

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

1. Name of Property

historic name Missouri Athletic Club Building
other names/site number Missouri Athletic Association Building

2. Location

street & number 405-409 Washington Avenue [n/a] not for publication
city or town St. Louis [n/a] vicinity
state Missouri code MO county St. Louis (Independent City) code 510 zip code 63101

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 [].)

 Mark A. Miles / Deputy SHPO FEBRUARY 27, 2007
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

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

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form
Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	0
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		building
<input type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> site		sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		objects
		1	0 total

Name of related multiple property listing.
 N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register. 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

SOCIAL/clubhouse

Current Functions

SOCIAL/clubhouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification
Renaissance Revival

Materials
 foundation limestone

 walls brick
limestone

 roof asphalt
 other _____

see continuation sheet [].

see continuation sheet [].

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION
 See continuation sheet [x]

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form
Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

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

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

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

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

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

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

Areas of Significance

ARCHITECTURE
SOCIAL HISTORY

Periods of Significance

1915-1957

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person(s)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Ittner, William B. (arch.)
Brueggemann, George (arch.)

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other:

Name of repository: Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form
Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

A. Zone 15	Easting 744 860	Northing 4279 460	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
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 Michael Allen/Researcher
organization Landmarks Association of St. Louis date October 27, 2006
street & number 917 Locust Street, 7th floor telephone 314-421-6474
city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63101

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

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

Additional Items

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

Property Owner

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

name Missouri Athletic Club
street & number 405 Washington Avenue Telephone 314-539-4477
city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63101

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Summary

Built in 1915 with additions in 1927 and 1950, the Missouri Athletic Club Building at 405-9 Washington Avenue in St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri is a ten-story, rectangular building of reinforced steel construction clad in limestone and brick. The original section is 100 feet wide and 143 feet long, with a light court in the center beginning above the sixth floor. Architecturally, the building is Renaissance Revival, with noticeable English and Italian influences. The south and east elevations front major downtown streets and are articulated formally, while the western elevation was originally obscured and the northern elevation is informal. The building is articulated in three sections divided by strong horizontal elements, and topped by a greatly projecting cornice on massive brackets. The base is clad in rusticated limestone, with a center section of red brick under a projecting balustrade. Above the balustrade, the top section of the building is clad in patterned brick that provides a very distinctive appearance to the building. The later additions maintain the base of the building, although they are only seven stories tall and lack the formal expression of their upper floors. The interior contains several ornate spaces, including a lobby, dining room and gymnasium that retain historic character. Overall, the building easily retains historic integrity.

Setting

At the time of construction, the area around the intersection of Fourth and Washington streets was dense with multi-story buildings. Many of the buildings on Washington were relatively recent brick buildings housing wholesale manufacturers' warehouses and offices, while the brick buildings along Fourth Street tended to house offices and banks related to the city's financial and legal trades. Currently, the intersection retains its urban density although the northeast and southeast corners were subsequently replaced by mid-century modern structures. At the southwest corner, the 1899 Kennard Carpet Company Building (NR 5/5/2000) remains. To the immediate west and north of the Missouri Athletic Club, older commercial buildings have been demolished for parking. The remainder of the Club's block is now a large surface parking lot, while on the lot to the north stands a multi-level concrete parking garage that overhangs Lucas Avenue. Both Washington Avenue and Fourth Street, however, have retained many historic commercial buildings and their "canyon walls" of multi-story buildings. In particular, Washington Avenue west of the Athletic Club substantially retains its historic character and many

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 2

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

buildings there have been rehabilitated using historic tax credits. However, the overall character of the Missouri Athletic Club site remains urban and commercial.

Exterior

The formal elevations face Washington Avenue (south) and Fourth Street (east), and are divided into three almost equal sections through pronounced horizontal elements (see photograph #1). The three-story base is of rusticated white Bedford limestone atop a granite water table.

The symmetrical primary elevation faces Washington Avenue and is six bays wide. To the left of the wall is a carport built in the 1980s that mimics the rustication and tone of the base in cast concrete. The slightly recessed wall facing Washington bears one arched window that imitates the divisions of the other ground-floor windows, albeit with constrained proportions. The first floor of the original building is divided into six arched openings. The second and fourth openings are topped with projecting arched surrounds and keystone brackets; these originally served as entrances although the fourth opening from left (west) was changed into a window opening like the others during remodeling. The other openings have only the keystone brackets. The window openings bear wood-framed windows divided with one horizontal division that creates a transom and two vertical divisions. The second opening from left (west) is the original and current main entrance. It features a recessed entranceway, with walls clad in wooden paneling and a ceramic tile floor, leading to a set of revolving doors flanked by person doors, all made of aluminum frames and plate glass. This door configuration dates to the middle part of the twentieth century. Above the opening is a projecting, curved cast iron canopy supported by two diagonal braces from the building wall. This canopy has a decorative foliage motif in the Renaissance style found throughout the building. Centered above this canopy and projecting from the building is a neon sign in the shape of the club's logo.

Above the first floor is a projecting cornice featuring beading on its face. Above this, centered on the openings below, are two-story window openings flanked by pilasters. These window openings have stone balustrade at their base and are divided into a triple-hung arrangement by two horizontal and two vertical wooden dividers. The openings contain clear leaded glass windows divided into many small panes. In the center sections of the top division, each leaded section bears a stained glass shield on a circle at center.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 3

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Above the windows is a stringcourse featuring decorative rosettes centered above each pilaster, except for over the center two windows where engraved into this course is an archaic name of the club: *Missouri Athletic Association*. Above this course is a projecting cornice supported by dentils that effectively defines the base of the building. Above this cornice, the wall is clad in red brick.

The six window openings of the fourth floor are set in elaborate projecting limestone surrounds that extend up from the cornice. Each surround features flanking scrolls and brackets with trefoil bases under a pediment. The two pediments centered over the original first-floor entrances are broken-scroll pediments with an urn-like shape in the center, while the other pediments are traditional triangular pediments. Above these windows are large, recessed segmental-arch openings. These openings are divided into a short lower three-part window (one six-pane fixed window flanked by two one-over-one double-hung windows) separated from a taller Palladian window by a spandrel. The spandrel and the reveals of these openings are covered with multi-colored small ceramic tiles, which form a rosette at the center of each spandrel (see photograph #3). The upper Palladian windows consist of a central double-hung six-over-nine window flanked by five-pane sidelights and under a transom with typical Palladian division. Above these openings is a projecting limestone balustrade, supported by tapered brackets paired between each bay. The balustrade features an urn motif repeated in interior decoration at the building. The brackets are decorated with a foliage pattern.

Above the balustrade, the wall is clad in Hydraulic Press Brick's Hy-Tex Velour Matts arranged in a two-tone diaper pattern accented by Venetian Red headers. The window opening arrangement in this four-story section consists of six columns of single openings centered over the bays below, with paired openings between each set of outer bays and single columns of small openings flanking the center two bays. All large openings bear wooden six-over-one double-hung windows, and the small openings contain fixed single panes. Four cast iron balconies extend from the tenth floor at intervals. Above the tenth floor is a band of decorative polychromatic brickwork. The band is divided into sections bearing either a diamond shape or a circle with diamond shape inset, with a large center diamond shape and several larger circles and diamonds marking bay divisions. Above this band is the elaborate projecting cornice, which is clad in copper. The cornice is supported by large, rounded brackets paired at each bay division with two single brackets spaced between. Above these brackets, the cornice steps out again with smaller single

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 4

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

brackets centered at each single or paired bracket below. The brackets and other cornice elements feature a stamped foliage motif not easily visible from the street level due to the oxidation of the copper. The intact cornice is notable given that many downtown building owners removed elaborate cornices in the period of 1930-1960 due to deterioration. Most of the cornices removed in this period were terra cotta tied with steel ties to buildings, and the ties' deterioration often led to falling pieces. The construction of the Missouri Athletic Club cornice—steel forms clad in copper set under a coped roof section—likely provided protection against the water infiltration that caused problems with other downtown buildings.

