

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

German-American Bank Building

AND/OR COMMON

First Federal Building, American National Bank Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

624 Felix Street

__ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

St. Joseph

__ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

#6 - Hon. E. Thomas Coleman

STATE

Missouri

CODE

29

COUNTY

Buchanan

CODE

021

3 CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | PRESENT USE | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL | <input type="checkbox"/> PARK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL | <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDEN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SITE | PUBLIC ACQUISITION | ACCESSIBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: |

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

First Federal Savings & Loan Assoc. of St. Joseph, Missouri

STREET & NUMBER

624 Felix Street

CITY, TOWN

St. Joseph

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Missouri 64501

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Office of Recorder of Deeds, Buchanan County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Fifth and Jules Streets

CITY, TOWN

St. Joseph

STATE

Missouri

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

1. Missouri's Contribution to American Architecture

DATE

1928

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

John Albury Bryan, St. Louis Architectural Club

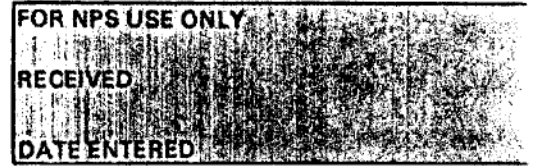
CITY, TOWN

St. Louis

STATE

Missouri

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GERMAN-AMERICAN BANK BUILDING

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- | | |
|---|-------|
| 2. <u>Historic Preservation Inventory, St. Joseph, Missouri</u> 1972 Johnson, Johnson and Roy, Inc. Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103 | local |
| 3. Missouri State Historical Survey 1978 Department of Natural Resources Office of Historic Preservation P.O. Box 176 Jefferson City, Missouri 65101 | state |
-

ITEM 11

2. Nancy Sandehn
P.O. Box 43
St. Joseph, Missouri 64502
816/279-3558

7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION | | CHECK ONE | CHECK ONE |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The German-American Bank Building, now the First Federal Building, 624 Felix Street, St. Joseph, Missouri is a six story bank and office building designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style with added beaux arts detailing. It is rectangular in plan, with the ground floor above grade along its south facade and below grade along its north. The building borders a narrow alleyway on the south and abuts a jewelry store on the west.

EXTERIOR

Over-all dimensions

The building measures 100' along its east and west sides, and 60' along the north and south.

Construction materials and colors

The exterior walls of the German-American Bank Building are constructed primarily of red brick which is laid in common bond and molded in the areas which serve as the junctures of the intrados and extrados of its arched openings, the window reveals and the engaged columns. Rock-faced brick is used exclusively at the first and second floor levels on the north facade and the northernmost portion of the east facade, and to form decorative surrounds elsewhere. In addition, red sandstone is employed in smooth-dressed voussoirs of the flat arches which cap the windows; as rock-faced voussoirs and random ashlar embellishment on the first and second floor levels, particularly in the areas of the two main entrances, and as courses on the second and third floor levels; as finely tooled ashlar blocks, archivolt, jambs, jamb shafts, zoomorphic grotesques, pilasters and shields decorating the two main entrances, and as impost blocks at the sixth floor level; and as finely carved moldings, capitals, archivolt and decoration in various places on the exterior, and as laurel wreaths, swags and piscinae surrounding the cornice. In addition to brick and sandstone, blocks of white and grey unpolished marble have been used to create a decorative gargoyle and fountain niche just north of the east entrance.

Important design features

North facade. At the first floor level, the bricked-in windows on this facade are capped by flat arches with heavy, rock-faced sandstone voussoirs. These arches are topped by a narrow course of rock-faced sandstone. At the street floor level is the main entryway to the banking floor. It is located under a heavy Richardsonian arch of radiating sandstone voussoirs. This arch is ornamented with a pronounced, tooled sandstone archivolt which is trimmed with a band of running, triple chevrons. Flanking this portal and rising to impost level are two squat, tooled sandstone pilasters, each of which is embellished with scrolling, acanthus motives and a rincau peuplé of acanthus featuring alternating figures of birds and squirrels. Surrounding the doorway, and as a decorative feature at the northeast corner of this

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facade, are rock-faced blocks in a random ashlar configuration which act to emphasize these areas. Above the entryway, incised in sandstone, is the name "German-American Bank". This is now covered by the new, bronze "First Federal" nameplate. Cast iron lintels which are decorated with rosettes and stylized acanthus motives are located above the windows which flank this portal. Topping the portal are two mosaic panels, one to either side, which depict the German Imperial eagle and the American eagle. All the brick on this portion of the facade is rock-faced. Capping this level is a course of rock-faced ashlar blocks which in turn is capped by a juxtaposition of a stylized egg and dart molding and a bead and reel molding.

At the third floor level on the north facade, each of the rectangular sash and transom windows is capped by a flat arch of smooth-dressed sandstone which has been adorned on its underside with a stylized water leaf molding. A string course runs across the facade at the level of this molding and becomes a hood mold over the three round arched windows above the central door. Additional rock-faced brick adorns the northeast corner of the building at this level.

The window pairs at the fourth and fifth story levels are joined beneath arcades which are supported by slender, compound engaged columns of molded brick. Each of these columns is capped by an impost block which is embellished with a series of indented moldings. Each impost block rests on a capital which is ornamented with scrolling, acanthus motives and delicate, tripartite entrelacs. All of the pairs of sash and transom windows at the third, fourth and fifth floor levels are surrounded and joined to those one story above by a band of radiating, rock-faced brick voussoirs which begins at the molding over the ashlar course above the second story, runs up and over the apex of the round arched windows on the fifth floor and continues down the other side of each window pair.

