This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property
   historic name Alswel
   other names/site number Lemp, William Estate

2. Location
   street & number 12696 Alswell Lane
   city, town Sunset Hills
   state Missouri code MO county St. Louis code 189 zip code 63128

3. Classification
   Ownership of Property Category of Property Number of Resources within Property
   private building(s) Contributing Noncontributing
   public-local district 1 buildings
   public-State site 11 sites
   public-Federal structure 11 structures
   object 2 objects
   2 0 Total

   Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

   Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification
   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

   Signature of certifying official: Frederick A. Brunner, Ph.D., P.E., Director, Date
   State or Federal agency and bureau

   In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

   Signature of commenting or other official Date

   State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification
   I, hereby, certify that this property is:
   [ ] entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
   [ ] determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
   [ ] removed from the National Register.
   [ ] other, (explain:)

   Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
Alswel is a large cypress-clad chalet-like house set at the top of a bluff two-hundred feet above the Meramec River. The house has two full stories and a third level in the lea of the all-embracing gable roof. From the entrance side, the embankment nearly hides the ground floor, which is concrete construction. The upper stories are surfaced in cypress planks, applied shiplap-style on the second story, vertically on the third. The same material forms brackets, balustrades and friezes. The interior is unusually arranged, with most of the public rooms on the level below the entry, a large reception hall and four bedrooms at entry level, and four more bedrooms on the third floor. Interior detailing, essentially unaltered except in the kitchen, reflects the Craftsman movement. Alswel originally presided over an estate of about 200 acres. The present grounds are much reduced but retain the most important aspects of the historic setting. The arrow-straight entrance drive is now partly converted into a suburban street, mistakenly spelled Alswell Lane. The view of the river remains unobstructed, underlined as seen from the house by a stone retaining wall and viewing pavilion. The house itself is currently having central air-conditioning installed but is otherwise in virtually unchanged condition.

The salient feature of the house is its roof, a front-facing gable with very long low-angled slopes. On both north and south slopes are low, wide dormers with similar roofs. Both dormers and main roof have tile cresting. Punctuating the roofline are red brick chimneys, each with its own gabled roof above corbeled and arched openings. These chimney pavilions imitate the belfries found on authentic Tyrolean chalets. The picturesque appearance of the house disguises its structure of reinforced concrete and steel. The concrete is finished in a very irregular sand-colored aggregate but smoothed out in a white finish around doors and windows. These window surrounds are shaped at the corners and center in somewhat Baroque style. The front steps and entry porch are blue-toned terrazzo. Massive brackets at the corners of the ground floor and a few intermediate locations support the balcony which runs around three sides of the house at second-floor level. The balcony is of reinforced concrete paved with quarry tiles. Its balustrades have square posts and flat slats which are notched in such a way that they form a pattern of circular holes alternating at top and bottom. These balustrades appear also on the front porch, on the third-floor balcony above the entry, and on the similar third-floor balcony on the river side. The entrance is sheltered by a broad shed roof supported by carved brackets. It has elaborately scalloped shingles forming a frieze, a larger version of which also appears on the edges of the main roof and the gables and below the third-floor riverside balcony. Two of the first floor windows on that side have gables similarly trimmed.
The cypress cladding of the upper floors employs a variety of decorative motifs. The frames of the second-floor windows are wide and scalloped on top. The vertical boards siding the third floor are scalloped at the bottom in a pattern that matches the frieze of the entry porch and continues its line.

Many of the interior spaces of Alswel are strikingly detailed, but period and ethnic influences are replaced by the materials and motifs of the Craftsman movement. From the main drive, one enters the large parquet-floored living hall, which extends through the house to the riverfront balcony. It has a high ceiling with exposed trusses and an art-glass skylight. On one side a massive fireplace of rockfaced granite has a bracketed mantel, while on the other side, a stair descends to the ground floor. The somewhat narrower end of the room toward the river can be set off by portieres, for which the recessed rod is still in place. At the corners of this floor are large bedrooms with bathrooms and dressing rooms at the corners. A service staircase is set back off to the left of the entry.

The main staircase opens into the ground floor living room by way of a landing which has three steps down at both ends. This irregularly shaped room has a large alcove extending under the overhanging balcony toward the river. The fireplace combines bricks of an unusual aggregate composition with a micaceous limestone. The wainscoting is said to be sugi, or Japanese cypress; bookcases with leaded-glass doors are fitted into this paneling next to the fireplace and next to the stair.

