

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

1. Name of Property

historic name Knight, Joe, Building

other names/site number Joe's Corner, Knight Drug Store

2. Location

street & number 201 W. Commercial Street [N/A] not for publication

city or town Lebanon [N/A] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Laclede code 105 zip code 65536

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

22 July 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

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

[] 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):

Knight, Joe, Building
Laclede County, Missouri

5. Classification

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

Name of related multiple property listing.

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

COMMERCE/TRADE: Restaurant
HEALTH CARE: medical business/office

Current Functions

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural classification

MODERN MOVEMENT: Streamlined Moderne

Materials

foundation concrete

walls brick

roof

other Glass

See continuation sheet []

Narrative Description See continuation sheet [x].

Knight, Joe, Building
Laclede County, Missouri

8. Statement of Significance
Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

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

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

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

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

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

See continuation sheet [x].

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography See continuation sheet [x].

Areas of Significance

Commerce

Architecture

Period of Significance

1948-1955

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person(s)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

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:

Knight, Joe, Building
Laclede County, Missouri

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property: less than one acre

UTM References

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	529550	4170345			
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 Debbie Sheals
organization Private Contractor
date March 11, 2005
street & number 29 S. 9th St. Suite 204 telephone 573-874-3779
city or town Columbia state Missouri zip code 65201

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 FOP for any additional items)

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

name Kim Light, President, Central Bank
street & number 101 West Commercial Street PO Box 31
telephone 417-532-2151
city or town Lebanon state MO zip code 65536

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

**Knight, Joe, Building
Laclede County, Missouri**

Summary:

The Joe Knight building is located at 201 W. Commercial Street in Lebanon, Laclede County, Missouri. Constructed in 1948, it is a three-story tall, Streamline Moderne building, with brick walls and a flat roof. It sits at the southwest corner of W. Commercial and Madison Streets in the central commercial district of Lebanon. It is a long narrow building, with curved corners and glass block windows. The short end of the building faces Commercial Street, and the long side wall faces Madison. The ground floor is slightly recessed and sheltered by a simple flat canopy, which curves out over a corner entrance on Commercial Street. The exterior walls feature string courses of darker brick, and horizontal bands of windows, and the curved corners are accented by large curved glass block walls. Dark bricks are also used to spell out "Joe Knight '48" and "Knight" on the main elevations. The interior spaces of the building feature extensive use of glazed ceramic blocks, with glass block accents. The building is the only resource on the property, and it occupies all of its lot. It is intact, in good condition, and immediately recognizable to its period of significance.

Elaboration:

The Knight building occupies a prominent corner lot, in the heart of Lebanon's central business district. The streets of the business district are set at a 45 degree angle to the compass points. The short end of the Knight building faces southeast, to Commercial Street, and the long side on Madison Street faces northeast. The southwest wall of the building is shared with the two-story commercial building next door, and a small alley runs along the northwest end of the building.

Commercial Street is one of the primary business thoroughfares in the community. It is lined with one- and two-story commercial buildings for several blocks to either side of the Knight building; two-story buildings are most common in the immediate vicinity. (See photo 1.) The Knight building is like most of the buildings in the commercial center, in that it sits directly on the sidewalk and occupies all of its lot.

The design of the Knight Building capitalizes on the dual street frontage. Both of the corners that face Madison Street have distinctive rounded edges, accented by large, curved, glass block windows on the upper floors. The edge of the ground floor canopy curves to follow the line of the building at the back corner, and extends out to form a round hood over the front corner entry.

The main entranceway is further accented with walls that curve back towards the central doorway, and by terrazzo flooring that echoes the line of the round canopy above. A metal-clad round post provides structural support for the building corner. (See photos 8 and 9.) The curved brick bulkheads and angled glass windows around the entryway are

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**Knight, Joe, Building
Laclede County, Missouri**

early or original; the doors themselves are newer.

The ground floor canopy is one of several design elements that combine to give the building a horizontal composition. Wide stripes of dark brick are also used to emphasize the streamlined silhouette, and window placement continues the theme. A band of dark brick visually anchors the base of the walls, and string courses of the same dark brick introduce strong horizontals at the second and third floors. The tops of the windows on the upper floors all line up with the string courses, and the window openings all have rowlock sills of the same dark brick. The bricks used for the main surfaces of the walls are a much lighter tan color, and have a slightly rougher surface than the dark bricks. The same type of dark bricks that are used for string courses and window accents are also used for signage above the third floor windows. The short end, facing Commercial Street, bears a single name "KNIGHT", while the long end reads "JOE KNIGHT '48".

The window openings themselves tend to be wider than they are tall, especially at the corners, where wide, curved expanses of glass blocks are flanked by narrower steel casement windows. That pattern is reversed on the other upper window openings, which have clear glass centers flanked by panels of glass blocks. The glass blocks and steel casements are early or original; the clear glass windows date to the 1970s or 80s.

