 1980
DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Old ~~United States~~ Customs House and Post Office and Fireproof
Storage Company Warehouse

AND/OR COMMON

Chamber of Commerce Building and the 310 Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

300-314 West Liberty

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Louisville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3 & 4

STATE

Kentucky

__ VICINITY OF

CODE

021

COUNTY

Jefferson

CODE

111

3 CLASSIFICATION**CATEGORY**

DISTRICT
 BUILDING(S)
 STRUCTURE
 SITE
 OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC
 PRIVATE
 BOTH
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
 IN PROCESS
 BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED
 UNOCCUPIED
 WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
 YES: RESTRICTED
 YES: UNRESTRICTED
 NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE
 COMMERCIAL
 EDUCATIONAL
 ENTERTAINMENT
 GOVERNMENT
 INDUSTRIAL
 MILITARY
 MUSEUM
 PARK
 PRIVATE RESIDENCE
 RELIGIOUS
 SCIENTIFIC
 TRANSPORTATION
 OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Weight Watchers of Kentucky, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

310 West Liberty

CITY, TOWN

Louisville

__ VICINITY OF

Kentucky

STATE

40202

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Weight Watchers of Kentucky Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

310 West Liberty

CITY, TOWN

Louisville

STATE

Kentucky 40202

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky

DATE

__FEDERAL STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Kentucky Heritage Commission

CITY, TOWN

Frankfort

STATE

Kentucky

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The old United States Customs House and the Fireproof Storage Company Warehouse are located in the central business district of Louisville. These structures are close to the Kaufman-Strauss Building (National Register Feb. 14, 1978) and the new Hyatt Hotel on the site of the Tyler Block (National Register October, 1973, demolished 1974) and the old Courier Journal Building (demolished November, 1979).

The Customs House is a four-story structure built of Indiana limestone. The irregular facades are composed of forward thrusting end and central bays with recessed sections between forming five units. The rusticated stone of the first story is separated from the smooth stone of the upper stories by an extended stone course. A series of open arches in the original construction led into the street level post office. Some of these arches remain though they have been filled in with windows. The other arches on both street facades have been removed to accomodate large, rectangular windows, a display window, and a modern entrance on Liberty Street.

In the 1912 renovation, supervised by Louisville architect John Bacon Hutchings, the original second-story space was divided into two floors. The tall windows were divided to create rectangular windows on the new second story. The present third-story windows are the arched tops of the original window openings but without the original panes. Arched stone moldings supported by small, carved pendants remain above the third-story windows.

Fourth-story fenestration is varied and appears little changed from that in the original construction. Most windows are composed of coupled, vertical paned sections separated by stone stanchions which form arches within the window enframement. The windows in the projecting bays also have a small round window surmounting the arched panes forming a tracery effect. The original arched stone moldings are above all the fourth-story windows and there are pairs of small dentils beneath the sills. Two bold, stone courses with a plain entablature between traverse the building above the fourth story. An extended roof cornice is underscored by large stone brackets in pairs and a parapet tops the building. A small, one-story addition to the building on the south side on Third Street was built in recent years and is quite compatible in style and material.

The Fireproof Storage Company Warehouse is a seven story structure with a buff colored brick and stone facade. It is constructed in the Amercian version of the Beaux Art style.

The structure is divided into two bays and the lower two floors are sheathed in smooth-coursed stone. The entry is in an archway at the left of the facade. Five other arches contain windows on the ground floor. A band course divides the first and second floors. Rectangular windows pierced the second floor below an extended stone band supported by modillions.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1853-1858, 1907 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Ammi B. Young/E. E. Williams
Arthur Loomis

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Customs House at Third and Liberty Streets, constructed under the supervision of local architect Elias E. Williams (1794-1880) and possibly designed by Ammi Burnham Young (1798-1874), was the first building erected by the federal government in Louisville for the specific purpose of housing customs offices, the post office, and the federal courts.¹ It is one of the few structures from the 1850s which survive in Louisville, and it is an outstanding example of the excellent architectural design of the government buildings erected during the decade from 1850 to 1860 under the direction of Ammi B. Young, Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department during those years. Additionally it has been imaginatively adapted for re-use twice--first as a home for the Courier-Journal and The Louisville Times and second as office space for the Louisville Chamber of Commerce and other businesses. The 1907, Fireproof Storage Company Warehouse is a fine adaptation of the Beaux Art style as applied to high rise buildings.

