

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name Firestone Tire and Rubber Company Service Station

Other names/site number N/A

Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

## 2. Location

Street & number 1112 E. Linwood Blvd. N/A not for publication

City or town Kansas City N/A vicinity

State Missouri Code MO County Jackson Code 095 Zip code 64109

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this X nomination     request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets     does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

    national     statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:     A     B X C     D

B. K. De 8-19-21  
Signature of certifying official/Title DEPUTY SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register     determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register     removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. Service Station  
Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

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

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

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE: Specialty Store

TRANSPORTATION: Road-related (vehicular)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Art Deco

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Brick

Stone

roof: EPDM

other: Cast stone

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION ON CONTINUATION PAGES**

Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. Service Station  
Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Areas of Significance**

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1930

**Significant Dates**

1930

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Smith, Charles A. (architect)

Miller-Stauch Construction Co.

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE ON CONTINUATION PAGES**

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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

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

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**10. Geographical Data**

Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. Service Station  
Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri  
County and State

**Acree of Property** Less than one acre

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>39.068992</u>	<u>-94.570890</u>	3	_____	_____
	Latitude:	Longitude:		Latitude:	Longitude:
2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	Latitude:	Longitude:		Latitude:	Longitude:

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

**Boundary Justification** (On continuation sheet)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Amanda K. Loughlin, National Register Manager  
organization Rosin Preservation, LLC date Dec. 2020, rev. March & April 2021  
street & number 1712 Holmes St. telephone 816-472-4950  
city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64109  
e-mail amanda@rosinpreservation.com

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:**
  - A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
  - A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Photographs**
- **Owner Name and Contact Information**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. Service Station  
Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri  
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## Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

## Photo Log:

Name of Property: Firestone Tire and Rubber Company Service Station

City or Vicinity: Kansas City

County: Jackson County State: Missouri

Photographer: Brad Finch, f-stop Photography

Date

Photographed: December 1, 2020

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

**01 of 15:** West, southwest, and south elevations, looking NE

**02 of 15:** West elevation, looking E

**03 of 15:** South elevation, looking N

**04 of 15:** South and east elevations, looking NW

**05 of 15:** Parapet detail, west elevation

**06 of 15:** East and north elevations, looking SW

**07 of 15:** North elevations and west elevation of parking garage, looking SE

**08 of 15:** South elevation under canopy, looking NW

**09 of 15:** First floor, former showroom, looking SW

**10 of 15:** First floor, stair core, looking NW

**11 of 15:** Second floor, above showroom, looking W

**12 of 15:** First floor, parking garage at north half of building, looking SW; down-ramp to basement level at left

**13 of 15:** First floor, ramp to second floor, looking NW from garage door bay at south elevation

**14 of 15:** Second floor, garage, low (north) level, looking SE

**15 of 15:** Third floor, garage, high (south) level, looking NW

## Figure Log:

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

**Figure 01:** Contextual map, showing the building within Kansas City. Source: Base map from Google.

**Figure 02:** Top: The 3100 Block of Troost Avenue, looking south from center of block. The Firestone Station is in the background at left. Bottom: East Linwood Boulevard, looking west toward the intersection with Troost. Source: Brad Finch, March & December 2020.

**Figure 03:** Boundary map. Boundary denoted by dashed line. Source: Base map from Kansas City, Missouri Parcel Viewer ([maps.kcmo.org/apps/parcelviewer](https://maps.kcmo.org/apps/parcelviewer)).

**Figure 04:** Snippet of the 1951 Sanborn map, showing the corner of Troost and Linwood The Firestone Station boundary represented with dashed line. Source: *Insurance Maps of Kansas City, Missouri*, Vol. 4 (New York: Sanborn Map Company 1909, rev. February 1951), 465.

Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. Service Station  
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**Figure 05:** Exterior photo key. Source: Base map from Base map from Kansas City, Missouri Parcel Viewer.

**Figure 06:** Current first Floor Plan and Photo Key. Not to Scale. Sketch by author based on historic Second Floor plan from Charles A. Smith, Service Station for Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, architectural plans, 1930. State Historical Society of Missouri, AR Collection, AP Card: 053.004.

**Figure 07.** South elevation under canopy, looking NNE and showing the non-historic west half. Source: Brad Finch, December 2020.

**Figure 08.** Parapet details on southwest corner and south elevation of canopy. Source: Brad Finch, December 2020.

**Figure 09:** Partial south elevation of the Firestone Station in 1931, showing the historic configuration of the north wall of the concourse. Source: Anderson Photo Company, "Firestone Building During Fire," Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City, Missouri, Public Library, South Central Business Association Records, item 109590.

**Figure 10:** The Firestone Station in 1989, looking NW. Note that by this time the infill of the north wall under the canopy is in place, the skylight is uncovered, the dividing columns removed, and some bronze fixtures in place. Source: Dory DeAngelo, "Firestone Tire Building," Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City, Missouri, Public Library, General Collection, item 102985.

**Figure 11:** West elevation, showing non-historic windows. Note the light fixtures, added after 1930; they have been removed as of December 2020. Source: Brad Finch, November 2019.

**Figure 12:** Partial roof plan, showing east parking deck and circulation core. Not to Scale. Source: Charles A. Smith, Service Station for Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, architectural plans, 1930. State Historical Society of Missouri, AR Collection, AP Card: 053.004. Inset is historic butterfly doors leading onto roof parking deck. Source: Brad Finch, December 2020.

**Figure 13:** Section BB, cut north-to-south, looking east and showing the west elevation of the garage along the alley within dashed box and enlarged below. Not to Scale. Source: Charles A. Smith, Service Station for Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, architectural plans, 1930. State Historical Society of Missouri, AR Collection, AP Card: 053.004.

**Figure 14:** Roof and skylights over the two-story portion of the building, looking southwest from the northeast corner. Source: Brad Finch, December 2020.

**Figure 15:** Historic second story exterior wall behind bulkhead, view looking west. The decorative brick panel with centered diamond pattern is visible below the opening (arrow). Source: Brad Finch, Dec. 2020.

**Figure 16:** Extant historic storefront in west bay of historic south elevation. Source: Brad Finch, December 2020.

**Figure 17:** South (high) parking level of the parking garage, looking northeast toward ramp. The roof was historically exposed concrete but was covered with EPDM at an unknown date. Source: Brad Finch, December 2020.

**Figure 18:** Second Floor Plan and Photo Key. Not to Scale. Source: Sketch based on second floor plan by Charles A. Smith, Service Station for Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, architectural plans, 1930. State Historical Society of Missouri, AR Collection, AP Card: 053.004.

**Figure 19:** Third Floor Plan and Photo Key. Not to Scale. Source: Charles A. Smith, Service Station for Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, architectural plans, 1930. State Historical Society of Missouri, AR Collection, AP Card: 053.004.

**Figure 20:** Basement Floor Plan. Not to Scale. Source: Charles A. Smith, Service Station for Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, architectural plans, 1930. State Historical Society of Missouri, AR Collection, AP Card: 053.004.

**Figure 21:** Top: the 1930 Firestone one-stop station in Evansville, Indiana in 1977. Source: Douglas Stern, "Firestone Tire & Rubber Company Service Store," National Register nomination (1983). Bottom: the Louis H. Smith Inc.

Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. Service Station

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Firestone Store in Amarillo, Texas, 2015. Source: Melissa Dailey, "Louis H. Smith, Inc. Firestone Store," National Register nomination (2015).

**Figure 22:** The 1931 Firestone Service Station in Detroit, Michigan with associated parking garage. The station was demolished in the 1960s. Source: Detroit News, "Streets; Vernor. At Trumbull showing Grand River," 4 August 1936, Virtual Motor City Collection (vmc48586), Detroit News Photograph Collection (UAV002691), Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

**Figure 23:** The first Firestone Station at 2007 Grand Avenue, opened in May 1930. Photo from 1940. Source: Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City 1940 Tax Assessment Photograph Collection, District 4, Block 258. Below is the station today. Source: Google Streetview, March 2019.

**Figure 24:** The intersection of Linwood Blvd and Troost Ave, looking NE toward the open parcel where the station would be constructed. Source: *Kansas City Star* (6 September 1929): 18.

**Figure 25:** Stylized rendering of the building by architect Charles A. Smith with details of design #2. Source: "How the One-Stop Service Station will be Expanded to Maximum Proportions Here," *Kansas City Star* (15 June 1930): 3-D.

**Figure 26:** Opening day of the Firestone Station August 9, 1930. Architect Charles A. Smith is at right. Source: Source: Montgomery (photographer), "Firestone Store Opening," Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City, Missouri, Public Library, General Collection, item 100594.

**Figure 27:** Detail of exterior decoration, design #1. Not to Scale. Source: Charles A. Smith, Service Station for Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, architectural plans, 1930. State Historical Society of Missouri, AR Collection, AP Card: 053.004.

**Figure 28:** Detail of exterior decoration, design #2 (as built). Not to Scale. Source: Charles A. Smith, Service Station for Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, architectural plans, 1930. State Historical Society of Missouri, AR Collection, AP Card: 053.004.

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Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. Service Station

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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### Summary Description

Built in 1930, the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company Service Station is located at 1112 East Linwood Boulevard Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri. Because of its location at the northeast corner of Linwood Boulevard and Troost Avenue, the Art Deco service station has two public facades, with the south-facing elevation being the most prominent.<sup>1</sup> The L-shaped building footprint follows the historic functions of the service center. At the northeast end, a three-story rectangular mass housed a parking garage and automotive shop. The concrete structure features a ramped drive from basement to roof; red brick infills the exposed concrete grid on the east, north, and west elevations. The filling station function encompassed the entire south portion of the building along Linwood within a two-story open air volume sheltered by a prominent flat-roofed canopy; the architect Charles A. Smith labeled this area the “Concourse.” A two-story mass within the northwest corner of the Concourse housed offices and a showroom. The canopy is a character-defining feature of this building both for its functional design and its Art Deco ornamentation. Polychrome brickwork and decoratively carved stonework adorn all three sides of the parapet; cast stone shields with the stylized Firestone “F” accent the north and east corners of the canopy. The building retains its historic integrity as a significant example of the one-stop service shop developed in the late 1920s and early 1930s that attracted motorists through its design and comprehensive vehicle services.

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### Narrative Description

#### SETTING AND SITE

The Firestone Tire and Rubber Company Service Station (Firestone Station) is located within a late nineteenth century neighborhood fewer than two miles south of the downtown Kansas City, Missouri, commercial core and approximately one mile west of U.S. Highway 71 (*Figure 1*). The building anchors the northeast corner of Linwood Boulevard and Troost Avenue at the south end of an early-to-mid-twentieth century commercial district (*Figures 2 through 4*). The 3100 block of Troost Avenue is a remnant of a larger commercial district that once lined Troost within this primarily residential area.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The county addresses the parcel as 3145 Troost; the city addresses the parcel 1112 E Linwood Blvd. Historic city directories and newspapers listed this building most often at “the northeast corner of Linwood and Troost;” however, the street index in 1931 directory lists the building address as 1106 East Linwood Blvd.

<sup>2</sup> After review of a district nomination for this block between 2019-2020, SHPO determined it was ineligible for listing in the National Register.

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Section number 7 Page 2

Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. Service Station
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

The two-story 1926 Harkness Building abuts the north side of the Firestone Station. A former bank building, constructed in 1950, occupies the northwest corner of Linwood and Forest Avenue to the east of the Firestone Station; a vacant lot separates the two buildings.<sup>3</sup> Across Troost to the west is an altered 1940 commercial building at the south end of a row of commercial buildings. A six-story brick apartment building formerly occupied the vacant parcel to the south of the Firestone Station across Linwood; this building was demolished between 1980 and 1991.<sup>4</sup> The historic one-story commercial building that anchored the southwest corner of the intersection was demolished in 2017, leaving a vacant lot. The Firestone Station remains the only historic anchor at this intersection (*Figure 4*).

Both Linwood Boulevard and Troost Avenue are major transportation corridors in Kansas City. The north-south running Troost Avenue is a two-lane street with parallel parking along both sides. Linwood Boulevard is a significant intra-neighborhood connector designed and planned by George Kessler as part of the Kansas City Parks and Boulevards System.<sup>5</sup> The four-lane thoroughfare has a wide right-of-way without on-street parking in the Firestone Station block.

Concrete sidewalks and shallow concrete curbs line the west and south sides of the Firestone Station. A curb cut from Troost provides access into the building. Four evenly spaced curb cuts provide access from Linwood. Landscaping consists of small, grassy verges along Linwood between the curb cuts and between the sidewalk and street. A non-historic streetlight occupies the west verge, and a single small tree occupies the eastern two. The sidewalks, curb cuts, and landscaping are within the public right-of-way and outside the nominated boundary.

### EXTERIOR

The Firestone Station is a two- and three-story auto service building over a partial basement with an L-shaped plan and flat roof. The fireproof building has a steel encased concrete structure with polychrome brick veneer and red brick infill. A two-story concourse spans the south half of the

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<sup>3</sup> Dates from Sanborn maps. According to available historic aerials from the 1950s, this formerly paved lot was associated with the neighboring bank and was used for parking; the bank's canopy spanned the south end of this lot. The pavement has been mostly removed as of December 2020 (as seen in Photo 6).

<sup>4</sup> According to historic aerial images from Google Earth and Historic Aerials.com, as well as an undated 1980s photograph of Troost on file with the Kansas City Historic Preservation Office.

<sup>5</sup> Linwood Boulevard, including this portion adjacent to the Firestone Station, was listed in the National Register in 2016 as part of the Kansas City Parks and Boulevards Historic District (NRIS #14000931) associated with *The Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards MPDF* (NRIS #64501206).

