

**PHASE 4  
ARCHITECTURAL/HISTORICAL SURVEY  
OF THE  
MIDTOWN & COMMONS NEIGHBORHOODS  
ST. CHARLES, MISSOURI**

**FINAL REPORT**

Fiscal Year 2014 Historic Preservation Fund Grant  
Project No. 29-14-121161-001

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**April 2015**

This project is partially funded by a grant from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. Grant awards do not imply an endorsement of contents by the grantor. Federal laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sex, age, handicap or ethnicity. For more information, write to the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No.
Introduction. . . . .	1
Survey Objectives. . . . .	1
Methodology. . . . .	2
Geographical Description of the Survey Area . . . . .	5
Historic Context . . . . .	9
Results. . . . .	22
Folk Houses . . . . .	22
Gable Front. . . . .	23
Gable-Front-and-Wing. . . . .	24
Centered Gable. . . . .	26
Massed-Plan, Side-Gabled . . . . .	27
Pyramidal. . . . .	27
Houses built between 1940 and 1961 . . . . .	30
Ranch. . . . .	30
Architectural Styles . . . . .	31
Federal . . . . .	31
Romantic/Picturesque. . . . .	32
Gothic Revival . . . . .	33
Italianate. . . . .	33
Victorian Houses . . . . .	34
Second Empire. . . . .	34
Queen Anne . . . . .	35
Folk Victorian. . . . .	36
Eclectic Houses . . . . .	38
Colonial Revival. . . . .	38
Craftsman. . . . .	41
Bungaloid. . . . .	42
Minimal Traditional. . . . .	43
Ancillary Buildings . . . . .	44
Commercial . . . . .	46
Recommendations . . . . .	47
Bibliography. . . . .	49

	Page No.
<b>MAPS</b>	
Map of the Survey Area . . . . .	4
Portion of 1869 Bird's Eye View of the city. . . . .	6
Portion of Brink's 1875 Illustrated Atlas Map of Saint Charles County, MO. . . . .	11
Portion of page 16 of the 1917 Sanborn Insurance Map. . . . .	13
Portion of page 2 of the 1917 Sanborn Insurance Map. . . . .	15
Portion of page 4 of the 1917 Sanborn Insurance Map. . . . .	15
Proposed Commons Neighborhood Historic District . . . . .	48
<b>CHARTS</b>	
Chart 1: Construction Dates by Decade . . . . .	7
Chart 2: Original Functions. . . . .	8
<b>PHOTOGRAPHS</b>	
546-556 Morgan Street . . . . .	5
631-705 North Benton Avenue . . . . .	5
631 North Fifth Street . . . . .	7
Alley behind 528 North Benton Avenue. . . . .	7
607-631 North Fifth Street. . . . .	9
700 block North Kingshighway. . . . .	9
706 Clark Street. . . . .	12
603 North Sixth Street. . . . .	12
700 block Decatur Street. . . . .	12
North side 700 block North Seventh Street. . . . .	12
535 North Benton Avenue. . . . .	14
612, 602 and 522 North Sixth Street. . . . .	14
1001, 1009, 1015 and 1023 North Fifth Street . . . . .	17
1101-1125 North Fifth Street . . . . .	18
1009 North Fifth Street . . . . .	23
633 Decatur Street. . . . .	23
South side 800 block Lewis Street . . . . .	24
728 North Kingshighway . . . . .	24
814 North Seventh Street . . . . .	24
806-808 Clark Street. . . . .	24
709 North Seventh Street . . . . .	25
626 Clark Street . . . . .	25
1116 North Benton Avenue. . . . .	25
1015 North Fifth Street. . . . .	26
724 Lewis Street . . . . .	26

	Page No.
553 Decatur Street . . . . .	26
712 Decatur Street . . . . .	27
819 North Fifth Street. . . . .	28
519 North Sixth Street . . . . .	28
559 Lewis Street. . . . .	28
1000 North Kingshighway. . . . .	28
823 Lewis Street. . . . .	29
720 North Kingshighway. . . . .	29
1000 North Sixth Street . . . . .	29
525 North Benton Avenue. . . . .	30
717-719 Decatur Street . . . . .	31
720 North Benton Avenue. . . . .	31
528 North Benton Avenue. . . . .	32
1013 North Benton Avenue. . . . .	32
554 Morgan Street . . . . .	32
915 North Benton Avenue. . . . .	32
Old Trinity Episcopal Church, 620 North Benton Avenue . . . . .	33
701 North Fifth Street. . . . .	33
631 North Fifth Street. . . . .	35
607 North Fifth Street. . . . .	35
539 North Fifth Street. . . . .	35
535 North Benton Avenue . . . . .	35
602 North Sixth Street . . . . .	36
564 Clark Street . . . . .	36
800 North Benton Avenue . . . . .	37
1116 North Benton Avenue . . . . .	37
811 North Fifth Street . . . . .	38
617 North Benton Avenue . . . . .	38
727 Decatur Street . . . . .	39
631 North Benton Avenue. . . . .	39
806-808 Clark Street . . . . .	40
810 Clark Street. . . . .	40
532 North Benton Avenue. . . . .	40
635 Decatur Street . . . . .	41
529 North Seventh Street . . . . .	41
1101 North Fifth Street. . . . .	42
701 Decatur Street. . . . .	42
618 Lewis Street. . . . .	43
810 North Seventh Street . . . . .	43
819 North Benton Avenue . . . . .	43

	Page No.
805 North Fifth Street. . . . .	43
919 North Sixth Street . . . . .	44
621 North Fifth Street. . . . .	44
Outbuilding, 535 North Benton Avenue. . . . .	44
Outbuilding, 720 North Benton Avenue. . . . .	44
Garage, 1013 North Benton Avenue. . . . .	45
Garage, 539 North Fifth Street . . . . .	45
Outbuilding, 1022 North Benton Avenue . . . . .	45
Outbuildings, 921 North Benton Avenue. . . . .	45
House and Garage, 612 North Sixth Street . . . . .	46
House and Garage, 805 North Fifth Street. . . . .	46
816 North Kingshighway. . . . .	47
980 North Kingshighway. . . . .	47

## **Introduction**

The survey of the St. Charles Midtown and Commons Neighborhoods is a four-phased project, as shown on the map on page iv. Utilizing a FFY 2010 Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) Grant, Phase 1 of the survey was completed in August 2011 by preservation specialist Karen Bode Baxter in partnership with staff of the City of St. Charles. Subsequently, the City was awarded HPF Grants in FFY 2011, 2012 and 2014 to conduct Phases 2-4 of the survey, all of which were completed entirely by city staff.

The multi-phased survey includes two of five districts that were identified as potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places by reconnaissance-level surveys in the late 1980s but for which nominations were never prepared. (The surveys were jointly funded by the State Historic Preservation Office and the City of St. Charles.) The first district was identified in 1987-1988 by Mary Stiritz and Deborah Wafer and includes the St. Charles County Courthouse and the residential blocks to the west (bounded by Fifth Street on the west, Clark Street on the north, Second and Third Streets on the east, and Jefferson Street on the south). This area is included as part of Phase 1. The second district was identified in 1989 by Maureen Jones and is composed of both the Midtown and Commons neighborhoods. This potential district is roughly bounded by Fifth Street on the east, First Capitol Drive on the south, Kingshighway on the west, and Randolph Street on the north and this is generally the area covered in Phases 2 through 4.

## **Survey Objectives**

The Phase 4 reconnaissance-level survey encompassed archival research, field survey, architectural evaluation and photography (archival quality black-and-white photographs) of each resource to determine the potential of the area for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district and to identify properties that may be individually eligible for listing. The objectives of the survey were to:

- record each property on a Missouri Historic Inventory Form;
- determine the approximate date of construction of each building;
- note physical characteristics of each property;
- assess each resource's potential for individual eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places; and
- determine each resource's contribution to a proposed historic district.

The goal of the four-phased survey is the preparation of National Register nominations of potential historic districts (one for Midtown and one for the Commons neighborhoods). Phases 1-3 was a survey of Midtown, which was nominated to the National Register using a FFY 2013 HPF grant. The Midtown Neighborhood Historic District was listed on October 29, 2014. The survey can also serve as the basis for the preparation of a Multiple Property Submission cover document that would establish the registration requirements for properties that may be surveyed and nominated in the future. (In addition to the present four-phased survey, several large areas in the city should be surveyed and eligible districts nominated.

Some of these areas, including the Lindenwood and Southside districts, were identified as potentially eligible by Maureen Jones in 1989.)

The Phase 4 survey area is the locally-designated Commons Preservation District, but no properties have been listed on the National Register. Only 25 inventory forms were prepared during previous reconnaissance-level surveys, but these inventory forms contained minimal information. This survey will provide an important addition to the Missouri Cultural Resources Inventory at the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), help city planning efforts and should have a positive impact on local historic preservation efforts. In addition, this is an excellent opportunity to educate the public and locally-elected officials and increase their appreciation of the City's history and historic resources. Although it is a long-term goal, the survey and National Register listing can be used to develop walking/driving tours and travel itineraries to promote heritage tourism in the city.

## Methodology

Brenda Rubach, Preservation Planner for the City of St. Charles, conducted the phase 4 reconnaissance-level survey, which encompassed both archival research and field survey. Ms. Rubach meets the "Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards" as an architectural historian. She holds a Master of Science degree in Historic Preservation from Ball State University and worked in the Mississippi State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) as the National Register Coordinator for nine years and the Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Coordinator (federal and state) for twelve years. While at the Mississippi SHPO she prepared numerous National Register nominations for individual buildings and historic districts, conducted architectural surveys, and prepared a Multiple Property Documentation Form for the Historic and Architectural Resources of Copiah County, Mississippi. She assisted preservation specialist Karen Bode Baxter with phase 1 of this survey and completed phases 2-4 herself. She also prepared the National Register nomination for the Midtown Neighborhood Historic District, which was listed on October 29, 2014, based on phases 1-3.

The reconnaissance-level survey of the Commons Neighborhood (phase 4) was completed in conformance with the procedures outlined in *National Register Bulletin 24: Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning*. Upon receiving notification of the grant award from the Missouri SHPO, photographs of many of the properties were taken so as to get the best views possible while foliage was off of the trees. On June 16, 2014, a public information meeting was held after the regular monthly meeting of the Landmarks Board to inform property owners and the interested public about the goals and scope of the project. Property owners were sent letters and the meeting was publicized on the City's web site. Ms. Rubach also filmed a YouTube segment announcing the meeting, and the segment could be accessed from the City's web site. Anne Freand, AICP, City Planner, assisted with the preparation of the meeting notifications and Chuck Lovelace, GISP, GIS Coordinator, prepared maps for inclusion with the notifications. In addition to six Landmarks Board members, two City Council members, and three staff members, about 25 people attended the meeting.

Field work consisted of an inspection of every building on each property in the survey area to determine building materials, features and form, and details about the setting of each property were also noted. Field work was done from the public right-of-way. Multiple photographs of each building and the streetscape were taken and were used, along with the field notes, to write the descriptions of each building and its setting. Handouts explaining the project were available during the field work to distribute to property owners and/or residents inquiring about the survey. The streets that run north/south were surveyed first, beginning with Fifth Street and progressing westward to Kingshighway (which runs northeast/southwest), after which the east/west streets were surveyed, beginning with Clark Street and moving north.

For each property, except for vacant lots, at least one 5"x7" black and white photograph was printed. Additional photographs were printed for properties having more than one building unless the secondary structure was visible in the photograph of the primary resource. Photographs were printed using an Epson Stylus Photo R2880 printer, ink cartridges and photographic paper that meet the National Register Photography Guidelines. (One set of photographs was printed for the SHPO and a second for the City.) Each photograph was labeled in pencil with the survey name and number, property name and address, and the date the photograph was taken.

Missouri Architectural/Historic Inventory Forms were completed for 270 properties. Those properties that were built after 1965 (11 properties) were minimally recorded with an architectural description, construction date, and photograph. Inventory forms were also completed for the four (4) vacant lots in the survey area since they will have to be included when a National Register nomination for a historic district is prepared.

Archival research concentrated on collecting pertinent information about the development of the neighborhood, as well as the history of individual properties. The history of the development of St. Charles as a whole is detailed in the final survey report for Phase 1, so this report focuses primarily on the development of the Phase 4 survey area. Primary resources referenced include city directories, Sanborn Insurance Maps, photograph collections, and other archival materials that were available at the St. Charles County Historical Society in St. Charles. The 1869 Bird's Eye View of the City of Saint Charles, historic maps, and plat books at the County Courthouse, Historical Society, and the St. Charles Department of Community Development were consulted. The City's Address Files in the Department of Community Development were referenced to determine dates of construction and alterations, but these records only provided information on more recent projects, such as alterations and additions to buildings and construction of garages.

