United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Alligator Oil Clothing Company Buildings

other names/site number Alligator Company Buildings, P.D. George Company Buildings, Multiplex Company Buildings

2. Location

street & number 4153-71 Bingham Avenue not for publication N/A

city or town St. Louis Vicinity N/A

state Missouri code MO county St. Louis (Ind. City) code 510 zip code 63116

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide x local

Mark A. Miles DEC 7, 2012

Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles, Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Alligator Oil Clothing Company Buildings
Name of Property

St. Louis (Ind. City), MO
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- [x] private
- [ ] public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [ ] public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

- [x] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	2	buildings
0	0	district
0	0	site
0	1	structure
0	0	object
2	3	**Total**

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commercial

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete
walls: Concrete
Brick
roof: Asphalt
other:

Alligator Oil Clothing Company Buildings
Name of Property

St. Louis (Ind. City), MO
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [ ] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [x] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- [ ] A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [ ] B removed from its original location.
- [ ] C a birthplace or grave.
- [ ] D a cemetery.
- [ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- [ ] F a commemorative property.
- [ ] G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
1918-1920

Significant Dates
1918
1919

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Haeger, Leonhard (architect)
Murch Brothers (builder)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
____previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
__x__Other
Name of repository: Preservation Research Office

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 4.83 acres

Latitude and Longitude

Latitude: 38.588498
Longitude: -90.261157
(see continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael R. Allen/Director

organization Preservation Research Office date August 6, 2012

street & number 3407 S. Jefferson Avenue #211 telephone 314-920-5680

city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63118

e-mail michael@preservationresearch.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:**
  - A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
  - A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Photographs.**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner:

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

name Alligator Clothing Factory LLC

street & number 245 Union Boulevard telephone 314-367-2800

city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63108

Summary

The Alligator Oil Clothing Company Buildings are located at 4153-71 Bingham Avenue in the southern portion of St. Louis, Missouri. The complex consists of four buildings and the ruins of a fifth building, situated on the western end of a large parcel (see figure 1). The east end of the parcel historically has been undeveloped, and today is divided between a lawn and a paved parking area. Chain link fencing surrounds the site on its west, north, east and most of its south side. Due to a northward site slope, the buildings of the plant present different heights at the street face, on the high side of the slope, than at the rear. The main building of the Alligator Oil Clothing Company complex is a large, reinforced concrete factory building from 1918 on the west end of the site. This four-level building expresses its concrete grid on its exterior, and has a main elevation that presents a shaped concrete parapet, concrete grid, brick knee walls and steel sash windows. North of this building is a one-story flat-roofed non-contributing support structure dating to c. 1960. To the east are Building 3, a two-story office and manufacturing building dating to 1919 that cloaks much of its concrete structural grid in a traditional brick face, and Building 4, a non-contributing one-story warehouse dating to 1959. Connecting Buildings 1 and 3 are the ruins of a fire-damaged addition from 1943. The loss of the addition returns the plant largely to its pre-1943 appearance. Despite the presence of the ruins and two non-contributing buildings, the Alligator Oil Clothing Company Buildings retain architectural integrity and express their historic condition well.

Setting

The Alligator Oil Clothing Company Buildings are located in what is now called the Bevo neighborhood of St. Louis. East of the plant, six-lane Gravois Avenue runs southwest-northeast through the neighborhood. At the northeast corner of the plant, Gravois runs in a cut beneath a truss that carries a railroad line. Gravois's current configuration dates to 1936. North of the plant are apartment buildings and commercial buildings facing Chippewa Avenue. To the east is the large, Art Deco, reinforced-concrete mass of the National Candy Company Factory at 4230 Gravois Road (1928, Klipstein & Rathmann; NR 11/5/2009). South and west of the plant, the character of the neighborhood is residential. Streets run on a grid with blocks having long east-west dimensions. The housing stock consists of a mix of frame and brick masonry housing built largely between 1890 and 1910. Much of this housing consists of one and one-and-half-story single dwellings of modest size. Just southwest of the Alligator Oil Clothing Company Buildings is the two-story Oak Hill School at 4300 Morganford Road (1907, William B. Ittner). Throughout the neighborhood, trees are planted in rear yards and in tree lawns. The street grid includes bisecting alleys on each block, although there is none running north of the Alligator plant.

Building 1 (1918; Leonhard Haeger, Architect; Contributing)

The original Alligator Oil Clothing Company Building, built in 1918, is a concrete-framed building with a low-pitched gabled roof (see photograph 1). Due to the grade of the site, the front elevation facing Bingham Avenue reads as two stories tall while the rear elevation shows the

building's four levels (see photograph 4). The front elevation is divided into ten bays. The concrete piers and beams are exposed to frame the fenestration here. Each opening save the entrance features a brick knee wall topped by a slightly projecting rowlock sill course. Above these walls the openings are glazed with steel sash currently covered by corrugated plastic sheets. The entrance is found in the third bay from right (east), where concrete frames a single door opening flanked by sidelights. Concrete brackets rise to support a projecting concrete hood over the entrance. This elevation is topped by a stepped concrete parapet. Every other pier rises through the parapet's segments, which have a slight rise. These piers support projecting consoles with stepped bases (see photograph 3). The center segment of the parapet forms a gentle pediment. Each section's central area is recessed. There are two saw-tooth skylights, with reinforced concrete structures, running across the width of the building at the south end of the roof. The steel sash windows that once filled the openings on the north-facing skylights have been removed and the openings partly infilled with concrete block. There is a shed-roofed concrete elevator house on the east side of the building above the third bay from the north.

The side elevations are similarly arranged with exposed concrete piers and beams defining the openings (see photographs 2 and 4). On the 12-bay east elevation, which appears as two stories on the south and four stories on the north, the fenestration matches that of the front elevation. This elevation reveals some former connections into the missing addition. In the sixth bay from the north on the third floor, the bay was completely open to the lost structure. It is now filled with plywood. On the second floor, the fourth bay from the north is covered with plywood while the fifth bay contains an opening with a steel overhead roll-up door. The first floor on this elevation has a blind concrete wall with a single opening containing an inset steel roll-up door toward the north corner. The west elevation is slightly different in that the fourth floor openings are filled in with single steel windows at center (see photograph 5). Most of the window openings on these elevations are covered in corrugated plastic sheets. The second floor is fenestrated five bays from north until it meets the slope. The fourth floor bay openings are largely clad in brick around small openings with jack arches and rowlock sills at the center. These openings contain steel windows under corrugated plastic sheets. At this elevation, a smokestack stood until its demolition in 2011.

The 10-bay rear elevation has continuous fenestration with steel-sash windows at its third floor, and in the eastern half of its fourth floor (see photograph 4). The western five bays of the fourth floor contain blind brick infill. At the second floor, the seventh and eighth bays from east lack brick knee walls and window sash; one is covered in corrugated plaster while the other is covered by plywood. The other bays are fenestrated in the building's standard manner. At the first floor, fenestration is irregular corresponding to interior functions and loading openings. The easternmost bay has a recessed entrance inside, with brick piers to each side creating two flanking window openings containing steel windows. The other openings have openings high on the wall, with concrete walls beneath, with the exception of the fourth and sixth bays from the east. These are configured with full-height center openings (once covered with steel roll-up doors) set between concrete piers and flanking window openings. Some of the window openings on the first floor are filled with concrete block.

