

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Christman's Department Store, Christman's Annex, Paramount Building

other names/site number Fifth and Main Historic District (preferred)

2. Location

street & number 501-513 South Main Street, 502-508 Virginia Street [N/A] not for publication

city or town Joplin [N/A] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Jasper code 097 zip code 63357

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [] locally.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Mark A Miles

05/16/06

Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO

Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

[] entered in the National Register.
See continuation sheet [].

[] determined eligible for the National Register.
See continuation sheet [].

[] determined not eligible for the National Register.

[] removed from the National Register.

[] other, (explain):

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**Fifth and Main Historic District (preferred)
Jasper County, Missouri**

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources Within Property	
		Contributing	Non-contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	3	0 buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	0	0 sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	0 structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0 objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	3	0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing.

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

Current Functions

- Commerce Trade/Department Store
- Commerce Trade/Specialty Store
- Business/Office Building
- Health Care/office

Vacant/ not in use

7. Description

Architectural classification

- Chicago
- Other: Two part commercial block
- Other: Two part vertical block

Materials

- foundation Concrete
- walls Brick
- Limestone
- roof not visible
- other wood
- metal

See continuation sheet []

Narrative Description See continuation sheet [x].

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**8. Statement of Significance
Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

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

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

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

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

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

See continuation sheet [x].

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography See continuation sheet [x].

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other:

Name of repository:

State Historical Society of Missouri

Areas of Significance

Commerce

Period of Significance

ca. 1903-1954

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person(s)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Architects: Michaelis, August and Alfred
Architects: Garstang and Rea

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: less than one acre

UTM References

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	365503	4105562			
C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Debbie Sheals (With Becky Snider)
 organization Private Contractor date January, 2006
 street & number 29 S. 9th St. Suite 204 telephone 573-874-3779
 city or town Columbia state Missouri zip code 65201

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

Photographs

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

Additional Items

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

Property Owner

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

name Urban Dwellers, LP (as of April, 2006)
 street & number 400 South Avenue Suite 210
 telephone 417-830-5224
 city or town Springfield state MO zip code 65806

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Fifth and Main Historic District (preferred)
Jasper County, Missouri

Summary: The Fifth and Main Historic District (preferred), in downtown Joplin, Missouri, contains three early 20th century commercial buildings. The district occupies the northern end of the 500 block of South Main; two of the buildings face west, to Main Street, and the third faces east, to South Virginia Avenue. All are of brick construction, with flat roofs and concrete foundations. Construction dates range from ca. 1903 to ca. 1920. The largest and most visually dominant building in the district is the Christman's Department Store, at 501-505 South Main Street. The Christman's building is a six-story brown brick two-part vertical block building that was built in 1917. It occupies the southeast corner of the intersection of Fifth and Main. Directly south of the Christman's store is the Paramount building, which was built ca. 1912. It is a wide two-part commercial block, with open storefronts at street level and dark brown brick on the upper façade. The third building is the Christman's Annex, which adjoins the Christman's Store building to the east. The annex is also of brick; it is three stories tall, and has elevations along Fifth Street and Virginia Avenue. The north part of the annex was built ca. 1903, and the southern part was added ca. 1920. The three buildings are the only resources within the district boundaries and all three are contributing. All have served a commercial function since they were built, and all are in fair to good condition.

Elaboration:

The Fifth and Main Street district is located in the historic commercial center of Joplin. Main Street has been an important commercial artery for most of Joplin's long history, and it continues to reflect that function today. The blocks surrounding the Christman Building feature tightly-packed commercial buildings, a majority of which were built between the late 1800s and the mid-1900s. Properties on the nearby blocks of Main Street range from two-story, single bay commercial buildings, to large multi-story department stores and office buildings. Smaller buildings are the most common, and few are more than three stories tall. Levels of integrity and physical condition vary widely, and many late 19th and early 20th century commercial buildings in the area have seen significant alterations in the past several decades.

The Fifth and Main district is located within a fairly large section of the city center that was the subject of an architectural and historical survey in the late

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1980s.¹ (See Figure One.) Although the survey area was chosen for its historic ties to commerce, and for the concentration of historic resources found there, changes over the years resulted in a widely scattered collection of intact historic resources, and no potential historic district was identified during that project. That type of fragmentation has continued, and in spite of the existence of a number of individually impressive historic resources, there are few cohesive groupings of intact historic resources the downtown area. It is difficult to find more than a few intact historic buildings in a contiguous group. The small cluster of commercial buildings at Fifth and Main is one such grouping, and the buildings there offer a small sampling of early commercial architecture in Joplin.

The Fifth and Main district, which is anchored by the large Christman's Department Store on the corner, forms a discrete collection of intact historic resources. It is bounded on the north by Fifth Street, on the east by Virginia Avenue, and on the west by Main Street. The southern boundary is marked by older buildings that have seen too many alterations to be considered eligible for Register designation. The property immediately south of the district on Main Street contains the front section of an historic theater. The auditorium for the theater has been demolished, and the front section has been greatly altered. On Virginia Street, the southern boundary is marked by a small alley and a relatively large brick commercial building. Although that building (512-514 S. Virginia) was constructed around 1920, it is currently sheathed with ca. 1960s or 1970s materials that obscure most of the façade. (Those materials may be removed in the future, at which time a boundary revision will be considered to add that property to this district.)

The buildings of this small district continue to reflect their historic functions and, although some are battered, they are largely intact. All of the buildings in the district are slated to undergo comprehensive rehabilitation. That work will reverse the most onerous of modern alterations, and put all three buildings, which are currently vacant or nearly so, back into service. All of the work will meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

All three properties in the district are contributing, and there are no outbuildings or other resources.

¹ BCCW/Casey Architects-Engineers, "City of Joplin Historic Survey, Stage Five: Research Design." (Typescript on file with the State Historic Preservation Office, Jefferson City, MO, 1988).

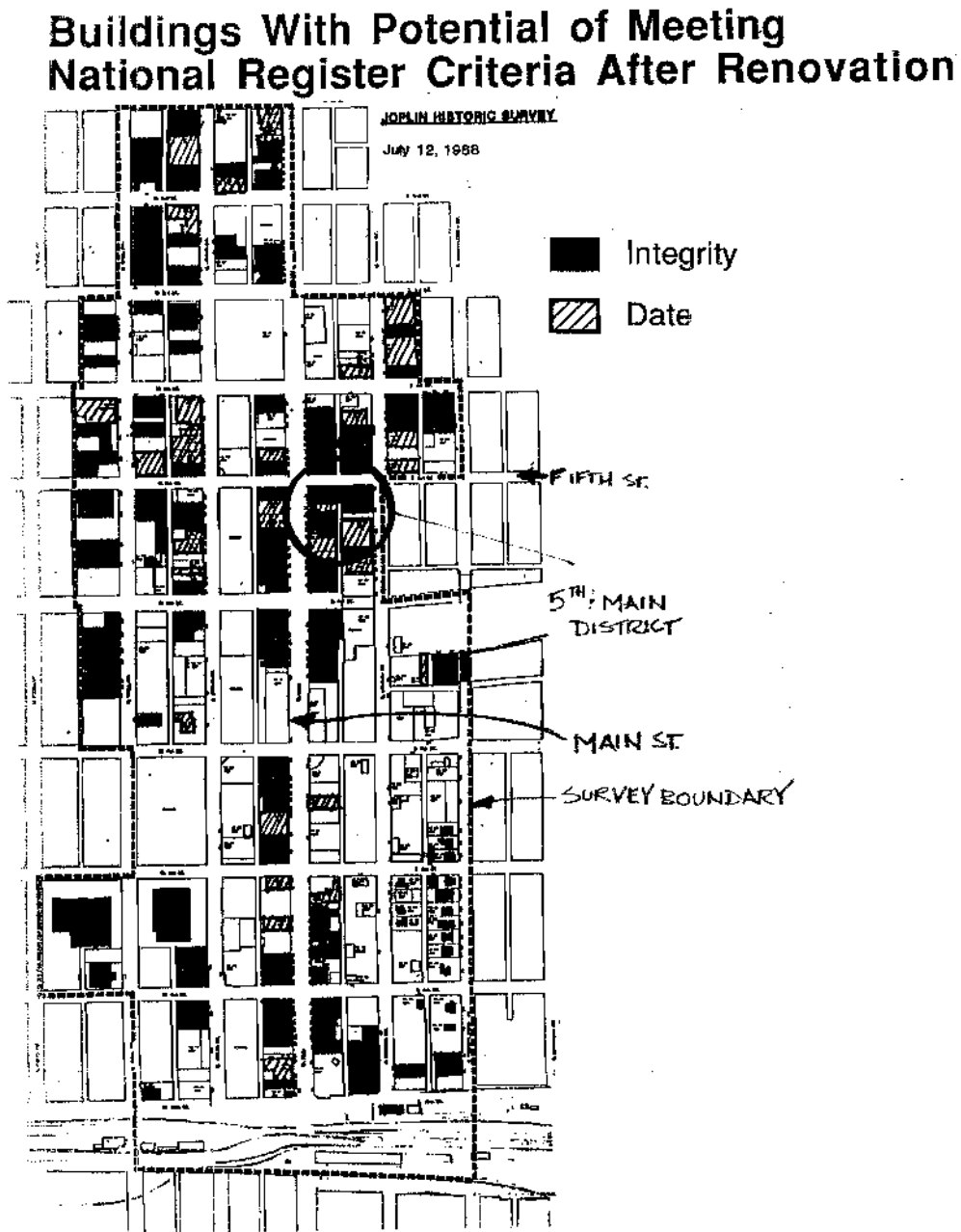
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Figure One. Location Map.

