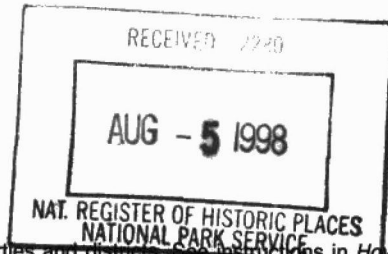


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Trustees System Service Building

other names/site number 201 North Wells Building

2. Location

street & number 201 North Wells Street  not for publication

city or town Chicago  vicinity

state Illinois code IL county Cook code 031 zip code 60606

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

William L. Uebel /SH/ 6-25-98  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency  
State of Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action  
9.3.98

**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	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

N/A

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

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Business  
Commerce/Financial Institution

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Business

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Skyscraper  
Art Deco

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone  
walls Brick  
roof Asphalt  
other Limestone  
Terra Cotta

**Narrative Description**

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

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Trustees System Service Building

## 7. DESCRIPTION

The Trustees System Service Building, at 201 North Wells Street in Chicago, Illinois, stands at the northeast corner of West Lake Street and North Wells Street at the north end of the Loop, just south of the Chicago River. The Art Deco skyscraper is twenty stories high plus an eight-story set-back tower capped by a ziggurat and lantern, on one basement on hardpan caissons. The architects were John Reed Fugard and Frederick J. Thielbar, and James B. Black was the engineer. Reputed to be the tallest existing building of reinforced concrete when it was completed in 1930, the structural system is actually a hybrid. The first twenty stories are constructed of concrete slabs and columns reinforced with cast-iron cores and helical bars. The upper stories consisting of the tower, ziggurat and crown are framed in steel. The building extends approximately 150' along Wells Street and 78' along Lake Street, to the property line on all sides. The main entrance faces south, with both south and west elevations treated as primary facades, with the rear north elevation facing on an alley and the east elevation facing a small open lot. The first four stories of the south and west facades are faced in limestone, with brick on the upper stories, and terra cotta trim at the lintels, spandrels, and capping all the setbacks and the crown.

The building plan forms a narrow rectangle, with just three 26' structural bays across, and eight bays deep extending south to north, with the southernmost bays at the entry measuring 26' deep and the remaining bays to the north just slightly over 17' on center. Above the third floor, the northeast corner of the building is notched out to form a light court. The light court is set in 25' from the east elevation and set in 60' from the north elevation. From the south the building appears quite vertical in proportion, with the tower of the building situated toward the south, leaving a deeper setback at the north. The series of setbacks up to the crown of the building vary in depth. At the 21<sup>st</sup> floor is the first setback of the tower, forming two terraces at the corner setbacks on the Lake Street facade (south) and a large terrace facing north. There is a slight setback the 22<sup>nd</sup> floor, a major setback at the 23<sup>rd</sup> floor, and another setback rising from the 24<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> floor. These floors are essentially the same as the 23<sup>rd</sup> floor but the brick is set back at the southeast and southwest corners, making the bays only slightly projected from the tower itself. The 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> floors set back slightly again, leaving no bays. Together, the repeated setbacks form the verticality of an Art Deco skyscraper.

The south and west primary elevations are treated much the same, with embellished limestone facing the first four floors and face brick cladding the upper floors with monochromatic terra cotta ornament. The lower floors of the south facade are symmetrical, with the entrance to the

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Trustees System Service Building

former main bank lobby in the central bay, flanked by the entrance to the elevator lobby in the eastern bay, and a storefront in the western bay. The dramatic two-story central entry is framed by stylized pilasters visually supporting a low-pitched simple pediment, all in limestone. The pediment is carved with the bank's name and date, "Trustees System Service, founded MCMXIV". The entrance is set in almost six feet from the face of the building, within a surround ornamented with ten limestone plaques designed and carved by Gwen Lux and Eugene Van Breeman Lux, depicting in allegorical figures the evolution of commerce and banking. The lowest panel right (east) of the door is carved with "Credit Moves the Modern Business World" and ornamented with an Native American head. The panel above this is carved with two men with a globe, ticker tape and a stock chart. The third panel is carved with, "To Safeguard Wealth Men Established Banks" and is garnished with the profile of an eagle. The fourth panel contains two robed men bartering in a biblical scene. The fifth panel is carved with, "The Seal of The State Put Trust In Minted Coins" and is decorated with a profile of Mercury. To the left (west) of the door, the lowest panel is carved, "With Gold Commerce Was Carried Over Seas" ornamented with a profile of an Native American head. The second panel features allegorical figures with a scale and a ship. The third panel is carved with, "Exchange by Barter Marked the Dawn of Trade" embellished with a carved eagle. The fourth panel is carved with two robed men bartering in a classical scene. The final panel is carved with, "The History of Business Records Man's Progress" embellished with the profile of Mercury.

The existing brass framed entry doors are set below a grid of glass panels that rises to the top of the two-story surround. These panels, designed and executed by artist Edgar Miller, are created of lead cut-out figures and designs encased within panes of glass to form a grille effect. The figures represent the many trades of man through history such as farming, mining, and logging. Each figure is centered in a design of lace-like geometric cut-outs. On the exterior, the glass panels have been painted over, but from the interior the artistry is revealed. The original entry doors to the building consisted of a revolving door flanked by a glass paneled door on either side. The panels, which also featured the cut-out lead grille work, in rinceau designs, are in storage and will be re-installed in place as part of the building rehabilitation.

The commercial lobby entrance is located in the bay east of the banking entrance, and also consists of a revolving door flanked by single glass paneled doors set in brass. The doors are intact, as is the original cast iron surround. The revolving door leads into the L-shaped lobby. Incised in stone over the door, is '201 North Wells Building.' There is one storefront facing

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south on Lake Street, in the westernmost bay. The original cast iron surround is intact, but the plate glass and door openings have been boarded up and painted.

On either side of the two-story entrance, the second through fourth-story facades are treated similarly to those of the west elevation, with sets of three tall windows in each bay at the second story, and shorter windows in sets of three in each bay of the third and fourth stories. There are inset carved limestone spandrels set between fluted piers which form the mullions between windows up to the third floor. The three panels between the second and third floors on either side of the entrance, however, depict Greek mythological figures on either side of a floral panel. These allegorical figures, also by Eugene van Breeman Lux and Gwen Lux, feature Hermes (Mercury) representing commerce, and a female figure with a cornucopia and a beehive (Pomona?), representing industry.

The south and west limestone facades of the building capture the Art Deco spirit through the use of ornamentation and materials. The base of the building, ranging from one to two feet in height, is black granite. The first four floors are clad in limestone which has been painted gray, but which has been revealed to be of a golden rust tone which complements the brick and terra cotta colors. There are eight storefronts facing west along Wells Street. Four storefronts are north of the commercial lobby entrance, which is located in the center of the west facade. Each storefront is approximately eight feet square. The original windows, still existing in the four northern storefronts, are constructed of large plate glass, with an inset door. The original, cast-iron storefront surrounds are topped with three, curving feather finials that are repeated throughout the tower and interior lobby of the building. On this elevation, the storefronts to the south of the revolving door leading into the commercial lobby have been covered over with wood. The southernmost storefront contains a non-original wooden door. All of the surrounds, however, are intact.

At the second through fourth floors, each bay contains a set of two, non-original, fixed pane, metal windows. The windows are deeply set into the limestone, with each of the second and third floor windows resting on a terra cotta spandrel panel. The ornamentation in the spandrels is made up of two narrow ribbons of cast flowers and pods at the edges of the panels. Centered in the panel is a wreath cast with fleur-de-lis and flower pods, flanked by smooth terra cotta stripes. Separating the windows and spandrels are fluted piers capped by terra cotta finials shaped as urns. At the top of the fourth floor, a cornice of terra cotta dentil brackets delineates the base of the building from the upper floors.

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Trustees System Service Building

On the upper levels of the south and west elevations and on all elevations of the tower, the fenestration pattern carries up from the lower floors, clearly articulating the structure and forming a grid of slightly projecting piers and inset spandrels. On the south elevation, there are three windows in each of the three bays, and on the west elevation there are two windows per bay, each separated by a pier. Originally, the windows were one-over-one metal double-hung windows, but in 1987-88 most of the windows were replaced with single paned, fixed light thermal-glazed metal windows. Four or five windows on each floor were replaced with one-over-one double-hung windows.

On both the south and the west elevations, floors five through eight are clad in rust-colored brick with purple flecks. The brick on floors nine through twenty is peach with rust speckles, and the brick cladding the tower is maize speckled with rust. The brick used for this building is slightly smaller than Chicago common brick. The face brick is laid in common bond, with every seventh row of bricks set as headers. Throughout the building, all of the joints are raked except where there has been tuckpointing. In the tuckpointed areas, the joints are flush. Beginning at the fifth floor level and rising through the eighth story are bull-nose header bricks forming slightly projecting fluted piers separating the deeply-set windows. The piers culminate at the eighth story level with stylized floral terra cotta panels, capped by a rust-colored terra cotta projecting cornice which delineates this section from the upper floors. The terra cotta spandrel panels between the piers at each of these stories feature stylized Art Deco volutes, gargoyles and inverted crenellation.

