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 Traders National Bank Building

Other names/site number N/A

Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

2. Location

Street & number 1125 Grand Boulevard | N/A | not for publication

City or town Kansas City | N/A | vicinity

State Missouri Code MO County Jackson Code 095 Zip code 64106

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

Toni M. Prawl 03/15/16

Signature of certifying official/Title Toni M. Prawl, Ph.D., 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	
2	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	0	**Total**

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/ TRADE: Financial Institution
COMMERCE/ TRADE: Office Building
TRANSPORTATION: Parking Garage

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/ TRADE: Office Building
TRANSPORTATION: Parking Garage

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: CONCRETE
GLASS
roof: ASPHALT
other: N/A

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:

- [ ] 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

1956, 1960-62

Significant Dates

1956

1962

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Kivett and Myers (Architect, Parking Garage)

Stanley, Thomas E. (Architect, Office Tower)

[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):

- X 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: **Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City (Missouri) Public Library**

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

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

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

	Latitude:	Longitude:		Latitude:	Longitude:
1	39.100131	-94.580277	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 Rachel Nugent, National Register Coordinator; Lauren Rieke, Historic Preservation Specialist

organization Rosin Preservation date March 2016

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city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64108

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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: **Traders National Bank Building**

City or Vicinity: **Kansas City**

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

Photographer: **Brad Finch, F-Stop Photography**

Date Photographed: **October 2015**

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

1 of 14: Southwest corner. View northeast.
2 of 14: South façade of tower. View north.
3 of 14: Southeast corner. View northwest.
4 of 14: 1956 garage, east elevation. View west.
5 of 14: 1962 building, northeast corner. View southwest from roof of 1956 garage.
6 of 14: Northwest corner. View southeast.
7 of 14: Ramp in 1956 garage. View northeast.
8 of 14: First floor, main lobby. View southeast.
9 of 14: First floor, elevator lobby. View northwest.
10 of 14: Second floor, non-historic office space, typ. View northwest.
11 of 14: Fourteenth floor, historic office space. View southeast.
12 of 14: Fourteenth floor, historic office space. View southeast.
13 of 14: Basement, historic terrazzo floor. View west.
14 of 14: 1956 garage, ramp system. View southeast.

Figure Log:

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

Figure 1. Contextual Map. *Source: ArcGIS 2013*.
Figure 2. Site Map. *Source: ArcGIS 2013*.
Figure 3. Map of construction sequence. *Source: Adapted from Kansas City Parcel Viewer, City of Kansas City, Missouri, GIS Digital Data.*
Figure 4. Photo Map, Exterior, first floor. *Source: Gastinger Walker Harden Architects, 2005.*
Figure 5. Photo Map, Second floor. *Source: Gastinger Walker Harden Architects, 2005.*
Figure 6. Photo Map, Fourteenth floor. *Source: Gastinger Walker Harden Architects, 2005.*
Figure 7: Historic Plans, Traders National Bank Parking Garage, Elevations, 1956. *Source: State Historical Society of Missouri, Kansas City, Missouri.*
Figure 8: Historic Plans, Traders National Bank Parking Garage, First Floor Plan, 1956. *Source: State Historical Society of Missouri, Kansas City, Missouri.*
Figure 9: Historic Plans, Traders National Bank Parking Garage, Upper Floors Plan, 1956. *Source: State Historical Society of Missouri, Kansas City, Missouri.*

Figure 10: Historic Photo, parking garage, 1957. *Source: Kansas City Star, October 6, 1957.*
Figure 11: Historic Plans, South elevation, 1960. *Source: Kansas City Research Center, The State Historical Society of Missouri.*
Figure 12: Historic Plans, North elevation, 1960*. Source: Kansas City Research Center, The State Historical Society of Missouri.*
Figure 13: Historic Plans, East and west elevations, 1960. *Source: Kansas City Research Center, The State Historical Society of Missouri.*
Figure 14: Historic Photo, office tower, 1962. *Source: Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, MO.*
Figure 15: Sanborn Fire and Insurance Map, 1951. Current property boundaries outlined in red. *Source: Sanborn Fire and Insurance Map, Kansas City, Missouri, 1951.*
Figure 16: Argyle Building, 306 East 12th Street. Note three-story portion of the 1956 Garage at the far left, outlined in red. *Source: Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, MO.*
Figure 17: Basement of 1956 Garage, view west. *Source: Brad Finch, 2015.*
Figure 18. Historic photograph of Midwest Research Institute, 1953. *Source: Robert Askren Photograph Collection, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library*.
Figure 19. Historic photograph of Old American Insurance Company Building, 1959. *Source: Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.*
Figure 20. Hallmark Cards National Headquarters, 1989. *Source: Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.*
Figure 21. Historic photograph of Kansas City Public Library, Main Branch, c.1960. *Source: Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.*
Figure 22. Historic photograph of Commerce Tower, c. 1965. *Source: Wilborn Photography, Kansas City, Missouri.*
Figure 23. Ten Main Center, 2015. *Source: Google Street View*.
Figure 24. Mercantile Bank & Trust Building, 2008. *Source: Brad Finch, f-stop Photography.*
Figure 25. City Center Square, 2015. *Source: Google Street View*.

SUMMARY

Traders National Bank Building at 1125 Grand Boulevard, fills nearly half a city block in downtown Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri. Commercial buildings of various sizes, styles and dates comprise the surrounding neighborhood. The building was constructed as two contributing resources. A twenty-story Modern Movement office tower, constructed in 1962 as the company's main public banking headquarters and a speculative office building, occupies the west half of the parcel. A four-story open-deck parking garage, constructed in 1956 for Traders National Bank, then located at 1111 Grand Boulevard, adjoins the tower and fills the east half of the parcel. They form a continuous façade along the south elevation and function as a unified building *(Photo 3 and Figure 14)*. The simple rectangular slab of the office tower has a four-story "base" and a sixteen-story "shaft." A buff brick circulation tower and non-historic drive-through bank a non-historic drive-through bank project from the north elevation. In keeping with the Modern Movement style, the building is stripped of all extraneous ornament. The east, south and west elevations have regular rhythm of bays filled with aluminum windows. Wide structural columns and slender continuous mullions create a strong sense of verticality, while opaque panels at each floor create a contrasting horizontality. On the interior, various configurations of office space organize each floor. Historic office space is extant on the fourteenth floor. The building has experienced few changes since the period of significance and retains integrity.

ELABORATION

SETTING

Located at 1125 Grand Boulevard in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri, Traders National Bank Building rises in the center of the downtown business district. Major thoroughfares surround the downtown core. Interstate 70 runs approximately six blocks to the east; Interstate 670 is three blocks to the south; and Interstate 35 passes roughly one-half mile to the north and west (*Figure 1)*. The Missouri River flows one mile to the north. The Traders National Bank tower is one of the tallest buildings in downtown Kansas City. Buildings of various dates, sizes, and styles fill the surrounding blocks. The Kansas City City Hall and the Jackson County Courthouse are two blocks to the east.

The building occupies the south portion of the block bounded by 11th Street on the north, McGee Street on the east, 12th Street on the south and Grand Boulevard on the west. It sits tight to the public sidewalk on three elevations – 12th Street on the south, Grand Boulevard on the west, and McGee Street on the east (*Figure 2)*. To the north of Traders National Bank there is a parking lot along Grand Boulevard and a three-story commercial building facing McGee Street.

TRADERS NATIONAL BANK

Two contributing components comprise the Traders National Bank property: a 1956 parking garage on the east half of the parcel and a 1962 office tower on the west half of the parcel *(Figure 3)*. Traders National Bank commissioned the construction of both resources.

1956 Parking Garage

A four-story open-deck parking garage with eight staggered levels, designed in 1956 by Kivett and Myers for Traders National Bank when it was located at 1111 Grand, occupies the east half of the property. The

garage was built with six levels on three stories *(Figure 10); see the three-story portion of the garage at the far left of the c. 1960 photograph of the adjacent Argyle Building, Figure 16)*. With construction of the tower, the bank added one story (two levels) to arrive at the current height. The easternmost bay of the 1962 tower was constructed on top of the southwest corner of the parking garage *(Photo 3)*. Each story of the garage is slightly shorter than those of the tower, thus the fourth story of the garage aligns with the third story of the tower. The two-way staggered floor ramp system, with two-way ramps at the north and south ends of the center of the garage, raises the west half of the garage one-half-story higher than the east half.

The primary (east) elevation has four bays created by the recessed concrete structure *(Photo 4)*. On the first story, open vehicular entrances fill each bay. The entrance ramp in Bay 4 rises into the second level in the west half of the garage. Each story has cementitious panels that cover the bottom half of the opening at each level; the upper half is open, creating continuous horizontal bands of cantilevered deck.

The slightly recessed concrete columns create four bays on the south elevation *(Photo 3)*. On the first story marble panels, identical to those that clad the columns on the tower, cover the three westernmost columns. Buff brick fills Bays 1 and 3, and an open, vehicular entrance fills Bay 2. Bay 4 is open, with a low, buff brick kneewall. On the second through the fourth stories cementitious panels cover the bottom half of each level, and a metal railing rises above the panel, leaving the upper half open. The configuration of the staggered levels is clearly visible in the offset panels, as are the concrete ramps between the levels at the center of this elevation. A flat concrete deck covers Bays 2 and 3 above the fourth story.

An adjacent building abuts the north elevation of the garage. Only the north half of the west elevation is visible between the adjacent building and the 1962 tower. The west elevation has the same open first story and cementious panels on the upper stories as the south and east elevations *(Photo 6)*.

On the interior, concrete ramps connect each level of the parking garage *(Photo 7)*. The two-way ramps are located at the center of the north and south ends of the building *(Photo 14)*. Each level of parking is flat. Cantilevered flat parking areas span the space between the ramps. Square painted concrete columns concentrated at the center of the garage and at the perimeter form an irregular grid at each level. The floors are smooth painted concrete. The exposed structural ceiling grid has deep coffers. The columns at the east end of the garage are held back from the façade, creating cantilevers at each story *(Photo 4)*. The basement of the garage was constructed as the basement for the previous building. The basement has concrete block walls, concrete and terrazzo floors, concrete columns, and exposed mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems *(Figure 17)*.

Office Tower (1962)

Exterior

The west-facing twenty-story office tower has a concrete foundation, a reinforced concrete structure, and a flat roof. The concrete frame creates seven bays on the south elevation and three bays on the north, east, and west elevations. From the first through the fourth stories, gray marble panels cover the concrete columns between each bay and at each corner. From the fifth through the twentieth floors, porcelain steel panels cover the columns.

The primary (west) elevation fronting Grand Boulevard has three bays *(Photos 1 and 6)*. The first four stories form a base that is different in design than the upper stories that form the shaft. The first story is slightly taller than the second and third stories, which are taller than the fourth story. Glazing within each bay is recessed from the structure at stories one through three and recessed slightly further at the fourth story. Cementitous panels cover the spandrels above floors one through three. Three aluminum mullions divide each opening into four sections. An aluminum bar further divides each openings horizontally. On the first story, an entrance fills Bay 1. It has paired automatic sliding glazed metal doors with wide sidelights and a full transom. A non-historic canopy projects slightly from the façade above this bay. In Bays 2 and 3, marble panels fill the bottom half of the aluminum frame, and glazing fills the top half. Simple non-historic square capitals adorn the marble panels at the second story. On the second through the fourth stories, glazing fills each portion of the aluminum frame.

Three continuous aluminum mullions rise through the tower shaft from the fifth story to the twentieth story, aligned with the mullions below. An aluminum bar also divides each opening horizontally. Glazing, flush with the façade, fills the top half of each bay on each story; opaque panels fill the bottom half.

The south elevation has seven bays *(Photo 2)* with a fenestration pattern similar to that of the west elevation. On the first story, Bays 1 through 3 are identical to Bays 2 and 3 on the west elevation. Bay 4 contains an aluminum storefront window with a recessed entrance. Buff brick fills Bay 5; and the alley fills Bay 6. On the second and third stories, Bays 1 through 6 are identical to the west elevation and from the fourth through the twentieth stories, Bays 1 through 7 are identical to the west elevation. Floors one through three of Bay 6 are slightly narrower than the upper floors to accommodate the 1956 parking garage that occupies Bays 7.

On the east elevation, the tower rises from the southwest corner of the adjoining parking garage, which covers floors one through three *(Photo 4)*. Three bays organize the shaft above the garage *(Photo 5)*. On the fourth story, Bays 1 and 3 are identical to the west elevation. Recessed buff brick and a deeply recessed glazed aluminum door fill Bay 2. The door leads to a concrete patio with a metal picket rail that extends from the tower onto the roof of the garage. The patio spans the width of the tower. A non-historic corrugated metal lean-to is located along the north side of the patio. The fenestration patterns on the fifth through the twentieth stories match those on the west elevation. A paired window pierces the brick above the twentieth story on the buff brick circulation tower.

On the north elevation, the adjoining parking garage fills Bay 1 on the first through the third stories *(Photo 5)*. Buff brick clads the entire elevation from the first through the third stories. A buff brick block covers the two west bays of the north elevation at the fourth through sixth stories, leaving one bay exposed. The stories above have three bays. A narrow sliver of the main building is exposed on the west side of the tower. The fenestration patterns in the exposed bays are identical to the west elevation.

A buff brick circulation tower rises at the northwest corner of the footprint *(Photo 6)*. It is recessed from the primary building façade and rises one-story above the building, extending south over Bay 1. Two vents at the top of the north elevation and one vent at the top of the east elevation are the only openings to pierce the blank brick wall.

