

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Lee's Summit Christian Church Building

other names/site number First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Henry's Antiques and Collectibles

2. Location

street & number 401 Douglas Street

N/A not for publication

city or town Lee's Summit

N/A vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Jackson code 095 zip code 64063

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Mark A. Miles
Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles, Deputy SHPO

MARCH 9, 2011
Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

 entered in the National Register

 determined eligible for the National Register

 determined not eligible for the National Register

 removed from the National Register

 other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Lee's Summit Christian Church Building
Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property

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

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	buildings
	district
	site
	structure
	object
1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

NA

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: BRICK

roof: ASPHALT

other: WOOD

Lee's Summit Christian Church Building

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

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:

- | | |
|---|--|
| x | 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years. |

Areas of Significance

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1949

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Drotts, Phillip T. (architect)

Williams, Thomas A. (builder)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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 # _____
___ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

___ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

Lee's Summit Christian Church Building
Name of Property

Jackson County, MO
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property Less than an acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>380799</u> Easting	<u>4307811</u> Northing	3	<u></u> Zone	<u></u> Easting	<u></u> Northing
2	<u></u> Zone	<u></u> Easting	<u></u> Northing	4	<u></u> Zone	<u></u> Easting	<u></u> Northing

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sally Fullerton Schwenk, Historian, and Amanda K. Loughlin, Architectural historian
organization Sally Schwenk Associates, Inc. date October 1, 2010
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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Photographs.**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner:

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

name Henry Real Estate LLC C/O Charla Ann Henry
street & number 723 NW High Point Drive telephone 816-524-5694
city or town Lee's Summit state MO zip code 64081

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Lee's Summit Christian Church Building
Jackson County, Missouri

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION STATEMENT

Lee's Summit Christian Church's 1949 building is located in downtown Lee's Summit, Missouri, at the east corner of SE Douglas and SE Fourth Streets. [Figures 1 and 2: Location and Setting Maps] The church property encompasses two lots, with the building on the northwestern portion and an asphalt parking lot on the southeast. The principal elevation faces Douglas Street. (Photograph No. 1) The interior axial plan creates a simplified rectangular footprint of the basilica form that early Christians borrowed from the Romans. [Figure No. 5] The square central bell tower (without a steeple) on the principal elevation is four stories tall. [Figure No. 4]

Modeled in the post-World War II Colonial Revival style, the Lee's Summit Christian Church is a two-and-a-half story brick building with a T-shaped plan, and a square, four story central bell tower on the narrow gable-front primary façade which faces northwest. The auditorium portion of the sanctuary has a gable-front roof with the ridge running from northwest to southeast. The side-gable transept roof ridge runs northeast-southwest and extends approximately six feet above the cornice. The bell tower's roof is a low-slope pyramidal hipped roof with a metal cross at the top. Architect, Phillip Drotts' 1946 rendering and construction drawings show a tall steeple instead of a hipped roof.¹ [Figures No. 4 and 9] The building's entire roof has dark gray asphalt shingles, as was originally specified in Drotts' plans.

The building design features symmetrical fenestration on all elevations. Dominating the side elevations are four, multi-light arched windows with cast stone keystones and square cast stone panels set at the termination of the arch rings of each window. These elevations (Photographs No. 2 and 3) also contain symmetrically-placed, rectangular, double-hung sash windows with multipane upper sashes and lower sashes that have a single pane that is typical of the twentieth century Colonial Revival style. A cast stone water course separates the basement and main levels. [Figure No. 6] At the rear of the side elevations are two-story projecting gable-front ells that form the interior auditorium transept spaces. [Figure No. 5] The rear elevation reflects the gable-front central portion and the transept side ells punctuated by rectangular window and door openings. (Photograph No. 4) A central exterior chimney occurs at the center of the gable bay of the rear elevation. Attached to and projecting from the rear southwest corner of the church building adjacent to the parking lot is a one-story, wood frame, modern garage with two vehicular bays that face the alley. This addition, located at a secondary rear location, is the only addition to the building that compromises the original integrity of the building.

¹ The steeple was part of the original design, but was never built.

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Lee's Summit Christian Church Building
Jackson County, Missouri

ELABORATION

LOCATION AND SETTING

The rectangular site is located in Block 21 of William Howard's Addition and contains lots 7 and 8. The blocks in the original downtown Lee's Summit's first plats are at a forty-five degrees tangent to true cardinal directions. As a result, this site is (from front to back) on a northwest-southeast axis, with the building's principal elevation facing northwest on lot 7. The site is bounded by Douglas Street on the northwest, Fourth Street on the northeast, an alley on the southeast, and another lot, which holds a surface parking lot on the southwest. [Photographic Map and Figures 2 and 3]

The site is fairly flat, but slopes down significantly at its northeastern edge. On the northeast elevation of the building, the building's lowest level opens out to grade. At the first bay at the northeast corner of the northeast elevation and at the extension at the rear southeast of that elevation, a concrete retaining wall extends to the northeast from the church foundation and when it reaches the interior boundary of the public sidewalk, turns ninety degrees and runs parallel to Fourth Street. (Photograph No. 3) Atop the retaining wall at the southeast end, is a wooden privacy fence. Between the retaining wall sections, a chain-link fence encloses a small gravel patio area.

Little vegetation remains on the site. A grass lawn runs to the sidewalks along Douglas Street at the corner of Fourth and Douglas Streets. A grass verge separates the sidewalks and the curbs. A smaller strip of lawn separates the southwest side of the church from both the sidewalk and an asphalt-paved surface parking lot that covers most of Lot 8, and that is part of the church property. Adjacent to the southwest edge of the parking lot is another grassy area that includes a small playground surrounded by a low, chain link fence. To the southwest, on part of Block 21, a sidewalk delineates the southwest boundary of the church property. A paved parking lot contains a large building recessed to the southeast portion of the parking lot. [Figure No. 3] Gravel paving covers the area behind the church. Large yew shrubs extend upward to the main level's window sills and flank the entrance to the church. Five mature elm trees are scattered around the site: three along Douglas Street and two adjacent to, and sheltering portions of, the parking lot.

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Lee's Summit Christian Church Building
Jackson County, Missouri

DESIGN AND MATERIALS

Exterior

The foundation walls are finished grade poured concrete with brick veneer.² The only place the concrete foundation walls are exposed is on the Fourth Street elevation. Here the foundation wall extends upward to approximately 4'-6" from grade and is painted white.

