

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Springfield Furniture Company

other names/site number General Warehouse Corporation

## 2. Location

street & number 601 North National [N/A] not for publication

city or town Springfield [N/A] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Greene code 077 zip code 65806

## 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 [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [x] locally.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ] )



5/16/06

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

Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ] )

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper      Date of Action

[ ] entered in the National Register.  
See continuation sheet [ ].

\_\_\_\_\_

[ ] determined eligible for the National Register.  
See continuation sheet [ ].

\_\_\_\_\_

[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_

[ ] removed from the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_

[ ] other, (explain:)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Springfield Furniture Company  
Greene County, MO**

**Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri**

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources Within Property	
		Contributing	Non-contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	2	0 buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	0	0 sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	0 structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0 objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	2	0 Total

**Name of related multiple property listing.**

Historic and Architectural Resources of  
Springfield, Missouri

**Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register.**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

VACANT/NOT IN USE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural classification**

OTHER: warehouse/industrial  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

foundation concrete  
walls brick  
concrete  
roof asphalt  
other wood  
\_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet [ ]

**Narrative Description** See continuation sheet [x].

**Springfield Furniture Company  
Greene County, MO**

**Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri**

**8. Statement of Significance  
Applicable National Register Criteria**

**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.

**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**

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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

See continuation sheet [x].

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

**Bibliography** See continuation sheet [x].

**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
- # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

Industry

**Period of Significance**

ca. 1895-ca. 1942

**Significant Dates**

ca. 1896

ca. 1904

ca. 1913

**Significant Person(s)**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

unknown

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other:

Name of repository:

Springfield Public Library

Springfield Furniture Company  
Greene County, MO  
Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property:** approximately 4.3 acres

**UTM References**

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	475426	4118762	15	475538	4118757
C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	475523	4118620	15	475421	4118630

[ ] See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Debbie Sheals  
organization Private Contractor date January, 2006  
street & number 29 S. 9<sup>th</sup> St. Suite 204 telephone 573-874-3779  
city or town Columbia state Missouri zip code 65201

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**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.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional Items**

(Check with the SHPO or FOP for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

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

name Big Windows, LLC, c/o Craig Wagoner  
street & number 1010 E. Elm  
telephone 417-865-8698  
city or town Springfield state MO zip code 65806

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

**Springfield Furniture Company  
Greene County, MO  
Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri**

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**Summary:** The Springfield Furniture Company is located at 601 North National Avenue, in Springfield, Missouri. It is a manufacturing complex with two large brick factory buildings, on a lot that covers just over four acres. Both of the buildings have brick walls, flat roofs, and little architectural detailing. The buildings were constructed in phases as the business grew; the oldest sections date to ca. 1895, and the last major addition was done before 1933. The south building is two stories, with brick walls and evenly spaced rows of single arched windows; it is the oldest of the two. It began as two separate buildings when the factory opened at this location around 1895, and those two buildings were expanded and combined to create the present building ca. 1904. A large water tower was added to the building at that time as well. The north building was probably built as a two-story building around 1913, with the third floor added sometime before 1933. It has brick walls with wide blocks of multi-paned windows that are separated by flat brick piers. A small two-story ell on its northeast corner was originally a freestanding office, which was built ca. 1895. The buildings are highly intact, inside and out, and in fair condition. Neither has seen exterior alterations of any note in the last 75 years, and each is a contributing resource. There are no other resources on the property. The buildings of the Springfield Furniture Company are highly intact examples of the Warehouse/Industrial Property Type discussed in the Multiple Property Submission cover document "Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri." Together, they form an impressive historic complex which clearly meets the registration requirements set forth in that document, under Criterion A, in the area of Industry.

**Elaboration:**

The Springfield Furniture Company occupies a large lot at the southwest corner of N. National and Chestnut Expressway. Chestnut Expressway runs along the north side of the property, and North National is on the east side. The property is bordered on the west by an open gravel lot, and on the south by other light industrial property. The southern edge of the lot, which at one time contained a railroad spur, now has a narrow belt of trees and other vegetation. The rest of the property is open and level, and much of it is covered with graveled parking areas. Historically, North National was the only street in the immediate vicinity, and the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Springfield Furniture Company  
Greene County, MO  
Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri

land on the other three sides of the property was open. (Chestnut Expressway was developed in the 1950s.) National Avenue has been widened over the years, and it now runs within a few feet of the buildings at the east side of the lot.

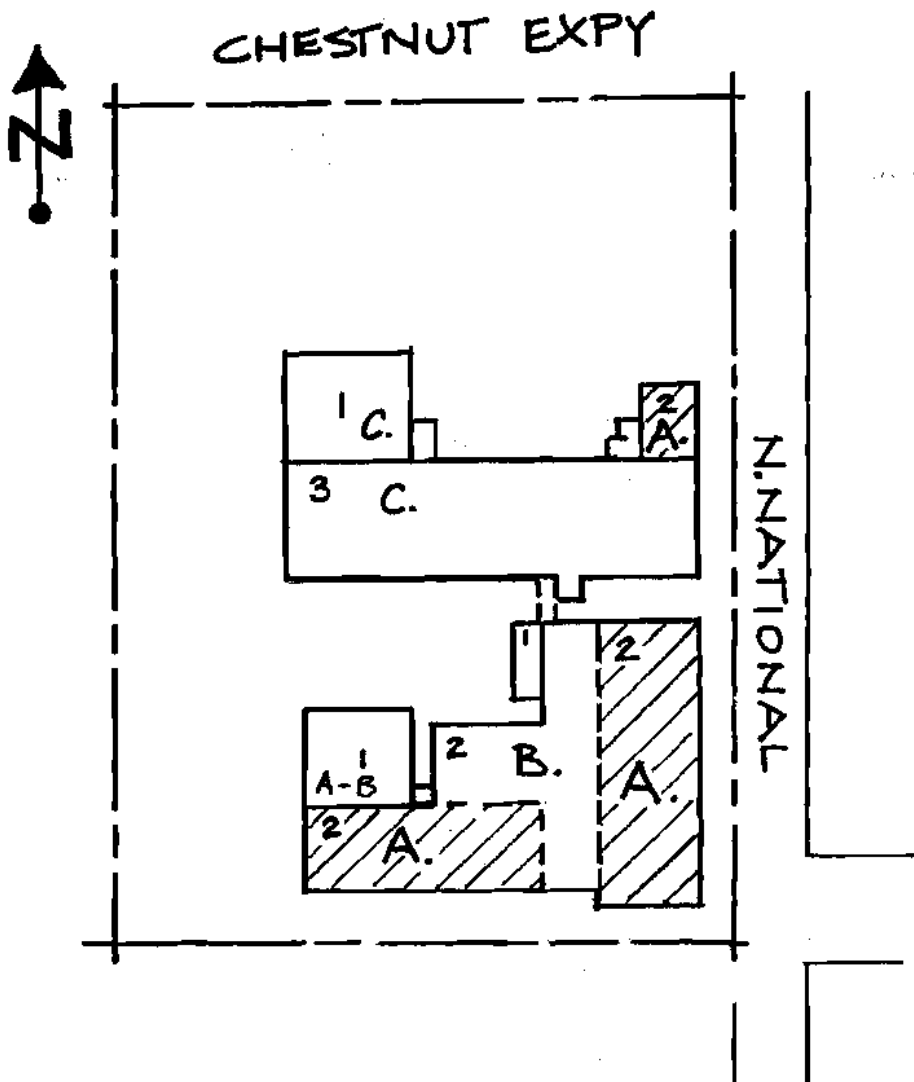
**Figure One: Site Plan, with construction dates and patterns of development.**

