

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Peters, Nelle E., Troost Avenue Historic District

other name/site number Spanish Court Apartments; Gerre Apartments

2. Location

street & town 2719-37 Troost Ave.; 2730 Troost Ave. N/A not for publication

city or town Kansas City N/A vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Jackson code 095 zip code 64109

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ 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 ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. ( ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

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

June 4, 2009  
Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

☐ entered in the National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the  
National Register

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register.

☐ removed from the National  
Register.

☐ other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Peters, Nelle E., Troost Avenue Historic District  
Name of Property

Jackson County, MO  
County and State

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private

☐ public-local

☐ public-State

☐ public-Federal

### Category of Property

(check only one box)

☐ building(s)

☒ district

☐ site

☐ structure

☐ object

### Number of Resources within Property

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

Contributing

Noncontributing

6

buildings

sites

structures

objects

6

Total

### Name of related multiple property listing

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

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

"Working-Class and Middle-Income Apartments in Kansas City, MO"

0

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

### Current Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

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

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS

Other: Low-rise walk-up apartment building

Other: Garden apartment building complex

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation

Stone

walls

Brick

roof

Asphalt

other

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

Peters, Nelle E., Troost Avenue Historic District  
Name of Property

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## 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

### 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

### Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

### Period of Significance

1923

### Significant Dates

N/A

### Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Peters, Nelle E./architect

Quality Builders/builder

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

### Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☒ Local government
- ☒ University
- ☒ Other Name of repository:

Missouri Valley Room, Kansas City Public Library

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

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Name of Property

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County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.24 acres

### UTM References

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 1/5 3/6/4/1/1/0 4/3/2/6/5/0/0  
Zone Easting Northing

2 / / / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing

3 / / / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing

4 / / / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

X See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title See continuation sheet

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

**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.

**Photographs:** Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

name/title Barry Heiman, Managing Member, Courtyard Properties LLC

street & number 6416 Dearborn Drive telephone 913-269-7261

city or town Mission state KS zip code 66202

**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. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## National Register of Historic Places

### Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

**Peters, Nelle E., Troost Ave. Historic District**  
**Jackson County, MO**  
**Working-Class and Middle-Income**  
**Apartments in Kansas City, MO**

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### Summary

The Nelle E. Peters Troost Avenue Historic District is located in the 2700 block of Troost Avenue in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri. All six properties are brick, three-story buildings constructed in 1923 from designs by Nelle E. Peters, a prolific female architect in the Kansas City area during the 1920s. Quality Builders served as contractor. Specifically, the district consists of the Spanish Court Apartments at 2719-2737 Troost (five buildings) and the Gerre Apartments at 2730 Troost (one building). The properties exemplify and meet the registration requirements for the Garden Apartment Building Complex and Low-Rise Walk-up Apartment Building subtypes as described in the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) titled "Working-Class and Middle-Income Apartments in Kansas City, Missouri."<sup>1</sup> The district is located within a heavily urban and substantially blighted area approximately two miles southeast of the central business district. The Nelle E. Peters Troost Avenue Historic District retains integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials, association and feeling and warrants inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Two additional Peters-designed apartment buildings in the 2700 block of Troost have been lost, along with other buildings, so integrity of setting is not retained.

### Elaboration

Troost Avenue is a prominent north-south thoroughfare between Kansas City's East Side and West Side. The five buildings that comprise the Spanish Court Apartments are on the east side of Troost and the single-building Gerre Apartments is situated on the west side of Troost, midway in the block and just a few feet south of the Spanish Court Apartments (see district map, p. 13). The Spanish Court and Gerre Apartments complement one another. As a group, they convey a sense of

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<sup>1</sup>Sally F. Schwenk, "Working-Class and Middle-Income Apartments in Kansas City, MO," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, September 2007. Note that the cover document addresses registration requirements for individual properties but not historic districts.

