

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

1. Name of Property

historic name Kite, Robert B. and Vitae A., Apartment Building

other names/site number n/a

2. Location

street & number 769-771 South Avenue [n/a] not for publication

city or town Springfield [n/a] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Greene code 077 zip code 65802

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

12/16/03

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

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Kite, Robert B. and Vitae A., Apartment Building
Greene County, Missouri
Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, MO

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)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		
			_____ sites
			_____ structures
			_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing.
Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, MO

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function	Current Functions
<u>DOMESTIC: Multiple-dwelling</u>	<u>VACANT: Work in Progress</u>
_____	_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification	Materials
<u>OTHER: Porched Square Apartment Building</u>	foundation <u>concrete</u>
	walls <u>brick</u>
	roof <u>asphalt</u>
	other <u>limestone</u>
	<u>wood</u>
	<u>glass</u>

Narrative Description

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

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Greene County, Missouri
Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, MO**

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

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

Periods of Significance

1906 – 1945

Significant Dates

1906

Significant Person(s)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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:

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre

UTM References

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	474020	4117160			
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 Richard Lee Burton, President and Chief Preservation Officer

organization Historic Springfield, Inc date September 10, 2003

street & number P.O. Box 50305 telephone 417-894-8323

city or town Springfield state MO zip code 65805-0305

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 Buzbee Properties, LLC Attn: Dr. Gary L. Buzbee

street & number 1206 West Merlin telephone 417-881-1388

city or town Ozark state MO zip code 65721

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

**Kite, Robert B. and Vitae A., Apartment Building
Greene County, Missouri
Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, MO**

Summary:

The Robert B. and Vitae A. Kite Apartment building is located at 769-771 South Avenue in Springfield, Greene County, on the western tier of the southern corridor into the Public Square. It is a small-scale two-story brick apartment building, with a symmetrical square plan. Constructed c. 1906, the subject property consists of a total of four multiple-dwelling domestic apartment units on the first and second floors in a two-over-two configuration. It is representative of the property type "Downtown Apartment Buildings, 1900-1945" described in the amended Multiple Property Submission "Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri" within the context "Early 20th Century Apartment Buildings, 1900-1945." Specifically, the Kite Apartment Building is a strong example of the Porched Square subtype prominent in Springfield during the first decade of the 20th century and the initial transformation of its downtown to an urban center. It has a flat roof, with a slight pitch sloping east-to-west, and a flat parapet capped with tile coping around its primary east and side north and south elevations. The full width of its façade is covered with a two-story stacked wood porch characteristic of the property subtype. Another, simpler two-story stacked wood porch covers the full-width of the rear west elevation. The property retains its original symmetrical fenestration of arched openings, with its original double-hung wood sash windows almost fully intact. The building rests on a poured concrete foundation and has a full basement, which has been in-filled with two additional apartment units. It is the only resource on the property. Overall, the Kite Apartment Building retains substantial integrity of design, materials, workmanship, association and location. Its exterior remains predominately unchanged from its original construction, although some elements of the wood porches have been inappropriately replaced (e.g., the front porch railings). The original interior floor plan and materials are almost fully intact. The property has been vacant since a fire in 2002 damaged the bathroom and bedroom areas of the two south apartments. A preservation project has been initiated under state and federal historic rehabilitation tax credit programs to address issues of deterioration and interior surface material alterations and to return the property to its historic function as a multiple-dwelling apartment.

Elaboration:

The Kite Apartment Building is within the John A. Stevens Addition to the Original Plat of Springfield recorded in 1851. Prior to 1902, Steven's Addition was largely underdeveloped, with a few single-dwelling domestic properties, a neighborhood grocery store and feed store in the immediate vicinity (*See Figure 1*). By 1910, a greater density of residential properties had been constructed, along with the subject property and another two-story brick multiple-dwelling apartment building adjacent to the south (*See Figure 2*). An earlier single-dwelling property north of the subject property has been demolished and replaced with surface parking. A modern two-story wood frame apartment building is now located on the site of the previous property at the south. The subject property is situated at a thirty-foot setback from the sidewalk at South Avenue, which bounds the property at the east. A driveway runs along the south elevation of the subject property to a gravel parking that fully covers the rear west of its site. It is the only resource on the property. A mix of historic single-dwelling domestic buildings, converted for current rental apartment use, and modern multi-plex apartment buildings are in the surrounding area. Another representative example of the Porched Square property subtype is found diagonally to the southeast at 806 South Avenue (*See Photo 1*). Two other examples are located to the north at 755 and 741 South Avenue.

The subject property is one of the finest extant examples of the Porched Square apartment building which emerged in

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Springfield's downtown during the first decade of the 20th century to meet the increasing demand for multiple-dwelling rental housing (*See Photo 2*). It is 42½ feet wide and 48 feet deep. A two-story stacked wood porch, characteristic of the Porched Square property subtype, covers the primary east elevation and projects 6 feet and 5 inches from the perimeter wall. Another two-story porch spans the rear west elevation, projecting 6 feet and 100 inches. Until the current rehabilitation project currently underway, the property had fallen into a condition of deterioration and surface alterations. However, its original symmetrical fenestration, materials, floor plan and historic function are largely intact.

The primary east elevation of the subject property is constructed of red smooth-surfaced brick in a stretcher course bond with sand-colored mortar (*See Photo 3*). The second-story has four symmetrical bays, including central single-door entrances with transoms flanked by single arched double-hung wood sash windows. These openings retain their original doors, window sashes and framing. The first-story has five bays. The central bay is a projecting vestibule entry with paired single doors with transoms opening into staircases to the second-story apartments (*See Photo 4*). This bay is flanked on either side by single doors with transoms to the first-story apartments. The four main entrance doors retain their original hardware (*See Photo 5*). The first and fifth bays are single arched windows. The façade is fully covered by a flat-roofed two-story stacked wood porch. Each porch level is supported by four simple round wood columns beneath a plain wood entablature (*See Photo 6*). The first-story columns rest on square brick piers with rough-faced limestone caps. The original wood porch railings have been replaced with inappropriate modern treatments. Based on other extant representations of the property subtype in the area, these railings most likely were constructed of narrow square posts. A wide poured concrete staircase with modern wood hand-rails rises to the first-story porch.

The side north and south elevations are constructed of red "soaker" brick in a stretcher bond and are symmetrically fenestrated (*See Photo 7*). Both second and first stories of each elevation have five bays, consisting of single arched windows. The window openings at the fourth bay of the side north elevation and second bay of the side south are shorter than those of the other bays, as they are placed at the interior bathrooms (*See Photo 8*). All but two of the windows retain their original wood sashes and framing, although they have been variously covered with metal storms. The windows at the second and third bays of the first-story on the side south elevation were burned by a fire in 2002 and have been replaced with vinyl double-hung window units (*See discussion of fire below*). The exposed poured concrete foundation has been scored to create the impression of bonded blocks. Two original arched basement windows are found at each of the side elevations. Two other rectangular window openings appear to have been added. An enclosed stairwell to the basement at the side north elevation is a later addition.

