

L.S. AYRES & COMPANY DEPARTMENT STORE
1 West Washington Street
Indianapolis
Marion County
Indiana

HABS No. IN-253

HABS
IND
49-IND,
45-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
Northeast Region
Philadelphia Support Office
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, P.A. 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

L.S. AYRES & COMPANY DEPARTMENT STORE

HABS No. IN-253

HABS
IND
49-IND,
45-

Location:

1 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana

USGS Indianapolis West, Indiana Quadrangle
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
16.572040.4401920

Present Owner:

City of Indianapolis
Department of Metropolitan Development
200 East Washington Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Present Use:

Vacant

Significance:

The L.S. Ayres & Company Department Store is locally significant in the areas of architecture and commerce. The original 1905 portion of the department store, located at the corner of Washington and Meridian Streets, was the work of one of Indianapolis' most famous architectural firms, Vonnegut & Bohn. When opened, the original building was the first "modern" department store built in the city. It was eight stories high, with six modern elevators, 250 feet of show windows, soda fountain and Tea Room - plus a startling concept locally, the Economy Basement. For nearly eighty years, the Ayres department store, was one of the leading retail dry goods operations in Indiana. Additions constructed in 1914 and 1928-29 were designed by the firm of Vonnegut, Bohn & Mueller. The final addition, built in 1946, was the work of the nationally recognized firm of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill of Chicago. The construction was under the personal supervision of Nathaniel Owings, a former Indianapolis resident.

From its founding, the department store has been "first in Indiana": in 1872, city water, in 1876, illuminating gas. A telephone was installed in 1877, and in 1880, electric lights. The year 1890 saw the first elevator and 1928, the first air conditioning in an Indianapolis department store. Escalators came in 1937, with access to all selling

floors by 1954. The new and now familiar credit card service, the Carga-Plate was introduced in 1937.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The original portion of the L.S. Ayres & Company Department Store, built at the intersection of Washington and Meridian Streets, was constructed in 1905.
2. Architect: The Indianapolis architectural firm of Vonnegut & Bohn designed the 1905 portion of the L.S. Ayres & Company Department Store. This firm was founded in Indianapolis in 1888 by Bernard Vonnegut and Arthur Bohn. Vonnegut (1855-1908) was born in Indianapolis of German-immigrant parents and studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the Polytechnic Institute of Hannover, Germany ("Bernard Vonnegut Claimed by Death," Indianapolis Star, August 8, 1908, p.1). Bohn (1861-1948) was born in Louisville, Kentucky of German-immigrant parents and studied architecture in the Royal Polytechnic Institute in Karlsruhe, Germany (Jacob P. Dunn, Indiana and Indianans, Chicago: American Historical Society, 1919, IV:1796). Numerous examples of the firm's, (and later Vonnegut, Bohn & Mueller, founded in 1911) work are located throughout the Indianapolis area including Das Deutsche Haus-Athenaeum (HABS No. IN-63), Block's Department Store, Selig Dry Goods Company Building, John Herron Art Institute, Crown Hill Cemetery Porter's Lodge (HABS No. IN-57), the Roosevelt Building (HABS No. IN-215) and the Schnull & Company Building (HABS No. IN-219).
3. Original and subsequent owners: The L.S. Ayres & Company Department Store, opened in 1905, was built for and paid by the L.S. Ayres & Company. On January 25, 1972, the L.S. Ayres & Company announced an agreement to sell its stores to Associated Dry Goods Corporation, a New York-based retail department store chain. In 1984, Ayres was merged with H & S Pogue, a chain owned by Associated. In 1986, May Department Stores Company of St. Louis acquired Associated. The May Company closed the store in January of 1992 and held a public auction of its contents on February 15, 18, 19 and 20, 1992. On October 29, 1992, the building was acquired by the City of Indianapolis.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: The 1905 portion of the L.S. Ayres & Company Department Store was built by the Westlake Construction Company. The name of the contractor for the 1914 is still unknown at this time. The 1928-29 addition was built by the Strathmann Construction Company of Indianapolis and the William P. Jungclaus Company, Inc. of Indianapolis was the general contractor for the 1946 addition.
5. Original plans and construction: The 1905 portion of the L.S. Ayres & Company Department Store was a rectangular-shaped, eight-story building. The building was three-bays wide along Washington Street and measured 67-1/2' (east-west) and was nine-bays long on Meridian Street measuring 196' (north-south). Exhaustive searches of the likely repositories of historic architectural drawings have not been able to locate any of the original drawings for this building.
6. Alterations and additions: In 1914, a nine-story 3-bay addition was constructed to the west doubling the size of the original building and the Washington Street facade. The ninth-story of the addition was set back so that the cornice line would match the original construction. This addition was designed by Vonnegut, Bohn & Mueller, which was formed in 1911 when engineer Otto Nicholas Mueller joined the established architectural firm of Vonnegut & Bohn. In 1928-29 an eleven-story five-bay addition was constructed to the south of the original building spanning over Pearl Street. This addition, also designed by Vonnegut, Bohn & Mueller, was similar to the original in its materials and details. Finally, in 1946, an eleven-story, two-bay addition, designed by the nationally recognized architectural firm of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill of Chicago was constructed to the south completing the building to its existing size and appearance. This addition, while continuing the overall lines of the building, lacked the details and ornamental decorations of the earlier constructions. As with the original construction drawings, drawings for the 1914 addition have not been located. However, blueprints of the architectural drawings for both the 1928-29 and 1946 additions have recently been discovered. These are currently in the possession

of the City of Indianapolis pending the determination of an appropriate repository. Further, original drawings relating to the structural steel work for the 1928-29 and 1946 additions are in the collection of the Indiana Historical Society Library in Indianapolis.

As is the nature of department stores, numerous alterations have occurred to the building over its life. The most notable exterior alterations include revisions to the first floor storefront display windows, replacement of the Meridian Street entry canopy and the infill of the open stairwell on the upper levels of the Pearl Street connector. Interior alterations include the installation of the escalators to service all floors as well as the frequent reconfiguration of the sales areas.

B. Historical Context

The L.S. Ayres & Company story in Indianapolis began in 1872 when Lyman S. Ayres, who formerly operated dry goods stores in Cardon, Ohio and Geneva, New York, bought an interest in the N.R. Smith & Company, an existing retail dry goods operation located in the "Trading Place" at 28 West Washington Street in downtown Indianapolis. Appropriately, the name of the dry goods business was changed to the N.R. Smith & Ayres Company. In 1874, Lyman S. Ayres took over its management, changed the name to L.S. Ayres & Company and moved the business across the street to 33-37 West Washington Street. Following the death of Lyman S. Ayres in 1898, his son Frederic M. Ayres became president, and L.S. Ayres & Company was incorporated. When constructed in 1905, the original eight-story building, located at the corner of Meridian and Washington Streets, was the first modern, fireproof department store edifice built in Indianapolis. It contained such amenities as a soda fountain, grill and tea room, six elevators and 250' of storefront display windows.

Prior to the construction of the 1905 building, the site was occupied by the four-story Hubbard Block facing Washington Street and series of three and four-story buildings fronting on Meridian Street. These were demolished to make way for the new eight-story department store. In 1914, in order to accommodate for the construction of the addition to the west of the original building, the four-story Iron Block was demolished. As

the department store grew to the south, the eight-story Chamber of Commerce building as well as the two adjacent three-story buildings were demolished and the 1928 eight-story addition which spanned Pearl Street ("3 More Old Landmarks Are Passing to Make Way for Ayres' New Store," Indianapolis Star, March 4, 1928). The final expansion of the department store required the demolition of the old William B. Burford Retail Store ("Ayres' Store To Build 11-Floor Addition At Cost Of \$500,000," Indianapolis Star, December 29, 1945).

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The L.S Ayres & Company Department Store is a combination of the original eight-story structure built in 1905 with a nine-story addition to the west in 1914, an eleven-story addition to the south in 1928-29 and with another eleven-story addition to the south in 1946. The Early Commercial High-Rise design and details of the original building and the 1914 addition are identical as is the use of the brown brick with iron spots, limestone and buff-colored terra cotta trim. While the details of the 1928-29 addition varies slightly from the previous buildings, the materials repeat. The 1946 addition departs from the existing design scheme in its details and materials and would be best classified as International Style. The addition is clad in a yellow brick with limestone trim and is void of ornament. Alterations continued until the department store was closed in 1992. On the exterior, original materials or features were removed or covered up and on the interior spaces were reconfigured and remodeled.
2. Condition of fabric: The exterior masonry materials of the building, consisting of brick, terra cotta and limestone, appear to be in good condition. The interior of the building is also in good condition although it has been extensively remodeled over time.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The L.S. Ayres & Company Department Store occupies half of a city block measuring 135 feet wide and 375 long. The north facade is six bays wide and 130 feet in height. The east facade is divided into seventeen bays and is 175 feet in height at its southern end. The building has a basement and sub-basement area which extend eighteen feet under the Washington Street sidewalk and sixteen feet under the Meridian Street sidewalk.
2. Foundations: The poured concrete foundations do not have exterior exposures.
3. Walls:
 - a. North and east elevations: The L.S. Ayres & Company Department Store's two principal elevations are on the north along Washington Street and the east along Meridian Street. The Washington Street facade is six bays wide and eight stories tall. The entire Meridian Street facade is seventeen bays long and varies in height from eight stories at the north end to eleven stories at the south addition.

The first floor base is divided into storefront bays. The 1905 division of storefront windows has been altered and the transoms are covered with plywood panels. The original double level transom windows with frosted glass and decorative muntins remain behind the plywood. An elaborate bracketed cast iron canopy adorns the Washington Street entrance while a simpler, replacement cast iron canopy is in place at the Meridian Street entrance. The southern bay of the east facade also contains a recessed entry with limestone panels and trim. Above the first floor, the exterior of the building remains virtually intact. On the 1905/1914 buildings, the facades are divided vertically into recessed bays of brick spandrels and windows by brick piers which rise from limestone bases on the ground floor up to the pressed metal cornice. The piers are trimmed with angled brick borders. On the second floor, the bays contain "chicago-style" one-over-one, double hung wood windows with transoms. All other floors contain three-over-one wood double hung windows of equal proportions

without transoms. Some of the windows have had vent louvers installed in place of their sash. The window openings are trimmed with limestone sills and cream-colored terra cotta lintels. The brick piers are interrupted at the eighth floor level by a horizontal brick band which is capped with by a shallow terra cotta ledge which serves as the sill for the eighth floor windows. These windows are separated by brick mullions with decorative terra cotta capitals. Atop the eighth floor is another brick spandrel band which is punctuated by cross-shaped vent holes and is capped with an elaborate pressed metal cornice consisting of rosette ornaments in the frieze and shields with a raised "A" at each pier.

As stated previously, the architectural character and materials of the 1928-29 addition are very similar to those of the 1905/1914 buildings while the 1946 addition differs greatly. The first floor storefront originally mimicked the 1905 building but was modernized with the 1946 addition to create a uniform appearance. The facade is divided vertically by similar brick piers which now stretch to the eleventh floor. However, the angled brick borders stop at the eighth floor level. The configuration of the windows is the same however the windows contain one-over-one light sash. The cornice consists of a brick parapet with two vertical terra cotta floral elements per bay and smaller shields atop each pier. The piers on the 1946 addition do not have the angled brick border nor is there any cornice/parapet decoration.

As part of the 1928-29 addition to the south, the connector spanning Pearl Street was constructed. The connector sets back 20 feet from the east facades of the north and south buildings. Its elevation starts at the second floor level and consists of a projecting bay with screened openings expressing nine stories. An eleventh floor is recessed. The projecting bay of the connector contains a metal fire escape stairway which runs down from the eleventh floor to the second floor where the stairway enters the south building. At an unknown time, the screened openings above the fourth floor level were infilled with stucco-like panels. The brickwork, limestone and terra cotta detailing on the connector correspond with those of

the south building. The walls under the connector are clad with brown iron-spot brick and cream colored glazed brick with terra cotta trim details. Metal casement windows with wire glass are set high on both the north and south walls.

On the northeast corner of the building, dubbed "The Crossroads of America" in Ayre's promotional literature, is a large, ornate cast bronze clock. The clock was designed by Arthur Bohn of the architectural firm of Vonnegut, Bohn & Mueller of Indianapolis, the bronze was cast by the Flour City Bronze Company of Minneapolis, Minnesota and the works were built by the International Time Recording Company of Endicott, New York (L.S. Ayres and Company, "The Ayres' Clock," undated). The clock was added to the second floor of the building in 1936 and has become a local landmark and the setting for an Indianapolis tradition. Since 1947, a bronze cherub has "appeared" on the clock every Thanksgiving evening, to stay for the duration of the Christmas season.

- b. South and west elevations: The south and west elevations originally abutted adjacent construction or were relegated to alley exposures and are therefore functional in nature and design. The west elevations are clad in red brick except for the 1946 addition which is the same yellow brick as the east facade. The first three floors of the west wall of the 1914 addition is a blank masonry party wall because of adjacency of a previously constructed building to the west. Above that level, the masonry wall was punctuated by openings containing single, three-over-three, hollow metal sash double hung windows. These openings have limestone sills and lintels. However, all openings on the fourth, fifth, six and numerous openings on the seventh and eighth floors have been infilled. The west elevations of the 1928-29 and 1946 additions also contain the hollow metal windows at the thirteen and eleven stories respectively.

The south elevation consists of a yellow brick clad party wall of the 1946 addition which rises above an adjacent seven-story building to the south. Glazed terra cotta units spell out "L.S. Ayres & Co." near the cornice. These have since been painted over.

4. Structural system, framing: The structural system of the 1905 building and all three additions is steel frame with the primary steel beams being encased in concrete. The curtain walls are either brick or brick and tile construction. The floors and roof of the 1905 and the 1914 sections are tile overlaid with concrete while those of the later additions are concrete.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies: Shallow balconettes with limestone balustrades occur above the storefront entries on the north facade and at the southeast corner of the north building.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The first floor of the building is accessed by entrance doors on the north and east facades as well as on both elevations under the Pearl Street connector.

The entrance on the north elevation is located in the center two bays. This entry was created when the 1914 addition was constructed. Previously, the north facade entry was centered in the middle bay of the original 3-bay 1905 structure. The existing entrance consists of four revolving wood doors, two per bay, which are framed by limestone clad piers atop granite bases. A cast iron canopy provides shelter for the doorways. It in turn is supported by three pairs of ornate cast iron brackets attached to each pier. The canopy is trimmed with an acanthus acroterium. Above the canopy are plywood panels which cover the original double level transoms. The doorway composition is completed by a projecting cornice supported by consoles in the form of scrolls with acanthus. The cornice consists of dentils and a band of Greek fretwork and is capped by balustraded sections forming balconettes at the second floor level.

The east facade entrance into the 1905 building is also centered on its elevation. The entry consists of a bay, projecting from the plane of the facade, with narrow display windows at each side. The entry doors are

situated on the angled sides of the projecting bay. Once inside the projecting bay, a modern aluminum revolving door provides access into the sales room. Above the projecting entry bay is a four-light transom which fills the storefront opening. A metal canopy provides shelter to the entry and is cantilevered from the facade and hung by twisted cast iron rods with turnbuckles. The canopy sports cast iron fringe elements and small acroterium. As with the entire storefront, the original transom area is covered by plywood panels.

A second major entry on the east facade is located in the southernmost bay of the 1905 building. The recessed corner entrance is framed by limestone clad piers and is capped with a matching limestone cornice and balconettes as that on the north facade. A pair of aluminum revolving doors provide access and are situated under a curved wall of butt-glazed glass which is protected by an ornate cast iron screen.

Another, nondescript storefront entrance on the east facade is located in the center bay of the 1928-29 south building. This entry was remodeled as a part of the 1946 construction. It contains a pair of painted steel revolving doors flanked by standard leaf doors. The entry is framed in granite and the granite trim continues as a base for the entire south building storefront. The storefront is sheltered by a modern, coffered metal canopy.

Secondary entries are located in both the north and south elevations of Pearl Street under the connector. These entries also contain revolving doors and are framed with marble surrounds.

- b. Windows and shutters: Different fenestration patterns are found on the various constructions and elevations. The north facade contains "chicago-style" windows with transoms on the second floor. The windows consist of one-over-one wood double hung sash and they include single light transoms. Above the second floor, tripled three-over-one, wood

double hung windows, without transoms, fill the openings. At the eighth floor level, the windows change to three-over-three double hung wood sash.

