NPS Form 10-900
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

OMB No. 1024-0018

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1046

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 Simmons Funeral Home

Other names/site number Dr. Clopper's Hospital Clinic; KHRI # 209-2187

Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

2. Location

Street & number 1404 South 37th Street | N/A | not for publication

City or town Kansas City | N/A | vicinity

State Kansas Code KS County Wyandotte Code 209 Zip code 66106

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

I hereby certify that this _X_ 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 _X_ 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 _X_ local Applicable National Register Criteria: _X_ A ___ B _X_ C ___ D

Patrick Zollner 11-19-13

Signature of certifying official/Title Patrick Zollner, Deputy SHPO Date

Kansas State Historical Society

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:)

for Edson W. Beall 1-8-14

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

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

X	private
	public - Local
	public - State
	public - Federal

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

X	building(s)
	district
	site
	structure
	object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		**Total**

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

FUNERARY/mortuary
HEALTH CARE/clinic

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/Not In Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY
REVIVAL/ Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY
REVIVAL/Craftsman Bungalow

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete
walls: Brick
roof: Clay Tile
other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources, if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary

The Simmons Funeral Home at 1404 South 37th Street, Kansas City, Kansas was completed in 1927 in the Mission style. It was designed by Kansas City, Kansas architect Fred S. Wilson. The one-and-one-half-story commercial building has brick load-bearing walls, multi-colored clay tile hipped roof with flared eaves, and Mission-inspired parapet walls. The east-facing primary elevation reflects the building's interior central hall plan. Other details include the tri-casement windows, decorative carved and painted wood brackets, and glazed terra-cotta frieze band. The interior layout experienced significant changes in 1935, when the building was converted from Dr. David E. Clopper's 20-room hospital to the Simmons Funeral Home. Aside from two compatible additions (chapel and garage), the building is mainly intact since 1927, with typical minor modifications. The building retains integrity and clearly communicates the original architectural design of Dr. Clopper's hospital and the Simmons Funeral Home.

Elaboration

Site:

The Simmons Funeral Home occupies the southeast corner of Strong Avenue and 37th Street, south of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad yard and east of the Harry Darby Memorial Highway/Interstate 635 (see figure 3). The site is approximately six miles southwest of downtown Kansas City, Kansas. There are residential neighborhoods surrounding the site, which consist of an eclectic mix of 19th and early-20th century single-family dwellings. A few blocks to the east on Strong Avenue starts the main commercial thoroughfare of what used to be Argentine, Kansas (annexed into Kansas City, KS in 1910).

A grass lawn with various types of trees and shrubbery borders the north and east sides of the nominated building. Paved driveways border the building on the west and south, both leading to a garage with an L-shaped plan attached to the building's southwest corner. There is a raised parking lot south of the building, which is accessed from 37th Street where there are two brick retaining walls on either side of the entrance. The building's primary entrance is on the east elevation and is accessed by a brick walkway and stairs leading to a covered full-width front porch.

Exterior:

The building is comprised of three masses: a 1927 hipped-roof section with a rectangular footprint; a 1952 one-story addition with a rectangular footprint on the south elevation; and a ca. 1953-1968 L-shaped garage addition at the southwest corner. There are two interior brick chimneys – at the southeast and northwest corners.

The 1927 building has a hipped roof with multi-color clay-tiles, finials, and flared eaves with decorative brackets. The 1952 side chapel section to the south is covered by a flat roof behind a brick parapet. The attached garage is covered by a flat roof as well with smaller, less articulate sections of brick and terra cotta parapets. The upper two-thirds of the exterior of the 1927 building is composed of multi-colored tapestry brick. The bottom one-third is red tapestry brick that flares out at the base. This brick pattern runs continuously around the building. The exterior walls are brick load-bearing with buttressed connections to the ground on the north elevation.

The east (primary) elevation features a one-story, full-width porch supported by four brick piers with flared bases. The porch is accented along the top by floral-patterned tiles bordered by buff-colored brick in a soldier course. The porch is accessed by wide brick steps centered on the east elevation. There is a central, double-door entrance with tripartite metal casement windows accented by buff-colored brick in a soldier course. The front porch connects to the set of doors leading to the central corridor, as well as a historic decorative wooden set of doors that enters into the chapel. The hip roof covers the front porch and contains decorative carved and painted wood brackets, a painted bead board ceiling and four brick columns with arched steel lintels and glazed terra cotta frieze band above. The flooring is original square clay tiles. The decorative floral-patterned terra cotta frieze band continues at the same height on the east façade of the 1952 chapel addition, with red tapestry brick above to the top of the parapet.

The north façade contains the floral-patterned tiles above the fenestration with herringbone patterned brick coursing in between, bordered by buff-colored brick in a soldier course across the 1927 portion of the building. The fenestration consists of one single steel casement window, three triple steel casement window assemblies, one quadruple steel casement window assembly and one five steel casement window assembly at the first floor. Below each casement window at the first floor level are fixed steel windows with metal mesh coverings and below one is access to the basement level which is surrounded by a wrought iron railing. Near the west portion of the north facade is a Mission-inspired parapet wall. The garage addition, which is set back, contains similar brick styles with a terra cotta topped brick parapet wall, a single door and overhead garage door. Stairs accessing the basement level are located where the 1927 building ends and the garage addition begins.

The west façade includes the garage addition and the original west façade of the 1927 building and 1952 chapel addition. The west façade of the garage addition is painted CMU blocks with two glass block windows. The west façade of the 1927 building is now located on the interior of the garage and has since been painted whitish grey. It contains a covered porch with a double door entrance with transom above that leads to the main corridor. The covered porch contains similar brick columns, arched steel lintels and wood bead board ceiling as found on the east elevation. The porch is accessed by a ramp. The 1952 chapel addition contains an entrance as well with 5 steps up to the original single door entrance. Fenestration includes a fixed steel window next to the 1952 chapel entrance.

The south façade contains the 1952 chapel addition and the garage addition. The 1952 chapel addition contains the sections of multi-colored tapestry brick and red tapestry brick, with an additional section of red tapestry brick above the multi-colored portion. Buff-colored brick in a soldier course separates the middle section of multi-colored brick with the upper section of red brick, as well as surrounds the two glass block windows. The same brick sections are found on the garage addition with a terra cotta topped brick parapet wall. The brickwork on both the additions was done exceptionally well. Fenestration, which is the only distinguishable difference between the 1927 building and the chapel and garage additions, includes one glass block window centered on the south façade of the garage section and two glass block windows on the south façade of the 1952 chapel addition.

The chapel addition was finished in December 1952.[1] It is suspected that the attached garage and adjacent parking lot were finished after 1952, but before 1968. The 1953 newspaper article describing the chapel addition makes no mention of a garage or parking lot addition and the 1951 Sanborn Map still shows a house and garage occupying the lot. The 1968 image (Figure 6) shows the current neighboring house in the background, with the house and garage from the 1951 Sanborn Map demolished.

[1] "Funeral Home Addition," *The Kansas City Kansan*, January 25, 1953.