The rear west elevation is constructed of red "soaker" brick in a stretcher bond and is symmetrically fenestrated (*See Photo 9*). Both the second and first stories have six bays, consisting of two central single arched door openings with transoms, flanked on either side by two single arched windows. The original doors, windows and framing are intact (*See Photo 10*). A two-story stacked wood porch fully covers the rear north elevation. The two levels of this porch are supported by simple chamfered wood posts. An exposed row of earlier joist recesses, in the brick wall surface between the first and second stories, indicates that the original two-story porch was rebuilt later in the period of significance, most likely at the time modifications to the basement (*See discussion of basement below*). A staircase rising along the west wall at the north side of the elevation to the center of the second-story above was constructed at the time that the

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**Kite, Robert B. and Vitae A., Apartment Building
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original porch was rebuilt. A second south staircase, mirroring the one on the north, has been removed; but, its location is still evident along the exterior wall. The original porch railing has been removed, but a remaining balustrade at the top of the north staircase provides an indication of its original design. A wide poured concrete staircase at the center of the first-story porch is flanked on either side by a narrower poured concrete staircase.

The original interior floor plan is intact and configured to have four apartment units stacked two-over-two. Each apartment consists of a front entry, living room, dining room, single bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and ample closets (*See Figure 3*). The apartments retain an original double opening with transom and French doors, which separated the front living room from the center dining room (*See Photo 11*). A built-in china cabinet is found on the west interior wall of the dining room, indicating the original use of this central space (*See Photo 12*). The apartment interiors retain their original wood 5-panel doors, hardware and wood trim (*See Photos 13 and 14*). The interior wood trim doors throughout the property were originally stain-finished. Although a majority is now painted, areas with the original stain-finish are still extant (*See Photo 15*). Some of the original lath and plaster wall surfaces have been covered with modern wood paneling. Additional investigation is necessary to determine the condition of the plaster walls. The lath and plaster ceilings have been variously covered by modern suspended tile ceilings. The plaster above has been determined to be in poor condition. The original pine wood floors are intact and in good condition, although some areas have been covered by vinyl or carpet (The living and dining rooms have a later overlay of oak flooring). Other extant original elements include the turned-spindle balustrades at the top of the second-story staircases, cast iron claw-foot bath tubs, built-in bathroom linen chests, wood kitchen cabinets and several styles of later period metal forced air heating grates (*See Photos 16-18*).

The bathroom and bedroom of the first- and second-floor south apartments (771 and 771½ South Avenue) were severely damaged by a fire in 2002. The fire started in the first-floor apartment bathroom and rose through the walls. In February 2003, the City of Springfield cited the building under its dangerous building ordinance due to the fire damage. The south windows of the first-floor apartment bathroom and bedroom were replaced with modern vinyl units. Wall and ceiling surfaces in the areas affected are largely unsalvageable. Additional investigation is necessary to determine the extent of damage to the structural wood framing. These conditions, along with other issues of deterioration and surface material alterations, are currently being addressed by the new owner who acquired the property in June 2003 for historic rehabilitation.

The full basement contains two multi-bedroom apartment units. Based on the wood frame and drywall construction of the interior in-fill walls, these were added later and outside of the subject property's period of significance, most likely at the time that the rear west porch was rebuilt. During this construction, the basement level area was expanded west to provide additional functional space under the rear porch. This accounts for the brick and plaster construction of the porch foundation. The basement level apartments are accessed through stairwell entrances below the front east and rear west porches, as well as a shed-roofed covered stairwell on the side north elevation, added during construction of the basement in-fill. The later basement windows on the side north and south elevations also were most likely added at this time (*See discussion of side elevations above*). Architectural evidence in the basement ceiling indicates that interior staircases originally led to the basement from the kitchens of the first-story apartments above, at the location of

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current closets. It is probable that an original rear access from the exterior was located at the original foundation wall of the rear west elevation. The basement has a poured concrete floor, original to the date of construction. Several of the original square wood support posts were moved to accommodate the later interior in-fill wall construction, but the original locations are still evident.

Integrity Statement:

Overall, the Kite Apartment Building retains substantial integrity and fulfills the registration requirements established for "Downtown Apartment Buildings, ca. 1900-1953" in the Multiple Property Submission cover document, "Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri." Its modest-style brick exterior, characteristic two-story stacked wood porches, symmetrical fenestration of original arched double-hung wood sash windows, exterior doors, original two-over two floor plan and interior materials and amenities (e.g., built-in china cabinets) are remarkably intact. The presence of original hardware, interior French and paneled single doors, wood trim, flooring and claw-foot bath tubs reflect the detailing of its construction. The current rehabilitation project will address issues of deterioration and modern interior surface alterations, while appropriately updating it for sustained use in its historic function. The subject property is a strong presentation of its association with the rise of apartment building commercial interests during Springfield's early 20th century urban transformation. As one of the most intact examples of Springfield's simple and small-scale Porched-Square property subtype, it retains a high level of integrity of design, materials, workmanship and location.

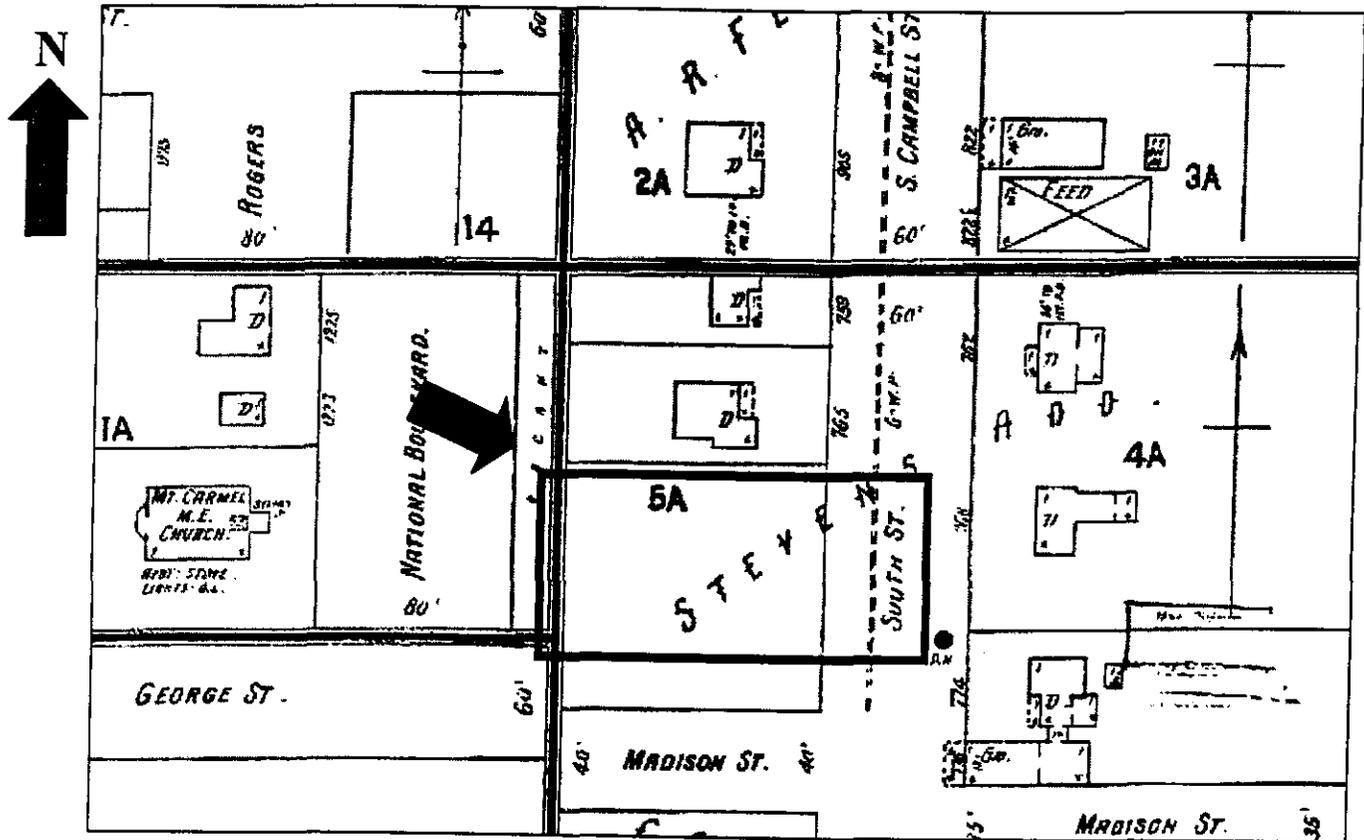
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Figure 1: Historic Map . Future site of subject property noted. Not to scale (Map: Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1902)



