

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received JUN 11 1985
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Starks Building

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number 455 S. Fourth Avenue not for publication

city, town Louisville na vicinity of

state Kentucky code 021 county Jefferson code

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	NA in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	NA being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Starks Building

street & number 455 S. Fourth Avenue

city, town Louisville vicinity of state Kentucky

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Jefferson County Courthouse

street & number 517 W. Jefferson

city, town Louisville state Kentucky

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Kentucky Survey of Historic Sites has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1978 federal state county local

depository for survey records Kentucky Heritage Council

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 Starks Building, a familiar landmark to Louisvillian's since its construction in 1913, is located at the corner of Fourth Avenue and Muhammad Ali Boulevard. It lies in the heart of the city's retail/commercial district and is just one of many prominent buildings in the immediate vicinity that display significant architecture in their own right. These include the Stewarts Dry Goods Building to the south (National Register, 1982), the newly renovated Seelbach Hotel to the south-west (National Register, 1975) and the Kaufman-Strauss Building to the north (National Register, 1978).

The Starks Building stands as a monument to the Chicago School architecture of D. H. Burnham and Company. Technological advances of the turn of the century are reflected in the structure's emphasis on verticality while the traditionalism associated with Burnham's work at Chicago's Colombian Exposition of 1893 is displayed by repeated use of classical motifs.

The Starks Building is fourteen bayed on the Muhammad Ali Boulevard facade and nine bayed on the Fourth Avenue facade. Each face has identical ornamentation and fenestration.

The first floor of this impressive building is typical of 1913 commercial storefronts because of its large expanse of fixed glass display windows. Starting at the ground level, each bay division is differentiated by vertical members that rise the height of the building. On the first three levels each is incised with Greek fretwork. The first two floors are further subdivided by horizontal metal panels decorated in bas-relief with an egg and dart motif. The third floor bays are subdivided by metal panels showing the exuberance of Sullivanesque detailing. The classicism of Greek acanthus leaves and dentils lines the top of the third floor.

The fifth floor decorations are increasingly more elaborate. Egyptian style pilasters, topped by rosettes, acanthus lined pedestals and Greek urns are flanked by swags, all of which is framed by a border of fretwork.

Between the thirteenth and fourteenth floors great lions' heads, mounted on medallions, are framed by more egg and dart. Bricks forming elongated dentils topped by a band of foliage distinguish the fourteenth floor from the fifteenth.

The very top floor alternates between irregularly shaped shields entwined with serpents around a winged torch and a design of classical urns and rosettes. A parapet and coping finishes the building.

The Starks Building was constructed in 1913 as a "U" shaped structure. It was expanded twelve years later in an eastwardly direction and was enclosed to form a four-sided structure. The result of this expansion was a dramatic light court that opened from the second to the fifteenth floor.

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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1913, 1926 **Builder/Architect** D. H. Burnham and Company (1913)
Graham Anderson Probst and White (1926)
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Selden and Breck Builders

The Starks Building is an outstanding example of turn-of-the-century commercial architecture with Beaux-arts details. The Starks Building is located at one of the City's most important intersections of the central business district and has been a well known local landmark for over seventy years. The building, designed by D. H. Burnham and Company of Chicago, is a monument to aesthetic expression of the era in which it was built.

In 1911, John Price Starks commissioned the prestigious Chicago architectural firm of D. H. Burnham and Company to design an edifice to house their growing retail concern. Their choice in hiring Daniel H. Burnham was, no doubt, in a large part due to the recognition the architect had received as one of the leading promoters of the 1893 World's Colombian Exposition in Chicago.

Daniel Hudson Burnham's reputation as an architect reflected years of design experience. He was first employed by William Le Barron Jenny, "father of the skyscraper," where he learned the basics of architectural design and structure. From 1873 until 1891 Burnham had a partnership with John Wellborn Root that ended upon Root's death. Subsequently, the D. H. Burnham and Company was formed and it was under this title that the Starks's Building was constructed.

