

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination FormSee Instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only

received

date entered

## 1. Name

historic Grand Avenue Temple and Grand Avenue Temple Building

and/or common Grand Avenue Temple and Office Building

## 2. Location

street &amp; number 205 East 9th Street, 903 Grand Avenue not for publication

city, town Kansas City vicinity of

state Missouri code 29 county Jackson code 095

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Office

## 4. Owner of Property

name (205 E. 9th Street).  
Grand Avenue Methodist Church (See continuation sheet)

street &amp; number 205 E. 9th Street

city, town Kansas City, vicinity of state Missouri 64106

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of The Recorder of Deeds  
Jackson County Courthouse, Kansas City, Annex

street &amp; number 415 E. 12th Street

city, town Kansas City state Missouri 64105

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Landmarks Commission of Kansas City  
Central Business District Survey was this property been determined eligible? ☒ yes ☐ nodate 1980, 81 federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Landmarks Commission of Kansas City, Missouri

City Hall, 26th Floor, East 414 East 12th St.  
city, town Kansas City state Missouri 64106

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(903 Grand Avenue)  
% Ronald B. Durning  
Brooke Financial Corp.  
Temple Assoc. Limited  
126 E. 36th St.  
New York, NY 10016

## 7. Description

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☒ good  
☒ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☒ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Grand Avenue Temple, 205 East 9th Street, located in the Central Business District of Kansas City, Missouri, is designed in the Greek Revival style of architecture. This three story church with basement, rectangular in plan, is oriented with its main facade facing north on Ninth Street. The church and adjoining office tower are sited on a sloping location, with the church being approximately 45 feet from Grand Avenue. The church has a frontage of approximately 70 feet on Ninth Street, and a depth of 96 feet. <sup>1</sup>

### Exterior

#### Construction Materials and Colors

The church is of masonry and reinforced concrete construction. The exterior walls are buff brick on the north and east facades and a section of the south facade. Red brick is used on portions of the south and east facades. Decorative ornamentation consists of terra cotta, limestone and stained glass. The capitals, arches over the windows, spherical design on the frieze and recessed rectangular panels under the windows are made of terra cotta and are painted a reddish clay color. The doors on the main facade are painted a reddish orange color.

### Roof:

The gable roof is constructed of concrete trusses and is a built-up roof consisting of alternating felt and tar.<sup>2</sup> Skylights are placed evenly along the slant of the roof line.

### North (Main) Facade

The main facade of the Grand Avenue Temple faces north. The facade is divided into five equal recessed bays by four fluted attached ionic columns and two pilasters, which are located at each end of the structure. Both columns and pilasters rest on stone bases. The design of both the capitals and the pilasters are taken from the Erechtheion Temple in Athens.<sup>3</sup>

The basement windows, located in the central three bays graduate in size according to the grade of Ninth Street. The windows are casement and are in sets of three - a larger recessed window made up of a large central square light flanked by small square multi-panes is the middle window in the set. Fixed sidelights of small square multi-panes flank the central window.

There are two entrances on the main facade, each located in the end bays. The entrances are double, single light, doors with recessed stained glass transoms above. A terra cotta decorative molding separates the door from the transom. The entrances are identical with the exception of the approach and size and shape of transoms. The entrance at the northeast corner is approached directly from the sidewalk and its transom is rectangular in shape. The northwest entrance is approached by four stone steps and the transom is square in shape and larger than that of the northeast entrance.

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Also located in the central three bays above the basement windows are recessed casement stained glass windows in sets of three - One large multi-pane window flanked by multi-pane stained glass sidelights. Terra cotta sill coursing runs beneath the windows, and each set of window is flanked by an attached brick, rectangular pilaster with terra cotta capitals. Directly above the windows, and over the transoms above the entrances, runs a terra cotta, denticulated cornice visually separating the first and second floor.

The second floor window treatment is the same throughout each bay - a larger, recessed, multi-pane, stained glass window flanked by multi-pane stained glass sidelights. The lower window is a casement and square in shape, while the upper window is a casement and rectangular in shape. Both sets of windows are framed by brick attached pilasters which visually support a terra cotta arched head and keystone. Above the upper windows are stained-glass rounded arch fanlights. Directly over the fanlights is a terra cotta rounded, arched, head with an ancon acting as both a keystone and entablature support.

