

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

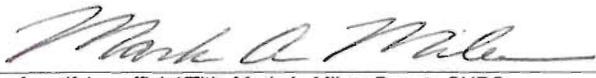
1. Name of Property

historic name ABC Auto Sales & Investment Company Building
other names/site number AALCO Express, Merrell Public Movers, Elkay Industries

2. Location

street & number 3509-27 Page Boulevard (AKA 3517-21 Page Blvd.) N/A not for publication
city or town St. Louis [Independent City] N/A vicinity
state Missouri code MO county St. Louis City code 510 zip code 63106

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 at the following level(s) of significance:
___ national ___ statewide local
 
Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles, Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.
Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____
Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:
___ entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:) _____
Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
Name of Property

St. Louis (Independent City), MO
County and State

5. Classification

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

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

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

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis, [Independent City], MO

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: concrete

walls: terra cotta

brick

roof: asphalt

other:

ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
Name of Property

St. Louis (Independent City), MO
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- 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

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1927-1935

Significant Dates

1927

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Harrison, David R./architect

Harrison & Kopman Construction
Company/builder and contractor

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Landmarks Association of St. Louis

ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
Name of Property

St. Louis (Independent City), MO
County and State

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

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property .445 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>741383</u> Easting	<u>4281123</u> Northing	3	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing
2	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing	4	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (On continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (On continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Matt Bivens (with original draft by Meghan Cotner)
organization Lafser & Associates, Inc. date REV 9-1-2012
street & number 1215 Fern Ridge Pkwy., Suite 110 telephone 314-560-9903
city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63141
e-mail msbivens@lafser.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Photographs.**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner:

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

name Northside Regeneration, LLC
street & number 1001 Boardwalk Springs Place, Suite 200 telephone
city or town O'Fallon state MO zip code 63366

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
St. Louis City (Ind. City), MO
Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis [Independent City], MO

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Summary

The ABC Auto Sales & Investment Company Building located at 3509-3527 (AKA 3517-21) Page Boulevard in St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri is an Art Deco style, trapezoidal shaped, four-story concrete frame commercial and warehouse building with white glazed terra-cotta and red brick cladding, a flat roof, and a concrete foundation. Featuring highly stylized ornamental detail at the primary façade, the building also retains original features such as metal sash windows, arched garage bay entries, a mezzanine balcony which overlooks a first floor showroom, and exposed concrete mushroom support columns; an original terrazzo band and ornamental metal railing accents the mezzanine. Designed and constructed respectively in 1927 by prominent architect David R. Harrison and his firm Harrison & Kopman Construction Company, the building is in good condition overall. The nominated building is representative of the automotive distributorship property type and meets the registration requirements set forth in the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) entitled, "Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis [Independent City], MO." Although window openings at the primary elevation have been in-filled with glass block (an historic alteration in itself), bays retain their original dimensions, detailing, and depth; other bays also have reversible wood panel infill. Despite these common changes the building retains sufficient integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Although the environment has changed over time, the building still retains some integrity of setting.

Site

The ABC Auto Sales & Investment Company Building sits on a triangular-shaped block created by the intersection of North Grand Boulevard to the northwest, Page Boulevard to the southwest and Dr. Martin Luther King Drive (formerly Easton Avenue) running diagonally to the city grid from southeast to northwest. The property is in the middle of the city block, and based on the property lines, it has a truncated and trapezoidal footprint. A two-story red brick theater constructed in 1909 is located at the northwest; the structure is nearly as tall as the nominated building. A modern gas station has been constructed to the northwest of the theater building fronting Grand Boulevard while a vacant lot and parking area sits at the southeast corner. New construction, deteriorated structures, and vacant lots surround the site at this busy intersection just north of Midtown, St. Louis. (See Figures 2, 3a-3d for historic site maps)

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ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
St. Louis City (Ind. City), MO

Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis [Independent City], MO

Exterior

The primary elevation faces southwest along Page Boulevard and fronts the sidewalk (*photo 1*). This terra cotta clad pier and spandrel structure has five bays which span the full height of the building set between pilasters. The two outermost bays are narrower in width than the three inner bays. The piers (in the form of terra cotta-clad pilasters) extend above the parapet wall and terminate with shaped pinnacles. Fenestration within the center three window bays extends from the first floor to the second (mezzanine) floor. A modern, yet historic, entrance is set within the center bay just above ground level. Flanking this entrance bay, the former display window bases—clad in terra cotta—are visible and support modern glass block infill; above the bases are also small sections of wood infill panels. Heavily stylized Art Deco/Gothic detailing is evident in the cast terra cotta spandrel panels that separate the second and third floors as well as the third and fourth floors (*photos 1 and 2*).

The northwestern-most primary elevation bay has a garage loading area at the first floor set above what appears to be a later concrete dock addition to enable trucks to unload goods into the building direct from their beds. A non-original steel overhead rolling door has been attached to the front of the opening. The southeastern-most bay has an exposed elliptical arched opening; an identical opening is behind the metal garage door at the opposite side. The arch is detailed with paneled terra cotta and faced with rosettes. A low relief tracery panel sits below a cast terra cotta windowsill. The opening within the actual arch has been in-filled with glazed block with a newer inset window. The windows at the second floor above the loading door have been removed while the opposite side has been covered with Plexiglas (*photos 1 and 2*).

The primary façade showroom display windows are continuous from the first floor to the second floor of the center three bays. These openings have been in-filled with glass block during 1947. Wide window bays at the third and fourth floors have also been in-filled with glass block during the same period.

The southeast and northwest side elevations are exposed concrete framing with buff and red brick infill (*photo 3*). On the southeast elevation, roof and wall materials from a demolished two-story building remain in deteriorated condition. A non-original loading door and man door have been added below grade and at ground level respectively (*photo 3*). The earth has been cut, graded back and ramped downward to the dock

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ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
St. Louis City (Ind. City), MO

Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis [Independent City], MO

from the street and adjoining vacant lot; the ground has been covered with concrete. A layer of concrete parking was applied to the elevation at some time, likely to mask damaged brick and mortar. At the northwest elevation small, four-light original metal windows are at each floor corresponding to the interior staircase. A 1927 photograph shows that this style of window was present immediately above the primary façade display windows as well as doubled at the upper stories of the primary elevation (see *figure 4*).

The northeast-facing rear elevation is comprised of buff-colored brick and penetrated by window and storefront openings (*photo 4*). Divided into six equal-sized bays, the upper two stories contain original metal frame, paired twelve-light windows. Six boarded storefront openings with steel lintels with a simple soldier course header are at each bay of the first floor; the center four bays have entrance openings adjacent storefront windows. Second floor window openings are covered with wood panels. Window openings have a simple soldier course header and a rowlock sill.

A two-story buff brick elevator penthouse projects above the roof in the northwest corner of the building; the building corner here is truncated. A pedestrian door is located at the ground; it has been boarded (*photo 4*). The freight elevator allows access to the roof with an in-filled entry at the southwest while a man door accesses the roof at the northwest side. A small six-light metal window is centered on the north and on the south elevation at the upper portion of the elevator penthouse.