The tower of the Trustees System Service Building, which begins at the 21<sup>st</sup> floor, is embellished with monochromatic terra cotta ornament in stylized leaf and sunburst patterns, and presents the same treatment on all four elevations. Ornamentation at the top of the 20<sup>th</sup> floor includes terra cotta spandrel panels. The panels in the two bays on either end of the facades contain two narrow projecting pilasters. The center panels are cast in the shape of a figurine. Decorative sculpture is also located at each of the setbacks, leading the eye upwards. The lintels over the top of the 27<sup>th</sup> floor tower windows are terra cotta in a sunburst pattern. As the top symmetrically steps back to its peak, it forms the most celebrated Art Deco feature, the ziggurat, capped off with an ornamental terra cotta crown. On all elevations, at floors 21, 22, and 23 are ornate iron railings enclosing functional and non-functional balconies. Some of the cast-iron cresting and fencing has currently been replaced at the set-backs, where it had deteriorated and had been removed.

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In addition to the setbacks, 201 N. Wells is topped by a six-story steel-framed ziggurat. Originally, the ziggurat roof was copper, but the copper was removed during the 1967 alterations and replaced with aluminum roofing material, which has again been replaced with asphalt roofing, painted silver. Setting atop the ziggurat is a terra cotta crown on a steel frame, surrounding the chimney stack. Each piece of the crown is separate and is placed to form a vented octagonal crown. The severely deteriorated crown underwent a rehabilitation in 1988-89. The crown was disassembled and new terra cotta leaf finials were cast from moldings of the deteriorated originals. Each leaf is three feet high and is fastened on the base of the tower by anchors and highlighted with gold leaf, in the same fashion as the originals. The finials, of stylized leaves, are a motif repeated in various places throughout the building.

On the north elevation of the building which faces onto an alley, the painted limestone and colored brick of the west facade wraps around onto the north elevation, decorating most of the westernmost bay. To the east of that treatment, the north elevation is clad in Chicago common brick. On this elevation, there are three windows per bay rising from the second story to the top of the 20<sup>th</sup> story. The original windows on this elevation were three-over-three vertical light double-hung metal windows. Most of these were also replaced with the fixed light windows in 1987-88, although some remain.

The first four stories of the east elevation are faced in brick which has been painted to imitate the rust-colored brick on the south and west facades. Originally, the walls of the first four floors were contiguous to the adjoining four-story building. The upper stories are clad in the same face brick as the south and west facades, fading to the maize-colored brick at the top. Original plans of the east elevation show no window openings. Ten openings have been added to various floors over time, which now have single-pane, metal industrial windows. The windows in the east elevation of the notched out light court are the same as the windows on the north elevation - metal sash, three-over-three light double-hung windows.

### **Interior**

In the interior, the dramatic commercial lobby presents a theatrical set of rare, blood-red Numidian marble trimmed in gold leaf. The commercial lobby is L-shaped, extending 90' north from the Lake Street entrance and then 60' west to the doors opening onto Wells Street. The commercial lobby is east of the banking lobby, with a two-story door, executed in the same manner as the entrance window, separating the two. The lead grille work depicts again the

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various forms of man's labor across the top forming a transom above lace-like cut out patterns in the glass of the lower panels. In the commercial lobby, the deeply veined Numidian marble walls play against the gilded plaster, stepped back corners of the walls. Opulence is displayed in the bronze elevator doors, etched with stylized Art Deco leaves, flowers, pods and etched ziggurats, with surrounds featuring the same stepped-back design in marble and plaster as that on the corners of the walls and the moldings. The plaster ceiling rises to thirteen feet. The ceiling is supported by large scalloped plaster ceiling beams springing from marble pilasters. The floor is composed of Napoleon gray marble with borders of Cardiff green and Travertine Antique marble. From this lobby, seven elevators can be accessed, four along the east wall and three along the west wall that separates the banking from the commercial lobby. There is also a fire staircase to the south of this bank of elevators.

The banking lobby, west of the commercial lobby, rises 25-feet to a plaster ceiling. Square in shape (not counting the stairs,) the banking lobby is 3,000 square feet. The floor is Travertine with dots of Belgian black marble, with the outer border of dark cedar Tennessee marble. Directly opposite the two-story glass entry is a sixteen-foot wide Italian Travertine "Verde Antique" deep green marble staircase leading to the 12,000 square foot second floor, with all except the lower portion of the treads and risers intact. Originally, there was a wall to the west of the stairway, separating the retail area from the banking lobby. The walls of the stairway are also of red Numidian. Set into the marble on either side of the stairway is a bronze plaque. The plaque on the left exhibits "Thrift" symbolized by an image of an owl, denoting wisdom, and a beehive, denoting hard work; all of which result in thrift, depicted by an image of a man with nice clothes, shoes, a house and the proverb: "Life prospers the thrifty." The contrasting image to the right, is of "Thriftlessness". This bronze plaque depicts an image of a man who is shoeless, wearing ragged clothing surrounded by weed-like thistles and thorns. This plaque is symbolic of an irresponsible lifestyle and features the proverb: "Life punishes the thriftless". These plaques were also executed by Gwen and Eugene van Breeman Lux.

The stairway leads to what was originally the second-story banking floor, along the west wall of the building. With finishes and detailing similar to the lobbies, the original space was lavish with plaster moldings, marble walls and floor, gold leaf trim, and a frieze of plaques representing the history of credit. Little of this remains, with the exception of the second floor elevator lobby which is largely intact beneath applied paneling and finishes. 1967 alterations in the building included the installation of suspended acoustic tile ceilings in both the banking and commercial area lobbies. The installation of new lighting, electrical and air conditioning led to the destruction

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of the second floor banking room ceiling. In addition, the marble walls, customer stations, and carved frieze, in addition to the office partition walls, were removed, though a portion of the travertine floor remains. In the commercial lobby, the ceiling was dropped to one foot above the elevators, and in the banking area, a second floor was inserted into the two story lobby. In both lobbies, the walls were covered with drywall and the floor covered with industrial vinyl floor tiles. Restoration begun in 1988-90 included removing the unsympathetic alterations, uncovering extant original features and replicating missing pieces of plaster detail in the commercial lobby. In the banking area, most of the unsympathetic alterations have been removed and restoration of the banking lobby is underway. No evidence of an original or existing bank vault has been found.

Three storefront interiors along the west facade are currently utilized. The interiors have been altered over time and currently have dropped, suspended ceilings and linoleum floors. There is a shoe store, a computer software store and a small, day-care center. The southwest corner space which adjoins the original bank lobby is currently vacant while undergoing restoration.

The upper, commercial office floors of the building have been altered over time, following the major renovation in 1967. The floor plan consists of an L-shaped corridor surrounding a core of bathrooms and elevator shafts, centered on the east wall. The floors feature typical elevator lobbies with dropped suspended acoustical tile ceilings covering mechanical equipment. Industrial carpeting has been used on the floors with four-inch vinyl baseboards along the walls. The elevator doors are plain painted metal, generally with original simple dark, wood surrounds around the doors and a triangular pediment over the doors. Centered over the door is a light fixture with a mother-of-pearl glass covering set in two octagonal brass fixtures. The pediments and lights are not extant on every floor. On floors one through fifteen the functioning elevators are on the east side of the building. The upper floor functioning elevators are on the west side of the elevator bank. Some original Napoleon gray marble remains in some of the upper floor bathrooms, used for wainscot, partitions, stiles, caps and trim, with a base of French Gray marble. The upper floor offices were also altered in the 1967-68 renovation. The offices also have suspended acoustic tile ceilings, carpeting and new office doors.

The HVAC system consists of three steam, brick-lined boilers in the basement. The boilers originally ran on coal but were converted to fuel. Steam radiators are still located throughout the building. Hot steam or cold water is pumped through fan coils at the center of the building for heating and cooling.

**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**

(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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1930

**Significant Dates**

1930

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Thielbar, Frederick J.

Fugard, John Reed

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Commission on Chicago Landmarks

Trustees System Service Building  
Name of Property

Cook County, Illinois  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property less than 1.0 acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	6	44	7	43	0	4	6	3	7	1	0	0
Zone		Easting				Northing						

3 

Zone		Easting				Northing						

2 

Zone		Easting				Northing						

4 

Zone		Easting				Northing						

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

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

**Boundary Justification**

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

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Susan Baldwin, Jessica Warm

organization Baldwin Historic Properties date February 5, 1998

street & number 70 W. Hubbard Street, Suite 204 telephone 312-321-0707

city or town Chicago state Illinois zip code 60610

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

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

**Additional items**

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

**Property Owner**

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

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**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. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

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Trustees System Service Building

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

*Summary*

The Trustees System Service Building at 201 North Wells meets Criterion C as a significant example of the Art Deco skyscraper in Chicago. Designed in 1929 by the firm of Thielbar and Fugard and completed in 1930 following the stock market crash, the building was cited by historian Carl Condit as "typical of the purified skyscraper with its vertical emphasis." Reinforced concrete frames the lower twenty floors while steel frames the tower and top, with engineer James B. Black utilizing a noteworthy composite structural system in which the concrete columns are reinforced with solid cast iron cores and helical bars. The Trustees System Service Building is Chicago's only Art Deco Skyscraper clad in brick. The graduated brick coloring, along with the projecting piers, eight-story tower, and series of set-backs topped by a six-story ziggurat and crown emphasize the building's verticality. A distinguished collaboration between modern architecture and art, the carved limestone embellishments and lead grille panels illustrate the early transitional work of sculptors Eugene van Breeman Lux and Gwen Lux and artist Edgar Miller. The building represents all of the characteristics of the relatively rare Art Deco style skyscraper, with additional significance in its theatrical lobby design of red Numidian marble. The Trustees System Service Building is a significant complement to Chicago's collection of steel framed, limestone skyscrapers which tell the story of the city's development in the 1920s.