Directly above the recessed bays and supported by the columns and pilasters is a plain terra cotta architrave. A terra cotta decorative architrave molding separates the architrave from a plain brick frieze with four reddish clay colored, plain, spherical terra cotta ornaments. A low pitch pediment rises above the frieze, void of any decoration. The roof line is topped with a parapet cap of brick headers.

East Facade

The east facade is seven bays wide and is constructed of buff brick except for approximately the lower 3 feet of the wall which is red brick. A small square two-over-two, double hung, sash window with a stone sill is located at the extreme northeast corner. At the southeast corner, at first floor level is a two-over-two, double hung, sash, rectangular window with a stone sill below. An air-conditioner is located in the lower sash. Directly to the north of the window is a recessed double fire door with a single light transom above.

The central five bays contain the window treatment. It is similar to that on the main facade - a multi pane stained glass window flanked by stained glass sidelights. The third story windows are also topped with stained glass fanlights. The entire window treatment on this facade is covered over with a protective wire mesh storm window obstructing the view of the stained glass windows from the exterior. At the first story the storm windows are rectangular, with eleven lights. A stone sill runs below each window and a row of brick-headers runs above. Recessed rectangular brick panels lie between the first and second story windows. The third story windows are the same as the first except that they have 12 lights and above the windows are rounded arch fanlights with a louvered vent in the central semi-circular shape area. The arch is topped with a brick rounded arch head with a brick keystone.

Directly above the brick arches and running the entire length of the facade is a projecting brick stringcourse. Two additional projecting brick stringcourses

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run near the roof line. A plain cut stone parapet cap tops the roof line. A metal fire escape located at the southeast corner of the facade runs from the roof to the second floor. Two-story metal downspouts are located between the first and second windows and fourth and fifth windows of the central bay.

South Facade

The South facade is void of any openings. The facade is composed of course stone, on the lower section, red brick above it and buff brick above the red brick section. The roof line is stepped and a plain cut stone parapet cap runs along the top.

Interior

The interior of this church has remained unaltered and contains significant interior features. The interior displays Greek Revival elements, particularly, its decorative plaster - rosettes, egg and dart moldings, and dentils.

The interior of the church consists of an amphitheater shaped sanctuary. The oak pews are situated in a semi-circular fashion around a raised dias which is centered on the south wall. The sanctuary is made up of a main level and a two level balcony. The balconies are "C" shaped, (the upper balcony to a lesser degree), and are cantilevered over the lower area by steel trusses encased in concrete.<sup>4</sup>

An extraordinary feature of the sanctuary is the 54 rank pipe organ that spans the entire south wall. This organ is original to the church and was designed by the reknown American organist Ernest Skinner.<sup>5</sup> The twelve stained glass skylights located in the middle of the sanctuary and the stained glass windows on the north and east facades are other outstanding interior features.

A bold innovation at the time of the church's construction was a telephone service that was connected with the pastor's desk on the pulpit to various areas in the church including the choir area.<sup>6</sup> This feature is still in the church.

Alterations

A comparison of the present church with photographs taken earlier reveals that a decorative cornice with antefix has been removed from the main exterior facade (1939).<sup>7</sup> Also spherical shape light fixtures have been removed from the columns and pilasters also on the main facade and were probably removed the same time as the cornice. New signage was added to the main facade (date unknown.)

Present Status and Condition

The church is still being used as a Methodist church and has an active congregation of approximately 200. The condition of the church is good. An historic report and

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feasibility study was done on the church in the Spring of 1981.

Site

The church is in an area of downtown where renovation has occurred or is presently occurring. To the east of the church is a parking lot owned and used by the U.S. Government. In the same block facing McGee Street is the Federal Reserve Bank. Directly across the street (to the north) from the church is the U.S. Courthouse and Post Office. Adjoining the church on the west is the Grand Avenue Office Building soon to commence renovation. South of the church is a small parking lot. In general, the immediate area surrounding the church is comprised of tall office buildings occupied mostly by the government or financial institutions.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 "How The New Grand Avenue M. E. Church Will Look When Completed", Kansas City Times, 3 February 1911, p. 4A.
- 2 Walter Daniels, Peter Visentin and William Westerman, "Historic Structures Report/Restoration Feasibility Study Grand Avenue Temple and Office Building", (n.p., 1981), p. 22.
- 3 Cyril M. Harris, Historic Architecture Sourcebook ( New York. McGraw - Hill Inc, 1977), p. 199-201.
- 4 Daniels, p. 10
- 5 "Dedication Festival Program of the Grand Avenue Temple", Kansas City Star, 8 June 1949, p. 1. and "Organ Gets Historic Citation", Kansas City Times, 16 April 1983 p. 14D.
- 6 "The Newest and Oldest Church", Kansas City Star, 16 July 1911, p. 1C.
- 7 Building Permit No. 8170A, Public Work Department, City Hall, 414 East 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri, 64109.

