

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

Historic name Mansion House Center Historic District
Other names/site number n/a
Name of related Multiple Property Listing n/a

2. Location

Street & number	<u>200-444 N. Fourth Street</u>	<u>n/a</u>	<u>not for publication</u>
City or town	<u>St. Louis</u>	<u>n/a</u>	<u>vicinity</u>
State	<u>Missouri</u>	Code	<u>MO</u>
County	<u>St. Louis [Independent City]</u>	Code	<u>510</u>
Zip code	<u>63101</u>		

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

Toni M. Prawl 07/06/16
Signature of certifying official/Title Toni M. Prawl, Ph.D., Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register

other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

Mansion House Center Historic District
Name of Property

St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	
8		buildings
		sites
1		structures
1		objects
10	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

COMMERCE: business

RELIGION: religious facility

COMMERCE: restaurant

TRANSPORTATION: road-related (vehicular)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

DOMESTIC: hotel

COMMERCE: business

vacant

TRANSPORTATION: road-related (vehicular)

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT: International Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: METAL

CONCRETE

roof: _____

other: _____

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION ON CONTINUATION PAGES

Mansion House Center Historic District
Name of Property

St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- 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

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE ON CONTINUATION PAGES

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): n/a

Areas of Significance

Architecture

Period of Significance

1964-1966

Significant Dates

1966

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Schwarz & Van Hoefen

Moran-Turner

Layton, Layton & Associates

Mansion House Center Historic District
Name of Property

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County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 6.4

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>38.629627</u>	<u>-90.186928</u>	3	<u>38.628502</u>	<u>-90.186327</u>
	Latitude:	Longitude:		Latitude:	Longitude:
2	<u>38.629482</u>	<u>-90.186353</u>	4	<u>38.627986</u>	<u>-90.186448</u>
	Latitude:	Longitude:		Latitude:	Longitude:

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)
_____ NAD 1927 or _____ NAD 1983

1	_____	_____	_____	3	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (On continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (On continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	<u>Lynn Josse and Matt Bivens</u>	date	<u>March 25, 2016</u>
organization	<u>Lafser & Associates</u>	street & number	<u>1215 Fern Ridge Parkway, Suite 110</u>
city or town	<u>St. Louis</u>	telephone	<u>(314) 560-9903</u>
e-mail	<u>msbivens@lafser.com</u>	state	<u>MO</u>
		zip code	<u>63141</u>

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Photographs**
- **Owner Name and Contact Information**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Mansion House Center Historic District
Name of Property

St. Louis (Independent City), MO
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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log:

Name of Property: Mansion House Center Historic District

City or Vicinity: St. Louis

County: St. Louis [Independent City] State: Missouri

Photographer: Lynn Josse

Date Photographed: January-February 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 of 15
Overview from Eads Bridge
Camera facing SW
January, 2016 | 6 of 15
300 N. Fourth St.
Camera facing E
February, 2016 | 11 of 15
Promenade, Restaurant (335
N. Third St.) and 300 N.
Fourth St.
Camera facing SE
February, 2016 |
| 2 of 15
200 N. Fourth St.
Camera facing NE
February, 2016 | 7 of 15
400-440 N. Fourth St.
from Eads Bridge
Camera facing SW
January, 2016 | 12 of 15
Restaurant (335 N. Third St.)
Camera facing NW
January, 2016 |
| 3 of 15
200-400 N. Fourth St.
Camera facing NE
February, 2016 | 8 of 15
400-440 N. Fourth St.
Camera facing NE
February, 2016 | 13 of 15
Promenade and 220 N. Fourth
St.
Camera facing N
February, 2016 |
| 4 of 15
300 N. Fourth St. and
promenade
Camera facing N
January, 2016 | 9 of 15
330-400 N. Fourth St.
Camera facing NE
February, 2016 | 14 of 15
Detail of 300 N. Fourth St.
Camera facing N
January, 2016 |
| 5 of 15
300-400 N. Fourth St.
Camera facing N
February, 2016 | 10 of 15
Chapel (no street address)
Camera facing NE
January, 2016 | 15 of 15
Garage and entrance
at 400 N. Fourth St.
Camera facing E
February, 2016 |

Mansion House Center Historic District
Name of Property

St. Louis (Independent City), MO
County and State

Figure Log:

Include figures on continuation pages at the end of the nomination.

Figure 1 Site plan. 2

Figure 2: This diagram indicates the layout of the parking garage which underlies the entire historic district. Source: Lynn Josse photo taken in Gentry’s Landing Parking garage, February 2016. 11

Figure 3: Aerial view facing southwest shows some original landscape elements along with the chapel (left) the tower at 200 N. Fourth Street (top left), the commercial building at 220 N. Fourth Street (top right), and the tower at 300 N. Fourth Street (right). Source: Bing Maps, 2016. 12

Figure 4: This photographed drawing indicates the original plan for the putting green which was located on the promenade immediately south of the 400 N. Fourth Street tower. North is to the left; the building at the left side is 400 N. Fourth Street, and the building at the bottom right is 330 N. Fourth Street. Source: Lynn Josse photograph from Gentry’s Landing management office. 13

Figure 5: Aerial View of St. Louis Riverfront and downtown, circa 1930. Source: Missouri Historical Society. Most of the tall office buildings in the downtown core were located west of Fourth Street, leaving a wide swath of smaller, older buildings along the riverfront. 16

Figure 6: Aerial View of St. Louis Riverfront and downtown, circa 1941. Source: Missouri Historical Society. 19

Figure 7: Renderings released in April, 1959 included two 40-story towers. Source: “Forty-Story Glass Towers planned for Riverfront Development” clipping, source unknown, April 26, 1959 (St. Louis Public Library “Mansion House” folder). 20

Figure 8: By September of 1959, original plans for two 40-story towers had been changed to show three 36-story towers along with related commercial buildings. At this point the plan also showed a southern block that included the existing Pierce Building and a new motel. The southern block was removed from the plan before construction began, although officials were still discussing the proposed motel as late as 1966. Source: “Luxury Apartment Plans for River Front Unveiled,” *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, September 4, 1959. 21

Figure 9: This image from a c. 1965 advertisement shows a view that did not exist of two structures that had probably not yet been completed. Even so, the image succeeds in conveying an image of the modernity of the apartments and their surroundings. Source: “Mansion House Center - High in the Heart of the Metropolitan Area.” 24

Figure 10: In the cover illustration from Banham's book, Paul Rudolph’s plan for the Lower Manhattan Expressway Project illustrates the idea of a “frame” as applied to the megastructure. Here the conception is near-monolithic and monumental rather than a composition of differentiated parts. 31

Figure 11: New York’s Waterside Plaza complex (1972, Davis, Brody & Associates) a megastructure with a multi-use podium which covers parking. Photo Source: rew-online.com 32

Figure 12: Marina City Model shows office building (left), theater (front), and residential towers on a mixed-use podium. Chicago Tribune Photo. 33

Figure 13: Mansion House Center Historic District map with numbered vertices. Source: Bing Maps, 2016. 39

Figure 14: Photo Key. Original Source: Sanborn Map Company, 1970. 41

Figure 15: Sanborn map with text visible. Source: Sanborn Map Company, 1970. 42

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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Mansion House Center Historic District
Name of Property St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri
County and State n/a
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Summary

The Mansion House Center Historic District is a complex of eight buildings and a connecting structure, located in downtown St. Louis, Missouri. The complex was designed and began construction in 1964. Completed in 1966, Mansion House Center was built as a unified superblock and exemplifies Modern design. All of the contributing buildings (three 28-story residential towers, three low-rise office buildings, a restaurant building and a chapel) are connected by a contributing structure: a promenade, which is lifted a story above the street level, and which covers an at-grade and underground parking garage. There is also a contributing object, a granite basin and fountain in front of the center tower. Mansion House Center was built around a previously existing building, the 1957-1958 Peabody Coal Company headquarters building, which is included in the district boundary and is already individually listed in the National Register.¹ The Mansion House Center district fronts on Fourth Street and runs between Fourth Street and Memorial Drive / Third Street. The northern boundary is Washington Avenue, and the southern boundary is Pine Street, four blocks to the south. The three towers are notable for their use of concrete structural columns at the lower levels, curtain walls of bronze-tinted aluminum panels alternating with glazing and balconies at upper stories, and flat roofs. The three commercial buildings are concrete and glass, while the restaurant building on the promenade between the northern two towers is concrete with a thin shell concrete roof, the design of which is echoed in the covered walkways and stairs across the promenade. The chapel building reflects some of the bronzed metal elements of the towers, but its square design, with wood elements, metal grills, and stylized metal steeple element, causes it to stand out from the rest of the complex. With the exception of the previously listed Peabody Coal Company Building, all of the architectural elements of the Mansion House Center Historic District were designed by the firm of Schwarz & Van Hoefen, with Richard Henmi as the associate in charge of design. Despite minor alterations, the district as a whole retains integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, association, location, and setting.

Setting

The Mansion House Center Historic District occupies a four-block site. (Please see Figure 1 and Figure 13.) The blocks form a north-south strip. To the east of Mansion House, across Memorial Drive/Third Street and Interstate 70, lies the landscaped northern end of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, and beyond that is the Mississippi River. The elevated promenade which connects the buildings of the complex also forms a barrier between the roadways and national park to the east of the district and the downtown blocks which lie to the west. The three towers and three commercial buildings are all accessed from Fourth Street. Facing them across Fourth Street to the west is a row of historic buildings which includes the eight-story red brick Laclede Building of 1886-1888 (NRHP 8/06/1998); the 11-story Security Building of 1890-92 (NRHP 2/10/2000); and Washington Avenue's seven-story J. Kennard & Sons Carpet Company Building of 1901 (NRHP 5/05/2000). To the south is a modern hotel which incorporates a re-clad historic building (the Pierce Building) and a large addition.

¹ Julie Ann LaMouria, "Peabody Coal Company National Headquarters" National Register Registration Form, listed 12/03/2008.

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n/a
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Buildings within the district are four-sided with 90 degree angles (except the 45-degree cutaway entrance wall of the Peabody Coal Company Building) and align to a grid with the streets to the north, west, and south. The street grid is about 25 degrees off from the cardinal directions; for ease of description, cardinal directions will be used instead of the more precise variations.

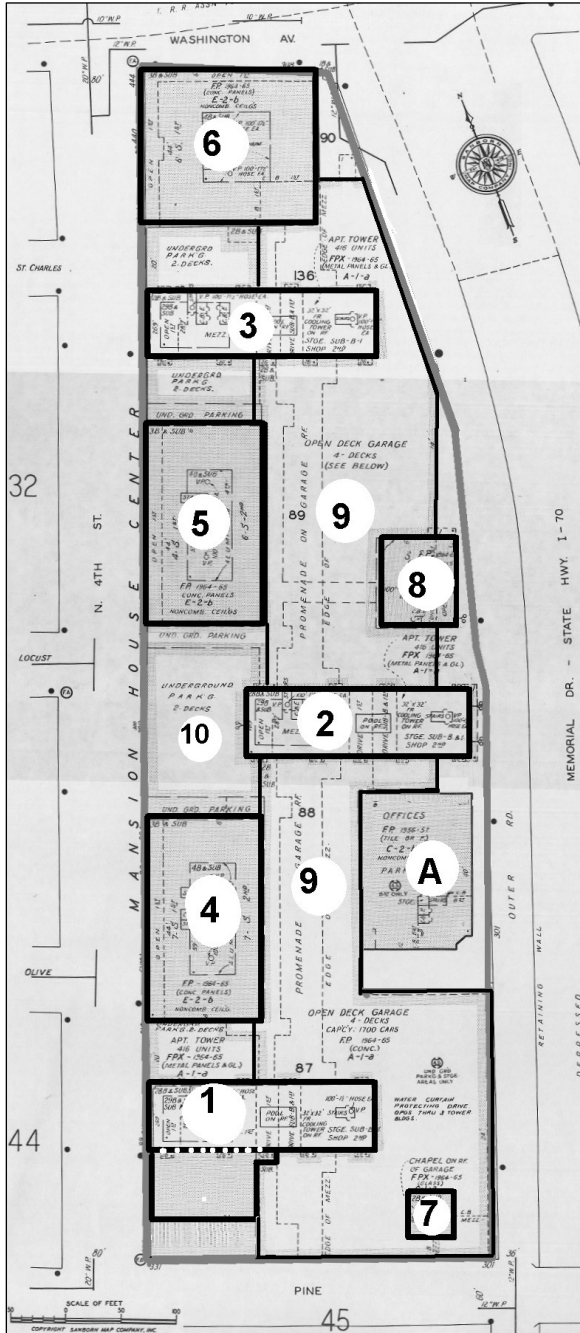


Figure 1 Site plan.
 Source: Sanborn Map Company, 1970.
 1: 200 N. Fourth St. (Contributing)
 2: 300 N. Fourth St. (Contributing)
 3: 400 N. Fourth St. (Contributing)
 4: 220 N. Fourth St. (Contributing)
 5: 330 N. Fourth St. (Contributing)
 6: 440 N. Fourth St. (Contributing)
 7: Chapel (Contributing)
 8: Restaurant (Contributing)
 9: Parking garage and Promenade (Contributing Structure)
 10: Granite Fountain (Contributing Object)
 A: Peabody Coal Company Headquarters Building (previously listed in NR)

Towers

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Mansion House Center Historic District
Name of Property St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

The three towers, located at 200 N. Fourth Street, 300 N. Fourth Street, and 400 N. Fourth Street (numbered 1-3 on the figure above), were designed by Schwarz & Van Hoefen partner Hari Van Hoefen.² All three are 28 stories and have the same size, proportions, and exterior materials (**Photo 1**). The style of the towers is best described as Miesian, following Mies van der Rohe's precedent of using curtain walls, visible metal frame elements, open floor plans, exposed materials, and rigid symmetry.³

Fronting the street level, four square structural columns define three bays. The small-aggregate panels on the columns or pilotis are not flush at the corners, revealing that the concrete is in the form of applied precast veneer rather than monolithic. The front wall is set back behind the columns as noted in the individual descriptions.

