HABS No. IL-1182

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

MARSHALL FIELD RIVER WAREHOUSE

LOCATION: 310 W. Polk Street
Chicago, Cook County, Illinois

USGS Englewood Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
Zone 16 Easting 447220 Northing 4635620

PRESENT OWNER: United States Postal Service

PRESENT OCCUPANT: Vacant

SIGNIFICANCE: The Marshall Field River Warehouse is a unique industrial structure that was designed by an important national architect for a prominent Chicago business. Its significance is derived from its design, setting on the Chicago River, and details and craftsmanship of its exterior.

The River Warehouse is considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. Just after the turn of the century, Burnham's firm designed several warehouses for Marshall Field and Company. The River Warehouse remains today as the last of those warehouses. It is significant, therefore, as the product of a long-term relationship that Burnham had with Marshall Field and Company. D. H. Burnham & Co. designed a brick structure that integrates decorative bands, as well as a prominent, well-defined cornice. These features, in addition to the building's massing and scale, made it a prominent structure on the South Branch of the Chicago River. The placement of the River Warehouse is unique. It was designed to permit access by river barges on the east, and railroad cars on the west. It is the only remaining warehouse on that part of the river that retains this unique ability to facilitate the two transportation forms. It is also important because it is the only remaining Marshall Field and Company downtown

warehouse.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: 1904 (Original building permit)

2. Architect: D.H. Burnham & Co.

3. Original and subsequent owners:

1904 to 1919 - Marshall Field and Company

1919 to circa 1924 - Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne & Chicago Railroad

circa 1952 to 1973 - Merchant's Warehouse

1973 to 1974 - 310 W. Polk Building Corporation

1974 to present - United States Postal Service

4. Builder: R. & S. Sollitt

5. Alterations and additions: This building has changed little over its life. Perhaps the most prominent changes occurred after Marshall Field and Company abandoned the facility. Quarter inch steel plates 4 feet by 5 feet 4 inches were laid over the maple flooring and large stamping machines were moved in and installed on the upper floors that once contained Marshall Field and Company merchandise. Several of these stamping machines remain in the structure.

A. Historical Context:

DANIEL HUDSON BURNHAM AND D.H. BURNHAM & CO.

Daniel Burnham was born in Henderson, New York in 1846. He began his architectural career as an apprentice in the firm of Sanford Loring and William LeBaron Jenney, recognized as the founder of steel-frame high-rise

architecture.[1] He also worked with John Mills Van Osdel, Chicago's first professional architect, and Gustave Laureau before joining the office of Carter, Drake and Wight in 1872 as a draftsman. It was there that he met John Wellborn Root, also in the firm's employ. By 1873 Burnham and Root formed their own practice, which lasted until Root's death in 1891.[2] With Root as chief designer, the practice established a reputation as one of the greatest in Chicago and the nation, designing landmark buildings such as the Montauk (1882, demolished), the Monadnock (1889), the Rookery (1886), and the Masonic Temple (1892, demolished). Their fame led to the appointment of the firm as architects of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893.[3] After Root's death in 1891, Burnham took charge of the Fair, elevating both his own status as a planner and also the firm's status, which became the largest architectural practice in Chicago.[4]

The Burnham firm reached its apogee in the two decades between 1891 and Burnham's death in 1912, designing over 200 executed buildings in addition to city plans for several major urban centers that included San Francisco, Washington D.C., Cleveland, and Chicago. After Root's death, the role of chief designer in the Burnham firm was taken over by Charles Atwood.[5] Atwood died in 1896, having designed such landmarks as the Reliance and Fisher Buildings. In 1898, Ernest Graham became the chief junior partner of Burnham, and by 1900, Pierce Anderson was chief designer for the Burnham firm.[6] The River Warehouse was designed under

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1. Moore, Charles, Daniel H. Burnham: Architect, Planner of Cities, DaCapo Press, New York, 1968 (reprint of 1921 copyright). Appendix: List of Commissions.

2. Hines, Thomas S., Burnham of Chicago: Architect and Planner, New York, Oxford University Press, 1974.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p. 260 ff.

6. Ibid., p. 270.

the supervision of Graham and Anderson, a partnership that would continue through the execution of other river buildings, including the Butler Brothers Warehouse and the Merchandise Mart.

The Burnham Co. designed numerous buildings for Field. In 1900, they erected a Marshall Field warehouse.

