

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items

1. Name of Property

historic name TWA Administrative Offices Building

other name/site number N/A

2. Location

street & town 11500 Ambassador Drive N/A not for publication

city or town Kansas City N/A vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Platte code 165 zip code 64153

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Mark A. Miles September 20, 2007
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: _____ Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

- 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) _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
1		sites
2		structures
		objects
4		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE / business

COMMERCE / business

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Miesian

foundation CONCRETE

walls Steel

GLASS

roof SYNTHETICS

other Marble

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

TWA Administrative Offices Building
Name of Property

Platte County, MO
County and State

8. Description

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- 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

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

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

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

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

TRANSPORTATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1968-1971

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Skidmore Owings & Merrill, Architects

Wilson, Morris, Crain & Anderson, Associate Architects

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other Name of repository:

Platte County Historical Society, TWA Museum

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

TWA Administrative Offices Building
Name of Property

Platte County, MO
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 30

UTM References

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 1/5 3/5/4/6/7/7 4/3/5/1/4/4/9
Zone Easting Northing

2 1/5 3/5/4/8/0/9 4/3/5/1/4/4/9
Zone Easting Northing

3 1/5 3/5/4/8/0/9 4/3/5/1/6/3/2
Zone Easting Northing

4 1/5 3/5/5/0/3/3 4/3/5/1/6/3/2
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of the nominated property is delineated on the attached USGS map by the polygon whose vertices are marked by the following UTM reference points: 15/354677/4351449; 15/354809/4351449; 15/354809/4351632; 15/355033/4351632; 15/355033/4351161; 15/354677/4351161.

Property Tax No. N/A

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the building, site, and structures that have been historically associated with the TWA Administrative Offices Building and that maintain historic integrity. The intact original landscape design, which includes the symmetrically arranged surface parking, tree-lined lawns and islands, as well as large swaths of grassy open space, contributes significantly to the property's historic/architectural integrity. The six-acre parcel of the original site directly north of the building has been excluded per NPS guidelines because it has been subdivided, is under different ownership, and contains a building constructed after the period of significance.

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sally Schwenk, Historian and Kerry Davis, Architectural Historian
organization Sally Schwenk Associates, Inc. date April 2007
street & number 112 West 9th Street, Suite 415 telephone 816-221-2672
city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64105

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.
Photographs: Representative **black-and-white photographs** of the property.
Additional items: (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

name/title 11500, LLC
street & number 31 North Tejon Street, Suite 500 telephone 719-473-4530
city or town Colorado Springs state CO zip code 80903

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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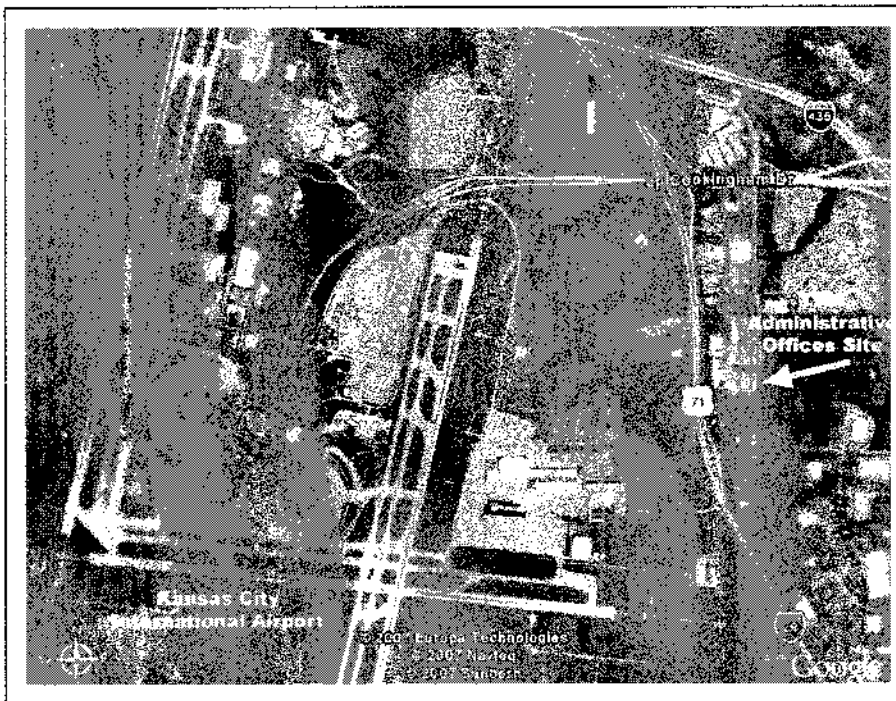
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

**TWA Administrative Offices Building
Platte County, Missouri**

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION STATEMENT

The TWA Administrative Offices Building, erected in 1968-1971, is located at 11500 Ambassador Drive, just east of Interstate 29 and sixteen miles north of downtown Kansas City. The building and its surrounding open lawn and original driveways and parking areas occupy a 30-acre site across Interstate



29 from Kansas City International Airport. The building is highly visible from Interstate 29, standing alone on a slight knoll.

The property includes the main TWA Administrative Offices Building, the architect-designed site, the original emergency generator building, and the massive air-cooling tower as contributing resources. The TWA Administrative Offices

Building is a four-story building executed in the Modern Movement Miesian style. The building conveys an overall horizontal effect underscored by the dramatically contrasting black and white grid of the exterior walls, which are eleven bays wide on the east and west elevations and seven bays wide on the north and south elevations. The welded steel frame of the building is organized into 36-foot square units that form a rectangular footprint measuring 252 feet by 396 feet that comprises 500,000 square feet of space. Bands of tinted grey-black glass separated by thin black aluminum muntins and panels of white marble form a curtain wall that conceals the structural members. Each elevation is identical in wall treatment and the building lacks any additional architectural ornament or adornment. A low, horizontal dark metal entrance canopy in front of the entrance door system is the only visual cue from the exterior of the building denoting the location of the primary façade. The separation of the canopy from the building and the lack of a dominant entrance on the primary façade underscore the visual impact of the geometric wall grid.

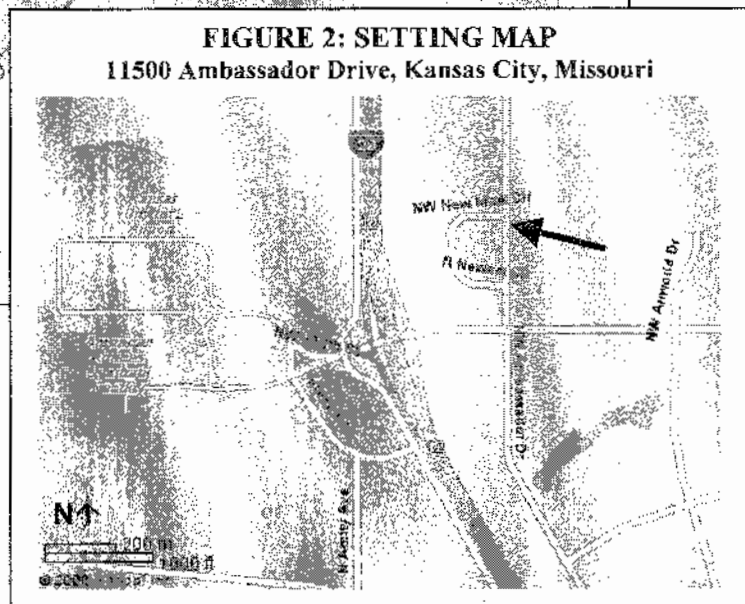
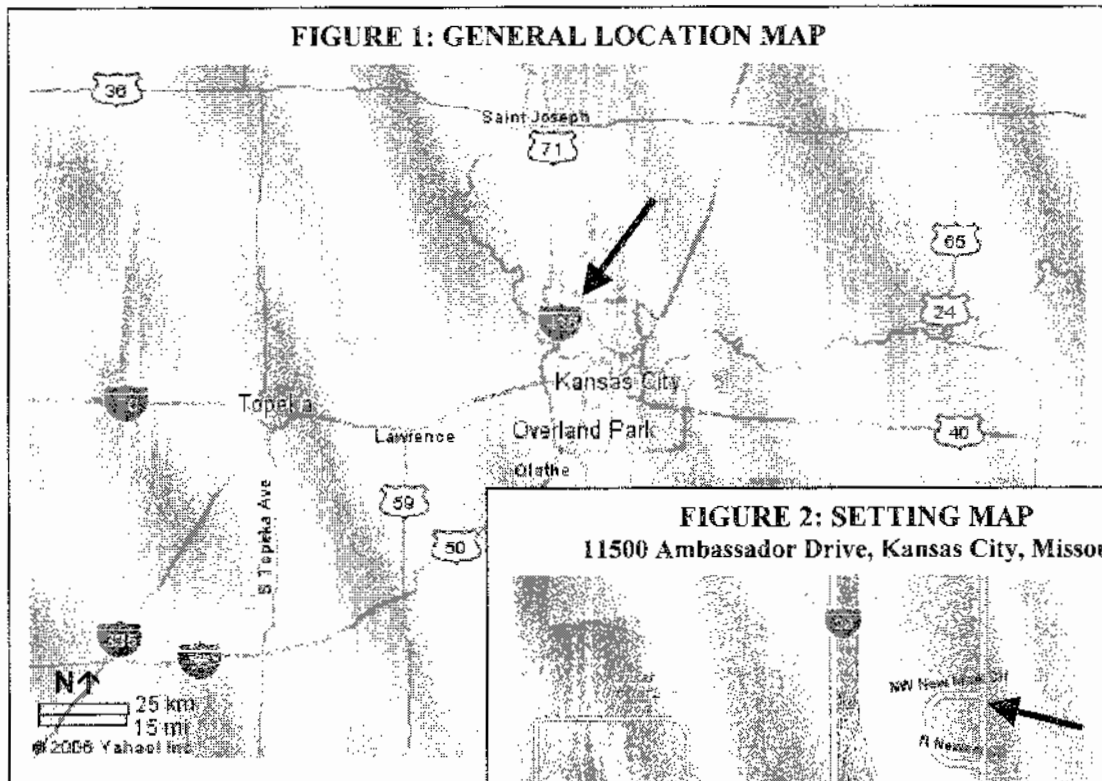
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**TWA Administrative Offices Building
Platte County, Missouri**

The building encompasses approximately 500,000 square feet of space on four floors and a below-grade basement. A low, deeply recessed first-story entrance lobby opens up into a large full-height atrium at the center of the building. The interior office space, which is arranged on a 6-foot module, fills the area between the central atrium and the building's perimeter walls. The aesthetic of the exterior grid also occurs in the atrium where a continuous corridor of open balconies encircles the atrium space on each floor, which reads as rectangular voids that contrast with the grid of the white marble-clad columns and spandrels. The atrium retains the original glass and steel skylight. Within the atrium and directly across from the entrance lobby is a pair of wide, exposed criss-crossing escalators that provide a contrasting geometric feature in a space defined by sleek white marble horizontal spandrels and vertical columns. The upper floors feature an open perimetral floor plan. The 36-foot modular floor plan design anticipated the reconfiguration of space over time.



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CONTINUATION SHEET**

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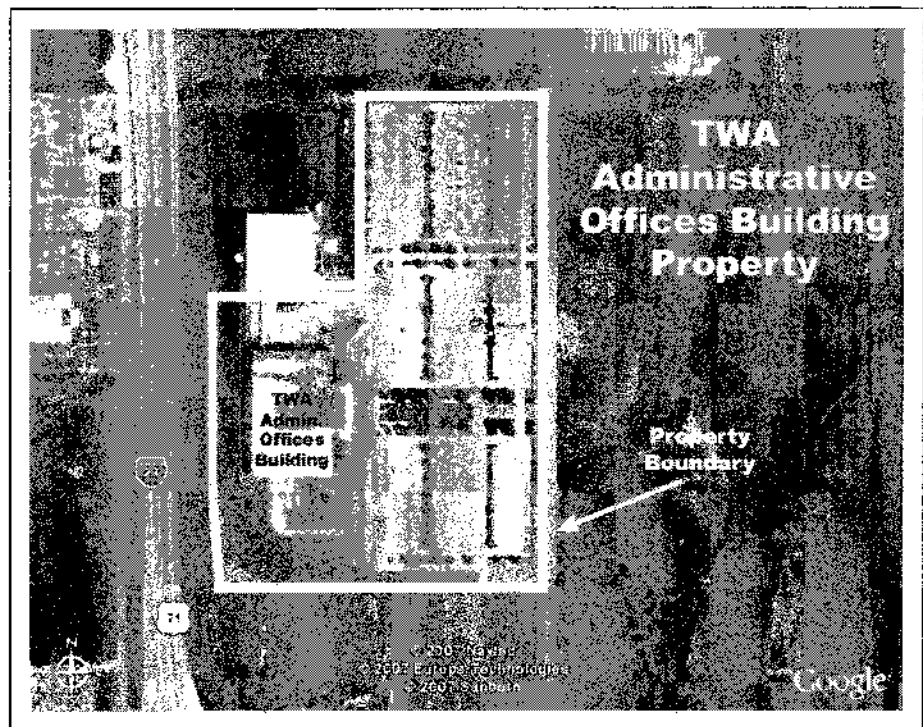
**TWA Administrative Offices Building
Platte County, Missouri**

ELABORATION

LOCATION AND SETTING

The TWA Administrative Offices Building is the centerpiece of a 30-acre site that includes the original landscape design of the firm of Sasaki, Dawson, DeMay Associates, Inc., which incorporated an entrance drive, lawn areas, extensive surface parking lots, and plantings and walkways, all of which are in front of the building along the east length of the rectangular parcel.

A circa 1978 long, narrow hyphen with dark metal siding extends from the west end of the north elevation of the TWA Administrative Offices Building toward an adjacent building that at one time served as an extension of the headquarter building's computer and data processing infrastructure. The hyphen once served as a corridor between the two buildings. The hyphen has been disconnected by the removal of the portion



attached to the adjacent circa 1978 computer building, and the opening is walled off. The land upon which the adjacent circa 1978 computer building stands was platted as a separate parcel.¹ A chain link fence topped with barbed wire surrounds the building, further delineating the separation from the TWA Administrative Offices Building site. The adjacent circa 1978 computer building is two stories tall and features a contrasting grid aesthetic that is similar to that of the TWA Administrative Offices Building, however, it is executed in dark brown brick and a lighter masonry surface. Because this building is on a

¹ The City of Kansas City, Missouri owns the parcel legally described as "11530 N Ambassador Drive TWA Administrative Center Lot 2."

