

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

## 1. Name of Property

historic name St. Paul Block

other names/site number Hermann-Brownlow Building; Hermann-Sanford Building

## 2. Location

street & number 401 South Ave. [N/A] not for publication

city or town Springfield [N/A] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Greene code 077 zip code 65806-2113

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

( See continuation sheet for additional comments [ 1. ] )

*Mark A. Miles*

*December 2, 2008*

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

Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
See continuation sheet [ ].
- determined eligible for the National Register.  
See continuation sheet [ ].
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**St. Paul Block  
Greene County, Missouri**

**5. Classification**

<b>Ownership of Property</b>	<b>Category of Property</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure
	<input type="checkbox"/> object

**Number of Resources Within Property**

Contributing	Non-contributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing.**

Historic and Architectural Resources of  
Springfield, Missouri

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

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

COMMERCE/TRADE: Specialty store  
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/  
EXTRACTION: Manufacturing Facility  
SOCIAL: Meeting Hall  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

COMMERCE TRADE/specialty store  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural classification**

Other: Downtown Commercial Building  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

foundation concrete  
 walls brick  
limestone  
 roof \_\_\_\_\_  
 other \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet [ ]

**Narrative Description** See continuation sheet [x].

**St. Paul Block  
Greene County, Missouri**

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

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

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

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

Property is:

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

**B** removed from its original location.

**C** a birthplace or grave.

**D** a cemetery.

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

**F** a commemorative property.

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

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

See continuation sheet [x].

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

**Bibliography** See continuation sheet [x].

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

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

**Areas of Significance**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Commerce  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

\_\_\_\_\_  
1920-ca. 1957  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

\_\_\_\_\_  
N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person(s)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

\_\_\_\_\_  
unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**St. Paul Block  
Greene County, Missouri**

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property:** less than one acre

**UTM References**

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	474045	4117868.			
C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing

[ ] See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

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

**Boundary Justification**

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

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Debbie Sheals  
organization Private Contractor date September 1, 2008  
street & number 29 S. 9<sup>th</sup> St. Suite 204 telephone 573-874-3779  
city or town Columbia state Missouri zip code 65201

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

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

**Photographs**

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

**Additional Items**

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

**Property Owner**

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

name Three-D Properties, Inc. attn: Debbie Dock  
street & number 2052 E. Nottingham  
telephone 417-883-4143  
city or town Springfield state MO zip code 65804

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St. Paul Block  
Historic And Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri  
Greene County, Missouri

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**Summary:** The St Paul Block, a large commercial building located at 401 South Ave., Springfield, Greene County, MO, was constructed in 1905 and has been used for commercial purposes ever since. It occupies a prominent corner lot just one and one-half blocks south of the Springfield Public Square. It is a three story brick commercial building with a flat roof and open storefronts along the two street elevations. The street elevations have nearly identical detailing, and the other two walls are relatively unadorned. The upper floors of the street elevations feature corbelled brick cornices, and even rows of windows that are topped with ornamental brick arches. The ground floor contains five narrow shop spaces that face South Avenue, as well as a large side entrance on West Walnut. The shop spaces have been interconnected for larger tenants for much of the building's history. The building is intact, inside and out; minor storefront alterations constitute the only exterior change of note to have taken place in the last century. It is the only resource on the lot. The St. Paul Block is an intact example of the Downtown Commercial Buildings Property Type, as described in the MPS Cover Document, "Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri." It meets the registration requirements set forth in that document, under Criterion A, in the area of COMMERCE. The building is in good condition, and it is immediately recognizable to its period of significance, which runs from 1920 to ca. 1957.

**Elaboration:** The St. Paul Block sits at the southwest corner of West Walnut Street and South Avenue. The intersection of West Walnut and South Avenue is a prominent commercial junction. South Avenue is the primary commercial artery to the south of the Springfield Public Square, and the nearby blocks of Walnut Street are lined with commercial buildings.

The St. Paul block is one of the larger buildings in that commercial area, where most historic commercial buildings are two-part commercial blocks that have one to two shop spaces. Most are two to three stories in height. The St. Paul Block sits directly on the sidewalk at the east and north sides of the lot, which face the public streets. The west, rear wall is shared with an adjacent two story building, and the south wall overlooks an open lot. Sanborn maps show that the side lot has been used for parking and automobile service areas for much of the last century.<sup>1</sup>

The two street elevations are very similar. The upper floors have red brick walls, with wide windows that are topped with segmental arches. The arches are

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<sup>1</sup> Springfield Sanborn maps, 1902-1950.

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composed of triple sailor courses and accented with brick keystones. Most of the windows have early 1/1 wood sashes; a few have newer single sheets of glass and/or plexiglass in lieu of sashes. Each window has a slim rock-faced limestone lug sill. The street elevations have corbelled brick cornices, each of which has a narrow band of limestone detailing. The short parapet walls above the cornices are topped with dark terra cotta coping tiles. The upper east corner of the north elevation has a flat datestone set high in the wall, near the cornice. That would be the most visible corner to someone traveling south from the Square. The shield-shaped datestone is of gray limestone, and it reads "ST. PAUL BLOCK 1905."

The ground floor level of each street elevation is filled with tall storefronts. The lower three fourths of the storefronts contain open plate glass display windows, and the upper sections are filled with simple, vertically ribbed metal panels. The display windows extend almost to the sidewalk and are divided by narrow mill-finish aluminum framing. The east wall, which faces South Avenue, contains five single doorways with aluminum and glass doors. The north wall, which faces West Walnut street, has a single, larger entranceway at the west edge of the building. That entrance is recessed, with a double doorway and large glass sidelight. The building was listed in city directories with a separate Walnut Street address between 1950 and 1955, and it appears that the north entrance and the current storefronts were added around that time. (See Appendix 1: Chronology.)

The west and south walls are constructed of the same type of red brick used on the street elevations. The lower part of the west (back) wall is connected to a two-story commercial building on the adjacent lot. The third floor of the back wall has a row of arched window openings the same size as those found on the front walls; they are all boarded over. An elevator penthouse near the west edge of the roof is also visible from that side of the street. The top two floors of the south side wall have the same type of arched windows used elsewhere on the building. Most of those have early 1/1 wood sashes. A small metal fire escape runs from the third floor to the second.

