

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic The Louise Apartments

and/or common Crabapple Court Apartments

2. Location

street & number 3900 Lindell Boulevard/231 Vandeventer Avenue not for publication

city, town St. Louis, vicinity of

state Missouri code 29 county City of St. Louis code 510

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: apartments

4. Owner of Property

name P.I.J. Partnership c/o Mark Cofman

street & number 6609 Clayton Road

city, town St. Louis, vicinity of state MO 63117

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Louis City Hall

street & number Market Street at Tucker Boulevard

city, town St. Louis state MO 63103

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title 1. Missouri State Historical Survey has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ nodate June 1984 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ localdepository for survey records Historic Preservation Program
Missouri Department of Natural Resourcescity, town P. O. Box 176
Jefferson City, state MO 65102

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☒ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Crabtree Court Apartments (originally built as the Louise Apartments) consist of two red brick buildings three stories high which were constructed in 1908. Designed by St. Louis architect Charles Deitering, the complex is located on the southwest corner of Lindell and Vandeventer in the west end of St. Louis. Through the use of projecting bays and a courtyard, the buildings represent an important early development in St. Louis apartment building design.

The land upon which the complex was constructed is made up of two lots each fifty feet wide. In order to build the thirty units and maintain the early twentieth century residential scale and set-back established by the two and three story dwellings then lining Lindell Boulevard, architect Deitering designed two buildings. One runs along Lindell, contains twelve units, and measures 99 by 56 feet. The other contains eighteen units which surround a three-sided courtyard entered from Vandeventer. The two buildings are joined by an exterior, iron fire escape. (See Site Plan.) Both are constructed with steel girders and 12-inch brick walls. Red face brick is laid in Flemish bond with black headers and black contrasting mortar. The restrained classical ornament is of cream-colored terra cotta.

The Lindell structure was set back even with the building line of the existing houses. With its yard-like setting and three-story height, the facade easily harmonized with its neighbors (Photos #1 and #2). Symmetrically divided by two entrances marked by terra cotta enframements and entablatures and surmounted by second and third story double windows, the facade is given strong definition by four, projecting, three-sided bays running the full height of the building. Decorative elements which tie the Lindell elevation with the east (Vandeventer) and courtyard elevations include a watertable of vertically laid bricks marking the high basement, a terra cotta sill course beneath all first story windows, the use of vertically laid brick over all windows, and a slightly projecting, terra cotta cornice surmounted by a parapet.

The east elevation of the Lindell building and the two ends of the U-shaped building make up the Vandeventer facades (Photo #3). Although the bays were not employed on the end elevations, the tri-part windows are slightly bowed, carrying out the theme. The courtyard is entered through a terra cotta balustrade which has been painted white.

The courtyard U is formed by two long sides running east and west with dimensions 40 by 60 feet and a short side measuring 32 by 86 feet running from north to south (see Site Plan). As with the Lindell elevation, each of the three courtyard facades is divided symmetrically by central entranceways and projecting, three-sided bays (Photo #4). These doorways are also en-framed with terra cotta; however, the surmounting windows are triple casements

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with stained glass transoms instead of the paired, double hung sash of the Lindell facade. The courtyard space also provides an attractive setting for flowering trees and shrubs; thus, accounting for the renaming of the apartments to Crabtree Court.

The south and west (side) elevations of both buildings are unadorned. Concrete and iron fire escapes are simple in design and in need of repair.

The interiors of the buildings, both in the public spaces and individual units, were designed to appeal to potential tenants of middle- and upper-middle incomes. The apartments were graciously layed out with four to six rooms including a separate living (which is expressed on the exterior in the bays) and dining room with butler's pantry attached to the kitchen. Oak was used for flooring and woodwork, although some of the latter has been painted over the years. Polychrome tiled foyer floors and original stairways also remain. Unfortunately, several of the stained glass transoms in the courtyard have been lost as well as the glass shades on the brass light fixtures. However, it is remarkable that the apartments have not been subdivided and retain most of their original features.

The exterior is in structurally good condition and is virtually unaltered.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1908 **Builder/Architect** Charles H. Deitering, architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Crabtree Court Apartments on the southwest corner of Lindell and Vandeventer are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria C, and are significant in the following category: ARCHITECTURE: The buildings are well-preserved examples of St. Louis apartment house design in its formative period of development. Designed in 1908 by prominent local architect, Charles H. Deitering, the apartments are distinguished by the quality of their brickwork, Georgian Colonial Revival design, and courtyard plan.

