



Can you guess which building this architectural detail is from? Test your knowledge with our column,
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LandmarksLetter

Forest Park Highlands - One of St. Louis' Most Beloved Recreational Attractions >>

July 19, 2013 marked the fiftieth anniversary of a fire that destroyed Forest Park Highlands – one of St. Louis’ most beloved recreational attractions. The amusement park covered a two-block stretch along the south side of Oakland Avenue just west of Macklind Avenue – roughly the area associated with Forest Park Community College today. Forest Park Highlands opened on Sunday, May 25, 1896 when “the grounds . . . beautifully illuminated” hosted a minstrel show featuring “Billy Rice” (William H. Pearl, 1844 - 1902), a popular comedian from New York. The park’s early activities centered on performances, hosting popular musicians, entertainers and variety shows. The site’s development as an amusement park started in 1902 when a bowling alley and “frame cycle railway” (an antecedent to the roller coaster) were added to the grounds. In 1906, the park began to charge admission to support the growing expense for adding rides, improving the grounds and paying performers. In 1910, “two great thrillers”

were added – a “Mountain Scenic Railway” consisting of “bridges, tunnels, gulches” and “impressive mountain views” and a “racing coaster” with “two-mile up and down declivities.” Forest Park Highlands soon came into its own as St. Louis’ answer to Coney Island and never looked back. For more

than 50 years, the park provided entertainment for young and old – live entertainment, dancing, dining, rides, swimming, picnics, auto shows – anything and almost everything could be found at the Highlands.

In August 1906, mention of Forest Park Highlands reached the *New York Times* when Horace Barnabee Wild attempted to circle St. Louis in his “airship, the Eagle,” which he launched from the park. Horace Wild (1879 – 1940) was an aviation pioneer who discovered his calling at 10 years of age when he “took hold of the crossbar of a kite at Hillsdale, Illinois” and “was carried 150 feet into the air.” The enthusiastic Wild earnestly sought opportunities to continue his growing fascination with flight. As a teenager, he began to parachute from hot air balloons – losing his nerve to jump the first time and ending up bruised and battered – but no less intent on becoming an aviator. While working at a Chicago amusement park in 1905, Wild took on a part-time job as a parachutist. Within a year, he saved sufficient cash to purchase a dirigible dubbed “the Eagle.” Wild’s escapades took him all over the country – he entered contests and exhibitions in Chicago, Detroit, St. Louis, Louisville and Los Angeles. In 1908, he flew across the Sierra Nevada’s Mount Baldy – an impressive 458-mile adventure ending in the Mojave Desert. He is estimated to have completed more than 1,800 flights during his lifetime and in every conceivable aircraft “from kites to airplanes.”



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Landmarks Letter is the official publication of Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc. for its members and friends. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the Editor and contributors and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Board or membership of Landmarks Association. Please address all correspondence, comments and inquiries to the Editor.

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While William B. Ittner is best known by St. Louisans as the architect of most of St. Louis' iconic school buildings, he had a significant career nationally and in the St. Louis region following his tenure as the Commissioner of School Buildings with the SLPS (1897- 1910). While Ittner designed 50 school buildings in St. Louis City, he designed approximately 500 buildings nationwide. In 1922, he was involved with at least two projects for the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine (The Shriners) in the St. Louis area. In St. Louis City, he designed the well-known Shriner's Hospital at 700 Euclid in the Central West End. Lesser-known is the design he completed along with architect A. B. Frankel (a Shriner himself) for the Ainad Shriners at 609 St. Louis Avenue in East St. Louis (completed 1923). The elaborate, custom-made Moorish-inspired terra cotta that adorns the entries of both buildings is strikingly



is a pharaonic head (aka sphinx head), half-moon, scimitar and star ensemble that represent important symbols of the Shriner's organization. The Ainad Shriners recently celebrated their 100 year anniversary and the much-beloved building remains occupied and in use by the organization. ●

