

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

1. Name of Property

historic name TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 1735-1741 Baltimore Avenue/1740 Main Street [N/A] not for publication

city or town Kansas City [N/A] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Jackson code 095 zip code 64107

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 [x]
nationally [] statewide [X] locally.

(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title  Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO

Date 9 Oct. 02

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

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

See continuation sheet [].

Signature of the Keeper

Date

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
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<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
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<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
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<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
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<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
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<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total
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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 Function

TRANSPORTATION: air-related
COMMERCE/TRADE: office building

Current Functions

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

INTERNATIONAL STYLE: Miesian

Materials

foundation concrete

walls steel

aluminum

roof synthetic

other glass

Narrative Description

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

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.

Areas of Significance

TRANSPORTATION

COMMERCE

Periods of Significance

1956-1969

Significant Dates

1956

Significant Person(s)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Bales, Raymond E., architect

Schechter, Morris, architect

Long Construction Company

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State Agency

☐ Federal Agency

☐ Local Government City Hall

☐ University

☒ Other:

Name of repository: Linda Hall Library

Kansas City Missouri Public Library

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

A. Zone Easting Northing
15 362990 4328300

B. Zone Easting Northing

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 Cydney E. Millstein

organization Architectural and Historical Research, LLC date May 20, 2002

street & number P.O. Box 22551 telephone 816.363.0567

city or town Kansas City state Missouri zip code 64113

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

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

Additional Items

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

Property Owner

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

name The Nicholson Group

street & number P.O. Box 10485 telephone 913-321-5550

city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64171

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building
Kansas City, Jackson County, MO

Section number 7 Page 1

Summary

The TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building, located in Kansas City's Midtown area, south of the central business district, was designed by Raymond E. Bales, Jr., and Morris Schechter, architects and built by the Long Construction Company, Kansas City. Executed in the Miesian style, the TWA Building is a three-story, "L"-shaped, curtain wall commercial facility dominated by aluminum panels and corrugated concrete paneling. It was constructed utilizing the Youtz-Slick method, where a pre-cast floor slab is lifted into place by jacking it up along the columns. Containing approximately 124,000 square feet, the TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building is sited on the northeast corner of 17th Street and Baltimore Avenue. The massive TWA Corporate Headquarters' fronts Baltimore Avenue and Main Streets and serves as an anchor to both thoroughfares. To the north, south and east are other early to mid-20th century brick and reinforced concrete commercial buildings.

In good condition, the TWA Building has retained the majority of its historic features to convey its significance. With the exception of the storefront level of the main façade and the first four bays of the east façade, the exterior of the building has seen very limited alteration over the years. Its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association has been retained.

Elaboration

Featuring the signature red and white corporate colors, the TWA building includes two floors at 18th and Main and 18th and Baltimore, and three floors at the 18th and Baltimore intersection. Modified recessed entrances are located at the east and west façades. An alley access to the parking level is located at the south façade. The exterior features aluminum spandrels, while continuous corrugated concrete paneling separates each floor and also forms the parapet. Continuous fenestration is aluminum framed.

It was reported in several local newspaper articles that the Youtz-Slick method of construction was used at the TWA building, where steel support beams were first erected. Then "concrete slabs were poured at ground level and lifted into place by hydraulic jacks. The slabs were then bolted and welded on to the beams." With this method, curtain walls could be constructed of lighter materials. This method, which featured 5,000 to 6,000 square-foot slabs, also allowed for a reduction in cost and construction time.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building
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Alterations to the TWA building include reinforcing floors (1961), entrance modification (1966) and the addition of a stucco wall surface (1981), recently removed by the current owner, as part of the rehabilitation process. A 35-foot red and white rocket, 6-feet in diameter, was originally installed at the southwest rooftop corner of the building. This artifact has been located and will be reinstalled at its original location.

Each floor of the TWA Building remains open with exposed reinforced concrete columns with mushroom capitals.

Currently, there are proposed plans for the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the TWA Building. Future plans include rehabilitation of the exterior and interior spaces. Plans for the project will be prepared in accordance with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. Once the proposed plans are completed, they will be submitted to the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service for review and compliance.

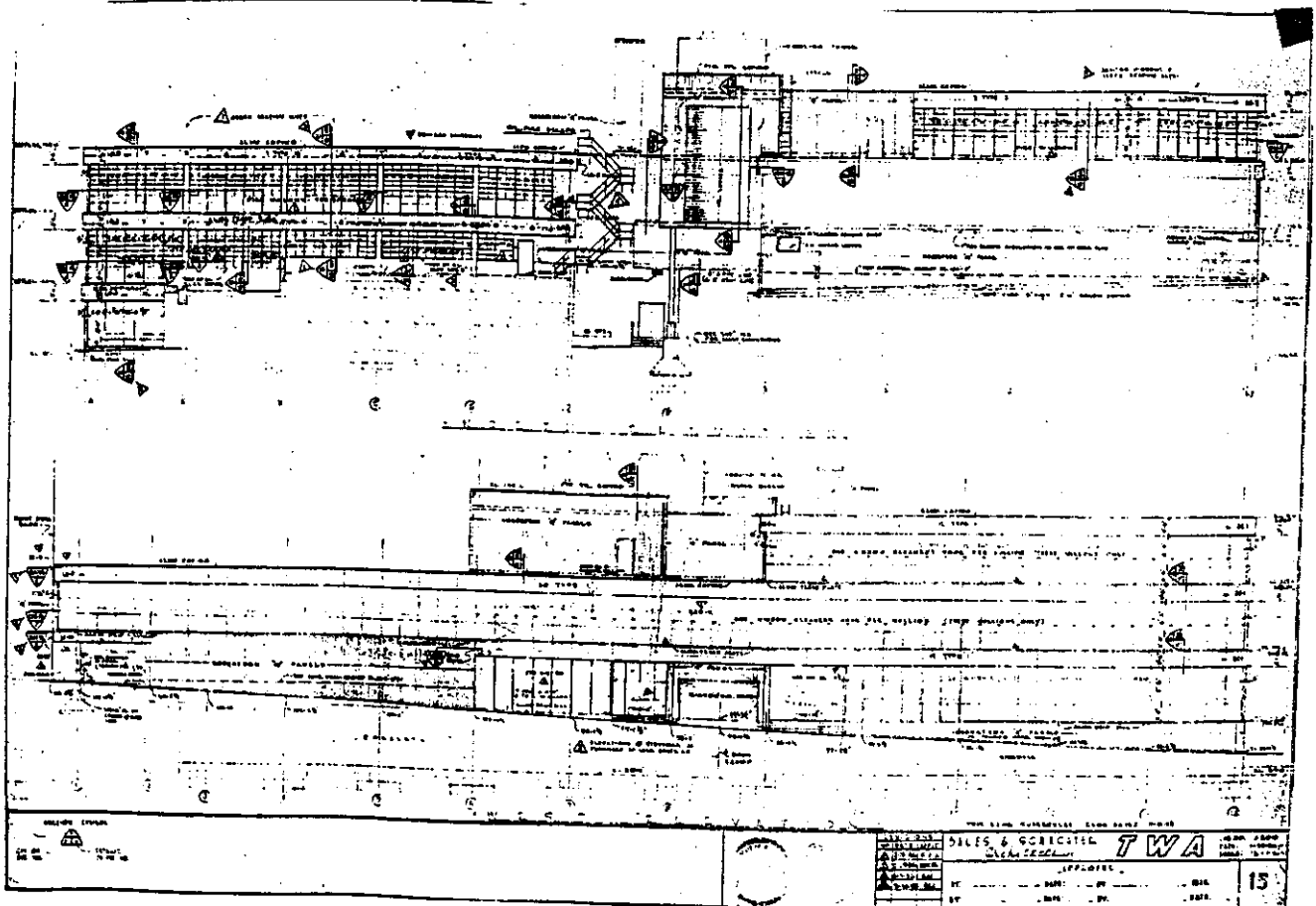
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building
Kansas City, Jackson County, MO

