

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name N/A
other names/site number Excelsior Springs Hall of Waters Commercial West Historic District [preferred]

2. Location

street & number along portions of Thompson & St. Louis Avenues; South, Main, Marietta,
Spring Streets; and Elms Boulevard [n/a] not for publication
city or town Excelsior Springs [n/a] vicinity
state Missouri code MO county Clay code 047 zip code 64024

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this
 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property
be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Claire F. Blackwell 19 April 99
Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO Date
Missouri Department of Natural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register See continuation sheet [].	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet [].	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, explain see continuation sheet [].	_____	_____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	20	6
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		
			buildings
			sites
			structures
			objects
		20	6
			Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

Name of related multiple property listing.

n/a

n/a

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
 COMMERCE/TRADE: department store
 COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store
 COMMERCE/TRADE: financial institution
 DOMESTIC: hotel
 DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling
 HEALTH CARE: resort
 HEALTH CARE: clinic
 RECREATION & CULTURE: auditorium

Current Functions
 COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store
 COMMERCE/TRADE: restaurant
 COMMERCE/TRADE: office building
 DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling
 GOVERNMENT: city hall
 RECREATION & CULTURE: museum
 RELIGION: religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

LATE VICTORIAN
 LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS
 MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials

foundation BRICK
 CONCRETE
 walls BRICK
 STONE
 root ASPHALT
 other GLASS

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

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

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

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

Areas of Significance

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

Periods of Significance

ca. 1894-1948

Significant Dates

n/a

Significant Person(s)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Jackson, Frank J.

Schrage, William F.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other:

Name of repository: Excelsior Springs Historical Museum

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 9 acres

UTM References

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	393410	4355300			

C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cydney E. Millstein, architectural historian, in assoc. with Herb Duncan, architect
organization Architectural & Historical Research date July 1998
street & number P.O. Box 22551 telephone 816-363-0567
city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64113

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

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

Additional Items

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

Property Owner

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

name _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Excelsior Springs
Hall of Waters Commercial
West Historic District
Clay County, Missouri

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SUMMARY

The Excelsior Springs Hall of Waters Commercial West Historic District contains twenty-six (26) buildings. Of the total number of resources, twenty (20) contribute to the historic architectural qualities and historic associations of the district, while six (6) buildings are non-contributing because of age and/or modification to the primary facade. The construction dates of the contributing buildings range from c. 1894 to c. 1942 while the dates of the non-contributing properties range from c. 1909 to 1951. Although some alterations to the storefronts of the contributing buildings have occurred within the district, overall, the area maintains its integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship and location.

INTRODUCTION

Located in Clay County, approximately thirty-three miles northeast of Kansas City, the Excelsior Springs Hall of Waters Commercial West Historic District includes a significant portion of the Original Town plat of Excelsior Springs and serves as the western half of the city's downtown area. It retains much the same compactness today that it did in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The district has a long history as a commercial center and the buildings that survive reflect that use today. The district consists of five full blocks of commercial buildings and portions of three additional city blocks. The district boundaries are somewhat irregular and in most instances are defined by the depth of one building. The northern boundary of the district generally lies to the northern property line of Spring Street, while the eastern boundary follows Marietta Street and jogs to the east along South Street to Main Street. The southern boundary encompasses the southern boundary line of those properties on the south side of South Street, and follows the eastern property line of those properties along the eastern side of Thompson Avenue and finally to Elms Boulevard. The western boundary is generally defined by Thompson Avenue.

Of the total number of resources included in the district, five were constructed from c. 1894-1905; twelve between 1909-1919, eight between c. 1922-1933, and one between c. 1942-1951. The majority of the properties are commercial in nature and are constructed of brick with stone detailing; a significant number feature brick corbeling, prominent storefront fenestration and are one to three stories in height with flat, parapeted roofs. In terms of style, the vast majority of these buildings are designed in various vernacular interpretations, although there are a few that feature ornamental cornice

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detailing that reflect secondary influences such as Victorian. There are two predominate sub-types of commercial structures in the district: the two-story Victorian era building and the one-part commercial block. The Victorian Commercial buildings generally display a decorative treatment of the cornice line while the one-part commercial block structures are one-story without embellishment. Among the remaining contributing buildings, the following architectural styles are exhibited: Neo-Classical Revival, Georgian/Colonial Revival and Art Deco.

The following building-by-building descriptions are organized south to north generally beginning at Elms Boulevard and St. Louis Avenue, then following Thompson Avenue north, east along South Street, west along Spring Street to Marietta Street. The street address appears first, then the building date (if known), architect/builder (if known), and description with comments on style. Contributing status and photograph reference(s) are also cited.

Elms Boulevard

1. 505 Elms Boulevard, Excelsior Springs Post Office, 1914 with addition. One-story brick, Neo-Classical Revival with limestone trim and shaped parapet with tile coping. Centered aluminum-framed, double-door main entrance set in an entablature surround is crowned by a decorative panel set beneath an original transom. Four twelve-over-twelve, double-hung, sash windows are separated by prominent Ionic columns; end bay fenestration is six-over-six. Secondary fenestration, flanked by brick piers with stone capitals are similarly designed, multipaned, double-hung sash. Other notable features of the original building feature stone sills and lintels, wide water table, molded and denticulated cornice, and a centered, decorative stone panel in relief. Original transoms have been obscured. Rear addition (c. 1942-1950), is built along a slope which allows for full-height basement fenestration. (Contributing; photograph #1)

St. Louis Avenue

2. 402 St. Louis Avenue, McCleary Thornton-Minor Hospital, c. 1910, with addition. Two-story brick, single entry with display windows. Symmetrically designed south facade; storefront features a centrally-placed, recessed metal-framed entry and entry vestibule with flat roof canopy and multipaned transoms. Bulkhead at south facade is