By the end of the nineteenth century, St. Louis' reputation as a city of fine houses was generally recognized both locally and by numerous visitors who commented favorably on the advanced state of domestic architecture in the city. The greatest concentration of large artistic houses stood in the city's West End along an eight block corridor reaching westward from Grand Avenue to Kingshighway. Anchoring the eastern and western boundaries of the corridor, St. Louis University (under construction in the 1880s) and Forest Park (opened in 1876) had been important stimulants to real estate values and residential development. Particular attention was early focused on development of one of the street by a group of prominent citizens who privately financed the improvement of Lindell Boulevard with pavement, sidewalks, and trees. By 1890, the former country wagon road was heralded as St. Louis' "Parisian boulevard" and described as one of the "finest carriage drives ornamented with costly residences that can be found in the Western country."¹ Religious institutions soon followed their congregations westward and four, in fact, located along Lindell Boulevard amid the numerous large impressive houses which lined the street.

Despite the fact that West End property was in great demand and vacant land was fast disappearing, St. Louisans resisted construction of apartment buildings to accomodate the growing desire for residency in the area. In 1901, the press reported that while rumors of apartment houses in the West End were persistently circulated, the buildings probably would not be erected due to "the hostility of the owners of residences" on the streets affected.² Judging from contemporary accounts, the objection to apartments was not an argument against their appropriateness as a feature of urban life, but rather a problem of design. As one writer succinctly put it: "Everyone knows the flat is not a things of beauty," and further remarked

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on the stuffiness, inconvenient plan, and cheap construction of the "clumsy, hand-me-down box called an apartment." Allowing for exceptions, the critic nonetheless observed that, "the rule in St. Louis is to cut them all to one measure. . .the style never changes from age to age. . .they are all alike forever and ever, only some are worse."³ Less than a decade later, however, it was apparent that apartment design had changed dramatically when a 1909 feature article on the building type boasted:

St. Louis, world reknown for its beautiful homes and attractive residence districts, soon will become equally as famous for its commodious and imposing apartment houses. Already apartment-house buildings in this city have reached such a high state of perfection that prospective builders from other cities are coming here on tours of inspection.⁴

As the article explained, true apartment buildings were practically unknown in the city until very recently; although "so-called apartment houses" existed earlier, they, "in reality were only joined flats." The steadily increasing popularity of the apartment house was attributed to St. Louis' progressive architects, who, after "exhaustive study" of apartments in the East, returned with up-to-date, artistic designs upon which they them improved.⁵

Among the architects who were earning respected reputations for pioneering apartment design was Charles H. Deitering, a native St. Louisan who was trained at M.I.T. After working with prominent local architect Isaac S. Taylor, Deitering opened his own office and as early as 1903, was receiving commissions for West End apartments along with large private houses in the area. He gained recognition for designs of numerous minor structures at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis and received the Grand Prize for the Chinese Government Building and a Gold Medal for the Distillery.⁶ During the first decade of the twentieth century, Deitering and other local apartment specialists broke new ground in residential living patterns as they evolved design criteria for a distinctive West End apartment building type which won approval from reticent St. Louisans. Hallmarks of the early apartment house design included a limit of three or four story height, substantial construction of high-grade brick, exteriors articulated with projecting bays and generously proportioned entrances, restrained classical detailing, interiors artistically finished with fine materials, and often a central courtyard plan opening to the street.

When Deitering was commissioned in 1908 to draw plans for the apartment buildings at the southwest corner of Lindell and Vandeventer,⁷ the press described them as one of the "big projects" giving impetus to the "unprecedented movement" in apartment construction at the time.⁸ Although West End

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residents earlier had voiced the strongest protests against apartments, attitudes were rapidly shifting and the most intensive apartment building activity in the city was now centered along West End streets. Deitering's apartments represented a new building type for Lindell Boulevard which, at the time, was gaining further prestige as the site of the St. Louis Archdiocese's magnificent Cathedral under construction three blocks west at Newstead. The buildings embodied all the characteristics of the modern St. Louis apartment house. Careful to maintain the uniform set-back, height, scale, and fine brickwork of the nineteenth century houses which lined the street, Deitering articulated the building's facades with fashionable Georgian Colonial Revival detailing in terra cotta (Photo #1). To further enhance their home-like appearance, he introduced a courtyard plan with balustraded entry on the Vandeventer elevation (See Site Plan).

