

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Kieselhorst Piano Company Building  
other names/site number 1007 Olive

2. Location

street & town 1007 Olive Street n/a not for publication  
city or town St. Louis n/a vicinity  
state Missouri code MO county St. Louis [Independent City] code 510 zip code 63101

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  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
Mark A Miles February 21, 2008  
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): \_\_\_\_\_

Kieselhorst Piano Company Building  
Name of Property

St. Louis [Independent City] County, MO  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

n/a

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

n/a

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store
- COMMERCE/TRADE: business
- COMMERCE/TRADE: professional
- INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: manufacturing facility

**Current Function**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- COMMERCE/TRADE: professional
- VACANT/not in use

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- LATE VICTORIAN: Romanesque

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation** Limestone
- walls** Brick
- Sandstone
- roof** Asphalt
- other** \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

Kieselhorst Piano Company Building  
Name of Property

St. Louis [Independent City] County, MO  
County and State

### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

#### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

#### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### 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

(enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

#### Period of Significance

1906-1930

#### Significant Dates

n/a

#### Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

#### Cultural Affiliation

n/a

#### Architect/Builder

unknown

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

#### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other Name of repository:

Landmarks Association of St. Louis

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

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St. Louis [Independent City] County, MO  
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**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 1/5 7/4/4/2/0/0 4/2/7/9/3/6/0  
Zone Easting Northing

2 / / / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing

3 / / / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing

4 / / / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Property Tax No.

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Lindsey Derrington, Researcher  
organization Landmarks Association of St. Louis date December 3, 2007  
street & number 917 Locust Street, 7th Floor telephone (314) 421-6474  
city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63101

**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 FPO for any additional items)

name/title Olive Partnership (Mark Pitliangas)

street & number 1007 Olive 2nd Floor telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63101

**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. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127, and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**Kieselhorst Piano Company Building  
St. Louis [Independent City], MO**

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### Summary

The Kieselhorst Piano Company Building is located at 1007 Olive Street in downtown Saint Louis (see photograph 1). Standing five stories tall, the Romanesque Revival style building was completed in 1890 for use as offices. The narrow building faces south and covers the entirety of its lot, measuring twenty-four feet six inches by one hundred and eight feet. Its five stories bring the building to a height of sixty-eight feet with a basement below. The building has brick bearing walls that decrease in thickness as they rise, with the first story walls measuring twenty-two inches thick and the fifth story walls measuring thirteen inches thick. Its exterior is of red brick laid in stretcher bond with red sandstone detailing. The building's most distinctive features are the decorative brick corbels and string courses emanating from its round-arched fifth story windows. The first story of its main elevation (with the building's entrance) was altered circa 1985 with elements of the Classical Revival style, but these reversible alterations are typical of commercial buildings in the downtown area. Otherwise the Kieselhorst Piano Company Building retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

### Exterior

The front (south) elevation overlooks Olive Street. The second, third, and fourth stories are identical, with three narrow rectangular, double-hung aluminum windows each. The window headers are of vertical bricks laid in the stretcher bond and the windows are edged with shaped brick at the wall plane. A decorative brick bead pattern forms a surround, encasing the windows on three sides. A continuous sill course of red sandstone stretches across the elevation, projecting underneath the windows and receding back to the wall plane at the edge of the building.

The fifth story is altogether different (see photograph 3). Instead of windows above a simple sill course, a ribbon of three round-arched windows sits above a single molded sill course supported by a string of twenty-two corbels. The arches are comprised of six layers of vertical headers, the third of which slightly projects from the wall plane and the last of which curves outward to form a ridge. The arches terminate in courses of a brick bead pattern, below which decorative window piers contain shaped brick which forms a transition between the wall plane and rectangular recessed sections. The aforementioned corbels below the sill are three bricks deep, with those on either end composed of stretchers and those in between composed of pairs of headers. Around and above the arches are recessed bands two bricks wide that alternate with comparable bands at the wall plane. These rise to the building's cornice. The cornice consists of another band of twenty-two corbels, elongated and comprised of many more bricks that slope gently outward and upward to support a plain entablature.

The building's first story has been wholly altered and now has a Classical Revival appearance. The former storefront is sheathed in grey-painted synthetic stucco which attempts to give the appearance of rusticated limestone. The stucco is partitioned by grooves into eight wide courses and encases three slightly recessed arched bays topped by shaped keystones. The

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westernmost of these leads to a recessed entrance while the others contain windows. All have round fanlights above molded wooden panels. For the easternmost two bays, these panels form spandrels above single-paned windows. These have simulated dividers which give the windows the appearance of being twenty-paned. Slightly larger wooden panels sit below these and extend down to just above the street line. A cast iron cornice covers the original second story window sill course. It consists of a Greek key meander pattern. This cast iron portion is painted forest green along with the woodwork in each of the three bays.