Drawn by Deb Sheals, from Sanborn Maps and an aerial photo map of the property. Diagonal lines identify oldest parts of the complex.

**KEY:**

- A.) Built ca. 1895
- B.) Built ca. 1904
- C.) Built ca. 1913-1933

Numbers refer to the number of stories of that section of the building.



**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

**Springfield Furniture Company**  
**Greene County, MO**  
**Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri**

The two buildings sit close together, at the south end of the property. The south building has a roughly L-shaped footprint, and the main block of the north building is rectangular. Together, they form a U-shaped complex with a central courtyard that is open on the west. (That space held a drying kiln when the factory was in operation.) A small driveway between the two buildings provides access from National Avenue, and the buildings are physically linked via a walkway that runs over that driveway at the second floor level. (See photo 4.) The walkway has a concrete structure, red brick walls and a flat roof. It appears to have been constructed about the same time as the north building, and was definitely in place by the time of the 1933 Sanborn.

The south building started out as two long rectangular buildings, set perpendicular to each other, close to the south and east property lines. They were built around 1895, when the company first opened at this location. Around 1904, the two buildings were joined with infill construction that is similar in materials and massing.<sup>1</sup> With the exception of minor additions and alterations, the south building today looks much as it did after that ca. 1904 construction project.

The south building is two stories, with a one-story engine room at its northwest corner. A large water tower sits east of the engine room; it has a high square brick base, which is topped by a polygonal metal platform, and a round metal water tank. (See photo 15.) There is also a small one-story ell with a shed roof that is located on the east side of the courtyard.

The south building has flat brick walls, with little embellishment. The two early sections have very small corbelled cornices, and most other exterior walls have plain flat surfaces topped with ceramic coping tiles. There are also several fire walls within the building; they extend up above the roofline, and several of those are topped with ceramic coping tiles as well. The south wall of the building is painted white, and the east wall has a thick coating of black paint. The other elevations feature unpainted red brick, although some of those bear remnants of multicolored paint from paintball guns; the factory was home to a paintball business in recent years.

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<sup>1</sup> Both buildings were in place by the time the factory was first mapped by the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company in 1896, and the infill was in place by 1906, when a drawing of the plant was published in Merchants and Manufacturers Record of Springfield, Missouri, (Springfield: A. Owen Jennings, 1906.) A summary of company history on file with the Springfield Public Library mentions an addition to the plant in 1904; it has been assumed that referred to this project.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 4

**Springfield Furniture Company  
Greene County, MO  
Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri**

**Figure Two. Ground Floor Plans.** Drawn by Butler Rosenbury & Partners, Springfield, MO.



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 5

**Springfield Furniture Company  
Greene County, MO  
Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri**

---

Windows throughout are tall and narrow, and almost all have segmental arched tops. There are a few doorways as well; they are wider than the windows, and many have flat-topped openings. All except for a handful of the doors and windows have plywood coverings over the openings; several early or original window sashes remain in place beneath that sheathing. Most of the surviving windows, which are in fair to very poor condition, have six-over-six double-hung wood sashes.

The interior of the south building has seen few changes. It has an open plan, with simple wooden posts and beams, and exposed ceiling joists. Most rooms have their early or original wood floors, and brick walls are either plain or painted. There is little to no plaster or interior millwork. There are several wide doorways in the thick brick fire walls, a few of which retain early or original sliding metal fire doors.

The north building is the newest of the pair. Sanborn maps show that it was constructed between 1910 and 1933, and physical evidence indicates that it was built in two stages. It appears that the lower two floors were constructed first, ca. 1914, and the third floor was added not long after.<sup>2</sup> There is a clear difference in construction methods between the top and the lower floors on the east elevation of this building, and the bottom two floors throughout have different types of windows.

The main block of the north building is three stories tall, and there are two smaller ells on its north side. A low one-story block sits at the west end of the north wall, and a smaller two-story office wing is located on the east end. Sanborn maps show that the one-story ell, which has been in place since before 1933, has a concrete structural system, while the rest of the building has a brick structure. The one-story ell appears to be roughly the same age as the lower floors of the main block. It has rough red brick walls and widely spaced single windows. The windows are in-filled with concrete blocks, but the openings themselves are intact. A small frame porch on the north wall is probably not original.

Sanborn maps also indicate that the two-story ell was originally a free-standing building, and that it is as old as the original sections of the south building. It housed offices and support space on the first floor, and a "sample

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<sup>2</sup> Sanborn maps of 1910 and 1933 established the range of dates. The summary of company history on file at the Springfield Public Library also noted an expansion in 1913, and it has been assumed that the lower floors of the north building were built at that time.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

**Springfield Furniture Company**  
**Greene County, MO**  
**Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri**

---

room" on the second for much of the period of significance, both before and after it became part of the building.

