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Cover

National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

_X___ New Submission ____ Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

19th and Early 20th Century Commercial Buildings, ca. 1850 - 1948

C. Form Prepared by

name/title __PhilipThomason/Principal

organization ___Thomason and Associates_____ date_November 18, 1998

street & number __P.O. Box 121225_____ telephone _(615) 385-4960

city or town __Nashville_____ state_TN____ zip code_37212

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Claire F. Blackwell 12 May 1999
Signature and title of certifying official Date
Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO
Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Edson H. Beall 6·25·99
Signature of the Keeper Date
for

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The multiple property group submittal for the historic and architectural resources of Springfield, Tennessee includes the context of 19th and Early 20th Century Commercial Buildings, ca. 1850 - 1948. This nomination discusses buildings and structures and no archaeological resources are included within this multiple property group.

19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS, ca. 1870 - 1948

Springfield is located in the southwest section of Missouri and is the seat of Greene County. Springfield is the third largest city in the state and in 1990, had a population of just over 140,000 residents. In the late 19th century Springfield developed as the major rail, manufacturing and industrial center of southwest Missouri and has remained the prominent city in the region into the 20th century. Springfield has an extensive commercial heritage which is reflected in its built environment.

Springfield began as a pioneer settlement on the edge of the western frontier in the early 19th century. Its initial commercial development consisted of businesses such as blacksmiths, millers, carpenters and other enterprises necessary to support a pioneer town's existence and growth. As the town matured, agriculture along with a few individual entrepreneurs began to shape the local trade. But over time transportation by far had the largest impact on Springfield's urban, commercial, and industrial development. From a stage line, to the railroad, and eventually US Route 66, various avenues of transportation transformed what originally had been a crossroads of Native American trails into a regional trading and distribution center.

Kickapoo, Delaware, and Osage tribes, occupied what is now southwest Missouri before white settlement began there in the early 19th century. As explorers pushed the boundary of the frontier westward, demand for the land increased, and the government removed the Native Americans soon after Missouri became a state in 1821. Adventuresome pioneers heeded the call of those who touted the land as beautiful and fertile, and they set out from Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina in search of a fresh start.[1]

Among those seeking a new life was John Polk Campbell from Maury County, Tennessee. Having traveled through southwest Missouri in the mid-1820s, Campbell returned in 1830 with his family and slaves to settle there permanently. Arriving about the same time were William Fulbright, A. J. Burnett,

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[1] Shanna Boyle and Julie March, eds. Crossroads at the Spring: A Pictorial History of Springfield, Missouri. (Virginia Beach: The Donning Company Publishers, 1997), p. 9-11.

Joseph Rountree and their families.[2] They built homes, cleared the land, sowed crops and soon established a small but thriving community, which included some basic commercial enterprises.

Junis Campbell, John's brother, started the community's first store in 1831. Blacksmith shops, cabinet makers, millers, and additional dry goods merchants soon followed his lead. Residents also added a schoolhouse and a church, revealing their intentions of establishing a permanent home for themselves and future generations. By 1833, nearly one hundred families lived in the area, a sufficient enough number to warrant the establishment of an independent county. Citizens chose the name Greene County, after Revolutionary War hero Nathaniel Greene, and selected John Campbell as county clerk and his brother Junis as the county treasurer.[3]

John Campbell continued to be a key figure as he donated fifty acres around the public square to establish the town as the county seat. In 1836, the townsite was surveyed and platted, and lots were sold. Campbell's design for Springfield was based upon his home town of Columbia, Tennessee and had a central public square with the streets radiating from the square in the four cardinal directions.[4] Two years later the town of Springfield was officially incorporated and contained some three hundred residents.[5] The main arteries in town were Boonville and South Avenues, which led north and south from the public square, and College and St. Louis Streets, which traversed east and west. Olive, Walnut, and Mulberry Streets were major surrounding avenues.[6]

In the following two decades, Springfield grew steadily. The first bank, a branch of the Missouri State Bank, opened in 1845 and provided capital for new businesses. Early industries included the carding of wool for homespun cloth and the tanning of hides for leather. A horse powered carding machine was in operation east of the Boonville Avenue Bridge and a tanning yard existed on the west side of Boonville

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[2] Ibid., p. 11.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Bartholomew and Associates, "Springfield, Missouri, Preliminary Report on a System of Major Streets," p. 5.

[5] Crossroads at the Spring, p. 12.

[6] Jonathan Fairbanks and Clyde Edwin Tuck, Past and Present of Greene County, Missouri. (Indianapolis: A. W. Bowen & Company, 1915), p. 667.

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Avenue, which spawned other endeavors like the making of boots, shoes, saddles and other leather goods.[7] Area farms provided an ample supply of produce, grains, poultry and livestock. Dry goods stores, such as the Johnson and Wilson Company, offered a variety of merchandise including hardware, groceries, books, stationery, and footwear, and for payment they accepted beeswax, tallow, hemp, and furs as well as cash.[8]

By the late 1850s a variety of shops lined the streets leading to the public square, making it the primary business district. In 1858, sixteen of Springfield's commercial establishments sold over $300,000 in merchandise.[9] Among the many businesses were several wagon, harness and saddle shops, and a livery stable along with numerous tailors, milliners, shoe shops, and jewelers. The town was also home to two tin shops, three meat markets, two printing offices, and three confectionery stores. Those traveling through the area had a choice of three hotels and could visit Springfield's one saloon. Those deciding to stay had twenty carpenters, two brick masons, three painters, and four land agents available to help them get settled and construct buildings. Residents also had access to ten lawyers, five doctors, four clergymen, and one dentist.[10]

The town's early blacksmith shops included Cary Jamison's on West Walnut Street, and John Lair's on St. Louis Street, both of which were established ca. 1855. Around this same time Allen Mitchell and John Caynor opened the O.K. Flouring Mill on West Mill Street, and Hancock Hardin and Company began a tobacco factory on Main Street. In 1858, W. H. Worrell opened a confectionery store on the corner of College Street and the square, various planning mills were established, and the town's first foundry was opened.[11]

In 1858, the Butterfield Stage made its first run through Springfield on its route to California. This provided the already booming town with greater exposure and important connections to other regions. To advance and keep up its image as a progressive community, the town expended public funds for the

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[7] Ibid., p. 666-667.

[8] Crossroads at the Spring, p. 12-13.

[9] John Phelps, History of Greene County, Missouri. (St. Louis: St. Louis Western Historical Society, 1883), p. 738.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Fairbanks and Tuck, p. 667-668.

first time and spent $417.39 in 1859 for street and sidewalk improvements. In 1860, Springfield furthered its connection to the rest of the world with the arrival of the telegraph.[12]

Springfield's prosperity was interrupted by the coming of the Civil War. Throughout most of the conflict the town was under military occupation and both county and city government were suspended. In 1861 the original courthouse burned, but it was rebuilt in the northwest corner of the square, where it remained until 1914.[13] After the war, however, Springfield quickly resumed its healthy commercial activity. Rapid growth occurred and industry flourished in the form of cotton, woolen, and planning mills, foundries, and meat and grain enterprises.[14] The influx of new residents after the Civil War resulted in the enlargement of the city limits in 1869. This annexation included the area now bounded by National and Fort Avenues, and Grand and Division Streets.[15]

In the midst of this burgeoning post-war development, the Atlantic and Pacific railroad made arrangements to construct its line through the Springfield area. A controversy soon erupted, however, when it was discovered that the railroad intended to locate the line more than a mile north of the town center. Residents appealed to the company, who would only agree to move the line closer if the town would share the cost. But the town was not willing to make this agreement. Meanwhile, Dr. Edwin T. Robberson, who owned five hundred acres on the proposed railroad site, joined with other prominent Springfield residents S. H. Boyd and attorney Charles Edward Harwood to form the Ozark Land Company and enticed the railroad to maintain the original site. As a result, the new town of North Springfield was established.[16]

North Springfield grew rapidly. Numerous businesses sprouted up along Commercial Street, the main thoroughfare on which the depot was located. Trains made their first stop in April of 1870, and two months later the railroad-owned and operated Ozark House, the region's largest and most elegant hotel, opened its doors on the corner of Commercial Street and Benton Avenue. The railroad also chose to

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[12] Phelps, p. 738.

[13] Crossroads at the Spring, p. 18.

[14] Fairbanks and Tuck, p. 669.

[15] Bartholomew and Associates, p. 5.

[16] Phelps, p. 778-780.

locate the repair and maintenance shops for its entire line in North Springfield. The largest of its kind west of the Mississippi, it became one of the city's largest employers.[17]

North Springfield's rapid success caused much concern among Springfield residents, and a strong rivalry between the two communities soon developed. Springfield made a concentrated effort toward commercial development and public improvements to promote civic pride. Several prominent citizens joined forces and built the Metropolitan Hotel on College Street near the square. Opening in 1871, it was equal in elegance to the Ozark House and provided it with competition.[18] To encourage more development, Springfield citizens approved $22,000 in bonds in 1872 to assist manufacturing enterprises.[19]

Although it initially brought controversy, the railroad ultimately brought growth and prosperity to both towns. The Frisco line, as it became known, not only brought many newcomers to the area, but also provided businesses with necessary goods, connected local manufacturers and tradesmen with regional and national markets, and exported agricultural products and natural resources. In 1878, over half of North Springfield's population was employed by the railroad and many others were involved in the shops, restaurants, hotels, and other businesses, which the railroad made possible. Business in Springfield benefited as well. In 1878, one hundred and fifty businesses had stocks totaling a million dollars. Trade in cotton, wool, hides and furs was extensive and the produce and grain industries were gaining momentum. The Springfield Cotton Mills, established in 1872, utilized 3,000 spindles in 1881. The Queen City Mills, which began operation in 1879, produced 150 barrels of flour a day and shipped to markets in the South and East. The smaller operation of the Eagle Mills produced flour primarily for the local market. Mining interests increased with the discovery of lead and zinc in surrounding areas. Coal fields supplied the railroad with fuel, and the manufacturing of white lime from limestone became an important industry. The town also boasted two iron foundries, a carriage factory, grain elevators, and several tobacco and cigar factories.[20]

The area between the two towns remained largely commercially undeveloped. Drury College had the most impact on the area. Founded in 1873 by the Congregationalist Church, the college spawned around its

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[17] Dick Grosenbaugh, Million Hours of Memories. (Springfield, MO: Springfield Sesquicentennial Committee, 1979) not paginated.