The east elevation stands unnaturally exposed overlooking a parking lot on the northwest corner of Olive and Tenth Streets. As such, it is of common brick bond with rough, uneven mortar joints. The parapet wall steps down from the south (front) end of the building as it goes to the north (rear) end. The west elevation runs flush with the Eastman Kodak Building at 1009 Olive and therefore is not visible.

The north elevation overlooks the alley (see photograph 4). As on the main elevation, the upper four stories have three windows each. All are identical, with segmental arched window headers comprised of three rows of vertical brick headers with limestone sills (see photograph 5). The first story is windowless, extending beyond the wall plane of the upper floors to the alley line. This simple extension contains the building's north entrance from the alley.

### Interior

The main entrance leads to a small square lobby. Directly ahead is an elevator; to the right is the entrance to the building's first story. For whatever reason this first floor was never converted into modern office space along with the rest of the building during the circa 1985 renovation and it now is used for storage. With exposed brick walls, wooden ceiling, and concrete floor, the open space is bare. Though closed off, the underside of the original staircase runs along the west wall. Of note is the partially exposed column of black granite blocks of alternating thickness at the southeast corner of the building (see photograph 6). This is one of two columns that framed the building's original storefront (see Figure 6).

Totally overhauled during the renovation, the upper four stories of the Kieselhorst Piano Company retain none of the building's original features. Each is accessed by the elevator.

### Integrity

The major alteration to the Kieselhorst Piano Company Building was the storefront remodeling. The original appearance of this portion of the building is shown in great detail in a 1920 advertisement the firm published in the city directory (see Figure 6). Similar in form to that of the adjacent Eastman Kodak Building, the main entrance was placed at the center of the elevation and was deeply recessed. Two spacious display windows with dark marble knee-walls ran flush with the wall plane along most of the street line before tapering back to the door, giving the entrance a v-shape. The doorway and windows were framed by signs above and two columns of black granite blocks to either side. Only the east column is certain to remain as the rest have

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either been removed or covered. Deterioration has worn the building's fifth story sill, but most of its masonry is in fine condition. Overall, the Kieselhorst Piano Company Building substantially reflects integrity of location, setting, materials, feeling, workmanship and association from its period of significance.

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St. Louis [Independent City], MO**

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### Summary

Constructed in 1890, the Kieselhorst Piano Company Building at 1007 Olive Street in downtown Saint Louis is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of COMMERCE. Multiple tenants occupied the five-story building before it was solely let to the Kieselhorst Piano Company beginning in 1906. The firm, founded in 1879, was one of the oldest piano dealerships in the city and was representative of the major influence of German culture upon the musical tastes and practices of the city. The company had its showroom on the building's first floor while using the rest of its floors to store merchandise, manufacture pianos, and house a number of other operations related to the instrument. The Kieselhorst Piano Company Building is one of the best remaining examples of a once thriving, now much-depleted piano dealership district running along Olive Street from Ninth to Twelfth (and later Tenth to Twelfth) Streets from the early 1880s to the 1920s, most of which has been razed.<sup>1</sup> Today it is one of the few architectural remnants of the heyday of the music industry in Saint Louis and a reminder of the cultural forces that propelled that industry into being. The period of significance begins in 1906 when the Kieselhorst Piano Company first occupied the building through 1930 when it downsized and moved elsewhere.

### Development of the Olive Street Piano District

The stretch of Olive Street that would become Saint Louis' premiere piano and music distribution district began as a residential area. During the 1840s the newly subdivided land north of Market Street and west of Ninth was still remote from the city's riverfront business district and, as such, was desirable for residential development. Divided into long, narrow lots roughly measuring 24 by 108 feet, the western end of Olive in particular began to rapidly attract wealthy residents and fashionable row houses lined its blocks within a few years. The extension of a cable car line down Olive in the 1850s primed the area for commercial development; by 1875 the blocks of Olive east of Ninth Street were increasingly witnessing the conversion of residences into offices and businesses as residents moved to more secluded areas elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

By the early 1880s the blocks of Olive between Ninth and Twelfth were undergoing these changes as well. They were unique though in attracting a steady number of piano dealerships and

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<sup>1</sup> Fifteen buildings remain on the blocks of Olive between Tenth Street and Twelfth Street (now Tucker Boulevard). In addition to the Kieselhorst Piano Company Building, the Balmer & Weber Music House and Thiebes-Stierlin Music Company at 1004 and 1006 Olive (NR 8/31/00 and NR1/28/04) were both built and inhabited by piano dealers. Three other extant buildings (1107, 1114, and 1116 Olive) were also home to piano dealerships at various brief points in time, but all three exhibit relatively major exterior alterations. Substantial additional research would be needed to gauge historic significance.

<sup>2</sup> Ernst D. Kargau, *The German Element in St. Louis: A Translation from German of Ernst D. Kargau's St. Louis in Former Years, A Commemorative History of the German Element*. pp. 87.; St. Louis Platbook, 1891.; Richard J. Compton and Camille N. Dry, *Pictorial St. Louis, the Great Metropolis of the Mississippi Valley: A Topographical Survey Drawn in Perspective, A.D. 1875*, pl. 21.