Interior:

The interior was reconfigured in 1935, when Dr. Clopper's hospital was converted to Simmons Funeral Home. The main entrance leads into a central hall, with offices, a reception area, chapel and music room accessible on the first floor and a viewing room and embalming and work rooms on the lower level. Additionally, the plaster walls and ceilings, a fireplace, and several light fixtures date to the 1935 funeral home renovation. The plaster walls and ceilings are generally in fair condition, with localized portions of failing walls and ceilings due to years of water damage apparent throughout the building. Portions of the main corridor, the original chapel space and 1952 chapel space all have acoustical tile ceilings and the rooms to the west of the chapel spaces have dropped ceilings. Some rooms contain non-historic wood panel walls. The historic light fixtures and fireplace are in fair condition. Some historic doors and door hardware remain, exhibiting the Craftsman style. A non-historic elevator was added during one of the building's periodic upgrades (see floorplan).

The 1952 chapel addition is located south of the original 1927 building and adjacent to the original chapel space. The walls are plaster, with simple crown, picture and base molding. The ceiling contains acoustical ceiling tiles. The original decorative wooden entrance double doors remain at the east end of the room. An accent wall build-out is directly south of the decorative wooden doors.

The basement has the same footprint as the 1927 portion of the first floor. The stairwell leads down to a central corridor on the lower level. An original double-door entry/exit is located at the west end of the central corridor. The original corridor doors remain. Original light fixtures have all been replaced with non-historic fluorescent light fixtures, except for the decorative brass fixtures surrounding the fireplace which is located at the southeast corner of the building.

The garage addition is a one-story open space with concrete masonry unit (CMU) walls, drywall ceilings and a concrete floor. The exterior brick of the 1927 building and 1952 chapel addition on the interior of the garage remains exposed and is painted a light-grey color.

Integrity

The Simmons Funeral Home maintains sufficient architectural integrity to communicate the historic function as a funeral home and residence. The historic Mission and Craftsmen/Bungalow styles are evident on the exterior and interior. Alterations are largely limited to accessibility modifications to the interior and compatible additions built after the original structure. Interior alterations are minimal, with historic configuration, finishes, and fixtures largely intact.

The chapel and garage attachment were added after the original building was completed in 1927. The chapel was added in 1952, with similar brick style and color, as well as the same glazed terra cotta frieze band as on the original structure. The garage addition followed the chapel addition by several years. The additions don't take away from the historic integrity of the original structure and document the progression and growth of the Simmons Funeral Home.

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.)

- [x] 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.
- [x] 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.

Areas of Significance

Commerce

Architecture

Period of Significance

1927-1963

Significant Dates

1927

1935

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Wilson, Fred S. (architect)

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins in 1927, the year the building was constructed, and ends in 1963 with the 50-year cut-off date established by the National Park Service to provide sufficient passage of time to allow objective evaluation of the historic resource eligibility at the time of its listing.

Criteria Considerations (justification)

N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Summary

The Simmons Funeral Home at 1404 South 37th Street, in Kansas City, Wyandotte County, Kansas was constructed in 1927 for Dr. David E. Clopper as a 20-room hospital, and was purchased in 1935 by George Simmons and his son Gib Simmons for use as a mortuary. This property is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places for its local significance under Criterion C in the area of ARCHITECTURE and Criterion A in the area of COMMERCE. Designed by Kansas City architect, Fred S. Wilson, the building reflects the Mission and Craftsman styles popular in the early 20th century. This was the second and long-time home of the Simmons Funeral Home, a family-run business established in the 1880s that operated out of this building until December 2007, when Maple Hill Funeral Home purchased the building.[2]

Elaboration

THE AMERICAN FUNERAL INDUSTRY[3]

The Rise of the Funeral Home[4]

"The modern American funeral industry developed slowly at the end of the nineteenth-century after embalming gained acceptance during the Civil War. Prior to this, family members typically prepared their dead for burial without embalming. The use of embalming was largely limited to medical schools, where students dissected embalmed cadavers as part of their studies. The secretive nature of medical training and problems associated with stealing corpses from graveyards raised fears among the American public that embalming involved bodily mutilation. During the Civil War, when thousands of soldiers died on battlefields or in hospitals far from home, embalming allowed their bodies to be returned to their families for burial. Embalming gained further legitimacy when the body of President Abraham Lincoln was embalmed so that it could be transported from Washington, D.C. to Springfield, Illinois for burial.

By the turn of the twentieth century, changing standards for personal hygiene and public sanitation (particularly in urban areas) as well as advances in modern science and medicine significantly reduced the occurrence of pandemics, which had historically caused abundant deaths. As mortality rates decreased and longevity increased, degenerative diseases and accidents replaced infectious diseases as the most common causes of death. The evolution of the medical practice also led to a rapid rise in the number of hospitals across the United States. One survey documented a 3800 percent rise in the number of hospitals nationwide between 1873 and 1920. While most of the growth occurred in urban areas, hospitals and medical facilities

[2] "History and Staff," from the Maple Hill Funeral Home and Cemetery website, 3 April, 2013 <http://www.maplehillfuneralhome.com/who-we-are/history-and-staff>.

[3] Unless otherwise noted, context for the development of funeral homes is drawn from Gary Laderman, *Rest in Peace: A Cultural History of Death and the Funeral Home in Twentieth-Century America,* (New York: Oxford University Press), 2003.

[4] This section is quoted from *The American Funeral Industry* from Elizabeth Rosin and Kristen Ottesen. "H.W. Gates Funeral Home," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2010), 8-4 through 8-5.

also began appearing in smaller towns and in rural areas. The proliferation of medical facilities meant that patients were increasingly treated in hospitals instead of at home. Consequently, more deaths occurred in hospitals as well. The process of dying at a hospital involved scientific and technological intervention that differentiated the experience from dying in the home, where one was typically surrounded by prayer and family.

As death moved farther away from everyday experience, the funeral industry began to flourish. The public welcomed the involvement of undertakers who took charge of preparing the corpse for burial. By the late nineteenth century, most communities had at least one undertaker who would embalm the body; make the necessary arrangements for visitation; and coordinate the burial. The work of embalming might occur in the home of the deceased or in the undertaker's place of business, quite often a livery stable or furniture store. These practitioners generally learned embalming techniques from other undertakers, many of whom had acquired their expertise in the field during the Civil War.

During the early twentieth century, the American funerary industry became increasingly professional. Undertakers received training at mortuary conferences and at specialized schools that opened across the country. As a typical course of study expanded from six weeks to nine months, the curriculum evolved to include subjects such as anatomy and chemistry. Graduates of these programs joined professional associates at the national and state levels, subscribed to trade journals, and received licenses to practice their profession. By 1940, the term "funeral director" was preferred over "undertaker." This change in title reflected the changing identity of the funeral home owner from a technical and scientific profession to one that incorporated social, psychological and business skills as well as the technical aspects of preparing a body for burial.

Within a thirty-year period, the number of undertakers in the United States increased by 150 percent, growing from just under 10,000 in 1890 to nearly 25,000 in 1920, even as the national death rate dropped. Locally, the number of undertakers working in the Kansas City area followed this national trend. The 1895 city directory listed ten undertakers in Kansas City, Missouri and five in Kansas City, Kansas; the 1920 city directory lists thirty-seven undertakers in Kansas City, Missouri and thirteen in Kansas City, Kansas, representing growth of over 300 percent in just twenty-five years."