The office wing is tall and narrow, and set with its wide side facing National Avenue. (See photos 11-12.) The east elevation of that wing has a simple corbelled brick cornice, above which is a short parapet wall. The cornice is early or original; the parapet appears to be a later addition. The second floor has, or had, narrow, evenly-spaced windows that are very like those on the south building. The second floor windows of the office wing are currently either boarded over or bricked in. The ground floor of its east elevation has wider square windows, which are not original, but may be more than fifty years old. A single doorway there is topped by a bracketed gabled hood that probably dates to the 1920s or 30s. The north ground floor has a small storefront that is roughly the same age as the windows on the east side, and there are similar windows on the lower west elevation as well. The entire office wing and the east elevation of the main building have been painted pink in recent years; rehab plans call for removal of that paint, or at the least, a change of color.

The east elevation of the main block of the building matches the east elevation of the office wing. The lower two floors of that wall are very similar to the office wing, with single narrow arched windows and a matching corbelled brick cornice at the top of the second floor. (See photo 11.) Most of the windows are covered or missing; the few that are exposed have one-over-one and two-over-two wood window sashes. The third floor of that elevation, which appears to have been added later, has large banks of multi-light metal factory windows instead of small single windows, and the top of the wall has only a simple stepped parapet.

The other three elevations of the north building all have similar fenestration, with wide window bays separated by flat brick piers, and no cornice or other ornamentation. None of those red brick walls have ever been painted. The window bays are all topped with poured concrete lintels, and a band of concrete runs along the entire top of the third floor. The top floor has the same type of metal windows as the third floor of the east elevation, and the lower two floors have multi-light wood windows. The wood units consist of large, 12-light, pivoting sashes, and there are four sashes in each bay. There is a small covered wooden loading dock on the west end of the building, and a covered concrete loading dock on the north wall; both are early, but probably not original.

The interior of the north building is much like the interior of the south

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 7

**Springfield Furniture Company  
Greene County, MO  
Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri**

---

building, with few interior partitions or finishes in the bulk of the space. The brick walls are plain or painted, and there is little millwork or plaster. The north building differs in that part of its structural system is concrete. The ground floor has large concrete posts and beams, and the top two floors have wooden structural members. The bottom two levels have concrete floors, and the third story has wood floors.

There are a few smaller rooms in the east end of the building that housed offices when the factory was in use. Some of those spaces are a little more finished, with simple flat trim around the front windows, wood floors and low flat baseboards. Some of the rooms also have ceilings sheathed with simple embossed ornamental sheet metal, and a few retain early or original plaster.

Overall, the buildings of the Springfield Furniture Company look today very much as they did when the plant was in operation. Neither building has seen any changes of note to form or patterns of fenestration, and the complex stands as a highly intact link with Springfield's industrial history. The high level of integrity and prominent corner location makes this an especially notable historic resource, which clearly meets the registration requirements of the Warehouse/Industrial property type.



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 8

**Springfield Furniture Company  
Greene County, MO  
Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri**

**Summary:** The Springfield Furniture Company, a two-building complex, is locally significant as the relatively intact home of the earliest and largest furniture manufacturing firm in Springfield, Greene County, Missouri. The nominated properties meet National Register Criterion A in the area of Industry, with a period of significance beginning in 1895 when the first building was constructed and ending when the company went out of business in ca. 1942. During this 47-year span, Springfield Furniture is believed to have been the city's dominant furniture maker, employing up to 90 workers as early as 1904. The nominated buildings, constructed between ca. 1895 and ca. 1932, housed most of the manufacturing activities and today represent the remaining core of the complex. Additionally, the buildings are representative of the Warehouse/Industrial Property Type described in the Multiple Property Submission cover document "Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri." They meet the registration requirements set forth in that document under the context "Industrial Development in Springfield, 1835-1945." The complex today looks very much as it did when the furniture factory was in operation, and it serves as a prominent, highly intact link with Springfield's industrial history.

**Elaboration:**

"The Springfield Furniture Company is one of the largest enterprises of its kind in the State of Missouri, and is a manufacturing establishment of which the City of Springfield may well be proud."<sup>3</sup> So proclaimed the Pictorial and Genealogical Record of Greene County, Missouri, in 1893. That statement was made only two years after the Springfield Furniture Manufacturing Company came into existence. The company was formed in December of 1891, and must have had immediate success, as its stock was doubled just six months later, on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1892.<sup>4</sup> The company started out at a location on the east side of town, but moved to the North National location soon after, and remained in operation there for the next half-century.

The Springfield Furniture Company was established during a period of significant growth for the city of Springfield. The population of the city grew from just over 21,000 in 1890 to 35,201 in 1910.<sup>5</sup> At least one local source credited

<sup>3</sup> Pictorial and Genealogical Record of Greene County, Missouri, (Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1893) p. 54.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Jonathan Fairbanks and Clyde Edwin Tuck, Past and Present of Greene County, Missouri, (Indianapolis: A. W. Bowen and Company, 1915) p. 672.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 9

**Springfield Furniture Company**  
**Greene County, MO**  
**Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri**

---

much of that growth to an increase in manufacturing activity. A description of the city written in 1915 claimed that the turn-of-the-century growth spurt "was due largely to industrial development. In five years Springfield had made a gain of 45 per cent in the amount of capital invested in its manufactures."<sup>6</sup>

The Springfield Furniture Company was one such manufacturer. A profile of the company that was published in 1893 noted that they started out with capital stock of \$25,000, which increased to \$50,000 just six months later. The company was forced to invest even more money just two years later, when a fire destroyed much of their plant. The same profile noted that the fire caused a "loss of \$15,000 over and above all insurance," and another description mentioned that they suffered from another fire just a year later, in 1894.<sup>7</sup> That second fire may have triggered the decision to relocate the business to the property on National Avenue.

Whatever the reason for the move, it is clear that by the summer of 1896, Springfield Furniture occupied the site that was to be their home for the next several decades. The first record of the complex in operation on National Avenue dates to July of 1896, when the property was mapped by the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company. They had obviously been there for some time when the map was made, as it records two large brick factory buildings, as well as an extensive collection of smaller support buildings. (See Figure Three.) The map also shows a six-inch water line running from the street to a double hydrant at the center of the complex; that alone would have been a compelling reason to relocate for a company that had suffered two major fires in less than four years.

The early officers of the company were well-suited for their task, and clearly up to the challenges they faced in those first years of operation.<sup>8</sup> One of the first vice presidents was Col. Homer F. Fellows, who had also been a founder of the Springfield Wagon Company twenty years earlier. The Springfield Wagon Company, which was located not far from the Furniture Company's property on National, was one of the city's most prominent early manufacturing facilities. They were in operation for some 70 years, and as one local history noted, the wagon company was "famous world-wide for its products."<sup>9</sup> Although he was not an officer for long,

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 672.