A steel frame rises from the foundation walls and forms the building structure.³ The walls have a veneer of rust-colored, textured "oak bark" brick [Figure No. 6] installed in a running bond pattern. A cast stone water table string course separates the lower and main levels of the building and runs the entire perimeter of the building. In the coursing directly above the water table on the Fourth and Douglas Street primary corner is the cornerstone, which is now covered by a yew.⁴ The north portion of the stone reads, "Est. 1870."⁵[Figure No. 7] The simple building cornice has little overhang.

Douglas Street Primary Façade (Photograph #1)

The symmetrical, three-bay primary façade incorporates a central bay, which includes the bell tower and double-leaf entrance doors at grade, above which is a full-arch, multi-pane window similar to those of the south and north elevations that illuminate the sanctuary. Directly above this window is a round window with four, cast stone keystones. Crowning the tower is the belfry with full arch louvered windows centered in the wall on each side. The wall treatment of the square bell tower is identical to the rest of the building with the exception of the top one-quarter of the tower which housed the bell.⁶ A thick cast stone cornice separates this section of the tower from the lower portion. It is slightly inset and its corners have white, painted cast stone quoins.

² Edward R. Schauffler, "A Lee's Summit Pastor Helps Build New Church After Fire." Vertical File. Lee's Summit Christian Church Archives. Lee's Summit, Missouri. Schauffler's article mentions that the foundation walls are cut stone, but the foundation walls visible on the north side are concrete. This is substantiated by the architectural plans prepared by Phillip T. Drotts.

³ Ibid., 2.

⁴ Julia Canterbury interview by Amanda K. Loughlin, 23 April 2010, interview notes. Sally Schwenk Associates, Inc. Kansas City, Missouri. Congregation historian, Julia Canterbury, noted that a time-capsule of items from 1949 are sealed in this cornerstone. It was not removed when the congregation relocated.

⁵ This was the year the congregation was founded in Lee's Summit. Unable to access the southwest side of the stone because of the yew shrub, it may be possible that the date of 1949 appears on this side since the cornerstone laying service was held 8 May 1949.

⁶ The bell, which is said to come from the first church building, was saved from the 1948 fire according to "Centennial of the Lee's Summit Christian Church 1870-1970." (unpub. booklet, Lee's Summit Christian Church Archives, Lee's Summit, MO, 1970). The bell is now displayed on the grounds of the congregation's current building at 800 Tudor Rd., Lee's Summit, Missouri.

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Lee's Summit Christian Church Building
Jackson County, Missouri

With the exception of the replacement doors and transom, the entrance dates to 1949. A single, narrow rectangular (non-original) transom spans the space between the top of the pair of doors and the stone surround. The pair of doors had two lights each according to a circa 1950 photograph [Figure No. 8]. The stone surround is at least eight inches wide. It is topped with a deep cornice and triangular pediment. All elements are painted white. A set of two steps leads from the sidewalk to a small concrete terrace; a second set of two steps leads from the terrace to a small stoop porch and into the building.

Flanking the central bay bell tower are two rectangular six-over-one light, double-hung sash windows, the tops of which are in line with the apex of the entry pediment. Above these windows are seven-light, quarter-round casement windows, which hinge along the sill.

At the basement and main floor level on the southwest wall of the projecting transept is a rectangular double-hung sash window with six-over-one lights. (The basement level window on the northwest side of the northeast transept projection contains an air-conditioning unit in the window opening and part of the string course.)

Side Elevations (Photographs Nos. 3 and 4)

The side elevations are quite similar. Each has four large full-arch, double-hung sash windows that illuminate the sanctuary. The arched upper sash is stationary. The arch ring of the window has three muntins separating five lights. Below these are ten lights: six evenly spaced lights in the middle with four smaller lights on each side. The bottom sash, which is operable, matches this pattern. The sills are painted cast stone; the surrounds are soldier-course brick with cast stone keystones and a single, cast stone panel, the width of the soldier course at the junction of the ends of the arches (arch rings). Below the water table and aligned in the same bays as the arched windows directly above, are rectangular double-hung sash, eight-over-one light windows. Many of the other rectangular windows in the building follow this pattern with eight-over-one, six-over-one, or four-over-one light double-hung sashes

Rear Elevation (Photograph No. 4)

The rear elevation faces an alley. The gable end main portion that forms the interior sanctuary apse has a small, square, brick chimney rising to the center of the gable; the chimney has a simple capstone. A pair of double-hung sash windows with six-over-one-lights flank the chimney at grade. Set wider apart from the chimney on the second story are narrower, four-over-one light, double-hung wood sashes. The rear elevations of the transept projections each have a rectangular, double-hung window with six-over-one lights at the sanctuary level and at grade.

Other Features

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Lee's Summit Christian Church Building
Jackson County, Missouri

The door on the projecting gable ell of the northeast wall of the transept (Photograph No. 3) is a replacement door. According to the circa 1950 photograph, the original door had six lights. Above the door is an original half-circle, Adam style fan transom with three, evenly spaced muntins. The circa 1950 photograph also clearly shows that on the Fourth Street elevation, the two doors now found at grade beneath the arched windows were originally windows.⁷ The site at this location reflects a later excavation exposing the foundation and the current solid doors replaced the two end windows. With these exceptions, the remaining windows in the building appear on exterior and interior inspection to be the original wood units dating to the building's construction.

Interior

The Colonial Revival style church building features an axial interior plan following the rectangular form of the basilica that early Christians borrowed from the Romans. [Figure No. 5]⁸ The plan produces the strong axial orientation that dramatizes the Eucharistic liturgy, the central component of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) weekly worship services.

The main entrance leads directly into a vestibule stair landing the width of the bell tower. [Figures No. 5 and 10] To the landing's northeast is a narrow flight of stairs leading to the lowest level; to the southwest is a wide set of eight steps leading up into the narthex⁹ on the main level of the church. A second flight of stairs leads up from this landing to a balcony level above the narthex overlooking the sanctuary.

One enters the sanctuary auditorium through the narthex's central pair of doors. On either side of the narthex are doors leading into smaller rooms, one originally used as a chapel and the other as a Sunday school room and for over-flow seating. Glass multipane windows in these spaces, which can be opened, face into the sanctuary.¹⁰ Directly above these rooms are two other identically sized rooms, also with glass paned windows. A large, rectangular framed opening looking into the sanctuary makes up most of the wall of the second level landing. [Figure No. 11]

The long nave, the main body of the church, culminates at a raised altar which originally held the communion table. A pulpit (lectern) used for sermons and readings was to one side. In this auditorium

⁷ A photograph on the cover of the church's centennial booklet also indicates that these doors were in place in 1970.