From the third through the 28th levels, the east and west elevations are revealed as a simple grid of 13 bays divided by metal elements which resemble rectangular beams with small T-channels projecting outward from them. At the base of each story, each of the 13 bays has a small rectangular kick panel of molded aluminum which projects outward to form an irregular shape with a triangular section. (Please see **Photo 14** for a detail.) Above these, each bay at each story has either an aluminum panel (at the first, fourth, fifth, seventh, ninth, tenth, and thirteenth bays) or full glazing (at the second and third bays, the sixth, eighth, and eleventh and twelfth). The metal panels are a dark gray-brown, described as bronze in the early accounts of the building, which is the result of a duranodic anodization process.⁴ Tinted plate glass was specified for the tower windows and is generally intact.

The corner detailing of the towers is a double set back corner consisting of three 90 degree exterior corners and two 90 degree interior corners to soften the edges of the towers. These elements stretch the full height of the towers, interrupted by seams that show the floor divisions and continue the horizontal lines established by the kick panels. The center exterior angle lines up with the outer columns of the base. This detailing creates the visual impression that the piers continue from the ground to the top of the building and that the upper stories' skin is a separate layer.

The north and south elevations of the buildings are made more complex by the introduction of cantilevered concrete balconies at intervals. Both north and south elevations have 47 bays divided and articulated with the same cladding and vertical beams as the east and west elevations. Windows are located in twos and threes as follows: at bays 2-3, 6-7, 10-11, 14-15, 18-20, 23-25, 28-30, 33-34, 37-38, 41-42, and 45-46. Each expanse of windows is separated by two bays of metal panels, with a single paneled bay at either end.

At the north elevation there are four vertical stacks of balconies located at bays 2-4, 18-20, 28-30, and 44-46. At the sunnier south elevation each building has five vertical stacks of

² Richard Henmi, personal interview by Lynn Josse, March 24, 2016.

³ Style definitions in this form follow the Modernist categories established by the Virginia Department of Natural Resources in its helpful document "New Dominion Virginia, Architectural Style Guide," prepared by Melinda Bezirdjian and Lena Sweeten McDonald, 2014. Accessed online at <http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/newdominion/newdomstylgdeapril2014version.pdf> on May 16, 2016.

⁴ Richard Henmi, personal interview by Lynn Josse, March 24, 2016.

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Mansion House Center Historic District
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balconies. These are located at bays 2-4, 14-16, 23-25, 32-35, and 44-46. The balconies are set in a staccato rhythm beginning at the third story (the first residential story and the first story of the character-defining curtain wall); there are no balconies at floors 4, 7, 10, 12, 15, 18, 20, 23, 26, and 28 (the top floor). Put more simply, the balconies are aligned in rows and skip every second or third floor.

Facing north and south, the balconies' concrete bulkheads or lower walls are thick with an outward slant that recalls the lower metal panels. Set above these knee walls is an additional short metal railing. The two sides of the balconies have metal railings without the concrete section.

Under each of the towers are two basement levels which access the upper two levels of the parking garage. All three towers' roof levels retain original swimming pools. Two penthouse structures are located at each roof, one with mechanical services and one with resident access related to the swimming pool.

Original glazing and balcony doors are intact at the upper stories of all three of the towers.

From a distance, the only visible alteration to the towers is the elevator addition to the southern tower, noted below.

1. 200 N. Fourth Street (Crowne Plaza Hotel)

1 Contributing building

Photos 1, 2, 3

Architect: Schwarz & Van Hoefen

Date: 1964-1966

The southern tower of the complex is built all the way to the Fourth Street sidewalk, although the two-story open space in front of the entrance avoids crowding the street. The four freestanding columns at the street (which support the upper stories) and the four behind them have been reclad in a smooth material, thickening the original elements. A drive runs between the forward set of piers and the second one, topped by a shallow vaulted thin concrete canopy supported by concrete beams. The canopy was extended to the south using the same style and complimentary materials in c. 1998.

At the base of the southern elevation, set flush with the original front wall of the first two stories, is a complimentary modern addition which contains the hotel bar and escalators (Photo 2). Completed in 1998, this simple cubic volume is metal and glass that compliments the original building. The same material was used to redesign the first two stories of the original tower, lending the illusion that the cubic addition actually extends under the tower. The addition has eight bays facing west to Fourth Street. Eight bays face south to Pine Street, but the easternmost bay is half the size of the others. The addition's roof is flat.

The south tower also has a 1998 elevator tower appended to the north elevation. Located beginning at the 12th bay from the east (right), the glass-clad addition is compatible in terms of

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materials and design. The addition has no impact on the front of the building facing west or on the other two elevations, so this building is still considered contributing.

Balconies at the southern tower are painted to match the rest of the building.

2. 300 N. Fourth Street (Mansion House Apartments) 1 Contributing building
Photos 1,4,5,6
Architect: Schwarz & Van Hoefen
Date: 1964-1966

Unlike the north and south towers, the center tower is sited back from Fourth Street with a front courtyard. An asphalt drive circles a low square black granite basin that contains a fountain and which is counted and described separately. At the front of the building the drive passes under a thin shell concrete cross-vaulted canopy which is supported on concrete piers and beams.

The first two stories of the center tower are not deeply recessed like those of the other two towers, due to the fact that the building is set back from the street and the drive can pass in front of it rather than through it. The first story has a glass curtain wall under metal panels; this is set back to align with the back of the four structural columns at the front of the building. The second story juts forward from this and aligns with the front of the four columns; it too uses a glass wall, in this case placed over metal panels. To either side of the first story, the parking garage structure (described separately) meets the building at the second set of columns.

Balconies at the center tower are painted white.

This tower is the most intact of the three, with no significant additions or alterations.

3. 400 N. Fourth Street (Gentry's Landing Apartments) 1 Contributing building
Photos 1, 7, 8
Architect: Schwarz & Van Hoefen
Date: 1964-1966

The buildings at 400 and 440 N. Fourth Street have been rebranded as the Gentry's Landing complex; the visual component of the rebranding is the use of brick veneer at the base of the freestanding structural columns supporting both buildings (Photo 8). Brick also clads the first two stories to the left of the tower's front doors. The columns are also encircled with metal bands (four per column) at the first two stories, presumably to secure the precast concrete panels. These alterations are both superficial and reversible.

Like the southern tower, the northern tower's first story is set back a bay and a half, allowing for a drive to pass between the first two orders of structural columns. The drive is covered with a shallow vaulted thin cast concrete shell supported on concrete beams tied into the building's structural columns, very similar to the same feature at the southern tower.

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The lower two stories are set back behind the second set of structural columns, as in the southern tower. Unlike that building, however, the glazing here appears to be original. The right side of the two stories consist of glazing separated by thin metal mullions; a band of metal panels separates the first story from the second, and there is a set of double doors (fully glazed metal-framed doors) centered.

In the upper stories of the northern tower, some of the exterior panels have been pierced with a metal venting panel which is approximately half the height and two thirds of the width of the original panel. This alteration was made following the separation of the buildings' ownerships in 1989. At the north elevation there are seven of these per story, located at bays 4, 9, 13, 17, 26, 27, and 43. At the south elevation these are located at bays 4, 9, 16, 21, 22, 31, 35, 36, and 43. These vents match the dark bronze-brown color of the panels and are not noticeable from a distance. This results in relatively minor changes to the building's materials and design, and the building is still considered contributing.

Balconies at the north tower are painted white.

Three-story buildings

The three three-story concrete low-rise commercial buildings were designed by Richard Henmi, associate in charge of design at Schwarz & Van Hoefen.⁵ The style of these buildings can best be described as International Style. The first floor facing Fourth Street, with the fully glazed walls set back behind columns, are reminiscent of the architectural of Mies van der Rohe. According to the National Register style guide promulgated by the Virginia Department of Natural Resources, the International Style's characteristics include lack of ornament, light metal or concrete frames, open plans, flat roofs, use of glass curtain walls, and the use of stilts or piers at the ground level.⁶ That document pictures several building which use similar devices, such as concrete-framed windows.

The elevations facing Fourth Street have square concrete structural columns in front of a recessed first story. The storefronts at the first story are fully glazed except as noted. The second and third stories have vertical windows in two-story frames with a concrete spandrel panel between them. In the narrow vertical space between each window frame is a channel which is flush with the wall plane above the third story and below the second story windows. The columns of the first story are spaced at every four window bays along Fourth Street.

Roofs of these buildings are flat with a mechanical core that rises a full additional story at the center of the roofs. There are also two basement levels that connect to the upper levels of the parking garage.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Bezirdjian and McDonald, 31.

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n/a

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The cast concrete elements at these buildings use different aggregates according to the following schedule: The columns and the elements that can be considered the main wall of the building have a small pebble aggregate. No aggregate is visible in the cast concrete window frames. The spandrel panels use a large pebble aggregate. In all three buildings the columns are painted neutral colors that resemble concrete.

4. 220 N. Fourth St. 1 contributing building

Photos 3, 4

Architect: Schwarz & Van Hoefen

Date: 1964-1966

This three-story building is located between the southern tower and the center tower, with a parking garage entrance set back at either side. The southern elevation features store windows between the structural concrete columns. Above this, the two stories facing south are blind, clad with precast concrete panels which match the material of the columns.

The west elevation or façade has nine bays separated by ten structural square columns clad with precast concrete. The storefronts correspond to the bay divisions. A lit plastic signboard is in place at the top of each bay between the structural columns at street level; some have business names, and some are blank.

The entrance to the upper story offices is at the fourth bay from the left, which is further recessed from the front wall to add emphasis. Here the original double doors and a side window are slid to the right side of the bay. Wall surfaces are slabs of what appears to be travertine, in contrast to the concrete of the rest of the complex.

The north elevation is articulated in a similar manner to the south, with glazing at the first story and blind walls above.

The east elevation of this building faces the promenade level. Here, only two stories are visible, the lower level being underneath the level of the promenade. This elevation is visible at the far left of Photo 4. The second story opens onto the promenade with double doors at some bays, while the remaining bays are fully glazed in the manner of storefronts. The top floor picks up the same expression of narrow vertical windows in concrete enframements found on the front elevation.

The commercial building at 220 N. Fourth Street retains integrity; its original walls are intact and much of the original glazing is still in place

5. 330 N. Fourth St. 1 contributing building

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Photos 5, 9, 11

Architect: Schwarz & Van Hoefen

Date: 1964-1966

Like the southern commercial building, the center commercial building has nine bays facing Fourth Street. The north and south elevations feature glazing at the first story and blind precast concrete panels at the second and third.

The main entrance to the upper stories is at the fourth bay from the left, and is articulated in a similar manner to that of the southern building. At the seventh bay, the original glazing has been covered with a modern board (incompatible) with compatible metal and glass door in the board.

The east elevation of this building faces the promenade level (Photo 11). Here, only two stories are visible, the lower level being underneath the level of the promenade. The second story opens onto the promenade with double doors at some bays, while the remaining bays are fully glazed in the manner of storefronts. The top floor picks up the same expression of narrow vertical windows in concrete enframements found on the front elevation.