The ground floor window openings also contain a mix of glass block and plate glass, although they differ in that the two are not mixed within single masonry openings. The windows around the front doorway are all of plate glass, while openings along the long side wall are filled with either glass blocks or plate glass. The side elevation also contains an entranceway, which opens to a small vestibule with an elevator and stairs. The side doorway is the general building entrance, while the one at the front corner opens directly to the ground floor retail space.

The interior of the building, which is largely vacant, continues to reflect its original mix of retail and office use. The now-vacant upper floors house offices, the ground floor contains a single open retail space, also vacant, and the basement holds a beauty shop, a barber shop, and office space. (See Figures One and Two, Current Floorplans.) The building has had a beauty shop in the basement since the early 1950s or before, and the barber shop has been in business for many decades. Almost all of the interior spaces have some glazed ceramic block walls and glass block windows. Several of the interior partitions have glass block insets to move light into the interior of the building. The ceramic block in some places bears remnants of glue, from an arguably misguided remodeling project which involved applying carpet and other modern materials to the walls.

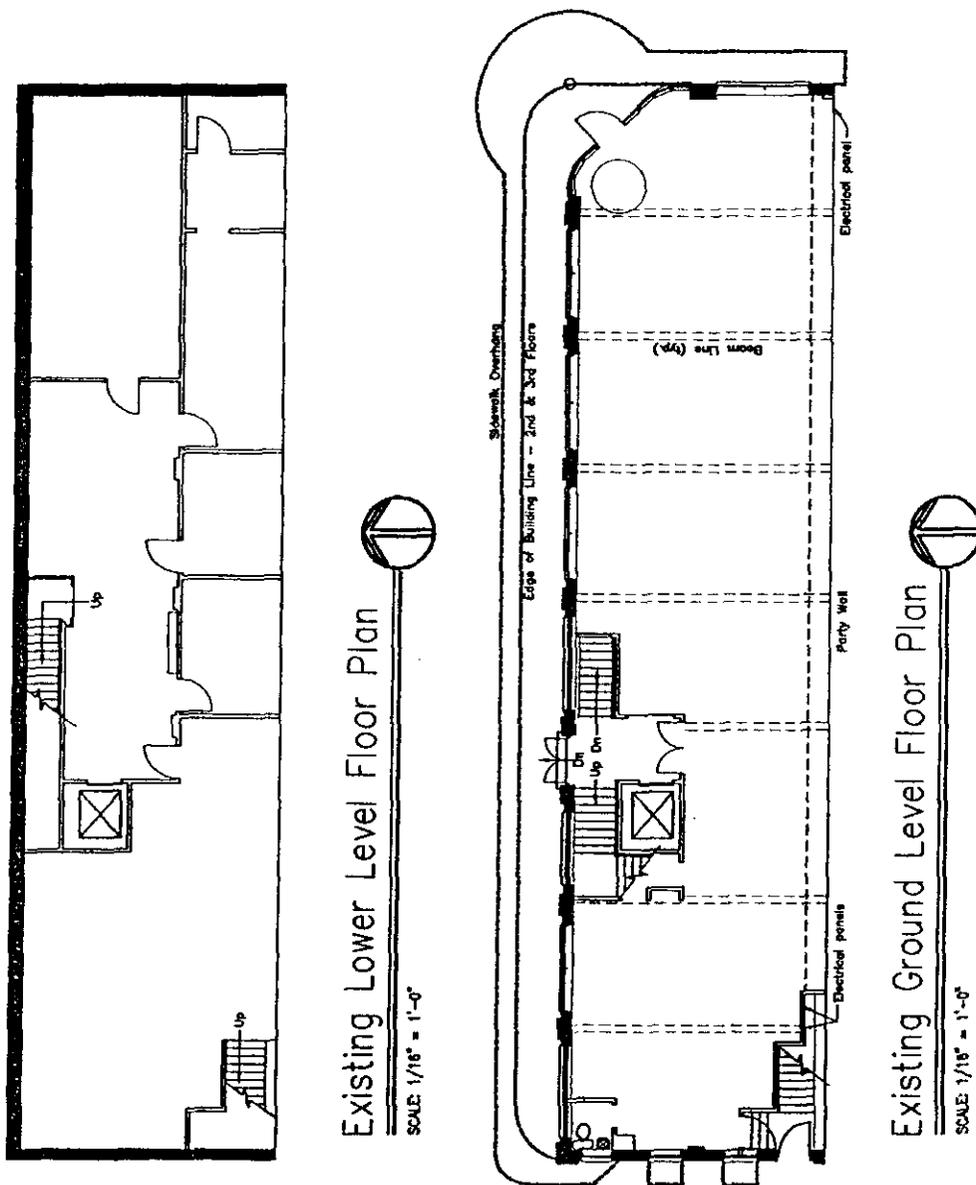
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Knight, Joe, Building
Laclede County, Missouri

Figure One. Ground Floor and Basement Plans.
Drawn by the Casey Associates, Springfield, MO.



