

# 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 Mason Building

Historic name Mason Building

Other names/site number Rock Building, Zelner Building, Borel Building

Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

## 2. Location

Street & number 1110 Grand Boulevard	N/A	not for publication
--------------------------------------	-----	---------------------

City or town	Kansas City	N/A	vicinity
--------------	-------------	-----	----------

State	Missouri	Code	MO	County	Jackson	Code	095	Zip code	64106
-------	----------	------	----	--------	---------	------	-----	----------	-------

### 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      ☒ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:   A     B     X     C     D  

Signature of certifying official/Title

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

Mason 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	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1		<b>Total</b>

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

N/A

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE:business

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE:business

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American

Movements: Commercial Style

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Limestone

walls: Brick, Terra Cotta, Sheet Copper

roof: Thermoplastic Polyolefin, (TPO)

other:

☒ **NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION ON CONTINUATION PAGES**

Mason 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:

☐ 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.

☒ **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE ON CONTINUATION PAGES**

### Areas of Significance

ARCHITECTURE: Design/Construction

### Period of Significance

1905, 1921

### Significant Dates

1905, 1921

### Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Wilder & Wight

Tarbet & Gornel

## 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): \_\_\_\_\_

Mason Building  
Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 39.0602 -94.3452 3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Latitude: Longitude: Latitude: Longitude:

2 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Latitude: Longitude: Latitude: Longitude:

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

\_\_\_\_\_ NAD 1927 or \_\_\_\_\_ NAD 1983

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (On continuation sheet)

**Boundary Justification** (On continuation sheet)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Andrew B. Weil, Katie Graebe

organization Landmarks Association of St. Louis date 2/12/21

street & number 3118 S. Grand Blvd. Suite 700 telephone 314-421-6474

city or town Saint Louis state MO zip code 63118

e-mail aweil@landmarks-stl.org

## 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**
- **Owner Name and Contact Information**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**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.



**Mason Building**

Name of Property

**Jackson County, Missouri**

County and State

## Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

## Photo Log:

Name of Property: **Mason Building**

City or Vicinity: **Kansas City**

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

Photographer: **Maureen McMillan**

Date

Photographed: **November 1, 2020**

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

- Photo 1. Primary façade facing west
- Photo 2. Rear elevation facing south west
- Photo 3. First floor storefront facing north west
- Photo 4. Primary elevation fenestration detail facing west
- Photo 5. Primary elevation terra cotta detail, south pilaster facing west
- Photo 6. Lobby interior facing south
- Photo 7. Lobby interior facing west
- Photo 8. Lobby stair facing west
- Photo 9. First floor storefront facing east
- Photo 10. First floor interior facing west
- Photo 11. First floor interior facing east
- Photo 12. First floor interior space facing east
- Photo 13. Second floor interior facing west, historic stairway
- Photo 14. Second floor interior stair facing east
- Photo 15. Second floor interior stair hall facing west
- Photo 16. Second floor interior hall facing east
- Photo 17. Third floor stair hall facing east
- Photo 18. Third floor stair hall facing west
- Photo 19. Third floor front office facing north
- Photo 20. Third floor front office facing south
- Photo 21. Third floor work space facing west
- Photo 22. Third floor work space facing east
- Photo 23. Third floor center hall facing east
- Photo 24. Fourth floor stair hall facing east
- Photo 25. Fourth floor stair hall facing west
- Photo 26. Fourth floor front office facing south east
- Photo 27. Fourth floor office facing east
- Photo 28. Fourth floor work space facing west
- Photo 29. Fourth floor work space facing east

Mason Building

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

Photo 30. Fifth floor stair hall facing east  
Photo 31. Fifth floor stair hall facing west  
Photo 32. Fifth floor work space facing north  
Photo 33. Fifth floor work space facing south  
Photo 34. Fifth floor work space facing west  
Photo 35. Fifth floor work space facing east  
Photo 36. Fifth floor work space facing south  
Photo 37. Fifth floor work space/cafeteria facing south east  
Photo 38. Sixth floor office facing south east  
Photo 39. Sixth floor office facing north west  
Photo 40. Sixth floor center office facing south  
Photo 41. Sixth floor work space facing north  
Photo 42. Sixth floor work space facing south  
Photo 43. Sixth floor hall facing west  
Photo 44. Sixth floor mezzanine stair facing north west  
Photo 45. Sixth floor work space facing west  
Photo 46. Sixth floor work space facing east  
Photo 47. Sixth floor mezzanine/attic facing west  
Photo 48. Sixth floor mezzanine/attic facing east  
Photo 49. Sixth floor mezzanine/attic facing east  
Photo 50. Sixth floor mezzanine/attic facing west  
Photo 51. Sixth floor mezzanine/attic facing south west-- windows

**Figure Log:**

Map 1: Boundary of Nominated Resource

Figure 1: St. Patrick's Church, Kansas City, MO., Wikimedia

Figure 2: The Midland Theater Building, Kansas City, MO. Copper Mansard and Storefront Surrounds, Source Wikimedia

Figure 3: The Majestic Building, Kansas City, MO., Source Wikimedia

Figure 4: Residential Building with copper bays, address unknown, Cambridge MA., Source, Larry Peters

Figure 5: Heurich House Museum, Washington D.C., Source, Larry Peters

Figure 6: Old Court House, St. Louis, MO., Source, Wikimedia

Figure 7: Hoboken Terminal, Hoboken, NJ., Source, Larry Peters

Figure 8: Gimbels' Bridge, New York, NY., Source, Atlas Obscura

Figure 9: Fulton Building, Pittsburgh PA. Source, Larry Peters

Figure 10: Boley Building, Kansas City, MO., Source, Wikimedia

Figure 11: Louis Curtiss Studio, Kansas City, MO., Source, Wikimedia

Figure 12: Map showing Mason Building in relation to Boley Building and Curtiss Studio. Mason Central, Boley Upper Left, Curtiss Studio Bottom. Courtesy John Guenther FAIA, Google Earth base map

Figure 13: Location (macro)of Mason Building within Kansas City, MO., Source, Google Earth

Figure 14: Location Mason Building (detail) within downtown Kansas City, MO., Source, Google Earth

Figure 15: Mason Building prior to 1921 addition. Source, Kansas City Public Library photo collections

Figure 16: Mason Building post 1921 addition, source Kansas City Public Library photo collections

Figure 17: Kansas City Star Production Building

Figure 18: Starlight Theatre, KC, MO.

Figure 19: First Floor Photo Map

Figure 20: Second Floor Photo Map

Figure 21: Third Floor Photo Map

Figure 22: Fourth Floor Photo Map

Mason Building

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

Figure 23: Fifth Floor Photo Map

Figure 24: Sixth Floor Photo Map

Figure 25: Sixth Floor Mezzanine Floor Photo Map

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Mason Building

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Summary**

The Mason Building is a six story commercial building with two first floor storefronts and flexible open plan office/retail/manufacturing space within the upper stories. It was completed as a four story speculative office/commercial building in 1905. Two additional stories were added in 1921; the addition continued the existing copper and terra cotta facade resulting in a building that does not “read” as one that has been altered. Indeed there is some question about whether the “addition” was actually the delayed realization of the original design. The primary curtain wall facade clad in custom fit sheet copper is the defining significant feature of the design. Above the storefront level are five floors, each subdivided into three bays. Each bay contains a ribbon of three windows with associated transoms separated by various arrangements of copper spandrel panels and copper-clad mullions. The modernistic copper façade is dominated by horizontal and vertical lines, which define fenestration and express internal structure, within a classically-inspired terra cotta frame. The building is capped with a projecting terra cotta dentil cornice. The side walls are not visible as they are adjacent to other buildings. The rear of the building has a loading dock and door on the first floor and fire escape. Rear window bays have been partially blinded with brick and glass block up to the fourth floor, after which they retain historic multi-light sash.

**Setting**

The building is located in the central business district of Kansas City, Missouri, which, despite significant amounts of new construction and demolition, retains a high degree of historic integrity dominated by buildings from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Map 1, Figures 13-14). To the south of the Mason Building is a late 20<sup>th</sup> century parking structure, but immediately to the north and east are high/mid rise buildings dating to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. To the west, across the alley, is a public plaza. The central business district of Kansas City is a dense urban environment with many historic buildings that are contemporaneous with the Mason Building.

**Form and Materials**

The Mason is built of brick-masonry with a mixed structural system of wooden “mill” construction with some structural steel components as well as both brick and concrete support piers in the basement. The side walls (north and south) are blind and abut adjacent buildings. The primary elevation (East—Photo 1) consists of a white glazed terra cotta masonry frame surrounding a copper-clad curtain wall custom-fitted to a wooden framework.

**Architectural Description, Exterior**

(Photo 1) The Mason Building is essentially a Commercial Style building with Classical influences. The primary elevation is divided into a one story storefront, which is delineated from the upper five stories by a white glazed terra cotta drip cornice with an “egg-and dart” pattern (Photo 3). The first floor contains two storefronts with non-original fixed plate glass windows on either side of a central entry containing non-original security doors. At the opposite ends of the first floor are additional entries, which provide access to the building’s upper levels (Photo 3). At the left side of the first floor (facing the building) is a double door (non-original) leading to a vestibule that gives access to the elevator and stair tower for the rest of the building.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Mason Building

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

White glazed terra cotta tiles, edged with a foliate design cover a pilaster at both sides of the façade rising to a projecting terra cotta cornice (Photo 5). The cornice projects substantially from the plane of the building and is accented with dentils. Each pilaster is capped with a terra cotta tile with a garland motif.

The Classical terra cotta frame encloses a copper-clad curtain wall composed of a gridded system of columns, beams, and ribbons of windows that express the building's internal structure (Photo 1). The façade is divided into three bays each containing a ribbon of three (non-original) fixed, single pane lights separated by two beams clad with ornamental formed sheet copper. Each floor is subdivided by a projecting horizontal element which is also clad in formed sheet copper (Photos 1 and 4).

