

WARNER PLAZA, 3251 MAIN STREET
Kansas City
Jackson County
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1893-L

HABS

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
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A. General Statement

Located on the south corner of Warner Plaza and Main Street this two-story building with a bell tower is one of fourteen original buildings in the Warner Plaza complex, all of which reflected features common to the Spanish Eclectic style popular from 1915 to 1940. This building and its "twin" located directly north across the street at 3245 Main Street (HABS No. MO-1893-A) were designed to be mirror images of each other and serve as a gateway entrance to the apartment buildings facing onto Warner Plaza. Designed primarily as a commercial building with apartment space, it represents one of four design variations or types found in the complex and utilizes a common decorative Spanish brick idiom which incorporates tile roofing and terra cotta ornamentation. The most highly ornamented of the four design types found in the complex, the unique style/type of the building is designated for the purposes of this narrative as "Type I."

B. Description of Exterior

Measuring approximately 55' x 45', this common Flemish bond brick course building features a three story arcaded bell tower on the south end of the west side. An ornamented parapet clad in terra cotta encircles the perimeter of the building and incorporates a compound roof plan. Typical of the Spanish Eclectic style, different visual units of the building have separate roof forms of varying heights arranged in an irregular, informal pattern. In this example of the Spanish Eclectic compound roof plan, the central section of the roof is flat, covered with tar and gravel. The arcade tower tile roof is hipped as is the tile roof on the opposite end bay.

West Side:

The west side faces onto Main Street and is composed of three parts: a slightly recessed center section with two end bays. The original stone band course which separates the first and second stories is boxed in. The two stories were originally designed to present a balanced appearance. A center vertical line is highlighted with an scrolled terra cotta escutcheon on the parapet; a small, square window with a wide surround on the second story; and an arched doorway on the ground level.

The first floor of the west side has been significantly altered. Originally designed to present a balanced appearance despite the

asymmetrical arrangement of door openings, all the original display window openings have been enclosed with glazed brick. The original smooth stone facing which covered the entire first floor of the west side has been removed and only exposed brick piers remain. In the recessed center section, the original display windows located on each side of the arched central entrance, show significant alterations. The stone cornices are not apparent. In the display window bay directly to the south of the arched entrance, the transom door has been replaced with a metal and glass door. The rest of the display bay has been completely filled with glazed brick. The display window bay opening to the north of the arched entrance, has a smaller window flanked with infill. The fanlight of the arched door entrance is still evident. Below it, a modern wooden door has been installed. The original openings on the end bays incorporate the same glazed brick infill hiding or replacing the original concave window hoods. The corner entrance in the bell tower bay on the north end of the first floor is also enclosed.

The second floor of the west side retains its original symmetrical appearance. The small square window with a wide stone surround incorporates a single, four pane wooden sash. Flanking the square window in the center section are tripartite windows with segmented pediments of terra cotta with centered ornamental lunettes. Segmented brick arches with stone keystones form the lintels over the pediments. These windows have rowlock course brick sills. The end bays on the second story feature projecting tripartite windows with bases ornamented in low relief carvings of plateresque inspiration. All of the tripartite windows on the second floor feature a single pane, fixed sash flanked by narrower double hung windows with four-over-one sashes. The center, fixed sash window located on the south side of the recessed central section is boarded over. Just below the base of the parapet in each end bay, a decorative rectangular arch of terra cotta spans the width of the projecting tripartite windows.

The third floor arcaded bell tower walls are clad in terra cotta and features an arcade of triple arches repeated on all four sides. Centered in the cornice and frieze is a simple escutcheon flanked by dental-like carvings and, on the ends, projecting rinceau brackets. Directly below the triple arches, the parapet features a brick and terra cotta treatment. Centered in the bay is a shallow, low relief scrolled escutcheon flanked by horizontal panels carved in a scroll motif. Larger and more deeply carved concave scrolls end the terra cotta treatment leaving corners of exposed brickwork. The low-pitched, hipped bell tower roof has no overhang and is covered in regularly laid straight barrel mission tile.

The low pitched hipped roof which projects from the bay on the south end of the west side also has no overhang and is covered in regularly laid straight barrel mission tile. It is supported by an ornamented terra cotta frieze and cornice which rest on a brick section of the building's parapet wall. The decorative carving on this frieze is larger and more defined than other building treatments and features a large, central scrolled escutcheon flanked by horizontal bands of interlocking scrolls.

North Side:

The north side which faces onto Warner Plaza is composed of two distinct components: the north side of the bell tower which replicates exactly the bell tower bay on the west side and a simple, two-story brick wall with a symmetrical arrangement of window openings. On the ground floor the corner entrance and display window located in the bell tower bay have been enclosed with glazed brick infill which extends upward to meet the boxed stone band course, covering the area where the original concave stone window hood was located. Directly above on the second floor a tripartite projecting window with an ornamented base, duplicates those found in the end bays of the west side. The north side of the third floor of the bell tower duplicates that of the west side.

The other visual unit of the north side is to the east of the bell tower bay and is an exact mirror image of the one directly across Warner Plaza at 3245 Main Street. Composed of six bays, the two stories of this visual unit present a symmetrical appearance. A center vertical line is highlighted with a scrolled terra cotta escutcheon on the parapet, an arched blind niche faced with stone on the second floor and a small, square window with a wide surround on the ground level. The escutcheon and the square window are duplicates of those found in the recessed central portion of the west side. On the first floor, two square windows with stone sills and lintels flank the small, central square window with a stone surround. These windows are boarded over. On the second floor, double hung, rectangular windows with four-over-one sashes and stone sills and lintels flank the blind niche. A narrow stone band separates the first and second stories. Stone banding also continues on the ground level and extends upward to frame the east corner of the first floor. A continuation of the parapet clad in terra cotta caps this section of the building wall.

Northeast Side:

The building design incorporates a diagonal side facing northeast onto Warner Plaza. This side visually links the north side of 3251 Main Street with its commercial setback to the north side of 9 Warner Plaza which, like the other apartment buildings facing onto Warner Plaza, features a deeper, residential setback (See HABS No.

MO-1893-K-3 photograph). The northeast side is symmetrical and repeats elements found in the bay on south end of the west side. Smooth stone facing covers the entire first floor. A central display window/door opening covered by a concave stone window hood is boarded over and conceals the window or window/door configuration. Located on the second floor and duplicating those found in the end bays of the west side, a centered tripartite projecting window with an ornamented base is composed of a single pane, fixed sash flanked by narrower double hung windows with four-over-one sashes. Just below the base of the brick parapet, a decorative rectangular arch of terra cotta strips spans the width of the projecting tripartite window. An ornamented terra cotta frieze and cornice caps the brick section of the parapet wall.

South Side:

Extensive demolition to the south of the building has partially exposed the building's south side. This side of the building has no ornamentation other than the narrow stringcourse at the base of the parapet and a duplication of the frieze and cornice of the west side which supports the hipped tile roof. Composed of six bays, it incorporates a central section with a one-story roofed bay and a second story recessed bay. The entire central section has no openings. On the second story, one double hung window with four-over-one sashes distinguishes the two-story west vertical bay. On the second story of the opposite end bay, paired windows with double hung sashes featuring four panes in the upper sash and a single-pane lower sash appear.

C. Description of Interior

Other than the arrangement of stairwells and hallways the original elements of the interiors no longer exist. A central entrance stair hall located in the Main Street entrance connects to the second floor hallways which run north and south. Small apartment units opened off the halls. The interior arrangement of first floor commercial space has been significantly altered.