

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Armour & Co. Branch House

Other names/site number: JFCD-258

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

2. Location

Street & number: 201 E. Main St.

City or town: Louisville State: Kentucky County: Jefferson

Not For Publication: n/a Vicinity: n/a

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

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

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

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria: X A ___ B ___ C ___ D

<p>Signature of certifying official/Title: Craig Potts/SHPO Date _____</p> <p>Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office _____</p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>
<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p> <hr/> <p>Signature of commenting official /Title: _____ Date _____</p> <hr/> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

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 _____

Armour & Co. Branch House
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>2</u>	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register n/a

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE:
Processing/Storage - Meatpacking

Current Functions

COMMERCE/TRADE: Business
DOMESTIC: Multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN

Materials:

Principal exterior materials of the property:
Brick, stone

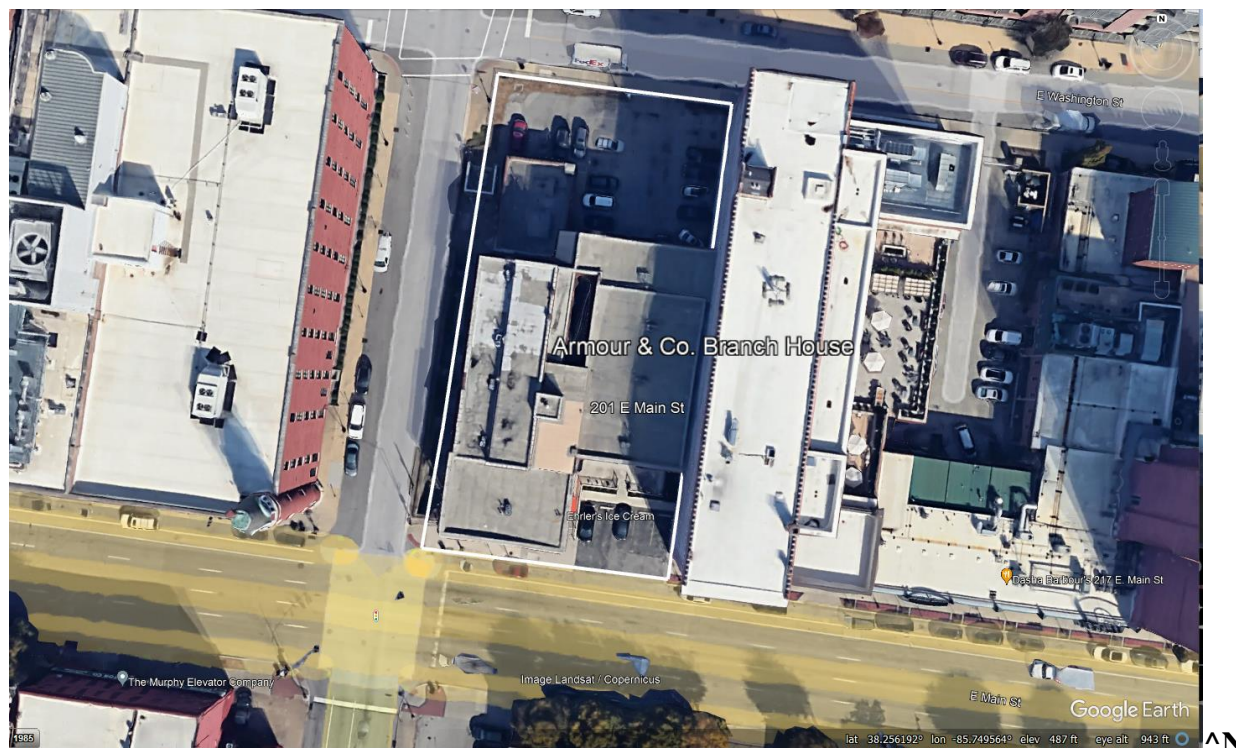
Armour & Co. Branch House
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

Narrative Description

Summary

The former Armour & Co. Branch House (JFCD-258) at 201 East Main Street is a utilitarian, three-story industrial building with a full basement located at the northeast corner of East Main and North Brook Streets on the east side of downtown Louisville, Kentucky. The overall main building is L-shaped with a stone foundation and flat roof. This early twentieth-century agricultural processing building occupies most of its one-acre parcel, with the south and west facades meeting the sidewalk boundaries. A railroad spur historically met the western façade – with loading/unloading taking place directly into the basement of the building – but this siding is no longer extant. Meatpacking giant Armour & Co. purpose-built this branch house as the gateway location to expand its reach into the southern consumer market. The building was originally erected ca. 1900 but in 1910, a major fire destroyed most of the original building. The extant structure was rebuilt in 1914 to be fireproof and taller on the same footprint, with red brick on the exterior and concrete floors on the interior. A one-story brick utility building was built ca. 1914 to the rear as part of the rebuild. This nomination proposes the listing of two (2) contributing buildings: the main L-shaped branch house / factory building and the small one-story brick utility building to the immediate north. The two buildings are adjacent to each other on two different parcels but are owned by the same entity.



Armour & Co. Branch House - Louisville, KY

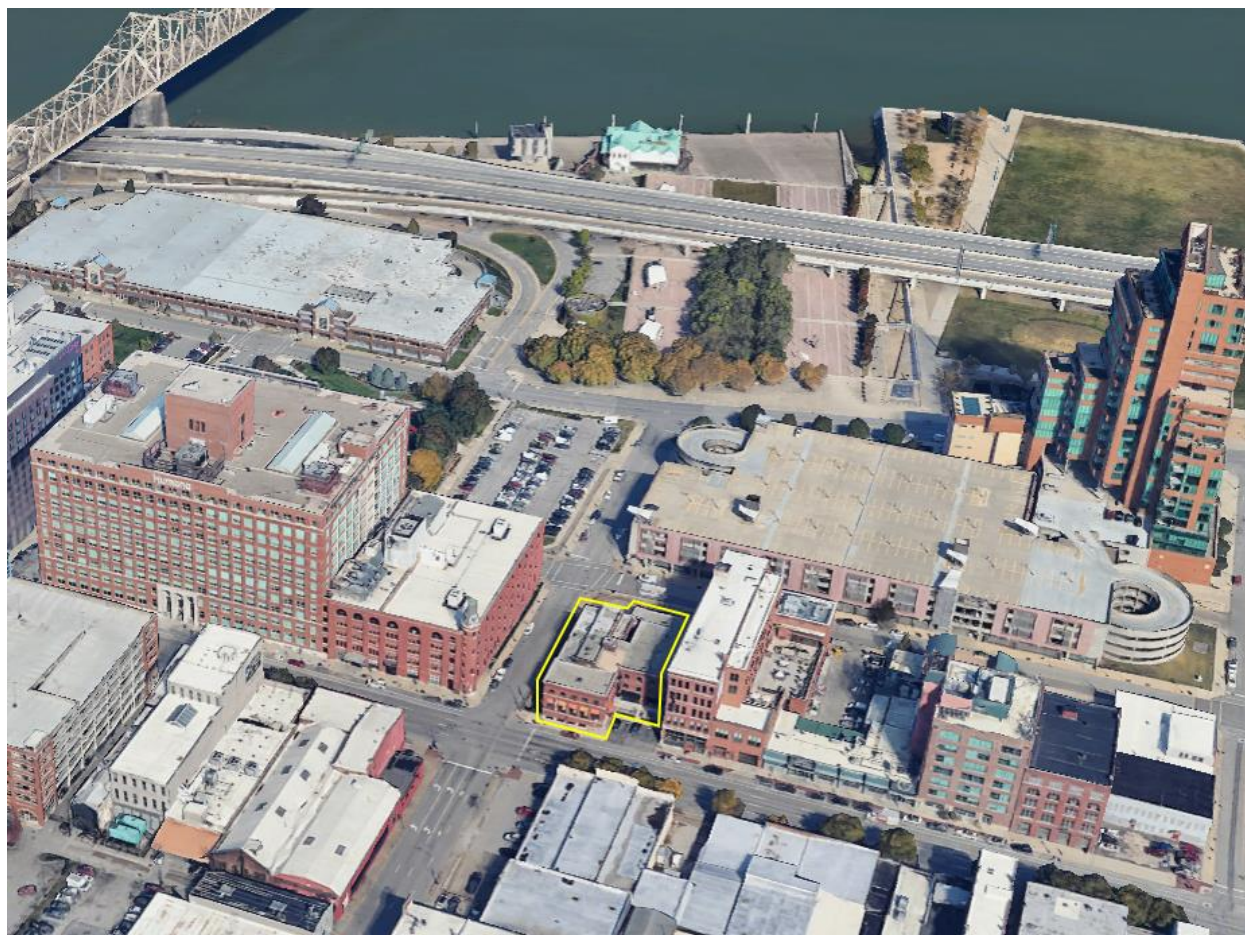
Latitude 38.256161; Longitude -85.749622

