

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS



**NAME**

HISTORIC Unitarian Church of the Messiah

AND/OR COMMON



**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Corner of Locust and Garrison Streets

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

St. Louis

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

3rd District--The Hon. Rich. Gephardt

STATE

Missouri

CODE

29

COUNTY

St. Louis City

CODE

510



**CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:



**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME First Cathedral Church of the Apostolic Faith  
c/o The Rev. John D. Layne

STREET & NUMBER

4307 Cranford

CITY, TOWN

St. Louis

VICINITY OF

STATE  
MO

63121



**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

St. Louis City Hall

STREET & NUMBER

Tucker Boulevard and Market Street

CITY, TOWN

St. Louis

STATE  
MO



**REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

1. Landmark of the City of St. Louis

DATE

9/25/73

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Community Development Agency

CITY, TOWN

St. Louis

STATE  
Missouri

63101

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CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH, ST. LOUIS

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2. State Historical Survey State  
1980  
Historic Preservation Program  
Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City Missouri 65102

ITEM NUMBER 11 PAGE 1

3. James M. Denny, Section Chief, Nominations-Survey  
and State Contact Person March 10, 1980  
Department of Natural Resources  
Historic Preservation Program 314/751-4096  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City Missouri 65102

# DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The publication in France of Peabody and Stearns' Church of the Messiah in L'Architecture Américaine in 1886 (Photo #1), only six years after the completion of the building indicates the tremendous critical acclaim earned by the church both at home and abroad. One of only five churches (including H. H. Richardson's Trinity Church) selected for illustration in the three volume French survey of recent American architecture, the Church of the Messiah also appeared in the American Architect and Building News, the Brickbuilder and was discussed at length in St. Louis architectural criticism (See Section 8). With more recent acknowledgment of the significance of the Boston firm--"the most important arbiters of building taste after H. H. Richardson"<sup>1</sup>--and as the only Peabody and Stearns church extant outside New England, St. Louis' Church of the Messiah holds a distinguished place in American architecture.

Ground was broken for the Church of the Messiah in November, 1879, and the cornerstone laid February 1, 1880, at which time it was reported in the Missouri Republican that the church would be "in the English Gothic style, and dissimilar to any other church building in St. Louis."<sup>2</sup> Charles Everett Clark of Medford, Massachusetts, (one of Peabody and Stearns' select "tried and true" builders) was the contractor. The total cost of site and church, excluding stained glass windows and interior furnishings, was \$109,000. On December 26, 1880, the first service was held although the church was not formally dedicated until December 16, 1881, when Dr. Henry W. Bellows of Boston came to speak.

Clearly developed within a 118 foot square, (See Site Plan) the plan successfully realized the Victorian search for new planning solutions in Protestant churches. The uninterrupted T-shaped nave (56 feet by 101 feet) merged with a short transept and shallow chancel to provide a large auditorium space required by Unitarian liturgical practice. At the west end of the nave, a small vestibule was attached. Auxiliary spaces located on the south side of the church answered increasing demands of the time for rooms for social activities. Sliding glass doors in the south transept arch (Photo #2) conveniently linked the auditorium to a large Sunday School/meeting room so that the seven hundred person seating capacity of the nave could be supplemented by an additional two hundred when needed. Adjoining the Sunday School room on the east was a two story unit of smaller rooms used for classes, library, ladies' parlor and sewing room; a dining room and kitchen were located in the basement. The bay windowed pastor's study connected to the Sunday School room at the west end and also opened into the tower through which the nave could be entered.

However functionally efficient the plan was, utilitarian concerns did not preclude exterior expression of the felicitous "Peabody touch"<sup>3</sup> in a strikingly picturesque assemblage of low, simple forms (Photo # 3). Particularly effective are the repetition of gables and conjunctions of the varied roof heights carried through in the break of the nave roof-slope by an abbreviated clerestory. The

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strong, simple tower--pushed back from the nave facade and gracefully joined with a broached spire--is a fine example of Peabody's special affinity for towers found in so many of his buildings.

In accordance with the architect's preferred use of masonry construction for churches, the building has locally quarried blue limestone load bearing walls (faced inside with brick) trimmed with smoothly-rubbed tawny sandstone from Warrensburg, Missouri. (The high value placed in the 1880s on such "truthful" construction (See Section 8) is an instructive comment on the change, or sophistication, in local thinking about architecture, since the 1852 Gothic brick Church of the Messiah was widely acclaimed for seventy tons of iron used in its construction.) Free of ornament, the exterior walls capitalize on the varied texture and color of the masonry; simple buttresses leave the walls virtually unbroken. Red slate forms a handsome roof.

Functional spaces are differentiated by sandstone-faced fenestration: pointed-arch windows denote ecclesiastic use while linteled openings mark rooms for secular activities. (Photo # 3 ) A bold, broad effect is gained by introducing, high into the gables, five lancet windows on the west facade, three tall lancets on the north wall and a large rose window with two lancets on the south side.

Originally the interior was a perfect expression of High Victorian "constructional coloration", relying entirely upon natural structural materials for rich polychrome effects. Although the walls are now compromised by white-wash, exposed areas can be found that reveal pale yellow and red brick patterning.<sup>4</sup> Compared in the nineteenth century to Westminster Abbey, the majestic open timber truss ceiling is native Missouri yellow pine,<sup>5</sup> "unspoiled by the painter's brush" but darkened now by age. (Photo #4 ) A system of hammer beams and tie beams divides the nave into two large units subdivided into four bays by small lancet windows on the north wall. A dramatic tent-like effect is created at the crossing by the expansive framing. (Photo #5 ) (The ceiling of the Sunday School/meeting room also features exposed ornamental wood framing.) Below the windows, walls are lined with a wooden dado surmounted in the chancel by a trefoil arcade that once contained brass memorial tablets. (Photo # 5 )

Only one set of the English-made, figural stained glass windows survives in situ<sup>6</sup>--a group of five, sumptuous Pre-Raphaelite lancets illustrating the Christian Graces--at the western end of the nave. (Photo #4)

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The present condition of the church shows evidence of years of neglect with abortive attempts to patch spawling sandstone with concrete (Photo #6) and to arrest roof leakage with makeshift repairs. A period of vacancy brought vandalism which stripped the interior of several wooden posts and detailing along with some stained glass. Water has also damaged the interior. Despite these signs of deterioration, major features such as the open truss ceiling are intact (although possibly threatened by roof leakage) and the masonry construction appears secure. Since the original plans exist in Boston, an accurate restoration could be undertaken.