Just above the fifth floor level, at the northeast corner of the building, is a sandstone shield with the date "1889" carved in high relief within it. Surrounding this shield is additional rock-faced brick detailing. Directly above this and below the level of the sixth floor, runs a string course which is composed of a row of dentils surmounted by a fillet which supports a cyma recta molding.

At the level of the sixth floor a running arcade of twelve arches supported by eleven columns forms a shallow gallery in front of a series of twelve fixed windows. Each arch is constructed of molded brick and rests on a simple, carved sandstone impost block which is ornamented only with a series of astragals along its lower edge. Supporting this arrangement in each case is a smooth-dressed sandstone column which is capped by a series of astragals and a stylized acanthus basket capital. Each capital is ornamented with a series of Solomon's seals. The first and last

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supports in the series are really pseudo-antae, nothing more than impost blocks and capitals embedded in the brick wall.

Above the running arcade, at the attic level, is a frieze composed of a series of repeated swags and laurel wreaths. Above each swag, and approaching the level of the cornice, is a stylized form resembling an ancient piscina or medieval stoup which is formed from a semi-circular projection which ends in a cul-de-lampe and is capped by a hairpin arch of molded brick. The series of arches so created forms a blind arcade at cornice level.

The northern three-bayed portion of the east facade is virtually identical in decoration and design to the north facade. Between the third and fourth bays is a decorative, cast iron, spiral fire escape running from the cornice to just above first floor level which is probably post 1900 in date. Just below this is located an arched fountain niche which is formed from blocks of tooled grey and white, unpolished marble set in a chevron pattern of alternating shades. In the second level of marble blocks, in the center of the niche, a humanoid gargoyle acts as a fountain spout. Capping the niche is a small arch of broad, rock-faced sandstone voussoirs. Below is the fountain basin of poured concrete. Surrounding the niche and linking it to the office entryway directly to the north is decorative wall treatment of rock-faced brick and random ashlar.

The fourth bay of the east facade has several unique decorative features. At street level rock-faced brick and random ashlar embellishments surround the entrance portal which is capped by another heavy Richardsonian arch of rock-faced, cut sandstone voussoirs. Flanking the entrance at impost level are two tooled sandstone shields which lack detailing of any kind. Supporting the lintel upon which these shields rest are eight jamb shafts, four to either side, which are finely tooled with vertical striations on their outer sides and short, horizontal striations on their recessed portions. Each shaft is topped by an astragal which supports a capital adorned with stylized acanthus motives. A vertically ridged and scrolled abacus, which is decorated with rosettes and runs a zig-zag course, unites the four capitals above each group of four jamb shafts. Supporting each jamb shaft and resting on a tooled ashlar base block is a crouching zoomorphic grotesque which is finely tooled with random striations.

Above the portal on the east facade, the course of rock-faced ashlar sandstone topped by egg and dart and bead and reel moldings continues to an abrupt halt just south of the entrance. Its terminus is embellished by a vertical sandstone panel which has been carved with a delicate floral motif.

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Above this level in the fourth bay are two balconies, one atop the other, which rise through the third, fourth and fifth stories. Decoration in this area includes rock-faced brick surrounding the arch which encloses the balconies and a decorative column which supports the second balcony while resting on the balustrade of the first. This column has no base and a plain shaft with pronounced entasis. The capital rests on an astragal and is adorned with acanthus motives and delicate entrelacs. Its abacus is decorated along its lower edge with a series of gutti-form projections. Resting on this support are two flat arches, similar to those which cap the rectangular windows, which are embellished with a water leaf molding. Above this sits a Richardsonian balustrade which is topped by a course of molded brick. Each brick baluster is four courses high and one stretcher wide and is separated from the next by the length of one stretcher. Above these balconies the decoration is patterned after that of the north facade.

The south portion of the east facade differs in appearance from the rest of that side. At the first floor level are two glass-paneled store fronts. Above these and resting on their decorative, cast iron lintels is a slightly radiating soldier arch of rock-faced brick. Topping this and resting on a course of rock-faced sandstone, the second floor windows rise as on the north facade. At the third floor level, three corbel courses of brick form a sill for each pair of windows. In addition, each of these windows is topped by a heavy sandstone lintel. Above this, the windows of the fourth, fifth and sixth stories are joined, each pair to the pair above, by two rounded arches of radiating rock-faced brick, each of which has a pseudo-porthole window at its apex. The elements which support the arches enclosing the windows are similar to those found at the fourth and fifth floor levels elsewhere. Above this, the molding which forms the upper portion of the piscinae on the north and the rest of the south facades takes a step up and runs straight to the southeast corner. Capping this is the cornice which rises slightly higher here than on the rest of the building.

South facade. This side of the building is completely undecorated and only crudely finished. Several pairs of sash and transom windows are located at third, fourth and fifth floor levels.

INTERIOR

The interior of the German-American Bank Building has been totally changed from its original condition due to remodeling. The only original elements which remain are the three story vault with its cast iron spiral staircase and shields bearing the monogram GANB and their accompanying egg and dart molding which are located on the echini of each pilaster on the banking floor.

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ALTERATIONS

An extensive alteration of the building in 1920 materially changed the ground floor level on the east facade and the western portion of the north facade. Prior to this alteration, the east facade had three additional store fronts located at and below street level, just below the large windows at its northern end. These stores were reached from the street by a stair just north of the fountain niche. In addition, west of the main entrance on the north facade where one of the large windows is presently located, a small staircase previously led from the sidewalk directly to the banking floor, obscuring both of the first floor windows in this area. In 1920, the both of these stairways were removed.

