

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Westminster Congregational Church

AND/OR COMMON

Westminster Congregational Church

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

3600 Walnut Street

CITY, TOWN

Kansas City

VICINITY OF

#5 Hon. Richard Bolling

STATE

Missouri

64109

CODE  
29COUNTY  
JacksonCODE  
095**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT  
☐ BUILDING(S)  
☒ STRUCTURE  
☐ SITE  
☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC  
☒ PRIVATE  
☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS  
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED  
☐ UNOCCUPIED  
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS  
**ACCESSIBLE**  
☒ YES: RESTRICTED  
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED  
☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE  
☐ COMMERCIAL  
☐ EDUCATIONAL  
☐ ENTERTAINMENT  
☐ GOVERNMENT  
☐ INDUSTRIAL  
☐ MILITARY  
☐ MUSEUM  
☐ PARK  
☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
☒ RELIGIOUS  
☐ SCIENTIFIC  
☐ TRANSPORTATION  
☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Westminster Congregational Church

STREET &amp; NUMBER

3600 Walnut Street

CITY, TOWN

Kansas City

VICINITY OF

STATE  
Missouri 64109**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Jackson County Courthouse, Kansas City Annex

STREET &amp; NUMBER

415 East 12th Street

CITY, TOWN

Kansas City

STATE  
Missouri 64109**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

1. Missouri State Historical Survey

DATE

1977

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 176

CITY, TOWN

Jefferson City

STATE  
Missouri 65102

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT  
☒ GOOD  
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED  
☐ ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Westminster Congregational Church, 3600 Walnut Street, is located on the southwest corner of Thirty-sixth and Walnut streets in Kansas City's Westport District. The church has a frontage of approximately 109 feet on East Thirty-sixth Street and 91 feet on Walnut Street. The structure consists of the church proper, and an addition housing administrative offices, Sunday School rooms and a room for social activities. The church is asymmetrical in plan, with its main entrance on the north facade. The Sunday School addition is rectangular in plan.

### Construction Materials and Colors

The church and Sunday School addition are constructed of native blue limestone, trimmed with Carthage, Phoenix and Blue Bedford limestone.<sup>1</sup> The doors on the exterior are oak with brass hardware and the window tracery is stone.<sup>2</sup> Stained glass designed by the Campbell Glass and Paint Company is used throughout the 1904 section.<sup>3</sup> The foundation of the entire structure is coursed stone.

### Roof

Originally the roof of the church was slate, however it has been replaced with asbestos shingles. The roof of the church is pitched, but becomes flat in the center where there is a skylight. The addition and bell tower have flat tar and gravel roofs.

### Chimney

There are four stone chimneys located on the west facade.

### North Facade

The north facade, facing Thirty-sixth Street is the main facade. Located on the extreme east end of this facade is a two story, polygonal stone tower with a stone battlement. The tower contains slender louvered windows in rectangular frames on the second story and slender windows in rounded arches on the first story. Directly to the west of the tower is a stained glass window with stone tracery in a Gothic arch. Above the window is a stone hood mold. Next to the window and located in the middle of the facade is a large projection featuring a large stained glass window with stone tracery within a Gothic frame. A stone hood mold is also located above the window. The roof line of the projection is pointed with stone coping. The main entrance, located to the west of the projection is recessed within a modified cloister composed of paired columns with early English capitals. A secondary entrance is located to the west of the main entrance. A castellated semi-hexagonal stone bay is located on the west end of the north facade. The bay contains a painted three dimensional stained glass window. Directly above the bay is a pair of dormers with a pair of Gothic windows.

### West Facade

On the north end of the first floor of the 1904 structure are one-over-one double hung sash stained glass windows in rectangular frames. Above them is a round stained

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glass window centrally positioned. The 1912 addition consists of sash windows in rectangular frames on the first and second stories and in Gothic arches on the third story. The roof line along this section is castellated. At the south end of the facade are wooden doors on each story connected by a fire escape.

South Facade

The window treatment and roof line are the same as on the west facade. However, at the southeast corner of the facade on the first and second story is a pair of gothic windows. Two wooden door entrances are located on the ground floor and are positioned in about the middle of the facade.

