

1016-18 Sylvania (Duplex)  
Museum Hill  
St. Joseph  
Buchanan County  
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1921

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MO-1921

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

**Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287**

HABS NO. M0-1921

1016-18 SYLVANIE (DUPLEX)

**Location:** 1016-18 Sylvania, St. Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri  
Legal Description: Lots 1 and 2, Block 2, Inslee and Allen Addition

**Present Owner:** Charlie R. Moore, 2231 South 10th St., St. Joseph, Missouri, 64503

**Statement of Significance:** This duplex is a contributing and distinct property type in the Museum Hill historic district which reflects the attempts by owners in the prestigious areas to create investment properties. Museum Hill is a residential area of St. Joseph, Missouri, that has architecturally significant buildings and historically relates to early growth of the city by being home to many of the important local residents. The owner and builder of this duplex, John De Clue, lived next door and was an important builder in St. Joseph.

**Prepared by:** David Bergstone  
Historic Preservation Planner  
City of St. Joseph  
June 2, 1994

## Part I. Historical Information

Date of erection: c. 1881

Architect: Unknown

Builder: John DeClue

Original owner: John DeClue

The building was probably built by the owner of the adjacent lot, John DeClue, who resided at 1020 Sylvania. Mr. DeClue came to St. Joseph from New York in 1859. He was the owner of the St. Joseph Planing Mill and was a builder for several significant buildings in St. Joseph, most notably the Buchanan County Courthouse (HABS No. MO-1844) and the W.M. Wyeth residence (301 South 11th, "Tootle House," HABS No. MO-1855). His company by 1881 had 40 employees<sup>1</sup> and he had constructed both the Christian Church and Presbyterian Church.<sup>2</sup> He was "well known as a school house and bank builder."<sup>3</sup> A water permit for this lot was issued in 1869 to Mr. DeClue.<sup>4</sup> Mr. DeClue, however, did not purchase the lot until 1881.<sup>5</sup>

Other information shows that the building had four porches on each side, one on either side of the side bays in 1888. There was a large building across the rear of the property. In the 1911 Sanborn Fire Insurance map, the porches and rear building no longer appear.<sup>6</sup>

The City Directories show several different residents in the duplex. From 1897 to 1899, Edward Brown, who worked as a clerk for the Burlington Railroad lived in 1016 Sylvania. In 1899, Frank Hill, who was a 'Commercial Traveler' for the Creamery Supply out of Kansas City lived in 1018 Sylvania.

The duplex residential structures were a common and important building type in St. Joseph. Many of the nineteenth century affluent neighborhoods, such as Museum Hill (see related district documentation on Museum Hill, HABS No. MO-1917), had a significant number of duplex structures. In Museum Hill almost a third of the buildings in the area are duplexes or multi-family residences. Many were constructed immediately adjacent to the owner's own residence, or one unit may have been used as a residence by some owners. They reflect one use of capital through the development of the major commercial and industrial businesses. They also reflected the 'middle class' attempts to obtain housing in the more prestigious areas of the community.<sup>7</sup> These structures were often in similar style and detail to the owner's structure and exhibited the same high quality of architectural detailing as primary residences.

## Part II. Architectural Information

This is a two story side-by-side, mirror image duplex. It is constructed of brick with details made from corbelled brick and carved stone. Most of the building has been painted in a white paint, which is peeling in many areas. The building is rectangular in plan, approximately 32 feet wide and 55 feet deep. The building is situated on a sloping lot, which falls from on the front from left to right (east to west), and slightly drops from front to back. There is a brick walk from the sidewalk, on the left (east) side of the building which runs directly to the side porch. A large tree in the rear of the lot is the only significant vegetation. (Just before documentation of the building was begun, a large hedge across the front of the building was removed.)

It is next to a north-south alley and there is an east-west alley across the rear of the lot. The lots to the west of the alley do not appear to have ever had more than small residences on the rear halves of the lots. The lot across the alley to the west only has a garage remaining on the lot, the rest of the lots are empty. The lots to the east were filled with residences, each using two of the lots. The property immediately to the east, 1020 Sylvania, is now vacant with some areas of concrete paving remaining.