Forest Park Highlands continued >>

On Thursday, August 16, 1906, Wild attempted to fly the Eagle from Forest Park Highlands to the rooftop of *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch* building at 210-212 N. Broadway. A "slit in the gas bag" (later discovered to be an intentional slash made with a knife) resulted in premature landing on the east side of the Mississippi River near Cahokia. The Eagle ended up "in a stubble field" where Wild "seized a bunch of weeds [while holding] the airship down until Father Frank Berkenbrock of Holy Family Church came to [his] assistance." The dirigible and Wild were returned to the Highlands via automobile, and four men were arrested (Claude Vaughn, Joseph Williams, Arthur Haley and John McElhinney) all of whom denied any responsibility for damaging the Eagle. On the plus side, Wild's unsuccessful flight brought to light a few things that he had failed to consider previously – most importantly that the city's layer of smog (due to burning coal) prevented him from distinguishing individual buildings from the air. Unfortunately this was a problem that could not – and would not – be resolved before the Eagle took off a second time from Forest Park Highlands five days later.

On Tuesday, August 21, the Eagle was repaired and ready to try again – as was its pilot. The weather, however, was less cooperative, delaying take-off by nearly an hour. The *Post-Dispatch* reported Wild's second flight as "successful" though he again failed to make his goal of landing atop the newspaper building. The flight was not – however – uneventful. En route from Forest Park Highlands, as Wild flew above

Handlan's Park at Grand and Laclede (a venue not unlike the Highlands), fireworks were shot in tribute to his flight. The pilot, fearing his life was in danger and that the dirigible was exploding, later stated he "almost jumped out of the frame" at that point. Another mishap occurred when a shed, holding a throng of spectators on its ill-suited roof, collapsed. Wagons, cars and people thronged the streets, jamming traffic for nearly an hour and the *Post-Dispatch* reported that the windows of City Hall and the Courts Building were "black with spectators lost in admiration."

Wild's flight from the Highlands lasted about 35 minutes and involved two landings – both near City Hall. Wild grazed buildings on 12th Street as he descended the first time, managing to evade the crowd and telegraph wires. He "missed the lawn [in front of City Hall] by the width of the street . . . [and came] in contact with a three-story building" before finally being caught by the same group of men who had tumbled from the collapsed shed. The group grabbed the dirigible's rope, dragging it – and Wild – to the ground. Wild took off again about a half hour later to find a more suitable landing site in City Hall Park. When asked about his near misses, Wild pointed out that he was never in danger, having survived much worse in Chicago when he crashed into a church and "carried the steeple away with me." The Eagle was not as fortunate, suffering a twisted crank shaft and deflated air bag. Wild and the Eagle were again "carried back to the Highlands" – mission accomplished. ●

2013 Magic Chef Mansion Event



Joe Edwards

We are pleased to announce that Joe Edwards will accept the 2013 H. Meade Summers Jr. Award for lifetime achievement in historic preservation at Landmarks' 2nd Annual "Meet the Chefs at the Magic Chef Mansion" event! This year the party will be bigger and better, with more participating restaurants and vendors creating a veritable circus of culinary experiences amidst the Victorian splendor of one of St. Louis'

most beautiful and meticulously restored historic mansions. Named for, and endowed by a past President of the Board of Landmarks Association and Chair of the Missouri Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the H. Meade Summers Jr. Award is intended to recognize individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the cause of historic preservation and the revitalization of historic neighborhoods in St. Louis.

Through creative vision and leadership, Joe Edwards has helped transform the University City Loop into one of the most vibrant restaurant, shopping, arts and entertainment districts in the U.S. For decades, Joe has been renovating historic buildings and

encouraging the revitalization of St. Louis by creating destination attractions and cultivating vibrant cultural environments. His work stands out as a superb case study of how historic preservation goes hand-in-hand with community revitalization and how urban areas that have suffered from disinvestment can be reborn as centers of commerce, arts, culture and life. Please join us in honoring Joe with the H. Meade Summers Jr. Award for his achievements in historic preservation and community revitalization, and enjoy an unparalleled evening of food and fun at the Magic Chef Mansion.

