CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCHES IN MISSOURI
by Mimi Stiritz

“Whatever may be said of Christian Science as a religion or a cure either for or against it … there is no question that in the architecture of its church buildings it has set an example that every denomination should follow . . . [Scientist] churches, large and small, all over the country, are not only a wide departure from the traditional church architecture, but they are most satisfying to the eye and to the sense of fitness. If Christian Science does no more than reform church architecture it will assuredly not have lived in vain.”  Reedy’s Mirror, June 13, 1907

The Christian Science denomination was formally organized in Boston in 1879 by Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910) and thus became a late entry into the traditions of Protestant church building. The new religion’s first major building (the “Mother Church”) was erected in Boston in 1894 just one year before the completion of the first Christian Science church in Missouri, a St. Louis building designed by the prominent local architect Theodore Link that was among the first Christian Science churches to be built worldwide. From the start, Scientist buildings were recognized for quality design, often commissioned to the country’s foremost architects such as Solon Beman, Carrère & Hastings, Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge, Charles Klauder, Bernard Maybeck, along with unbuilt designs by Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright and Eliel Saarinen.

The early Scientist churches erected in the mid-1890s followed typically either Romanesque or Gothic Revival modes that were popular with other Protestant denominations at that time. Church founder Mrs. Eddy never prescribed any particular building style to her followers but left design decisions entirely in the hands of individual congregations. She herself, however, is known to have preferred a traditional “churchly” look, incorporating characteristic features such as tall spires or towers, rose windows, and stained glass windows illustrating bible scenes. These features were largely met in the granite Romanesque mother church in Boston, seating 1,100 (Franklin I. Welch, exterior; Frederick Comstock, interior), as well as in the Gothic style First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Kansas City, Missouri (1897, George Mathews), built of rock-faced Missouri limestone, with red tile roof, and a seating capacity of 1,400. Theodore Link’s more modest 500-seat “Dutch Colonial” church with steep tile roof in St. Louis (1895) also reflected historical mixed styling. Though St. Louis critic Samuel Sherer considered the building to be “a well managed design of unusual interest,” he felt it failed to convey the “idea of a church.”
For interior arrangements, the Boston mother church and its progeny turned again to prevailing Protestant usage and adopted the ubiquitous “auditorium sanctuary,” a plan type offering optimum conditions for hearing and viewing that was preferred by congregations valuing the spoken word over liturgy and ceremony in their services. Good acoustics and sightlines were of particular importance to the Christian Scientist Sunday worship service that relied heavily on the spoken word, as well as to Scientist congregational meetings held on Wednesday night. Rejecting the long nave and side aisles lined with columns, the auditorium sanctuary featured a centralized plan of a basically square, circular or polygonal shape. Ultimately derived from theater design, auditorium plans often featured a bowl type layout of pews (or folding opera seats) set on a floor sloping down to a raised stage or speakers platform; columns were omitted to maximize views of the stage space.

Mrs. Eddy’s book, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (1875). Interior and exterior walls carried inscriptions from these books, already present inside the 1890s St. Louis and Kansas City churches.

The great concern for a cheerful, well-lighted auditorium in the mother church led the building committee to open the roof with a skylight that streamed light into a large “sunburst” ceiling feature of art glass encircled by electric lights. Variations of this ceiling feature became popular in Scientist churches everywhere whether on vaulted, domed, or flat ceilings. Electric lights were generously distributed throughout the 1895 St. Louis auditorium, outlining ceiling beams, arches, and side walls.

Other features of the Boston auditorium also gained general usage in later Scientist buildings. The location of the auditorium on the second floor above the foyer (suited to lots with limited ground space) was often adopted regardless of lot size. The spacious inside foyer or vestibule (equipped with cloakrooms) served an important function as a gathering place for social exchange before and especially after services; almost invariably Scientists included this feature in planning their churches. The prominent display of the organ, facing the congregation, at the center of the platform, became another standard feature that soon was enriched by enclosing the bank of pipes with decorative screens as seen in the 1895 St. Louis church.