Skyscrapers in Chicago, like those in New York, were a product of real estate speculation, urban conditions, zoning ordinances, building technology, and prevailing tastes. In response to the economic recession of the early 1890's, Chicago limited its building heights, which discouraged development. In contrast, the New York zoning law of 1916 required that buildings occupy a decreasing percentage of their site area as the height increased, but with no restriction on height. The resultant effect was that New York presented a skyline of tall towers, while Chicago had bulkier buildings of similar heights. According to Carol Willis in *Form Follows Finance: Skyscrapers and Skylines in New York and Chicago*:

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Trustees System Service Building

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As late as 1923, a survey showed only ninety-two buildings of ten to twenty-two stories in the Loop. In New York where height was unrestricted....towers proliferated. By 1913, Manhattan boasted nearly one thousand buildings of eleven to twenty stories, and fifty-one of between twenty-one and sixty stories. Thus, while New York had slightly more than double Chicago's population in 1920,...it had more than ten times the number of tall buildings.

From 1920 through the early 1930s, the total volume of office space more than doubled in both cities, with new zoning laws altering the skyscrapers and skylines of each city. In Chicago the 1923 zoning law finally permitted buildings above the old 260 feet limit. The passage of the law was precipitated by a building boom fueled by the post World War I expansion of business. By the end of the decade, there were more than twenty buildings that exceeded the old height restrictions, most of these with large amounts of speculative office space.

A 1920 revision of the earlier height limits in Chicago had allowed occupied floors of up to 260 feet, with unoccupied, ornamental towers raising to 400 feet. Buildings such as the Wrigley Building (400 & 410 N. Michigan Ave. 1919-24, Graham, Anderson, Probst & White) and the London Guarantee Building (360 N. Michigan Ave. 1923, Alfred S. Alschuler) were built during this time. Under the new code, a building could rise to 264 feet at the sidewalk, with towers above that which occupied not more than 25% of the lot size, or one-sixth of the cubic area of the main building. This law governed the shape of Chicago's skyscrapers in the 1920's, encouraging the stepped back features.

Through the 1920s the building type evolved from the simple base and tower form, usually with classical embellishment, to the more integrated massing with a graceful series of set-backs accompanied by simpler, modern ornament. Other forces shaping the skyscraper of the 1920s were the floor plans, dictated by the need for natural light and ventilation, and both vertical and horizontal traffic patterns. An example of the evolution of the style can be seen by comparing two buildings by architects Vitzthum and Burns. The Randolph Tower building at 188 West Randolph (1929) was the last of the historical tower buildings, with its ornate cream terra cotta Gothic ornament and tower. Completed just a year later, One North LaSalle (1930) is a vision of Art Moderne simplicity with its telescoping towers.

Prior to the Randolph Tower was a decade of towered skyscrapers, including the Wrigley Building, the Chicago Temple (77 W. Washington St. 1923, Holabird & Roche) and the Tribune

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Tower (435 N. Michigan Ave. 1923, Howells & Hood). The Chicago Temple building was the first to challenge the old building height restrictions, obtaining a special variance from the city council for its eight-story spire. Inspired by the Chicago Temple's experience, the Tribune Tower also pushed the envelope to build above the height restrictions, which were raised within a year of its completion. The London Guarantee Building, also completed in 1923, is another building built to the maximum allowable height of this era, with Neo-Classical ornament, but without the striking tower and belvedere of the Pure Oil Building of 1926 (35 E. Wacker Drive, Thielbar & Fugard; Giaver & Dinkelberg, assoc. archs.) after the zoning law. Other buildings in this category are the Straus Building, now Britannica Center (310 S. Michigan Ave. 1924, Graham, Anderson, Probst & White) with classical ornamentation, and the Pittsfield Building (55 E. Washington St. 1927, Graham, Anderson, Probst & White), with gothic ornamentation, both with towers topped by pyramids. The aim of the developers of these buildings was openly stated to "achieve the highest ratio of rentable area to the cubic contents of the building and enclosing walls."<sup>1</sup>

Two other buildings, both completed in 1928, present an interesting contrast in design. Similar to the pre-Art Deco New York towers is the Mather Tower building (75 E. Wacker Dr. 1928, Herbert Hugh Riddle) with its soaring telescoping tower sheathed in historical ornament. Similar in proportion and size to the Mather Tower but contrasting in treatment is 333 North Michigan, Chicago's first true modernist Art Deco skyscraper, inspired by the prototypical but never built 1922 Eliel Saarinen second-place winner in the Tribune competition. In this instance, the tower presents a series of rectilinear set-backs that reflect the new geometry and simplicity of modern design, setting the standard for skyscrapers into the post-modern era. Unlike the square plans of previous buildings with hollow-core plans, by the late 1920's the compact but tall tower with mechanical core became the norm both because of efficiency and its sleek modern look.

As a form, Art Deco skyscrapers evolved out of the commercial style and the development of the skeletal frame with its emphasis on verticality and articulation of spandrels and piers. While the commercial buildings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were frequently sheathed in classical vocabulary and ornamentation, the gothic style became a natural expression of verticality, as seen on the Reliance Building from 1895 (32 N. State St. D.H. Burnham & Co.) as well as the Tribune Tower from 1923 and other buildings mentioned above. While many buildings of the 1920's employed an eclectic mix of historic and cultural styles, the hallmark of the Jazz

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<sup>1</sup> Carol Willis, Form Follows Finance: Skyscrapers and Skylines in New York and Chicago. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press: 1995) p. 114.

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Age was modernism and a departure from historicism. One manifestation of this was the Art Deco style, a name and inspiration which derived from the *Exposition Des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes* held in Paris in 1925. That exposition was the culmination of progressive artistic movements of Europe and the United States in the first quarter of the twentieth century, drawing from the Art Nouveau, the Glasgow School, the Viennese Secession, German Expressionism, and the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and the Prairie School. Adapted as a medium of progressive design, it promulgated geometric forms and both geometric and nature-inspired decoration.

As adapted to the skyscrapers of the 1920s the Art Deco style featured numerous distinctive characteristics. The verticality was emphasized by the continued use of slightly projecting piers and recessed spandrels, with the piers devoid of ornament and the spandrels at the lower levels presenting surfaces for stylized modern embellishment. Materials are smooth and flat, ornament is non-historical, low-relief and geometric in style. In addition to the mixed-use planning, stepped-back verticality and use of towers and non-historical precedents, the distinctive characteristics of the style included the use of color in various ways, the integration of modern art and craft, the introduction of dramatic, theatrical entrances, lobbies and public spaces, and the use of exterior lighting for additional dramatic effect.

These characteristics can be seen in numerous Chicago skyscrapers of 1929 and the early 1930s. The McGraw-Hill building (520 North Michigan Avenue, 1929, also by Thielbar and Fugard,) and the Chicago Motor Club building (68 East Wacker, 1929 Holabird and Root) are excellent examples of modernism as interpreted in a smaller building, and include exemplary use of art and sculpture. Of the large buildings, the Civic Opera Building (20 North Wacker, 1929, Graham, Anderson, Probst and White), Riverside Plaza (400 West Madison, 1929, Holabird and Roche), and the Palmolive Building (919 North Michigan Avenue, 1929, Holabird and Roche) are the most notable from 1929 as embodiments of the modern Art Deco skyscrapers because of their sheer size as well as their non-historical ornament, dramatic public spaces and original exterior lighting. All are of steel framing clad in Bedford limestone. More unusual in decoration if not form is the Carbon and Carbide Building (205 North Michigan Avenue, 1929, Burnham Brothers) noted for being the only example of a polychromatic terra cotta clad skyscraper in Chicago, and the only one of a dark color, clad in green and gold. The Hotel InterContinental (formerly the Medinah Athletic Club, 505 North Michigan Avenue, 1929, Walter Alschlager) is typically stepped back in form, features excellent low-relief sculptural panels and an excess of theatricality in its interior. On the exterior, it is distinctive due to its gold onion dome and crenellated top. Willoughby Tower (8 South Michigan Ave. 1929, Samuel N. Crowen & Assocs.) is another

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throwback to historical ornamentation applied to a modern skyscraper form. All of the above, with the exception of the McGraw-Hill building, are steel framed structures.

Only a few skyscrapers, of which construction had begun before the stock market crash of October 1929, were completed in 1930 and remain extant. Of these, several continue in the design mode of the typical large Art Deco skyscraper in Chicago, with Bedford limestone facing on a steel frame, monumental size with a series of set-backs, and modernist treatment. Among this group are One North LaSalle, LaSalle-Wacker Building (221 North LaSalle, 1930, Holabird and Root), and 100 North LaSalle (1930, Graham, Anderson, Probst and White). Completed after the Trustees System Service Building, the Board of Trade (1930, Holabird and Roche) is the most important and probably the finest example of the type in Chicago. The Field Building, (135 South LaSalle, Graham, Anderson, Probst and White) begun in 1928 and not completed until 1934, was the largest, last and most devoid of external historical ornament as an example of the Art Moderne.