The same window pattern continues on the east facade of the north building. However, the three southernmost window openings on the eighth floor of the north building and the northernmost window opening on the south building contain multi-light casement sash with transoms. These windows occur in the dining room and club room of the former Tea Room restaurant. The rest of the windows on the east facade of the south building are of the same design as those on the north building however they contain one-over-one sash.

West elevation windows are three-over-three double hung hollow metal sash with wire glass glazing. Metal casement windows with wire glass are present on both the north and south elevations under the Pearl Street connector.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The ornate cornice of the 1905/1914 buildings and the plain parapets of the 1928-29/1946 buildings frame and obscure the flat roofs of the various construction periods. The roof have rubber membrane or bituminous surfaces covered with gravel ballast.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The north and east facades of the 1905/1914 buildings are capped by an elaborate pressed metal cornice with rosettes in the frieze and shields located at each brick pier. The east facade of the 1928-29 building has a brick parapet with terra cotta details and shields. The parapet atop the 1946 addition is plain brick with a limestone coping.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: Several brick and metal clad penthouses, elevator machinery rooms and cooling towers rise above the flat roof surfaces.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Commonplace to large department stores are the numerous alterations and remodelings that routinely occur on the interior of the building. The L.S. Ayres and Company Department Store is no exception. As the various sales departments expanded or relocated within the building, changes were made. However, the general open layout and arrangement of the sales room floors was dictated by the interior column spacing. The structural bays remained a constant and the partition walls and sales counters were erected accordingly. For the most part, the interior of the department store consisted of open sales floors from the basement up to the eighth floor. These were subdivided by partition walls for display, storage, fitting rooms and office areas. Interior finishes and features consist largely of modern replacement materials and fixtures. Store offices were located on the ninth through the twelfth floors. The most significant interior spaces remaining in the building are the first floor sales rooms and the eighth floor Tea Room.

The first floor sales rooms of the 1905/1914 and 1928-29/1946 buildings are essentially large open spaces, almost twenty feet high stretching the length and width of the respective buildings. The interior finishes of the 1905/1914 room are beige marble tile floors, dark wood wall paneling, polished bronze elevators, brushed aluminum escalators, ornate plaster chandeliers and plaster column capitals and high plaster panel and beam ceiling with acanthus and egg and dart moldings. All of these elements contribute to create a richness and grandeur that was unique in Indianapolis. A mezzanine, originally open to the sales floor below and edged with a decorative cast iron railing, which contained the "Top of the Stairs" restaurant is situated along the southern wall of the sales room. It has since been enclosed with drywall panels but the ornate marble stairway is still exposed to view.

The first floor sales room in the 1928-29/1946 building still retains the marble floor and wall panels at the bank of elevators and the decorative plaster column capitals and panel and beam ceiling.

However, most of the other finishes have been replaced with modern materials. A mezzanine, located along the southern wall is simple in nature and design.

On the eighth floor was "the historic Tea Room that has fed and entertained generations of Downtown shoppers" (Future uncertain for Downtown Ayres, "Indianapolis Star, November 8, 1990). Though known for its chicken velvet soup and chicken pot pies, architecturally, the Tea Room is distinguished by its Art Deco Style plaster column capitals and panel and beam ceiling and painted wood wall wainscot panels. The hardwood floors are covered by carpeting and vinyl floor surfaces.

2. Stairways: The building does not contain any monumental stairways however, a few interesting sets of stairs remain. As described above, there is a marble stair with cast iron railing leading from the first floor to the mezzanine in the 1905/1914 buildings. A second stair worthy of mention is located in the northeast corner of the first floor of the 1905 building. It is a cast iron stairway with decorative railing which leads down to the basement. Other stairs in the building are merely functional and utilitarian in design.
3. Flooring: The floors in both buildings originally consisted of concrete or clay tiles overlaid with concrete that were in turned covered with marble or hard wood surfaces. However, multiple floor surface finishes, including hard wood, marble, ceramic tiles, carpeting, linoleum or vinyl floor coverings are now present. Bare concrete floors are found in the mechanical areas of the sub-basement, basement and attic areas.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: As with the floors, the interior wall and ceiling finishes have also undergone numerous alterations. Current wall finishes include original plaster, drywall, wood paneling and demountable display partition systems. The ceiling finishes include original plaster, drywall and suspended acoustical tile systems. Exposed masonry and concrete wall and ceiling surfaces are visible in the mechanical areas of the basement and attic.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: A few of what appear to be original interior doors remain scattered throughout the building. These are stained wood panel doors, some with obscure glazing, and are relegated to service and support areas. Trim, if present, consists of flat surrounds.
- b. Windows: The interior window trim of the 1905/1914 buildings consist of simple flat surrounds, some are stained and some are painted. The detail at the window openings of the 1928-29/1946 buildings consist merely of a plaster/drywall return.

6. Decorative features and trim: Distinctive and character-defining features and materials remain in the building. In the first floor sales rooms these include marble tile floors, wood paneling, plaster column capitals and ceilings, plaster chandeliers, and cast iron stair railings. The eighth floor Tea Room contains wood wainscoting and decorative plaster wall moldings, column capitals and ceilings. The 1928-29 building contains several of its original brass and wire glass elevator doors and one original elevator cab.

7. Hardware: Remnants of original hardware can be found of the remaining original doors and windows. These are simple, non-decorative brass hinges, knobs and pulls.

8. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: Cast iron steam radiators can be found on the upper floors of the building. They are located below windows along the exterior walls of both buildings. The remainder of the existing heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems are modern replacements and of little interest.
- b. Lighting: Original cast plaster chandeliers, in the shape of deep bowls, remain throughout the first floor of the north building. All other light fixtures date from later periods.

- c. Plumbing: A few water closets and lavatories have survived, most have been removed or replaced as needed.
 - d. Escalators and elevators: In place of stairways, brushed aluminum escalators, reportedly the first in Indiana, provide access to all sales floors. These were installed between 1937 and 1954. Also, each building has a bank of elevators located along its west wall. Of the elevators in the south building, several sets of the brass and wire glass doors and one original 1928 Otis elevator cab still remain.
- D. Site: The L. S. Ayres & Company Department Store occupies Lots 1, 2, 3, 10 and 11 of Section 66 of Alexander Ralston's 1821 plat for the City of Indianapolis. The architecturally detailed elevations face north onto Washington Street and east onto Meridian Street. The Washington Street elevation measures 135' while the Meridian Street elevation measures 375'. Along its entire elevation to the south, the Ayres building abuts a seven-story, brick, commercial building. Along its entire elevation to the west, former alley and party wall elevations, at the time of this report is the construction site for the Circle Centre Mall development project. When completed, new construction will abut and adjoin the west elevation of the Ayres building.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural Drawings: As stated previously, drawings for the original 1905 construction and the 1914 addition have not been located. Recently however, 25 blueprints by Vonnegut, Bohn & Mueller entitled "New Store Building for L.S. Ayres" and dated from 4/1928 to 8/1929 have been discovered. Further, the Indiana Historical Society Library has 265 original drawings from the Central States Bridge & Structural Company, dated 1928, which depict steel connections and details for the 1928-29 south addition to the building. Also, literally hundreds of blueprints by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill entitled "Burford Addition to South Building" and ranging in date from 1946 through 1948 have recently been discovered. The collection at the Indiana Historical Society Library also contains 56 original drawings, dated 1946-47, from the Central States Bridge & Structural Company relating to the structural steel framework.

- B. Historic Views: Numerous historic photographic views of the L.S. Ayres & Company Department Store exist. These photographs, from the Hugh J. Baker Collection, the Bass Photo Company Collection, the Jack Householder Collection and the Klein & Kuhn Collection of the Indiana Historical Society Library and the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission, depict general exterior and interior views. For the purpose of this report, the following historic photographic views were selected:

(see field notes)

Bass Photo Company Collection #3201, c. 1900, depicts the Hubbard Block and a smaller three-story building that preceded the initial portion of the L.S. Ayres & Company Department Store at the corner of Washington and Meridian Streets. The view, looking southwest, also shows the Chamber of Commerce Building on Meridian Street and a partial view of the Iron Block on Washington Street.

Bass Photo Company Collection #4314, dated April 22, 1905, depicts the construction of the original portion of the building. The view, taken from South Meridian Street looking northwest shows the structural steel framing as it reaches the third floor level.

Bass Photo Company Collection #5772, dated January 5, 1906, depicts the north and east facades of the original 1905 construction at the corner of Washington and Meridian Street. The view, looking southwest, shows the original Washington Street entrance, altered by the 1914 addition, and the original glass and cast iron canopy over the Meridian Street entrance.

Bass Photo Company Collection #43427F, dated c. 1915, depicts the north and east facades shortly after the construction of the 1914 addition to the west. This view, taken from the northeast corner of Washington and Meridian Streets, shows the new Washington Street entrance. Also, the facades of the Chamber of Commerce Building and the two adjacent buildings are visible to the south of the L.S. Ayres & Company Department Store.

Bass Photo Company Collection #49570, dated 1916, depicts the interior of the sales room on the first floor of the north building. The view, looking southeast, shows the decorative plaster ceiling, column capitals and chandeliers, the storefront transom windows and the cast iron mezzanine railings.

Bass Photo Company Collection #206848F, dated 1928, depicts the construction site of the south building along Meridian Street. This view, looking northwest, shows the original south elevation (Pearl Street elevation) of the north building prior to the construction of the south building. Also, the original canopy at the Meridian Street entrance on the north building had been replaced by the time of this view.

Jack Householder Collection #C5954, dated 1954, depicts the south elevation and east facade of the L.S. Ayres & Company Department Store after the 1946 addition. The view, looking northwest, shows the "L.S. AYRES & CO." lettering on the eleventh floor of the south elevation.

Bass Photo Company Collection #301490F3, dated 1957, depicts the north and east facades of the north building. This view, looking southwest, shows the Ayres' clock and alterations to the storefront display windows.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Deed Books, Marion County Recorder's Office,
Indianapolis, Indiana, 1900-1993.

Letter, dated January 10, 1992, addressed to the May Department Stores Company from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources listing items of architectural and historical value observed in the building prior to the public auction.

2. Secondary and published sources:

a. Books

Dunn, Jacob P. Indiana and Indianans. Chicago: American Historical Society, 1919.

Sanborn Map Company. Insurance Maps of Indianapolis, Indiana. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1898 & 1914, and 1914-15 corrected to 1954.

b. Newspapers

"Bernard Vonnegut Claimed by Death."
Indianapolis Star. August 8, 1908.

- "3 More Old Landmarks Are Passing to Make Way for Ayres' New Store." Indianapolis Star. March 4, 1928.
- "Ayres' Store To Build 11-Floor Addition At Cost Of \$500,000." Indianapolis Star. December 29, 1945.
- "Ayres' Hollows Out Niche 40,000 Sq. Ft. For Santa In Pit." Indianapolis Times. November 11, 1947.
- "L.S. Ayres & Co. Born In Depression Of 1870's." Unknown. 1953.
- "O.N. Mueller." Indianapolis News. November 13, 1958.
- "Scorecard Needed For L.S. Ayres." Indianapolis News. December 2, 1968.
- "L.S. Ayres Being Sold To New York Chain For About \$78 Million." Indianapolis Star. January 26, 1972.
- "Ayres Foresees 2 More Big Units." Indianapolis News. June 20, 1972.
- "Future uncertain for Downtown Ayres." Indianapolis Star. November 8, 1990.
- "Talk of Ayres demise comes at bad time." Indianapolis Business Journal. November 12-18, 1990.
- "Where There's An Ayres, There's A May." Indianapolis News. November 20, 1990.
- "L.S. Ayres will close Downtown location." Indianapolis Star. October 26, 1991.
- " 'Sad day for Indiana retailing' " Indianapolis Star. October 26, 1991.
- "That Ayres Look - Building's future uncertain." Indianapolis Star. January 13, 1992.

"Goodbye to a dear old friend." Indianapolis Star. January 21, 1992.

"Last chances to buy part of Ayres." Indianapolis Star. February 11, 1992.

"Auction selling memories." Indianapolis Star. February 16, 1992.

"Downtown missing a holiday tradition." Indianapolis Star. December 5, 1992.

c. Brochures/Advertisement Materials

"The Ayres' Clock." L.S. Ayres & Company. undated.

"L.S. Ayres and Company Clock Recently Restored." L.S. Ayres & Co. of Indiana. 1978.

"Merchandising, vision, civic-mindedness, service, integrity and quality." L.S. Ayres & Company. 1982.

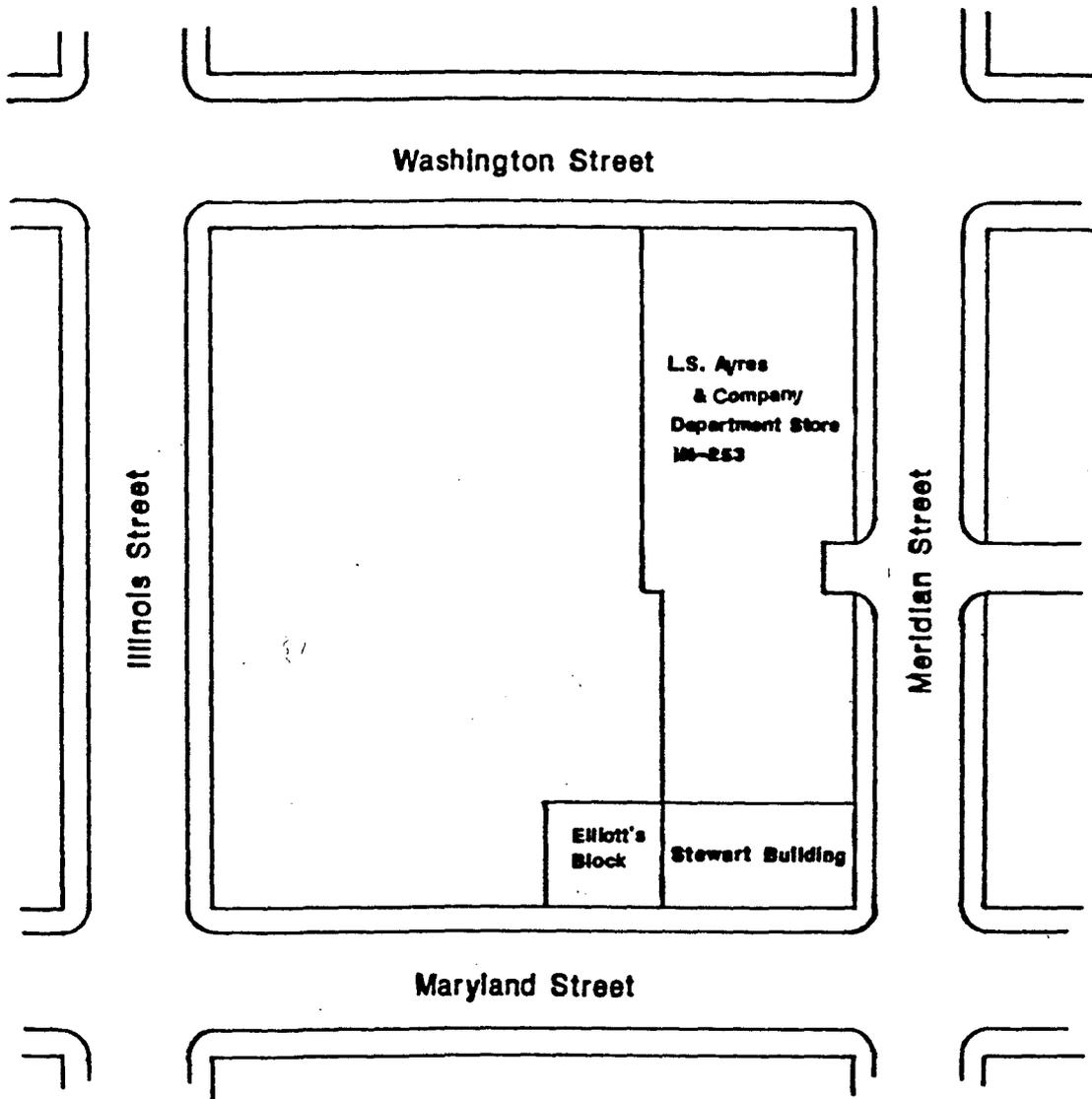
"Public Auction, L.S. Ayres Downtown Department Store." Commercial Liquidators of America. 1992.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission (IHPC) in compliance with the Memorandum of Agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as a mitigative effort due to substantial rehabilitation.

