Historic Preservation Plan

for the

City of Liberty, Missouri

October 2020

City of Liberty missouri

Historic Preservation Plan

October 2020

Prepared for the

Planning and Development Department

by

HERITAGE strategies

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Illustrations

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COVER PHOTOS: (Front, from left) Jesse James Bank Museum, by Shane Immelt; 421 North Lightburne, by City of Liberty; Clay County Courthouse, by Shane Immelt; 408 West Kansas, by City of Liberty; D'Agee & Co. Florist, 18 E. Franklin, by Shane Immelt; (back, from left) Garrison School Cultural Center, home of Clay County African American Legacy Inc., by City of Liberty; Kansas Street on the Courthouse Square; 315 North Water; Clay County Museum & Historical Society, 14 North Main; and upper West Franklin Street.

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Historic Preservation Plan for the City of Liberty, Missouri

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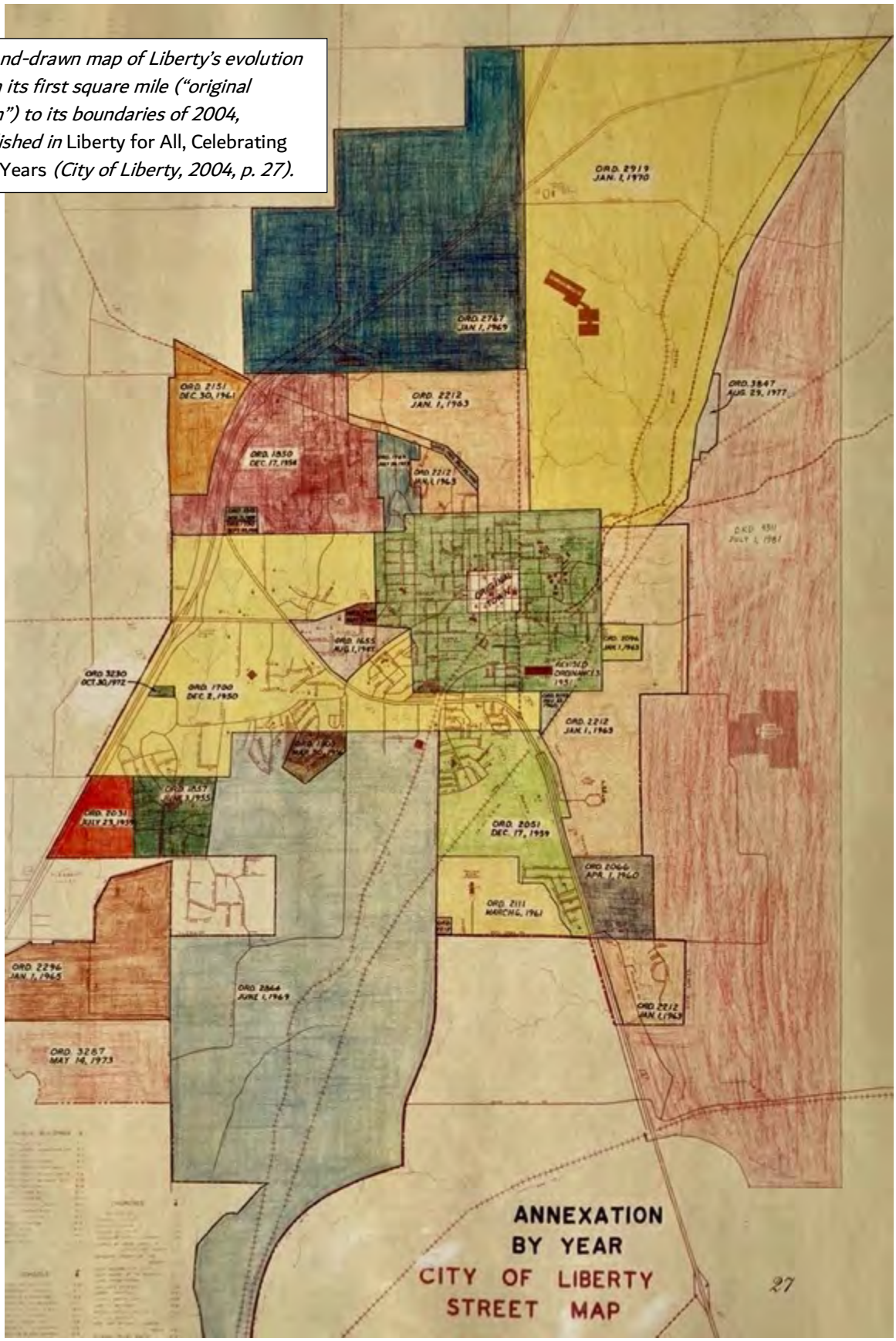
A hand-drawn map of Liberty's evolution from its first square mile ("original town") to its boundaries of 2004, published in Liberty for All, Celebrating 175 Years *(City of Liberty, 2004, p. 27).*



Executive Summary

The City of Liberty has a mature historic preservation program that effectively began in the 1970s with the City Council's determination to revitalize Liberty's Historic Square. Thanks to the initiatives and investments of many community leaders, business owners, homeowners, nonprofit organizations, and City staff, Liberty as a community today enjoys robust benefits from historic preservation.

Liberty not only has many historic districts and individual properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places, but the national Advisory Council on Historic Preservation has awarded the community a coveted Preserve America designation. Historic Downtown Liberty, Inc., is one of the top Main Street organizations in the state – and nationally accredited by the National Main Street Center – and the commercial heart of Liberty's Historic Downtown is considered a regional destination. So much so, that recently the City invested in a next-generation renewal of the Square's streetscaping and utilities. Liberty's historic neighborhoods are well-regarded places to raise families and live happily in the Kansas City metro area – some are locally designated to encourage greater investment, and still more neighborhoods are worthy of study and potential local protection.

Moreover, multiple museums and historic sites preserve and explain Liberty's unique history, with sustained enthusiasm. Of note, local appreciation for the community's African American heritage is considerable, dating from an important community survey undertaken in the mid-1990s, a time when many communities had not yet deeply considered the multiple strands of their collective history. Community history groups also can participate in one of the nation's rare National Heritage Areas, Freedom's Frontier, one of only 55 recognized nationwide. Designated by Congress and supported by the National Park Service, this program tells the story of the Kansas-Missouri border strife leading up to the Civil War and much more.

So why undertake Liberty's first historic preservation plan? The answer is, each generation needs its own way of thinking about community values. This plan celebrates the accomplishments of the past 40 years. More important, it provides a path for the leaders of today and tomorrow to claim great achievements of their own in the next 40 years.

Historic preservation is not simply about maintaining historic buildings, or even whole districts. To do preservation properly, those planning almost any community action must ask, "How can this undertaking reinforce Liberty's character and the assets of our community that support our quality of life?" This principle can lead to such a question as, how will the City maintain the public domain and build trails to connect all neighborhoods – and lead pedestrian customers to the events and businesses around the Square? Or, how does the City spend federal and state grants or confer local property tax benefits or encourage use of federal and state income tax credits in the name of preservation? How do we tell our visitors about what we have to offer, and help them find their way around?

For a more detailed picture than this short explanation, Chapter 1 provides a more complete summary.

For readers who enjoy history, this plan provides a relatively short explanation of how Liberty came to be the special place visitors and residents now appreciate. Those who read Chapter 2 will be able see and experience the physical evidence of that history all over the city.

Chapters 3 and 4 explain the City's historic preservation program and how it works.

To learn more about how the City's planners and other administrators can support historic resources in the work they do, read Chapter 5.

For those who are curious about all those history organizations, or wayfinding, or how tourism promotion and development works in Liberty, Chapter 6 provides details. That chapter, in fact, lays down one of the greatest long-term challenges for Liberty's next four decades – teaching the community's children how Liberty works and how to be its next leaders, for the sake of preservation and otherwise.

