

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Buehler, William, House

other names/site number n/a

## 2. Location

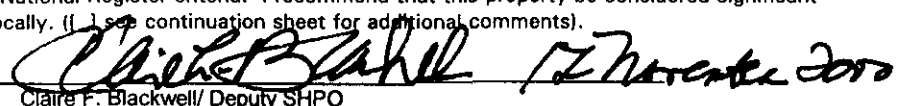
street & number 2610 Tennessee Avenue [n/a] not for publication

city or town Saint Louis [n/a] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county St. Louis (Independent City) code 510 zip code 63111

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. ([ ] see continuation sheet for additional comments).

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

Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

☐ entered in the National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the  
National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register.

☐ removed from the National  
Register.

☐ other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Buehler, William, House  
Name of Property

St. Louis (Independent City), MO  
County and State

### 5. Classification

#### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

#### Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

#### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	0	Total

#### Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

n/a

#### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

### 6. Function or Use

#### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/secondary structure

#### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/secondary structure

### 7. Description

#### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/Romanesque

#### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE/Limestone

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other

#### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Buehler, William, House  
Name of Property

St. Louis (Independent City), MO  
County and State

### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

#### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

#### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

#### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

#### Period of Significance

1894-1896

#### Significant Dates

1894-1896

#### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

#### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

#### Architect/Builder

Lemm, Herman, Architect

P. Schneider and Company, Contractor

#### Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Buehler, William, House  
Name of Property

St. Louis (Independent City), MO  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property under 1 acre

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 [115] [7141051310] [4121716171810]  
Zone Easting Northing

2 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]  
Zone Easting Northing

3 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

4 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

☐ See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Karen Bode Baxter, Architectural Historian and Timothy P. Maloney, Research Associate

organization Karen Bode Baxter, Consultant date May 24, 2000

street & number 5811 Delor Street telephone (314) 353-0593

city or town Saint Louis state Missouri zip code 63109-3108

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the complete form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name John Andrew Zacher and Laura Filbert Zacher

street & number 2610 Tennessee Avenue telephone (314) 481-7623

city or town Saint Louis state Missouri zip code 63111

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Buehler, William, House  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

### Narrative Description

#### SUMMARY

Completed by 1896 after construction began late in 1894, this two and one-half story, Richardsonian Romanesque, red brick, single family residence with its three-story square tower and its two-story, brick carriage house dominate the surrounding residential area in this Late Victorian neighborhood in south Saint Louis. The residential area is now known as the Tower Grove East neighborhood and consists primarily of simpler, turn of the twentieth century, red brick, two story, single family and two family residences. The Buehler House shares an elevated front yard and a common setback with other houses on this block, except for the imposing tower which projects slightly from the main façade and is a full story taller than other façade features on houses in this block. The Buehler House is located on the east side of Tennessee Avenue just four doors south from Sidney Street and is only three blocks directly east of the northeastern corner of Tower Grove Park and the South Grand Boulevard commercial business district. The Buehler House is less than two blocks south of the exclusive Compton Heights historic district (including the historic Compton Hill Reservoir and Water Tower) as well as three blocks from the Shaw Neighborhood (an historic district noted for its uniform architectural character as a late nineteenth century subdivision development), both areas being developed concurrently and less than a decade before the Buehler House and its immediate neighborhood. Although they have been vacant for two years and suffer from a lack of maintenance and several aborted attempts at alterations, both the house and the carriage house retain a high degree of historic integrity and are currently in the midst of a major historic rehabilitation.

#### EXTERIOR

This two and one-half story red brick house with its coursed ashlar limestone foundation has a steeply pitched hipped roof with cross gables, bays and narrow overhangs as well as a tall, three-story, square tower opposite the curved corner of the façade, all distinctive features of Richardsonian Romanesque designs. The house retains its original copper gutters and slate roof, but a previous owner unwisely applied asphalt shingles directly over the slate shingles and the rehabilitation project currently underway is removing these asphalt shingles and the destroyed slate roofing to install a new slate roof to match the original. Although the use of a square tower with a tiered ogee roof with a flared pyramidal cap is an unusual design adaptation, the round-topped, relieving, brick arches over the paired front windows and the similarly arched entry of the base of the tower, as well as the use of a variety of masonry textures and materials, are all common characteristics of Richardsonian Romanesque houses. Despite the asymmetry to the exterior plan, the design of the house is unified by certain visual elements, especially the vertical symmetry of the fenestration pattern, the repetition of paired round-topped arches on the façade, the stringcourse that forms the second floor sills that wrap the tower and the front façade, as well as the coursed ashlar limestone foundation with its dressed capstone that forms a high water table and a contrasting element to the red brick walls of the house.

#### **Primary Façade (West Elevation)**

The façade of the Buehler House consists of two major elements that form two vertical bays across the front of the house: the three-story tower on the south half of the façade (which incorporates the arcaded entry porch) and the two-story bay on the northern half of the front elevation.

The large, square, three-story tower on the southern half of the façade dominates and projects out from the main façade line about three feet. It carries the same basic wall treatments as the rest of the house (red brick walls with a raised, coursed limestone foundation) and also had a slate roof originally and tiered copper gutters (one at the base of the roof

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### Narrative Description (continued)

and one where the ogee roof meets the pyramidal cap). Based upon longtime neighborhood residents, a weathervane with a barrel motif originally capped the tower's roof (part of the post is still extant). The south side of the tower merges with the south elevation's wall, forming a complete arched opening on the first floor level and single sashed windows on each level above. The north side of the tower is nestled into the southeast corner of the house with only enough projection beyond the main façade line to allow for a half-arch opening on the first floor. The front elevation of the tower is spanned by a wide round arched opening with paired, arched, sashed windows on both upper levels. The arched upper floor sashed windows on both the front (west) elevation and south elevation of the tower utilize the same design details as the main façade with brick compound arched lintels, with half round transoms on both of the south elevation windows as well as the third floor windows on the front, while the second floor windows have round-topped sashes.

Between the first floor and second floor levels, a wide, compound band of brick and limestone stringcourses distinguish the tower elevations from adjacent surfaces on the main house elevations. Included in this band is a series of square, red, terra cotta tiles with an embossed spiral (wave-like) motif that is situated between limestone crown molding courses, the upper one being the continuous sill for the second floor windows and the lower one having a red terra cotta egg and dart stringcourse directly below it. Beneath this band, there are three rows of brick with a brick quarter-round stringcourse at its base that projecting out slightly from the main wall (a similar treatment is used at the top of the tower to provide visual definition below the roofline).

The first floor level of the tower is an open arcaded entry porch. On the west or front elevation of the arcaded entry, the compound, brick arch (with a limestone key that extends up to the base of the band described above) springs from square, brick, squat, engaged columns with elaborate egg and dart capitals and with a base of brick roping resting on massive, dressed limestone piers. Rusticated limestone bands, in line with the upper portion of these limestone capitals, define the brick corners both on either side of the front elevation as well as at the back of the arched opening on the south elevation, helping to define the boundary of the south side of the tower as well as to continue the top division of the columns. The upper portion of the dressed limestone piers extend along the sides of the tower under the side arches (above the foundation stone), with short brick knee walls capped with dressed limestone. Three wide limestone steps span the width of the front arch, leading to the covered porch floor of blue and white ceramic tile. The covered porch/entry has a wooden, coffered ceiling.

The doorway faces west and has a brick, segmental arched lintel with paired transoms separated by beaded and chamfered casing. The paired doors are deeply recessed in the doorway with recessed paneled side walls and a dressed limestone sill plate. These panel-and-light vestibule doors have paired recessed panels near their bases with a horizontal panel of elaborate tracery. The large, rectangular, beveled glass light in the upper half of each door is framed with casing that has a projecting lintel and sill, both with egg and dart molding with a dentil course at their bases.

The northern half of the façade consists of the two-story elevation with paired, round-topped arched windows on each level. The north corner of the façade is rounded with a curved glass, round-topped arched window on each level as well. The hipped roof above this portion of the façade has a single dormer centered above the paired windows of the façade and the dormer has sloped sides, a single, double hung sashed window and an unusual, hipped roof that extends to a pointed overhang in front of the window. Both the paired windows and the corner, curved glass window on the first floor have half-round, clear glass transoms above the double hung sashed windows, and on the second floor have a round-topped upper sash on the double hung sashed windows. The massive, brick, relieving arches are actually part of the wall surface but have projecting brick caps that have stepped bases. The limestone sills on the façade (including the curved corner windows) are more elaborate than on the other elevations, having crowned caps, with those on the first floor being lug sills while those on the second floor being continuous, forming a stringcourse that continues on the tower. Within the

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### Narrative Description (continued)

*coursed ashlar, limestone, raised foundation are similarly position, wooden awning windows, a pair on the front and a single window on the curved corner, all with dressed stone sills and the dressed stone header course forming the lintels.*

### Secondary Elevations

The secondary elevations all share common design features that are distinctive from the facade. While these elevations also have red brick walls and a coursed ashlar limestone foundation (high water table), there is not a dressed limestone cap. Also, the basement windowsills are rock-faced limestone, rather than dressed limestone. The first and second floor windows and doors all have simple, brick, segmental arched lintels and plain, lugged sills of dressed limestone (without a crowned cap). The windows are all two-over-two, double hung, wooden sashed windows which currently have aluminum combination storm windows designed to look like a sashed window with a transom. In general, the windows are aligned vertically, one on each floor level with basement window directly underneath. These basement windows are paired wooden casement windows (usually with a single paned, wooden storm window).

The south side elevation of the house is divided into two bays. The front (west) section consisting mostly of the brick walls and coursed ashlar limestone foundation with a small buttress-like extension of brick near the front corner of the upper level and a single bay of windows at the west end of this bay. The back bay (at the east end) is gabled with a pair of windows in the attic level and a single window centered on the second floor level. This gabled bay projects out slightly further south than the western bay, and there is a narrow window (one on each level) that faces west.