On the platform, Christian Scientists replaced the trio of pulpit, pastor, and sermon found in mainstream Protestantism with two “desks” or lecterns reserved for the two readers (usually a man and a woman) elected by the congregation, that conducted services consisting of readings from the Christian bible and Mrs. Eddy’s books.

St. Louis, First Church of Christ, Scientist, 1895, Theodore Link, interior.

The astonishing surge in membership of the new denomination prompted the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* in 1908 to proclaim that, “the rise of Christian Science is without parallel in the history of religions for rapidity of growth.” By the early 20th century the demographic center of the faith had shifted from the east coast to the Midwest, where Chicago’s claim of 50,000 followers placed Illinois in first rank nationally. During the pioneering 1880s, impetus to regional growth was given by founder Mary Baker Eddy who personally had conducted classes in Christian Science both in Chicago and St. Louis, and recommended the Chicago model of church government for use in St. Louis.

Press coverage of the growth of congregations in Missouri underscored the prominence of successful business and professional men in the membership, attributing the use of a business model to the noteworthy increase of adherents in Missouri, ranked 5th in the country in 1908. The St. Louis metropolitan area then boasted six congregations: First Church (chartered by the state in 1894); Second Church (1902); Third Church (1906); Fourth Church (1908); suburban Kirkwood First Church (1906); and in East St. Louis, Illinois, a colony of St. Louis First Church was established in 1903. Following the custom of early New England Congregational and Baptist churches, Mrs. Eddy set up the uniform system of naming all branch churches numerically; the number order was determined in each locale by the year congregations organized or received state charters.
Across the state on the western border of Missouri the same pace of growth could be observed. In Kansas City, Scientists had formed three congregations by 1903, two of which claimed the largest memberships in the state. Missouri’s third largest city, St. Joseph, organized First Church in 1895, and Second Church in 1900. Additionally, at least twenty smaller cities had active Scientist groups by the opening decade of the 20th century.

Chicago, First Church of Christ, Scientist, 1896, Solon Beman, 4017 South Drexel Boulevard

Within two years after completion of the Boston mother church, a pivotal shift in the architecture of Christian Science was launched by the first of a bevy of prominent Scientist churches in Chicago all designed in Classical Revival, the style destined to become almost synonymous with Christian Science over several decades, and the one satisfying Christian Scientists that their faith should have a unified architectural identity of its own, distinct from the eclecticism of traditional Protestantism.

Project for Saint Louis First Church of Christ, Scientist, 1901, Mauran, Russell & Garden

In 1896, Solon Spencer Beman (1853-1914), after winning the competition for Chicago’s First Church of Christ, Scientist, introduced the first strictly classical design in the Scientist canon. The immediate precedent for First Church came from the architect’s own Merchant Tailors Building, a small, domed structure with Ionic portico erected at the Chicago World’s Fair (1893). Beman, however, attributed the inspirational source to an ancient Greek original, the Erechtheion on the Acropolis, an example from the “age of Pericles,” representing the “greatest perfection in the art of architecture that the world has ever witnessed.” The architect saw a correspondence between tenets of the Christian Science faith and the underlying principles of Greek architecture.

Beman’s tiered seating, unusually large foyer (requested by the congregation), and other features of the church interior were derived from Louis Sullivan’s Auditorium Building (1889) where the congregation worshipped before erecting First Church. The large Chicago churches from Beman designs supplied the seminal imagery that became industry standards and widely imitated in the Midwest and beyond. A convert to Christian Science from the Episcopal Church, Beman trained in the prestigious New York office of church specialist Richard Upjohn (1802-1878) before opening his own office in 1877. The commission to build a planned industrial town outside Chicago for the Pullman Car Company brought Beman to the Windy City where he gained fame for his work at Pullman and for the tall office buildings he designed.

Merchant Tailors Pavilion at the Chicago World’s Fair, 1893, designed by Solon Beman

The classicism favored by Christian Scientists dovetailed with broad progressive movements such as City Beautiful and the strong impact of Beaux-Arts classicism at Chicago’s World’s Fair, reinforced in 1904 by the buildings put up for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis. In contrast to denominations that found classical to be too “pagan” or secular for ecclesiastical use, Christian Scientists embraced the established, deeply rooted institutional associations of respectability, civil authority, and dignity linked with classically styled public buildings such as banks, libraries, museums, government buildings, and courts of law. As a new religion, sometimes harshly criticized at first, Christian Science found a stylistic haven in church buildings that mirrored public buildings and institutions held in high esteem. Construction of churches thus became an important and effective means for the new movement to ‘advertise’ its faith.

