

COLUMBUS PARK SURVEY

FINAL REPORT

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI  
1988

Prepared by Melanie A. Betz  
for the Kansas City, Missouri, Landmarks Commission

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The Kansas City Landmarks Commission has contracted for an intensive level survey of approximately 170 acres of Kansas City, Missouri, bounded on the north of Front Street; the west by Locust Street; the south by Independence Avenue; and on the east by the North Midtown Freeway. This area is commonly known as **"Columbus Park"**. The survey of Columbus Park was designed to provide a comprehensive inventory of historically and architecturally significant buildings and structures. The results will be used as a tool in the identification and protection of historic resources and for making decisions pertaining to land use. It also will provide an outline of the cultural heritage and developmental patterns of Kansas City.

Approximately 150 inventory forms were prepared during the Columbus Park survey. Although this does not represent 100% of the sites reviewed, it does include most of the building constructed prior to 1940 in addition to some erected after this date. This project was undertaken in the Fall of 1987 by Melanie A. Betz, Architectural Historian with the Kansas City Landmarks Commission. A research design and final report were prepared which included an assessment of the National Register eligibility of all of the inventoried properties.

By means of a field survey, each building in the Columbus Park area was examined and a historic inventory form prepared for most of the pre-1940 buildings. The following information was provided on these forms:

- 1) A site number keyed to the mylar survey map. The site number has two parts: the first is the block number and second is the

building letter. For example, the site number for the Holy Rosary Church, is #16.A (block #16, building letter "A");

2) A photograph negative number which has two parts: the first is the role number and the second is the frame number. All surveyed properties are filed under the "Northeast" or "NE" in the Landmarks Commission files. For example, the photograph number for the Holy Rosary Church is NE #2-4;

3) Street address or description of location;

4) Approximate (or exact) date of construction;

5) Designation of style or design. This is given **ONLY** if the building is a true representative of that style;

6) Name of Architect, engineer, or builder, if known;

7) Original and current uses;

8) An on-site varification and description of prominent architectural features including number of bays (if applicable), building material, plan or shape, exterior condition, number of stories, foundation material, roof type, etc. Section #36 of the inventory form also indicates the direction of the front facade, additional features not mentioned in section #24-33, and major alterations, if any;

9) History and significance of building (if any), including early occupants of residents (if known);

10) Description of environment and outbuildings;

11) National Register eligibility;

12) Sources of information. The primary souce materials were obtained from the following locations:

a) City Hall, 414 East 12th St., Kansas City, Missouri.  
This is the repository for water and building permits.

Kansas City Atlases for 1886, 1891, 1907 and 1925 are also located here. Furthermore, the Landmarks Commission office also has photographs from a 1941 real estate assessment survey which was useful in identifying Columbus Park buildings.

b) Missouri Valley Room, Kansas City Public Library, 311 East 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri. This local repository of city directories, newspaper clippings, copies of the Western Contractor (a construction trade journal) and numerous other local history books, scrapbooks, photograph collections, and files.

c) Oral interviews. Historical information for a few of the Columbus Park buildings was obtained from past and present owners.

d) Finally, at least one photograph was taken of the primary facade. A 35mm camera was used with Kodak Pantomic-X black and white film. A 3" x 5" print was then made and mounted on the inventory form.

### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Because of its location near industry (west and north) and to the central business district (south) of Kansas City, Columbus Park often became home to many early immigrants and migrants. Although Columbus Park was sometimes known as "Little Italy" because of the many Italian immigrants and persons of Italian descent, many other ethnic groups settled in the area. Census records indicate that Russian-Jews, Poles, and other Eastern and Northern Europeans resided here along with the Italians.