<sup>7</sup> Pictorial and Genealogical Record, p. 54, and a summary of company history on file with the Springfield Public Library..

<sup>8</sup> Company officers were listed in Pictorial and Genealogical Record, p. 54. as well as in city directories throughout the period of significance.

<sup>9</sup> Dick Grosenbaugh, ed. A Million Hours of Memories, (Springfield: Springfield Sesquicentennial Committee, 1979; no page numbers.)



**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 11

**Springfield Furniture Company**  
**Greene County, MO**  
**Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri**

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Two other early officers were members of the family that was to operate the company for the entire span of its existence. Marcellus Holbrook served as president from 1892 into the 1920s, and his son-in-law, M. W. Coolbaugh, was Secretary/Treasurer for much of that same time period. Marcellus Holbrook was a native of Pennsylvania who lived in Iowa before settling in Springfield. He had a long career in banking before he decided to go into the furniture business with his son-in-law, who was also a former banker. Coolbaugh, who was married to Holbrook's oldest daughter, Anna, had even started his own bank in Iowa, before moving to Missouri.

The factory stayed in the Holbrook family for the rest of its existence. Marcellus Holbrook was active in the firm throughout its early years, and when he died in 1925, he left substantial amounts of stock in the company to his many heirs.<sup>10</sup> His will specifically stated that his son Burke's share of the estate should be exclusively in company stock, and it was Burke Holbrook who operated the company after his father's death. He continued in that role into the early 1940s, aided at times by his sister Anna, who was listed as the vice president of the firm in the early 1940s.

Sanborn maps show that the factory saw steady expansion from the late 1890s well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By 1902, they had doubled the size of the engine and engine room, increased the size of drying kilns, and built a large new warehouse on the south side of the lot. (The warehouse is no longer there.) Just a few years after that, a more extensive building project combined the two 1890s buildings with new construction to form one large L-shaped building. The water tower was also added at that time.

By the time of that expansion, the Springfield Furniture Company was one of the most prominent manufacturing concerns in the city. A description of the city included in a statewide publication of 1904 shows that the Furniture Company had 90 employees and a wholesale output equal to that of the Springfield Wagon Company at that time, \$75,000 per year. Of the many industries listed in that work, only one other manufacturing concern, a saddlery company, had a higher output.<sup>11</sup>

That same statewide publication also listed the total annual business of the

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<sup>10</sup> Probate records for Marcellus Holbrook, deceased. (Will dated March 24, 1924, and Probate Statement dated November 18, 1925. On file at the Green County Archives, Springfield, MO.)

<sup>11</sup> Walter Williams, The State of Missouri: An Autobiography, (Columbia, MO: E. W. Stephens, 1904) p. 300.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 12

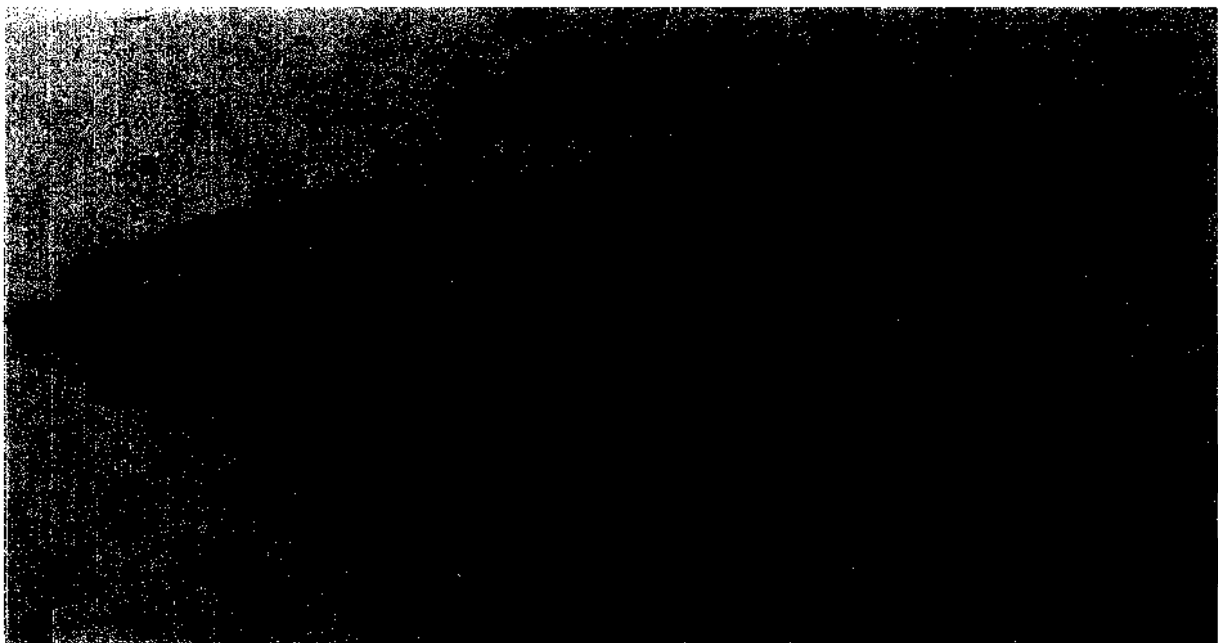
Springfield Furniture Company  
Greene County, MO  
Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri

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company at \$150,000, double its wholesale output. That different amount seems to indicate that the company had healthy retail sales as well. Early Sanborn maps show that the second floor of the original office building contained a "sample room," which may have served as the sales floor for local customers.<sup>12</sup> (That building is in the upper right in the illustration below.)

Another description of manufacturing in the city as of 1906 noted that Springfield Furniture at that time had 80 employees, who made "dining room and kitchen furniture."<sup>13</sup> The factory was also one of just a handful of manufacturing plants chosen to illustrate a book called Merchants and Manufacturers Record of Springfield, Missouri.<sup>14</sup>

**Figure Four. Illustration of the Factory, from Merchants and Manufacturers Record of Springfield, Missouri, 1906.**



<sup>12</sup> Williams gives sales figures on p. 300. Sanborn maps from 1895 through at least 1910 note the existence of the "Sample Room." That function may well have continued in the mid-century; later Sanborn maps have more general labeling systems for all parts of the complex, and just identify that particular wing as office space.

