

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

NRIS Reference Number: 05000373

Date of Listing: May 6, 2005

Property Name: Hiland Telephone Exchange Building

County: Jackson

State: Missouri

none  
Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

for Daniel J. Vivian  
Signature of the Keeper

May 6, 2005  
Date of Action

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Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8: Statement of Significance

Criterion Consideration A is hereby added to reflect the fact that the building is partially used for religious purposes at the present time.

This change was made in consultation with and approved by the National Register staff of the Missouri SHPO.

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The Missouri State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

**National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

NR JAP 8

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Hiland Telephone Exchange Building

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 1020 East 63<sup>rd</sup> Street [ N/A ] not for publication

city or town Kansas City [ N/A ] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Jackson code 095 zip code 64110

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Mark A. Miles 03/22/05  
Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.  
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ].)

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

☐ 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

Hiland Telephone Exchange Building  
Jackson County, MO

Page 2

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**5. Classification**

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**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 buildings                     sites                     structures                     objects1 Total**Name of related multiple property listing.**

N/A

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

N/A

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**6. Function or Use**

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**Historic Function**

INDUSTRY/Communications Facility

**Current Functions**COMMERCE/Business  
RELIGION/Religious Facility

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**7. Description**

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**Architectural Classification**Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American  
Movements/Commercial Style**Materials**Foundation: CONCRETE  
Walls: BRICK  
Roof: ASPHALT  
Other:**Narrative Description**

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

Hiland Telephone Exchange Building  
Jackson County, MO

Page 3

## 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

COMMUNICATIONS

### Periods of Significance

c. 1910 -1933

### Significant Dates

c. 1910  
1924

### Significant Person(s)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Smith, Charles (1924 expansion)

## 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: Kansas City (Missouri) Public Library;  
Kansas City (Missouri) Landmarks Commission

Hiland Telephone Exchange Building  
Jackson County, MO

Page 4

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreage of Property less than 1 acre**UTM References**

A. Zone Easting Northing  
15 363640 4319460

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.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Elizabeth Rosin, Partner and Kristen Ottesen, Architectural Historianorganization Historic Preservation Services, LLC date September 2004street & number 323 West 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 112 telephone 816-221-5133city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64105**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 Blue Hills Community Services Corporationstreet & number 301 East Armour Boulevard, Suite 650 telephone 816-333-7870city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64111

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

**Hiland Telephone Exchange Building  
Jackson County, Missouri**

**SUMMARY DESCRIPTION**

The Hiland Telephone Exchange Building, located at the northwest corner of 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and Troost Avenue in the Blue Hills Neighborhood of Kansas City, Missouri, is a two-story building with a concrete structure, brick veneer, and a flat roof. The rectangular footprint is interrupted by an elevator tower on the north elevation, which projects slightly from the main building wall and rises above the main roof surface, and by a small one-story addition at the east end of the building. The building was constructed in circa 1910 and received a sizable addition in 1924. Classically influenced ornamentation includes matching brick quoins and simple limestone trim, which forms a water table and a belt course. The belt course encircles the building above the windows of the raised basement. Dark brown brick covers the walls below the belt course and red brick covers the walls above the belt course. The grade of the property drops slightly from east to west and from north to south, increasing the visibility of the water table accordingly. Although some cosmetic changes have been made to the building, it retains the majority of the character-defining properties that convey its significance as an early telephone exchange building.

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

**SETTING**

The Hiland Telephone Exchange Building occupies the northwest corner of the busy commercial intersection at 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and Troost Avenue. Concrete sidewalks and curbs extend along the south and east sides of the building. Modern retail buildings that are set back behind surface parking lots occupy the northeast and southeast corners of the intersection. A two-story brick commercial block building with Spanish Revival styling developed by J. C. Nichols in circa 1927 occupies the southwest corner. The remainder of the Hiland Telephone Exchange property is an asphalt parking lot. Shrubs and flowers are planted along the south and east foundation walls.

**EXTERIOR**

Matching red brick quoins mark the building's four corners and divide the south wall into four unequal sections. Moving from west to east, there are two sections that are three bays wide, one section that is one bay wide, and one section that is three bays wide. Fenestration defines the bays, each of which contains a column of single windows. The original symmetrical arrangement of this elevation (three bays, one bay, three bays) was altered with the addition of the three-bay section to the west end of the building in 1924. The east end of the building contains three bays of windows in the first story and a single tripartite window in the second story. The three bays on the west elevation feature two bays of paired windows flanking a bay of single windows. Fenestration on the north elevation has slightly wider spacing and a more irregular arrangement. Roof scuppers are aligned above each bay of windows on the north and south elevations. A simple band of dentiled brick marks the cornice below the metal coping.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

**Hiland Telephone Exchange Building  
Jackson County, Missouri**

All of the window openings have concrete sills and aluminum storm windows. The window openings contain three-over-one double-hung wood sashes, with the exception of the west elevation windows, all of which contain sashes with a two-over-one configuration. Some of the windows on the north elevation have wire glass. Thin wood pilasters separate three banded windows on the north elevation.