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unity due to their early 20<sup>th</sup> Century architectural features, which define them respectively as Spanish Revival and Prairie style. Their similar heights and brick construction are other unifying elements, along with black iron fencing and black iron balconies. The properties also mesh well with the nearby Alana Apartment Hotel, a Jacobean-style brick and terra cotta structure located at 2700-2706 Troost (NR listed 7/5/06).<sup>2</sup>

### Exteriors

Enclosed by a black wrought iron fence and set off from the sidewalk by a limestone wall, the Spanish Court Apartments on the east side of Troost are a Garden Apartment Building Complex of five brick buildings designed by architect Nelle E. Peters and constructed in 1923. The Gerre is a tapestry brick walk-up type with Prairie-style characteristics. In the 1980s, an arched brick wing with a curved wall nearly as tall as the original structure was added to the Gerre. Like the Spanish Court apartments, the Gerre is set off by a black iron fence—which encompasses the building and a large parking lot. The Spanish Court and Gerre apartments have undergone some changes to their original designs but retain integrity, particularly on their exteriors. Where present, non-historic lap siding is limited to rear elevations.

The Spanish Court buildings, all with single main public entrances, are identified separately as 2719-21 Troost, 2723-25 Troost, 2727-29 Troost, 2731-33 Troost and 2735-37 Troost. The buildings all face and share a grassy, rectangular courtyard (with two mature trees) which is bordered on the west by a black wrought iron fence. The buildings at 2719 and 2723 face south. The building at 2727, the largest of the five, faces Troost Avenue on the west. The buildings at 2731 and 2735 both face north. All five Spanish Court buildings bear the hallmarks of Spanish Revival style architecture, with red tile pent roofs, ornamental terra cotta, stucco and iron

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<sup>2</sup>But the district would not work spatially if the already-listed Alana were included, plus in terms of function the Alana as an apartment-hotel was a different type of building—and its architect was Charles M. Williams, not Peters.

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balcony railings. All of the balcony railings have been removed, repainted and replaced.

The Spanish Court buildings at 2719 and 2735 face each other across the courtyard and are essentially twins, with similar dimensions of 35 feet x 45 feet. These two buildings are the most ornamental of their group and of the district. Their front façades feature single-light entrances with three-pane sidelights. The doors are framed by a terra cotta entry topped by a small pent roof. The central bay windows, which are aluminum replacements in original openings, are surrounded by a two-story brick arch accented by terra cotta tiles. The roofs feature central parapets offset by pent tile roofs on either side. The cornice is accented by terra cotta squares and a diamond pattern. The left and right bays of the primary façade feature French doors which open onto small black iron balconies.

The secondary facades of 2719 and 2735 feature four bays, including a front bump-out bay that features terra cotta squares and belt courses on the first and third floors. The fenestration consists of paired and single double-hung windows which are aluminum replacements. Rear facades of both buildings contain three bays, the middle bays of which are clad with non-historic lap siding.

The larger 2723 and 2731 buildings are also twins, with similar dimensions of 57 feet x 31 feet. Both structures are less ornamental than the buildings at 2719 and 2735, although they feature central pent tile roofs flanked by squared-off parapets, and three decorative terra cotta squares in their center bays. These bays are flanked by French doors with two-pane sidelights and black iron balconies. Paired double-hung aluminum windows bookend the buildings and serve the front-facing apartment units.

The secondary facades of 2723 and 2731 contain three bays with single, double-hung aluminum windows. On their rear façades, however, these buildings feature

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four bays with a bump-out bay right of center which is clad with non-historic lap siding. These bump-outs encompass rear staircases and common areas.

The “middle” building at 2727-29 Troost is roughly twice the width of the others, measuring 85 feet x 42 feet. It features two terra-cotta framed entryways, both of which are flanked by the familiar French doors and two-paned sidelights. There are also paired double-hung aluminum windows on each end of the front façade. The building is topped by a pent tile roof and two Mission-style curved parapet roofs fronted by terra cotta diamonds.

