

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Lee, Robert E., Hotel  
other names/site number Auditorium Hotel; Evangeline Home; Railton Residence.

2. Location

street & number 205 N. 18th Street [ n/a ] not for publication  
city or town St. Louis [ n/a ] vicinity  
state Missouri code MO county St. Louis (Independent City) code 510 zip code 63103

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 19 December 2006  
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

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

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

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	0
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		building
<input type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> site		sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		objects
		1	0 total

Name of related multiple property listing.  
 N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register. 0

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Function

DOMESTIC/hotel  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
Renaissance Revival

Materials  
 foundation limestone  
 walls brick  
limestone  
 roof asphalt  
 other \_\_\_\_\_

see continuation sheet [ ].

see continuation sheet [ ].

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**  
 See continuation sheet [x]

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

Property is:

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

**B** removed from its original location.

**C** a birthplace or grave.

**D** a cemetery

**E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

**F** a commemorative property.

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

**Areas of Significance**

ARCHITECTURE  
COMMERCE  
SOCIAL HISTORY

**Periods of Significance**

1927-1935

1939-1956

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person(s)**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Gentry, Alonzo H. (arch.)

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

**Bibliography**

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

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

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

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

# \_\_\_\_\_

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

# \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other

Name of repository: Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreege of Property less than one acre

**UTM References**

A. Zone 15	Easting 743 200	Northing 4279 520	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
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 Michael Allen/Researcher

organization Landmarks Association of St. Louis date May 10, 2006

street & number 917 Locust Street, 7th floor telephone 314-421-6474

city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63101

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional Items**

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

**Property Owner**

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

name Salvation Army Midland Division

street & number 1130 Hampton Avenue Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63139

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

Lee, Robert E., Hotel  
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

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### Summary

The former Robert E. Lee Hotel at 205 N. 18<sup>th</sup> Street in downtown St. Louis occupies the southeast corner of a city block bounded by 19<sup>th</sup> Street on the west, Olive Street on the north, 18<sup>th</sup> Street on the east and Pine Street on the south. Designed in 1927 by architect Alonzo H. Gentry and built in 1927-28, the building stands 14 stories tall with basement and has a structural framework of cast concrete with walls of red machine-rolled bricks. The hotel's body is divided into the classic form of base, shaft and top. The base consists of a first floor of coursed terra cotta blocks under two stories of brick marked by false pilasters. An elaborate terra cotta cornice above the third floor, now removed, marked the start of the shaft, which terminates in a blind arcade cornice in brick featuring corbelled arches below a flat parapet bearing terra cotta medallions featuring a lion's mouth. To the west of the hotel body is a one-story section, clad in the same terra cotta as the hotel's first floor, housing a restaurant and service areas for the hotel. The hotel is notable because alterations, even to its storefront spaces, have been minimal. The interior spaces are remarkably well preserved, and the lobby and coffee shop spaces especially retain many original features. However, the building's original two-over-two wooden windows have been replaced with one-over-one wooden windows, and the original storefront window divisions have been modified. The building became a single-room occupancy residential hotel operated by the Salvation Army in 1939, but the new use retained the original floor plan.

### Site

While all of the other hotels that once lined 18<sup>th</sup> Street have been demolished, the location remains urban with moderate to high building density on most surrounding blocks. Many historic buildings remain, including nearby Union Station.

### Exterior

The Robert E. Lee Hotel has a footprint that is nearly square, with frontages of 100 feet on 18<sup>th</sup> Street and 109 feet on Olive and Pine streets. However, the main body of the building only occupies the eastern 49 feet of the footprint, and the western half is only one story tall.

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The building's symmetrical primary elevation faces 18<sup>th</sup> Street (see photograph #1). The first floor of this elevation is clad in coursed buff terra cotta blocks that imitate stone rustication; this cladding wraps along the southern elevation as well. The horizontal joints are raked and wider than the vertical joints. At the top of the first floor, a cyma reversa course serves as a base for one projecting course of the same blocks as the rest of the wall. A small top course reverts to the original plane of the wall. The first floor is divided into five storefront-sized openings. The center opening is the hotel entrance, denoted by a metal canopy hanging over the sidewalk and a flagpole above either side of the canopy. Above the recessed entrance is a flat entablature reading "ROBT. E. LEE HOTEL" (see photograph #5). The double-leaf entrance consists of a doorway and transom window flanked by sidelight windows that run from middle of the wall to the entablature. The four openings to either side of the entrance originally had cast iron dividers between the storefront windows and doors as well as original transom windows; after 1939, all first-floor windows were replaced with steel sash windows that altered the original divisions. There is no ornamentation around these openings. Above the first floor, the brick body of the hotel begins with ten window bays. The window openings originally had a two-over-two wooden, double-hung window (now replaced by one-over-one wooden windows dating to the 1980s) but retain unembellished limestone sills. The lintels are steel jack-arches not reflected in the brickwork. The second and third floors appear as a mezzanine. The wall plane recesses slightly in the middle of each window bay to create the appearance of pilasters at each corner and between each bay; these false pilasters are embellished with simple terra cotta bases and originally had decorative capitals that have been removed. Above these pilasters originally was a decorative cornice of buff, glazed terra cotta bearing a medallion motif and topped by foliage-patterned brackets. This cornice was removed in 1958. The fourth through fourteenth floors form an unornamented shaft broken only by each window.

Above the shaft is a blind arcade that wraps along all four sides of the building. This arcade is executed in the same brick as the shaft with some ornamentation in terra cotta. On the primary elevation, each end of the arcade is supported by paired, tapering brickwork brackets extending from the 14<sup>th</sup> floor window sills to the parapet. The parapet projects somewhat over the wall of the shaft and for one brick's thickness over the brackets themselves. The parapet wall stands six feet, five inches taller than the roof level. Between the brackets, the blind arcade consists of groups of three arches centered over each window bay. The outer lines of each arch group form a wide, tapered bracket

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between each bay; the inner lines form two narrow brackets with decorative buff terra cotta bases. Centered above each arch group on the parapet is a simple terra cotta medallion featuring a projecting lion's mouth.