The first recorded residents of one of the oldest buildings identified during the survey, 569-71 Campbell (1883-84, site #17-H) were Russian-Jews, Germans and Italians. 573 Campbell (1904, site #17-J) provided residence for Israel Brady, a Russian-Jew who came to this country in 1888; David Horowitz, a Russian-Jew who worked as a butcher; D. Osaj, a Russian-Jew who worked as a huckster; and Margaret O'Hara, an Irish immigrant and her three children. The earliest occupants of 549 Campbell (1904, site #17-B) included Samuel Hoffman, a Russian-Jewish immigrant who worked as a stone mason, and Joseph Silver, also a Russian-Jewish immigrant who worked as a carpenter. The S'heims, the Aronsteins, the Goldbergs, and Joseph Silver, also a Russian-Jewish immigrant who worked as a carpenter. The S'heims, the Aronsteins, the Goldbergs, and the Morris - all Russian-Jews - resided at 565-67 Campbell (1909, site #17-G) along with the Trachinos and the Cordos, Italian immigrant families. By 1914, when Karnes School (550 Charlotte, site #8-A) was complete, 98% of the student population was either Italian or Russian-Jewish. The other 2% was recorded as "other ethnic groups."

Blacks also began to settle in the area during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1890, the Garrison School, originally located at 553 Tracy (now demolished) was constructed for black students. The Garrison Field House (later, the Garrison Community Center), 1130 East 5th Street (site #24-A), was constructed in 1913-14, and became the only settlement center in Kansas City exclusively for blacks.

While many of the early Jewish residents began to move southward, more and more Italian immigrants and migrants began to settle in the area. Many of these people were laborers, merchants, or skilled craftsmen. The Holy Rosary Church, SE corner of Campbell and Missouri (1903-4, site #16-A) had (and still has) a strong influence on the Italian community. A 1911 Kansas City Star article described several success stories of Italians who resided in the area including Salvador and Joseph Palermo, owners of a grocery store/apartment building at Troost and Eighth Streets (now demolished), and Samuel Nigro, another grocer whose beginnings were in a peddler's wagon. The Nigro family, to note, owned numerous Columbus Park buildings including two commercial/residential structures: 520-22 Campbell (1890, site #11-E) and 512-23 Campbell (1910, site #15 D) and numerous single and multi-family residences including 5111 Charlotte (1899, site #11-B), 517 Missouri (1932, site #7-H), and 710 Missouri (1932, site #7-F). Other prominent Italian families included the Barelli's who owned and operated Jennie's Restaurant, 509-22 Cherry (1905, site #3-A) and the LaSala's who owned LaSala's grocery store/restaurant, 912 5th Street (1908, site #14-C). These two successful businesses have

operated in Columbus Park for four generations.

In 1942, the Rev. Luigi Donanzan, of Holy Rosary Church, unveiled drawings for Rosary Plaza, a small subdivision of brick houses on the bluffs of the Missouri River. However, a couple of property owners refused to sell and Father Donanzan left Kansas City. The federal government instead took over the land, and by the early 1950's, demolished much of the northeast section of the neighborhood to make way for the 418 unit Guinotte Manor (1954), a public housing project. The ethnic fabric of the area again changed with the arrival of other groups including Blacks, Cubans, Mexicans, and Southeast Asians.

Despite these changes, the older neighborhood retains its Italian flavor. The Holy Rosary Church and school, and St. John Bosco Center (526 Campbell, 1940, site #12-M) still have strong influences on the Italian community. Jennie's, LaSala's, and Vocci's Italian Food products (559 Campbell, 1947, site #17-W) are just three examples of businesses owned by families of Italian descent. Italian names are still visible on many late 19th and early 20th century apartment and commercial buildings although some of the families may have left the area including: Antonio Affronti, 517 Gillis, (1908, site #22-G); M. Donnici, 1138 Pacific (1904, site #26-W); and J. Leone and Sons, 1000-02 Pacific (1913, site #20-G).



## SURVEY FINDINGS/ARCHITECTURE

The earliest extant building in Columbus Park is the Italianate dwelling at 513-15 Holmes (site #7-C) which was constructed in 1879. Out of 150 properties recorded, 19 buildings (or approx. 13%) were constructed between 1879-89; 16 buildings (or approx. 11%) between 1890-99; 79 buildings (or approx. 53%) between 1900-09; 17 buildings (or approx. 11%) between 1920-29; 7 buildings (or approx. 5%) between 1930-39; 3 buildings (or approx. 2%) between 1940-49, and 9 buildings (or approx. 6%) after 1950. Based on original use, the majority of buildings (out of 150 recorded) were residential (118 buildings or approx. 79%). Out of these 118 buildings, 28 were recorded as single family dwellings and 90 were recorded as multi-unit. 17 buildings (or approx. 11%) had both residential and commercial functions. Other buildings recorded: two schools (approx. 1%); 1 church (less than 1%); 5 commercial buildings (approx. 3%) and 5 structures (approx. 3%) classified as "other" (public garages, etc.)