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stone; end piers feature stone bases and pendant-like ornamentation. Storefront fenestration, which wraps to the far south bay of the east facade, is tripartite plate glass with prominent transoms. Second-story ribboned fenestration at the south and east facades is non-original, triple-hung, one-over-one-over one, with brick sills. Bays of the east facade are divided by brick piers. First-story fenestration of the east facade has been modified with tripartite window units; original openings have been partially infilled. The west facade features one-over-one, double-hung, sash wood windows; several doorways, which once led to the former adjoining building, have been infilled. Sheet metal cornice at roof line, which wraps to the east and west facades, features prominent modillions. Non-original addition at the north facade. (Contributing; photograph #2)

Thompson Avenue

3. 449-463 Thompson Avenue, c. 1922-1926. One-story brick, multiple entry with display window, commercial building. Seven storefronts with recessed entrances and prominent plate glass windows. Original multipaned transoms crowning each storefront are extant, although some have been obscured. Brick corbeling at the roof line and stone coping. (Contributing; photograph #3)
4. 427 Thompson Avenue, Montgomery Ward Building, 1929. One-story brick and stone, multiple entry with display windows, Art Deco commercial building. Two-symmetrically-placed recessed entrances with non-original aluminum-framed double doors set beneath original transoms flanked by plate glass storefront windows. A wide continuous transom, separated by chevron patterned banding, has been obscured by signage and plywood. The stepped parapet features chevron banding and stylized initials "MW" intertwined at the apex. Ceramic tile bulkhead. Barrel-vaulted roof. (Contributing; photograph #4)
5. 426 Thompson Avenue, DX Service Station, c. 1942-1951. Drastically altered from the original design, this former concrete block gasoline station has been modified with a mansard roof with wide overhang, wood piers, and lattice-covered aluminum-framed plate glass fenestration and doors. Main entrance faces east. (Non-contributing, photograph #5)

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6. 423 Thompson Avenue, J.J. Newberry Company Building, c. 1929 with addition. One-story brick, multiple entry with display windows, commercial building. Two recessed entrances set in-between aluminum-framed, plate-glass storefront windows. Original multipaned transoms obscured by cloth awnings. Corrugated aluminum paneling obscures upper portion of the primary facade. (Non-contributing, photograph #4)
 7. 421 Thompson Avenue, J.S. Lewis Dry Goods Company Building, c. 1909-1913. One-story brick, single entry with display windows, commercial building. Off-centered, recessed entrance with aluminum-framed door and plate glass fenestration. Corrugated aluminum paneling obscures upper portion of the primary facade. (Non-contributing, photograph #4)
 8. 417 Thompson Avenue, Standard Publishing Company Building, c. 1909-1913. The original primary facade of this one-story brick commercial building has been drastically altered from the original design. Original brick storefront has been covered with plaster. Recessed entrance with aluminum-framed door. Wrought-iron railing. (Non-contributing; photograph #4)
 9. 415 Thompson Avenue, J.C. Penney Company Building, c. 1929. One-story brick, single entry with display windows, commercial building. Off-centered recessed, original wooden double-door entrance; prominent wood-framed, plate glass windows. Ceramic tile bulkhead. Original transom obscured by vertical board paneling. Basket weave brick patterning above pressed metal coursing; stepped parapet with stone coping. (Contributing; photograph #4)
 10. 414 Thompson Avenue, Silvers Garage and Dodge/Chrysler Showroom, c. 1919. Flat-roof and barrel vaulted two-story brick commercial building. The flat roofed unit is seven bays long and one bay deep. The original fenestration and overhead doors, separated by prominent brick piers, have been infilled with plaster. A single multipaned, casement style window at the north elevation is extant. Other notable features of the main unit include brick corbeling and a stepped parapet with stone coping. The double barrel vaulted unit to the west facade is constructed on a lower street level. Original fenestration, separated by concrete piers, has been infilled with concrete block. Secondary entrances at the rear or west elevation.

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(Contributing, photograph #5).

11. 409-413 Thompson Avenue, c. 1926-42. One-story brick, multiple entry with display windows, commercial building, modified from the original design. Dual, recessed entrances feature non-original aluminum-framed doors; prominent plate glass display windows. Corrugated aluminum paneling above the storefront obscures original brickwork. Non-original metal canopy. (Non-contributing; photograph #4)
12. 405 Thompson Avenue, Gem Drug Company Building c. 1926-1942. One-story brick, single entry with display windows, commercial building. Symmetrically-placed recessed entrance with wood door crowned by a transom and flanked by plate glass display windows. Original transom obscured by wood paneling. Basket weave brick patterning below parapet with stone coping. Brick bulkhead. (Contributing; photograph #4)
13. 403 Thompson Avenue, c. 1926-1942. One-story brick, single entry with display windows, commercial building. Off-centered entry with aluminum-framed door and plate glass window. Transom obscured. (Contributing; photograph #4)
14. 311 Thompson Avenue, J.W. Coen, Grocer, c. 1911. One-story brick, multiple entry with display windows, commercial building. Canted facade; two recessed entrances with aluminum-framed doors. Prominent plate glass display windows. Original continuous transom has been infilled. Brick corbeling at the roof line. Metal paneling obscures a portion of the brick bulkhead. Non-original metal canopy. (Contributing; photograph #6)
15. 112 Thompson Avenue, Elks Lodge No. 1001, c. 1913-1926. Two-story brick and stone, Georgian Revival/Colonial influenced meeting hall. Symmetrically-placed entrance with a multipaned wooden door, multipaned sidelights and transom set in an entablature surround is crowned by a pressed metal architrave below a segmental arch. Flanking the entrance are engaged pilasters. Fenestration is wood, one-over-one, double-hung sash with stone sills and brick lintels with stone keystone. Primary facade fenestration is tripartite. A full-width patio, with brick foundation and balustrade, is placed at the front facade. Three entrances area placed at the south facade. Prominent brick chimney, north facade. Limestone foundation. Pressed metal water table. Addition.