Secondary resources referenced include the County Tax Parcels Database, written histories, such as Steve Ehlmann's *Crossroads: A History of St. Charles County, Missouri* and *A History of St. Charles County, Missouri (1765-1885)*, plaques in yards, and survey reports for reconnaissance-level surveys prepared by Mary Stiritz and Deborah Wafer in 1987-1988 and Maureen Jones in 1989. Evaluation of the resources for significance was in accordance with *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. The location of each property inventoried was indicated on a large scale map (1"=200') prepared by Chuck Lovelace. Property addresses and notation as to whether each property would be contributing or noncontributing to a historic district were provided on a map



## Geographical Description of the Survey Area

Phase 4 of the survey of the Midtown and Commons Neighborhoods is a 60.3-acre area that is nearly triangular in shape and contains the residential neighborhood known locally as the Commons. It is bounded by Fifth Street on the east, Clark Street on the south, Kingshighway on the west, and Randolph Street on the north. The numbered streets and Benton Avenue (originally named 5½ Street) run north/south, while the other named streets run east/west, except for Kingshighway, which runs diagonally northeast/southwest. All of the streets are fairly quiet residential streets except Kingshighway, which is a busy four-lane thoroughfare that has suffered from developmental pressures.

Most of the streets in the survey area had been constructed by the time the 1869 Bird's Eye View was drawn, but North Benton Avenue had not been built north of Lawrence Street and Seventh and Eighth Streets had not been constructed north of Lewis Street. By the time the 1875 atlas map was published, Seventh and Eighth Streets had been extended northward from Lewis Street to Kingshighway, but North Benton Avenue still had not been built north of Lawrence Street. The Sanborn Insurance maps indicate that construction of North Benton Avenue was completed between 1886 and 1893, and in 1929 Franklin and North Seventh Streets were still unpaved.

There are 270 properties within the survey area and the lot sizes are not uniform. A few are relatively large, such as 923 and 1022 North Benton Avenue, but most are small. Many of the lots along Kingshighway are irregularly shaped and some are triangular due to the northeast/southwest orientation of that street. Public sidewalks of both concrete and brick span the front boundary of most, but not all, of the properties. For example, Benton Avenue north of Morgan Street is narrow and does not have public sidewalks and in some instances there are no curbs. Setbacks are not uniform and range from shallow to deep, but most of the houses have only moderately sized front yards and are built close together with small side yards. Some of the houses, such as those on the north side of the 500 block of Morgan Street (below left), are built close to the street, while just a few have deep front yards, such as 1012 North Sixth and 524 North Eighth Streets.



546-556 Morgan Street. The houses on this block have very small front and side yard setbacks.



631-705 North Benton Avenue. Many lots are elevated above the street and have retaining walls.

Lots range from flat to significantly elevated, such as those on the west side of the 700 block of North Benton Avenue (above right), and some have masonry or wooden retaining walls

along the front property line. Mature trees and plantings are found throughout the neighborhood. There are only four vacant lots—one on Fifth Street and three on Clark Street—and all are noncontributing because they historically held buildings. The one at 826 Clark Street is partially paved for parking. Outbuildings such as garages are located near the rear lot line of slightly more than half of the properties, and alleys extend along the rear of most of the lots.

The survey area developed over a long period of time, with the existing 266 primary buildings dating from circa 1850 to 2011. Of the 266 primary buildings in the phase 4 area, 255 are 50 years old or older. The 1869 Bird's Eye View of Saint Charles shows that the survey area was sparsely settled at that time. There were a few houses along Fifth, Sixth and Clark Streets, but most were situated along the north side of Morgan Street and on North Benton Avenue north of Morgan. It appears that only 11 of the houses shown on the map are extant, including the side-gabled, brick Federal style houses at 915, 923 and 1003 North Benton Avenue; 800 North Seventh Street; 622 and 706 Clark Street; and 554 Morgan Street. The two frame houses at 912 and 1027 North Benton Avenue and the grand 3-story, brick Second Empire style mansion at 535 North Benton Avenue are also shown on the Bird's Eye View.



Portion of the 1869 Bird's Eye View of Saint Charles showing the Commons Neighborhood

Twenty-one (21) of the existing buildings were built prior to 1880, but during the period from 1880 through 1929, 182 (68.5%) were constructed. The single greatest decade of growth was from 1900 to 1909, when 69 (26%) of the buildings were built. Only 8 were built in the 1930s, undoubtedly due to the Great Depression, but in the 1940s, with the end of World War II, construction rebounded, with 27 buildings constructed. Seventeen (17) were built between 1950 and 1965 and only 11 were built after 1965. (See Chart No. 1 below.)

Most (93.9%) of the buildings in the neighborhood were constructed for residential use. There were 227 (85.3%) built as single-family dwellings and 23 (8.6%) built as multi-family dwellings. In addition, 4 (1.5%) were combination commercial/residential buildings. One of these combination buildings is the 3-story, brick Second Empire style building at **631 North Fifth Street**, which was built circa 1895 (below left). The north half of the first floor was a grocery while the remainder of the building was in rental residential use. Six buildings

(2.3%) were constructed for commercial purposes, including three that were built as gasoline stations: 512 Clark Street (1963), 500 North Kingshighway (circa 1961) and 816 North Kingshighway (circa 1936). The building at 980 North Kingshighway, Dungan's Market, was built as a combination grocery, gasoline station and residence. Three originally served as secondary buildings or garages but were later converted to other uses. One of these is the building that faces onto the alley that runs along the south lot line of 528 North Benton Avenue (below right). It was constructed in 1927 as a garage for the house located at 528 North Benton Avenue, but in 1945 the lot was subdivided and in 1955 the City issued a nonconforming use permit for a warehouse in this location. The building was used by a beer distributor, as a frozen meat warehouse and for storage for a furniture company.

<b>CHART NO. 1</b>		
<b>CONSTRUCTION DATES BY DECADE</b>		
<b>Construction Date</b>	<b>Number of Buildings</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1850s	4	1.5%
1860s	7	2.7%
1870s	10	3.8%
1880s	17	6.4%
1890s	32	12.0%
1900s	69	26.0%
1910s	21	7.9%
1920s	43	16.0%
1930s	8	3.0%
1940s	27	10.2%
1950s	8	3.0%
1960-1965	9	3.4%
After 1965	11	4.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



631 North Fifth Street, c. 1895. A grocery was originally on the first floor and apartments were on the second.



Alley behind 528 North Benton Avenue, 1927. Built as a garage for the Benton Avenue house, but by 1955 it was a warehouse.

Two church buildings are located in the survey area, including the former Trinity Episcopal Church, which is a circa 1900 Gothic Revival style building, and the 1929 Gable Front Assembly of God Gospel Mission. Chart No. 2 below lists the original function of buildings in the survey area and the associated number of resources.

<b>CHART NO. 2</b>		
<b>ORIGINAL FUNCTIONS</b>		
<b>Original Function</b>	<b>Number of Resources</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Resources</b>
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling	227	85.3%
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling	23	8.6%
COMMERCE/TRADE	6	2.3%
Both COMMERCE/TRADE & DOMESTIC	4	1.5%
RELIGION/Religious Facility	2	0.8%
DOMESTIC/Secondary Building	3	1.1%
GOVERNMENT/Fire Station	1	0.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	266	100.0%

The phase 4 survey area was, for the most part, a blue-collar neighborhood, being home to the lower-middle and middle classes. Although historically the neighborhood was mostly inhabited by whites, a few African Americans did live here, but their homes are no longer extant. Since this was a reconnaissance-level survey, research was limited to determining the construction dates of the buildings and the names and occupations of only the earliest residents, as determined using city directories.

Residents worked at a wide variety of occupations: factory workers, laborers, carpenters, painters, plasterers, building contractors, electricians, salesmen, grocers, clerks, and drivers. A few doctors, engineers, and business owners also lived here, as well as a couple of community leaders and educators. The important role that three industries had on the economy of St. Charles is evident in the Phase 4 area. The earliest known owners and/or occupants of 104 of the 254 residential properties, or 41%, housed employees of the American Car and Foundry Co.; 10 were occupied by employees of the International Shoe Co.; and 3 were the residences of McDonnell Aircraft employees. (The number for McDonnell Aircraft is small because this company was founded in 1939 and grew significantly during World War II. Undoubtedly many employees of McDonnell Aircraft lived in older houses in the Phase 4 survey area, but research was only conducted on the earliest occupants of each building.)

The neighborhood has a significant collection of late-nineteenth and early twentieth century residential resources. Numerous examples of Federal, Second Empire, Queen Anne and Queen Anne Free Classic, Folk Victorian, Colonial Revival (including Dutch Colonial and Cape Cod), Craftsman and Minimal Traditional styles can be found throughout the Phase 4

survey area; however, many are vernacular designs that merely reflect these stylistic influences. The following folk forms or types are common in the survey area: Gable Front, Gable-Front-and-Wing, Pyramidal (including American Four Square), Bungalow and Ranch. Many of these folk houses display at least some detailing typical of architectural styles that were popular during the period they were built. Most streets within the survey area contain a mixture of architectural styles or forms, although some areas contain concentrations of a particular style or form, such as the Second Empire style buildings in the **500 and 600 blocks of North Fifth Street** (below left) and the four Gable Front cottages with recessed corner porches in the **700 block of North Kingshighway** (below right).



607-631 North Fifth Street. There is a concentration of Second Empire style buildings in the 500 and 600 blocks of North Fifth Street.



A row of four Gable Front cottages with recessed corner porches is in the 700 block of North Kingshighway.

## HISTORIC CONTEXT

The history of the founding and early development of the City of Saint Charles is provided in the survey reports for Phases 1-3, so this report will concentrate mainly on the history and development of the Phase 4 survey area. St. Charles is situated along the Missouri River, and like all Missouri-French villages founded during Spanish rule, it was laid out in a grid following Spanish Colonial town designs. Two long streets of blocks paralleled the river, and in 1791 Third Street was the western city limits.<sup>1</sup> By the time the town was incorporated in 1809, its westernmost boundary was Fifth Street, and west of Fifth Street were the commons, which was a large tract of land where all inhabitants of the town could graze animals and collect firewood. The Phase 4 survey area is located within a portion of the commons and is locally known as the Commons Neighborhood.

By an Act of Congress on June 13, 1812, the rights, titles and claims to town lots, out lots, common field lots, and commons in and adjoining St. Charles were confirmed to be the property of the inhabitants of the town.<sup>2</sup> Nathan Boone conducted extensive survey work in the commons, afterwards known as “Boone’s Survey.”<sup>3</sup> In 1824 the Missouri Legislature

<sup>1</sup> Mary M. Stiritz, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Frenchtown Historic District (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior/National Park Service), 10 August 1990, Section 8, pages 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> Abstract of Title for 729 Adams Street, St. Charles, MO (copy provided by Linda Prenger, on file at City of St. Charles, Department of Community Development, St. Charles, MO).

<sup>3</sup> Ehlmann, Steve. *Crossroads: A History of Saint Charles County, Missouri*. St. Charles, MO: Lindenwood University Press, 2011, p. 70.

authorized and empowered the town to lease, sell and dispose of its lands, and city records from 1825 through 1831 show innumerable orders authorizing the execution of leases to commons lots for the term of 999 years.<sup>4</sup>

After the Louisiana Purchase, a large number of Americans—mainly from Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia and the Carolinas—began to move into the area. In addition, German settlers began to arrive in St. Charles County around 1830, influenced to move here by Gottfried Duden’s book, *Report on a Journey to the Western States of North America*, published in 1829. The book, which was a best seller with wide circulation, specifically referenced St. Charles and the fertility of the area, and as a result thousands of German settlers moved to St. Charles County in the 1830s.<sup>5</sup> Only 10% of the total heads of households were German in 1840, but by 1850 it was 44%.<sup>6</sup> A second heavy wave of German immigration to the area occurred in the 1850s as a result of the political unrest surrounding the Revolution of 1848 in Germany. The city’s population increased 116% between 1850 and 1860 and 72% between 1860 and 1870. St. Charles was the second largest town of German-settled Missouri, with only St. Louis being larger, and was part of the “German belt” that extended up both sides of the Missouri River. In 1870, when the city’s population reached 5,570, it was estimated that 75% of the community was either German-born or first generation German-American.<sup>7</sup> The German settlers, who were typically educated and politically active, influenced the architectural, economic and social development of the town.

With the influx of settlers, additional areas were annexed into the city. In the Phase 4 survey area, the blocks between Fifth and Sixth Streets were annexed in 1849, while the remainder was annexed in 1869.<sup>8</sup> Kingshighway was the western city limits in 1869. The 1869 Bird’s Eye View of Saint Charles shows that the survey area was sparsely populated at that time, and it appears that only 11 of the houses shown are extant (see Bird’s Eye View on page 6).

With the settlement of Americans and Germans in the area, the French commons and common fields system was replaced by larger homesteads farmed by yeomen farmers who sold their crops in regional and national markets. St. Louis provided a nearby urban market for agricultural products, accessed first by river, then by road and later by rail. As discussed in the survey report for Phase 3, the rail lines that ran through St. Charles included the North Missouri Railroad, which was chartered in 1851 and reorganized in 1871 as the St. Louis, Kansas City and Northern Railroad Company; the Wabash Railway Company (later Wabash Railroad Company); and the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad (known as The Katy). The city directories indicate that a few men who lived in the Phase 4 survey area were employed by the Wabash, such as William Bezenburger, who lived in the 1904 duplex at 711 North Fifth Street, and Fred Bredenbeck, who worked for the company for 25 years while living at 923 North Benton Avenue. Bredenbeck’s parents built the house in 1862.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Abstract of Title for 729 Adams Street, St. Charles, MO (copy provided by Linda Prenger, on file at City of St. Charles, Department of Community Development, St. Charles, MO).

<sup>5</sup> Karen Bode Baxter and Ruth Keenoy, “Architectural/Historical Survey of the Mid-Town & Commons Neighborhoods, Saint Charles, Missouri: Final Report,” 31 August 2011, p. 47.

