

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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city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64105

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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**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.<sup>1</sup> Today there are over five hundred surviving colonnade apartment buildings built in Kansas City, Missouri between c.1900<sup>2</sup> 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*

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>*

**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 "apartmenta" 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.<sup>4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup>

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.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> 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.

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

<sup>5</sup> Eig and Hughes, E2

<sup>6</sup> Hawes, 19-20

<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup>

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."<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup> 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.

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<sup>8</sup> Hawes, xiii.

<sup>9</sup> Eig and Hughes, E3 citing James Goode, *Best Addresses*, 536.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, E3.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

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Richard Morris Hunt's "Stuyvesant Flats," constructed in 1869, set the mode for the New York luxury apartment building. Hunt was the first American to be educated in architecture at the *Ecole des Beaux Arts* and his career reflects the influence of this experience. He designed Stuyvesant Flats to complement and utilize the New York residential streetscape. His design like that of the Hotel St. Cloud, also constructed in 1869, included kitchens and bathrooms in each apartment.<sup>12</sup>

The French flat, with one apartment per floor, became established in New York in the mid-1870s. This form adapted easily to the city's long narrow lots that previously accommodated row houses. In the 1880s, larger apartment buildings appeared, often filling entire city blocks. These taller and larger buildings reflected changes in building technology, in particular the development of the elevator and steel framing. Developer Juan de Navarro's "Central Park," erected in 1883, was the first of these massive buildings. Its spacious floor plans used the French model of one apartment per floor and offered large seven-room units complete with kitchens, baths, and servants' quarters.<sup>13</sup>

In the 1880s, the apartment building reached Chicago. C. W. Westfall's study of Chicago apartment buildings found that "From the beginning, Chicago had resisted multifamily residences of any kind."<sup>14</sup> Chicago's first apartment buildings include the Waltone built in 1879, followed in 1880 by the seven-story Ontario Flats. These buildings incorporated the popular French one-unit-per-floor format with floor plans based on the prevailing style of Chicago's better residences. The individual apartment suites featured public parlors and dining rooms, but did not include private kitchens. Despite the communal kitchens clearly associated with hotels, these buildings, located in residential sections of the city, established the apartment building as a residential property type in Chicago.<sup>15</sup>

In Kansas City, variations of the East Coast apartment building prototypes appeared in the mid-1880s, almost concurrently with those in Chicago. Although not every idea formulated in New York or Boston was appropriate for Kansas City, many of the medium-size plans for apartment hotels and apartments<sup>16</sup> proved to be adaptable to the City's environment. From these prototypes, developers and architects developed their own unique apartment

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., E4.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., citing C. W. Westfall's "From Homes to Towers; A Century of Chicago's Best Hotels and Tall Apartment Buildings" in *Chicago Architecture: 1872-1922*, 269.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> The distinction between the apartment hotel and the apartment house is often blurry and application of the appropriate nomenclature often varied during different time periods and locales. In general, apartment hotels at this time were primarily residential buildings servicing permanent or seasonal renters rather than transients. These buildings offered many of the same amenities as hotels — concierge services, maid and valet service, communal kitchens, and private and public dining rooms. Many of the larger buildings featured ground floor retail services as well. Apartment houses catered to permanent year-round lessees and often included private kitchens as well as communal kitchens with delivered meals to living quarters. Some also included a private communal dining room with a fixed price daily special.

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variants. Kansas City, like other growing metropolises in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, saw the apartment building evolve in response to specific conditions of local needs, tastes, and restrictions.

**THE EVOLUTION OF THE APARTMENT BUILDING IN  
KANSAS CITY: 1880-1930**

As in other American cities of the period, the earliest form of multi-family housing in Kansas City, Missouri included the makeshift conversion of large buildings, usually single-family residences, into small self-sufficient living units. Some of these conversions included kitchens and/or baths, while others did not. However, unlike their predecessor, the boarding house, or their corresponding form, the hotel, apartment buildings were designed and built specifically to accommodate numerous family units. The earliest of this property type was the tenement building, erected to house working-class families. In Kansas City, Missouri, they took the form of simple frame or brick structures incorporating separate living quarters that might or might not include shared bathing and kitchen facilities. These buildings were within walking distance of the City's industrial and freight centers. Beginning in the 1880s, during the region's population and real estate boom, the purpose-built apartment building erected for the middle and upper-middle classes first appeared in the City's residential neighborhoods. To understand the property type's evolution in Kansas City, it is important first to understand the City's residential development.

**RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS**

**Settlement Period: 1830-1860**

The nucleus of present-day Kansas City, Missouri evolved from two early nineteenth century trading centers linked by primitive narrow "roads" that followed the river levee and the deep ravines in the hilly terrain. In 1830, a town company platted the "Town of Kansas" on the south side of the Missouri River near the confluence of the Kaw (Kansas or Kanza) River, near the river landing site selected in 1826 by Francois Chouteau, a French fur trader. Later, in 1835, a group of traders and merchants platted the "Town of Westport" approximately four miles<sup>17</sup> to the south near the Missouri-Kansas border. By 1847, a paved wagon road, which cut through the bluffs at Main Street in the Town of Kansas, connected Westport directly with the river landing. Other north-south access roads soon followed.