<sup>13</sup> "Fifty Years Ago in Springfield: The Good Old Days." Springfield Daily News, April 1, 1956, p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Merchants and Manufacturers Record of Springfield, Missouri, (Springfield: A. Owen Jennings, 1906)

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 13

**Springfield Furniture Company  
Greene County, MO  
Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri**

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Springfield Furniture held onto that position of prominence throughout the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Historic Sanborn maps and commercial listings in city directories and telephone books from the period of significance indicate that the Springfield Furniture Company was the longest-lived furniture manufacturer in the city during the period of significance, and they also appear to have had the greatest level of production for much of that time. The company consistently had the most prominent listing for "Furniture Manufacturers" in city directories of that period, and in several cases, they were the only furniture factory to be listed. They also appear to have been the dominant, if not the only, residential furniture company in the city through the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Directory listings from 1905 to 1929 regularly list only Springfield Manufacturing Company and Moore Manufacturing Company under the category of "Furniture Manufacturers," and Moore Manufacturing was not listed in all of the years. Early Sanborn maps show that Moore Manufacturing specialized in "School and Church Furniture," which means that Springfield Furniture may have been the only domestic furniture maker of note in Springfield during that period. Moore Manufacturing operated a small plant at the corner of Washington and Phelps Streets, which was comprised of just one small manufacturing building, with a couple of "lumber piles."<sup>15</sup> Moore apparently closed after a fire in the early 1930s; the company was listed in the 1929 City directory, but the plant was described as "fire ruins" on the 1933 Sanborn map, after which they disappeared from commercial listings.

The 1940 telephone yellow pages show that the Springfield Furniture Company's dominance continued into the middle part of the century. The 1940 phone book listings for furniture manufacturers included them and just two other furniture makers: Queen City Woodworks and Lumber Co., and Glenn White. Neither appears to have been making furniture at the same scale as Springfield Furniture Company; White apparently had a very small shop, and Sanborn maps show that Queen City's plant, though substantial, was not as big as the complex on North National Avenue.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> 1910 and 1933 Sanborn Maps.

<sup>16</sup> The Queen City plant was on the Sanborn map of 1933, although the company did not appear in directories of the time.

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National Park Service

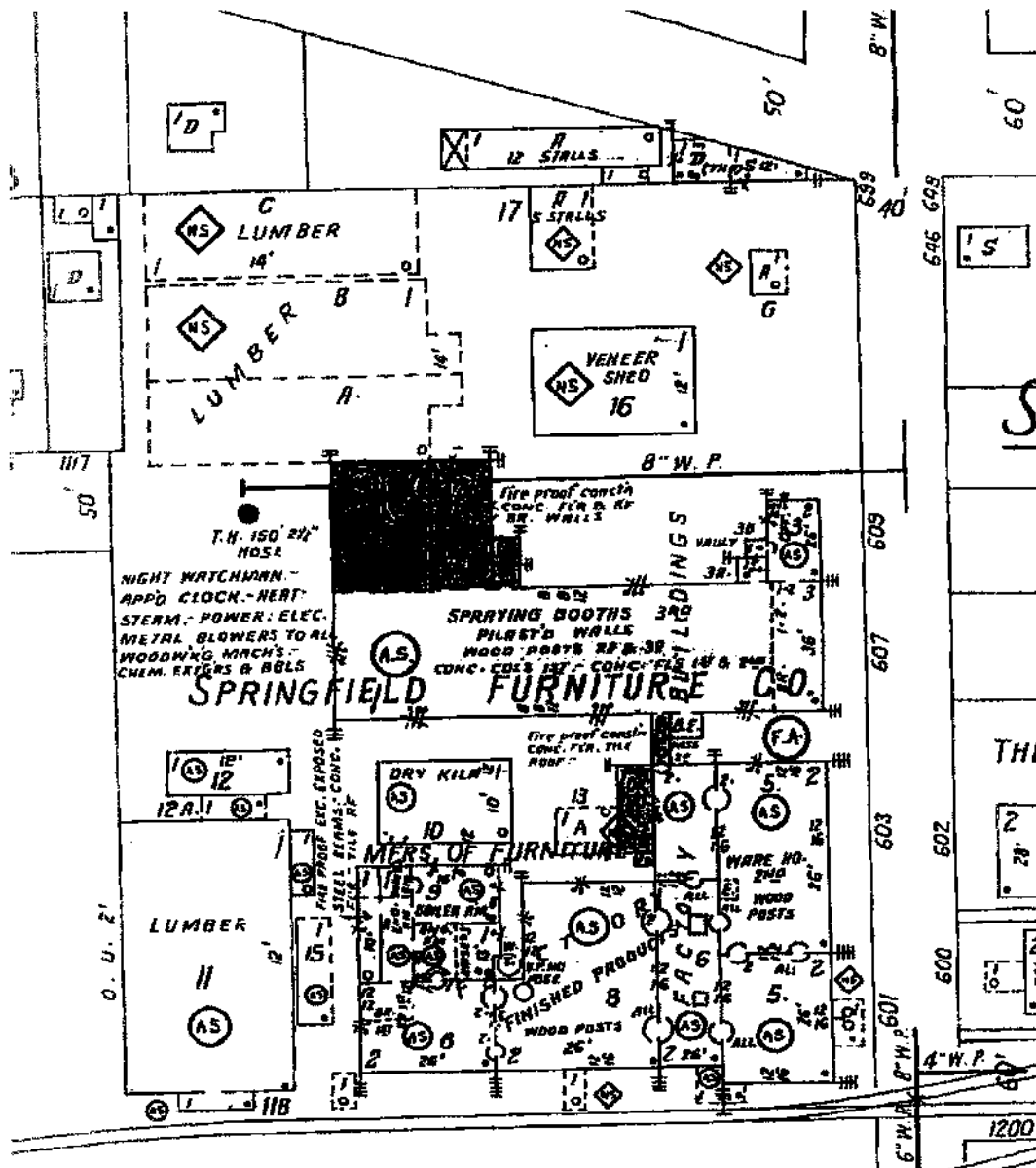
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 14

Springfield Furniture Company  
Greene County, MO

Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri

Figure Five. 1933 Sanborn Map of the Factory.