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music-related industries and the strip began to take on a distinct character as a music district. Possibly attractive to piano dealers because of the ease with which residences could be converted into venues for displaying instruments meant to be played in the home,<sup>3</sup> four of about a dozen of the city's piano dealerships were located here in 1881. That number grew to five by 1882 and seven by 1884. Two years later there were eight dealerships and three piano tuners in the district, and by 1893, of eighteen dealerships throughout the city, seven were located on Olive between Ninth and Twelfth Streets with another nearby near Eighth.<sup>4</sup> That year Saint Louis historian Ernst Kargau described the area's development: "Now one can hardly recognize this region, which, as it were, has become the center of the piano business."<sup>5</sup> No other area of the city could claim such a concentration. The district would maintain its character for the next forty years.<sup>6</sup>

### Construction and Early Occupation of the Kieselhorst Piano Company Building

Situated on the north side of Olive four lots west of Tenth, the property at 1007 Olive was typical of the street at this time (see Figure 1). Its original brick row house had evolved from a single family residence to a boarding house to a home furnishings store to a dentist's office.<sup>7</sup> By 1890 the increasingly valuable piece of land was ripe for new development, and early that year the parcel attracted the attention of respected lawyer, businessman, civic leader and then-president of the board of Washington University, George Eliot Leighton. He purchased the property for \$25,000 on January 7<sup>th</sup> of that year and set about improving it.<sup>8</sup>

Maximizing the profitability of the comparatively tiny sliver of land, Leighton took out a building permit on April 7<sup>th</sup> for a five story brick office building to take up the entirety of the lot. The following day he obtained a wrecking permit for the row house and work on the new structure began.<sup>9</sup> One of several of Leighton's speculative real estate holdings throughout Saint Louis, the property was the only one he sought to develop himself and he put the large sum of \$19,000 towards his new building's construction.<sup>10</sup> The architect responsible for its Romanesque Revival style design is unknown. It is one of the earliest multi-storied commercial buildings in

<sup>3</sup> Hopkins' *Atlas of the City of St. Louis, Missouri: From Official Records, Private Plans and Actual Surveys* shows row houses lining Olive between Ninth and Twelfth in 1883, two years after the city directory lists piano merchants there. Building permits also show that new commercial construction only slowly began during the 1890s making it reasonable to infer that during the early years of the district dealers were located in converted homes. Apart from pianos the district also attracted an unusual number of furniture stores, a line of business which would also be well-suited to displaying its wares in former residences.

<sup>4</sup> St. Louis City Directory.

<sup>5</sup> Ernst D. Kargau. *The German Element in St. Louis: A Translation from German of Ernst D. Kargau's St. Louis in Former Years. A Commemorative History of the German Element*, pp. 92.

<sup>6</sup> St. Louis City Directory.

<sup>7</sup> *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, 13 June 1875.; *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, 6 November 1887.; Gould's St. Louis Commercial Register.

<sup>8</sup> William Hyde and Howard L. Conard. *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis*. pp. 1250-1252.; City of Saint Louis deed abstracts.

<sup>9</sup> City of Saint Louis building permit records.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*; St. Louis Probate Court, record of George Eliot Leighton.

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the area, constructed at a time when the height and density characterizing those blocks nearer the river were just beginning to spread west. As a narrow, single-lot structure built at that height, it set a tone that the rest the district's buildings would follow through the 1920s.

Under Leighton's ownership the building functioned as general rental space for a variety of tenants. The Olive Street Furniture, Stove & Carpet Company made its home here from 1893 to 1896 while the Conroy Brothers furniture company resided in the building from 1897 to 1901. The Terrell & McClure Stove Company occupied part of the building during 1898 but then moved, as did gold- and silversmiths Hess & Hinderman in 1899. The longest-running tenant of this period, the Emil Willbrandt Surgical Manufacturing Company, stayed from 1897 to 1905.<sup>11</sup> This period in the building's history was characterized by a high turnover of occupants, some of which remained for only a year.

Leighton died in 1901 and left most of his fortune to his only child, George Bridge Leighton.<sup>12</sup> The younger Leighton moved his family to the Northeast in 1903 and sold the 1007 Olive property to wealthy businessman George F. Tower on February 28, 1905 for \$105,000. Three months later Tower sold it to the Ashland Realty company for \$123,000, and one month later Ashland sold the property to chemical manufacturing magnate Edward Mallinckrodt for \$125,000.<sup>13</sup> The new owner then cleared 1007 Olive of its occupants in order to lease the space to a single tenant, the Kieselhorst Piano Company.