The back or east elevation is divided into five bays with a single dormer between the second and third bay (from the north), matching the front façade dormer and directly opposite it. The southern bay serves as the back entry and leads to the back stairwell and as a result, the two upper level windows are situated at the landing (between the first and second floor and at the landing to the attic). The transomed, wood paneled door with a pair of vertical half-lights has two-steps of limestone and a small shed-roof supported by knee braces. The second bay from the northern end has an additional wooden transomed doorway (2 over 5 lights in each of the French doors) that apparently led to a small porch (that is no longer extant) over the concrete steps to the basement doorway below and the second floor level has an additional wooden transomed doorway (2 over 4 lights) and while it is difficult to be sure, it appears that these are original doorways, although they may represent early modifications when the house was converted into a duplex in the 1930s. The other three bays are window bays.

The north side elevation is also divided vertically into two separate elements. The front section is connected to the façade by the rounded corner and separated from this corner by the end-wall chimney. The brick chimney pierces through the roof and has a simple limestone band that connects with the front elevation's second floor continuous sill (but is rusticated instead of dressed stone). The base of the chimney also continues the front façade dressed limestone cap and coursed ashlar raised foundation stones, but above this cap is an iron ash-pit door. Above the limestone band, at the second floor height, the chimney is decorated with terra cotta rosettes and reeded in a bisected rectangular outline. The chimney, above the roofline, has two vertical, brick buttress-like supports, but appears to be missing its original chimney cap. Behind the chimney, is a single bay of windows. The front section is connected to the back section by a canted wall that has a single bay of windows (no basement opening) below the gabled roof extension. The pedimented gable roof on this elevation has a single sashed window at the attic level and below the gabled roof are two bays of windows (the eastern set being the small windows for the two bathrooms. Behind the gabled roof area where the hipped roofline continues, there is another bay of windows.

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St. Louis (Independent City), MO

### Narrative Description (continued)

#### INTERIOR

The interior plan of the Buehler House is defined by the linear hallway and front staircase that form the entry foyer along the south side of the house with the parlor and dining room opening off this hallway to the north. This main hallway forms an L where it connects to the back hall that separates the dining room from the kitchen and sitting room along the back (east) side of the house. Along the south wall, the front hall and stairwell are connected to the rear stairwell and back entry by a small storage room at the elbow where the two halls meet. At the north end of the back hall is a small half-bathroom and on the west side of this back hall there was originally a small closet between the doorway to the dining room and the elbow in the hall. The second floor plan closely mirrors the first floor plan, although the original use of the spaces differed since the rooms were all bedrooms originally with the bathroom positioned directly above the first floor bathroom. The only variation the first and second floor plans is the small sitting room in the tower on the second floor, the area of the entry porch on the first floor. The back stairwell provides access to both the attic and basement levels, both of which are basically unfinished spaces. As is typical of Late Victorian floor plans, the hallway provides spatial continuity with direct access to all of the rooms and the floor plan's circulation is further enhanced by additional passages between rooms of the first floor (main parlor to dining room across back hall to sitting room to kitchen) without having to re-enter the hallway between each room, a pattern that is closely replicated between the bedrooms upstairs.

Unlike many of the neighboring houses, the Buehler House utilizes much more extensive decorative detailing, an indication of the opulence found in the homes of more affluent, middle-class Saint Louis citizens during the late nineteenth century. As is also typical of Late Victorian designs, the interior utilizes extensive decorative detailing to provide the visual variety that is endemic of the house styles of this era as well as the continuity which unifies the interior through the repetition of decorative treatments. Elaborate plaster moldings frame the ceilings (which are 10 feet high on the first floor and 9 feet high on the second floor) of the front hallway and two rooms to the north on both levels, with ornate medallions centered in all three rooms on the north side of each floor and in the ceiling of the main hallway/staircase, although the patterns vary from room to room. The same convex pilaster casing trim pattern surrounds window and door frames throughout the house and is identical for both floors, only altering the pattern of the head trim, corner treatments and the base treatments between the front and back rooms on each level. Both levels have a three member molded baseboard. The interior doors throughout the house (both hinged and pocket doors) consist of five panels (with tall, paired vertical panels above and small vertical panels below the wide, horizontal panel) and most have two light, hinged transoms. In most areas of the house, the floors are oak, tongue and groove boards. Other common elements used throughout the house include the hot water radiators and brass door hardware.

The door and window trim does vary between the front rooms (the front stairway/hall, and two rooms to the north, being the main parlor and dining room on the first floor and two bedrooms on the second floor, as well as the sitting room in the second floor tower) and the back rooms (the back stairway/hall, the storage room on the south wall, the bathroom, and the rooms along the east (back) end of the house), although it is the same on each floor. In the front rooms, this convex pilaster casing trim had mitered corners at the top and an applied pilaster and heavy plinth-like base block supporting each side of the windows and doorways with a recessed wood panel under the windows. The front door, the pocket doors between the two front rooms on each level, and windows of these rooms (except for the tower sitting room) are capped with a embossed roping in an egg-and-dart pattern that connects the window trim to the cornice joining with the ceiling



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### Narrative Description (continued)

molding. Interior doors for these rooms, as well as the tower sitting room, omit the egg-and-dart roping in exchange for an embossed cap trim that was actually a separate cornice over the head casing. The trim for the back rooms has simple bulls eye corner blocks and simple windowsills, omitting the recessed wood panels under the windows. Both the doors and windows of the back rooms omit the pilaster treatment for the base blocks (wainscot height) and the doors utilize a shorter base block that matches the convex pilaster casings.

### Front Hallway and Main Staircase

The front hallway serves as the foyer for the main entry and incorporates the main staircase that leads up to the second floor. The ceiling on the first floor of this hallway was originally surrounded by a composite molding that formed a crown molding at the walls, but the front portion was removed while the house was duplexed. However, the back half of the hall still has heavily embossed rose vine pattern in the middle of this molding and corner blocks of a sculpted head of a woman. The inside of the paired entry doors is less elaborate than the exterior, with recessed panels similar to those of the other interior doors, except that the area where there would normally be the two upper panels has a single pane of glass. The paired transoms under the segmental arch opening is capped by the roping in the egg-and-dart pattern that is used elsewhere over windows and doors, but in this case it does not merge with the decorative trim at the cornice. At the back end of the stairs on the first floor is a mitered casing, five-panel door to the closet under the stairs and there is a small alcove with a window created adjacent to this door (This same area serves as the stairway landing on the second floor). The hallway actually narrows behind this alcove with a composite shouldered arched opening of molded plaster that terminates in small, floating, engaged colonettes that have elaborate, embossed flowers in the base and capitals. Behind this arched opening, the first floor hallway continues as a narrower hall that terminates at another mitered casing, five-panel door. Single pocket doors on the north wall of the hall provide access to the main parlor (across from the base of the staircase) and the dining room (across from the alcove behind the staircase).

The open straight-flight staircase has a closed stringer with a panel springboard and wood paneled walls. Although the railing is missing, the newel post has been saved and it matches those on the second floor level (and it will be reinstalled as part of this historic rehabilitation project along with a replicated railing). In the second floor hallway, the stairway opening is surrounded on both the north and west sides by a balustrade that probably matched the original staircase balustrade (since the newel posts match). The second floor balustrade has a panel springboard and the fancy turned balusters capped by the heavy railing that abut newel posts at each corner. The newel posts, both at the base of the stairs and at each end of the second floor railing, are chamfered with a squared cap topped by a small covered urn and have frieze panels on each side with fluting radiating from the bulls eye centers.

The upper level front hallway is configured similar to the first floor front hallway with an additional doorway (directly over the entry doors) leading to the tower sitting room. The second floor hallway is missing the arched opening treatment where the hallway narrows and has a mitered corner doorway with a five-panel door at this point instead of further back, making the second floor front hallway rectangular in shape. However, the upper level ceiling over the stairway is the most elaborate in the house, divided into six coffered panels with a decorative plaster ceiling medallion and bas relief leaves in each corner of each panel. It is surrounded by an ornate cornice molding that incorporates a heavily embossed vine of flowers, which appear to be gardenias, with corner blocks of a bust of a longhaired woman crowned with laurel.

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**Buehler, William, House  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO**

**Narrative Description (continued)**

**Back Stairway and Hall**

The back stairway provided access between the first and second floors, as well as the attic and the basement. Originally, there were doors to the kitchen, the storage room on the south wall (west of the stairway/hall) and to the back yard (on the east wall), but the transomed door to the storage room had been walled over on the storage room side (now uncovered and found intact). The back door is transomed and has two vertical lights in place of the typical upper wood panels of the five-panel door design used throughout this house. The open dog-legged staircase has open stringer panels with a paneled wall below the stringer and turned balusters. On each face, the chamfered newel post has three vertical grooves with a rosette in the squared panel above. The railing has a half-cylinder crook for the landing and a quarter-circle turn into the wall of the enclosed attic stairs. There are doors to the attic and basement steps. There is a simple wainscoting created with the same convex millwork trim as is used around the doors and windows.

**First Floor Rooms**

The main parlor at the northwest corner of the house and the dining room just to its east are separated by a pair of pocket doors, but seem to flow easily into each other, partly due to this wide opening and partly due to the continuity of the millwork and plaster moldings. Both the main parlor and the dining room open into the hallway with a single pocket door each on their south walls. The parlor features the paired windows with the round arched transoms on the west wall, the curved corner window (also with a round arched transom), as well as the fireplace and an additional sashed window just east of the fireplace on the north wall. Although the fireplace mantel is missing, the brick firebox is intact. Besides the round arched transoms and wood recessed panels below the windows, the curved corner window, the ornate ceiling medallion and the elaborate plaster cornice molding, with its heavily embossed clusters of grapes, still identify this room as the most important room in the house.

The dining room has an another distinctive ceiling medallion (obviously used as a base for the missing chandelier) and the crown molding cornice around the perimeter of the room, but it lacks the heavily embossed vine motif of other rooms (which might be an indication of a later remodeling since even the bedroom directly overhead has such a molding). This room apparently never had a fireplace but did have a chimney breast with a round flue hole, possibly indicating the use of a coal-burning stove at one time. To the west side of this chimney breast the corner of the room is canted for a window and to its east is another window on the north wall. Like those in the parlor, these windows have the recessed panel treatment below the windows. There is a shouldered arched doorway opening into the back hall that is currently unadorned.