The east elevation is also formal, and is twelve bays wide (originally nine). The articulation is similar to the front elevation, since the façade treatment wraps the building (see photograph #1). There are differences in fenestration, though, consistent with variation of floor heights inside. On the first floor, the third bay from left (south) was originally an entrance to a bank on the first floor, and retains its projecting surround although converted into a window opening like the others. This and other window openings on the first floor of this side contain ventilation grilles rather than windows. To the right of the ninth bay from left is a doorway under a column of small openings bearing one-over-one windows that extends up to the tenth floor.

On the second and third floors, the first three bays carry the large floor-to-ceiling openings also found on the front elevation as well as the tall arched openings above those. The remainder is divided into two distinct floors, with the second floor's windows taller than the third. A horizontal wooden divider that creates a transom and two vertical dividers that create sidelights divide the second floor window openings. The center opening contains hinged pairs of windows. All openings are glazed with leaded glass. The third floor openings are similarly divided, except without the horizontal divider with a small transom over each center section. On the fourth floor, all pediments on this elevation are traditional triangular pediments.

In the fourth and fifth leftmost (south) bays, the arched openings descend to just above the pediments of the fourth floor. The smaller window openings from the arched openings to the left are maintained at this lower position, but above these windows the recessed opening is blind except for transoms now filled in with ventilation grilles. To the right (north) of these two bays, the last three bays maintain small fifth floor window

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 5

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

openings separated by a spandrel from a window opening above that continues the recess and reveal to a flat jack-arch termination. Above these windows, between the brackets of the balustrade, the openings of the seventh floor carry aluminum double-hung six-over-one windows that mimic replaced original wooden windows.

The balustrade under the seventh floor projects slightly at the second leftmost (south) bay to accommodate a cast iron fire escape that runs from the first floor up to the balustrade. The window arrangement on the upper four floors varies from the first floor somewhat. Columns of single windows are centered over all but the leftmost (south) bay, with paired openings to the left of the second, fifth and eighth bays and the column of smaller windows to the right of the eighth bay. In the two rightmost bays of the tenth floor, there is irregularity in window opening placement.

To the right of the original section of the building, the two additions maintain the articulation of the first four floors almost perfectly. The 1927 addition also maintains formality above the fourth floor, with two bays carrying wide window openings on the fifth and sixth floors and paired openings on the sixth under a flat version of the balustrade. However, the two-bay 1950 addition to its right uses a different tone of brick than the original building and is blind above the fifth floor. The fifth floor carries two window openings similar in size to those of the 1927 addition, although the leftmost (south) has been partly in-filled with brick and the other bay has been completely infilled. This section does not maintain the height of the 1927 addition, and terminates with prosaic concrete coping.

The western elevation of the building is irregularly arranged due to the fact that the first five floors were entirely obscured when the building was built (see photograph #2). Later window and door openings have been added since the buildings that once stood to the west have been demolished; only the upper five floors show formal arrangement although two deep setbacks for light courts make the elevation highly informal. The cornice and decorative brickwork of the primary elevation wraps the corner, but otherwise the upper floors are unornamented. Each window opening on this wall has a flat-topped jack-arch with steel lintel, and carries a one-over-one aluminum replacement window. The lower five floors have a random arrangement (see photograph #2), with an enclosed steel staircase to the second floor projecting in the middle of the elevation.

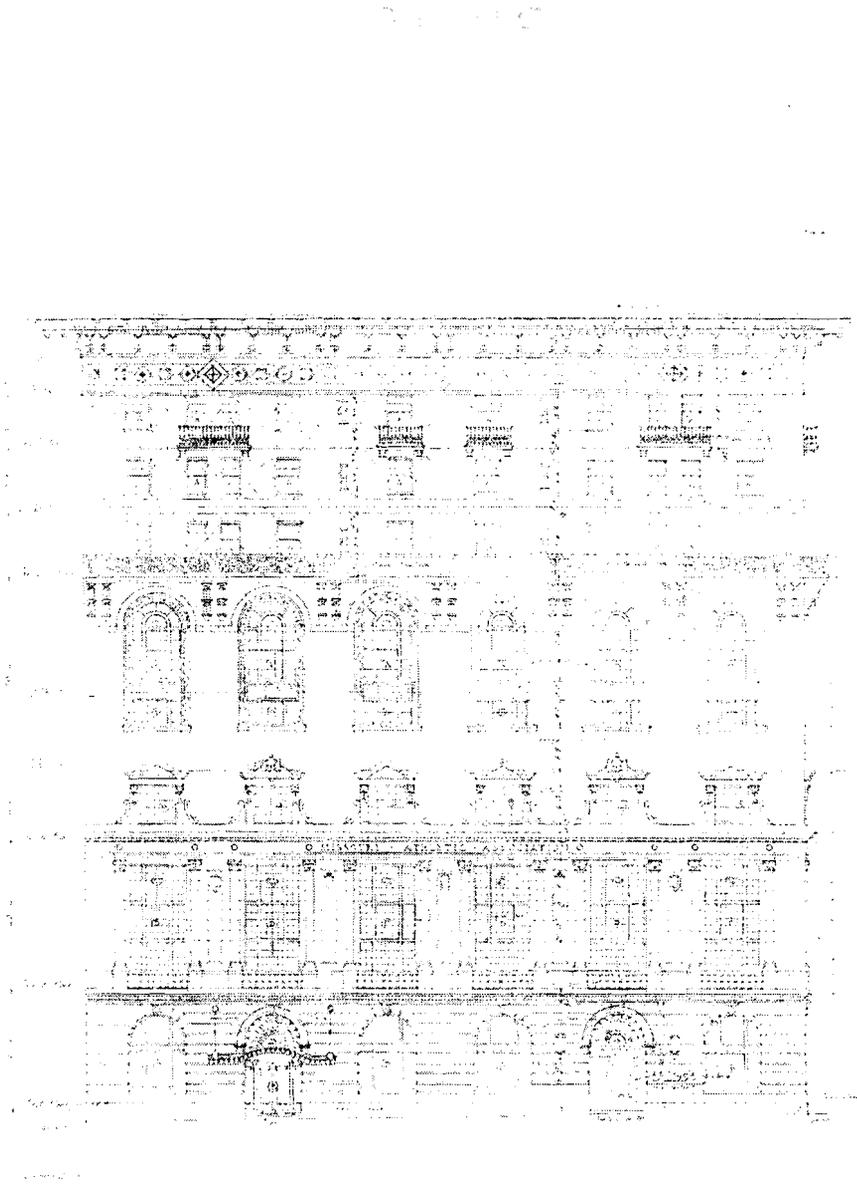
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 6

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

**Figure #1: A drawing of the Washington Avenue elevation by architects Ittner and Brueggemann.
(Source: Landmarks Association.)**



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 7

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

At the far right (south), a projecting entrance canopy with glass dome is made of cast concrete scored to carry the lines of the original limestone base. The entrance under this canopy consists of doors in the center of two large aluminum-framed, plate-glass windows. Above the fourth floor, the formal bays are evident, as is the projecting bay containing the fire stairs. At the left (north) side of the wall set at the edge of one of the recessed setbacks is a centered column of five windows. In the recess between ribs are three bays with window openings on four floors; the leftmost bay carries sets of two window openings spaced apart. The side walls of the recess carry centered, smaller window openings on four floors. To the right of this recess, the upper wall is blind. There is another recess to the right of this wall section, with windows and cast-concrete floor slabs visible on the side walls but not on the main wall in the recess, which rises to join with a two-story elevator house on the building's roof. To the right of this recess are two bays, spaces apart, with centered window openings on four floors. Under these bays are two vent openings with segmental arches and a small window close to the building's corner. Below these openings, the roofline of a now-demolished building is apparent.