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The Grand Avenue Temple Office Building, 903 Grand Avenue, in Kansas City's Central Business District, is situated on a sloping corner location at Ninth Street and Grand Avenue and is adjoining the Grand Avenue Temple. The twelve story, rectangular building is oriented with its main facade facing west and exemplifies neo-classical elements.

## Exterior

### Over-All Dimensions

This twelve story structure with basement has a frontage of approximately 96 feet on Grand Avenue and 45 feet on Ninth Street.<sup>1</sup> Original plans of the building as well as alteration plans that occurred in 1940 are housed at the University of Missouri Kansas City campus.<sup>2</sup>

### Construction Material and Colors

This steel frame building is sheathed with rusticated granite on the second story, brick painted a tan color on the first floor, and buff brick for the exterior walls of the remaining stories. The primary ornamentation is on the second, eleventh and twelfth stories.

### West (Main facade)

The main facade is divided into four horizontal divisions: 1) first floor; 2) second story; 3) third through eleventh story; and 4) twelfth story and cornice.

The first floor has been modernized and contains three recessed entrances. A recessed, single light aluminum frame, door is located at the northwest corner of the building. Two additional entrances, recessed, double, single light aluminum frame doors are located in the center and southwest end of the facade. One entrance in the middle of the facade is framed by marble and stone facing. Modern fixed, three pane tinted glass windows, the same height as the doors run between the entrances. A grooved anodized aluminum sheathing runs above the first story windows and doors and separates the first story from the second.

The second story has a rusticated stone finish and is fenestrated with Chicago style windows. A recessed, incised stone, wave molding with keystone is placed above each window on this story. A simple cut stone denticulated cornice runs between the second and third stories.

The third through twelfth stories is buff brick faced and is fenestrated with paired double hung, sash windows with cut stone sills. Ornate cartouches with lion heads are placed between each paired windows on the eleventh story. Directly above runs a modillioned cornice.

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Decorative terra cotta panels separate the windows on the twelfth story. The windows are further decorated with terra cotta surrounds in a leaf design. Above the twelfth story windows is an elaborately overhanging denticulated cornice with paired brackets.

South Facade

The first and second story of this facade are void of openings. The fenestration from the third through eleventh story is the same as the main facade with the exception that, the windows are not paired. A cornice return and cartouche, the same as on the main facade, is located at the southwest corner on the eleventh and twelfth stories.

A slightly projecting brick course visually separates the eleventh and twelfth stories. Rectangular brick panels with brick corbeling above, (resembling a column design) alternates between the windows on the twelfth story. A cut stone parapet cap tops the roof line.

North Facade

The north and west (Main) facades are almost identical with only two slight variations. On the first story, the window and door openings have been covered over with grooved wood sheathing. On the second story the difference is, that there is one Chicago style window flanked by a single one-over-one, double hung, sash window.

East Facade

The east facade is composed of ten bays. The fenestration is one-over-one, double hung, sash windows with stone sills. In the seventh bay (counting from the north) the windows are smaller in size. The eighth bay contains even smaller windows which are located in between stories (these windows coincide with the stair landings inside). A metal fire escape located between the eighth and ninth bay, runs from the twelfth to the fifth story. Brick keystones are located over the windows on the eleventh story. Directly above is a slight projecting brick cornice. Between each of the paired windows on the twelfth story is a rectangular brick panel with corbelled brick above (resembling a column design), the same as on the south facade.

Three small square single light windows are located in the third, fourth and ninth bay of the cornice area. Also decorating this area are three slightly projecting rectangular panels running the entire facade. A cut stone parapet cap tops the roof line.