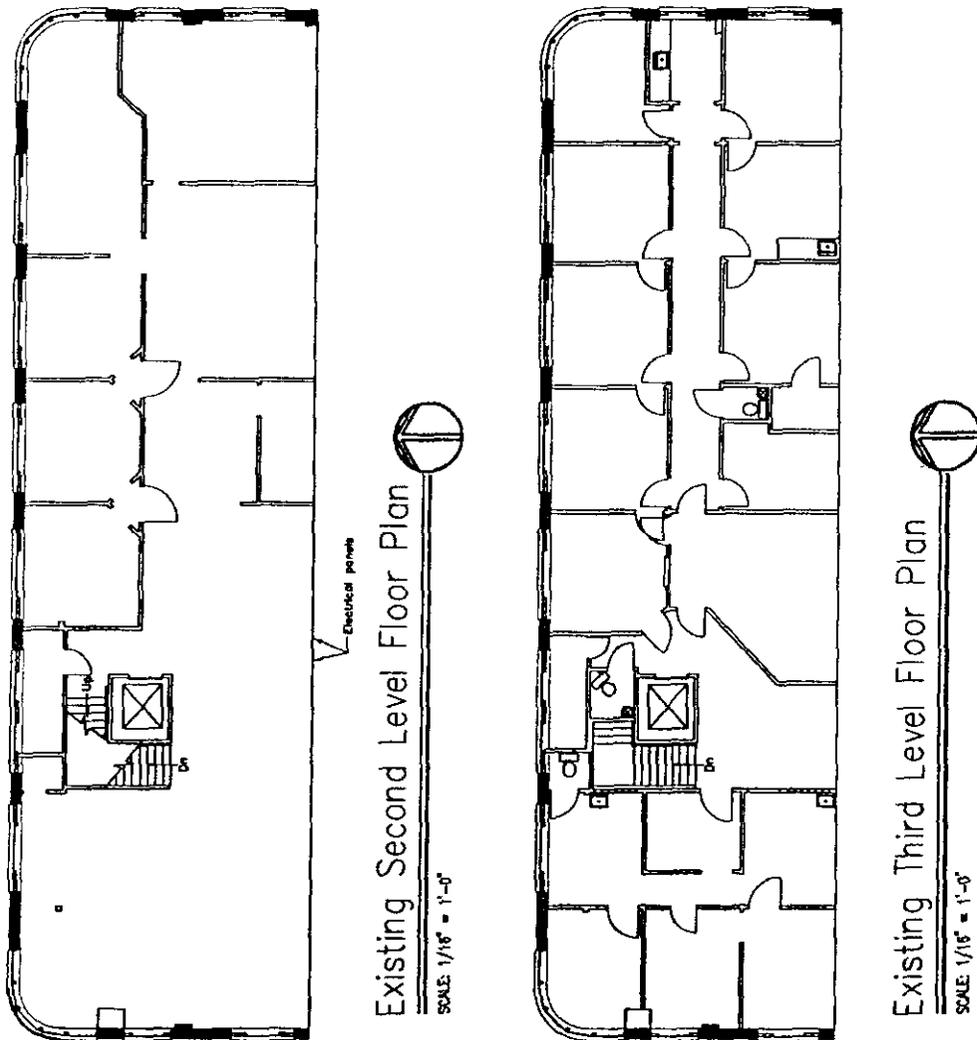
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**Knight, Joe, Building
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**Figure Two. Second and Third Floor Plans.
Drawn by the Casey Associates, Springfield, MO.**



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**Knight, Joe, Building
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The ground floor, which was home to Joe Knight's pharmacy for decades, holds a simple open space which is accessed via the front corner entry or the side vestibule. With the exception of the vestibule, there are no interior partitions of note on that level. The exterior walls of the room are of gold glazed ceramic block, and the ceiling is plastered. The block wall has been painted white in one part of the room. The walls to the vestibule are also of glazed block, with plate glass and glass block windows, and a set of heavy glass entry doors that are early or original. (See photo11.)

There are two sets of stairs in the vestibule. One leads down to the basement, and the second winds around the elevator shaft for upper floor access. The basement has low ceilings, terrazzo floors, and glazed block walls. (See photo 10.) The second and third floors appear to have been built for office space, and to have been similar to each other when the building was new. Each has, or had, a series of small offices on either side of a small central hallway, with ceramic block walls and some terrazzo flooring. The second floor is more open than the third, with just a few rooms along the Madison Street wall, while the third floor is almost filled with small offices. On both of those floors, the ceramic block walls between the outside offices and the hallway have large glass block insets for natural light.