For those who might have been thinking they would like to see some changes, the last appendix summarizes a community survey given to support the plan mid-way through 2020, answered by nearly 500 people.

And that last point should tell readers something important – that so many people in this relatively small town went to the trouble to answer the call for their thoughts. This plan endeavors to show those respondents, and many others, how to admire and care for Liberty and work together for even greater achievements in the years to come.

The historic center of Liberty with the Clay County Courthouse (1934) at center right. (Photo courtesy City of Liberty)

Chapter 1. Overview

1.1. Introduction

The City of Liberty, Missouri, was founded less than two decades after the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1803-06 explored the newly acquired Louisiana Purchase for the United States and President Thomas Jefferson.

Liberty is located near the Missouri River and the path the Meriwether Lewis and William Clark and their team followed westward to the Pacific. Today, it is also located on the northeastern boundary of Kansas City, Missouri – or perhaps to put it in Liberty's terms, upstart Kansas City has grown outward until it encountered the modern corporate limits of Liberty.

Liberty was first settled in 1822, incorporated as the Clay County seat in 1829, and chartered in 1851. In the 1850 Census, Liberty's population was just 850; the American Community Survey estimates its 2019 population at 32,100. That figure represents an increase of 9.8 percent over the 2010 Census of 29,149.

Framed by gentle ridges to the east and west and north, the first plat for Liberty encompassed a single square mile with the courthouse at the center. The first building for William Jewell College, the splendid Greek Revival

structure called Jewell Hall, was built with the college's founding in 1849 on the rise to the east. On the rise to the west, just over a mile away and virtually facing Jewell Hall, stands the handsome early-twentieth century Liberty High School, today the Heritage Middle School. And on the south flank of the northern rise is Garrison School, a formerly segregated mid-twentieth-century school for African American students. Built in 1911 and expanded in 1940 in the simplified style now known as mid-century modern, today it the cultural center of the nonprofit Clay County African American Legacy Inc.

These three buildings are symbolic of Liberty as a community, which as early as 1822 had its first schoolhouse. As noted by the surveyor of historic resources for Liberty in the 1980s, Deon K. Wolfenbarger, after the Civil War and the arrival of Liberty's first railroad access in 1868, the community "began to cultivate an atmosphere of gentility, emphasizing service over trade and manufacturing. Education, religion, quality journalism, culture, and temperance (for a while) became important themes in Liberty's history. Education in particular is an area in which Liberty's citizens have long been proud."[1] Schools in Liberty provided more than an educated citizenry – they provided economic benefits, drew residents to the growing community, and made a lasting mark on the community's physical and cultural heritage.

1.2. Liberty's New Historic Preservation Plan

Liberty has undertaken preparation of this Historic Preservation Plan to examine the role of historic resources in the City and how those resources can be preserved and enhanced as Liberty continues to grow and evolve. This plan identifies tools and strategies to influence historic resources and community character, including those traditional to the field of historic preservation but also those related to other disciplines and interests.

This plan reviews the types of historic resources that were developed during various periods of the City's evolution, the degree to which they remain and contribute to the life of the City, and how public and private actions can contribute positively to their preservation.

To that end, the process of developing the Historic Preservation Plan involved reaching out to a variety of stakeholders in Liberty to engage them in discussions about how historic resources relate to their interests. As the planning process began just as the Covid-19 pandemic took hold early in 2020, outreach in person became severely constrained. The planning team met with the Historic District Review Commission (HDRC) in early

[1] Deon K. Wolfenbarger, *Liberty Survey Summary Report* (City of Liberty Community Development Department, 1987), p. 22; available at https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/survey/CLAS001-R.pdf.

Main Street, the east-facing row of buildings across from the Clay County Courthouse, in 1885. Federal-style buildings built in the 1820s or 1830s, second and third from right, were still standing at that time. The drugstore in the center of the commercial block at left that today houses the Clay County Museum and Historical Society was a recent arrival. (Photo courtesy Clay County Archives & Historical Library)

February and then when a return in March became ill-advised, thereafter used telephone interviews, email exchanges, a public survey (see Appendix 3), and exchange of draft text to elicit information and opinions about Liberty's historic preservation needs and issues. All contacted have been eager to engage in collaborating to make Liberty a better place to live and work. Their enthusiasm helped shape the plan's strategies and they will be critical to its successful long-term implementation.

The Historic Preservation Plan for Liberty was funded through a grant provided by the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office of the Department of Natural Resources, whose support for Liberty as a Certified Local Government (a critical preservation achievement explained in Chapter 4) has been vital over many years. The plan was a project of the City's Department of Planning and Development, principally the Community Development Division with support from the HDRC.

1.3. Foundation of the Plan

Strategies for promoting historic preservation in the City of Liberty were founded upon two considerations that are reflected in Chapters 2 and 3. First, the plan seeks to understand the types of historic resources in the community and how they reflect Liberty's long history and the themes that have become apparent over the community's evolution. Second, the plan has crafted a

This Victorian house in the Dougherty local historic district is a dramatic, fine combination of Queen Anne (the jigsawn trim on the porch and the bay window), Italianate (the brackets under the eaves), and even early Colonial Revival (the quoins at the corner, ordinarily styling seen in brick and stone).

preservation approach with vision, goals and principles to shape the range of activities and initiatives that in turn shape change in Liberty and affect historic resources.

In examining the history of Liberty and Clay County, and how change has occurred over time, five historic themes have been identified through the work of local historians. Each has its own set of historic resources that have influenced the City's community and character. The landforms and ecology of the region that provide the setting, context, and natural resources also influenced Liberty's historical development.

Establishing a Community: Liberty from 1817-1860

Westward migration provided the basis for Liberty's livelihoods first, and the tiny community prospered as a trading post and outfitting point. After nearby Fort Leavenworth was established twenty miles west of Kansas City in 1827, trade traffic greatly increased in Liberty. By the end of the period, steamboat river commerce, agriculture, and hemp manufacturing were predominant economic activities.

Civil War and Reconstruction: 1861-1874

Liberty saw some action in the Civil War, but the war left few physical marks. The war, however, sparked a nationwide boom in railroads. Communities that did not have railroads before the war, like Liberty, strove to gain them. In 1867 "the Hannibal & St. Joseph (later the Chicago, Burlington, & Quincy) made Liberty a stop on the line from Kansas City to Cameron, Missouri. In 1868, the Wabash, St. Louis, and Pacific Railroad passed through the south part of Liberty. At the same time however, nearby Westport Landing began to grow in importance, and with the coming of a

A Queen Anne-style residence with lingering touches of the Italianate style in the Jewell local historic district, an addition to the City during Liberty's "Great Boom" of the late 1880s. The use of brick is rare in Liberty, where wood frame is the more common building material for residences. (Photo courtesy City of Liberty)

railroad bridge across the Missouri, the future Kansas City emerged as the dominant railroad town. This, coupled with the ending of the steamboat era in nearby Liberty Landing, led Liberty to adapt its economy."[2]

The Real Estate "Boom" and Residential Growth in Liberty, 1866-1896

"The late 1880's brought the "Great Boom" in Clay County real estate, and with it came unprecedented growth. The population in 1890 jumped to 2,600 residents [from 1,500 in 1880]. The first year of the boom is variously placed in 1887 or 1889; what is important to note is that in one year the value of real property transfers in Clay County was reported at $6,074,176, a staggering sum in those days.... the owners of the larger, close in estates were in the best position to profit from Liberty's growth, and many small lots were laid out among the large, earlier homes."3

The "Bon ton" Suburban Community: Liberty from 1896-1946

Early Liberty was already so completely developed that it was impossible for someone to accumulate enough land to develop either a romantic neighborhood with gently curved roads and park spaces, first popularized by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., soon after the Civil War, or the more typical gridded neighborhood with restrictive covenants. Liberty's size, grown to 3,500 in 1930, also did not warrant such large-scale ventures, which were common nationwide.[4] Nevertheless, the architectural trends of the first half

[2] Ibid., p. 22.
[3] Ibid., p. 24.
[4] Ibid., p. 57.

of the twentieth century are clearly present, from Prairie to revival styles and from such house forms as four-squares and bungalows.