The main entrance is roughly centered on the south elevation. The one-story portico features dark brown faceted brick posts and pilasters that support a flat metal roof structure. A metal and glass storefront system with paired doors fills the entrance. Neither the doors nor the portico is historic to the building. It is likely that these features and the interior stairwell associated with them were constructed in 1965.

Attached to the north is a small rectangular block with a flat roof. Building permits indicate that this structure was built as a "temporary" icehouse in 1965. Like the rest of the building, the exterior of the structure is multi-textured. Above the concrete foundation, there is a tall layer of dark brown brick, a concrete belt course, and a shorter layer of red brick below the metal coping.

**INTERIOR**

The main entrance on the south (63<sup>rd</sup> Street) elevation provides access to the building midway between the basement and the first story. Stairs lead to the first and second floors and to the basement. The stairwell and its finishes date to circa 1965 and are non-historic features of the building. Non-historic gypsum board walls have been installed on all three floors and divide the large open spaces into a series of offices and larger meeting rooms. Despite this, the interior of the Hiland Telephone Exchange Building retains much of its original fabric, including the grid of plastered reinforced concrete columns and pilasters that punctuate each floor; the plaster walls ringing the interior perimeter of the building; the wood window trim; and the northeast (front) staircase between the basement and the first floor. Non-historic finishes include suspended acoustical tile ceiling grids (the original plaster ceilings remain intact above these grids); carpet; and an assortment of composition tile on the floors. The non-historic finishes and partition walls are all easily removable.

**INTEGRITY**

The Hiland Telephone Exchange Building generally retains a high degree of integrity as defined by the significant distinctive features that express its original function as a telephone exchange building. In particular, its classically influenced architecture and its setback from Troost Avenue enhanced the compatibility of its commercial function with the surrounding residential neighborhood. The brick and cut stone façade, the rhythmic arrangement of bays, and the multi-light, double-hung wood sash windows are very reminiscent of apartment building design from the same era. To provide customers with uninterrupted telephone service, fireproof construction was critical. The Hiland Telephone Exchange Building represents an early adaptation of reinforced concrete technology to provide this advantage. The asymmetry of the south façade reflects the expansion of the building as telephone technology changed and the customer base for the Hiland Telephone Exchange grew. The interior of the building also retains

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 3

**Hiland Telephone Exchange Building  
Jackson County, Missouri**

significant historic fabric; notably, the original plastered concrete columns and pilasters are all extant, as is the wood window trim and the textured plaster finish on the perimeter walls. The non-historic partition walls on each floor are easily removable. In particular, the second floor, which originally housed the operators' stations, could easily be restored to its original open plan. The most notable change to the building involved relocating the entrance from the east elevation to the south elevation. Accompanying this alteration was the addition of the south stairwell and the removal of partition walls from the first story. The archival record indicates that the J. C. Nichols Company commissioned these changes in circa 1965 from the local architectural firm of Tanner and Linscott, which was led by the prominent Kansas City designer Edward W. Tanner.<sup>1</sup> Also after the period of significance the historic wood cornice and projecting window lintels were removed. It is unclear when these changes occurred, but it is possible that they happened in tandem with the other 1965 alterations.

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<sup>1</sup> Although it does not specifically address the relocation of the entrance and the construction of the new stairwell, a 1965 building permit notes the address of the building as "6242 Troost, Corrected to 1020 East 63<sup>rd</sup> Street," which suggests the concurrent construction of the new entrance.



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 4

**Hiland Telephone Exchange Building  
Jackson County, Missouri**

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Hiland Telephone Exchange Building, 1020 East 63<sup>rd</sup> Street, Kansas City, Missouri is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for the area of COMMUNICATIONS. It was constructed circa 1907 to facilitate the early technology of the telephone system and is one of Kansas City's earliest surviving examples of this property type. Telephone exchange buildings were located in the heart of the area they would serve and were sensitively designed to blend with their surroundings. As a result, the design of the Hiland Telephone Exchange Building is reminiscent of contemporary apartment buildings and blends with the adjacent early twentieth century residential neighborhood. The early twentieth century telephone exchange building is becoming an increasingly rare resource. In 1912, the first year the Hiland Exchange appears in the city directory, it was one of ten exchange buildings in Kansas City, Missouri serving the customers of Kansas City's two telephone companies.<sup>2</sup> Of these, only four, including the Hiland Telephone Exchange Building, remain extant.<sup>3</sup> The Hiland Telephone Exchange Building was also one of the first structures built at the intersection of 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and Troost Avenue and corresponds to the annexation of this area into the city limits of Kansas City. As such, it also reflects the population surge Kansas City experienced in the first decade of the twentieth century and the corresponding increase in suburbanization. The period of significance for the property is circa 1910 - 1933. Beginning with the construction of the building, this range reflects the period during which the resource served a telecommunications function.