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southwest facade. (Contributing; photograph #7)

South Street

16. 101 South Street, The Buckley Building, c. 1909-1913. Two-story yellow brick four-plex. Centered recessed entry with wood framed door and sidelights; leaded glass transom extant. Polygonal end bays. Fenestration is Prairie style, multipaned, double-hung sash with stone lugsills and wooden surrounds. Three-quarter, two-story porch with flat roof and wooden rail. Brick piers support wide entablature. Second-story entrance repeats design of first-story unit. Fenestration of secondary facades duplicates that of the main facade. Tuck-in garage entrance with non-original door, east facade. Multi-story rear porches; second story units have been enclosed. Brick corbeling at roof line. (Contributing; photograph #8)

17. 117-119 South Street, Snapp's Hotel, Frank J. Jackson (Jackson & McIlvain, architects), 1913 with additions. Four/five story, brick and stone hotel with flat, parapeted roof. Building is H-shaped in plan; primary facade faces north. Centered entrance with double-door and sidelights with non-original canopy. Tripartite, pointed arch, multipaned fenestration with stone lug sills at the first story. Recessed porch with pointed arch openings west of the main entrance. Brick pilasters with stone base and amortizements separate bays. Upper-story fenestration is three-over-one, double-hung sash with stone lugsills and brick lintels. Terra-cotta stringcoursing between third and fourth stories. Fourth story fenestration features decorative terra-cotta surrounds; central window units additionally framed in terra-cotta. Fenestration of the secondary facades, with few exceptions, duplicates primary facade units. Sloping west facade features a one-story, flat roofed sun porch with exposed rafter tails, terminating as a patio on the south end. The rear or south facade features several pointed arched window units as well as one secondary entry and two overhead entrances. Additional features include stone foundation, stone and tile coping, and two, modest additions. (Contributing; photograph #9, 10)

18. 118 South Street, Goff House; Hotel Topoka, c. 1894-1900. Two-story, Permastone veneered brick commercial building. Canted recessed entrance at the southwest facade; wood frame entry door flanked by

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prominent plate glass fenestration. Secondary entrances on the west and south elevations with wood doors. Original second-story fenestration obscured by wood fencing pales. Tile coping at roof line. (Contributing; photograph #11)

19. 201-209 South Street, Wholf's Tavern and Royal Hotel, 1898; c. 1910. Four/five story, brick commercial building. Built in two phases, the original east unit is four stories and features a centered, double-door entrance set beneath a transom that has been infilled with wood. Large plate glass fenestration with stone sills and brick surround. Recessed flat roof porch, with prominent brick piers at first-story, wraps to the east facade and a portion of the south or rear facade. Fenestration of upper stories is one-over-one, double-hung, sash with stone sills and brick lintels; center bay units feature multipaned sidelights. Fenestration at the first-story of the east facade features stained glass transoms. The five-story west unit features multiple recessed entrances and plate glass fenestration with leaded glass transoms separated by brick piers. Upper story fenestration is one-over-one, double-hung, sash with stone lugsills and brick surrounds. A wood water table separates the fourth and fifth stories. Wide, sheet metal cornice with multiple modillions unifies both buildings. A one-story terra-cotta mansard roof stucco tower is set back from the main, north facade of the west unit. (Contributing; photograph #12, 13)
20. 213-217 South Street, Washington Hotel; Orpheus Theatre, c. 1900-1905. Three-story brick multiple entry with display windows, Victorian commercial building. Original recessed storefront entrance has been altered with wood infill and metal sheathing, although the far east bay retains its plate glass fenestration and leaded glass transom. Metal lintel extant. Upper-story fenestration is segmental, one-over one, double-hung sash with stone lugsills and brick keystones at the lintel. Brick corbeling and belt coursing. (Contributing; photograph #13)
21. 218 South Street, 1909-1913 with alterations. Two-story commercial building. Original brick exterior has been drastically altered with granite and stone aggregate. Original fenestration is no longer extant. (Non-contributing; photograph #6).

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Spring Street

22. 213 Spring Street, Craven Law Offices, 1909. Two-story brick, multiple entry with display windows, commercial building. Storefront, slightly altered from the original, features two symmetrically-placed entrances flanking a modified plate glass display window and a continuous multipaned transom. Tripartite fenestration at the second story features one-over-one, double-hung sash with stone lugsills; the center window of the western unit has been modified from a porch door. Secondary facade features segmental fenestration similar in design to the windows of the main facade; numerous units at ground level have been infilled with brick. Stone coping at the roof line. (Contributing; photograph #14, 15)

23. 215 Spring Street/ 201 Thompson Avenue, I.O.O.F. Building, 1913-1917. Two-story brick, multiple entry with display windows, commercial building. The main entrance on Spring Street faces north. Recessed entrance at the far east bay features a denticulated, molded copper pediment, displaying the fraternal symbol and "I.O.O.F", supported by brick pilasters; leaded-glass transom below is extant. Canted entrance northwest facade. Additional recessed entrance at the west facade. Aluminum-framed, plate glass storefront, fenestration, north and west facades. Transom area has been obscured with plywood. Second-story tripartite fenestration with stone sills and continuous lintel course has been infilled with brick at the north facade and partially infilled at the west facade. The remaining window units are one-over-one, double-hung sash. Brick piers separate bays at the north and west facades. Stepped parapet; stone coping. (Contributing; photograph #14, 15)

24. 216-220 Spring Street/111 Thompson Avenue, Hope Funeral Home, c. 1933. One and two-story stone buildings connected by a one-story hall. The west unit and connecting hall have steeply pitched mansard roofs, while the east unit has a composition shingled, gable roof. The entrances on the west and south facades have tile hipped roofs supported by carved wood brackets. The south east entrance displays a lion's head motif. The west entrance with wood door features a handicapped ramp with metal railing; the south entrances feature concrete steps with solid stone railings. Fenestration of the west unit features six-over-six, double-hung sash with metal awnings. The remaining, original windows are

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Prairie-style multipaned. The stone veneer of both units is random ashlar, quarry-faced limestone with prominent stones serving as quoining. Irregularly-shaped stones are randomly placed throughout the exterior. Sills are composed of small, square stones while the lintels display narrow, vertical stones with skewbacks and keystone.
(Contributing; photograph #7, 16)

