

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name The Baker-Vawter Building

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 915-917 Wyandotte [n/a] not for publication

city or town Kansas City [n/a] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Jackson code 095 zip code 64105

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this
[X] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my
opinion, the property [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered
significant [] nationally [] statewide [X] locally.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell/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

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- [X] 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
See continuation sheet [].

Signature of the Keeper

Date

Elson A. Beall 5.5.00

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

1 0 buildings

0 0 sites

0 0 structures

0 0 objects

1 0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing.

N/A

Number of contributing resources
previously listed in the National
Register.

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

INDUSTRY: manufacturing facility
INDUSTRY: industrial storage

Current Functions

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY MODERN
MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style

Materials

foundation Concrete
walls Concrete
Brick
roof Asphalt
other

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographic 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

ARCHITECTURE

Periods of Significance

1920

Significant Dates

1920

Significant Person(s)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Hoit, Price and Barnes, Architects/
Long Construction Company

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

A. Zone Easting Northing
15 362920 4329520

B. Zone Easting Northing

C. Zone Easting Northing

D. Zone Easting Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cydney E. Millstein
organization Architectural and Historical Research, L.L.C. date December 3, 1999
street & number P.O. Box 22551 telephone 816/363-0567
city or town Kansas City state Missouri zip code 64113-0551

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)

Property Owner

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

name M.J.T. Real Estate, Inc.
street & number 7611 State Line Road, Suite 301 telephone 816/444-0900
city or town Kansas City state Missouri zip code 64114

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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**The Baker-Vawter
Building, Jackson
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SUMMARY

The Baker-Vawter Building, located at 915-917 Wyandotte, Kansas City, Missouri, was designed by the prominent local architectural firm of Hoit, Price and Barnes and built by Long Construction Company in 1920. The six-story, reinforced concrete, two-part vertical block commercial building is rectangular in plan and measures approximately 50 feet by 142 feet, totaling 42,600 square feet. Yellow terra cotta veneers the primary or west façade of the building and divides it into three distinct bays. Emphasis is on the vertical created by the terra-cotta piers. The primary façade is further defined by two distinct zones, where the "lower zone rises two stories and serves as a visual base for the dominant shaft or upper zone." Decorative elements are relegated to the cornice and entrance bays. Secondary façades display a concrete structural grid.

Located in the central business district, the Baker-Vawter Building shares its north wall with a one-and-one-half story building, constructed ca. 1915. Large surface parking lots are located to the south and west, while early twentieth century commercial buildings of the central business district are sited to the east of the Baker-Vawter Building.

With the exception of slight modification to the entrance doors, the primary or west façade has retained all of the elements of the original, historic exterior vocabulary as specified by Hoit, Price and Barnes in their original drawings. Consequently, the Baker-Vawter Building has maintained the majority of its historic features to convey its significance. Its integrity of location, design,

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setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association
has been retained.

ELABORATION

West or Main Façade

The primary façade of the Baker-Vawter building is divided into three bays; the central bay is wider than the two end bays. Each end bay contains a recessed entrance crowned by a wide, molded terra-cotta entablature. The entrance located at the far north bay has been modernized with aluminum-framed plate glass transom, sidelights and double-leaf door. The south entrance bay is original and features a terra-cotta projecting pediment surround, sidelights and wide transom. Supporting the pediment, that displays a depiction of an open book in relief at its center, are voluted consols embellished with acanthus leaves at either end. The original double-leaf door has been replaced with a modern, aluminum-framed unit.

A wide storefront plate glass display window, now covered by a sign, is flanked by the two entrances and rests below a multipaned industrial sash transom with three symmetrically placed awning units.

Fenestration above the first story, separated from the central bay by a metal transom and at the end bays by the terra-cotta entablatures, is multipaned, industrial sash with awning units placed at the center. A wide terra cotta band separates the second story level from the upper stories. Fenestration of the second through sixth stories duplicates that of the second story and is separated at each level by spandrels of terra-cotta (end bays) and metal

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(central bay). The upper zone of the building terminates in a wide cornice with contrasting geometric patterning set in-between depictions of open books in high relief placed at the apex of each pier. Crowning the whole is a shaped parapet, embellished at the center with a cartouche displaying the letters "B-V".