<sup>6</sup> Maureen Jones, “Survey Plan, City of Saint Charles, Missouri,” July 1989, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Stiritz, *Frenchtown*, Section 8, p. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Annexation Map of St. Charles, Missouri. Department of Community Development, City of St. Charles, St. Charles, MO.

<sup>9</sup> Yard Plaque, 923 North Benton Avenue, St. Charles, MO.

In addition to providing farmers access to markets, the railroad enabled St. Charles to become an industrial center. Between 1856 and 1867 the North Missouri Railroad gave employment to a sizable work force in its maintenance and building shops located along the riverfront in Frenchtown; however, in 1867 the company moved its maintenance plant out of St. Charles, which was a devastating blow to the local economy. As a result, a Citizens Association was established to start a new business venture, which became the St. Charles Manufacturing Company (in 1873) and ultimately the American Car and Foundry Company (discussed in detail later in this report), which employed a large number of the Commons Neighborhood's residents.<sup>10</sup>

By 1875, four subdivisions had been created in the survey area, as shown on Brink's plat map of the city (below): Rigg's Subdivision, Wilson's Subdivision, Pallardie's Subdivision, and McKnight's Partition. Unfortunately, plats could not be located for any of these subdivisions at City Hall or the County Courthouse.



The Commons Neighborhood, as shown in Brink's 1875 *Illustrated Atlas Map of Saint Charles County, MO*.

### Rigg's Subdivision

Rigg's Subdivision is a triangular area bounded by Clark Street on the south, Kingshighway on the west and Sixth Street on the east. There are 118 properties in this subdivision, and of these, two (824 and 826 Clark Street) are vacant lots. Four of the existing houses in the subdivision were built by the time the Bird's Eye View of the City was prepared in 1869.

<sup>10</sup> Stirtz, Frenchtown, Section 8, pp. 11, 13.

These are 622, 626 and **706 Clark Street** (below left) and 800 North Seventh Street, and all four are side-gabled brick Federal style buildings. Only one of the existing houses in the subdivision was built in the 1870s, two in the 1880s and five in the 1890s. The houses built before the turn of the century include the Federal (below left), Second Empire, Italianate and Folk Victorian (below right—**603 N. Sixth Street**) styles. Construction picked up in the decades between 1900 and 1929, with 67 buildings (57.8%) constructed during that period. Building nearly came to a halt with the Great Depression, with only 4 of the extant buildings having been constructed in the 1930s, but rebounded in the 1940s when 16 houses were built. Four were built in the 1950s, six in the 1960s, and four after 1970.



706 Clark Street, circa 1868

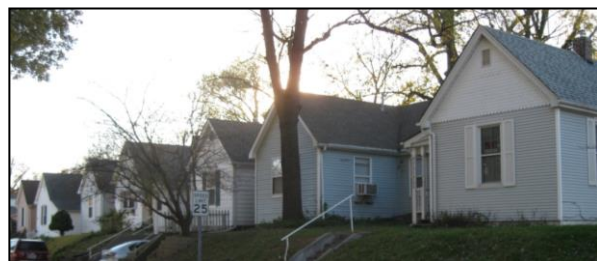


603 North Sixth Street, 1889

Seventy-one percent (71%) of the houses in Rigg's Subdivision are of frame construction, and the most common style is the Colonial Revival, with 22 examples. Of these 22, five are Dutch Colonial Revival and five are Cape Cod. Also displaying the Colonial Revival influence are two houses built in the Queen Anne Free Classic style. Seven houses are built in the Minimal Traditional style. Most of the houses are simple vernacular forms, with the Gable Front folk form being the most popular with 26 examples. There are 4 Gable-Front-and-Wing form houses, 10 Cross-Gabled, 6 Side-Gabled, 8 Bungalows, and 7 Ranch houses (see photos below).

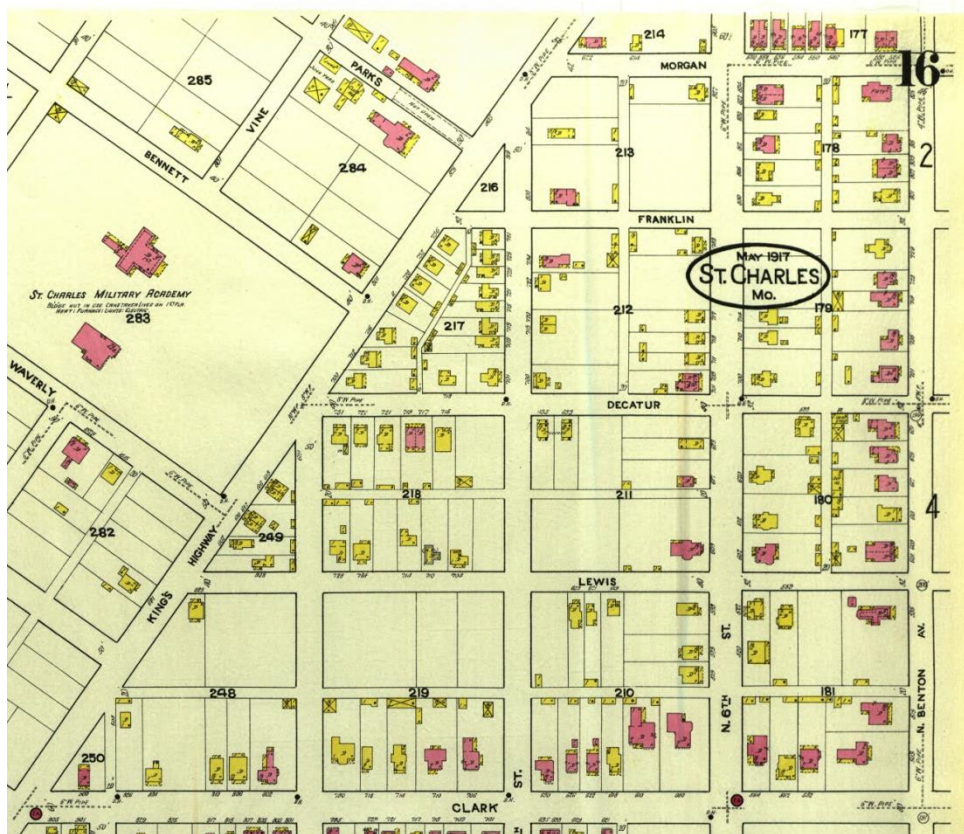


The 700 block of Decatur Street has a variety of styles and forms, including Craftsman, Bungalow, Colonial Revival and Federal.



The north side of the 700 block of North Seventh Street has numerous Gable-Front-and-Wing and Cross-Gabled houses built during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

By the time the 1917 Sanborn Insurance Map was prepared, many houses in Rigg's Subdivision had been built but there were still large areas that were vacant. For example, there were only three buildings in the block bounded by Sixth, Morgan, Seventh and Franklin Streets in 1917 and by 1929 there were only six. In 1917 no buildings had been built on the north side of the 600 block of Lewis Street and only one (823 Lewis Street) had been built on the south side of the 700 and 800 blocks of Lewis Street. By 1929 buildings had been constructed on the north side of the 600 block and the south side of the 800 block of Lewis Street, but the south side of the 700 block had only one small building. Franklin and Seventh Streets were still unpaved in 1929.



This is a portion of page 16 of the 1917 Sanborn Insurance map.

Some of the more prominent residents of Rigg's Subdivision include Edward Lawler, Fred T. Robbins, Dr. Vernon E. Dungan and Dr. Orville Towers. Lawler, who resided at the frame Dutch Colonial Revival style house at 523 North Sixth Street, was the assistant general foreman of the American Car and Foundry Co. In 1919 he sold the house to Fred T. Robbins, who owned the F.T. Robbins Feed Store on Main Street. The Robbins family owned the property until 1985. Dungan, a chiropractor, lived in the circa 1952 Minimal Traditional house at 921 North Sixth Street and his office was located next door at 980 North Kingshighway, also in the Commons Neighborhood. Towers, who lived in the Minimal Traditional house at 523 North Seventh Street, was a physician with an office located at 123½ North Main Street.

Quite a few men associated with the building trades also lived in the subdivision. John P. Wetter was a German-trained architect/builder and a brick mason who built his house at 724 North Seventh Street in 1892. His four sons were also tradesmen: John J. was a bricklayer; Oscar, a carpenter and employee of the American Car and Foundry Co.; Albert, a bricklayer; and Ralph, a plumber. (About 1936 John J. opened Wetter's Service Station at 816 North Kingshighway, which is also located in the subdivision.) A few of the other tradesmen in the subdivision include Louis Roth, a plasterer (711 Decatur Street) and painters Virgil Holt (712 Decatur Street) and Theodore Schone (714 Decatur Street). As in the neighborhood's other subdivisions, a large number of the residents of Rigg's Subdivision was employed by the American Car and Foundry Co. and some of the houses were built as rental housing for them. One example is the house at 635 Decatur Street, which was built about 1917 by John Platte, a local builder and architect. The first known occupants were Fred and Margaret Schlemmer, and he was a machinist for the American Car and Foundry Co.

### Wilson's Subdivision

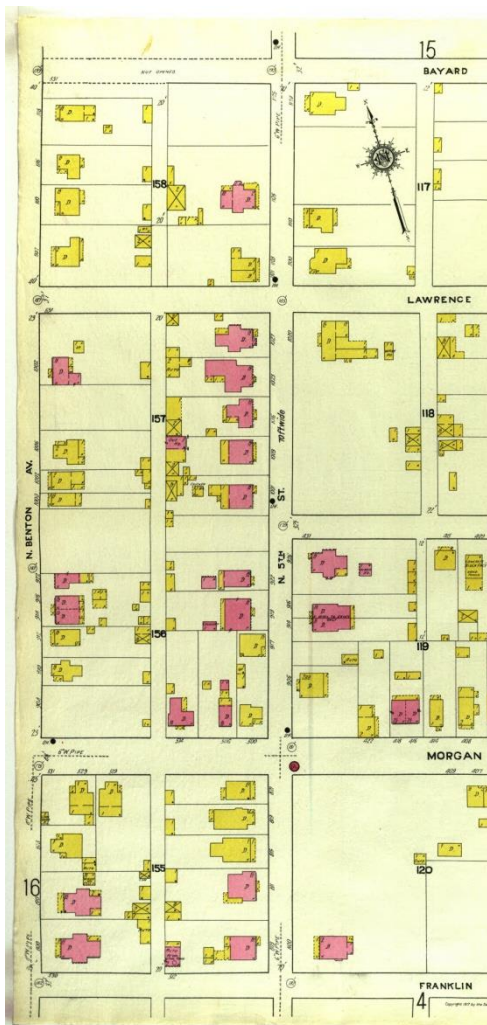
Wilson's Subdivision, which has 84 properties, is bounded by Clark Street on the south, Sixth Street on the west, Morgan Street on the north and Fifth Street on the east. Only one of the 84 properties is vacant (562 Clark Street) and only one building appears to have been built before 1870. It is the grand three-story brick Second Empire style mansion at **535 North Benton Avenue** (below left), which was constructed in 1869. Seven houses were built in the 1870s, and of these one is Italianate, one is Second Empire and the other five are Federal in style. Nine houses were erected in the 1880s, but the period of greatest construction was from 1890 to 1909, when 40 (48.2%) were built. Six more were constructed in the 1910s, and the 1917 Sanborn Insurance maps show that the subdivision was well developed by that time (see map above and two below). Nine of the extant houses were built in the 1920s, only seven were constructed in the 35-year period between 1930 and 1965, and three were built after 1965. Fifty-nine percent (59%) of the houses are brick and the most popular styles are the Federal (11 examples), Second Empire (7), Folk Victorian (17) and Colonial Revival (17) (see photograph below right). There are two Queen Anne houses, two Queen Anne Free Classic style houses and one Craftsman style, as well as many vernacular forms.



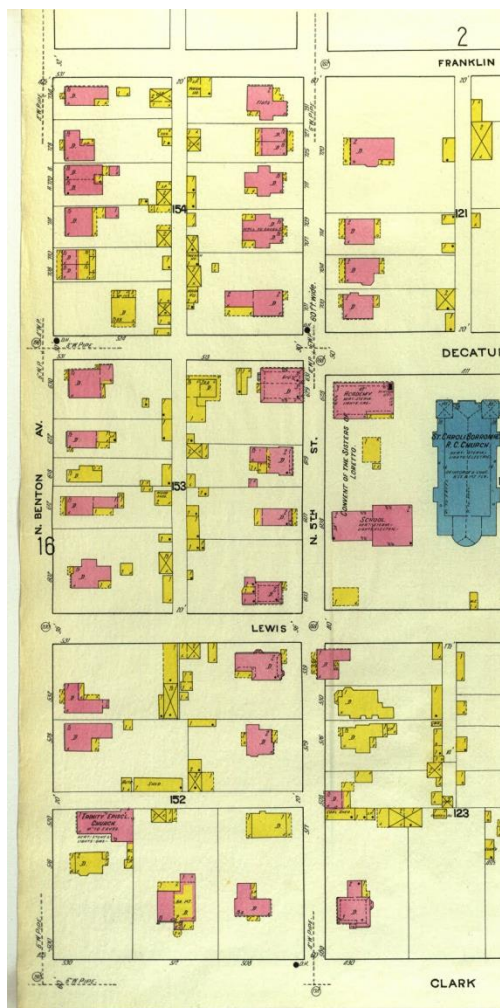
535 North Benton Avenue. Built in 1869, this is the oldest house in Wilson's Subdivision.