Armour & Co. Branch House
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

Site Description

The former Armour & Co. Branch House is bounded by East Main Street on the south, North Brook Street on the west, and East Washington Street to the north. Farther north, across Washington Street, is a modern parking deck, a portion of Waterfront Park, and the Ohio River. The building is located in a warehouse and wholesale district that developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many of the multi-story, brick buildings constructed for various companies are still standing on the north side of East Main, lending a business-like setting to this block on the east side of downtown. The National Register-listed E.L. Hughes Co. Building (ca. 1905; NRIS #16000498) is located to the immediate east, and the Louisville Grocery Co. Building (ca. 1914; NRIS #03000258) is a few parcels farther to the east at 231 East Main Street. Across East Main to the south are mostly one- and two-story commercial and industrial buildings. The city block to the west across Brook Street consists of two large multi-story brick buildings: the Louisville Public Warehouse building (ca. 1884) and the massive, former Belknap Hardware building (ca. 1923), both of which are now owned by local health insurance company, Humana Inc.



Current neighborhood context; Armour & Co. building highlighted

Armour & Co. Branch House
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

Change in Use of the Building

From the few historical photographs that have been located, the ca. 1914 Armour & Co. Branch House still maintains its historic appearance on the exterior even though the interior use has changed over time. The branch house received raw meat via train which was then smoked, washed, and dressed to distribute to local markets. Once Armour & Co. moved meatpacking operations to a different location in Louisville in the early 1970s, the building on East Main Street was sold. Starting in late 1973, a sewing machine sales and repair shop occupied the building for many years.



Ca. 1922 Caulfield & Shook photo clip (U of L)



Ca. 1959 Ivey W. Cousins photograph clip (Filson)

In 1984, after the period of significance, local real estate developer Frank Metts purchased the building with the intent to bring residential density back to downtown. He converted the Armour & Co. Branch House building into apartments with offices and commercial space on the first floor by dividing open spaces with demising walls and installing windows. Metts added a lightwell in the center of the building to provide light to the offices and apartments in the easternmost section. It appears that the lightwell was located in the area of some of the building's smokerooms, according to Sanborn maps. In 1999, eight additional apartments were added to the basement level. The building is still used for apartments and first floor retail and offices.



East Main Street façade, camera facing north. In the photo: western portion on left; eastern portion on right.

Armour & Co. Branch House
Name of Property

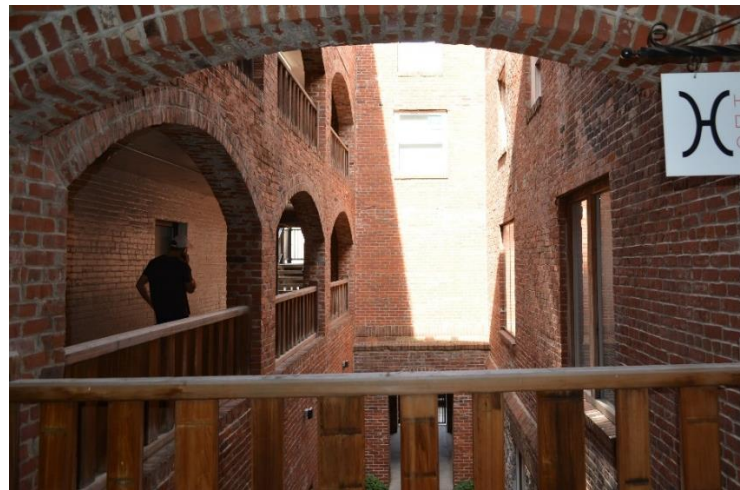
Jefferson, KY
County and State

Exterior Description

No historical images or drawings have been found that show what the original ca. 1900 branch house looked like before the fire and the rebuild of the current building. The extant building is roughly L-shaped and will be discussed as the western portion (closest to Brook) and eastern portion (setback from East Main with parking in front). The sections are generally separated by the interior light well and apartment access connected with covered hallways.



Access point between buildings



Covered hallways and interior lightwell

Western portion at corner of East Main and Brook Streets

Front/south façade: This façade is five bays wide and meets the sidewalk edge; basement window wells are present at ground level. The red brick on the front façade is laid in a running bond, and there are brick keystone details present in accents over the upper windows and with an exaggerated dentil corbeling pattern near the roofline. Similar decorative brick work near the cornice is seen in historical photographs of Armour & Co. branch houses in other cities, many of which are no longer extant (see examples in section 8). It was a design feature that lent a professional appearance to an otherwise industrial property.

Stone banding is present as a continuous sill at the level of first and upper floor windows - including stone sills at the transom level - as well as at the cornice line as a parapet cap. The stone banding and decorative brick work at the corner wrap around to the eastern façade and the entrance to the ground floor retail tenant. Windows are replacements: one-over-one on the upper level, with large storefront glass panels in the retail space. The 1922 and 1959 historical photograph clips (on page 5) show an entrance door on this façade in the bay closest to the former loading dock; it is unknown when this was converted to a window.

Armour & Co. Branch House
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State



Left: Western portion at corner of E. Main and Brook Streets; Right: (Fig. x) 1959 clip of Ivey Watkins Cousins photograph (entire façade was not visible in the historical photograph)

West façade: The long west façade running parallel to Brook Street shows that the building has three stories and a full basement below ground level with a stone foundation. There are 8 bays: 2 in the front office section and 6 in the rear former factory section. The middle floor windows are not original but were added in the same rhythm sometime after the 1959 Ivey Watkins Cousins photograph was taken (see above), most likely when the building was converted to apartments in the 1980s. Since the building was a factory, the blind or bricked-in windows may have been put in place as part of the original design; the arched window openings on the long façade of the processing building are in a regular pattern, inset with stone sills on the first and third floors. An elevator penthouse on the roof has been removed after 1959, but recent exploratory demolition revealed the shaft is still extant in that rear interior corner of the building.

Sanborn fire insurance maps shows a railroad spur meeting the new Armour & Co. building along its Brook Street façade; it was still present in the 1959 photograph (above). The railroad siding would have met this basement section for unloading goods, and remnants of where the shed roof attached can be observed on the building face. While the rail is no longer in place, the area of this siding can still be observed at the basement level, side courtyard of the building, which is lower than the sidewalk.



Armour & Co. Branch House
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

Eastern portion, set back from East Main Street with parking

Front/south façade: The 1940 Sanborn map indicates this section as the sausage factory, which a 1906 *Courier-Journal* article claimed would be “one of the most complete in the South, and will comply fully with the new laws and regulations governing the manufacture of sausage”¹ once it was built. Unfortunately, this section would also be the one that caught fire a few years later in January 1910, according to another article:

*“Armour & Company’s pork-packing plant, at Brook and Main streets, was damaged to the extent of \$5,000 by fire and water... when grease dripping from meat in the sausage room became ignited... By the time the first engines reached the plant the fire had gained such headway that the great iron doors on the sausage and meat rooms were burst open and the flames were licking out into the other departments... The chief damage was in the smoke and sausage rooms.”*²

The extant building is the one that was rebuilt in 1914. From the parking lot, this appears to be a three-story section of the building, four bays wide with a non-historic storefront entrance door, but there is also a basement level. Windows are one-over-one replacements but in original arched window openings with stone sills. There is simple brick corbeling near the cornice line, which has a stone parapet cap. The southern façade is raised from ground level at what was originally a covered truck loading dock and now parking for visitors. The porch and sidewalk connects to the first floor retail tenant on the eastern façade of the western portion, as well as to a gated entry (at the bend in the “L”) into the building elevator breezeway for apartment residents and other office tenants. There is a small gap between the eastern façade and the neighboring building.