The event will take place on Thursday evening, September 12 from 5:30-8:30. Tickets cost \$75.00 and include cooking demonstrations



by some of St. Louis' best chefs, great food, drinks, and the privilege of exploring the mansion and its expansive grounds. Non-member guests will receive a complimentary six month membership in Landmarks Association of St. Louis. For more information or to reserve tickets, please call (314) 421-6474, or email awei@landmarks-stl.org. ●

2013 Most Enhanced Award Winners

For 17 years, Landmarks Association of St. Louis has used the Most Enhanced Awards to recognize excellence in the restoration, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of St. Louis' architectural heritage. Award winners are selected based on the difficulty of the project, the capacity of the project to have a transformational effect on the surrounding area, the historical or architectural significance of the building, and the project's power to inspire. They are also selected with an eye toward a diversity of building types and development entities.



St. Louis Central Public Library

The St. Louis Public Library was designed by renowned New York architect Cass Gilbert and completed in 1912 as a component of downtown's grand municipal plaza. Renovation was completed this past November as the library turned 100 years old. Cannon Design was the project architect and BSI Constructors was the general contractor. The building is both an architectural and civic treasure and it stands as a shining example of how an institution can accommodate the current and future needs of its mission while respecting and honoring its architectural legacy. ●

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2013 Most Enhanced



3339 Missouri Avenue

Clearly visible on the 1875 pictorial map of St. Louis, the two buildings at 3339 Missouri were likely constructed well before the Civil War. The primary residence and alley house bear many of the hallmarks of what has been termed the Missouri German Vernacular Classical Style. This home predates much of the existing buildings in Benton Park and, when constructed, was in an area that was in a transitional zone between the city of St. Louis and the farms and dairies that supported it. Vacant and deteriorating for well over a decade, the Benton Park Community

Housing Corporation and Alderman Ken Ortmann were concerned that these early and important buildings would be lost. They worked tenaciously to secure title to the property and find a developer who was willing and able to renovate the property. They found that person in Ray Simon, an architect and long time resident of the Benton Park neighborhood. No stranger to dilapidated buildings, Ray has won multiple Most Enhanced Awards and holds a prominent place among the special breed of fearless rehabbers who keep buildings like this from becoming vacant lots. The project architect and contractor was Ray Simon and the owner/developer was Green Corn Dancers LLC. ●



The Flying Saucer, 374 South Grand Boulevard

Constructed in 1967 by the Teamsters Union of St. Louis (Local 688), and designed by architect Richard Henmi, this unique, space-age building originally housed a service station for the adjacent Council Plaza housing development. Council Plaza was designed as a total retirement community concept for the Teamsters, providing residential, retail, office space, a restaurant, and medical and automotive services for tenants. The highly unique building was briefly considered as a target for demolition in 2011 earning it a place on that year's Most Endangered list.

Following an avalanche of public support for the preservation of the quirky building, developer Union Square Enterprises decided that there was opportunity in its unmistakable appearance and changed course for adaptive reuse. The project architect was Klitzing-Welsch and the contractor was Paric. ●



1435 Salisbury

This enormous corner commercial/residential building was originally constructed in 1893 as a component of a complex of buildings that included a dance hall and a three-story privy. An important anchor at the prominent and intact corner of Salisbury and Blair in Hyde Park, the deterioration of this building (vacant for more than 30 years) had become so severe that it was included on Landmarks' Association's Most Endangered list in 2010. The redevelopment of this building is a component of a much larger scattered-site project known as "Hyde Park South," which is rehabilitating twenty six buildings in one of St. Louis' most beautiful, but at-risk neighborhoods. The developer was ND Consulting, the project architect was AGM Inc., Jeff Brambila was the historic preservation consultant and E.M. Harris Construction Company was the contractor. ●



Metropolitan Artist Lofts, 500 North Grand Boulevard

Located at the high-profile intersection of Grand and Olive in the heart of Midtown, the former Metropolitan Building was constructed in 1907 and designed by the St. Louis firm of Mauran, Russell & Garden. Once a prominent address for doctors and other medical professionals, all of the floors aside from the street level retail spaces were vacant by the mid 1970s. Rehabilitation by Dominium Development required complete replacement of about 35% of the roof, 20% of the 8th floor, 10% of the 7th floor and all the remaining floors were reinforced with structural decking. In addition, many original details were restored including marble corridor floors, paneling, woodwork and the historic lobby. The building now contains 72 lofts, two art studios, a dance studio, four soundproof practice studios, a fitness room and basement indoor parking. Paul Hohmann with Ebersoldt + Associates was the project architect, Paric was the contractor. ●

