

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Tandy Community Center

other names/site number Tandy Recreation Center

2. Location

street & number 4206 West Kennerly Avenue [n/a] not for publication

city or town St. Louis [n/a] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county St. Louis [Independent City] code 510 zip code 63113

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Signature of certifying official/Title *Clare F. Blackwell* 12 August 1999
Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register See continuation sheet [].	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet [].	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, explain See continuation sheet [].	_____	_____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	1	0
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	0	0
		0	0
		0	0
		1	0

Name of related multiple property listing.

Historic and Architectural Resources of the
Ville, St. Louis

Number of contributing resources
 previously listed in the National
 Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
Recreation and Culture/sports facility

Current Functions
Recreation and Culture/sports facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
Art Deco

Materials
 foundation concrete
 walls brick

 root asphalt
 other limestone
 terra cotta _____

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

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

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

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

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

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

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

Areas of Significance

Ethnic Heritage--Black

Periods of Significance

1938-1949

Significant Dates

n/a

Significant Person(s)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Osburg, Alfred A./Becker, C.E.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other:

Name of repository: Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	740420	4282640			
C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title see continuation sheet

organization _____ date _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name City of St. Louis

street & number 4206 West Kennerly Avenue telephone 314/652-5131

city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63113

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

**Tandy Community Center
St. Louis [Independent City], MO
Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis**

Summary: The Tandy Community Center, constructed in 1937-1938 at 4206 W. Kennerly, St. Louis, is an intact example of the Institutional Buildings property type, rendered in a restrained Art Deco style used for many institutional buildings constructed under the auspices of the Public Works Administration (PWA). The T-shaped building has a buff brick exterior with decorative limestone and terra cotta detailing. The facade's central portico is topped by stepped limestone blocks which recall a classical pediment; two wide bays to either side feature sets of windows above a high basement. Most of the stem of the "T" shape, to the rear, is a gymnasium space, with services at the far south end. The community center is in good condition, and the exterior as well as significant interior spaces retain high integrity.

Narrative: Tandy was PWA Project #8483, designed by Board of Public Service architect Albert A. Osburg with engineer William C. E. Becker. Construction cost \$200,000. The approach to the flat-roofed building consists of two flights of seven steps each running almost the full width of the center pavilion (Photo #1). Sited considerably above grade, the building occupies the eastern segment of the block; the remainder of the block is given over to Tandy Park. The building was constructed, and remains, in the center of an area of important African American institutions: Sumner High School just south; Homer G. Phillips hospital to the east; Tandy Park to the west; and the St. Louis Colored Orphans Home (now the Annie Malone Children and Family Service Center) directly across the street to the east on Goode (now Annie Malone Drive).

The buff brick T-shaped building consists of a raised basement below one tall single story. Although details are clearly Art Deco in design, the composition of the front elevation is almost classical in its division of parts. A center (three-bay) slightly projecting volume is defined by fluted square limestone pillars, with stepped limestone blocks above the whole suggesting a pediment. Columns carry a limestone architrave with "TANDY COMMUNITY CENTER" inscribed between Art Deco terra cotta blocks. Doors between the pillars are topped with large, pedimented transoms; small vertical windows are above.

Wings on either side of the central block are two bays wide (the wider units here make each wing approximately the same width as the center pavilion) and two bays deep. The gymnasium wing, which forms most of the stem of the "T," is defined as a separate volume (both narrower and taller than the front section) with higher window levels and the introduction of a subtly decorated terra cotta cap and cornice. Decorative features carried from the front of the building include a limestone water table and brick motifs including the use of soldier courses at sill and lintel levels. The upper front wall of the gymnasium, where it rises above the front of the building, frames the center pavilion.

The gymnasium is six bays long and six bays wide. Along the sides, original downspouts drain scuppers between alternate pairs of windows. A lower service area at the rear of the building extends south for another two bays, and is terminated by a centered smokestack, square at the base but chamfered and tapered above the roofline-to an octagonal shape (Photo #2).

The exterior of the building appears to have been altered very little and, with the exception of being in need of cleaning, is in good condition and retains a high degree of integrity. Replacement windows do not match the multi-paned originals but do fit into their openings and do not call attention to themselves.