Growth and Modernization in Liberty: 1946-Present

Liberty has never really stopped growing. As it has spread outward, later neighborhoods demonstrate continuing architectural trends (and yes, now quite a few have been graced with curvilinear roads). Kansas City is ringed by numerous small communities established after World War II, with 1950s ranch houses built in neighborhood after neighborhood. Similarly, Liberty has several such neighborhoods; more followed decade by decade as the city grew and became more accessible through roadway improvements. Today, Liberty offers "something for everyone" in the form of housing of all sizes, ages, and styles.

Each of these periods or contexts had its own set of historic building and community resources and affected the community in different ways. The result was a layering of resources and conditions that give Liberty its distinctive character today and enrich local quality of life.

1.4. Preservation Approach

The preservation plan emphasizes the central role that heritage and historic character play in the City's quality of life and views the entire community as significant – a Missouri treasure. The plan articulates three simple goals that together express the ways in which historic preservation can be incorporated into the strategies and initiatives shaping Liberty's future:

- **Goal 1 – Strengthen Community Character and Reinforce Historic Areas of the City:** Reinforce the role of the City of Liberty's historic resources as a key element of the city's character, central to the city's identity and long-term economic sustainability and development. Recognize Liberty's historic Downtown, including its surrounding historic residential neighborhoods, as distinctive places for living, working, and investing.

- **Goal 2 – Make the Most of City Programs:** Use the city's planning, public works, and recreation programs strategically to stimulate private investment in continued revitalization of historic areas, sustain quality of life, and connect the city's historic core to its outlying suburban neighborhoods. A focus on historic preservation throughout City policies provides an important lens in seeing and setting priorities.

- **Goal 3 – Activate Community Engagement:** Actively engage residents and visitors with information, interpretation, and programming that reinforces community identity, tells the City's stories, and encourages local appreciation of historic preservation action.

Garrison School, built in 1911 to replace an earlier school serving Liberty's African American residents. It is part of the Garrison School Historic District listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2000 following a 1995 survey by the City of African American resources in Liberty. Today the school houses a busy cultural center operated by the nonprofit Clay County African American League Inc. (Photo courtesy City of Liberty)

1.5. Historic Preservation Program

Discussion of Liberty's local historic preservation program, Chapter 4, is the heart of the Historic Preservation Plan. The program is responsible for identifying and documenting historic resources and working with all other agencies and stakeholders in the preservation and appropriate treatment of those resources.

Chapter 4 reviews measures specific to historic preservation in Liberty, including the identification and recognition of historic resources and the role and responsibilities of the HDRC. The most important historic preservation activity happens at the local level, where local residents, officials, and volunteers know their community, history, and historic resources best. Local government plays a critical role in the identification of resources and in providing protections through the administration of routine governmental regulatory and planning processes. A key principle is to fully integrate historic preservation values and considerations into every aspect of City programs and processes. In addition, Liberty's HDRC must take responsibility for the leadership of historic preservation initiatives. In undertaking this task, the HDRC must have members who are willing and able to be active participants in City affairs.

Understanding Liberty's Historic Resources

Liberty is fortunate in having commissioned a thorough historic resource inventory in the 1980s for the center of the City, an essential historic preservation tool in support of community planning. A survey of African American heritage resources in 1995 was a significant addition to the inventory. For the entire inventory, however, the survey work was largely limited to the 1940 city boundary. The inventory should be upgraded and improved as an ongoing priority and significant gaps should be addressed, covering the entire community and updating the age of structures to be surveyed to the fifty-year mark, 1970.

The City followed through from the 1980s inventory in supporting the preparation of a Multiple Property Documentation Form in 1992, an outstanding step that enables historic resources across the City more easily to be nominated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This Multiple Property Submission (as such documentation is now called) was supplemented in 2000 with additional documentation of historic contexts identified in the original survey work. Such context statements provide guidance in assessing the significance of the individual resources identified for the inventory. In the future, following completion of additional context-writing and inventorying, the City should support preparation of additional National Register nominations and expansions of local historic districts and the list of local landmarks.

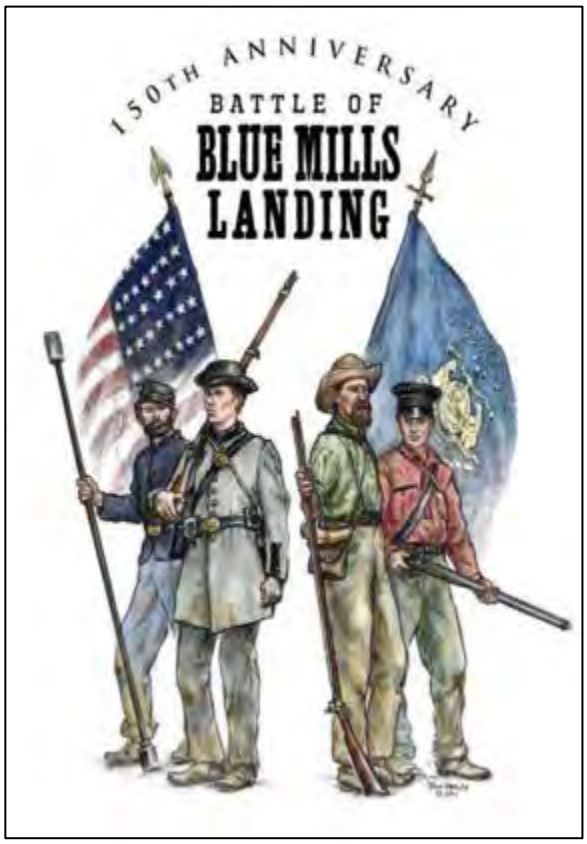
There is much work to be done in the years ahead to document and map Liberty's historic resources, but Liberty should be grateful that such a strong foundation exists for the care of its historic assets and community character.

Liberty's Historic District Review Commission

Liberty's HDRC, supported by staff of the Department of Planning and Development, is responsible for leading the local historic preservation program for the City. The HDRC reviews proposed construction projects and other improvements requiring building permits within Liberty's locally designated historic districts. To carry out this role, HDRC members need continued training and support.

HDRC members should participate actively in City governance and be integral to City activities, policies, and programs. As an advisory body, the HDRC should make sure that other City entities have the information and guidance they need to make informed decisions about actions that may have an impact upon historic resources of all kinds. HDRC members should be expected to participate in the monitoring of historic resource issues and conditions, to be engaged in City affairs, and to be effective ambassadors and advocates for preservation and the appropriate treatment of Liberty's historic resources.

Liberty's HDRC has had a strong, long-serving group of volunteers, appointed by the City Council, with interests in history, historic preservation, the quality of Liberty's residential and commercial neighborhoods, and community character. Both the HDRC and staff, however, have limited capacity and time. Therefore, the tasks being undertaken must be organized, prioritized, and targeted to what can reasonably and realistically be achieved. The purpose of this plan is to enable an understanding of the larger picture for historic preservation in Liberty and provide enough details to support yearly work plans for the HDRC and staff in the years ahead that set priorities and phase the work strategically to make the most of the City's administrative resources.



The Battle of Liberty/Blue Mills Landing, an early action in Missouri's many conflicts in the Civil War, is now the subject of a recent documentary video and a historical marker, both by the all-volunteer Clay County Museum & Historical Society in collaboration with Liberty's Alexander Doniphan Chapter of the DAR. The video was made possible with a grant from the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area and the marker with a grant from Liberty's Tourism Committee. The battlefield is 3.5 miles south of Liberty. Although the site is unprotected, a walking/driving tour is available. (Illustration by Dan Hadley, 2011, courtesy Clay County Museum & Historical Society)

1.6. City Planning and Land Use

Planning is critical to the potential future preservation and treatment of historic resources in Liberty. Through a variety of different planning documents, City policies and procedures are established that influence how historic resources are treated as development and change take place. Historic preservation interests and principles should be incorporated into Liberty's planning documents, Unified Development Ordinance, and project review processes in as many ways as possible. It is important to state clearly that it is City policy that historic resources should be preserved and treated appropriately as lasting, vital community assets.