2013 Most Enhanced



4557 Flad Avenue

This four-family walk up apartment building is a property type that typifies the Shaw's Garden Historic District and the Southwest Garden neighborhood in general so it is fitting that its redevelopment was made possible by the cooperative long-term planning of the Southwest Garden Neighborhood Association, the Southwest Garden Neighborhood Housing Corporation, Alderman Steve Conway, and a local businessman (Chuck Vilnai) with a deep commitment to the community. Mr. Vilnai renovated every aspect of the building. He installed a new roof, repointed the exterior, removed paint from the brick and stone, stabilized structural problems, removed and rebuilt the rotting porch, repaired damaged plaster walls and ceilings, repaired and refinished original floors and trim, added new mechanical systems, bathrooms, and kitchens. He also restored leaded glass windows, doors, and even the historic garage. The project architect was Fendler and Associates; the contractor was Arthur Kotets. ●



Elaia & Olio, 1634 Tower Grove Avenue

From the 1920s through the 1940s, many corner service stations were built in residential areas around St. Louis to accommodate droves of new automobile owners. They were largely abandoned in the latter half of the century as service stations morphed into the convenience mart and moved on to major transit arteries and out of the neighborhoods. Unfortunately, they frequently left environmental problems behind in addition to small buildings that are difficult to repurpose. As they have done before, the Urban Improvement Company (UIC) found an opportunity in a building that, on the surface, was not an obvious candidate for redevelopment. Combining the internally connected service station and a multi-family residence next door, Elaia & Olio is the epitome of

adaptive reuse. The buildings are now beacons of good taste, good food, and demonstrate how creativity and vision can convert a neighborhood lemon into neighborhood lemonade. The project architect, contractor and the owner/developer was UIC. ●



5074 Waterman Boulevard

Constructed in 1909 and designed by the noted St. Louis firm of Mariner & LaBeaume, the large single family home at 5074 Waterman was foreclosed upon in the same year it turned 100 years old. Fortunately, it soon caught the eye of Washington University researcher Dr. Marco Colonna who hired neighborhood based Core10 Architecture to handle the extensive renovation plans. The home had suffered from deferred maintenance for years and the usual range of neglect issues plagued the building. The exterior of the home was at a tipping point with areas of decaying wood and masonry on the verge of failure. The original porte-cochere had rotted away, the exterior trims had deteriorated and the garage was all but collapsed. Dr. Colonna invested heavily in stabilizing the structure and restoring all of the original windows and woodwork throughout. The extensive restoration work was complimented with bright interiors and modern kitchen and bath renovations. The project architects were Brian Wheeler and Tyler Stephens with Core10 Architecture and the contractor was Higginbotham Brothers. ●



Cupples #9, 900-914 Spruce Street

Originally constructed in 1895 and designed by the St. Louis firm of Eames and Young, the building at 900-914 Spruce Street is a component of the City Landmark Cupples Station warehouse district. Abandoned by the 1970s the warehouse sat vacant and mothballed for approximately forty years before the economics of redevelopment made sense. Piggybacking on the success of the other Cupples redevelopments, the Koman Group along with Space Architects and Clayco contracting not only saved the building, they created a valuable civic asset from what many considered to be just another crumbling warehouse. The rehabilitation took advantage of the building's open floor plans and highlighted original structural elements to create fascinating new interior spaces that masterfully blend both old and new. Today Cupples 9 recalls our city's importance as a center of trade and innovation while providing a much-needed anchor of density and mixed use opportunity in the ballpark area. ●

2013 Most Enhanced



5936-38 Etzel Avenue

Through the Most Enhanced Awards, we not only attempt to recognize high profile projects that restore the city's architectural treasures, we attempt to recognize the diversity of the developers and the many ways in which the rehabilitation of historic buildings can serve the community. Suffering from water damage and neglect, the decaying two-family home was far from a neighborhood asset when it was acquired by Cornerstone Corporation, a non-profit organization that has worked to provide affordable housing in the city since 1976.