The other street-facing elevation is the south elevation facing Pine Street (see photographs #2 and 3). Its first floor is divided into two sections, with one being the one-story portion to the west and the other being the portion that is the base of the hotel body. The one-story section consists of four bays, with the two western-most bays bearing storefront windows divided by false pilasters bearing ornamental capitals, and the next bay to the right framed for a doorway. The openings on this section originally were divided like those windows on the 18<sup>th</sup> street elevation with synchronized transom dividers and windows, but were altered by the Salvation Army for new windows that sit higher than the originals. Terra cotta blocks fill in the bottom areas of these openings, but the infill blocks are not greatly obvious. The eastern-most bay on this section is slightly recessed and features a single plate-glass window that begins about five feet from the sidewalk level. The right side of the first floor is divided into three window bays just like the upper floors of this elevation. The western-most bay is the secondary hotel lobby entrance, originally covered by a small metal canopy but still containing a set of double glass doors. The middle bay is a window like the eastern-most bay on the one-story side of the first floor, and the eastern-most bay on the hotel body is a storefront bay exactly like those of the 18<sup>th</sup> Street elevation. All framing, sash and trim are the original cast iron parts. The upper floors share the bay divisions of the first floor and are executed almost exactly like those on the 18th street elevation. The only difference is that the arch groups in the blind arcade are divided by tapering brackets that form an additional blind arch; these brackets start at the level of the 14th-floor windows' sills, just like the brackets at each end of the arcade.

The west elevation of the first floor was not originally exposed and consists of a blank brick wall with concrete structural elements revealed and red terra cotta coping tiles instead of the buff tiles topping the hotel's visible parapets (see photograph #3). The west elevation of the hotel body is divided into nine window bays that share basic articulation with the primary elevation but also have key differences. The fourth bay from left is blind, while the eighth bay bears stairwell windows offset from floor levels. The cornice has somewhat different articulation, too: between the paired tapering brackets on the north-most edge and the first window bay, two additional long tapering

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brackets form another blind arch like the others in the blind arcade. There are no medallions over the sixth, seventh or eighth bays from the left. A later steel exhaust stack rises on the left side of this elevation, obscuring the corner brackets. A rooftop mechanical room at the northwest corner extends the parapet height over from the corner through the first widow bay.

The first floor on the north elevation is blank on the hotel body except for one filled-in window on the left corner and a doorway toward the right, and is divided into a door opening to the left of three window openings on the one-story section. These openings bear original steel-sash windows. The elevation is divided into three bays like the south elevation, but the western-most bay is blind (see photograph #4). Between the center bay and the blind bay, are offset window openings marking an internal fire escape. The rooftop mechanical room extends from the right corner through the fire escape window openings. The entire perimeter of the parapet is coped in buff terra cotta tiles. The tiles extend through the wall of the mechanical room to maintain the visual continuity of the roofline. The mechanical room's parapets are also coped in these same tiles, although some have been replaced with cast concrete replicas.

**Interior**

The building's lobby is largely intact. The entry vestibule retains original metal grilles and terrazzo floor, although the metal-framed glass doors are not original. The lobby is a large open room that extends from the center of the building to the south wall; four decorated support columns are present in the space (see photograph #6). Original wooden wainscoting runs along all walls in the lobby; wooden door moldings and doors remain. An elaborate coffered plaster ceiling remains above a suspended ceiling of acoustical tiles. The original terrazzo floor is intact, although mostly covered with carpeting; the color of the main body is gray while the outer edges are green. Immediately to the right of the entry doors is a short hallway containing a mailbox and doors to a storefront space. Just past that hall along the north wall are the building's two elevators and another short hallway. The front desk is aligned with the main entrance on the west wall. On the south wall, a vestibule projects into the lobby from the Pine Street entrance; this entrance is below the floor grade of the lobby and there are steps leading down to the vestibule. The four columns in the lobby have plaster capitals at each corner near the level of the dropped ceiling; their bases are clad in wooden wainscoting.

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Figure 1: A photograph of the Robert E. Lee Hotel upon completion in 1928. Source: Missouri Historical Society Photographs and Prints Collection.



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Through a doorway on the west wall, one enters the old restaurant space in the one-story portion. Leading down to the floor level of this portion of the building are seven marble steps, finished with cast-iron balusters, wooden railing and brass lion heads at the end of each railing. A door on the south wall allows for access directly from the street. Most of this area is open, as it was originally, but has been substantially altered with paneling applied over the walls and a dropped ceiling of acoustic tiles installed. An area at the north end is partitioned off to create the kitchen area, which retains walls of original yellow tile with black trim.

Each of the upper floors has the same plan (see figure 2): a double-loaded corridor running laterally down the center of the building, with an elevator lobby positioned at the center of the west side of the building. Original terrazzo floors are evident underneath later tile in the corridors. The ten-foot ceilings have been largely covered under acoustical tiles hiding services added later, but original walls remain (see photograph #7). All partitions are structural clay tile covered in plaster. Many floors have a built-in ironing board behind a narrow door located in the north end of the corridor, and all retain an original hemispherical water fountain near the center of the east wall of the corridor. While doors on the corridors of the third, fourth and fifth floors were replaced in 1995, the other floors retain the original two-panel oak doors topped by transom windows (most are gone) and room numbers. Originally there were 17 rooms on each floor, but four rooms and part of the corridor at the south end of the top floor have been combined into a large apartment. The rooms are 20 feet deep by 10 feet wide, with a small bathroom and closet flanking each side of the room at the entrance. Most rooms retain original two-panel oak doors and door hardware in addition to wooden framing. Many have original white-enameled cast iron bathroom fixtures and the common white beehive floor tile (some floors with blue tiles interspersed) with a marble threshold under the bathroom door.