To preserve the historic buildings and districts that are central to Liberty's identity, historic preservation values and methodologies must be incorporated into the City's planning policies and documents in as many ways as possible. Supporting this concept, this Historic Preservation Plan emphasizes that the planned update of Liberty's comprehensive plan, *Blueprint for Liberty*, presents many opportunities to reinforce information and conditions that support historic preservation.[5] The Department of Planning and Development expected to begin work on updating the comprehensive plan and had prepared funding and issued an RFP for consulting support

[5] https://www.libertymissouri.gov/485/Planning-Zoning

(Photo courtesy City of Liberty)

when the Covid-19 pandemic began in early 2020. Staff anticipate moving forward with the update again as the situation is resolved.

Work on this Historic Preservation Plan has incorporated issues and topics that are expected to be addressed in the new comprehensive plan and recommends actions expected to inform the new comprehensive plan's approach and concepts. It is furthermore anticipated that this Historic Preservation Plan will be adopted as the comprehensive plan's preservation planning element.

This Historic Preservation Plan also seeks to reinforce the City's long-range planning for trails and greenways, viewed as vital for outdoor recreation and community. Not only do they contribute to the quality of life for Liberty's residents, but they weave all neighborhoods and residents together. They provide access from outlying neighborhoods to the historic center of Liberty where recreation, shopping, dining, and festivals and events await. Moreover, they can offer a platform for educating residents with occasional outdoor interpretive signs noting features about Liberty and its history, another way of reinforcing the community's sense of identity.

1.7. Heritage Tourism and Public Outreach

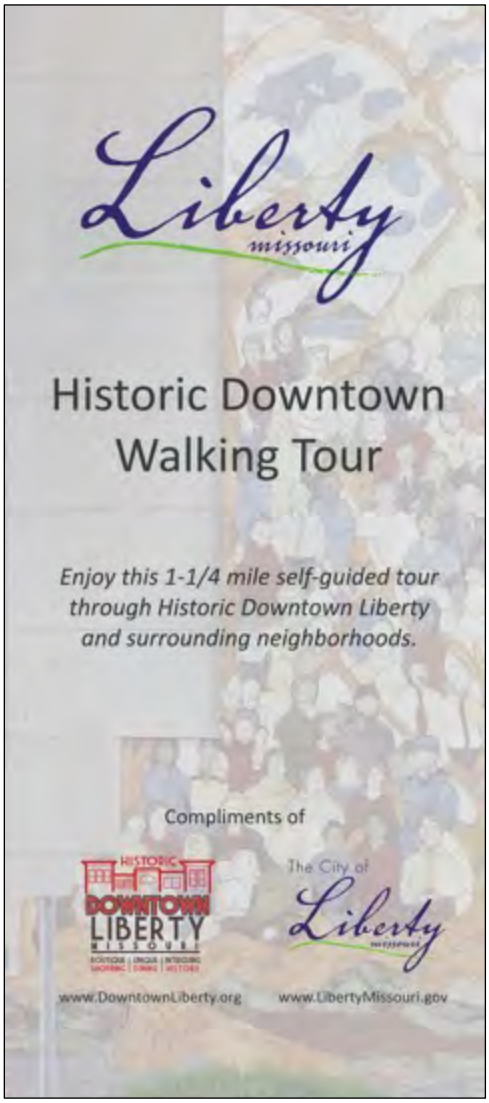
Liberty's history and small-town character are central to its appeal to heritage visitors. Visitors, in turn, are central to support for Liberty businesses in the Downtown. The Main Street program operated by Historic Downtown Liberty, Inc. (HDLI) with support from the City is a comprehensive economic development program for maintaining the businesses and buildings that attract visitors to spend time and funds in Liberty.

Place-based interpretation is an additional, important way to engage Liberty's visitors and residents by providing richer, in-depth experiences that reinforce Liberty's identity and quality of life. The coordinated storytelling at the heart of such interpretation supports historic preservation by highlighting historic buildings and districts, encouraging their recognition and appreciation, and building support for their stewardship and care.

Interpretation of Liberty's history and historic sites is already offered by several organizations described in the final chapter in this plan, Chapter 6. These organizations' programs could be coordinated and developed into a network that educates visitors and residents while providing rewarding experiences that will encourage them to stay longer and to return more often.

In order to keep all actions related to the HDRC in one place, a strong discussion of the HDRC's role in public education remains in Chapter 4.

That role is critical in leading an ongoing, citywide program of civic education and outreach about Liberty's historic resources and how their continued preservation benefits the entire community.



Preservation is about carrying a community's legacy into the future, not the past. The support and knowledge of constituents, not simply their leaders and public servants, is vital. The HDRC does much to support this role, first in its thoughtful interaction with applicants for Certificates of Appropriateness – an approval that must accompany building permits for activity in locally designated historic districts. Many applicants have emerged from the COA process with a greater appreciation for the effect of their actions on their own assets as well as on Liberty as a whole. The HDRC needs to do even more than this, however, in providing information, training, and other programs.

Among the most important actions educational actions to be undertaken by the HDRC in the years ahead may be to encourage more residential and commercial property owners seeking to invest in their properties to use the Missouri Historic Tax Credit (HT) to reduce their costs. Some commercial property owners may be able to add the federal HTC on top of that. Every little bit counts in the current economic downturn resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. These tax credits offer 25 cents and 20 cents respectively back to taxpayers for every dollar spent on qualified rehabilitation expenses. It's not a grant, and it is paperwork, and there are standards, but good planning and a determination to take it step by step will reward owners with tens of thousands of dollars back in their pockets to spend again in Liberty.

Finally, also related to education, discussed in Chapter 6, is the need to develop a robust program with the schools serving the community, especially K-12. The need for this was recognized as far back as the 1980s surveys, when the project leader for that work, Deon K. Wolfenbarger, endorsed developing "a public and school-age information program, as education is often the best protection device of all." She called for more walking and driving tours for Liberty – and many are now available – and encouraging local school systems to develop a 'Liberty Heritage Education' packet, which would focus on local history as expressed by Liberty's built environment." A few interested teachers do take their students to various interpretive locations in Liberty, but a more comprehensive program still is needed.

1.8. The Big Ideas in this Historic Preservation Plan

Historic Preservation

Liberty's longstanding historic preservation program simply needs continuing attention and a continuing commitment to best practices. Liberty's well-deserved Certified Local Government status under Missouri and federal requirements is the gold standard. The last forty years has proven the worth of historic preservation to Liberty's Downtown – commercial and residential – and it remains for the community to capitalize further on historic preservation principles. This means a fair amount of updating. The City's inventory of historic properties was last updated with a survey of African American properties in 1995 and the bulk of the inventory was supplied through surveys in the late 1980s. There is more to be done – see Actions 4.5.A-B. The inventory needs to be updated in the City's Geographic Information System (GIS) and will provide a foundation for National Register nominations and updates and recognizing local landmarks and, subject to long term public engagement, additional local historic districts or expansions (Actions 4.8.C, D, and F). It will also aid refinements in other City programs, including a careful look at historic properties that are not local landmarks or districts in planning and zoning decisions, Chapter 353 property tax abatement, or perhaps others as discussed in Chapter 5, City Planning.

Alerting the public to the results of the survey will have many benefits; it might most be used to improve the list of candidates for local landmark status. One possibility for consideration is creating a more robust landmark program, perhaps with a parallel program of honorary "Liberty History Awards" (Action 4.9.F for the honorary program; Actions 4.9.A-E for refinements to the current program, including considering special landmark tax incentives.)