A metal sign at the primary elevation was installed in 1963; it is highly likely that the rear sign dates to about the same period. (*photo 5 primary; photo 4 secondary*)

Interior

The interior of the building is comprised of concrete floors, framing and mushroom columns which continue from the ground up through the fourth floors. The concrete column system coupled with the concrete floor slabs allow for large spans of open space—ideal for automobile display and storage (*photos 6-10*). At the first floor the original showroom is a massive, two-story space which features a mezzanine level reached via a central stair (*photo 6*). Comprised of concrete and terrazzo, the stair features an ornamental metal railing which continues across the balcony of the

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ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
St. Louis City (Ind. City), MO

Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis [Independent City], MO

mezzanine level; the same terrazzo continues as a decorative band which outlines the edge of the structure.

An original or at least early wall dividing the showroom from the garage bay remains intact on the north side of the first floor; extending the length of a room is a plaster-and-lathe wall with marble base and chair rail molding in addition to a full-light door and sidelight opening. Later period remodeling extended the closed office area via a light weight plaster-board enclosure inspired by the earlier modification (*photo 7*). Also at the first floor is a garage door access into the building from the primary elevation (*photo 8*). Once into the first floor space, the freight elevator is nearer the center of the building. The showroom space is light and airy and at the mezzanine level one can imagine the 1928 Hudson-Essex in its full glory seen from above (*photo 9*).

A freight elevator and interior staircase are located at the northwest edge of the building. The remainder of the building floors contain open areas accented by concrete mushroom columns with exposed brick walls and concrete floor slabs (*photo 10*). Also visible on the upper two floors are the original metal frame windows and concrete ceilings (*photo 11*). A partial basement located at the rear of the building includes spaces for coal storage, general storage, in addition to boilers and heating oil tanks. (*see figures 1a-1d which include as-built floor plans*)

Integrity

A building permit to install glass block within window openings was issued to the owner on May 6, 1947. Installed at the primary elevation only, this infill respected the original openings in addition to retaining window detail and depth. The glass infill is deteriorated and lacks integrity and is outside of the period of significance. Original metal windows remain in the stair hall and rear of the building in varying condition. The interior retains original finishes including exposed brick, plaster walls, concrete floors and columns, a terrazzo-banded mezzanine with metal railing, and marble base mold. Despite common, reversible changes such as wood and glass block infill, the building retains sufficient integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Although the environment has changed over time (itself an historic scenario), the building retains some integrity of setting.

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ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
St. Louis City (Ind. City), MO
Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis [Independent City], MO

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The ABC Auto Sales & Investment Company Building at 3509-27 (AKA 3517-21) Page Boulevard in St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri, is eligible for local listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criterion A in COMMERCE. The property is associated with the historic context of "Marketing and Servicing the Automobile in St. Louis, 1900-1955 ca." set forth within the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) entitled *Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri*. The building is significant for its role as an automobile distributorship originally designed and built for the ABC Auto Sales & Investment Company in 1927 and used by ABC Auto Sales as a distributorship for automobiles until 1935. The building was designed by prominent architect David R. Harrison and constructed by his firm the Harrison & Kopman Construction Company as a St. Louis distributorship for the Hudson-Essex automobile at a time when Hudson and its Essex line were approaching peak production. The period of significance begins in 1927—the year the building was completed and first occupied as an automobile distributorship—through 1935—when the building was last used in association with the automobile industry. The nominated building was then used as a moving and storage company through the 1960s. The building retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Because of historic and modern changes in the surrounding area, the building retains some integrity of setting. The property meets the MPDF registration requirements for the following property types: Automotive Distributorships.

Background

In 1920, ABC Auto Sales Company emerged in St. Louis city directories. Listed at 3514-3516 Easton Avenue at Page Boulevard on the site of the future nominated building, the company has headed by Frank Doerer and Charles Stewart. The duo likely capitalized on the generic name "ABC" to draw attention to their enterprise within the business and city directory alphabetical listings—this was especially important during a time when print media was king. However, it is more of a possibility that the partners were inspired by the landmark 1884 "ABC Building" at the tip of the triangular lot at the intersection of Easton Avenue and Page Boulevard which was near the site of ABC Auto's beginnings. Regardless, Frank Doerer was joined by a brother in 1926 and the company was made official.

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ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
St. Louis City (Ind. City), MO
Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis [Independent City], MO

Incorporated in Missouri in 1926 with a capitol of \$20,000, the ABC Auto Sales & Investment Company was led by President Frank X. Doerer, his brother Harry A. Doerer as secretary and treasurer, and Vice-President Earl Flagg. ABC remained in the general location, addressed both at Easton Avenue and Page Boulevard in rented buildings into 1927 when the business partners determined the company needed a new and permanent home.¹ The Doerer brothers began to purchase lots on site in late 1926 and early 1927, including a large parcel from owner Jacob Mayer.²

Elaboration: ABC Auto Sales Company Builds a New Headquarters

Building permits were issued to local wrecker S. Schaefer & Sons to demolish buildings on this triangular slice of land bounded by Page Boulevard, and North Grand and Easton Avenues in February of 1927. One month later on March 9, 1927, ABC Auto Sales Company was issued a building permit to construct a four-story garage and salesroom to measure approximately 79 by 90 feet at 3519 Page Boulevard. Then estimated to cost \$30,000, ABC commissioned architect, builder, and contractor David R. Harrison and his firm the Harrison & Kopman Construction Company to design and construct its new edifice. A relatively unfamiliar design in this location, its style was thoroughly

1 ABC Auto Sales Company was listed at 3518-20 Easton in the 1925 *Gould's Red-Blue Book* city directory with a separate storeroom addressed at 3514 Easton. The original home corresponded either to a one-story store building constructed in 1910 on the site of the future nominated building or a three-story store constructed at the corner of Easton and Page in 1884 (historically the "ABC Building"). ABC Auto Sales Company was listed at both 3509-21 and 3519-21 Page and 3518 Easton in the 1926 city directories. Owner Frank Doerer altered the earlier building at 3521 page in 1925.

2 Unfortunately a direct link backwards tracing ownership of the lot and building (referred to as parcel 2) at 3517-21 Page Boulevard dead ends on October 2, 1962 when owner Charles W. Peters (wife Gladys died August 5, 1962) sold the property to Richard and Lucille Merrell (October 2, 1962; #151). The Merrell's transferred the property to its Merrell Moving & Storage Company in February of 1980; on the same day the company transferred the property (then including 3519-25 Page) to Pagran, Incorporated. Pagran had acquired the remainder of the site including 3509 Page in February of 1983.

The latter parcel (identified as parcel 1) was traced back to 1899. After successive transfers between parties, finally in March of 1927, then owner Industrial Benefit Life Insurance Company granted the property to Jacob Mayer. Mayer, a month later, sold the property to the ABC Auto Sales & Investment Company on April 25, 1927.

On January 27, 1930 the property, including adjacent lots at Easton and Page, was granted to Dorothy Yawitz. Exactly one year later Yawitz (then listed as single) sold the entire property to Frank and Ruth Doerer. Brother Harry Doerer was granted the property in January of 1931. By March 14, 1932 Harry had sold the property addressed as 3500-16 Easton and 3501-15 Page (likely corresponding to the vacant lot to the southeast of the nominated building) to Emma Foerstel who in turn transferred the property to Phillips Petro Company in 1936 for \$20,000.

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ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
St. Louis City (Ind. City), MO
Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis [Independent City], MO

modern in comparison to the traditional red brick commercial and residential buildings surrounding it.