Many years ago, Columbus Park was an almost self-sufficient, cohesive neighborhood that provided basic services for its residents. Today, the area is comprised of low-rise, single and multi-family dwellings with only a few remaining businesses. Most of these buildings were constructed up to the property line. This siting, along with the two- and three- level open front porches that line the streets, visually creates an old world European flavor to the neighborhood. The northern and northeastern sections of Columbus Park are now primarily public housing (Guinotte Manor).

**Although** multi-family dwellings predominated in the Columbus Park

area, single family residences were constructed as well, including: 416 Campbell (site #10-C, 1901); 517 Charlotte (1911, site #11-G); 1132 Pacific (1904, site #26-V; and 1104 Missouri (1901, site #25-G).

A few commercial/industrial buildings including the S-A Bakery, 1135 E. 5th Street (1925) and Joe Vaccaro's Soda Manufacturing Company, 918-22 5th Street, (1923, site #14-D), were identified during the survey. Most commercial buildings also served as residences (apartment over store). Examples include: the Nigro stores at 521-23 Campbell (1910, site #15-D) & 520-22 Campbell (1898, site #11-E); the Antonio Afronti Building, 517 Gillis (1900, site #22-G); the C. Arnone Building, 525 Gillis, (1906, site #23-A); the M. Donnici building, 1138 Pacific (1901, site #26-W), and the J. Leone and Sons Building, 1000-02 Pacific (1913, site #20-G).

#### RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE:

Most of the residential buildings were constructed by local builders or contractors using stock plans. A prevalent design for multi-family dwellings is the rectangular two-story, three-bay duplex with two-level open porch extending the length of the front facade. Crowned with a hip roof (example: 536 Troost, 1898, site #23-F) or a gable roof (example: 535 Charlotte, 1899, site #12-C), the buildings were usually frame structures with clapboard siding (example: 574 Harrison 1912, site #17-M). Almost all of the facades have been covered with aluminum or asbestos siding. Variations of this duplex design include: a five-bay front facade (example: 1042 E. 5th Street, 1906, site #18-D); the use of brick veneer (example: 554 Harrison, c.1912, site #17-T); stucco veneer

(example: 519 Harrison, 1902, site #19-G); or variations in the roof line: cross gable (example: 1136 Pacific, 1904, site #26-O); flat (example: 537 Troost, 1897, site #26-E); pedimented gable (example: 1126 Pacific, 1907, site #26-W); pedimented gable projecting from a hip roof (example: 514-16 Gillis, 1898, site #19-N) or clipped gable with an irregular plan (509 Charlotte, 1901, site #11-A). Fenestration includes rectangular windows with frame surrounds or stone sills and lintels (many of the door and window openings have been altered). Foundation materials are usually stone (example: 539 Troost, 1889, site #26-F). Frame or metal (modern) columns resting on brick piers support many of the porch roofs. Variations include an all frame porch (example: 536 Forest, 1905, site #26-Q) or all brick columns (example: 573 Campbell, 1904, site #17-J).

### ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT

In general, the buildings of Columbus Park reflected current developments in architectural design. Used structurally and for decoration, cast iron became a popular construction material during the last third of the 19th century. 1141 E. 5th Street (c.1888, site #25-N) displays a cast-iron storefront. The Nigro store at 520-22 Campbell (1898, site #11-E) once had a cast-iron storefront although it has been altered in recent years. A few examples of Italianate or modified Italianate apartment buildings were also identified during the survey. 511 Holmes (1899, site #7-B); 513-15 Holmes (1879, site #7-C), 569-71 Campbell (1883-84, site #17-H); 1105-07 Missouri (1886, site #26-BB) and 1113-15 E. Missouri (1890, site #26-J) all display decorative cornice lines and brackets

characteristic of Italianate design.

