

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name Quality Hill Center Historic District

Other names/site number Quality Hill Towers, 910 Penn

Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

## 2. Location

Street & number 817, 905, and 929 Jefferson Street and 910 Pennsylvania Avenue

N/A

not for publication

City or town Kansas City

N/A

vicinity

State Missouri Code MO County Jackson

Code 095

Zip code 64105

## 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

Toni M. Prawl

FEB 14 2017

Signature of certifying official/Title Toni M. Prawl, Ph.D., Deputy SHPO

Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Quality Hill Center 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	
4	1	buildings
		sites
3	2	structures
		objects
7	3	<b>Total</b>

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

0

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling

LANDSCAPE/Parking Lot

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling

LANDSCAPE/Parking Lot

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/International Style

MODERN MOVEMENT

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: BRICK

METAL

roof: RUBBER

other: GLASS

☒

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION ON CONTINUATION PAGES

Quality Hill Center 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**

### Areas of Significance

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

### Period of Significance

1951-1958

### Significant Dates

1951

1958

### Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Lauck, Jesse F. (Architect) – 1951

Kivett and Myers and McCallum (Architect) – 1958

Winn-Senter Construction Company (Builder)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☐ Local government

☐ University

☒ Other

Name of repository: Missouri Valley Special Collections (KCPL)  
State Historical Society of Missouri (UMKC)

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

Quality Hill Center Historic District  
Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 4.0 acres

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84:

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	39.10440	-94.59202	3	39.10293	-94.59106
	Latitude:	Longitude:		Latitude:	Longitude:
2	39.10437	-94.59098	4	39.10294	-94.59170
	Latitude:	Longitude:		Latitude:	Longitude:

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

1	Zone	Easting	Northings	3	Zone	Easting	Northings
2	Zone	Easting	Northings	4	Zone	Easting	Northings

Verbal Boundary Description (On continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (On continuation sheet)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rachel Nugent, Senior Historic Preservation Specialist

organization Rosin Preservation, LLC

date February 2017

street & number 1712 Holmes St.

telephone 816-472-4950

city or town Kansas City

state MO

zip code 64108

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## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:**
  - A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
  - A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Photographs**
- **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.

Quality Hill Center 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: Quality Hill Center Historic District

City or Vicinity: Kansas City

County: Jackson

State: Missouri

Photographer: Brad Finch, f-stop Photography

Date

Photographed: June 2016, October 2016

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

- 1 of 22: Jefferson Street from River Club, view south.
- 2 of 22: Jefferson Street, north and west elevations of contributing resources, view southeast.
- 3 of 22: 910 Penn and 905 Jefferson, north and west elevations, view southeast.
- 4 of 22: 929 Jefferson, south and west elevations, Jefferson and W. 10<sup>th</sup> streets, view northeast.
- 5 of 22: 910 Penn, 929, 905, and 817 Jefferson, and contributing parking lot, view southwest.
- 6 of 22: 910 Penn, east elevation, view northwest.
- 7 of 22: 910 Penn pool (NC), view north.
- 8 of 22: Quality Hill Towers pool and pool house(NC), view north.
- 9 of 22: 929 Jefferson lobby, typical of Quality Hill Towers buildings, view southwest.
- 10 of 22: 929 Jefferson lobby, typical of Quality Hill Towers buildings, view northeast.
- 11 of 22: 929 Jefferson upper floor elevators, typical of Quality Hill Towers buildings, view southeast.
- 12 of 22: 929 Jefferson corridor, typical of Quality Hill Towers buildings, view northwest.
- 13 of 22: 929 Jefferson apartment living room, typical of Quality Hill Towers buildings, view northeast.
- 14 of 22: 929 Jefferson apartment living room, typical of Quality Hill Towers buildings, view west.
- 15 of 22: 929 Jefferson kitchen, typical of Quality Hill Towers buildings, view north.
- 16 of 22: 910 Penn lobby, view northeast.
- 17 of 22: 910 Penn lobby, view west.
- 18 of 22: 910 Penn corridor, typical, view south.
- 19 of 22: 910 Penn kitchen, typical, view southeast.
- 20 of 22: 910 Penn living room, typical, view northwest.
- 21 of 22: 910 Penn bedroom, typical, view northwest.
- 22 of 22: 910 Penn parking garage, view north.

## Figure Log:

Include figures on continuation pages at the end of the nomination.

**Figure 01.** Context Map. Google Maps, 2016.

**Figure 02.** Site Map. Kansas City Parcel Viewer, 2016.

**Figure 03.** Photo map: exteriors. Kansas City Parcel Viewer, 2016

**Figure 04.** Photo map: Quality Hill Towers ground floor. J.F. Lauck, Quality Hill Towers, arch. drawings, sheet 7A, 1950.

**Figure 05.** Photo map: Quality Hill Towers typical floor. J.F. Lauck, Quality Hill Towers, arch. drawings, sheet 7A, 1950.

**Figure 06.** Historic site plan, Quality Hill Towers. J.F. Lauck, Quality Hill Towers, arch. drawings, sheet 4M, 1950.

**Figure 07.** Ground floor plan. J.F. Lauck, Quality Hill Towers, arch. drawings, sheet 7A, 1950.

**Figure 08.** Typical floor plan. J.F. Lauck, Quality Hill Towers, arch. drawings, sheet 7A, 1950.

**Figure 09.** South and West elevations, Building A. J.F. Lauck, Quality Hill Towers, arch. drawings, sheet 7A, 1950.

**Figure 10.** Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Kansas City, Missouri, Volume 1, 1895, Sheet 12.

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Jackson County, Missouri

Name of Property

County and State

- Figure 11.** Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Kansas City, Missouri, Volume 1a, 1938, Sheet 31.
- Figure 12.** Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Kansas City, Missouri, Volume 1a, 1957, Sheet 105.
- Figure 13.** Buildings A and B, historic photograph, c.1951. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.
- Figure 14.** Quality Hill Towers, historic aerial photograph, c.1951. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.
- Figure 15.** Quality Hill Towers, historic aerial photograph, 1956. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.
- Figure 16.** Photo map: 910 Penn ground floor. Kivett & Myers & McCallum, architectural drawings, ground floor plan, 1957.
- Figure 17.** Photo map: 910 Penn typical floor. Kivett & Myers & McCallum, architectural drawings, typical floor plan, 1957.
- Figure 18.** Photo map: 910 Penn parking garage. Kivett & Myers & McCallum, architectural drawings, garage floor plan, 1957.
- Figure 19.** Historic site plan, 910 Penn. Kivett & Myers & McCallum, architectural drawings, site plan, 1957.
- Figure 20.** Rendering, "Quality Hill 1952," *Kansas City Star*, September 21, 1952.
- Figure 21.** Model, "A Modern Profile Planned for Quality Hill Area," *Kansas City Star*, July 10 1955.
- Figure 22.** Rendering, "More Apartments for Quality Hill," *Kansas City Star*, October 7, 1957.
- Figure 23.** Historic Postcard, Hilton Inn (formerly Cliff House Motor Hotel), c. 1970, constructed 1960.
- Figure 24.** Model, "Expand Plans on Quality Hill," *Kansas City Times*, February 3, 1959, 4.
- Figure 25.** Map of Downtown Kansas City Missouri, from "Central Business District Kansas City Missouri Study," 1956.
- Figure 26.** Historic 1962 photograph of Wayne Miner Housing Development, constructed 1960. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.
- Figure 27.** Historic photograph of Twin Oaks, constructed 1951, n.d., Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.
- Figure 28.** Carlton Plaza Apartments (1956) and Plaza House Apartments (1955). Google Street View, 2016.
- Figure 29.** Churchill Apartments (1964). Google Street View, 2016.
- Figure 30.** Sunset Apartments (1965). Google Street View, 2016.
- Figure 31.** Historic Planting Plan. Kivett & Myers & McCallum, architectural drawings, planting plan, 1957.
- Figure 32.** Model of Quality Hill Towers initial design. *Kansas City Star*, October 2, 1949.
- Figure 33.** Quality Hill Tower, 929 Jefferson Street, 9<sup>th</sup> floor plan. Source: J.F. Lauck.
- Figure 34.** Quality Hill Tower, 929 Jefferson Street, 10<sup>th</sup> floor plan with combined units. Source: J.F. Lauck. The configuration depicted in the historic plans are accurate to date.
- Figure 35.** 1947 Map of Residential Areas. Source: City Plan Commission, *The Master Plan for Kansas City*, 3.
- Figure 36.** Detail of 1947 Map of Residential Areas. Source: City Plan Commission, *The Master Plan for Kansas City*, 3.
- Figure 37.** Historic Photo of 904 Jefferson, 1940. Source: Kansas City 1940 Tax Assessment Photographs, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.
- Figure 38.** Historic Photo of 921 Jefferson, 1940. Source: Kansas City 1940 Tax Assessment Photographs, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.
- Figure 39.** Historic Photo of 820 Pennsylvania/817 Jefferson, 1940. Source: Kansas City 1940 Tax Assessment Photographs, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.
- Figure 40.** Historic Photo of 918 Pennsylvania, 1940. Source: Kansas City 1940 Tax Assessment Photographs, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.
- Figure 41.** Historic Photo of 901 Jefferson, 1940. Source: Kansas City 1940 Tax Assessment Photographs, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**SUMMARY**

The Quality Hill Center Historic District (District) encompasses portions of two blocks between Jefferson Street and Pennsylvania Avenue from W. 8<sup>th</sup> to W. 10<sup>th</sup> streets in downtown Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri. The District includes ten resources: four contributing buildings, three contributing parking lot structures, one non-contributing building, and two non-contributing structures (pools) (*Figure 2*). Three of the contributing buildings, 817, 905, and 929 Jefferson Street (Quality Hill Towers), are three identical high-rise apartment buildings constructed in 1951.<sup>1</sup> Each building has a concrete foundation, a concrete and steel frame, a painted brick base, and buff brick cladding. A series of overlapping rectangles create the irregular footprints. The buildings exhibit a restrained expression of the Modern Movement style, specifically the aluminum windows that wrap the outer corners of each floor and the lack of ornament on the asymmetrical façades. On the interior, entry vestibules open to small elevator lobbies. U-shaped double-loaded corridors lined with studio (single occupancy) and one-bedroom (double occupancy) apartments organize each floor in all three buildings. The interiors have simple finishes such as plaster walls and ceilings, steel doors, and composite tile floors, although many of these historic floors have been replaced or covered. The corridors retain the louvered wood summer doors as well as the ice delivery/trash pick-up doors. Two stairwells and two elevators provide circulation through the buildings. The fourth building, 910 Pennsylvania Avenue (910 Penn), is an eleven-story rectangular apartment building that rises from a below-grade parking garage that forms the basement of the building. Constructed in 1958, the long primary east and west façades of the Modern Movement building have an aluminum frame with horizontal and vertical bands of enameled steel panels flanking aluminum windows. The narrow north and south facades are buff brick with a single vertical band of windows. The metal and glass curtain wall of the upper stories and the concrete first story, slightly recessed to reveal the structural concrete columns, provides a local interpretation of the Miesian aesthetic. The three contributing parking garages are historic as part of the original plan for the property. The three non-contributing resources, the two pools and the pool house, were constructed c.1963 at the center of the 900 block. The location and small size of these resources have a minimal impact on the District. The contributing buildings have excellent interior and exterior integrity of materials, design, and workmanship. The Quality Hill Center Historic District has experienced few alterations and retains excellent integrity, sufficient to communicate feelings about and associations with its significance as the first private residential project constructed under Kansas City's newly enacted urban redevelopment legislation.

**ELABORATION**

***Setting***

The contributing buildings in the District face Jefferson Street and Pennsylvania Avenue on the west edge of the Quality Hill residential neighborhood. The Quality Hill neighborhood occupies the area west of Broadway and Kansas City's Central Business District contained within the downtown loop of I-35, I-70, I-670, and 71 Highway. The primary elevations of the Quality Hill Towers buildings face west towards Ermine Case Junior Park (Case Park)<sup>2</sup> on the bluffs overlooking the West Bottoms industrial area, the

<sup>1</sup> As described in the context below, originally there were five identical buildings constructed as Quality Hill Towers. The two southernmost buildings were demolished in 2004. As described in the Integrity section below, the loss of these two buildings does not compromise the integrity of the District and its ability to convey associations with the area of significance.

<sup>2</sup> Case Park was historically named West Terrace Park and was part George Kessler's original master plan for Kansas City's parks and boulevard system. This park was not included in the National Register nomination for the Kansas City Parks and Boulevards Historic District (NR listed August 9, 2016) due to significant alterations. Cydney E. Millstein, and Paul Novick, "Kansas City Parks

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Missouri and Kansas rivers, and the state of Kansas (*Figures 1 and 2*). Case Park has several concrete walking paths and paved seating areas that cut through large swaths of grassy lawns (*Photo 2*). Large groupings of mature deciduous trees frame the park, particularly on the west edge at the bluffs. A circular paved area at the north end of the park contains a monument to the Lewis & Clark expedition. The primary elevation of 910 Penn faces east toward the rest of the Quality Hill neighborhood and the Central Business District. The Quality Hill neighborhood contains a wide range of different building types and functions. Residential resources include a few remaining narrow Late-Victorian era single-family dwellings, most of which have been converted to multi-family residences or commercial functions, early twentieth-century apartment buildings, and rows of late-twentieth-century townhouses. Construction is currently underway on three- and four-story apartment buildings that occupy the lots south of the District. The few purpose-built commercial resources have multiple stories and occupy large tracts of land, such as the 1952 American Hereford Association Building and its c.2000 addition two blocks southwest of the nominated property and the c.2000 State Street Bank which occupies the 700 and 800 blocks of Pennsylvania Avenue to the northeast. Outside the District, the surrounding blocks retain historic characteristics such as the low scale of the buildings and the use of brick as exterior cladding. New residential buildings are constructed on lots that historically contained residential resources but by the end of the twentieth century had become vacant lots or parking lots, including the lots that originally contained the two additional Quality Hill Towers buildings. Except for the thirteen-story Cathedral Square Towers, constructed in 1977 on W. 12<sup>th</sup> Street two blocks southeast of the nominated property, the buildings in the District are the only high-rise towers in the Quality Hill neighborhood, as they were historically.

The topography of the District changes significantly with Jefferson Street cresting at E. 8<sup>th</sup> and E. 10<sup>th</sup> streets while E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street slopes down from Pennsylvania Avenue on the east to its lowest point at Jefferson Street on the west (*Photos 2-4*). The 900 block of Pennsylvania Avenue is relatively flat. Due to the change in grade, the exposure of the ground level at each building varies by elevation. The building at 817 Jefferson Street (Building A) shares the block with the two contributing parking lots and the River Club, the building constructed for the exclusive dining club in 1950. The buildings at 905 and 929 Jefferson Street (Buildings B and C, respectively) and 910 Penn share the block with the three-story Pennbroke Apartments, constructed in 1926 at 604 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street (*Photo 4, Figure 3*).<sup>3</sup> The large parking lot (a contributing structure) and the pool area and concrete block pool house (non-contributing structure and building) occupy the space between Buildings B and C (*Photo 8*). A second pool area, also a non-contributing structure, occupies the southwest corner of the parking area atop the parking garage for 910 Penn (*Photo 7*). Grass covers the lot surrounding the buildings on Jefferson Street. A painted post and rail fence runs along the perimeter of these lots adjacent to the public sidewalks that encircle each block. The 910 Penn building is set back from the street a short distance to provide space for a shallow semi-circular driveway and porte cochere at the center entrance (*Figure 19*). The landscaping at 910 Penn resembles its original planting plan, with irregularly shaped planting beds containing low deciduous and evergreen shrubs (*Figure 31*). A few small deciduous trees dot the larger sections of lawn that flank the entrances to the parking garage below 910 Penn.

and Boulevards Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2016, 8-34. Case Park is not included in the boundary for the Quality Hill Center Historic District.

<sup>3</sup> The Pennbroke Apartments was listed in the National Register on April 15, 2009.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Description of Resources**

**817, 905, and 929 Jefferson Street (Buildings A, B, and C)**

**Three Contributing Buildings**

**Lauck, J. F. (Architect)**

**Modern Movement**

**Winn-Senter Construction Company (Builder)**

**1951**

Exterior

The three contributing buildings are identical to one another with the exception of a few small details. The description provided here applies to all three buildings except where noted.

The high-rise apartment building has a concrete and steel frame and brick cladding (*Photos 2-4*). White painted brick clads the ground level that varies in height depending on the slope of the site. A band of soldier course brick with alternating projecting and recessed bricks caps the ground level cladding and provides the only ornament on the building. A series of overlapping rectangles forms the irregular footprint, with narrow rectangles projecting north and south and shorter, shallower rectangles projecting east and west. Single and paired windows pierce the ground level walls on each elevation. Ten identical stories with the same fenestration pattern and cladding rise above the ground level. Windows that pierce the walls have steel lintels and rowlock brick sills. Large and small single windows, paired windows, and paired windows that wrap the corners of the building pierce each elevation. Small single windows indicate the internal location of a kitchen or bathroom. Paired windows wrap the southernmost and northernmost corners of the building. In 1985, aluminum single-hung windows replaced the original double-hung aluminum windows. The building has a flat roof with a small rectangular mechanical penthouse containing the elevator overrun.

A non-historic metal and vinyl canopy extends westward from the primary entrance on the west elevation. A non-historic aluminum glazed single door with sidelights accesses the interior. The secondary entrance is a recessed opening in the south elevation. The building does not have central air, so most apartments have a window air conditioning unit.

The only exterior difference between the buildings is the slope of the surrounding land and the exposure of the ground level. For Building A (817 Jefferson Street), the lot slopes down to the south and west. For Buildings B and C (905 and 929 Jefferson Street), the lot slopes down to the north and west.

Interior

The building has a complex layout and simple finishes. The main entrance opens to a small vestibule (*Figure 7*). The vestibule contains the mailboxes for each unit. A non-historic aluminum storefront door with a transom and sidelights provides the secure entrance to the building and opens to the small elevator lobby. The elevator lobby contains access to two passenger elevators, an adjoining mail room, and the storage and laundry spaces that occupy the rest of the ground level. The vestibule and lobby have historic plaster ceilings with a non-historic "popcorn" finish, historic plaster walls with a simple crown molding, and non-historic ceramic tile floors and bases (*Photos 9 and 10*). The original metal elevator doors, frames, and portions of the cabs are extant while the finishes within the cabs have been updated. Building C (929 Jefferson Street) contains the property manager's office at the northwest corner of the lobby. Historically this space contained a single room as the office and the rest was designed as an apartment for the property manager. It is unknown when the entire apartment was converted to the manager's office.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Buildings A and B have apartment units in this location. The laundry and storage spaces behind the lobby have painted brick walls and concrete floors. These spaces have highly utilitarian finishes.