Louisville was established as a customs collection district within the state of Virginia by an act of Congress in 1789. At this time no federal customs house existed between Louisville and New Orleans, which was a foreign port. Most imported goods were thus transported up the Mississippi River with no collection of duties. Congress then passed an act in 1799 making Louisville a port of entry. The act remained in force until the acquisition of Louisiana in 1803. New Orleans was made a port of entry and the position of customs collector at Louisville was abolished. In its place the office of Surveyor was created. The functions of the Surveyor included the inspection of all boats constructed in the Mississippi District and the granting of temporary licenses which were to be surrendered at the New Orleans customs house. By 1831 the growth of trade was great enough that Congress reinstated a port of entry at Louisville. A collector of customs, or port director of customs, have been here ever since.

The Customs House in Louisville was located in a series of rented sites. In 1851 the United States government acquired several lots on the southwest corner of Liberty (then Green Street) and Third Streets from the heirs of Henry Clay, Jr., for the site of a building to house all federal government offices in Louisville.

In 1853, after congressional wrangling over the appropriation of funds for the construction of custom houses, notices began appearing in local newspapers inviting proposals for the construction of the new customs house.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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UTM NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

QUADRANGLE NAME New Albany, Ind.-Ky.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 608860 4234380
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

City of Louisville, Block 14K, Lots 65 & 66

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Mary Jean Kinsman--former Researcher
Marty Poynter Hedgepeth--Director of Research

ORGANIZATION Landmarks Commission DATE January 24, 1980

STREET & NUMBER 727 West Main Street TELEPHONE 502/587/3501

CITY OR TOWN Louisville STATE Kentucky, 40202

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE *Cedric W. Hunter*

TITLE DATE 3-14-80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Sally Goldberger
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 ATTEST: *Kristin O'Connell*
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE 5/31/80

DATE 5/14/80

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Old United States
Customs House and
Fireproof Storage
Co. Warehouse

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

6

PAGE

1

Metropolitan Preservation Plan, Louisville: Falls fo the Ohio
Council of Governments, 1973.

Old United States Customs House
National Register of Historic Places
November 23, 1977

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Old United States Customs
House and Post Office and

CONTINUATION SHEET Fireproof Storage ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

The upper floors are of buff-colored brick. The bays are articulated by three pilasters of yellow brick. The pilasters rise from large stone panels of classical decoration. Simple fenestration marks these floors. Stone eagles surmount the pilasters. The seventh floor is an attic story separated from the lower floors by a decorated band course. A parapet caps the structure.

The Fireproof Storage Company Warehouse is adjacent to the customs house and all the mechanical equipment for both structures is housed in the basement of the Fireproof Storage Company Warehouse. The two buildings function as one unit and are open to each other on the interior. The physical functioning of these two structures as one unit and the architectural merit of the Fireproof Storage Company Warehouse are the basis for requesting a change in the listing of the old Customs House to include the Fireproof Storage Company Warehouse.

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Old United States Customs
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CONTINUATION SHEET Fireproof Storage ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

The architect of the customs house is not definitely know. The design has been attributed to E. E. Williams (1794-1880) a Louisville architect who was referred to in contemporary sources as "Superintending Architect" for the customs house. However, because of the design of the structure and the period during which it was built, consideration must be given to Ammi B. Young (1798-1874), supervising architect of the construction branch of the Treasury Department from 1852-1860.

Little is known about E. E. Williams or his work in Louisville. He was first listed in the city directory in 1839 as an architect. In addition to the customs house, he is credited with the design of three other structures in Louisville, none of which survive. The Masonic Temple, which occupied the block on the west side of Fourth Street between Green (Liberty) and Jefferson, was under construction at the same time Williams was supervising the customs house and was completed in the late 1850s. He is also credited with the design of the Shreve House and the Greek Revival Ben Smith house. A newspaper article in 1913 mentioned that Williams spent some time in New Orleans and that he was awarded government contracts for building Marine hospitals in Baton Rouge and Natchez. He evidently gave up his architectural work, as he was listed in the city directories as a wholesale liquor dealer in the 1860s and 1870s. He died in 1880.