⁸ The floor plan was made at the time of consideration of expanding the facility. Some of the original features, such as the spaces on either side of the narthex, show changes. The original spaces remain intact.

⁹ A vestibule on the short side of a church's rectangular plan

¹⁰ "Centennial...", 1970. One of these rooms was presumably the Sunday school room. The other room is now a bathroom, with a wall separating the bathroom from the glass window wall and creating a small hallway. The trim along the bathroom door is similar to the trim in the rest of the building, indicating an original wall.

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Lee's Summit Christian Church Building
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plan there was a center aisle as well as side aisles and a shallow transept (extension of space that crosses the nave). Seating for the choir was in these transept spaces adjacent to and facing the altar.

The sanctuary is a two-story space designed to seat around 200 people.¹¹ Acoustic ceiling tiles remain on the segmented vaulted ceiling with the original pendant light fixtures intact [Figure No. 11]. On either side of the chancel are two doors. The one on the south leads into a small room that was once a classroom;¹² the other door leads into a small vestibule with a stair leading to the lower level and a small office. The lower level of the church is partially underground. The space directly beneath the sanctuary was partitioned into smaller rooms when the building was used as a funeral home.¹³ [Figure No. 12] These rooms flank a long central hallway leading east towards the kitchen area.

Apart from carpet that has been replaced, the majority of finish materials remain intact. Walls are white plaster, and dark stained wood trim surrounds doors and windows on the main and upper balcony level; white painted wood trim is found in the lower level.

ARCHITECTURAL INTEGRITY

The 1949 Lee's Summit Christian Church Building retains integrity of location. The setting has changed: to the southwest, modern development in the recent past has changed the neighborhood setting. Directly across Douglas is a 1950s Dairy Queen; to the southwest of this building is new construction. The intersection of Fourth and Douglas retains integrity of setting, including a historic filling station at the southeast corner that marks the transition from residential/institutional to the commercial downtown. The church building's location on a prominent corner, with the buildings on each corner of the intersection retaining historic architectural integrity, is an important component of the building's extant historic setting. The building retains its original size, scale, massing, design and materials. The only alteration to the original plan is the addition of a one-story, two-bay garage at a rear corner of the building near the parking lot and alley. Alterations to the design include replacement of the original double-leaf entrance doors and the single-leaf door to the transept elevation facing Fourth Street. On the Fourth Street elevation, two basement windows have been converted to doors.

The interior sanctuary space remains unaltered with the exception of the removal of the pews. One of the Sunday school rooms overlooking the sanctuary has been divided and converted into a bathroom and hall, but the wall with windows overlooking the sanctuary remains intact. The basement level partitioning of rooms reflects the previous occupancy of the building by a funeral home business. The interior space

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Julia Canterbury interview 23 July 2010.

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Lee's Summit Christian Church Building
Jackson County, Missouri

currently contains antiques and a tea room and is operated by the owner as Henry's Antiques and Collectibles. [Figure No. 11]

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Lee's Summit Christian Church Building
Jackson County, Missouri

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Colonial Revival style Lee's Summit Christian Church Building located in Lee's Summit, Jackson County, Missouri, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its local significance in ARCHITECTURE. The property is locally significant for its association with the simplification of traditional church designs in post-World War II ecclesiastical architecture, which utilized traditional forms and plans and stripped them down by the use of minimal detailing and decoration. As such, it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, and method of construction unique to the mid-twentieth century period - an era noted for a dramatic change in church architecture and design in the United States. Important locally, is the erection of the church building prior to the rapid suburbanization of Lee's Summit in the 1950s. Contributing to its significance are "distinctive characteristics" of the Lee's Summit Christian Church architectural property type that reflect the "pattern of features common to a particular class of resources" (religious houses of worship). In addition, the simplified use of Colonial Revival stylistic features and the European basilica plan reflect the individuality and variations of features within the class of architectural styles found in religious architecture of the post-World War II era on both a local and national level. The use of a modernized, streamlined Colonial Revival design idiom reflects the evolution of the style/class in the mid-twentieth century - a continuation of the Colonial Revival treatments which began in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. As such, this post-World War II building reflects a significant transition between a distinct class of architectural resources. Designed and erected as a religious property, the Lee's Summit Christian Church building meets National Register Criteria Consideration A relating to nomination of religious properties to the National Register because it derives its primary significance from local architectural distinction. From its siting, to its materials and design to its interior plan, the church sanctuary building embodies the tenets of post-World War II ecclesiastical architecture for the small church buildings, presenting a streamlined design executed in the mid-twentieth century Colonial Revival style. The period of significance is 1949, the date of completion and occupation of the building by the congregation.

ELABORATION

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH AND PROPERTY

Twelve founders established the Christian Church of Lee's Summit, Missouri (Disciples of Christ), in the summer of 1870. The members of the small congregation were followers of The Restoration Movement of the Christian Church¹⁴ that began in America during the Second Great Awakening of Protestant

¹⁴ The movement is also known as the American Restoration Movement or the Stone-Campbell Movement.

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Religion in the early nineteenth century. In reaction to the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England, the movement sought to restore the "true" first century church: patterned after the church as described in the New Testament, and established by Jesus' disciples, through the unification of all Christians into a single body. The Restoration Movement developed from several independent efforts, but two groups that independently developed similar approaches to the Christian faith were particularly important to its development. The first, led by Barton W. Stone, began at the great revival at Cane Ridge, Kentucky, and the followers called themselves simply "Christians." The second, led by Thomas Campbell and his son, Alexander Campbell, began in Western Pennsylvania and what is now West Virginia and used the name "Disciples of Christ." By the time of the initial settlement of Jackson County, Missouri, these two groups had merged. Because the founders wanted to abandon all denominational labels, they referred to themselves simply as "Christians." Among other things, they celebrated the Lord's Supper (communion) on the first day of each week, invited all who accepted Jesus as the true son of God to share in the communion despite denominational affiliation (or lack thereof), and believed that baptism of adult believers by immersion in water was a necessary condition for salvation. These practices affected the design of their churches.