East, across the back hall from the dining room is an additional room that was probably used as a sitting room originally and to its west was the old kitchen, but the previous owner had started remodeling this area of the house, and most interior walls in the back hall are down to the studs and door frames. Like other rooms at the back of the house, the sitting room's ornamentation is less elaborate and the millwork utilizes the bulls eye corner blocks, lacks the cornice caps and panels below the windows. Even so, the sitting room does have an ornate plaster ceiling medallion. There is an additional chimney breast with a flue hole (for a coal-burning stove) centered on the north wall of the sitting room with a sashed window to its west. On the back wall of the house (the east wall of the sitting room) is a sashed window with a transomed pair of French doors to its east. There is an additional doorway connecting the sitting room and kitchen directly (without having to re-enter the hallway).

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Buehler, William, House  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

### Narrative Description (continued)

The kitchen had been remodeled several times in the past apparently and was currently stripped of the cabinets. There was originally a doorway to the back hall and one to the back stairs (on the south wall), but most of the west wall of the kitchen had been removed by the previous owner. The door to the back stairs is a good example of the hidden gems in this house, since a little exploratory hole into the wall above the door revealed an intact transom that is only missing its millwork trim. There are two windows on the back (east) wall of the kitchen.

The back hall which spans across the house from north to south originally had small closets on the west wall (the dining room wall) between the doorway to the dining room and the door to the front hall, but most of the plaster and lath has been removed from this area of the hall. The door at the north end serves the downstairs bathroom (which had been gutted by the previous owner, except for the sashed window and radiator) while the door at the south end serves the storage room that has a very narrow sashed window on the west wall where the outside wall juts out.

### Second Floor Rooms

The floor plan for the second floor mirrors that of the first floor and most of the millwork and window and door locations matches that of the first floor as well. As such, only those details that differ from the lower level will be discussed.

The area above the front porch is the tower sitting room and despite its diminutive size, it is visually impressive due to the round arched sashed windows (a pair on the west side and a single window adjacent on the south wall) with the crowned cornice caps and recessed panels below the window. The room apparently never had the cornice molding of the other rooms, but it does retain the ornate ceiling medallion. The door from this room opens into the west end of the front hallway.

The front bedroom utilizes all of the same ornate grapevine moldings and medallion designs used in the front parlor, which is directly below. It also has evidence of a fireplace but it has been veneered with lava rock, eliminating the mantel (an intrusive feature that will be removed during the current historic rehabilitation project). Rather than round arched transoms on the front windows, these windows have round arched upper sashes with the upper corners paneled and squared off on the interior.

The middle bedroom is located directly over the dining room. The only variation in the original detailing from that of the dining room is the inclusion of plaster molding in the cornice molding that is a heavily embossed trumpet vine (which may provide a clue that it would have also been used in the dining room). Although the ceiling had been lowered during one of the past renovations, it was done with wood framing that created boxed ceilings around the windows and did not damage the window trim. However, the header of the pocket doorframe was lowered and the door transom (to the hall) covered (removing the millwork above the dropped ceiling), but both the pocket doors and transom are still intact and the millwork will be repaired as part of this rehabilitation project. There is a non-cased door opening between this bedroom and the back hall, which may have originally been a transomed doorway, but the current status of the rehabilitation project has not investigated this area yet.

The back bedroom in the northeast corner of the house has been drastically remodeled with the ceiling lowered, the walls paneled, and the chimney breast veneered with light tan brick. Since the dropped ceiling has been removed, it is clear that the transomed door between this bedroom and what was originally another bedroom (later a kitchen for the duplex and now being converted into a new bathroom) is still intact behind the paneling, even the millwork. The upper portions of the window and the transom above the outside door, both on the east wall, the upper portion of the window on the north wall as well as the transom for the door into the hall, also appear to be intact although some of the millwork trim is missing. The original plaster ceiling is intact, without cornice trim (just like the sitting room below).

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**Buehler, William, House  
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**Narrative Description (continued)**

The room on the east wall of the house between the northeast corner bedroom and the back stairway had originally been a bedroom that was converted into a kitchen when the house was duplexed around 1930 and it appears that some of the kitchen cabinets may date from that era. The transoms of all the doors are walled over. There is convex millwork wainscoting matching the other millwork in the house. In the northwest corner there is a small pantry with a five-panel door and transom (a two-paneled wood door) utilizing the same millwork on the doorway as elsewhere in the house.

On the west wall of the back hall are closets with a mitered trim doorway facing east and another on the north end. The bathroom at the north end of this hall has had the ceiling lowered, but it is boxed around the window. A more recent renovation boxed and paneled around the bathtub, but this material is being removed since inspection revealed that the tub was a vintage pedestal tub as are the pedestal sink and toilet, probably all dating at least back to the 1930 duplex conversion of the house by 1930. The storage room at the other end of the hall replicates the one on the first floor, but it currently has a dropped ceiling boxed around the window.

**CARRIAGE HOUSE**

The two-story carriage house is original to the property and spans most of the backyard, facing the alley to the east. It is made with the same red brick as the house with a limestone foundation (barely visible at the base) but has a flat, parapeted roof that slopes slightly toward the alley (not parapeted on that elevation). The west side, the side visible from the house, has brick corbelling at the parapet and two small segmental arched brick lintels for wood framed windows (awning type that open inward) on the second floor and another similar window on the north end of the first floor. There is a wood paneled door with a segmental arched lintel as well as a large carriage door opening (that appears to have originally had a sliding door, but is now boarded in). On the east or alley elevation there are three small windows on the north half of the first floor level and one centered above these windows on the second floor level, all of which have brick segmental arched lintels and wood framed awning type windows. On the south portion of the alley elevation is another carriage door opening, which also appears to have originally been a sliding door but which is currently enclosed with corrugated metal and above this door is a large rectangular opening which appears to have housed three wood framed, awning type windows (that all opened inward and had a single horizontal muntin divider which simulated a sashed window) which are currently laying on the floor of the second floor. The two side elevations are unadorned brick walls. There was apparently a simple pine wood floor on the second floor level and a dirt floor on the first floor historically, but the second floor is currently down to its joists in most places because of the missing and damaged roof. There are some metal rings imbedded in the wall near the northeast corner, possibly left from when this area served as horse stalls. There is a simple wooden ladder against the west wall that provides access to the upper floor.

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Buehler, William, House  
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Narrative Description (continued)

### ALTERATIONS AND INTEGRITY ISSUES

Although the house has been empty for a few years and the interior is in a partial state of rehabilitation and not currently habitable, the house retains a high degree of historic integrity despite its serious need for maintenance. In the 1930s, the house was converted into a duplex and it was only the immediate past owner who began the process of removing the duplexing features and the late twentieth century alterations.

The exterior has had few alterations, most significantly, the use of a white cement paint that coats the limestone foundation, the red paint on the brick walls in the porch/entry and the partial repointing with a light, rather than matching red mortar which provide more visual contrast to the wall surfaces than originally intended but these do not seriously detract from the overall historic appearance of the façade. The roof had been covered with asphalt composition shingles in recent years, which have deteriorated rapidly since they were applied directly over the original slate roof and this process destroyed the original slate roofing, but the new owners have made it a priority to replace this roofing with a new slate roof as part of their Missouri Historic Tax Credit and Neighborhood Preservation Act Tax Credit funded rehabilitation project that is currently underway. The only other exterior modification is the application of aluminum storm windows which do not match sash lines with the wooden sashed windows (and create the appearance of transoms where there are none), but the most visible of these (on the front elevation) are being replaced with more historically appropriate storm/screens as part of this rehabilitation project. On the back of the house, the second bay from the north is either missing an original balconied porch that served the first and second floor level doors or these were originally window openings converted to doorways (with a non-extant porch/stairs) when the house was converted into a duplex in the 1930s.

The interior, also retains a high degree of historic integrity, despite the numerous remodelings which included a division of the two floors (vertically) into at least two separate dwelling units (around 1930). When the current owners purchased the house, the mechanical systems did not function (although they were fortunate enough to still have most of the original steam radiators). The interior walls behind the back hall on the first floor had been removed (down to the studs), but most of the house's original plaster walls, doors, millwork, and plaster moldings (including the elaborate ceiling medallions) were still intact. Besides walling off certain doorways, the previous remodelings had walled over the transoms above doorways (many of which are being uncovered intact as part of this current rehabilitation project), damaged sections of millwork around doors and windows, removed the elaborate plaster trim from the front portion of the front hall and dining room, removed the fireplace mantels, took out the original light fixtures (although the ceiling medallions remained), paneled a few rooms, and dropped the ceilings down to the eight foot height. The current rehabilitation project will remove the last remnants of the duplexing, repair the damaged millwork and wall surfaces, restore the ceilings to their original height, and stabilize the plaster moldings (with plans for ongoing restoration of the decorative plaster trim) as well as update the mechanical systems (retaining the radiators) and put in new kitchen cabinets and install new bathroom fixtures downstairs and convert a back bedroom upstairs into an additional bathroom. Even before the current historic rehabilitation project is completed (which must comply with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* to receive the tax credits that are helping fund this project), the interior retained most of its original decorative elements and its original room configuration, including the highly unusual and elaborate plaster cove moldings and ceiling medallions, and the current rehabilitation is carefully repairing missing or damaged elements. The only modifications to the original interior design are those intended to meet modern demands for convenience and comfort.

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### Narrative Description (continued)

The carriage house has had severe structural damage, including a fire in the upper level that destroyed several of the roof joists and a number of floor joists for the second floor. At some point, the carriage house was apparently converted into an outhouse (according to fire insurance maps) before it became a garage but it is not evident what structural alterations resulted from this conversion. Currently, much of the roof is missing and a previous owner's attempt to repair the carriage door and large window opening on the alley elevation resulted in damage to that portion of the brick wall when lintels were removed. As part of the current rehabilitation project, the structural members are being repaired, a new roof installed, the two openings properly repaired (with the original windows put back in place) and the damaged portion of the brick (east) wall carefully rebuilt.

In many neighborhoods in south Saint Louis, there is usually one house that is larger and more elaborate than the majority of the houses in the block. This usually marks the beginning of the area's residential development. Such was the case with the two blocks of the old Morrison farm where the Buehler House was built. It was obviously one of the first houses on the block, and today it still retains the distinctive design features that identify it as an early home, partly due to its larger scale and more elaborate design and workmanship as well as its setting which projects forward from the common façade line of this block. The exterior retains a high degree of integrity, not only due to the integrity of its setting in this intact, late nineteenth and early twentieth century, residential neighborhood, but it also retains a high degree of integrity in the materials, workmanship and design of the house.