Carl Condit, in his notes for *Chicago 1910-29: Building, Planning and Urban Technology*, refers to the Trustees System Service Building as one of four buildings completed or under construction in 1929 that are typical of the purified skyscraper with its vertical emphasis. The building exhibits virtually all of the characteristics of the Art Deco skyscraper style with a high degree of integrity. The Trustees System Service Company chose architects Thielbar and Fugard for the design of their new national headquarters. The architects drew on their experience, creating their most imposing design in Chicago and using the artisans they had worked with on the McGraw-Hill Building to create a highly personalized statement for the company.

John Charles Corcoran was the founder of the Trustees System Service Company, a private loan and investment bank specializing in consumer loans. In 1913 Corcoran saw the need for a company in the United States based on the Raiffeisen and Schulze-Delitzsch systems of Germany and the People's Banks of Italy. These systems were founded on the early credit societies which originated in fourteenth century Germany. Similar to the Savings and Loans and Credit Unions in America, these institutions allowed the individual to make deposits toward the specific goal of saving equity for a home mortgage. When the target down payment amount was reached, the loan was made for the remainder. Corcoran modified the system, adding ways to allow a borrower to negotiate a loan with other types of collateral. From its founding in 1914, the company grew to 24 branches nationwide in 1929, branching out from its national headquarters and four branches in Chicago. When the national headquarters building was built at Lake and

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Wells streets, the Trustees System Service company occupied floors two, three and four, leasing out retail space on the first floor and office space in the remaining upper floors. No longer intact, the original check desks, benches and cashiers' cages were all black and gold and red marble, all displaying the splendid interior of the Trustees System Service Building. The second floor was used to house the Industrial Finance quarters. Originally, along the east wall there was a frieze of sculptured plaques depicting the history of Industrial Finance. These Lux panels were done in a Neo-Classical style and tell the story of the rise of international finance. The first plaque portrayed a Medieval Pawnshop, the second, depicted the Raiffesen system; the third, the Schulze-Delitzch banks; and the fourth, a Trustees System Service office, featuring figures in modern dress, an unusual feature for this time period.

The building became known as "The Chicago Home of International Businesses," with many export and import firms, foreign consulates and trade offices, and law firms.<sup>2</sup> Among these were the Italian Chamber of Commerce, National Railways of Mexico, and the Public Service Broadcasting Company. There were also two radio stations, WIND and WJJD. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> floor was the Skyline Restaurant, which was said to be a "speakeasy", serving alcohol along with dancing under the stars on the terrace formed by the large set-back at that level. Due to the clandestine nature of this business during prohibition, the restaurant was not listed in the building directory at this time.

The architectural firm of Frederick J. Thielbar and John Reed Fugard was founded early in 1925. At this time, each of the partners had a history of involvement with skyscraper design and execution. John Reed Fugard (1886-1968) was a native of Newton, Iowa. He received his BS in architecture from the College of Engineering at the University of Illinois in 1910. A principal in the firm of Fugard and Knapp until the beginning of 1925, his most noteworthy commissions up to the time of his partnership with Thielbar were principally in the field of large-scale luxury apartment and hotel designs. Among those commissions are: 229 East Lake Shore Drive (1918), 219 East Lake Shore Drive (1922) and the Lake Shore Drive Hotel at 181 East Lake Shore Drive (1922), all of which are part of the East Lake Shore Drive Historic District designated a Chicago Landmark in 1985. Fugard also designed 220 and 230 East Delaware Place (1924-25, Eckland, Fugard & Knapp). As an associate architect, Fugard collaborated with architects Murgatroyd and Ogden in the construction of the Allerton Hotel at 701 North Michigan Avenue in 1924.

<sup>2</sup> Office and Building Directory, 1931.

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Another noteworthy example of John Fugard's work prior to his partnership with Thielbar is the Moody Memorial Church (1925, Fugard & Knapp) at 1609 North LaSalle. According to the dedication day program, the church was inspired, in part, by the Byzantine Haggia Sophia of Istanbul. The design of the office and meeting room section was inspired by Romanesque churches of Lombardy.

Frederick J. Thielbar (1886-1941) was born in Peoria, Illinois and educated at the University of Illinois. He served as a superintendent of construction and later as a partner in the office of Holabird & Roche (approximately 1910 through 1924). Thielbar was also a member of the Board of Directors of the Methodist Church in Chicago. He was instrumental in securing the commission for the Chicago Temple Building at Clark and Washington streets for Holabird & Roche. Thielbar served as the principal designer and construction supervisor of that 1923 commission.

Thielbar and Fugard met through their association with the Methodist Church. Both men sat on the boards of local Methodist organizations. Prominent in civic affairs, Fugard served as a commissioner of the Chicago Housing Authority, an officer of the Illinois Society of Architects and the American Institute of Architects, was founder and president of the Metropolitan Housing and Planning Council, and was a member of the citizens board of trustees at the University of Chicago.

Thielbar & Fugard specialized in high-rise projects in various styles. During their partnership, Fugard retained his role as principal designer. In 1925, Thielbar & Fugard designed the Lombard style, 17-story, 201 East Delaware Place building, known today as the Raphael Hotel. By 1926, Thielbar & Fugard served as supervising architects for the Pure Oil (Jewelers) Building at 35 East Wacker Drive. The building was designed by the New York firm of Giaver & Dinkelberg. In the same year, Thielbar and Fugard served as architects of the Methodist Book Concern Building. The seven-story building was constructed at 740 North Rush Street, on the northwest corner of East Superior Street. In 1928, Thielbar & Fugard designed the Colonnade Apartment Building in Evanston at the corner of Main and Hinman. Thielbar & Fugard's design for the McGraw-Hill Building was completed in 1929 at 520 North Michigan Avenue. The commercial building is 16-stories high, with two basements, on wood piles. The building's structure represents a step in engineer James B. Black's development of the von Emperger/Considère reinforced concrete system with its cast iron cores.

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Several commissions followed the construction of the McGraw-Hill Building. In 1929, Thielbar & Fugard were hired to make alterations to the McCormick House at 24 Burton Place. In 1929, Thielbar & Fugard completed the 20-story Trustees System Service Building at 201 North Wells. Fugard also designed another building for the Trustees System Service in 1929 at 1630 West Belmont. In 1932, the firm designed the Hall of Religion for the Century of Progress Exposition. In 1937, Thielbar & Fugard completed the 12-story Moody Bible Institute Building at 830 North LaSalle. In 1935, manufacturer of washing machines F.L. Maytag, who had purchased the McGraw-Hill Building, hired Thielbar & Fugard to design an office building for the Maytag Company in Newton, Iowa. Finally, in 1941, the firm completed the Wesley Memorial Hospital at 250 East Superior. The commission was Frederick Thielbar's last. He died in the old Wesley Memorial Hospital just before the new hospital was completed.

At the time of World War II, Fugard formed a syndicate of several firms for the purpose of designing large wartime projects. This firm, Fugard Olson Urbain & Neiler, executed government projects nationwide until 1943. In 1945, the firm was again reorganized. Gustave Orth, who had been the first employee of Fugard and Knapp, continued on with the firm. In 1967, after traveling around the world, John Reed Fugard was hospitalized in Fairhope, Alabama where he had previously bought a 600 acre dairy farm. At the age of 81, Fugard passed away.

The site chosen for the construction of the Trustees System Service Building, at the north end of the Loop and just one street west of the financial center of LaSalle Street, provided easy access by public transportation for individual customers and employees and yet a strong connection to the business center of the city. In keeping with the multi-use nature of the city center, the building offered various uses on different levels with carefully considered internal traffic patterns. It was also ideally situated for access to public transportation. The street level took advantage of the corner site to offer direct access to retail shops along Wells Street, plus a Wells Street entrance to the L-shaped interior lobby that also provides access to retail stores and links to the office elevators and entrance on the Lake Street side. In addition to the Lake Street commercial entrance was the visually stunning central, two-story entrance and lobby leading to the second floor banking facility.

Clearly a modernist design, the Trustees System Service Building is a departure from towers such as Pure Oil Building or Randolph Tower with their application of rich classical and gothic ornament. Devoid of cornices, brackets, arches, or curves, the Trustees System Service Building

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soars upward with flat planes that contain just enough ornament to draw the eye up and arrest it occasionally. The Trustees System Service Building is narrow on the main facade facing south with the main banking entrance and the commercial entrance, and deep on the Wells Street elevation, so that the proportion of the building from the south is very narrow and tall. In addition, the fluted piers created with curved bricks at floors five through eight and the continuous, slightly projecting piers on the remainder of the facades draw the eye upward. The tower is located toward the front of the building, leaving large terraces at the major set-backs to the north facing the river. With a series of additional set-backs, the six-story ziggurat and the crown of stylized, pointed leaves, the building presents a model example of the vertical skyscraper form. The ziggurat and crown are framed in steel. The crown, which covers the original exhaust stack, is surmounted by terra cotta "leaf" finials which are trimmed in gold.