Embedded too in the broad appeal of classicism were metaphysical meanings linking Christian Science beliefs and classical form. Writing in 1907, Solon Beman interpreted the “sense of calm power and dignity” found in classicism, together...
with its “true systems of proportion … and rationalism,” as representative of the principles of Christian Science. He pointed out that “Christian Science is anything but mystical, and stands for all that is scientifically true, rational and natural.” Scientist church services were “simple and direct” and by intent lacked the emotion, the ceremony, pageantry, and ritualism characteristic of other types of worship service that were best served by the “artistic framework” of the Gothic style; “strange forms and symbolisms” could not be tolerated in Christian Science buildings.

By 1903, however, a modified design without dome by the same architects was under construction at a new site located in the prestigious cluster of churches known as “Holy Corners” in the heart of the city’s exclusive private place residential area. The 1200-seat building was rushed to completion by summer 1904 in order to welcome visitors to St. Louis’s World’s Fair. Built of warm, variegated shades of brown brick trimmed in limestone, First Church reflected an Arts & Crafts interest in materials and a relaxation of formal classicism that continued to find expression in later Scientist churches in St. Louis. The interior conformed to Christian Science preference for restrained classical ornamentation and large windows glazed with non-figural leaded glass of pale color admitting abundant daylight, supplemented by electric lights. The auditorium was placed in the second story, approached by three graceful stairways accessed from a large foyer. The Sunday school on the ground level also received plenty of natural light.

Missouri Christian Scientists quickly followed the lead of Chicago and produced designs for monumental domed churches in classical style for congregations located in the three largest cities: St. Louis, Kansas City, and St. Joseph, thus sowing the seeds of classicism for branch churches statewide. Details of plans announced in 1901 by First Church, St. Louis, called for an elaborate $100,000 domed church of Carthage (Missouri) stone, gray brick, and terra cotta, to designs of Mauran, Russell & Garden (St. Louis). A news report confirmed the denomination already had achieved a recognizable ‘design unity’ with the statement that “like other Christian Science churches in this country the design of the St. Louis church will be classic with Greek details, … in accordance with Christian Science ideals the architectural lines of their church buildings nearly always follow the purity and beautiful simplicity of the Greek school. This appeals to the Christian Scientists more nearly than the conventional ecclesiastical ideas used by other church in their places of worship.”

Chicago connections likely influenced the commission awarded to the new partnership formed in 1900 by John Lawrence Mauran (1866-1933), Ernest John Russell (1870-1956) and Edward Gordon Garden (1871-1924). All three partners had worked in the Chicago and St. Louis branch offices of Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge (Boston). Shortly after Hugh M. G. Garden, an architect practicing in Chicago and a brother to Edward, won honorable mention in the 1896 competition for First Church, Chicago, he received the commission for Chicago’s Third Church (1899), a brick building with classical portico and a strong feeling of Prairie Style/Arts & Crafts.
Plans for both First Church, St. Joseph, and Second Church, Kansas City were prepared by Frederick R. Comstock (1866-?), a Christian Scientist who studied architecture at Columbia University under William Robert Ware (1832-1915). Comstock had collaborated on the 1894 Boston mother church, drew up plans for First Church, Brooklyn (1897), Second Church, New York City (1900), along with several other Christian Scientist churches in the East and Midwest in addition to churches for other denominations. The foundation of the St. Joseph building was in place in 1899 but the monumental domed superstructure not completed until 1906. Nearly square (approximately 86 feet by 96 feet) the church was constructed on a steel frame, with exterior walls in Batesville, Arkansas marble articulated in both Doric and Corinthian orders. The auditorium featured mahogany pews and a Hook & Hastings organ.

