NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

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 Independence Boulevard Christian Church

Other names/site number Independence Avenue Christian Church

Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

2. Location

Street & number 606 Gladstone Boulevard | N/A | not for publication

City or town Kansas City | N/A | vicinity

State Missouri Code MO County Jackson Code 095 Zip code 64124

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

I hereby certify that this _X_ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property _X_ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide _X_ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: ___ A ___ B _X_ C ___ D

Mark A. Miles Nov 19, 2014

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

5. Classification

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

X	private
	public - Local
	public - State
	public - Federal

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

X	building(s)
	district
	site
	structure
	object

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

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/Religious Facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/Religious Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH/EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:

BEAUX ARTS

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE
walls: STONE; BRICK
CONCRETE
roof: ASPHALT
other: METAL/Copper dome

X **NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION ON CONTINUTATION PAGES**

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.

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

[X] 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

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1904

Significant Dates

1905, 1909, 1919

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Howe, Hoit & Cutler--Architects

Hollinger & Mitchell--Builders

[X] **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE ON CONTINUTATION PAGES**

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:

_X_State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
_X_Other
Name of repository: **Independence Boulevard Christian Church**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

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

	Latitude:	Longitude:		Latitude:	Longitude:
1	39.105612	-94.545959	3		
2			4		

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)
_____ NAD 1927 or _____ NAD 1983

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1				3			
2				4			

Verbal Boundary Description (On continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (On continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan Jezak Ford

organization Citysearch Preservation date July 6, 2014

street & number 3628 Holmes Street telephone 816-531-2489

city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64109

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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**
- **Owner Name and Contact Information**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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.

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log:

Name of Property: **Independence Boulevard Christian Church**

City or Vicinity: **Kansas City**

County: **Jackson** State: **Missouri**

Photographer: **Brad Finch**

Date Photographed: **June 19, 2014**

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

1 of 15: North façade, camera facing south.
2 of 15: Northeast elevation, camera facing southwest.
3 of 15: East elevation, camera facing west.
4 of 15: South church elevation and east gym elevation, camera facing northwest.
5 of 15: Southeast gym elevation, camera facing northwest.
6 of 15: Southwest elevation, camera facing northeast.
7 of 15: Northwest elevation, camera facing southeast.
8 of 15: Independence Boulevard streetscape, camera facing east.
9 of 15: Northwest view of sanctuary, camera facing northeast from first story.
10 of 15: East sanctuary memorial window, camera facing east.
11 of 15: Southwest sanctuary view, camera facing southwest from second story.
12 of 15: East vestibule entry, camera facing west.
13 of 15: R.A. Long Prayer Chapel, camera facing southeast.
14 of 15: Gymnasium interior, camera facing southeast.
15 of 15: Fellowship Hall, camera facing southeast

Figure Log:

Include figures on continuation pages at the end of the nomination.

Figure 1. IBCC with photograph locations.
Figure 2. Floor plan of first story with photograph locations.
Figure 3. 1905 and 1910 views.
Figure 4. Undated early photograph.
Figure 5. R.A. Long Prayer Meeting Room.
Figure 6. Early interior views.
Figure 7. Early gymnasium views.
Figure 8. 1910 Illustration of the sanctuary organ.

Summary

The Independence Boulevard Christian Church is one of Kansas City's most stunning houses of worship. The Beaux-Arts church is located at 606 Gladstone Boulevard, Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri. The two-story stone building is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a locally significant example of the Beaux-Arts style. Built in two phases—1904-1905 and 1909-1910—the massive building retains its L-shaped form. With the addition of a 1919 bell tower, the church's symmetrical facade includes colonnaded pediments, an east dome and classical ornamentation. The interior is as exuberant as the exterior, with mosaic floors, stunning woodwork, fluid lines and sanctuary stained glass windows created by Tiffany studios. The church is one of Kansas City's jewels, designed by prominent architect Henry Hoit.

Architectural Description

The Independence Boulevard Christian Church (IBCC), located on the southwest corner of Independence Boulevard and Gladstone Boulevard, is oriented to the north facing Independence Boulevard. The church and its additions fill most of the two city lots that measure approximately 200 by 250 feet. The site also includes a non-contributing southeast parking lot.

The Independence Boulevard Christian Church consists of three sections, forming a complex L-shaped building (figure 1). The church, located on the southwest corner of Independence Boulevard and Gladstone Avenue, faces north. The original 1905 east portion contains a two-story sanctuary with a central dome that sits on a raised basement. The building's 1909 two-story educational annex connects to the west side of the sanctuary. The 1909 two-story gymnasium building, also on a raised foundation, is attached to the south side of the educational building.

The three sections of the building are of brick construction. The sanctuary and façade are faced with ashlar stone, foundations are concrete and, unless noted, the roof is asphalt. The east dome and bell tower's pyramidal roof are covered with metal.

The building's two-story **north façade** (photograph 1) is divided into three sections—the east entrance to the sanctuary, a center connecting section and the west entrance to the educational building. The entire façade has a common simple entablature with a dentilled cornice topped with a flat parapet. A ribbed watercourse separates the upper level from the basement level. The church's low ribbed dome rises above the east section of the church.

The east portion of the façade, nine bays wide, projects from the façade. This portion provides a grand entrance to the sanctuary via a flight of stone steps (photograph 2). Viewing the building from east to west and counting bays by fenestration, bay one is a plain stone wall bisected by the water course. The parapet in bay one contains alternating

pilasters and metopes. Bay two, pulled forward from bay one, is also a flat stone wall but with a plain parapet. Bays three through seven have multipaned double-hung windows with star muntins in the second story. Bays three and seven have multipaned double-hung windows with star muntins in the first story. The second-story windows are framed by stone carved in a geometric design. The first-story windows, also framed in stone, have elaborate flat headers with dentil moldings supported by scrolled brackets. A stone panel separates the upper and lower windows. Bays four, five and six each contains a pair of wood and glass entrance doors. A five-pane transom with fishscale leaded glass tops each set of doors. Stone panels and second-story windows matching those in bays three and seven are located above each entrance. A large pedimented pavilion supported by six monolithic Ionic fluted columns fronts bays three through seven. A flight of stone steps rises to the entrance, surrounded by two stone platforms, each holding an ornate bronze lamp with five globes. The pavilion's dentilled pediment is ornamented with a palmette at the peak and at each corner. The entablature reads, "CHRISTIAN CHURCH". Bays eight and nine in the façade's east portion match bays one and two, stepping back from the entrance pavilion. Bay nine is a plain stone wall with a vent in the basement level.

The recessed central section of the façade connects the east sanctuary to the west educational building. This section contains three bays of windows matching those in the east bay three, separated by simple engaged Tuscan pilasters. Basement windows are located under each window. The parapet in this section contains alternating pilasters and metopes.

The west section of the façade, seven bays wide, projects from the central portion of the façade, presenting a smaller version of the east section. West bays one, two, six and seven match bays one, two, eight and nine of the east section. Bays three, four and five each contains a pair of wood and glass entrance doors. A five-pane transom with fishscale leaded glass tops each set of doors. A narrow stone panel and second-story window with star muntins is located above each entrance. A short flight of stone steps rises to the three entrances, surrounded by two small stone platforms, each holding a bronze lamp matching those on the east. The columns and pediment of the pavilion match those on the east. West bays six and seven, matching one and two, step back from the pavilion.

A two-story bell tower rises above the west bays three, four and five. The lower story of the tower sits on a square stone block base. The base of the tower has three recessed rectangular areas on the west, north and east sides, either filled with blocks or containing star muntins. The tall upper story of the bell tower has three rectangular screened openings on each side topped with screened transom openings. Star muntins fill each of these openings. Engaged pilasters separate the screened openings. A simple entablature and cornice with dentil molding tops the tower. The tower's parapet has palmettes at each corner and above each pilaster. The tower's roof is a pyramid topped with a palmette finial.

The church's **east elevation** (photographs 2 and 3) is eight bays wide. This elevation's entablature, cornice and water course match the north façade, except that this elevation has no dentil molding. Viewing from north to south, bay one has windows in the first and second stories, as well as a basement vent. The first story window is framed with a carved stone casing, including a pedimented header supported by scrolled brackets. The second story window matches those in the eastern portion of the façade. Both windows have multi-paned windows with star muntins. Bays two through six are pulled forward from bay one. A pediment adorned with three palmettes tops these five bays. Bays two and six are stone walls with small, square openings near the water course, each filled with a star muntin window. Bays three, four and five each contain stained glass windows in the first and second story. Engaged pilasters separate and surround the windows. Bay seven contains a ground-level entrance projects from the east façade. The single glass and metal door with narrow sidelights is topped by a flat dentilled header supported by scrolled brackets. An awning covers the entrance. Above the entrance is a set of three windows with star muntins and separated by small pilasters. The upper portion of the building is recessed above the entrance bay's parapet. The roof parapet has small pilasters and metopes in this bay. Bay eight steps back from the east elevation. The one-story bay contains a central set of Chicago-style double-hung windows and a single small north double-hung window. Basement openings with decorative ceramic blocks are located below the windows. The church's sanctuary walls and brick chimney rise above the north portion of the eighth bay.