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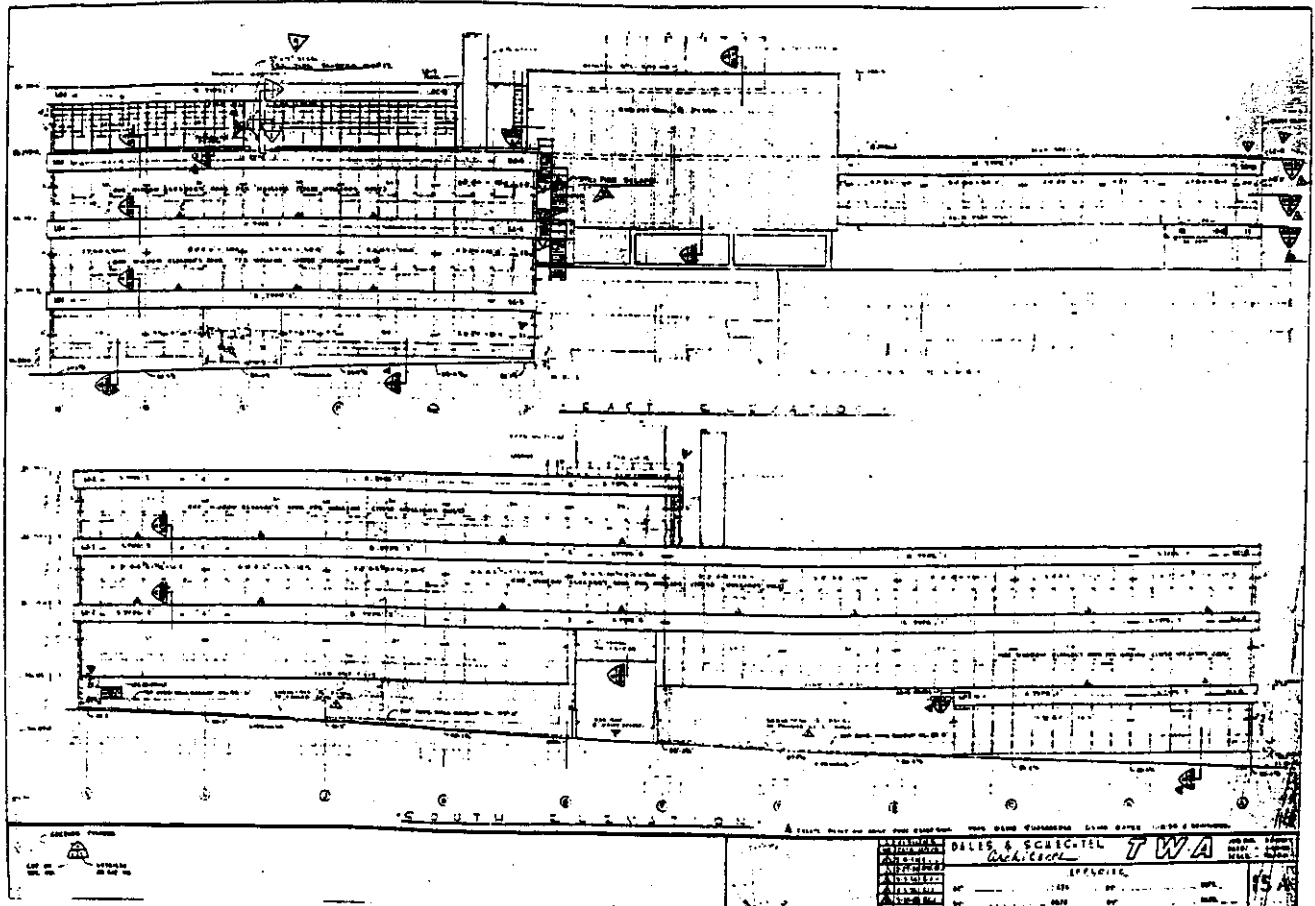
North and West Elevations



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEETTWA Corporate Headquarters' Building
Kansas City, Jackson County, MO

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East and South Elevations

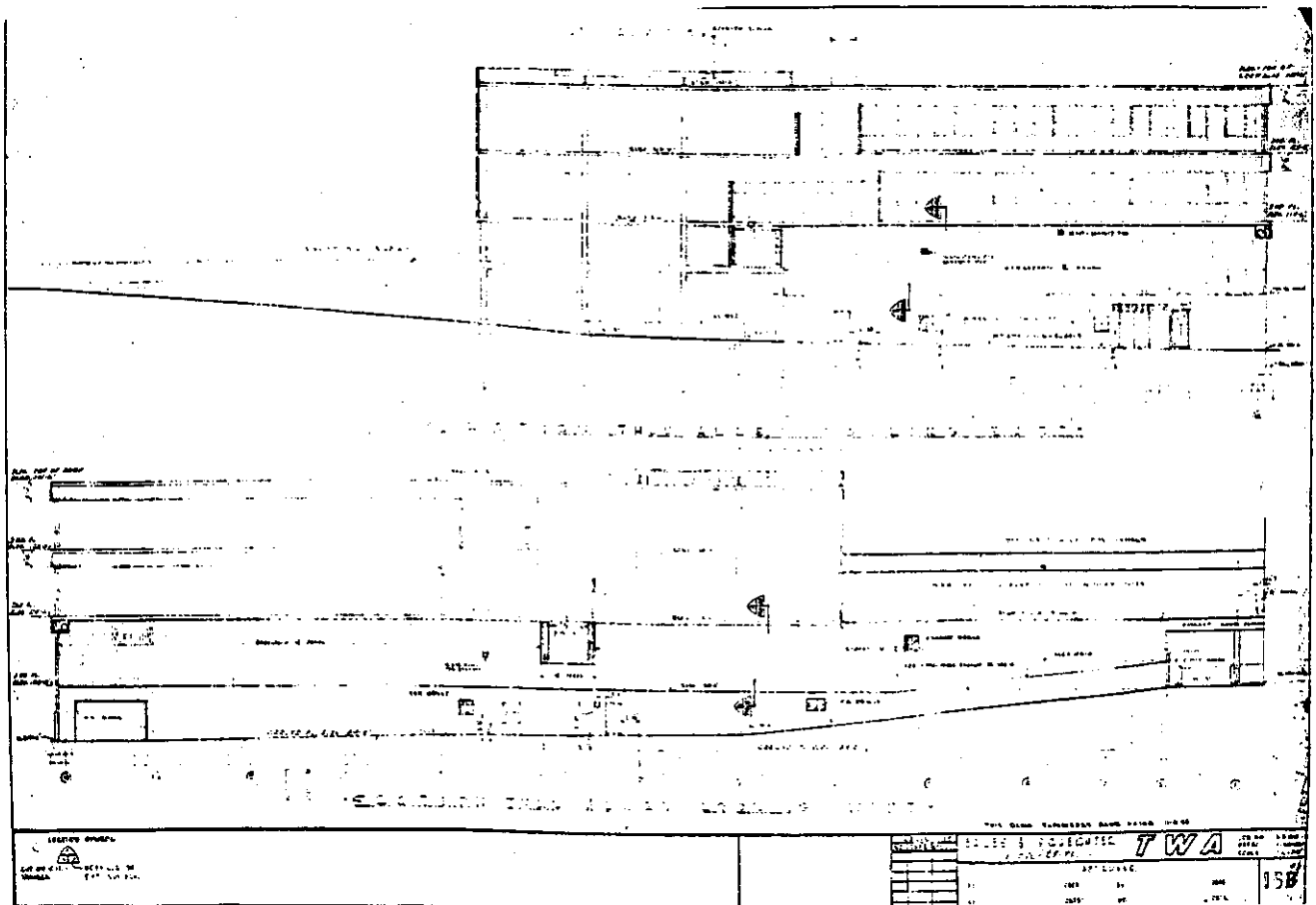


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TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building
Kansas City, Jackson County, MO

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Section Through Alley Looking East
Section Through Alley Looking West



