

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

### 1. Name of Property

historic name St. Albans Farms Stone Barn

other names/site number Stone Dairy Barn

### 2. Location

street & number 3476 St. Albans Road [N/A] not for publication

city or town St. Albans [N/A] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Franklin code 071 zip code 63073

### 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 [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [ x ] locally.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ]. )

Mark A. Miles 12/12/05  
Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

[ ] entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet [ ].

[ ] determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet [ ].

[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.

[ ] removed from the National  
Register.

[ ] other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**St. Albans Farms Stone Barn**  
**Franklin County, Missouri**

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**5. Classification****Ownership of Property**

☒ private  
☐ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

**Category of Property**

☒ building(s)  
☐ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

**Number of Resources Within Property****Contributing****Non-contributing**

1	0 buildings
0	0 sites
2	2 structures
0	0 objects
3	2 Total

**Name of related multiple property listing.**

N/A

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

N/A

**6. Function or Use****Historic Functions**

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: animal  
 facility

**Current Functions**

VACANT/NOT IN USE

**7. Description****Architectural classification**

Other: Barn

**Materials**

foundation concrete

walls limestone

roof wood

other

See continuation sheet [ ]

**Narrative Description**

See continuation sheet [x].

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Franklin County, Missouri**

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**8. Statement of Significance  
Applicable National Register Criteria**

☐ **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**

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

See continuation sheet [x].

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

**Bibliography** See continuation sheet [x].

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

#

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

#

**Areas of Significance**

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

ca. 1918

ca. 1932

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person(s)**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Link, Theodore C.

**Primary location of additional data:**

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State Agency

☐ Federal Agency

☐ Local Government

☐ University

☐ Other:

Name of repository:

**St. Albans Farms Stone Barn  
Franklin County, Missouri**

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property:** less than one acre

**UTM References**

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	695336	4272725			

C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing

[ ] See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Debbie Sheals  
 organization Private Contractor  
 date September 7, 2005  
 street & number 29 S. 9<sup>th</sup> St. Suite 204 telephone 573-874-3779  
 city or town Columbia state Missouri zip code 65201

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

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

**Additional Items**

(Check with the SHPO or FOP for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

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

name St. Albans Properties, LLC c/o Peter Bigford, General Manger  
 street & number PO Box 49  
 telephone 636-458-8016  
 city or town St. Albans state MO zip code 63073

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**St. Albans Farms Stone Barn  
Franklin County, Missouri**

**Summary:** St. Albans is a small town near the Missouri River in northeastern Franklin County, about 35 miles west of St. Louis. The St. Albans Farms Stone Barn is located at 3476 St. Albans Road, in a level field near the tracks of the Rock Island and Pacific Railroad. It was built ca. 1918, from plans drawn by St. Louis architect Theodore C. Link. The barn is a large, low, building with limestone-faced walls, and a steep gable roof. It is one story tall, with a roughly U-shaped plan, and round corner towers that are topped with conical roofs. The main entrance to the barn faces a wide courtyard formed by the arms of the "U". The entranceway features a tall formal doorway, flanked by round windows and topped with a tall hipped roof. St. Albans Road now runs along the back of the barn property; the roadway was relocated from its original path in front of the barn around 1990.<sup>1</sup> The front entrance and courtyard of the barn face southeast, to an open field that was originally edged by the main road. A long ell extends from the center of the back wall of the barn, and there is a large round tile silo off of each back corner of the main "U". The tile silos are early, but probably not original; they are contributing structures. Two other large metal silos near the northeast corner of the back wall are newer, and counted as non-contributing structures. The barn is the only building on the property. The interior of the building is largely open, with wooden framing members, and poured concrete floors. The barn has been vacant for many years, and is in fair to poor condition. The roof is especially deteriorated, and has collapsed in a few areas. The building is largely intact, however, and has seen very few changes in the last half century. It continues to reflect its early use as a horse and dairy barn, and stands as an impressive reminder of the early years of St. Albans Farms.

**Elaboration:** The St. Albans Farms Stone Barn sits in a level field, near what is now St. Albans Road. The tracks of the Rock Island and Pacific Railroad run along the other side of that road. St. Albans Road is the main road into the core of St. Albans, which has recently been developed into an upscale residential community. Most of the properties in the area contain large modern houses that have been built within the last ten years. There are also a few commercial and civic buildings in the area, including a community center directly across the road from the barn, and the historic St. Alban's General Store, which is less than a quarter of a mile to the southwest of the barn property. (The store was listed in the National Register April 11, 2003; it is the only building in St. Albans that is listed today.)

The barn sits apart from much of the surrounding development, on an open field which is edged on three sides by belts of trees. There is a small frame building that serves as the

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<sup>1</sup> The old road was still in place when the current U.S.G.S. topo map of the area was updated in 1980, and the property changed hands in 1988.