The commercial building at 330 N. Fourth Street retains integrity; its original walls are intact and much of the original glazing is still in place.

6. 440 N. Fourth St. 1 contributing building

Photos 7, 8

Architect: Schwarz & Van Hoefen

Date: 1964-1966

This building is larger than the other two commercial buildings due to its location at the northern end of the site. First story commercial space faces west to Fourth Street, north to Washington Avenue, and east to Third Street.

The western elevation facing Fourth Street, like the other two three-story buildings, has a fully glazed first story recessed behind concrete columns which support the second and third stories. This building's Fourth Street elevation is seven bays wide. The eight columns have nonhistoric brick veneer at the bases, like those at the northern tower. They are also encircled by two narrow metal bands each, presumably to stabilize the concrete panels. Unlike the other two commercial buildings, this one is fully articulated with windows on the south elevation of the second and third stories.

The northern elevation has six bays (using the first story bay divisions); its first story is fully glazed with one entry at the right side of the second bay from the left. Unlike the western elevation, here the structural columns are spaced at every five window bays instead of every four.

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The eastern elevation is somewhat different than the other two. Here, the first story is not recessed behind pilotis. Instead, the bays of the first story are divided by concrete piers which are spaced to align with every four windows bays of the second and third story.

The commercial building at 440 N. Fourth Street retains integrity; its original walls are intact and much of the original glazing is still in place.

7. Chapel 1 contributing building

Photo 10

Architect: Schwarz & Van Hoefen

Date: 1964-1966

This small building does not have a separate address. It was designed by Richard Henmi of Schwarz & Van Hoefen.⁷ Located immediately east of the 200 N. Fourth St. Tower, it is a single oversized story with a simple square plan. At the west elevation, five concrete piers divide the façade into four bays. Each bay is identical, with a pair of wood double doors above which is a paired set of bronze (or bronze-like) grills. To either side of the concrete columns and at the center of each bay (between the doors and behind the grills) is a metal upright of the same material. These project slightly from the wall and almost a foot above the roof level, and could be described as fins. The other three elevations use the same structural system, with five concrete columns defining four bays which are further divided by the metal fin elements. These elevations are fully glazed between the concrete columns, although some of the windows are broken and boarded. The interior of the chapel is open space with a logical waffle truss concrete ceiling. On top of the flat roof is a nondenominational steeple element consisting of four abstract metal fins or sails.

The style of this building is mixed. The heavy doors and grills, as well as the building's symmetry, recall New Formalism. The overall metal and glass aesthetic of three elevations, and the exposed metal frame of the building make the building a good candidate to be considered International Style.⁸

With no exterior modifications other than the boarded windows, the chapel retains integrity.

8. Restaurant (335 N. Third Street) 1 contributing building

Photos 11, 12

Architect: Schwarz & Van Hoefen

Date: 1964-1966

This building was also designed by Schwarz & Van Hoefen's Richard Henmi.⁹ It is three stories at its east elevation on Third Street and two stories at the remaining elevations which face the promenade. Its primary access is from the promenade, and the west elevation is considered

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Bezirdjian and McDonald, 31 and 50.

⁹ Interview with Richard Henmi.

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the façade. The west elevation is divided into four bays by five concrete columns which extend the full height of the building. Both stories are fully glazed, with metal panels between floors. Each bay is divided by metal mullions into three vertical divisions and three horizontal divisions (the center of which is the band of metal panels between floors). The entrance is in the third of four bays, aligning with the covered walk on the promenade (described separately at #9).

From Third Street and at the eastern bay of the three-bay north and south elevations, the building reads as a full three stories. The upper two stories retain the same bay divisions and design that they do on the two-story elevations. A concrete beam separates the first story from the upper two. All of the concrete elements of this building are painted white.

The roof of the building is thin shell concrete with deep overhangs. The roof has peaked sections over the center division of each bay, and the second story glazing extends up into the peaks.

Like the chapel, this building is mixed in its stylistic influences. Its symmetry and overhanging roof recall New Formalism, but the overall style could probably best be considered International Style because of the exposed concrete frame, open plan, large expanses of glass, and focus on volume rather than mass.¹⁰

The restaurant building retains integrity; its exterior appears very similar to its historic appearance.

9. Parking Garage and Promenade

1 contributing structure

Photos 4, 10, 11, 13, 15

Architect: Schwarz & Van Hoefen

Landscape Architect: Layton, Layton & Associates

Date: 1964-1966

Originally advertised as a 1700-car garage, the parking structure which runs beneath the entirety of the complex now has 1500 spaces on the original seven levels. The concrete structure has structural concrete columns supporting ramped floors. Two parking levels are above ground and five are below ground.

It is clear that the parking garage is under three different ownerships from the different paint and lighting schemes used in different sections. Overall, the garage appears to be in good condition. The exterior walls of the garage at the eastern edge of the building are concrete panels spaced to provide light and ventilation to the interior.

¹⁰ Bezirdjian and McDonald, 31 and 47.

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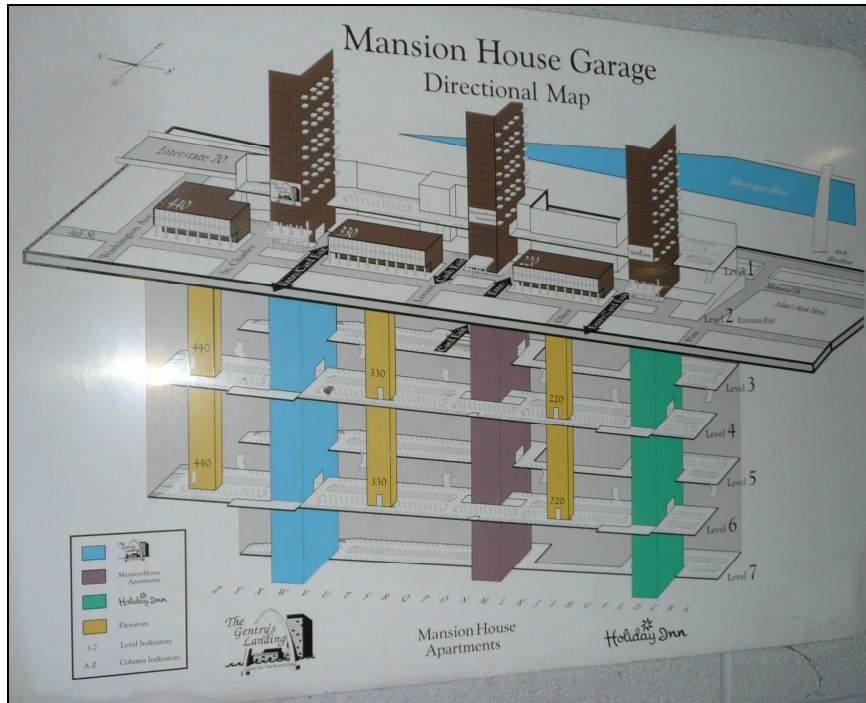


Figure 2: This diagram indicates the layout of the parking garage which underlies the entire historic district. Source: Lynn Josse photo taken in Gentry's Landing Parking garage, February 2016.

The top deck of the parking structure is the promenade, a feature originally designed from plans by landscape architects Layton, Layton & Associates to connect all of the buildings of the Mansion house complex, separating it from the surrounding city and providing amenities for residents of the three towers.

Like the garage, the promenade shows evidence of being under different ownerships. The southern two sections, south of the 300 N. Fourth Street tower, retain some original elements, including a serpentine wall north of the chapel.¹¹ At this time, the original landscape design for the southern sections has not been located. Figure 3 shows the southern two sections from the air. The major elements of the design include a raised area in the southeast corner which elevates the chapel, walks, and a landscaped fountain. The fountain's setting, a curved brown brick wall, is visible in Photo 4. The paving at this southern section consists of square concrete fields separated by a grid of brick. The section of the promenade located behind the 220 N. Fourth St. building is divided into two rectangular plots of grass surrounding by precast concrete square tiles.

¹¹ Although the original plans of this section have not been located, architect Richard Henmi noted that the wall and other elements were part of his original design. Richard Henmi personal interview by Lynn Josse.

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Figure 3: Aerial view facing southwest shows some original landscape elements along with the chapel (left) the tower at 200 N. Fourth Street (top left), the commercial building at 220 N. Fourth Street (top right), and the tower at 300 N. Fourth Street (right). Source: Bing Maps, 2016.

The space east of the 330 N. Fourth Street building is divided into plots that are filled with dark gravel, visible in Photo 11. This section stands in stark contrast to the original promenade plans for either side of 400 N. Fourth Street. As shown in Figure 4, the original landscape reflected 1960s aesthetics as expressed in a putting green and other lawn areas.

Throughout the promenade are freestanding metal and concrete canopies, which cover the main walkways between buildings, and stairs to and from the street level. These are visible in Photos 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, and 13. All are painted white. The covers over the walkways consist of painted metal structures supporting a thin shell concrete roof. The concrete roof is flat in the canopies that run along the east walls of 220 and 330 N. Fourth. In the other canopy structures, which are slightly taller so they can overlap, the roofs mimic that of the restaurant building, with peaks centered between the metal supports. The stairs are of similar construction and design, with the addition of concrete treads and painted metal handrails.

The promenade was designed from the beginning to house a collection of sculptures. The eleven sculptures which were installed in 1966-1967 were sold at auction as part of the foreclosure proceedings in 1989.¹²

The loss of original design elements, especially in the northern section of the promenade, affects the integrity of the structure. Overall, though, the structure retains integrity because of the intactness of the stair and walkway elements, the overall form, the curved wall and other elements of the southern section, and the completely intact parking garage beneath.

¹² Patricia Degener, "Sold! Record \$1.9 Million Bid for Calder Sculpture," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, May 25, 1989. (Page unknown.) The \$1.9 million bid for Calder's "The Tree" set a record for Calder's sculpture.

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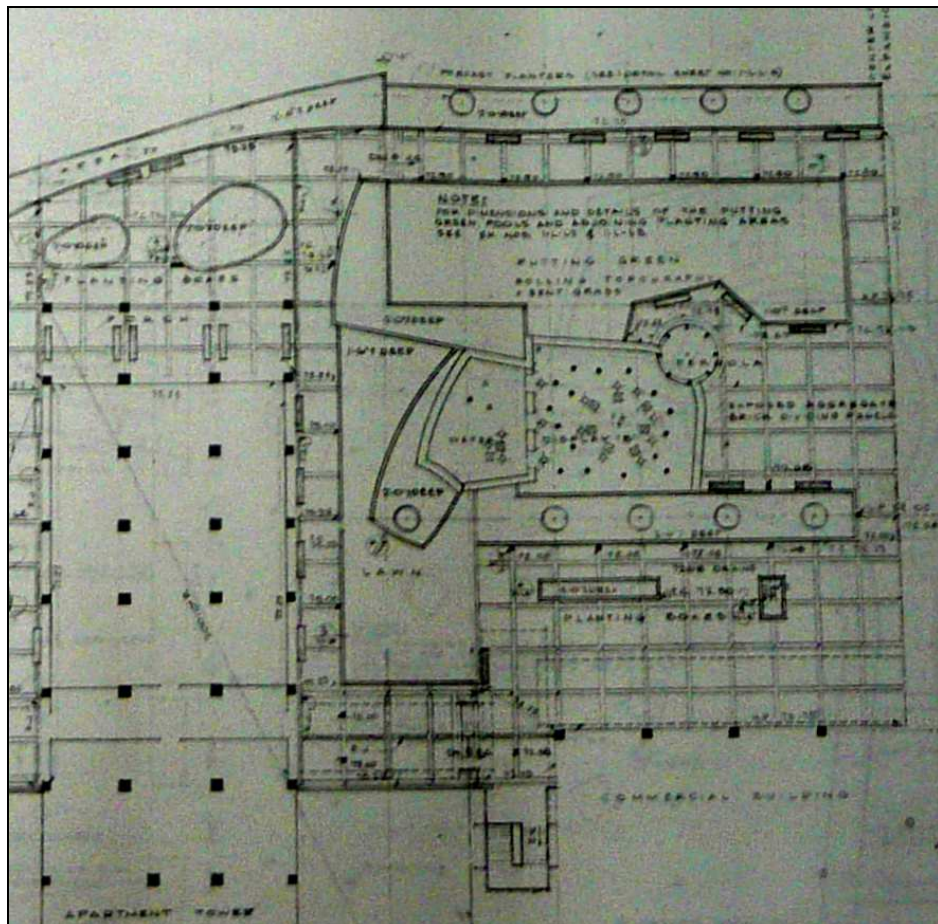


Figure 4: This photographed drawing indicates the original plan for the putting green which was located on the promenade immediately south of the 400 N. Fourth Street tower. North is to the left; the building at the left side is 400 N. Fourth Street, and the building at the bottom right is 330 N. Fourth Street. Source: Lynn Josse photograph from Gentry's Landing management office.