Overall, the Joe Knight building today looks much as it did when Joe Knight's pharmacy occupied the ground floor. The distinctive Streamline Moderne exterior is highly intact, and the interior spaces strongly reflect their original use and appearance. The basement is still used much as it has been since opening day, and the other spaces all retain a good deal of original fabric. The building is largely intact, inside and out, and it clearly evokes a sense of its time and place. ♦

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Knight, Joe, Building
Laclede County, Missouri

Summary: The Joe Knight Building, at 201 W. Commercial Street in Lebanon, Missouri is locally significant under Criterion A, in the area of Commerce, and Criterion C, in the area of Architecture. It was built in 1948 for local pharmacist Joe Knight, and it housed Knight's Drug store until his retirement in 1977. The period of significance for the building thus runs from 1948 to 1955, the standard fifty-year cut-off point. The distinctive brick building, located on a busy corner in the heart of Lebanon's commercial district, is, as a 1987 newspaper noted, "a longtime landmark in Lebanon."¹ Joe Knight was a native of Lebanon who spent all of his adult life as a pharmacist. He opened his first store in Lebanon in 1923, and worked as a pharmacist in the community until his retirement in 1977, at the age of 81. The building is also important as a rare intact example of Streamline Moderne architecture in Lebanon. Built near the end of the period of popularity for the style, it exhibits many character-defining features of the Streamline Moderne movement. The horizontal banding, curved corners and extensive use of glass block all reflect the machine aesthetic that characterized streamline styling of its day. The building is intact and in good condition, and it looks today much as it did when Joe Knight's pharmacy occupied the ground floor. An upcoming rehabilitation will ensure that it continues its commercial function well into the 21st century.

Elaboration:

Lebanon is the county seat and largest town of Laclede County, in south-central Missouri. It is located on Interstate Highway 44, and is also on the historic path of Route 66. Early transportation was supplied by the St. Louis to Springfield branch of the San Francisco Railroad, whose tracks still run through the central business district, although they are now used by the Burlington-Northern Railroad. The railroad tracks in the downtown area run parallel to Commercial Street, just one block southeast of the Joe Knight building. Commercial Street, as the name suggests, has served as a primary commercial artery in Lebanon throughout the community's history. Jefferson Street, which doubles as State Highway 64, serves as the main east-west route through town; it intersects Commercial Street one block northeast of the Knight building. The blocks surrounding Commercial and Jefferson Streets have housed Lebanon's business district for well over a century.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Joe Knight (b. Aug. 18, 1896-d. April 15, 1987) would chose Commercial Street when he decided to go into the pharmacy business in his hometown. Knight spent his childhood in Lebanon, and moved to St.

¹ "Longtime Lebanon Druggist is Dead," Lebanon Daily Record, April 16, 1987, p. 1.

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Knight, Joe, Building
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Louis as a young man to attend the St. Louis College of Pharmacy. He graduated from college early, at the age of 20, and ended up having to wait a year to become a registered pharmacist. He bought his first pharmacy in Ferguson, Missouri soon after that, and ran that business until 1923, when he sold it to return for a job in his hometown.²

That job was to manage a pharmacy on Commercial Street then owned by a man named Brownie Watson. The move was apparently successful, as Knight bought the pharmacy and property from Watson two years later.³ He was to remain in business at that corner for the next 52 years. The building he bought in 1925 burned in the mid-1940s, and was replaced with the current building.

Knight was not shy about getting his name before the public; the building on the lot today has his name spelled out in darker bricks on both street elevations, and an early photo of the building shows that he also put his name in neon channel letters along the front edge of the entrance canopy above the front door. (See Figure Three.)

An early key to the electrical circuit box for part of the building refers to that canopy as the "duck bill." It also offers a look at the varied functions of Knight's business, which included a small restaurant as well as a drug store. In addition to two circuits for "drugs" there was a coffee machine and cash register, two different candy counters, a "Victrola," a perfume case and a tobacco case. Signage was also included; there was the "Joe Knight, duck bill," along with "RX on top," and an apparently later entry for a flood light. Another possible later entry included two lines labeled simply "roof."

Those "roof" notes probably had something to do with the large bell tower that originally sat at the front corner of the building. (See Figure Three.) Local history holds that the bells could be rung from inside the store, and there are still wires near the front door that may have connected to those rooftop circuits. The tall tower, which is no longer extant, would have been visible from nearby Jefferson Street, and possibly from Route 66, which originally ran south of the downtown area.

An early telephone directory for Lebanon shows that by 1951, Knight's building hosted a variety of businesses.⁴ It also shows that the building itself had an identity; the address for most of the tenants was simply, "Joe Knight Building." A check of the

² "Ian Joel 'Joe' Knight," in *Laclede County Missouri: History and Families*, (Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Co., 2000) pp. 201-202.

