

RUGBY BUILDING (KRESGE BUILDING)
100 East Second Street
Owensboro
Daviness County
Kentucky

HABS No. KY-227

HABS
KY-227

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Building Survey
National Park Service
Southeast Region
Department of the Interior
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

ARCHITECTURAL DATA FORM

STATE Kentucky		COUNTY Daviness	TOWN OR VICINITY Owensboro
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) Rugby Building - named by Rugby Company, Inc. who owned the bldg. for 55yrs.			HABS NO. KY-227
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE Kresge Building - used by Kresge Co. for over 50 years.			
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) 100 E. 2nd St., Owensboro, KY 42301			
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) 1921 according to son of builder		ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) Unknown	
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) The building was typical of those constructed in downtown Owensboro during the early 20th century. It was constructed by the Westerfield Furniture Co. and used by that business for several years when the company went bankrupt and was taken over by the subcontractors			
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE) Commercial			
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Wire exterior; structure is steel, masonry, and wood.			
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) 75' feet wide and 90' feet deep; four stories with a full basement (see floor plan)			
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE The building is typical of early 20th century construction in size; it is unadorned wire-scratched brick, known locally as Theiss brick for the Theiss Company brick contractors.			
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED) No original fabric remains; see floor plans			
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES The building was altered in 1929 when the Kresge Co. moved in and again in the 1950's when the company expanded into the next two stores.			
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE The building has been vacant since the late 1970's and is in a deteriorated state.			
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE A more detailed history of the building can be found in the Kentucky Room of the Owensboro-Daviness Co. Public Library in the vertical files under KRESGE BUILDING.			
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDING LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.) Interview with Albert P. Theiss, son of the brick contractor, held in 1982.			
COMPILER, AFFILIATION Glenda Thacker, Executive Director of Downtown Owensboro, Inc.			DATE July 10, 1988

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Construction of the Kresge Building was begun in 1920 by the owners of the Westerfield Furniture Store, who had outgrown their location at 114-116 E. 2nd. St., and completed in 1921. The property was purchased from the Reinhart estate and the old Reinhart home was razed to allow for the construction of the new store. The purchase included a parcel of land that would not be needed for the construction of the new furniture store and it was sold to the Fraulich sisters who subsequently used the property for the site of their hat business, "The Fair".

The architect's name is unknown and only the brick contractor, Jake Theiss is known.

By 1925 the Westerfield Furniture Store was bankrupt and the various subcontractors assumed the ownership of the building. The major subcontractor was Jake Theiss, who with his sons Albert, William, and George laid all the brick for the project. The subcontractors formed a partnership called the Rugby Co. for the purpose of managing the property which was primarily owned by Jake Theiss and his sons. Through the years, Albert bought out some of the minor stock owners and eventually owned over half of the stock.

Before the Westerfield Co. had completed their bankruptcy sale, the Rugby Co. had found another tenant for the first floor, the national S.S. Kresge Co.. The upper floors were divided into office space and leased to insurance companies, attorneys, and accountants.

The Kresge Co. immediately installed their size and changes were made to the storefront to reflect the coming of a new business. The large brick pilaster and transom glass were removed to allow for the enlargement of the display windows on the front of the building. On the side, however, the original display windows were bricked in and replaced with smaller windows similar to those on the upper floors. No photographs of the old Westerfield interior remain but changes were most likely made to allow for the new use.

By 1954, the Kresge Co. needed more room and leased the two small buildings east of the original building and altered the exterior to tie them together. A glazed salmon-colored metal was applied to all three storefronts and the windows were altered again.

In the middle 1970's the Kresge Co. closed their downtown store due to the opening of their KMart store in the mall. Few of the upper floor offices remained rented due to the depressed state of the downtown and the Rugby owner chose to close down the whole building because of the expense of heating.

In 1985 the building was sold to Robert Miller who planned to renovate it into moderately priced offices. The inability to secure adequate financing forced him to sell it to Steve Bosley shortly afterwards. Bosley sold it to Daviess County Fiscal Court when he could not secure adequate parking to attract tenants.