Source: BCCW/Casey, "City of Joplin Historic Survey, Stage Five: Research Design."



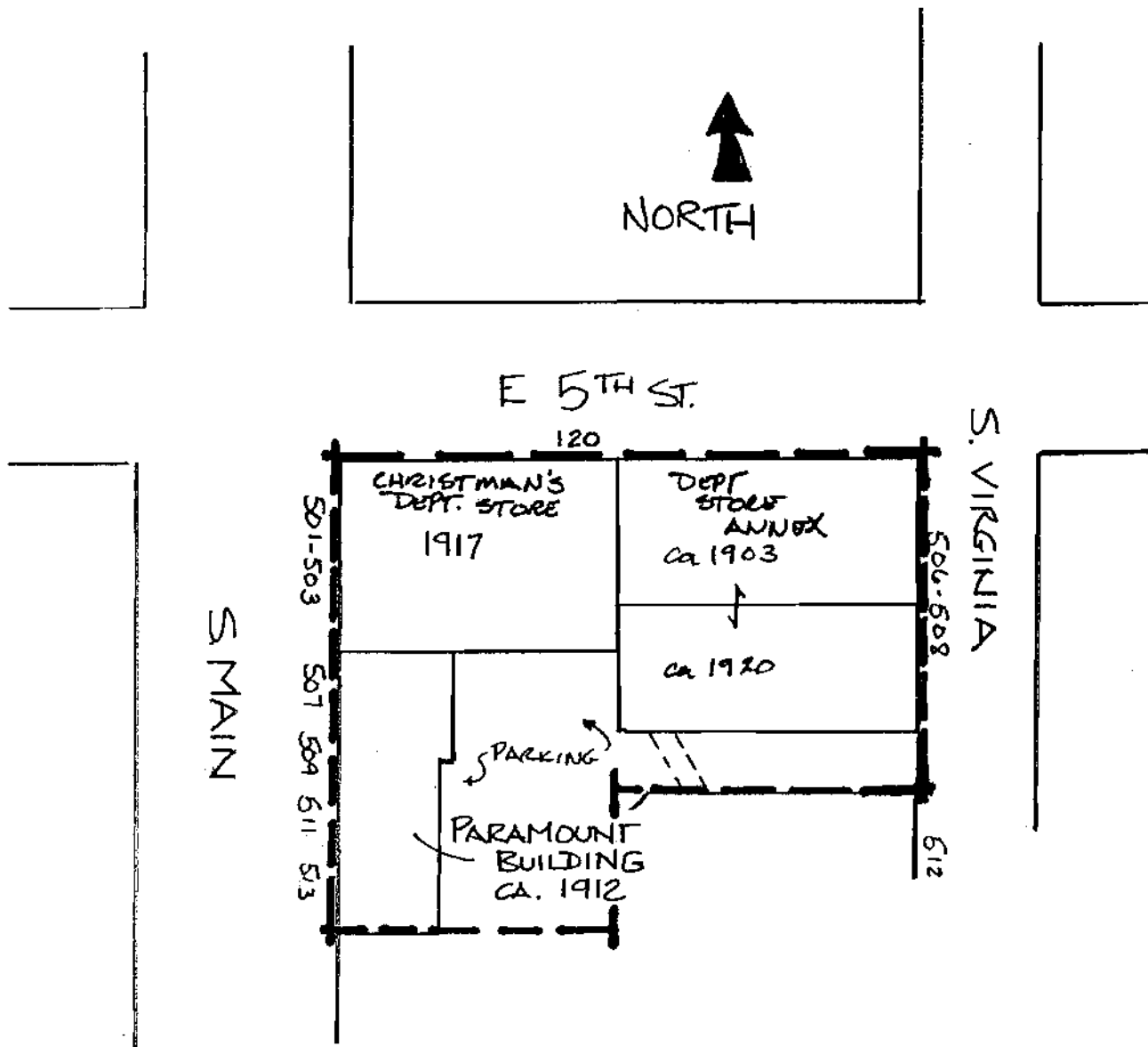
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Figure Two. Site Plan.



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1.) 501-505 South Main Street (Also has an entrance at 120 East Fifth Street), 1917; Christman's Department Store.

This is the largest and most intact historic building in the immediate vicinity. It has brick walls, a concrete foundation and a flat roof. It is six stories tall, with brown brick and light terra cotta on the main elevations, and red brick on secondary wall surfaces. The façade, which faces west to South Main Street, is 65 feet wide, and the north elevation, which runs along East Fifth Street, is 120 feet long. The lower part of the back (east) wall is connected to the neighboring building, as are the bottom two floors of the south side wall.

The design of the building reflects its corner location; both of the elevations with street frontage feature nearly identical patterns of fenestration and ornamentation. A substantial terra cotta cornice runs along the top of the mezzanine floor level on both elevations, and the upper floors are divided into wide, window-filled bays. The bays are separated by brick piers on the upper floors and by brick pilasters on the lower floors. The top of the building originally had a cornice along those two walls as well; historic photos show that the top cornice was replaced with a band of plain brick sometime before 1940.²

The upper bays of the two main elevations are filled with modified Chicago style windows. The wood-framed windows have wide fixed center sash, with one-over-one, double-hung windows on the sides. Narrow brick mullions run between the units, and each section is topped by a separate transom window. All of those windows appear to be early or original. The window openings on the top floor of the façade are almost all covered over with plywood, and some have new, small, windows within the plywood infill. Those openings will all be uncovered, and new matching windows will be installed during the upcoming rehabilitation project. There are also one-over-one double-hung wood windows at the mezzanine level on the north elevation. Those are set in pairs, with wide wooden mullions between them. Several of those have also been covered over with plywood. An early, but not original metal fire escape is located near the center of the north elevation. It runs from the top floor to the mezzanine level.

The two main elevations are also set apart in that they are faced with smooth brown bricks, with terra cotta and limestone accents, while the other two walls have rougher finishes. All of the upper floor windows have smooth limestone sills, and the fifth-floor window openings feature ornamental lintels as

² Brad Belk. *The Best of Joplin* (St. Louis: G. Bradley Publishing Co., 1999) p. 141.

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well. The upper sections of the east and south walls, by contrast, are of fairly rough red brick, with exposed concrete structural grids that are painted dark reddish-brown. The few windows on those elevations are small, with one-over-one double-hung sash, and no added ornament.

The roof is surrounded by a low parapet on all except the east side. There is a small elevator penthouse in the northeast corner of the roof, and a slightly larger equipment room in the southeast corner. Historic photos show that the equipment room was topped by a water tower at one point. The tower is no longer there, but the rest of the structure is intact. The north and west sides of the elevator penthouse, which are visible from Main Street, are faced with the same type of brown brick used on the finished elevations of the building, and the other walls of the penthouse and the equipment room are faced with the same type of rough red brick used on the east and south walls.

The bottom floors of the building are set off by the lower cornice, which separates the first floor and mezzanine from the upper stories. The large terra cotta cornice extends out almost a foot from the wall and it is adorned with dentils and an ornamental frieze band. The cornice also features simple oval medallions that bear the letter "C", presumably for Christman's; there is one medallion above each of the pilasters that delineate the bays of the lower floors. The pilasters have terra cotta capitals adorned with Greek key patterns and bands of dentils.

The front part of the building features broad storefronts with low limestone bulkheads and large display windows. The storefronts are separated from large windows at the mezzanine level by just a small ornamental metal band, which gives the effect of a single oversized display window across the lower two floors of the façade. The first bay of the north elevation has the same type of fenestration. The openings for the display windows, including the limestone bulkheads and upper metal band, appear to be original; the glazing and entrance doors are probably newer.

There are two wide recessed front entrances, one on the south edge of the façade, and one at the front corner of the north elevation. Each is sheltered by a wide flat canopy that appears to be original. (The canopies are shown an architect's rendering of the building that was published in the local paper in 1917. See Figure Nine.) The canopies are of metal, with bands of ornament along the outside edges, and heavy support chains that tie into ornamental medallions on the pilasters. A matching canopy shelters a second doorway near the back

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edge of the north wall; that entrance has an address of 120 East Fifth Street.

The interior of the department store is highly intact. The main retail space near the front doors features a large room that is two stories tall, with mezzanine spaces at the front and back that are linked by a narrow balcony along the north wall. The room features two rows of monumental square columns that are topped with egg and dart molding, and adorned with large shield-shaped medallions that feature the letter "C". That room takes up almost all of the ground floor; the rest of the space contains an elevator lobby and formal staircase for access to the upper floors. The upper floors generally contain large open rooms that were used for retail display, as well as a few smaller support spaces. Most upper level rooms have wood floors, plaster walls, and simple square plastered columns.

2.) 507-513 South Main Street, ca. 1912; Paramount Building.

This wide two-part commercial block is two stories tall, with brown brick walls, a concrete foundation and a flat roof. It is roughly 200 feet wide and about 80 feet deep, and sits close to the sidewalk, facing Main Street. It is five bays wide, with newer storefronts on the ground floor and early or original materials on the upper floor. The upper floor was until very recently covered with flat metal sheathing that was added in the 1960s or early 1970s. Although the sheathing had a dramatic impact upon the overall appearance of the building, its application involved minimal damage to the original fabric, and the upper façade was left largely intact behind it.