An open, one-story non-historic drive-through bank with brick piers and a partial flat concrete roof projects from the north side the circulation tower. The drive-through was constructed c.1983 when the building changed ownership. Buff brick walls support the north and south ends of the partial roof.

Interior

Various configurations of historic and non-historic office space characterize each floor on the interior (*Figures 4-7)*. Four elevators and a single staircase rise from the basement to the twentieth floor in the northwest corner of the building. The U-shaped concrete staircase continues into the twenty-first story mechanical penthouse. Four shafts accessing each floor are arranged in pairs flanking the east and west sides of the elevator lobby. A second staircase rises along the center of the east wall. It has various configurations from the first to the fifth floors. It continues as a U-shaped staircase from the sixth through the twentieth floors.

On the first floor, the main entrance opens into a small vestibule (Figure 4). The east and west walls are fully glazed with aluminum frames and sliding doors; the north and south walls have historic marble panels. Non-historic white speckled marble tiles cover the floor; drywall covers the ceiling. The vestibule opens into the main lobby *(Photo 8)*. It has the same marble floor tiles and drywall ceiling. A band of black marble marks the location where a historic partition was removed. A row of square columns clad in orange marble run east-west through the space. On the north side, the lobby continues into the elevator lobby and staircase. Historic black marble panels clad the east and west walls of the elevator lobby; mirrored panels clad the north wall *(Photo 9)*. An office with a fully glazed wall curves into the southeast corner of the lobby. East of the lobby, drywall and glazed partitions divide the remainder of the first floor into offices. Non-historic drywall covers the ceilings; non-historic tile and carpeting cover the floors.

Office space fills the building from the second through the twentieth floors (Figure 5). Restrooms and mechanical spaces are located immediately east of the elevator lobby on each floor. Non-historic mirrored or wood panels clad the elevator lobbies on the upper floors. As was anticipated with this speculative office tower, tenants have renovated and reconfigured offices to suit their business needs numerous times over the past 50 years. Each floor has different finishes and layout *(Photo 10)*. Historic office space extant on the fourteenth floor *(Photos 11 and 12)* has carpeting, historic wood paneling on the walls and built-in wood shelves, desks and cabinets. Typical office finishes include non-historic carpet covers the floor and non-historic acoustical ceiling tile grids dropped to the historic ceiling height.

The basement is open and utilized primarily as storage. Extant historic materials at this level include terrazzo floors *(Photo 13)* and bank vault doors.

INTEGRITY

Traders National Bank Building retains sufficient integrity to demonstrate its significance as the first Modern Movement high-rise office tower in the city and its impact on the commercial expansion of the downtown core in the latter half of the twentieth century. The garage has not been altered. It retains all aspects of integrity and continues to clearly express its historic function within the period in which it was constructed.

Location
The building stands in its original, prominent corner location in the center of the downtown business district of Kansas City. Ideally situated near governmental buildings, retail stores and office buildings, the commercial vitality of Traders National Bank Building remains strong due to this location.

Setting
As when it was constructed, commercial buildings of various dates, styles, and sizes comprise the surrounding blocks. The Traders National Bank tower remains a distinct landmark on the skyline.

Design
The building clearly communicates the original vision of the architects designed to herald the prestige of the bank. The geometric massing and design details clearly communicate the Modern Movement style of the building. The lower levels of the tower incorporate the parking garage, constructed six years earlier, to create a unified whole. The rectangular form, the distinct articulation of the lower floors, and the rhythmic unity of the upper floors remain intact. Inside the building, the relationship between public and private spaces is intact. As is typical of tenant spaces in a building constructed as a speculative office tower, the offices and banking spaces have been altered regularly throughout the years, while the placement and configuration of the lobbies, circulation tower and restrooms has generally remained constant.

Only one major alteration has occurred on the exterior, and it does not compromise the overall integrity of design. A concrete solar screen originally covered the second and third floors of the south and west elevations. It was likely removed around 1983 when the building changed ownership. Initially rejected by the Kansas City Arts Commission, this element was only added during the final phase of construction at the insistence of the architects. It was installed in the final phases of construction and was not essential to the overall design of the building. Early illustrations of the building do not include the solar screen, and the historic architectural plans show only a dashed line where the screen, or “grillage,” was to be installed *(Figures 6 and 8)*. Treatment of the cladding beneath the solar screen indicates that this portion of the façade was designed to be visible. The same ornate marble panels that clad the columns below the screen continue behind it. The significance of the building derives from its importance as the representation of Miesian style architecture, namely the rectangular slab organized by the structural grid, thus the removal of the solar screen does not compromise the integrity of the architectural design.

Minor alterations include the construction of metal entablatures above the entrances on the south and west elevations and the application of metal capitals to the pilasters, above the second story. The addition of these elements dates to the 1994 renovation. They could be removed with minimal damage to the historic materials and little impact on the overall integrity of the building.

The construction of the non-historic drive-in bank on the north side of the building has a very minimal connection to the historic materials. It also illustrates associations with the historic function of the lower floors of the building and the need to make periodic updates to keep up with advancements in banking technology.

On the interior, a 1994 renovation enclosed the three-story open lobby designed for the public banking functions. The roughly square lobby rose from the basement to the second floor. An open staircase and

escalators were removed to accommodate concrete floor slabs installed at the first and second floors to enclose the space. A glazed wall that divided the vestibule and the elevator lobby from the bank was removed. Dark marble floor tiles highlight the former location of the partition. These changes were a natural evolution of the space after the bank removed from the building and the single-tenant lobby was no longer necessary. This modification is in keeping with the original intent and purpose of the building as a speculative office tower and does not compromise the integrity of design. The intentional adaptability of office space supported the long-term commercial viability of the building.

Materials

Original materials are extant throughout the building and clearly communicate the era of construction. These elements include the reinforced concrete structure covered by gray marble on the lower floors and porcelain enameled steel on the upper floors; the curtain wall, with original glass and cementious panels separated by aluminum mullions; marble paneling in the first floor elevator lobby; and terrazzo floors at the basement level.

Workmanship

It is difficult to evaluate the integrity of workmanship for a building whose design specifically eliminated architectural ornament. There is little evidence of artisans' skill and labor, other than the installation of various building materials. The workmanship of the building is demonstrated by its simple geometric form that stands distinctly on the skyline, stripped of ornament to highlight the quality of construction. At its core, it retains its reinforced concrete structure, rare at a time when many skyscrapers utilized steel construction.

Feeling

Rising distinctly on the skyline with its repetitive banding of metal and glass, the Traders National Bank clearly evokes feelings about the Modern Movement office towers that characterized downtown development across the county during the late-1950s and 1960s. The building clearly communicates its historic commercial function and the era in which it was constructed.

Association

The building retains strong associations with commercial development and efforts to revitalize Kansas City's downtown core that began in the 1960s. The continued commercial success of the building underscores its original impact on the downtown core as the first high-rise office tower erected since the Great Depression.

SUMMARY

Traders National Bank Building (Traders) at 1125 Grand Boulevard, Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C for the area of ARCHITECTURE. It is locally significant as the first commercial high-rise office building property type erected in downtown Kansas City to express the Modern Movement design aesthetic. Traders National Bank Building retains the distinctive characteristics expressive of its period of construction, specifically the combination of the influence of zoning changes adopted in cities across the country in the late 1950s and early 1960s and the popularity of vernacular versions of the Miesian rectangular slab form, curtainwall construction, and banded fenestration. Traders National Bank, a successful local bank, constructed the building in two phases, a 1956 parking garage designed by the locally prominent architectural firm of Kivett and Myers, and a 1962 office tower designed by Dallas, Texas architect Thomas E. Stanley. When erected, the speculative office tower was the first skyscraper added to the Kansas City skyline since 1937, and the first private high-rise building constructed since 1932. Construction of Traders led the trend of speculative office tower development in downtown. A zoning ordinance passed in 1961 while Traders was under construction enabled developers to complete the building as designed. The zoning ordinance raised the maximum height and setback requirements to 250 feet, 70 feet higher than the maximum set forth in the 1923 and 1959 zoning ordinances. This change not only allowed the construction of Traders, a twenty-story, 274-foot building with a small setback at 247 feet, but also enabled subsequent development of similar Miesian style office towers characterized by the rectangular slab form. Other office towers built in downtown Kansas City soon after Traders was completed followed the form of this property type. These subsequent buildings have the same rectangular slab form with minimal setbacks for mechanical spaces, highlighting the importance of the Traders National Bank Building as an early example in downtown Kansas City of Modern Movement architecture allowed to achieve new forms due to contemporary changes in the zoning ordinance. Traders, expressive of its period of construction, illustrates a conservative expression of the Modern Movement aesthetic with strong horizontal fenestration patterns contrasted with thin vertical elements and large expanses of glass and metal balanced with brick and marble. Constructed as a speculative office building, it has remained a functioning office building throughout its history, remaining commercially viable due to the adaptability of tenant spaces and the availability of convenient parking facilities. The period of significance is 1956 and 1960-62, the dates of construction for each portion of the property (garage and tower).

ELABORATION

History of Traders National Bank

J.R. Dominick founded Traders National Bank on October 15, 1900 as Traders Bank of Kansas City. The original offices were housed in a building at the corner of Missouri and Walnut Streets. In November of that year the bank held over $123,000 in deposits. On September 15, 1908 the bank was issued a National Charter and at the same time, relocated to the (Old) Bryant Building at 1102 Grand Boulevard, on the same block as the nominated resource. The bank received a Trust Certificate on April 27, 1925 and two years later formed a separate Trust Department. In February of 1930, Traders National Bank and Gate City National Bank merged to form the Traders Gate City National Bank. The combined banks held

a total of $8.5 million in deposits.[1] The newly-formed institution operated from the elegant temple-front building Gate City National Bank constructed at 1111 Grand Boulevard in 1920.[2]

After World War II, the Board of Directors officially shortened the name of the bank to Traders National Bank of Kansas City. In the late 1940s, the bank held over $26 million in deposits. By the mid-1950s the bank was in need of new facilities as a way to freshen its image. Rather than move to suburban areas burgeoning south and west of the city center, Traders chose to reinvest in the downtown financial center in which it first started. The block surrounding the old Traders National Bank (Gate City National Bank, 1111 Grand Boulevard) was primed for redevelopment. At the north end of the block was the sixteen-story Professional Building (1101-07 Grand Boulevard) and a seven-story parking garage, both constructed in 1929. South of the six-story Gate City National Bank Building along Grand were four buildings: the eight-story Shukert Building and three low-rise commercial buildings. The southernmost of these, a two-story building erected in 1929, anchored the corner at 12th Street. Along McGee Street, south of the parking garage on 11th Street, were two three-story commercial buildings, a paved surface parking lot, and a two-story commercial building at the corner of 12th Street.[3] Traders National Bank targeted the underutilized south end of the block for redevelopment *(Figure 15).*

In the early 1950s, the bank undertook a $150,000 renovation to modernize and enlarge its existing facilities, completing the work in 1954.[4] Other improvements at the time included a new parking garage with drive-through teller windows to supplement the main banking facility at 1111 Grand and modernize banking operations. Drive-through banks became a national trend after World War II to facilitate automobile access to financial institutions in urban centers. Traders National Bank hired the local architectural firm of Kivett and Myers to design the new building on the southeast corner of the block at 1118-1124 McGee Street (*Figures 7-9)*. The original design for the garage, occupying only an eighty-foot frontage along McGee, was expanded to 136 feet to include a new drive-through facility.[5] The final design could accommodate an additional two-and-one-half-stories of parking, if needed.

To construct the garage, it was necessary to demolish the existing two-story building on the site owned by the Nelson-Rockhill Trust. The design repurposed the existing basement of the building for storage of bank records and locker rooms for employees.[6] When completed in 1956, the $450,000 three-story (six-level) open-deck garage featured both walk-up and drive-through banking service at the street level with vehicular entrances on McGee and 12th streets (*Figure 10)*.[7] It offered 143 parking spaces for both bank customers and employees as well as patrons and employees of nearby businesses. The drive-through banking services at the "Traders Motor Bank," as it was called in contemporary newspaper articles,

[1] "Historical Data and Information on Traders National Bank." [n.d.] Vertical File: Banks- Traders National. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.
[2] Gate City National Bank Building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on September 2, 1982.
[3] Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Kansas City, Missouri, 1951. Volume 1, Sheet 31. Of the buildings illustrated in 1951, only the Professional Building, old Traders National Bank Building (Gate City National Bank), and one of the three-story commercial buildings on the east half of the block (the Louis Curtiss Studio Building at 1116-1120 McGee Street) are extant. These three buildings were listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1979, 1982, and 1972, respectively.
[4] "Modern, But No Rush," *Kansas City Star,* November 7, 1954. Mounted Newspaper Clippings: 1950-1970. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.
[5] "Revise a Garage," *Kansas City Star,* January 8, 1956. Mounted Newspaper Clippings: 1950-1970. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.
[6] Kivett & Myers. "A Drive-In Bank & Garage for Traders National Bank," Historic plans, 1956. State Historical Society of Missouri, Kansas City, Missouri. The basement is still used as storage space.
[7] "Revise a Garage," *Kansas City Star,* January 8, 1956.

offered modern conveniences to their customers such as cash deposits, check cashing, and the ability to make change. The five teller stations and one walk-up window connected with the main bank (1111 Grand Boulevard) across the alley via a series of pneumatic tubes.[8] The combined parking garage and auto bank offered the same conveniences as new suburban bank buildings while remaining within to the bank's downtown setting.