The ten upper floors are identical to one another in both layout and finishes (*Figure 8*). A U-shaped corridor organizes each floor (*Photos 11 and 12*). The elevators at the southwest corner of the corridor, the concrete stair at the northwest corner, and the concrete stair at the southeast corner provide vertical circulation and access to each floor. The corridors have historic plaster ceilings, historic plaster walls, and non-historic carpeting and base. Historic steel doors with metal frames provide access to each unit. The unit entrances retain their historic wood louvered "summer" doors. Low metal doors that are now soldered shut historically provided access to each unit for ice delivery and trash collection. Ten rectangular or L-shaped units create the unique layout. This layout allows eight of the ten units to have two exterior walls.

The building contains two types of units: studio (historically referred to as single occupancy) and one-bedroom (double occupancy) (*Figure 8*). The studios, ranging in size from 375 to 400 square feet, contain a large living room, a small galley kitchen, a large closet, and a full bathroom with an attached dressing room. One-bedroom units, ranging in size from 495 to 525 square feet, contain a large living room, a slightly smaller bedroom, a galley kitchen, a full bathroom, and two closets. There are four studios and six one-bedroom apartments on each floor of each building. The units are self-sufficient with private kitchens and bath facilities. The units retain most of their historic finishes, including the plaster ceilings and walls, the wood base, the steel interior doors and metal frames, and the marble slabs at the window sills (*Photos 13 and 14*). Most units have non-historic carpet and sheet vinyl floors, although many retain the historic composite tile flooring beneath the non-historic materials. The kitchens retain their historic metal cabinets, although many of the cabinets have received an updated painted finish and new hardware (*Photo 15*). Countertops, fixtures, and appliances have also been updated. The bathrooms retain their historic ceramic tile floors and wainscot, as well as historic fixtures.

Five units, dispersed among the three buildings, are two-bedroom apartments, as they contain adjoining units that were combined into single apartments. On the floors that have combined units, the configuration of the corridors remains intact. In most cases, joining units involved only cutting a doorway in the demising wall between the units. One kitchen and one bathroom were retained when units were joined. Interior partitions that created the other kitchen, bathroom, and dressing room/closet were often removed. Except for the combined apartment on the seventh floor of 817 Jefferson, the two-bedroom apartments are located on the tenth floor of each building. On the tenth floor of 929 Jefferson, Units 1005 and 1006 were combined, as were Units 1007 and 1008. The difference between the ninth and tenth floors highlight the simple ways in which these units were combined (*Figures 33 and 34*).

**910 Penn (Building F)**

**Modern Movement: Miesian**

**Kivett, Myers & McCallum (Architect)**

**Contributing Building**

**1958**

**Winn-Senter Construction Company (Builder)**

Exterior

The eleven-story 910 Penn faces east and occupies the southeast corner of W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. The rectangular building has a concrete foundation and a concrete frame that rises eleven floors to a flat roof (*Photo 6*). The lowest level, below grade, is nearly twice the size of the upper floors and contains a concrete parking garage that attaches to the west side of the basement of the

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

building. The roof of the parking garage is a paved parking area that wraps around the building at street level. The basement is below grade on the primary east elevation, but is gradually more exposed on the north elevation as the grade slopes downward along W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street. Overhead metal vehicular doors provide access to the basement garage through the north and west elevations. The entrance to the west elevation is accessible from the northernmost section of the large terraced parking lot, a contributing resource, between Buildings B and C.

The long east and west elevations are nearly identical to one another, except for the building entrances to the first story and the configuration of bays on the upper stories. The narrow north and south elevations are also identical to one another. Rectangular concrete structural posts are exposed at the first story with the exterior wall recessed behind the columns. Metal panels cover the soffit of the recessed area at the first story. Concrete panels with decorative large and small aggregate clad the first story. Rectangular punched openings at regular intervals contain historic single aluminum windows with a large fixed upper sash and a small hopper sash. The fenestration pattern on the first story does not correspond to the fenestration pattern of the façade above. Nine single punched openings flank two pairs of double doors at the center entrance. The entrance consists of two pairs of fully glazed aluminum storefront doors, each with a single outer sidelight. The aluminum storefront doors do not appear to be historic although they are similar to the fully glazed pairs of doors that were there historically. A historic simple flat metal canopy extends over the semi-circular drive at the main entrance. Narrow concrete columns support the outer corners of the canopy.

Clear anodized aluminum frames form the grids of the upper stories of the long east and west façades (*Photo 6*). Horizontal and vertical bands frame the window bays at each story. The bands contain dark enameled metal panels. The vertical bands divide the façade into twelve bays. Each bay contains either one window assembly or two, arranged in a pattern of 1-2-2-1, repeated three times across the front façade. The four-part window assembly consists of two fixed panes occupying the upper three-quarters while one fixed pane and one hopper sash occupy the lower quarter. A vertical mullion divides the assembly in half vertically. Projecting aluminum fins define each vertical column of windows or enameled metal panels.

The rear west façade uses the same materials and four-part window assembly with a slightly different fenestration pattern. The west façade has twelve bays of windows alternating between bands of enameled metal panels. The pattern of window assemblies is a single window and a pair of windows flanking eight single windows. The verticals between the center single windows contain two bands of enameled panels, rather than a single band. Projecting aluminum fins define each vertical column on this façade as well.

The narrow north and south elevations are identical in material and configuration. They have the same exposed structural columns and recessed large-aggregate concrete panel walls at the first story. Light buff brick clads the upper stories except for a central column containing pairs of windows (*Photos 3 and 5*). Projecting aluminum ribs define the vertical elements of this band while the horizontal elements alternated between a pair of four-part window assemblies and enameled metal spandrel panels. There is no applied ornament on this building, other than the cladding materials themselves. The façades terminate in a simple coping at the roof line. Several mechanical penthouses and equipment rise from the center of the flat roof.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

The below-grade parking garage attaches to the west side of the building at the basement level (*Photos 3 and 5, Figure 18*). The garage has a concrete foundation, concrete structural columns, and a concrete roof deck with concrete half-walls at the perimeter. Patterned concrete blocks form the screen across the open portions of the exposed north and west elevations to provide interior ventilation. Two large vehicular entrances with metal overhead garage doors provide interior access. Although the current garage doors are not historic, they replaced earlier metal overhead garage doors. The north entrance accesses W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street. The west entrance accesses the northernmost section of the large terraced parking lot between Buildings B and C on Jefferson Street. The roof of the parking garage is a large parking lot paved with asphalt and striped for about fifty cars (*Figure 19*). Historically the asphalt driveways flanking the building provided access to the parking area, which included a small area at the southwest corner. When the pool was installed at the southwest corner of the property in c.1963, it blocked access to the parking area from the south driveway. The south driveway currently still accesses a small parking area striped for about six vehicles.

Interior

The interior of this building retains its historic simple design and materials. The pairs of fully glazed doors open to a narrow vestibule with identical pairs of non-historic fully glazed aluminum doors. The vestibule doors open to a small rectangular lobby (*Photo 16*). The west end of the lobby, opposite the vestibule, are the two historic elevators (*Photo 17*). The long double-loaded corridor extends north and south from the west end of the lobby (*Photo 18*). Studio, one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments are accessible from the single center corridor. The first floor contains nine studio and one-bedroom apartments. The upper floors each contain twelve apartments. The two-bedroom apartments occupy the north and south ends of the building while the eight apartments at the center of each floor of the building are one-bedroom units. The building retains its historic configuration with a few small alterations to individual units, primarily on the first floor (*Figures 16 and 17*).<sup>4</sup> The apartment unit immediately north of the lobby was converted to the building management office. Another studio unit was converted to a small fitness center and the kitchenette was removed. The one-bedroom apartment unit at the southwest corner was converted to a changing room/restroom and storage area for the outdoor pool. In several locations, historic adjacent one- and two-bedroom units were converted to studios and three-bedroom units by closing off the historic bedroom door and creating a new opening in the wall between the units.<sup>5</sup> Other alterations include partially removing the partition between the kitchen and the living room in some apartment units. In units where this alteration has been made, the other historic partitions remain intact. The apartment units have small galley kitchens and closets with tall doors (*Photo 19*). The basement contains laundry, maintenance, mechanical, and storage spaces, all with utilitarian finishes.

The building retains many historic finishes, although some finishes have been replaced to update and refresh the units. The lobby has non-historic ceramic tile floors, historic plaster walls, although the historic wood panel wainscot is no longer extant, and non-historic dropped ceilings with acoustical tile. Historic white marble panels clad the wall immediately surrounding the two elevator cabs (*Photo 17*). The elevator lobbies, or the corridor immediately in front of the elevators, on the upper floors have wood non-historic parquet flooring. The corridors have carpet, plaster walls, and plaster ceilings, as they did historically. Non-historic crown molding was added to the walls to conceal electrical and data conduit. The finishes in the apartment units include non-historic carpet and tile, historic plaster walls and ceilings, and historic

<sup>4</sup> The first floor is identified as the "Ground Floor" on historic architectural plans.

<sup>5</sup> It is unknown when these alterations and unit conversions occurred.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 7

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

metal door frames that are flush with the plaster walls (*Photo 21*). Historic doors are wood slab doors while the replacements are wood panel doors. The grid of the metal frame and spandrel panels of the exterior are visible on the interior, although they have been painted a single color (*Photo 20*). The units do not have any base trim or crown molding. Some kitchens retain their historic metal cabinets and laminate counter tops. Other kitchens have newer cabinets, counters, and appliances. Most of the bathroom finishes and fixtures have been replaced.

The interior of the parking garage is the exposed concrete structure and concrete floor (*Photo 22*). A small room at the top of the stairs leading from the basement to the garage was historically the office for the attendant. This room has large fixed glazing that looks out into the garage. The windows are covered and the space is used for storage.

**Quality Hill Towers Parking Lots**

**Three Contributing Structures**

**1951**

The District includes three paved parking lots historically associated with the apartment buildings. Two asphalt parking lots striped for thirty cars each occupy the terraced area immediately west of Building A (817 Jefferson Street) at the northwest corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street. A strip of grass and a concrete stair span the space between the parking lots (*Photo 5*). A larger paved parking lot occupies the space between Buildings B and C (905 and 929 Jefferson Street). The terraced lot has concrete block retaining walls between the three sections. The north section is striped for twenty cars; the center and south sections are striped for twelve cars each. The east half of the center and south sections was converted to the pool area c.1963. The asphalt parking lots have been repaved and re-striped periodically, but they retain their historic configuration, materials, and function.

**Quality Hill Towers Pool House**

**Non-Contributing Building**

**Quality Hill Towers Pool**

**Non-Contributing Structure**

**910 Penn Pool**

**Non-Contributing Structure**

**c.1963**

The pool facilities were constructed in 1963, after the buildings were completed. The Quality Hill Towers facility includes a large concrete patio and an irregularly-shaped in-ground pool. The concrete pool has a clay tile border. A narrow rectangular building provides storage and an enclosure for the pool equipment. The low building has painted brick walls, concrete floors, and a flat tar and gravel roof. The pool house building has several punched openings with steel or wood slab doors (*Photo 8*).

The 910 Penn pool was constructed at the southwest corner of the property historically occupied by the corner of the paved parking lot (*Photo 7*). This area is south of the below-grade parking garage. A wood fence encloses a rectangular patio covered with concrete pavers and a rectangular in-ground concrete pool. A second wood fence east of the patio encloses the pool equipment.

***Integrity***

The Quality Hill Center Historic District retains excellent integrity to communicate associations with mid-century planning trends whereby private corporations utilized federal, state, and local legislation to redevelop blighted urban areas through the construction of modern residential buildings. The District illustrates the first residential project in the state initiated under Missouri's Chapter 353 urban

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 8

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

redevelopment legislation and Kansas City's urban redevelopment ordinance. It also illustrates how the developer, Lewis Kitchen, later expanded his redevelopment plan to include additional resources. Both the initial and expansion plans included other resources that were either built and are now demolished or were never built. Kitchen's original Quality Hill Towers plan called for ten apartment buildings. The five buildings constructed in 1951 were labeled as buildings "A" through "E." The other five buildings identified under this first plan were never built. When Kitchen was ready to build again in the mid-1950s, his later redevelopment plan called for a high-rise apartment building, seven three- to six-story office buildings, and a motor hotel near the newly constructed interstate highway. In 1958, Kitchen constructed 910 Penn, labeled in the architectural drawings as Building "F" (*Figure 31*). The Cliff House Motor Hotel was completed c.1960 but demolished in 2002. The office buildings were never built. Buildings "D" and "E" were demolished in 2004 after they had deteriorated significantly under separate ownership. The nominated District contains a cohesive group of all extant resources directly associated with Lewis Kitchen's plans to revitalize Quality Hill.

All four buildings retain sufficient architectural integrity and historic characteristics to communicate the mid-century era in which they were constructed and their historic function as high-rise apartment buildings. Such character-defining features include façade appearance, interior configuration of public halls, apartment unit entrances, and stairways as well as unit layouts, which are unchanged. The only substantial change to the façades occurred in 1985 when the ownership group replaced the windows in 817, 905, and 929 Jefferson. The exterior materials and the interior configuration of 910 Penn are intact. The replacement of doors and windows are common alterations to apartment buildings that do not necessarily diminish the building's ability to convey associations with the historic context. The replacement windows in the Quality Hill Towers are the same material, aluminum, even if the configuration has changed from two-over-two to one-over-one.

The four buildings continue to communicate the historic redevelopment plan that originally contained six apartment buildings. Demolition of the two buildings at the south end of the development area, across Jefferson and W. 10th streets from the District does not compromise the District's ability to communicate associations with historic contexts. The three remaining Quality Hill Towers buildings, as the first three constructed, form a cohesive group that face the same direction and clearly exhibit the same design (*Figures 13-15*). The historic rhythm of high-rise apartment buildings along Jefferson Street (*Figure 13*) is not affected by the demolition of Buildings "D" and "E". The Quality Hill Towers, along with 910 Penn, form an intact collection of mid-twentieth-century apartment buildings that exhibit the scale and setting associated with urban redevelopment projects. The District retains integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, materials, association, and feeling, sufficient to represent its significance as the first and the largest private residential redevelopment project in Kansas City.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

Quality Hill Center Historic District
Name of Property Jackson County, Missouri
County and State N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

### SUMMARY

The Quality Hill Center Historic District (District) is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT. The District is significant as the first redevelopment project in Kansas City initiated under Missouri's Chapter 353 urban redevelopment legislation and Kansas City's urban redevelopment ordinance. This legislation was similar to federal Urban Renewal legislation that enabled the public entity to condemn private property for acquisition and redevelopment at a reduced price. The legislation was passed to facilitate slum clearance as a way to revitalize urban cores decimated after periods of disinvestment concurrent with the expansion of the suburbs. Prominent local real estate developer, Lewis E. Kitchen, embraced this new legislation and embarked on a plan to revitalize the previously blighted Quality Hill residential neighborhood. Kitchen commissioned Kansas City architects J.F. Lauck Associates and Kivett and Myers and McCallum to design the six high-rise apartment buildings in two phases, two of which have been demolished. The buildings housed middle class individuals and families. While his plans included additional apartment buildings, commercial office buildings, and hotels, the nominated District encompasses all of the extant resources associated with Kitchen's plans and forms the cohesive core of the plan designed to revitalize Quality Hill through the construction of residential resources. The period of significance begins in 1951, with the construction of Quality Hill Towers, and ends in 1958, which corresponds to the date of construction when the redevelopment plan was brought to fruition with the completion of 910 Penn, the only extant resource from the expansion of Kitchen's original redevelopment plan.

### ELABORATION

#### ***Quality Hill Neighborhood***

The Quality Hill residential neighborhood flourished in the last decades of the nineteenth century, having earned its name from the high concentration of stately homes on wide lots. The neighborhood occupied the area on the bluffs overlooking the West Bottoms industrial area, west of Broadway and the Central Business District as it expanded south from the original town site less than one mile northeast. Quality Hill extended from W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street to W. 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Original residents of Quality Hill included the wealthy merchants and businessmen whose business ventures led to the growth of this new city (*Figure 10*). The exclusively residential neighborhood provided easy access to downtown cultural and commercial establishments while remaining relatively secluded on the bluff.<sup>6</sup>

Around the turn of the twentieth century, Quality Hill began to lose its status as an exclusive neighborhood. Several factors contributed to this decline: primarily the smell from the packing houses in the West Bottoms, the expense associated with updating the Victorian era homes with modern conveniences such as electricity and indoor plumbing, and the scarcity of land available for new construction. Many of the wealthy residents of Quality Hill or the next generation of social elites led the growth of the city southwards. Without available land in Quality Hill, those with means constructed dwellings in new suburban subdivisions, primarily south of the Central Business District, such as Hyde Park two miles south and east.<sup>7</sup> The city limits expanded accordingly. The large homes in Quality Hill attracted investors and landlords interested in subdividing these properties to obtain maximum rent. Apartments, flats, and rooming houses provided affordable accommodations for the large number of working-class individuals

<sup>6</sup> Clifford Naysmith, *Quality Hill: The History of a Neighborhood*, (Kansas City, MO, 1962), 15. Vertical File: Quality Hill, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

<sup>7</sup> Naysmith, 24.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

moving to the city in the early twentieth century. Despite efforts to provide decent accommodations through new construction in the 1920s, Quality Hill was considered a slum with substandard housing by the 1940s.<sup>8</sup> The City Plan Commission conducted a social, physical, and economic analysis of residential areas and compiled the findings in a report published in 1944. The results of the study informed the City's proposed master plan, published in 1947. The published plan included a color-coded map indicating areas that needing "Redevelopment" (red), "Rehabilitation" (orange), "Active Conservation" (yellow), or "Continued Protection" (green) (*Figure 35*). The nominated property is located with an area shaded red for needing redevelopment (*Figure 36*).<sup>9</sup>

According to the 1938 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for the block on which Buildings B and C were constructed, one third of the buildings had already been demolished. The remaining buildings included the Pennbroke Apartments (NR Listed 4/15/2009), a large former single-family residence converted to the Pennway Hotel, a three-story family hotel, a pair of flats, and several narrow single-family dwellings and associated outbuildings. The block on the west side of Jefferson Street was almost completely devoid of structures (*Figures 11 and 12*).<sup>10</sup> The buildings slated for demolition for the Lewis Kitchen's redevelopment projects for Quality Hill were two- to three-story narrow brick buildings. Most were either purpose-built apartment buildings, such as the Hotel Penn (904 Pennsylvania, *Figure 37*) and the flats at 921 Jefferson (*Figure 38*), or large single dwellings modified as apartments, such as 820 Pennsylvania/817 Jefferson (*Figure 39*) and the large building at 918 Pennsylvania (*Figure 40*). There was also a commercial resource with a single storefront on the first floor and apartments above (*Figure 41*). In 1940, the residents of these dwellings were predominantly white, although several lodgers were African American. The residents, regardless of race, held blue-collar jobs such as laborer, maid, waitress, clerk, cook, construction, truck driver, seamstress, and city employees in the utility or public works departments.<sup>11</sup> It is unclear exactly how many people were displaced. The 1939 city directory lists roughly twenty-four people on Jefferson Street and roughly eighty on Pennsylvania Avenue living in the 800 and 900 blocks. Additionally, several buildings offered furnished rooms, the residents of which were not listed in the city directory. Although it is unknown where all of the displaced residents moved, research suggests they moved to individual houses or small apartment buildings scattered in neighborhoods throughout the city.<sup>12</sup> Public housing constructed concurrently may have accommodated displaced residents, although it is unknown the extent to which this occurred.