East Facade

The east facade contains the tower at the northeast corner. To the south of it, is a small projection with a pointed roof line with a stained glass window with stone tracery in a gothic frame. Above it is a hood mold. To the south of this projection is another projection set back from the smaller projection. It too has a stained glass window with stone tracery within a gothic frame with a hood mold. One-over-one double hung sash windows in rectangular frames are located on the ground floor of the projections and tower. To the south of the recessed projection is an entrance set back and approached by a series of stone stairs. A door with fixed stained glass transoms is framed in a gothic arch. Above the entrance is a bell tower. The bell tower and entrance visually separate the 1904 section from the 1912 section. The 1912 section is three bays wide. A central bay contains a group of four Gothic windows on both the first and second floor within a Gothic frame and hood mold above. A projecting bay with paired Gothic windows on the first and second floor is located on either side of the central bay. The roof line of each bay is pointed with stone coping. A stone cross within a circle is located on the top of the central bay. The ground level of the central and northernmost bay contains paired hung sash windows in rectangular frames. A double wooden and glass door is located on the ground level of the southernmost bay. A stone course runs between the ground floor and the first story of the entire 1912 section.

Interior

The interior of the church consists of an amphitheater shaped sanctuary. The seats are located in a circular form with the floor sloping downward to the pulpit platform. There are four side aisles with a partial central aisle. The pulpit platform, consisting of an altar, choir stall, and a pipe organ is located in the northeast corner of the church. There is a large stained glass Gothic window and a smaller one on the west facade; while a large stained glass window is located on the north facade.

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The ceiling of the church is polygonal in shape and is supported by ribs rising from four Corinthian pilasters. An interior stained glass dome is located in the middle of the ceiling. The walls of the church were smooth plaster originally, but have been texturized.

Behind the main sanctuary, located in the southwest corner of the church is a horseshoe shaped area with ground floor and gallery, that can be closed off from the main sanctuary by a partition that drops from the ceiling.<sup>4</sup> This horseshoe area has a small stained glass interior dome in the ceiling. The back wall of the horseshoe area in both the gallery and ground floor area contain one-over-one double hung sash stained glass windows in rectangular frames that open into the Sunday School area. A Gothic wooden arcaded balustrade runs along the gallery level.

Directly behind the horseshoe gallery, located in the 1912 addition are twenty-five rooms on both the ground floor and balcony levels. These compartments run around three sides of the large open space and can be closed completely by glass and wooden accordian type doors. They were designed especially for Sunday School use.<sup>5</sup> The rooms on the balcony level are framed with Gothic arches while on the ground floor they are within rectangular frames. In the center of the ceiling is an interior stained glass dome.

The basement under this section contains a kitchen and a large room for social activities.

Two rooms are located at the west end of the sanctuary, a small parlor originally used as a women's parlor and a room directly behind it once used for infant classes.<sup>6</sup> Surrounding the entire women's parlor is red oak wainscotting with a Gothic arch design. A fireplace is located on the west wall of each of the two rooms. Directly above these rooms is a large room that was used at one time as the pastor's study.<sup>7</sup> It is presently not being used.

Other decorative features within the church:

1. Brass sconces in the church proper
2. Brass door fixtures

Alterations

1. Roof changed from slate to asbestos shingles - c. 1975
2. Walls of church interior texturized - 1977
3. Acoustical ceiling tiles placed in women's parlor - date unknown

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Condition

Westminster Congregational Church is in good condition on the exterior and in fair condition in the interior. A severe winter has caused water damage to the interior. The building however is well maintained.

Site

The church is surrounded by residential structures on the south, north and east. To the west is a parking lot and a commercial structure.

Present Status

The building still functions as the Westminster Congregational Church. Currently, there are no plans for redevelopment that would affect this structure.

FOOTNOTES

1. Braecklein and Martling "Specifications of Labor and Material to be Used In the Execution of Church for the Westminster Congregational SW Cor. 36th and Walnut Street - Kansas City, Mo -", p.3.
2. Ibid, p.3.
3. Invoice, Campbell Paint and Glass Co., August 16, 1904 and December 1, 1904.
4. Braecklein and Martling "Specifications of Labor and Material To Be Used In the Execution of Stone Building for Westminster Congregational Church 36th and Walnut Sts, Kansas City, Mo.", p.12.
5. "To Dedicate Enlarged Church", Kansas City Times, 19 April 1913, p.3.
6. "Its Corner Stone Laid", Kansas City Times, 23 May 1904 p.2.
7. Ibid, p.2.