10. Granite Basin and Fountain 1 contributing object
Photos 6, 9
Designer: Layton & Layton (presumed)
Date: c. 1966

This low granite basin and fountain is the only section of the original landscape design that was not on the promenade level. The square pool is contained by black granite on four sides. On the top surface, facing Fourth Street, it has two bronze plaques which serve the traditional roles of a cornerstone. The southern plaque gives the roll of those involved in the Mansion House Center project (developers, architects, builders, Engineers, and Landscape Architects). The northern plaque is in memory of Edwin L. Zohner, A.B., L L B., 1933-1966. The fountain is

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intact and in good condition, and serves the commemorative role of a cornerstone for the entire complex.

A. Peabody Coal Company Headquarters 1 previously listed building

Photos 4, 13

Architect: Ralph Cole Hall

Date: 1957-1958

This three-story office building has a rectangular plan with its entrance in a cutaway corner at the southeast. The exterior is granite with aluminum and white metal detailing, described in the National Register nomination as a Modern composition with Art Deco influence.¹³ The building has no significant exterior alterations and retains integrity. As a previously listed building, it is not included in the contributing/noncontributing resource count.

Integrity

The Mansion House Center District as a whole retains integrity. All eight buildings of Mansion House Center are contributing, most with few visible exterior alterations. The promenade and parking structure which connects the buildings is extant and largely intact, although some of the design elements of the promenade have been altered or eliminated. The complex was built around the pre-existing Peabody Coal Company Headquarters building, which is intact and does not affect the integrity of the district.

¹³ LaMouria, p. 7.1.

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Summary

The Mansion House Center Historic District is located at 200-440 N. Fourth Street in downtown St. Louis, Missouri. It consists of three residential towers, three three-story office buildings, a chapel, restaurant, parking garage and promenade, a fountain which is counted as an object, and the previously constructed Peabody Coal Company Headquarters (individually listed in the National Register in 2008). Constructed between 1964 and 1966, the Mansion House Center complex is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Designed chiefly by Richard Henmi and Hari Van Hoefen of the architectural firm Schwarz & Van Hoefen, Mansion House Center was designed as a single multi-block complex with numerous separated uses. In the words of the 2013 survey of Modern Movement architecture in St. Louis, it ushered St. Louis into “the era of the ‘megastructure.’”¹⁴ The district is a locally significant example of a megastructure, a property type defined in 1964 by Fumihiko Maki as a “large frame in which all the functions of a city or part of a city are housed.”¹⁵ The complex’s many uses were reflected in the variety of architectural language used to differentiate the parts of the complex. Each use was expressed in a different version of International Style or Miesian language, with variations in materials, roof forms, and framing. The period of significance begins in 1964, the date of final architectural drawings and the beginning of construction for Mansion House Center, and ends in 1966, when most of the complex was completed and the first residents moved in.

Representation in Previous Surveys

In 2013, the City of St. Louis completed its thematic survey of Modern Movement non-residential architecture constructed between 1945 and 1975. The Mansion House Center complex, although overwhelmingly residential in nature, was included because of its mixed uses. As one of the city’s best examples of Modern Movement design, Mansion House was one of 25 properties recommended for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places.¹⁶ The survey recognized that “the Mansion House buildings; three bold rectangular towers with associated low-rise structures, all connected by parking below-grade; are an iconic part of the St. Louis skyline and excellent examples of Modern architecture.”¹⁷

¹⁴ Chris Madrid French, “Historic Context Statement: Modernist Architects in Practice in St. Louis, ca. 1945 – 1975” in “Thematic Survey of Modern Movement Non-Residential Architecture, 1945 – 1975, in St. Louis City.” (City of St. Louis Cultural Resources Office, 2013.), p. 120.

¹⁵ Quoted in Banham, p. 8.

¹⁶ City of St. Louis Cultural Resources Office, “Thematic Survey of Modern Movement Non-Residential Architecture, 1945 - 1975, in St. Louis City,” 2013. <https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/planning/cultural-resources/upload/131024-STL-Modern-Report.pdf> accessed March 24, 2016.

¹⁷ Kristin Minor, “Historic Context Statement: Architectural Trends, Forms, Materials and Expression Important in the St. Louis School of Modern Movement Architecture, c. 1940 -1975” in “Thematic Survey of Modern Movement Non-Residential Architecture, 1945 – 1975, in St. Louis City.” (City of St. Louis Cultural Resources Office, 2013.), p. 103.

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Background: Downtown St. Louis and City Planning

The City of St. Louis was founded as a trading post in 1764. During the French colonial period, the village stretched some 19 blocks north-south along the riverfront to a depth of three blocks.¹⁸ After Missouri became a state in 1821, St. Louis was recognized as a City in 1822. Expanded to a total of 385 acres, the new city limits stretched west to Seventh Street, with additions to the colonial grid at the north and south ends.¹⁹ An increase of city population from 6,694 to 16,649 between 1830 and 1840 corresponded to new areas of the city open for development. A significant portion of the downtown area was destroyed by fire on May 17, 1849. The concentrated rebuilding that followed firmly established the commercial center along the riverfront.

As the population of the city expanded, so did its commercial section. In 1872, the U. S.



Figure 5: Aerial View of St. Louis Riverfront and downtown, circa 1930. Source: Missouri Historical Society. Most of the tall office buildings in the downtown core were located west of Fourth Street, leaving a wide swath of smaller, older buildings along the riverfront.

government began construction of a major new federal building eight blocks west of the

¹⁸ Norbury Wayman, *History of the Physical Growth of St. Louis*, Saint Louis City Plan Commission, n. d. p 4.

¹⁹ Wayman 11; St. Louis City Plan Commission, "St. Louis Development Program," June 1973, p. 7.

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riverfront. The U. S. Custom House & Post Office (commonly known as the Old Post Office, NHL 2/28/1971), required demolition of a full residential block on the western edge of downtown. Its completion in 1884 sparked the growth of new construction in the area. This time period coincided with the development of a new building type, the tall elevator-served office building. The new skyscrapers were built almost exclusively west of Fourth Street (this is evident in Figure 5). By the end of the 19th century, new construction was concentrated in the area around the Old Post Office and reached all the way to 12th Street (now Tucker Boulevard).

Touted as the nation's "Fourth City" at the end of the nineteenth century, St. Louis continued to see a boom period into the early 1900s. In the twenty years between 1887 and 1906, at least 75 office buildings (over five stories) were built in downtown St. Louis. In stark comparison, in the period from 1907-1930, fewer than half of that number were constructed.²⁰

Inspired by the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exhibition, a group of local citizens formed the Civic League in 1907 and wrote the city's first official planning document in that year. The St. Louis Board of Aldermen formed a City Plan Commission in 1911, and by 1918 the city passed its first zoning ordinance.²¹ Declared unconstitutional by the Missouri Supreme Court in 1923, the ordinance was ultimately revised and legalized in 1926.²²

Consideration of the types of uses within the city and an assessment of the condition of dwelling units in the 1930s led to a shift of attention to the social problems the city faced. Housing conditions, vacant properties, welfare issues, homeownership ratios, literacy, economic well-being, and other issues were studied in depth. In an effort to address these concerns, by 1936 the City Plan Commission endeavored to establish an urban land policy that would address zoning, nuisances, enactment of housing standards, and the revision of zoning regulations.²³

Land had already begun to be cleared in an earlier effort to renew the downtown riverfront in conjunction with the 1933 Plan for the Central Riverfront.²⁴ Inspired in the early 1930s by prominent St. Louis attorney Luther Ely Smith and his idea for a memorial to be located on the site of the founding of the city, a bond issue was passed in 1935 to acquire nearly 90 acres of

²⁰ John D. Randall, *The Art of Office Buildings, Sullivan's Wainwright and the St. Louis Real Estate Boom*, (Springfield, Illinois: Ford Printing, Inc., 1972)

²¹ St. Louis City Plan Commission. *1918 Zoning Plan for St. Louis*. Published January, 1918. It was argued that by implementing a zoning ordinance based on this plan, the city could regulate haphazard growth, control the height and area of buildings, the uses of properties, and the character of all building developments within the city.

²² Idem. *1926 Zoning Ordinance of the City of St. Louis, Missouri*. Published May 26, 1926.

²³ Idem. "Urban Land Policy." Published October 22, 1936, St. Louis. The report was undertaken in response to significant negative trends in the City of St. Louis. It was designed in order to preserve population, land values and development within the city limits.

²⁴ Idem. *A Plan for the Central Riverfront*. Published June 1, 1933. This plan was a revised publication of the original 1928 "A Plan for the Central Riverfront" and was developed in hopes of revitalizing the riverfront. The plan consisted of creating, widening, and paving associated streets as well as providing direct connections to the bridges. The plan most importantly set up the process and implementation of the acquisition of riverfront property and general improvement of the riverfront area.

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land encompassing some 37 city blocks.²⁵ Most of the buildings in the area were commercial in nature, interspersed with a few residential rentals and Bohemian nightlife spots. The age of the structures and the shift westward of the business district resulted in “vast tracts of low-earning rentals and empty buildings.”²⁶ Even so, the area was still occupied by numerous businesses employing an estimated 3,000-5,000 workers.²⁷ Demolition of the historic commercial riverfront was complete by the early 1940s. Full land clearance was achieved in the blocks facing the riverfront east of Third Street, with the exception of the 1834 Basilica of St. Louis standing at Walnut Street and Memorial Drive.²⁸ Figure 6 illustrates the land clearance nearly complete.

The State of Missouri added a powerful tool for city governments and their private partners to fight blight in the 1940s. Introduced in 1943 and revised into its final form in 1945, the state’s Urban Redevelopment Corporations Act allowed local governments to assign its powers of eminent domain to private corporations working to rebuild “blighted” areas. The rebuilt areas could be granted tax abatements or exemption as part of such a project. The law is most commonly referred to by its section in the Missouri code, Chapter 353.²⁹ The first developer to use the incentives was Kansas City builder Lewis Kitchen, whose Quality Hill apartment project (adjacent to downtown Kansas City) was begun in 1950.³⁰

The City published its first comprehensive plan in 1947. On the staff of the City Plan Commission at this time was an architect named Arthur Schwarz, later a principal in the firm which designed Mansion House Center. A number of subsequent city plans and studies continued into the 1950s, culminating in a *Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance* approved in April of 1950, a 1956 *Land Use Plan*, and two studies in 1958 assessing space usage in the central business district and downtown in general.

Between 1930 and 1960 there was a total decline of building in the downtown core;³¹ the purpose of the 1958 *Central Business District Space Use Study*³² was in essence to evaluate the assets and the defects of the Central Business District in order to understand why it was in decline. In its 1958 *Downtown Land Use Study*, the City Plan Commission asserted that the City could offer decent and plentiful parking, spaces for cultural and educational activities, tourism, recreation destinations and new office spaces, which in turn would promote economic growth and stability. The study specified a number of potential locations for renewal projects—

²⁵ Betsy Bradley. “Historic Contexts St. Louis: The Gateway Years, 1940 – 1975.” In “Thematic Survey of Midcentury Modern Movement Nonresidential Architecture, 1945 – 1975, in St. Louis City.” Page 9.

²⁶ Tracy Campbell, *The Gateway Arch* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), p. 30.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Commonly known as the Old Cathedral, the basilica was listed as part of the Jefferson National Expansion Historic Site on 10/15/1966.

²⁹ Michael M. Shultz and F. Rebecca Sapp, “Urban Redevelopment and the Elimination of Blight: A Case Study of Missouri’s Chapter 353,” *Washington University Journal of Urban & Contemporary Law* 03 v. 37(1990) Available at: http://openscholarship.wustl.edu/law_urbanlaw/vol37/iss1/2 accessed 3/23/2016. P. 5.

³⁰ Don Wilson, “Downtown St. Louis,” *St. Louis Construction Record*, March 8, 1960 p. 23.

³¹ John D. Randall. “The Art of Office Buildings, Sullivan’s Wainwright and the St. Louis Real Estate Boom.” (Springfield, Illinois: Ford Printing, Inc., 1972).

³² St. Louis City Plan Commission. “1958 Central Business District Space Use Study.” Published March 1958.