The north elevation consists of six bays arranged asymmetrically and mostly obscured by the multi-story parking garage that overhangs Lucas Avenue and the sidewalk on this side of the building. The four leftmost (east) bays bear wide window openings on the second through fourth floors. In these openings are window ribbons divided into four aluminum one-over-one windows. To the right are two bays with irregular fenestration. The first of these has a recessed doorway with steel double doors centered under paired one-over-one windows in a single opening. The second features paired windows on the second and third floors with a doorway on the first floor; however, these are not centered. Above the fourth floor, a cornice of Bedford limestone with an ogee header runs continuously across the elevation and wraps around each corner to meet the cornice line of the base of the formal elevations. This cornice marks the original height of the 1950 addition, which was later expanded to a seven-story height. Above this cornice and centered on the wall are two window openings carrying paired windows on the top two stories.

Interior

The interior of the building consists of numerous spaces, including several large public spaces that retain historic character and many service, office, restaurant and gym spaces

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 8

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

that have been extensively remodeled over the years. Overall, the interior retains great historic character; the level of detail that is intact in the public spaces is remarkable. For the purposes of the nomination, descriptions of spaces are separated by space to facilitate clarity.

Lobby

The lobby of the building consists of two sections divided by an archway: the front waiting room and the rear reception area around the front desk (see photograph #4 and figure #1). Throughout both spaces, the floor is covered with grey marble squares arranged in a diagonal pattern with rectangular borders. Also common to both areas is the wall cladding: tall wooden paneling stained fairly dark, with a decorative blind arcade in wood running above. The pattern on the blind arcade features Roman columns under stylized urns between groups of three arches. The high ceiling throughout both spaces is coffered, with rib divisions matching the column lines in the lobby. Each rib is decorated in a foliage-and-cartouche motif in molded plaster, while the recesses feature a cross-like pattern with border. Rosettes featuring floral patterns and leaf clusters sit in the corners formed by the cross, as well as at the midpoint of each side in the border. On the west side of the main lobby, the removal of a wall section has created a lower-ceiling area leading to the later parking lot entrance. On the east wall, two doorways have been cut and framed to allow connection between the lobby and the neighboring former bank lobby now used as a reception room. At the south end, to the right of the vestibule, an area under the mezzanine features a marble staircase leading to mezzanine offices where hinged, multi-paned windows overlook the lobby at the tops of the south and west walls. On the north wall is a tall arcade of four arches. The two leftmost arches lack a separating column and lead to the rear section of the lobby, the third arch opens into the grand staircase, and the fourth arch leads to the members' entrance to athletic facilities and a dining room. This arcade is a larger version of that found in the paneling crown. In the rear section of the lobby, the original front desk is still in use. In this section, the mezzanine forms a balcony over the ceiling. Brass light fixtures throughout the lobby are complementary but not historic. Of special note are the two elevator entrances at the west end of the hall. The gold-painted cast iron surrounds are ornate with a classical pattern, and the elevator doors bear a bronze plaque with the club logo at center.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 9

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Bank Lobby

At the southeast corner of the building is the former lobby of the German-American Bank, now connected to the lobby of the club and used for receptions. Although not historically part of the club, the decoration of this room dates to the period of significance and serves as a pleasant contrast to the style of the building. The room's present appearance dates to the 1930s with a streamlined Art Deco style. Fluted black marble columns punctuate the room, and the vaulted ceiling carries the fluting between columns. On the east wall is a streamlined black marble fireplace. The walls are clad in wood paneling with rectangular recessed panels.

Grand Staircase/Mezzanine

The balustrade of the grand staircase continues the column and urn pattern found in the lobby (see photograph #5). The stairs are carpeted, as they were originally. A landing connects to the low-ceilinged mezzanine level, into which the elaborate plaster ribs of the lobby ceiling extend. Most of the mezzanine is taken up by office space of recent configuration, although the rear (north) section retains some original appearance. Here, the corridor overlooks the lobby over the front desk, with a railing that repeats the column and urn pattern. The club barbershop was remodeled during the early 1950s and substantially reflects its appearance after that remodeling. Above the mezzanine, the grand staircase leads to the carpeted second floor hall outside of the main dining room. Original door casements, wooden wainscoting and baseboards abound, as do many original doors with original hardware. The ornate elevator surrounds seen on the first floor are repeated here.

Main Dining Room

Three door openings bearing original wooden folding doors (five vertically arranged panels on each section) open into the main dining room. This room runs the entire width of the building, with the tall windows on the south and east elevations exposed (see photograph #6). The center of the floor is black terrazzo with a brown border; this is traditionally a dancing area. The rest of the floor is carpeted. The walls are decorated with plaster relief patterns between the tall windows, and the west wall features tall mirrors shaped like the windows that punctuate the east and south walls. Other mirrors carry the shape of the relief patterns. A balcony, supported by five elaborate plaster-on-wood brackets, runs the length of the room on the north wall. The sides of each bracket are decorated with a shamrock pattern, while the undersides bear oak leaves. The

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 10

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

balcony projects between the second and third brackets from the east. A solid knee-wall runs along the balcony, and facing the dining room are columns topped by urns between recessed panels. Under the balcony, pewter wall sconces project between doorways. Most of the room's ornament comes from the ceiling, though. The ceiling is divided by five ribs that are clad in decorative plasterwork, with an egg and dart course under a dentil course on each lateral side. Between each beam are three recessed sections: a wider center panel and two smaller outer panels. These feature raised borders and floral patterns, all in molded plaster with some gilding (see figure #1). Four crystal chandeliers are suspended from all save the center rib. The room was recently restored, and has been returned to historic appearance.

Missouri Room and Meeting Rooms

The two easternmost sets of the doors from the Main Dining Room lead into the smaller Missouri Room, used as a breakout dining room. The room features low vaulted ceilings and dark-stained paneling throughout. Brass light fixtures are not historic, although the millwork appears to be. The room is carpeted as it was originally. Original wooden doors on the west wall lead to the second floor hall. Private meeting rooms on the fourth and sixth floors retain original floor plans with original millwork and wooden doors throughout; only light fixtures, carpeting and wallpaper have been replaced. The boardroom on the sixth floor dates to 1959 and thus is outside of the period of significance.

Gymnasium

On the fifth floor are the main athletic facilities of the club, including many workout and locker rooms that have been reconfigured and remodeled over time. However, the main gymnasium retains near-original appearance (see photograph #7). The large room, at the building's southeast corner, runs nearly the entire width of the building. It is a spare space, with the rock-maple floor and cast-iron mezzanine as the defining features. The floor was recently replaced with new wood to match the original species and dimensional cut. Above the gym floor and reachable via a cast iron spiral staircase in the room's northeast corner is the suspended iron mezzanine. The outer edge of the mezzanine forms an ellipse, and the structure is used as an indoor walking track. Underneath this mezzanine on the western and northern walls is a secondary mezzanine, cantilevered from the sidewalls and enclosed by an iron grille. This secondary mezzanine is used as a workout area and, while not original, was built prior to the 1930s when it appears in photographs.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 11

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Pool

At the other end of the fifth floor is the indoor swimming pool. The pool itself is a rectangular lap pool made of a lead casting. According to the club, the pool has never leaked since being installed during the building's construction. The arched pool ceiling is tall and is divided by ribs into several vaults whose arched ends are visible on the mezzanine above the pool (see photograph #8). The walls of the pool area are covered in small powder blue tiles with white and navy blue tile stripes running at chair-rail height. The tile is not original, but dates to the period of significance.

Private Suites

On the seventh through tenth floors, a rectangular corridor runs parallel to the light court (see figure #2). This corridor is double-loaded with the private suites of the club. Each corner suite consists of a large private room and smaller sleeping room, with bath. All other suites consist of a single room and bath. Original wooden baseboards and casements are evident throughout, and the floor plan has not been altered. However, ceilings have been dropped in the corridors and the bathrooms have been remodeled over the years.