The interior of the Tandy Center is also very little changed. Upon entering through the front doors, one is

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section 7 Page 2

**Tandy Community Center
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Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis**

faced with a central flight of steps up flanked by stairs down on either side. The floors are of dyed and polished concrete and the walls of yellow vitreous brick. At the top of the steps, a hall runs from side to side; beyond the hall, the rest of the first floor is taken up with a standard gymnasium with hardwood floor, built-in movable bleacher seats and a stage at the far end. On either side of the front of the building on the first floor are offices. Below the gymnasium are a swimming pool and locker rooms. The interior is virtually unchanged and is in good condition.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 3

**Tandy Community Center
St. Louis [Independent City], MO**

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis

Summary: Tandy Community Center is significant under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage - Black, representing the context "The Ville as a Center For Black Culture, 1910-1950" in the *Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis* MPS. It represents the Institutional Buildings property type. Opened in 1938, Tandy was the largest of the city's initial three recreation centers for African-American citizens. Its location in the Ville community underscored that neighborhood's position as the center of black St. Louis life. Except for local school facilities, Tandy was the first recreational outlet in the neighborhood. For almost 60 years, it has served the local population (still almost entirely African-American) in the Ville neighborhood and beyond. The proposed period of significance extends to 1949, the arbitrary fifty year limit.

Narrative: In the decades between 1910 and 1930, the racial makeup of the Ville neighborhood changed from overwhelmingly white to nearly 90% black. Aside from Sumner High School and the Pine Street Y.M.C.A., there were no recreational facilities for blacks in the area. All of the municipal facilities in the neighborhood were for whites only.

Concerned about the lack of recreational facilities for black youth, a committee formed by J. M. Grant, C. M. Evans, C. B. Broussard, W. H. J. Beckett and Dr. O. S. McClellan began to lobby city government in 1934. All five lived in the greater Ville area. Mayor Bernard F. Dickmann, who owed his election in 1932 to Democratic organizers in the black community, realized the political value of public works projects. A bond issue was approved in 1934 for two community centers for the black community, one to be located near the intersection of Kennerly and Goode (now Annie Malone Drive).¹ Land had not yet been acquired for this construction, but the location mentioned was to become the site of the Tandy Center. A few months later, the Public Works Administration (PWA) approved \$126,000 in grants for the two projects.²

Tandy was one of dozens of building projects in the St. Louis area subsidized by the PWA. From the time of the PWA's authorization in 1933 until St. Louis area projects were completed in 1940, millions of dollars in building program assistance was disbursed in the form of grants and loans. In the first four years of the program alone, the PWA claimed to have spent over 72 million dollars in the state of Missouri. About 8.5 million dollars of that was spent in the St. Louis area to support projects such as the Civil Courts Building, Municipal Auditorium (Kiel Center), the Soldiers' Memorial, and, in the Ville, Homer G. Phillips Hospital.³ Other projects between 1933-1940 included work at City Hospital, Koch Hospital, the St. Louis Training School for the Feeble Minded, and a variety of schools and police stations. Non-building PWA projects included construction of or improvements to streets, sewers, bridges and viaducts.

In 1937-1938, three recreation centers for the black community (rather than the initially proposed two) were constructed: Vashon at Compton Avenue and Market Street, Gamble at Gamble Street and Glasgow Avenue, and Tandy at Goode and Kennerly Avenues. Of these, Tandy had the most facilities and was

¹"City Officials Checking Over Bond Projects," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 22 May 1934.

²"\$2,522,000 Grant Made by PWA for City Institutions," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 20 July 1934.

³"\$72,345,374 SPENT BY PWA IN MISSOURI," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 16 June 1937, "PWA Here Spent 72 Million in 4 Years," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 16 June 1937.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 4

Tandy Community Center
St. Louis [Independent City], MO
Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis

clearly intended as the centerpiece of the mayor's building plan. The center was named after Capt. Chariton H. Tandy, a black Civil War Veteran who was also an active civic and political figure at the turn of the century.

Built at 4206 West Kennerly in City Block 3688, Tandy Community Center was an important addition to the emerging middle-class black neighborhood of the Ville. Sumner High School lay just south of the new building, Homer G. Phillips hospital was to the east, and the St. Louis Colored Orphan's Home (now the Annie Malone Children and Family Service Center) was just across the street on Goode (now Annie Malone Drive).