The bank expanded throughout the 1950s. Plans to replace the old bank building began to materialize in 1959. Bank President J. Robert Dominick II had envisioned a new four-story building to house his growing business.[9] After some initial planning he decided instead to reinvest in the surrounding downtown community and build a larger tower with leasable office space that would help attract businesses back downtown. Downtown was ripe for new development. Dominick intended that his office tower would not only symbolize the power and prestige of the bank, but it would stimulate revitalization in the central business district. Because many Kansas City business leaders were skeptical of his idea, Dominick turned to R.E. Dumas Milner, a highly successful developer from Jackson, Mississippi.[10] Milner had conducted a study of the city around 1956 and had found it to be "economically aggressive" and "bursting at the seams."[11] He entered the Kansas City market that year with the purchase of the Bill Sullivan Chevrolet Company[12] and continued to invest in a variety of business ventures in the area for several years. An article from 1961 states that Milner was looking for a new project in Kansas City when he undertook the Traders National Bank Building development. Milner was the ideal investor for the project. He had overseen construction of a twenty-five-story building in Cincinnati, Ohio, a twelve-story building in Mobile, Alabama, and a twelve-story building in Jackson. He had several other projects ongoing, and believed that Kansas City was more in need of a new office building than other cities of a similar size.[13] In addition to his work as a developer, Milner also owned or served on the board of almost thirty corporations, including several motor companies and a home products company that produced Pine Sol. A 1960 newspaper article notes that he planned to locate one of his enterprises in the new Traders building and possibly develop a factory in Kansas City in the coming years.[14]

Initially, the Board of Directors of Traders National Bank hired McCune and McCune Architects from Tulsa, Oklahoma to design a four-story building. With the backing of investor R.E. Dumas Milner, however, the project expanded into a twenty-story speculative office tower that would spur commercial activity in downtown Kanas City. Although McCune and McCune had experience designing banks with bold Modern Movement features, these buildings were small compared to the scope of the project imagined for Traders National Bank. Dominick released McCune and McCune and hired the firm of Thomas E. Stanley of Dallas, Texas to design the new bank (*Figures 11-13)*; although the McCune and McCune design for the bank space was incorporated into Stanley's design for the larger building.

[8] Ibid.
[9] "The New Attraction On Kansas City's Skyline," *Kansas City Star,* June 24, 1962. Vertical File: Buildings- Traders National. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.
[10] Ibid.
[11] "Sullivan Agency Sold for $400,000," *Kansas City Times,* October 11, 1956. Microfilm, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.
[12] The Bill Sullivan Chevrolet Company was located at 1601-15 McGee Street, five blocks south and east of the nominated property. The building is no longer extant.
[13] "A New Skyscraper Here," *Kansas City Star*, February 16, 1960. Mounted Newspaper Clippings: 1950-1970. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.
[14] Ibid.

Work progressed quickly. Site preparation for the new office tower began when the Cleveland and B.G. Wrecking Companies demolished the two-story commercial building at the corner of 12th and Grand in August 1960. A formal event on October 14, 1960 marked the beginning of construction.[15] The first permits for the new office tower were issued in November 1960, authorizing Milner to alter the concrete piers of an existing building, presumably the parking garage, and to erect the $5 million office tower.[16] The Beck-Truckee Construction Company, also from Dallas, Texas, completed the construction of the reinforced concrete skyscraper in 1962. Additionally, the bank added two new parking decks, an elevator, and a sprinkler system to the 1956 garage.

The Traders National Bank office tower opened in the summer of 1962 (*Figure 14)*. It was a distinct Modern Movement addition to the Kansas City skyline. The building marked a series of firsts for the city. The reinforced concrete roof of the penthouse was a record height in the city for this type of construction. The curtain wall also set records in the city for a new height.[17] On the exterior, the building featured gray marble panels cladding the columns on the lower floors and matching porcelain steel panels on the upper floors. The architects insisted on including a solar screen across the second and third stories of the south and west elevations to block light and mitigate the thermal heat gain facilitated by the floor-to-ceiling windows on these floors. The city Art Commission initially rejected this expensive element, but the architects stood by their design and the screen was one of the final pieces added to the building.[18]

When the construction of the tower began in 1961, the bank held almost $52 million in deposits.[19] When the Traders National Bank Building opened the following year it had nearly $57 million in total resources. These included over 7,100 savings accounts, 6,200 checking accounts, and 2,800 special checking accounts and various loan, trust, and accounting departments.[20] The bank's five-story office suite nearly doubled the size of their previous facilities at the other end of the block.[21] The original McCune and McCune designs were used for the interior spaces, which featured an open, three-story lobby with a staircase between the basement and first floors, an escalator from the first floor to the second floor, a rock garden at the basement level, and a rotating steel sculpture designed by Duayne Hatchett of Tulsa, Oklahoma. The various departments were spread across the first four floors of the building and the basement, "garden level." Safe deposit vaults were located in the basement of the tower, along with the purchasing and data processing departments; the main floor featured teller windows and "One-Stop" checking; the second floor was home to the Loan Department and Executive Offices; the Research and Accounting Departments were on the third floor; and a fourth-floor patio over the adjoining parking garage was created for bank employees.[22]

[15] "Set Traders Bank Start," *Kansas City Star,* October 9, 1960. Microfilm, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.
[16] City of Kansas City, Missouri Landmarks Commission, Building Permit #64953A, November 28, 1960. Building Permit #19223, November 28, 1960.
[17] "Traders Skyscraper Sets Curtain Wall, Concrete Record," *Kansas City Star*, December 1962. Mounted Newspaper Clippings: 1950-1970. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.
[18] "The New Attraction on Kansas City's Skyline."
[19] "Historical Data and Information on Traders National Bank." Vertical File: Banks- Traders National. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.
[20] "Traders National Bank," pamphlet. Vertical File-: Banks-Traders National. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.

In 1963, the first year city directory information was available for the Traders National Bank Building, small insurance companies, law firms, investment companies, and advertising agencies occupied suites while larger entities such as Traveler's Insurance, New England Mutual Life Insurance, the Insurance Company of North America, the Educational Credit Bureau, the Portland Cement Association, and the Chevrolet Metro Division of the General Motors Corporation occupied entire floors.[23] The diversity in the size and operation of these first tenants highlights the intentional function of the building to accommodate a variety of tenants. As a speculative office tower, periodic repairs and renovations ensured its continued functionality. Shortly after the tower opened in 1962, repairs were made to the brick on the west elevation in 1963.[24] Another permit in 1966 authorized a $300 repair to the marble panels at the corner of the building.[25] Multiple permits document renovations to the office spaces, banking lobby, and elevator lobbies over the following decades. The building remained commercially viable throughout the 1960s. When Milner sold the building to the Del. E. Webb Corporation in 1970, in conjunction with the sale of a building in Cincinnati,[26] it boasted nearly full occupancy. Throughout the 1970s, new businesses periodically moved into the building, while others expanded their suites. Prominent businesses in 1975 included an Office of the Public Defender, the Consumer Products Safety Commission, and the United States Postal Inspection Services, along with multiple law offices and insurance companies.[27]

Lehndorff Traders Venture acquired the building around 1980. A $3 million renovation in 1983 removed the exterior sunscreen from the west and south elevations. Just four years later, when Kansas City Bankshares purchased Traders National Bank, it held $131.4 million in assets. The joint company was renamed The Bank of Kansas City.[28] That same year the owners initiated a $3 million building renovation, which won a Commitment to Kansas City award from the Kansas City Corporation for Industrial Development.[29] A recent renovation occurred in the 1990s when the owners added floor slabs to fill the three-story lobby. The building continued to boast a high occupancy rate throughout the 1980s and 1990s, and was overwhelmingly occupied by attorneys, along with U.S. Telecom, the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, and the Kansas City Investment Company.[30] The Bank of Kansas City removed from the building in the late 1980s, after which time the Merchant Bank Center occupied the first four floors. The building is still used as office space and a bank today.

High Rise Office Tower Development

Traders National Bank Building is an excellent expression of its period of construction. It is an example of a high-rise office tower property type, conservatively designed to express the Modern Movement aesthetic. The primary features of the property type include the rectangular slab form that extends from the ground to the full height of the building without setbacks, the glass and concrete curtain wall, the regular rhythm of bays across each elevation, and the circulation core. Traders was the first high-rise office building erected in downtown Kansas City in twenty-five years and the first to embrace the era's

[23] *Polk's Kansas City City Directory*, 1963. Microfilm, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.
[24] Building Permit #5673, November 12, 1963.
[25] Building Permit #30767, November 22, 1966.
[26] "Traders Bank Building Sold."
[27] *Polk's Kansas City (Jackson County, Missouri) Directory*, 1975.
[28] "Traders Bank sale now final," *Kansas City Times*, March 17, 1984. Mounted Newspaper Clippings. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.
[29] City of Kansas City, Missouri Landmarks Commission, Kansas City Historic Resources Survey Form, "1125 Grand Ave." May 1994.
[30] *Polk's Kansas City (Jackson County, Missouri) Directory*, 1985.

new design style. It was also the first building constructed under a new zoning code which allowed the building to rise 250 feet from the sidewalk before setbacks were required. It represents a distinct point in the evolution of downtown commercial architecture in the city.

During the first few decades of the twentieth century, businessmen and real estate developers constructed speculative office buildings to house the wide array of commercial and professional entities conducting business in the heart of downtown Kansas City. As construction technology advanced and demands for office space increased, buildings became taller. By the start of World War I, masonry-clad skyscrapers had greatly altered the Kansas City skyline. Three buildings completed in 1906 marked the arrival of the skyscraper era in Kansas City. These were the fourteen-story R.A. Long Building (Henry Hoit; 928 Grand Boulevard); the sixteen-story National Bank of Commerce Building (Jarvis Hunt, 922 Walnut); and the eleven-story Scarritt Building (Root & Siemens, 811 Grand).[31] Inspired by the Chicago School of architecture, these buildings were designed with a three-part exterior form that reflected the classical tradition of base, shaft, and capital.

It was not uncommon during this period for buildings to be erected in phases, with the original portion designed to accommodate additional stories as demand warranted. Louis Curtiss designed the first four stories of the Argyle Building (306 E. 12th Street) in 1906, to which Keene & Simpson added six stories in 1924; Andrew B. Anderson designed the first five stories of the Dierks Building (1006 Grand Boulevard) in 1909, while subsequent additions by Hoit, Price & Barnes brought the full height of the building to seventeen stories in 1930. Charles A. Smith and George E. McIntyre designed the sixteen-story Professional Building at the northwest corner of the block (1101-07 Grand Boulevard) in 1929.[32]

In the early 1930s, the next generation of Kansas City skyscrapers employed steel frame and reinforced concrete technology. These office towers rose to staggering heights with more than twice the number of stories as their predecessors. Notable examples include the Bryant Building (twenty-six stories, 1931), the Kansas City Power and Light Building (thirty-eight stories, 1931), and the Fidelity National Bank and Trust Building (thirty-two stories, 1932). Although the Great Depression halted private development, New Deal era public works programs also produced two high-rise office buildings in downtown Kansas City: Jackson County Courthouse (twenty-two stories, 1934) and City Hall (thirty stories, 1937). Zoning ordinances at the time created a distinct appearance for these buildings. First enacted in 1923, the Kansas City Zoning Code allowed buildings to rise to a height of only 180 feet, after which they required a one-foot setback for every additional five feet in height. As a result, tall buildings in downtown Kansas City tapered as they rose in height. Similar to codes found in other large cities, such as the code enacted in New York City in 1916, the regulation intended to prevent tall buildings from blocking natural light from reaching the street level.

After World War II a new form of skyscraper emerged in cities throughout the United States. Drawing from the work of architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, the Modern Movement office tower was a purely geometric form that brought the structural skeleton to the exterior, typically sheathed in a glass curtain

[31] All three of these buildings are listed in the National Register of Historic Places: R.A. Long Building, 8 January 2003; National Bank of Commerce, 5 May 1999; Scarritt Building, 9 March 1971.
[32] The Argyle Building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on 17 August 2005. The Dierks Building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on 29 January 2009. The Professional Building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on July 17, 1979.

wall and stripped the mass of all ornament. Business leaders commissioned these towers as a symbol of their progress and innovation. One notable, early example is the Lever House in New York City (Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, 1952). Thomas E. Stanley, the architect for the Traders National Bank Building, was highly adept at this type of design. His portfolio included high-rise office towers for banks and insurance companies, including Fidelity Union Life Building (Dallas, Texas, 1951) and Fulton Bank (Atlanta, Georgia, 1955).[33] He typically employed thin vertical elements to counter the strong horizontal banding of windows and metal spandrel panels on the long, flat façades. The use of more conservative materials, such as brick and marble, balanced the height and expanses of glass and metal. While not a full imitation of a Miesian design, as the first Modern era high-rise office tower in downtown Kansas City, Traders National Bank Building exemplifies this aesthetic.

During the 1950s when companies across the country began erecting commercial monuments to the modern age, skyscraper development all but ceased in Kansas City.[34] Several factors were at play. Few large businesses were headquartered locally, minimizing the need to build an iconic edifice. The few companies that did erect new office buildings during the 1950s constructed sprawling, low-rise blocks outside of the central business district. Two office buildings constructed on or near the Country Club Plaza, roughly four miles south of the nominated building, include the two-story Midwest Research Institute (Nevill, Sharp & Simon, 1953, *Figure 18*) and the four-story Old American Insurance Company (Voskamp & Slezak, 1959, *Figure 19*). Hallmark Cards constructed an expansive, multi-level complex to house the company's headquarters more than one mile south of the nominated building (Welton Beckett, 1955, *Figure 20*). The Kansas City School District and Board of Education constructed an eleven-story building to house the main branch of the public library and District offices two blocks south of the Traders National Bank Building (Edward Tanner, 1957, *Figure 21*).[35] These buildings shared several common architectural features, including simple rectangular massing, long expanses of banded windows, and a lack of applied ornament, all elements that set them apart from older commercial buildings and clearly expressed the Modern Movement aesthetic. With the exception of the Board of Education building, the location of these buildings well outside of the central business district is also notable as they did not support the downtown economy like Traders National Bank Building.

