

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Firestone Building

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 2001 Grand Avenue not for publication

city, town Kansas City vicinity of

state Missouri code 29 county Jackson code 095

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Firestone Building Limited

street & number 8601 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1100

city, town Beverly Hills vicinity of state California

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of Recorder of Deeds

street & number 415 E. 12th Street Jackson County Courthouse

city, town Kansas City state Missouri 64106

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Landmarks Commission of Kansas City, Missouri Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date July 1982 federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Landmarks Commission of Kansas City, Missouri  
City Hall, 26th Floor East

city, town 414 E. 12th Street, Kansas City state Missouri 64106

## 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 Firestone Building, 2001 Grand Avenue, Jackson County, Missouri, is an eight story commercial building constructed of reinforced concrete, with terra cotta on the north and west facades and brick on the south and east facades. The Firestone Building was constructed in 1915 on the southeast corner of Twentieth Street and Grand Avenue. The primary facades face north and west; the structural frame is expressed in the facades.

### EXTERIOR

#### Overall Dimensions

The Firestone Building is rectangular in plan and shape, consisting of eight stories with an elevator overrun and sprinkler tank projection enclosed in a terra cotta tower atop the building. The building is seventy-three feet wide (three bays, frontage on Grand Avenue) and one hundred fifteen feet deep (six bays, frontage on Twentieth Street).

#### Construction Materials and Colors

The building structure is reinforced concrete veneered in white terra cotta on the north and west facades and brick on the south and east facades.

#### Openings

The west facade window treatment changes from the first story to the second story with the windows in stories two through eight, double hung sash wood windows. The frames are painted green. The west facade is divided into three bays (Photo #1). The first story, first bay (from left to right) contains a painted metal grille base with a wood painted framed plate glass display window. The second bay contains a brick base with a painted wood framed plate glass display window and the main entrance to the Firestone Building. The main entrance is a Tudor arched opening in terra cotta with an aluminum and glass double door replacing the original wood doors. A painted wood frame surrounds the opening with a tudor arched glass transom (Photo #3). The third bay contains a brick base with a painted wood framed plate glass display window.

Stories two through eight in the first bay contain 3 one over one windows. The second bay contains 2 one over one windows and 1 one over one window with 2 sidelight type windows. The third bay contains 3 one over one windows.

The north facade window treatment changes from the first story to the second story with the windows in stories two through eight double hung sash wood windows. The frames are painted green. The north facade is divided into six bays (Photo #1). The first story, first bay, is open. The second bay contains a metal rolling door. The third bay contains a wood and glass door with a four light transom. The fourth bay contains a wood and glass garage door. The fifth bay contains a brick base with a wood frame plate glass display window. A double wood and glass entry door with a two-light transom is also located in the fifth bay. The sixth bay contains a painted metal grille base with a wood frame plate glass display window.

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The second story, first bay, contains 2 one over one windows. The second bay contains 1 two over two window. The third bay contains 1 two over two window. The fourth bay contains 2 one over one windows divided by three "sidelight" type one over one windows. The fifth bay contains 4 one over one windows and the sixth bay contains 3 one over one windows.

Stories three through eight, first bay, contain 2 one over one windows. The second and third bay windows are at the 1/2 story line and each contain 1 two over two window. The fourth and fifth bays contain 4 one over one windows. The sixth bay contains 3 one over one windows. Also, the tower on the north facade contains 1 four over four window.

The east facade window treatments, stories two through eight, are double hung sash wood windows. The frames are painted green. The east facade is divided into three bays. The first story is a dock area. Stories two through eight, first bay, contain 3 three over three windows. The second bay contains 4 three over three windows. The third bay contains 3 three over three windows.

The south facade is not divided into a bay system. The windows are double hung sash, wood windows with painted green frames. The first story is concealed by a garage addition. Stories two, three and four contain 3 four over four windows spaced across the facade. Stories five, six and seven contain 3 four over four windows and one smaller two over two window. The eighth story contains 5 four over four windows, 2 three over three windows and one smaller two over two window (Photo #2).

### Decorative Details

On the north and west facades, the building contains a decorative string course between the second and third stories running around the perimeter of the building (Photo #5). Another string course is featured at the parapet (Photo #4).

A spandrel type panel runs above the windows on the north and west facades. The material is dark green terra cotta panels with "rose centers" (Photo #4).