The Funeral Home[5]

"As more people spent their final hours in a hospital and as living quarters, particularly in urban areas, became smaller, it soon became the norm for undertakers to direct the entire funeral and burial process from buildings that they owned, which they offered to the family of the deceased for a memorial or funeral ceremony. Commercial buildings housed some early funeral parlors, but the residential-style "funeral home" quickly gained favor. It provided comforting domestic qualities that were reminiscent of the funeral services routinely held in the parlor of the deceased's home just a few decades earlier, but without bringing the taint of death into one's personal home. Offering mourners an atmosphere that was peaceful, reverent, and soothing, by the 1920s funeral homes had replaced parlors and churches as the primary location for funerary activities in larger towns and urban areas.

[5] This portion is quoted from *The American Funeral Industry* from Elizabeth Rosin and Kristen Ottesen. "H.W. Gates Funeral Home," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2010), 8-5 through 8-7.

Although it resembled a single-family home, and indeed usually housed living quarters for the funeral director's family on the upper floors, the interior layout and appearance of the funeral home was specialized. It generally included preparation rooms for embalming the corpses, a public showroom where the funeral director could assist families in the selection of a coffin, an office for the funeral director, a private "parlor" room where family and friends could view the body (often called a "slumber room"), and a chapel for funeral services. Designed to look like a bedroom, the slumber room was a particularly important part of the modern funerary process. It allowed family and friends to spend time with the deceased in a setting that recalled a traditional death scene in a private home. The introduction of music into the funeral service also prompted the installation of organs in many funeral homes.

The presence of the funeral director's children in the house and the increasing involvement of funeral directors' wives in a previously male-dominated business reinforced the domestic qualities of the funeral home. Like the wives of other middle-class business owners, funeral directors' wives participated in the daily running of the operation. Their responsibilities ranged from bookkeeping to planning funerals to applying makeup to the deceased prior to viewing. Their maternal touch was also considered important for families faced with planning a child's funeral. Professional associations and conferences conducted special seminars for women in the funeral industry. Children raised in the business often joined their parents in business and later assumed operation of the funeral home when their parents retired. Multi-generational involvement with a funeral home reinforced the connections between the business and the community.

After World War II, there was a distinct change in the funeral industry. The migration of Americans from rural areas to urban centers placed increased demand on existing funeral homes. At the same time, the children of funeral directors often chose to pursue other career paths.

In the middle of the twentieth century, the funeral home came under fire. In 1963, a book titled *The American Way of Death* by Jessica Mitford harshly criticized the funeral industry, creating public awareness of the high cost of funerals, unscrupulous practices, and lack of options for those desiring services outside the establishment industry norm. The book had a profoundly negative impact on public perception of funeral directors and the industry. Seizing onto the report, the media ran sensational stories about funeral directors charging exorbitant fees for funerals and taking advantage of grief-stricken families or of certain ethnic groups who would pay high-dollar for extravagant funerals. Several portrayals of undertakers in other literature also contributed to their stereotypical image as money-hungry and insensitive.[6]

Despite the negative publicity, funeral homes remained a central part of the American death experience. By this time, the American public widely accepted the practices established by the funeral home industry at the start of the century, and the local funeral director was a neighbor who generally enjoyed community support.

Toward the end of the twentieth century, mergers and buy-outs created corporate conglomerates that often edged out the local, family-owned funeral home. Although fewer in number, individual funeral homes remain in business, particularly in smaller communities. The directors of these funeral homes remain active members of their local community and they continue to offer personal service and attention that distinguishes them from their corporate competitors."

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[6] "Funeral Industry," Encyclopedia of Death and Dying, http://www.deathreference.com/En-Gh/Funeral - Industry.html, internet, accessed 9 October 2007.

THE SIMMONS FAMILY AND FUNERAL HOME[7]

The history of the Simmons Funeral Home closely follows the course of the American funeral industry. George Simmons was involved in the formation of the city of Argentine and served as assistant mayor in 1884 when the city elections took place. George and his brother, Geddes Simmons, started a livery stable in February 1882. Because they owned horses and a wagon, they were asked to travel to Kansas City to purchase coffins for community member's funerals and assist in burial procedures. These continued requests eventually turned into a family business. George learned embalming in 1887 from Professor F. A. Sullivan, who had embalmed the body of Ulysses S. Grant. In 1895, George and his son G. Gilbert formed a partnership; he purchased a stock of caskets and established the city's first mortuary.

During the same period, Dr. David E. Clopper had become an influential figure in Argentine and Kansas City, Kansas. Dr. Clopper served as mayor of Argentine in 1903; president of the Argentine State Bank (1906-1927); was a member of the Kansas City, Kansas Board of Education (1931-1935); and a surgeon for the Santa Fe Railroad (1896-1935). Dr. Clopper maintained his office at 22nd and Silver streets until 1927 when he built a modern emergency hospital and private clinic at 37th Street and Strong Avenue.

Dr. Clopper experienced difficulties in operating the clinic. He had to mortgage his home in order to build the clinic, and when it failed the bank had to foreclose on the mortgage. Upon Dr. Clopper's death in 1935, Dr. K. C. Haas, a fellow Argentine physician, bought the building and was stated as saying 'it was purchased merely as an investment.'[8] Mr. Simmons, who originally tried to acquire Dr. Clopper's residence but was unable to because the neighbors objected to having the location rezoned, was approached by Dr. Haas regarding the clinic-hospital since it was already zoned for business. George Simmons accepted; On April 19, 1935, George and Gib Simmons purchased Dr. Clopper's 20 room clinic-hospital from Dr. K. C. Haas.[9] The interior was then redesigned and converted into a mortuary. The interior alterations included a chapel with a seating capacity of 175 persons, a music room, a family room adjoining the office, a 50 foot long by 8 foot wide hallway, and a bathroom on the main level. The basement contained two large casket rooms (one containing caskets for children and the other containing caskets for adults), a reposing room, a preparation room and a large bedroom for the employees. Also at this time, Simmons constructed a driveway on the west side of the building, entering from Strong Ave.[10] The total remodeling and improvements cost George Simmons $3,500. The company hosted an open house on August 24-25, 1935, to introduce the building to the public.[11] In 1936, Gilbert, his wife Carrie, and their daughter Marjorie moved into the new living quarters in the west portion of the main.

In 1952, a chapel addition was completed on the Simmons Funeral Home.

> "A $17,000 addition to the Simmons Funeral Home, 1404 South Thirty-Seventh, was completed in December of 1952. The addition, measuring 24 by 52 feet, provides a new chapel and family room. The addition was constructed of brick and terra cotta to blend with the exterior of the main building. The addition is air conditioned. The funeral home celebrated its seventieth anniversary during 1952.

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[7] Unless otherwise noted, context for the History of Argentine is drawn from Donald H. Simmons, *Centennial History of Argentine, Kansas City, Kansas, 1880-1980*, (Kansas City: Simmons Funeral Home, 1980). Accessed online 06/27/2013. http://kansasheritage.org/kssights/argentine/title.htm> .

[8] "Buys Clopper Hospital," *Kansas City Kansan*, March 21, 1935.

[9] "Undertaker Buys Clopper Hospital," *Kansas City Kansan*, April 19, 1935, 1.

[10] "Plan Open House at Funeral Home," *The Kansas City Kansas*, August 23, 1935.

The establishment was begun in the Argentine district in 1882 by the grandfather of H. H. Simmons, the present owner."[12]

Howard H. Simmons joined his father Gib and grandfather George in the business in the late 1920's. Marjorie, Gib's daughter, was a part of the firm for several years in the early 1940's. Donald H. Simmons, George's great-grandson, joined the firm in 1958. Donald's son Gary H. also joined the firm, making that the fifth generation of Simmons involved in the business. The business and funeral home was sold to Maple Hill Funeral Home in December 2007.