**ELABORATION**

**HISTORY OF TELEPHONE SERVICE IN KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**

The telephone arrived in Kansas City, Missouri in 1876 when trainmaster J. L. Barnes installed a line that connected his office in Kansas City's West Bottoms with his home on top of the bluff. In 1879, the first telephone exchange was constructed to serve thirty subscribers who each paid \$60 for local telephone service. Shortly thereafter, the Missouri and Kansas Telephone Company issued its first directory, which was one page long and listed fifty-eight subscribers, most of which were businesses. By 1882, Kansas City boasted 278 local telephone connections and in 1885, phone subscribers were able to place long-distance calls.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In 1912, the Missouri and Kansas Telephone Company had five exchanges in Missouri (Main, East, Grand, South, and Hiland). The Kansas City Home Telephone Company had four Missouri exchanges (Main, East, Linwood, and Warwick). In addition, both companies operated a single exchange in Kansas City, Kansas.

<sup>3</sup> The other extant exchange buildings are Missouri and Kansas Telephone Company's Grand Exchange (1617 Main Street) and the Linwood Exchange (33<sup>rd</sup> Street and Wabash Avenue) and the East Exchange (Peery and Bellefontaine Avenues) of the Kansas City Home Telephone Company.

<sup>4</sup> Sherry Lamb Schirmer and Richard D. McKinzie, *At the River's Bend: An Illustrated History of Kansas City* (Woodland Hills, California: Windsor Publications, Inc. in association with the Jackson County Historical Society, 1982), 94.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 5

**Hiland Telephone Exchange Building  
Jackson County, Missouri**

The Missouri and Kansas Telephone Company was part of the national Bell Telephone system and was often referred to locally as “the Bell.” After the turn of the twentieth century, a national anti-trust ruling against the Bell Telephone Company resulted in the establishment of a second telephone company in Kansas City in 1904 — the Home Telephone Company. Because subscribers to one company could not call subscribers of the other company, most public areas had two sets of public phones, each with their own telephone books. Businesses usually advertised in both companies’ telephone books.<sup>5</sup> Although the Home Telephone Company started with fewer than ten thousand subscribers, by 1915 the company boasted five thousand more customers than its rival, “the Bell.”<sup>6</sup>

During World War I, government officials in Kansas City called for consolidation of the phone system. On an exchange-by-exchange basis, the merger began in 1920 and was completed in 1922 when Kansas City’s two phone companies, along with the phone system in Independence, merged into the independent Kansas City Telephone Company. For the next five years, the company and its stockholders defended the Kansas City Telephone Company against a takeover by the conglomerate Bell Telephone Company; however, in 1927, the Bell Telephone Company succeeded in its efforts.<sup>7</sup>

**THE ROLE OF THE TELEPHONE EXCHANGE BUILDING**

The telephone exchange was literally the hub of this communication network. To place a call, the caller gave an operator the number of the person or business they wished to phone and waited (sometimes several minutes) for the connection to be made. Often the initial attempt reached the wrong number and the caller had to contact the operator to place their call again.<sup>8</sup> Telephone exchange buildings, which housed the operators, were built in each of the general exchange areas. When a request was made to place a call, the operator would manually route the call to the exchange that handled that geographic area.

The exchanges were named for the areas they served. In addition to the Hiland Exchange, by 1910 the Missouri and Kansas Telephone Company had four other exchange “offices” that included the East Office (1111 Prospect Avenue); the Grand Office (1617 Main Street); the Hickory Office (911 Mulberry Street); and the South Office (southeast corner of 29<sup>th</sup> and Walnut Streets).<sup>9</sup> The Kansas City Home Telephone Company operated a series of exchanges in similar locations to serve its business and residential customers. Their network of “sub-stations” included the East substation (southeast corner Peery and Bellefontaine Avenues); the Linwood Substation (northwest corner of 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and Wabash Avenue);

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>6</sup> City of Kansas City, Missouri Landmarks Commission, Administrator’s Report, Home Telephone Company — Linwood Exchange Building, 3244 Wabash, Case No. 0080-D, [n.d.], 2.

