

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Gerhart Block

other names/site number n/a

2. Location

street & number 3900-08 Laclede Avenue/1-17 Vandeventer [n/a] not for publication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
[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 [].)

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

14 April 2003
Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [x] 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:

Signature of the Keeper

Date

[] 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 [].

Gerhart Block
 St. Louis (independent city), Missouri

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	0	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	1	0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing.

n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

COMMERCE: business
 COMMERCE: specialty store
 COMMERCE: restaurant
 DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

Current Functions

VACANT
 COMMERCE: restaurant

7. Description

Architectural Classification

French Renaissance

Materials

foundation Stone: limestone
 walls brick
 roof asphalt
 slate
 other cast iron
 terra cotta

Narrative Description

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

Gerhart Block
St. Louis (independent city), Missouri

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

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

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

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

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

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

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

Areas of Significance

Architecture

Periods of Significance

1896

Significant Dates

1896

Significant Person(s)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Beinke, August

Gerhart Realty Co.

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

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, Inc.

Gerhart Block
St. Louis (independent city), Missouri

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References

A. Zone 15 Easting 740070 Northing 4279980 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 Lynn Josse

organization Landmarks Association of St. Louis date October 20, 2002

street & number 917 Locust St., 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)

Property Owner

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

name ACY Realty attn: Don Yatkeman

street & number 9909 Clayton Road LL7 telephone 314-692-8400

city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63124

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

Gerhart Block
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Summary

The Gerhart Block is a two-story commercial building constructed in 1896 at 3900-08 Laclede/1-17 Vandeventer in St. Louis. The corner location makes good use of both street elevations (100 feet across on Laclede and 175 feet on Vandeventer). The footprint of the building is a J-shape, with shops on the first story and apartment units (most now converted to commercial use) at the second story. The major facade materials are buff Roman brick and terra cotta with projecting metal bays at the second story. Rear elevations are red brick with unusual cantilevered wood balconies. The picturesque silhouette and aggressive breaking of planes with different bays, turrets, projections and decorative materials **results in an interpretation of the French Renaissance** or "Chateausque" style. The building has been well maintained and its integrity is very good with intact storefronts and original doors. The setting is now generally commercial, institutional and industrial in character. 3910-12 Laclede Avenue (c. 1887), nominated separately, is located immediately east.

Exterior

The Gerhart Block's footprint is shaped like the letter J, with the longest arm running north-south down Vandeventer Street and a shorter elevation to the west along Laclede. A short hook runs back south parallel to the Vandeventer arm. The primary material on both street elevations is beige Roman brick, but both are enlivened by extensive terra cotta and projecting metal bay windows. The asphalt-shingled roof slopes towards the street but is essentially a false front, concealing a flat roof which covers the rear part of the building. Stepped parapet walls running up the roofline provide fire separation between interior units. Most first-story shop doors are original wood doors with large oval-shaped glass panes surrounded by wooden foliage. Doors into the upstairs residential units are set back behind the round-arched entries and are rectangular with a square window at the upper half (boarded in some cases).

The north elevation is seven bays wide. The building's formal main entrance is in the fourth (center) bay. Cream-colored terra cotta forms a classical pediment supported by four pilasters at the first story. "Gerhart Block" is written in block letters above the door, below the frieze. At either side of the door, small round-arched windows are set between the pilasters. At the second story, a small rectangular window opening lights the stairway. Scrolled terra cotta modillions support the eaves; the roof here is lower than the rest of the building. A small hipped dormer projects above.

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Gerhart Block
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

At the first story, the three bays to the left of the main entrance are wooden storefronts between cast iron columns (from the Globe Iron Company and Foundry in St. Louis). The left bay (the northeast corner of the building) projects slightly above the main second story roofline and is capped by a medium-steep pyramidal roof, giving the appearance of a square turret. The second story windows are arranged in a set of three round-arched double-hung sashes. Three rectangular one-over-ones are to the right of this. All are linked by a stone sill course. To the right of the entrance bay are a storefront bay, a bay with two round-arched entrances (with terra cotta capitals at the springing points and keystones (to stairs which lead to the upstairs units), and another storefront bay. The two storefronts have very shallow, rounded projecting bay windows at the second story supported on a gentle swell of corbelled brick. The entrance bay has a full projecting metal bay at the second story (painted gray) breaking the roofline and capped with a hipped roof.

