

**From:** [Mel Borst](#)  
**To:** [Martin Long](#); [John Alcalá](#); [Rick Billinger](#); [J.R. Claeys](#); [Marci Francisco](#); [Tom Hawk](#); [Michael Houser](#); [Susan Humphries](#); [Jarrod Ousley](#); [Gene Suellentrop](#)  
**Cc:** [Muri Riedel](#)  
**Subject:** Docking State Office Building  
**Date:** Saturday, October 9, 2021 12:48:14 PM  
**Attachments:** [KS State Office Building Nomination \(2\).pdf](#)  
[ARCC2017\\_Session5A\\_Gibson\\_0.pdf](#)

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**EXTERNAL:** This email originated from outside the organization. Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Chairman Long and members of the Joint Committee on State Building Construction,

The historic Docking State Office Building is too valuable of a state property to substantially destroy and then partially rebuild as per the Option B proposal. Option B is also an unnecessarily waste of embodied design, material, skill and labor resources -plus the resources needed to demolish, transport and dispose of a tremendous amount of rubble.

- Despite its 64 year age and minimal maintenance, the state office building has retained its structural and historic integrity as well as its adaptive functional capacity.

-The building is well-located and designed for state use. It is robustly constructed of the finest materials and can qualify to become energy star certified. It is also the only example of a mid-century building in the Capitol Complex.

- The building demonstrates ground-breaking innovations including structural, window and natural lighting designs as described in the currently-tabled nomination to national and state registers [attached] and Michael Gibson's Energy Study [attached].

- The state architect's example of modern-movement high rise construction has demonstrated its superior construction by remaining in stable condition through decades of minimal care and now, years of mothballing.

- Option A restores the Docking Building's exterior and renovates the interior space as needed for state use. Future use of mothballed building space need not be extensive or soon -and may well benefit those now concerned.

- The Topeka Landmarks Commission has gone on record supporting the nomination of the Docking State Office Building to the National Register of Historic Places and the Shawnee County Historical Society has recognised and honored efforts to save a building Kansas could once again be proud of.

Option A is less expensive, faster and restores a shining example of Kansas optimism. Please consider recommending Option A to keep this gem of a state building intact to continue its purpose of serving the citizens of Kansas while also providing a highly useful [and cool] reminder of our heritage stewardship.

Sincerely,

**Mel Borst**

**1918 Humboldt Street**

**Manhattan, Kansas 66502**

**[785] 770-7018**



February 16, 2016

Amanda Loughlin  
National Register of Historic Places Coordinator  
State Historic Preservation Office  
Kansas Historical Society  
6425 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Topeka, KS 66615-1099

Dear Amanda:

Enclosed please find the draft National Register nomination for the ***Kansas State Office Building, Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas***. Accompanying the nomination is a CD containing digital copies of the nomination and the photographs.

Constructed between 1954 and 1957, the Kansas State Office Building is an exceptionally intact and unique example of Modern Movement architecture applied to a public office building. We hope you will agree that it merits listing in the National Register.

If there is anything else you need, please contact me. You can reach me at 816-472-4950 or [rachel@rosinpreservation.com](mailto:rachel@rosinpreservation.com).

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rachel Nugent", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rachel Nugent  
Associate

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 Kansas State Office Building

Other names/site number Docking Building; 177-3153

Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

## 2. Location

Street & number 915 SW Harrison Street

--

 not for publication

City or town Topeka

--

 vicinity

State Kansas Code KS County Shawnee Code 177 Zip code 66612

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

I hereby certify that this  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  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  local Applicable National Register Criteria:  A  B  C  D

Signature of certifying official/Title Patrick Zollner, Deputy SHPO Date \_\_\_\_\_

Kansas State Historical Society  
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 \_\_\_\_\_

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**5. Classification**

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

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

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	<b>Total</b>

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

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT/Government Office  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Government/Government Office  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

foundation: CONCRETE  
walls: GLASS  
STONE  
roof: SYNTHETICS  
other: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## **Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources, if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

### **Summary**

The Kansas State Office Building at 915 SW Harrison Street, Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas, is a twelve-story building with a reinforced concrete foundation and a glazed curtain wall with dressed stone panels. The building has a flat roof and an irregular plan. Alternating horizontal bands of glazing and Vermont Greenstone panels clad the long elevations of the two intersecting towers that define the building's footprint. Dressed limestone panels with ornamental panels carved in low relief on the short elevations of the intersecting towers provide a contrast to the glass and metal on the long elevations. Columns clad in polished red granite panels form regular bays around the perimeter of the building at the first floor. The historic materials and windows are extant on the exterior. The interior is organized with a central circulation core and open office space radiating outward in each wing of the intersecting towers. In addition to offices for state governmental agencies, the building also contains an observation tower at the center of the twelfth floor and a cafeteria in the basement. The building retains historic Vermont Greenstone flooring and marble panels in the more ornate lobby on the first floor, as well as the more utilitarian finishes of VCT flooring and perforated aluminum tile ceilings in the office spaces. The historic metal elevator doors are extant. The Kansas State Office Building retains all aspects of integrity to clearly communicate the mid-century era in which it was constructed and its elevated importance as a building associated with state government.