### **Urban Redevelopment Legislation and Implementation**

The abundance of inferior housing conditions coupled with the proximity to downtown Kansas City created the conditions that spurred the housing revitalization programs developed in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The prevalence of slums in many cities stemmed from the rapid industrialization and urbanization that occurred in the late 1800s when high demand and little regulation overlapped. Such areas, identified

<sup>8</sup> A. Theodore Brown and Lyle Dorsett, *K.C., A History of Kansas City, Missouri*, (Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing Company, 1978), 187.

<sup>9</sup> City Plan Commission, *The Master Plan for Kansas City* (Kansas City, MO: City of Kansas City, 1947), 2-3. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

<sup>10</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Kansas City, Missouri, Volume 1, 1909 corrected to 1938, Sheet 31. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library. The block on the west side of Jefferson Street was eventually included in West Terrace Park (Case Park).

<sup>11</sup> United States Census Bureau, 1940 Federal Census, available on-line: Ancestry.com (accessed November 30, 2016).

<sup>12</sup> *Polk's Kansas City (Jackson County, Missouri) Directory*, Volume 77, 1952, Kansas City, MO: R.L. Polk & Co., Publishers, 1952, Ancestry.com (accessed June 6, 2016).



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 11

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

as blighted, were thought to be the source of "disease, juvenile delinquency, and crime."<sup>13</sup> Economic and social analysts differed on the approach to eliminate blight based on the perceived root causes. Some thought the low quality and lack of basic amenities in the physical structures within blighted areas were the cause of the problem. Others believed the problem stemmed from the depletion of the tax base when middle- and upper-class residents and associated commercial entities moved out of the urban core to outlying suburban areas.<sup>14</sup> The Great Depression exacerbated these issues as migrants moved to cities to look for non-existent work and aging housing stock continued to deteriorate without funds for repair. New Deal era programs, such as the National Industry Recovery Act of 1933 and the National Housing Act of 1934 focused on stimulating the economy by addressing two problems simultaneously, specifically the lack of employment and the on-going lack of adequate housing.<sup>15</sup> The Public Works Administration (PWA) projects included public housing, among other civic improvements; the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), created under the National Housing Act, provided insurance for private mortgages, enabling large-scale construction of single-family housing. Both programs required a significant number of construction jobs. Participation in World War II necessitated a hiatus on non-essential construction projects and the shortage of adequate housing not only did not abate, it worsened as veterans returned from abroad.

The United States Housing Act of 1937, refined in the Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954, directly addressed blight through the provision of grants and loans for local housing authorities to clear slums and construct low-cost housing.<sup>16</sup> It quickly became clear that the federal government was not equipped nor did it have widespread local support to construct public housing on the scale necessary to address housing shortages. States adopted similar urban redevelopment legislation with the significant distinction of engaging the private sector. Such state legislation granted local governments the authority to acquire blighted properties through eminent domain, amass large tracts of land, and resell those tracts to private developers, with the federal government covering the difference between the costs of acquisition and clearance and the resale price.<sup>17</sup> State legislation also enabled local governments to provide appropriate incentives.<sup>18</sup> New York State enacted the first Urban Redevelopment Corporations Act in 1941. Missouri modeled its 1943 Urban Redevelopment Corporations Act on the New York legislation, although it applied only to St. Louis.<sup>19</sup> When revised and enacted in 1945, Missouri's Urban Redevelopment Corporations Act, commonly referred to as Chapter 353, included additional provisions to bolster the authority of local governments as a way to attract private investment. Not only could local governments authorize tax abatement for selected projects, they could transfer the power of eminent domain to the redevelopment corporation pursuing the project.<sup>20</sup> Kansas City enacted an ordinance on October 9, 1950 to accept the powers allocated through the state legislation and allow the city to participate in the federal program.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Michael M. Shultz and F. Rebecca Sapp, "Urban Redevelopment and the Elimination of Blight: A Case Study of Missouri's Chapter 353," *Urban Law Annual; Journal of Urban and Contemporary Law* 37 (January 1990): 35.  
[http://openscholarship.wustl.edu/law\\_urbanlaw/vol37/iss1/2](http://openscholarship.wustl.edu/law_urbanlaw/vol37/iss1/2) (accessed May 20, 2016).

<sup>14</sup> Shultz, 35.

<sup>15</sup> Shultz, 30.

<sup>16</sup> Shultz, 30.

<sup>17</sup> Shultz, 31.

<sup>18</sup> Shultz, 36.

<sup>19</sup> Shultz, 39-40. The original statute applied only to cities with a population greater than 700,000.

<sup>20</sup> Shultz, 41. When it was enacted in 1945, Chapter 353 applied to St. Louis and Kansas City. Subsequent amendments extended the legislation to charter cities or cities that met other requirements.

<sup>21</sup> Jack Roy Bohanon, "A History and Economic Analysis of the Kansas City Missouri: Federal Urban Renewal Program," Master of Arts Thesis in Economics, University of Missouri-Kansas City, November 1, 1971, 16.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 12

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Quality Hill Towers was the first project in Missouri initiated under the state's urban redevelopment legislation and the first project in Kansas City under the subsequent local ordinance.<sup>22</sup>

The National Housing Act of 1954 included Section 220, the purpose of which was to provide mortgage and loan insurance for private entities and corporations financing the construction of new dwellings in areas identified by the local, state, or federal government as eligible for urban renewal.<sup>23</sup> This provision allowed developers utilizing local and state urban redevelopment legislation to obtain mortgage insurance which stabilized financing for such large projects. The guarantee of federal backing of mortgages protected lenders against losses due to defaults, thereby giving them confidence to invest substantial funds in large projects. Public-private partnerships were integral to the process of redeveloping land in large and mid-sized cities across the country. Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New York City implemented local legislation that utilized state and federal legislation to enable local municipalities to acquire land for resale to developers as well as provide incentives to facilitate development.<sup>24</sup> While early redevelopment efforts focused on residential construction, as the resource most needed was housing, later redevelopment incorporated more mixed uses or even strictly commercial use. Lewis Kitchen obtained mortgage insurance for the construction of 910 Penn under Section 220. In 1957, the *Kansas City Star* stated that 910 Penn was the first project west of Chicago to include a high-rise tower with an elevator.<sup>25</sup> Kitchen used several applicable redevelopment tools and incentives to bring his plans to revitalize Quality Hill to fruition. Lewis Kitchen was one of the nation's key players in redevelopment projects across the country and his passion for urban redevelopment manifested in projects of similar or even larger scale in other cities. Using similar state and local redevelopment legislation, Kitchen sought to address city-designated blighted areas in cities such as St. Louis, San Francisco, and Detroit.<sup>26</sup> For example, Mansion House (NR listed 8/23/2016) in downtown St. Louis, constructed in 1964-1966, is an example of a "megastructure," with multiple buildings that house residential, commercial, and religious functions and landscape features.<sup>27</sup> The 1965 Bunker Hill Urban Renewal Project in Los Angeles is a similar example of a megastructure, with high-rise apartment buildings and integrated landscaping, retail, parking, and office functions.<sup>28</sup>

### Quality Hill Towers

Local real estate developer, Lewis E. Kitchen, who grew up in Quality Hill and got his start managing large office buildings in downtown Kansas City, immediately understood the potential this state legislation had in implementing the federal legislation and enabling new construction.<sup>29</sup> Under the Housing Act of 1949 and Missouri's Chapter 353, developers could obtain at a reduced rate large tracts of cleared land, freeing up

<sup>22</sup> "New Life to the West Side," *Kansas City Star*, February 25, 1950. Vertical File: Kansas City – West Side, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

<sup>23</sup> "Section 220," *National Housing Act of 1954*, United States Code: 12 USC 1715K, <http://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title12-section1715k&num=0&edition=prelim> (accessed 12 October 2016).

<sup>24</sup> Reuschke, Darja. "Public-Private Partnerships in Urban Development in the United States." Master's thesis for the NEURUS Program, University of California Irvine, 2001, 4, <http://www.sre.wu-wien.ac.at/neurus/reuschke.pdf> (accessed November 30, 2016).

<sup>25</sup> "More Apartments for Quality Hill," *Kansas City Star*, October 7, 1957, Microfilm Clippings, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

<sup>26</sup> James W. Scott, "Lewis Kitchen and His 'Fifth Urban Frontier.'" *Kansas City Times*, November 5, 1959, Microfilm Clippings, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

<sup>27</sup> Lynn Josse and Matt Bivens, "Mansion House Center Historic District," *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*, 2016, 8-15.

<sup>28</sup> Ray Herbert, "Developer Named for \$50 Million Bunker Hill Project," *The Los Angeles Times*, June 22, 1965, 31. <https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/160982804/> (accessed October 13, 2016).

<sup>29</sup> Scott.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 13

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

funds to cover large construction costs.<sup>30</sup> Kitchen envisioned using the law to “recreate an entire neighborhood, sweeping away the blight and decay and putting up the new buildings.”<sup>31</sup> He partnered with W. T. Kemper, Jr., chairman of the City Bond and Mortgage Company board, to finance such a project in the once-grand Quality Hill neighborhood.

Lewis Kitchen and his investors, including Kemper and a New York banking company, formed the Riversite Redevelopment Corporation in February 1950 to acquire several tracts of land on Jefferson Street, between W. 8<sup>th</sup> and W. 11<sup>th</sup> streets.<sup>32</sup> The Corporation purchased the land without having to use the power of eminent domain awarded to a private entity under Chapter 353.<sup>33</sup> The primary benefit of using the local and state urban renewal legislation was tax abatement. Per the state and city legislation, the developer would have ten years of taxes frozen at the amount paid on the land before it was acquired for redevelopment. The tax rate for the following fifteen years would be fifty percent of the assessed value of the land and buildings.<sup>34</sup> As per the state legislation, the redevelopment corporation submitted the plan to construct middle-class high-rise housing as an ordinance to the city plan commission. The commission evaluated the plan to determine that the project area was designated as blighted, that the plan was in compliance with the city’s master plan, whether existing public infrastructure was adequate to support an increase in residents, and that the project would not cause undue hardship for those displaced.<sup>35</sup>

The city plan commission forwarded approved plans to the city council for a public hearing to approve the ordinance.<sup>36</sup> The full redevelopment plan for Quality Hill called for ten modern apartment buildings, the construction of which would occur in three phases.<sup>37</sup> The initial plan for the first phase submitted to the city plan commission and the model released to the public included four twelve-story buildings (*Figure 32*).<sup>38</sup> Within days of the initial submittal to the city plan commission, local aviation officials expressed concern about the height and location of the proposed towers. Worried that the new buildings would interfere with the approach to the north-south runway at the Municipal Airport located directly north of the nominated property, officials requested further study of the project. Kitchen and architect J. F. Lauck redesigned the project to eliminate two stories from each building and add a fifth ten-story building to the initial phase of construction.<sup>39</sup> At one million dollars each, the developers financed the construction of only the first five buildings, identified as Buildings A-E. The other five buildings were never constructed.

J. F. Lauck Associates Architects issued drawings in November 1949 with revisions issued during construction in February and March 1951. Construction began in March 1950 and the first building

<sup>30</sup> Scott.

<sup>31</sup> Scott.

<sup>32</sup> Missouri Online Business Filing – Business Entity Search, Missouri Secretary of State.

<https://bsd.sos.mo.gov/BusinessEntity/BusinessEntityDetail.aspx?page=beSearch&ID=73488> (accessed June 6, 2016). Riversite Redevelopment Corporation voluntarily dissolved in 1991.

<sup>33</sup> “A Zoning Change Wait,” *Kansas City Times*, October 6, 1949, Microfilm Clippings, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

<sup>34</sup> “To Add to West Skyline,” *Kansas City Times*, April 22, 1958, 1. Microfilm Clippings, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

<sup>35</sup> “Expand on Quality Hill,” *Kansas City Time*, July 5, 1955, Microfilm Clippings, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

<sup>36</sup> “Expand on Quality Hill.”

<sup>37</sup> “Aim is Ten Buildings,” *Kansas City Times*, December 17, 1949, Microfilm Clippings, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

<sup>38</sup> “Model of Future ‘Quality Hill,’” *Kansas City Times*, October 2, 1949, Microfilm Clippings, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

<sup>39</sup> “A Zoning Change Wait.”

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 14

Quality Hill Center Historic District
Name of Property Jackson County, Missouri
County and State N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

(Building B) was ready for occupation by March 1951. The remaining buildings were completed at six-week intervals, with the fifth and final building completed by July 1951. The original drawing set provided details for three buildings, Buildings A, B, and C (*Figure 6*). Two additional buildings, Buildings D and E were constructed shortly after the first three. Winn-Senter Construction Company constructed all five buildings (*Figure 14*). The three Quality Hill Towers buildings reflect a conservative approach to the Modern Movement aesthetic, as was common for these early Post-War apartment buildings. Such buildings expressed “tentative utilitarian vernacular modernist designs” (*Figure 9*).<sup>40</sup>

In January 1951, five show units opened in Quality Hill Towers Building B (905 Jefferson Street).<sup>41</sup> Within six weeks, thirty families moved into the building while construction wrapped up.<sup>42</sup> The tenants of Quality Hill Towers were working-class and middle-income individuals, typically a higher socio-economic status than the residents of the neighborhood prior to redevelopment. A newspaper article published at the time of the opening described the new tenants as young singles or married couples, many of whom were new to Kansas City. While some of the men (single or married) held jobs as insurance investigators, clerk, or cartographer with the U.S. Map Service, many were laborers or skilled tradesmen such as electricians. Single women living in the Quality Hill Towers buildings held slightly higher positions such as a saleswoman for Singer sewing machines, the manager of a beauty salon at the President Hotel, and flour broker at the Board of Trade.<sup>43</sup> An interview with Lewis Kitchen in 1959 revealed his thoughts about the demographics of the residents.<sup>44</sup> The one thousand apartments accommodated seven hundred adults, thirty-five dogs and cats, and about six children. The families with young children often moved out to single-family homes. Kitchen believed the specialized housing he provided at Quality Hill Towers was ideal for single men and women, widows or widowers, divorcees, and couples without children.<sup>45</sup> Marketing literature did not explicitly indicate that the redevelopment project was segregated, however rental prices in the new construction was nearly twice the rental rate of public housing. Individuals displaced by the redevelopment project likely could not afford Quality Hill Towers and sought accommodations elsewhere in the city.

Advertised as “Your Downtown Home with a Viewpoint,” promotional materials touted the property’s location in proximity to downtown churches, playgrounds, schools, and shopping areas as well as the view from the bluffs while also emphasizing rental fees designed to “suit even a young married’s budget” (*Figure 20*).<sup>46</sup> Rent for singles (studio apartments) was \$66 to \$83 per month, depending on the height and the view; rent for doubles (one-bedroom apartments) was \$80 to \$98 per month.<sup>47</sup> Within seven years, rents rose two dollars per month. The promotional brochure and application for prospective tenants outlined the amenities offered, including the lighted off-street parking lots, cleaning and laundry services,

<sup>40</sup> Sally Schwenk, Multiple Property Documentation Form Working-Class and Middle-Income Apartment Buildings in Kansas City, Missouri. Kansas City, Missouri, 2007, E-40.

<sup>41</sup> “A Quality Hills Showing,” *Kansas City Times*, January 21, 1951, Microfilm Clippings, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

<sup>42</sup> “Site Recalls Old Era,” *Kansas City Times*, March 2, 1951, Microfilm Clippings, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

<sup>43</sup> *Polk’s Kansas City (Jackson County, Missouri) Directory*, Volume 77 (Kansas City, MO: R.L. Polk & Co., Publishers, 1952). Ancestry.com (accessed June 6, 2016).

<sup>44</sup> Scott.

<sup>45</sup> Scott.

<sup>46</sup> “Quality Hill Towers” advertisement, *Kansas City Star*, February 18, 1951, 19D, Microfilm Clippings, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

<sup>47</sup> “Quality Hill Towers” advertisement.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 15

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

daily trash pick-up, and annual window washing.<sup>48</sup> The application requested information about previous residence, employment, wife's employment, and five personal or professional references. It also provided a typical floor plan and space for applicants to indicate which floor plan and which floor they would prefer.<sup>49</sup> Promotional materials also highlighted proximity to the River Club, an exclusive dining club with a clubhouse constructed just north of Building A (817 Jefferson Street) in 1949. Lewis Kitchen, along with six other prominent local businessmen, founded the River Club in 1948. References to the nearby River Club helped to promote Quality Hill as a fashionable place to live, once again.

The buildings received periodic updates throughout the ensuing decades. A swimming pool was built at the southeast corner of the parking lot between 905 and 929 Jefferson c.1963. Two different ownership groups purchased the buildings in groups in 1985. The ownership group that purchased Buildings D and E did not maintain the buildings as well as the ownership group that purchased Buildings A, B, and C. Buildings A, B, and C received new windows and doors and minor cosmetic updates to the apartment units. When DST Realty purchased Buildings D and E in 2004, they were substantially vacant and deteriorated. DST Realty demolished the two buildings shortly after purchasing them.<sup>50</sup> Buildings A, B, and C continue to operate as they did historically, as high-rise apartment buildings with modest rental units within close proximity to the central business district.