Between 1902 and 1907 they designed portions of the State Street retail store.[7] In 1903, as Burnham was completing New York's famed Flatiron Building and the Railway Exchange Building in Chicago, the firm designed a small warehouse for Field at Polk and Ellsworth, immediately west of the subject property.[8] In 1904, Burnham had commissions for State Street additions and for the subject River Warehouse.[9] The River Warehouse appeared to influence the design of the Butler Brothers Warehouses constructed in 1912 and 1922. Here, as in so many cases, the Burnham firm designed a wholly practical building in a compelling and enduring style. While the Butler Brothers Warehouses have been identified in several sources as significant works, the 310 W. Polk Building from the same design team has escaped scholarly notice, due in all probability, to its location south and west of the central business district.[10]

[7.] Christian, Ralph J., National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form for Marshall Field & Company Store, 111 N. State, Chicago, Illinois. Form dated March, 1977. Item 7.

[8.] Moore, Daniel H. Burnham, Appendix.

[9.] Ibid.

[10.] 1992 marks the completion of the first comprehensive inventory of historic buildings in Chicago. Previous inventories, such as the Illinois Historic Structures Survey of 1972-75, and publications such as Randall, History of the Development of Building Construction in Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1949, end their investigations east of the Chicago River and north of Harrison Street, or generally exclude warehouses in favor of offices and railroad terminals. This

THE CHICAGO SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

The Chicago School of Architecture produced what the National Park Service has identified as the first original architecture since the Italian High Renaissance and the only Western architecture whose consequences spanned the globe.[11] The style grew out of Chicago's rebuilding of the central business district after the Great Fire of 1871. While the business district was originally rebuilt with four- and five-story Italianate blocks of masonry construction, early 1880s land values and technologies, like the elevator, resulted in the increased height of commercial blocks. Architects who converged on Chicago in the wake of the Fire began to make their presence known, and Burnham and Root were among the first with the 10-story Montauk Building of 1882 (demolished).[12] William LeBaron Jenney pioneered the iron and steel frame building in 1884 with the Home Insurance Building. By 1890, major landmarks by Adler & Sullivan and Holabird & Roche had also appeared, and a design system for these first "skyscrapers" was being developed and enunciated.

The Chicago School is often called the Commercial Style, due to its emphasis on maximizing land value and

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inattention is compounded by the low regard such buildings received from contemporary architectural and building journals. The citation in The Economist for April 30, 1904 describes the many commissions of D.H. Burnham & Company, including a warehouse on Wabash, but merely lists the permit, size, and construction cost for the Marshall Field & Co. River Warehouse. The recently completed Chicago Historic Resources Survey has identified hundreds of significant buildings previously overlooked.

[11.] Miller, Hugh C., The Chicago School of Architecture, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1973, p. 1.

[12.] Condit, Carl W., The Chicago School of Architecture: A History of Commercial and Public Building in the Chicago Area 1875-1925, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1964, pp.51-56.

practicality. Chicago School buildings were less ornate than their predecessors, taking their design not from formal architectural learning but *sui generis*, from their functions. Exterior curtain walls were full of windows, since these walls no longer bore the weight of the building. The architects did not try to disguise their structural innovation, but rather revelled in it, producing muscular facades that expressed the steel piers and trusses beneath. Sullivan proclaimed that a tall building should follow in basic design a classical column, with a base, a shaft of repetitive office floors, and a terminating cornice.[13] This basic massing system was complemented by a variety of other design innovations, including the Chicago Window, the use of terra cotta cladding, protruding bay windows, strengthened corners, and organic, modern ornament integrated into the design and function of each building.

The Chicago School, according to Carl Condit, the primary historian of the movement, reached the end of its initial flowering in the early years of this century, with the construction of buildings like the Chicago Building of 1904-05, the Brooks Building of 1910 by Holabird & Roche, the Montgomery Ward Warehouse of 1906-08, and the Dwight Building of 1911 by Schmidt, Garden and Martin.[14] After 1910, eclectic and neoclassical styles resurged, and surviving Chicago School firms like Holabird & Roche and D.H. Burnham & Co. moved into more traditional designs. Burnham's firm, of course, had planned the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, developing a national reputation while simultaneously inspiring a national trend toward classical design forms and motifs. Always conservative, the Burnham firm embraced the new eclecticism of the 1910s.[15]

The River Warehouse is clearly a Chicago School

[13.] Poppeliers, John C., What Style Is It? A Guide to American Architecture, Washington, D.C., The Preservation Press, 1983, p. 72.