In the first quarter of the twentieth century, reinforced concrete advanced the search for an inexpensive construction method that allowed for reasonable spans, structural expression and the fullest amount of light. With reinforcement, concrete has great strength and flexibility of form, in addition to its fire and water proofing capabilities. It is also economical as a material and can be constructed without highly skilled labor, all factors which led to interest in pushing the limits of its span capabilities. The design engineer of the Trustees Service System Building, James B. Black, was advancing reinforced concrete techniques at a time when the technology was evolving from concrete slab construction to that of shell construction. In the Trustees Service System Building, he used a reinforced concrete structural scheme for the lower twenty stories of the building which Condit describes as "curious". It was a variation of the system that he had recently used for the McGraw-Hill Building, which was cited in the July 25, 1929 issue of *Engineering News-Record*. The composite system consists of concrete columns with the reinforcement of cast-iron cores, a system which had been invented by the German engineer Fritz Von Emperger in the late nineteenth century, plus the addition of continuous helical bars, based on earlier helical reinforcing developed by Armand Considère in France. The building columns are spaced 26' apart, six feet wider than those of the McGraw-Hill Building, with cast iron cores in each 30" square column that are tapered as they rise toward the top of the building. The eight-story tower, ziggurat and crown portions of the building are supported by steel framing. The Trustees System Service Building is the largest and, along with the McGraw Hill Building which is now being demolished, the only Art Deco skyscraper in Chicago with this structural system. It may have been chosen for its structural efficiency and speed of construction as well as economical cost.

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Ely Jacques Kahn, a prolific New York architect of skyscrapers of the period, was noted for his use of color and synthesis of form and decoration. In his 1928 essay "On the Use of Color," he writes:

What seems to be particularly vital, however, is the conception of the use of color as a part of the structure and not as merely applied ornament...It will be found, essential, however, for many essays of trial to determine what colors will maintain their values at particular heights and in prescribed locations, for even in the most carefully studied work the final effect has been proven to be quite at variance with what the original composition had suspected... The precise manner of handling color, whether in masses, adapted as contrasts to the major tone of the building, as accents only, or where the entire structure develops color by reason of its basic material, depends again on the program of the creative designer.<sup>3</sup>

Chicago's only brick faced Art Deco skyscraper made excellent use of the material through its program of flowing color design using three different shades of brick. Beginning at the fourth floor level, above the limestone and continuing up to the tenth floor, the brick color is rust flecked with darker purplish tones. Floors ten through twenty are faced in a lighter reddish tan shade, almost peach with darker flecks, and the tower is faced in a golden buff colored brick, also with flecks of a darker hue. The terra cotta crown is off white with gold trim. The multiple colored brick was used to emphasize the building's verticality by creating an optical illusion that the higher floors were bathed in the light of the atmosphere, and "to give the viewer the illusion of sunlight even on an overcast day."<sup>4</sup> Along with the golden buff limestone base and extensive terra cotta decoration, the color of the building contrasts it against a city of Bedford limestone and glass skyscrapers. Although more frequently used in New York, the only other use of this color device in Chicago is on the terra cotta cladding of the Wrigley Building. It employs six different shades of terra cotta ranging from gray to cream, increasingly lighter toward the top. However, Zukowsky mentions that "Atwood achieved a similar variation on a smaller scale in the cladding of the 1892 Marshall Field Annex."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Ely Jacques Kahn, in Arthur Tappan North Contemporary American Architects Series (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1931) p.24

<sup>4</sup> Cervin Robinson and Rosemarie Haag Bletter, Skyscraper Style, p. 58

<sup>5</sup> John Zukowsky, The Sky's the Limit: A Century of Chicago Skyscrapers, (New York: Rizolli International Publications, Inc.: 1990).

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While the ornamentation on the building is eclectic and non-historical in style, some of it is classically derived. Fluted pilasters rise through the third floor, topped by modernist, stylized capitals. Low relief panels of both Art Deco-inspired Greek allegorical figures and foliated designs form the second floor spandrel panels. Above the four story base, set-backs at various levels are articulated with low relief stylized leaf patterns and sunbursts in monochromatic terra cotta.

The carved limestone and cast work by the team of Eugene van Breeman Lux and Gwen Lux includes both classically inspired and modern figures in stylized designs that are unmistakably Art Deco, and modern in subject. The two-story entrance surround to the building is adorned with low-relief limestone panels depicting the history of finance through the ages. They also designed the Greek allegorical commerce and industry figures at the second story spandrels flanking the entrance, the bronze plaques depicting thrift on either side of the grand staircase in the first floor banking lobby, and four panels that formed a frieze on the east wall of the second floor banking hall which depicted the history of credit. All but the four panels on the second floor banking hall are extant. This work on the Trustees System Service Building was the last of the artistic collaborations of the husband and wife team, before Gwen Lux went on to her distinguished solo career as a sculptor and teacher. Her work in Chicago on the McGraw-Hill and Trustees Service System buildings are noteworthy examples of the contributions made by artists to a style of architecture that was characterized, in part, by its synthesis of contemporary form and decoration. This work also constitutes some of Gwen Lux's early and formative architectural sculpture, as she went on to collaborate with other significant architects after World War II. The quality and distinctiveness of the Trustee Service System designs and their detailed execution are in keeping with the importance of the commission. With the demolition of the McGraw-Hill Building on Michigan Avenue, the artistic accomplishment on the Trustees System Service Building will be the only remaining example in Chicago of Gwen Lux's architectural collaborations.

Eugene van Breeman Lux was born in Hungary in 1900 and trained as a sculptor at the Academies of Fine Arts at Paris, Vienna and Munich. In Paris he studied under Bourdelle, and later studied under Ivan Mestrovic, the sculptor of *The Spearman* and *The Bowman*, the Native

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American figures on horseback that line Congress Plaza along Michigan Avenue. After his work on the Trustees System Service Building, Lux steered his career into industrial design and did little other sculpture of note.

Gwen Lux, on the other hand, went on to have a prominent and long artistic career. Born Gwen Wickerts in 1908, she worked in Detroit in the art pottery studios of Mary Chase Stratton, founder of Pewabic Pottery and an influential figure in the history of American Arts and Crafts. Gwen Lux studied art at the Maryland Institute of Arts in Baltimore and the Boston School of Fine Arts, and also traveled to Yugoslavia to study with Ivan Mestrovic. Soon after completion of the work on the Trustees System Service Building, Gwen Lux's first solo was an aluminum sculpture of Eve, commissioned by the Radio City Music Hall in New York City, which was installed in 1933. Following a Guggenheim Foundation fellowship in 1933, she worked as a designer for Steuben Glass before becoming head of the sculpture department at the School of the Detroit Society of Arts and Crafts. Following World War II, Gwen Lux collaborated with many important architects, including Edward Durrell Stone (University of Arkansas Theater), Victor Gruen (Northland Shopping Center, Detroit), and Eero Saarinen (General Motors Technical Center in Warren, Michigan). She passed away in Honolulu, Hawaii, August 19, 1986.

There are two important works by the craftsman/artist Edgar Miller on the Trustees System Service Building - the great two-story window located above the revolving door of the bank's main entrance, and the large sliding glass door which divides the banking and commercial lobby spaces in the interior. These works were innovations in both technique and subject matter for Edgar Miller. It was his first use of lead cut-outs to create figures and patterns, which were placed between panes of glass to create a grille. The creations depict the trades of man, which are in keeping with the theme of the Lux work on the nobility of labor and thrift. Each pane, or panel, depicts a man at work as a farmer, lumberjack, miner, or steel worker. Below the panels depicting figures, on the sliding glass door and on the original entrance doors, the lead is cut out to form a rinceau pattern. The subject matter was somewhat unusual for Miller, who more frequently created designs of animals and figures from nature, although Miller's work can best be defined as eclectic in the sense that he absorbed influences from a variety of sources. Earl H. Reed, Jr., wrote about Miller's art in the August 1932 issue of *Architecture*,

Through the modern pattern of Miller's art expression runs threads of things seen in the South Seas, Central American, and our own West and Southwest. Often a fugitive medievalism or a primitive classic spirit predominates. The influence of Iannelli can be

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seen in his Prairie-influenced stained glass and his love of bas-relief sculpture. Carved wood panels, woodcuts and other stained glass windows, however, reveal an interest in folk art, mythology and the Gothic traditions. Animals, especially birds, horses and antelopes, were used as subjects frequently by Miller who felt that figurative art was more meaningful to the average person than abstract art.

Edgar Miller received little conventional art training. Born in Idaho, at fourteen he lived in Australia, and at seventeen he spent a short time enrolled at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the city that became his home. Four valuable years of apprenticeship were passed in the studio of Alfonso Iannelli, another talented Chicago artist. He regularly exhibited at the Art Institute, including the Exhibition of Modern Decorative Arts of 1925 and the Chicago Architectural League Exhibition of 1928, and won three Frank G. Logan medals over the years. Besides his own practice, he operated an art gallery, "The House at the End of the Street," in the early 1920s. Miller was art director for the Streets of Paris at the 1933 Century of Progress Exposition and designed a number of murals for the concession. He practiced in the Chicago area until the 1960s when he retired, first to Florida and then to California.