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Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. Service Station

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

building with a high canopy covering an open-air service area (*Photo 1*). The distinctive south and west elevations of the canopy feature polychrome brickwork and carved cast stone motifs typical of the Art Deco style.

The canopy shelters most of the south elevation. Historically, the west half of the south elevation under the canopy stepped back and angled to the northwest (*Figure 4*). In the late 1970s-early 1980s, a new brick-and-stud wall enclosed this portion of the concourse (*Figures 6 & 7; Photos 1 & 2*). A three-story concrete and brick parking garage forms the northeast corner of the Firestone Station (*Photos 4 & 6*). Historic windows throughout the building are steel pivot sash units.

### Canopy

Due to the distinctive character of the canopy, the following section focuses on its description. The elevations of the building itself are described in following sections. The canopy over the concourse is a significant character-defining feature of the Firestone Station. Smooth Missouri limestone veneer, polychrome brick, and cast stone decorate the structure that shelters an open service area (the concourse) along the south of the building. The west and south elevations of the canopy radiate from a canted southwest corner that faces the intersection of Linwood and Troost (*Photos 1 through 4*). Steel encased concrete columns with limestone veneer support the perimeter of the canopy; ribbing adorns the inner column facing. The columns extend from the ground to cornice and frame open bays on the south, southwest, and west elevations. Stone scroll brackets accent the upper inside corners of the openings and cast iron bollards protect the inside corners of the vehicular bays. Smooth stone veneer wraps the openings.

The southwest canted bay is the most highly ornamented (*Figure 8; Photo 1*;). A centered polychrome brick panel has a deep inset and a wide stone trim with keystone. The panel features a carved diamond medallion with leaf design and formerly also a light fixture (*Figure 8*). Wide stone vertical trim flanks this center panel and extends to the top of the tall, shaped parapet. A stylized wheat sheaf carved in stone surmounts the brick panel, and a smooth stone band separates the brick panel from the upper parapet. Carved stone and cast stone cap the parapet wall.

Four bays organize the south elevation of the canopy (*Photos 1 & 3*). The center and east bay are narrow openings with short stone bulkheads; the other two wide bays correspond to the curb cuts along Linwood to allow four points of vehicular access into the concourse. Two bays organize

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Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. Service Station

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

the west elevation: a large opening spans most of the elevation, and an enclosed (historic) narrow bay (described below) terminates the north end of the elevation. When constructed, a pair of columns divided the west elevation's single open bay and the two open south bays; knee walls extended between every other south bay, historically, as well (*Figure 9*). The dates of the removal of the columns and knee walls are unknown but pre-date 1989 (*Figure 10*).

The south, west, and east elevations of the canopy share the same detailing. Cast stone capitals with stylized floral and geometric motifs cap the limestone columns atop the parapet wall, and a stylized floral ornament extends down from the capital along the stone column to the bottom of the parapet wall. A minimally inset polychrome brick panel laid in a stacked bond of headers spans the area between the columns in the parapet wall. Thin stone trim surrounds the panel, and a segmented brick arch and brick surround frame the panel. A stone keystone adorns the top of the arch, and carved pedimented coping lines the parapet wall between the flanking column capitals except at the east end of the south elevation and the north end of the west elevation (*Photos 1 through 5*). At these locations, an elaborately carved stone panel rises above the column capitals. Centered in this panel is the shield and stylized "F" representing the Firestone brand (*Photo 5*). Bronze light fixtures, installed at an unknown date, formerly adorned the parapet (*Figures 9 & 10*).<sup>6</sup>

The parapet walls above the vehicular bays on the south and west elevations each feature two groups of five minimally inset polychrome brick panels separated by a more ornate panel matching the parapet walls above the columns. Historically, these panels corresponded to the columns formerly separating the open bays on the south and west elevations. Each of the five grouped panels are laid in a stacked header bond and framed by segmented brick arches and brick surrounds (no stone trim). A carved stone diamond medallion with spiral punctuates the upper center of each panel (*Figure 8*). Narrow stone and brick pilasters with stylized cast stone caps separate the brick panel; cast stone coping spans the parapet walls between the pilasters and each features the same geometric motif.

<sup>6</sup> Photos of the building from 1931 do not show these fixtures (*Figure 10*). During a November 2019 survey, four fixtures remained. These had been removed by December 2020. These same fixtures formerly adorned the west elevation, which were removed by December 2020.

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Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. Service Station

Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

*West Elevation (Troost)*

The canopy terminates at the narrow bay at the north end of the west elevation (*Photos 1 & 2*). The decorative treatment of this wall corresponds to the canopy. At the first story, a non-historic wooden storefront window fills the bay (*Figure 11*). A divided-light transom surmounts a pair of fixed display windows; the unit sits atop a historic stone bulkhead, and stone spans the bay, dividing the first and second stories. A single masonry opening pierces the second story, and a non-historic fixed window with two lites fills the opening. Stone outlines the openings; the side trim extends from the lintel of the first story to the top of the parapet. As described above, an elaborately carved stone panel with stylized "F" caps the parapet wall (*Photo 5*). Polychrome brick clads the rest of the bay.

The west elevation of the non-historic infill is inset slightly from the historic canopy opening and fills almost half of the bay opening. A six-part non-historic fixed display window system atop a short concrete bulkhead defines this wall at the first story. Synthetic sheeting covers the second story above.

East Elevation

The utilitarian east elevation fronts a historically vacant lot. The south third of the elevation is two-stories tall (*Photos 4 & 6*). Two bays organize this polychrome brick wall. The treatment of the narrow south bay corresponds to the south and west elevations of the canopy; stone columns flank a narrow opening, and a decorative brick panel ornaments the parapet. The vehicular bay to the north has a smooth stone lintel and no other ornamentation; cast iron bollards protect the corners of the opening. Simple cast stone coping tops the brick parapet wall.

The north two-thirds of the east elevation is three stories tall, corresponding with the parking garage function of the building (*Photo 6*). The exposed concrete structural grid of the garage divides the bays and defines the stories. Historically, red brick clad concrete block infilled the concrete grid; the infill has been removed from the lower two stories of the north two bays. Historic windows pierce all three stories of the south bay, the upper two stories of the next bay, and the upper story of the second bay from the north. The parapet wall steps up at the three center bays and down at the north end of the wall. Simple stone coping caps the parapet above the south two bays; clay tile coping caps the center two bays, and the coping on the north bay is missing along with a portion of the parapet wall above the concrete beam.

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Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. Service Station

Name of Property

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County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

North Elevations

The north elevation of the parking garage is similar to the east elevation (*Photos 6 & 7*). The concrete structural grid divides the wall into four even bays and three stories. The historic brick and concrete block infill is missing from the lower two stories. The second bay from the west at the first story historically contained butterfly garage doors.<sup>7</sup> Bollards remain at the opening.

The north elevation of the service station block sets back from the parking garage elevation (*Photo 7*). Two bays organize this two-story red brick elevation. The exposed concrete structure defines the bays and each story. In the wider east bay, historic steel windows pierce the center and upper stories of the wall and correspond to an internal stair core. Smaller steel windows pierce each story of the west bay. At the roof level, the wall is polychrome brick; a chimney rises from the east end of this wall, corresponding with the basement boiler (*Figure 12*).

West Elevation (Parking Structure)

The west elevation of the parking garage is similar to the north elevation (*Photo 7*). The wall abuts the north-south alley at the rear of the building. The concrete structural grid divides the wall into four bays and three stories; the south bay is taller than the others. The historic brick and concrete block infill is missing from the lower two stories of the north two bays. Historic infill and windows remain in the third story and south bays; windows formerly pierced every bay (*Figure 13*).

Concourse and South Elevation

The open-air concourse spans the entire width of the building, covering the bottom two stories of the south elevation. The distinctive canopy shelters the former filling station function within this area. Polychrome brick clads the historic interior walls of the concourse, and a concrete slab covers the floor. Exposed steel trusses support the canopy, and non-historic corrugated metal sheeting hides the steel and concrete structure of the roof slab as well as the continuous skylight extant above this area (*Figure 14; Photo 8*).<sup>8</sup>

When constructed, the west one-third of the south elevation under the canopy stepped back. The west half of this wall angled to the northwest (*Figure 4*); wood framed storefronts pierced this wall. In the late-1970s-early 1980s, a new brick-and-stud wall enclosed this portion of the

<sup>7</sup> According to the 1930 plans on file with the State Historical Society of Missouri.

<sup>8</sup> The corrugated metal post-dates 1989 (*Figure 10*).

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concourse (*Figures 6 & 7; Photos 1 & 2*). The infill steps back approximately one foot from the historic polychrome brick wall to its east. Non-historic split-rib concrete blocks emulating vertically stacked brick with deep mortar joints clad the first story of the enclosure. Synthetic sheeting covers the second story along the south and west elevations (*Figure 7; Photo 8*). Four openings pierce the non-historic wall. The two west bays and the east bay contain fixed rectangular windows; the main entrance into the building fills the second bay from the east, consisting of a single glazed aluminum pedestrian door. Although the historic storefronts and brick were removed on the first story with the construction of the enclosure, the historic polychrome brick and steel windows of the second story remain behind the second story bulkhead (*Figure 15*). Inset brick panels directly beneath these windows feature a course of soldier bricks across the middle with a centered brick diamond.

Eight masonry openings organize the historic east portion of the south elevation (*Photo 8*). From the west, Bays 1, 5, and 8 are wider than the other bays. Bay 1 contains a historic wood framed storefront atop a short brick bulkhead (*Figure 16*). This window unit features a divided-light transom above four evenly spaced display windows; plywood covers the west half of the storefront. A historic steel sash pivot window pierces the second story wall above the storefront. A single pedestrian entrance fills Bay 2. A historic divided-lite transom surmounts a non-historic wood slab door. Bays 3 and 4 contain historic wood overhead garage doors with six rows of panels, the top two rows of which are glazed.<sup>9</sup> A non-historic aluminum storefront system fills the historic opening of Bay 5; three fixed transoms surmount five glazed doors. A historic glazed wood overhead door fills Bay 6; a portion of the top is missing. Non-historic metal siding fills the historic opening of Bay 7; a smaller, non-historic aluminum overhead door pierces the east side of this bay. The east bay, Bay 8 is also missing its historic door. The opening has been partially downsized with plywood on both sides; although, the historic masonry opening is visible. This bay opens directly onto the historic concrete ramp leading up to the second floor.

Five inset brick panels surmount the masonry openings, organizing the bays into five groups. These panels span Bay 1, Bays 2 through 4, Bay 5, Bays 6 and 7, and Bay 8. Today, the band of non-historic sheeting covers all but the top two brick courses of these panels. The panel design matches that found in *Figure 15*, with a centered course of soldier bricks and a central brick

<sup>9</sup> The 1930 architectural plans show doors of this design. Charles A. Smith, Service Station for Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, architectural plans, 1930. State Historical Society of Missouri, AR Collection, AP Card: 053.004.

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diamond.<sup>10</sup> A single wythe of soldier brick frames the masonry openings in Bays 1, 5, and 8; similarly, a single wythe of soldier brick frames the groupings of Bays 2 through 4 and Bays 6 and 7. A continuous course of soldier brick headers spans the upper façade above the brick panels and directly below the sill of the second story window.

The third story of the parking garage rises above the roof of the canopy. The south elevation has the same utilitarian detailing found on the east, north, and west elevations. The concrete structural grid divides the wall into four even bays. Historic brick fills the bays between the concrete. Two pairs of historic steel windows pierce Bays 2 and 3.

### Roof

A flat roof with parapet covers the two-story west half of this building (*Figure 14*). A continuous skylight pierces the roof over the concourse; corrugated metal covers the extant structure. Three gabled skylights pierce the north half of the roof; a combination of non-historic materials cover the glass. Rolled EPDM covers the roof structure between the skylights.

The roof of the parking garage structure historically functioned as a parking deck (*Figures 12 & 17*). A covered ramp at the northeast corner of the roof opens onto the north side of the roof, and a ramp in the center of the roof provides access between the north and south sides of the roof deck. Non-historic rolled EPDM covers the roof structure today.

## INTERIOR

Open floor areas characterize the interior of the Firestone Station (*Figures 6, 12, & 18 through 20*). The west half is a full two stories with partial basement; the east half has three stories, a full parking deck, and a full basement. A centrally located historic circulation core functionally divides the floor plan. A three-quarter turn stair and historic small elevator comprise this core; the stair accesses the basement to roof, and the elevator extends from basement to second floor. The west half of the interior contained more public-oriented spaces such as the showroom and offices; the east half was dedicated to automobile service and parking. Historic interior materials within the public spaces include concrete floors and plaster walls and ceilings. Utilitarian areas

<sup>10</sup> Charles A. Smith, Service Station for Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, architectural plans, 1930. State Historical Society of Missouri, AR Collection, AP Card: 053.004.

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have exposed concrete columns and ceilings, exposed concrete block and brick walls, and concrete floors.

West Half (Showroom and Offices)

The first story of the west half formerly housed the showroom (*Photo 9*). This room today is completely open with no demising walls. The historic south exterior wall was removed when the space was enlarged in the late 1970s-early 1980s. The historic columns and concrete beams remain within this area to denote where the wall formerly stood. Gypsum board and wood paneling cover the south (non-historic) wall of the space.

A door at the north end of the east interior wall opens into a small hallway with a restroom (non-historic finishes) on the north and a door into a former office area on the south. This office features the remaining historic wood storefront on its south wall; non-historic finishes include wood paneled walls, dropped acoustical ceilings, and sheet vinyl flooring.