South Façade

The south façade of the Baker-Vawter Building exhibits a stepped parapet wall with tile coping. Fenestration of the third through sixth stories of the central bays repeats that of the primary façade. Additional fenestration includes segmental arched, three-over-three double-hung, sash units with stone sills at the seventh through ninth bays (moving west to east), sixth story. Vents are scattered at the fourth and fifth floors while two located at the first story have been infilled with concrete. Basement openings have also been infilled. A large neon sign with the words "BAKER-VAWTER COMPANY" is placed at the western end of the sixth story.

North Façade

Fenestration of the north façade, typically in pairs, is segmental arched, three-over three and two-over-two, double-hung sash with brick sills. Moving east to west, the first, second, seventh through ninth bays of the top story displays the three-over-three unit. Additional floors that feature this window configuration include the third and seventh bays of the third through sixth stories. Two-over-two units are located at the third, fifth and seventh bays

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of the upper story, and the fifth bay of the third through sixth stories.

East Façade

Located adjacent to an alley, the east façade displays, at the basement level, original openings that have been infilled with concrete block at the south and central bay. The original freight door at the far north bay has been replaced with a metal overhead door. The upper stories of the east façade feature the same metal sash industrial fenestration as exhibited at the primary façade. The unit located at the central bay of the second story has been removed and is currently covered with plywood.

Additional features of the Baker-Vawter Building include a large metal fire escape located at the south bay of the east façade, wrapping to the first two stories of the east bay of the south façade. A stone foundation and flat roof with parapet further characterize the industrial facility.

Interior

The interior of the Baker-Vawter Building has been modified over the years. The first floor features modernized offices while the remainder of the building features exposed octagon-shaped concrete columns, brick and exposed plaster. Ceilings and floors are concrete.

Future Plans

Currently there are proposed plans for the renovation and adaptive re-use of the Baker-Vawter Building. Future plans for the property include renovation of the exterior and modernization of the interior floors to accommodate

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apartments. Duncan Architects, Inc., Kansas City, Missouri
City, is preparing these plans in accordance with *The
Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of
Historic Properties*. Once the proposed plans are completed,
they will be submitted to the Department of Natural
Resources, Jefferson City, Missouri, for review.

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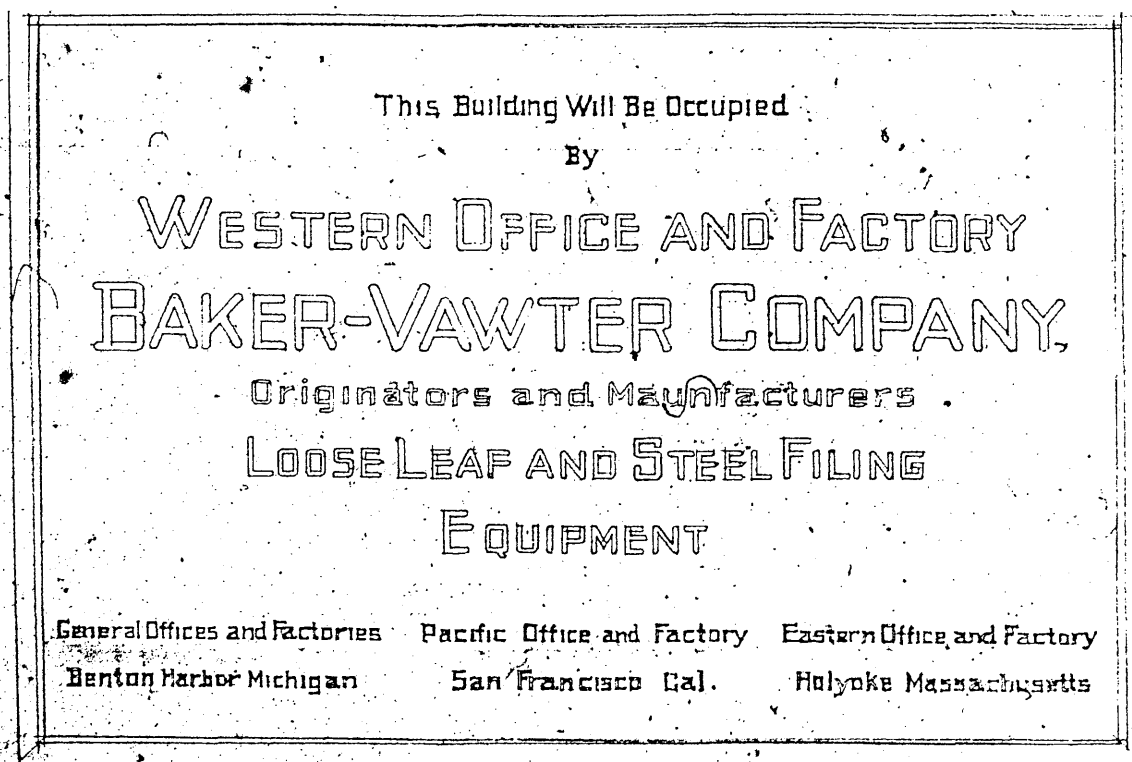
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Wooden Sign for Baker-Vawter Building, Kansas City,
Missouri. Hoit, Price and Barnes, March 5, 1920.