By the time Robert Swain Peabody, FAIA (1845-1917) and John Stoddard Stearns, FAIA (1843-1917) received the commission for the Church of the Messiah in 1878, their highly successful partnership had been in existence for eight years. Both men were educated at Harvard and trained with Van Brunt after which Peabody went on to study architecture at the École des Beaux Arts. From the start, Peabody was the design partner with Stearns' meticulous superintendence of projects earning the firm a reputation for construction of outstanding quality. While they built almost every type of building, the architects perhaps became best known and appreciated for their prolific residential work at Newport where they out-built McKim, Meade & White and Richard Morris Hunt. After H. H. Richardson's death in 1895, Peabody & Stearns became equal in importance to McKim, Meade & White in New York City and were selected to represent Boston in the 1893 Chicago Fair. Peabody served a term as national President of the A.I.A and played an important role in Boston's urban planning.

The Unitarian church commission attracted enough additional business in St. Louis to justify a branch office with Pierce P. Furber as manager and later partner of the firm, and some of the firm's major works were built in St. Louis. Unfortunately, the city has lost two of the three office buildings, the St. Louis Museum of Fine Arts, the St. Louis Club and all of the Vandeventer Place houses. This church must be saved.

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F O O T N O T E S

<sup>1</sup>Karl S. Putnam, Some Comments on Buildings in the Course of a Walk from Bridge Street to Round Hill (Undated pamphlet), n.p., quoted in Wheaton A. Holden, "The Peabody Touch: Peabody and Stearns of Boston, 1870-1917," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 32 (May, 1973): 114.

<sup>2</sup>"The Corner-stone Laid for the New Church of the Messiah," Missouri Republican, 2 February 1880.

<sup>3</sup>A phrase used by one of the firm's designers. Holden, p. 122.

<sup>4</sup>It was reported in 1882: "the dark red of the faced bricks...line the walls above the wooden dado; while in the frieze and about and above the points of arches and window-heads are other of light yellow laid in masses or simple patterns." Dedication Services of the Church of the Messiah (St. Louis: Privately printed, 1882), pp. 15-16.

<sup>5</sup>Yellow pine was shipped by rail to St. Louis from Iron Mountain, Missouri, but because white pine discolored from floating downriver, St. Louisans were forced to paint and grain interior wood instead of following the Eastcoast fashion of merely shellacking. E. C. Illsley, "St. Louis.--Its Growth and Advantages.--Its Building Materials.--The Cost of Labor.--Real Estate." American Architect and Building News 3 (9 March 1878): 184.

<sup>6</sup>Several of the original windows were transferred to the new church on Union when the congregation moved in 1906.

# SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1880

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Peabody & Stearns, Boston

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Church of the Messiah is the only extant building directly intertwined with the life and work of William Greenleaf Eliot (1811-1887).<sup>1</sup> Eliot himself gained national prominence both as an activist urging a wide range of social reforms and as the founder of a precedent-setting institution of higher education, Washington University. His small St. Louis congregation grew from the first Unitarian outpost west of the Mississippi River to a prosperous and altruistic force responsible for the founding of nationally significant cultural, educational and philanthropic institutions.<sup>2</sup> Finally, as the only remaining church located outside New England by the Boston firm of Peabody & Stearns, the architectural significance of one of the firm's largest and most important churches is also of national significance.<sup>3</sup>

Shortly after graduation from Harvard Divinity School in 1834, William Greenleaf Eliot, son of a prominent Massachusetts family, arrived in St. Louis as a missionary preacher to organize the first Unitarian church west of the Mississippi. Composed largely of New Englanders, the Church of the Messiah (or First Congregational Society, as it was originally called) had grown sufficiently in numbers by 1837 to build its first church--a small, simple Doric temple located at Fourth and Pine Streets. From the outset Eliot committed himself and the Society to community needs. When Charles Dickens visited St. Louis in 1843, the Unitarians were already advancing education and philanthropic work in the city. Impressed with what he saw the Englishman wrote:

The Unitarian Church is represented in this remote place, as in most other parts of America, by a gentleman of great worth and excellence. The poor have good reason to remember and bless it; for it befriends them, and aids the cause of rational education without any sectarian or selfish views. It is liberal in all its actions; of kind construction; and of wide benevolence.<sup>4</sup>

Believing firmly that "our American salvation must come through Public Schools and social education,"<sup>5</sup> Eliot integrated these ideals into the life of his church; by 1840, the Unitarians had organized in the basement of the Pine Street church the first truly free school for indigent children. (Later incorporated with expanded services as the Mission Free School, this agency grew into the William Greenleaf Eliot Division of Psychiatry, now the Child Guidance Clinic, Washington University School of Medicine.) In 1849, the

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Missouri State Legislature passed a bill drafted by Eliot (then President of the St. Louis School Board) providing for the first tax assessment for the under-funded public schools of St. Louis. The subsequent success of the St. Louis schools contributed to the establishment of free public schools throughout Missouri.

By 1852, the congregation had built its second church at Ninth and Olive Streets, a brick Gothic Revival building, claimed to be the largest Protestant church in St. Louis at the time. While serving as pastor of the Church of the Messiah, Eliot's interest in education was given a new focus in 1853 when a prominent member of his church, State Senator Wayman Crow (1808-1885), obtained a State charter for Eliot Seminary, renamed Washington University at Eliot's request.

The original seventeen incorporators of the new institution (including Eliot and Crow) were all members of the Church of the Messiah and its non-sectarian policy was clearly influenced by Eliot's concern "to keep narrow and sectarian influences from every department."<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the survival and growth of Washington University were largely the result of dedicated work and financial support from Eliot's church: four-fifths of the total school endowment by 1864 (\$478,000) had come from the Unitarian congregation.<sup>7</sup> One of the university's most generous benefactors and workers, Wayman Crow, endowed both the present Wayman Crow Chair of Physics and the former St. Louis Museum of Fine Arts for which Peabody & Stearns designed an important Renaissance Revival building in 1879 (razed). The building was designed both as a museum and home for the Washington University School of Fine Arts, the first in the nation founded as part of a university. The school and museum separated in 1909 when the museum was placed under City control. An active sponsor of the arts, Wayman Crow brought sculptress Harriet Hosmer to St. Louis and commissioned her to do the statue of Senator Thomas Hart Benton for Lafayette Park.