Although Gothic Revival architecture was uncommon in Kansas City, ecclesiastical buildings often displayed Gothic windows and buttressing. In the Columbus Park area, Holy Rosary Church (1903-4, site #16-A) displays these Gothic Revival elements.

By the late 19th and early 20th centuries much of the architecture was characterized by the frequent use of Romanesque elements such as arched windows, brick veneer, masonry construction and decorative corbelling. 509 Harrison (c.1901, site #19-B) and 511 Harrison (1901, site #19-C) are two masonry buildings with brick facades, arched windows and doors, and decorative brick corbelling. Other Columbus Park buildings displaying Romanesque Revival elements include: 513 Charlotte (1902, site #11-C); 5B Cherry (1905, site #13-B) and 521-23 Cherry (1906, site #3-C).

Classically inspired architectural elements also began to adorn many Columbus Park buildings. Two examples include the Karnes School, 550 Charlotte (1914-5, Charles A. Smith, architect, site #8-A) which displays decorative medallions and stone belt courses above the piano nobile and water table; and, the apartment building at 524-26 Holmes (1913, site #3-D) which displays a pedimented gable roof supported by brick and frame columns.

During the first decade of the 20th century, major advancements in construction technology influenced the designing of Kansas City buildings including the use of reinforced concrete. Karnes School, 550 Charlotte (1914-15, Charles A. Smith, architect, site #8-A) is an example of a reinforced concrete building located in the Columbus Park area.

After 1920, much of the building activity in the area diminished as Kansas City moved southward. Only a few buildings were constructed between 1920 and 1950 including: 918-22 5th Street (1923, site #14-D; 716 Missouri (1932, site #7-G) and 720 Missouri (1932, site #7-F). During the early 1950's, much of the northern and northeastern sections of Columbus Park were demolished so that a large public housing project could be constructed on the site. Since this time, a few private residences have been constructed in the area including four buildings on Holmes that face a public park: 534 Holmes (1977, site #4-A); 536 Holmes (1972, site #14-B); 538 Holmes (1973, site #4-C); and 540 Holmes (1978, site #4-D).

Another common apartment design in Columbus Park is the two-level brick building with a flat roof and two-to-five bays. A two-level open porch extends the length of the front facade. The porch roof is supported by brick columns (example: 565-67 Campbell, 1909, site #17-G); frame columns (example: 1015 Pacific, 1919, site #21-A); frame columns resting on brick piers (example: 1007-09 Pacific, 1917, site #21-B) or metal columns resting on brick piers (example: 561-3 Harrison, 1898, site #21-D). Variations include a three-level brick building (example: 512 Troost, 1890, site #22-K), a decorative frame cornice with brackets (example: 1120 Pacific, 1909, site #26-DD); the use of decorative brick corbelling (example: 543 Troost, 1908, site #26-G) and dormers projecting from a low-pitch hip roof (example: 533-35 Troost, 1886 site #26-D). The building at 532 Gillis (1905, site #20-L), 534 Gillis (1905, site #20-K) and the row houses at 538-48 Gillis (1888, site #20-JJ) do not have front porches. 529-31 Charlotte (1906, site #12-B) has an irregular plan. Fenestration for most of these buildings

includes one-over-one sash rectangular windows (some have been altered). Foundation material for most of these buildings is stone.

## CONCLUSIONS

Columbus Park is a cohesive neighborhood located directly northeast of Kansas City's downtown business district. The area contains many late 19th and early 20th century residences, commercial buildings, community centers and churches. Many of these buildings have been altered over the years including new siding on many of the residences and changes made in fenestration (doors, windows and storefronts). However, a few buildings in the Columbus Park area possess integrity of location, design, setting, material, workmanship, feeling and association, and are eligible under **criterion "A"** (associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history) and/or **criterion "C"** (embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinctive entity whose components may lack individual distinction). These buildings are significant in the areas of architecture, commerce, education, social/humanitarian and/or ethnic history. The following individual buildings were identified during the Columbus Park Survey as being potentially eligible:

### Under Criterion A:

#### **The Garrison Community Center**

**1130 E. 5th Street, Benjamin Lubschez, Architect, 1913-14, Site #24-A.**

Significant in the area of social/humanitarian and ethnic history, The Garrison Community Center is a multi-functional building that was described in 1915 as "the only settlement center in Kansas City



exclusively for Negroes". The officials and employees of the center were also black. The building contained a gymnasium/assembly room, showers, a reading room, and a branch library. Designed by Benjamin Lubschez and completed in 1914, the building retains many of its original features including its three-part composition and brown and buff colored brick with white stone trim. The building is in good condition.