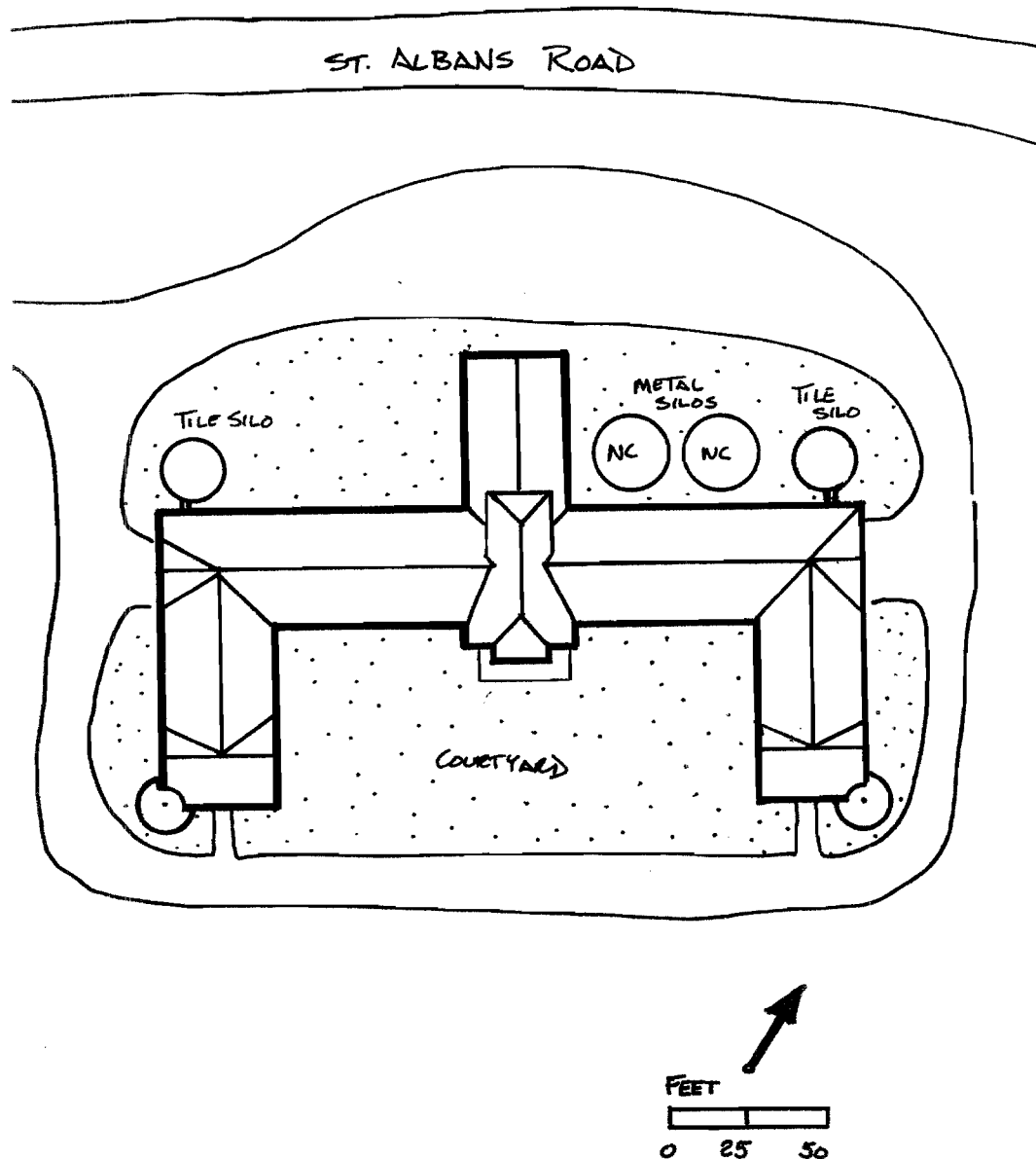
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St. Albans Farms Stone Barn  
Franklin County, Missouri

Figure One. Roof Plan of the Barn. Drawn by Debbie Sheals from a survey of the property on file with St. Albans Properties.



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**St. Albans Farms Stone Barn  
Franklin County, Missouri**

office for St. Albans Properties to the southwest, and the rest of the field is empty. The post-1990 roadway runs along the northeast edge of the field; the older road ran south and east of the barn. (See enclosed topo map.) The barn is currently circled by a wide gravel drive which adjoins a parking lot for the nearby development office. The barn itself is vacant and nearly empty. It is currently used only for storage and support space for maintenance crews.

The barn is large, with an irregular footprint and a complex roofline. The main block of the building is U-shaped, with round towers on the front wings of the "U", and a rectangular rear ell centered on the back wall. (See Figure One.) The large tile silos sit at the back corners of the U, and are linked to the building with short walls of the same type of ceramic tile blocks used for the main silos. The tile silo on the eastern corner is topped with a newer shallow conical roof, which has pipes that link it to the two newer metal silos nearby. The tile silos were probably added around 1930, and were definitely in place by the time of 1956 photo of the barn. The newer metal silos, which are freestanding, were added after 1956; they are non-contributing structures.

Overall, the building measures roughly 225 feet from side to side, and 150 feet from the edge of the front courtyard to the back of the rear ell. It has a steeply pitched gable roof, with large cross gables at the ends of the front ells, and drive doors at the back of the U. The round corner towers, which contain silos, are also on the front of the barn, at either edge of the courtyard. The towers are inset into the corners of the front wings, and topped with steep conical roofs. The roofs have early or original wooden shingles, overlaid with tar paper or asphalt roofing in some places. The shingles are nailed directly to sawn planks, which form the roof decking. The gable ends of the building are faced with thick wooden weatherboards that appear to be original.

The large central entranceway to the barn is topped by a hipped roof, which is taller than the main roof and which extends back over the roof of the rear ell as well. The roof overhangs slightly in the front to shelter the two-story tall entranceway, and the entire entrance bay extends out a few feet from the plane of the wall. The walls of the entrance bay slope outward from roof to ground, and there are large round windows on either of the entranceway. (See photo 9.) The entranceway has wide double doors flanked by sidelights at the first floor, and there are matching sidelights at the second floor. A large multi-light window that once filled the space above the doors has fallen apart, although some remnants of the frame and muntins are still in place. The one surviving door is in ruins, and no glass remains in the sidelights or the round windows. The frames for the windows and doors survive however, and are fully intact and in fair condition.