From the church's **south elevation of the east portion** (photograph 4), one can see the building's dome fronted by a plain parapet, a simple pediment and a full one-story rectangular block. The rectangular block is four bays wide, containing Chicago-style windows in bays one and four and single windows in bays two and three. Each bay has a basement window. All of the windows are covered with bars. The building's chimney rises behind the parapet in the southeast corner.

A recessed light well separates the east sanctuary building from the west education building.[1] Within the light well, one can glimpse the **west wall of the sanctuary building**. From north to south, the wall has three windows in the first and second stories under a pediment, one bay with three upper windows and one lower window and a one-story bay containing a trio of windows.

The 1909 **educational annex and gymnasium** are buff brick, except for the north façade. Unless noted, the windows in this addition are double-hung with stone sills and arched brick headers. The south wall of the north two-story connection has two double-hung windows that rise above a central basement-level roof. A mid-level connection contains a

[1] The west wall of the sanctuary building, east wall of the educational building and south wall of the educational building are difficult to view. Photographs of these hidden elevations are not included with the nomination.

central double-hung window. A south connection has basement window openings in a south brick wall.

The **east wall of the educational annex** is nine bays wide. A stepped parapet rises above the flat roof. Viewing the wall from north to south, each bay one through five has one second-story window. Bay six has a mid-level window. Bays seven and nine have first- and second-story windows. Bay eight has a second-story window.

The **south wall of the educational annex** is five bays wide. Viewing from west to east, bay one has a pair of windows in the first and second stories. Bay two has a second-story metal door with a fire escape and a first-story single window. Bays three and five each have a pair of second-story windows and bay four has a single second-story window. A one-story concrete block addition with an east entrance is located at the juncture of the educational annex and the gymnasium building. The 1974 addition contains the church's elevator and a modern stairway.

The **gymnasium building** (photographs 4, 5 and 6) sits on a raised foundation faced with stone. The building has a cross-gable asphalt roof. Parapet walls rise from the south side gables and the north gable. The gymnasium's east and west elevations have six bays. Viewing the gymnasium's east wall from south to north, bay one has two small windows in the second story and one north window in the first story. Each of these windows has a stone sill and a crenellated tile header. An interior end chimney rises above the roof. The basement level has a south entrance with an awning. Each bay two through five has a trio of windows in the first and second stories[2] with arched headers and stone sills. Each bay also has two six-paned windows with stone lintels and sills in the basement level.

The side-gabled **south elevation** of the gymnasium faces 6th Street, providing a public entrance to the building. A flight of steps surrounded by concrete blocks leads to the building's first story. The east and west walls rise above the side-gable south elevation creating parapet walls, each containing an end chimney with an interior flue. The east and west corners of the south elevation have decorative brick quoins. Viewing from west to east, the first story has a large bricked-over window bay, a multi-paned entrance door with sidelights and a small square window. The first story windows have stone sills and tiled headers. A portico with a flat roof covers the entrance. South wood octagonal posts and rear Tuscan columns support the portico. The second story has three double-hung windows, all with tiled headers and a sill course.[3] The first and third windows have projecting sills supported by small brackets. Two oval dormers with vents project from the roof.

[2] The second-story windows are boarded over.
[3] The south columns and second-story windows are replacements.

The gymnasium's **west elevation** is six bays wide. Viewing from south to north, bay one has a central shallow chimney pent below the projecting chimney. Small windows matching those on the east side surround the pent on the upper and lower levels with trim matching the south windows in the gymnasium's east elevation. The rear five bays of the west elevation match those on the east elevation.

The **west wall** of the educational annex (photographs 6 and 7) is eight irregular bays long with a stepped parapet. Unless noted, the windows in this wall are pairs of two-over-two double-hung wood sashes with stone sills and flat headers. Viewing from south to north, bays one through seven are clad in buff brick. Bays one, two, four, five, six and seven have pairs of windows in the first story but bay three has a first-story vent. The second story of bays one through seven contains single north and south windows surrounding seven pairs of windows. The basement level of bays one through seven has twelve double-hung one-over-one windows fronted by metal bars. Bay eight is clad in stone and is set back from the west wall. The bay contains windows in each story matching those in the first bay of the church's east elevation. The stone south edge, entablature and cornice of bay eight wraps around bay seven.

Interior

The church's interior (figure 2) retains its original palette of cream and white painted surfaces. Wood moldings and mosaic floor tile patterns provide dark accents. Ornamentation throughout the building, especially in the sanctuary and first story of the education annex, is restrained but of high quality. The interior square footage of the sanctuary and attached education annex is approximately 45,000 square feet.

One enters the church's sanctuary via the east vestibule. The entry vestibule (photograph 12) has mosaic tile flooring, a barrel vault ceiling and classical crown molding. Greek key motifs border the floor mosaics and the entablature below the wood crown molding. Stairways are located on the east and west sides of the space. Three pairs of carved wood and glass doors between the vestibule and the sanctuary are topped with five-paned transoms with leaded fishscale glass. Pilasters separate and surround each set of doors.

The curvilinear sanctuary (photographs 9 and 11) contrasts with the classical straight lines and sharp corners of the church's exterior and other spaces. The two-story space is framed by arches on the north, south, west and east walls. Walls are plaster and the floor is carpeted. A shallow central dome fills most of the church's ceiling. The dome and each arch are outlined with incandescent light bulbs. Spiral wood stairways in the southeast and southwest corners of the room lead to the church's balcony, which curves to fill the north, west and east walls. The front of the balcony is faced with dentil molding. Joined wood chairs fill the church's balcony and curved wood pews fill the sanctuary's main floor. The altar area fills the south wall, located on a raised platform that steps out with curved walls to the sanctuary. The altar area has raised levels in the east and central portions. A baptism

pool fills the west portion of the altar area. The arched wall behind the altar is filled with a wainscoted wall and the church's organ. The wainscoted wall consists of panels topped with small brackets supporting simple molding. The central portion of the organ consists of two rows of pipes surrounded by oriels filled with more pipes. The oriels have ornate tapered bases and parapets adorned with palmettes. Wood and cloth screens fill the east and west sides of the south arch. Six rectangular stained glass windows with wood surrounds—three upper and three lower—are located in the east and west walls of the sanctuary (photograph 10). The windows are attributed to the studio of Louis Comfort Tiffany. The original pastor's office and choir room are located in a room south of the sanctuary, behind the altar.

A north two-story passageway connects the sanctuary to the education building. The first story of this passageway is very simple with plain walls. The second story is lined with wood cabinets.

The entry to the education building matches the sanctuary's vestibule, with mosaic floors and crown molding with an entablature. The area has an east staircase. The former west staircase was removed in the 1960s and filled with a small memorial chapel.[4] Three original rooms open from the church's west entrance—the west History Room, the east Bethany Classroom[5] and the south R.A. Long Memorial Prayer Chapel. The History Room and Bethany Classroom both have wood moldings that include chair rail moldings and mantels around tiled fireplaces. The large Prayer Chapel (photograph 13) opens from the south side of the west entrance. The room has a beamed ceiling with nine pendant lights. Woodwork includes chair rail moldings and pilasters situated where each ceiling beam meets the wall. A large organ is located on the south wall of the room. Two south doorways lead to a hall containing two classrooms, a west bathroom, access to an east stairway and access to the gymnasium. The second story of the educational building contains a central classroom surrounded by a hallway. Classrooms and a bathroom line the perimeter of the second story. Hallways have plaster walls with floor and chair rail moldings, carpeted floors and modern suspended ceilings. Each classroom entrance consists of a paneled wood door topped with a transom window, now painted over and sealed closed.

The church's bell tower is accessed by a narrow stairway in the north second story of the educational building. The stairway leads to a small room with three small windows in the west and east walls and one north window. The church's McShane carillon sits in the center of the room. Ropes connect the carillon's batons to pulleys attached to the bells in the tower above. A metal ladder leads to the ceiling trap door of the bell tower.

The building's lower level contains the church's kitchen, large fellowship room, offices and several rooms that serve as storage or house various ministries. Under the east sanctuary,

[4] The chapel space is now a storage area.
[5] The Bethany Chapel was the church's first history room.

offices fill the east and south walls. A meeting room is located in the south-central portion of the east basement. The church's large Fellowship Room (photograph 15) spans the central basement located under the east and west sections of the building.[6] The room's walls are plaster and the floors are covered with carpet. Corinthian columns support beamed ceilings. The center of the room has historic skylights, now painted over. A stage is located in the room's northwest corner. Storage rooms are on the north and west walls. The church's kitchen is in the southeast corner of the west basement, adjacent to a central restroom and stairwell.

The church's **gymnasium building** is connected to the educational building by a first story passage to a short set of stairs. The building is approximately 4,000 square feet on three levels. The two-story gymnasium (photograph 14) occupies most of the building's first story. The room has brick walls, wood floors and a wood ceiling. Basketball backboards are attached to the north and south walls. The room's original upper jogging track has been removed. A south door in the room leads to the building's entrance containing a kitchen in the southwest corner and east stairs leading to the second story and the basement. One classroom fills the south end of the second story. The basement's original swimming pool area under the gymnasium (figure 7) is now filled with a utility room and two classrooms.

Conclusion

The Independence Boulevard Christian Church retains its interior and exterior architectural integrity. The completed building has received mechanical updates, most noticeably a rear elevator and air conditioning units. The basement level—a secondary space—has also received alterations to accommodate church activities. The building is well maintained and remains in very good condition.