Front/south façade of Armour & Co. Branch House

¹ “Sausage Factory: To Be Established Here...” *Courier-Journal*, July 19, 1906.

² “Sausage Fry at the Armour Plant.” *Courier-Journal*, Jan. 23, 1910.

Armour & Co. Branch House
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

Rear / north façade: Viewed from Washington Street, all floors of both sections can be seen, as well as the contributing, one-story utility building. This rear brick wall appears to have an older style, common bond brick pattern with a row of dark-colored headers, which might indicate that this rear foundation wall was not completely rebuilt in 1914 after the fire in 1910. Windows on this façade are replacements and were likely added when the building was converted to apartments, although they may have been installed in existing openings since the 1940 Sanborn does indicate openings here. The window openings on the basement level as well as the stucco coating on the foundation are likely not original. The overall roof is flat with a non-combustible covering; the elevator penthouse is raised above the roof in the center of the building. The gated parking lot is reserved for apartment residents.



North/rear façade: eastern and western sections divided by hallway/stairway. Utility building at right.

Utility building: This one-story, box-shaped brick building does not appear on the 1905 Sanborn since the Hughes lumberyard was still there at that time, so it's likely that it was also built after the 1910 Armour & Co. fire. The 1940 Sanborn map identifies it as a boiler and machinery room with an ammonia tank or line present. The structures for the two wired glass skylights on the flat roof (shown on the Sanborn) have been covered over with roofing material but are still present, hidden from ground level by a parapet wall. Part of the building interior has been renovated and more recently used as a small residence, with non-historic windows and doors added at that time. The original door-window orientation is unknown. The utility building is not physically connected to the main building and is accessed via a door closer to the main building's rear entrance and stairway. The interior was occupied during the site visit and unable to be viewed.

Armour & Co. Branch House
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State



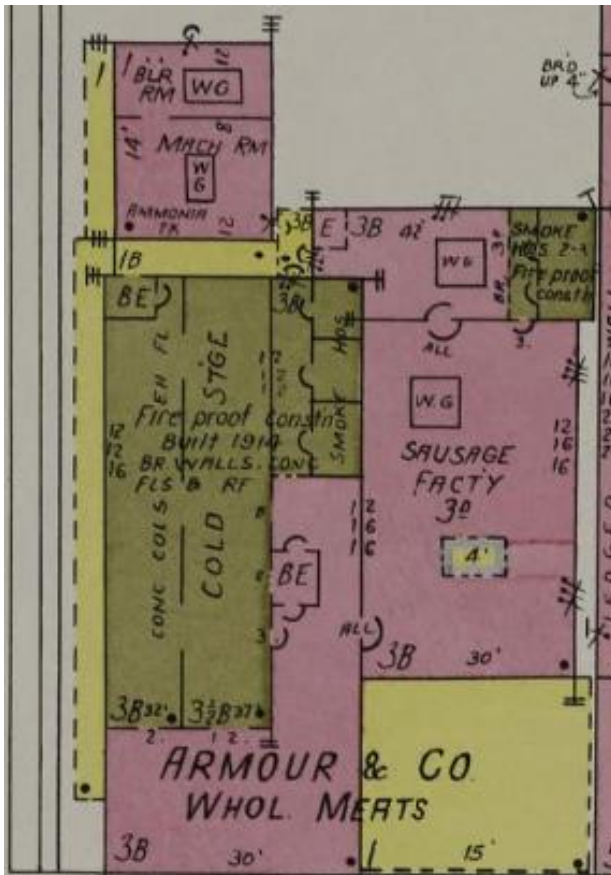
NW corner of utility building



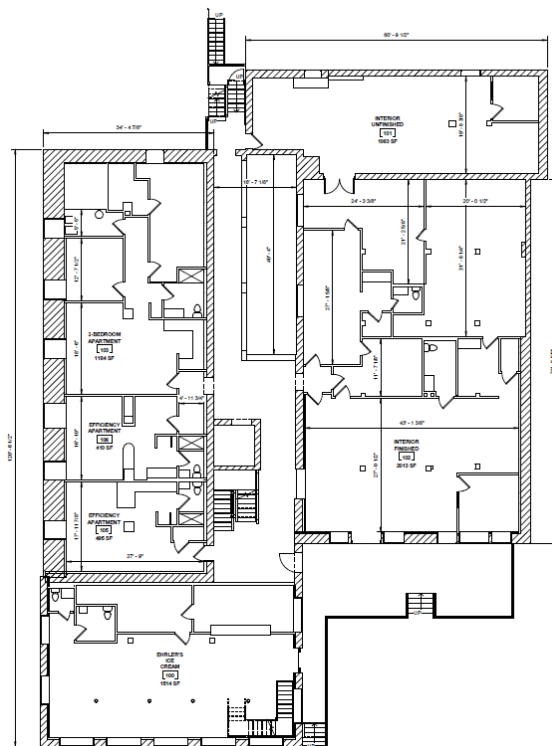
Roof of utility building

Interior Description

No interior photographs or floor plans have been found that showed the building under wholesale operation for Armour & Co., but it is generally thought that the floors were open in plan based on its historic use. The 1940 Sanborn map shows areas dedicated to cold storage, smoke houses, and the sausage factory; these main wall divisions are still present, even after conversion to offices and apartments.



1940 Sanborn map

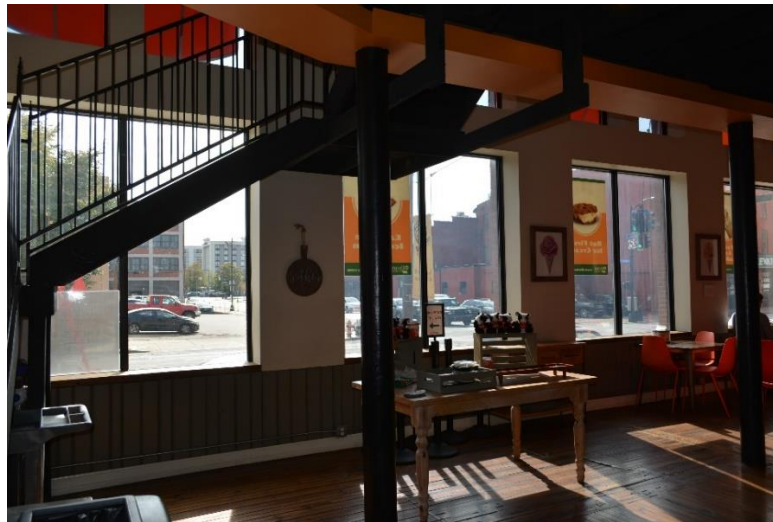


Interior first floor plan

Armour & Co. Branch House
Name of Property

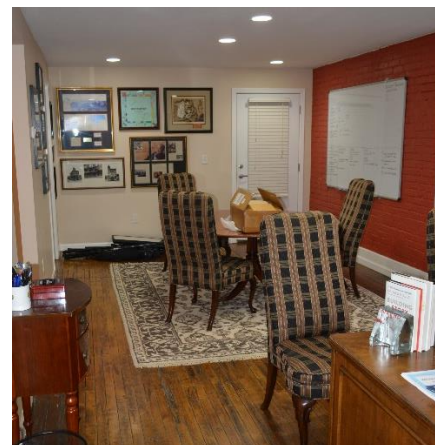
Jefferson, KY
County and State

The interior has been modified for new uses since the time when the building was used as a meatpacking plant, with divisions created for apartments and offices. Interior framing of heavy wooden beams and columns remains intact, although some are obscured by modern (but reversible) wall and ceiling treatments. There are two ground level commercial/retail spaces: the current main retail tenant, an ice cream shop in the western portion of the building, has original hardwood floors with the wood columns and ceiling structure left exposed. The open stairs to the second floor storage area are not original, but the replacement storefront windows are in the original window openings. The original orientation of this space, as well as the cold storage and factory floors, is unknown.