In this case, Cornerstone partnered with Grace and Peace Fellowship, a church congregation, to turn the building into accommodations for graduates of a shelter for homeless women that the church runs during the winter months. Using immense amounts of volunteer muscle and skill from a diverse array of organizations, the formerly deteriorating home was converted into three sparkling living spaces including a three bedroom apartment on the upper floors and two efficiency units on the first floor. The project architect was the St. Louis Design Alliance, the developer was Cornerstone Corporation, the contractor was Swedlund Construction, the financing was provided by a host of private donors, churches, and foundations, and the labor was provided by good people with a commitment to serving those in need. ●



The Restaurant at the Cheshire Inn, 7036 Clayton Road

When CLM Rest LLC and Lodging Hospitality Management purchased the restaurant building at the Cheshire Inn, they acquired a St. Louis landmark. They also acquired a building that had been vacant since the 1990s and had experienced years of deferred maintenance with brickwork that was crumbling in places, woodwork that was rotten, overgrown vegetation growing into the walls and an interior that had been stripped of windows, paneling, molding, lighting, mantels and railings for an auction years earlier. Architect Mike Killeen was tasked with a complete

restoration of the exterior based on a historic rendering and The Lawrence Group was called in to coordinate interior finishes. The renovations took what had been a rambling space with numerous dining rooms, party rooms, bars and lounges and created a series of distinct businesses: The main Restaurant, the Market (a casual café and gourmet grocery), and Basso's basement pub. Once threatened with demolition, the iconic building is once again thriving and providing a unique anchor at this prominent intersection. The contractor was Paric. ●



Robert A. Young Federal Building, 1222 Spruce Street

Completed in 1933 as a mixed use headquarters for the Terminal Railroad Association, the enormous scale and progressive art-deco design spoke of St. Louis' prominence as a center of rail traffic in the pre-world war II era. The one million square foot building was purchased by the U.S. Army in 1941 and used in large part to manufacture tank components during the war. In 1961 it was acquired by the General Services Administration to accommodate various Federal offices and in 1988 it was renamed in honor of Missouri representative Robert A. Young. By 2009, the building was showing its age in both appearance and efficiency and thus was targeted for a major modernization effort under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The thorough and sensitive modernization brought the nearly 80 year old skyscraper up to LEED Silver certification. This project represents an outstanding example of how a historic building can be retrofitted to meet high standards of energy

efficiency for the 21st century. The developer was the General Service Administration, project architect was Team Four/Saur and the contractor was HOF Construction. ●



Kenrick-Glennon Seminary, 5200 Glennon Drive

Constructed in 1931 and designed by architect Henry Hess, Kenrick-Glennon Seminary serves as the college and graduate school of theology for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. Louis. Both an architectural and institutional landmark in the St. Louis region, we applaud the decision to renovate rather than replace the aging buildings. Simply put, the facility needed an upgrade. Interiors were showing wear, systems were very dated, public spaces were dark and residence floors lacked basics such as private bathrooms and central air. The project entailed extensive rehabilitation of the historic buildings, sensitive new additions, and general site improvements. The extent of the project demonstrates an outstanding commitment on behalf of the St. Louis Archdiocese to its historic seminary, and beautifully illustrates how historic buildings and modern convenience can be combined to honor tradition while realizing progress. The project architect was Cannon Design, the owner and developer was the Archdiocese of St. Louis and BSI Constructors was the contractor. ●

Landmarks Association and the St. Louis Regional Arts Commission >>

Because the population of school-age children in the St. Louis area is primarily located in suburban environments constructed well after World War II, there is a great need for educational opportunities that introduce students to the rich architectural heritage of the region's older core. It is remarkable that in a metropolitan area that boasts such great architecture, very few schools take advantage of the opportunities that buildings provide to teach a wide variety of lessons. Enter Landmarks Association and the St. Louis Regional Arts Commission.

A single historic building presents a diverse range of opportunities for teaching and learning. Brick walls, limestone foundations, iron hardware and terra cotta ornament can be used to introduce students to the geology and industrial history of the region. Design motifs, architectural styles, and building forms can be examined through the lenses of history, art history, ethnicity and popular culture. Structural systems and the uses to which various materials are put can teach lessons about mathematics, physics and geometry. Finally, a building as a whole bears messages from the past about the people that built, designed, and occupied it. A building is a physical expression of human ideas, knowledge, experience and decisions; it is a work of art.