"ABC Auto Sales Opens New Page-Grand Building" touted the December 18, 1927 edition of the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. Branded as the "Hudson-Essex dealer's new home," the ABC Auto Sales & Investment Company planned to hold its formal opening after January 1, 1928. After completion in the fall of 1927 the building officially measured 110 feet at Page with a depth of 120 feet and had cost \$150,000—over \$120,000 more than originally estimated.³ The *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* continued:

It is four stories high with a mezzanine floor opening on the showroom, and a concrete roof, accessible to automobiles by the electric elevator, which serves all floors. The front of the building is surfaced in white terra cotta. A large vertical illuminated sign, three stories high, is on the building.⁴

David R. Harrison – Architect and Contractor

Listed as an architect for the first time in St. Louis city directories in 1921, David Harrison's firm Harrison Construction Company was also listed. Then partner, Emanuel M. Loeb, was listed at 6053 Waterman (the same address as Harrison in 1925). By 1927 the directory listed Harrison & Kopman Construction Company with Joseph W. Kopman recorded as president. Active on a number of projects during the mid-1920s including the 6-story Gotham Apartment building at 5900-04 Enright in 1925 (NRHP listed in Hamilton Place Historic District 10-15-2005), the 11-story Fashion Square Building at 1307 Washington Avenue in 1926 (NRHP listed 10-9-1985), and the Olympia Apartments at 3863 West Pine in 1926 (since demolished), the commission for ABC was a challenge due to the unusual site.

Designed in a style indicative of Harrison, the building's primary elevation facing Page Boulevard featured extensive terra-cotta detailing in the form of pilasters and spandrel

³ The discrepancy in price is likely due to either a typo which resulted during the later transcribing of the original building permit or a purposeful submission of a lower price by the contractor in order to save on the cost of the building permit.

⁴ *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. December 18, 1927. Page 4s.

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ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
St. Louis City (Ind. City), MO
Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis [Independent City], MO

panels in an Art Deco/Gothic-inspired motif. Harrison had used similar detailing in his Fashion Square Building, east of the nominated building in 1926.

1927 Automobile Dealerships

The 1927 *Polk-Gould St. Louis Business Directory* included ABC Auto Sales & Investment Company, addressed at 3515-25 Page Boulevard, among a healthy listing of "automobile dealers." In the same year *Gould's Red-Blue Book* listed ABC Auto Sales Company Inc. at 3519-21 Page and ABC Auto Sales & Investment Company Inc. at 3515-25 Page with the former listed as a distributor of Hudson-Essex Motor Cars. (see figures 5a-5c for samples of Essex cars).

Previously, only the Hudson-Frampton Motor Car Company at 3301-17 Locust was the sole distributor of the Hudson line in St. Louis city. Hudson-Frampton continued to sell the Essex line however it had shifted its attention to the more expensive Hudson models as well as used cars beginning in the late 1920s.

Meanwhile, ABC was listed from 1928 to 1930 both at the building rear 3536 Easton address and at the primary elevation at 3519-21 Page. In 1931 the new Essex automobiles were being sold from the Page storefront while it maintained a used car business which was being handled at the Easton elevation. Of note is that the ABC Auto Sales & Investment Company dealt automobile accessories and parts; listed at

3519-21 Page in 1930, ABC Auto Sales Company's dealership was addressed at 3536 Easton. By 1932 ABC Auto Sales relocated entirely and was listed down the street at 3631 Easton while the ABC Used Car Exchange listed in the nominated building, was working from the rear at 3536-40 Easton—both companies were still led by Frank X. Doerer.

In 1932 the Hudson Company began to phase out its Essex line of automobiles and its two St. Louis city distributors were forced to reconsider their options. Hudson Frampton Motor Car Company had already removed the Essex from its city directory listing entirely (as if they had insider information) previous to 1932. The ABC Auto Company tried to stay afloat but perhaps not able to seal a contract with Hudson to carry the new TerraPlane model ABC shifted to exclusively selling used cars. However, for reasons currently unknown, perhaps in part to the end of the Essex, the Doerers began to sell off the adjacent property and then the nominated building. By the end of the

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ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
St. Louis City (Ind. City), MO
Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis [Independent City], MO

year ABC Used Car Exchange was managed by Jacob G. Lenharth while Frank Doerer was listed as a salesman living at 5544 Goethe with his wife Ruth and his brother Harry

was listed as a manager living at 3864 Delor; according to city directories Harry was the manager of a branch of ABC Auto Sales located at 3631 Easton (since demolished) in 1938. Former company Vice-President Earl Flagg was listed as a chauffeur for Jim Remley Marketing Incorporated. By 1933, the ABC Used Car Exchange was listed at both 3536 Easton and 3519 Page in the nominated building.

The Hudson Motor Car Company

The Hudson Motor Car Company of Detroit, Michigan began automobile production in 1909 and by 1954 it had merged with Nash-Kelvinator Corporation to form American Motors. In 1919 the company first announced the Essex line of automobiles. Designed to compete with the two industry giants, Ford and Chevrolet, Hudson's Essex was one of the company's first affordable sedans available on the market. In fact, combined Hudson and Essex sales moved from seventh in the United States to third by 1925.⁵ Armed with an aggressive advertising campaign and backed by record sales, it is no wonder that the Essex led the market. (see figures 6a-6c for typical period advertisements) At the peak of production in 1929, Hudson and Essex produced a total of 300,000 cars in one year. Essex models were being handled in St. Louis first by the Hudson-Frampton Motor Car Company at 3301-17 Locust Boulevard along the famed

"Motor Row" until Frampton began to focus on Hudson's more expensive models.

Sales of the Hudson Essex enabled ABC Auto Sales & Investment Company to fill a necessary niche in the automobile market by providing a desirable, affordable, and reliable product to St. Louis consumers. An unfortunate shift in 1932 Detroit would result in a premature end of the Essex reign. It was in this year that Hudson began to phase out the Essex line in order to promote its modern Terraplane brand. Launched via a publicity stunt with Ameila Earhart at the wheel of a new Terraplane in July of 1932, less than two years later the Essex name had disappeared altogether. (see figure 5d for samples of Terraplane cars)

Later Owners and Building Changes

5 G. N. Georgano. Cars: Early and Vintage, 1886-1930. (Mason Crest Publishers, 2002)

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ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
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Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis [Independent City], MO

Meanwhile, the ABC Used Car Exchange, led by Jacob Lengarth, continued to sell all types of used cars to St. Louisans. The company sold used cars and operated from both the Page and Easton elevations through 1935, after which ABC Auto Sales

opened a branch run by George Morgan at 2514 South Jefferson in 1937 and a branch at 3531 Easton run by Harry Doerer. While the Phillips Petroleum Company opened a corner gas station at the intersection of Easton Avenue and Page Boulevard in 1936, the nominated building housed a branch of AALCO Express, an "expressing and moving" company. Originally incorporated in Missouri in 1929 with a capital of \$40,000 by husband and wife team Charles and Gladys (President/Treasurer and Vice President respectively), the company was renamed AALCO Moving & Storage Company by 1940.