### *Front*

The building has two, two-story bays on the front. The side walls each have two-story projecting bay, which have one set of windows on the angled face which is also visible from the front. The front bays are octagonal with the front, flat portion about half the width of the angled walls and with the front portion slightly projecting. There is a corbelled cornice and a small flat area between the two bays. The flat area is about the same width as the two front flat areas on the bays. There is a continuous, three course thick string course at the top of the foundation level.

There is about a two foot flat section from the corner to the projecting portion of the bay. These flat areas each have a recessed panel, about one brick header in width, which is interrupted half way by a small stepped detail, the same as is used at the top and bottom of the recessed area. The central flat portion between the bays has a similar recess but it is formed by two of the vertical recesses. The recess on the lower level has a horizontal connection at the top and the recesses on the second level have a horizontal connection across the bottom. The central portion of the bays also have two recesses on each level, but there is no connection and they end with the same corbel brick detail. On the flat part of the bays, there is a small panel which is created between the level of the lower floor window tops and the level of the window sills on the second floor. There are horizontal projecting brick bands, two courses thick which turn the corner of the slight projection and return to the angled wall of the bay. In the center of these formed areas are squares formed by the same type of recess, with the center of the square still flush with the wall.

Each bay has two windows, one on each level, on each angled wall. Several of the windows are missing sash, but there are some one-over-one double hung sash still remaining. There are also a few four pane, wooden frame storm windows on some windows. The windows all have simple stone sills.

The windows all have the same brick formed window hoods. The hoods are two brick headers in width and extend from about one foot below the top of each window to the corner of the window. They then turn at an angle to meet at a peak above the middle of the window. At the bottom end

of the hood mold on each side is a projecting stone block with a projecting small, four lobed pattern, the center with a recess. At the spring points of the hood is a stone block, which is roughly wedge shaped, with the thinner end notched to fit the top corner of the window opening. The lower side of this block is horizontal with the upper side forming a perpendicular angle to the peaked area. The block has a recessed decoration, which is a truncated *fleur-de-lis*, so that the lower side ends as if it were cut off. The upper side ends in a small curling pattern. A keystone at the top of the hood arch is a similar stone to those at the spring points, but it has a full *fleur-de-lis*. Between the three different stone blocks the connecting areas of the molding have two courses of header bricks. The outer row is projecting the same amount as each of the stone details, while the inner row is flush with the wall. The pediment area beneath the hood and above the window opening has a wooden panel which has a central *fleur-de-lis* and then two half *fleur-de-lis* positioned horizontally on both sides.

The projecting cornice is formed by corbelled brick and three wooden console brackets. The console brackets are placed at the two sides and in the center of the wall. The cornice is about eight courses tall. The roof has a wooden projecting soffit and fascia, which has some decorative molding but is generally simple. The cornice has a corbelled area from which, all the way across the front, there are alternating two and three course rows of corbelling, which form a detail similar to dentils.

#### *East side*

The east side of the building is five bays wide. The wall is flat with a central octagonal bay. The front two bays are formed by windows identical to those on the front. The second bay from the front is a doorway, although it has the same hood as the front windows. The ground level only slightly below first floor level so there is only a small step up onto the single bay porch for the doorway. The central, two story bay has three equal sides, but only the angled sides have windows. There is a second doorway on the lower level, symmetrical to the front door, but there is about a two foot drop from the level of the doorway to the ground. There is a faint shadow of a porch and stairs. The two rear bays differ in having bricks replacing the stone elements found in the other windows. The rear angle of the bay has a small access doorway below the string course.

The doorway in the second bay from the front is the current main entry and was probably the main entry into the one side of the building. The porch is square in plan with two pilasters and two square columns at the corners. The porch has a flat roof and the ceiling is from flat boards, with a modern glass globe fixture. The columns for the porch are square with a small square concrete bases and a concrete floor. The columns are chamfered and have a small astragal and then a larger flat top. Above this are supported the entablature, which has decorative brackets on the exterior sides and round, quarter circle brackets supporting the frieze between the posts. The brackets are made from five layers of alternating sizes of wood. There is a transom window above the door. The door is has a single lower panel and three vertical upper, rounded glass panes. The side door behind the bay window also has a transom and a screen door. The door itself is a four panel door in an inverted cross configuration.