As President of the Board of Directors of Washington University (1853-1885) and Chancellor (1871-1887), Eliot gave liberally of his own money and talents. James Smith, another church and university board member, willed Eliot personally nearly \$200,000 which, characteristically, the Chancellor donated to the university.<sup>8</sup> Known locally as "the most accomplished and successful beggar,"<sup>9</sup> but also as a shrewd businessman, Eliot's genius for raising money was highlighted in the Springfield, Massachusetts, Republican:

...it is apparently becoming tolerably discreditable for a rich citizen either to live or die without giving something to this institution. Among its eastern patrons have been

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Nathanial Thayer of Boston whose gifts amount to \$50,000 and Mrs. Augustus Hemenway of Boston... Rev. Dr. Eliot... may be honestly called the father of Washington University. His society though far from being conspicuously rich in its personal elements, has, I believe the reputation of giving more money alike to denominational and philanthropic and public objects than any other religious society in the whole country.<sup>10</sup>

Eliot's radical concept of a totally new type of "western university" with a practical orientation challenged the hegemony of the traditional classical course of study in American higher education. Planned to meet the conditions of a growing urban industrial society, Eliot's innovative polytechnic course programs served the working classes with evening instruction as well as training scientific professionals. His leadership in these areas of study influenced other urban universities and laid the groundwork for Calvin Woodward's great achievement in manual training education.<sup>11</sup>

In the absence of any organized public charity, the Unitarians' efforts continued to be of great influence and importance. The largest nineteenth century charitable institution in the Mississippi Valley, the Western Sanitary Commission, was created by Eliot and his friend James Yeatman in 1861. Yeatman credited Eliot with being "the soul and embodiment of the Commission" whose head it was "that conceived, planned and developed the work."<sup>12</sup> Over four million dollars were raised by this agency to aid casualties of both Union and Confederate armies, civilians left homeless and freed slaves moving north.<sup>13</sup>

Eliot also gained recognition through published positions on numerous social issues including emancipation, women's suffrage, Indian rights, prison reform and temperance. His successful campaign to repeal the Social Evil Ordinance (the first attempt in America to regulate prostitution by registration and medical inspection) attracted publicity to the St. Louis experiment which generated debate nationally and internationally for decades after the law was nullified in 1874.<sup>14</sup> While Eliot had objected to the Ordinance on moral grounds, he demonstrated advanced thinking for his time by arguing that the law promoted exploitation of women.

Within twenty years after the church was built at Ninth and Olive Streets (viewed dangerously far west in 1852) Eliot was proposing a new church farther west in the Stoddard Addition<sup>15</sup> where he had lived since 1856.<sup>16</sup> A glance at

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Plate 21 of Compton and Dry's Pictorial St. Louis--1875 graphically demonstrates the dramatic change in the Ninth and Olive Street area from prestigious residential to commercial use. Across the street from the church, the new Post Office was to occupy a full city block and the old Lucas mansion was converted to a restaurant--causing R. J. Compton to remark:

It is quite possible that the important changes in the neighborhood of the church may necessitate its removal farther west in a few years.<sup>17</sup>

Plans for the third Church of the Messiah were under serious consideration by January, 1877, when Eliot's article for the church bulletin urged construction of a new church, "for precisely the same reasons for which the present building was erected"<sup>18</sup>--the imperative of following the congregation as it migrated westward to escape encroaching business and industry. In 1879, the Unitarians secured a lot at the corner of Garrison and Locust Streets in the heart of the fashionable Stoddard Addition (Photo # 7) where several members already lived. Known for its "elegant and tasty residences"<sup>19</sup> the subdivision was also dubbed "Piety Hill" due to the concentration of churches relocated there.

Although Eliot had officially resigned from pastoral duties in 1873 to devote full time to his position as Chancellor of the university, he remained actively involved in church affairs including preaching when needed for his successor, John Snyder, well into the 1880's. His continuing leadership, however, was most visible in the planning of the new church:

Two weeks ago or more a petition or request was prepared by the Trustees asking me to take hold and lead in church building enterprises. This is a new departure altogether.<sup>20</sup>

Charged with this responsibility, Eliot not only successfully directed the financing of the new building, but also introduced the first important outside influence on St. Louis architecture by bringing the Boston firm of Peabody & Stearns to the midwest. Indeed, Eliot's sponsorship of his Unitarian colleague's son, Robert Swain Peabody,<sup>21</sup> had far reaching consequences. Through Eliot Oregon received its first Eastern influence with the 1879 Peabody design for the First Unitarian Church in Portland, then under the pastorate of Eliot's son, Rev. Thomas Lamb Eliot.<sup>22</sup>

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Eliot's letters to his son in Portland reveal considerable knowledge of real estate and building as well as shedding light on his appraisal of architects. In a letter dated March 28, 1878, (several months before Peabody first met with the church committee in St. Louis)<sup>23</sup> Eliot disclosed his view of church design:

I don't think much of architects, but believe Peabody is a fair and just man. They know less of acoustics and care more for looks irrespective of uses than they ought; but using your own common sense as corrective you can safely employ them I suppose.<sup>24</sup>

Eliot's concern for utility was realized in Peabody's design for the Church of the Messiah which featured a large uninterrupted auditorium space that provided excellent conditions for preaching while the subsidiary rooms answered other needs of the congregation. (See Section 7) Since Peabody's own views on church building were close to Eliot's it is clear why the minister entrusted the St. Louis and Portland designs to him. In 1877, the architect had written:

In designing of Congregation churches we are met by two opposing influences: on the one hand, utilitarianism,... the needs of the parish in the modern order of things; on the other ritualism...that returning to the old symbols, customs, and decorations...Obviously, the purposes to which the building is to be put - the present forms of religious worship - must be our guide.<sup>25</sup>

However, Peabody's conservative belief in the importance of keeping "the church itself, from top to bottom, sacred, and put the adjuncts elsewhere"<sup>26</sup> underscored by his declaration that "the main church is not a church-parlor so much as a place of worship"<sup>27</sup> would have met with Eliot's approval. The minister expressed fears about the "changing character" of the Church of the Messiah regretting that it was "becoming less a church than a society. The religious strength less, social perhaps greater."<sup>28</sup> Thus the clear separation of the church's functional spaces (social from religious) together with its "honest" construction and adherence to traditional English Gothic ecclesiastical prototypes resulted in a building that satisfied Eliot's churchmanship.

The special significance of the church to St. Louis was illuminated by the flurry of local critical response that appeared after its completion in

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1880. All agreed that it was unique--unlike any other church in St. Louis. But while some were content to call it a "beautiful poem" and "tasteful, cozy chapel" others ventured more serious commentary guided by Ruskin's "Lamp of Truth". With passionate earnestness the church was scrutinized for architectural deceits that violated "honest" expression of plan, structure and materials. That the new church vindicated abuses in current church building (condemned for imposing "a fraud on the Almighty") is clear from testimonies such as the following:

...too much praise cannot be given to the building committee for selecting architects who had the brains and taste to use suitable materials in the finishing of their work. Here we have for the first time, nearly, in St. Louis church architecture, wood undaubed with paint, and bricks whose natural color, suited to the plan of the interior decoration, are neither concealed by mortar or paint. We have the real material out of which the building is constructed standing for what it is worth....<sup>29</sup>

In a word, its beauty is a direct outgrowth of the honest use of good materials, honestly exhibited for what they are, and not made to look like what they are not.<sup>30</sup>

Merit was also found in the church's simple design, having no pretense of being a "lofty and grand cathedral",<sup>31</sup> and in its "honest" plan where each space "shows externally for what it really is."<sup>32</sup> The church was clearly recognized as an important model for the future "which nothing but unwisdom amounting almost to imbecility"<sup>33</sup> would prevent its being copied.