HISTORY OF ARGENTINE, KANSAS[13]

The Argentine community developed primarily because of the construction of the smelter and Santa Fe railroad. Originally part of the Shawnee Indian reservation, Argentine was platted in 1880 and formed its first city government in 1882.[14] When it was named a first-class city in 1890, it boasted a population of 6,500. However, Kansas City, Kansas eventually annexed Argentine in 1910 because of financial struggles.

In 1875, the Atchinson, Topeka, & Santa Fe Railroad was constructed between the Argentine and Turner communities. Because of the railroad expanses, a smelting business owner named W.N. Ewing chose Argentine as the location for his new smelting plant. Construction of the plant began the same year the town was established. In 1880, James W. Coburn purchased 60 acres from the Shawnee Indians and began developing a town. The plant quickly prospered, with about 10 million dollars of business as early as 1882. By 1890, the Argentine rail yard had 27.5 miles of tracks and employed around 500 workers. In 1898 during the peak of the smelter's success, it produced one-twelfth of all the gold, one-eighth of all the silver, and one-fifth of all the lead in the United States.

Around the same time, freight rates began to rise, making it less economical to transport ores by railroad. It became more advantageous to send ores by waterways, making the need for the Argentine plant less necessary. On October 4, 1901, the smelting plant closed its doors and shut down operations, affecting nearly 700 families in Argentine and put the city in a difficult financial situation. A flood in 1903 devastated the community of Argentine, and without the smelter, the city was unable to survive on its own. In 1910, Argentine officially became a part of Kansas City, Kansas.

ARCHITECTURE

The Mission, Spanish Colonial Revival, and Spanish Eclectic styles were popular for residential and commercial architecture during the early 20th century, particularly following the wide publicity and praise following the 1915 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego, where the buildings designed by Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue introduced the style. These styles are derived and in combination with the Mission Revival style and the Arts and Crafts Movement, which includes design elements such as low-pitched clay tile

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[11] "Plan Open House at Funeral Home," *The Kansas City Kansas*, August 23, 1935.

[12] "Funeral Home Addition," *The Kansas City Kansan*, January 25, 1953.

[13] Unless otherwise noted, context for the History of Argentine is drawn from Donald H. Simmons, *Centennial History of Argentine, Kansas City, Kansas, 1880-1980*, (Kansas City: Simmons Funeral Home), 1980. Accessed online 06/27/2013. http://kansasheritage.org/kssights/argentine/title.htm> .

[14] Susan Keim Rohrer, *Unintended Consequences: the Argentine Neighborhood That Refused to Die*. (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas, 1986.), 8.

roofs, terra cotta or cast concrete ornamentation, small porches, tall casement windows and decorative iron ornamentation.[15]

Numerous Mission-style and Spanish Eclectic residential and commercial buildings were designed during the early 20th century in the Kansas City area. Some examples include the Westheight Manor Shops (1401-1403 North 18th Street and 1657-1659 Washington Boulevard), The Harold M. Franklin Residence (1829 Washington Boulevard), the Harry G. Miller, Sr. Residence (2204 Washington Boulevard), and the Simmons Funeral Home (1404 S 37th Street). Probably the most well known Spanish-influenced work of architecture in the Kansas City area is the Country Club Plaza, which opened in 1923, and may be the inspiration for the numerous Mission- and Spanish Eclectic-style residential and commercial buildings in the Kansas City area.

The positive reviews from the 1915 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego, followed by the success and elegance of the Country Club Plaza, could be a factor in the influence of the numerous Mission and Spanish Eclectic-style buildings in the Kansas City area, particularly, the Simmons Funeral Home, which was designed and built only a few years later in 1927.

ARCHITECT FRED S. WILSON[16]

Fred S. Wilson first appears in the Kansas City directory in 1910, as a draftsman for Kurfiss and Goddard architecture firms. He worked with several architectural firms during his career starting with Kurfiss and Goddard in 1910, the following year joining Sannerman and Van Trump, and finally joining Louis S. Curtiss in 1912. Wilson remained with Curtiss until the start of World War I. Wilson may have been involved in the war effort – either as a serviceman or civilian employee, as he was not found in city directories. After the war, Wilson returned to Rosedale, in the Kansas City area.

After World War I, Curtiss' need for architectural staff came to an end. However, Wilson continued to do job supervision for Curtiss through his last few projects. Under Curtiss' supervision, Wilson likely developed a preference for Craftsman and Spanish Eclectic/Colonial Revival architectural styles. These influences are apparent in many of his designs and the Simmons Funeral Home is an excellent example.

In June 1920, the Kansas City Kansas Planning Commission was formed and the highly regarded planner and landscape architect George E. Kessler was appointed as planning consultant. Wilson was hired as staff engineer, where he prepared maps and other documents. Chairman of the commission was Williard J. Breidenthal, and members included Dr. David E. Clopper and Jesse A. Hoel. A few years earlier, Wilson worked with Curtiss and Hoel on the Hoel house. It is possible that this relationship helped Wilson land the job with the planning commission.

While employed with the planning commission, Wilson also took on several projects for private clients in Kansas City, Kansas. Some of these projects included an apartment building for the Hoel Realty Company (NE corner of North 25th Street and Minnesota Avenue; 1920); the funeral home for H.W. Gates (1901 Olathe Boulevard in Rosedale; 1922); the clinic building for Dr. Clopper (SW corner of 37th Street and Strong Avenue; 1924) which later became the Simmons Funeral Home; Brown Road Methodist Episcopal Church (1900 Steele

[15] Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), 409-410, 417-429.

[16] Biographical information on Fred S. Wilson is from "Westheight Manor Historic District," from the Unified Government of Wyandotte County website, 16 March, 2013 < http://www.wycokck.org/assets/1738669D-55DD-43CF-8EC9-BD40E13BDA72.pdf> 88-89.

Road; 1925); and a store and apartment building for C.F. Peterson (NE corner of West 39th Avenue and South Adams Street; 1925).

Near the end of 1925, Wilson formed an architectural partnership with William W. Rose and Joseph A. Ridgway. Wilson left the partnership in September 1926 and the firm continued as Rose and Ridgway. Wilson maintained an architectural office at his until 1927, the last year he appeared as an architect in the 1927 city directory.

CONCLUSION

The Simmons Funeral Home, completed in 1927, is an excellent example of an early- to mid-20th century funeral home the funeral home constructed in communities throughout the United States. The Mission-Craftsman-style detailing of the building and its location on the corner of 37th Street and Strong Avenue conveys the importance of the business within the community, while its size and scale blend in with the surrounding residences. The buildings architectural features from the period of significance remain largely intact on the interior and exterior.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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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:

_x_State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository: **Kansas Historical Society**

___ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less Than 1

Provide latitude/longitude coordinates OR UTM coordinates.
(Place additional coordinates on a continuation page.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

	Latitude:	Longitude:		Latitude:	Longitude:
1	39.074783	-94.671806	3		
2			4		

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The nominated property is located at 1404 South 37th Street, Kansas City, Wyandotte County, Kansas, and is described as follows: The property's tract description is as follows: BOEKE PLACE, S19, T11, R25, Acres 0.7000, L1 TO L7, L33, L34 & VAC ALLEY ADJ.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundary of the nominated property includes all land historically associated with the building and its operation as the Simmons Funeral Home.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jonathan Klocke
organization Foutch Brothers, LLC date 6/10/2013
street & number 8201 NW 97th Terrace telephone 816-746-9100 x213
city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64153
e-mail jonathan@foutchbrothers.com

Property Owner: (complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Simmons Senior Housing, LP ATTN: Therese Gardner
street & number P.O. Box 6146 telephone 913-908-5337
city or town Kansas City state Kansas zip code 66106

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 100 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.