The interior of the building was completely remodeled between 1974 and 1976 by the First Federal Savings and Loan Association. Black steel sash and smoked glass were installed throughout the building and all electric heating and cooling systems were modernized. Exterior alterations during this renovation were minimal. The building was cleaned chemically, and the brick was tuckpointed where necessary. In addition, a green marble pediment which had been inserted at an unknown date within the arch of the northern portal was removed.²

CONDITION

Due to the recent renovation and cleaning, the condition of the building is excellent

SITE

The building is located at the corner of 7th and Felix Streets in the heart of downtown St. Joseph. Under the city's urban renewal plan, Felix Street has become a pedestrian mall with vehicular traffic limited to the north-south streets. Immediately to the north of the bank and across the street, a pocket park is planned which is now being developed by the St. Joseph Junior Chamber of Commerce. The bank building abuts commercial buildings on the west. Lining Felix Street, to the south of the building and further west, is a series of noteworthy, nineteenth century commercial structures in various styles and stages of disrepair. To the northeast is one square block which has been almost totally cleared of buildings under an urban renewal program. To the east, a block of business buildings includes the Missouri Theater which was a grand movie palace built during the second decade of this century. This building has been purchased by a concerned group of citizens and now serves as a concert hall.

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PRESENT STATUS

The German-American Bank Building is not in danger of demolition at the present time.

FOOTNOTES

1. Data excerpted from the National Register Inventory Nomination Form for the German-American Bank Building, prepared by Nancy Sandehn of St. Joseph, Mo., July 26, 1976.
2. Ibid.

SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW | | | |
|-------------|--|---|---|--|
| PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION |
| 400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE |
| 500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE |
| 500-1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN |
| 700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> ART | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER |
| 800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| 900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | | |

SPECIFIC DATES 1889 BUILDER/ARCHITECT The firm of Eckel and Mann

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The German-American Bank Building, 624 Felix Street, St. Joseph, Missouri, is significant as a symbol of commercial enterprise brought to fruition by the German immigrant population of the growing city of St. Joseph in the nineteenth century.¹ The primary significance of the building, however, is architectural and stems from its Richardsonian Romanesque style which has been hybridized with added beaux arts detailing. Due to its style and certain eccentricities of detail, this building has become intimately involved in the emerging argument concerning the importance of the work of the late nineteenth century draftsman and designer of genius, Harvey Ellis, who worked for the firm of Eckel and Mann from 1888 or 1889 to 1892.² Some support the claim that Ellis designed the building,³ but others feel that the style and decoration reflect the imagination of Edmond Jacques Eckel,⁴ a prominent architect of the period who worked in St. Joseph in partnerships with many other architects from 1869 until his death in 1934.

Edmond Jacques Eckel was born in Strasbourg, the province of Alsace, France in 1845. His early schooling was at the Gymnase Protestant of Strasbourg, supplemented by architectural study under the city's architect.⁵ From 1864 to 1868 he studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris in the ateliers of Paccard and Vaudoyer.⁶ Some of his drawings survive from this period which show him to be imbued with beaux arts design principles and a fine artist, even at this early date.⁷

In 1868 Eckel came to the U.S.A. on the steamer Ville de Paris and worked for several months in New York and Cleveland.⁸ En route to Omaha in 1869, his train was delayed in St. Joseph. It is reported that he liked the town so much that he decided to stay.⁹ He first worked as an architect for P.F. Meagher and later joined the firm of Stigers and Boettner.¹⁰ In 1872 he became a partner of the firm and, with the retirement of Mr. Stigers, the firm became known as Boettner and Eckel.¹¹ From 1880 to 1893 Eckel worked in association with George Mann, an architect from Indiana who had studied at M.I.T. and had previously practiced in Minneapolis, Detroit and Washington, D.C. as a draftsman.¹² From 1893 to 1903 Eckel practiced alone. In 1908 he joined into partnership with Walter Boschen and in 1910 with William Aldrich. Still later, he joined with Otto Brunner. This firm exists today as Brunner and Brunner, with William, the son of Otto, as senior architect.¹³ Eckel, who has been described as "the oldest and most successful architect and respected practitioner of architecture in the central western United States",¹⁴ was a member of the Western Association of Architects from 1885 to 1889 when that organization merged with the American Institute of Architects. At that time Eckel was made a fellow of the A.I.A.¹⁵

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Up to the year 1889 the architectural firms with which Eckel was associated worked almost exclusively in the Beaux Arts style with occasional dabblings in Italian Villa¹⁶, Chateausque, Mannerist Revival and other styles popular in the nineteenth century. Beginning in 1888-1889 with the design for the German-American Bank Building, a series of designs originated in Eckel's office in the Richardsonian Romanesque style.¹⁷ At this time it is reported that Harvey Ellis, a draftsman who had worked previously in Minneapolis, Albany and Rochester, New York, was employed by Eckel and Mann in St. Joseph.

