

WARNER PLAZA, 42 WARNER PLAZA
Kansas City
Jackson County
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1893-F

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MIDWEST REGIONAL OFFICE
National Park Service
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Omaha, NE 68102

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A. General Statement

Located on the north side of Warner Plaza, this building 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. Like the other buildings in the Warner Plaza complex, they utilize a common decorative Spanish brick idiom which incorporates tile roofing and terra cotta ornamentation. This building, its mirror image located directly south across the street at 43 Warner Plaza (HABS No. MO-1893-G), and the two facing buildings located at 12 Warner Plaza (HABS No. MO-1893-C) and 15 Warner Plaza, feature one of four design variations or "types" found in the complex. For the purposes of this narrative, these buildings are designated as "Type III." Because of their location on the corners of Warner Plaza and Warwick Boulevard, 42 Warner Plaza and 43 Warner Plaza differ from the other "Type III" buildings by having two primary entrance sides.

B. Description of Exterior

Measuring approximately 75' x 35', the apartment building is clad in common Flemish bond brick and is distinguished by the design features of its south and east sides. The south side facing onto Warner Plaza is composed of three parts: a slightly recessed center section and two projecting end bays. The foundation level masonry treatment is random ashlar stone capped by a stringcourse. A narrow, soldiered brick band course separates the random ashlar stone foundation from the brick masonry treatment of the upper stories. The windows on the first and second stories have rowlock course brick sills. The east side facing onto Warwick Boulevard is distinguished by twin, bell towers with balconied arcades, symmetrical fenestration and a focal entrance featuring an elaborate stone surround and terra cotta arch which extends upward past the second floor level.

Typical of the Spanish Eclectic style, different visual units in each building type have separate roof forms of varying heights arranged in an irregular, informal pattern. In this "Type III" design variation features an abbreviated mansard-like roof originally clad in tile covers the center section and is interrupted by the entrance bay's parapet. At the time of photographic documentation, demolition was in process. The center section of the roof was partially intact with some of the original rafters visible. The projecting end bay on the west has a flat, tar and

gravel roof hidden by a parapet clad in a terra cotta rinceau frieze. The other projecting end bay is a bell tower which features balconied arcades capped by a low pitched, hipped roof with no eave overhang. The roof covering is regularly laid straight mission tile. The east side roof design is composed of low pitched, hipped roofs with no eave overhang capping the bell towers and a short, abbreviated mansard-like roof in the center section. All are covered in regularly laid straight mission tile.

The design of the focal entrance in the center section of the building sides that face onto Warner Plaza is one element that distinguishes the style types found in the Warner Plaza buildings. In "Type III" buildings such as 42 Warner Plaza, the center foyer bay section features a wide, square doorway with a stone surround decorated with a carved cornice and a mission revival shaped carved pediment. The surround extends upward and incorporates a rectangular, focal window centered above the entrance cornice on the stairway landing level mid-way between the first and second floors. The window surround is capped with a large, terra cotta escutcheon flanked by vertical scroll designs, creating a pediment effect. A wrought iron railing in front of the focal window creates a balconet. The entrance and window are boarded up, leaving only the surrounds and ornamentation exposed. This entrance bay extends the full height of the facade. The brick parapet adorned with terra cotta coping, a centered finial projection and, just below, a shield flanked by horizontal panels with carved, low relief scroll designs found on other buildings of this design is not present.

The center recessed section of the south side features an asymmetrical arrangement of window openings in relation to the entrance foyer bay. To the east of the entrance bay on each story, including the ground floor basement level, are paired windows. On the west side of the entrance bay on both the first and second stories are four bays created by: a single window; a double door opening with a cantilevered balcony and wrought iron railing; a narrow, full length window and paired windows. All of the visible window openings have missing sashes. The single windows on the second floor are boarded over, as is the narrow single window on the first floor. The basement level windows have no mullions.

Both the first and second stories of the projecting end bays featured double leaf door openings and cantilevered balconies with wrought iron railings. The east, bell tower bay of the south side also includes a tower arcade formed by four brick keystone arches ornamented with a low, wrought iron balconet and, on the basement level, paired windows. Double leaf doors with multiple panes open onto the balconies of the east end bay.

East Side:

The east side facing onto Warwick Boulevard is composed of three parts: a center section which features a large elaborate focal entrance, situated below the abbreviated mansard-like roof and two end, bell tower bays. Because of the grade of Warwick Boulevard, the east entrance is located on what is the basement or foundation level of side facing Warner Plaza. Thus, this side has three stories and the arcaded bell towers. Unlike the south side the entire east side, including the foundation, is brick except for the ashlar treatment on the corners of the ground level. Here, the ashlar stone used in the foundations on the south and north sides wraps around the corners creating quoins. A narrow, soldiered brick band course continues from the south side and, on the east side, separates the entrance level from the upper stories. All the windows feature rowlock course brick sills. The fenestration is symmetrical, balanced on either side of the focal entrance bay. On the ground floor, paired windows flank the entrance. On the second and third stories, two single windows flank the focal entrance bay. All of the windows are either covered with plywood or open to the elements. None of the sashes remain. The twin, tiled hipped roof bell towers with balconied arcades incorporate single windows centered under the tower arcade.

The elaborate focal entry is composed of a wide, rectangular stone surround with terra cotta ornamentation. The terra cotta entablature includes a horizontal panel of exposed brick in the frieze. Directly over the cornice, located on the stairway landing level mid-way between the first and second floors, is an elaborate carved, low-relief ornament. The ornamentation is a visual continuation of the door surround and is composed of a central shield-like shape flanked by elongated scroll designs. The ornamentation creates the effect of a focal window or blind niche by exposing portions of the brick work beneath. These foyer entrance elements are incorporated in a terra cotta arch with an exaggerated keystone. The arch extends upward a full two stories creating a blind arch of brick over the entrance surround. Centered above the focal entrance and directly below the abbreviated mansard-like roof is a central escutcheon flanked by low relief carved panels and small escutcheons.

North Side:

The rear, north side is visible from Warwick Boulevard and an alley with a narrow sidewalk. This side replicates exactly the asymmetrical fenestration of the south side. There are, however, two distinct visual components of the rear side. The end bell tower bay which repeats the design and ornamentation of bell tower bay of the south side. The remainder of the side is unadorned brick except for the random ashlar foundation and brick stringcourse. The

flat roof over this section has no parapet. The window openings are either covered in plywood or exposed. The window openings which are uncovered do not have sashes, only the frames and reveals remain. The door opening is covered over with boards.

C. Description of Interior

Other than the arrangement of stairwells and hallways the original elements of the interiors no longer exist. A central stairway hall ran from the central entrance to the rear. Hallways to the east and west connected with the central hallway. Small apartment units, incorporating Murphy beds opened off the east-west halls.