Ammi Burnham Young (1798-1874) was born in New Hampshire and is believed to have studied with Alexander Parris (1780-1852) a Boston architect. Young designed buildings for Dartmouth College, the Vermont state capitol (1837), and the magnificent Greek Revival customs house in Boston (1838-1849), his best-known work. In 1852 Young was appointed supervising architect of the Office of Construction of the Treasury Department, a post he held until 1860.

During Young's tenure in office the Treasury Department constructed an unprecedented number of federal buildings made necessary by the rapidly growing population and commerce of the country. Young was the architect of most of the customs houses and post offices built during those years. Talbot Hamlin, in his Greek Revival Architecture in America, said that Young's buildings were especially important because of his innovative use of metal in attempting to deal with the problem of fireproof building. His buildings used iron columns, stairs, window frames, and sometimes even iron doors and internal window shutters. Most of the federal buildings designed by Young were classic in style with some variations. Some had Greek Revival details, other were Georgian and some had Italian Villa characteristics.

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Old United States Customs
House and Post Office

CONTINUATION SHEET Fireproof Storage **ITEM NUMBER** 8 **PAGE** 3

The Louisville Customs House has the angular, vertical appearance of the Villa style, although it was described in contemporary sources as a "combination of Byzantium Romanesque and Anglo-Norman." Unfortunately none of the original interior remains for comparison with other examples of Young's work. Descriptions of the structure in local newspapers upon its completion in 1858 referred to the iron staircases, iron window frames and the fact that, with the exception of the pine floors, all materials were stone and iron.

Although records of most of the government buildings designed by Young exist in the National Archives, no plans or drawings of the Louisville Customs House have been found. It was the usual practice to attribute these buildings to the superintending architect on the site, and in some instances the local architect may have done the actual plan, based upon descriptions and specifications from Young. Thus until some evidence is found the design of the Louisville Customs House cannot be conclusively attributed to either Young or Williams.

The old Customs House became obsolete in 1896 when a new structure was erected at Fourth and Chestnut. Walter H. Haldeman, president of the Courier-Journal newspaper purchased the structure from the federal government. Haldeman planned to move his newspaper operations into the building but delayed the necessary remodeling for some years and used the structure as a public warehouse.

Haldeman's sons, Bruce and W.B., carried out the plans for renovation with the assistance of Louisville architect John Bacon Hutchings. An additional floor was added and the floors reinforced to hold the heavy printing equipment.

The public warehousing business proved to be profitable and the Haldemans built the Fireproof Storage Company Warehouse in 1907, several years before the old Customs House became the location for the Courier-Journal. The Fireproof Storage Company Warehouse was later used for the expansion of the Courier-Journal into its radio station and remained the home of WHAS radio until 1948.

The architect for the Fireproof Storage Company Warehouse was Arthur Loomis. Loomis practiced for a number of years with Charles J. Clarke. Among their most notable buildings are the Louisville Medical School

(National Register, July, 1975); Levy Brothers (National Register, March 24, 1978); the Todd Office Building, the largest such building in the

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House and Post Office

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state at its time of completion; St. Peters and St. Pauls Churches and the Whiteside Bakery (National Register, April, 1979). After Clarke's death in 1908, Loomis designed the Speed Building, the Speed Museum and the Baptist Seminary. Loomis died in 1935.

For over 120 years the old Customs House has been a functional building and a rare example of an early architectural style. Both the old Customs House and the Fireproof Storage Company Warehouse provide important visual links to downtown Louisville's past.

¹The Old United States Customs House and Post Office was listed on the National Register November 23, 1977. The warehouse is an addition to the nomination.