On the west facade, a parapet wall peaks in the center and contains a linear triptych of terra cotta banding (Photo #1).

A decorative terra cotta tower encloses the elevator overrun and sprinkler tanks. The tower reflects the treatment of the building (Photo #5).

### ALTERATIONS

#### Interiors

The first story interior has been remodeled into a retail store for the Firestone Tire & Rubber Company. The upper stories, two through eight,

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maintain their original qualities in the lobby area with a three-over stair wrapping around the elevator (Photo #6). On the fifth story, an old "end-grain" wood floor remains in place. The remainder of the building, stories two through eight, have been remodeled as the Firestone Tire & Rubber Company saw necessary (Photos 7 and 8).

Exterior

The only significant exterior alteration appears to have been made in 1941. The first story exterior was remodeled with a new storefront and the addition of a one-story garage to the south of the Firestone Building (Photo #2).

CONDITION

The building is currently occupied by the Firestone Tire & Rubber Company. The company occupies only the first story with a retail store and garage. Stories two through eight are unoccupied. The building is in good condition. Necessary work is of a maintenance rather than a remedial nature.

SITE

The Firestone Building is located in the Midtown District of Kansas City, Missouri. Its prominence may be due to its corner site, lower surrounding structures and its unusual Gothic-inspired architecture. The Firestone Building has a one-story attached garage to the south. A one-story commercial building is located across the alley to the east. A surface parking lot is across Twentieth Street to the north. Three- and four-story brick commercial buildings are located across Grand Avenue to the West.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Kansas City Star, September 5, 1915.

## 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Technology
<b>Specific dates</b> 1915-1916	<b>Builder/Architect</b> Swenson Construction Co./Smith, Rea & Lovitt			

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Kansas City, Missouri's Firestone Building is significant according to the criteria under definitions A and C. Built in 1915, the Firestone Building represented the largest investment in one city by the Firestone Tire & Rubber Company. The Firestone Building is significant architecturally because it embodies the characteristics of a period: commercial style buildings in the early 1900's; a type: conservative design that is quite contemporary in its esthetic development; method of construction: a reinforced concrete structure that is completely revealed in the facade. The Firestone Building was designed by Smith, Rea, & Lovitt (1910-1920) a locally prominent firm that developed a national reputation. Because of the early use of reinforced concrete construction, the Firestone Building is significant in the area of technology. The building is also significant in the area of transportation.

### Transportation

The Firestone Building was built, owned and occupied in 1915 by the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company. Harvey S. Firestone had offices in 46 cities scattered around the world. Harvey Firestone chose Kansas City for his largest investment. The investment amounted to \$300,000.<sup>1</sup>

Two major reasons why Kansas City was chosen by the Firestone Company are explained in an article dated November 9, 1915.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Firestone believed that good roads and the farming industry were key ingredients to the success of his company. In 1915, Harvey Firestone said, "Kansas City is going to be a great city. It has the location, the spirit, the enterprise, the transportation facilities and the great warehouse of resources on which to feed and grow. But better than that it is the ardent desire all over the Kansas City territory for good roads. Good roads are an economic as well as a social necessity."<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Firestone also thought that farming was the greatest business of the country and that it was especially Kansas City's greatest business. He was very interested in the fact that the motor car was being used as a necessity more and more on the farm.

One of Mr. Firestone's proudest achievements was his start of the "Put the Farm on Rubber" campaign. Mr. Firestone also organized the "Ship by Truck" movement. A movement to encourage the use of trucks for transportation of food, machinery, and other goods. This led to the "Good Roads" movement in 1918.

Harvey Firestone located the Firestone Building in what was considered the Midtown area in 1914. This area surrounded the newly completed Union Station. New streets were being constructed around this area. New manufacturing and warehouse buildings were also being constructed in the area.

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The Firestone Building stands out as a significant example that remains virtually unchanged. The initial owners, Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, still occupy the building.

Architecture/Technology

The building is considered to be a conservative design that is quite contemporary in its esthetic development. The austere exterior is elegantly proportioned and is animated by a variation in the widths between the white terra cotta piers and the mullions. Minimal Gothic-inspired motifs were applied to the building. These motifs read as a texture rather than individualized details.