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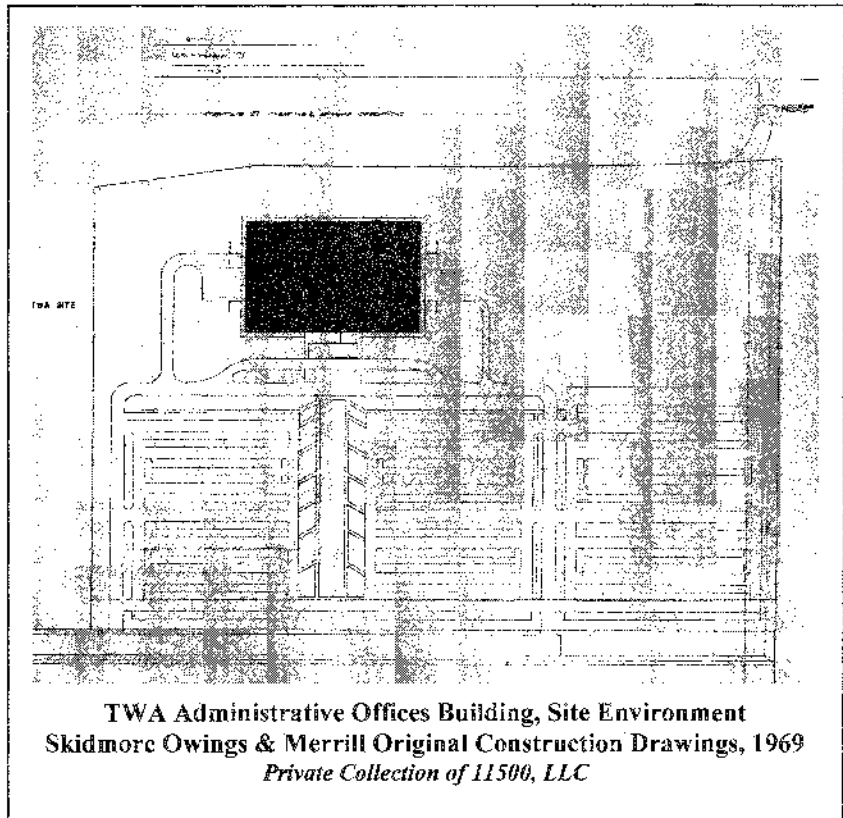
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**TWA Administrative Offices Building
Platte County, Missouri**

separate parcel, is under different ownership, and was constructed after the period of significance, it is not within the proposed boundaries of the TWA Administrative Offices Building site. The original landscape plans show a lake in this area; however, the lake was never built at this location.

A narrow rectangular lawn lined on each side by deciduous trees and concrete walkways forms a 420 foot long perpendicular axis leading from Ambassador Drive to the primary entrance at the center of the east elevation of the building. The surface parking is divided into three areas, two of which are symmetrically placed on each side of the axial entrance lawn and a third that is aligned to the north. Each of the parking areas has two long I-shaped grassy "islands" and seven parallel double-loaded paved driving lanes with a north-south orientation. A 25 foot wide paved lane encircles the two south parking areas and features two spurs that flank the building's north and south elevations to access the below-grade service dock levels at these locations. A new set of concrete steps is located between the axial entrance lawn and the primary entrance canopy. Medium-sized deciduous trees line the primary façade of the building.



The original emergency generator building, which is a one-story concrete building, stands adjacent to the north elevation. The generator building is two bays wide and six bays deep and its long side has an east-west orientation. Louvered air intake openings define the bays on the north, east, and west elevations; the openings on the south elevation contain double-leaf doors. A large air-cooling tower occupies a concrete pad directly to the south of the generator building, as shown on the original plans.

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**TWA Administrative Offices Building
Platte County, Missouri**

EXTERIOR

The TWA Administrative Offices Building is a low four-story horizontal glass and marble box that rises 60 feet above grade. Each of the exterior elevations is identical in treatment and dominated by the visually contrasting curtain wall composed of dark glass set in black aluminum frames and white marble spandrels that clad the steel structure. The resulting grid is seven bays wide on the north and south elevations and eleven bays wide on the east and west elevations; each bay is 36 feet wide. Thirty-six-foot square modules form the building's welded steel frame and the building has a rectangular footprint measuring 252 feet by 396 feet. Each wall section contains six large glass panels that are 10 feet 3 inches tall; the two outermost panels of each section are 4 feet 7 inches wide and the inner panels are 6 feet wide.

The only architectural feature that designates the east elevation as the primary façade is the one-story entrance canopy that spans the width of the office building's three center bays and features a flat roof supported by steel support posts. The canopy and posts are sheathed in smooth black aluminum. The entrance behind the canopy has new aluminum-framed triple-leaf glass doors set within the original entrance bays. The basement level is partially exposed on both the north and south elevations where the grade has been excavated and concrete retaining walls installed to allow vehicular loading access to this utilitarian service level. These basement elevations each feature vehicular loading bays with overhead doors.

INTERIOR SPACES AND FEATURES

The TWA Administrative Offices Building encompasses approximately 500,000 square feet of space on four floors and a below-grade basement. A low, broad entrance lobby extends 60 feet from the primary entrance into the central atrium, which is the dominant feature of the interior. The full-height atrium occupies the nine central 36-foot square modules of each floor, around which all other spaces are organized along the perimeter of the floor plates. The aesthetic of the exterior grid is continued around the perimeter of the atrium where open continuous balconies encircle the space on each floor and read as voids that contrast with the grid of the white marble-clad spandrels and columns. The original full-height criss-crossing escalators are located at the west end of the atrium, providing a striking visual contrast to the surrounding grid. The floor features the original black terrazzo finish and a portion of the original planter landscape feature; new glossy black tile occupies the footprint of the original feature. The entire atrium and surrounding walkways are naturally illuminated by the 108-by-108-foot glass and steel skylight structure that spans the atrium. The glass ceiling panels are set within a steel framing structure painted black that echoes the 36-foot module pattern. This structure holds over 970, 5-by-2-foot glass

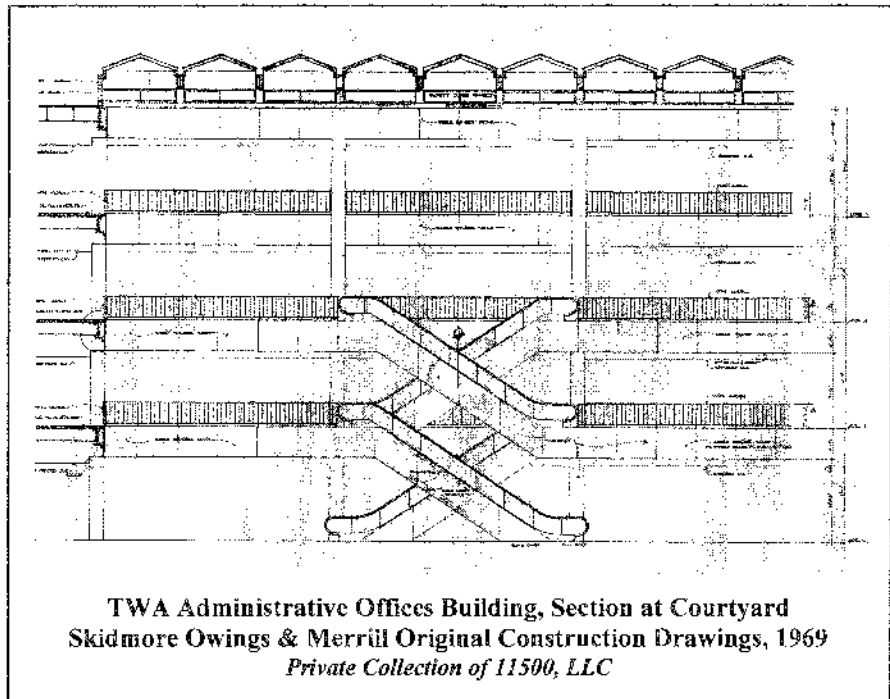
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**TWA Administrative Offices Building
Platte County, Missouri**

panels set within peaked sub-framing within the master structure. The master structure also features a low clerestory around its entire perimeter. The interior atrium, balcony corridors, and office spaces reflect the minimalism of Miesian design. In addition to the atrium, black terrazzo covers the floors throughout the entrance lobby and first floor corridors. Throughout the building, sheetrock covers the walls.



Two elevator and stair cores, measuring 36 feet by 108 feet are at the north and south sides of the atrium. Restrooms and mechanical and utility rooms flank a central pair of elevators with stair towers located at each end. The wood paneling that originally covered the north and south walls has been removed. The elevator doors are stainless steel.

The basement level of the TWA Administrative Offices Building accommodates typical mechanical, storage, and utility areas. In addition, it features large spaces originally devoted to archives, advertising, printing, and electronic data processing computer equipment. The remainder of the basement level features spaces originally devoted to computer fan equipment, transcription, data processing storage, and a tape library.

Beyond the entrance lobby and atrium courtyard and the balcony corridors, the upper floors feature an open perimetral floor plan. The perimeter curtain wall is interrupted every 36 feet (on-center) by a steel structural post sheathed in sheetrock. Most floor plates behind the perimeter walls of the balcony corridor are open, with a limited number of sheetrock walls to define specific spaces. The original plans specify movable partition walls to allow for flexibility. The 36-foot modular floor plan design allowed the

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**TWA Administrative Offices Building
Platte County, Missouri**

reconfiguration of space over time, and the rearrangement and/or introduction of various existing office spaces does not compromise the original character of these spaces.

INTEGRITY

The TWA Administrative Offices Building retains a high degree of integrity and has sustained minimal alterations to its original overall design. The building and site retain their historic/architectural integrity of original setting, landscape design, and location, in particular the continued visual connection with the adjacent airport, overhaul facility, and I-29 Interstate Highway. The only significant changes that have occurred over time include the circa 1978 construction of an adjacent computer building and pedestrian hyphen to the north, realignment of the vehicular drive under the canopy to improve accessibility, and the replacement of the original concrete steps from the parking lot to the entrance canopy area with a concrete system that mimics the original materials and design as shown in photographs and drawings. Other than these alterations, the retention of the original landscape design, which includes symmetrically arranged surface parking with tree-lined lawns and islands as well as large swaths of grassy open space, which was developed by the nationally renowned landscape architecture firm of Sasaki, Dawson, Demay Associates, Inc., contributes significantly to the property's historic/architectural integrity.

A pristine expression of Miesian Modernism due to its retention of character-defining design elements, the building continues to communicate a feeling of its time of construction. Because of the retention of a high degree of significant features and materials, the building also conveys its associations with the Miesian corporate office building property type that emerged in the 1950s and remained popular into the 1970s. Of particular note, the design and use of tinted glass and white marble curtain wall reflects the Miesian idiom developed by the firm of Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM), leaders in corporate architecture in the United States at the time the building was erected and recognized by their contemporaries in the field of architectural design and architectural history for the creation of their own Miesian idiom.

The building retains a high degree of its original materials and design features, including the original exterior and interior marble structural cladding; black aluminum window muntins; terrazzo floors; the dramatic atrium with its distinctive escalators and the glass and steel skylight; and key lobby, balcony, and office spaces. The necessary replacement of the original curtain wall window glazing due to failure of the seals and various types of discoloration reflects a loss of material; however, the new glazing recreates the original appearance.

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**TWA Administrative Offices Building
Platte County, Missouri**

Alterations to the atrium include the removal of the wood wall paneling along the north and south elevator core walls and of the metal balcony railings; partial removal of the original interior planter feature; and the deepening of the soffits above each atrium balcony corridor to comply with current life and safety codes for smoke exhaust and air handling. The extended soffits, which do not occur in the entrance lobby, are sheetrocked and painted to match the original surface treatment at the advice of the National Park Service. In addition, due to accessibility issues and fire code, the original revolving door system was removed and a new system of doors installed within the original openings. Despite these alterations, the overall integrity of the character-defining design elements far outweighs the loss of the features and materials described above. Because the secondary office spaces were designed to be flexible, reconfiguration of these spaces has little impact on any character-defining elements of the office spaces.

The current owners consulted with the National Park Service rehabilitation tax credit staff to ascertain if recent alterations would meet tax credit guidelines and National Park Service staff provided advice relating to the necessary replacement of failing and discolored tinted glazing with new double-pane glazing to match the original; the addition of air-handling soffits in the ceilings of the corridors around the atrium as required by fire and safety codes; the removal and replacement of metal banisters due to height requirements for public safety; the reconfiguration of the entrance system to meet fire and safety codes; and the re-creation of the original steps between the parking lot and entrance pavilion terrace areas. These changes do not significantly impact the ability of the building to convey its original design and setting, and the building continues to convey its feeling of a finite time period and its commercial and functional historic associations. Both the exterior and the interior of the building retain a very high percentage of their significant character-defining features and materials and the distinctive features of the Miesian style continue to be clearly conveyed. The TWA Administrative Offices Building and site continue to clearly convey the property's historic associations and feelings.

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**TWA Administrative Offices Building
Platte County, Missouri**

Architect/Builder (cont.)

Ellisor Engineers, Structural Engineers
Chenault & Brady, Consulting Engineers
Sasaki, Dawson, DeMay Associates, Inc., Landscape Architects
Blount Brothers Corporation, General Contractors

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The TWA Administrative Offices Building is locally significant under National Register Criterion A for the areas of COMMERCE and TRANSPORTATION and under Criterion C for the area of ARCHITECTURE. It also complies with Criteria Consideration G for properties that have achieved significance within the last fifty years. Its period of significance, 1968-1971, reflects the period of construction. The building, which is the only administrative facility designed and erected by TWA on land that it owned in Kansas City, has significant local associations with Commerce and Transportation due to Trans World Airline's (TWA) role as Kansas City's "Home Town Airline" beginning in 1931. The TWA Administrative Offices Building accommodated two thousand employees and is exceptionally significant locally in Commerce for its association with TWA, the largest employer in Kansas City at the time.² The \$15 million office headquarters was part of TWA's unprecedented investment in the community and was integrally related to the design and construction of the Kansas City International Airport. As the airport's primary tenant, TWA invested well over \$90 million in its Kansas City facilities between 1968 and 1972, the then-largest expenditure made by any firm in the Kansas City metropolitan area.³ At the time of the completion of the TWA Administrative Offices Building, TWA contributed up to \$200 million annually into the local economy.⁴ The building reflects specific administrative changes that occurred within the TWA Corporation internationally in the late 1960s, which resulted in the consolidation of TWA's administrative offices at the Kansas City International Airport into one of the state's largest office buildings at that time, in anticipation of the Kansas City International Airport becoming the country's central international air travel arrival and destination point.⁵ The property also has exceptional significance in the area of Transportation for its administrative associations as the

² Hines Interests, "Administrative Office Building for Trans World Airlines Kansas City," unpublished booklet (Houston: Gerald D. Hines Interests, June 7, 1968).

³ "Technical Services Center Heads \$90 Million Program," *TWA Skyliner* vol. 31, no. 15 (15 July 1968), 4, TWA Museum Chapter of the Platte County Historical Society, Kansas City, Missouri.

⁴ Julius A Karash and Rick Montgomery, *TWA: Kansas City's Hometown Airline* (Kansas City, MO: Kansas City Star Books, 2001).

⁵ Jack Adams, "Shapeup at KCI," *TWA Today* vol. 34, no. 17 (16 August 1971) TWA Museum Chapter of the Platte County Historical Society, Kansas City, Missouri.

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**TWA Administrative Offices Building
Platte County, Missouri**

location of TWA's main national and international overhaul and maintenance base located in Kansas City and as the international headquarters of TWA's Programmed Airline Reservation System (PARS), the first computerized reservation system in airline history.

The TWA Administrative Offices Building is also exceptionally significant locally in the area of Architecture for its association with the "leading force in American corporate architecture in the post-World War II period — the architectural firm of Skidmore Owings & Merrill,"⁶ a firm that established the Miesian curtain wall as a formula and promulgated the integration of landscape architecture with building design.⁷ In particular, the design of the building and site reflects Mies van der Rohe's philosophy that buildings should rise from a symmetrical central space, creating a balance between the building and the surrounding open space. Crucial to this plan was the pioneering design work of the planning and landscape architecture firm Sasaki, Dawson, DeMay Associates, Inc. Hideo Sasaki, founder of the firm, was then also the chairman of Harvard University's landscape architecture program. Also joining SOM on the design and construction team were the following national leaders in building construction, noted for the quality and ingenuity of their work: Hines Interests, internationally recognized real estate developers known for their role in the construction of the Shell Oil Company's world headquarters and the Houston Galleria; the architectural firm of Wilson, Morris, Crain and Associates, designers of the Astrodome; Chenault & Brady Engineers and Ellisor Engineers, structural and mechanical engineering companies for the Shell Oil and the Pennzoil corporations' international headquarters; and the Blount Brothers Corporation, general contractors noted for the construction of the Louisiana Superdome.