The walls of the barn are constructed of poured concrete that is faced with irregular slabs of natural limestone. The inside walls of the silos show the marks from the forms that were used for those walls. (See photo 14.) The tawny fieldstone used on the exterior of the



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**St. Albans Farms Stone Barn  
Franklin County, Missouri**

walls was taken from a hillside nearby, and laid up to emphasize the irregular forms of the rocks. The upper sections of the front towers have a slight overhang, and naturally curved rocks were used to form the smooth lip that marks the transition. (See photo 2.) The walls are more than a foot thick in most places, and door and window openings are edged with wooden frames. All of the walls of the barn have wide rows of windows, which are set high in the walls and which run up to the lower edges of the roof. Almost all of the windows retain early or original frames, but most are missing muntins, and almost all are missing window glass.

The interior of the building is highly intact. The interior spaces are largely open, and little changed. Large garage/tractor doors at the back of the main block of the building provide access to a drive that runs through the entire back of the building, and smaller walk doors provide access to the other wings. Most of the smaller doorways have sliding wood doors that are early or original. The interior framing consists of slender chamfered support posts, with crossed supports, and exposed ceiling rafters. The framing members are surprisingly small; the support posts range from 3-1/2" x 5-1/2" to 3-1/2" x 8-1/2", and the rafters are just 1-1/2" x 5-1/2". The interior has more finish than one would expect to see in a stone barn. The walls are of smooth concrete which may have a top coat of plaster, and the windows have simple flat moldings, most of which are intact.

The front entranceway opens to a small office or vestibule, which has stairs to each side of the door that lead down into the barn. The barn floor is about three feet lower than the entranceway floor. The entranceway also has a small bathroom, and a storage area that is open to the barn drive. The front wings each have interior doorways that lead to the corner towers, and there are also doors in the back wall near where the tile silos connect to the building.

Overall, the barn today is battered, but little changed from the period of significance. It has been vacant for at least a dozen years, and is in need of substantial rehabilitation. It is largely intact, however, and continues to reflect its long years of service as a barn. The only changes of note to have occurred are due to the effects of age and weather, and the barn today looks very much as it did when it housed cattle for St. Albans Farms.

**Figure Two.**  
Photo from  
St. Albans: History  
and Folklore of a  
Missouri River  
Town, p. 72



*The Stone Dairy Barn in 1956. Photo taken from the old road into St. Albans. Photo collection.*

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**St. Albans Farms Stone Barn  
Franklin County, Missouri**

**Summary:** The St. Albans Farms Stone Barn is located at 3476 St. Albans Road in St. Albans, Missouri. It is significant under Criterion A, in the area of Architecture, with a local level of significance. It was designed by Theodore C. Link around 1918, and used by St. Albans Farms from the time of its construction into the 1980s. Theodore Link is perhaps best-known as the architect for Union Station in St. Louis, which was completed in 1894, but, as one biography noted "if he had never worked on the massive structure he would have still been a major Missouri architect."<sup>2</sup> Link was known for designing large formal buildings of stone, but this quite probably the only barn he ever designed. It also differs from most of his other designs in that the walls are faced with randomly shaped fieldstones, in a construction method popular for vernacular architecture of the time. The building is also significant as the last major barn left from St. Albans Farms, which at one point encompassed over 7,000 acres. Link designed the barn for Irene Johnson, who, with her husband Oscar Johnson, created St. Albans Farms. The barn was built to serve as a horse barn, and converted for use as a dairy barn around 1932, at which time the large tile silos were added to its rear wall. It housed a large percentage of the St. Albans Farms' "Golden Guernsey" herd, which was the largest Guernsey herd in Missouri at the time. After the dairy herd was sold off in the 1950s, the barn housed beef cattle, and remained in use until the last of the St. Albans Farms property was sold in the late 1980s. The barn has two periods of significance: ca. 1918, which corresponds to the time it was built, and ca. 1932, when the tile silos were added. The barn today is highly intact, if in poor condition. It is a significant, unusual, example of the work of architect Theodore C. Link.

**Elaboration:** St. Albans is located near the Missouri River, in rural Franklin County, Missouri. The tiny town has enjoyed access to good transportation and communication networks since the first days of settlement, first via the Missouri River, and later through railroad and public roadways. Access to the Missouri River was especially important early in the 1800s, when good overland routes were rare. The river carried early explorers through the area, and later provided transportation to settlers.

Lewis and Clark stopped there in May of 1804, and the site is mentioned in William Clark's journal.<sup>3</sup> The site was identified by a description of Tavern Rock, a distinctive 300 foot tall cliff nearby which has a large cave in its base. Within a few decades of Lewis and Clark's visit, settlers were routinely using the river to gain access to the rich bottomlands and picturesque scenery of the area. Tavern Creek, which flows into the Missouri River near

<sup>2</sup> Kinsey, Joni L. "Link, Theodore Carl," in Lawrence Christianson, et. al. Dictionary of Missouri Biography, (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1999) p. 490.

<sup>3</sup> Huger, p. 2.

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Franklin County, Missouri**

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Tavern Rock, provided a good supply of fresh water, adding to the attraction. The earliest homesteads in northeastern Franklin County were filed in the 1820s, and by the early 1830s, the Tavern Creek area had become a favored destination for German immigrants.

Even though the majority of those early settlers were German, the actual plat for St. Albans was filed by a Scotsman. The town was laid out in 1837 by Scottish immigrant, Dr. Peter Kinkaid, who was one of the first property owners in the area. Kinkaid was no doubt planning to capitalize on the good river landing; the text which accompanied his plat noted that "This place is well known to all Navigators of the Missouri River as a celebrated landing place for steamboats...."<sup>4</sup> Although Kinkaid's plat included 128 lots, the town never grew very large. A description of St. Albans which was written almost a century later, in 1925, noted that "It has four houses and probably never had more than ten."<sup>5</sup> Even though the town reminded small, the surrounding countryside proved to be popular, for scenic beauty as well as agricultural pursuits, and St. Albans has functioned as a service center for residents of the area throughout its history.