Many investors were hesitant to begin new construction projects in downtown Kansas City during this period, as it was an area they perceived to be in decline. Downtown commercial growth slowed as many businesses relocated to new suburban developments south and west of the city center. The patterns had shifted from a predominance of retail businesses in the early Post-War period to a predominance of general office space by the mid-1950s.[36] The authorization of urban renewal programs beginning in the mid-1950s shifted the focus of development to the city center. Kansas City's earliest redevelopment projects focused on housing and transportation improvements, such as freeway expansion.[37] Although not a designated federally-funded Urban Renewal project, Traders National Bank Building marked a shift in this trend and was the first of a new era of high-rise development and the commercial revitalization of

[33] "Stanley, Thomas E(dward)," George S. Koyl ed., *American Architects Directory*, 2nd edition. (New York: R.R. Bowker Company, 1962), 668.
[34] George Ehrlich, *Kansas City, Missouri: An Architectural History, 1826-1990*, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 124.
[35] Although this building was the first large-scale mid-century construction project in downtown, it differs from the Traders National Bank Building in two key ways: 1) it is not a high-rise; and 2) it was designed for a public agency, rather than a commercial venture.
[36] The City Plan Commission of Kansas City, Missouri. *Fifteen Years of The Central Business District: A Summary of Studies and Reports*, Kansas City, Missouri, June 1960, 27.
[37] Ehrlich, 129-130.

downtown Kansas City. The building illustrates the evolution of the bank as it expanded its facilities throughout the twentieth century and marked its rebirth as a modern company, manifested in an iconic high-rise office tower.

The design of the tower befits the time and place of its construction and represents an early example of Modern Movement commercial design in Kansas City. As the first high-rise office tower erected locally in the Post-War era, there was some inclination for the design to meld with the traditional aesthetic that characterized the existing cityscape. The Modern Movement expression was restrained in comparison to later buildings and subtly references historic forms. The bold vertical columns that rise between each bay evoke the classical columns of traditional designs, while the marble cladding at the base of the tower further recalls this ethos. These elements made the building compatible with the architecture of the surrounding blocks which featured similar façade organizations and vertical emphasis.[38] As local architectural historian George Ehrlich stated, Traders National Bank Building is "cautious in design, but nevertheless a clear statement in a simple geometric vocabulary based on emphasizing structural elements."[39]

The rectangular slab form was one of the more distinct breaks from past designs. As it was drawn in July 1960, Stanley's vaguely Miesian-inspired design did not conform to the city's existing zoning regulations. Kansas City first enacted a zoning ordinance that outlined use restrictions and maximum heights in 1923 as a means of stabilizing the downtown area and its property values. Until 1960, the zoning ordinance remained relatively unaltered, with only minor changes, such as enlarging the boundaries of the Central Business District. Another change was necessary to allow for the construction of Traders National Bank Building. The code revision in 1960 raised the maximum height before setbacks were required from 180 feet to 250 feet. This allowed Traders National Bank Building to rise vertically along the sidewalk for the full twenty stories to around 247 feet, less than three feet short of the maximum, before stepping back to the penthouse for a total of 274 vertical feet.[40] This change in the zoning code laid the groundwork for later Modern Movement office towers in Kansas City to rise to similar or greater heights, unencumbered by low setback regulations. By 1969, the zoning code had again been rewritten to calculate building height and setback regulations based on a ratio of building footprint to lot size, rather than strictly by height.[41]

Most importantly, the design helped set the stage for future developers to erect office towers with more avant-garde Modern Movement designs. The direct connection between these towers and adjacent parking garages communicates the importance of having convenient parking accommodations in downtown during the mid-century. Together these would reshape the image of Kansas City as an economically vital and wholly modern city.[42] A few blocks to the north, Commerce Tower opened in 1964 (Keene and Simpson, *Figure 22*) and Ten Main Center, the first LCRA urban renewal commercial project

[38] Ibid, 129.
[39] Ibid, 141.
[40] "Zone Change Asked for Bank Building," *Kansas City Times,* October 15, 1960. *Mounted Newspaper Clippings: 1950-1970. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.*
[41] *Zoning Ordinance, Kansas City, Missouri, Chapter 65 Revised Ordinances 1956 as Amended to January 29, 1969.* January 29, 1969.
[42] Ehrlich, 147.

in downtown, opened in 1968 (Charles Luckman, *Figure 23*).[43] The trend continued into the 1970s with the construction of the Mercantile Bank & Trust Building (Harry Weese Architects, 106 W. 11th Street, 1974, *Figure 24*)[44] and City Center Square (Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, 1100 Main Street, 1977, *Figure 25*). While the design of these buildings may be considered more representative of the Modern Movement aesthetic, Traders National Bank stands out as an excellent expression of the period of construction and a good example of its property type. As the first high-rise office tower erected in the city in twenty-five years, it introduced the city to a new era of design and helped open the door for the resurgence of the downtown economy through the construction of speculative office buildings, after a roughly twenty-year hiatus for this functional property type.

As the first new high-rise office tower developed in Kansas City in the post-war period, the positive effects of the Traders National Bank Building on downtown Kansas City were almost immediate. An article celebrating its opening described the building as "a 20-story, 3½ million-dollar testimonial to the resurgent vitality of the downtown district."[45] Another contemporary article states that "the timing, and the Twelfth Street and Grand Avenue location, seemed to act as a catalyst downtown after the postwar preoccupation with decentralization."[46] By the fall of 1962, the building boasted a sixty-percent occupancy rate. The first tenant, a regional sales office of the Chevrolet Motor Company, moved into a fifteenth floor suite before the official grand opening.[47] Shortly thereafter, the Travelers Insurance Company occupied the fifth, sixth and seventh floors and the Portland Cement Company had a suite on the twentieth floor. Throughout the building's history, law firms and insurance companies comprised its primary tenant base.[48]

The economy of Kansas City continued to improve during the 1960s. By the end of the decade, one developer stated that "Kansas City had a good demand for first-class office space" and noted the ideal location of the Traders National Bank Building within the downtown core.[49] By 1970 a variety of businesses occupied suites in the building, including the Southwestern Bell Company, Indian Enterprises Incorporated, and the National Cystic Fibrosis Research Foundation. Law firms and insurance companies remained the most prevalent business tenants. Many companies had been tenants for an extended period, and some, such as the Travelers Insurance Company, had greatly expanded their office suites over the years.[50]

CONCLUSION

Traders National Bank Building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. It is locally significant in the area of ARCHITECTURE. Constructed in two phases, the

[43] Commerce Tower was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on April 11, 2014. Commerce Trust Company Historic District, including the Commerce Garage, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on November 9, 2015. Ten Main Center was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on November 2, 2015. LCRA is the Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority.
[44] The Mercantile Bank & Trust Building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on December 31, 2009.
[45] "The New Attraction On Kansas City's Skyline."
[46] Ibid.
[47] Article from Vertical File: Buildings – "Traders National." Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.
[48] *Polk's Kansas City (Jackson County, Missouri) Directory 1963*, (Kansas City: R.L. Polk & Company, 1963). Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri. Microfilm.
[49] "Traders Bank Building Sold," *Kansas City Star*, June 10, 1970. Mounted Newspaper Clippings: 1950-1970. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.
[50] *Polk's Kansas City (Jackson County, Missouri) Directory, 1970.*

building is comprised of a 1956 parking garage designed by Kivett and Myers, and a 1962 office tower design by Thomas E. Stanley. The parking garage was built for Traders National Bank while it occupied its previous location at 1111 Grand Boulevard. When completed, the office tower was the first skyscraper constructed in downtown Kansas City in twenty-five years. It illustrates the primary features of an office tower as a property type constructed in the mid-twentieth century, including the rectangular slab form, regular rhythm of bays, compact circulation core, and glass and concrete curtain walls. The use of traditional building materials such as brick and marble illustrates a more conservative Modern aesthetic. Construction of the building coincided with the city's changes to its building code to allow for taller buildings without setbacks. Traders National Bank Building likely ushered in a new era of construction in Kansas City and one of the catalysts for later development and revitalization of the downtown core. The period of significance is 1956 and 1960-62, the dates of construction for each phase of the nominated property.

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Traders National Bank, historic plans, 1960. Kansas City Research Center, The State Historical Society of Missouri.

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"Zone Change Asked for Bank Building," *Kansas City Times,* October 15, 1960*. Mounted Newspaper Clippings: 1950-1970. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.*

Zoning Ordinance, Kansas City, Missouri, Chapter 65 Revised Ordinances 1956 as Amended to January 29, 1969. January 29, 1969.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Swopes Addition, Lots 87 and 88 and all of the vacant alley lying east of and adjoining said, and Lots 132 through 134 (except part of Lots 87 and 134 deeded as 12th Street right-of-way), Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes the parcels historically and currently associated with the nominated resource *(Figure 2)*.

Figure 1: Contextual Map. *Source: ArcGIS 2013*.

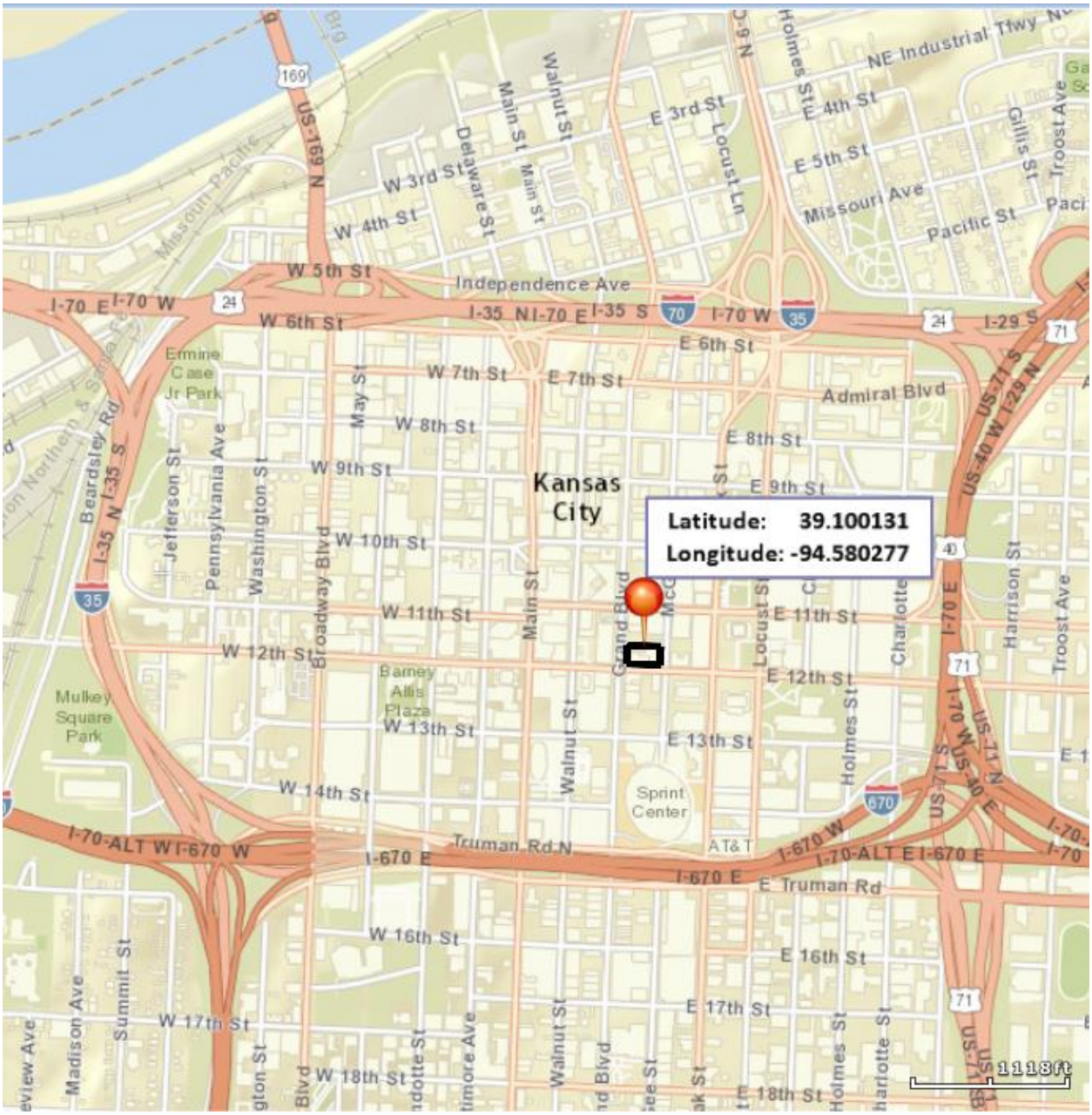


Figure 2: Site Map. *Source: ArcGIS 2013*.