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Map of Saint Louis (Independent City), MO  
Locating the property



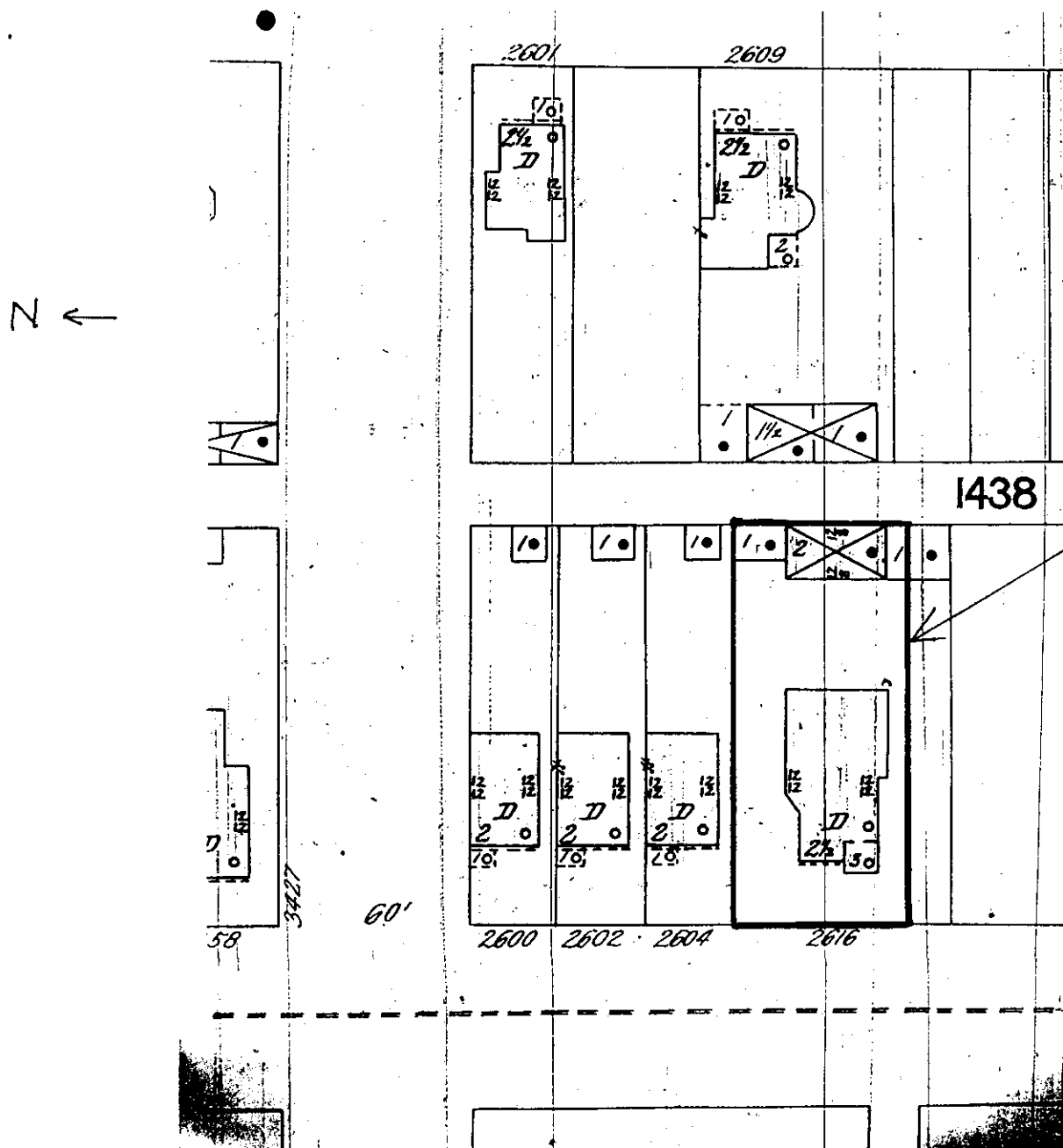
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Site Plan  
(From 1903 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps)





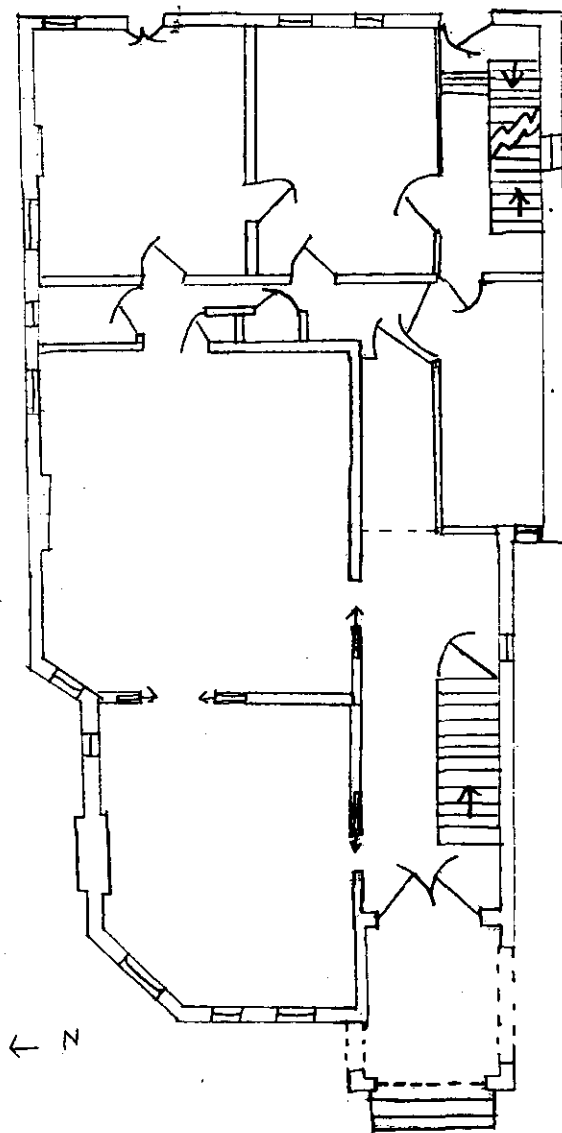
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First Floor Plan  
January 2000



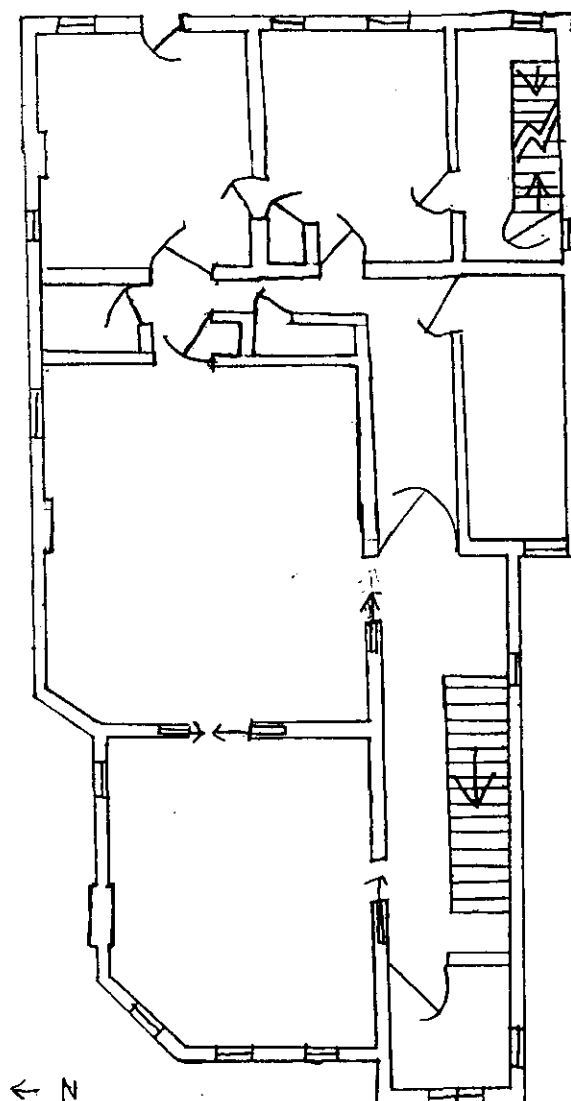
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Second Floor Plan  
January 2000



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Buehler, William, House  
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### Narrative Statement of Significance

#### Summary

Designed by Herman Lemm and built between 1894 and 1896,<sup>1</sup> the William Buehler House, located at 2610 Tennessee Avenue in the Tower Grove East neighborhood of south Saint Louis (Independent City), Missouri, is significant locally under Criterion C: Architecture. The three-story house, with a tower on the southwest corner, is an important example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style and is the only known extant example of Herman Lemm's designs in Saint Louis. Besides its impressive exterior design, the interior incorporates more elaborate decorative details (especially the elaborate plaster moldings) than are commonly found on houses in the Tower Grove East neighborhood. In addition, the property retains its large, two story, brick carriage house, an anomaly in what is predominantly a working class neighborhood. The William Buehler House is not only important for its own architecture merits, but also demonstrates the development patterns and associated architecture of Saint Louis southwest of downtown. Besides being a rare example of Richardsonian Romanesque design in a neighborhood where the other large homes are Italianate, Queen Anne and Dutch Colonial styles, the very dominance of the William Buehler House in its design, size, and placement serve as visual evidence of the residential development patterns in this south Saint Louis neighborhood, where a single large home on a block is indicative of the early spacing of homes as well as the subdivision of just a few blocks at a time. All of these architectural elements, interior and exterior, as well as its prominence in the neighborhood, combine to make the William Buehler House significant under Criterion C: Architecture.