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### **Elaboration**

#### Setting

The Kansas State Office Building at 915 SW Harrison occupies an entire city block in Topeka, Kansas. Located just west of the Kansas State Capitol, it forms an integral part of the surrounding government complex, which includes the Kansas Judicial Center, Landon Hall and Memorial Hall. Concrete sidewalks line the perimeter of the property (Photo 6), and concrete walks lead to the main entrances on the west, south and east elevations. A circular drive leads from the northeast corner of the property to the northwest corner, passing beneath the raised building mass at the top of the arc. Near the southwest corner of the property, a concrete driveway descends from SW 10<sup>th</sup> Street to loading docks at the basement level. Brick retaining walls with granite caps line each side of the drive. Metal pedestrian doors and a metal overhead door access the building.

#### Exterior

The twelve-story building has a flat roof and rises from a reinforced concrete foundation. It has an irregular plan. Two intersecting rectangular towers rise above three-story blocks that comprise the north and southwest sections of the building's footprint. A separate square tower rises in the northwest corner of the intersecting towers. Glazed curtain walls with aluminum frames and dressed stone blocks clad the exterior of the welded steel structure. Limestone clads the lower blocks of the mass and the observation tower. The primary elevation faces east toward the State Capitol Building.

The first floor of the tower has a consistent treatment across each elevation. Red granite panels clad round columns that separate each bay. Recessed behind the columns, each bay of the main façade has a band of four fixed aluminum windows that sit on red granite kneewalls.

The two rectangular towers have the same treatment, creating a unified exterior (Photos 1, 2, 4, 5). The east-west tower is twelve stories. A deeply recessed entrance on the first floor of the west elevation is the primary building access. Paired aluminum frame glazed doors and a single aluminum frame glazed doors, both with transoms, pierce the single center bay. The flanking bays have the same cladding as the remainder of the first

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floor. The narrow east and west elevations have a strong sense of verticality. Dressed limestone clads floors 2-12. The second floor is void of fenestration. A carved limestone relief panel adorns the north side of the second floor on both elevations. Floors 3-11 each have a single bay with a simple limestone frame and a band of four fixed aluminum windows. On the wide north and south elevations, limestone enframes the upper floors of the tower. West of the north-south tower, the south elevation has five bays and the north elevation has three bays. East of the tower, each elevation has two bays. The north elevation has three bays on the west side and two bays on the east side. The horizontal and vertical elements of the curtainwall outline each bay. Three aluminum mullions further divide each bay into four sections. Recessed Vermont Greenstone panels clad the spandrels above and below the fixed aluminum windows and the mullion between each bay.

The eleven-story north-south tower bisects the east-west tower (Photos 1-6). It has the same entrance configuration as the west elevation of the east-west tower, with a single and paired aluminum doors in the south elevation. The narrow north and south elevations have the same cut limestone cladding, bas relief ornament and single bay configuration on Floors 2-11 as the east and west elevations of the east-west tower (Photo 7). The upper floors of the east and west elevations have six bays on the south side of the east-west tower. On the north side of the tower, the east elevation has eight bays and the west elevation has six bays. They match the curtain wall configuration and Greenstone cladding of the north and south elevations of the east-west tower.

The three-story north block sits north of the east-west tower (Photos 2). The east elevation has nine bays. The first floor is recessed one bay behind red granite columns that sit flush with the upper floors, creating a covered walkway with Vermont Greenstone paving. Entrances fill Bays 1-2. Three single aluminum frame doors with sidelights and transoms access the building in each bay. The curving wall in Bay 3 is void of fenestration. Bays 4-7, have the same configuration and red granite cladding as the tower blocks. Bays 8-9 are open to accommodate the covered walkway and driveway, respectively. Cut limestone clads Floors 2-3. A continuous limestone frame surrounds the nine bays on each floor, creating a strong sense of horizontality. Within the frame, Vermont Greenstone panels divide each bay. A band of four fixed aluminum windows fill each of the center bays. A band of three fixed aluminum windows fills the end bays.

The north elevation of this block has eight bays (Photo 3). The first floor is recessed behind two rows of red granite columns. The covered walkway fronting the east elevation fills Bays 1. An aluminum framed entrance with a single pedestrian door fills Bay 2. Bay 3 is void of fenestration. Bays 4-8 have bands of four fixed aluminum framed windows. Floors 2-3 match the limestone cladding and fenestration patterns of the east elevation. The west elevation has nine bays and nearly mirrors the east elevation (Photo 4). An aluminum-framed glazed entrance with three doors fills Bay 9.

The smaller three-story south block sits at the southwest corner of the building, recessed between the intersecting towers (Photo 5). It has three bays on the south elevation and five bays on the west elevation. The cladding and fenestration patterns match those of the north block. The first floor is only slightly recessed from the main façade.

A square limestone-clad observation tower rises to the fourteenth floor at the northwest corner of the intersecting towers (Photo 4). It is nearly void of fenestration. Three bands of four fixed aluminum framed windows extends the length of the east and west elevations at the top of tower. The north and south elevations have a band of four windows at each corner.

### Interior

A central circulation core surrounded by open office space organizes the interior of the building. The circulation core rises from the basement to the twelfth floor and consists of an elevator lobby flanked by two banks of three elevator shafts (six total), a U-shaped staircase, and a freight elevator.