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Photographs

Photograph Log

Name of Property: Simmons Funeral Home

City or Vicinity: Kansas City

County: Wyandotte State: Kansas

Photographer: Jonathan Klocke

Date Photographed: November 2012

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

1 of 15: South and east facades; photographer facing northwest.

2 of 15: East façade, main entrance; photographer facing west.

3 of 15: North façade; photographer facing south.

4 of 15: North façade, shaped mission roof parapet; photographer facing southwest

5 of 15: North façade, showing the decorative roof brackets, ceramic frieze band and steel casement windows; photographer facing southwest.

6 of 15: North façade, garage addition; photographer facing south.

7 of 15: Entrance lobby, main corridor with existing doorways/transoms, crown and base molding, and historic light fixtures; photographer facing west.

8 of 15: Historic light fixture; photographer facing north.

9 of 15: Historic fireplace; photographer facing south.

10 of 15: Original opening and door; photographer facing west.

11 of 15: Historic light fixture; photographer facing west.

12 of 15: View into chapel; photographer facing east.

13 of 15: Original entrance on west façade; photographer facing northeast.

14 of 15: Central corridor in basement; photographer facing west.

15 of 15: Historic fireplace in basement; photographer facing south.

Additional Documentation

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Photo Maps

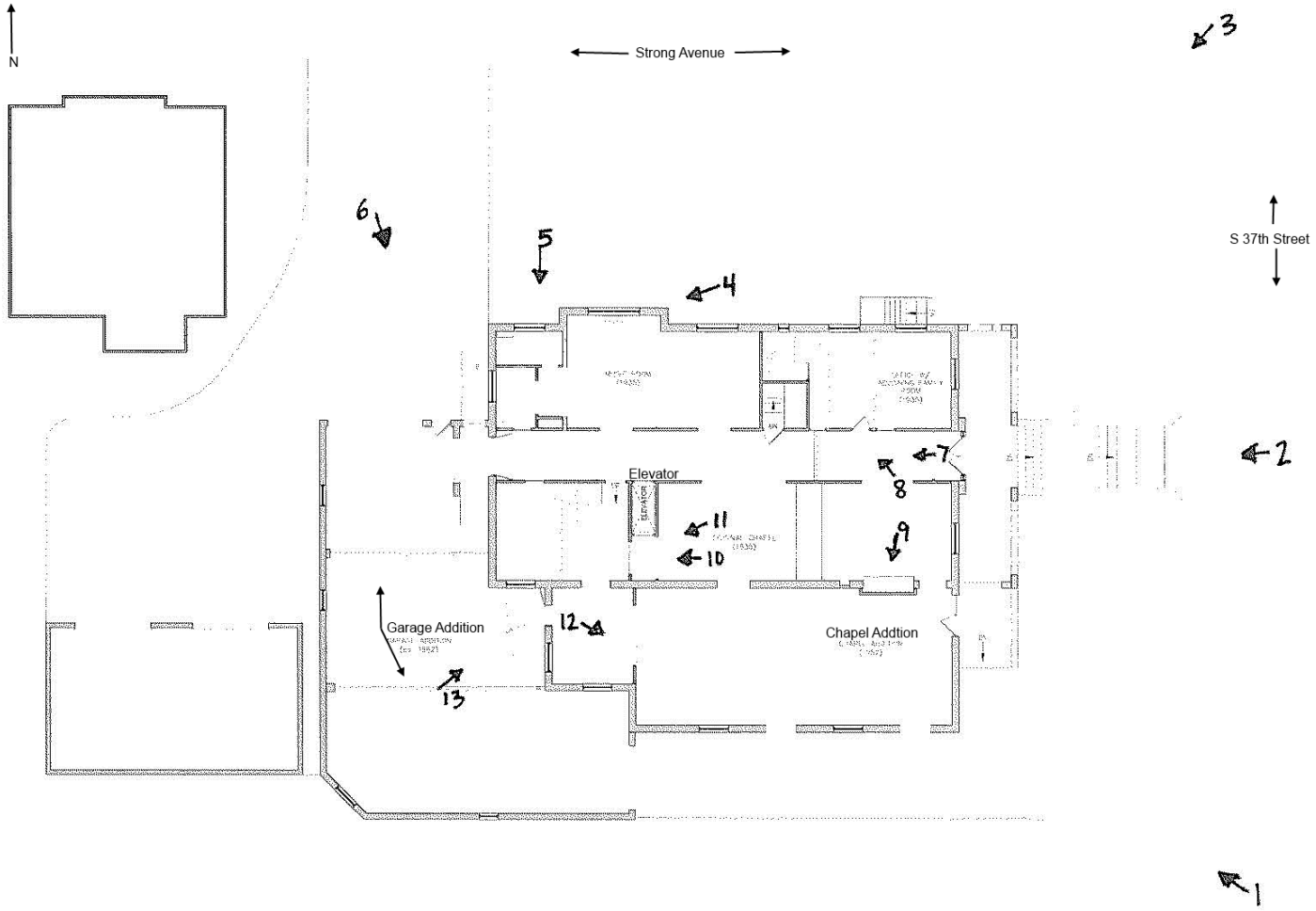

Figure 1: Photo Map - First Floor Plan

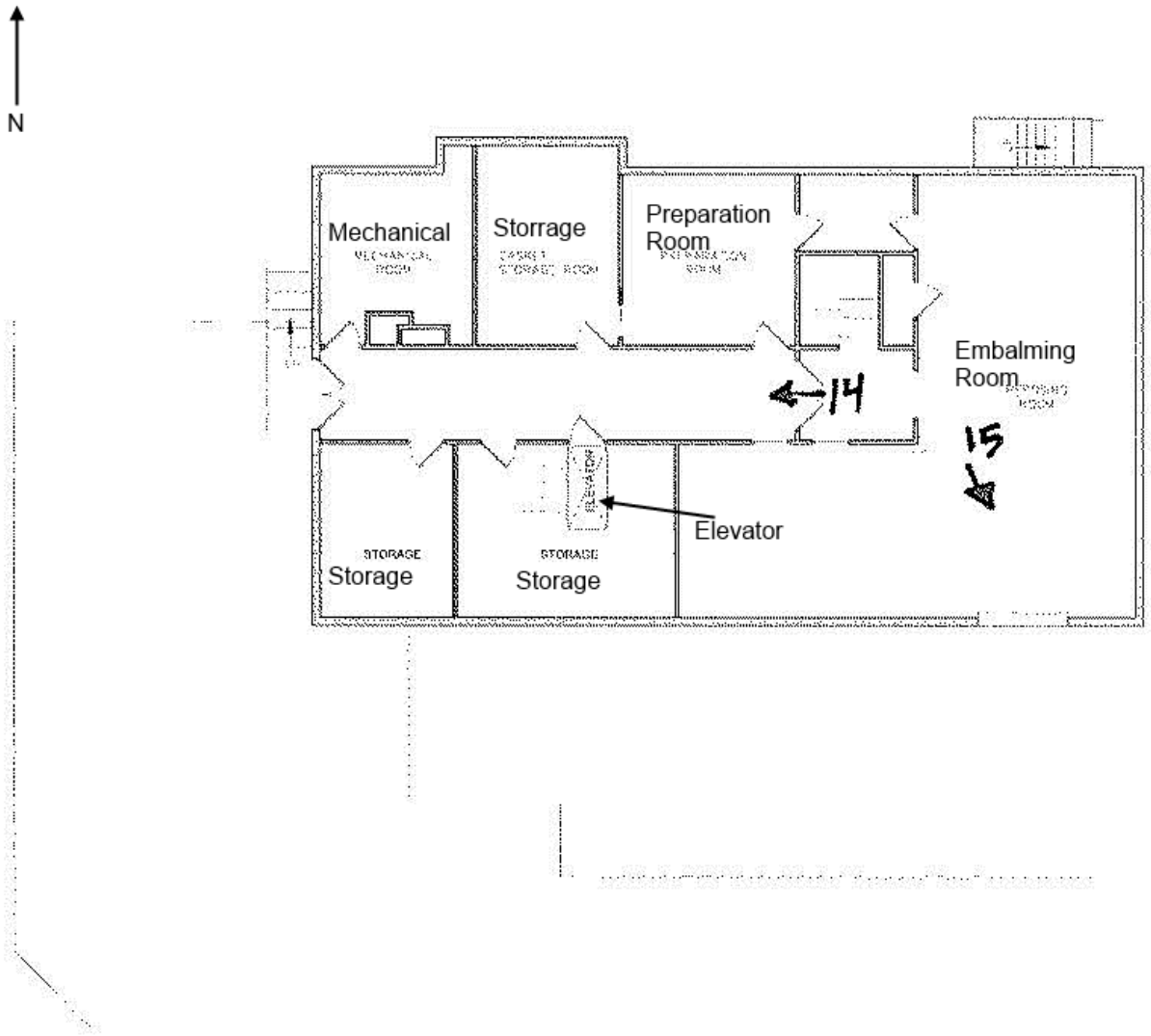

Figure 2: Photo Map - Basement Floor Plan

Figure 3: Kansas City, KS 1894 (From USGS Historical Topographic Map Collection website)

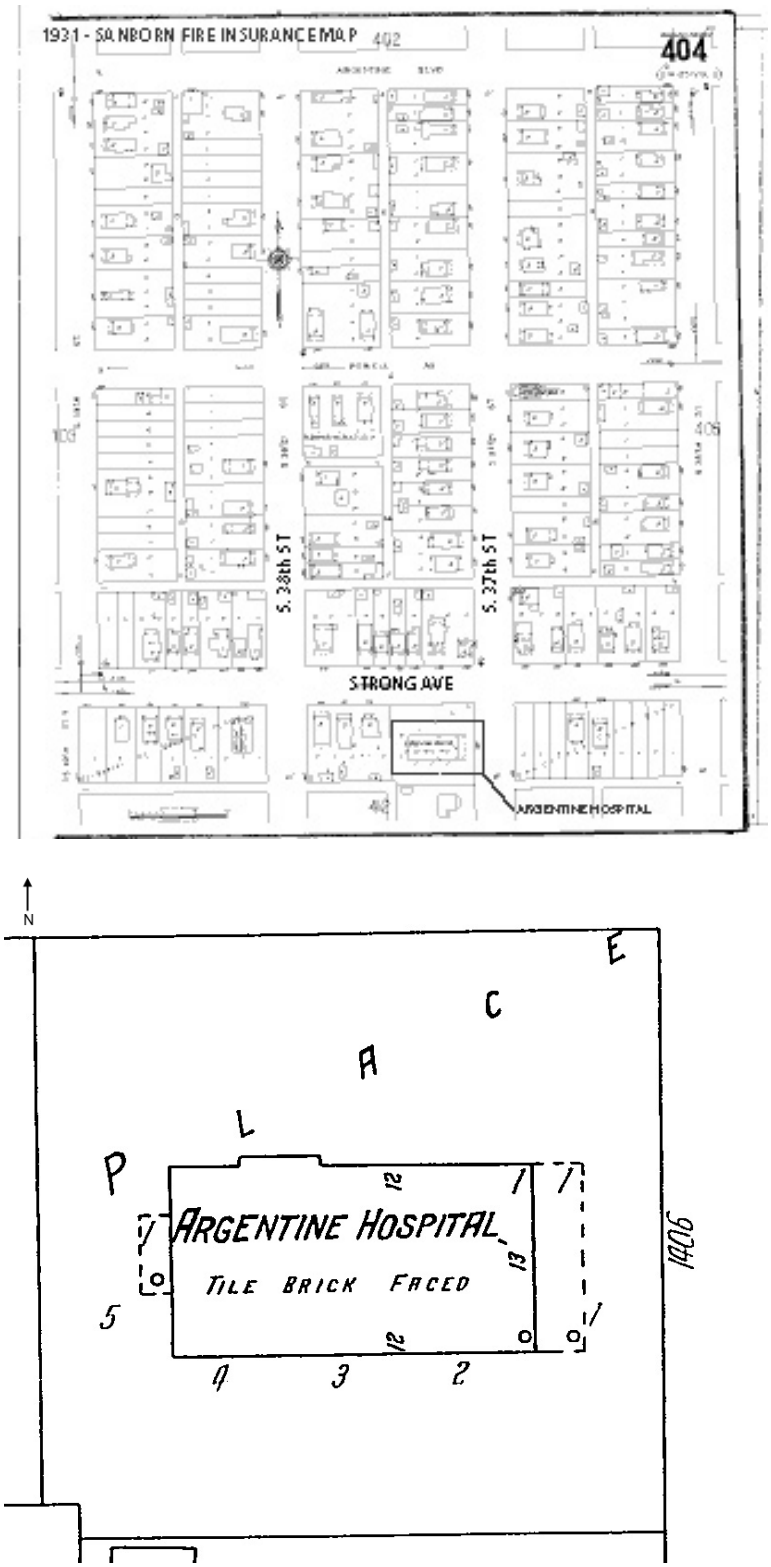

Figure 4: 1931 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing Argentine Hospital and enlarged below.

Figure 5: 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing Simmons Funeral Home

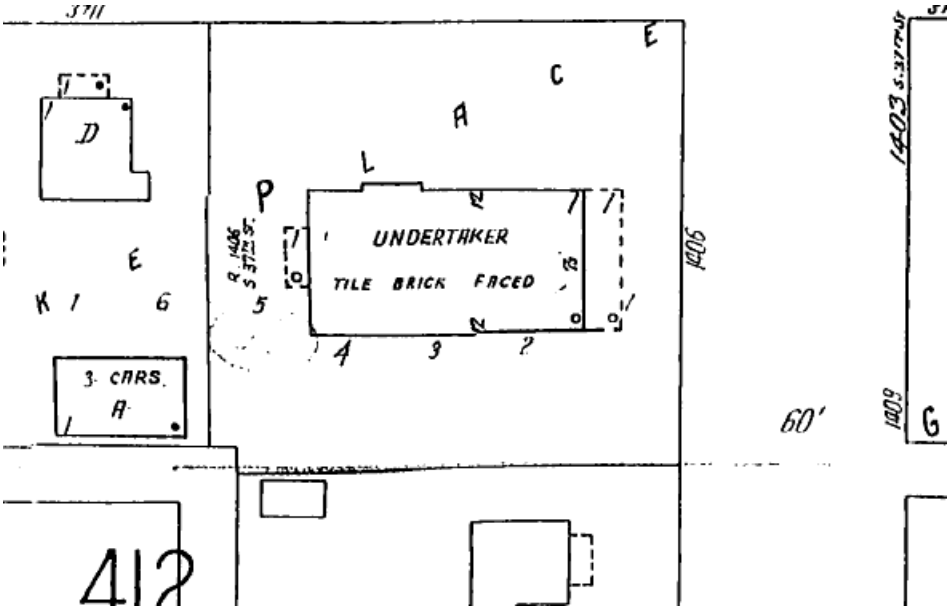

Figure 6: 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (enlarged) showing Simmons Funeral Home