Reinforced concrete in the early 1900's was a relatively new building material. In Architectural Record in 1908, an article appeared "Architectural Expression in a New Material: Practical and Ethical Problems of Design in Reinforced Concrete", questioning the use of reinforced concrete. One of the major concerns was that there was not a direct expression of the individuality of concrete in the facade. In the Firestone Building, the reinforced concrete structural frame is fully revealed in the treatment of the facade. Steel pan forms were used to construct the building's structural frame. In 1915, steel pan forms were not generally used. Wood was the frequently used forming material. When steel pans were used, the proportioning of the structure was integral with the design of the building. The dimensions were precisely worked through permitting a uniform size steel pan to be used repeatedly in construction. This type of form work more than likely contributed to such an elegantly proportioned building. The concern for proportion is carried out through the smallest detail. Even the spandrels are divided through the use of color and materials to read on a vertical dimension contributing to the overall facade.

All things considered, the Firestone Building remains today as one of Kansas City's most fascinating examples of a conservative design that is elegantly proportioned, quite contemporary in its esthetic development and is virtually unchanged.

Architects

The firm of Smith, Rea & Lovitt designed several of Kansas City's important buildings. Charles A. Smith, Frank S. Rea and Walter U. Lovitt became partners in 1910. Charles A. Smith was the senior partner of the firm and became an architect of national repute. Smith arrived in Kansas City in 1893, and became junior partner with William F. Hackney. William F. Hackney was the architect for the School District of Kansas City. Upon Hackney's death in 1898, Smith acquired the position as School Board Architect. Smith remained the School Board Architect for the next forty years and designed over fifty schools. Smith designed all the school buildings in Kansas City built between 1898 and 1936. His innovations, particularly in ventilation and sanitation, were adopted by other school systems throughout the United States.

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The firm of Smith, Rea and Lovitt practiced architecture for ten years and designed such notable buildings in Kansas City as the Jenkins Music Company Building, the Rialto Building, the Ridge Arcade, Ivanhoe Temple, Isis Theater/Wirthnam Building, the Rothenberg & Schloss Company Building and the Firestone Building. All of these structures still survive.

In 1920, the firm of Smith, Rea & Lovitt dissolved. Subsequently, Charles A. Smith practiced alone until his retirement in 1936.

The survey of Missouri's historic sites is based on the selection of sites as they relate to theme studies in "Missouri's State Historic Preservation Plan". The Firestone Building, therefore, is being nominated to the National Register as an example of the themes of "transportation," "architecture" and "technology".

FOOTNOTES

1. Kansas City Star, November 9, 1915.
2. Kansas City Star, November 9, 1915.
3. Kansas City Star, September 12, 1916.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Kansas City Star, September 10, 1916.  
Kansas City Star, November 9, 1915.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than 1 acre.

Quadrangle name Kansas City, Mo.-Kansas

Quadrangle scale 1: 24,000

### UTM References

A 

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

B 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot Numbers 96, 97, Union Station Addition, which constitute the original boundaries of the property.

### 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 1. Sue E. Yoakum

organization Urban Design Group, Architects date June 1, 1985

street & number 1111 Grand Avenue, Suite 600 telephone (816) 421-6330

city or town Kansas City state Missouri 64106

## 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

*Wayne E. Hon*

for Frederick A. Brunner, Ph.D., P. E., Director, Department of Natural Resources and  
title State Historic Preservation Officer date 11/21/85

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



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National Park Service**

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"Charles A. Smith Dies", Kansas City Times, January 12, 1948.

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Jenkins Music Company Building - National Register of Historic Places Inventory  
Nomination, prepared by Edward J. Miszczuk, Chief Research Historian Landmarks  
Commission.

Kansas City: A Place in Time, 1977, Local Landmarks Commission of Kansas City,  
Missouri, City Hall, 26th Floor, 414 East 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri  
64106.

Kansas City Star, May 9, 1915.

Kansas City Star, September 5, 1915.

Kansas City Star, Nov. 9, 1915.

Kansas City Star, May 17, 1916.

Kansas City Star, September 12, 1916.

Kansas City Star, March 9, 1920.

Kansas City Star, November 9, 1941.

Kansas City Star, November 14, 1948.