Transportation services for the community were greatly improved in the years following the Civil War, via the introduction of railroad service. The first railroad came through in the 1870s, and St. Albans was for many decades a stop on the Rock Island Line. A schedule for the Rock Island Railroad which was printed in 1910 shows that at that time, one could get from downtown St. Louis to St. Albans in just under an hour and a half.<sup>6</sup> The railroad became even more important to St. Albans after 1904, when a flood caused the river to shift away from town, eliminating the option for boat travel.

It was also around the turn of the century that St. Albans began to capture the attention of wealthy St. Louis residents, who were charmed by the beauty of the countryside. The availability of railroad service to and from the city made it an ideal location for city dwellers' country retreats. One of the first St. Louis residents to buy land for a country estate at St. Albans was architect Theodore C. Link, who bought property from the local postmaster, Charles Becker, in August of 1903.<sup>7</sup>

Theodore C. Link was at the time one of the more prominent architects in St. Louis. Today, it is hard find a guide book on St. Louis architecture that does not include examples of his work; one source estimated that he designed one hundred buildings in the city.<sup>8</sup> He is

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<sup>4</sup> Huger, p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> Herman Gottlieb Kiel, Centennial Biographical Directory of Franklin County Missouri, (Washington, MO: Missourian Publishing Co., 1986) p. 210.

<sup>6</sup> Huger, p. 80.

<sup>7</sup> Huger, pp. 47-50.

<sup>8</sup> Kenneth Luebbering, "Link, Theodore Carl 'Ted'," in Lawrence Christianson, et. al. Dictionary of Missouri Biography,

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Franklin County, Missouri**

best-known as the principal architect of St. Louis's massive Union Station, which was built in 1893-1894. He worked in a range of styles, and designed everything from entrance gateways to large office buildings. He was also involved with a number of professional organizations during his long career, including the AIA and the Architectural League of New York. He served two terms as president of the Missouri State Association of Architects, and was also a long-time member of the St. Louis Architectural Club.<sup>9</sup>

Theodore Link was born in Germany in 1850, and studied engineering and architecture in London and Paris before moving to the United States in 1870. He first came to St. Louis in 1873, as a railroad engineer and designer, and in 1874 joined the design team that was laying out Forest Park. He moved to the east coast in the late 1870s, but returned to St. Louis after a few years, and he maintained a busy practice in the city for the next several decades. The fruits of his labors are still evident in the city today; a quick check of architectural guidebooks and biographies identified more than two dozen of his buildings, 19 of which are in St. Louis. (See appendix.)

He worked with several different partners in his early career, before settling into solo practice around the time Union Station was completed. He was with Link, Rosenheim and Ittner from 1883-1886, after which he teamed up with Wilbur Trueblood for about 3 years.<sup>10</sup> By the time a competition for the Union Station project came along in 1891, he was working with Edward Cameron, who was probably his last partner. Link and Cameron beat out eleven other architectural firms to secure that commission, and the building opened to universal acclaim in 1894.<sup>11</sup> Link dissolved his partnership with Cameron before Union Station was completed, and worked without formal partners for the rest of his career.

His buildings utilize a variety of architectural styles and building types. His early commercial and religious work in particular utilizes a fairly delicate version of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. One source noted that he was known for "his monumental stone buildings designed in the manner of the leading architect of the period, Henry Hobson Richardson."<sup>12</sup> He was flexible, however, and surviving buildings attributed to him also show attributes of Beaux Arts Eclecticism, Elizabethan Revival, and Tudor Revival. His projects ranged in size and scale from formal stone entrance gates for Portland Place in St. Louis, (ca.

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(Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1999) p. 491.

<sup>9</sup> M. L. Van Nada, ed., Book of Missourians, (Chicago: T. J. Steele & Co, 1906) p. 154.

<sup>10</sup> Henry F. Withey and Elise Rathburn Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased), (Los Angeles, California: New Age Publishing Company, 1956) pp. 373-374.

<sup>11</sup> Toft and Josse, pp. 69-70. Toft and Josse, among others, note that Link's chief assistant architect, John Willard Adams, likely played an important role in that project as well.

<sup>12</sup> Kinsey, p. 490.

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Franklin County, Missouri**

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1890) to the multi-story headquarters for Robert, Johnson and Rand, later known as International Shoe, also in St. Louis. (1919)

Union Station was Link's first major commission, and the years immediately following its completion brought several major project in St. Louis, including a number of large churches, and the Carlton Building, a commercial building at 6<sup>th</sup> and Olive Street that housed his office for many years. He was also active in the 1904 World's Fair. He was a member of the Commission of Architects for the Fair, and the designer of the Mines and Metalurgy Building. Commissions outside of St. Louis included the Madison County Courthouse in Fredericktown, Missouri in 1899, and the Wabash Terminal in Pittsburgh, PA, in 1904. He also had a number of major commissions in the southern United States, including the Mississippi State Capitol in Jackson, Mississippi, begun in 1900, and several buildings for the Louisiana State University, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He was living in Baton Rouge and supervising the University project there at the time of his death in 1923.

Link was 53 when he bought property in St. Albans in 1903, and, with a busy architectural practice, would have welcomed a quiet place in the country. Link and his wife Annie started construction of a modest frame country house on their new land in St. Albans immediately after they bought the property, and in just two months were ready to entertain friends from the city. A guest register that Link kept in his new country house contained a note in the front that explained that the property was purchased in August 1903, and "finished for occupancy October 1903 with the following staff: Theo C. Link, lessor & Proprietor General Manager of Deficits."<sup>13</sup> A later entry in the book included a poem from friends that starts out thus:

There was a man in our town  
And he was wondrous wise  
For on a cliff he built his home  
And dwelt there near the skies.