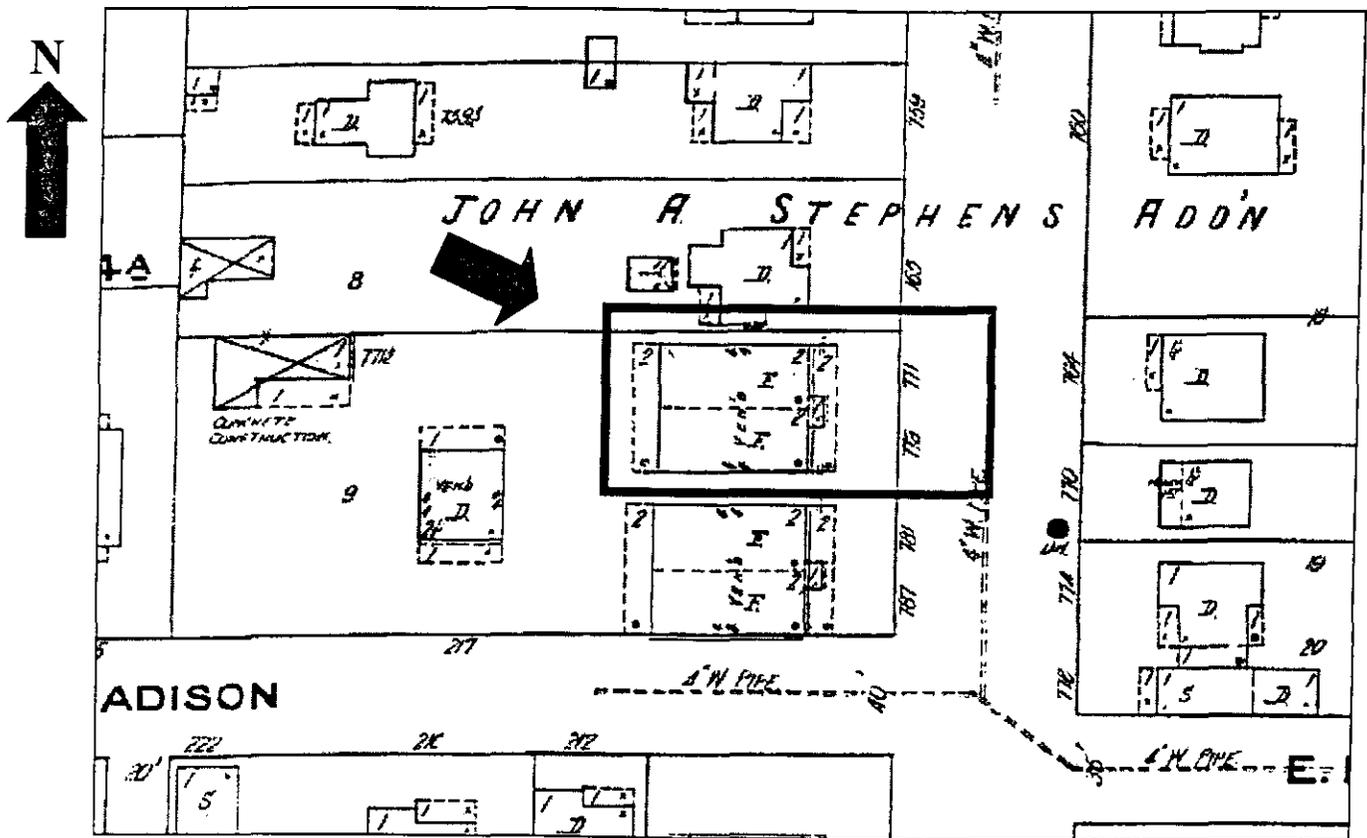
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Figure 2: Historic Map . Site of subject property noted. Note similar property constructed at south, no longer extant. Not to scale (Map: **Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. 1910**)



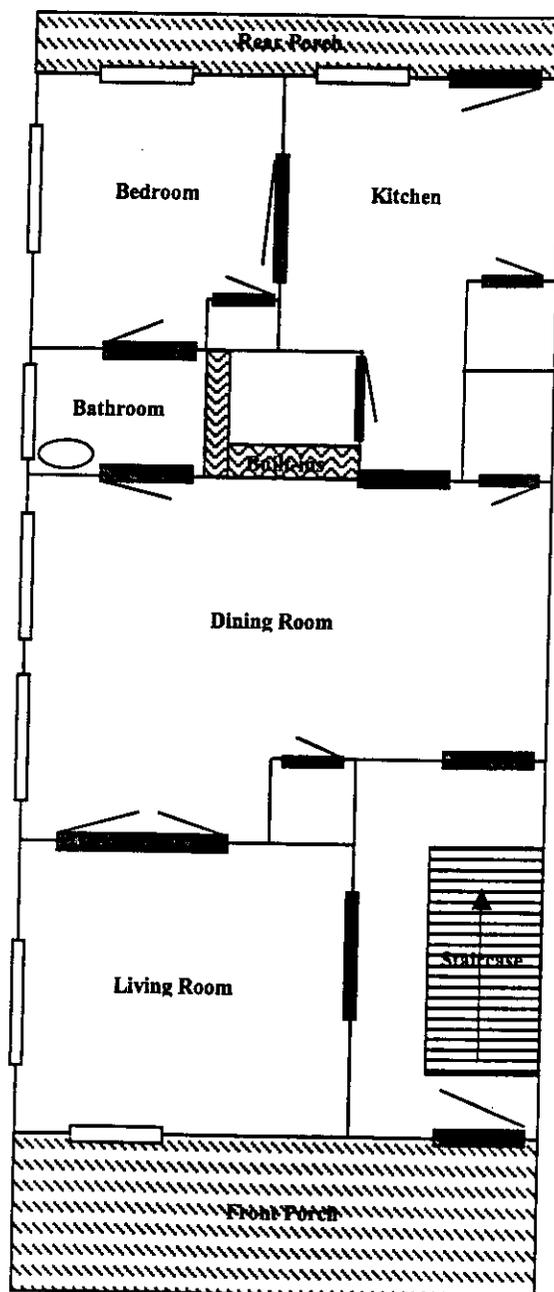
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Figure 3: Apartment Unit Floor Plan. Second-story south apartment (771½ South Avenue). All four apartments within the subject property conformed to this floor plan, with the apartments on the north mirroring those on the south. Not to scale. (2003. Historic Springfield, Inc.)