On the first floor, the elevator lobby has historic marble walls, a Vermont Greenstone floor and a non-historic ceiling grid with acoustical panels. The historic metal elevator doors have an etched geometric design. From

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Floors 2 to 12, the lobbies have historic marble walls and lay-in perforated aluminum ceiling panels, and non-historic vinyl tile floors that were installed c. 1980 (Photo 10). Original elevator doors on the upper floors are smooth metal. The passenger and freight elevators have original cabs.

Men's and Women's restrooms sit west of the lobby on each floor. These have historic ceramic tile floors and walls and some historic fixtures. Separate U-shaped staircases rise near the ends of the north, west and east towers. The metal-frame stairs have metal risers, tread and railings.

Floors 1-3 have a larger floor area and higher ceilings than the remainder of the building. On these floors, marble-walled corridors extend north from the circulation core (Photo 11). The first floor lobby has more decorative finishes than the remainder of the building (Photos 8, 9). Vermont Greenstone covers the floor, and marble clads walls and round columns. A non-historic grid with acoustical panels hangs from the ceiling. The main lobby has a historic Modern-style metal clock on the south wall and a non-historic reception desk.

Open space, punctuated by a double-column grid, defines the majority of Floors 1-12 surrounding the central circulation core (Photos 12, 13). Non-historic and historic partitions divide each floor into varying configurations of offices. The permanent walls surrounding the circulation core, stairwells and columns are painted plaster. Mechanical equipment hidden behind metal enclosures lines the exterior walls beneath the windows. Carpet covers the historic VCT floors in some spaces. Historic suspended perforated aluminum ceiling tiles hang below historic plaster ceilings. Rows of historic fluorescent lights are integrated into the ceiling. Non-historic wood doors in historic metal frames are located throughout the building.

A separate staircase leads from Floor 12 to the observation tower. Mechanical space fills the center of the tower. A viewing corridor with ceramic tile walls, vinyl tile floor and a plaster ceiling lines the perimeter of the tower (Photo 15).

At the basement level, an original cafeteria sits north of the elevator lobby (Photo 14). The kitchen has historic tile floors and walls. North of the cafeteria are two separate meeting rooms with accordion wall panels and a small auditorium. A tunnel at the northeast corner of the basement leads east and connects to the basement level of the Kansas State Capitol. The tunnel has ceramic tile walls and vinyl tile floors.

Mechanical space occupies the sub-basement. The mechanical room was enlarged around 1980 to accommodate new equipment and now extends beyond the footprint of the building.

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**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.
- 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**

1954-1957

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1954

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Brown, John A. (Architect)

Slemmons, Robert (Architect)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance is 1954-1957, the dates of construction for the Kansas State Office Building.

**Criteria Considerations (justification)**

N/A



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### **Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

#### **Summary**

The Kansas State Office Building appears eligible for the National Register of Historic Places for local significance under Criterion C in the area of ARCHITECTURE. Constructed between 1954 and 1957, it is an exceptionally intact and unique example of Modern Movement architecture applied to a public office building. The pure geometric forms, contrasting horizontal and vertical emphasis, glass and aluminum curtain wall, and smooth limestone facing on the exterior epitomize the primary tenets of the style. The interior configuration remains largely unaltered from the period of construction, retaining key features such as the marble elevator lobbies and open office space organized around a central core. The building was constructed to house multiple state agencies in close proximity to the Kansas State Capitol. Its simple form, stark exterior, and modern materials contrast with the surrounding governmental buildings, including the Capitol, which were constructed earlier in the twentieth century. The Kansas State Office Building illustrates the tenets of Modern Movement design and the era of high-rise office buildings that characterized commercial development in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s.

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#### **Elaboration**

Modern Movement architecture became popular in the United States following World War II and continuing into the 1960s. Derived from the International Style, popular in Europe prior to World War I, the Modern Movement marked a distinct break from the classically-inspired styles that shaped American architecture in the late nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The overarching themes of the Modern Movement focus on functionality and the use of modern materials and technology. New construction methods allowed the designers to shift the structure of buildings away from heavy load-bearing exterior walls to lighter interior support systems. This permitted curtain wall glazing on exterior façades and open interior floor plans, which became defining elements of the period. Other key features of the Modern Movement include geometric forms, contrasting vertical and horizontal elements, and restrained ornament.

In keeping with these principles, the asymmetrical arrangement of rectangular forms defines the massing of the Kansas State Office Building. Wide bands of fenestration on the tall vertical blocks balance with the horizontal form of the low three-story blocks. The rhythmic grid of the aluminum curtain wall becomes the primary ornament on each façade, reinforcing the minimalist aspects of the design and supporting the juxtaposition of horizontal and vertical elements. The internal steel framework and central circulation core allowed for open floor plates on the interior, which was divided by an innovative system of moveable partitions into office space that fit the needs of each agency. Following the underlying philosophies of the Modern

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Movement, the building incorporated modern technology into all aspects of construction. The steel structure was the first state building in Kansas to be secured using bolts, rather than traditional rivets. The aluminum-framed curtain wall, an early example of this technology in the region, was further enhanced by advanced energy efficient glazing. On the interior, the six Otis elevators featured a "Collective Management Timing System" that provided efficient service to quickly move people through the building.<sup>1</sup> Last, but not least, a state-of-the-art system heated and cooled the building.