Integrity

With an exterior that has only seen the small alteration of closing the bank entrances and the replacement of some windows, the building clearly projects its historic appearance outside. Inside, the building also retains the grandeur and character of its large public and athletic spaces, even as service areas, offices, private suites and other areas have seen some modification to suit changing tastes. This grandeur is almost unmatched downtown, and coupled with the exterior appearance gives the Missouri Athletic Club Building strong integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

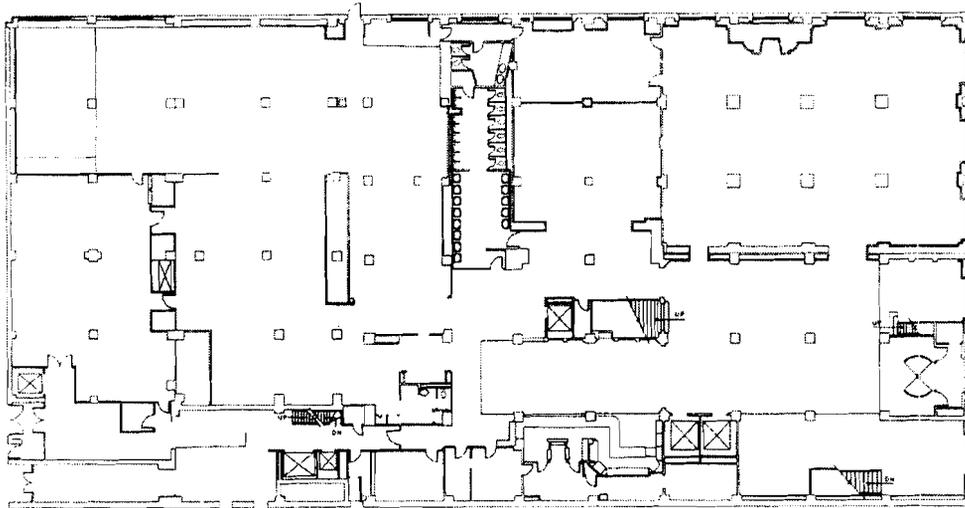
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 12

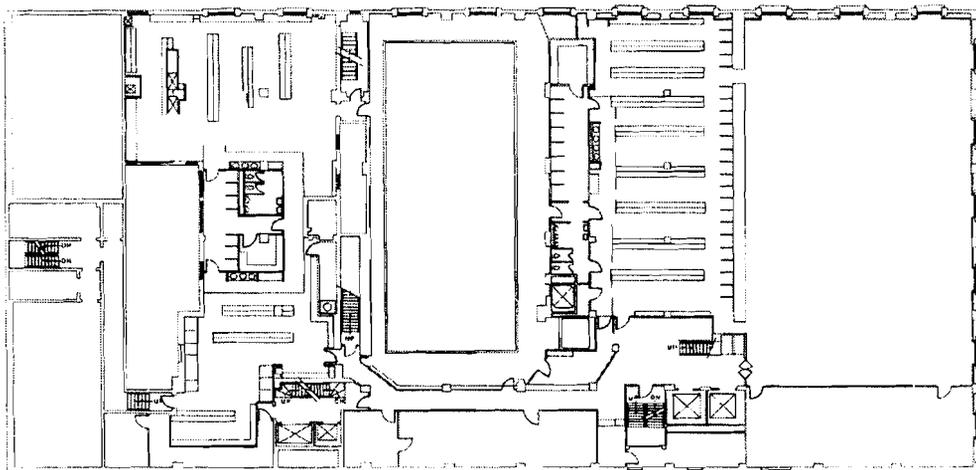
Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Figure #2: Plans for the first, fifth and ninth floors of the building. The ninth floor illustrates the typical arrangement of the upper four floors. (Source: Missouri Athletic Club.)

First Floor



Fifth Floor



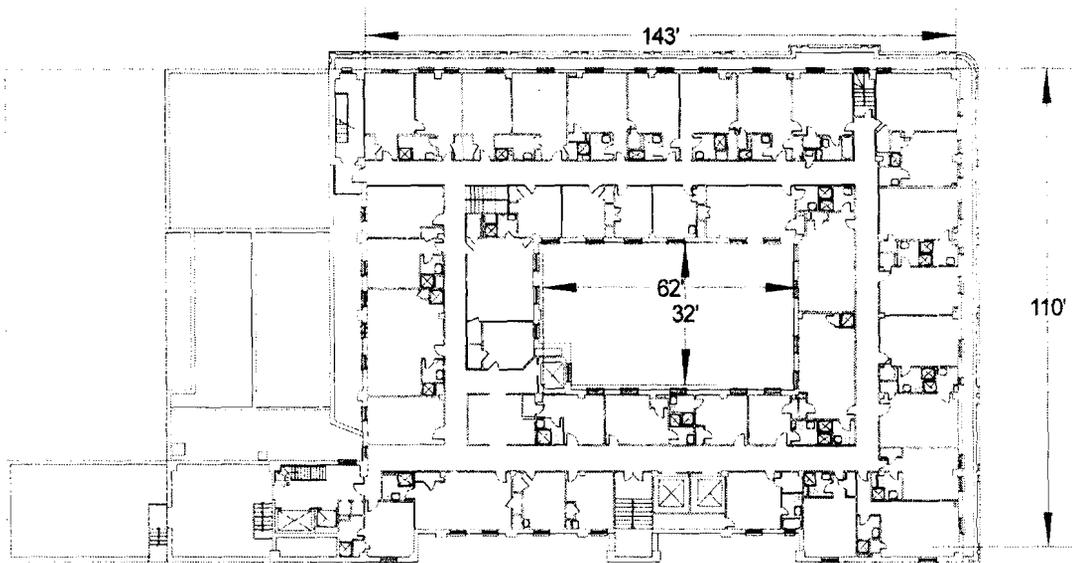
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 13

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Ninth Floor



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 14

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Summary

The Missouri Athletic Club Building is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of SOCIAL HISTORY and under Criterion C under ARCHITECTURE. The period of significance begins in 1915, when the building was completed, and runs to an arbitrary 50-year cut-off in 1957. Anticipating the World's Fair and Olympic Games to be held in St. Louis in 1904, promoter Charles Henry Genslinger and local business leaders formed the Missouri Athletic Club (MAC) in 1902. This was the first and only businessmen's amateur athletic club created in St. Louis, and one of the first to open in the United States. The club opened a lavish clubhouse downtown in leased space, where members could participate in athletic activities, dine and enjoy social activities taking place there. A deadly fire destroyed the club's building in 1914, necessitating the construction of new quarters. The MAC acted swiftly, commissioning well-known St. Louis architect William B. Ittner in partnership with George F.A. Brueggemann to design the new building. Their design was for a large, ten-story building in the Renaissance Revival Style that encompassed state-of-the art gymnasium, swimming, dining and social facilities. The building combined stylistic refinement with an impressive scale, and was later lauded in the pages of *Architectural Forum*. After opening the new building, the club—renamed the Missouri Athletic Association until 1939, when the original name returned—grew to become a popular venue for socializing and entertainment among businessmen in St. Louis. Later additions in 1927 and 1950 extended the side elevation in a mostly complementary fashion. The MAC has maintained many of the building's original features, including the character of its large main rooms. Both the building and the MAC remain prominent parts of the city.