**910 Penn**

After completion of the Quality Hill Towers, Lewis Kitchen developed his long-range master plan for the area, which included a mix of residential and commercial properties. He continued to use local, state, and federal urban redevelopment tools and incentives to attempt to revitalize Quality Hill, including tax abatement and federal mortgage insurance. In July 1955, Kitchen announced plans to expand the redevelopment project begun with Quality Hill Towers. The proposed eleven-million-dollar project included a ten-story tower, seven single-occupancy office buildings, and 173-room motor hotel.<sup>51</sup> Kitchen and his partners formed five separate corporations to file with the City the redevelopment applications for each piece of the plan. West Terrace Redevelopment corporation filed the application for the apartment building (910 Penn) while Cliff House Redevelopment corporation filed the application for the hotel. Clark's Point, Washington Avenue, and West Side redevelopment corporations filed applications for the seven multi-story office buildings (*Figure 21*).<sup>52</sup> The plans went before the City Plan Commission in September 1955. The commission approved the residential components of the plan, but partially opposed the commercial components, arguing that the tax incentives offered to these businesses provided an unfair advantage over other businesses.<sup>53</sup> Kitchen was able to move forward with two parts of this plan, the apartment building and the hotel. Within two years of approval from the City Plan Commission, construction began on the apartment building in October 1957, with plans to start construction of the Cliff House Motor Hotel by the following spring.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>48</sup> "Quality Hill Towers," brochure and application, Quality Hill Towers management office, 1958.

<sup>49</sup> "Quality Hill Towers," brochure and application.

<sup>50</sup> Kevin Collison, "2 apartment buildings on Quality Hill razed," *Kansas City Star*, March 6, 2004, C2:1. Vertical File: Quality Hill, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

<sup>51</sup> "Expand on Quality Hill."

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> "Quality Hill O.K." *Kansas City Times*, September 20, 1955, Microfilm Clippings, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library. This is possibly the reason why the commercial components of the project were not built initially.

<sup>54</sup> "More Apartments for Quality Hill."

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 16

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Kitchen engaged prominent local architects Kivett and Myers and McCallum to provide renderings of the proposed projects.<sup>55</sup> Initial publicity touted the Modern design and the luxury amenities provided at both the proposed apartment building and the proposed motor hotel.<sup>56</sup> Local newspapers promoted the apartment building as the first high-rise residential building in the Kansas City area to employ curtainwall construction, with its metal frame and aluminum windows and panels. The rendering for the apartment building (910 Penn) shows the existing Quality Hill Towers buildings in the background, highlighting the association between these properties (*Figure 22*). Using Section 220 of the National Housing Act of 1954, Kitchen obtained mortgage insurance for his new apartment building.<sup>57</sup>

When it opened in 1958, 910 Pennsylvania contained roughly 120 one- and two-bedroom units. Advertisements in the local newspaper highlighted the luxury features, specifically the twenty-four-hour doorman, individual control of the heat or air conditioning in each room, and ample closet space. The building provided off-street parking, both covered and uncovered. The garage offered interior access to the building, a feature rarely incorporated into earlier apartment buildings. The advertisement Kitchen crafted promoted the building as “the first real ‘Park Avenue’ style apartment in Kansas City history,...the most fashionable *new* address in town.”<sup>58</sup> Rental prices started at \$135 per month. Residents in 1960 held white-collar and professional occupations, including sales managers and agents, presidents and vice-presidents of local manufacturing companies, and authors and composers.<sup>59</sup> Ten years later, residents held similar positions, including architect, chiropractor, manager, and vice-president of a local company. In 1971, eight businesses or social organizations leased space in the building. Lewis Kitchen had an office on the third floor and lived on the top floor.

Lewis Kitchen constructed the other residential component of his 1955 expansion plan, the Cliff House Motor Hotel, in 1960. Kivett & Myers designed the Y-shaped six-story hotel building with a built-in parking garage for a large square lot at the north edge of downtown Kansas City. The square lot occupied the full 600 block of Washington Avenue, overlooking the Missouri River, the Downtown Airport, and the new interstate highway, dedicated in 1956.<sup>60</sup> By the late 1960s or early 1970s, the 180-room hotel building operated as the Hilton Inn (*Figure 23*). The hotel was demolished in 2002, although the parking garage still occupies the property.<sup>61</sup> The office buildings proposed in the 1955 plan were never constructed. With the construction of 910 Penn and Cliff House underway, Kitchen returned his attention to the two blocks immediately east side of Quality Hill Towers between Pennsylvania and Washington avenues from W. 7<sup>th</sup> to W. 10<sup>th</sup> streets, immediately south of the Cliff House Motor Hotel. Kitchen’s 1955 plan called for seven multi-story office buildings. By 1958, Kitchen superseded the office plan with a plan to construct additional apartment buildings.<sup>62</sup> The details of the revised plan expanded from six twelve-story towers in 1958 to four twenty-story towers in 1959 (*Figure 24*).<sup>63</sup> Neither of these plans came to fruition and nothing new

<sup>55</sup> “An Expansion of Quality Hill Redevelopment is Announced,” *Kansas City Times* July 5, 1955. Microfilm Clippings, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> “More Apartments for Quality Hill.”

<sup>58</sup> “Have You Seen 910 Penn?” *Kansas City Times*, August 7, 1959, 70. Microfilm Clippings, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

<sup>59</sup> *Polk’s Kansas City (Jackson County, Missouri) City Directory*, v. 84, 1960, (Kansas City: R. L. Polk & Co., 1960). Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

<sup>60</sup> “More Apartments for Quality Hill.”

<sup>61</sup> Historic aerial photographs date the demolition to between 2002 and 2003.

<sup>62</sup> “To Add to West Skyline.”

<sup>63</sup> “Expand Plans on Quality Hill,” *Kansas City Times*, February 3, 1959, 1. Microfilm Clippings, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 17

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

was built on these blocks until well after 1970. Three-story row houses and associated parking were constructed along Pennsylvania Avenue and W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street at the south half of the block c. 1990. A large complex for State Street Corporation was erected on the double block to the north c. 2000. The Quality Hill Center Historic District encompasses all of the extant resources associated with Lewis Kitchen and his plans to revitalize Quality Hill through the construction of residential buildings.

The Quality Hill Center Historic District clearly reflects a concerted effort to add middle-income housing accommodations to an area where the housing stock had been depleted. However, the success of the plan to revitalize the area was dependent on factors beyond the control of developer. While these multi-million-dollar construction projects significantly changed the appearance of Quality Hill, it was not enough to stem the tide of middle-class flight to the suburbs in the 1960s and 1970s. The buildings that comprise Quality Hill Center Historic District remained near full capacity while the surrounding buildings lost a substantial percentage of tenants. In 1971, the five Quality Hill Towers buildings had between two and five vacancies each, out of five hundred apartments. Out of 132 apartments in 910 Penn, there were thirty-eight vacancies. Comparatively, the few remaining apartment buildings in the surrounding blocks had between sixty and eighty percent vacancy rates.<sup>64</sup> In 1981, the vacancies at Quality Hill Towers had crept up to between four and fourteen units in each building while 910 Penn decreased its vacancies to nine units.<sup>65</sup> Surrounding apartment buildings no longer listed tenants. By 1994, however, the decline of Quality Hill and downtown Kansas City stretched into the District. The three extant Quality Hill Towers buildings (Buildings A, B, and C) and 910 Penn were roughly two-thirds vacant while the vacancies in Buildings D and E were closer to eighty percent.<sup>66</sup> Occupancy has risen in recent decades and the property ownership adequately maintained the extant buildings in the Quality Hill Center Historic District since they were constructed. The District continues to express its historic function and the era in which it was constructed.

***Residential Construction and Urban Redevelopment in Kansas City***

Like many other cities across the country, Kansas City responded to the need for more and better housing in the mid-twentieth century with a mixture of public and private development projects. Defense housing and early FHA projects typically generated sprawling multi-block complexes with low (two- to three-story) buildings often executed in a restrained expression of the Colonial Revival style. President Gardens (NR listed 12/10/1998), erected south of the city limits in 1945 to house employees of the Pratt & Whitney engine plant, contains thirty-six two-story apartment buildings with Colonial Revival details and massing.<sup>67</sup> Similarly, public housing projects from the late 1940s and early 1950s resulted in dense concentrations of long, low apartment buildings. The 1955 City Plan Commission map, generated as part of a study of urban redevelopment projects in the Central Business District and surrounding areas, identified three existing and three approved public housing sites. Two public housing projects, Riverview (1952) and Guinotte Manor (1954), located roughly two miles northeast of the nominated property, were mid-century apartment buildings that have been demolished and replaced with row houses or apartment buildings of a similar two-story scale (*Figure 25*). The public housing projects, T.B. Watkins (1953) and Choteau Court (1956)

<sup>64</sup> *Polk's Kansas City (Jackson County, Missouri) City Directory*, 1971. Kansas City: R. L. Polk & Co., 1971. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

<sup>65</sup> *Polk's Kansas City (Jackson County, Missouri) City Directory*, 1981. Kansas City: R. L. Polk & Co., 1981. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

<sup>66</sup> *Polk's Kansas City (Jackson County, Missouri) City Directory*, 1994. Kansas City: R. L. Polk & Co., 1994. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

<sup>67</sup> Deon Wolfenbarger and Allen Tatman, "President Gardens Apartments Historic District," *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*, 1998, 8-5.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 18

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

located two miles east of Quality Hill, and West Bluff (1956), less than one mile southwest, have retained but modified the two- to three-story apartment buildings. The Wayne Miner public housing project, located two miles east of Quality Hill, was distinctly different from contemporary public housing projects. Planned in 1956 and completed in 1960 as the city's largest public housing project, Wayne Miner Court included five ten-story V-shaped buildings, each containing one- to three-bedroom units, and fifteen two-story rectangular buildings, each containing four- and five-bedroom units.<sup>68</sup> The Housing Authority of Kansas City borrowed federal funds to acquire the land and construct public housing projects to house individuals displaced in local urban redevelopment projects.<sup>69</sup>

The high-rise apartment buildings at Wayne Miner were similar to the buildings in the Quality Hill Center Historic District in size, massing, and material (*Figure 26*). The Wayne Miner buildings had brick-clad sections at the ends of the building, flanking center sections of aluminum and glass curtainwalls with strong horizontal banding. The brick sections were elevated on piloti and had deeply recessed first-story walls. In the 1970s, private corporations and the Housing Authority of Kansas City used federal funds for the construction of high-rise towers for senior housing. The 1974 Brush Creek Towers and the 1977 Cathedral Square Towers are both thirteen stories tall and reflect Brutalist and Postmodern architectural aesthetics. The Wayne Miner public housing project was demolished in 1987 while the later towers are extant.<sup>70</sup>

The next private project initiated under local, state, and federal redevelopment legislation focused on revitalizing an area at the north end of the central business district, roughly eight blocks east of the nominated property on the east side of Main Street. The North Side Redevelopment Corporation, formed in 1952 and headed by James M. Kemper, purchased land identified in the 1947 Master Plan as needing redevelopment (*Figure 36*). The North Side plan had apartment and motor hotel components, similar to Kitchen's plans for Quality Hill. The thirteen-story International Style blond brick Walnut Tower Apartments completed in 1963 at 722 Walnut Street was designed by Keene, Simpson & Murphy and built by Winn-Senter Construction Company.<sup>71</sup> The Prom Motor Hotel was constructed at 6<sup>th</sup> and Main streets in 1959 with a large addition in 1963.<sup>72</sup> The apartment building is extant and retains integrity while the hotel was demolished in 2007. Kitchen's projects in Quality Hill are larger in scale and more intact as a cohesive redevelopment plan than the North Side Redevelopment.

Private high-rise apartment buildings constructed in the 1950s have similar design features and massing. Contemporary examples include the 1949 Alexander Hamilton Apartments (NR listed 11/07/2007), the 1950 Plaza Towers (NR listed 2/23/2016), the 1951 Twin Oaks apartments (demolished 2007), the 1955

<sup>68</sup> Kevin Fox Gotham, *Race, Real Estate, and Uneven Development*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), 81-82. Riverview, Guinotte Manor, and Chateau Court are located northeast of the central business district, less than two miles northeast of the nominated property. West Bluff is located roughly one mile south and slightly west of the nominated property. T.B. Watkins and Wayne Minor sites are located two miles east and slightly south of the nominated property.

<sup>69</sup> "Housing Plans Win Approval," *Kansas City Times*, September 10, 1957. Microfilm Clippings, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

<sup>70</sup> Jilian Mincer, "National Notebook: Kansas City, MO., Failed Project is Demolished," *The New York Times*, Real Estate, March 8, 1987. <http://www.nytimes.com/1987/03/08/realestate/national-notebook-kansas-city-mo-failed-project-is-demolished.html> (accessed October 13, 2016). Cathedral Square Towers is located two blocks southeast of the nominated property. Brush Creek Towers is located five miles southeast of the nominated property.

<sup>71</sup> "Apartment on Walnut," *Kansas City Times*, February 17, 1959, 1. Microfilm Clippings, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

<sup>72</sup> "Plan 102-Room Hotel Addition," *Kansas City Times*, November 1, 1963. Microfilm Clippings, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 19

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Plaza House Apartments (NR listed 10/16/2013), the 1956 Carlton Plaza Apartments, the 1964 Churchill Apartments, and the 1965 Sunset Apartments (*Figures 27-30*).<sup>73</sup> They all have brick cladding and banded fenestration patterns and/or corner windows, similar to the resources in the Quality Hill Center Historic District. Only the Churchill Apartments employs continuous banding similar to 910 Penn, although it still has solid masonry bands between the windows (*Figure 29*). These buildings are examples of private construction projects that took advantage of the FHA mortgage insurance program to assist in the financing of the project, but were not associated with slum clearance programs or officially recognized urban redevelopment areas. These similar buildings were constructed three to five miles south of the nominated property in stable, upscale neighborhoods.

**Architects**

J. F. Lauck

Jesse F. Lauck was born in 1888 and attended the University of Pennsylvania. He began working in Kansas City in the early 1900s. After a forty-year partnership with Elmer Boillot, Lauck established his own firm and reservedly embraced the Modern Movement aesthetic. He had a long history of designing apartment buildings and hotels in the Kansas City area, including the Hotel Phillips, the Walnut Apartments, and the group apartments near the Country Club Plaza named for famous poets, all from the 1920s.<sup>74</sup> He designed the Quality Hill Towers high-rise apartment buildings beginning in 1949.

Kivett and Myers and McCallum

The architectural firm of Kivett & Myers was prolific in Kansas City. Established in 1940 by Clarence Kivett and Ralph Myers, the firm thrived for thirty years. Following World War II, it was Kansas City's leading architectural design firm and produced a broad spectrum of projects, including some of Kansas City's most notable structures.<sup>75</sup> Growing from less than ten employees to almost one hundred employees at its peak, the firm's popularity grew with the increasing acceptance of Modern Movement architecture. Through the 1950s, Kivett & Myers' projects included small commissions, such as office remodelings and home additions, as well as larger commissions, such as designs for residential and commercial buildings, hotels, libraries, country clubs and nursing homes.<sup>76</sup> Kivett & Myers did the majority of design work for the local Katz Drug Store chain, which was owned by Kivett's uncles, and for the Woolf Brothers department store chain. Angus McCallum joined the firm from 1951 to 1961. Born in Kansas City in 1911, McCallum attended MIT and operated his own firm from 1936 to 1942. In partnership with Kivett and Myers, McCallum produced designs for institutional buildings in Missouri and Kansas.<sup>77</sup> During the 1960s and 1970s, Kivett & Myers received larger, more prominent commissions, including Kansas City International

<sup>73</sup> Alexander Hamilton Apartments – 701 E. Armour Boulevard; Plaza Towers – 209 Emanuel Cleaver II Boulevard; Twin Oaks apartments – 4948-5000 Oak Street; Plaza House Apartments – 4712 Roanoke Parkway; Carlton Plaza Apartments – 4740 Roanoke Parkway; Churchill Apartments – 803 W. 48<sup>th</sup> Street; Sunset Apartments – 4821 Roanoke Parkway

<sup>74</sup> "Jesse F. Lauck Dies," *Kansas City Times*, September 29, 1969, 3B. Microfilm Clippings, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library. The Hotel Phillips at 106 W. 12<sup>th</sup> Street in downtown Kansas City was listed in the National Register on June 4, 1979. The Walnut Apartments is a three-building complex at 50<sup>th</sup> Street and Wornall Road roughly four miles south of the nominated property. The five buildings that comprise the poet-group apartments occupy the block on the north side of Ward Parkway between Roanoke Parkway and Jefferson Street just west of the Country Club Plaza.

<sup>75</sup> Donald Hoffman, "A Foundation of Midwest Architecture: Clarence Kivett is the Mentor of More than 50 Design Firms," *Kansas City Star*, October 18, 1982, 1B. Clarence Kivett Vertical File, Kansas City (Missouri) Historic Preservation office.

<sup>76</sup> Joe Gose, "Incredible Inspiration is Gone: Clarence Kivett, a Leading Force in Kansas City Architecture Dies at 91," *Kansas City Star*, December 5, 1996, A1. Clarence Kivett Vertical File, Kansas City (Missouri) Historic Preservation office.

<sup>77</sup> American Institute of Architects, "McCallum, Angus," *The AIA 1962 Historical Directory of American Architects*, 440.

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National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 20

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Airport (1967), the Jackson County Sports Complex (1967), and the Alameda Plaza Hotel (1971), all in Kansas City, Missouri.

**Conclusion**

The Quality Hill Center Historic District is significant as the first and largest redevelopment project in Kansas City to use state and local urban renewal legislation to finance and enable the acquisition of land for the construction of resources designed to eliminate blight in a targeted area. Local real estate developer Lewis Kitchen was successful in constructing more than six hundred rental apartments in fewer than ten years in the formerly blighted area of Quality Hill. The contributing resources, the three ten-story Quality Hill Towers and the eleven-story 910 Penn, were constructed as part of Kitchen's initial and expanded plans to revitalize a small residential area adjacent to the central business district. The District retains excellent integrity as a compact mid-twentieth-century residential complex associated with the attempted redevelopment of downtown Kansas City.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 21

Quality Hill Center 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 22

Quality Hill Center 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 23

Quality Hill Center Historic District
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
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National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 24

Quality Hill Center 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 25

Quality Hill Center Historic District
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Latitude/Longitude**

5 39.10253 -94.59211  
Latitude: Longitude:

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

The Quality Hill Center Historic District encompasses three large parcels that flank W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street between Jefferson Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. The north boundary of the District is the north property line of 817 Jefferson Street. The east boundary is Pennsylvania Avenue. The south boundary is the south property line of 910 Pennsylvania Avenue, the east property line of 929 Jefferson Street as it wraps around the corner of the unaffiliated Pennbroke Apartments (640 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, NR Listed 2009), and the south property line of 929 Jefferson Street at W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street. The west boundary is Jefferson Street.