The property meets National Register criteria for significance for Architecture in the following areas: (1) for its Miesian design, which embodies "distinctive characteristics of a type, period, and method of construction;"⁸ and (2) as a representative example of the work of a recognized architectural firm and associated design/construction team members of national note for the construction of Modern Movement office buildings. The building reflects the individuality, variation of features, and evolution that occurs within the general class of Miesian office buildings in Kansas City, as well as variations⁹ of the SOM Miesian idiom that brought national and international acclaim to the architectural firm. As a Miesian curtain wall box design, the building demonstrates the transition in Kansas City between pre-World War II office buildings and the post-World War II class of corporate architecture. Comparison to contemporaneous architectural designs of other Modern Movement Miesian style buildings in Kansas

⁶ Leland M. Roth, *A Concise History of American Architecture* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1979), 278.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service Interagency Resources Division, 1990, Rev 1998), 17.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

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**TWA Administrative Offices Building
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City further highlights its uniqueness and exceptional importance in the architectural heritage of the community.

The building meets Criterion G for exceptional significance in the following areas: (1) it is unique locally as an early example of an office building specifically located and designed to accommodate computer age technology; (2) its association as the first and only main computer headquarters for TWA's innovative and groundbreaking international reservation systems; (3) it is a regionally unique example of SOM's Miesian low-rise office building genre and the National Park Service has recognized the post-World War II era of Miesian-influenced design within the context of the evolution of the Modern Movement and has determined that sufficient time has passed and scholarly analysis of the style has been completed to evaluate the significance of these architectural works;¹⁰ and (4) as the location for the administration of TWA's corporate financial department and its executive staff; the executive directors and staff of both the employment and safety engineering functions of TWA's International Industrial Relations Department; the company's printing, advertising, and distribution departments; and TWA's international maintenance and overhaul base operations in Kansas City (where three generations of workers took home more than \$100 million in annual salaries.)¹¹ These combined programs made TWA the leading corporate entity in the metropolitan area's economy.

ELABORATION

HOME TOWN AIRLINE: TWA'S SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW: PATTERN OF EVENTS

Beginning in the 1939 with the establishment of Trans World Airline's national headquarters in Kansas City, the region's economy was integrally linked to the rise of TWA as a globe-spanning air transportation empire. The corporation had its origins in Western Air Express, which was organized in 1925 to transport the U.S. Mail and provide limited passenger service between Los Angeles and Salt Lake City. Four years later, the airline offered daily flights between Los Angeles and Kansas City. The establishment of this Midwestern transcontinental link to the East Coast put Western Air Express in direct

¹⁰ Marcella Sherfy and W. Ray Luce, *National Register Bulletin 22: Guidelines for Evaluating and Nominating Properties that Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years* (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, revised 1996), 6.

¹¹ Karash, 50.

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competition with an eastern airline company, Transcontinental Air Transport Company. The two companies merged in 1930 and became Transcontinental and Western Air Incorporated. On October 25, 1930, Transcontinental and Western Air launched the first coast-to-coast air-passenger service. Flying only during daylight hours, the flight's only stopover was in Kansas City, Missouri.¹²

The following year, voters endorsed a public improvements program, including a bond issue for expansion of the city's recently established Municipal Airport near the city's downtown central business district. As a result, Transcontinental and Western Air selected Kansas City, Missouri as the base of its maintenance, ground operations, and location of its general offices. The city issued bonds in an amount equivalent to \$3 million today, and provided funding to help the cash-short airline build facilities that included an Art Deco style two-story headquarters and hanger facility at 10 Richards Road.¹³

The transfer of 250 families into the area from Western Air Express and Transcontinental Air Transport Company facilities brought \$1 million in annual salaries into the local economy.¹⁴ At this time, Kansas City, which was within twelve hours flying time of any point in the airline's system, benefited from its geographic centrality. Already an important hub in the nation's railroad and trucking network, Kansas City was the midway point in the thirty-six-hour coast-to-coast daylight flight. Kansas City's location as the coast-to-coast overnight stop was a boon to downtown hotel and restaurant businesses. By 1934, the airline advertised three daily transcontinental round-trip flights. In 1939, the airline established its national headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri and continued to occupy its maintenance, ground operations, and general office spaces at the Municipal Airport.¹⁵

Under the direction of principal stockholder Howard Hughes, Transcontinental and Western Air experienced significant growth. The airline's service to the U.S. military during World War II fostered a commitment to an international role in aviation. Stimulated by the development of the Lockheed "Constellation," which set a flight record of six hours and fifty-eight minutes for a non-stop flight from Burbank, California to Washington D.C., the airline applied for authority to provide around-the-world air service in 1944. Upon receiving authorization the next year to operate routes to Europe, the Middle East, and India, the name of the company changed to Trans World Airlines. In 1946, TWA moved its

¹² Sherry Lamb Schirmer and Richard D. McKinzie, *At the River's Bend: An Illustrated History of Kansas City, Independence and Jackson County* (Woodland Hills, CA: Windsor Publications in association with the Jackson County Historical Society, 1982) 350.

¹³ Karash, 14-15. The airline erected its maintenance facility in the Fairfax industrial area of Kansas City, Kansas, directly across the Missouri River from the Municipal Airport in Kansas City, Missouri.

¹⁴ Karash, 16.

¹⁵ Schirmer, 350.

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maintenance facilities out of the hangers at Municipal Airport to part of the North American Aviation plant in the Fairfax industrial area on the Kansas side of the Missouri River. At this time, TWA maintained its corporate headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri and operated various facilities in Kansas City, Missouri and Kansas City, Kansas, including a crucial national terminal and a national maintenance facility. In 1949, TWA located the international division's maintenance and overhaul facilities in Kansas City, Missouri and, from that time forward, Kansas City, Missouri served as the location for TWA's chief maintenance and overhaul base.¹⁶

During the 1950s, TWA continued to expand its domestic and international routes, creating growth in "traffic, revenues, personnel, and technical capabilities."¹⁷ By 1954, TWA's profits were over \$10 million annually.¹⁸ During this period, TWA developed a large fleet of propeller aircraft, including short-haul Martin 404s, the Constellation L749A, and the Super Constellation. The airline was the first to provide all-cargo service across the Atlantic Ocean and its international "Sky Chief" service was the first with all-sleeper luxury service.¹⁹ In 1959, TWA entered the jet age with the addition of Boeing 707 service from San Francisco to New York. A nonstop jet flight from Los Angeles over the North Pole to London followed, as did other new routes, and, by 1960, TWA had twenty-eight jet transports in operation. The next year, TWA fully transitioned to all-jet international routes.²⁰

At this time, Kansas City's 687-acre Municipal Airport served up to one million passengers per year. In addition to TWA, other airlines operating out of the airport at this time were Braniff International Airways, Central Airlines, Delta Chicago & Southern, Continental Air Lines, Ozark Airlines, and Slick Airways.²¹

TWA outgrew its administrative space in the Municipal Airport and, in addition to the administrative offices at the Municipal Airport, occupied a variety of rented offices in the Downtown area. City Directories for 1952 through 1955 show that the company continued to maintain its national headquarters' administrative offices at the 10 Richards Road facilities at the Municipal Airport; credit union offices at

¹⁶ Schirmer, 350.

¹⁷ "'67 in Review: TWA Sets New Records, Paves Way for Supersonic Seventies," *TWA Skyliner* vol. 31, no. 1 (1 January 1968), 5, TWA Museum Chapter of the Platte County Historical Society, Kansas City, Missouri.

¹⁸ Schirmer, 351.

¹⁹ Karash, 30.

²⁰ "'67 in Review," 5.

²¹ "Kansas City . . . Hub of Transportation," *Polk's Kansas City (Jackson County Missouri) Directory 1955* (Kansas City, MO: R. L. Polk and Company, 1955), 16

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20 West 9th Street; district sales offices at 1206 Fairfax,²² and information and ticket offices at 103 West 12th Street. In 1957, the company consolidated their administrative offices into 124,000 square feet of leased space in a recently completed three-story Miesian style building at 1735 Baltimore Avenue,²³ just south of the central business district.²⁴

Erected as a speculative investment by real estate developers and designed by Raymond Boiles, Jr. and Morris Schechter, the Modern style building, with its streamlined glass and red and white aluminum Miesian curtain wall box featuring a rocket ship model poised over the corner entrance, became a local corporate symbol of the company.²⁵ In addition to the various administrative programs that moved into the building, the credit union and the information and reservation operations left other rented space in downtown Kansas City and moved to the new building. The executive offices of the vice president of transportation, the vice-president of the engineering department, and the director of industrial relations remained at their offices at the Municipal Airport. Leased space in the Robert Keith Building at 1301 Baltimore Avenue housed the TWA Flight Operations Training Center. The Kansas City ticket offices outlet remained at 103 West 12th Street and an additional ticket office opened in the new facility at 1735 Baltimore Avenue. The executive offices of TWA's international division remained in New York. In 1964, TWA established its national administrative headquarters in New York and transferred its senior executive staff from Kansas City to New York.

Between 1958 and 1968 the number of TWA's employees more than doubled, reaching nearly ten thousand.²⁶ By the early 1960s, the company became Kansas City's largest employer. This growth occurred locally at a time when the corporation underwent significant changes and great turmoil, much of it due to conflict between the top management and the principal stockholder, Howard Hughes. In 1961, when financial institutions refused to lend to TWA, Hughes sold his interests. At this time, and continuing until 1976, Charles C. Tillinghast, Jr. served as president and chief executive officer of TWA. Under his guidance, the corporation pursued a policy of expansion and diversification that profoundly affected Kansas City.

²² In Kansas City, Kansas.

²³ The TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on November 20, 2002.

²⁴ Cydney E. Millstein, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form "TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building" 9 October 2002, 18. Missouri Department of Natural Resources, State Historic Preservation Office, Jefferson, City, MO. City directories for this time period indicate that some of the executive offices remained at the Municipal Airport building at 10 Richards Road.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 29-30

²⁶ Karash, 44.

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Under Tillinghast's direction, and in anticipation of the construction of Kansas City International Airport, in 1967, TWA became the first airline to offer all-jet service on both domestic and international routes. In December of that year, a restructuring of the TWA financing system involving \$800 million in a debt securities program set the stage for future growth. The restructuring freed the company from the mortgage financing of Hughes Tool Company and, for the first time since 1947, TWA was able to arrange long-term financing without a mortgage.²⁷ In the following spring, TWA implemented a new organizational structure that consolidated into one division all sales and services dealing with the public, including marketing, public relations, and passenger and cargo services.²⁸ To accommodate the staff assigned to Kansas City, which was planned as TWA's international hub, the design of a new iconic administrative building across from the airport was already underway.

This building was part of a massive expansion program in the Kansas City metropolitan area associated with the construction of the Kansas City International Airport. In addition to occupying 30 percent of the new airport's terminals, TWA's facility growth at the new airport included the expansion of its international overhaul and maintenance program, construction of giant hangers for recently purchased Boeing 747 and supersonic transport jet planes, and the central administrative building. In nearby, Overland Park, Kansas, just across the state line from Kansas City, Missouri, TWA broke ground for a 34.4-acre training facility to accommodate up to four thousand airline hostesses a year.²⁹

At this time, 12.6 million passengers flew a total of 14 billion passenger-miles on TWA. Cargo volume rose 33 percent over the previous year. TWA ordered 31 new jets and, by the end of 1967, TWA's all-jet fleet numbered 170 aircraft, including 15 CargoJets. The company also completed arrangements to acquire 47 more subsonic jetliners, 2 more U.S. supersonic transports (SSTs), 6 British-French Concorde SSTs, and 12 U.S. SSTs.³⁰

In 1976, the company posted a profit of \$30 million. By this time, the airline pumped more than \$200 million annually into the Kansas City economy.³¹ However, the rising fuel costs in the late 1970s brought an end to an era of prosperity. To meet escalating costs, TWA sold its jumbo jets to Iran. The subsequent deregulation of airlines was the beginning of the end for many of the country's major airlines.

²⁷ "Record \$800 Million Financing Program Means Greater Growpower for TWA," *TWA Skyliner* vol. 31, no. 1 (1 January 1968), 1, TWA Museum Chapter of the Platte County Historical Society, Kansas City, Missouri.

²⁸ Flight operations and technical services functions remained separate.

²⁹ "Groundbreaking Set Next Month," *TWA Skyliner* vol. 31, no. 1D (6 May 1968), 5, TWA Museum Chapter of the Platte County Historical Society, Kansas City, Missouri.

³⁰ "67 in Review," 5.

³¹ Karash, 42.

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Trans World Corporation, with a portfolio³² packed with unrelated holdings, competed with emerging air lines by cutting fares and providing expanded international service.³³ At the same time the corporation did not reinvest income from TWA back into the airline and the corporation's management failed to make the radical changes necessary to compete with the emerging airlines who had little overhead.

In the early 1980s, Trans World Corporation cut TWA loose with an aged fleet of jets, weak domestic routes, and devalued stock. In 1982, corporate raider Carl Icahn gained control of the airline.³⁴ Under a complex privatization plan approved by TWA stockholders in 1988, Icahn received \$469 million and the airline assumed \$539.7 million in debt.³⁵ This debt, along with a national recession and the Gulf War in the early 1990s, increased fuel costs, and reduced travel, ended TWA's dominance of air trade and travel. A proposed merger with Pan Am that failed in 1991 and Icahn's sale of the airline's profitable London routes led to reorganization under bankruptcy. The bankruptcy plan failed and, in 1995, the company again filed for bankruptcy. Although the bankruptcy removed \$500 million of TWA's \$1.8 billion debt, the company's cash-poor operations and long-term problems could not be erased quickly. In 2001, a federal judge approved the purchase of TWA by American Airlines.

COMMERCIAL IMPACT OF THE TWA FACILITIES

Immediately after the flood of 1951 destroyed much of the TWA overhaul base in Fairfax, Kansas, the City of Kansas City, Missouri purchased nearly 5,000 acres in Platte County for TWA's new overhaul base.³⁶ The rural location on high, dry ground was also ideal for the construction of the long runways required by jet aircraft. In July 1954, construction began on an overhaul base and maintenance facilities on land leased to TWA for thirty years. The commencement of construction on the overhaul base marked the beginning of an airfield that evolved into Kansas City International Airport. After its completion, the overhaul and maintenance base provided three generations of workers with more than \$100 million annually in salaries.³⁷

³² In 1979 Trans World Corporation became the parent company of TWA, Canteen Corporation, and Hilton International Company. Later that same year, Century 21 Real Estate Corporation and Spartan Food Systems, Inc. joined the Trans World Corporation family. Kansas City remained the national and international base of operation for TWA.

³³ Karash, 44.

³⁴ Ibid., 56.

³⁵ Ibid., 64.

³⁶ Ibid., 50.

³⁷ Ibid., 50.