Completed early in 1909, the buildings were named the Louise Apartments and offered thirty suites of four, five, and six rooms with up-to-date features such as shades, gas ranges, oak floors in all rooms, steam heat, and janitor service. The interiors were artfully finished with oak woodwork throughout and exposed beam ceilings in the dining rooms. The projecting exterior bay windows opened to living rooms in each unit, increasing the entry of light and air.⁹

Testimony to the success of the new form of residential living was made when scarcely three years after the Louise Apartments (now the Crabtree Court Apartments) had been constructed, the first high-rise apartment building appeared on Lindell three blocks to the east. Other tall apartment building types followed during the teens and twenties as the apartment hotel gained in popularity. Despite the ascendancy of multi-unit residential buildings, Lindell maintained its prestigious position as the showplace of the city.

By the 1940s, considerable change could be observed along Lindell as a number of nineteenth century houses were replaced with low-rise commercial structures. This pattern of development eventually removed all except one of some two dozen private houses which once shared the block with the Crabtree Court Apartments, and also took its toll all along the boulevard to Forest Park. While only a handful of scattered nineteenth century houses still stand, the architecturally significant institutional buildings and apartment houses have maintained the street's stature. Associated with the early development of the modern apartment building in St. Louis and one of the first to be built on Lindell Boulevard, the Crabtree Court Apartments hold a significant place in the history of the city's residential architecture.

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FOOTNOTES

¹St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 21 August 1890.

²St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 19 May 1901.

³St. Louis Builder, December 1904, n.p.

⁴St. Louis Republic, 19 September 1909, Part V, p. 1.

⁵Ibid.

⁶The Book of St. Louisans (St. Louis: The St. Louis Republic, 1912),
p. 153.

⁷The apartments were built by Delmar Realty whose president, Simon Von Raalte, was a prominent developer in the West End and downtown St. Louis. Born in Germany in 1854, Von Raalte emigrated to the United States as a child and moved with his family to St. Louis shortly after the Civil War. Trained as a jeweler and diamond cutter, Von Raalte had established a business in St. Louis by 1874. By the turn of the century, however, he was actively involved in real estate and after organizing the Von Raalte Realty Investment Company, served as president of several other companies.

⁸St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 10 May 1908.

⁹St. Louis Globe-Democrat, 17 January 1909.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Attached.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Granite City, IL/MO

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	5
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7	4	0	1	1	0
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4	2	8	0	0	5	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The Crabtree Court Apartments are located in St. Louis City Block 3921 and are situated in lots 53 and 54 of Peter Lindell's 2nd Addition. The building runs 100 feet along Lindell and 430 feet along Vandeventer.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title J. Katherine N. Kurtz, Architectural Historian

For:
organization Interex

date 4 June 1984

street & number 470 North Kirkwood Road

(314) 821-7400
telephone (314) 727-6377

city or town St. Louis,

state MO 63122

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Fred A. Lafser
title Fred A. Lafser, Director and State Historic Preservation Officer, Department of Natural Resources

date

7/10/84

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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The Book of St. Louisans. St. Louis: The St. Louis Republic, 1912.

St. Louis Builder, December 1904, n.p.

St. Louis Globe-Democrat, 17 January 1909.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 21 August 1890; 19 May 1901; and 10 May 1908.

St. Louis Republic, 19 September 1909.

Sexton, R. W., ed. American Apartment Houses of Today. New York:
Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1926.