The dining room beyond has full paneling in mahogany, with a built-in buffet or serving board. The ceiling of this room is a shallow cross-vault. At the southwest corner of the house is a garden room, also called the breakfast room, separated from the dining room by glass doors. It has a tile floor, half-timbered walls, a beamed plank ceiling, and a massive fireplace with an iron hood and an ornamental spit.

On the north side of the house is an entry area walled in red brick, with a powder room to one side. This entry leads to the northeast room, called the billiard room. One of the most carefully detailed rooms in the house, it has a tile floor, beamed ceiling, and walls surfaced to wainscot level with gray-brown brick laid with recessed gray joints. The brick fireplace is trimmed with rockfaced stones and flanked by cabinets with glass doors. The windows in this room as well as the windows in its door have muntins in a pattern of nine circles with diamond-shaped interstices.

The service rooms on the ground floor include a kitchen lined with white-enameled brick, a butler's pantry, a scullery, and a boiler room, which
extends under the entrance porch and drops about ten feet below the level of the other ground-floor rooms.

Four more bedrooms and two baths are located on the third floor, which centers on a large hall. Occupying most of this room is the art-glass window lighting the living hall below. It is surrounded by a white-painted balustrade. Above it opens a rectangular lantern or cupola.

Steps descend on both sides of the house from the entrance drive to the back yard, which extends in a gentle grade about 120 feet to a stone retaining wall. At the north end of the wall is an octagonal pavilion with a cupola, while a little beyond the south end is a circular stone tower with a flat wooden roof arranged as a viewing platform. Beyond the line of the wall, the ground drops steeply about 150 feet down a wooded hillside to the floodplain of the Meramec River. Since the ground on the other side of the river is much lower, the view from the house is panoramic. Directly opposite Alswel is George Winter Park, the property of St. Louis County. The ground immediately around the house has recently been subdivided, and the nominated property is defined by the new plat.

NOTES


8. Statement of Significance

"Alswel", the country estate of William J. Lemp, Jr. is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C. It's significance lies in the area of Architecture because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Swiss Chalet style, which first achieved a degree of popularity in the 1850's, but which is virtually unknown in Missouri. Country houses were built by St. Louis businessmen on the outskirts of the city from the 1850's to the 1920's, some for part-time and some for full-time residence. Lemp's Alswel is a significant example of this trend; started in 1911, the estate was occupied by its builder through 1921. Though not the largest or most expensive, Alswel is perhaps the most unusual of the exurban mansions of its era.

ARCHITECTURE

Alswel, built between 1911 and 1914, is a late example of the Swiss Chalet style. English pattern books including designs for wooden houses based on Swiss and German chalets appeared in America as early as the 1820's, and Andrew Jackson Downing's popular books, Cottage Residences (1842) and The Architecture of Country Houses (1850), illustrated several examples.1 The "Swiss Cottage" shown as Design XI in Country Houses has the same high foundation, widely angled roofline, clapboard siding, and large brackets to support balconies and overhanging roof as Alswel.2 Other "Swiss" designs were published by S. H. Brooks, John Bullock, Henry W. Cleveland, and others. These plans were for relatively modest structures, but by the 1850's high style architects were also employing the style, influenced as much by the German periodical Architektonisches Skizzen-Buch, as by English and American sources. The "Tirolerhauschen" illustrated in these pages were directly inspired by native Alpine buildings. Leopold Eidlitz and Richard Upjohn were two of the most prominent architects to design houses influenced by these sources in the 1850's and 1860's. Chalet designs were also transmitted via publications from France, where Alpine chalets had enjoyed a vogue since at least the 1840's; an old chalet from Berne had actually been reconstructed in the Bois Du Boulogne. Richard Morris Hunt, who had studied for many years in France, made use of these sources in several houses built just after the Civil War, when, as Sarah Bradford Landau writes, "Americans recognized the potential of the Swiss chalet, traditionally associated with hilly, rural, and waterside sites, as a piquant style for summer and suburban houses."3

See continuation sheet
One such, actually called "The Chalet," was built by Hunt for Mrs. Colford Jones in Newport, 1866-67. Other chalet-like houses were designed in the post-war period by such notable architects as Jacob Wrey Mould, Edward Tuckerman Potter (one of whose houses was called "Bavarian" by a contemporary writer) and William Le Baron Jenney.