The size of the floor plates in Building 1 correspond to the slope of the site. The first two stories are only half floors, and are built against a cut in the hill. The upper two stories are full floors. On the first floor, concrete and clay tile partitions divide the level into functional spaces. The northwest corner is where the boiler room is located, adjacent to a series of equipment rooms that once housed elements of the fan drying system. To the east is a large open area. The second floor is largely open, except for an oil storage room in the northeast corner that has brick walls and a sliding steel fire door over its entrance. On the third floor, above the second floor room, is an identical room where oil mixing once took place. There are bathroom stalls inside of partitions adjacent to these rooms, and there are other storage rooms on the perimeter of the north side of the second, third and fourth floors. Under the elevator house on the east side is the building's open wooden elevator, with an open concrete stair to its south. At the fourth floor, there is a mezzanine level in the northwest end of the building, constructed of reinforced concrete. The mezzanine begins at the north end of the high space formed by the northernmost skylight structure (see photograph 7).

Throughout the interior spaces, the reinforced concrete structure is fully exposed (see photograph 6). Most obvious is the grid of poured columns, which have slender round forms under tapering "mushroom" caps. On the lower floors, the caps support square concrete plates underneath the form-poured slab floors. On the fourth level, the caps directly support the low-sloped gabled roof. On the roof, where roofing material is missing, the concrete aggregate of the roof deck is close in composition and finish to the concrete composition of the building's exposed exterior concrete elements.

Building 2 (c. 1960; Non-Contributing)

To the north of Building 1 is a narrow, one-story, flat-roofed red brick building. No building permit corresponding to its construction exists (see photograph 8). The building sits on a reinforced concrete slab. The north, east and west walls are blind. At the east end, there is an open area with a concrete corner column and concrete roof slab. The southern face presents three sets of double-leaf steel doors in jack-arch entrances interspersed with seven boarded window openings with jack arches and brick sills. The building does not appear on Sanborn fire insurance maps until 1964, when it is indicated as a "varnish and color department." This building is divided into three rooms accessible from the exterior entrances.

Building 3 (1919; Leonhard Haeger, Architect; Contributing)

Building 3, built in 1919, is a two-story concrete-framed building with low-pitched gable roof (see photograph 9). All window and door openings currently are clad in plywood. Here the site slope exposes the lower story partially on the sides and fully at the rear. The front elevation is clad in red brick and divided into four bays. The second bay from right (east) is the entrance. In this bay, a door opening is to the right (east) of a window opening. Surrounding the bay, piers project outward and rise to support a pediment. In the recessed tympanum is an area clad with painted stucco. White terra cotta trim adorns and caps the piers and the pediment. A

soldier course runs across the bay above. The other three bays are arranged the same: the wall plane is recessed between the piers, with the wall stepping up to meet the plane at the top. On the recessed sections are large window openings with soldier headers. All window openings have rowlock sills. Above these window bays is a terra cotta cornice supported by long brackets. The parapet above, which rises slightly at each pier, has terra cotta coping.

Brick cladding wraps one bay back on both the east and west elevations; these bays are arranged as the window bays on the front elevation. The eastern elevation then has four bays defined by exposed concrete piers and beams above a concrete foundation (see photograph 10). In these bays are brick walls with rowlock sill courses under tall, wide window openings. The western elevation is similar except that at the third bay from south, a tower wing rises to a height of one story above the building. The tower has exposed concrete framing with inset brick knee walls with projecting rowlock sill courses under its window openings (see photograph 11). The rear elevation shows the gable pitch as well as a painted area marking the location of the 1943 connector addition. This elevation has a tall concrete foundation under a section with exposed concrete framing infilled with brick. Only a few door openings penetrate the wall.

The interior of Building 3 is different on each level. The basement level is largely open, with partitions forming a small room near the elevator tower. The main level historically was open, but contains some partitions added over the years to form private offices. Overall, the interiors substantially reflect historic appearance. The building once was connected to other buildings to the north built around the time of its own construction, but those buildings were subsumed by the 1943 addition. After much of that addition was demolished in 1999, Building 3 was reduced to its original footprint.

Building 4 (1959, Non-Contributing)

Adjoining Building 3 but not interconnected is the low, flat-roofed one-story Building 4 from 1959. Building 4 is constructed on a concrete slab and partial basement, and has a structure consisting of steel columns, trusses and roof decking, with brick exterior cladding. This building obscures part of the eastern elevation of Building 3 (see photograph 10). The exterior of Building 4 consists of a nearly continuous ribbon of steel windows (all boarded over with plywood) with brick knee walls below. At the rear (north) elevation, the site slope reveals concrete foundation piers infilled with concrete block; under this addition is a basement area. On the east elevation, there is an entrance toward the south containing double-leaf steel slab doors (see photograph 13). Toward the north on that elevation is a concrete loading dock with a large steel crane. Off the dock is a tall, wide entrance now boarded. On the western side, Building 4 once was built against the now-wrecked 1943 connector section. The interior of Building 4 is open, with no partitions.

Addition (1943, Non-Contributing)

The ruins of the addition that once connected Building 1 and Building 3 is a non-contributing structure (see photograph 11). A 1999 fire damaged the addition, and it was partially

demolished afterward. The reinforced concrete foundation and basement level remain in place, with a concrete floor slab above. Due to the slope of the site, at the north end only the low concrete base of the now-lost north elevation is evident, but at the south side the concrete wall of the basement is fully exposed (see photograph 12). The floor slab retains one opening to the basement level, but access is not possible. At the east side of the structure are several traces of the addition. Two bays of two-story reinforced concrete building structure remain, complete with a low-pitched gable roof slab. There is a wall running between this component and Building 3 that retains three jack-arch openings containing steel window sash at the second level. Although these fragments are intact, they do not have any integrity on their own.

Integrity

The Alligator Oil Clothing Company Buildings pose a challenge for evaluation of integrity, but definitely retain integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The challenge for evaluating integrity comes from the presence of the large ruin that connects Buildings 1 and 3, the two contributing buildings. Non-contributing buildings 2 and 4, built well after the period of significance, have minimal impact on the integrity of the other buildings. Building 2 is a small, detached support structure not visible from the street. Building 4 adjoins Building 3, but is not connected. Due to the site slope, the building is built on the grade of Building 3's basement level. Thus, Building 4 makes only a small visual impact. Building 3 has its south, north and west elevations fully exposed, and only a blind concrete section of the lower level of the eastern elevation concealed. Thus, Building 4 has no impact on design, setting, materials or feeling of Building 3. The loss of building volume historically interconnected with Building 3 does not remove its ability to express its area of significance, Architecture. Covering of window and door openings is reversible.

Building 1 retains its historic appearance with minimal alteration, even if there is some deterioration. The historic floorplans and spatial volumes are intact, the concrete materiality remains a definitive feature, and most of the steel sash windows are intact underneath plastic or wooden covering (some are exposed inside and out). Minimal infill of openings has taken place, and none has altered the visible original dimensions of openings. Removal of the smokestack had no impact on the building's ability to convey its area of significance, Architecture. The loss of the 1943 addition actually returns Building 1 to the integrity of materials, workmanship, design and association during the period of significance.

Since the Alligator Oil Clothing Company Buildings are significant under Criterion C for Architecture, the aspects of feeling and association are evaluated in relationship to the role the buildings played in local architectural history. The integrity of the overall composition as a manufacturing facility is deficient, but the buildings' manufacturing history is not significant under National Register of Historic Places criteria.