The upper façade is divided into five equal bays, each of which has a set of three double-hung windows. The one-over-one wood windows are separated by wide wood mullions, and the openings are surrounded by flat limestone trim. More than half of the original window sashes remain in place; the others have been replaced with louvered panels or covered with plywood. The window openings are all fully intact, as is the surrounding trim. The façade is topped with a short parapet wall and the remains of a small cornice, and a wide string course runs between the cornice and the tops of the windows. The string course is fully intact, and a new cornice will be installed during the upcoming rehabilitation project. The lines of the cornice and string course are peaked to form a simple pediment over the center bay, and the bays are separated by brick piers that extend up into the parapet wall.

The ground floor retains its early five-bay configuration, and at least three

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of the storefronts also retain early or original transoms. Four of the five bays have open storefronts below the transom line; the fifth is partly filled with a newer brick wall. The two southernmost display windows and storefronts appear to be the oldest of the group, and may be more than fifty years old. Those shopfronts each have recessed center entrances flanked by large display windows over very short bulkheads. Finishes for the storefront systems in the other bays appear to date to the 1960s or later. (A more cohesive and sympathetic storefront system will be installed during the upcoming rehabilitation, which will also include restoration of second floor finishes.)

3.) 502-508 South Virginia Avenue, ca. 1903 and ca. 1920; Christman's Annex.

This three story building is located directly east of the Christman's Department Store, at the southwest corner of Fifth Street and Virginia Avenue. It has brick walls, with simple limestone trim and a flat roof. The building was built in two stages; the northern half, which is closest to Fifth Street, was built ca. 1903, and the southern half was added ca. 1920. Together, they measure roughly 100 feet wide and 120 feet deep. The northern section of the building, which originally served as a warehouse for Christman's, is slightly narrower than the southern section.

The east elevation of the building, which faces Virginia Street, has painted brick walls on its upper levels, and reddish brick at the ground floor level. Until very recently, the lower part of this elevation was faced with large flat granite panels. The granite was mounted to the surface with individual brackets, and the original wall was left largely intact behind it. The newly uncovered section of that wall features a painted wall sign that runs along the entire elevation, just above the first floor line. (See photo 8.) The sign is white, with the words "Christman's" spelled out in black letters above the central entrance. The entrance has two wide doorways, and two tall window openings. The doors and windows in place now are newer, but the original openings remain intact, and will be reopened during the upcoming rehabilitation project. There are two large openings on the south side of the ground floor that appear to have held storefronts at one time. They are now partly filled with newer windows and partly framed over. They, too, will be reopened during the rehab. The north side of the ground floor has just one smaller rectangular opening; it is partly framed in, and partly filled with a modern window.

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The windows of the upper floors on the east elevation were bricked-in at the same time the granite was applied and the wall was painted. That infill will soon be removed, and plans call for the installation of one-over-one replacement windows in the near future. The two upper sections of that elevation have different patterns of fenestration. The north side, which is the older of the two, has four single window openings on each upper floor. They are narrow segmental arched openings, and one of the early one-over-one window sashes was left in place inside the building when the exterior brick was applied; it will serve as a model for the replacement windows. (See photo 13.) The upper part of that section has a small brick cornice, and a tall parapet wall runs along the top of the entire east elevation. Rusticated piers edge the original corners of this part of the building.

The southern part of the wall, which was built later, has much larger window openings, which appear to have held three sashes in each opening. The third floor windows openings are arched, and those on the second floor are flat-topped. A slightly more elaborate brick cornice runs along the top part of that section.

The north wall of the building, which faces Fifth Street, is highly intact. It has three main bays, divided by rusticated brick piers that match those on the east elevation. The body of the north wall is faced with light brown brick, and the brick used for the piers is a dark reddish-brown. The same darker color of brick is used for a small corbelled cornice that runs along the top of the wide center bay on the north elevation. The entire north elevation is filled with evenly spaced double-hung wood windows, all of which are early or original. Those on the ground floor are shorter than those above, and set high above the sidewalk. A metal fire escape is located in the easternmost bay on that wall; it is early but not original.

The south wall of the Annex faces a narrow alley that leads to a small parking lot behind the Home Brew building. The south wall is flat, with rough red bricks and little to no ornamentation. There are several simple door and window openings, and most of the two-over-two window sashes in those appear to be original. Some of the doors are early as well. A pair of enclosed walkways runs from the Annex to the building to the south; they are now closed off at the junction with the neighboring building. There is one walkway at each upper floor, and they are stacked one above the other. They appear to be more than fifty years old and are considered to be part of the annex building

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Overall, the three buildings of this tiny district offer a diverse sample of early 20th century commercial architecture in downtown Joplin, Missouri. They are immediately recognizable to their period of significance, and clearly reflect their long ties to commercial history of Joplin, MO.

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Summary:

The Fifth and Main Historic District (preferred), which includes the buildings at 501 South Main Street, 507-513 South Main Street and 504-506 South Virginia Street, is significant under Criteria A in the area of Commerce with a local level of significance. The district offers an intact sampling of historic architecture, including a large department store, a warehouse/support building, and a mixed-use building that housed a combination of retail and office space. The three buildings in the district were constructed between ca. 1903 and ca. 1920, and all have been in continuous commercial use since the time of their construction. The largest building in the district, Christman's Department Store, at 501 South Main Street, is located on the southeast corner of South Main Street and 5th Street. Designed by August and Alfred Michaelis, the principals in one of Joplin's most distinguished architectural firms, the Christman's building functioned as a department store from 1917, the year it was constructed, until the last decades of the 20th century. By the 1910s, Christman's was one of a triumvirate of large independent department stores in Joplin; all of which were located on Main Street. In addition to its commercial importance, the Christman's Department Store building is a good example of the Chicago style of curtain wall architecture that became popular for large buildings in the early twentieth century. The Christman's Annex building is the oldest building in the district. Constructed circa 1903, the building doubled in size with an addition circa 1920. The Annex served as warehouse and support space for the Christman's Department Store early in its history, and it was later incorporated into the store itself. The Paramount Building, at 507-513 South Main, was built just south of the Christman's building circa 1912. It functioned for much of its history in the typical manner of a two-part commercial block, with retail shops on the first floor and offices on the second floor. The period of significance for the district begins circa 1903, the year the first building in the district was constructed, and extends to 1954, the year Christman's Department Store was purchased by Macy's. The buildings in the Fifth and Main Historic District are in fair to good condition and are largely intact. All three buildings are contributing buildings; there are no non-contributing resources.

Elaboration:

Joplin is in the southwestern corner of Missouri, and it is the largest

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town in Jasper County. Between 1837 and 1839, the first permanent settlers to the area where Joplin stands today began arriving from Tennessee, Delaware and Pennsylvania. The town gets its name from one of these settlers, Reverend Harris G. Joplin, a Methodist home missionary who came to the area in 1839 and built a log cabin large enough to hold church services.³ Jasper County was organized in 1841 and Carthage was named as the county seat. The discovery of lead deposits spurred settlement in the county. However, the lack of transportation routes to the area and the fierce battles that took place throughout southwest Missouri during the Civil War hindered settlement in Jasper County until after the late 1860s.

Although several lead mining communities were established in Jasper County in the 1850s, Joplin was not officially founded until after the Civil War.⁴ Like many of the towns in the area, the impetus to the founding of Joplin was the discovery of a rich source of lead in Joplin Creek. In the fall of 1870, two miners, Elliott R. Moffett and John B. Sargeant, leased a tract of land along the creek from John Cox and began mining the site. One early history noted that they discovered a deposit that "reportedly produced \$60,000 worth of lead in the first ninety days."⁵ Shortly after that discovery, John Cox

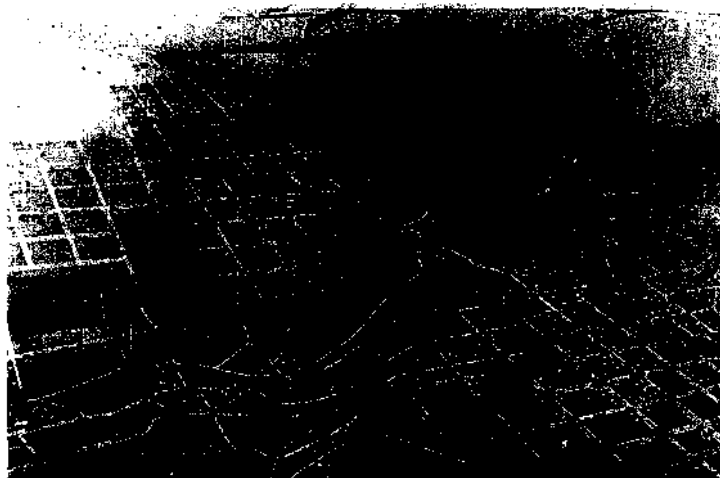


Figure Three: Bird's eye view of Joplin, 1877.

Source: Joplin; A Pictorial History, 1981, p. 26.

³ Kay Kirkman and Roger Stinnett, Joplin: A Pictorial History. (Joplin: Joplin Historical Society, 1981) p.13.

⁴ James W. Goodrich and Lynn Wolf Gentzler, eds. Marking Missouri History. (Columbia, Missouri: The State Historical Society of Missouri, 1998) pp. 204-206.

⁵ G. K. Renner, Joplin: From Mining Town to Urban Center. (Northridge, CA: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1985), p. 25.