<sup>7</sup> Schirmer and McKinzie, 95.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>9</sup> *Kansas City Directory*, Vol. XL (Kansas City, Missouri: Gate City Directory Co., 1910).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

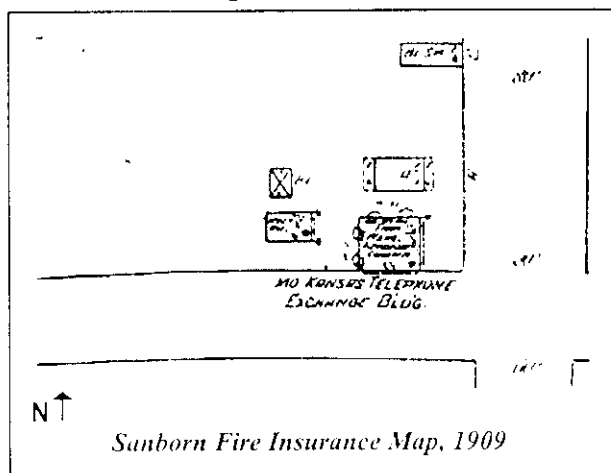
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 6

Hiland Telephone Exchange Building  
Jackson County, Missouri

the South Substation (northwest corner 39<sup>th</sup> Street and Warwick Boulevard); a Downtown Substation (1710 Grand Avenue); and the West Substation (713 Armstrong Avenue, Kansas City, Kansas).<sup>10</sup>

As the base of telephone customers continued to grow, new exchanges were constructed in expanding parts of the city. In 1909, the City of Kansas City annexed a large area of land south and east of the current city limits. The new boundary extended the municipality south to approximately 75<sup>th</sup> Street and east to near the Blue River, more than doubling its size. Largely undeveloped at the time of annexation, new residential neighborhoods and commercial enclaves soon appeared within the expanded city limits.



The Missouri and Kansas Telephone Company seized the opportunity to expand its customer base into the burgeoning neighborhoods when it built the Hiland Telephone Exchange Building. The 1909 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map reveals the limited development in the vicinity of the exchange building at that time. A few years later, the Home Telephone Company followed suit, adding the Jackson Exchange to handle all calls south of 59<sup>th</sup> Street. When the company announced the construction project in 1913, they estimated roughly one thousand telephones in this exchange area.<sup>11</sup> In

1916, the Bell Telephone Company began building the Wabash Exchange at 39<sup>th</sup> Street and Montgall Avenue to serve customers in the growing neighborhoods on Kansas City's east side.<sup>12</sup>

When the Home Telephone Company and the Bell Telephone companies merged in 1920, the two companies had a customer base of approximately 110,000 telephones handled by twenty-five exchanges throughout the city.<sup>13</sup> In addition to upgrading the exchanges to allow Home Telephone Company customers to call Bell Telephone customers and vice versa, many of the exchanges had overlapping districts and it was necessary to reconfigure the service area for each exchange. For example, the Jackson Exchange of the Home Telephone Company and the Hiland Exchange of the Bell Telephone Company served very similar areas in south Kansas City. Following the unification of service, the territory of the Jackson Exchange shifted to include all customers south of Meyer Boulevard, while the Hiland Exchange

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> *Kansas City (MO) Times*, 3 May 1913. Mounted Clippings File, Telephone - Home K.C.. Kansas City, Missouri: Kansas City, Missouri Public Library, Special Collections. Microfilm; "Kansas City Telephone Company Merger Service in Effect, Jackson Exchange First." *Kansas City (MO) Star*, 19 September 1920. Mounted Clippings File. Kansas City, Missouri: Kansas City, Missouri Public Library, Special Collections. Microfilm.

<sup>12</sup> *Kansas City (MO) Star*, 25 June 1916. Mounted Clippings File, Telephone (Company) Bell K.C.. Kansas City, Missouri: Kansas City, Missouri Public Library, Special Collections. Microfilm.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 7

Hiland Telephone Exchange Building  
Jackson County, Missouri

served customers to the north, between Meyer Boulevard and 59<sup>th</sup> Street. Because it was the smallest exchange in either network, the Jackson Exchange was the first to be unified.<sup>14</sup> By the end of October 1920, the Wabash and Leeds<sup>15</sup> exchanges, as well as the Jackson Exchange, offered unified service to approximately 6,000 subscribers. In March 1921, the 2,225 subscribers in the Hiland Exchange received upgraded service, bringing the number of unified exchanges to six.<sup>16</sup> On January 21, 1922, after twenty-nine months, the *Kansas City (MO) Star* announced, "unification of the two telephone systems of Greater Kansas City is now complete."<sup>17</sup> Company officials boasted that the work in Kansas City represented "the largest consolidation of competing telephone systems ever made in the world."