Owner Charles Peters was granted a permit to alter the nominated building at 3519 Page at a cost of \$2,500 on May 6, 1947. Installing glass blocks at the primary elevation display windows and upper stories, adding a central ground pedestrian entrance at Page, and likely creating the primary elevation loading dock and closed-in garage bay with window also at Page served as a moving and storage facility for AALCO for the next decade. Charles' wife died in August of 1962 and the building was sold to Richard Merrell in October. Formally known as the Merrell Moving & Storage Company, the business was issued a permit in September to occupy the building as a "new and used furniture store and moving and storage company."

A few months later in March of 1963 Merrell Moving Company was issued a permit to install a sign on the building. Either corresponding to the Page or Easton (now Dr. Martin Luther King Drive) façade, signs are still present there today.

The MPDF and Property Type "Automotive Distributorships"

Documentation within the MPDF explains that this type of building may date as early as 1910, but more likely to have been constructed in the 1910s and 1920s and that it was unlikely that after 1929 any of these types were built because of a change in marketing strategy. The majority of these building types were located along Locust Street between Grand Avenue and Eighteenth Street. These building types were reliant upon their exterior images—achieved through architectural embellishment—to distinguish them from simple warehouses as well as other distributorships. These buildings are also distinguishable by their massing and large size.

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ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
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Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis [Independent City], MO

Unique relative to the nominated building is, rather than being located within the traditional "Motor Row" on Locust, that it was constructed at a prominent "crossroads"

where Easton and Page intersected at Grand Avenue, away from the traditional automotive center of the city. Location had likely been a major factor to the ABC directors as earlier incarnations of the company were located on sites adjacent to the nominated building.

Indicative of the property type, the nominated building was constructed with a concrete structural frame; a primary elevation storefront which contained wide, two-story plate glass (lighting the first and mezzanine floors); an interior main floor showroom and mezzanine; open floors; and finally divided glass window bays in between highly ornamental pilasters on the upper floors. Constructed in a unique style in the area, the building's modern appearance was quite progressive amidst the more traditional red brick Victorian and Revival style structures of former decades which surrounded it.

The nominated building is significant as an automobile distributorship under National Register Criterion A in Commerce. Based on the MPDF, this type of building serves as evidence of the important role automobile sales played in St. Louis' economic growth and development. Although the building is not being listed with architectural significance, it is a good example of a commercial Art Deco/Gothic style structure which retains all of its original, highly-ornamental terra cotta cladding at its primary elevation. In addition, the building retains its primary garage bays, open floor plans, freight elevator, exposed concrete mushroom columns and flooring, in addition to its terrazzo-accented mezzanine which overlooks the primary showroom at street level. The building is also the design of a prominent St. Louis architect, David R. Harrison and is currently the only known automobile dealership building designed by him.

The nominated building meets the registration requirements as an automobile distributorship because it retains sufficient integrity from the period when it served as an automobile business. The building retains all of its exterior wall cladding—an elaborate façade of white terra cotta in addition to its massing and other exterior details including two primary elevation arched garage door entries (although one has been closed in with hollow clay blocks and modern entrances and the other has a metal roll-up garage door), projecting finials, and original metal windows at the rear and

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northwest side elevations. The display windows at the first floor are readily apparent although closed with glass blocks and wood boards; terra cotta clad window bases below are intact except at the middle bay where it was historically altered to provide a

pedestrian entrance. Exterior stylistic details and upper level fenestration is intact although original windows were blocked in. Although the glass block infill historically replaced the original windows, the alteration is outside of the period of significance.

Further, character defining features from the period of the nominated building's use as an automobile business are evident inside the structure and include such details as a pair of garage door bays (slightly altered as detailed above), the auto-freight elevator shaft and elevator, elevator access to the roof, the internal stair case and rail, the open floor plan, the original mezzanine level complete with terrazzo cladding and ornamental metal railing and stairs. At some early point historically an office wall was constructed nearest the southeast interior corner of the first floor where similar terrazzo accents the base and chair rail details of a plaster wall with door and window punches. The nominated building served several historic purposes over time however it is clearly recognizable from its period of association with the automobile.

The nominated building is significant under Criterion A because of its important association with the ABC Auto Sales and Investment Company, dealer of the Hudson-Essex line of automobiles during the period when this vehicle was at the peak of its production. Although new automobile sales dropped 75% between the stock-market crash of 1929 and through the Great Depression in 1933 (with an all-time low in 1932 coinciding with Hudson phasing out the Essex line), ABC remained successful during this period and reinvented itself in the decade following as a seller of used cars. Typical of many small dealers like ABC Auto, the Great Depression likely drained the resources of the original company directors resulting in a transfer to a new owner in 1933 as well as the change in profession of the Doerer Brothers and former Vice-President Flagg. By 1940 the building was home to a moving and storage company and its automobile association had been all but forgotten.

The building clearly conveys its historical significance and it is recognizable from its period of association with the automobile between 1927 and 1935 as defined under the context of "Marketing and Servicing the Automobile in St. Louis, 1900-1955 ca." within the *Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri* –

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St. Louis City (Ind. City), MO
Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis [Independent City], MO

Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF). In addition, the building represents the most intact, most architecturally significant, and best physical example of an automobile-oriented building relating to the history of Hudson-Essex distribution in St.

Louis which remains today; the former Hudson-Frampton dealership on Locust, although extant, has unfortunately been entirely altered inside and out.

Historic Buildings Surveys

In Spring of 2011, Landmarks Association of St. Louis conducted a city-wide survey of buildings which might be eligible for listing in the National Register of historic places in association with automobile industries in St. Louis. It identified the nominated building as being potentially eligible under Criterion A for its association with the automobile industry in St. Louis under the current MPDF.

The Building Today

After transferring the building to Elkay Industries after 1995 the building was in use for a short time as storage then it sat vacant until recently. The new owner anticipates a full historic rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the building.

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ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
St. Louis City (Ind. City), MO
Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis [Independent City], MO

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Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis [Independent City], MO

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ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
St. Louis City (Ind. City), MO
Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis [Independent City], MO