The building retains its original Cutler Mailing System, which features mail slots on each floor connected to a chute leading to an ornate brass mailbox in the lobby.

**Integrity**

The integrity of the hotel building is good. The Salvation Army constructed a large neon sign on the roof bearing its own name; the sign's framework is minimal. The most

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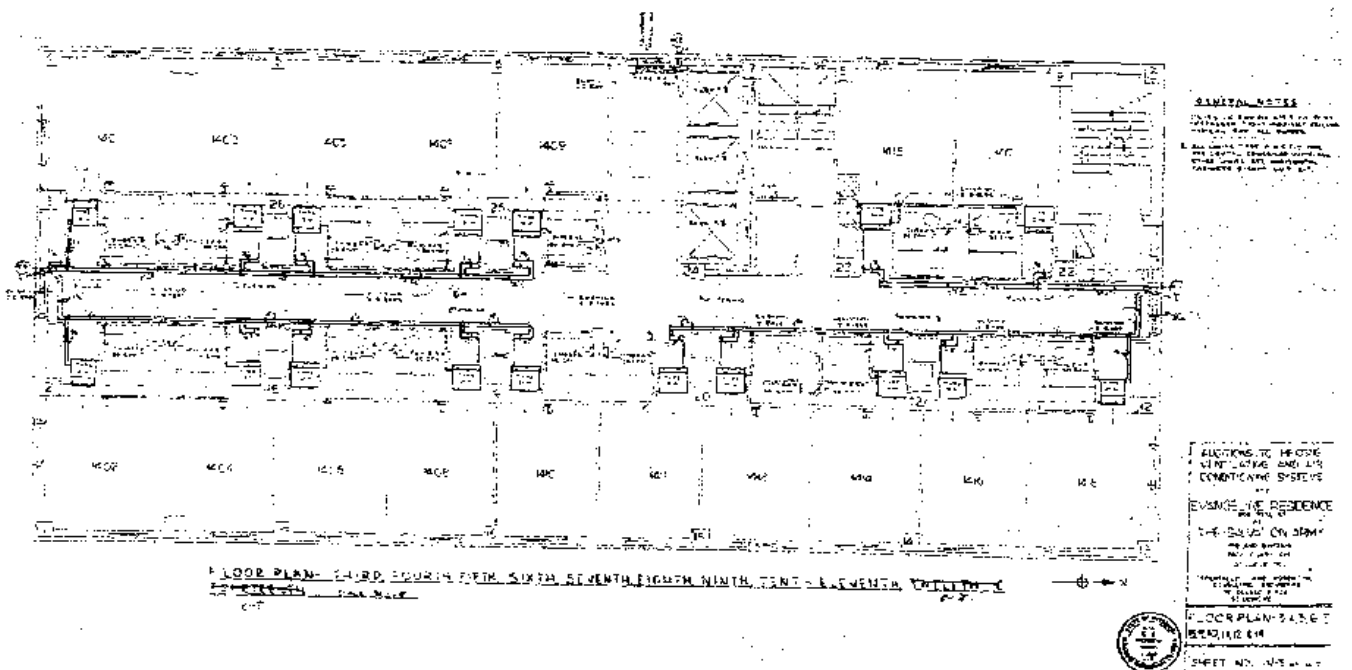
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significant alteration was the removal of the decorative cornice and false pilaster capitals at the top of the third floor. Other notable exterior alterations are the addition of a complementary entrance marquee, the construction of a steel stack on the western elevation and the replacement of the building's original two-over-two windows with one-over-one wooden windows. The new windows maintain the lines of the old windows even if the details are not exact. Largely, though, the exterior looks exactly as it was built. The interior spaces have seen some remodeling, although the lobby and corridors largely retain their historic character. Overall, the Robert E. Lee Hotel retains integrity of location, setting, materials, feeling, workmanship and association and reflects its historic appearance.

Figure 2: Plans for the first floor and a typical upper floor. Source: Salvation Army Midland Division.