³ Ibid.

⁴ *1951 Telephone Directory: Lebanon-Richland*, (Local United Long Distance: Lebanon, MO, 1951.)

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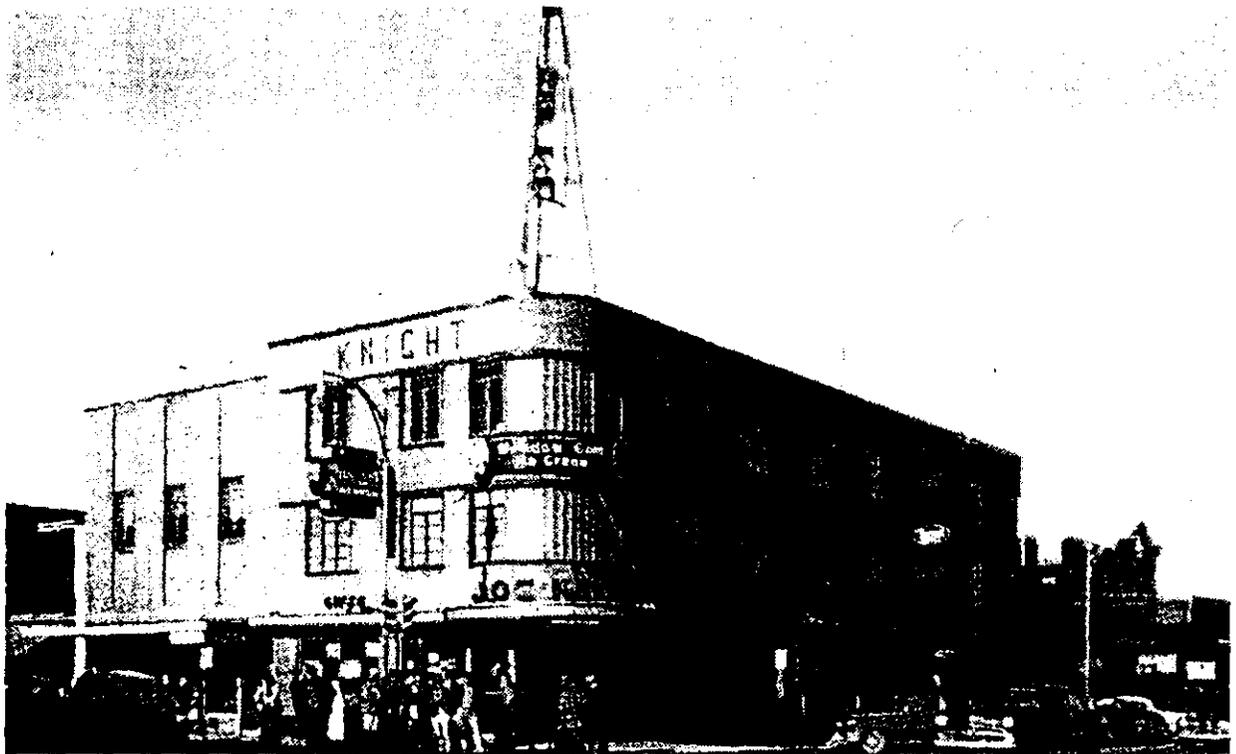
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**Knight, Joe, Building
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Yellow Pages in that 1951 book shows that Knight listed his address as 201 W. Commercial, and that he was one of 7 druggists in the community. Other occupants included Hazel's Beauty Shop, one of the eight dentists in town, and four of the eight doctors in the community. A 1972 city directory shows that one of those doctors, Ferrell H. Johnson, was still an occupant at that time.⁵ Other tenants from the 1950s included the State Auto License Bureau, a notary public, and the "Sport Shop."⁶

Figure Three. Photo of the building taken in 1955.

(From A Pictorial History of Laclede County Missouri, Vol. I. Marceline, MO: Walsworth Publishing Co., 1992.)



⁵ 1972 Directory of Lebanon, (The earliest available.)

⁶ A list of tenants at the time of the 1955 photo was included in Pictorial History, p. 117.