The 14-bay eastern elevation is somewhat more regular in its organization. The bays are generally similar to the western half of the northern elevation. The southeast corner bay has a storefront at the first story (entered from a cutaway corner entrance behind an iron column at the southeast corner) and a round turret projection with a conical roof at the second story. The second, fifth, eighth, and eleventh bays each have two round-arched entrances at the first story and a strongly projecting hipped-roof metal bay at the second (as at bays five and seven of the north elevation). Between each of these (and between bay 11 and 14, the corner tower bay) are two bays with storefronts at the first story and very shallow corbelled bay windows at the second.

The rear of the building has residential and commercial entries at the first floor; each commercial unit has a separate basement entry below grade. At the second story residential units – the entire eastern side of the building and the west side of the north wing - cantilevered balconies are supported on wood beams. Typical upstairs units have two one-over-one sash windows in segmental arched openings and a single wood-framed, transomed door. Secondary walls are red brick facing the courtyard and the building to the west; the wall along the alley at the far southern end of the building is buff Roman brick as at the facades.

Interior

Most of the building was designed as commercial first floor spaces with residential units overhead. At the northeast corner of the building, however, the second floor has always been

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Gerhart Block
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

office space accessed from a staircase in the center bay of the north elevation. Much of the building is now leased to a single tenant which operates a nightclub at both stories.

Even when a single business occupies more than one storefront, the original configuration is evident in most cases because load-bearing walls are retained, with fairly modest openings cut through for traffic flow. At the south end of the south leg and the west end of the west leg, a few vacant storefronts retain patched metal ceilings.

A few vacant residential units remain at the second story; about half have been converted into commercial space. The residential units have front and rear stairs; the rear stairs empty into hallways connecting into the first floor commercial spaces (allowing a proprietor to move between the upstairs apartment and downstairs business without having to go outside). A hallway along the stairways acts as a spine from which the other rooms are entered. An unusual feature of the second story is a series of light wells with windows from the bathrooms at one side and the dining rooms at the other.

Integrity

Exterior integrity of the Gerhart Block is extremely good; most of the storefronts are intact with unboarded transoms and original doors. The building has been kept in good repair and the only obvious exterior replacement is the roof. The cantilevered rear balconies are an unusual feature and have been maintained in good condition. Interior spaces maintain varying degrees of integrity. Some apartments (all now vacant) retain original floor plans and millwork. Some storefronts retain historic tin ceilings (generally with patches), but on the whole, these versatile spaces came without significant historic finishes. Second story offices at the northeast corner of the building retain the original floorplan, and the staircase up to them still has original marble.

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Gerhart Block
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Summary

The Gerhart Block, located at 3900-3908 Laclede Avenue/1-17 Vandeventer in St. Louis, Missouri, is locally significant under National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The period of significance is 1896, the date of construction. Local architect August Beinke who was known for designing a number of prominent buildings and fine houses, earned the commission from the Gerhart Realty Company to design this substantial corner retail and residential building. The picturesque Vandeventer facade is enlivened by a series of storefront display windows, oval-paned entrances, and round arched openings. A pyramidal roof anchoring the corner, a turret on the south end, as well as stepped gables and hipped roofs over projecting bays animate the roofline. This application of the French Renaissance or "Chateausque" style to a commercial block is skillfully handled, resulting in one of the city's most picturesque neighborhood commercial buildings. Exterior integrity is extremely good.

Elaboration

The Gerhart Block stands on the eastern 100 feet of a parcel at the southwest corner of Laclede and Vandeventer purchased by the Gerhart Realty Company in 1896.¹ On May 4 of that year, Gerhart Realty took out a permit for a \$40,000 building. The real estate company served as contractors; August Beinke was the architect.