First floor retail tenant, westernmost portion

The front section of the eastern portion office space added non-historic flooring in places but showcased the columns and beams. Smaller offices behind the front section have original hardwood flooring and exposed brick walls, some of which have been painted.



First floor office tenants, easternmost portion

Armour & Co. Branch House
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

Storage areas in the rear of the easternmost section are mostly unrenovated with concrete floors, painted brick walls, exposed ceiling structures, and a remaining iron fire door. There are concrete posts and beams present in part of this rear storage area, with the exterior common bond brick pattern visible on the wall.



Iron fire door in storage area at rear of office; Brick floor in third floor apartment

Some apartment units, mostly in the upper rear of the eastern portion, retained original brick tile floors, which were likely present in smokehouse rooms and/or cooling areas for temperature maintenance and easier cleaning. Most apartment treatments are modern with appliances and fixtures in various stages of updates. Future renovation of the apartments will expose other historical elements and features as discovered where possible, such as columns enclosed in walls.

Finally, as an interesting side note, the name “The Carlisle Building,” which appears on the main façade, was said to have been randomly chosen by developer Frank Metts in the 1980s. Coincidentally, an 1884 atlas of the city, pre-dating the Louisville Public Warehouse building, shows a building or residence to the west across Brook Street as belonging to an “M. E. Carlisle.”

Armour & Co. Branch House
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

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

- 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: AGRICULTURE / COMMERCE

Period of Significance: 1900 - 1970

Significant Dates: _____

Significant Person: n/a

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Armour & Co. Branch House
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph

The former Armour & Co. Branch House (JFCD-258) in Louisville, Kentucky, meets National Register eligibility Criterion A and is significant within the areas of Agriculture and Commerce as the gateway location to national meatpacker Armour & Co.'s southern territory expansion. Armour & Co., one of the "Big Five" meatpackers in the early twentieth century, located the branch house in Louisville near a major railyard and immediately widened their market to construction of branch houses in other cities in Kentucky and the south. At the time of construction, large Chicago-based meatpackers and other giants in the fresh food industry were capitalizing on the success of using refrigerated railcars and regional management to grow their reach. When the Armour & Co. Branch House was built in 1900 – and in 1914, on the cusp of a world war, rebuilding bigger and smarter after a 1910 fire – it signaled the company's continued push to adapt to advances in technology and transportation. The Armour & Co. Branch House played a major role in spurring development of the rest of its east downtown block, with other wholesale and warehouse companies locating on the north side of East Main Street to be near railroad access and other similarly minded enterprises.

Its significance is explored within the historic context "Regional Growth of Armour & Co. into the South in the early 1900s." The period of significance begins in 1900 when Armour & Co. began operations at the corner of E. Main and Brook Streets and ends in 1970, when Armour was acquired by the Greyhound Corp. Operations had moved out of the branch house to another location by 1973.

Historic Context: Regional Growth of Armour & Co. into the South in the early 1900s

Note: For background information on the company's overall history and growth, see the historic context for the Armour & Co. Building (San Francisco, CA) presented in the National Register nomination (NRIS #09001117) listed in November 2009.

Armour & Co. was founded in the late 1860s and by 1880, "Armour was Chicago's leading industrial enterprise and employer. By the end of the 1880s, Armour slaughtered more than 1.5 million animals each year and reached about \$60 million in annual sales. Many of those sales derived from the processing of all the parts of the animal—"everything but the squeal"—making such products as glue, lard, gelatin, and fertilizer."³

Louisville was a major pork packing center along with Cincinnati, Ohio, in the 1850s up unto the Civil War, but Louisville didn't maintain its previous market dominance after that due to various factors:

³ "Armour & Co.," The Encyclopedia of Chicago

Armour & Co. Branch House

Name of Property

Jefferson, KY

County and State

“The gradual expansion of livestock production in the South, the development of the transcontinental railroad network, and the concentration of livestock trade at new western rail centers such as Chicago, Omaha, St. Louis, and Kansas City cut into Louisville’s shipping business and severely eroded its standing as a national livestock market and packing center. The Falls City remained, however, a regional packing leader.... By 1880 Louisville had dropped to sixth place among western porkpacking cities, but the industry remained an important component of the city’s economy, ranking well ahead of both tobacco and distilled spirits in annual sales volume.”⁴

Armour & Co. was one of the “Big Five” meatpackers in the early 1900s dominating the market by as much as 50 to 75 percent, depending on market definition.⁵ The other major companies at that time were Cudahy, Morris, Swift, and Wilson. According to city directories, Cudahy attempted to gain a presence in Louisville in the 1890s but was not successful. Swift had a minor share but had three different locations in the city between 1905 and 1910; they finally established an East Main location one block east of Armour in the early 1930s yet ended their business there sooner than Armour.

Local, family-owned meatpacking companies were often bought out by other local firms, and the change in names and addresses through the city directories over time is evidence of this industry trend. Many of these firms were concentrated in the Butchertown area of east Louisville near the Bourbon Stock Yards, about a mile to the east of the Armour & Co. Branch House. However, these local firms had to compete with the national meatpackers employing techniques of mass production in both slaughtering, transportation, and packaging with an eye on greater regional growth.



In this 1905 USGS map, Armour & Co. branch house is indicated with a star; and the remaining piece of stockyards, the ca. 1914 Bourbon Stock Yards Exchange Building, is indicated with x in circle.

(Clip of 1905 Prospect, KY USGS Topographic map)

⁴ “Meatpacking,” The Encyclopedia of Louisville

⁵ USDA Technical Bulletin: “Beefpacker Concentration” 1999

Armour & Co. Branch House
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

Armour & Co. in Louisville, Kentucky

Armour & Co. had a presence in Louisville as early as 1890, with an article indicating that a branch house existed at Brook and Washington Streets (Washington Street would be considered the north alley or backside of Main Street, running parallel). The exact location of this earlier branch house is not certain, but it's possible Armour was operating nearby out of the rear, lower level of the Louisville Public Warehouse (JFCD 238), which was built for general warehousing in 1884 and is still extant.



Louisville Public Warehouse (with corner clock tower) and the Armour & Co. Branch House

The 1890 article stated that not only does Armour “do a big business in Louisville and Kentucky, but use[s] the house here as a distributing point for the whole South.”⁶ This was reiterated in 1902, a year after the new branch house had opened at the northeast corner of Brook and East Main, that Louisville was “the gateway to all their Southern territory” and the new building was the “handsomest and best equipped branch house operated by the Armours in the United States.”⁷

The early 1900s was a period of rapid regional growth for Armour & Co. Soon after the Louisville location opened, other branch houses were built in Paducah, Henderson, Lexington and Jackson, Tennessee.⁸ Locating branch houses in these southern cities, connected by rail, facilitated the growth of Armour & Co.’s meatpacking interests into the south.

⁶ Courier-Journal. “Raised to \$16,000: Armour & Co. Before the Board of Equalization.” Nov. 29, 1895.

⁷ “Southern Enterprises that Attract Attention.” July 15, 1902.

⁸ “Southern Enterprises that Attract Attention.” July 15, 1902.

