

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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Federal Office Building

Other names/site number: Richard Bolling Federal Building

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 601 East Twelfth Street

City or town: Kansas City State: MO County: Jackson

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

	<u>6/17/2021</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>U.S. General Services Administration, Federal Preservation Officer</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
	<u>1/27/21</u>
Signature of commenting official:	Date
<u>Missouri State Historic Preservation Office</u>	
Title : Missouri State Parks Director State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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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

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT/government office

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT/government office

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Modern Movement/International style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Concrete

Metal

Stone

roof: Modified Bitumen

other: Glass

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Federal Office Building, owned and operated by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) and now known as the Richard Bolling Federal Building, was designed and constructed between 1961 and 1967 and is located on Twelfth Street in downtown Kansas City. The building is one of seven local, state, or federal government buildings in the immediate area. The International style Federal Office Building occupies two city blocks and is set in a designed landscape. The building is composed of an eighteen-story high-rise office tower, connected three-story low-rise block, and a parking garage. The main entrance to the building, the lobby, and a small post office are all located in the low-rise block. The exterior of the tower features a distinctive checkerboard pattern created by alternating dark grey, glazed, glass panels with lighter grey metal spandrels. The low-rise block is partially wrapped in a screen of aluminum tubes attached to the upper stories. Below the aluminum screen, the walls are a mixture of stonework and smooth metal panels.

Highlighting the exterior of the low-rise block is a bas-relief sculpture, *The Builders*, by artist Constantino Nivola. An additional artwork commissioned by GSA for the building, the large mural, *The Movement of Time from Redman to Truman*, by Frederick Conway, is located inside the Federal Office Building.

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The Federal Office Building underwent minor and major modernization projects to ensure its continued use by the federal government and to increase its physical security. Security measures include the addition of vestibules at both the north and south pedestrian entrances. These changes are distinct from but harmonious with the design of the original.¹

The Federal Office Building continues to serve as a federal office building, housing a mix of client tenant agencies. The building retains historic integrity for the period of 1963–1967, which includes its construction through the installation of the two artworks, *The Builders* and *The Movement of Time from Redman to Truman*. The building retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Narrative Description

The Federal Office Building is composed of one contributing building, which consists of three major elements: an eighteen-story office tower, a low-rise block, and an attached parking garage, completed in 1966. Two recently installed guard shacks, located at the entrances to the upper and lower levels of the parking garage, are noncontributing. Although the plantings and hardscape features of the landscape have been updated, the site retains its original size, boundaries, and relationship to the Federal Office Building and is a contributing resource. The bas-relief sculpture on the exterior and a large mural in the lobby, commissioned for the building and completed by 1967, are significant features of the Federal Office Building, but are not counted as separate objects.

Setting

The Federal Office Building is located at 601 East Twelfth Street in downtown Kansas City, Missouri, in a primarily commercial area locally known as East Village. The building is northwest of the I-70/I-670 interchange, south of the Missouri River, and east/northeast of the Financial and Power and Light districts. The building occupies a lot that spans two city blocks and is bounded by Locust Street to the west, Holmes Street to the east, East Twelfth Street to the north, and East Thirteenth Street to the south. Adjacent to the Federal Office Building lot are additional governmental buildings and parking lots.

The adjacent governmental buildings include the Jackson County Corrections and Missouri State Office buildings, which are south of East Thirteenth Street; the Sixteenth Circuit Court of Jackson, which is west of Locust Street; and the Kansas City Police Department, Municipal Court, and City Hall, all of which are located north and northwest of East Twelfth Street. The government buildings continue for several blocks and include the Charles Evans Whittaker U. S. Courthouse on Ninth Street. Additionally, there is a large parking lot east of Holmes Street,

¹ Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, Standard Number 9 indicates: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

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which serves the Federal Office Building, and St. Mary's Episcopal Church² stands at the southeast corner of East Thirteenth Street and Holmes.

Site

The Federal Office Building consists of an eighteen-story office tower, a three-story low-rise block, and a two-story parking garage sited within a designed landscape (Photo 1 Figure 1). The three building components are contiguous, connected internally, and together occupy approximately thirty percent of the site, which slopes gently downward to the east and south. The generally rectangular office tower is positioned on the southern portion of the lot, with its long axis oriented east-west, parallel to East Thirteenth Street. Its short north-south axis is centered on the former location of Cherry Street. The building is accessed from the north on the first-floor level and from the south on the ground floor level.

When the building was first opened several driveways pierced the outer edge of the Federal Office Building site (Figure 2 and 3). Originally, a circular driveway was centered on the door at the northeast corner of the low-rise. This driveway was subsequently removed. Currently, two original driveways provide access to the parking deck, with the open upper level of the deck accessed from East Twelfth Street and the below-grade lower level deck accessed from Holmes Street.

Historically, the landscape surrounding the building has included a large, paved, circular plaza positioned at the northwest corner of the two-block lot. The plaza originally included four concrete paths that radiated outward from an inner circle and passed through a low wall. Using two different colors of concrete, the paths graphically continued into the center of the circle, passing through rings near the outer edge of the plaza to meet at a smaller inner ring. An aerial view of the plaza reveals a bull's eye pattern in the hardscape. Seven openings, each with a tree, encircled the inner ring in the plaza. Smaller openings near the outer edge of the plaza added additional planting locations for smaller trees. A low, smooth-finish concrete wall surrounded the entire circular plaza and further defined the plaza. The concrete wall extended to outline a small fountain and circular raised bed positioned near the junction of the office tower and low-rise block. Several additional smaller planting beds, particularly near the northeast and southwest corners of the office tower and around the parking deck, were also defined by the smooth concrete walls. Areas of grassy lawn flanked the plaza and were adjacent to the public sidewalk. The 1967 planting plan for the building included a schedule of plants, which included hawthorn, honey locust, Japanese holly, and crabapple. The plan also noted two different species of pine trees, and the ground cover was identified as either English Ivy or lawn.³ The plans included the tallest of the trees, the sixteen- to eighteen-foot-tall honey locust, spaced around almost the entire two-block parcel of the building, with openings at each of the pedestrian entries, access points to the upper and lower level of the parking deck, and at the corner of Locust Street.

Following the Oklahoma Federal Building bombing in 1995, the landscape at the Federal Office Building underwent modifications to protect the building and its occupants. These changes

² Constructed 1887–1888; NRHP Registration Number 78001663, listed November 7, 1978.

³ GSA, "Planting Plan" (Public Buildings Service, Washington, D.C., 1967), 17-1.

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included restricting vehicular access to the building, reducing the width of the pedestrian walkways approaching the front door of the building, and installing security bollards.

As part of the 2004 First Impressions updates to the Federal Office Building, the landscaping on the north side of the building underwent additional alterations. The short walkway that had been installed in the late 1990s was removed and replaced by a raised walkway accessed by three steps with flanking metal railings and positioned south of four evenly spaced metal bollards. The walkway has three stylized columns on its east side that support a flat roof cantilevered over the sidewalk. East of the columns is a reflecting pond, which is also raised from grade, serving as an added security measure.

The landscape was most recently rehabilitated in 2011 as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) modernization project (Photo 1; Figure 4). The current landscape, designed by landscape architects Young + Dring of Overland Park, Kansas, modernized the landscape design while retaining many of the iconic features and further enhancing its security features. The large circular plaza remains extant; however, the new design replaces the original bullseye pattern with a series of segmented, circular planting beds and small circles, each with a tree planted at its center. Earlier concrete walls were removed, and new walls clad with random-coursed ashlar stone were constructed in their place. Many of the new walls also incorporate stone coping to form a ledge and provide additional seating areas. Encircling the outside wall of the plaza is a sunken area, or bioswale, that is flanked by concrete walls and infilled with a selection of ornamental grasses to disguise its security function and to control runoff water. Security measures were no longer limited to the entrances into the building following the 2011 landscape updates. Bollards were installed just inside of the public sidewalk and extend south of the parking garage ramp off Holmes Street, across the south side of the building, and a short way around the west side of the building along Locust Street. Inside the line of the bollards, south of the parking deck ramp, is an enclosed play area, a non-original feature.

The plant materials were also updated, although some of the trees were retained from earlier installations and relocated within the 2011 design. The current overall planting plan includes a greater variety of plants, including ornamental grasses and additional flowering plants. Not only is there a greater variety of plants, but the number of individual plants has also increased. Plantings that were historically largely limited to the north side of the building now wrap around the parking garage on the east side of the complex and extend along the base of the west elevation of the office tower. The new design replaced the numerous hawthorn and locust trees on the south side of the building with larger Autumn Blaze maples that turn orange and bright red in the fall.

As part of the plaza improvements, the hardscape was also modernized. An effort was made to transform the concrete surfaces from the smooth grey surface to a more textured, natural look through the use of random-coursed ashlar stone. Brick pavers of different colors laid in a herringbone design replaced the large concrete pads that originally paved most of the plaza surface. The dark red/brown and black brick pavers are arranged to accentuate the planting beds in the plaza and in stripes across walkways along Twelfth Street (Photo 2). Accenting the pavers

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are bands of concrete, which also form curbs around many of the planting beds. Tall, metal light posts, which are capped by a flat metal ring that surrounds a large lamp, stand at regular intervals in the concrete bands. Additional street furniture includes short metal posts topped by a small metal tabletop surrounded by four chairs, which are scattered throughout the plaza. A new low wall/bench topped with granite echoes the circular design of the plaza and is positioned between the plaza and the west wall of the low-rise building. Low benches around the landscape provide a place for pedestrians to gather and an additional barrier to vehicular access.

The former straight walkway to the door on the north side of the low-rise block has also been replaced with several low stairs adjacent to the reflecting pool and columns supporting a canopy over the walkway. Additional hardscape areas near the main entryway define planting areas and augment security without overtly announcing this purpose. These include low, concrete walls around trees spaced within the patterned paver walkways. The low, concrete walls also extend along the north side of the walkway that spans the north side of the building to access the parking deck. The wall along the walkway creates a double tier of landscaping, with lawn and small trees along the street curb and additional trees spaced on either side of the patterned paver sidewalk. Small shrubs flank the trees east of the entrance. Additional lampposts are placed near each tree to provide lighting along the walkway. A small bronze sculpture entitled *Flight* was added to the property in 1996 and is located east of the East Twelfth Street entrance. This non-historic sculpture is not substantial enough to be included in the resource count as a noncontributing resource.

There are several signs placed in the landscape on the north side of the building. One sign is positioned perpendicular to the sidewalk that is north of the low-rise block. The long, low sign has a concrete base that is surmounted by four metal panels joined to form a smooth surface. The metal panels float just above the base and have metal lettering on each of the long sides that reads:

RICHARD BOLLING
FEDERAL BUILDING
601 EAST TWELTH STREET

A second sign is embedded on the east face of the random-coursed stone wall that extends along the east side of the front walkway. The smooth, granite plaque reads:

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
LYNDON B JOHNSON
PRESIDENT

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
BERNARD L BOUTIN
ADMINISTRATOR

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1964

Building Exterior

The Federal Office Building is of steel framed construction with varied exterior cladding. It consists of three distinct but integrated sections: a high-rise office tower; a three-story low-rise block extending from the north elevation of the tower; and a parking structure east of the low-rise block and north of the tower (Photo 3 and Photo 4). The eighteen-story office tower has a rectilinear footprint with a flat roof. A brick mechanical penthouse is on top of the roof. Additional utilities on the roof are located within a long, rectangular, semi-open area that is partially concealed by a screen created by vertical aluminum tubes (Photo 5). The office tower's long axis extends east and west, resulting in the longest elevations facing north and south. Each of these elevations is clad in alternating glass spandrel panels, aluminum spandrel panels, and windows, creating an overall checkerboard pattern. The glass panes are tinted dark grey and each lighter grey aluminum panel is slightly convex, forming a large X-shape that adds rigidity to the panels, creates a subtle texture, and gives the illusion of movement. The east and west elevations of the office tower are clad with variegated granite panels that wrap around to the north and south elevations to frame the checkerboard surface. The east and west elevations of the office tower, which mirror each other and lack fenestration, are divided vertically into three sections: the north and south sections are positioned at offset angles to each other and flank a central, recessed band of aluminum tubing (Figure 5 and Figure 6).

The checkerboard pattern on the south elevation terminates above the first story. East of the entry, the building elevation consists of a ribbon of windows positioned at grade that is topped by a band of metal vents to provide shade to the cafeteria inside. The remainder of the first story has random-coursed ashlar stone below the lowest row of spandrel panels and a course of broad, gray, granite panels. West of the entry, the granite course continues with a band of ribbon windows below. Below the windows, random-coursed ashlar stone clads the wall (Photo 7).

The pedestrian entrance on the south elevation of the office tower is clad with highly polished black granite and darkly tinted glass. Brushed aluminum surrounds encase slightly projecting doors positioned on the east elevation of the structure. The doors rise to just one story and the area above the doors, as well as the eastern two-thirds of the vestibule's south elevation, is filled with tinted glass. A broad flat roof caps the vestibule and extends out over the east elevation doors. The overhanging portion of the roof is supported by a pair of concrete columns positioned on either side of the doors. The building name and address is mounted low on the west side of the south elevation:

RICHARD BOLLING
FEDERAL BUILDING
601 EAST 12TH STREET

In 2008 the south entrance to the Federal Office Building underwent extensive alterations. When the building was first opened it included a scoop entry on the south elevation similar to the one that provides access into the lower level of the parking garage. The structure consisted of three

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slabs of exposed aggregate concrete, with the supporting slabs cut at a sharp angle to suggest movement into the building (Figure 5). The original concrete scoop entry was demolished and replaced with a two-story glass and granite pavilion (Figure 7 and Figure 8).

The three-story low-rise block is positioned on the north elevation of the office tower, slightly off-center toward the east end of the tower (Photo 8). This portion of the building has essentially a rectilinear footprint, although the southeast corner is inset to provide a loading dock area below a broad pent roof. A variety of construction materials clad the low-rise block, including stone, aluminum tubes, and expanses of glazed windows. The lower portion of the north elevation is clad with variegated random-coursed ashlar stone, which continues beyond the wall of the low-rise block to enclose the adjacent parking structure. A ribbon of narrow windows, which provides natural light into the first story of the building, is placed above the stonework. The east elevation of the low-rise block is clad in variegated, uncoursed stonework on the lower level and flat aluminum panels on the upper stories. The metal panels are pierced by six single-light windows that are the same size as the panels. The rows of windows in the two stories are offset from each other, creating a staggered fenestration pattern (Photo 9). A pent roof that extends over five overhead doors of the loading dock divides the first and second stories in the recessed portion of the low-rise block. Unlike the upper stories, the wall area around the loading dock doors is exposed concrete.

The first story of the west elevation includes a ribbon of full height windows, which terminates at each end with a panel of the bas-relief sculpture, *The Builders*, by Constantino Nivola (Photo 10). The sculpture consists of seven panels, with one horizontal panel positioned at the west corner of the north elevation, a second at the north corner of the west elevation, and the remaining panels stacked to rise the full three stories of the low-rise block next to the junction with the office tower.

The upper two stories of the low-rise block are wrapped with a screen of vertical aluminum tubes. This aluminum tube screen extends across the west elevation, excluding the five stacked panels of the Nivola sculpture, the north elevation, and the north portion of the east elevation. The screen curves at the corners, overhangs the first floor, and rises above a projecting vestibule near the northwest corner. Here, the main screen is supplemented by a panel of tubes arranged in an undulating fashion to denote the location of the north entrance. West of this panel is a bronze relief of the Great Seal of the United States positioned near the upper corner of the low-rise block's north elevation. A second relief of the Great Seal of the United States is positioned over the original location of the doors on the west elevation of the low-rise block. This location is partially concealed by trees but would have historically been clearly visible across the plaza. Below the seal is the building name and acknowledgement of the post office inside:

Richard Bolling
Federal Building
United States Post Office
Civic Center Station

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Although the same font is used in the entire sign, “Richard Bolling” is cast in silver metal and the remainder of the sign is bronze to match the seal.