HOIT, PRICE & BARNES	
ARCHITECTS	
607 RELIANCE BLDG. KANSAS CITY, MO.	
DRAWN BY <i>EMK</i>	DATE <i>3-5-20</i>
CHECKED BY	DWG. <i>01</i>
APPROVED BY	NO.

WOODEN SIGN FOR

BAKER-VAWTER BUILDING
KANSAS CITY - MO.

SCALE 3/4" = 1'-0"

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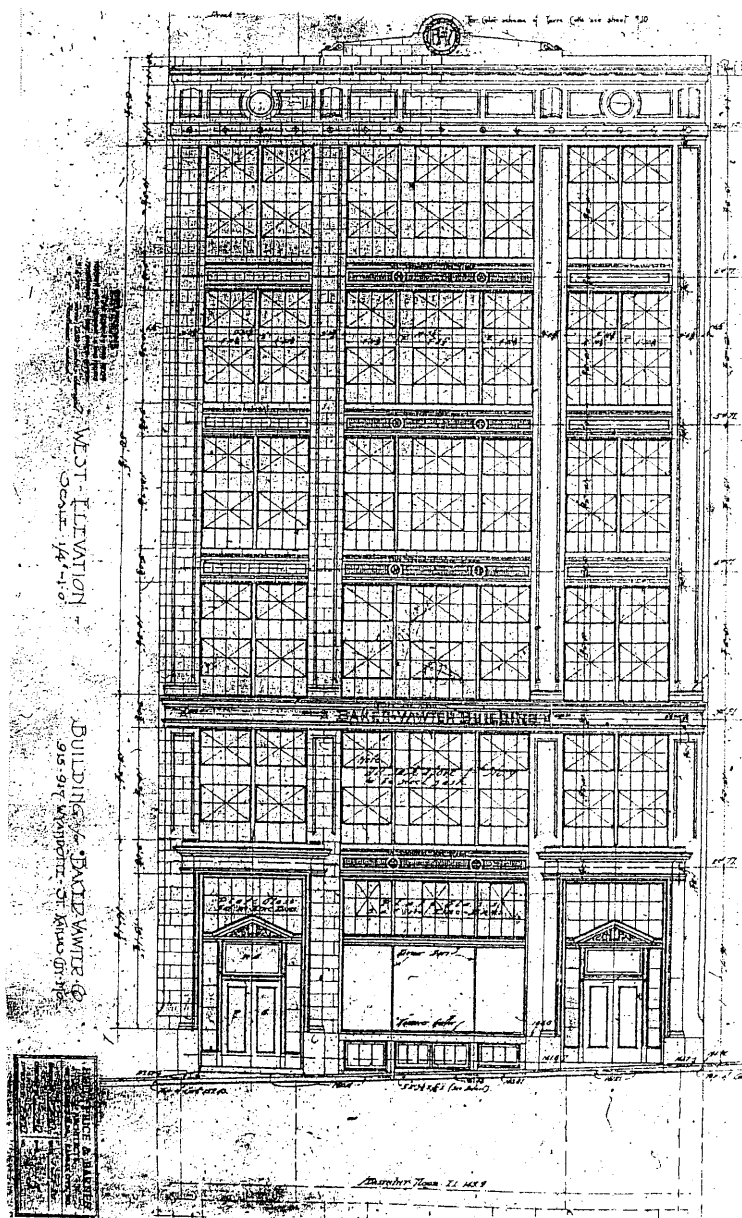
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Baker-Vawter Building, West or Primary Elevation
Hoit, Price and Barnes, January 22, 1920.