#### South Saint Louis Development

The development in the south part of Saint Louis began in the 1850s as the population rapidly increased through the effects of immigration. Many of the immigrants that came to Saint Louis prior to the Civil War were Germans leaving their homeland in the wake of the 1848 revolutions that took place in Europe. Many of these immigrants began to populate the areas south of downtown when they arrived in Saint Louis. The population growth led to the expansion of the city boundaries in 1855 when the State Legislature extended the city limits south to Keokuk Street and west to a point 660 feet west of Grand.<sup>2</sup> Despite the extent of the expansion, the population was still centered around downtown, although the population was beginning to move south into areas such as Soulard (a local historic district, certified in 1972), Benton Park (a National Register Historic District, listed 30 December, 1985) to the south and west of downtown, and Lafayette Square, (a National Register Historic District, listed 24 July, 1986), west of Soulard.<sup>3</sup> As these areas started to grow, the city began platting and subdividing areas even further south and west.

By the 1870s, the areas south of Chouteau Avenue and west of the Soulard neighborhood, Benton Park and Lafayette Square began to be developed, but most of the area to the south and west of these three neighborhoods continued to be utilized for agriculture, as part of the Saint Louis common fields.<sup>4</sup> The Compton Heights subdivision (just southwest of Lafayette Square and north of Tower Grove East), which is a majority of the Compton Hill Local Historic District, was platted in 1884, marking the beginning of the major growth in the area, although some limited development had already taken place. In the 1840s, Compton Hill was utilized for summer houses by Saint Louis's elite families and later, as the area was developed in the 1890s, it was home to many of the leading German brewery families.<sup>5</sup> The Shaw neighborhood was also being developed at the same time as the Compton Hill neighborhood. Shaw's development began in 1878 when Henry Shaw had Shaw Place built and rented the properties out to pay for the Botanical Gardens. Later, in 1887, the Western Investment and Improvement Company bought Mary Tyler's property and subdivided it into the Tyler Place Subdivision, consisting of twelve hundred lots, most of which were auctioned off in 1890. The development of the Shaw neighborhood consisted of long even blocks with a uniform architectural character primarily because it was a suburban tract development instigated by real estate developers rather than an area developed by individual property owners.<sup>6</sup>

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### Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

In 1870 Tower Grove Park (now a National Historic Landmark, listed 20 December, 1989) opened just three blocks west of the future site of the William Buehler House. Tower Grove Park was first proposed in 1868 by Henry Shaw, who agreed to donate the land for the park to the city, on the condition that the city pay for the park's improvement and reserve an area around Shaw's Garden to be used for residences that would be leased to raise money for Shaw's Garden.<sup>7</sup> The park was named after Henry Shaw's country estate, which lost some of the area for the park itself. When the park opened, Shaw's country estate was within the city limits but in an area that was still rural in character.<sup>8</sup>

To serve the south part of the city east of Grand, the City Water Division created the Compton Hill Reservoir Park in 1871 to supply fresh water in conjunction with the Bissel Point Waterworks. Located less than a half mile north of the future site of the William Buehler House, the reservoir initially more than adequately met the water needs of the area it was tasked to supply because much of the land immediately around it was still farmland and orchards rather than residential neighborhoods. Within 25 years, the 56,000,000-gallon reservoir was no longer able to fulfill the demands placed upon it. In 1896, the same year the William Buehler House was completed, the Compton Hill Water Tower, a Romanesque standpipe designed by Harvey Ellis (listed in the National Register of Historic Places on 9 September 1972), had to be added to the Compton Hill reservoir to insure a continued supply of fresh water to the people living south of downtown. The area surrounding the reservoir and Tower Grove Park was experiencing a rapid increase in population, taxing the existing water works and requiring an increase in the amount of fresh water needed for all of the new residents living in the area, making the Compton Hill Water Tower an important addition to the area.

Changes in transportation also aided in the development of the area. By the mid-1870s a horse car line was running out Arsenal Street and Gravois Road to Grand. With the appearance of cable cars in 1886, these lines soon replaced the horse car lines, making it even easier for people who wanted to move into the new neighborhoods to get to and from their jobs. The transportation system improved more with the introduction of the electric trolley lines in the 1890s and by 1899 almost all of the lines had been consolidated under the Saint Louis Transit Company, which instituted a universal transfer system. This further spurred both residential and commercial development throughout the areas along South Grand, Gravois and Arsenal, the major arterial streets bordering the Tower Grove East neighborhood. The trolley system made the south side of the city even more attractive to residential development by connecting it to downtown.<sup>9</sup>

### The Growth of the Tower Grove East Neighborhood

Earlier residential developments surrounded the Tower Grove East neighborhood, with Compton Heights to the north, Benton Park to the east, and Shaw to the west (all now designated historic districts). Unlike these surrounding developments, the Tower Grove East neighborhood was not a deliberate, compact, speculative development, but more reflective of the typical late nineteenth century or even twentieth century residential developments that slowly extend into previously rural areas with land being subdivided into residential lots, a few plots at a time. In Tower Grove East, the residential development was characterized by a seemingly random development of the available plots as small speculative ventures. Although the city had already platted the area with block numbers, much of the area remained agricultural and not subdivided into residential lots. Such was the case around the Morrison farm, the location of the William Buehler House, which had some surrounding blocks subdivided by 1883, but with only one or two houses built in each of the newly subdivided blocks.<sup>10</sup>

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**Buehler, William, House  
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### **Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)**

Unlike the nearby neighborhoods of Shaw and Compton Heights, the Tower Grove East neighborhood developed slowly, even though the area was within the 1855 city limits expansion and actually closer to older residential neighborhoods than the Shaw neighborhood. This is because the neighborhood was not developed all at once the way Shaw and Compton Hill were. A single owner had consolidated those neighborhoods over time, which made it possible for speculative real estate developers to develop a large area at once as a single neighborhood, similar to modern suburban tract development.

In contrast, Tower Grove East was not owned by a single large real estate company and the smaller property owners developed the land at a much slower pace. As a result the neighborhood was not laid out in its entirety but rather waited until there were buyers for at least some of the lots before these smaller plots were developed, often with the development only including one or two blocks at a time.<sup>11</sup>

By the time the William Buehler House was completed in 1896, most of the area to the east, north and even west had been subdivided into residential lots and had established neighborhoods, but the Tower Grove East neighborhood, between Grand and Nebraska south of Shenandoah and north of Gravois, remained largely agricultural with only scattered farmhouses for the various orchards and small farms that had once been common throughout the southern part of Saint Louis. Unlike the surrounding neighborhoods, this area was not subdivided into lots all at once, but rather one agricultural plot at a time was divided into residential lots. In the case of the William Buehler House block, the small plot of two city blocks (formerly the Morrison farm) was one of the later plots to be subdivided into residential lots. Even so, there were few residential properties in the surrounding area when construction began in 1894 on the William Buehler House, which would have had a direct view of Tower Grove Park only three blocks due west.<sup>12</sup>

### **History of the William Buehler House**

The William Buehler House, completed in 1896 after two years of construction<sup>13</sup> and located at 2610 Tennessee Avenue, is a Richardsonian Romanesque single family residence built for William Buehler. Buehler was a cooper in Saint Louis who had been living on 2121 Bismarck (now 4<sup>th</sup> Street), in the heart of the Saint Louis brewery district (east of Broadway and the Soulard Local Historic District).<sup>14</sup> Even after relocating to his new home on Tennessee, the Bismarck Street property apparently continued to be utilized for his barrel making enterprise where it retained its shed for boiling wood.<sup>15</sup> Buehler apparently worked as an independent businessman, with a small operation out of the back of his old home on Bismarck, supplying local breweries. Although little is known about Buehler, he was obviously a successful craftsman since he managed to build a larger and more elaborate house than was typical for working class Saint Louisans in the late nineteenth century, especially during the economic depression of the 1890s. His new home included the large, brick carriage house that still stands at the alley, a rarity in most working class neighborhoods. Neighbors remember a beer barrel weathervane on the tower, which was only removed in recent years. Local lore identifies this as an August Busch residence, something that was easily disproved by early research. Possibly the barrel weathervane, representing Buehler's career as a cooper, was the origin of such misidentification.

The Buehler house is a good example of a common occurrence in the area's development. Much of the area was subdivided just a little at a time, with some of the subdivisions amounting to little more than a single block. Located in a neighborhood today known as Tower Grove East (east of Grand, south of Shenandoah, west of Nebraska, and north of Gravois), the William Buehler House was the first house built on its block in what had been the Morrison farm (now city blocks 1438 and 1441).<sup>16</sup> The initial houses built on each block were often larger and more ornate than those that followed. The William Buehler House is a good example of this practice, since this large Richardsonian Romanesque

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**Buehler, William, House  
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### **Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)**

house was larger than the surrounding houses and is still the most architecturally impressive and imposing house on the block. It is also one of the few houses that was designed by an architect instead of being built according to mass plans used by contractors.<sup>17</sup> The William Buehler House is also differentiated from the rest of the block by its setback. Most of the surrounding neighborhoods, especially Compton Heights and Shaw had restrictive covenants regarding the design and layout of the houses<sup>18</sup> and the area around the William Buehler House later followed the accepted pattern of common setbacks. The William Buehler House is closer to the street than the other houses on the block because it was built before setbacks in the area became commonplace.