The east end of the hallway opens into the stair core. The stair has poured concrete treads and risers and a simple metal bannister (*Photo 10*); the perimeter walls are painted concrete block. A door in south end of the stair room leads onto a small platform. The small parts elevator occupies the southwest corner of the platform. Two risers along the east edge of the platform lead down into the first floor of the garage/service area.

The second story of the west half of the building follows the historic footprint of the building. A single room occupies the space above the first floor office; historic steel pivot windows pierce the south and west walls. A doorway in the north wall leads into a large open room above the former showroom (*Photo 11*). Exposed concrete block lines the perimeter walls. Historic steel pivot windows pierce the south wall; these former exterior windows are currently obscured by later construction (*Figure 15*). A concrete block office and restroom occupy the northeast corner of this space. A door in the east wall of the open area leads into the stair core.

The stair leads up to the roof level above this half of the building and down to the partial basement. A former boiler room and coal bin occupy the excavated half of the basement under the showroom.

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East Half (Auto Service/Parking Garage)

The east half of the Firestone Station functioned as the auto service space and parking garage. Garage doors in Bays 3 through 7 along the south elevation and a single garage door from the alley to the north provided access into the first floor. This floor housed the primary service area for tire changes, brake service, and other maintenance needs (*Figure 4*). Today the floor remains open; non-historic walls were constructed at the east side of the floor. A ramp at the east side of the first floor leads down to the full basement (ramp seen in *Photo 12*), which provided both additional service area and washing station (*Figures 6 & 20*).

The upper two floors and the roof were dedicated to parking (*Figure 4*). The easternmost garage doors in the south elevation, Bay 8, lead directly onto a ramp up to the upper floors (*Photos 8 & 13*). The historic wall dividing the first floor service area and ramp up to the second floor is of stud-and-beadboard construction (*Photo 13*). A set of six historic fixed, divided-light wood windows pierce the wall; a pedestrian door at the south end of the wall leads back into the service bays (*Photo 13*). The second and third floors, as well as the roof, each have two levels and two ramps. The east ramp leads up to the north (low) parking level; a centered ramp on each floor leads to the south (high) parking level (*Photos 14 & 15*). At the north end of the east ramp on the third floor, a historic opening leads onto the roof. Plywood fills the opening today with a single pedestrian door; however, a pair of historic wood butterfly doors and their track remain (*Figure 12*). Parking spaces line the north and south walls of each parking level. The west side of the north half of the third floor was enclosed at an unknown time (*Figure 19*). Concrete block walls create a narrow office area.

**INTEGRITY**

The Firestone Tire and Rubber Company Service Station retains historic integrity from its 1930 construction as a one-stop service shop property type. The building remains in its historic *location* within an intact commercial block and, more importantly, at the northeast corner of two major transportation corridors, Linwood and Troost. The *setting* remains commercial despite demolitions and alterations to neighboring buildings. Nominated for its architecture, the building retains historic *design, materials, and workmanship* associated with its building type. The major alterations to the building include the removal of three pairs of supporting columns and their associated knee walls, the covering of the historic (intact) skylights, the loss of the first story canted wall at the northwest corner of the concourse, and the loss of some historic exterior brick infill at the parking garage. Despite these alterations, the most significant character-defining

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feature remains the two-story canopy along the south of the building. The historic spatial void remains mostly intact, which continues to communicate the historic *feeling* and *association* of the building. Further, the public-facing elevations feature distinctive Art Deco characteristics such as polychrome brick and geometric and floral carvings in cast stone; the applied style was intentionally meant to draw passing motorists. The interior also retains its historic spaces that help communicate the building's historic character as a one-stop shop service station. The east half of the building, which housed the auto service areas and parking garages, retains its historic ramps between floors and parking levels, including the roof, and open floor areas continue to characterize each level of the east half of the building. The most substantial changes seen in the west half of the building are on the first floor where the historic canted south wall has been removed; however, the structural header remains in place to indicate the historic location of the wall. The second floor of this two-story west half of the building retains its historic spatial arrangements as an open floor area with smaller enclosed rooms. The historic circulation core ties the two halves of the building together.

**Table 1.** Character-defining features of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. Service Station

Exterior

- Polychrome brick
- Stone and cast stone ornamentation along parapet, including Art Deco zigzags, and the stylized Firestone F
- Open-air concourse
- Remaining historic storefront and garage doors (overhead and butterfly)
- Historic steel sash/pivot windows

Interior

- Open floor areas
- Spilt-level parking decks on second, third, and roof levels
- Utilitarian central stair

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### Summary Paragraph

The 1930 Firestone Tire and Rubber Company Service Station at 1112 E. Linwood Boulevard in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as Kansas City's best representative example of the Firestone Company's One-Stop Service Station developed in the late 1920s-early 1930s. Prolific local architect Charles A. Smith designed the three-story station at the corner of two major transportation corridors, Linwood Boulevard and Troost Avenue. The Firestone Station represented a relatively new business venture for the company, providing a "one-stop shop" for automobile maintenance and servicing. When the plans were first publicized for the Kansas City station in the fall of 1929, neighborhood advocates opposed the facility. The aesthetics were among the issues cited. Smith revised the design following a meeting with the owner representatives and the neighborhood to make the building more attractive to the prominent corner. The Art Deco style applied to the service station aligned with the commercial intent of the property type to attract passing motorists. The building's most character-defining feature is its two-story concourse sheltered by a polychromatic brick canopy with stone geometric patterns and stylized floral motifs typical of the Art Deco style. The period of significance covers the year of construction and opening, 1930.

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### Narrative Statement of Significance

The 1930 Firestone Tire and Rubber Company Service Station at the corner of Linwood Boulevard and Troost Avenue is significant as Kansas City's best representative example of the one-stop service station developed during the height of the early twentieth century automobile era to provide maintenance services in addition to gasoline.

#### **THE FIRESTONE TIRE AND RUBBER COMPANY AND ITS ONE-STOP STATION PROPERTY TYPE**

Harvey S. Firestone opened a small rubber factory in Akron, Ohio in 1900, joining B.F. Goodrich and Goodyear as one of the Big Three rubber companies. When the first fifteen million Model T Fords entered the market in 1908, Firestone and his competitors took advantage of the sudden increased need for rubber tires, and by 1913, his company alone produced over six hundred thousand tires a year. Firestone, along with Goodrich and Goodyear, invested in technology and ruthless marketing to grow business, gain loyal customers, and remain competitive.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> John Tully, *The Devil's Milk: A Social History of Rubber* (New York: NYU Press, 2011), 134, 136-138.

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As one of the Big Three, Firestone maintained offices in forty-eight cities around the world by the mid-1910s. Harvey Firestone decided in 1914 to establish another office in Kansas City, Missouri. The Kansas City branch would oversee the distribution of Firestone brand tires, which in 1915 equaled eighteen thousand a year. In an interview with *The Kansas City Star* in early November 1915, Firestone explained his reasons for wanting to locate in this city:

A survey of Kansas City's territory and possibilities for development prompted such a decision. This is going to be a great city. It has the location, the spirit, the enterprise, the transportation facilities and the great warehouse of resources on which to feed and grow.<sup>12</sup>

With the opening of Kansas City's Union Station in 1914, the transportation of goods like tires became easier, as new warehouses sprang up around the station. Firestone also hailed the city's boulevard system and county road network, which residents and leaders alike supported. Soon after the office opened at 2001 Grand Avenue, Firestone initiated the "Ship by Truck" movement, encouraging manufacturers and distributors to rely more on trucks to transport merchandise and goods. The movement led to better roads and the sale of more tires.<sup>13</sup>

The eight-story Kansas City regional office building opened at the southeast corner of 20<sup>th</sup> Street and Grand Avenue in 1915. Charles A. Smith of Smith, Rea, and Lovitt designed the Gothic Revival skyscraper using a reinforced concrete structure with applied terra cotta ornamentation. When it opened, it was the largest Firestone office in the country and represented the largest investment in one city by the company.<sup>14</sup>

### One-Stop Shop Service Station

Continuing to remain competitive with Goodyear and Goodrich in the late 1920s, the Firestone company developed service stations across the country where motorists could purchase tires and gasoline and receive basic maintenance services. The service station evolved from earlier filling stations that simply provided gasoline; basic repairs and maintenance services were undertaken

<sup>12</sup> "[H]e Follows the Road," *The Kansas City Star* (9 November 1915): 13.

<sup>13</sup> "[H]e Follows the Road," 13; Sue E. Yoakum, "Firestone Building [Kansas City, Missouri]," National Register nomination (June 1985): 5. The building was listed in the National Register in 1986 (NRIS #86000004).

<sup>14</sup> "[H]e Follows the Road," 13; Yoakum, "Firestone Building," 5.

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at separate garages until the 1920s.<sup>15</sup> In contrast, the service station provided more than just gasoline. Firestone touted his new prototype as a “one-stop station” for the convenience of the consumer. The one-stop station was intended to provide almost all automobile servicing needs; although, the focus of the business was on the sale of Firestone brand tires. Besides tire sales and repair, the stations provided gasoline, oil, greasing, battery repair, and washing. These stations provided services required for general vehicle maintenance and did not offer engine repair or body work.<sup>16</sup>

The Firestone Service Stations were one- to four-story buildings constructed along major vehicular thoroughfares. Often these buildings were located at intersections to maximize customer access. Simple massing characterized the stations, with form following the internal functions, but they were not strictly utilitarian buildings, as stylistic architectural references, such as Art Deco, adorned the public-facing elevations. Programmatically, the stations included showrooms/sales areas where products—namely Firestone-branded tires—were displayed and goods purchased; service areas were integrated into the building, and canopies sheltered gas pumps lining the front of the building. The canopy and its open-air service area became the dominant feature of these otherwise nondescript stations, communicating the building function to passing motorists.<sup>17</sup> Larger stations also provided ample space for car storage.<sup>18</sup> This service was especially helpful for nearby residents who purchased vehicles but whose turn-of-the-century houses provided no driveways or personal garages in which to park.

Examples of the One-Stop Service Station are found across the county. The 1930 Firestone Tire & Rubber Company Service Store in Evansville, Indiana (extant), features restrained Art Deco ornamentation applied to the top of exterior walls, and a large canopy shelters gas pumps and service bays (*Figure 21, top*).<sup>19</sup> The same year, a two-story Art Deco station opened in Amarillo,

<sup>15</sup> John Margolies, *Pump and Circumstance: Glory Days of the Gas Station* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1993), 26.

<sup>16</sup> As noted in “How the One-Stop Service Station Will Be Expanded to Maximum Proportions Here,” *The Kansas City Star* (15 June 1930): 3D.

<sup>17</sup> Chad Randl, “Preservation Brief 46: The Preservation and Reuse of Historic Gas Stations,” National Park Service, Heritage Preservation Services (September 2008): 6.

<sup>18</sup> Two other known examples besides Kansas City with associated parking garages were in Detroit, Michigan (1931, not extant) and Tyler, Texas (1929, extant, listed 2002, NRIS #02000646).

<sup>19</sup> The Evansville station was listed in the National Register in 1984 (NRIS #84001702).

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Texas (extant) (*Figure 21, bottom*).<sup>20</sup> The canopy of the Amarillo station is the dominant feature of the polychrome brick station, sheltering a large gas pump area and service bays. In Detroit, Michigan, a large Firestone service station was erected in 1931 (not extant), featuring a distinctive canopy over a two-story open-air concourse and a four story parking garage and service building (*Figure 22*).<sup>21</sup> All three stations were located at intersections.

Kansas City received two Firestone one-stop stations in 1930. The first opened in May directly south of the 1915 Firestone office building. The one-story structure included almost 29,000 square feet with a covered filling station on the Grand Avenue side. The rear of the building housed space for battery, tire, greasing, and washing.<sup>22</sup> Being next to the Gothic Revival headquarters, ornamentation on this station featured minimal Gothic references such as quatrefoil medallions, stone quoins, and peaked end pilasters (*Figure 23, top*).<sup>23</sup> Although not located at an intersection, the ornamented canopy and open-air service area were the defining characteristics of this building. The building today has been refaced and the open-air service bay infilled; the only visible remnants of the historic building are the corner brick columns (*Figure 23, bottom*).<sup>24</sup> The second one-stop station, the three-story Art Deco station, opened at the corner of Linwood Boulevard and Troost Avenue in August 1930. The Grand Avenue and Linwood Boulevard stations were the only two Firestone One-Stop Service Stations constructed in Kansas City.<sup>25</sup>

### *Art Deco Style*

Due to the time period in which these stations developed, Art Deco was a commonly used style applied to the public façades of the Firestone stations. This phase of American architecture epitomized what historian William Curtis calls the consumerist theatricality of pre-1929-crash

<sup>20</sup> The Amarillo station was listed in the National Register in 2015 (NRIS #15000451).

<sup>21</sup> This building was demolished in the 1960s for construction of a new highway. Detroit News, "Streets; Vernor. At Trumbull showing Grand River," 4 August 1936, Virtual Motor City Collection (vmc48586), Detroit News Photograph Collection (UAV002691), Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

<sup>22</sup> "New Motor Service In," *The Kansas City Star* (15 May 1930): 31.

<sup>23</sup> The architect of the station is currently unknown but could have been Smith given his connection to the 1915 building next door and the building on Linwood.

<sup>24</sup> The date of alteration is currently unknown; Google Streetview shows the current configuration as early as 2007.

<sup>25</sup> Firestone advertisement in *The Kansas City Star* (7 August 1930): 6.

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capitalism.<sup>26</sup> Elaborate polychrome and violent textural contrasts perfectly aligned with the commercial advertising of the era, intending to attract, delight, and persuade potential consumers into purchasing goods and services.<sup>27</sup> Commercial buildings built in this era frequently exhibited elements of the Art Deco style.