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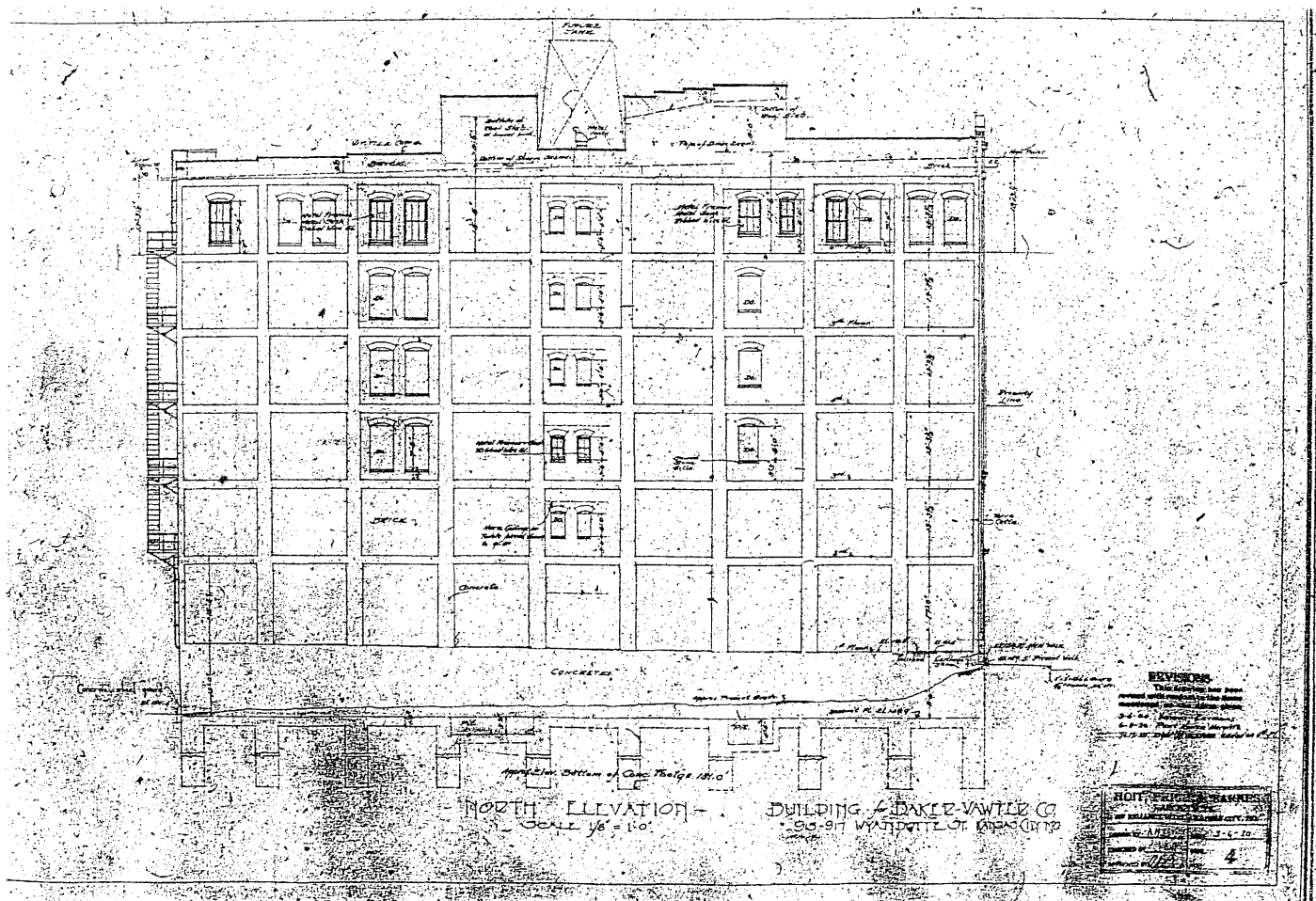
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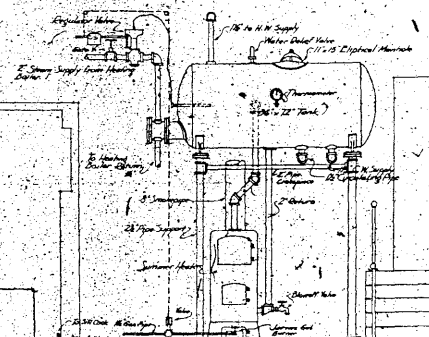
Baker-Vawter Building, North Elevation
Hoit, Price and Barnes, March 6, 1920.