Initially, the small group of the members of the Christian Church of Lee's Summit, Missouri, held services in Dryden's Hall and, in 1873, the membership included sixty-five individuals. That year they erected a small brick church building at Fourth and Douglas Streets.¹⁵ In the late 1890s, the congregation demolished this building and completed a new wood frame building suitable for the growing congregation of 150, which they dedicated July 17, 1898.¹⁶

Fire destroyed the fifty-year old church building on January 13, 1948. The congregation, which now numbered 260, held worship services in the Miller Park High School building until a new church could be built. According to a copy of a newspaper article in the church archives, in February 1948, the Reverend Merle McConnell, then minister of the church, drafted preliminary plans for a new church building described as "New England Colonial." (McConnell studied engineering for one year at the University of Missouri prior to entering studies for the ministry.) The article reported that in March of that year, he took the preliminary plans to Indianapolis, Indiana, where Charles A. Betts, advisory architect to the Disciples of Christ Board of Church Extension, had his offices. Together they made some changes to the plans.

¹⁵ Town founder, W. B. Howard, in platting the town, reserved lots for congregations to build their house of worship.

¹⁶ Lee H. Barnum, "A Historical Sketch of the Christian Church," *Directory and History of the Christian Church of 1909* (Lee's Summit, MO: Lee's Summit Christian Church, 1909), n.p. Lee's Summit Christian Church Archives. Lee's Summit, Missouri.

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Lee's Summit Christian Church Building
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However, plans found in the church archives dating to 1946, and prepared by Phillip Theodore Drotts (a Kansas City, Missouri, architect), closely resemble the completed building. It is possible that the Reverend McConnell used these plans as the basis for the plans submitted to Betts, or he submitted the original Drotts' plans as part of the consultation with Betts. However, it is clear in reviewing the elevations and schematic prepared by Drotts (part of the collection of the Western Historical Manuscript Collection), that the secondary newspaper source is not accurate as to the source of the original design of the facility. [Figures No. 4 and 9]

In May of 1954, the congregation paid off the mortgage. Due to the growth of the congregation in the 1950s, the congregation purchased the adjacent property at 407 S. Douglas which had two houses. One of the houses served as classrooms while the church leaders discussed the construction of an educational building. Despite these plans the old frame house at the east or rear part of the lot at 407 S. Douglas served as an annex until its demolition in the summer of 1970 to make way for the parking lot that is part of the property today.¹⁷ In the 1980s, it became apparent that if the church were to grow, a new location was needed. In 1985 the congregation dedicated their current house of worship at 800 NE Tudor in Lee's Summit. The church building on Douglas Street subsequently housed a funeral home and, then, the current antiques businesses.

POST-WORLD WAR II ECCLESIASTICAL ARCHITECTURE IN AMERICA

Ecclesiastical architecture refers to the architecture of buildings of Christian churches. It evolved over the two thousand years of the Christian religion, and includes an amalgamation of both secular and religious styles, new innovative designs which sometimes borrowed features from other architectural styles and plans that responded to changing beliefs, practices and local traditions.¹⁸

By the 1960s, the "Protestant establishment" (the seven mainline denominations of Baptists, Congregationalists, Disciples (Christian Church), Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, and Presbyterians) dominated most communities in the Midwest, with Roman Catholic Churches and/or the Jewish congregates present in cities and large towns or communities initially settled by a large Roman Catholic and/or Jewish populations. The growth of these congregations occurred in unprecedented numbers in the United States. In addition to the growth in membership, funding for construction of religious buildings increased, in particular, in growing suburban areas and communities. The growth, in part, can be attributed to the post-war baby boom,¹⁹ which was well established by the 1950s. Of note,

¹⁷ Centennial of the Lee's Summit Christian Church 1870-1970. n.p.

¹⁸ Joanne Beckman, "Religion in Post-World War II America," Duke University ©National Humanities Center, <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/twenty/tkeyinfo/trelww2.htm> (Accessed August 30, 2010).

¹⁹ The term applies to those born between 1946 and 1965.

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Lee's Summit Christian Church Building
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and applicable to the growing community of Lee's Summit as documented in the MPDF, growth occurred in this decade in suburban areas due to the exodus of parents who came from a middle class, Caucasian background who moved to the suburbs, establishing in this decade the church and family as the twin pillars of suburban respectability.²⁰

The shift that occurred in the post-war era between the continued use of traditional church design and the use of Modern Movement designs arose from a perceived need to redefine churches as religious communities began to address the issues and emerging culture of the post-war and Cold War era. As a result, church design became an important component of a larger context over the role of religion in the modern post-war era.²¹ By the mid-1960s and 1970s, cultural and political changes introduced new diversity into mainstream America. . In the religious sphere, this meant that "mainline Protestantism or even the tripartite division of Protestant-Catholic-Jew no longer represented all of society's spiritual endeavors. In the last thirty years of the twentieth century, diversity increasingly fragmented American religious life. On the one-hand vitality is seen in the resurgence of more traditional, conservative expressions of Christianity that led growing congregation, such as the Lee's Summit Christian Church's congregation to build a larger church and educational facilities in the 1980s and 1990s in one of the expanding suburban areas of Lee's Summit. At the same time, the Religious Right and New Age seekers provided a very different expression of religious vitality. Both of these trends were due to the preferences of the Baby Boomers that came of age in the late twentieth century, 42 percent of those Baby Boomers dropped out for good from the traditional churches of the 1950s; 25 percent returned to the traditional church affiliations of their childhoods.²²

In addition to the pressures of growth and changes in religious practices, the need for new or expanded houses of worship and educational facilities had its roots in the conditions generated in Great Depression and World War II that precluded the construction of large numbers of new houses of worship during the 1930s and 1940s. Suburban congregations built most of the new churches in the immediate post-war period of the 1940s and early 1950s, and these buildings initially reflected the character of their neighborhoods and traditional designs. During this period, the number of parishioners was often initially small, and the budget restricted.