Summary

The Alligator Oil Clothing Company Buildings, located at 4153-71 Bingham Avenue in St. Louis, Missouri, are locally significant under Criterion C for ARCHITECTURE. The contributing buildings consist of a four-level reinforced concrete factory building (1918) and a two-story reinforced concrete office and factory building (1919). Both buildings were designed by architect Leonhard Haeger, an accomplished architect whose practice included the landmark reinforced concrete Pevely Dairy Plant (1915; NR 11/18/2009). The Alligator factory building is one of only six identified St. Louis buildings built between 1900 and 1920 to fully expose its concrete structure on the exterior, making it an outstanding example of reinforced concrete industrial design in St. Louis. The second building is a good example of the more conventional local practice of employing brick face cladding in reinforced concrete industrial architecture. Together, the Alligator Oil Clothing Company Buildings embody the range of treatments of reinforced concrete industrial architecture employed locally between 1900 and 1940, when Modern Movement architectural practice led to greater experimentation with exposed concrete surfaces. The period of significance begins with the 1918 issuance of the building permit for the first of the two buildings and ends with completion of the second building in 1920.

Background: The Alligator Oil Clothing Company

With burgeoning rail access to southern and southwestern cotton markets, St. Louis thrived as a center of garment manufacturing after the Civil War. By the early twentieth century, the city had a diversified garment industry that included manufacturers of dresses, suits, coats and uniforms as well as related shoe and millinery concerns. Yet among the producers of garments, none in St. Louis specialized in rain-repellent outerwear until the Ferguson Waterproof Company was incorporated before 1911. The company was located on the riverfront at Second and Trudeau streets.

Waterproof clothing was a relatively new item of mass production. In 1877, Norwegian Captain Helly Juell Hansen first soaked coarse linen in linseed oil to produce waterproof clothing suitable for maritime work. Hansen's invention won acclaim at the 1878 Paris Exposition and led to global development of oil-treated clothing, known by the common fabric names oilskin and oilcloth.[1] While early fabric was used by sailors, railroad workers and others exposed to long periods outdoors in wet conditions, by the early 20th century garment makers were mass producing oil-treated clothing for general wear. Of course, raincoats were the chief product.

The Ferguson Waterproof Company reorganized as the Alligator Oil Clothing Company in 1916. From 1916 through 1918, the company's manufacturing took place in a two-story factory at 1118 S. Grand. At incorporation, Forrest Ferguson served as president and David M. Flournoy as vice president. World War I provided impetus for major corporate expansion. The United States Army purchased some three million Alligator raincoats for soldiers, according to an

[1] "Helly Hansen Heritage." Accessed 3 August 2012. <http://www.hellyhansen.com/about-us/heritage>

Alligator advertisement.[2] All of these coats were made in St. Louis, and led to the company's decision to relocate to a large, modern facility with sufficient capacity for large demand.

Alligator purchased land in the new Bingham's Estate Addition, located along the Missouri Pacific Railroad line that crosses through south St. Louis. The site chosen by the company was located in an area where Gravois and Meramec Avenues along with the railroad line diagonally cross the street grid to create oddly-shaped lots. Peerless Coal and Coke Company had already located here, and other industry would follow as companies sought to build new rail-served fireproof buildings outside of the riverfront and central corridor areas. Between 1910 and 1940, many St. Louis companies moved along rail lines in the north and south city to develop large, fireproof manufacturing facilities directly served by rail.

The new plant at 4171 Bingham Avenue was a spacious, four-floor fire-proof concrete building served by its own rail spur. Its architect was Leonard Haeger, whose recent Pevely Dairy Company building (1916) had garnered favorable local attention for its superior efficiency and plant layout. The company's new facility led to boastful advertising touting its wartime production and the assertion that Alligator's coats were the only union-made rain gear in the nation.

Around the time of completion of the Bingham plant, the Alligator Company purchased additional land and built two Haeger-designed factory buildings next door. The intent of this construction, which included a spacious office, is uncertain. Upon completion, Alligator leased both buildings to the new P.D. George Company, a maker of varnishes, paints and wire coatings. Founded by Pericles D. George that same year, the company may have been incorporated to capitalize on the potential co-production at the Bingham facility.[3] The oils needed for Alligator's waterproof clothing were also necessary for paint and varnish production, and byproducts generated by the clothing operation could be used to make waterproof varnishes that the P.D. George Company produced.

In 1921, the Alligator Oil Clothing Company changed its name to the Alligator Company. On August 15, 1921 the United States Patent Office granted the company an official trademark for its "Rain-Queen" line of clothing.[4] The company already held a trademark for "Rain-King." Advertisements for Alligator's rain gear regularly appeared in railroad magazines throughout this period, showing that the company was focused on marketing its utilitarian work clothing. These advertisements boasted that Alligator's wares were union-made. The company dared periodical readers: "If your dealer does not handle Alligator oiled clothing, send us his name and yours."[5]

The relationship between Alligator and the P.D. George Company was especially fruitful throughout the 1930s, when the Alligator Company obtained one patent per year in a three-year

[2] Alligator Oil Clothing Company Advertisement, *The Frisco-Man*, April 1919.
[3] Walter Tracy, "Pericles D. George," *St. Louis Leadership* (St. Louis, 1944).
[4] *Official Gazette of the United States Patent Office* 297, 25 April 1922. p. 773.
[5] Alligator Oil Clothing Company Advertisement, *The Railroad Trainman* 37.4 (April 1920), p. 194.

period. In 1931, P.D. George's son John E. George secured for Alligator United States Patent #1832199, which protected a method of ornamenting waterproof fabric with patterns. One year later, George obtained U.S. Patent #1877394, assigned to the Alligator Company.[6] This patent protected George's development of a method of waterproofing balloon cloth. These patents were preceded in 1930 by U.S. Patent #1785029, secured by Allligator engineer A.H. Hessler for his invention of a fixed-belt raincoat.

The P.D. George Company operated production at 4153 Bingham Avenue until 1943, when it terminated its lease and moved to a new facility at 5200 N. 2nd Street. The Bingham Avenue facility continued to house the company research laboratory. The National Research Council's 1946 guide *Industrial Research Laboratories of the United States* reports that the P.D. George Company maintained a laboratory at the Bingham site, with its research activities including wire enamels, coatings for insulation and electrical industries, adhesives, industrial paints, lacquers, varnishes and "specialties."

By the 1940s, Alligator's advertisements regularly appeared in *Time* and other national magazines, and their products ranged from waterproof clothing for railroad workers to raincoats for consumers. In 1943, Alligator expanded the plant by connecting both its original factory and the buildings vacated by the P.D. George Company. Alligator's growth led to New York and Los Angeles branch offices. During World War II, Alligator enjoyed substantial success as both a military and civilian supplier. Plant expansion continued in 1953 and 1959. In 1966, clothing giant BVD, Inc. acquired Alligator, continuing production at the Bingham Avenue plant until 1971. In 1971, BVD sold the factory complex to Multiplex, Inc., a manufacturer of beverage dispensing equipment and water treatment systems for the foodservice industry. Multiplex left the plant by the late 1990s, and the buildings have been vacant since then.

Context: Reinforced Concrete Industrial Architecture in St. Louis

Reinforced concrete frame construction appeared in St. Louis by 1900, used first for cold storage warehouse construction, but its use was not widespread until after 1905. Throughout the first decades of the use of reinforced concrete for industrial architecture, full display of the concrete structure on the exterior was rare, possibly due to the influence of the local brick industry.[7] Yet local architects were quick to take advantage of rapid early advances in reinforced concrete technology in American architectural engineering.