The secondary facades of the 2727-29 building lack ornamentation and are fenestrated by three bays of paired, double-hung aluminum windows. The rear façade is U-shaped, with six bays, including one bay that encloses a staircase and common areas and is framed by non-historic lap siding. The fenestration on the rear façade also consists of double-hung aluminum windows.

The Gerre Apartments building at 2730 Troost is situated on the west side of Troost Avenue, just a few feet south of the Spanish Court buildings. Also designed by Peters, the Gerre was constructed in 1923 along with two associated apartment buildings on the same side of the block called the Gene and the Jack. Located respectively at 2732 and 2734 Troost, the Gene and the Jack were demolished in the 1980s.<sup>3</sup>

The Gerre is a three-story tapestry brick walk-up building with a 39 foot frontage. A hip roof porch supported by brick piers resting on an elevated base extends across the primary (east) façade. Stone banding frames double-hung aluminum windows on the second and third stories and continues into the secondary facades. Above a projecting cornice, a parapet wall terminates in stone coping. These

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<sup>3</sup> The Gene Apartments and Jack Apartments were standing at least as late as 1982 when the Kansas City Landmarks Office prepared inventory forms for them.



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modest characteristics are evocative of Prairie style architecture which was popular during the era of construction.

In the early 1980s, the Gerre's interior floor plan was altered and a three-story brick wing with three belt courses and a curved Moderne-style end wall was built to project from its north elevation. This addition contains a stairwell which projects into the original building where the redesigned central hallway now runs north and south. While this addition impacts architectural integrity, the design is such that virtually no one would confuse it with the original structure even though the bricks are a complementary type, and the Gerre retains the ability to convey feelings of its period of construction.

### Interiors

Floor plans of the Spanish Court Apartments are unchanged from 1923. In the central hallways, the buildings at 2723 and 2731 retain original oak staircases with newel posts and balustrades which have been painted white. The current owner intends to repair and reinstall them. In the other buildings, central staircases have been replaced with non-historic banister rails. All unit doors are replacements in their original openings.

While floor plans are intact, individual living units in the Spanish Court buildings are a patchwork of historic and non-historic materials. Original walls and ceilings were all replaced with drywall in the 1980s. Original red oak floors are intact under carpeting and will be repaired for all units. Ornamental Tuscan columns are intact in the living rooms of some units and additional Tuscan columns were found in storage. Plans call for the found columns to be repaired and reinstalled.

Unlike the Spanish Court Apartments, the Gerre has undergone substantial interior changes. In the 1980s its floor plan was completely reconfigured. What had been a central hallway leading east-west from the entrance to the rear of the building

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was removed to accommodate three- and two-bedroom units. The addition of the three-story curved structure on the north side of the building added three central hallways, all running north-south. All interior material in the common areas and living units is non-historic.

While the interiors of the Spanish Court buildings are considerably more intact than the interior of the Gerre, the exteriors of all six buildings successfully reflect their association with the development of this new type of living space for working-class and middle-income families in Kansas City. Since two of the Peters-designed apartments that were originally associated with the Gerre have been razed, integrity of setting is one aspect of integrity that is not retained. And while the Spanish Court Apartments might be a better candidate for individual listing than the Gerre, the presence of the Gerre—designed by Peters at the same time as the other district buildings—clearly enhances the Nelle E. Peters Troost Avenue Historic District overall and helps bring visual harmony to a blighted urban area.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For additional discussion of registration requirements for the Garden Apartment Building Complex and Low-Rise Walk-Up property types, see Schwenk, in particular pages F5-F7, F15-F16 and F23. Note that Schwenk's discussions focus on the characteristics and qualities needed for individual listings rather than for districts. In general, however, they can be taken to support this district nomination.