### Impact of German Immigrants upon the Musical Culture of Saint Louis

By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, intense German immigration had affected nearly every aspect of culture and commerce in Saint Louis. An early wave of German-speaking peoples broke upon the city in the 1830s followed by an even larger one after 1848 which brought thousands of middle class progressives fleeing after the failed liberal revolutions. By 1890, 66,000 Saint Louis residents had been born in the German states while thousands more named Austria or the German-speaking areas of Switzerland as their places of origin.<sup>14</sup> Their influence was such that already by 1865 one contemporary remarked that there "were four cultural elements in the city after the [Civil War]: Roman Catholics, Southerners, New Englanders, and Germans [with the latter dominating the rest as it was] 'ascendent in amount of its members, its aggressiveness, its general intelligence, and its unity of spirit.'"<sup>15</sup> Within only thirty years German culture had made quite an impression on the cultural flavor of Saint Louis with its liberal ideals, intellectualism, and, most importantly for the Kieselhorst Piano Building, its academic approach to music.

<sup>11</sup> St. Louis City Directory.; Mercantile Advancement Co., *St. Louis, Queen City of the West*, pp.175; Gould's St. Louis Commercial Register.

<sup>12</sup> "George E. Leighton Dies at His Summer Home," source unknown.; St. Louis Probate Court, record of George Eliot Leighton.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*; United States Census, 1910.; City of Saint Louis deed abstracts.

<sup>14</sup> William Hyde and Howard L. Conard. *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis*. pp. 890.

<sup>15</sup> Denton J. Snider, quoted by David W. Detjen. *The Germans in Missouri, 1900-1918: Prohibition, Neutrality, and Assimilation*. pp. 10.

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That the German immigrants' unique perspective on the study of music along with their affinity for the piano greatly influenced the middle-class culture of the United States seems to have been accepted from nineteenth century contemporaries to twentieth century historians.<sup>16</sup> While many wealthy American households prior to the middle 1800s counted members who were academically trained in a variety of instruments, such training was not widespread amongst the middle and working classes. In Germany things were far different. There the classical study of music was commonplace amongst those of the middle class and, as a particularly versatile instrument well-suited to that end, the piano was a fixture in most households. As Germans settled throughout the United States their musical practices made a deep impression upon their new countrymen. As Kargau wrote in 1893,

The general introduction of piano playing in American circles must unquestionably be ascribed to the Germans. This was due not only to the numerous music teachers, men as well as women, but also the example which German families set in that regard. Many a German family brought an old piano with the rest of their household belongings, sometimes only a spinet. Mother and daughters then attracted the attention of their American neighbors by their playing. This awakened in them the desire to emulate their new neighbors.<sup>17</sup>

The interest that the Germans sparked apparently led to the general popularization of the piano and the instrument quickly became a staple of the American middle class home. As the disseminators of this new musical culture, German immigrants in Saint Louis dominated when it came to dealing the instrument. City directories from the 1880s on display a disproportionate number of German surnames attached to piano dealerships, with Reis, Shattinger, Bollman, Drumheller, Nennstiel, and Koerber among them. Son of an early German immigrant, John A. Kieselhorst, Jr. was among these.

### **Establishment of the Kieselhorst Piano Company**

Kieselhorst was born to German parents in Saint Louis in 1844. The son of a carpenter, he followed in his father's trade early on before taking up employment as a pay teller. He married Emma Adele Homeyer in the early 1870s and the two welcomed their first son Edwin Artus on December 7, 1874.<sup>18</sup> Kieselhorst continued in banking through the end of the decade and in 1879 he left his position as a bookkeeper to go into business with Ernst P. Olhausen, then assistant editor of the *Westliche Post*.<sup>19</sup> Offering "pianos, organs, musical instruments, music, books, and stationary," Olhausen & Kieselhorst was located at 10 South Fourth Street.<sup>20</sup> After Olhausen

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<sup>16</sup> Alfred Loesser, *Men, Women and Pianos: A Social History*, pp.491-2; William Hyde and Howard L. Conard, *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis*, pp. 891.

<sup>17</sup> Ernst D. Kargau. *The German Element in St. Louis: A Translation from German of Ernst D. Kargau's St. Louis in Former Years, A Commemorative History of the German Element*, pp. 154.

<sup>18</sup> United States Census, 1850-1880; St. Louis City Directory; *The Book of St. Louisans: A Biographical Dictionary of Leading Living Men of the City of St. Louis*, pp. 333.

<sup>19</sup> *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 29 February 1880, pp. 6.

<sup>20</sup> St. Louis City Directory.

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departed a year later Kieselhorst, a talented flute player lauded for his performances, opted to continue in the music business and kept the store in his own name.<sup>21</sup> In 1881 he began selling Henry Miller Pianos of Boston at 2706 Laclede Avenue in the Mill Creek Valley.<sup>22</sup> Three years later, he moved the business to 1111 Olive in the burgeoning piano district downtown.