Prepared by: David A. Kroll
Ratio Architects, Inc.
36 South Pennsylvania Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204
June, 1994

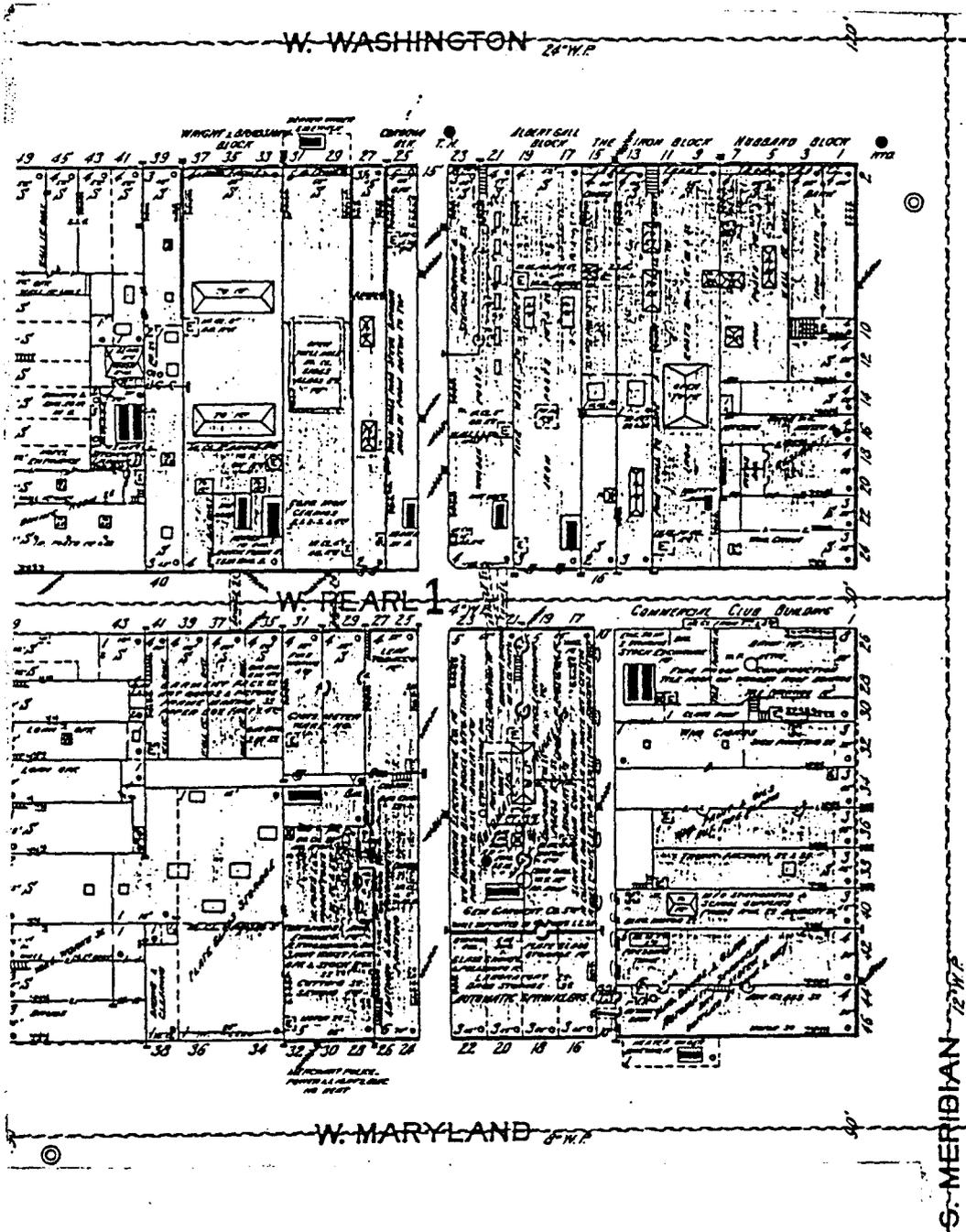
EXISTING SITE PLAN



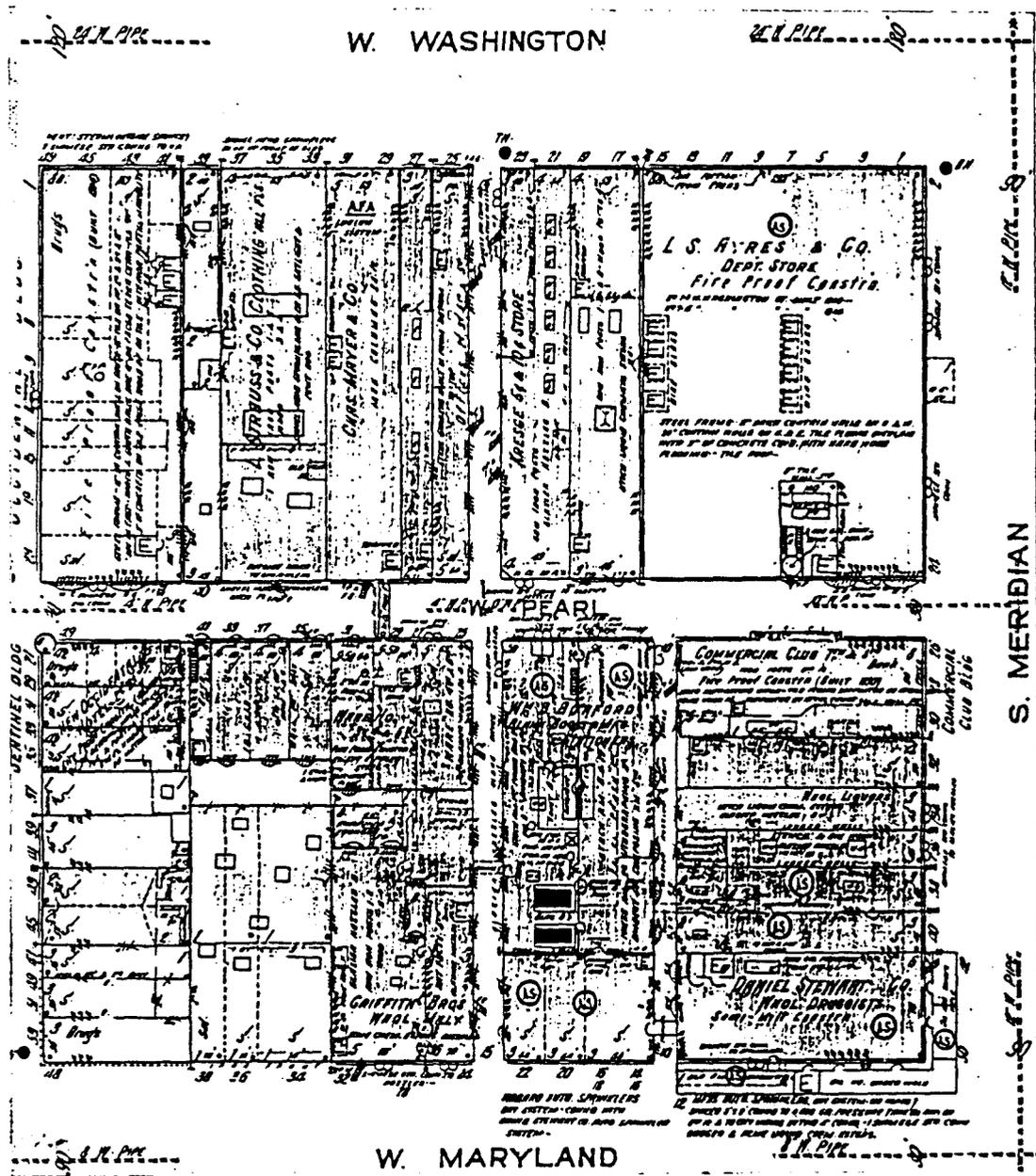
CITY SQUARE 66

Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana

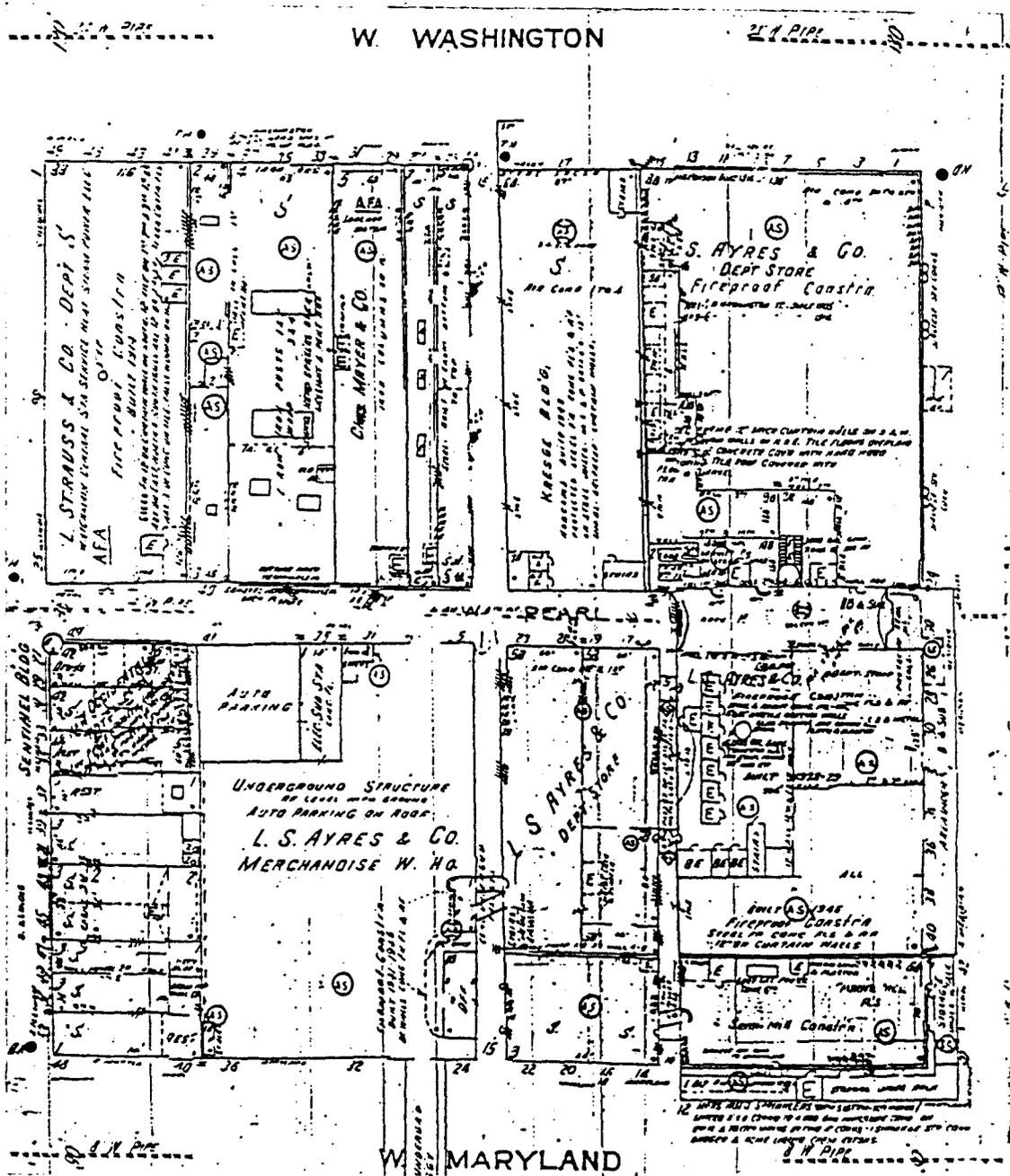
1898 Insurance Map of Indianapolis, Indiana
Sanborn Map Company, New York, NY



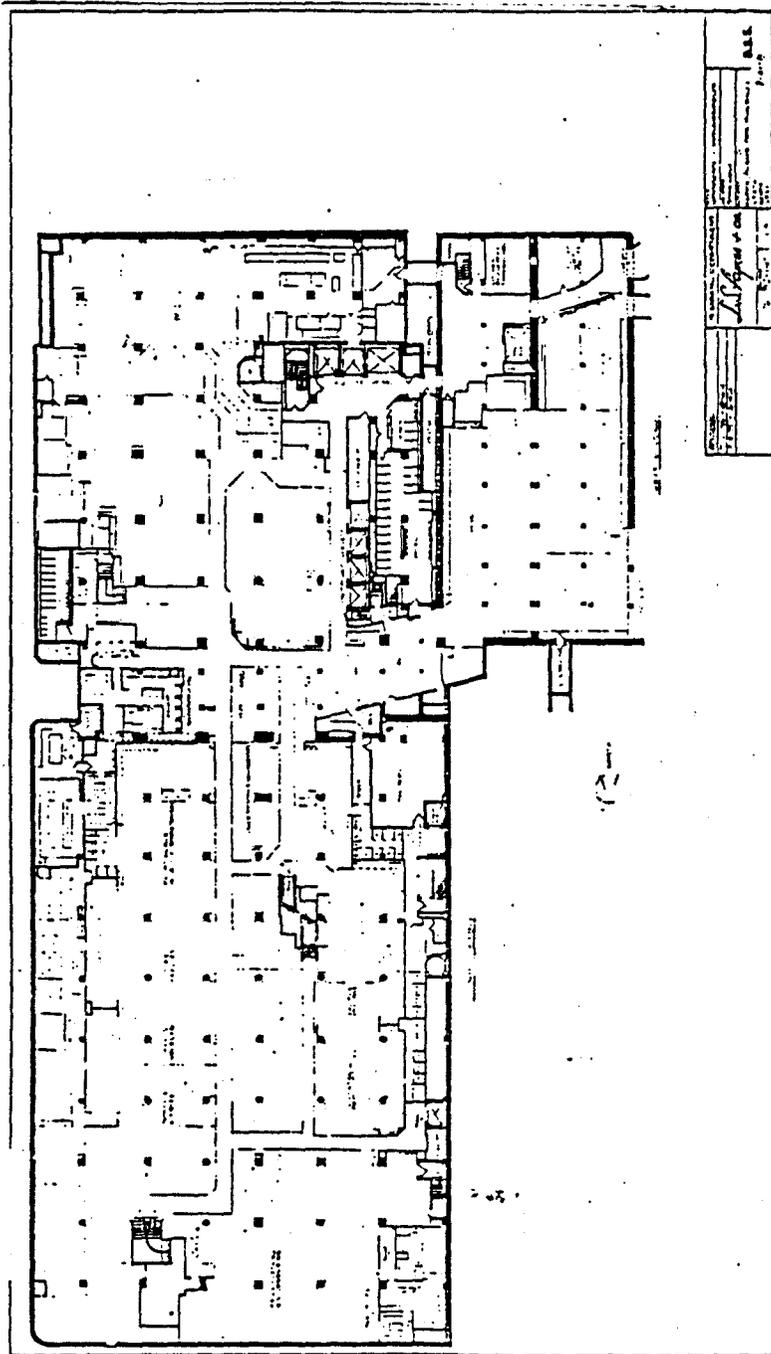
1914 Insurance Map of Indianapolis, Indiana
Sanborn Map Company, New York, NY