The second floor fenestration consists of a ribbon of nine windows (divided into sets of three per bay) above which are sheet copper spandrel panels. The central window bays contain 1x1 single light sliding sash flanked by single fixed lights. Above the panels there are fixed single light transoms. All lights, panels, and transoms are separated by a grid of copper-clad mullions (Photo 1).

The third and fourth floors contain the same ribbon of nine windows; however the copper spandrel panels are located beneath the windows. Each window bay is capped with a single light transom (Photo 1).

The fifth floor has a ribbon of nine two/two light windows above a double row of copper spandrel panels. The windows are situated beneath fixed single light transoms (Photo 1).

The sixth floor has a ribbon of nine two/two light windows set above copper spandrel panels. Above each of these windows is a 1x1 light window. Each bay terminates in a single light transom (Photo 1).

The building is capped with a projecting terra cotta cornice featuring multiple rows of dentils, garlands, egg-and dart, and floral ornamentation (Photo 1).

**Rear Elevation: Exterior**

The rear elevation is utilitarian and addresses an alley (Photo 2). It is divided into two sections by a square brick pilaster. This elevation is essentially devoid of ornament with the exception of the contrast between the red brick face brick and the white concrete sill courses.

The section of the rear of the building to the left of the central pilaster (facing it from the alley) contains four window bays (Photo 2). The first three floors appear to have had their windows altered and partially infilled with brick and glass block. The upper three floors have intact window bays with what appear to be ribbons of four, 3/3 wooden sash. The upper three windows in each sash are larger than the lower three and are separated by a heavy, projecting wooden mullion. Each window bay has a flat arch and a continuous concrete sill (Photo 2).

The section of the rear of the building to the right of the central pilaster (facing it from the alley) has essentially the same fenestration except it only has three window bays. The space occupied by the fourth window bay on the opposite side is penetrated by exits leading to a steel fire escape. These exits have non-historic steel security/fire doors. Next to the fire doors at the edge of the elevation are 1/1 wooden sash windows that illuminate the rear stair stack.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Mason Building

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**First Floor**

The first floor of the Mason Building contains two commercial storefronts and two corner entrances (Photo 3). The south entrance serves as a primary lobby space that provides access to the elevator and stairs to the upper floors of the building (Photos 6-8). Access to photograph the commercial spaces was not available due to leased spaces being closed by tenants per covid 19 restrictions.

The lobby space that provided access to the upper floors occupied by the Mason Company was available and features marble wainscoting (Photos 6-7) and a wrought iron railing along a stairway with terrazzo treads (photo 8). Otherwise the accessible first floor spaces (Photos 9-12) do not appear to possess character-defining features and have been subdivided by non-historic, impermanent partition walls into individual use areas. Fenestration including windows and loading bays on rear elevation has been altered with brick and glass block (Photo 2).

**Second Floor**

The second floor of the building (Photos 13-26) has also been subdivided by non-historic, impermanent partition walls. The most significant visible feature is the stairway which features a historic wooden balustrade (Photo 13). There is also a historic light well, which features historic six light fixed sash windows with wooden muntins (painted over) (Photo 15). Historic fenestration patterns are intact on the primary elevation. Fenestration on rear elevation has been altered with brick and glass block (Photo 2).

**Third Floor**

The most important visible character-defining feature of the third floor is the continuation of the historic wooden stair balustrade (Photos 17-18). The rest of the third floor of the building (Photos 17-23) is dominated by active work space with non-historic, frame partition walls and non-historic flooring. Historic fenestration patterns are intact on the primary elevation. Fenestration on rear elevation has been altered with brick and glass block (Photo 2).

**Fourth Floor**

The most important visible character-defining feature of the fourth floor is the continuation of the historic wooden stair balustrade (Photos 24-25). The rest of the fourth floor of the building is dominated by active work and office space with non-historic partition walls and flooring (Photos 26-29). Historic fenestration patterns are intact on the primary elevation. Fenestration on rear elevation has been altered with brick and glass block (Photo 2).

**Fifth Floor**

The fifth floor marks the transition between the original (1905) building and the 1921 addition of two additional stories plus mezzanine. The staircase transitions from the wooden balustrade with terrazzo flooring to a steel stair with steel balustrade and wooden railing at this point (Photos 30-31). The rest of the floor is dominated by active work space and a cafeteria with non-historic partitions, interior cladding and flooring. Historic fenestration patterns are intact on the primary elevation (Photos 32-37). Historic fenestration is essentially intact on rear elevation (Photo 2).

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Mason Building

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Sixth Floor**

The sixth floor contains what appear to be some historic wood and glass office partitions as well as doors and wainscoting dating to c. 1921 (Photos 39-40). Most of the rest of the floor is divided into work/office space with non-historic partitions and flooring (Photos 38, 41-43). The central steel mezzanine stair and balustrade is intact (Photo 44). The rest of the space is reserved for storage Photos 45-46). Fenestration is intact on primary elevation (Photo 1) and rear elevation (Photo 45).

**Sixth Floor Mezzanine/Attic**

The attic level is reserved for storage (Photos 47-50) and is essentially devoid of historic/character-defining features with the exception of the historic 3/3 double-hung sash windows on the rear elevation (Photo 51).

**Integrity**

Windows facing the alley have been altered (partially blinded) with brick and glass block from the first through the fourth floor (Photo 2).

Window glazing on the primary elevation is not original, although transoms may be. The historic fenestration pattern defined by custom sheet copper cladding is intact (Photo 1).

Roofline balustrade visible in Figures 15-16 was removed at an indeterminate date.

Interior spaces, which as built, were largely open and intended to be flexible work spaces for tenants to modify, have, in some cases, been subdivided into offices and use-specific spaces by frame dividing walls on multiple floors.

The first floor has been altered with modern plate glass and an incised storefront (Photos 3-4).

The terra cotta frame of the façade and the sheet copper cladding which dates to 1905 and 1921 respectively remains intact. The formed sheet copper facade is the dominant, character-defining feature of the building and it retains historic integrity.

The steel mezzanine stair (1921) is an intact prominent feature, as are the wooden and iron balustrades on the stairs (1905 & 1921) throughout.

Some historic glazed office partitions remain intact as do some historic window sash on the primary and secondary elevations.

Overall, the building, and its most significant feature—the sheet copper clad facade, possesses integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Mason Building
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Statement of Significance**

The building is eligible for the National Register at the local level of significance under **Criterion C: ARCHITECTURE** at the local level of significance as a unique example of the use of custom sheet copper as a cladding material. The building represents the specialized skills of Kansas City-based "A. Zahner Sheet Metal Co." which was employed to custom fit copper cladding to the horizontal and vertical lines that define the building's fenestration and express the internal structure of its curtain wall.<sup>1</sup> Within the historic architectural context of Kansas City, the use of copper on the Mason Building appears to be unique in its scale and design. While copper can be found in limited use on other buildings employed as flashing, roofing material, and as cladding on features such as roofs, oriels, and finials, the Mason Building is the most substantial example of a copper clad façade identified so far in the City. Indeed, buildings with such extensive use of sheet copper as a cladding material for curtain walls are rare not just in Kansas City, but nationwide. As such the building embodies a distinctive example of the use of copper in early 20<sup>th</sup> century American commercial buildings and an important departure from the more traditional uses of architectural copper in Kansas City and beyond.

**ELABORATION: Building History**

The Mason building was completed in 1905 as a speculative investment property by businesswoman Anna Mason.<sup>2</sup> Not much is known about Mason, but she spared no expense with her building by hiring one of Kansas City's most prominent architectural firms [(Edward) Wilder & (Thomas) Wight] for design work. Presumably, Wilder & Wight made the decision to hire the Zahner Sheet Metal Company (based in Kansas City to this day) to clad the primary elevation in what would have been, at the time, gleaming custom-fit sheet copper.<sup>3</sup> The unique Zahner facade is not only quite rare, but according to L. Bill Zahner (architectural historian as well as President and CEO of the family-owned Zahner Company) is an important early surviving work.<sup>4</sup>

A State Historical Inventory form from 1980 indicates that the building is of brick masonry with a steel structural system, however recent inspection indicates that the original building has a timber frame structural system, which appears to have later been reinforced with steel and concrete, probably when an additional two stories were added in 1921. Historic photographs and building permits indicate that the building was originally four stories tall with a façade defined by ornamental copper work framed by terra cotta and capped with a terra cotta cornice and balustrade.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. Zahner Sheet Metal Co. "A. Zahner Sheet Metal Company; A History of the Corporation" Team Zahner, Kansas City, MO. Vol. 1. 1992 p. 1

<sup>2</sup> State Historical and Inventory Office, "Historic Inventory Forms. Kansas City Central Business District. On file, State Historical Society of Missouri, Kansas City, 1980

<sup>3</sup> Wilder & Wight was the short-lived precursor to what would become yet another prominent Kansas City firm of Wight & Wight.

<sup>4</sup> L. William Zahner, personal communication, 9/22/2020

<sup>5</sup> State Historical and Inventory Office, "Historic Inventory Forms. Kansas City Central Business District. On file, State Historical Society of Missouri, Kansas City, 1980

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Mason Building
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Two additional stories were added to the building in 1921 per plans by the prominent, but short-lived architectural partnership of (Samuel B.) Tarbet & (Robert) Gornel.<sup>6</sup> This partnership only lasted for two years (1920-1922), although the architects, in particular Samuel Tarbet, had a long and distinguished career in Kansas City.<sup>7</sup>

In 1929, another prominent Kansas City architect Charles A. Smith was commissioned to make updates to the façade although it is unclear exactly what these alterations entailed.<sup>8</sup> The permit itself was for \$3,500 and stated that the purpose was to “Remodel Front.”<sup>9</sup> It may be that this refers to the alteration of the storefront, which presently is organized in a manner that does not match the c. 1921 photograph (Figure 16).