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platted a town called Joplin City on the east side of Joplin Creek. An article that appeared in The Carthage Banner on June 22, 1871 sparked a population boom in the area. The article reported:

There is a new town in Jasper County. Its name is Joplin, and it is located fourteen miles southwest of Carthage on the farm of J. C. Cox. It has lead in unlimited quantities under it. Everybody out of employment ought to go there and dig.⁶

Less than two months after Joplin City was platted, a town called Murphysburg was established by Patrick Murphy on the other side of Joplin Creek.⁷ Both Joplin City and Murphysburg grew quickly, but rivalry between the two towns, combined with an assortment of nefarious businesses and rough characters, led to widespread lawlessness and intolerable living conditions. A meeting of the two town leaders resulted in a petition to the county court for the incorporation of the two towns into one. The new town of Union City was incorporated on March 14, 1872 by the Jasper County Court, and a marshal was appointed to help establish order. Unfortunately, the continued rivalry between the two communities and a legal challenge to the validity of the petition to join the towns resulted in a reversal of the court's decision. Thus, the two towns were reinstated. However, a year later, a local election in favor of a merger between the towns prompted civic leaders to apply to the state legislature for a special charter giving the new town of Joplin status as a fourth-class city. With the approval of the charter by the legislature on March 23, 1873, Joplin was officially born.⁸

The new town of Joplin grew quickly both in population and physical size. By 1877, Joplin had more than 7500 residents, and eight additions to the town had been platted.⁹ A bird's-eye view of Joplin from the same year shows the considerable development on both sides of Joplin Creek. (See Figure Three.) In addition to the opening of additional mining operations in and around

⁶ The Carthage Banner, June 22, 1871.

⁷ The History of Jasper County, Missouri, including a condensed history of the state, a complete history of Carthage and Joplin, other towns and townships. (Des Moines, IA: Mills & Co., 1883), p. 393.

⁸ Renner, p. 27.

⁹ Dolph Shaner, The Story of Joplin. (New York: Stratford House, Inc., 1948) p. 46 and The History of Jasper County, Missouri, pp.396-400.

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Joplin, businesses of all types were established during the town's early years. According to G. K. Renner, the author of Joplin: From Mining Town to Urban Center,

In 1875, the fledgling city already had fifty-two mercantile establishments. Additional businesses included twelve blacksmith shops, five hotels, two banks, and sixteen physicians.¹⁰

In the 1880s, Joplin became known as the "town that Jack built" as zinc ore, nicknamed "Jack", once thought of only as a by-product of lead mining, became a valuable commodity.¹¹ However, within a few years, mining was only one aspect of Joplin's booming economy. Although it was the mining industry that first drew Joplin's earliest settlers, it was the town's diversification into other industrial and commercial enterprises that resulted in its unprecedented growth in the 1890s and early 1900s, and which sustained its economy after the mines were depleted. Many of the businesses established during this period catered to the hundreds of miners who made up the bulk of Joplin's population. As Jim Henry, the author of the article "Downtown once heart of Joplin" noted:

Main Street in Joplin on Saturday nights was festive during the height of the mining era. Saturday marked the end of a six-day work week, and miners' wages and the operators' accounts for ore were paid at this time.

Banks were open Saturday nights from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. and operators set up booths inside the banks or in saloons where they paid the miners.

During that hour, more than \$100,000 was usually disbursed, and from 8 p.m. until midnight the stores and sidewalks were crowded with shoppers and with people socializing. Stores usually transacted one-fourth of their week's business on Saturday night.

Especially in the early boomtown days, miners didn't have their families with them. Single guys out on the town with nothing to do

¹⁰ Renner, p. 27.

¹¹ Shaner, p. 78.

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except spend their money and get drunk.¹²

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, Joplin grew an extraordinary 161.7 percent, reaching a population of 26,023 by 1900.¹³ It was by far Missouri's fastest growing city. During this period, Joplin began to shed the rough mining camp image for that of a sophisticated city. Substantial brick commercial buildings quickly replaced Joplin's earliest commercial buildings, most of which were simple frame structures. Sanborn maps show that Main Street, in particular, was soon lined with several densely packed blocks of two and three story commercial buildings. (See Figure Three.) The following description of Joplin from the 1899 Missouri State Gazetteer and Business Directory points out the city's many amenities:

In the rush of mining development, comfort and advancement of the city have not been neglected. There are excellent public school buildings, mostly brick structures, all commodious and well arranged....It is lighted by electricity and gas, has a splendid system of waterworks, built in 1881 at a cost of \$120,000, electric street railway, an efficient and thoroughly equipped fire department, an elegant theater, costing \$40,000, zinc smelting works, the most extensive lead smelting works in the state, white lead works, flouring mills, paint works, brewery, boiler shops, 2 newspapers, 5 banks, wagon factories, foundries and machine shops, cigar factories, planing mills, powder works, ore dressing plant manufactory, ice factories, etc.¹⁴

Those favorable business conditions led to the establishment of many new businesses, including Christman's Dry Goods. In 1890, Peter Christman and Edmund Bliedung arrived in Joplin. The two young fortune seekers from Dubuque, Iowa, who were related by the marriage of Christman's brother and Bliedung's sister, were on their way to New Orleans. They stopped in Joplin, saw the potential for success in the booming mining town and decided to stay.

¹² Jim Henry, "Downtown once heart of Joplin," Joplin Globe. (Undated article from the vertical files of the State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia, MO).

¹³ Renner, p. 40.

¹⁴ Missouri Gazetteer and Business Directory 1899. (St. Louis, MO: R. L. Polk & Co., 1899).

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On September 13, 1890, they opened Christman and Bliedung Dry Goods at 211 Main Street.¹⁵ A year later, Charles Christman came to visit his brother, and he also decided to put down roots in Joplin. He purchased a furniture store at Third and Main Street that he and another brother, Fred Christman, operated under the name Christman Brothers Furniture.¹⁶ Both the Christman & Bliedung Dry Goods and Christman Brothers Furniture businesses were quite successful. Within just a few years, the two stores moved into a new building further downtown, in the heart of Joplin's commercial district. This new building, known as the "Dubuque Block," was a three-story building, at the corner of Fifth and Main Streets. (See Figure Four.) It appears to have been built for the Christman businesses.

Figure Four: Christman's, Dubuque Block, 501-505 Main Street, ca. 1902
Source: Joplin Picture Book, 1902.



Although both Christman businesses moved into the building, they operated independently for several years. In 1902, Will Christman, join his three brothers and Edmond Bliedung in the Joplin business. At that time, the

¹⁵ Shaner, p. 121.

¹⁶ "Christman's store had long history," Joplin Globe. February 20, 1987.

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dry goods store and the furniture store were combined into one business, the Christman's Dry Goods Company.¹⁷

Christman's was the first business in Joplin to follow the department store model that had developed in Paris, London and New York in the late 1850s. In A History of the Department Store, the author, John William Ferry, provides the following definition of this type of retail store.

When a retail store provides for most of our material requirements in addition to clothing, with departments supplying furniture, hardware, books, radio and television, jewelry, foodstuffs, candy, and many other wares, and boasts of a restaurant, beauty salon, post office, rest rooms, or other amenities, it must be a large establishment and is to be considered as a department store in the fullest sense of the term.¹⁸

By the 1920s, Christman's, as well as the two other large department stores in Joplin, were providing their customers with many of the same services they might find in the department stores of major American and European cities.

Joplin's growth leveled off during the first decade of the twentieth century. Census figures cite the population at 32,073 in 1910. More important, however, was the population of the eleven towns within a ten-mile radius of Joplin, whose residents totaled more than sixty thousand. As one Joplin historian noted, all of these towns "were tied to Joplin not only by roads and railways but also by an electric trolley system."¹⁹ This service, along with Joplin's wide selection of shopping and recreational opportunities, helped to solidify the town's position as the premier urban center for the tri-state mining district. (See Figure Five.)

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ John William Ferry, A History of the Department Store. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960) p. 10.

¹⁹ Renner, p. 46.

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Figure Five: Joplin Merchants Advertisement
Source: Joplin Globe, March 15, 1917.

DO YOUR SHOPPING IN JOPLIN
And Your Railroad or Street Car Fare Will Be Refunded by the Joplin Trade Extension Association, No Matter How Great the Distance
READ: A ROUND TRIP TO JOPLIN FREE
This town's status as a regional trade center was bolstered by the fact that after 1909, Joplin was the only 'wet' community in Jasper and many surrounding counties.

20 Kirkman and Stinnett, p. 65.

21 Sanborn maps, and The History of Jasper County, Missouri, including a condensed history of the state, a complete history of Carthage and Joplin, other towns and townships, (Des Moines, IA: Mills & Co., 1883) p. 484.