[14.] Condit, Chicago School of Architecture, p. 161.

[15.] Ibid., p. 178.

building, with its pronounced division of its exterior facade into a base, shaft and cornice, its minimalist functionalism, and the sincerity of its expression. The brick exterior emphasizes the structural piers, incorporates and reveals the mechanical penthouses as towers, and utilizes brick quoining and corbelling to create strengthened corners and flared eaves and cornice lines. It departs from the Chicago School in its simple windows, but it is not an office building, and the Burnham firm only used the "Chicago Window" on two or three of its hundreds of commissions.[16]

A HISTORY OF MARSHALL FIELD'S COMPANY

Marshall Field was born in 1834 in Conway, Massachusetts and died in Chicago in 1906, leaving a legacy as the merchant prince of the midwestern metropolis.[17] He began in the dry-goods business as a $10-a-week clerk for Henry Davis of Pittsfield in 1851 but by 1855 was already offered a partnership in the store. Field decided instead to go west with $1,000 savings and became a clerk at Wadsworth and Company, the largest dry-goods wholesaler in Chicago. He was promoted to traveling salesman and became a junior partner in 1860. Two years later he bought a partnership, and in 1864 the firm became Farwell, Field and Co. Field's meteoric rise continued unabated as he dissolved the partnership and together with Levi Leiter bought Potter Palmer's dry-goods business for $750,000 in January, 1865.[18] Field was not yet 31 years of age.

The company prospered with Leiter managing the wholesale and retail divisions in Chicago and Field handling the purchasing outside the city. By 1868 Field decided to stay in Chicago. He bought out both Palmer and Leiter by 1881, and the firm became Marshall

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16. Ibid.

17. Christian, National Register form for Marshall Field & Company Store, Item 8, page 1 ff.

18. Ibid.

Field & Company.[19] During this period, the wholesale division was accounting for 80% of net sales in a hinterland stretching across the United States.[20] As noted in the National Register nomination for the Marshall Field & Company Department Store: "In an era when manufacturing and transportation facilities tended to be confined to limited areas, gigantic firms like Marshall Field & Company played the vital role of distributing goods to retailers and supplying the needs of consumers."[21]

Field also made great strides in retail and is credited with the customer service concept "Give the Lady What She Wants". He selected able managers such as John Graves Shedd who ran wholesale and Henry Gordon Selfridge who ran retail. Selfridge and Field pioneered the discount basement in the mid-1880s and Shedd kept the wholesale business in expansion.[22] The 1890s witnessed the emergence of the department store in Chicago, beginning with Leiter's store at State and Congress Streets.[23] Field's 1892 store followed quickly, and by 1902 D.H. Burnham & Company was designing the present State Street facade of Marshall Field & Company. Field died in 1906, but the firm survived. The wholesale division declined in the 1920s, but retail prospered, and Burnham and its successor firm, Graham, Anderson Probst & White,

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[19.] Wendt, Lloyd, and Kogan, Herman, Give The Lady What She Wants: The Story of Marshall Field & Company, South Bend, Indiana, And Books, 1987 (copyright 1952 Marshall Field & Company) pp.137-170.

[20.] Twyman, Robert W., History of Marshall Field & Co., 1852-1906, Philadelphia, University of Philadelphia Press, 1954. p. 93.

[21.] Christian, National Register form for Marshall Field & Company Store, Item 7, p. 1.

[22.] Wendt and Kogan, Give The Lady What She Wants, pp.171-180.

[23.] Harris, Neil "Shopping, Chicago Style," in Chicago Architecture 1872-1922, John Zukowsky, Ed., Art Institute of Chicago, Munich, 1987, p. 141.

continued to design retail and warehouse facilities for Field, culminating with the erection of the massive Merchandise Mart in 1930.