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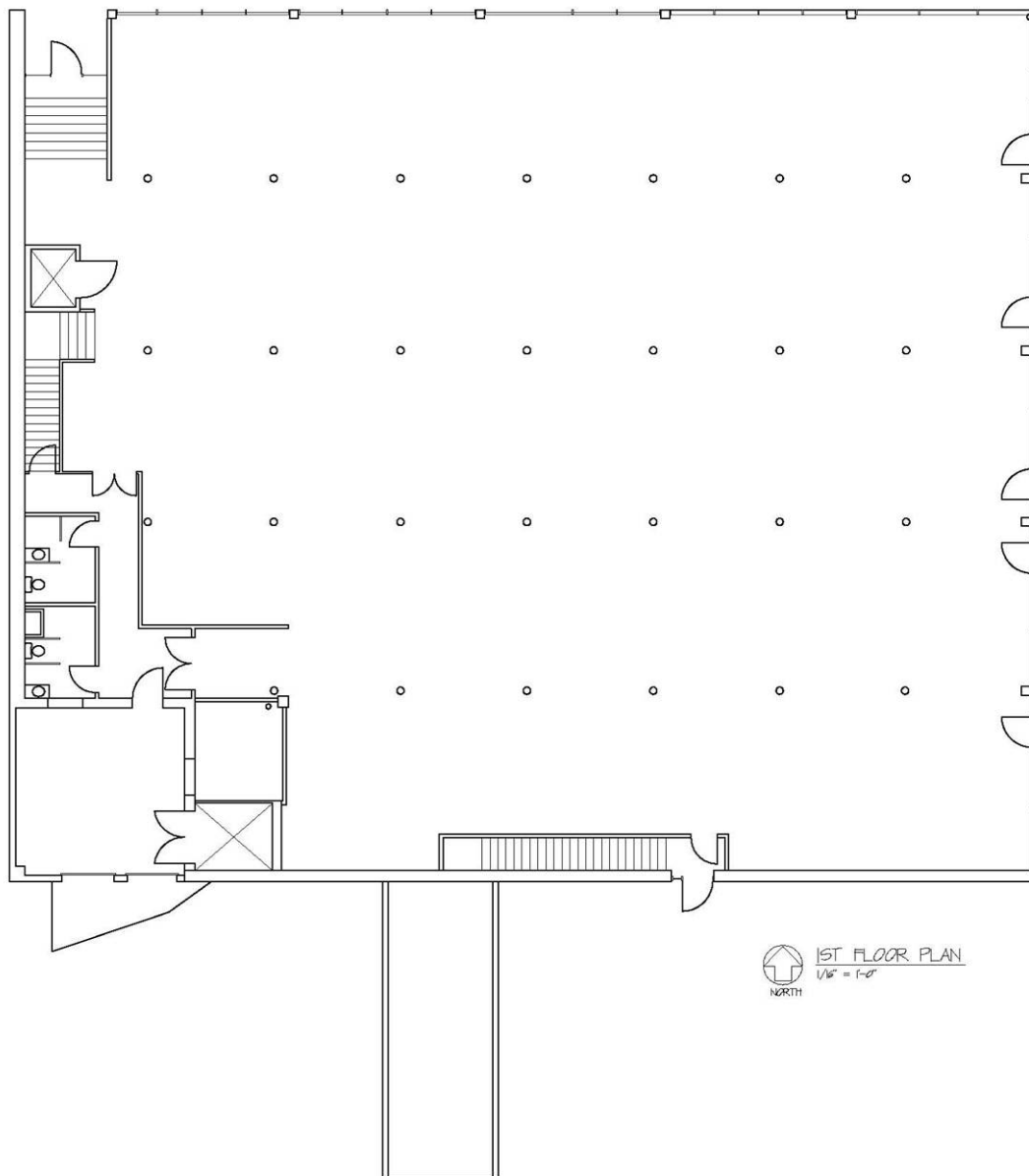
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Historic And Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri  
Greene County, Missouri

**Figure One. First Floor Plan.**

Courtesy of Melissa Higbie, Esterly, Schneider & Associates, Inc., AIA, Springfield, MO  
Not to scale.



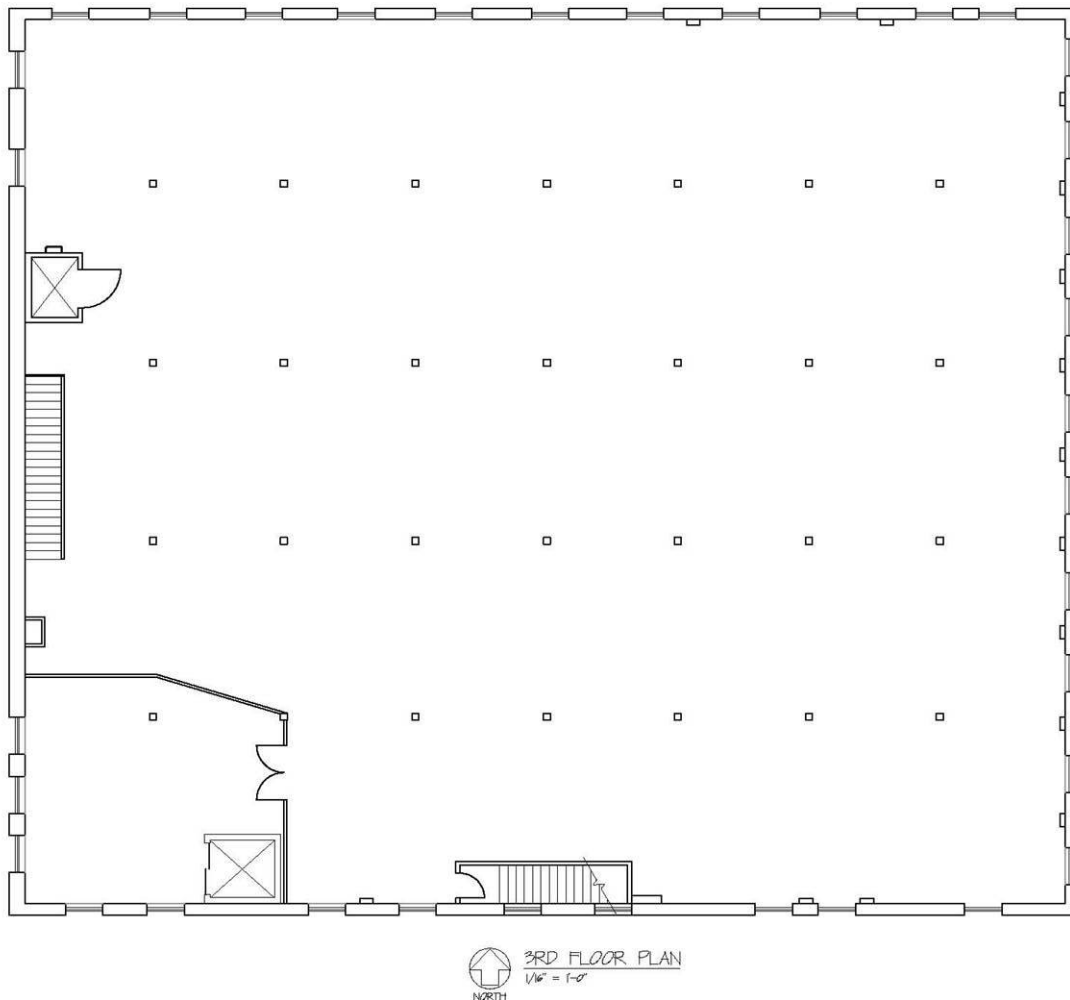
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**Figure Two. Third Floor Plan. (Second is similar)**

Courtesy of Melissa Higbie, Esterly, Schneider & Associates, Inc., AIA, Springfield, MO  
Not to scale.