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 15

**Springfield Furniture Company  
Greene County, MO  
Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri**

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That success led to increased demands upon the physical plant, which the Holbrooks addressed through the construction of another large factory building. Around 1913, they increased manufacturing space significantly via the construction of the north building, which they also expanded upward by the time the company was mapped by the Sanborn Company in 1933. (See Figure Five.) The 1933 Sanborn map of the property shows that the third floor of the new building housed spraying booths, and it is likely that the volatile finishing materials for those booths were kept in the one-story concrete ell on the north of that building. The map also shows that the two brick buildings were used for all manufacturing and shipping activities, as well as the company offices. Lumber and other raw materials were kept in other buildings on the site; none of which have survived to modern times.

Burke Holbrook was still president of the firm in the late 1930s, when the company began to experience financial difficulties. In 1939, a federal judge issued an order authorizing the plant to reorganize, possibly in response to an ongoing strike of its workers.<sup>17</sup> The strike was still going on in March, 1940, when the local paper reported that the strikers were picketing the plant as it attempted to reopen after a shutdown associated with the reorganization.<sup>18</sup> Holbrook and his management staff were apparently able to continue operations for at least a while after that, as the property was still listed as a furniture company in the 1941 city directory.

It was a temporary solution, however. The 1946 directory shows that the property was by then home to the General Warehouse Company. That company was also owned by Burke Holbrook. A brief account of his life that was published upon his death in 1948 noted that "he continued with the [furniture] company until 1939 when it was liquidated, then began operations of General Warehouse Corporation in the old furniture factory building."<sup>19</sup> The end of the period of significance has thus been set at ca. 1942.

The former furniture company housed the warehouse business for several years after Holbrook's death, and most recently was used by a paintball business. The buildings are currently vacant, and a major rehabilitation is planned for the near future. Both buildings have remained notably intact over the years, and they strongly evoke a sense of their time and place. The creation of Chestnut Expressway

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<sup>17</sup> "Furniture Strikers Defy Reopening," *Springfield Leader and Press*, March 22, 1940, p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> "Strikers Quietly Stand Watch at Furniture Factory." *Springfield Leader and Press*, March 28, 1940, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> "Burke Holbrook Dies Suddenly While Lunching," *Springfield Leader and Press*, March 15, 1948, p. 1A.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 16

**Springfield Furniture Company  
Greene County, MO  
Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri**

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in the early 1950s made the factory site a much more public location, and it is today one of the more visible historic manufacturing facilities in the city. It is an important, highly intact, physical link to Springfield's industrial past.

**Figure Six. Architect's rendering of the plant after rehabilitation.** Drawn by Butler Rosenbury and Associates. (North elevation of the north building.)



**Appendix: Springfield Furniture Chronology**

1891 Not on Sanborn

December: Springfield Furniture Company established, and incorporated with a stock of \$25,000.

First officers:

President-- Benjamin N. Massey

VP -- George M. Jones

General Superintendent-- J. M. Price

1892, July, Stock in the company was doubled.

New Officers:

President—Marcellus Holbrook

VP—H. F. Fellows

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 17

Springfield Furniture Company  
Greene County, MO  
Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri

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Secy/treas.—M. W. Coolbaugh

Manager—C. M. Price (Probably the same Price mentioned above, one version may be a typo.)

The plant was originally located on Calhoun between Campbell and the Belt Line RR.

1893 Pictorial and Genealogical Record: Greene County, MO notes that “the Springfield Furniture Company is one of the largest enterprises of its kind in the State of Missouri.” (p. 54.) That source also noted that a major fire in the new plant March 3, 1893 destroyed everything, but described their factory at the time as being on the east side of town. A description of the plant from the Greene County Library mentions another fire in 1894, so they probably moved after that.

**ca. 1895 Springfield Furniture Company opens for business at the National Avenue location.**

1896 Sanborn: Two of the current buildings in place, plus several other support buildings and structures.

1902 Sanborn: Complex looks much the same; a bigger drying kiln and a “furn. warehouse” had been added. (Neither remains.)

1905 Directory: Springfield Furniture Company

President—Marcellus Holbrook

VP—Louis Sutter

Secy/treas. M. W. Coolbaugh

1905-06 Business Directory for the city shows this and “Moore mfg” as the only furniture manufacturers in town.

1906. A drawing of the plant in a 1906 publication shows the south building at close to its present form. A newspaper article of “Fifty Years Ago” written in 1956 notes that the plant “employs 80 hands in making dining room and kitchen furniture” and that 10,000 feet of lumber is brought into the city annually for the manufacture of wagons, buggies, and furniture.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 18

**Springfield Furniture Company**  
**Greene County, MO**  
**Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri**

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1910 Sanborn: Shows expanded south complex and current water tower. Warehouse was bigger. All work done between 1902-1906, probably in 1904. A business directory for Southwest Missouri has only this company as a furniture manufacturer.

**1913, ca. Lower two floors of the north building constructed.**

1922 City directory shows this as the ONLY furniture manufacturer in town.

1925, March 3. Marcellus Holbrook dies. His estate includes substantial amounts of stock in Springfield Furniture Co. He specified that his son Burke should get his inheritance wholly in Springfield Furniture Company stock.

1926 City directory:  
Burke Holbrook, President-treas.  
H. B. McDaniels, VP  
Roy F. Wallace, secy.

1929 City directory again shows just this and "Moore Mfg" as the only furniture manufacturers in town.

**1933: Front building in place, and three stories tall, per Sanborn Map.** Looked then much as it does today. (Moore Manufacturing plant is shown as "fire ruins" on Sanborn map.)

1937 City directories show just 2 furniture manufacturing companies in the city; this one and Reynolds Manufacturing, at 600 Prospect.

1939 Federal Judge issues an order authorizing the plant to reorganize, possibly in response to an ongoing strike of its workers.

1940 Both the City Directory and the local Yellow Pages list just three furniture manufacturers in town: Springfield Furniture Company, Queen City Woodworks and Lumber Co, and Glenn White.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 19

**Springfield Furniture Company**  
**Greene County, MO**  
**Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri**

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1941 Directory still lists Springfield Furniture Company at 601 N. National.  
Burke Holbrook, president-treasurer  
Anna H. Coolbaugh Vice President  
Roy F. Wallace, Secretary

**1942, ca. Springfield Furniture plant closes its doors. End of period of significance.**

1944 Springfield Phone book lists General Warehouse Corp at this address.

1950 update of 1933 Sanborn: Now called General Warehouse Corporation.