A few years before his death in 1887, Eliot was publically acknowledged the "most influential man in St. Louis" and the church he had forged eulogized by the St. Louis Republican:

The congregation...in culture, standing and wealth, as well as in earnest and the more important qualities, zealous work and devotion to duty, is not excelled in St. Louis. It numbers men and women who have achieved distinction in business, in the professions, in literature and in art.<sup>34</sup>

In 1906, when the Church of the Messiah was forced again to relocate in response to the westward move of the congregation, the era of uncommon leadership and community service had closed. Eliot's son, Henry Ware Eliot, explained:

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"St. Louis is now too large a city for any one institution to play a part in public affairs as our church did in its early days."<sup>35</sup> The fourth church at Union and Enright in the Central West End was less ambitious, reflecting the diminished size and relative stature of the congregation. However, the decision to sell the old church at Garrison and Locust in 1906 to the only black congregation of the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri, All Saints Episcopal Church, paid homage to William Greenleaf Eliot and the early members:

There is nevertheless, something particularly fitting in the fact that our old church building should now furnish a place of worship to the negroes whose freedom its early members labored so well to establish and whose lot in slavery days they did so much to alleviate.<sup>36</sup>

All Saints Episcopal Church remained in the Peabody & Stearns building for over fifty years (1906-1957) followed by the Star of Bethlehem Baptist Church (1957-1967) and then the Baptist Church of the Good Shepherd. In 1978, ownership passed to the building's present occupants, the First Cathedral Church of the Apostolic Faith, a small black congregation led by Rev. John D. Layne. Keenly aware of the church's architectural and historical significance, Rev. Layne has invested everything within his limited means to make critical repairs essential for keeping the building structurally secure. Optimistic, he hopes to see the building restored to its original integrity.

Throughout the nineteenth century, Eliot and the Church of the Messiah were a pioneering and increasingly powerful force confronting problems of urbanization and industrialization that established St. Louis as a model in social reform for other cities. However, Eliot's conviction that "the best citizen...receives from the community he serves far more than he can give"<sup>37</sup> prompted him to keep his name from institutions and memorials for which he deserved recognition. His efforts were so successful that few, today, are fully aware of his great legacy. The loss of the Church of the Messiah would remove a major work from the Peabody & Stearns' canon, and the only building directly linked to William Greenleaf Eliot and his church's extraordinary contribution to the social history of this county.

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F O O T N O T E S

<sup>1</sup>Urban clearance has removed all trace of Eliot's four homes, his first two churches and the old Washington University campus. The fourth Church of the Messiah (1907) was built after his death. Important associations also exist with Eliot's grandson, poet, T. S. Eliot (1888-1965).

<sup>2</sup>It is beyond the scope of the nomination to discuss individual achievements of the congregation which include involvement with the founding of the Mercantile Library, the Academy of Science, the Missouri Historical Society and numerous social service institutions.

<sup>3</sup>Telephone interview with Wheaton A. Holden, Peabody scholar, Northeastern University, Boston, MA, January, 1980.

<sup>4</sup>Charles Dickens, Works, Vol. 11: American Notes (New York: Scribner, 1924), p. 389.

<sup>5</sup>W. G. Eliot to T. L. Eliot, Portland, OR, 4 October 1876, Eliot Letters, Washington University Archives, St. Louis, Missouri.

<sup>6</sup>W. G. Eliot, Establishing Ordinance, 22 February 1953, Corporation Records, Vol. A, pp. 10-11, Washington University Archives, St. Louis, Missouri.

<sup>7</sup>W. S. Swisher, A History of the Church of the Messiah, 1834-1934 ([St. Louis: Unitarian Church of the Messiah], 1934), p. 32.

<sup>8</sup>Alexander S. Langsdorf, "The Lengthening Shadow of a Man," 125 Years of Unitarianism in St. Louis 1835-1960 (St. Louis: n.p., 1960), n.p.

<sup>9</sup>Thomas J. Scharf, History of St. Louis City and County, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts & Co., 1883), Vol. 2, p. 1730.

<sup>10</sup>Republican (Springfield, MA), 2 January 1872, Eliot Notebooks, Notebook 8, Washington University Archives, St. Louis, Missouri.

<sup>11</sup>Charles M. Dye, "William Greenleaf Eliot and Washington University, St. Louis: An Innovation in Nineteenth Century American Higher Education," Missouri Historical Society Bulletin 35 (April, 1979): 131-146.

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<sup>12</sup>James Yeatman quoted in Charlotte Stearns Eliot, William Greenleaf Eliot (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1904), p. 350.

<sup>13</sup>Selwyn K. Troen and Glen E. Holt, eds., St. Louis (New York: New Viewpoints, 1977), pp. 103-104.

<sup>14</sup>John C. Burnham, "The Social Evil Ordinance--A Social Experiment in Nineteenth Century St. Louis," Missouri Historical Society Bulletin 27 (April, 1971): 211-216.

<sup>15</sup>W. G. Eliot to T. L. Eliot, Portland, OR, 21 December 1872, Eliot Letters, Washington University Archives, St. Louis, Missouri. Eliot was also planning to build another church on Grand Avenue.

<sup>16</sup>Eliot lived at two addresses in the Stoddard Addition, located conveniently a few blocks from the church and the university.

<sup>17</sup>Camille N. Dry and Richard J. Compton, Pictorial St. Louis: The Great Metropolis of the Mississippi Valley (St. Louis: Compton & Co., 1876; reprint ed., St. Louis: Harry M. Hagen, 1971), p. 107.

<sup>18</sup>W. G. Eliot, "Why Should a New Church be Built?" January, 1877, Eliot Notebooks, Washington University Archives, St. Louis, Missouri.

<sup>19</sup>Joseph A. Dacus and James W. Buel, A Tour of St. Louis; or, The Inside Life of a Great City (St. Louis: Western Publishing Co., 1878), p. 371. The boundaries of the Stoddard Addition were: Dayton to the north, Olive to the south, Jefferson to the east and Compton to the west.

<sup>20</sup>Eliot Notebooks, Number 10, Washington University Archives, St. Louis, Missouri. In the same notebook exists a form letter signed by Eliot, dated 24 November 1877 inviting church members to meet to discuss the "desirableness of a new church."