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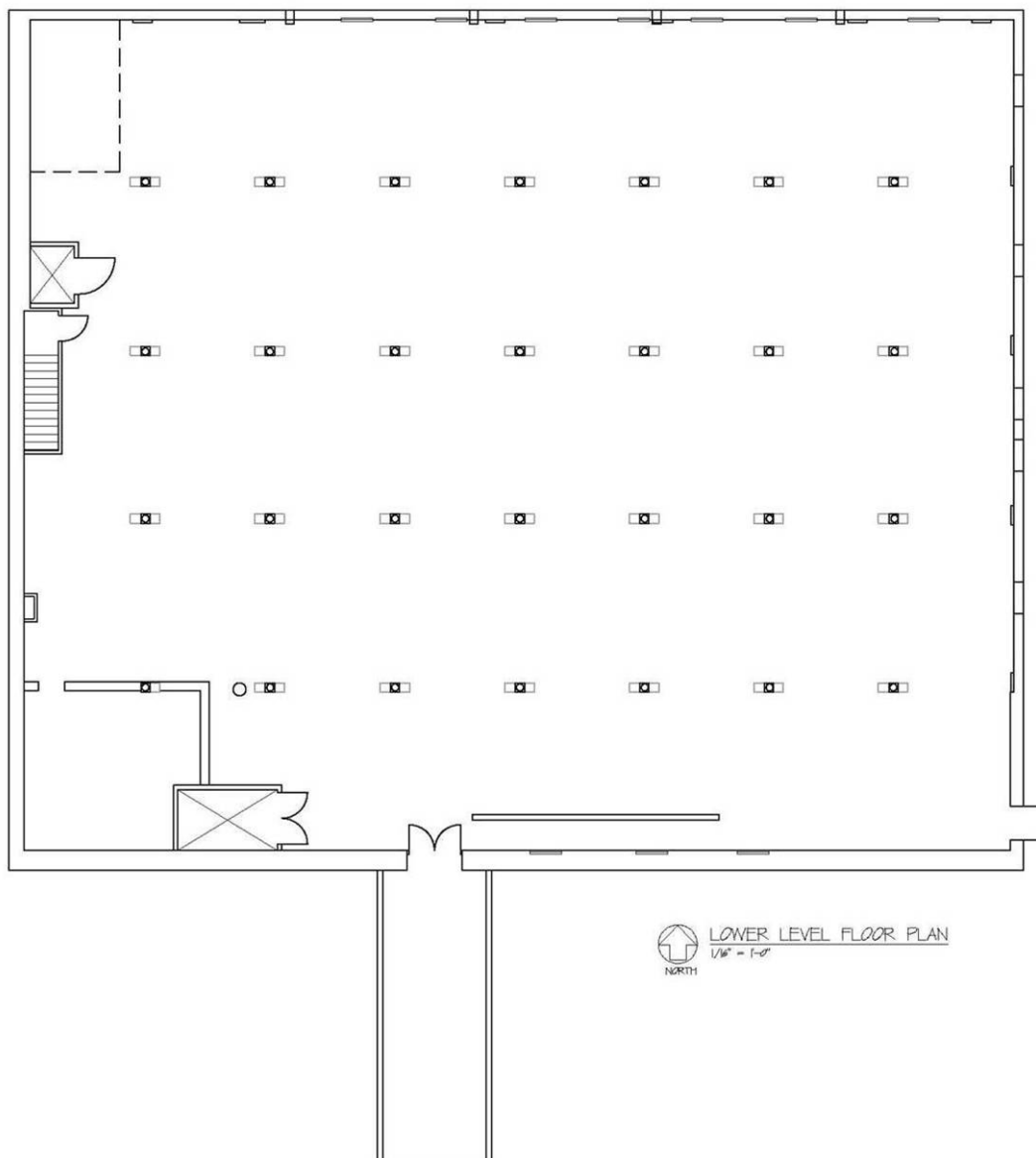
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**Figure Three. Basement Plan.**

Courtesy of Melissa Higbie, Esterly, Schneider & Associates, Inc., AIA, Springfield, MO  
Not to scale.



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The ground floor of the south wall has an early or original loading area near the back, and a single pedestrian door near the front. A wide recessed ramp near the center of the elevation leads down to a basement-level garage entrance. The garage door opening is intact, with some newer infill and a pair of modern pedestrian doors. The loading area has some newer brick infill as well, and there is an early or original loading door near the center of the ground floor that has also been bricked in. The single door near the front of the south wall has a small flat canopy over it; the doorway and canopy date to the mid-1900s or later. The south wall also bears the remnants of a painted wall sign, located near the front edge of the wall and covering much of the wall below the third floor window sills. The sign is very faded, and appears to have had at least two sets of lettering along its top edge. It is just possible to make out "...nlow Co." at the end of the top line, presumably from the Hermann-Brownlow Company, the long-time occupant of the building. A large tile mosaic panel is mounted to the base of the wall near that sign.

The interior spaces are largely intact. Each floor is open, with even rows of support posts and few interior partitions. The ground floor has ornamental round iron support posts and the upper floors have simpler square wooden posts. The ground floor has heavy poured concrete posts, which support a structural concrete floor system for the main level above. There are two elevators and a set of stairs that serve all levels of the building, and another set of stairs links all except the basement. The west wall has a passenger elevator and a formal set of stairs, and a freight elevator and utility stairs are located near the south wall. The freight elevator is accessible from the recessed dock area at the back end of the south wall.

The ground floor is the most finished of the interior spaces. In addition to the round columns, it has an ornamental pressed metal ceiling, and some wood flooring. The formal south staircase has an elaborate wooden balustrade with paneled newel posts, and the passenger elevator cab has an open cage adorned with cast iron wreaths. The plan is largely open, although there are some interior partitions and about a third of the ground floor rooms have newer suspended ceiling systems. Some of the original columns have been wrapped with newer sheathing, but overall, the ground floor retains a high level of integrity. The basement appears to have always had a utilitarian function, and aside from a few painted surfaces, it has no finishes of note. The basement floors, walls, ceilings and support posts are all of poured concrete.

The upper two floors are very similar in layout and level of finish. Both have open plans with even rows of support posts, and hardwood flooring. Each floor has

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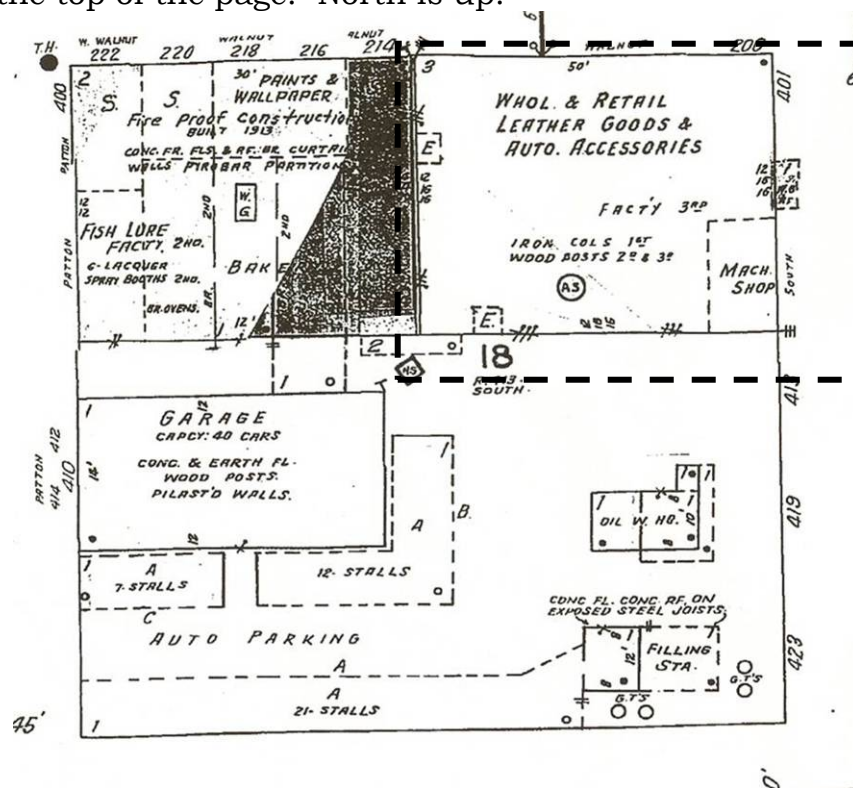
St. Paul Block  
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simple tall beaded baseboards, wide flat window casing, and a plank ceiling, and most walls have exposed red brick. The floors, ceilings and woodwork all appear to be early or original. The walls have been altered at some point by the removal of what was probably an original plaster finish; a very few interior walls still have a plaster finish.