As Modern Movement architecture soared in popularity, many cities across the country adopted the design and technology to build new and larger public buildings at an economical price.<sup>2</sup> Architects eschewed the elaborate classical styles in favor of the simple lines, minimal ornament, and austere designs of the Modern Movement to create "symbol[s] of the new political order."<sup>3</sup> During this post-war period, Topeka saw a surge in new construction, aided by a \$20 million Urban Renewal program initiated in 1956. Beginning in the 1960s, various private enterprises erected new buildings in the downtown area. Many adopted the Modern Movement style. The free-standing commercial buildings with concrete and glass exteriors expanded the range of architectural expressions found in downtown Topeka. Completed in 1957, the Kansas State Office Building was an early addition to this new city image. It also signaled an early iteration in the nationwide shift in public architecture toward more streamlined designs.

In its representation of public architecture, the Kansas State Office Building is an essential element of the governmental complex in downtown Topeka. Beginning with construction of the Neoclassical State Capitol in 1866, the buildings in the complex showcase the evolution of popular architectural styles over the next century. They include the 1910 Classical Revival Landon State Office Building, the 1914 Beaux Arts Memorial Hall, and the 1972 Brutalist Kansas Judicial Center. The use of limestone cladding on the narrow ends of the Kansas State Office Building pays homage to the heavy masonry cladding of the older governmental buildings, and the small rectangular relief panels on the east, south and west elevations offer simple embellishment that alludes to earlier precedents. However, the geometric forms, aluminum and glass curtain wall, and strong horizontal and vertical lines epitomize the Modern Movement and showcase the progressive attitude of the city that prevailed during the decades following World War II.

Architect David Griffin cites the Kansas State Office Building as one of the first examples of Modern Movement architecture effectively applied to a public building in Kansas. It was also one of the earliest buildings in the region to utilize an aluminum and glass curtain wall.<sup>4</sup> The Kansas State Office Building clearly expresses the ideals and trends that shaped mid-twentieth century architecture and influenced both public and private office building construction throughout the country.

<sup>1</sup> David Griffin, "Docking State Office Building" *Kansas Preservation* 33:1 (2011), 6.

<sup>2</sup> Leland Roth, *A Concise History of American Architecture*, (New York City: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1980), 276.

<sup>3</sup> Carole Rifkind, *A Field Guide to Contemporary American Architecture*, (New York: Dutton, 1998), 111.

<sup>4</sup> Griffin, 6.

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### Property History

Prior to erection of the Kansas State Office Building, state agencies were housed in the State Capitol and in various private buildings throughout Topeka. The idea of building a single, modern state office building was in the works for approximately nine years before construction began. Appropriations for the project by the State Legislature in 1945, 1947 and 1949 totaled \$2 million.<sup>5</sup> In 1955 the Legislature issued an additional \$7,500,000 in bonds. Additional funding for the project came after it opened through rental fees from the state agencies that leased office space in the building.<sup>6</sup>

A site near the State Capitol, with convenient access to its services and facilities, was the ideal location for the new state office building. The blocks surrounding the State Capitol were originally a prominent residential section of Topeka, characterized by high-style mansions. Construction crews demolished several of these private homes in order to create space for the Kansas State Office Building.

State Architect John A. Brown designed the building, with Robert Slemmons serving as project architect.<sup>7</sup> Construction of the Kansas State Office Building was an important event. Newspapers from across the state documented each phase of the process. Work began on October 26, 1954 with a groundbreaking ceremony led by Governor Edward Arn and including seven members of the state office building commission and the architects.<sup>8</sup> As it signaled a new era of Kansas state building, the date was notable because construction of the Kansas State Capitol had begun in October, eighty years prior. The new office building marked a notable change in design direction for state buildings. Original plans had proposed a Neoclassical treatment for the new building that would complement the adjacent Kansas State Capitol and other state buildings. However, the Modern Movement architecture of the period prevailed.<sup>9</sup> During the groundbreaking ceremony, Governor Arn stated that "the new building will be a salute to our pioneer forefathers and that grand dome across the street."<sup>10</sup> He went on to say that the building would epitomize "our great state's growth and progress."<sup>11</sup>

Contracting company Harmon Contractors completed the twelve-story, steel-frame building in March of 1957 for a cost of approximately \$9 million. An additional \$500,000 went to build a

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<sup>5</sup> Jim Peterson, "Population of State Office Building Is Larger Than City of Anthony, Kan." *newspaper unknown*, October 6, 1957. Kansas Press Service, (Scrapbooks of clippings related to the State Office Building, 1953-1962), Topeka.

<sup>6</sup> George Mack, "State Office Building Financing Succeeds," *newspaper unknown*, August 16, 1959. Kansas Press Service, (Scrapbooks of clippings related to the State Office Building, 1953-1962), Topeka.

<sup>7</sup> Griffin, 5.

<sup>8</sup> Griffin, 5.

<sup>9</sup> Griffin, 5.

<sup>10</sup> As quoted in Robert Clark, "Work Starts on The New State Office Building," *Kansas City Weekly Star Farmer*, November 3, 1954. Kansas Press Service, (Scrapbooks of clippings related to the State Office Building, 1953-1962), Topeka.

