

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Unsell, Elijah J., House

other names/site number Unsell-Cabell House

2. Location

street & number 615 East Monroe [N/A] not for publication

city or town Kirkwood [N/A] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county St. Louis code 189 zip code 63122

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)

Sara Parker 11/25/02
Signature of certifying official/Title Sara Parker/Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.
See continuation sheet .

determined eligible for the
National Register.
See continuation sheet .

determined not eligible for the
National Register.

removed from the National
Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Unsell, Elijah J., House
St. Louis County, Missouri
Historic Resources of Kirkwood, Missouri

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources Within Property		
		Contributing	Non-contributing	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	2	1	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	0	0	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	0	structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0	objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	2	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing.

Historic Resources of Kirkwood, Missouri

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling
DOMESTIC/ secondary structure

Current Functions

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling
DOMESTIC/ secondary structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Late Victorian/ Italianate

Materials

foundation Stone
 walls Wood

 roof Asphalt
 other _____

Narrative Description See continuation sheet [x].

See continuation sheet []

**Unsell, Elijah J., House
St. Louis County, Missouri
Historic Resources of Kirkwood, Missouri**

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

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

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

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

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

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

See continuation sheet [x].

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

See continuation sheet [x].

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

Areas of Significance

Architecture

Period of Significance

1873-ca. 1930

Significant Dates

1873

Significant Person(s)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other:

Name of repository:

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.314

UTM References

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	727000	4273060			
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 FOP for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name Mr. and Mrs. Hugh McPheeters
 street & number 615 East Monroe telephone (314) 241-5888
 city or town Kirkwood state MO zip code 63122

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Continuation Sheet

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Unsell, Elijah J., House
St. Louis County, Missouri
Historic Resources of Kirkwood, Missouri

SUMMARY: The Elijah J. Unsell House, at 615 E. Monroe in Kirkwood, St. Louis County, Missouri, is a two story frame Italianate House with a high level of architectural detailing. It was built in 1873. It is a refined, highly intact example of Property Type B. Italianate Houses. It meets the registration requirements for that property type set forth in the MPS Cover document "Historic Resources of Kirkwood, Missouri." The large house exhibits many features typical of the Italianate style in Kirkwood. They include a wide bracketed and dentiled cornice, elaborate window trim, and wood siding designed to mimic cut stone, complete with staggered quoins on most corners. The front porch of the house is of special note; it features slender paired posts and Italianate style trim, all of which appear to be original. As is the case for many of Kirkwood's Italianate houses, the core of the Unsell house takes the form of a large gabled ell. The massing is made more irregular by the addition of three different polygonal window bays, the staggered outline of the one-story front porch, and a square extension over the entrance which echos the line of towers on similar houses. (It may have been topped with a tower or ornamental roof at one time.) The large size and frame construction are also typical of the property type in Kirkwood. The two-over-two windows of the house, which are early or original, have heavy molded trim; those in the gable ends of the second floor have elaborately detailed pedimented hoods. The house sits on a large lot which contains a newer frame garage, set near the house, and a small secondary residence which is set further back on the lot. This gable-roofed frame building has vertical board and batten siding, and a massive exterior stone chimney. The garage is non-contributing; the small house, which appears to date to the 1920s or 1930s, is contributing. The Unsell House is highly intact, with notably refined Italianate style architectural detailing. It is in excellent condition, and immediately recognizable to its period of significance.

ELABORATION: The Elijah J. Unsell House is a well-maintained example of the Italianate style, with many design features which were popular nationwide, as well as a few which were more typical of Kirkwood. The Unsell House faces south onto East Monroe street, and has an irregular floor plan with multiple rooflines. A basic gabled ell form is embellished with one-story, flat-roofed, polygonal bays on the south, east, and west elevations. An open porch with a stepped footprint adds to the irregular massing. A square projection over the front doorway may have be the base for an early tower, or simply a way to echo the floorplan of contemporary houses in the area which did have towers. Two hip-roofed additions, each with correspondingly lower rooflines, extend to the north from the rear elevation. A one-story, flat roofed porch is set on the east side of the "L" formed by the rear additions.

All of the roofs are low-pitched, with wide, overhanging boxed eaves. The front section of the house has a wide, flat frieze board has widely spaced paired brackets, with dentils in between. The cornice area of the two rear additions is plain. All sections of the house are clad with wide, wood

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shiplap siding.