Originally, the front entrance of the Federal Office Building was a series of revolving doors integrated into the center of the west elevation of the low-rise block off the landscaped plaza. A secondary entry into the low-rise block was located at its northwest corner. In 2003 a projecting, rectilinear vestibule clad in glass was added to the north elevation of the low-rise block and the west elevation doors were replaced by fixed glass panels. There are two sets of doors on the new entrance vestibule: one smaller set provides access from the west side of the vestibule, and the other from the north side. The west doors are fully glazed with an airlock between the pairs of doors. In contrast, there are two revolving doors on the north elevation. The vestibule entrance has a flat roof with a broad eave that extends well beyond its west side wall and is supported by a pair of concrete columns positioned near its north and south corners.

The two-story parking deck is east of the low-rise block, adjacent to the north face of the northeast corner of the office tower and is set into the slope at the east end of the site (Photos 11 and 12). The deck is encircled by a random-coursed ashlar wall on the north and east elevations. The north elevation wall is broken by a ramp from East Twelfth Street, whereas the east elevation wall is pierced by a projecting concrete “scoop” that is formed by three slabs of exposed aggregate concrete, with the supporting slabs cut at a sharp angle to suggest movement into the deck. The open upper level of the deck is accessed by the East Twelfth Street ramp and provides access to the five-bay loading dock on the east side of the low-rise block. The lower level of the deck is below grade and is accessed by the Holmes Street entrance. A metal-fenced yard that provides a secure play area for the in-house daycare center is south of the Holmes Street entrance.

Both the Holmes Street and East Twelfth Street entrances include a small guard shack adjacent to the driveway (Photos 9 and 10). The shacks are rectilinear buildings with the long side positioned parallel to the driveway. Each building has a hipped metal roof, metal-paneled lower walls, and glazed upper walls. The guard shacks were installed ca. 1995 but have been replaced since 2016 (upper deck in 2016 and Holmes Street in 2018). Given their age, the guard shacks are considered noncontributing buildings.

Building Interior

Although both the north and south entrances to the Federal Office Building are at grade on the exterior of the building, on the interior the south entrance accesses the ground floor whereas the north entrance accesses the first floor, due to the sloping site.

The interior of the Federal Office Building office tower has eighteen floors and a full basement and partial sub-basement. The basement and sub-basement house mechanical systems. Each floor of the tower includes a stairway, restrooms, and duct space in the irregularly shaped sections at the east and west ends. A third staircase is located near the center of each floor, on the south side of the elevator lobby. An elevator lobby is located at the center of each floor in the office tower and forms the hub for circulation through the tower. A single corridor passes east-

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west through the center of the elevator lobby and extends the length of the office tower to connect with the staircase at each end of the tower. A second corridor wraps the exterior of the elevator lobby on the first through seventh floors of the tower; this corridor changes configuration on the eighth floor and above to accommodate surrounding office spaces. A corridor on floors one through three extends north-south and connects the office tower with the low-rise block (Figure 9 and Figure 10).

Each elevator lobby includes several utility areas, such as ducts, vending areas, an interior stairway, and a freight elevator. The elevator lobby in the first through eighth floors of the office tower includes two banks of passenger elevators on both the north and south sides of the east-west corridor, including a total of ten elevators on the west side of the lobby and six on the east side (Photo 13). On the ninth floor, the entire east bank of elevators is replaced by an elevator machine room and the bank of six elevators is eliminated, leaving the western bank of ten elevators to serve the ninth through the thirteenth floors. Floors fourteen to eighteen are served by one bank of five elevators on the north side of the elevator lobby. As the number of elevators is reduced, space opens for additional functions, such as utility closets, restrooms, an elevator machine room, or duct space.

Circulation in the low-rise section of the building is accommodated by a staircase in the northeast corner and an escalator on the east side of the north-south corridor. The escalator provides access from the basement level to the third story. The artwork, *curtain wall*, a glass installation covering the east wall alongside the escalator from the ground level to the third floor, was installed in 2013.

There are several large public spaces within the building, including the lobbies at the north and south entrances. Inside the new entrance vestibules (described above), the formerly narrow north entrance lobby was enlarged to accommodate security at the junction of the new vestibule with the original building exterior (Photo 14). Beyond security, the U.S. Post Office space remains on the east side of the north-south corridor but is much reduced from its original size. Instead, its former area is currently occupied by offices and a large classroom. The classroom is positioned behind the mural *The Movement of Time from Redman to Truman* by Frederick Conway (Photo 15). The approximately thirty-foot-long mural was installed in 1967 and depicts a tableau of Kansas City's history painted in yellows, rusts, and greens. Although the mural remains in its original location on the east side of the north-south corridor, sections of the wall have been removed from around the mural to give the artwork more prominence in the space. Immediately south of the mural is the escalator and a portion of the new artwork, *curtain wall*, by Anne Lindberg (Photo 16).

Prior to 2004, when the First Impressions renovation was completed, the north lobby in the low-rise block had a larger number of doors that faced west toward the large circular plaza. This entrance consisted of six doors that were fully glazed and arranged in a pattern to combine pedestrian doors with two revolving doors. The smaller entrance on the north elevation utilizes the same fully glazed doors but consists of two regular doors flanking a single revolving door. Inside, the open lobby has a T-plan with the top of the T formed by a short corridor leading from

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the west elevation doors and the leg of the T formed by the corridor that leads into the building from the north doors, passes through security, and extends into the office tower. At the north end of the lobby is a small convenience store and a branch of the U. S. Post Office (Photo 17). The lobby finishes include marble-veneer-clad walls, a terrazzo floor, and an acoustical tile ceiling.

Originally, the south entrance lobby on the ground floor of the tower was, much like the north lobby on the first floor of the low-rise, a large open hallway with terrazzo floors and marble-veneer-clad walls. The lobby corridor continued to the north, passing through the elevator lobby then moving to the escalator on the east wall. As security measures became tighter, a guard station and scanner were added to the south lobby space, resulting in a utilitarian appearance.

The large entrance space at the south entrance includes an open lobby that is flooded by light from the glass walls of the entry pavilion (Photo 18). The new lobby space features terrazzo floors and granite walls that rise two full stories. The space contains the 2014 oil on canvas triptych mural by Eric Sall, *RFB Tower*. The new entry is accessed from the east, where four fully glazed doors are positioned on either side of a small vestibule. Inside the south lobby security is positioned at the wall of the original Federal Office Building.

A large cafeteria is in the southeast corner of the ground floor. This location enables diners to sit along the south wall of the office tower, which is lined with windows and provides a view of the adjacent landscaping and Thirteenth Street. The cafeteria dining room, which was in the same location as the current facility, is a large, open space with a row of support columns dividing the serving and dining areas. Originally the space was filled with a sea of small tables and chairs. Following the ARRA-funded renovations, the cafeteria was upgraded to include a series of booths and round and rectangular tables. The tile floors have been replaced with a mix of dark terrazzo and strips of black and rust/orange carpet that match the booth colors.

The corridors and elevator lobby on each floor originally had vinyl tile floors. Interior paint and color schedules indicate that the elevator lobbies and adjacent vending areas on even numbered floors (2, 4, 6...) had either seafoam green stipple or lemon ivory stipple tile. Odd numbered floors (3, 5, 7...) had either almond buff mottle tile or frost white stipple tile. Modernization of the building included replacing many of the finish materials. Public corridors on the ground and first floor, including the two entrance lobbies and all elevator lobbies, utilize the dark terrazzo floors and travertine walls. The ceiling tiles have been replaced with drywall that is pierced by can lights, which have replaced the original fluorescent panel lights. The upper floors also use the dark terrazzo floors, and the elevator lobbies' walls are clad with tile. Some floors also have wood panel details with matching wood benches incorporated into the walls. The wood extends up to the ceiling and partially across the ceiling and has its own incorporated lighting. To further brighten the corridors in the upper floors of the buildings, some of the walls that once formed the inner edges of tenant spaces were removed. In their place, floor-to-ceiling glazing was added. These new glass walls have full-height doors with simple, vertical, metal bars to serve as handles and limit the visual obstruction.

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The remainder of the building is largely dedicated to office spaces and conference rooms (Photo 19), although the building also includes a child care center and a credit union on the first floor and a fitness center and a clinic on the ground floor. The offices include a mix of small individual spaces, typically along the exterior walls of the floor, and large, open office areas, depending on the agency or tenant requirements. Some of the larger spaces rely on movable partitions to create individual workspaces, which contrasts with earlier office configurations shown in a photograph from 1966, shortly after the building opened, with a sea of desks without dividers (Figure 11 and Figure 12). Today, within the offices and other private spaces, the walls are drywall, ceilings are acoustical tiles, and many of the floors have carpet.

A major aspect of the renovation was the introduction of the “Streets in the Sky” design completed in 2011 through an investment by the ARRA. The intention of the new design was to create an “extension of the lobby spaces to connect with the first floor circulation, visually orient the user, and bring in natural daylight into the building core.”⁴ This project opened a second major circulation corridor on each of the upper floors that is perpendicular to the original east-west corridor. A new branding program was applied to the perpendicular corridors, which are located in roughly the same location as Cherry Street, which had divided the two-block building lot prior to the construction of the Federal Office Building. Building on the Cherry Street name, the upper floors in the building were each assigned a local tree for use in their wayfinding tools. This program introduced graphics and signage, lightboxes within the elevator lobbies, and floors finished in alternating broad bands of dark grey and cream-colored terrazzo to aid in orienting the building employees and visitors alike to their location within the building.

As part of this update, the finishes in the tenant areas were also updated. Originally, most of the walls were simply painted drywall, but following the renovation, materials such as wood, tile, and stainless steel were utilized for ceilings, wall treatments, and elevator surrounds (Photo 20). Additionally, the tenant areas’ original vinyl tile floors were resurfaced with either dark grey terrazzo or carpeting. Many of the colors added to the interior were inspired by the color palette of the *Movement of Time* mural on the first floor, further tying the building together.⁵ One of the most innovative changes to the interior spaces of the office tower was the addition of a series of sloped ceiling planes along the outer walls that capture daylight and reflect it into the core of the building.

Artwork

Two art pieces were installed in the Federal Office Building during or soon after the original construction was completed. The first of these is a bas-relief sculpture, *The Builders*, by Constantino Nivola (1911–1988), which was installed on the low-rise block portion of the building in 1966.⁶ The artwork consists of a series of sculpted bas-relief, cast concrete panels that celebrate the civic spirit of America. Consisting of three horizontal panels and one vertical composition, the artwork is placed with two of the horizontal pieces abutting each other to wrap the northwest corner of the low-rise block near the East Twelfth Street entrance. The remaining

⁴ GSA, *Richard Bolling Federal Building, Kansas City, MO, GSA Design Awards*.

⁵ GSA 2008.

⁶ GSA, *The Builders*, <https://www.gsa.gov/fine-arts#/artwork/21778>, accessed March 23, 2020.

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panels are positioned on the west elevation of the low-rise block. Historically, these panels flanked the original entrance to the low-rise block, which has subsequently been removed. The art panels remain in their original location, with a horizontal panel abutting the vertical panel that rises to the height of the low-rise block at the southwest corner. Each of the panels includes roughly textured images with both complex and semi-abstract shapes suggesting human and architectural forms. Included in the design are a number of clearly recognizable outlines of tools: a hammer, wrenches, pliers, shovels, trowels, and ropes. The shapes or features were first sculpted in sand to create a mold and then cast in concrete.⁷

The second artwork is *The Movement of Time from Redman to Truman* by Frederick Conway (1900–1973), which was installed in the lobby of the building in 1967.⁸ The approximately thirty-foot-long oil on canvas mural is positioned along the north-south first-floor corridor that extends from the north entrance into the low-rise portion of the building. At the time of its installation, the painting was described as “so full of detail and images within images that it cannot be grasped in one glance or even five long looks.”⁹ The images in the painting create a tableau of Kansas City’s history painted in yellows, rusts, and greens. The painting took the native St. Louis artist approximately two years to create. When it was finished, it was taken to Kansas City, where it was carefully cut into two horizontal sections for convenient mounting and was then rejoined in its current location. Once hung, Conway painted over the seam and added a few final touches to the piece.¹⁰

The 2008 interior renovation of the Federal Office Building resulted in changes to the lobby around the mural *The Movement of Time*. The surrounding area was reconfigured by opening the walls at both the north and south ends of the mural to give the artwork more prominence in the space. The reconfigured space provides a greater visual connection between the main corridor and the escalators and eases movement between the two areas and a newly established classroom east of the mural.¹¹ The reconfiguration also provides greater protection for the mural, reducing the possibility that passersby may make contact with its delicate surface.

In 1996 a small bronze sculpture, seven foot tall with base, was dedicated at the Federal Office Building as a memorial to the children killed in the Oklahoma City Federal Building bombing.¹² The sculpture, east of the East Twelfth Street entrance, is entitled *Flight* and depicts a boy gazing upward and releasing a dove. Unlike the other artworks present at the building, this sculpture

⁷ US-Museums.com, *The Builders*, accessed December 23, 2019, <https://us-museums.com/artwork/The-Builders-21778/>.

⁸askArt, “Frederick E Conway (1899-1973),” accessed December 26, 2019, <https://www.askart.com/artist/artist/105626/artist.aspx#>; “Richard Bolling Federal Building, Kansas City, MO,” U.S. GSA., accessed October 4, 2019, <https://www.gsa.gov/historic-buildings/richard-bolling-federal-building-kansas-city-mo>.

⁹ Richard M. Jones, “A Wall of History,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, January 14, 1968, 20-21.

¹⁰ Jones, “A Wall of History,” 20-21.

¹¹ GSA 2008.

¹² “Children Remembered in Sculpture Kansas City Work Dedicated to Children Killed in Oklahoma,” *The Spokesman-Review* (Spokane, Washington), February 11, 1996.

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was not commissioned through GSA's Art in Architecture program and does not belong to its Fine Arts Collection.

Among the most recent additions to the artwork of the Federal Office Building is *curtain wall* by artist Anne Lindberg (1962–).¹³ Commissioned by GSA's Art in Architecture program, the four-story artwork was installed in 2013 and consists of 270 panels of custom printed glass covering a 2,549-square-foot area.¹⁴ The work is adjacent to the escalators and creates a sense of rhythm as people move through the area, using varying widths of color stripes combined with etched glass.

The oil on canvas triptych mural by Eric Sall (1976–), *RFB Tower*, was installed in the south lobby of the Federal Office Building in 2014.¹⁵ The abstract work was also commissioned through GSA's Art and Architecture program. The huge painting consists of three panels, each eight feet wide by six-and-one-half feet high and uses vivid colors.

While *The Builders* (1966) and *Movement of Time* (1967) were commissioned for the building, installed within a year of its completion, and are significant features of the building, they do not constitute "objects" to be included in the resource count. Similarly, the artworks added to the property well after the period of significance: *curtain wall*, *RFB Tower*, and *Flight*, do not constitute "objects" to be included in the resource count.

Alterations

The Federal Office Building has been subject to numerous alterations and several modernization campaigns since its construction, as required to ensure the safety and mission needs of the tenants and operational efficiency of the building. There were several rounds of alterations to the Federal Office Building associated with the increasing level of security needed at all federal facilities following the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995. As was mentioned briefly above, the changes associated with each of the renovations included the addition of security measures, such as metal detectors and guards positioned at each of the major entries. Additionally, in 1998 GSA established the First Impressions program to address the first impression made by federally occupied buildings on the general public. Areas of particular concern in this program included refreshing lobbies and redesigning plaza areas.¹⁶ Specific areas of the Federal Office Building addressed under the First Impressions program included the new north entrance addition and first-floor corridor improvements, which were completed in 2004.

The most extensive modernization program was completed in four phases, cost more than \$200 million, incorporated First Impressions and ARRA projects, and lasted for well over a decade, from 2002 to 2015. During these renovations, alterations were made to much of the interior of the building, including reconfigurations of and additions to both the north and south entrances,

¹³ Anne Lindberg, "curtain wall," accessed December 30, 2019, <http://www.annelindberg.com/architectural-projects-1>.

¹⁴ GSA, "curtain wall,"

¹⁵ GSA, "Eric Sall Project at Bolling Federal Building," accessed, January 7, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q2Iyn5TY7Cg>.