As suburban development grew, new houses of worship sprang up. This demand provided opportunities to go beyond the initial uncertainty in adapting Modern Movement, as well as the wider category of Modernism design, to church buildings. As a result, high style church designs by leaders in the modernist movement occurred throughout the United States. Nevertheless, the conservative approach dominated

²⁰ Beckman.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

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the design of sacred buildings through the mid-1960s. The traditional approach was largely a continuation of eclectic revival style treatments originating in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century America. The American Colonial Revival/Georgian style sub-type became the most popular expression of the conservative Protestant movement after the war, culminating in such high style examples as the Parma South Presbyterian Church (1950), Parma Heights, Ohio; the St. Martin Episcopal Church (1956), Chagrin Falls, Ohio; and Forest Hill Church, Presbyterian (1964), Cleveland Heights, Ohio.²³

DESIGN OF THE LEE'S SUMMIT CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The traditional Euro-American church design of the Lee's Summit Christian Church Building reflects the early post-World War II trends. The church building's Colonial Revival style,²⁴ like many other houses of worship erected in the early postwar period, conformed to both the traditional streetscape of the community and to traditional expectations of a house of worship's religious character. Its design reflects an era after the war that did not initially embrace modernism in design.²⁵ Rather, like other religious congregations at the end of World War II, the members of the Lee's Summit Christian Church expected their church to "look like a church."²⁶

Commanding a corner location on the edge of Lee's Summit's downtown commercial district, the church portrays importance and permanence and reflects the transition from commercial to institutional to residential in the city's development patterns. The Colonial Revival design of the Lee's Summit Christian Church follows the traditions of American colonial church architecture from the period around the time of the Revolutionary War, usually being two to three stories in height with a roof ridge line running perpendicular to the street, and featuring a symmetrical front facade with an accented doorway and evenly spaced windows on either side of it.

Following on the heels of America's Centennial celebrations, the Colonial Revival style emerged in the early 1880s. The style borrowed heavily from the Georgian style sub-type's religious sanctuary buildings found in the New England Colonies from 1600-1700. Among the leaders of the initial Colonial Revival style movement were the partners at the prestigious New York City architectural firm of McKim, Mead

²³ Carole Rifkind, *A Field Guide to Contemporary American Architecture* (New York: Plume Penguin Group, 1998), 193.

²⁴ The term "Colonial Revival," as used here, refers to the entire rebirth of interest in the early English and Dutch architectural forms found along the Atlantic seaboard. The Georgian and Adams styles form the backbone of the Colonial Revival style. Details from two or more of these precedents were often combined.

²⁵ Rifkind. 193.

²⁶ Ibid.

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and White, who toured New England's historic towns in 1878 to study original Georgian and Adam buildings.²⁷

The continuing use of colonial era design in the United States, beginning at the end of the nineteenth and continuing into the mid-twentieth century, typically occurred in bank buildings, churches and suburban homes. The Colonial Revival style, as it evolved in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, reflects a combination of various colonial architectural and contemporaneous design elements of the period of construction. In the late nineteenth century, the Colonial Revival style building rarely duplicated original colonial designs, but was more eclectic than its antecedents, often utilizing columns on the primary facade. During the first decade of the twentieth century, Colonial Revival style designs shifted toward carefully researched copies with proportions and details similar to the original colonial era designs. The wide dissemination of photographs in books and periodicals which first occurred in the early twentieth century popularized established prototypes for the Colonial Revival style. After World War I, the popularity of research-based historical attractions like Colonial Williamsburg led to purer adaptations. The Great Depression of the 1930s, World War II, and changing post-war fashions led to a simplification of the style in the 1940s and early 1950s.

Particular to this latter class of adaptation of colonial architecture was simple stylized door surrounds, plain cornices and other details that suggested their colonial precedents rather than closely copying them.²⁸ Other common characteristics of the Colonial Revival style in mid-twentieth century American ecclesiastical architecture included: symmetrical facades; streamlined classical cornices; door entablatures; wood shingle roofs; red brick walls; and multi-pane, double-hung sash windows or arched windows with keystones.

Moreover, the exterior features and materials used at this time fully document the available residential building crafts and techniques used in the high-style ecclesiastical architecture during the immediate post-World War II period. For example, the use of steel and concrete construction and brick veneer reflects its period of construction. The type of rug face brick chosen by the architect represents available materials and masonry practices found in the mid-twentieth century in Lee's Summit and the surrounding region.²⁹ The color and texture of the brick used as veneer is different from that found in earlier twentieth century churches in Old Town Lee's Summit, reflecting a higher degree of uniformity of the brick, as well as greater accuracy in masonry installation, which were typical and attainable due to the advent of

²⁷ Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 326.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ The appearance and composition of brick always reflects a particular time period as all properties of structural clay products are affected by the composition of the raw materials used and the fabrication process employed during the period of manufacture. These factors affect important characteristics such as color, texture, size variation, absorption, compressive strength, and durability.

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national standardization of color, size, materials, etc. These features and materials serve as examples of the embodiment of distinctive characteristics of a type and period of construction that makes the building architecturally significant.

Features of Small Church Design in the 1940s

The Lee's Summit Christian Church also reflects the popular and established tenets in the design of small churches in the mid-twentieth century. Texts such as the 1944, *The Small Church. How to Build It and Furnish It* set the standard for the traditional design and construction of small churches seating between 50 and 400 worshipers in the post-war period. These sources advocated well-built, stylistic, functional edifices important as a house of God.³⁰ Presenting both general and very specific information, the architectural guide addressed the details of good church design, siting, layout, and elevation. Architect Frederick Roth Webber, author of *The Small Church* . . . , stressed in particular the importance of the plan reflecting the rituals of specific denominations.³¹

Webber's work built upon retaining traditions in church design. The massing of the church was to reflect interior functions, and designers were to maintain a ratio of one-to-three (width-to-height) of the main building. Typically the chancel took up one-third of the space and the nave, two-thirds. The roof swept over the chancel and nave in an unbroken line. Its steep pitch differentiated the church from other buildings designed for public assembly, from barns, and from residences. Recommended floor plans sought to promote circulation during the worship services and every small church was encouraged to have a center aisle at least five feet in width.

One of the tenets of church architects of this and previous periods was the use of large, tall arched windows to provide ventilation and greater light into the sanctuary, the latter a consideration of enhancing the spiritual feeling of the space.³² In the Colonial Revival style church these tall windows featured rectangular or diamond shaped panes. Beginning at the turn-of-the-century, the typical design of a Christian Church (Disciples), in the metropolitan area and throughout the United States featured Colonial Revival style or vernacular variations thereof.³³ Of note was the use of colored art glass in windows in simple geometrical patterns with limited colors that broke the light, set a serene atmosphere,

³⁰ Frederick Roth Webber, *The Small Church. How to Build It and Furnish It* (Cleveland, OH: Central Publishing House, 1944,) 1-4.