612 (c. 1900, Colonial Revival), 602 (1899, Queen Anne) and 522 (1902, I-house with Colonial Revival influence) North Sixth Street



Portion of page 2 of the 1917 Sanborn Insurance Map



Portion of page 4 of the 1917 Sanborn Insurance map

Some of the more prominent residents of the Commons Neighborhood lived in Wilson's Subdivision; however, the majority of the residents were blue-collar workers. A few of the leading businessmen living in the subdivision include Victor D. Dierker, Henry C. Rauch, Antone Stoltz and Edward Kister. Mr. Dierker was president of the St. Charles Brick Co. and built the fine brick Craftsman bungalow at 515 North Benton Avenue in 1909. By 1916 he had sold the house to Henry Rauch, who was the president and manager of the St. Charles Electric Express Co. and owner of H.G. Rauch & Son Grocers, H.G. Rauch Lumber Co. and H.G. Rauch Wholesale Grocery Co. Antone Stoltz owned the circa 1880 Second Empire style house at 539 North Fifth Street, as well as a saloon—said to be the largest saloon in the city—and a hotel and was a prominent stockholder in the tobacco factory of St. Charles.<sup>11</sup> Edward Kister owned the 1909 Colonial Revival style house at 552 Clark Street. It was built by his father, Henry Kister, a builder who also founded the Home Milling Co. in the 1890s with J.B.

<sup>11</sup> *History of St. Charles County, Missouri (1765-1885)*, Hollrah, Paul R., ed., no publisher, reprinted 1997, p. 432.

Thro. Edward was a bookkeeper for the Home Milling Co. in 1910 but by 1916 he was president of the company.

Like the other subdivisions in this neighborhood, a large number of residents of Wilson's Subdivision worked at the St. Charles Car Company, which later became the American Car and Foundry Co. (ACF). John Kelley, the superintendent of ACF, lived at 701 North Benton Avenue with his wife Mary from 1906-1926, when he sold the house to John Ruckman, a foreman at the company, and his wife Catherine. The Ruckmans owned the home for 26 years. The house at 612 North Benton Avenue was home to Herman Klaustermeier, a deputy sheriff, and later Frank Borgmeyer, a carpenter and employee of ACF. Borgmeyer also served on the St. Charles City Council. Another community leader living in the subdivision was Joseph Lackland, who served as mayor of St. Charles from 1923-1926. He was also the editor of the *Cosmos Monitor* but later became a timekeeper at ACF.

Employees of the International Shoe Company and McDonnell Aircraft were also represented in the subdivision. For example, Albert Sander, who lived in the circa 1913 Colonial Revival style house at 819 North Fifth Street, and Gustav Paul, who lived in the circa 1900 Folk Victorian house at 812 North Sixth Street, were employed by Star Brand/Roberts, Johnson & Rand Shoe Company (which became the International Shoe Co. in 1911). Built in 1886 and remodeled in 1954, the house at 630 North Benton Avenue became the home of Wilbert Schmidt in 1952. At that time he was a clerk at McDonnell Aircraft. In the 1955 city directory he is listed as a manufacturer of concrete blocks. Also living at this address in 1955 were Marion Dissens, a draftsman at McDonnell Aircraft; William Moore, a block layer for Wilbert Schmidt; and Jake Nixon, a machinist for McDonnell Aircraft. The 1954 remodeling of the house incorporated the materials manufactured by Schmidt. Some of the other men involved in the building trades include Joseph Bottani, a building contractor (532 North Benton); August Schone (617 and 631 North Benton), a carpenter and contractor; Joseph Platte (714 North Benton), operator of a sun-dried brick yard on Fourth Street; Henry Meiser (625 North Benton), a carpenter, contractor and builder; and Francis Sebacher, a plumber for John Schulze Plumbing and Heating Co.

In addition to owner-occupied dwellings, some of the homes in the subdivision were built as rental housing. For example, both 710 and 714 North Sixth Street were built in 1894 to house employees of the St. Charles Car Company (later renamed the American Car and Foundry Co.). These two houses were built by Charles Wilson, a prominent attorney, and his wife Julia Fraysier, who inherited the property from her father, Robert.

### Pallardie's Subdivision

Pallardie's Subdivision includes 47 lots bounded by Morgan Street on the south, Sixth Street on the west, Lawrence Street on the north and Fifth Street on the east. Only one lot (903 North Fifth Street) is vacant. Three of the existing houses were built in the 1850s, three in the 1860s and two in the 1870s. The most construction occurred in the 29-year period between 1880 and 1909, when 22 houses (48%) were constructed. During the 29-year period between 1910 and 1939 only five houses were built, but in the 1940s seven were constructed. Only

one was built in the 1950s, none were built between 1960 and 1965 and three were constructed after 1965.

Fifty-seven percent (57%) of the houses in Pallardie's Subdivision are of masonry construction and the most popular style is the Federal, with 15 examples. Some of the other styles represented include Folk Victorian (3 examples) and Colonial Revival (3). However, many of the houses are simple vernacular folk forms with no architectural detailing, such as the Gable Front form (6 examples) and Bungalows (4), while others could only be described by their roof type (see below). For example, there are 5 Side-Gabled houses and 4 Cross-Gabled houses.



North Fifth Street, left to right: 1001(1873, combination Federal and Italianate); 1009 (1890, Gable Front); 1015 (1899, Centered Gable); and 1023 (1893, Cross Gabled)

The vast majority of the residents of Pallardie's Subdivision were employed by the St. Charles Car Company/American Car and Foundry Co. Some of the other residents' occupations included baker (William Miles, 910 North Benton Avenue); mail carrier (Jugurtha Chrismer, 919 North Fifth Street); clerk at Kuhlmanns (Henry Poll, 923 North Fifth Street); painter (Michael Magenheimer and his son, Leo, 1023 North Fifth Street); carpenter (Edward Benskin, 528 Morgan Street); electrician (Ernest Bowles, 538 Morgan Street); and shoe worker at the International Shoe Co. (Hubert Hoelscher, 542 Morgan Street).

### McKnight's Partition

McKnight's Partition is bounded by Lawrence Street on the south, Kingshighway on the west, Randolph Street on the north and Fifth Street on the east. There are 21 properties in this subdivision. Two of the existing houses were built in the 1880s, one in the 1890s, and in the 29-year period between 1900 and 1929, 15 (71.5%) were built. None were built in the 1930s and one per decade was built in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. Most (81%) of the houses in McKnight's Partition are frame. There are four examples of the Folk Victorian style, three of the Colonial Revival, one Queen Anne Free Classic and one Craftsman bungalow, but the others are vernacular folk forms or can only be identified by their roof type (see below).



The houses at 1101-1125 North Fifth Street include a Craftsman Bungalow, a 2 ½-story Queen Anne Free Classic style house, and two vernacular Bungalows.

Like the other three subdivisions in the Commons Neighborhood, a large number of the residents of McKnight's Partition were employed by the St. Charles Car Co./American Car and Foundry Co. Several laborers also lived in the subdivision, including C.H. Jaspreng (1101 North Benton Avenue), Charles Bloom (1111 North Benton Avenue) and William Kneemiller (1120 North Benton Avenue). A few business owners also resided here, including Henry Platte, Arthur and Percy Schaefer, and Frank Schniedermeyer. Platte resided in the 2½-story, brick Queen Anne Free Classic house at **1105 North Fifth Street** (second house from left in photo above) and owned a business selling dry goods and groceries at 1125 North Second Street. Arthur Schaefer and his son Percy owned Schaefer & Son meats and they lived in the two bungalows at 1123 and 1125 North Fifth Street (see photo above). Schniedermeyer, who lived at 1117 North Benton Avenue, was the co-owner of Schaefer & Schniedermeyer Grocers at 116 South Main Street.

### Industries

The three largest employers of residents in the survey area were the American Car and Foundry Co. (ACF) and the International Shoe Co. (ISC), both in St. Charles, and McDonnell Aircraft in St. Louis County. As mentioned earlier, in 1873 a Citizens Association established the St. Charles Manufacturing Company. The company received its first contract in 1874 and began manufacturing railroad cars on the grounds formerly occupied by the North Missouri Railroad. It reorganized in 1881, expanded its facilities and workforce, and changed its name to the St. Charles Car Company.<sup>12</sup> However, in 1899, the company became part of a national merger of thirteen leading manufacturers of freight and passenger cars that formed the American Car and Foundry Company (ACF).<sup>13</sup> The buildings were demolished and replaced by the present brick structures in Frenchtown as the company began constructing steel railroad cars to be sold around the world.

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<sup>12</sup> Ehlmann, 351.

<sup>13</sup> Stiritz, Frenchtown, Section 8, p. 13.

During the 1910s, ACF employed from 1,500 to 2,000 men,<sup>14</sup> which was more than three times as many people as the Robert, Johnson and Rand Shoe Company (later the International Shoe Company), the next largest factory in town. ACF became the city's greatest asset and gained a national and international market for its cars in the 1890s when employment reached as high as 1,800 men. During both World Wars, ACF made substantial contributions to the war effort, adapting its production to the manufacture of military equipment. More than 2,500 Army escort wagons were produced during World War I, along with numerous parts for artillery vehicles.<sup>15</sup> The St. Charles ACF plant also manufactured a large number of other items, including Army cots, ambulance water tanks and cast iron stoves. During World War II, the employees peaked at an all-time high of 3,000.<sup>16</sup> These workers produced 1,800 tanks in addition to other military items and in 1944 the plant announced that it would build 100 custom-designed railroad hospital cars (earlier in the war the plant had converted 32 old rail coaches into hospital cars).<sup>17</sup> After World War II ended, the plant resumed commercial activity. In 1951 ACF formed an Aircraft Division, which produced the U.S. Air Force B-47 bomber. Due to the decline of rail passenger traffic, the St. Charles plant phased out car production in 1959.<sup>18</sup>

Since this was a reconnaissance-level survey, research was only conducted on the earliest occupants of each building, and the earliest known owners and/or occupants of 104 of the 254 residential properties in the Commons Neighborhood, or 41%, housed employees of the American Car and Foundry Co. The superintendent of ACF, John Kelley, owned the Second Empire style house at 701 North Benton Avenue in 1906. Leo Baumann (530 North Eighth Street) and James Hill (1002 and 1022 North Benton Avenue) were engineers and William Osiek (520 North Sixth Street) and Sigvald Udstad (710 Clark Street) were designers/draftsmen. Edgar Rohlfing (529 North Sixth Street), Frank Billing (618 Clark Street) and George Quade (728 North Kingshighway) were clerks, and timekeepers included Alfred Gruer (622 North Benton Avenue) and Joseph Lackland (729 North Benton Avenue).

Most of the ACF employees worked in the factory in a wide variety of occupations. The assistant general foreman was Alois Sebacher (1012 North Sixth Street) and other foremen included Edward Lawler (523 North Sixth Street), Frank Borgmeyer (612 North Benton Avenue) and Samuel Mills (559 Lewis Street). Some of the carpenters were Peter Billing (811 North Fifth Street), Edward Duckworth (700 North Sixth Street), Martin Blanken (706 North Sixth Street), Joseph Etling (806 North Sixth Street), Charles Kalbriar (912 North Benton Avenue), Joseph Wessler (1027 North Benton Avenue) and Wilhelm Klinghammer (715 Decatur Street). Fred Bauers (617 North Sixth Street) was a riveter; Fred Litteken (1110 North Benton Avenue) and B.F. Walker (622 Clark Street) were blacksmiths; Oscar Hischke (1127 North Benton Avenue) was a welder; Ervin Ohlemeyer and Oscar Fromme (both 718 Clark Street) were steel workers; Albert Rehling (725 North Seventh Street) and Gerhard Wecker (629 Decatur Street) were tanners; Louis Heitgerd (810 North Seventh Street) was a trimmer; and John Poertner (623 Lewis Street) was a molder. Steamfitters included Carl Ahlemeyer (730 North Sixth Street), Arthur Hower (520 North Eighth Street), Walter

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<sup>14</sup> Baxter and Keenoy, p. 56.

<sup>15</sup> Ehlmann, 362.

<sup>16</sup> Stiritz, Frenchtown, Section 8, p. 19.

<sup>17</sup> Ehlmann, 455-456.

<sup>18</sup> Stiritz, Frenchtown, Section 8, p. 19.

Heitmann (1014 North Benton Avenue), August Beimdick (630 Clark Street) and George Kuehler (530 Morgan Street). Casper Koetter (800 North Sixth Street), Julius Schappe (1116 North Benton Avenue) and Herman Kaveler (626 Clark Street) were machine operators. Frank McCloskey (801 North Benton Avenue) and Max Hahn (815 North Benton Avenue) were painters, Henry Krechel (631 Decatur Street) was an electrician, and Fred Squires (731 North Seventh Street) was a fireman.