The front porch has slender square columns with Tuscan-type capitals. These columns are grouped in two's and three's, and are topped with impost blocks and a plain entablature. Small wood diamond trellises connect the impost, and the porch entry is topped with a jig-sawn, arched frieze. Except for the entry area, the rest of the porch has been enclosed with wood screen panels, inset from the columns. The original form of the front porch remains clear, and the screening does not seriously detract from the historic appearance of the facade.

The entry door is double-leaf, wood with eight glass lights and a glass transom above. The windows in the first story, half-hexagonal bays are very narrow and tall, with one-over-one, double-hung wood sashes. The majority of remaining windows on the original portion of the house are two-over-two, double-hung sash, with flat-topped, projecting entablatures and sills. The south and east facing gable wings each have a paired set of very narrow, one-over-one windows with a single, large pedimented crown with dentils.

The house has been extended rearward twice, once within the period of significance, and once again fairly recently. Both of the rear sections have concrete foundations and wooden drop siding. Although neither has been dated conclusively, the section closest to the original house appears to date to the early decades of the 20th century, within the period of significance. That section has double hung wood windows and operable shutters which are similar to those found on the original house. Several of the features on the very rear addition, including new casement windows and brickwork of the back chimney, indicate a relatively recent date of construction.

The second rear addition is not aligned in plan with the first, but instead extends beyond the eastern elevation of the first addition. On the east elevation of the first rear addition, a shed roof greenhouse with brick side walls has been added. Several of the windows on both rear additions are two-over-two, but are not as tall as those on the original portion of the house. The north elevation of the second rear addition has a large, exterior chimney with two shafts joined by a brick spandrel. There are two other chimneys in the original portion of the house - one of which is quite tall, with brick corbeled patterns.

Neither of the rear ells is visible from the street, and the modern section at the very back of the house has not seriously impacted the overall integrity of the house. The property clearly meets the registration requirements for the Italianate Houses Property type, as laid out in the MPS Cover document "Historic Resources of Kirkwood, Missouri." In reference to additions, those requirements state that "additions and alterations to rear ells and secondary elevations are acceptable, as long as the basic form and massing of the original building are not seriously impacted, and the scale of any new construction does not overpower the original portion of the building."¹ The modern addition is not at all visible from the street, and has obscured neither the original form and massing of the

¹ MPS Cover Document, "Historic Resources of Kirkwood, Missouri," Section F, p. 8.

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building, nor the highly intact Italianate style detailing of the original section of the house.

A large outbuilding building which was used as a play house and party house in the 20th century is located at the northern edge of the property; it is historic and contributing. It has a gable roof, and random width board and batten siding. A massive exterior stone chimney intersects the roof edge on the west elevation. There are numerous windows, recessed within simple, rectangular wood frames. Most have fixed sash, with double or multiple panes. A wood trellis on the south gable end generally follows the slope of the roof. Of uncertain construction date, the secondary building appears to have been built between 1909 and the early 1930s. A one-story, gable-front garage, with board and batten siding is located to the northeast of the house. Although the garage has sympathetic detailing and construction materials, it is modern, and therefore non-contributing.

The house sits in the front one-third of the large lot. A circle drive is located in the front yard, and a wide drive leads to the garage. The yard has numerous deciduous and evergreen trees. The main house and secondary building both retain integrity in the areas of design, materials, workmanship, setting, location, and feeling. △