<sup>11</sup> As quoted in "Shovels First Spade of Dirt," *Pittsburg Headlight*, October 26, 1954. Kansas Press Service, (Scrapbooks of clippings related to the State Office Building, 1953-1962), Topeka.

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surface parking lot to accommodate the increasing automobile traffic.<sup>12</sup> When it opened the Kansas State Office Building was the tallest building in Topeka, save the dome of the adjacent State Capitol, and one of the largest office buildings in the state, with a total of 324,700 square feet.<sup>13</sup> The larger state agencies were housed on the wider lower floors, while smaller agencies occupied the smaller floor plates in the tower.<sup>14</sup> The cross-shape plan of the upper floors provided more windows to each floor.

The architects employed state-of-the-art materials and innovative technologies throughout the building. During construction, the steel frame was connected using welded bolts, rather than rivets, which saved on costs, labor, and time.<sup>15</sup> It was the first state building in Kansas to utilize this construction method. The aluminum-frame curtain wall, produced by Benson Manufacturing Company of Kansas City, Kansas, was in itself an innovative design for the area. The windows had modern energy-efficient glazing. Deluxe materials included the Vermont Greenstone that clad the exterior and the first floor and the Silverdale limestone that faced each end of the curtain wall. Sculptor Bernard Frazier worked on site to create the bas relief panels on the east, south and west facades that depict Kansas history.

On the interior, polished marble walls in the elevator lobbies and marble-faced columns in the main lobby added an aura of sophistication.<sup>16</sup> An innovative system of movable steel partitions based on five-foot modules could accommodate the spatial arrangements required by the different state offices. Designers incorporated modern technology into the mechanical systems. Convectors along the exterior walls of the building provided heating and air-conditioning on each floor. Perforated aluminum ceilings, hung below four inches of insulation, aided ventilation and acoustics. The cooling tower for the building was installed in the basement rather than on the roof to keep the exterior of the building as streamlined as possible. The six passenger elevators featured a "clock-operated control system," which accommodated peaks and valleys in elevator usage that occurred during the day.<sup>17</sup>

A two-day open house held March 16-17, 1957, opened the Kansas State Office Building for tours to the general public. It was 95 percent occupied when it opened, housing 2,600 state employees from agencies such as the State Board of Health, the State Architect, and the State Board of Nurse Registration and Nursing Education. There was also a post office, a secure vault, and a concession stand in the building.<sup>18</sup> In the basement there were meeting rooms as well as a cafeteria with seating for 500. A tunnel connected the Kansas State Office Building to the State Capitol, so employees could pass from one building to the other without concern for

<sup>12</sup> Mack, "State Office Building Financing Succeeds."

<sup>13</sup> Mack, "State Office Building Financing Succeeds."

<sup>14</sup> "State Office Building Is Biggest in Midwest," *Topeka State Journal*, March 4, 1958. Kansas Press Service, (Scrapbooks of clippings related to the State Office Building, 1953-1962), Topeka.

<sup>15</sup> "Topeka Likes It Quiet," *Leavenworth Times*, August 22, 1954. Kansas Press Service, (Scrapbooks of clippings related to the State Office Building, 1953-1962), Topeka.

<sup>16</sup> Griffin, 6.

<sup>17</sup> Peterson, "Population of State Office Building Is Larger Than City of Anthony, Kan." Kansas Press Service, (Scrapbooks of clippings related to the State Office Building, 1953-1962), Topeka.

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inclement weather or automobile traffic. Notably for the period, the tunnel could also serve as a bomb shelter.

Few changes have been made to the building since it opened. Governor John Carlin renamed it the Docking State Office Building on January 9, 1987, to honor former governor Robert B. Docking.<sup>19</sup> Carpet and new tile were installed on some floors, some bathroom fixtures were replaced, and the arrangement of the open offices has been altered according to the needs of changing tenants. The building remains largely unaltered since the period of construction, and it has served as a state office building for nearly sixty years.

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<sup>18</sup> "State Office Building Is Biggest in Midwest."

<sup>19</sup> Griffin, 5.

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### 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Clark, Robert. "Work Starts on The New State Office Building," *Kansas City Weekly Star Farmer*, November 3, 1954. Kansas Press Service. (Scrapbooks of clippings related to the State Office Building, 1953-1962) Topeka.

Griffin, David. "Docking State Office Building." *Kansas Preservation* 33:1 (2011).

Mack, George. "State Office Building Financing Succeeds," *Newspaper unknown*, August 16, 1959. Kansas Press Service. (Scrapbooks of clippings related to the State Office Building, 1953-1962) Topeka.

Peterson, Jim. "Population of State Office Building Is Larger Than City of Anthony, Kan." *Newspaper unknown*, October 6, 1957. Kansas Press Service. (Scrapbooks of clippings related to the State Office Building, 1953-1962) Topeka.

Roth, Leland. *A Concise History of American Architecture*. New York City: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1980.

Rifkind, Carole. *A Field Guide to Contemporary American Architecture*. New York: Dutton, 1998.

"Shovels First Spade of Dirt," *Pittsburg Headlight*, October 26, 1954. Kansas Press Service. (Scrapbooks of clippings related to the State Office Building, 1953-1962) Topeka.