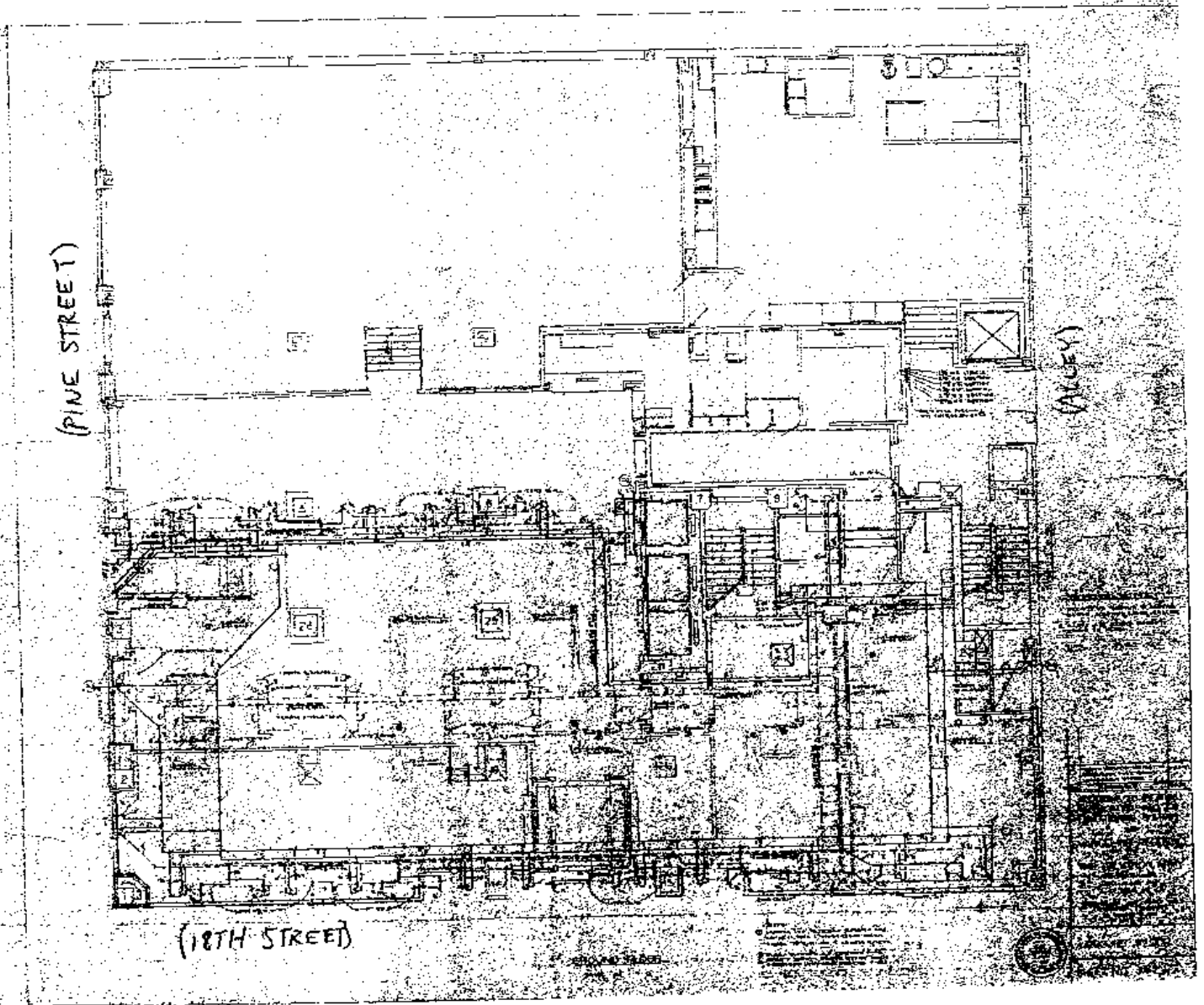


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**Summary**

The Robert E. Lee Hotel, located at 205 N. 18th Street in downtown St. Louis, is eligible for National Register listing under Criterion A for its local significance under the areas of COMMERCE and SOCIAL HISTORY and under Criterion C for its local significance in the area of ARCHITECTURE. Fourteen stories tall with a basement, the hotel is the only surviving building of a group of hotels located along 18th Street to serve passengers arriving from nearby Union Station. The Robert E. Lee is a strong local example of the Renaissance Revival style adapted to a high-rise hotel form, emphasizing verticality through a narrow body and restrained ornamentation. The hotel was one of only two major hotels built in downtown St. Louis during the 1920s, and is a local prototype of the chain economy or traveler's style of hotel that now dominates the hotel market. The hotel is also notable because it marks the only known St. Louis work by prominent Kansas City architect Alonzo H. Gentry, whose works include the 1935 Municipal Auditorium in Kansas City and several high-rise hotels and apartment buildings in other Midwestern cities. Later, the Salvation Army purchased the hotel and converted it into one of its Evangeline Residences, which were operated as single-room hotels for young professional women. The building retains a strong level of integrity despite some modifications. This integrity is rare among the hotels of downtown St. Louis, most of which saw substantial remodeling over the years to keep up with the demands of the hostelry industry. The periods of significance are 1927-1935, when it was built and operated as the Robert E. Lee Hotel, and 1939-1956 covering the year when the building opened as the Evangeline Residence to an arbitrary fifty-year cut-off.

**Background**

In 1894, the new Union Station opened at the southwest corner of 18<sup>th</sup> and Market streets in the western end of downtown St. Louis. The train station was a center of constant activity, and was instrumental in the westward expansion of the downtown business district. The area around Union Station had been filled with small tenement buildings and storefronts, but began to transform radically after the railroad station opened. Larger buildings built by companies attracted by the railroad terminal began going up, including warehouses and hotels. The hotels appeared at a particularly fast rate along Market and 18<sup>th</sup> streets. New buildings appeared alongside tenements crudely converted into small inns and hotels. The 18<sup>th</sup> street corridor seemed to attract the most hotel construction.

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The northern anchor of this hotel district was the large and stately Marquette Hotel (NR 09/26/1985, demolished 1988), built in 1906 from plans by Barnett, Haynes and Barnett and standing at the crossroads of the wholesale district of Washington Avenue and traffic to and from Union Station. Other hotels of note were the Claridge, Princess, Excelsior, Ritz and Edison. As the names indicate, hotels around the station tended to have names with widespread national recognition, often sharing a name with a more famous hotel in New York or Chicago. By 1927, the city directory listed ten hotels in operation along a six-block stretch of 18th Street between Market on the south and Washington on the north.

**Elaboration**

The Robert E. Lee Hotel chain started with the construction of two hotels in Texas. The Travis Investment Company built a hotel bearing the Robert E. Lee name in San Antonio (NR 02/16/1996) that opened on May 26, 1923. The large hotel was located downtown and was designed with traveling merchants and businessmen in mind.<sup>1</sup> Designed by Herbert S. Green, the San Antonio hotel was ten stories high and fully air-conditioned. The principals of the Travis Investment Company were Russell Hill, Harry Rogers and Wallace Rogers.<sup>2</sup> These investors created the Robert E. Lee Hotel Company to operate the hotel, with Percy Tyrell serving as president and chairman.<sup>3</sup> By the end of the year, the company completed construction of another downtown hotel bearing the Robert E. Lee name in Laredo, Texas (NR 04/14/1992). Two years later, the chain built the Robert E. Lee Hotel in Kansas City, Missouri. This hotel, which collapsed and was demolished in 1954, boasted 200 rooms and a location in the heart of downtown. This was the last hotel built by the chain.

Tyrell was a pioneer of two modern trends in hostelry and tourism: chain hotels and highways. In addition to his work with the Robert E. Lee chain, Tyrell served as secretary of the Old Spanish Trail Association. The Old Spanish Trail Association was an early organization of tourism industry leaders that advocated building the Old Spanish Trail, a paved highway system that would connect Saint Augustine, Florida with San

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<sup>1</sup> Maria Watson Pfeiffer and Richard Moore, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory Form: Robert E. Lee Hotel (San Antonio, Texas)*. Washington, D.C.: US Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 1995.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.battersbyornamental.com/robtelee.htm> Robert E. Lee Hotel (24 March 2006).