The cornice on the side steps down from front to rear. The area from the bay window to the front has recessed panels and corbelled square details between. The projecting corbelled areas have a small recessed area in the middle. At the bay there are recessed panels on each side, but

no other details. The rear area has only a small three course corbelled cornice with no other details. The top of this rear is at the same course level as the bottom of the front cornice. There is a brick chimney extending up in the middle of the bay. It is rectangular, about the width of the wall of the bay and has not been painted. It appears to have a simple concrete cap.

#### *Rear*

The rear wall is a flat wall with three bays. The two outer bays are formed by single windows, while the central bay is formed by paired windows. The ground slopes steeply enough that there is a basement entry on the left (west) and right (east) side bays, about three small steps below grade. The basement level also has three small windows irregularly spaced across the middle of the wall.

The windows on the rear all have brick moldings. The moldings however, form a shallow segmental arch and do not have any other detailing than to extend across the opening and about three courses down on either side of the windows. Stretcher bricks are used to form the hoods. There are simple stone sills on the windows. The basement entry and basement windows have radiating bricks but no hoods. The area in the central bay has the outer layer of brick which have collapsed above the first floor windows. (Since the photographs were taken, the entire left (west) side of the rear wall has subsequently collapsed.) The rear wall does not have any parapet wall, and there is a full width gutter across the rear of the building. This guttering no longer has a central down spout, which has been the source for the water which has deteriorated the rear wall.

#### *West side*

This side is identical to the East side, except for the following details. The floor level is about four feet above ground level on this side, and there are paint shadows and joist pockets of the wooden deck which extended to the front of the building and then steps down to ground level. (Some wooden parts of this porch were removed by the owner just before the documentation was started.) The front, first floor window of the central bay window has been changed into a doorway. This door has a large glass pane and single panel below. The rear, side door has a solid, five horizontal panel door. The front, main entry doorway has the remains of a wooden screen door and a paneled door, with a large glass panel above and small panel below.

This side has basement level windows, located in line with the windows on the main and second floor. These windows have the same simple brick hoods found on the rear, main windows. There is a half door on the front side of the bay, and a short, 4 panel doorway on the rear side of the bay. The windows are fixed two lights windows, or two-over-two sash. The heights of the windows and doors generally follow the change in terrain along the side of the building. The chimney on the west side is also slightly shorter than the chimney on the east.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> St. Joseph Steam Printing Company, *History of Buchanan County Missouri*, (1881), reprinted by Ramfre Press, Cape Girardeau, Missouri, 1974, p. 634.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 493.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 723-724.

<sup>4</sup> Susan Ide Symington. "Museum Hill Architectural Survey, Saint Joseph, Missouri," (Prepared for the City of St. Joseph, Landmark Commission and the Missouri Historic Preservation Program, May 1985), Missouri Architectural/Historic Inventory Survey Form for 1016-18 Sylvania.

<sup>5</sup> Warranty Deed, Sarah E.C. Floyd to J. De Clue, 1881, Book 110, Page 211.

<sup>6</sup> *Sanborn Map for St. Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri*, 1888, p. 23; 1897, p. 50; 1911, p. 6; 1955, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Hugh Davidson, "Museum Hill Historic District," (National Register of Historic Places Nomination prepared for the City of St. Joseph, Landmark commission and the Missouri Historic Preservation Program, November 1990), Sec. 7, p. 3.

### Part III. Sources of Information

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**Part IV. Project Information**

This Historic American Building Survey (HABS) documentation of 1016-1018 Sylvania, St. Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri was undertaken and supervised by the Department of Community Development of St. Joseph, Missouri. The project was conducted in accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement among the City of St. Joseph, Missouri and the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office; and accepted by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, which requires a HABS record be created for this building considered for demolition and documentation for the entire district. Laura Norris, Kansas City, Missouri conducted the field photography. David Bergstone, Historic Preservation Planner, St. Joseph, Missouri, prepared documentation of the building.