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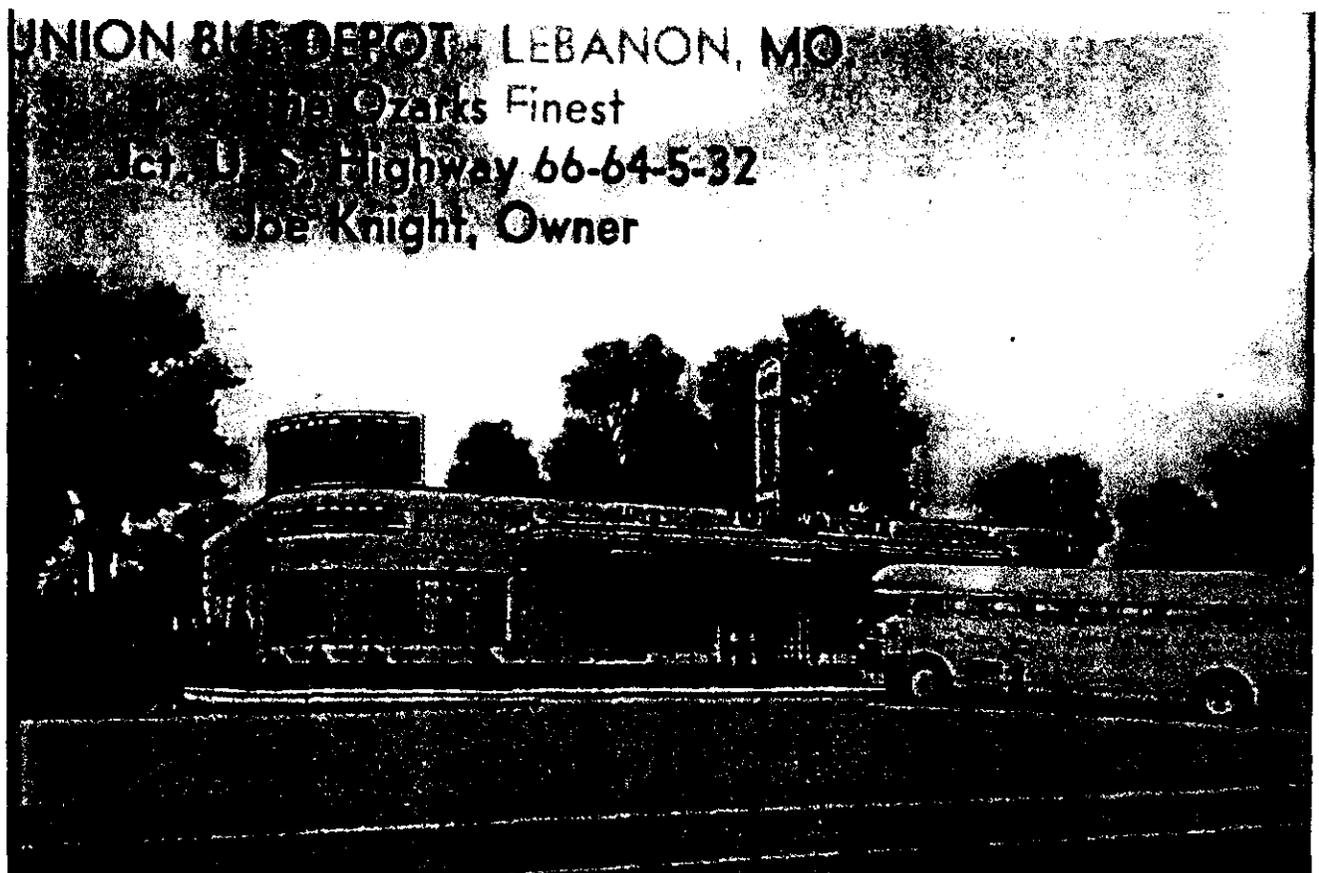
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**Knight, Joe, Building
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The large new building at Commercial and Madison was not the only building Knight had constructed during the 1940s. An historic postcard of the ca. 1941 Union Bus Depot in Lebanon, which was also owned by Knight, shows a striking similarity to the nominated building. (See Figure Four.) The bus station in the photo had the same type of two-tone horizontal brick banding and sweeping curves, and even had what appears to be an identical set of neon letters spelling out Knight's name above its entrance. (That building, greatly altered, is only a few blocks from the nominated building; it is slated for demolition in the near future.)

Figure Four. Historic Postcard of the Union Bus Depot in Lebanon. Postcard image from project architects, The Casey Associates.



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**Knight, Joe, Building
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The horizontal banding, curved corners, and overall streamlined shape of the new building exemplifies the "Streamline Moderne" style of architecture. The Streamline Moderne movement in design came into its own during the 1930s and continued to be popular into the 1940s. Streamline Moderne is one of group of "modern" movements which were in vogue in the early decades of the 20th century. Art Deco scholar David Gebhard identified two related schools of architectural theory popular at the time; high style "modernist" or International School Style, and popular "Moderne," which he divides into Art Deco, or Zigzag Moderne, and Streamline Moderne sub-styles. Architects and designers from both schools of thought shared a desire to emphasize the future rather than the past, including a disdain for exact copies of elements taken from historic architecture.

There were, however, different opinions as to just how far those principles should be carried. Practitioners of the International Style sought to totally distance themselves from all connections with architecture of the past, including the use of classical forms or applied ornamentation of any kind. Designers of the "Moderne" styles, on the other hand, embraced the concept of decoration, albeit in varying manners.⁷ Art Deco designs featured applied ornament, richly textured surfaces, and a decidedly geometrical look. Streamline Moderne designs, by contrast, emphasized sleek profiles and much more subdued systems of ornament, all of which were calculated to create an impression of speed, even in large, decidedly stationary buildings.