<sup>3</sup> Pfeiffer and Moore.

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Diego, California through cities like San Antonio and New Orleans.<sup>4</sup> This effort led to the completion of the Trail in 1929, a major milestone toward development of interstate tourism.

In 1927, the Robert E. Lee Hotel chain set its sights upon St. Louis. The company entered into an agreement with a real estate trust in which the trust would build the building and the chain would operate it for an annual lease fee. The site was a lot at the northwest corner of 18th and Pine streets owned by a syndicate headed by St. Louis banker John S. Lionberger. This location was in the center of the small district of hotels along 18th street that stood in close proximity to Union Station, where hundreds of passengers disembarked daily.

The lot also had a notable local history interwoven with some of St. Louis' prominent families as well as a connection to noted architects. The lot, once the site of the Mound City Livery Company, had become the property of Mary A. Shepley, mother of architect George F. Shepley of Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge, successors to H.H. Richardson's firm. Upon her passing, the land went to her estate, whose trustees included relatives in the prominent Shepley, Coolidge, Lionberger and Nagel families. One trustee was Mary Shepley's nephew John S. Lionberger (1889-1966), son of prominent St. Louis attorney and businessman Isaac H. Lionberger, who had married Mary's sister Louise. (Lionberger, brother-in law to George Shepley, built a famous home designed by Richardson's firm and approved by Richardson before his death.) John S. Lionberger founded the Security National Bank Savings and Trust Company and served as its vice president.<sup>5</sup> Lionberger spearheaded many real estate investment projects, including the 18<sup>th</sup> Street Garage located diagonally across 18<sup>th</sup> Street from the Robert E. Lee Hotel site. Completed in 1924, this was one of the first large parking garages completed in downtown St. Louis and a boon to the hotel district. This garage no doubt was an enticement to Tyrell, the avid promoter of automobile travel.

In June 1927, in anticipation of the lease with the Robert E. Lee Hotels, the estate transferred ownership of the land to the "18<sup>th</sup> and Pine Trust" with Lionberger, his brother-in-law John S. Lehmann and insurance executive Stratford Lee Morton as Trustees. On July 13, 1927, the Trust took out a building permit for a \$900,000 hotel. St.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.oldspanishtrailcentennial.com/Articles/ROADSHOW%202005.pdf> *Old Spanish Trail Roadshow 2005* by Charlotte Kahl (24 March 2006).

<sup>5</sup> "John S. Lionberger Funeral Saturday." *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, June 4, 1966.

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Louis-based Collins Construction Company would serve as general contractors for the project, but the architect would not be local. The Trust hired Alonzo H. Gentry to design the hotel, a decision that led to an impressive design from a prolific Missouri architect not based in St. Louis but in Kansas City. Most hotels being built in St. Louis at the time were designed by St. Louis architects, with some of the more lavish ones having New York or Chicago architects as lead or consulting designers. Not one of these hotels had been designed by a firm from Missouri's other major city. As it was, few buildings in St. Louis had ever been designed by Kansas City architects, since St. Louis had such a vast and nationally recognized talent pool. Also notable about the new hotel was that a hotel of such size or larger had not been built downtown since ten years earlier, and only one more would be built there before the Great Depression hit in 1929.

Alonzo Henley Gentry (1886-1967), a noted architect in the Kansas City, Missouri area, was born nearby in Independence, Missouri. Gentry's work largely encompassed hotels and special government buildings, with some residential projects. He attended the Virginia Military Institute and graduated with a degree in electrical engineering in 1908. From fall 1908 to June 1909, the young graduate served as Professor of Mathematics and Military Science at Wentworth Military Academy in Lexington, Missouri.<sup>6</sup> Gentry then studied architecture at Columbia University, earning his Bachelor of Architecture degree in 1916. At graduation, the American Institute of Architects bestowed upon Gentry a medal for maintaining "the best general standing throughout the course."<sup>7</sup> Gentry worked for the influential New York firm of George B. Post and Sons from 1916 until 1923. At first he was a staff member of the New York office, but later he became the firm's representative in Cleveland and, in 1921, Kansas City. After leaving Post and Sons, Gentry and Raymond L. Voskamp started on their own firm of Gentry and Voskamp. Gentry was a prominent and well-liked member of the Kansas City chapter of the American Institute of Architects. He retired from practice in 1961.

Gentry is probably best known for his design of the Municipal Auditorium in downtown Kansas City, built in 1935 and widely praised as one of America's finest Art Deco public buildings. *Architectural Record* named the Auditorium one of the ten best buildings in the world when it was built. Other prominent government-sponsored buildings designed by Gentry are the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Building (1926), a neo-Georgian World War I memorial now known as the Harry S Truman Memorial Building and the Harry S.

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<sup>6</sup> Gentry, Alonzo H. Files of the Kansas City Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

<sup>7</sup> "Alonzo H. Gentry, Architect, Is Dead." *Kansas City Times*, February 7, 1967. p. 20.