Beinke (c. 1846-1901) was a successful local architect who designed a number of attractive commercial buildings and residences. His first listing in the St. Louis directory was in 1873. He practiced with J. L. Wees from 1891-1894; the firm's best-known building was probably the West End Hotel (razed) at Vandeventer and West Belle Place (1891-1892). He died in 1901 after a six-month illness at age 55.²

The Gerhart Realty Company developed and owned a number of similar commercial/residential buildings. Brothers Frank Henry and Charles Beauregard Gerhart were involved in interconnected ventures including the Frick Real Estate Company, the Flandrin Real Estate

¹ A pre-existing building on the western 40 feet of the lot is concurrently nominated on a separate form (3910-3912 Laclede Avenue).

² "August M. Beinke Dead: Prominent Architect Passes away after a Long Illness." *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, August 18, 1901.

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Gerhart Block
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Company (apparently Frank Henry's own company, named after their mother), and the Gerhart Investment Company.

Located at the intersection of two streetcar lines and the border of two neighborhoods, the Gerhart Block attempted to take advantage of the growing westward trend in population growth. Once-fashionable Midtown was losing favor as the growth of transit lines brought more commercial encroachment; by 1896 the Central West End was already established as the new neighborhood of the upper classes. Many of the lots in between these two neighborhoods remained undeveloped in the 1890s. Charles Juehne's West End Plats published in 1899 shows that most of the parcels on this block were still vacant, and the block immediately to the north was as yet undivided.

Early tenants included the proverbial corner drug store, a physician and dentist in the upstairs offices, a paperhanger, restaurant, saloon, grocer, butcher, barber, cigar store, and music teacher (in one of the apartments). High hopes for the neighborhood, however, were not matched by the eventual course of development. Laclède became the northern end of an industrial district which probably originated at the railyards in the Mill Creek Valley to the south. Juehne's 1899 map shows both a distillery and a factory two blocks south of the Gerhart Block. Within two decades, Laclède and Forest Park Boulevard (the next street south) would become home to auto manufacturers and repair shops, pharmaceutical manufacturers, and other industry both light and heavy.³ The corridor of fashionable homes passed farther north along Lindell and other streets heading to the residential Central West End.

Although the presence of a historic commercial building in this institutional and industrial neighborhood is notable, the architecture of the building makes it significant. Beinke's design, combining a restraint in color and materials with picturesque massing and ornament, results in an unusually attractive corner block. The best style category according to several authorities is probably Chateauesque, although the interpretation is free bordering on eclectic. Most often seen in upscale residences, "Chateauesque" refers to architecture which picks up elements of the French Renaissance-era combination of Gothic and classical details on picturesque, castle-like buildings. Steep-pitched roofs, turrets, wall dormers, and basket handle arches are all typical of

³ See National Register documentation for the Luyties Homeopathic Pharmacy Company Building, 4200 Laclède (pending); Sanitol Chemical Company Building at 4264 Laclède (listed 10/21/1985); two Dorris auto factories (listed 2/10/2000 and 5/1/86); and the Ford Motor Car Company Building at 4100 Forest Park (determined eligible 3/6/2002).

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Gerhart Block
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

the style in the 19th and early 20th centuries.⁴ Beinke's interpretation offers the roofs, projections, and massing to identify the building with the style.

Integrity

The architectural significance of the building is very clearly conveyed because so much of the original appearance is intact. The only obvious exterior alterations are a roof replacement (with asphalt shingles) and some minor boarding of bulkheads and a few transom and door windows.

⁴ See Virginia and Lee McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses* or John J.-G. Blumenson's *Identifying American Architecture* for good descriptions of the "Chateausque" style as applied to residential architecture.

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Gerhart Block
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Bibliography

"August M. Beinke Dead: Prominent Architect Passes away after a Long Illness." *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. August 18, 1901.