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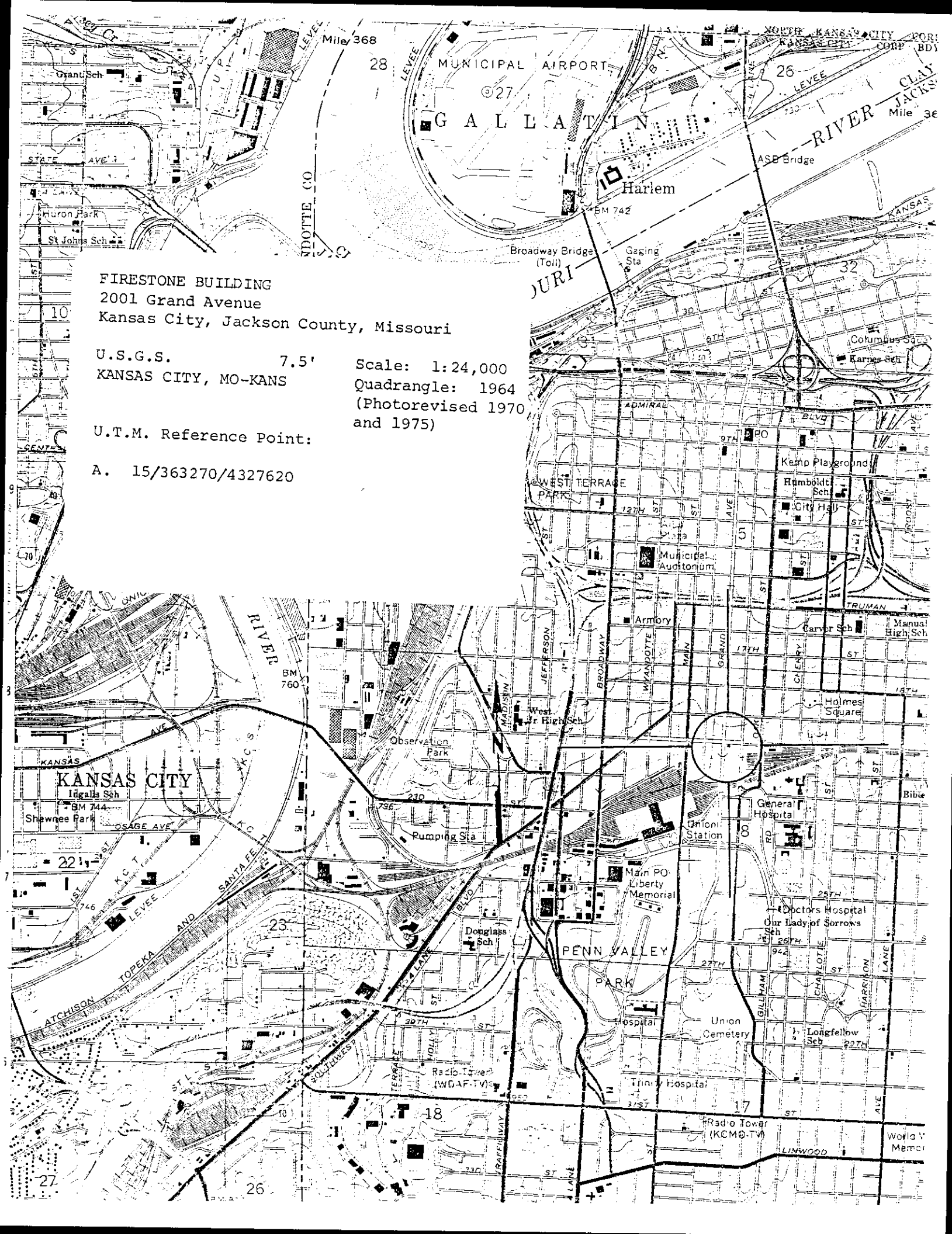
- 2. James M. Denny  
Chief, Survey & Registration  
and State Contact Person  
Department of Natural Resources  
Historic Preservation Program  
P. O. Box 176  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102  
Phone: 314/751-4096  
Date: March 15, 1985