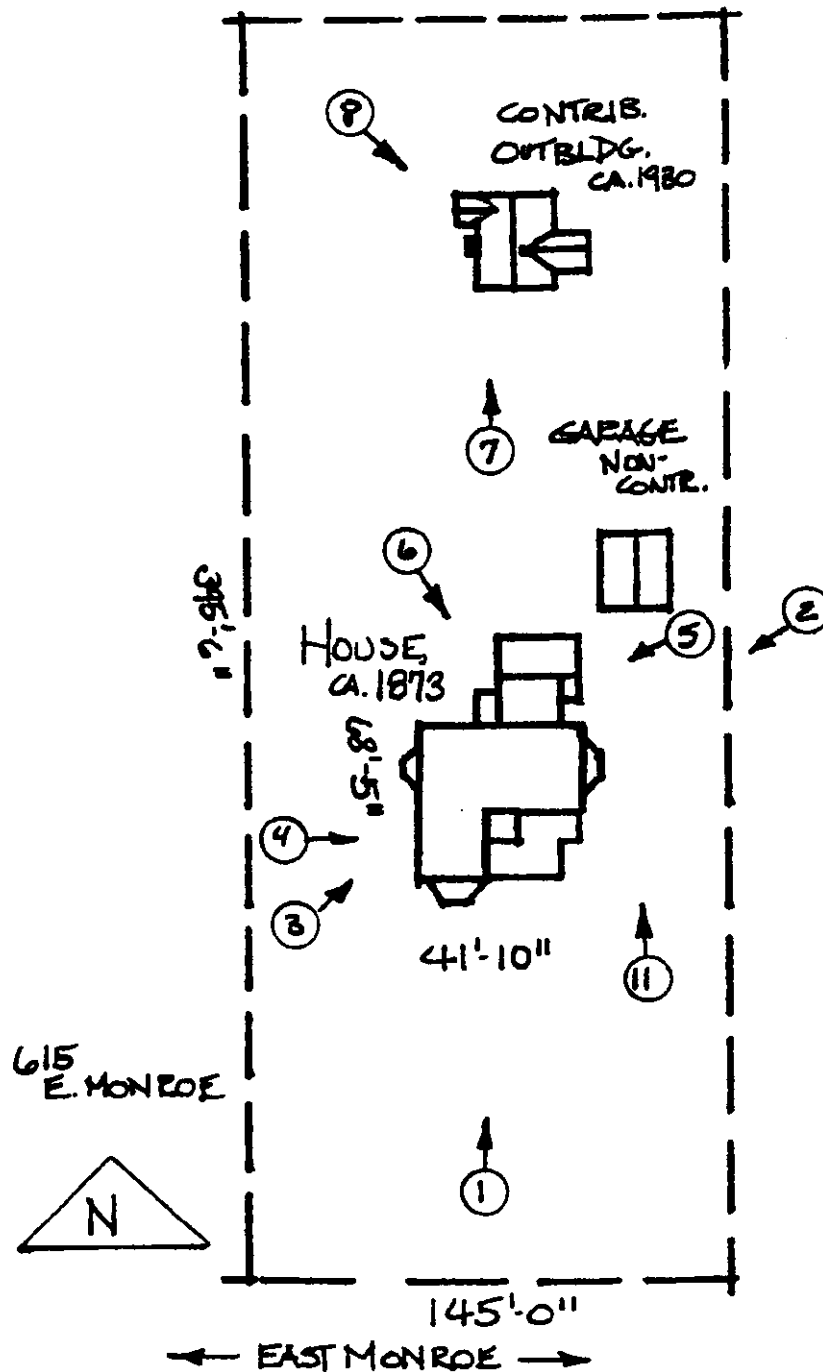
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Figure One. Site plan and photo key.



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Unsell, Elijah J., House
St. Louis County, Missouri
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SUMMARY: The Elijah J. Unsell House, 615 E. Monroe, is significant under Criterion C in the area of ARCHITECTURE. It is a good example of the Italianate Residences property type in Kirkwood. The irregular massing, bracketed cornices, elaborate wall treatments, and general architectural detailing of the house are all typical of Property Type B.: Italianate Houses. The house meets the registration requirements for that property type set forth in the MPS Cover document "Historic Resources of Kirkwood, Missouri," and falls under the context "The Town of Kirkwood: Late Nineteenth Century Suburban Growth--1865-1898". The house was built in 1873 for Elijah J. Unsell, and the large outbuilding at the rear of the lot was built in the early decades of the twentieth century. The period of significance for the property therefore runs from 1873 to ca. 1930, by which time both contributing resources were in place. A modern garage which is of sympathetic design and materials is a non-contributing resource. The house and its outbuildings are in excellent condition, and exhibit a high degree of integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The house has some of the more refined Italianate style detailing found in the core of Kirkwood today, and it is clearly representative of its time and place.

ELABORATION: The Unsell house is a large, well crafted example of the Italianate House property type.² Italianate elements on the Unsell house include an irregular plan, ornamental window hoods, and a low-pitched roof with wide eaves supported by scrolled brackets. The exterior wall treatments are also characteristic of this property type. The walls are sheathed with wide shiplap wood siding, combined with wood quoins, which gives an appearance from the street of tooled stone. The house also features some of the most elaborate Italianate style porch embellishments found in the core of Kirkwood. The historic appearance of the slender, classically inspired square porch columns and sawn wooden ornamentation of the porch are not significantly impacted by screen panels which were added later. The original form and massing of the porch are still clearly evident. Often, porch posts and ornamentations are altered over the years; this early intact porch is a rare resource.

Elijah J. Unsell bought this property in April of 1873, and apparently began construction on the house immediately afterward.³ A City and County Directory published in 1874 shows that he had moved from his residence in St. Louis to Kirkwood by that time, presumably to this house. Unsell is said to have had so much trouble with the theft of lumber from the job site that he had to

² See MPS Cover document "Historic Resources of Kirkwood, Missouri, Section F, Associated Property Types," for more discussion of the Italianate House property type.