The Roberts, Johnson & Rand Shoe Company was incorporated in 1898 and operated in St. Louis.<sup>19</sup> By 1905 the company was looking to build a plant outside of St. Louis, so State Representative R.C. Haenssler and others raised money to attract the company to St. Charles. The company was given \$25,000 and property located on Pike Street worth another \$10,000, where a factory was built.<sup>20</sup> The facility, which began shoe production in January 1906, employed about 400 men and women.<sup>21</sup> In 1911 Roberts, Johnson & Rand consolidated with the Peters Shoe Company of St. Louis to form the International Shoe Company (ISC). By the mid-1920s, ISC was the country's largest manufacturer of shoes with 43 specialty shoe factories and 32 subsidiary plants.<sup>22</sup> During the Great Depression there was little private investment in the city, but ISC constructed a heel plant after local businessmen collected enough money to buy 8.8 acres next to Blanchette Park and donated it as the site for the new plant.<sup>23</sup> By 1940 the company employed 1,000 at the main plant and 160 at the heel plant, and during World War II the company manufactured boots for military troops. The plant closed in September 1953.<sup>24</sup> A few of the neighborhood's residents who worked for ISC included Elmer Weber, who lived in the duplex at 807 Lewis Street, and Hubert Hoelscher, who lived in the bungalow at 542 Morgan Street. Their occupations were listed as shoe worker in the city directories. William Schuettenberg, a trimmer for the company, and Oscar Schroder, a cutter, both lived in the Federal style house at 706 Clark Street.

McDonnell Aircraft, located in St. Louis County, was founded in 1939 and grew significantly during World War II, when it employed over 5,000 people, many of them from St. Charles County. By the end of the war the company had become the country's largest supplier of airplane parts.<sup>25</sup> Both ACF and ISC were gone by 1959, and although other factories opened in St. Charles County, a large number of workers were driving to jobs in St. Louis County. McDonnell Aircraft was a big contributor to the local economy and by 1955, 1,371 of its employees were living in St. Charles County and commuting to work. In January 1959 the company was awarded a contract to design and construct the Mercury spacecraft, and by the following December there were 1,600 McDonnell Aircraft employees working to deliver 20 capsules to NASA.<sup>26</sup> The earliest residents of three houses in the Commons were found to be McDonnell Aircraft employees; however, many more employees of the company undoubtedly lived here in older houses, but for the most part research was only conducted on the earliest occupants of each building. After World War II there was a housing shortage, and between

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<sup>19</sup> Mary M. Stiritz, National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form, *Roberts, Johnson & Rand/International Shoe Company Complex*, June 1984, Section 8.

<sup>20</sup> Ehlmann, 351.

<sup>21</sup> Ehlmann, 362.

<sup>22</sup> Stiritz, Roberts, Johnson & Rand, Section 8, page 2.

<sup>23</sup> Ehlmann, 437.

<sup>24</sup> Ehlmann, 485.

<sup>25</sup> Ehlmann, 456.

<sup>26</sup> Ehlmann, 489.

1945 and 1959 many homeowners in St. Charles created apartments in their homes, and many of these apartments were occupied by employees of McDonnell Aircraft.<sup>27</sup>

Leo Jones, an inspector at McDonnell Aircraft, and his wife Loraine owned the Minimal Traditional frame house at 621 North Fifth Street, which was built in 1946. Kenneth Boewer, who was employed by McDonnell Aircraft, lived in a duplex at 702 North Seventh Street (632 Decatur). The house at 630 North Benton Avenue was built in 1886 and significantly remodeled in 1954 by Wilbert and Julia Schmidt. When Wilbert acquired the property he was a clerk at McDonnell Aircraft, but by 1955 he was manufacturing concrete blocks. The Schmidts had also apparently subdivided their house during the remodeling, because the 1955 city directory notes that several other people were also living there: Marion (draftsman at McDonnell Aircraft) and Jeanne Dissens; William (a block layer for Schmidt) and Marie Moore; and Jake Nixon (a machinist for McDonnell Aircraft).

### Automobile-related Businesses

In the early twentieth century, the automobile gained importance. Henry Machens opened the first automobile dealership in the county in 1906, and Herman Bruns opened the first dealership in St. Charles in 1908. In 1916, St. Charles had more than 200 automobiles, and by 1921 there were 2,108.<sup>28</sup> Automobile-related businesses were developed by neighborhood residents. In 1920 Charles and Florence Gatsweiler purchased the home at 815 North Fifth Street. They owned automobile dealerships in St. Charles on Main Street and later Clay Street (First Capitol Drive). Oscar McGee purchased 624 North Sixth Street in 1927 and was the owner of the Main Street Motor Co. at 220-224 South Main Street. Oscar Hischke (1127 North Benton Avenue) was an acetylene welder at ACF in 1921 but by 1925 he had opened an auto supply and service station at 1913 North Second Street. Built circa 1936, the building at 980 North Kingshighway served as a grocery store, filling station and home to the Dungan Family. Other automobile-related businesses in the neighborhood include Wetter's Service Station at 816 North Kingshighway, built circa 1936; Kingshighway & Clark 66 Service Station at 500 North Kingshighway, built circa 1961; and Adams Motor Service auto repair shop at 512 Clark Street, built in 1963.

Pressure to build better roads came from car owners as well as from auto-related businesses. The streets were first oiled in 1911, after a modern road oiling machine was purchased by the City. The business portion of Main Street was reconstructed in 1922 and by the end of the decade the City had paved 20 of its 35 miles of streets and five automobile dealerships were in operation in the town.<sup>29</sup> In the survey area, the 1929 Sanborn Insurance map shows that Franklin Street and Seventh Street were still unpaved.

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<sup>27</sup> Brenda Rubach. "Phase 3: Architectural/Historical Survey of the Midtown & Commons Neighborhoods, St. Charles, Missouri." Final Report. April 2013, p. 27.

<sup>28</sup> Ehlmann, 373.

<sup>29</sup> Ehlmann, 374-375.

## Results

During the Phase 4 survey, 270 properties were inventoried. These properties include 266 primary buildings, 149 outbuildings, 2 structures and 4 vacant lots. One-hundred eighty (68%) of the primary historic buildings retain sufficient architectural integrity to contribute to the character of a historic district; however, vinyl siding has been installed on many and/or the windows have been replaced, and some have had insensitive additions. None of the buildings appears to be individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, but there is a potentially eligible historic district within the survey area.

The Phase 4 survey area developed over a long period of time, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, but the period of greatest development was from 1880 through 1929, when 182 (68.4%) of the primary buildings were constructed. The neighborhood has a significant collection of mid- to late-nineteenth and early twentieth century residential resources, with only ten buildings originally constructed for commercial purposes, but of these ten, four are combination residential/commercial properties. Two church buildings are also located in the neighborhood.

Many of the residential buildings are vernacular folk forms that can best be described by their plan shape or roof type. From the mid- to late-nineteenth century, Federal style houses were popular, and from the last quarter of the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, Late Victorian designs, such as the Italianate, Second Empire, Folk Victorian and Queen Anne styles, became popular with the neighborhood residents. Modest Colonial Revival and Craftsman bungalows became the favored styles in the 1910s. Modern influences, such as the Minimal Traditional, grew in popularity in the mid-twentieth century. The following discussion of folk forms and specific stylistic features is based upon Virginia and Lee McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses*.<sup>30</sup>

### FOLK HOUSES

Although most American houses display some stylistic influences, folk houses were built with little regard for changing fashion. Early folk houses were constructed of materials found near the building site, such as logs and stone, and unlike fashionable styles, folk building traditions changed little with time. The first period of American folk architecture extended from the earliest permanent settlements of the seventeenth century to the growth of the railroads during the last half of the nineteenth century. McAlesters' *A Field Guide to American Houses* classifies folk houses built during this period as Pre-Railroad. No folk houses built in the pre-railroad period were identified in the phase 4 area.

With the expansion of the nation's railway network between 1850 and 1890, construction materials could be moved rapidly and cheaply over long distances. As a result, the traditional building materials and construction techniques of folk dwellings changed. Houses that had

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<sup>30</sup> Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984.

formerly been built with logs or heavy hewn frames were replaced by balloon-framed structures. However, many of the previous folk shapes persisted well into the twentieth century even though different construction techniques were being used. The resulting houses were simple dwellings defined by their form and massing, but they lacked identifiable stylistic attributes. The McAlesters classify the period after the spread of the railroad as the National period.

In the phase 4 area, these folk house designs were built from circa 1890 to circa 1996 as an affordable alternative to more ornate and complex architectural styles. The National folk house forms that were identified include Gable Front; Gable-Front-and-Wing; Centered Gable; Massed-Plan, Side-Gabled; and Pyramidal. Each house form is discussed below. Many of the houses could not be categorized by a folk form or stylistic influence, so the roof shape was used as a type, such as Side Gabled and Cross Gabled.

### Gable Front

The Gable Front form house became popular in the pre-railroad era in New England and the northeast region, and with the expansion of the nation's railroad network in the 1850s and the resultant availability of inexpensive building materials, it was a dominant folk form well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Architectural ornament is minimal and is generally limited to millwork on front porches. In the Phase 4 survey area 29 examples of Gable Front houses were identified that display no stylistic features and these were built between circa 1890 and 1996. Built in 1890, the brick house at **1009 North Fifth Street** (below left) is the survey area's oldest example of a Gable Front cottage that displays no stylistic detailing. Twenty-five of the Gable Front houses are 1½-stories, but three are 1-story and one is 2-stories. Twenty-one are frame, seven are brick and one is stucco. The house at **633 Decatur Street** (below right) is the survey area's only 2-story example and also the only house finished with stucco.



1009 North Fifth Street, 1890. This house is the earliest example of a Gable Front cottage in the survey area.



633 Decatur Street, circa 1916. This is the survey area's only 2-story example of a Gable Front house and the only stucco example.

The Gable Front houses range from two to four bays wide, with three of the four 4-bay wide examples having been built as duplexes, such as **807-809 Lewis Street** (below left). Nine of

the houses are two bays wide while 16 have three bays. Eight of the examples have recessed corner porches, which is a common feature found in houses of various styles or vernacular forms in this neighborhood and older parts of the city; however, some of these porches have been enclosed to provide additional living space. An intact example of a Gable Front house with recessed corner porch is **728 North Kingshighway** (below right), which was built circa 1907.



On the south side of the 800 block of Lewis Street is a row of Gable Front single-family houses and duplexes that were built in 1928.



728 North Kingshighway, circa 1907. The recessed corner porch is a popular design feature in the Commons.

In addition to the Gable Front houses with no stylistic features, there are six examples in the Phase 4 area that display stylistic influences. Three have features from the Folk Victorian style and three have Colonial Revival features. All are 1½-story frame houses built between 1900 and 1928. An example of a Gable Front house with Folk Victorian detailing is **814 North Seventh Street** (below left), which was built circa 1907. This type house is well-suited to narrow urban lots, such as this one which is only 33-feet wide. Built in 1913, the duplex at **806-808 Clark Street** (below right) displays the Colonial Revival influence.



814 North Seventh Street, circa 1907



806-808 Clark Street, 1913

### Gable-Front-and-Wing

While the Gable Front house was a common urban folk form, the Gable-Front-and-Wing form became popular for use in rural areas. The Gable-Front-and-Wing house was created by

adding a side-gabled wing perpendicular to the Gable Front block, giving the house its distinctive L-shaped massing. A shed-roofed porch was typically placed within the L made by the two wings, and architectural ornament was minimal. Four Gable-Front-and-Wing form houses that display no stylistic features were identified in the phase 4 survey area. Three are 1-story and one is 1½-stories, and all are frame. They were built between circa 1907 and 1924, but all have been substantially altered so that they are noncontributing. One of these is **709 North Seventh Street** (below), which was built circa 1907.



709 North Seventh Street, circa 1907

Although the Gable-Front-and-Wing form house was commonly built as a unit, some grew in stages, such as the house located at **626 Clark Street** (below left). Originally built as a Federal side-gabled cottage circa 1864, this structure acquired its present Gable-Front-and-Wing form between 1917 and 1929 when a front-gabled addition was made to the west (left) elevation and a Colonial Revival style gallery was added. The five Gable-Front-and-Wing form houses that display Folk Victorian detailing were built as a unit. These five were built between circa 1899 and 1902, and two are 2-stories while three are 1½-stories. Two are brick and three are frame. The 1½-story frame example at **1116 North Benton Avenue** (below right) was built circa 1900. In addition to having a Folk Victorian porch, the front gable end is finished with wooden shingles and there is an incised horseshoe-shaped gable ornament with scalloped molding and drop pendant.



626 Clark Street. Right side-gabled wing built circa 1864, gable-front wing and Colonial Revival gallery added circa 1923



1116 North Benton Avenue, circa 1900

### Centered Gable

The Centered Gable folk form is a symmetrical house with a side-gabled roof having a prominent central cross gable, and the front wall of the house extends into the gable without a break (no eave or trim). Although this form house is found throughout the older parts of town, only one example is found in the Phase 4 survey area at **1015 North Fifth Street** (below). It was built circa 1899. This house form often has an ell centered on the rear elevation, giving the house a T-shaped plan. The form may be derived from the Picturesque cottages of A.J. Downing, especially the Picturesque Gothic cottage.



1015 North Fifth Street, circa 1899

Although not built in the true Centered Gable house form, two houses in the neighborhood were obviously influenced by this form. The circa 1900 house at **724 Lewis Street** (below left) has a pyramidal roof rather than a side-gabled roof. The house at **553 Decatur Street** (below right) has a side-gabled roof and centered front gable but the front gable is set back slightly from the eaves rather than having the front wall of the house extend into the gable without a break.