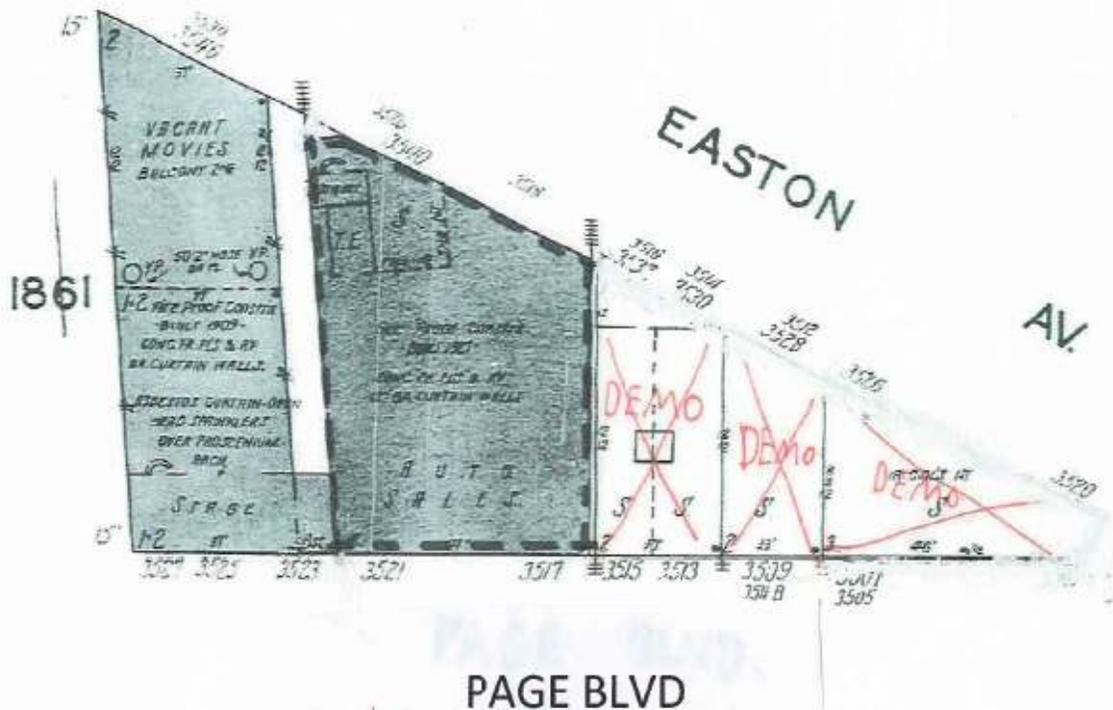
Verbal Boundary Description

The ABC Auto Sales & Investment Company Building at 3509-27 (AKA 3517-21) Page Boulevard in St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri, is located on City Block 1861 measuring .445 acres in midtown St. Louis, Missouri. The nominated property is legally known by the Assessor's Office as parcel number 18610000150. The property was historically part of the re-subdivision of Lots 5 and 6 of D. D. Page's 3rd Western Addition to the City of St. Louis; it is also referred to as Lot A. A dashed line on the accompanying map entitled "ABC Auto Sales & Investment Company Building Boundary Map" indicates the boundary of the nominated property.

Boundary Justification

The nominated parcel includes the building footprint.

"ABC Auto Sales Company Building Boundary Map"



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Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis [Independent City], MO

List of Figures

Figures 1: Building plans. Source: Klitzing Welsch Associates, Inc.

Figure 1a: Building floor plan (first floor and basement) existing conditions.

Figure 1b: Building floor plan (second floor) existing conditions.

Figure 1c: Building floor plan (third floor) existing conditions.

Figure 1d: Building floor plan (fourth floor) existing conditions.

Figure 2: 1876 Compton & Dry *Pictorial St. Louis*.

Site of the future nominated building is in the center within the triangle lot.

Figures 3: Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

Figure 3a: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, V 2, 1909, plate 1.

Figure 3b: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, V 2, 1932, plate 1.

Figure 3c: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, V 2, 1950, plate 1.

Figure 3d: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, V 2, 1971, plate 1.

Figure 4: ABC Auto Sales & Investment Company as completed in 1927.

Source: *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, December 18, 1927, page 4s.

Figures 5: Samples of the Hudson Essex and competitors

Figure 5a: 1923 Essex

Figure 5b: 1925 Essex

Figure 5c: 1927 Essex Speedster

Figure 5d: THE COMPETITION which replaced the original Hudson Essex:
the 1932 Essex Terraplane (top) & 1934 Terraplane (bottom)

Figures 6: Advertisements from period industry publications

Figure 6a: Advertisement from Hudson Triangle and Essex Topics (October 1, 1924,
volume XII, No. 10).

Figure 6b: Advertisement from Hudson Triangle and Essex Topics (December 1, 1924,
volume XII, No. 11).

Figure 6c: Advertisement from Hudson Triangle and Essex Topics (January 1, 1925,
volume XIII, No. 1).

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ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
St. Louis City (Ind. City), MO
Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis [Independent City], MO

Source: Klitzing Welsch Associates, Inc.

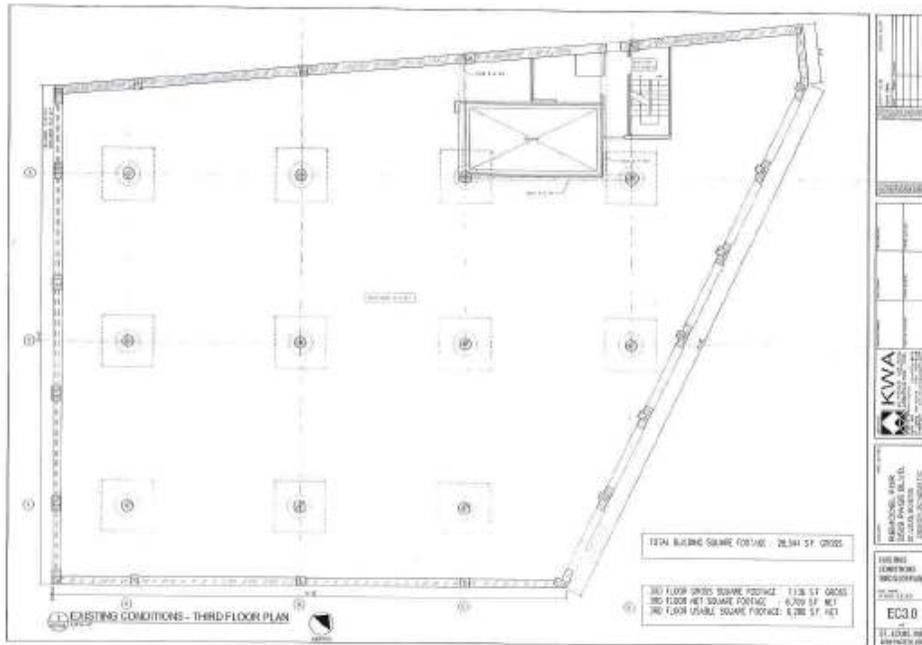


Figure 1d: Building floor plan (fourth floor) existing conditions.
Source: Klitzing Welsch Associates, Inc.

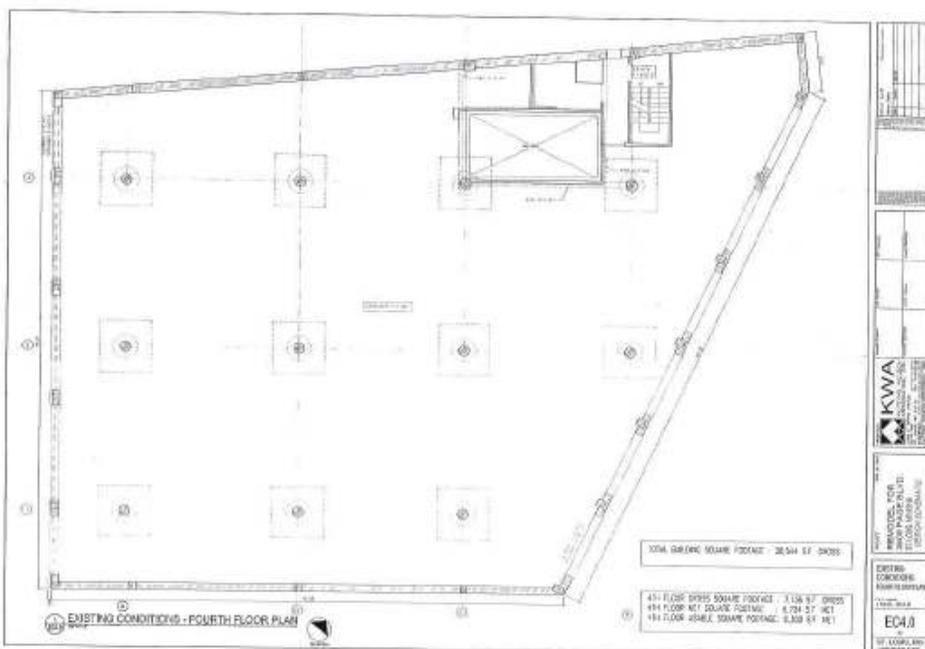


Figure 2: 1

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ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
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Site of the future nominated building in in the center within the triangle lot.