Just months after completing the unification of the two phone systems, the Kansas City Telephone Company began installing dial operation, which allowed patrons to place calls without operator assistance. By 1925, automatic dialing was available throughout the city.<sup>18</sup>



Looking East on 63<sup>rd</sup> Street, Circa 1925

The transition of the telephone system from a manual (operator-assisted) dialing system to an automatic dialing system also included the construction of three new exchange buildings and the substantial expansion of several others. In addition to the enlargement of the Wabash Exchange, seven floors in the Telephone Building at 11<sup>th</sup> and Oak Streets were retrofitted to accommodate dial equipment. New exchange buildings were constructed for the Westport Exchange at 39<sup>th</sup> and Walnut Streets, and for two merged exchanges — the Benton-Chestnut Exchange at 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Cleveland Avenue and the Hiland-Jackson Exchange at 63<sup>rd</sup> and Holmes Streets.

<sup>13</sup> *Kansas City (MO) Journal*, 27 October 1920. Mounted Clippings File, Telephone. Kansas City, Missouri: Kansas City, Missouri Public Library, Special Collections. Microfilm.

<sup>14</sup> "Kansas City Telephone Company Merger Service in Effect, Jackson Exchange First."

<sup>15</sup> Located at 6523 East 37<sup>th</sup> Street, the Leeds Exchange served customers in the far eastern portion of Kansas City near the Blue River.

<sup>16</sup> "Hiland Exchange Linked Up," *Kansas City (MO) Star*, 16 March 1921. Mounted Clippings File. Kansas City, Missouri: Kansas City, Missouri Public Library, Special Collections. Microfilm.

<sup>17</sup> "Unification of the Two Telephone Systems of Greater Kansas City Is Now Complete," *Kansas City (MO) Star*, 21 January 1922. Mounted Clippings File. Kansas City, Missouri: Kansas City, Missouri Public Library, Special Collections. Microfilm.

<sup>18</sup> Schirmer and McKinzie, 94-95.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 8

Hiland Telephone Exchange Building  
Jackson County, Missouri

**ARCHITECTURE OF THE TELEPHONE EXCHANGE BUILDING**

In order to serve their clientele, telephone exchange buildings were built within or on the edge of residential neighborhoods. Because they were seen as a commercial encroachment, an effort was made to design these facilities sensitively so they would mesh with their surroundings. Brick façades with cut stone trim and double-hung windows camouflaged fireproof concrete structures. The announcement for the Wabash Exchange noted its "colonial architecture" and that its placement was "set well back from the street, conforming to its surroundings."<sup>19</sup> Most were designed to accommodate one or more additions as business increased. The Wabash Exchange, for example, could accommodate an additional story to the top or an extension to the side, like the Hiland Telephone Exchange Building received.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, the Wabash Exchange received an addition to its south end in 1932 that tripled the size of the building. The expansion was necessary to house the new automatic switching apparatus for the 17,200 customers in the Wabash service area. Including the additional operating equipment, the building expansion reflected an expenditure of \$1.8 million.<sup>21</sup>

Fireproof construction was especially important to the telephone companies. The announcement for the Wabash Exchange described a "fire-proof vault to accommodate the entering underground telephone cables, a fire-proof gas engine room, which will supply power for charging the storage batteries," as well as hollow steel doors at the stairwells to help contain a fire. Additional spaces in the building included "a storage battery room, which supplies the current operating the exchange . . . the terminal room, containing the distributing frames power board, testing desks, etc. also a part of the operator's quarters." The second floor contained the operating room and additional lounge areas. Facilities for the operators included a large locker room, a lunchroom with a cafeteria and a lounge that "will be furnished in the most attractive manner."<sup>22</sup>



*Tax Assessor Photograph, 1940*

Like the Wabash Exchange, the design of the Hiland Telephone Exchange Building reflects the form, massing, and styling common to early twentieth century apartment buildings in Kansas City. The

<sup>19</sup> *Kansas City (MO) Star*, 25 June 1916. Mounted Clippings File, Telephone (Company) Bell K.C. Kansas City, Missouri: Kansas City, Missouri Public Library, Special Collections. Microfilm.

<sup>20</sup> "'Wabash' Exchange of Bell Co. Will Be Handsome Structure," *Kansas City (MO) Journal*, 2 July 1916. Mounted Clippings File. Kansas City, Missouri: Kansas City, Missouri Public Library, Special Collections. Microfilm.