"State Office Building Is Biggest in Midwest," *Topeka State Journal*, March 4, 1958. Kansas Press Service. (Scrapbooks of clippings related to the State Office Building, 1953-1962) Topeka.

"Topeka Likes It Quiet," *Leavenworth Times*, August 22, 1954. Kansas Press Service. (Scrapbooks of clippings related to the State Office Building, 1953-1962) Topeka.

**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
  - Other
- Name of repository: Kansas State Archives

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):  
\_\_\_\_\_

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### 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreeage of Property** 3.4 acres

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**Provide latitude/longitude coordinates OR UTM coordinates.**  
(Place additional coordinates on a continuation page.)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>39.047987</u> Latitude:	<u>-95.680380</u> Longitude:	3	_____ Latitude:	_____ Longitude:
2	_____ Latitude:	_____ Longitude:	4	_____ Latitude:	_____ Longitude:

**OR**

**UTM References**

\_\_\_\_\_ NAD 1927 or \_\_\_\_\_ NAD 1983

1	_____ Zone	_____ Easting	_____ Northing	3	_____ Zone	_____ Easting	_____ Northing
2	_____ Zone	_____ Easting	_____ Northing	4	_____ Zone	_____ Easting	_____ Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (describe the boundaries of the property)

The Kansas State Office Building occupies Original Town, Lot 291 +, Topeka Avenue Lots 290 thru 324 (even numbered lots); Harrison Street Lots 289 thru 311 (odd numbered lots); 10<sup>th</sup> Street East Lots 8 thru 24 (even numbered lots); and all adjacent vacant alleys, Section 31, Township 11, Range 16.

**Boundary Justification** (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundary includes the parcels historically and currently associated with the nominated resource.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Rachel Nugent, National Register Coordinator, and Lauren Rieke, Historic Preservation Specialist  
organization Rosin Preservation, LLC date February 2016  
street & number 1712 Holmes Street telephone 816-472-4950  
city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64108  
e-mail [rachel@rosinpreservation.com](mailto:rachel@rosinpreservation.com)

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**Property Owner:** (complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name State of Kansas, Office of Facilities and Property Management

street & number 900 SW Jackson Street, Room 600 telephone 785-296-1318

city or town Topeka state KS zip code 66612

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each digital image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to a sketch map or aerial map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Photograph Log**

Name of Property: Kansas State Office Building

City or Vicinity: Topeka

County: Shawnee State: Kansas

Photographer: Lauren Rieke, Rosin Preservation, LLC

Date

Photographed: March 13, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 15: East elevation, view northwest
- 2 of 15: North and east elevations, view southwest
- 3 of 15: North elevation, view south
- 4 of 15: North and west elevations, view southeast
- 5 of 15: South and west elevations, view northeast
- 6 of 15: South elevation and State Capitol, view northeast
- 7 of 15: Detail of stone ornament on south elevation
- 8 of 15: Entrance lobby, first floor, view south
- 9 of 15: Entrance and elevator lobby, first floor, view east
- 10 of 15: Elevator lobby, typical upper floor, view east
- 11 of 15: Corridor, second floor, view north
- 12 of 15: Office space, second floor, view northeast



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13 of 15: Office space, typical upper floor, view north

14 of 15: Cafeteria, basement, view southwest

15 of 15: Observation deck, 12<sup>th</sup> floor, view east

### Figures

Include GIS maps, figures, scanned images below.