Engineer and architect Ernest Ransome pioneered reinforced concrete structural systems for industrial architecture in the 1880s and 1890s. When a terrible fire in 1902 left his concrete-framed Pacific Coast Borax Refinery in Bayonne, New Jersey (1897) largely unscathed, interest in using reinforced concrete for the construction of fire-prone industrial buildings grew. Ransome's United Shoe Machinery Plant in Beverly, Massachusetts (1903) was the largest

[6] United States Patent Records #1785029, #1832199 and #1877394.
[7] Lynn Josse, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory Form: Luyties Homeopathic Pharmacy Co. Building* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 2003), p. 8.9.

reinforced concrete industrial building built to date.[8] By then, engineer Julius Kahn of Detroit had already developed a modular structural system of concrete columns and beams, patented in 1902. Kahn's brother, noted architect Albert Kahn, employed the "Kahn system" throughout his career to design dozens of American factories. Kahn used the system to maximize widths between columns and increase the size of window openings in the outer envelopes of factories and warehouses to allow for consistent, ample natural light. Kahn's design for the Brown-Lipe Chaplin Factory in Syracuse, New York (1908) may be the first fully-realized "daylight factory" plan in American architecture. The Brown-Lipe Chaplin Factory set some standards in daylight factory design: low height, here five stories; minimal or no use of masonry cladding; use of ornament only at entrances, cornices and piers; and use of ribbons of multi-pane steel sash windows with hopper windows to maximize daylight and allow ventilation.

Engineer C.A.P. Turner developed a slab and column concrete structural system that eliminated the need for beams altogether.[9] First employed in Turner's Johnson-Bovey Building in Minneapolis (1906), Turner's system was called the "mushroom cap system" due to the appearance of the caps Turner designed for his rounded columns. Turner patented his system in 1908. Turner's system allowed for faster construction of fireproof industrial and commercial buildings, and also made it easier for non-architects in the building trades to design these buildings (saving even more money). According to architectural historian Amy Slaton, most American reinforced concrete industrial buildings that avoided masonry cladding built between 1900 and 1930 were designed by engineers without the participation of trained architects.[10] In St. Louis, however, well-known trained architects like Albert B. Groves, the principals of Mauran, Russell & Garden, Tom P. Barnett and Leonhard Haeger would produce the bulk of early functionalist reinforced concrete design.

Two of the earliest industrial buildings in St. Louis to employ modern reinforced concrete structures came from prolific firm Mauran, Russell & Garden and are contributing resources in the Washington Avenue Historic District (NR 2/12/1987). The firm designed both the Butler Brothers Building at 1701 Olive Street and the Lesan-Gould Building at 1322-24 Washington Avenue for wholesale warehousing, which required fireproof construction and floors that could handle heavy loads. The giant five-story Butler Brothers Building occupied an entire city block and utilized a structure of reinforced concrete columns, beams and slabs, all poured in place using wooden forms. The exterior, however, was given lavish masonry treatment with polychrome brown brick and sumptuous red terra cotta. Nonetheless, *The Realty Record and Builder* proclaimed that the building was "the largest monolithic re-enforced concrete building in the world."[11] On the other hand, the Lesan-Gould Building occupied a narrow site, and its two-bay-wide form emphasized verticality. Mauran, Russell & Garden employed Julius Kahn's concrete structural system here, leaving it fully exposed on the side and street-facing elevations

[8] Amy E. Slaton, *Reinforced Concrete and the Modernization of American Building, 1900-1930* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), p. 138.
[9] Josse, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory Form: Luyties Homeopathic Pharmacy Co. Building*, p. 8.8.
[10] Slaton, p. 169.
[11] "Largest in the World," *The Realty Record and Builder* (June 1908).

with brick infill in the bay openings (see figure 2).[12] The stark utilitarian form is softened by Arts and Crafts elements like copper-clad, bracketed cornices and polychromatic enamel brick knee walls and first floor cladding.

Railroad freight depots also embraced advances in fireproof concrete construction. The Missouri, Kansas and Texas completed a massive freight depot at 1600 N. Broadway in 1910. The reinforced concrete structural grid was hidden underneath walls that emphasized the masonry cladding and ornament used. Yet three years later the St. Louis and Southwestern Railroad (the "Cotton Belt Route") completed a nearly *avant garde* concrete freight depot near the Missouri, Kansas and Texas depot. Designed by O.D. Schmidt, the five-story Cotton Belt Freight Depot was functionally designed and expressed (see figure 3). The building's exterior was completely concrete, with cladding showing both the aggregate composition of the material and the imprints of the 40'6"-long, one-story-high wooden form used to guide the pouring of the walls.[13] Yet the building was not as structurally honest as it may have appeared, despite its early aesthetic statement: the Cotton Belt Freight Depot's structure consisted of steel columns, beams and joists clad in concrete to make them fireproof.[14]

In 1914, the Ford Motor Company completed the first section of a five-story reinforced concrete factory at 4100 Forest Park Boulevard (see figure 4). The company expanded the factory in 1916. Designed by Clymer & Drischler of St. Louis with an addition by Albert Kahn, the plant followed a traditional daylight factory plan. Wide column spacing, window openings nearly the full height and width of bay openings, steel sash windows and austere exterior design make this a very modern building. The original building employed a single column cap form, event for the exterior columns, so that column caps protrude through the brick exterior cladding.[15] However, the Ford factory only shows reinforced concrete on its exterior away from public streets. The street-facing east and north elevations are clad in face brick with relief pattern work and terra cotta ornament. Overall, the Ford Motor Company Building (NR 3/6/2002) cloaks a modern fireproof form under a fairly traditional masonry grid. The Ford factory compares to the earlier Koken Barber Supply Building at 2528 Texas Avenue (1912, William A. Lucas; NR 2/7/2007 as part of district), which was a five-story reinforced concrete factory utilizing the Turner system while exhibiting a brick Classical Revival exterior.

Not every architect in St. Louis was hesitant to explore the extensive use of reinforced concrete. According to architectural historian Lynn Josse, Frederick C. Bonsack's Luyties Homeopathic Pharmaceutical Building at 4200 Laclede Avenue (1915; NR 3/27/2003) "is the first known building in the city to use poured concrete for almost every aspect of its structure and its

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[12] Deborah Wafer, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory Form: Washington Avenue Historic District* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1986), p. 8.6.
[13] Winters Haydock, "'Cotton Belt' Freight Terminal at St. Louis," *Railway Age Gazette* 55.6 (August 8, 1913), p. 220
[14] Haydock, p. 219.
[15] Laura Johnson, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory Form: Ford Motor Company Building* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 2002), p. 7.4.

decorative program."[16] Although the Turner-derived structural system of the building was hardly innovative for its time, the use of concrete for the entire exterior of the building was preceded only by the Cotton Belt Freight Depot. Bonsack's design applies Classical Revival elements like a trabeated entrance and a projecting cornice with tall supporting consoles, but all of these are poured concrete. The fully-expressed structural grid compares to the Lesan-Gould Company Building, but it avoids brick infill entirely.[17]

During World War I, around the time that the Alligator Oil Clothing Company Buildings were built, the nation witnessed construction of the largest functionalist concrete industrial complex built between 1900 and 1920. In March 1918, the United States Army commissioned architect Cass Gilbert to design a massive military depot and supply base in Brooklyn, New York. Gilbert's design for the five million square foot complex turned reinforced concrete into both an expedient construction method and an aesthetic principle. Constructed of girderless, steel-reinforced concrete slabs, the Brooklyn Army Terminal buildings were clad in a concrete envelope. Although Gilbert made use of vertical piers, traditional window bays and other elements that were somewhat traditional, he embraced the expression of concrete on the exterior. Gilbert wrote of the complex: "There is something very fine about a great gray mass of building, all one color, all one tone, yet modified by the sunlight or shadow of pearly gray of wonderful delicacy."[18]