MARSHALL FIELD & CO. RIVER WAREHOUSE

The Marshall Field River Warehouse was designed by D. H. Burnham & Co. in 1904 for the Marshall Field concern, one of Chicago's pre-eminent wholesalers and retailers of dry goods.[24] R. & S. Sollitt served as contractors for the warehouse, one of several being operated by Field in the area west of the Central Business District. Burnham's firm had designed the majority of the buildings commissioned by Marshall Field since 1892, when the firm completed the oldest surviving portion of Field's State Street flagship store. Indeed, Burnham had designed warehouses for Field in 1900, 1902 and 1903 prior to the design of the River Warehouse.[25] The River Warehouse was designed and erected at the same time as the Burnham firm designed and supervised erection of major additions to the State Street store, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The River Warehouse was not prominently featured in journals in a year when D. H. Burnham & Co. was designing Field's State Street Store, the First National Bank, the Railway Exchange Building and Orchestra Hall on Michigan Avenue.[26] Yet the design, suggestive of a Florentine palace, related strongly to its own context and continued to influence warehouse design on the river. Its dominant central tower relates to the strong Norman tower of Solon Beman's Grand Central Station, which it faces across the South Branch of the Chicago River.[27] (Grand Central Station

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[24.] Chicago Historic Resources Survey Form Number 28-27-02-001, Commission on Chicago Landmarks, 1987.

[25.] Moore, Daniel H. Burnham: Architect, Planner of Cities.

[26.] Moore, Daniel H. Burnham, Architect, Planner of Cities, Appendix. Also Inland Architect, 1903-1905 issues.

[27.] An excellent illustration of this relationship is found in Condit, Chicago School of Architecture, Illustration 101.

was demolished in 1971). The use of the tower, together with the blind arcade at cornice level, reflects the train terminals that dotted the area, including LaSalle Street, Polk Street, and Grand Central.[28] It also suggests industrial river structures with their prominent monitors and elevators for the movement of grain and other commodities. Today, the towered warehouse recollects these industrial and transportation structures, now largely demolished or replaced.

Architectural historian Thomas S. Hines sees this period of design as the effective end of the Burnham firm's work in the Chicago School idiom. In his biography of Burnham, Hines states: "After the Heyworth and Railway Exchange Buildings of 1903, however, only two of Burnham's Chicago buildings truly followed the canons of the Chicago School - the Chicago Business College of 1910 and the strikingly austere Butler Brothers Warehouse, completed in 1913."[29] Chicago School historian Carl Condit shares this opinion: "As a work of architecture the Heyworth was a farewell performance for D.H. Burnham and Company. The huge Marshall Field Store, completed in four stages, 1902, 1906, 1907, and 1914, is slightly in the Chicago tradition with its cellular walls, but the massive construction of the exterior walls is a throwback to classical masonry forms."[30]

Given the 1904 design of the Marshall Field River Warehouse, it is clear that this functional loft structure fits within the Chicago School paradigm just prior to the abandonment of that paradigm by the firm. Its facade is simple and sculptural, recalling the Monadnock with its flaring at base and eave, and other Chicago School efforts with its shaft arcades, recessed from the piers and expressing the simple steel frame beneath. Its main departure from Chicago School forms

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[28.] Mayer, Harold M. and Wade, Richard C., Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1968, p. 127 ff.

[29.] Hines, Burnham of Chicago, p. 277.

[30.] Condit, Chicago School of Architecture, p. 114

- the simple and small windows set into much larger bays - reflects the building's warehouse function and limited need for interior light and air.

The Butler Brothers warehouses, designed by the Burnham firm in 1912 and again in 1922, recapitulate the massing and design scheme of the 1904 River Warehouse, with their towers, flared brick corbelling at the cornice level, and dentilled cornices executed in red brick. The exterior walls of the Butler warehouses also utilize the raised piers and recessed, shaft-length bays with windows, as well as the strengthened corners. In addition, the Butler warehouses use a brick quoining effect on each raised pier in the facade. Their facades are divided into three sections as in the River Warehouse, with dentilled cornices separating the base, shaft, and capital or concluding cornice. Their general massing seems Florentine.

The Butler Brothers warehouses are included in almost every publication regarding Burnham and its successor firm, Graham, Anderson, Probst and White. Pierce Anderson was chief designer for both firms during the construction of each of these warehouses, and the connection between the celebrated Butler warehouses and the River Warehouse is clear in their design and origin.[31] All three warehouses stand out from later warehouses such as cold storage facilities found along the river and the massive constructions of the Central Manufacturing District by their lack of applied ornament and aggressive, muscular massing.

The Marshall Field River Warehouse utilized clay tile floors covered with maple floorboards throughout, reflecting the current wisdom that this was the best material. Clay tile floors were seen as the best technology around 1904, as evidenced by extended attention to the topic in the Inland Architect magazine.[32] Each tile at the River Warehouse measured about six by eight by twelve inches, equivalent to those described in the magazine. An article by E.V. Johnson claimed that clay tile had half the weight of

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[31.] Hines, Burnham of Chicago, p. 270 ff.