[18] Phelps, p. 779-780.

[19] Fairbanks and Tuck, p. 669-670.

[20] Ibid., p. 669-671.

borders a residential neighborhood that grew as the college grew. Street cars arrived in 1881 to transport people back and forth between the two commercial districts. Mule drawn at first, Springfield street cars were electric by 1886. At this same time the gas street lamps, which had first lit the public square in the mid-1870s, were replaced by electric lighting.[21]

The 1880s continued to be booming years for both towns. In 1881, construction of the Kansas City, Fort Scott, and Memphis railway from Kansas City to Springfield was completed. This new addition, which eventually merged with the Frisco, opened direct communication and trade with Chicago and other northern cities and with Memphis, which was a major shipping point in the Southeast for a variety of products including grains, textiles, produce and tobacco.[22] Due to its central geographic location, healthy industries, and railroad connections, Springfield grew into a major trading and distribution center and was soon known as the "Queen City of the Ozarks."

Springfield's diversity increased as many German Swedish, and Jewish immigrants as well as many African-Americans and Northern entrepreneurs came to the town seeking, as the first settlers did, to make a fresh start. They added to and shared in the town's prosperity by opening a variety of successful businesses. In 1868, Victor Sommers, one of the area's first Jewish residents, opened a dry goods store on Boonville Avenue. Other Jewish families soon followed and by 1890, Springfield's business district contained over a dozen Jewish-owned establishments.[23]

German immigrants also found success in the dry goods business and in addition they owned many furniture stores and area farms. Many, like Sebastian Dingledein, operated breweries and local taverns. At its peak in 1882, Dingledein's Springfield Brewing Company on Fort Avenue and College Street produced 2,100 barrels of beer a day. Springfield's German population also established *Der Deutsch-Amerikanische Bund* (German-American League), which met at the Germania Hall at 1144 Boonville Street (razed in the 1980s).[24]

One of Springfield's most successful German residents was Charles Heer. After establishing successful businesses in Iowa and St. Louis, Heer came to Springfield in 1868 and opened a dry goods store. Heer's

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[21] Crossroads at the Spring, p. 38.

[22] Fairbanks and Tuck, p. 671.

[23] Crossroads at the Spring, p. 29.

[24] Ibid., p. 28 & 116.

Department Store, in business from 1869-1995 and family owned until the 1940s, became a landmark business on the public square. A huge fire destroyed the Heer's building along with several other businesses on the northwest corner of the square on June 9, 1913. Charles Heer rebuilt his business in 1914 on the former site of the county courthouse on the corner of the public square and College Street. Seven stories high, it was Springfield's largest department store and a notable structure in the business district.[25]

The town's African-American population was also active in business and included blacksmiths, dentists, morticians, and lawyers. Hardwick Brothers, the largest grocery in the city, was owned and operated by African-Americans. One of its competitors, the Springfield Grocer Company, founded in 1865, has remained the oldest surviving Springfield business and has become a major commercial food distributor in the region.[26]

One of the town's leading businesses, the Springfield Wagon Company, became famous nationwide for its quality products. Founded in 1870, the company remained in business for seventy years. In 1881, its one hundred employees produced two thousand wagons per year.[27] Agriculture remained a lucrative industry. Leading products included fruits from local orchards, tobacco, cotton, livestock, poultry, and dairy products. Farmers exported these goods to surrounding regions and sold them locally at the city market lot on the corner of Campbell Avenue and McDaniel Street.[28]

Gradually citizens of both towns came to recognize that they shared mutual interests. "After it had been demonstrated that 'old town' could not be 'busted' and that 'new town' could not be kept from growing, the hatchets were, by tacit agreement, buried," and in 1887 Springfield and North Springfield consolidated into one city.[29] Other events in this same year include the construction of the Baker Block, Springfield's first large office building, and the establishment of the YMCA. The Baker Block, located on the northwest corner of the square along Olive Street, also housed the city's first elevator (razed in 1950). The YMCA began on the corner of College and Campbell Streets, but later erected a building at

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[25] Ibid., p. 29, 111, 116.

[26] Ibid., p. 30.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Grosenbaugh.

[29] Phelps, p. 780.

the corner of St. Louis and Jefferson Streets. When this building burned, the YMCA rebuilt on South Jefferson and Pershing Streets.[30]

From 1880 to 1890, the population of Springfield increased from 6,522 to 21,850. Part of this dramatic increase can be attributed to the merging of both Springfields in 1887, but the majority of this increase was due to intense settlement in the community. As a unified city, Springfield continued to flourish into the twentieth century. After the turn of the century, the area of the Public Square continued as the primary business area, and government buildings shifted from the square to the Central Street area.[31] One of the major projects of the 1890s was the construction of the Federal Building on N. Boonville Avenue. Completed in 1894, this Richardsonian Romanesque style building served as the United States Customhouse and Post Office (NR, 1979). Nearby, a new Carnegie Library for the city was completed in 1903 on Central Street. Another public building, the Greene County Jail, was built just west of the downtown area on W. McDaniel Street in 1891. This jail, known as the Old Calaboose, was used until 1957 and currently houses a museum (NR, 1980).

Residential areas expanded to the east, west, and south of the downtown commercial area aided by the city's trolley line. Mule-drawn street cars were first utilized in 1881 and in 1885, electric trolleys were introduced.[32] The primary trolley lines extended from the Public Square in each direction and enabled businessmen and residents to travel in ten minutes as far as they could walk in 30 minutes. This led to extensive new residential development as new subdivisions were platted at the turn of the century. Many of the city's most prominent businessmen constructed dwellings along E. Walnut Street, and this row of Queen Anne, Italianate, and Colonial Revival style homes was listed on the National Register as the Walnut Street Historic District in 1985.

With residential construction moving away from the downtown area, new commercial buildings replaced many of the city's older dwellings in the immediate environs of the Public Square. The expansion of the downtown commercial area can be traced using the city's Sanborn Fire Insurance maps of the turn of the century. In 1884, the Public Square was lined with brick buildings and other commercial structures extended one block from the square in each direction. On the fringes of the commercial area were small industries such as carriage factories and blacksmith shops. Residential use predominated beyond these blocks except to the north where industrial and warehouse buildings clustered at the foot of the hill north

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[30] Grosenbaugh.

[31] Crossroads at the Spring, p. 26.

[32] Ibid., p. 38.

of the Public Square. During the 1890s, this relationship between a compact downtown and neighboring residential areas remained intact. New commercial buildings were built at corner locations but most of the blocks of E. and W. Walnut Street for example, remained in residential use.

Until the early 1900s, the Public Square contained many of the city's most notable commercial buildings. At the northwest corner of the square was the five-story Baker Building which was built in 1887 with the city's first elevator.[33] Another five-story building stood at the corner of Boonville Avenue and the remainder of the square contained solid rows of two- to three-story brick buildings. Businesses on the square included clothing stores, banks, department stores, saloons, and drugstores. The Public Square was also a focal point of the streetcar line and a circular track in the middle of the square was a common area for loading and unloading passengers. In addition to the commercial buildings, the Public Square was also the location of the three-story Greene County Courthouse which was built in 1861 and stood at this location until it was destroyed by fire in 1913. The need for a larger courthouse led county officials to leave the Public Square and a new Neo-classical style courthouse was built on Central Street in 1914.

Between 1902 and 1910 dozens of new brick commercial buildings were constructed around the Public Square and up to two blocks from the square in each direction.[34] While some of these buildings replaced earlier buildings on these lots, most of this development was the expansion of businesses into residential areas. In the 300 block of E. Walnut, the nine dwellings on this block in 1902 were replaced by multi-story brick commercial buildings. These included the Masonic Temple erected in 1906, the Landers Theater built in 1909, and the Airdome Theater completed ca. 1905 (now razed). Dwellings in the 200 and 300 blocks of S. Campbell Avenue were also replaced in these years by one- and two-story brick commercial buildings.

Other notable buildings of the construction boom of the early 1900s included the Colonial Hotel on Jefferson Street, the Hotel Sansone and the Woodruff Building on St. Louis Street, and the Heer's Department Store on the Public Square. The six-story Colonial Hotel was completed in 1906 and became known as the city's finest hotel building of the period. It was designed in the Colonial Revival style with a one-story Doric portico on the main facade, and enjoyed immense success well into the mid-20th century. The Colonial Hotel was razed in recent years. The Hotel Sansone was built in 1911 and this four-story business built a reputation as a small expensive hotel just east of the Public Square. This building still stands and retains much of its original design. The ten-story Woodruff Building was called Springfield's "skyscraper" when it was completed in 1911. Built by local developer John T. Woodruff,

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[33] Ibid., p. 15.

[34] Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, "Springfield, Missouri," 1902, 1910.

this building was the downtown area's largest office building in the early 20th century. This building remains extant but has been extensively remodeled. In 1914, Charles Heer built his seven-story department store on the Public Square. This business was one of the city's largest stores and it operated at this location until 1995.

The businesses of North Springfield remained centered along a six block section of Commercial Street, directly south of the Frisco Railroad right-of-way. Most buildings along these blocks were built in the 1880s and in the early 1900s. These buildings were occupied by a variety of businesses such as grocery stores, dry goods stores, and saloons. Several hotels such as the multi-story Ozark Hotel provided overnight lodging for the railroad's travelers. The district thrived during the early 20th century with many neighboring residents working at the nearby Frisco Railroad maintenance shops. The significance of Commercial Street was recognized in 1983 when it was listed as a historic district on the National Register.

The expansion of North Springfield and the downtown commercial area reflected the city's rising population and prominence. Between 1900 and 1910, Springfield's population increased from 23,267 to 35,201 residents, which represented a 48% increase.[35] In 1907, the Missouri Pacific Railroad completed its line to the city adding yet another rail connection with other cities and markets. By 1911, the city contained 600 retail stores, 200 jobbing concerns, and fifteen banks. A Jobbers' and Manufacturers' Association was organized in 1910 to "promote cooperation in upbuilding of the city's commercial and industrial interests."[36] A new water plant built in 1912 made indoor plumbing more widely available, and electricity was increasingly used.