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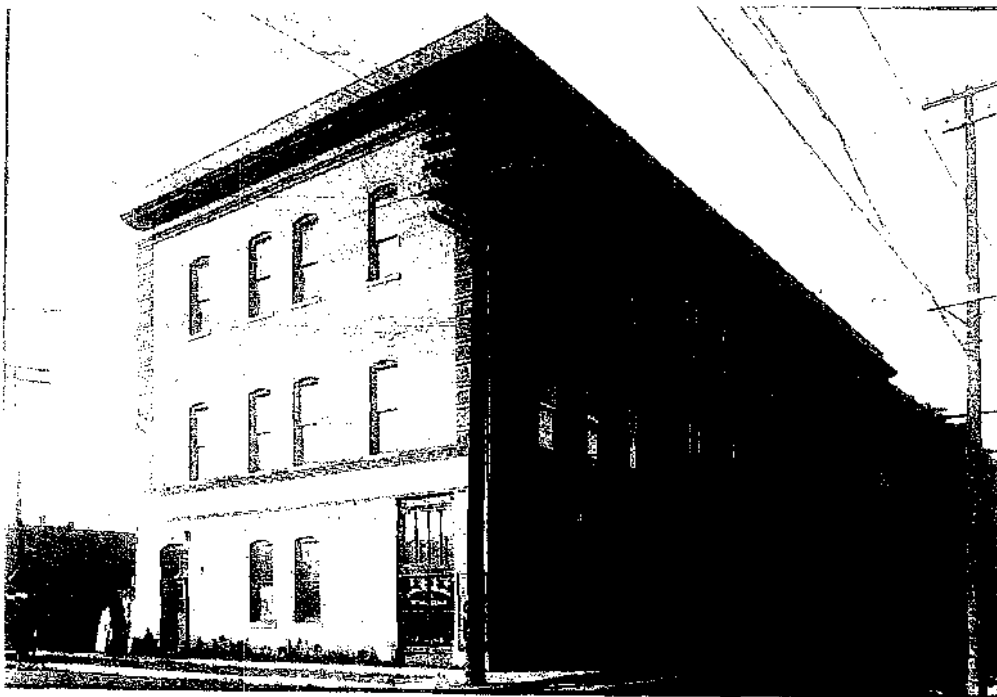
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the breweries.

Around 1903, Christman's built a new three-story building on the lot immediately to the east of their store, at 5th and Virginia. That building, the Christman's Annex, increased the store's total floor space to an impressive 58,000 square feet. The annex building was designed and built by Garstang and Rea, a prominent Joplin-based architectural firm.²² Christman's did not use all of that building at first, however; at least two ground floor spaces were occupied by other businesses in the early 1900s. The bay closest to Virginian Street was a beer warehouse in 1906 (presumably for the Middle West Brewery) and another bay was occupied by the Joplin Tobacco Company.²³

Figure Six: Christman's Annex. (North side)

Source: "The Way We Were," Joplin Globe. January 15, 1998.



Courtesy/Dorothea B. Hoover Historical Museum

A few years after the annex was completed, the brewery complex south of

²² "The Way We Were," Joplin Globe. January 15, 1998.

²³ Sanborn Map of Joplin, 1906, p. 22, and "The Way We Were," Jan 15, 1998.

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the department store was replaced with new commercial development. A new theater was built around 1910, and a couple of years later, the lots directly south of the Christman's property gained a wide new commercial building with four shops facing Main Street. That building, the Paramount Building, is located at 507-513 S. Main St.

The Paramount, which was built ca. 1912, provides an interesting contrast both in terms of history and architectural form to that of the Christman building. The two-story Paramount Building is typical of the commercial buildings that were built on Joplin's Main Street in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is a two-part commercial block, which architectural historian Richard Longstreth describes as "the most common type of composition used for small and moderate sized commercial buildings throughout the country. Generally limited to structures of two to four stories, this type is characterized by a horizontal division into two distinct zones."²⁴ In contrast to the Christman Building, which only had one occupant for most of its history, the Paramount Building had numerous tenants, many of which only stayed in the building for a few years. Typical of the two-part commercial block, the first floor storefront spaces in the Paramount Building were occupied by a variety of independent businesses, and much of the second floor was used for offices, many of which were medical.

The Paramount is a little unusual, though—the second floor also housed the type of businesses more commonly found in ground floor spaces—first a bar, and later a sandwich shop. One of the first tenants of the building was the Home Brew Bar, which was described as a "mezzanine bar" in one early account. That indicates that at least part of that business was on the upper floor. Later, the Paramount Sandwich Shop occupied two of those second floor spaces.

The Home Brew Bar was a carry-over from the days when a brewery occupied that part of the block. The Home Brew Bar was owned by Carl Greisser, who had also owned the saloon at that location (507 S. Main) before the Paramount Building was erected. Greisser operated the Home Brew Bar in the new building from 1912 to 1919.²⁵ A photo of the building taken in 1919 shows a sign out front that reads "Home Brew Bar." (See Figure Seven.)

²⁴ Richard Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street*. (Washington, DC: National Preservation Press, 1987) p. 24.
²⁵ "Where's Pop? He's Retired Now. Was in Business in Joplin 36 Years," *Joplin Globe*, March 29, 1944.

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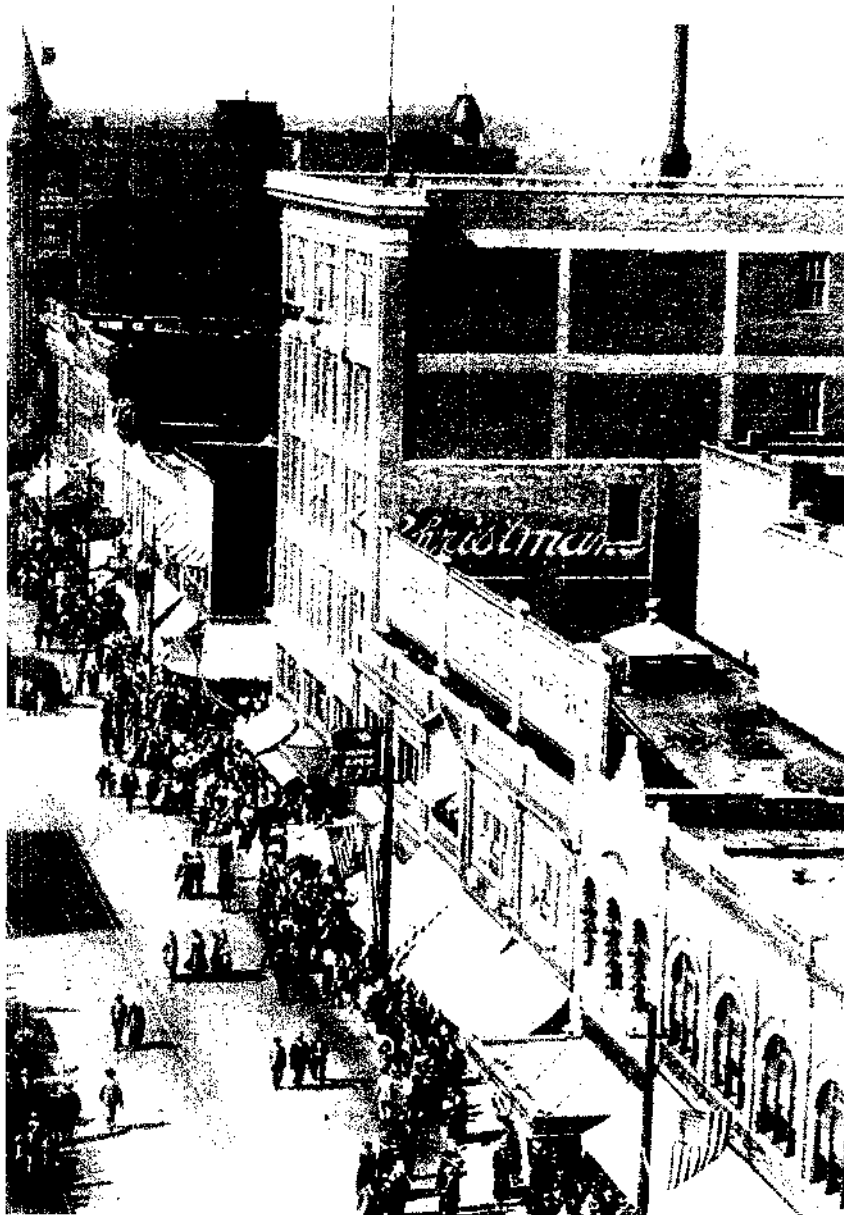
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Figure Seven: The 500 Block of South Main in 1919.

Source: The Best of Joplin, p. 147.



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Greisser's involvement in the saloon was carrying on family tradition; his family at times owned both the Middle West Brewery and the Home Brewing and Ice Company, which was also located in downtown Joplin. In 1909, both the Middle West Brewery and the Home Brewing and Ice Company were owned by Wilhelm Greisser, who was Carl Greisser's brother. Carl Greisser's Saloon at 507 S. Main was called the Middle West Brewery Saloon at that time, and William J. Greisser was working as a bartender there. Other members of the Greisser family were also listed in the city directory as employees of the Home Brew Company.

The buildings of the Middle West Brewery and the saloon were demolished to make room for the Electric (later Paramount) Theater as well as the Paramount Building. (See Figure Eight.) The entrance and lobby for the Electric Theater were located at 515 Main Street, but the theater auditorium was located perpendicular to Main Street, behind the buildings that faced Main Street. (The much-altered entrance to the theater survives; the auditorium has since been demolished.)

That was probably a two-part process. Apparently, the theater was built first, ca. 1910, and the Paramount building came later.²⁶ The Middle West Saloon building was not demolished and replaced by the Paramount Building until 1912.²⁷ An article about the retirement of Carl Griesser, by then known as "Pop", noted that:

"Pop" has decided to call it quits and finish out his life's span with memories of Joplin that go back to 1905 when he came here from Homestead, Pa. and established a bar with his brother, the late Wilhelm Griesser, then also owner of the old Middle West brewery.