Figure 3. Map of construction sequence. *Source: Adapted from Kansas City Parcel Viewer, City of Kansas City, Missouri, GIS Digital Data.*

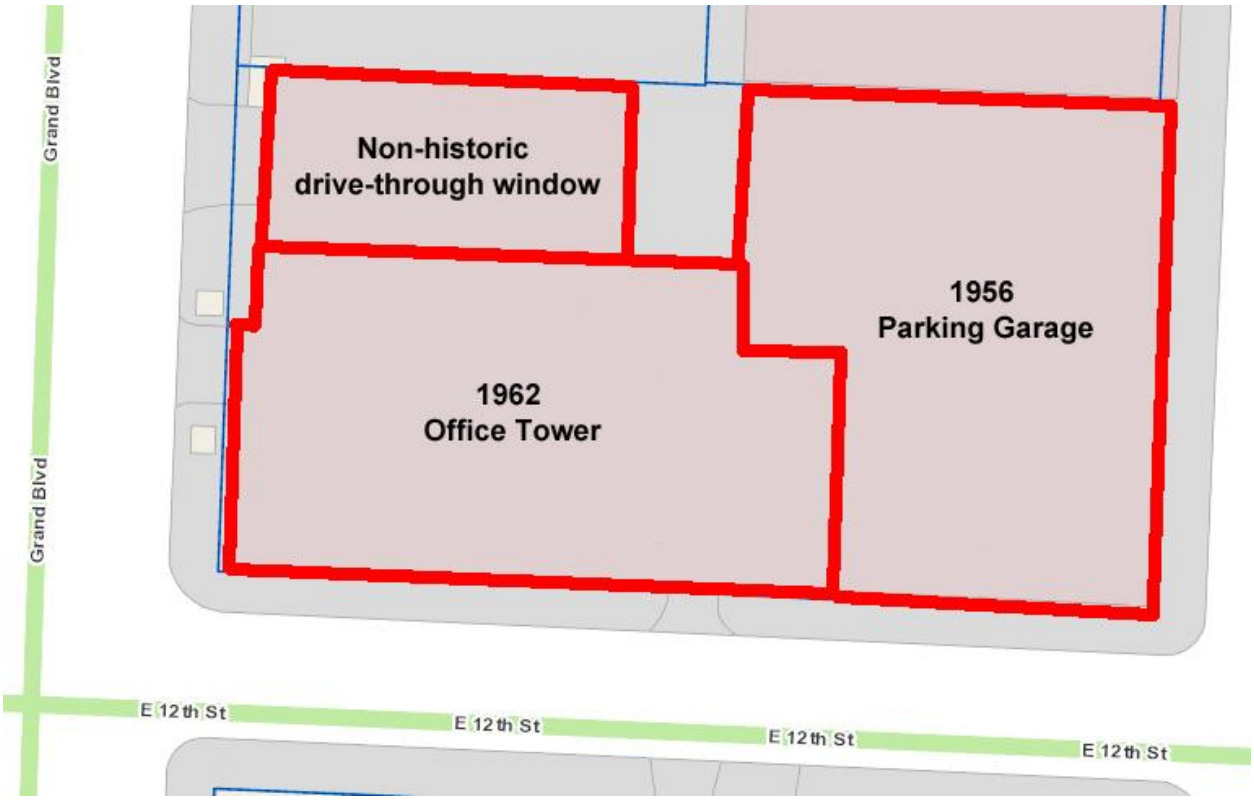


Figure 4. Photo Map, Exterior, first floor. *Source: Gastinger Walker Harden Architects, 2005.*

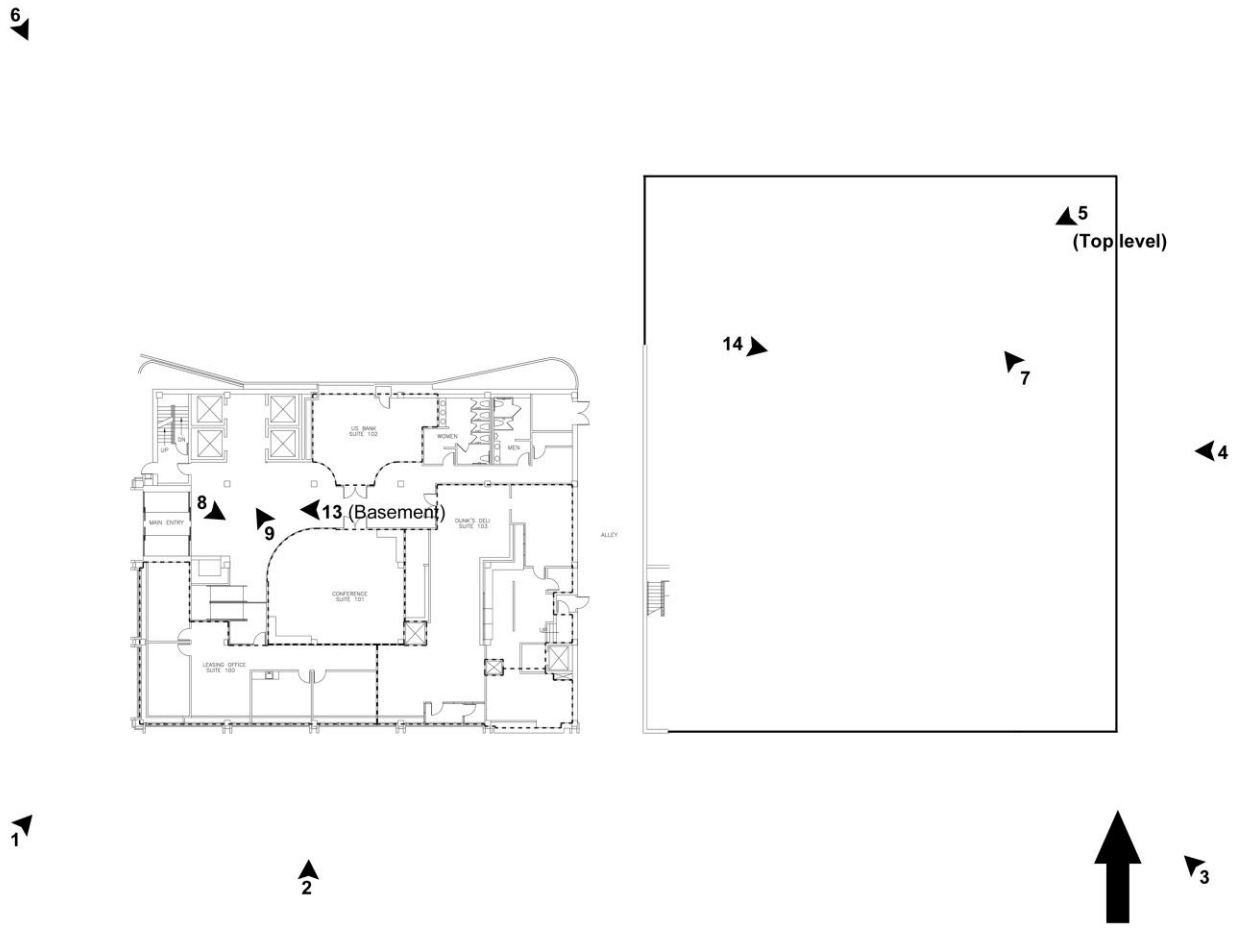


Figure 5. Photo Map, Second floor. *Source: Gastinger Walker Harden Architects, 2005.*

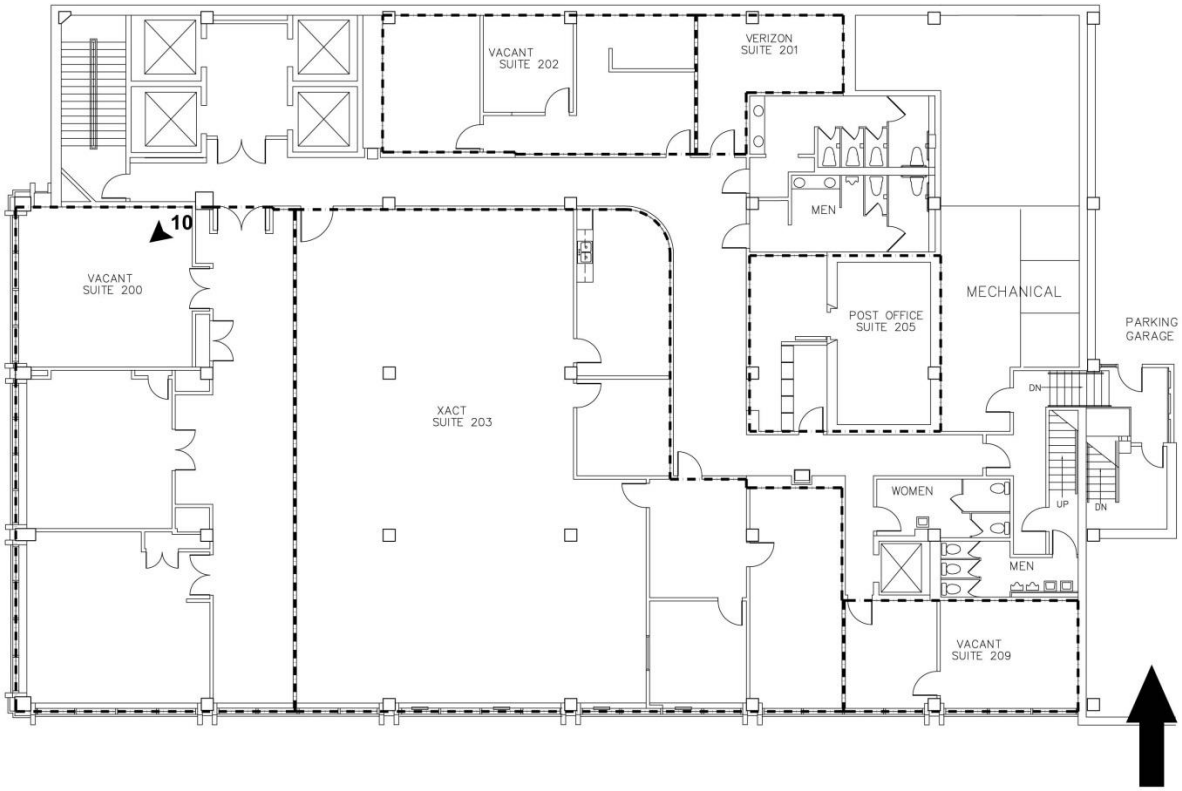


Figure 6. Photo Map, Fourteenth floor. *Source: Gastinger Walker Harden Architects, 2005.*

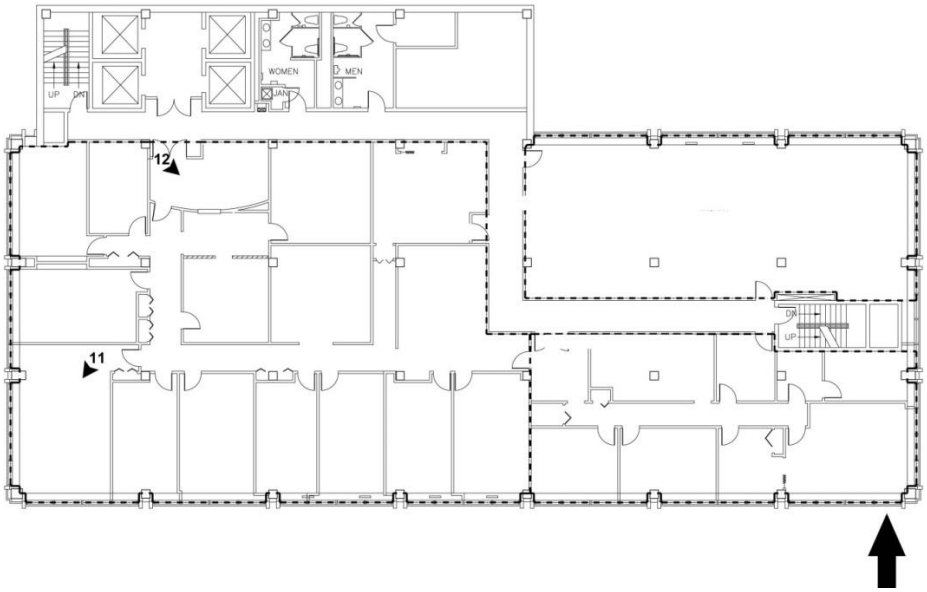


Figure 7: Historic Plans, "A Drive-In Bank & Garage for Traders National Bank," elevations, 1956.
Source: State Historical Society of Missouri, Kansas City, Missouri.