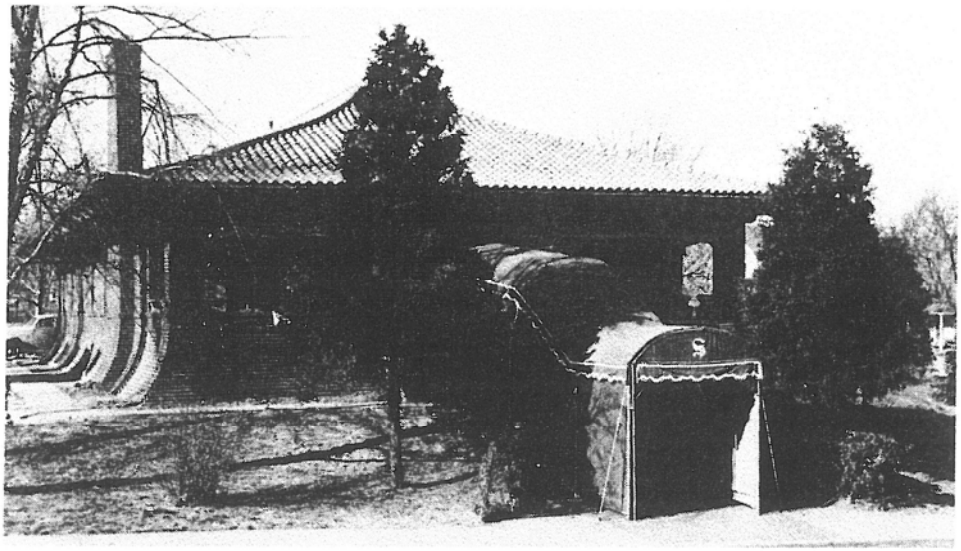

Figure 7: Simmons Funeral Home 1938 w/o chapel addition (from *Kansas Funeral Profession*)

Figure 8: Simmons Funeral Home 1968 w/ chapel addition (from *Kansas Funeral Profession*)

Three generations at Simmons, from left, Howard, Donald and Gary Simmons

Figure 9: Simmons Funeral Home 1982 from *The Kansan*, September 5, 1982

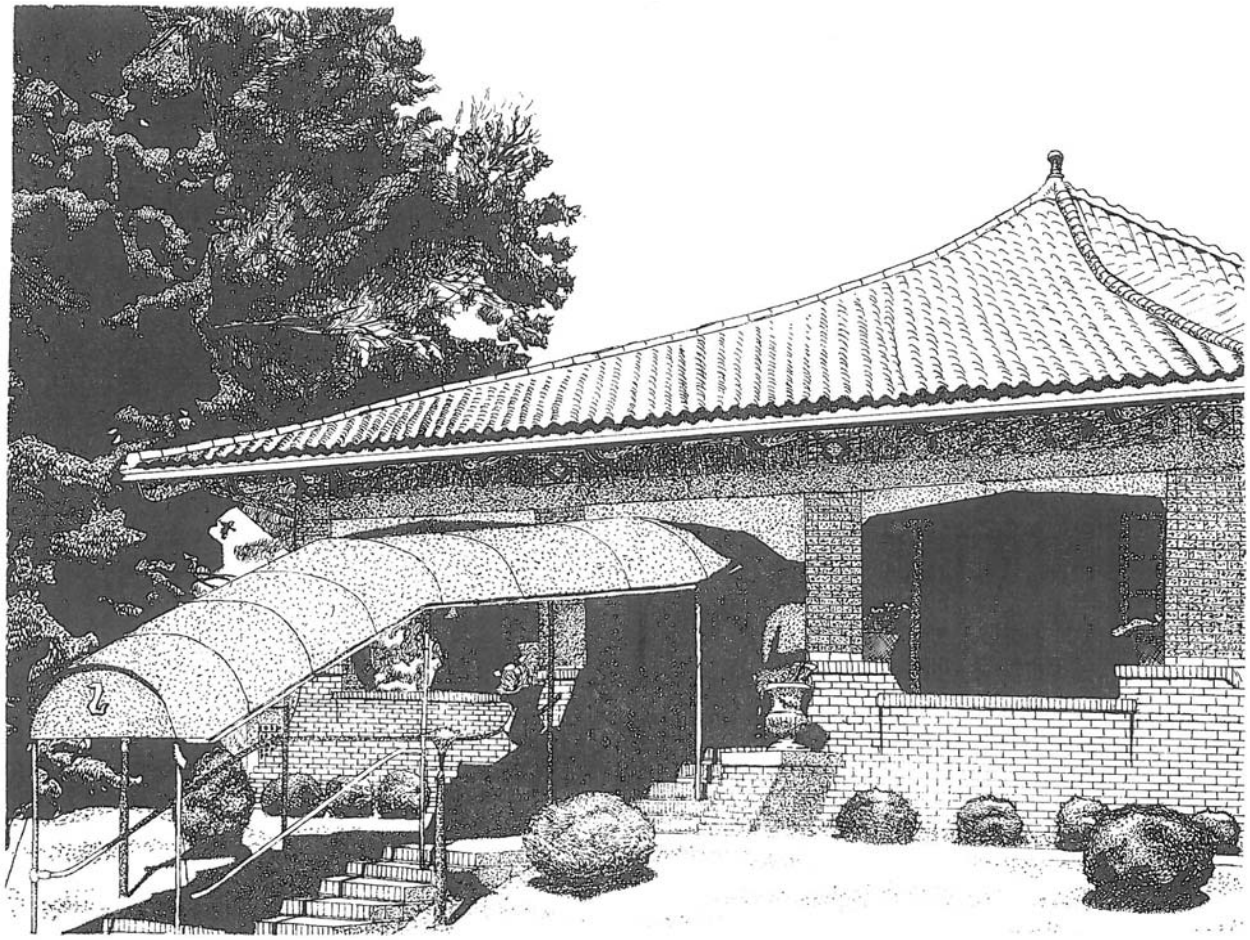

Figure 10: Simmons Funeral Home Drawing (originally mislabeled) from *1993 Art Club Calendar* by Adam Smith