The Streamline Moderne style was characterized by a horizontal emphasis, frequently teamed with smooth surfaces, curved lines and geometric glass block windows. The style has been strongly identified with the machine, by writers and designers of the time as well as later architectural historians. A 1940 article in Architectural Record titled "Design Decade," for example, claimed that "Finally, the critical observer must conclude that the decade just closed, nearly two hundred years after the Industrial Revolution, has for the first time shown a substantial accomplishment in relating machine inspired design to a machine inspired way of life."⁸

A description of the movement written more recently also notes that connection. Chester Liebs aptly describes the application of industrial design motifs to American architecture in the 1930s and 1940s: "Although it began as a futuristic wrapper for

⁷ David Gebhard, The National Trust Guide to Art Deco in America, (New York: John Wiley and Son, Preservation Press, 1996) p. 6.

⁸ "Design Decade," Architectural Record, Vol. 73, October, 1940, p. 217.

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**Knight, Joe, Building
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mechanical products, streamlining soon became a prominent form of architectural expression. Buildings were designed with rounded corners and detailed with lines of flow suggesting motion, and modern materials enhanced the effect."⁹ He described the frequent use of structural glass, porcelain enameled panels, and stainless steel, and noted that "glass blocks were built into huge, glowing translucent yet structural windows."¹⁰

Joe Knight's choice of the Streamline Moderne style for his new buildings reflects an awareness of the latest styles in architecture, and the similarity between the bus station and the drug store suggests that they are the work of a single architect. At the least, they could have been built from plans purchased from the same plan service. Although no information about the architect or contractor has been uncovered to date, it is safe to assume that both buildings benefited from input by professional designers.

Knight was in his early fifties when he built the streamlined bus station and his new drug store, old enough to be able to afford new business ventures, yet young enough to embrace the latest concepts in architecture. The survival of the nominated building on Commercial Street stands as a testament to both his business acumen and a good eye for design.

Knight continued to run the pharmacy and manage the Joe Knight Building until he was well past a standard retirement age. (It is not clear how long he owned the bus depot.) He was 81 when he finally retired in 1977, and one source noted later that he thought he had filled approximately one million prescriptions in his 60 years as a druggist. He was active in the pharmacy business throughout his career; one biographical account written by his son noted that his professional associations included service as:

- The Secretary and President of the Missouri Pharmaceutical Association
- The Secretary and President of the Missouri Board of Pharmacy
- Chair of an Advisory Committee to the National Board of Pharmacy
- President of the Mid-West Drug Conference
- A founding member of the National Association of Retail Druggists

He was also active in social and service organizations in Lebanon, including Lebanon Country Club, the Lebanon Chamber of Commerce, the Lions, the Rotary, the Masons, and the Shriners. He was a founding or lifetime member for several of those

⁹ Chester H. Liebs, Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside Architecture, (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995) p. 57.

¹⁰ Ibid.

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**Knight, Joe, Building
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organizations, and also served at least one term as a city councilman.¹¹ He remained well-known in the community until his death in 1987, at the age of 90. His obituary, which ran with a photo on the front page of the local paper, noted that he had "played a key role in Lebanon's downtown business community for 60 years."¹²

The Joe Knight building continues to serve as a local landmark in downtown Lebanon. The distinctive streamlined form of the building continues to set it apart, and the prominent name and date on the façade have endeared it to a new generation of downtown patrons. (Something about a name on a building seems to make it more attractive to the general public.) The building is intact and structurally sound and the upcoming rehabilitation will ensure decades of continued use. It looks today much as it did when Knight had his shop in the ground floor, and strongly reflects its long years of commercial prominence. ♦

¹¹ "Ian Joel 'Joe' Knight," pp. 201-202.

¹² "Longtime Lebanon Druggist is Dead." Lebanon Daily Record, April 16, 1987, p. 1.

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**Knight, Joe, Building
Laclede County, Missouri**

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- Liebs, Chester H., Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside Architecture. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- "Longtime Lebanon Druggist is Dead." Lebanon Daily Record, April 16, 1987, p. 1.

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Knight, Joe, Building
Laclede County, Missouri

Verbal Boundary Description

All of Lot 1, Block 17, First Railroad Addition to the City of Lebanon, Laclede County, Missouri, according to the plat thereof.

Boundary Justification

The current boundaries encompass all of the land currently and historically associated with the building.