Figure 3a: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, V 2, 1909, plate 1.

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ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
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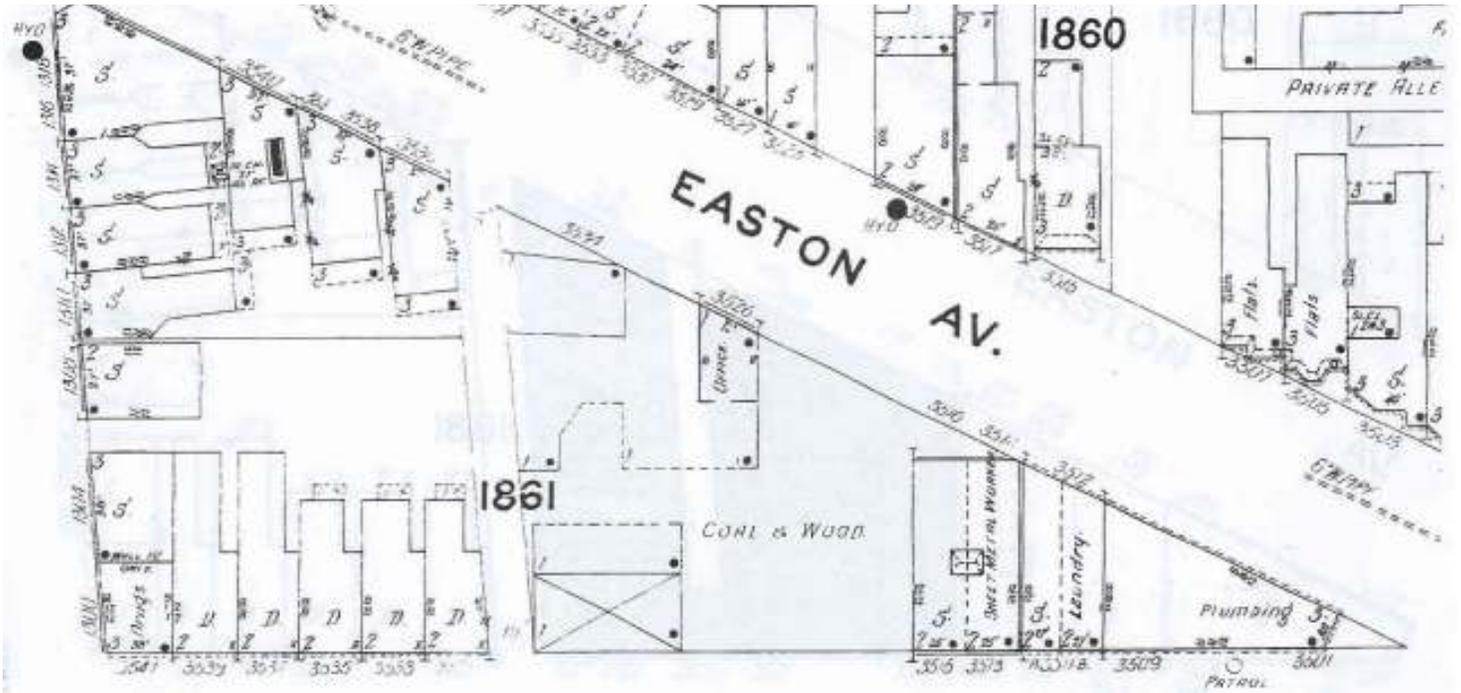
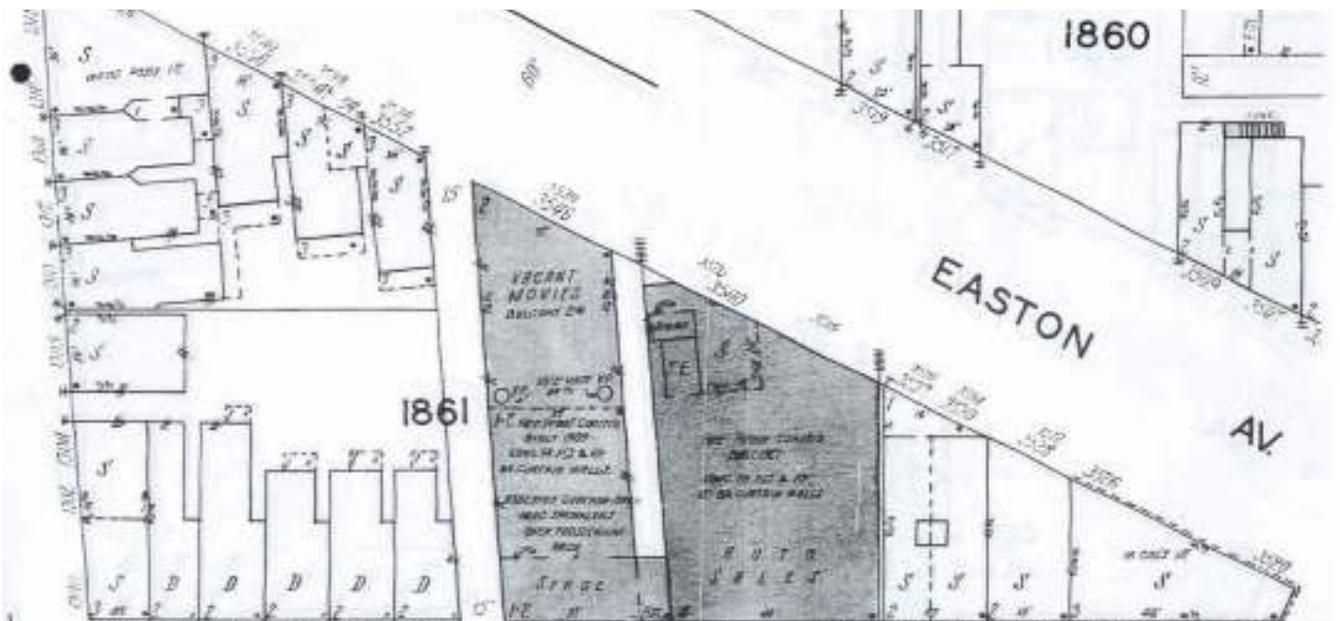


Figure 3b: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, V 2, 1932, plate 1.