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Summary:

The Robert B. and Vitae A. Kite Apartment Building at 769-771 South Avenue in Springfield, Greene County, Missouri, is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of COMMERCE and under Criterion C in the area of ARCHITECTURE. Constructed c. 1906 by Robert B. and Vitae A. Kite, it has retained its historic function as a multiple-dwelling domestic apartment building until vacated following a minor fire in 2002. It meets the registration requirements established in the amended Multiple Property Submission cover document, "Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri," and is within the historic context of "Early 20th Century Apartment Buildings, ca. 1900-1945." It is particularly noteworthy as one of the earlier examples in Springfield of the property type "Downtown Apartment Buildings, ca. 1900-1945." In the area of COMMERCE, it is significant for its role in the commercial history of Springfield through its association with the apartment housing industry that emerged as a result of the urban transformation of downtown Springfield's core in the period between 1900 and 1945. The rise of this multiple-dwelling apartment type was a response to the City's increasing demand for working and middle class residential rental accommodations. Its construction, along with several other examples of the same property subtype, in a concentrated area west of the State Normal School (now Southwest Missouri State University) established the same year also suggests an anticipation of new student housing demand. In the area of ARCHITECTURE, it is a representative and substantially intact example of the early Porched Square property subtype. The period of significance is determined as 1906-1945, beginning at the time of construction and ending concurrent with historic context for the property type. The subject property retains substantial integrity of design, materials, workmanship, association and location. It is appropriately named the Kite, Robert B. and Vitae A., Apartment Building, identifying it with the owners of the property at the time of construction and through 1921, a predominance of its historic period.

Background:

In 1848, John Polk Campbell, Springfield's most recognized founding father, increased his already significant land holdings south of the town's original plat through a patent granted by President John K. Polk to him as the assignee of Archibald Morris.¹ The patent consisted of 160 acres identified as the Southwest Quarter of Section 24 in Township 29 of Range 22, in Range 22, West and acquired in 1838 for \$200.00 by Mr. Morris, who subsequently assigned it to Mr. Campbell for unknown considerations.² The main road established through the tract was South Street (now South Avenue), the main southern corridor into Springfield's Public Square.

John A. Stephens, a successful merchant and ambitious real estate investor, acquired 40 acres of Mr. Campbell's 160-acre tract in 1851, with plans for developing it to capitalize on projected housing needs for Springfield's steady population growth.³ In 1855, Mr. Stephens' tract was annexed to the Town of Springfield, which extended its southern boundary to Market Street.⁴ This was the first annexation to the original Springfield plat, founded on the 50 acres of land donated by John Polk Campbell.

John A. Stephens' Addition

John A. Stephens was one of the many pioneers who came to southwest Missouri during the twenty years before the Civil War seeking new business opportunities. Born in Ohio and educated at Princeton College in Kentucky, Mr.

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Stephens arrived in Springfield with his wife Pamela C. Stephens in 1845. He had many talents and vocations, serving as a teacher and accomplished civil engineer. He was an active businessman and operated several mercantile concerns, including drug, hardware and dry goods stores.⁵ Like other successful men of his time, Mr. Stephens also had an interest in land speculation and real estate development. As noted above, he acquired 40 acres of land from John Polk Campbell, which subsequently was annexed into the original Springfield plat. In 1859, he recorded a plat for the planned development called the John A. Stephens' Addition, described below.⁶ Unfortunately, the outbreak of the Civil War significantly impacted growth and development in Springfield. It also brought an end to Mr. Stephens' substantial contributions to this pioneer community.

Plat

John A. Stephens' Addition

This Plat is Section 24, Township 29, Range 22, West, in West 1/2 of Southwest Quarter. The Northeast corner of Lot No. 1 is about one hundred and twenty rods North, and nineteen rods East of Southwest corner of Section 24, Township 29, Range 22, West.

The death of John A. Stephens' in 1861 was a sad, but notable event during the Union capture of Springfield in the early years of the Civil War. In October, General Fremont, camped with his army about 50 miles north of Springfield along the Pomme Terre River, ordered the commander of his Body Guard, Major Charles Zagonyi, to join forces with Major Frank J. White and his battalion of "Prairie Scouts", under General Franz Sigel, to march south and seize the "secessionist-held" town. After a forced march begun at 9:00 pm on October 24th, Union troops entered Springfield in late afternoon of the 25th during significant action against Confederate forces known as "Zagonyi's Charge." Hearing of the arrival of Zagonyi's Body Guard, John A. Stephens' and others stood on top of the Greene County Courthouse in Springfield's Public Square to observe the fight. As the Federal troops entered the town charging the retreating Confederates, Mr. Stephens left the courthouse to return to his nearby home. Running home, he was seen by one of the Body Guard and ordered to halt. Although the soldier repeated the command two or three times, Mr. Stephens continued toward his home and entered through the front gate. The Body Guard fired at Mr. Stephens, killing him instantly in his yard. As described by Holcombe, "The joy of the Union citizens of Springfield at the advent of the Federal troops . . . was greatly marred by the killing of one of their number."⁷

Following his untimely death, Mr. Stephens' land holdings were partitioned as specified in his will probated on July 18th 1862, with Lots 9 and 10 of the John A. Stephen's Addition assigned to Nancy A. McCullah and her husband James W. McCullah. At that time, the two lots were valued at \$400.00.⁸ In 1888, James W. McCullah and Katharine H. McCullah (presumably his second wife) deeded the lots to Dr. Wilhelm Rienhoff and Thomas M. Horne in consideration for \$2,000.00.⁹ Dr. Reinhoff's interest in the property reflects the perceived opportunity for development gain in the John A. Stephen's Addition. A prominent and prosperous German physician, Dr. Reinhoff was also a savvy real estate investor and was subsequently associated in 1906 with the development of Pickwick Place on property near the intersection of South Pickwick Avenue and East Cherry Street, divested when the Springfield Normal School reorganized into the State Normal School and moved into its new facility on South National Avenue.