1957 Sanborn—the complex looks about the same as it did in 1950; Chestnut Expressway has been built along the northern edge of the property.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 20

**Springfield Furniture Company  
Greene County, MO  
Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri**

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**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 21

**Springfield Furniture Company**  
**Greene County, MO**  
**Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri**

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The district encompasses two (2) parcels described as 601 N. National Avenue. This tract is legally described as follows:

**Tract 1:**

Beginning at a point on the West side of National Avenue that is 848.7 feet North of the Southeast corner of section thirteen (13), Township twenty-nine (29), range twenty-two (22), in the City of Springfield, Greene County, Missouri, and which point is at the intersection of the North line of railway switch track and the West line of said National Avenue and is also marked with an iron bar; thence North, along the West right-of-way line of National Avenue 438.5 feet; thence West 330 feet; thence South 436.4 feet to the aforesaid Railway switch track and which latter point is marked with an iron bar; thence Easterly along the North line of said railway switch track to the place of beginning; excepting that part along the North side thereof deeded for right-of-way purposes for Chestnut Street Trafficway subject to any part therefore taken deeded for used for road or highway purposes.

**Tract 2:**

A parcel of land being part of the South one-half (S1/2) of the Southeast quarter (SE ¼) of section thirteen (13); township twenty-nine (29) North, range twenty-two (22) West, Fifth Principle Meridian, in the County of Greene, State of Missouri, described as follows:

Commencing at the Southeast corner of said section thirteen (13), said point also being on the West right-of-way line of National Avenue; thence North 0°11'17" East along the East line of said section thirteen (13), and the West right-of-way line of National Avenue, a distance of 834.09 feet to the true point of beginning, being a point in the Southerly boundary of that certain 25-foot wide parcel of land conveyed to the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad Company; thence North 89°31'56" West along said Southerly boundary 223.93 feet; thence continuing Westerly along said Southerly boundary, being along the arc of a tangent curve, concave Southerly and having a radius of 1624.78 feet, a distance of 106.13 feet to the intersection with a line drawn parallel with and distance Westerly 330.0 feet, as measured at right angles from said East line of said section (13); thence North 0°11'17" East along said parallel line to intersection with the Northerly boundary of said 25-foot wide parcel of land; thence Easterly along said Northerly boundary, being along the arc of a curve, concave Southerly and having a radius of 1649.78 feet a distance of 106.25 feet; thence continuing along said Northerly tangent to said preceding curve, south 89°31'56" East along said Northerly boundary a distance of 223.81 feet, more or less to the intersection with said East line of said section thirteen (13); thence South 0°11'17" West along said East line a distance of 25.0 feet to the point of beginning, all in Greene County, Missouri, subject to any part thereof taken, deeded or used for road or highway purposes.

**Boundary Justification**

The current boundaries encompass all of the land currently and historically associated with the building.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number Photographs Page 22

**Springfield Furniture Company  
Greene County, MO  
Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri**

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**Photographs**

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Springfield Furniture Company  
601 North National Avenue, Springfield  
Greene County, MO  
Debbie Sheals  
November, 2005

**List of Photographs**

See photo key for description of camera angle.

1. West elevations of both buildings.
2. South building, northwest corner.
3. Looking east, into the courtyard.
4. North building, stair tower and walkway, looking north.
5. North building, south elevation
6. South building, south elevation, from National Ave.
7. Streetscape from south on National Ave.
8. South building, east elevation.
9. North building, east elevation.
10. North building, southeast corner.
11. North building, northeast corner.
12. Office wing, looking southeast.
13. North building, north elevation.
14. North building, looking southwest.
15. Water tower, looking south.
16. Interior, south building.
17. Interior, north building, second floor.
18. Interior north building, ground floor.

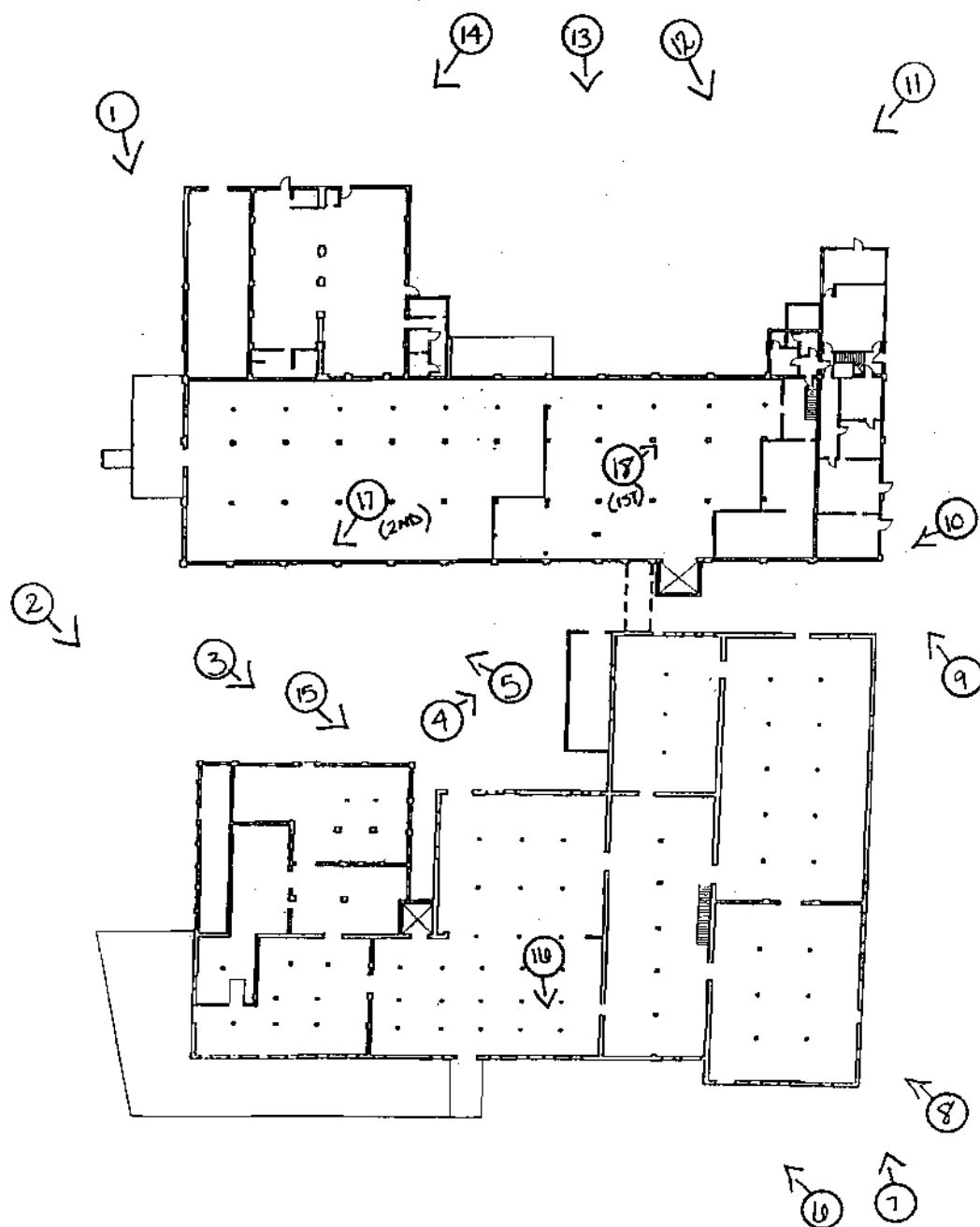
**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number Photographs Page 23