The Art Deco style is primarily one of ornamentation.<sup>28</sup> Stylistic features focus on geometry. Rectilinear forms dominate with geometrical curves a strong secondary motif.<sup>29</sup> Fluting and reeding are the two most prolific motifs commonly surrounding masonry openings. Zig-zags, chevrons, and frets meet stylized natural motifs such as fronds and sunbursts. These ornamental motifs occur in low relief most often with a flat front plane.<sup>30</sup>

Materials also play a defining role in Art Deco. Steel and concrete structures feature masonry veneers of stone, brick, glazed terra cotta, and cast stone. Ornamentation is integrated into the building through these masonry veneers and metal grillwork and panels. Buildings often feature polychromatic exteriors created by glazed terra cotta, multi-colored brick, or even gold leaf.<sup>31</sup> Curtis defines this treatment as “luxuriant indulgence in lustrous materials”<sup>32</sup> The qualities of this style led to its being known during its relatively short period of use as Modernistic, Jazz Moderne, and Zigzag Moderne.<sup>33</sup>

Art Deco paralleled the rise of the International Style. This latter movement eschewed ornament and championed clean lines and innovative materials. In contrast, Art Deco celebrated ornament while also utilizing innovative construction techniques and materials such as concrete and steel. Modern materials combined with elaborately decorated and colorful exteriors. With its abstract natural forms, Art Deco partly derived from the earlier Art Nouveau. As Curtis notes, “This

<sup>26</sup> William J.R. Curtis, *Modern Architecture Since 1900*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Phaidon Press, 1996), 223.

<sup>27</sup> Curtis, *Modern Architecture Since 1900*, 223.

<sup>28</sup> Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1992), 235.

<sup>29</sup> Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780*, 235.

<sup>30</sup> Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780*, 235.

<sup>31</sup> Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780*, 235.

<sup>32</sup> Curtis, *Modern Architecture Since 1900*, 223.

<sup>33</sup> Curtis, *Modern Architecture Since 1900*, 240. Whiffen notes that the term “Art Deco” was not coined until the late 1960s (240).

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loose affiliation of exotic and highly decorative tendencies was quite at odds with the fundamentalism and rigorous moral tenor of the new architecture [International Style], but it reached its full (and brief) efflorescence at about the same time.”<sup>34</sup> Adherents of the International Style viewed Art Deco as the epitome of the worst of the past.<sup>35</sup>

Automobile-related resources were among the commercial buildings featuring Art Deco ornamentation. The rise of the automobile in the 1920s and 1930s coincided with the rise in competition of oil and rubber companies. As a result, the design of auto service stations like those developed by Firestone in this era sought to capture the eye (and therefore the dollar) of passing motorists. The Art Deco style, with its flashy colors and decorative features, aligned with the capitalistic intent of these types of resources. Larger companies such as Texaco and Firestone championed the Art Deco and later Streamline Moderne styles for their commercial stations.<sup>36</sup>

### THE FIRESTONE TIRE AND RUBBER COMPANY SERVICE STATION AT LINWOOD & TROOST

On September 5, 1929, the Firestone Company filed an application for a building permit to construct a one-stop service station at the corner of Linwood Boulevard and Troost Avenue. Similar to the buildings constructed in Evansville and Amarillo, the new Kansas City building was to be two stories with simple massing and ornamentation. Three additional floors could be added if desired at a future point. The *Kansas City Star* accused the company of circumventing guidelines disallowing gas stations on Kansas City’s boulevards by combining the service station with additional functions. The permit included three driveways from Linwood and two from Troost in order to access the gas pumps along the south of the building. Greasing racks and other maintenance apparatuses associated with the facility would be visible from the streets. As the *Star* observed, “Aside from the tire and battery screen, the application merely is for a monumental gasoline filling station on one of the principal boulevard corners in the city.”<sup>37</sup> The South Central Business Association (SCBA), whose members owned property within the blocks

<sup>34</sup> Curtis, *Modern Architecture Since 1900*, 223.

<sup>35</sup> Curtis, *Modern Architecture Since 1900*, 240.

<sup>36</sup> Barbara Capitman, Michael D. Kinerk, and Dennis Wilhelm, *Rediscovering Art Deco U.S.A.: A Nationwide Tour of Architectural Delights* (New York: Viking Studio Books, 1994), 26, 45.

<sup>37</sup> “Combines and Gets By,” *The Kansas City Star* (5 September 1929): 3.

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surrounding the future station, adamantly objected to the permit of a “glorified filling station” at this coveted intersection.<sup>38</sup>

Kansas City Superintendent of Buildings, William J. McMahon, did not immediately issue a building permit despite the corner being zoned for a commercial use, including a filling station. The location along a city boulevard also meant that the Kansas City Park Board would need to approve the application for the curb cuts along Linwood.<sup>39</sup>

A couple of days following the permit application, the SCBA met to discuss the plans and strategize how best to prevent the construction of the station. In attendance were local Firestone representative J.F. Ward, architects, city officials, and owners of property within the immediate vicinity.<sup>40</sup> Objections raised by property owners primarily hinged on the fear that such a facility would depreciate property values in the surrounding area; the SCBA believed that the prime site justified a more impressive development than the proposed service station. Residents and the SCBA also opposed the number of curb cuts, believing that the already busy intersection would become even more congested with the presence of a service station and its five driveways (*Figure 24*).<sup>41</sup> Detractors also cited the station design as reason to refuse a permit, believing the design and function of the station was incongruous with the neighborhood.<sup>42</sup>

Following their September 8 meeting, the SCBA hired lawyers in an attempt to legally obstruct the station being built. Appeals were made to the zoning board.<sup>43</sup> An injunction against the Park Board was filed in circuit court to prevent their approval of the curb cuts. Letters were even written to Firestone president, Harvey S. Firestone.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>38</sup> “Combines and Gets By,” 3; “A Fight On ‘Gas’ Pumps,” *The Kansas City Star* (6 September 1929): 18.

<sup>39</sup> “Combines and Gets By,” *The Kansas City Star* (5 September 1929): 3; “For Gast Station Delay,” *The Kansas City Star* (7 September 1929): 3.

<sup>40</sup> “A Fight On ‘Gas’ Pumps,” 18. No architects were specified in the article, only “the architects who prepared the plans.”

<sup>41</sup> “A Fight On ‘Gas’ Pumps,” 18.

<sup>42</sup> “Halts Filling Station,” *The Kansas City Star* (26 September 1929): 3.

<sup>43</sup> “A ‘Gas’ Station Appeal,” *The Kansas City Star* (22 September 1929): 7.

<sup>44</sup> “Move to Halt Station,” *The Kansas City Star* (25 September 1929): 2.

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City manager H.F. McElroy instructed William McMahan to issue the building permit Friday, September 20, 1929; however, McMahan withdrew the permit on advice of city counselors due to ongoing objections.<sup>45</sup> The Park Board's legal counsel also advised they not issue a permit for the curb cuts along Linwood, believing that the withdrawal of the building permit nullified any actions by the board.<sup>46</sup>

In response to the permit withdrawal, Firestone applied for a writ of mandamus from the circuit court to compel the city to reissue the permits for the building and curb cuts. Firestone believed the city was depriving them of its property rights without due process.<sup>47</sup> Unsatisfied with this action, the SCBA appealed to the Missouri Supreme Court, who issued a writ of prohibition against the circuit court judges, preventing any action on the writ of mandamus before the case could be heard before the Supreme Court.<sup>48</sup> The Firestone Company decided against waiting for the case to come before the high court, as the earliest that could have taken place was January 1930. Instead, the company asked the circuit court to dismiss its mandamus suit, stating that although withdrawn, the issued permit had not been revoked and therefore construction could begin. City Manager McElroy determined to take no action to prevent the construction, agreeing that the permit was technically still in good standing.<sup>49</sup> Site work began on October 17, 1929, following the dismissal of the mandamus suit.<sup>50</sup>

Due to the ongoing controversy over the site, Firestone and the SCBA determined to meet to come to an agreement over the project. Harvey S. Firestone sent his personal representative, James D. Newton, to Kansas City on October 18, and the meeting occurred the following day.<sup>51</sup> At the conference, Newton indicated an architect, presumably Charles A. Smith, had been hired to develop plans for a larger structure at the corner to harmonize with Troost Avenue corridor (*Figure 25*). The new plans called for a three-story building that would also provide parking facilities for 172 cars. Importantly, the canopy was to have a greater amount of Art Deco

<sup>45</sup> "A 'Gas' Station Appeal," *The Kansas City Star* (22 September 1929): 7; "Halts Filling Station," 3.

<sup>46</sup> "Halts Filling Station," 3.

<sup>47</sup> "Still After the Station," *The Kansas City Star* (1 October 1929): 17.

<sup>48</sup> "No Station Move Soon," *The Kansas City Star* (12 October 1929): 3.

<sup>49</sup> "On With 'Gas' Station," *The Kansas City Star* (17 October 1929): 3.

<sup>50</sup> "On With 'Gas' Station," 3.

<sup>51</sup> "A 'Gas' Station Truce," *The Kansas City Star* (19 October 1929): 3.

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ornamentation than previously planned, appeasing the initial objections that the station was not attractive enough for its location. Newton indicated that when constructed, the Linwood station would be the largest and costliest of the one-stop service stations erected by Firestone in the country. The meeting was cordial, and all left believing a better understanding had been reached.<sup>52</sup>

No further objections seem to have arisen, and work continued on the site and building through the end of 1929 and into 1930. Site excavation began in earnest in March 1930 after the design was finalized.<sup>53</sup> Estimated costs of the Firestone Station neared \$200,000, a substantial increase from the previous proposed building.<sup>54</sup>

The one-stop Firestone service station at Linwood and Troost opened the morning of August 9, 1930 (*Figure 26*). Russell Firestone, son of the founder Harvey S. Firestone, attended the inaugural ceremonies.<sup>55</sup> The grand opening festivities continued through August 16, with special gifts and sales for customers.<sup>56</sup>

The new Kansas City station was over twice as large as other One-Stop Stations. The ground floor alone provided 30,000 square feet of servicing area with four floors available for car storage, including the basement and roof. The *Kansas City Star* article announcing its opening stated the building was the largest in the country as of its opening. The architectural styling of the Kansas City station was also more pronounced than earlier examples.

#### The Design of the Firestone Station (Architectural Significance)

Constructed at the corner of two major transportation corridors, the Kansas City Firestone Service Station exhibits the consumer-oriented Art Deco style applied to the one-stop service station property type developed by the Firestone Company. The site allowed the building to face both Troost and Linwood, with the primary orientation south toward Linwood Boulevard.

<sup>52</sup> "Near Gas Station Peace," *The Kansas City Star* (20 October 1929): 14.

<sup>53</sup> "Meeting on Gas Station," *The Kansas City Star* (31 March 1930): 2.

<sup>54</sup> "Meeting on Gas Station," 2; \$3.1 million in 2020.

<sup>55</sup> "Firestone Station Ready," *The Kansas City Star* (8 August 1930): 2. Although reportedly in attendance, he is not in photo from the event, *Figure 27*.

<sup>56</sup> Advertisement in *The Kansas City Star* (8 August 1930): 12.

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The three-story, L-shaped facility is primarily utilitarian. The brick and concrete structure was divided into two functional halves: the west side contained the showroom, sales area, offices, and waiting room while the east half housed the service station functions, ranging from oil and brake service, to washing, to automobile storage. Ramps in the east half allowed vehicles access to each story from basement to roof.

Despite its utilitarian function, however, architect Charles A. Smith designed the public-facing portions of the building to catch the eye of passing motorists. A distinctive canopy shelters the two-story open air concourse along the south of the building. Smith applied Art Deco ornamentation such as polychrome brick and stylized floral motifs in cast stone to the canopy. The size, materials, and ornamentation achieved the desired effect to attract customers and anchor the corner of the major intersection.

Smith proposed two ornamental designs for the exterior of the canopy both featuring Art Deco motifs (*Figures 27 & 28*). The basic design was the same on both with small, segmented arch panels between decorative pilasters and a canted southwest corner as a statement piece. Pilaster caps extended above the parapet on both designs, and fluting adorned the inside faces of the columns. Both also featured the Firestone logo – an “F” within shield – at the ends of the north and east elevations. The difference between the two designs included the geometry and materials used. The first design, supported by neighboring property owners, relied on angles, zig-zags, and terra cotta to make a statement. The second, winning design, preferred by the Firestone company, featured stylized floral motifs, multi-colored brick, cast stone, and limestone that adorned the parapet.<sup>57</sup>

One year after sympathizing with the detractors, even the *Kansas City Star* praised the new station.

Because of opposition to a station at this corner, due to traffic conditions, the company undertook to meet the objections by remodeling its plans, reducing the number of driveways and adding greatly to the design and incidentally to the cost of the building, which now is operated without adding much to the congestion.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>57</sup> “Meeting on Gas Station,” *The Kansas City Star* (31 March 1930): 2.

<sup>58</sup> “Two Exemplary Structures,” *The Kansas City Star* (13 September 1930): 14.