### Wilder & Wight

According to the Kansas State Historical Society, Thomas Wight was born in 1874 in Halifax Nova Scotia and at the age of 26 moved to New York to join the firm McKim, Mead & White.<sup>10</sup> In 1904, Wight moved to Kansas City and opened a new firm with partner Edward Wilder (also formerly of McKim, Mead & White).<sup>11</sup> The Mason Building is among the firm’s earliest commissions considering its date of construction and the date the firm was founded. Among the firm’s important surviving commissions in Kansas City are the New England Bank Building (1907, 21 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street, [NR11/07/76])<sup>12</sup> and the First National Bank Building (1906) at Baltimore Avenue and West 10<sup>th</sup> Street (NR 11/07/76).<sup>13</sup> The latter monumental building is currently home to the Kansas City Public Library.

Thomas Wight’s younger brother William joined Wilder & Wight in 1911 and subsequently bought out Edward Wilder upon his retirement in 1916, thus forming the firm of Wight & Wight, which went on to become one of Kansas City’s most influential architectural firms.<sup>14</sup>

### Tarbet & Gornel

According to Kansas City-based architectural historian Cydney Millstein, the work of Samuel Tarbet and Robert Gornel as independent operators and as a partnership has made a significant mark on Kansas City. Millstein writes: “Examples of the work of these architects can be found throughout Kansas City,” calling attention to the Kansas City Athenaeum (1914-15, Tarbet); the Uptown Building and Theatre

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Cydney E. Millstein and Linda F. Becker, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: Wheeling Corrugating Company, Kansas City* (Washington D.C.: Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 1994) p.9

<sup>8</sup> Kansas City Building Permit No. 90338, 2/14/1929 On file, Historic Kansas City, 234 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Kansas City, MO. 64105.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Wight & Wight History <https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/wight-and-wight/19394> viewed on 9/10/20

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Edward J. Mischuk *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: West 9<sup>th</sup> Street/Baltimore Avenue Historic District. Kansas City* (Washington D.C.: Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 1975) p. 5

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 13

<sup>14</sup> Wight & Wight History <https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/wight-and-wight/19394> viewed on 9/10/20

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Mason Building
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

(1924-25 Gornel) and the Ambassador Hotel Historic District (1924-25 Gornel), which are all listed in the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>15</sup>

As previously noted, a building permit indicates that Tarbet & Gornel oversaw the addition of the fifth and sixth floor (and mezzanine) that were added to the Mason Building in 1921. It is unclear if the firm actually designed these elements or if they were hired to manage the completion of the original design. Either way, the upper two floors were skillfully integrated within the existing design concept, continuing the modernistic copper-clad façade within its classical terra cotta frame.

While the original Wilder & Wight plans have not been found, the coherence of the finished building and the fact that the molded copper work between the lower floors and the addition match so seamlessly prompts the question of whether the upper floors are actually a realization of the original design. Architectural historian and architectural copper expert Larry Peters (Historian with the American Copper Development Association) notes that the expertise with which the ornamental elements of the copper cladding were continued through the additional stories indicates that the custom molds used to create the first four floors had been retained by the manufacturer for 16 years, likely in anticipation of a future realization of the building's intended scale.<sup>16</sup>

### Material Significance

As Margot Gayle and David Look note in "Metals in America's Historic Buildings" (a publication of the National Park Service) "A high degree of craftsmanship went into fabrication of the metals in older American buildings... such craftsmanship, which is for the most part irreplaceable, deserves recognition and preservation...metal components of American buildings should be appreciated as part of the nation's artistic heritage."<sup>17</sup> The authors also note, "[O]ften it was local artisans who designed and built..." such works.<sup>18</sup> This appears to be the case with the Mason Building as there is a strong documentary association with the A. Zahner Sheet Metal Company. Zahner has been in continuous operation in Kansas City since 1897 and over more than a century has played an integral role in a very large number of internationally significant architectural works.<sup>19</sup>

While copper is a common *component* of buildings in Kansas City and throughout the country, its use is primarily confined to roofing, flashing, cornices, downspouts, and decorative elements.<sup>20</sup> It is a relatively expensive metal, but its malleability, initial luster, ultimate patina, and its durability have made it a desirable material for architectural (and other) purposes for thousands of years.<sup>21</sup> As an architectural metal, only gold and copper have a patinated tone that is not on the gray/silver

<sup>15</sup> Millstein and Becker, 1994 p. 9

<sup>16</sup> Larry Peters, Copper Development Association, personal communication 11/2/20

<sup>17</sup> Margot Gayle and David W. Look, *Metals in America's Buildings* (Washington D.C.: Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 1992) p. 6

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> History of A. Zahner Sheet Metal Co. <https://www.azahner.com/about/history/> viewed on 10/1/20

<sup>20</sup> Gayle & Look, 1992. p. 23

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p. 22.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Mason Building
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

spectrum.<sup>22</sup> The use of copper as a building material represents design-intent because it makes buildings stand out visually while having the added benefits of longevity and limited need for maintenance.<sup>23</sup>

While cast iron storefronts and later facades of pressed galvanized sheet metal (usually steel) were increasingly common in the United States beginning as early as the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, copper clad facades were much less common.<sup>24</sup> This is especially true when it comes to buildings as large as the Mason. Indeed, such facades are so rare that every architectural historian consulted over the course of research into the Mason Building has indicated that they were unaware of any comparable copper-clad façade in Kansas City or the Midwest at large.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, architectural historian and expert on architectural metal L. William Zahner states that the façade of the Mason Building is exceedingly rare and is the product of very skilled craftsmen. Unlike pressed steel and cast iron facades of the period, which were pre-fabricated, ordered from catalogues, and subsequently assembled like jigsaw puzzles, the copper façade of the Mason Building was applied “...like a fine tailor fitting the skin precisely to the building.”<sup>26</sup>

#### Copper in Early American Architecture

The first major commercial copper mining industry established in the United States began in Michigan in the 1840s.<sup>27</sup> Later the focus of American copper extraction moved west to Montana, Colorado and Utah toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>28</sup> Prior to the establishment of the American copper industry, imported material from England had been used since the 18<sup>th</sup> century for roofing and ornamental purposes.<sup>29</sup> Among the earliest major uses of architectural copper in the United States are the First Bank of the United States in Philadelphia (1795), and the Massachusetts State House (1795-89); the latter sourced finished material from the newly established rolling mill of Paul Revere.<sup>30</sup>

#### Architectural Copper at the Turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Larry Peters, architectural historian and project manager with the Copper Development Association states that buildings such as the Mason “...showcase a period, starting in the late 1800s and continuing into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when the increased availability of light gauge sheet copper, combined with technical advances in metal-forming equipment, allowed for functional, durable, and light-weight sheet metal cladding...” He then noted that due to its “...initial material cost, [copper] was reserved for ‘higher-end’ buildings [and was] preferred by architects and building owners who were willing to make

<sup>22</sup> L. Bill Zahner, *Copper, Brass and Bronze Surfaces; A Guide to Alloys, Finishes, Fabrication, and Maintenance in Architecture and Art* (Hoboken NJ: John Wiley and Sons 2020) p. 6

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Gayle & Look, 1992., p. 51

<sup>25</sup> Historians consulted: L. Bill Zahner (A. Zahner & Co) 9/22/20, Cydney Millstein (Architectural & Historical Research LLC, KC MO) 9/29/20, Michael Allen (Washington University and Preservation Research Office) 10/20/20, Larry Giles (St. Louis Building Arts Foundation) 10/20/20, Larry Peters (Copper Development Association) 11/2/20.

<sup>26</sup> L. William Zahner, Zahner Metal Conservation. Personal communication. 10/21/29

<sup>27</sup> Margot Gayle and David W. Look, 1992 p. 22

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. p.23

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

Mason Building
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

an initial investment in order to reap long-term savings due to a lack of a need for maintenance.”<sup>31</sup> He continued to state that at the time the Mason Building was constructed, “[C]opper used to clad multi-story commercial facades was a relatively new concept...” He noted that custom fitting sheet copper as a cladding material for a curtain wall was an uncommon and notable use of the material that stands out in contrast with the more typical roofing or bay applications of the time.<sup>32</sup>

This observation seems to be borne out by present research; applications of copper as cladding on the roofs and bays of residential buildings are not difficult to find. An example of such an application can be found in the following apartment building in Cambridge Massachusetts, which integrates copper clad bays within masonry walls (Figure 4—address unknown, example provided by Larry Peters). It was also a popular cladding material used by wealthy homeowners such as that of brewer Christian Heurich in Washington DC whose home features an elaborate, classically-inspired copper facade on its rear ell (Figure 5).

Ecclesiastical buildings of the era, like the aforementioned St. Patrick’s Church (Figure 1) or St. Peter’s Cathedral (both in Kansas City) frequently used copper as roofing material or as cladding for spires and finials while institutional or otherwise public buildings of a grand scale like the Old Court House in St. Louis (Figure 6) took advantage of the material to highlight features like domes and cupolas.

Perhaps the most remarkable architectural copper installation dating to the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the United States is the Hoboken Terminal and Yard complex in Hoboken New Jersey (1907) (Figure 7). Architect Kenneth Murchison designed the building not only for visual impact, but for fire prevention in consideration of the fate of multiple previous buildings on site.<sup>33</sup> The Terminal copper cladding provided both a stunning visual impact, and ensured that sparks from the stacks of the trains and ferry boats it served would not land on a flammable surface.