The importance of the railroad to Springfield's economy was immense during the early 20th century. With the completion of the Missouri Pacific Railroad to the city in 1907, Springfield had direct rail connections with the major cities of the region such as Kansas City, Memphis, and St. Louis. Many new factories and industrial buildings were constructed along these railroad lines during the 1910s and 1920s, especially in the Jordan Creek valley just north of the Public Square. The maintenance shops of the Frisco Railroad required some 2,000 workers in the 1910s and 1920s and was the city's largest employer.[37] Dozens of trains served the city each day, and stimulated business development throughout the early decades of the century.

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[35] Bartholomew and Associates, p. 7.

[36] Fairbanks and Tuck, p. 671-673.

[37] Grosenbaugh.

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Businesses in the downtown area at the turn of the century included clothing stores, hardware stores, department stores, theaters, banks, restaurants, saloons, and hotels. In 1905, the downtown area contained the Citizens Bank, the Farmer and Merchants Bank, the National Exchange Bank, and the Union National Bank. Prominent downtown businesses included: the Keet & Roundtree Dry Goods Company which occupied a four-story brick building at 321 South Avenue; the McGregor and Noe Hardware Company at 301 E. St. Louis Street; the Upham, Gordon & Company, Wholesale Shoes at 418 South Avenue, and; the Springfield Hat Company at 322 South Avenue. Most attorneys had offices adjacent to the courthouse in the Baker Block on the Public Square.

As the town grew, entertainment became a growing industry. Stage, vaudeville and eventually movie theaters appeared throughout the downtown area. One of the early and most significant ones was the Baldwin Theater, which opened on St. Louis Street in 1891. In addition to a 1500-seat auditorium, the large building also contained fifty-one offices and two stores. This theater was Springfield's finest until it burned in 1909. In 1905, The Star on Boonville Avenue was one of the first movie theaters, and the Landers Theater opened on E. Walnut Street in 1909 with the capacity for both films and live performances. Construction of the Shrine Mosque was completed in 1923 at the corner of St. Louis and Kimbrough Streets (NR, 1982). At the time it was the "largest auditorium west of the Mississippi River."[38] The Gillioz Theater on E. St. Louis Street was completed in 1926 and was the city's first "atmospheric" theater with an ornate interior and special effects (NR, 1991). The Electric Theater on the Public Square was built around 1935 and has been remodeled into a church.

The railroads continued to play a major role in the city's economy by employing hundreds of workers and by providing farmers and businesses with a connection to important markets. In Springfield, the Frisco built the largest maintenance shops west of the Mississippi River and at its peak employed some 2,000 workers. This network of shops and maintenance buildings was constructed in 1909 and remained in operation until 1996. In addition to the shops, the Frisco built a new Spanish Colonial style railroad depot on Mill Street in 1926 (razed in 1976).

Construction and development of the downtown commercial area continued until the end of the 1920s. Trolley lines remained a primary mode of transportation and provided residents with ready access to downtown businesses. During this decade, many of the remaining residences in the blocks surrounding the Public Square were purchased and demolished for commercial buildings. Along with the Gillioz Theater, other notable buildings constructed during this decade included the E.M. Wilhoit Building on S. Jefferson Avenue, and the Medical Arts Building on South Avenue. The E.M. Wilhoit Building was completed in 1926 and was designed with retail shops and offices on the first floor and offices on the

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[38] Ibid., p. 94, 99.

second floor. This immense building covered a half block and was home to many insurance companies and other professional offices in the mid-20th century. The Medical Arts Building, constructed in 1929, is the last pre-1950 high rise building erected in the downtown area. Designed with Art Deco influences, this eight-story building housed many of the city's physicians and dentists during the mid-20th century. In addition to these two buildings, the ca. 1906 Springfield Life Building was remodeled into the Savoy Hotel in 1928, and was one of the city's leading hotels when it opened. The interior lobby was designed in the Spanish Colonial style and the building was renamed the Hotel Seville Hotel in 1933.

The decade of the 1920s also witnessed changes in commerce due to the widespread use and ownership of automobiles. The first privately owned automobile arrived in Springfield in 1905 and by 1923 the city contained 148 miles of streets, sixty of which were paved. Congestion in the downtown area led to the widening of South Alley into McDaniel Street around 1925. South Alley was located one block south of the Public Square and the widening of the street resulted in the razing of several buildings. New buildings were constructed soon after along McDaniel Street in 1926 such as at 300-308 W. McDaniel Street and 302-304 S. Campbell Avenue. Traffic Alley south of Walnut Street was also widened in 1926 to create Pershing Street. New parking garages were also built in the downtown area to accommodate the increasing automobile traffic.

The rise in automobile ownership allowed large new areas of the city to be developed since commuters no longer needed to live within walking distance of the streetcar line. From 1920 to 1928, the population rose by 53% to 60,768 residents. As the population increased, large tracts of land were platted and subdivided for residential lots, especially towards the south and east. Development of these areas was facilitated by the large increase in automobile ownership. In 1918, some 2,100 residents of the city owned automobiles and over the next ten years this number rose to just under 10,000.[39] The automobile allowed residents to live several miles from downtown yet reach it within a ten to fifteen minute drive. By 1926, the city limits were increased in all directions and following this expansion the city contained some 13.6 square miles.[40] The rapid changes which occurred during this decade led city planners to commission major studies in 1929 to recommend street improvements and zoning.

As the city's residential areas expanded, corner neighborhood commercial buildings and commercial districts were built. These frame and brick commercial buildings were occupied by businesses which served the immediate needs of the neighborhood such as grocery stores, barbers, beauty shops, drugstores, and small retail stores. These were businesses which could be readily accessible by area

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[39] Bartholomew and Associates, p. 20.

[40] Ibid, p. 6.

residents and lessened the need to go downtown or to the businesses on Commercial Street. The majority of these buildings were one-story in height and built with traditional storefronts including bulkheads, large display windows, and transoms. Neighborhood commercial shopping areas were also built along major arteries and were the precursors of the automobile oriented developments which occurred in the decades following World War II. Representative examples of these neighborhood commercial areas can be found in the 700-900 blocks of Boonville Avenue, the 500 and 600 blocks of W. College Street, and at the intersection of S. Pickwick Avenue and E. Cherry Street.

With the rise in automobile ownership came an increase in businesses catering to this growing market. These businesses included gas stations, repair shops, sales dealerships, and parts and tire suppliers. in addition to these types of businesses, tourist courts and restaurants arose along the main traffic arteries of the city and especially along Route 66. Route 66 was completed in 1926, and like the railroad it combined with Springfield's central geographic location to make it a major transportation hub.[41] Route 66 entered Springfield at its northeast city limits and ran west along Kearny Street. Travelers on Route 66 could turn south following Glenstone Avenue or south on National Avenue. These routes then extended to St. Louis Street where Route 66 turned west and extended to the Public Square. Route 66 then followed College Street west until it left the city limits.

The increase in tourists and travelers through the city in the 1920s affected construction in the downtown area. The building of the Springfield Business College on W. Walnut Street was remodeled ca. 1920 into the Marquette Hotel to take advantage of increased visitation to the city. In 1928, the four-story Savoy Hotel (now Hotel Seville) was established in the Springfield Life Building on W. Walnut Street, and garages at the rear provided accessible parking for those passing through on nearby Route 66. Older hotels in the downtown area such as the Colonial and the Sansone also profited as Route 66 became a major national thoroughfare in the late 1920s. On the fringes of the downtown area, new gas stations, automobile dealerships, and repair shops were also widely built in these years.

More profound and lasting commercial development took place on the highways leading into Springfield during the 1920s. This decade witnessed the formation of new businesses along the roadside to provide services for automobile travelers and tourists. These new businesses included tourist camps and courts, stores, gas stations, and restaurants. Springfield became a crossroads for US Highways 60, 65, and 66. Several paved state routes also were built to connect with the city in the 1920s. Springfield became a hub for automobile traffic, particularly for the heavily traveled Route 66. Developing along these "approach

[41]Grosenbaugh.

strips" were linear urban commercial portals with new types of architectural designs and building types.[42]

In the 1920s and 1930s, new automobile building types included gas stations, repair and sales shops, and tourist courts and camps. In Springfield, examples of these types of buildings were constructed along the major arteries of the city with many concentrated along Route 66. Gas station designs included simple rectangular forms with open drive-thru bays on the primary facade. A representative example of this type of gas station still stands at 601 S. Main Street. Other designs were built as small houses reflecting the popular residential building forms of the period.[43] The Spanish Colonial and English Cottage styles of the early 20th century were utilized for several gas stations in the city. The use of porcelain tiles to create "streamlined' designs gained popularity into the 1940s and 1950s.

Automobile repair shops, garages, and dealerships were also built along these streets and on the edges of the downtown commercial area. These buildings were generally built with both pedestrian entrances and automobile garage bays on the main facade. Art Deco, Moderne, and Spanish Colonial styles were popular for these types of buildings. Garage bays were designed with glass and wood hinged doors or with "roll-up" designs which retracted below the ceiling. A representative example of this type of building is the Mo-Ark Coach Lines Building on S. Kimbrough Street. This building was designed with an exterior of terra cotta tiles and large arched openings.

Tourist camps or courts were widely built on Route 66 along Kearny Street, Glenstone Avenue, and W. College Street. The earliest examples of these tourist courts from the 1920s no longer survive but historic photographs show them as simple frame cottages consisting of a bedroom and bath. These types of camps or courts usually had anywhere from six to twenty units facing a central court or parking area. Associated buildings included an office and sometimes a restaurant or service station. By the 1930s, more permanent buildings of brick and stucco were built reflecting popular house forms of the period. Several of these courts survive and feature English Cottage and Spanish Colonial designs. Representative examples include the Trail's End Motel on Kearny Street built in 1938, and the Rock Fountain Tourist Court on W. College built in 1947.