[32.] Inland Architect, 1904,1905.

reinforced concrete and twice the carrying capacity. He referred to a testing station for the tile at 28th and LaSalle in Chicago and noted that use had increased from 1,000 tons in 1877 to 2 million tons in 1904.[33] The journal was clearly fighting the perceived threat of the new technology, reinforced concrete construction. The River Warehouse used the clay tiles, which are in excellent condition even today.

Freight elevators served the two halves of the building, each terminating in a flared and corbelled brick penthouse at the western facade. The building was connected to the city's system of coal and freight tunnels which were just being completed. These tunnels were also connected to Marshall Field and Company's massive State Street store, completed in 1907, and provided a traffic-free means of access between the Company's retail, wholesale, and distribution operations. The River Warehouse had thirteen loading dock bays at the waterfront and ten inland loading dock bays adjacent to the freight railroad lines.

The importance of the River Warehouse lies not only in its design but also in its relationship to the major Marshall Field wholesale and retail concern. Marshall Field and Company, like other Loop businesses, carried out extensive freight and warehousing operations in the area west of the Loop. In the years following the Great Fire of 1871, Field and Leiter utilized warehouses and delivery barns along LaSalle Street.[34] As the Loop expanded, such "back-office" operations moved farther west. In 1884, the noted Marshall Field Wholesale Store of H.H. Richardson (demolished) was located on what is now Wacker Drive.

Much of Marshall Field and Company's business from 1880 through 1920 was in wholesale, and indeed the noted Marshall Field Wholesale Store by Richardson is counted

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[33.] Johnson, E.V., "The Structural Value of Hollow Tile for Buildings," in Inland Architect, Vol. XLV, No. 2, March, 1905.

[34.] Wendt & Kogan, Give The Lady What She Wants, p. 137 ff.

among Chicago's greatest lost landmarks.[35] In the late nineteenth century, as much as 80% of Field's business was in wholesale.[36] But this significant aspect of Field's business can be seen today only in the River Warehouse, whose setting suggests the intensive freight needs of the business. The River Warehouse flanks the river and the freight yards in the heart of downtown Chicago, receiving and distributing a variety of goods by a variety of means. This spatial orientation for receiving and distribution can also be seen in the remaining Pugh Warehouses of 1905 (now North Pier Terminal), located between rail lines and the Ogden Slip. The Merchandise Mart was also designed for Marshall Field and Company. It is a retail structure that postdates Field's near abandonment of wholesaling in the 1920s. The River Warehouse is thus the only surviving Marshall Field warehouse in Chicago.

THE RIVER WAREHOUSE AFTER MARSHALL FIELD & COMPANY

Field sold the land and, presumably, the warehouse in 1916, and it was acquired by the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne and Chicago Railroad Company in 1919.[37] In 1924, a collection of railroad companies subdivided all of the surrounding lands. It is difficult to trace the building's ownership between the 1920s and 1950s due to a paucity of records. The adjacent Marshall Field and Company Warehouse at Polk and Ellsworth was demolished sometime after 1936.[38]

Cadaco-Ellis, Inc., also known as Cadaco and Rapid Mounting and Finishing Company, manufacturers of board games and printing and cutting jobbers, occupied the

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[35.] See Condit, Chicago School of Architecture, also Hitchcock, Henry-Russell, Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, Pelican History of Art, Penguin, 1969 (Third Edition) p. 317 ff.

[36.] Twyman, Robert W., History of Marshall Field & Co., 1852-1906, p. 93.

[37.] Title records, Cook County Recorder of Deeds, County Building, Chicago.

[38.] Mayer and Wade, Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis, p. 315.

building as their factory and headquarters from at least 1950 until 1983.[39] Cadaco manufactured the "Tripoley" game at the building, and advertised it to expressway patrons via large painted signs on the building's tower. The Tripoley game combined elements of popular board, card and dice games. Cadaco manufactured other board games, and also produced posters for such concerns as United Airlines and Erlanger Brewing, and produced spiral shipping tubes and other paper and cardboard products.[40]

A 1950 directory of the building lists a number of businesses that used the warehouse. A 1952 directory reveals a different list, suggesting that many companies used the space on a short-term lease basis. Culp Lamp Company and Superior Manufacturing were tenants in both 1950 and 1952, as was Rapid Mounting and Finishing Company. Other 1950 tenants included:

The Lerner Shops (women's clothing)
Fick Paper Company
Globe Poster Corporation
Finke Famous Foods
Boorum & Pease (notebooks, clerical supplies)
Caledonia Company
Winterburn Company
Seng Warehouse (possibly the building owner)

1952 tenants included:

Hudson-Ross Co. (appliance retailers)
General Dye Stuffs
Merchant's Warehouse (building owner to 1973)
Antara Products
Champion Boards
Harlich Corporation[41]

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[39]. Buyer's Guide and Industrial Directory of Chicago, Chicago Association of Commerce and Industry, 1951.