And when he found that friends of his,  
With all their might and main  
Did love the place—he asked them there  
Again and yet again.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Huger, p. 56. Ms. Huger borrowed the scrapbook from Theodore C. Link, Jr, the elder Link's grandson.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Huger, p. 146.

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Some of the earliest and most frequent visitors to Link's county place were also clients. That same guest book includes entries for Oscar and Irene Johnson, for whom Link designed a large home on Portland Place in 1905.<sup>15</sup> Oscar Johnson, Sr. could well-afford a house on Portland Place and a country estate. He was at the time co-owner and vice-president of Robert, Johnson, and Rand, which later became the International Shoe Company, the largest shoe company in the world.<sup>16</sup> It was no doubt through Johnson that Link received the commission for the Robert, Johnson, Rand headquarters building in St. Louis in 1909.

Oscar Johnson is first known to have visited St. Albans with Link in 1907, and he apparently liked what he saw, as he and his wife, Irene, began buying land in the area a few years later.<sup>17</sup> By 1914, Oscar and Irene Johnson owned 1,500 acres, which they named St. Albans Farms. Irene (Walter) Johnson, had grown up on a plantation in Holly Springs, Mississippi, and she was an active partner in the development of the farm. When Oscar Johnson died at age 52 in 1916, Irene Johnson kept St. Albans Farms, and continued to buy land to expand her holdings in the area. It was under her management that the farm reached its peak size of some 7,500 acres.

She also continued the relationship with Theodore Link, who maintained his St. Albans country house even after he started working extensively out of state. He designed a formal stone house at St. Albans Farms for Mrs. Johnson around 1917. That house, "The Studio," which was later enlarged by the St. Louis firm of Jamieson and Spearl, survives today.<sup>18</sup> It was rehabilitated when the surrounding property was redeveloped in the 1990s, and now serves as a conference center. It is located on a hilltop overlooking the river, not far from the site of Link's early house, which burned in 1960.<sup>19</sup> Those properties are less than a mile southwest of the stone barn.

Irene Johnson wanted St. Albans Farms to be a working property, and she experimented with a variety of uses for the large country estate. In the late 1910s, during the years of World War I, she worked to get fields cleared so that she could raise sheep, and in the meantime raised wheat and garden produce and canned her surplus. Because most young men were off to war, she employed women and college students to run the farm. She even had female farm managers, a rare event in those times. The farm was profiled in Missouri

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15 Julius K. Hunter, Westmoreland and Portland Places, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1988) p. 210.

16 Huger, p. 50, and Rosemary Feurer, "Shoe City, Factory Towns", Gateway Heritage, Vol. 9, No. 2, Fall, 1988, p. 2. Johnson became president of the company in 1915.

17 Huger, p. 50.

18 Huger, p. 54, and 94. Huger noted that Link worked with a Wilbur Trueblood on the original design for the Studio. It is possible that the reference is to William Trueblood, his former business partner.

19 Huger, p. 49. The house that burned in 1960 was actually Link's second dwelling on that site; his first house there burned in 1905.

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Woman magazine in 1918, which praised her work there: "Mrs. Johnson is trying to make St. Albans Farm 100 percent patriotic in several ways. First, she is increasing the food supply; second, she is using girl-labor, thus releasing men for government service; third, she is canning all her surplus vegetables; fourth, she is preparing to increase the supply of wool by raising sheep."<sup>20</sup>

Irene Johnson was not all business, however; she was also interested in aesthetics, and she kept the grounds of the immense farm well-maintained. She had a particular interest in flowers, and had some 3,500 rose bushes planted along the ten miles of roadway that ran through the farm property. Also, as noted in a recent history of St. Albans, she held a "peony festival with extensive plantings of peonies."<sup>21</sup> Some of her early peony bushes still bloom on the former grounds of the Old Barn Inn, a restaurant she opened in 1928 in a former barn near the village center.

Johnson remained active in the operation of the farm, and continued to experiment with agricultural practices. In addition to practicing "scientific feed and grain farming," the farm housed a variety of livestock. In the teens and twenties, the farm raised chickens, Southdown sheep, Duroc-Jersey and Poland-China hogs, prizewinning Aberdeen Angus cattle, and saddle horses.<sup>22</sup> It was the saddle horse business that led Irene Johnson to commission Theodore Link to design one of his more unusual buildings, the large stone barn.

The stone barn was built around 1918, as a saddle horse facility.<sup>23</sup> Mrs. Johnson's new blufftop house was fairly secluded, and she may have felt that an elaborate barn down in the bottom land near the main road would provide an impressive public image for her rapidly-developing farm. Link's design for the new barn was both picturesque and practical. It was obviously designed to have more architectural presence than the average horse barn, and at the same time, was a working building, with functional requirements that would have been distinctly different than anything Link had worked on before.

The irregular footprint of the barn allowed for lots of windows and cross ventilation, and the high roof would have also helped with air circulation. The drive doors at the back of the building allowed for quick access, as well as cross-ventilation, and the numerous smaller doors in other locations provided easy access to the horse stalls and storage areas. The corner towers, combined with the open front courtyard and elaborate central entranceway, give the barn a notable formality. The steeply pitched roofs, multiple cross gables, and mullioned windows continue the picturesque theme.

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<sup>20</sup> Missouri Woman, April, 1918, Quoted in Huger, p. 57.