Continuation sheet The Louise Apartments Item number 11 Page 2

State Contact Person

2. Jim Denny, Chief, Survey & Registration
Department of Natural Resources
1915 Southridge Drive
Jefferson City

June 4, 1984
(314) 751-4096
Missouri 65101

3900

3B

STAIRWELL

3B

3B

STAIRWELL

3B

IRON

3B

IRON

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COURTYARD

3B

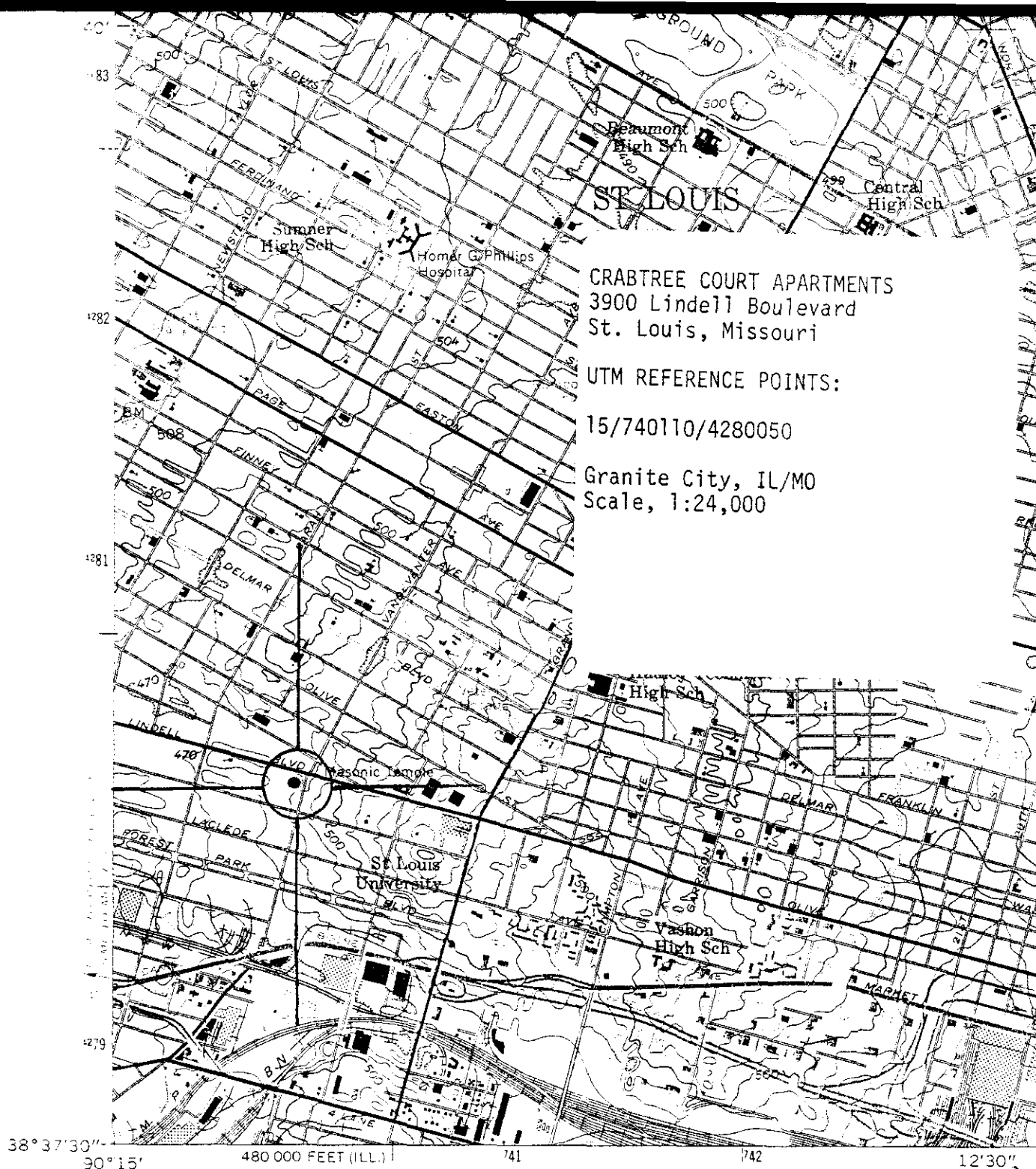
IRON

ALLEY

VANDEVENTER AVENUE

N
↑
1" = 33'

JUNE 1984



WEBSTER GROVES
1961 1:25,000

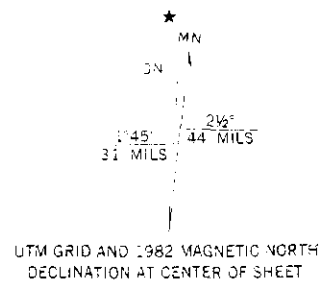
Mapped by the Geological Survey
Revised by the Army Map Service
Published for civil use by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography from planetable surveys by the Geological Survey 1930 and 1933. Planimetric detail revised from aerial photographs taken 1952. Field check 1954

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grids based on Illinois coordinate system, west zone and Missouri coordinate system, east zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
move the projection lines 2 meters south and
9 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks



FOR

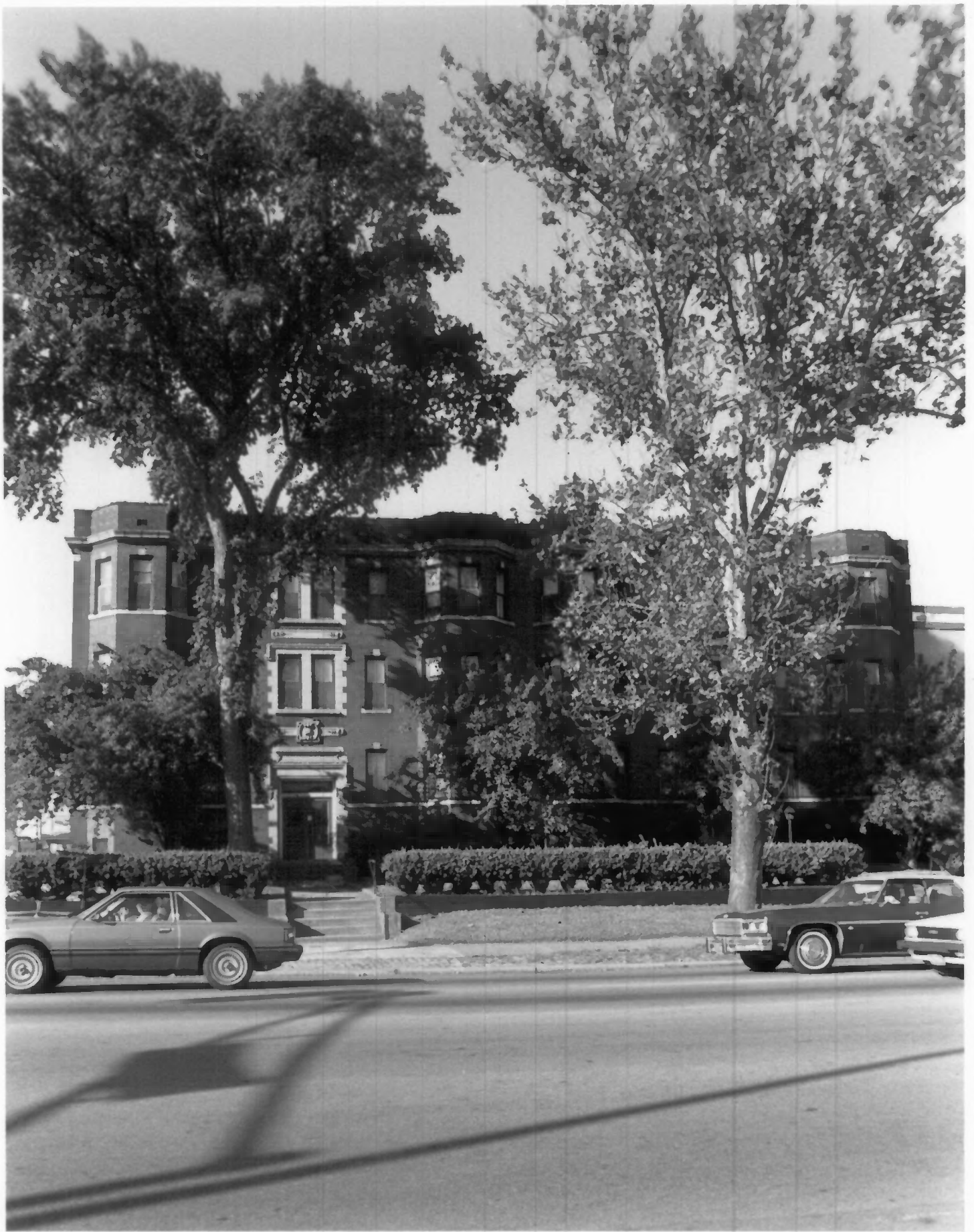
There may be private inholdings within
the boundaries of the National or
State reservations shown on this map

CRABTREE COURT APARTMENTS
3900 Lindell Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri

#1 of 4 North (Lindell) elevation

Photographer: Katherine N. Kurtz
Date: May 1984
Negative: 6016 Washington Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63112

North elevation; camera facing
south.