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the most vital being the area facing the cleared site of the proposed Memorial on the riverfront³³ and included blocks north and south along Fourth Street and Broadway. The areas proposed for clearance were almost exclusively commercial, including many of the oldest buildings remaining in downtown.



Figure 6: Aerial View of St. Louis Riverfront and downtown, circa 1941.
Source: Missouri Historical Society.

Elaboration: Mansion House Center Development

Lewis Kitchen, the same Kansas City developer who had pioneered the use of Chapter 353 development in Kansas City, saw the potential of doing the same in St. Louis. In accordance with the 1958 *Downtown Land Use Study*, Kitchen and his St. Louis associate Paul Lashly engaged the St. Louis firm of Russell, Mullgardt, Schwarz & Van Hoefen to produce preliminary designs for a high-rise residential development along the north end of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial grounds. The idea for the mixed-use development was later credited to Lashly, who said he first conceived of “apartment towers overlooking the rising Gateway Arch while serving on the City Plan Commission from 1949-1956.”³⁴

³³ Architect Eero Saarinen won the national competition for the design of the monument in 1948 but contracts to build the structure were not issued until 1959. The Gateway Arch was completed in 1965.

³⁴ “Mansion House Ground Broken,” *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, May 31 1964. (Page unknown.)

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The first renderings for the project were unveiled in April, 1959. This occurred in conjunction with the City Plan Commission's recommendation that the area between Third and Fourth Streets, and Chestnut Street and Washington Avenue, be declared "blighted." As stated above, under Missouri's Chapter 353 law, private developers could be granted some of the powers of government when they worked in blighted areas.³⁵ Kitchen and Lashly would need to wait for additional study and the full approval of the Board of Aldermen before the project could go forward.

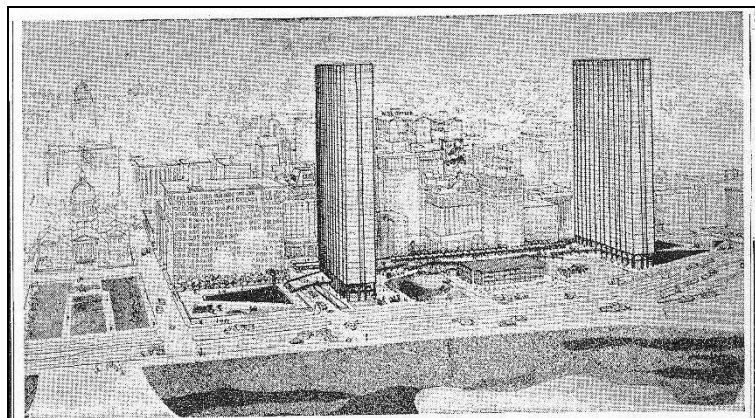


Figure 7: Renderings released in April, 1959 included two 40-story towers. Source: "Forty-Story Glass Towers planned for Riverfront Development" clipping, source unknown, April 26, 1959 (St. Louis Public Library "Mansion House" folder).

The original proposal for the site included only two towers which would reach 40 stories each. Because of the site's adjacency to the as-yet-unbuilt Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, there was concern that such tall buildings would compete with what was referred to as "the Saarinen arch."³⁶ By September, 1959, the blighting bill had been approved by aldermanic committee, and the project had morphed from two 40-story towers into three 36-story towers.³⁷ Speaking on the decrease in height and increase in total square footage, Kitchen stated that "further studies showed a greater demand for apartment space than was contemplated originally."³⁸ (These studies have not been identified.)

By October of 1959, the National Park Service and St. Louis Mayor Raymond Tucker entered into an agreement to limit the height of new construction along the riverfront memorial to 275 feet, some 74 feet less than Kitchen's planned development. The height limit was described as a compromise between Saarinen's desires and Kitchen's proposal.³⁹ Two months later, newspaper reports indicated that Saarinen and Conrad Wirth, Director of the National Park Service, "still felt the 36-story buildings might detract from the arch." Kitchen's reaction

³⁵ James Neal Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 3rd ed. (Saint Louis, Mo: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1998). 473.

³⁶ "Apartments on the Riverfront" editorial, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, June 4, 1959 (page unknown).

³⁷ "Luxury Apartment Plans for River Front Unveiled," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* September 4, 1959 (page unknown).

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ "Limit on Height of Structures at Memorial," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 21, 1959 (page unknown).

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included a decision to reduce the towers to 28 stories each and the statement "I can live with it, but, of course, it is not as much as I had hoped for."⁴⁰

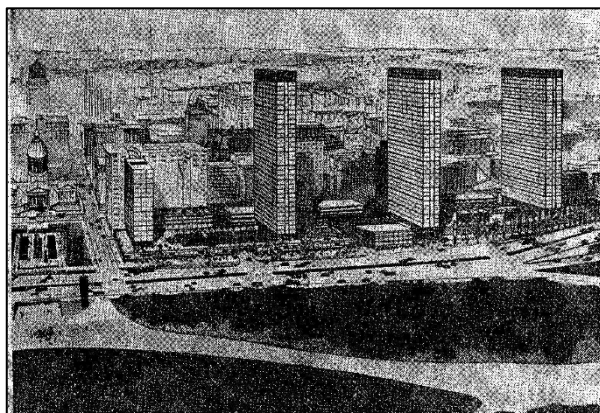


Figure 8: By September of 1959, original plans for two 40-story towers had been changed to show three 36-story towers along with related commercial buildings. At this point the plan also showed a southern block that included the existing Pierce Building and a new motel. The southern block was removed from the plan before construction began, although officials were still discussing the proposed motel as late as 1966. Source: "Luxury Apartment Plans for River Front Unveiled," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, September 4, 1959.

A Competition over the Riverfront's Future

An unanticipated occurrence in 1959 turned the project into a competition. In July, a news item noted that a 2000 square foot parcel in the project footprint had been purchased. The new owner, identified as G. J. Nooney, stated that his intention was to build "an attractive building in keeping with the new three-story Peabody Coal Co. building."⁴¹ A day later, reports updated the plan. Nooney and his company, Conduit Industrial Redevelopment Corporation, would submit a commercial plan for a three-square block area to rival Kitchen's proposed residential towers.⁴² Nooney subsequently engaged the architectural firm of Helmut, Obata & Kassabaum to design a complex of two office buildings, a hotel and a motel for the full five-block site.⁴³

In January 1960, Nooney formally filed his plan for consideration against Kitchen's. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* architecture critic George McCue ran a series of commentaries on the two proposals. Architect Gyo Obata's competing design was for

⁴⁰ "Height of Three Apartments for Riverfront Reduced Again," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, December 19, 1959 (page unknown).

⁴¹ "New Riverfront Office Building Being Planned," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, July 27, 1959. (Page unknown.) The Peabody Coal Headquarters was completed in 1958.

⁴² "Commercial Plan Downtown Rivals Residential Area," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, July 28, 1959.

⁴³ Rival Proposal for Riverfront to be Studied," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, January 24, 1960. (Page unknown.)

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one structure, five blocks long, seven stories (about 100 feet) high. It would have openings for the passage of Pine, Olive and Locust streets; its ground floor would be two stories high, and it would be set back at intervals alternately on Third and Fourth streets, to provide for large open courts.⁴⁴

In this initial description McCue criticized “the long, flat roofline and a rather monotonous repetition of similar elements – the long procession of ground floor stilts, and the grid of the upstairs windows.” He did like the built-in public space, courtyards facing east and west created by the setbacks of the building. In a later commentary, McCue gave space to Obata’s views. He noted that the designer wanted to embody the spirit of the old riverfront in the design, recalling the “rows of warehouses , offices and shops that once lined the levee.”⁴⁵ As restated by McCue, Obata felt the roofline would not be monotonous because of the various setbacks, that the setbacks and openings for the east-west streets would prevent any street-level monotony, and that the windows would be deeply recessed “to avoid the bleak glassy surface of windows that are set flush in curtain walls.”⁴⁶

Ultimately, though, George McCue presaged the decision of the City Plan Commission by his verdict that the Kitchen plan was a better fit for downtown St. Louis. He praised it on two counts, for its residential nature as well as its design. “To introduce high-salaried permanent residents into the downtown environment would not only make a substantial addition to downtown living in itself,” he wrote, “but would germinate new shops and service facilities of top quality.”⁴⁷ As for the design, he felt the buildings would “inject some sorely needed excitement into our drab riverfront skyline....” Visible from points to the west, “they would beckon visitors, with their bold forms by day and their lighted windows at night, to an area of revived human activities.” He also preferred the Kitchen plan because whatever was built north of the future Arch would require a balancing set of buildings to the south. “The rival proposal of a single building, eight stories high and five blocks long” would be hard to mirror.⁴⁸ The City Plan Commission agreed, noting the need for new residents and a striking addition to the skyline.

At the end of April, 1960, the final hurdle to proceed with the Kitchen plan was cleared when the Board of Aldermen confirmed the recommendations of the City Plan Commission and Downtown St. Louis Inc., and unanimously voted in favor of the mixed-use Mansion House Center project.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ George McCue, “High and Low Plans for Riverfront,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, January 31, 1960. (Page unknown.)

⁴⁵ George McCue, “Youthful St. Louis Form-Giver,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, March 6, 1960. (Page unknown.)

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ George McCue, “High-Rise Design for Riverfront,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, March 13, 1960 (Page unknown.)

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ “Aldermen OK Kitchen Plan Downtown,” *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, May 1, 1960. (Page unknown.)

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Building and Opening Mansion House Center

The years of 1960-1962 were occupied with assembling the parcels that would be required for the project. The condemned buildings were almost exclusively commercial, including two tall office buildings that were originally set to be spared from demolition: the 10-story Rialto Building (1892) and the 18-story Landreth Building (1926). In June, 1962, the architects for the project recommended the demolition of these buildings as well.⁵⁰ In the final plan only two existing buildings from the redevelopment area would be spared: the Pierce Building, located south of Pine Street (a block which was ultimately excluded from the Mansion House Center footprint), and Peabody Coal's new headquarters at 301 N. Memorial Drive (formerly Third Street, NRHP 12/03/2008).⁵¹

By mid-1962, reports indicated that about half of the buildings in the redevelopment area had been purchased from the owners, and the rest would have to go through the condemnation process. The first two buildings were demolished in October, 1962.⁵² Around the same time, plans were circulating for a sculpture garden to feature works by local artists (a version of which was retained in the final plan), and a warehouse for "historically and architecturally interesting materials salvaged from the demolition" (which did not happen).⁵³

In 1963, Kitchen stepped down from the presidency of the Mansion House Center Redevelopment Corp. in favor of his St. Louis partner, Paul Lashly. By this time, models of the complex showed all of the major elements in place, including the commercial buildings, chapel, and restaurant on the promenade.⁵⁴ Architect Arthur Schwarz described it as a "total community."⁵⁵

Land assembly was complete by 1964, when the project's major financing was finalized. Many players were involved in financing the \$45,000,000 development, but the most important commitment was from the Federal Housing Administration, which signed loan guarantees for more than \$35,000,000 in April, 1964. This was considered the final step before construction could begin.⁵⁶ Groundbreaking for the Mansion House Center project took place at the end of May, 1964.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ Peter W. Salsich, Jr., "Plan Group OK's Razing 2 Riverfront Buildings," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, June 9-10, 1962 (page unknown).

⁵¹ The Pierce Building would ultimately be incorporated into the Adam's Mark Hotel in the 1980s; Peabody Coal Headquarters was listed in the National Register in December 2008.

⁵² "Mayor to Start Demolition at Mansion Site," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, October 5, 1962 (page unknown). The properties were at the southern end of blighted area at 204 – 208 N. 4th Street.

⁵³ "Mansion House Plans to Feature Rich Past," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, September 29-30, 1962, p. 7A.

⁵⁴ "Paul W. Lashly Heads Mansion House Center Redevelopment Corp." *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, June 18 1963. (Page unknown.)

⁵⁵ "St. Louis Looks Forward," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, May 10, 1963 (page unknown).

⁵⁶ "FHA Guarantees \$35,641,200 Loan for River Apartments," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, April 22, 1964. (page unknown)

⁵⁷ "Mansion House Ground Broken," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, May 31, 1964 (page unknown).