Thanks to the St. Louis Regional Arts Commission (RAC), year after year Landmarks Association stands ready to assist educators, social groups, after-school programs, seniors' organizations, neighborhood associations, and anybody interested in learning about

the architecture of the region. I am pleased to announce that for the 22nd year in a row, RAC has awarded Landmarks a grant to help support our educational programs.

If you know of a school or social group that might be interested in educational opportunities related to the historic architecture of the St. Louis region, please contact Landmarks' office. In addition, if you are an educator or simply have an interest in creating lesson plans that are rooted in architecture and the building arts, please step forward. In the coming year we are looking to expand our repertoire of educational programming and outreach, and we need your help! ●

Landmarks Association is Preparing a National Register Nomination for Bellefontaine Cemetery >>



As our members are well aware, Landmarks Association has a long history of writing National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nominations for properties in and around St. Louis. We have been doing so, in fact, since the 1970s! The NRHP program was created under the 1966 Historic Preservation Act and one of the earliest properties in St. Louis to be recognized under its aegis (in 1970) was the Wainright Tomb in Bellefontaine Cemetery. Because of this and because of its outstanding design and notable occupants, many readers may be surprised to learn that the cemetery itself is currently not on the NRHP. It is therefore a great pleasure to announce that this will no longer be the case, as we have been granted the opportunity to nominate Bellefontaine for the recognition it so clearly deserves.

Eären Hummel, Director of Landscape Design, at Bellefontaine has graciously agreed to share her research and provide assistance (thank you Eären!), as has the entire staff at Bellefontaine. If all goes as planned, we hope to present the nomination in May 2014 to the Missouri Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Following this initial step, the ultimate goal is to seek an even higher level of recognition (National Historic Landmark status) for the cemetery. We'll keep you posted and in the meantime, please consider

a visit to St. Louis' most architecturally significant and historically important cemetery. Visits are free and the cemetery is open daily from 8:00 until 5:00. More information is available at www.bellefontainecemetery.org or by calling (314) 381-0750. ●

TOURS

Tour: Three Historic Office Buildings on Olive Street with Owner Mark Pitliangas

Sunday, October 13. 3:00-5:00.

Reservations are required. Cost is \$15.00 per person. Call Landmarks' office at (314) 421-6474 or email aueil@landmarks-stl.org to reserve your spot!

Mr. Pitliangas has been involved in the redevelopment of downtown St. Louis for decades and has renovated numerous historic buildings including 1009, 1108, and 1112 Olive Street, which we will visit. All of the buildings have fascinating interior details designed by Pitliangas' company Antique Architectural Décor, which is based at the 1112 Olive address. The building at 1009 Olive is now known as "The Thaxton" and is used primarily as event space, although it was constructed in 1928 for the Eastman Kodak Company (designed by Klipstein & Rathmann). 1108 Olive, now known as the Versailles Building was designed in 1912 by noted St. Louis architect Henry Roach, and 1112 Olive was built in 1925 by the Koplar family. Come take advantage of this rare opportunity to explore these buildings and hear Mr. Pitliangas' perspectives on the future of downtown! ●



Tour the Mid-Century Home Designed by Architect Ralph Fournier for Builder Burton Duenke

Saturday, September 21. 1:00-2:30.

Reservations are required. Cost is \$20.00 per person. Call Landmarks' office at (314) 421-6474 or email aueil@landmarks-stl.org to reserve your spot!