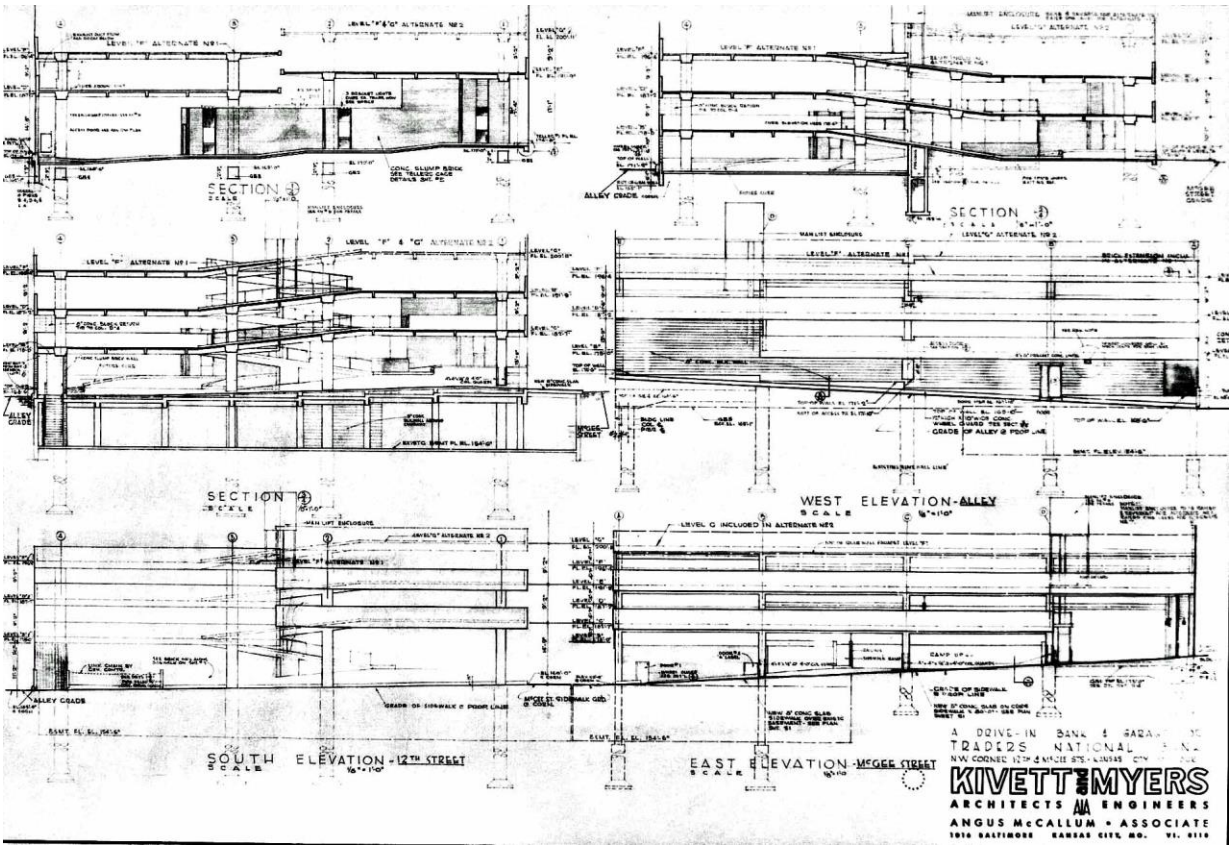


Figure 8: Historic Plans, Traders National Bank Parking Garage, First Floor Plan, 1956. *Source: State Historical Society of Missouri, Kansas City, Missouri.*

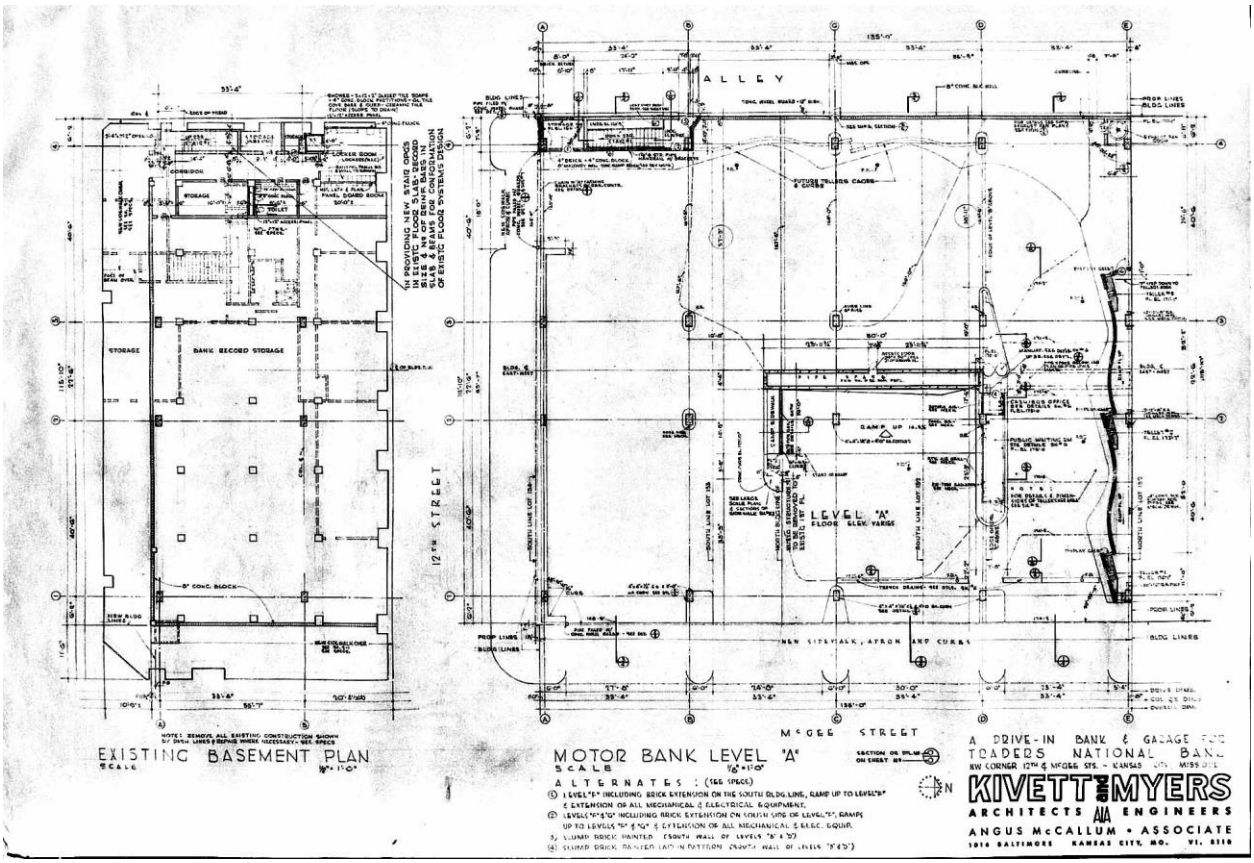


Figure 9: Historic Plans, Traders National Bank Parking Garage, Upper Floors Plan, 1956. *Source: State Historical Society of Missouri, Kansas City, Missouri.*

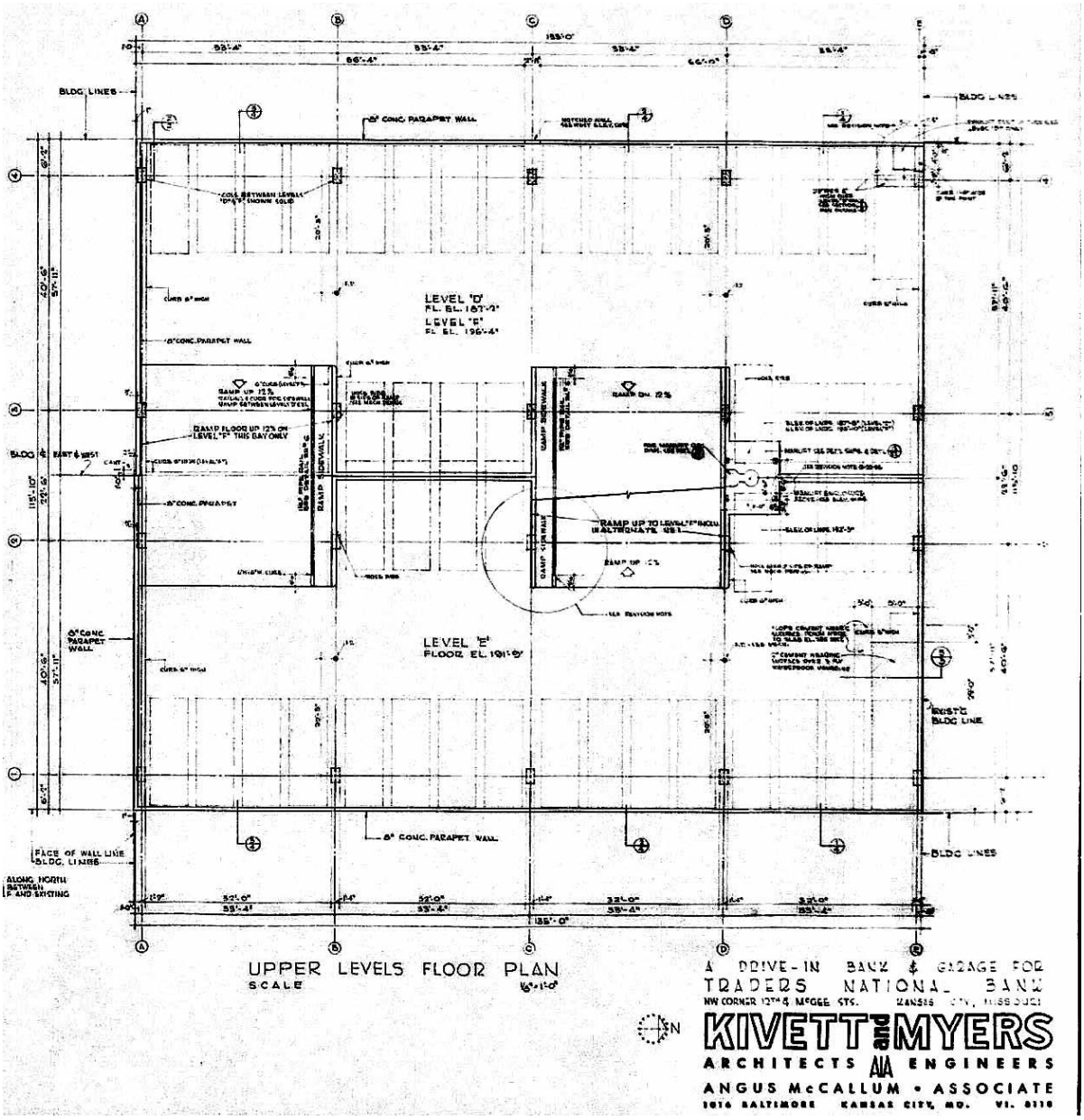


Figure 10: Historic photograph, Traders Motor Bank, 1957. *Source: Kansas City Star, October 6, 1957.*

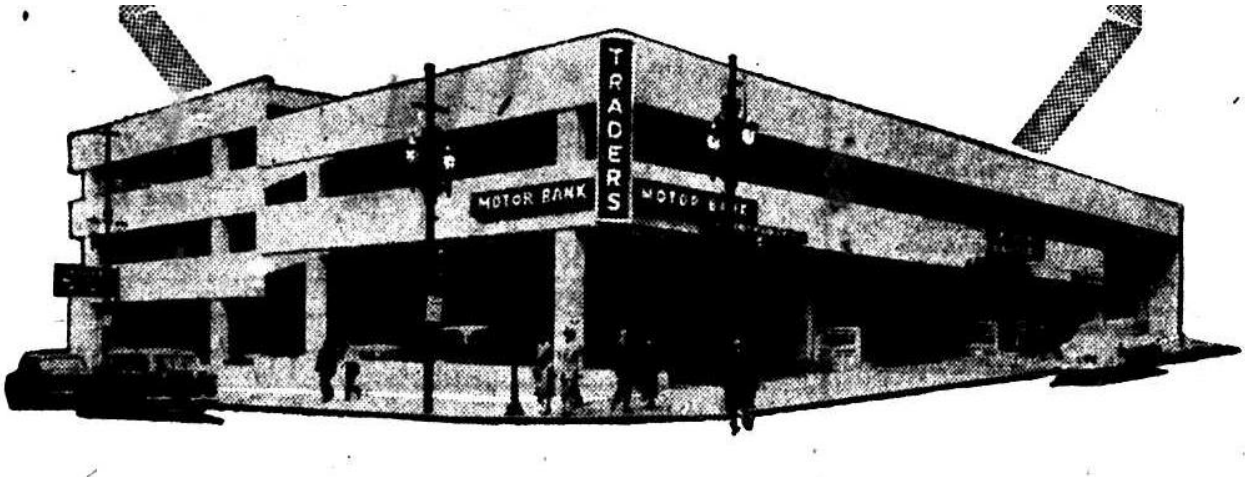


Figure 11. Historic Plans, South elevation, 1960. *Source: Kansas City Research Center, The State Historical Society of Missouri.*