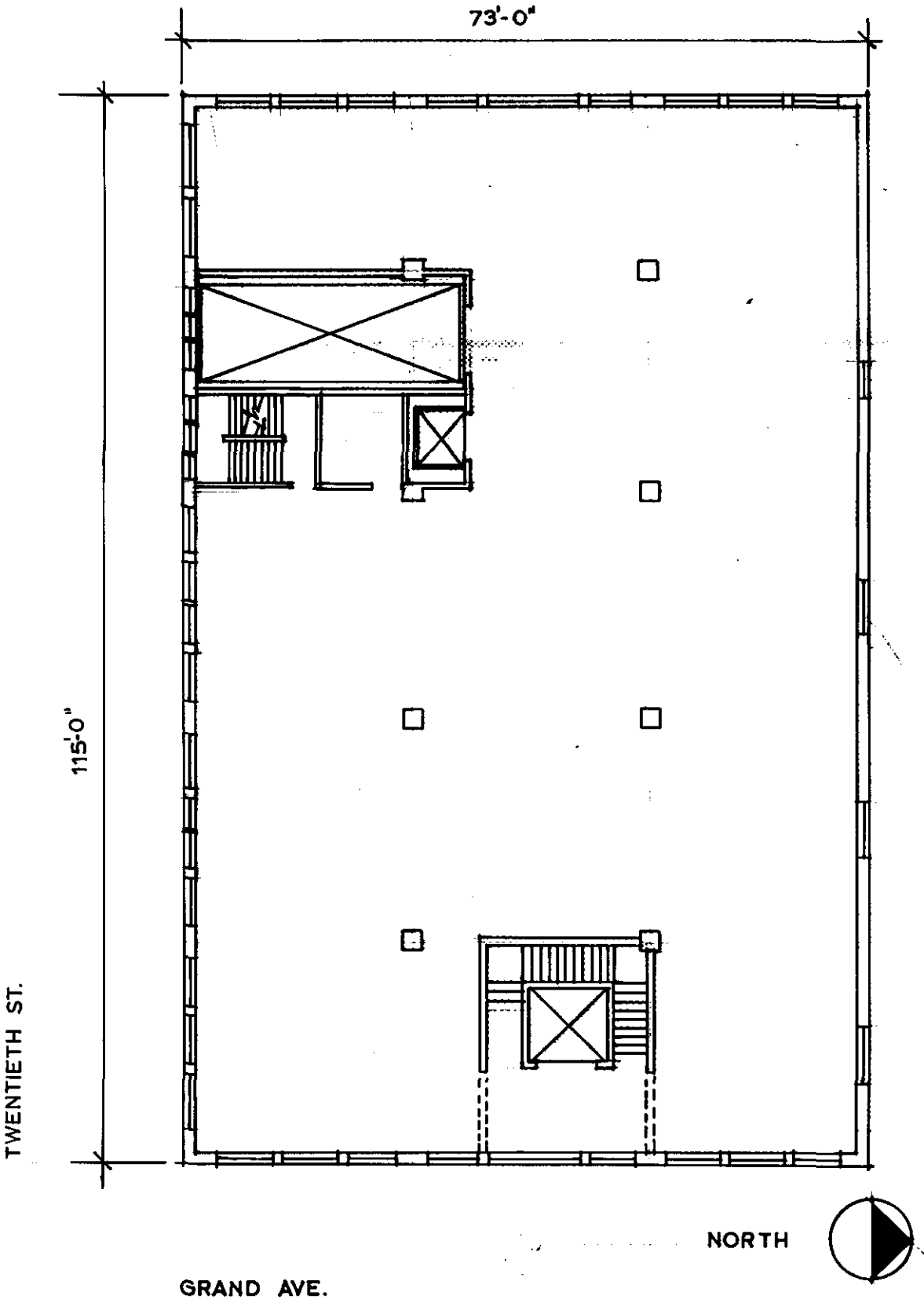
FIRESTONE BUILDING  
2001 Grand Avenue  
Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri

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KANSAS CITY, MO-KANS Quadrangle: 1964  
(Photorevised 1970  
and 1975)

U.T.M. Reference Point:

A. 15/363270/4327620





FIRESTONE BUILDING 1 of 8  
2001 Grand Avenue  
Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri

Photographer: Paul S. Kivett  
Date: April, 1985  
Neg. Loc.: Architectural Fotographics  
715 May Street  
Kansas City, Missouri

North and West elevations.



200  
010

FIRESTONE BUILDING 2 of 8  
2001 Grand Avenue  
Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri

Photographer: Paul S. Kivett  
Date: April, 1985  
Neg. Loc.: Architectural Photographics  
715 May Street  
Kansas City, Missouri