The south staircase on each of the upper floors is also formally detailed, with turned balusters and square newel posts. The stair on the second floor is partially enclosed with an early beadboard wall and a large multi-pane glass window. The window has been painted over, but appears to be intact.

An upcoming rehabilitation project will retain the commercial function of the first floor, and add new residential units to the upper levels. Important historic features will be retained and repaired throughout, and the building should continue to look and function much as it has for the last century.

**Figure Four. 1950 Sanborn Map of the block.** South Avenue is to the right and Walnut Street is at the top of the page. North is up.



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Historic And Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri  
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**Summary:** The St. Paul Block, at 401 South Avenue, in Springfield, Greene County, Missouri is locally significant under Criterion A, in association with the historic context “19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial Buildings, ca. 1850-1948.” The St. Paul Block was constructed on a busy corner lot in 1905, at a time when the business district was expanding outward from the Public Square into the surrounding blocks. It is one of the larger commercial buildings constructed on South Avenue in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and it has a strong history of commercial use. It is significant in the area of Commerce, for its association with one of the most prominent and long-lived harness makers in the city’s history, the Hermann-Brownlow Company. F. C. Hermann first entered the harness business around 1893, and fifty years later, his company was still making harnesses, as the Hermann-Brownlow Company. They were the last harness-maker to operate in the city of Springfield. They did not go out of business when harness-making became a thing of the past, however. They added automobile parts to their line in 1912, and gradually evolved into an automobile supply company, a function they continued into the 1970s. The company bought the St. Paul Block in 1920, and remained in business there until ca. 1957. The period of significance for the building corresponds to their occupation of the property, 1920-ca. 1957. The St. Paul Block has continuously served a commercial function for over a century, and it still looks much as it did during the period of significance.

**Elaboration:**

The St. Paul Block was constructed in 1905 by a group of local businessmen, apparently as a speculative venture. In late 1904 or early 1905, George Culler, John Schnook, and R. W. Stewart bought the property, and almost immediately began construction. By March 1905, an article in the local paper noted that they had prospective customers lining up for a chance to occupy a new building on such a prominent corner. An article in the Springfield Republican titled “Site is Wanted by Eight Firms” noted that “many propositions for building on this site have been made to the owners,” and that they planned to build either a “first class business house” or a hotel.<sup>2</sup> They obviously settled on the “first class business house” option, as the building now on the site was completed just a few months later.

The St. Paul Block is apparently named for the building it replaced. The lot at South and Walnut was occupied for decades by the St. Paul Methodist Church,

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<sup>2</sup> “Site is Wanted by Eight Firms.” The Springfield Republican, March 1, 1905, p. 2.

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which was razed in early 1905 to make way for the current building. That church building was constructed sometime before the Civil War, and used by the Methodist congregation into the first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The congregation moved into a new church building in 1904, and by early 1905, the old church was the property of the local Elks Club, who sold it to Culler, Schnook and Stewart.<sup>3</sup>

The demolition was covered in the local paper, complete with descriptions of unusual items found during the demolition, such as Civil War bullets and a cache of lead bricks found in one of the interior walls. The church had been occupied by Union soldiers and had served as an armory during the Civil War, and the contractor who found the lead bricks speculated that they were meant to be used for the production of ammunition. The old church was referred to with respect by those involved in the demolition, and they may even have reused a piece of it for the new building project. The unusual shape of the datestone located on the current building invites speculation that it was a piece of the original church.

The redevelopment of the property was typical of what was happening throughout the surrounding blocks during that time period, due to a significant expansion of the business center around the Public Square. The Springfield Public Square was the original commercial center of Springfield, and it continued to be an important commercial hub even after North Springfield was established in 1870. The addition of railroad service closer to the square in the late 1800s assured that supremacy. As noted in the MPS cover document “as railroad lines were built just north of the Public Square, downtown Springfield became the dominant commercial area in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with expansion occurring into another ten blocks surrounding the public square”.<sup>4</sup> The same document noted that “Between 1902 and 1910 dozens of new brick commercial buildings were constructed around the Public Square and up to two blocks from the square in each direction. While some of these buildings replaced earlier buildings on these lots, most of this development was into residential areas.”<sup>5</sup>

The area around the St. Paul Block saw just that type of change in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The 1902 Sanborn shows few commercial buildings on South Avenue anywhere south of Walnut Street. The lots on the 400 block of the street were

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3 Lucile Morris Upton. “Fifty Years Ago in Springfield... The Good Old Days,” Springfield News, January 9, 1955, p. B5, and March 6, 1955, p. B5.

4 Philip Thomason, “Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri,” Multiple Property Submission, Nov. 18, 1998, p. F-3.

5 Thomason, p. E-9.

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occupied primarily by widely spaced residential properties, and at least two churches, including St. Paul's. Within a dozen years, almost all of those residences and both of the churches had been replaced with commercial buildings, and much of the street was lined with tightly-packed brick commercial buildings, one of the largest of which is the St. Paul Block. Many of those commercial buildings remain in place and largely intact today, and the area is dotted with small commercial historic districts. They include the South Avenue Historic District (listed 06/25/99), just east of this of this building, and the South-McDaniel Patton Historic District (listed (03/07/03) which is just north of this one.

The St. Paul Block was home to several businesses during the period of significance. The first-known occupant was the Blackwell Home Furnishings Company, who had the ground floor by 1907, and may have occupied all of the first and second floors as well.<sup>6</sup> The Blackwell Company stayed for several years. City directories show that they were still there in 1911, but they were gone by 1920, when the Hermann-Sanford Saddlery Co. bought the property and took over all three floors.<sup>7</sup> That company, which was headed by F. C. Hermann, was to occupy the building for more than a quarter of a century.

That saddlery company was one of the largest and most enduring harness making businesses in the history of Springfield. The company had its roots in a saddlery shop opened by F. C. Hermann in the late 1800s, and in 1900, he took on partners to form the Hermann-Sanford Saddlery Company.<sup>8</sup> Hermann-Sanford grew to be the largest harness maker in the city, and in 1924, the company name changed to Hermann-Brownlow. Herman-Brownlow outlasted all of its competitors, to earn the distinction of being the last harness manufacturer in Springfield.

Franklin C. Hermann was born in Illinois in 1857. He entered the leather business at a young age as an apprentice harness maker, and he opened his first retail shop in Vandalia, Illinois at the age of 19. He moved to Springfield, Missouri in 1885 and spent several years as a traveling salesman for local leather companies. By the 1890s, he once again had his own shop, the Springfield Saddlery Company.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> City Directories, which were used to trace business occupants, include scattered information for the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and businesses were not indexed by address until the early 1920s. Blackwell was found by searching all business listings for this address, and it was the only company to found with an address for this building. See Appendix I for early directory and Sanborn map listings.