<sup>21</sup>Robert S. Peabody's father, Rev. Ephraim Peabody, officiated at Eliot's ordination in Boston, and edited a Unitarian publication with Eliot and another minister. The architect was an active member of the Unitarian Church throughout his life.

<sup>22</sup>Earl Morse Wilbur and Evadne Hilands, A Time to Build (Portland, OR: The First Unitarian Society, 1966), p. 27.

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<sup>23</sup>Peabody's notebook entries establish he was in St. Louis in early October, 1878. Unpublished notebooks, property of Wheaton Holden, Boston.

<sup>24</sup>W. G. Eliot to T. L. Eliot, Portland, OR, 28 March 1875, Eliot Letters, Washington University Archives, St. Louis, Missouri.

<sup>25</sup>R. S. Peabody, "Modern Church Architecture," American Architect and Building News 2 (8 December 1877): 393.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Eliot Letters, 7 November 1875, Washington University Archives, St. Louis, Missouri.

<sup>29</sup>Veritas (pseud.), "Our Church Architecture," St. Louis Spectator 1 (8 January 1881): 183.

<sup>30</sup>Observer (pseud.), "Our Churches Again," St. Louis Spectator 1 (15 January 1881): 199.

<sup>31</sup>Pazza (pseud.), "Architecture, With Critical Notes on First Methodist Episcopal Church, The New Custom-House, and the Church of the Messiah," St. Louis Spectator 1 (1 January 1881): 163.

<sup>32</sup>Observer, p. 199.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>"The Church of the Messiah," St. Louis Republican, 18 October 1885.

<sup>35</sup>Henry Ware Eliot, "A Short History of the Church of the Messiah," address presented to the Men's Club of the church, 29 March 1916, Missouri Historical Society collections, St. Louis, Missouri.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

An article in The Church News, November, 1906, stated that the Unitarian Church had sold the church to the black congregation at a price considerably lower than what they could have received.

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Eliot's personal support of emancipation is well illustrated by the protection he gave Missouri slave, Archer Alexander, who later was memorialized in Eliot's biography of him, and in a very popular bronze sculpture by Thomas Ball (1819-1911), the "Freedman's Memorial" (1874), first executed for the Capitol grounds in Washington, and then copied for Boston. Typically, Eliot declined the request that he officially present the monument in Washington for the Western Sanitary Commission which raised funds for the sculpture and was responsible for the portrait likeness of Alexander instead of an idealized figure. Charlotte S. Eliot, William Greenleaf Eliot (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1904), pp. 346-351.

<sup>37</sup>"A Semi-Centennial....Dr. W. G. Eliot Declines a Public Reception," Unidentified newspaper article, 27 November 1884, The Scrapbook of Marshall S. Snow, p. 107, Washington University Archives, St. Louis, Missouri.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See attached.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. .7 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Granite City

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 741870 4270325

B         

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Church of the Messiah is located in City Block 1013 on a lot which is 175 feet by 175 feet square on the corner of Locust Boulevard and North Garrison Avenue.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Mary M. Stirtz, Research Associate and Jill R. Johnson, Researcher

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc.

3/6/80

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

611 Olive Street, Suite 2187

(314) 421-6474 or (314) 421-1778

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

St. Louis

MO

63101

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

STATE   

LOCAL   

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Director, Department of Natural Resources and State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

ATTEST: KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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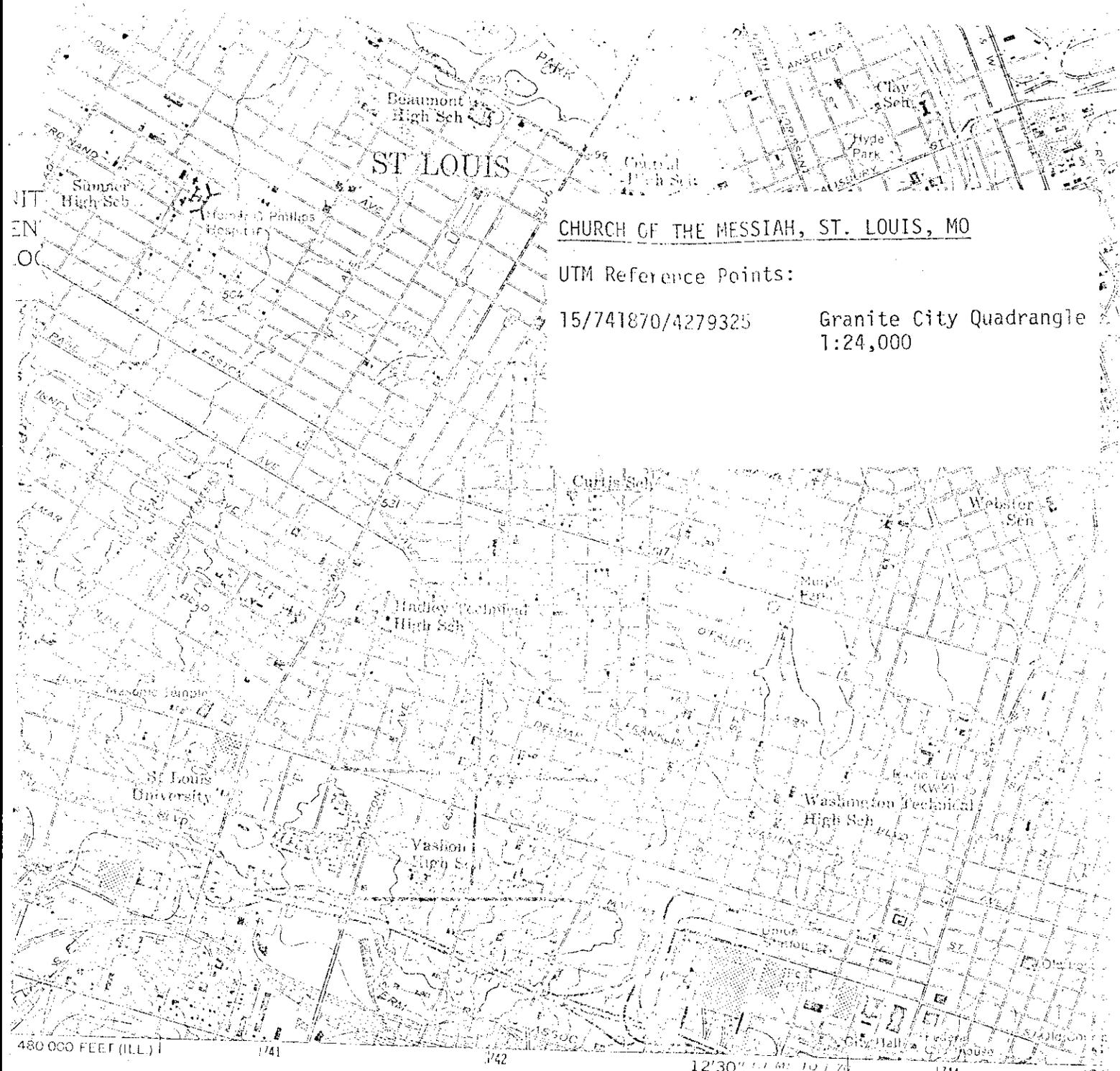
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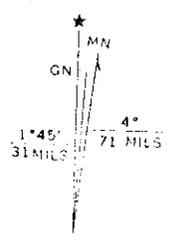
CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH, ST. LOUIS, MO