The Historic District Review Commission is the City's lead actor in design review of changes within locally designated historic districts and must continue to mind its legal processes (Actions 4.7.B-C) ; its design guidelines could be updated to reflect modern materials and HDRC experience (Action 4.8.E). A yearly work plan would help to guide the program more completely, followed each year by publicizing the annual report already made to the Missouri SHPO for maintaining CLG status (Action 4.7.A). The plan calls for the HDRC to help the City live up to historic preservation principles across the board, by liaising with the City Council and other boards and commissions and working to align City actions across all departments with the needs of historic preservation (already a requirement of the Unified Development Ordinance; Actions 4.7.D-E).

President's House, William Jewell College, an early twentieth century Neoclassical treasure. (Photo by Elizabeth Watson, Heritage Strategies, LLC)

Perhaps most of all, the HDRC is best advised to redouble its effort in public engagement, to encourage community appreciation for Liberty's historic resources and the many benefits of their preservation (Action 4.7.G). Those interviewed for this plan praised the HDRC's past and current activities in this regard and asked for more. A topic that has been completely missing in the HDRC's outreach – perhaps because it does not relate directly to the care of old buildings – is how owners of residential and commercial properties can gain refunds on their income taxes for rehabilitation work through Missouri's Historic Tax Credit (Action 4.4.A). Although more widely used, owners also could use more information about the Chapter 353 property tax abatement program described in Chapter 5, City Planning. Other ideas include offering workshops on a variety of other topics; improving the identification of local historic districts with additional signage (Action 4.8.A); and undertaking a study of the economic benefits of local historic districts (Action 4.8.B). The idea of engaging with Liberty's school district as a long-term strategy (Action 6.5.A) is discussed in Chapter 6, Tourism & Outreach.

City Planning

For those who consider historic preservation to be a select and separate activity of City government, it may come as a surprise that the greatest number of recommended actions in this Historic Preservation Plan concern City responsibilities outside the immediate purview of the HDRC and the Community Development Division's staff. A major portion of the actions in Chapter 5, City Planning, concern ideas for the City's upcoming update of its comprehensive plan, Blueprint for Liberty. The chapter first recommends a series of actions in the section discussing the comprehensive plan

(Actions 5.3.A-G). It then reinforces other ideas by noting their relationships to comprehensive planning:

- Master planning for the Downtown's business district (Action 5.7.N), including intensifying productivity and occupancy in the relatively constrained district through: requiring first-floor space on the Courthouse Square to be devoted to retail uses (Action 5.7.A); retaining and increasing residential uses within and close to the Downtown (Action 5.7.B).; addressing under-utilized upper floors of commercial buildings (Action 5.7.C); and conducting a parking study (Action 5.7.O);
- Continuing to explore the idea of expanding the Downtown commercial area's attractions and overall economic productivity through additional construction allowing more retail/restaurant and residential space (Action 5.7.P);
- Identifying public investments to encourage additional private sector investment (Action 5.9.E), including extending the distinctive infrastructure improvements undertaken around the Courthouse Square to side streets (Action 5.7.R);
- Investigating the potential for employing Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Districts to stabilize neighborhoods not ready for full historic district designation (Action 5.11.A);
- Enhancing walkable connections from the historic Downtown in every direction (Action 5.7.Q, 5.12.E);
- Developing a strategy for compatible, affordable infill development of residential properties on vacant lots in under-developed historic neighborhoods within the Chapter 353 tax abatement district (Action 5.9.F);
- Undertaking a stormwater management plan to eliminate nuisance flooding damage to streets and streetscaping and improve water quality in the older parts of (Action 5.12.A); and
- Inventorying sidewalks, alleys, and roadways in the Downtown Liberty Chapter 353 District and develop a capital improvement plan for these public assets (Action 5.12.C).

Some actions, like the one immediately above, concern the maintenance of the public domain; for a sidewalk, this is a responsibility shared between the City and the owner of the property through which the sidewalk runs. Another example is Action 5.12.B, which calls for inventorying street trees in historic districts and creating detailed maintenance (and replacement) plans. Trees are important to the quality of life throughout the City, and the City has earned the Tree City, U.S.A., recognition for decades. Other day-to-day maintenance concerns are addressed in actions concerning enforcement (Actions 5.6.A and B and Action 5.12.D). For redevelopment of historic buildings, meeting modern codes can be a concern, addressed by Actions 5.5.A-C. Under the City's Unified Development Ordinance, the Public Works Department is

expected to consult with the HDRC in advance of detailed planning for all maintenance, construction, and replacement of elements of the public domain (Action 5.12.F).

(Photo courtesy City of Liberty)

All of the ideas expressed for both the comprehensive plan and the public domain would benefit from stronger interest from residents. Toward that end, the plan recommends cultivating the establishment and effectiveness of local neighborhood associations as a vehicle for sparking engagement by local residents (Action 5.11.B). As with historic preservation itself, neighborhood quality of life lacks organized citizen advocacy. While this speaks well of the City's devotion to quality of life and service to its residents and property owners, as HDLI's fifteen-year experience shows, a partnership among stakeholders, including the City, can undertake long term strategies and yield benefits important to maintaining quality of life, including the City's many historic assets. It is to be hoped that the upcoming comprehensive planning process will reinforce the awareness of residents and owners across Liberty of how much their participation in determining the future of Liberty can matter.

Heritage Tourism and Public Outreach

Tourism is becoming an important part of Liberty's business economy, and provides enjoyment to Liberty residents who participate in events and programs meant to build audiences of all kinds. With the establishment of a lodging tax (described in Chapter 6, Heritage Tourism and Public Outreach), the City has additional means to encourage tourism, wayfinding, and the arts. This plan recommends a further expansion of the long-term planning for the wayfinding program to include outdoor interpretive signs (Action 6.4.D) and otherwise reinforces continued work on Liberty's branding, marketing, promotion, and events (Actions 6.2.A, B, and C and 6.4.G).

A number of anniversaries are coming up when Liberty should have a presence: the Missouri Bicentennial (2021; Action 6.2.D); Liberty's founding (2022; Action 6.4.B); the nation's 250th anniversary of the Revolutionary War (2026; Action 6.4.C); and last but hardly least, Liberty's official bicentennial year, 2029 (Action 6.2.F).

These commemorations could be used as encouragement for this plan's emphasis on the need for more collaboration among Liberty's history stakeholders (multiple interpretive sites, William Jewell College, local historians, and others as appropriate) in order to expand the telling of the entire story of the City of Liberty, reinforce each individual program, and reach more visitors and audiences. (Action 6.4.A, supported by Action 6.2.C,

D, F; 6.4.B, C, G, H) Liberty is graced with more than its fair share of robust interpretive groups and sites for such a small town, almost all of them all-volunteer. Getting to the next level of telling Liberty's story will take resources and attention, but it is not for the City itself necessarily to determine how this should be done; perhaps the commemorations will provide a natural channel for these groups to identify further means of mutual support.

Collaboration among history stakeholders might particularly be encouraged by the creation of an "Arts & History Trail" encompassing the many walking tours, artworks, and outdoor interpretive signs and markers created by these groups, together with the actual interpretive sites. This is a program where direct City participation would be appropriate. (Action 6.4.F)

Finally, this plan encourages City leaders and history stakeholders to confer with the Liberty school district on how they can support the teaching of local history, civics, and other topics through multidisciplinary, place-based, team learning for all grades, K-12. (Action 6.5.A) This is a very long-term initiative, with some parallel to the community's decision forty years ago to emphasize historic preservation. Now, it is vital to ensure that upcoming generations of leaders and residents appreciate Liberty's place in the world, historic and otherwise, and how the City works to promote a sustainable quality of life.

1.9. Conclusion

Today, Liberty sits easily against Kansas City as community proud of its singular heritage and its many historic resources spreading out from that original square mile. While it has benefited economically from the proximity of a metropolis, it has maintained a separate identity as one of the most desirable small towns in the region in which to live, work, invest, and play. This Historic Preservation Plan aims to help Liberty's community leaders and residents continue that legacy well into the future.