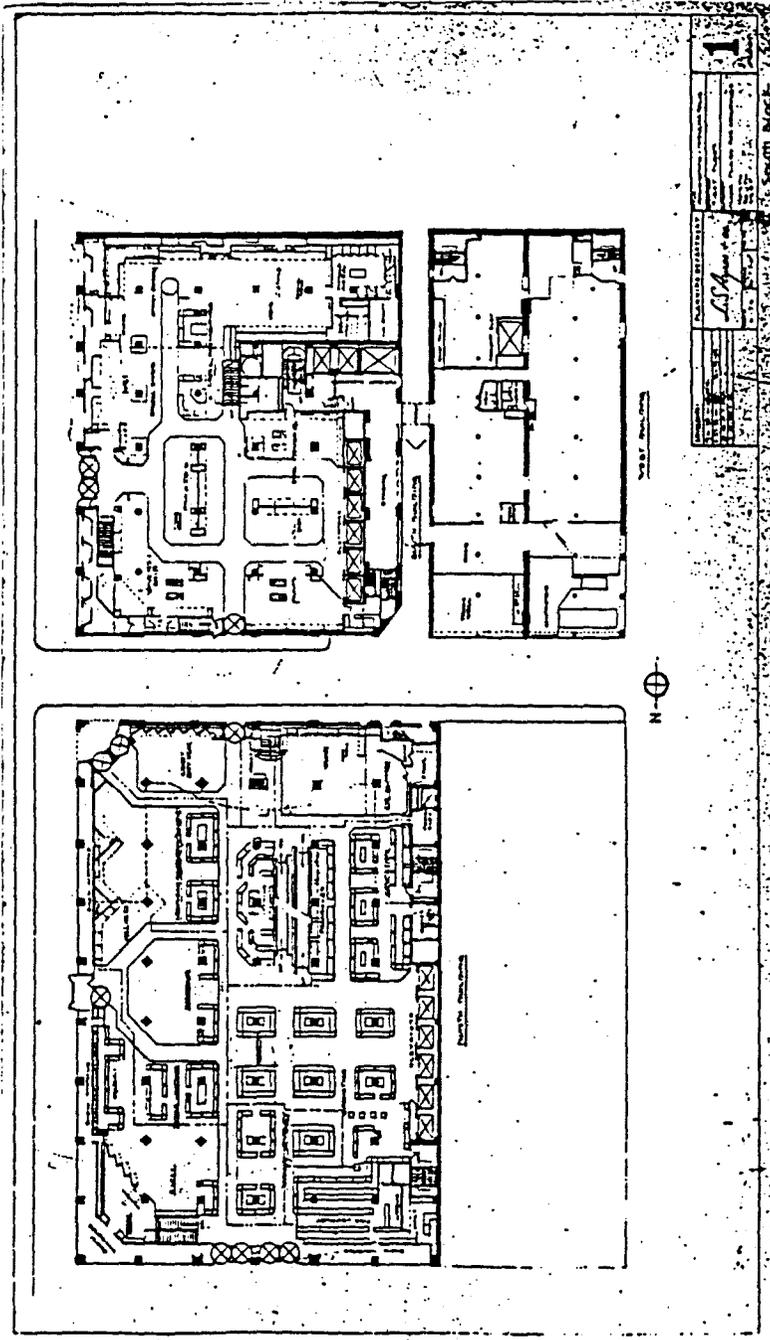
1915-1954 Updated Insurance Map of Indianapolis, Indiana
Sanborn Map Company, New York, NY



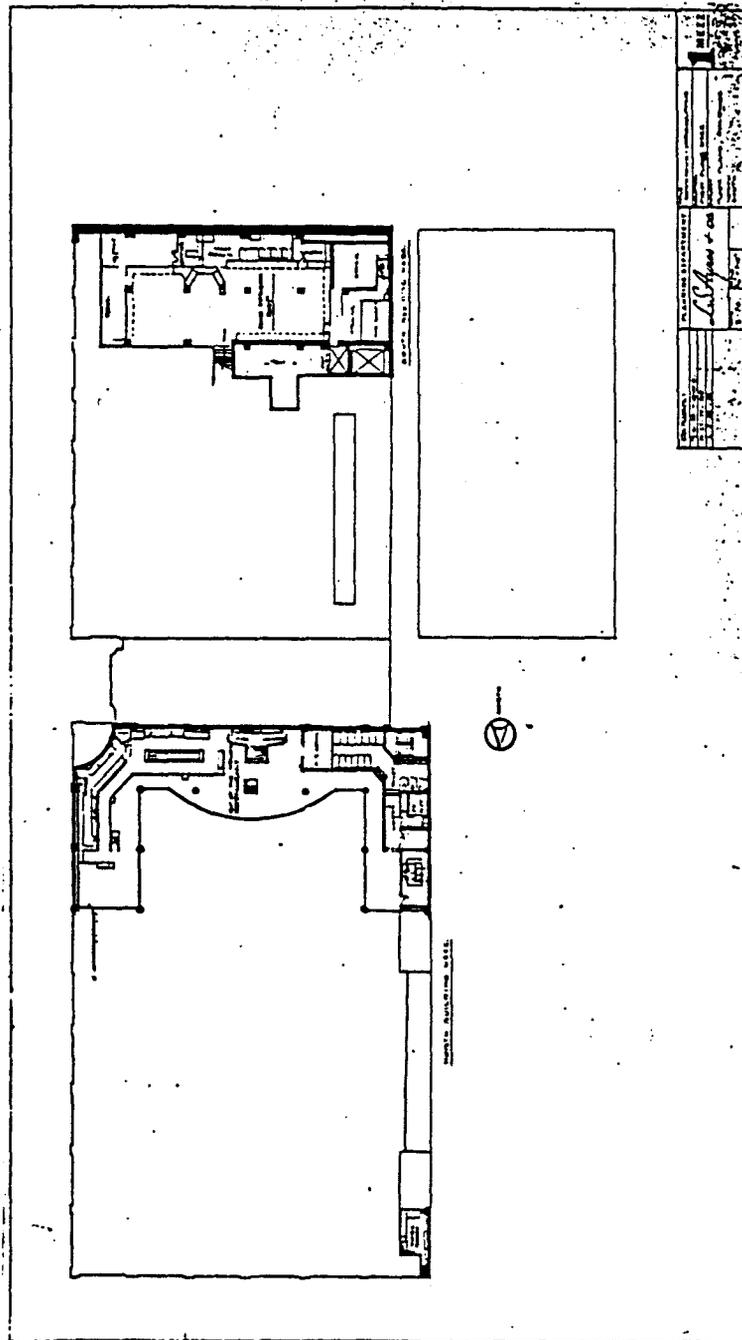
Floor Plans for Buildings, Basement, L.S. Ayres & Co. Planning Department, 1976, updated in 1979. Blue prints in the possession of the City of Indianapolis.



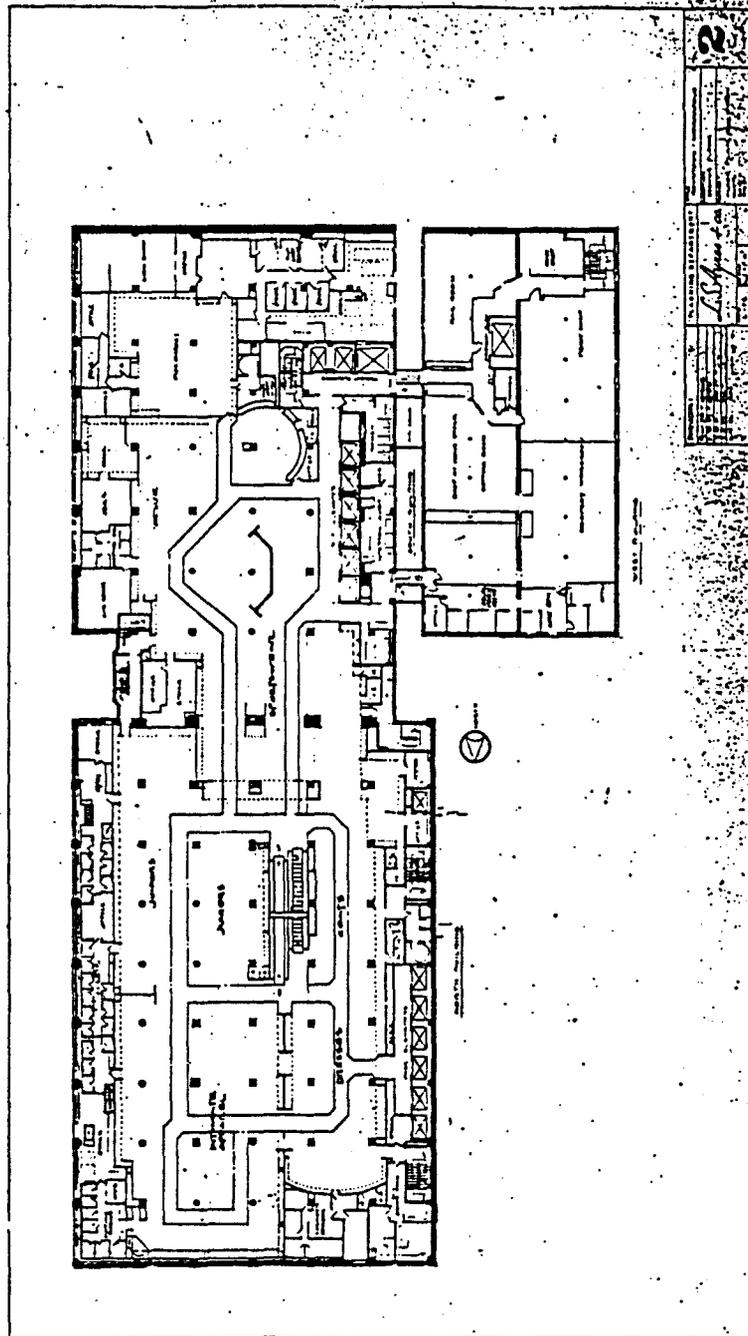
Floor Plans for Buildings, First Floor, L.S. Ayres & Co. Planning Department, 1976, updated in 1985. Blue prints in the possession of the City of Indianapolis.



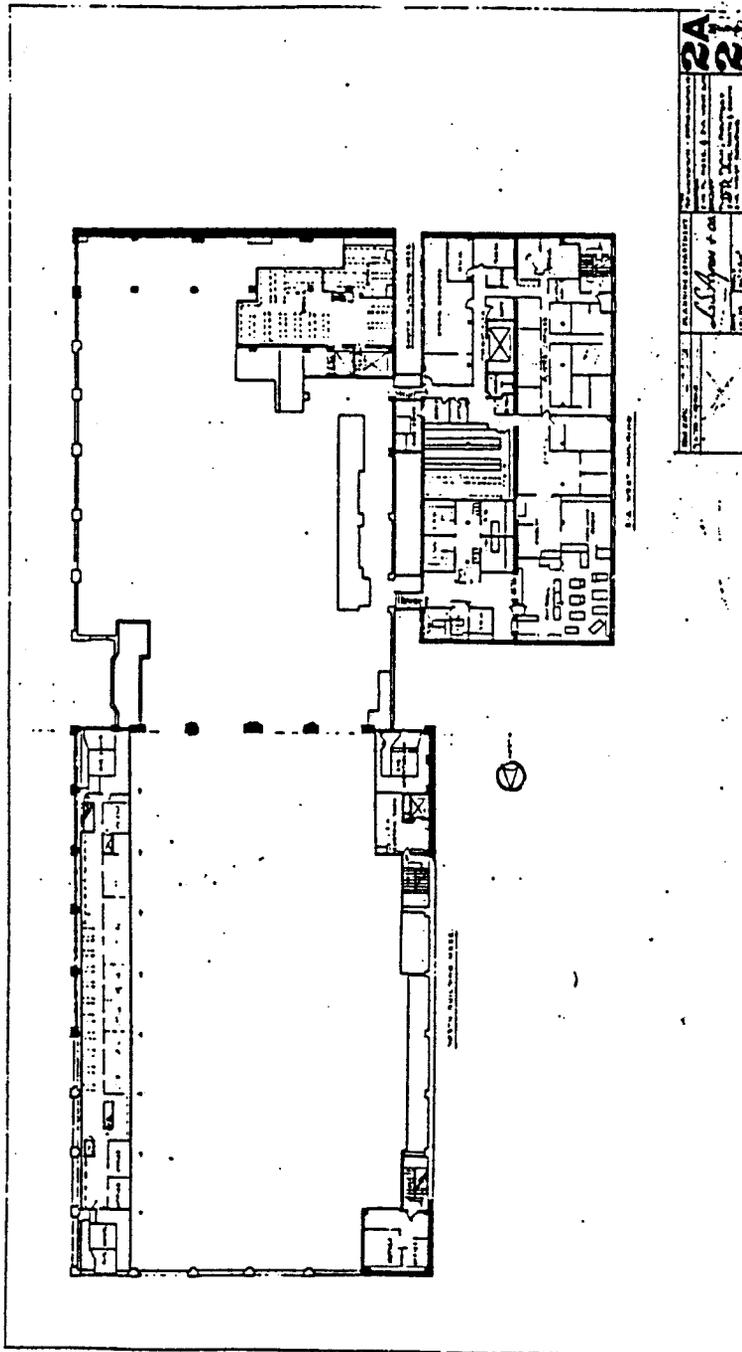
Floor Plans for Buildings, First Floor Mezzanine, L.S. Ayres & Co. Planning Department, 1976, updated in 1985. Blue prints in the possession of the City of Indianapolis.



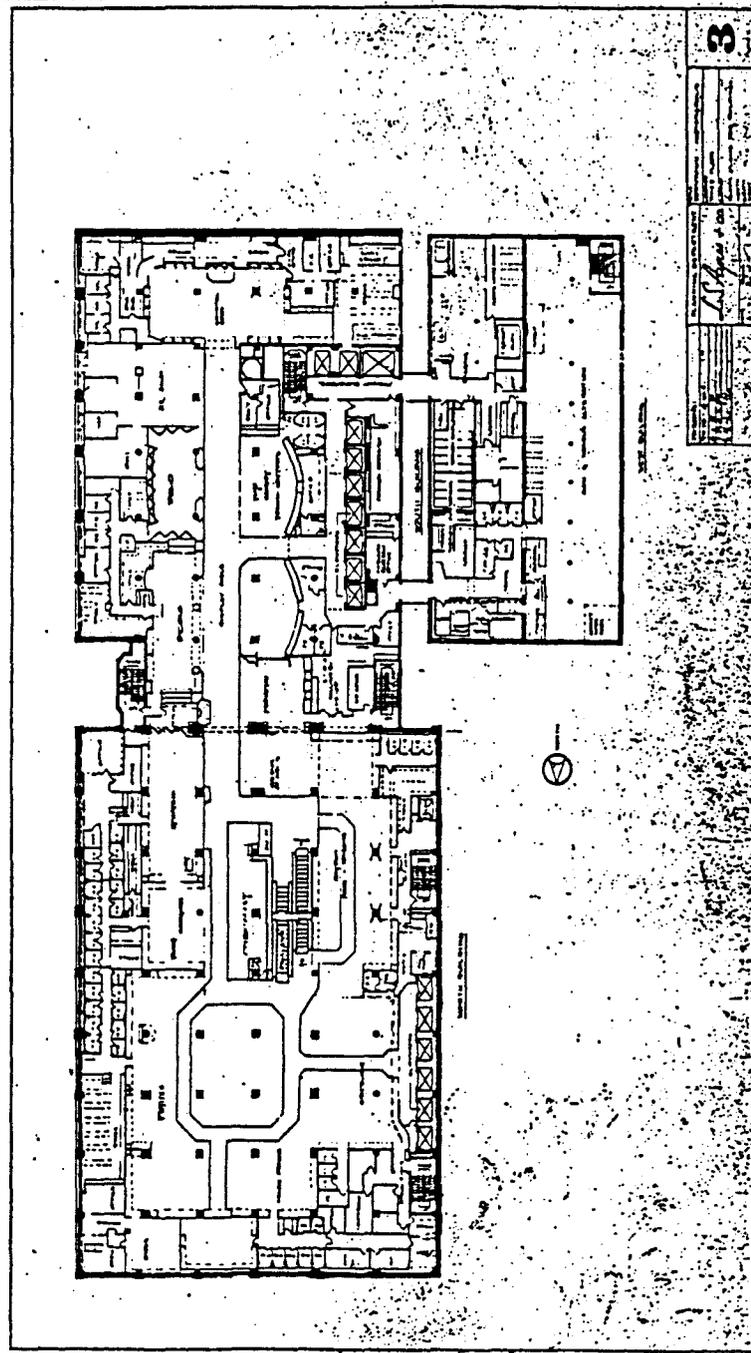
Floor Plans for Buildings, Second Floor, L.S. Ayres & Co. Planning Department, 1976, updated in 1986. Blue prints in the possession of the City of Indianapolis.