#### **The Karnes School**

**550 Charlotte, Charles A. Smith, Architect, 1914-15; site #8-A**

Karnes School is significant in the areas of education. Originally located at Fourth and Troost (now Guinotte Manor), the building was completed as a grade school in 1915 with 24 classrooms, a branch library and separate gymnasiums for boys and girls. When it opened, it was the largest grade school in the city. 98% of the student body was of Italian and Jewish descent. Karnes was the first school in Kansas City to utilize the "Gary System" of rotational study modified to meet the demands of the city. Despite efforts to save and repair the building by interested residents (the Northeast Coalition Neighborhood organization), the building is in fair condition and is slated for demolition.

#### **The Holy Rosary Church & School**

**Campbell and Missouri Streets; Church: 1903 site #16-A; school: c. 1907, site #16-B.**

The Holy Rosary Church has had a strong influence on the Italian community and throughout the northeast since its completion in 1903. Although the building itself has been through three fires, it remains one of the centers of neighborhood activity. Retaining most of its original exterior features, this nave plan church with Gothic Revival details displays a centrally located open belfry and pointed arch portals. It is in good condition.



The Holy Rosary School was constructed shortly after the church around 1907. It is a two-story masonry building with a barrel-tile roof and an entranceway highlighted by a stone surround. The school is intact and in good condition. Significant in the area of commerce, two businesses have served the Columbus Park area continuously since the early 20th century: Jennie's at 509-22 Cherry (Site #3-A) and LaSala's, 912 5th Street (site # 14-C). The buildings that they have occupied may be eligible under criterion A although some changes have been made which may effect their overall integrity.

**Jennie's**  
**509-22 Cherry, 1932 (1905 foundation; 1942 facade; 1976 add.)**  
**Site #3-A**

The origin of Jennie's restaurant can be traced back to a saloon located at 4th and Cherry (now destroyed) called "Tony's Place" which was owned and operated by Tony Barelli from 1916-32. Around 1932, the Barelli family purchased a frame house that was built around 1905 located on the current site of Jennie's Restaurant. The house was demolished but the foundation was used to build a two-story brick building. The Barelli's, for awhile, lived on the upper level of this building. The place was also called "Tony's Place" until it was renamed "Jennie's Party House" after Tony Barelli's mother who ran the restaurant/saloon. The name was later shortened to "Jennie's" and has continued to be a popular restaurant in Kansas City. The original 1932 (with c.1942 facade) building is relatively intact. The large 1976 addition located to the north may effect the overall integrity of the building.

**LaSala's**  
**912 5th Street, 1908, site #14-C**

The LaSala family has operated this market/restaurant for four generations. Their three-story building at 912 5th street has brick corbelling, stone lintels and sills, and a corner entrance. Some alterations have been made to the storefront. In good condition, the building has apartments above the store which was common in Columbus Park.

**Under Criterion C:**

Although approximately 79% of the buildings recorded during the Columbus Park survey were residential (both single and multi-family), most are not eligible because of the loss of integrity. However, a few buildings are significant in the area of architecture.

Several fine examples of brick Italianate or modified Italianate buildings have retained their original architectural integrity including their moldings, cornices, brackets and much of their fenestration. However, before a final determination can be made of their significance, these buildings should be assessed with other Italianate residences throughout the northeast section of the city.