<sup>21</sup> *Kansas City (MO) Star*, 10 January 1932. Mounted Clippings File, Buildings - Telephone Exchange - 39<sup>th</sup> & Montgall. Kansas City, Missouri: Kansas City, Missouri Public Library, Special Collections. Microfilm.

<sup>22</sup> "'Wabash' Exchange of Bell Co. Will Be Handsome Structure."

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 9

**Hiland Telephone Exchange Building  
Jackson County, Missouri**

building's architect placed the exchange building on its lot with setbacks matching those of the nearby residential development. The dark red brick walls featured quoining at the corners. A white wood cornice with classical details (now missing) encircled the eaves and a stone stringcourse marked the water table. Windows were placed at regular intervals along the side walls and a band of three windows was prominently placed above the main entrance, facing Troost Avenue. The fireproof concrete structure of the Hiland Exchange Building also protected the mechanical equipment that was critical to maintaining a functional telephone exchange system.

**PROPERTY HISTORY**

While the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps indicate that the Hiland Telephone Exchange Building was built in 1907, the water hook-up permit for the building is dated 1910. The exchange is first mentioned in a 1912 city directory as the "Hiland Office" of the Missouri & Kansas Telephone Company (the local Bell Telephone Company subsidiary).<sup>23</sup> The other Bell Company offices operating that year were the East Office (1111 Prospect Avenue); the Grand Office (1617 Main Street); the Hickory Office (911 Mulberry Street); and the South Office (southeast corner of 29<sup>th</sup> and Walnut Streets). Of these buildings, only the Hiland and Grand offices remain extant.

Centered on the east façade, facing Troost Avenue, the main entrance led to a central corridor on the first floor. A staircase was in the northeast front corner of the building next to the entrance. A second stairwell was in the northwest corner of the building. Flanking the corridor were a lounge, lunchroom, women's bathroom, and the battery room. The second floor housed the main "operating room." Rows of columns divided the room into approximate thirds. Rows of workstations with switchboards were arranged around the perimeter of the room, outside the columns and next to the windows. Between the columns were ceiling fans and down the center of the large open room were regularly spaced gas arc lights and heating vents. The basement housed the terminal room and the building's mechanical equipment boiler room, coal room, and gas powered generator.<sup>24</sup>

In 1924, the Kansas City Telephone Company expanded the Hiland Telephone Exchange Building with the construction of a three-bay addition to the west end of the building. Designed by noted Kansas City architect Charles Smith, the addition measured approximately 25 feet by 60 feet and cost \$35,000 to build.

The plans suggest that the primary purpose of the addition was to increase the capacity of the operating room from fourteen stations to twenty-four. The west wall of the original building was substantially removed at the second story and partially removed at the first story. The plans do not indicate intended uses for the new basement and first-floor spaces. The addition also included a new single entrance in the easternmost bay of the south elevation. The entrance featured a glass and wood paneled door topped by a

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<sup>23</sup> *Polk's Kansas City (Jackson County, Missouri) Directory*, Vol. XLII (Kansas City, Missouri: Gate City Directory Co., 1912).

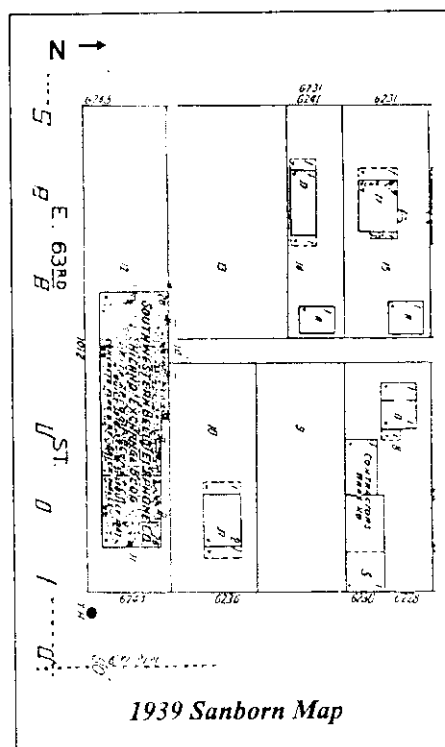
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National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 10

Hiland Telephone Exchange Building  
Jackson County, Missouri

metal canopy that hung by chains from the wall of the building. Because of the change in grade, this doorway provided access into the building at the basement level. Charles Smith designed all of the exterior architectural details – brick color, quoining, stone belt course and water table, rhythm and style of fenestration, and cornice treatment – to match the original exchange building.<sup>25</sup>