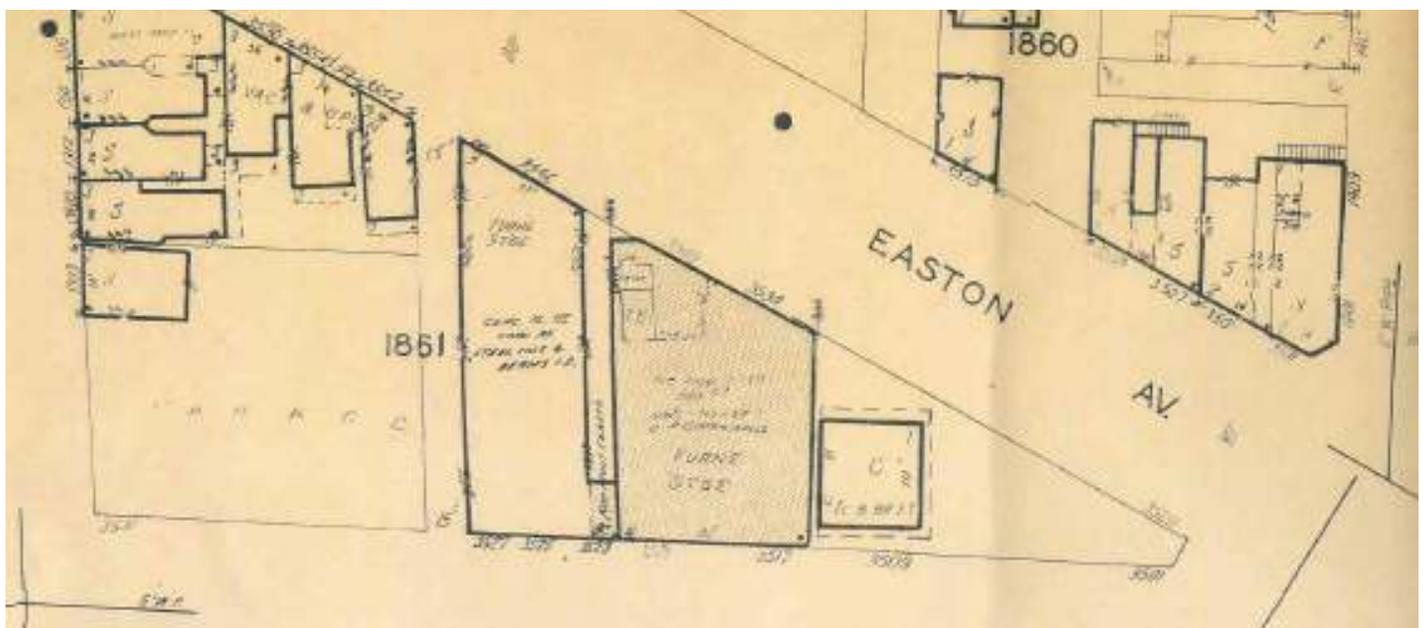


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ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
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Figure 3d: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, V 2, 1971, plate 1.

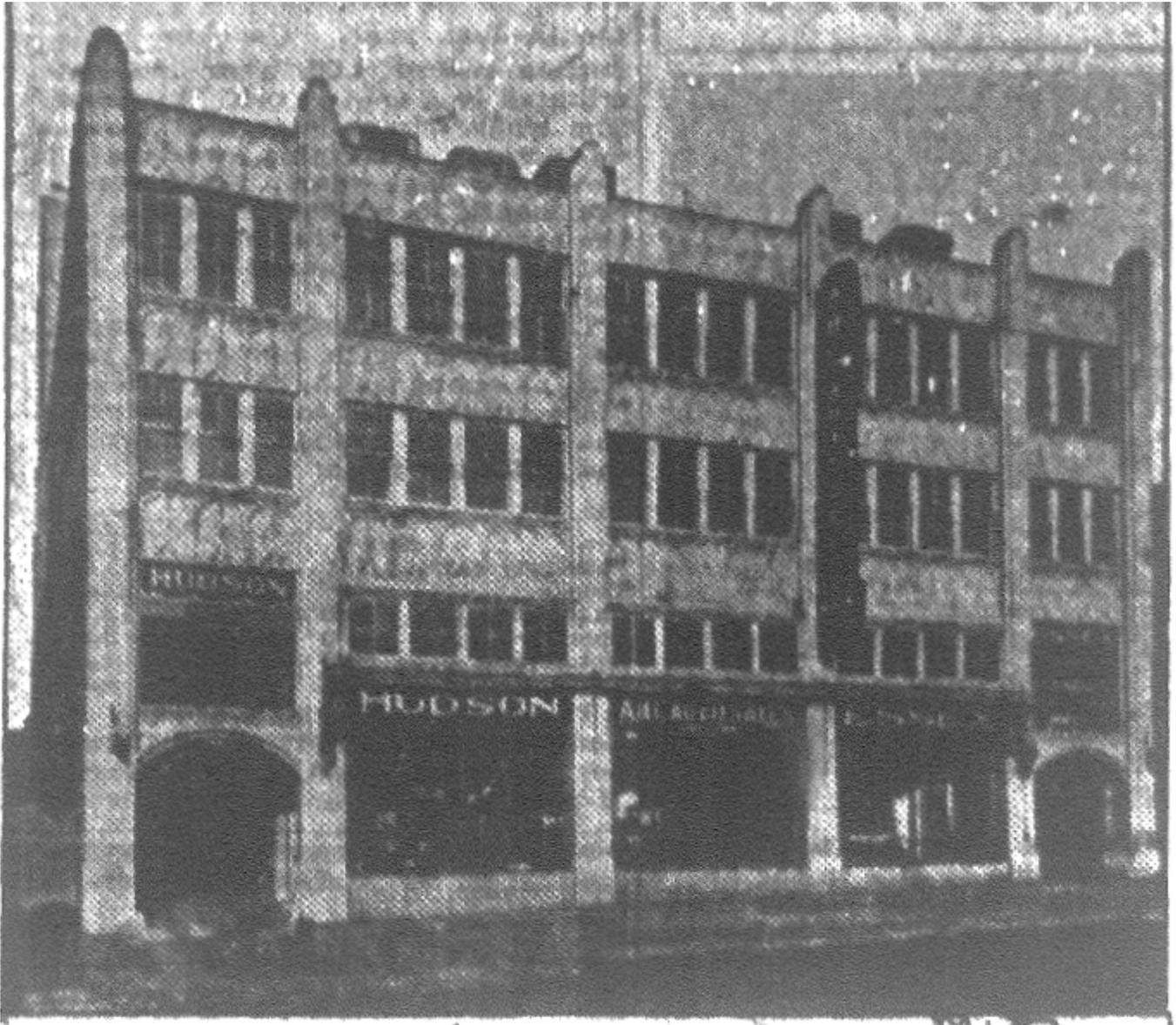


Source: *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, December 18, 1927, page 4s.