<sup>7</sup> Lucille Morris Upton, "Fifty Years Ago in Springfield... The Good Old Days." Springfield News, September 19, 1971, p. C2.

<sup>8</sup> "F. C. Hermann, Business Leader Here, Dies" Springfield Daily News, January 15, 1930, p.1.

<sup>9</sup> A later company history cited 1893 as the year he opened his first Springfield shop; the first known

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At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he teamed up with local banker E. L. Sanford and former customer J. W. Brownlow to form the Hermann-Sanford Saddlery Company.<sup>10</sup>

The company grew steadily in the next decades, especially after landing a contract making harness for the government during World War I, which generated in more than \$2,000,000 worth of sales in a two-year period. It was in that same decade that they bought out what was then the city's oldest leather-working business, the Steineger Saddlery Co, which had been founded by Melchior Steinegar in the 1880s.<sup>11</sup>

Hermann-Sanford operated at several different locations near the public square in their first two decades, and in 1920 they purchased the St. Paul Block, which was to house their manufacturing and retail operations for almost three decades. Just after that move, in 1921, Hermann sold most of his interest in the company to Sanford and moved to Eau Claire, Wisconsin to take charge of the bankrupt Gillette Tire Company there. Sanford was named president, and Brownlow became the vice-president.

That transition apparently did not work out very well. In 1924, the local paper noted that "F. C. Hermann was elected president of the board of directors of the Herman-Sanford [sic] Saddlery Company, to succeed E. L. Sanford."<sup>12</sup> No mention is made in the article of why the change was made, but Sanford disappeared from company listings after that time. Earlier directory listings show that he was also involved in banking, and while heading Hermann-Sanford in 1922 was also the president of the Holland Banking Company, so it is possible he simply decided to concentrate on banking instead.

Brownlow was re-elected as vice-president at the same meeting, and the name of the company was changed one last time, to Hermann-Brownlow. Although that 1924 article said Hermann was going to move back to Springfield, a later article showed that he stayed in Eau Claire and visited regularly instead, and that Brownlow served as the general manager of the company.

The Hermann-Brownlow Company celebrated their 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1928.<sup>13</sup> That anniversary date, which would have put the founding at 1893, was apparently

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directory listing for his shop was 1899.

<sup>10</sup> "F. C. Hermann, Business Leader Here, Dies," p.1.

<sup>11</sup> "Hermann-Brownlow Celebrates 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary," Springfield Daily News. May 13, 1928, Hermann-Brownlow Section.

<sup>12</sup> "Hermann is Named Head of Company." Springfield Leader and Press. January 24, 1924, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> "Hermann-Brownlow Celebrates 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary."

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based upon the year Hermann got into the business in Springfield rather than the formation of Hermann-Sanford in 1900. Although the 1900 date was more often used in later sources, it appears that the company found the 1893 date to be a convenient reason for a celebration, and their recent name change may have encouraged them to seek extra publicity.

The anniversary was marked with the publication of an entire 16-page section in the Springfield Daily News, devoted exclusively to, and apparently financed by, the Hermann-Brownlow Company. One of the first pages of that publication noted that “the purpose of this section is to present a comprehensive idea of the growth and present magnitude of the Hermann-Brownlow Company.”<sup>14</sup> The next page had a large rendering of the St. Paul Block, titled “the home of the Hermann-Brownlow Company” along with portraits of F. C. Hermann, president and J. W. Brownlow, vice-president and general manger.

That special section offers a snapshot of a company in transition, with healthy sales in both horse and automobile-related lines. They employed 75 men, including some 14 traveling salesmen, and supplied “saddles, harness and automobile equipment” to seven states and Cuba. Featured division mangers included J. R. Bird, a long-time traveling salesmen for the company who used to make his sales calls via horse and buggy, and W. A. Dyche, who joined the company when they began carrying automobile parts in the 1910s. Dyche was quoted as saying that the future for the parts business looked strong, since cars were beginning to “keep their attractive appearance much longer since we have good roads....In the old days by the time the parts began to wear out an automobile had lost its good looks and the owner was likely to replace it completely.”<sup>15</sup>

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14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

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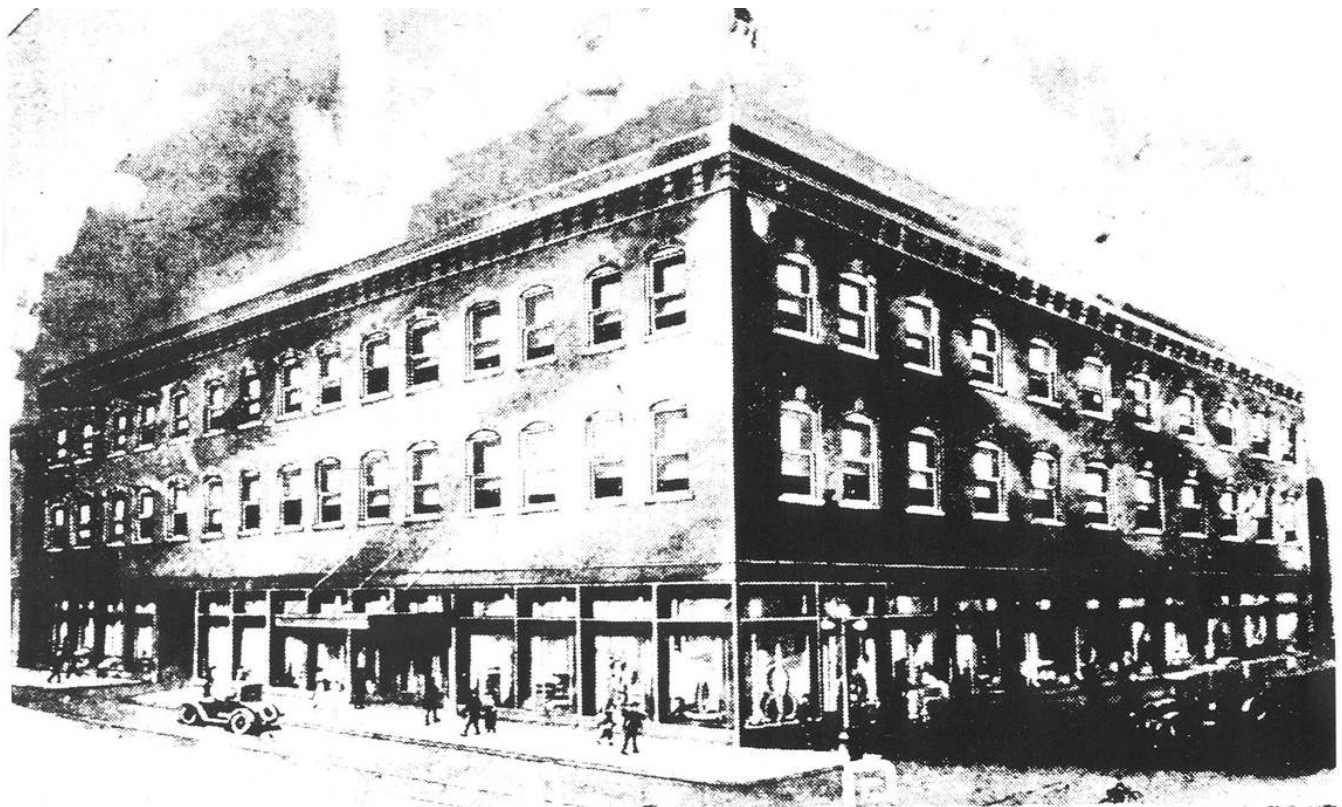
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**Figure Five. 1928 Rendering of the St. Paul Block.**

From "Hermann-Brownlow Celebrates 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary," Springfield Daily News, May 13, 1928, Hermann Brownlow Section.