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**Peters, Nelle E., Troost Ave. Historic District  
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Apartments in Kansas City, MO**

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### Summary

The Nelle E. Peters Troost Avenue Historic District, located in the 2700 block of Troost Avenue in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, with local significance in the area of ARCHITECTURE. The district consists of the Spanish Court Apartments (five buildings at 2719-37 Troost) and the Gerre Apartments (one building at 2730 Troost). The six brick, three-story buildings are associated with contexts developed in the Multiple Property Documentation Form "Working-Class and Middle-Income Apartments in Kansas City, Missouri."<sup>5</sup> The district offers an example of Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals architecture, with the Spanish Court buildings featuring applied Spanish Revival details including red ceramic tile roofs, ornamental terra cotta and iron balcony railings. The Gerre Apartments are representative of the Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movements architectural category, notably applied Prairie styling. Prairie affinities are evident in the Gerre's brick cladding, angularity, horizontality enhanced by stone banding framing façade windows, wide hipped roof porch, and overhanging eaves. Within the MPDF, the Spanish Court Apartments are also classified as a Garden Apartment Building Complex, while the Gerre Apartments meet the definition of a Low-Rise Walk-Up Apartment Building. Thus the Spanish Court Apartments were designed "to provide a more hospitable and healthier life" for the occupants, while the Gerre "introduced new residential organization and dictated new approaches to day-to-day living."<sup>6</sup> All of the buildings retain architectural integrity and historic characteristics for identification with their property types as described in the cover document. The period of significance is 1923, the year of construction for all six apartments.

### Elaboration

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<sup>5</sup> Accepted by the National Register in 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Schwenk, pp. F14 and F22.

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Construction of the Spanish Court and Gerre buildings strongly coincided with (1) a surge in Kansas City's population and (2) the city's high-water mark for apartment construction. Between 1910 and 1930 the city's population increased by 150,000—from approximately 250,000 to nearly 400,000 residents. To help meet the housing needs of these new residents, builders began constructing “purpose-built” multi-family dwellings. From 1920 to 1929, 15,152 new apartment units and 1,092 new duplex units came on the market. At the same time the average size of apartment buildings expanded significantly. The construction boom peaked in 1923 when 299 apartment buildings—including the Spanish Court Apartments and the Gerre Apartments—providing more than 3,200 units were completed.<sup>7</sup>

As Schwenk noted, “The purpose-built apartment building, which arose to meet a housing need created by a demographically significant increase in the number of hourly workers in Kansas City, established the concept of multiple dwellings as a fundamental type of housing in the City. [They] institutionalized new residential organization and dictated new approaches to day-to-day living.”<sup>8</sup>

As an example of the Garden Apartment Building Complex, among other things the Spanish Court Apartments “represent a distinctly twentieth century philosophy for multi-residential buildings in the United States that advocated grouping of apartment buildings designed in relationship to each other and the landscape” instead of referencing the traditional city street grid. The goal was “a healthier approach to residential housing patterns” through a more suburban environment. In the case of the Spanish Court Apartments, this was accomplished by grouping five three-story buildings around a central grassy courtyard which was accessible to all of the tenants instead of fronting them directly on a busy street.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Schwenk, p. F 21.

<sup>8</sup> Schwenk, p. F2.

<sup>9</sup> Schwenk, p. F22.

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The MPDF further describes this subtype as a group of at least three individual buildings, each of which was designed and constructed to function as a multiple dwelling. Each building was designed to contain at least four self-sufficient (with private bath and kitchen facilities) apartment (dwelling) units and be at least two but no more than eight stories high. All of these buildings, like the Spanish Court Apartments, were designed and sited to relate to the surrounding landscape.<sup>10</sup>

As an example of the Low-Rise Walk-Up Apartment Building, among other things the Gerre “provided residential dwelling units with an increased effectiveness utilizing locally available architectural and financial resources.” The Low-Rise Walk-Up was a basic (and prevalent) working-class and middle-income apartment type which persisted through the 1960s. Its design enabled urban land to be used more efficiently “in locations already served by public transportation and utilities, directly affecting patterns of population growth.”<sup>11</sup>