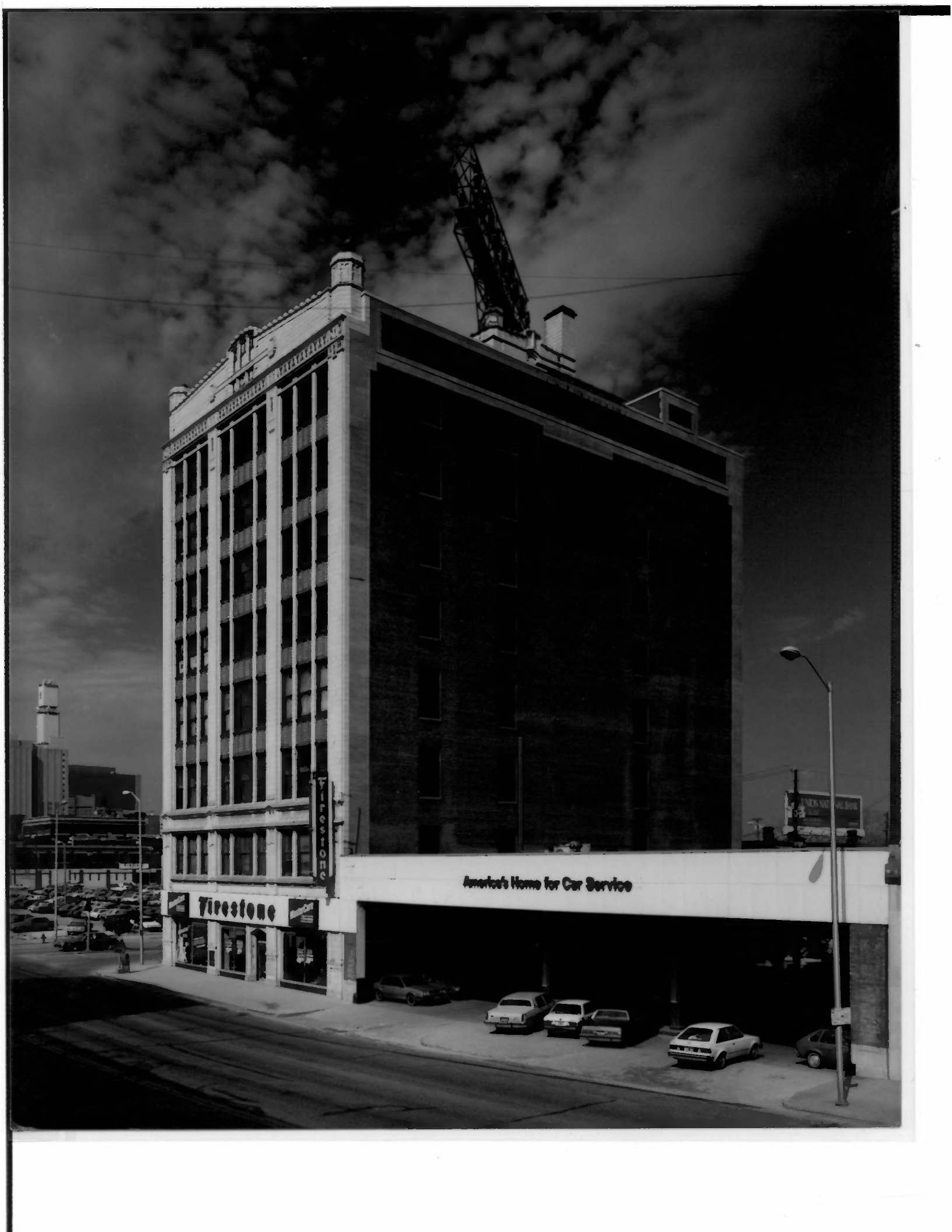
South and West elevations.

ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHICS  
Photography and Printing by Paul S. Kivett

**8574-06**

715 May Street Kansas City, Missouri 64101





America's Home for Car Service

Firestone

Firestone

AMERICAN NATIONAL BANK

FIRESTONE BUILDING 3 of 8  
2001 Grand Avenue  
Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri

Photographer: Sue E. Yoakum  
Date: May, 1985  
Neg. Loc.: Urban Design Group  
1111 Grand Ave., Suite 600  
Kansas City, Missouri

West elevation entrance.