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ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
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Figure 5: Samples of the Hudson Essex
Figure 5a: 1923 Essex



Figure 5b: 1925 Essex



Figure 5c: 1927 Essex Speedster

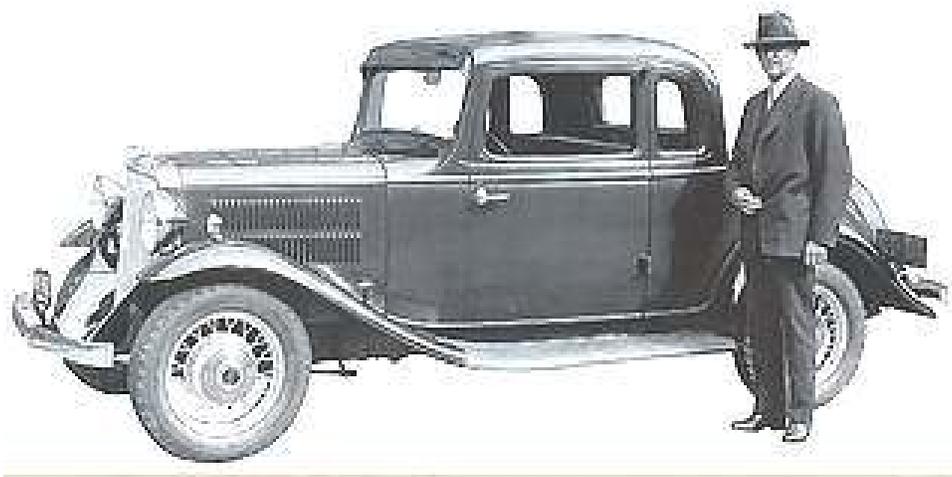


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Section number figures Page 25

ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
St. Louis City (Ind. City), MO
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Figure 5d: THE COMPETITION which replaced the original Hudson Essex:
the 1932 Essex Terraplane (top) & 1934 Terraplane (bottom)



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ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
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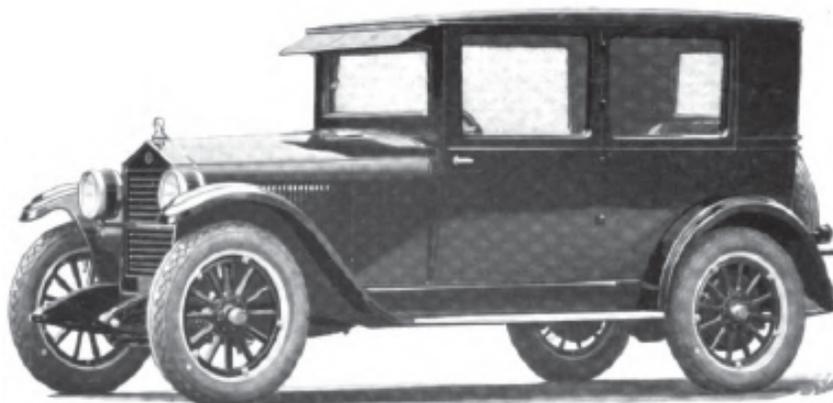
Figure 6a: Advertisement from Hudson Triangle and Essex Topics (October 1, 1924, volume XII, No. 10).

THE HUDSON TRIANGLE

and
Essex Topics



Vol. XII, No. 10 Oct. 1, 1924



This Is Your Best Essex Salesman

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Figure 6b: Advertisement from Hudson Triangle and Essex Topics (December 1, 1924, volume XII, No. 11).



“World’s Greatest Buy”
Everyone Says It -- Sales Prove It

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ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
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Figure 6c: Advertisement from Hudson Triangle and Essex Topics (January 1, 1925, volume XIII, No. 1).

This Essex Six Coach \$895

Freight and Tax Extra

The Finest Essex Ever Built

The easiest driving and riding Essex ever built.

The finest Essex in materials and workmanship ever built.

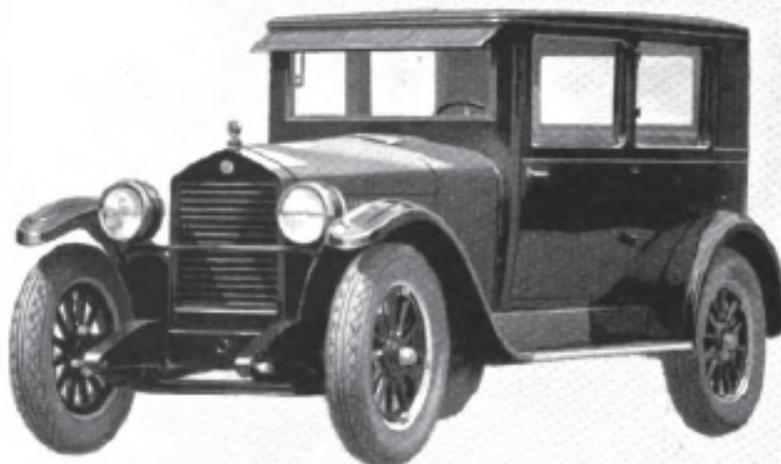
The smoothest, most reliable Essex ever built.

A car you will take pride in owning.

It is better looking and better arranged.

It gives freedom from tinkering and frequent repair costs.

Its price—\$895—is the lowest at which Essex has ever sold. You cannot get comparable performance and reliability in any other car within hundreds of dollars of its price.



Its Greatest Values Cannot Be Copied

The Chassis Is Patented

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Continuation Sheet

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ABC Auto Sales & Investment Co. Building
St. Louis City (Ind. City), MO
Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis [Independent City], MO

Photo Log:

The following is true for all photographs-

ABC Auto Sales & Investment Company Building,

3509-27 (AKA 3517-21) Page Boulevard

St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Photographer: Matt Bivens

Date: April 20, 2012

Negatives on file at: Lafser and Associates

Photo #1: Southwest Façade (left) Southeast Façade (right), camera facing north

Photo #2: Southwest Façade, camera facing northeast

Photo #3: Southeast Façade, camera facing northwest

Photo #4: Northeast Façade, camera facing southwest

Photo #5: Southwest entry, camera facing northeast

Photo #6: Showroom interior, camera facing north

Photo #7: Showroom interior, camera facing east

Photo #8: Loading area interior, camera facing southwest

Photo #9: 2nd Floor Mezzanine interior, camera facing southwest

Photo #10: 3rd Floor interior, camera facing south

Photo #11: 4th Floor interior, camera facing east

ABC AUTO SALES
 & INVESTMENT CO.
 BLDG.
 ST. LOUIS (IND. CITY),
 MO
 UTM REFS:
 15/741383 E
 4281123 N

720 000 FEET
 (ILL.)

38°37'30" 90°15'00" 740 741 2 280 000 FEET (ILL.) 12'30"

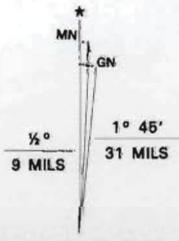


**Produced by the United States Geological Survey
 in cooperation with U.S. Corps of Engineers**

Compiled by planimetric surveys 1930 and 1933. Revised from imagery dated 1952. Field checked 1954. Revised from imagery dated 1993. PLSS and survey control current as of 1954. Map edited 1996. Contours not revised. Contours that conflict with revised planimetry are dashed. North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). Projection and blue 1000-meter ticks: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 15 10 000-foot ticks: Illinois (west zone) and Missouri (east zone) Coordinate Systems of 1983

North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 83 and NAD 27 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map



UTM GRID AND 1996 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

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FRANK
INDUSTRIAL
8519

SPEED
LIMIT
35

LABOR DISPUTE
SHAME ON
STL. HOUSING AUTHORITY
LABOR DISPUTE



LABOR DISPUTE
— SHAME ON —
STL. HOUSING AUTHORITY
LABOR DISPUTE

ST. LOUIS
HOUSING AUTHORITY





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PUBLIC
MOVERS
EST. 1900



FLAY INDUSTRIES
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3519











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JBL