The center's dedication on May 15, 1938 was a community event, scheduled to coincide with the May Day celebration of the St. Louis Colored Orphans Home. According to news reports, several thousand spectators turned out to hear Mayor Dickmann, who was not modest about his part in planning the new center. Dickmann mused "who can tell but what a second Joe Lewis may emerge from your splendid gymnasium?"⁴ (While a second Joe Lewis has not yet emerged from Tandy's ranks a young tennis player from Tandy Park's courts, Arthur Ashe, succeeded in the previously all-white world of professional tennis.) Dickmann's audience apparently agreed that the building of the community centers was more than a symbolic gesture from a clever politician. An editorial in the black newspaper, *The St. Louis Argus*, written after the dedication praised Dickmann for "being earnest and sincere in his efforts to serve the people of this city in a large way."⁵

While Tandy offered recreational opportunities to black athletes in the Ville, its sponsorship of sports leagues and tournaments assumed a prominent place in the black St. Louis sports scene of the late 1930s and 1940s. In an era when relatively few professional opportunities existed for black athletes, local contests enacted between company sponsored teams, schools, and recreation center teams, usually dominated the sports pages of the African-American press. Tandy has continued to serve the neighborhood, and the city, since its dedication. The Silver Gloves Boxing Tournament, an annual event sponsored by the St. Louis Department of Parks and Recreation, is held at Tandy as are tournaments for basketball. While serving traditional functions, the community center has also kept up with modern technology, and now features a computer lab. Tandy remains important to the Ville as a center for community life: as a gathering place for events, a "safe haven" for youngsters and a reminder of the Ville's rich history as an African-American neighborhood.

⁴"New Tandy Center Formally Dedicated," *St. Louis Argus*, May 20, 1938.

⁵"Mayor Dickmann." *St. Louis Argus*, May 20, 1938, p. 8.

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**Tandy Community Center
St. Louis [Independent City], MO
Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis**

9. Major Bibliographic References

- "\$2,522,000 Grant Made by PWA for City Institutions." *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. 20 July 1934.
- "City Officials Checking Over Bond Projects." *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. 22 May 1934. "Mayor Dickmann." *St. Louis Argus*, 5/20/38, 8.
- "New Community Center to be Dedicated." *St. Louis Argus*, 5/13/1938.
- "New Tandy Center Formally Dedicated." *St. Louis Argus*. 5/20/1938.
- "PWA Here Spent 72 Million in 4 Years." *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. 16 June 1937.
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of St. Louis, v. 7, for 1909, 1951, 1961. Sanborn Fire Insurance Company.
- Short, C. W., and R. Stanley-Brown. *Public Buildings: Architecture Under the Public Works Administration 1933-1939*. v. 1. New York: Da Capo Press, 1986. Reprint of 1939 edition.
- "Tandy Community Center Dedicated." *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, 5/16/1938.
- "Tandy Negro Center Ceremonies Today." *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 5/15/1938.
- Toft, Carolyn Hewes, ed. *The Ville: The Ethnic Heritage of an Urban Neighborhood*. St. Louis: Social Science Institute, Washington University, 1975.
- Wright, John A. *Discovering African American St. Louis: A Guide to Historic Sites*. St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1994.

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Tandy Community Center is shown as the bold line on the accompanying map entitled "Historic and Architectural Resources of The Ville, St. Louis MPS: Tandy Community Center." The property is located in Block 19 of the Subdivision of the Wash Estate (City Block 3688) in the City of St. Louis.

Boundary Justification

These boundaries coincide with surveyed boundaries surrounding the Tandy Community Center but excluding the adjacent Tandy Park, which is not proposed for nomination.