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By the early 1960s, it was evident that Kansas City's Municipal Airport had no room for the expansion necessary to accommodate jet airplanes. The problem of relatively short runways required jets to make steep climbs and descents to avoid the downtown skyscrapers on the 200-foot-high river bluffs at the south end of the runways. Furthermore, Kansas City's central business district was right in the flight path for takeoffs and landings, creating a constant roar of jet aircraft over the downtown area. The city council decided to locate a new international airport in Platte County on the land purchased in the early 1950s for the TWA overhaul base. In 1966, Kansas City voters approved \$150 million in revenue bonds to convert the small Northland airport into the city's main passenger airport.³⁸ The city purchased an additional 5,000 acres and annexed this property, naming the facility Mid-Continent International Airport; shortly thereafter, the city renamed it Kansas City International Airport.³⁹ To allow for expansion of TWA facilities, TWA increased the 125 acres it leased from the city to 251 acres.

In the mid-1960s, the Kansas City architectural firm of Kevett and Myers began the design of the terminals and control tower at the new airfield. Many of the design decisions of the airport were driven by its primary tenant, TWA; the firm would occupy one-third of the passenger terminal space as well as a \$3 million cargo terminal. The airline envisioned the facility as its international hub with jets carrying people from the center of the United States to all points on the globe.⁴⁰ In an effort to avoid the cost of moving passengers from gate to gate and terminal to terminal, TWA insisted on the concept of circular terminals with gates being very close to the street.

In addition to the terminal facilities, TWA initiated a \$33 million expansion of its maintenance and overhaul programs at its huge Technical Services Center at the new airport. In 1968, twenty-three Boeing 747 aircraft were scheduled for delivery to TWA. Four of these 350-passenger jets and four U.S. SSTs were slated to be housed in a large new hyperbolic hanger in Kansas City that was erected as part of the expanded facilities.⁴¹ The Technical Services Center was the largest commercial aircraft overhaul and repair base in the world. Also included in the work was completion of an expansion of the jet engine overhaul building at the Kansas City International Airport, which would double the existing capacity of

³⁸ Ibid., 60. The airport opened in 1972.

³⁹ Despite requests from Kansas City, the airport has been unable to change its original International Air Transport Association (IATA) Mid-Continent designation of MCI, which had already been registered on navigational charts. Further complicating requests to change the designation, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) at the time reserved all call letters with "K" or "W" for radio and television stations and so KCI was not viable. The "W" and "K" restrictions have since been lifted, but the IATA is reluctant to change names that have appeared on navigational charts.

⁴⁰ Streets around the airport had the names of Mexico City Avenue, Brasilia Avenue, Paris Street, London Avenue, Tel Aviv Avenue, and so forth.

⁴¹ "67 in Review..." 5.

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handling 120 engines a month. The major part of the expansion included construction of a large new test cell to accommodate the 747 and SST engines.⁴²

At a luncheon to announce these plans, TWA Chief Executive Officer Charles C. Tillinghast, Jr. also revealed plans for construction of a new central administrative office building near the overhaul base, noting:

*The decision to locate our office building at this spot was not an easy one. We had several interesting proposals to erect a prestigious headquarters building downtown that would serve as a landmark for both the city and TWA. The more we studied the problem, however, the more convinced we became that proximity to our overhaul base would yield important operating benefits, particularly in the field of data processing.*⁴³

The significance of the economic impact of TWA's expanded facilities in the Kansas City area is apparent in the efforts of the city and the state to provide financial support. Kansas City Mayor Ilus W. Davis traveled to the Chase Manhattan Bank in New York City to sign the 10,200 bonds that provided funds for the city-financed expansion of airport facilities.⁴⁴ Through the efforts of U.S. Senator Stuart Symington and other elected officials, Kansas City also received a \$121,466 grant from the Department of Transportation to begin design of a freeway to the airport. The grant covered about two-thirds of the cost of the preliminary engineering. Initially, the freeway was to be used for local and express transit services for employees at the airport, including the planned two thousand employees at the new TWA administrative Offices Building.⁴⁵

By July 1968, TWA had \$90 million in new construction projects in Kansas City underway and scheduled for completion in 1971. These new projects and the existing facilities represented a community investment by TWA of well over \$115 million, the largest expenditure made by any firm in Kansas City at that time.⁴⁶

⁴² "Groundbreaking Set Next Month," 3.

⁴³ Ibid., 5. Unannounced was the development of an international reservations computer system that would require a network of underground communications cables.

⁴⁴ *TWA Skyliner* vol. 31, no. 1 (1 January 1968), 5, TWA Museum Chapter of the Platte County Historical Society, Kansas City, Missouri.

⁴⁵ "Groundbreaking Set Next Month," 3; and "New Administrative Center is Underway at Kansas City," *TWA Skyliner* vol. 31, no. 24 (18 November 1968), 1, TWA Museum Chapter of the Platte County Historical Society, Kansas City, Missouri.

⁴⁶ "Technical Services Center Heads \$90 Million Program," 4.

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TWA ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES BUILDING

The announced construction of a new four-story administrative office building to be erected on 116 acres purchased by TWA on the east side of Highway I-29, opposite the entrance to the TWA overhaul base, would consolidate the five divisional administrative staffs housed at the 1926 Municipal Airport at 10 Richards Road, the TWA office building at 1735 Baltimore Avenue, and the Centennial Building in downtown Kansas City. TWA executives estimated that the building would cost between \$11 and \$13 million, and would be completed by the fall of 1970.⁴⁷

The Team

TWA selected Gerald D. Hines Interests, a Houston, Texas-based real estate developer, to assemble a group of nationally prominent architects, planners, landscape architects, engineers, and construction specialists. The team consisted of Hines Interests; Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM) and the firm of Wilson, Morris, Crain and Anderson, architects; Ellisor Engineers and Chenault and Brady, structural and consulting engineers, respectively; Sasaki, Dawson, DeMay Associates, Inc., landscape architects; and Blount Brothers Corporation, general contractor. This stellar team is of exceptional significance in the building history of the United States, and each of the members has been recognized nationally and internationally by its peers.

Gerald D. Hines, a Texas-based real estate developer founded Hines Interests in 1957. The firm developed over 205 million square feet in more than 650 properties worldwide, including skyscrapers, corporate headquarters, mixed-use centers, industrial parks, master-planned resorts, and residential communities throughout the United States and eleven other countries. Hines Interests were noted for their practice of hiring outstanding architects and among them were Philip Johnson, John Burgee, Cesar Pelli, I. M. Pei, and SOM. The Urban Land Institute bestowed their Award for Excellence to Hines' famed Houston Galleria and to the Norwest Center in Minneapolis. In 2000, the National Building Museum presented their 2000 Honor Award to Gerald D. Hines. Given annually since 1986, the Honor Award recognizes outstanding individuals and companies who have made significant contributions to the nation's built environment. Hines was recognized for his commitment to the highest standards of design,

⁴⁷ Ibid.

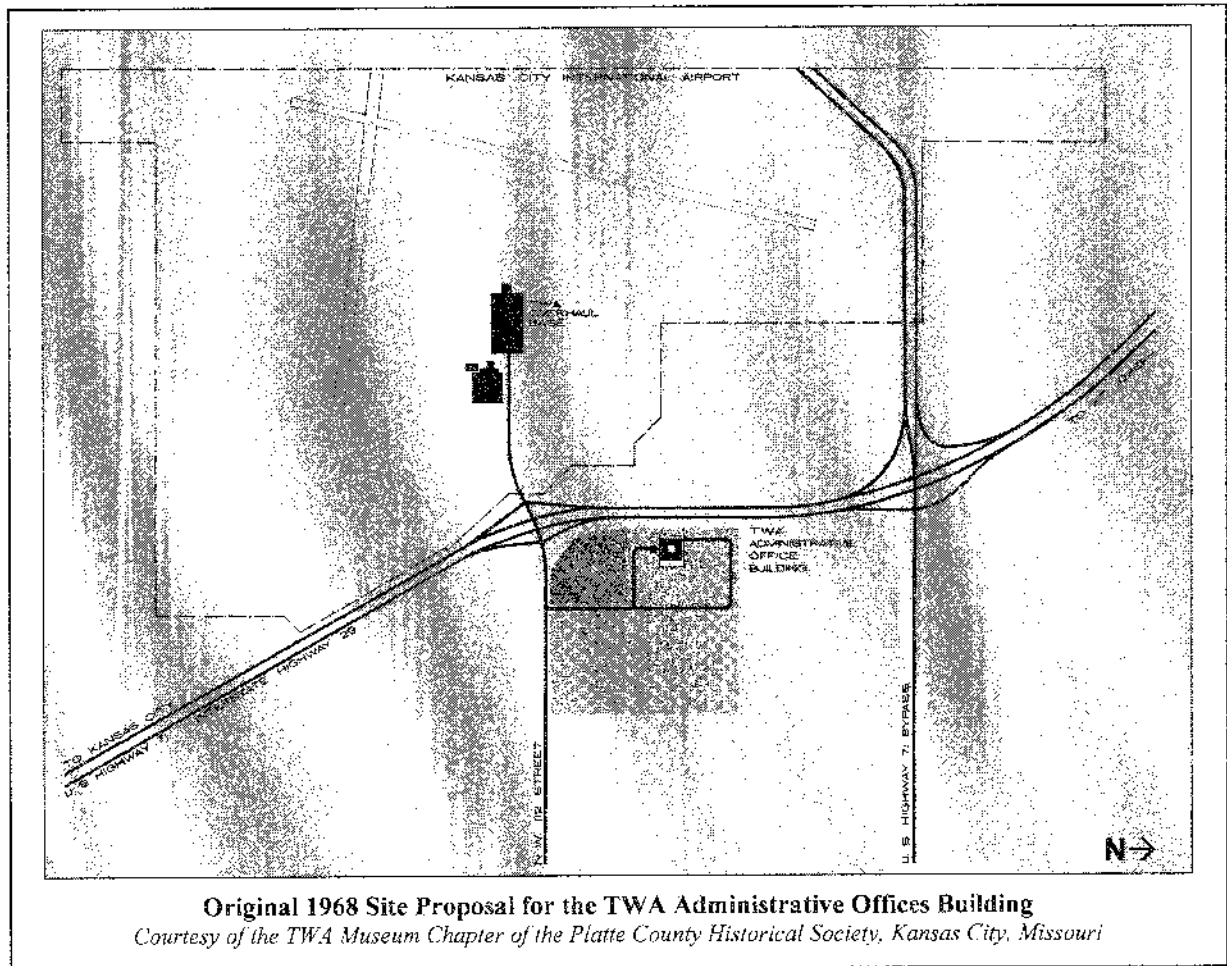
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engineering, construction, and property management and as the founder and leader of one of the most important development entities in the United States.⁴⁸



⁴⁸ Hines Interests Limited Partnership, "Gerald D. Hines to be Honored by National Building Museum at Washington Gala on June 20, 2000," press release, available online at <http://www.hines.com/press/releases/05-08-00.aspx>; Internet; accessed 4 February 2007.

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The architectural team was comprised of the Chicago office of SOM and Houston-based Wilson, Morris, Crain and Associates. The team, in association with Hines Interests and Chenault and Brady Engineers, had recently completed the design of One Shell Plaza, the fifty-story Shell Oil world headquarters building in Houston. When completed in 1971, it was the tallest concrete building in the world and remains the tallest lightweight concrete building in the world today. The building's curtain wall of white marble and dark tinted glass continued the use of the early SOM Miesian idiom erected in Kansas City and other communities in the 1960s and early 1970s.

SOM was in 1968 and is today one of the largest and most influential architecture firms of the modern era. After the design of Lever House in the early 1950s, one of SOM's major contributions during the ensuing fifty years was the creation of a generic glass tower building type for corporate headquarters.⁴⁹ Today, SOM's portfolio covers the whole range of modern styles since the mid-twentieth century, including famous examples of the International Style, Brutalism, and Post-Modernism. The firm designed many of the world's tallest buildings, including Burj Dubai, Sears Tower, Jin Mao Tower, and the John Hancock Center. At the time of the design of the TWA Administrative Offices Building, SOM had recently completed the executive office building for United Air Lines, which featured twin three-story white marble and dark glass Miesian curtain wall low-rise office buildings, and the headquarters of the Connecticut General Life Insurance Company, which was also a large rectangular three-story glass curtain wall low-rise building. The TWA Administrative Offices Building in Kansas City is part of SOM's Miesian low-rise office building genre and is unique to the Kansas City region.

Founded in 1939 by F. Talbott Wilson, Jr. and S. I. Morris, Jr., this Houston-based architectural firm evolved into the nationally known firm of Wilson, Morris, Crain and Associates. B. W. Crain, Jr. became a partner in 1946 and Ralph A. Anderson, Jr. joined in 1953. The design of the Astrodome in 1965 established the group as a leader in large-scale projects. Arthur Drexler's *Transformations in Modern Architecture* exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in 1979 cites the firm's glass walled precast concrete pavilion erected for the Heights State Bank in Houston. Previously the firm gained notice for their design of the Miesian curtain wall Downtown Houston United States Post Office, which was completed in 1962. The firm also completed the design of the towering headquarters building for the Houston Lighting and Power Company Building in 1968.

In 1953, Hideo Sasaki founded the firm that would evolve into Sasaki Associates. That same year he joined the faculty at Harvard University. He had studied at the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Illinois, and Harvard. From 1958 to 1968, Sasaki served as chairman of Harvard's

⁴⁹ Roth, 286

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landscape architecture department where he revolutionized the study of landscape architecture by pioneering the concept of interdisciplinary planning and design. At the time of the construction of the TWA Administrative Offices Building, Sasaki was already an internationally respected landscape architect and planner.

The TWA Administrative Offices Building is an early work of the engineering firm of Chenault and Brady. In addition to the Shell Oil office building in Houston, the engineering firm was later noted for its work in the design of One U.S. Bank Plaza, which was erected in St. Louis in 1976 and was the tallest building in the city at that time. This firm also gained national notice for its work in the design of the twenty-two-story Hyatt Regency in Indianapolis, Indiana, which was completed in 1977 and featured 535 guest rooms arranged around a nineteen-story atrium.

Shortly after working on the preliminary design of the TWA Administrative Offices Building in Kansas City, Ellisor Engineers began consultation with Philip Johnson and the Hines Interests in 1970 on the design of the twin tower Pennzoil Place office building in Houston. Constructed between 1972 and 1976, the welded steel and concrete building was one of the most architecturally influential buildings constructed in the United States during the 1970s and 1980s. The two towers are 495 feet tall and between them contain 1.8 million gross square feet of space. Closely spaced bronze-anodized aluminum mullions and bronze-tinted double-paned solar glass formed the building's exterior curtain wall. Between the two towers is a pair of glass-roofed air-conditioned plazas. After its completion, Pennzoil Place received critical acclaim among professionals in architecture and engineering.⁵⁰

The general contractor of the TWA Administrative Offices Building was the Blount Brothers Corporation. Established in Houston in 1946, the firm became known internationally for large and complex projects and served as contractors for such projects as the First Avenue Viaduct in Birmingham, Alabama; the Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans; Cape Canaveral's Complex 39A, which launched Apollo 11; and King Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The company was sold to Lehman Brothers in 1999 for \$1.35 billion.

⁵⁰ William Marlin, "Pennzoil Place," *Architectural Record* 160 (November 1976).

