

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

New Submission Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic Colonnade Apartment Buildings of Kansas City, Missouri

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

The Evolution of the Apartment Building in Kansas City: 1880-1930
The Rise of the Middle-Class Multi-Family Residential Unit in Kansas City: 1885-1930
The Colonnade Apartment in Kansas City: c.1900-1930

C. Form Prepared by

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D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. [] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mark A. Miles
Signature and title of certifying official Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO

08/28/03
Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

Oct 17, 2003
Date

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Historic Colonnade Apartment Buildings of Kansas City, Missouri

MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING NAME: Historic Colonnade Apartment Buildings of Kansas City, Missouri

PREFACE

Kansas City's historic colonnade apartment buildings – their size, setting, design, plan, and materials – reflect important aspects of the City's cultural history and development. This Multiple Property Documentation Form focuses on the colonnaded “purpose-built” apartment building — a building designed in the Neoclassical style or in simple vernacular variations referencing classical design and constructed to serve as a multiple family dwelling for the middle and upper-middle classes. The Kansas City Colonnade Apartment Building Property Type is typically a multi-story, masonry apartment building with one or more prominent multi-story colonnaded porches.¹ Today there are over five hundred surviving colonnade apartment buildings built in Kansas City, Missouri between c.1900² and 1930.

ASSOCIATED HISTORIC CONTEXTS

The Evolution of the Apartment Building in Kansas City: 1880-1930

The Rise of the Middle-Class Multi-Family Residential Unit in Kansas City 1885-1930

The Colonnade Apartment in Kansas City: 1900-1930

INTRODUCTION: PRECEDENTS AND PROTOTYPES

As noted by architectural historians Emily Hotaling Eig and Laura Harris Hughes in their study of Washington D.C. apartment houses,

The clustering of several families under one roof is often the result of economic or political necessity. Under many circumstances the question of how to house these families is moot; the families make do, working together as an extended family, or perhaps accommodating each family unit on separate floors. But to plan for the housing of separate families as independent units who

¹ Brenda R. Spencer, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Form” Colonnaded Apartments on the north end of The Paseo Boulevard in Kansas City, Missouri, ca. 1896-1945,” 20 May, 2000. City of Kansas City, Missouri Landmarks Commission, Kansas City, Missouri.

² A review of previous surveys reveals only a handful of colonnade apartments assigned dates of construction predating 1900. The one example listed in Spencer’s study had columns added a decade later. In a review of the other survey forms with pre-1900 dates, it appears that they are circa dates and are not based on building permit dates. This, combined with the documentation of McKecknie’s 1900 design for the Pergola Apartment building as a forerunner of the colonnade prototype, led to the assignment of a c.1900 date.

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choose to be lodged within the confines of a single building is a different issue, and one that has resulted in the formation of a specific building type — the 'Purpose-built' apartment building.³

EARLY MULTI-FAMILY PRECEDENTS

American multi-family dwellings are cultural descendents of traditional European housing dating as early as the fourth century B.C., where apartment buildings were a popular solution to urban living in Rome. (The noun "appartimenta" is from the Latin verb *partier* — to divide or to share.) As it did throughout history, multi-family housing occurred in ancient Rome in response to economic and physical conditions associated with the growth of cities. The multi-family housing unit allowed not only the wealthy, but also the lower and middle classes to live near urban centers by providing different families with separate residential space in a building that did not require much land. Roman city planners erected thousands of three- to eight-story multi-family buildings called "insulae" (islands) that housed both patricians and plebeians.⁴

During the Renaissance, the growth of cities resulting from the increase of trade, wealth, and population built upon the tradition of communal living, established the multi-family building as an important residential component in large cities.⁵ Over the ensuing centuries, European cities exhibited variations of the apartment building that evolved into specific forms and floor plans, in part due to the establishment of building codes requiring setbacks, fireproof materials, and height limits. Complexes of small to large buildings, often housing retail shops on the ground floor, housed different classes in close proximity to one another.⁶

The French example became the primary influence on apartment design in the United States. Paris was a major center of apartment building beginning in the 1600s. The city's development in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as one of Europe's primary cities established the apartment building as economically viable housing for its increasing population. It was, however, in the late nineteenth-century that the French apartment dwelling became the prototype for the building type in American cities. Beginning in the 1870s, American architects who studied in Paris at the *Ecole Des Beaux Arts* brought the French style of exterior massing and architectural treatment as well as their floor plans to Boston, New York City, and Chicago.⁷

³ Emily Hotaling Eig and Laura Harris Hughes, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Form "Apartment Buildings in Washington D.C. 1880-1945," 1 July 1993, E1. District of Columbia Planning Department, Washington D.C.

⁴ Elizabeth Hawes, *New York, New York How the Apartment House Transformed the Life of the City* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), 20.

⁵ Eig and Hughes, E2

⁶ Hawes, 19-20

⁷ Eig and Hughes, E2-3.

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American Prototypes

The growing popularity of the apartment house in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries corresponds to the era between the Civil War and the Great Depression, a time when towns became cities and the majority of the nation's citizens became an urban people. Despite the European tradition of communal living, in antebellum America the idea of sharing a roof, front door, and a staircase with other families was distasteful. Initially, traditional values held that multi-family dwellings were the purview of the lower classes. As communities grew after the end of the Civil War, the establishment of the apartment house as a significant part of a city's housing reflects a number of factors, the foremost of which was a rapidly growing population and limited land mass near centers of economic activity and transit systems. In particular, the growing numbers of working-class and middle-class bachelors and single women arriving in cities to take jobs as clerks, salesmen, ministers, teachers, librarians, middle managers, secretaries, and stenographers created a demand for affordable housing, without the responsibilities and costs of home ownership. Among certain groups of the upper classes, the popularity of apartment dwelling during this period occurred at a time of spiraling cost of servants and, after 1913, the impact of income tax. For the bachelor physician, banker, or attorney and the well-to-do widow or spinster, "apartment hotel" living, with its attendant food and maid services, became an accepted alternative to living in a single-family dwelling.⁸

According to James Goode in *Best Addresses*, an authoritative study of the luxury apartment buildings of Washington, D.C., the Hotel Pelham in Boston was "... the first authentic apartment house in the United States."⁹ Dating to 1857, the Pelham's design follows the Parisian apartment model with one apartment unit per floor. Called a "hotel" from the French word for private mansion, the building's apartments did not have private kitchens or bathrooms.¹⁰ Boston's Hotel St. Cloud, constructed twelve years later, more closely follows the modern-day definition of an apartment building in its inclusion of kitchens and bathrooms in each apartment.

Over the ensuing years, Boston's middle- and upper-class apartment house design acquired its own distinct characteristics. Large apartment buildings featured commercial space on the ground floor, kitchens on the top, and servants' quarters in the basement. The more modest "triple-decker" style apartment building plan consisted of three units, one per floor. Its larger counterpart, the "double triple-decker" building plan consisted of six units, two per floor, and three per side connected by a central stair hall. Both building types appeared as a detached house.¹¹ These plans became a model for the "walk-up" apartment flats that continued in popularity throughout the twentieth century in the United States and in Kansas City's apartment building property types.

⁸ Hawes, xiii.

⁹ Eig and Hughes, E3 citing James Goode, *Best Addresses*, 536.

¹⁰ Ibid, E3.

¹¹ Ibid.