The following Italianate buildings were identified:

- 513-15 Holmes, 1879, site #7-C
- 511 Holmes, 1899, site #7-B
- 569-71 Campbell, 1883-84, site #17-H
- 1101-03 E. Missouri, 1886, site #26-A
- 1105-07 E. Missouri, 1886, site #26-AA
- 1109-111 E. Missouri, 1886, site #26-BB
- 1113-15 E. Missouri, 1890, site #26-J

The apartment building at 524-26 Holmes (1913, site #3-D) is an intact example of Classical Revival Architecture. Before a final assessment of its eligibility can be made, a thematic study of

apartment buildings in Kansas City must be completed. The Landmarks Commission has contracted to begin this study - developing a typology for Kansas City apartments and establishing criteria for their eligibility. Other apartment buildings in the Columbus Park area should be examined during this study.

DIRECTORY OF ARCHITECTS, BUILDERS AND CONTRACTORS  
COLUMBUS PARK

Compiled by  
Melanie A. Betz  
Kansas City Landmarks Commission  
Kansas City, MO  
June, 1988

Key:

- (A) Architect
- (B) Builder
- (C) Contractor
- (R) Realtor

## A - B

<u>NAME OF ARCHITECT</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>SOURCE</u>
Bliesier, J.J. (B)	516-18 Harrison	1913	BP
Brennan, E.J. (B)	1118-E. Missouri	1915	BP

## C - D - E - F - G

<u>NAME OF ARCHITECT</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>SOURCE</u>
Calataw, George (B)	543 Troost	1903	BP
Dasta, J.G. (B)	559 Campbell	1947	BP
Dando, I.J. (B)	517 Gillis	1908	BP
Devine Architects (A)	801 Pacific	1985	KC Star 12/11/85
Garnett, R.B. (B)	506 Harrison	1908	BP

## H - I - J - K - L

<u>NAME OF ARCHITECT</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>SOURCE</u>
LaBella, George (B)	513-15 Campbell	1913	BP
Lubschez, Benjamin (A) c/o A. VanBrunt & Co.	1130 E. 5th St. Garrison Field House	1913-14	<u>KC Times</u>
Liebe, Fred (B)	508 Harrison	1912	BP

## M - N

<u>NAME OF ARCHITECT</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>SOURCE</u>
Madorie, Edgar P. (A)	513-15 Campbell	1913	BP
	524-26 Holmes	1913	WC;BP
Meyer, John (B)	521-23 Campbell	1910	BP
Medcoff, A. (B)	512-14 Harrison	1914	BP
Morton Const. Co. (B)	801 Pacific	1985	KC Star 12/11/85
Nigro, M. (B)	520-22 Campbell	1898	



## P - Q - R

<u>NAME OF ARCHITECT</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>SOURCE</u>
Patti, Sam (B)	504-06 Campbell	1926	BP
Patti Const. (B)	526 Campbell	1940	BP
Priest (B)	-524 Campbell	1907	BP
	-535 Campbell	1899	WP
	-526-28 Harrison	1906	WP
	-1019-23 Missouri	1906	WP
	(528 Gillis)		
Priest, George (B)	-555 Campbell	1906	WP
	-529-31 Charlotte	1906	WP
	-527 Gillis	1905	WP
	-532 Gillis	1905	WP
	-534 Gillis	1905	WP
Peiliteri, George (B)	1000-02 Pacific	1913	BP

## S - T - U - V - W

<u>NAME OF ARCHITECT</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>SOURCE</u>
Smith, Charles A. (A)	550 Charlotte Karnes School	1914-15	<u>KC Times</u> <u>BP</u>
Siedhatt, George H. (B)	-550 Charlotte Karnes School	1914-15	<u>KC Times</u> <u>BP</u>
	-1130 E. 5th St.	1913-15	<u>KC Times</u>
Smith, H. Hilton (A)	1118 E. Missouri	1915	BP
Williams, C.M. (A)	501 Charlotte	1925-26	BP

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COLUMBUS PARK CORRECTIONS

- 1) 1135 East 5th Street  
recorded as site #25  
should be: site #25-L
- 2) 543 Troost  
recorded as site #26-6  
should be: site #26-G
- 3) 506 Troost  
recorded as site #22-T  
should be: site #22-J
- 4) 571 Harrison  
recorded as site #21-D  
should be: site #21-E