Harness making was still an important part of the business, and a description of the work done in the building showed that the entire third floor was devoted to harness production, with some work occurring on the second floor as well. Saddles were made by skilled workmen in one corner of the third floor, and the rest of that space was devoted to harness making. Heavy horse and mule collars were cut and sewn there, and stuffed on machines located on the second floor. The company turned out as many as fifteen dozen collars every day, and received orders for hundreds of collars, harnesses, and saddles at a time, especially in spring and fall.

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The author noted that most of those orders were for work harness, “the demand for buggy harness having almost disappeared.”<sup>16</sup> The rest of the second floor, and the basement were used for shipping and storage, and the first floor contained showrooms and office space.

The company officials were obviously aware of the way times were changing, but they were clearly not planning to give up on the harness business. One full-page ad included the following statement, accompanied by a drawing of a heavily muscled work horse:

*Always we have been dealers in transportation! During the first years of our career saddle horses were in vogue. Demands were made upon us for fancy saddles and bridles, and fancy they were because in those days a man's station in life was indicated by the horses he maintained and nothing was left undone to make them appear more beautiful.*

*The perfection of the automobile brought about the retirement of the saddle horse—but in no way did it retard the harness industry. Today there are twenty million horses and mules at work in the field in the United States, and, we might add that there are not that many automobiles in the United States.*

*The farming industry depends today, as it always has, upon horses and mules to do the work. We believe that the future will reveal no changes in this respect as it has been proven conclusively time and time again that to use horse power on the farm is more efficient and economical.*

*During the life of our company, time has brought many changes. We've seen the automobile industry grow from infancy to the largest industry in the world. We are distributors for a tremendous amount of accessories throughout our territory. But—there remains, as there always has been, a tremendous field for us to serve—the vast harness industry! Upon this business we have built the present Hermann-Brownlow Company and upon this business we shall continue to serve.<sup>17</sup>*

Even though their predictions on the future of horse power were not quite prescient, the waning of equine popularity did not mean the end of Hermann-Brownlow. The company gradually shifted its offerings to take advantage of the ever-

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> “Hermann-Brownlow Celebrates 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.”

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growing demand for automobile supplies, although they continued to make harnesses and saddles into the early 1950s. They also added luggage and other leather goods to their offerings, which would have provided an outlet for the skilled leatherworkers and leather suppliers that once drove the harness making side of the business. Over the next three decades, automobiles gradually became their focus. They added a machine shop on the ground floor around 1950, and by 1955, there was no longer a mention of leather goods in their directory entries.<sup>18</sup>

That change echoed statewide and national trends, as harness making gradually became a thing of the past. A review of Missouri “Red Books” put out by the Missouri Bureau of Labor Statistics over a half century documents the gradual decline of the trade across that state. Late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century reports routinely listed harness making as a major industry, although as early as 1897 one state analyst noted that “the industry has suffered materially in recent years through the substitution of electric and cable motive power and the bicycle for man’s best friend, the horse. All agree that the success of this business depends directly upon the farmer.”<sup>19</sup> By 1931, there was only one harness-maker operating in all of Greene County, and by 1946, harness-making was no longer even a category in the state’s list of common industries.<sup>20</sup>

Hermann-Brownlow was most likely that sole harness maker the state labor board found in Greene County in 1931, as they were the only harness maker in Springfield for most of the time they occupied the St. Paul Block. They were the only harness maker listed in the Springfield City directories as early as 1922, and they maintained that status for another quarter of a century. Finally, between 1950 and 1955, they switched to automobile supplies only.

The function of neighboring businesses changed in that time period too; by 1933, a filling station and “Auto Laundry” business had been established just south of the building and a garage occupied the lot to the southwest. Both of those businesses remained in operation for the rest of the period of significance. (See Figure Four.) It was also in the mid-1950s that the side entrance on Walnut Street was first listed separately, as the home of a wholesale dry goods company. Hermann-Brownlow probably did not need as much space once they stopped manufacturing harnesses, and adding a separate side entrance would have allowed them to lease the upper floors to the dry goods company while continuing to use the ground floor.

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18 City directory listings for 1911, 1922, 1928, 1933, 1940, 1950, and 1955, 1958, 1963, 1970, 1980.

19 Rozelle, Arthur, Commissioner, Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Jefferson City, MO, 1897.

20 Division of Industrial Inspection, 1946-47 Statistical Report. Jefferson City, MO. 1948.

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In 1957, the Hermann-Brownlow Company relocated to a smaller building in a commercial area located a few blocks west of the public square. They continued in business at that location as an auto parts supplier into the early 1970s. Even with the smaller building, they apparently maintained their regional presence; an article on the company that was published in 1971 noted that they also had stores and affiliates in Rolla, Branson, Sedalia, and Clinton at that time.<sup>21</sup>

By 1958, the St. Paul Block had five South Ave. addresses, which indicates that it had been divided back into smaller shop spaces by then. The building housed a number of retail concerns until the late 1980s, when it was, ironically, returned to its original function as a home furnishings store. Wheeler's Furniture took over all three floors in 1988 and stayed until the spring of 2008, when the building was sold to the current owners.

The St. Paul block provides a large, intact example of the property type "Downtown Commercial Buildings," as discussed in the MPS cover document, "Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, MO." In form and function, it provides an outsized example of a two-part commercial block, which the cover document noted was one of the most common local building forms during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The building is in the early stages of a complete rehabilitation, which will assure its continued use well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The rehab has been carefully planned to ensure that, when complete, the St. Paul Block will still look much as it did when it was the home of the last harness factory in Springfield.

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<sup>21</sup> "Auto Parts Firm Names a President." Springfield Leader and Press. December 7, 1971, p. 21.

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Appendix I: Selected Chronology.

1893 Franklin C. Hermann opens a saddlery store, per a business history put out 35 years later. Hermann had been listed as a “com’ trav” in an 1892 city directory. The same directory included 4 harness makers and one harness and saddle maker in the business listings for the city; all were individuals, and none appear to be very large concerns. Melchior Stenieger was one of the harness makers.

1899 City business directory includes the Springfield Saddlery, owned by F. C. Hermann, at 322 South Avenue.  
E. L. Sanford was a cashier at the Exchange National Bank.

1900 F. C. Hermann, E. L. Sanford, and J. W. Brownlow teamed up to form the Hermann-Sanford Saddlery Company. They were later said to have bought out the Steineger Company, which was established in the late 1800s and was said to be the oldest establishment of its kind when they took it over.

1902 Sanborn shows St. Paul’s M. E. Church at this corner. That same year, the congregation sold the property to the local Elks Club for \$10,000, to help fund a new church building.

1904 Hermann-Sanford Saddlery Co. moves into a five story building at 401 St. Louis St, a few blocks east of the square. The 1910 Sanborn map shows that to be a five story building with Wholesale on the lower floors, a saddle factory on the fourth and a harness factory on the fifth floor.

1905 January 9. Local paper notes sale of the church property by Elks to George Culler, John Schmook, and R. W. Stewart, for \$12,000.