Kansas City’s Second Church, in “Roman Doric,” seemed to one critic “the handsomest and most complete church edifice west of New York City.” It became perhaps Missouri’s most lavish example of Christian Science architecture when it was built 1902-04 for a sum of more than $200,000, but in 1955 the church building was replaced with a J. C. Penney store. As in the St. Joseph design the architect used a central plan auditorium that received light through large windows of art glass and the dome, 48 feet in diameter, glazed in amber colored panes. Of steel frame clad in native Missouri Phenix limestone, the building, 105 feet square, soared 202 feet from the ground to the top of the dome. The two-story vestibule was adorned with biblical murals by Edward J. Holslag of Chicago, who also worked on the Congressional Library.

The influence of classicism also began to appear in a few Christian Science churches in Missouri’s smaller communities. Typically however, congregations of modest size purchased church buildings erected by other denominations, or sometimes rented space. Two noteworthy examples of early Classical Revival churches in southwestern Missouri stand in Joplin, a city of about 26,000 in 1900. First Church (1905) artfully employed “artificial stone” (hollow concrete block) to create formal designs on both the primary façade and the rear elevation. Second Church (1910) of wood frame construction exhibited a fine classical portico, the new hallmark of Christian Scientist architecture.

In 1908, First Church in East St. Louis, Illinois, directly across the Mississippi River from St. Louis, completed a substantial yellow brick building detailed in white terra cotta. In 1928, Scientists of First Church, Jefferson City affirmed the continuing popularity of classical porticoes in the articulation of their church in red brick.
ANTICLASSICAL ALTERNATIVES

Although classicism had won an emphatically strong following among Christian Scientists across the country by the time St. Louis’s Second Church in “Spanish Colonial” appeared in 1910, church authorities never had mandated nor acknowledged an “official” style. Debate remained open on the question of what style was the most appropriate or best embodied the teachings of Christian Science. Polemics awakened with the California experiments of architects such as Irving Gill (who had worked for Louis Sullivan) and Elmer Grey (a follower of Sullivan theories); both men were designing Christian Science churches in hybrid styles blending classical elements with Italian Romanesque, or with Spanish Colonial/Mission Revival, already the rage in almost every type of building in California and the West.

Grey authored defenses for alternative “churchly” idioms that recalled the views of Mrs. Eddy. Her hometown congregation in Concord, New Hampshire, erected in 1904 a large, Gothic Revival stone church (Allen & Collins, Boston) with tall spire and figural stained glass that would inspire other Christian Science projects. An advocate for indigenous regional expression and individual freedom of choice in style, Grey believed there was no need for Christian Scientist architecture to express a group identity or to purposefully differ from other denominations. Any worthy building from Christian architecture of the past should not be excluded from Christian Science design.

The congregation of Second Church, reportedly a discontented offshoot of First Church, nonetheless in 1908 selected Mauran, Russell & Garden, the same firm that designed First Church, to draw up plans for its new church in a style indicating a distinct identity. The architects used characteristic Spanish elements such as the curved parapet, tiled roof, and arcaded loggia entrance that recalled Hispanic style Christian Science buildings in California, the state that by the teens was becoming the new center of the faith. Arts & Crafts influence also was notable in the Prairie Style exterior brickwork of Second Church, and in the simplicity of the interior, with exposed beam ceiling, and unpainted gray brick walls articulated in panels, each having a “medallion” with cross and crown, a Christian symbol frequently used in Scientist Churches. In 1962, much of the original design was lost from fire damage.

One other St. Louis church showed Spanish influence: First Church in suburban Webster Groves, completed in 1924 to designs of the St. Louis firm Ewald & Allen. The architects carried out “Spanish mission” themes in the stucco exterior finish over hollow clay tile walls; in the red tile roof, and in small decorative glazed tiles over the front doorways. The nearly square auditorium featured large clerestory windows of amber leaded glass. The press reported the auditorium, seating 400, was finished in “French gray with dark gray pews;” the Sunday School and reading room were located in the basement.