Origins of the Club

The origin of the Missouri Athletic Club (MAC) traces back to a relative outsider to St. Louis, businessman and athletic club promoter Charles Henry Genslinger (1856-1925?). An Ohio native, Genslinger settled in New Orleans in 1878 and entered the business world there. He organized the Bank of Commerce and the Louisiana Fire Insurance Company along with his chief business, a printing house called Hunter & Genslinger.¹ Genslinger also owned a professional baseball team, the New Orleans Pelicans. Later,

¹ Amy S. Norris, *Missouri Athletic Club: 100 Years of Excellence* (St. Louis, Mo.: Missouri Athletic Club, 2002), p. 75.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 15

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Genslinger fell into bad health and had to spend three years away from his business concerns. After recuperation, Genslinger moved to New York City and set out on a new personal mission: the creation of athletic clubs that would promote physical well-being as well as social camaraderie among businessmen. His first effort was the New Manhattan Club in New York. Genslinger then returned to New Orleans and organized the Olympic Club there. In 1902, he moved to St. Louis for the express purpose of opening a third club. Like the other cities where Genslinger had worked, St. Louis was not yet home to an amateur athletic club for businessmen.

After canvassing the local business community for support, Genslinger established an advisory board and officers in fall 1902. Leslie Marmaduke was president, Zack W. Tinker was vice president, Frank R. Tate was treasurer and Genslinger was secretary and manager. The name of the new venture was the Missouri Athletic Club, and the timing impeccable: the new club set itself to open before the opening dates of the World's Fair and Olympic Games to be held in St. Louis in 1904. This was to be only the third modern Olympic Games, and since most athletes in the early Olympics were recruited locally, the club could foster many participants.² The goal of the new club was provision of world-class athletic, social and dining facilities in an opulent setting in the heart of downtown St. Louis. Of course, given the prejudice of the time, membership would be restricted to white men. At first, the club found space in a building at Fourth and Locust streets in the downtown financial district. Shortly, though, the club had the chance to lease several floors of the Boatmen's Bank Building at Fourth and Washington. This building allowed for a more spacious club sharing a building with one of the city's leading financial institution. The combination would set the club off to a great start.

Determined to make the opening even greater, Genslinger hired some of the country's best-known instructors for the MAC: World Champion middleweight boxer Tommy Ryan would teach boxing; infamous New Orleans billiards player Francois Magglioli would teach his art; the physical director of the noted Cleveland YMCA, C.W. Bassett, would serve as athletic director; and Frank Gehle, the wrestler who taught President Theodore Roosevelt to wrestle, would teach MAC members.³ Genslinger would not be around for opening day, however. Within a year of his arrival in town to establish the club, he found himself at odds with the men he recruited to serve as his board. According

² Norris, p. 25.

³ Ervin A. Pickel, Jr., "For 75 Years...A Way of Life." *Cherry Diamond: The Official Monthly Journal of the Missouri Athletic Club*, Vol. 72, No. 8 (September 1978), p. 42.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 16

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

to the club's long-time newsletter editor Ervin A. Pickel, Jr., "These men, while sharing Genslinger's enthusiasm for a fine gentleman's club, began to disagree with his methods and (one suspects) his monolithic administration."⁴ Genslinger left town, while the institution for which he was an essential catalyst opened to fanfare.

On September 19, 1903, the Missouri Athletic Club opened its doors. The renovation of the club space was splendid. The lobby off Washington Avenue was made to look like a Roman basilica, replete with imported marble columns. The main dining room held 500 people, and was complemented by small private dining rooms. A full gymnasium could be found on the seventh floor as well as a large swimming pool. Other amenities at the club included a 20-table billiards and pool room, Turkish and steam baths and 96 sleeping rooms for club members. Membership and visits boomed, especially during the World's Fair when 22,000 visitors came to the club between May and December 1904. In addition to countless middle-class businessmen, the city's elite such as Mayor Rolla Wells and World's Fair President David Francis joined. During the Olympic Games, the Missouri Athletic Club yielded competitors in track and field, swimming, boxing and wrestling, boosting its national reputation. The winner of the 100-yard dash was club member Culver L. Hastedt.⁵ The club began to develop cultural events, at which women were welcome to attend, such as vaudeville shows and a popular glee club.⁶

After such rapid early progress, tragedy struck the club on March 8, 1914, when the Boatmen's Bank Building caught fire and was destroyed. The huge blaze took the lives of thirty club members and visitors.⁷ With the resolve shown in the swift establishment and opening over a decade earlier, the club under the leadership of President Norton Newcomb moved fast to build its own building. Within weeks of the fire, the Board obtained temporary facilities: the Southern Hotel (demolished) for social rooms and a barbershop; Tony Faust's Restaurant (demolished) for dining; and the gymnasium at the Davis Building (demolished) one block west at Broadway and Washington for athletics.⁸ For some reason, the MAC elected to change its name to the Missouri Athletic

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Norris, p. 27.

⁶ *Ye Clubbe: The Official Monthly Journal of the Missouri Athletic Club*, Vol. 3, No. 11 (January 1909).

⁷ Norris, p. 11.

⁸ Norris, p. 13.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 17

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Association that year, although the name change would only last for 25 years.⁹ On July 28, the Board polled members on where to build the new building; some wanted to move the club west to a site at 12th and Locust streets. However, the membership overwhelmingly supported the Board's plan to lease the existing site from Boatmen's Bank for construction of the new building. Membership remained impressive that year, reaching 1,605 members by August.¹⁰

On July 31, the Board of Governors met to appoint a New Building Committee. William D. Connett was appointed chairman of that committee. The Building Committee set about choosing an architect for the new building. Earlier in the year, architect Tom P. Barnett offered a grandiose but impractical plan for a 15-story building. Barnett's proposed building included a roof garden behind a colonnade as well as an interior swimming pool in a Pompeian style with domed ceiling and nude statues.¹¹ Naturally, the Committee sought a more pragmatic approach. On August 13, 1914, the Committee recommended that the Board of Governors select William B. Ittner and George F.A. Bruggemann architects of the new building, and the Board accepted the recommendation unanimously. This was not surprising given the remarkable talent of the two architects, especially that of Ittner. The commission the architects would receive for the design was 4% cash and 1% in member bonds from the total construction cost, with construction initially estimated at around \$500,000.¹²

Ittner and Bruggemann

William Butts Ittner (1864-1936) was one of the most prolific and celebrated St. Louis architects of the time. Best known for his tenure as the chief architect of the St. Louis Public Schools, his career actually spanned a variety of building types and styles. Ittner was born in St. Louis to Anthony Ittner, who with his brother owned the Ittner Brothers Brick Company on the city's south side. In 1884, William B. Ittner was among the graduates of the first class of Washington University's Manual Training School. After receiving a degree in architecture from Cornell University and studying in Europe, Ittner returned home to work for the prominent firm Eames & Young. Ittner maintained his

⁹ For purposes of consistency, this nomination uses the enduring "Missouri Athletic Club" name throughout, even to refer to the building's name.

¹⁰ Minutes of the Board of Governors of the Missouri Athletic Club, August 27, 1914.

¹¹ Norris, p. 13.

¹² Minutes, August 13, 1914.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 18

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

own office from 1889 through 1891. After that period, he entered short partnerships with William Foster and then Link & Rosenheim. During these early years of his career, Ittner designed several residences in revival styles as well as the Shingle Style.¹³ His professional reputation was strong, and he served as President of the St. Louis Chapter of the American Institute of Architects from 1893-95.