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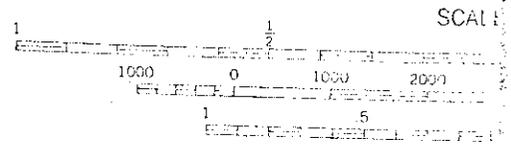
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Granite City Quadrangle  
1:24,000

Geological Survey  
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 civil use by the Geological Survey  
 USGS and USC&GS  
 maps and photostereograms by the Geological Survey 1930  
 metric detail revised from aerial photographs  
 field check 1954  
 datum. 1927 North American datum  
 coordinates based on Illinois coordinate system, west zone  
 coordinate system, east zone  
 Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15.  
 areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



UTM GRID AND 1974 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



SCALE  
 CONTOUR IN  
 DOTTED LINES REPRESENT  
 NATIONAL GEODETIC

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACT  
 FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
 STATE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
 AND BY THE DIVISION OF RESEARCH, MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS

CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH, ST. LOUIS, MO

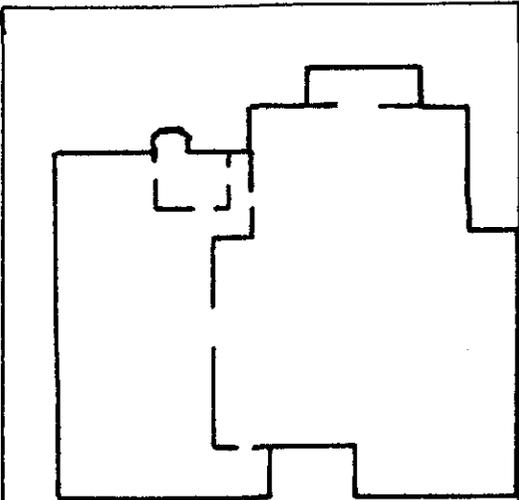
Site Plan

Draftsman: Pat Hays Baer  
Date: January 1980

SITE PLAN:  
CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH  
ST. LOUIS, MO.

N. GARRISON AVE.

508



CB 1013

LOCUST BLVD.

1 1/2" = 50'

MAP: JANUARY 1980 · PAT HAYS BAER

CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI  
Photo #1 Southern & western elevations  
c. 1880-85

From: L'Architecture Americaine (Paris:  
Andre, Daly fils Cie., 1886).  
Republished in American Victorian  
Architecture (New York: Dover, Inc.,  
1975), p. 31.

Photocopy: Silver Image Ltd, 1980.

Negative: Landmarks Association of St.  
Louis, Inc.



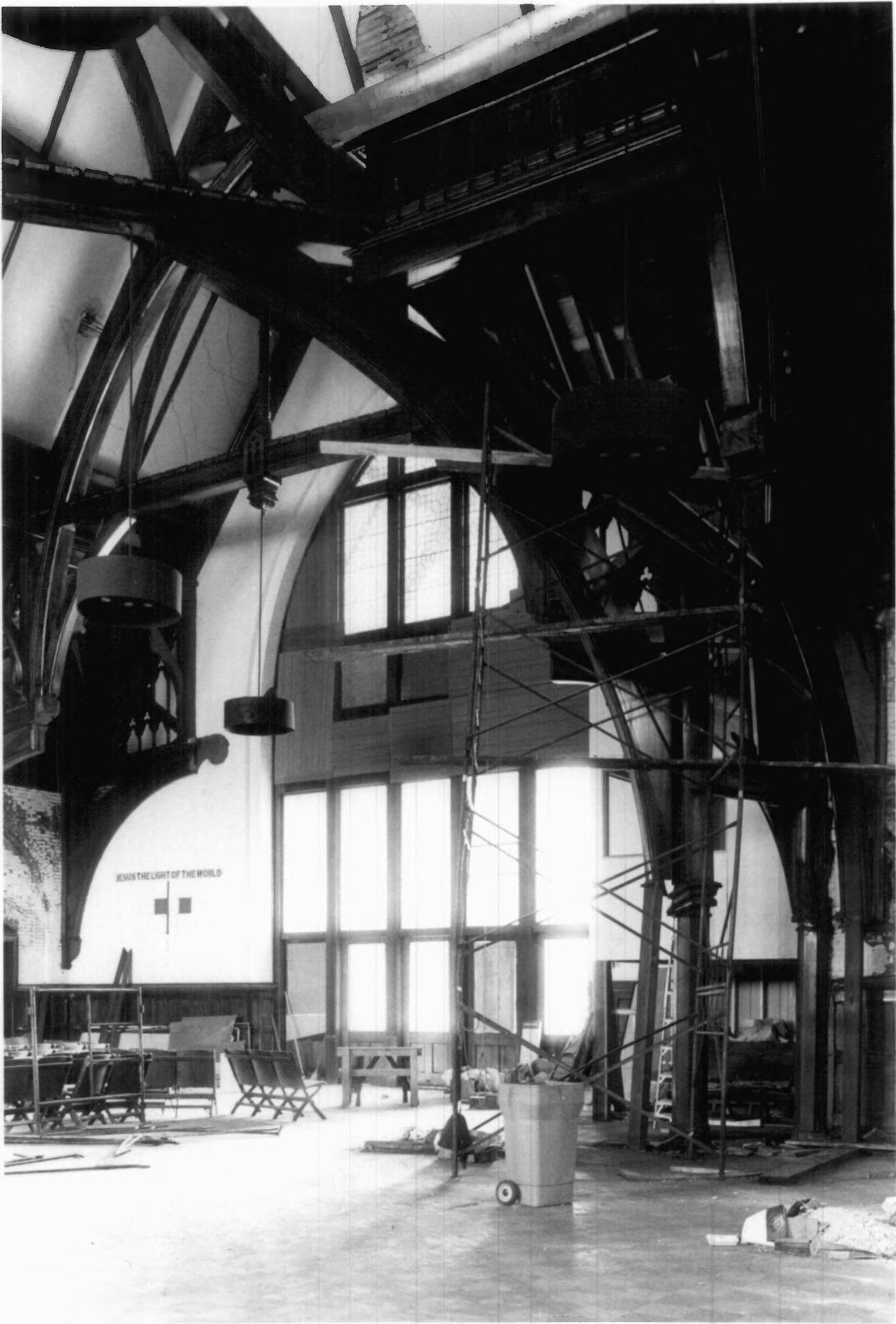
CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Photo #2 Interior view looking south toward  
doors in south transept arch.