Firestone

MasterCare

TUNE-UP

34965

Black Tires

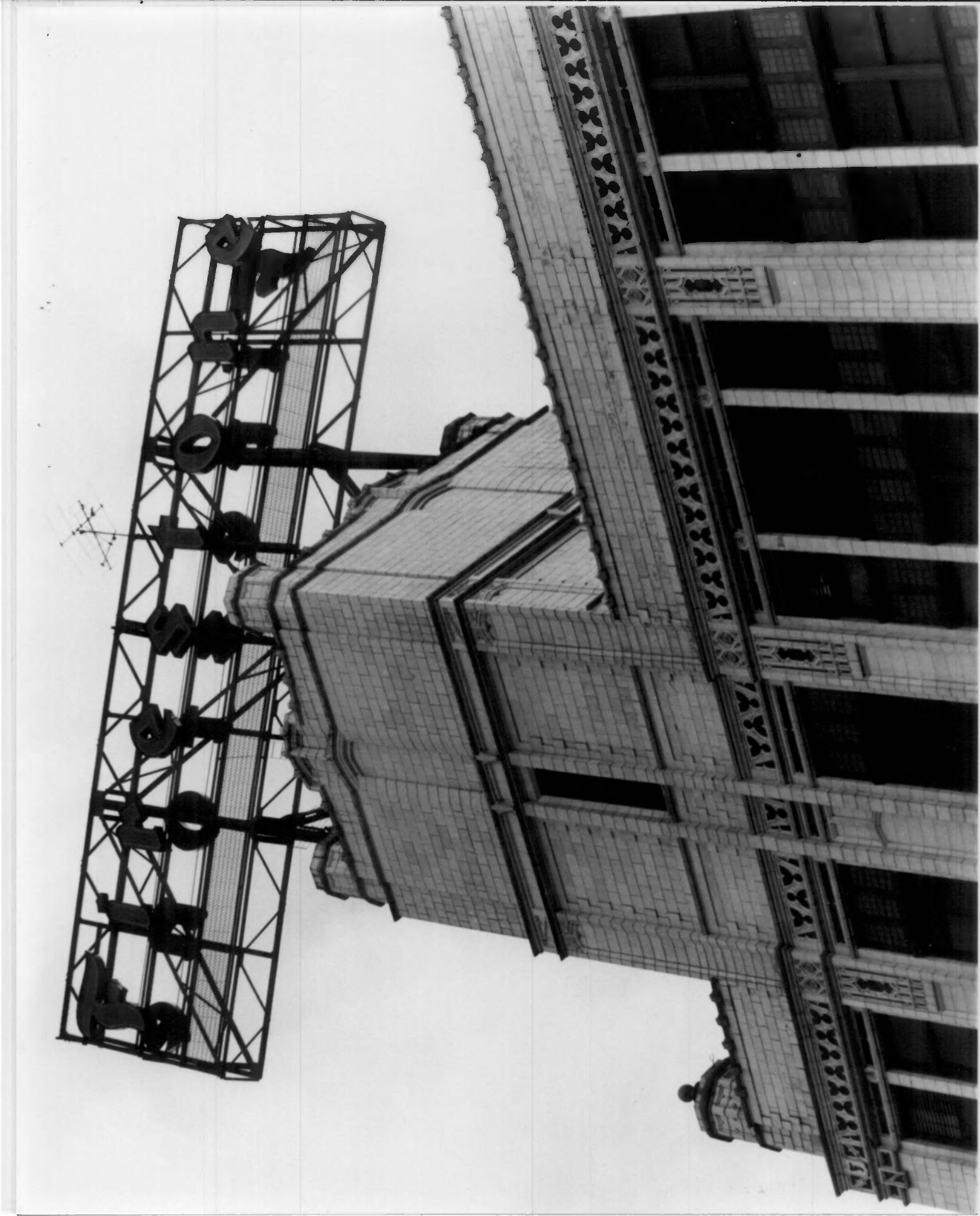
FIRESTONE BUILDING 4 of 8  
2001 Grand Avenue  
Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri

Photographer: Sue E. Yoakum  
Date: May, 1985  
Neg. Loc.: Urban Design Group  
1111 Grand Ave., Suite 600  
Kansas City, Missouri

North elevation detail.