When William Buehler hired Herman Lemm as the architect for the project and P. Schneider & Co. as the contractors, the block of Tennessee Avenue had not yet developed into a neighborhood but was a block with no other houses on it. When the building permit was taken out to begin construction the lots on the block had not been numbered and the two building permits found for the block were both addressed as "East Side of Tennessee between Sidney and Magnolia." The correct permit for the William Buehler House was identified when the information was compared to city directory information. William Buehler's residence was listed as 2610 Tennessee in the city directory in 1896, the first year that the lots were given specific house numbers for their street addresses and the same year construction was completed on the house.<sup>19</sup>

The Buehler family only lived in the house until 1907, when Frederick Gaisler, whose occupation was listed as "pattern" (possibly a tool and die maker) in the city directory, moved into the house. He lived there until about 1916, during which time the house was either subdivided or also doubled as an office because by 1915 there was also a physician named Emma Howe listed at the address. Gaisler was clearly listed as a resident in the city directory (by an 'r.' after the listing) while Howe did not have that designation. By 1917 the house was home to the Paule Real Estate and Building Company, and the next year was joined by Benjamin Charlevill, president of the B.J. Charlevill Building and Investment Company. By 1922 both Charlevill and the Paule Real Estate Company were replaced by William Albrecht, who owned a delicatessen on South Grand while living in the Buehler house.<sup>20</sup>

When the current owners acquired the house, physical evidence still provided clues to the apartment division of the former single family house with two kitchens and partition walls separating the staircases up to the second floor apartment from the first floor apartment. If the house had not yet been subdivided into two apartments prior to the time the Albrechts owned the house, they divided the house into a flat after their purchase in 1922,<sup>21</sup> since they lived in the house until the mid-1930s, along with a series of boarders who lived in the other division of the house.<sup>22</sup> The upstairs apartment kitchen appears to date from this era as well. By 1941, the fire insurance maps even identify the building as a flat with the original carriage house being used as an outhouse.<sup>23</sup> Once the Albrechts sold the building, it changed hands often, usually within five years, but with the exception of 1955-1961, one of the residents living in the house was also the owner while the other was a tenant. From 1955-1961, the house was owned by John H. and Esther J. Scheibe, who never lived in the house and only rented it out. This pattern continued until the mid-1990s, when the house was left vacant.<sup>24</sup> Sometime during the period it was left vacant, the owner began converting the house back into a single family unit but never finished the project and sold it to the current owners in 1999.

### **Architectural Legacy**

With its tall, 3 story, square tower opposite the curved corner façade, the William Buehler House is the largest and the most imposing house design in the two city blocks that originally comprised the Morrison farm as well as one of the most distinctive houses in the Late Victorian, Tower Grove East neighborhood. Most of the other houses are two stories, with a

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### Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

few exceptions that are three stories tall and even a few one story houses added to empty lots, many in the 1950s. Most of the surrounding houses were based on mass market designs from design books contractors used and are simple Four Square designs or townhouses common among the late nineteenth and early twentieth century south Saint Louis neighborhoods. Although most homes in the immediate neighborhood share a common setback from the public sidewalks, the visual prominence of the Buehler House is enhanced by its forward projection from this setback line, an anomaly probably resulting from the Buehler House's completion before most of the other neighboring homes. Few of the houses were designed by an architect. The William Buehler House is an exception, designed with an unusual three story square tower in the Richardsonian Romanesque style by Herman Lemm. A few other distinctive designs are scattered around the neighborhood (such as an Italianate house at 2347 Virginia, two Dutch Colonial Revival houses to its west, a Queen Anne design at 3321 Shenandoah, and a less elaborate Richardsonian Romanesque design at 2351 Louisiana), but there are no other distinctive designs in the area of the old Morrison farm or in the northern area of the Tower Grove East neighborhood (north of the major east-west neighborhood arterial street, Magnolia).<sup>25</sup>

The house was also one of the better examples of Richardsonian Romanesque design applied to a residence in south Saint Louis, a style influenced by the Romanesque adaptations by the innovative Boston architect, Henry Hobson Richardson who actually designed three houses in Saint Louis.<sup>26</sup> The Buehler House is a significant example of this style in south Saint Louis in part because it is more modest in scale than other Richardsonian Romanesque designs found elsewhere in Saint Louis (such as in the historic districts in the western part of the city where the well-to-do Saint Louisans resided), yet the Richardsonian Romanesque features on the Buehler House have not been minimized as much as is commonly found on most working and middle class homes in Saint Louis, especially those in the surrounding neighborhood. These more modest house designs bear little overt similarity to the William Buehler House, revealing the Richardsonian Romanesque stylistic influence chiefly in the massive arches over the entries or the front windows as the primary ornamentation on a simple townhouse or four-family flat.

In contrast, the William Buehler House contains many of the identifying features of a Richardsonian Romanesque design on what is a less common house form for south Saint Louis, a freestanding, single-family residence, one with a hipped roof with cross gables (rather than the parapeted flat roof) and an asymmetrical massing to the exterior (as opposed to the townhouse or block house form). Although the cross gabled hipped roof commonly found on Richardsonian Romanesque designs is the shape similar to the typical Queen Anne roof form, with one gable front-facing and the other side-facing, on the Buehler House, both gables face the side to allow for the sweeping rounded corner of the façade, a feature often identified with the Richardsonian Romanesque style. However, the distinctive three story tower is a common feature of this style, although the square version on the Buehler House is less common than a rounded tower. Like other Richardsonian Romanesque designs, the tower sports a uniquely shaped roof, in this case an ogee shape with a pyramidal cap. The characteristic round-topped arches grace the openings at the base of the tower (which is the entry porch) as well as the windows of the tower and front façade. While many Richardsonian Romanesque designs utilize stone, in the tradition of Saint Louis house design, the Buehler House is constructed of brick, but the masonry details are characteristic of the Richardsonian Romanesque style: rough-faced, coursed ashlar limestone for the foundation, the uniform masonry finish, the massing of the heavy, arch springs, decorative plaques, arch surrounds, and belt courses. In addition, the squat columns with smooth piers with enriched capitals, the paired, arched, and transomed windows, the large arched entry, the hipped dormers, and the broad roof with eaves close to the walls are all commonly found in this style.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)**

The interior even incorporates more elaborate decorative details, with distinctive, heavily embossed, and elaborate plaster moldings as cove moldings and ceiling medallions. The floral motifs of these plaster moldings as well as their massing is a feature of Richardsonian Romanesque designs. Other decorative detailing is also more opulent than most houses in this middle-class neighborhood, especially the woodwork: the convex pilaster casing trim, the embossed roping in an egg-and-dart pattern, the three member molded baseboards, the five panel doors with transoms, fancy turned balusters, the chamfered newel posts, the wood paneled springboard and walls of the open straight-flight staircase, and the recessed wood panels below the windows. The house retains its original hardwood floors and most of its hot water radiators, common features in Late Victorian houses. The spatial continuity provided by the open staircase and by the direct access to all of the rooms from the hallways as well as the pocket doors between the main rooms of both levels is also characteristic of this era's house design, although not commonly seen in this south Saint Louis neighborhood where most homes were of much simpler design, even on the interior.

In addition, the property retains its large, two story, brick carriage house, an anomaly in what is predominantly a working class neighborhood. In fact, it is the only remaining example (and one of the few houses to ever have a brick carriage house) in the immediate neighborhood around the Buehler House.<sup>27</sup> It still retains its distinctive carriage house configuration with a hayloft level as well as the iron rings in the interior walls to tie the horses.

Besides being a rare example of a more elaborate, Richardsonian Romanesque design in the Tower Grove East neighborhood, the William Buehler House is also significant as the only known extant example of the work of local architect Herman Lemm, and is one of only a few known designs by this Saint Louis architect, and the only known extant example. The Saint Louis architects files compiled by the Landmarks Association of Saint Louis and Esley Hamilton (with Saint Louis County) from their extensive historical surveys and historic district nominations as well as indexed from a meticulous reading of the nineteenth and early twentieth century daily Saint Louis newspapers by David Simmons revealed no other extant examples of Lemm's residential designs. In addition, archival research revealed little about his career or life. What is known about Lemm is that he was practicing architecture in Saint Louis as early as 1885 and continued to practice here until 1902. During that span he worked for the Saint Louis Water Department in 1899.<sup>28</sup> While Lemm was not a major architect in Saint Louis in the late nineteenth century, he was known by Simmons to be a Saint Louis architect.<sup>29</sup> Actually, Lemm is characteristic of most architects of the era, whose work is little known and not well documented. As such, the William Buehler House is especially important as a record of his work.

**Conclusion**

The William Buehler House is significant under Criterion C: Architecture. It is the only known extant example of the residential designs of Herman Lemm. The Richardsonian Romanesque design is a great example of the style applied to a middle-class house in what is predominantly a middle-class and working class neighborhood in south Saint Louis. It is unusual as a single-family residence and for its tall three-story tower, curved corner on the facade and its asymmetrical massing in a neighborhood dominated by simpler, rectangular townhouses, Four Square designs, or Saint Louis vernacular block houses. The Buehler House dominates its neighborhood, providing a visual reminder of the incremental conversion of this once agricultural area into the Late Victorian, residential development of the Tower Grove East neighborhood.



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### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The date of construction can be narrowed down to 1894-1896 because the building permit was issued in late 1894 but William Buehler was listed at his previous address on Bismark in the 1895-96 city directory and he was not listed at the address on Tennessee until the 1896-97 city directory, while his business still remained on Bismark. Saint Louis, Missouri, City of Saint Louis, Building Permits, Permit # C-683, 11 November 1894; "Building News," Saint Louis Daily Record, 24 November 1894, 3; <sup>14</sup> *Gould's St. Louis (Missouri) City Directory*, (Saint Louis: Polk Gould Directory Company, Publishers) 1894-1895, 263, 1895-1896, 261, 273; 1896-1897, 278.

<sup>2</sup> Saint Louis City Plan Commission, *History: Physical Growth of the City of Saint Louis* (Saint Louis: City Plan Commission, 1969) 14-15; William Barnaby Faherty, S.J. and NiNi Harris, *St. Louis: A Concise History* (Saint Louis: Print Graphics, Inc., 1989) 30.

<sup>3</sup> Saint Louis City Plan Commission, *History: Physical Growth of the City of Saint Louis*, 22-23.

<sup>4</sup> Camille N. Dry, Pictorial St. Louis: *The Great Metropolis of the Mississippi Valley: A Topographical Survey Drawn in Perspective A.D. 1875*, Edited by Rich J. Compton, (1875, reprint, Saint Louis: McGraw-Young Publishing, 1997) plates 59-60, 65-66. [Hereafter referred to as *Compton and Dry*]

<sup>5</sup> Norbury L. Wayman, *History of St. Louis Neighborhoods: Compton Hill* (Saint Louis: Saint Louis Community Development Agency, 1978) 2; Saint Louis City Plan Commission, *History: Physical Growth of the City of Saint Louis*, 22; James Neal Primm, *Lion of Valley: St. Louis, Missouri, 1764-1980*, 3<sup>d</sup> ed. (Saint Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1998) 182, 346.

<sup>6</sup> Tim Fox, ed. *Where We Live: A Guide to St. Louis Communities* (Saint Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1995) 104-106; Landmarks Association of Saint Louis, *Shaw Local Historic District* (St. Louis, MO: City of Saint Louis Ordinance 59400, 2 April, 1985) 3-4.