[6] A sub-basement is located under the Fellowship Hall.

Summary

The Independence Boulevard Christian Church is locally significant and is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C as a distinctive example of the Beaux-Arts style in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri. When initial construction was completed in 1905, it was considered the most expensive and most beautiful church in Kansas City and possibly among all Christian Churches of the time, according to Truce Llewelyn, pastor during the 1970s. The building's symmetry, stone exterior and classically inspired ornament display significant elements of the style rarely used in Kansas City. As an early local example of the style, it may well have influenced the form and ornament of later Beaux-Arts buildings in Kansas City. The church has changed little since its last addition in 1919, retaining its massive, well maintained presence in northeast Kansas City.[7] The building's period of significance, 1904, encompasses construction of the initial east church, the west educational building and gymnasium and the west bell tower. As the work of the local architectural firm of Howe, Hoit & Cutler, the building was designed to impress and continues to do so today.

Elaboration

Architecture

The Independence Boulevard Christian Church building is an excellent local example of Beaux-Arts architecture. The Renaissance-inspired style was popular between 1885 and 1930, relying heavily on formality, symmetry and lavish ornament as taught at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. The style was used at the 1893 World Columbian Exposition and then spread throughout the country. The style's large massing and ornamentation made it an expensive style to build. When used for churches, it was most often associated with large urban congregations, such as the Independence Boulevard Christian Church.[8]

Significant elements of the Beaux-Arts style present on the Independence Boulevard Christian Church include the façade's symmetry with the pedimented projecting pavilions, Ionic columns, dome and ashlar stone cladding. Additional character-defining elements of the style include the building's Beaux-Arts ornamentation of entablatures, ornamented parapets, dentil molding, decorative palmettes and interior Greek key designs in the mosaic floors and crown moldings. The form and ornamentation place the building squarely within the Beaux-Arts style, supporting its eligibility under Criterion C.

The Beaux-Arts style is usually limited to very grand buildings. Perhaps the best known example of the style in Kansas City is the 1914 Union Station (30 West Pershing Road, listed in the National Register 2/1/72, boundary increase 5/6/04). The grand station shows the symmetry, stone cladding and grand columns seen on the Independence Boulevard Christian Church, but contains more ornament with ribbed columns, carved

[7] The only exterior addition is the 1974 block addition in the southeast juncture for an elevator and stairway.
[8] Jeffrey Howe, *Houses of Worship* (San Diego: Thunder Bay Press, 2003), 260.

swags, elaborate entablatures and protruding and receding surfaces. Jarvis Hunt, a Chicago architect, designed the station as a portal to a growing city. The building's construction after IBCC and the intent to impress newly arrived travelers may explain Hunt's extravagant use of the style. The 1910 R.A. Long House/Corinthian Hall (3218 Gladstone Boulevard, listed in the National Register 11/14/80), also postdates the church's initial construction. The extravagant Corinthian Hall, Long's three-story mansion designed by Henry Hoit, is ornamented with carved panels, balustrades, decorative keystones, round copper dormers, quoined corners, a second-story façade balcony and the entrance's two-story portico supported by Corinthian columns. The residence is much more elaborate than the church, also reflecting a later construction date and likely the desire to convey the importance of its owner, R.A. Long. The 1922 Sophian Plaza apartment building (4628 Warwick Boulevard, listed in the National Register 7/5/83) is a large apartment building designed by Shepard & Wiser in the Beaux-Arts style. The building's brick and terra cotta exterior cladding reflects materials popular during the 1920s. Style details include multi-story entrance columns and decorative panels, but most ornament is limited to the first, second and ninth stories. It is an example of the Beaux-Arts style as applied to an apartment building constructed nearly two decades after the Independence Boulevard Christian Church was begun. All known examples of the Beaux-Arts style in Kansas City post-date the beginning of the Independence Boulevard Christian Church building. The building's new style within Kansas City may have served as inspiration for these later buildings.

Henry F. Hoit of the Kansas City firm of Howe, Hoit & Cutler, designed the church building. Henry Hoit was born in Chicago and graduated from the Chicago Manual Training School in 1892. He pursued architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where his training emphasized the classical ideology of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Hoit then worked for various architects in Boston. In 1901, he began working with the Kansas City office of Van Brunt & Howe, which was quickly renamed Howe, Hoit & Cutler. It was named Howe & Hoit in 1907 after Cutler's death. Frank Howe died in 1909, leaving Hoit to operate as sole architect for four years.[9]

Most of the planning and funding of the building was the result of Robert Alexander Long's generosity. Long, a wealthy lumber baron, developer and philanthropist, was a member of the church and undoubtedly wanted the building to impress all of Kansas City. Long first met Henry Hoit at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. Hoit oversaw the design of the Fair's Palace of Varied Industries building there. Long appreciated Hoit's conservative designs and his emphasis on classical form, proportion and ornament. The two began a partnership that lasted through many years and several buildings. Hoit's other work for Long ultimately included designs for the R.A. Long Building, one of Kansas City's first steel framed skyscrapers (925 Grand Boulevard, 1906, listed in the National Register 1/8/03); R.A.

[9] George Derby and James Terry White, *The National Cyclopædia of American Biography, Vol. 16* (New York: James T. White & Co., 1918) 178.

Long's mansion, Corinthian Hall (3218 Gladstone Boulevard, 1910, listed in the National Register 11/14/80); Longview Farm, Long's country estate (1001 SW Pergola Park Drive, Lee's Summit, MO, 1911-1914, listed in the National Register 10/24/85); Christian Church Hospital (2524 West Paseo Boulevard, 1914, listed in the National Register10/21/04) and eventually Long's mausoleum.[10]

Building History

The Independence Boulevard Christian Church congregation grew out of a Sunday School group established in 1886 by the Christian Church at Morley Hall, 2315 Independence Avenue. The group shared the building with Methodists until 1887. The Christian congregation outgrew the hall and purchased a lot on the northeast corner of Sixth and Prospect Streets for a new, larger church building. The building was completed in 1890 and the mortgage was quickly paid off.[11]

The church's best-known minister, George Hamilton Combs, arrived in Kansas City from Shelbyville, Kentucky in 1892. The small, frail man, who often fainted in the pulpit, arrived to a church divided over internal affairs. He reunited warring factions and led the church to become one of the most important congregations during his decades-long tenure. The church had nearly outgrown its building at Sixth and Prospect Streets when it sustained significant fire damage.[12]

In December 1902, church member Robert A. Long gathered the church officers and other male members to a dinner at the Midland Hotel. He had previously purchased a lot on Independence Boulevard for the church. He stated to the group:

> I believe it is time for the Sixth and Prospect Street Church to build a new church and get out of the side street. I have purchased a lot on Independence Avenue and Gladstone and have had plans drawn for a church building that will cost $140,000. I will make this proposition. I will pay one-half of the cost of that building, including the lot, if you will agree to pay the other half including what can be secured from the old building.[13]

The cornerstone was laid on Sunday, June 5, 1904 following a scripture reading, prayers and an address. The *Kansas City Star* stated, "The edifice will be of as nearly a pure Grecian Ionic style as is compatible with the requirements of modern church usage."[14] The building

[10] *Restoration of a Window* (Kansas City Museum, 2009.)
[11] Truce V. Lewellyn, *Independence Boulevard Christian Church* (Kansas City: Independence Boulevard Christian Church, 1979), 7.
[12] Lucy Lee Sharp, "The First Eighty Years", 1966, 3-6.
[13] Lewellyn, 13.
[14] "A New House of Worship," *The Kansas City Star*, 5 June 1904, 6.

was to have an auditorium that seated about 1200, parlors, reading rooms, robing rooms, a Sunday school room and space for guild rooms, social purposes, kitchens and pantries.[15]

The building was dedicated September 17, 1905. The final cost was $125,000, $70,000 paid by R.A. Long. The design by the architectural firm of Howe, Hoit and Cutler elevated the main floor, which was reached by a wide flight of eleven steps above the sidewalk on Independence Boulevard. Large, bronze "electroliers" flanked the stairs, which led to a portico supported by six monolithic stone Ionic columns. [16]

The auditorium was designed in a Greek cross under a shallow dome ceiling. A horseshoe-shaped gallery wrapped around the upper portion. Three of the four short arms of the floor plan contained windows, providing light. The arches between the arms were lined with 400 incandescent bulbs. The fourth arm contained the pulpit, a Hutchings-Votey organ and elaborate baptistry. The auditorium seated about 1000 and the gallery seated 400. Parlors were located on either side of the auditorium. T.G. Johnson painted the church's interior in shades of white, cream and ivory. Pews and railings were mahogany. The *Kansas City Journal* wrote, "Memorial windows have been placed in the main church auditorium that are perhaps the finest in the city. They are genuine Tiffany's and are three in number."[17] R.A. Long dedicated one to his father and mother, Samuel M. and Margaret K. Long. One window was dedicated to the memory of Stephen Edgar Rumble, representing the church's first missionaries. The third window was donated by the congregation to Dr. John A. Brooks, the church's first pastor who served from 1888 to 1893. The church's basement included rooms for Sunday school, a kitchen, pantries and other service rooms.[18]