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The paper further acknowledged the attractive design and hoped the building would stimulate further growth in the neighborhood.<sup>59</sup> The building continued to serve as a Firestone one-stop station through the 1960s.<sup>60</sup>

*Charles A. Smith, Architect*

Born in Ohio, Charles Ashley Smith (1866-1948) began his architectural career at the age of sixteen, working as a draftsman for the Des Moines firm Bell & Hackney. Smith moved to Kansas City in 1887 when William Hackney opened an office in the city, becoming a partner in 1892.<sup>61</sup> Between 1899 and 1936, Smith also held the position of architect for the Kansas City School Board, designing over sixty new buildings and additions for the school district.<sup>62</sup> His designs incorporated various historical eclectic styles. In addition to schools, Smith designed numerous buildings throughout the city, including civic, residential, commercial, and religious facilities while principal of the firm Smith, Rea & Lovitt (1910-1921) and under his own name thereafter. Notable works by Smith include the Classical Revival Paseo YMCA at 1822-1828 The Paseo (1914, extant), the Romanesque Revival Woodland School at 711 Woodland Avenue (1921, extant), and the Gothic Revival Capital Garage at 1306-1310 Main Street (1928, demolished). His last commission was the Unity Temple at 747 West 47<sup>th</sup> Street (extant), a streamlined version of the Romanesque Revival completed after his death in 1948.<sup>63</sup>

### CONCLUSION

Constructed and opened in 1930, the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company Service Station is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a representative example of Firestone's One-Stop Service Station developed in the late 1920s. The building sits at the prominent intersection of Troost Avenue and Linwood Boulevard. Because of its location, surrounding property owners advocated for a design worthy of the corner. Charles A. Smith, a noted local architect, designed the mostly utilitarian building with a character-defining canopy

<sup>59</sup> "Two Exemplary Structures," 14.

<sup>60</sup> According to available city directories.

<sup>61</sup> Sherry Piland, "Charles A. Smith," *Historic Kansas City Foundation Gazette* (January/February 1986): 4.

<sup>62</sup> Elizabeth Rosin and Rachel Nugent, "Historic Resources of the Kansas City Missouri School District Pre-1970," National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form (2012): F-35.

<sup>63</sup> Piland, "Charles A. Smith," 4-5; "Charles A. Smith Dies," *Kansas City Times* (12 January 1948): n.p.

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featuring Art Deco ornamentation. Stylized floral motifs, geometric carvings, fluting around masonry openings, and the use of multi-colored brick adorn the parapet of the canopy that shelters a two-story open-air concourse. When it opened, the Firestone Station was one of the largest and costliest one-stop service stations in the country due primarily to the cooperation of the neighborhood, Firestone representatives, and architect.

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**Geographical Data**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The Firestone Tire and Rubber Company Service Station occupies its entire legal parcel. This L-shaped property is described as follows by the Jackson County Assessor: Withers Place, Part of lot 4, beginning at the NE corner of Linwood & Troost, thence E 185' thence N 160' thence W 95' thence S 60' thence W 90' thence S 100' to point of beginning.

Today, Troost Avenue and Linwood Blvd form the public west and south boundaries, respectively. A vacant lot creates the east boundary, and an L-shaped alley forms the north and partial west boundary (*Figure 3*).

**Boundary Justification**

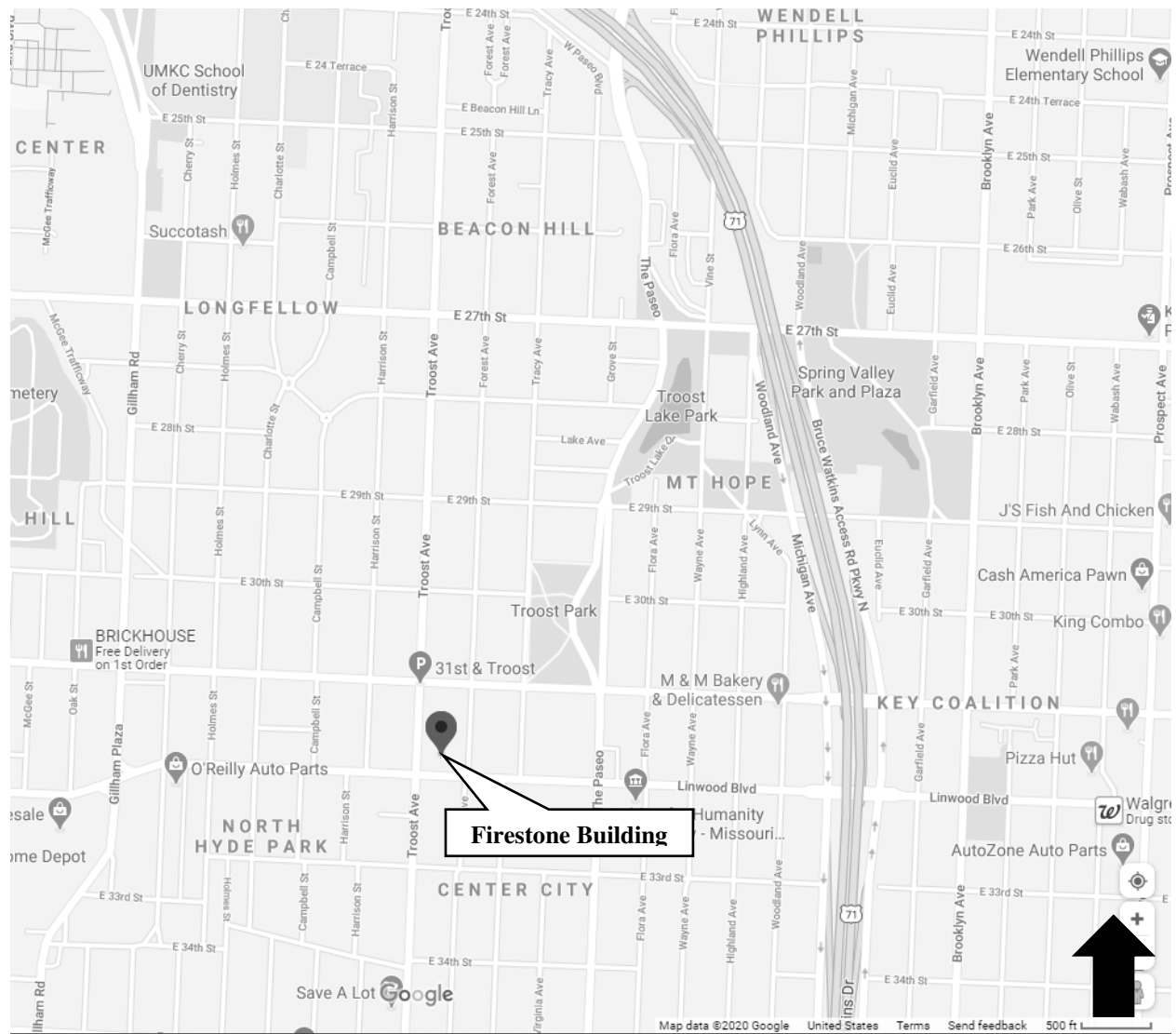
The selected boundary incorporates the historic building and the historic land on which it sits.

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**Figure 1.** Contextual map, showing the building within Kansas City. Source: Base map from Google.



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**Figure 2.** Top: The 3100 Block of Troost Avenue, looking south from center of block. The Firestone Station is in the background at left. Bottom: East Linwood Boulevard, looking west toward the intersection with Troost. Source: Brad Finch, March & December 2020.



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**Figure 3.** Boundary map. Boundary denoted by dashed line. Source: Base map from Kansas City, Missouri Parcel Viewer ([maps.kcmo.org/apps/parcelviewer](https://maps.kcmo.org/apps/parcelviewer)).

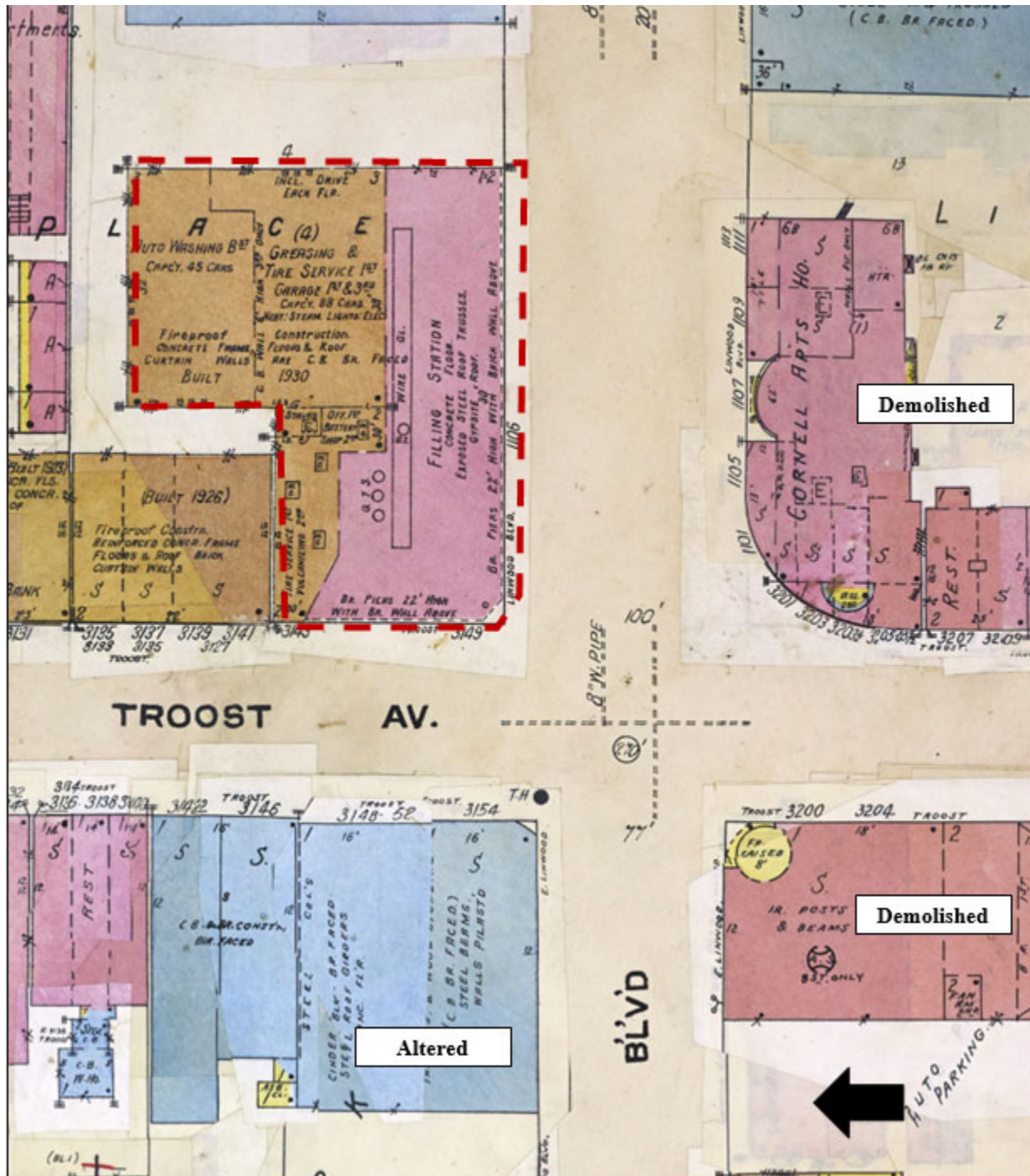


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**Figure 4.** Snippet of the 1951 Sanborn map, showing the corner of Troost and Linwood The Firestone Station boundary represented with dashed line. Source: *Insurance Maps of Kansas City, Missouri*, Vol. 4 (New York: Sanborn Map Company 1909, rev. February 1951), 465.



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**Figure 5.** Exterior photo key. Source: Base map from Base map from Kansas City, Missouri Parcel Viewer.

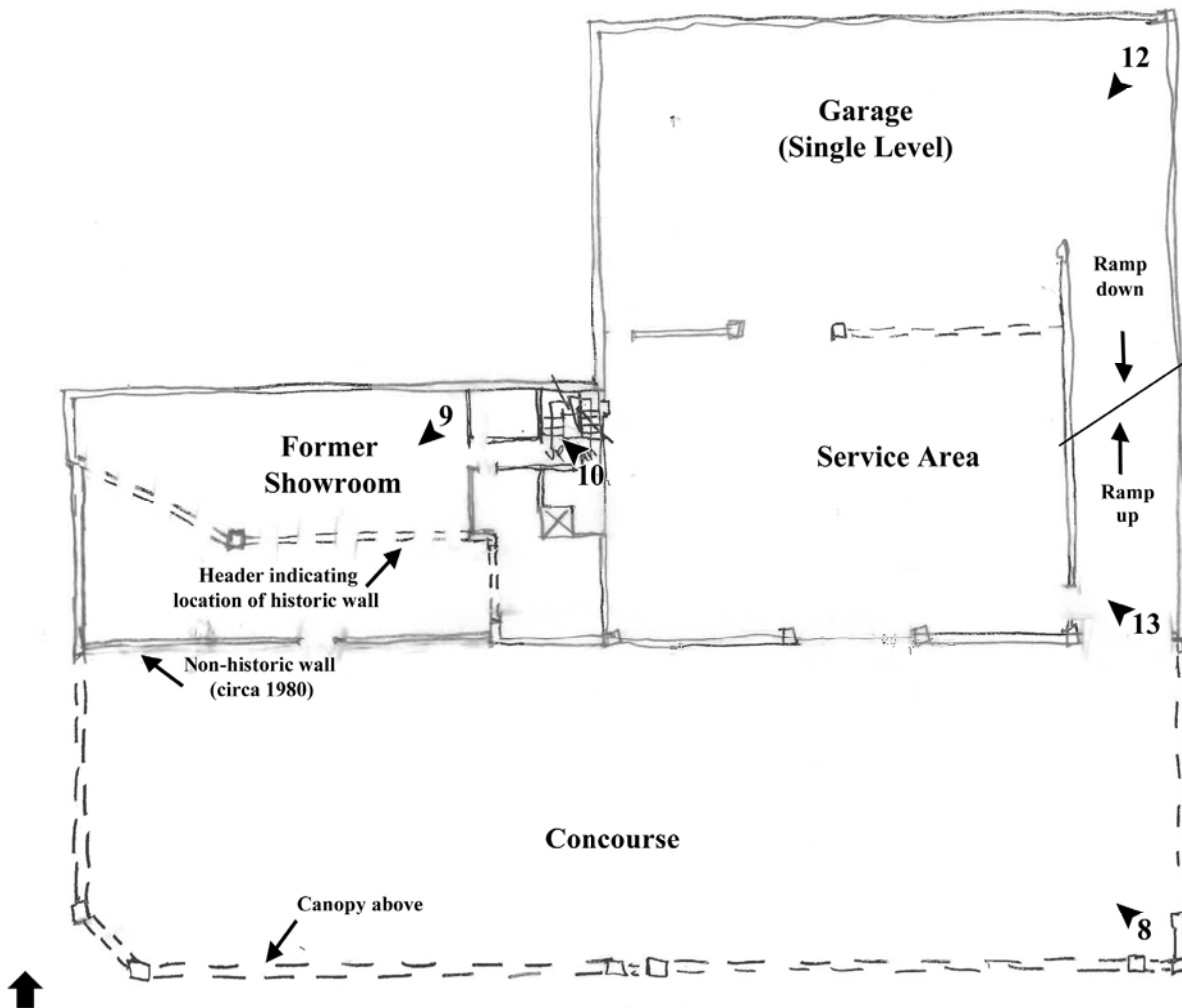


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**Figure 6.** Current first Floor Plan and Photo Key. Not to Scale. Sketch by author based on historic Second Floor plan from Charles A. Smith, Service Station for Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, architectural plans, 1930. State Historical Society of Missouri, AR Collection, AP Card: 053.004.