Before this plan turns, however, to the details of the ideas outlined in this chapter, the following chapter describes Liberty's historic assets and historical contexts in more detail.

The north-facing side of the first block of East Kansas Street across from the Clay County Courthouse was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District in 1992. It was among the City's first set of nominations that were tied together by multiple property documentation with several historic contexts. This block is part of the much larger local historic district Liberty has established for its commercial district.

Chapter 2. History and Context

2.1. Introduction

The following chapter is an abridged version of the *Liberty Survey Summary Report* (Survey Summary), prepared in 1987 by Deon K. Wolfenbarger for the Liberty Community Development Department (now the Department of Planning and Development, Community Development Division), combined with subsequent reports, called Multiple Property Documentation Forms (MPDFs). The National Register accepted the MPDFs beginning in 1992 and extending into 2001.

The purpose of the Survey Summary was to provide an evaluation of past survey efforts in Liberty, which took place between 1984 and 1987. The evaluation developed preliminary historic and architectural contexts, which were subsequently refined and submitted to the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office and the National Register of Historic Places, together with nominations for selected resources for individual resources and historic districts in 1992 and 2000. The 1987 report also discussed the potential for

What Is a Historic Context?

Evaluation of historic resources should be referenced against broad patterns of historical development within a community, defined as historic contexts. Cultural resources have long been examined from some sort of historical perspective, but by evaluating them in reference to historic contexts, important links can be made with local patterns or major themes in Missouri history.

Historic contexts broadly define cultural themes within geographical and chronological limits. In Liberty, these themes are represented by individual houses and other properties that reflect the development of Liberty's built environment. Between the level of individual buildings and the broad historic contexts is a concept known as property type. A property type is a grouping of individual properties based on shared physical or associative characteristics. In Liberty, six broad historic contexts were developed, which contained 24 property types.

Source: Liberty Survey Summary Report, pp. 2-5

National Register nominations, defined preliminary district boundaries, and set priorities, and reviewed preservation issues in Liberty.

The surveys evaluated in the Survey Summary were:

- **Phase I, 1984-85:** centered around the Court-house Square area; consisting of the four streets which front onto the square (Main, Franklin, Water, and Kansas) and extended outward one block from these streets. Approximately 100 buildings were surveyed.

- **Phase II, 1985-86:** focused on the residential neighborhoods north and east of the square bounded by Gordon Avenue to the north; Mill Street, south; Water, Missouri, and Leonard Streets on the west; and Jewell and Evans Streets to the east. Approximately 275 structures were surveyed.

- **Phase III, 1986-87:** surveying two residential areas, one west and the other south of the square. The boundaries for the west district were W. Franklin on the north; Fairview Avenue on the west; W. Liberty Drive, Harrison, and W. Kansas on the south; and N. Prairie on the east. The southern survey area was S. Leonard Avenue from Mill to Hurt, and Arthur Street from S. Leonard to Jewell. Approximately 218 structures were surveyed.

These surveys were later joined by a 1995 survey of African American historic resources (a recommendation of the *Liberty Survey Summary Report*), which documented 171 buildings.[6]

Historic contexts described in the reports – excerpted here in combination with some of the extensive discussion of property types and their architectural styles – are:

- Exploration and Settlement in Clay County, 1817-1860
- The Real Estate "Boom" and Residential Growth in Liberty, 1866-1896

[6] Links to the report, map, and survey data for all four surveys may be found on the Missouri SHPO's web page for architectural surveys, https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/survey-eg.htm.

- The Courthouse Square in Liberty, 1858-1941
- Suburban Residential Growth in Liberty, 1896-1941
- The African American Experience in Liberty: Forging a Community after the Civil War, 1866-1941

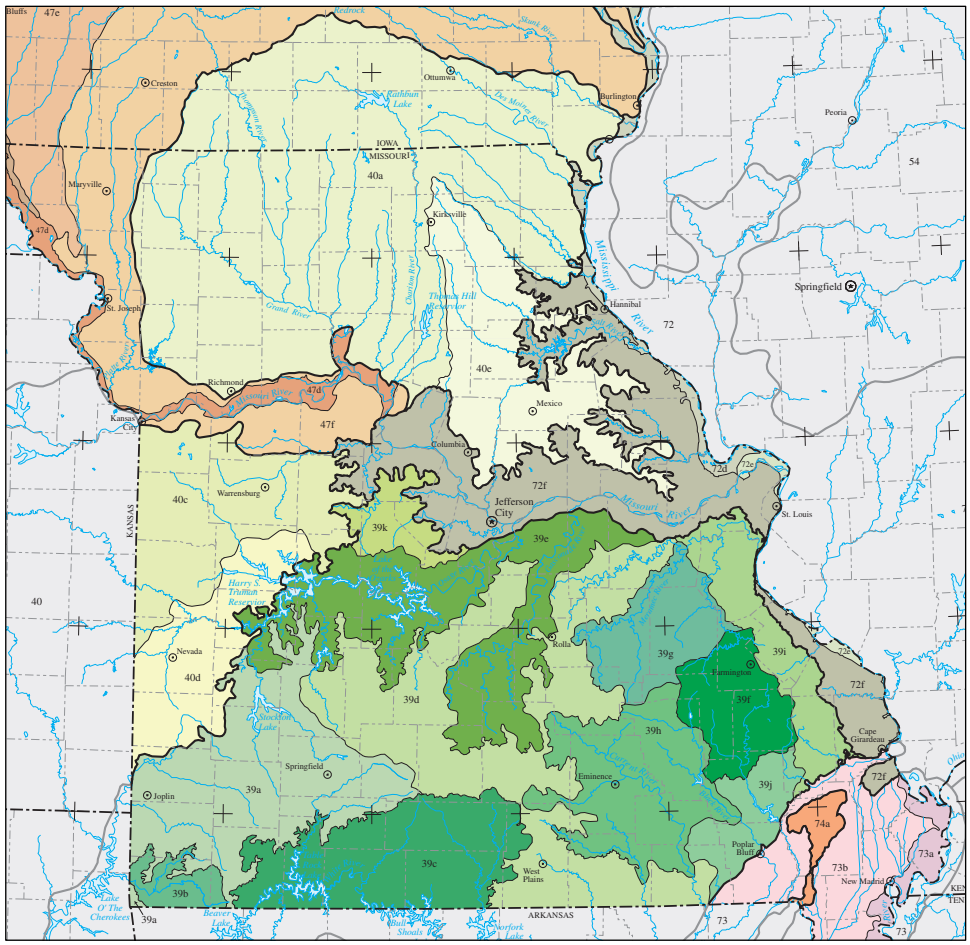
Missouri Time Periods, Missouri Encyclopedia (website: https://missouriencyclopedia.org/)

In Chapter 4, Historic Preservation Programs, this Historic Preservation Plan recommends updates to all contexts and the development of a "mid-century modern" historic context to reflect Liberty's history starting in World War II up to 1970 (the traditional cut-off date for surveys is for properties fifty years old). The original Survey Summary and the four existing surveys' documentation are commended to interested readers for the much greater detail than space allows in this plan; they will remain valuable resources to historic preservationists for many years to come.