<sup>21</sup> Huger, p. 54.

<sup>22</sup> Huger, pp. 57-58.

<sup>23</sup> Huger, p. 71.

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Figure Three. A drawing of the barn done by St. Louis artist Frank Nuderscher, for a brochure promoting St. Albans Farms. From Huger, p. 63.



**St. Albans Farms, Inc.**  
**Pure Bred Guernsey Milk**

*Drawing from a brochure by Frank Nuderscher.*



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The corner towers in particular combine esthetics and practicality. Link's choice to top them with steep conical roofs and place them at the front of the building maximized their visual impact, and at the same time, put feed within easy reach of the barn users. It should also be noted that even using silos at that time was a relatively new practice, especially with horse barns. Plan books of the time showed many horse barn plans without silos, and a State Board of Agriculture report for 1921, for example, described the "Silo Campaign," a Board initiative to encourage farmers to use silos, which they described as "feed conservers in the interest of cheaper production of better livestock."<sup>24</sup>

Link's use of randomly shaped slabs of rock for the barn walls represents a notable combination of elegance and practicality. Although he was well-known for designing formal buildings of quarried stone, this is probably the only building for which he used this particular construction method. The barn walls are actually made of poured concrete combined with irregular slabs of fieldstone. A recent description of the construction project noted that: "Forms were made, stones set in place, and concrete poured, making a section at a time."<sup>25</sup> The fieldstone for the project came from another part of the farm.

That combination of poured concrete and rough natural fieldstone was more typical of vernacular building of the day than of high-style architecture, and none of the surviving high-style buildings attributed to Link use anything like it. The technique is, by contrast, common to early 20<sup>th</sup> century vernacular architecture in many parts of the state. Studies of vernacular stone construction in the Missouri Ozarks, for example, have documented numerous modest buildings with walls of poured concrete and irregular fieldstone facing. That construction method is sometimes referred to as Ozark rock masonry.<sup>26</sup>

It is possible, in fact, that Link learned the construction technique directly from an Ozark builder. His work on the Madison County Courthouse in 1899 had brought him into contact with Louis Miller, a prolific builder and designer who worked for decades in southeast Missouri. Miller handled the construction end of the courthouse project, while Link did the design and site supervision.<sup>27</sup> Around the turn of the century, Miller began experimenting with a construction method which combined poured concrete walls with native stone facing. He was one of the first of many Missouri builders to use that method, and by the time the St.

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<sup>24</sup> Jewell Mayes, *Missouri Year Book of Agriculture: 1921*, Jefferson City: Hugh Stephens Press, 1921, p 459.

<sup>25</sup> Huger, p. 71.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Bonnie Stepenoff, "Ozark Rock Masonry Architecture Survey: Phase Two," (Typescript on file with the State Historic Preservation Office, Jefferson City, MO, 1993) and Debbie Sheals, "Ozark Rock Masonry in Springfield: ca. 1910-1955," (National Register MPS Cover Document on file with the State Historic Preservation Office, Jefferson City, MO, 2005).

<sup>27</sup> Lynn Morrow, "Louis Miller: Master Craftsman and Folk Artisan of Southeast Missouri," *Gateway Heritage*, Summer 1983, p. 33.

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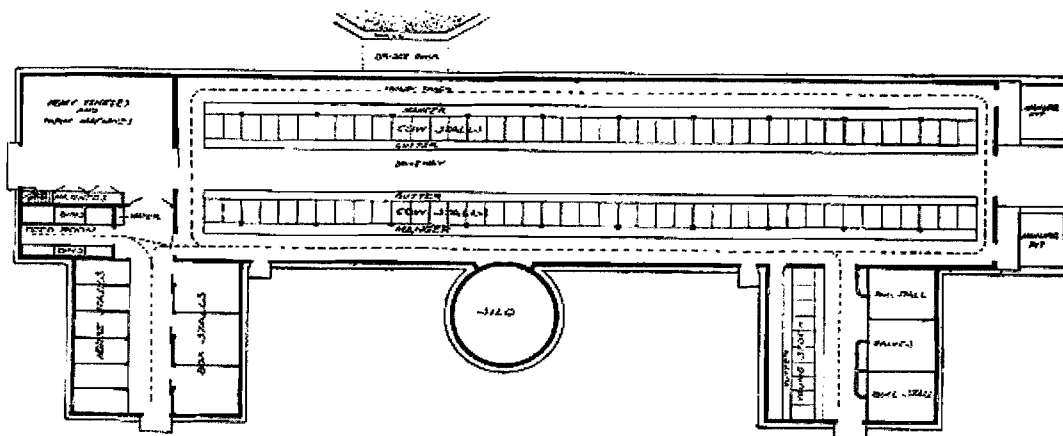
**St. Albans Farms Stone Barn  
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Albans barn was built, it was relatively common to vernacular architecture in Missouri. In Miller's location, the native stone consisted of rough rounded rubble stone, locally called cobblestone, but many other examples utilize rough slabs like those used on the St. Albans barn. Link no doubt found the technique to be a practical way to use one of his favorite formal building materials, stone, in a more "rustic" application.

Even without the fieldstone walls, Link's barn would be distinctively different than the vernacular barns found on average farms in Missouri and other parts of the Midwest at the time. The irregular plan and picturesque massing in particular set it apart from most Missouri barns, which, regardless of size and function, tend to have compact forms and rectangular plans.<sup>28</sup>

Link no doubt did research on the special physical requirements associated with barns when he was designing Mrs. Johnson's new farm building, and he may have looked at barn pattern books as well. Books on the planning of farm buildings had been in publication in the United States for many decades by then, and one early 20<sup>th</sup> century work even included a plan for a "Pretentious Stock Barn" that shares characteristics with the St. Albans barn. That design, which was published in 1909 in Radford's Practical Barn Plans, features a U-shaped plan, with a central courtyard, which, the book explained, was good for "admitting the sun, but obstructing the severe storms and giving shelter to the stock."<sup>29</sup>

Figure Three. Plan of the "Pretentious Stock Barn" from Radford's Practical Barn Plans, p. 177.