Armour & Co. Branch House
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

How Transportation and the Packer's Chain led to the construction of Branch Houses

A large company expanding its nationwide reach by building regional locations in other cities is not a new idea for the time period, nor one specific to Armour & Co. as a meatpacker. It was a concept that gained momentum as railroads dominated the transport of goods across the country. Meatpacking and the fresh produce industries in particular benefited from the use of refrigerated rail cars to get products to new and farther markets on a year-round basis. Philip D. Armour established his own line of private refrigerated rail cars in 1883. Previously, transportation of meat products via rail was mostly done during the colder winter months. With access to extensive railroad lines and private refrigerated rail car technology, Armour & Co. was well-suited to expand from its Midwest market with the construction of company branch houses throughout the region.

Once in these new markets, the products needed a distribution center or "branch house". Raw meat arrives via rail, is smoked and dressed at the branch house, and prepared for the local market. A book written in 1906 by J. O. Armour, son of founder Philip Armour, stated:

*"These branch houses complete the packers' chain that takes the animal from farm or range, converts it into meat, and sets it down at the retail meat-merchant's door."*⁹

It was a shortcut in one division of Armour's perishable product line, saving the company time and money in the transport of goods. Fig. X explains that these branch houses were "located principally in the East and South in cities 500 miles or more from the major packing plant locations."¹⁰



Refrigerated branch houses link the retail stores with the packing plants, aiding in distribution of perishable foods. They are spotted throughout the country, but are located principally in the East and South in cities 500 miles or more from the major packing plant locations.

Photo and caption from an Armour & Co. informational brochure in 1960

⁹ Armour, J.O. The Packers, Private Car Lines and The People

¹⁰ "History of the American Food Industry," Armour Food Source Map, 1960.

Armour & Co. Branch House
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

The “first of all the hundreds of Armour branch houses was the one opened in New York in 1884 for the express purpose of selling canned meat.”¹¹ There are few extant examples of city-located, regional branch houses that were built in the early 1900s like the one in Louisville. These were likely to have been sited on major railroad lines within the city, and not intended to be a major livestock exchange or slaughterhouse at the edge of town. In 1906, J. O. Armour, son of company founder Philip Armour, stated in his book, The Packers, Private Car Lines and The People, that Armour & Co. had over 300 branch houses at that time. However, a 1909 USDA meat inspection report index only had about 42 “official establishment” locations listed. Other than New Orleans, Louisville was the only southeastern city with a branch house inspected. By 1911, 55 Armour locations were on the inspection list, with the newest cities representing the south in Mississippi, Tennessee, and even Florida.¹² It’s possible that not all branch houses were inspected for the report.

A handful of historical photographs of other Armour & Co. branch houses from the era show similar characteristics to the Louisville building, including two- or three-story construction, corner location, set back loading area, and the use of brick and stone with decorative brickwork details around the windows and near the cornice line. These branch houses were often located on intersections and designed to look professional even though the processes taking place inside the building were of an industrial and agricultural processing nature. The architecture was similar but each city’s Armour building was not a cookie-cutter of another. See the following postcard images of Armour & Co. branch houses that resemble the one in Louisville.



Joliet, IL, ca. 1900



Johnstown, PA, ca. 1910s.

¹¹ Armour and His Times. P.52

¹² 1909, 1911 “Meat-Inspection Directory” reports by USDA Bureau of Animal Industry

Armour & Co. Branch House

Name of Property

Jefferson, KY

County and State



Dubuque, IA, unknown construction date



Lincoln, NE, ca. 1911

Once Armour & Co. shifted business operations, many regional branch houses were abandoned, demolished, or converted through adaptive reuse. It is unknown how many of the possibly hundreds of branch houses across the country are still intact. Some extant former Armour & Co. branch houses have been repurposed for other uses recently, including a boutique hotel in Deadwood, South Dakota (ca. 1912), and an apartment complex in Birmingham, Alabama (ca. 1911).



(Fig. 6) The Branch House hotel in Deadwood, SD; (Fig. 7) Armour & Co. loft apartments in Birmingham, AL

Meat Trust Regulations & Rebuilding Due To Fire

The text on the Johnstown, PA and Lincoln, NE branch house postcard images (Fig. X and Fig. Y, respectively) seen in the previous section states: “This is one of the many Armour branch houses placed over the country for the distribution of government inspected meats and pure foods.” The meatpacking industry in the early 1900s was rife with concerns about safety and quality.

The Federal Meat Inspection Act of 1906 [and later, the Wholesome Meat Act of 1967] “were designed and implemented to provide the public with a safe, wholesome meat supply. Today's

Armour & Co. Branch House
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

consumer relies on the Food Safety and Inspection Service inspectors to ensure this.”¹³ Prior to 1906, other acts had been put in place:

*“A meat inspection act passed on March 3, 1891 and a meat inspection amendment of March 2, 1895 strengthened meat inspection laws but did not provide for a national meat inspection system. In the early 1900s, when Theodore Roosevelt was president, there was public outcry over unsanitary conditions and inadequate inspection. This public indignation was increased by Upton Sinclair's novel *The Jungle* (Sinclair, 1906), in which he described the horrendous working conditions and poor sanitation in Chicago slaughterhouses. This led to the enactment on June 30, 1906 of the comprehensive Meat Inspection Act of 1906, which strengthened requirements for sanitary conditions in packing houses and required inspection of meat for interstate commerce.”¹⁴*

As the meatpacking industry was forced to adapt to new regulations and technology, as well as deal with the societal reactions to the trusts, the Louisville branch house faced another major setback. On January 22, 1910, a large fire damaged the branch house building, with an article the next day cleverly declaring “Sausage Fry at the Armour Plant.” It was reported that “grease dripping from meat in the sausage room became ignited” and the “great iron doors on the sausage and meat rooms were burst open and the flames were licking out into the other departments.” The damage was reported at that time to be about \$5,000.

It would be March 1914 before news appeared in the *Courier-Journal* again that Armour would rebuild on the site; it’s unknown if part of the branch house continued to operate in those in-between years. A very brief mention stated that “the present building will be partly demolished, only two of the walls to be used in the construction of the new building.” The building permit was issued in early April 1914.

¹³ “Introduction and Historical Review of Meat Inspection,” abstract to 1990 NIH/NLM Cattle Inspection report

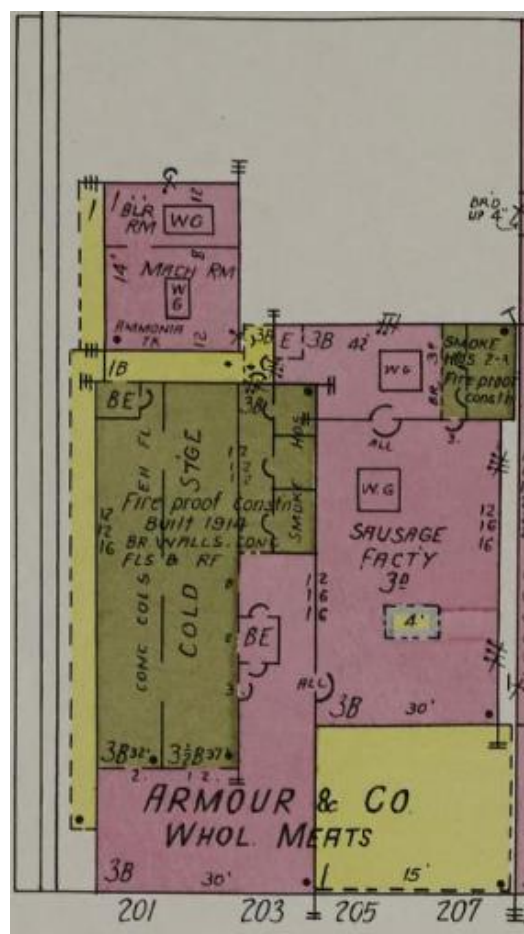
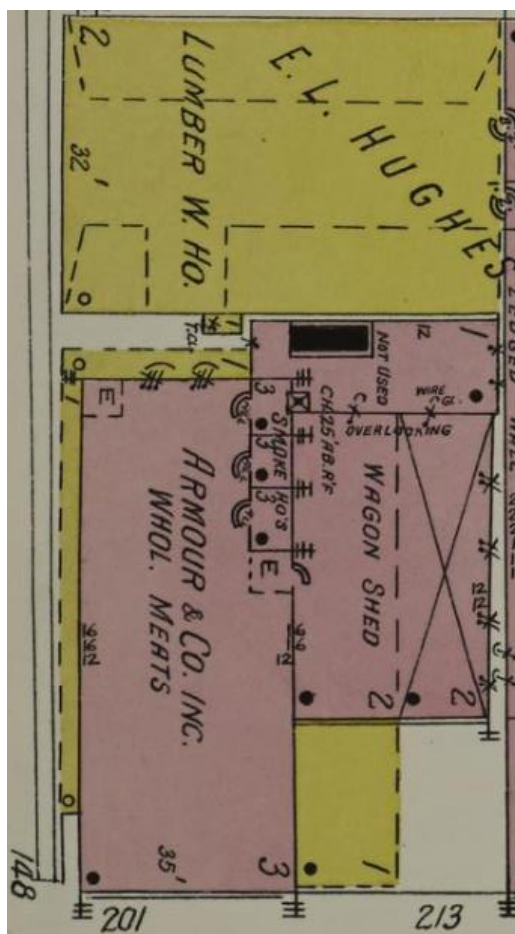
¹⁴ “Introduction and Historical Review of Meat Inspection,” abstract to 1990 NIH/NLM Cattle Inspection report