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Pickwick Place was developed by the Pickwick Land Company, a corporation formed under articles of association recorded on August 20, 1890 by John W. Lisenby, George S. Rathbun, W.H. Park, J.T. White, S.H. Horine, Edward Swaysee Finch and others.¹⁰

Although Springfield as a whole rebounded quickly during the Post-Civil War years, with the arrival of the railroad in 1870 stimulating significant economic growth and demand for new commercial and residential construction. Many new grand homes were constructed on South Street (now South Avenue) south of the downtown commercial area. Several of these high-style properties in the 600 block of South Avenue are still extant, including the Day House at 614 South Avenue (*National Register Listed 11/07/76*), the Fricke-Rebori House (615 South Avenue), the McCullah-Pierce House (625 South Avenue), the Holland-Davis-Bingam House (636 South Avenue) and the Landers House (649 South Avenue). These five properties form a fine grouping of Post-Bellum single-dwelling domestic buildings and have all been designated as Springfield Local Historic Sites. Development of land further south of the 600 block of South Avenue into the John A. Stephens' Addition proceeded at a slower pace and tended to be for the construction of smaller-scale one and one-half story wood frame houses with L-Shaped and T-Shaped Plans. Although the streetscape has changed significantly with later period and modern in-fill construction, a scattering of these earlier homes are still present, albeit in various conditions of alteration, disrepair and deterioration. Dr. Reinhoff, who had secured full ownership of them, still had not developed Lots 9 and 10 of the John A. Stephens' Addition by 1906, when he sold them to Robert B. Kite and his wife Vitae A. Kite.¹¹

Robert B. Kite

Robert B. Kite was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on May 8, 1857. The son of Hiram Kite, a Pennsylvania Quaker, and Rosanna Warren Kite, an English immigrant, Mr. Kite was brought to Marshfield, Missouri, with his family in 1859. He grew up with his seven brothers and sisters in Marshfield, where his father worked as a leather worker, and later on a farm in Strafford, Missouri. Mr. Kite received a minimal education in the Marshfield public school. In 1873, he hired onto the Atlantic & Pacific Railroad (later the Frisco Railroad) as a brakeman and was promoted in 1880 to a freight conductor position. He was promoted again in 1886 to passenger conductor and served in this capacity, while living in Monett, Missouri, until he retired in 1901 after twenty-eight years of service to the railroad.¹²

Upon his retirement, Mr. Kite acquired a farm south of Springfield, consisting of 100 acres of the Crenshaw homestead. During his limited years of farming, he made significant improvements to the land, cultivating all but 10 acres. Notably, he installed the first water system in the area and had hot and cold water in both his house and barn.¹³ In 1906, Mr. Kite and his wife Vitae acquired Lot 9 and the north portion of Lot 10 of the John A. Stephens' Addition from Dr. Wilhelm Reinhoff for \$2,500.00.¹⁴ On the eastern portions of these parcels, he constructed two matching two-story brick apartment buildings at 771-773 South Street (now the subject property at 769-771 South Avenue) and 781-787 South Street (no longer extant). In 1907, the Kites sold their farm and moved into the southern most apartment building at the corner of South Street and West Madison Street. They continued to live here, managing their several real estate properties, until 1921, when they sold the two apartment buildings to Edward B. Garner for \$20,000.00.¹⁵

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Kite Apartment Building

The timing of Mr. Kite's retirement, the increasing demand for multiple-dwelling housing in Springfield burgeoning urban core and construction of the new State Normal School facility several blocks to the east perhaps coincided to inspire the construction of his two matching "four-apartment flats."¹⁶ If so, the inspiration was not his alone. Several other two-story brick apartment buildings of the same scale and general design were constructed in the surrounding area and are still extant, including one diagonally across the street from the subject property to the southeast at 806 South Avenue and two directly to the north at 755 and 741 South Avenue. Clearly, the entrepreneurial real estate investors recognized the emerging demand for multiple-dwelling housing resulting from the growth and urbanization of Springfield's downtown core, which emerged in the first decade of the 20th century as its important apartment building commercial industry.

(For information on the development of Springfield's apartment building industry, reference the historic context "Early 20th Century Apartment Buildings, 1900-1945" in the amended Multiple Property Submission, "Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri.")

Robert B. and Vitae A. Kite sold their "four-apartment flats" in 1921, as the construction of multiple-dwelling apartment buildings began its period of larger-scale and higher-style design. With the coming of the Great Depression and subsequent World War II economy, apartment building construction in downtown Springfield came to a halt and only resumed for a few years following the war. During this same era, ownership of the subject property changed numerous times, indicative of the financial conditions of the time (*See Chronology below*). Although it continued to operate in its original historic function, the Kite Apartment Building continued in its downward spiral of owner turn-over and slow deterioration. By 2002, fifty-two years after the end of the period of Downtown Apartment Building construction in 1945, the subject property had fallen into a condition of severe neglect. Because of a fire in February that year in the southwest corner of its first floor, the City of Springfield cited it in violation of its newly enacted dangerous building ordinance. In June 2003, Buzbee Properties, LLC, acquired it for historic rehabilitation and sustained use in its historic function. Despite the numerous changes of ownership in later years, conditions of deterioration and recent fire damage, the Kite Apartment Building continues to reflect its local significance as a strong representation of downtown Springfield's period of urbanization and its association with the city's commercial history.

Significance:

As outlined below, the subject property meets the registration requirements for individual site listing under Criterion A in the area of COMMERCE and Criterion C in the area of ARCHITECTURE, as established for the property type "Downtown Apartment Buildings, ca. 1900-1945" in the amended Multiple Property Submission "Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, MO."

Criterion A: COMMERCE

The Kite Apartment Building is historically significant for its commercial association with the rise of the multiple-dwelling apartment building industry during downtown Springfield's urban transformation in the early 20th century.

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**Kite, Robert B. and Vitae A., Apartment Building
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Specifically:

To be considered eligible under Criterion A in the area of COMMERCE, a property must have served as a multiple-dwelling apartment building for a predominance of its history and must continue to reflect this historic function. This use would be most evident in extant exterior design and the configuration of interior hallway and multiple-room floor plans.

Since its construction in 1906, the subject property has served as a multiple-dwelling apartment, retaining this historic function through its present rehabilitation. Its original exterior design and materials and interior two-over-two square plan are substantially intact and continue to reflect its character and associations as a historic downtown apartment building. As a strong example of the Porched Square property subtype constructed during the first period of Springfield's downtown apartment development, the Kite Apartment Building is distinguished from other historic downtown apartment buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Like the Kite Apartment Building, the property at 1625 North Washington Avenue (*Mid-town Historic District listed 7/13/89*) is an example of the Porched Square subtype. However, its northern location adjacent to Commercial Street more closely associates it with the development of the "uptown" area first established as the Town of North Springfield. The Englenook Apartments located at 700 East Walnut Street (*Walnut Street Boundary Increase listed 8/05/02*) and the College Apartments at 408 East Walnut Street (*Individually listed 5/01/03*) are both representative of the larger-scale, more stylized Commercial Block Apartment Building subtype which emerged during the second period beginning in 1915. Therefore, the Kite Apartment Building is associated with the earlier, nascent period of the industry's development, rather than its later boom growth and maturity.