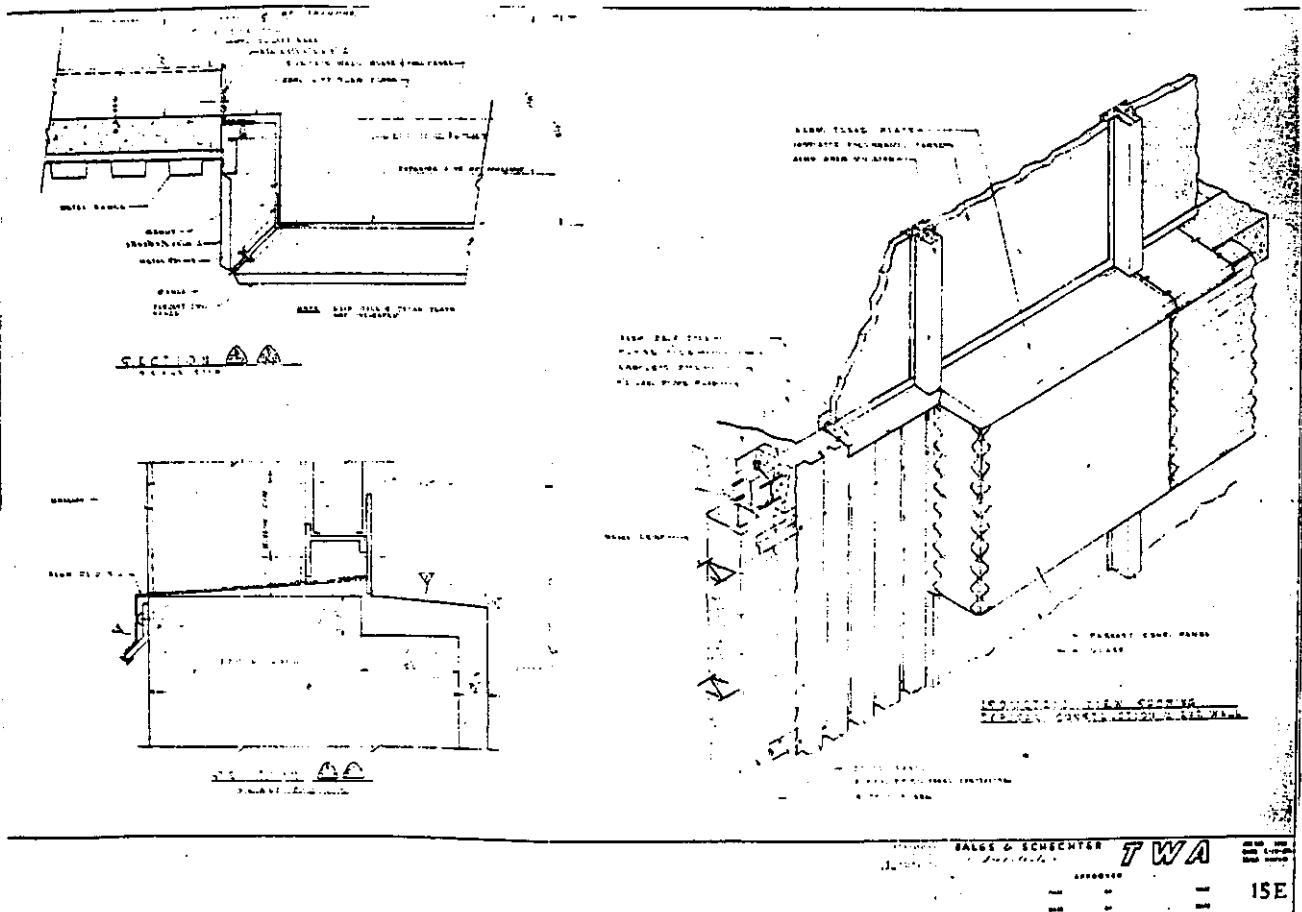
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building
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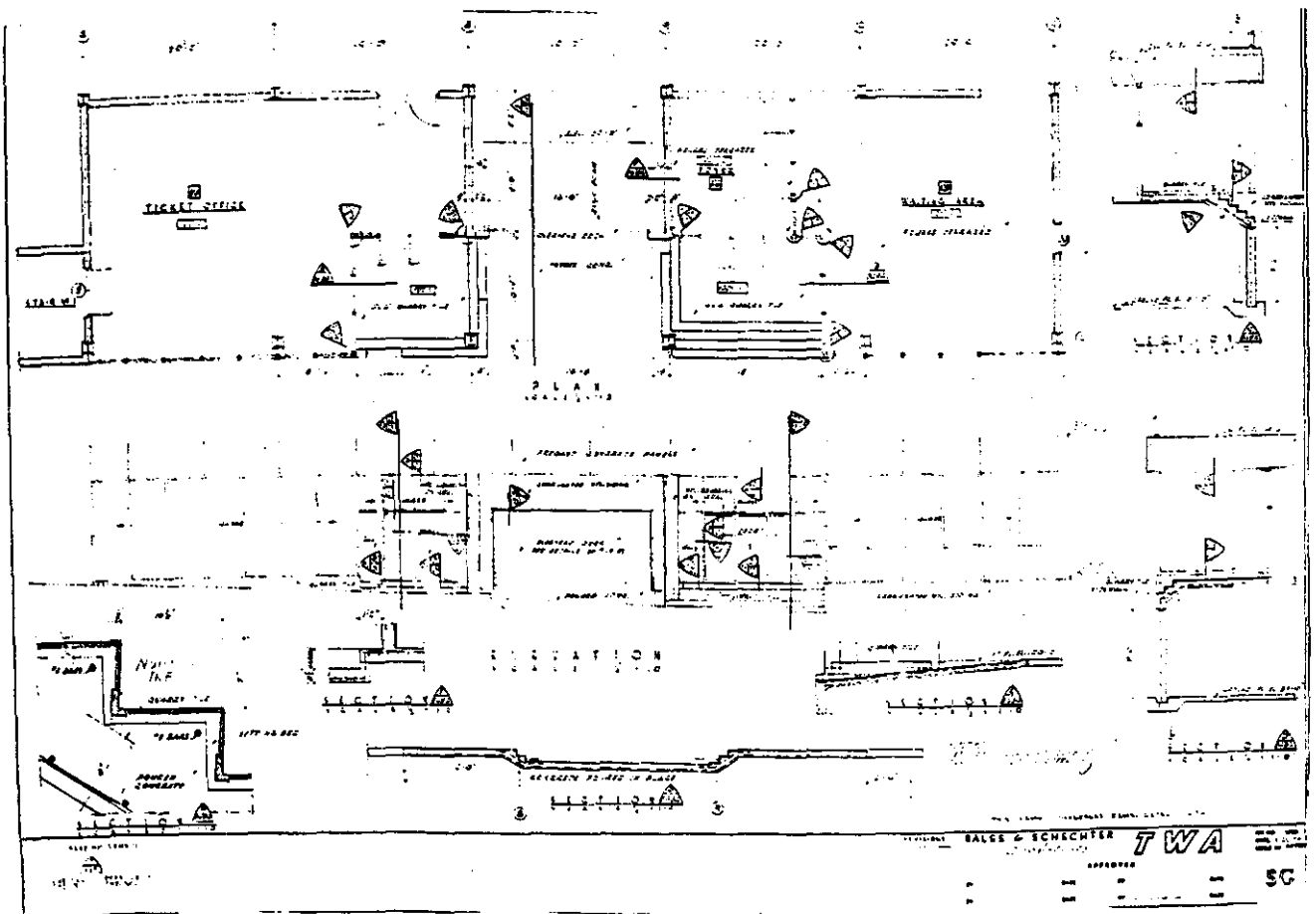
Isometric View Showing Typical Construction and Exterior Wall



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Kansas City, Jackson County, MO

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Details of Precast Concrete Panels



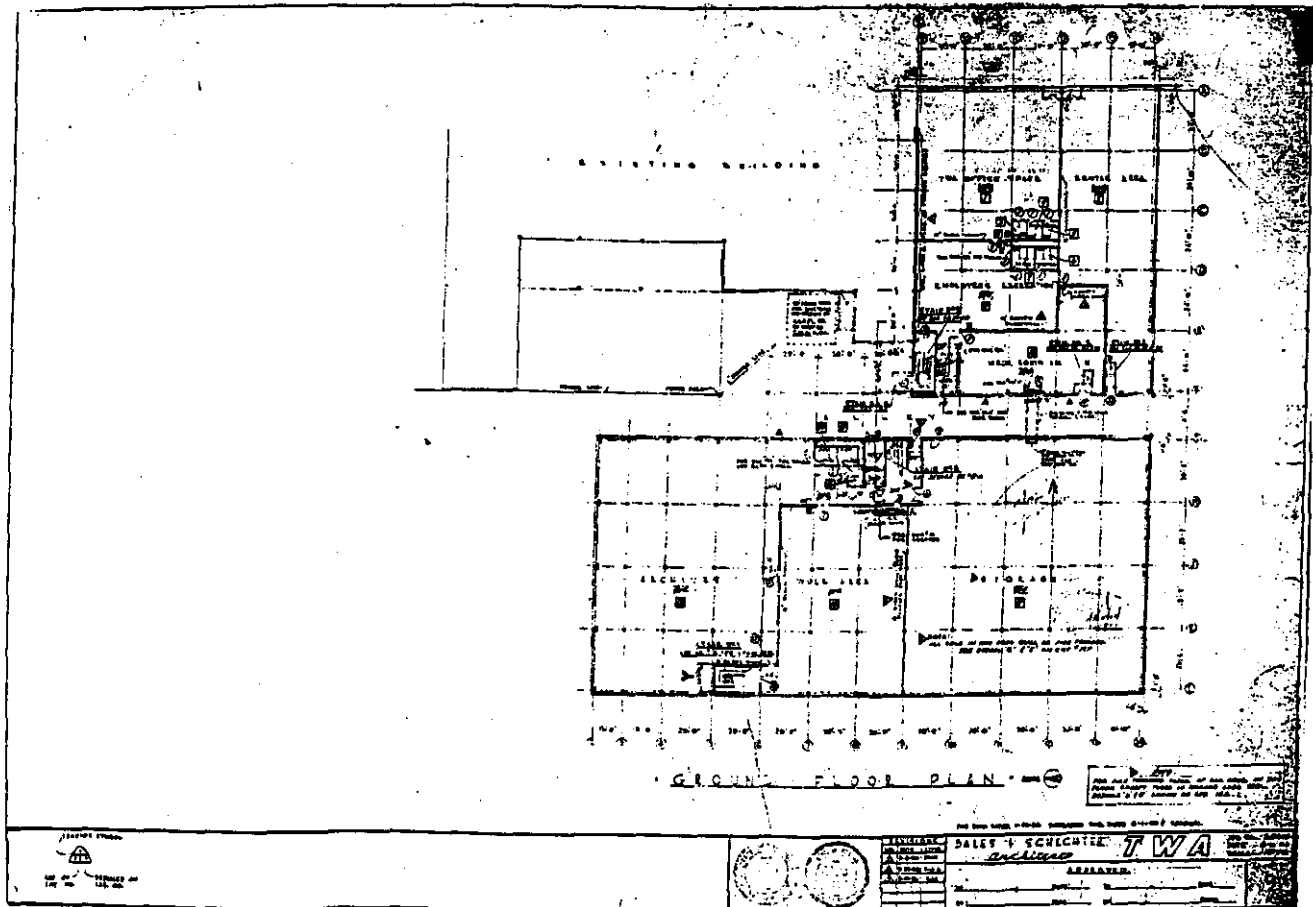
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TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building
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Ground Floor Plan