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Old United States Customs House
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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

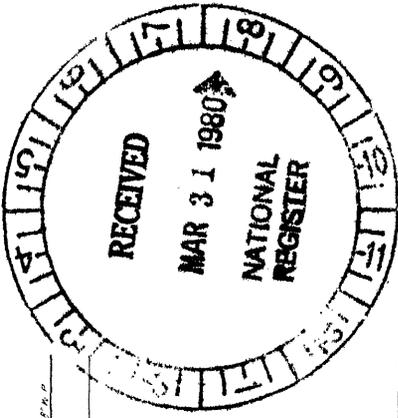
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Old United States Customs House
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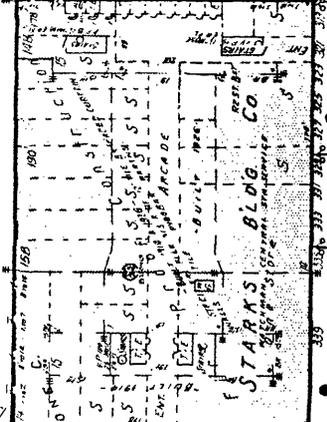
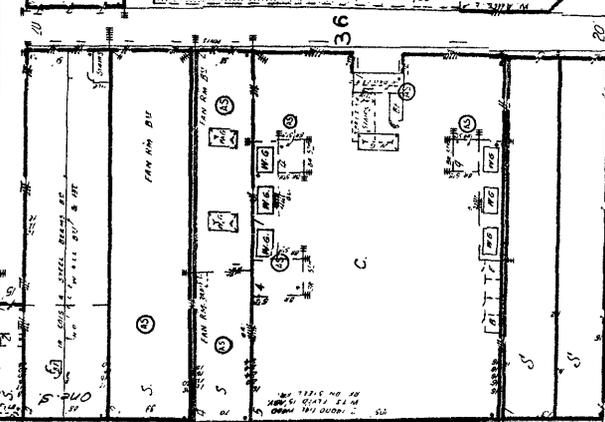
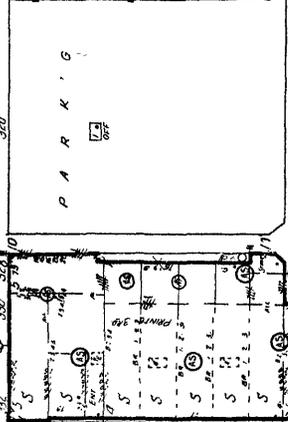
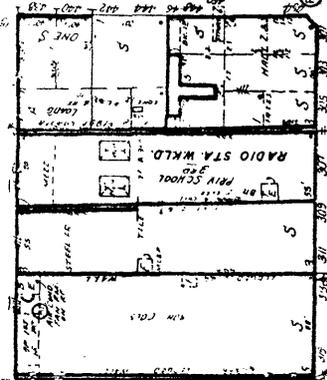
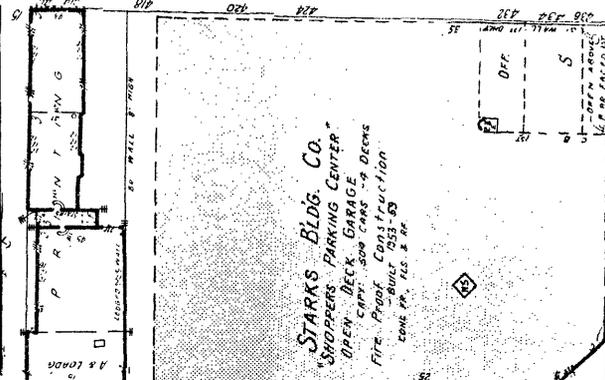
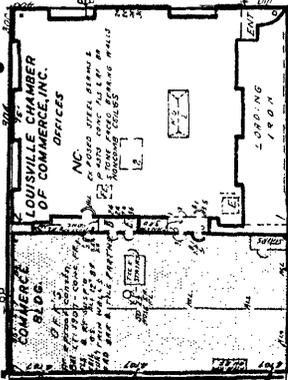
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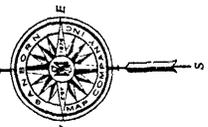
52

S. 3 RD ST



RIVER CITY MALINO TRAFFIC S. 4TH ST. S. 4TH ST. S. 4TH ST.

50



W. LIBERTY

39

Old US Customs House &
Post Office & Fireproof
Storage Co. Warehouse
Louisville, Jefferson, Ky
300-314 West Liberty

Sandborn Map Co.
New York, 1972
Map 2 Sandborn Map

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