<sup>28</sup> See for example, Allen Noble and Hubert G. Wilhelm, Barns of the Midwest (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1995), and Howard Marshall, Barns of Missouri: Storehouses of History, (Virginia Beach: Donning Company Publishers, 2003.)

<sup>29</sup> William A. Radford, Radford's Practical Barn Plans, (Chicago: Radford Architectural Company, 1909) p. 176.

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There were also local examples of show barns that no doubt inspired both Link and his client. Howard Marshall's book on barns in Missouri, for example, includes photos of two elaborate St. Louis County barns that illustrate, as Marshall put it, "what an owner can do when money is no object."<sup>30</sup> Those barns, which were both built before the barn at St. Albans, are located in Ballwin and Chesterfield, which were at the time small towns in west St. Louis County. Both towns are located between downtown St. Louis and St. Albans, and it is likely that both Link and Johnson were familiar with them.

Mrs. Johnson continued to invest heavily in St. Albans Farms once the elaborate new barn was completed. Although she experimented with a variety of products and activities throughout the 1920s, none proved to be profitable, and the farm lost money for most of that decade.<sup>31</sup> She continued to buy land, however, and by the early 1930s the farm had reached its peak size of some 7,500 acres.

In 1931, she hired a new manager, Australian Richard D'Oily Hughes, to run the farm. In an effort to identify a way for the farm to actually make money, Hughes consulted experts in agriculture, including professors at the University of Missouri in Columbia. After some study, he decided that dairy farming held great promise for St. Albans Farms.<sup>32</sup> His decision proved to be quite sound; within a decade, milk from St. Albans Farms was in high demand.

Several of the existing farm buildings, including the stone horse barn, were converted to use as dairy facilities, and Johnson and D'Oily began buying Golden Guernsey dairy cows in 1932. The first shipment of milk, 47 quarts, went out in 1933, and production increased rapidly from that point on. By 1941, the farm was shipping up to 5,000 quarts a day, and the farm had over 650 head of Guernsey cattle. The stone barn housed more than 140 of those cows, and it was probably about that time that the tile silos were added to provide extra feed storage.

St. Albans Farms became the largest single supplier of milk to the St. Louis market, and its Golden Guernsey herd was the largest Guernsey herd in Missouri. In 1951, the state Guernsey Breeders Association recognized Irene Johnson's role in the development of the herd by awarding her a lifetime honorary membership in the association, which they described as "an honor reserved for a few who contribute materially to the Guernsey breed and promise in Missouri."<sup>33</sup> Irene Johnson was by that time retired; St. Albans Farms was incorporated in 1945, and ownership had passed along to her two sons, Oscar and James Lee Johnson.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Marshall, p. 125.

<sup>31</sup> Huger, p. 58.

<sup>32</sup> Hughes' own journal, quoted in Huger, p. 58.

<sup>33</sup> Guernsey Breeder's Journal, February, 1951, quoted in Huger, p. 63.

<sup>34</sup> Huger, p. 59.

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By 1952, the strain of maintaining such a large herd was being felt, especially since the crops raised on the farm for livestock feed were lost to floods almost every year for a full decade. The farm management made the decision to sell the dairy herd in the spring of 1952. The resulting auction, which was held at the stone barn, was the largest sale of a privately owned Guernsey herd ever held west of the Mississippi.<sup>35</sup> More than 800 people were served lunch on the day of the sale, and over 1,000 attended the auction.

The farm then switched to raising beef cattle, a function it retained into the late 1980s when the property was sold for redevelopment. The stone barn was used for beef cattle until the property was sold in 1988; and it has been little-used, and little-changed, since then. The roof is structurally unsound in several places, and the building is currently unsafe for any use.

The solid concrete and stone walls are quite sound, however, and the barn in general is highly intact. National Register designation will raise awareness of its historic value, and increase the chances that the distinctive building will be rehabilitated.

See Appendix below for a list of buildings attributed to Theodore C. Link.

**Figure Four.** Snapshot from the files of St. Albans Properties. A dairy cow in front of the stone barn.



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<sup>35</sup> Huger, p. 64.

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**Appendix: Buildings Attributed to Theodore C. Link (1850-1923)**

**From: Carloyn Toft and Lynn Josse. St. Louis; Landmarks and Historic Districts. St. Louis: Landmarks Association of St. Louis, 2002, the Theodore C. Link Vertical File, State Historical Society of Missouri, and other sources in the bibliography.**