Springfield, Missouri’s First Church (1915) adopted simple Romanesque Revival motifs such as the arcaded corbel table and round arch windows that were popular in California.
Scientist work; the interior featured a typical two-story auditorium plan, and windows by Jacoby Art Glass Co. (St. Louis). The building was designed by the First Reader of the congregation, Arch Norman Torbitt ((1883-1958) AIA, architect of Greene County Courthouse (1910-12) and other prominent buildings in Springfield. Part of the cost of construction was met under provisions for branch churches in Mrs. Eddy’s will. The building has been adaptively reused as offices of the Springfield-Greene County Department of Health.

At the close of the 1920s two more congregations in St. Louis, Seventh Church and Eighth Church (the last branch churches to be chartered in the city) turned away from classicism and chose variants of Italian Gothic. The revival style was based on 15th century architecture of northern Italy that excelled in the use of brick in combination with rich terra cotta embellishments. Italian buildings in this style sometimes used in the same design both Gothic pointed arches and Romanesque round arches, a combination also present in the St. Louis examples. Both Seventh (1931) and Eighth (1929) churches exhibit fine brickwork and terra cotta enrichment as well as the characteristic Italian arcaded corbel table that forms a prominent cornice frieze. Seventh Church and Eight Church were both commissioned to the St. Louis partnership formed by Albert August Aegerter (1880-1952) and Norman I. Bailey (c. 1888 - ?).

St. Louis Seventh Church of Christ, Scientist, 1931, Aegerter & Bailey, 123 Holly Hill Ave. at Tennessee

The churches are attractively sited facing large parks and boulevards in different sections of the city. Across from Forest Park on a triangular lot, Eighth Church (1929) of variegated buff brick and cream terra cotta, with a red tile roof, has a side entry off Wydown Boulevard at the western boundary of St. Louis adjoining suburban Clayton. The church neighbors the prominent United Hebrew Temple (1925) now the Research Library of the Missouri History Museum, and Westminster Presbyterian Church, a stone Perpendicular Gothic design started in 1925 by Albert B. Groves and completed in 1931 by Aegerter & Bailey.

St. Louis Eighth Church of Christ, Scientist, 1929, Aegerter & Bailey, 6221 Alexander at Wydown

Due to problems encountered on the site, the layout of Eighth Church became an exception to Christian Science custom placing the auditorium on the second floor, above the foyer. The space occupied now by Eighth Church’s uncommonly large foyer is believed to have been planned originally for a two-story auditorium and foyer until it was discovered that the site, a remnant of a pond dug for the 1904 World’s Fair, could not support adequate footings for a 1000-seat auditorium. The congregation acquired an adjoining lot to build the octagonal auditorium. Tall Gothic windows of lightly tinted, leaded glass permit a soft, diffused entry of light, enhanced by a small vaulted dome.

St. Louis Eighth Church of Christ, Scientist, foyer

In planning Seventh Church (1931) facing Holly Hills Boulevard and Carondelet Park in southwestern St. Louis, Aegerter & Bailey may have looked closely at Chicago’s Eighteenth Church (1926) by Chicago architect Charles Draper Faulkner (1890-1979) who was hired to design the interior arrangements for Seventh Church, St. Louis. The Chicago and St. Louis churches have in common compact octagonal shapes recalling late medieval Italian baptisteries, together with masonry exterior walls displaying painterly effects in warm muted shades of variegated brown, orange, and red, though the St. Louis example is executed in brick and the Chicago one in stone. Faulkner, a Christian Scientist who began his career designing for Solon Beman, introduced a modernistic classicism in the interior of Seventh Church that repeats elements, such as treatment of the readers platform, found in his
Scientist designs in other cities. Faulkner and his son became the country’s leading designers of Christian Science churches in the 1930s.

Two prominent 20th century congregations in Kansas City also broke rank from classicism. Sixth Church (1925), an impressive Gothic Revival building of stone with soaring spire, and an auditorium detailed in finely crafted wood paneling and ceiling beams. It was built to designs of Charles Ashley Smith (1867-1948), architect of the Kansas City School District (1898-1936) and buildings at Westminster College, William Jewel College, and Kansas City University.