[40]. Based on building inspection 4 April 1992.

[41]. Buyer's Guide and Industrial Directory, cross-referenced with reverse telephone directories for 1950 and 1952, at Chicago Historical Society.

During this period the property was owned by the Merchant's Warehouse Company, which sold it to 310 W. Polk Building Corporation in 1973, who in turn sold it to the Postal Service in 1974.[42] Some space was rented to other companies, primarily for records storage, through the late 1970s. Both Cadaco and the 310 W. Polk Building Corporation ceased operations completely in 1983, and the warehouse has been largely unused for the past decade.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Architectural character: The River Warehouse is of architectural merit based on the integrity and craftsmanship of its facade, its massing and its relationship to the Chicago River. It is an important example of Chicago School design, which departed from historical precedents and revelled in simplicity and function. It is an early surviving industrial building by the nationally prominent architectural firm of D. H. Burnham & Company.

2. CONDITION OF FABRIC: The building is in good condition. Water infiltration has caused buckling of floors on the western exterior wall and at other points in the building. A large opening in the brick exterior wall at the twelfth floor on the north face is patched with plywood. Some small parts of the cornice have deteriorated. Effloresence of the brick walls is visible on the east and west sides of the building on the upper floors. Interior paint is peeling on many floors, but the structural piers, clay tiles, and exterior brick walls are in good condition.

3. SUMMARY DESCRIPTION: The thirteen-story warehouse was constructed in 1904 at a cost of $500,000 on a trapezoidal site measuring 286'x 119', immediately contiguous to the South Branch of the Chicago River.[43]

[42.] Title records, Cook County Recorder of Deeds, Chicago.

[43.] Chicago Historic Resources Survey Form Number 28-27-02-001, 1987 and Permit Ledgers/Records, Department of Buildings,

Two elevator penthouses are located on the roof on the west side of the building. A four-story tower in the center of the building also houses equipment for the four interior freight elevators. This feature provides a distinctive element on the skyline. The building's massing suggests the Italian High Renaissance with its tower, quoined corners, and cornices defined by blind Romanesque arcades.

All four building sides are richly textured, with structural bays demarcated by raised brick piers that stretch in the form of elongated arches between the third and twelfth floors. Each of the corner bays is defined by raised brick sections in the form of quoins, giving the corners strength in the tradition of Chicago School high-rise design. Overall the exterior walls of the building follow Chicago high-rise design principles in their tripartite division into base, shaft, and cornice. A two- or three-story base terminates in brick corbelling and brick dentils on each of the four sides. The bulk of each exterior wall appears as a recessed nine-story arcade which again terminates in a corbelled and dentilled cornice. The twelfth floor in turn terminates at a dramatically flared and corbelled blind arcade at the thirteenth floor, surmounted in turn by a shorter attic level and rooftop cornice. The attic corbelling at the corners extends lower than the corbelling in the central bays of each exterior wall.

The windows throughout these levels are two-over-two lights set in sliding sashes of wood, with one window per bay on each floor. The two smaller towers have similar windows in their northern and southern faces, while the central tower has two levels with one two-over-two window on each of its four sides. The windows in the corner, quoined bays at either end of each exterior wall are three-over-three lights. The thirteenth floor exterior is defined by smaller, squarer attic windows, and the cornice flares out at a blind corbelled arcade. The lower stories are demarcated by a string course beneath the third floor and the absence of raised piers between bays. The entire exterior is composed of a deep red brick, with no differentiation to indicate a building front.

City Hall, Chicago.

The building contains five bays at the north end which gradually expand to seven at the south end. There are fifteen bays running along the east and west sides.

B. DESCRIPTION OF EXTERIOR:

1. Overall dimensions: This trapezoidal structure measures 288 feet (east or riverside) x 128 feet (south side) x 283 feet (west side) x 94 feet (north side). The building is approximately 130 feet from ground level to cornice, with the central tower extending an additional 40 feet.