³¹ Ibid., 33.

³² Ibid., 22, 36-37, 51, 184-185, 223.

³³ "When Traditional Could be Modern. Religious Buildings in Kansas after World War II." *Kansas Preservation*. 26 (April): 9. Because governance and ownership of Disciples of Christ Church property was local, some congregations elected to adopt other contemporaneous revival styles during the first half of the twentieth century, particularly the Classical Revival style.

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and provided an absence of iconography in the denomination's sanctuaries.³⁴ In the immediate post-World War II period, painted walls and woodwork in mellow tones of gray, taupe, cream, and/or ivory, and the use of just as much stain on woodwork to take away the rawness of exposed wood complemented the restrained design of the Colonial Revival church with its New England Congregationalist architectural roots.³⁵ Other common architectural treatments utilized for churches in this style both prior to and immediately after World War II are red brick³⁶ with white trim, rectangular plans, gable roofs, both multi-light rectangular and arched windows with keystones, pedimental entrances and decorative details such as quoins and urns.

The Lee's Summit Christian Church reflects the latest in small church design at the period of its construction, retaining these features, as well as specific architectural characteristics of ecclesiastical architecture that evolved by the end of World War II, such as an elevated sanctuary reached by exterior and/or interior stairs. This treatment was, in particular, a reaction to flat sites of residential neighborhoods found in developing suburban areas after the war. Thus, the view from the sanctuary was above the adjacent parking lot and surrounding houses. An important component of this treatment, found in the Lee's Summit Christian Church building, was a design that required the act of entering from the outside world first into a confined space with its attending awareness of a changing environment, then the entrance into the large sanctuary of the church. Inherent in this process is a progression of changes in light, a primary element in creating the right spiritual atmosphere for gathering of the congregation in unity and harmony.

The Lee's Summit Christian Church building's Colonial Revival style featured a longitudinal plan with a strong axial orientation that dramatizes the Eucharistic liturgy, the central component of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) weekly worship service. The church's high, vaulted nave and elevated chancel area gave visual and emotional prominence to the altar. The nave's auditorium plan consisted of a central aisle that divided the seating with flanking side aisles. Benches for the choir were on either side

³⁴ The nineteenth century and early twentieth century debate about the use of musical instruments as part of the worship service also affected traditional designs of Christian Churches, where the central architectural focal point was not the organ or organ pipes. Because of its mission to restore the original order of the First Century Church, ecumenical goals and New Testament theology, as well as its origins as a primitive evangelical church, sanctuaries were simple with no iconography. The reliance on Colonial Revival church design through World War II and the decade thereafter, with its classical detailing may have delayed the adaptation of figurative ornamentation in stained glass windows until the 1960s when abstract treatments in colored art glass came into vogue with the arrival of Modern Movement designs.

³⁵ Webber, 36-37.

³⁶ In the early decades of the twentieth century buff and lighter colored brick was also widely used for Classical and Colonial Revival adaptations.

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in the transepts (arms that cross the nave).³⁷ A baptismal is behind the back wall of the chancel.³⁸ Behind the chancel and flanking stairways are office spaces and classrooms.

The long nave, the main body of the church auditorium, culminates at the raised chancel with its communion table and the lectern used for sermons and readings. The placement of the communion table was significant as the worship service of the Disciples of Christ, which placed special emphasis on the weekly open communion service. The placement of the communion table on the raised chancel served as the focal point of the Lee's Summit Christian Church's sanctuary design, allowing the congregation seated around the communion table to feel equal and united.

This plan and use of features and spaces was very much in keeping with the design of small traditional churches that emerged in the 1930s and 1940s. The brick veneer construction allowed the traditional use of both arched windows and secondary rectangular double-hung sash windows. In the sanctuary, the arched windows follow the recommended placement of sills at least four and a half feet above the floor.

Phillip Theodore Drotts, Architect

Phillip T. Drotts, AIA, worked as an architect in Kansas City from 1904 until the early 1950s. During this period, he designed some of the city's outstanding structures. Drotts attended Columbia University. Early in his career he worked with two of Kansas City's prominent architects, John McKecknie and Ernest Brostrom. He worked as a draftsman in McKecknie's office from 1907 to 1910, from 1914 to 1915, and from 1917 to 1918. From 1920 to 1923, he was a partner with Brostrom in the firm of Brostrom & Drotts. Ernest Brostrom was a prolific designer of churches and wrote a book about the design process for churches. Drotts designed a number of Kansas City churches during his career including the Broadway Baptist Church at 3931 Washington (1922), and the Immanuel Lutheran Church at 4201 Tracy (1924).³⁹ His other work included large apartment hotel buildings, industrial/commercial buildings and high style residences, all featuring adaptations of popular academic architectural styles.

LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE IN ARCHITECTURE

The 1949 Lee's Summit Christian Church building is an excellent example of the ecclesiastical architecture that contributed to the architectural patterns of Lee's Summit's Old Town area prior to the advent of massive post-World War II suburbanization. At the time of its construction, the church

³⁷ The seating is no longer extant. The spaces of chancel, nave, apse and axial orientation remain intact as do the original fenestration on exterior and interior walls of the sanctuary.

³⁸ The baptismal is a standard fixture in the Disciples of Christ Churches due to the belief in baptism by immersion.

³⁹ Sherry Piland, "Phillip Drotts." Vertical File. Landmarks Commission of Kansas City, Missouri. City Hall. Kansas City, Missouri.

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buildings in the Old Town area dated from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and featured revival style architectural treatments. Because Lee's Summit's population did not change significantly until after 1958 with the development of the Western Electric plant, the need for additional space and ancillary buildings was not common. The construction of the Lee's Summit Christian Church was an anomaly, an *in situ* response to a fire which destroyed the congregation's house of worship.

Designed by prominent Kansas City architect, Phillip T. Drotts, the post-World War II Colonial Revival style church building reflects the continuation into the mid-century of the popular revival styles in the city and nation prior to a massive shift in religious architecture to Modern Movement styles a decade later.⁴⁰ Its gable-front bell tower, symmetrical fenestration, rectangular basilica plan with its strong axial ornamentation, quoins, and keystone arched windows on side elevations is indicative of the popularity of the traditional church design immediately after the end of the war and its transitional role in relation to the advent of the modern style religious buildings which became popular by the early 1960s.