724 Lewis Street, circa 1900



553 Decatur Street, circa 1890

### Massed-Plan, Side-Gabled

Side-gabled folk houses that are more than one-room deep are known as Massed-Plan, Side-Gabled houses. They are 1- or 1½-story structures that vary mainly in roof pitch and in the size and placement of porches. Earlier examples typically had full-width porches, but examples built in the 1930s and later usually had only small entry porches or no porch at all, imitating the then-fashionable Cape Cod style. In the Phase 4 area four Massed-Plan, Side-Gabled houses were identified. All are frame and all but one are 1-story. Built circa 1947, the 1-story house at **712 Decatur Street** (below) has a stoop at the entrance.



712 Decatur, circa 1947

### Pyramidal

Massed-plan folk houses that are nearly square in shape are typically built with pyramidal roofs, which require more complex roof framing but need fewer long-spanning rafters, making construction less expensive. The Pyramidal house form appeared earlier in the post-railroad era than the Massed-Plan, Side-Gabled form. At the turn of the twentieth century, 1-story Pyramidal houses became a popular replacement for the less spacious Hall-and-Parlor houses, while 2-story examples began to replace rural I-houses. From about 1900 to 1930, the 2-story examples became a popular urban house form, and most were built with Colonial Revival, Neoclassical Revival, Prairie, Tudor or Craftsman detailing; however, many lacked such stylistic details.

In the phase 4 survey area, 11 Pyramidal form houses were identified, and of these eight have Colonial Revival detailing on the porches, two have Craftsman detailing and one has a replacement porch with turned posts. These houses were constructed from circa 1900 through circa 1927 and range from 1½- to 2½-stories. The 2- and 2½-story examples are the American Four Square form. All but two are frame. Examples of 1½-story Pyramidal houses are **819 North Fifth Street** (below left) and **519 North Sixth Street** (below right). The former house's character-defining feature is its recessed corner porch, which is a common feature found on older houses throughout the neighborhood and city. The Sanborn Insurance maps show that the porch was originally this size. The unusual column supporting the porch roof has rusticated concrete belt courses, giving the appearance of stacked spools, and the column rests on a rusticated concrete block pedestal. The house at 519 North Sixth Street has a Colonial Revival style portico.



819 North Fifth Street, circa 1913



519 North Sixth Street, 1915

Nationally, the American Four Square house form became a popular choice for homes between 1900 and 1930. In the late nineteenth century, when public taste was turning away from the excessively ornate and asymmetrical Victorian style, the American Four Square represented a renewed sense of simplicity and restraint. The popular house form has precedent in the Georgian manor house. The comeback of the square shape is at least partly a matter of economy, with the cube yielding the most interior space for the money spent on the foundation, framing, and roof. Four Square variants appeared in virtually every pattern book between 1900 and 1925, and some companies, such as Sears Roebuck and Co., sold prefabricated versions. The basic Four Square has two stories (with four rooms on each story), a pyramidal or hipped roof with broad overhanging eaves and a dormer on the front slope, a prominent front porch, and a boxy, nearly cubical shape. The national trend was to have a full-width porch on the main façade, but in St. Charles  $\frac{3}{4}$ -width porches are also common. The porches have box columns or classical columns. Examples of the Four Square type house in the Phase 4 area include the properties at **559 Lewis Street** (below left), built in 1912, and **1000 North Kingshighway**, built in 1923 (below right). The former has a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -width front gallery displaying rusticated concrete pedestals supporting fluted concrete columns with belt courses that give the columns the appearance of stacked spools. The Kingshighway house displays the Craftsman influence, with battered box columns resting on pedestals, a gabled dormer with exposed rafter tails in the eaves and a knee brace in the gable end, and 4/1 double-hung windows.



559 Lewis Street, 1912



1000 North Kingshighway, circa 1923

About 15% of the houses in this neighborhood could not be categorized by a folk form or stylistic influence, so roof shape was used as a type, such as Side-Gabled and Cross-Gabled. This was largely a working-class neighborhood, so it is not surprising that many simple houses were built without stylistic detailing. Fourteen are Side-Gabled, and of these all but four have been extensively altered, resulting in their being counted as noncontributing. One of the contributing Side-Gabled examples is **823 Lewis Street** (below left), which was built circa 1913. There are 21 Cross-Gabled houses that display no stylistic detailing, and they were built between circa 1873 and circa 1909. Eleven are 1-story, nine are 1½-stories, and one is 2-stories, and only one is brick while the others are frame construction. Like the Side-Gabled houses, many have been significantly altered, with only eight retaining sufficient integrity to be considered contributing. One of the contributing 1-story examples is **720 North Kingshighway** (below right), which was built circa 1900. Its peaked lintels have pierced foliated designs and in the gable ends are circular pierced wooden ventilators.



823 Lewis Street, circa 1913



720 North Kingshighway, circa 1900

Another building type with no stylistic detailing that had to be categorized by its roof type is the Hip with Cross Gable type. Four examples were identified, and they were built from circa 1885 to circa 1907. Two are brick and two are frame and all are 1½-stories. The brick example at **1000 North Sixth Street** (below) was built circa 1895.



1000 North Sixth Street, c. 1895

## Houses built between 1940 and 1961

During World War II, most domestic building ceased, but when construction resumed after the war the public's tastes quickly shifted from the period houses of the 1920s and 1930s to new variations of the Modern styles that had only begun to be popular in the pre-war years. The Modern houses of the 1950s and 1960s grew from the earlier phases of Eclectic modernism and sometimes mimic details from the Craftsman, Prairie, Modernistic and International styles.

### Ranch (nationally circa 1935-1975)

Several California architects developed the Ranch type house in the mid-1930s and it gained popularity during the 1940s and became the dominant type throughout the country during the 1950s and 1960s. With the end of World War II there was an extreme housing shortage in America as vast numbers of returning veterans wanted to finish their education and start families. In 1945 the U.S. government passed the Serviceman's Readjustment Act (known as the GI Bill), which allowed veterans to purchase or build their own houses using VA-insured, no-down-payment mortgage loans. During the next decade housing construction experienced unprecedented growth, aided by the technological advances achieved in wartime. Although labor and materials were expensive in the postwar years, there was still plenty of relatively cheap land available. The streetcar suburbs of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries typically had relatively compact house forms on small lots because people walked to nearby streetcar lines. However, the country's increasing dependence on the automobile allowed compact houses to be replaced by rambling Ranch houses on much larger lots.<sup>31</sup>

Nine Ranch houses are located in the Phase 4 survey area, and these were constructed between circa 1938 and circa 1962. Four examples are frame, three are brick, one is stucco, and one is a combination of stucco, weatherboard and vertical board. This type house is typically an asymmetrical one-story structure crowned by a low-pitched roof with moderate to wide eaves, and the plan sometimes includes an integral garage, such as at **525 North Benton Avenue** (below), which was built in 1951. Large, fixed-pane picture windows are common, and these are sometimes flanked by narrow sashes similar to the Chicago style window. The most common detailing is decorative iron or wooden porch supports and decorative shutters.



525 North Benton Avenue, 1951

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<sup>31</sup> Betsy Friedberg, "Postwar Housing Comes of Age," *Preservation Advocate*, Spring 2003, 6.

## ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

Examples of many of the architectural styles that were popular nationally are represented in the Phase 4 survey area, although many were retardataire or outdated by the time they were built. A discussion of the various styles found in the survey area is provided below.

### Federal (nationally 1780-1840)

Throughout St. Charles, during the mid-to-late-nineteenth century, both Americans and Germans were building simple vernacular houses that reflect the influence of the Federal style. In the Phase 4 area, 31 Federal-influenced houses were built between circa 1850 and circa 1909. Twenty-eight were built as single-family dwellings, but three, such as **717-719 Decatur Street** (below left), were built as duplexes. Another—**720 North Benton Avenue** (below right), was built as a 3-bay single-family dwelling but a 3-bay addition was built later to create a duplex to provide income for the owner, Mary Bartels.



717-719 Decatur Street, 1898



720 North Benton Avenue. The north (left) half of this house was built in the early 1870s and the south (right) half was added later to create a duplex.

The Federal style houses range from 1- to 2½-stories: three (10%) are 1-story, 26 (84%) are 1½-stories, one (3%) is 2-stories and one (3%) is 2½-stories. All but three are brick. These houses have openings headed with low segmental arches, flat jack arches, or lintels of stone or wood (like **528 North Benton Avenue**, below left), and they range from 2- to 6-bays wide, with one having 2 bays, 19 having 3 bays, five having 4, three having 5, and three having 6 bays. Although built as single-family dwellings, some of the houses have two front doors, such as **1013 North Benton Avenue** (below right), which is a 4-bay example.



528 North Benton Avenue, circa 1875



1013 North Benton Avenue, circa 1900

All of the Federal style houses in the survey area have side-gabled roofs and only one (**554 Morgan Street**, below left) has parapeted end walls. The roofs of all but four of the brick examples have denticulated entablatures, although some are partially obscured by porch additions. Most, if not all, of the Federal style houses in the survey area were built without front porches and without dormers, such as **915 North Benton Avenue** (below right), although many have had porches and dormers added. However, many of these alterations were made more than 50 years ago.



554 Morgan Street, circa 1855



915 North Benton Avenue, circa 1855

### **Romantic/Picturesque Houses (nationally 1820-1880)**

The first popular Romantic style was the Greek Revival, which dominated the country from about 1825 to 1860. American's waning interest in British styles after the War of 1812 and their support and sympathy for the Greeks in their fight for independence from Turkey in the 1820s were strong influences for the popularity of the Greek Revival style. During the second half of the nineteenth century that style was supplanted in popularity by the Gothic Revival and Italianate styles. Builders and homeowners were influenced by the Picturesque movement popularized by the publication of such widely distributed pattern books as Andrew Jackson Downing's *Cottage Residences*, published in 1842, and *Villas and Cottages*, published by Calvert Vaux in 1857. These pattern books offered several new fashions that were alternatives to the formality of the prevailing Greek Revival classicism. Medieval precedents were recommended in models that led to the Gothic Revival style and Italian

Renaissance traditions were freely adapted in Italianate cottages. Nationally, the Gothic Revival style was popular from about 1840 to 1880 and the Italianate from 1840 to 1885, but in St. Charles, features from these two styles were still being used as late as about 1900. However, apparently none of these styles were popular in the Commons Neighborhood. No houses display the Greek Revival influence, one church was built in the Gothic Revival style, and three houses display the Italianate influence.

#### Gothic Revival (nationally 1840-1880)

In the Phase 4 survey area, there is only one example of the Gothic Revival style, and it is the old Trinity Episcopal Church, located at **520 North Benton Avenue** (below left). Built circa 1900, this church has walls finished with stucco, a steep front-gable asphalt roof trimmed with bargeboard, a quatrafoil-shaped stained glass window and pointed-arched Gothic windows topped by stucco label moldings.



Old Trinity Episcopal Church, 620 North Benton Avenue, circa 1900



701 North Fifth Street, circa 1870

#### Italianate (nationally 1840-1885)

The Italianate style, which was a Romantic era interpretation of Medieval precedents, dominated American residential architecture from about 1850 through the 1880s, but in St. Charles Italianate detailing was still being used as late as the turn of the twentieth century. There are only three houses in the Phase 4 survey area that display the Italianate influence, and they were built between circa 1870 and circa 1880. All three are brick, and one is 1½-stories while the other two are 2-stories.

Italianate style houses have roofs that are typically low-pitched with widely overhanging eaves having decorative brackets beneath, and many have a square cupola or tower. Windows are tall, narrow, and segmental-arched and frequently arranged in pairs or trios. They have 1/1 or 2/2 glazing and are often topped by U-shaped or pedimented crowns. Small entry porches are most common, but many have full-width galleries, and most are single story. The most common type of porch support is a square post with chamfered corners. Built circa

1870, the house at **701 North Fifth Street** (above right) has a low hip roof that has wide overhanging eaves trimmed with elaborate crenellated brick detailing that references the wooden brackets seen on many Italianate residences. The 1917 Sanborn Insurance map shows that there had been a 1-story, single-bay portico, but it has been replaced with a 1-story Craftsman-influenced gallery that is nearly full-width.

### **Victorian Houses (nationally 1860-1900)**

Britain's Queen Victoria reigned from 1837 to 1901, but in America the architectural styles that were popular during the last four decades of her reign are generally referred to as "Victorian." During this period dramatic changes in house design and construction resulted from industrialization and the growth of the railroads. Balloon framing rapidly replaced heavy-timber framing as the standard building technique, which freed houses from their traditional box-like shapes by greatly simplifying the construction of corners, wall extensions, overhangs and irregular plans. In addition, growing industrialization allowed many complex house components to be mass-produced and shipped at relatively low cost on the expanding railway network. Victorian styles reflect these changes through their use of complex shapes and elaborate detailing. In the phase 4 survey area there are examples of the Second Empire, Queen Anne and Folk Victorian styles that were popular during the Victorian Period.

### **Second Empire (nationally 1860-1885)**

The Second Empire style takes its name from the reign of Napoleon III as Emperor of France (1852 to 1870). During his reign Paris underwent a massive rebuilding program that changed the city into a masterpiece of urban design. Cities all over Europe and America strived to adopt the image of Parisian urbanity by erecting majestic buildings in the Second Empire style. Although all of the important early works were public buildings, gradually Second Empire features were incorporated into domestic architecture, creating a somewhat simplified and downscaled version that became an important part of American residential design until about 1885. The most distinctive feature of this style is the mansard roof, which has two slopes on each side, the lower being very steep and the upper very flat. The two slopes are typically separated by a molding or curb that is often crested with an iron railing, and the lower slope is pierced by elaborate dormer windows. Decorative brackets are typically placed beneath the eaves.