Ellis is a shadowy figure in the world of art history. He was born in 1852 in either Rochester or Albany,¹⁸ and his life, as far as is known, can be characterized as one of fierce independence, frenzied work and chosen obscurity with a final retreat into alcoholism and disease. It is known that Ellis practiced architecture in Rochester with his brother (1875) and that he served as a draftsman in the office of H.H. Richardson in Albany (1887-1878).¹⁹ During this time, he may have gone to Europe to escape a love affair, though the evidence is scanty.²⁰ Ellis is well known as a draftsman of genius.²¹ His best work in the 1880's was for Leroy S. Buffington, an architect with a dishonest stripe who tried not only to claim some of Ellis' best designs as his own, but also to patent the technique of metal skeleton construction several years after William Jenny had come up with the design for the Home Insurance Building in Chicago (1883), the first building to utilize such construction.²² Ellis seemed unperturbed at this plagiarism and never disputed any claims by this architect or others to his designs, even after Buffington confessed his crime.²³ In fact, during the most restless period of his career, when Ellis worked all over the midwest and southwest in the 1880's and 1890's, he seemed to prefer obscurity. He did not settle down, often submitted drawings by mail, and worked under at least one pseudonym Albert Levering.²⁴ Consequently, his career and actual works are hard to pinpoint. In the late 1890's, and possibly earlier,²⁵ Ellis turned to painting and to furniture and interior design in a style strongly influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites, Mission Style, Symbolism, Japanese art and the Glasgow School of art nouveau. In 1903 and 1904 he wrote many articles for the Craftsman Magazine which are illustrated with his designs. He died of nephritis in 1904.

Several arguments can be made supporting each side in the Ellis-Eckel dispute which surrounds the German-American Bank Building. In the pro-Ellis camp, the arguments rest primarily on the Richardsonian Romanesque style of the bank which was an Ellis trademark in the late 1880's. There are no documented examples of an Eckel-designed building prior to 1889 in this style. Moreover, when Eckel was working alone (1893-1903), he preferred the Beaux Arts and Neo-Classical or Federal styles and never, so far as is known, designed anything in the Richardsonian style.²⁶ In other studies of structural designs attributed to Ellis, certain characteristics of his style have been

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noted. These include the use of both smooth and rock-faced surfaces to achieve a decorative effect, and carvings of grotesque animal forms, delicate floral motives and shields which are sometimes emblazoned with the date of construction but often merely decorative in nature.²⁷ All of these features are found in the system of decoration of the German-American Bank Building.

In addition to these arguments, it might be suggested that, since it is highly likely that other members of the firm provided much input for design at least from 1910 on, Eckel allowed or even encouraged independent designs from his associates in his earlier years. After Eckel joined William Aldrich in 1910, the firm designed the City Hall in St. Joseph (1927), a building which echoes the design of the Boston Public Library (1898), built by the firm of McKim, Mead and White. Aldrich had worked for this firm before coming to St. Joseph (1903-1910),²⁸ and it is likely that he was influenced by their design. In addition, the lobby foyer of the City Hall is a near duplication of the foyer of the American Academy in Rome, Italy (1913), another building by McKim, Mead and White with which Aldrich had been intimately associated.²⁹ With these facts in mind, it is highly likely that Aldrich and not Eckel provided the design theory behind the City Hall, though the firm is given the credit. That this sort of independent design occurred in the case of Ellis is not out of the question. In fact, in a letter of 1952, George Eckel, Edmond's son, admitted as much when he wrote, "Ellis paid no attention whatever to construction when designing."³⁰

In the search for evidence to support Ellis as the designer of the German-American Bank Building, another avenue of inquiry has come to light which has been little explored. As stated above, there is a possibility that Ellis traveled in north Italy prior to 1880. Consequently, it is intriguing to speculate upon the significance of the fact that the distinctive, decorative detailing on the German-American Bank Building is largely derivative of the art of pre-Lombardic and Lombardic northern Italy with some relation to the Romanesque art of southern France. The column capitals of the sixth floor colonnade bear a strong resemblance to those found in the church of San Vitali in Ravenna (526-547), though here they are adorned with Solomon's seals, signifying perhaps a relation to Freemasonry.³¹ Each column capital at the fifth floor level bears an abacus composed of a series of indented moldings, similar to the abaci from the Cathedral of Autun in southeastern Burgundy (late eleventh century).³² The entrelacs on the same capitals owe their tripartite nature and their tight, knotted twists to pre-Lombardic prototypes common to north Italy.³³ The egg and dart molding which runs above the second floor level of the bank is a hybrid due to its added spirals which surround each egg. Yet, a molding strikingly similar to this is found on the ciborium archivolt of Santa Maria Antica in Rome (705-707).³⁴ Rinceaux peuplés are common in Lombardic art and are used to adorn engaged pilasters on the Duomo in Verona

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(early twelfth century) in a manner similar to that used on the north facade of the bank building.³⁵ In addition, the St. Joseph rinceaux have a tripartite division which make them strikingly similar to the pre-Lombardic entrelacs mentioned above. The capitals of the jamb shafts at the eastern portal of the building are remarkably similar to those found in the cloister at Moissac in Languedoc (early twelfth century), while the stylophorus grotesques have many prototypes in Romanesque art of north Italy and southern France,³⁷ but are not found elsewhere in Europe in this period.

Supporting E.J. Eckel as the designer of the German-American Bank Building there is primarily negative evidence. Since there has never been an in-depth study of Eckel and his career, very little is actually known about him. He studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts during the same period as H.H. Richardson,³⁸ and they may have met there and exchanged ideas. He may have traveled in Italy, too, though there is no record of such a trip. In addition, the records of his work in the nineteenth century were destroyed in a fire in the early part of this century,³⁹ so very little evidence exists even for his undisputed works.