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1904; 1912 addition

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Diboll and Owen

Braecklein and Martling

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Westminster Congregational Church is significant as an early example of the "Akron Plan" church design in Kansas City. It is further significant as an excellent example of Early Gothic Revival Style architecture in Kansas City.<sup>1</sup> Westminster Congregational Church was modeled after the Prytania Street Presbyterian Church in New Orleans, and was designed by the New Orleans architectural firm of Diboll & Owen Ltd.<sup>2</sup> constructed in 1904 with the Kansas City architectural firm of Martling and Braecklein as associate architects.<sup>3</sup> An addition was built in 1912 by S.B. Tarbet and Company to house Sunday School rooms.<sup>4</sup>

Westminster Congregational Church first began as the Second Presbyterian Church in 1875. In February 1895 a controversy of sufficient magnitude arose over the appointment of a new pastor. This caused some members to withdraw from the church and in June 1895, these members along with others founded the Westminster Presbyterian Church, an independent Presbyterian church with Reverend William Potts George as pastor.<sup>5</sup> The church at this time was located in the former Grace Episcopal church at Tenth and Central Streets.

It wasn't until 1900 that the Westminster Presbyterian church was offered membership in both the Kansas City Congregational Union and the Kansas City Presbytery.<sup>6</sup> Following the invitations a meeting was held among the members and a decision to join the Congregational church was made. On January 17, 1901, the Westminster Congregational Church was formally received into the Kansas City Union with Reverend George as pastor. Around 1902 after being accepted into the union a motion was made to construct a new church in the residential district of Hyde Park. The present site at Thirty-Sixth and Walnut streets was selected and construction began in 1904. The cornerstone was laid on May 22, 1904 and the church was completed and dedicated on June 16, 1907.<sup>7</sup> "Westminster at this time was rated as one of the four outstanding Congregational churches in the state."<sup>8</sup>

An outstanding feature of the 1904 construction of Westminster Congregational Church was the use of the "Akron Plan" design. This design originated in church architecture soon after the Civil War and was conceived by Mr. Lewis Miller and Reverend John Heyl Vincent.<sup>9</sup> The first church to use such a design was the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Akron, Ohio.

"The Akron Plan consisted of a hall with a horseshoe gallery. Both ground floor and gallery could be divided into classrooms by sliding partitions."<sup>10</sup> The main concept of the Akron Plan was to provide a setting for Sunday School in which opening exercises of the entire congregation could be conducted and then separate classes could be held. This Sunday School area could be opened directly into the main sanctuary by a sliding door that dropped from the ceiling.

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"In its most common form the Akron Plan included a pulpit platform wedged into a corner of the building."<sup>11</sup> The pulpit platform at Westminster is located at the northeast corner of the building and contains the pulpit, pulpit chairs, choir directly behind the chairs and the organ pipes behind the choir.

The Akron Plan has had a tremendous influence on church architecture for more than half a century. Many churches throughout the United States have been designed in this plan however, most have been so remodeled that their original arrangement is no longer recognizable. In the last fifty years the Akron Plan has been replaced by a new concept whereby the Sunday School is placed in separate rooms or even separate buildings.<sup>12</sup> This was true with the Westminster Church, for in 1911 the land south of the church was purchased for an addition to house the Sunday School and social activities. The addition was constructed in 1912 by the Kansas City architectural firm of S. Tarbet & Co. and was designed in the same style and material as the 1904 church.<sup>13</sup>

Historical Data

The architectural firm of Diboll and Owen was formed in 1895 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Their work included many churches, banks and office buildings, some of which are extant in New Orleans. After the death of Mr. Diboll his son, Collins Diboll continued the firm. The firm is still in existence under the name of Kessels, Diboll and Kessels. It is said to be one of the ten oldest firms in the United States still in the same family leadership.<sup>14</sup>

John Braecklein and George Martling were Kansas City architects who formed a partnership in 1903. The firm of Braecklein and Martling was dissolved the following year. Each man then began practice on his own. Westminster Congregational Church was one of the largest projects they worked on in partnership.

The survey of Missouri's historic sites is based on the selection of sites as they relate to theme studies in Missouri history as outlined in "Missouri's State Historic Preservation Plan." Westminster Congregational Church is, therefore, being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as an example of the themes of "Architecture" and "Society."

FOOTNOTES

1. Marcus Whiffen, American Architecture Since 1870. A Guide to the Styles (Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1969), p.53.
2. Diboll and Owen Lts. to C.W. Whitehead, 11 May 1903, Westminster Congregational Church, Kansas City, Missouri.