In the thick of the local piano world Kieselhorst increased his range of goods to offer a number of lines from across the country; William Knabe & Company of New York, Kimball & Company of Chicago, and Blasius & Sons of Woodbury, New Jersey were among them.<sup>23</sup> By 1893 the store was so successful that Kieselhorst was able to move to a more prominent space at the southwest corner of Olive and Tenth as well as build a home in the stylish Central West End for his family, now enlarged by sons John Albert III (born 1880) and Henry Adiel (born 1882). He was able to enjoy these for only two years before dying at age fifty-one in late 1895. As his wife had passed away the previous March, Kieselhorst left his large estate worth \$60,000 to his three sons. To Edwin, the eldest at only twenty-one, went the control of the business.<sup>24</sup>

Edwin Kieselhorst (see Figure 2) had attended the city's public schools before enrolling in classes at the Hayward's Shorthand and Business College in 1891. After a few months he entered his father's store as a clerk. Upon John Kieselhorst's death he became general manager.<sup>25</sup> With a well-established reputation and a large inventory of nearly one hundred pianos Edwin immediately set about expanding the company's capabilities.<sup>26</sup> He moved the store a little further east to 914 Olive, still in the heart of the piano district, and incorporated it as the Kieselhorst Piano Company in 1898 while maintaining full control as its principle stockholder. He greatly expanded the company's services to consist not only of dealing traditional pianos and organs but of manufacturing pianos and piano parts, polishing, tuning, and storing. In 1902 the firm employed twenty-six workers and Edwin had doubled the company's sales by pushing forward in the new field of player-pianos and electric pianos. He brought on his younger brothers as manager in the player-piano department and foreman in the electric piano department and soon the company had perfected the new Kieselhorst specialty, a self-playing attachment for use on either pianos or organs.<sup>27</sup> In 1905 the construction of an addition to the 1903 Frisco Building (NR 3/29/1983) necessitated the demolition of their store at 914 Olive, forcing Edwin to look elsewhere for rental space. Luckily he did not have to look far; Leighton's building at 1007 Olive was changing hands from one party to another and Edwin was able to secure his firm's place as its sole tenant.

### Kieselhorst Piano Company Moves to 1007 Olive

<sup>21</sup> Ernst D. Kargau, *Mercantile, Industrial and Professional St. Louis*, pp. 375.

<sup>22</sup> *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 29 May 1881, pp. 8.

<sup>23</sup> St. Louis Probate Court, record of John A. Kieselhorst.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*; St. Louis City Directory.

<sup>25</sup> *The Book of St. Louisans: A Biographical Dictionary of Leading Living Men of the City of St. Louis*, pp. 333.

<sup>26</sup> St. Louis Probate Court, record of John A. Kieselhorst.

<sup>27</sup> Ernst D. Kargau, *Mercantile, Industrial and Professional St. Louis*, pp. 375; St. Louis City Directory.

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**Kieselhorst Piano Company Building  
St. Louis [Independent City], MO**

The Kieselhorst Piano Company moved into 1007 Olive late in 1905, finally bringing the building into the fold of the surrounding piano district (see Figure 3). The firm was the first to wholly occupy the building at 1007 Olive and it would stay there for the next twenty-four years. By this time the Kieselhorst Piano Company was one of twenty-one dealerships in the city and one of eleven located in the district. The area was undergoing significant change as businesses began razing older structures in order to build modern ones similar in scale to the Kieselhorst Piano Company Building. The other two of the district's best-preserved structures, the Balmer & Weber Music House and the Thiebes-Stierlin Music Company standing at 1004 (NR 8/31/00) and 1006 (NR 1/28/04) Olive, were built this same year directly across the street. These were exemplary of most of the buildings that sprang up along this portion of Olive. While the construction of large office buildings such as the Frisco and Syndicate Trust (NR 10/16/02) had crowded out the piano dealerships that once populated Olive between Ninth and Tenth, between Tenth and Twelfth dealers determinedly held on and the district only grew more dense. Tightly confined, the majority of the structures in the district by necessity stuck to the original footprints of their lots, making this stretch of Olive with its tall, thin buildings unique in relation to the rest of downtown which was quickly filling with larger structures (see Figures 4 and 5). By 1912 the district had twelve of the city's thirty-four dealers located within these two blocks alone, making it the only such concentration in Saint Louis.

The Kieselhorst Piano Company was thriving as well. Edwin had proven himself an excellent businessman, being noted in the *Book of St. Louisans* both in 1906 and 1912 for his successful efforts at making Kieselhorst's one of the best-known and most all-encompassing piano establishments in the city. While brother John had moved across the river to Alton to establish his own music store, Henry continued as superintendent of manufacturing and soon became vice president.<sup>28</sup> Still very much a family business, the firm's advertisements proudly reminded Saint Louisans of its early date of establishment and touted the store as the place "Where Music Is Sweetest."

After forty-one years of operation the company took out a half-page advertisement in the city directory's *Buyer's Guide*—the "Who's Who" in the business life of St. Louis"—featuring a rendering of its storefront (see Figure 6). Displayed along with traditional pianos are the latest technologies, Victrolas and records; just as Edwin had embraced the player-piano twenty years earlier, in the age of electronics he sought to capitalize on these cutting-edge products (see Figure 7). The life-sized model of Nipper the Victor dog sitting in front of the store's entrance further reinforced the store's identity as a purveyor of the modern. Yet the firm continued to manufacture pianos and served as the exclusive dealer of certain lines from elsewhere while offering polishing, storage, moving, repairing, tuning, reproducing, and cleaning services. The building also housed the Kieselhorst Musical Bureau and Kieselhorst Theatre & Concert Ticket Office.<sup>29</sup> Edwin had nurtured the company into modern times, and at the height of its success Kieselhorst assets were valued at \$350,000.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> United States Census, 1910, 1920.