The dominance of the automobile led to more and more mainstream businesses such as department stores, grocery stores, and building supply stores to move suburban shopping centers. Local and nationwide

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[42] Chester H. Liebs, From Main Street to Miracle Mile. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1985), p. 27.

[43] John Margolies, Pump and Circumstance, Glory Days of the Gas Station. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1993), p. 55.

trends in vehicular use led to the demise of the city's trolley system and the ultimate decline of railroad passenger service. Widespread ownership of automobiles and the introduction of local bus lines led to the end of Springfield's trolley line in 1937.[44] Train use for passenger travel remained important through World War II but declined significantly in the post-war years. The last passenger train came through Springfield in 1967.

In the years following World War II, Springfield's downtown commercial area experienced a gradual decline as businesses moved outward to the suburbs. Glenstone Avenue became one of the densest commercial strips in the city during the 1950s and 1960s. Kearny Street and Sunshine Street also developed as major commercial areas in these decades. In the 1960s, Interstate 44 was completed through the northern city limits of Springfield spurring the construction of North Town Mall. Battlefield Mall off Glenstone Avenue was also developed in these years, and became a major shopping center on the south side of the city.

The cumulative effect of these suburban developments was a loss of business in the downtown area and an increase in vacancies. To combat this decline in business, various efforts were undertaken to "revitalize" the downtown area. One of these efforts was to increase the number of parking spaces by demolishing older buildings for garages and surface lots. Casualties of these years included the 1871 Metropolitan Hotel on W. St. Louis Street which was razed for a parking lot in 1952, and the Springfield Convention Hall on S. Campbell Avenue which was also razed for a parking lot in 1958.

Another plan was to turn the Public Square into a "mall" type atmosphere by adding metal canopies and modernizing historic facades. This mall was first planned in 1970 and it was completed and dedicated in 1975. This work included the creation of a landscaped public park in the center of the square, and the addition of continuous metal canopies above the first floors of buildings. These efforts did not have the intended results, and vacant buildings were common in the downtown area throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

Today, the downtown area of Springfield consists of "clusters" of intact pre-1950 buildings separated by parking lots and buildings which have been extensively altered. The overall appearance of the downtown area has been transformed by the removal of historic buildings, and their replacement with surface parking lots. While new building construction has been limited, a number of pre-1950 buildings have been altered through the application of stucco or metal surfaces on their primary facades.

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[44] Crossroads at the Spring, p. 42.

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Investment in the downtown commercial area has risen in the past decade through an emphasis on historic preservation. The rehabilitation of the Landers Theater was a major event and the neighboring Masonic Temple was also remodeled in the 1980s. Rehabilitation of several notable buildings is presently underway such as the Gillioz Theater, the Seville Hotel, and the Marquette Hotel. New restaurants, nightclubs, and antique shops have also contributed to economic development in the downtown area. The reuse of upper floor space for residential use is also underway. There is also renewed interest in automobile oriented businesses of the mid-20th century, particularly those along Route 66. Several guidebooks and histories pertaining to Route 66 have been published in recent years to identify and recognize these resources along this route and within Springfield.

PROPERTY TYPES

The property types for Springfield's commercial buildings are divided into three categories: Downtown Commercial Buildings, ca. 1870 - 1948; Neighborhood Commercial Buildings, ca. 1890 - 1948, and; Automobile Related Commercial Buildings, ca. 1920 - 1948. These property types relate to the growth and development of commercial areas in the city and how their construction was affected by expansion of the streetcar and automobile suburbs.

DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS, ca. 1870 - 1948

Downtown commercial buildings are those which were built in Springfield and North Springfield during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These are buildings which were constructed as part of commercial centers which served residents relying on walking and horse drawn transportation. In Springfield, these are the city's oldest commercial buildings and are centered on and around the Public Square. In North Springfield, these are buildings which were built along Commercial Street directly south of the Frisco Railroad right-of-way and depot. These buildings are primarily of masonry construction and were built with storefronts with large expanses of glass for display of goods.

Description:

Downtown commercial buildings in Springfield are typically one- to four-story brick buildings constructed from ca. 1870 to ca. 1930. Most buildings in the downtown area are one-part and two-part commercial blocks which reflect common building forms and designs prevalent from the late 19th century to the 1920s.[45] One-part commercial blocks usually have large plate glass storefronts detailed with ornamental framing while two-part commercial blocks have separate storefronts and upper facades. Many of the buildings have brick piers or cast iron pilasters at the storefronts. The use of Carrara glass panels for storefront remodeling in the 1930s and 1940s was also prevalent in the downtown and Commercial Street area. Many masonry upper facades are embellished with brick corbelling at the rooflines, and arched or rectangular one-over-one sash windows. A few buildings have upper facade decoration including terra cotta panels, cast iron hood molding, and sheet metal cornices.

Architectural styles which are prevalent in the city's downtown commercial areas include Italianate, Colonial Revival, and Art Deco. Although not generally referred to as a "style," many of the buildings could also be described as "Brick Front." Commercial Italianate buildings are those which were built

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[45]Richard Longstreth, The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1987), p. 24.

between ca. 1870 and ca. 1910 and feature arched windows in the upper facade and brick or sheet metal cornices at the roofline. These buildings were often decorated with inset brick or terra cotta panels. Examples of this style include buildings at 210 and 308 S. Campbell Avenue, and 317 and 404-406 South Avenue. The influence of the Colonial Revival style is also evident on a number of buildings and these designs include quoins, jack arching over windows with keystones, and classical pilasters. The two-story building at 300-304 S. Campbell Avenue is representative of this style and features a broken pediment over the main entrance and a dentilled cornice over the storefront. The Bell Hotel at 307 S. Jefferson Avenue has an exterior with Doric pilasters and a cornice with triglyphs and metopes at the roofline. Use of the Art Deco style was limited in the downtown area with the Medical Arts Building at 430 South Avenue the most representative example of this style. This high rise building features vertical fluted banding at the roofline, and floral and geometric decorative panels at the entrances.

The vernacular form of Brick Front refers to buildings from ca. 1910 to ca. 1930 which were built with traditional storefronts and have upper facades displaying rectangular windows, corbelled brick cornices, and decorative brick panels.[46] This building form has also been referred to as "Tapestry Brick." Many of the buildings in the downtown area fall into this terminology such as 416 South Avenue and 315 E. Walnut Street. Decoration on many of the buildings includes transoms of tinted leaded glass known as Luxfer glass, and terra cotta panels. The majority of the buildings along Commercial Street can also be classified as Brick Front designs.

Significance:

Commercial buildings in Springfield may be significant primarily under National Register Criteria A and/or C for their role in the commercial history of the city and for their architectural design. During the late 19th century, Springfield emerged as the regional trade and commerce center in southwest Missouri. Designated as the county seat of Greene County, a brick courthouse was constructed in the middle of the Public Square and by the 1850s numerous commercial buildings lined the perimeter of the square. After the Civil War, the square remained the site of the county courthouse for several decades and numerous lawyers and professional offices located in the vicinity. The Public Square also became the main commercial center for Springfield and dozens of one- to five-story brick buildings were built around the square and on adjacent streets from 1870 to 1900. These buildings housed traditional businesses of the period such as general mercantile stores, banks, drugstores, hardware stores, and saloons. Buildings were also constructed to house uses in the arts and recreation such as fraternal halls, and theaters.

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[46] Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings, American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940. (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1985), p. 240.

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Downtown Springfield was also home to the leading hotels of the period such as the Southern and Metropolitan Hotels.

The construction of the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad north of the downtown area in 1868 led to the development of North Springfield and a row of commercial buildings on Commercial Street. This downtown area along Commercial Street was home to numerous brick buildings by the 1880s. These buildings housed large warehouses for the shipping of produce and goods, traditional mercantile stores for North Springfield residents, and numerous hotels to serve rail passengers. Despite two commercial centers within two miles of each other, both downtown Springfield and the area along Commercial Street thrived at the turn of the century. As railroad lines were built just north of the Public Square, downtown Springfield became the dominant commercial area in the early 20th century with expansion occurring into another ten blocks surrounding the Public Square.

Downtown commercial properties provide important information on the growth and development of Springfield and the lifestyles of its inhabitants. Both the downtown area and Commercial Street retain dozens of buildings which housed the most notable businesses of late 19th and 20th centuries. These are businesses which had a direct impact on the economic viability of the community and provided the goods and services required for everyday life. The downtown commercial areas were also the center for arts and recreation such as theaters, arcades, and other amusements. Restaurants, lodge halls, and saloons contributed to the social life of the community, and hotels were centers of both overnight accommodations and social events.

Downtown commercial areas were also the location for many of Springfield's largest and most ornate buildings. The appearance of buildings was tied to business identity and success, and the businesses of the period competed to construct attractive and imposing structures. Owners employed architects to design buildings reflective of architectural styles of the period and these buildings continue to reflect notable artistry and detailing.

Registration Requirements:

Downtown Commercial Buildings in Springfield are significant primarily because of their architectural design and/or their association with the commercial growth and development of the community. In order to be historically significant under National Register Criterion A, a building must be the site of a business of particular importance to the community, exemplify a particular building type or use, or be associated with an important event or occurrence. Both the Landers Theater (NR 1977) and the Gillioz Theater (NR, 1991) were previously listed under this criteria. These two theaters are located within two blocks of the Public Square and were the most prominent theaters in the city in the early 20th century.

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To be architecturally significant under National Register Criterion C, a building must be a notable example of a particular style or possess unusual design elements and detailing. The building must also possess integrity of setting and location, design, workmanship, and materials. To be individually eligible under this criteria, a building must retain the majority of its original storefront design, original upper facade decoration, and notable interior details. In addition to Criterion A, both the Landers and Gillioz Theaters were listed on the National Register under this Criterion C for retaining the majority of their exterior and interior design and detailing.