In St. Louis, however, such open display of reinforced concrete structure remained unusual even as World War I limited steel availability. The steel shortage during World War I led the developers of the downtown Arcade Building to have architect Tom P. Barnett substitute reinforced concrete for steel when construction started in 1917. Barnett's Gothic Revival design, however, remained unchanged, and the building was completed in 1919 clad in terra cotta with its structural form hidden. Even industrial buildings avoided full exposure of structure. The Rexall Company Building at 3901 N. Kingshighway Boulevard (1920, Harry M. Hope Engineering Company) and the Emerson Electric Company Building at 2012-18 Washington (1920, Albert Groves) have a structural honesty inherent in the wide, tall window openings, but avoid display of the concrete structures save on their rear and side elevations. One of largest reinforced concrete daylight factory buildings erected in St. Louis was the Bevo Bottling Plant at the Anheuser-Busch Brewery (1919, Klipstein & Rathmann and Widmann, Walsh & Boisselier). The Bevo Bottling Plant not only is clad in brown brick and buff terra cotta, but it uses masonry fill in bay openings to artistic effect, so that the structure of the plant is only selectively displayed (see figure 5).

Despite conservative architectural treatment of the form, the reinforced concrete daylight factory received positive local press. A 1918 *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* article on the proposed Pedigo-Weber Shoe Factory at Theresa and Locust streets, designed by Albert B. Groves, extols the building's fireproof structural system and points out that the large window openings

[16] Josse, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory Form: Luyties Homeopathic Pharmacy Co. Building*, p. 8.4.
[17] Ibid., p. 8.10.
[18] Onderonk 249

would allow the "maximum amount of daylight" to reach the factory inside.[19] Of course, the building was clad in red brick. One work from the World War I era that seems consonant with the Alligator factory is Groves' McElroy-Sloan Shoe Company Building at 2035 Washington Avenue (1919), a five-story building that mitigates its expressed functionalist concrete frame with Renaissance Revival elements including a projecting cornice (see figure 6). Novelty in reinforced concrete architecture arrived with the introduction of gunnite, a mixture of concrete and sand sprayed onto steel forms that created buildings with fully concrete exteriors. The *Post-Dispatch* included a lengthy article on the construction of the National Lead Company's pottery plant at Manchester and Macklind avenues, the first all-gunnite industrial building built in the city when completed in 1920.[20]

In 1920, after completion of the Alligator Oil Clothing Company Buildings, the Crunden-Martin Manufacturing Company commissioned architected Tom P. Barnett to design a substantial addition to their factory on the south riverfront (NR 2/9/2005; see figure 7). The National Register nomination for the Crunden-Martin plant states that this new six- and seven-story building was only the second factory building designed by Barnett.[21] Yet the concrete form here is not dissimilar to Barnett's layout of the Arcade Building, despite the smaller scale. The difference between this building and any others designed by Barnett is not the use of reinforced concrete but the raw expression of the material as exterior finish. The walls, piers, crenellation and all other elements of the walls are finished concrete. Certainly, Barnett is a more significant architect than Haeger, and the Crunden-Martin Building exhibits a formal originality that identifies it as the work of a master.

In the 1920s and 1930s, reinforced concrete factories in St. Louis rarely exhibited the utilitarian "ferro-concrete style" displayed by the Alligator Oil Clothing Company buildings. A survey of major examples from the period shows continuation of the use of masonry cladding to either mask entire elevations or piers. The Ramsey Accessories Manufacturing Company Building at 3963 Forest Park Avenue (1923, C.G. Schoelch; NR 4/16/2008) has side walls of exposed concrete structure and brick infill, but its front elevation is brick-clad and even utilized one-over-one wooden windows in the office area. The J.C. Penney Company Warehouse Building at 400 S. 4th Street (1927, Tom P. Barnett; NR 12/31/1998) is one of the most purely functionalist works of the period, but still used face brick to disguise its concrete grid on the north, west and south sides. Nearby, the Endicott-Johnson Shoe Company Distribution Plant addition at 1132 Spruce Street (1924, Nolte & Naumann; NR 10/11/12007), the work of a firm considered to be capable of artistically progressive work, is even more decorated and even has an ornamental terra cotta entrance.

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[19] "Spacious and Modern Plant to be Erected for Shoe Factory," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 1 December 1918, p. A1B.
[20] "New Building in St. Louis Being 'Shot' From a Cement Gun," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 14 November 1920, p. C5.
[21] Matthew Bivens, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory Form: Crunden-Martin Manufacturing Company* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 2005), p. 8.16.

The Steelcote Manufacturing Company Paint Factory at 801 Edwin Avenue (1922-29, Hellmuth & Hellmuth; NR 6/27/2007) includes a building that follows the utilitarian expression of concrete form shown by the Lesan-Gould, Alligator and Adler buildings. The five-story main building at the factory, first built as a three-story building in 1924 and expanded in 1929, exposes its concrete structure on all four sides and makes use of steel windows and inset brick knee walls similar to Alligator.[22] A similar building completed in the same year is the Stix, Baer & Fuller Relay Station warehouse at 3717 Forest Park Avenue (NR 7/17/2002). Industrial buildings that displayed concrete structures would be intermittent in the following decades. The advent of the International Style, with its emphasis on clear material and structural expression and lack of ornamentation, would become a catalyst for later reinforced concrete industrial architecture. The now-demolished massive Falstaff Brewing Company Ice House at 20th and Madison streets (1940) was a geometric concrete mass that exhibited International Style design and pure reinforced concrete exterior expression. This building's roots went back to earlier works including the Alligator Oil Clothing Company Factory.

Leonhard Haeger (1867-1977)

Architect Leonhard Haeger had a long career in St. Louis, and his practice is connected with buildings ranging from factories to flats to banks. Most of his works are located in south St. Louis, near his home and office. Haeger was born on February 5, 1867. The start of his architectural practice is not known, but his name appears in *The Construction News* as the architect of houses by 1907. Haeger lived and worked at 3844 Utah Place, a residence that he designed in 1907.[23] A 1934 American Institute of Architects roster reports that Haeger had been a member since 1933.

Haeger is the recorded architect for at least 15 buildings in the Tower Grove Heights Historic District (NR 9/6/2001). Haeger designed residences on Humphrey, Utah and Wyoming streets with construction dates between 1907 and 1914. His largest work in the district is the two-story commercial building at 3207-11 South Grand Avenue (1909). This building is a Classical Revival two-part commercial block with splayed terra cotta lintels with keystones, a projecting terra cotta cornice with modillions and shaped parapets bearing inset terra cotta medallions. The building on Grand Avenue is fairly conventional for this period in St. Louis.

Haeger's first industrial project seems to be additions to the Pevely Creamery at 3301 Park Avenue (NR 7/19/2006), completed in 1903 (designed by Ernest J. Hess.) In 1910, Haeger designed a 48' by 39' two-story addition to the two-story building. Two years later, the architect designed a 42' by 102' third story addition encompassing both the original building and the addition.[24] The additions maintain the fairly utilitarian masonry envelope of the mill-method plant, but the cornice made use of polychrome enameled terra cotta. Haeger continued his

[22] Karen Bode Baxter and Timothy Maloney, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory Form: Steelcote Manufacturing Co. Paint Factory* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 2007), p. 8.18.
[23] *The Construction News*, various dates.
[24] Paul Meier and Doug Johnson, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory Form: Pevely Dairy Company Buildings* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 2006), p. 8.19.

practice of designing flats in south side neighborhoods, including the four-family building at 3246 Nebraska Avenue (1914).