Hollinger & Mitchell served as the building's general contractors. Steel for structural supports was from the Armourdale Foundry Company. Rood & McIntyre installed the modern heating and cooling system. Andrew Flood applied concrete and plaster. The plumbing fixtures were made especially for the church by L. Wolff & Co. of Chicago. The sheet metal for the domed roof, skylight, interior and exterior decoration was from the Stoeltzing Stove and Hardware Company.[19]

Membership in the church grew from 952 in 1904 to 2980 in 1912. The stately new building was considered the most expensive and most beautiful church in Kansas City and possibly among all Christian churches of the time, according to Truce V. Lewellyn, a scholar and pastor during the 1970s. The stunning new building likely attracted many potential members who remained. Other factors are also attributed to the rapid rise in numbers. The charismatic minister, George Hamilton Combs was becoming quite well known. Combs

[15] Ibid.
[16] "Ready For Dedication," *The Kansas City Star*, 10 September 1905, 8.
[17] "The House Beautiful," *The Kansas City Journal*, 10 September 1905, Sec. 2, p. 3.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.

published several books, lectured at church conventions and recruited many of the new members. The membership of R.A. Long, one of Kansas City's most successful businessmen of the time, may also have been responsible for attracting business and professional men to the church. Evangelism was also becoming extremely popular at the time. The movement often included revivals that nearly matched theatrical performances with music, chanting and much emotion. Charles Reign-Scovill, an extremely successful evangelist, preached a three-week revival that began the Sunday the new sanctuary was dedicated in 1905, bringing in more than 300 new members. Dr. Combs led his own three-week revival in 1912, adding 160 new members.[20]

Another construction project began in 1909 when R.A. Long proposed building an educational annex south and west of the church facing Sixth Street. Long offered to purchase the lot and pay for an annex and gymnasium if Bible School attendance did not fall below 700 during July and August and below 1000 during the months after. The challenge was met and Sunday school attendance exceeded the numbers.[21] Henry Hoit designed the two three-level additions (Figures 3 and 4). The educational annex expanded the basement fellowship hall to accommodate 900 people. The building included a prayer chapel that seats 250, a room for the ladies aid society, classrooms, library, and pastor's study. The gymnasium building included the gymnasium, a swimming pool and two rooms for reading, conversation and relaxing (Figures 5, 6 and 7).[22]

The sanctuary was also remodeled in 1910. The remodeling included the installation of a new Austin pipe organ, the largest west of the Mississippi, according to Truce Lewellyn (Figure 8). The organ boasted 4500 pipes. Two smaller organs were added to the Prayer Chapel and the Sunday School assembly hall.[23] The final cost to Long for the organs and educational building was $175,000.[24]

The new educational building required an increase in church staff and programs in 1912 and 1913 with a Boy Scout troop, the Northeast Men's Bible Class, a soup kitchen and supported the free Longview Camp for mothers and children and the Kansas City Christian Hospital. The increased activities and required staff strained the budget of the church during these years. Elder D.M. Pinkerton and R.A. Long developed a plan to address the church debt. Long invited all board members and their wives to dinner at his new home on Gladstone Boulevard. After dinner and music, Long announced that he had a list of each board member's net worth. He proposed that the $12,000 deficit be divided

[20] Lewellyn, 14.
[21] "The Plan Of A Church Club," *The Kansas City Star*, 3 February 1910, 7.
[22] Lewellyn, 14-16.
[23] The Prayer Chapel organ is still extant. The basement assembly hall organ has been removed.
[24] Lewellyn, 14-16.

proportionately amongst the board members. The proposal was voted down but the deficit was soon liquidated.[25]

Mr. and Mrs. R.A. Long again served as benefactors to the church with the gift of chimes and a bell tower in late 1919 to honor the memory of friends and neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. D.O. Smart. The set of 11 bells weighing more than 13,000 pounds hung within a heavy wooden frame atop the west 1910 addition. The largest bell bore the inscription, "Given to the Independence Boulevard Christian church by Mr. and Mrs. R.A. Long in memory of their friends and neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. D.O. Smart. A.D. 1919". [26] A square tower with open lattice windows enclosed the room. The bells were dedicated at a two-hour morning service on New Year's Day 1920. M. Mette, concert master from the McShane Foundry in Baltimore, Maryland, played the carillon three times during the service.[27]

Church membership grew less rapidly in the 1920s but IBCC still retained 3000 members in 1928.[28] Many members were dislocated during World War I and the church's very popular minister, George Hamilton Combs, retired in 1919. Church membership declined during the 1930s and early 1940s. Sunday School attendance dropped from an average of 1200 in 1934 to 665 in 1944[29] but the church's annual budget rose by 50 percent between 1947 and 1949.[30] In 1947 the gymnasium swimming pool had too many cracks to repair so it was filled in to create a new classroom. The sanctuary was also repainted, carpeted and received a new sound system. The church received several gifts between 1943 and 1978, totaling more than $300,000.[31] These gifts helped establish endowments to provide for future maintenance.

The church received extensive repairs in the 1960s and early 1970s, thanks to bequests from several members and their estates. A house east of the church was purchased and demolished to create a new parking lot.[32] Restrooms were modernized, a memorial chapel replaced the northwest stairway, offices were built in the east end of the fellowship hall, the exterior masonry and windows received repair and the sanctuary was redecorated. A new Casavant organ was purchased for the sanctuary in 1968. Membership and attendance declined from 1,867 in 1963, to 1,449 in 1970. The decline was attributed to a general population shift to the suburbs, civil rights disturbances and the deteriorating condition of the building.[33] In 1985 the church received extensive preservation treatments, including

[25] Lewellyn, 18.
[26] "The New Chimes And Levers," *The Kansas City Star*, 31 December 1919, 3.
[27] "A Crowd Heard New Chimes," *The Kansas City Star*, 1 January 1920, 3.
[28] "Independence Boulevard Christians' History Calm," *The Kansas City Post*, 3 March 1928, 14.
[29] Lewellyn, 39.
[30] Lewellyn, 52.
[31] Lewellyn, 79.
[32] The new parking is east of the building and is not included in the nomination boundary.
[33] Lewellyn, 61-64.

waterproofing, window and door repair, storm window repair and interior and exterior paint.

The church has approximately 50 members in 2014.[34] It continues to serve its neighborhood in many ways. The church established Micah Ministry at this location in 2001 to serve free meals every Monday evening. As many as 500 people come to the lower level Fellowship Hall every Monday for a meal and a visit to the food and clothing pantries, also located in the church's lower level.[35] The building is also home to two new congregations that do not have their own buildings.

Site

Independence Avenue was an exclusive address in the late 1800s. During the 1880s, Kansas City's most prominent businessmen built mansions along the street. August Meyer, Robert Gillham, John Merrill and Joseph and Harry Loose all had large houses built along the street.[36] The wide Independence Avenue and the adjoining Gladstone Boulevard were the first roadways acquired by the new parks and boulevards system in 1893. The initial boulevard route, the north backbone of the system, began on Independence Avenue at Woodland Avenue on the west, turned north on Gladstone Boulevard and went further east on St. John Avenue.[37] "Avenue" and "Boulevard" were used interchangeably in the church's name during the first few years. Articles from competing newspapers used both names during 1906 and the 1906 Sanborn map identifies the church as Independence Avenue Christian Church. By 1910, the name Independence Boulevard Christian Church was the consistent designation.

By the late 1890s the greener areas south of the city appealed to the wealthy homeowners. They left their mansions and many were eventually divided into apartments or sleeping rooms.[38] Today Independence Boulevard is a busy thoroughfare linking downtown Kansas City to rejuvenated historic neighborhoods, mid-level housing and the city of Independence (photograph 8).

Conclusion

The Independence Boulevard Christian Church retains its architectural integrity as an excellent example of the Beaux-Arts style in Kansas City. The building reflects the style with

[34] Rose Alice Chandler and Martha Dominick, Interviews with author, 5 June 2014.
[35] Matt Campbell, "Church welcomes atheist group," *The Kansas City Star*, 15 November 2013.
[36] Rick Montgomery and Shirl Kasper, *Kansas City: An American Story* (Kansas City, MO: Kansas City Star Books, 1999), 123.
[37] Janice Lee et al., *A Legacy of Design* (Kansas City: Kansas City Center for Design Education and Research, 1995), 197.
[38] Montgomery, 127.

its symmetrical façade, columned pavilions, fenestration and dome. The solid west addition continues in the style and contributes to the building's striking appearance. Henry Hoit's design remains today as an early, impressive and distinctive example of the Beaux-Arts style in Kansas City. The impressive building's design, construction and architectural details recall its role in the early 1900s as a church for Kansas City's elite, making it clearly eligible for listing under Criterion C.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The property is located on the east part of Lot 7 and all of Lot 8 in Long, Croysdale and Vaughan's Subdivision, coordinates 39.105612, -94.545959. The property is bound by Independence Avenue on the north, Gladstone Boulevard on the east, 6th Street on the south and by the property line on the west (Figure1).

Property Tax No. 00970532B

Boundary Justification

The boundaries include the lots historically associated with the Independence Boulevard Christian Church and its southeast parking lot, a non-contributing structure. A parking lot east of the church, purchased in the late 1960s, is not included in the boundary.