**Figure 1:** Site Map. *Source: ARCGIS, 2015.*

**Figure 2:** Context Map. *Source: Google Earth, 2015.*

**Figure 3:** Photo Map, exterior, lower floors. Not to scale.

**Figure 4:** Photo Map, upper floors. Not to scale.

**Figure 5:** Kansas State Office Building, 1955. *Source: Kansas Memory.*

**Figure 6:** Kansas State Office Building, 1957. *Source: Kansas Memory.*

**Figure 7:** Kansas State Office Building, 1957. *Source: Kansas Memory.*

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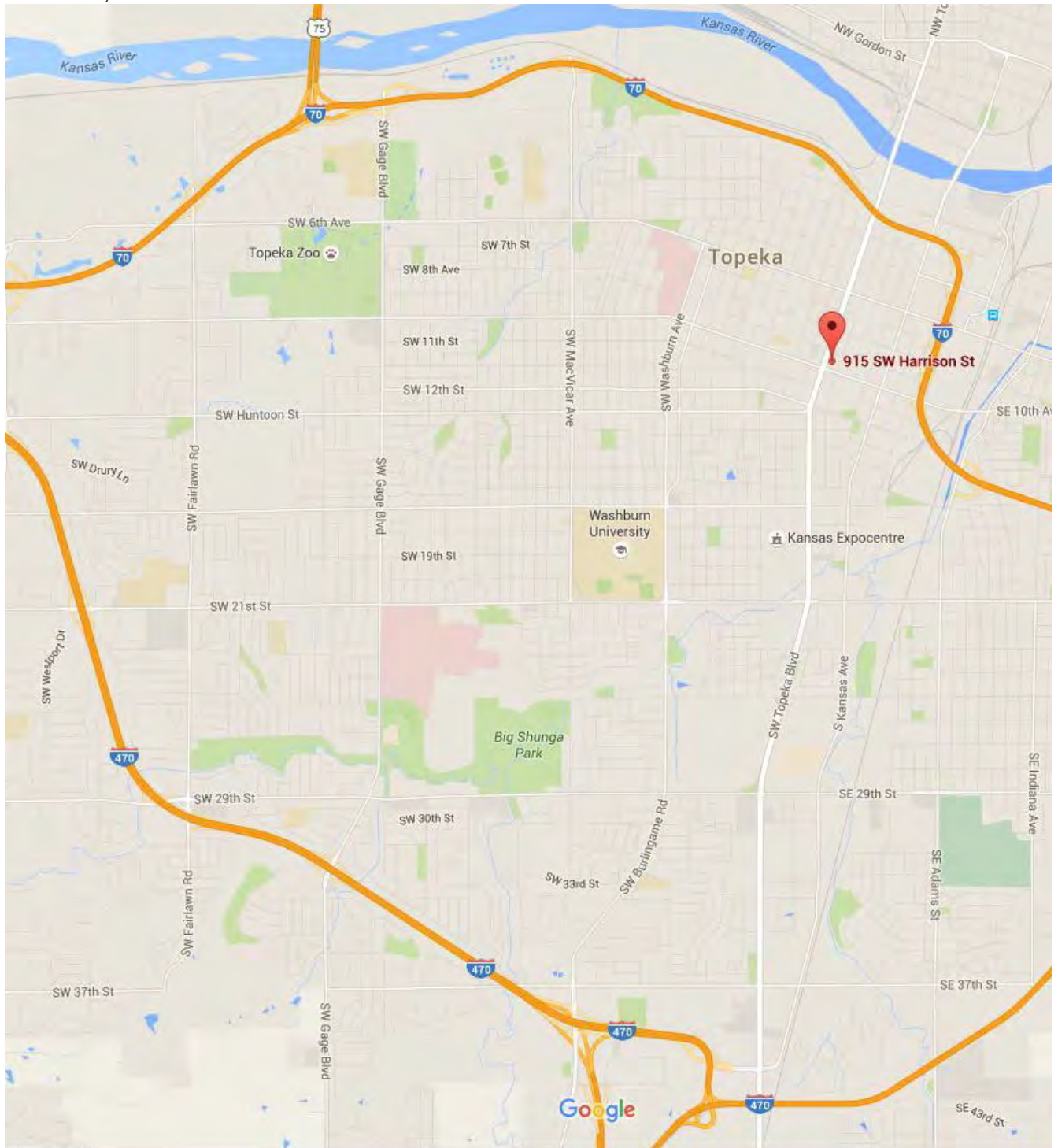
**Figure 1:** Site Map. *Source: ARCGIS, 2015.*  
Kansas State Office Building  
915 SW Harrison Street, Topeka, Kansas  
39.047987, -95.680380