<sup>7</sup> Fox, *Where We Live: A Guide to St. Louis Communities*, 105; Saint Louis City Plan Commission, *History: Physical Growth of the City of Saint Louis*, 22.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Fox, *Where We Live: A Guide to St. Louis Communities*, 100; Saint Louis City Plan Commission, *History: Physical Growth of the City of Saint Louis*, 23-24; Wayman, *History of St. Louis Neighborhoods: Compton Hill*, 17.

<sup>10</sup> *Compton and Dry* plates 59-60, 65-66; Julius Pitzman, *Pitzman's New Atlas of the City and County of Saint Louis, Missouri*, (1878. Reprint, indexed by St. Louis Genealogical Society, Saint Louis: Saint Louis Genealogical Society, 1997) plate 10; *Atlas of the City of St. Louis, Missouri: From Official Records, Private Plans, and Actual Surveys*, (Philadelphia: G.M. Hopkins, C.E., 1883) plate 22.

<sup>11</sup> Fox, *Where We Live: A Guide To Saint Louis Communities*, 104.

<sup>12</sup> *Compton and Dry* plates 59-60, 65-66; Pitzman, *Pitzman's New Atlas of the City and County of Saint Louis, Missouri*, plate 10; *Atlas of the City of St. Louis, Missouri: From Official Records, Private Plans, and Actual Surveys*, plate 22; Saint Louis, Missouri, City of Saint Louis, Microfilm Room, Building Plans/City Block Cards, City Block 1438, "Insurance Maps of Saint Louis Missouri" v.9 (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1903, and 1932 corrected to 1951) 41.

<sup>13</sup> Saint Louis, Missouri, City of Saint Louis, Building Permits, Permit # C-683, 11 November 1894.

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### Endnotes (continued)

<sup>14</sup>*Gould's St. Louis (Missouri) City Directory*, (Saint Louis: Polk Gould Directory Company, Publishers) 1887-1888, 807; 1893-1894, 815; 1893-1894, 270; 1894-1895, 263, 1895-1896, 261, 273; 1896-1897, 278, 292; 1898, 287; 1908, 629; 1915, 761, 1021; 1916, 800, 1077, 1714, 2153; 1917, 475, 1691; 1918, 662, 1822; 1921, 511, 815; 1922, 399; 1930, 44, 211; 1931, 1187, 2041; 1932, 1802, 1165; 1933-34, 1758; 1935, 43, 71, 1051, 1858; 1939, 534, 1892; 1940, 565, 1900; 1941, 36, 1501, 1301, 1927; 1951, 453, 1056; 1955, 253, 293, 435, 976; 1956, 813, 1206, 2000; 1962, 592, 830, 1503; 1963, 659, 1475; 1970, 531, 984; Investors Title Company, *Chain of Title*, Saint Louis, 1999.

<sup>15</sup>"Insurance Maps of Saint Louis Missouri" v.4 (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1909) 25.

<sup>16</sup>*Atlas of the City of St. Louis, Missouri: From Official Records, Private Plans, and Actual Surveys* (Philadelphia: G.M. Hopkins, C.E., 1883) plate 22.

<sup>17</sup>Saint Louis, Missouri, City of Saint Louis, Microfilm Room, Building Plans/City Block Cards, City Block 1438.

<sup>18</sup>Fox, *Where We Live: A Guide to St. Louis Communities*, 106; Wayman, *History of St. Louis Neighborhoods: Compton Hill*, 14.

<sup>19</sup>*Gould's St. Louis (Missouri) City Directory*, (Saint Louis: Polk Gould Directory Company, Publishers) 1887-1888, 807; 1893-1894, 815; 1893-1894, 270; 1894-1895, 263, 1895-1896, 261, 273; 1896-1897, 278, 292; Saint Louis, Missouri, City of Saint Louis, Building Permits, Permit # C-683, 11 November 1894; Saint Louis, Missouri, City of Saint Louis, Microfilm Room, Building Plans/city Block Cards, City Block 1438; "Building News," Saint Louis Daily Record, 24 November 1894, 3.

<sup>20</sup>*Gould's St. Louis (Missouri) City Directory*, (Saint Louis: Polk Gould Directory Company, Publishers) 1898, 287; 1908, 629; 1915, 761, 1021; 1916, 800, 1077, 1714, 2153; 1917, 475, 1691; 1918, 662, 1822; 1921, 511, 815; 1922, 399; Investors Title Company, *Chain of Title*, Saint Louis, 1999.

<sup>21</sup>Investors Title Company, *Chain of Title*, Saint Louis, 1999.

<sup>22</sup>*Gould's St. Louis (Missouri) City Directory*, (Saint Louis: Polk Gould Directory Company, Publishers) 1922, 399; 1930, 44, 211; 1931, 1187, 2041; 1932, 1802, 1165; 1933-34, 1758; 1935, 43, 71, 1051, 1858; 1939, 534, 1892; 1940, 565, 1900; 1941, 36, 1501, 1301, 1927.

<sup>23</sup>"Insurance Maps of Saint Louis Missouri" v.9 (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1932 corrected to 1951) 41.

<sup>24</sup>*Gould's St. Louis (Missouri) City Directory*, (Saint Louis: Polk Gould Directory Company, Publishers) 1951, 453, 1056; 1955, 253, 293, 435, 976; 1956, 813, 1206, 2000; 1962, 592, 830, 1503; 1963, 659, 1475; 1970, 531, 984; Investors Title Company, *Chain of Title*, Saint Louis, 1999.

<sup>25</sup>Karen Bode Baxter and Timothy P. Maloney, Neighborhood Windshield Survey March, 2000.

<sup>26</sup>Lynn M.-Josse, "H.H. Richardson's Isaac H. Lionberger House: Context and Assessment" (Master's Thesis, University of Oregon, June, 1995) 18-21.

<sup>27</sup>"Insurance Maps of Saint Louis Missouri" v.9 (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1903, and 1932 corrected to 1951) 41.

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**Endnotes (continued)**

<sup>28</sup> *Gould's St. Louis (Missouri) City Directory*, (Saint Louis: Polk Gould Directory Company, Publishers) 1882, 699; 1884, 673; 1885, 705; 1886, 714; 1887, 719, 1317; 1888, 762, 1395; 1889, 765, 1407; 1890, 792, 1463; 1891, 834, 1537; 1892, 922, 2710; 1893, 853, 1567; 1894, 888, 1638; 1895, 894, 1654; 1896, 970; 1897, 1017; 1898, 1002; 1899, 1046; 1900, 1099; 1901, 1153; 1902, 1214; 1903, 1134.

<sup>29</sup> Clayton, Saint Louis County, Missouri., Department of Parks and Recreation, Historic Sites and Preservation, Research File; Landmarks Association of Saint Louis, Architects Research File. Saint Louis, Missouri; David Simmons, Architect Research Notes, Taken from Newspaper Research, Saint Louis Missouri.

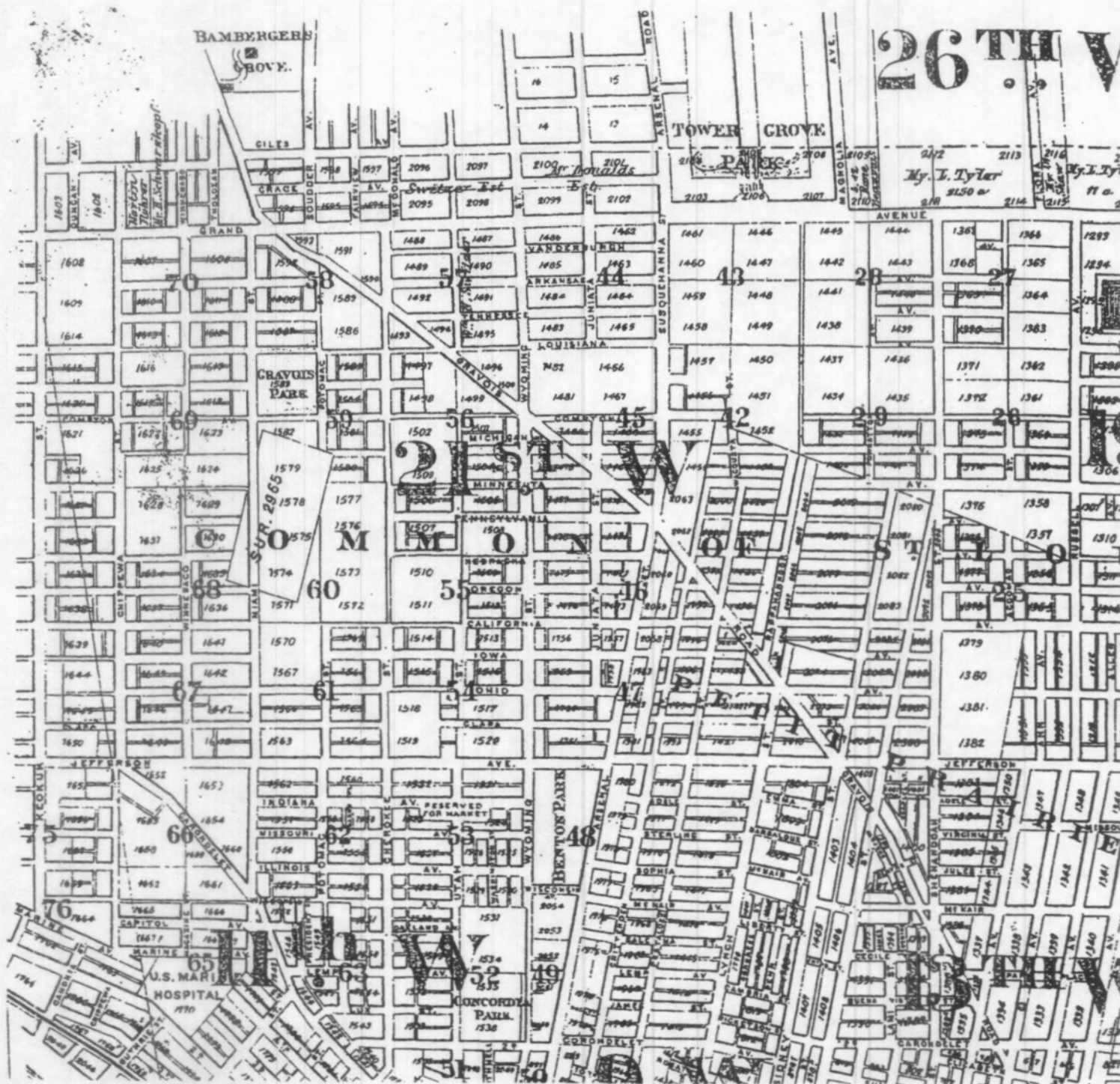
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Pitzman's New Atlas of the City and  
County of Saint Louis, Missouri. 1878