The use of masquerons, gargoyles and fantastic grotesques is usually considered to be an Ellisian characteristic, yet Eckel was using some of these motives as early as 1886 in his design for the Ogden House in St. Joseph. In fact, the entire design idea behind the Richardsonian Romanesque was current in architectural practice by 1889 and could have been adopted and adapted by any architect who wished to use it. Moreover, The German-American Bank Building has certain beaux arts decorative features such as the laurel wreaths and swags at the cornice level which are never found in the works of Ellis or those attributed to him.⁴⁰ That they should occur in a design by Eckel would not be surprising, since he was originally trained in that tradition. Lastly, it can be argued that, since the bank building was built in 1888-1889, the same time that Ellis appears to have arrived in St. Joseph, Ellis could not have had anything to do with its design.⁴¹ Indeed, Ellis is not listed in the City Directory until 1890, and by 1892 he has presumably left town.⁴²

In the light of the present evidence, no positive conclusion can be drawn concerning the designer of the German-American Bank Building. It is this fact, in addition to the striking appearance and the historic style of the structure, which make it significant as a living laboratory for research concerning the lives of two of America's most famous midwestern architects, Harvey Ellis and Edmond Jacques Eckel.

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

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FOOTNOTES

1. Because of the rampant growth of the city of St. Joseph and the influx of German speaking citizens in the 1880's, a group of businessmen in St. Joseph decided to incorporate a new bank in the spring of 1887. Bank incorporators included: Ten Eyck Beekman, Henry Krug, Jr., J.G. Schneider, John Donovan, George E. Blank, James Craig, Jr., Ulrich Schneider, H.J. Buckingham, W.L. Beuchle and C.J. Siemens. The bank opened on June 6, 1887 at 118 North Fifth Street, and two years later it was moved to the building at the corner of Seventh and Felix. The bank was nationalized in 1908, and in 1918 the name was changed to the American National Bank. Data excerpted from the National Register Inventory-Nomination Form for the German-American Bank Building, prepared by Nancy Sandehn of St. Joseph, Mo., July 26, 1976.
2. Due to Ellis' habit of submitting drawings to one architect while in the employ of another, these dates can only be considered as approximate. See Roger Kennedy, "Long, Dark Corridors: Harvey Ellis," Prairie School Review, V (First-Second Quarter 1968), 13. Ellis is not listed in the City Directory until 1890. See Hoyes City Directory (St. Joseph: Hoyes City Directory Co., 1890), 173.
3. Three examples are Roger Kennedy, "Long, Dark Corridors: Harvey Ellis," and Bill Scott, "First Federal Plans Extensive Remodeling of Old Bank Building," St. Joseph [Missouri] News-Press, August 1, 1974, p. 1A and Eileen Manning, "The Architectural Designs of Harvey Ellis" (unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Minnesota, 1953).
4. Prominent among these is Mrs. George Eckel, the daughter-in-law of E.J. Eckel and the wife of one of the partners of the firm in its later years. Statement by Mrs. George Eckel, personal interview, January 3, 1978.
5. Men Who Make St. Joseph "The City Worthwhile" (St. Joseph: W.P. Tracy, 1920), n.p.
6. Ulrich Thieme and Felix Becker, Allgemeines Lexicon der bildenden Künstler, Vol. X (Leipzig: Verlag von A.E. Seemann, 1914), 318. Alexis Paccard was named Architect of Fontainebleau in 1845 and he created there the galerie des cerfs. See Ulrich Thieme and Felix Becker, Allgemeines Lexicon der bildenden Künstler, Vol. XXVI, 113. Laurent Vaudoyer was the architect of the French Institute and the Sorbonne. He restored the pillars and the dome of the Pantheon in Paris in 1798 and received the grand prix d'architecture from the Royal Academy in 1811. See Ulrich Thieme and Felix Becker, Allgemeines Lexicon der bildenden Künstler, Vol. XXXIV, 137-138.

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7. "Contemporary Architects and Their Works: E.J. Eckel," Western Architect, XVII, No. 9 (September, 1911), 80.
8. John Albury Bryan, (ed.), Missouri's Contribution to American Architecture (St. Louis: St. Louis Architectural Club, 1928), p. 50.
9. Nellie Utz, History of the Growth and Development of St. Joseph (St. Joseph: no publisher, 1935), p. 76.
10. John Albury Bryan, (ed.), Missouri's Contribution to American Architecture, p. 50.
11. Data excerpted from the National Register Inventory-Nomination Form for the German-American Bank Building, prepared by Nancy Sandehn of St. Joseph, Missouri, July 26, 1976.
12. History of Buchanan County, Missouri (St. Joseph: St. Joseph Steam Printing Co., 1881 [reprinted by Seward W. Lilly, Lithographic Printers and Bindery, Cassville, Missouri, 1973]), p. 826.
13. Data excerpted from the National Register Inventory-Nomination Form for the German-American Bank Building, prepared by Nancy Sandehn of St. Joseph, Missouri, July 26, 1976.
14. Men Who Make St. Joseph "The City Worthwhile", n.p.
15. Data excerpted from the National Register Inventory-Nomination Form for the German-American Bank Building, prepared by Nancy Sandehn of St. Joseph, Missouri, July 26, 1976.
16. Some examples of these in St. Joseph are the Italianate Adam Schuster Home (1881), the Chateausque Ogden House (1886), the Beaux Arts Commercial Bank (1887), and the Mannerist Revival City Auditorium (date unknown).
17. These include, in addition to the German-American Bank Building, the Josiah Beattie Moss Home (1890-1892), the Irish-American Building (date unknown; now demolished), the Joshua Motter Home (1890), the J.W. McAlister Home (1890-1891), the John J. Tootle Home (1890-1892) and the C.D. Smith Drug Co. (date unknown). Many of these examples and those from the previous note can be seen in Albrecht Art Museum, The Architecture of St. Joseph - The Golden Age, the photographs of James Enyeart (St. Joseph: Albrecht Art Museum, 1974). The dates given are from this publication.