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**Figure 7.** South elevation under canopy, looking NNE and showing the non-historic west half.  
Source: Brad Finch, December 2020.



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**Figure 8.** Parapet details on southwest corner and south elevation of canopy. Source: Brad Finch, December 2020.



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**Figure 9.** Partial south elevation of the Firestone Station in 1931, showing the historic configuration of the north wall of the concourse. The historic steel windows at the second story .  
Source: Anderson Photo Company, "Firestone Building During Fire," Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City, Missouri, Public Library, South Central Business Association Records, item 109590.



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**Figure 10.** The Firestone Station in 1989, looking NW. Note that by this time the infill of the north wall under the canopy is in place, the skylight is uncovered, the dividing columns removed, and some bronze fixtures in place. Source: Dory DeAngelo, "Firestone Tire Building," Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City, Missouri, Public Library, General Collection, item 102985.



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**Figure 11.** West elevation, showing non-historic windows. Note the light fixtures, added after 1930; they have been removed as of December 2020. Source: Brad Finch, November 2019.

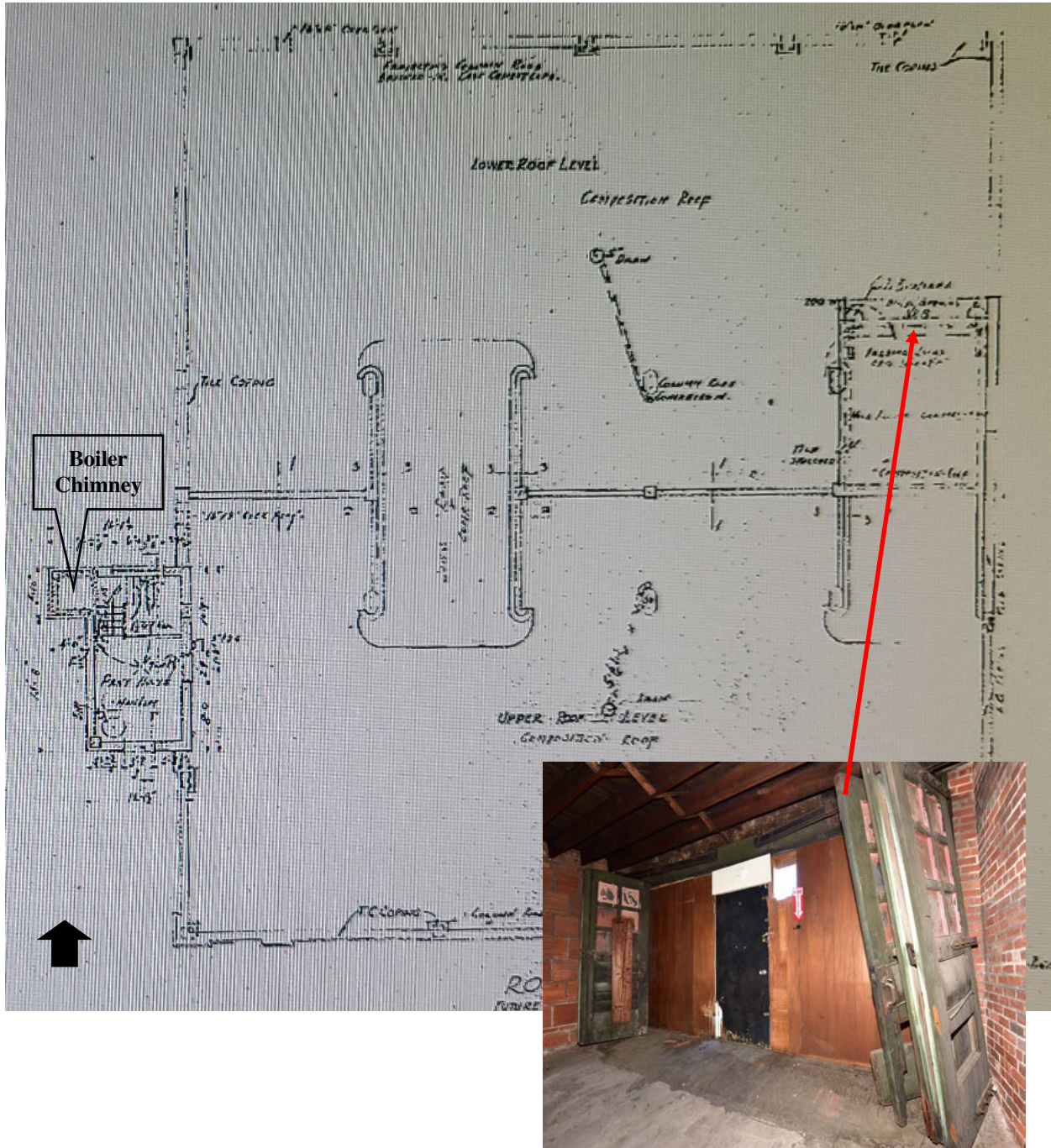


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**Figure 12.** Partial roof plan, showing east parking deck and circulation core. Not to Scale. Source: Charles A. Smith, Service Station for Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, architectural plans, 1930. State Historical Society of Missouri, AR Collection, AP Card: 053.004. Inset is historic butterfly doors leading onto roof parking deck. Source: Brad Finch, December 2020.



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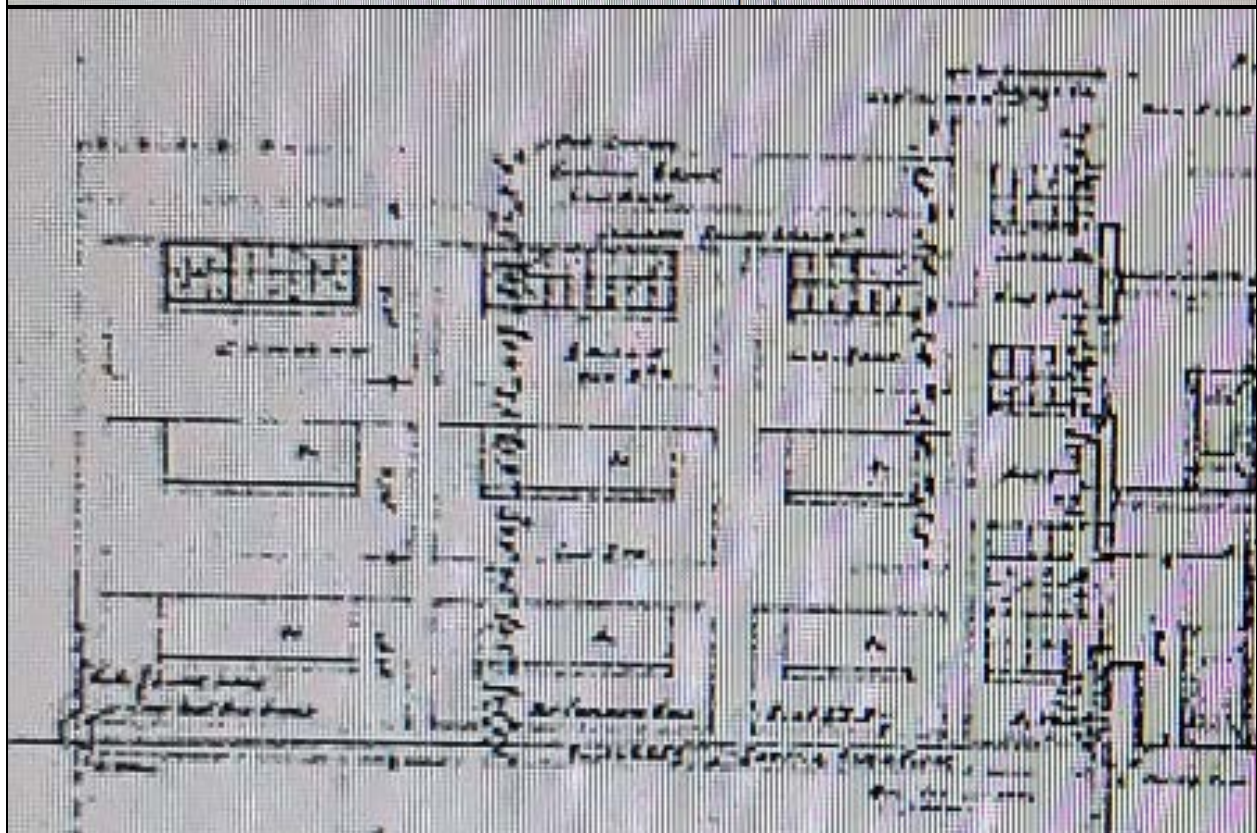
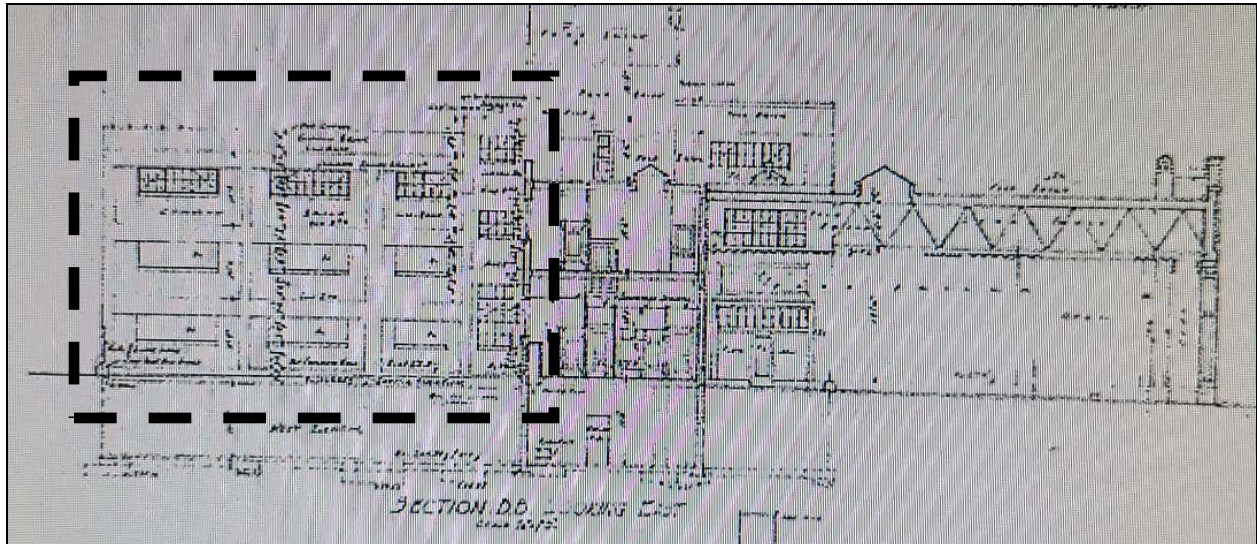
Jackson County, Missouri

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N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 13.** Section BB, cut north-to-south, looking east and showing the west elevation of the garage along the alley within dashed box and enlarged below. Not to Scale. Source: Charles A. Smith, Service Station for Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, architectural plans, 1930. State Historical Society of Missouri, AR Collection, AP Card: 053.004.



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**Figure 14.** Roof and skylights over the two-story portion of the building, looking southwest from the northeast corner. Source: Brad Finch, December 2020.



**Figure 15.** Historic second story exterior wall behind bulkhead, view looking west. The decorative brick panel with centered diamond pattern is visible below the opening (arrow). Source: Brad Finch, December 2020.

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**Figure 16.** Extant historic storefront in west bay of historic south elevation. Source: Brad Finch, December 2020.



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**Figure 17.** South (high) parking level of the parking garage, looking northeast toward ramp. The roof was historically exposed concrete but was covered with EPDM at an unknown date. Source: Brad Finch, December 2020.