**Boundary Justification** (On continuation sheet)

This boundary includes all of the parcels containing extant resources associated with the residential redevelopment, Quality Hill Center, as planned by developer Lewis Kitchen between 1951 and 1958.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 26

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

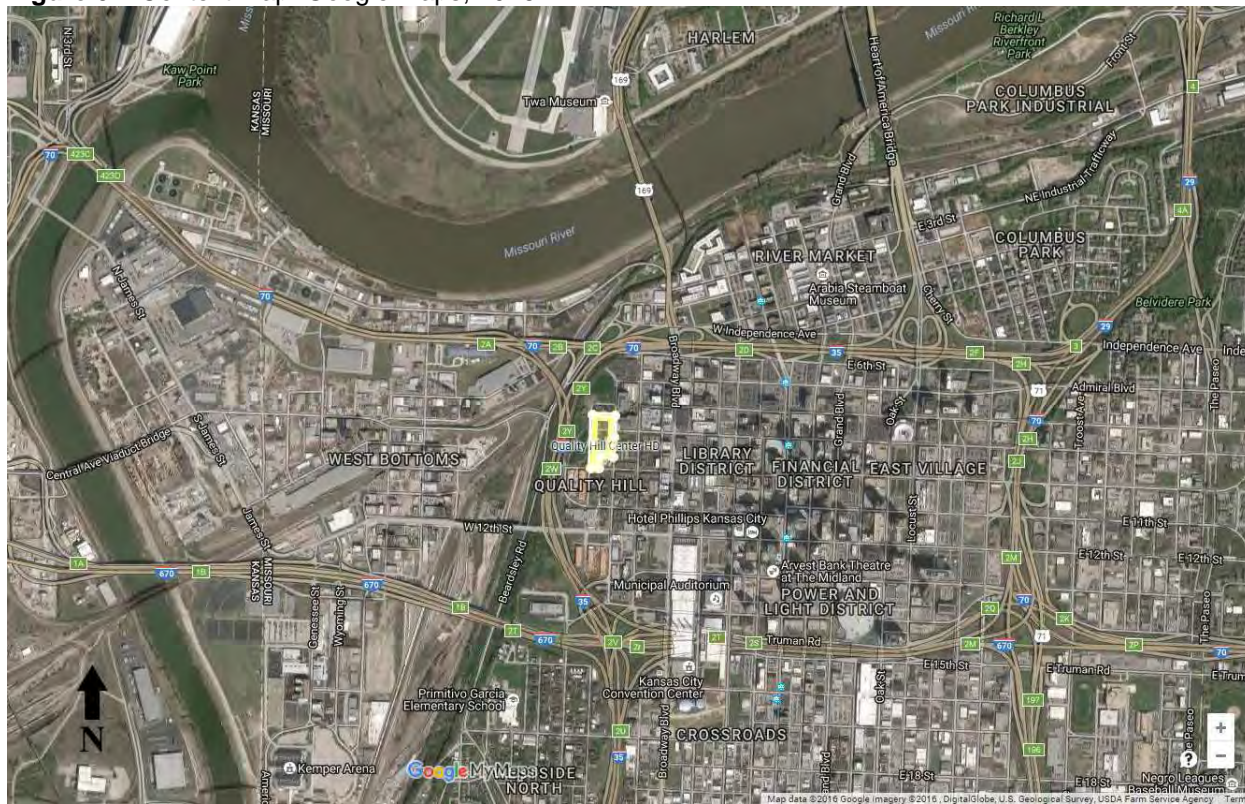
Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 01.** Context Map. Google Maps, 2016.



Quality Hill Center Historic District  
817, 905, 929 Jefferson Street and 910 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Kansas City, Missouri  
39.10440, -94.59202  
39.10437, -94.59098  
39.10293, -94.59106  
39.10294, -94.59170  
39.10253, -94.59211



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 27

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

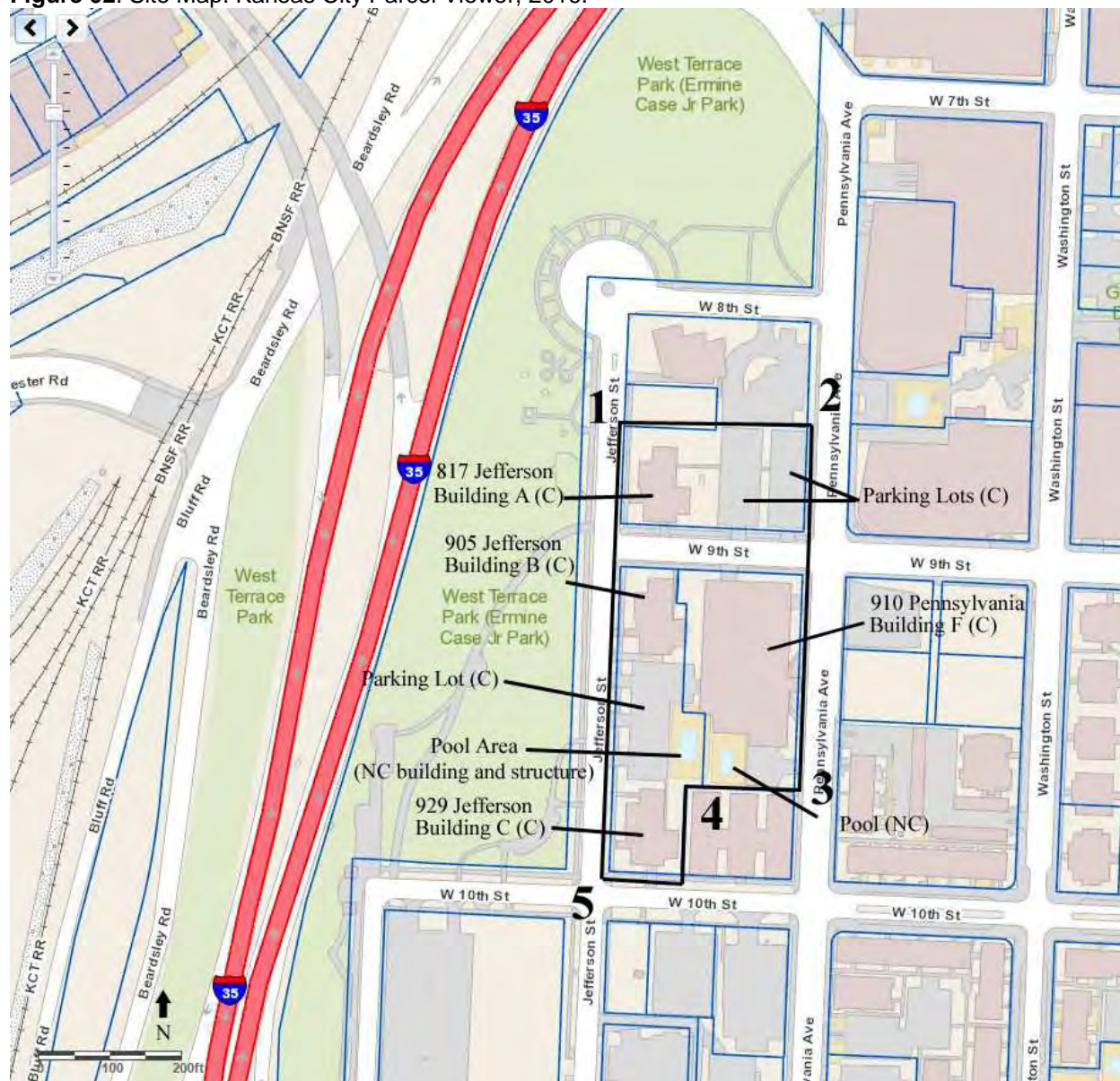
Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 02.** Site Map. Kansas City Parcel Viewer, 2016.



Quality Hill Center Historic District  
817, 905, 929 Jefferson Street and 910 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Kansas City, Missouri  
1. 39.10440, -94.59202  
2. 39.10437, -94.59098  
3. 39.10293, -94.59106  
4. 39.10294, -94.59170  
5. 39.10253, -94.59211

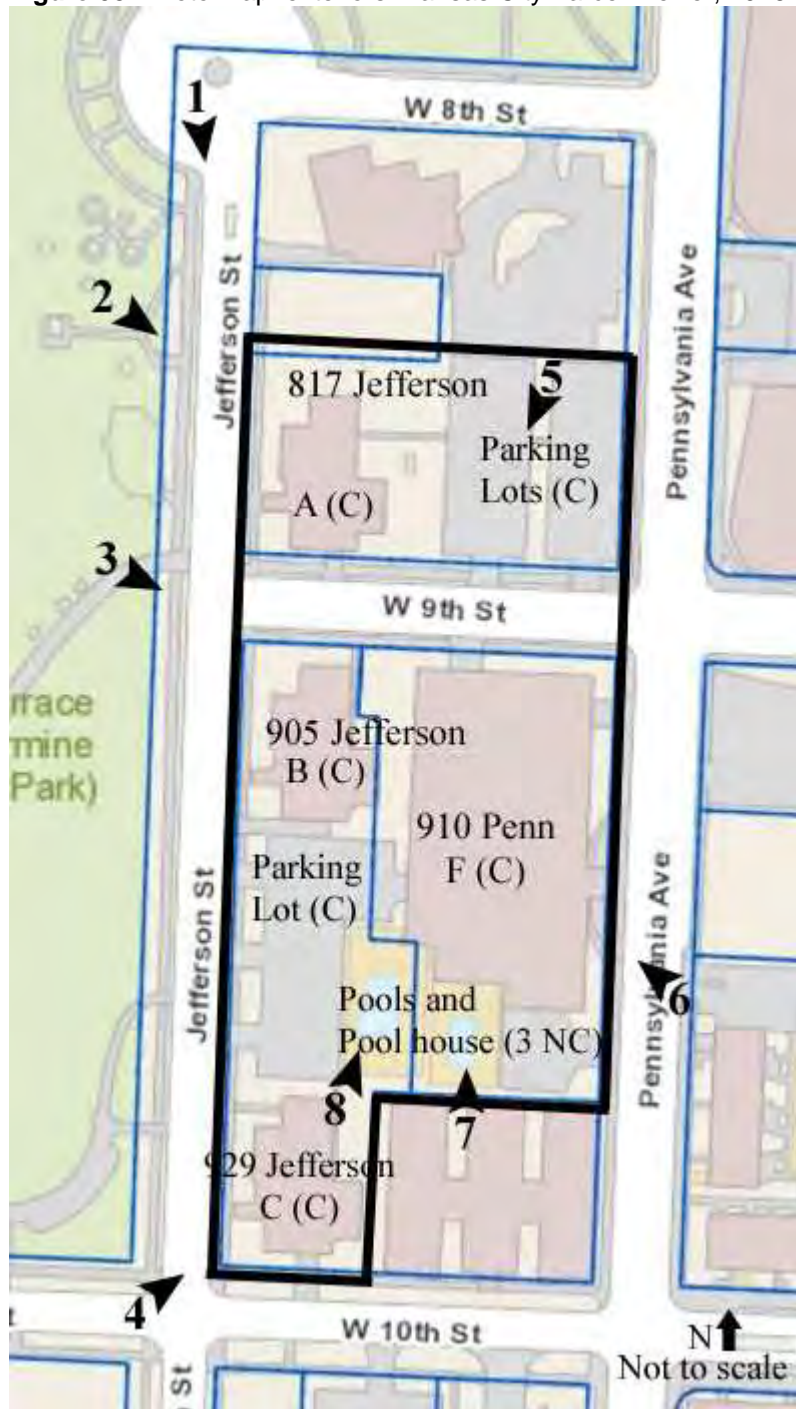
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 28

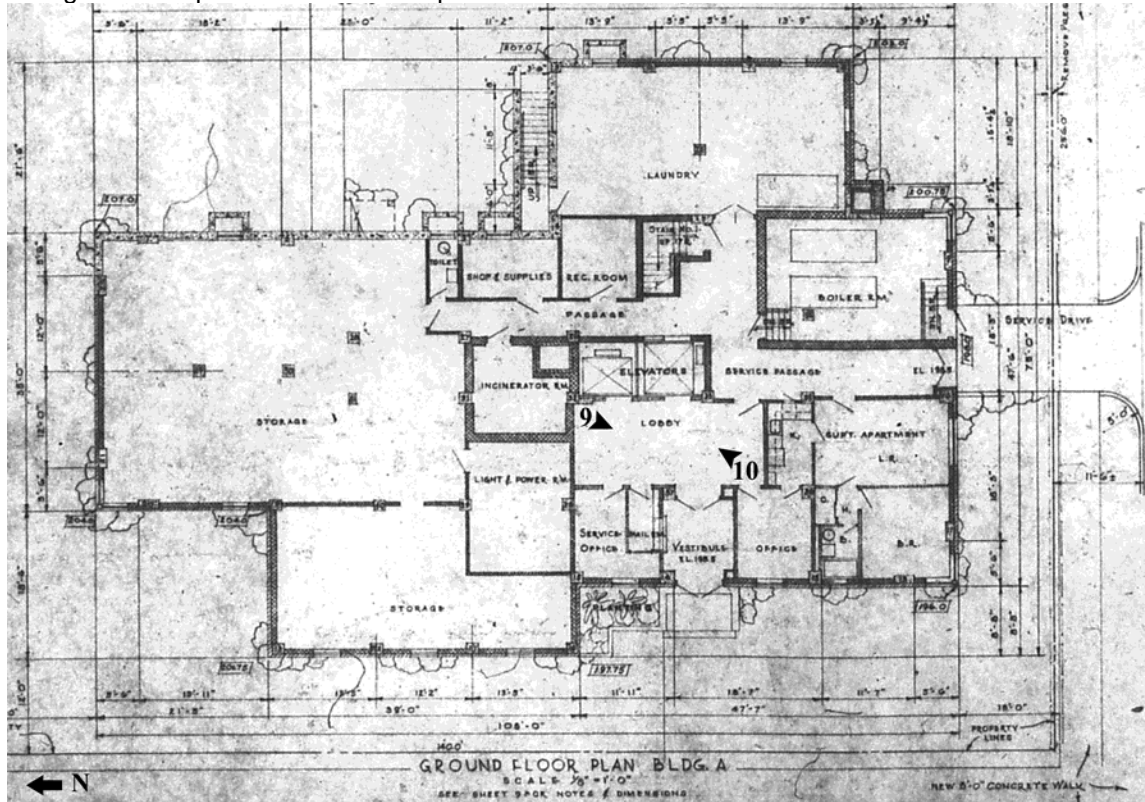
Quality Hill Center Historic District

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

**Figure 03.** Photo map: exteriors. Kansas City Parcel Viewer, 2016.



## Name of multiple listing (if applicable)





National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 30

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

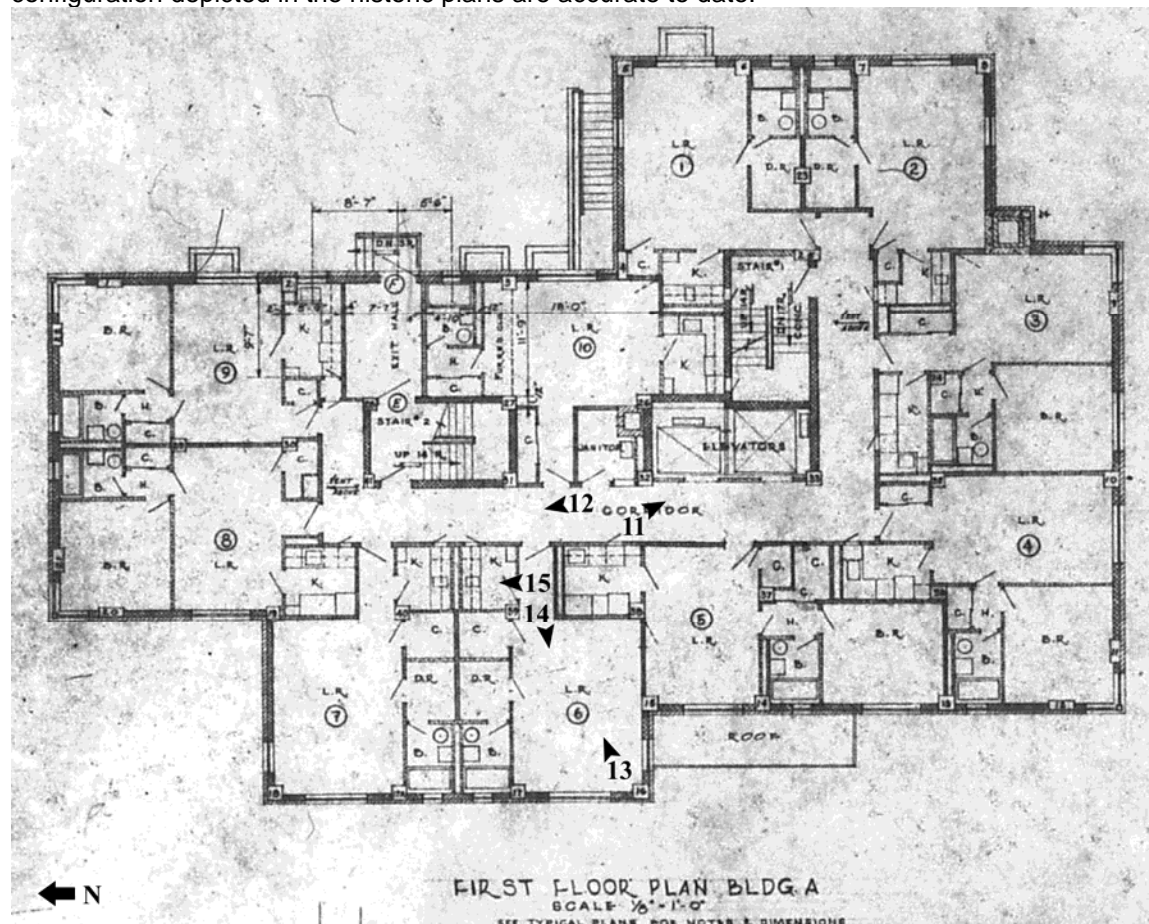
Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 05.** Photo map: typical floor. J.F. Lauck, *Quality Hill Towers*, arch. drawings, sheet 7A, 1950. The configuration depicted in the historic plans are accurate to date.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 31