Many of these designers were attracted to the chalet because of its potential for ornamental "gingerbread" and brightly colored polychromy, which in their hands often diverged from the Alpine model into the realm of fantasy. By the time Alswel was built, high-style American architecture was more accurate in replicating European precedents. Alswel is specifically modeled on the so-called Tyrolean chalet, which is actually a German form developed in the Chiemgau region south of Munich and carried into the Lower Inn Valley of Austria by Bavarian settlers. Alswel reflects this type in its relatively low-pitched roof, its long balconies, and its belfry-like chimneys.

Vincent Scully in his pioneering studies of the Stick Style, saw early "Swiss" houses as precursors of modernism because of their structural expressiveness. Later scholars, however, have observed that the seemingly structural patterning of vertical and horizontal boards on many American chalets is usually sheer decoration. Alswel too has a non-structural exterior; its fragile-looking cypress siding conceals a sturdy steel and concrete frame. The architect, Guy Norton, was the staff architect for the Lemp Brewery, and his experience was primarily in large industrial buildings where such structural technology would have been commonplace.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

St. Louis County has been seen as a retreat from the City of St. Louis since the eighteenth century, when colonial governor Zenon Trudeau is said to have had a country retreat near Spanish Lake. Some of these houses have been weekend and summer places of resort, while others were primary places of residence. They have been distinct from the surrounding farms and villages in that the owners had their primary business interests and sources of income in the city. The cost of leading such dual existences meant that these exurbanites were among the most prominent people in St. Louis life. William Clark, the last territorial governor, had a town house at Main and Vine but also a large country estate on Natural Bridge Road. Early millionaire John Mullanphy had a retreat called "Taille de Noyer," near Florissant which his daughter Jane Chambers made her permanent home, while a second daughter Catherine Graham settled at "Hazelwood" nearby. James Lucas and his sister Anne Lucas Hunt owned most of the land that became downtown St. Louis, but they also had vast estates in Normandy, where Lucas and Hunt Road is named for them.
Beginning in the 1850's, the railroads enabled more people to live farther from town while maintaining their business interests there. William McPherson, president of the Pacific Railroad, built a house at Glendale Station, where his neighbor was Hudson Bridge, a director of the railroad and president of both the Mercantile Library and Bellefontaine Cemetery, major city institutions. The Pacific Railroad had transcontinental ambitions and an ambivalent attitude toward suburban commuting, but some lines were specifically intended for that purpose, most notably the Westend Narrow-Gauge Railroad, which went past the Clark and Lucas estates to Florissant. It stimulated the construction of many suburban estates, of which the Pine Lawn Carriage House is the last remaining structure.

Toward the end of the century, the banks of the Meramec River began to attract similar development. The river, which has its origins in the Ozarks, flows through St. Louis from west to east. Midway through the county it makes a long southern bend, and the high bluffs along the north and east banks afford wide vistas of the lower plain to the south and west and the distant hills beyond. In the early nineteenth century hopes had been entertained that the Meramec could support regular navigation, but water levels proved to be too irregular for that, and the river remained largely undeveloped throughout the century. In 1895, however, a resort called the Meramec Highlands opened at the bend in the river about three miles north of Alswel. Served by the Missouri Pacific Railroad, it had a large hotel, cottages, a dance hall, and many recreational facilities.

In the next few years the brewer Joseph Griesedieck and the stovemaker Louis Stockstrom acquired adjacent properties about a mile and a half south of Meramec Highlands where they built private estates as retreats from the city. Later, houses for year-round occupancy were built. William Lemp's younger brother Edwin built "Cragwold" on a hill overlooking the river in 1911, the same year that brewer August Busch built the palatial mansion at "Grant's Farm" on Gravois Road closer to the city. The next year Anheuser-Busch converted a nearby restaurant into the Sunset Hills Country Club, and in 1913 Busch's son Adolphus Busch III built "Grandview" adjacent to it. This area may have been attractive to so many brewers in part because it was easily accessible via Gravois Road to the southern part of the city, where most of the breweries were located. Cragwold has a half-timbered exterior, Grant's Farm is a French chateau of the late sixteenth century, and Grandview is Colonial Revival. Alswel stands out in this group for its exotic style.