South Marietta Street

25. 114 S. Marietta/208 Spring Street, Arlington Hotel, William F. Schrage, 1899-1900. Two-story brick, multiple entry with display windows and Victorian buildings. The building facing 114 S. Marietta features a canted entrance with non-original aluminum-framed doors and plate glass windows; transoms obscured. Additional storefront fenestration has been partially infilled with plaster and altered with small, fixed plate glass windows. Second-story fenestration is segmental, six-over-six with stone sills. Large polygonal oriel windows at the northeast, southeast and southwest facades with stone sill coursing and metal awnings. Prominent sheet metal water table separates first and second stories. Prominent molded cornice at roof line. A narrow two-story walkway connects 114 S. Marietta with the east facade of 208 Spring Street. The main facade of 208 Spring Street faces south. Features of the main facade include a two-story full-width, shed roof porch with wooden piers and columns and open wooden railing. Main double-door entrance with sidelights flanked by Ionic pilasters and wood surround. Paired, six-over-six, double-hung sash segmental fenestration at first and second story; additional, centered entrance at second story. Hipped roof dormer at south facade with ribboned, six-over-six double-hung sash fenestration. Rear porch has been enclosed. Bell-cast hipped roof. (Contributing; photograph #16, 17)
26. 200-216 S. Marietta Street, Ideal Hotel, c. 1900-1905. Two, two-story brick buildings connected by a short, narrow enclosed walkway at the 2nd story, east facade. Multiple recessed entrances with display windows. Non-original aluminum-framed doors and plate glass windows. Bays are divided at the storefront level by brick piers; prominent free-standing piers mark the corners. Molded entablature crowns each storefront entrance; transom has been infilled with plaster. A belt course separates the first and second stories. Fenestration, paired on the west facade, is one-over-one, double-hung sash with continuous stone

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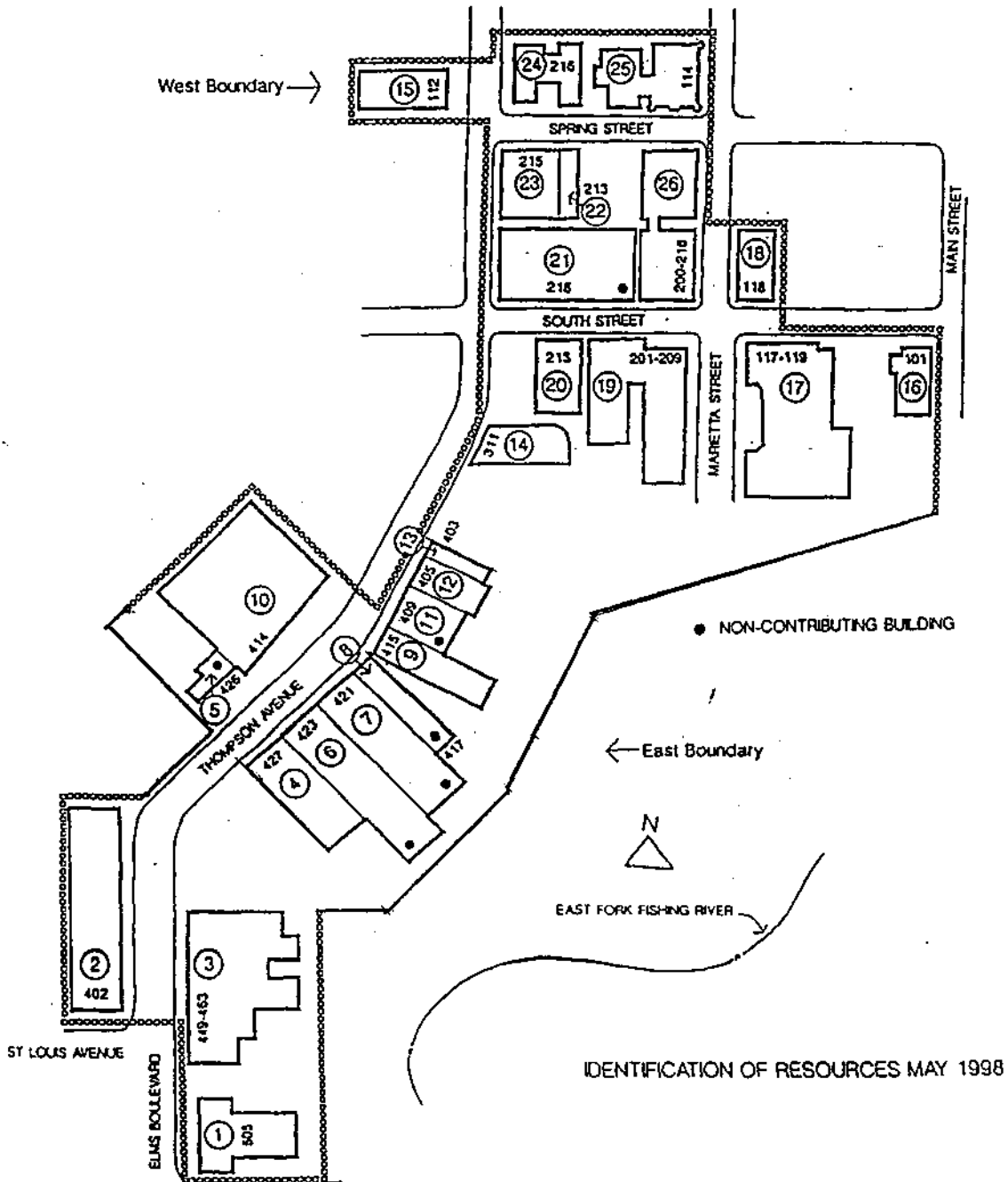
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sill and lintel coursing with contrasting stone accents. Molded cornice
set above denticulation. Stone coping. A narrow alley, on an east/west
axis, sets between the north and south units. At the Marietta Street
elevation, a modest 2nd story balcony features decorative iron railing.
(Contributing; photograph #18)