Miller worked in a variety of mediums, including carved wood and stone, ceramics, mural painting and stained and etched glass. His work was favored by numerous Chicago architects, including Howard Van Doren Shaw, Thomas Tallmadge, Earl H. Reed, Barry Byrne and Andrew Rebori. The collaboration between Miller and the architectural firm of Holabird & Root was especially close. Miller's work for the firm included stained glass windows for the executive board room of the Palmolive Building at 919 North Michigan Avenue (1929); murals for the Tavern Club, located atop the 333 North Michigan Avenue Building (1928); a set of sand-blasted glass panels, depicting the goddess Diana, which graced the now-demolished Michigan Square Building at 540 North Michigan Avenue (1928); bronze sculpture for the North Dakota State Capitol in Bismark (1934); and the Technological Institute at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois (1942), for which he designed a variety of sculptures. Other prominent local work includes the Fisher Apartments and the redesign and embellishment of several brick rowhouses in the Old Town neighborhood with Sol Kogen in the late 1920s and 1930s. Frederick Thielbar became acquainted with the work of Edgar Miller as a partner in the firm of Holabird and Roche, and in 1925 when he formed a partnership with Fugard was able to highlight Miller's talents on the Trustees Systems Service Building.

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In addition to the sculpture and art, the Trustees System Service Building provides an excellent example of craft and the use of theatricality in its entrance and lobbies. The red Numidian marble is quarried from Oran, in Algeria. The quarries were known to have been operated by the Romans, but records show that they were in production even before that time. The original quarries have become exhausted, and those from which the Trustees System Service Building marble were quarried were only opened in the first decade of this century just a short distance from the original.<sup>6</sup> A 1930 *Chicago Evening Post* article describes the marble lobby as follows,

“The romance of ancient Rome, with its mighty legions, and the Sahara Desert, with its burnoosed Arabs, lingers about the warm-toned red Numidian marble in the lobby of the Trustees System national headquarters, for this marble came from the old Roman quarries in northern Africa, and was used exclusively in the great palaces of the Imperial City. For centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire the quarries were lost, and it was not until late in the nineteenth century that they were rediscovered. It is said the Trustees System headquarters, the Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh and the Union Trust Company in Detroit are the only buildings in American which are fortunate enough to possess this rare relic of old Roman splendor.”

The building was owned by the Trustees Systems Service company or its associates until 1949, when it was sold to the Corn Products Company. Directories for 1941-42 list the Trustees System Discount Corporation with offices on several upper floors, but with the second floor banking space occupied by General Finance Corporation. Upon the sale in 1949, the name of the building was changed to the Corn Products Building, although the Trustees System Service Building incised over the Lake Street entrance remained. In 1967, the building underwent a major interior modernization, which covered over the lobbies and destroyed the marble walls and much of the detailing of the second floor banking space. In the upper floors, the installation of new HVAC equipment necessitated the lowering of ceilings with suspended acoustic tile to cover up ductwork and wiring. Elevator lobbies were also modernized. Other alterations included the painting over of the limestone of the first four stories and the removal of the main entrance revolving door. In 1988, a rehabilitation of the building was begun with the restoration of the lobby and the terra cotta crown atop the building. In addition, most of the original double-hung one-over-one light

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<sup>6</sup> “Through the Ages”, *Marble Trade Journal*, January 1931, p.12

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metal windows in the building were replaced with fixed thermal pane single-light metal windows. The current rehabilitation work includes plans to restore the original banking entry and lobby, continue cleaning and masonry repair work on the exterior, and replace the existing windows with one-over-one light double-hung windows similar to the original.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

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Trustees System Service Building

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Trustees System Service Building

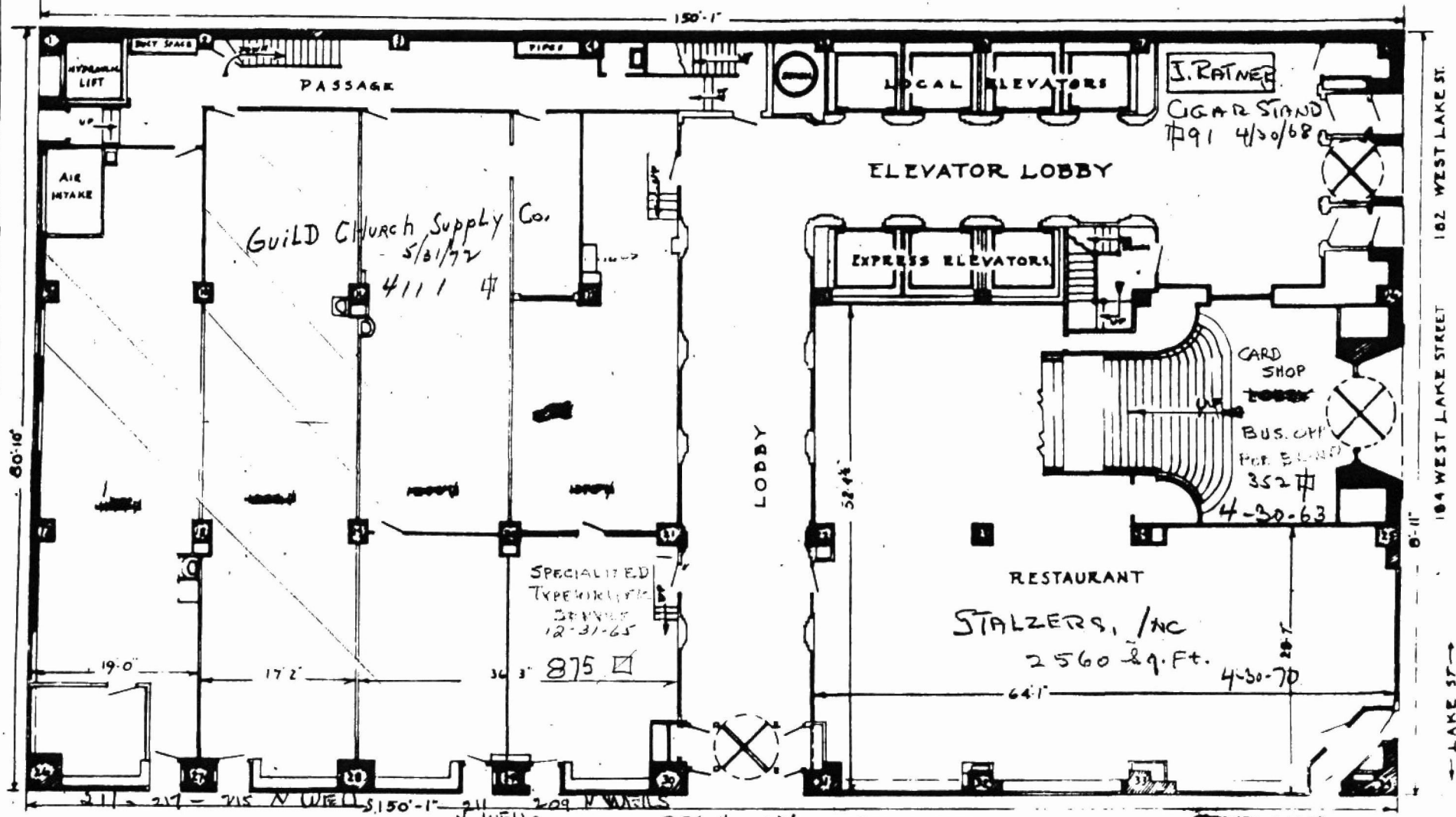
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### 10. Verbal Boundary Description

Metropolitan's Resubdivision of Lot 5 of Block 19 of original town of Chicago, in Cook County, Illinois.

### Boundary Justification

The above described lot constitutes the property historically associated with the Trustees System Service Building.