Neither Westport nor the Town of Kansas had a large settled population prior to the Civil War. The community's physical development spread south and southeast over the hilly terrain from the original river settlement. The first additions to the original Town of Kansas plat were rectangular plats that extended twelve blocks south from the Missouri River levee and three blocks from west to east. By mid-century, the town's boundaries reached south to 20<sup>th</sup> Street and east twelve blocks to Lydia Avenue. Within this area, clustered around a grid of platted lots, was a

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<sup>17</sup> At approximately 40<sup>th</sup> Street today.

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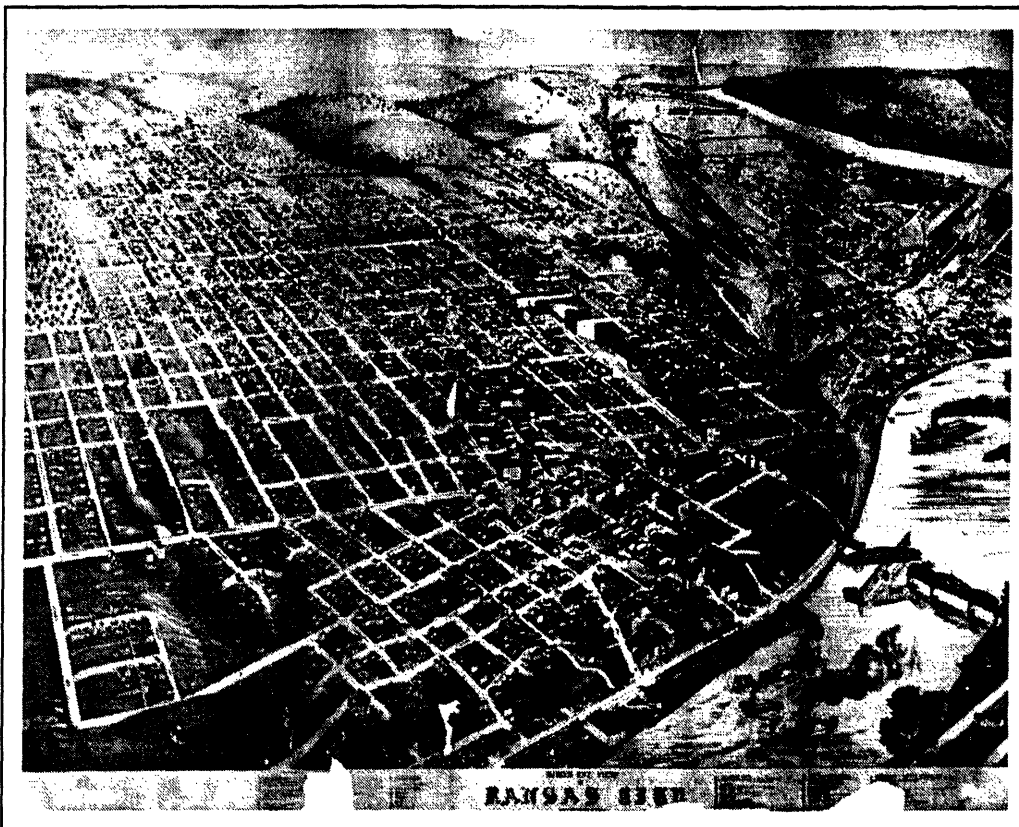
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scattering of small, plain buildings — residences, commercial structures, and other facilities that were common to small towns in Western Missouri. Although new residences and businesses located in established or recently platted areas, the agrarian nature of the period resulted in scattered farmsteads that grew at a faster rate than the urban population. As a result, neither the Town of Kansas nor the Town of Westport had high residential density prior to the arrival of the railroad in the region.

The buildings and structures of the period were generally simple, utilitarian, vernacular designs, usually of log or frame construction. Residential buildings favored the styles that evolved in the Middle South and "Little Dixie" areas of Missouri. Classical and Gothic Revival styles prevailed as the design choice for finer residences. Brick construction was common for many of these buildings as well as others that were more formal in design and decorative treatment.

**Kansas City: 1870-1910**



After the end of the Civil War and almost immediately after the completion, in 1869, of the Hannibal Railroad Bridge, the City of Kansas became a national shipping hub. As a result, the City doubled its physical size.

The growth in rail connections and the commercial trade in grain, livestock, and agriculture processing industries greatly altered the appearance of the City. Manufacturing and related commercial businesses became more clustered and grew in density near the growing network of rail lines. Distinct residential

**"Birdseye View" of Kansas City, Missouri, c.1870**  
Kansas City, Missouri Public Library, Special Collections



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neighborhoods and retail commercial centers began to emerge in the developed parts of the City. Residential areas differed in their physical relation to the City's core and in their ethnic, racial, and socio-economic composition. At the same time, the City's hilly topography promoted scattered neighborhoods and sprawl.