<sup>29</sup> St. Louis City Directory.

<sup>30</sup> "Edwin A. Kieselhorst Dies of Heart Attack," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 12 November 1940, pp.10A.

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**Kieselhorst Piano Company Building  
St. Louis [Independent City], MO**

In 1930 Edwin Kieselhorst, age fifty-five, had reached the prime of his success as a businessman. Both he and his wife were honored with separate biographies lauding their civic accomplishments in *Who's Who in Saint Louis* and had followed countless other Saint Louisans of means in moving to a quiet wealthy residential pocket in Clayton. The Kieselhorst Piano Company was still one of the most prominent of the fifteen major dealerships in the city but with the onset of the Great Depression and changing cultural tastes the demand for pianos began to wane and the Olive Street district quickly faded. Recognizing that the age of the piano was on its way out, Edwin Kieselhorst decided to dissolve the company: "Having observed the decline of the piano and musical instrument business for many years, we have decided to retire cheerfully and gracefully with substantial assets, no liabilities, and a pride in the family name."<sup>31</sup> Henry Kieselhorst continued to operate a smaller successor firm under the same name. Without the need for such a large space he moved the store east to the Railway Exchange Building in 1931. By 1935 only four dealerships remained in the once bustling district. After Kieselhorst's departure the Kieselhorst Piano Company Building was home to a variety of tenants including a furniture store and the St. Louis Chapter of the American Red Cross Blood Donor Service, among others.<sup>32</sup> Home to several offices now, the building's current owner is planning its historic rehabilitation.

The Kieselhorst Piano Company Building remains one of the best examples from the city's most prominent piano dealership and music district. As home to the Kieselhorst Piano Company, founded by a family of German ancestry, it is exemplary of the time when German musical tastes greatly affected the tastes of the American middle class by creating the desire for pianos within the home. The Kieselhorst Piano Company Building at 1007 Olive stands as one of the few remaining examples from this rich period in the history of Saint Louis when commerce, musical culture, and the enormous impact of German immigration coalesced.

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> St. Louis City Directory.

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**Kieselhorst Piano Company Building  
St. Louis [Independent City], MO**

Figure 1: Northwest corner of the intersection of Olive and Tenth Streets, view from the southwest. The house at 1007 Olive, standing on the future site of the Kieselhorst Piano Company Building, is four lots in from Tenth Street (*Pictorial St. Louis, the Great Metropolis of the Mississippi Valley: A Topographical Survey Drawn in Perspective, A.D. 1875, p.21*).

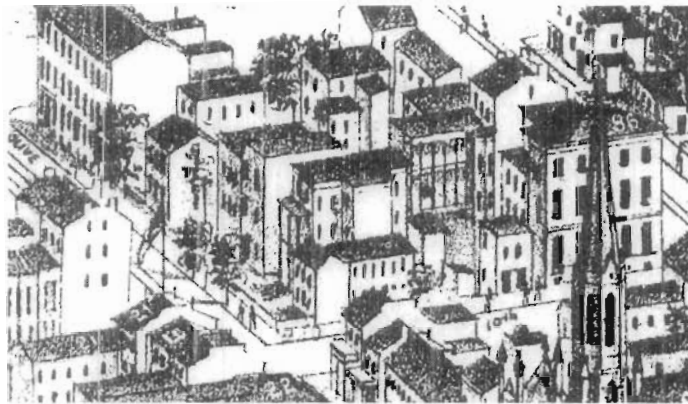


Figure 2: Edwin A. Kieselhorst circa 1925 ("Edwin A. Kieselhorst Dies of Heart Attack," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 12 November 1940).



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**Kieselhorst Piano Company Building  
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Figure 3: Kieselhorst Piano Company Building, view from the southwest circa 1910 (Missouri Historical Society Archives).





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**Kieselhorst Piano Company Building  
St. Louis [Independent City], MO**

Figure 4: Olive Street just east of Eleventh, view from the west circa 1910. The Kieselhorst Piano Company Building is two and one half buildings in from the left. See photograph 2 for comparison (Missouri Historical Society Archives).



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**Kieselhorst Piano Company Building  
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Figure 5: Northwest corner of Olive and Eleventh Streets, view from the southwest circa 1911. The Laclede Gas Company Building (NR 11/26/80) was the largest built on either side of the block of Olive between Tenth and Eleventh Streets. The Kieselhorst Piano Company Building stands three lots to the right from the Laclede Building (Missouri Historical Society Archives).