¹⁶ General Services Administration (GSA), "First Impressions Program Overview," accessed April 7, 2020, <https://www.gsa.gov/real-estate/design-construction/design-excellence/first-impressions-program-overview>.

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which were completed in 2004 and 2008; changes in interior materials; and changes in some of the interior spaces to meet modern office requirements. There were also alterations to the landscaping that aided movement into the building and increased the building's security. Not all the changes are visible, such as hazardous materials abatement of spray-on fireproofing and lead paint on the building's steel frame; new spray-on fire protection; new insulation behind the exterior spandrel panels; and new high-performance lighting systems.

As part of the alterations made in the ARRA program, improvements were made to mechanical equipment throughout the building, which included updated heating, ventilating, and air conditioning components. Plumbing upgrades and the modernization of restroom facilities included the introduction of water conservation strategies. These alterations resulted in the building obtaining a Silver Rating under the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System for Commercial Interiors.¹⁷

Changes to the landscape/site, and building are provided under the appropriate heading above.

Integrity

There have been a number of changes to the Federal Office Building over the last twenty-five years. However, in spite of these changes, the building continues to maintain a high degree of historic integrity, particularly with regard to the major character-defining features of its exterior. The Federal Office Building retains its integrity of location. It continues to occupy the two-block area defined by Twelfth, Holmes, Thirteenth, and Locust streets in downtown Kansas City, Missouri. The Federal Office Building setting continues to be within the civic center, which includes the Kansas City, Missouri, City Hall, Police Department, and Municipal Courts, Jackson County Circuit Court, and the Fletcher Daniels State Office Building, all located within two blocks of the Federal Office Building.

The two-block site retains the original boundaries, configuration, and relationship to the building. Perhaps most significant and unaltered is the building's placement within the generous site with setbacks on all sides, which allows the building to be highly visible as a landmark feature in the landscape from points well beyond the immediate setting. An integral part of the landscape design was the open plaza at the northwest corner of the site, which enabled light to reach the building and provided an outdoor space for visitors and employees alike to relax. While the plantings, hardscape, and small-scale landscape elements have been updated more than once over the decades, the most recent rehabilitation is respectful of the original design intent, maintaining the prominent circular feature for example, while also incorporating compatible sustainable and security features. Overall, the site retains sufficient integrity to convey a sense of the original mid-20th century design.

The exterior design, materials, and workmanship of the building also retain a high degree of integrity. The character defining two-part building scheme composed of the eighteen-story high-rise tower and the three-story low-rise block is present. The distinctive checkerboard pattern

¹⁷ General Services Administration (GSA), *Richard Bolling Federal Building, Kansas City, MO, GSA Design Awards Modernization* (Washington, D.C.: GSA, 2008).

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created by alternating metal panels and glazing and glass panels is also present on the office tower, although the windows were replaced with in-kind materials, including the same dark bronze glazing in the exact same openings. The only difference between the original and current windows is that the new windows have thermal panes, whereas the original windows were single panes of glass. The frames holding the window units on the lower floors were upgraded for blast resistance, but the appearance of the windows from the exterior did not change in the recent modernization project. Similarly, the decorative aluminum tube screen is still present on the low-rise block, although a second panel was added above the front entrance of the building to draw attention to the doorways.

The two most obvious changes to the building, the additions of the entrance vestibules, were carried out largely in glass, which enables the structures to have volume without the added mass of other materials. These vestibules also provide a means of accommodating greater security measures without requiring substantive changes to the historic building fabric. Public access to the building continues through entrances in each of these building segments, although the access points have been altered for security purposes. A glass vestibule was added to the north elevation of the low-rise block and the original entry on the west side of the building was sealed. On the south elevation of the office tower, the original low-slung concrete scoop entrance was also replaced with a two-story glazed vestibule. The vestibules utilize International style design vocabulary and the use of glass allows views to the original building beyond. The scoop entry motif has been retained at the entrance to the underground parking lot off Holmes Street on the east side of the building.

The interior of the Federal Office Building was originally designed to be flexible, changing as tenants' needs dictated. This practice has continued in the building, with subsequent alterations made to ensure that the building remains efficient and secure. The original circulation patterns created by the elevators, escalators, and interior corridors remain, but have been expanded with the insertion of additional north-south corridors in the tower. The changes made on the upper floors introduce new surface finishes, way-finding, and security measures, while at the same time opening the space to bring more natural light into the building. However, on the first floor, the elevator lobby and the north-south corridor retain the original dark terrazzo floors and travertine walls, and the elevators retain the original illuminated signage. Removal of some of the first floor walls creates a more open interior, particularly around the post office and iconic mural, *The Movement of Time from Redman to Truman*. The changes have successfully retained the mid-century character of the most publicly accessible areas of the interior, while enabling the historic Federal Office Building to continue its useful life well into the twenty-first century.

Overall, the Federal Office Building continues to convey the unique feeling and association that was present when it was completed in 1967. It remains an iconic Modern-era element in Kansas City's civic center and a notable symbol of the federal presence.

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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.

Criteria Considerations

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

- 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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Government

Architecture

Period of Significance

1963–1967

Significant Dates

1966

1967

Significant Person (last name, first name)

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder (last name, first name)

Voskamp & Slezak, architects

Everitt & Keleti, architects

Radotinsky, Meyn & Deardorff, architects

Howard, Needles, Tammen & Bergendoff, structural engineers

Hare & Hare, landscape architects

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Federal Office Building located in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri, is eligible for the National Register at the local level under Criterion A for Government and C for Architecture. The building is representative of the federal building program that embarked on an unparalleled period of growth in the 1960s and 1970s, resulting in the construction of hundreds of buildings in a variety of Modern styles. The Kansas City building is a notable example and among the largest constructed by GSA nationwide during this period. Architecturally, there are only a few

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examples of large International style buildings in Kansas City, with most being constructed after the Federal Office Building. The International style Federal Office Building exemplifies the style with its unornamented, rectilinear-footprint office tower clad with continuous bands of alternating glass and metal panels. The building is set within a designed landscape that includes a large public plaza, which links the building to its civic neighbors. The design scheme, which positioned long, low blocks next to tall towers within a landscaped plaza, became popular across the country. Finally, there is a breakdown between interior and exterior spaces in the building due to the large ribbons of plate glass windows on the first story of the office tower's south elevation.

Overall, the Federal Office Building retains a high level of historic integrity with its character-defining features largely unchanged, including the distinctive two-part building design and integrated parking garage set in a landscaped plaza. The period of significance is 1963–1967, which encompasses the years of construction and the installation of the two original artworks, the bas-relief sculpture *The Builders* and the mural *The Movement of Time from Redman to Truman*.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Significance

Under Criterion A and Area of Significance, Government, the Federal Office Building is among the earliest and most prominent of the hundreds of buildings constructed by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) as part of the federal government's massive post-World War II building campaign designed to accommodate a workforce rapidly outgrowing the hodgepodge of facilities pieced together during previous years. The diversion of resources for World War II combined with unprecedented economic and population growth after the war, placed considerable strain on publicly provided services and the buildings that housed them. Beginning in the early 1960s and continuing at a slightly slower pace into the 1970s, GSA's Public Buildings Service (PBS) oversaw the construction of approximately 700 new federal buildings. The process of the planning and construction was guided and funded by the 1959 Public Buildings Act, which was intended to ensure the orderly planning and construction of public buildings and increased and refined PBS's ability to manage the public buildings program. As part of the post-war federal building campaign, GSA and PBS initiated two significant changes: a commitment to hire private architects for the design and engineering of federal facilities, and an acceptance of Modern design. Notable federal buildings constructed as part of this program were the Federal Center in Chicago (Ludwig Mies Van Der Rohe, 1964-1974); the John F. Kennedy Federal Building in Boston (Walter Gropius and the Architects Collaborative, 1966); the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Building (now the Robert C. Weaver Federal Building) in Washington, D.C. (Marcel Breuer, 1968); and the U.S. Tax Court in Washington, D.C. (Victor A. Lundy, 1976). Designed between 1960 and 1961 by a prominent local architectural firm, the building pre-dated the 1962 *Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture*, which sought to elevate the design quality of the new federal buildings, but independently expressed some of its aspirational tenets through its Modern design reflecting

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contemporary architectural thought, efficient and flexible interior layout, collaborative site selection and incorporation of artwork. GSA and the architects sought to develop a modern and flexible building that would not only meet the needs of the federal government to house a large number of departments and employees that had previously been housed in several facilities across the city, but also fit into the surrounding urban environment and be representative of its time of construction. When completed, the building consolidated most of the federal employees in Kansas City into one building, housing approximately seven thousand employees from eighteen different departmental and agency offices.

Under Criterion C, and the Area of Significance, Architecture, the Federal Office Building is a prominent example of the International style in Kansas City. Beginning in the first half of the twentieth century, there was a growing desire to develop architecture that embraced new and exciting forms that were made possible by the development of new materials and advances in technology. Among the styles or forms that were established in this period was the International style, which was known for its elimination of applied ornamentation, the concept of volume over mass, and the use of mass-produced, modular construction. The team of architects selected to complete the design and construction of the Federal Office Building, led by consulting architect Harris Armstrong who had previously worked with Raymond Hood and assisted with the design of the Rockefeller Center in New York City, were all skilled in designs of the Modern Era, including the International style. The Federal Office Building was designed beginning in 1961 and followed the tenets of the International style, exhibiting a number of character-defining features of the style. The Federal Office Building includes two distinct volumes: an eighteen-story tower and a three-story low-rise building, along with a two-story parking garage. The tower, although massive, gives an appearance of lightness due to the use of a skin that has a checkerboard pattern created by alternating dark grey, glazed, glass panels with lighter grey metal spandrels. The tower embodies volume without creating the weight usually associated with a building's mass. Utilizing modern industrial-based materials, the checkerboard skin is ornament on a monumental scale across the façade of the building. Another area of ornamentation is the screen of aluminum tubes that extends across the upper portion of the low-rise block. The tubes create a transition between the stone of the low-rise building and the more metallic appearance of the tower. The building's prominence is enhanced by its generous landscaped site which includes a plaza forming a transitional space between the city streets and the federal building and allowing the building to be viewed against the skyline. Although altered, the site maintains its original size, location, boundaries, and relationship to the Federal Office Building. These features combine to make the Federal Office Building an excellent example of the International style in Kansas City.

Federal Office Building Development Background

In 1931 Kansas City voters approved a bond totaling \$48 million for the construction of a new county courthouse and city jail. Similar bond proposals had failed in 1928, but the changes in the economic situation in the city as a result of the Great Depression pushed the new bond proposal through and provided work for a number of city residents.¹⁸ The 1934 Jackson County

¹⁸ George Ehrlich, *Kansas City, Missouri: An Architectural History, 1826-1990*, (Columbia, Missouri, University of Missouri Press, 1992 [rev ed]), 100.

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Courthouse is located at 415 East Twelfth Street and was designed by architects Wight and Wight, with assistance from Keene and Simpson and Frederick C. Gunn. The Art Deco style building is located across the street from City Hall, which was constructed in 1937 at 414 East Twelfth Street. Also designed by Wight and Wight, City Hall combines Art Moderne with Art Deco style and together these buildings created an architecturally distinct government center.¹⁹ By grouping the city hall and county courthouse, city leaders were successful at generating civic pride and a hope for the future while providing “a solid nucleus for a true civic center.”²⁰ This civic pride was further enhanced by the U.S. government, which constructed a large new post office that was completed in 1933. Several decades later, this area would be the focus for the new Federal Office Building, but not before the city carried out an extensive urban renewal program.

In the 1950s a series of plans was launched in Kansas City that was intended to both improve transportation around the growing city and “clean the decay out of the downtown, beautify what’s left, make order out of the disorder typical of all America downtowns.”²¹ These plans were facilitated by the Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority (LCRA), which was established by the State of Missouri in 1953.²² LCRA was charged with planning and administering local urban renewal activities, including clearance of blighted neighborhoods. LCRA was a separate legal entity from the City of Kansas City, and therefore was not directly responsible to city hall or the city manager for their decisions. LCRA oversight came in the form of a board composed exclusively of leaders from the private sector. Approximately two-thirds of the \$80 million in funding for LCRA came from the federal government, but the board was charged with decisions such as site selection and size, project cost, and duration.²³ LCRA’s eighteen projects between 1953 and 1969 focused largely on reshaping downtown Kansas City through the removal of blighted residential neighborhoods. Among the projects was one in South Humboldt, the future site of the Federal Office Building. This project operated between 1956 and 1965 and included 27.6 acres of land.²⁴ The stated purpose of LCRA’s South Humboldt project was to expedite construction of the downtown freeway loop. However, as a result of the project, 231 people (twenty-eight black and 203 white), and sixty-six businesses were displaced.²⁵

The Kansas City program was considered to be one of the best in the country, gaining recognition through an article in a 1958 issue of *Look* magazine. The local chapter of the AIA received an award in 1959 from the AIA for its comprehensive plan for downtown revitalization.²⁶ Following a 1958 visit to Kansas City, *Denver Post* editorial writer Ed Wolff wrote of the new expressways, bridge, slum demolition projects, public housing areas, and

¹⁹ American Institute of Architects [AIA] /Kansas City, *American Institute of Architects Guide to Kansas City Architecture & Public Art* (Kansas City, MO.: Hightower Editions, 2000), 36.

²⁰ Ehrlich, *Kansas City, Missouri: An Architectural History*, 101.

²¹ Ed Wolff, “Denver Praise for ‘Kansas City 1980,’” *KCT*, December 30, 1958, 32.

²² Kevin Fox Gotham, *Race, Real Estate, and Uneven Development* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 2002), 78.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 80.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 79.

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private apartments and commercial developments that had developed “as fast as plans can be detailed and contracts let.”²⁷ Wolff elaborated that the plans admirably addressed a city fabric that had previously grown unchecked, but with planned oversight would make the city a place where everyone would do business, find entertainment, and live graciously.

Wolff specifically called out two areas in his review of the Kansas City program: the South Humboldt and East Side Redevelopments, which combined covered twenty-seven blocks in downtown Kansas City. The areas were slated to be “cleared or cleaned up, converted from a crazy-quilt inefficient, unpleasant-use pattern into well-planned commercial and residential areas.”²⁸ In 1958 Kansas City officials proposed a list of public improvement projects to be financed by bonds. Included among the projects was the East Side renewal project, which included a \$530,000 bond including \$100,000 to be repaid to the South Humboldt Renewal Project.²⁹ The South Humboldt renewal area was roughly bounded by Eleventh, Fourteenth, and Locust streets and the Midtown Freeway. By October 1959, city leaders identified the South Humboldt redevelopment area as the “best location for the proposed thirty-two million dollar federal office building.”³⁰ Eight community leaders suggested the location to Earl H. Lund, regional director of GSA’s Public Buildings Service, at a city council meeting. The endorsement identified the South Humboldt area as the “most desirable location because of its nearness to the central business district and the civic center and the ‘obvious saving to the taxpayers by reason of the availability of cleared land in such a choice location under the federal-urban renewal program.’”³¹ In 1961 the city stated that the South Humboldt project “is cleared except two buildings, just in time for the construction of the new Federal Office Building to get underway.”³² Another government building, the Missouri State Office Building, was erected in the former South Humboldt area just after the Federal Office Building was completed. In contrast to the tall tower of the federal building, the five-story Missouri State Office Building (1968) is an example of the Modern-era Brutalism style by architects Kivett & Myers.³³

In 1949 the federal government created the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) to consolidate the government’s immense property management and procurement functions. One of the first orders of business for GSA was to address the backlog of building needs that resulted from the expansion of the government during World War II. In the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, the federal government continued to expand at a tremendous rate, increasing the number of employees and the budget. The period between 1960 to 1976 alone resulted in GSA undertaking more than 700 building projects across the country, including offices, courthouses, post offices, museums, and border stations.³⁴

²⁷ Wolff, “Denver Praise for ‘Kansas City 1980,’” 32.

²⁸ Wolff, “Denver Praise for ‘Kansas City 1980,’” 32.

²⁹“Bond Project Given Review,” *KCT*, November 26, 1959, 14B.