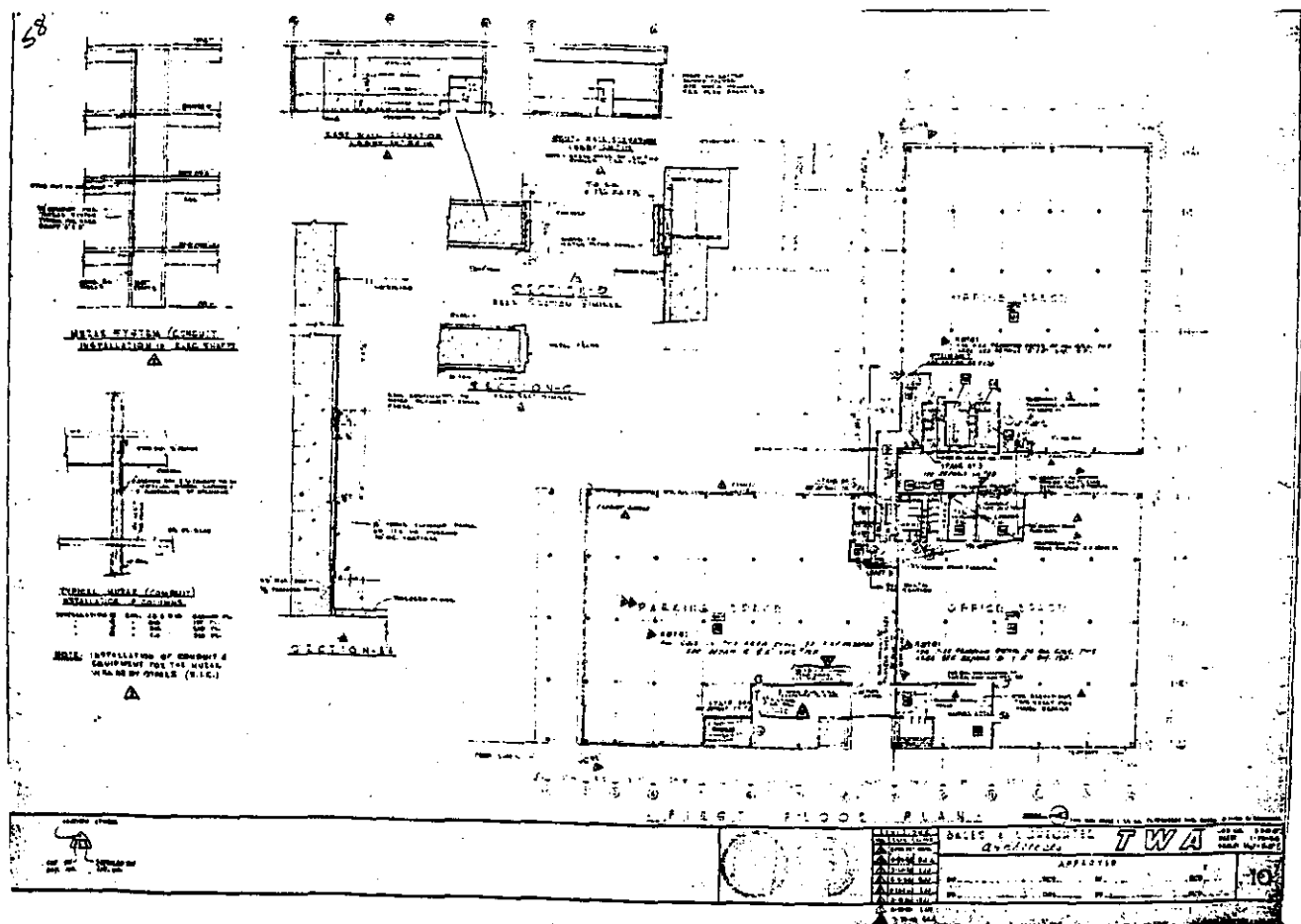
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

**TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building
Kansas City, Jackson County, MO**

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First Floor Plan



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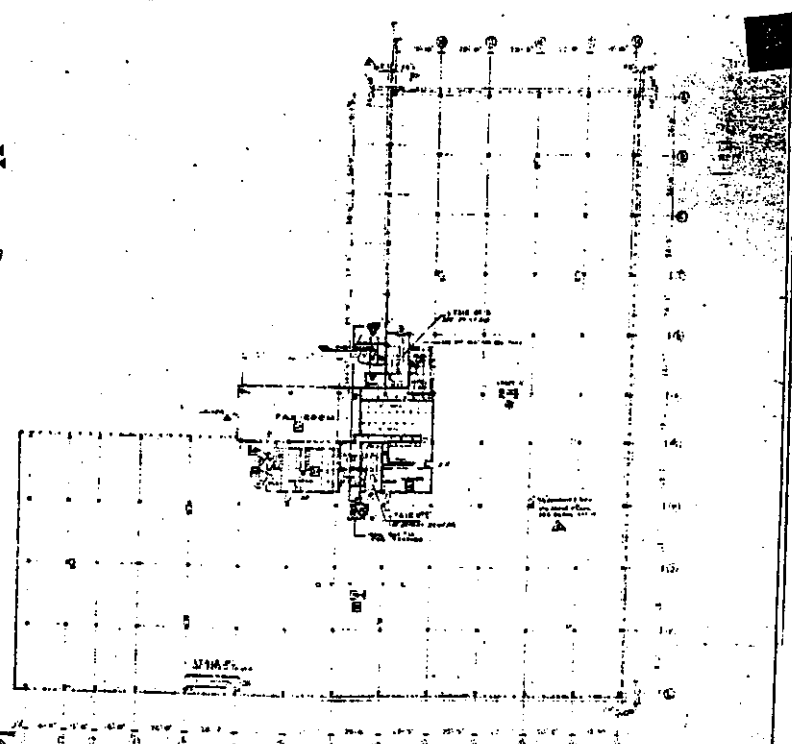
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building
Kansas City, Jackson County, MO

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Second Floor Plan

ROOM	FINISH	SCHEDULE
101	WOOD	WOOD
102	WOOD	WOOD
103	WOOD	WOOD
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SECTION 7

DATE: 1980-10-10

BY: [Signature]

FOR: [Signature]

REVISIONS:

NO.	DESCRIPTION	DATE
1	ADD ROOM 101	1980-10-10
2	ADD ROOM 102	1980-10-10
3	ADD ROOM 103	1980-10-10
4	ADD ROOM 104	1980-10-10
5	ADD ROOM 105	1980-10-10
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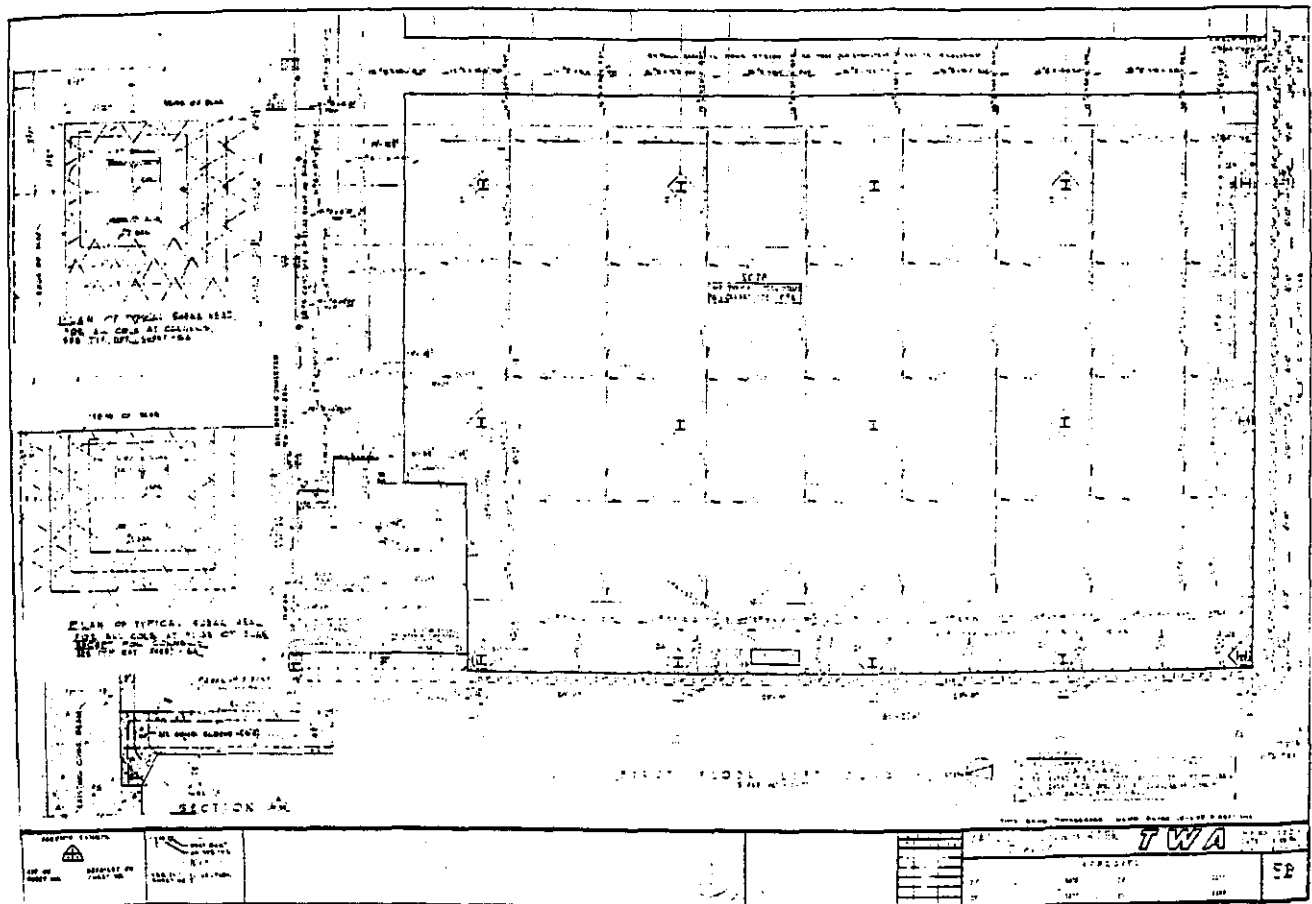
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building
Kansas City, Jackson County, MO

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First Floor Lift Slab Plan (Baltimore Avenue)



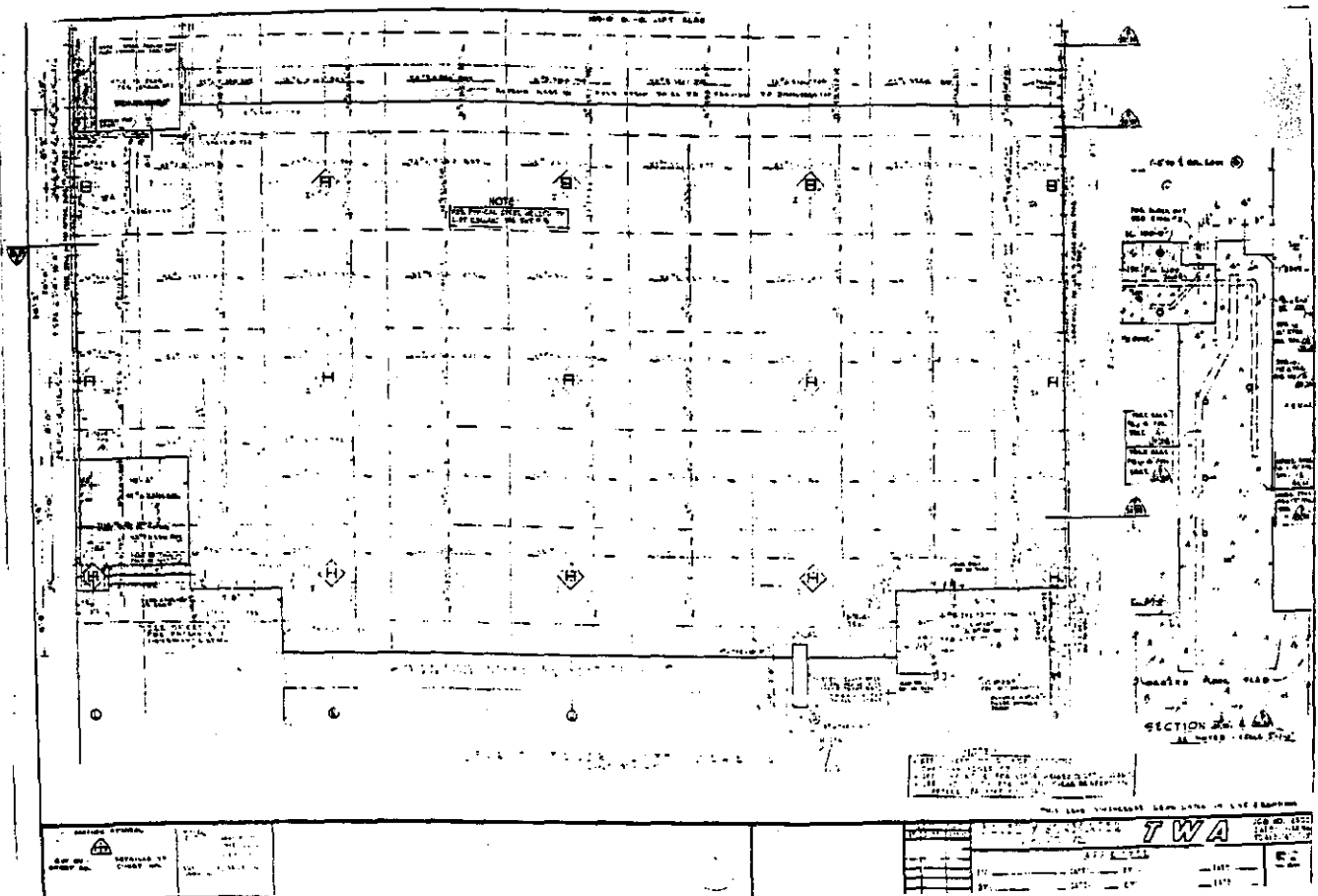
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TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building
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First Floor Lift Slab Plan (Main Street)



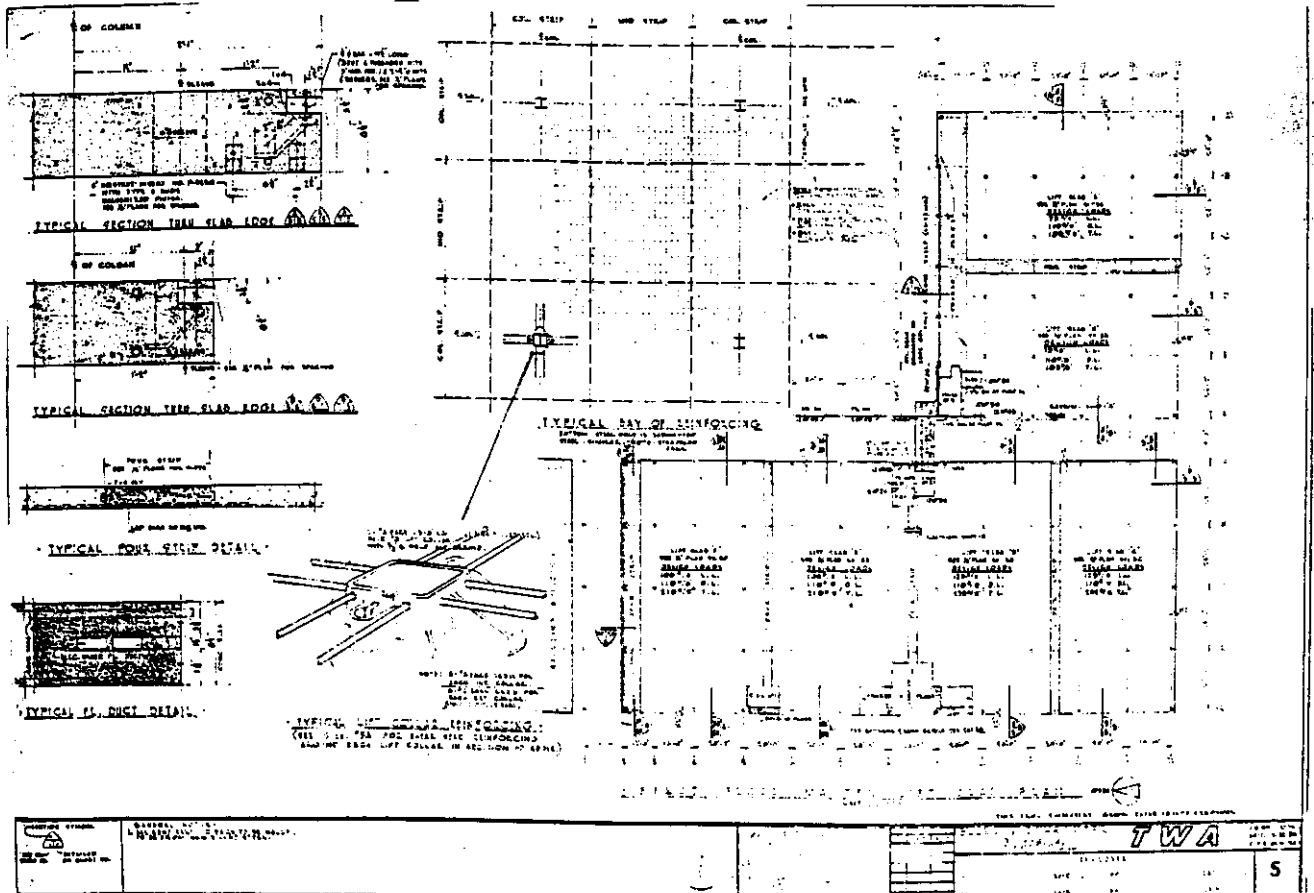
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TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building
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First Floor Master Lift Slab Plan