The elevator shaft can be seen on this facade at roof level. It is faced in buff brick and contains two, two light, square casement windows with sills, spaced



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evenly on each of the facades.

Interior

The interior of the Grand Avenue Office Building has been remodeled extensively several times. A few remaining original interior features are the marble wainscot used in the elevator area and halls, and the interior staircase.

Alterations

The Grand Avenue Office Building has undergone extensive alterations. In 1940 major alterations were done by the local, Kansas City architectural firm of Gentry, Voskamp and Neville.<sup>3</sup>

1940

1. The old storefronts were changed to "pearly pink granite and aluminum.
2. Interior - new floors and walnut paneled walls were added to the lobby
3. New restrooms and elevator cabs installed

In 1958 there were further interior alterations including "improvements in the office and ground floor stores, in the entrance and lobby elevators, and lighting."<sup>4</sup>

Major exterior alterations occurred again around 1974-75.<sup>5</sup>

1. Changing the first floor storefronts to fixed narrow tinted glass windows (west facade)
2. Aluminum frame single light double door entrances (west facade)
3. Brick facing painted a golden buff color (west facade)
4. Anodized aluminum sheathing covering transom area. (north and west facades)
5. Grooved wood sheathing over entrance and storefront. (north facade)

Condition

The building is in fair condition. Renovation is scheduled to begin mid-February. Plans are for a total renovation of the building, creating eleven floors of office space and retail space on part of the first floor. The Kansas City architectural firm of Gastinger Reese Walker Architects, will be the project architects for the building.<sup>6</sup> Some renovation plans include restoring the lobby areas and the first floor on the exterior to their original appearance.<sup>7</sup>

Site

- The Grand Avenue Building is located on the northern portion of Grand Avenue. There are other renovation projects, as well as, completed renovation projects near this building. To the immediate east, and adjoining the building is the Grand Avenue Temple, directly across the street (to the north) is U.S. Courthouse

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and Post Office, to the west, across Grand Avenue is the newly renovated Ozark National Bank Building. To the northwest is the Scarritt building, presently under restoration and on the National Register. To the south of the office building is a small parking lot. In general the immediate area around this building is commercial structures housing government and financial institutions.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Building Permit No. 9982, Public Works Department, City Hall, 414 East 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri, 64106
- 2 File No. 57:30, K.C. 6 Missouri Valley Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historian, Architectural Records Collection, The Joint Collection of the Western Historical Manuscript Collection and the State Historical Society, The General Library, Rm. 212, University of Missouri - Kansas City, 5100 Rockhill, Kansas City, Mo., 64110.
- 3 Building Permit No. 9523 and File No. 44:11.
- 4 "Temple Building To A Chicago Man", Kansas City Star, 6 July 1958, p. 5E.
- 5 Building Permit No. 10501.
- 6 "Rehabilitation Is Set for 72-Year-Old Building at 903 Grand Aveue", Kansas City Star, 16 December 1984, p. 5E.
- 7 George Koppe to Linda Becker, 19 December 1984, Historic Kansas City Foundation, Kansas City, Missouri.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates	1909-11	Builder/Architect	John McKecknie
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### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Grand Avenue Temple, located on its original site, since 1866, and known as the "Mother Church of Methodism", "The church of Strangers and the "Crossroads of America Church" is significant as having played a prominent role in development of Methodism in Kansas City.<sup>1</sup> Being one of the six remaining churches in the downtown area, it has further played a major role as a center for religious and educational gatherings in the downtown community. At the time of its construction, 1909-1911, the concept of building an adjoining office building was unique to Kansas City and attracted wide-spread attention.<sup>2</sup> These buildings, designed by John W. McKecknie, the pioneering architect in reinforced concrete construction in Kansas City, are early examples of this type of construction.<sup>3</sup> The Greek Revival Style church as well as the office building clad in neo-classical elements further exemplifies the outstanding architectural designs of John McKecknie. The church houses the original organ (1912), which has been named to the National Register of Historic Instruments, providing additional significance.<sup>4</sup>

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Church History and Development