**Springfield Furniture Company  
Greene County, MO  
Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri**

Photo Key.



SPRINGFIELD  
FURNITURE  
COMPANY

601 N. NATIONAL  
AVENUE  
"18 SPRINGFIELD  
GREENE COUNTY,  
MD

UTMS

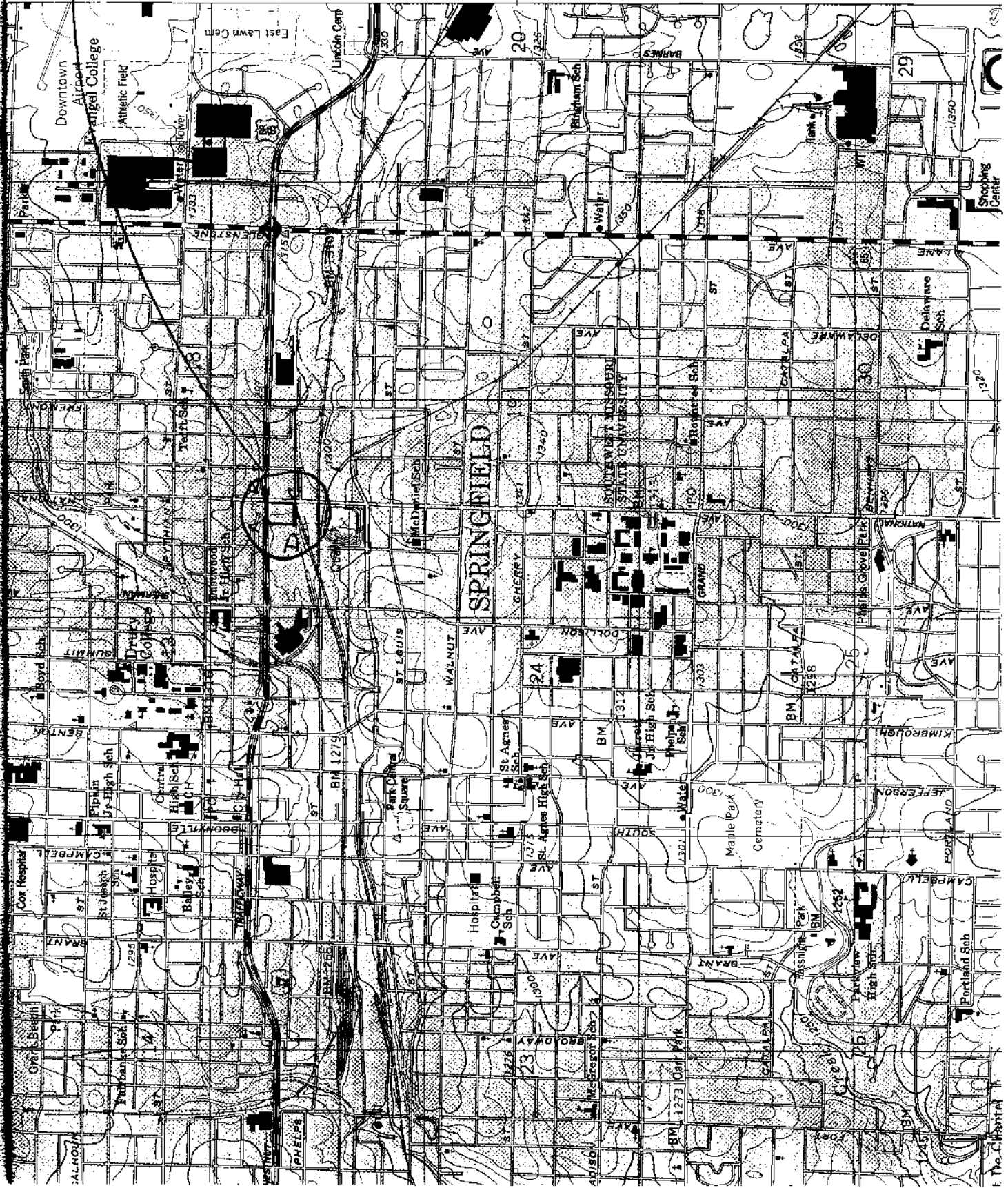
A. 15/475426E 418702N

B. 15/475538E 418757N  
12'30"

C. 15/475523E 418620N

D. 15/475421E 418630N

UTMS BY GIS  
SYSTEM



STORAGE

BARGAIN  
SURPLUS  
ALL TYPES





CANAL

MR. KIMMS







AMERICAN  
WASTE

DO NOT FILL  
BEYOND THIS  
LINE

AMERICAN  
WASTE



Water tower with faded text and a logo.

D.C.C.

Small sign on the dark building to the right.



Tampa St 1200 E

TEXT BUCKS  
STEAK & NEW TURTLE  
TOO HOTTIES  
HAIRBOTS FOR MEN  
8:30-8:00A

Papagiorio's  
PIZZA  
DELIZIOSO

1 TOPPING OR  
LARGE OR  
2 MEDIUM OR  
4 SMALL \$6.99

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T 214  
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