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18. Blake McKelvey, "Harvey Ellis: A Biographical Sketch," A Rediscovery - Harvey Ellis: Artist, Architect (Rochester: Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester, 1972), p. 44.
19. Roger Kennedy, "Long, Dark Corridors: Harvey Ellis," p. 8.
20. Blake McKelvey, "Harvey Ellis: A Biographical Sketch," p. 45.
21. This opinion is expressed in Eileen Michels, "Late 19th Century Published American Perspective Drawing," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, XXXI (December, 1972), 300ff; Hugh M.G. Garden, "Harvey Ellis, Designer and Draftsman," Prairie School Review, V, (First-Second Quarter, 1968), 36-39; Roger Kennedy, "Harvey Ellis: A Tribute," A Rediscovery - Harvey Ellis: Artist, Architect, pp. 50-54; and David Gebhard, letter to the editor, Prairie School Review, IV (Third Quarter, 1967), 32-35.
22. Buffington's antics are explained in Muriel Christianson, "How Buffington Staked His Claim," Art Bulletin, XXVI (March, 1944), 13-24.
23. Roger Kennedy, "Long, Dark Corridors: Harvey Ellis," p. 17 and Jean R. France, "Harvey Ellis: Architect," A Rediscovery - Harvey Ellis: Artist, Architect, pp. 12-13.
24. Blake McKelvey, "Harvey Ellis: A Biographical Sketch," p. 48.
25. Howard S. Merritt, "Harvey Ellis: Artist," A Rediscovery - Harvey Ellis: Artist, Architect, p. 42.
26. Two examples are the Neo-Classical John J. Tootle Home (1900) and the Beaux Arts Tootle-Lemon Bank (1899). Both of these can be seen in John Albury Bryan, (ed.), Missouri's Contribution to American Architecture, p. 108.
27. Data excerpted from the National Register Inventory-Nomination Form for Compton Hill Water Tower, prepared by M. Patricia Holmes, State Historical Survey and Planning Office, June 27, 1972.
28. "Contemporary Architects and Their Works: E.J. Eckel," Western Architect, p. 82.
29. Aldrich studied at the Academy in the late 1890's when McKim was president of that institution. Life at the Academy makes for very close friendships, and so it is not surprising that the great McKim would have influenced his associates. For

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29. references to the life of William Aldrich at the Academy, see Charles Moore, The Life and Times of Charles Follen McKim (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1929) pp. 150-151, 156 and 164. The Academy building was not built until 1913, after Aldrich was established in St. Joseph. Those who are familiar with life at the Academy realize, however, that the school in Rome is a Mecca to which former students, associates and art historians make pilgrimages as often as possible. Consequently, it is almost certain that Aldrich saw the completed lobby of that building prior to the design of the interior of the City Hall in St. Joseph in 1927.
30. Eileen Michels, "Late 19th Century Published American Perspective Drawing," 305. As many architects do, Ellis kept drawings of architectural details he ran across which particularly intrigued him for use in his own designs. See Jean R. France, "Harvey Ellis: Architect," pp. 6-8.
31. The capitals from this church can be seen in G. McN. Rushforth (trans.) Lombardic Architecture, by G.T. Rivoira (London: William Heinemann, 1910), fig. 87. In addition, from the time of the opening of the building until 1897, various masonic bodies including two Blue Lodges, all of the York Rite Bodies and Moila Temple AAONMS met in the rooms on the floor of the bank building where these capitals are located. Perhaps these capitals were designed to reflect this. Data excerpted from the National Register Nomination Form for the German-American Bank Building, prepared by Nancy Sandehn of St. Joseph, Missouri, July 26, 1976.
32. Denise Jalabert, La flore sculptée des monuments du moyen age en France (Paris: Editions A. and J. Picard and Cie., 1965), Plate 32.
33. G. McN. Rushforth (trans.), Lombardic Architecture, figs. 170, 171, 199, 200.
34. Ibid., fig. 205.
35. Wart Arslan, L'architettura Romanica Veronese (Verona: La Tipografica Veronese, 1939) p. 109 and Plate LXVII.
36. Denise Jalabert, La flore sculptée des monuments du moyen age en France, Plate 22B.
37. Examples can be seen at the Abbey Church of St. Gilles and the church of St. Trophime at Arles in southern France. See Roberto Savini, Medieval Sculpture (Greenwich: New York Graphic Society, 1969), Plates 125-129.