In 1866, under the leadership of Reverend Griffis, thirty-five members of the Methodist Episcopal Church met in an old house at the corner of Ninth Street and Grand Avenue, the future site of the church that would become known as the "Mother of Methodism" in Kansas City.<sup>5</sup> A contribution of \$1.25 from an "old negro washer-woman", which was to be used originally as her burial money, initiated the building fund.<sup>6</sup> The three lots at Ninth and Grand, one still occupied by the church today, was purchased for \$1,000. The foundation was laid by the end of 1866 and a temporary tabernacle or "Wigwam" was used as a place of worship until the main auditorium of the church was completed in 1896, and dedicated in 1870.<sup>7</sup> The church had many distinguished ministers, as well as, had been the mother of other churches in Kansas City, including Summit, Dundee, Howard Memorial, Arlington, Independence Avenue, Oakley, Oakhurst, Grace and Phoenix Park Methodist Church.<sup>8</sup>

As the downtown grew, many of the downtown churches moved southward to the residential areas of city. The property at Ninth Street and Grand Avenue, owned by the church, soon became a extremely valuable and desirable piece of property. In 1897, at a farewell sermon, Dr. Mitchell, bishop at the time, presented the idea of building a new church and office building.<sup>9</sup> Finally in 1909 it was decided that the church would remain downtown adhering to its original purpose of being the first to welcome newcomers to the city and "the haven on Sunday morning and night for travelers."<sup>10</sup> It was also decided that a new church and office building would be constructed.

John McKecknie was commissioned in 1909 to build the two structures, at a cost of \$375,000, money which was borrowed from a New York capitalist.<sup>11</sup> It was believed that the office building, with its expected revenue of \$67,000 a year, could help support the church and thus become a means for financing the spread of Methodism.<sup>12</sup> The church was completed and dedicated in 1911 by Bishop William F. Anderson, of Chattanooga, Tenn.

No expense was spared in the construction of this Greek Revival style church, both inside and out. The exterior, although altered, retains a Grecian simplicity and a dominating temple front facade. "The interior finish is cathedral oak, with the walls done in ivory, and myriad lights studding the dome, was a thing of beauty to endure for the years".<sup>13</sup>

Upon its completion, the Grand Avenue Temple became nationally known, and was referred to as the "Crossroads Church of America" and the "Church of Strangers", because of its hotel and boarding house members.<sup>14</sup> Shortly after the church opened, its strong desire to serve its community was seen by the introduction of a "noonday club for girls who worked downtown."<sup>15</sup> A working girl could become a member for 10¢ and have her lunch with a free cup of hot chocolate in one of the church's parlors from 11 to 2 o'clock each day. The purpose was to offer a rest hour in company with other girls. This service was discontinued

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in 1914.

With the rapid growth of downtown, by 1916 the church property was valued at a million dollars, clearly making it one of the wealthiest congregations in the United States.<sup>16</sup> Before and during the years of World War I, the church remained an active force in the downtown metropolitan community.

Then in 1924, the church received its first of a series of financial difficulties. A lawsuit was brought by the descendants of the original purchasers of the lot. Although the Missouri Supreme Court ruled in favor of the church, it was a financial blow. With more "modern skyscrapers" being built, the adjoining office building was no longer providing a financial asset but rather a deficit. By 1929, a considerable debt had been incurred. The church was dealt another financial blow in 1939 with foreclosure proceedings brought by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.<sup>17</sup>

Although the Grand Avenue Temple has had financial difficulties, it has had enough community support to see it through its hard times. The church and its members have maintained its desire to remain downtown and serve the community. It is a community church in the true sense of the word; with its founding of the Helping Hand Institute, (a temporary aid to down-and-outers), with its commencement of the local Good Will Industries, and with its present day use as an Emergency Assistance Center in the church's basement.<sup>18</sup>

Although the congregation only numbers 200, the church still provides a place of worship for any denomination, hotel guests, lodgers, or downtown apartment dwellers - thus a "Church for the Stranger", the concept on which the church was originally built over one hundred years ago.

Besides the Grand Avenue Temple, there are five churches remaining in the downtown, Central Business District. They are: The Immaculate Conception Catholic Cathedral, Grace and Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, St. Mary's Church, St. Patrick's Catholic Church, and Calvary Baptist.

Building Concept

The combination of an office building and adjoining church was a unique concept at the time. It was a bold, controversial and notable experiment by the church at this time. The idea behind this unusual combination was to gradually pay off the debt and supply the church with large funds in order to do missionary work and spread the word of Methodism.