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

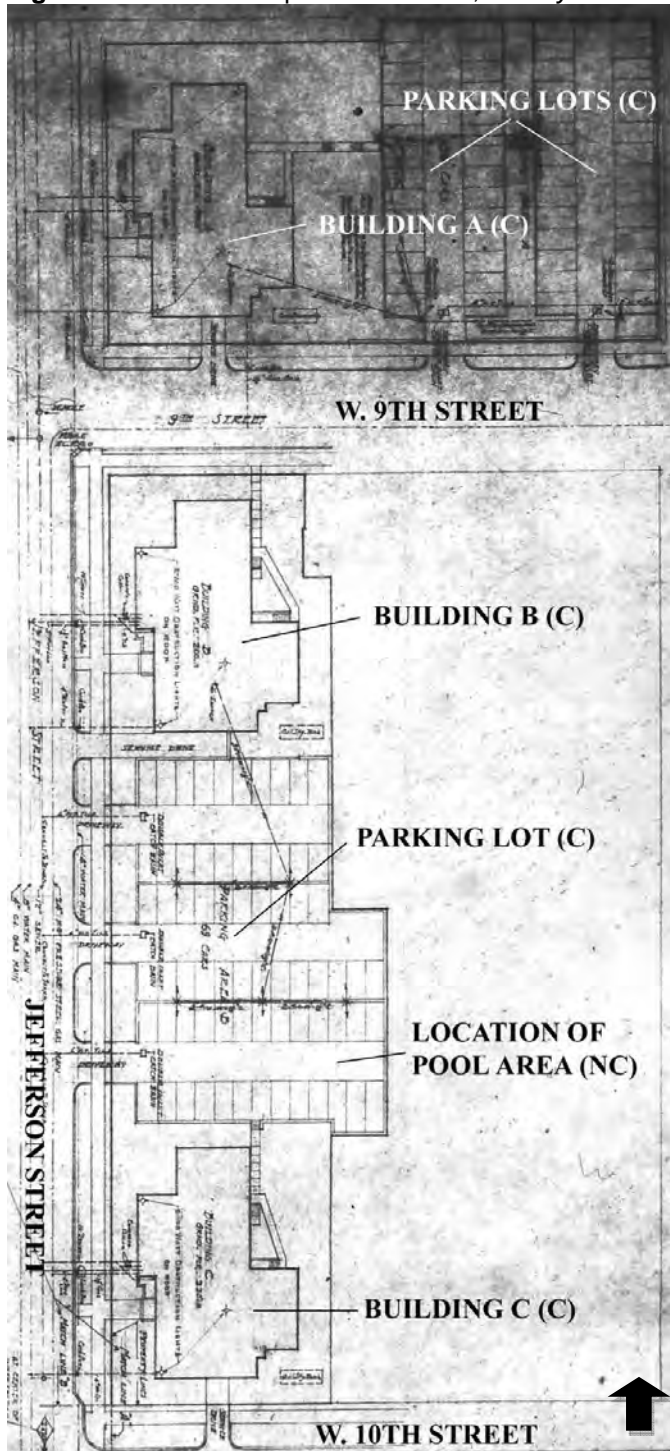
Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

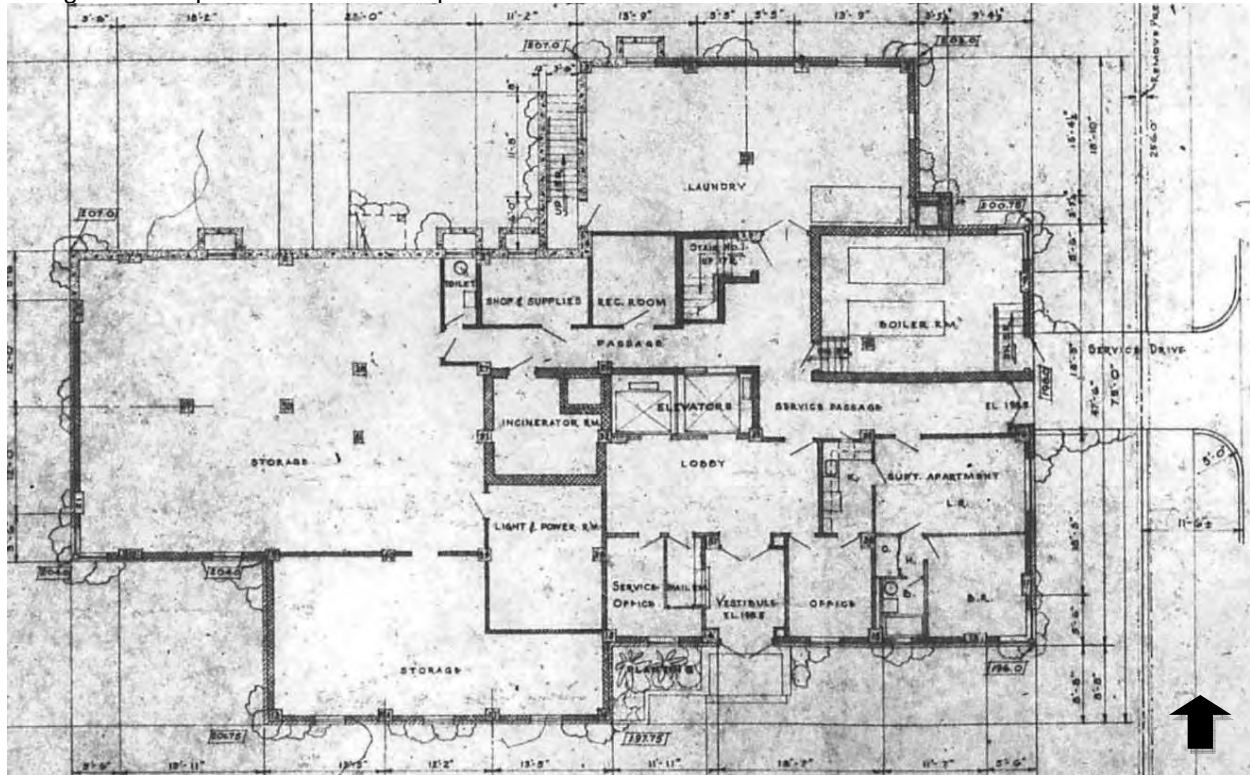
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 06.** Historic site plan. J.F. Lauck, *Quality Hill Towers*, arch. drawings, sheet 4M, 1950.



## Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



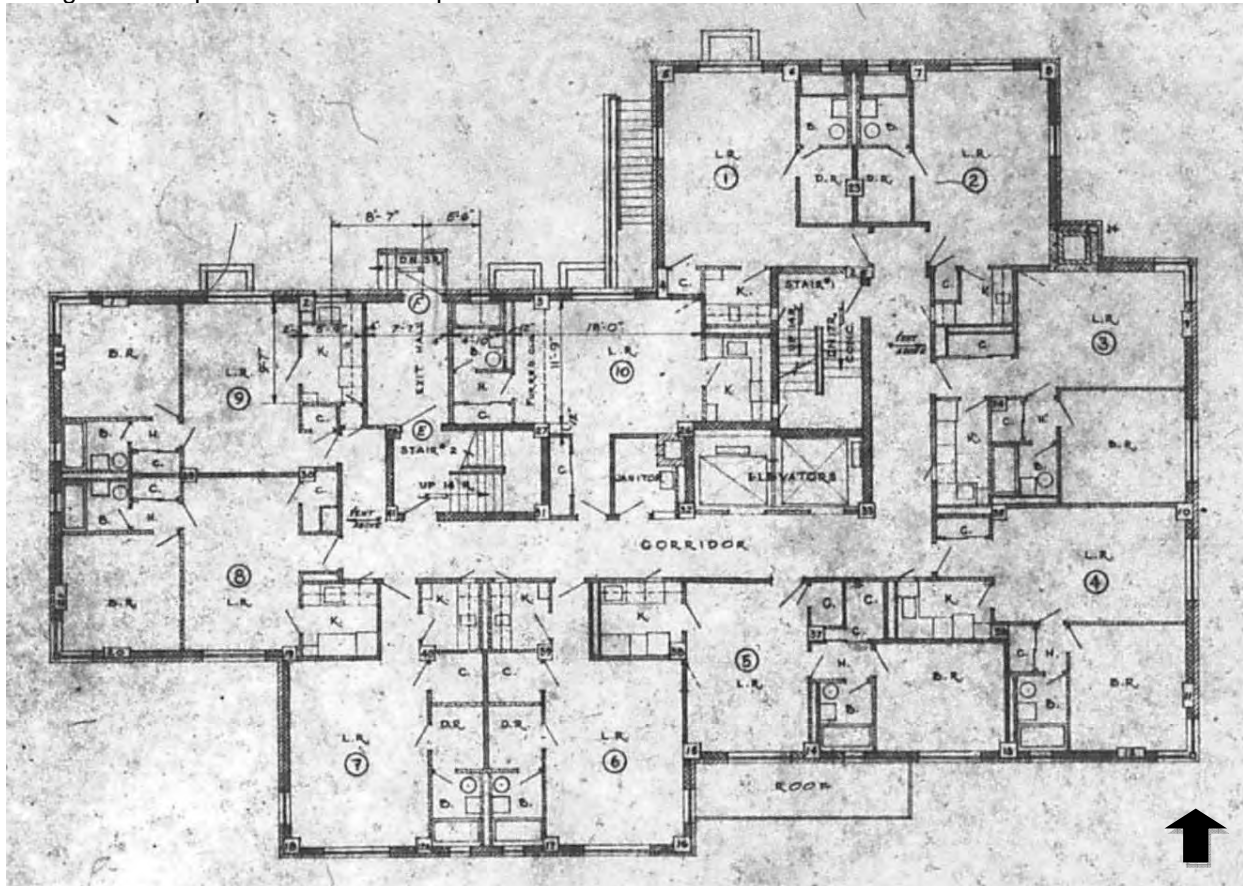
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 33

Quality Hill Center Historic District

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

**Figure 08.** Typical floor plan. J.F. Lauck, *Quality Hill Towers*, arch. drawings, sheet 7A, 1950. The configuration depicted in the historic plans are accurate to date.



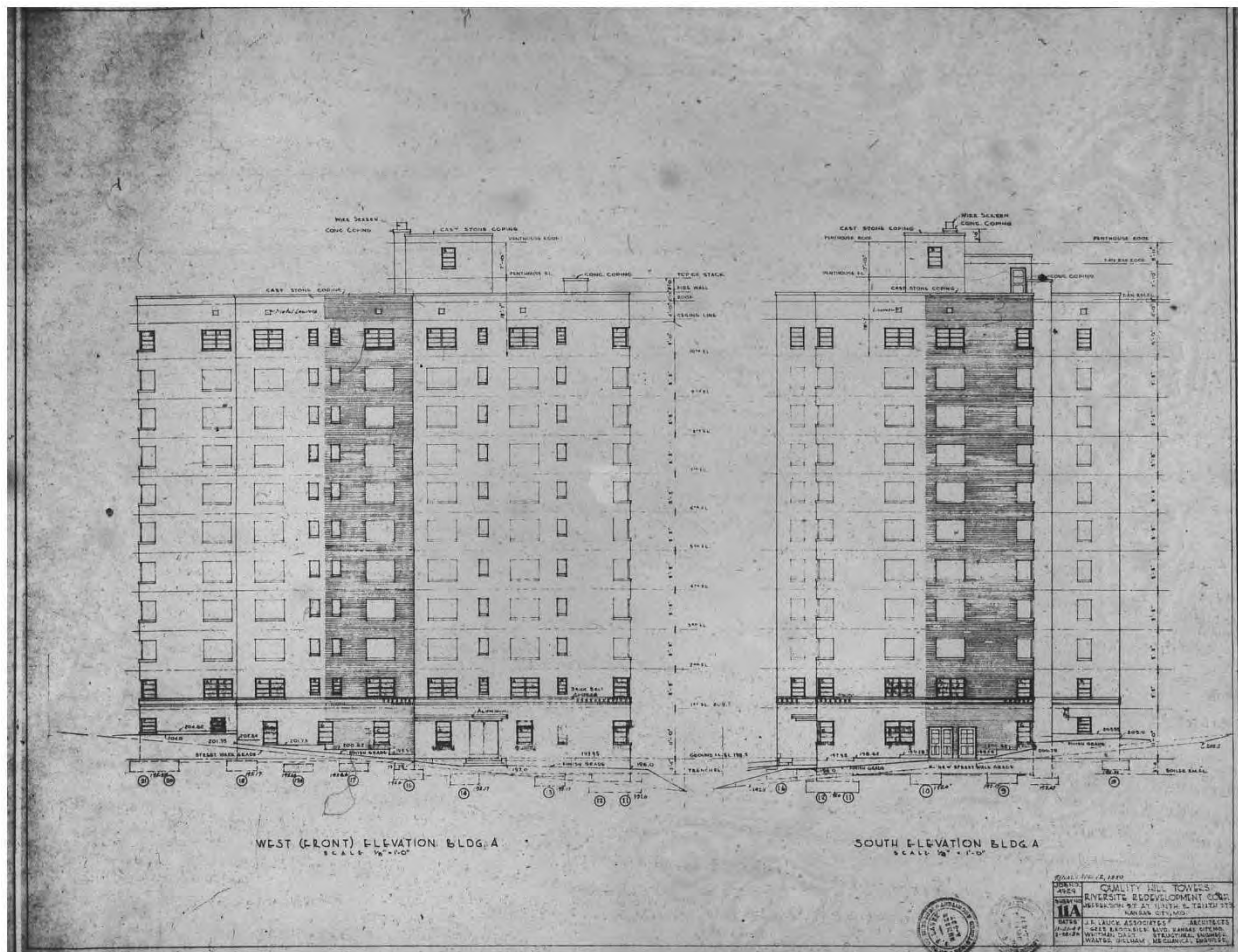
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 34

Quality Hill Center Historic District

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

**Figure 09.** South and West elevations, Building A. J.F. Lauck, *Quality Hill Towers*, arch. drawings, sheet 7A, 1950.





National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 35

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

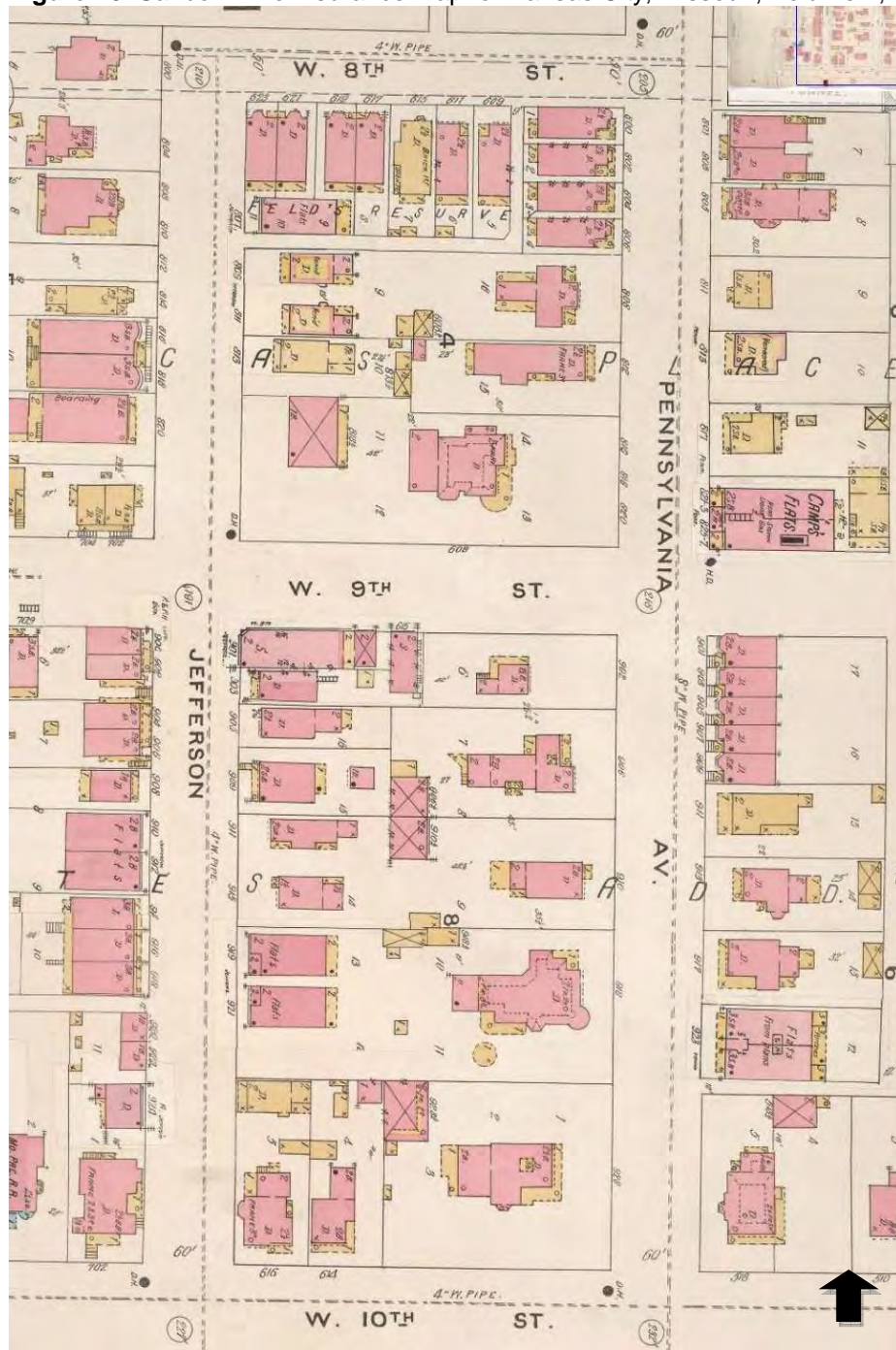
Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 10.** Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Kansas City, Missouri, Volume 1, 1895, Sheet 12.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 36

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 11.** Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Kansas City, Missouri, Volume 1a, 1938, Sheet 31.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 37

Quality Hill Center Historic District

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

**Figure 12.** Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Kansas City, Missouri, Volume 1a, 1957, Sheet 105.



**Figure 13.** Buildings A and B, historic photograph, c.1951. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.





National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 38

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 14.** Quality Hill Towers, historic aerial photograph, c.1951. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 39

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 15.** Quality Hill Towers, historic aerial photograph, 1956. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 40