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TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building
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The TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building, c. 1960
Source: Wilborn & Associates, Kansas City, MO



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TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building
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Summary

The TWA Headquarters' Building, located at 1735-1741 Baltimore Avenue/1740 Main Street, Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and Criterion consideration G and is significant in the following area: TRANSPORTATION. This landmark commercial facility, built in 1955-1956, was the first consolidation of Trans World Airline's national/international corporate headquarters for TWA in Kansas City, Missouri. Prior to moving into this modern facility, TWA was housed in several buildings throughout the metropolitan area. It was during the occupation of this building that TWA experienced the transition from propeller to jet aircraft. At this location, all accounting, sales, advertising and marketing activities took place. In 1967, TWA became the first airline to offer all-jet service on both domestic and international routes. COMMERCE. During the later half of the 1950s, TWA's consolidation of their company into the new building at 1735 Baltimore greatly contributed to the overall economic climate of Kansas City. The period of significance is 1956 through 1969, the end date established when TWA moved from this location.

Elaboration

Trans World Airlines (TWA) began when four separate airlines, flying four separate mail routes, merged on October 25, 1930. During the late 1920s, the four airlines were part of the growing number of companies that entered into the shipping business by establishing airmail delivery services. In 1926, Western Airlines was launched with mail routes from Los Angeles, California to Salt Lake City, Utah.¹ The same year, Standard Airlines was routing mail shipments from Los Angeles to Tucson, Arizona. In 1927 Maddux Airlines began flying a regular route between Los Angeles and Tijuana, Mexico. Transcontinental Air Transport (TAT) began flying mail routes coast-to-coast in 1928. On October 25, 1930, all four airlines merged under Transcontinental and Western Airlines (TWA).²

¹ Western Air Express "took advantage of the Kelly Act of 1924, which authorized letting airmail contracts by bid and which represented the 'first practical recognition of commercial aviation and air transportation.'

" See Sherry L. Schirmer and Richard D. McKinzie, *At The River's Bend* (Woodland Hills, California: Windsor Publications, Inc, 1982), 350.

² TWA, *People and Progress: The Story of TWA* (Kansas City: Trans World Airlines, n.d.), n.p. Vertical Files. Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City Missouri. This document was not paginated.

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TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building
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Although TWA can trace its beginnings to an airmail shipping service, by 1929 they began to enter the commercial passenger market. The first flight of its kind took place on July 8, 1929, with Charles A. Lindbergh as the pilot. The flight began in Los Angeles and finished in New York with a stopover in Kansas City, Missouri. At this time in flight history, technology had not yet been developed to accommodate the ability to navigate an airplane after dark. This first flight on the company's Ford Tri Motor planes took thirty-six hours one way, at a cost of \$200 per person.³

TAT and Kansas City began a partnership during the opening dedication ceremonies for the Kansas City Downtown Municipal Airport on August 17, 1927. The first plane to arrive was a passenger plane carrying a delegation of local politicians as well as Federal representatives from the Commerce Department in charge of aeronautics. The second plane transported a shipment of mail. The pilot was Charles Lindbergh.⁴ Lindbergh, as "head of a committee to select a site for Transcontinental Air Transport (TAT) headquarters," was instrumental in helping Kansas City become the first home of TWA.⁵

Within a year, TWA executives in New York decided to base operations in centrally located Kansas City, thus marking the dawn of a company soon to become known as the "Airman's Airline." Unfortunately, a tragic crash in 1931 of a TWA Fokker, shortly after take off from Kansas City, "staggered the fledgling company." But in the end, this misfortune created the "revolutionary air transport, the DC-1 and its enormously successful offspring."⁶

In 1932 TWA contributed to one of the largest expansions to take place at the Kansas City Municipal Airport with the construction of their national headquarters. The building was financed by a city wide bond issue, further illustrating TWA's importance to both aviation history and the present and future economic growth of Kansas City. A Modification Center was also located at the downtown airport until a new overhaul facility was built by TWA in Fairfax in the latter part of 1945.⁷

³ *Ibid.*, n.p.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ George R. Bauer, *A Century Of Kansas City Aviation History: The Dreamers And The Doers* (Kansas City: Historic Preservation Press, 1999), 121.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ "A New TWA Building," *Kansas City Star*, 5 May 1955.

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TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building
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Later, under the direction of Howard Hughes, "an expert pilot and engineer who became principal stockholder in 1939, TWA made great strides."⁸ The airlines corporate headquarters had been located in Kansas City beginning in 1939 and subsequently became an important terminal and maintenance facility. It was during Hughes' early affiliation with the airline that the Boeing 303 Stratoliner, the first four engine pressurized air transport, was developed.⁹

When TWA began using the pressurized cabin plane, the Stratoliner, for domestic service in 1940, they were the first to do so. This plane allowed TWA to cut fourteen hours from cross-country flights because of its ability to fly above the inclement weather. Also during the 1940s, TWA began using the four engine "Connie" which could travel at 300 miles per hour for long distance non-stop flights. The Connie opened the market to faster international travel for TWA and in 1946 the first transoceanic commercial flights began. Subsequently, it was time to change TWA's name for the last time. In 1950 Transcontinental and Western Airlines officially became Trans World Airlines to reflect the newly evolving international scope of the company.¹⁰

The heart of any business can be found in the men and women that keep the company moving progressively forward. In 1954, prior to construction of the building at 1735 Baltimore, TWA employed 5,094 people within the Greater Kansas City metro region. It was also the beginning of "banner earning" years at TWA according to Carter L. Burgess, the company's president.

As to passenger service, TWA was the first airline to offer "domestic multi-service transports." September 25, 1955 was the first time that a domestic flight served both first class and tourist class. Twenty Lockheed 1049Gs were converted to dual-class service. On order and soon-to-be-delivered were twenty-four new 1649 Super Connies with a new, more accommodating seating arrangement already in place. The ratio of passenger traffic in 1955 for tourist class was estimated at 60%. An \$80 tourist class fare on a non-stop transcontinental flight was offered at the time to generate sales and increase

⁸ Schirmer and McKinzie, *At The River's Bend*, 350.

⁹ In January 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt traveled on a TWA Stratoliner to the summit meeting at Teheran with Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin. According to *At the River's Bend*, "These contributions to the war effort sparked TWA's commitment to international aviation and led to its application in June 1944, for authority to provide around the world air service."

¹⁰ TWA, *People and Progress*, n.p. Howard Hughes had decided to change the name of the airline sometime around 1945, but the official change did not occur until March 1950 when the trademark was filed.

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passenger volume. Tourist class traffic in 1949 totaled 56,622; in 1954, TWA served 1,071,237 tourist class passengers.¹¹

By 1957, the year that 1735 Baltimore was completed, 6,400 Kansas Citians were employed by TWA. Capital investments also increased during the same period, from \$10 million to \$52 million, while traffic grew from 97 flights to 127 flights daily, a 30.9% gain in sales. These figures, tracked by the accounting division, were then handed to advertising for their expert application of media blitzing. Both of these divisions, along with the credit department, were housed at 1735 Baltimore.