In 1897, a new city charter created the elected position of Commissioner of St. Louis Public Schools and Ittner was elected to the office. The position was responsible not for education but for the design and construction of school buildings. Ittner used this position to develop schools unlike any previously seen in the United States. His buildings, mostly Tudor or Georgian Revival in style, were highly functional buildings that maximized natural light, ventilation and volume of spaces. Other cities took note of his work, and when he returned to private practice he would provide designs for schools in cities ranging from Washington, D.C. to Long View, Washington. In 1910, Ittner resigned as Commissioner but continued as the chief architect of the St. Louis Public Schools as Architect of the Board of Education. Before his resignation from that post in 1914, Ittner designed eighty-six schools for the St. Louis Public Schools.¹⁴

The Missouri Athletic Club contracted with Ittner and George Brueggeman right after Ittner's resignation from the St. Louis Public Schools. The new commission helped Ittner expand his reputation by demonstrating that he had the acumen to devise excellent designs for other large buildings. After designing the Missouri Athletic Club Building, Ittner would also design two important buildings in Midtown St. Louis: the Scottish Rite Cathedral, built in 1921, and the Continental Building, a 23-story Art Deco office tower built in 1929 (both contributing resources to the Midtown Historic District, NR 7/7/1978). The Continental Building was a particularly notable accomplishment given that it was Ittner's only building in the Art Deco style and one of the city's few tall buildings in that style. During his later career, Ittner lectured on school planning at New York University in 1922 and participated in a White House Conference on schools in 1926.¹⁵ He served as Vice Chairman of the St. Louis Civic Plaza Commission starting in 1926; the commission developed plans for redeveloping a section of downtown St. Louis

¹³ Carolyn Toft, "St. Louis Architects: Famous and Not So Famous: William B. Ittner." *Landmarks Letter*, January 1985. p. 4.

¹⁴ Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey. *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects* (Los Angeles, Calif.: New Age Publishing Co., 1956), p. 316.

¹⁵ Toft, p. 4.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 19

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

around important government buildings as a grand city plaza. By the end of his career, Ittner is said to have designed over five hundred buildings in 115 cities in 29 different states.¹⁶

George F.A. Brueggemann (1873-1936) became Ittner's chief assistant in 1901, a position which Brueggemann was well-suited since the two men shared academic and professional paths. Brueggemann was a St. Louis native who had received a bachelor's degree in architecture at Cornell University, Ittner's *alma mater*, in 1895.¹⁷ Upon graduating from college, Brueggemann returned to St. Louis, where he worked stints at the prestigious firms Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge and Mauran, Russell & Garden before joining with Ittner. Also in 1901, Brueggemann was elected president of the St. Louis Architectural Club, an organization with roots as an architectural sketch club. After working with Ittner, Brueggemann served as chief draftsman and office manager for yet another prestigious firm, Eames & Young. He opened his own independent practice in 1910, enjoying modest success. Brueggemann was very active in the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects; he served as secretary from 1909-1912, vice president 1912-13 and then president from 1913-14. In 1915, he became a fellow of the American Institute of Architects.¹⁸ Besides his collaborative design of the building for the Missouri Athletic Club, of which he was a member, Brueggemann is only known for designing the Warwick Hotel and several private residences.

The New Building

Ittner and Brueggemann's design created a building type unknown to St. Louis at the time. While there were numerous private hotels and clubs with buildings, there had been no large-scale combination of elaborate hotel-like dining and meeting facilities, private rooms and extensive athletic space. Ittner and Brueggemann deftly married these disparate functions through innovative use of split-level floors and mezzanine spaces above the lobby and fifth floors. They also had to create a corner storefront space to the German-American Bank, which had pledged an annual lease of \$12,000 to the club if it built on the site at Fourth and Washington.¹⁹ In so doing, they managed to balance the use-

¹⁶ Withey and Withey, p. 316.

¹⁷ "G.F.A. Brueggemann Dies at St. Luke's", *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 24 October 1936.

¹⁸ Landmarks Association File: G.F.A. Brueggemann

¹⁹ "Building of New Missouri Athletic Club: A Triumph of Team Work", *Cherry Diamond: The Official Monthly Journal of the Missouri Athletic Club*, Vol. 35, No. 1, January 1941.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 20

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

dictated requirements of different floor heights with aesthetic concerns. Ittner must have drawn on his ample experience with public school design, which required unification of disparate spaces in single and attractive public buildings. Where Ittner had extensive creative range, Brueggemann brought formidable talent as a draftsman. Together, they devised an innovative solution to the complicated needs of the club, which had previously confined its activities to space in a building designed for other purposes.

Figure #3: Postcard view of the new Missouri Athletic Association Building, 1914. (Source: Landmarks Association Files.)



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 21

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

The building was ten stories tall with a flat roof, with formal elevations fronting 100 feet on Washington and 143 feet on Fourth Street. The building had a steel frame with concrete floor slabs, and was elevator-served. Stylistically, the new building was in the fashionable Renaissance Revival style and very formal. The six-bay-wide front elevation was symmetrical, while the eight-bay-wide side elevation maintained the articulation perfectly. Ittner and Brueggemann managed to balance the intricate details and motifs of that style with a form starkly divided into different elements. The body of the building was red brick, with a three-story rusticated Bedford limestone base topped by a decorative cornice. In this base were the tall windows of the main dining room, fronting on Washington and wrapping around to the Fourth Street elevation. Above the base was a three-story section of brick topped by a projecting ornamental balustrade. This section carried the large arched windows of the gymnasium and pool, which further accentuated the building's outward projection of its interior functions. These window openings were set in recesses clad in polychrome tiles bearing designs common to the Renaissance Revival style. Above this section was a four story section given a distinctive diaper pattern executed in velour bricks by the local brick giant Hydraulic Press Brick; the pattern was reminiscent of some of the brick patterns found on Ittner's revival style school buildings. Above this section, the building was crowned by an enormous projecting cornice clad in copper with large brackets.

The architects gave the new building the sort of detail, scale and beauty normally reserved for the city's finest hotels. Inside, the building contained so many different spaces all decorated with refinement far above even the lavish remodeling of the former MAC space in the Boatmen's Building. On the ground floor was a large lobby, paneled with a marble floor. This led to the front desk and a grand staircase leading to both a mezzanine that ringed the lobby and a second level where the dining rooms could be found. Throughout the lobby and staircase, the architects placed Renaissance Revival motifs that echoed exterior ornament. The main dining room, with its high ceiling reflected in high second-floor windows of the building's formal elevations, was resplendent with its molded and gilt plasterwork and crystal chandeliers. Numerous other dining rooms, including several that were private, were also on this floor and above. Service came from a huge kitchen.

The main athletic facilities were on the fifth floor with a mezzanine level, centered around a large gymnasium with suspended walking track and a large lap pool. Every

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 22

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

conceivable indoor athletic function had its own space, from handball (which had both practice and spectator-seating spaces on two different levels) to mechanized exercise. Support facilities included massage rooms, a whirlpool, sauna and pro shop. Social facilities abounded in the building, too: a lunch club, card room and meeting room on the fourth floor; eight private meeting rooms on the fourth and sixth floors, a reading room and billiards room on the tenth floor. On the seventh through ninth floors were 125 private suites, with both single and double rooms. All suites had private baths and full laundry service. The rooftop for the building supported a tennis court and sundeck.

Figure #4: View of the Lobby after completion of the building. (Source: Missouri Athletic Club.)



Ittner and Brueggeman arranged the spaces with care to keep aspects of club life separated for privacy, noise and function. With their design, the club was able to offer

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 23

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

full amenities in addition to great luxury only hinted at with their previous facility. The specifications were in keeping with this grandeur. Lockers and gymnasium equipment came from the Medart Manufacturing Company, the nationally-renowned manufacturer of gymnasium and playground equipment based in St. Louis. The James H. Bright Contracting and Building Company erected a skeleton of steel and concrete that cost \$118,985 in itself. The club selected the finest linens and carpets from the Scruggs, Vandervoort and Barney department store, and the best furniture from Stix, Baer and Fuller. According to Ittner, the cost of electric and steam utilities for the new building would cost \$14,330 per year.²⁰

The total construction cost for this great building was \$1.2 million, financed through \$100 bonds purchased by members. Boatmen's Bank and brewer August Busch (an MAC member) each purchased \$5,000 worth of bonds to start the financial campaign.²¹ On October 15, the Missouri Athletic Association signed a 99-year lease of the site from Boatmen's Bank for the sum of \$16,500 per year.²² To boost spirits, a ceremonial procession from the Southern Hotel to the building site took place on October 26, 1914. Mayor Henry Kiel joined the entire Board of Governors and countless members for the day's events. The cornerstone of the new building was laid before a large assembled crowd on June 10, 1915. One of the speakers was hardware wholesaler and business leader A.J. Shapleigh, who boasted with confidence: "I say without hesitancy that this building when completed will be the superior of all of the athletic clubs in the United States or the world—except possibly for that beautiful club in Los Angeles, California."²³ Of course, this was local boosterism on Shapleigh's part, but it would be supported by the later recognition by *Architectural Forum*. Local recognition of the achievement came when the St. Louis Art League awarded the new club building its annual merit certificate for best architectural work in 1916.