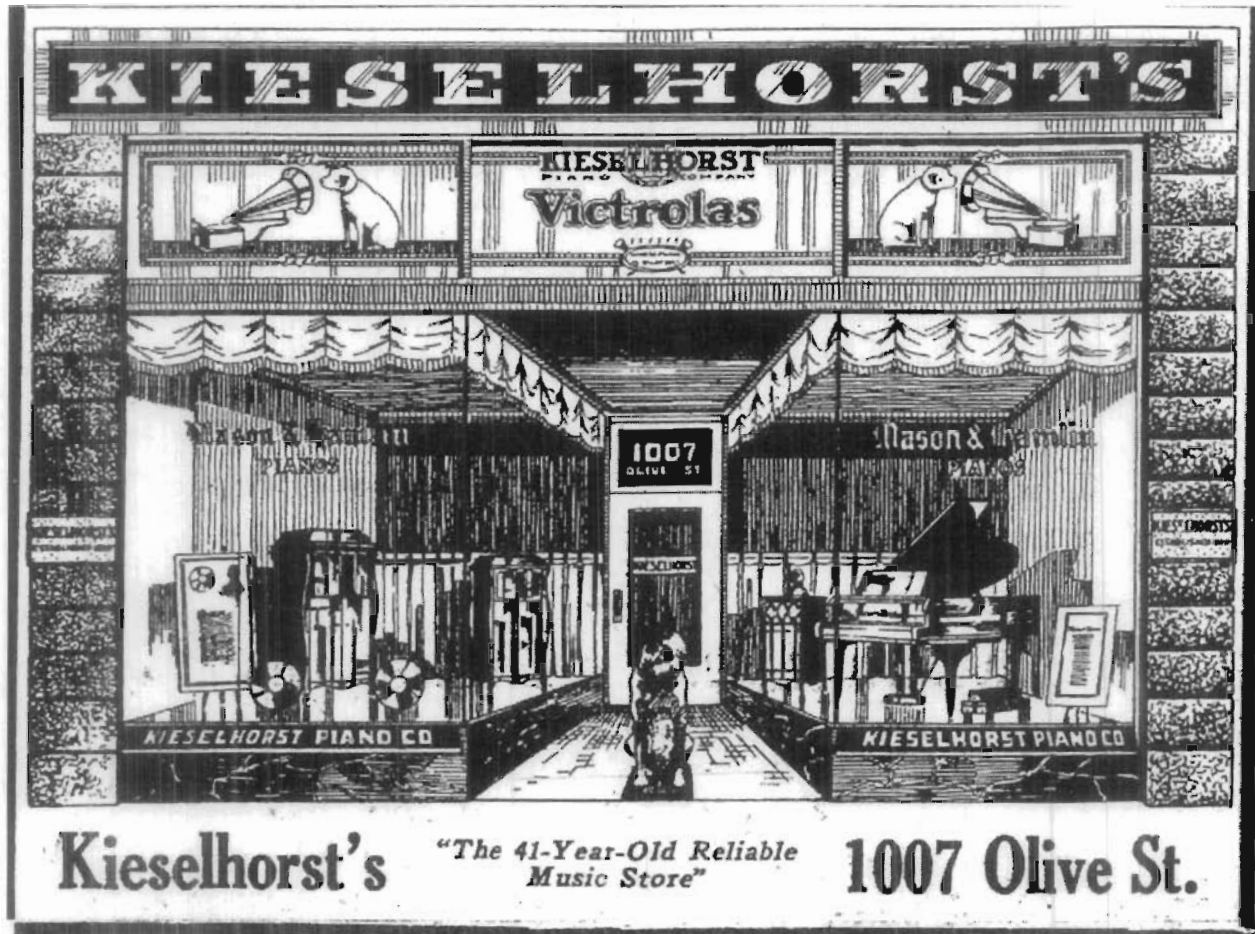
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Figure 6: 1920 *Buyer's Guide* advertisement (St. Louis City Directory).



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Kieselhorst Piano Company Building  
St. Louis [Independent City], MO

Figure 7: Advertisement running in the June 6, 1920 edition of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.



**VICTROLAS**

**Just Arrived!**  
Another Shipment of the  
STYLES  
**14 and 16**  
In Various Finishes  
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Select Your Instrument  
Immediate Delivery! Easy Terms!

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PIANO CO.**

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*"The Store  
With the Big  
Victrola Dog"*

**"SEALED"**  
Victrola  
Records



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**Kieselhorst Piano Company Building  
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**Kieselhorst Piano Company Building  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO**

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### Boundary Description

The Kieselhorst Piano Company Building is located at 1007 Olive Street on city block 280 in downtown Saint Louis. The structure's footprint comprises all of its 24.6' by 108' foot lot. It is part of lot 5-6 of the J. B. C. Lucas Addition. The nominated property is legally known by the City of St. Louis Assessor's Office as parcel number 02800000600.

### Boundary Justification

The nominated parcel includes all of the property historically associated with the Kieselhorst Piano Company.