Armour & Co. Branch House

Name of Property

Jefferson, KY

County and State



(Left) 1905 Sanborn; (Right) 1940 Sanborn. Extant fireproof building was completed in 1914 after a fire in 1910 destroyed the building. Many changes can be noted between the 2 maps, although in general the footprint remained the same.

Comparing the 1905 and 1940 Sanborn maps provides insightful information regarding how the building's design changed after the fire. The footprint remained nearly the same, with many of the wall dimensions similar. The 1940 Sanborn map indicates that the extant fireproof building, with its cold storage section of concrete floors and columns, was built in 1914. The easternmost portion of the building – the 2-story wagon shed in 1905 – was now a 3-story sausage factory, including the rear portion with more, fireproof smoke houses. The shed-roofed truck loading dock was enlarged on the E. Main Street façade, and the extant brick-enclosed elevator in the center of the building was added. With the loss of the E.L. Hughes lumber warehouse to the rear, Armour was able to build a one-story boiler and machinery room as a separate building connected by a covered frame structure. The shed-roofed truck loading dock was also expanded to take better advantage of the growth in truck deliveries.

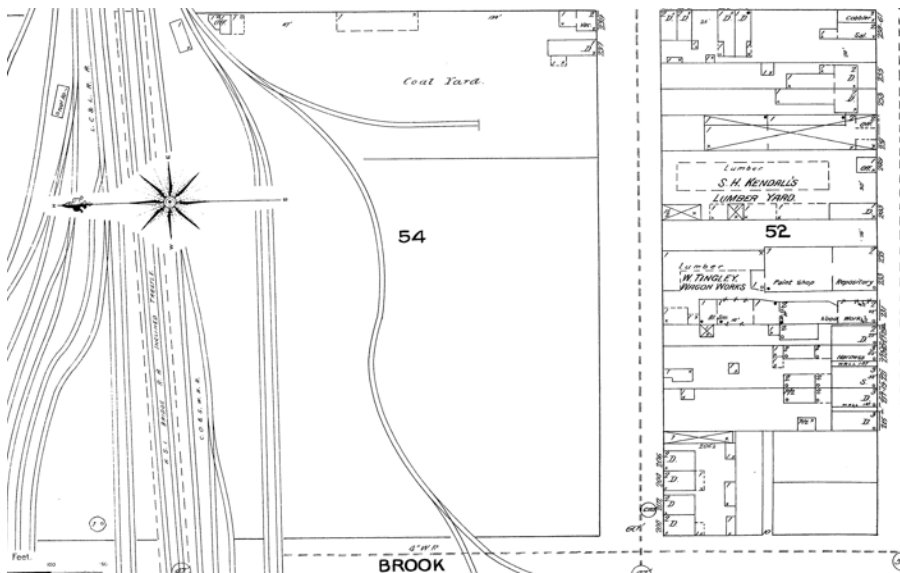
So close on the heels of the meat trust regulations, it's possible Armour & Co. used the rebuild opportunity to incorporate the latest technology and equipment that would improve overall conditions in the Louisville branch house.

Armour & Co. Branch House
Name of Property

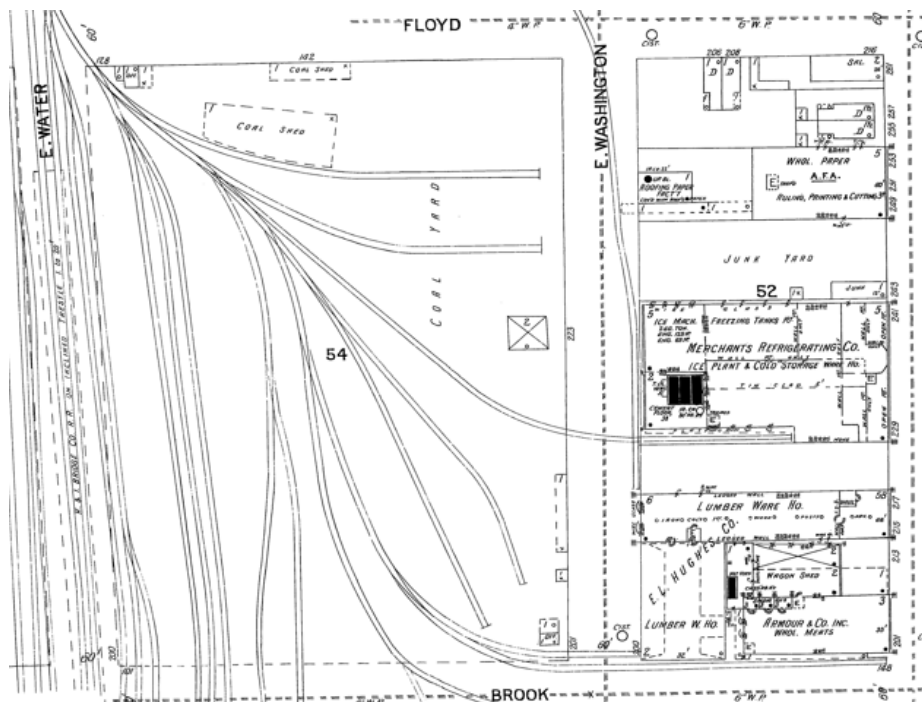
Jefferson, KY
County and State

Historical Site Development & East Main Wholesale/Warehouse District

The 1892 Sanborn fire insurance map shows the block between Brook and Floyd with a lumber yard, a wagon works, and a collection of one- and two-story dwellings. By 1905, most of the small houses were gone and the industrial and warehousing nature of the block was beginning to develop. An extensive railroad and coal yard was located to the north between Washington Street and the Ohio River, with a roundhouse east of Floyd for both the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railway (abbreviated as CCC & StL and also known as the "Big Four Railroad") and the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad (abbreviated C & O).



1892 Sanborn (sheet 101)



1905 Sanborn (sheet 145)

Armour & Co. Branch House

Name of Property

Jefferson, KY

County and State

Due to the railroad access in this area, it is clear why Armour & Co. sought to locate their Louisville branch house where they did. Many other businesses felt the same way. When Armour & Co. built its new branch house in 1900, it spurred development on the block, with other warehousing and wholesaling companies choosing to locate in the area with similar industries and easy access to multiple rail lines, including but not limited to:

- The E.L Hughes Co. lumber warehouse building (ca. 1905, listed in 2016, NRIS 16000498). In 1919, the building was purchased by the firm of Pickrell & Craig and changed use to a grocery distribution warehouse.
- Convenient for meatpacking, the Merchants' Refrigerating Co. ice plant & cold storage warehouse was located 2 parcels to the east. The ice plant would go through several rebuilds over the years, with a tower being constructed in the vacant parcel in 1920.
- The wholesale paper building seen on the 1905 Sanborn would burn down in 1912, but two years later, the Louisville Grocery Co. would construct a wholesale building in its place (ca. 1914, listed in 2003, NRIS 03000258).
- In the 1920s, a coffee wholesale building and freight depot (both still extant) would complete the block at the corner of E. Main and Floyd.