March 1. Local papers headline “Site is Wanted by Eight Firms,” plans call for “either a “first class business house” or a hotel.

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1905 City Directory includes all three new owners with occupations. None have a business in this location. George Culler (Suveryor and partner in Schmook and Culler, Insurance, Bonds, Surveys), John Schmook, (Secy/Treas New Phoenix Foundary & Machine Co., plus Schmook and Culler); R. W. Stewart, (Real Estate.)

**1905, ca. building is completed, and named the St. Paul Block, per the datestone on the north wall.**

1907 City Directory:

Blackwell Home Furnishing Co., 401 South Ave. They appear to be the first major tenant.

F. J. Curran, pres.

J. S. Farrington, VP

F. G. Blackwell, sec/treas.

There is little information on any of these men in local sources. Felix Blackwell's profession was listed as "trav" in the 1906 directory, and "comm'l trav" in the 1892 directory, presumably for traveling salesman.

1910 Sanborn, St. Paul Block in place (401 South Ave.) labeled as having a Lodge on the third floor. No lodge listings at this address were found in any directories.

An article about the Springfield Leather Workers' union noted that Hermann-Sanford and Steineger-Rountree were the largest of 10 leather goods manufacturers in the city.

1911-1912 Directory, Blackwell still at that location, with Felix G. Blackwell as sec and treas.

The directory also shows Hermann-Sanford Saddlery Co. at "cor. St. Louis & Jefferson".

Business listings included 10 automobile-related businesses, 7 retail harness shops and two wholesale harness makers, Hermann-Sanford and Steineger.

That same year, the Hermann-Sanford Company was one of forty local businesses that banded together to form the Springfield Jobbers' and Manufacturers' Association.

1917, ca. Hermann-Sanford added automobile equipment to their offerings, under

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the supervision of W. A. Dyche.

**1920 Hermann-Sanford Saddlery Company moves into 401 South Ave. They occupy the entire building. They bought the property from R. W. Stewart for about \$10,000.**

1921 Hermann-Sanford officers, as listed in the city directory:

F. C. Hermann pres.

J. W. Brownlow, VP

E. C. Parmenter, treas.

E. L. Sanford, sec.

Later that year, E. L. Sanford buys a good deal of F. C. Hermann's stock in the company, which at that time was said to be worth \$600,000.

F. C. Hermann moves to Eau Claire, Wisconsin, to take over a nearly bankrupt rubber company, the Gillette Rubber Company.

1922 Directory lists Hermann-Sanford Saddlery Co. 401-407 South. Listing includes officers:

Edw. L. Sanford, Pres. (Also president of Holland Banking Co.)

Joseph W. Brownlow, VP

Howard L. Nelson, Sec.

Edgar C. Parmenter, treas.

They are the only Wholesale Harness Co. listed in the yellow pages, and one of 38 automobile accessories suppliers. There were more than 95 automotive listings altogether.

1924 F. C. Hermann returns to Hermann-Sanford, to "succeed E. L. Sanford" as president. The change happened after a meeting of the stockholders, but the article did not say why. J. L. Brownlow was re-elected as vice-president at the same meeting and the name apparently changed about the same time. Although the article said Hermann was going to move back, a later article showed that he stayed in Eau Claire and visited regularly. Name change to **Hermann-Brownlow Company**.

1928 Directory

Frank C. Hermann, pres.

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J. W. Brownlow, Vice Pres.

J. Riley Bird 2<sup>nd</sup> VP

J. H. Frank, Sec.

E. Cretcher, Treas.

The directory entry reads "Wholesale Manufacturers and Jobbers, Saddlery, Harness, Leather, Automobile Accessories, Tires & tubes." They were the only Harness Manufacturer listed.

1933 and 1940 Directories. Not many changes, except that luggage and more automotive supplies were added to Hermann-Brownlow's listing. Still making saddlery and harness, and carrying luggage and leather.

1950 Sanborn map labels the building as "Whol. & Retail Leather Goods & Auto Accessories", and a machine shop is located in the southeast corner of the ground floor.

1955 Hermann-Brownlow's Directory **listing no longer includes any mention of leather.**

Also for the first time there is a listing for the side entrance on Walnut:  
210 W. Walnut W. M. Arwood Co., Whol. Dry Goods.

**ca. 1957 Hermann-Brownlow relocates to a building on College Street, west of the Public Square.**

1958 The St Paul block may have been subdivided into smaller shops, since there are separate directory entries along South Avenue:

401 House of Tomorrow, furniture dealer

405 and 409 Vac.; 415-19 Robberson Oil Co.

Hermann-Brownlow is listed at 633 College Street, as a wholesale supplier of automotive supplies and accessories.

1970 Directory. Hermann-Brownlow is listed at 615 College, but gone from business listings by 1980.

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

LOT SIXTY-ONE (61), BLOCK EIGHTEEN (18), ORIGINAL TOWN OF SPRINGFIELD, GREENE COUNTY, MO.

**Boundary Justification**

The current boundaries encompass all of the land historically associated with the building.

**Photographs**

The following information is the same for all photographs:

St. Paul Block  
401 South Avenue, Springfield  
Greene County, MO  
Debbie Sheals  
April, 2008

**List of Photographs**

See photo key for description of camera angle.

1. Northeast corner, looking south on South Ave.
2. North elevation, looking west on Walnut Street.
3. Looking east on Walnut St.
4. South Elevation and adjacent lot.
5. Looking north on South Ave.
6. Looking south on South Ave. Note datestone in upper center.
7. East elevation.
8. Ground floor interior, north end, looking east.
9. Ground floor interior, stairs and elevator, looking west.
10. Second Floor interior, south end, looking east.
11. Third floor interior, north wall, looking east
12. Basement, west end, looking east.