The crown jewel of Arrowhead Estates, this stone and redwood home is among the finest examples of residential modernism in St. Louis County. The home was designed for the family of Burton Duenke who developed several mid-century neighborhoods



including Harwood Hills, Arrowhead, Ridgewoods and Craigwoods, as well as the Tan Tar A resort. He frequently collaborated with architect Ralph Fournier to create environments where contemporary design was framed by natural beauty. Constructed in 1955, and occupied by the Duenke family until 1962, the home was featured in *House & Garden Magazine* shortly after completion. It features built-in furniture and cabinetry, terrazzo floors, thirteen exterior doors, original redwood throughout and stained glass by famed St. Louis artist Siegfried Reinhardt (a resident of Duenke's Craigwoods neighborhood). Current owners Franc Flotron and Anne Lewis have generously offered us a unique opportunity to tour this mid-century gem—don't miss it! ●



The Story of the National Cash Register Building at 1011 Olive >

The modest two-story brick and terra-cotta commercial building at 1011 Olive Street downtown is easy to overlook. Typical of early 20th century commercial buildings, it is a form that once was common in downtown St. Louis and along the city's commercial thoroughfares. These were the buildings that housed the diverse array of small businesses that together created a bustling urban environment. Unfortunately, the commercial functions that occupied buildings such as this largely relied upon heavy pedestrian traffic and fixed public transit lines to connect with customers. With the decline of downtown as a center of commerce in the latter 20th century, and the dismantling of the streetcar system, many of the businesses that owned or rented space in buildings such as this abandoned their neighborhoods for new suburban developments.

Downtown, the modest scale of buildings such as 1011 Olive made them easy targets for demolition as their larger neighbors sought to provide convenient parking for remaining customers. Rather than facilitating the continuation of business in the urban core, the dismantling of dense commercial districts to accommodate automobiles hastened its precipitous decline. Despite the fact that this self-destructive pattern is so clearly visible in hindsight, proposals continue to surface in St. Louis claiming that we can demolish our way to prosperity.

While most attention is usually focused on high-profile redevelopments of downtown's largest and most impressive commercial and office buildings, the smaller buildings such as 1011 Olive play an important role in the big picture as well. These buildings create opportunities for a diverse range of activities to take place along a single street. The variability of their size, materials, form and ornament makes for a visually stimulating environment, and they provide reference points to inform future infill construction that seeks to knit the

pedestrian environment back together.

Interestingly, many of these small buildings have stories to tell that are just as fascinating as their monumental neighbors. In the case of 1011 Olive Street, that story is about the National Cash Register Company (NCR) of Dayton, Ohio; its relentless efforts introduce the cash register to the world; and the role that St. Louis played in its strategy.

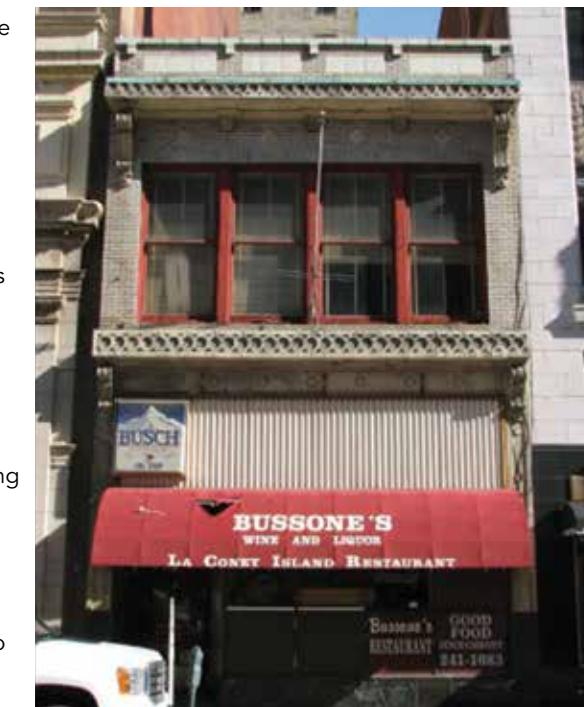
The story of NCR began in 1884 when a businessman named John H. Patterson purchased a small factory and the patents for the first mechanical cash register (invented several years earlier by James Ritty). Patterson embarked upon a feverish effort to improve the machine and to introduce it to a business world that for centuries had run on a ledger-based system. Despite initial resistance among business owners and employees the company grew at an exponential pace in the decades bracketing the turn of the 20th century.

In 1884 the company sold 359 cash registers, mostly in the Dayton area and in the eastern United States.

By 1903 the number of machines it had sold was in the hundreds of thousands and it was operating in 27 countries. In 1911, the company sold its one millionth machine and its fiercely anti-competitive practices

had secured 95% of the American cash register market. These practices would eventually result in anti-trust prosecutions and jail sentences for the company's leadership. NCR's business practices were as innovative as they were aggressive and many aspects of employee training, organization, advertising, and product development pioneered by the company became models for other American industries.