Unfortunately, the events in Fairfax and later the construction of the new overhaul base and the new airport in Platte County during the 1960s served to overshadow the business developments that took place at 1735 Baltimore. In 1954, TWA was overhauling five engines daily at the Municipal airport. Three years later the number had grown to twelve in the effort to maintain a fleet of 170 airplanes then owned by TWA. More planes were on order to handle the influx of travelers that rose from 3.5 million in 1954 to over 5 million in 1957. The action taking place at the Fairfax overhaul base, the downtown airport and the new airport that was completed in 1972 were far more worthy of media attention when it came to shareholder profitability.¹²

Kansas City and the Jet Age: TWA Moves to 1735 Baltimore Avenue

Over the course of the next two decades, the success and notoriety of TWA was unparalleled and subsequently, this prosperity directly benefited Kansas City. "When TWA people were making lots of money, the enthusiasm in the community absolutely blossomed," said Max Norman, a former Kansas City, Missouri, Chamber of Commerce executive. "You look at the history of this community. It looks awfully like the history of TWA."¹³ This period of rapid success and unparalleled advancement in airline travel occurred when TWA's Corporate Headquarters was located at 1735 Baltimore Avenue.

During the years that TWA operated their administrative offices at 1735 Baltimore, the "Jet Age" arrived and brought new opportunities for TWA as they established many jet-age firsts. The transition of TWA into the jet age occurred in 1959,

¹¹ Gordon Conley, "TWA Hopes to Double Tourist Volume," *Aviation Week* September 5, 1955, 97-8.

¹² Carter Burgess, *Kansas City Missouri and TWA* (Kansas City: TWA, 1957), n.p. Vertical Files, Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City Missouri. This document was not paginated.

¹³ Julius A. Karash and Rick Montgomery, *TWA Kansas City's Hometown Airline* (Kansas City: Kansas City Star Books, 2001),

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three years after the construction of the company's first new office building at 1735 Baltimore. TWA added Boeing 707 service from San Francisco to New York and then a non-stop flight from Los Angeles to London was established. This development launched TWA into the European market for the first time in aviation history as a completely owned United States Corporation.

On March 20, 1959, the first TWA jet left San Francisco for New York. By October 29, 1961, they became the first all-jet passenger fleet operating across the Atlantic Ocean.¹⁴ "This is another step forward in Trans World Airlines programs to stabilize their operations in Greater Kansas City," according to George H Clay, then vice president and secretary of TWA.¹⁵ Finally, in 1967, TWA became "the first airline to offer all-jet service on both domestic and international routes," This major development was a boon for Kansas City and its economy.¹⁶

Other firsts for TWA during the occupancy of the building at 1735 Baltimore include: introducing in-flight movies on both international flights in 1961 and long range domestic flights in 1963; pioneering the Doppler airborne navigation system in 1962; introducing the first domestic all-cargo jet service in the United States in 1962 and extending cargo service to Europe in 1963.¹⁷ It is important to note that the main TWA Cargo offices were located in the Baltimore building.¹⁸

With 30,000 miles of world routes, Kansas City remained the center of the airline's activities. In addition to its large overall and maintenance base, the airline's operation department, its communication and reservations system and its purchasing, accounting and treasury departments were based in Kansas City. Kansas City was also home base for a large percentage of flying personnel including hostesses, pilots, co-pilots and flight engineers.

By 1964 TWA's growth as an international figure in aviation prompted the company to move the executive offices to New York. However, the central location of TWA's main overhaul base and the large number of employees based in Missouri,

¹⁴ TWA, "The Jet Age," *People and Progress*. n.p.

¹⁵ "A New TWA Building," *The Kansas City Times*, 5 May 1955, n.p.

¹⁶ TWA, along with Pan American and American Airlines, was one of the first major commercial passenger systems to invest in jet travel.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* This development stems directly from Howard Hughes connection to Hollywood and his competitive spirit. His influence on TWA was focused on innovative standards that reached further than the competitors. Hughes intention was always to be first, then bigger and better.

¹⁸ *Polk's Kansas City Directory* (Kansas City: Polk Publishing, 1966), n.p.

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allowed the company to continue operating the accounting and other support staff in Kansas City. The Baltimore building remained headquarters for the TWA accounting department, ticket office, the credit department and the cargo offices until 1969. Thereafter, the space remained vacant until 1975 at which time the Bureau of Hearings and Appeals Regional Development Center took occupancy.¹⁹

An Overview of the Development of TWA's New Headquarters: Unique Construction of 1735 Baltimore Avenue

Constructed on the site of the former Muehlebach Brewery on 18th Street between Main and Baltimore, the TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building was hailed as one of the largest commercial buildings to be erected in decades in Kansas City. Costing over \$1.5 million, the modern curtain-wall and reinforced concrete building originally housed the company's accounting, secretarial, district sales, regional public relations, advertising and archives. Original plans for the building included roof accommodations for helicopter landings.

The move to the modern building consolidated four downtown offices for TWA. At one point in its history, TWA occupied over eighteen buildings scattered about the metropolitan area. In October 1954, TWA announced plans to construct a multi-story building at 11th and Wyandotte streets, but failure to start on schedule cancelled the project.

Designed by Raymond Bales, Jr., and Morris Schechter and constructed by Long Construction Company, the 124,000 square foot building was the project of the Baltimore Realty Company, who sold it to the Kansas City Life Insurance Company. TWA subsequently leased the facility for fifteen years with options for two additional five-year periods. The Baltimore Realty Company built the modern Mesian style building originally on speculation. TWA entered into the agreement with the Kansas City Life Insurance Company shortly after the foundation for the new facility was underway.

Clearing and excavation of the site began in May 1955; structural steel was erected by November 1955. The 124,000 square foot, multi-level structure was built by a construction process called Youtz-Slick, developed by a New York Architect and a Texas oilman, and utilized then by a licensee, the Skyhook Life Slab Corporation. Skyhook was

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

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named as a subcontractor operating under the Long Construction Company, general contractor of the project,"²⁰

The construction of the new TWA building appeared as an anomaly for the general public. "For the next five weeks, onlookers [were] treated to the spectacle of immense chunks of concrete weighing upwards of 270 tons each slowly rising on steel H-beams."²¹ First the various slab sections were poured at ground level. A thin compound with a silica base then separated the different slabs. As the individual slabs were raised, the compound allowed them to be parted without bits of concrete clinging. Hydraulic jacks (operated by special hydraulic oil) were then attached to the tops of the H-beam columns. When slabs were in place, the castings were welded to the columns.²²

On October 31, 1956, construction was finished. The new Trans World Airlines Corporate Headquarters' Building was dedicated in a ceremony with an international and futuristic flare in which representatives of both Egypt and Israel attended. "The airline was praised for its part in the economy of Kansas City and worldwide air transportation."²³

TWA From 1959 Through The 1970s

By the time construction of the new headquarters' building was completed, the company was transitioning itself into an era of internationalism and beginning to distance itself somewhat from the "Airman's Airline" mentality. In other words, separating itself from Howard Hughes. Multi-million dollar loans obtained after Hughes agreed to place his control of Trans World Airlines in trusteeship, assured the company of a fleet of jet planes that would permit the airline to compete favorably with other lines.

On August 2, 1959, a ceremony at the Municipal Terminal celebrated the arrival of jet transportation in Kansas City. "One hundred eleven paying passengers, the first ever to depart from the municipal air terminal in a pure jet airliner, flew to Los Angeles last

²⁰ "Whole Concrete Floors Rise in Unusual Construction," *The Kansas City Times*, 8 April 1956, n.p. The Youtz-Slick lift-slab method was further developed by the Institute of Inventive Research and Southwest Research Institute, San Antonio.

²¹ *Ibid.* See also Tip Brown, "Operation Skyhook: Kansas City Building Slab Lifted by Bootstraps," *Construction Methods and Equipment* 34 (April 1952), 50. The Stern-Slegman-Prins Company Building was the first property in Kansas City constructed by the Youtz-Slick method.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ "TWA Shift is on," *The Kansas City Star*, 28 July 1956, n.p.

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night in a Trans World Airlines Boeing 707.”²⁴ At the ceremony, with some three thousand people in attendance, former chamber of commerce aviation chairman addressed the crowd, telling them that aviation had surpassed the optimistic vision had for it in the early days. “My prediction today is that before long, even this fine terminal building will be insufficient to handle the volumes of air travelers.”²⁵

In 1960, a new executive team was announced. Charles C. Tillinghast, Jr., was named as president, and Ernest Breech as board chairman. Their policy was vigorously expansionist. “Although I am new to the air transport business, I have had an opportunity to observe TWA closely through Bendix connections, and regard it as one of the most technically sound airlines in the country,” Tillinghast said.²⁶

“Shortly after assuming control, they ordered 30 new jets, costing \$187,000 and invited talks with insurance companies for new long term financing.”²⁷ This opened a new era for TWA, one in which Hughes’ influence has not been felt in every major decision. In accepting the post, Tillinghast also said “TWA did one of the best jobs in the industry in integrating jet services.”²⁸

Of the thirty planes purchased by TWA under Tillinghast, TWA owned twenty-six outright, and all were delivered by late fall of 1962. Four planes that TWA leased from Boeing were in the airline’s fleet by September of 1961.”²⁹ The most modern type of turbofan engine powered all of the planes.

