

MILLER PLAZA, 3225 MAIN STREET
Kansas City
Jackson County
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1892-A

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
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U.S. Department of the Interior
1709 Jackson Street
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MILLER PLAZA, 3225 MAIN STREET

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A. General Statement

Designed primarily as a commercial building with apartment space, this building is one of two buildings located on the corners of Main Street and Miller Plaza which were designed to be mirror images of each other and served as a gateway entrance to the apartment buildings facing onto Miller Plaza. The four-story common Flemish bond course brick buildings are irregular in shape, a plan that is roughly L shaped. The building design effectively serves as two buildings in one. The rectangular commercial section which faces west contains retail space on the first story and apartment space on the upper floors. An irregularly shaped four-story apartment wing faces south onto Miller Plaza. Like the other buildings in the Miller Plaza complex it reflects the historical eclecticism of the post-World War I era through the restrained use of a mixture of Tudor and Colonial Revival stylistic influences. As one of fourteen buildings originally in the complex, this building features one of three design variations or "types" found in Miller Plaza. For the purposes of this narrative, the unique style/type of this building and its "twin" located at 9 Miller Plaza (HABS No. MO-1892-H) are designated as "Type I."

B. Description of Exterior

The commercial section of the building is composed of five vertical bays on the primary facades facing Main Street and Miller Plaza. A diagonal wall facing onto Miller Plaza connects the southeast corner of the commercial "building" with a narrower apartment wing which faces onto Miller Plaza.

West Side

The first floor store fronts facing Main Street are visually separated and distinguished from the second and upper stories by a projecting stone stringcourse. A second stone stringcourse also separates the third from the fourth story. The parapet surrounding the flat, tar and gravel roof is clad in terra cotta and features intermittent vertical pinnacles. These elements and the stone coping visually create a cornice which is pierced by a decorative curvilinear projection above each center bay.

The first floor of the west side was originally designed to present a balanced appearance. Four entrance/display window bays were separated by brick piers with limestone bases and tabbed caps. The south, end bay incorporated a corner entrance. Except for the removal of one of the brick piers and all of the ornamental tabbed caps, the structural elements appear to be intact. The two shops

on the south end have been remodeled to house one retail operation. Of the two on the north end, one was vacant and boarded up at the time of the photodocumentation.

The upper three stories feature a symmetrical arrangement of paired and single windows. A center vertical line is highlighted with a terra cotta medallion centered in the curvilinear projection above the parapet, a single rectangular window with stone quoins and a blind keystone arch on the fourth story, and single rectangular windows on the second and third stories. On each side of the single windows in the center bay are two sets of paired windows. Terra cotta pinnacled window embrasures surround the paired rectangular windows of the fourth story. All of the windows have stone sills and feature double hung sashes with six panes in the upper sashes and a single-pane lower sash.

South Side

This side includes the commercial portion of the building and the apartment portion which face onto Miller Plaza. Throughout the entire south side, the projecting stone stringcourse found on the west side, continues to visually distinguish the first story from the second and upper stories. The stone stringcourse separating the third and fourth stories also continues. The terra cotta parapet repeats the use of intermittent vertical pinnacles and cornice and coping found on the west side. Decorative curvilinear projections above the parapet appear over the center bays in the commercial portion and the entrance bay in the apartment section.

The south side of the rectangular, commercial portion of the building has two distinct visual units: the corner entrance and an arrangement of half windows on the first story, and the asymmetrical arrangement of windows on the second, third and fourth stories. The first floor incorporates the corner entrance with a display window and two bays created by horizontal half windows with stone sills located directly below the projecting stone stringcourse. The upper three stories feature an asymmetrical arrangement of paired and single windows creating five bays on each story. Directly below the curvilinear projection in the center of the parapet are two bays of single windows on each story. On the fourth story, they are linked by a blind, keystone arch and feature tabbed window surrounds. To the west of the two center bays on each of the upper stories is a bay created by paired windows. To the east of the two center bays on each of the upper stories are a bay created by triple windows and an end bay of single windows. On the fourth story, terra cotta pinnacled window embrasures surround all but the two single windows in the center bays. All of the double hung windows have stone sills and feature six panes in the upper sashes and a single-pane lower sash.

The design of the apartment building section incorporates a diagonal side facing southeast onto Miller Plaza and an entrance side facing directly south. The diagonal segment of the building visually links the shallow commercial setback of the south side of the retail section of the building with that of the connecting apartment building wing which faces onto Miller Plaza which has a deeper, residential setback.

The diagonal portion of the side facing Miller Plaza is composed of two bays on each story which incorporate a single window and triple windows. The portion of the apartment building side facing directly south is composed of five bays on each story. On each of the upper stories the bays consist of a single window in the west bay; narrow, triple windows in the entrance bay; another bay of triple windows and two end bays of paired windows. This pattern is repeated on the first story with the exception of a wide, pedimented entrance embrasure with no supporting pilasters. Modern glass and metal doors replace the original double doors. A decorative curvilinear projection is located above the entrance bay. Narrow tripartite windows with tabbed stone surrounds contain a double hung center window with four panes in the upper sash and a single-pane lower sash and two narrow windows with a single pane in each sash. All of the windows have stone sills and, except for those located in the entrance bay, feature double hung sashes with six panes in the upper sash and a single-pane lower sash. All of the windows on the fourth story, except those in the entrance bay, have terra cotta pinnacled window embrasures.

North Side

The north side of the commercial/apartment portion and the apartment building portion replicate the fenestration of the south side (not including the diagonal section which faces southeast). A brick chimney projects from the roof between the end bays of the commercial portion of the building. The decorative window surrounds, stone stringcourses and parapet ornamentation found on the west and south sides do not continue on this side.

C. Description of the Interior

The commercial portion of the building which faces west onto Main Street is composed of retail space on the first story which has been altered significantly. Access to the apartments on the upper stories of the building is through the Miller Plaza entrance which opens onto a stair hall running north and south, which is bisected by a hallway running east and west with small apartments opening off the hallways.