Because of its historic architectural integrity of location, setting, design, materials, and workmanship, the Lee's Summit Christian Church building successfully conveys information about its period of construction and its association with the twentieth century architectural patterns of religious buildings in Lee's Summit, specifically, and with institutional architecture of Lee's Summit, in general.

⁴⁰ According to survey data base information and updated survey of areas outside of the Old Town area conducted by the preparer and associates, Modern Movement designs dominated church construction in Lee's Summit, near new suburban development in the 1960s. Survey revealed that the Modern Movement designs associated with religious architecture in the Old Town area occurred in ancillary buildings and additions in the mid-1950s to late nineteenth and early twentieth century houses of worship.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All of Lot 7 & 8 (except sly 22'3") Block 21, W.B. Howards Addition.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary of the Lee's Summit Christian Church building encompasses the historic church building and grounds that retain their historic architectural integrity and legal associations. The District's boundary corresponds to the lot lines of the church property. The church, its sidewalks and parking area define the historic setting and historic sense of place, both of which are strengthened by the adjacent intact historic street network and public right-of-way (not included in the boundary).

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Photographer:	Brad Finch. F-Stop Photography Kansas City, Missouri 64116
Date of Photographs:	March 2010
Location of Photographs:	Missouri State Historic Preservation Office Jefferson City, Missouri 65101 City of Lee's Summit, Missouri (Negatives & Prints)

Photograph Number	Camera View	Street Address/Location
1.	SE	401 SE Douglas Street. Primary Facade
2.	NE	401 SE Douglas Side Southwest Elevation
3.	SW	401 SE Douglas Rear Southeast Elevation
4.	SW	401 SE Douglas Side Northeast Elevation

PHOTOGRAPHIC MAP

SE GREEN ST

SE GRAND AVE

SE 4TH

SE DOUGLAS ST

ALLEY

ALLEY

407

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- Figure 6: Brick and Cast Stone Detail
- Figure 7: Cornerstone
- Figure 8: Primary Elevations, c. 1955
- Figure 9: Copy of 1946 Schematic Drawing by Phillip Drotts, AIA.
- Figure 10: Narthex (Entrance Vestibule and Stairs). 2010
- Figure 11: View from Alter to Sanctuary Entrance, 2010
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FIGURE 1: LOCATION MAP



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FIGURE 2: SETTING MAP

OLD TOWN LEE'S SUMMIT NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBLE TWENTIETH CENTURY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS



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FIGURE 3: SITE MAP



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Architectural drawings of the Church Building for the First Christian Church, Douglas, 24th St., Lees Summit, Mo. The drawings include a detailed cross-section and two elevations: the East Elevation and the South Elevation. The East Elevation shows a building with a steep gable roof, a central steeple, and a small porch. The South Elevation shows a long, rectangular building with a series of arched windows and a small steeple. The drawings are labeled with various architectural details and materials.

EAST ELEVATION

SOUTH ELEVATION

CROSS SECTION

CHURCH BUILDING FOR FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, DOUGLAS, 24TH ST., LEES SUMMIT, MO.

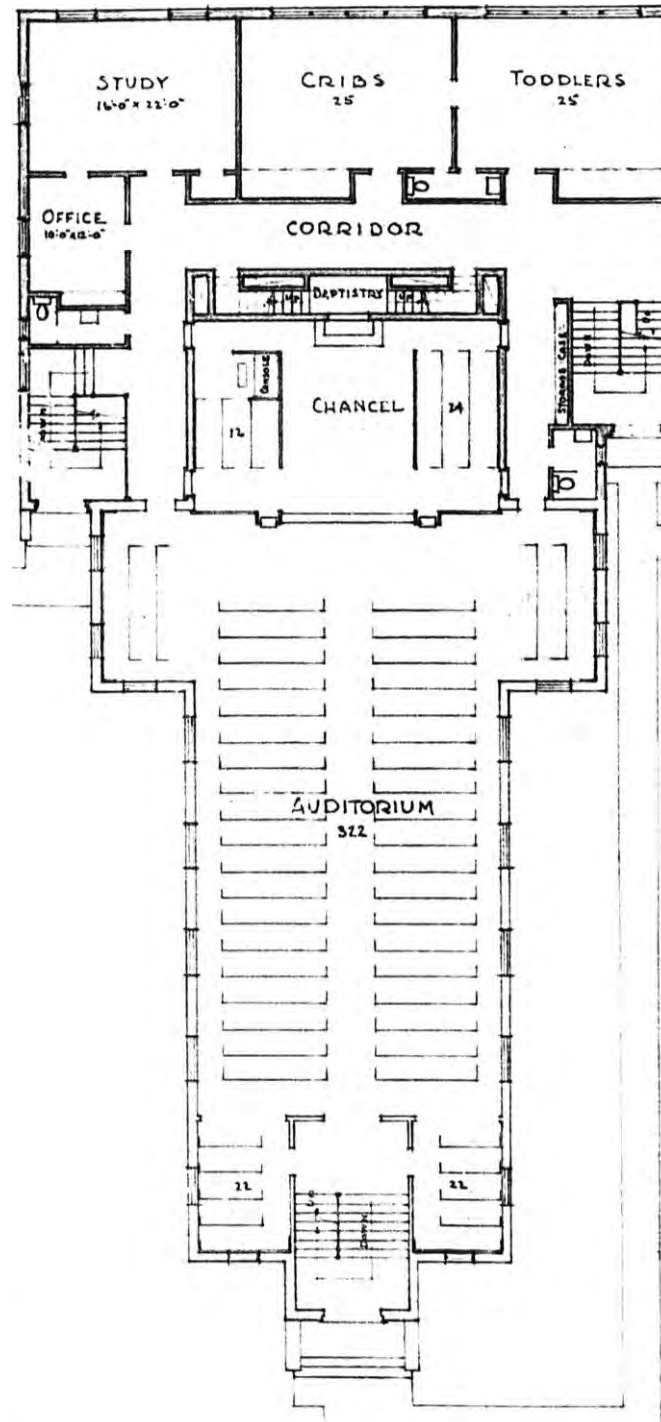
DATE: PHILLIPS, 11/10/11

BY: A. A. GILBERT

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FIGURE 5: SANCTUARY FLOOR PLAN EXISTING BUILDING
ALBERT FULLER, AIA, PLAN FOR EXPANSION OF THE CHURCH, N.D. (NEVER CONSTRUCTED)



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Figure 6: Lee's Summit Christian Church, Window well, "oak bark" brick, and cast stone water table string course on Southwest Elevation, 20 July 2010, digital photograph, A. Loughlin.



