

# 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 McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Other names/site number N/A

Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

## 2. Location

Street & number Bounded by E. 17th St. (N), E. 20<sup>th</sup> St. (S), McGee St. at the 1700 and 1900 blocks (W), Alley between McGee and Grand at 1800 block (W), and Alley between McGee and Oak St. (E)

N/A	not for publication
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City or town Kansas City

N/A	vicinity
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State Missouri Code MO County Jackson Code 095 Zip code 64108

## 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

Applicable National Register Criteria: X A      B      C      D

  
Signature of certifying official/Title JP Date 03/26/18

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 \_\_\_\_\_

McGee Street Automotive Historic District  
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 type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input checked="" 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	
22	2	buildings
		sites
2	3	structures
		objects
24	5	<b>Total</b>

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

3

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/ TRADE: Specialty store

COMMERCE/ TRADE: Warehouse

TRANSPORTATION: Road-Related (vehicular)

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/ TRADE: Business

COMMERCE/ TRADE: Specialty store

COMMERCE/ TRADE: Financial Institution

COMMERCE/ TRADE: Restaurant

COMMERCE/ TRADE: Professional

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Theater

RELIGION: Religious Facility

TRANSPORTATION: Road-Related (vehicular)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: One-Part Commercial Block

OTHER: Two-Part Commercial Block

OTHER: Free-Standing Commercial Block

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS

MODERN MOVEMENT

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Brick, Stone

walls: Brick, Stucco, Concrete

roof: Asphalt

other: Stucco, Metal

X

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION ON CONTINUATION PAGES

McGee Street Automotive Historic District  
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

## 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

Missouri Valley Special Collection  
Name of repository: Kansas City Library

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

### Areas of Significance

COMMERCE

### Period of Significance

1912-1968

### Significant Dates

N/A

### Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Smith, C. C.

Raney & Dumas

Smith, Rea, & Lovitt

Schmidt, C. P.; Edward Tanner & Associates

McGee Street Automotive Historic District  
Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 8.2 acres

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

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

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	39.093323, Latitude:	-94.580036 Longitude:	3	39.088943 Latitude:	-94.579703 Longitude:
2	39.093306 Latitude:	-94.579472 Longitude:	4	39.088989 Latitude:	-94.580288 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 Rachel Nugent, National Register Coordinator; Sophie Roark, Historic Preservation Specialist  
organization Rosin Preservation, LLC date March 2018  
street & number 1712 Holmes telephone 816-472-4950  
city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64108  
e-mail rachel@rosinpreservation.com

## 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.

McGee Street Automotive Historic District  
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: McGee Street Automotive Historic District  
City or Vicinity: Kansas City  
County: Jackson State: Missouri  
Photographer: Brad Finch, f-stop Photography  
Date  
Photographed: July 29, 2017

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

- 1 of 12:** East side of 1700 block of McGee Street, view southeast.
- 2 of 12:** 1727-1729 McGee Street, view southeast.
- 3 of 12:** The east side of the 1800 block of McGee Street, view northeast.
- 4 of 12:** 1737-41 McGee Street, view northeast.
- 5 of 12:** East side of the 1800 block of McGee Street, view southeast.
- 6 of 12:** 1821 McGee Street, view east.
- 7 of 12:** The east side of the 1800 block of McGee Street, view northeast.
- 8 of 12:** 1901 McGee Street, view southeast.
- 9 of 12:** 1913 McGee Street, view east.
- 10 of 12:** The east side of the 1900 block of McGee Street, view northeast.
- 11 of 12:** West side of the 1800 block of McGee Street, view northwest.
- 12 of 12:** West side of the 1800 block of McGee Street, view southwest.

## Figure Log:

- Figure 1.** Automobile-related occupants in the McGee Street Automotive Historic District. *Source: Polk's City Directories 1918-1977. Page 18.*
- Figure 2.** Context Map. *Source: Google Maps, 2017.*
- Figure 3.** District Boundaries and Contributing/Non-contributing Resources.
- Figure 4.** District Boundaries and Coordinates. *Source: OpenStreetMap.org 2017*
- Figure 5.** Photo Map. *Source: OpenStreetMap.org 2017*
- Figure 6.** The 1909 Sanborn map shows multi-family and single-family dwellings lining the 1700 and 1800 blocks of McGee Street. *Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, vol. 3, Sheet 314, 1909.*
- Figure 7.** 1901 McGee Street with large storefront windows on the ground. *Source: Kansas City 1940 Tax Assessment Photograph, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.*
- Figure 8.** McGee Street in 1922 view is looking north from the viaduct immediately south of the intersection of McGee Street and East 20<sup>th</sup> Street. *Source: Judge Elmo M. Hargrave Photographic Collection, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.*

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Jackson County, Missouri

Name of Property

County and State

- Figure 9.** Elevator shaft and vehicular entrances on the rear elevation of 1727 and 1729 McGee Street. View southwest. *Photo by Brad Finch, f-stop Photography, July 2017.*
- Figure 10.** 1801 McGee Street had large storefront glazing on the ground floor showroom space. *Source: Kansas City 1940 Tax Assessment Photograph, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.*
- Figure 11.** The 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows the 1700 and 1800 blocks of McGee Street lined with commercial buildings that abut to create a continuous streetwall. The Kansas City Star Building occupies the western side of the 1700 block. *Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, vol. 3, Sheet 314, 1951.*
- Figure 12.** A 1982 photo shows 1701 McGee Street with storefront infill after the Kansas City Star newspaper purchased the building in 1968. *Source: Midtown Survey Final Report Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri, 1981-85. Kansas City Landmarks Commission, Kansas City, Missouri, 2008, survey form JA-A3-008-1219.*
- Figure 13.** A 1982 photo shows 1717, 1721, and 17 McGee Street. The Kansas City Star altered the storefront of 1717 McGee Street. 1721 is still an auto-related business and a livestock supply company occupies 1725 McGee Street. *Source: Midtown Survey Final Report Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri, 1981-85. Kansas City Landmarks Commission, Kansas City, Missouri, 2008, survey form JA-A3-008-1220.*

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

## SUMMARY

The McGee Street Automotive Historic District is a distinct commercial section of Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri one half mile south of the center of downtown Kansas City (*Figure 2*). Thirty-three (33) resources line the three-block stretch of the north-south McGee Street and form a cohesive district of early-twentieth century automotive-related commercial buildings (*Figure 1, page 18*). The district boundaries are East 17<sup>th</sup> Street on the north, East 20<sup>th</sup> Street on the south, McGee Street and the alley between McGee Street and Grand Boulevard on the west, and the alley between McGee Street and Oak Street on the east (*Figures 3, 4, and 5*). Three resources previously listed in the National Register, the Kirkwood Building at 1731-41 McGee Street (NR listed 2001) (*Photo 4*), the Interstate Securities Building at 215 East 18<sup>th</sup> Street (NR listed 2017) (*Photo 12*), and the McGee Street Automotive Service Building at 1901 McGee Street (NR listed 2008) (*Photo 8*) are within the district boundaries.<sup>1</sup> Commercial development surrounds the District. The buildings in the District date from circa 1912 to 1950.<sup>2</sup> Some surface parking lots replaced buildings, but the extant buildings mostly abut each other to form a continuous streetwall separated from the two-lane road by concrete sidewalks. The buildings are one to three-story masonry commercial buildings with flat or barrel-vaulted roofs. Brick and terra cotta are common cladding. The one and two-part commercial block forms have well-defined ground floor storefronts. Many retain vehicular door openings communicating their original function and twenty-two buildings are contributing resources. Two narrow alleys on the east and west sides of the District provide access to the rear vehicular entrances to these buildings and are identified as contributing structures. Portions of these alleys retain their historic brick paving. The non-contributing resources include two buildings that lack sufficient integrity due to alterations, three parking lot structures that have not reached the fifty-year threshold, and or lack historical significance, and one vacant site (described below but not included in the resource count) where a building was demolished in 2016 (*Figure 3*). Together, the District represents a cohesive grouping of commercial resources constructed and used for the sale and service of automobiles during the early development of the automobile industry.

## ELABORATION

### LOCATION AND SETTING

The survey area is a three-block corridor along the north-south McGee Street one-half mile south of Kansas City's downtown core. Numbered streets run east-west and named streets intersect on a north-south axis to create an orthogonal street grid. Interstate 670 separates the survey area from the downtown central business district. McGee Street is discontinuous where it terminates at the southern boundary of the highway corridor. It continues into downtown north of East 13<sup>th</sup> Street and the large-scale Sprint Center arena. The Kansas City Star Plant building, constructed in 2004, occupies two blocks on the east side of McGee Street from East 15<sup>th</sup> Street to East 17<sup>th</sup> Street south of the highway. This two-block area was historically similar to the current survey area prior to the construction of the *Kansas City Star* Printing Plant. The 1911 Kansas City Star Building and its associated surface parking lots occupy the block

<sup>1</sup> Susan Richards Johnson and Nicole M. Sabatini, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, "Kirkwood Building," February 2001; Elizabeth Rosin, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, "1901 McGee Street Automotive Service Building," December 2008; Rachel Nugent and Alison Dunleavy, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, "Interstate Securities Building," April, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> The only resources that post-date 1950 are parking lots that replaced buildings. The district was infilled by 1950 and no new buildings were completed after that date.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

bounded by East 17<sup>th</sup> Street, East 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Grand Boulevard, and McGee Street. A surface parking lot fills the 1900 block on the west side of McGee Street.

The east side of McGee Street between East 17<sup>th</sup> Street and East 20<sup>th</sup> Street and the west side of the 1800 block are lined with one- to three-story commercial buildings that create a streetwall separated from the street by a concrete sidewalk (*Photo 1*). The density is such that buildings abut each other with the exception of three non-historic surface parking lots that create narrow voids between buildings (*Photo 3*). Two buildings have deeper setbacks as part of their historic designs that allow parking in front of the buildings (*Photo 9*). Storefronts face McGee Street and alleys (**contributing structures**) provide vehicular access to rear entrances.

East 20<sup>th</sup> Street marks the end of the extant historic commercial character along this corridor. The McGee Street viaduct crosses railroad tracks south of East 20<sup>th</sup> Street and surface parking lines that portion of the road. Crown Center, south of the railroad tracks, is a circa-1970 large-scale mixed-use development and is notably different in scale and character from the historic commercial corridor to the north.

#### RESOURCES

Dating from 1912 to the mid-twentieth century, most of the resources in the McGee Street Automotive Historic District are simple one- to three-story commercial buildings. The traditional building material is brick. Of the thirty-two resources in the District, twenty-four are contributing, five are non-contributing, and three are previously listed in the National Register. The buildings within the District share physical or associative characteristics that link them to their original function. The two contributing alleys also retain their historic function, providing access to rear vehicular entrances, and some of their historic materials

The buildings in the McGee Street area are predominantly commercial buildings. The majority of resources exhibit two building forms: one-part commercial blocks and two-part commercial blocks. Most resources are brick with some terra cotta cladding or stone trim (*Photo 2*). Rear elevations are typically brick, clay tile, or concrete masonry unit. They primarily have flat roofs and rectangular plans oriented with the short end facing the Street. Two buildings have barrel roofs. A defining feature of the early commercial property types is a well-defined ground floor "storefront" that distinctly separates it from the upper stories and reflects a difference in public and private uses (*Photo 5*). In the case of auto-related commercial buildings, the first floor often served as a public retail space while upper stories were storage, offices, or service, necessitating the installation of large elevators.