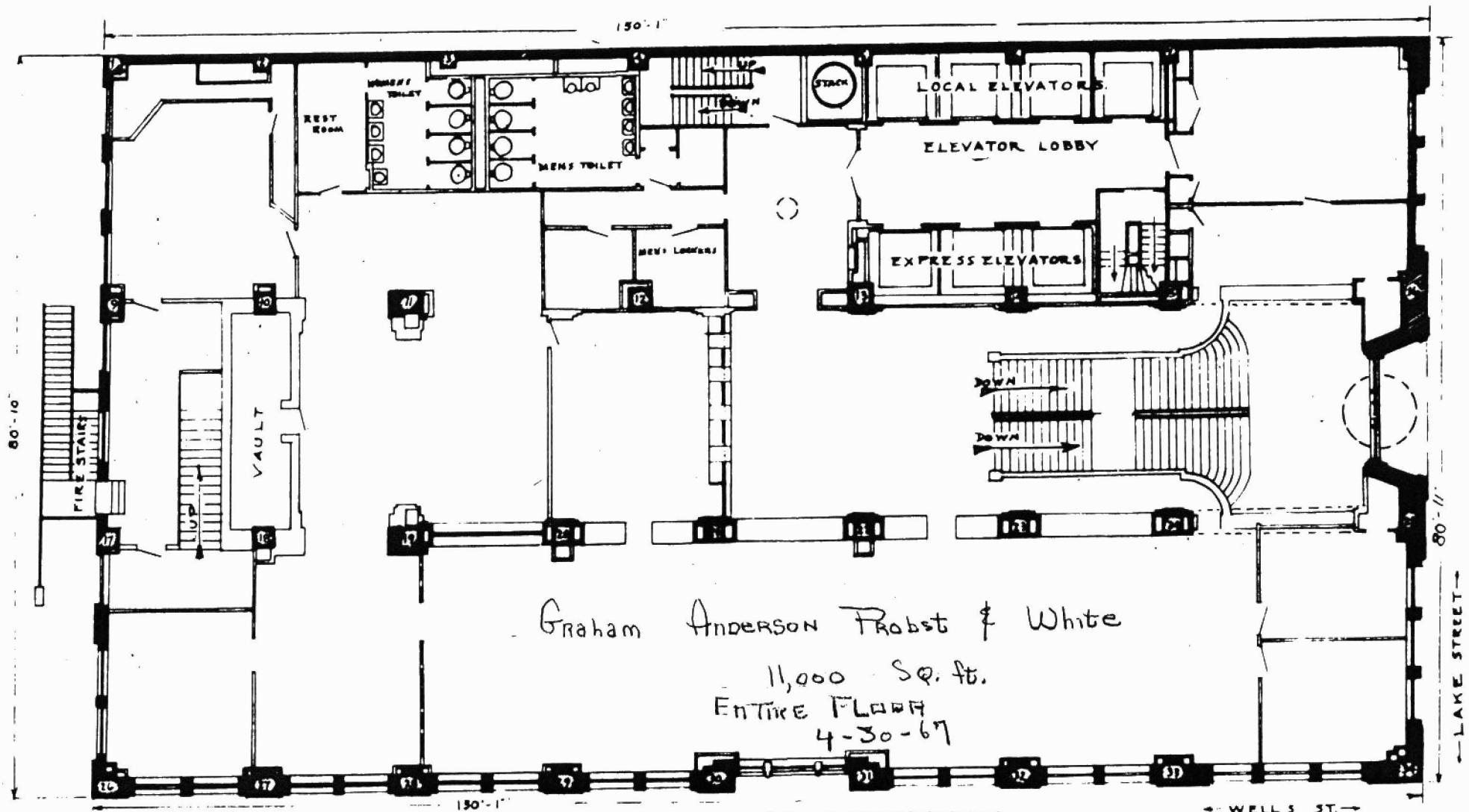


201 NORTH WELLS STREET CHICAGO 6  
**CORN PRODUCTS BUILDING**

1ST FLOOR PLAN 1953  
 SCALE 1" = 10'

2546 SQUARE FT  
 THAT INCLUDES CIGAR STAND

*Corn Products Building*  
 201 NORTH WELLS STREET  
 CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

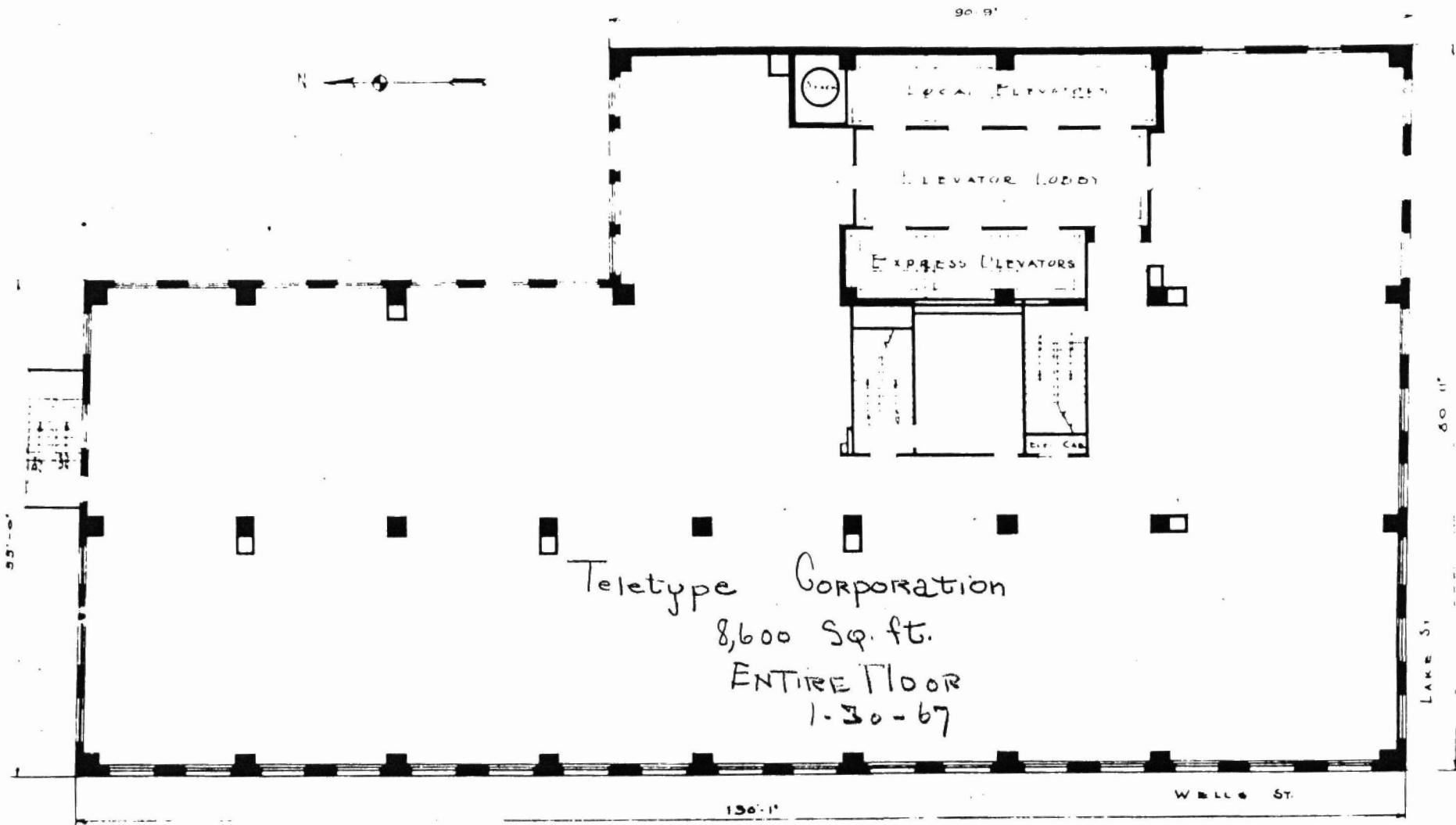


Graham Anderson Probst & White  
 11,000 Sq. Ft.  
 ENTIRE FLOOR  
 4-30-67

201 NORTH WELLS STREET CHICAGO 6.  
**CORN PRODUCTS BUILDING.**

← WELLS ST. →  
**2ND FLOOR PLAN - 1953**  
 SCALE 1/8"

*Oliver S. Turner & Company*  
 201 NORTH WELLS STREET  
 CHICAGO 6, ILLINOIS  
 AUG. 11, 1953



Teletype Corporation  
 8,600 Sq. ft.  
 ENTIRE FLOOR  
 1-30-67

— CORN PRODUCTS BUILDING —

SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

*Oliver B. Hunt & Company*  
 ARCHITECTS  
 NORTH WELLS ST.  
 CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

3

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Trustees System Service Building

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ILLINOIS, Cook

DATE RECEIVED: 8/05/98      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/18/98  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/03/98      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/19/98  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 98001132

NOMINATOR: STATE

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    9.3.98 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in the  
National Register**

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



TRUSTEES SYSTEM SERVICE BUILDING,  
COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS

SBALDWIN

FEB. 2, 1998

70 W. HUBBARD, CHICAGO, IL

W. FACADEN, LOOKING NORTHEAST

①



TRUSTERS SYSTEM SERVICE BUILDING  
COOK COUNTY, IL  
S. BALDWIN  
FEB. 2, 1998  
70 W. HUBBARD, CHICAGO, IL.  
S. FACADE, LOOKING NORTH

(2)



TRUSTEES SYSTEM SERVICE BLDG,

COOK COUNTY, IL

S. BALDWIN

FEB. 2, 1998

70 W. HUBBARD, CHICAGO, IL

S. ~~FACADEL~~, LOOKING NORTH

(3)



TRUSTEES SYSTEM SERVICE BLDG

COOK COUNTY, IL.

S. BALDWIN

FEB. 2, 1998

70 W. HUBBARD, CHICAGO, IL

S. FACADE ~~LDN~~, LOOKING NORTH

(4)



TRUSTEES SYSTEM SERVICE BLDG.

COOK COUNTY, IL.

S. BALDWIN

FEB 2, 1998

70 W. HUBBARD, CHICAGO, IL

N. ELEVATION, LOOKING S.

(5)



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312

TRUSTEES SYSTEM SERVICE BUILDING

COOK COUNTY, IL

S. BALDWIN

FEB. 2, 1978

70 W HUBBARD, CHICAGO, IL

W. FACADE / CORNER OF N. ELEVATION,  
LOOKING SOUTHEAST

(6)



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TRUSTEES SYSTEM SERVICE BUILDING  
COOK COUNTY, IL.