Opened Mezzanine Bar

"Pop" operated his bar in the 500 block on the east side of Main street until the Paramount building was erected in 1912, then spent that summer operating a concession at the old Electric park, now Schifferdecker park. In the autumn of 1912 he opened a mezzanine bar at 509 Main Street and retained it until prohibition became effective.²⁸

²⁶ Directories indicate that the theater opened in 1910.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ "'Where's Pop?' He's Retired Now. Was in Business in Joplin 36 Years."

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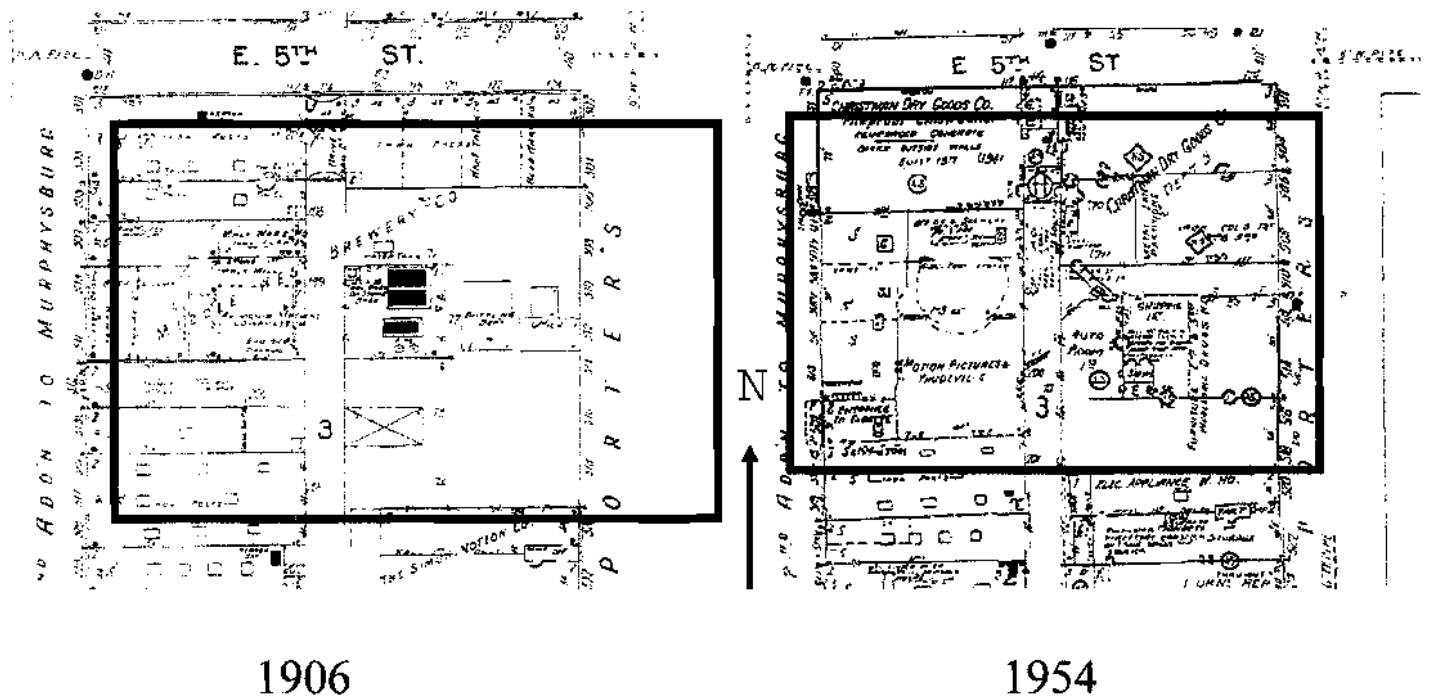
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Figure Eight: 500 block Main Street, 1906 and 1954.

Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, Map of Joplin, 1906 and 1954.



The retail space that had been occupied by the Home Brew Bar was filled by John Taylor's Candy Shop in the 1920s and by the Paramount Sandwich Shop in the 1930s.²⁹ Other early retail tenants in the Paramount Building included a clothing store owned by Morris Fogel, Abrams Studio Photography and the O. G. Jones Electric Hat Works.³⁰ Second floor occupants included dentist, doctors, and insurance agents. Garman's Jewelry Shop, which became McKee's Jewelry in the early 1930s, appears to have been the tenant with the longest occupancy in the building. Garman's moved into the building around

²⁹ Polk's Joplin City Directory 1925. (Kansas City, MO: R. L. Polk & Co., Publishers. 1925), and Polk's Joplin (Jasper County, MO) City Directory 1937, (R. L. Polk & Co., Publishers, Kansas City, MO, 1937).

³⁰ Dunham's Joplin, Missouri Directory 1915. (Joplin: Dunham Directory Company, 1915 and Leshnick's Joplin City Directory 1920, (Peoria, IL: Leshnick Directory Co. Publishers, 1920).

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1919 and was still in operation as McKee's Jewelry in the 1960s.³¹

By the late 1910s, Christman's was facing stiff competition from the two other leading department stores in town. In 1898, Albert Newman and his brother-in-law, Gabe Newburger, had established the second large department store in Joplin, the Newman Mercantile Company. Originally a clothing and shoe store for men and boys, it expanded into a full-service department store with the construction in 1910 of the five-story Newman Building at Sixth and Main Streets. Ramsay's, the third large department store in Joplin, was originally established in 1890 in Pittsburgh, Kansas by Albert and Robert Ramsay and Pat Martin. Their Joplin store, which opened in 1910 in the 600 block of Main Street, was Ramsay's fourth location in the Midwest.³² Thus, by 1910, all three of Joplin's large department stores were located within one block of each other. Christman's was the only one in an older building.

In what was undoubtedly an effort to keep up with their competition, Christman's also built a new building in 1917. They hired prominent local architects, August and Alfred Michaelis to design a modern new building for the store. Not wanting to sacrifice their prime location in downtown Joplin, the Christmans decided to construct the new building on the site of their current store. They used the annex on Virginia as a temporary store during the construction project. As noted in one article about the company, "in 1916, the stock of the company on the Main Street side was removed to the Virginia Avenue side and the five-story front was constructed."³³

A description of the new building was published in the Joplin Globe on February 4, 1917.

The handsome new \$150,000 home of the Christman's Dry Goods Company, now in course of construction at the southeast corner of Fifth and Main streets, probably will be ready for formal opening July 1, it was announced yesterday by officers of the firm.

The Christman store will be one of the largest and handsomest

31 *Ibid.*, Polk's Joplin (Jasper County, MO) City Directory 1947, (R. L. Polk & Co., Publishers, Kansas City, MO, 1947), Polk's Joplin (Jasper County, MO) City Directory 1955, (R. L. Polk & Co., Publishers, Kansas City, MO, 1955), and Polk's Joplin (Jasper County, MO) City Directory 1960, (R. L. Polk & Co., Publishers, Kansas City, MO, 1960).

32 Shaner, pp. 122-124.

33 "Christman's store had long history," Joplin Globe, February 20, 1987.

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establishments in the southwest. It is vastly different to most business structures, and numerous modern features have been embodied in the building. It is the first building in Joplin in which polished granite is employed in the exterior decorations. Plinth blocks beneath all windows are to be of this gorgeous stone, three carloads of which already have arrived here. Buff mat [sic] brick will form the face of the store building, and glazed terra cotta will be conspicuous in the shields and scrolls that adorn the cornice and front of the building.

Fireproof in every detail, the store will be equipped with a modern sprinkler system, operating automatically in the event of a blaze anywhere within the building.

Two passenger elevators and a freight elevator will be operated electrically.

American walnut will be used in the interior decoration of the establishment and the architects are planning an elegant tearoom and other impressive features.³⁴

A few months later, the architect's drawing was also published in the Interstate Gazette. (See Figure Ten.) However, in this publication, the occupancy date was cited as April 1st, of 1918. Evidently, some parts of the new building, including the first electric elevators in Joplin, were finished earlier than that, because Christman's newspaper advertisements began promoting this new feature in the summer of 1917.

In addition to incorporating new technology into the Christman Building, the Michaelis brothers designed the building using many of the principles of the popular Chicago Style. Typical of the Chicago Style, the Christman Building has a two-part vertical block form and a façade with minimal ornamentation and Chicago Style windows, which have a large central fixed-pane window flanked by 1/1 double-hung windows.³⁵ The Chicago Style was developed primarily by several Chicago architectural firms, including Sullivan and Adler, Burnham and Root and Holabird and Roche. These architects used innovative materials and technology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth

³⁴ "Christman's Expect to Occupy New Building, Costing \$150,000, July 1," Joplin Globe, February 4, 1917.

³⁵ John C. Poppeliers and S. Allen Chambers, Jr., What Style is It? A Guide to American Architecture, Revised Edition, (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2003) pp. 100-105.

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century to create “the skeleton-frame skyscraper that would transform cities around the world.”³⁶

Figure Nine: Architect’s Drawing of the New Christman’s Building. This illustration was published in various sources of the day. Source: Property Owner’s files.



³⁶ Ibid.

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The new building apparently helped boost Christman's business; just two years later, they again expanded, with a 30,000 square foot addition to the Annex building. Directory listings indicate the store had a cafeteria on Virginia from about 1919 into the 1930s, and it is likely the new addition housed that service. The annex addition increased the store's total square footage to approximately 150,000 square feet. Thereafter, Christman's touted itself as "the largest retailer in southwest Missouri."³⁷ The annex and the main store gradually were merged, and by 1947, doorways on Virginia Street were serving as the east entrance to the store, which appears to have had display space in both buildings in later years.³⁸

Although its competitors expanded into other towns in the mid-twentieth century, Christman's remained a one-store, family-owned and operated organization throughout its history. In 1949, Christman's celebrated its 60th anniversary. According to an article in the Joplin Globe announcing the anniversary sale, the company employed approximately 150 people.³⁹ A photo of the building from this period shows that its terra cotta cornice had been removed. (See Figure Ten.) Five years after the company celebrated its 60th anniversary, the Christman's Dry Goods Company was purchased by national retailer, R. H. Macy's and Company.