Figure 1. IBCC with photograph locations.
(www.bing.com accessed June 6, 2014; coordinates 39.105612, -94.545959)

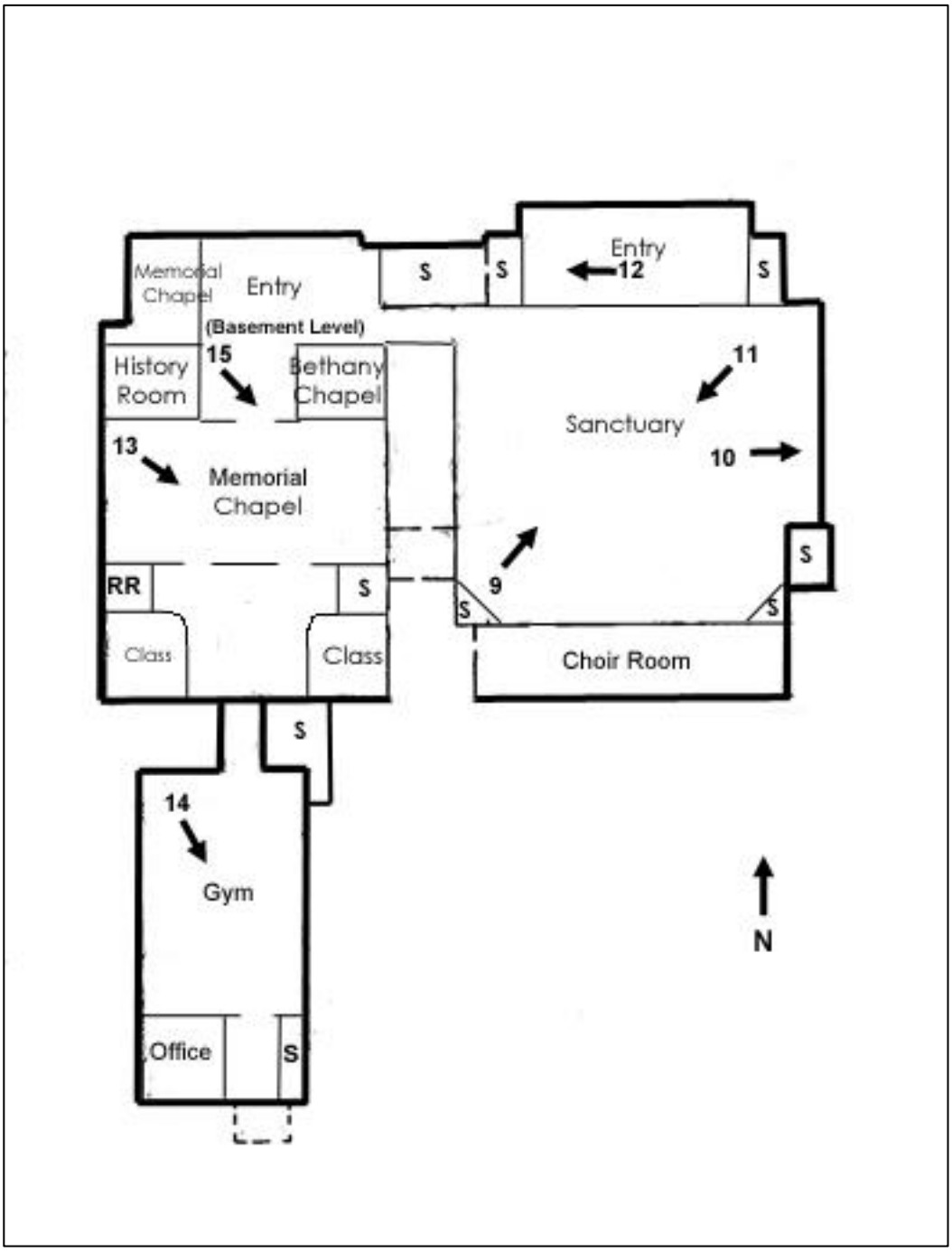


Figure 2. Floor plan of first story with photograph locations.
(Susan Jezak Ford, June 2014, not to scale.)

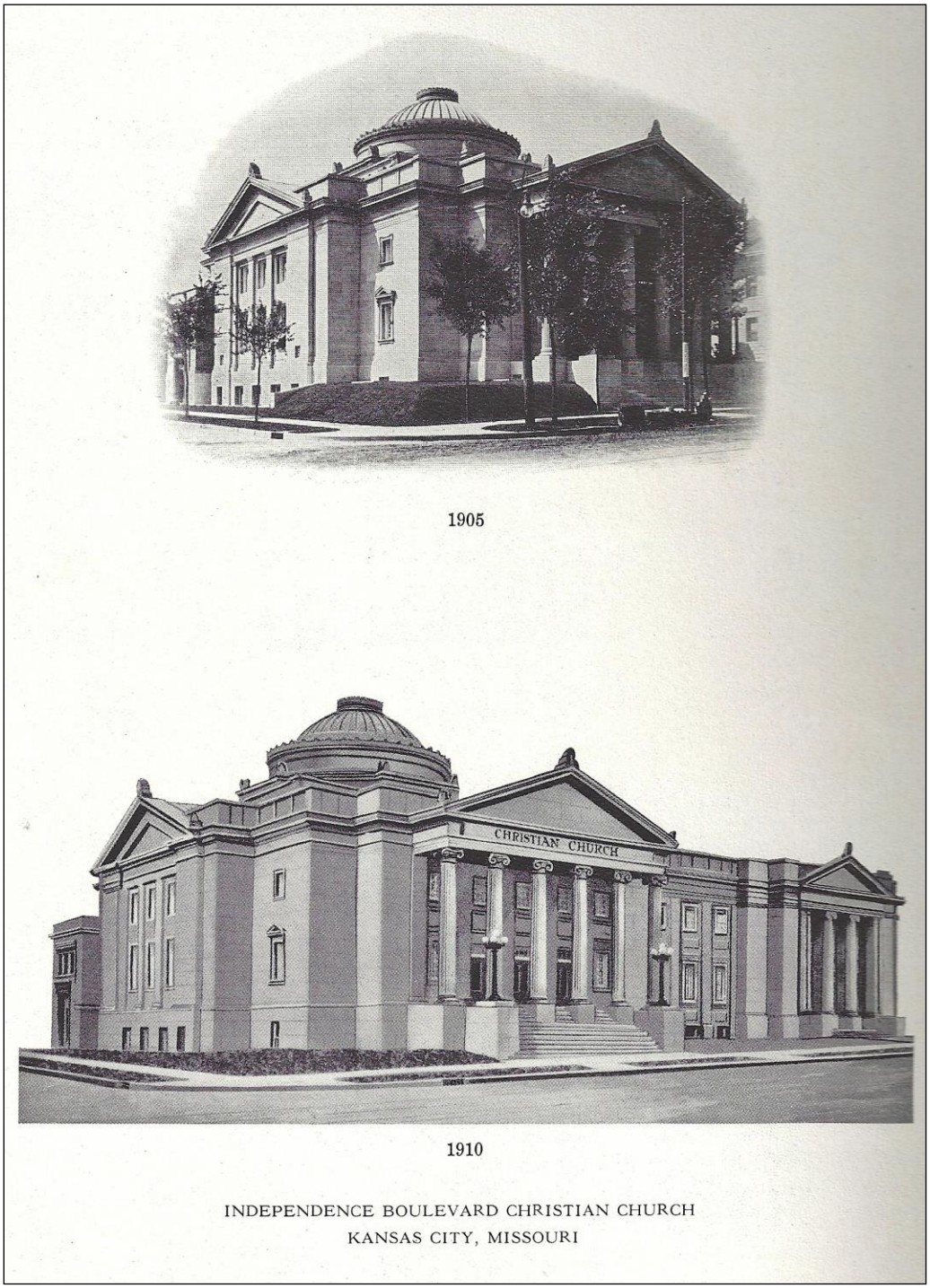


Figure 3. 1905 and 1910 views. ("George Hamilton Combs" 1917 booklet page 12.)