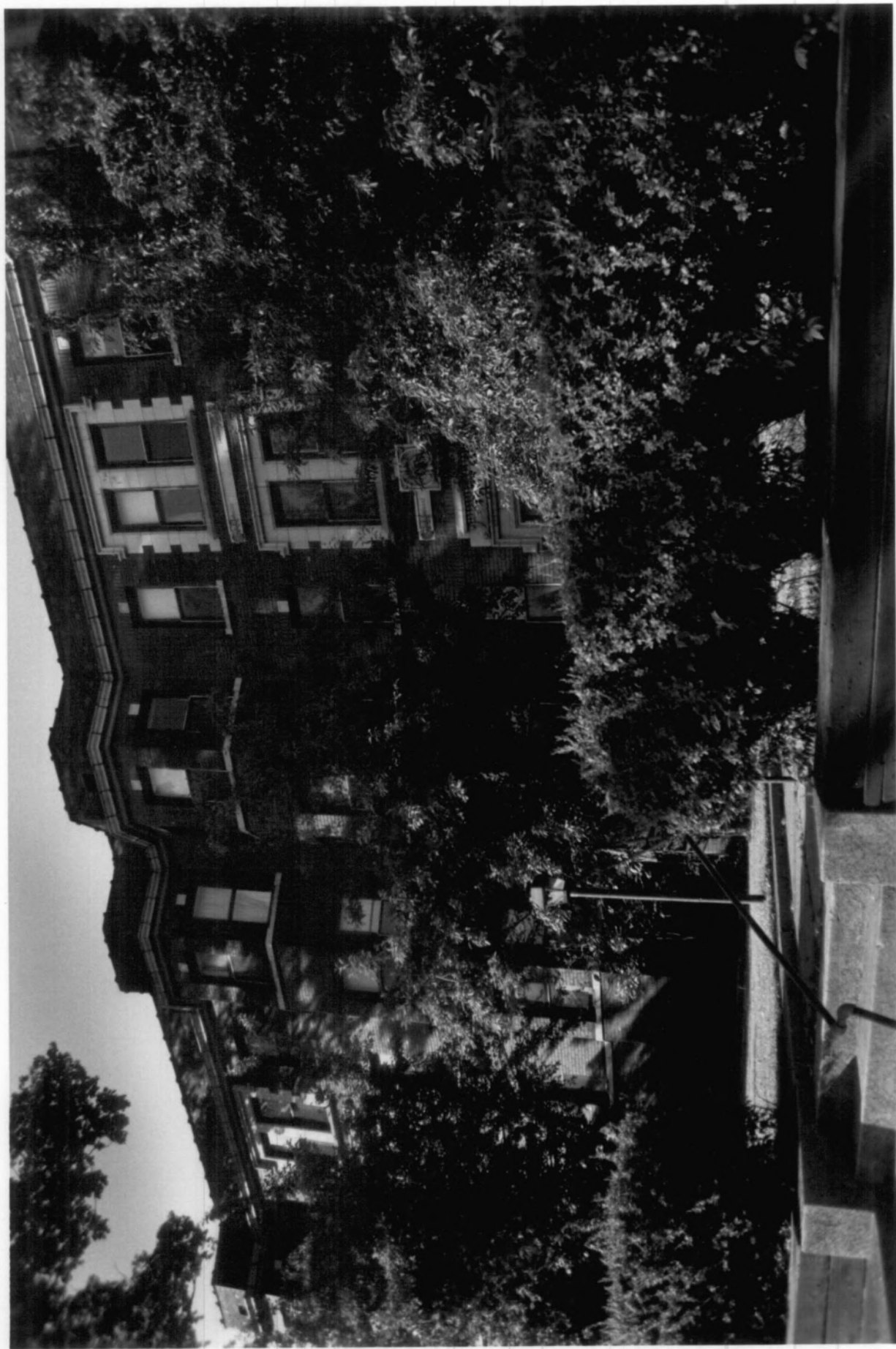


CRABTREE COURT APARTMENTS
3900 Lindell Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri

#2 of 4 Close-up of north elevation.

Photographer: Katherine N. Kurtz
Date: May 1984
Negative: 6016 Washington Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63112

Camera facing southeast.



CRABTREE COURT APARTMENTS
3900 Lindell Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri

#3 of 4 East (Vandeventer)
elevations.

Photographer: Katherine N. Kurtz
Date: May 1984
Negative: 6016 Washington Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63112

Camera facing northwest.



CRABTREE COURT APARTMENTS
3900 Lindell Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri

#4 of 4 View of Vandeventer
courtyard.

Photographer: Katherine N. Kurtz
Date: May 1984
Negative: 6016 Washington Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63112

West and south sides of courtyard;
camera facing southwest.