³⁰ “Pick a Building Site,” *KCT*, October 3, 1959, 17.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² “Kennedy Push for Jobs,” *KCT*, February 3, 1961, 5.

³³ Ehrlich, *Kansas City, Missouri: An Architectural History*, 144.

³⁴ Robinson & Associates, et al, *Growth, Efficiency, and Modernism: GSA Buildings of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s* (U. S. GSA, Center for Historic Buildings, 2006), 6.

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The spread of Modernism and the International style in the United States coincided with this period of extensive federal government growth. This architectural movement was first represented in federal commissions such as the buildings of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill at the U. S. Air Force Academy (1962) in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and Eero Saarinen's Washington Dulles International Airport (1962) in Chantilly, Virginia. In 1962 President John F. Kennedy's Ad Hoc Committee on Federal Office Space published *Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture*. The report called for designs for federal office buildings to meet a two-fold requirement: "First, it must provide efficient and economical facilities for the use of Government agencies. Second, it must provide visual testimony to the dignity, enterprise, vigor, and stability of the American Government."³⁵

GSA was responsible for a number of buildings that are examples of Modern era buildings and are most closely associated with the International style. Among these are the Chicago Federal Center, composed of the Everett M. Dirksen U. S. Courthouse (1964), the John C. Kluczynski Federal Building (1974), and the U.S. Post Office Loop Station (1974) designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and constructed in an expansive plaza in Chicago, Illinois; and the Jacob Javits Federal Building and James Watson Court of International Trade (1963–1967), designed by the architectural firms of Alfred Easton Poor, Kahn & Jacobs, and Eggers & Higgins, and near Foley Square in lower Manhattan, New York, New York.³⁶ These buildings, which are contemporaries of the Federal Office Building, share a number of common features.

The Everett M. Dirksen U.S. Courthouse, John C. Kluczynski Federal Building, and U.S. Post Office Loop Station were constructed between 1964 and 1974 in a complex that covers a two-city-block area. Like the Federal Office Building in Kansas City, the Chicago complex includes designed open spaces around the building to create an area for pedestrians to gather and to set off the buildings as sculptural objects. The iconic Calder Stabile sculpture, *Flamingo*, stands in front of the Kluczynski Federal Building. The building complex was designed by lead architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, with the buildings illustrating his preference of working in steel and glass with a minimalist approach to the design. Ornament on the building towers is largely dependent on the glass curtain walls and projecting steel I-beam mullions, which are distinctive features of Mies's designs.³⁷ The lack of ornament incorporated into the design of the building but the presence of artwork on the exterior of the building are features shared with the Federal Office Building in Kansas City. However, given the space constraints of the Chicago location, each of the three major building components of the complex are stand-alone buildings, tied visually by construction materials and shared features such as the pilotis enabling an open plaza below the first stories of both the Dirksen and Kluczynski towers. This contrasts with the single building with three distinct components found in the Federal Office Building.

³⁵ Ad Hoc Committee on Federal Office Space, "Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture," accessed March 3, 2020, <https://www.gsa.gov/real-estate/design-construction/design-excellence/design-excellence-program/guiding-principles-for-federal-architecture>.

³⁶ GSA, *Explore Historic Buildings*, Accessed April 23, 2020, <https://www.gsa.gov/real-estate/historic-preservation/explore-historic-buildings>

³⁷ GSA, *Everett M. Dirksen U.S. Courthouse, Chicago, IL*, accessed July 14, 2020, <https://www.gsa.gov/historic-buildings/everett-m-dirksen-us-courthouse-chicago-il>

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The Jacob Javits Federal Building and James Watson Court of International Trade (CIT) in New York consists of two sections, a forty-one-story office tower and eight-story court building. Unlike the Federal Office Building, the two sections of the complex are not a single block but instead are connected by a four-story pedestrian bridge. The building complex is set within a large landscaped plaza. Similar to the Kansas City building, the Javits Building is lacking in ornament and clad with gray Alabama limestone panels, black Minnesota granite panels, and glass arranged in a checkerboard pattern. In contrast with the patterned tower, the CIT building in the complex is a cube sheathed in black glass.³⁸ This design feature—a patterned tower and more modest associated second building—is echoed in the Federal Office Building. The New York building complex takes advantage of its location to emphasize the height of the office tower, which rises to forty-one stories, more than twice the height of the Kansas City building.

About the same time the Chicago and New York federal complexes were being constructed, a team of architects and engineers was assembled to begin work on the new federal building slated for construction in Kansas City, Missouri. The design team included a number of local and regional firms that were already working in the Modern era styles, including the architectural firms of Voskamp & Slezak, Everitt & Keleti, and Radotinsky, Meyn & Deardorff; structural engineers Howard, Needles, Tammen & Bergendoff, consulting architect Harris Armstrong; and landscape architects Hare & Hare. The building, when it was dedicated in 1966, included 1,210,000 square feet of interior space, with the office tower rising to eighteen stories and the low-rise portion of three stories.³⁹

The Federal Office Building was the fourth federal government building constructed in Kansas City. The first, a combined post office and customs house, was constructed in 1885 in the Renaissance Revival style.⁴⁰ The U.S. Post Office and Custom House was located at 911 Walnut Street,⁴¹ roughly seven blocks northwest of the current building. Quickly outgrown, the functions it housed were moved to a new federal building, also named the U.S. Post Office and Custom House, which was constructed between 1892 and 1900 at 811 Grand Boulevard. University of Missouri-Kansas City Art History professor George Ehrlich, a recognized expert on Kansas City architecture, called the second federal building a “miniature late-nineteenth century statehouse with its Renaissance dome and free adaptation of Classic forms.”⁴² Eventually, this building faced criticism of its interior spaces and was ultimately demolished to make way for a new federal courthouse. This third federal building, a massive Art Moderne building known as the U.S. Courthouse and Post Office,⁴³ was completed in 1939 and still stands at 811 Grand Boulevard. Vacated by the federal government in 1998 when the new Charles Evans Whittaker U.S. Courthouse opened at 400 East Ninth Street, the third federal building was transferred to a private developer for conversion to residential apartments. Meanwhile, the vacated first federal

³⁸ GSA, *Jacob Javits Federal Building & James Watson Court of International Trade, New York, NY*, accessed July 13, 2020, <https://www.gsa.gov/historic-buildings/jacob-javits-federal-building-james-watson-court-international-trade-new-york-ny>.

³⁹ GSA, *Federal Office Building Dedication Brochure*, April 22, 1966, GSA Archives, Washington, D. C.

⁴⁰ Ehrlich, *Kansas City, Missouri: An Architectural History*, 43.

⁴¹ Constructed 1885; NRHP Registration Number 97000908, listed August 14, 1997.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 51, 55.

⁴³ Constructed 1939; NRHP Registration Number 7001231, listed November 20, 2007.

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building was eventually demolished and replaced by the Fidelity National Bank and Trust Building, an Art Deco tower completed in 1932, which incorporated the first federal building's bell and clock into its design. The bank building was subsequently acquired by GSA in 1950, renamed Federal Building, and occupied by federal agencies for several decades. In 1996 the building was transferred to a private developer and was converted to residences in the early twenty-first century. Thus, two former federal buildings and one federal courthouse remain in same general vicinity as the Federal Office Building. The two former federal buildings are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.⁴⁴

In the 1930s there was almost a complete turnover in government buildings in Kansas City. First, a new large post office building was constructed at Pershing and Broadway, near the Union Station. The proximity to the railroad station was planned and allowed for an underground connection between the new building and the baggage levels of the railroad station. The post office building was completed in late September 1933.⁴⁵ As the post office was nearing completion, ground was broken for a new county courthouse on Twelfth Street between Oak and Locust streets. The courthouse was completed in less than two years and was dedicated in December 1934.⁴⁶ The new municipal auditorium was completed in October 1935, and the new city hall opened in late 1937.⁴⁷ The new city hall was located across Twelfth Street from the courthouse, with the two buildings forming the official seat of government. With the construction of the new city hall completed, the old city hall, the adjacent police headquarters, and an old market building were demolished. In 1938 and 1939 new municipal courts and police headquarters buildings were erected at the northeast corner of Twelfth and Locusts streets and the new federal courts building and post office was finished.⁴⁸

Ehrlich noted that there were few examples of what appeared to be a coordinated effort to plan the new civic center present in the city before the civic center was completed.⁴⁹ The buildings within the civic center shared a common use as government buildings and had similar Art Deco design influences. The cohesiveness of the area may have been accidentally accomplished as the same architectural firm, Wight & Wight, designed the county courthouse, city hall, and the municipal courts building. To formalize the connection between the government buildings, the firm of Hare and Hare, which later was involved with the Federal Office Building, was consulted on landscaping for the 1930s buildings.⁵⁰

In contrast to the Art Deco-influenced buildings of the earlier civic center buildings, the Federal Office Building was designed in the International style, a term coined by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson in their essay in the catalog that accompanied *Modern*

⁴⁴ The Fidelity National Bank and Trust Company Building (NRHP Registration Number 97000908, listed 8/14/1997) and United States Courthouse and Post Office—Kansas City (NRHP Registration Number 7001231, listed 11/20/2007)

⁴⁵ Ibid., 103.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.,104.

⁵⁰ Ehrlich, *Kansas City, Missouri: An Architectural History*, 104.

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Architecture: International Exhibition, a 1932 exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art, and the subsequent book, *The International Style: Architecture Since 1922*. According to Hitchcock and Johnson, the three principles that are the hallmark of International style buildings are architecture as volume, regularity, and avoiding the application of ornament.⁵¹ An advantage of the style was that the buildings could be constructed quickly because of their use of mass-produced, inexpensive materials and new construction technologies. Typically, International style buildings feature designs that emphasize the use and technical abilities of iron, steel, and glass. These designs tend to focus on simplicity of form and line while eliminating the extraneous applied ornament of earlier design philosophies. Like the typical International style building, the Federal Office Building features curtain walls with large amounts of glazing. Another popular, but not required, feature of the style is an outdoor plaza that links the building to the surrounding civic center.

Another advantage of the International style, as exhibited in the Federal Office Building, was the ability to create interior office spaces that were large, open areas that could be flexibly reconfigured with impermanent dividers. The tenet of the style was that architecture should represent volume over mass. About the same time as the International style was gaining popularity, there were technological advances in structural engineering construction methods and materials, including the change from using the exterior walls as structural support. This new construction method enabled the interior space to be opened and the exterior walls to become a skin that enclosed the space. To achieve this, interior floors were cantilevered from interior supports, enabling the exterior skin to be glazed without interruption and interior spaces to be manipulated without the numerous interior columns present required in earlier buildings.⁵² The combination of philosophy and technology made the International style very appealing for the managers of a building that needed to accommodate a number of different tenants, all with different space requirements.

The Kansas City newspapers were very interested in the design of the new federal building. In March 1960 an article in the *Kansas City Times* [KCT] noted that buildings erected by the government abroad stirred the imagination and hoped for a similarly inspiring building in Kansas City. The article recommended that, because the new building would dominate the city skyline for several generations, it should be “of bold contemporary design [that would] put Kansas City on the map.”⁵³

In *Skylines*, the publication of the Kansas City Chapter of the AIA, William Dye, associate editor, wrote that the Federal Office Building and its landscaping comprised one of the best examples of the International style in Kansas City, Missouri. The 1962 article described the new Federal Office Building design as “an almost complete break from the Greek classicism of early American government structures,” and continued:

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² William J. R. Curtis, *Modern Architecture Since 1900*, 3rd ed. (New York: Phaidon Press, Inc., 1996), 259.

⁵³ “A Federal Building to stir the imagination,” *KTC*, March 3, 1960.

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The fabric-like (when viewed from a distance) texture of the checkerboard pattern of windows and aluminum panels of the 18-story federal building will be contrasted in a dramatic, dynamic treatment of the relatively narrow building ends...Each end will be in the form of a giant upended “jaws” of granite panels.⁵⁴

In March 1965, even before the Federal Office Building was completed, the impact of the new building was already felt in Kansas City. A *Kansas City Times* article noted that the “massive block of granite and glass looms prominently against the sky.”⁵⁵ The large office building was recognized for other features that it was bringing to the downtown area, such as the open area around the base of the building that allowed for “ample open space for statues, landscaping and a fountain.”⁵⁶

The International style is clearly expressed through a number of character-defining features of the Federal Office Building. These features illustrate the concept of volume over mass and repetitive modular forms. Both concepts are illustrated in the Federal Office Building through the use of the checkerboard pattern created by alternating dark grey glazed windows and spandrel panels with lighter grey metal spandrels. The checkerboard is the embodiment of repetitive modular forms, with the pattern carried out across almost the full height of the eighteen-story tower. The materials convey lightness while encapsulating the large space within. Similarly, the metal panels and the aluminum tube screen around the low-rise block convey an association with industrial materials that were also common characters of the style. Many International style buildings are composed of multiple components, including multiple towers or a combination of a low-rise block and tower, such as the Federal Office Building. Examples include the United Nations Headquarters (1947–1952), the Jacob Javits Federal Building and James Watson Court of International Trade, and the Chicago Federal Center. The final key character-defining feature of the International style is the practice of incorporating pedestrian plazas into the site design for the buildings. These plazas provided public amenities outside the buildings in contrast to the typically small building lobbies and allowed the buildings to be viewed as sculptural objects. Examples include the Seagram Building (1954–1958), Lever House (1951–1952), and the John C. Kluczynski Federal Building (1964). In the case of the Federal Office Building, the plaza consists of a large portion of the site and includes landscape and hardscape that provides a transition from the busy city streets to the door of the building.

History of the Property

The 1959 Public Buildings Act, which provided for the construction, alteration, and acquisition of public buildings of the federal government, included an appropriation of \$25 million to be used in the acquisition of sites for several new federal buildings, including one in Kansas City, Missouri.⁵⁷ Prior to the release of funds, the prospectus of the proposed building and associated cost estimates were required to be reviewed and approved by both the Senate and the House

⁵⁴ Dye, “Kansas City Opens New Frontier,” 9.

⁵⁵ “New Towers in the sky,” KTC, March 24, 1965.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Jack Williams, “Hopes Rise for U.S. Structure,” *The Kansas City Times* [KCT] (Missouri), January 19, 1960, 1.

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Public Works Committees. A newspaper article in January 1960 announced that approval was anticipated in the coming weeks. Upon approval of the Senate and House Public Works Committees, GSA was authorized to purchase a site for the proposed building and begin other preliminary planning.⁵⁸ The proposed site was a two-block area that had been largely cleared of earlier buildings by the LCRA and was within sight of the city and county offices, the school board, library, and Southeast freeway system.⁵⁹

There was local support for the new federal building, as evidenced by the endorsement by the Business District League. The League voted in February 1960 to adopt a resolution urging the Public Works Committee of the House of Representatives to approve a bill that would provide funds for the proposed federal building.⁶⁰

In March 1960 GSA had won approval to move forward with the Kansas City location, although the specific site had not yet been finalized. A newspaper article about the building exclaimed that the long-used “postoffice [sic] Roman” style associated with most federal buildings in recent years was at long last put to rest, and a “bold, contemporary design” would be selected.⁶¹ Although the federal government lagged in the decision making for the building site, the *Kansas City Star* reported that the site had been set aside by the city government. The location, bounded by Locust, Holmes, Twelfth, and Thirteenth streets, was confirmed by Albert J. Harmon, executive director of the LCRA.⁶² Harmon further explained that the LCRA held the land at the request of GSA and would eventually turn the site over to the federal government for \$963,000.⁶³

By October 1960 the Kansas City Council passed four amendments to move the project forward. These amendments included acquiring a block of land northeast of the Federal Office Building site for development of a multi-level parking development; vacating Cherry Street between Twelfth and Thirteenth streets; authorizing the adjacent zoning to include the location of the planned Federal Office Building; and authorizing the widening of Thirteenth Street from Charlotte to Locust streets.⁶⁴

On July 26, 1960, GSA announced that “A new multi-million dollar federal building, approved for construction in Kansas City, Missouri, will be designed by four firms of the project city.”⁶⁵ The selected firms included Voskamp & Slezak; Everitt & Keleti; Radotinsky, Meyn & Deardorff; and Howard Needles. It was anticipated that the design phase for the new facility, which was intended to house the post office and eighteen additional federal offices, would be

⁵⁸ Williams, “Hopes Rise,” 2.