Another notable use of the material as a cladding, but also as an artistic statement, is “Gimbel’s Bridge in New York City (Shreve & Lamb). Built in 1925-26 to connect the Gimbels’ Department Store with the former Saks Building, which Gimbels had purchased three years before, the bridge is a beautiful use of sheet copper in a hybrid classical/art deco design that the “New Yorker Magazine” once referred to as the “Chartres of Aerial Tunnelry (Figure 8).”<sup>34</sup>

Despite these examples, large-scale copper commercial facades from this era akin to the Mason Building are more difficult to find. The most notable example identified to date is the magnificent courtyard elevations of the Fulton Building in Pittsburgh, PA (Figure 9). Designed by architect Grosvenor Atterbury and completed in 1906, the interior courtyard of the building is almost completely clad in sheet copper and features a projecting copper cornice as well.<sup>35</sup> Interestingly, Atterbury worked in the

<sup>31</sup> Larry Peters, Copper Development Association. Personal Communication. 11/2/20

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> James Barron, “Hoboken Terminal, With Flair and Grandeur, is a Survivor” *New York Times*, 30 September, 2016

<sup>34</sup> Christopher Gray, “A Civilized Approach, New York’s Aerial Bridges” *New York Times*, 17 August, 2014

<sup>35</sup> Albert M. Tannler, “Grosvenor Atterbury’s Pittsburgh Buildings” Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation 27 April, 2017.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

Mason Building
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

offices of McKim, Mead & White at the same time as the designers of the Mason Building (Thomas Wilder and Edward Wight) in the 1890s.<sup>36</sup>

It is posited that late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century American commercial buildings that employ substantial use of custom sheet copper craftsmanship as a primary design element constitute a “Class” of resources. In the words of National Register Bulletin 15, copper-clad properties like the Mason Building “clearly illustrate...the individuality or variation of features that occurs within the class.”<sup>37</sup>

### Copper in Kansas City

The 1994 architectural survey of Kansas City’s central business district specifically identified several buildings from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century with substantial architectural copper components, though none of the resources possessed anything close to the copper façade of the Mason Building (Ironically, the Mason was not identified as having copper cladding because a century of soot and grime obscure much of its underlying green patina). A search of the survey yielded references to notable copper components on:<sup>38</sup>

1. St. Patrick’s Church (800 Cherry Street) with its twin copper-clad domes (Figure 1).
2. The Loews’ Midland Theater (1228 Main Street) with its copper mansard and storefront surrounds (Figure 2).
3. The Majestic (931 Broadway) which has a two story copper projecting oriel (Figure 3).

Of these buildings, only The Majestic, constructed as the James E. Fitzpatrick Saloon in 1911 showcases architectural copper cladding (recently restored) as a design component as prominently as that of the Mason Building, though the treatment is much less extensive.<sup>39</sup> In addition the three-story Majestic is a much more traditional design which is more in keeping with American “Main Street” building traditions (Figure 3). This is in contrast with the more modern design of the Mason Building with its linear bands of windows and the manner in which it expresses its internal structure.

It should be noted that the use of architectural sheet copper in Kansas City has continued to the present day and the City boasts several notable examples dating to the 21st century. The production facility for the *Kansas City Star* (2006, architect Juan Moreno) is contained within a glass and copper curtain wall that was fabricated and installed by the locally-based A. Zahner Company (Figure 17).<sup>40</sup> Zahner also manufactured the copper roof, cupola, turrets, and “donors’ circle” for the Kansas City Starlight Theatre

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> US. Department of the Interior, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. (Washington D.C.: Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 1995) p. 18

<sup>38</sup> State Historical and Inventory Office, “Historic Inventory Forms. Kansas City Central Business District. On file, State Historical Society of Missouri, Kansas City, 1994.

<sup>39</sup> State Historical and Inventory Office, “Historic Inventory Forms. Kansas City Central Business District. On file, State Historical Society of Missouri, Kansas City, 1994, p. 389

<sup>40</sup> [www.AZahner.com](http://www.AZahner.com) viewed on 2/27/21

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 11

Mason Building
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

and its "Jeannette and Jerome Cohen Community Stage", which was added to the Theatre complex in 2000 (Figure 18).<sup>41</sup>

### Zahner Sheet Metal Company History

According to an internal Zahner Company history, Andrew Zahner began operating a sheet metal company in the Joplin, MO area in the 1880s before relocating to Kansas City in 1897 to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the rapidly developing city.<sup>42</sup> The company specialized in sheet metal facades, cornices, roofing, etc., and to this day continues the tradition as one of the most highly regarded sheet metal specialists in the United States.<sup>43</sup> The list of world-class architects/firms with which the company has worked on specialty architectural metal installations is quite extensive and includes Antoine Predock, Herzog & de Meuron, Gyo Obata, Arthur Erickson, Daniel Libeskind, Snohetta Company, Morphosis, Rem Koolhaas, Tadao Ando, and the firm has enjoyed a close working relationship with Frank Gehry for many years.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, Gehry wrote the introduction to L. William Zahner's book "Architectural Metals; A Guide to Selection, Specification, and Performance."<sup>45</sup> This is only one of several books that Zahner, considered to be an international authority, has written on the topic of architectural metals and metallurgy. From humble beginnings in Joplin, MO and Kansas City, the Zahner Company has made its mark on world architecture.

According to L. Bill Zahner, the copper façade of the Mason Building is almost certainly the work of his family's company.<sup>46</sup> While Zahner corporate records do not stretch back to the original construction of the building in 1905, the company's historic ledgers begin just a few years later and include extensive commissions from the architects of the Mason Building Wight & Wight as well multiple references to copper work/repair on the Mason building itself from the 1910s-1920s.<sup>47</sup>

In addition to the A. Zahner Company, another well-known manufacturer that worked in the medium of pressed metal facades in the Midwest was Mesker Brothers of St. Louis and Indiana.<sup>48</sup> While thousands of their surviving facades have been identified across the country, they are fundamentally different from the copper façade of the Mason Building. Mesker prefabricated galvanized metal and cast iron facades and sold/shipped them "as is" from catalogues.<sup>49</sup> In contrast, the Mason Building has a custom

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> A. Zahner Sheet Metal Co. 1992. p.1

<sup>43</sup> Sara Fernandez Cendon, "The Kansas City Fabricator Quietly Exports it's Architectural Prowess to the World" *Metropolis Magazine* New York, NY., March 26, 2019.

<sup>44</sup> L. William Zahner Personal Communication 10/13/20; Stafford, Margaret "Kansas City Based Sheet Metal Company Builds National Reputation" *Lawrence Journal World*, 7 November, 2004.

<sup>45</sup> L. Bill Zahner *Architectural Metals, a Guide to Selection, Specification, and Performance*. (Hoboken, NJ., John Wiley & Sons. 1995) NP- Introduction

<sup>46</sup> L. William Zahner, Personal Communication, 9/22/20. \* Based on internal Zahner ledgers, on file with Company.

<sup>47</sup> Kat Zahner, Zahner Metal Conservation. Personal Communication \* Based on internal ledgers provided 9/4/20

<sup>48</sup> Mesker Brothers Sheet Metal Company history

<https://www2.illinois.gov/dnrhistoric/Preserve/Pages/gotmesker.aspx> Viewed on 10/12/20

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 12

Mason Building
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

made and custom fit copper façade.<sup>50</sup> As L. Bill Zahner put it: "These [copper] facades, particularly to the scale of [the Mason] Building are rare. They took more skill than what was usually available at the time. It was like a fine tailor fitting the skin precisely to the building."<sup>51</sup>

In contrast with the brick, terra cotta, and cast iron that dominate the facades of Kansas City's surviving 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings in its central business district, the copper cladding of the Mason building appears to be unique.<sup>52</sup> The scarcity of such buildings and the craftsmanship it embodies make it an important example of the city's historic commercial architecture. Indeed to continue Mr. Zahner's comments on the matter, in his professional opinion he described the Mason as "...very unusual for its time..."<sup>53</sup> The author of several authoritative books on architectural metals, Zahner stated that he wished that he had known about the Mason before writing his book "Copper, Brass and Bronze Finishes; a Guide to Alloys, Finishes, Fabrication and Maintenance in Architecture and Art" noting that he would have included it as an example.<sup>54</sup>

#### Architectural Context, Kansas City

While a "Work of a Master" architectural argument for the Mason Building is not being made, the connection between Wilder & Wight in Kansas City and McKim Mead & White (MMW) of New York (where both architects had previously worked) is intriguing for a number of reasons. The Mason Building is located in close proximity to the MMW-designed New York Life Insurance Building (1890) which is located nearby within Kansas City's "Library District." While the building predates Wilder & Wight's presence in Kansas City, it very well may have paved the way for the partners' decision's to move to the city given the fact that shortly after arriving they were commissioned to design multiple other buildings for the banking and insurance industries in the immediate area. In addition, with regard to the modernistic, stripped down and structural design of the Mason Building's facade, it seems that links can be drawn back to MMW. The minimally ornamental and structurally expressive aspects of the Mason have led multiple architectural historians to comment that it is an unusually "modern" building for its time.<sup>55</sup> This makes sense given that its designers had just left MMW, which architectural historians Robert Stern and Gregory Gilmartin assert was second only to Frank Lloyd Wright in its contribution to the "...identity and character of modern American architecture."<sup>56</sup>

In another curious coincidence, the Mason building was constructed just before the early modern designs of Louis Curtiss, who is known as the "Frank Lloyd Wright of Kansas City" and who began to

<sup>50</sup> Kat Zahner, Kat Zahner, Zahner Metal Conservation. Personal Communication \* Based on internal ledgers provided 9/4/20.

<sup>51</sup> L. William Zahner, personal communication, 10/21/20.

<sup>52</sup> State Historical and Inventory Office, "Historic Inventory Forms. Kansas City Central Business District. On file, State Historical Society of Missouri, Kansas City, 1980 and 1994.