The MPDF describes the Low-Rise Walk-Up Apartment—designed specifically as a multifamily residence—as containing at least six self-sufficient (with private kitchen and bath facilities) apartment (dwelling) units. These buildings are at least three but no more than four stories high. They have a single main entrance along with secondary entrances on elevations facing public rights-of-way. They may have a vestibule but not a lobby, and they lack an elevator.<sup>12</sup>

### Nelle E. Peters

Nelle E. Peters, who designed all six of the nominated properties, was born in North Dakota in 1894 and attended Buena Vista College in Storm Lake, Iowa. Although she lacked formal architectural training, Peters followed a pattern common during that period by working as an apprentice in an established

<sup>10</sup> Schwenk, p.70

<sup>11</sup> Schwenk, pp. F14-15.

<sup>12</sup> Schwenk, 62

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architect's office and simultaneously taking correspondence courses. From 1903 to 1909, Peters worked for the Sioux Falls, Iowa firm of Eisentraut, Colby and Pottenger in the drafting division—a job she acquired through persistence: “I said I could draw. That I wanted to design houses. I talked and talked and at last I talked myself into a job,” she said. In 1909, Peters was sent to Kansas City to work under Ernest O. Brostrom.<sup>13</sup>

Peters branched out on her own beginning in 1910 “with a very small savings and a large amount of nerve.”

At first she focused on designing small single-family residences and fairly standard two- to three-story apartment buildings.<sup>14</sup>

In 1913, Peters began an association with the Charles E. Phillips Building Company of Kansas City—an association which continued until 1948. As Phillips' real estate and development activities increased, her commissions escalated. Peters' growing reputation enabled her to strike up project-specific partnerships with other contractors including Quality Builders, a company described as among “the most prolific” Kansas City builders of the era.<sup>15</sup>

Peters gradually explored different site plans and designs for apartment buildings that incorporated the functional demands for light, ventilation and open space. This led to her collaboration with Quality Builders on both the Spanish Court Apartments and the Gerre (and the demolished Jack and Gene) apartment buildings on Troost Avenue, as well as other properties.

<sup>13</sup> Sherry Piland. “Early KC Architect: A Liberated Woman.” Historic Kansas City Foundation Gazette, April 1976, p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Schwenk, pp. 48-49.

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“Court groups” such as the Spanish Court Apartments were initiated by Peters in 1919 and continued throughout the 1920s as a means of siting a number of buildings to achieve a unified complex. Court groups were essentially synonymous with what the MPDF calls the Garden Apartment Building Complex. According to historians George Ehrlich and Sherry Piland:

While court grouping does not utilize the available land for the maximum profit, it realizes other advantages...Several buildings grouped around a central court space permit the gradual development of a piece of property. Appearance can be varied from building to building without a lessening of individual unity. The arrangement has the added advantage of providing more exterior wall surface for the windows to the individual apartment units.<sup>16</sup>

Ehrlich and Piland go on to describe the Spanish Court Apartments as “maintaining unity through [such things as] pent tile roofs [and] the use of French doors onto wrought iron balconies overlooking the court area.” Peters’ work on the Spanish Court and another property (since demolished) on Southwest Trafficway were acknowledged in national architectural journals such as *Architectural Record* and *National Builder*.<sup>17</sup>

The Nelle E. Peters Troost Avenue Historic District represents the most productive period of her long career. According to Ehrlich and Piland, the apartments were among 41 buildings attributed to Peters in 1923 alone.<sup>18</sup>

Several buildings designed by Peters are already listed in the National Register of Historic Places. These include the Ambassador Hotel on Broadway, the Rio Vista

<sup>16</sup>George Ehrlich and Sherry Piland. “The Architectural Career of Nelle E. Peters.” *Missouri Historical Review*, p. 127.

<sup>17</sup>The Spanish Court Apartments were featured in the November 1924 issue of *National Builder*, p.48.

<sup>18</sup>Ehrlich and Piland, p. 168.