S. BALDWIN

FEB. 2, 1998

70 W. HUBBARD, CHICAGO, IL.

S. FACADE, LOOKING NORTH

(8)











2-15



2-15

















TRUSTEES SYSTEM SERVICE BUILDING  
COOK COUNTY, IL

S. BALDWIN

FEB 2, 1998

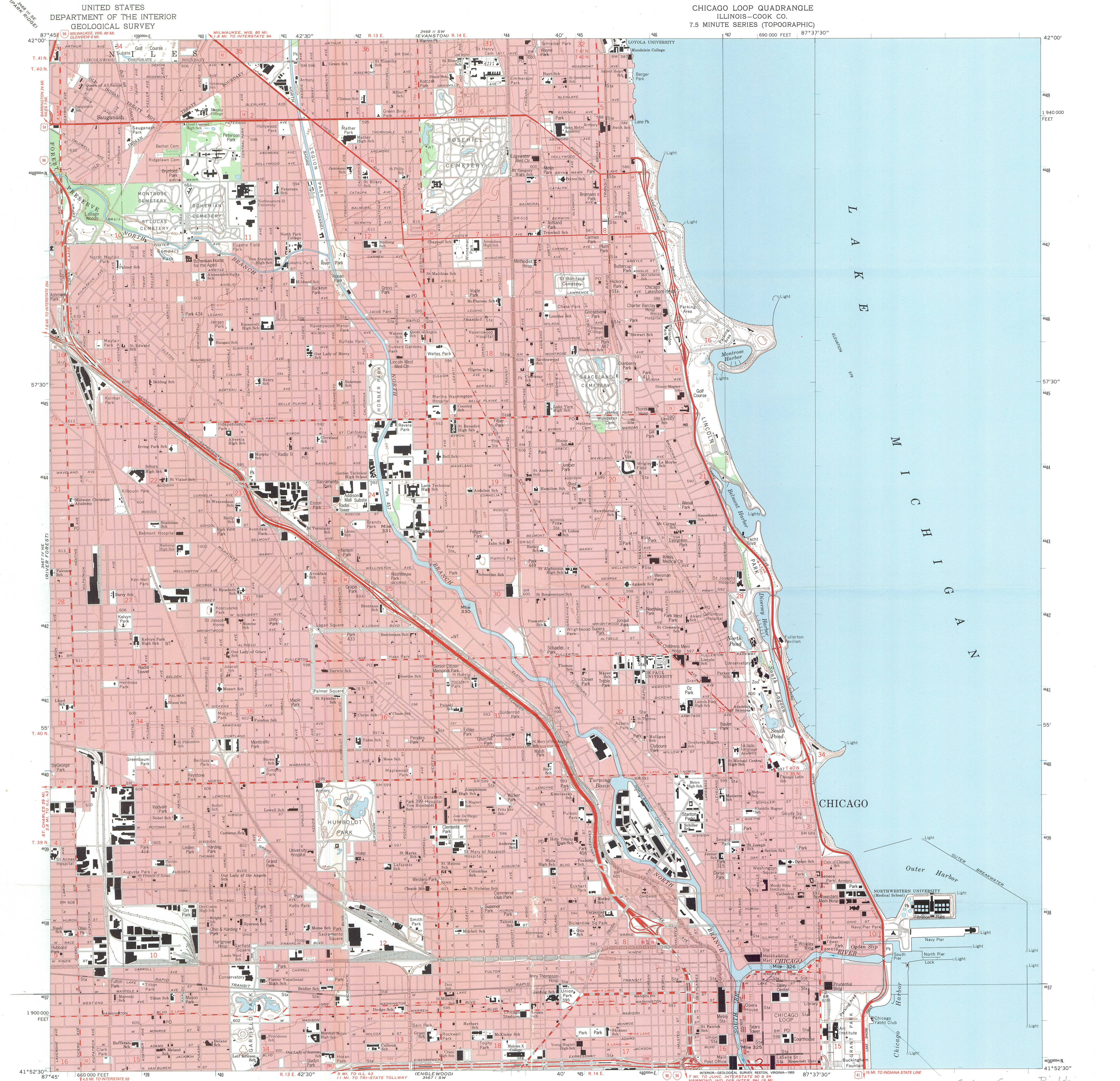
70 W. HUBBARD, CHICAGO, IL

INTERIOR, UPPER FLOOR, LOOKING  
NORTHWEST

(15)







UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

CHICAGO LOOP QUADRANGLE  
ILLINOIS—COOK CO.  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, City of Chicago and  
Cook County Highway Department  
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
taken 1962. Topography by planimetric surveys 1929  
Revised from aerial photographs taken 1988. Field checked 1992  
Map edited 1993  
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Illinois coordinate  
system, east zone (transverse Mercator)  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 16, shown in blue  
1927 North American Datum (NAD 27)  
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks  
The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute  
intersections are given in USGS Bulletin 1875  
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the  
National or State reservations shown on this map  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

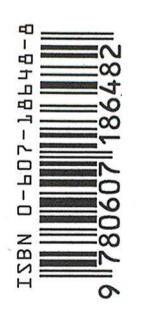
SCALE 1:24,000  
CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
Primary highway, hard surface  
Secondary highway, hard surface  
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface  
Unimproved road  
Interstate Route  
U. S. Route  
State Route

Trustees System Service Building  
COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS  
ZONE 16  
E 447430  
N 4637100

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
AND ILLINOIS GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS 61820  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

CHICAGO LOOP, ILL.  
41087-H6-TF-024  
1993  
DMA 34671 NW-SERIES Y863





**Illinois Historic  
Preservation Agency**

1 Old State Capitol Plaza • Springfield, Illinois 62701-1507 • (217) 782-4836 • TTY (217) 524-7128

---

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Mayor Richard Daley, City of Chicago  
Charles Thurow, Deputy Commissioner, Landmarks  
Division, Department of Planning and Development

FROM: Ann V. Swallow, Survey & National Register Coordinator *AVS*

DATE: March 9, 1998

SUBJECT: Preliminary Opinion of the Trustees System Service  
Building, 201 N. Wells, Chicago

The Trustees System Service Building at 201 N. Wells does not meet Criterion C for listing in the National Register of Historic Places due to the building's lack of historic integrity. The original window design in an historic building is a crucial character-defining feature. The building has had most of its historic double-hung windows replaced with single pane stationary windows, and therefore the design and historic feeling of the building has been significantly impacted. I do not recommend that the Trustees System Service Building be listed in the National Register.



City of Chicago  
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of Planning  
and Development

Christopher R. Hill  
Commissioner

320 North Clark Street  
Room 516  
Chicago, Illinois 60610-4711  
(312) 744-3200 (Voice)  
(312) 744-9140 (FAX)  
(312) 744-2958 (TTY)

<http://www.ci.chi.il.us>

April 1, 1998

Ms. Ann Swallow  
National Register Coordinator  
Illinois Historic Preservation Agency  
Old State Capitol  
Springfield, Illinois 62701

RE: **Trustees System Service Building**  
**201 N. Wells Street**

Dear Ms. Swallow:

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks has reviewed the nomination for the above-referenced property to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. We do not concur with your opinion that the property does not meet Criterion C for listing due to its lack of historic integrity.

Despite the replacement of the historic double-hung windows with single pane stationary windows; nonetheless, the Chicago Historic Resources Survey deemed this building noteworthy for its overall Art Deco design as well as its interior decorative work by Edgar Miller and its sculpture by Gwen and Eugene Lux. The Commission on Chicago Landmarks determined that the Trustees System Service Building does meet Criterion C for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Please contact our staff if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Albert M. Friedman  
Acting Chair



Please  
Recycle!





City of Chicago  
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of Planning  
and Development

Christopher R. Hill  
Commissioner

320 North Clark Street  
Room 516  
Chicago, Illinois 60610-4711  
(312) 744-3200 (Voice)  
(312) 744-9140 (FAX)  
(312) 744-2958 (TTY)

<http://www.ci.chi.il.us>

April 2, 1998

Ms. Ann Swallow  
National Register Coordinator  
Illinois Historic Preservation Agency  
Old State Capitol  
Springfield, Illinois 62701

RE: **Trustees System Service Building**  
**201 N. Wells Street**

Dear Ms. Swallow:

On behalf of Richard M. Daley, Mayor of the City of Chicago, I am responding to your correspondence of March 11, 1998 regarding the nomination of the above-referenced property to the National Register of Historic Places.

The Department of Planning and Development has reviewed the matter and finds listing would be consistent with the City's policies and plans for the Central Area. Despite changes to the windows (which, we understand, are being reversed), the Department of Planning and Development thinks that the building meets Criterion C for listing due to its local architectural significance. The Chicago Historic Resources Survey deemed it noteworthy for its overall Art Deco design as well as an example of the decorative work of Edgar Miller and Gwen and Eugene Lux.

Please feel free to contact Charles Thurow (312/744-3200) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Christopher R. Hill  
Commissioner

Originated by:

Charles Thurow  
Deputy Commissioner  
Landmarks Division



Please  
Recycle!





**Illinois Historic  
Preservation Agency**

1 Old State Capitol Plaza • Springfield, Illinois 62701-1507 • (217) 782-4836 • TTY (217) 524-7128

July 13, 1998

Beth Boland  
National Register Program  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
P. O. Box 37127  
Washington, D. C. 20013-7127

Dear Beth:

Enclosed please find the following properties that were recommended for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places by the Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council at its June 12, 1998 meeting, and nominated by the State Historic Preservation Officer:

Trustees System Service Building, Chicago

Sincerely yours,

Ann V. Swallow  
Survey & National Register  
Coordinator

encl.