In 1914, the Pevely Dairy Company turned to Haeger to draw up plans for a massive modern plant at the southwest corner of Chouteau and Grand (see figure 8). Haeger designed a four-story office building to sit right at the corner, and a four story milk plant to be interconnected to the west. The interior of the plant was built out to maximize sanitization through the use of enameled white brick, wall tile and floor tile.[25] The interior spaces were divided according to specialization within the dairy process. Both buildings made use of reinforced concrete structures consisting of cast-in-place columns, girders and floor plates. Haeger designed the building as a "daylight factory" with window openings of ample height and full bay width. The structural grid of the building could be read inside and out, although not directly. Haeger clad the street elevations in red brick and set a terra cotta cornice atop the walls, so that the building followed the precedent of the Ford Motor Company Building in cloaking its reinforced concrete mass beneath a traditional masonry skin. The office building was completed in 1915 and the milk plant in 1916. Currently, the Pevely Dairy Company Plant (NR 11/18/2009) is under demolition.

In 1919, Haeger designed the Tower Grove Bank Building at the northwest corner of Grand and Juniata streets near his home. The Tower Grove Bank Building, re-clad in the 1930s and demolished in 2001, was a two-story brick building with Beaux Arts influences evident, including the two-story Ionic columns, parapet balustrade and pedimented entrance (all terra cotta). In 1920, Haeger designed a one-story parking garage in Clayton, Missouri for owner A.J. Kerth.[26] The following year, Haeger designed a one-story, 50' by 100' foundry for the Chester Iron and Foundry Company at 7000 Vulcan Avenue in Carondelet. Also in 1921, Haeger designed a two-story reinforced concrete Nurses' Home for the Lutheran Hospital at 3500 Ohio Avenue (likely demolished). That same year, Haeger designed a now-demolished row of stores and flats for Daniel Kris at Lafayette Avenue and 39th Street.

Haeger continued to design reinforced concrete buildings, including a one-story laundry plant at 2655 Victor Avenue for the Cascade Wet Wash Laundry (1923) and the Waxide Paper Company plant at 1525 S. Newstead Avenue (1928). Also, the 1928 building permit for the ten-story Art Deco South Side National Bank Building at 3606 Gravois Avenue lists Haeger as the architect. However, all drawings and articles related to the building attribute the design to the Bank Building and Equipment Company.[27] No evidence has been found indicating that Haeger ever worked for Bank Building and Equipment Company, but the building permit suggests that he was involved in the design of the bank building in some way.

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[25] Julie Ann LaMouria, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory Form: Pevely Dairy Company Plant* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 2009), p. 8.11.
[26] *The American Contractor* 41 (20 April 1920), p. 83.
[27] Lynn Josse, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory Form: South Side National Bank* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 2000), p. 8.12.

Haeger remained active as an architect until World War II. In 1931, Trinity United Church of Christ completed a new dark-brick Gothic Revival church at 4700 S. Grand Avenue from plans by Haeger. The Gast Brewery turned to Haeger to design a one-story concrete bottling plant on Hornsby Street in 1938. Two years later, Haeger's name appears on permits for both an addition to the Waxide Paper company plant that he designed earlier and for a fireproof industrial building at Glasgow and North Market streets. Leonhard Haeger's retirement date is unknown. The architect passed away in 1967.

The Alligator Oil Clothing Company Buildings: Modern Reinforced Concrete Industrial Architecture

Three years after completion of the new Pevely Dairy Plant, its neighbor across the street, the Alligator Oil Clothing Company, hired Haeger to design its new plant on Bingham Avenue. Alligator needed a large fireproof building with specialized production areas, just as Pevely had built. It is not surprising that Alligator turned to the architect of Pevely's impressive plant, Leonhard Haeger, for its design needs. After purchasing the western part of the site on June 11, 1918, the Alligator Oil Clothing Company received a building permit on July 3 for a two-story factory building with a 151 by 199 foot footprint at 4171 Bingham Avenue. The permit reported cost of $120,000. Murch Brothers, a prolific contracting firm, was the builder. Although the permit reported a two-story height, the actual building reaches a height of four stories on the north end of a sloped site (see figure 9).
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Haeger designed the Alligator Oil Clothing Company factory to fully express its reinforced concrete construction. The building employs a structural system based on Turner's "mushroom cap" system, and a daylight factory exterior fenestration pattern based on Kahn's daylight factory model. Whether limited budget or artistic license led to Haeger's decision to reveal the concrete structure on the exterior is unknown, but the architect integrated the form of the building into its exterior appearance seamlessly. The concrete columns on the perimeter of the building were poured with different caps than the interior columns, forming smooth continuous piers. The floor slabs are trimmed with smooth beams that form a clear structural grid on the exterior. Within the bay openings, simple red brick knee walls run under wide ribbons of steel windows. The windows and brick are visually subordinate, however, to the concrete frame. On the front elevation, the building is dominated by an expressive poured-in-place concrete parapet, with two steps on each side of a central gabled step. Yet the parapet is not plainly built, and has recessed panels to create relief, as well as decorative consoles at the piers. The use of decorative elements made the factory more than a utilitarian box. Inside, the plant largely had an open plan as was needed for Alligator's production process, although some specialized interior rooms existed (see figure 10).

Haeger's design rejects the classical articulation of fireproof architecture that he employed at the Pevely Dairy Plant. Yet it is consistent with the daylight factory movement of which Pevely and other brick-clad concrete buildings are a part. The concrete grid is similar to what is underneath the Ford Motor Company Building (1914-1916), the Bevo Plant (1919) and the Emerson Electric Company Building (1920), but it is not concealed on its street face as the

structures of those buildings are. Instead, the Alligator plant draws upon a less conventional strain of local fireproof architecture. The openly expressed structural grid with brick infill seems to have one peer from this period, the McElroy-Sloan Shoe Company Building (1919). In fact, the National Register nomination for the Luyties Homeopathic Pharmaceutical Company Building cites the McElroy-Sloan building as the only other major building from that decade that expresses its concrete structural grid.[28] The Alligator factory is one more.

The Alligator Company purchased the remainder of the site on August 23, 1919. This purchase was followed by two building permits issued to Alligator by the city on September 9. These permits correspond to a $17,000 "two-story" office building and factory with a footprint of 60 by 89 feet that still stands, and a $30,000 two-story factory building with a footprint of 39 by 79 feet of which only a one-bay fragment remains. The *Daily Record* shows that Hager again served as architect and Murch Brothers as builder. Again, the permit is misleading because the "two story" office and factory building actually is one story with two basement levels, and Sanborn fire insurance maps mark the heights as "1B" rather than "2." These two buildings and numerous non-extant tanks and sheds built between 1919 and 1926 were initially used by the P.D. George Company.

With brick cladding on its front elevation that wraps the corners, the P.D. George building follows the more dominant local reinforced concrete tradition. Haeger conceals the structural form to some extent, although the brick cladding clearly articulates the column placement and bay heights. Yet the sides, tower and rear return to the plain structural expression found in the original Alligator building. Together, the two buildings are good examples of the contrasting local architectural expressions of reinforced concrete industrial architecture in the early fireproof construction period.