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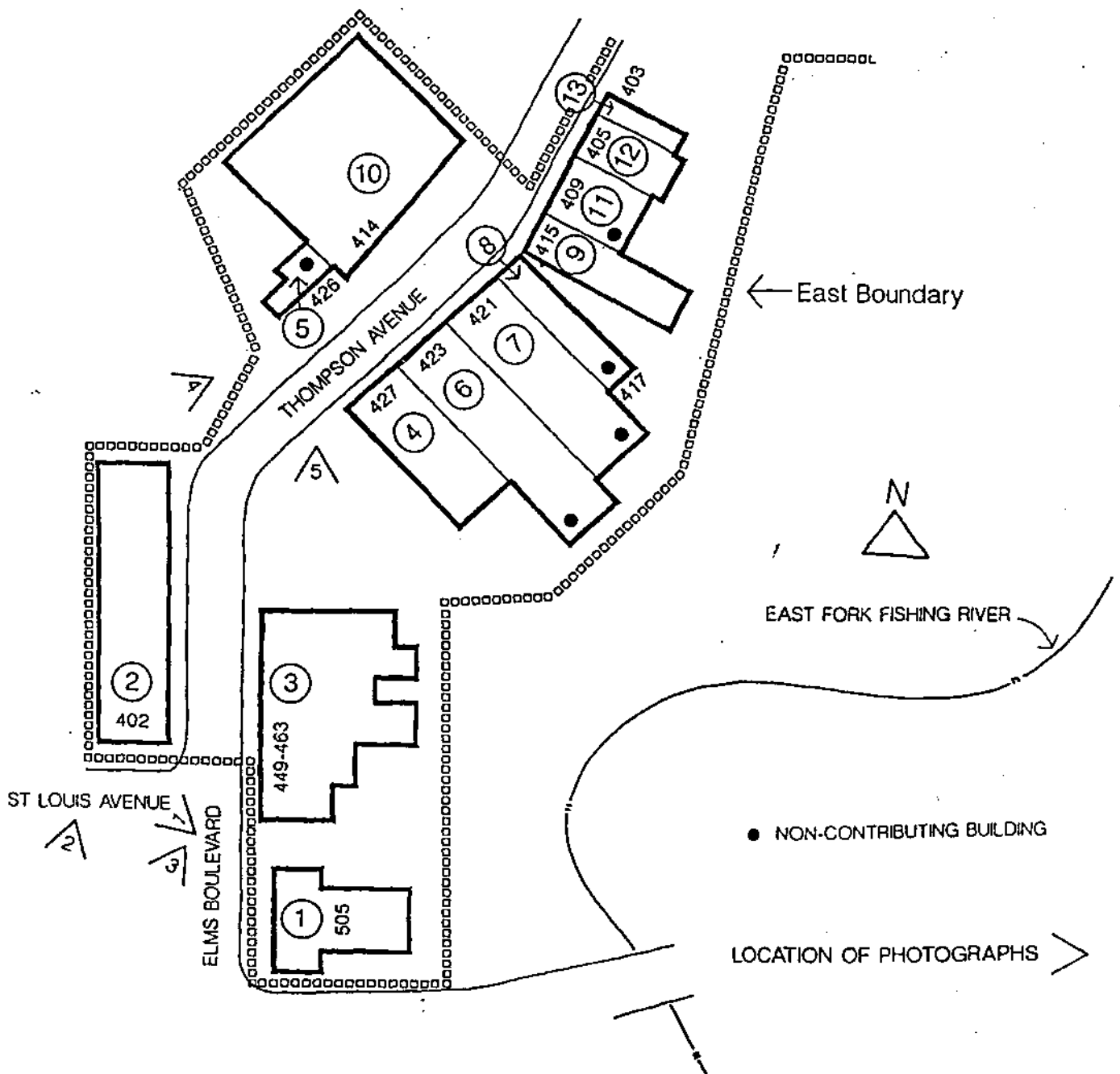