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37. In northern Italy, examples are plentiful. A few are the portals of San Quirico d'Orcia at Siena, the ambos of San Bartolomeo in Pantano at Pistoia, and as impost supports at San Giusto at Lucca. See Mario Salmi, L'architettura Romanica in Toscana (Milano: Bestetti e Tumminelli, n.d.) Plates CXLII, CCXXVII, CCLXXXVI.
38. Richardson and Eckel overlapped one year at the Ecole. Richardson studied there from 1859 to 1864 and Eckel from 1864 to 1868. They did not however study in the same ateliers. See Richard Chafee, "Richardson's Record at the Ecole des Beaux Arts," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, XXXVI (October, 1977), pp. 175-188.
39. Statement by William Brunner, personal interview, January 3, 1978.
40. Indeed, William Purcell claimed that journeymen draftsmen such as Ellis were completely untouched by the beaux arts tradition. See Jean R. France, "Harvey Ellis: Architect", p. 11.
41. But, it should be remembered that Ellis did many designs for architectural firms in towns other than those in which he resided. With this in mind, it is intriguing to wonder if George Mann and Ellis had met while they were both working in Minneapolis and had continued to correspond and share designs. Perhaps it is even possible that Mann, influenced by Ellis, provided the design of the German-American Bank. Ellis and Mann did work together later in St. Louis where Ellis designed works such as the Entrance to Washington Terrace in 1894. See John Albury Bryan, (ed.), Missouri's Contribution to American Architecture, p. 93.
42. Hoyes City Directory (St. Joseph: Hoyes City Directory Co., 1890 and 1891), pp. 173 and 217 respectively.

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10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/4

QUADRANGLE NAME "St. Joseph North, Mo.-Kans."

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 34 1265 4403385

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

East 1/2 of Lot 5, East 1/2 of Lot 6, City Block 5, Smith's Addition

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

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

1. Noelle Soren

ORGANIZATION

Office of Historic Preservation, Dept. of Nat. Resources

DATE

February 6, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 176

TELEPHONE

314/751-4096

CITY OR TOWN

Jefferson City

STATE

Missouri

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

STATE

LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

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

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

ATTEST: KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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3. Boder, Bartlett. "Edmond Jacques Eckel," Museum Graphic, XIV (Winter, 1962), 17-18.
4. Bragdon, Claude. "Harvey Ellis: A Portrait Sketch." Prairie School Review, V (First-Second Quarter, 1968), 19-25.
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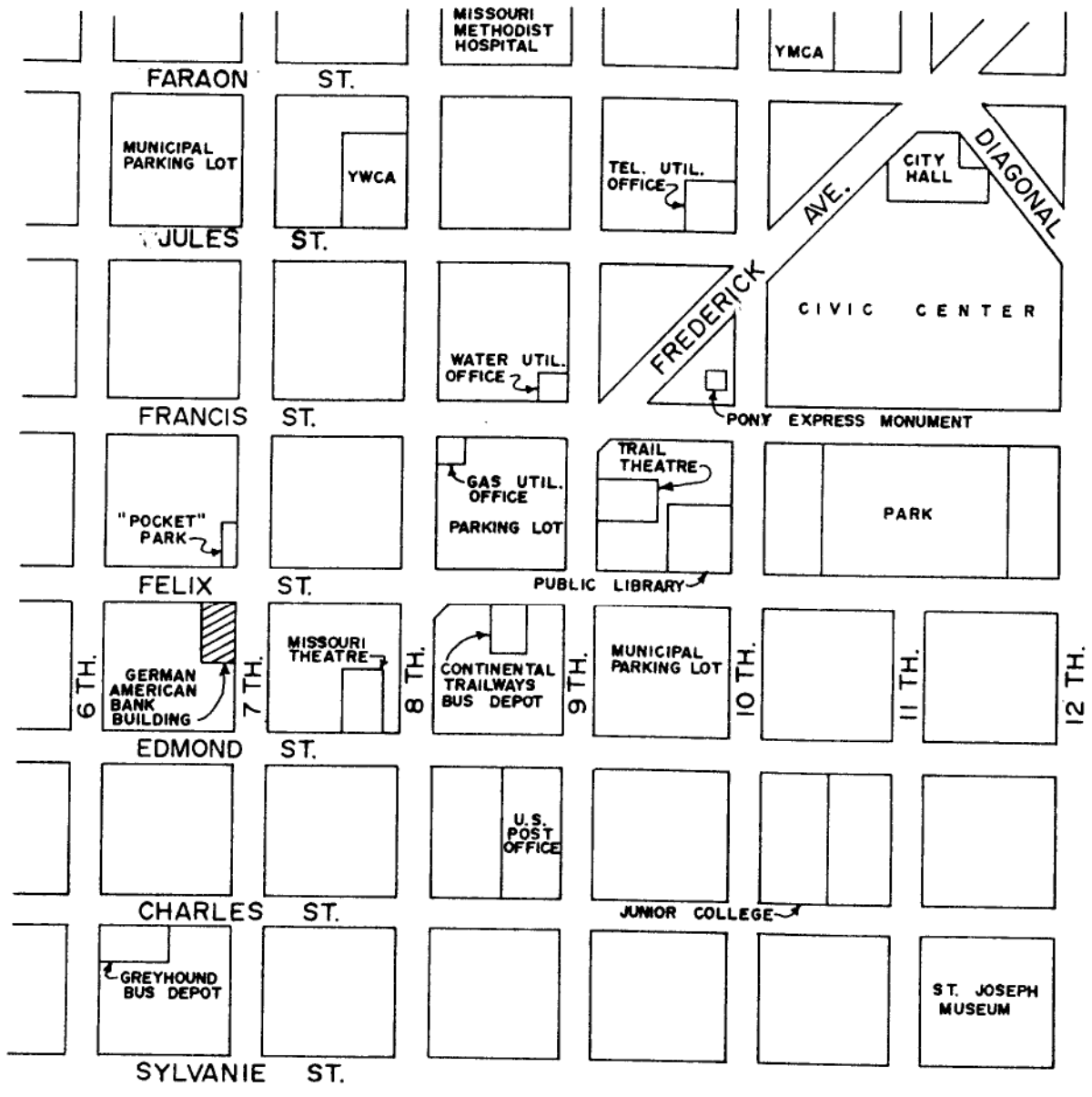
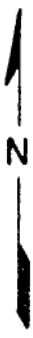
GERMAN-AMERICAN BANK BUILDING