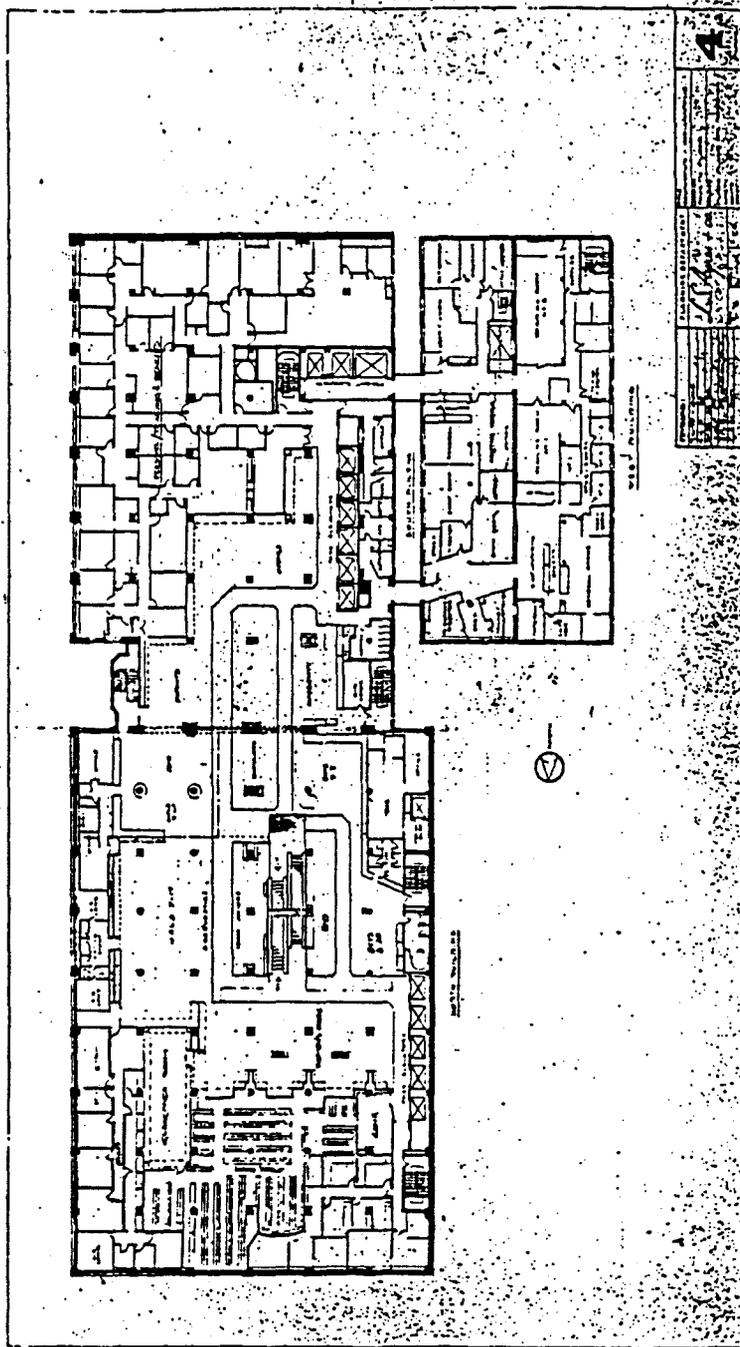
Floor Plans for Buildings, Second Floor Mezzanine & 2-A West Building, L.S. Ayres & Co. Planning Department, 1975, updated in 1978. Blue prints in the possession of the City of Indianapolis.



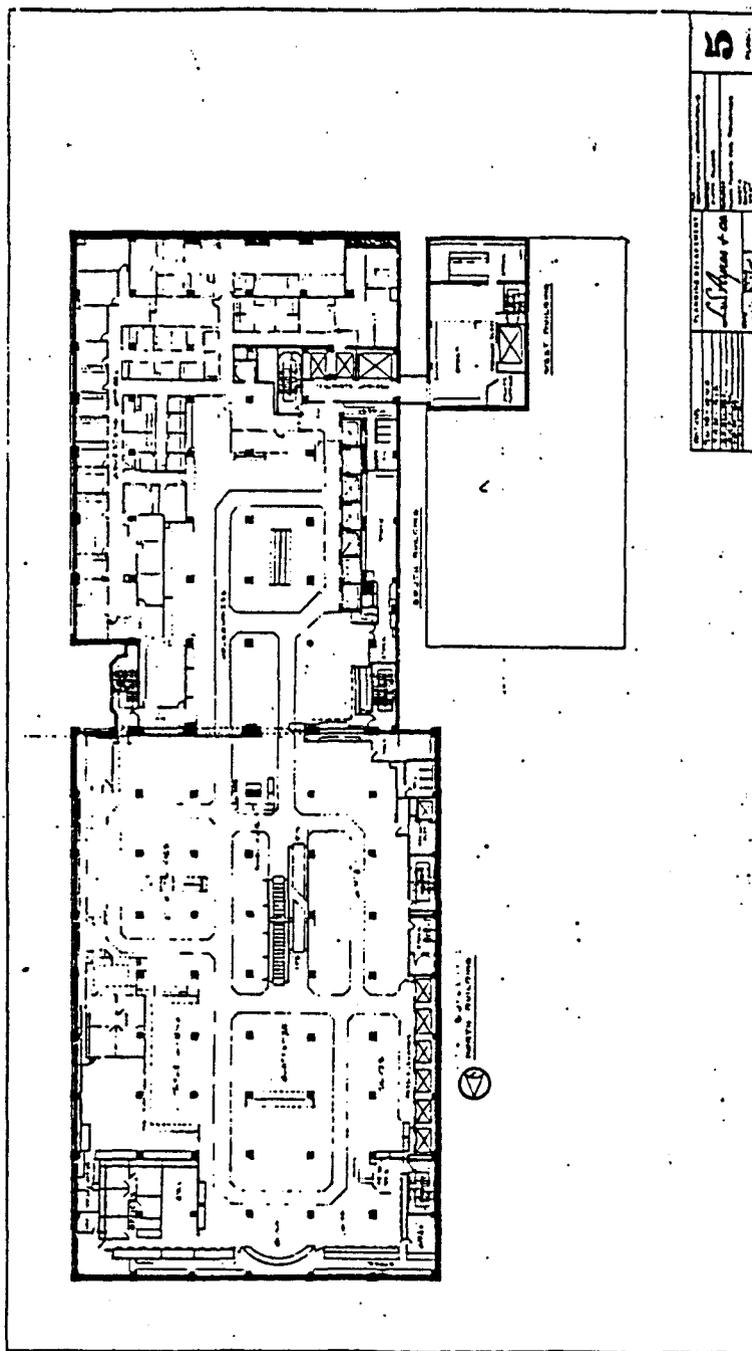
Floor Plans for Buildings, Third Floor, L.S. Ayres & Co. Planning Department, 1976, updated in 1986. Blue prints in the possession of the City of Indianapolis.



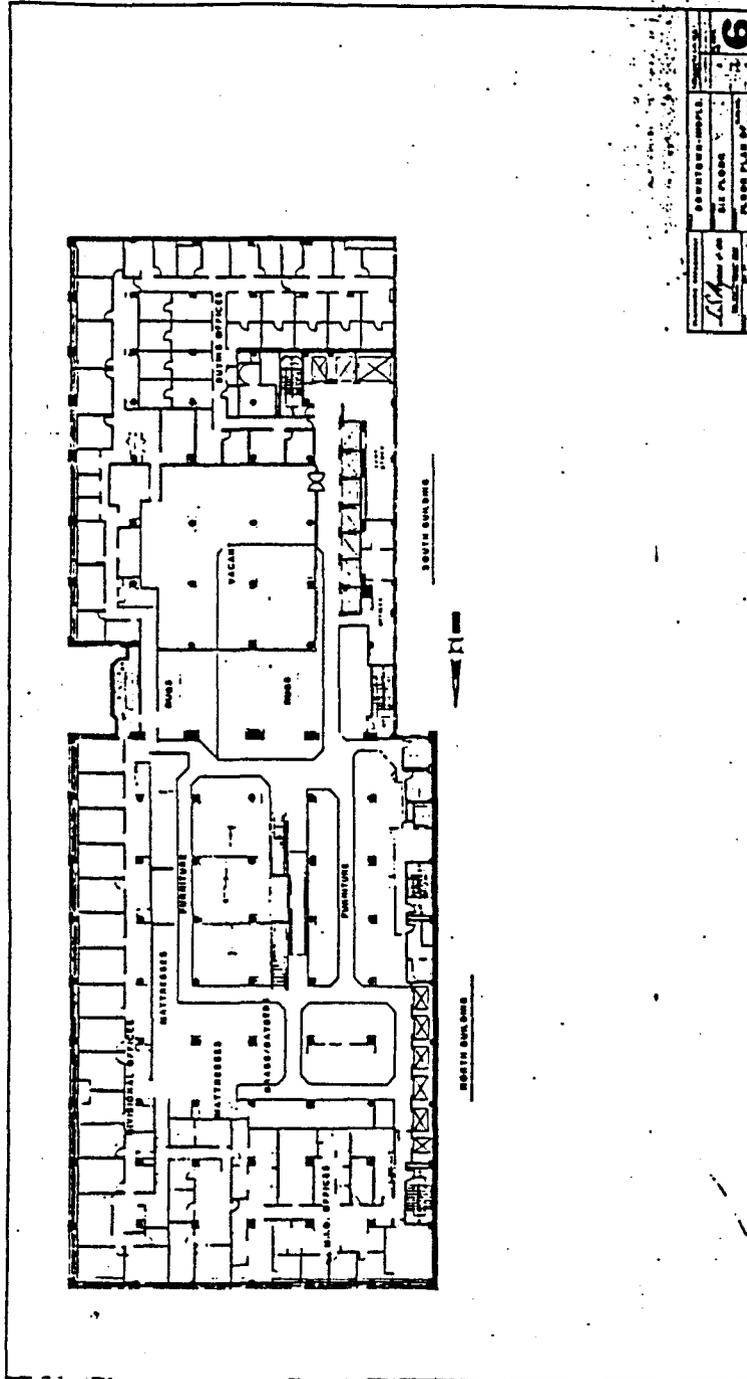
Floor Plans for Buildings, Fourth Floor, L.S. Ayres & Co. Planning Department, 1976, updated in 1986. Blue prints in the possession of the City of Indianapolis.



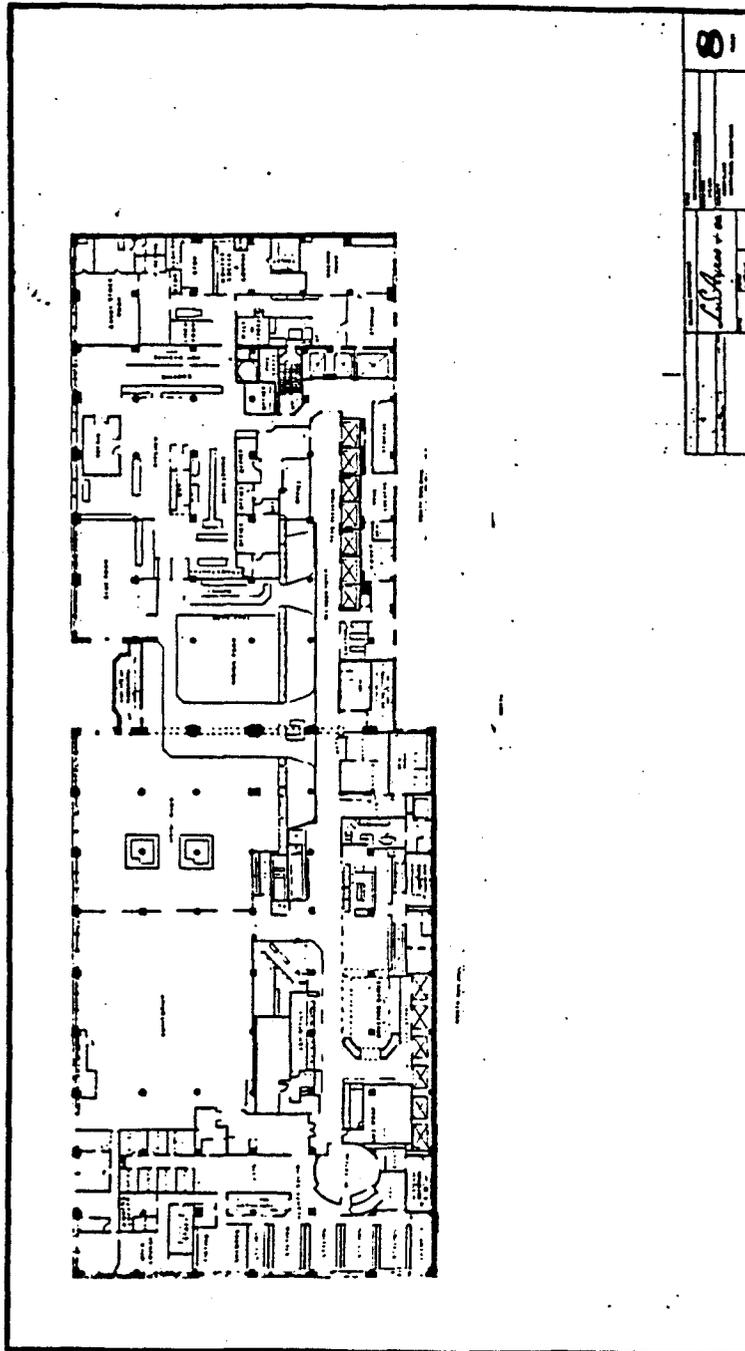
Floor Plans for Buildings, Fifth Floor, L.S. Ayres & Co. Planning Department, 1976, updated in 1985. Blue prints in the possession of the City of Indianapolis.



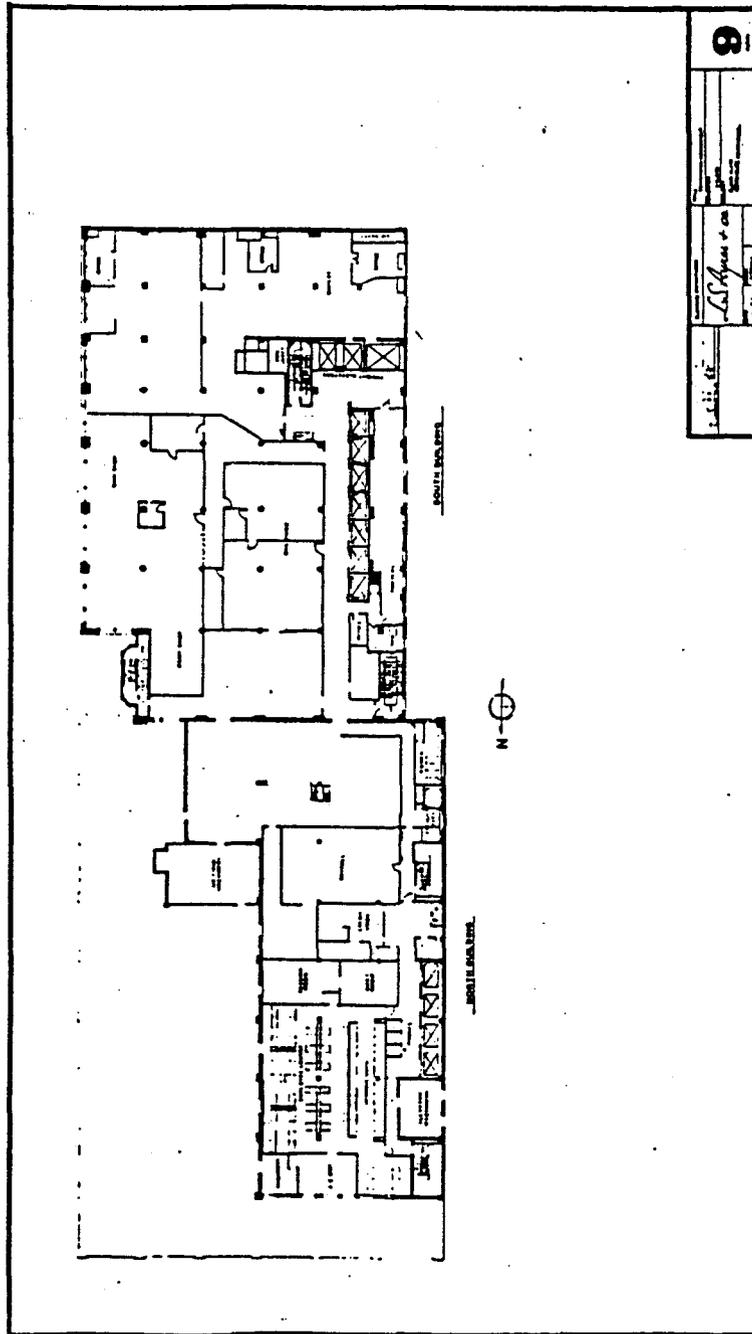
Floor Plans for Buildings, Sixth Floor, L.S. Ayres & Co. Planning Department, 1986. Blue prints in the possession of the City of Indianapolis.