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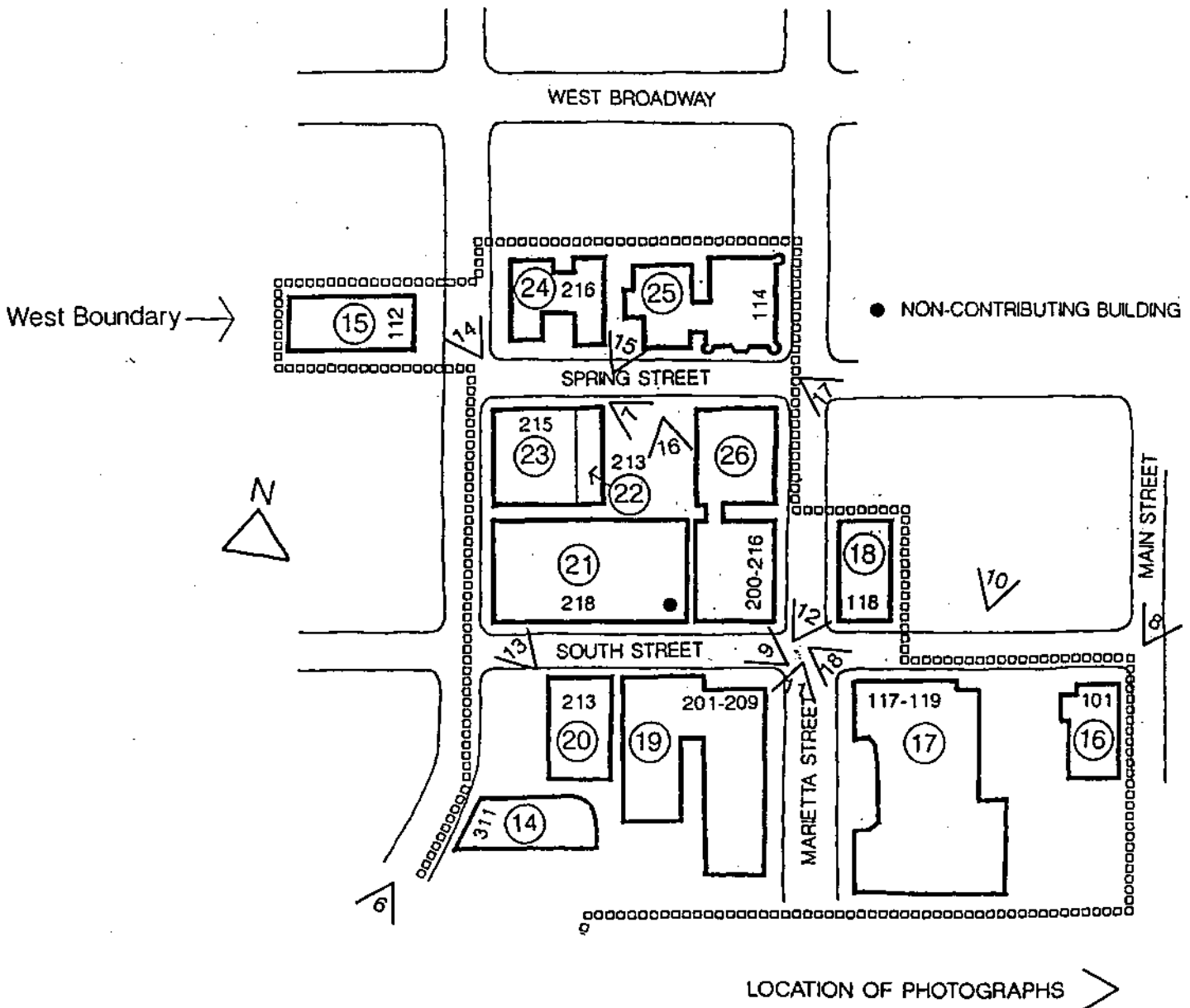
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The Excelsior Springs Hall of Waters Commercial West Historic District is significant under Criterion A for Commerce and Criterion C for Architecture. Historically, the district was the commercial center of the town and the vigorous commercial activity represented by the buildings in the district is still present today. In addition, Excelsior Springs was founded, existed and was nationally famous as a health resort and examples of surviving buildings and a site in the district that are representative of these health-related resources survive. Architecturally, the historic district embodies a cohesive collection of well-crafted, vernacular commercial buildings, some with Late Victorian stylistic influences, as well as examples of the Neo-Classical, Georgian/Colonial Revival and Art Deco styles. Together the architecture is reflective of the time and period of the development and prosperity of the commercial district. The period of significance for the historic district, c. 1894-1948, represents the span of years between the earliest extant resource in the district and the arbitrary fifty-year cut-off date required by the National Register. While some of the buildings of the district have experienced storefront alterations, overall, the historic district retains its integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, and location and has survived in good condition.

It is important to note that the Excelsior Springs Hall of Waters Commercial West Historic District is inextricably linked, in terms of history and architecture (including density, scale, type, age, style of buildings, structures and patterns of historic development and association), with the neighboring Hall of Waters Commercial East Historic District. Consequently, the following elaboration reflects the general history and development that characterizes and substantiates the significance of both districts. However, because the unity of the commercial district, in its entirety, is interrupted by intrusions and is therefore discontinuous, the east and west commercial historic districts no longer are physically connected.

ELABORATION

Throughout Excelsior Springs' history the discovery and subsequent commercialization of its mineral waters dominated much of the city's overall growth and development, yet water resources for which the town would eventually become famous, were first treated with suspicion. For many years it was known that a mineral spring ran from the north bank of Fishing River, but it was never believed that it possessed curative powers. Referred to as "Pizen Spring", its overflow was iron-rust red in color.

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Prior to its discovery, throughout the years following the Civil War, the area encompassing what was to become Excelsior Springs remained wild and undeveloped. The rough terrain, rocky hills and heavy growth made it a difficult site for settlement. Purportedly, it wasn't until 1880 that Excelsior Springs was "discovered" by accident by an African-American farmer, Travis Mellion. Mellion's daughter, suffering from scrofula (swelling of the lymph glands), frequently used the water for bathing and drinking. A nearby German Farmer, Fredrick Kugler, witnessed the rapid improvement of the girl's health and began using the water to treat his rheumatic knees and an old war wound. When Kugler recovered from his ailments, word spread throughout the area, and the valley was soon visited by many seeking the medicinal powers of the spring waters.

Landowner A.W. Wyman, whose holdings included the mineral spring, realized the potential for developing his property. Along with the Rev. J.V.B. Flack, a businessman from Missouri City, Wyman sent samples of the water to Wright & Merrill, St. Louis chemists, to be analyzed. The analysis stated that the water contained minerals that "justified expectations of curative results." Subsequently, Excelsior Springs was surveyed on September 1, 1880, by County Surveyor Thomas B. Rogers and in the same month, platted by Wyman and Flack. On February 7, 1881, Excelsior Springs was incorporated by the county court as a village, the site comprising all of the northeast quarter of the southwest quarter of Section 1, Township 52, Range 30---totaling forty acres. On July 12, 1881, the town was incorporated as a city of the fourth class.

Flack, who swiftly made his home in Excelsior Springs, opened the first dry goods store, founded the first church and then turned his preaching abilities to the merits of the waters, which he carried to a number of midwestern states. The spring, originally named "Excelsior" by the Rev. Flack after a popular poem by Henry Longfellow, was later changed to "Siloam." The promotion and development around several other springs, including the "Empire" (later the "Regent"), "Relief," "Superior," and "Saratoga" quickly followed. Twenty separate springs or wells were eventually discovered.

Within a year of the town's platting, nearly two hundred houses were constructed on the hillsides and valleys surrounding the original spring and, in a very short time, small boarding and rooming houses were built to accommodate the throng of visitors. The 25-room Excelsior House, Excelsior Springs' first hotel, was constructed by Joseph Wert and A.W. Wyman in March 1881 and was located on East Broadway in the Original Town plat (later

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demolished). Other commercial buildings, including Flynn's Grocery, Flack's Dry Goods, M.G. Froman's and Stapp & Snapp's Hardware were all centered along Broadway and Main Streets. After the town was platted, the ensuing commercial development of Excelsior Springs increased with such vigor that "it is doubtful that any town in Missouri ever grew more rapidly in one year . . ."