The Missouri Athletic Club Building's architectural influence was noted in a pair of articles on athletic and social club design that appeared in the September 1926 issue of *Architectural Forum*. In "The Social or Athletic Club; Its Exterior Design," architect and critic Dwight James Baum examines several social and athletic club buildings built in the first part of the twentieth century and outlines the principles Baum finds most desirable

²⁰ Minutes, December 10, 1914.

²¹ Norris, p. 13.

²² Minutes, October 8, 1914.

²³ "Cheers and Tears in MAA Ceremony," *St. Louis Republic*, 10 June 1915.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

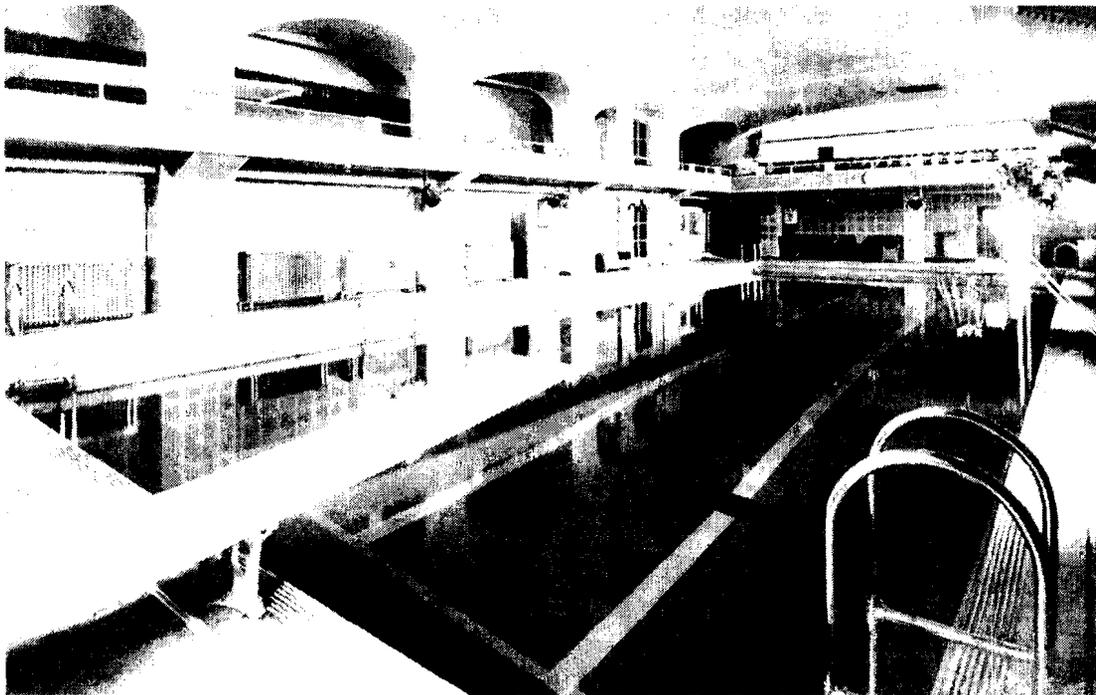
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 24

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

for such buildings. Among Baum's principles are avoidance of ostentation in design, frank outward expression of interior functions and an impressive building mass. The Missouri Athletic Club Building is one of the examples Baum chooses to illustrate his principles. He writes: "William B. Ittner's athletic association building is an interesting example of designing in brick, resulting in a structure which is distinctive and at the same time extremely dignified."²⁴ The article includes a large photograph of the building. The second article, "Planning the City Social or Athletic Club," by Charles G. Loring, uses a photograph of the Grill Room at the MAC to illustrate the types of modern amenities clubs used to attract visitors, especially younger ones. Shapleigh's prediction may not have come exactly true, but the building did receive critical acclaim. Notable is that the Los Angeles club mentioned at the cornerstone laying is not included in either Baum or Loring's articles.

Figure #5: The swimming pool after completion of the building. (Source: Missouri Athletic Club.)



²⁴ Dwight James Baum, "The Social or Athletic Club: Its Exterior Design," *Architectural Forum*, (September 1926). p. 148.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 25

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

The Missouri Athletic Club in Social and Civic Life

The grand opening of the Missouri Athletic Club Building occurred on March 1, 1916, and featured a three-day program of festivities. Speeches, a formal reception, a dinner dance and various entertainments were featured. According to club records and newspaper accounts, over 5,000 people attended the opening night's events. The club thus embarked on a robust new life in a new home, which included a growing number of social events attended by many non-members. The club was a major part of the growing dance craze, which exploded after World War I and particularly during the 1920s. The club also became an important downtown institution as one of only two downtown lunch clubs to remain after the City Club closed its doors in 1933.²⁵ In 1917, club instructor and later longtime athletic director Carl Bauer began offering athletic lessons to youth. In the 1920s, Bauer began organizing "Hall of Health" outings to the countryside, thus expanding club functions outside of the building. The club expanded the building in 1927 with a six-story addition to the north that blended almost seamlessly with the original building.

In 1931, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* sports writer Ed Wray lamented the decline in stature of the Missouri Athletic Club's athletes.²⁶ However, the importance of the MAC as a social and cultural institution had long since eclipsed its importance as a proving ground for athletes. In the 1930s, the club hosted weekly card parties that drew hundred of players, along with the usual program of dinners, dances and special events. Membership continued to grow during the Great Depression, reaching 2,500 in 1931.²⁷ In 1936, the club undertook extensive remodeling of private dining rooms and other spaces in the building. In 1939, the club returned to its old name of the Missouri Athletic Club, which had never fallen from the favor of long-time members. Athletics received a boost during World War II, when the Missouri Athletic Club provided athletic training for locally-stationed officers of the Armed Forces and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. This program coincided with the introduction, in 1941, of golfing sponsored by the club. One MAC golfer was Hord W. Hardin, Jr., who won the local championship in 1948 and later became the national Professional Golfers' Association President.

²⁵ Lynn Josse, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory Form -- Nomination Form: City Club*. Washington, D.C.: US Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 2002.

²⁶ Pickel, p. 52.

²⁷ Pickel, p. 53.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 26

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Figure #6: The gymnasium in use during the 1920's. (Source: Missouri Athletic Club.)



In 1950, the MAC built a second addition to the original building. On its Fourth Street elevation, this addition replicated the appearance of the Bedford limestone base of the original building and its earlier addition. However, the upper floors used contrasting brick and the north elevation was given a spare, modern treatment. The new addition housed additional kitchen and office space to keep up with the demands of the MAC, which grew rapidly after World War II. By the middle of the 1950s, there was a first-ever waiting list for club membership. The boom led to extensive interior remodeling undertaken in 1959, which altered the private suites and upper floors especially. In an article written to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the MAC, Ervin Pickel, Jr. stated that the 1950's were the "prime" years of the club.²⁸ Nonetheless, the MAC has remained a prominent institution since then, and membership remains steady to this day. The Board of Governors finally reversed age-old policies and voted to allow African-American members in the 1970s and female members in 1988. The MAC has kept vigilant with maintenance on the original building, which largely retains its historic appearance. While the club elected to open a branch facility in the western suburbs in 1995, the MAC is committed to its downtown location.