Depending on the date of construction, structural elements include concrete frames, steel members, and concrete block to support automobiles and or machinery on upper floors. Similarly, storefronts incorporate combinations of brick, glass, metal, and wood. Banded windows on upper floors and transoms topping storefronts are common features (*Photo 7*). Terra cotta, stone, and brick banding, terra cotta inlays, parapets, and cornices are decorative elements applied to the restrained commercial style buildings (*Photo 11*).

Stylistic treatments for the commercial properties in the survey area reflect architectural styles popular in the era in which they were built. While simple vernacular design defines the vast majority of the buildings in the historic district, several resources exhibit formal architecture styling primarily reflecting *Late*



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

*Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Revivals.* Executed in permanent masonry materials, the buildings are primarily commercial blocks with applied ornament. Upper story windows, parapets, engaged columns, and masonry surfaces are common elements that display stylistic influences, mostly in the form of applied materials with historical forms. Arched windows, inlaid geometric shapes, and contrasting masonry banding and texture are common devices. Ten resources distributed throughout the survey area express elements of a revival style. An additional two resources express elements of the Modern Movement style (*Photo 10*), while the remainder lack any characteristics tying them to an architectural style and instead display vernacular commercial forms such as one and two-part commercial blocks.

**INTEGRITY**

The McGee Street Automotive Historic District retains sufficient architectural integrity to convey the period of time and historical associations for which they are significant. The resources within the District and the streetscapes they create define the setting and visual character of the historic district. The commercial buildings were constructed from 1912 to 1950 and retain the majority of their historic materials. The historic district had a relatively short development period and was largely built-out by 1930. Limited infill and loss of historic fabric maintain a historic streetscape in its original location and commercial, urban setting (*Photo 11*).

While storefront alterations were common for commercial building in constant use throughout the twentieth century, the resources in the McGee Street Automotive Historic District largely retain their historic configurations and many still have the dimensions of vehicular entrances (*Photo 8*). Elevator penthouses and vehicular entry doors are visible on many of the resources, particularly on the rear elevations (*Figure 9*). The combination of formal commercial buildings with decorative terra cotta ornament mixed with smaller utilitarian buildings with vehicular entrance bays incorporated into storefronts communicates the corridor's historic function as an automobile row containing dealership showrooms and service businesses clustered together. The alleys on either side of the District provide direct access to the rear vehicular entrances of the buildings.

The period of significance begins in 1912 with the estimated construction date of the first extant auto-related commercial building and ends in 1968. The period of significance extends through the mid-twentieth century after new construction largely ceased, but automobile-related businesses occupied the majority of the buildings, maintaining its automotive character. In 1968, the Kansas City Star newspaper company began purchasing multiple lots in the district, signaling a change in use from a majority automobile-related to more diverse commercial enterprises. Some alterations to storefronts occurred during the period of significance as building owners sought to modernize storefronts or made alterations to accommodate specific tenants through the mid-twentieth century.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**DISTRICT PROPERTIES<sup>3</sup>**

1701 McGee Street  
Photo 1

Contributing Building  
1916, alt. c.1947, 1968, c. 1990

This one-story brick building has a rectangular plan and a flat roof with a parapet. Five bays organize the front (west) elevation. Raised columns with terra cotta coping define each bay at the roofline. A peaked parapet rises over the second bay. A glazed white terra cotta stringcourse spans the west elevation and the first bay of the north elevation under the roofline. Glazed white terra cotta bands surround five storefront openings on the west and the first bay of the north elevation. Non-historic wood storefronts fill the historic openings. While the storefront materials are not historic, they retain the historic proportions of transoms, display windows, and entrances. Brick pilasters define seven bays on the north elevation. Non-historic windows fill historic openings on the north elevation. Brick soldier course and concrete sills line window openings. The building was constructed circa 1916. Automobile-related companies occupied the building during most of the twentieth century. H. A. Dougherty Motor Company was a tenant from 1918 through 1923. Cleveland Automobile Sales Company, Brown Auto Company, Norris Motor Company, Inc. occupied the building during the 1920s. Downtown Buick Company Autos was a long-term tenant from 1934 until 1952 when Hoffman Buick Company is listed as the tenant. The building was vacant after Hoffmann Buick Company moved out in 1959. In 1968, the historic window openings were infilled with green pebble aggregate that has since been removed (*Figure 12*).<sup>4</sup> The Kansas City Star occupied the building during the 1970s. The building retains the large display window openings and vehicular entrances that convey its significance as an early automobile-related commercial building. 1701 McGee Street has good integrity and is recommended as a contributing resource to the historic district.

1717 McGee Street

Non-contributing Building  
1912 altered in c.2015

The building at 1717 McGee Street was originally constructed along with 1721 as one building. The 1982 survey treats the two buildings as one resource because they were built as one building. They are divided into two resources in this document because the resources read as two separate buildings. Each side has had different alterations that have historically appeared as separate buildings.<sup>5</sup> This one-story brick building has a rectangular plan and a flat roof with a parapet. A blond brick pilaster defines the north end of the front (west) façade while a blond brick band frames the historic storefront opening. Red brick fills the space between the pilasters and the storefront opening. Non-historic wood paneling covers the parapet. A non-historic wood structure with a gabled roof rises from the north end of the parapet. Non-historic wood storefront frame fills the historic storefront opening. The building has undergone several alterations. A circa 1968 alteration filled in the historic storefront between the pilasters with the red and blond brick, which was then filled with aggregate panels. A circa 2012 renovation altered the storefront

<sup>3</sup> Information for individual properties, including dates of construction and ownership information, was obtained from *Midtown Survey Final Report Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri 1981-85*, (Kansas City: Kansas City Landmarks Commission, 2008) and Rosin Preservation, "McGee Street Historic Resources Survey, Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri, 2017. Additionally, building permits stored at the City of Kansas City and City Directories provided information about construction dates, occupants, and alterations. These sources are all included in the bibliography.

<sup>4</sup> Building Permit #42640 on file at the Office of Historic Preservation, City of Kansas City, Kansas City, Missouri.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

and parapet by adding the wood storefront frame and vertical wood paneling. Alterations to the parapet and storefront of 1717 McGee compromise its ability to convey its significance as an early twentieth century automobile-related commercial building. The resource is recommended as non-contributing to the potential historic district.

1721 McGee Street

Contributing Building  
1912 altered in c.1951

Architect Charles C. Smith designed and built 1717-1723 McGee for the Belfast Investment Co. in 1912 to house automobile-related businesses. The 1982 survey treats the two buildings as one resource because they were built as one building. They are divided into two resources in this document because the resources read as two separate buildings. Each side has had different alterations that have historically appeared as separate buildings (*Figure 13*). This one-story brick building has a rectangular plan and a flat roof with a parapet. Plywood covers the storefront frame and at the parapet. Historic painted brick pilasters are visible on each end of the façade. A metal overhead rolling door with glazing fills the north bay. A band of rectangular metal windows with operable middle sash top fixed aluminum storefront windows and a non-historic metal slab door are in the south bay. A slightly raised parapet has metal coping. Noyes-Kill Motor Company was an early tenant in 1918 and later tenants included automobile accessory dealers and auto body and repair services through the 1970s. A permit from 1951 indicates work was done to repair fire damage.<sup>6</sup> This resource was constructed as a single building with 1721-1723 McGee. Deed research indicates the buildings were on two separate parcels by 1943. The current appearance of separate storefronts and their uses are distinctive. The building retains the configuration of the vehicular entrance and storefront display windows that convey integrity and communicate its significance as an early automobile-related commercial building. 1721 McGee Street is a contributing resource.

1725 McGee Street

Contributing Building  
1917

Architect A. J. Raney and builder George E. Bowling constructed 1725 McGee for owner Frank Bayhyot in 1917. This one-story brick building has a rectangular plan and a flat roof with a shallow peaked parapet. A single cut stone band frames the two bays that organize the west elevation. A storefront with non-historic metal frame, tall fixed-windows and a transom fills the south bay. A brick column separates the bays. A metal door with glazing and glass transom fills the north bay. Soldier row brick coursing creates a rectangular panel above both bays and outlining the elevation. Cut stone coping lines the parapet and two raised columns on either side.

Automobile accessory companies, a restaurant, the E. J. Reardon Wholesale Candy company, and a battery warehouse occupied the space during the mid-twentieth century. The Midwest Battery Warehouse, Inc. occupied the building when the Kansas City Star purchased the property in 1968, but it is unclear if

<sup>6</sup> The 1940 Tax Assessor's photograph documented 1717 and 1721 McGee Street as two separate buildings. *Kansas City 1940 Tax Assessment Photograph, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.*

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

that company was automobile-related. By 1971, Franklin Laboratories Inc. occupied the building and the Kansas City Star is listed as occupant in 1973.<sup>7</sup> The building retains the configuration of openings and simple parapet ornament that convey integrity and communicate its significance as an early automobile-related commercial building. The building at 1725 McGee Street is recommended as a contributing resource.

1727-1729 McGee Street  
Photo 2

Contributing Building  
1914

The building at 1717-1729 currently occupies two parcels, but was constructed as a single building. The front façade retains unifying design themes and the building reads as a single building with a single cornice stretching across two storefronts, unlike the buildings at 1717 and 1721 McGee that read as two separate buildings. This two-story building has a rectangular plan and a flat roof with a parapet. Herringbone brick clads the pilasters that define two bays at the first and second stories. A bracketed cornice spans the front façade below the parapet. Terra cotta coping tops the parapet. 1727 McGee Street is the north half of the building. The storefront is infilled with brick and four fixed-light windows and a recessed entry. The alteration occurred after the 1982 survey documented the building. A historic transom with grid pattern tops the storefront. Bands of header and stretcher bricks frame header brick panels in the spandrel area and at the parapet. Three sets of historic wood windows pierce the second story. Two fixed transoms with a wood mullion top three vertical lights with wood muntins. Brick pilasters with lozenge terra cotta tiles separate window sets. Terra cotta banding forms a continuous sill. The south storefront at 1729 has the same configuration with non-historic storefront glazing, an offset entry with a transom and sidelight, and a glazed transom topping the entire storefront opening. Three non-historic windows fill historic openings on the second floor. The aluminum windows have two horizontal fixed lights topping three vertical lights and two horizontal lights. Brick pilasters with lozenge terra cotta tiles separate window sets. Terra cotta banding forms a continuous sill. Bands of header and stretcher bricks frame header brick panels in the spandrel area and at the parapet.

Owner W. S. Epperson hired architect Smith, Rea & Lovitt and builder Hucke, Sexton C & B Co. to construct the building in 1914. Automobile-related companies occupied the building until 1933 when a coffee company moved in. The J B Osgood Coffee Company occupied the building until 1964 when Duncan Coffee Company moved in. The Pub restaurant occupied the space in the 1970s. The building retains integrity and communicates its significance as an early automobile-related commercial building. The rear vehicular entrances attached to large freight elevators are a custom feature associated with its design specifically for automobile-related commerce. 1727-1729 McGee Street is a contributing resource.

1733 McGee Street

Non-contributing parking lot  
c.1990

<sup>6</sup> Building Permit #31431A on file at the Office of Historic Preservation, City of Kansas City, Kansas City, Missouri.

<sup>7</sup> Polk City Directories, various years.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 7

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

1733 is a surface parking lot that replaced an earlier commercial building circa 1990. This resource is a non-historic structure that is not related to the context of the surrounding resources. It is less than fifty years of age and is not eligible for listing in the National Register, either as an individual resource or as part of a historic district. It is a non-contributing resource.