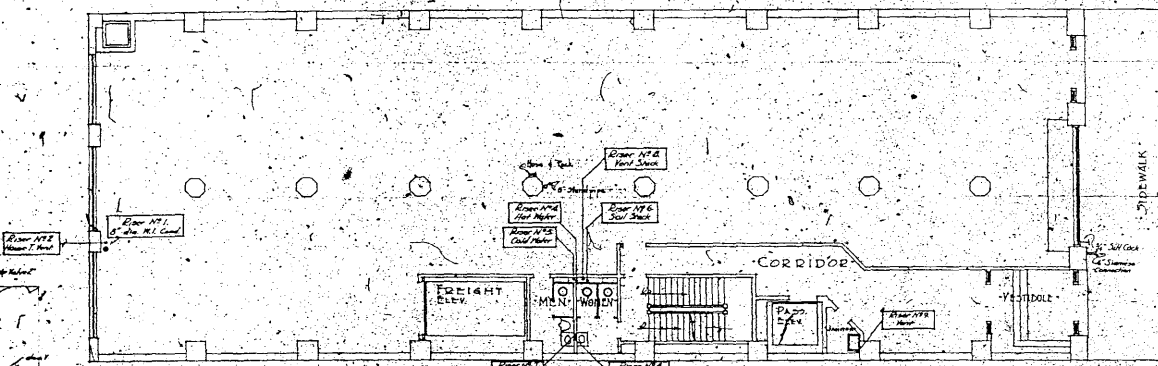
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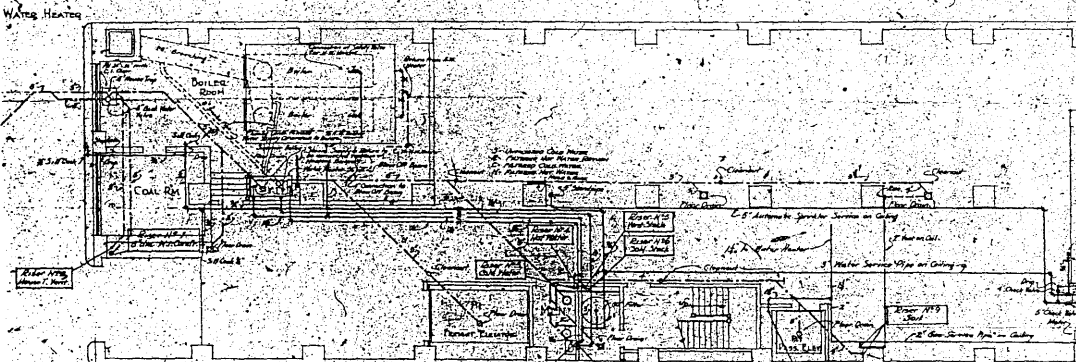
SIDE ELEVATION OF WATER HEATER
Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"



FRONT ELEVATION OF WATER HEATER
Scale 1/2" = 1'-0"



FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

Notes: See R. 14 to be reached by the Contractor so that it will not interfere with the Contractor's work.

REVISIONS

This drawing has been revised with respect to the items mentioned on the notes given.

PLUMBING PLANS SHEET P-1.

BUSINESS BUILDING	HOT PRICE & BARNES ARCHITECTS
BAKER & VAN TATER CO.	604 RELIANCE BLDG. KANSAS CITY, MO.