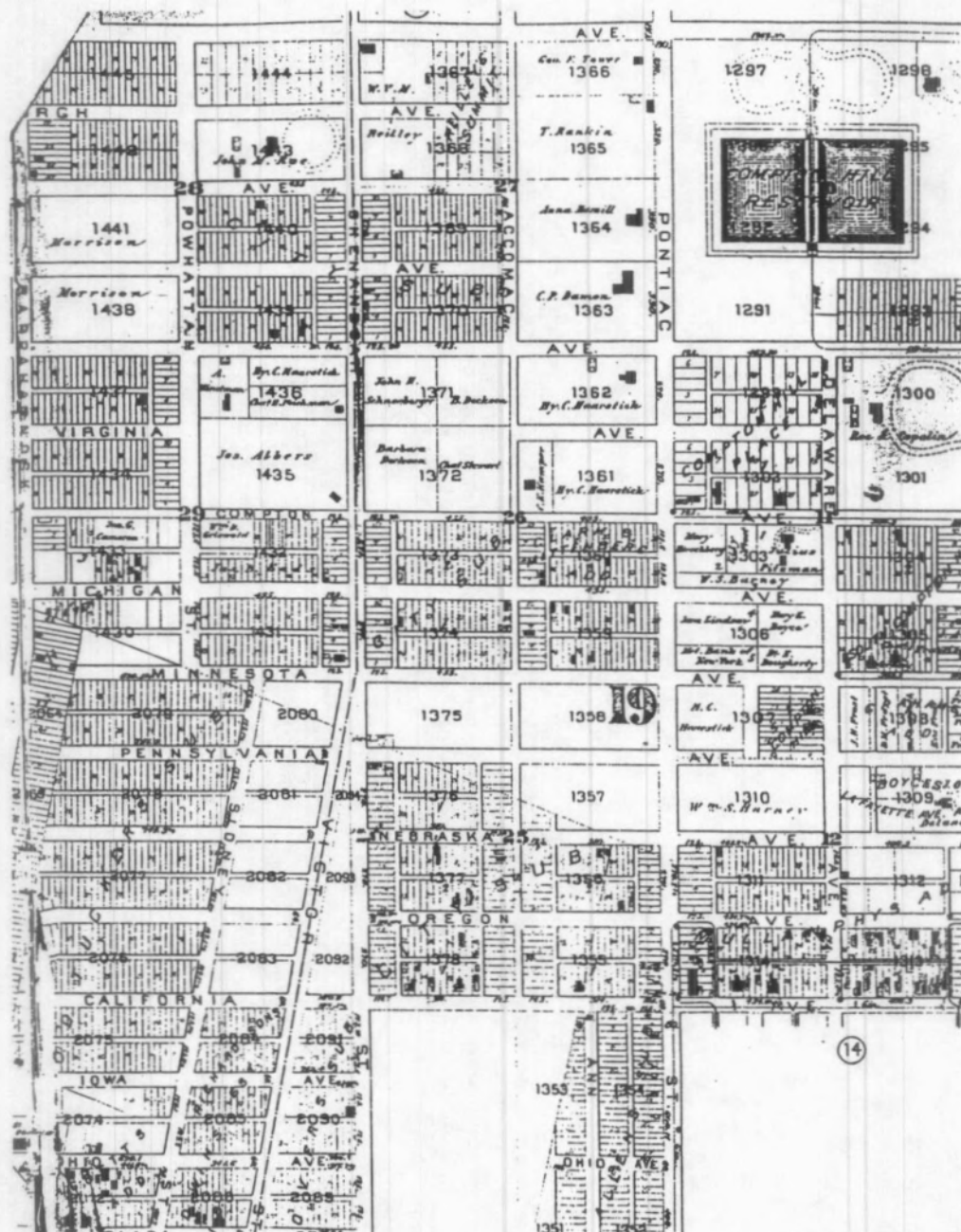
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Atlas of the City of  
St. Louis, Missouri, 1883



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- . *History of St. Louis Neighborhoods: Marquette-Cherokee*. Saint Louis: Saint Louis Community Development Agency, 1978.

### Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 24 and 25 of Adele S. Morrison's subdivision and in Block 1438 of the City of Saint Louis.

### Boundary Justification

These boundaries incorporate all of the property that has been historically associated with these buildings and these boundaries correspond to the property's legal description.

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Buehler, William, House  
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### Photo Log

Photographer: Karen Bode Baxter  
May 2000

Negatives with photographer: Karen Bode Baxter, 5811 Delor Street, St. Louis, MO 63109

Photo #1: Exterior, Looking northeast at the west and south facades

Photo #2: Exterior, Looking east at the front entry

Photo #3: Exterior, Looking south at the northwest corner

Photo #4: Exterior, Looking southwest at the north and east facades

Photo #5: Exterior, Looking west at the east facade

Photo #6: Interior, First floor living room, Looking north into the living room from the dining room

Photo #7: Interior, First floor front hall, Looking south at a detail of the shoulder arch and molding at the east end of the hall from the west end of the hall

Photo #8: Interior, First floor, Looking east at the back stairs from the bottom of the stairs

Photo #9: Interior, Second floor front hall, Looking east at the hall from the west end of the hall

Photo #10: Interior, Second floor front hall, Looking east and up at a detail of the molding on the ceiling

Photo #11: Interior, Second floor front hall, Looking northeast and up at a detail of the molding in the corners on the ceiling

Photo #12: Interior, Second floor tower room, Looking west into the tower room above the entrance

Photo #13: Interior, Second floor living room, Looking northwest from the southeast corner of the room

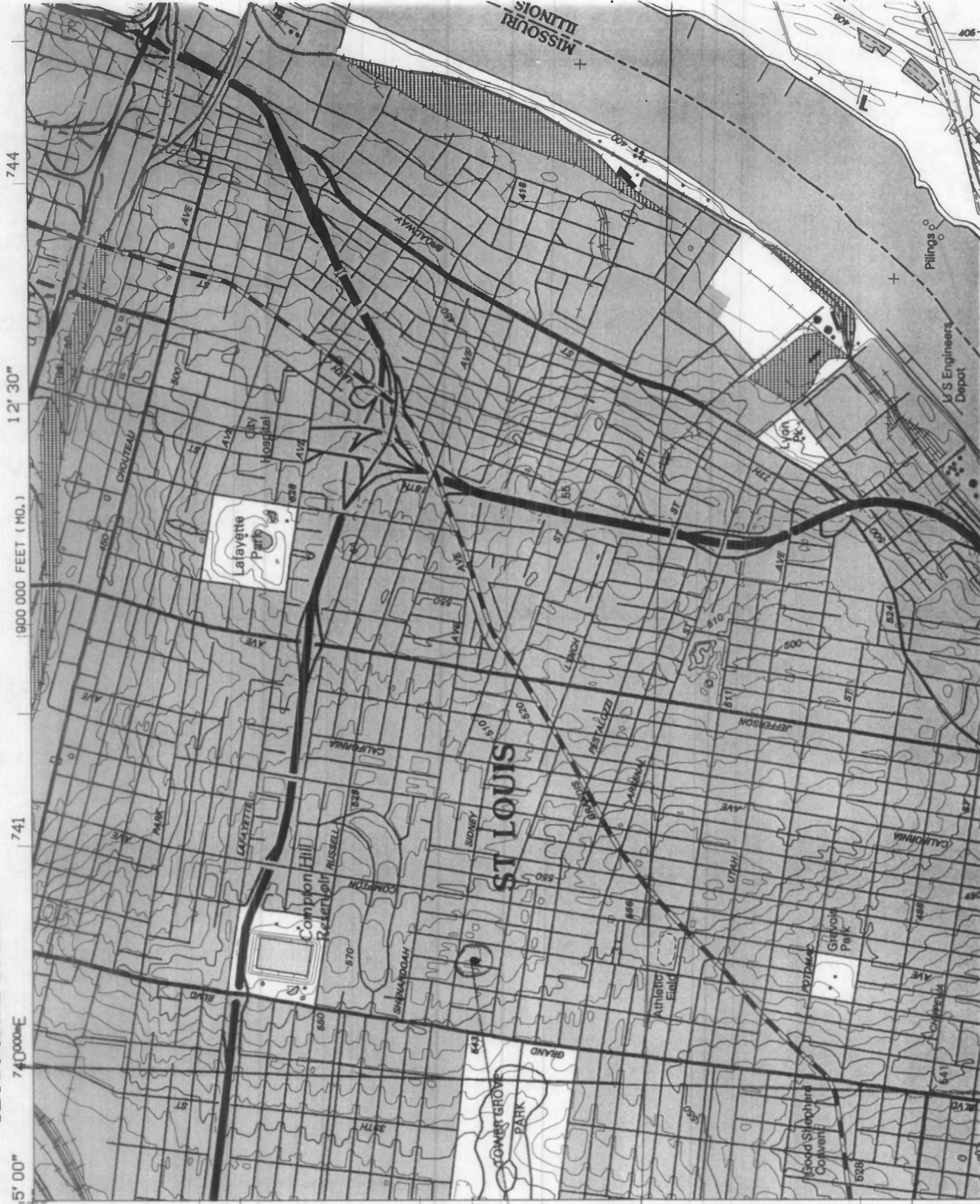
Photo #14: Interior, second floor living room, Looking southwest and up at a detail of the ceiling in the southwest corner of the room from the middle of the room

Photo #15: Exterior, Looking east at the west wall of the carriage house

Photo #16: Exterior, Looking southwest at the east and north walls of the carriage house



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



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ST. LOUIS, MO  
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