2. Foundation: The west side appears to be supported by a limestone foundation, although this may be the exception. While not visible, it is assumed that caisson foundations, generally used for tall buildings of the period, provide the foundation system.

3. Walls: The walls are built of red face brick on all four sides. Bricks measure 8 3/8 inches x 2 3/8 inches. A fire wall separates the northern and southern halves of the building from the ground floor to the top of the central tower.

West Side: This side has a two-story base, a nine-story midsection defined as a blind arcade, and a two-story cornice consisting of the thirteenth floor and an attic level where brick corbelling flares to the dentilled concluding cornice. This face is fifteen bays from north to south, with a double fire escape across the eight and ninth bays reaching from the attic to the ground. A painted sign reading "310 W. Polk Building" is visible at the attic level, obscuring an earlier sign reading "Seng Warehouse". The central tower has a painted sign reading "Have Fun! Play Tripoley".

East Side: This side has a three-story base, a nine-story midsection defined as a blind arcade, and a two-story cornice consisting of the thirteenth floor and an attic level where brick corbelling flares to the dentilled concluding cornice. This face is fifteen bays from north to south, with a double fire escape across the eight and ninth bays reaching from the attic to the ground. This face has a concrete foundation at its base, the west bank of the South Branch of the

Chicago River. A painted sign reading "310 W. Polk Building" is visible at the attic level, obscuring an earlier sign reading "Seng Warehouse". The central tower has a painted sign reading "Have Fun! Play Tripoley".

South Side: This side has a three-story base partially obscured by a partially demolished bridge abutment. It has a nine-story midsection defined as a blind arcade, and a two-story cornice consisting of the thirteenth floor and an attic level where brick corbelling flares to the dentilled concluding cornice. This face is seven bays from east to west. A painted sign reading "310 W. Polk Building" is visible at the attic level. The central tower has a painted sign reading "Great Games by Cadaco".

North Side: This side has a three-story base and stretches only five bays from east to west. It has a nine-story midsection defined as a blind arcade, and a two-story cornice consisting of the thirteenth floor and an attic level where brick corbelling flares to the dentilled concluding cornice. Part of the cornice level atop the nine-story arcade has been destroyed in the central, or third, bay of this wall, and the corresponding twelfth floor window has been lost. A plywood panel replaces the missing elements of wall and window in the central bay on the twelfth floor. A painted sign reading "310 W. Polk Building" is visible at the attic level. The central tower has a painted sign reading "Great Games by Cadaco".

4. Structural system: Floor levels are constructed entirely of clay tile, with maple flooring laid on top. Concrete columns, presumably reinforced with steel, support the loft-style construction. The diameter of these columns varies by floor. Column diameters measure 68 1/2 inches on floors 10 through 13; 77 inches on floors 8 and 9; and 84 inches on floors 1 through 7.

5. OPENINGS, DOORWAYS, WINDOWS: There are ten loading dock doors on the west side which measure 14 feet 6 inches in width x 8 feet 11 inches in height. These are recessed two bays into the side, creating an overhang for truck loading. It is probable that these openings were altered earlier in the century when the

building began to service truck rather than railroad traffic on its western side. There are thirteen loading dock doors on the east side serving the River which measure 12 feet in width x 8 feet 9 inches in height. A single loading dock exists on the south side under the base of the Polk Street bridge (demolished). A modern office entrance which measures 56 inches in width x 82 inches in height also exists on the south side at ground level, and it is framed by 18-inch wide marble facing on its sides and top. A small dock entrance 97 inches wide x 68 inches high, exists on the west side at the southern end. All windows, as noted, are double hung wood sash with two-over-two or three-over-three lights. Windows are centered in the structural bays, with attic windows being smaller and squarer than those below, and arranged in pairs.

6. Roof: The roof is flat with a typical composition roof and parapets topped by drip caps. There are three mechanical penthouses, one being the four-story central tower. All are finished in like manner and material to the building, and feature corbelled cornices. A parapet surmounts the fire wall and separates the roof into its northern and southern portions.

C. Description of Interior:

1. FLOOR PLANS: Each floor follows an identical loft plan, with the northern half consisting of five structural bays in width and eight structural bays in length, the width expanding to six bays at the fourth lengthwise bay. The southern half consists of six structural bays in width and seven structural bays in length, the width expanding to seven structural bays at the fourth lengthwise bay.