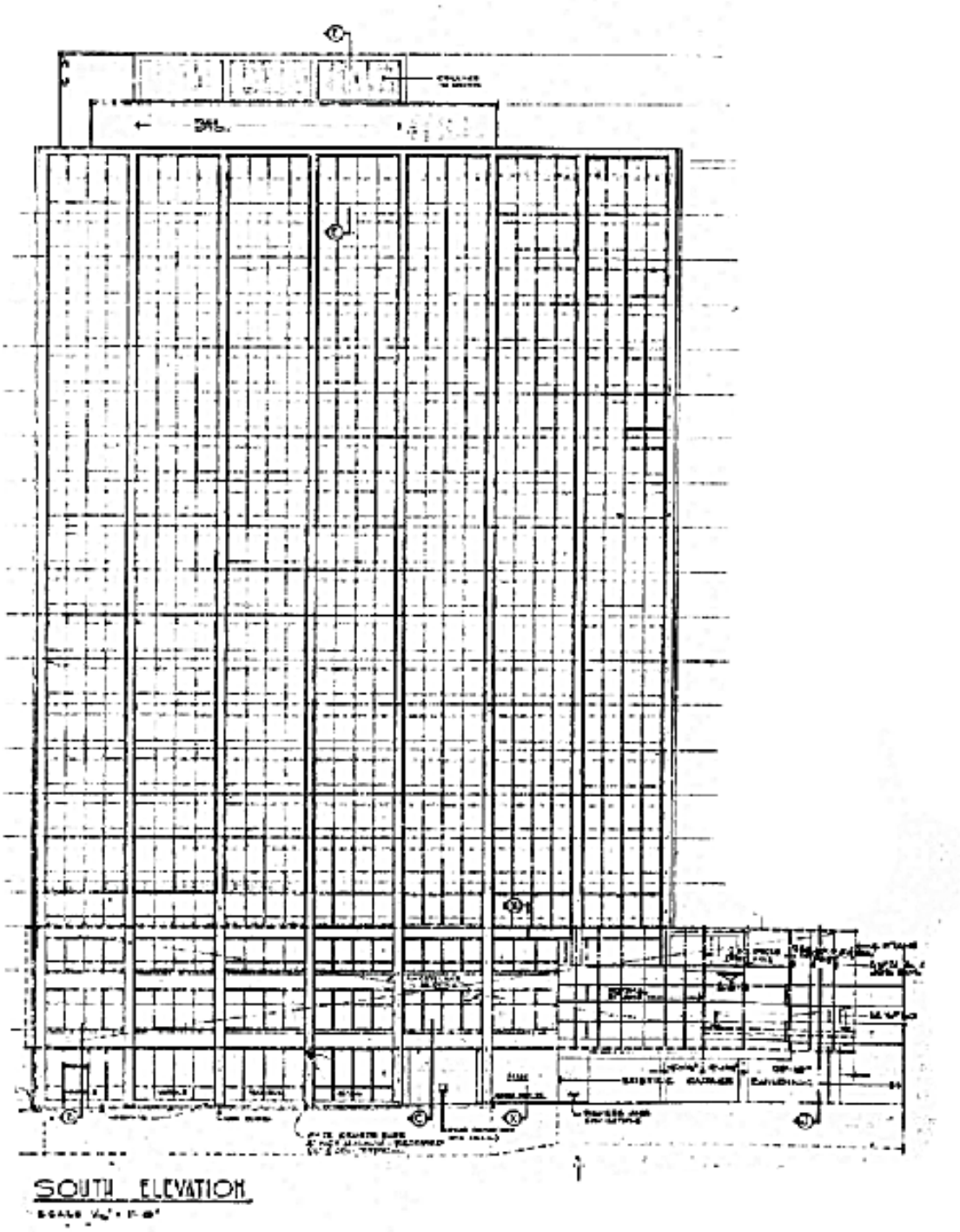


Figure 12. Historic Plans, North elevation, 1960. *Source: Kansas City Research Center, The State Historical Society of Missouri.*

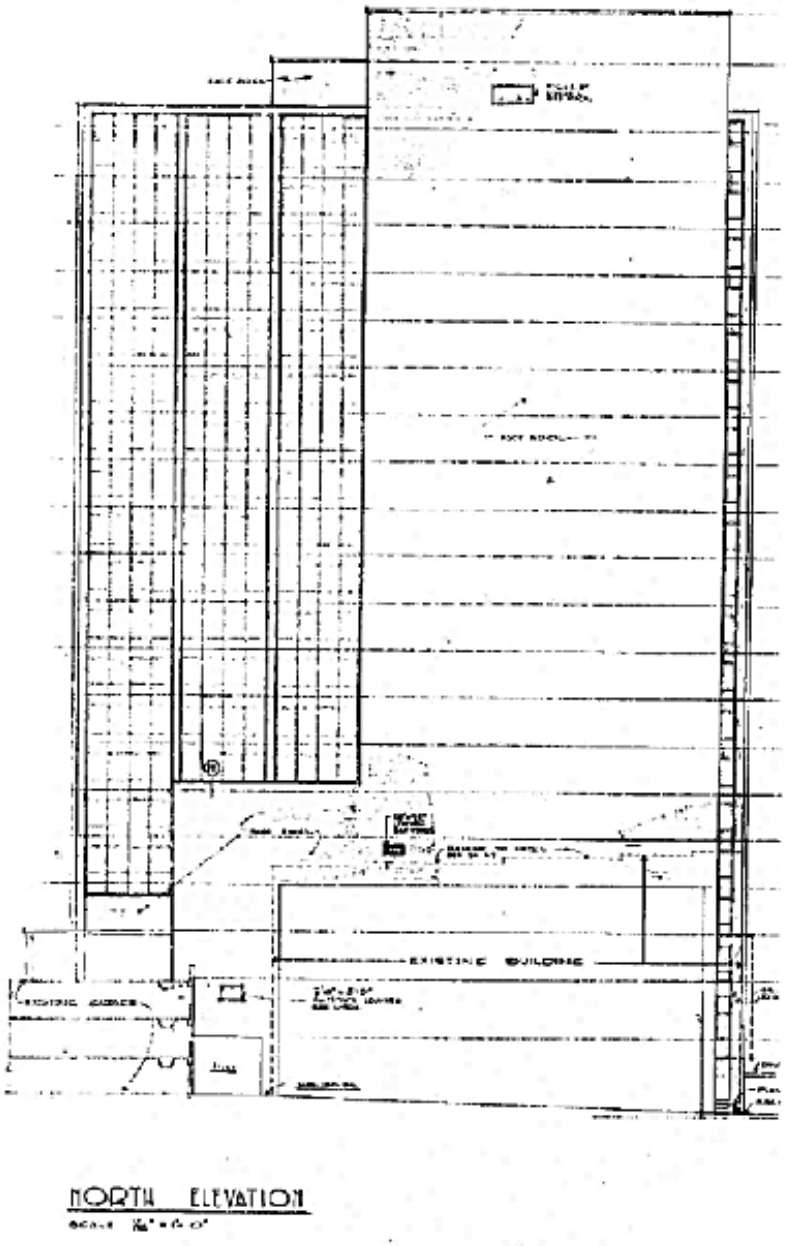


Figure 13. Historic Plans, East and west elevations, 1960. *Source: Kansas City Research Center, The State Historical Society of Missouri.*

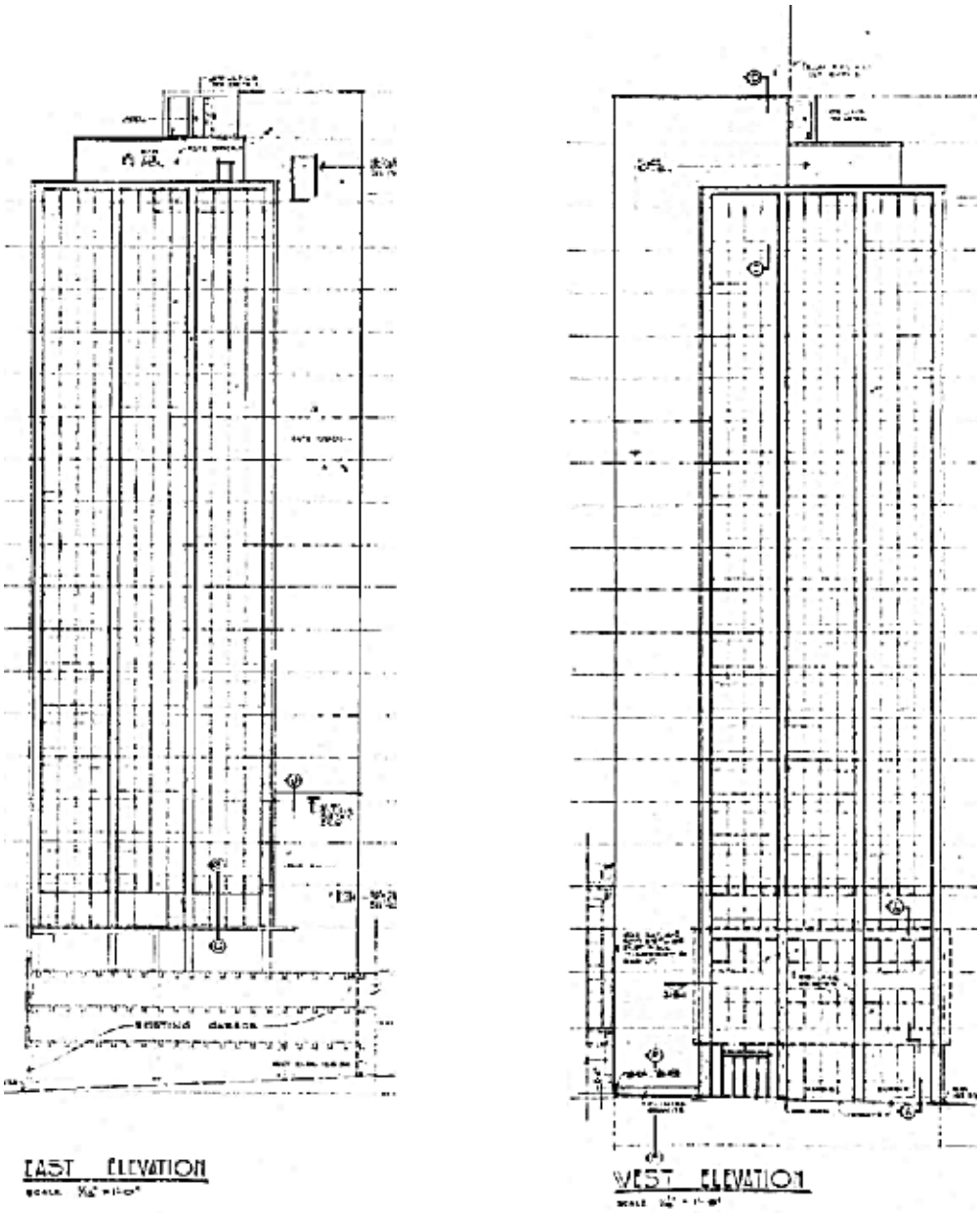


Figure 14. Historic Photo, 1962. *Source: Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, MO.*

Figure 15: Sanborn Fire and Insurance Map, 1951. Current property boundaries outlined in red. *Source: Sanborn Fire and Insurance Map, Kansas City, Missouri, 1951.*

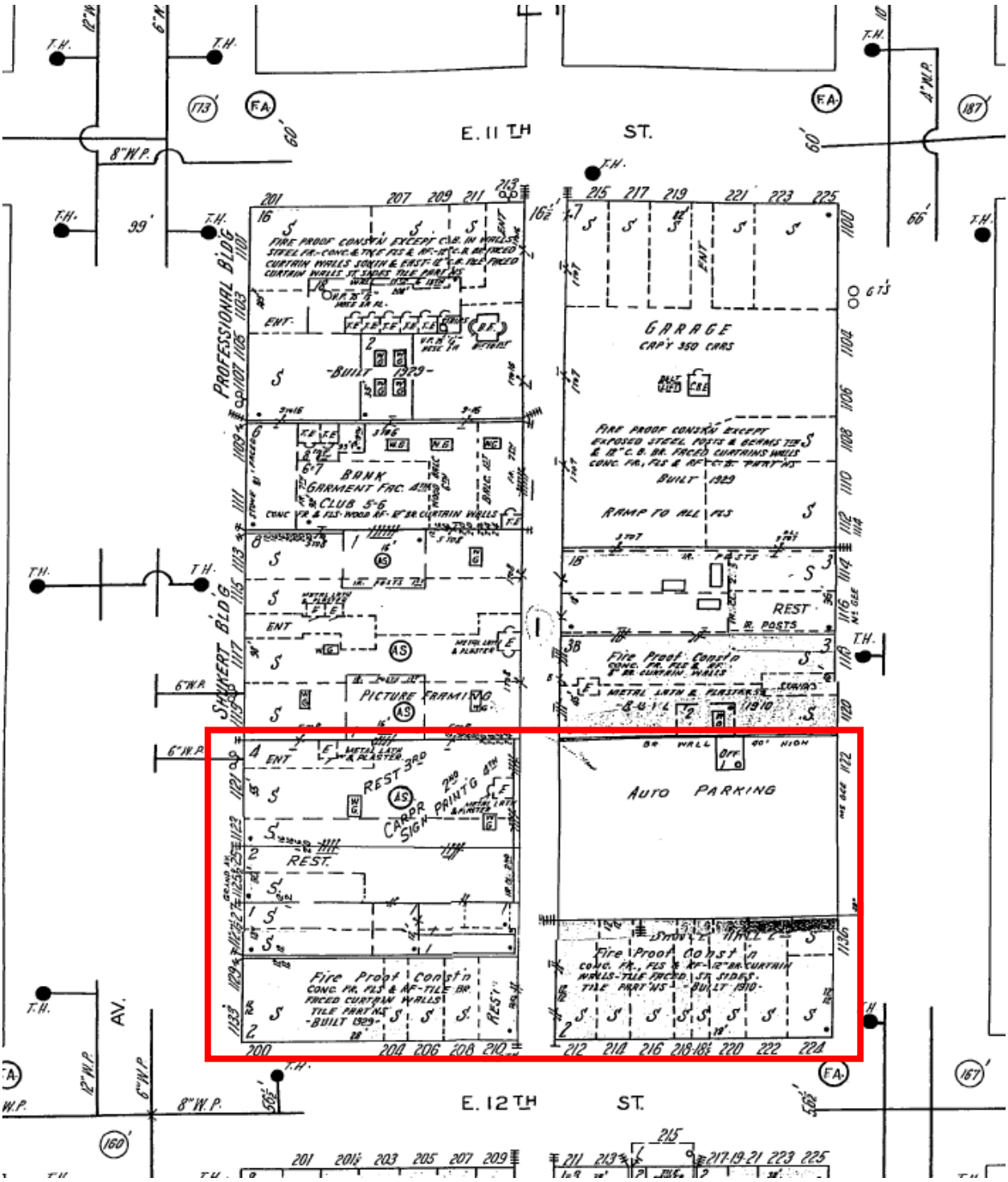


Figure 16: Argyle Building, 306 East 12th Street. Note three-story portion of the 1956 Garage at the far left, outlined in red. *Source: Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, MO.*