²⁸ Pickel, p. 56.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

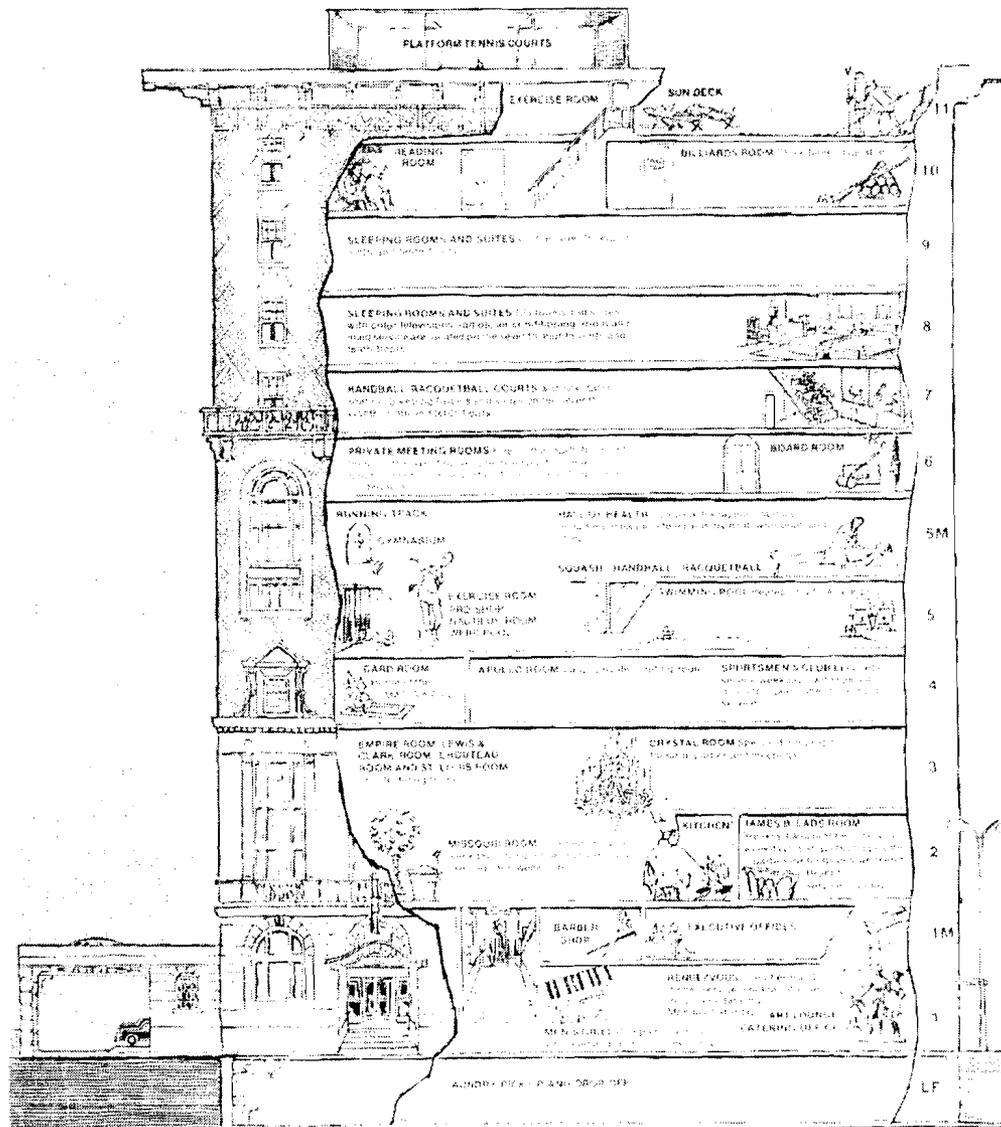
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 27

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Figure #7: A cross-section of the Missouri Athletic Club Building drawn in 1988. (Source: Missouri Athletic Club.)

This Is Your Club



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 9 Page 28

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 9 Page 29

Missouri Athletic Club Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

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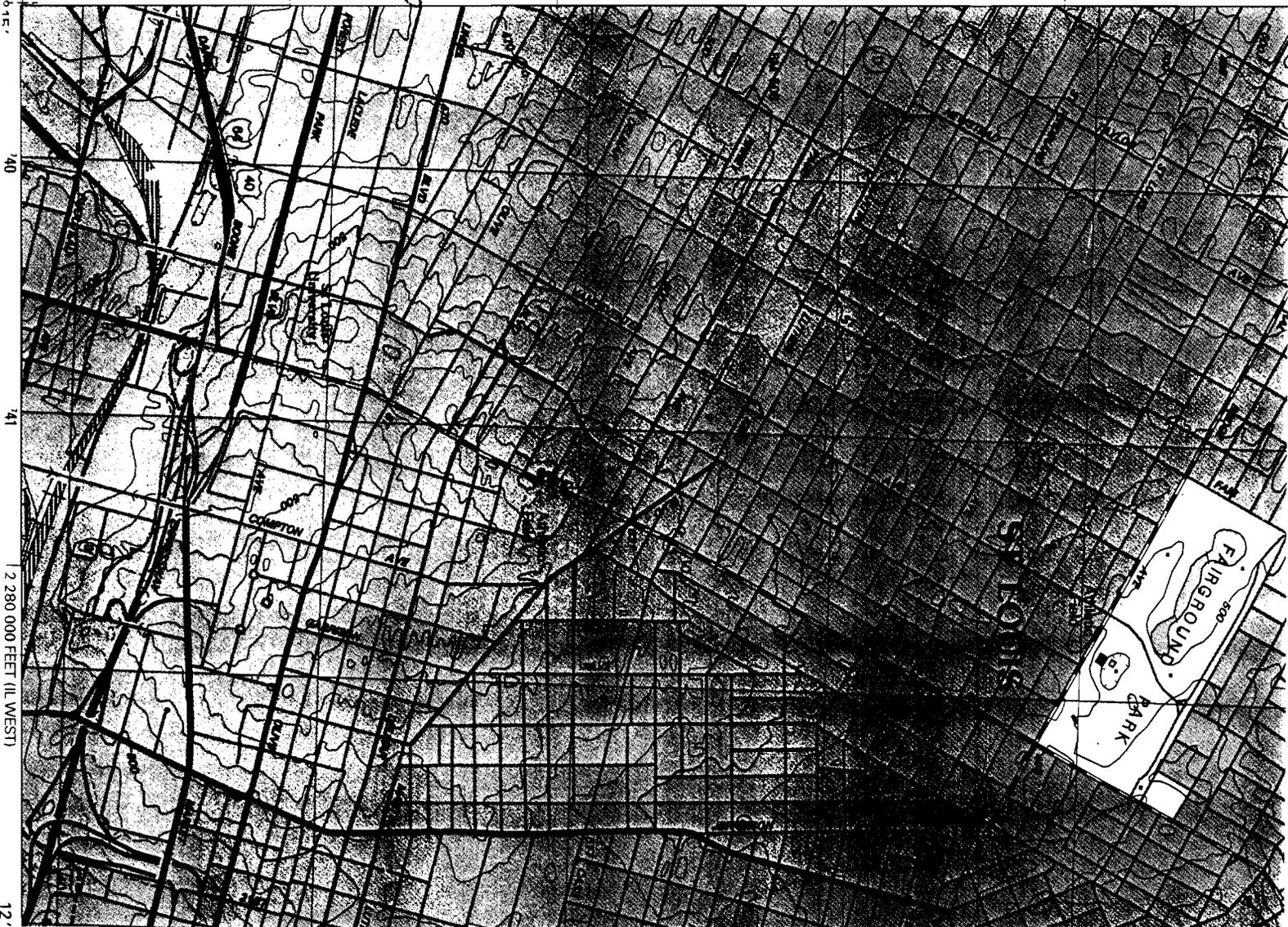
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