<sup>53</sup> L. William Zahner, Personal Communication, 10/13/20

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> John Guenther, FAIA. Larry Peters. Personal communication

<sup>56</sup> Robert. A. M. Ster, Gregory Gilmartin, John Montague Massengale. New York, 1900:Metropolitan Architecture and Urbanism, 1890-1915. (New York, NY: Rizzoli) 1983. NP

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 13

Mason Building
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

innovate the community's architecture in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>57</sup> One can even imagine the Mason Building as an antecedent to two nearby Curtiss designs. Curtiss's Boley Building (1130 Walnut, NR 3/9/1971—Figure 10) and the Louis Curtiss Studio (1116-20 McGee, NR 6/19/72—Figure 11) may have drawn inspiration from the Mason. Both buildings are located within one block of the Mason (Figure 12). And, like the Mason, both buildings employ terra cotta with a Classical ornamental vocabulary surrounding a more Modern metal curtain wall that highlights horizontal and vertical planes expressing interior structure. All three buildings represent a transitional period in American architecture where early modern ideas are being combined with more traditional vocabularies.

### Summary

The Mason Building is a locally significant work of architecture in the Kansas City Central Business District. Designed by the prominent firms of Wilder & Wight as well as Tarbot & Gornal the building represents a significant example of the use of custom copper sheet cladding on an early modern curtain wall. The Mason's copper work can be traced to the local A. Zahner firm, which is still based in Kansas City today. CEO and noted historian of architectural metals L. Bill Zahner believes that the building's façade represents an important example of the company's early work and a rare example of ways architectural sheet copper was employed at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by American Architects. This assertion is supported by Larry Peters who serves as the historian for the Copper Development Association of America. The metal craftsmanship and transitional design of the building represent an important step in the architectural evolution of the community and a locally unique application of sheet copper as an architectural material. The building embodies a movement away from the heavy masonry facades of past decades and a shift toward lighter, more transparent edifices comprised of glass and light metal elements.<sup>58</sup> As NR Bulletin 15 notes, "[A] structure is eligible as a specimen of its type or period of construction if it is an important example (within its context) of building practices of a particular time in history."<sup>59</sup> The Mason Building possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling and is a significant architectural resource.

<sup>57</sup> Roe, Jason "The Frank Lloyd Wright of Kansas City <https://kchistory.org/week-kansas-city-history/frank-lloyd-wright-kansas-city> viewed on 10/3/20

<sup>58</sup> American Institute of Architects Kansas City Chapter (2000). [American Institute of Architects Guide to Kansas City Architecture & Public Art](#). (Kansas City, MO: Highwater Press. 2000).p. 29

<sup>59</sup> National Register Bulletin 15

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 14

Mason Building
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Bibliography**

American Illustrating Company, "Pen and Sunlight Sketches of Kansas City" Kansas City, MO: *American Illustrating Company*, c.1911

American Institute of Architects Kansas City Chapter (2000). [American Institute of Architects Guide to Kansas City Architecture & Public Art](#). Kansas City, MO: Highwater Press. 2000.

A. Zahner Sheet Metal Co. "History of A. Zahner Sheet Metal Company" Kansas City, MO: *A. Zahner Sheet Metal Co.* 1992.

A. Zahner Sheet Metal Co. Projects <https://www.azahner.com/about/> viewed 2/5/21 (Figures 17-18)

Barron, James, "Hoboken Terminal, With Flair and Grandeur, is a Survivor" *New York Times*, 30 September, 2016

"Borel Building", prior to 1921 expansion Kansas City Public Library (Figure 15)

"Borel Building", post 1921 expansion Kansas City Public Library (Figure 16)

Borel family members, Personal Communication, 8/28/2020

Boley Building, Kansas City, MO. Wikimedia (Figure 10)

Cendon, Sara Fernandez "The Kansas City Fabricator Quietly Exports it's Architectural Prowess to the World" *Metropolis Magazine*. 26, March 2019.

Consulting Architectural Historians: L. William Zahner (A. Zahner & Co) 9/22/20, Cydney Millstein (Architectural & Historical Research LLC, KC MO) 9/29/20, Michael Allen (Washington University and Preservation Research Office) 10/20/20, Larry Giles (St. Louis Building Art Foundation) 10/20/20, Larry Peters (Copper Development Association) 11/2/20.

Cambridge MA. Unknown Address. Courtesy Larry Peters (Figure 4).

Curtiss, Louis Biographical Information <https://kchistory.org/week-kansas-city-history/frank-lloyd-wright-kansas-city> viewed on 10/14/20

Curtiss, Louis Biographical Information:  
<https://historicmissourians.shsmo.org/historicmissourians/name/c/curtiss/> viewed on 10/11/20

Curtiss, Louis Studio, Kansas City, MO. Wikimedia (Figure 11)

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 15

Mason Building
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Fulton Building, Pittsburgh, PA. Courtesy Larry Peters (Figure 9)

Gayle, Margot and David W. Look "Metals in America's Historic Buildings" Washington D.C.: Department of Interior/National Park Service, 1992.

Gimbels' Bridge, New York, NY. Atlas Obscura (Figure 8)

Google Earth (Figures 13-14)

Gray, Christopher "A Civilized Approach, New York's Aerial Bridges" *New York Times*, 15 August, 2014.

Guenther, John FAIA and President St. Louis Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians. Personal Communication, 10/28/20.

Guenther, John FAIA and President St. Louis Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians. (Figure 12)

Heurich House Museum, Washington DC. Courtesy Larry Peters (Figure 5)

History of A. Zahner Sheet Metal Company <https://www.azahner.com/about/history/> viewed on 10/1/20

Hoboken Terminal, Hoboken, NJ. Courtesy Larry Peters (Figure 7)

Kansas City Assessor's Office website <https://maps.kcmo.org/apps/parcelviewer/> viewed on 1/28.21 (Map 1)

Kansas City Building Permit No. 90338. 2/14/1929. On file, Historic Kansas City, 234 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Kansas City, MO. 64105

Kansas City Public Library, photos of "Borel Building" (Figures 15-16)

Mesker Brothers Sheet Metal Company History:  
<https://www2.illinois.gov/dnrhistoric/Preserve/Pages/gotmesker.aspx> viewed on 10/12/20

Midland Theater Building, KC, MO. Wikimedia (Figure 2)

Millstein, Cydney E. and Linda F. Becker. *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: Wheeling Corrugating Company, Kansas City*. Washington D.C.: Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 1994.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 16

Mason Building
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Miszczuk, Edward J. National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: West 9<sup>th</sup> Street/Baltimore Avenue Historic District, Kansas City. Washington D.C.: Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 1975.

Old Court House, St. Louis, MO. Wikimedia (Figure 6)

Peters, Larry, Copper Development Association, Personal Communication. 11/2/20

Roe, Jason "The Frank Lloyd Wright of Kansas City" Kansas City Public Library ND. Viewed online <https://kchistory.org/week-kansas-city-history/frank-lloyd-wright-kansas-city> 10/3/20

Stafford, Margaret "Kansas City Based Sheet Metal Company Builds National Reputation" *Lawrence Journal World*, 7 November, 2004.

State Historical and Inventory Office, "Historic Inventory Forms." Kansas City Central Business District. On file State Historical Society of Missouri, Kansas City, MO. 1980 & 1994.

Stern, Robert. A. M., Gregory Gilmartin, John Montague Massengale. New York, 1900: Metropolitan Architecture and Urbanism, 1890-1915. Rizzoli: New York, NY: Rizzoli. 1983.

St. Patrick's Church, KC, MO. Wikimedia (Figure 1)

Tannler, Albert M. "Grosvenor Atterbury's Pittsburgh Buildings" Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation 27 April, 2017.

The Majestic Building, KC, MO. Wikimedia (Figure 3)

U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation." Washington D.C.: Department of Interior/National Park Service, 1995.

Wight & Wight history <https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/wight-and-wight/19394> viewed on 9/10/20

Zahner Company History, Wikipedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zahner> viewed on 10/13/20

Zahner, Kat and L. William, Zahner Metal Conservation, Personal communication, 9/22/20. Records on file with Zahner Metal Conservation, 1900 E. 9<sup>th</sup> St. Kansas City, MO.

Zahner, Kat. Zahner Metal Conservation. Personal Communication, 9/4/20. Records on file with Zahner Metal Conservation, 1900 E. 9<sup>th</sup> St. Kansas City, MO.

Zahner, L. William Architectural Metals, a Guide to Selection, Specification, and Performance. Wiley & Sons: Hoboken, NJ. 1995.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number   9   Page   17  

Mason Building

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Zahner, L. William personal communication, 9/22/2020

Zahner, L. William. Personal Communication, 10/13/20

Zahner, L. William. Personal Communication, 10/21/20

Zahner, L. William Copper, Brass and Bronze Surfaces; A Guide to Alloys, Finishes, Fabrication, and Maintenance in Architecture and Art. Wiley and Sons: Hoboken, NJ. 2020.