³ Book 461, page 510, at the Recorder of Deeds Office of St. Louis. Unsell bought 2 acres of land from Frederick and Carrie Howes.

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hire a night watchman.⁴ At this time, Unsell was the purchasing agent for Keokuk Northern Line Packet Company, a boat store. Directories show that by 1878, he had become the manager of the store. He was also known as a river boat captain. Unsell died in 1886, and his widow, Emily C. Unsell, sold the property to C. Franklin Simmons in 1889.⁵

It was sold again in 1898 to Margaret H. and Ashley Cabell. Locally, the house is known as the Unsell-Cabell House.⁶ The Cabells were well known in Kirkwood society, and their daughter Margaret had the distinction of being the St. Louis Veiled Prophet Queen in 1907. They lived there until 1932, and it was probably under their ownership that the large outbuilding at the back of the lot was constructed.

The house is one of the larger, more elaborate of the Italianate houses left in Kirkwood today. It is immediately recognizable to its period of significance, and is in excellent condition. It has seen no changes of note, and appears today much as it did a century ago. ♡

⁴ Landmark Records, City of Kirkwood Planning Department.

⁵ Book 41, page 231, at the Recorder of Deeds Office of St. Louis.

⁶ Chomeau, Mary B. "A Centennial Portfolio of Early Kirkwood Houses." Kirkwood Historical Review. Vol. IV, March 1965, p. 7.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chomeau, Mary B. "A Centennial Portfolio of Early Kirkwood Houses." Kirkwood Historical Review. Vol. IV, March, 1965.

Dahl, June Wilkinson. A History of Kirkwood, Missouri: 1861-1965. Kirkwood, MO.: The Kirkwood Historical Society, 1965.

Gould's St. Louis Directory. 1874, 1878.

McPheeters, Ann H. Interview. 5 March 1990.

St. Louis County. Recorder of Deeds Office. Book 41, p. 231; Book 109, p. 46; Book 461, p. 510; Book 480, p. 222.

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**Unsell, Elijah J., House
St. Louis County, Missouri
Historic Resources of Kirkwood, Missouri**

Verbal Boundary Description

The Eastern 145 feet of the Western 245 feet 6 inches of Lot of Block 16 of East Kirkwood, in St. Louis County, Missouri according to the plat thereof recorded in Plat Book 3 page 62 of the St. Louis City (formerly County) Records, fronting 145 feet on the North line of Monroe Avenue by a depth Northwardly between parallel lines of 395 feet 2 inches to the South line of Madison Avenue, together with all improvements thereon known as and numbered as 615 East Monroe, with a total acreage of 1.314 acres.

Boundary Justification

The original lot has been subdivided and redeveloped over the years; the current property boundaries encompass all of the land historically associated with the house that retains integrity from the period of significance.

Photographs

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Unsell, Elijah J., House

615 East Monroe

Kirkwood, St. Louis County, MO

1-3, and 11, taken by Debbie Sheals, 406 West Broadway, Columbia, MO 65203; date: 2002

4-10, taken by Linda Stockman, 139 South Kirkwood Rd, Kirkwood, MO, 63122; date: 1990

(The house was field checked in 2002 to ensure the 1990 photos are still accurate.)

Negatives are on file with the City of Kirkwood Dept of Planing and Development, 139 South Kirkwood Road, Kirkwood, MO 63122, 314-822-5808.

List of Photographs

See photo key for indication of camera angles.

1. Facade, south elevation.
2. East elevation, looking southwest
3. West elevation, cornice details.
4. West elevation.
5. Back of house, looking south-southwest.
6. Back of house, looking southeast.
7. Outbuilding/small residence, looking north.
8. Outbuilding/small residence, looking southeast.
9. Stair hall, from front door.
10. Fireplace, with marble mantel.
11. Modern garage and small residence.

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Historic Resources of Kirkwood, Missouri

11. Form Prepared By

Name Linda Stockman
organization Kirkwood Landmark Commission date 1990
street & number 139 South Kirkwood Road telephone (314) 822-5808
city or town Kirkwood state Missouri zip code 63122

Name Deon K. Wolfenbarger
organization Three Gables Preservation date 1992
street & number 9550 N.E. Cookingham Drive telephone (816) 792-1275
city or town Kansas City state Missouri zip code 64157

Name Debbie Sheals
organization Independent Contractor date May, 2002
street & number 406 West Broadway telephone 573-874-3779
city or town Columbia state Missouri zip code 65203



