The structural columns, encased in concrete and finished as cylinders, are visible throughout the building. The floor plan has been modified on some floors by the addition of office partitions, none of which are deemed significant. Utility rooms and bathrooms are also modern partitions not deemed significant. The fire wall separating the northern and southern halves is cut through on the west side of the central mechanical tower at each floor, and on the east side of the tower on the second and fifth floors.

The ceilings on each floor are constructed of clay tile and vaulted between joists. Two joists are found between each structural column, thereby creating three vaults in each bay.

2. Stairways: Stairways run the height of the building at each of the three mechanical towers, with the central tower consisting of two stairways separated by a fire wall. The stairways are cast iron with metal treads and metal railings throughout, decorated only with simple tapered newel posts and spherical newels. There are two flights of stairs between each floor. Each flight contains 9 steps and one landing. Each step is 12 inches deep x 37 3/4 inches wide x 7 inches high.

3. Flooring: The building has structural clay tile floors with maple flooring laid on top throughout. Floor boards measure 14 feet in length x 2 1/4 inches in width. On several of the upper floors 1/4 inch steel plates 48 inches x 64 inches in size have been placed on top of the maple flooring to accommodate printing and cutting machines.

4. Wall and ceiling finishes: With the exception of modern partitions, wall and ceiling finishes are simple coatings of plaster, much of which has deteriorated.

5. Openings:

   a. Doorways/doors: With the exception of metal doors 40 inches wide x 87 inches high that separate the stairwells from each floor, and large sliding fire doors 87 inches wide x 89 inches high, set into the fire wall, all other doors are modern partitions not deemed significant. Exterior loading dock doors are corrugated metal and roll into overhead canisters by chain mechanisms.

   b. Windows: Windows are of two basic types. The first can be described as having two-over-two lights set in sliding sashes or wood 48 inches wide x 82 inches high. These are centered in the structural bays throughout the building. The end window on each wall can be described as a three over three lights set in sliding sashes or wood 60 inches wide x 82 inches high.

6. Interior trim: Not applicable. Surviving office partitions date from mid-century at the earliest.

7. Hardware: Not applicable. Surviving office partitions date from mid-century at the earliest.

8. Mechanical equipment:

   a. Heating/ventilation: Some forced-air heating systems of recent vintage are found. A large basement boiler room which may have some original machinery is submerged under water. Steam radiators under each window in the building were made by the Arco, Cameo, Weil & McLain Co.

   b. Electrical: The freight elevators in the central tower were installed in 1947.[44] Freight elevators also serve the two smaller western towers, and they appear to be of modern vintage. A major electrical control panel is found on the northern interior face of the central double stairwell at each floor.

   c. Plumbing: A major plumbing stack is found facing the south face of the central stairwell on each floor. In addition a sprinkler system appears to have been part of the original structure of the building. The basement contains four wells in which a modern ADT fire sprinkler system is located. The wells, however, appear to be part of the original design of the building. There is no evidence to suggest the type of manufacture of the original sprinkler system.

   d. Manufacturing: Two Seybold stamping machines from the Cadaco/Rapid Mounting and Finishing Company remain in place on the twelfth floor. Another large printing or cutting machine reaches from the eleventh through the twelfth floor.

D. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

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[44]. Permit Ledgers/Records, Department of Buildings, City Hall, Chicago.

1. General setting and orientation: The building does not have one clearly defined principal entrance, despite its 310 W. Polk Street address. Rather, its east and west sides were used for both river and rail traffic respectively. Brickwork on each of these sides is similiar. The central tower provides a distinctive termination and complement to the vertical warehouse from each perspective. The river shapes the trapezoidal site, with the building following the riverfront on the east. The west side of the building is aligned with Ellsworth Street, which was vacated in 1924.[45] Ellsworth Street conformed to Chicago's rectilinear urban grid pattern. Consequently, as the building progresses southward it expands in size. The building was abutted by the Polk Street bridge (demolished) at its southern face.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

A. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources: None

2. Secondary and published sources:

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[45] Title Records, Cook County Recorder of Deeds, County Building, Chicago.

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PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the U.S. Postal Service as it fulfilled Section 106 compliance requirements for a project that will affect the River Warehouse. The Postal Service contracted with Envirodyne Engineering for overall project services. Envirodyne then sub-contracted with Archaeological Research Incorporated (ARI) for the formal HABS documentation. Project personnel included Mr. Ron Gordon, photographer, Ms. Joan Pomaranc, historical researcher, Dr. John N. Vogel, project associate, and Mr. David Keene, project director.