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The north tower was completed and the first residents moved in during April, 1966. Even before the 16 display units opened in the tower, the public had been invited to get to know a model unit built in the Famous-Barr parking garage two blocks west of the complex. As excitement grew, management ballyhooed their accomplishment. "The best living is downtown," boasted Paul Lashly, President of the Mansion House Redevelopment Corporation.⁵⁸

Designers and management did their best to make that statement come true. "Prize-winning" kitchens were "convenience engineered" by General Electric, and featured built-in appliances, walnut cabinets, and "fatigue-free" vinyl floors.⁵⁹ Bathrooms were vaunted for their neutral color palettes, roomy cabinets, and thermostatically controlled showers. Apartment rental included "the most advanced central heating and air-condition system ever installed in St. Louis," changing the temperature within seconds of the command to do so. Soundproofing was also highly touted.⁶⁰

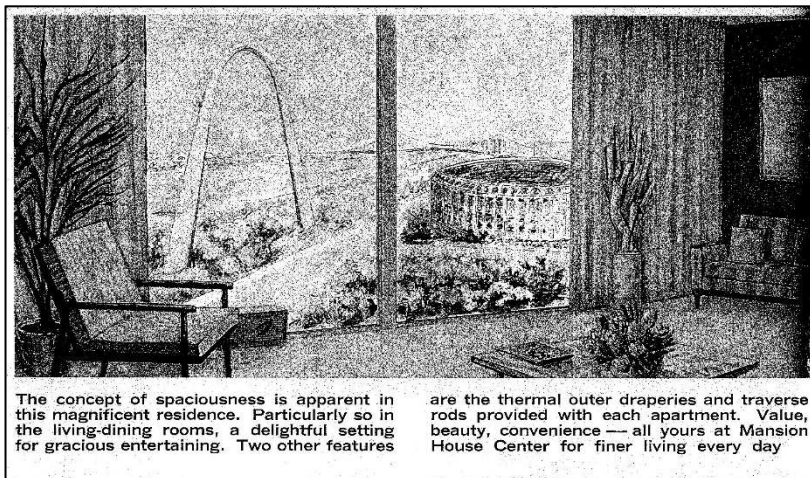


Figure 9: This image from a c. 1965 advertisement shows a view that did not exist of two structures that had probably not yet been completed. Even so, the image succeeds in conveying an image of the modernity of the apartments and their surroundings. Source: "Mansion House Center – High in the Heart of the Metropolitan Area."

The towers were built with many luxuries to entice and entertain. Each tower had a rooftop swimming pool. Maid service was offered, and management promoted the forming of clubs and organizations within the buildings. An interdenominational chapel was built on the promenade level to take care of residents' spiritual needs. The three-story commercial buildings had shops on the first story, offices on the top story, and a combination of the two to serve patrons at the promenade level.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Clarissa Start, "Riverfront Mansions in the Sky," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, February 7, 1965. (Page unknown).
⁵⁹ "Mansion House Center – High in the Heart of the Metropolitan Area" promotional brochure or placemat, c. 1965.
⁶⁰ Ibid.
⁶¹ One popular business which faced the promenade was the Spanish Door bar, per architect Richard Henmi. Richard Henmi, personal interview by Lynn Josse, March 24 2016.

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At the second story level, this seven-acre promenade connected residents of all three towers. Early visions for the promenade included an area set aside for residents to garden.⁶² By mid-1966, construction had begun on a plaza featuring works of internationally famous sculptors. The promenade and street level site plan by Schwarz & Van Hoefen, with the landscape architects Layton, Layton & Associates, provided settings for works of art by Alexander Calder, Jacques Lipchitz, and others. According to reports, the sculpture program was the first local example of the FHA's new 1% for art program in action.⁶³ A year later, a "putting green" or mini-golf course was installed on the promenade.⁶⁴

The Modern architecture contributed to the attraction of the units. With the steel skeleton of the building, floor plans could be combined and altered without load-bearing walls getting in the way. "Floor plans on each building level are flexible, to permit the combination of units into three- four- and five-room suites if desired," Kitchen said⁶⁵

Perhaps the biggest selling point, also made possible by the Modern construction of the buildings, was the view. Each unit faced either north or south, allowing views that included the Mississippi River to the east and the city to the west. Many units featured balconies for a fuller experience of outdoor living.

Within a year of its completion, Mansion House Center and its architects won the prestigious Architectural Achievement Award, which was bestowed by the St. Louis chapters of the Producers' Council and the American Institute of Architects. The award was for the most outstanding apartment building of the years 1964-1966.⁶⁶

Later Developments at Mansion House Center

Within a few years of opening, it was clear that there were financial problems at Mansion House Center. The complex never achieved full occupancy, and in 1972, the owners defaulted on their HUD-guaranteed loans. The federal government paid the full \$35,000,000 it had guaranteed to creditors.⁶⁷ By mid-1972, six years after the complex opened, there were only 524 residents in the 1250-unit complex.⁶⁸ In 1977, one of the partners was charged with illegally diverting \$3 million, after which the owners filed for bankruptcy and the towers went into

⁶² Promised in 1965 (Start, "Riverfront Mansions in the Sky,") it is not known if residents ever had gardening opportunities.

⁶³ George McCue, "Large Sculptures for Mansion House," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, June 1, 1966. (Page unknown.) The \$300,000 budgeted for the purchase of sculptures was just under 1% of the amount of FHA's loan guarantees on the property. The sculptures were sold as part of the bankruptcy proceedings in 1989.

⁶⁴ Vickie Kinney, "Golf in the City: Putting Green is a Colorful Island in the Concrete Canyons of St. Louis." *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, July 10 1967. (Page unknown.) In another first, this green was reported to be "the first apartment complex to use [Monsanto's new] product, the same grass substitute installed in Houston's Astrodome."

⁶⁵ "Study of Plans for Riverfront Apartments to Take Three Months," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, September 4, 1959. (Page unknown.)

⁶⁶ "Design Award for Mansion House," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, March 26, 1967. (Page unknown.)

⁶⁷ Robert H. Teuscher, "Mansion House Plan Rejected," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, June 4, 1979, p. 3A.

⁶⁸ "Mansion House Revival – an Omen of Downtown Vitality?" *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, December 30-31, 1972. p. 1A.

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receivership. In 1978, the complex was described as having been through five different managers in six years.⁶⁹

Throughout the 1970s, measures to improve the towers were met with optimism. Conversion of the South Tower to a Holiday Inn in the mid-1970s was considered a move that would support both the complex and the city's new convention center, which was under construction at the northern end of downtown. By 1978, the remaining residential towers (now in receivership) were at 98% occupancy, but the manager indicated that it would be years before the company was in a position to pay on its HUD obligations. These, after accruing interest, were by this time estimated at \$50,000,000.

Despite the enormous debt, HUD did not foreclose immediately. Experts suggested that HUD may not have had the authority to foreclose on the hotel tower, that separating the towers in a foreclosure would be difficult, and that a successful foreclosure would leave HUD with millions of dollars in addition debts that the corporation still owed.⁷⁰ Momentum built throughout the 1980s, though, and plans for a foreclosure auction were finally announced in 1989.

The June, 1989 auction finally separated the towers into three separate parcels, which remain in place today. The hotel operator purchased the south tower for 11.9 million. Two different bidders paid \$3.3 million for the north tower and \$7.6 million for the center tower. The difference in selling price for two nearly identical buildings was attributed to the amount of asbestos that would eventually have to be remediated.⁷¹ Today the south tower remains a hotel. The center tower retains the "Mansion House" name, while the northern tower, still in residential use, has been branded as "Gentry's Landing."

Elaboration: Schwarz & Van Hoefen

The firm of Schwarz & Van Hoefen was a midcentury incarnation of one of the longest-running continuously operating firms in St. Louis. It began in 1900 as Mauran, Russell & Garden when three architects broke away from the St. Louis office of Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge (which was set up locally as Shepley, Rutan, Coolidge, and Mauran).⁷² John Lawrence Mauran brought along two younger colleagues, Ernest Russell and Edward Garden, and the firm almost immediately received several important commissions.⁷³ Ned Garden left the firm in 1909, to be replaced by William Crowell in 1911. After Mauran's death in 1933, Russell & Crowell added W. Oscar Mullgardt.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Mary Huss, "Every Receivership has a Silver Lining," *Profile St. Louis*, April 13, 1978. P. 10-11.

⁷⁰ Teuscher.

⁷¹ Claudia MacLachlan, "Mansion House Towers Go to Different Buyers," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, June 22 1989. P. 1.

⁷² Charles Savage, *Architecture of the Private Streets of St. Louis* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1987): 165-166.

⁷³ Carolyn Toft, "Edward Gordon Garden, FAIA" at http://www.landmarks-stl.org/architects/bio/edward_gordon_garden_faia_1871_1924/ (retrieved January 25, 2013).

⁷⁴ Esley Hamilton, "Grand Avenue's Flying Saucer and its Architect," Newsletter Society of Architectural Historians, Missouri Valley Chapter. Vol. XVII number 3, Fall 2011.

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Arthur Frederick Schwarz

Arthur Frederick Schwarz was born in St. Louis, Missouri on August 17, 1909 and educated in St. Louis city schools; he graduated from Cleveland High School in 1927.⁷⁵ While attending Washington University he joined Mauran, Russell & Crowell in 1927.⁷⁶ He graduated from Washington University Extension School in 1931, and was promoted to become an associate in 1941. He left the firm during World War II to pursue war work, including a stint planning with Harland Bartholomew & Associates. Afterwards, he joined the staff of the City Plan Commission and is listed as staff architect of the city's 1947 Comprehensive Plan.⁷⁷ He rejoined the firm as a partner in 1947.⁷⁸ Schwarz died in 1971.

Hari Van Hoefen

Van Hoefen was born in St. Louis, Missouri on March 20, 1905. Four years the senior of partner Arthur Schwarz, Van Hoefen was also educated at Washington University between 1925 and 1927 from whence he attended the University of Texas from 1927 to 1929. Van Hoefen worked as an engineer with prominent St. Louis firm Hoener, Baum & Froese between 1930 and 1932 and became principal in his own firm from 1932 until joining Russell, Mullgardt, Schwarz, & Van Hoefen in 1952.⁷⁹ In 1960, the name of the firm changed again, this time to Schwarz & Van Hoefen. Van Hoefen retired from the firm in 1968.

Richard Toshio Henmi

Henmi was born and raised in California and came to St. Louis in 1942. Educated at Washington University, his student years were cut short upon being drafted into the U. S. Army, where he ultimately served as a lieutenant with the Railway Security Division in Europe from 1945 to 1947. Henmi worked as a designer for William B. Ittner, Inc. and then went to work with Schwarz and Van Hoefen in 1951. By 1956 he was named "Associate in charge of design," and became a partner in 1968 following the retirement of Hari Van Hoefen.⁸⁰ After Arthur Schwarz's death (1971), Dick Henmi remained at the helm until 1989.⁸¹

Work of the Firm

By the mid-20th century, more than half a century into its existence, the partnership remained one of the leading architectural firms in St. Louis. Esley Hamilton wrote that in the 1950s and 60s, the firm "was unusual in maintaining its design flare while working on large commercial projects."⁸² The firm completed many architecturally significant works during this period. In addition to the Mansion House, four of their other projects were recommended for National

⁷⁵ George S. Koyl, editor, *American Architects Directory* (New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1955), page 494.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Harland Bartholomew, engineer. "Comprehensive City Plan: Saint Louis, Missouri." (St. Louis: St. Louis City Plan Commission, 1947), page 494.

⁷⁸ Chris Madrid French, "Historic Context Statement: Modernist Architects in Practice in St. Louis, ca. 1945 – 1975" in "Thematic Survey of Modern Movement Non-Residential Architecture, 1945 – 1975, in St. Louis City." (City of St. Louis Cultural Resources Office, 2013.) P. 127-128.

⁷⁹ Hamilton.

⁸⁰ French, 124-125.

⁸¹ Hamilton.

⁸² Ibid.

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Register listing in the City of St. Louis' Modern Movements survey of 2013.⁸³ This means that 1/5th of the 25 properties on the list were by the various iterations of this single partnership, more than any on other firm on the list.

The four other buildings on the list are as follows. The Wohl Recreation Center (1959) at 1515 N. Kingshighway Boulevard is a glass-skinned neighborhood recreation center commissioned by the City of St. Louis. The Engineers Club of St. Louis (1959) at 4359 Lindell Boulevard is a low-rise addition to the emerging Modernist corridor; its use of traditional masonry and playful forms is very striking. The original two-story section of the Optimist Building (1961, 4490-94 Lindell Boulevard), a block to the west of the Engineers Club, has an exposed concrete frame.⁸⁴ Finally, the Steinberg Art Gallery Building at Washington University was a collaboration between the partnership and architect Fumihiko Maki, who is credited with the design (1960, 6201-53 Forsyth Blvd.)