Separately, the Kite Apartment Building is notable for its location further south from Springfield's Public Square. Within the John A. Stephens' Addition, it was constructed in a subdivision originally platted for single-dwelling housing. Among a concentration of other examples of the property subtype in the surrounding area, it reflects the impact of the apartment industry on residential neighborhoods and the spread of urbanization away from downtown Springfield's commercial core. Its proximity to the State Normal School (now Southwest Missouri State University) suggests that apartment developers of the time had a keen awareness of their emerging market and the opportunities it presented. In this light, the Kite Apartment Building reflects the early influences that institutional growth had on Springfield's urbanization and on its residential neighborhoods – influences that continue to significantly impact the city today.

Criterion C: ARCHITECTURE

The Kite Apartment Building is architecturally significant as one of the finest and most intact representative examples of the modest Porched Square Apartment Building property subtype constructed during the early 20th century in response to the increasing demand for multiple-dwelling housing. Specifically,

To be considered eligible under Criterion C in the area of ARCHITECTURE, a property must be a strong representation of the stylistic and functional characteristics associated with the Downtown Apartment

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Building type. As such, it should possess a distinctiveness of stylistic design and/or substantial integrity of design, material and craftsmanship in comparison to other extant apartment buildings within the period of significance. Eligible properties must have substantially intact original fenestration, wall surface materials and distinguishing architectural detailing. They also must retain to a high degree their original interior surfaces, detailing and circulation patterns.

A total of 40 downtown apartment buildings were identified in a 2002 survey of the area at the southwest and southeast of Springfield's Public Square bounded by Grant Avenue on the west, National Avenue on the east, Walnut Street on the north and Grand Street on the south. Stylistically, these are classified as belonging to one of two subtypes: 1) the two-story Porched Square Apartment buildings constructed during an earlier period of development in a more modest scale and single-dwelling aesthetic; and 2) the two- and three-story Commercial Block Apartment buildings constructed during a later period in a larger, more stylized and "urban" commercial presentation. Twenty-one of the total 40 properties included in the completed survey are representative of the Porched Square subtype, including the Kite Apartment Building. These are all modest-scale two-story brick buildings with hip-and-dormer or flat parapeted roofs and with roughly square plans. Their facades generally have a central entrance bay, flanked on either side by a single window bay. Almost without exception, they have a double-stacked porch, with a second story central door. This particular feature was specifically intended to provide the same "front porch" feel and function found among the surrounding single-family homes and contributed to the harmony between the two building types within the overall streetscape. These properties have limestone foundations and full basements, characteristic of their early-period construction.

The Kite Apartment Building can be more narrowly classified as an example of the "flat roofed" variant of the Porched Square subtype. The "flat-roofed" apartment building provides a more visible juxtaposition of commercial and residential aesthetics than the "hip-roofed" presentation. Although similar in residential feel, setback, scale and overall fenestration to its "hip-roofed" contemporaries, the "flat-roofed" Porched Square is more reminiscent of the vernacular multi-storied Commercial Block buildings prevalent within Springfield's downtown commercial districts. These properties have flat parapets with tile-coping at the roofline and often double main entrances. Unlike in the "hip-roofed" variant, the double-stacked porch of these properties generally spans across the entire façade and has two separate entrances onto the second-story level.

Prior to its current rehabilitation, the Kite Apartment Building was allowed to deteriorate in recent years and subjected to interior surface material alterations. Despite these conditions, the subject property has retained substantial integrity and is one of the finest examples of its subtype in downtown Springfield. Its original fenestration, exterior wall surfaces and important architectural features (original flat parapeted roofline, central main entrances, double-hung wood sash windows, stacked porches, etc.) are almost fully intact and under repair. Its original interior two-over-two floor plan has been unchanged. Furthermore, its significant interior materials and features (paneled single and double French doors, hardware, wood trim bathtubs, built-ins, etc.) are still present and reflect the character and detailing of the early 20th century apartment building.

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Chronology:

The following provides an early chronology of the history of the Kite Apartment Building through the end of its period of significance.

- 1841 Land patent for 160 acres, including the site of subject property, granted by President James K. Polk to John Polk Campbell as assignee for Archibald Morris
- 1845 John A. Stephens arrives in Springfield from Kentucky
- 1851 John A. Stephens, who was acquiring land in the area for a platted development, acquires 40 acres of the patented 160-acre tract
- 1855 Additional land, including Mr. Stephens' 40 acres, is annexed to the original 50-acre plat of the Town of Springfield, extending its southern boundary to Madison Street, one lot south of the subject property
- 1859 John A. Stephens plats the John A. Stephens Addition to the City of Springfield
- 1861 John A. Stephens is killed by a member of the Union's Body Guard during "Zagonyi's Charge" into Springfield. Lots 9 and 10 of the John A. Stephen's Addition are subsequently partitioned to James W. and Nancy A. McCullah.
- 1888 Lots 9 and 10 of the John A. Stephens' Addition, including the site of the subject property, are acquired from James W. McCullah and his second wife Katherine H. McCullah by Dr. Wilhelm Reinhoff and Thomas M. Horne. Dr. Reinhoff, a prominent physician and real estate developer, subsequently gains full ownership in the lots
- 1901 Robert B. Kite, a retired conductor with the Frisco Railroad, retires with his wife Vitae B. to his 100-acre farm south of Springfield
- 1902 Lots 9 and 10 continue to be undeveloped, although several single-dwelling domestic buildings have been constructed in the surrounding area
- 1906 The State Normal School (formally the Springfield Normal School) moves from its previous location at the intersection of Cherry Street and Pickwick Avenue to its newly constructed building on the 900 block South National Avenue, east of the site of the subject property
- 1906 Robert B. and Vitae A. Kite acquire the eastern portion of Lots 9 and 10 from Dr. Wilhelm and Sadie A. Reinhoff. Here the Kites build a pair of two-story brick multiple-dwelling apartment buildings, including the subject property
- 1921 The Kites sell the subject property to Edward B. Garner
- 1929 Edward B. Garner sells the subject property to Katherine E. Wrightsman
- 1932 Katherine E. Wrightsman sells the subject property to F.W. and Vivian Barrett
- 1934 The Barretts sell the subject property to Myrtle A. Langston

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-
- 1937 Myrtle A. Langston and her husband, Ralph W. Langston, sell the property to Edgar R. and Gertie B. Humphrey and Gladis N. Hallam
- 1938 Edgar R. and Gertie B. Humphrey and Gladis N. Hallam sell the property to George P. and Bertha F. Bennett
- 1945 The Bennetts sell the property to J.W. Stout
- 1954 J.W. Stout sells the property to C.M. And Iva L. Young, who retain ownership for a year

End Notes:

1. **Abstract of Title: 769-771 South Avenue.** Greene County Records. (Springfield, MO: American Title Insurance Company et al), Sheet No.72, Book 296, Page46.
2. Ibid., Sheet No. 2.
3. Ibid., Sheet No.10, Book "E," Page 366.
4. City of Springfield. **Map: History of Annexation 1838-January 2000.** Springfield: City of Springfield. 2000.
5. Jonathan Fairbanks and Clyde Edwin Tuck. **Past and Present of Greene County, Missouri.** (Indianapolis: A.W. Bowen, 1915), pp. 1906-1907.
6. **Abstract of Title: 769-771 South Avenue.** Sheet No.13, Book "A," Page 9.
7. Jonathan Fairbanks and Clyde Edwin Tuck. pp. 372-380.
8. **Abstract of Title: 769-771 South Avenue.** Sheet No.26, Book "W," Page 504.
9. Ibid., Sheet No.50, Book 66, Page 581.
10. **Abstract of Title: 910 South Pickwick Avenue.** Greene County Records. (Springfield, MO: Lincoln Abstract Co.), Sheet No.104, Book 85, Page 556
11. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. "Springfield, Missouri, 1902." Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, New York.
12. Jonathan Fairbanks and Clyde Edwin Tuck. pp. 1575-1577
13. Ibid.
14. **Abstract of Title: 769-771 South Avenue.** Sheet No.69, Book 243, Page 156.
15. Ibid., Sheet No.79, Book 419, Page 28.
16. Jonathan Fairbanks and Clyde Edwin Tuck. pp. 1575-1577

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Sources:

Abstract of Title: 769-771 South Avenue. Greene County Records. Springfield, MO: American Title Insurance Company et al.

Abstract of Title: 910 South Pickwick Avenue. Greene County Records. Springfield, MO: Lincoln Abstract Co.

City of Springfield. **Map: History of Annexation 1838-January 2000.** Springfield: City of Springfield. 2000.

Fairbanks, Jonathan and Clyde Edwin Tuck. **Past and Present of Greene County, Missouri.** Indianapolis: A.W. Bowen, 1915.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. "Springfield, Missouri, 1902, 1910." Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, New York.

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**Kite, Robert B. and Vitae A., Apartment Building
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Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundaries of the subject property are determined by the following legal description in the Warranty Deed filed with the Greene County Recorder's Office in Book 995, Page 423 on March 23, 1954.

ALL OF THE NORTH FIFTY AND ONE-HALF (50½) FEET OF THE EAST ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-TWO AND SEVEN-TWELFTHS (122-7/12) FEET OF LOT NINE (9) IN JOHN A. STEPHENS ADDITION TO THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI. THE METES AND BOUNDS OF SAID PROPERTY BEING AS FOLLOWS: BEGINNING AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF LOT NINE (9) IN JOHN A. STEPHENS ADDITION TO THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI, THENCE RUNNING WEST ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-TWO AND SEVEN-TWELFTHS (122-7/12) FEET, THENCE SOUTH FIFTY AND ONE-HALF (50½), THENCE EAST ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-TWO AND SEVEN-TWELFTHS (122-7/12) FEET, THENCE NORTH FIFTY AND ONE-HALF (50½) TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

Source: Greene County Recorder's Office
940 Boonville Avenue
Springfield, MO 65802

Boundary Justification:

The selected boundaries include the land associated with the subject property at the time of its 1954 sale following the end of the period of significance. The land parcel which Robert B. and Vitae A. Kite acquired in 1906 and on which they constructed the subject property included all of Lot Nine (9) and a portion of Lot (10) of the John A. Stephens Addition. However, this larger parcel was subsequently subdivided through various transactions and changes of ownership for unrelated development. The boundaries described above are most appropriate for the subject property and its associated historic context and function.

Maps:

1. USGS Map. Springfield, MO.

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Photographs:

The same is true for all photographs.

Kite, Robert B. and Vitae A., Apartment Building
769-771 South Avenue
Springfield, Greene County, Missouri
Richard Lee Burton
Negatives on file with Historic Springfield, Inc.; P.O. Box 50305; Springfield, MO 65805-0305

**Exterior Photographs –
July 30, 2003**

- Photo 1:** Streetscape. View down 500 block of South Avenue. View from north
- Photo 2:** Primary east elevation. View from southeast
- Photo 3:** Primary east elevation
- Photo 4:** Primary east elevation. Detail of projecting entrances to second-story apartment units
- Photo 5:** Primary east elevation. Detail of original front main entrance door hardware
- Photo 6:** Primary east elevation. Detail of first-story porch column
- Photo 7:** Rear west and side south elevations. View from southwest
- Photo 8:** Side north elevation. Detail of original smaller bathroom window
- Photo 9:** Rear west elevation. View from southwest
- Photo 10:** Rear west elevation. Detail of original single-door rear entrance

**Interior Photographs –
August 8, 2003**

- Photo 11:** 769½ South Avenue. Dining room. Interior east wall with original French doors into living room

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Photo 12: 769½ South Avenue. Dining room. West interior wall with original built-in china cabinet

Photo 13: 769 South Avenue. View from west through dining room to front east main entrance

Photo 14: 771½ South Avenue. Dining room. Side south perimeter wall. Detail of original double-hung wood sash window and trim