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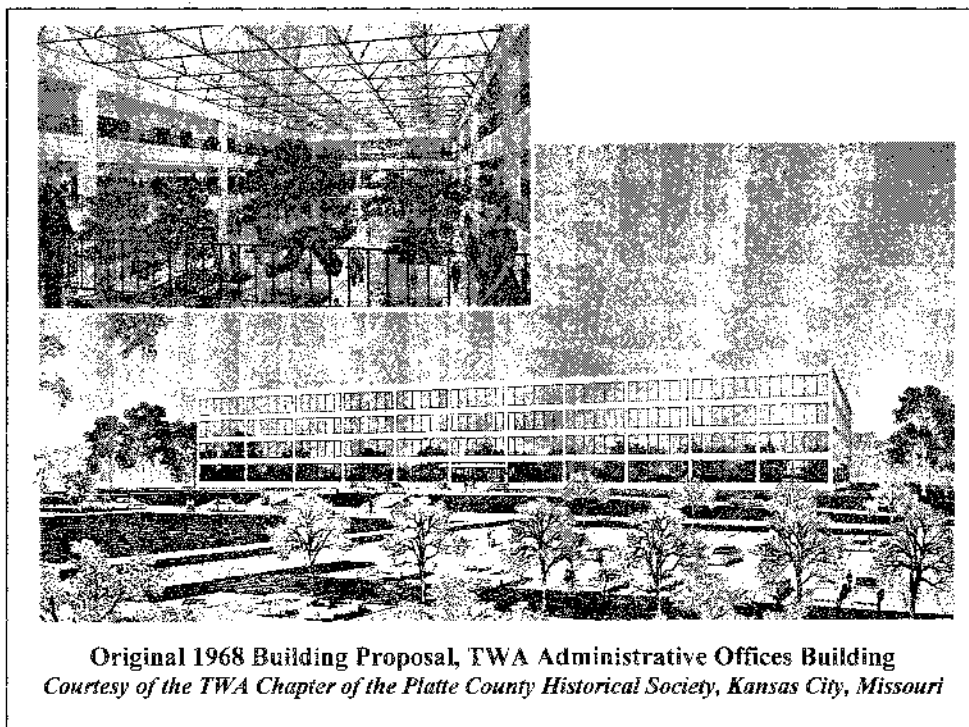
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The Design

The schematic design prepared by this team presented a plan to meet specific functional requirements of TWA as well as providing for expansion. The schematic design also reflects TWA's desire for a corporate logo building at the new Kansas City International Airport. The proposal for the design read:

We plan to create a standard of excellence for the building design and exterior grounds consistent with Trans World Airlines international reputation and the company's image as the largest employer in the Kansas City Area.⁵¹

The plan of the four-story building, which was large enough to accommodate up to two thousand employees, included an auditorium, cafeteria, computer and key punch areas, and general and special office areas to accommodate the accounting and data processing operations of the airline's financial department; the employment and safety engineering functions of TWA's Industrial Relations Department; and the printing, advertising, and distribution departments of TWA.⁵²



Original 1968 Building Proposal, TWA Administrative Offices Building
Courtesy of the TWA Chapter of the Platte County Historical Society, Kansas City, Missouri

⁵¹ Hines Interests, "Administrative Office Building for Trans World Airlines Kansas City."

⁵² "Technical Services Center Heads \$90 Million Program," 4.

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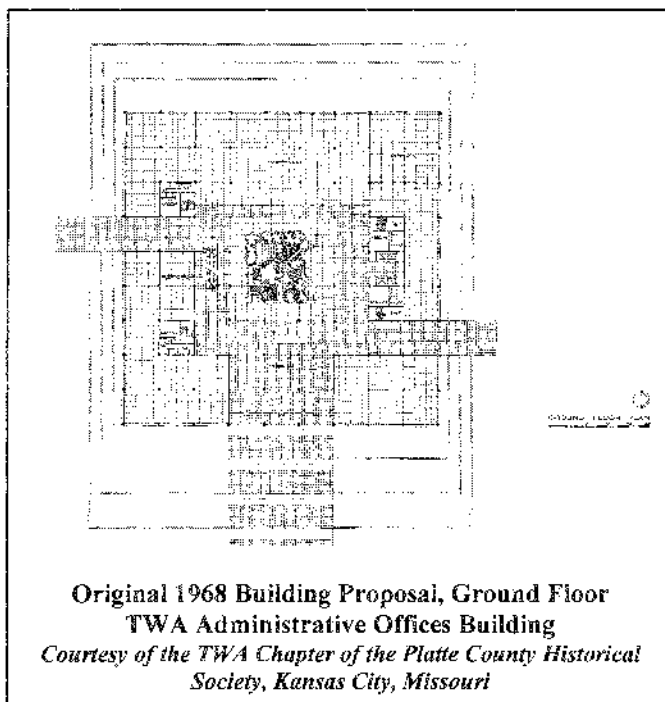
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The building's footprint equaled a little over 2 square acres. The designed landscape for the 116-acre site occupied a little over two square miles and included grass lawns, trees, and shrubbery to blend with the rolling countryside surrounding the airport.⁵³ The surface parking lots accommodated 1,800 cars.

The steel frame and precast concrete structural elements supporting a curtain wall of white Italian marble and gray-black tinted thermal pane glass created a classical Miesian box resting on an elevated landscaped platform. The use of tinted thermal glass reduced glare and the need for blinds or draperies. The thermal "duplex reflective sound-attenuating glass" also reduced the noise impact of the nearby airport.⁵⁴ The air-conditioned, climate-controlled 108 square foot inner court was an integral part of the design aesthetic, providing a "visual center for the building at all levels."⁵⁵ This atrium, with its steel skylight the same size as the court footprint, allows natural light into the building and forms a central lobby on the main floor. Open corridors on all four floors function as continuous balconies overlooking the court below. The design included four "oversize" elevators and two extra wide 48-inch escalators to facilitate rapid transportation between floors.



**Original 1968 Building Proposal, Ground Floor
TWA Administrative Offices Building
Courtesy of the TWA Chapter of the Platte County Historical
Society, Kansas City, Missouri**

To allow the flexibility to accommodate new technologies and growth, the architects designed the office space on each floor to be partition-free. Typical offices on the second through fourth floors featured 9-foot ceiling heights with acoustical tile ceilings. Specially designed recessed lighting fixtures featured low-brightness and prismatic lenses specially designed to complement the concealed spine ceiling system that housed the air supply and return air systems. The HVAC system featured zones from 4,000 square feet down to 250 square feet, allowing thirty-two separate heating/air conditioning zones per floor.

⁵³ New administrative Center is Underway at Kansas City," 1, 3.

⁵⁴ Hines Interests, "Administrative Office Building for Trans World Airlines Kansas City."

⁵⁵ Ibid.

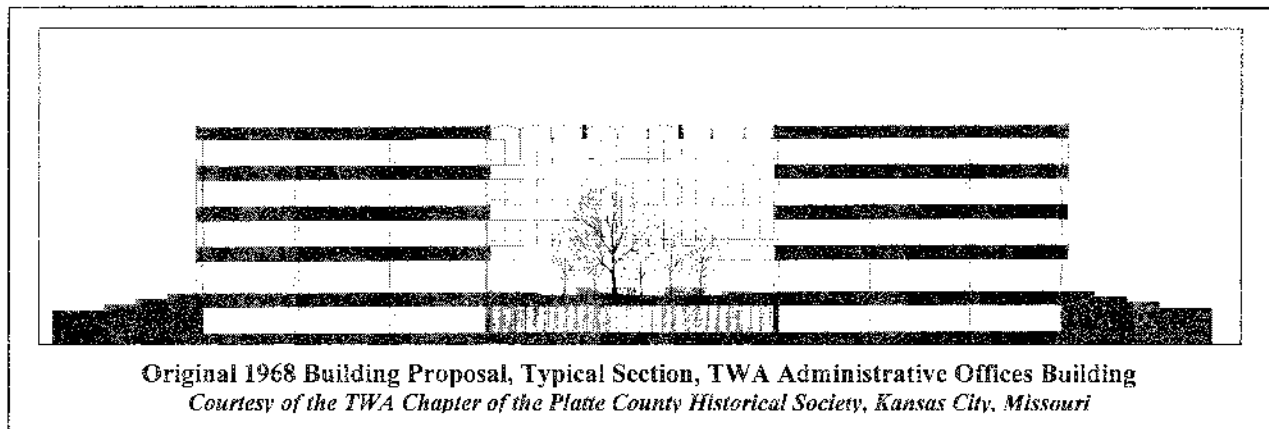
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Movable soundproofed partitions provided flexibility in the allocation of certain functions to size-specific spaces.



Of particular note with regard to the building's exceptional significance is the location on the ground floor of TWA's master computer processor for its national and international Programmed Airline Reservation System (PARS). Developed for TWA by International Business Machines (IBM), at the time of its installation in 1971, PARS was the fastest, most sophisticated reservation operation in the airline industry.⁵⁶ Surpassing TWA's former system and other airline reservation systems, PARS provided a single central storage of flight schedules, inventory, and availability together with passenger name records that were instantly available to each reservation salesperson within the TWA system by way of a cathode ray tube (CRT) machine. Not only did the PARS computer system track available open flights, it also had the ability to produce account marketing analysis to assist field sales staff in identifying premier travelers.⁵⁷

Although airlines had used a primary form of computer inventory systems for years, until this time, there was no passenger name record computer. The existing computer programs provided only an inventory device that indicated whether there were spaces to sell. Under the old system, a sales order was written and sent down a conveyor belt to a back room file. As a result, a reservation booked in New York was known only to the New York reservation personnel. PARS united all reservations. Seconds after a reservation was made, a single, central storage of flight inventory and passenger name records located in

⁵⁶ Bob Hall, "Pars a Means to an End" *TWA Today* vol. 34, no. 23 (8 November 1971), 1, TWA Museum Chapter of the Platte County Historical Society, Kansas City, Missouri.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

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the TWA Administrative Offices Building in Kansas City allowed an agent using a TWA CRT anywhere in the world to access the information.⁵⁸

Exceptional Significance in Commerce and Transportation

Scholarly Analysis

The evaluation of a property that is less than fifty years old for significant associations with a pattern of events related to Commerce and Transportation involves an understanding of the local and national historical contexts in which the event took place and the association of the resource with those contexts. The history of TWA from the 1920s to the 1980s has been the subject of investigation by academics in the context of the history of aeronautics and transportation, as well as the subject of popular media. The story of the role of TWA in Kansas City is a recognized story and there exists an abundant amount of primary and secondary information relating to the growth of TWA as part of the national and local economy and culture.

Comparison to Like Resources

The comparison of the property to like resources is also an important component in establishing the exceptional significance of the TWA Administrative Offices Building. Today, there are a limited number of function-specific buildings, sites, and structures associated with TWA's role as Kansas City's "Home Town Airline" and as the largest employer in the region in the mid- to late twentieth century. The Municipal Airport building dating from the 1930s no longer retains sufficient architectural integrity to communicate its associations with TWA. As noted previously, with the exception of the national headquarters' executive offices maintained at the Municipal Airport building between 1957 and 1968, TWA consolidated its administrative offices into 124,000 square feet of leased space in a building at 1735 Baltimore Avenue.⁵⁹ Unlike the 1968-1971 TWA Administrative Offices Building, where the airline erected its office building on land owned by the airline, the Modern Movement Miesian building at 1735 Baltimore Avenue was a speculative investment by real estate developers and was leased by TWA. This building is listed in the National Register for its exceptional locally significant associations with Transportation during TWA's switch to an all-jet airline and the company's associated growth from 1957 to 1968, when construction on the TWA Administrative Office Building at the Kansas City International

⁵⁸ Ibid. In the late 1970s, TWA erected a computer building to the north of the TWA Administrative Offices Building. A hyphen that connected the new building to the PARS computer processing space in the TWA Administrative Offices Building provided the only egress between the two buildings. This addition occurred at a time when TWA began to decline.

⁵⁹ The TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on November 20, 2002.

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Airport began. The Robert Keith Building at 1301 Baltimore Avenue, demolished in 2004, housed the TWA Flight Operations Training Center in leased space until the construction of an expanded flight training program was established at the Kansas City International Airport between 1968 and 1971.

The TWA Administrative Offices Building is the only administrative facility designed and erected by TWA on land owned by the airline in Kansas City. The building is TWA's only administrative facility in Kansas City to be associated with the new Kansas City International Airport and that was specifically designed to house TWA's national and international executive and staff administrative functions, including TWA's financial department and its executive staff, the executive directors and staff of the employment and safety engineering functions of TWA's International Industrial Relations Department, and the company's printing, advertising, and distribution departments.⁶⁰

The building's design of flexible open interior space to meet specific technological requirements is significant and introduced into TWA's operations the ability to provide special climate-controlled zones for mainframe computers and the data entry and data processing areas, as well as the IBM-designed PARS national and international reservation system.⁶¹ Locating the building in open farmland allowed the company to install the cables required for this technology in a manner that was more efficient and less expensive than it would have been had they erected their administrative headquarters in downtown Kansas City. As such, the building is unique locally as an early example of a building specifically located and designed to accommodate computer age technology.

Extraordinary Impact

In addition to scholarly analysis and comparison with like resources, National Park Service guidelines for the evaluation of buildings less than fifty years old indicate that an "extraordinary impact" on the community is a reliable measure of exceptional significance.⁶² Research documents that the TWA Administrative Offices Building was an integral part of TWA's impact on the Kansas City region during the establishment of the Kansas City International Airport, a continuation of TWA's role as Kansas City's "Home Town Airline" and the largest employer in the region in the mid- to late-twentieth century. The \$15 million building, which consolidated all of TWA's Kansas City administrative functions, was (1) one of the state's largest office buildings at the time of its construction; (2) served as the administrative offices for TWA programs that pumped more than \$200 million annually into the Kansas City economy

⁶⁰ "Technical Services Center Heads \$90 Million Program," 4.

⁶¹ These open floor plans and movable partitions retain their integrity. Built-up floors for computer wiring and cables have been removed over the years.

⁶² Sherfy.

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as the largest employer in Kansas City;⁶³ (3) served as the headquarters for TWA's Programmed Airline Reservation System (PARS), the first computerized national and international reservation system in airline history; and (4) was part of TWA's investment in the community relating to the construction of Kansas City International Airport, which was well over \$90 million between 1968 and 1972 and was the then-largest expenditure made by any firm in the Kansas City metropolitan area.⁶⁴

MODERN MOVEMENT ARCHITECTURE

POST-WAR CORPORATE ARCHITECTURE

An appreciation of the TWA Administrative Offices Building's local significance in architecture requires an understanding of the role of modern design after World War II in corporate architecture and the national impact of the work of Mies van der Rohe and SOM's Miesian corporate office idiom in the post-World War II period.

Following the barren years in private construction due to the Great Depression and World War II, the revival of the Modern Movement in the United States can be traced to a number of factors. Underlying specific events was the fact that the dormant ideals of the International Style resurfaced and exerted a powerful influence on architects, major corporations, and institutions. As the economy shifted from wartime to civilian production, there was a pent-up desire to demolish decaying nineteenth and early twentieth century structures and erect new buildings that reflected the optimism of a new era. Contributing to this dynamic was the complexity of social, economic, and governmental institutions transitioning from a major war effort. Instead of nostalgia for the past or a retreat into romanticism, the simplest approach was to continue the institutional methods that had so efficiently marshaled resources during the war. As a result, a "pragmatic utilitarianism" became the motivating factor in commercial and institutional architecture in the United States.⁶⁵

Another factor that built upon the popular use of what became classified as the Modern Movement were the advances in building technology that became readily apparent after the return to peacetime production. Traditionally, architectural design in America changed either imperceptibly as a result of the accumulation of small changes, or noticeably as the result of singular structural invention. In the post-war

⁶³ Karash, 42.

⁶⁴ "Technical Services Center Heads \$90 Million Program," 4.

⁶⁵ Roth, 277.