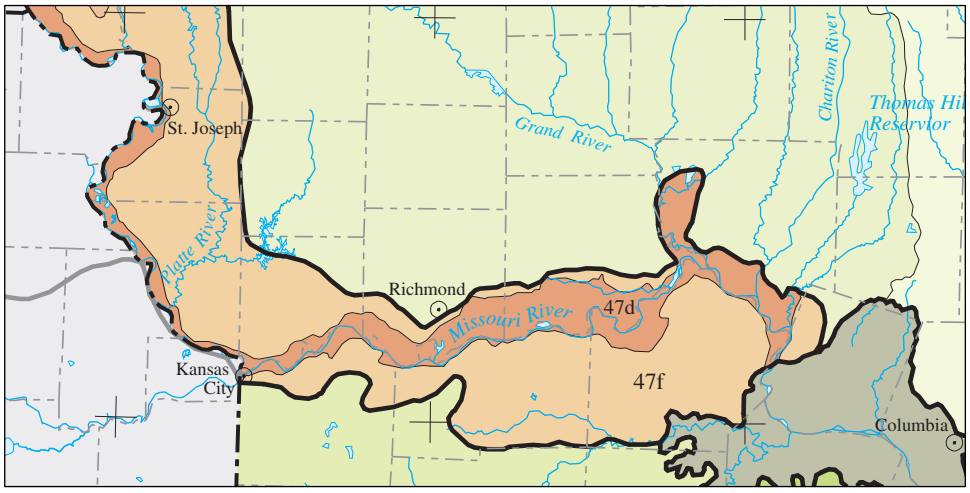
2.2. Environmental Context – The Influence of the Native Landscape

Liberty is located in the small Missouri portion of the Western Corn Belt Plains Level III ecoregion.[7] This region occurs as a relatively narrow band

[7] United States Environmental Protection Agency, https://www.epa.gov/eco-research/ecoregion-download-files-state-region-7#pane-23. "The approach used to compile [the maps seen here] is based on the premise that ecological regions can be identified through the analysis of the spatial patterns and the composition of biotic and abiotic phenomena that affect or reflect differences in ecosystem quality and integrity (references omitted). These phenomena include geology, physiography, vegetation, climate, soils, land use, wildlife, and hydrology. The relative importance of each characteristic varies from one ecological region to another regardless of the hierarchical level."



The Western Corn Belt Plains ecoregion (light browns) follows the Missouri River, dividing the Central Irregular Plains to the north and south (light greens). (EPA)



Detailed view of the Western Corn Belt Plains ecoregion (light browns). Liberty is located in this part of the ecoregion near the Missouri River west of the center of this image between Richmond on the east and Kansas City on the west. (EPA)

this ecoregion, all to the south and east of Clay County. Most of Clay County lies within this ecoregion; the county's northern border and northeastern corner are in the adjacent ecoregion, Central Irregular Plains, Missouri's largest ecoregion (second-largest in Iowa).

Specifically, Liberty is completely within the loess deposits – windblown soils – on well drained plains and open low hills that characterize the Rolling Loess Prairies Level IV ecoregion (subregion). Loess deposits tend to be thinner than those found in the Level IV ecoregion to the west, generally, less than 25 feet in depth except along the Missouri River where deposits are thicker. Natural vegetation would have been a mosaic of mostly tallgrass prairie and areas of oak-hickory forest. Although cropland agriculture is widespread, this particular subregion has more areas of woodland and pasture than the neighboring subregion to the west.

Missouri's Natural Wealth

"According to the Massachusetts senator [Daniel Webster], Missouri had more mineral and agricultural wealth than any other area on earth. A few years later, Ralph Waldo Emerson was barely less eloquent when he said that the meeting of the Missouri River with the Mississippi was the world's greatest crossroad. Such wide interest in her natural wealth and prominence encouraged Missourians to believe in their state's universal strength, for who could deny that nature had dealt generously with the state, leaving handsome bequests of marvelous land, river valleys, forests, mineral deposits, and helpful weather?"

Source: Paul C. Nagel, Missouri: A History *(University Press of Kansas, 1977), p. 50*

The predominant bedrock of the Western Corn Belt Plains is a Pennsylvanian formation (320 to 286 million years ago) of clays, shales, limestones, and sandstones, laid down during cycles of sea level rise. In parts of the state, underclay found in this bedrock is often refractory grade, suitable for brick-making and ceramics.[8] After the last postglacial period, about 11,000 years ago, a thick layer of wind-blown loess was deposited over the entire region by violent dust storms in the barren, still frigid landscape. With time, these soils developed into some of the richest for farming on the planet, aided by an average annual precipitation of 24 to 35 inches occurring primarily in the growing season. Water supplies are plentiful; established around a convenient spring, Liberty today is supplied mostly by groundwater, with one intake for surface water on the Missouri.

The landforms in the immediate vicinity of Liberty are simply the undramatic rolling hills characteristic of the entire ecoregion; in Liberty, the terrain is noticeable more to the pedestrian but sufficient to give the city grid some interest. The city's original center, today's courthouse square, is framed by gentle ridges to the east, west and north, each crowned by school buildings long important to community life. To the south, limestone outcrops form bluffs roughly paralleling the course of the Missouri River, some of them being quarried. The river itself occupies a level, wide floodplain still used largely for farming.

[8] Jo Schaper's Missouri World, "A Brief Geology of Missouri" (retrieved from http://members.socket.net/~joschaper/penn.html).

The broad stone chimney of 525 N. Gallatin is one clue to its pioneer-era origins. Underneath the modern siding is believed to be a log structure built by an Indian agent on the edge of Libery's original square-mile plat. (Google image capture October 2016)

A distinguishing characteristic of nearly all of the residential architecture in Liberty is wood construction. Wealthier settlers – plantation owners – built large brick homes in antebellum Greek Revival style. Wood, however, was ultimately more plentiful, first for log construction – a few log structures survive in Liberty – and soon for the lighter balloon frame construction that came into use just before the Civil War. By contrast, in the state's capital, Jefferson City, also on the Missouri further east at the state's center, residential architecture was built of brick right up into the mid-century modern era of architecture. This was the result of more plentiful clays nearby and a propensity for masonry characteristic of the Germans who settled that region. In Liberty, masonry was largely reserved for commercial structures.

2.3. Exploration and Settlement in Clay County, 1817-1860

The first Europeans to explore the Missouri River valley were the French. In the area which was to be known as Clay County, there is historic mention of a settlement of French trappers on the Randolph Bluffs in 1800 (History of Clay and Platte Counties, Missouri, 1885). As the French generally did not establish permanent settlements in the area, no tangible traces remain today.

After the War of 1812, migration into Missouri began in earnest. Actual exploration of the area was brief; permanent settlement of Liberty and its environs began soon after the first arrivals. The earliest groups of white settlers arrived in Clay County around 1817, when the federal government established the first base lines from which local surveys could be made. This enabled property ownership to be recorded for the first time. A few more settlers arrived in 1818 and 1819. A heavy increase in migration began in 1820. By 1821, there were 1,200 people in the area (Jackson, 1976). The county's boundaries extended north to the Iowa line, covering a territory of more than 2,000 square miles; it was reduced to its present size of approximately 402 square miles in 1833. In spite of the expansive boundaries of the newly formed county, the majority of residents in 1821 in Clay County were settled on or near the Missouri River.

Americans from the Upper South had begun to migrate into Missouri by the turn of the nineteenth century, settling among the hills along the north side of the Missouri River. This continued until a veritable flood of settlers from the Upper South eventually contributed to a majority of Missouri's population. Clay County and Liberty were a part of this Southern American

settlement experience. The earliest settlers in Liberty, Clay County, and Missouri were from the Upper South states (Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Maryland), and most settlers were from the lowland regions therein – the Bluegrass, the Tidewater-Piedmont, and the Nashville basin.[9] The pioneers brought with them a decidedly southern culture. Those that settled north of the Missouri River were farmers and naturally brought with them many of their agrarian traditions, such as a slave-based economy, tobacco, and hemp plants. The county was named in honor of the Kentucky statesman, Henry Clay, when it was partitioned off from Ray County in 1822 (*The History of Clay and Platte Counties, Missouri*, 1885).

Lightburne Hall, 301 N. Water (c. 1852). The original entrance with its antebellum Greek Revival portico, lower photo, faces south, an indication that this was the original home in what is now the Lightburne local historic district. Wealthy Southern plantation owners brought with them a tendency to build in brick in the earliest period of settlement, but most residences in Liberty built in the years after the Civil War are made of wood.