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Truman Library (1957), both located in his hometown of Independence and both related to the President whom Gentry counted as a friend. Among his five hotel designs are the Robert E. Lee; the Tiger Hotel, built in 1928 in Columbia, Missouri (NR 2/29/80); Hotel Sunflower in Dickinson, Kansas (NR 5/25/2001) and the Warrior Hotel, built in 1930 in Sioux City, Iowa (NR 6/27/1985). The Tiger and Sunflower hotels are designed in the Renaissance Revival style, while the Warrior Hotel is executed in an Art Deco style. Gentry's firm also designed the President Gardens Apartments in Kansas City (NR 12/10/1998), among seven other high-rise apartment buildings, and collaborated with the landscape architecture firm Hare & Hare on the 1928 design of Lake Quivira, a private residential community on the boundary between Wyandotte and Johnson counties in Kansas.<sup>8</sup> Other works include the General George C. Marshall Library at the Virginia Military Institute, the Kansas City Research Hospital and Medical Center and buildings at the Missouri State Penitentiary in Jefferson City.<sup>9</sup>

For the St. Louis hotel, Gentry came up with a design both pragmatic and impressive. The 14-story Robert E. Lee Hotel in St. Louis contained 221 air-conditioned rooms, each having its own bath. Each floor had a water fountain in the hallway that offered chilled drinking water. The hotel's first floor contained a lobby and five stores including a coffee shop.<sup>10</sup> While the hotel offered luxurious rooms, its lack of a restaurant and ballrooms indicates that its purpose was more utilitarian than other large hotels built in the city at the time. Other hotels built in the 1920s, such as the Chase or Statler hotels, contained restaurants, cafes, ballrooms and banquet spaces that catered to locals as much as to travelers. After opening in early 1928, the Robert E. Lee marketed itself specifically to traveling buyers who arrived via Union Station and had business in the downtown area. Along with its tie-in to a chain name, the hotel's nature made it a prototype for the travelers' hotels that are now standard in the United States alongside highways and near airports.

The most impressive aspect of the hotel, though, was its exterior design. The Robert E. Lee married the Renaissance Revival style popular in the 1920s to the sleek form of tall office buildings. The building's form was wide along 18<sup>th</sup> street, but narrow on its sides, a shape that emphasized its height. Through a restrained program of ornament and stark

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www3.wycokck.org/static/planning.zoning/HISTORY2004/WESTHEIGHTMANOR.pdf>  
*Westheight Manor Historic District* (22 March 2006).

<sup>9</sup> Gentry, Alonzo H

<sup>10</sup> "\$900,000 Hotel to be Erected." *Greater St. Louis*, August 1927. p. 24.

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articulation of form, Gentry underscored the hotel's economy and strong form. The plain terra cotta courses, with deep horizontal joints, of the first floor base are in stark contrast to the small red bricks of the building's body. The terra cotta course above the second floor provides a pleasant interruption to the otherwise unornamented shaft. The blind arcade and flat cornice studded with terra cotta medallions give the brick full expression within the conventions of the Renaissance Revival style.

Figure 3: Advertisement for the newly-opened hotel. Source: St. Louis Public Library Hotels File.



At the time, hotels with such stylistic refinement as the Robert E. Lee tended to be larger, while hotels of its size and smaller were typically rather plain. The Renaissance Revival style was very popular for hotel as well as apartment building design in St. Louis at the time, but few contemporary buildings in this style so powerfully express their height. The strongest precedent came from the design by Gentry's former employer, George Post & Sons, for the Statler Hotel (NR 03/19/1982), built in 1917 at the southeast corner of 9<sup>th</sup> Street and Washington Avenue in the downtown core. Given that Gentry had just started

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working at the New York office when the hotel was being designed, it is likely that he would have been aware of it even if he had no involvement in its design. It embraces the modern verticality seen in the Robert E. Lee, with similar use of restrained Renaissance Revival ornament to mitigate the tall shaft of the building as well as to provide embellishment. The Statler was much larger, at 650 rooms spread among 22 stories, but its organizational principles are similar to the Robert E. Lee. The Statler had demonstrated that there were other possibilities for the hotel form in St. Louis, and pointed the way toward designs that were architecturally stylish but also utilitarian. With the Robert E. Lee Hotel, Gentry masterfully adapted the Statler's architectural form to a more modest traveler's hotel. The hotel opened when guests were still more travelers than tourists, but its design anticipated the demands of the age of tourism that was imminent with advances in interstate roadways such as those for which Tyrell had lobbied.

Figure 4: The Robert E. Lee Hotel as the Hotel Auditorium at an unknown date. Source: St. Louis Public Library Hotels File.



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The formal principles Gentry employed in the Robert E. Lee are present in the next and last downtown hotel built in the 1920s, the Lennox Hotel (NR 09/06/1984) designed by St. Louis architect Preston Bradshaw and completed in 1929. The 22-story Lennox Hotel, located just north of the Statler on Washington Avenue, is taller and more classically ornamented than the Robert E. Lee, but its shape and distribution of ornament are strikingly similar. Although it uses a prominent setback of the central section on its lateral wall, the Lennox projects its height through a central section of unornamented brick. This is a notable design since it is the first downtown "high-rise hotel" designed by a local architect. While more elaborate than the Robert E. Lee, the Lennox definitely shows that Post and Sons' and Gentry's designs made an impact on the city. Soon after the opening of the Lennox, however, the Great Depression hit the nation. The Lennox was the last downtown hotel built until 1963.

In 1933, the Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company, which held the mortgages of the Robert E. Lee Hotel Company, foreclosed on the chain's loan on the San Antonio flagship.<sup>11</sup> Shortly after and perhaps because of this foreclosure, the St. Louis Robert E. Lee Hotel switched to new management under the new name of the Auditorium Hotel. The hotel briefly retained its stature, though, and was featured in a 1935 pictorial spread in the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* alongside well-regarded hotels including the Mayfair and Chase.<sup>12</sup> However, its life as a hotel was short-lived. On June 13, 1939, the Salvation Army Advisory Board met at the Auditorium Hotel to consider the possibility of purchasing it for conversion to an Evangeline Residence. The Evangeline Residences were single-room occupancy hotels operated by the Salvation Army to provide young business women with clean, safe and convenient housing in the downtown areas of major American cities. The residences were named for Evangeline C. Booth, the incumbent General of the Salvation Army and its first female leader. The Salvation Army decided to establish these residences because many young women left small towns to take professional work in larger cities and did not have connections or money to secure decent housing upon arrival. Up to 1939, Evangeline Residences were located in Chicago, Detroit, New York and Washington, D.C., among other places.<sup>13</sup> By August 1939, the local advisory board endorsed purchase of the Auditorium Hotel, and the sale for \$1 took place on September 22.