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period of retrofitting from wartime production to private manufacturing, technological changes of the past decade and new inventions became overwhelmingly noticeable and commonplace. Among the most significant were new designs for wind bracing and the development of rigid steel frames and new composite structural systems of steel and concrete that reduced building sway and vibration, and made thin curtain walls of glass and aluminum feasible. Revolutionary improvements in the design, fabrication, and installation of cladding and joints led to taut, smooth exterior surfaces and allowed the installation of glass and cut stone of larger dimensions. The development of laminates, reflective tinted glass, synthetic sealants, and improved gaskets and anchors were a major departure from traditional materials. Better floor finishes and improved ways of concealing and zoning air-handling systems emerged. The commercial fluorescent lamp, first marketed in 1938, became a staple for commercial and institutional buildings, as did central air conditioning. "Engineering became almost a fetish and the interest was inevitably reflected in the appearance as well as the working of the architecture."⁶⁶

Despite a consensus among architects supporting simple utilitarian designs, a single cohesive modern style did not emerge after World War II, as had the Craftsman or Art Deco styles of the early twentieth century. Because the Great Depression and World War II interrupted the merging of European and American modernism, American architectural preferences in the late 1940s and early 1950s initially were an exaggerated adherence to the particular style of individual architects. Among those who achieved early ascendancy were the European modernists who immigrated to the United States during the 1930s, including Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.

THE MIESIAN OFFICE BUILDING

As director of the School of Architecture at Chicago's Armour Institute of Technology⁶⁷ and through the reconstruction of its campus, Mies van der Rohe's work attracted considerable national attention in the late 1940s. A commission to design a number of high-rise apartment buildings on Lake Shore Drive in Chicago sealed his reputation for producing cutting edge modern design and distinguished him from the other modernists in the more mainstream International Style. The designs for these Chicago apartment projects — simple boxes formed by structural frames constructed of steel and broad expanses of glass for fenestration — secured a following among students, designers, and architects who became deeply committed to the Miesian design philosophy.



⁶⁶ John Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown, *The Architecture of America: A Social and Cultural History* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1961), 411.

⁶⁷ Later the Illinois Institute of Technology.

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The design of the glass curtain walled Lever House in 1952 by Gordon Bunshaft, designing partner of the architectural firm of SOM, utilized elements of earlier designs of Mies van der Rohe. The curtain wall design of the Seagram Building (1954-1958) by Mies van der Rohe and Philip Johnson reflected "a steady, undeviating, long evolution of strongly contrasted forms, precisely articulated structures and decisive details" that were the fruition of Mies van der Rohe's design ethos dating to the 1920s.⁶⁸

While curtain wall construction dates to the early twentieth century, the design of Lever House and the Seagram Building created an "expressive new language" for the curtain wall. "Strict rules governed the manner of joining elements together, of ordering horizontal and vertical members, of proportioning part to part."⁶⁹ The result was a new abstract aesthetic created by industrially produced building elements utilizing "careful proportions, the studied craft of simplicity and the inexorable regularity of repeating elements."⁷⁰

By hanging the glass curtain wall in front of the structural columns, the architects dispensed with the rhythm created by vertical columns and created a uniform fenestration of dark glass or panels, creating an opaque appearance. Moreover, despite the orientations of exterior walls and the widely differing thermal heat gains on different elevations, there was absolutely no variation in the appearance of the tower walls.⁷¹ The siting on the open plaza, which exposed the entire box to public view, created on the exterior and interior no sense of front or back. Thus, the Miesian glass box, a study in simplicity strictly organized with a rectangular grid curtain wall, presented no complexities and focused only on the "exorable regularity of repeating elements"⁷² and could be utilized for commercial or residential purposes and sited at any location. Moreover, unlike the designs of other contemporary architects, the Miesian order that emerged with Lever House and the Seagram Building could be easily learned and repeated.⁷³

The two buildings catapulted the Miesian office building, with its geometric glass and metal curtain wall and open public plaza, to the forefront of American architecture and it became the country's most influential and copied office building design. The Miesian glass tower, with its remarkable functionalism, became the symbol of American business in the post-war period, providing the sense of aloof isolation

⁶⁸ Burchard and Bush-Brown, 439

⁶⁹ Mark Gelernter, *A History of American Architecture: Buildings in Their Cultural and Technological Context* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1999), 267.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Roth, 284.

⁷² Gelernter, 267.

⁷³ Ibid.

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and regal image desired by corporate clients. At the same time, the smaller Miesian building provided a more hospitable and engaging image.⁷⁴

The popularity of the style, however, was short lived. Beginning in the early 1970s, economic conditions and technological advances resulted in the construction of taller and taller buildings, and eventually their sheer height encouraged verticality rather than a grid effect. By the mid-1970s, a number of architects eschewed the severity and austerity of Miesian towers and explored treatments that elaborated on the basic frame and curtain wall construction, blending aesthetic goals with functional efficiency. In the 1980s, architects tried to conceal the verticality of their high-rise office buildings and apartments with horizontal bands and neoclassical ornament. Postmodernists of the next decade obliterated the grid of glass and metal, creating "slick skin" curtain walls of highly reflective tinted solar glass and thin cut stone and laminates, incorporating it in a variety of pleated, terraced, and eroded forms.⁷⁵

The Miesian curtain wall construction of the TWA Administrative Offices Building reflects a pattern of features common in the corporate architecture executed by SOM in the post-World War II 1950s through the 1970s. The building is one of a limited number in the Kansas City metropolitan area that clearly expresses the Miesian style and its era of popularity and, as such, is unique in the architectural heritage of the community. Moreover, it is the only low-rise Miesian office building in the region designed by the prestigious firm of SOM.

The TWA Administrative Offices building is also significant as an early example in Kansas City of the advent of the architectural corporate logo in the post-World War II period. The intent of TWA in the selection of the design and construction team and of a Miesian style office building was clearly a choice to create an iconic building at the new Kansas City International Airport. In announcing the construction of the building, Arthur N. Knudsen, TWA staff vice president noted:

*This building is conceived to provide TWA with a thoroughly functional environment for its operating personnel in Kansas City and at the same time contribute to TWA's public image as a result of a visual expression that will add to the architecture of the community." The city shares our hopes that the TWA building will set the standard for subsequent development of the area.*⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Roth, 286, 278, 291.

⁷⁵ Carole Rifkind, *A Field Guide to Contemporary American Architecture* (New York: Penguin Putnam, Inc., 2001), 297.

⁷⁶ "New Administrative Center is Underway at Kansas City," 3.

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The Rise of the Architectural Corporate Image

The use of architecture to form the marketing image to the public was well established in the business and architectural community by the 1960s. As corporations became increasingly dominant in the post-World War II economy, architecture responded to the market created by corporate commercial institutional spaces — the executive office, the secretarial stations, the boardroom, the cafeteria, and climate-controlled computer rooms. Commercial architecture was no longer defined by the Main Street business building or the function-driven factory. By the mid-1950s, the nation responded to similar advertisements and shared the uniform products of nationwide technology and communication. The United States was fast becoming a nation of urban and suburb dwellers whose regional folkways faded as more and more decision-making occurred on a national level. The response was architecture that reflected a nationwide technology.⁷⁷ It was under these conditions that large architectural and engineering firms practicing on a national basis became a unique American development.⁷⁸ By 1960, the size and institutional character of the emerging post-World War II business and industrial client required architectural firms that would perfect types of buildings for specific corporate needs, but would not be expected to make radical innovations in design. “At their best, as in the case of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, such firms might do some of the finest architecture of the day. Some other big firms did some of the worst.”⁷⁹

At the same time, commercial architecture was an increasingly important form of public relations. In a post-war era noted for “a confident and enthusiastic desire to get on with the business of progress, the ideals of the International Style were still very potent,” and corporate architecture became sleek, modern, reductive, and exclusive.⁸⁰ The United Nations Secretariat building (1950) was the first large dominating modern office building form. Its thirty-nine stories with a tinted glass curtain wall on the dominant east and west façades were an exciting departure from the skyscrapers of previous decades. The advertising value of the eye-catching, gleaming geometric walls caught on quickly. Lever Brothers, manufacturers of soap and edible oils, commissioned SOM to design their new office building in New York (1950-1952) and, out of this commission, designing partner Gordon Bunshaft created “the first corporate image in New York.”⁸¹ Seagram house (1957- 1958) established the Miesian curtain wall office tower as the dominant design for the emerging post-World War II corporate architectural icon.⁸² Thereafter, more and more corporate clients sought to reinforce their public image through the design of their building and, in the

⁷⁷ Burchard and Bush-Brown, 424.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 425.

⁸⁰ Roth, 275.

⁸¹ Burchard and Bush-Brown, 474; and Roth, 278.

⁸² Burchard and Bush-Brown, 473.

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process, "gave architects like Mies, Johnson and Skidmore, Owens and Merrill opportunities to realize the normative, universal, technically pure architecture they had advocated for twenty years."⁸³

TWA was among the corporations that hired architects noted for their International Style design. In 1956, construction of the TWA terminal building at the John F. Kennedy Airport in New York began. TWA chose a general theme of motion and excitement as a marketing image and hired Eero Saarinen and Associates to design a modern terminal building.⁸⁴ "In the 1960s, the airplane and the automobile became a symbol of power and mobility and,⁸⁵ with the reorganization of the company in 1968, TWA commissioned the New York industrial design firm of Walter Dorwin Teague Associates, Inc. to perform a study to create a new visual and service image for the "Supersonic Seventies."⁸⁶ At the same time, TWA opened an ultra modern reservation center at the 2 Penn Plaza complex in New York, which was designed to reflect the Saarinen-designed terminal building.⁸⁷ During this same period, the design of the TWA Administrative Offices Building in Kansas City reflected the airline's conscious use of a modern architectural corporate image.⁸⁸

SOM Miesian Office Buildings

It is not surprising that TWA selected SOM for its new office building. Most of the large firms doing important work in corporate architecture were conservative by the very nature of their clientele. An exception was SOM, a partnership that began in 1936 and quickly became noted for "technological inventiveness and purity."⁸⁹ The firm attracted and employed talented and innovative graduates of the nation's architectural schools. Skidmore, who placed importance on research and organization in the solicitation and handling of large corporate commissions with talented design partners like Gordon Bunshaft, "seized the Miesian idiom and employed it skillfully"⁹⁰ as a modern corporate logo. Of the countless architects who took up the Miesian idiom, "none were more energetic or more inventive."⁹¹ This and the firm's organizational ability, which was demonstrated when it was contracted to provide a layout and house designs for the town of Oak Ridge, Tennessee (1942-1946), made it one of the most sought-after firms of the 1960s. By 1970, the firm employed one thousand architects, twenty-one

⁸³ Roth, 277.

⁸⁴ The building was completed in 1962. At the time, the name of the airport was Idlewilde Airport.

⁸⁵ Roth, 297.

⁸⁶ "Headlines & Highlights," *TWA Skyliner* vol. 31, no. 1 (1 January 1968), 5, TWA Museum Chapter of the Platte County Historical Society, Kansas City, Missouri.

⁸⁷ Saarinen died in 1961 before the completion of the terminal building.

⁸⁸ "New Administrative Center is Underway at Kansas City," 3.

⁸⁹ Roth, 286.

⁹⁰ Burchard and Bush-Brown, 424.

⁹¹ Roth, 286

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partners, and forty-five associates, and had offices in Chicago; New York; San Francisco; Portland, Oregon; and Washington, DC.⁹²

MODERN MOVEMENT ARCHITECTURE IN KANSAS CITY

The local architectural significance of the TWA Administration Offices Building is clear when viewed within the context of the local evolution of post-war Modern Movement style architecture. In particular, an understanding of the "individuality and variations of features" that occurred within the Miesian office buildings, the "evolution of that class," and the "transition" between the post-modern architectural classes requires analysis of significant post-World War II office buildings in Kansas City.⁹³

New commercial and institutional construction in Kansas City in the decade following the end of World War II moved cautiously toward the modernism that was taking hold of urban centers nationwide. In the 1950s, construction of Modern Movement style office buildings generally occurred outside the central business district. In 1953, local architects Neville, Sharp & Simon designed a new facility for the Midwest Research Institute near the Country Club Plaza. The International Style building's low, horizontal, symmetrical façade includes a heavy masonry frame surrounding a glass curtain wall. As noted by architectural historian George Ehrlich in his 1978 study of Kansas City architecture, "The thin geometry of the curtain wall is a bit constrained by the visually heavy weight of the stone frame."⁹⁴

The Old American Insurance Company building near the Country Club Plaza designed by Voskamp and Slezak architects and completed in 1959 also featured a stone enframing of three-story curtain walls, but with "subtler proportion."⁹⁵ Ehrlich singles out the 1950 design by Los Angeles architect Welton Becket, which was completed in 1955 as the headquarters building for Hallmark Cards in the Midtown area, as a successful expression of the International Style. The design incorporated glass curtain wall technology without an exposed masonry frame.⁹⁶ Of note is the avoidance of symmetry balanced with the creation of regularity in design, which is a characteristic of the International Style.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ National Register Bulletin No. 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, 18.

⁹⁴ George Ehrlich, *Kansas City, Missouri: An Architectural History, 1826-1990*, rev. ed. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 125.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 125-126.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 121.

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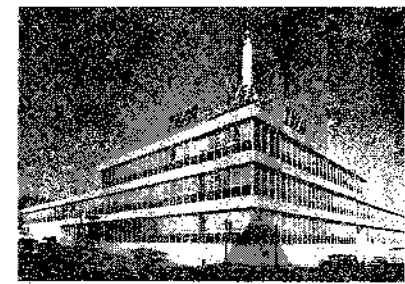
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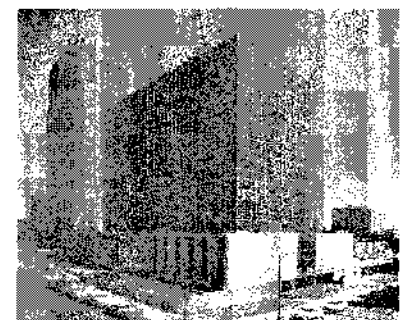
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The three-story low-rise Modern Movement building⁹⁷ designed by Raymond Boiles, Jr. and Morris Schechter and erected at 17th Street and Baltimore Avenue in the railroad freight area south of the central business district featured a variation of the curtain wall of glass and aluminum panels in a space age design complete with a rocket ship model on the roof. The horizontality created by the ribbons of curtain wall windows and corrugated aluminum panels reflects elements of the International Style established in the 1930s and the use of the Miesian curtain wall on multiple façades.⁹⁸ Similar in its use of ribbon windows and panels was the three-story Old Security Life Insurance building erected on Broadway in the Midtown area in 1959. Designed by the Kansas City firm Kivett & Meyers & McCallum Design, the wall treatment features careful proportions and rigid geometric patterning.⁹⁹

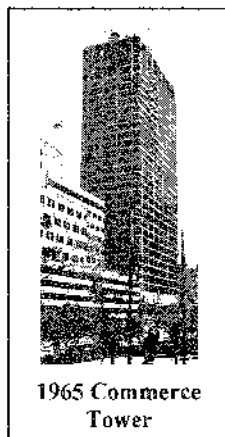
The construction of the Kansas City Public Library and Board of Education Building (1958-1960) is significant as the first Modern Movement style Miesian office tower in Kansas City. It reflects an important transition that occurred in Kansas City from the low-rise curtain wall office building to the tall Miesian office tower.