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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3. Western Contractor, January 1, 1904, p.1.
4. Building Permit No. 10666, Public Works Department, City Hall, 414 East 12th Street  
Kansas City, Missouri, 64109.
5. Olive L. Hoggins, Collection of Letters and Notes Relative to the Study of  
Kansas City Churches, n.d., n.p.
6. Ibid, n.p.
7. "Its Corner Stone Laid", Kansas City Times, 23 May 1904, p.2 and "The Westminster  
Dedication", Kansas City Times, 17 June 1907, p.1.
8. Hoggins, Collection of Letters, n.p.
9. James F. White, Protestant Worship and Church Architecture Theological and Historic  
Consideration (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc, 1964) p.127.
10. Ibid, p.127.
11. Ibid, p.127.
12. Ibid, p.128.
13. Building Permit No. 10666.
14. Collins C. Diboll to Linda F. Becker, 10 July 1979, Landmarks Commission, Kansas Ci  
Missouri.



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Braecklein and Martling "Specifications of Labor and Material To Be Used In The Execution of Stone Building for Westminster Congregational Church 36th and Walnut Sts, Kansas City, Mo.", p.12.

Building Permit No. 10666, Public Works Department, City Hall, 414 East 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64109.

Collins C. Diboll to Linda F. Becker, 10 July 1979, Landmarks Commission, Kansas City, Missouri.

Diboll and Owens Ltd. to C.W. Whitehead, 11 May 1903, Westminster Congregational Church, Kansas City, Missouri.

Hoggins, Olive L. Collection of Letters and Notes Relative to the Study of Kansas City Churches. n.d., n.p.

Invoice, Campbell Paint and Glass Co., August 16, 1904 and December 1, 1904.

"Its Corner Stone Laid." Kansas City Times, 23 May, 1904 p.2.

"The Westminster Dedication." Kansas City Times, 17 June 1904, p.1.

"To Dedicate Enlarged Church." Kansas City Times, 19 April 1913, p.3.

Western Contractor (January 1, 1904) p.1.

Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1870. A Guide to the Styles, Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1969.

White, James F. Protestant Worship and Church Architecture Theological and Historical Consideration, New York: Oxford University Press. Inc., 1964.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Braecklein and Martling "Specifications of Labor and Material to be Used In the Execution of Church for the Westminster Congregational SW Cor. 36th and Walnut Street - Kansas City, Mo -", p.3.

continued:

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

QUADRANGLE NAME "Kansas City"

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 115 362860 4324620

B         

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 1, 2 & 3, Block 19, Hyde Park, Jackson County, Missouri

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

1. Linda F. Becker

September 17, 1979

ORGANIZATION

Landmarks Commission of Kansas City

STREET & NUMBER

414 East 12th Street

TELEPHONE

274-2555

CITY OR TOWN

Kansas City

STATE

Missouri 64106

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE   

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Director, Department of Natural Resources and  
State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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WESTMINSTER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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2. James M. Denny, Section Chief, Nominations-Survey  
and State Contact Person  
Department of Natural Resources  
Office of Historic Preservation  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City

October 17, 1979

314/751-4096

Missouri 65102



WESTMINSTER CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH  
U.S.G.S. 7.5'  
Kansas City Quadrangle  
Scale: 1:24,000 (1975)

UTM Reference:  
15/362860/4324620

**Photo Log:**

Name of Property: **Westminster Congregational Church**

City or Vicinity: **Kansas City**

County: **Jackson County** State: **MO**

Photographer: **Sherry Piland**

Date

Photographed: **Apr. 1979**

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

- 1 of 13. Exterior of N façade of church. View looking S.
- 2 of 13. Exterior – E façade of church. View looking NW.
- 3 of 13. Exterior – Tower located on the NE corner of the church. View looking SW.
- 4 of 13. Exterior – W façade of the church. View looking SE.
- 5 of 13. Exterior – Partial N and W facades. View looking SE.
- 6 of 13. Exterior – Detail of modified cloister on N façade. View looking S.
- 7 of 13. Interior – Horseshoe gallery and first floor located to the rear of the main sanctuary. View looking S.
- 8 of 13. Interior – Main sanctuary of the church, showing alter platform and organ pipes. View looking NW.
- 9 of 13. Interior – Horseshoe gallery and balcony located in rear of main sanctuary. View looking S.
- 10 of 13. Interior – 1912 Addition showing detail of first and second floor of Sunday School rooms. View looking NE.
- 11 of 13. Interior – Stained glass dome located in main sanctuary.
- 12 of 13. Interior – 1912 Addition, first floor and balcony showing accordion door partitions for Sunday School. View looking SE.
- 13 of 13. Interior – Painted three-dimensional glass window in Women's Parlor. View looking N.









WESTMINSTER  
CONGREGATIONAL

