Fiscal Court originally hoped to renovate the building for use as a judicial center and move all their court and court related activities within one building. The architects determined that the building was not large enough for the needed agencies and that the support system did not allow for enough open space to accomodate the courtrooms.

ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

The building is four story brick building with few ornamentations. It was well maintained until the mid-1970's when it was vacated and since that time has deteriorated in condition. Various alterations through the years have left no original fabric on the first floor. The demolition of five buildings to the east have left that side with a void which was filled with concret block.

The building is 75' wide and 95' deep and four stories with a full basement. Each floor is 7,030 sq. ft. and it originally had a party wall on the east side. The foundation is spread footings with 12 inch thick masonry walls. The structure is steel, masonry, and wood.

There are no porches, stoops, or balconies, although a metal fire escape is located on the west side.

There is one opening on the north side which once serviced the Kresge business and one opening on the west side which serviced the back hall leading to the elevator.

There are four pairs of double hung windows on the north and west elevations on each of the upper level floors. The rear elevation has randomly placed windows that were not ment to be visible from the street. The same is true of the east elevation.

The roof is flat.

The first floor has always been used for retailing and is primarily a large open space with little of the original fabric remaining. There is a small mezzanine over the rear lobby area (see floor plans).

The second, third, and fourth floors were divided into small offices in 1925 and remain that design.

There were originally two elevators for the furniture store but when the upper floors where converted to offices, the freight elevator was removed and the shaft space was converted to restrooms on each level.

There is one stairway in the southeast corner of the building which services each floor.

All floors are hardwood covered with linoleum block.

The walls in all areas are plaster. No original hardware exists

There is no air conditioning in the building. The whole building is served by steam heat.

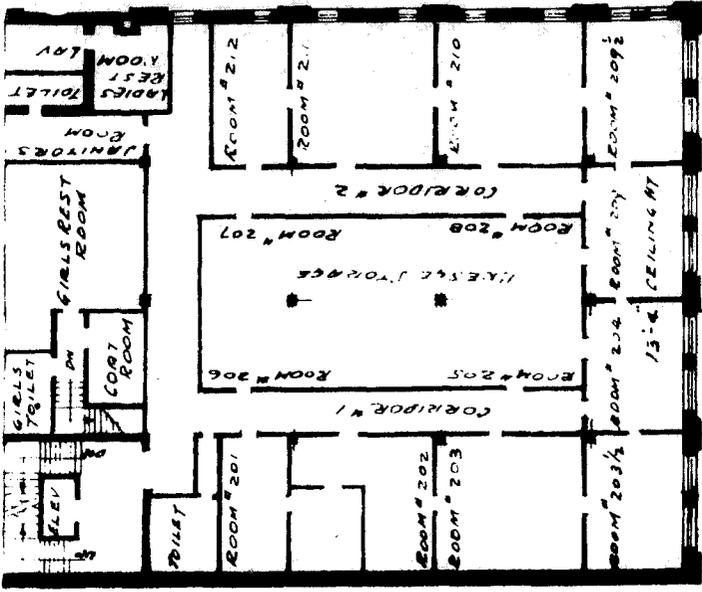
SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Information on the history of the Kresge Building was obtained by Glenda Thacker, Executive Director of Downtown Owensboro, Inc. through an interview with Alber Theiss on November 9, 1982. Photographs of the construction of the building, the bankruptcy sale, and early views of the Kresge store are in the possession of the Theiss family. Downtown Owensboro, Inc. has copies of these as well as slides.