Commercial buildings may also meet registration requirements if they form a cohesive grouping to meet historic district criteria. To be eligible as an historic district under Criterion A, a grouping of buildings will be within the downtown commercial areas of Springfield and North Springfield, and reflect traditional businesses, and the growth and development of the community in the 19th and early 20th centuries. To be eligible, these buildings must be contiguous at their original locations, and a significant concentration and majority must retain integrity of design, workmanship, materials, feeling and association. Buildings which retain integrity are those which have most of their original upper facade and storefront detailing and materials, and collectively retain the feeling and association of the pre-1948 era. One-story commercial buildings retaining integrity will possess most of their original storefront elements such as bulkheads, display windows, and transoms. Multi-story commercial buildings retaining integrity will possess original upper facade detailing which will be readily visible and not concealed or obscured. If upper facade detailing is intact, multi-story buildings may retain integrity if they have either pre-1948 storefront materials, or replacement traditional storefronts using transoms, display windows and bulkheads.

To be eligible as an historic district under Criterion C, a grouping of buildings will be within the downtown commercial areas of Springfield and North Springfield, and the majority must retain integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials, feeling and association. Buildings which retain integrity are those which retain most of their original upper facade detailing and materials, and collectively possess the feeling and association of the pre-1948 era. One-story commercial buildings retaining integrity will possess most of their original storefront elements such as bulkheads, display windows, and transoms. Multi-story commercial buildings retaining integrity will possess original upper facade detailing which will be readily visible and not concealed or obscured. If upper facade detailing is intact, multi-story buildings may retain integrity if they have either pre-1948 storefront materials, or replacement traditional storefronts using transoms, display windows and bulkheads.

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Under this criteria, the Commercial Street Historic District was listed on the National Register in May of 1983. This district is significant in the growth and development of North Springfield and retains much of its early 20th century architectural character. In addition to this district, several other concentrations of properties in the downtown area of Springfield appear to meet National Register criteria.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS, CA. 1890 - 1948

Description:

Neighborhood commercial buildings are those which were constructed in residential areas of Springfield during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These buildings were constructed primarily along the major streets in the community adjacent to trolley lines and at prominent corners. The designs for these buildings were similar to those constructed in the downtown commercial areas. Most are one-part and two-part commercial blocks which reflect common building forms and designs prevalent in these years. One-part commercial blocks usually have storefronts with transoms, large display windows, and frame or brick bulkheads. Above the storefronts are generally decorative brick panels or on frame buildings, a wood or sheet metal cornice. Two-part commercial blocks have separate storefronts and upper facades. Many masonry upper facades are embellished with brick corbelling at the rooflines, and arched or rectangular one-over-one sash windows. The interiors of these buildings often consist of open floor space for display of goods, and decorative detailing confined to tongue-in-groove walls and ceilings or pressed metal ceilings.

The majority of surveyed examples of this commercial building type are one-story in height and of brick construction. These buildings can be generally described as "Brick Front" forms with traditional storefronts and decorative upper facade detailing. In many cases the storefronts of these buildings have been altered and no longer retain integrity. This is especially common where these buildings have been converted into residential use.

Significance:

Neighborhood commercial buildings in Springfield may be significant primarily under National Register Criteria A and/or C for their role in the commercial growth and development of the city and for their architectural design. Buildings may also be significant under Criterion B if they are related to an individual of particular importance in Springfield's business community. These buildings were constructed after the 1880s as electric trolley lines allowed residents to move further away from the downtown business centers. As residents built homes in outlying areas, businesses constructed small stores or a row of stores to supply the immediate needs of an area or neighborhood. Services such as groceries, hardware stores, shoe repair shops, barbers, beauticians, and saloons were the most common businesses occupying

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neighborhood commercial buildings. These buildings were constructed to be within a few minutes walking distance from hundreds of residents in an area or neighborhood.

By the early 1900s, there were dozens of these buildings scattered throughout Springfield. Many of these were built along major streets and at prominent corners. The increase in automobile usage extended the city's limits even further and neighborhood shopping centers and stores continued to be built in newly developed subdivisions of the 1920s and 1930s. In the post-World War II years, many of these neighborhood stores and shopping centers fell into disuse as Springfield's shopping areas became concentrated along strips readily accessible by automobile but rarely by pedestrians. As these nodes of commercial activity moved out along Glenstone Avenue, Kearny Street, and other major thoroughfares, these earlier neighborhood buildings were often adapted to other uses such as residences, churches, and offices. Neighborhood commercial buildings which remain represent the transition in commerce from downtown centers to automobile oriented shopping areas.

Registration Requirements:

Neighborhood commercial buildings in Springfield are significant primarily because of their architectural design and/or their association with the commercial growth and development of the streetcar and automobile suburbs from ca. 1890 to ca. 1948. In order to be historically significant under National Register Criterion A or B, a building must be the site of a business of particular importance to the community, must be associated with an individual of particular importance, or be associated with an important event or occurrence. None of the surveyed properties were identified as meeting this criteria.

To be architecturally significant under National Register Criterion C, a building must be a notable example of a particular style or possess unusual design elements and detailing. The building must also possess integrity of setting and location, design, workmanship, and materials. To be individually eligible under this criteria, a building must retain the majority of its original storefront design, original upper facade decoration, and interior details.

Neighborhood commercial buildings may also meet registration requirements if they form a cohesive grouping to meet historic district criteria. To be eligible as an historic district under Criterion A and/or C, a grouping of buildings will be located along outlying streets away from the downtown area and in areas which developed along streetcar lines or pre-1948 automobile suburbs. To be eligible, these buildings must be contiguous at their original locations and a significant concentration and majority must retain integrity of design, workmanship, materials, feeling and association. Buildings which retain integrity are those which have most of their original storefronts, upper facade detailing and materials, and collectively retain the feeling and association of the pre-1948 era. Since the majority of these buildings are one-story in height, retention of original storefront elements is an important component of integrity.

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AUTOMOBILE RELATED BUILDINGS, CA. 1920-1948

Description:

Automobile related buildings are those which were constructed along Springfield's streets and highways in the early 20th century, and which were directly related to automobile operation. These are properties which provided goods and services to travelers and residents during the early years of automobile ownership and usage. As such, these are buildings and structures which were erected on or close to the city's major thoroughfares and depended upon vehicular, rather than pedestrian, shoppers for their existence.

During these early decades of the automobile, buildings and structures designed to accommodate this new mode of transportation were built in both the downtown and outlying areas. By the 1920s, a number of gas stations were located within a few blocks of the Public Square and along Commercial Street. In addition to gas stations, other automobile oriented buildings of the period include dealerships, repair shops, garages, and transfer stations. Those which remain from the early 20th century are generally one-story brick buildings located on the edges of the downtown area. In some instances, 19th century livery stables were converted into automobile garages such as the buildings at 311-313 Patton Avenue. The majority of these buildings were constructed in utilitarian forms with minimal decorative detailing. Alterations to these buildings have been common such as the addition of modern garage doors and enclosures of original storefronts.

Outside of the downtown area, a number of building designs and types evolved in the 1910s and 1920s as businesses aimed their sales and accessibility towards vehicular usage. One of the most popular building designs for this new roadside architecture were domestic forms. Domestic forms were buildings designed with the appearance of residences. This was especially common for tourist courts and cabins which emphasized a "homelike" atmosphere. "By resembling interwar suburban houses, such as picturesque half-timbered 'English cottages' with overshot eaves, the design of wayside commercial structures often traded on familiar domestic imagery."[47] Designs of the period reflected popular residential styles such as Tudor Revival, Bungalow, Colonial Revival, and Spanish Colonial. These types of small house designs were also used extensively for gas stations. For example, the Pure and Phillips oil companies introduced the use of Tudor Revival and Colonial Revival designs for their gas stations in the 1920s.[48] Other gas station designs introduced the use of canopies on the main facade for "drive-thru"

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[47] Liebs, Main Street to Miracle Mile, p. 47.

[48] Margolies, Pump and Circumstance, Glory Days of the Gas Station, p. 55.

bays to provide protection against the elements. Other forms of roadside architecture included buildings designed with historical references such as log cabins or Spanish missions. These types of designs were employed for restaurants, roadside stands, and gas stations. The use of Art Moderne, or "streamline" designs were also widely utilized. The aerodynamic designs of the 1930s and 1940s emphasized sleek, curved shapes which were well suited to roadside architecture.[49] Roadside architecture of the period also included oversized sculpture and objects advertising businesses such as large bottles, animals, or human figures.

Following World War II, roadside architecture expanded rapidly into a variety of building forms as the "strip" shopping centers began to rival downtown areas for commercial prominence. Building designs included those which were built with large expanses of glass such as automobile showrooms and restaurants. Other buildings were designed with exaggerated materials such as large concrete pylons or high-pitched roofs.[50] Oversized signage also became common as the concentration of businesses competed with each other for driver's attention. In Springfield, Kearny Street, Glenstone Avenue, and Sunshine Street all came to exemplify the automobile's dominance in post-war business and shopping trends. The majority of these properties are less than fifty years of age and have not yet been inventoried in the city. Future surveys are expected to provide additional information on the evolution of Springfield's roadside architecture and its significance in the mid-20th century.

Significance:

Automobile related buildings in Springfield may be significant primarily under National Register Criteria A and/or C for their role in the commercial growth and development of the city and for their architectural design. Buildings may also be significant under Criterion B if they are related to an individual of particular importance in Springfield's business community. Automobile related buildings from the early 20th century reflect changes in transportation, social history, and architecture which helped to shape the appearance of 20th century America. The dramatic rise in automobile ownership between 1920 and 1940 resulted in the decline of the downtown commercial area, and the rise in suburban automobile related businesses.

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[49] Liebs, Main Street to Miracle Mile, p. 57.

[50] Ibid, p. 61.

The 1920s was the first "suburban" decade of the United States with suburban areas growing at a faster rate than central cities.[51] The expansion of roadside commerce during this decade reflected this move to suburbia, and provided shopping opportunities outside of the downtown area. The flourishing of roadside businesses continued despite America's economic struggle during the Depression and its involvement in World War II. From 1920 until 1945, "roadside strips were well on the way to becoming the undisputed marketplace of the motor age."[52] In Springfield, automobile related buildings may be significant as illustrating the rise of suburban shopping areas, or be related to an important automobile oriented business.

Automobile related buildings may also be significant for their architectural design. A variety of building designs were used in the early years of roadside architecture such as business logos, domestic designs, historical imagery, and architectural styles of the period such as Art Deco and Art Moderne. Such buildings may be significant as notable examples of a particular building form or style. These properties may also be notable for illustrating the evolution of designs oriented towards automobile transported customers.