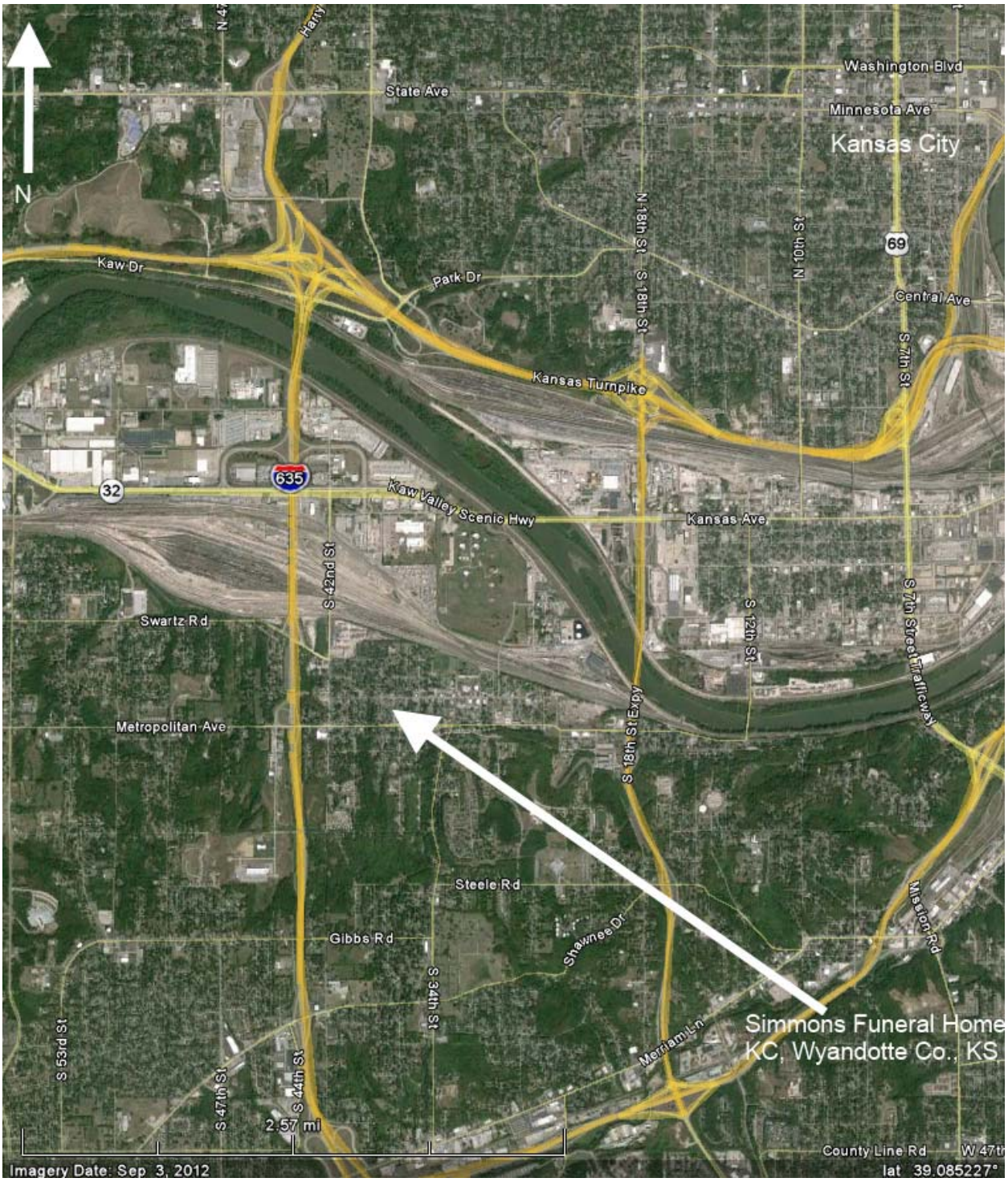

Figure 11: Contextual Aerial image. Google, 2012.

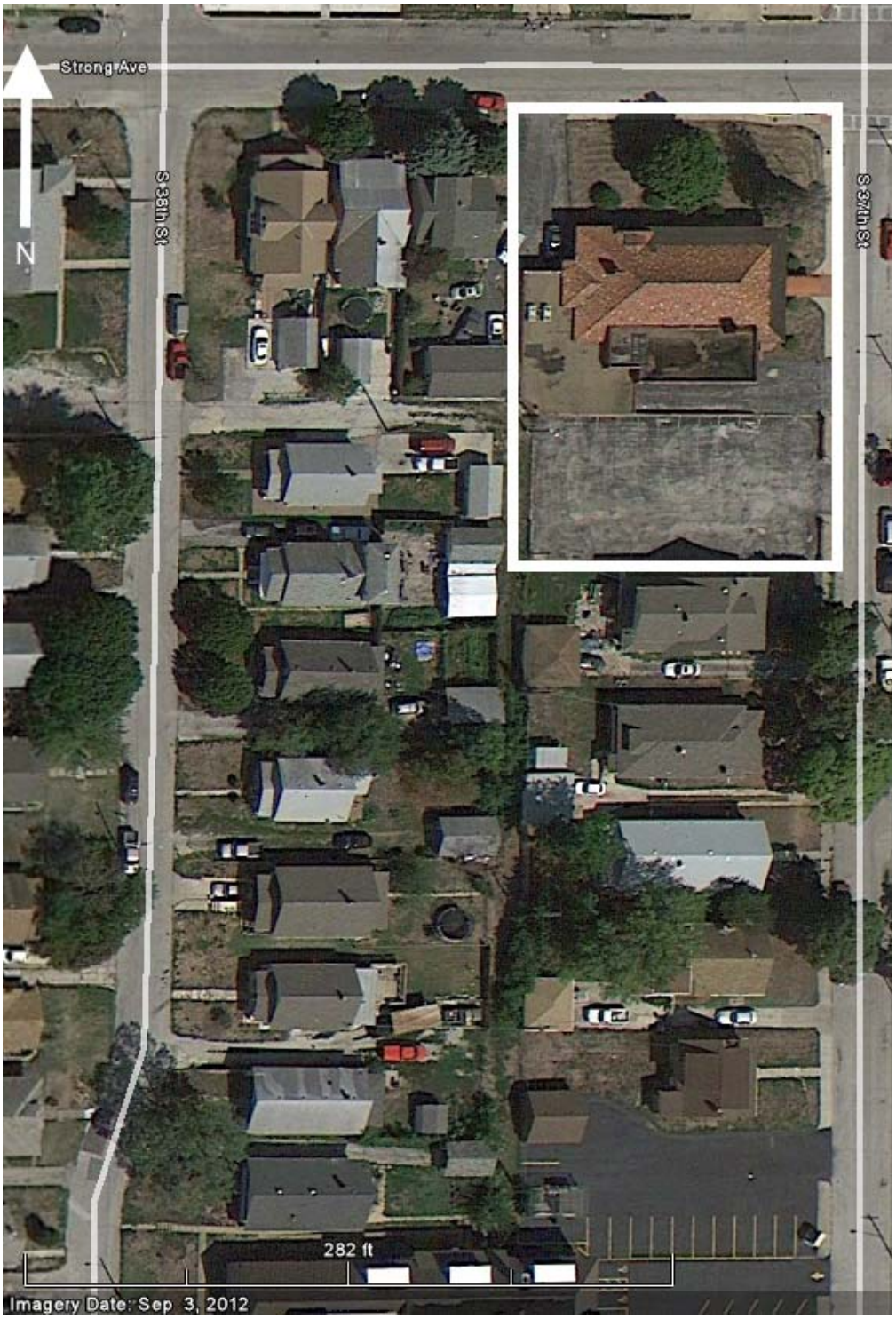

Figure 12: Close-up Aerial image. Google, 2012.

Dodge
hp
REINFORCED
JARDIN HOSE