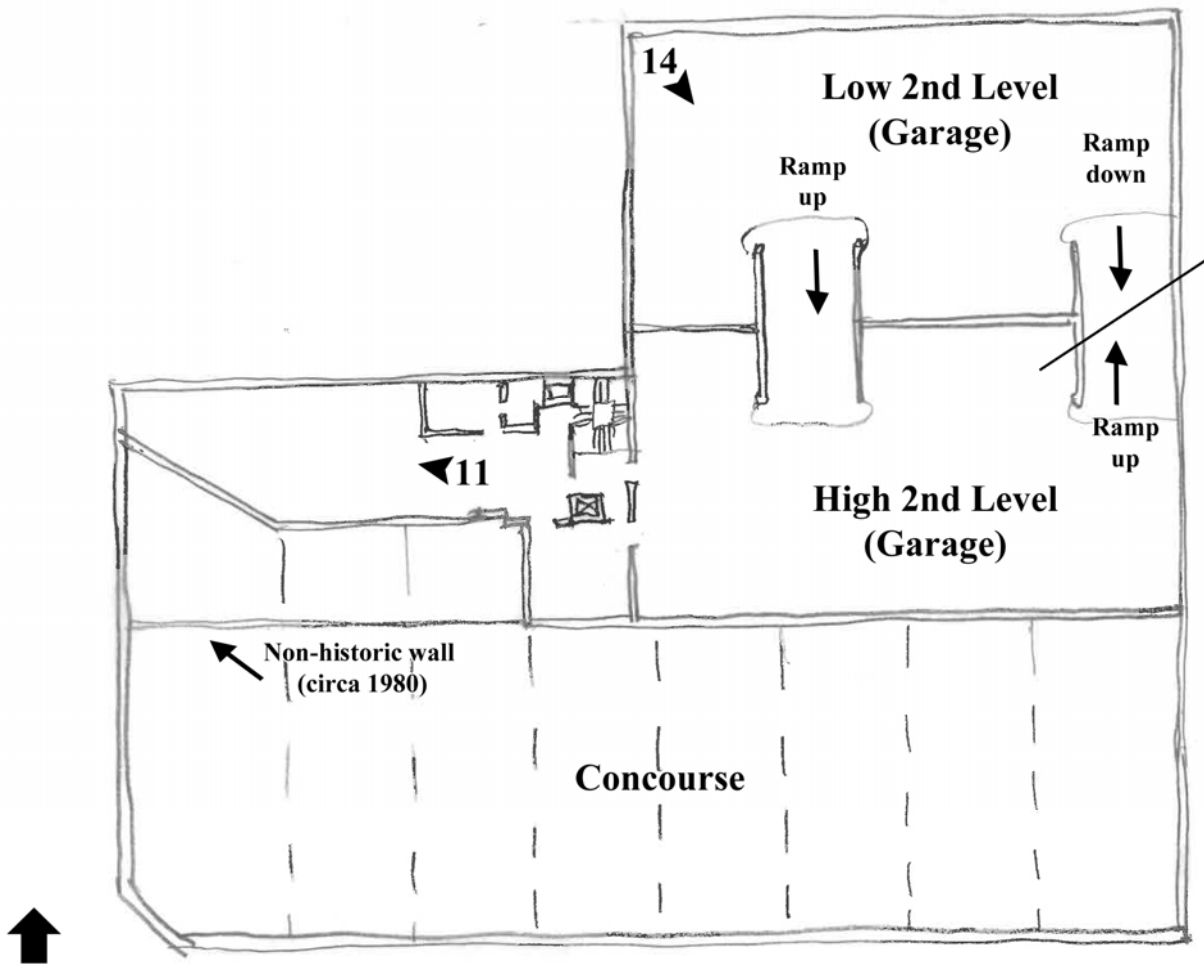


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**Figure 18.** Second Floor Plan and Photo Key. Historic and current plan. Not to Scale. Source: Sketch based on second floor plan by Charles A. Smith, Service Station for Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, architectural plans, 1930. State Historical Society of Missouri, AR Collection, AP Card: 053.004.

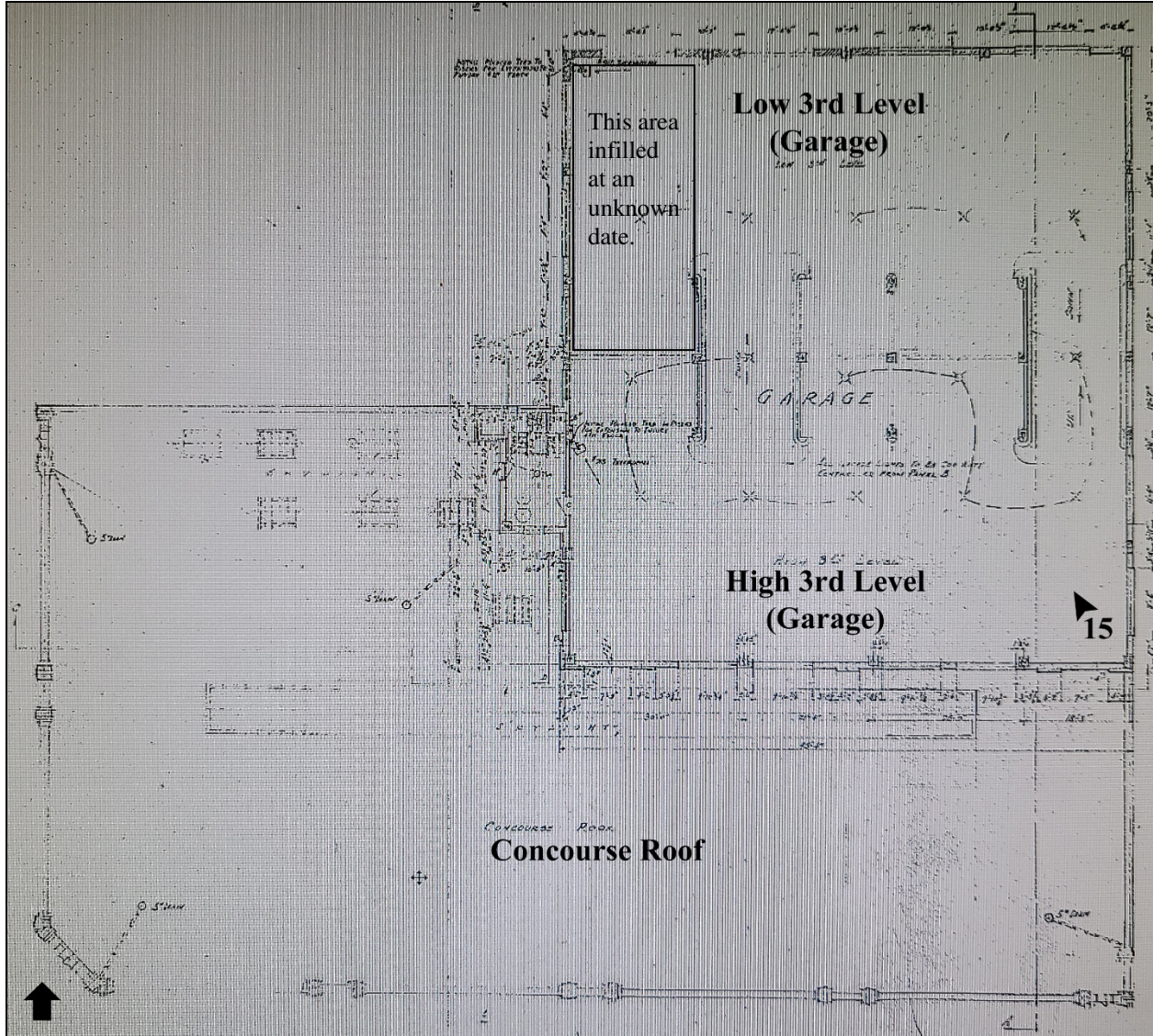


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**Figure 19.** Third Floor Plan and Photo Key. Historic and current plan. Not to Scale. Source: Charles A. Smith, Service Station for Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, architectural plans, 1930. State Historical Society of Missouri, AR Collection, AP Card: 053.004.

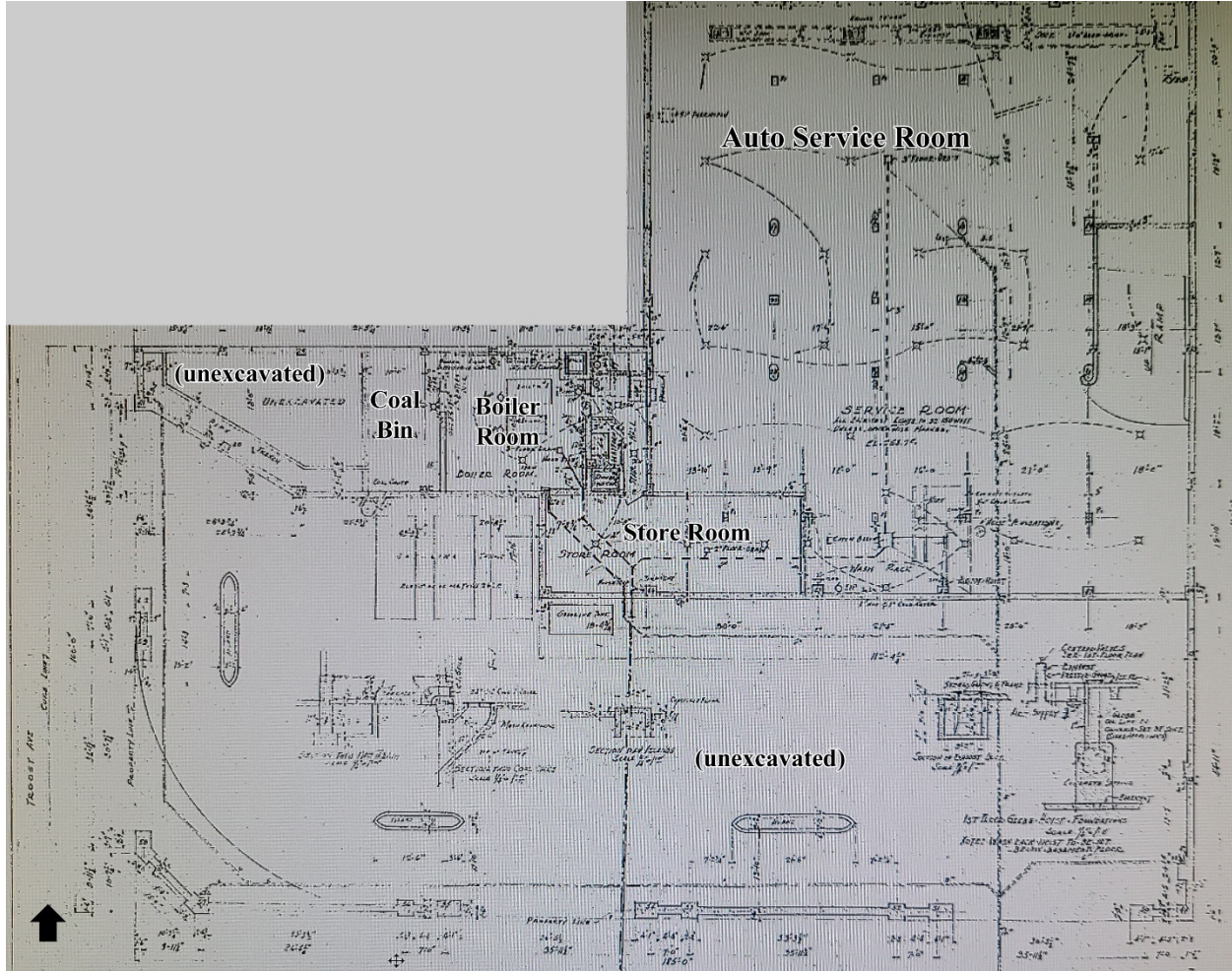


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**Figure 20.** Basement Floor Plan (historic and current). Not to Scale. Source: Charles A. Smith, Service Station for Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, architectural plans, 1930. State Historical Society of Missouri, AR Collection, AP Card: 053.004.



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**Figure 21.** Top: the 1930 Firestone one-stop station in Evansville, Indiana in 1977. Source: Douglas Stern, "Firestone Tire & Rubber Company Service Store," National Register nomination (1983). Bottom: the Louis H. Smith Inc. Firestone Store in Amarillo, Texas, 2015. Source: Melissa Dailey, "Louis H. Smith, Inc. Firestone Store," National Register nomination (2015).



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**Figure 22.** The 1931 Firestone Service Station in Detroit, Michigan with associated parking garage. The station was demolished in the 1960s. Source: Detroit News, "Streets; Vernor. At Trumbull showing Grand River," 4 August 1936, Virtual Motor City Collection (vmc48586), Detroit News Photograph Collection (UAV002691), Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.



**Figure 23.** The first Firestone Station at 2007 Grand Avenue, opened in May 1930. Photo from 1940. Source: Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City 1940 Tax Assessment Photograph

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Collection, District 4, Block 258. Below is the station today. Source: Google Streetview, March 2019.