In the consideration of significance, part of the history of roadside architecture of the 20th century is its impermanence. Early roadside buildings of the pre-World War II era were often razed to make way for post-war businesses or new buildings reflecting changing ideals of fashion and modernity. Significance may be related to the survival of a particular building type or design which has otherwise been lost. Automobile related buildings which remain from the pre-1945 era can provide important information on the change from an urban to suburban commercial landscape and how this landscape was expressed.

Registration Requirements:

Automobile related buildings in Springfield are significant primarily because of their architectural design and/or their association with the growth and development of the automobile commercial areas from ca. 1920 to ca. 1948. In order to be historically significant under National Register Criteria A and/or B, a building must be the site of a business of particular importance to the community, must be associated with an individual of particular importance, or be associated with an important event or occurrence.

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[51] David L. Ames, "Context and Guidelines for Evaluating America's Historic Suburbs for the National Register of Historic Places," (Draft) National Park Service, 1998, p. 9.

[52] Liebs, Main Street to Miracle Mile, p. 27.

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To be architecturally significant under National Register Criterion C, a building must be a notable example of a particular style or possess unusual design elements and detailing. The building must also possess integrity of setting and location, design, workmanship, and materials. To be individually eligible under this criteria, a building must retain the majority of its original storefront design, original upper facade decoration if applicable, and interior details. A collection of functionally related buildings such as similar plan motel units may also be eligible if it meets the above integrity criteria.

Automobile related buildings may also meet registration requirements if they form a cohesive grouping to meet historic district criteria. To be eligible as an historic district under Criterion A and/or C, a grouping of buildings will be located along outlying streets away from the downtown area and in areas which developed as pre-1948 automobile suburbs. To be eligible, these buildings must be contiguous at their original locations and a significant concentration and majority must retain integrity of design, workmanship, materials, feeling and association. Buildings which retain integrity are those which have most of their original facades and materials, and collectively retain the feeling and association of the pre-1948 era.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

This multiple property documentation form was prepared to include historic properties within the 1998 boundaries of the City of Springfield, Missouri.

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SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS

This multiple property documentation form was prepared at the request of the Springfield Urban Districts Alliance, an agency which is promoting downtown revitalization in the community. In 1998, the Alliance contracted with Thomason and Associates of Nashville, Tennessee (Contractor) to prepare a nomination for commercial properties within the city limits. Although the focus of this effort was on the downtown area, this study also included a review of pre-1945 commercial properties elsewhere in the city limits. Throughout this project the Contractor was assisted by Mary Lily Smith and the Springfield Planning Department.

Initial efforts included the surveying of all commercial properties within a sixteen block area of downtown Springfield. The boundary of this survey was approximately McDaniel Street and Park Central West on the north, Benton Avenue on the east, Elm Street on the south, and Market Avenue on the west. The Contractor photographed all properties within this area and prepared architectural descriptions. Following this on-site field survey, the Contractor completed extensive research on the commercial history of Springfield at the Springfield Public Library.

The only area of the downtown area not extensively surveyed was the Public Square and the adjacent blocks of Park Central West, Park Central East, Boonville Avenue, and South Avenue. The Public Square was the subject of extensive public investment in the 1970s including the application of metal canopies and metal fronts on several of the buildings. Due to these intrusive elements, the Public Square does not appear to presently meet National Register criteria and it was omitted from this study.

On May 18th, the Contractor met in Springfield with Lee Gilleard and Alan Tatman of the Historic Preservation Program of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. The purpose of this meeting was to review the project area and identify potentially National Register eligible buildings and districts. As a result of this meeting, potentially eligible districts were identified along E. Walnut Street and South Avenue, and along S. Campbell Avenue. It was recommended that a multiple property documentation form be prepared on the commercial history and architecture of Springfield along with accompanying historic district nominations.

In order to prepare the multiple property documentation form, other commercial properties were examined outside of the downtown area. These included other commercial buildings in the immediate downtown area, neighborhood commercial buildings, and automobile related buildings which pre-dated 1948. The Contractor reviewed materials from previous architectural surveys and also consulted with the staff of the Springfield Planning Department. The Contractor then performed field inspection of neighborhoods, streets, and highways which had the greatest potential for containing commercial resources.

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In addition to the two historic district nominations which accompany this submittal, the Contractor also identified a number of individual properties which appeared to meet National Register criteria. Preparation of nominations for these properties were not within the scope of work requested by the Urban Districts Alliance, and future nominations for these properties will depend upon the interest and support of property owners and/or the Springfield Planning Department.

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NPS Form 10-900-b
(June 1991)

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

Cover AD

APR - 6
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Documentation Form (National Register Bulletin 16B.)* Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a).

____New Submission _X_ Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic And Architectural Resources of Springfield, MO

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

19th and Early 20th Century Hotels, ca. 1870-1950.

C. Form Prepared by

name/title Debbie Sheals [for The City of Springfield, MO; (417) 864-1094]

organization Private Consultant date December, 1999

street & number 406 W. Broadway telephone 573-874-3779

city or town Columbia state Missouri zip code 65203

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the standards and sets forth the requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. ( ) See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Claire F. Blackwell 30 March 2000

Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Edson H. Beall 5-5-00

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

for

INTRODUCTION

This is an amendment of the 1999 Multiple Property Submission titled "Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri." That cover document was accompanied by district nominations for the "South Avenue Commercial Historic District" and the "Springfield Warehouse and Commercial Historic District," both of which were listed in the National Register on June 25, 1999. Additional properties with potential eligibility were identified during that project, including at least two early twentieth century hotels which fell outside recommended district boundaries. They are: the Hotel Sansone, built in 1911 at 312 Park Central East, and the Marquette Hotel, at 400 E. Walnut St. The Walnut Street building was built in 1907 to house the Springfield Business College, and became the Marquette Hotel ca. 1918. This amendment has been prepared to broaden the context for hotels which was included in the original multiple property submission, and to lay the foundation for individual nominations of intact early hotels in the commercial centers of town. Individual nominations for the Sansone and Marquette Hotels accompany this document. ⌂

19th and Early 20th Century Hotels, 1870-1950.

The hotel industry as we know it today is a relatively modern development. Prior to the early 1800s, commercial lodging in America and Europe consisted mostly of inns which offered rooms and sometimes communal meals, all of which were of varying quality. The level of housekeeping services also varied, and in many cases, travelers were required to supply their own servants. It was not until around 1800 that the concept of combining overnight lodging with full housekeeping and dining services began to develop. The idea caught on quickly. One history of the industry noted that "it took 12,000 years for innkeepers to progress to the point of having 30 rooms under one roof. And in the next 100 years this jumped to 3,000 rooms." [1]

It has been noted in several historical account that the modern hotel industry is an American invention. One of the more expansive histories of the industry, Palaces of the People, names Boston as the home of the first modern hotel:

> The first hotel that was ever invented, the *Tremont*, opened in Boston, Massachusetts, on 16th October, 1829..... It was an American claim that there is as big a difference between the old inn and the modern hotel as between a broom and a vacuum cleaner; that the modern luxury hotel is as much an invention as the sewing machine and that it was an American invention, the first trans-Atlantic development that owed nothing to Europe.[2]

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[1] Henry End, Interiors Book of Hotels & Motor Hotels, (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1963) p. 3.

[2] Arthur White, Palaces of the People: A Social History of Commercial Hospitality, (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1968) p. 129.

The Tremont pioneered a number of features associated with modern hotels. It was the first to offer washing facilities, including what was at that time a rare commodity, soap, in every room. It was also the first establishment to hire a French chef and the first to use a system whereby a guest could push a button to request in-room service. The Tremont was instantly a hit, and soon imitated throughout America and Europe. Hotels became a standard feature in communities across the country, and were often regarded as objects of civic pride, with communities competing to have the biggest and best hotel of the day.

Inn or hotel, the locations of commercial lodging facilities have always been tied to transportation routes. The first known inns or taverns operated along trade routes thousands of years ago, and later, were located near stage lines in American and Europe. One description of the English inn system claimed that "the stagecoach and the inn developed together for the 200 years before the railroad appeared."[3] The spread of railroad service had a profound effect upon the growth of the hotel business in America, especially in frontier situations. As one history put it, as "the railroads spread westward across the continent, new cities grew at junction points. With new cities came new chambers of commerce that realized the need for a grand hotel to demonstrate enterprise and faith in the future."[4] As the preference for rail travel gave way to the freedom of the automobile, roads rather than rail lines became the deciding factors of where and when the next hotel, and later, motel, would be built, a practice that continues in many communities even today.

Springfield followed national trends, in that growth of the hotel industry paralleled that of rail service and highway development throughout its early history. Although simple inns for travelers were in operation in the Springfield area from the earliest days of settlement, hotels in the modern sense of the word did not become common until the railroad came through in 1870. The resulting link with regional and national markets naturally brought more travelers to the area, and increased the need for overnight lodging. In fact, one of the first full service hotels to be built in North Springfield was owned and operated by the railroad company. The Ozark House, which opened in North Springfield in June of 1870, was at that time one of the region's largest and most elegant hotels.[5]

The early competition between what were originally the separate towns of North Springfield and Springfield is reflected in the history of hotel development; the next new hotel was built in the older town. The Metropolitan Hotel was built on College Avenue near the public square soon after the Ozark House opened. That hotel, which was described as a "commodious four story brick structure," lasted much longer than the three story frame Ozarks House, which burned just a few years later.[6] The

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[3] End, p. 2.

[4] End, p. 5.

[5] John Phelps, History of Greene County, Missouri, (St. Louis: St. Louis Western Historical Society, 1883) p. 780.

[6] Phelps, p. 780.

Metropolitan remained in operation for decades; it was still operating as a hotel in the mid-1920s, and probably continued in that capacity until it was demolished in 1952.

The hotel business grew along with the city. Property values rose sharply with the connection of rail service to Kansas City in 1881, and with the consolidation of the two towns in 1887. The county history of 1883 claimed that local real estate had increased "in value in one year from 50 to 200 per cent.[7] Early city directories show that the hotel business kept pace with that growth through the end of the century. There were 12 hotels in the city in 1886, and 20 in 1901.[8] Hotel growth appears to have leveled off at that point, and the number of hotels in operation actually dropped slightly in the early years of the new century.