1737-41 McGee Street  
Photos 3 and 4

Individually NR-listed  
c.1919

Prominent Kansas City firm Wight and Wight designed the streamlined Neoclassical style building to accommodate two separate automobile dealerships, the Girdley Motor Company and the Indiana Truck Company in 1919. The building remained occupied by automobile-related companies until 1939.<sup>8</sup> The four-story concrete frame and structural clay tile building has a concrete foundation and a flat roof with a parapet. Brick, set in a decorative pattern of header brick, clads the exterior with cut stone and terra cotta detailing. The first story has a recessed canted corner entry while brick pilasters define the bays. Each bay has an aluminum storefront with a banded transom. The bays on the second, third and fourth stories have banded one-over-one windows in sets of three and four. Banded cut stone tops first and fourth story windows. The Kirkwood Building is individually listed on the NR (2001).

1801 McGee Street  
Photo 5

Contributing Building  
c.1917

J. T. Bird commissioned architect Henry F. Hoit to design the building at 1801 McGee and contractors Patti-Moore Co. completed construction in 1917. This two-story brick building has a rectangular plan and a flat roof. Non-historic metal transoms top divided non-historic metal storefront windows on the first floor in each bay. Brick columns separate bays. Three bays organize the first story of the west elevation. Transoms top fixed, divided storefront windows on the first story. Bands of non-historic fixed aluminum eight-light windows fill the six bays on the north elevation. Non-historic fixed aluminum four-light windows fill the historic masonry openings in the seven bays on the west elevation. Soldier course brick bands form continuous lintels on the first and second stories. The O'Malley Ford Sales and Service Company leased the building and used the first floor for sales and the second floor for service repairs until 1920. No information is available for the occupants during the 1920s. From the 1930s until the 1950s, Central Pontiac occupied the space. Herb Miller Pontiac and Joe Strick Pontiac were tenants in the early 1950s. Ellfeldt Machinery and Supply Company moved in in 1957 and remained until 1975. The company produced industrial metal parts for machinists. The building retains integrity and communicates its significance as an early automobile-related commercial building. The recessed vehicle entries on the rear elevation represent a design feature associated with the building's automobile-related businesses. 1801 McGee Street is recommended as a contributing resource.

1809 McGee Street

Contributing Building

<sup>8</sup> Susan Richards Johnson and Nicole M. Sabatini. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, "Kirkwood Building," February 2001.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 8

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

c.1912

H. B. Sappe hired architect J. C. Bracklen to design the one-story public garage in 1912. This one-story brick building has a rectangular plan and a flat roof. Two bays organize the west elevation. A metal overhead rolling garage door fills the north bay. Diagonal wood infill covered in a painted mural, two narrow fixed windows, and a metal door with glazing and a glass transom fill the south bay. A full-height banded vertical brick pier separates the two bays and brick piers project from each end of the building. Stone coping lines the parapet. Tenants were various automobile accessory and repair shops until 1947 when it became the used car department for Central Pontiac which was in the larger showroom building immediately north at 1801 McGee Street. The storefront was altered in 1947. Auto parts suppliers moved in in 1957 and the building served as an auto product warehouse from 1962 until 1974. The building retains integrity and communicates its significance as an early automobile-related commercial building. Despite alterations to the storefront, the historic configuration of a vehicle entry, a large storefront, and a main entry with transom remain intact and recognizable as a retail space related to the automobile industry. 1809 McGee Street is a contributing resource.

1813 McGee Street

Contributing Building  
c.1919 altered 2012

George M. Bliss Construction Company built 1813 McGee Street in c.1919. This two-story brick building has a rectangular plan and a flat roof. Full-height brick corner piers rise above a parapet. Stone coping stops the roofline. Two bays organize the first story. The north bay has a non-historic glass transom with metal muntins topping a recessed non-historic aluminum storefront with glazing and a glazed aluminum door. The south bay has scored concrete surrounding a fixed window with a horizontal aluminum muntin. Sailor course brick bands create geometric ornament above first and second story windows. Diamond-shaped stone inlays are geometrically spaced above second story windows. The storefront was altered circa 2012. The C & R Used Ford Car Company leased the building in 1920. Several used car dealerships occupied the space during the 1920s. An auto paint company, auto supply company, and a tool company used the building until the early 1960s. There are no city directory listings for this building after 1962. The building retains integrity and communicates its significance as an early automobile-related commercial building through the retention of the historic configuration of its storefront, transom, and second-story banded fenestration as well as the utilitarian rear vehicle doors that served its auto-related function. 1813 McGee Street is recommended as a contributing resource.

1817 McGee Street

Contributing Building  
1914

Physician Herbert G. Tureman developed the building at 1817 McGee in 1914. A. J. Raney was the architect and Long Construction Co. was the builder. This two-story brick building has a rectangular plan and a flat roof. The front façade has one wide bay at each story. A transom tops storefront glazing and a wood door with glazing on the first story. The wood frame is historic while the glazing has been replaced. At the second story, an original single, long arched window with wood mullions fills the bay. The opening has a terra cotta lugsill and terra cotta arch with an exaggerated keystone. Terra cotta coping lines a

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 9

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

shaped parapet above a tall but simple terra cotta cornice. Howard Motors Company and MacDowell Motor Car Company were early tenants between 1918 and 1921. Auto parts businesses used the building from the 1940s through the 1970s. The building retains integrity and communicates its significance as an early automobile-related commercial building through its retention of the historic storefront configuration and rear utilitarian features to move cars within the building. 1817 McGee Street is a contributing resource.

1819 McGee Street

Contributing Building  
1917

Owner Paul H. Linn hired W. H. Johns as architect and builder to construct 1819 McGee Street in 1917. This one-story brick building has a rectangular plan and a flat roof. Two bays organize the west elevation. The north bay is a recessed storefront with a non-historic metal transom and a metal door with glazing that maintains the dimensions of the historic garage door opening. The south bay is a non-historic metal storefront with a transom above the historic stone kneewall that maintains the historic storefront opening dimensions. The large recessed opening in the north bay historically contained a vehicular entrance and although the storefront system has been replaced, the east bay historically contained the display window. Brick courses and inlaid geometric stone ornament the brick parapet. Stone coping tops the parapet. 1819 McGee housed automobile and general machinery storage, sales, and repair businesses from the 1920s through the 1970s. The building retains integrity and communicates its significance as an early automobile-related commercial building. The alterations to this façade do not compromise the ability of the building to convey its historic auto-related function and the era of construction. 1819 McGee Street is a contributing resource.

1821 McGee Street  
Photo 6

Contributing Building  
1917

1821 McGee Street was constructed in 1912 for the Belfast Investment Company. W. Owen was the architect and C. C. Smith was the builder. The original tenants were automobile dealers Hall Brothers and Reeves.<sup>9</sup> Automobile-related companies continued to occupy the space including the Paul M Smith auto repair shop in 1937, and Automotive Wholesale Auto Parts from 1945 until 1974. This one-story brick building has a rectangular plan and a flat roof. The storefront is a circa 2012 update that maintains the arrangement of an earlier 1961 alteration to the storefront.<sup>10</sup> The 1961 alteration created a horizontal storefront atop a brick kneewall, a recessed entry in the south bay, and a bay of decorative concrete blocks on the north bay where a historic vehicular entry is visible on a 1940 photo of the building next door. That configuration remains, but the north bay is currently infilled with horizontal wood siding (*Photo 6*).

The solid brick parapet has vertical contrasting course brick dividing it into five sections. Full-height brick columns rise on the north and south end of the front elevation. The wide storefront opening fills the area between the columns. Wood planks clad the north end of the opening and the bulkhead below the band of

<sup>9</sup> *Midtown Survey Final Report Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri 1981-85*, (Kansas City: Kansas City Landmarks Commission, 2008), JA-AS-008-1234

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 10

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

aluminum storefront windows. A recessed entry with an aluminum door with glazing and a transom fills the south end of the storefront. The building retains integrity and communicates its significance as an early automobile-related commercial building. The storefront retains the historic configuration of display windows, recessed entry and parapet. Its rear vehicle door and storefront convey its historic auto-related function and the era of construction. 1821 McGee Street is a contributing resource.

1827 McGee Street  
Photo 7

Contributing Building  
1914

1827 McGee Street was constructed in 1914 as a two-story building for George Hoffman and George Bowling, two of Kansas City's early real estate developers. The third story was added in 1916.<sup>11</sup> This three-story brick building has a rectangular plan and a flat roof. Two bays organize the first and second story. White terra cotta frames two arches that terminate in concrete piers at ground level. The double height arches have an engaged center pilaster and spandrels separating the first and second stories. Decorative keystones and textured molding top each arch. A 1953 remodel removed windows and replaced them with glass block. The storefront in the south bay was likely also part of this same alteration. Storefront glazing above glass block, a recessed entry with a wood door with glazing and a glass block transom fill the south bay on the first story. Glass block with metal hopper windows fill the arch in the second story of the south bay. Glass block with banded metal hopper windows fill the first and second story of the north bay. A terra cotta cornice spans the elevation above the second story. Terra cotta framing organizes two bays on the third story. Glass block surrounds banded metal hopper windows in both bays. A terra cotta cornice spans the two bays underneath a raised parapet with terra cotta coping. A rear elevator shaft rises above the rear elevation (*Figure 9*). Republic Rubber Company occupied the building from 1918 until 1920 when General Tire and Rubber Company moved in. The building was vacant during the Depression in the 1930s and a laboratory supply company occupied the space from the 1940s until 1965 when an auction company moved in. The space became vacant in 1967. The building served as an automobile-related commercial space during the 1920s and communicates its intended use with its large storefront and rear utility elevator. 1827 McGee Street is a contributing resource.

1829 McGee Street  
Photo 7

Contributing Building  
1912

Belfast Investment Company hired C. C. Smith to construct the building at 1829 McGee Street in 1912. 1829 McGee Street is a one-story brick building with a rectangular plan and a flat roof. The building represents the north portion of a larger building (1833 McGee directly to the south), but each storefront has a separate owner and the two addresses are on individual parcels. Brick piers separate three bays on the storefront. The north bay has storefront glazing and a metal door with glazing and a transom light. The middle bay has storefront glazing and the south bay contains glazing and a recessed entry with a metal door with glazing and a transom. The current storefront and flat parapet are a 1965 alteration. Automobile sales and service businesses were the primary tenants. Tire sales and transmission repair companies used the space through the 1970s. The altered storefront maintains the streetwall of similar scale and type

<sup>11</sup> *Midtown Survey Final Report Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri 1981-85*, (Kansas City: Kansas City Landmarks Commission, 2008), JA-AS-008-1236



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 11

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

of commercial buildings and does not compromise the ability of the building to convey its historic auto-related function and the era of construction. 1829 McGee Street is recommended a contributing resource.

1833 McGee Street  
Photo 7

Contributing Building  
1912

Belfast Investment Company hired C. C. Smith to construct the building at 1833 McGee Street in 1912. 1833 McGee Street is a one-story brick and stucco building. The rectangular plan building has a flat roof and a stepped parapet clad in stucco. The building is attached to 1829 McGee Street immediately to the north, but is a separate parcel. Storefronts with glazing and a transom flank a canted, recessed corner entry with a metal door with glazing. A metal mullion delineates a north bay that was historically a garage door opening. A 1936 alteration remodeled the storefront glass and wood. The Locomobile Company of Missouri, Gridley Motor Company Service, and Koup Motor company were tenants between 1918 and 1922. An automobile glass company, auto repair shop and body shop were long-term tenants from 1937 until 1958. Millard Auto Parts supply company occupied the space through the 1970s. The building retains integrity and communicates its significance as an early automobile-related commercial building. The building retains its historic configuration of the storefront with a canted entry, transom, and parapet. A vertical mullion maintains the dimension of the historic vehicle bay by delineating that dimension in the storefront glazing. 1833 McGee Street is a contributing resource.