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SUMMARY

The Baker-Vawter Building, located at 915-917 Wyandotte Street, Kansas City, Missouri, is locally significant and is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the following area:
ARCHITECTURE: Designed in 1920 by the prolific and prominent Kansas City architectural firm of Hoit, Price and Barnes, the Baker-Vawter Building is representative of the firm's finest achievements in industrial design in Kansas City. Hoit, Price and Barnes, who played a "significant role in development of Kansas City's architecture between the World Wars," is best known for their design of tall, monumental commercial buildings.¹ However, the firm's contributions to the area's industrial architecture is exemplified by the Baker-Vawter Building, the earliest documented industrial design by Hoit, Price and Barnes in Kansas City, Missouri, and one of a few actually constructed. The period of significance is 1920, established by the date of the building's construction.

ELABORATION

Shortly after the firm of Hoit, Price and Barnes was established in 1919 (see below), plans for a building at 915-917 Wyandotte were prepared. The original scheme for the site was for a three-story brick garage and warehouse building, commissioned by the National Bank of Commerce,

¹ Melanie Betz. "Kansas City Power and Light Building." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. March 4, 1988, 8-1. See George Ehrlich. *Kansas City, Missouri, An Architectural History*. (Kansas City: Historic Kansas City Foundation, 1979), 94.

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Kansas City, Missouri.² The plans, which called for a restrained, yet classical, symmetrically arranged commercial storefront, was never implemented. Subsequently, in March 1920, the Baker-Vawter Company hired Hoit, Price and Barnes to design a new facility at the Wyandotte location. Baker-Vawter, with offices in Benton Harbor, Michigan; San Francisco; Indianapolis; and Holyoke, Massachusetts, manufactured perpetual ledgers, loose-leaf and manifold order systems and handled steel filing equipment. Established nation-wide, Baker-Vawter was acquired by the Remington-Rand Corporation ca. 1935, who owned and occupied the building at 915-917 Wyandotte for over 15 years. In 1950, Remington-Rand sold the property to the Sosland family of Kansas City, Missouri. The Soslands used the facility to consolidate their interests of the Sosland Envelope Company, Sosland Press, Inc., and the *Southwestern Miller* publication.³ Today, the building stands vacant.

It appears that the Baker-Vawter building is the earliest documented industrial design by the prolific firm. Planned early in their partnership, the Baker-Vawter building can be thought of as a fusion of both commercial and industrial vocabulary. The main facade of the building combines metal-

² Hoit, Price and Barnes. "Garage and Warehouse." Plan No. 84.10, September 9, 1919.

³ In 1922, brothers Samuel, David and Sanders began publishing their own trade paper. Pitched to the grain and milling trade, it was called the *Southwestern Miller*. Now known as *Milling and Baking News*, this weekly is the bible of grain business in the United States. Sam Sosland was the "heart of it, writing and directing its news coverage with an iron hand." Until his death at the age of 94, he was managing editor of the legendary publication, serving also as chairman of Sosland Companies, Inc., the family-owned holding company.

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sash fenestration, typical of industrial buildings of the era, with a richly embellished terra cotta veneer, a rather uncommon exterior consideration for this utilitarian type. The choice, in part, was due to the function of the building where light industrial activity was to take place. However, its placement in the heart of Kansas City's central business district, coupled with the desires of a nation-wide client, more than likely dictated the use of elaborate exterior materials, setting it apart from typical industrial schemes.

Surprisingly, the Baker-Vawter Building, designed by Hoit, Price and Barnes, would be the firm's only single site listing in the National Register. Research suggests that only two works by the firm, included as part of district nominations, have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Continental Hotel, 106 W. 11th Street (listed as part of the Hotels in the Downtown Area of Kansas City, 1983) and the Martha Washington Candy Company Building, 3828-30 Main Street (listed in the Southside Historic District, 1983).

Hoit, Price and Barnes may have referred to their earlier scheme for the proposed garage and warehouse planned in 1919 when considering their design for the Martha Washington Candy Company Building, 3828-30 Main Street (Kansas City).⁴ The plan for this two-story building follows, with few exceptions, the arrangement for the modest design of the garage facility. Both plans are much

⁴ Elle Sheetz, president of the Martha Washington Candy Company, built a profitable national business around his wife's candy making. Candies were produced in Kansas City for Western Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma and Nebraska by over 80 employees.