Zahner, L. William, Zahner Metal Conservation. Personal communication. 10/21/29.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 18

Mason Building

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary of the nominated resource is defined by Kansas City, MO as a single parcel described as 1110 GRAND BLVD SWOPES ADD N 46.71 FT LOT 81

**Boundary Justification**

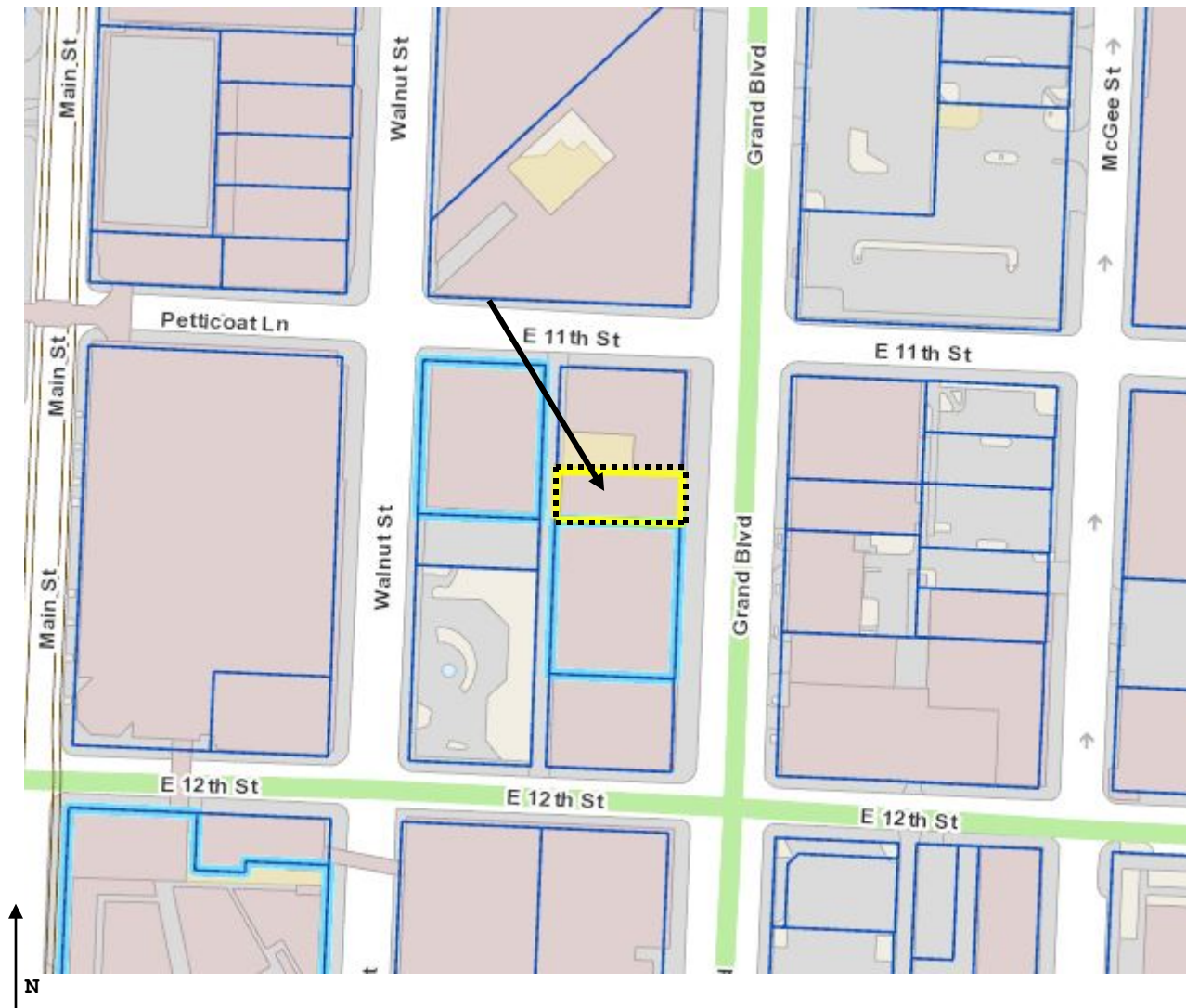
The boundary of the nominated resource is the original footprint of the Mason Building.

Map 1: Mason Building (1110 Grand Blvd) Boundary Map: Boundary of nominated resource. ....

39.0602 -94.3452

Latitude Longitude

Source: <https://maps.kcmo.org/apps/parcelviewer/>





National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 19

Mason Building

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 1: St. Patrick's Church, Kansas City, MO—Source, Wikimedia.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 20

Mason Building

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 2: The Midland Theater Building, Kansas City, MO. Copper Mansard and Storefront Surrounds, Wikimedia



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 21

Mason Building

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 3: The Majestic Building, Kansas City, MO, Source Wikimedia.





National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 22

Mason Building

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 4: Residential Building Cambridge, MA Source Larry Peters



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 23

Mason Building

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 5: Heurich House Museum, Washington DC. source Larry Peters





National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 24

Mason Building

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 6: Old Court House, St. Louis, MO. Source Wikimedia—facing east.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 25

Mason Building

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 7: Hoboken Terminal, Hoboken New Jersey, source Larry Peters





National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 26

Mason Building

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 8: Gimbels' Bridge, New York, NY. Source, Atlas Obscura



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 27

Mason Building

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 9: Fulton Building, Pittsburgh PA. Source Larry Peters





National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 28

Mason Building
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 10: Boley Building, Kansas City, MO. Source Wikimedia—facing north west.





National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 29

Mason Building

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 11: Louis Curtiss Studio, Kansas City, MO. Source Wikimedia



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 30

Mason Building

Name of Property

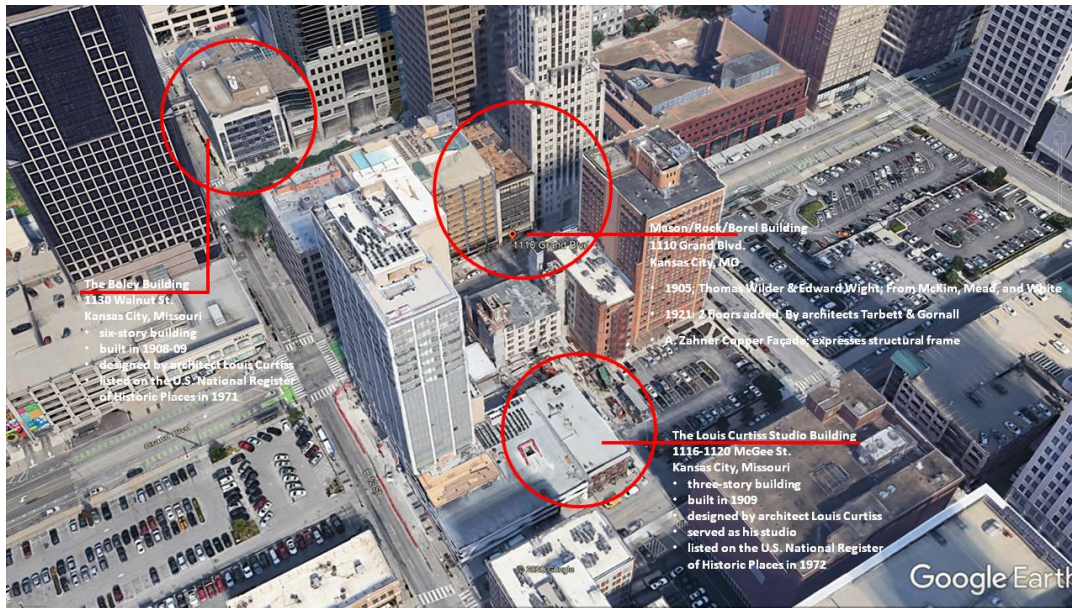
Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 12: Map showing Borel Building in relation to Boley Building and Curtiss Studio. Courtesy John Guenther FAIA—Facing west, north west. Borel Central, Boley Upper Left, Curtiss Studio Bottom.





National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 31

Mason Building

Name of Property

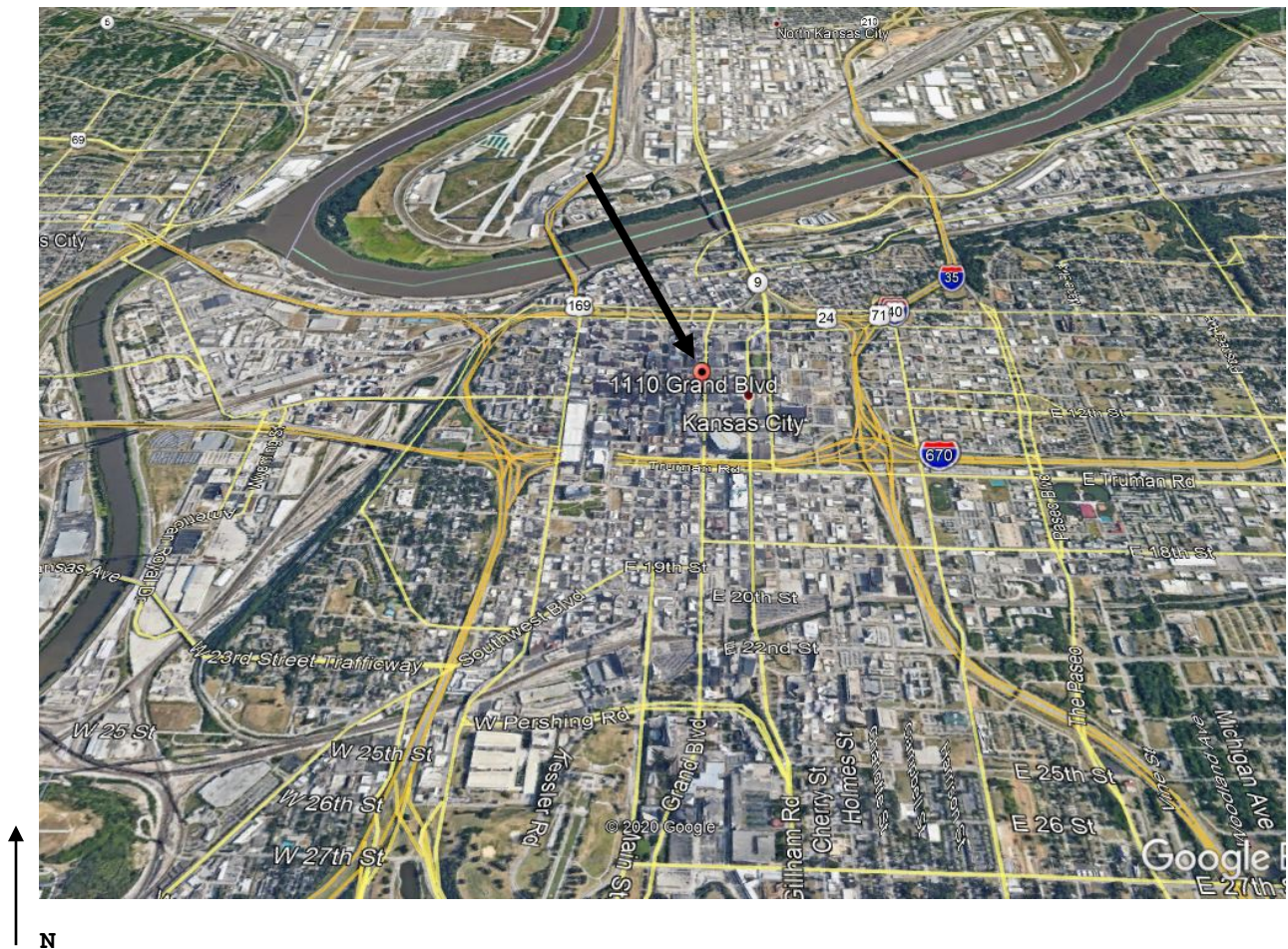
Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 13: Location of Mason Building within Kansas City 1. Source Google Earth