In 1933, the Hiland Telephone Exchange was replaced by a new automatic dial telephone exchange. Serving the southern neighborhoods of Kansas City, this new facility merged the Hiland and Jackson exchanges into a single building at 63<sup>rd</sup> and Holmes Streets. This building continues to function as a switching station for the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company.<sup>26</sup>

A variety of owners and tenants occupied the building over the next sixty years. The South Side Moving and Storage Company was the next occupant. Between 1956 and 1963, the Butler Manufacturing Company had a branch office in the building. This local company was a leading producer of grain storage bins and pre-engineered buildings. During this period, some alterations to the building were made using plans by the architect Edward Tanner. These plans have not been located and the extent of the work is not known. Subsequently and through 1981, the

University of Missouri–Kansas City used the building variously for its School of Dentistry, Family Study

<sup>24</sup> Charles A. Smith, Architect, *Addition to the Hiland Exchange, Sixty-third & Troost Avenue, for the Kansas City Telephone Co.*, 1924: (Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri–Kansas City, Microfilm).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. No plans were found for the 1910 building and the architect of the original design is unknown.

<sup>26</sup> *Kansas City (MO) Journal-Post*, 3 May 1933. Mounted Clippings File, Telephone – Dial System – Linwood. Wabash & Elmridge. Kansas City, Missouri: Kansas City, Missouri Public Library, Special Collections, Microfilm. The Jackson Exchange was built in 1913 at 71<sup>st</sup> and Main Streets for the Home Telephone Company.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 11

**Hiland Telephone Exchange Building  
Jackson County, Missouri**

Center School, Department of Psychology, and Department of Continuing Education. The university was responsible for the construction of the “temporary” icehouse on the west end of the building. Local developer J. C. Nichols owned the building during the decade following the end of World War II and again in the early 1980s. In 1984, he donated the property to the current owner, the Blue Hills Community Services Corporation.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Karin Graves, “Missouri and Kansas Telephone Company — Highland Exchange Building,” Missouri Architectural Historic Inventory Form (Kansas City, Missouri: Blue Hills Homes Corporation, 2003); City of Kansas City, Missouri Landmarks Commission, building permit for 6242 Troost, building permit number 99404, 1935; Ibid., building permit for 1012 East 63<sup>rd</sup> Street, building permit number 41612, 1955; Ibid., building permit for 6242 Troost, corrected to 1012 East 63<sup>rd</sup> Street, building permit number 20392, 1965.



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 9 Page 12

**Hiland Telephone Exchange Building  
Jackson County, Missouri**

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 13

**Hiland Telephone Exchange Building**  
**Jackson County, Missouri**

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 14

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Jackson County, Missouri

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 10, Photographic Documentation Page 15

**Hiland Telephone Exchange Building**  
**Jackson County, Missouri**

**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Lots 11 and 12 and the West 114.63 feet of Lot 13, Block 4 and the North and South vacated alley lying between Lots 11 and 12, Lawn Addition, Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

This nomination includes the parcel of land historically associated with the resource.