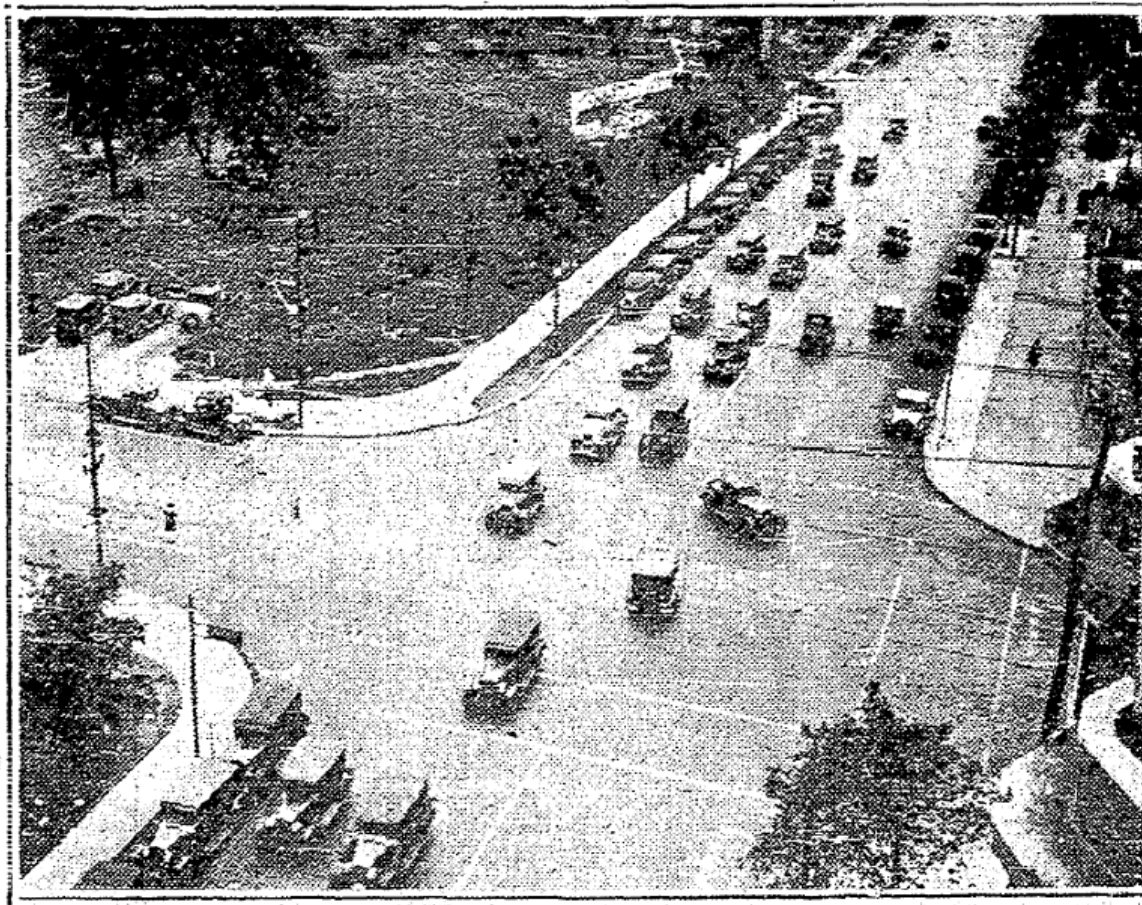
**Figure 24.** The intersection of Linwood Blvd and Troost Ave, looking NE toward the open parcel where the station would be constructed. Source: *Kansas City Star* (6 September 1929): 18.

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WHERE FILLING STATIONS WOULD INVADE NEW DISTRICTS, CREATING TRAFFIC HAZARDS AND DISFIGURING BOULEVARDS.



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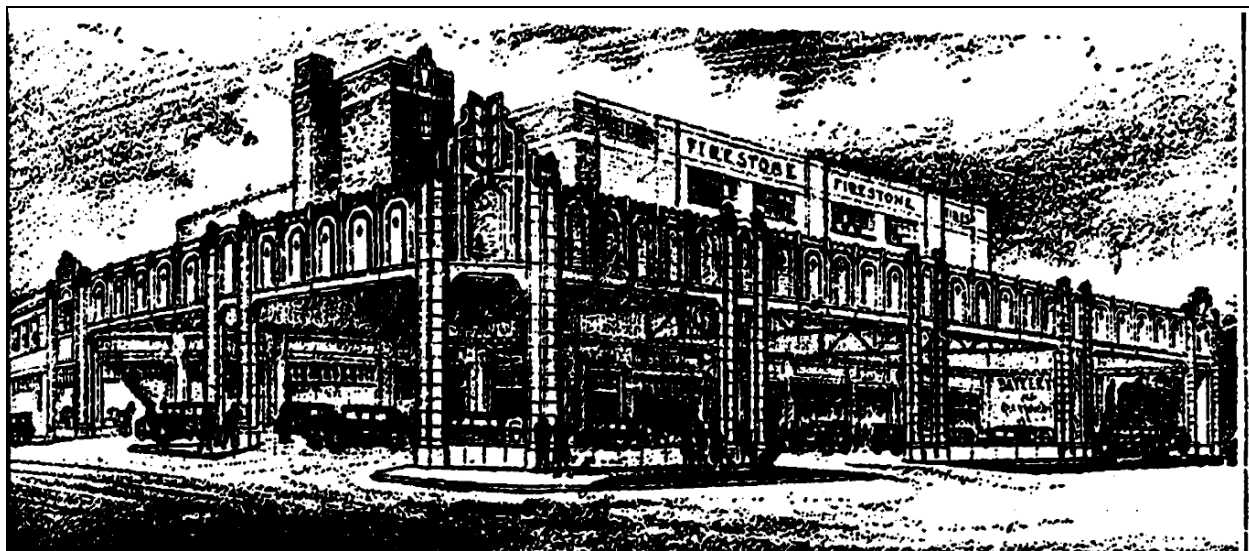
Jackson County, Missouri

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N/A

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**Figure 25.** Stylized rendering of the building by architect Charles A. Smith with details of design #2. Source: "How the One-Stop Service Station will be Expanded to Maximum Proportions Here," *Kansas City Star* (15 June 1930): 3-D.



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**Figure 26.** Opening day of the Firestone Station August 9, 1930. Architect Charles A. Smith is at right. Source: Source: Montgomery (photographer), "Firestone Store Opening," Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City, Missouri, Public Library, General Collection, item 100594.



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Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. Service Station

Name of Property

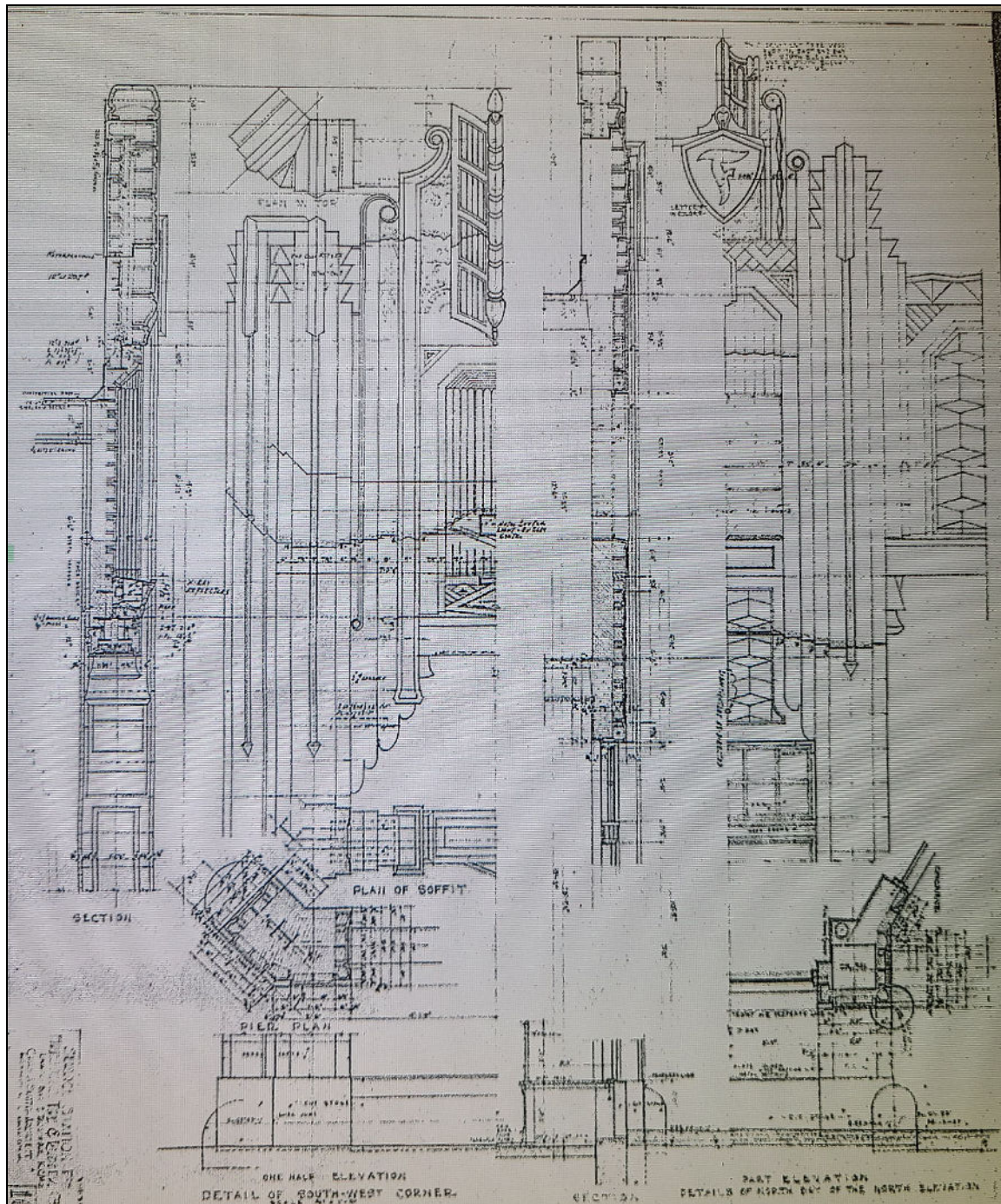
Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 27.** Detail of exterior decoration, design #1. Not to Scale. Source: Charles A. Smith, Service Station for Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, architectural plans, 1930. State Historical Society of Missouri, AR Collection, AP Card: 053.004.

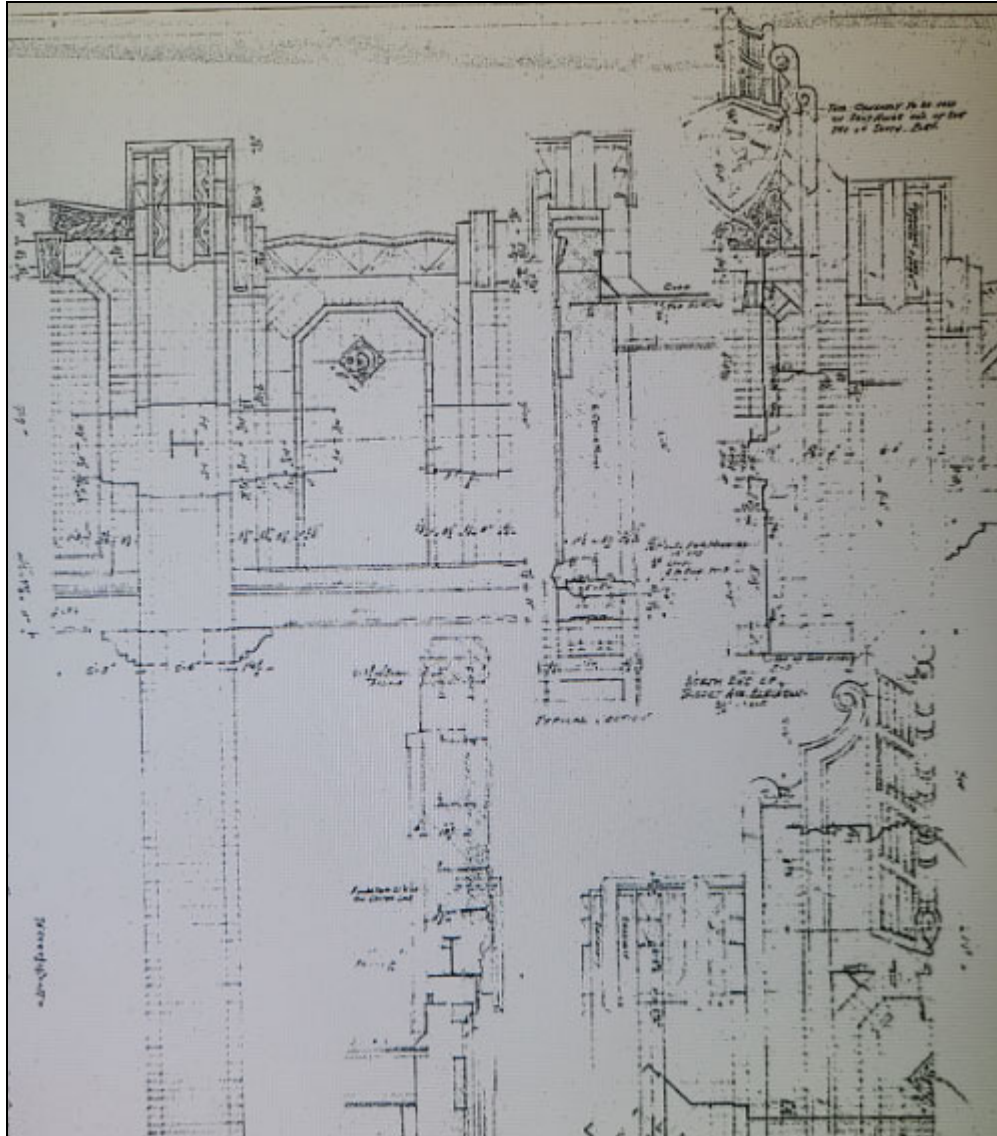


National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 54

Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. Service Station
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**Figure 28.** Detail of exterior decoration, design #2 (as built). Not to Scale. Source: Charles A. Smith, Service Station for Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, architectural plans, 1930. State Historical Society of Missouri, AR Collection, AP Card: 053.004.





LEFT TURN  
YIELD  
ON GREEN

Linwood Blvd

AHEAD

NEIGHBOURS  
BUILDING  
THE  
ROOTS OF  
MIDTOWN













PARKING