Soon after taking over, Macy's remodeled the east elevation of the annex, and they remained at that location for another twenty-two years. Oddly, after Macy's closed in 1976, the store reopened as Christman's again and operated as such for a few more years.⁴⁰ In recent years, the building has been owned and occupied by Howsman's Office Supply.

The blocks surrounding Christman's and the Paramount building served as Joplin's primary commercial center into the 1950s, when new commercial development along the outer parts of the city began to offer serious competition. As was the case in countless cities, downtown businesses began to close or relocate to fringe developments that offered ample parking and modern new buildings. Many downtown property owners, struggling to compete with new construction, applied slipcovers and other façade treatments to their aging commercial buildings. The Paramount fell prey to that trend in

³⁷ Charles Gibbons, Angling in the Archives, (Joplin, MO: H. Lang Rogers, 1996) p. 142.

³⁸ City directories list 502-04 Virginia as the "east entrance" to Christman's from 1947 on.

³⁹ "Christman's 60th Anniversary Sale," Joplin Globe, September 29, 1949.

⁴⁰ "Christman's store had long history," Joplin Globe, February 20, 1987.

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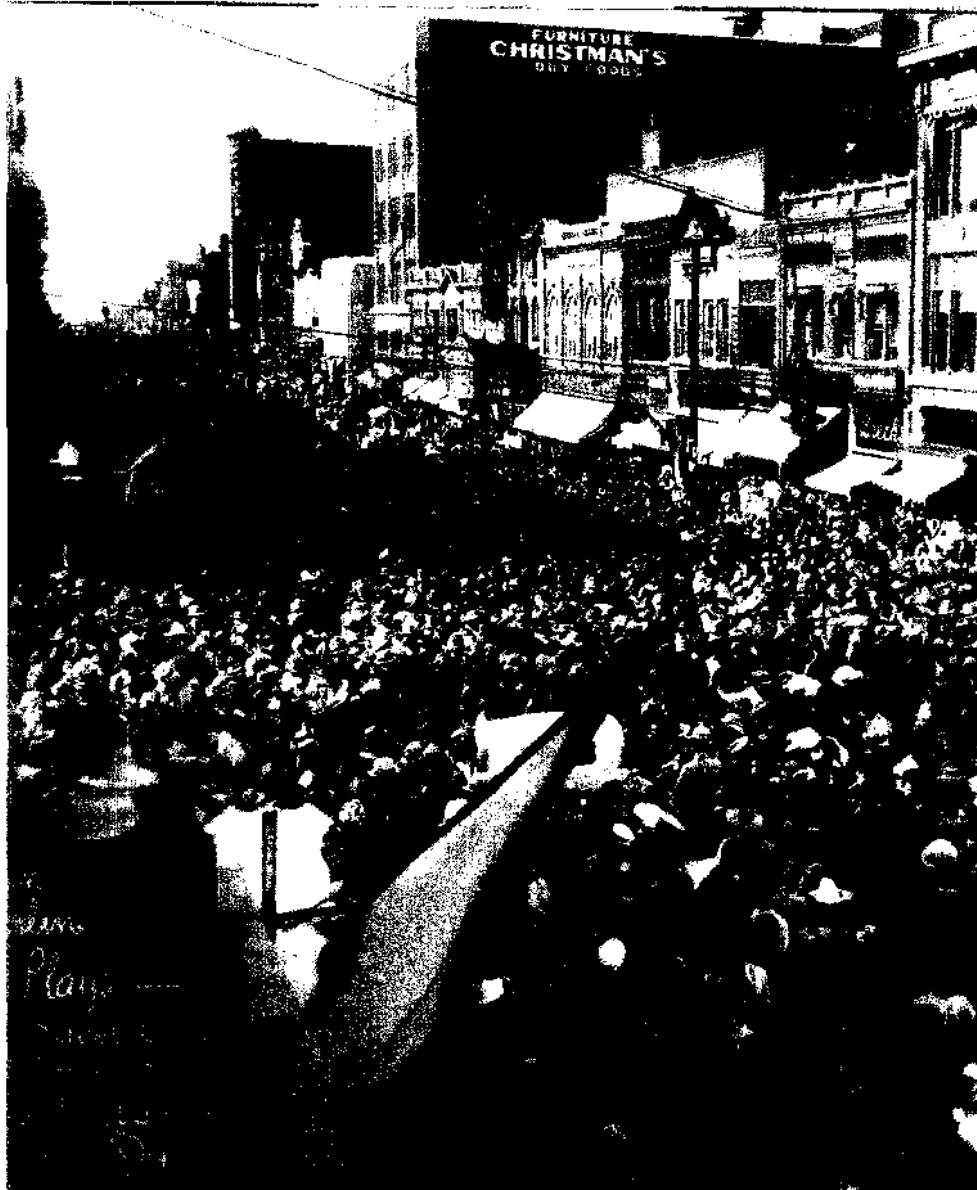
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the 1960s or so, when it received flat new metal sheathing across its upper façade, along with storefront updates.

Figure Ten: Main Street in the 1940s.

Source: Best of Joplin, p. 141.



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The Paramount was not alone. Of the 17 commercial buildings in the 500 block of Broadway, for example, 16 appear to have been built before 1940, and of those, 8 have seen substantial façade alterations. Most of those changes appear to have been done in the 1960s and early 1970s, and not a lot of work of any type has occurred on the block since that then.

Things are changing in downtown Joplin, however. The city of Joplin has announced a major downtown redevelopment campaign, which will include streetscape and parking improvements, as well as financial incentives for private development. As the Joplin City manager, Mark Rohr, said in a recent presentation to the Joplin City Council, "the time to intervene and demonstrate the values of historic preservation through the creation of a comprehensive redevelopment program with standards and incentives is now, before more architectural treasures are lost."⁴¹ He also recommended pursuing National Register designation for more structures in the downtown area. The 500 block of Main Street is part of a proposed "demonstration area" for that plan, and the city has even prepared drawings showing what the block might look like after streetscape improvements and the removal of inappropriate façade treatments on the building. (See Figure Ten.)

In the meantime, work has already begun on the buildings of the 5th and Main Historic District. The false front has been removed from the Paramount Building, and 1950s alterations to the Christman's Annex are also being reversed. All three buildings in the district are slated for major overhauls, and all of the planned work will meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. That project will return those nearly-vacant buildings to use, and serve as a highly visible example of the value of historic preservation in downtown renewal.

The buildings in the Fifth and Main Historic District are important reminders of Joplin's heyday as a mining, industrial and retail center. The Christman Building is a local landmark, which served as the home of one of the most long-lived retail stores in Joplin. The Christman's Annex building, the oldest building in the district, served as both warehouse and showroom space for the department store for more than seventy years. The Paramount Building is representative of the many commercial buildings which served as

⁴¹ Mark Rohr, presentation to the Joplin City Council, an electronic version of the speech and drawings are on file with the current property owners, and on line at <<http://www.joplinmo.org/DowntownRevitalizationPlan.cfm>>, February 3, 2006.

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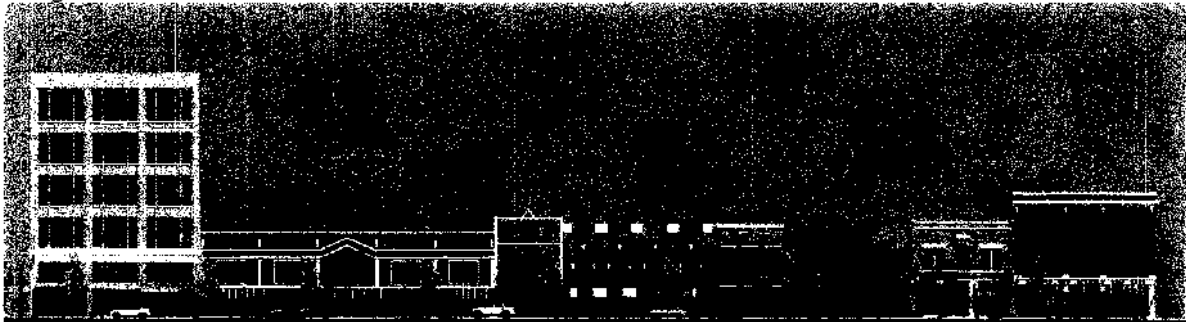
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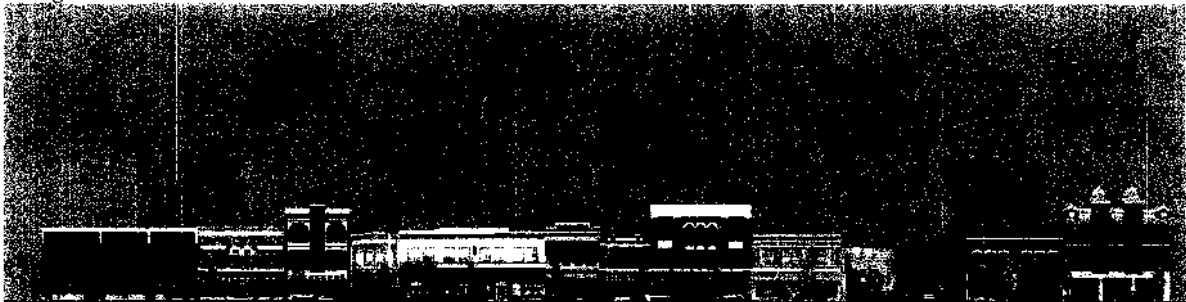
retail and office space for Joplin's small business owners over the years. The buildings of the Fifth and Main Historic District offer an intact grouping of commercial buildings in Joplin, and they strongly evoke their period of significance.