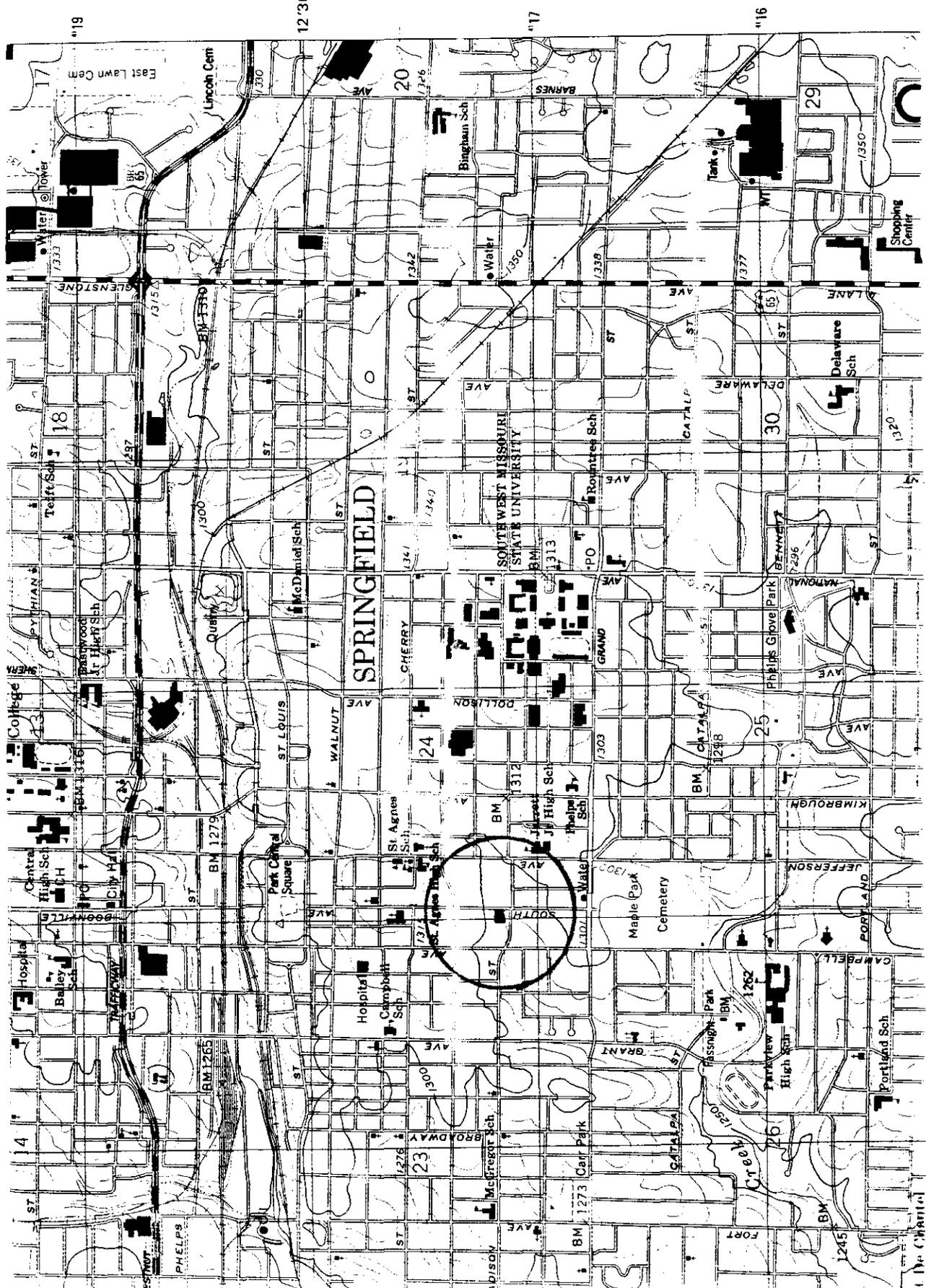
Photo 15: 771½ South Avenue. View of staircase landing from west toward second-story porch door at east

Photo 16: 771½ South Avenue. Staircase rising east-to-west from first-story porch to second-story apartment above

Photo 17: 769 South Avenue. Bathroom. South interior wall with original built-in linen chest

Photo 18: 769 South Avenue. Kitchen. Interior north wall with original kitchen cabinet

Hite, Robert B. and Vitor A., Apartment Building
 769-771 South Avenue
 Springfield, Greene County, Missouri
 UTM Reference: 15/424020/4117160
 Sale: 1.24K

















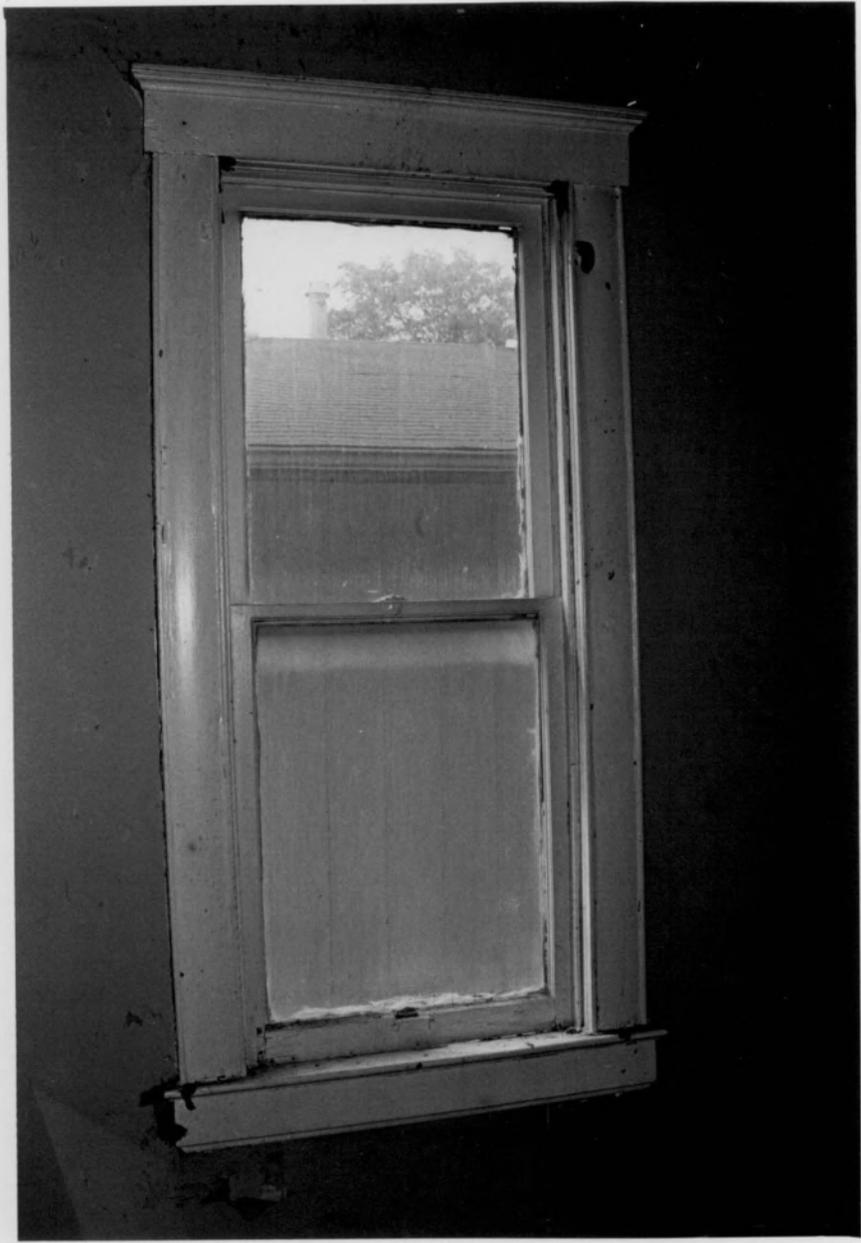






















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21A KODAK 5053 TMY 25 21B KODAK 5053 TMY 26 21C KODAK 5053 TMY 27 21D KODAK 5053 TMY 28 21E KODAK 5053 TMY 29 21F KODAK 5053 TMY 30



19A KODAK 5053 TMY 13 19B KODAK 5053 TMY 14 19C KODAK 5053 TMY 15 19D KODAK 5053 TMY 16 19E KODAK 5053 TMY 17 19F KODAK 5053 TMY 18



13A KODAK 5053 TMY 7 13B KODAK 5053 TMY 8 13C KODAK 5053 TMY 9 13D KODAK 5053 TMY 10 13E KODAK 5053 TMY 11 13F KODAK 5053 TMY 12



7A KODAK 5053 TMY 1 7B KODAK 5053 TMY 2 7C KODAK 5053 TMY 3 7D KODAK 5053 TMY 4 7E KODAK 5053 TMY 5 7F KODAK 5053 TMY 6