Reinforced Concrete Construction

Both the Grand Avenue Temple and Office Building are early examples of reinforced concrete construction in Kansas City. Ernest L. Ransome, introduced into the United States the use of reinforced concrete and patented his idea in 1844.<sup>19</sup>

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This type of construction eliminated the wall mass and provided a framework of columns and floors, allowing for larger window openings. Terra cotta ornamentation was used in early reinforced concrete structures in order to hide the construction. "Kansas City was the scene of several quite early reinforced concrete structures".<sup>20</sup> The Gumbel Building (1904), 801 Walnut, is the earliest example in Kansas City and in this country.<sup>21</sup> The Grand Avenue Office Building was designed five years later, during a period in Kansas City where a rapid growth in downtown Skyscraper construction was occurring.

John W. McKecknie (1862-1934)

John W. McKecknie was one of Kansas City's most prolific and successful architects. He has been credited with designing over 120 buildings in Kansas City alone.<sup>22</sup> His early use of reinforced concrete construction as well as his innovative techniques in residential design has enhanced the architectural history of Kansas City.

McKecknie was born in Clarksville, Ohio on October 3, 1862, a son of a doctor. His post high school education included Wilmington (Ohio) College, two years; a four year classical course at Princeton, graduating in 1886; and Columbia School of Mines, N.Y.C. where he studied architecture for two years. After graduating from Columbia, McKecknie was employed by various New York architectural firms for five years.

A life long love of art and architecture was strengthened by his employment at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1889-1893), the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Science and an five month expedition in 1895 with Professor Goodyear. On the expedition, he took significant photographic and measurement documentation, the results of which were published in the Architectural Record of 1896 and 1897.<sup>23</sup>

McKecknie came to Kansas City in 1898 and opened his own office in 1900. He was sole practitioner until 1914 when Frank Trask joined his firm. McKecknie remained the innovative design force in the firm until his death in 1934. It is clear that he was one of the better designers of his generation.<sup>24</sup>

Other outstanding examples of McKecknie's use of reinforced concrete construction and design in Kansas City are the Gumbel Building, 801-03 Walnut, 1904 and The Gloyd Building, 921 Walnut, 1909.<sup>25</sup>

Original Organ

The E. M. Skinner Opus 190 Pipe Organ is original to the Grand Avenue Temple and is the first pipe organ in the area to be named to the National Register of Historic Instruments by the Organ Historic Society of America.<sup>26</sup>

The organ was designed by the American organ builder, Ernest M. Skinner. It was built in Boston in 1912 and "modeled after the organ in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York".<sup>27</sup> The organ was a memorial gift to the church from Henry Schoellhopf, a member of the congregation.

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Continuation sheet Grand Avenue Temple and  
Grand Avenue Temple Building Item number 8

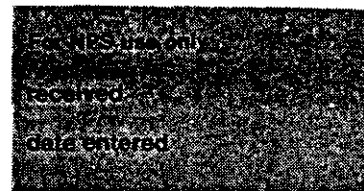
Page 4

FOOTNOTES

1. "Church of The Stranger" Marks 70 years of Service Downtown," Kansas City Times, 25 October 1939, p. 1D.
2. "Dedicated Church Edifice", Kansas City Times, 12 February 1912 p. 3.
3. Donald Hoffman, "Early Concrete Construction in Kansas City," Skylines and Midwest Architect, 15 (Dec. - Jan. 1965), p. 14.
4. "Organ Gets Historic Citation", Kansas City Times, 16 April 1983, p. 14D.
5. Olive L. Hoggins, Collection of Letters and Notes Relative to the Study of Kansas City Churches, n.d., p. 41.3.
6. "Church of The Stranger" Marks 70 years of Service Downtown," Kansas City Times, 25 October 1939, p. 1D.
7. Hoggins, Collection of Letters, n.d. p. 41.1.
8. "A Mother of Churches", Kansas City Star, 15 October 1911, p. 17A.
9. Hoggins, Collection of Letters, n.d., p. 41.2.
10. "Church of The Stranger" Marks 70 Years of Service Downtown," Kansas City Times, 25 October 1939, p. 1D.
11. "A Mother of Churches", Kansas City Star, 15 October 1911, p. 17A.
12. Ibid
13. "Church of The Stranger" Marks 70 Years of Service Downtown," Kansas City Times, 25 October 1939, p. 1D.
14. Ibid
15. "The Grand Avenue Temple Review A Quarter Century of Fruitful Endeavor", Kansas City Star, 7 February 1937 p. 4C.
16. "A Downtown Church is 50", Kansas City Star, 16 October 1916, p. 2.
17. "Bank Building Poses As Background For Temple Building and Adjoining Church", Kansas City Star, 23 January 1955, Sec. G p. 1.
18. "Yates School Slated To Reopen as Shelter For The City's Needy", Kansas City Star 7 November 1984, p. 45.