Figure Ten: Drawings of the 500 Block of S. Main in Joplin, showing proposed streetscape improvements and possible rehabilitation options for the historic architecture of the area. The Christman's Store and Paramount Building are in the upper left corner. Drawing courtesy of the City of Joplin.

Facing East



Facing West



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**United States Department of the Interior
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Jasper County, Missouri**

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**United States Department of the Interior
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**Fifth and Main Historic District (preferred)
Jasper County, Missouri**

Verbal Boundary Description

501-505 S. Main All of the lot Numbered One hundred ninety-seven (197), and the north half (N1/2) of lot numbered One hundred ninety-eight (198) in Murphy's second addition to Murphysburg, now a part of the City of Joplin.

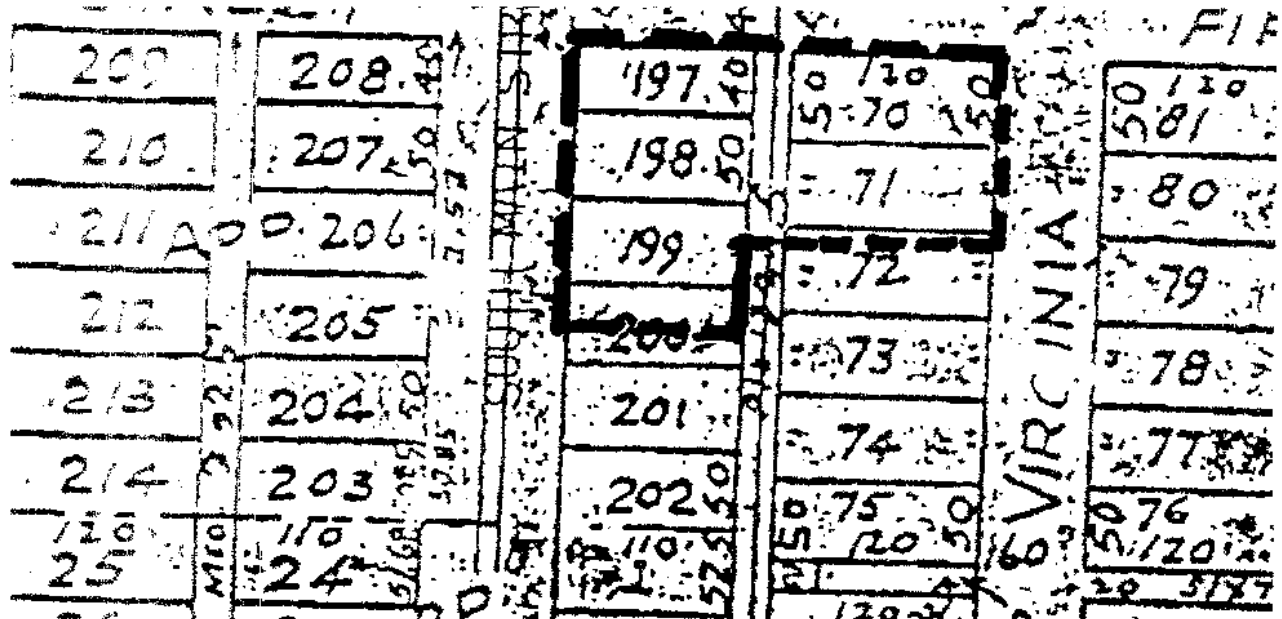
507-513 S. Main All of the South One-half of Lot Numbered One-Hundred Ninety-Eight, all of Lot Numbered One-Hundred Ninety-Nine (199), and of the North One-Half of Lot Numbered Two Hundred (200) in Murphy's second Addition to Murphysburg, Now a part of the city of Joplin, Jasper County, Missouri, according to the recorded Plat thereof.

506-508 Virginia All of lots numbered Seventy (70), Seventy-one (71), and the North 1 foot of lot numbered Seventy-Two (72) in Porter's Addition to Murphysburg, now a part of the City of Joplin.

Boundary Justification

The current boundaries encompass all of the land currently and historically associated with the buildings of the district.

Boundary Map



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Fifth and Main Historic District (preferred)
Jasper County, Missouri

Photographs

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Fifth and Main Historic District

Fifth Street and South Main Street, Joplin

Jasper County, MO

Debbie Sheals

Photos were taken between October, 2005 and March, 2006.

List of Photographs

See photo key for description of camera angle.

1. Looking north on Main Street.
2. Paramount Building façade.
3. Christman's Store, Main Street façade.
4. Looking east on Fifth Street.
5. Christman's storefronts
6. North elevation, Annex.
7. North elevations, Annex and Christman's, looking west.
8. Annex façade, looking northwest.
9. Alley and bridges, Annex, looking west.
10. Christman's interior.
11. Christman's interior, column detail.
12. Christman's interior, upper floor.
13. Upper floor Annex window, interior view.
14. Upper floor Paramount windows, interior view.

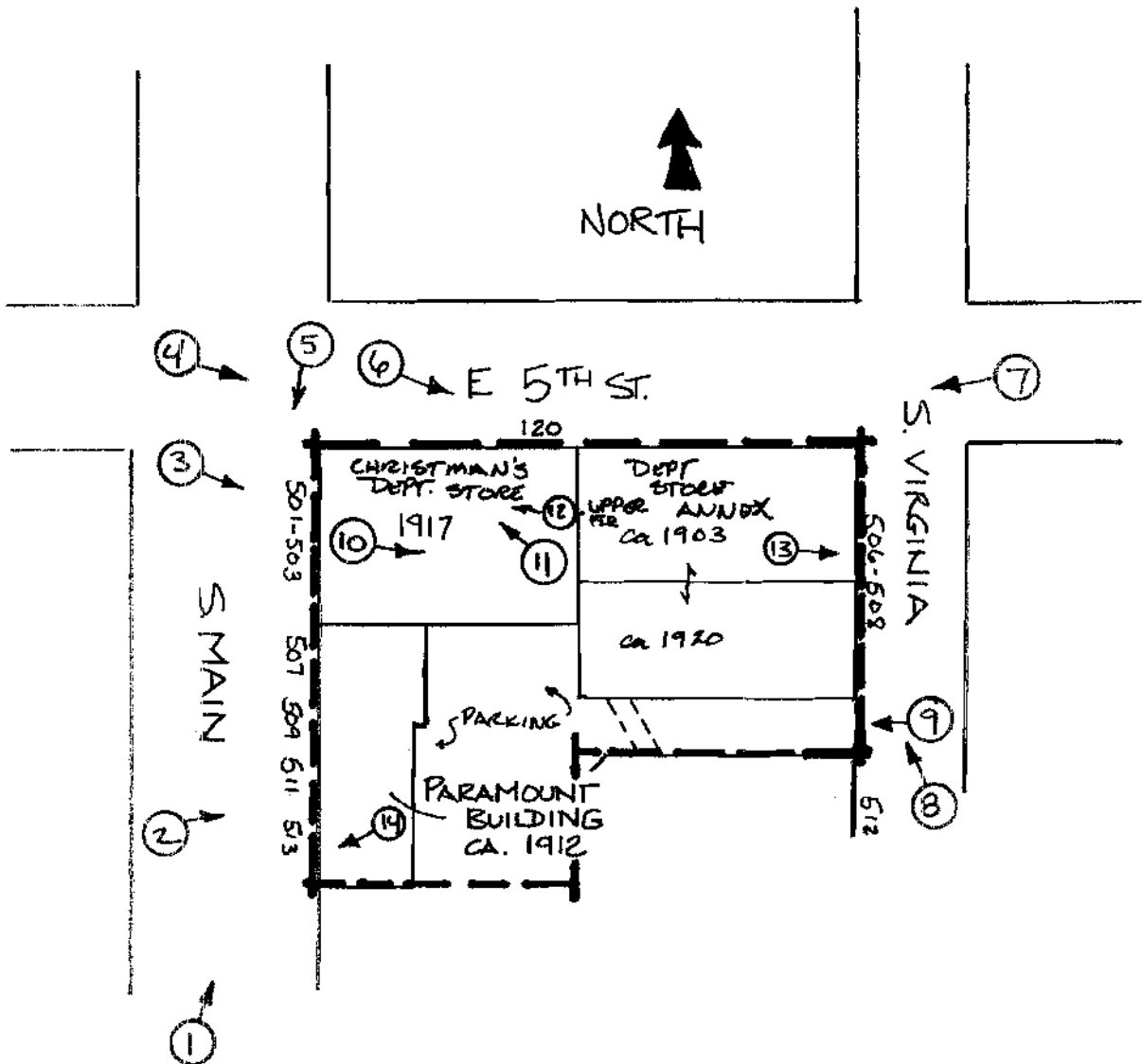
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Fifth and Main Historic District (preferred)
Jasper County, Missouri

Photo Key.







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