In 1941, Indianapolis architect Charles Wilbur Foster (1896-1960) AIA created for Seventh Church a broad basilica with clerestory in a brick Italian Romanesque design featuring a picturesque tower and tile roof that harmonized with the 1920s and 30s Spanish themed architecture of the nearby Country Club Plaza, an upscale historic planned shopping district. Foster was well known for his Christian Science churches in Indiana, including Colonial Revival Fourth Church (1936), designed for his own congregation; outside Indiana, Foster was architect for Detroit’s Eighth Church (1937), and Second Church (1949), Washington, D. C. Born in Chicago, Wilbur was the son of mechanical engineer Charles B. Foster (1871-1932) who worked with Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesan and on the Larkin Building in Buffalo where Wilbur was raised. Wilbur Foster enjoyed a successful, varied practice ranging from churches and apartment buildings to shopping centers.

In contrast to the opulent mother church and the many branch churches in Chicago and other cities that were finished in dressed stone, the majority of Missouri urban churches displayed brick exteriors, often trimmed in terra cotta. The choice of clay over stone may be explained in part by the availability of the product from Missouri’s strong home industries, together with the ability of companies such as Hydraulic-Press Brick and Winkle Terra Cotta to supply materials of uncommon quality that were highly valued by disciples of the Arts & Crafts Movement. Brick, especially, offered in a wide variety of colors and textures, became a chief artistic feature in Missouri churches that today preserve a virtual catalogue of the fine product.
The classically styled churches in St. Louis and Kansas City built between 1909 and 1941 expressed the mature ideals in church planning first formulated in the Boston/Chicago prototypes and advanced in Missouri Scientist churches that upheld the movement’s high standards, using progressive building technology and quality materials to create distinguished exterior designs and expansive, uncluttered, light-filled interiors. Divided between the north and south sides of the city, four of the St. Louis churches, all with striking stone columned fronts, feature squarish plans with large windows set in broad cross-gables permitting ample entry of light.

Kansas City’s Third Church and Fourth Church (1926), are both in brick with impressive stone columned facades. Plans for Third Church were prepared in 1913 by Keene & Simpson, the collaborators, later, on the Jackson County Courthouse (1934) and architects for Scottish Rite Temple (1930), both in Kansas City. The congregation worshipped in the completed basement until the auditorium, following the 1913 design, was built in 1921. This pattern of construction was not uncommon for large, costly churches.
Graf finished the auditorium in 1924 with a narrow-aisled basilican plan providing generous light through untinted glazing in tall arched windows and the clerestory. A hint of Spanish Mission is found in the red tile roof and in detailing of porch windows in decorative tile and iron grillwork, but the splendid portico of finely carved stone asserts a strong classical presence.

In University City, bordering St. Louis, First Church (1924) by T. P. Barnett & Co. took a place of honor among an ensemble of monumental buildings in Civic Plaza. The octagonal central-plan auditorium fills the second floor, approached by elegant stairways in corners of the vestibule. The compact, dignified stone exterior is built on a steel and concrete frame requiring special engineering for the classically coffered dome spanning the auditorium. After the congregation moved in 1958, the building served Assumption Greek Orthodox Church, and since the 1980s it has been converted for office use under different ownerships.

The era of historic classicism in St. Louis city and county closed with construction of First Church, Overland (St. Louis County), and Second Church, located in the south sector of the city. The two buildings encapsulated national trends in Scientist design of the 1930s, 40s and later. The Colonial Revival style of the small Overland church (1941) appealed to Christian Science congregations and many others that were downsizing in suburban environments where the simpler character of Colonial seemed more appropriate (and affordable) than that of the large urban models. The church of variegated red brick trimmed in white is enhanced by its setting on rising ground in a desirable ‘island’ lot of triangular shape.

In contrast to Colonial Revival ties to the heritage of the American past, the modernistic, streamlined classicism of Second Church (1940) pointed to the future. The auditorium, accommodating 650 with a balcony on a long side, was articulated with simple fluted engaged piers and a classically detailed entablature wrapping the space; the basement housed the Sunday School. Designed by German immigrant Carl Frederick Schloemann (1898-1942) of Clayton, Second Church with its clean, simple lines in buff brick, together with its open interior space, proved to be an easy fit for a succession of banks that occupied the building after the congregation left in the 1980s.