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more commercial than industrial in their schematization and are marked by recessed storefronts at the first story. The 1922 plan for the two-story brick and stone detailed candy company employs hints of the Colonial Revival in the broken pediments crowing the primary storefront entrances. Today, the building's historical integrity survives intact.

An additional building for Sheetz's booming candy trade was also planned when the former site on Main became inadequate for their plant activities. This two-story brick and stone building totaling 27,000 square feet, somewhat based on the initial 1922 scheme, called for a Colonial style entrance with fanlight and secondary entrances with broken pediment surrounds. Fenestration featured multipaned, industrial sash units. The exterior was also to be embellished with nameplates, monograms and stone carvings at the cornice line. Planned for a site at 3216-22 Gillham Road, the building was never constructed.⁵

From 1922 to 1926 there were several city icehouses that were built in Kansas City based on designs by Hoit, Price and Barnes. Typically of brick and modestly embellished with stone, these two to three-story utilitarian facilities were constructed throughout the city. It appears that none of the icehouses by Hoit, Price and Barnes have survived.⁶

⁵ Although a Kansas City Star article discussed Sheetz's plan for his new factory, it appears that the facility was never constructed. According to a *Sanborn Insurance Map* for Kansas City, the lot was never improved with the factory building and retail candy store. Today, a frame residence occupies the lot.

⁶ Icehouses were located at the following addresses: 224 W. 75th Street, 67th and Myrtle, 39th and Indiana, Brush Creek Pkwy and Oak Street, 85th and Olive, and 21st and Campbell.

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Two other known industrial designs by Hoit, Price and Barnes include the Sewell Paint and Glass Company Building, 1300-02 W. 8th Street (1925) and additions to the Faultless Starch Company factory, 1025 W. 8th Street (1937). The four-story, reinforced concrete Sewell Paint and Glass Company features large expanses of industrial sash fenestration that have been altered, and an exposed concrete structural grid on all facades. The brick addition to the Faultless Starch building follows a more standard, industrial lay out, devoid of any exterior embellishment.

Possibly the last industrial design planned by Hoit, Price and Barnes in Kansas City before the firm dissolved was for the Cook Paint and Varnish Company, 1408 Knox Street, North Kansas City, Missouri. Constructed in 1940 this austere manufacturing and processing building was originally one-story and featured industrial sash fenestration, now infilled with glass block.⁷

Hoit, Price and Barnes

Hoit, Price and Barnes, one of the leading architectural firms in Kansas City's history, can trace its legacy to 1901, when Chicago-born and MIT trained Henry Ford Hoit (1872-1915) moved to Kansas City and joined the firm of Van Brunt and Howe. Prior to his arrival in Kansas City, Hoit worked for the Boston firm of Cabot, Everett & Meade after

⁷ Millstein, Cydney E. "Cook Paint and Varnish Company Building, 1408 Knox, North Kansas City, Missouri." Missouri Historic Property Inventory Form. October 1995. A second story was added ca. 1946-47.

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a short stint at a lithographic business. It was his friend William Cutler, a Kansas City architect employed by Van Brunt and Howe, who convinced Hoit to come to the Midwest. " 'We are now covered up with work here,' explained Cutler in a letter to Hoit, " 'and now we have the chance at another job that is too big to turn down. I speak of one of the main buildings to be put up for the World's Fair in St. Louis. We need a man who can take full charge of the men and design on this job. I've told Mr. Meade that you could handle it. Would you consider the job?' " ⁸

After Cutler sent the letter to Hoit, Frank Howe decided to pay a visit to Boston and interview the young architect at his office.⁹ Subsequently, Hoit took the job in Kansas City.

Following the death of Van Brunt in 1903, Hoit became a partner in the firm, along with William H. Cutler. The firm of Howe, Hoit and Cutler was responsible for the design of the R. A. Long Building, Grand Boulevard and Tenth Street (1906), one of the earliest skyscrapers in Kansas City and the Beaux Arts styled Independence Boulevard Christian Church, 606 Gladstone Boulevard (1905). Two years after the firm was established, Cutler passed away and in 1909, Howe died.¹⁰ The passing of his two partners left Hoit the

⁸ Richard F. Fowler, "Henry F. Hoit,; Turning Point in my career." *The Kansas City Star*. n.d. Files, Landmarks Commission, Kansas City, Missouri. The project Cutler mentioned was the Varied Industries Building, to be constructed in plaster.