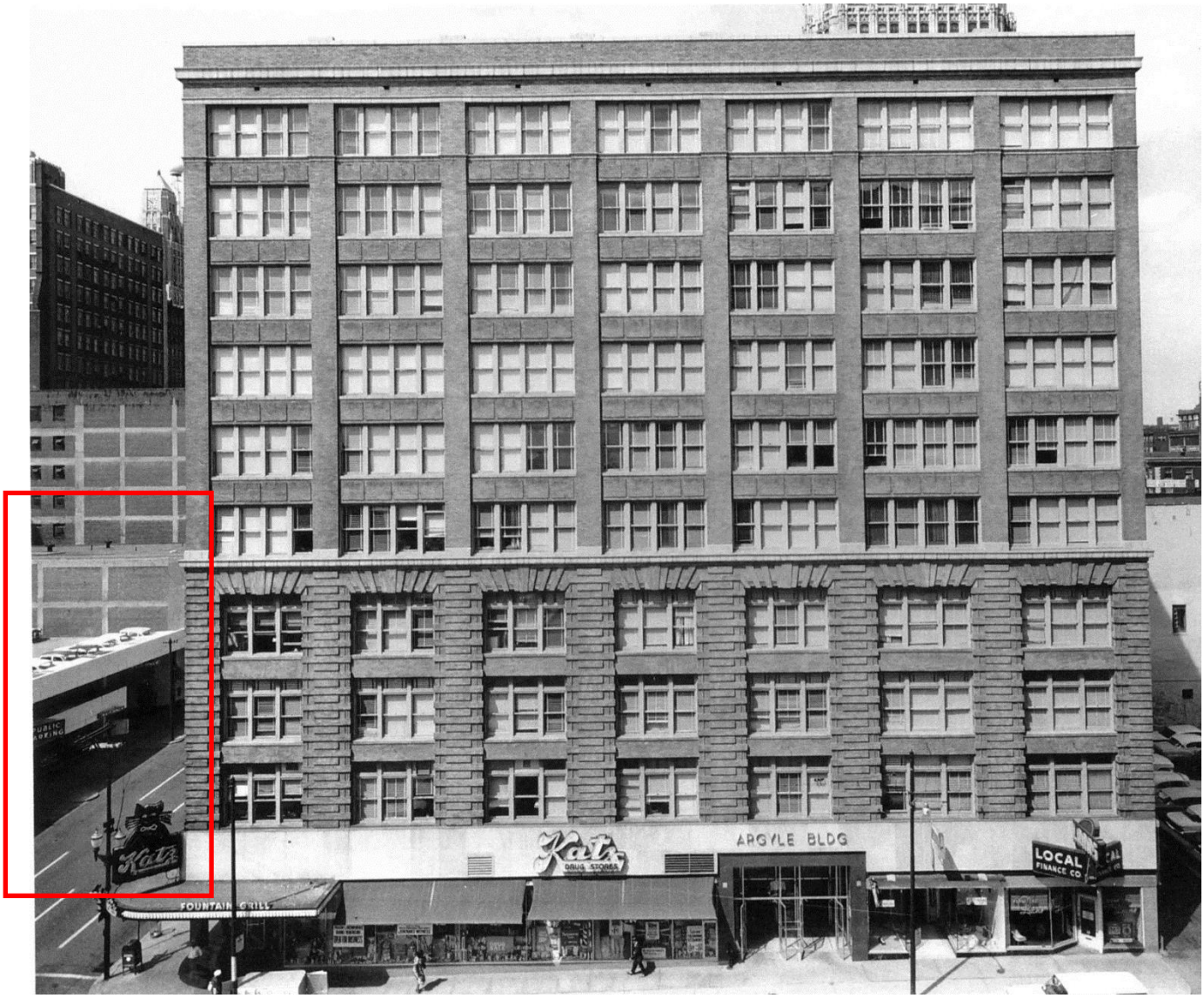


Figure 17: Basement of 1956 Garage, view west. *Source: Brad Finch, f-stop Photography, 2015.*

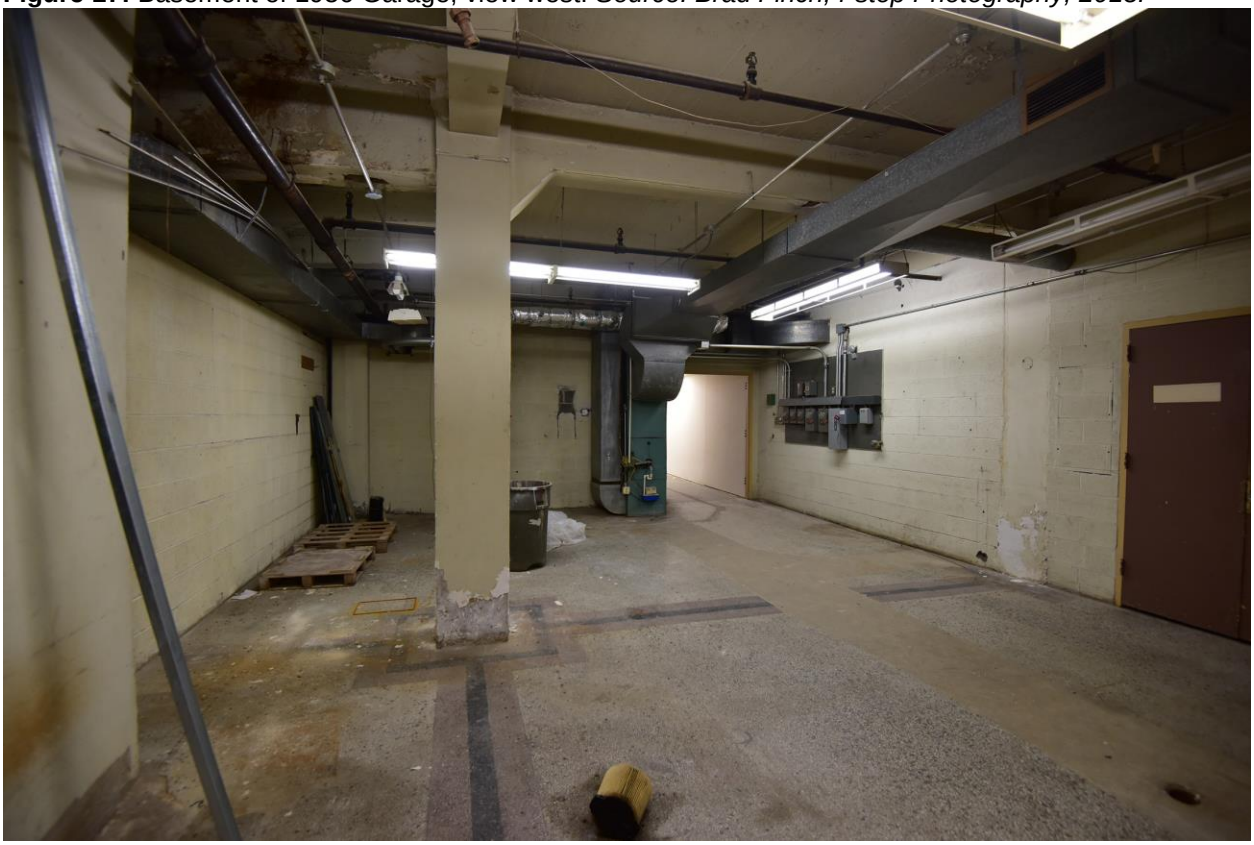


Figure 18. Historic photograph of Midwest Research Institute, 1953. *Source: Robert Askren Photograph Collection, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library*.

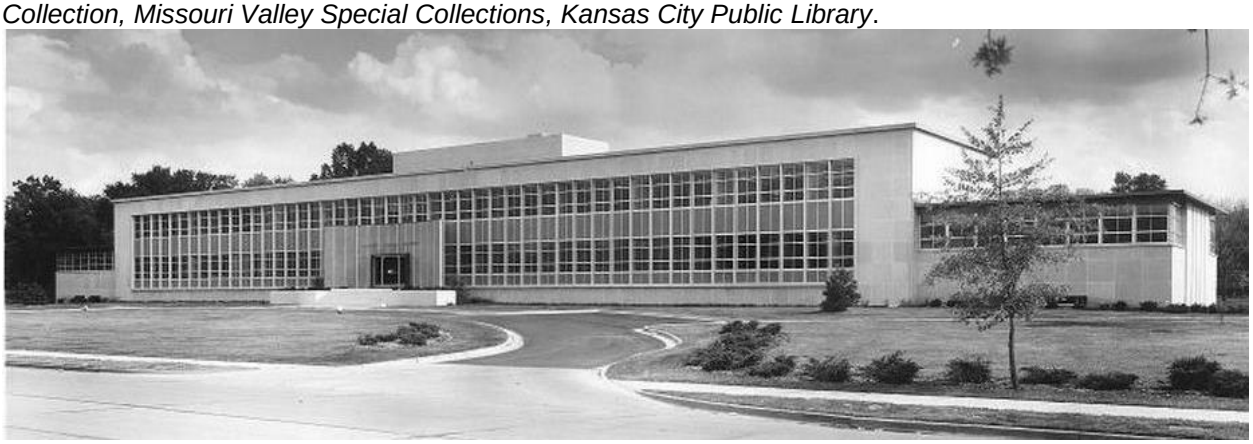


Figure 19. Historic photograph of Old American Insurance Company Building, 1959. *Source: Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.*

Figure 20. Hallmark Cards National Headquarters, 1989. *Source: Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.*

Figure 21. Historic photograph of Kansas City Public Library, Main Branch, c.1960. *Source: Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.*

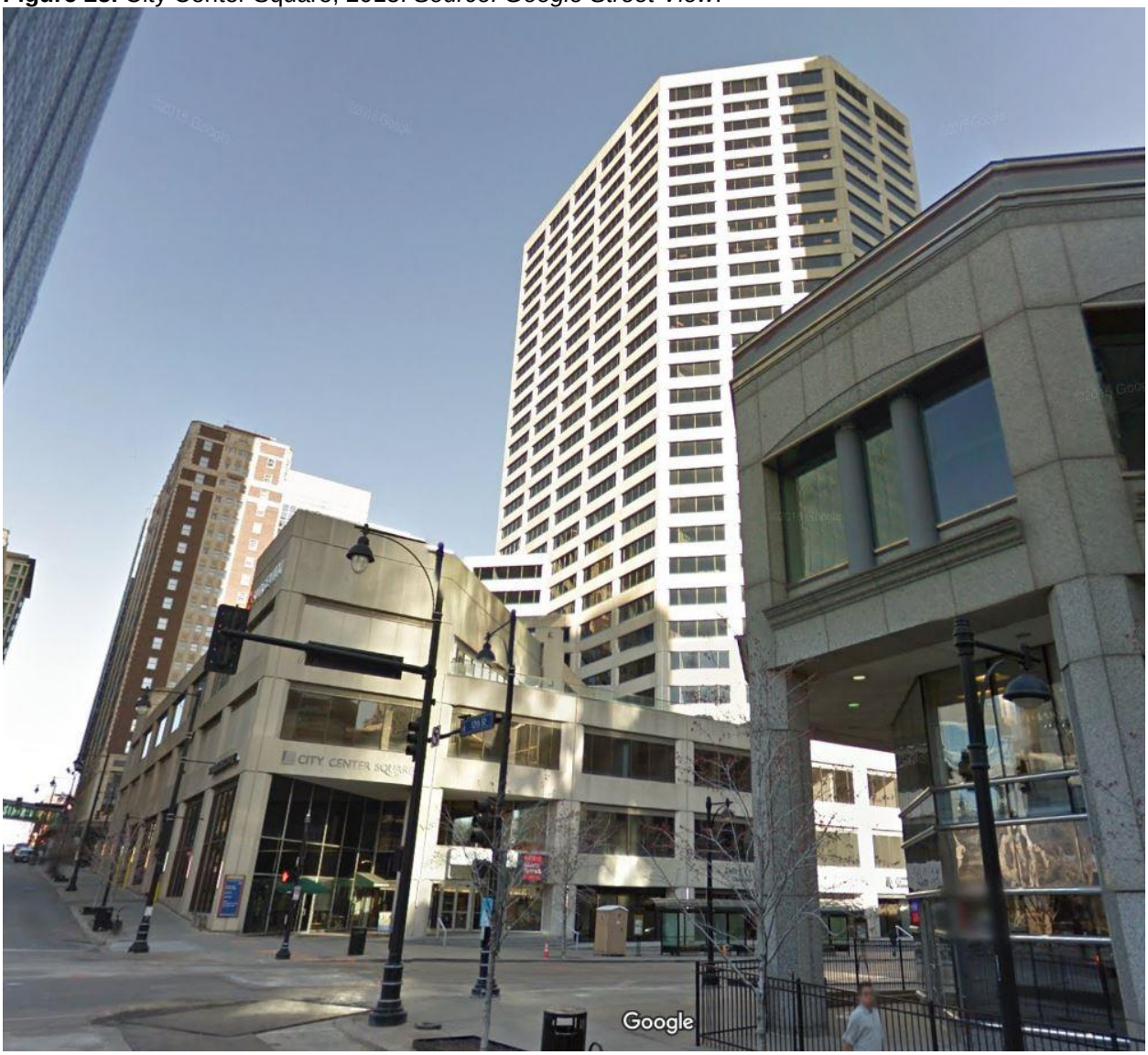
MVSC, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri

Figure 22. Historic photograph of Commerce Tower, c. 1965. *Source: Wilborn Photography, Kansas City, Missouri.*

Figure 23. Ten Main Center, 2015. *Source: Google Street View*.

Figure 24. Mercantile Bank & Trust Building, 2008. *Source: Brad Finch, f-stop Photography.*

Figure 25. City Center Square, 2015. *Source: Google Street View*.



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