Alton Public Library, Alton, IL  
Barnes Hospital, St. Louis  
Barr Branch Library, Lafayette Avenue, St. Louis, 1905  
Carleton Building, St. Louis (before 1903)  
Forest Park, Chief Engineer, 1874 (and later Superintendent of public parks)  
Gates of Westmoreland and Portland Places, St. Louis (ca. 1890)  
House at 1905 South Grand, St. Louis, 1888  
Johnson, Walter and Irene, House, 38 Portland Place, St. Louis (1905)  
Johnson, Walter and Irene, House, ("The Studio"), St. Albans, MO (between 1908 and 1918) (possibly with William or Wilbur Trueblood)  
Learning Center, 4504 Westminster Place, St. Louis (1908)  
Lindell Ave Church, w/ A.F. Rosenheim, St. Louis  
Link, Theodore and Annie, House, St. Albans, MO (1903, and 1905)  
Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA (1923)  
Madison County Courthouse (1899)  
Mines and Metallurgy Building, Worlds Fair, St. Louis (1904)  
Mississippi State Capitol, Jackson, MS (1900-1903)  
Monticello Seminary, Godfrey, Illinois  
Neidringhaus, Lee, House, 7104 Delmar Blvd., University City  
Robert, Johnson and Rand Shoe Company building, 1501-07 Washington Ave, St. Louis (1909)  
St. John's United Methodist Church, 500 Washington Blvd., St. Louis (1901) (Wilbur Trueblood did an addition in 1928)  
St. Marks Episcopal Church,  
Second Presbyterian Church Sanctuary, 4501 Westminster Place, St. Louis (1899)  
Tebbetts, Louis, B., House, 29 Portland Place (1891)  
Union Station, St. Louis, with Edward Cameron and John Willard Adams (1892-94)  
Wabash Station, St. Louis, Link and Rosenheim (1897)  
Wabash Terminal, Pittsburgh, PA (1904)  
Washington University, Medical Buildings, St. Louis  
House at 5900 West Cabanne Place, St. Louis, 1901

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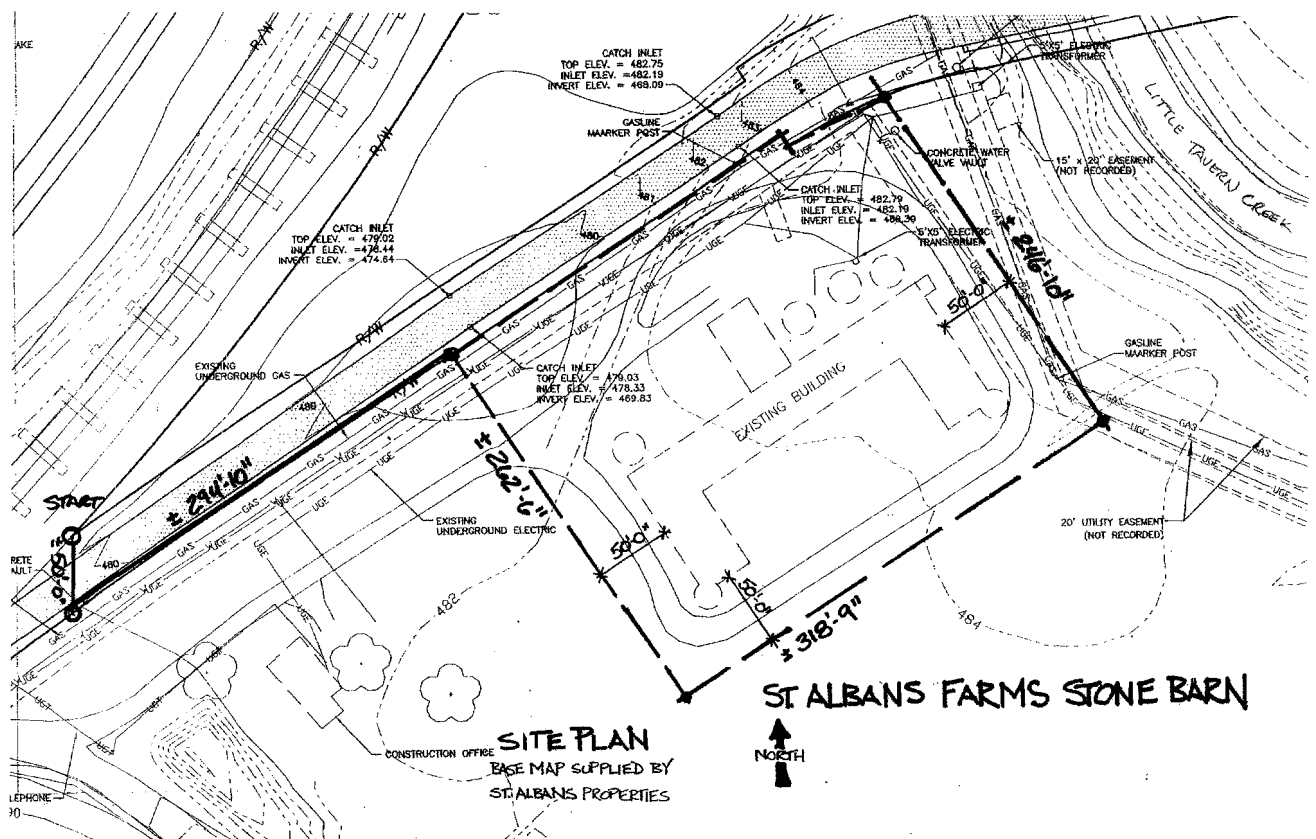
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### Site Plan and Boundary Map.





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**Photographs**

The following information is the same for all photographs:

St. Albans Farms Stone Barn  
3476 St. Albans Road, St. Albans  
Franklin County, MO  
Debbie Sheals, 29 South 9<sup>th</sup> St. Suite 204, Columbia, MO 65201  
August, 2005

**List of Photographs**

See photo key for description of camera angle.

1. South corner, looking to courtyard
2. South silo and southwest elevation.
3. Front (southeast) elevation.
4. East corner, long view.
5. Northeast elevation, from the south.
6. Northeast elevation, from the north.
7. Rear ell, from the northeast.
8. West corner, from the north.
9. Main entranceway, from the courtyard.
10. Front door and entryway.
11. Interior, looking east from near the entry.
12. Interior, looking west from the west drive door.
13. Interior, looking southeast down front ell.
14. Interior of south silo.
15. Interior, looking west from east drive door.
16. Interior, looking to the rear, from near the east front silo.

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Photo Key