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**Kieselhorst Piano Company Building  
St. Louis [Independent City], MO**

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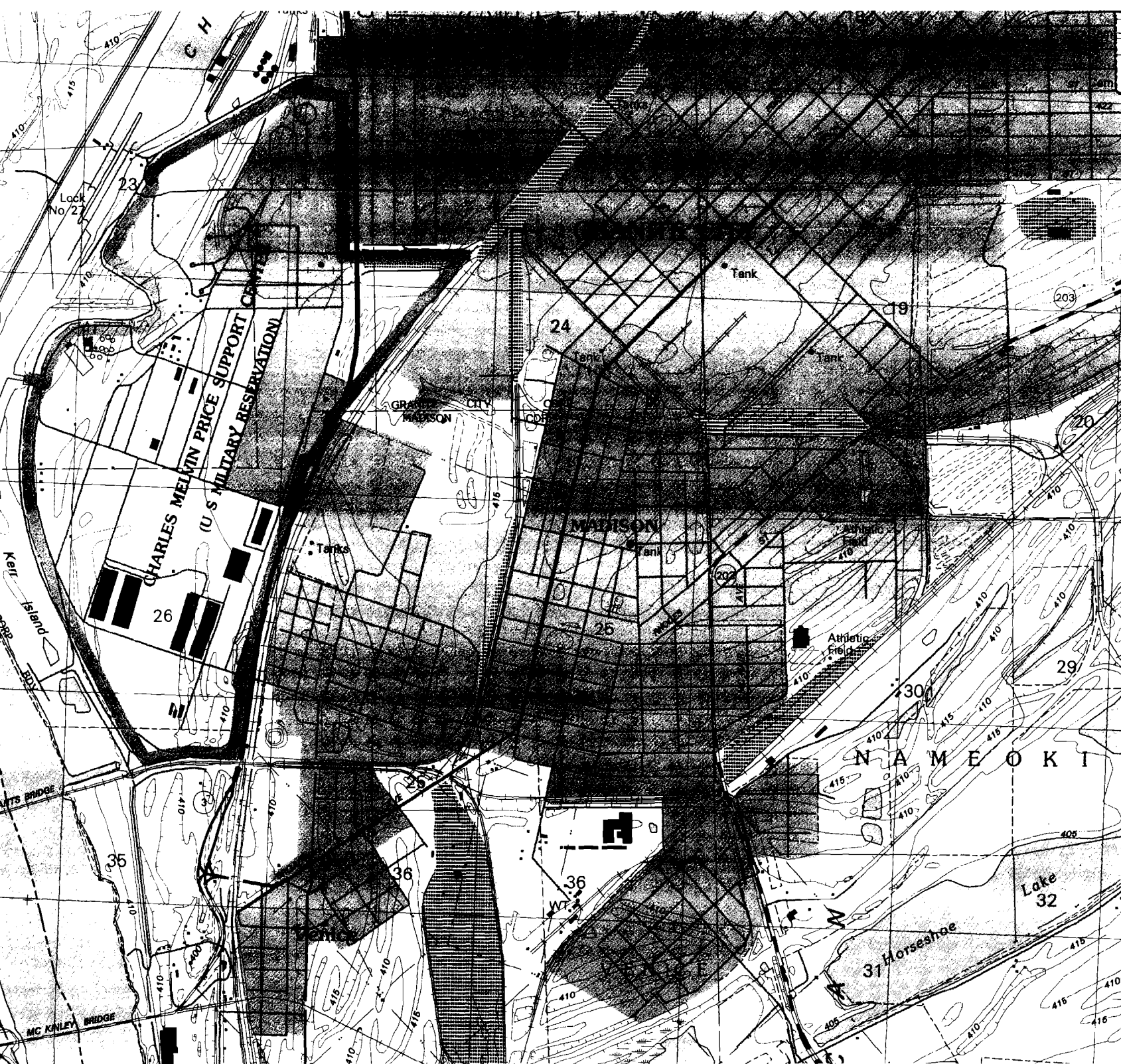
Unless otherwise indicated, the following is true for all photographs submitted with this nomination:

Kieselhorst Piano Company Building  
1007 Olive Street  
Saint Louis [Independent City], Missouri  
Photographer: Lindsey Derrington  
August 2007  
Negative on file at: Landmarks Association of St. Louis

The descriptions of each photograph number are:

1. Looking northwest at building from Olive Street.
2. Looking northeast from the intersection of Olive and Eleventh Streets, compare with Figure 4.
3. Looking northeast at detail of the fifth story of the south (main) elevation.
4. Looking southwest at north (rear) and east elevations from Tenth Street.
5. Looking southwest at detail of north (rear) elevation from alley.
6. Looking southeast at interior detail of original black granite column once exposed as part of the building's store front.





42°30'

488

487

486

485

484

40'

Kieserhorst piano Co  
1007 Olive Street  
St. Louis [Missouri City]

MISSOURI  
UTM REFS:  
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4279360N





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