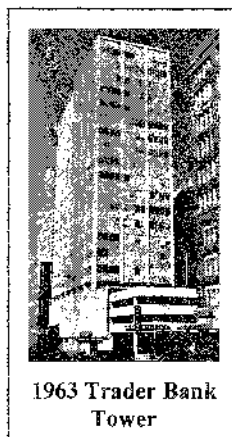
**TWA Corporate Headquarters'
Building, Midtown Crossroads
Freight District, c. 1955
Nicholson Group and El Dorado, Inc.**



**Kansas City Public Library and
Board of Education Building, c. 1960**



**1965 Commerce
Tower**



**1963 Trader Bank
Tower**

Through the early 1960s and into the 1970s, the importance of Modern Movement office buildings, the majority of which derived their design from the Miesian style, became the ultimate expression of progress. Between 1963 and 1968, a number of trend-setting Miesian office buildings changed the Kansas City skyline.

The 1963 Traders Bank Tower designed by the Chicago architectural firm of Thomas E. Stanley, Inc. and the 1965 Commerce Tower designed by the Kansas City firm of Keene,

⁹⁷ The TWA Corporate Headquarters' Building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on November 20, 2002 for its significance in Commerce and Transportation. TWA leased the building.

⁹⁸ John, S., Poppeliers, Allen Chambers, Jr., and Nancy B. Schwartz, *What Style Is It? A Guide To American Architecture* (New York: National Trust For Historic Preservation, 1983), 92.

⁹⁹ Ehrlich, 125.

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Simpson & Murphy both featured the flat, geometric Miesian curtain wall treatment as applied to the tall office tower.

Three office buildings erected during the 1960s and located outside the central business district are representative of the Miesian designs of the national firm of SOM. The Business Men's Assurance Building (BMA) is perhaps the most arresting and aesthetically significant of the Miesian designs in Kansas City due to its elegant crisp structural elements and siting on a plaza in a park at one of the highest points in the city.¹⁰⁰ Completed in 1964, it was not the first SOM-designed building in Kansas City.



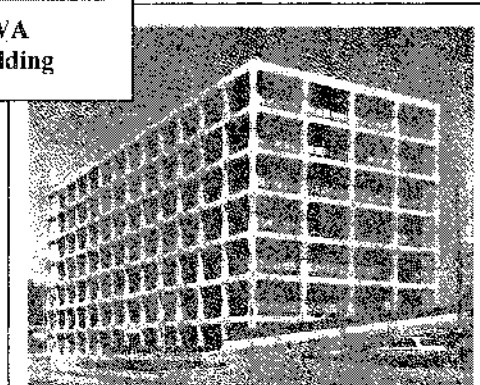
1964 Business Men's Assurance Office Tower

The fairly large John Hancock Building located on the northwest edge of the Country Club Plaza predates it by one year. In both buildings, the architects innovatively brought the



1968-1971 Low-Rise TWA Administrative Office Building

structure outside the curtain wall box, creating a grid-like exoskeleton. By contrasting the white structure with the recessed dark glass curtain wall, they created elegant rectangular patterns. The designs of these buildings were novel for Kansas City, but they were not unique within the SOM firm. There are close stylistic copies by SOM in other cities.¹⁰¹



1963 Mid-Rise John Hancock Building

Although not an office tower, the four-story low-rise TWA Administrative Offices Building erected in 1968-1971 at the Kansas City International Airport is also a striking example of SOM's utilization of a flat curtain wall treatment. The building is an excellent

¹⁰⁰ The building was listed as the BMA Tower in the National Register of Historic Places on August 21, 2002 for its high artistic value.

¹⁰¹ Ehrlich, 139.

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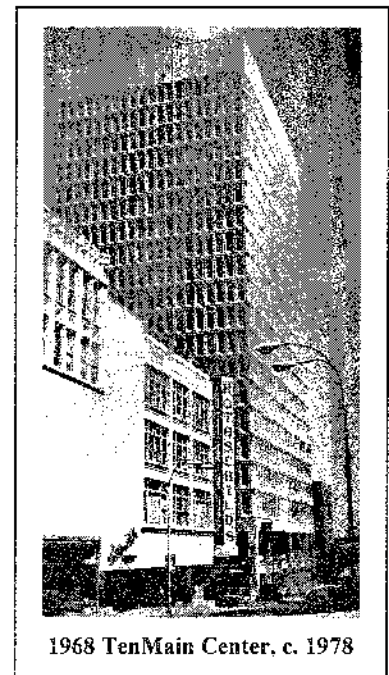
**TWA Administrative Offices Building
Platte County, Missouri**

example of the low-rise Miesian style office building designs perfected by SOM in the 1960s, and by repeating the use of white marble and grey-black glass curtain wall, continues the firm's signature crisp articulation found in the other SOM buildings in Kansas City.

The use of the Miesian curtain wall continued in the 1970s in Kansas City and included the 1973 Mercantile Bank Building designed by Harry Weese & Associates of Chicago and the 1977 Mutual Benefit Life office tower designed by the office of Mies van der Rohe Architects of Chicago.¹⁰²

But, by this time, a transition was occurring. Several large office buildings incorporated the "stark geometry" of Miesian style, but have elevations with considerable texture. They reflect a trend away from the precise mechanical lightness the glass and steel curtain wall produced and toward a growing appreciation for plasticity and the effects light and shadow created between mass and solidity.

One example of this is the Ten Main Center building, designed by Los Angeles architect Charles Luckman and completed in 1968. This building retains the stark geometric arrangement of windows of the Miesian genre, but the walls are no longer flat. The horizontal joints of the precast panels create a noticeable texture and the resulting variations of light and shade produce a complex surface pattern that departs from the simple planes of the Miesian curtain wall of the 1950s and 1960s¹⁰³ and is a precursor of the Brutalism style that emerged in the 1970s.



ARGUMENT FOR ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The TWA Administrative Offices Building constructed in 1968-1971 clearly embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, and method of construction. It incorporates the pattern of features common to the Modern Movement Miesian style office building that emerged in the United States in the 1950s and enjoyed popularity in the 1960s and early 1970s. The use of the style for a low-rise office building reflects the individuality and variation of features that occur within this architectural class. Moreover, it reflects the variations on the SOM Miesian idiom unique to Kansas City.

¹⁰² Ludwig Mies van der Rohe died in 1969.

¹⁰³ Ehrlich, 142.

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This SOM variation of the Miesian metal-glass curtain wall box reflects the design philosophy of Mies van der Rohe that buildings should rise from a symmetrical central space, creating a balance between the building and the surrounding open space. The collaboration with the Sasaki firm in achieving this end is significant.

The building's distinctive high style design characteristics reflect the emergence of corporate architecture in Kansas City in the 1960s. In designing for a function-driven purpose that required flexibility for future growth and technological change, the building's functionalism, stark simplicity, and flexible planning proved to be an innovative and successful design choice at the time of its construction in Kansas City.

Exceptional Architectural Significance

As noted previously, the National Park Service outlines several specific issues relating to time that should be addressed in evaluating a less than fifty-year-old property. This involves an understanding of the historic resource within its historical contexts and, in particular, the time period, evidence of scholarly evaluation, comparison with similar resources within the geographical area of significance, and the exceptional nature of the resource. In addition to these measurements, the National Park Service guidelines for evaluation under Criterion G indicate that the "extraordinary impact"¹⁰⁴ and/or scholarly study of the resource is/are an additionally reliable measurement.

The 1968-1971 TWA Administrative Offices Building meets these thresholds. The National Park Service has recognized that sufficient time has passed and scholarly analysis of the post-World War II era of Miesian-influenced design has been completed to be able to evaluate the significance of these architectural works in the context of the International Style.

Scholarly Analysis

A substantial amount of professional, documented materials on the Miesian architectural property type, as well as the extremely significant Miesian idiom developed by the firm of SOM, has been conducted by notable scholars in architectural history beginning as early as 1961 with the American Institute of Architects' sponsored work of John Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown, and continuing to the analysis of the Modern Movement in the context of the post-modernist era by Carole Rifkind. Leland M. Roth's *A Concise History of American Architecture* is also an early scholarly evaluation of Modern Movement styles and the book continues to serve as a textbook for training of architectural historians and historic preservation professionals today.

¹⁰⁴ Sherfy, 6.

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Contributing to the ability to evaluate the Miesian architectural property type is the fact that the Miesian period was short-lived, extending roughly from the early 1950s through the 1970s, providing finite parameters from which to evaluate its role in the post-World War II Modern Movement.

The pioneering research and evaluation of Kansas City's architectural history in the late 1970s, and the updating of this work in 1992 by architectural historian George Ehrlich, PhD, professor of art history at the University of Missouri at Kansas City, provides a research base and a dispassionate analysis of the Modern Movement in Kansas City. The guidebook publications of the Kansas City Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1971 and in 2002 provided additional professional insight and assistance in compiling an inventory of extant Modern Movement buildings in the metropolitan area from which stylistic comparisons and analysis could be made to determine exceptional significance. These sources provided the basis for the comparison in this document of the extant properties in the metropolitan area that have the same associations with the Modern Movement and that illustrate the variations in the very limited number of Miesian style buildings in Kansas City built in the 1950s through the early 1970s.

Comparative Evaluation of the Local Significance of the Property

The comparison of the property to like resources is an important component in establishing the exceptional significance of a resource. As noted previously, it is clear from the analysis of the TWA Administrative Offices Building that it enjoys singular significance as: (1) one of a few examples of the low-rise Miesian curtain wall box in Kansas City, Missouri; (2) as one of only three buildings in Kansas City designed by the firm of SOM, the leading force in American corporate architecture in the post-World War II era and the firm that established the curtain wall as a formula in corporate design; and (3) the product of a design and development team whose members are known individually for their contributions to the American built environment. The building's high level of interior and exterior integrity reinforces its exceptional architectural significance for its associations with a type, period, and method of construction.

The only other Miesian style building formally evaluated for exceptional significance in architecture in Kansas City, Missouri is the BMA Tower (1961-1963), which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on August 21, 2002 for its local architectural significance due to the early recognition by the architectural community of its high artistic value as an expression of Miesian design as executed in the prototypical exoskeleton design of the national architectural firm of SOM. Although its siting in the middle of rolling parkland was significant, the design was not unique to Kansas City and was used by SOM at other locations. In comparison, the TWA Administrative Offices Building is a low-rise office

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building in which SOM employed the flat curtain wall rather than the exoskeleton. As such, it is significant for reflecting not only a unique local variation on the SOM theme, but also the continuum of a limited SOM idiom within the context of the Modern Movement design in Kansas City.

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**TWA Administrative Offices Building
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PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION

Photographer: Brad Finch
F-Stop Photography
Kansas City, Missouri

Date of Photographs: January 2007

Location of Digital Photographs on CD-ROM: Missouri State Historic Preservation Office
Jefferson City, Missouri

Photograph Number	Description	Camera View
1.	East (primary) façade and north (side) elevation	Southwest
2.	West (rear) elevation	South
3.	North (side) and west (rear) elevations	Southeast
4.	West (rear) and south (side) elevations	Northeast
5.	South (side) elevation	North
6.	South (side) elevation	North
7.	South (side) and east (primary) elevations	Northwest
8.	Backup generator building	Northwest
9.	Air cooling tower	Southeast
10.	East (primary) façade	West
11.	First floor, entrance lobby	Southwest
12.	First floor, atrium	West
13.	First floor, atrium ceiling	West, up
14.	First floor, atrium	North
15.	Fourth floor, view of atrium	Northwest
16.	Basement level office space, typical	North
17.	Fourth floor, typical office space	Northwest
18.	Parking area and landscaped islands	Southwest
19.	Disconnected hyphen	West

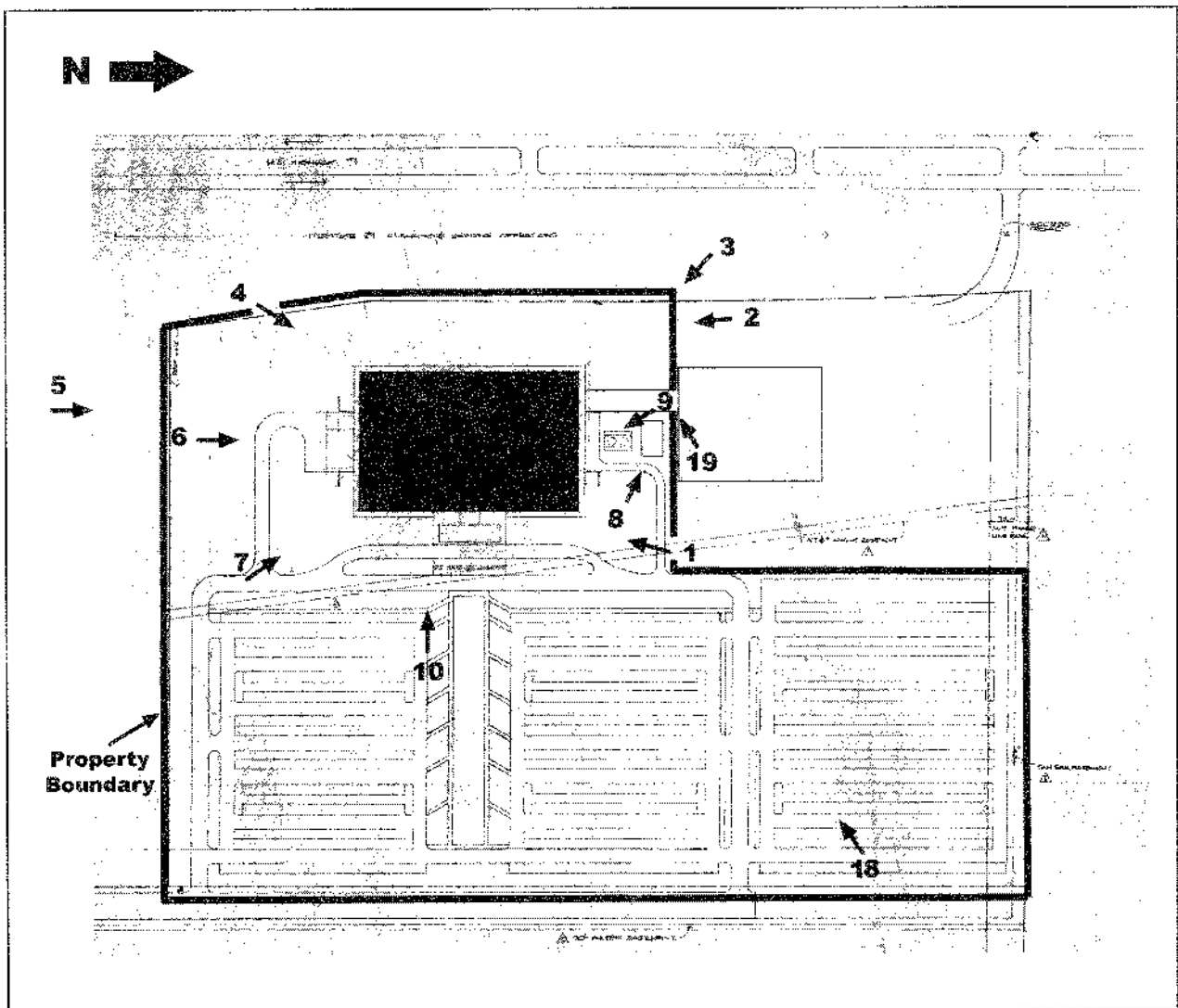
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**TWA Administrative Offices Building
Platte County, Missouri**