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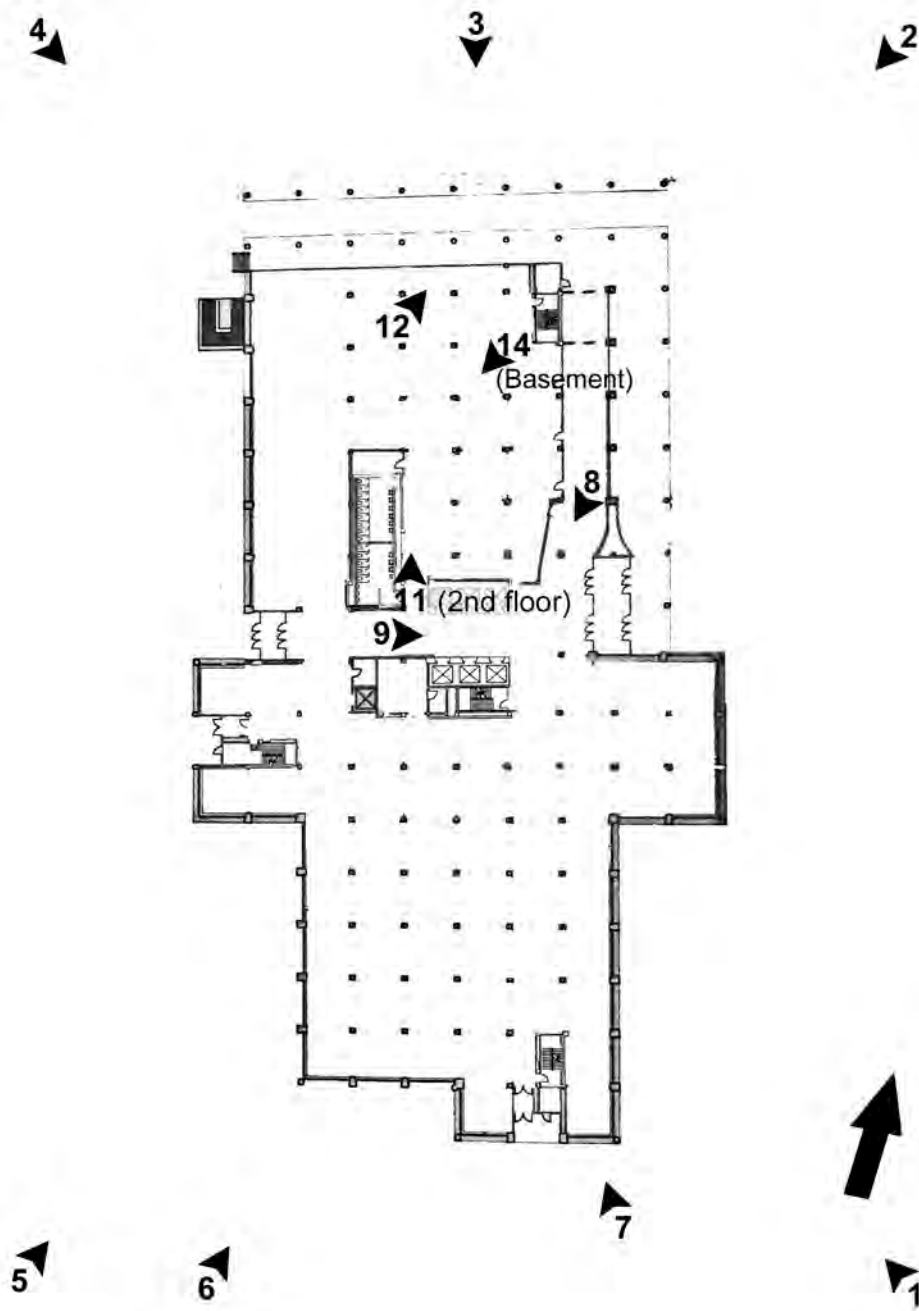
**Figure 2.** Context Map. *Source: Google, 2015.*  
Kansas State Office Building  
915 SW Harrison Street, Topeka, Kansas  
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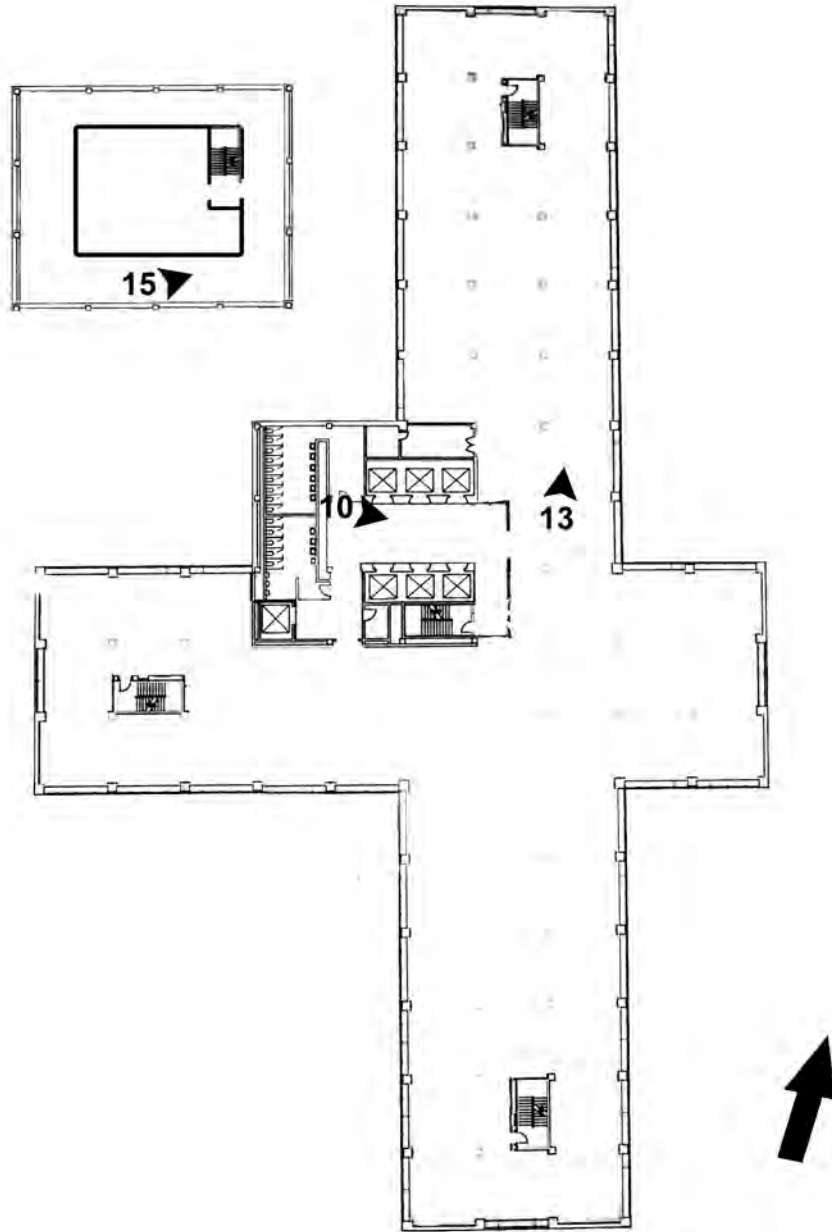
**Figure 3:** Photo Map, exterior, lower floors. Not to scale.



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**Figure 4:** Photo Map, upper floors. Not to scale.



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**Figure 5:** Kansas State Office Building, 1955. *Source: Kansas Memory.*



**Figure 6:** Kansas State Office Building, 1957. *Source: Kansas Memory.*



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**Figure 7:** Kansas State Office Building, 1957. *Source: Kansas Memory.*