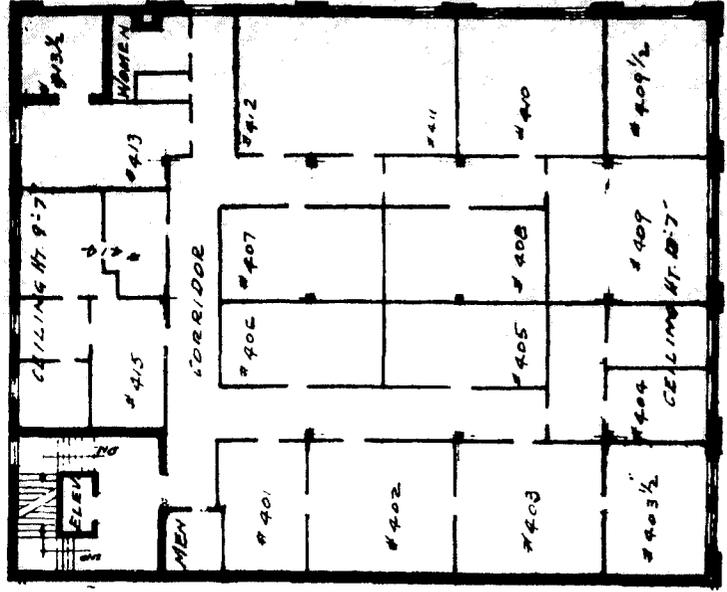
Copies of the original floor plan were provided to Downtown Owensboro, Inc. by Albert Theiss.

Building information was obtained from the Property Valuation Office of Daviess County.

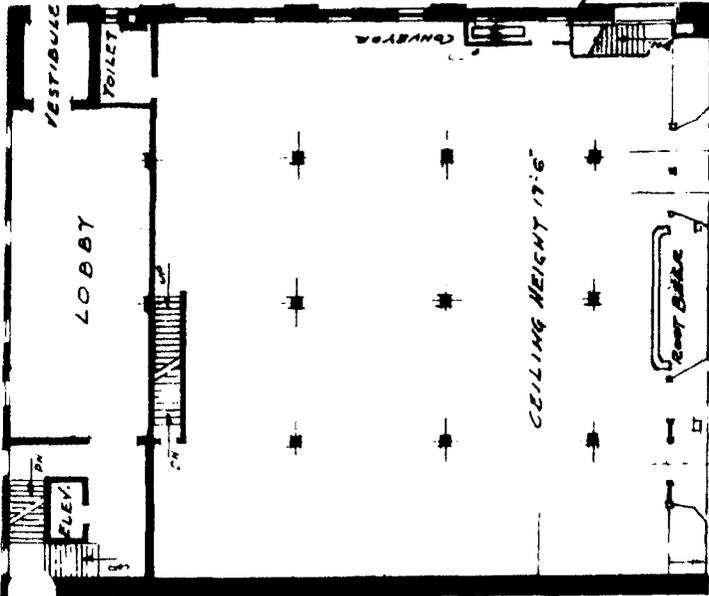
The ceiling on the first floor in the retail area is pressed tin. The lobby ceiling is acoustical tile and the ceilings of all offices in the upper floors are tile. The ceilings in the storage area in the second and third floor levels are unfinished.



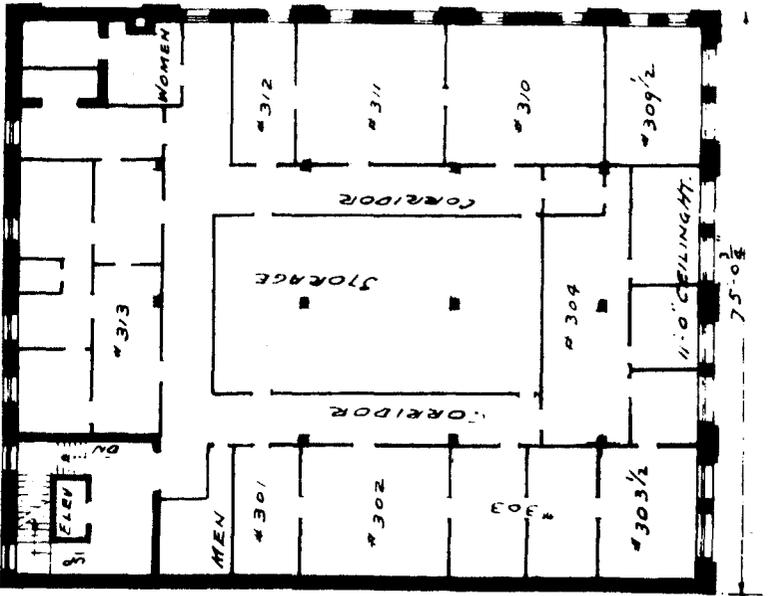
Second Floor



Fourth Floor



First Floor



Third Floor