1901 McGee Street  
Photo 8

Individually NR-listed  
1912

The Belfast investment Company constructed the building at 1901 McGee Street in 1912. 1901 McGee Street is a two-story brick building with a rectangular plan and a flat roof. Storefront glazing on the first story flanks a canted corner entry with a wood door with glazing and a transom. Three bays organize the west elevation on the first story. A non-historic paneled overhead rolling door with glazing fills the south bay. Storefront glazing with piers organize the middle and north bay. A spandrel clad with black structural glass spans the length of the elevation above the storefront. Six bays organize the second story on the west elevation. Three two-over-two windows with a smaller third light on top are banded between brick piers. Stucco clads the parapet. A cornice projects below the parapet. A series of auto-related businesses occupied the space for five decades. Until the 1940s, the building contained two distinct storefronts with two separate businesses. An auto dealer typically occupied the larger corner storefront while a smaller ancillary business such as an auto parts supplier occupied the south storefront. McGee Radio, a wholesale supplier of radios and radio parts moved in in 1954 and remained in the space until the 1980s. The Automotive Service Building at 1901 McGee Street is individually listed on the NR (2008).

1909 McGee Street

Contributing Building  
1917 alt. 1935, 1981

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 12

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Owners Simpson and Lockett hired architect Raney and Botkin architects and builder George E. Bowling and Son to design and construct 1909 McGee Street in 1917. This one-story brick building has a rectangular plan and a flat roof with a parapet. Two bays organize the west elevation. Contrasting buff brick in a soldier course lines each bay and surrounds the top and sides of the front elevation. An infilled transom tops an overhead rolling garage door, a storefront window, and a metal entry door with glazing in the north bay. Storefront glazing with an infilled transom and a metal entry door with glazing fills the south bay. A 1935 remodel altered the front glass and wood storefront. A metal panel bulkhead replaced glass block below the south storefront after 1981. Various auto-related businesses occupied the space until 1947 when a printing company moved in. It operated as an equipment service and supply display room in the 1960s and 1970s. Minor alterations such as infill of the transom do not compromise the building's ability to convey its significance as an early automobile-related commercial building. 1909 McGee Street is a contributing resource.

1913 McGee Street  
Photo 9

Contributing Building  
1934

Owner H. V. Jones & Company hired builder R.D. Shore to construct 1913 McGee Street for a brake testing business in 1934. This one-story brick building has a rectangular footprint and a flat roof. The building is set back approximately 50 feet from McGee Street and an asphalt surface parking lot fills the western portion of the lot in front of the building. The parking lot is associated with the building and provides access into vehicle bays. Four bays organize the west elevation. Paneled overhead rolling doors with glazing fill each bay. Brick piers topped by a soldier course row separate each bay. An arched window with decorative muntins pierces the parapet wall. Wood clads the stepped parapet. Masonry units clad the side and rear elevations. A set of wood pocket doors with glazing access a vehicle bay from the rear elevation.

Kansas City Brake Service Company Inc. has occupied the building since its construction. The building retains its auto bays that convey its design and function as an auto repair shop. Multiple bays in the front and a larger historic opening from the rear elevation provide access to the utilitarian interior space and communicate its significance as an early automobile-related commercial building. 1913 McGee Street is a contributing resource.

1917 McGee Street

Non-contributing Structure  
2007

1917 McGee Street is a surface parking lot. An 1887 residence converted to commercial use in 1922 was extant in 1981, but was demolished by 2007. The structure does not represent the area's historic character and is recommended as a non-contributing resource.

1921 McGee Street  
Photo 10

Contributing Building  
1919, 1920

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 13

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Construction occurred in two phases. Owner C. Manhein hired builder William W. Hermon to construct a one-story building in 1919. A remodel added a second story addition in 1920. This two-story brick building has a rectangular plan and a flat roof. Two bays organize the first story. A brick pier separates a storefront in the north bay with transom and a storefront with a metal entry door with glazing and a transom in the south bay. The storefront is a post 1982 alteration, but maintains basic configurations of transoms and storefront glazing with entry in the south bay that is visible on the 1982 survey form.<sup>12</sup> Concrete footings ornament brick piers at ground level. A horizontal beam tops the transoms. Contrasting brick courses surround the second story parapet and two metal fixed-pane windows with casement sidelights pierce the second floor. The second-floor windows were a post-1940 alteration. The first tenant was Van Tire Company. Stag Sales Company, a beer distributor occupied the building in 1940. Alterations to the second story fenestration do not compromise the building's ability to convey its significance. The historic configuration of storefronts, entry, and transoms is intact. The building retains integrity and communicates its significance as an early automobile-related commercial building. 1921 McGee Street is a contributing resource.

1925 McGee Street  
Photo 10

Contributing Building  
1919

Owner Emma F. Ade and builder and architect Carl Ade constructed the building at 1925 McGee Street in 1919. This one-story brick building has a rectangular plan and a flat roof with a parapet. Concrete footings ornament brick piers surrounding a single bay storefront. Storefront glazing tops a brick kneewall. A metal entry door with glazing and an infilled transom is on the north side of the storefront. A wood-shingle awning tops the storefront. Inset stone ornaments corners of contrasting brick courses at each end of the parapet. Stone coping lines the parapet. The storefront is a post 1982 alteration, but maintains the historic configuration of the off-set entry in the north bay next to the storefront glazing. The wood shingle awning covers the historic transom and a sign covers brick panels with terra cotta inlays on the parapet. Gilfillan Brothers Smelting and Refining Company were the first tenants. Paint companies, battery companies, bearing service, and tractor parts dealers were other tenants in the mid twentieth century. L & W Crankshaft & Bearing Service moved in in 1949 and remained in the space through the 1970s. The building's form, materials, storefront configuration and rear vehicle entry are intact. The building retains integrity and communicates its significance as an early automobile-related commercial building. 1925 McGee Street is a contributing resource.

1927-A McGee Street  
Photo 10

Non-Contributing Building  
1948

1927 McGee Street is a two-story brick building with a rectangular plan and a flat roof. The building is a 1948 addition to a larger 1918 commercial building that is no longer extant. The building is set-back from McGee Street and historically had surface parking in front of its west elevation (now a grassy lot). Four bays organize the first story of the west elevation. Window openings are currently covered with wood. A

<sup>12</sup> *Midtown Survey Final Report Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri 1981-85*, (Kansas City: Kansas City Landmarks Commission, 2008), JA-AS-008-1245

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 14

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

non-historic entry door with an infill transom and a glass block window with concrete banding sill fills the south bay. Continuous concrete banding creates a sill and tops four sets of metal one-over-one paired windows on the second story under a brick parapet with terra cotta coping. The original portion of this building was constructed in 1918 and was occupied by H&R Sales Company and R B Auto Repair Shop. Other auto-related businesses included Metz Battery & Electric Service Company and H J Byrne Service Station during the 1920s. In 1947, Myers Motor Equipment Company moved into the building that is no longer extant and constructed the current building as an addition in 1948. Its associated main building was construction in 1918 as part of the surrounding development of automobile row, but the loss of the primary building makes it a non-contributing resource.

1927-B McGee Street

Non-contributing Site (not included in resource count)  
2016 c.

This resource is a vacant lot that is not related to the context of the surrounding resources. It is less than fifty years of age and is not eligible for listing in the National Register, either as an individual resource or as part of a historic district. It is a non-contributing resource within the district. The building that previously occupied this lot was connected to the extant building at 1927 McGee Street and was demolished circa 2016.

215 E. 18<sup>th</sup> Street  
Photo 12

Individually NR-listed  
1950

Edward Tanner and Associates designed the two-story office building for the Interstate Securities Company, an automobile-related finance company. The S. Patti Construction Company completed the building in 1950. This two-story rectangular building has a concrete foundation, tapestry brick cladding, and a flat tar and gravel roof. A flat parapet with cut stone coping caps the building. The primary elevation faces north and is three bays wide. On the first story, three steel windows with center pairs of casement sashes, fixed upper sashes, and lower awning sashes, and a stone surround fill the outer two bays. This window configuration is used for all the windows in the building except the stairwell in the southwest corner. Fluted stone mullions separate the windows within each stone surround. A recessed main entrance with a glazed aluminum door and large glazed aluminum transom and sidelights fill the opening in the center bay, which has a slightly taller stone surround. The first and second-story fenestration on the east elevation is similar to that on the primary elevation. On the first story, three multi-light steel windows with a stone surround fill each bay. Fluted stone mullions separate the windows in each bay. After the Interstate Securities Company vacated the building in 1960, it changed hands a number of times between 1963 and 2002.<sup>13</sup> The Interstate Securities Building at 215 E. 18<sup>th</sup> Street is individually NR-listed (2017) under Criterion C for ARCHITECTURE. Designed by prominent local architect Edward Tanner in 1950, the Interstate Securities Building represents Tanner's first Modern Movement design and marks the transition of the architect's commercial designs from historical revival styles to a Modern Movement aesthetic.

<sup>13</sup> Rachel Nugent and Alison Dunleavy, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, "Interstate Securities Building," April, 2017, p.8-11.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 15

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

1808 McGee Street

Contributing Building  
1945

Charles Keyser designed and Winn-Senter Construction Company constructed the building in 1945. This one-story, rectangular plan building has a flat roof with a parapet. The building abuts 215 East 18<sup>th</sup> Street on the north, but does not share walls or interior openings. Its placement is slightly recessed and the storefront east elevation is setback. Brick clads the east front elevation and wraps around the side to the south elevation. Masonry unit clads the south and west elevations. Two bays organize the east elevation. A vehicle entry opening with no door fills the north bay. A storefront opening with no glazing fills the south bay. Doors and windows are currently missing. Contrasting brick courses create horizontal banding at the base, above openings and at the parapet under coping. Pat Wheeler Body Repair shop occupied the building from 1945 until 1963. Howard Needles Tamn & Bergendorf Garage were tenants beginning 1966. They occupied the space in 1977. The building retains integrity and communicates its significance as an early automobile-related commercial building. 1808 McGee Street is a contributing resource.

1812 McGee Street

Non-contributing Structure  
1969 c.

This asphalt-paved surface parking lot was constructed circa 1969. The structure does not represent the area's historic character and is recommended as a non-contributing resource.

1822-A McGee Street

Contributing Building  
1917

Smith, Rea & Lovitt designed the building and Charles Aiken constructed the building for the Cowie Electric Company in 1917. This two-story building has a rectangular plan and a flat roof with a parapet. Terra cotta clads the exterior front elevation. Fluted, pointed pilasters rise on both ends of a stepped parapet. Black terra cotta surrounds storefront windows with a centered, recessed entry with a transom. A transom tops a metal entry door with glazing. Brick clads the side and rear elevations. A brick chimney rises on the northwest corner and an elevator penthouse is setback from the southwest corner of the west elevation. Triplex Safety Glass Company of Kansas City moved into the space in 1929. KC Auto Supply Company is listed as a tenant in 1932 until 1969. Evelyn Inc. Beauty Salon Equipment and Supply occupied the space in the 1970s. The building retains the design and features, including a storefront and rear auto elevator, that communicate its significance as an early automobile-related commercial building. 1822-A McGee Street is a contributing resource.