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Apartments in Quality Hill, seven apartment buildings in the Armour Boulevard Multiple Property Survey Area, the Blenheim and Sylvester buildings in the Old Hyde Park East National Register Historic District, and the Arvada Apartments in Old Hyde Park West.

In addition, the Kansas City Historic Register has recognized several of Peters' works in the Nelle E. Peters Thematic District on Summit Street. This local register also features perhaps her most prominent designs, the "Poets and Painters" buildings that are the centerpiece of the city's famed Country Club Plaza and contain, among others, the Robert Browning, the Thomas Carlyle, the Robert Louis Stevenson, the Henry W. Longfellow, the Mark Twain, and the Rousseau and Cezanne buildings. Compared to many if not most of these, the Spanish Court Apartments and the Gerre Apartments are rather modest examples of Peters' legacy. However, these distinct property types are significant in their own right while further representing Peters' talent and her impact on Kansas City's architecture.

Since Peters' death in 1974, her reputation in Kansas City has been burnished by time. In a 1981 article in the *Kansas City Star*, Jane Flynn, then the administrator of the Kansas City Landmarks Commission, spoke about Peters in the context of the impending demolition of four of her buildings:

She was a gutsy lady and a true credit to her profession, which for years turned its back on her. It is too late for me to personally convey my admiration for her, but it is not too late for the public to realize the bit of history that will be lost forever with the razing of these buildings she designed.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> George Koppe, "Nelle Peters: An unheralded architect." *The Kansas City Star*, February 8, 1981.



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To paraphrase Flynn, perhaps it is time to recognize the bit of history that would be retained should the Nelle E. Peters Troost Avenue Historic District be added to the National Register of Historic Places.

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#### 10. Verbal Boundary Description

Property Tax Numbers: 2719-37 Troost Ave: 29-720-08-15-00-0-00-000  
2730 Troost Ave: 29-810-01-18-00-0-00-000

##### Property Descriptions:

2719-37 Troost Ave. (Referred to by Jackson County as 2719 Troost): Beacon Hill Cont of S 8 feet of E 150 feet of Lot 3, 4, & 5 Blk 9 (Ex PT DAF: BEG SW Cor Lot 5 then 71 feet then SELY 42.2 feet then S to N LI of Troost then W 45' to POB)

2730 Troost Ave. (Beacon Hill Cont of Lots 1-4 & N 10 feet of Lot 5 BLK 10 & S 10 feet of N 160 feet of W 150 feet of E 160 feet of BLK 10 LY N OF & ADJ

Also see District Map (page 17) with boundaries indicated by dashed line.

#### Boundary Justification

Boundaries encompass all of the apartment buildings designed by Nelle E. Peters in the 2700 block of Troost Avenue. Except for the Alana Apartment Hotel at the north end of the block (NR listed 7/5/06), the setting is otherwise devoid of historic properties of any type.

#### 11. Form Prepared By

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#### Photographs

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Nelle E. Peters Troost Avenue Historic District

Jackson County, Missouri

Tony Gardner, photographer

Photos taken October 2008

Negatives on file with Gardner Historic Property Consultants, Kansas City, MO.

1. Gerre Apartments, front elevation, facing west
2. Gerre Apartments, front elevation, facing southwest
3. Gerre Apartments, north side elevation, facing south
4. Gerre Apartments, south side elevation, facing northwest
5. Spanish Court setting, facing northeast
6. Spanish Court setting, facing east
7. Spanish Court setting, facing southeast
8. Spanish Court Building 1, front façade, facing north
9. Spanish Court Building 2, front façade, facing northeast
10. Spanish Court Building 3, front façade, facing east
11. Spanish Court Building 4, front façade, facing south
12. Spanish Court Building 5, front façade, facing south
13. Spanish Court Building 1, detail, facing north
14. Spanish Court Building 5 Detail, Facing South
15. Spanish Court, typical rear bay, facing east
16. Spanish Court, typical secondary façade, facing northeast

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