WILLIAM J. LEMP, JUNIOR

At the time he built Alswel, William Jacob Lemp, Junior, was a leader of the St. Louis brewing industry and a well-known figure on the St. Louis social
scene. Born in 1867, he was the son of William Lemp, Senior, and the grandson of John or Johan Adam Lemp, a German immigrant who had established St. Louis's first lager-beer brewery about 1841. Beermaking in the St. Louis area actually went back to 1810, when Jacques St. Yrain started a brewery near Fort Bellefontaine, but lager beer, brewed by slow fermentation and stored in cool cellars for maturing, was a better product and soon came to dominate the trade. Lemp's Western Brewery, located initially on Second Street south of Walnut (now in the midst of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial), was only one of more than a score of breweries operating in St. Louis at mid-century, but it gradually became the largest and most successful.

Adam Lemp was succeeded at his death in 1862 by his son William, who expanded distribution of the brew nationally and to Mexico, the Caribbean, South America, and even Japan. After the Civil War, operations were moved south about thirty blocks to Broadway and Cherokee, where deep natural caves were available for beer storage. By 1877 the buildings were said to be "the largest and handsomest in this line in the country." The company had 24 branch breweries in 13 states by 1893. The technology required for brewing produced several subsidiary businesses, too. A separate Western Cable Railway Company was organized, initially to link the brewery to the shipping yards. Up to 150 tons of ice were produced each day for refrigeration during the lagering process, and this capacity lead to the establishment of cold storage companies in Joplin, Sedalia, Little Rock, Dallas, and El Paso.

A graduate of Washington University, William Lemp, Junior, attended the United Brewers Academy in New York before joining the family firm as vice president in 1892, the year it became the William J. Lemp Brewing Company. When William Lemp, Senior, committed suicide in 1904, William Junior succeeded him as head of the brewery and all the related companies, which gave him enormous influence on the St. Louis business scene. William Marion Reedy wrote of him in 1912, "Verily he do cut some ice."

In the popular mind, however, Lemp was best known for his extravagant private life. The Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis referred in 1899 to his collection of Oriental furs and ivories, bronzes and bric-a-brac, and said he had a great fondness for horses. He once complained to a reporter that it was hard to find places to spend money and added that he used to spend $5,000 a year for beer alone in entertaining -- and he owned the company.

His marriage in 1899 to Lillian Handlan greatly increased popular interest in the Lemps. A contemporary said of Lillian, who was nearly ten years younger than William, "It is very difficult not to be rude and stare, because she is so handsome a lady." She was the daughter of Alexander Hamilton Handlan (1844-1921), who had made a fortune manufacturing and distributing railway supplies, and her spending habits were comparable to her husband's.
employed a private dressmaker who kept five seamstresses working almost continuously, and nearly all her clothes were violet, grape, mauve, or some other shade of purple, perhaps in imitation of the Empress Alexandra of Russia. The newspapers began to call her "the Lavender Lady." Shortly after William Lemp's mother died in 1906, "Bill just up and tells the public that he couldn't stand it with Lil and had to get out," Reedy reported; "But, of course, Bill was never noted for tact." The divorce trial that took place in 1909 was extensively reported in the papers. Lillian testified that Lemp, who was quite short and weighed only 120 pounds, took a handgun to bed with him for protection and after their frequent quarrels continually threatened suicide.

Lemp's move to Alswel following the divorce, which became final in 1911, marked a change in the family tradition of living close to the business. Adam Lemp had lived right in the Second Street complex. When the brewery moved to Cherokee Street, Adam's widow settled at 3343 South 13th Street (now DeMenil Place) and his son at 3322, both within a block of the brewery. William Lemp, Junior, had moved into his grandmother's residence after his marriage. This change was part of the larger trend outlined above, but it was no doubt influenced by the social trauma of the divorce. At a time when divorce was rare and severely stigmatized Alswel was, in its remoteness, a retreat from censure and, in its magnificence, a reward to loyal friends.

A year after his move, Lemp remarried. His new wife was Ellie Koehler Limberg, the daughter of Casper Koehler, the president of the former Columbia Brewing Company consolidated in 1907 into the Independent Brewing Company. Her brother Julius Koehler owned land adjacent to Alswel, and although business rivals the two families had been friends for many years. Ellie was the widow of Rudolph Limberg (1863-1910), who had founded the Excelsior Brewery, and later had joined his father-in-law in incorporating the Columbia Brewery. She was the mother of Edward A. Limberg, who had married the previous autumn, and her own marriage took place at his house. The Globe-Democrat reported "Mrs. Lemp is considered very attractive and is so youthful in appearance and manner that she looks more like her son's sister than his mother." She was four years older than her new husband.