1822-B McGee Street

Contributing Building  
1917

Sunderland & Besecke designed the building and Allen & Dyche from Kansas City Kansas constructed the building in 1922 for the Beach Wittman Company, a firm handling auto accessories. This one-story building has a rectangular plan and a flat roof. Historic white terra cotta clads the exterior. Finials rise

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 16

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

above the parapet. Decorative segmented arches ornament the parapet. Six bays organize a framed storefront. Historic multi-light transoms with stained glass top storefront windows and an entry in the north bay. A transom and sidelights surround a wood entry door with glazing in the north bay. The building abuts two story buildings on the north and the south. The Beach Wittman Company occupied the building until 1961. During the early 1970s, the space was a warehouse for the beauty supply company that occupied the building directly to the north (1822 McGee-A). The building's form, materials, storefront configuration and rear vehicle entry are intact. The building retains integrity and communicates its significance as an early automobile-related commercial building. 1822-B McGee Street is a contributing resource.

1824 McGee Street  
Photo 11

Contributing Building  
1919

The Mastin Realty and Mining Company hired C. P. Schmidt to design the building and Charles C. Smith to construct it in 1919. This two-story brick building has a rectangular plan and a flat roof with a peaked parapet. The first story storefront and a horizontal transom that historically topped the storefront are currently clad in corrugated metal. Non-historic vertical storefront windows are visible in the south bay. Glass block surrounds a recessed entry with a metal door with glazing. The alterations to the storefront occurred between 1940 and 1982 with the entry likely a mid-twentieth century alteration. Non-historic paired and banded one-over-one metal windows with smaller top lights fill historic window openings on the second story. Stone lugsills line the bottom of windows. Lentils with elongated keystones fill outer bays. Stone banding and contrasting brick courses ornament the parapet. Stone coping caps the parapet. The storefront cladding and the glass block was part of a 1950 renovation. Franklin-Williams Motor Company leased the building when it was completed. From 1936 until 1942, it housed the Interstate Securities Company Used Car Department. Post-WWII-era tenants were Lawler-Nash Company Autos and Columbia Glass & Window Company which moved in in 1953 and remained in the space until 1964.<sup>14</sup> Eugene Dietzgen Company sold drafting supplies in the building from 1966 through the 1970s. The building retains its historic configuration including the storefront, entry, second story, and rear vehicle entries. The storefront alterations do not compromise the resource's ability to communicate its significance as an early automobile-related commercial building. 1824 McGee Street is a contributing resource.

1832 McGee Street  
Photo 11

Contributing Building  
1919

The Mastin Realty and Mining Company hired C. P. Schmidt to design the building and Charles C. Smith constructed the building in 1919. Early tenants include Newell Motor Car Company in 1918, Emmet W. Wysong Autos in 1923. The building remained in use by automobile-related companies throughout the twentieth century. Service Auto Glass Company used the building as a warehouse from 1967 through 1977. This two-story, rectangular brick building occupies the northwest corner of East 19<sup>th</sup> Street and McGee Street. Two bays organize the main, east elevation fronting McGee Street. Brick piers separate two storefronts. A metal entry door with glazing, transom, and sidelights is in the southern portion of the

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 17

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

south bay. Contrasting buff brick spandrels top each storefront under a soldier course of red brick. The storefront retains the divided bay configuration with off-set entry that is visible in a 1940 photograph. Buff brick infills the historic opening for transoms, but maintains the visual configuration.

Three one-over-one metal windows fill each bay on the second story. Stone banding creates continuous lugsills. Cut stone tops brick piers separating each window. Stone coping caps a parapet which is elevated at ends and in the center. The historic storefront configuration with an offset entrance and its utilitarian vehicle entries are intact. The building retains integrity and communicates its significance as an early automobile-related commercial building. 1832 McGee Street is a contributing resource.

East Alley

Contributing Structure  
c.1912

The East Alley runs the length of the District on the east side, between McGee and Oak streets. The alley is roughly sixteen feet wide. The portions of the alley in the 1700 and 1800 blocks are paved with asphalt. The portion of the alley in the 1900 block retains its historic brick. Some areas have asphalt paving covering the brick. There may be other areas in the alley where the historic brick is exposed. The alley retains its historic configuration, some of its historic materials, and its historic function providing access to the rear vehicular entrances of the buildings in the District and is therefore a contributing structure.

West Alley

Contributing Structure  
c.1912

The West Alley runs the length of the 1800 block between McGee Street and Grand Boulevard on the west side of the District. The roughly sixteen-foot-wide alley is paved with asphalt, although there may be some areas where the historic brick is exposed. The alley retains its historic configuration and its historic function providing access to the rear vehicular entrances of the buildings in the District and is therefore a contributing structure.

<sup>14</sup> City Directory listings for this property do not indicate what type of glass company Columbia Glass and Window Company is, so it is not confirmed as automobile-related.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 18

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 1.** Automobile-related occupants in the McGee Street Automotive Historic District. *Source: Polk's City Directories 1918-1977.*<sup>15</sup>

Street Number	Street Name	Contributing / Non-Contributing	Construction Date	Years of auto -related businesses	End date of auto-related business
1701	McGee St.	C	1916	1918-1958	1958
1717	McGee St.	NC	1912	1921-1931; 1942-1945	1945
1721	McGee St.	C	1912	1918-1977	1977
1725	McGee St.	C	1917	1918-1935	1935
1727-1729	McGee St.	C	1914	1918-1939	1939
1733	McGee St.	NC	1990 c.	1925-1967	1967
1737-41	McGee St.	NR-LISTED	1919	1920-1939	1939
1801	McGee St.	C	1917	1934-1956	1956
1809	McGee St.	C	1912	1918-1936; 1948-1974	1974
1813	McGee St.	C	1919	1920-1941; 1948-1962	1962
1817	McGee St.	C	1914	1918-1977	1977
1819	McGee St.	C	1917	1918-1948; 1964-1977	1977
1821	McGee St.	C	1912	1918-1974	1974
1827	McGee St.	C	1914	1918-1923	1923
1829	McGee St.	C	1912	1918-1977	1977
1833	McGee St.	C	1912	1918-1977	1977
1901	McGee St.	NR-LISTED	1912	1912-1941	1941
1909	McGee St.	C	1917	1918-1945	1945
1913	McGee St.	C	1934	1934-present	2017
1917	McGee St.	NC	c. 1990	N/A	
1921	McGee St.	C	1919	1919	1939 (circa)
1925	McGee St.	C	1919	1919-1977	1977
1927-A	McGee St.	NC	1948	not auto related	
1927-B	McGee St.	NC	2016 c.	N/A	
215	E. 18th	NR-listed	1950	1950-1960	1960
1808	McGee St.	C	1945	1947-1977	1977
1812	McGee St.	NC	1969 c.	N/A	
1822-A	McGee St.	C	1917	1924-1969	1969
1822-B	McGee St.	C	1922	1918-1961	1961
1824	McGee St.	C	1919	1920-1952	1952
1832	McGee St.	C	1919	1920-1957; 1967-1977	1977

<sup>15</sup> This information is gleaned from City Directory listings from 1918 through 1977. In certain cases, company names do not indicate if an occupant was an automobile-related company. These dates represent listings that were clearly automobile-related.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 19

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

## SUMMARY

The McGee Street Automotive Historic District in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places for local significance under Criterion A in the area of COMMERCE. The historic district, roughly bounded by East 17<sup>th</sup> Street on the north, 20<sup>th</sup> Street on the south, and the alleys on the east and west sides of McGee Street, encompasses twenty-four contributing resources and five non-contributing resources. Three resources previously listed in the National Register, the Kirkwood Building at 1737-41 McGee Street, the Belfast Investment Company Building at 1901 McGee Street, and the Interstate Securities Building at 215 East 18<sup>th</sup> Street, are within the district boundaries. All three of the NR-listed buildings housed automobile-related businesses and are associated with the significant themes for the district. All of the resources in the District were constructed between 1912 and circa 1990. The 1981-1985 *Midtown Kansas City Survey* identified a potential district of transportation-related automobile properties that included the resources in the nominated district. The current District boundaries are based on information provided by the 1985 survey as well as results of a 2017 survey conducted in support of this nomination.<sup>16</sup> The resources within the defined boundaries represent an intact district of early-twentieth century commercial buildings designed and constructed for use as automotive sales and service businesses. Reflecting a larger trend of commercial buildings dedicated to the emerging automobile industry locating in clusters, the McGee Street Automotive Historic District embodies that trend as Kansas City's "automobile row." The linear group of buildings conveys its original function with expanded storefronts for automobile showrooms, vehicular entries on front, side and rear elevations, and industrial elevator structures specifically to move automobiles. The rear alleys (contributing structures) provided access to the rear vehicular entrances of the buildings. The contributing buildings are recognizable to their period of construction as buildings that facilitated the sales and service of automobiles and related parts. Service was always an important component of this early urban grouping of commercial buildings constructed when the automobile was a new product. As large-scale suburban dealerships usurped the position of McGee Street as the epicenter of auto sales, the service and parts manufacturing functions remained viable until the occupancy and character shifted away from the historically-dominant automobile character in the late 1960s. The period of significance is 1912 which is the date of construction of the oldest extant auto-related resource, until 1968 when the Kansas City Star newspaper company began purchasing buildings in the area and the overall character of the businesses evolved to accommodate other types of commerce.

## ELABORATION

### KANSAS CITY'S EARLY DEVELOPMENT

Kansas City incorporated in 1853 with a population of 2,500 near the confluence of the Kaw and Missouri Rivers. Along with nearby Westport and Independence, Kansas City's primary commercial activity in its early years focused on outfitting the migration west along major trails that passed through the area. The rivers formed a natural northern boundary and development began extending south and east in the nineteenth century. The initial development near the current River Market area began the street grid with named streets running north and south and numbered streets extending east and west. An early city hall

<sup>16</sup> *Midtown Survey Final Report Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri 1981-85*, (Kansas City: Kansas City Landmarks Commission, 2008); Rosin Preservation, "McGee Street Historic Resources Survey, Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri, 2017.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 20

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

and a public square were between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> streets and Main and Walnut streets in the 1850s.<sup>17</sup> Early development focused on the north-south Main Street and Grand Boulevard and extended south to 20<sup>th</sup> Street when the city annexed McGee's addition in 1859.<sup>18</sup> Construction of the Hannibal & St. Joseph Railroad bridge over the Missouri River at Kansas City in 1869 signaled a shift from pre-Civil War river transportation to the railroads dominating shipping and passenger transportation. The regional connectivity afforded by the new railroad system spurred industry and associated urban development. Kansas City utilized the railroads to import manufactured goods and export agricultural products such as cattle.

This new focus on railroad transportation shaped the significant urban development that occurred in the latter part of the nineteenth century while the city's population expanded rapidly to nearly a quarter of a million people by 1910.<sup>19</sup> The city expanded south, first to 31<sup>st</sup> Street by 1885 and further to include Westport, four miles south of the downtown business district in 1897. Early city-sponsored public transportation used horse-drawn street railways and later electric streetcars to reach residential neighborhoods surrounding the urban core. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, McGee Street between 15<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Streets was characterized by single family housing (*Figure 6*).<sup>20</sup>

#### EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY AUTOMOBILE AND RAILROAD INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Kansas City experienced significant growth between the decades of 1910 and 1930 when the population increased by 150,000 people to reach 399,736.<sup>21</sup> The 1909 annexation that extended the city to 75<sup>th</sup> Street set the southern boundary that remained in place until the post-World War II expansion.<sup>22</sup> The transportation infrastructure development during that period included the boulevard system, reflecting the nationwide City Beautiful Movement, and also the construction of Union Station in 1914, a large-scale commitment to the railroad system.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, the new auto industry grew rapidly. A Kansas City auto show in 1907 attracted 20,000 spectators, though only a couple hundred Kansas Citians owned an automobile at that time.<sup>24</sup> Mass production on the newly invented assembly line made automobiles more affordable and during the decade between 1910 and 1920, production and sales increased exponentially. Ford opened an assembly plant in the West Bottoms industrial area of Kansas City in 1912 and companies in the vicinity previously devoted to manufacturing carriages began assembling automobiles such as Studebakers.<sup>25</sup> The city's railroad network and manufacturing capacity made it a wholesale distribution center for cars, parts, and accessories. Rather than replacing the railroads as a dominate transportation method, the early automobile industry in Kansas City relied on a symbiotic relationship with the railroad network to import parts for assembly and automobile sales and to distribute parts machined in Kansas City manufacturing facilities.