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<sup>11</sup> Pfeiffer and Moore.

<sup>12</sup> "Hotels." *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, September 22, 1935.

<sup>13</sup> *The Salvation Army (St. Louis, Missouri) Advisory Board Minutes, 1938-1946.*

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Figure 5: The Robert E. Lee Hotel as the Evangeline Residence, circa 1940. (Source: Landmarks Association Postcard Collection)



THE EVANGELINE RESIDENCE  
FOR YOUNG BUSINESS WOMEN  
ST. LOUIS MISSOURI

By December 1939, the home had 101 permanent guests and anticipated full occupancy by March 1940.<sup>14</sup> Later, as the United States prepared to enter World War II, the Salvation Army decided to market the residence as a temporary home for wives separated from their drafted husbands. The strategy worked, and occupancy remained high for years to come. Some improvements came in 1942, when 50 rooms were converted to double suites with more space. The Salvation Army made some alterations to the exterior of the building around this time, including altering all of the storefront openings to eliminate doorways and raise the window sills. In 1944, the landmark neon sign reading “The Salvation Amy: Serving St. Louis Since 1880” was installed on the iron framework that the

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

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Robert E. Lee Hotel had built in 1932 for its own advertisement. The period of significance ends in 1956 at an arbitrary cut-off, while the use of the building as the Evangeline Residence for women continued into the early 1970s. Responding to declining occupancy in a downtown losing business jobs, the Salvation Army renamed the residence the "Railton Residence" and removed the restriction on male occupants. Today, the Railton Residence has a high occupancy. The Salvation Army seeks to continue its stewardship of the Robert E. Lee Hotel building by undertaking a major renovation using the state historic rehabilitation tax credit.

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[HISTORY2004/WESTHEIGHTMANOR.pdf](http://www3.wycokck.org/static/planning.zoning/HISTORY2004/WESTHEIGHTMANOR.pdf) *Westheight Manor Historic District* (22  
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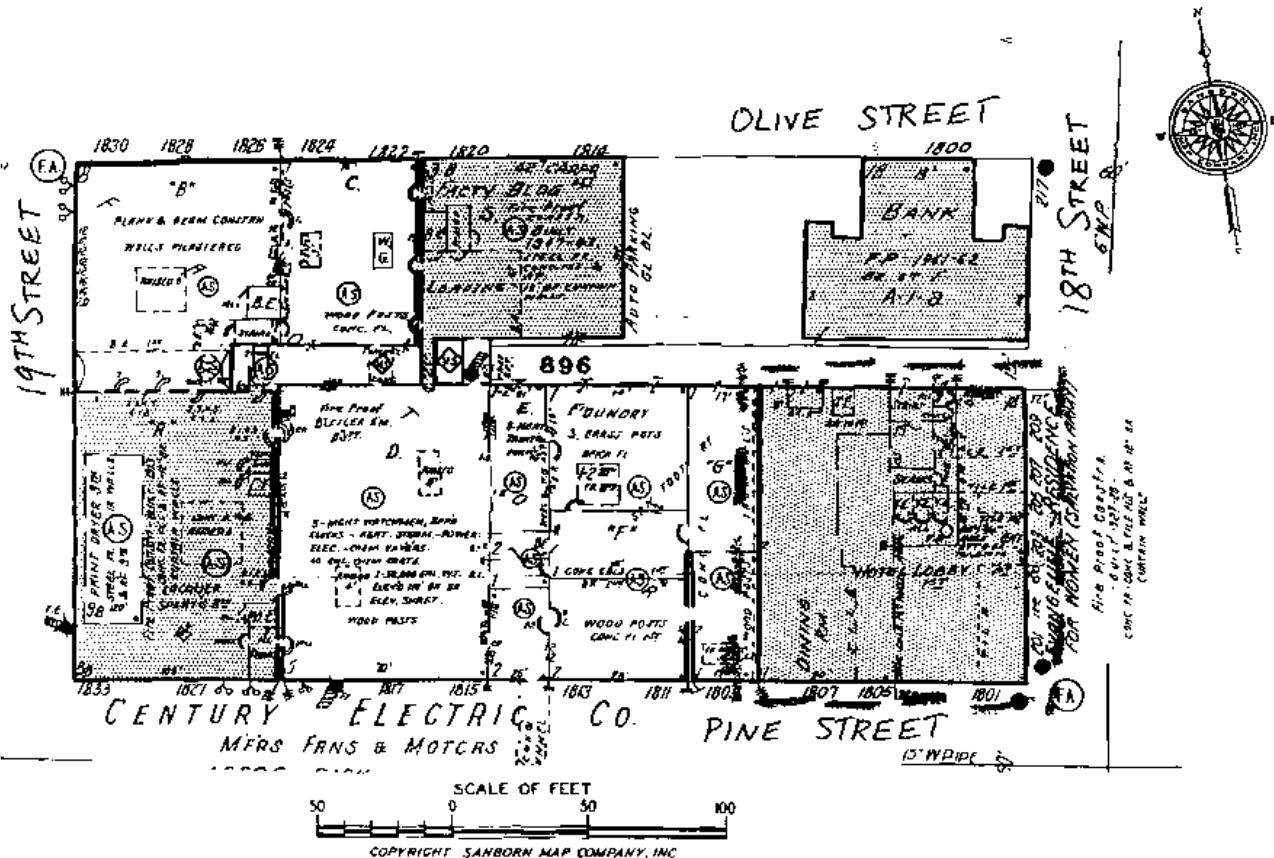
**Boundary Description**