The following years were the heyday of Alswel, where William and Ellie Lemp resided on their return from their wedding trip. This idyll was brought to an end by the ratification of the eighteenth amendment of the U.S. Constitution in 1919, which prohibited the manufacture of alcoholic beverages. Many brewing companies were able to remain in operation by turning to nonalcoholic beverages and related products such as yeast. Lemp, however, seemed unable to make this transition. The brewery buildings, which had been valued at seven million dollars in 1919, were sold on June 28, 1922, for less than $600,000 to
the International Shoe Company, and the Falstaff brand name with its distinctive escutcheon was purchased by the Griesedieck brewery. William and Ellie moved to the Chase Hotel and offered Alswel for sale. On December 29, 1922, William J. Lemp, Jr., put a bullet through his heart.

Back in 1912 Reedy had written, "discerning people will see the fundamental quality of Billy Lemp in the fact that it was he who called the most popular brand of his brewery product, Falstaff! There's a fine business, fine sense of humor, noble literary association and historic perspective in the name." He might have added that at the end there is also profound pathos.

In the absence of any offers, Alswel was auctioned by Lemp's executors in 1925. The estate gradually dwindled in size until 1987, when the last remaining acres around the main house were subdivided. The house itself, however, has remained in almost unchanged condition, a reminder of a way of life that enjoyed brief but vivid prominence.

NOTES

2. This illustration was republished by Vincent J. Scully, Jr., The Shingle Style and The Stick Style, (New Haven: Yale University Press, revised edition 1971).


11. An early promoter of Meramec River development was William Lindsay Long, who founded the town of Fenton on its banks in 1818. His later log house at 9385 Pardee Lane, Crestwood is listed on the National Register.


1877," Vol. 16, No. 2 (January 1960), pp. 154-157. The remaining brewery buildings and the Lemp Mansion at 3343 DeMenil Place are included in the Benton Park District listed on the National Register.


22. Cited by May Alsop, "The Lavender Lady," The Soulard Restorationist, Vol. XI, No. 5 (1986), pp. 18-34. This is the most detailed source of information on Lemp's relationship to his first wife.

23. Ibid.


27. The Book of St. Louisans (St. Louis Republic, 1906).


9. Major Bibliographical References


Previous documentation on file (NPS):

[ ] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
[ ] previously listed in the National Register
[ ] previously determined eligible by the National Register
[ ] designated a National Historic Landmark
[ ] recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #__________
[ ] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #_____

Primary location of additional data:

[ ] State historic preservation office
[ ] Other State agency
[ ] Federal agency
[ ] Local government
[ ] University
[ ] Other

Specify repository:

St. Louis County Dept. of Parks & Recreation 
41 S. Central Ave., Clayton, MO 63105

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approximately 1.5 acres

UTM References

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 12, The Enclave, a tract of land being part of lots 9, 10 & 11 of the subdivision of the Boli Tract, Township 44 North, Range 5 East, and being in U. S. Surveys 1933 and 1197, St. Louis County, Missouri.

Boundary Justification

Boundaries correspond with the current property legal description. The original Lemp estate was much larger, but all land except property immediately surrounding the house has been sold off and subdivided through the years.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Esley Hamilton
organization St. Louis County Dept. of Parks & Recreation date March 31, 1988
street & number 41 S. Central Avenue telephone (314) 889-3357
city or town Clayton state Missouri zip code 63105

7. St. Louis Daily Record, April 8, 1911; May 23, 1914.


2. Beverly A. Fleming  
Chief, Preservation Planning  
Historic Preservation Program  
Department of Natural Resources  
P. O. Box 176  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102  
Phone: 314/751-7960  
Date: July 26, 1988
**Photo Log:**

Name of Property: **Alswel**  
City or Vicinity: **Sunset Hills vicinity**  
County: **St. Louis County**  
State: **MO**  
Photographer: **Esley Hamilton**  
Date Photographed: **1987**

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

1 of 3. Entrance side from NE.  
2 of 3. Rear side from SW.  
3 of 3. View of river.