National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 32

Mason Building

Name of Property

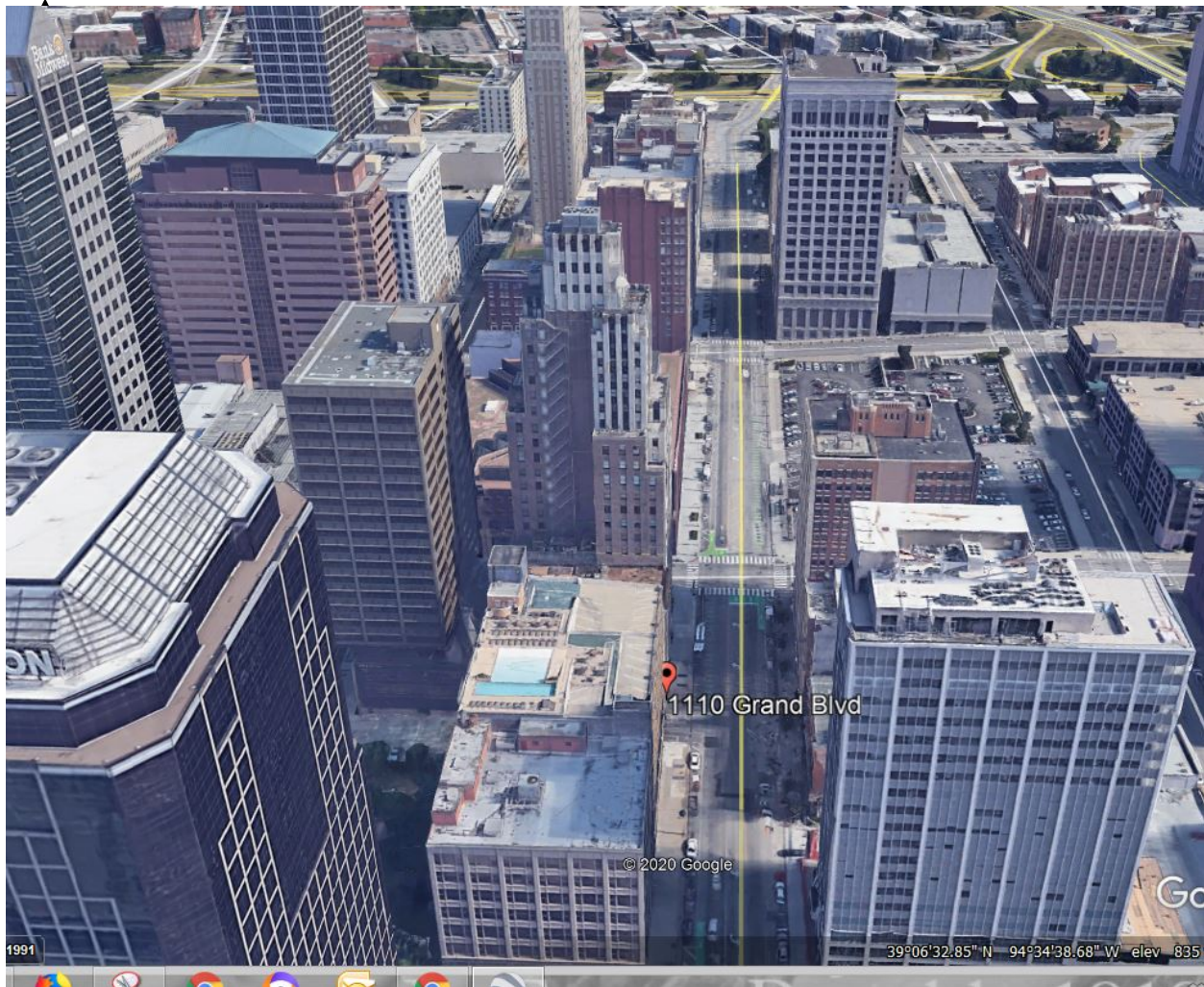
Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 14: Location Mason Building within Kansas City 2. Source Google Earth



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 33

Mason Building

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 15: Mason Building prior to 1921 addition. Source, Kansas City Public Library





National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 34

Mason Building

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 16: Mason Building post 1921 addition, source Kansas City Public Library



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 35

Mason Building

Name of Property  
Jackson County, Missouri  
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 17: Kansas City Star Production Building, Source, A. Zahner & Co



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 36

Mason Building

Name of Property  
Jackson County, Missouri  
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 18: Star Light Theatre, Kansas City, MO, Source, A. Zahner & Co



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

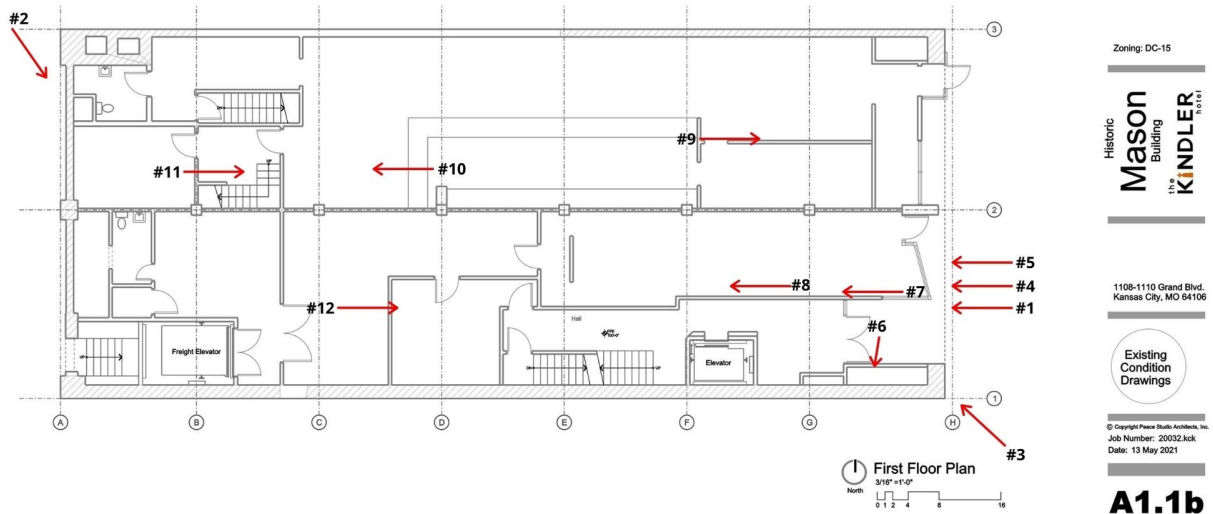
Section number Figures Page 37

Mason Building

Name of Property  
Jackson County, Missouri  
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 19: First Floor Photo Map





National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

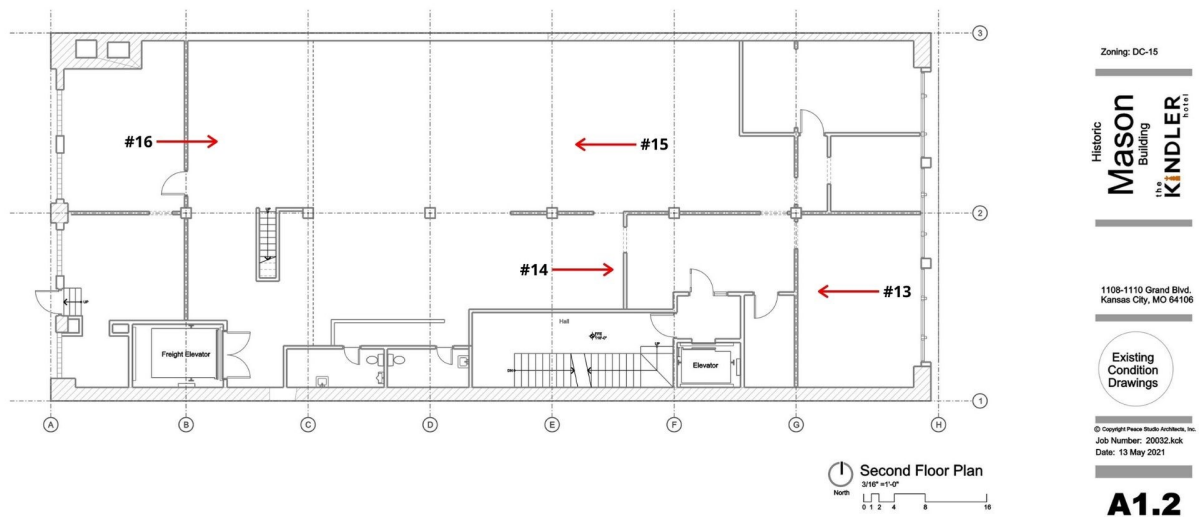
Section number Figures Page 38

Mason Building

Name of Property  
Jackson County, Missouri  
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 20: Second Floor Photo Map