Beinke, August. architect's file of loose clippings. Landmarks Association, St. Louis.

Blumenson, John J.-G. *Identifying American Architecture*. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1977.

City of St. Louis Building Permits. Office of the Recorder of Deeds. City of St. Louis, Missouri.

City of St. Louis Deed Abstracts. Office of the Assessor. City of St. Louis, Missouri.

Gould's Directory for the City of St. Louis, Gould Publishing Company, various years, 1880-1916.

Juehne, Charles. West End Plats. 1899 (filed in map collection at St. Louis Public Library).

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984.

Toft, Carolyn Hewes, with Lynn Josse. *St. Louis: Landmarks and Historic Districts*. 2nd ed. St. Louis: Landmarks Association of St. Louis, 2002. Contains abstracts and listing dates for the other National Register-listed buildings in the neighborhood which are referenced in the nomination: Luyties Homeopathic Pharmacy Company Building, 4200 Laclède (pending); Sanitol Chemical Company Building at 4264 Laclède (listed 10/21/1985); two Dorris auto factories (listed 2/10/2000 and 5/1/86); and the Ford Motor Car Company Building at 4100 Forest Park (determined eligible 3/6/2002).

Wayman, Norbury. *History of St. Louis Neighborhoods: Central West End*. St. Louis: St. Louis Community Development Agency Neighborhood Histories Project, 1978.

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Gerhart Block
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 1 and 2 of Ellen Davis' Subdivision of Peter Lindell's Second Addition in the City of St. Louis, Missouri. City Block # 3919W. Please see Figure 1, page 9.

Boundary Justification

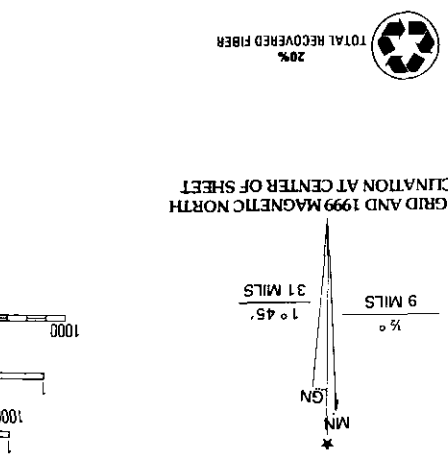
The indicated boundaries are those which have been historically associated with the building.

Produced by the United States Geological Survey

Topography compiled 1952. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1993 and other sources. Photoinspected using imagery dated 1998; no major culture or drainage changes observed. PLS and survey control current as of 1954. Boundaries, other than corporate, verified 1999 North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). Projection and 1000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 15 10 000-foot ticks: Illinois (west zone) and Missouri (east zone) Coordinate Systems of 1983

North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 83 and NAD 27 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software

Contours that conflict with revised planimetry are dashed There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations within the boundaries of



Zone 15
 Easting: 740 070
 Northing: 1279 980

2nd Street Block
 720 000 FEET (IL WEST)
 500-08 Laclede Ave.
 St. Louis (Independent Missouri)

Gerhart Black
St. Louis [Independent City], MO

Lynn Josse

" 2002

Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis

facing SW

1



Gerhart Block
St. Louis [Independent City], MO

Lynn Josse

11/2002

Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis

facing S

2



FOR RENT
692-8400

3906

GERHART
BLOCK

CITY 5
BOOKSTORE

BLUBRIGHT
LIVING FURNITURE

Gerhart Block
St. Louis [Independent City], MO

Lynn Jossx

11/02

Landmarks Association of St. Louis
camera facing NW

#3



Gerhart Block
St Louis [Independent City], MO

Lynn Josse

11/02

Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis
camera facing N

#4



Gerhart Block

St. Louis [Independent City], MO

Lynn Josse

1102

Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis

main staircase, camera facing SE

#5



Gerhart Block

St Louis [Independent City], MO

Lynn Jesse

Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis

11/2002

1st floor

camera facing W

#6