⁹ Frank Maynard Howe (1849-1909) formed a partnership with Henry Van Brunt in 1885. One of the firm's most notable designs was the Emery, Bird, Thayer Company Store Building, 11th and Grand Boulevard (1889-90); demolished.

¹⁰ The firm of Howe and Hoit designed St. George's Parish House, 2917 Tracy Avenue, in 1909. The Parish was demolished for the Bruce Watkin's Freeway project.

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principal architect. Working out of an office located at
315 E. 10th Street, Hoit worked on his own for four years.

In 1913, Edwin M. Price (1885-1957), one of Hoit's
draftsmen, became a partner.¹¹ Then in 1919, Alfred E.
Barnes, Jr. (1892-1960), a grandson of the noted Kansas
City architect Asa B. Cross, also joined the firm in
partnership.¹² The name of the firm was then changed to
Hoit, Price and Barnes.

One of the most prolific architectural firms in Kansas
City, Hoit, Price and Barnes "received commissions for a
wide range of projects from skyscrapers to single family
residences."¹³ A partial list of their best known commercial
projects include The Kansas City Athletic Club (1918,
1922), the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company Building
(1919, 1929), the Fidelity Bank and Trust Company Building
(1930), and the Art Deco Kansas City Power and Light
Company Building (1930-31). The firm's residential designs
include the Fred Hoose Home, 1300 West 59th Street, Kansas
City (1922), and the C. W. Titus Home, Tulsa, Oklahoma
(1930). Additionally, in association with Gentry, Voscamp
and Neville, Hoit, Price and Barnes planned for Kansas
City's Municipal Auditorium, an Art Deco municipal building
constructed in 1933-34.

¹¹ Edwin Price also attended MIT. His father, also an architect, designed stations for Kansas City Southern Railroad.

¹² In 1887-1888, Barnes drafted for his grandfather, Asa B. Cross. He began working for Hoit in 1909.

¹³ Betz, "The Power and Light Building National Register of Historic Places Nomination," section number 8, page 1. See George Ehrlich. *Kansas City, Missouri, An Architectural History*, 94.

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Hoit Price and Barnes remained active until Henry Hoit retired in 1941. Shortly after, the firm dissolved. After being in ill health for eight years, Hoit died in 1951 in Kansas City.¹⁴ Price, who had retired to Van Buren, Arkansas, died in 1957 after suffering from a long illness. Barnes, a native of Kansas City, and president of the Kansas City AIA in 1936, died in 1960.

¹⁴ Henry Hoit was elected president of the Kansas City Architectural Club in 1903, and was appointed to a Kansas City commission to revise city building laws during Mayor Beardsley's term in office in 1907. Hoit was also a member of Kansas City's first Art Commission.

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Bibliography

Published Materials:

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Hebron, Nebraska: Robert M. Baldwin Company, 1930.

City Directory. Indianapolis, Indiana. 1900.

Dauner, John T. "Respect for Sosland goes Beyond Grain."
The Kansas City Times. November 13, 1975.

"David Sosland, 74, Civic Leader, Dies." *The Kansas City Times*, July 15, 1968.

"Edwin M. Price is Dead." *The Kansas City Star*. January 11, 1957.

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Verbal Boundary Description

All of LOTS 14, 15 and 16, BLOCK 2, in ASHBURNS ADDITION, a subdivision in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Baker-Vawter Building.

Photographs

(Photographer: Cydney E. Millstein, Kansas City, Missouri. All negatives are the property of Architectural and Historical Research, L.L.C., Kansas City, Missouri.) November 1999, and January 2000.

1. West and south façades; view looking northeast.
2. Detail of west façade; view looking east.
3. Detail of west façade; view looking east.
4. Detail of entry bay, west façade; view looking east.
5. South façade; view looking north.
6. South façade; view looking northwest.
7. Rear or east façade; view looking south, southwest.
8. Detail of east façade; view looking west.
9. North façade; view looking south, southeast.
10. Typical interior (first floor); view looking southwest.



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