In addition to the buildings recommended for listing in the City's Modernism survey, the partnership of Schwarz & Van Hoefen designed many other important buildings in St. Louis. Among the most visible is Council Plaza, which consists of two towers and two smaller buildings located at 212 – 310 S. Grand Boulevard (NRHP 3/02/2007).

Elaboration: Layton, Layton & Associates⁸⁵

The firm of Layton, Layton & Associates was headed by husband and wife Emmet and Ruth Layton. Principal Emmet Layton was born in St. Louis in 1905 and received his M. Arch. degree from Washington University in St. Louis in 1933. He practiced on his own from 1939 – 1952, then with his wife Ruth formed the firm of Layton, Layton & Rodes. Layton, Layton & Associates was organized in 1959. The firm's major works included plans and landscape architecture for McDonnell Aircraft, Our Lady of the Snows Shrine (Belleville, Illinois), Jefferson Barracks Historical park (St. Louis County, Missouri), and the Darst-Webbe public housing complex in St. Louis (no longer extant).

⁸³ "Intensive Level Property Information" at <https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/planning/documents/upload/130206-StL-Property-Fliers-2.pdf>, accessed January 26, 2016.

⁸⁴ Changes approved to the Optimist Club in 2015 may result in a loss of integrity, as narrow vertical windows and the concrete wall that surrounds them are to be replaced by a glass wall fronting Lindell Boulevard. These alterations are possible due to the Modernist skeleton of the building, which includes concrete frame elements outside the curtain walls.

⁸⁵ Information for this section derived from George S. Koyl, editor, *American Architects Directory* second edition (New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1962). P. 408; and Emmet Layton Papers Washington University Archives, Collection Historical note, accessed online at <http://archon.wulib.wustl.edu/?p=collections/findingaid&id=615&q=&rootcontentid=362371> on May 23, 2016.

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Architectural Significance

Mansion House Center as a Megastructure

As mentioned above, Mansion House Center and its architects won the Architectural Achievement Award for the most outstanding apartment building of the years 1964-1966.⁸⁶ The fact that it won as an apartment building indicates that there was no category for what Mansion House really was: a superblock that combined all of the functions necessary for daily life into one great unit, sometimes known as a megastructure. The St. Louis Modern Survey states that Mansion House illustrates these important Modernist ideas:

These ideas include the re-making of small-scale street grids into superblocks with towers surrounded by plazas and landscaping being the ideal layout. The Mansion House Center development created a new plaza level where residents, office workers, and users of the buildings would congregate above street level and thereby be removed from the grittiness and problems of the existing streets.⁸⁷

To fully understand the development of Mansion House Center and its unique position in St. Louis architecture, it is necessary to understand the midcentury concepts of superblock and megastructure. The dictionary definition of superblock is “a very large commercial or residential block barred to through traffic, crossed by pedestrian walks and sometimes access roads, and often spotted with grassed malls.”⁸⁸ The influential critic Alan Colquhoun refers to the superblock as an economic unit, financed and organized by a single entity, made possible by “enormous reserves of capital in the modern economy which enable either private or public agencies, or a combination of both, to gain control over, and make a profit from, ever larger areas of urban land.”⁸⁹

The St. Louis Modern Survey notes that Mansion House Center is not only a superblock but also a megastructure, stating that “St. Louis entered the era of the ‘megastructure’ with the completion of the Mansion House Center development.”⁹⁰ In 1964, Fumihiko Maki (a faculty member at Washington University’s School of Architecture from 1956-1963) was the first person to use the term, in his publication *Investigations in Collective Form*. In Maki’s definition, the megastructure is a “large frame in which all the functions of a city or part of a city are housed.”⁹¹ Maki’s original definition focused on the frame as a space for changeable elements, a theme that was expanded on and broadened by Reyner Banham in his landmark book *Megastructures: Urban Futures of the Recent Past*.⁹² Alan Colquhoun further explains the difficulty of defining the term: “Though most architects know more or less what they mean by ‘megastructure,’ it becomes a somewhat slippery term as one tries to give it a precise

⁸⁶ “Design Award for Mansion House.”

⁸⁷ Minor, 103.

⁸⁸ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/superblock> accessed 4/9/2016

⁸⁹ Alan Colquhoun, *Essays in Architectural Criticism: Modern Architecture and Historical Change*. Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1981. 83.

⁹⁰ French, p. 120.

⁹¹ Fumihiko Maki, *Investigations in Collective Form*, Washington University (St. Louis) 1964. 8.

⁹² Reyner Banham, *Megastructures: Urban Futures of the Recent Past*, New York: Harper & Row, 1976.

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definition.”⁹³ Colquhoun divided the idea of megastructure into two types, those with a “monumental” support structure or frame (as in the designs of Archigram and the Japanese Metabolists), and those in which the support structure is “merely a sort of neutral grid” from which different elements emerge.

In the case of Mansion House, the “neutral grid” is a single-story podium, and major buildings are connected via the promenade (the top of the podium) as well as a seven-story parking garage at and below ground level. By eliminating the streets that had intersected the four-block footprint and connecting the buildings at ground level, the functions of each were made available to the whole. The connected complex meets Maki’s criterion that “many and diverse functions may beneficially be concentrated in one place.”⁹⁴ The podium or promenade reinforces the identity of the megastructure by separating the whole from the rest of the urban grid.

While the superblock form became a standard form for Modern urban housing across the country, most superblocks would not be considered megastructures. An example is Stuyvesant Town in Manhattan, one of the early Modern superblocks and the largest in the country to its time. Initiated in 1942, the design called for 72 acres (with about 600 existing buildings) to be cleared in order to create an orderly new high-rise village consisting of 32 towers.⁹⁵ Bold and unified in conception, the complex is not a megastructure because none of its towers are connected and there is no function other than the residential. Instead of attempting to duplicate the multiple functions of a city, this and the many similar (if smaller) projects that sprang up in urban centers were realizing the Corbusian goal of residential towers set in a parklike setting.⁹⁶ All of St. Louis’s high-rise housing projects of the 1950s would also exemplify this ideal.

⁹³ Colquhoun, 121.

⁹⁴ Maki, 8.

⁹⁵ Robert A. M. Stern et al, *New York 1960*, New York: The Monacelli Press, 1995. 279.

⁹⁶ Le Corbusier’s design for the *Ville Radieuse*, published in 1935, had a central section of towers in parks, each a separate neighborhood with 2700 inhabitants. Robert Fishman, *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge Mass, MIT Press, 1982.

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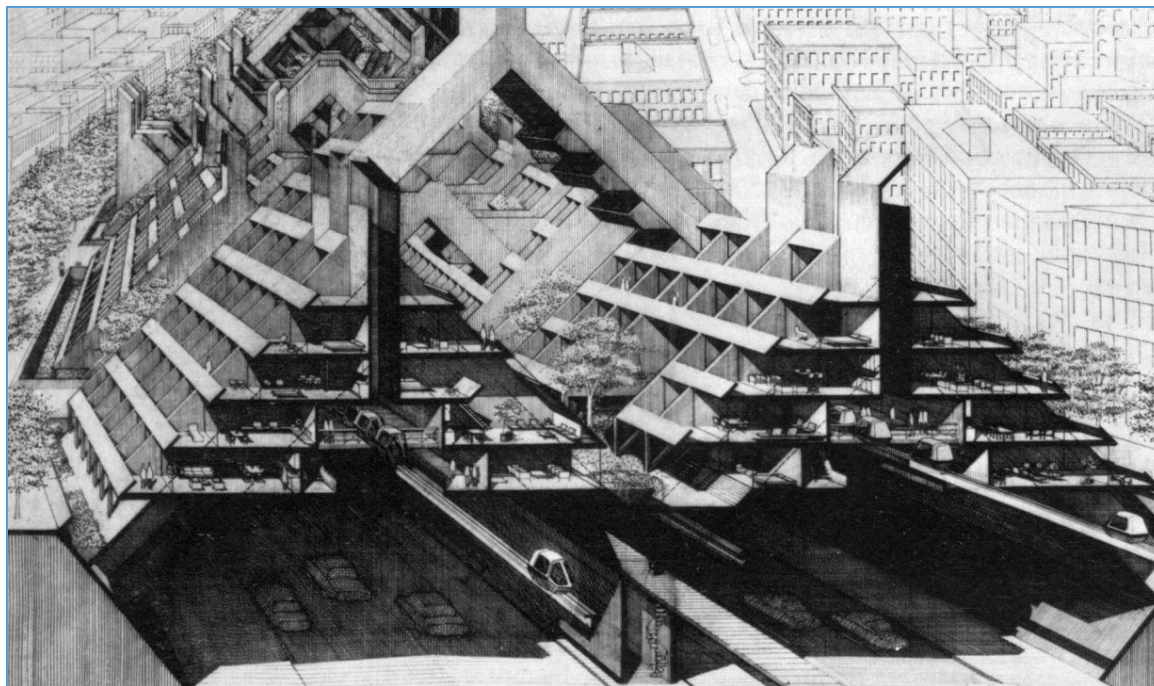


Figure 10: In the cover illustration from Banham's book, Paul Rudolph's plan for the Lower Manhattan Expressway Project illustrates the idea of a "frame" as applied to the megastructure. Here the conception is near-monolithic and monumental rather than a composition of differentiated parts.

There is no direct comparison for Mansion House Center in St. Louis City in terms of its size and its combination of the idea of the superblock with the multifunctionality and connectedness of a megastructure. In fact, few comparisons from the 1960s are well-known on a national scale. This may be because this specific type of megastructure has been little studied. For example, Banham focuses most of his attention on the "monumentalist" examples, showing examples of both designs and built projects that combine functions within a single, often Brutalist, frame (see Figure 10). It is only at the end of his book that considers examples that are more analogous to Mansion House Center, where the podium and separate buildings have more uniquely defined identities.

Banham's prime example of this type, which is a good comparison to Mansion House Center, is New York's Waterside Plaza complex (1972, Davis, Brody & Associates; see Figure 11). Banham notes that the four apartment towers of Waterside are placed on "parking-levels [which] make a complicated podium covering almost the entire site, with the towers rising through it and a conventionally handsome plaza with shops and social facilities on its upper surfaces."⁹⁷ The podium and built-in recreational and office uses prompted critic Ada Louise Huxtable to state that Waterside "could be the city's first breakthrough from the norm of sterile housing clichés and arid open space that has been the bureaucratic or easy-profit formula."⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Banham, 179.

⁹⁸ Quoted in Stern et al, 293.

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Figure 11: New York's Waterside Plaza complex (1972, Davis, Brody & Associates) a megastructure with a multi-use podium which covers parking. Photo Source: rew-online.com

Compared to Waterside, the Mansion House Historic District has an almost playful architectural approach; each building type is designed in a different variation of Modernism. The towers are designed in the Miesian aesthetic, but with projecting metal panels that provide an unusual sense of texture. The restaurant and chapel are both classified as International Style but have very different influences, from the New Formalism suggestions of the restaurant to the Neo-Expressionist steeple of the chapel. The three-story concrete commercial buildings are structurally simple and expressive concrete versions of the International Style. In an interview their architect, Richard Henmi, said that he didn't worry too much about what style his works might be called. "I like Modern, clean design and I tried to use Modern functional shapes."⁹⁹

A second comparison for Mansion House in both program and concept (if not style) is Bertram Goldberg's Marina City complex in Chicago (see Figure 12). Marina City (1959-1964) originally consisted of two towers with parking and residences, an office tower, and a theater, all connected by a mezzanine with amenities including shops and a bowling alley, to create "a city within a city."¹⁰⁰ Like Mansion House, it was designed to bring residents to the urban core, and was considered one of "the few mixed-use skyscraper projects in the world"¹⁰¹ when constructed. Goldberg's two poured-in-place "corn-cob" towers and the saddle-shaped theater

⁹⁹ Richard Henmi personal interview by Lynn Josse.

¹⁰⁰ Igor Marjanovic and Katerina Ruedi Ray, *Marina City: Bertram Goldberg's Urban Vision*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2010. P. 69

¹⁰¹ Ibid 136.

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are architecturally unique; unlike Mansion House Center, they are a reaction to International Style design instead of a variation upon it.



Figure 12: Marina City Model shows office building (left), theater (front), and residential towers on a mixed-use podium. Chicago Tribune Photo.