⁵⁹ “A Huge ‘Branch Office’ for Government,” *KCT*, January 29, 1960, 44.

⁶⁰ “Elected to 26th Term,” *KCT*, February 10, 1960, 28.

⁶¹ “A Federal Building to Stir the Imagination,” *KCT*, March 3, 1960, 26.

⁶² U.S. Building would tower over civic center.” *Kansas City Star*, January 19, 1960, 1.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶⁴ “Move on U. S. Building,” *KCT*, October 29, 1960, 33.

⁶⁵ GSA, Office of Information, “News Release, Wednesday, July 26, 1960, GSA #1258,” GSA Archives, Washington, D.C.

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completed in November 1961.⁶⁶ The Kansas City building was one of seventy-five new buildings in forty-one states announced by GSA in 1960. The estimated overall cost of the new Kansas City building was \$39.6 million dollars, putting it in the top ten percent of the new federal buildings funded by Congress that year based on cost.⁶⁷

The architects were clearly hard at work by September 1960, when Frank Slezak announced that his firm had hired Harris Armstrong, an architect from Kirkwood, Missouri, to consult with the four firms planning the building.⁶⁸ Armstrong was considered to be an architectural leader in the modern movement in the Midwest.⁶⁹ When the contracts were negotiated between GSA and the design firms, the team announced that they would “prepare the structural design of the new building as a joint venture. The engineering firm will prepare the mechanical design.”⁷⁰

The architectural team reported that they had traveled to New York, Washington, and Pittsburgh in search of design ideas.⁷¹ Although information on the specific buildings they may have visited is not reported in newspapers, given the time the group was traveling it was highly likely that in New York they saw the at least the Lever House,⁷² the United Nations Secretariat, and the Seagram Building.⁷³ Possible buildings visited in Pittsburgh include the Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA) building (1950–1953), which was designed by Harrison & Abramovitz and featured aluminum spandrels that may have inspired similar spandrels on the Federal Office Building.⁷⁴ In Washington, D.C., a possible stop may have been Federal Office Building #6 (Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Building; 1960). Federal Office Building #6 is considered to be the first Modernist federal office building to be designed and erected by the federal government in Washington, D.C.⁷⁵

Historically the new site was heavily developed. By 1896 the *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map* indicates that the two-block site was densely occupied with a variety of residential and commercial structures.⁷⁶ At that time, the south side of Twelfth Street was largely lined with two- and three-story brick buildings, including a bakery, drug store, and Odd Fellows Hall. The

⁶⁶ GSA, Office of Information, “News Release, Wednesday, July 26, 1960, GSA #1258,” GSA Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁶⁷ GSA, Office of Information, “News Release, Wednesday, June 15, 1960, GSA #1239,” GSA Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁶⁸ “To be consultant on U.S. building,” *KCT*, September 9, 1960, 23.

⁶⁹ Esley Hamilton, “Shanley Building” NRHP Inventory-Nomination Form, accessed February 28, 2020, <https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/nps-nr/82004718.pdf>.

⁷⁰ “Pick Firms for U. S. Building,” *KCT*, July 26, 1960, 1.

⁷¹ “To be consultant,” 23.

⁷² NRHP Registration Number 83004078 listed October 2, 1983.

⁷³ NRHP Registration Number 6000056 listed February 24, 2006.

⁷⁴ Pittsburg History & Landmarks Foundation, *Historic Landmark*, accessed July 13, 2020, <https://www.phlf.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/09/Historic-Plaques-2010b.pdf>

⁷⁵ GSA, *About the Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Building*, accessed July 13, 2020, <https://www.gsa.gov/real-estate/gsa-properties/visiting-public-buildings/lyndon-baines-johnson-building/about-the-lyndon-baines-johnson-department-of-education-building>

⁷⁶ Sanborn Map Company, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Kansas City, Jackson, Clay, and Platte Counties, Missouri*, vol. 2 (Pelham, NY: Sanborn Map Company, 1896), 122.

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remainder of the two-block area included a number of brick or frame residences. The one exception is the three-story building at the northeast corner of Thirteenth and Cherry Streets that included stores on the first story and housed the Hartnett Hotel on the upper two stories. By 1909, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps* indicate that the area was even more densely developed. Among the new buildings in the area was the two-story brick Missouri Dairy Company building that replaced several earlier residences on the east side of Locust Street.⁷⁷

In 1955 aerial photographs of the site of the future Federal Office Building reveal that there were a number of buildings on the site.⁷⁸ The commercial buildings along Twelfth Street remained, and a large multi-story building that fronted on Cherry Street. The former Hartnett Hotel was still extant as well. Buildings east of Cherry Street were larger than those present in the early part of the century, with a number of buildings closely spaced on the west side of Holmes Street. By 1959, aerials reveal that the two-block site was largely cleared, with the bulk of the property serving as surface parking lots.⁷⁹

On June 26, 1961, GSA announced that the new Kansas City building would have a basement, partial sub-basement, ground floor, an eighteen-story tower, and a penthouse. The penthouse would house the air conditioning plant and other mechanical facilities. Construction materials would include a glass and metal exterior with stone masonry walls at each end of the steel skeleton structure. The design called for a three-story structure along East Twelfth Street that would house the main lobby and the post office, as well as areas that would need to be easily accessed by the general public.⁸⁰

Overall, the building would occupy approximately one-third of the two-block site, with the remainder dedicated to a park and parking. The park-like setting would also echo the setting of City Hall and the Jackson County Courthouse, which are also set back from the street to give an open effect. By the end of June 1961, the architectural team's design received approval from GSA.⁸¹ With this approval, the project could then move on to Congress for construction funding.

In January 1963 the contract to construct the new federal building was awarded to S. S. Silverblatt, Inc, a New York contractor, for the low bid of \$23.6 million, which was approximately \$6,000 under the allotted funding by Congress.⁸² Two weeks after Silverblatt, Inc., was awarded the contract to construct the new Federal Office Building, the firm pleaded guilty in New York to payroll padding and bribery. Initially, GSA indicated that the charges would not impact the contract award; however, it would first confirm that the firm was financially and technically qualified to do the job.⁸³ The resulting investigation revealed that the Silverblatt firm did not meet the qualifications required to be awarded the construction

⁷⁷ Sanborn Map Company, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Kansas City, Missouri*, vol. 2 (Pelham, NY: Sanborn Map Company, 1909), 229.

⁷⁸ Netronline, Historic Aerials, Accessed March 27, 2020, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ GSA, Office of Information, "News Release, June 26, 1961, GSA #1456," GSA Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁸¹ "A striking U.S. Office Building," *KCT*, June 28, 1961, 28.

⁸² "Bids in on KC. Federal Building," *The Springfield News-Leader* (Springfield, Missouri), January 11, 1963, 32.

⁸³ "Bid Unaffected by Guilty Plea," *KCT*, January 29, 1963, 3.

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contract.⁸⁴ On February 8, 1963, GSA awarded the contract for the construction of the Federal Office Building to the second lowest bidders for the project, the team of Huber, Hunt & Nichols of Indianapolis and Frank Briscoe Company of New Jersey.⁸⁵ The team of two firms had submitted a bid of \$23.8 million. The construction contract, signed in April 1963, authorized the contractors to begin work on Monday, April 29, 1963, with the contract noting that completion to be within 870 calendar days.⁸⁶

In conjunction with the new building, the project included a plaza that would provide a transition from the street to the building and form a connection to other government buildings in the growing civic center. Early sketches of the project included a circular plaza set in the junction of the tower and low-rise block (see Figure 2).

Even as the construction of the building was nearing completion there was continued debate about the plaza. In July 1965 the City of Kansas City approached two different landscape architects, Lawrence Halprin and Hideo Sasaki, for revised designs that would tie both the federal building and a new state building together. The new Missouri State Office Building was to be constructed south of the Federal Office Building at Thirteenth and Holmes streets. However, federal officials were unwilling to delay construction for the time needed to produce a new plaza design.⁸⁷ That same month, GSA announced that the 160-foot wide sunken patio would be completed independently of the civic center plaza for other governmental buildings in the area.⁸⁸

Late in 1965, GSA announced that although the original plan for the construction of the new Federal Office Building had included the disposal of the 1933 federal building at 911 Walnut Street, it had become evident that growth in several departments meant the new building would not provide sufficient space for the staff of all the agencies. At that point, the federal government was the largest employer in Kansas City, with an annual payroll exceeding \$106 million.⁸⁹

The completed Federal Office Building was dedicated at 11:00 am, Friday, April 22, 1966.⁹⁰ The celebration, held in the circular plaza outside the new building, included speeches by featured speaker Representative Richard Bolling, with former President Harry S. Truman as the honorary chairman for the dedication and Robert P. Lyons, attorney and active civic and non-profit board leader, as the general chairman.⁹¹ Additional speakers included Senator Edward V. Long and Senator Stuart Symington, who was also the speaker at an earlier cornerstone laying program.⁹² Following the dedication and a celebratory luncheon, tours were given of the new building.

⁸⁴ "Contract for U.S. Building," *KCT*, February 9, 1963, 1.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ "U.S. Building Start Set," *KCT*, April 26, 1963, 1.

⁸⁷ William R. Graves, "U.S. to finish work on patio," *KCT*, July 22, 1965, 1.

⁸⁸ Graves, "U.S. to finish work," 1.

⁸⁹ John R. Cauley, "U.S. keeps title to 911 Walnut," *KCT*, October 28, 1965, 1.

⁹⁰ "You are Invited," *The Kansas Citan*, Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, April 19, 1966, 1.

⁹¹ "U.S. Office Building Dedication Today," *KCT*, April 22, 1966, 1.

⁹² "You are Invited," 1.

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In addition to the seven thousand employees scheduled to work in the new building, a variety of federal agencies were housed there beginning on November 6, 1965.⁹³ Among the eighteen different departmental and agency offices in the federal building were the U.S. Post Office; regional offices of the Office of Veterans Affairs; the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; the Office of Education; the National Severe Storm Forecasting Center; and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers.⁹⁴ In September 1967 the Office of Economic Opportunity was scheduled to move into the Federal Office Building. The Water Pollution Control Administration, the final new tenant to arrive in the new federal building, was scheduled to arrive in January 1968.⁹⁵

In 1994 the Federal Office Building was rededicated as the Richard Bolling Federal Building.⁹⁶ Bolling (1916–1991) served as the U.S. Congressman for Missouri’s 5th District from 1949 to 1983.⁹⁷ During his service in Congress, Bolling was a member of the Committee on Rules and was credited with greatly influencing congressional reform during the 1970s.⁹⁸

Architecture

The Federal Office Building is an International style building, a style which falls under the general umbrella of Modern architecture, which was popular in the United States during the twentieth century (ca. 1940–1970). The modern movement got its start in Europe and is generally traced to architects experimenting with new designs in the years between World War I and II.⁹⁹ After World War I, in 1919, architect Walter Gropius founded the Bauhaus School in Germany. The architectural style developed by Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and Le Corbusier incorporated the straightforward, unornamented, functional lines with the availability of new construction materials.¹⁰⁰ The development of new construction materials allowed for prefabricated, mass-produced, modular construction that could be incorporated into the designs. The coalescence of these philosophies and aesthetics resulted in the International style, which is defined by simple, geometric forms; structural frames of steel and concrete; flat roofs with little to no overhang; glass curtain walls and ribbon windows; and little to no decoration.¹⁰¹

As discussed above, the term “International style” was coined by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson in 1932 to describe a new movement of architecture that arose in Europe and America in the first decades of the twentieth century. Hitchcock and Johnson identified three

⁹³ “New Towers in the Sky,” *KCT*, March 24, 1965, 26.

⁹⁴ “Kansas City Federal Building About Ready,” *Sunday News and Tribune* (Jefferson City, Missouri), October 31, 1965, 2A.

⁹⁵ Bill Moore, “Government Finds Use for Both Federal Buildings – At Last!” *KCT*, August 23, 1967, 2B.

⁹⁶ GSA, “Richard Bolling Federal Building, Kansas City, MO, accessed December 12, 2019, <https://www.gsa.gov/historic-buildings/richard-bolling-federal-building-kansas-city-mo>.

⁹⁷ *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, “Bolling, Richard Walker, (1916-1991),” accessed December 6, 2019, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=B000605>.

⁹⁸ GSA, “Richard Bolling Federal Building, Kansas City, MO., accessed December 12, 2019, <https://www.gsa.gov/historic-buildings/richard-bolling-federal-building-kansas-city-mo>.

⁹⁹ Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2013), 620.

¹⁰⁰ Arnold and Conway, *Michigan Modern*, 22–24.

¹⁰¹ McAlester, *Field Guide*, 616; Robinson & Associates, et al, *Growth, Efficiency, and Modernism: GSA Buildings of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s* (U. S. GSA, Center for Historic Buildings, 2006), 14.

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principles that link International style buildings: architecture as volume instead of mass, regularity and not axial symmetry as an ordering device, and avoiding the application of ornament.¹⁰² Some scholars believe that there is fourth principle associated with the style: visual focus on surface articulation rather than decoration. This last principle is illustrated in the checkerboard treatment on the north and south elevations of the office tower of the Federal Office Building.

Following World War II, the International style was quickly adopted by private corporations for their buildings and campuses in the United States. The rapidly expanding post-war economy created a demand for buildings that could be constructed quickly and use mass-produced, inexpensive materials and new construction technologies, making the International style an appealing option. Many of these buildings featured curtain walls with large amounts of glazing and outdoor plazas linking the buildings to their surroundings. These features are showcased in buildings such as Lever House (1951–1952) in New York City by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill; the apartment towers at 860–880 Lake Shore Drive (1948–1951) in Chicago by Mies van der Rohe; the United Nations Secretariat (1947–1950) in New York City by Wallace K. Harrison and Max Abramovitz; and the Seagram Building (1954–1958) in New York City by Mies van der Rohe.¹⁰³

Modern architecture introduced a “diminishing distinction between public and private buildings.”¹⁰⁴ Exterior plazas replaced large interior lobbies. Interior office spaces were large, open areas that could be reconfigured with impermanent dividers. Large windows, made possible by advancements in technology and design, were used to visually unite exterior and interior spaces.

The International style is clearly expressed through the character-defining features of the Federal Office Building. The unornamented office tower is a rectilinear footprint with seventeen upper stories with continuous bands of alternating glass and metal panels, reflecting the three principles outlined by Hitchcock and Johnson in *The International Style*.¹⁰⁵ Like Lever House and the Seagram Building, the Federal Office Building has a large plaza, linking the building to its surroundings. Furthering this breakdown between interior and exterior are large ribbons of plate glass windows on the first story of the tower’s south elevation.

There were a number of International style buildings constructed in Kansas City contemporaneous to the Federal Office Building. Some of these, such as the TWA Corporate Headquarters Building at 1735–1741/1740 Main Street¹⁰⁶ are good examples of the International style with their use of curtain walls; however, at just three stories high and without the

¹⁰² McAlester, *Field Guide*, 617; Mark A. Runco and Steven R. Pritzker (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Creativity* (San Diego: Academic Press, 1999), 82.

¹⁰³ Leland M. Roth, *American Architecture: A History* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001), 412–426.

¹⁰⁴ Robinson & Associates, et al., *Growth, Efficiency, and Modernism*, 30.

¹⁰⁵ McAlester, *Field Guide*, 617.

¹⁰⁶ NRHP Registration Number 2001403, listed November 20, 2002.