<sup>17</sup> George Erlich, *Kansas City, Missouri: An Architectural History, 1826-1990* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 9.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 35.

<sup>20</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps Kansas City, Vol 3, Sheet 251, 1895.

<sup>21</sup> Erlich, 66.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 35.

<sup>23</sup> Union Station is NR-listed (1972) <https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/nps-nr/72000719.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> Susan Richards Johnson and Nicole M. Sabatini. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, "Kirkwood Building," February 2001, 8-19.

<sup>25</sup> Susan Richards Johnson and Nicole M. Sabatini, 8-21.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 21

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

By 1923, 55,000 Kansas City residents owned cars.<sup>26</sup> The built environment reflected the marked rise in personal automobile ownership. Six hundred miles of roads in Kansas City allowed for geographic sprawl outside of historic streetcar routes. Residential development spread out as far south as 65<sup>th</sup> Street by 1917 and home owners in existing residential neighborhoods added garages.<sup>27</sup> Developer J.C. Nichols pioneered the automobile-destination shopping center model with the construction of the Country Club Plaza five miles south of downtown Kansas City in the 1920s.

#### AUTOMOBILE ROW

While increased personal automobile ownership influenced large-scale development patterns, it also spawned a new and distinctive commercial development pattern associated with the sales and service of automobiles. The rise of automobile rows, or clusters of automobile-related commercial buildings, occurred in cities across the country in the first decades of the twentieth century. These commercial districts share some common design elements that characterize them as the first commercial buildings associated with the new industry.<sup>28</sup>

While automobile makers bore the cost of tooling and operating factories, they looked for cost savings in developing large-scale sales and distribution networks. Granting selling rights to local entrepreneurs, many of whom were already involved in transportation-related businesses, proved effective for developing sales outlets. Dealers constructed or leased buildings to house their sales and service operations at a furious pace during the nineteen teens. Automobile dealerships largely followed the commercial building models of the time with streetfront display spaces and rear utilitarian space, but the buildings designed and constructed specifically to sell automobiles adapted that traditional formula in several notable ways. First, automobile dealers sought locations along main thoroughfares outside of established dense commercial centers to maximize lower rents and taxes and to have access to more space.<sup>29</sup> Their commercial buildings retained traditional storefronts to display sales items, but expanded glazing to display their larger product. Locating along a thoroughfare brought customers along an existing transportation corridor. Clustering of similar businesses occurred when dealerships opened near each other and smaller ancillary businesses, such as services garages and auto parts stores and distributors, filled in the gaps. This model repeated in numerous cities to create districts of automobile-related businesses.<sup>30</sup>

#### KANSAS CITY'S AUTOMOBILE ROW: MCGEE STREET

Kansas City's only automobile row developed rapidly beginning around 1910. New commercial buildings designed as automobile showrooms replaced single-family houses along thoroughfares just south of the city's center. A roughly ten-block area between Truman Road (15<sup>th</sup> Street) and 20<sup>th</sup> Street along Grand Boulevard and McGee Street became a grouping of automobile-related businesses specifically clustered around McGee Street's north south streetcar route. Like other cities nationwide, Kansas City automobile dealers chose an area just outside of downtown. Early showrooms at 1829 McGee Street and 1821 McGee Street, both constructed in 1912, were close to each other on the same block and took advantage of the streetcar route that passed by with commuters who could see into their storefront windows. Kelly-

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 8-19.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 8-19.

<sup>28</sup> Chester H. Liebs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1985): 83.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 22

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Springfield Motor Truck Company occupied 1829 McGee Street in 1918 and Elgin Motor Car Sales Company and Sayers and Seoville Company Auto occupied 1821 McGee Street. A 1914 dealership at 1827 McGee Street filled in the space between the two. Republic Rubber Company occupied that space in 1918 and General Tire & Rubber Company was a tenant between 1920 and 1923. The building at 1901 McGee Street was constructed in 1912 with two distinct storefronts (*Figure 7*). An automobile dealer historically occupied the larger storefront space and smaller ancillary businesses such as auto parts suppliers occupied the smaller storefront. In 1918, the Dey Motor Car Company occupied 1901 McGee Street. As was common for the new automobile districts, dealers clustered along McGee Street and auxiliary businesses filled in the gaps.

At the same time automobile dealers were constructing commercial buildings that transformed McGee Street from a residential neighborhood, the construction of Union Station in 1914 influenced the character of new construction south of 19<sup>th</sup> Street that began focusing on industrial and commercial uses to take advantage of the railroad corridor.<sup>31</sup> The streetcar route along McGee Street ceased operation after a 1916 City Ordinance, signaling a burgeoning reliance on personal automobiles for transportation.<sup>32</sup> When McGee Street was dedicated to automobile traffic, the area thrived as a dense node of automotive sales and service businesses. Automotive-related businesses continued to locate around and infill the space between established dealerships after the initial period of construction between 1912 and 1918. The building at 1921 McGee Street was constructed in 1919 and 1920 and housed Van Tire Company. It was near the H&R Sales Company and RB Auto Repair Shop that anchored the corner of McGee Street and W. 20<sup>th</sup> Street (no longer extant). By 1920, one half of all automotive businesses in Kansas City were located along McGee Street and Grand Boulevard (*Figure 8*).<sup>33</sup>

Early automotive-related businesses in the new automobile row shared many characteristics with other contemporaneous commercial buildings. One- to four-story buildings had narrow set-backs and density that created a streetwall. Storefronts featured glazing to display their retail product, though in the case of dealerships, these windows were typically on a larger scale. Vehicular entrances were a common feature on both primary and secondary elevations. Early multi-story dealerships had showrooms on the first floor and used upper stories for storage and service. This vertical organization required large elevators to move cars in the interior. Elevators often had direct access to the exterior to facilitate the delivery and movement of vehicles and parts (*Figure 9*). The one-story building at 1809 McGee Street has a vehicular entrance on the front elevation. The Kirkwood Building at 1737-41 is a good example of a multi-story building with large storefront windows and a rear elevator to move inventory within the vertical space.

Like other commercial buildings, auto dealerships used architecture to convey the quality of their product (*Figure 10*).<sup>34</sup> Permanent materials such as brick and terra cotta often clad the exterior covering substantial frames to support interior loads. Interior showrooms were elaborate and well-appointed to communicate luxury and stability of the company. Interior organization prioritized showroom public space and placed offices in the rear or upstairs. Service functions were typically in the rear where vehicular

<sup>31</sup> Erhlich, 66.

<sup>32</sup> Elizabeth Rosin, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, "1901 McGee Street Automotive Service Building," December 2008, 8-7.

<sup>33</sup> Rosin, 8-7.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 8-7.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 23

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

entrances accessed the space. Narrow alleys between the primary streets provided access to these rear vehicular entrances. Historically the alleys were brick, although many were later paved with asphalt.

Building permits indicate many of the buildings along McGee Street were owned by real estate developers and leased to auto-related companies. The Maston Realty and Mining Company, which also sold auto insurance, constructed the building at 1832 McGee Street in 1919 and leased it to the Republic Rubber Company and Newell Motor Car Company in 1920. Charles C. Smith designed, and or constructed, several buildings in the area including the building at 1832 McGee. The Belfast Investment Company developed several buildings and also hired Charles C. Smith for design and construction. The buildings at 1717 McGee Street, 1721 McGee Street, 1829 McGee Street, and 1901 McGee Street were all developed by Belfast Investment Company and constructed by Charles C. Smith. George Hoffman and George Bowling, prominent Kansas City real estate developers developed the building at 1827 McGee Street. Irwin Kirkwood, a Kansas City developer, constructed the Kirkwood Building at 1737-41 McGee Street specifically to accommodate the Gridley Motor Company and the Indiana Truck Company, two auto-related businesses.<sup>35</sup> Contemporaneous automobile-related businesses also located along Grand Boulevard to the west of McGee Street and along Oak Street to the east. Many of those buildings are no longer extant. Infill and vacant lots have altered historic groupings along those streets. The few remaining automobile-related historic buildings in those areas are individually designated. McGee Street was historically the focal point of automobile row and currently retains the largest concentration of historic resources associated with the contextual theme of Kansas City's only automobile row (*Figure 11*).

#### Postwar auto dealerships: a new model

Adopting traditional commercial forms for buildings lent legitimacy to the new automobile industry when the first Automobile-related businesses opened around 1910. By the end of the 1920s, the auto industry was established and dealers and service providers began to move out of the early, dense automobile row districts. Greenlease Cadillac Building at 2900 Gillham Road (National Register listed 2003) was constructed in 1918 as a stand-alone dealership with a service department one-and-a-half miles south of the main cluster of automobile row on McGee Street and Grand Boulevard. While the Greenlease Cadillac Building was a Revival style commercial building, several later dealerships outside of the initial cluster forming automobile row exhibited later stylistic influences that evoked Moderne style. The Sight Brothers Chevrolet Building at 3201 Gillham Plaza was constructed in 1934 with horizontal massing and a Streamline Moderne curved façade. The sleek aesthetic and stand-alone site distinguish the 1930s-era dealership from its earlier predecessors grouped in one and two-part commercial blocks along automobile row. The J. C. Nichols Company, a large-scale developer, built The Faddis Motor Company building at 7 West 62<sup>nd</sup> Terrace in 1945 as part of a commercial node serving the Brookside neighborhood eight miles south of downtown. The building has streamlined accents and a rounded corner with a large display window. Despite the construction of other dealerships and automobile-related commercial buildings elsewhere in Kansas City in the first half of the twentieth century, the original Automobile Row along McGee Street remained dominated by automobile-related businesses.

The economic disruption of the Depression and the reduced automobile production during the war years were a setback to the entire industry. When production and consumer sales resumed in the postwar

<sup>35</sup> *Midtown Survey Final Report Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri 1981-85*, (Kansas City: Kansas City Landmarks Commission, 2008).