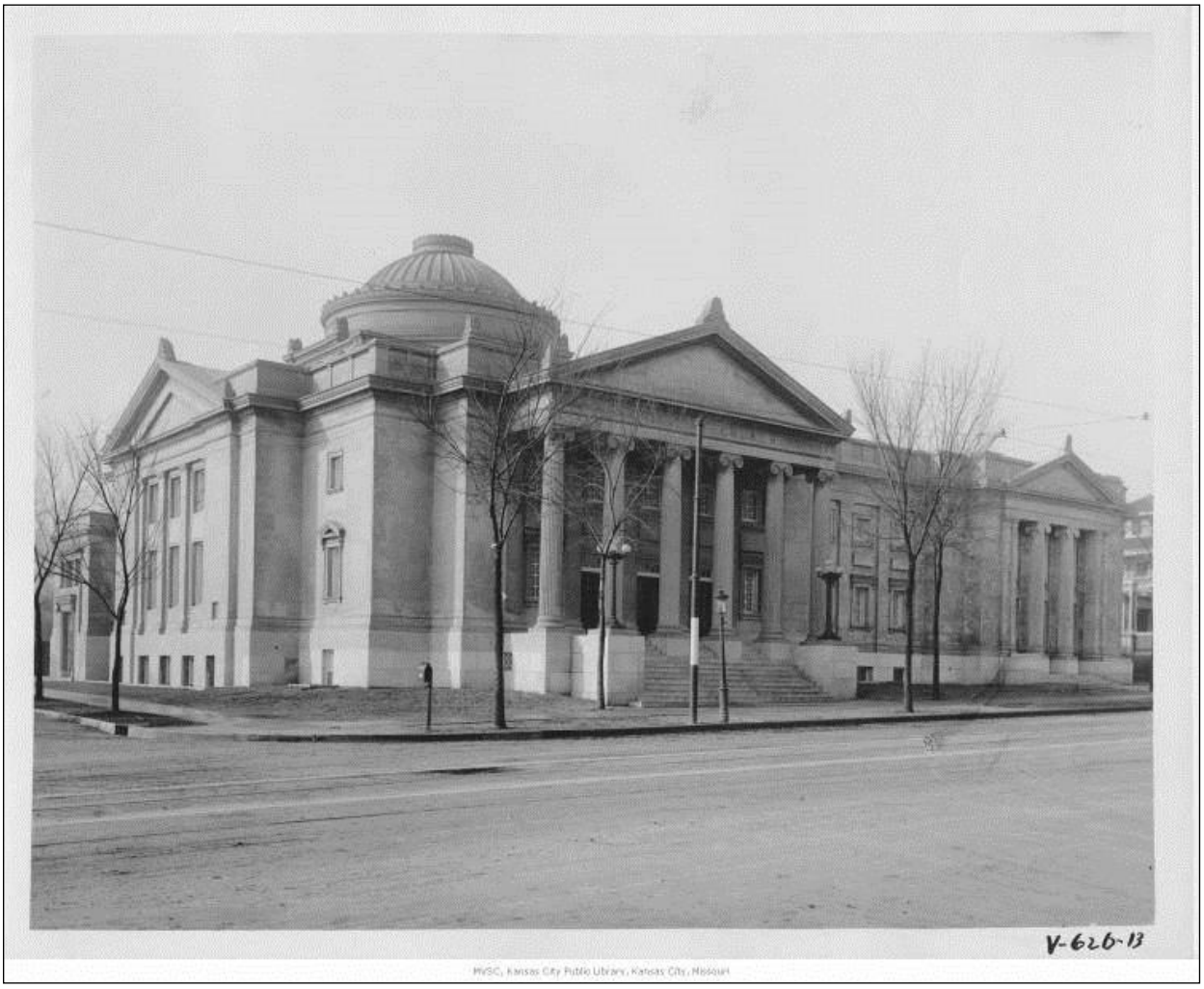
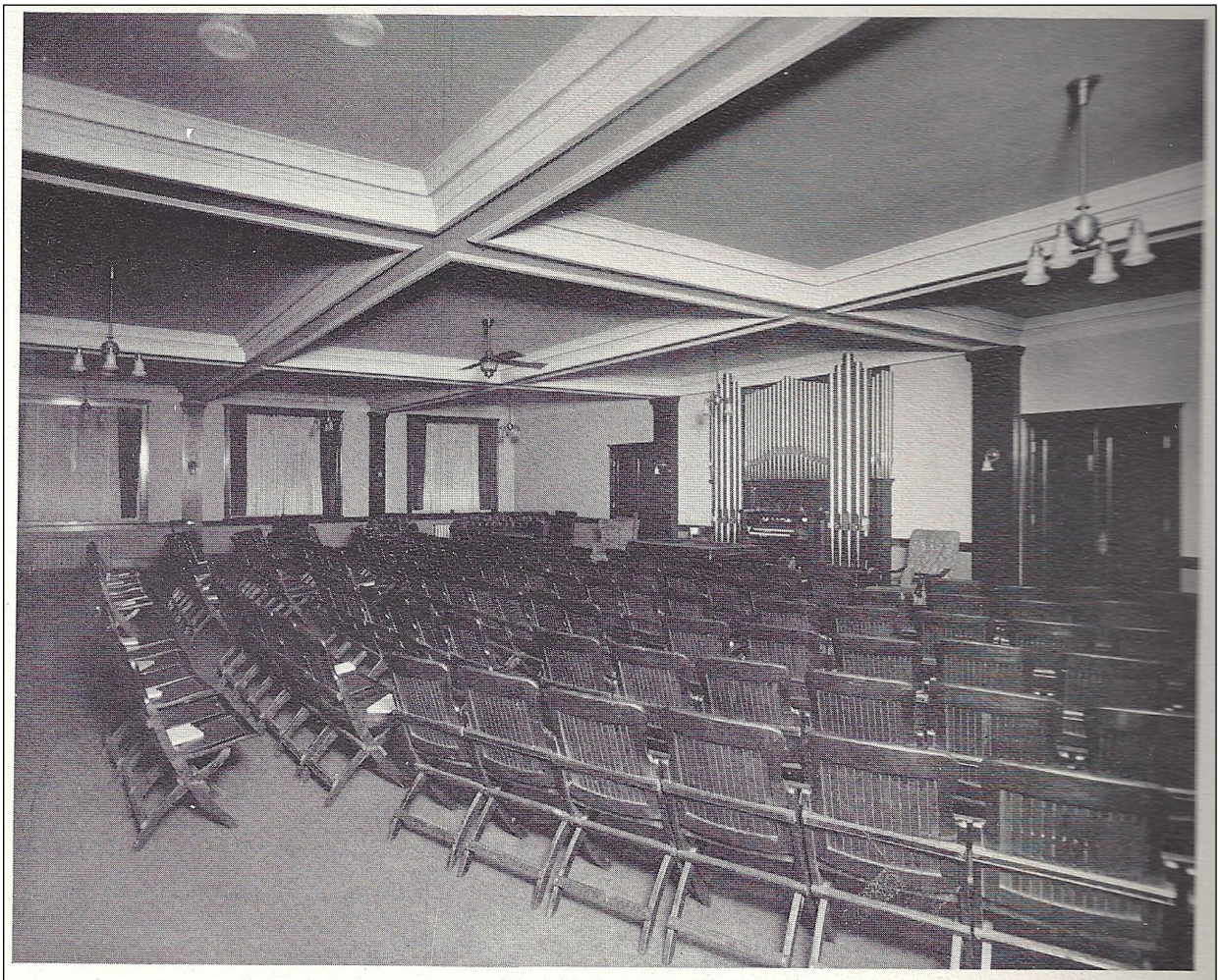


Figure 4. Undated early photograph. (www.kchistory.org.) Accessed July 2014.



PRAYER MEETING ROOM

Figure 5. R.A. Long Prayer Meeting Room. ("George Hamilton Combs" 1917 booklet page 24.)

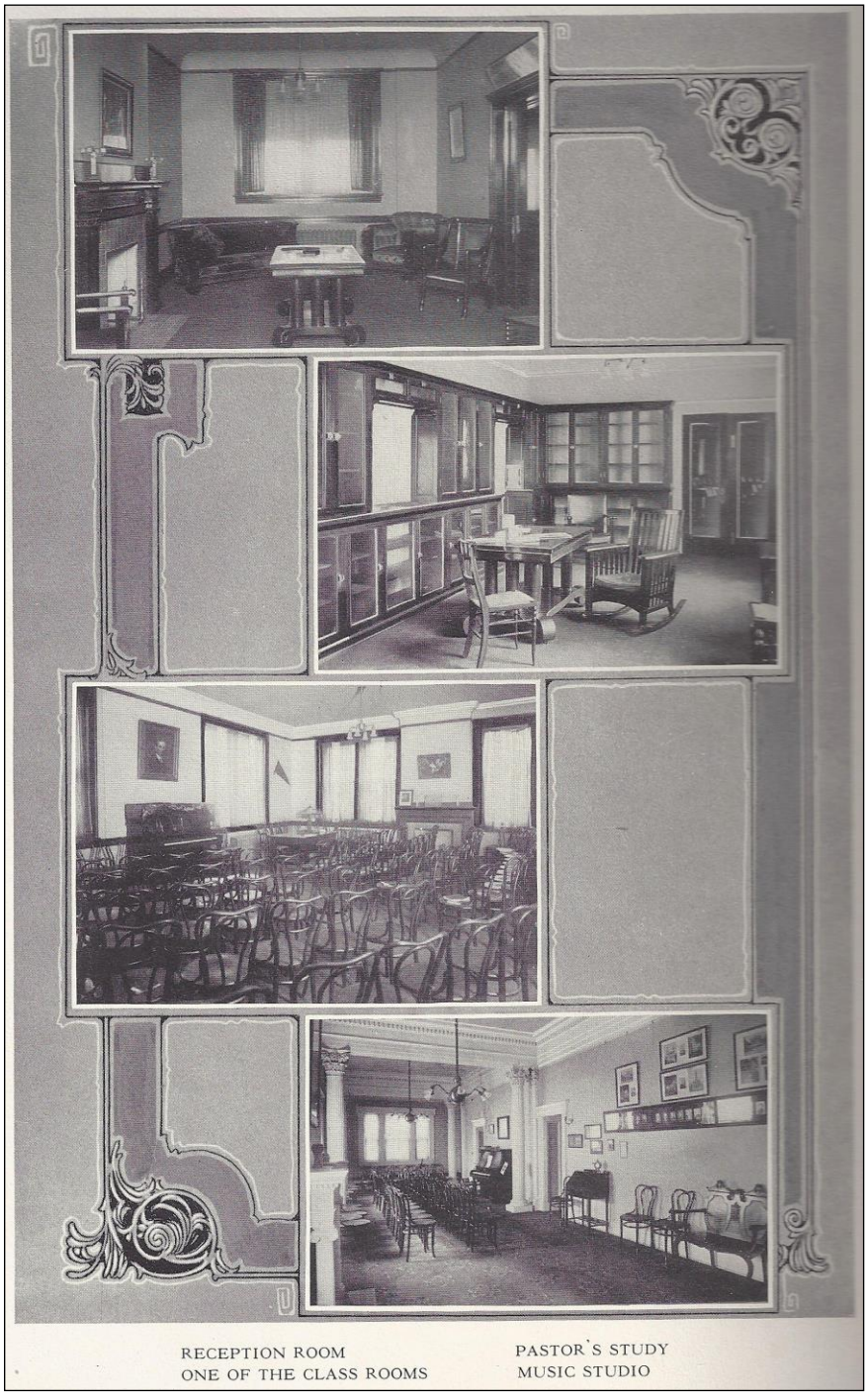


Figure 6. Early interior views. ("George Hamilton Combs" 1917 booklet page 28.)