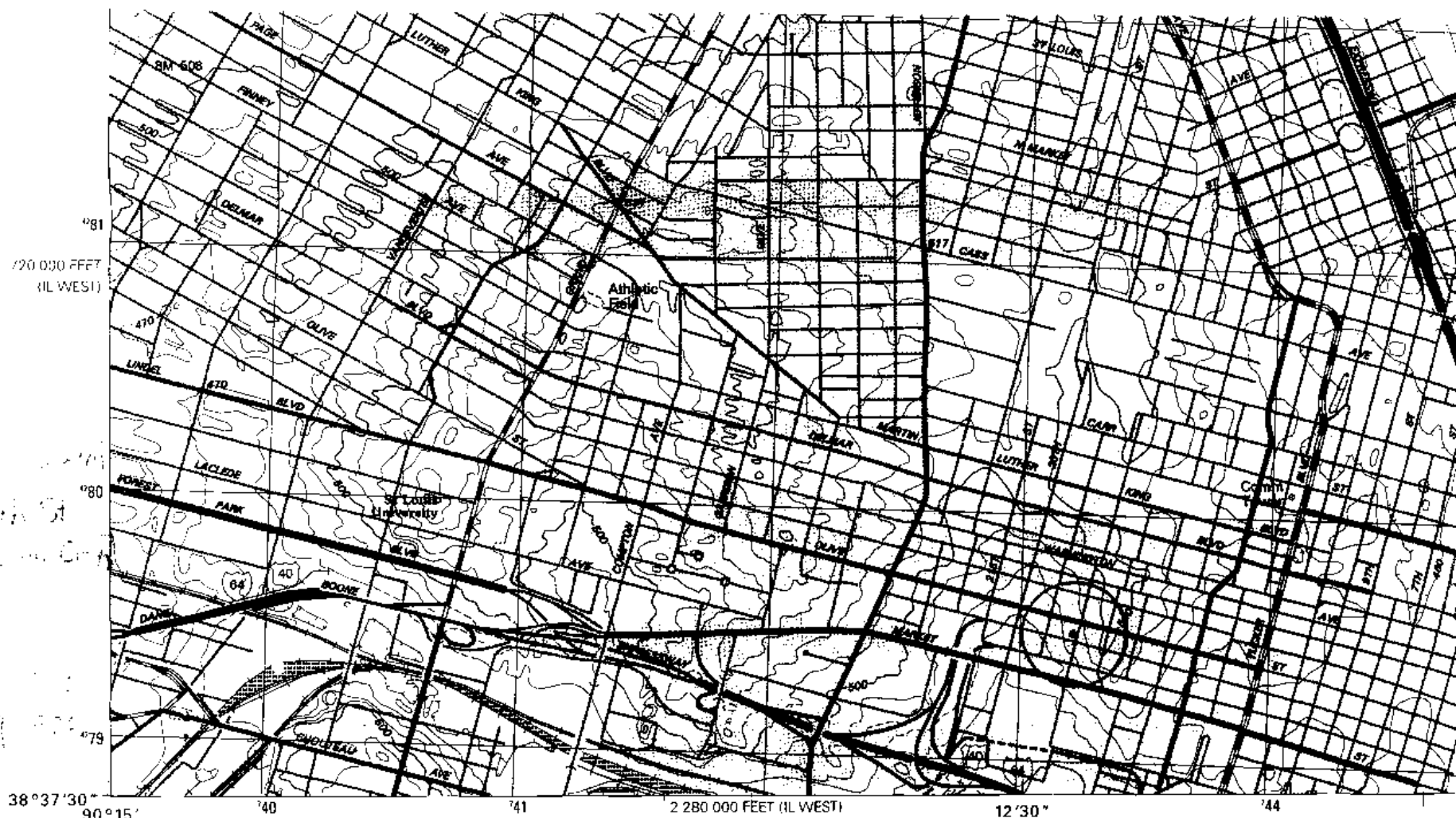
The nominated parcel is located at 205 N. 18th Street on City Block 896 in the city of St. Louis, Missouri. The site is legally known by the assessor's office as parcel number 08960000300. The property is part of the Lucas and Hunt addition to the city. The nominated property is indicated by a dashed line on the accompanying map entitled "Robert E. Lee Hotel Boundary Map."

**Boundary Justification**

The nominated parcel includes the property historically associated with the Robert E. Lee Hotel.

Robert E. Lee Hotel Boundary Map  
Source: Sanborn Map Company, v. 1W, p. 42, circa 1968.





205 N. 18th St  
 St. Louis, Mo  
 Elevation 7-3  
 N. 4279

**Produced by the United States Geological Survey**

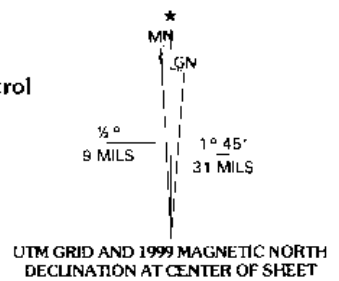
Topography compiled 1952. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1993 and other sources. Photoinspected using imagery dated 1998; no major culture or drainage changes observed. PLSS and survey control current as of 1954. Boundaries, other than corporate, verified 1999

North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). Projection and 1000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 15  
 10 000-foot ticks: Illinois (west zone) and Missouri (east zone) Coordinate Systems of 1983

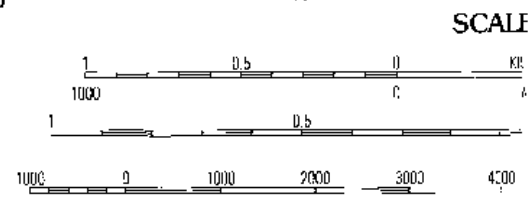
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 83 and NAD 27 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software

Contours that conflict with revised planimetry are dashed

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map



UTM GRID AND 1999 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



CONTOUR IN SUPPLEMENTARY CO NATIONAL GEODETIC TO CONVERT FROM FEET THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATI FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY AND ILLINOIS GEOLOGICAL SU AND DIVISION OF GEC MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATUR/ A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MA













ROBT. E. LEE HOTEL

RAILTON RESIDENCE

AILTON RESIDENCE