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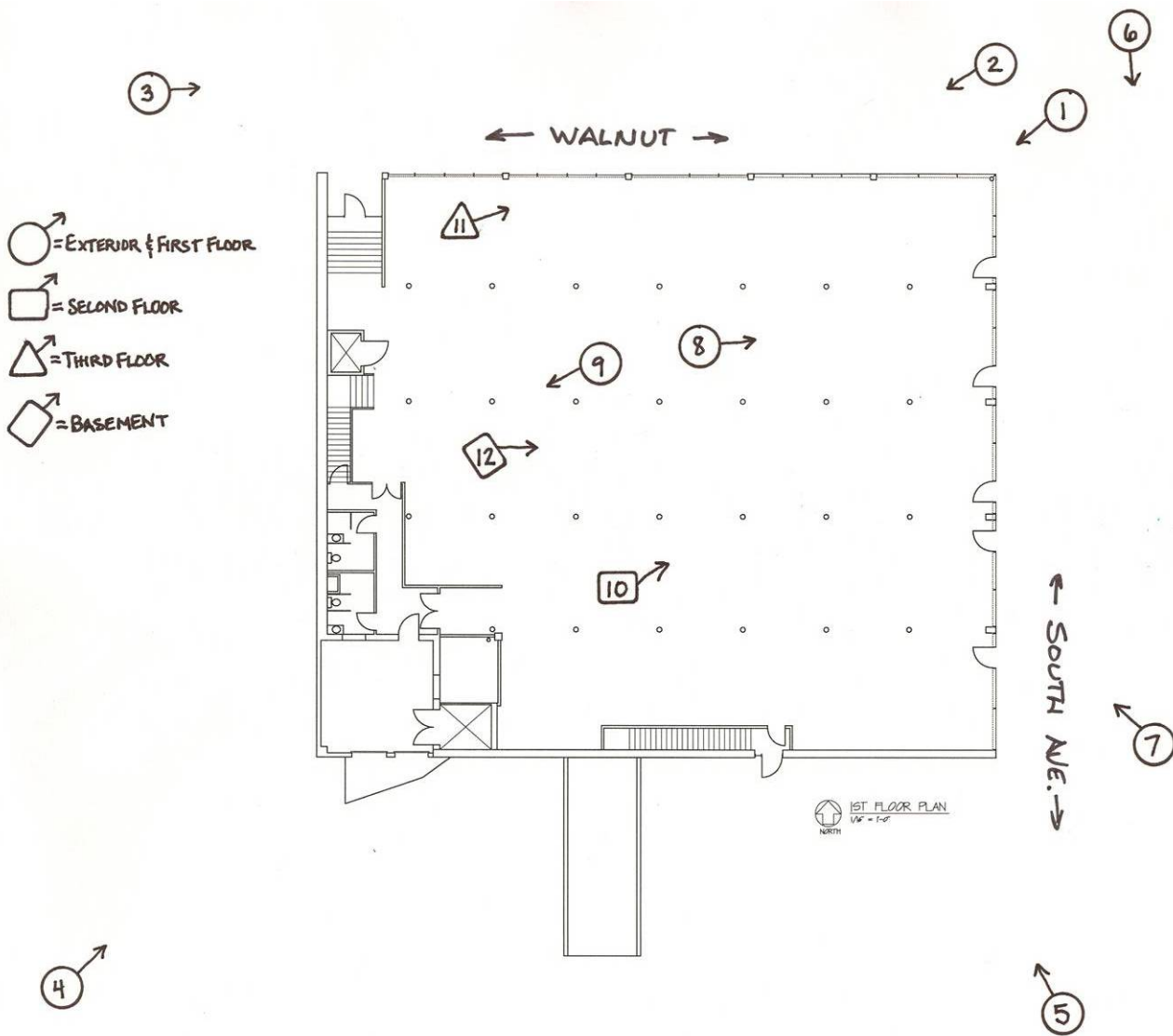
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**Photo Key.**

Base plan of first floor courtesy of Melissa Higbie, Esterly, Schneider & Associates, Inc., AIA, Springfield, MO. Not to scale.





Wheeler's  
Furniture

Wheeler's  
Furniture

STOP  
4-WAY

South  
1st St

WIFI

NO PARKING

STOP



South AVE 400 S

Wheeler's Furniture

ler's  
ture

WiFi

No Parking

WHEELER'S FURNITURE



GALLERY  
CARLSON BUILDING  
RESERVED PARKING



STOP



PEPSI  
FRI LADIES NIGHT  
LADIES 21 UP FREE  
SAT HIP HOP





NO PARKING  
ANYTIME

SPOT + PLUS  
833-4959

Wheeler's  
Furniture

Wheeler's Furniture  
2000 North Ave  
471-888-1234

Wheeler's Furniture  
2000 North Ave  
471-888-1234



Pershing St  
200 E.

86



**STAXX**  
style. service. simplicity.  
contemporary fashion for men and women

331

R&R

STOP

STOP

WHEEL'S  
furniture

NO PARKING  
LOADING  
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Wheeler's  
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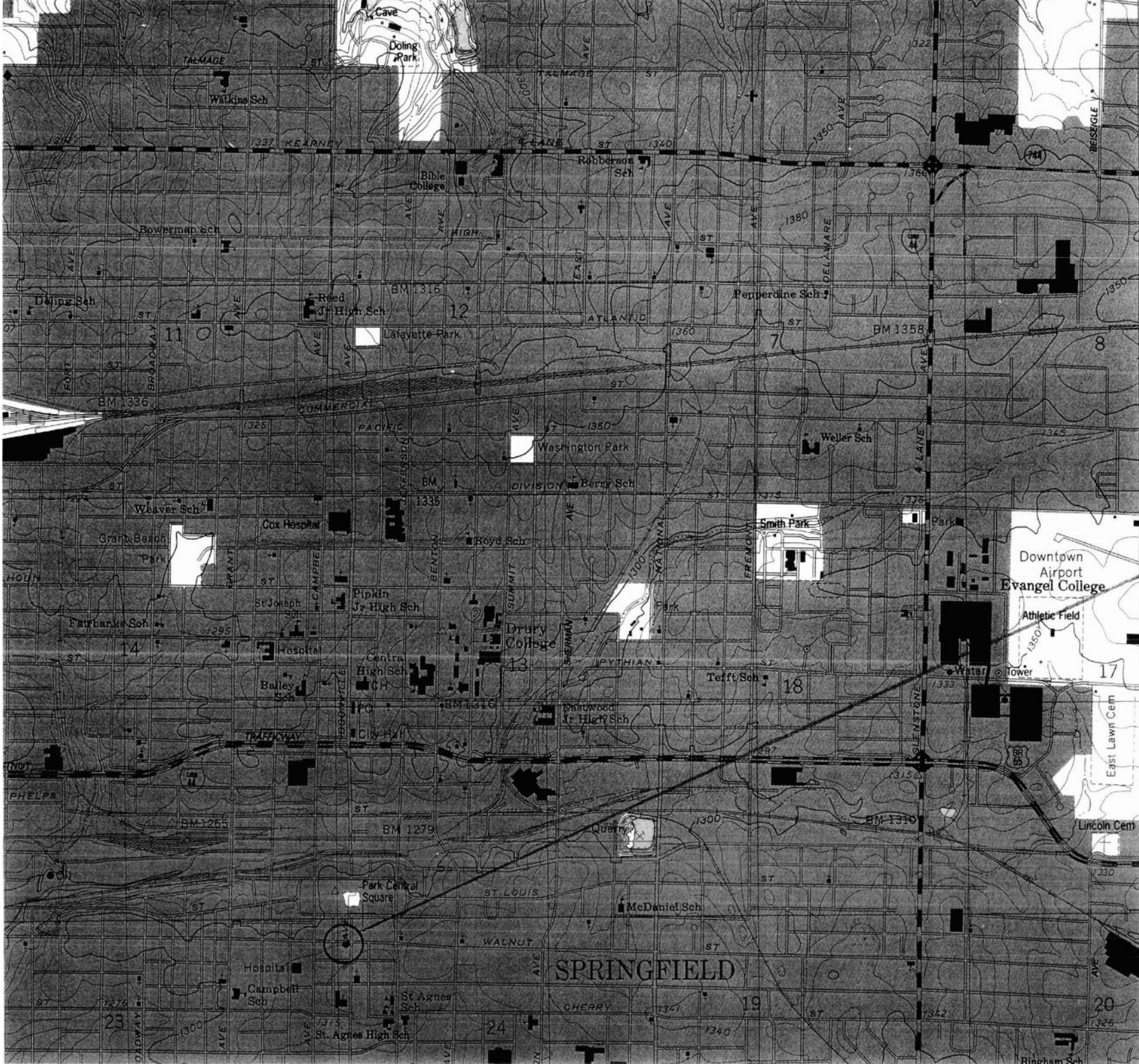
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HOOKER

Riverside



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ST. PAUL Block  
401 South Avenue  
Springfield  
Zone 15  
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Northing 4117868

SPRINGFIELD