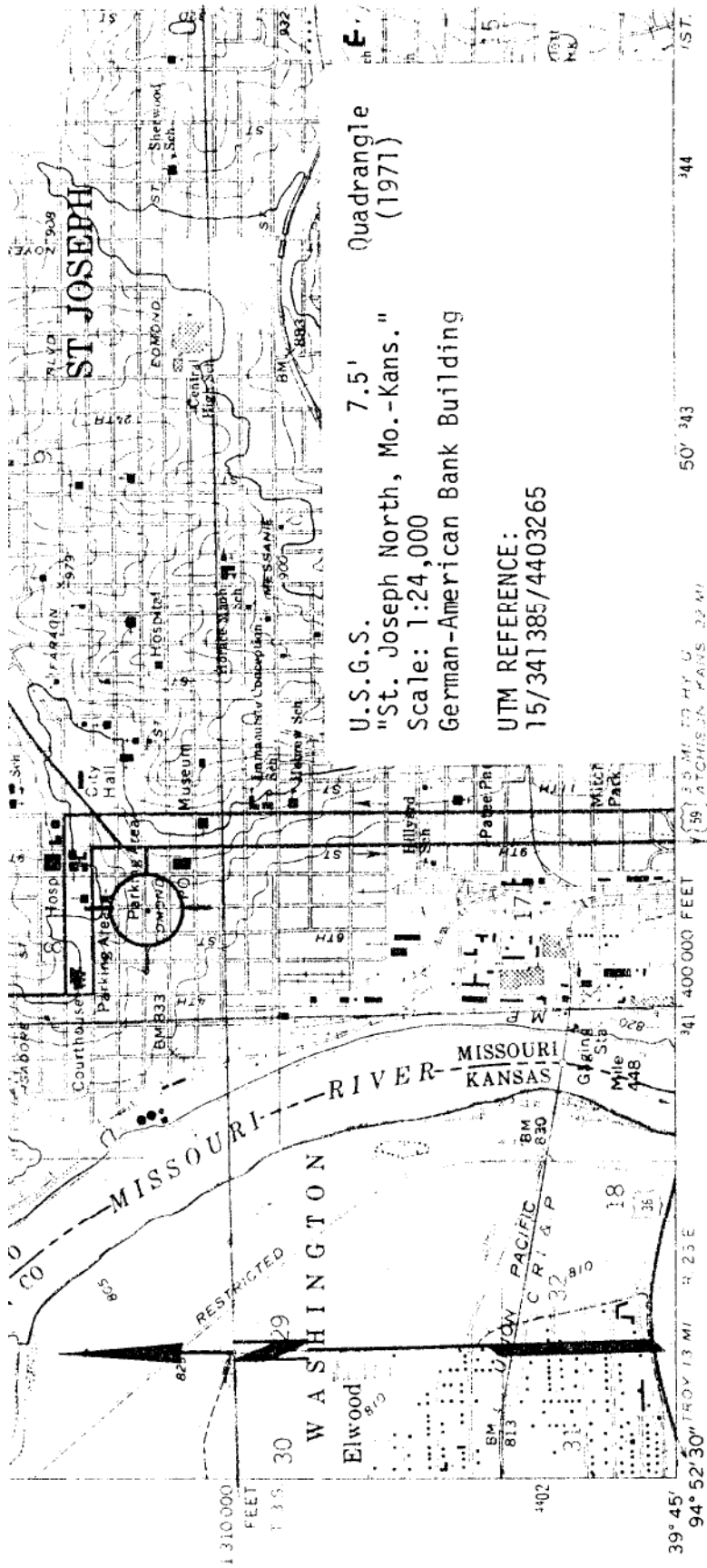
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SITE PLAN MAP
 GERMAN AMERICAN BANK BUILDING
 DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT
 ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI





U.S.G.S. 7.5' Quadrangle
 "St. Joseph North, Mo.-Kans."
 (1971)
 Scale: 1:24,000
 German-American Bank Building

UTM REFERENCE:
 15/341385/4403265

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1971

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum 10,000-foot grid based on Missouri coordinate system, west zone 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
 Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH
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 MISSOURI GEOLOGICAL
 AND STATE GEOLOGICAL
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC

UTM GRID AND 1971 MAGNETIC NORTH
 DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

Photo Log:

Name of Property: **German-American Bank Building**

City or Vicinity: **St. Joseph**

County: **Buchanan County** State: **MO**

Photographer: **Steve Jones**

Date Photographed: **Jul. 1976**

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

- 1 of 11. View from the NE looking SW.
- 2 of 11. Entrance to office building, view from E to W.
- 3 of 11. Entrance to bank floor, view from N looking S.
- 4 of 11. Lion's Head Fountain, feature of E façade, view from E looking W.
- 5 of 11. Tile shield to the left of entrance on N façade, American eagle.
- 6 of 11. Tile shield to the right of entrance on N façade, American eagle.
- 7 of 11. Balconies and spiral stair above and beside the entrance to the office building, view from the E looking W.
- 8 of 11. Window treatment, third and fourth floor levels of N portion of E façade and N façade.
- 9 of 11. Detail of capitals on sandstone columns of fifth floor balcony.
- 10 of 11. Detail of NE corner of building showing date nameplate and carved sandstone stringcourse between fourth and fifth floors.
- 11 of 11. Detail of decoration at top of the building, above fifth floor balcony.