Another boom around 1910 spurred a good deal of new construction, including the erection of two of the most prominent early twentieth century hotels in Springfield. A promotional pamphlet put out by the Chamber of Commerce in 1911 estimated that $4,000,000 worth of construction had recently occurred; new buildings listed in that account included the 1907 Colonial Hotel, at a quarter of a million dollars, and the 1911 Hotel Sansone, a smaller hotel which cost $100,000.[9] The Colonial was described as "one of the finest in the state," and the Sansone as "one of the most complete anywhere."[10]

Both the Sansone and the Colonial were built for John T. Woodruff, a local businessman and developer who devoted much of his life to the successful promotion and development of Springfield.[11] Both buildings were also advertised as being "fireproof" buildings. The practice of constructing buildings to be fire resistant was really in its infancy in America when Woodruff began erecting commercial buildings in Springfield. The need for such measures were just beginning to receive national attention, due in part to the earthquake and resulting fires which did such heavy damage to San Franciso in 1906.[12] Woodruff was obviously a proponent of fireproof construction; the Colonial Hotel

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[7] Phelps, p. 795.

[8] A. O. Jennings, Greene County Gazetteer and Business Directory, (Springfield(?): A. O. Jennings, ca. 1886, and Hoyle Directory Company, City Directory for Springfield, 1901, (Kansas City, MO: Hoyle Directory Co., 1901).

[9] Construction dates for those two hotels are from John Thomas Woodruff, Reminiscences of an Ozarkian and Early Tourism Developments, (Springfield, MO: Southwest Missouri State University, Office of Leisure Research, 1944. Edited version, 1994, Steve Illum, ed.) pp. 141-142.

[10] C. E. Collins, "Springfield Has It," promotional pamphlet, Springfield, 1911.

[11] Woodruff's contribution to Springfield development have been widely recognized; his autobiography, Reminiscences of an Ozarkian, describes many of his accomplishmnets.

[12] See Joseph Kendall Freitag, Fire Prevention and Fire Protection: A Handbook of Theory and Practice, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and London: Chapman & Hall, Limited, second edition, 1921) for a more complete contemporary discussion of fire prevention in architecture.

was the first fireproof hotel erected in the Ozarks, and the Woodruff building, a ten story office building which he developed in 1910, utilized reinforced concrete construction, which is fire resistant. The use of such technology can also be credited to architect Frank W. Hunt, who designed both the Woodruff building and the Sansone. Fireproof construction in hotels continued to be a selling point well into the 20th century; a 1935 publication put out by the Greene County Planning board mentioned that "Springfield has four fireproof hotels," and many early hotel ads mentioned fireproof status.[13]

The need for hotel rooms in Springfield continued to grow after the turn of the century. A 1919 publication put out by the Springfield Chamber of Commerce noted that the city had "many commodious hotels with all the latest conveniences and sanitary arrangements, but there is need for more hotel accommodations." It was about that time that one of the largest surviving historic hotels in the commercial area came into existence. The Springfield Business College, at Walnut and Jefferson Streets, became the Marquette Hotel around 1918. That conversion was relatively simple, as the ca. 1906 College had been built as a boarding school, and already had 54 student rooms. Several years later, the Springfield Life Building, an office building just down the street from the Marquette, was also converted to hotel use. It became the Savoy Hotel in 1928, and the Hotel Seville in 1933. It operated as the Seville into modern times.

Other business people recognized the opportunity, and by the mid-1930s, the number of hotels in town had nearly doubled over the 1901 figure. The 1933 Springfield directory included listings for 37 different hotels, and a 1935 publication estimated that there was a total of 1,500 hotels rooms available in Springfield. A comparison of those numbers with federal census figures for the mid-Thirties shows that the city at that time could boast of about 9% of all of the hotels in the state, and roughly 4½% of all available rooms. [14]

Part of the increased demand at that time can be attributed to the rising popularity of automobile travel, and the associated creation of a state highway system. By the mid-1920s, the city had access to state highways in all directions. Many of those later became federal highways, including US Routes 60 and 65, as well as the immensely popular Route 66. By 1941 Springfield was described as "the hub of a great network of roads, the layout being the envy of many communities, some larger than Springfield."[15] The availability of good roads spurred growth in the tourism industry, and many people stopped in Springfield en route to surrounding recreational areas. Pleasure travelers were playing a growing role

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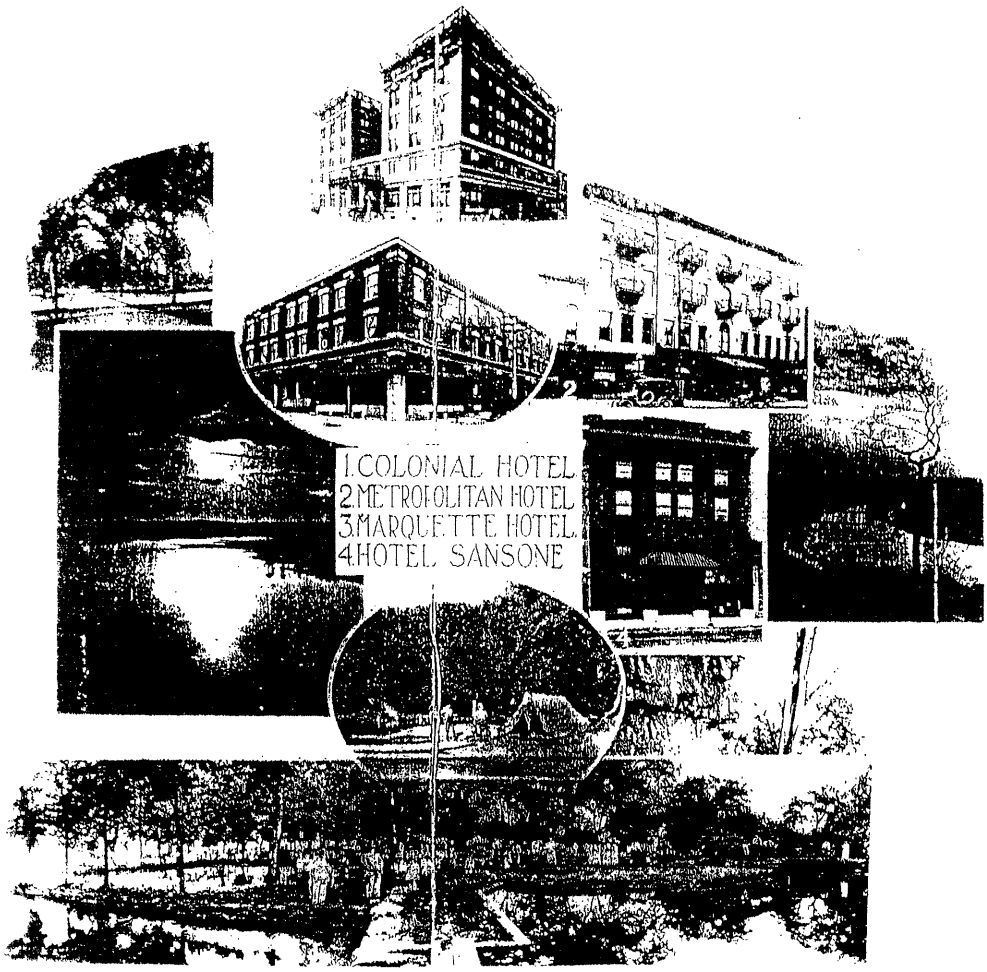
[13] Greene County Planning Board. A Survey of the Resources of Greene County and a Plan for Their Further Development. Springfield: Greene County Planning Board, 1935, and various city directories.

[14] United States Bureau of the Census, Census of Business 1935: Hotels. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Department of Commerce, 1937, p. 39.

[15] Woodruff, p. 111.

in the hotel business.[16] The connection between tourism and the hotel industry was recognized by civic leaders at an early date; a 1919 publication of the Springfield Chamber of Commerce included descriptions and photos of local scenic attractions along with photos of four of the more prominent hotels in the downtown area. (See Figure One.)

Figure One. From The Springfieldian, Vol. 1, No. 2, October, 1919.



[16] The growing popularity of the automobile also gave rise to tourist camps and motels on the outskirts of town, as discussed in the original cover document, "Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield."

It should be noted that hotels in the area were not used exclusively by out of town residents. Although most modern hotels tend to cater only to short term, or "transient" guests, it was common practice early on for a significant number of the rooms to be rented on a semi-permanent basis, and many people lived full-time in hotels, especially in downtown areas. A federal census of hotels conducted in 1935, for example, found that more than one third of the hotel rooms in the country at that time were rented out for periods exceeding one month. The percentage was even higher in Missouri, where roughly 41% of the rooms were occupied on a permanent basis.[17] That practice apparently continued past mid-century in Springfield; a 1960s newspaper article about the closing of the Hotel Sansone (then the Sterling) noted that 15 of the 45 hotel rooms in use at that time were for permanent residents.[18]

As with many businesses, it was not uncommon for hotel management personnel to move from one establishment to another. Many of the people who owned and managed the hotels of Springfield were associated with more than one hotel in town over the years. J. A. Taylor, for example, was manager of the Ben Franklin Hotel, at 308 N. Olive in 1927, after which he moved to the Hotel State, which he operated for most of the 1930s. Sicilian immigrant Charles Sansone and his wife were the original proprietors of the 1911 Hotel Sansone, and later spent twenty years in charge of the Colonial Hotel. There was also at least one case of different establishments teaming up for marketing and management efforts. An advertisement in a city directory of 1926 included a joint ad for the Sansone and the Ozarks Hotel, a nearby hotel which had borrowed the name of the city's original lodging place. That ad claimed that both establishments were "fireproof" and "modern", with "smiling service."[19]

Many of the historic hotels of Springfield are no longer in existence. The Metropolitan, for example, was lost in 1952, victim of a desire for more downtown parking. The Colonial, which was one of the largest hotels in town for decades, was demolished in recent years. They are not all gone, however. The Seville, the Sansone, and Marquette Hotels, among others, are all standing and largely intact. The Seville building, which is located within the South Avenue Commercial Historic District, is currently undergoing a complete rehabilitation which will return it to hotel use. The Marquette, which functioned as a hotel into the 1980s, is currently vacant and awaiting adaptive reuse. The Sansone building, which was a hotel until 1962, is also being rehabilitated, and will be converted to apartments. Both the Sansone and the Marquette are being nominated for inclusion in the National Register in association with this document. The historic urban hotels of Springfield provide important links with the rich commercial history of the city, and stand as significant reminders of the early vitality of the city's historic commercial areas. ⌂

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[17] Census of Business: Hotels, pp. 38-39.

