

MILLER PLAZA, 16-18 MILLER PLAZA
Kansas City
Jackson County
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1892-C

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MIDWEST REGIONAL OFFICE
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U.S. Department of the Interior
1709 Jackson Street
Omaha, NE 68102

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MILLER PLAZA, 16-18 MILLER PLAZA

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A. General Statement

Located on the north side of Miller Plaza, this building is one of fourteen original buildings in the Miller Plaza complex which reflected the historical eclecticism of the post-World War I era through the restrained use of a mixture of Tudor and Colonial Revival stylistic influences. The design of the apartment building is one of three architectural style variations or treatments which comprises the Miller Plaza complex and one of two which is repeated in alternating structures which face onto Miller Plaza, creating a streetscape of mirror images. This building and the buildings located at 19 Miller Plaza, 24-26 Miller Plaza, 27 Miller Plaza, 32-34 Miller Plaza, and 35-37 Miller Plaza (HABS No. MO-1892-E), were designed as mirror images of each other. The unique styling of the facing buildings is, for the purposes of this narrative, designated as "Type III."

B. Description of the Exterior

Measuring 66' x 37,' the three-story apartment building is clad in dark, common Flemish bond course brick. The building type is distinguished by the design features of its south side which faces onto Miller Plaza and includes: its symmetrical arrangement of windows and openings, the use of brick banding and stone trim to define the stories and identify the individual bays, the use of stone for decorative keystones and quoins, and its accentuated entrance bay.

South Side:

The central entrance bay which extends the height of the building and the arrangement of windows on each side creates seven vertical divisions in the south side facing onto Miller Plaza. The use of brick soldier courses to outline the vertical divisions of the bays and in the horizontal bands to delineate the stories is a significant design feature. Light colored, square stones are located at the intersection of the horizontal and vertical brick bands. Stone quoins appears where the horizontal brick bands turn the corners of the building. The repetition of the soldier coursing to form sills and lintels, stringcourses, banding and panels further distinguishes the brick design motif. In addition to the divisions created by the brick work, a stone stringcourse and random ashlar foundation treatment visually separate the basement level from the first story. A projecting cornice, which shows deterioration, is situated below a shallow parapet and extends across and turns the corners of the building face. The parapet with terra cotta coping encircles the flat tar and gravel roof.

The central focal entrance the width of double doors is flanked by simple Doric pilasters above which extend three stories of vertical soldier bond banding capped with stone crosses. Enclosed in this brick banding are tripartite windows located on the stairway landings mid-way between the first and second and second and third stories. They are visually linked by horizontal panels of brick banding with stone tab corners above each window unit. The double hung, triple windows are composed of a central window with four panes in the upper sash and a single-pane lower sash flanked by narrower windows with two-over-one sashes. The entrance is boarded over.

With the exception of the center entrance bay, window arrangements alternate between single and tripartite double-hung sashes. All of the windows on the first story are boarded over. The single windows on the upper stories have double hung sashes with six panes in the upper sash and a single-pane lower sash. The double hung, triple windows feature a center window with six panes in the upper sash and a single-pane lower sash flanked by narrower windows which have four-over-one sashes. The windows on the first story have arched brick lintels while those on the upper stories feature horizontal lintels. The brick window surrounds feature light colored stone tabs at each corner of the sill and light colored stone keystones centered on window lintels on the first and second stories.

North Side:

With the exception of single windows and a single-width door in the center bay and a narrow brick chimney, the unadorned rear, north side replicates the fenestration of the south side. The chimney is located immediately to the east of the end bay on the west end. The window openings on the first floor are boarded over. The east end of the building has been gutted by fire and only the window frames remain. Only a few of the windows located on the upper stories at the west end retain their original multi-pane upper sashes.

C. Description of Interior:

Due to damage caused by vandalism and fires, the original elements of the interior no longer exist. A central stairway hall runs from the central entrance to the rear. Hallways to the east and west connected with the central hallway. Twelve small apartment units which once incorporated Murphy beds opened off the east-west halls.