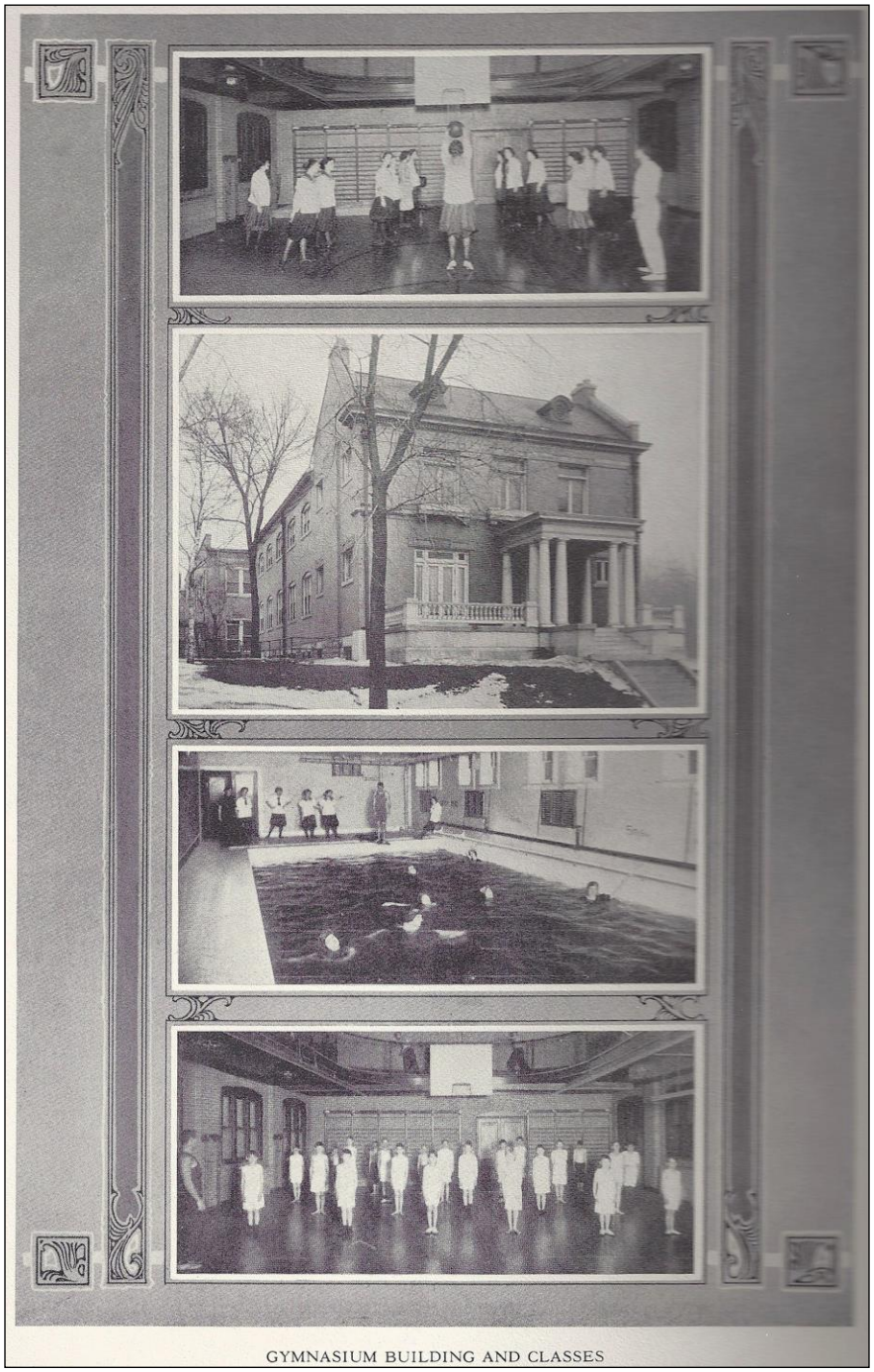


Figure 7. Early gymnasium views. ("George Hamilton Combs" 1917 booklet page 34.)

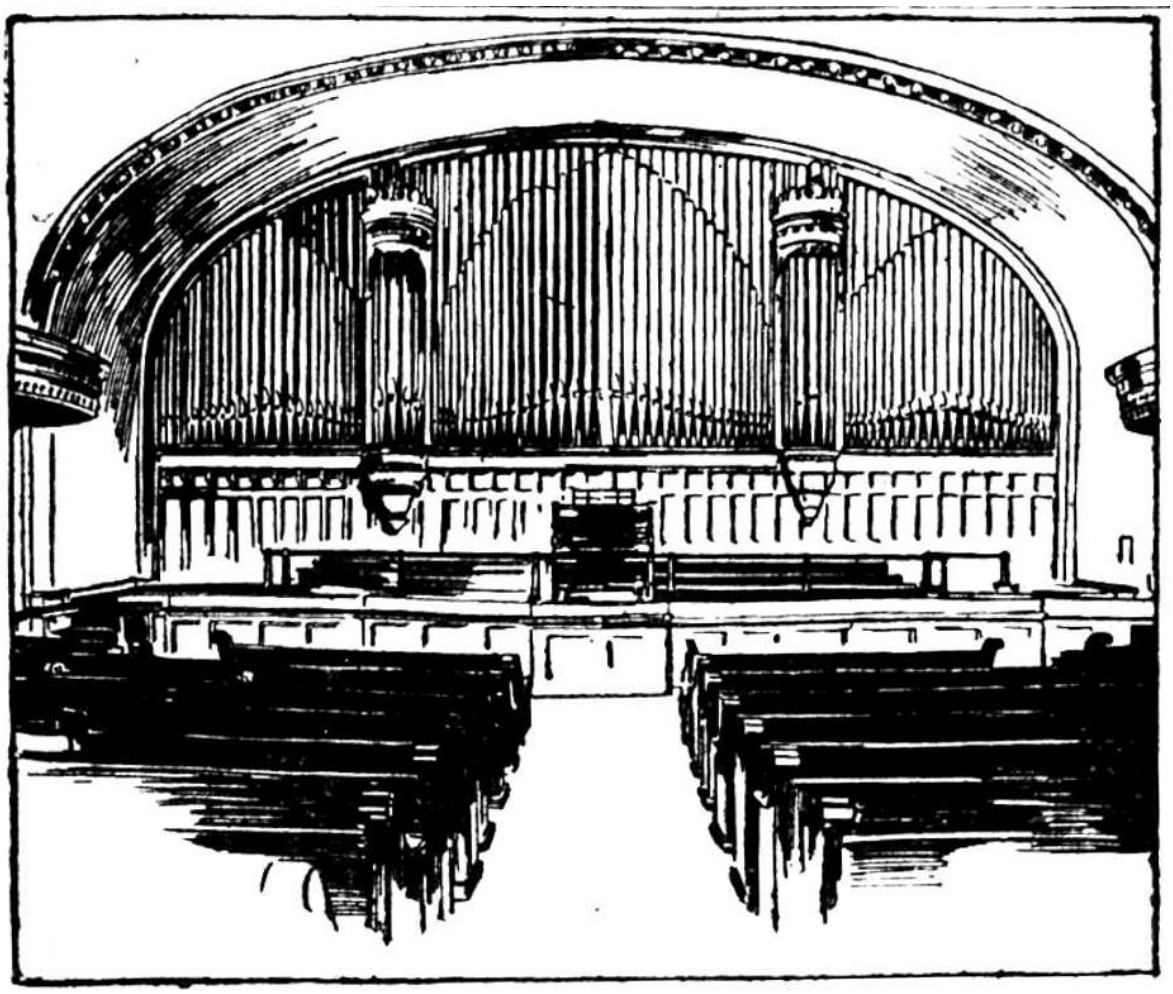


Figure 8. 1910 Illustration of the sanctuary organ. [39]

[39] "An Organ of 5,000 Pipes." *The Kansas City Times*, 24 November 1910.