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 24

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

period, the physical environment of postwar automobile row clusters of dealerships was considerably different than the early twentieth century model. The trend toward larger lots further away from dense downtowns intensified with auto-industry guidance dictating specific architectural designs intended for larger sites along highways.<sup>36</sup> The post-war economic boom marked the auto industry's heyday with a production of over seven million new automobiles in 1955 alone.<sup>37</sup> Volume sales from a reduced number of auto makers that had consolidated or merged with smaller companies characterized the postwar auto industry. Dealerships relocated to high traffic areas and designed buildings and sites to accommodate sprawling inventories, service stations, and used car lots. In Kansas City, main transportation thoroughfares continued to be popular locations for automobile businesses. In 1960, automobile dealers are listed along Troost Avenue in the 4500 block, the 6200 block, and the 5400 block, but were more dispersed along the road rather than clustered as densely as the McGee Street automobile row.<sup>38</sup> Several dealerships along Highway 71 south of the city exemplified the postwar trend of high-traffic locations that could offer sprawling lots. Economy Car Sales at 9501 Highway 71 located along the highway in a suburban setting and Debacker-Weidemier Chevrolet Inc. was at 117<sup>th</sup> Street and Highway 71, fourteen miles south of downtown.<sup>39</sup>

Postwar automobile-related businesses in Kansas City moved away from the original model of adjoining commercial blocks and instead spread out to individual locations. By 1960, automobile dealers were no longer concentrated in their historic automobile row along McGee Street. Of sixty-nine dealers listed in the commercial directory in 1960, only one was located in the historic automobile row corridor at 1601 McGee Street, which is no longer extant.<sup>40</sup> In spite of the loss of dealerships, the area along McGee Street between East 15<sup>th</sup> Street and East 20<sup>th</sup> Streets still contained many auto-related businesses. Three auto body repair shops, a service bearings company, an automotive warehouse, an auto supply company, a wholesale auto parts company, a glass and window company, a transmission repair shop, a brake service company, and an automotive key service were located in the 1700, 1800, and 1900 blocks of McGee Street in 1960.<sup>41</sup> The remaining cluster of automobile-related businesses along McGee Street reflected the area's original development as Kansas City's only Automobile Row and still characterized the area even after the dealerships had largely relocated.

The McGee Street automobile row evolved throughout the twentieth century and the change in character from automobile-related businesses occurred slowly to incorporate other light industrial, retail, and office uses alongside automobile-related parts and machine operations. By the late 1960s, the character along McGee Street was no longer strictly automobile-related businesses. In 1967, machinery supply, drafting supplies, lithograph services, food service equipment supply and a compressed gas supplier operated along McGee Street between East 17<sup>th</sup> Street and East 20<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>42</sup> A notable change occurred in the late 1960s when several businesses moved out and left vacant spaces around 1967. Shortly after, the Kansas City Star, a local newspaper headquartered along McGee Street, began buying buildings that had

<sup>36</sup> Lieb, 86.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 90.

<sup>38</sup> Durham Motor Company Inc. was at 6227 Troost Avenue, Feld Ervin Motor Company Inc. was at 4551 Troost Avenue, and Sam Miller Coach Co. was at 5408 Troost Avenue in 1960. Polk's City Directory, Kansas City, Missouri, 1960.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Polk's City Directory Kansas City, 1960. The circa 2003 Kansas City Star Building occupies the site.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Polk's City Directory Kansas City, 1967.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 25

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

previously been occupied by automobile-related businesses, signaling a change in use away from retail, commercial, and light industrial.

Mann Automatic Transmission Company, an auto repair business operated at 1900 McGee Street (no longer extant) in 1967. That building was vacant in 1968. Jones Auction Company moved out of 1827 McGee Street in 1968 and the building remained vacant through the 1960s. Beach-Wittman used the building at 1820 McGee Street as an automobile part warehouse space until 1967. The building was vacant in 1968. Puritan Compressed Gas Company operated their equipment division in 1701 McGee Street until 1967. The building sat vacant until the Kansas City Star purchased it in 1968 and altered the façade by infilling the storefront (*Figure 13*).

The Kansas City Star purchased lot number 421 of block 32 in Mastin's subdivision, which is currently a parking lot at 1822-B McGee Street, in 1970. The newspaper company also purchased lot 10 of Block 32 in Maston's Subdivision which is 1824 McGee Street in 1973 and the buildings at 215 E. 18<sup>th</sup> Street and 1808 McGee Street in 1975.<sup>43</sup> By 1970, the buildings in the 1900 block fronting Grand Boulevard had been razed and replaced with a surface parking lot.<sup>44</sup> The buildings fronting McGee Street on the west side of the 1900 block were razed in 1977 and a surface parking lot was constructed in their place.<sup>45</sup> Demolition of the buildings along McGee Street's 1900 block, along with the vacant spaces available for the newspaper to use as auxiliary space signaled a decline in occupancy, specifically for the automobile-related businesses that had historically occupied the area (*Figure 1*).

### Conclusion

The McGee Street Automotive Historic District represents the earliest commercial buildings designed and constructed to sell and service automobiles in Kansas City. The buildings along three blocks of McGee Street are an intact grouping of early-twentieth century automobile-related resources in Kansas City and represent the only cluster of such buildings still extant in Kansas City. The historic district communicates the nationwide trend of automobile businesses clustered together along transportation corridors in urban settings to create "automobile rows." The historic district retains its setting and feeling as a cohesive group of contemporaneous buildings that convey their function and significance as thematically related, early-twentieth century commercial buildings.

<sup>43</sup> The building at 1717 McGee Street was occupied by the Kansas City Star in 1981 at the time of the Midtown Historic Resource Survey documented the building. Deed records in file at Jackson County Courthouse, Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri

<sup>44</sup> Historic aerial photograph 1970, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer> accessed August 24, 2017.

<sup>45</sup> "Death of a City Block Recalls 100-Year Parade of History," *Kansas City Star*, October 15, 1977.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 26

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number   9   Page   27  

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 28

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

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

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: N/A  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>39.093323</u> Latitude:	<u>-94.580036</u> Longitude:	7	<u>39.091712</u> Latitude:	<u>-94.580707</u> Longitude:
2	<u>39.093306</u> Latitude:	<u>-94.579472</u> Longitude:	8	<u>39.091683</u> Latitude:	<u>-94.580149</u> Longitude:
3	<u>39.088943</u> Latitude:	<u>-94.579703</u> Longitude:	9	<u>°</u> Latitude:	<u>°</u> Longitude:
4	<u>39.088989</u> Latitude:	<u>-94.580288</u> Longitude:	10	<u>°</u> Latitude:	<u>°</u> Longitude:
5	<u>39.090309</u> Latitude:	<u>-94.580240</u> Longitude:	11	<u>°</u> Latitude:	<u>°</u> Longitude:
6	<u>39.090342</u> Latitude:	<u>-94.580771</u> Longitude:			

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary includes the western portion of the 1700, 1800, and 1900 blocks, including the alley, between McGee and Oak Street between East 17<sup>th</sup> Street on the north and East 20<sup>th</sup> Street on the south. The eastern portion of the 1800 block, including the alley, between McGee Street and Grand Boulevard between East 18<sup>th</sup> Street on the north and East 19<sup>th</sup> Street on the south is also included. See map (*Figure 2*).

**Boundary Justification**

The current district boundary represents a dense concentration of resources previously identified as a potential historic district representing Kansas City's only Automobile Row.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 29

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

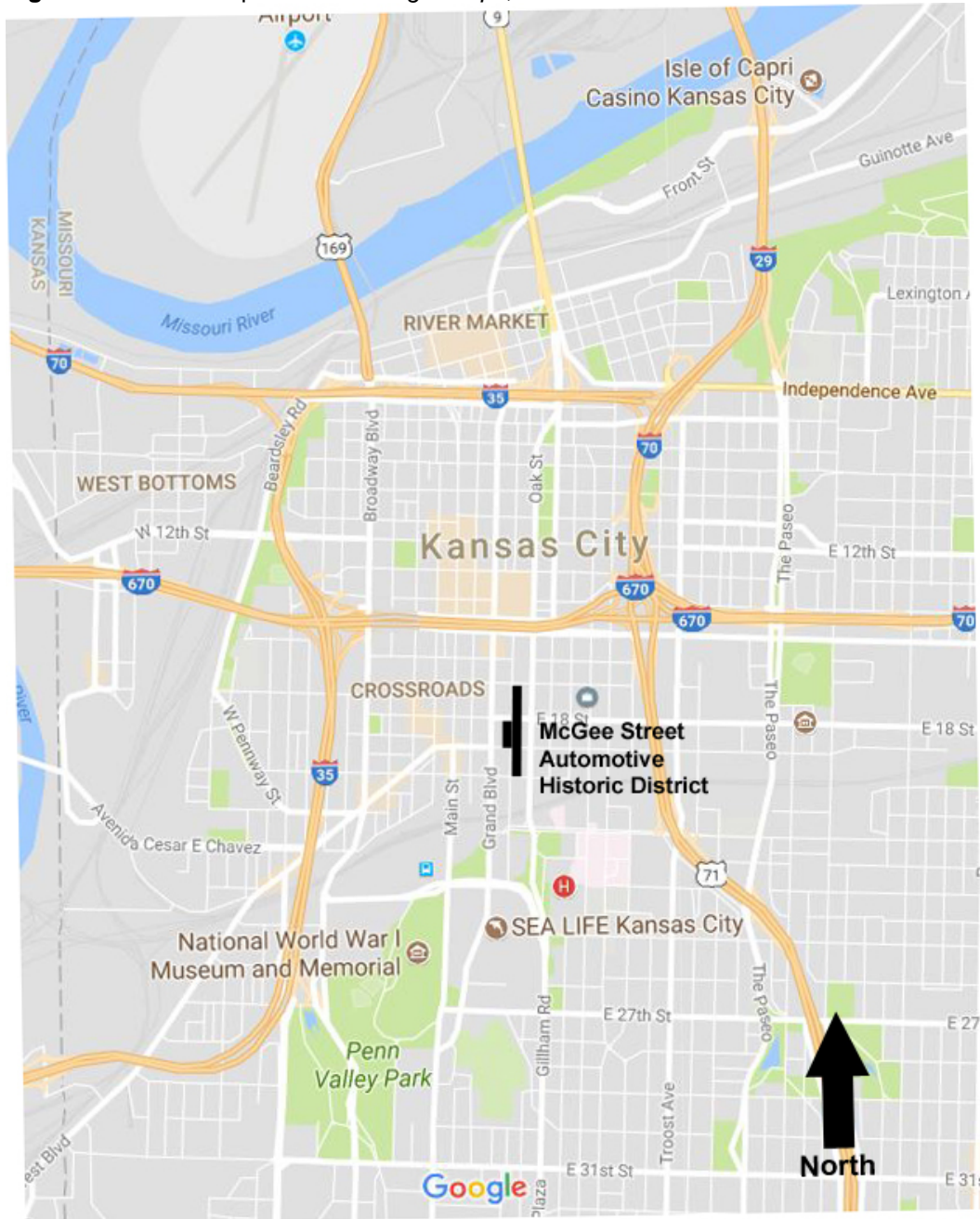
Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 2.** Context Map. *Source: Google Maps, 2017.*



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 30

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

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

**Figure 3.** District Boundaries and Contributing/Non-contributing Resources. *Source: OpenStreetMap.org 2017*



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 31

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

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

**Figure 4.** District Boundaries and Coordinates. *Source: OpenStreetMap.org 2017*



- |    |           |            |
|----|-----------|------------|
| 1. | 39.093323 | -94.580036 |
| 2. | 39.093306 | -94.579472 |
| 3. | 39.088943 | -94.579703 |
| 4. | 39.088989 | -94.580288 |
| 5. | 39.090309 | -94.580240 |
| 6. | 39.090342 | -94.580771 |
| 7. | 39.091712 | -94.580707 |
| 8. | 39.091683 | -94.580149 |