In 1943, after taking over all of the buildings on site, the Alligator Company connected the entire plant. A $25,000 building permit issued on January 4, 1943 covers a 25 foot by 65 foot two-story addition (a wall remains) that connected the two 1919 buildings as well as a 73 foot by 113 foot one-story addition extending from the 1918 building to the connected 1919 buildings (see figure 11 for an aerial view). This one-story addition was built on a slab without a basement, and is now wrecked. Alligator received a permit on February 27, 1953 for a one-story brick shipping room addition that cost $30,000 to build. This addition likely was located in a recess between the 1943 addition and the 1918 building. The last part of the complex to be built was the L-shaped one-story steel-framed manufacturing building for which Alligator received a permit on January 27, 1959. The permit reports a cost of $73,000 for this roughly 100 foot by 139 ½ foot building. Murch-Jarvis Company was the builder and Harold Jarvis the engineer and designer. Alligator added a loading dock on the east side of this building in 1971. This was the last major change to the complex until November 2, 1999, when a seven-alarm fire struck. Following the fire, the owners razed the 1943 addition, some of the 1959 building and all of the 1919 factory building save one bay left to stand as a ruin (see figure 12 for a view

[28] Josse, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory Form: Luyties Homeopathic Pharmacy Co. Building*, p. 8.10.

of Building 1 following the demolition). In 2011, the City of St. Louis demolished the smokestack, which had deteriorated and lost its top half.

With the exception of the presence of the 1959 addition and the loss of the smokestack, the current appearance of the plant is consistent with how it appeared prior to construction of the 1943 addition. Through intact form, exposed concrete structural grid, sawtooth skylights and the presence of steel sash windows, the original Alligator building conveys its historic use as a clothing manufacturing building. Its large footprint is consistent with the scale of garment industry buildings throughout the city, including around Washington Avenue downtown. The large floor plates with ample perimeter light aided the setting up of banks of sewing machines and work stations for clothing production. The P.D. George Company Building reflects its historic use as an office, laboratory and production facility for varnishes and other by-products tied to the oil clothing process as well as part of the later expanded production of the Alligator Oil Clothing Company. Both buildings continue to clearly demonstrate the reinforced concrete structure that makes them significant works of local architecture.

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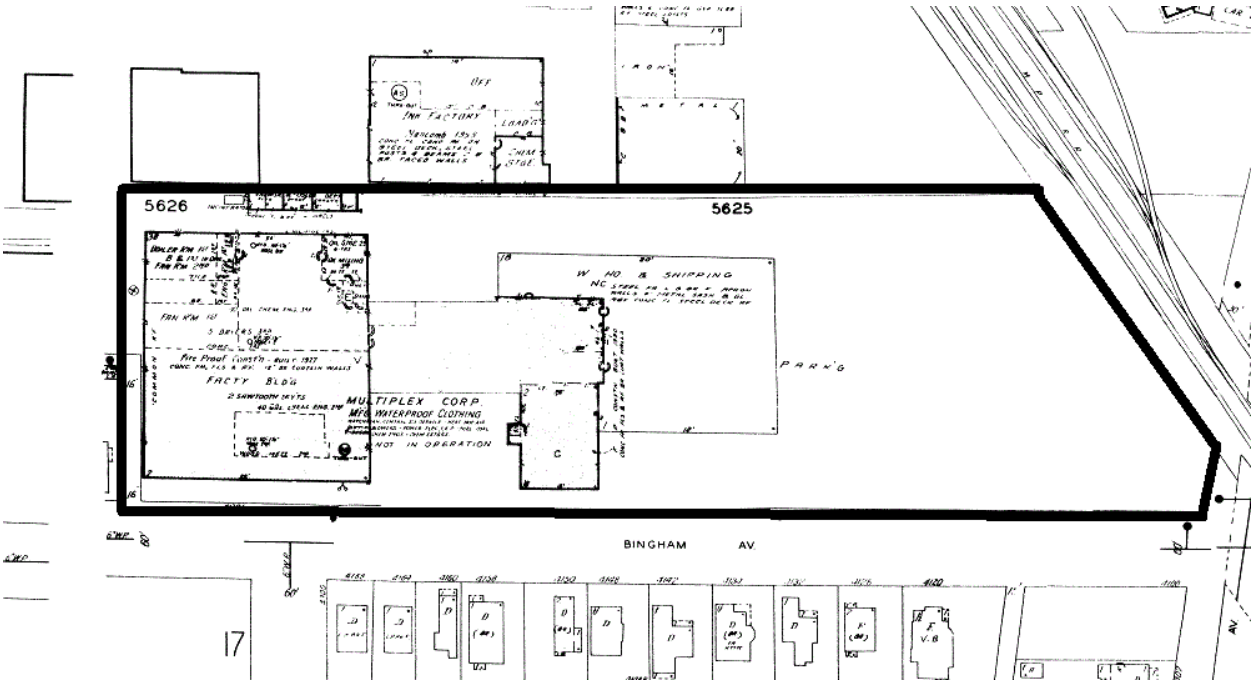
Boundary Description

The nominated property is located at 4153-71 Bingham Avenue in the Bevo neighborhood of St. Louis, Missouri. The buildings stand on City Block 5625 and 5626 west of Gravois Avenue. The property is identified by the city Assessor's Office as parcel number 562500140. The nominated property is indicated by a heavy line on the accompanying map.

Boundary Justification

The nominated parcel includes all of the property historically associated with the Alligator Oil Clothing Company Buildings.

Alligator Oil Clothing Company Buildings Boundary Map. Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, circa 1951.



Photographs

The following is true for all photographs submitted with this nomination:

Alligator Oil Clothing Company Buildings
4153-71 Bingham Avenue
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri, 63116
Photographer: Michael R. Allen
Digital source files in the collection of the Preservation Research Office.

The date that the photographs were taken:
July 26, 2012

The descriptions of each view follow:

1. View of the main elevation of Building 1 looking northeast.
2. View of Building 1 looking northwest.
3. Detail of concrete console on main elevation of Building 1.
4. View of Building 1 looking southwest.
5. View of eastern elevation of Building 1 looking southeast.
6. View southwest inside of the third level of Building 1.
7. View east inside of the fourth level of Building 1.
8. View northeast toward Building 2.
9. View northeast toward Building 3.
10. View northwest toward Building 3.
11. View southeast showing Buildings 3 and 4 from above.
12. View south toward Building 3, with Building 4 at left.
13. View west toward Building 4.

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Figure 4: Ford Motor Company Building (1914, Clymer & Drischler; 1916, Albert Kahn).

Figure 5: Bevo Bottling Plant (1919, Klipstein & Rathmann and Widmann, Walsh & Boisselier).

Figure 6: McElroy-Sloan Shoe Company Building (1919, Albert B. Groves).

Figure 7: Crunden-Martin Building (1920, Tom P. Barnett).

Figure 8: Pevely Dairy Plant (1915, Leonard Haeger).

Figure 9: Building 1 shown in a 1918 aerial photograph, circled.

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Figure 11: Aerial view of Alligator plant, 1971.

Figure 12: View of west elevation of Building 1 in 2001.

Figure 1: Site plan for the Alligator Oil Clothing Company Buildings (Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, c. 1951).