Figure 7: Cornerstone of Lee's Summit Christian Church, 23 July 2010, digital photograph, A. Loughlin.

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Figure 8: Lee's Summit Christian Church, Northeast Elevations, c. 1950, Anonymous, Lee's Summit Christian Church Archives.

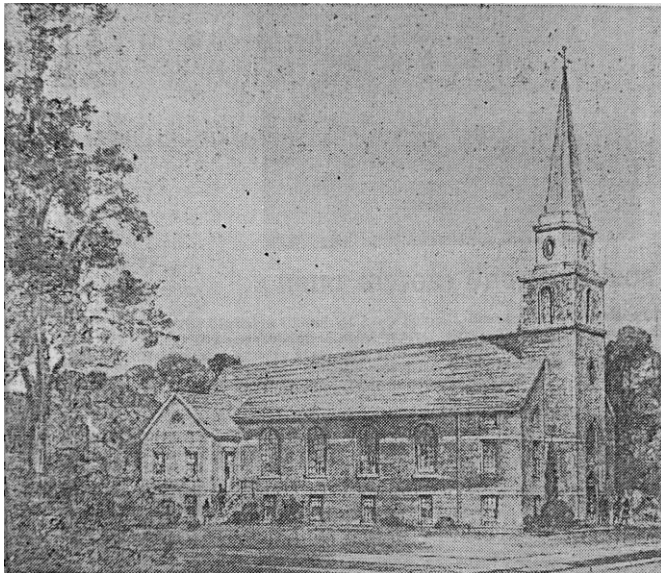


Figure 9. Phillip Drotts, AIA, Lee's Summit Christian Church, Photocopy of original 1946 Rendering, Lee's Summit Christian Church Archives.

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Figure 10. Lee's Summit Christian Church, Entrance Vestibule and Staircase Looking at Main Stair Leading Down to Entrance and Up to Sanctuary Space on Second Level, 20 July 2010. Digital Photograph, A. Loughlin.



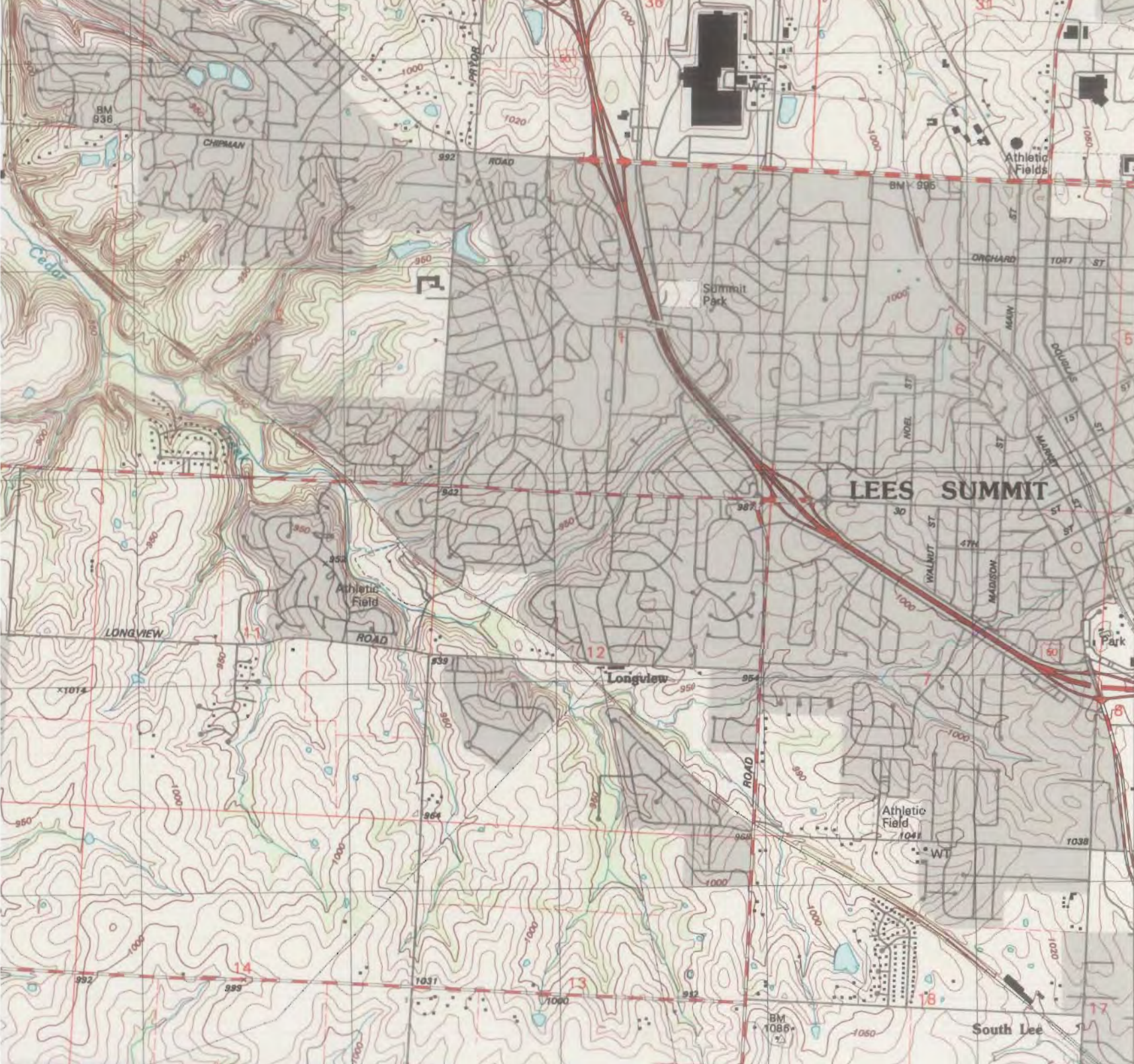
Figure: 11: Lee's Summit Christian Church Sanctuary Looking West from Altar, 20 July 2010, Digital Photograph, A. Loughlin.

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Figure 12: Lee's Summit Christian Church, Lower Level Looking West Down Central Corridor, 20 July 2010. Digital Photograph, A. Loughlin.



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← Lee's Summit Christian Church Building

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