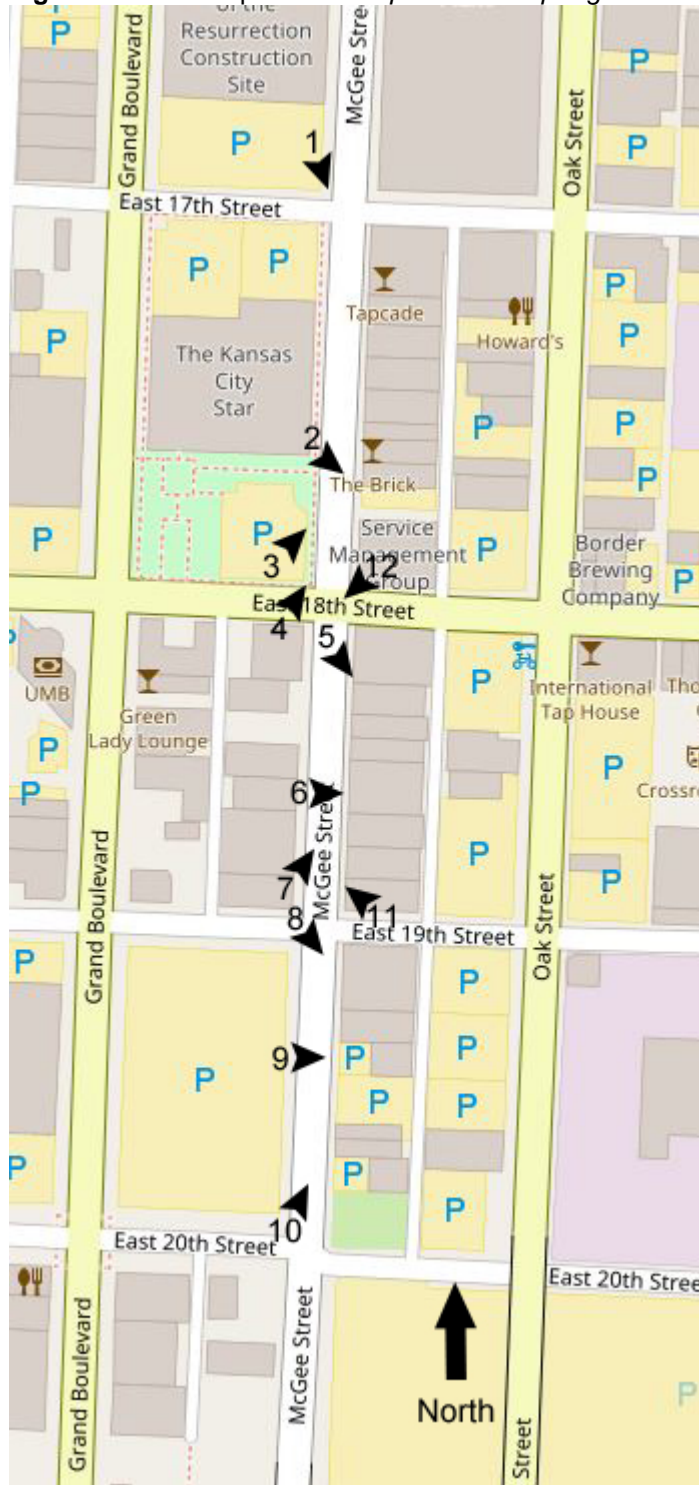
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 32

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

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

**Figure 5.** Photo Map. Source: *OpenStreetMap.org* 2017





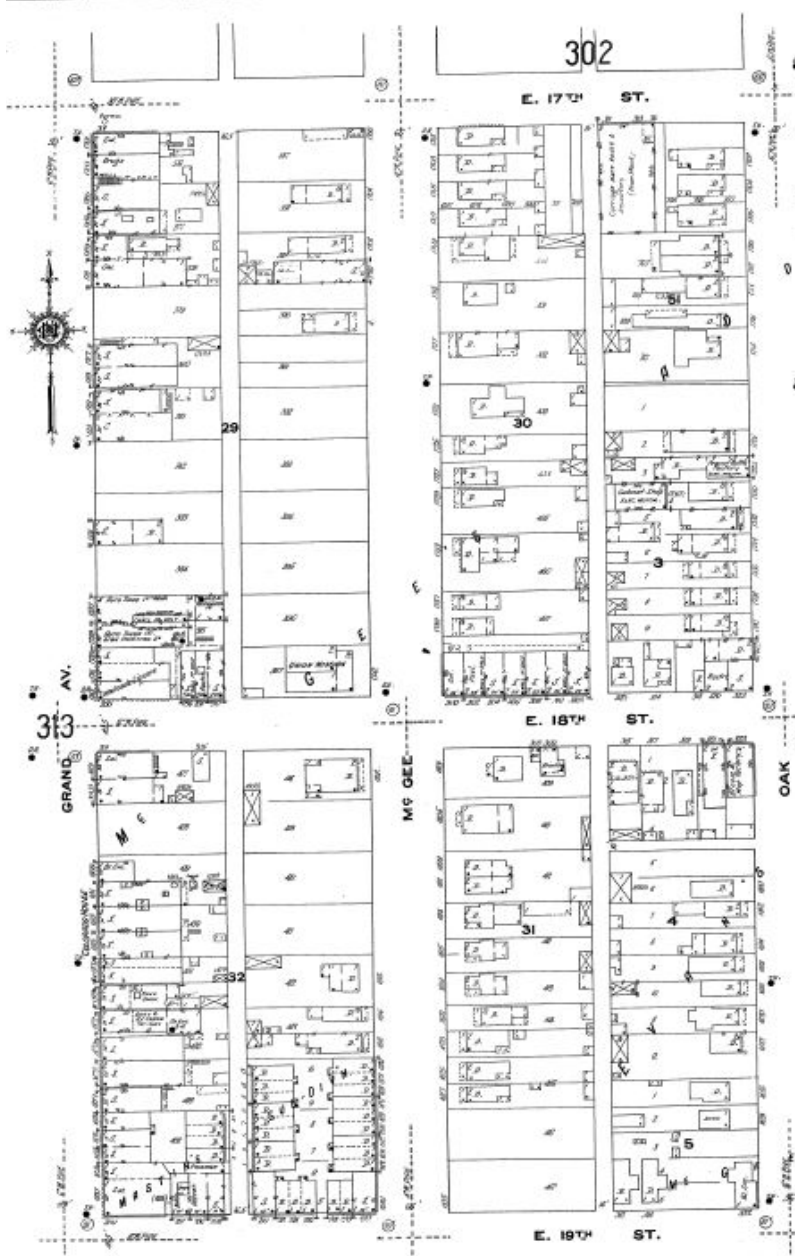
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 33

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

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

**Figure 6.** The 1909 Sanborn map shows multi-family and single family dwellings lining the 1700 and 1800 blocks of McGee Street. *Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, vol. 3, Sheet 314, 1909.*



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 34

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 7.** 1901 McGee Street with large storefront windows on the ground. *Source: Kansas City 1940 Tax Assessment Photograph, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.*





National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 35

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

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

**Figure 8.** McGee Street in 1922 view is looking north from the viaduct immediately south of the intersection of McGee Street and East 20<sup>th</sup> Street. *Source: Judge Elmo M. Hargrave Photographic Collection, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.*



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 36

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property  
Jackson County, Missouri

County and State  
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 9.** Elevator shaft and vehicular entrances on the rear elevation of 1727 and 1729 McGee Street. View southwest. *Photo by Brad Finch, f-stop Photography, July 2017.*



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 37

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

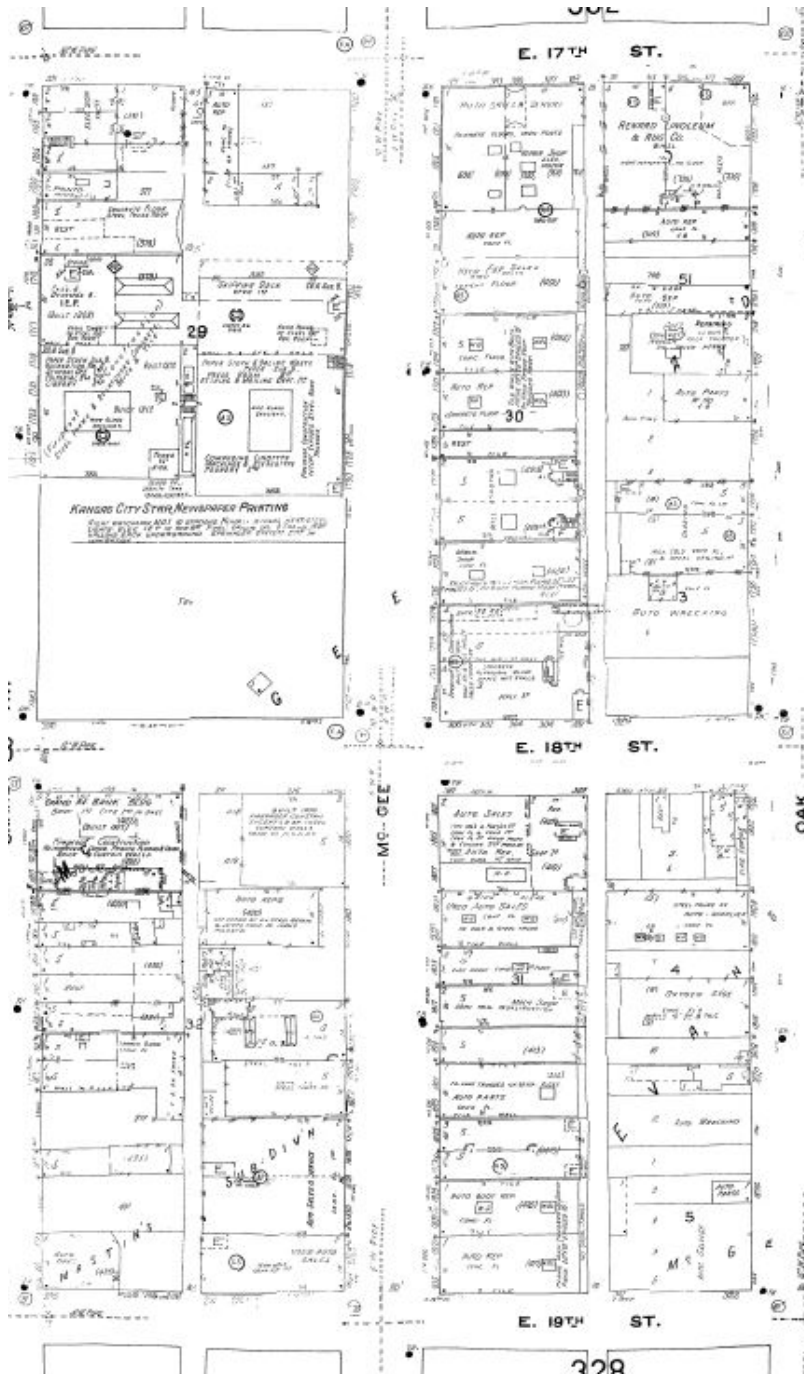
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 10.** 1801 McGee Street had large storefront glazing on the ground floor showroom space. *Source: Kansas City 1940 Tax Assessment Photograph, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.*



Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 11.** The 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows the 1700 and 1800 blocks of McGee Street lined with commercial buildings that abut to create a continuous streetwall. The Kansas City Star Building occupies the western side of the 1700 block. *Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, vol. 3, Sheet 314, 1951.*



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 39

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 12.** A 1982 photo shows 1701 McGee Street with storefront infill after the Kansas City Star newspaper purchased the building in 1968. *Source: Midtown Survey Final Report Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri, 1981-85. Kansas City Landmarks Commission, Kansas City, Missouri, 2008, survey form JA-A3-008-1219.*





National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 40

McGee Street Automotive Historic District

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

**Figure 13.** A 1982 photo shows 1717, 1721, and 1725 McGee Street. The Kansas City Star altered the storefront of 1717 McGee Street. 1721 is still an auto-related business and a livestock supply company occupies 1725 McGee Street. *Source: Midtown Survey Final Report Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri, 1981-85. Kansas City Landmarks Commission, Kansas City, Missouri, 2008, survey form JA-A3-008-1220.*













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