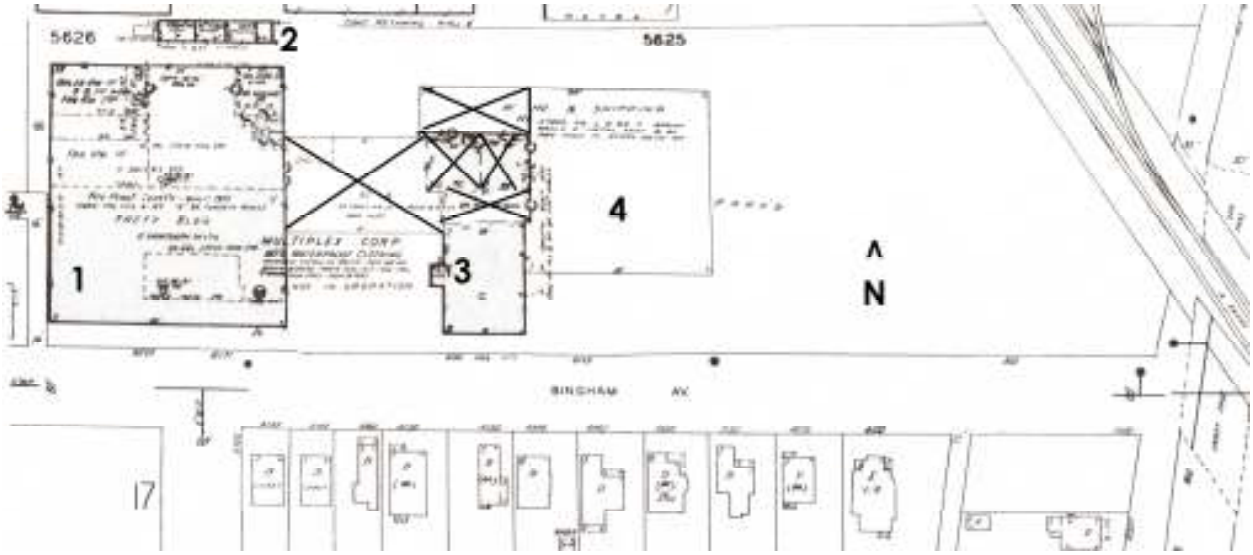


Figure 2: Lesan-Gould Building (1907, Mauran, Russell & Garden). Photograph by the preparer.

Figure 3: The Cotton Belt Freight Depot (1913, O.D. Schmidt). Photograph by the preparer.

Figure 4: Ford Motor Company Building (1914, Clymer & Drischler; 1916, Albert Kahn). (Source: Historic view c. 1916, Preservation Research Office Collection.)

Figure 5: Bevo Bottling Plant (1919, Klipstein & Rathmann and Widmann, Walsh & Boisselier). Photograph by Rob Powers.

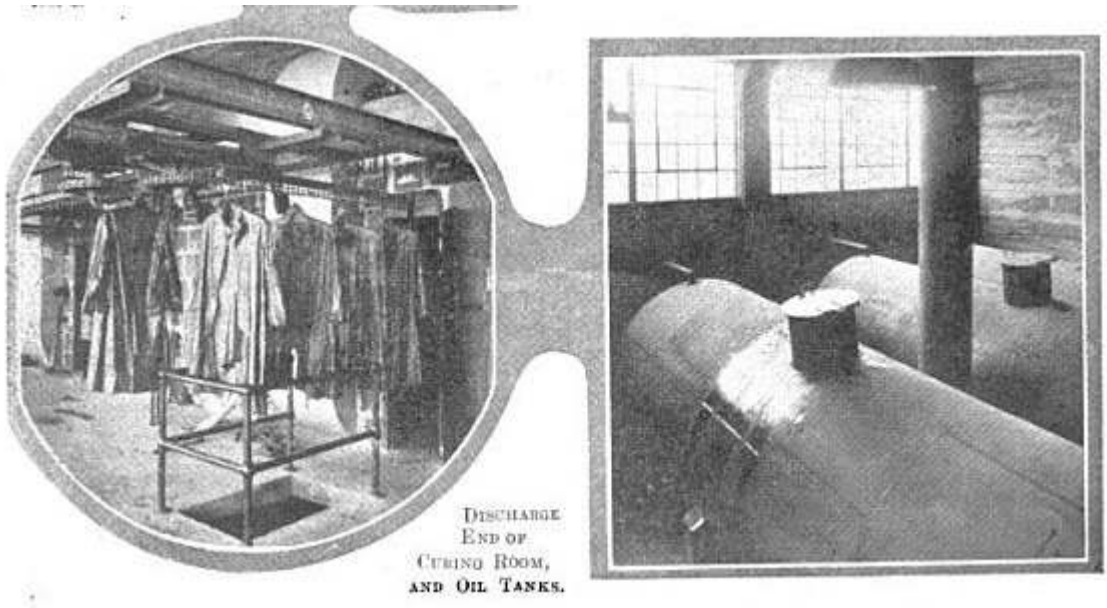
Figure 6: The McElroy-Sloan Shoe Company Building (1919, Albert B. Groves). Photograph by the preparer, 2005.

Figure 7: Crunden-Martin Building (1920, Tom P. Barnett). Photograph by the preparer.

Figure 8: Pevely Dairy Plant (1915, Leonard Haeger). Photograph by the preparer.

Figure 9: Building 1 shown in a 1918 aerial photograph; circled here. (Source: Collection of the St. Louis Building Arts Foundation.)

Figure 10: Interior views of Building 1 in 1919. (Source: *Southern Engineer* 32.3, October 1919).



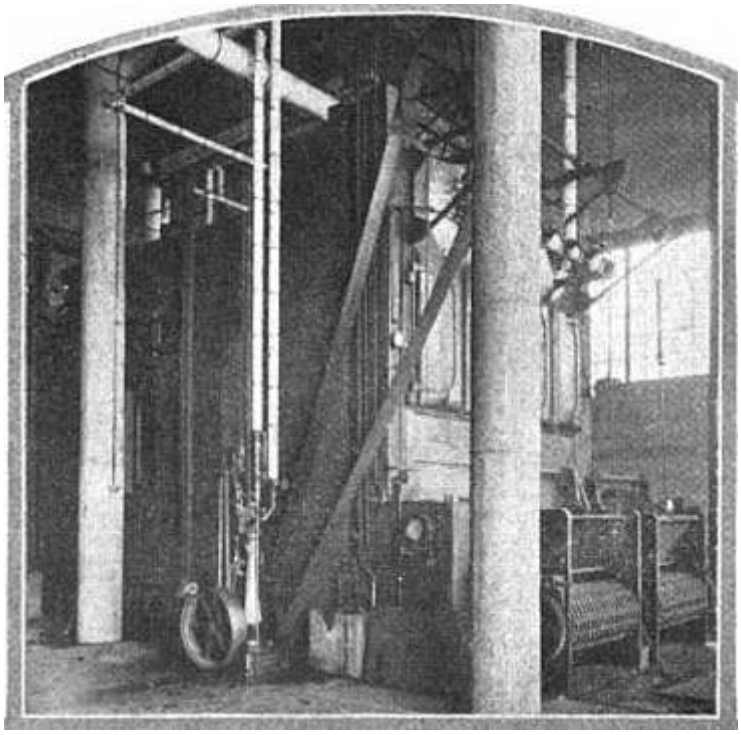


Figure 11: Aerial view of Alligator plant, 1971. (Source: Historic Aerials, historicaerials.com.)

Figure 12: View of west elevation of Building 1 in 2001. (Source: Sonic Atrophy, sonicatrophy.com.)

Alligator Oil Clothing Company Buildings
4153-71 Bingham Avenue
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
Latitude: 38.588498
Longitude: -90.261157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