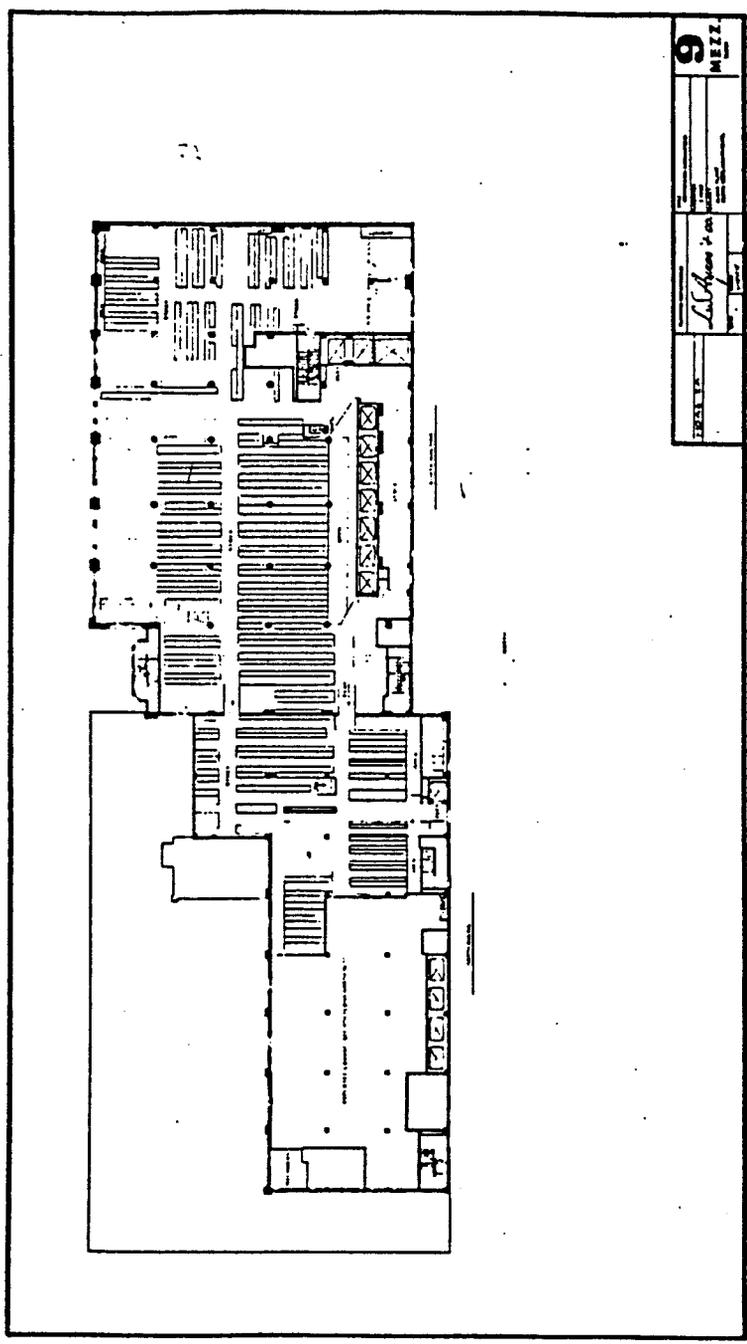
Floor Plans for Buildings, Eighth Floor, L.S. Ayres & Co. Planning Department, 1990. Blue prints in the possession of the City of Indianapolis.



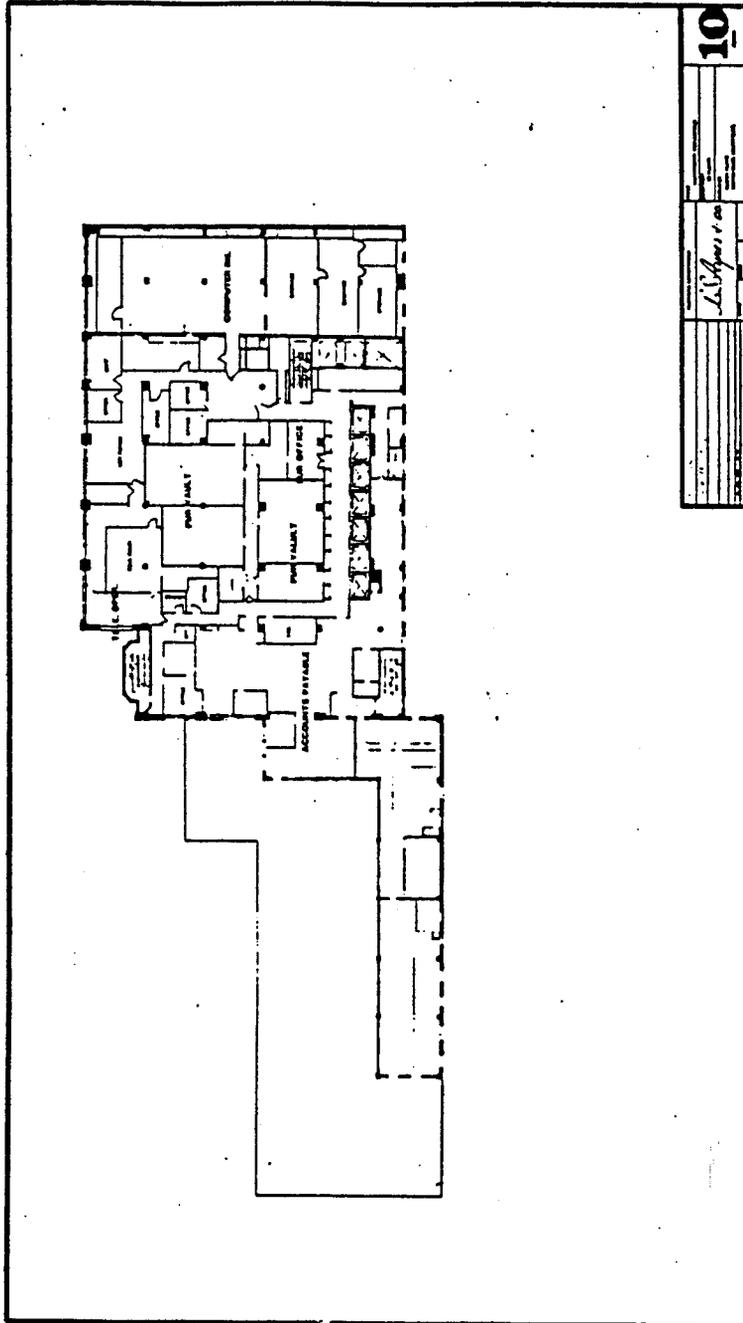
Floor Plans for Buildings, Ninth Floor, L.S. Ayres & Co. Planning Department, 1975, updated in 1990. Blue prints in the possession of the City of Indianapolis.



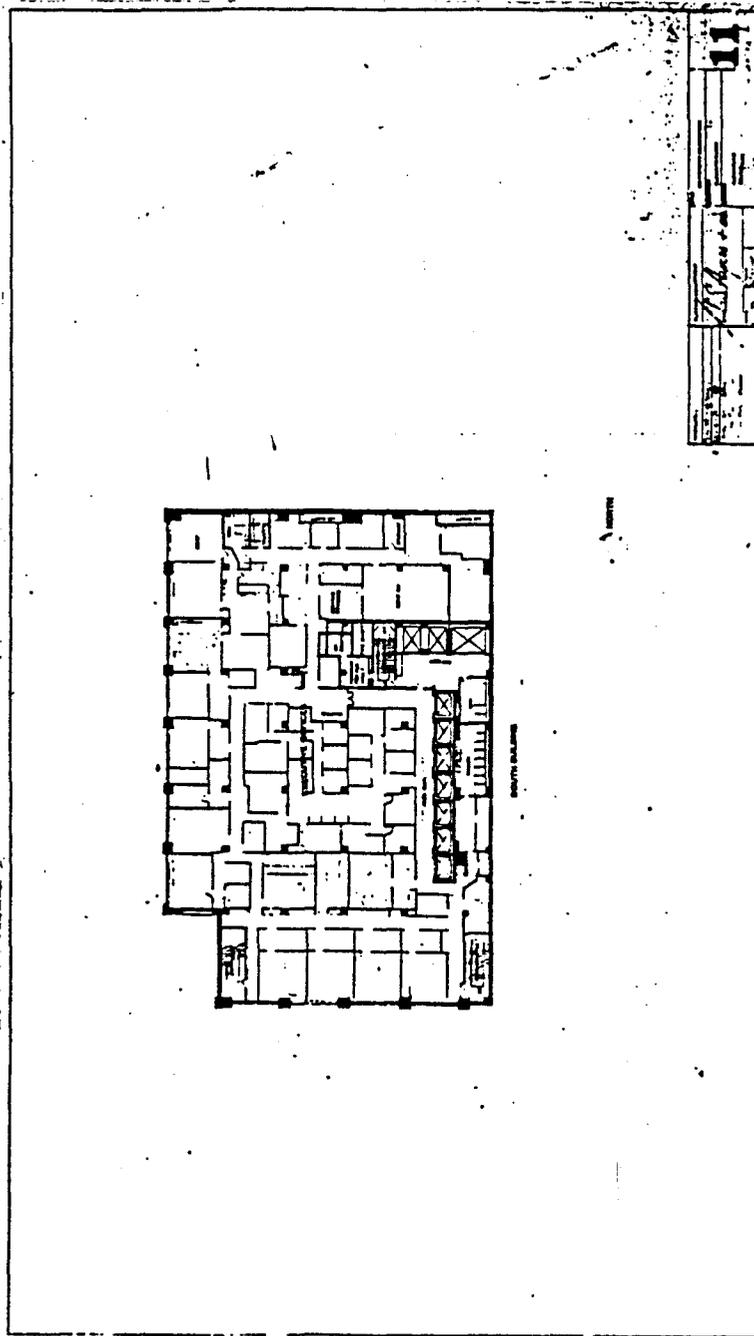
Floor Plans for Buildings, Ninth Floor Mezzanine, L.S. Ayres & Co. Planning Department, 1976, updated 1990. Blue prints in the possession of the City of Indianapolis.



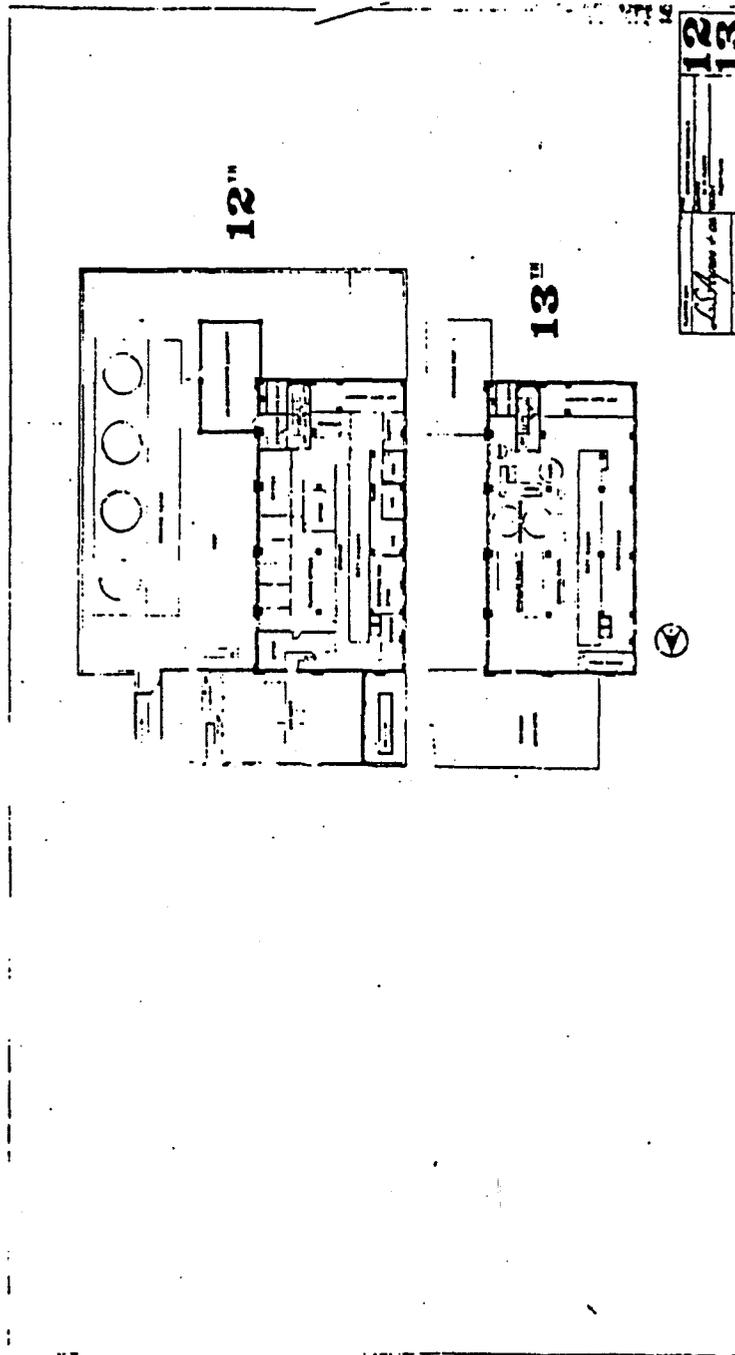
Floor Plans for Buildings, Tenth Floor, L.S. Ayres & Co. Planning Department, 1976, updated in 1990. Blue prints in the possession of the City of Indianapolis.



Floor Plans for Buildings, Eleventh Floor, L.S. Ayres & Co.
Planning Department, 1975, updated in 1986. Blue prints in the
possession of the City of Indianapolis.



Floor Plans for Buildings, Twelfth and Thirteenth Floor, L.S. Ayres & Co. Planning Department, 1975. Blue prints in the possession of the City of Indianapolis.

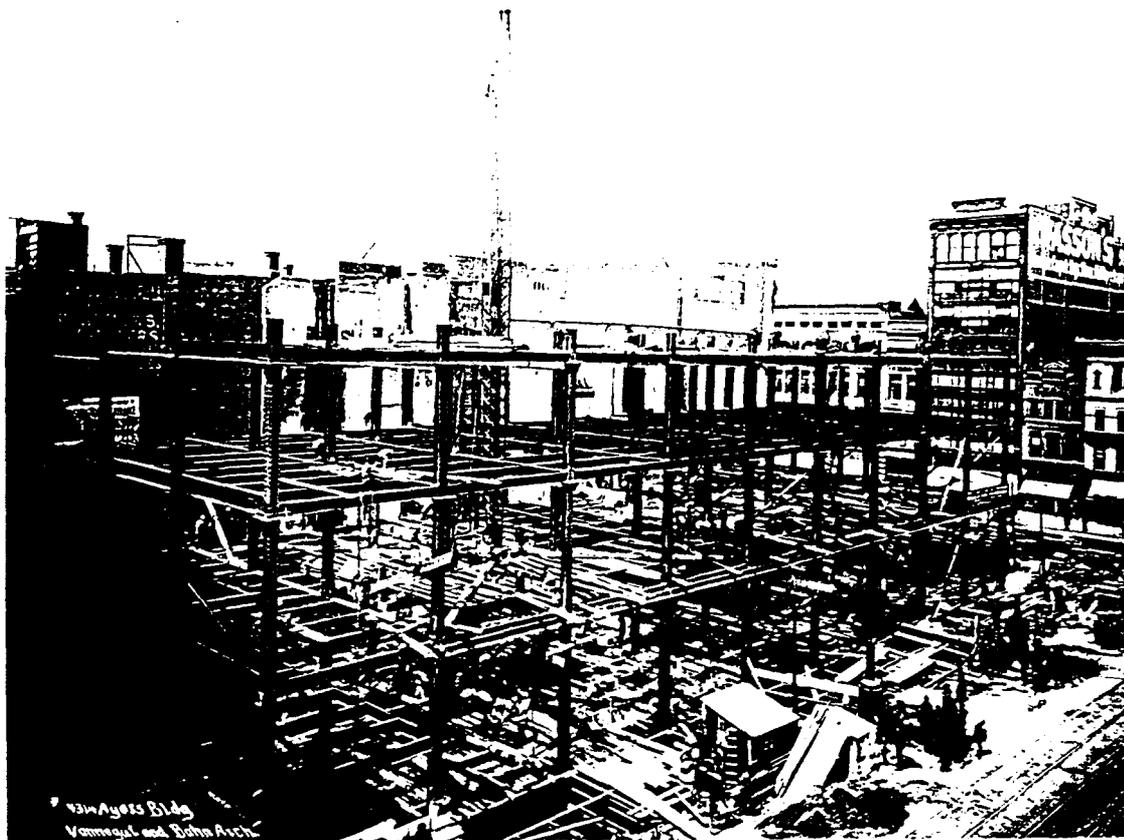


L.S. Ayres & Company Department Store
HABS No. IN-253 (Page 40)