1) Firestone Building  
2) 4 of 8

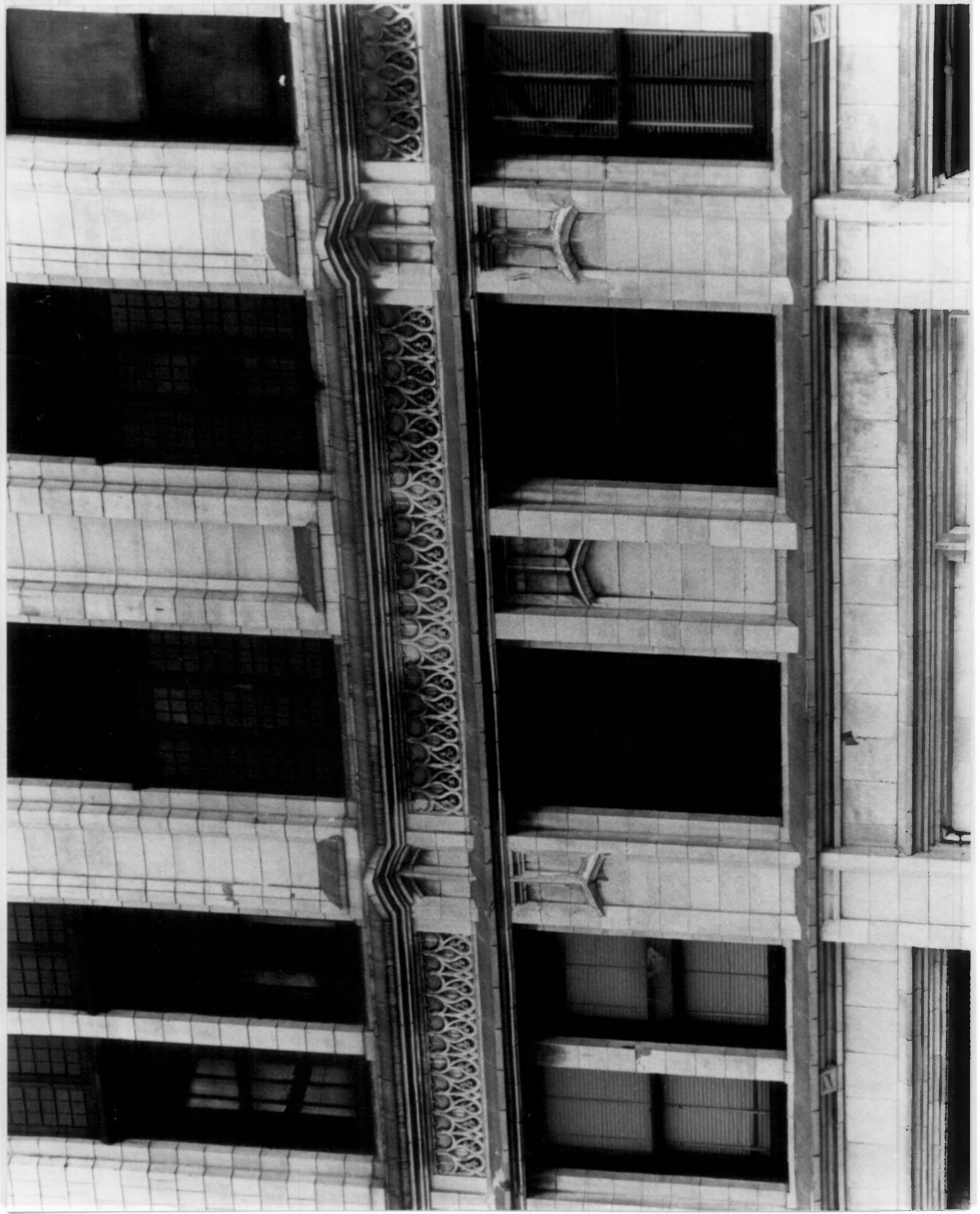




FIRESTONE BUILDING 5 of 8  
2001 Grand Avenue  
Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri

Photographer: Sue E. Yoakum  
Date: May, 1985  
Neg. Loc.: Urban Design Group  
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Kansas City, Missouri

North elevation detail.



FIRESTONE BUILDING 6 of 8  
2001 Grand Avenue  
Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri

Photographer: Sue E. Yoakum  
Date: May, 1985  
Neg. Loc.: Urban Design Group  
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Kansas City, Missouri

Typical Lobby-Camera direction South.

1) Firestone Building  
6 of 8





FIRESTONE BUILDING 7 of 8  
2001 Grand Avenue  
Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri

Photographer: Sue E. Yoakum  
Date: May, 1985  
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Kansas City, Missouri

Typical Floor-Camera direction East.

1) Firestone Building  
2) 7 of 8



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2001 Grand Avenue  
Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri

Photographer: Sue E. Yoakum  
Date: May, 1985  
Neg. Loc.: Urban Design Group  
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Typical Floor-Camera direction West.

1) Firestone Building  
8 of 8