By the early 1870s, the river landing lost its role as the focal point of commercial activity and Main Street became the principal nucleus of retail, commercial, and governmental activity, as well as the central axis for development. The City's businessmen moved their establishments the half-mile inland from the banks of the river. Here, they erected new houses of business around the Market Square at the corner of Main and Fifth streets. This mixture of frame and brick buildings, which were seldom more than three stories high, incorporated architectural design features that emphasized the more permanent nature of the City.

In the mid-1850s, the Town of Kansas boasted a population of 478 and, by 1860, counted 4,414 residents.<sup>18</sup> Successful businessmen located their homes on the bluffs a short distance to the west of the business center in an area known as Quality Hill. Another elite residential enclave, "Knob Hill," located north and east of the Old Town Market Square between Walnut and Grand avenues, rivaled Quality Hill in the wealth and status of its inhabitants. In this small, downtown residential section for upper-income residents, lots were 50 feet by 125 feet, laid out in a rectangular grid. To the south of the central business district, across 10<sup>th</sup> Street and east of Main Street, was McGee's Addition which, beginning in the late 1850s, housed the majority of the City's middle- and upper-middle-class citizens. The area also included residential pockets of the rich as well as the poor and was an integrated neighborhood where German and Irish emigrants, whites, and blacks of varying degrees of wealth and poverty lived. Here, the rectangular grid continued, resulting in 25-foot frontage lots.

With the establishment and growth of rail lines and the ensuing commercial development, Kansas City acquired the economic base and population to support a booming real estate market. The 1880s was the most active and prosperous decade of this era. A series of land annexations kept pace with this growth and, by 1885, the City boundaries expanded south to 31st Street and east to Cleveland, with the state line and the river remaining the other boundaries. The City continued its tendency to urban sprawl, with residences and businesses scattered over the terrain. By 1890, the population stood at 132,716.<sup>19</sup>

Much of this growth resulted from improved transportation networks and public improvements. In 1880, Kansas City leaders boasted of ninety miles of streets, fifteen of which were paved. Private development and public works projects leveled the hills and filled ravines. Massive cuts through the river bluffs allowed greater access to waterfront rail lines. The City's retail center moved southward toward 11th and Main streets where large office

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<sup>18</sup> A. Theodore Brown and Lyle Dorsett, *K. C., A History of Kansas City, Missouri* (Boulder: Pruett Publishing Company, 1978,) 23.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*30.

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buildings were under construction. The bluffs still isolated the rail yards from the retail and commercial heart of the City and new industrial and warehouse construction remained visually separate from the downtown areas of expansion. By 1886, cable car and electric trolley lines replaced the horse-drawn car lines that operated in the commercial areas between the river levee and the Town of Westport. The extensive cable system promoted outward expansion through twenty-five miles of cable that reached all corners of the City, as well as outside the city limits. One effect of this cross-hatching of cable lines, with the best level of streetcar service running east and west, was that the highest degree of land speculation took place east of downtown and extending from the river to 18<sup>th</sup> Street on the south.

The new residential development that followed the City's expanding transportation network reflected informal social, economic, and ethnic stratifications. Existing residential neighborhoods, such as those in McGee's Addition, grew and expanded. Others, such as Quality Hill and Knob Hill, which were adjacent to growing industrial districts, lacked space to expand and many of their residents built new homes further east and south.

Initially residential expansion concentrated in the eastern part of the City. In the area southeast of Knob Hill – along Independence Boulevard and Woodland, Forest and 10th streets – well-built apartments and spacious single-family houses began to rise to house the City's upper-middle class and newly wealthy cattle barons. Soon, small, middle-class houses surrounded these islands of privilege. Another northeast neighborhood, Pendleton Heights, reflected the impact of the rapid extension of cable car lines toward the eastern edge of the city in the mid-1880s. A wave of cheaper houses and three-story, multi-family residential blocks quickly followed the erection of high style homes for the wealthy in this neighborhood.

Development also occurred to a lesser extent to the south, along the Broadway residential corridor. Affluent families, many of whom were former residents of Quality Hill, erected large "suburban" style homes in the Hyde Park and Roanoke neighborhoods, located in today's "Mid-town" area south of 36th Street. Meanwhile, apartment hotels replaced the large residences original to the Quality Hill neighborhood.

It was during this period of expansion and growth that professionalism in architecture became firmly established in the City. The construction boom of the 1880s attracted major architectural firms from Chicago and New York to open branch offices in the City. The number of architects practicing in Kansas City tripled between 1884 and 1888, and peaked again during the building boom of 1904-1906. Ranging in skill and education from carpenter-builders to academically trained professionals, these "architects" erected buildings reflecting competent and innovative designs in the Second Empire, Queen Anne, Gothic Revival, and Romanesque styles.

By 1887, the real estate boom was over. Platted land for several miles around the City's core lay vacant. Large parcels of undeveloped land dotted with farm buildings separated clusters of suburban residential areas. During the







































































































