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NCR Sales and Repair Building, 1011 Olive Street

The Story of the NCR Building continued >>

While most attention is usually focused on high-profile redevelopments of downtown's largest and most impressive commercial and office buildings, the smaller buildings such as 1011 Olive play an important role in the big picture as well."

residential work in the Central West End and University City. At the same time NCR settled down its local operations on Olive, the company opened its first and only North American branch depot in a now-demolished building at Cupples Station and operated



NCR Repair Center, St. Louis. Courtesy of Dayton History

The company opened its first office in St. Louis in 1886 and moved around to various rented spaces downtown until 1913-14 when it moved its local sales and repair force into a new home (constructed-for, but not owned-by NCR) at 1011 Olive. Designed by Thomas Curtis Lee (1874-1918), the building was a departure from the architect's previous

the headquarters for its "Southern Sales Division" (with a territory that extended as far as California) from various rented offices nearby. Not only did NCR succeed in selling a cash register to most businesses in St. Louis, it used the city as the staging and distribution point for the cash register's invasion of the west. Interestingly, NCR's prominent presence in St. Louis resulted in a large collection of photographs of the city's businesses in the first half of the 20th century. Identified while researching 1011 Olive for a pending National Register nomination prepared by Landmarks Association, the photos are housed in the NCR Archives at the Dayton, Ohio Historical Society. Hundreds of them can be viewed by searching the keywords "St. Louis" in the photo archives at <http://www.daytonhistory.org/>

You just never know what you are going to find when you start digging into the history of even the most modest buildings in St. Louis. ●

March 21, 2013 – July 23, 2013

NEW MEMBERS

SUSTAINING

J. E. Novack Construction Co.

CONTRIBUTING

Dan Andersohn
Bill Hartnett
Tim Layton
Debbie Monterrey Millett
Christian Wessling

FRIEND

Hany Abounader
Mr. & Mrs. Bob Cocks
Marco Colonna

Josh Dodson/Cornerstone Corporation

Eric Ericson
Robert O'Loughlin/CEO,
Lodging Hospitality Management
Hanoch Vilnai

SENIOR

Jim & Annie Blum
Carol Christy
Bob Cradock
Roger Kirkbride
Lynn McGoogan
Egon Schwarz & Irene Lindgren

JUNIOR

Christa Iezzi

STUDENT

Timothy Meyer

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Tom & Ulrike Schlaflay
Missouri Athletic Club

PATRON

Leo A. & Kay Drey
HOK, Inc.
Mr. & Mrs. Robert O. Little
Janice & Gary Weil

BENEFATOR

Mrs. William Barnes III
Mrs. W. G. Keinath, Jr.
Nancy & Kenneth S. Kranzberg

SUSTAINING

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2013 Annual Membership Meeting - Don't Miss It

This year's annual membership meeting will take place on Sunday, September 22 from Noon until 2 at the St. Louis City Museum. Located at 701 North 15th Street downtown, the museum occupies the factory annex to Theodore Link's 1910 headquarters for the Roberts, Johnson & Rand (later International) Shoe Company. The annex was constructed in 1931 by the James Black Masonry and Contracting Company and contains over 600,000 square feet of space. Since 1997, that space has contained one of St. Louis' most unique attractions which features, among a vast array of other things, a remarkable collection of architectural salvage.

The meeting is free for Landmarks' members (and potential members) and includes refreshments. Board members and staff will give a brief report on the organization and its activities over the past year. Members will have a chance to vote in the election of Board Directors. Guests will be given a complimentary wristband providing access to most of the museum after the meeting. While reservations are not required, RSVP's are requested to facilitate planning. Please RSVP to Susan Tschetter at 314-421-6474 or email her at stschetter@landmarks-stl.org

Parking is available for \$5 in the lot at 16th & Delmar (enclosed by the serpent wall). Additional parking is available across Delmar (at 15th Street) for \$5. Street parking is metered. For more information on the museum, visit www.citymuseum.org or call (314) 231-2489.