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landscaping, differ significantly from the Federal Office Building.¹⁰⁷ Another low-rise International style building is the former IBM Building (1960), 301 Armour Boulevard, a five-story building that has been extensively altered, including enclosing the entire first story in glass, in its conversion into a luxury apartment building and commercial space.¹⁰⁸

Examples of International style buildings that include features similar to the Federal Office Building include the Kansas City Public Library Building and Board of Education (BOE) building (1960), the BMA Tower (1961–1963), and the Commerce Building (1964). Although the configuration of the Kansas City Public Library and BOE Building,¹⁰⁹ 1211 McGee Street, is slightly different than the Federal Office Building, it includes several similar elements. Designed by architect Edward W. Tanner, the building consists of a narrow nine-story tower sheathed with a grid pattern of glass and aluminum forming a curtain wall.¹¹⁰ This is similar to the Federal Office building; however, the Library/BOE building's tower rises above a wider two-story stone base, rather than an adjacent low-rise block. Like the Federal Office Building, the lot itself plays an important role in the building design. The Library/BOE building also includes a two-level parking garage, which takes advantage of the sloping lot to provide street-level access to the upper level of the north parking lot and similar access to the lower level of the parking lot from the west. The landscaping that surrounds the building also exemplifies landscapes associated with International style buildings, including the use of low brick walls that enclose terraced planting beds, which flanks wide concrete stairs leading from the public sidewalk.

The BMA Tower (1961–1963), 700 Karnes Boulevard, was designed with collaboration by Bruce Graham of Skidmore Owings & Merrill in Chicago, and Tanner & Liscott in Kansas City.¹¹¹ The BMA Tower is a nineteen-story building south of downtown Kansas City's central business district and is surrounded by 7.5 acres of land. The office tower has a welded steel frame that is clad with white glass panels that extend beyond the building's glass walls to create a dramatic black and white grid. Like many other International style towers, the first-story lobby is recessed from the perimeter to create the illusion that the building is floating. Although the gridded design of the tower is shared with the Federal Office Building, the construction materials result in the frame being the dominant feature of the building rather than the glass and spandrel surface of the federal building. The BMA Tower landscaping features a plaza of gray and white concrete pavers set in a grid design that mimics the tower design. A reflecting pool, concrete planters, and planting beds with deciduous and evergreen shrubs, ornamental trees, and flowers are incorporated into the landscape. There is also a pair of concrete stairways that provide access from Karnes Boulevard and the visitor parking areas.

¹⁰⁷ Cydney E. Millstein, TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building NRHP Registration Form, accessed July 14, 2020, <https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/nps-nr/02001403.pdf>.

¹⁰⁸ Mac Properties, "About the Community," accessed July 19, 2020, <https://www.macapartments.com/property/301-East-Armour-Blvd>.

¹⁰⁹ NRHP Registration Number 10001350, listed October 24, 2017.

¹¹⁰ Rachel Nugent Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building NRHP Registration Form. Accessed July 15, 2020, <https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/nps-nr/SG100001350.pdf>.

¹¹¹ NRHP Registration Number 2000886; listed August 21, 2002; Elizabeth Rosin, "BMA Tower," NRHP Registration Form, Accessed July 18, 2020, <https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/nps-nr/02000886.pdf>.

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The third Kansas City example of International style that includes a tower is the Commerce Tower (1965), 911 Main Street.¹¹² The thirty-story building was designed by Keene, Simpson & Murphy and features a curtain-wall office façade with precast stone forming a framework around a geometric pattern of glass on the upper levels.¹¹³ Like the BMA Tower, the Commerce Tower has its first two stories recessed. However, like the Federal Office Building, the Commerce Tower has a wing or associated low-rise building in the form of a five-story wing at the southeast corner of the tower. Additionally, the Commerce Building also sits in a planned landscape that includes a sunken garden.

A later example of the International style in Kansas City is the Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company Building in the IBM Plaza at Crown Center (1977), which had been attributed to the office of Mies van der Rohe. However, it was later determined to have been designed by Fujikawa Conterato Lohan & Associates.¹¹⁴ This twenty-eight story glass box is a late example of the style and features a steel frame covered with a cladding of anodized aluminum and solar glass.¹¹⁵ Like the Federal Office Building, it has some landscaping, although this is very modest in scale and includes small planting beds at each side of the building that are separated by a pair of four steps that provide access to a paved plaza.

Considering these examples of the International style in Kansas City, Missouri, the Federal Office Building is one of the few that includes not only the tall office tower clad with a skin that provides most of the building ornament, but also incorporates a low-rise block within the same complex. At the Federal Office Building the surrounding landscaping is a key feature and provides a transitional space between the city streets through a landscaped plaza that includes plants, seating areas, and a small fountain before entering the interior of the building. While many of the other International style buildings in the city have some landscape elements, there tends to be a greater use of hardscape than is present at the Federal Office Building. The one major exception to this is the BMA Tower, which is set on a large parcel of land surrounded by a landscape that is not possible in the urban center of Kansas City.

Recognizing the popularity of the International style and its cost-effective construction, GSA erected other federal buildings in the same style, including the Everett M. Dirksen U. S. Courthouse, John C. Kluczynski Federal Building, U.S. Post Office Loop, and the Jacob Javits Federal Building & James Watson Court of International Trade, discussed above.

Architects, Engineers, Landscape Architects, and Artists

Four firms were originally hired to complete the design of the Federal Office Building. These firms were architects Voskamp & Slezak, Everitt & Keleti, and Radotinsky, Meyn & Deardorff and structural engineers Howard, Needles, Tammen & Bergendoff. In September 1960 Harris

¹¹² NRHP Registration Number 14000141, listed April 11, 2014; AIA/Kansas City, *AIA Guide to Kansas City*, 26

¹¹³ Elizabeth Rosin and Lauren Rieke, Commerce Tower NRHP Registration Form, accessed July 19, 2020, <https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/nps-nr/14000141.pdf>.

¹¹⁴ Emporis, "2345 Grand," accessed July 14, 2020, <https://www.emporis.com/buildings/121803/2345-grand-kansas-city-mo-usa>.

¹¹⁵ AIA/Kansas City, *AIA Guide to Kansas City*, 47.

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Armstrong was brought into the project to serve as consulting architect. Although all the design firms are listed on drawings and other documents regarding the project with Harris listed last or next to last, in newspaper articles and architectural reviews of Harris Armstrong's projects, he is often described as the designer of the Federal Office Building, suggesting he may have had a greater role than a project consultant.¹¹⁶ The landscape design was the product of the firm Hare & Hare.

Voskamp & Slezak, architects

The firm of Voskamp & Slezak was founded by Raymond Leonard Voskamp (1904–1988) in 1945.¹¹⁷ Voskamp earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in interior design in 1935 and then went on to work as an assistant architect to the State of Missouri Building Commission.¹¹⁸ It was while working for the state that Governor Lloyd Stark hired him to be the project architect for renovations to the Missouri governor's mansion.¹¹⁹ Later, Voskamp worked for his brother, Edgar, at Gentry and Voskamp and then went on to work as the resident architect with Smith, Hinchman & Grylls before partnering with Frank Robert Slezak in 1945 to form Voskamp & Slezak.¹²⁰ Slezak (1913–1985) graduated in 1935 with a Bachelor of Science degree in architecture from the University of Kansas.¹²¹ From 1935 to 1941 Slezak worked as a draftsman with Gentry and Voskamp, where he met his future business partner, Raymond Voskamp. After Slezak worked for four years as an architectural engineer with Beech Aircraft, he partnered with Voskamp to form their new company.¹²² Based in Kansas City, Missouri, most of the firm's projects were in the metropolitan area, including the Exchange National Bank (1950) in Atchison, Kansas; the Elks Club Building (1955), Newton, Kansas; and the Twin Oaks Apartments (1951) and 333 Meyer West Apartments, both in Kansas City, Missouri (1955).¹²³

Everitt & Keleti, architects

The Kansas City-based firm was led by Robert Stanton Everitt (1910–2001) and George Peter Keleti (1925–2008).¹²⁴ The architecture firm was established in 1955 and, in addition to working in association with other firms, was credited with projects such as the Music and Applied Arts Building (1958); Chapel and Dorm Buildings, Missouri Trade School for Boys, Booneville,

¹¹⁶ Esley Hamilton, "Harris Armstrong," For St. Louis Architecture.Org, 2005, accessed April 10, 2020, <https://www.stlouisarchitecture.org/pdf/Armstrong.essay.pdf>.

¹¹⁷ George S. Koyl, editor., *American Architects Directory* (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1962), 730.

¹¹⁸ Lauren Rieke and Elizabeth Rosin, "Plaza House Apartments National Register Nomination," accessed January 7, 2020, <https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/nps-nr/13000837.pdf>.

¹¹⁹ Rieke and Rosin, "Plaza House Apartments," accessed January 7, 2020, <https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/nps-nr/13000837.pdf>.

¹²⁰ Koyl, *American Architects Directory*, 730.

¹²¹ Fred Gruwald, "Frank R. Slezak," accessed January 8, 2020, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/154187757>; Koyl, *American Architects Directory*, 648.

¹²² Koyl, *American Architects Directory*, 648.

¹²³ Rieke and Rosin, "Plaza House Apartments," accessed January 7, 2020, <https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/nps-nr/13000837.pdf>.

¹²⁴ Koyl, *American Architects Directory*, 201; Paul Keleti, "George Peter Keleti," accessed January 7, 2020, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/168118561>.

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Missouri; and Planetarium, Kansas City Museum (1959).¹²⁵ By 1962 the partnership had dissolved and Keleti formed his own firm, Peter Keleti and Associates.¹²⁶

Radotinsky, Meyn & Deardorff, architects

The firm of Radotinsky, Meyn & Deardorff was organized in 1957.¹²⁷ The three principals in the firm were Joseph William Radotinsky (1902–1983), Raymond Everett Meyn (1912–1980), and Fred Maynard Deardorff (1895–1978).¹²⁸ Among the firm’s larger projects were the Consumers Cooperative Association home office (1957) and the Board of Public Utilities Building (1961).¹²⁹ The Board of Public Utilities Building remains extant in 2020, but is highly altered from the Radotinsky, Meyn & Deardorff design.

Firm principal Joseph Radotinsky was educated at the University of Kansas after working in New York City for several years. Radotinsky served as the Kansas State Architect between 1928 and 1934.¹³⁰ Meyn was also educated at the University of Kansas and began working with Radotinsky in 1935 before becoming an architect for the War Department from 1941 to 1945. Deardorff earned his degree in Architectural Engineering from Kansas University in 1917.¹³¹

Harris Armstrong, F.A.I.A., consulting architect

Born in 1899, Harris Armstrong began his architectural career in the 1920s as an apprentice in a number of architectural firms in St. Louis. Although he never graduated from high school, Armstrong attended courses at Washington University and The Ohio State University. Briefly, during the Great Depression, Armstrong was employed by Raymond Hood, architect of Rockefeller Center and Radio City Music Hall, which may have influenced his work in the mid-1930s on two International style buildings, the Cori House¹³² and Shanley Building.¹³³ In the years after World War II, Armstrong designed a high-rise office building for the American Stove Company as their national headquarters. This building, known as the Magic Chef Building, “incorporated innovative natural lighting techniques. . . . and included a ceiling sculpture by Isamu Noguchi as an integral part of the lobby design.”¹³⁴ Like the later Federal Office Building, the Magic Chef building consisted of several major components: a monolithic brick tower featuring intricately laid brick masonry and a second tower that included extensive use of glass on the south and north elevations. Additional works by Armstrong include the Cancer Research Building (1950) at Washington University; the U.S. Consulate (1957) in Basra, Iraq; a collaboration with Minoru Yamasaki and Helmuth, Obata, & Kassabaum on the Plaza Square Apartment Complex (1959) in downtown St. Louis; and research residences for United States Gypsum Corporation, PPG Industries, and the University of Michigan in the mid-1950s.¹³⁵

¹²⁵ Koyl, *American Architects Directory*, 201.

¹²⁶ “Form Architect Firm,” *KCT*, May 3, 1962, 22.

¹²⁷ Koyl, *American Architects Directory*, 570.

¹²⁸ Lin, “Fred Maynard Deardorff,” accessed January 8, 2020, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/91607450>.

¹²⁹ Koyl, *American Architects Directory*, 570, 481,

¹³⁰ “Former State Architect Dies at Age 81,” *St. Joseph News-Press* (St. Joseph, MO), August 16, 1983, 4B.

¹³¹ “K.U. to Graduate Big Class June 6,” *The Topeka Daily Capital* (Topeka, KS), May 20, 1917, 2B.

¹³² Constructed 1935, NRHP Registration Number 86002799, listed October 2, 1986.

¹³³ Constructed 1935; NRHP Registration Number 82004618, listed September 20, 1982.

¹³⁴ Andrew Raimist, “Harris Armstrong: A Short Biography,” *Saint Louis Style*, June 3, 2016.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

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Armstrong was named a fellow of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1955, served on the editorial advisory board of the magazine *arts & architecture*, and was named an honorary member of the National Academy of Design in 1972. Armstrong died in December 1973.¹³⁶ Missouri architectural historian Estey Hamilton wrote of Armstrong, that “while his later work seldom achieved the clarity of stylistic coherence of his earlier designs, he remained highly respected, in effect the dean of the modern movement in St. Louis.”¹³⁷

Howard, Needles, Tammen & Bergendoff, structural engineers

Historically, the firm was known as Harrington, Howard & Ash and was founded in 1914 with a specialty of movable bridge and railroad bridge design.¹³⁸ By 1941 the firm partners included Ernest E. Howard, Enoch Needles, Henry Tammen, and Ruben Bergendoff, and the name was changed to Howard, Needles, Tammen & Bergendoff.¹³⁹ Although bridges remained a focus for the firm, they expanded to offer structural engineering expertise for architectural projects, such as the Federal Office Building in Kansas City. The company name was shortened to HNTB Corporation in 1993.

Hare & Hare, landscape architects

The firm was founded by Sidney Hare (1860–1938) who learned his craft while employed by the Kansas City engineer’s office as a landscape engineer. He went on to serve as the superintendent of Forest Hill Cemetery, where his life-long interest in cemetery design began.¹⁴⁰ Sidney’s son, S. Herbert Hare (1888–1960), graduated from the Harvard University School of Architecture in 1908, where he studied landscape planning under Frederick Law Olmstead, Jr.¹⁴¹ The father and son team established Hare & Hare in 1910 and focused on projects in Kansas City and throughout the United States. The firm, considered one of several pioneer landscape and planning companies in the country, completed projects from cemeteries and parks to large-scale planning projects. Among their most notable projects were the Park and Boulevard system and master plan for the Country Club District in Kansas City (1917); the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art (1929–1952); the planned city of Longview, Washington (1922); the National Agricultural Center and Hall of Fame in Bonner Springs, Kansas (1960); and the Parkway Towers in Kansas City (1959–1960).¹⁴² In 1970 Hare & Hare merged with Ochsner & Associates to form Ochsner Hare & Hare. Then, in 2014, the firm merged with Olsson Associates to become Ochsner Hare & Hare, a Design Studio of Olsson Associates.¹⁴³ Given that both founding principals of Hare &

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Hamilton, “Shanley Building.”

¹³⁸ BridgeHunter.com, “Howard, Needles, Tammen & Bergendorff Corporation of Kansas City, Kansas,” accessed January 8, 2020, <https://bridgehunter.com/category/builder/howard-needles-tammen-bergendoff-corporation/>.

¹³⁹ Kathi Ann Brown, *Diversity by Design: Celebrating 75 years of Howard, Needles, Tammen & Bergendoff, 1914-1989* (New York: Howard, Needles, Tammen & Bergendoff, ca. 1989).

¹⁴⁰ The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF), “Sidney Hare.” Accessed December 31, 2019, <https://tclf.org/pioneer/sidney-hare>.

¹⁴¹ TCLF, “Herbert Hare,” accessed December 31, 2019, <https://tclf.org/pioneer/s-herbert-hare?destination=search-results>.

¹⁴² “Hare and Hare Company Records,” The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center – Kansas City, accessed April 10, 2020, <https://collections.shsmo.org/manuscripts/kansascity/k0206.pdf>.

¹⁴³ TCLF, “Hare & Hare,” accessed December 31, 2019, <https://tclf.org/pioneer/hare-hare?destination=search-results>.