**TWA ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES BUILDING
SITE PHOTOGRAPH LOCATION MAP**



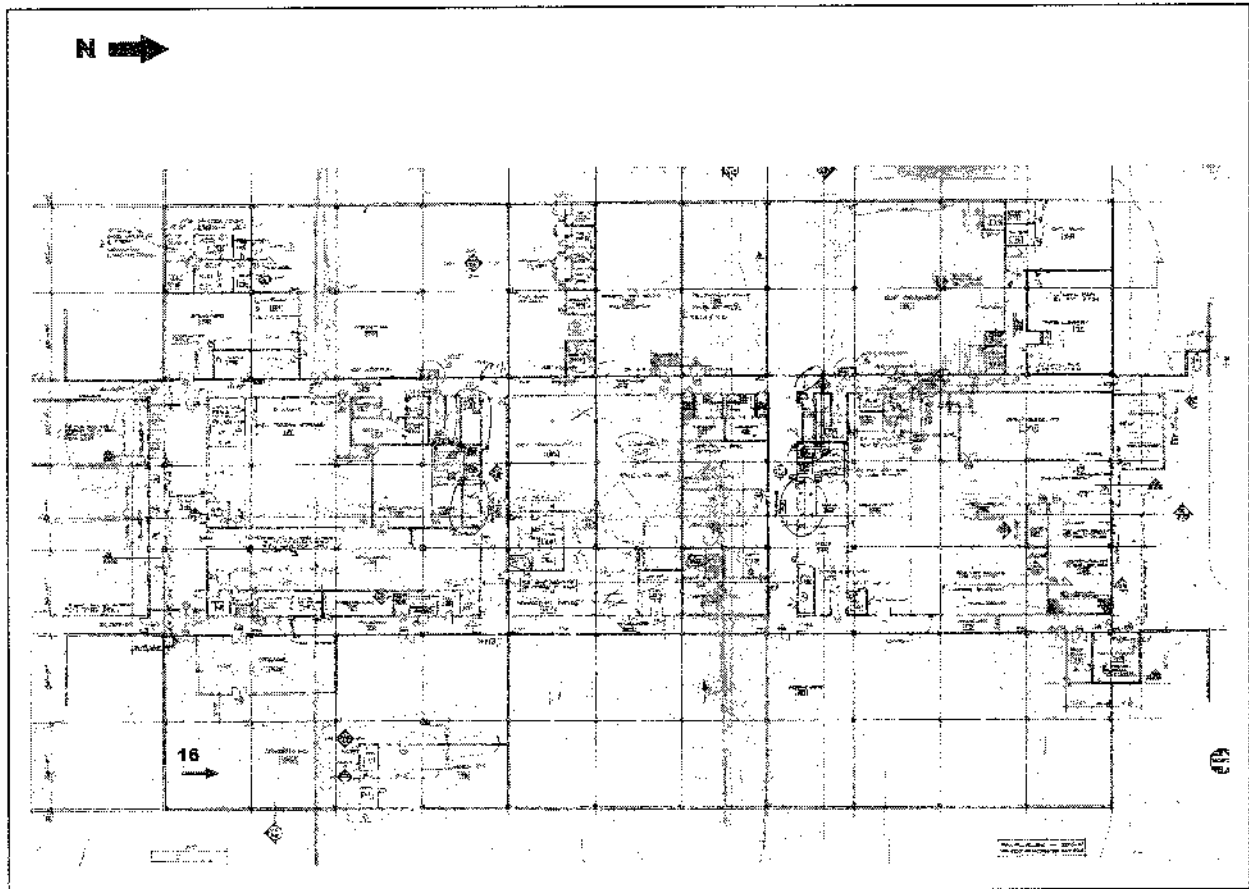
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**TWA Administrative Offices Building
Platte County, Missouri**

**TWA ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES BUILDING
BASEMENT PHOTOGRAPH LOCATION MAP**



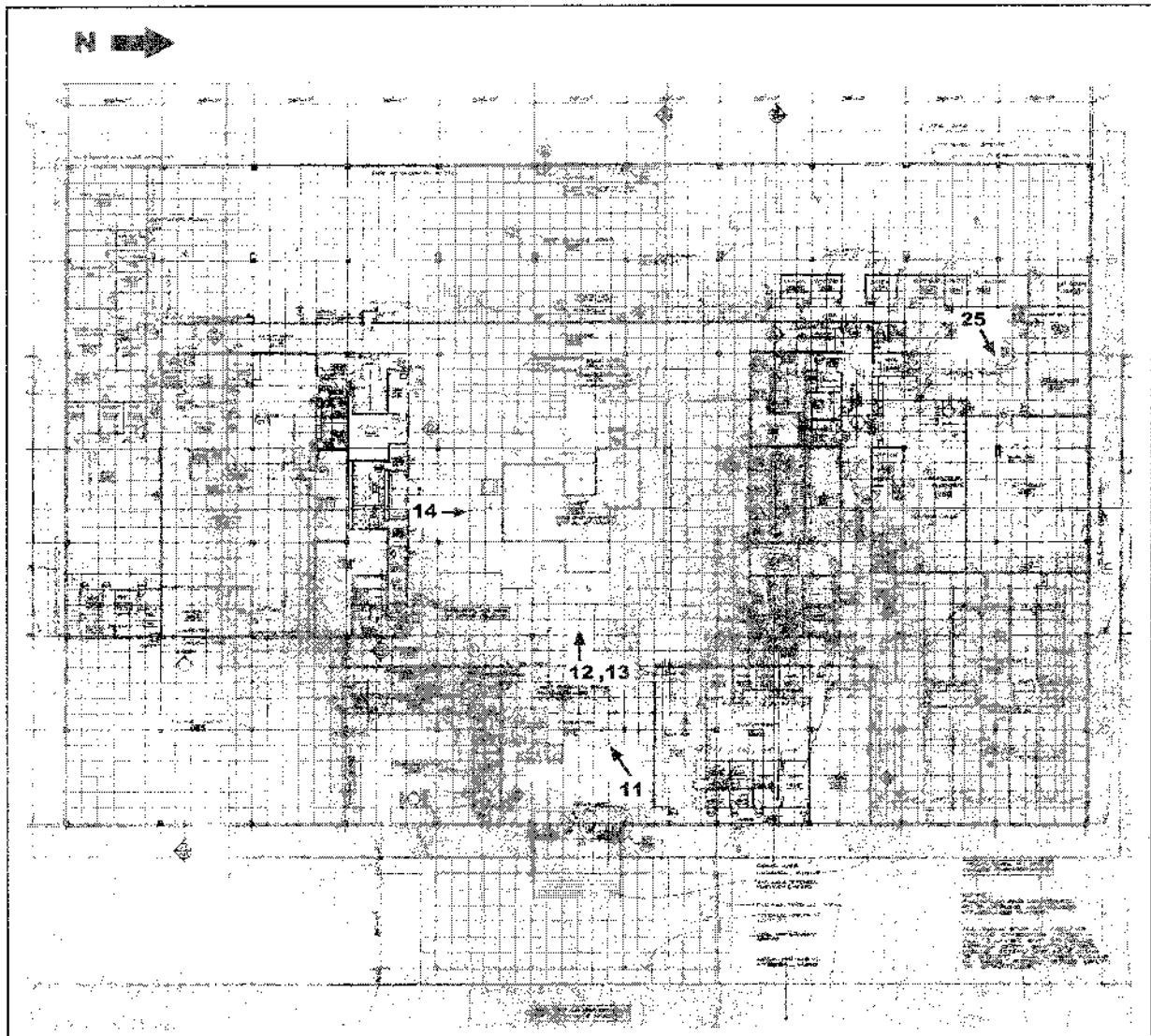
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**TWA Administrative Offices Building
Platte County, Missouri**

**TWA ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES BUILDING
FIRST FLOOR PHOTOGRAPH LOCATION MAP**



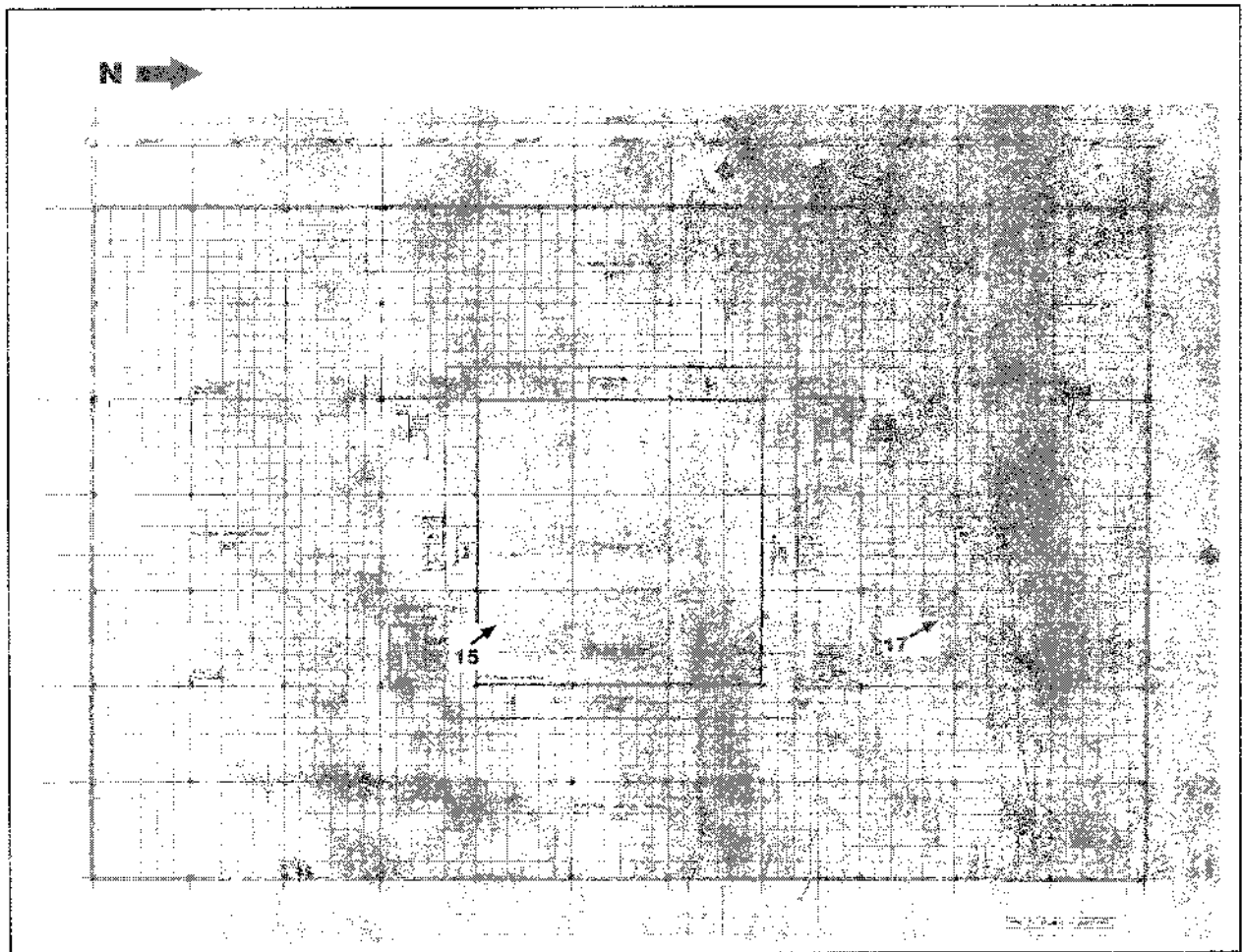
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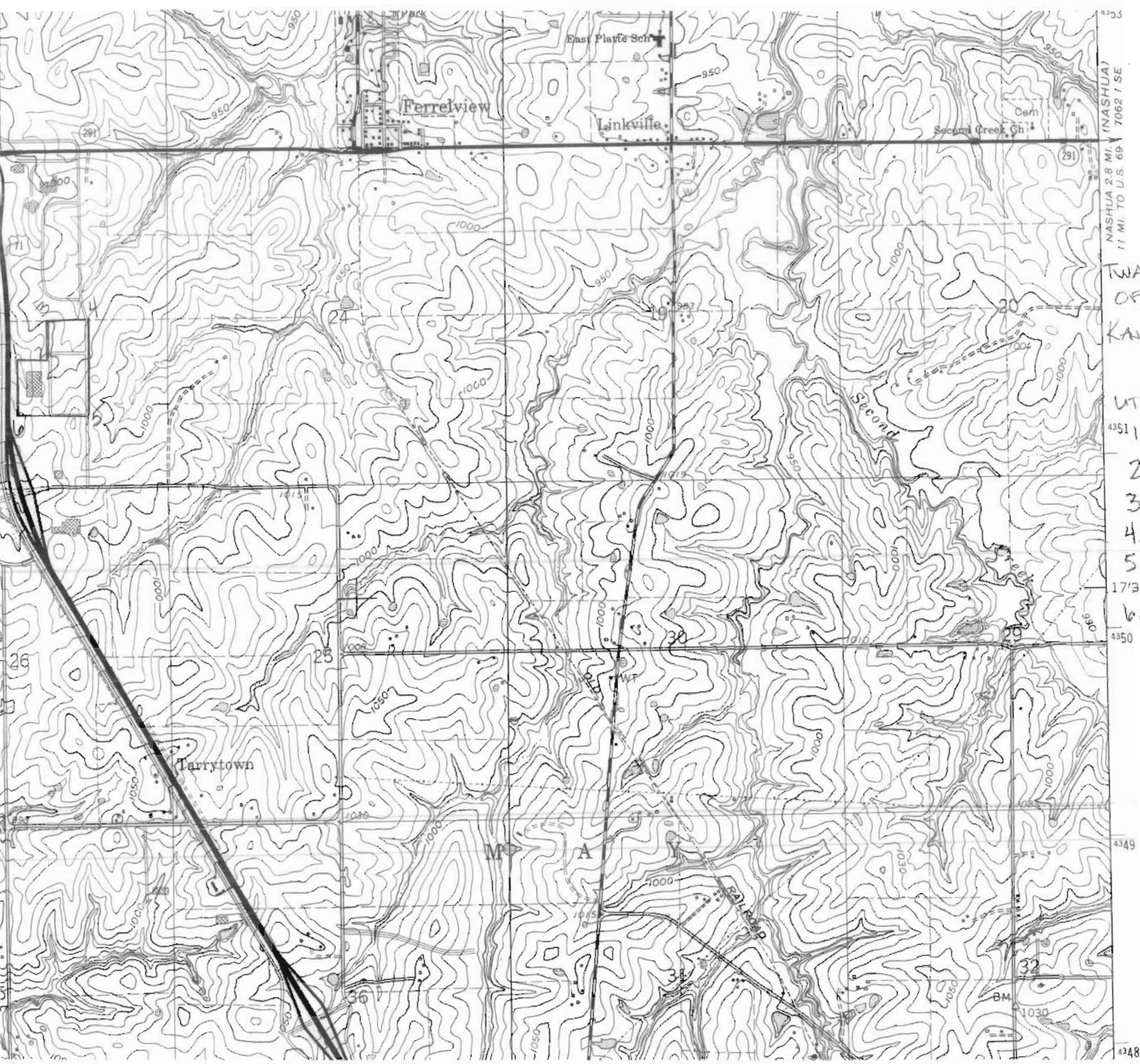
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**TWA Administrative Offices Building
Platte County, Missouri**

**TWA ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES BUILDING
FOURTH FLOOR PHOTOGRAPH LOCATION MAP**





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TWA ADMINISTRATIVE
OFFICES BUILDING
KANSAS CITY, PLATTE CO.
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 - 2. 15/354809/4351449
 - 3. 15/354809/4351632
 - 4. 15/355033/4351632
 - 5. 15/355033/4351161
 - 6. 15/354677/4351161

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