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19. Hoffman, p. 13.
20. Ibid, p. 13.
21. Sherry Piland, John McKecknie Architect 1862-1934, (Kansas City: Landmarks Commission of Kansas City, Missouri, 1981), p.6.
22. Ibid, p. 2 .
23. Hoffman, p. 14.
24. George Ehrlich, Kansas City, Missouri An Architectural History 1826-1976, (Kansas City: Historic Kansas City Foundation, 1974), p. 81.
25. Piland, p. 6,7.
26. "Organ Gets Historic Citation", Kansas City Times, 16 April 1983, p. 14D.
27. " A Mother of Churches", Kansas City Star, 15 October 1911, p. 17A.



## 9. Major Bibliographical References

"A Downtown Church is 50." Kansas City Star, 16 October 1916, p.2.

"A Mother of Churches." Kansas City Star, 15 October 1911, p. 17A.

(See continuation sheets)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Kansas City

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

205 E. 9th Street - Swopes Add. E 70.5 ft.

Lots 109 and 110., Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri

903 Grand Avenue - W. 45 ft. Lots 109 and 110

~~Swopes Add. Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri~~  
List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title L. Linda F. Becker, Director of Research

organization Historic Kansas City Foundation date February 7, 1985

street & number 20 West 9th St. Suite 450 telephone (816) 471-3391

city or town Kansas City state Missouri 64105

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

— national ☒ state — local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

John Karel, Director & Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

title Division of Parks & Historic Preservation

date 2/21/85

For NPS use only:

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
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Grand Avenue Temple and

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"Bank Building Poses As Background For Temple Building and Adjoining Church."  
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Grand Avenue Temple and  
Continuation sheet Grand Avenue Temple Building Item number 9

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"Rehabilitation Is Set for 72-Year-Old Building at 903 Grand Avenue." Kansas City Star, 16 December 1984, p. 5E.

"Temple Building To A Chicago Man." Kansas City Star, 6 July 1958, p. 5E.

"The Grand Avenue Temple Review A Quarter Century of Fruitful Endeavor." Kansas City Star, 7 February 1937 p. 4C.

"The Newest and Oldest Church." Kansas City Star, 16 July 1911, p. 1C.

"Yates School Slated To Reopen as Shelter For The City's Needy." Kansas City Star 7 November 1984, p. 45.