The Commons Neighborhood has the greatest concentration of Second Empire style buildings of any neighborhood in St. Charles. There are eight examples, and five of these are located in the 500 and 600 blocks of North Fifth Street. The buildings date from 1869 to circa 1895 and range from 1½- (one example) to 3-stories (two examples), but most (five) are 2-stories. One example was built as a duplex and another as a combination grocery and multi-unit apartment building, but the other six were built as single-family dwellings. The building located at **631 North Fifth Street** (below left) housed a grocery store on the first floor, with apartments above.



631 North Fifth Street, circa 1895



607 North Fifth Street, circa 1870.  
This house has a front mansard  
roof and a raised basement.

Various types of mansard roofs can be found in the neighborhood. In addition to plain mansard roofs, like 631 North Fifth Street, there are examples of a front mansard (**607 North Fifth Street**, above right), a gabled mansard (**539 North Fifth Street**, below left), and a bellcast mansard (**535 North Benton Avenue**, below right). The house at 535 North Benton Avenue is the oldest of the neighborhood's Second Empire style houses, having been built about 1869 by Dr. John Shore. It is shown on the 1869 Bird's Eye View of the city. Originally a single-family home, the building was converted into six apartments in the mid-1940s, when two masonry additions were built. The six apartments were converted into five apartments in 1992.



539 North Fifth Street, circa 1880—gabled  
mansard



535 North Benton Avenue, 1869—  
bellcast mansard

### Queen Anne (nationally 1880-1910)

The Queen Anne style was named and promoted by a group of nineteenth-century English architects, but the historic precedents had little to do with the formal Renaissance architecture that was dominant during Queen Anne's reign from 1702 to 1714. The precedents were actually Late Medieval models of the preceding Elizabethan and Jacobean eras. In America, the Queen Anne style was the dominant style of residential architecture during the period from about 1880 until 1900, and examples in the phase 4 survey area were constructed

between circa 1898 and circa 1906. The Queen Anne style is the most exuberant of the nineteenth-century styles and is characterized by its asymmetrical composition; steeply pitched, irregularly shaped roof, which is usually a hipped roof with an intersecting front-facing gable; the use of devices to avoid a smooth-walled appearance, such as patterned shingles, cutaway bay windows, towers, and turrets; and a porch that is partial-width, full-width or wraparound and typically only a single story.

The McAlesters' *A Field Guide to American Houses* subdivides the style into two sets of overlapping subtypes based on variations in shape and decorative detailing. Only two decorative detailing subtypes were identified in the survey area: the Spindlework and Free Classic modes. About 50 percent of Queen Anne houses have spindlework or "gingerbread" ornamentation, which most commonly appears on the porch in the form of delicate turned posts, corner brackets, balustrades and spindled friezes. Gable ends are also often decorated. In the Phase 4 survey area, only two examples of the Spindlework mode of the Queen Anne style were identified. Built in 1899, the 2½-story brick house at **602 North Sixth Street** (below left) has a high hip roof with cross gables. The gable ends, including that of the bracketed cutaway gabled bay, are finished with imbricated shingles and the portico has turned posts and a balustrade with turned balusters.



602 North Sixth Street, 1899



564 Clark Street, circa 1900

About 35 percent of Queen Anne houses have classical detailing. The Free Classic subtype became popular after 1890 and has much in common with some early Colonial Revival style houses. In this subtype the porches have classical columns rather than turned posts with spindlework detailing. The five examples of the Queen Anne Free Classic style in the survey area were built between circa 1900 and circa 1906. One is 1½-stories, one is 2-stories, and three are 2½-stories. The 1½-story brick house located at **564 Clark Street** (above right) has a high hip roof with intersecting cross gables, a wraparound porch, and a polygonal bay with mansard roof.

#### Folk Victorian (nationally circa 1870-1910)

The Folk Victorian style is defined by the presence of Victorian decorative detailing on simple folk house forms, such as the Pyramidal, Gable Front, Gable-Front-and-Wing, and

Centered Gable folk forms. This style house generally has a symmetrical façade (except for the Gable-Front-and-Wing form) and is much less elaborated than the Victorian styles (typically Queen Anne and Italianate) they attempt to mimic. The main areas for the application of decorative detailing are the porch and cornice line. Porches often have Queen Anne spindlework detailing or Italianate square chamfered posts, and cornices are sometimes bracketed. This style was popular nationally from about 1870 to 1910, but the 26 examples found in the Phase 4 survey area were built between c. 1885 and c. 1910. Fifteen of the Folk Victorian residences are brick and 11 are frame, and one is 1-story, 22 are 1½-stories, and three are 2-stories. Twenty display spindlework detailing, three have Italianate features, and three have both Italianate and spindlework details.

Built in 1892, the Cross Gabled house at **800 North Benton Avenue** (below left) can be classified as Folk Victorian due to its 1-story gallery that has Queen Anne spindlework detailing including turned posts with corner brackets, ball-and-rod spindled frieze, a shed roof that has a sunburst ornament at each end, and a gablet with sunburst ornament. The house was built by the Heckmans, builders and contractors, for Adam Heckman, Jr. Many of the frame examples have shingles in the gable ends, such as the house at **1116 North Benton Avenue** (below right), which is a vernacular Gable-Front-and-Wing form. In addition to the wooden shingles, there is an incised horseshoe-shaped ornament with scalloped molding and drop pendant in the gable end. Other Queen Anne details include the spindlework porch and the Queen Anne window with colored glass border in the upper sash.



800 North Benton Avenue, 1892



1116 North Benton Avenue, circa 1900

One of the Folk Victorian houses that displays the Italianate influence is **811 North Fifth Street** (below left), which was built in 1888. Its gallery has chamfered posts and a jigsawn balustrade. The roof of the house at **617 North Benton Avenue** (below right) is trimmed with a frieze ornamented with brackets and roundels, mimicking the Italianate style, and the gable end is finished with shingles and the portico has turned posts, as is common in Queen Anne style structures.



811 North Fifth Street, 1888



617 North Benton Avenue, circa 1885

### **Eclectic (nationally 1880-1940)**

The Eclectic movement began in the last decades of the nineteenth century and gained momentum with Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893. The movement drew inspiration from America's Colonial architecture as well as the architecture of Europe. While the European models for period styles were almost exclusively built of solid masonry, most American houses were of wood-framed construction. Solid masonry was generally limited to the most expensive houses, but in the early 1920s, inexpensive techniques were perfected for adding a thin veneer of brick to the exterior of the traditional balloon-framed house. This allowed modest cottages to mimic the masonry facades of European landmarks. As a result, houses were built in a full historical spectrum of European and Colonial American housing styles and dominated domestic building during the 1920s and 1930s. Also, in the early 1900s modern houses began to be constructed, including the Prairie and Craftsman styles. In the Phase 4 survey area, examples of the Eclectic movement include houses in the Colonial Revival and Craftsman styles. There are no examples of Tudor Revival or Mediterranean period houses.

### **Colonial Revival (nationally 1880-1955)**

"Colonial Revival" refers to the rebirth of interest in the early English and Dutch houses of the Atlantic seaboard. Although the Philadelphia Centennial of 1876 created interest in the country's colonial architectural heritage, the architectural firm of McKim, Mead, White and Bigelow is credited with popularizing the revival of colonial designs in 1877 after taking a widely publicized tour through New England to study Georgian and Adam buildings. Although these two styles are the basis for this revival, post-medieval English and Dutch Colonial prototypes were also influential. The early examples of the Colonial Revival style were not usually historically accurate copies but were free interpretations with details inspired by colonial precedents. However, by the first decade of the twentieth century the emphasis shifted to more accurate copies with correct proportions and details, and this emphasis continued to about 1935. The Great Depression, World War II, and changing postwar fashions led to a simplification of the style in the 1940s and 1950s.

In the Phase 4 survey area, there are 42 Colonial Revival style houses or houses that display the Colonial Revival influence. Of these 42, four are Dutch Colonial Revival and four are Cape Cod. Except for one example that was built in the 1860s and had a Colonial Revival porch added later, the Colonial Revival style houses were constructed between circa 1890 and circa 1950, but one was built in 2011 to mimic the historic building destroyed by fire on its lot. The majority (27) was built between 1900 and 1919. They are both brick and frame and range from 1-story to 2½-stories. McAlesters' *A Field Guide to American Houses* lists nine principal subtypes, and in the Phase 4 survey area five of these subtypes were found: asymmetrical, hipped roof with full-width porch, side-gabled, gambrel roof (Dutch Colonial Revival), and 1-story (Cape Cod).

Colonial Revival houses are typically symmetrical, but some have asymmetrical facades, a feature rarely seen on their colonial prototypes. An example of the asymmetrical subtype is **727 Decatur Street** (below left), which was built circa 1913. Although prior to 1900 about one-third of the Colonial Revival houses built in this style were asymmetrical, after 1910 few examples were constructed until the 1930s, when irregular facades reappeared with less elaborate detailing. These later examples were often asymmetrical due to the attachment of garages to the house.



727 Decatur Street, circa 1913



631 North Benton Avenue, circa 1910

Approximately one-third of Colonial Revival style houses built before 1915 are the hipped roof with full-width porch subtype. The front slope of the roof is usually pierced by a dormer and the 1-story, full-width porches with classical columns are attached to a 2-story, symmetrical house with square or rectangular plan. The house located at **631 North Benton Avenue** (above right) is an example of this subtype, although the porch is actually slightly shorter than full width. In McAlesters' *A Field Guide to American Houses*, front-gabled examples are included in this category with the statement that “on narrow urban lots a front-gabled roof occasionally replaces the more common hipped roof.”<sup>32</sup> The Gable Front folk form duplex at **806-808 Clark Street** (below left) has a ¾-width Colonial Revival style gallery, like its neighbor at **810 Clark Street** (below right), which also has a Palladian-influenced, tripartite window in the gable end.

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<sup>32</sup>McAlester, 328.



806-808 Clark Street, 1913



810 Clark Street, circa 1913

About one-fourth of Colonial Revival style houses throughout the country are simple, 2-story, rectangular blocks crowned by side-gabled roofs. A good example of the style is **532 North Benton Avenue** (below). The original homeowners were Joseph and Josephine Bottani, and he was a building contractor and likely built this house in 1927. It has a 6-panel wood door with 3-light sidelights and a multi-light elliptical fanlight, and the door opens onto a 1-story portico with Doric columns and pilasters supporting a gable roof. Like many Colonial Revival houses, the windows of this example have multi-pane upper sashes but lower sashes with only a single large pane, a pattern never seen on colonial originals.



532 North Benton Avenue, 1927

According to McAlesters', about ten percent of Colonial Revival style houses are the Dutch Colonial Revival subtype, with the identifying feature being a gambrel roof. From about 1895 to 1915 the most common form had a front-facing gambrel roof while side gambrels became the predominant form in the 1920s and 1930s. The steeply pitched gambrels have either separate dormer windows or a continuous shed dormer with several windows. A full-width gallery may be set under the main roof or else have a separate roof, or a one-bay Federal portico may replace the gallery. Only four examples of the Dutch Colonial Revival style are in the Phase 4 area, and they all have front-gambrel roofs. Three were built circa 1917 and one was built in 1900. One (**635 Decatur Street**, below left) is finished with stucco while the others are frame. According to a plaque in the yard, John Platte purchased the lot at 635 Decatur in 1911. He was a local builder and architect and was one of the first builders in

town to make his own decorative concrete blocks.<sup>33</sup> He likely made the porch columns and the rusticated concrete block piers on which they rest. Platte built the house as rental property for employees of the American Car and Foundry Co.



635 Decatur Street, circa 1917



529 North Seventh Street, 1941

Cape Cod houses are 1- or 1½-story Colonial Revival structures loosely patterned after early wooden folk houses of eastern Massachusetts. This style house has a side-gabled roof that often has dormers on the front slope, and it is typically symmetrical. Although built throughout the Colonial Revival era, Cape Cod houses were most common in the 1920s and 1940s. Only four Cape Cod houses in the Phase 4 survey area were identified. One was built circa 1923, one in 1941 and two in 1951. The earliest one has lost integrity. The house at **529 North Seventh Street** (above right) is a brick example that was built in 1941.

#### Craftsman (nationally 1905-1930)

The Craftsman style was the most popular style for smaller houses built throughout the country during the period from about 1905 through the 1920s. It originated in southern California, where most landmark examples are concentrated, but quickly spread throughout the country through extensive publicity in magazines and pattern books, and some companies offered complete pre-cut packages of lumber and detailing to be assembled by local labor. Craftsman houses were inspired primarily by the work of Charles Sumner Greene and Henry Mather Greene, two brothers who practiced architecture together in Pasadena from 1893 to 1914. The Greenes were influenced by the English Arts and Crafts movement, an interest in oriental wooden architecture, and training in the manual arts. High-style interpretations are rare except in California.