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**Tandy Community Center
St. Louis [Independent City], MO
Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis**

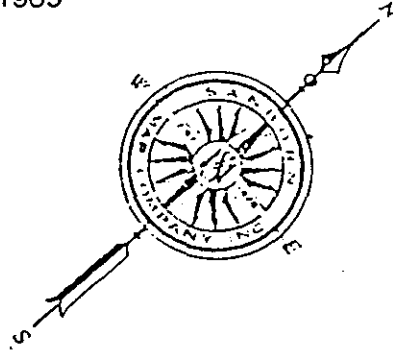
1. Lynn Josse and John Saunders, Research Associates
Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc.
917 Locust Street, 7th Floor
St. Louis MO 63101
314/421-6474
October 1997
original draft nomination, items 1-11

2. Steven E. Mitchell
Assistant Director
Historic Preservation Program
Division of State Parks
Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City, MO 65102
573/751-4692
August 1999
editor, items 1-11

COTT

KENNERLY

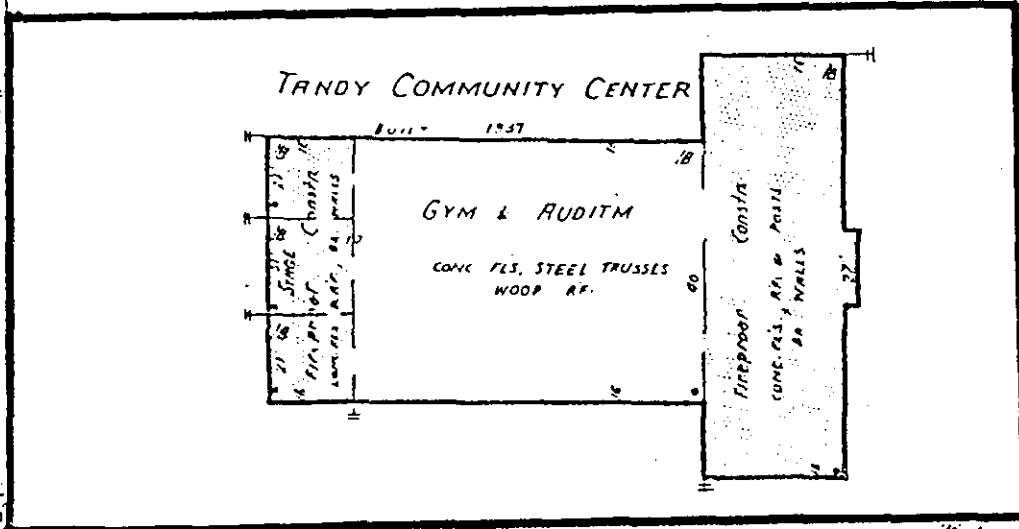
Historic and Architectural Resources of The Ville, St. Louis MPS
 Tandy Community Center
 4206 W. Kennerly Ave.
 St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
 Proposed boundaries indicated by heavy line
 source: Sanborn Map Company, 1969



Cottage Av.

Kennerly Av.

(former alley)



6" W PIPE

6" W PIPE

HYD.

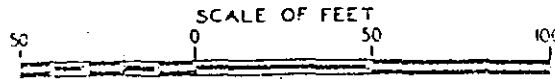
HYD.

AV.

ANNIE MALONE DRIVE

6" W PIPE

24



HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES OF THE
VILLE, ST LOUIS (INDEPENDENT CITY)

TANDY COMMUNITY CENTER
(TANDY RECREATION CENTER)

4206 W. Kennerly Ave.

St. Louis (Independent City) MO

BY: CYNTHIA LONGWISCH

DATE: 12/1996

NEG: LANDMARKS ASSOC. OF ST. LOUIS, INC

FACING: SW; PRIMARY ELEVATION

/ of 3



HISTORIC & ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES OF
THE VILLE, ST. LOUIS (INDEP. CITY)

TANDY COMMUNITY CENTER

4206 W. KENNERLY AVE.

ST. LOUIS (INDEPENDENT CITY), MO

BY: CYNTHIA LONGWISCH

NEG: LANDMARKS ASSOC. OF ST. LOUIS

DATE: 9/1997

FACING N; REAR ELEVATION

#2 of 3



HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES OF THE
VILLE, ST LOUIS (INDEPENDENT CITY)

TANDY COMMUNITY CENTER
(TANDY RECREATION CENTER)

4206 W. KENNEDY AVE
ST LOUIS (INDEP. CITY) MO

BY: CYNTHIA LONGWISCH

DATE: 1/1997

NEG: LANDMARKS ASSOC OF ST LOUIS, INC.
FACING SE; SIDE ELEVATION

3 of 3