**United States Department of the Interior  
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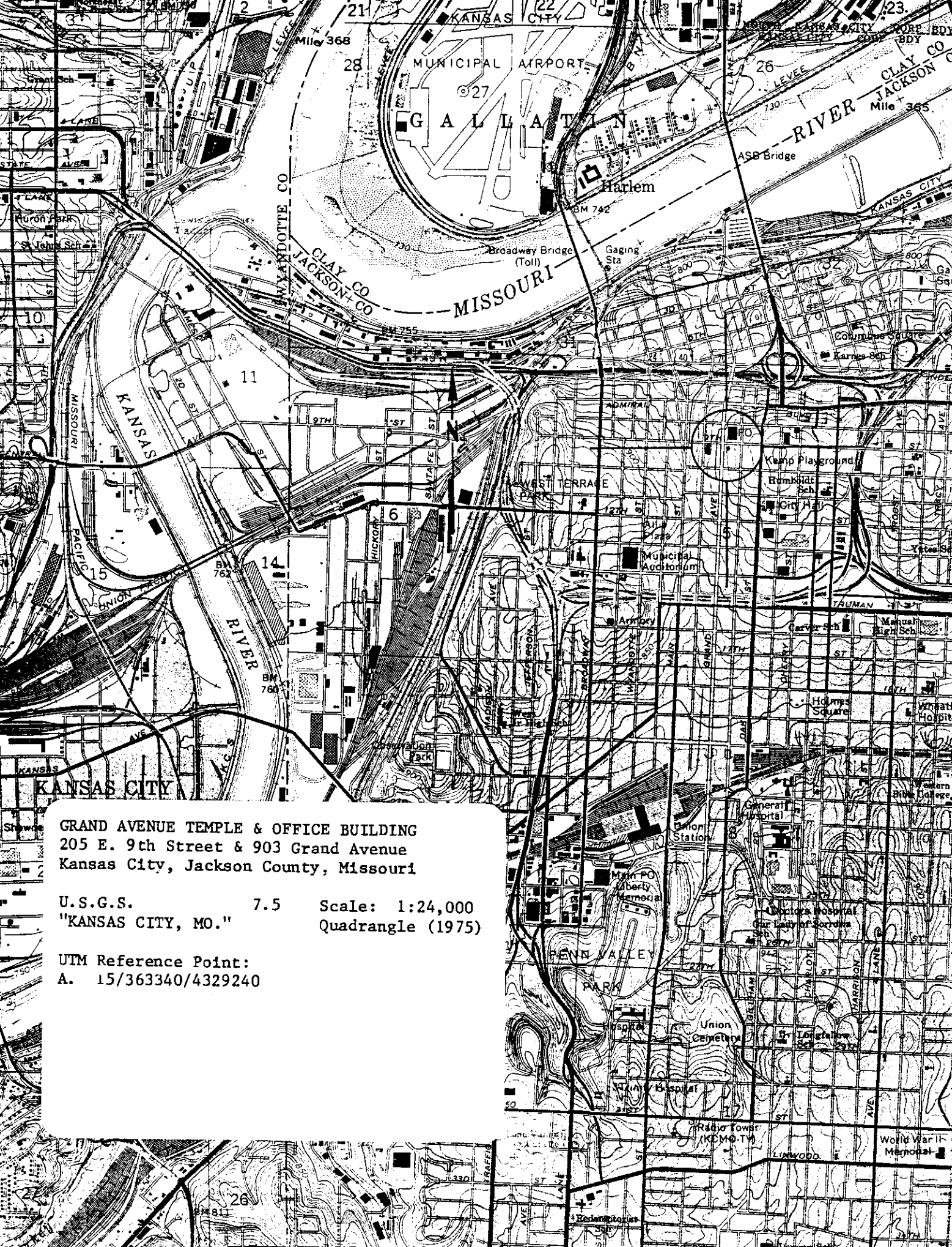
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Continuation sheet Grand Avenue Temple and  
Grand Avenue Temple Building Item number 11

Page 1

2. James M. Denny  
Chief, Survey and Registration  
and State Contact Person  
Department of Natural Resources  
Historic Preservation Program  
P. O. Box 176  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102  
Phone: 314/751-4096  
Date: March 15, 1985



GRAND AVENUE TEMPLE & OFFICE BUILDING  
205 E. 9th Street & 903 Grand Avenue  
Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri

U.S.G.S. 7.5 Scale: 1:24,000  
"KANSAS CITY, MO." Quadrangle (1975)

UTM Reference Point:  
A. 15/363340/4329240

**Photo Log:**

Name of Property: **Grand Avenue Temple and Grand Avenue Temple Building**

City or Vicinity: **Kansas City**

County: **Jackson County** State: **MO**

Photographer: **Photographic Creations and Illustrations**

Date

Photographed: **1984**

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

1 of 7. N (main) façade. View looking S.

2 of 7. NE corner of buildings, looking SW. View shows N facades on the right and E facades on the left.

3 of 7. NW corner of Grand Ave. office building and the N façade of the Grand Avenue Temple, looking SE. View shows the E (main) façade of the Grand Avenue Temple Building is on the right and N facades on the left.

4 of 7. Sw corner of buildings, looking NE. View shows the W façade (main) and the S façade of the Grand Ave. office building and the S façade of the Grand Avenue Temple.

5 of 7. Exterior detail on W façade on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> stories of the Grand Ave. office building. View looking E.

6 of 7. Interior – 1<sup>st</sup> floor and balcony of the sanctuary. Stained glass windows and elaborate plaster detailing can be seen on the E wall and ceiling area. View looking E.

7 of 7. Interior – S wall of the church, including 54 rank pipe organ, choir and altar area. View looking S.





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