Identifying features include low-pitched, gabled roofs with wide, unenclosed eave overhangs that often have exposed rafter tails that may be cut into decorative shapes; knee braces under the gables; and porches with the roofs supported by tapered or battered square columns that often rest upon more massive piers or a solid balustrade. These columns, piers and

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<sup>33</sup> Yard Plaque, 635 Decatur Street, St. Charles, MO.

balustrades often begin at ground level and extend well above the porch floor, and a variety of materials were used alone or in combination, including stone, clapboards, shingles, bricks, concrete blocks and stucco. The most common wall material is wood clapboard, but wood shingles, stone, brick, concrete block and stucco were also used. In the Phase 4 survey area there are four Craftsman style houses that range in date from 1909 to circa 1933, and three are brick and one has lapped siding. McAlesters' identifies four principal subtypes of the Craftsman style: front-gabled, cross-gabled, side-gabled, and hipped roof. In the Phase 4 survey area, two of the four Craftsman style houses are side-gabled, one is front-gabled, and one is hipped. One is 1-story and the other three are 1½-stories.

The 1½-story brick bungalow at **1101 North Fifth Street** (below left) was built circa 1920 and has a gallery with battered stone piers and a stone balustrade that extend to the ground. Built circa 1923, the front-gabled frame example at **701 Decatur Street** (below right) has the characteristic wide overhanging eaves and triangular knee braces in the gable end. A band of windows topped by a shed roof with exposed rafter tails is also in the gable end. The undercut gallery has half-wall railings and on top of the railing are slender box columns arranged in pairs, except on the corners where there are groups of three.



1101 North Fifth Street, circa 1920



701 Decatur Street, circa 1923

### Bungaloid

The term “Bungaloid style” is often used to describe vernacular bungalows, which are 1- to 1½-stories and typically have front-gabled, side-gabled, or cross-gabled roofs penetrated by a minimal number of dormers. Stylistic references are usually limited to the front porch columns and railing and reflect modest classical or Craftsman treatments. Twenty-two houses in the phase 4 survey area exhibit elements of the Bungalow form but without elements of the formal Craftsman style. Seven are brick and 15 are frame, and one is 1-story, one is 2-story and the remainder is 1½-stories. Built in 1928, the side-gabled Bungalow at **618 Lewis Street** (below, top row, left) has a gallery with classical columns resting on top of painted brick piers. The Bungalow at **810 North Seventh Street** (below, top row, right) has a hipped roof and undercut gallery with battered box columns resting on scored concrete pedestals, a typical Craftsman feature. All of the Bungaloid houses in the survey area were built in the 1920s except two. The two exceptions are **819 North Benton Avenue** (below, bottom row, left), which was built in 1935, and **805 North Fifth Street** (below, bottom row, right), which was built circa 1947. These two later examples are brick and in the front-gabled form.



618 Lewis Street, 1928



810 North Seventh Street, circa 1923



819 North Benton Avenue, 1935



805 North Fifth Street, circa 1947

### Minimal Traditional (nationally circa 1935-1950)

With the Great Depression, the Minimal Traditional style was a compromise that reflects the Tudor Revival influence but lacks its decorative detailing. First becoming popular in the late 1930s, the Minimal Traditional style dominated the post-World War II period of the 1940s and early 1950s, with a large number built in the large tract-housing developments of the period. Typical features include a dominant front gable, but the roof pitches are typically lower than in the preceding Tudor Revival style; little eave overhang; a simple entry stoop; asymmetrical façade; and 1- or 1½-story height. Windows are usually 1/1 double-hung sashes and there is often a large picture window that is sometimes flanked by narrow sashes, which is similar to the Chicago style window. Ten Minimal Traditional houses built between circa 1924 and circa 1952 were found scattered throughout the Phase 4 survey area. Three are brick and seven are frame, and three examples are 1-story, six are 1½-stories and one is 2-stories. Built in 1931, the asymmetrical 2-story example at **919 North Sixth Street** (below left) displays both Minimal Traditional and Colonial Revival influences. The Tudor Revival influence is evident in the front gable, which has one eave line significantly lower than the other, and in the projecting gabled 1-story entry bay, which has a round-arched, vertical board door and small leaded glass windows. The Colonial Revival influences include the gabled roof with cornice returns, 6/1 double-hung windows and keystones over the openings. Built in 1946, the house at **621 North Fifth Street** (below right) has a side-gabled roof with a wide projecting cross gable on the façade. Built immediately after World War II, it is an intact frame example with cement asbestos shingles and multi-light wood windows.



919 North Sixth Street, 1931



621 North Fifth Street, 1946

### Ancillary Buildings

Ancillary buildings provide important evidence in understanding the development of St. Charles' neighborhoods. They augment the understanding of the primary structure and are important to the overall historic and architectural character of the neighborhood. During the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the rear yards of city dwellings served utilitarian purposes. Common buildings included an outhouse, chicken coop, multi-purpose shed, summer kitchen, and carriage house or barn. Built shortly after the end of the Civil War, two of the oldest outbuildings in the Phase 4 survey area appear to be the masonry buildings in the rear yards of 535 and 720 North Benton Avenue. Situated to the northwest of the 3-story Second Empire style mansion on the property, the outbuilding at **535 North Benton Avenue** (below left) appears to have been a summer kitchen. The outbuilding at **720 North Benton Avenue** (below right) is directly behind a Federal style house and is connected to it by an open breezeway. It may have been a smoke house, based on the segmental-arched window opening filled with iron bars and the cross-shaped vents in the upper walls, but it could have been a summer kitchen.



535 North Benton Avenue, circa 1869



720 North Benton Avenue, circa 1870

With the arrival of the automobile, the existing carriage house or barn was converted to a garage or a new garage was built at the rear of the house. Based on their roof forms, the two

buildings shown below may have been barns that were later converted to garages. The building at **1013 North Benton Avenue** (below left) has a gambrel roof, walls clad with corrugated metal, vertical board sliding doors, and multi-light double-hung wood windows. The building at **539 North Fifth** (below right) has a front-gabled roof, and its east slope extends further down than the west slope, creating a “cat slide” or saltbox form. The building is shown on the 1909 Sanborn Insurance map, which is the earliest Sanborn map showing this block. Its walls are finished with vertical board siding.



1013 North Benton Avenue



539 North Fifth Street, pre-1909

Many of the outbuildings have shed or gabled roofs, and while some are brick, most are frame. The walls of frame structures were historically finished with board-and-batten siding, lapped weatherboard siding, or asphalt Bricktex siding. Although many historic outbuildings have been lost, some remain although their use could not always be determined, such as the shed-roofed, board-and-batten building at **1022 North Benton Avenue** (below left) or the shingled building at **921 North Benton Avenue** (left building in photo below right).



1022 North Benton Avenue



921 North Benton Avenue

By the 1920s, with the increased popularity of the automobile, detached garages were built behind existing houses using similar materials. For example, the grand Colonial Revival style house at **612 North Sixth Street** (below left) was built circa 1900 but its **garage** (below right) was built between 1917 and 1929. Like the house, the garage has a hipped roof and narrow weatherboard siding.



612 North Sixth Street: house built circa 1900, garage built between 1917 and 1929

Many of the houses that were constructed in the 1920s through 1950s had detached garages built with matching materials. For example, the house and garage at **805 North Fifth Street** (below) were built at the same time (circa 1947) and both have front-gabled roofs and walls of variegated bricks.



805 North Fifth Street, circa 1947. The garage is contemporary with the house.

Many historic outbuildings have been lost and every effort should be made to preserve those that remain. They not only are important in understanding the development of the neighborhood but their preservation is essential in order to maintain the historic and architectural character of the city.

### Commercial

The Commons Neighborhood is a residential area with very few commercial buildings. The most common type of commercial building is the gasoline station, reflecting the importance of the automobile to the neighborhood. Four former gasoline stations are located here. The two earliest were built circa 1936 and the other two were built in the early 1960s. The station at **816 North Kingshighway** (below left) is a good local example of the box-type service stations that were being built in the 1930s using modern materials such as porcelain enamel steel and large metal display windows. The building now houses a brake repair shop. Dungan's Market at **980 North Kingshighway** (below right) was built as a combination market, gasoline station and residence.



816 North Kingshighway, circa 1936



980 North Kingshighway, circa 1936

## Recommendations

During the Phase 4 survey, 270 properties were inventoried. These properties include 266 primary buildings, 148 outbuildings, 2 structures and 4 vacant lots. The majority (68%) of the primary historic buildings retains sufficient architectural integrity to contribute to a historic district; however, vinyl siding has been installed on many and/or the windows have been replaced, and some have had insensitive additions. Many of the houses that have lost integrity are along Kingshighway, the 900-1000 blocks of North Sixth Street, and the west side of the 1100 block of North Benton Avenue. These areas are omitted from the proposed National Register district, the boundaries of which are shown on the map on the following page.

The proposed district includes 336 total buildings, of which 246 (73%) are contributing and 90 (27%) are noncontributing, and there are two noncontributing sites. Of the 209 primary buildings, 169 (81%) are contributing and 40 (19%) are noncontributing. There are 127 secondary buildings, of which 77 (61%) are contributing and 50 (39%) are noncontributing. The district appears to be eligible for significance in the area of Architecture. In the future the City of St. Charles will apply for a Historic Preservation Fund grant for the preparation of a National Register nomination.

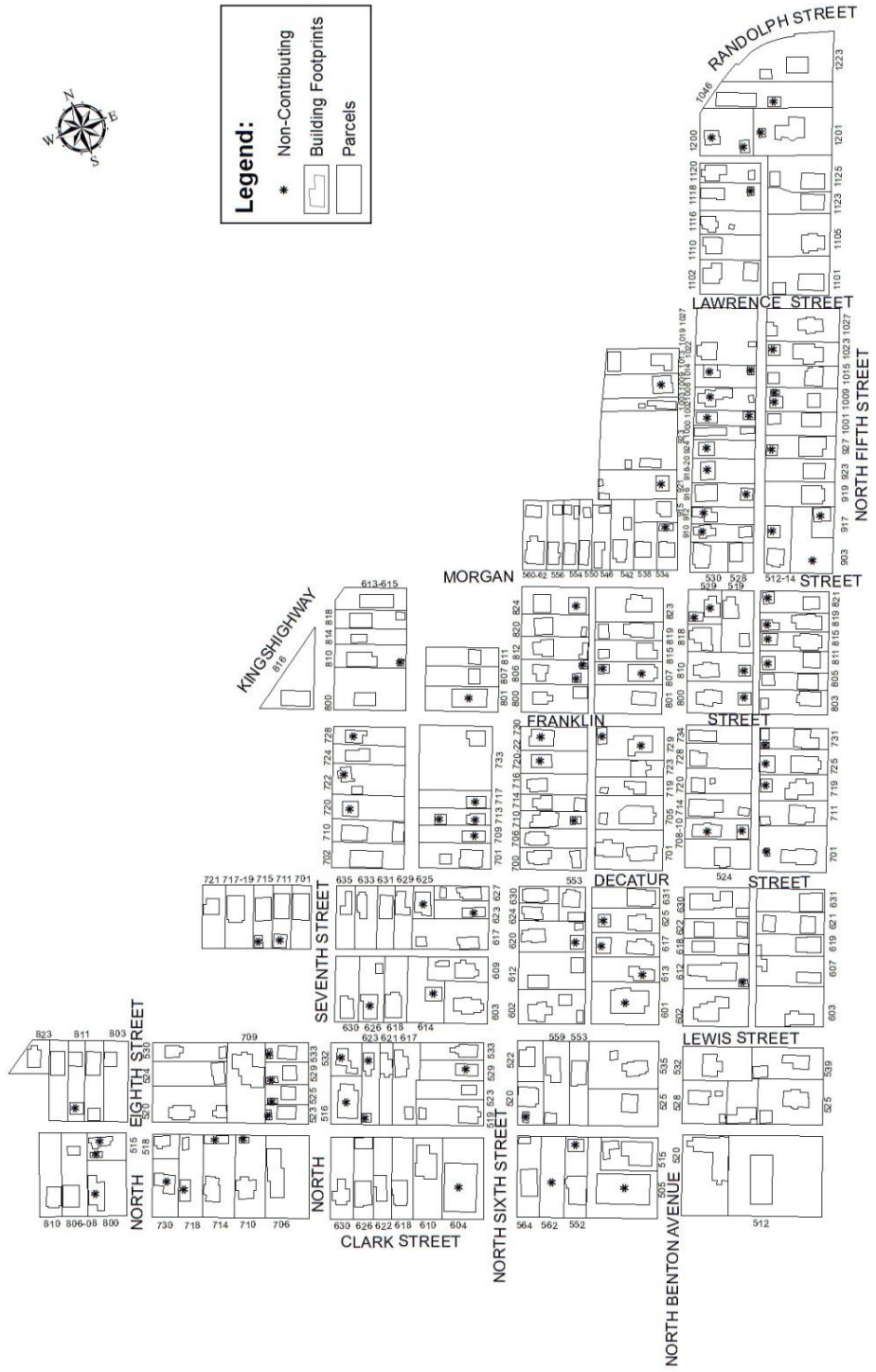
Of the 270 properties surveyed, none appear to be individually eligible for listing in the National Register and none were previously listed.

# Proposed Commons Neighborhood Historic District



**Legend:**

- \* Non-Contributing
- Building Footprints
- Parcels



Scale: 1"=150'  
 Map By: CWL  
 4/8/15  
 Z. Codev/Brends Projects/Commons Neighborhood  
 Proposed Commons Neighborhood Historic District



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