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Hare were deceased at the time the landscape was designed for the Federal Office Building, the designer was likely senior partner Donald W. Bush (1898–1979).¹⁴⁴ Bush was cited in an article about the landscape project as “one of the landscape designers for the federal building.”¹⁴⁵

Constantino Nivola

The artist of *The Builders*, Constantino Nivola (1911–1988), was the son of a Sardinian stonecutter. In 1939, on the eve of World War II, Nivola fled the political climate of his native Italy. Nivola arrived in New York City and relocated to East Hampton on Long Island in 1948. During his career, Nivola completed a number of public commissions. These pieces were inspired by his belief that “a work designed for a public space is less a work of art than a civic act...it concerns the ways in which we live together, and in which we influence each other.”¹⁴⁶ During his long career, Nivola was an advocate for modern architecture and served as the art director for *Progressive Architecture and Interiors* magazine; served as the director of the Design Workshop at Harvard University Graduate School; and taught at Columbia University, Dartmouth College, the University of California, Berkley, and the International University of Art in Florence, Italy.¹⁴⁷ Among his commissions were a 110-foot-long mural for the Mutual Insurance Company of Hartford, Connecticut; a war memorial in Fall Church, Virginia; a sand-sculpted wall designed for the Olivetti Company showroom on Fifth Avenue, later moved to Harvard; and numerous sculptures and wall paintings for playgrounds in and around New York.¹⁴⁸

Frederick Conway

Frederick Conway (1900–1973), *The Movement of Time from Redman to Truman* artist, was also a professor at Washington University, St. Louis. Conway was known for his murals. One of his first major murals was the 1940 work *The Roundup*, an oil painting on canvas that was created for the United States Treasury Section of Painting and Sculpture and hung in the U.S. Post Office in Purcell, Oklahoma.¹⁴⁹ In 1951 Conway won a competition to paint a 73-foot-long mural at the back of the tellers’ cages in the new First National Bank, Tulsa, Oklahoma.¹⁵⁰ Although the building has since been remodeled, the mural is still in place, partially obscured by the sea of cubicles.¹⁵¹ The following year, he painted the 75-foot-long floor-to-ceiling mural for the Brown Shoe Company headquarters, which depicts the history of shoemaking and the use of leather

¹⁴⁴ “Bush,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, March 7, 1979, 4D.

¹⁴⁵ Graves, “U.S. to finish work,” 3.

¹⁴⁶ US-Museums.com, *The Builders*, accessed December 23, 2019, <https://us-museums.com/artwork/The-Builders-21778/>.

¹⁴⁷ Rogallery.com, “Constantino Nivola, Sardinian/Italian (1911-1988),” accessed December 26, 2019, https://www.rogallery.com/Nivola_Constantino/Nivola-bio.htm.

¹⁴⁸ “Constantino Nivola, 76; sculptor,” *Hartford Courant* (Hartford, Connecticut, May 9, 1988), C4.

¹⁴⁹ The Living New Deal, “Post Office Mural -Purcell OK,” accessed December 26, 2019, <https://livingnewdeal.org/projects/post-office-mural-purcell-ok/>.

¹⁵⁰ George E. McCue, “Artist Fred Conway Dies; Teacher and Muralist,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, August 6, 1973, 3B.

¹⁵¹ Michael Overall, “Tulsa’s forgotten masterpiece needs a new home,” *Tulsa World*, accessed April 12, 2020, https://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/michael-overall-tulsa-s-forgotten-masterpiece-needs-a-new-home/article_7b909828-864c-5a26-b9b8-fd769dae5abd.html.

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from ancient Egypt to the industrial era.¹⁵² Other murals by Conway are located in Barnes Hospital, the Peabody Coal Company, and the television station KETC, all of which are in St. Louis, and the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota.¹⁵³ In addition to his work in murals, Conway designed the prismatic windows of Washington University's Gaylor Music Library reading room, painted a variety of portraits, and retired after teaching fine arts at Washington University for forty-six years.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Genevive Cortinovic, "St. Louis Modern Murals," in *St. Louis Modern*," accessed December 26, 2019, <https://edward-boccia.com/2016/10/28/st-louis-modern-murals-via-slam/>.

¹⁵³ McCue, "Artist Fred Conway Dies," 3B.

¹⁵⁴ McCue, "Artist Fred Conway Dies," 3B.

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Springfield News-Leader, Springfield, Missouri
St. Louis Post-Dispatch, St. Louis, Missouri
Sunday News and Tribune, Jefferson City, Missouri
The Topeka Daily Capital, Topeka, Kansas

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: U.S. General Services Administration, Region 6

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 5.5 acres

Use the UTM system

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Zone: 15 | Easting: 363605.0628 | Northing: 4329017.3382 |
| 2. Zone: 15 | Easting: 363787.6825 | Northing: 4329008.0470 |
| 3. Zone: 15 | Easting: 363781.7068 | Northing: 4328890.5940 |
| 4. Zone: 15 | Easting : 363599.0871 | Northing: 4328899.8851 |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Federal Building is bounded by East Twelfth Street on the north, Holmes Street on the east, East Thirteenth Street on the south, and Locust Street on the west.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary of the building includes the entire two-block area originally set aside for the building and its associated plaza, excluding the public sidewalk.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Elaine Robinson, Sr. Architectural Historian, Katie Remensnyder and Katie Beck, Architectural Historians

organization: Commonwealth Heritage Group, Inc.

street & number: 3215 Central Street

city or town: Dexter state: MI zip code: 48130

e-mail ehrobinson@chg-inc.com

telephone: 517-788-3550

date: August 2020, revised June 2021(Elizabeth Hannold, Preservation Specialist, GSA, Center for Historic Buildings)

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 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: Federal Office Building

City or Vicinity: Kansas City

County: Jackson

State: Missouri

Photographer: Angela L. Haines

Date Photographed: October 23, 2019

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

Photo 1 of 20: MO_JacksonCounty_FederalOfficeBuilding_0001

View: Richard Bolling Federal Building and public plaza, façade of building and landscaping in the plaza, facing southeast.

Photo 2 of 20: MO_JacksonCounty_FederalOfficeBuilding_0002

View: Bolling Federal Building, west elevation of entrance and detail of art by Constantino Nivola, facing southeast.

Photo 3 of 20: MO_JacksonCounty_FederalOfficeBuilding_0003

View: Richard Bolling Federal Building, façade, and west elevation, facing southeast.

Photo 4 of 20: MO_JacksonCounty_FederalOfficeBuilding_0004

View: Richard Bolling Federal Building, south and east elevations, facing northwest

Photo 5 of 20: MO_JacksonCounty_FederalOfficeBuilding_0005

View: Richard Bolling Federal Building, roof, facing west.

Photo 6 of 20: MO_JacksonCounty_FederalOfficeBuilding_0006

View: Richard Bolling Federal Building, west and south elevations, facing east-northeast.

Photo 7 of 20: MO_JacksonCounty_FederalOfficeBuilding_0007

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View: Richard Bolling Federal Building, south elevation and south entrance, facing northeast.

Photo 8 of 20: MO_JacksonCounty_FederalOfficeBuilding_0008

View: Richard Bolling Federal Building, façade and main entrance, facing southeast.

Photo 9 of 20: MO_JacksonCounty_FederalOfficeBuilding_0009

View: Richard Bolling Federal Building and Parking Structure, façade and east elevation and surrounding landscaping, facing southwest.

Photo 10 of 20: MO_JacksonCounty_FederalOfficeBuilding_0010

View: Richard Bolling Federal Building, detail of art by Constantino Nivola on the west elevation of the entrance, facing east-southeast.

Photo 11 of 20: MO_JacksonCounty_FederalOfficeBuilding_0011

View: Richard Bolling Federal Building, entrance to lower level of the parking garage, façade, and east elevation, facing west-southwest.

Photo 12 of 20: MO_JacksonCounty_FederalOfficeBuilding_0012

View: Richard Bolling Federal Building, parking garage, lower level, facing west

Photo 13 of 20: MO_JacksonCounty_FederalOfficeBuilding_0013

View: Richard Bolling Federal Building, 1st floor elevators, facing east.

Photo 14 of 20: MO_JacksonCounty_FederalOfficeBuilding_0014

View: Richard Bolling Federal Building, north (façade) entrance lobby, facing west-southwest.

Photo 15 of 20: MO_JacksonCounty_FederalOfficeBuilding_0015

View: Richard Bolling Federal Building, 1st floor, artwork *The Movement of Time from Redman to Truman* by Frederick Conway, facing east-southeast.

Photo 16 of 20: MO_JacksonCounty_FederalOfficeBuilding_0016

View: Richard Bolling Federal Building, 1st floor corridor and escalators with the artwork *curtain wall* by Anne Lindberg, facing north-northeast.

Photo 17 of 20: MO_JacksonCounty_FederalOfficeBuilding_0017

View: Richard Bolling Federal Building, 1st floor, post office, facing east.

Photo 18 of 20: MO_JacksonCounty_FederalOfficeBuilding_0018

View: Richard Bolling Federal Building, south entrance lobby, facing west-southwest.

Photo 19 of 20: MO_JacksonCounty_FederalOfficeBuilding_0019

View: Richard Bolling Federal Building, 8th floor conference room, facing southwest.

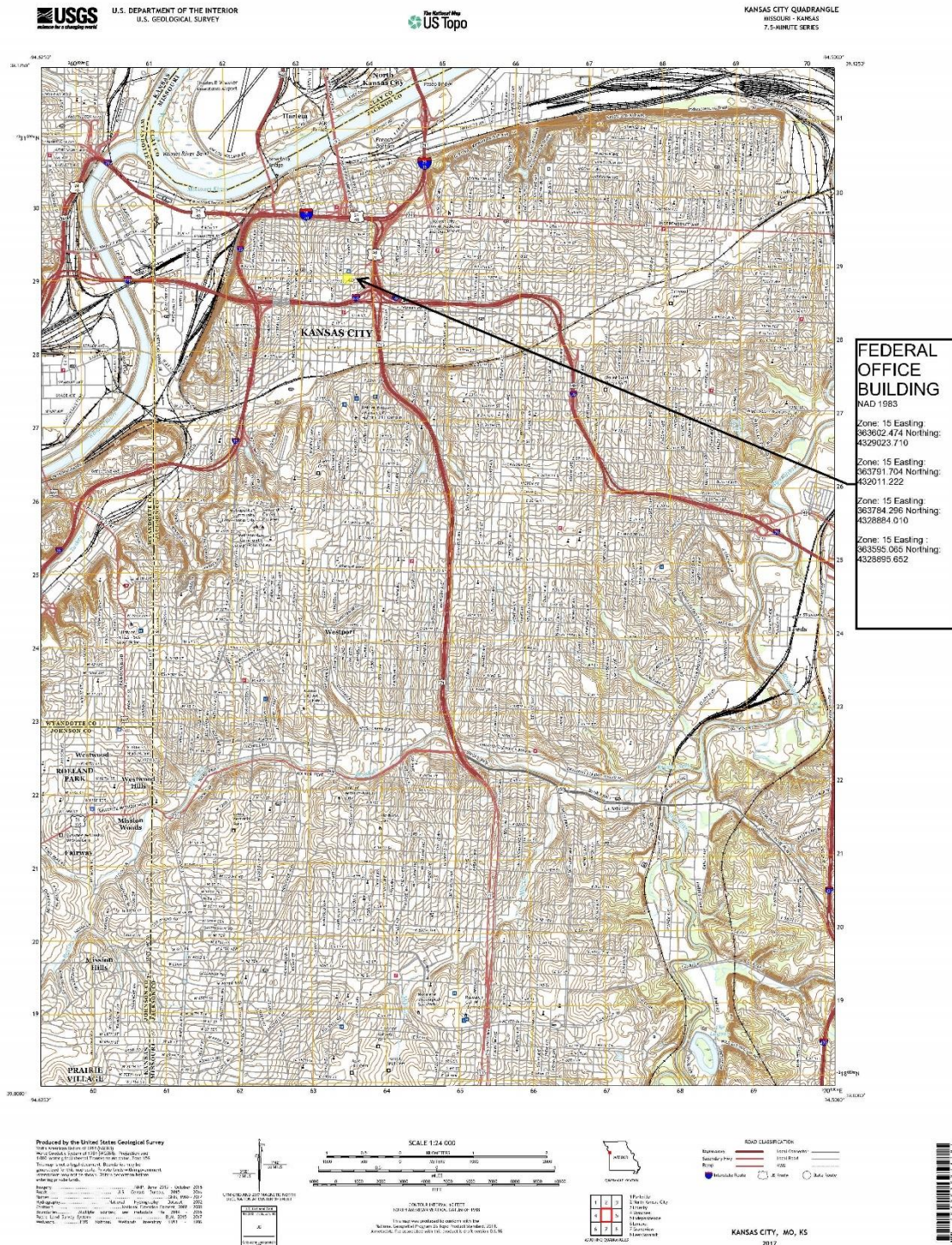
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Photo 20 of 20: MO_JacksonCounty_FederalOfficeBuilding_0020
View: Richard Bolling Federal Building, 18th floor corridor, facing west.

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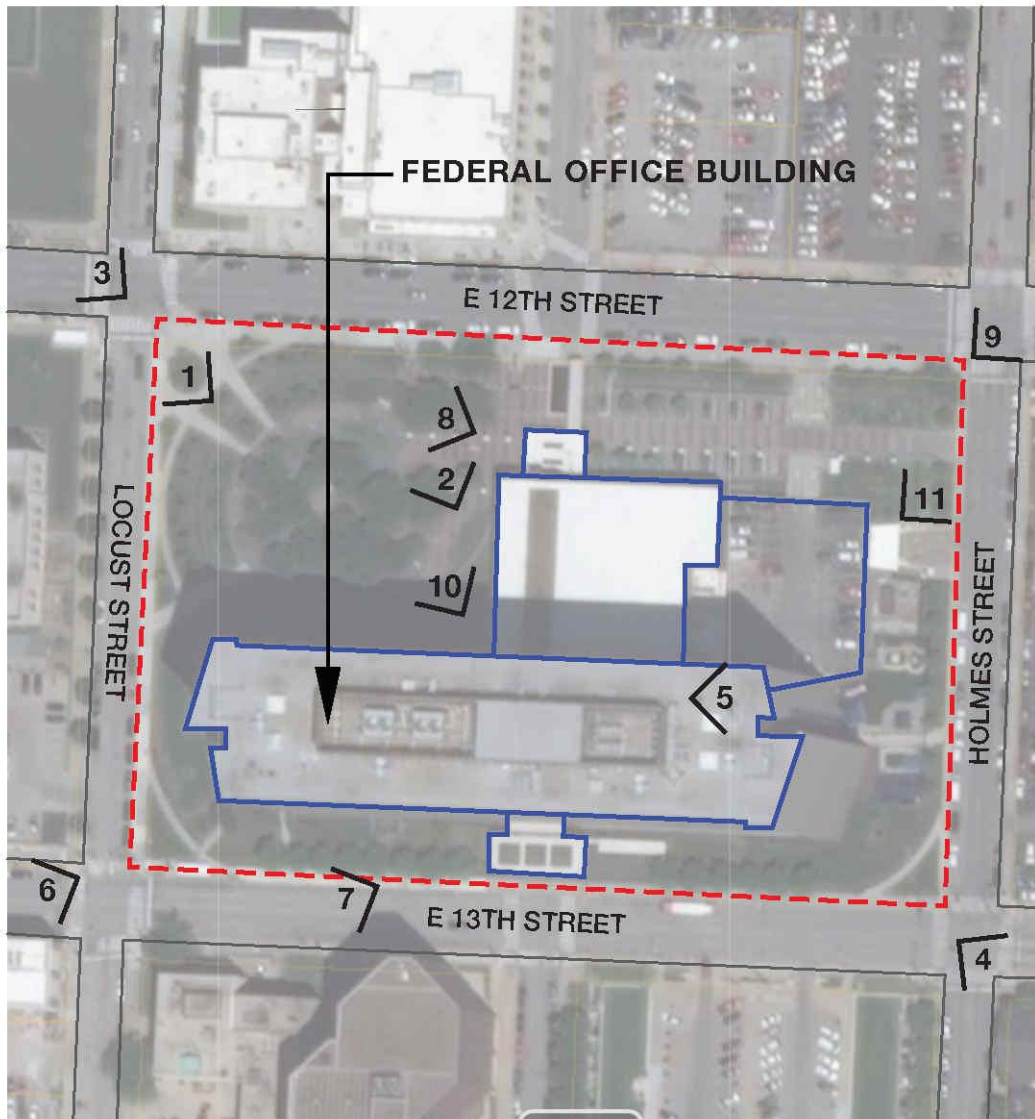
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Location Map

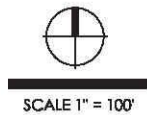
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-  building
-  boundary
-  photograph view

FEDERAL OFFICE BUILDING
JACKSON COUNTY, MO
SKETCH MAP AND PHOTO KEY
Aerial imagery courtesy Jackson Co., MO
prepared October 6, 2020






Sketch Map and Photo Key

Federal Office Building
Name of Property

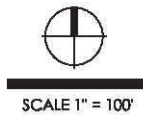
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-  contributing building
-  contributing site
-  non-contributing building

FEDERAL OFFICE BUILDING
JACKSON COUNTY, MO
CONTRIBUTING AND NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

prepared June 9, 2021



Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources

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Figure 1. Federal Office Building construction photograph, September 1, 1965, view to the southeast showing the main entry on the west elevation and secondary entry on the north elevation of the low-rise block

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Source: William E. Dye, "Kansas City Opens New Frontier in Government Office Buildings," *Skylines*, Kansas City, MO: Kansas City Chapter, A.I.A., 1962, 3-10.