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

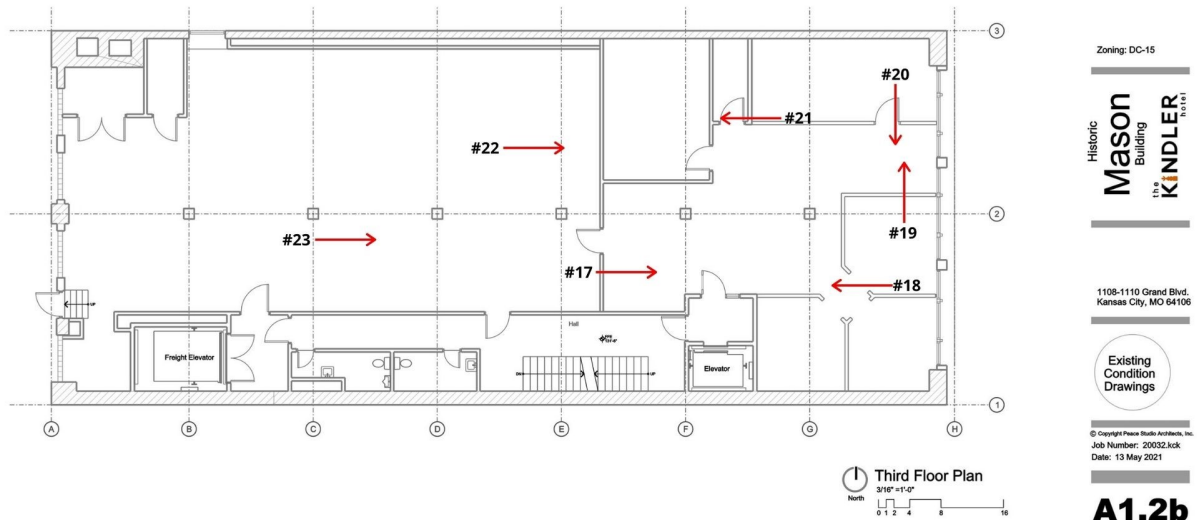
Section number Figures Page 39

Mason Building

Name of Property  
Jackson County, Missouri  
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 21: Third Floor Photo Map



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

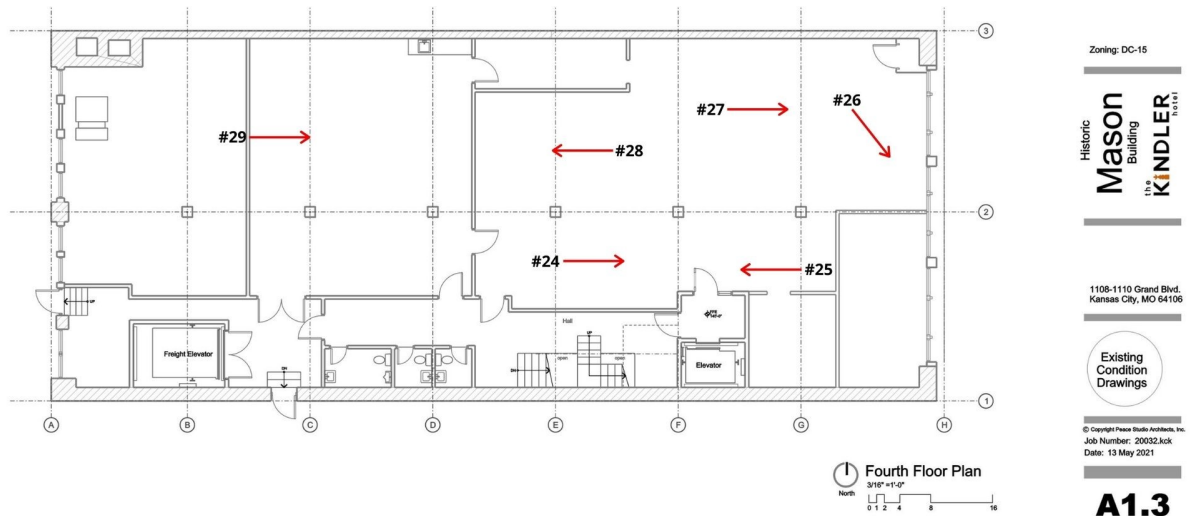
Section number Figures Page 40

Mason Building

Name of Property  
Jackson County, Missouri  
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 22: Fourth Floor Photo Map



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

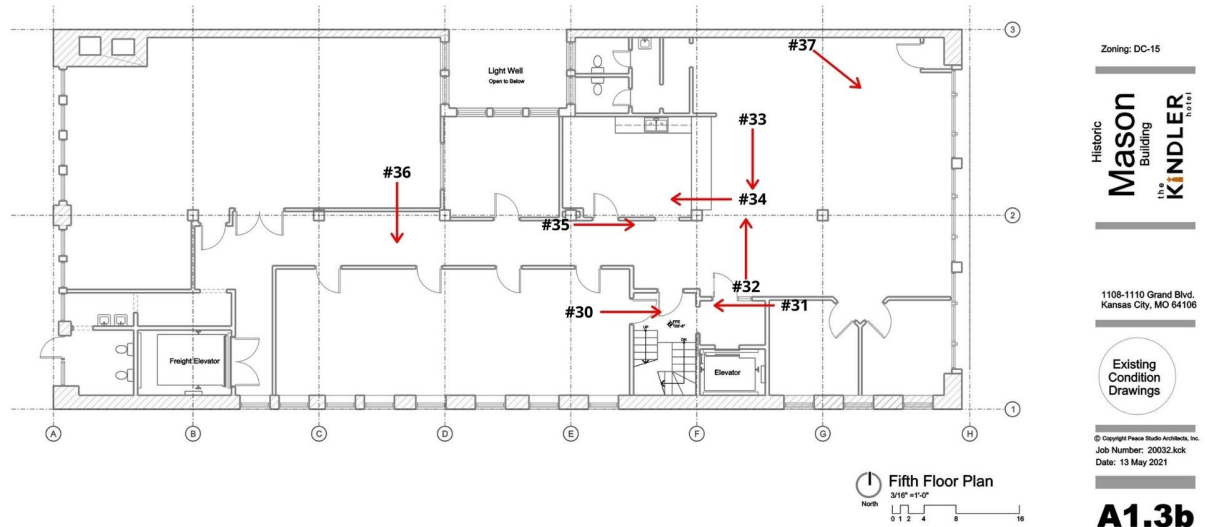
Section number Figures Page 41

Mason Building

Name of Property  
Jackson County, Missouri  
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 23: Fifth Floor Photo Map





Mason Building  
Name of Property  
Jackson County, Missouri  
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

The Sixth Floor Plan shows a layout with rooms and corridors. A Freight Elevator is located on the left side, and a standard Elevator is on the right side. A Light Well is located in the upper center. Red arrows indicate the locations of fire alarm call points #38 through #46. The plan includes a scale bar (3/16" = 1'-0") and a north arrow.

## A1.4

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

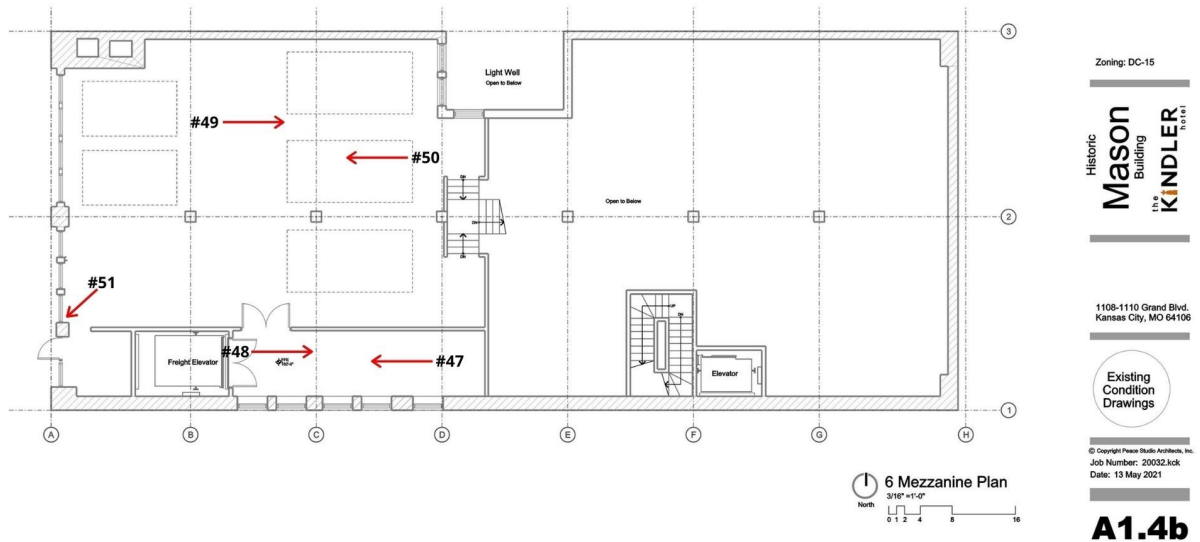
Section number Figures Page 43

Mason Building

Name of Property  
Jackson County, Missouri  
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 25: Sixth Floor Mezzanine Photo Map





1

ik  
west

PARKING GARAGE

ZAINA

PENSKE









3

S  
B  
D  
2  
4  
6  
7

Made  
WITH PASSION

ZAINA

OPEN

**ZAINA**  
RESTAURANT  
Mediterranean Cuisine

Shawarma  
Gyro  
Falafel

**WE CATER**  
816-842-1800

Chicken Kebab  
Hummus  
Baklava

**ZAINA**  
GYRO  
HUMMUS  
KATAEL  
SHAWARMA

11  
10



4







6





# Jules Borel & Co.



The Quality Assurance & Safety  
Boxes of this facility are  
Continuously Monitored











12





13



14







16







18



















24



















30



31

























38







40



41





42











45



46











49









51