Photographs

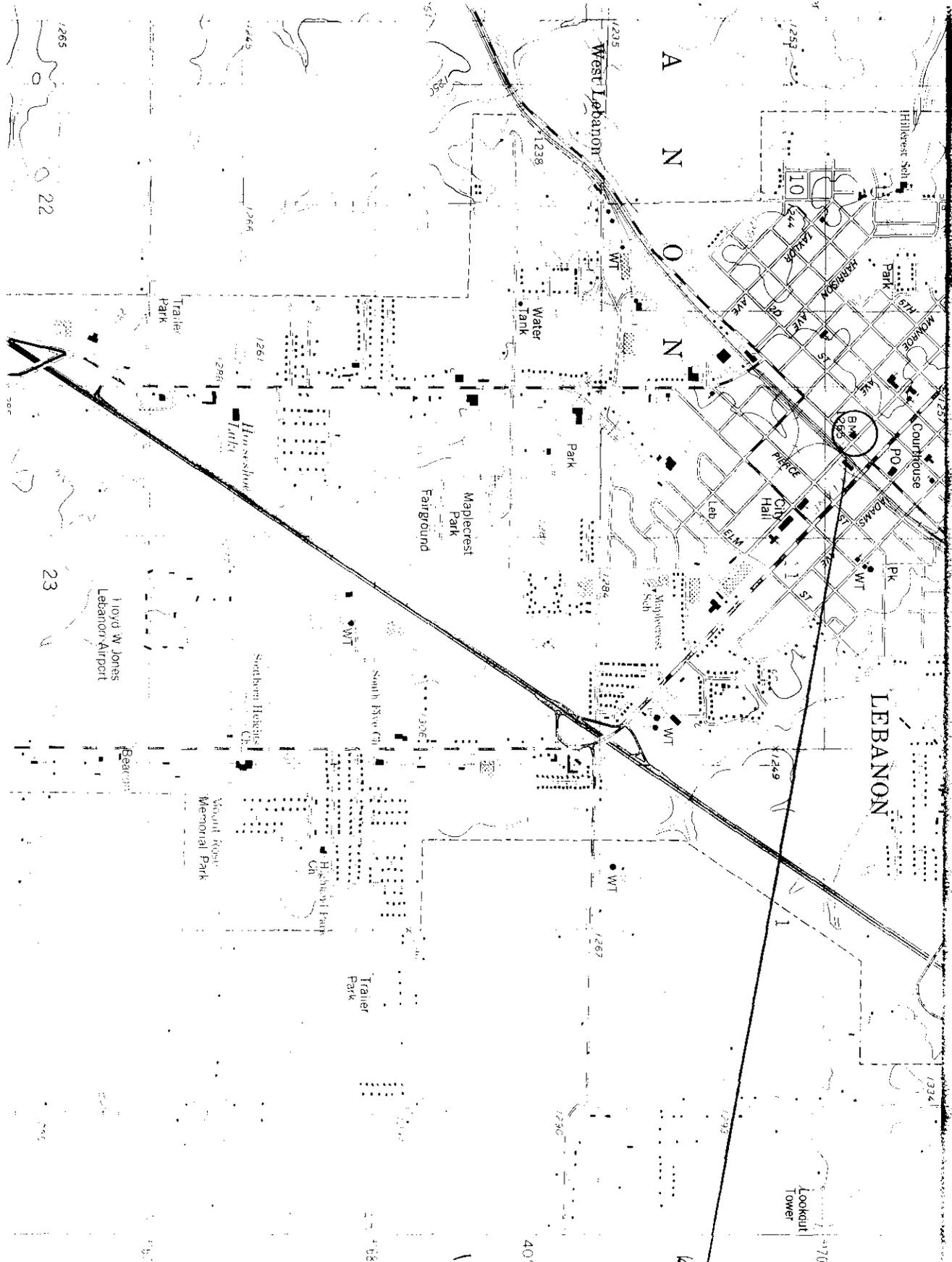
The following information is the same for all photographs:

Knight, Joe, Building
201 West Commercial Street, Lebanon
Laclede County, MO
Debbie Sheals
March, 2005
Negatives on file with Debbie Sheals
29 North Ninth Street, Suite 204, Columbia, MO 65201

List of Photographs

See photo key for description of camera angle.

1. Streetscape, looking southwest on Commercial.
2. East corner.
3. North corner, from Madison Street.
4. Detail, northeast (Madison St.) elevation
5. Detail, block window, east corner.
6. Ground floor, Madison St. elevation, looking southeast.
7. Detail of east corner.
8. Round canopy on front corner.
9. Front corner entry.
10. Basement, barbershop.
11. Ground floor, vestibule to side entrance.
12. Second floor window detail.
13. Interior of corner window, third floor.
14. Second floor hallway, looking southeast from the elevator.



KNIGHT JOE,
 BUILDING
 201 W.
 COMMERCIAL ST.
 LEBANON,
 40 LOCAL CO. W.V.
 MD
 15/529550E/
 4170130N