Although rail lines passed nearby to Excelsior Springs, in the early years of development, the community remained somewhat isolated. Stage lines had to be brought into operation from nearby railway points, such as Liberty, Missouri City, Kearney and Lawson. When the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad established a line between Chicago and Kansas City via Excelsior Springs in 1887, the town truly exploded with development. By the following year, the first Elms Hotel was constructed with rooms for 250 guests. In addition, the Interurban Electric line gave easy access to and from Kansas City. By the turn-of-the-century, Excelsior Springs had taken on a resort and vacation place atmosphere. Consequently, the town's commercial activity burgeoned.

By 1894, the greatest concentration of construction in Excelsior Springs occurred in the area of Broadway, South Street and Thompson Avenue, clearly setting the general boundaries and overall activity for the city's commercial area which has survived to the present. By 1909, the south side of Broadway (today included in the East Historic District) was heavily developed to Penn Street, yet some of the initial modestly designed commercial properties constructed in the early 1880s (located on the north side of Broadway) had been replaced with newer construction.

A sampling of the businesses that were established in the commercial area, now part of both the East and West Historic Districts, at the close of the 19th century included: The Goff House (118 South Street, West District); Excelsior Springs Drug Company (102-104 E. Broadway, East District); Wholf's Tavern (201 South Street, West District); and the Arlington Hotel (201 Spring Street/114 S. Marietta, West District) designed by architect William F. Schrage. Although these early surviving buildings do not display any particular high-style architectural influence, their collective image set the tone for future development, configuration, and character of Excelsior Springs' commercial core.

The first decade of the 1900s ushered into Excelsior Springs a large number of commercial ventures which undoubtedly accounted for one of the most significant building booms in the city's history. Unquestionably spawned by

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the increasing popularity of the mineral water springs, the mercantile trade expanded rapidly, infusing a wide variety of businesses throughout the city's commercial core. More than twenty establishments were started between 1900 and 1909. Hotels included the Ideal Hotel (200-216 S. Marietta, West District); The Washington Hotel (213-217 South Street, West District); and The St. Joe House (109 S. Main, East District). Specialty stores included Flanders Dry Goods (107-111 W. Broadway); S.G. Johnson and Sons Grocers (116 E. Broadway); S.J. Huey Jewelers (109 E. Broadway); F.M. Applegate confectionery & News Shop (101 W. Broadway), all presently located in the East Historic District. Recreational facilities included The Auditorium (110 S. Main Street), while the Eagle Aerie Lodge #3917 (244 E. Broadway) served as a social hall. The construction of the Clay County State Bank building (101 E. Broadway) gave Excelsior Springs a notable financial institution, as well as a highly significant building designed in the Neo-Classical style by the prominent and idiosyncratic Kansas City architect, Louis S. Curtiss.*

With the exception of the Curtiss bank, the majority of the properties built during this prosperous period of construction display a modest Late Victorian vocabulary applied to a two-part commercial block, "one of the most common types of composition used for small and moderate-sized commercial buildings throughout the county." In Excelsior Springs, this architectural form came to dominate the commercial streetscape. These two and three-story buildings display accentuated cornices with brick corbeling or pressed metal bracketing and stringcoursing that served as elaborate termini to the primary facades. The lower zones of these buildings are comprised of retail units with large display windows and transoms. While most of these buildings remain modest in overall design and scale, it is the consistency in the use of materials and uniformity in composition that contributes to an architecturally cohesive commercial core. Notable examples in both the East and West Historic Districts include: 215-217 E. Broadway, 109 through 115 E. Broadway, 101-105 W. Broadway, 107-111 W. Broadway, 110 S. Main Street, 200-216 S. Marietta and 213-217 South Street.

Construction in Excelsior Springs during the 1910s continued at a steady pace, adding to the existing divergent business climate and architectural character of the commercial district. Wood-frame residences that once lined Spring, South and Marietta streets were soon replaced by brick structures that survive

* The Clay County Bank Building was individually nominated to the Natinal Register of Historic Places; however, the nomination was not accepted by the National Park Service.

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intact. Boarding houses and hotels located on the south end of the West Historic District built during this period of continued expansion include the Buckley Apartments (101 South Street) and the Snapps Hotel (117-119 South Street); social halls include the Elks Lodge No. 1001 (112 Thompson Avenue) and the I.O.O.F Building (201-201 Thompson Avenue). One of the most substantial buildings in the western edge of the West Historic District constructed during this period is Silvers Garage (414 Thompson Avenue), purportedly the largest Dodge/Chrysler dealership west of the Mississippi River, according to the "Historic Resources Survey, Phase II, 1993." In addition, the first post office to be constructed in Clay County was the Excelsior Springs Post Office (505 Elms Boulevard), a Neo-Classical building that anchors the West Historic District at its southernmost boundary. Collectively, these buildings are reflective of the prosperity of the community during this era.

Like the preceding decade, the overwhelming majority of commercial buildings were designed in the vernacular (one and two-part commercial block, some with Late Victorian affinities), but there are several that display a more sophisticated architectural style. Besides the above mentioned Neo-classical Post Office, the Georgian Revival/Colonial Revival influenced building located at 112 Thompson and the Eclectic Snapp's Hotel, 117-119 South Street, are two of the more elaborately conceived buildings, providing key visual elements within the West Historic District. Additionally, the apartment building at 101 South Street imparts typical Prairie Craftsman detailing.

The pace of construction within the commercial core dramatically ebbed during the decades of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s due to economic stagnation; nevertheless the remaining vacant lots on Thompson Avenue (located in the West Historic District) were developed. Located mostly on the 400 block, several one-story brick vernacular style, one-part commercial block buildings were erected.