The steady decline of urban membership and suburban growth after World War II has left only four of twelve original St. Louis area congregations remaining in their historic buildings: First and Eighth Churches in St. Louis City, and in St. Louis County, First Church Kirkwood and First Church Overland. A similar pattern is found in Kansas City, St. Joseph, and other Missouri cities. However, a near-complete record of the history of Christian Science church building in Missouri has survived and been preserved, most of it by congregations of other denominations that became owners of the buildings. The few Missouri Christian Scientist churches that have been successfully adapted to other uses are representative of a nationwide survey showing that the design and substantial construction of Christian Science places of worship make them excellent candidates for repurposing as libraries, theaters, museums, offices, and residential apartments.
Talk:  The History of the Delmar Loop Through Architecture  
Tuesday, May 29, 2012 at 7:00 pm  
Regional Arts Commission  
6128 Delmar, 63112

Meredith Hawkins Trautt of the Archaeological Research Center of St. Louis looks at the buildings within the Delmar Loop and shows how its various architectural styles are silent markers of the history of the neighborhood and also how architecture has helped shape this area into its own, unique community.

The Delmar Loop was named "One of the 10 Great Streets in America" by the American Planning Association. The development of the Delmar Loop neighborhood can be viewed through the district's unusual blend of high style and vernacular architecture from the Lion Gates in University City down Delmar to DeBaliviere and the Missouri History Museum in St. Louis City's Forest Park. The Archaeological Research Center of St. Louis (ARC) was commissioned to prepare a study of the Loop's architectural heritage as part of the Environmental Assessment for the proposed Loop Trolley Project.

A few copies of the PDF version of the ARC Archival Search and Architectural Survey of the St. Louis Loop Trolley report will be available on CD for $18 after the presentation. Otherwise, CDs may be ordered by sending a check for $20 to the Archaeological Research Center, 2812 Woodson Rd, St. Louis, MO 63114. Please remember to specifically state that you are requesting the "Loop Trolley Report."

For additional information contact Meredith Hawkins Trautt at (314) 426-2577 or the Archaeological Research Center of St. Louis (ARC), www.arc-stl.com.

SAH Tour: The Pruitt-Igoe Site  
Sunday, May 27, 1 p.m.  
Meet on south side of Cass Avenue between 23rd and 25th Streets

Michael Allen’s one-hour tours of the site of the notorious public housing project Pruitt-Igoe have become a phenomenon in their own right. He is has agreed to schedule one more for our St. Louis Chapter of the SAH. Friends and acquaintances are also invited. The site has been reverting to nature for 35 years, longer than the thirty 11-story buildings existed.

Mid-Century Modern Architecture Tour  
Sunday, June 3, Pre-tour talk at noon  
buses departing 1, 1:30, and 2  
Meet at the Sheldon Galleries, 3648 Washington

View three houses designed by William Bernouldy, Paul Rudolph and Isadore Shank, some of the best examples of modernist and mid-century design in St. Louis. Reservations are essential. Timed tickets are $25 through MetroTix at 314-534-1111 or TheSheldon.org. For sponsorships, phone 314-533-9900.

Interior of dome, former First Church of Christ Scientist of University City, 1924, T. P. Barnett. Many of these churches had a circular pattern of one type or another on their ceilings.
ANNUAL MEETING
St. Louis Chapter
Society of Architectural Historians
Saturday, June 2, 10 a.m.
First Church of Christ, Scientist
Kingshighway at Westminster Place

This year’s brief business meeting gives you a chance to see the interior of Mauran, Russell & Garden’s great church described in this issue of the Newsletter, thanks to the hospitality of the congregation and in particular chapter member Bill Seibert. Parking is available behind the building and in the adjacent lot of the First Unitarian Church, accessible from Waterman Avenue.

The auditorium of the First Church epitomizes the architectural preferences of this distinctly American religious denomination: excellent sight lines and acoustics; a platform designed for reading from the central (or paired) desk or lectern by two leaders; provision for an organ, with the pipes exposed as an ornamental feature or screened (as here) by an ornamental grille; big windows and ample electric lighting, and (often) Neoclassical detailing and colors.