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

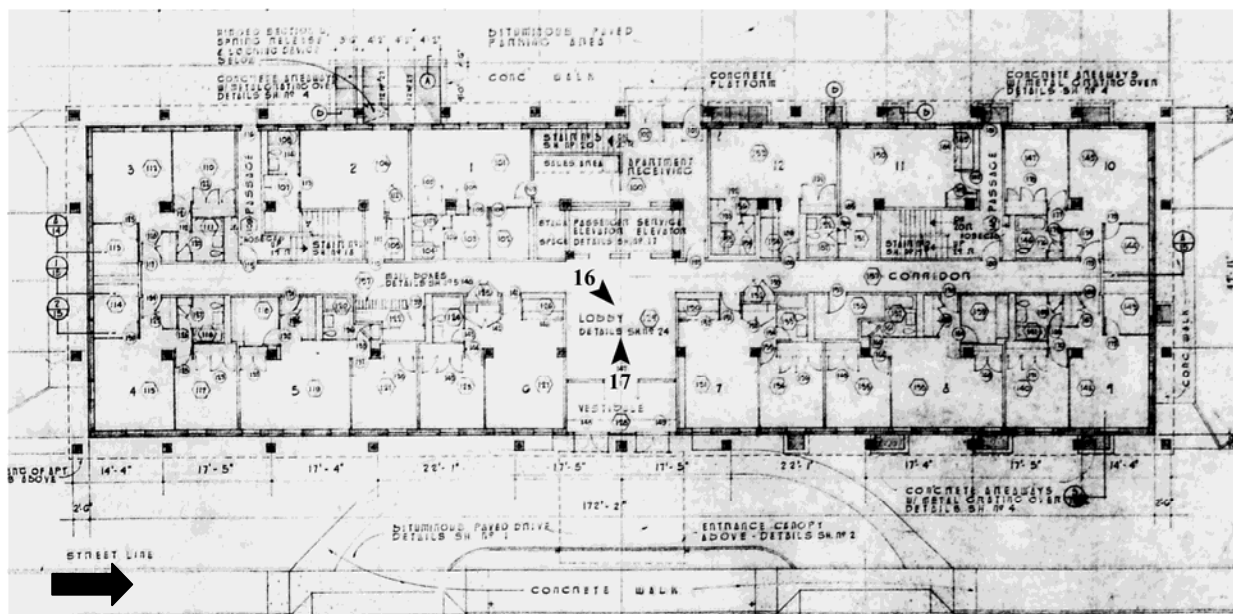
Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

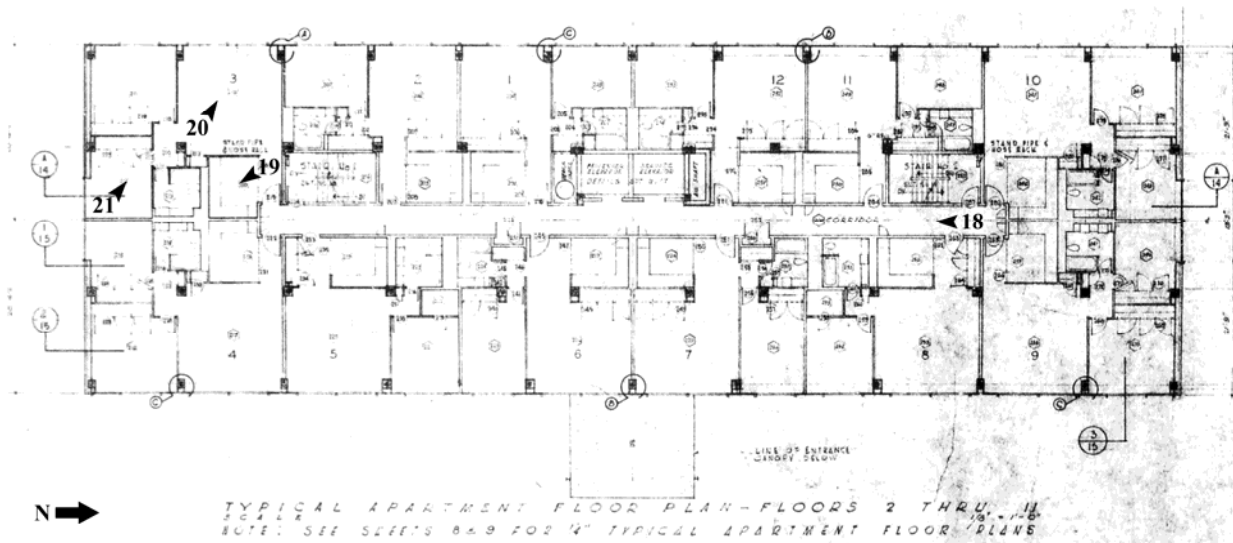
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 16.** Photo map: 910 Penn ground floor. Kivett & Myers & McCallum, architectural drawings, ground floor plan, 1957.



**Figure 17.** Photo map: 910 Penn typical floor. Kivett & Myers & McCallum, architectural drawings, typical floor plan, 1957.



## Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Figures Page 41[illegible]

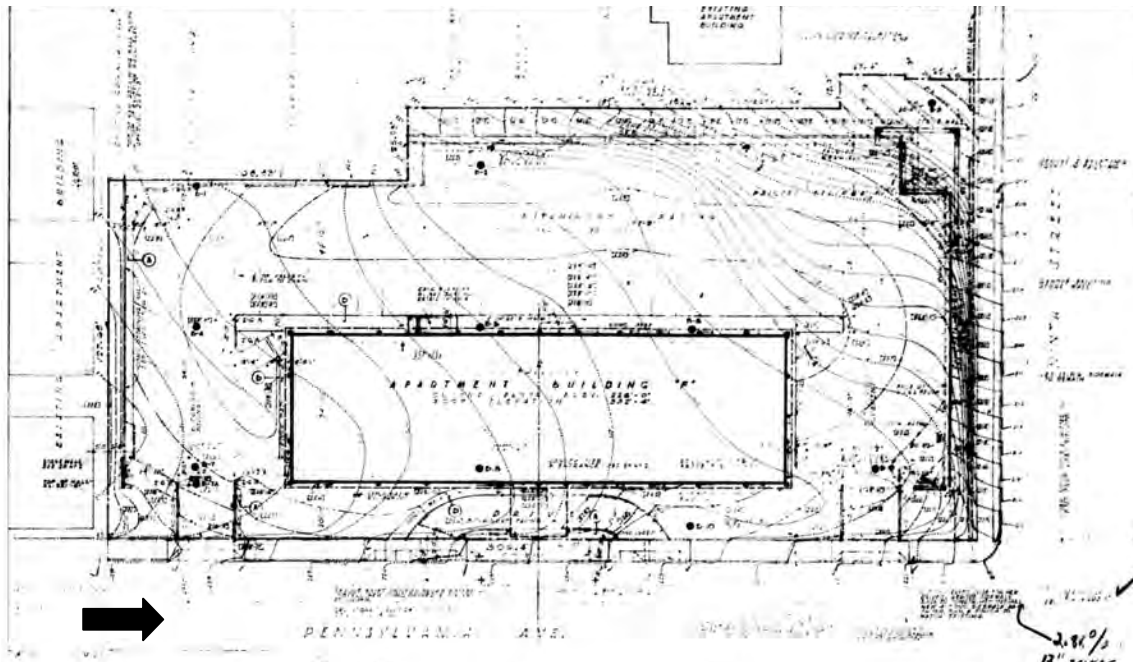
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 42

Quality Hill Center Historic District

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

**Figure 19.** Historic site plan, 910 Penn. Kivett & Myers & McCallum, architectural drawings, site plan, 1957.



**Figure 20.** Rendering, "Quality Hill 1952," *Kansas City Star*, September 21, 1952.





National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 43

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

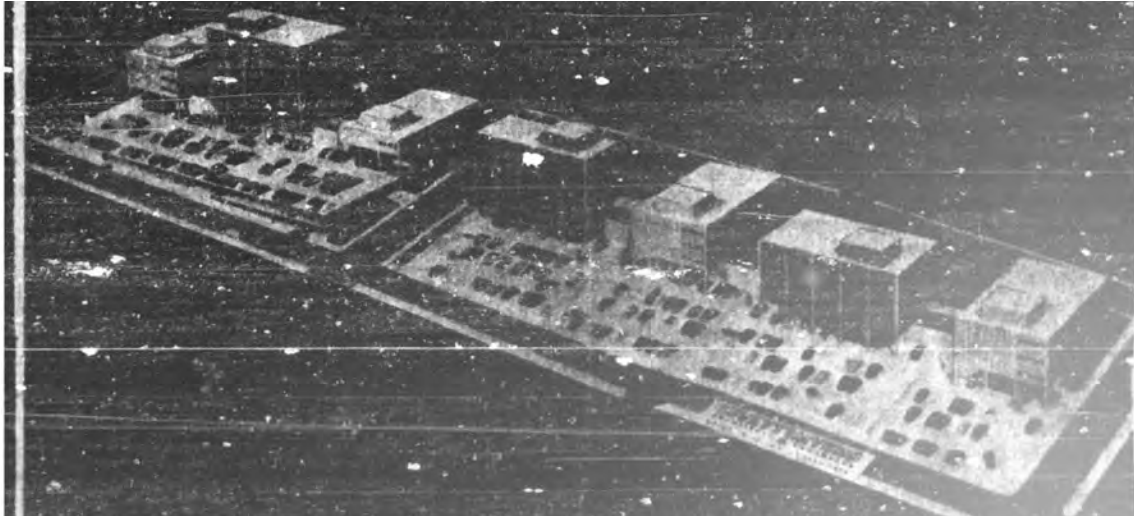
Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 21.** Model, "A Modern Profile Planned for Quality Hill Area," *Kansas City Star*, July 10 1955.



**Figure 22.** Rendering, "More Apartments for Quality Hill," *Kansas City Star*, October 7, 1957.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 44

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 23.** Hilton Inn (formerly Cliff House Motor Hotel), constructed 1960. Historic Postcard, c. 1970.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 45

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

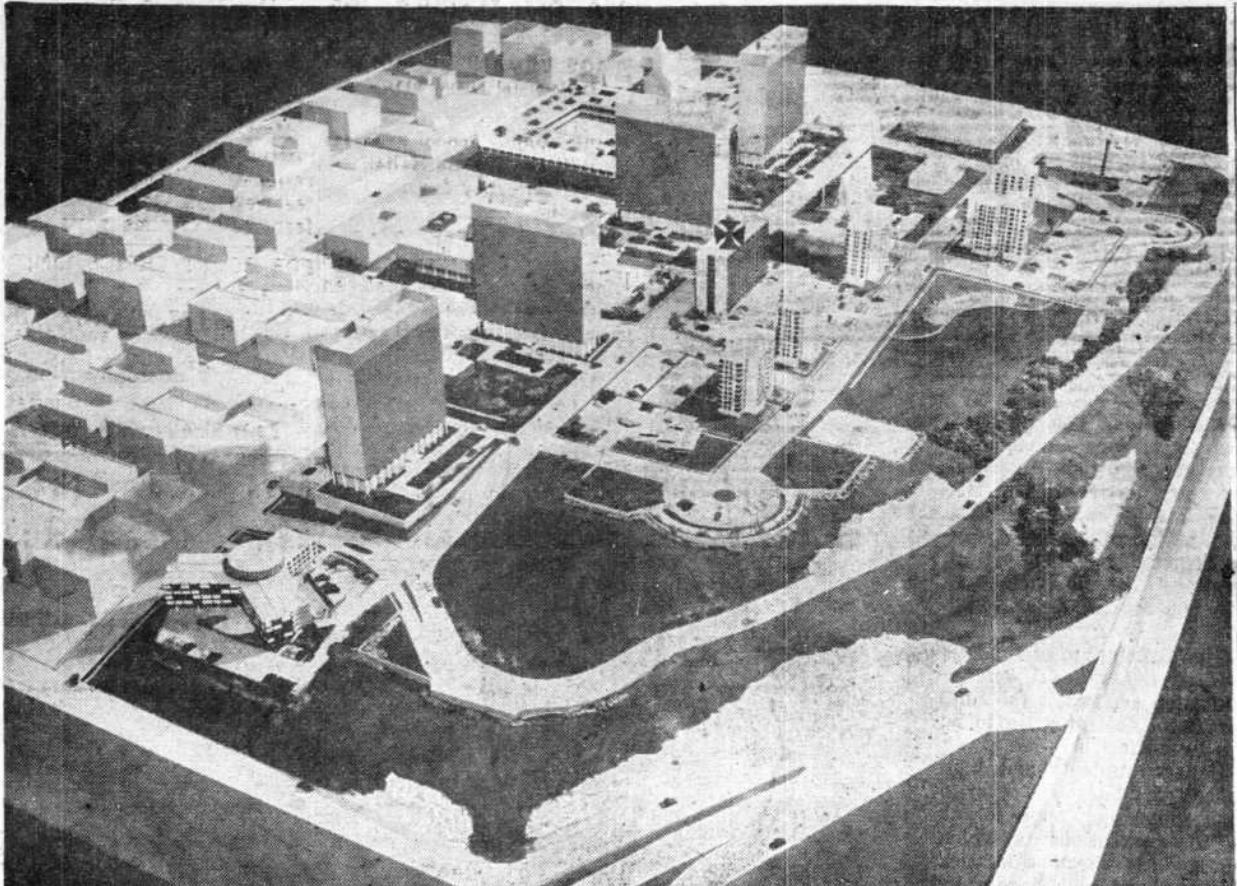
Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 24.** Model, "Expand Plans on Quality Hill," *Kansas City Times*, February 3, 1959, 4.





National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 46

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

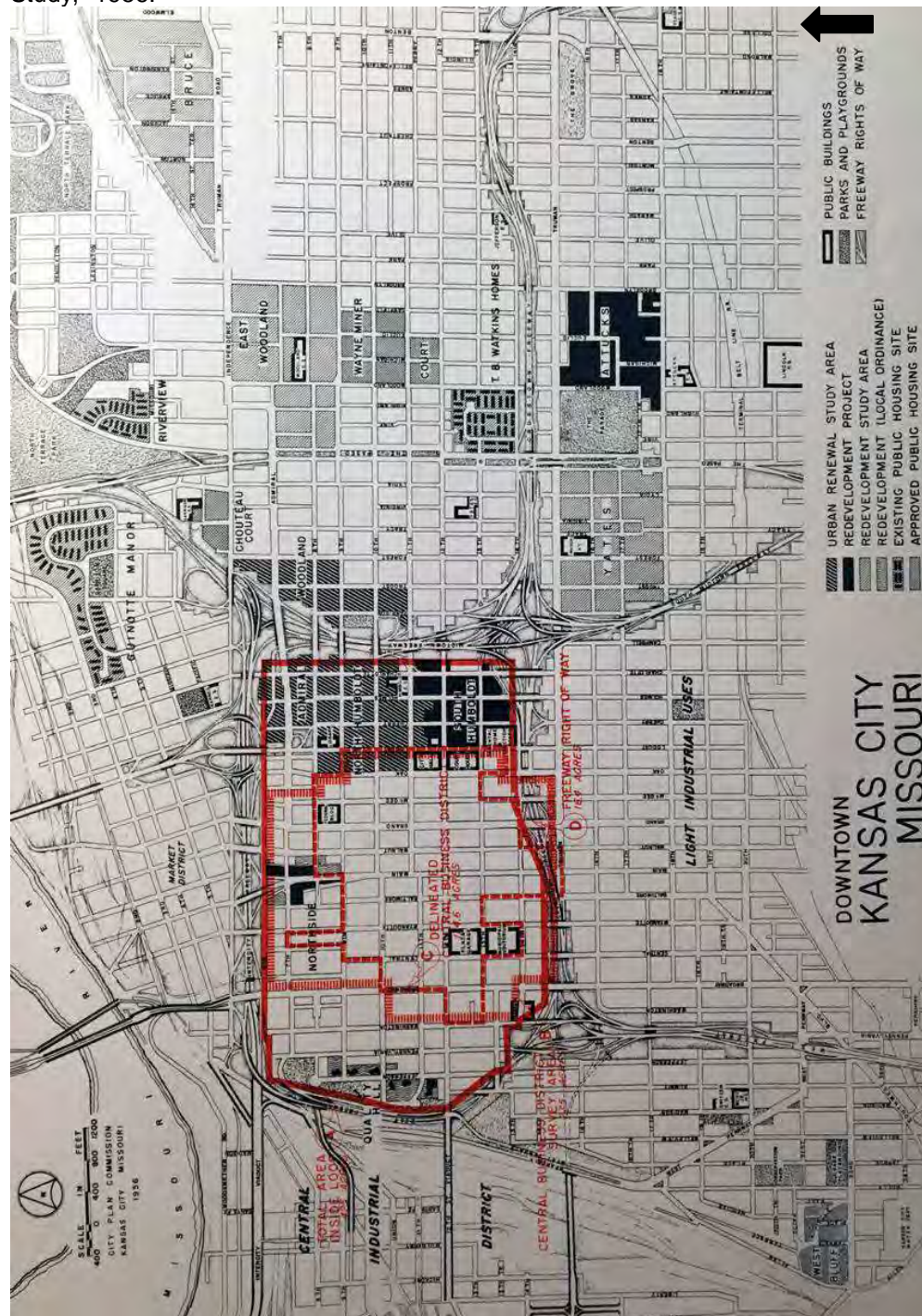
Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 25.** Map of Downtown Kansas City Missouri, from "Central Business District Kansas City Missouri Study," 1956.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 47

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 26.** Historic photograph of Wayne Miner Housing Development, constructed 1960. Photo taken 1962. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.



**Figure 27.** Historic photograph of Twin Oaks, constructed 1951, n.d., Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.





National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 48

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 28.** Carlton Plaza Apartments (1956) and Plaza House Apartments (1955). Google Street View, 2016.



**Figure 29.** Churchill Apartments (1964). Google Street View, 2016.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 49

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

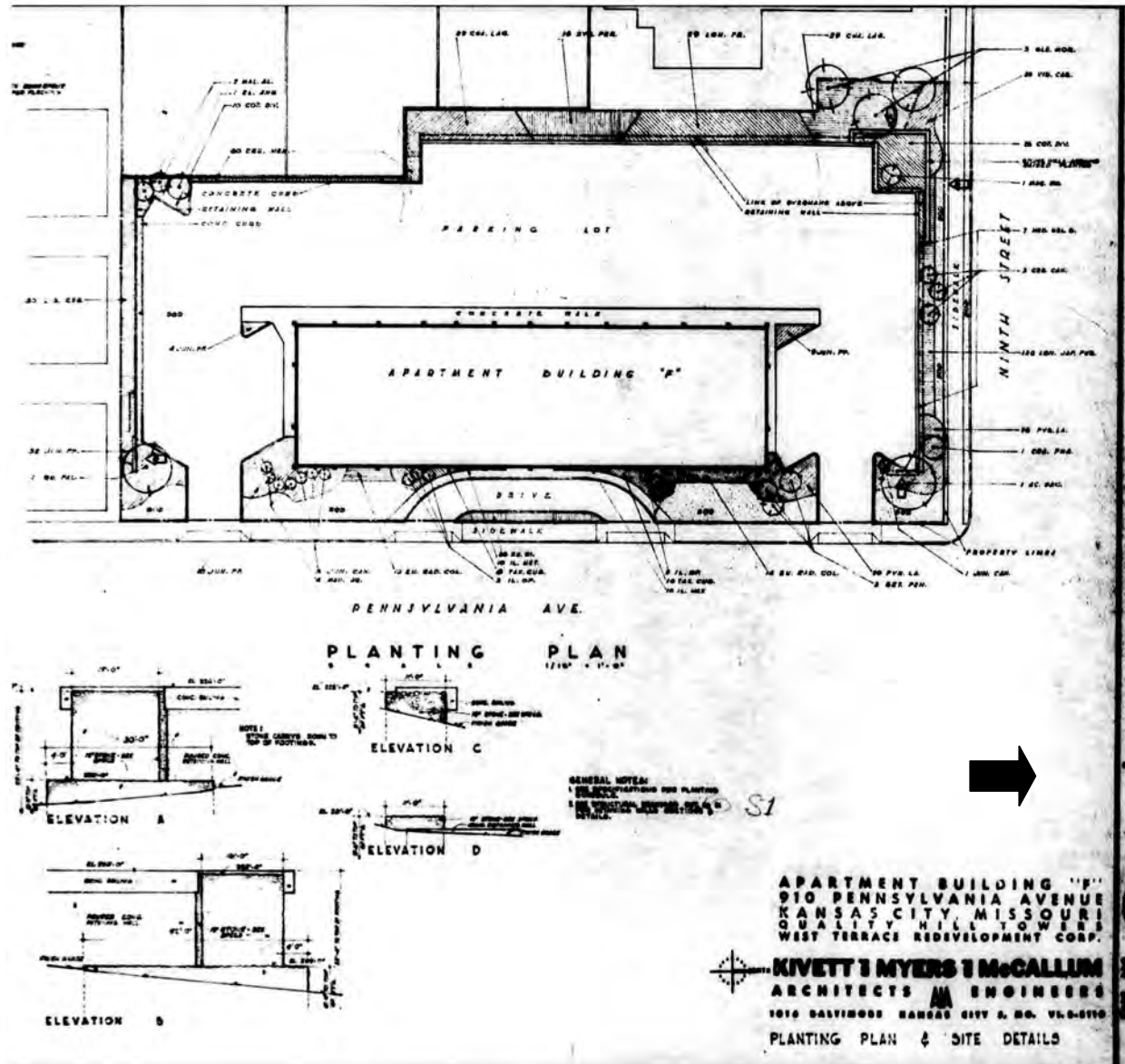
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 30.** Sunset Apartments (1965). Google Street View, 2016.



## Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 31.** Historic Planting Plan. Kivett & Myers & McCallum, architectural drawings, planting plan, 1957.





National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 51

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

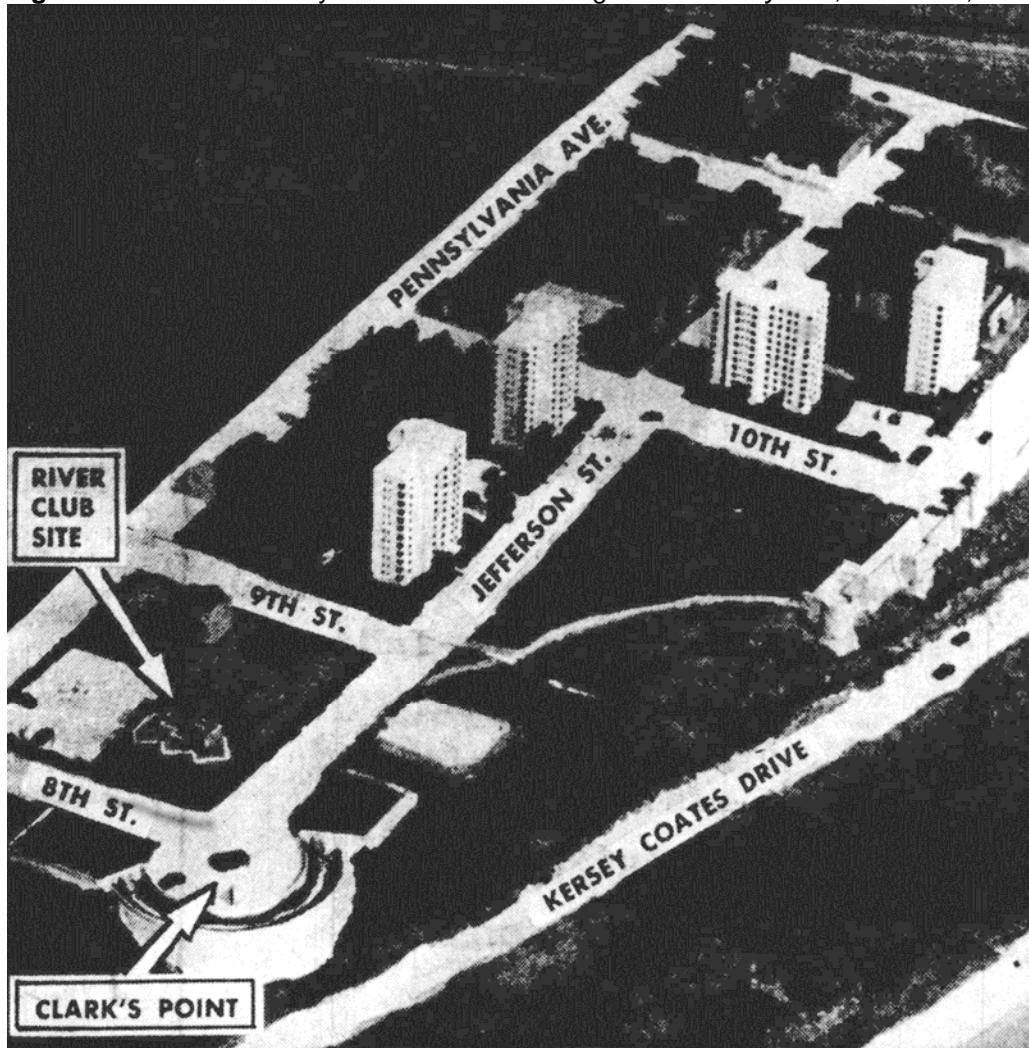
Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 32.** Model of Quality Hill Towers initial design. *Kansas City Star*, October 2, 1949.



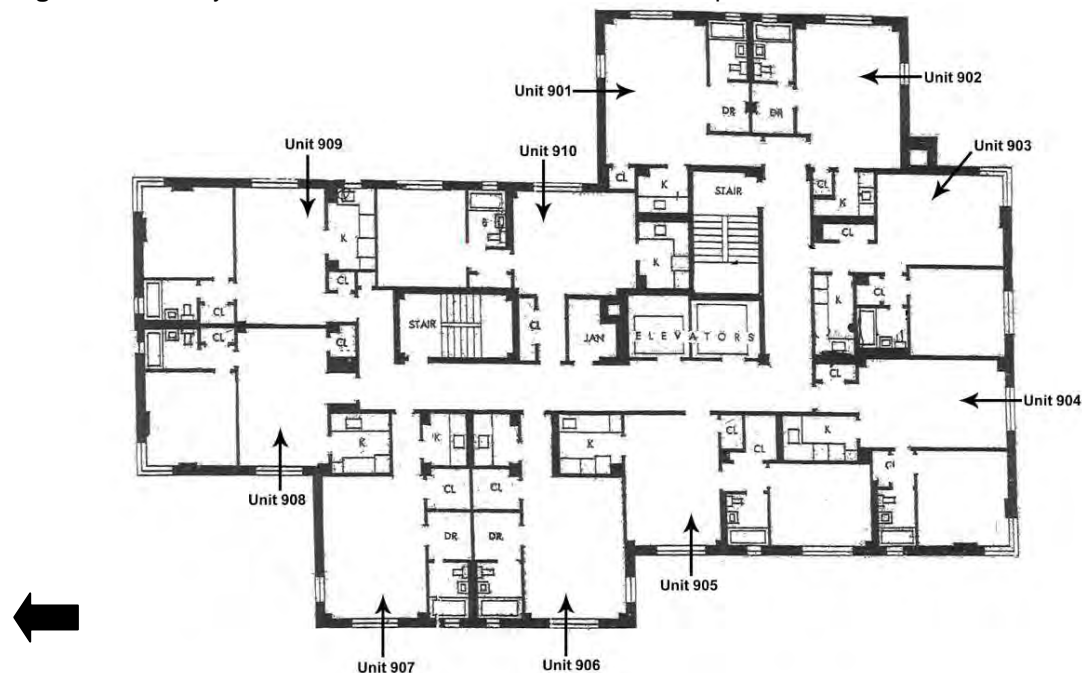
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 52

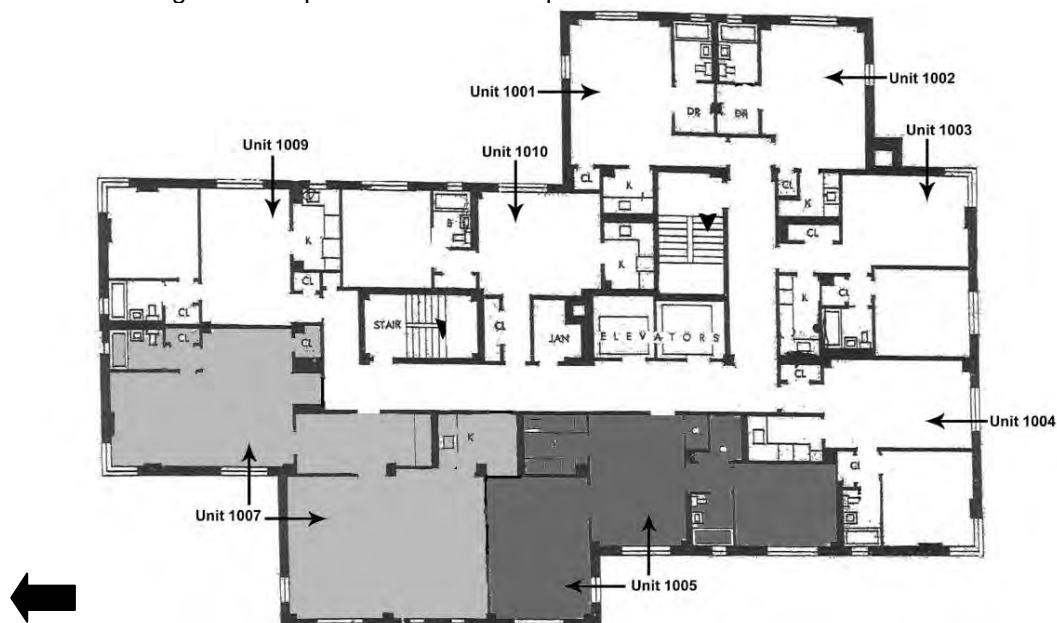
Quality Hill Center Historic District

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

**Figure 33.** Quality Hill Tower, 929 Jefferson Street, 9<sup>th</sup> floor plan. Source: J.F. Lauck.



**Figure 34.** Quality Hill Tower, 929 Jefferson Street, 10<sup>th</sup> floor plan with combined units. Source: J.F. Lauck. The configuration depicted in the historic plans are accurate to date.





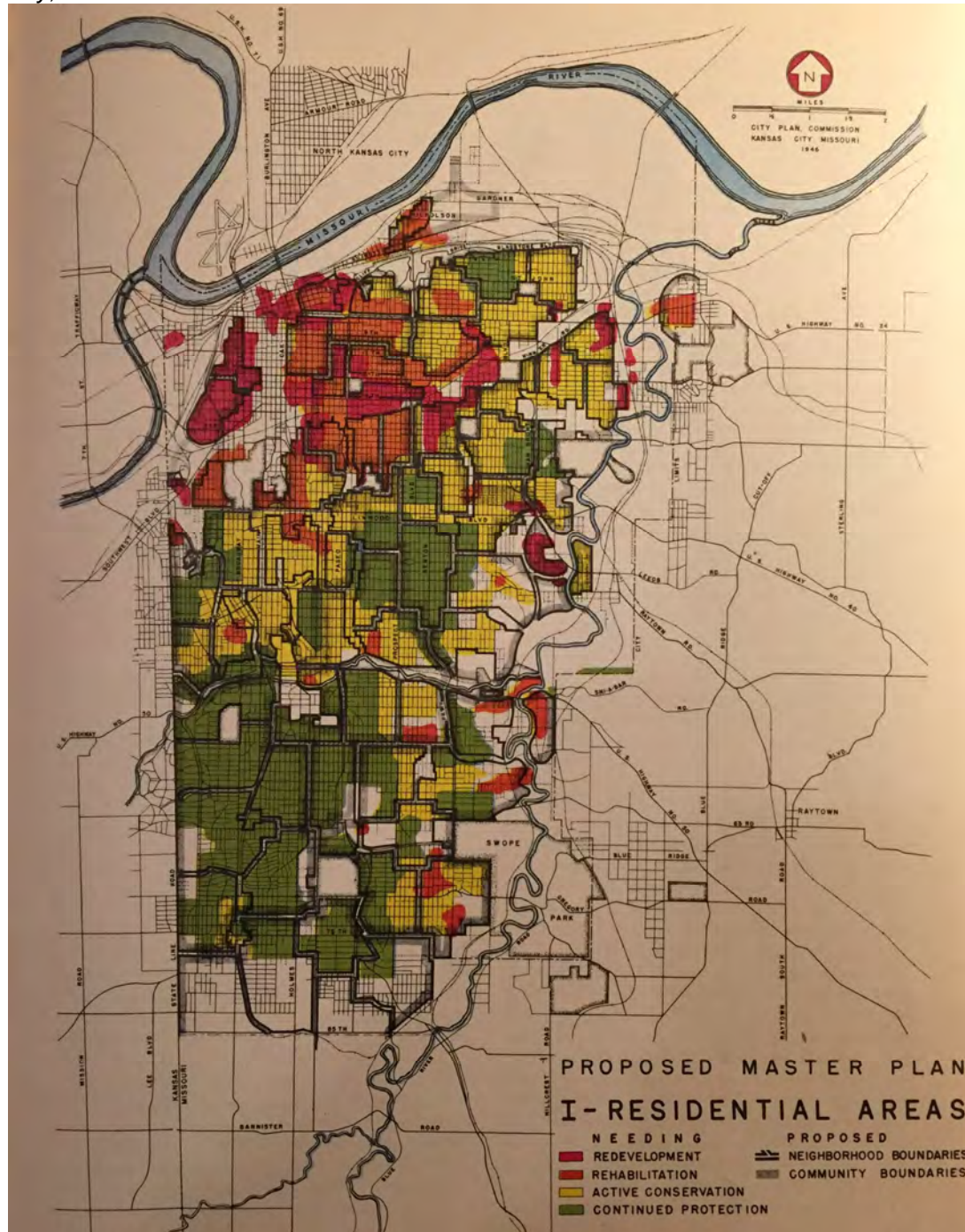
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 53

Quality Hill Center Historic District

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

**Figure 35.** 1947 Map of Residential Areas. Source: City Plan Commission, *The Master Plan for Kansas City, 3*.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 54

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

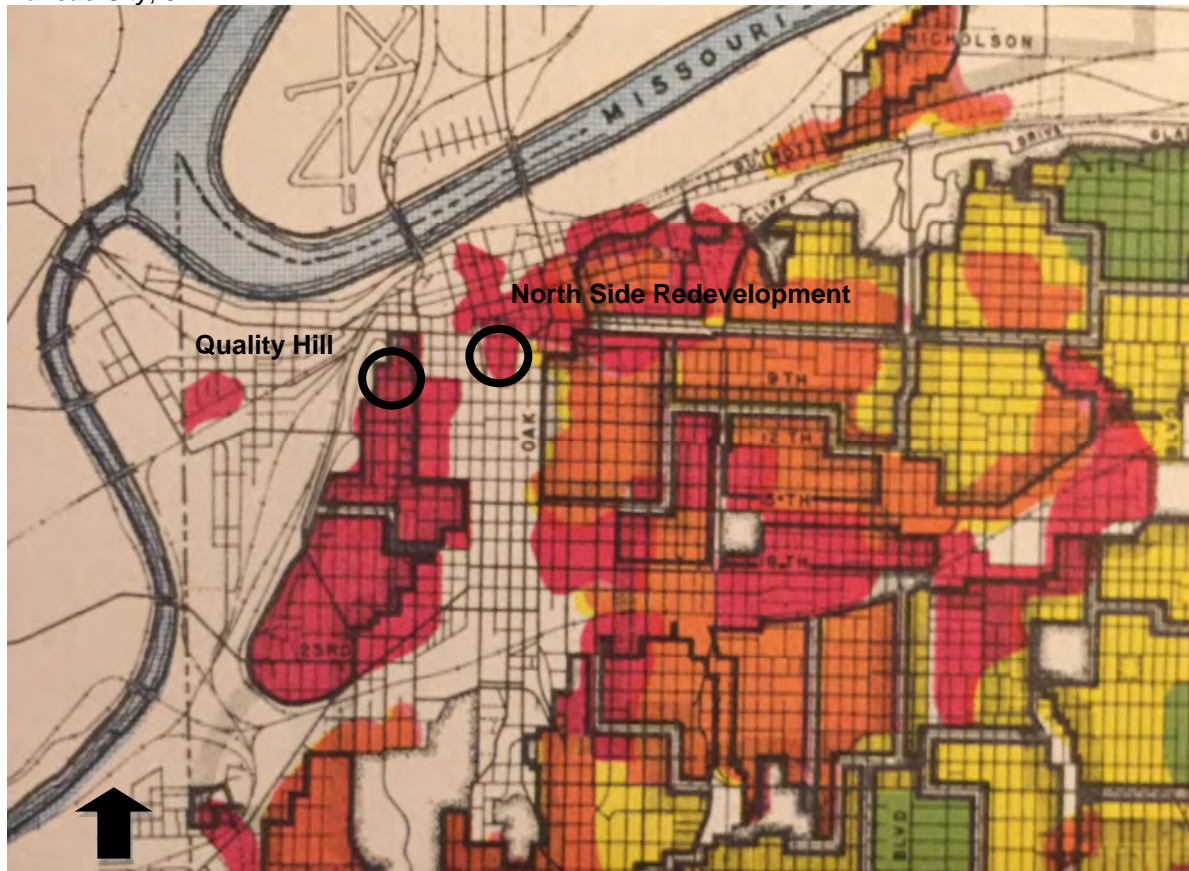
Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 36.** Detail of 1947 Map of Residential Areas. Source: City Plan Commission, *The Master Plan for Kansas City*, 3.





National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 55

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 37.** Historic Photo of 904 Jefferson, 1940. Source: Kansas City 1940 Tax Assessment Photographs, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.



**Figure 38.** Historic Photo of 921 Jefferson, 1940. Source: Kansas City 1940 Tax Assessment Photographs, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 56

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 39.** Historic Photo of 820 Pennsylvania/817 Jefferson, 1940. Source: Kansas City 1940 Tax Assessment Photographs, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.



**Figure 40.** Historic Photo of 918 Pennsylvania, 1940. Source: Kansas City 1940 Tax Assessment Photographs, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 57

Quality Hill Center Historic District

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 41.** Historic Photo of 901 Jefferson, 1940. Source: Kansas City 1940 Tax Assessment Photographs, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.















































