In the nomination for the Louisville Grocery Co. building, this developing east downtown district was discussed in terms of grocery wholesalers:

*"During the last decade of the nineteenth century, Louisville's wholesale grocery distributors started to take interest in the east side of downtown. This was spurred by the development of the "Haymarket" during the 1890s, which was located two blocks to the south in the area of East Jefferson between Brook and Floyd Streets bounded by Market Street." Local truck farmers selling produce directly to city dwellers started the Haymarket in 1891. It was serving the need left by the departure of the last Municipal Market House in 1888. By 1893, the city declared the area around the Haymarket to be a "Public Market Place." The presence of the Haymarket encouraged food-related marketing activities including food wholesalers who began locating in the area... This reflected the growing influence of the Haymarket in the establishment of a secondary wholesale district on the east side of downtown Louisville. The population had reached 204,731 by the beginning of the twentieth century underscoring the importance of the wholesale grocery distributor to serve the retail grocery stores located throughout the city."*¹⁵



Haymarket in 1940 (Royal Photo Co.)

¹⁵ "Louisville Grocery Co. Building," NRIS #03000258

Armour & Co. Branch House
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

Armour leaves East Main

In conclusion for Armour's local presence in Louisville, in 1969 they bought out the large local meatpacking firm of Klarer of Kentucky, Inc., which was located on Mellwood Avenue in the Butchertown area at 1200 Story Avenue. At that time, Armour was the second largest meatpacking firm in the United States, and they planned to make Klarer of Kentucky a regional distribution center for Armour and Klarer products. Klarer's facility had been recently expanded, and the company had bought out other Louisville meatpackers through the 1940s and 1950s. It's likely that the Armour & Co. Branch House on East Main Street was phased out at this time.

Shortly thereafter in 1970, Armour & Co. was taken over as a subsidiary under Greyhound Corp. The Branch House building was no longer in use by 1973. Eventually they merged with Fischer Meats and later sold out to ConAgra in 1983. Armour products are still on the market: processed, refrigerated meats under the "Armour Meats" brand of Smithfield Foods and canned, shelf-stable meat products under "Armour Star", owned by Pinnacle Foods.

Evaluation of the Significance of the Armour & Co. Branch House within the context

The Armour & Co. Branch House is significant for its association with Agriculture and Commerce, particularly as it connects to Louisville's place in the nationwide trends in meatpacking in the early twentieth century. Technological advances in refrigerated rail cars and regional management propelled Armour & Co. to continually adapt to market trends and new health and safety regulations while at the same time constantly seeking to expand their market reach to grow business. Initially the Louisville branch house was one more dot on Armour & Co.'s map of expansion from the Midwest, but Louisville was the gateway location to the southern market and led to more branch houses in more southern cities.

The ca. 1914 branch house building shows how an early twentieth-century, fireproof industrial building, purpose-built to receive goods via train and distribute to the local neighborhoods via truck, demonstrated the high-level organization and planning of the meatpacking company. Armour & Co. branch houses across the country followed a similar set of physical exterior characteristics, including thoughtful site selection and reliable construction materials.

American consumerism changed drastically in the early years of the twentieth century, with less of a focus on personal relationships to more consideration of convenience, value, and accessibility, particularly for food items. At its peak at the end of World War II, "Armour remained one of the nation's largest companies...when annual sales stood at \$1 billion."¹⁶ Armour was the second largest meatpacking firm in the United States at the time of its acquisition by Greyhound Corp. in 1970. The company maintained a strong presence at the corner of East Main and Brook in east downtown Louisville for nearly 80 years, capitalizing on both access to the railroad system as well as the nearby wholesale and warehouse district. The

¹⁶ "Armour & Co.," Encyclopedia of Chicago

Armour & Co. Branch House

Name of Property

Jefferson, KY

County and State

Armour & Co. Branch House stands as a monument to the industrialization of the meatpacking industry in the southeast in the early twentieth century.

Evaluation of the Integrity between the Significance of the Armour & Co. Branch House and its current physical condition

This nomination claims the property meets Criterion A, which emphasizes the bridge between our understanding of the property's significance and the ability of the physical property to support those understandings. The wording of the criterion emphasizes the property's connection to events: the "Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history." Thus, qualifying for Criterion A calls for an analysis of the building's physical cues that help us understand those important events with which it is associated.

Design, Materials & Workmanship: The former Armour & Co. Branch House maintains lasting early twentieth-century materials, featuring a stone foundation, stone banding and sills, and red brick construction. Details on the primary façade utilize brick patterns around the windows and at the cornice line to provide interest and decoration. After a fire in 1910, the extant building employed the use of fireproof materials such as concrete floors and columns when it was rebuilt in 1914. The design of this industrial building for meatpacking and processing was subtle yet professional, allowing it to blend into a downtown block of other wholesale and warehouse buildings. The type and style of the regional branch house was repeated in other cities, with similar materials and details adapted to suit each location. On the exterior, the Louisville branch house still communicates the building's past functional identity today. The addition of apartments after the period of significance allowed for a new use of the building while respecting the historic materials but enclosing some of the interior spaces with demising walls. Brick tiled floors are present in some of the apartment units and structural beams are left exposed in office and retail spaces.

Location & Setting: The branch house is locally significant to the East Main Street warehouse and wholesale area, and it has not been moved from its original location. The building site was chosen by Armour & Co. due to its proximity to the railroads as well as the industrial and warehousing development taking place in that area in the late 1890s and early 1900s. Early Sanborn fire insurance maps show the extensive system of railroads along the Ohio River; while these tracks are no longer extant, much of the area is now dedicated to parking lots for another form of transportation: the automobile. Many of the early twentieth century buildings are still present as neighbors, lending to the authentic setting. The historic streetscape is further activated by current adaptive reuse projects in the area, bringing mixed use to an area formerly used for industrial use only.

Feeling & Association: The Armour & Co. Branch House retains integrity of materials, design, location, and setting; therefore, the property can then be said to support the associations between the property and the broad pattern significance of a nationwide meatpacking and agricultural company seeking to expand its commercial reach into the south. The branch houses were not as noticeable to the public as the large slaughterhouses or even the corner neighborhood butcher's

Armour & Co. Branch House
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

market, but these regional centers were key transition points in the “packer’s chain” and vital for the distribution of goods to the local market. Locating branch houses in regional markets allowed Armour & Co. to continually expand its nationwide reach during its largest period of growth in the early twentieth century.



Armour employees at Peoples’ Market in Louisville, ca. 1950 (Royal Photo Co.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Armour, J. Ogden. The Packers, the Private Car Lines and the People. Philadelphia: Henry Altemus Company, 1906. Digitally scanned book accessed via Internet Archive.

Kramer, Carl E. “Meatpacking” in The Encyclopedia of Louisville, edited by John E. Kleber. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2001. Google books edition.

Leech, Harper and John Charles Carroll. Armour and His Times. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938. Digitally scanned book accessed via Internet Archive.

Walsh, Margaret. The Rise of the Midwestern Meat Packing Industry. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1982. Digitally scanned book accessed via Internet Archive.

Armour & Co. Branch House
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

Caron's Directory of Louisville, accessed online via HeritageQuest Online, various years.

Courier-Journal (Louisville, KY) newspaper articles, accessed online via ProQuest:
1902 July 15: "Southern Enterprises That Attract Attention"

Maps: Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps: 1892, 1905, 1928-1941, 1928-1951.
Google Maps: 2024.