Photograph 1. North façade (Photograph by Brad Finch)

Photograph 2. Northeast elevation (Photograph by Brad Finch)

Photograph 3. East elevation (Photograph by Brad Finch)

Photograph 4. South church elevation, east gymnasium elevation

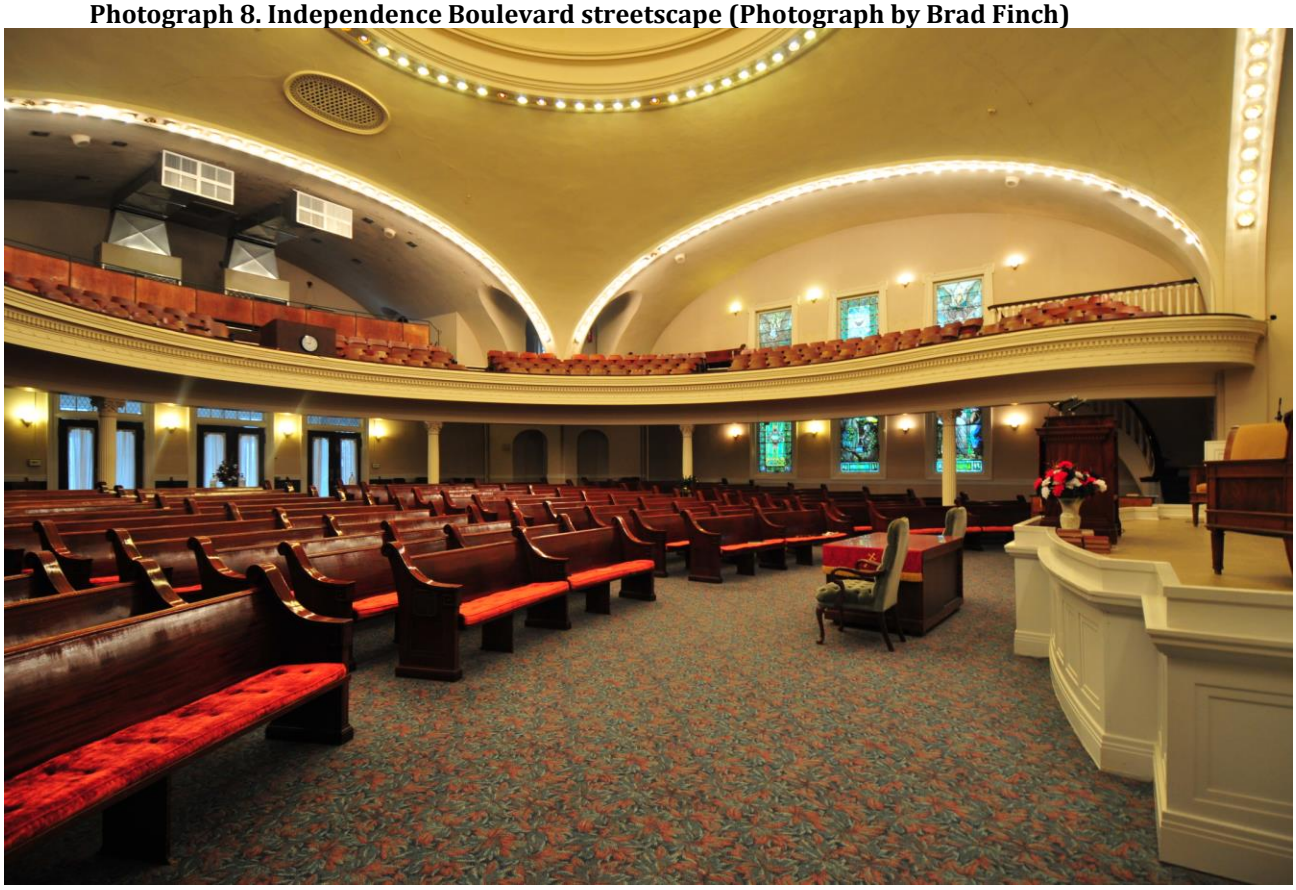
(Photograph by Brad Finch)

Photograph 5. Southeast gymnasium elevation (Photograph by Brad Finch)

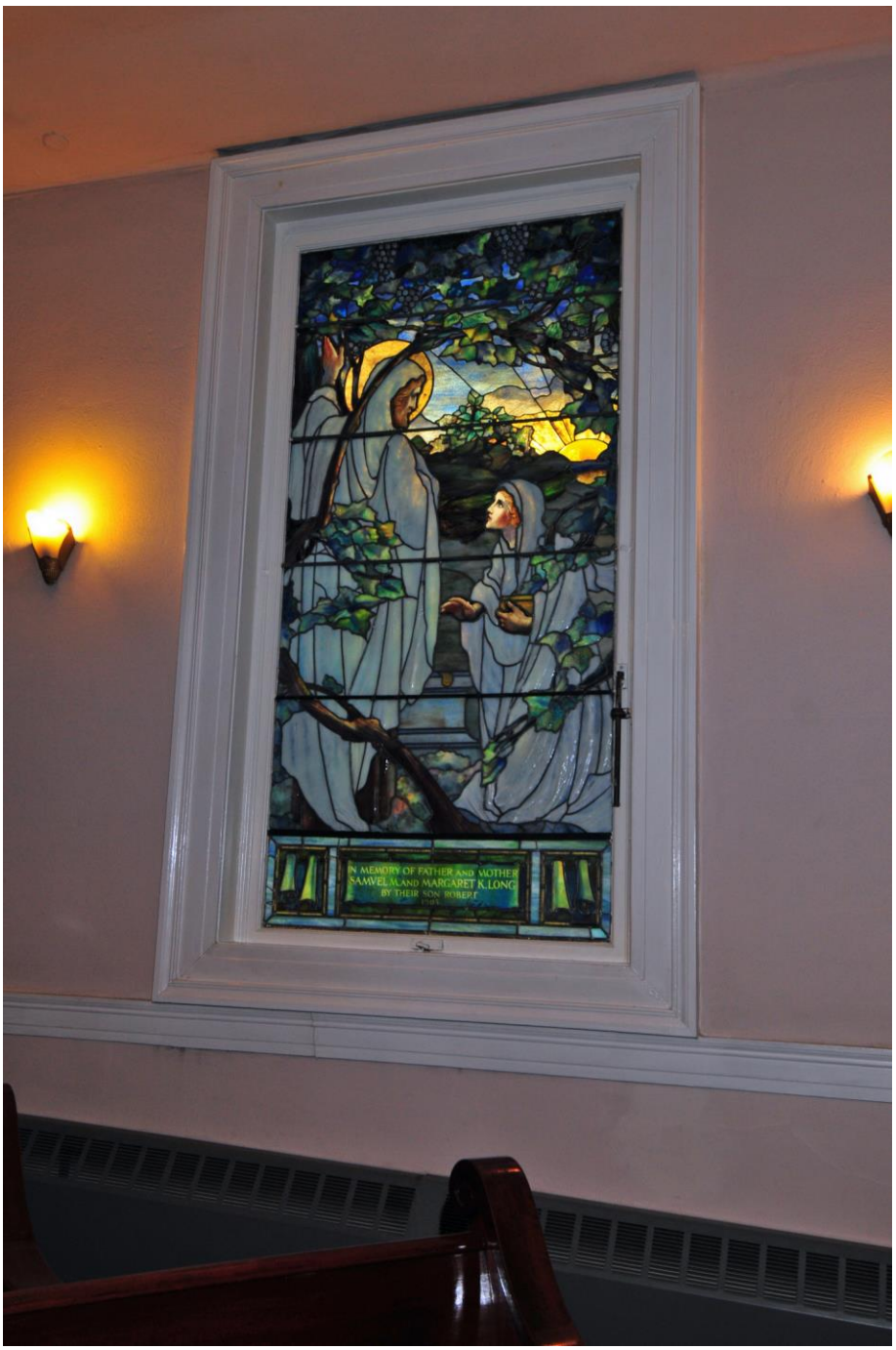
Photograph 6. Southwest elevation (Photograph by Brad Finch)

Photograph 7. Northwest elevation (Photograph by Brad Finch)

Photograph 8. Independence Boulevard streetscape (Photograph by Brad Finch)



Photograph 9. Northwest view of sanctuary (Photograph by Brad Finch)



Photograph 10. East sanctuary memorial window (Photograph by Brad Finch)

Photograph 11. Southwest sanctuary view (Photograph by Brad Finch)

Photograph 12. East vestibule (Photograph by Brad Finch)

Photograph 13. R.A. Long Memorial Prayer Chapel (Photograph by Brad Finch)

Photograph 14. Gymnasium (Photograph by Brad Finch)

Photograph 15. Fellowship Hall (Photograph by Brad Finch)

CHRISTIAN CHURCH

CHRISTIAN CHURCH
WORSHIP
SUNDAY SCHOOL

Independence
Boulevard
Christian
Church

EXIT

CHRISTIAN CHURCH
MICAH MINISTRY MON 6:30
SUNDAY WORSHIP 10:45
SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:30

CHRISTIAN CHURCH
SUNDAY WORSHIP 10:45
SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:30

IN MEMORY OF FATHER AND MOTHER
SAMUEL M. AND MARGARET K. LONG
BY THEIR SON ROBERT
1905

PLAY
AT
YOUR
OWN
RISK

EXIT