Representing the very foundation on which the town developed, The Hall of Waters was constructed during this period, in 1935-37. This Art Deco inspired focal point of the commercial district was the central dispersal site of the various kinds of mineral water to be found in Excelsior Springs. An extant pump that originally drew water from a lithia spring, is located to the east of the Hall of Waters, adjacent to 249 E. Broadway. It was installed c. 1936 by the Kansas City engineering firm of Black and Veatch in conjunction with the erection of the Hall of Waters. Other buildings that historically were

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associated with the commercialization of the mineral water springs include 402 St. Louis Avenue, 110-112 and 255 East Broadway. 402 E. St. Louis Avenue (located in the West Historic District) was the location of the McCleary Clinic, an institute that specialized in the healing of rectal and colonic disorders by the use of mineral water prescriptions. Formally opening in June 1927, the McCleary Clinic was one of four major clinics devoted entirely to the health aspect of the mineral waters in Excelsior Springs. Having served over 300,000 patients, it closed its doors in 1972. The later addresses (located in the East Historic District) housed the Salt Sulphur Bath House and the Excelsior Baths, respectively.

With regard to architectural significance, two additional notable buildings from this era include the Art Deco styled Montgomery Ward building (427 Thompson Avenue) and the Hope Funeral Home (111 Thompson Avenue/216-220 Spring Street) a rustic stone complex designed in the Picturesque tradition.

Until the early 1960s, the commercial area of Excelsior Springs continued to prosper. However, the city's vitality began to lag when legislation was passed in 1963 prohibiting the clinics from advertising cures based on the benefits of the mineral springs waters. Even though the economy of the Excelsior Springs has suffered since then, lately there has been a renewed interest in the community's history and commercial viability. An historic preservation ordinance was passed and the Excelsior Springs Historic Preservation Commission was formed. Rehabilitation of the National Register listed Elms Hotel, in its final stages, will undoubtedly fuel the city's future resurgence.

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point at the northeast corner of south intersection of Elms Boulevard and St. Louis Avenue (St. Louis Street is not continuous across Elms Boulevard; it forms two T-intersections offset by approximately 157 feet); proceed north along the east side of the right-of-way of Elms Boulevard approximately 157 feet to a point opposite the north side of the north T-intersection of Elms Boulevard and St. Louis Avenue; then proceed west to the southwest corner of 402 St. Louis Avenue; then proceed north to the northwest corner of 402 St. Louis Avenue; then proceed east to Thompson Avenue; then proceed northeast along the west side of the right-of-way of Thompson Avenue to the boundary line of 426 Thompson Avenue; then proceed northwest 120 feet along the property line of 426 Thompson Avenue; then proceed northwest to the north corner of 414 Thompson Avenue; then proceed southeast to the east side of Thompson Avenue; then proceed along the right-of-way of the east side of Thompson Avenue following as it goes northeast then north to the southeast corner of Thompson Avenue and Spring Street; proceed west across Thompson Avenue to the southwest corner of 112 Thompson Avenue; then proceed north to the northwest corner of 112 Thompson Avenue; then proceed east along the north property line of 112 Thompson Avenue to the east side of the right-of-way of Thompson Avenue; then proceed north to the northwest corner of 216 Spring Street; then proceed east to the west side of the right-of-way of Marietta Street; then proceed south to the northeast corner of the south building at 200-216 Marietta Street; then proceed east to the northeast corner of 118 South Street; then proceed south to the south side of the right-of-way of South street; then proceed east to the southwest corner of South Street and Main Street; then proceed south along the west side of the right-of-way of Main Street to the south property line of 101 South Street; then proceed west to the to the northeast corner of the property line of 403 Thompson Avenue; then proceed southwest along the rear property lines of 405, 409, and 415 Thompson Avenue to the northeast property line of 417 Thompson Avenue; then proceed southeast to southeast property line of 417 Thompson Avenue; then proceed southwest along the rear property lines of 417, 421, 423 and 427 Thompson Avenue to the south corner of the property line of 427 Thompson Avenue; then proceed west to the northeast corner of the property line of 449-463 Elms Boulevard; then proceed south to the north right-of-way of St. Louis Boulevard; then proceed west to the point of beginning, the northeast corner of the south T-intersection of Elms Boulevard and St. Louis Boulevard.

Boundary Justification

The historic district includes the historic commercial area generally bounded by Thompson Avenue, Marietta Street, Elms Boulevard and St. Louis Avenue. This area remains commercial in use and retains historic integrity. To the immediate north of the district are residential neighborhoods consisting

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of single family housing and boarding rooms dating from the turn-of-the-century to the 1920s. The Excelsior Springs Hall of Waters Commercial East Historic District is located to the east, while modern commercial properties are located west of the historic district. Fishing River Linear Park lies directly to the southeast.

Photographs

The following information is the same for all photographs:

1. Excelsior Springs Hall of Waters Commercial East Historic District
2. Clay County, Missouri
3. H. Duncan photographer; 2-4,7,8,10,11,15-18
Cydney Millstein; 1,5,6,9,12-14
4. May 1998
5. Negatives with preparer, Cydney Millstein, Architectural & Historical Services

List of Photographs

See Section 7: page 12-13 for indication of camera angles.

1. West facade and north elevation, 505 Elms Boulevard, looking southeast
2. South facade 402 St. Louis Avenue, looking north
3. West facade, 449-463 Elms Boulevard, looking northeast
4. Streetscape, east elevation of the 400 block of Thompson Avenue, looking northeast
5. East facades, 426 and 414 Thompson Avenue, looking north
6. West facade and south elevation, 311 Thompson Avenue, looking northeast
7. South facade, 216 Spring Street; east facade, 112 Thompson Avenue; looking west
8. North facade and east elevation, 101 South Street, Looking southwest
9. North facade and west elevation, 117-119 South Street, looking southeast
10. North Facade, 117-119 South Street, Looking south
11. South facade and west elevation, 118 South Street, looking northeast
12. North facade and east elevation, 201-209 South Street, looking southwest
13. North facades, 213 and 201-209 South Street, looking southeast
14. North facade and west elevation, 215 Spring Street, looking southeast
15. North facades, 213 and 215 Spring Street, looking southwest
16. South facade, 208 Spring Street, looking north
17. East facade, 114 Marietta Street, looking northwest
18. South and east elevations, 200-216 Marietta Street, looking northwest