During the period in which the Starks Building was constructed Burnham's style reflected both the Chicago School tradition popularized by Louis Sullivan and neo-Classicism that was a reflection of Chicago's Colombian exposition. "Form follows function" is manifested in the visual strength of the widened piers at the building's corners and the implied pilasters delineating each bay each of which emphasized verticality. However, there is a strong reference to Neo-Classicism in its detailing. Because it was designed following the beaux-arts tradition, the Starks Building was intended to correspond to the components of a classical column. The first three stories form the column base, the vertical shafts divide each window and resemble the flutes of a column and the ornately embellished fourteenth and fifteenth floors that complete the building correspond to a column capital. Intuitively, John R. Starks had chosen an architect who's conservatism bowed to the classics while still being progressive enough to reference the ideals of Louis Sullivan's Chicago School.

The Starks Building Company continued the tradition of relying on prominent architects in 1926 by hiring the Chicago firm of Graham, Anderson, Probst and White, the successor firm to the D. H. Burnham and Company upon Burnham's death in 1912. The 1926 addition, which enclosed one end of the building to create a "U" shape also formed a central light well. This addition was harmonious with the original building by repeating the facade details and fenestration in an identical fashion. In its present state

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name New Albany

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	6	6	0	8	2	5	0	4	2	3	4	7	5	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D

Zone			Easting					Northing						

E

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H

Zone			Easting					Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

City of Louisville Block 14K Lot 52. The site extends from the corner of Fourth Avenue (River City Mall) and Muhammad Ali Boulevard (Walnut Street) north 160' and east 229'

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 Joanne Weeter, Researcher

organization Louisville Landmarks Commission

date March 1985

street & number 727 W. Main Street

telephone (502) 587-3501

city or town Louisville

state Kentucky

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

David L. Morgan

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date May 21, 1985

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

J. Melores Byers
Keeper of the National Register

date 7-11-85

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Starks Building, Louisville, Jefferson, County KY

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The Starks Company has always strived to provide its customers and tenants with the most up-to-date conveniences. Not only was a self-park parking garage added on an adjoining lot in 1953, the first in the city, but it was also one of the first self-park parking garages in the country. In the mid-fifties, ten Otis elevators, also self-serving, were added in an era when manned elevators were the norm. The building has remained in the Starks' ownership since its construction.

The interior of the Starks Building is as impressive as the exterior. From the brass fixtures used throughout the building to the iron work on each stair riser it becomes evident that a great deal of attention was paid to detail. The floors and wainscoting of Italian marble and Honduran mahogany used extensively for wood trim gives the buildings halls and corridors a rich aestheticism. One is literally enveloped in the style and craftsmanship of the 1950s when stepping into the Otis elevators. Rich woods line the walls and back lighting highlights each elevators gently curving ceiling. It is befitting that such a finely designed building is both beautiful and utilitarian and is undoubtedly the reason why office space in the Starks Building is still in demand.

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the Starks Building is an outstanding example of Beaux-arts classicism and the Chicago School tradition and forms a cohesive whole.

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"Bids Soon to Be Taken For Work On Skyscraper" Courier Journal June 18, 1912

"Chicago Architect to Plan Business Block" Courier Journal August 19, 1911.

"Kentucky Historic Resources Inventory" July 3, 1978 by Marty Hedgepeth. December 15, 1976
by Mary Jean Kinsman

Photogravure Courier Journal November 7, 1926

"The Starks Building" promotional brochure September, 1939 and 1955

"The Starks Building" advertizing supplement to the Courier Journal and Louisville Times,
Sunday November 11, 1984

Thorndike, Joseph J. ed. Three Century of Notable American Architects. New York; 1981

Withy, Henry F. and Elsie Rayburn Withy, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects.
Los Angeles; Hennessey and Ingalls, 1956

Starks Building
455 S. Fourth Avenue
Louisville, Jefferson Co, KY

Sanborn Map Company, Inc.
629 Fifth Avenue
Pelham, New York