Photographer: Jill R. Johnson

Date: November, 1979

Negative: Landmarks Association of St. Louis



CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

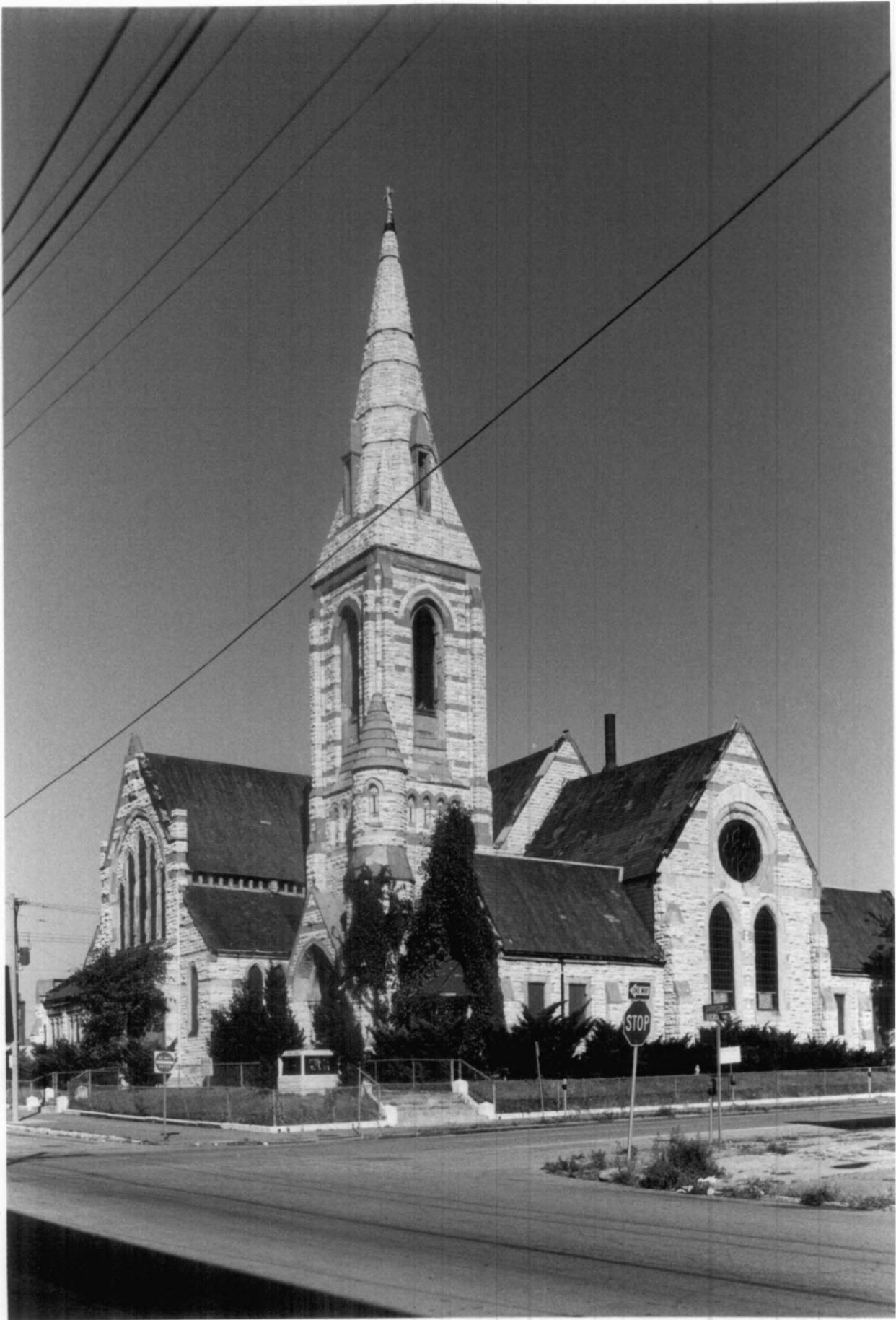
Photo #3 Southern & western elevations.

Photographer: Jill R. Johnson

Date: November, 1979

Negative: Landmarks Association of St. Louis

Camera facing northeast.



CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Photo #4 Interior ceiling, looking west  
toward original stained glass  
windows.

Photographer: Jill R. Johnson

Date: November, 1979

Negative: Landmarks Association of St. Louis



CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Photo #5 Interior of church looking east  
toward chancel.