**PHOTOGRAPH LOG**

**Photographer:** Kristen Ottesen  
Historic Preservation Services, LLC

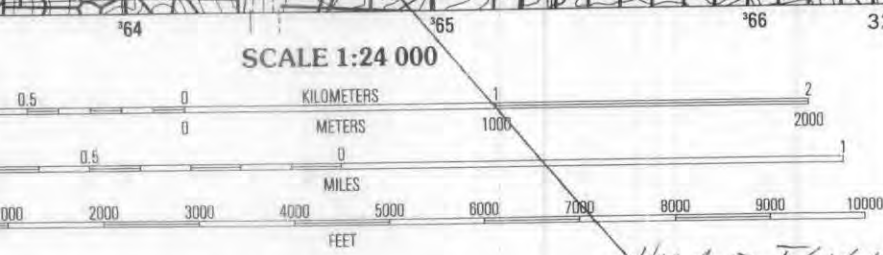
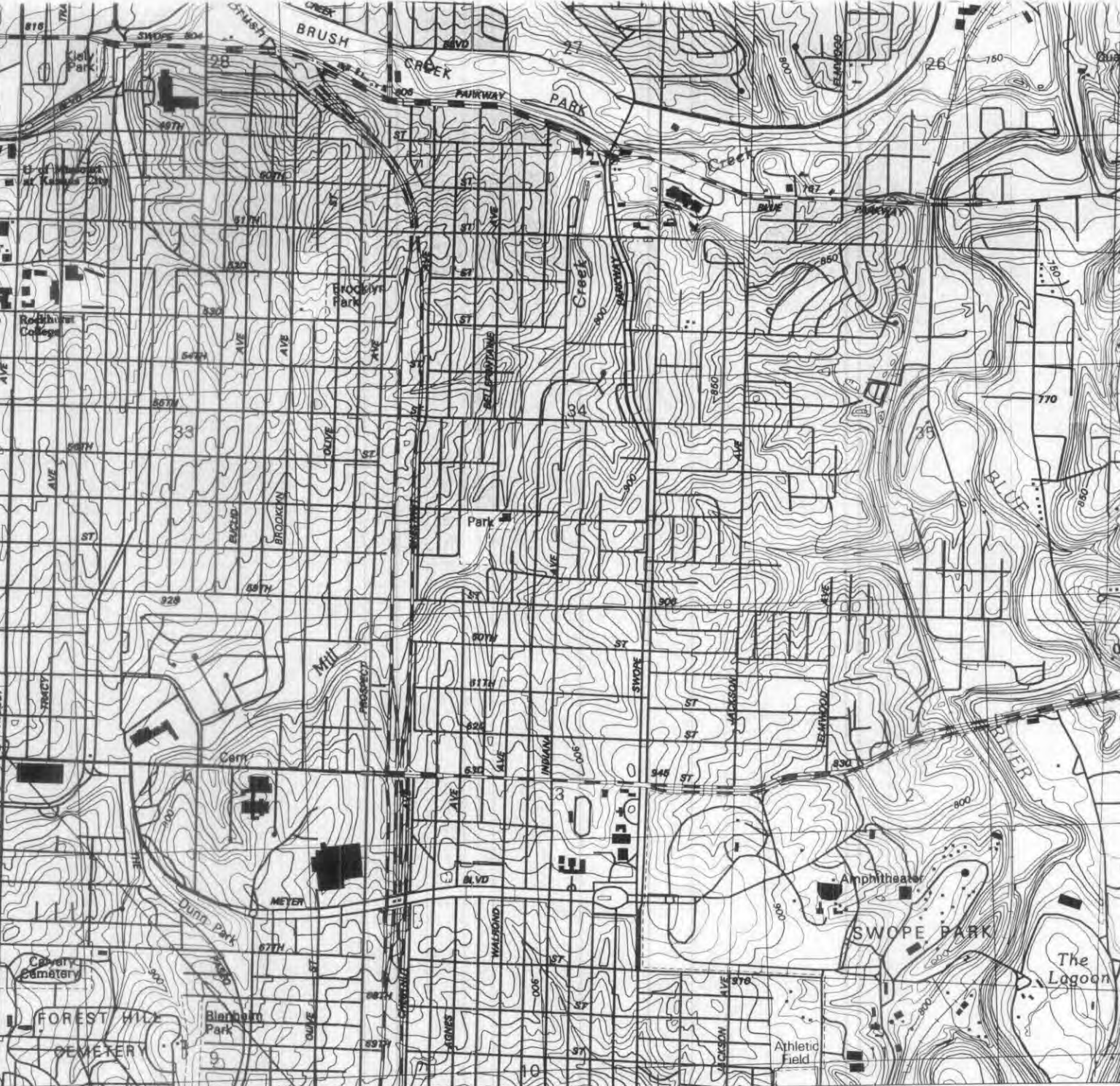
**Date of Photographs:** August 2004

**Location of Negatives:** Blue Hills Community Services Corporation  
301 East Armour Boulevard, Suite 650  
Kansas City, Missouri 64111

**Photograph  
Number**

**Description and Camera View**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | South and west elevations, view looking northeast                      |
| 2 | South and east elevations, view looking northwest                      |
| 3 | East and north elevations, view looking southwest                      |
| 4 | East and south elevations, view looking southeast                      |
| 5 | Window detail  |
| 6 | Original staircase in northeast corner of building, view looking north |
| 7 | Typical interior space, view looking southeast                         |



Primary highway  
hard surface .....  
Secondary highway  
hard surface .....

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
TO CONVERT FROM FEET TO METERS, MULTIPLY BY 0.3048

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225  
DIVISION OF GEOLOGY AND LAND SURVEY  
MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, ROLLA, MISSOURI 65401  
AND KANSAS GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, LAWRENCE, KANSAS 66044  
FOR DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

*HILAND TELEPHONE EXCHANGE BUILDING*  
*KANSAS CITY*  
*JACKSON COUNTY*  
*MISSOURI*

1	2	3	1 Parkville
			2 North Kansas City
			3 Liberty
			4 Shawnee
4		5	5 Independence
			6 Lenexa
			7 Grandview
6	7	8	8 Lees Summit

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLES

UTM:  
*15/3636401*  
*4319460*

