Bass Photo Company Collection #3201, c. 1900
View depicting the Hubbard Block that preceded the L.S. Ayres &
Company Department Store on the site
Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis, Indiana



Bass Photo Company Collection #4314, April 22, 1905
View depicting the construction of the 1905 building
Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis, Indiana



Bass Photo Company Collection #5772, January 5, 1906
View depicting the north and east elevations of the 1905 building
Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis, Indiana

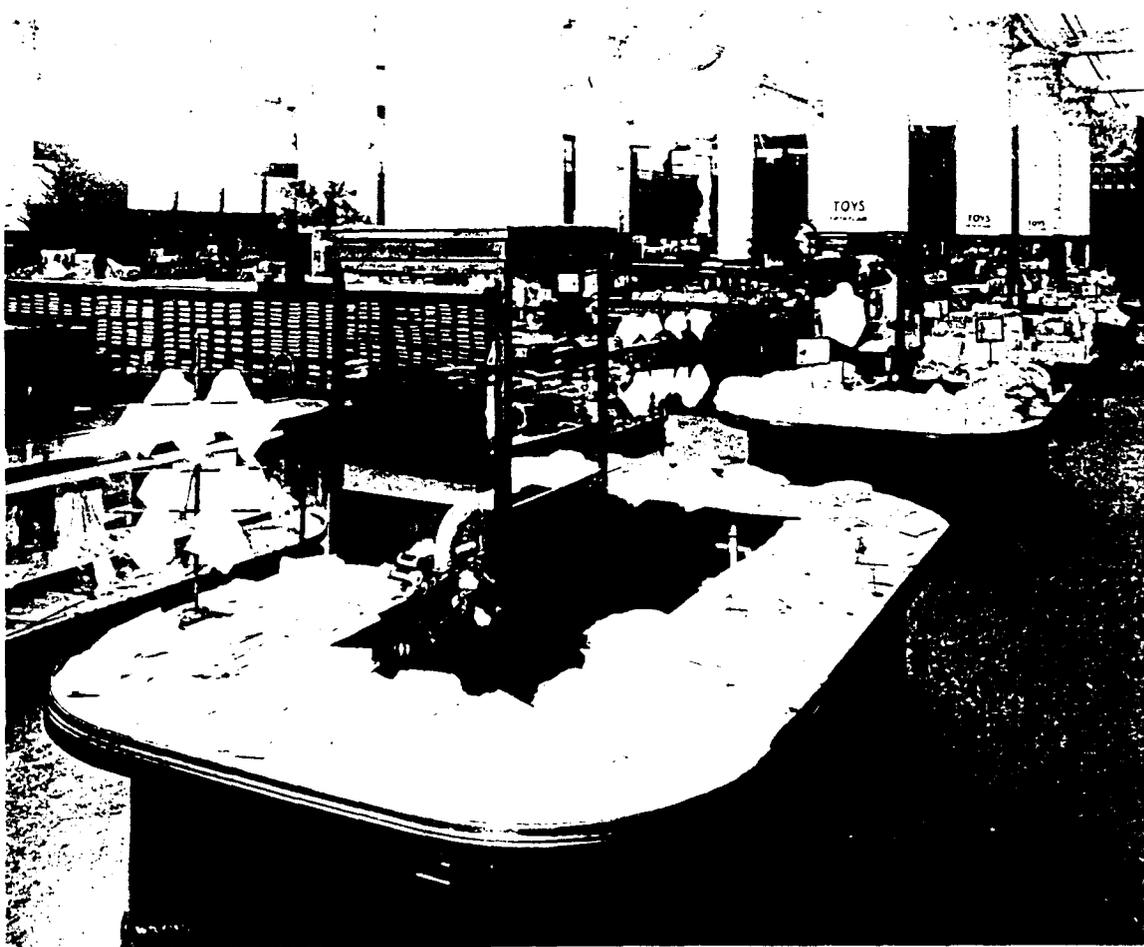


L.S. Ayres & Company Department Store
HABS No. IN-253 (Page 43)

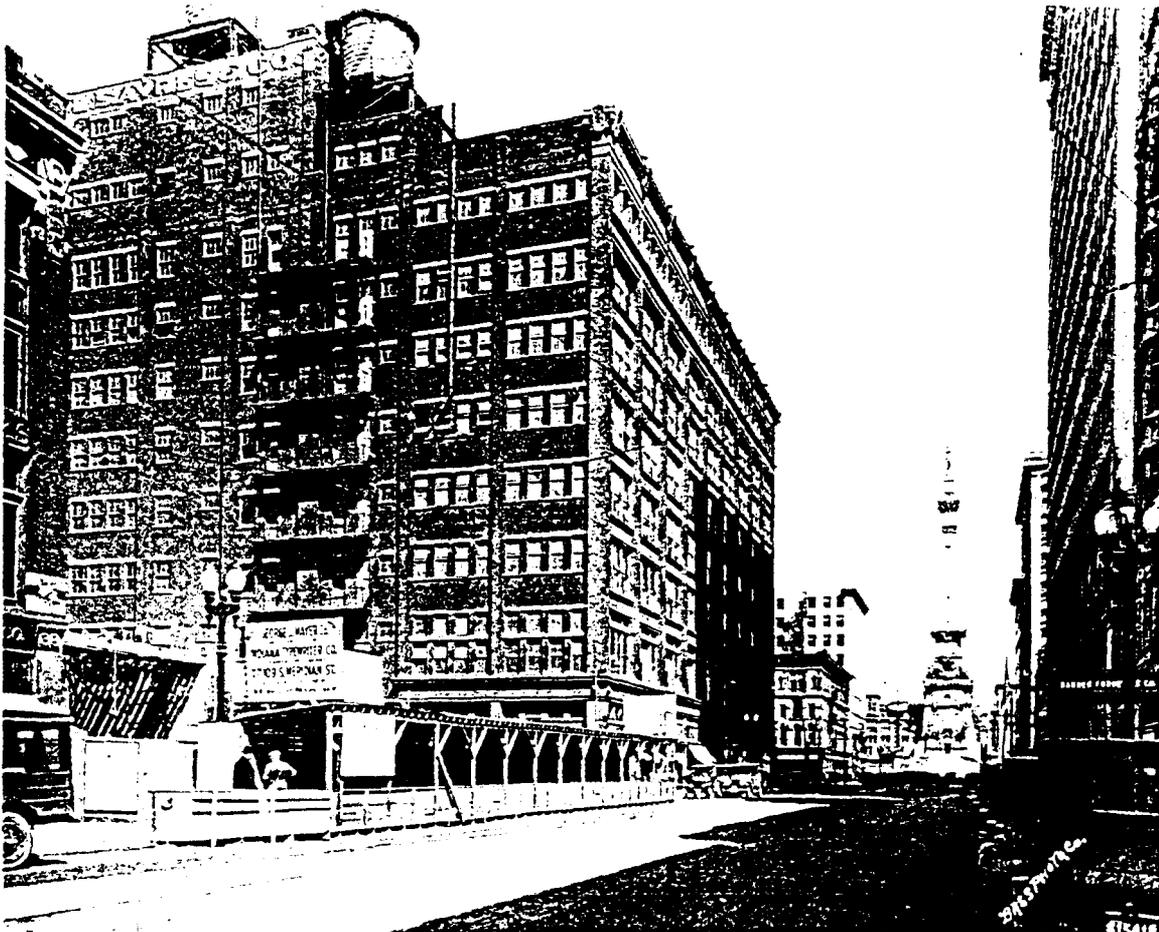
Bass Photo Company Collection #43427F, c. 1915
View depicting the north and east elevations shortly after the 1914
addition
Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis, Indiana



Bass Photo Company Collection #49570, c. 1916
View depicting the first floor sales room of the 1905 and 1914
buildings
Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis, Indiana



Bass Photo Company Collection #206848F, c. 1928
View depicting the construction site for the 1928 addition
Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis, Indiana



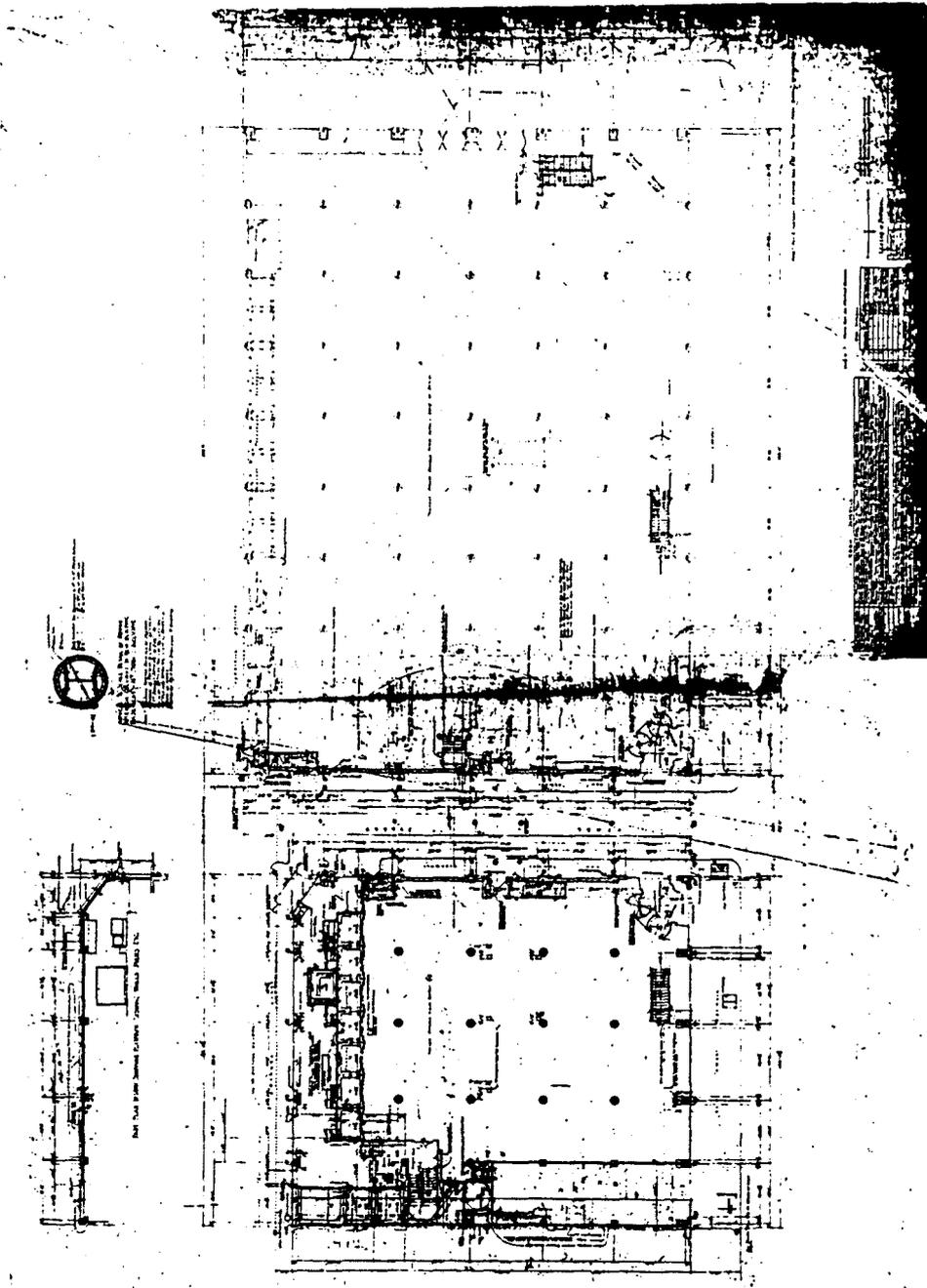
Jack Householder Collection #C5954, 1954
View depicting the south and east elevations of the 1928 and 1946
additions
Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis, Indiana



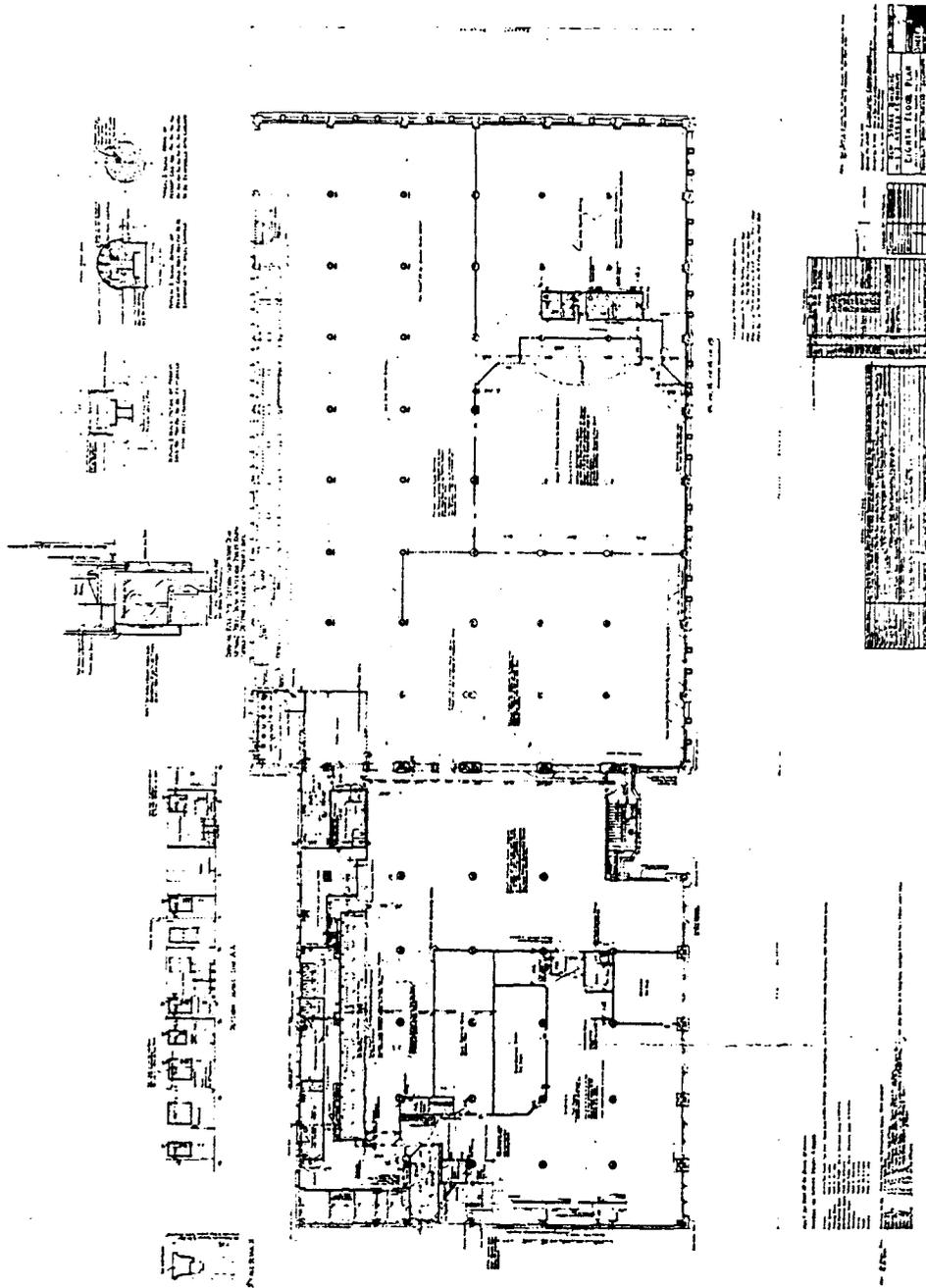
Bass Photo Company Collection #301490F3, 1957
View depicting the north and east elevations of the 1905 and 1914
buildings
Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis, Indiana