Comparisons in St. Louis

Only a few superblock developments in St. Louis compare to Mansion House in the multifunctional scope of the project. Perhaps the closest is Council Plaza (NRHP 3/2007),¹⁰² constructed between 1964-1968, which consists of two Modern Movement towers and four smaller buildings, and was also designed by Schwarz & Van Hoefen. While the complex was envisioned to serve multiple functions (residential, office, commercial, gas station, and parking), and the original street grid was erased to create a superblock at the site, none of the buildings

¹⁰² Melinda Winchester, "Council Plaza" National Register Registration Form, listed 3/02/2007.

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are integrally connected as at Mansion House. Open space separates and defines the major buildings at ground level.

A few other buildings in St. Louis were identified by the St. Louis' Modern Movement survey (2013) as aspiring to the ideal of the megastructure. These examples are at a much smaller scale and do not include the variety of functions of Mansion house or Marian City. The survey suggests that Murphy, Downey, Wofford & Richman's McDonnell Medical Science Building (1970) and the Post Office Annex (1969, Leo A. Daly) are "monumental modern buildings focused on satisfying a long list of functional requirements within one structure." The survey also refers to Washington University's Mudd and Eliot Halls (Dolf Schnebli, 1969 and 1971) as a megastructure; these monumental buildings (just outside the city limits) filled multiple academic purposes and were demolished in 1997.¹⁰³

Conclusion

The Mansion House Center Historic District is an architecturally significant complex which consists of eight contributing buildings, the structure which ties them together, and a fountain on the grounds in front. The individual components of the Center were designed together to comprise a locally unique example of what has become known as the "megastructure," Other examples of this type of megastructure exist in New York and Chicago, but none in St. Louis. The complex retains integrity of design, location, workmanship, setting, feeling, association, and materials.

¹⁰³ French, 120.

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Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

- | | | | | | |
|----|------------|------------|----|------------|------------|
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| 2. | 38.629482, | -90.186353 | 5. | 38.626510, | -90.187018 |
| 3. | 38.628502, | -90.186327 | 6. | 38.626766, | -90.188043 |
| 4. | 38.627986, | -90.186448 | | | |

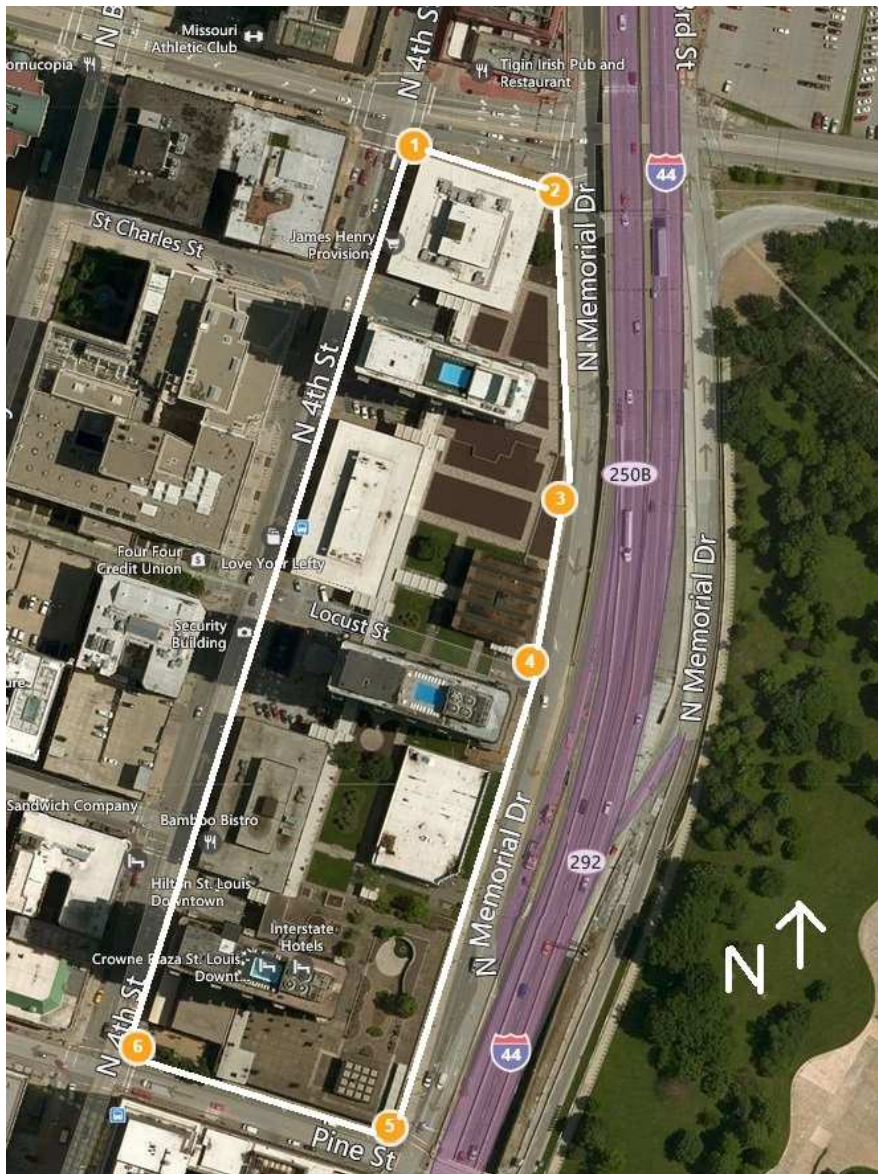


Figure 13: Mansion House Center Historic District map with numbered vertices.
Source: Bing Maps, 2016.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated district includes all of City Blocks 87 – 90 and 136 in the City of St. Louis Missouri as shown on the accompanying map (figure 13).

Boundary Justification

The nominated district includes all of the property originally associated with the Mansion House Center development. The Peabody Coal Company Headquarters is included in order to maintain a more consistent boundary.

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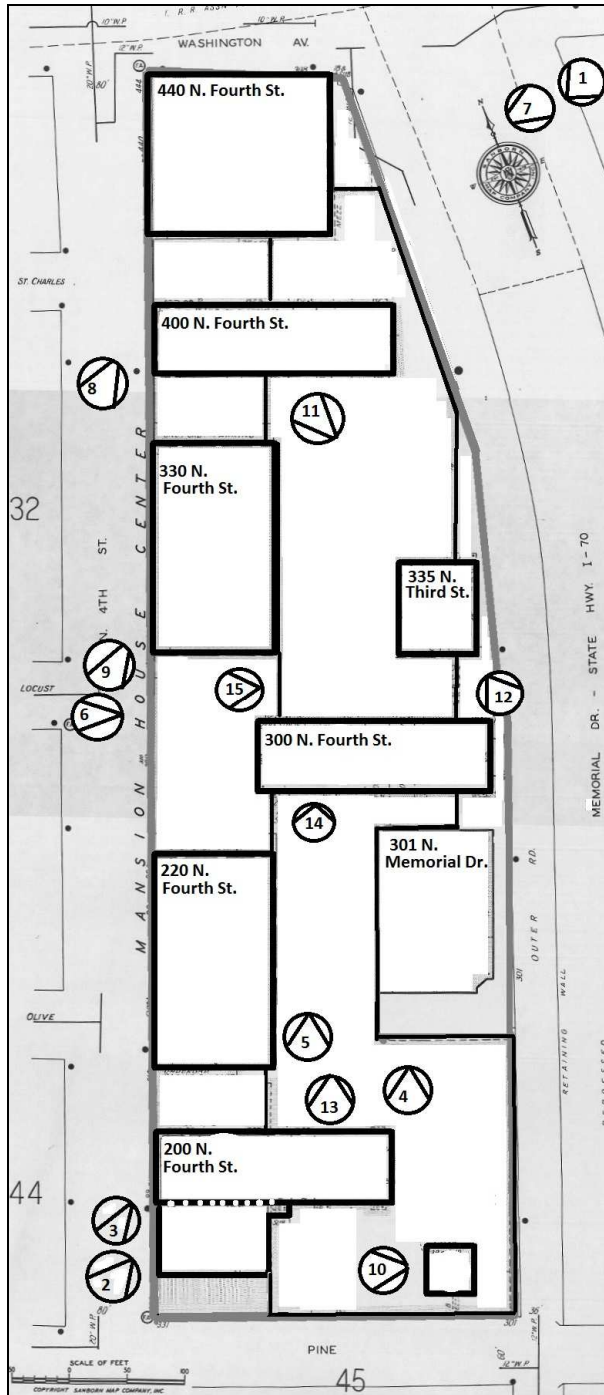


Figure 14: Photo Key. Original Source: Sanborn Map Company, 1970.

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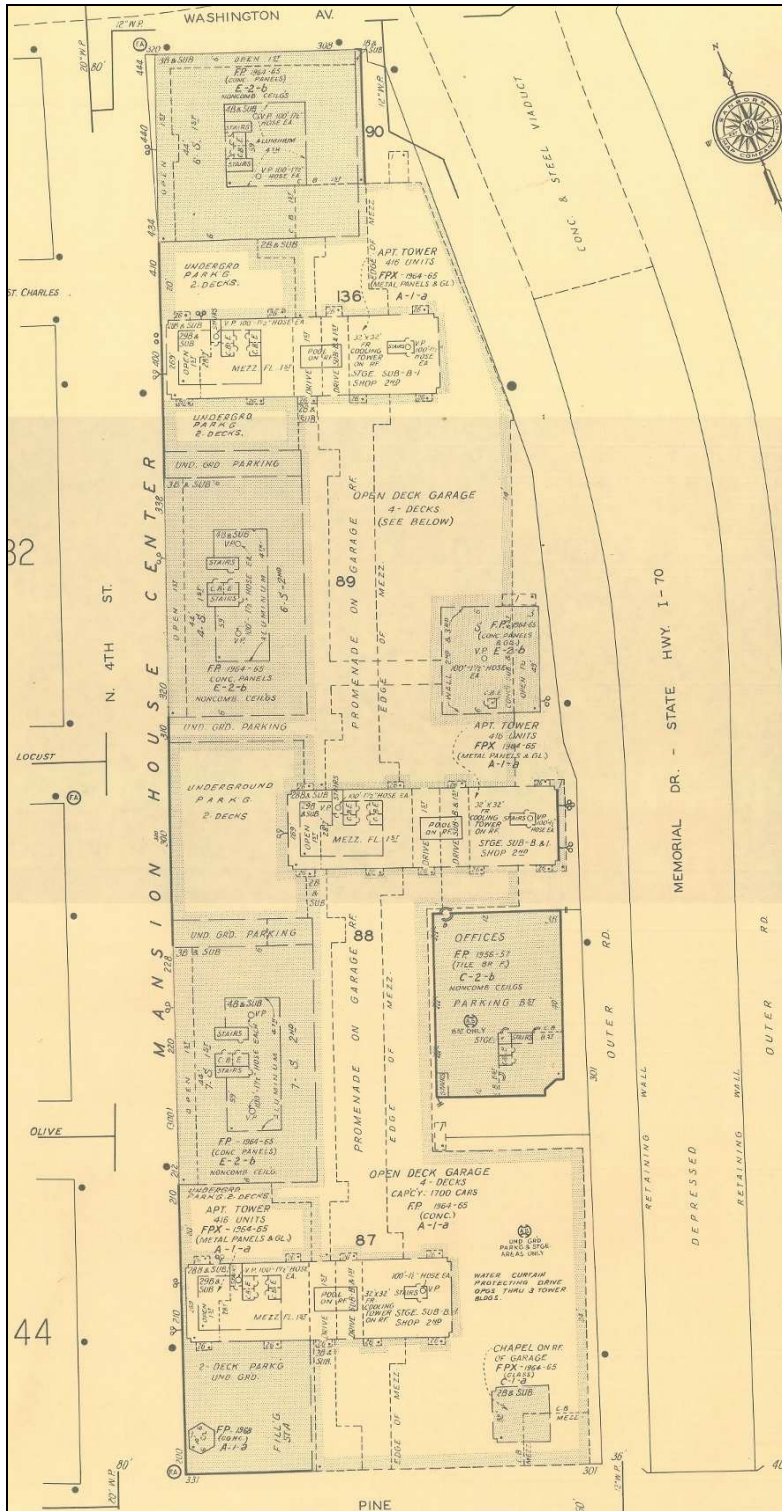


Figure 15: Sanborn map with text visible. Source: Sanborn Map Company, 1970.





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THEREOF
\$10.00 DAILY MAXIMUM
\$5.00 DAILY MAX SPECIAL IN BY 6:30AM EXIT BY
6:30PM (M-F)
\$5.00 PER DAY EXIT AFTER 5:30PM THROUGH
8:30M BY IMMEDIATE TUESDAY
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