These thirty aircraft, combined with the forty-seven TWA already had or about to receive, gave the airline more 4-engine jets on hand and on order than any other U. S. carrier.”³⁰ With the advanced engines, the planes had tremendous range advantages over jets with standard turbojet engines. The turbofan produced more thrust, consumed less fuel and provided the plane with better take-off and climb performances.

TWA, under Tillinghasts’ command would snap out of fickle cycles of success to post its best years ever. “By the 1970’s, the airline would pump more than 200 million

²⁴ “Air Age Mark in Jet Flight,” *The Kansas City Times*, 2 August 1959, n.p.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ “Tillinghast Named to TWA Helm,” *The Kansas City Times*, 27 March 1960, n.p.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ “TWA to Purchase 26 Jets,” *The Kansas City Star* 1 May 1966, n.p.

³⁰ “20 New Jets For TWA,” *The Kansas City Star* 7 June 1966, n.p.

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yearly into the Kansas City Economy.”³¹ Tillinghast presided over seven straight years of profit and saw the airlines worldwide payroll triple.

The building at 1725 Baltimore stands as a symbol of the advancements and contributions to the airline industry that TWA made during their presence in Kansas City. From 1929 when TAT first arrived in Kansas City, through the advancement in air travel time when TWA introduced the Stratoliners, to the expansion of an all jet fleet operating across the Atlantic in 1959, TWA continued to be Kansas City's hometown airline. While the Connie Museum at Municipal Airport holds the history of TWA signature aircraft, 1725 Baltimore stands as a legacy to the men and women of Kansas City that ran the support system during TWA's greatest decade of growth.

TWA and the Development of Aeronautics: 1930s through 1964

The history of TWA is based in its innovative approach to the development of aeronautics into the beginning of the Jet-Age in the late 1950s. In 1932 Jack Frye, Vice President of Transcontinental and Western Air Inc., Kansas City, attempted to purchase the Boeing Model 247 which was a fast, long distance completely modernized aircraft. Boeing was already working for United Airlines to complete an order for sixty of the 247s. Frye, competitive as he was, sent a letter to several aircraft manufacturers including Donald W. Douglas, Sr., at Douglas Aircraft Company in Santa Monica, California. The letter asked if Douglas would have any interest in building a tri-motored transport plane to TWA specifications. The Douglas' DC-2, the finished product born out of the DC-1 prototype, was put into service by TWA during the summer of 1934. Its performance and design surpassed the Boeing 247.³²

A specialty of TWA during the 1930s was in research of high speed and high altitude flight. Tommy Tomlinson, TWA, along with Lockheed, worked tirelessly to develop high-speed aircraft. Tomlinson's research would evolve into the development of the Boeing 307 Stratoliner, which TWA introduced in July 1940. This pressurized cabin allowed the plane to fly at 14,000-feet. Much of the research developed by men like Tomlinson was used by the United States military as the U.S. entered World War II. Of the ten Stratoliners built, seven were owned by TWA. When war broke out, TWA sold

³¹ Karash and Montgomery. *TW - Kansas City's Hometown Airline*.

³² Douglas J. Ingells, *The Plane That Changed the World: A Biography of the DC-3* (Fallbrook, California: Aero Publishers, Inc., 1966), 9-19.

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five of the 307 Stratoliners that went into immediate military service.³³ It was during World War II that the idea of jet aircraft was first conceived.³⁴

Before the jet engine was fully developed for commercial use, the piston engine dominated the aircraft industry of the 1940s and 1950s. The propeller-turbine engine aircraft of the 1950s offered an alternative to the piston driven engines: they were smoother, quieter, and were vibration free. However, they never reached the speeds that were promised by the jet-engines and were no more cost-effective than the piston engine. TWA never embraced the propeller-turbine engine, but instead developed the turbo-compounded engine with the Lockheed 1649A Super Constellation. These planes were often called "Jetstream" engines, which left passengers in the later half of the 1950s believing that they had flown on their first jet flight.³⁵

During the 1950s, airplane design grew longer and wider to accommodate more passengers. Routes also were extended during the 1950s, and planes were flying greater distances. Speed had become an important factor in ticket sales as well as volume. Larger and faster aircraft became a requirement in what was becoming a highly competitive industry.³⁶

The Comet 1 was the first true jet engine aircraft built by de Havilland, a British owned corporation. It sparked the world's first interest in achieving flight speeds in excess of 500 mph when it flew the first jet engine prototype on July 27, 1949. Disaster struck in 1954 when just months apart, two Comet 1 aircraft burst in flight. Metal fatigue was found to be the cause. Although a disaster, the world had gotten a taste for high speed flight and there was no turning back.³⁷

Analysts have determined three primary reasons for the early sweep of the jet age. First there was a surplus of aeronautic engineers that had entered into the civilian job market following World War II. Secondly, the economy was on an upsurge and manufacturers were willing to pump millions into research and development. Lastly, there was the air of competition between airlines for control of larger passenger loads and

³³ R. E. G. Davies, *Airlines of the United States Since 1914* (London: Putnam and Company, 1972), 204-7.

³⁴ Ibid, 509. Throughout TWA's history speed was a top priority. Flyers like Jack Frye, Tommy Tomlinson and even Howard Hughes in the late 1930s and during the years following World War II. TWA representatives broke records and set new standards in the industry. All this happened while TWA was head-quartered in Kansas City.

³⁵ Ibid, 506.

³⁶ Ibid, 502.

³⁷ Ibid, 510.

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greater air mileage. Pan American World Airways sparked the drive for competition when they ordered a total of forty-five new jet engine planes in October 1955. The first transatlantic flight for Pan Am's new jet—engine Boeing 707 took place on October 26, 1958.³⁸

During the latter half of the 1950s, TWA saw a decrease in business. The Super Connies could not compete with the speed and passenger capacity of the Boeing 707s and TWA fell to third place in passenger service across the Atlantic. To compensate for the drop in ranking, TWA concentrated on rapidly intensifying domestic service. On March 20, 1959, when jet service finally arrived at TWA, it was on a gamble when it acquired its first and only 707.³⁹

Howard Hughes was stubborn about acquiring jet planes for TWA. When he decided to order in a new fleet, he chose the Convair CV-880, also known as the Skylarks and Golden Arrows. Hughes placed the order in June 1956 and the first flight took place on January 27, 1959, three months behind Pan Am. However, TWA ran into financial trouble and Convair 880 service did not begin until January 12, 1961.⁴⁰

By 1964 Boeing was producing the 727. For the first time, the Big Four booked scheduled service of the new jet within a four month period beginning with Eastern Airlines on February 1, 1964; United Airlines on February 6, American Airlines on April 12 and finally TWA on June 1, 1964. TWA began to climb back into the competition. By the end of the 1960s, TWA was once again ranked in second place just behind Pan Am for international flights and first place on domestic flights in the United States.

³⁸ *Ibid.* Pan Am placed an order for twenty Boeing 707s and twenty-five DC-8 airliners. After the order was placed they went back to the boardroom to discuss whether or not they had made the right decision. Pan Am was not a domestic carrier at this time and flew only intercontinental routes.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 514-13.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 515.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Tract I: A parcel of land being all of Lots 3 through 12, both inclusive, Block 1, "GOODRICH ADDITION", a subdivision of land in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri, according to the recorded plat thereof, and all or portions of Lots 328 thru 331, both inclusive, Block 26, "MCGEE'S ADDITION", a subdivision of land in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri, according to the recorded plat thereof.

Tract II: A non-exclusive easement for ingress, egress, regress and passage over all that part of Lots 327 and 328, Block 26, "MCGEE'S ADDITION", described as beginning at a point in the East line of a 15 foot alley established by Ordinance No. 22729, May 19, 1903.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building.

Key to Photographs

Dave Everson and Len Fohn, photographers. All large format negatives are the property of Architectural and Historical Research, LLC, Kansas City, Missouri.)

1. West and south façades; view facing northeast
2. West façade; view facing southeast
3. East and south façades; view facing northwest
4. Detail of the south façade; view facing north
5. East façade; view facing west
6. West and north façade; view facing southeast
7. North façade; view facing south, southwest
8. Rooftop; view facing southwest
9. First floor interior (Baltimore Avenue side); view facing north
10. Second floor interior (Baltimore Avenue side); view facing north

the TWA
Corporate
Headquarters
Building

1735-1741
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