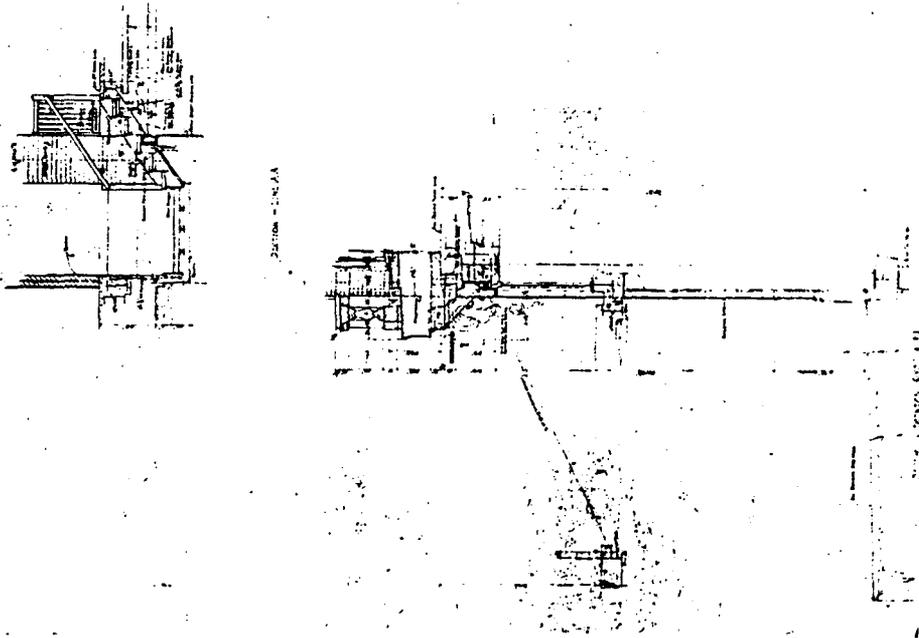
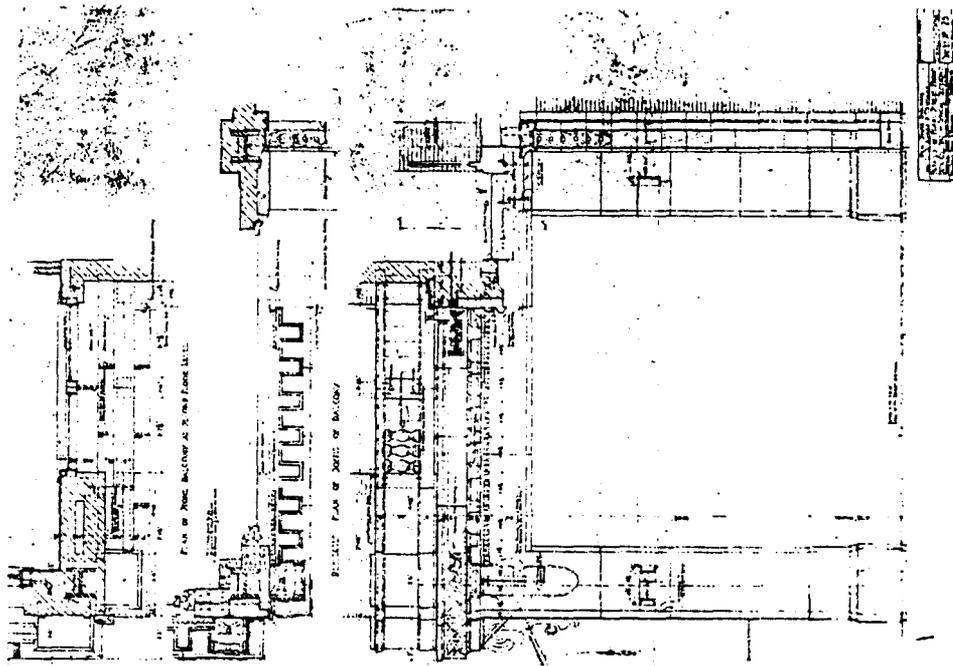
New Store Building for L.S. Ayres & Company, First Floor Plan,
Vonnegut, Bohn & Mueller Architects, 1928. Blue prints in the
possession of the City of Indianapolis.



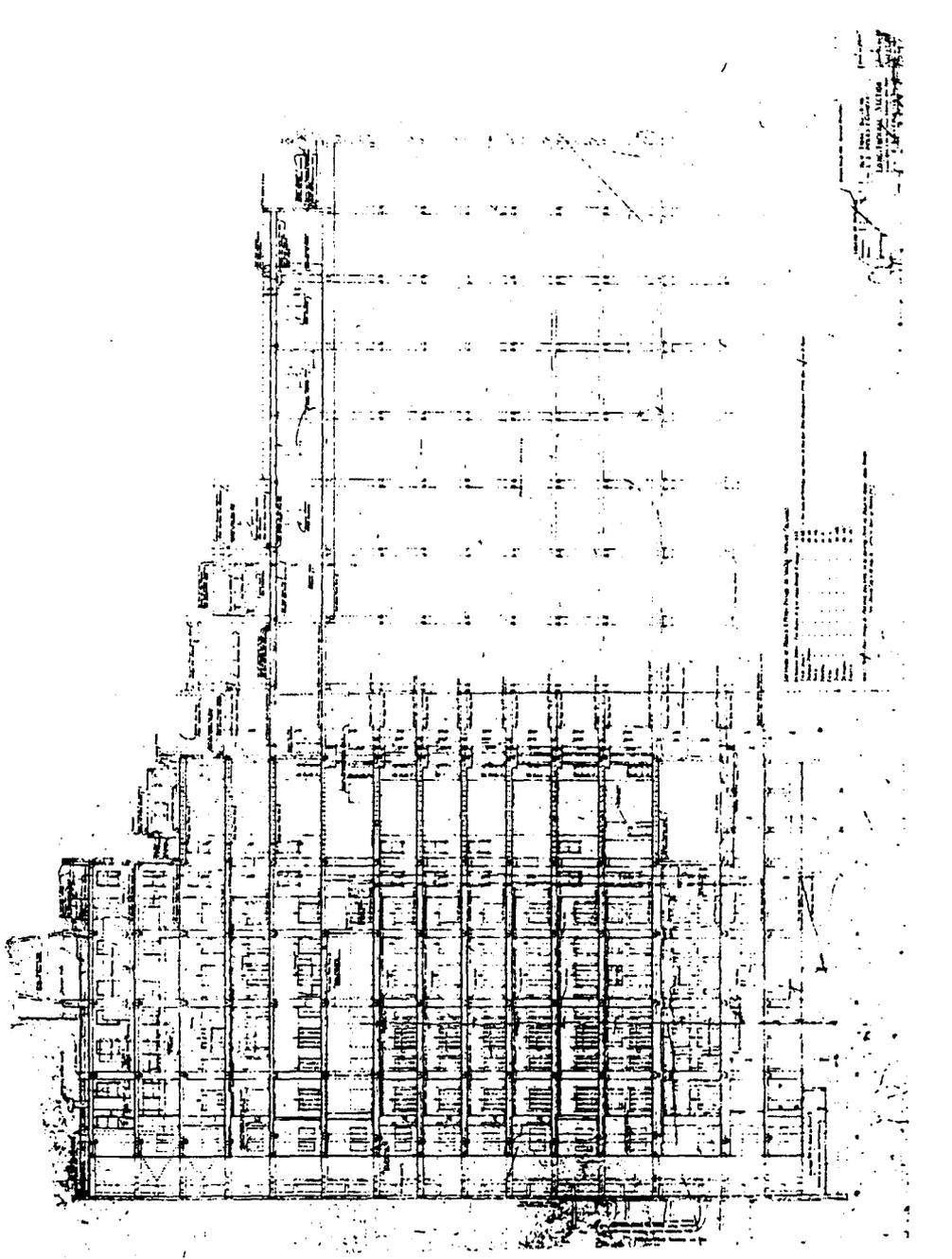
New Store Building for L.S. Ayres & Company, Eighth Floor Plan,
Vonnegut, Bohn & Mueller Architects, 1928. Blue prints in the
possession of the City of Indianapolis.



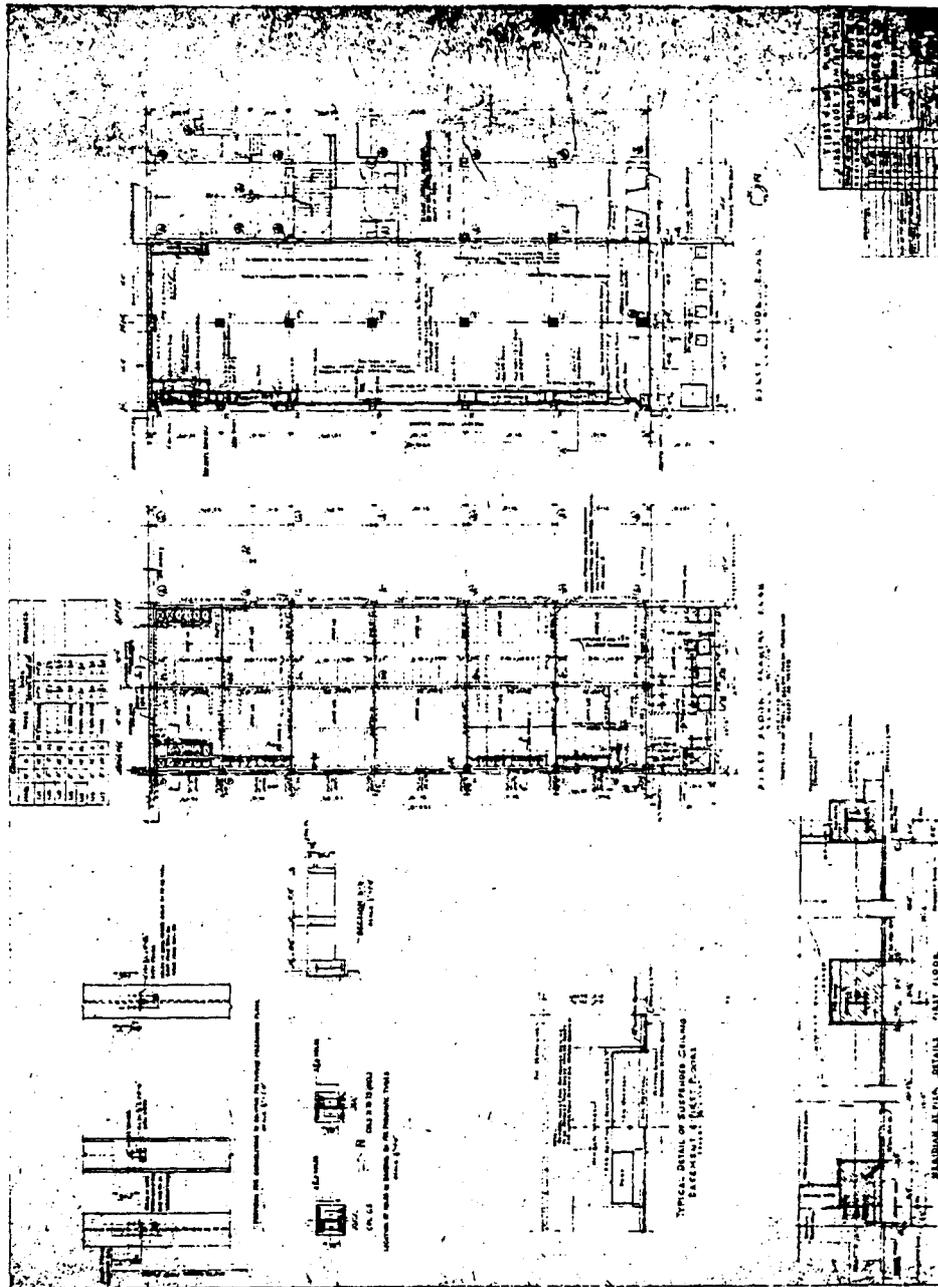
New Store Building for L.S. Ayres & Company, Details of Pearl Street Front, Vonnegut, Bohn & Mueller Architects, 1928. Blue prints in the possession of the City of Indianapolis.



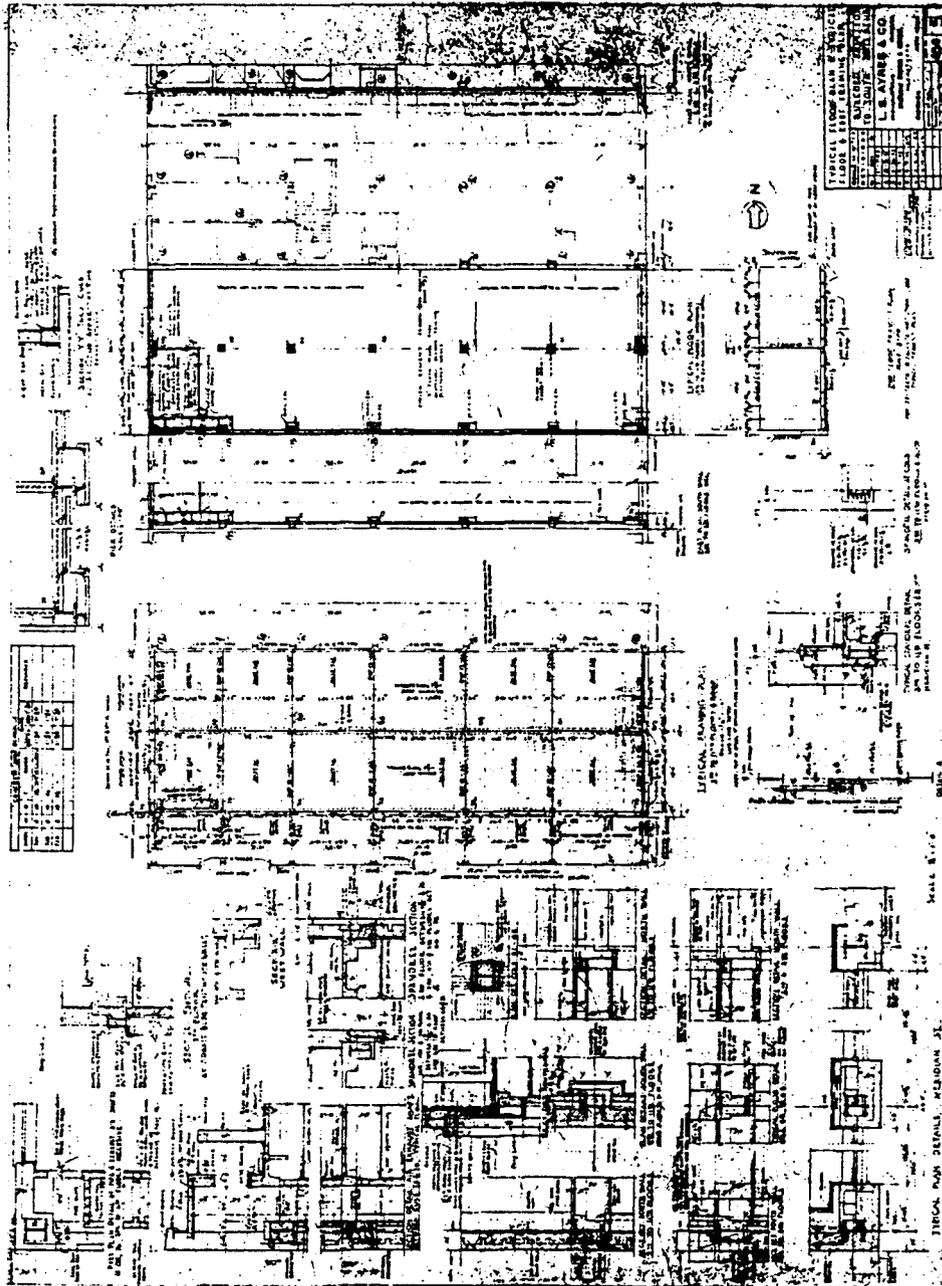
New Store Building for L.S. Ayres & Company, Longitudinal Section,
Vonnegut, Bohn & Mueller Architects, 1928. Blue prints in the
possession of the City of Indianapolis.



Burford Addition to South Building, First Floor Plan & First Floor Framing Plan, Skidmore Owings & Merrill Architects, 1945. Blue prints in the possession of the City of Indianapolis.



Burford Addition to South Building, Typical Floor Plan & Typical Floor & Roof Framing Plan, Skidmore Owings & Merrill Architects, 1945. Blue prints in the possession of the City of Indianapolis.



Burford Addition to South Building, Meridian Street Elevation & Cross Section, Skidmore Owings & Merrill Architects, 1945. Blue prints in the possession of the City of Indianapolis.