[18] "Harassed Hotel Dies," Springfield Leader and Press, May 2, 1962.

[19] R. L. Polk and Co., Polk's Springfield Directory 1926, (Kansas City: R. L. Polk and Co., 1926) p. 45.

Property Type: Downtown Hotels, ca. 1870-1950.
Downtown hotels are late 19th and early 20th century buildings in Springfield, which served as middle- to upper-class hotels from 1870 to 1950 and beyond. The buildings were built to serve as either offices or hotels; those built for other uses were remodeled at an early date to serve the regional hotel market, which was strong for much of that period. The first hotel in Springfield, the Ozark House, was built in 1870; 1950 serves as the standard 50 year cut-off date.

Description

Downtown hotels in Springfield are typically two to five stories tall, of masonry construction, with facades that utilize the two-part commercial block building form, which was nearly ubiquitous in the commercial areas of Springfield. Two-part commercial blocks are characterized by a horizontal division of both use and appearance. The single story lower zones of such buildings were designed to be used as public or commercial spaces, while the upper floors were used for more private functions. Downtown Springfield hotels of the period are typical of most American hotels which utilized the form, in that the ground floors contained such things as registration areas, elevator lobbies, and public dining rooms, while the upper floors were used almost exclusively for guest rooms. Some ground floor spaces were also utilized for separate commercial functions.

Ground floors generally have open storefronts with plate glass windows, bulkheads, and transoms. The main entrances to the lobbies are on the first floors, and are sometimes recessed or covered by a semi-permanent awning. The upper floors are less open, with regularly spaced windows set into masonry walls. Double-hung windows are most common, and are often quite large to maximize ventilation. Further light and ventilation is supplied via central light courts, which open the interior of the upper floors to fresh air and natural light. Brick is the most common wall cladding, ranging in color from dull red to the nearly black brick used on the 1911 Hotel Sansone. Structurally, many of the buildings utilize what was at the time the latest in fireproof construction, in which little wood was used in a load-bearing capacity, and structural members were sheathed in concrete for extra protection.

Stylistic influences are similar to those of the other commercial buildings in the community; prominent styles include restrained examples of Italianate, Beaux Arts, and Colonial Revival styles. All of those styles utilize classically derived detailing. It was common practice to ornament the primary elevations more highly than those less visible, and rear and side walls which faced service alleys were often unstyled. As with commercial buildings in the area, the Italianate style was the earliest; it was most commonly used between ca. 1870 and 1910. Italianate features include arched windows on the upper floors and bracketed cornices at the roofline. Colonial Revival and Beaux Arts buildings feature classical details such as quoins, jack arches with keystones, and classical pilasters. The pilasters, which are often of brick with terra cotta or stone capitals, are frequently used to delineate the multiple bays of larger buildings. Corbeled brick cornices were popular for buildings constructed after the turn of the century, as was glazed terra cotta ornamentation of various forms.

There is also at least one hotel, the Sansone, which uses Craftsman styling. That somewhat small hotel has a tall, narrow, four-story facade which is topped by a shaped parapet and wide bracketed hood with original green tile roofing, and exposed rafter ends. The large windows of the facade have Craftsman style three-over-one windows. The Sansone represents a particularly early example of both Craftsman styling and fireproof construction. Several of the hotels in the commercial area are essentially vernacular buildings with very simple styling. Like many of the surrounding commercial buildings, they can be categorized as Brick Front buildings, as identified by Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings, and discussed in the original cover document.[20] The Marquette Hotel, which has red brick walls, simple classical pilasters, and a corbeled brick cornice, provides a good example of a basic Brick Front building.

Significance

Downtown hotels in Springfield may be significant under National Register Criteria A and C, in the areas of COMMERCE and ARCHITECTURE. They will be eligible in the area of Commerce for their role in community development and the growth of the lodging industry. The history of the hotel industry in Springfield is closely linked with economic growth and the development of transportation systems, beginning in 1870 with the introduction of rail service, and later, with the growth of automobile travel. Hotels were a presence in the commercial part of the city from 1870 well into the 1900s. The period of significance thus runs from 1870 to 1950, the arbitrary fifty year cut-off point. Surviving hotels are also significant in the area of Architecture, as major buildings in the commercial part of town. It was important for even modest hotels to project an image of prosperity, and many of the hotels in the area were built with the latest technology and stylistic accouterments. They continue to reflect their historic functions yet today, and stand as representative examples of commercial architecture in general and urban hotels of Springfield in particular.

The first full service hotel in Springfield opened just two months after the first railroad came through town, and the subsequent growth of the hotel industry paralleled economic development in the commercial areas of Springfield throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Nearly all of the hotels in operation during that period were located in commercial areas, and were similar in appearance to the surrounding office and retail buildings. The downtown hotels also continued to do well after automobile use supplanted the railroad in the area of passenger travel. By the 1930s, hotel patrons had access to more than 35 different hotels, ranging in size from 231 rooms to 50 or less.[21] Many of the hotels which were built before 1950 remained in service for decades, and the surviving buildings continue to reflect their original function.

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[20] See Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings, American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940. (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1985) p. 240, and pp. F.1- F.2.

[21] Springfield Chamber of Commerce. "Springfield, Missouri." Promotional pamphlet in the collections of the State Historical Society of Missouri, 1935.

The hotels of downtown Springfield generally take the form of the two-part commercial block, which architectural historian Richard Longstreth describes as "the most common type of composition used for small and moderate sized commercial buildings throughout the country." [22] Two-part commercial blocks were extremely popular in America from 1850 into the first decades of the 1900s, and by the turn of the century, Main Streets throughout the country were lined with them. One scholar noted that the "buildings on Main Street reflect a standardization that became a fact of life in the American small town in the latter half of the nineteenth century."[23] The two part commercial block is said to have its origins in the buildings of Ancient Rome, where it was common for urban building to have a shop on the ground floor and living quarters above. That shop-house form was used in Europe for centuries, and moved to America as the Colonies developed major trading centers. The form eventually developed into a primarily public or business type of building, as buildings grew larger and single residences above the store areas became less common.

Although the form of the two-part commercial block generally varies only in size, there is much diversity of architectural styling. In Springfield, urban hotels ranged from fairly straightforward interpretations of popular styles to what are essentially vernacular buildings. Stylistic embellishments based on classical architecture are by far the most common, although it should be noted that extravagant ornamentation of any kind was more the exception than the norm, especially on exterior surfaces.

Many of the buildings show the influence of what is described by Alan Gowans as "Academic Architecture," which was widely utilized in America, and Springfield, between ca. 1890 and 1930. Academic architecture includes such varied substyles as Beaux-Arts, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman, as well as several not used for Springfield hotels. As Gowans put it, Academic architecture "does not itself refer to a style; it is a way of handling other, earlier styles, refining and correcting them...according to attitudes learned 'academically.' "[24] Gowans identifies four basic characteristics of the genre; a willingness to use applied ornamentation, generous scale, direct or formal application of earlier styles, and what he calls "a vague, generalized sort of associationism."[25] In Springfield and elsewhere, these varied from earlier, Victorian, styles in the formal, often restrained, manner in which ornamentation was handled, as well as in the tendency to use a generous scale for everything from door and window size to such things as exterior pilasters, which often spanned several stories on the buildings of Springfield. They varied from later, "Modern" styles in that applied ornamentation was still an integral part of the architectural design, both inside and out.

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[22] Richard Longstreth, The Buildings of Main Street, (Washington, D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1987) p. 24.

[23] Richard V. Francaviglia, Main Street Revisited, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996) p. 35.

[24] Alan Gowans, Styles and Types of North American Architecture, (New York: HarperCollins, 1992) p. 216.

[25] Ibid.

Regardless of individual stylistic embellishments, the downtown hotels of Springfield share a simple formality and an overall emphasis on presenting a dignified public impression. Hotel designers were undoubtedly aware of the role hotels played in the public image of the city, and of how important it was that the hotel project an air of genteel comfort. The surviving hotels continue to reflect such values, and they are today among the most impressive historic buildings in the downtown area.

Registration Requirements

Like other buildings in the commercial areas of Springfield, historic hotels are significant for their association with the economic growth of the city, including that of the lodging industry, and for their architectural design. Hotels have operated in Springfield from 1870 to the present; eligible buildings will have functioned as hotels at some point between 1870 and 1950, the standard 50 year cut-off date for periods of significance. To be considered eligible for registration under Criterion A, in the area of COMMERCE, a building must have served as a hotel for a meaningful portion of its early history, and continue to reflect its use as such. That use would be evident in the existence of early public spaces such as shops, entrance lobbies and other open areas on the ground floors, as well as basic corridor and circulation spaces on the upper levels. Because early hotel rooms were commonly quite modest by today's standards, alterations to actual room layouts are to be expected, and will not preclude designation. Exterior appearances should be relatively unchanged, especially on upper facades and other important elevations.

To be eligible under Criterion C, in the area of ARCHITECTURE, a building should be a notable example of a particular style and/or reflect common local building and design principals from the period of significance. An eligible building will exhibit a relatively high level of integrity of exterior surfaces and finishes, and retain at least moderate detailing of the most public interior spaces. Fenestration patterns and architectural detailing of the most public elevations should remain intact, especially on the upper facades. Ground floor alterations, which are quite common, will be acceptable as long as the original fenestration patterns of the storefront display windows and entrances are apparent, and modern changes are reversible. Newer storefront elements should maintain the historic opening in the masonry unit as closely as possible, and consist mostly of transparent glazing. ⌂

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