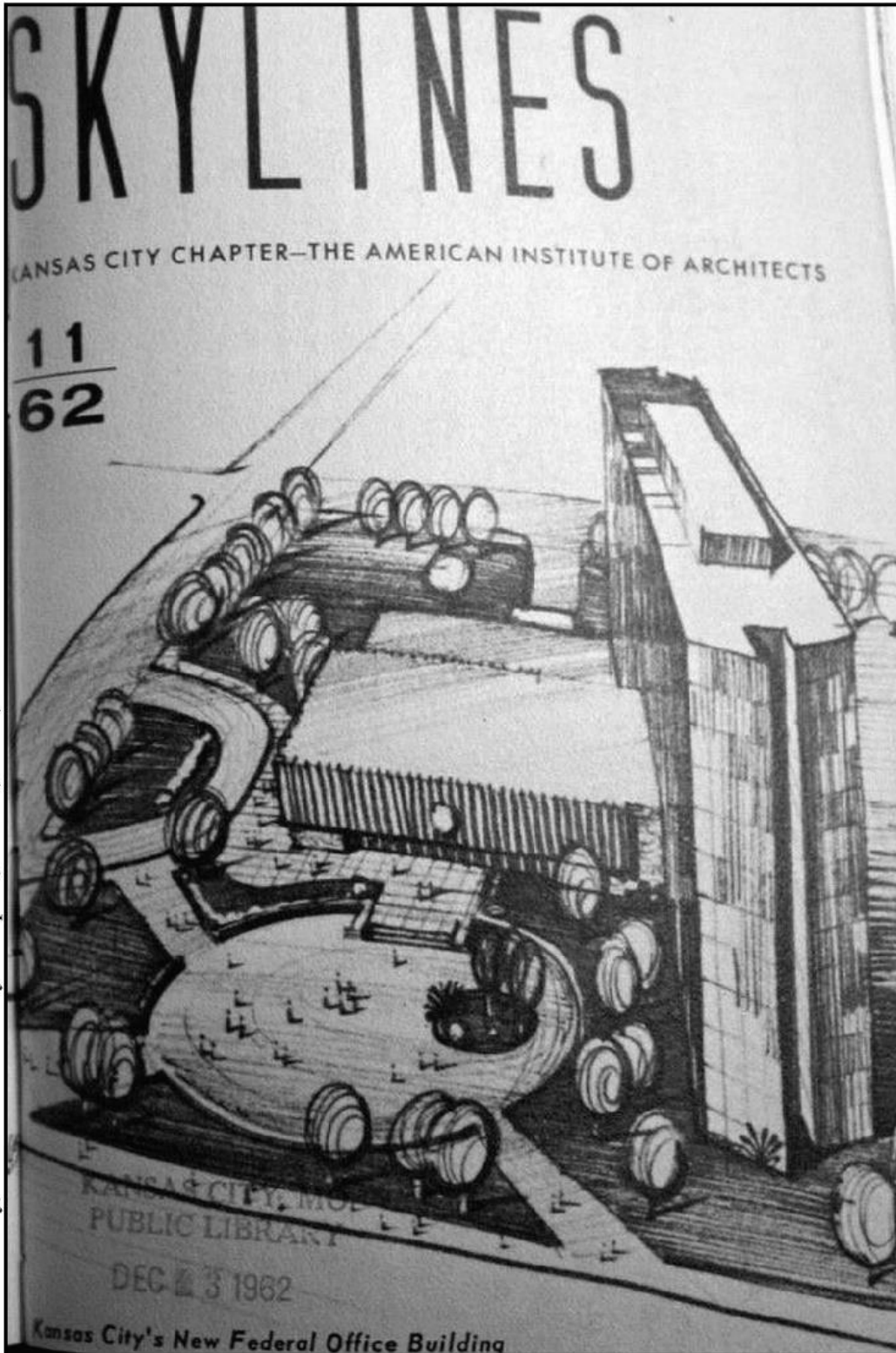


Figure 2. Early sketch of the Kansas City Federal Office Building and associated plaza

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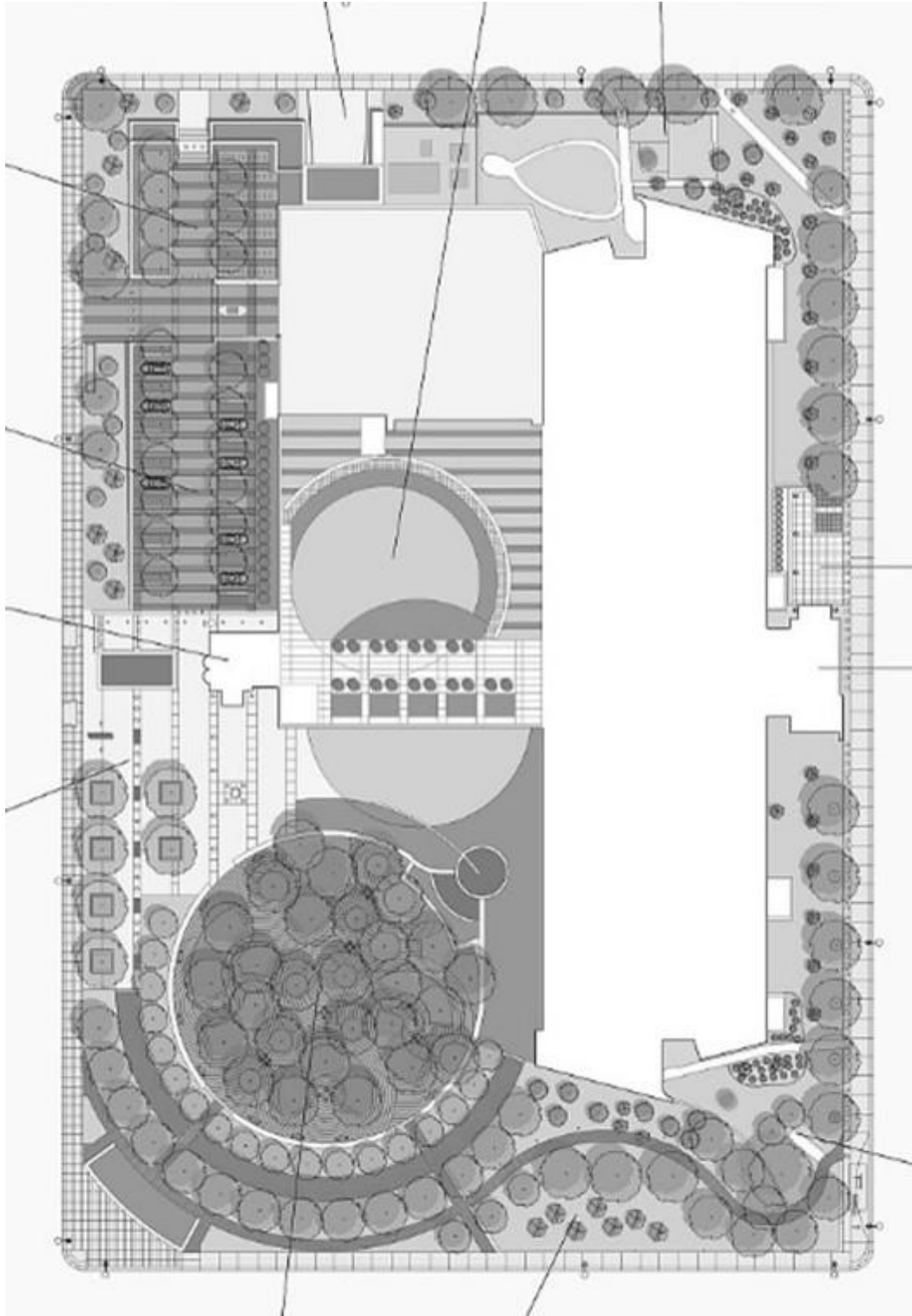


Figure 4. Richard Bolling Building Site Plan, 2008 (west at bottom of drawing)

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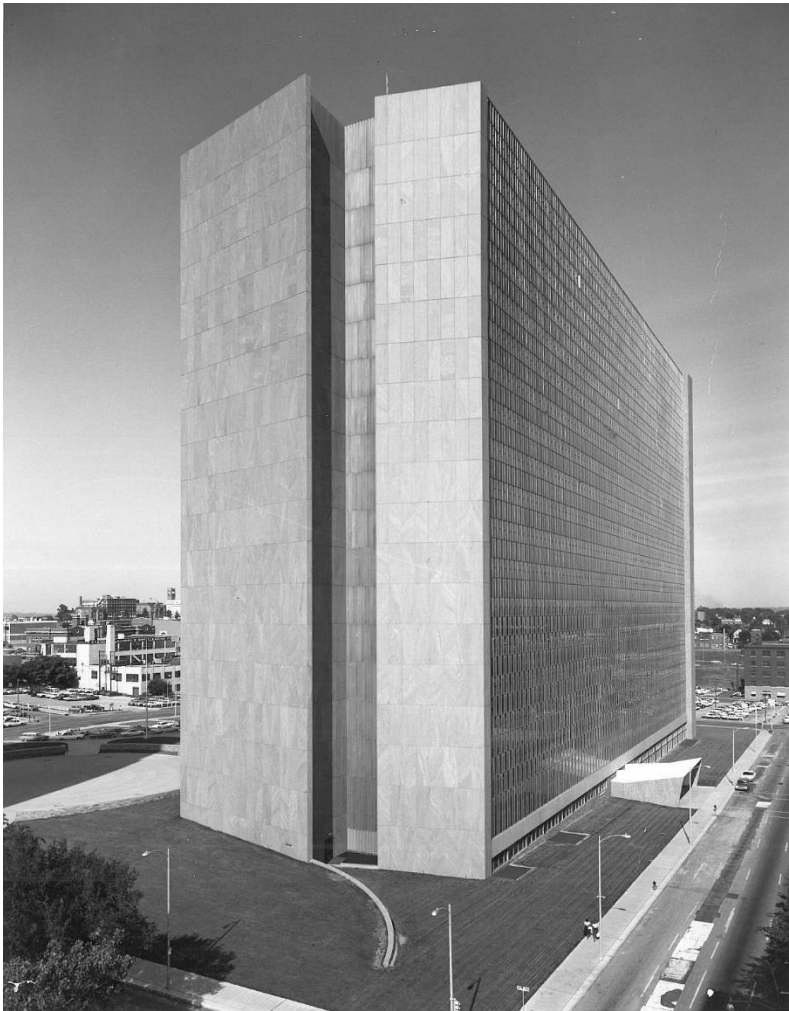


Figure 5. Federal Office Building, view to the northeast, 1966

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Figure 6. Federal Office Building, view to the northeast, 2019

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Figure 7. Federal Office Building, detail of south entrance, 1965

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Figure 8. Federal Office Building, detail of south entrance, 2019

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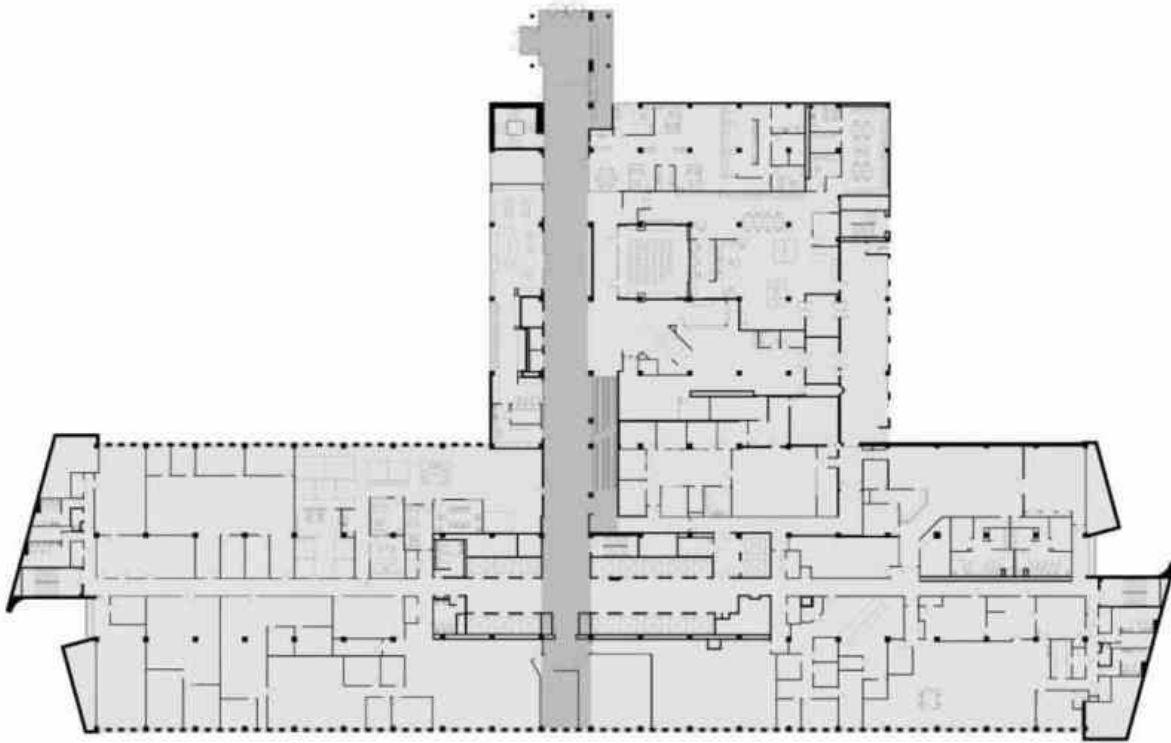


Figure 9. Federal Office Building first floor plan; the former Cherry Street location forms the main north-south corridor (shaded), ca. 2008

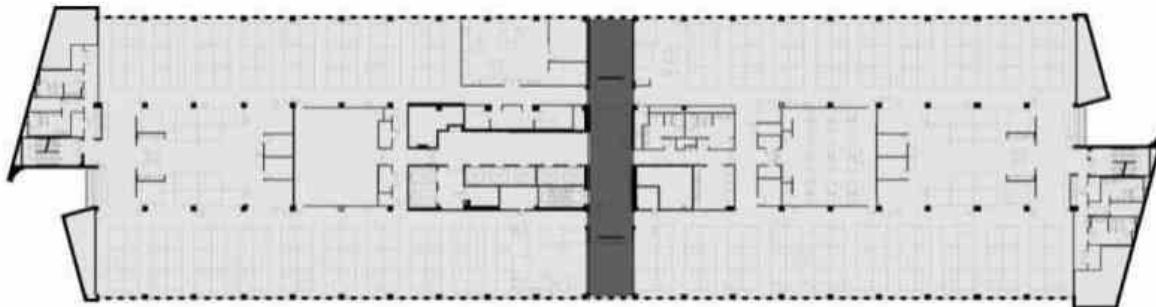


Figure 10. Federal Office Building, typical upper floor plan, ca. 2008

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Figure 11. Office area, ca. 1966

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Figure 12. Typical office area, 2019

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 100 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.



