National Park Service. *Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places* forms:

- "Armour & Co. Building (San Francisco, CA)." McNeill, Karen. Listed 2009. NRIS #09001117
- "Louisville Grocery Co. Building." Johnson, Cynthia. Listed 2003. NRIS #03000258.
- "E. L. Hughes Co. Building." Rogers Jr., Carlton Bruce. Listed 2016. NRIS #16000498.

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: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): JFCD-258

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 0.494 acres

Armour & Co. Branch House
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

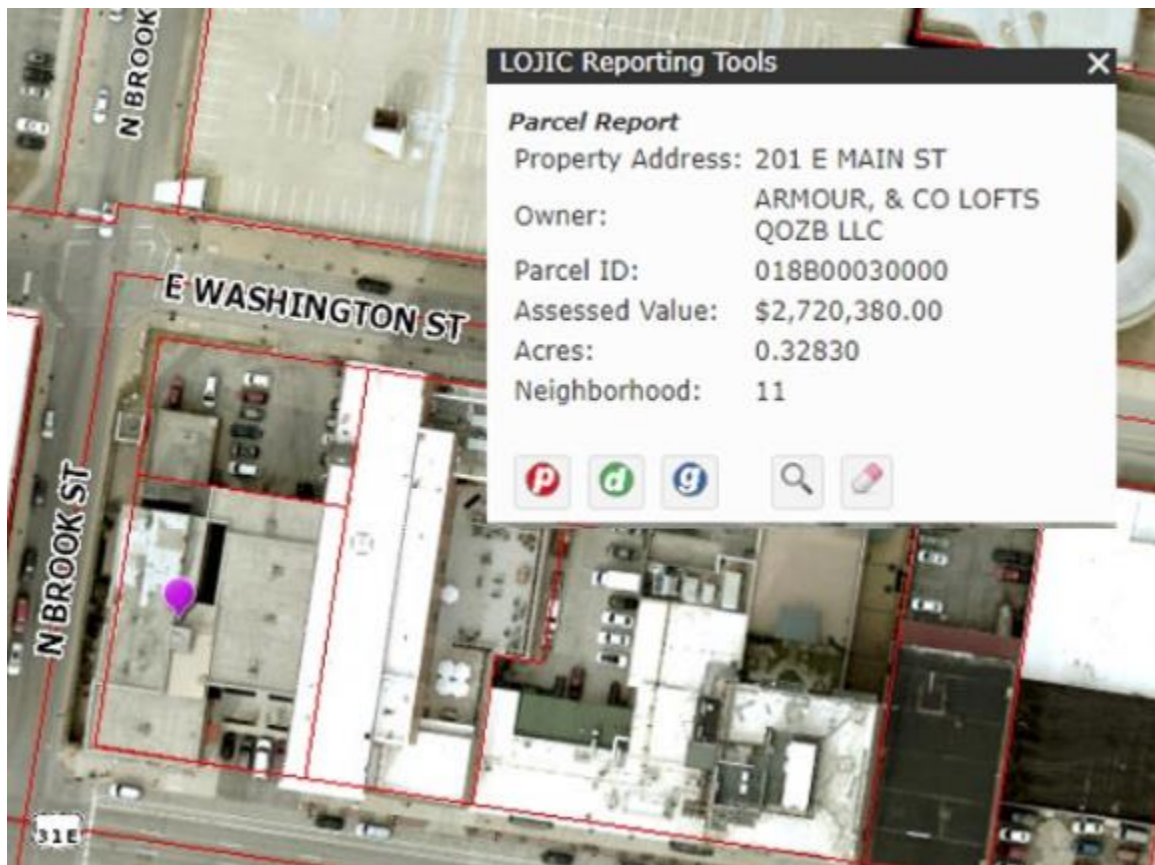
1. Latitude: 38.256490 Longitude: -85.749542

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary includes two (2) adjacent parcels that are owned by the same entity. Parcel ID 018B00030000 includes the former Armour & Co. Branch House building and Parcel ID 018B00080000 includes the former one-story utility building and resident parking lot.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entirety of the parcels with buildings associated with the Armour & Co. Branch House.



Armour & Co. Branch House
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Jessica McCarron, MHP / Historic Project Manager

organization: Weyland Ventures

street & number: 815 W. Market St. #110

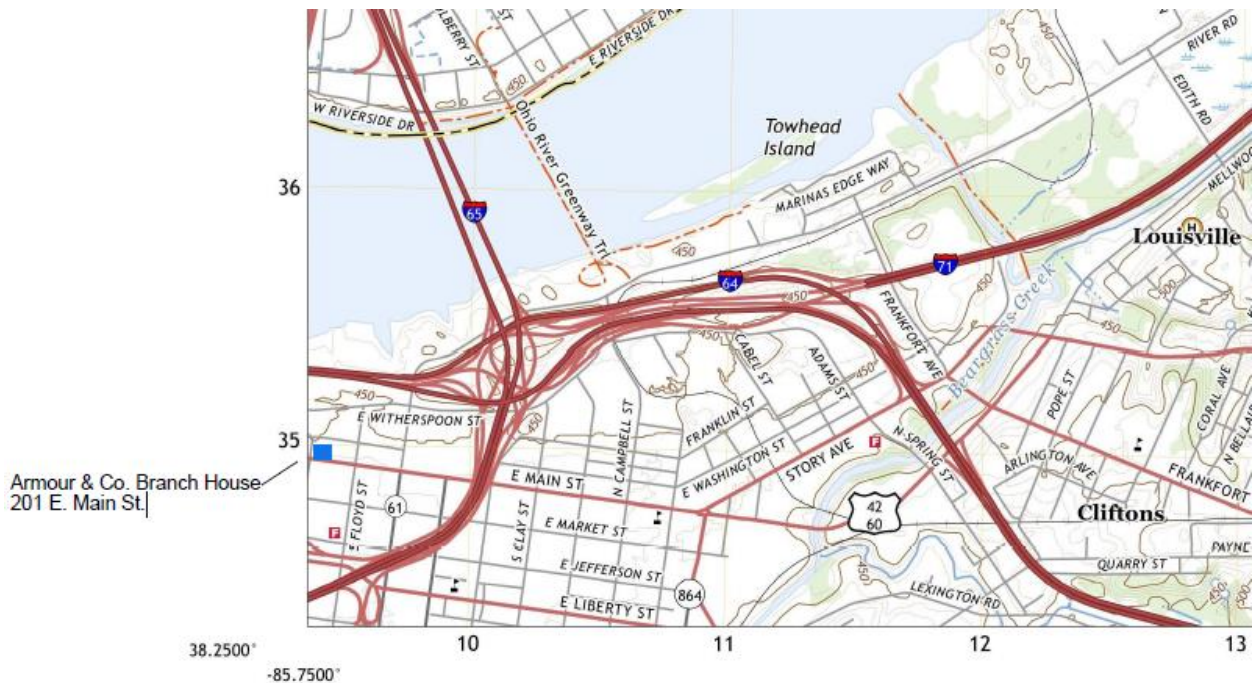
city or town: Louisville state: KY zip code: 40202

e-mail: Jessica@WeylandVentures.com

date: August 2024

Additional Documentation

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location. **(2022) Jeffersonville, IN, KY**



Armour & Co. Branch House
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

Photographs/Photo Log

Name of Property: Armour & Co. Branch House
City or Vicinity: Louisville
County: Jefferson
State: Kentucky
Photographer: Jessica McCarron
Date Photographed: Feb. & Aug. 2024

- Photo 0001: Facing NW across E. Main St., front/south façade of building
- Photo 0002: Facing NE across intersection of E. Main and Brook Streets
- Photo 0003: Facing SE across E. Washington St., rear/north façade of building
- Photo 0004: Facing SW, closer view of rear/north façade and visitor parking
- Photo 0005: Facing SE, former utility building, now a residence
- Photo 0006: Facing SE, view of western façade and basement level from sidewalk
- Photo 0007: Facing NE, view of western façade and basement level from front corner
- Photo 0008: Facing NW, view of intersection of building portions, resident access
- Photo 0009: Facing S from lower level of light well courtyard