Photographer: Jill R. Johnson

Date: November, 1979

Negative: Landmarks Association of St. Louis



CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

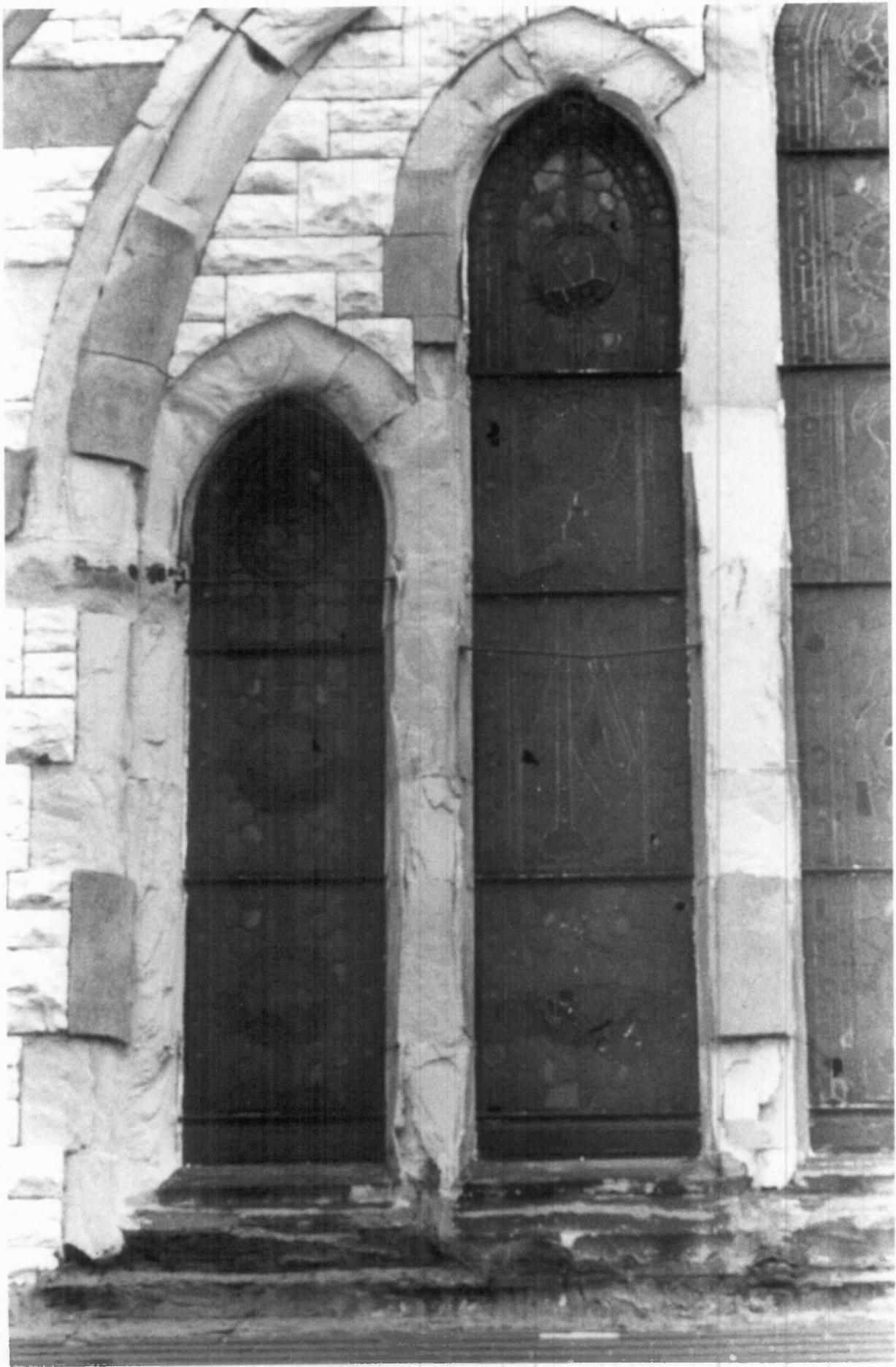
Photo #6 Detail of western window group.

Photographer: Jill R. Johnson

Date: November, 1979

Negative: Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis, Inc.

Camera facing east.



CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

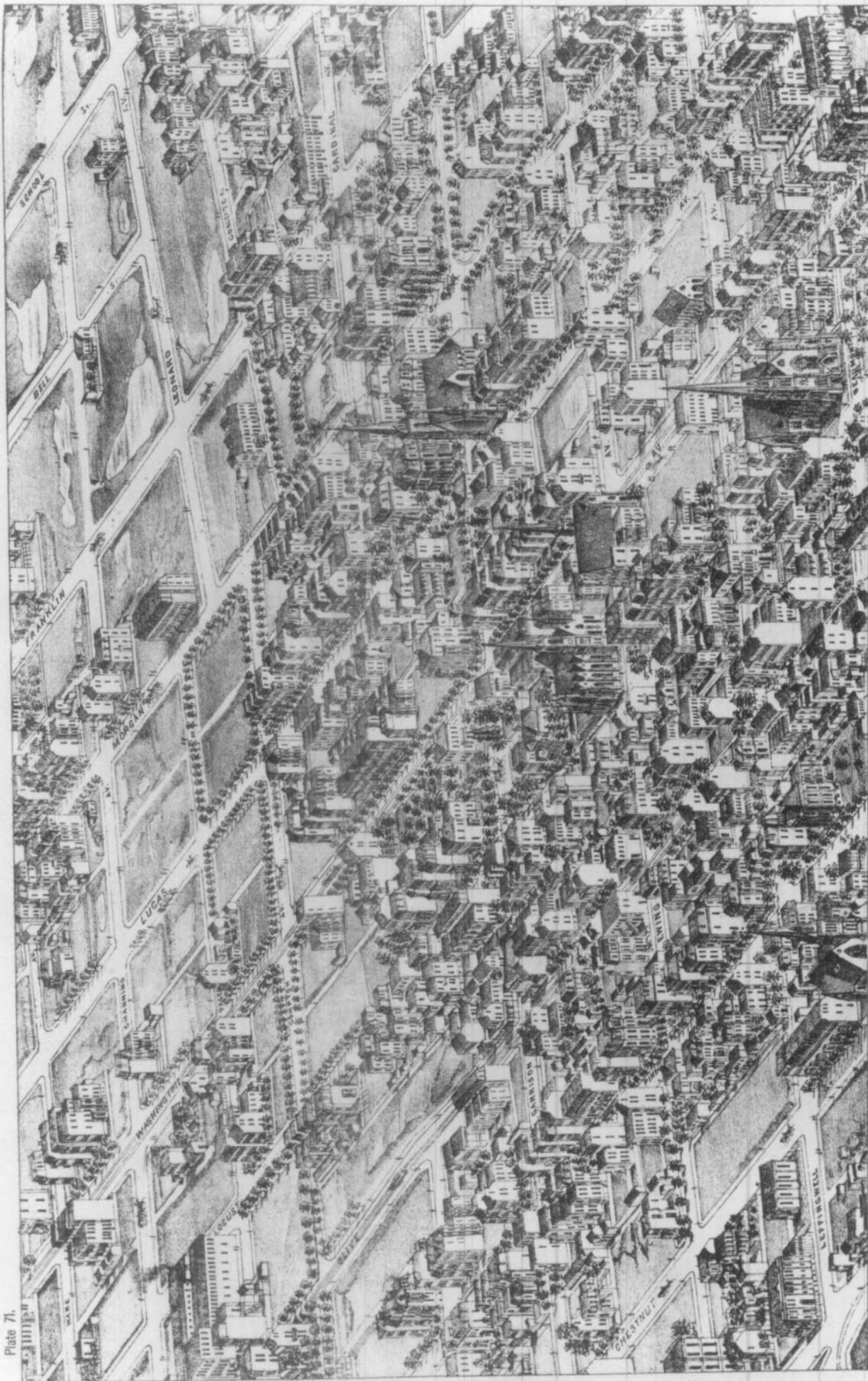
Photo #7 View of Stoddard Addition, facing northwest, showing future site of the Third Church of the Messiah.

From: Pictorial St. Louis (St. Louis: Compton & Co., 1876), Plate 71.

Photocopy: Silver Image Ltd., 1979.

Negative: Landmarks Association of St. Louis

Plate 7.



- 1. Boston Station, James B. B. - Ch.
- 2. St. Louis Cathedral
- 3. P. S. Duval
- 4. S. C. Taylor
- 5. St. V. W. W.
- 6. St. V. W. W.
- 7. J. P. K.
- 8. St. V. W. W.
- 9. St. V. W. W.
- 10. St. V. W. W.
- 11. Mrs. G. W. W.
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