The fertile agricultural land near the Missouri River may have been the earliest drawing card for settlement in Clay County, but the establishment of Liberty soon attracted other settlers. The location for the county seat was selected shortly after the first session of the Clay County Court in February, 1822. The Missouri River was prone to frequent and violent flooding, and the County Commissioners showed great foresight in selecting a fifty-acre tract for the county seat, situated on high, well-drained ground, with a healthful water supply, typified by the springs near the center of town, and located at some distance from the river. The rolling uplands and hills surrounding the town were well-timbered, providing a ready supply of oak, walnut, ash, and hickory. The devastation after the flood of 1826 prompted many entrepreneurs to move their businesses to higher ground, rather than risk annual destruction (*The History of Clay and Platte Counties, Missouri*, 1885).

When settlers first arrived in the area, Native Americans were still occupants, even as Missouri gained statehood, but were soon removed in the continuing story of that time about their fate.[10] There was sufficient concern about the potential for conflict that the pioneers petitioned Congress in 1835 for the construction of an arsenal. "The purpose of the Arsenal was to protect the pioneering town of Liberty and Clay County, Missouri along with the surrounding areas from the possibility of Indian attacks, which never came," writes local historian Christopher Harris. "From the founding in Liberty

[9] Howard Wight Marshall, *Folk Architecture in Little Dixie* (Columbia, MO.; University of Missouri Press, 1981), p. 4.

[10] Paul C. Nagel, *Missouri: A History (University Press of Kansas, 1977), p. 85-89.*

United States Arsenal—Liberty Landing

Military History of Clay County

By Robert Steele Withers

NO PHASE of Clay County's history was more firmly established by precedent than the military. Among the pioneers who removed the forests and laid out our fields were men who spent the winter at Valley Forge and followed the "father of his country" through the long succession of defeats and retreats—advances and victories on to the triumph at Yorktown.

There were many men who fought with Perry in the War of 1812, and many who had seen service in the various Indian wars. We know that in front of their wide fire-places, filled with blazing backlogs, the stories of Paul Revere, Molly Pitcher, Lafayette, Braddock, "Mad Anthony" Wayne, and others were passed on by word of mouth to the oncoming generation by men who had thrown their blue cocked hats and coon skin caps together high into the smoky air of battle fields that they had helped to immortalize.

Clay County, being an outpost of civilization, for many years had within her bounds as a place of refuge and as a garrison for troops a large arsenal built in the early thirties and maintained until the early eighties by the U. S. Government. The arsenal was built on the bluff just above Baxter's or Liberty Landing, about three miles south of Liberty. Here shining brass cannon pointed their muzzles out over the broad expanse of the Missouri River,

The Missouri River from Arsenal Hill

and glittering bayonets were carried over the parade grounds by blue-clad soldiers.

The arsenal was built by David M. Bevins, who came to Clay County in 1821 from Kentucky. He is most worthily represented by descendants, some of whom live on the land originally held by him.

Another factor in Clay County's military life was its proximity to Fort Leavenworth. In the

Grave of Richard Simms, Soldier of the Revolution

early days, Liberty being the social and educational center of the Northwest, many of the older officers stationed at the Fort, placed their children in the Liberty schools, and the younger officers came for social pleasures. The ball rooms of the old town were given a touch of color and glitter by the uniforms, and the click of swords and spurs mingled with the swish of milady's silken skirts.

By this contact, many young officers who became famous during the Civil War were well known to the citizens of Liberty—Albert Sidney Johnson, J. E. B. Stuart, Nelson A. Miles and others.

Several Revolutionary soldiers lie buried in Clay County, among whom are Andrew Robertson, Sr. and Richard Simms. The former was a native of North Carolina. He came to Clay County in 1820 and died here in 1837. The location of his grave is not known. He settled not far south of Liberty on what is now known as the Lightburne place. Richard Simms was born in Virginia in 1752, came to Clay County in the early twenties, located on a farm seven miles northwest of Liberty, died there in 1850, and was buried in the family burial plot on the farm. In October, 1912, Alexander Doniphan Chapter, D. A. R., placed a United States Government marker at his grave.

These two pioneers have many descendants in

Clay County Missouri Centennial Souvenir: 1822-1922, *p. 140, contains the only known drawing of the Liberty Arsenal. A major secondary source for this chapter, it was published by the Alexander Doniphan Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the* Liberty Tribune, *and edited by Ethel Massie Withers. (Image courtesy Missouri Digital Heritage, Missouri County Histories Collection, retrieved from https://cdm16795.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/mocohist/id/84728)*

in the United States. A mere ten miles from the United States western boundary. For a period of time the Arsenal supplied the arms and ordnance to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, roughly 34 miles by the Military Road."[11]

Liberty Becomes the County Seat

Although there were a handful of early settlements in Clay County prior to 1826 (most clustered around mills on creeks and rivers), Liberty was the earliest town in the county.[12] It was platted shortly after its selection as the county seat in 1822. At this time there were only eight houses within its boundaries. The "Original Town" plat, like most of Missouri's county seats, utilized a central courthouse square plan known as a "Shelbyville" square, named after an area in Tennessee where this plan was prevalent (Ohman, 1985). A Shelbyville square has two streets entering at each corner, with a total of eight entrances to the central courthouse square. The four streets bounding the central square were the earliest arteries into the town, and development naturally occurred in these areas first. Many of Liberty's oldest residences are located on these streets. This central square was a designated open space, upon which the key public building in the county seat – the county courthouse – was built. Historically, the principal business district forms the perimeter of the central square. The first sale of lots was held on July 4, 1822 (Withers, 1922). The most popular lots, as evidenced by their higher price and quick sales, were those around the square.

The selection of Liberty as the county seat stimulated commerce. Initially, ferry landings were extremely important to insure trade with the communities south of the Missouri River. As western Missouri continued to grow, steamboats from the east provided additional commercial opportunities for these landings. Allen's Landing, south of Liberty, was succeeded by Liberty Landing, which in turn served as the main port for northwest Missouri for several decades (Ohman, 1985). By 1830, steamboats from St. Louis were making regular trips to Liberty Landing (The History of Clay and Platte Counties, Missouri, 1885). Liberty Landing probably reached its peak in the 1850s, when as many as five steamers would move up the river daily, with at least one docking at Liberty Landing (Jackson, 1976). It remained an important site for steamboat traffic until railroad transportation became more prevalent in the 1860s (Withers, 1922).

Although the site of the town of Liberty was some distance from the river, the commercial establishments of the town were still able to take advantage of the river trade. Steamboats travelling from St. Louis on the Missouri would

[11] Christopher Harris, *Historical Timeline of the Missouri Depot/Liberty Arsenal at Liberty, Clay County, Missouri* (March 2020), pp. 3-4.

[12] Ethel Massie Withers, ed.. *Clay County Missouri Centennial Souvenir*: 1822-1922 (Liberty, MO: The Liberty Tribune, 1922; with the Alexander Doniphan Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution), pp. 18, 33.

Liberty's all-important access to the Missouri River was provided by Liberty Landing, the sound of a cannon shot away from the city. Multiple roads and one railroad connected Liberty to other destinations at the time of this map, 1877. (Image courtesy State Historical Society of Missouri, from An Illustrated Historical Atlas of Clay County, Missouri, 1877, p. 24, retrieved from https://digital.shsmo.org/digital/collection/plat/id/1071)

fire a cannon when several miles away from Liberty Landing in order to allow merchants and residents of Liberty time to reach the river.[13] This gave the town of Liberty many of the commercial benefits associated with river traffic, without the disadvantages of being located in a floodplain.

As the county seat and the leading provider of goods and services within the county. Liberty had by far the greatest number of roads in the county connecting it with other communities. The location of these major arteries also affected development in the town. The 1877 atlas reveals a veritable hub of roads radiating around Liberty. While some of these led directly into the

[13]Jackson, Don M. and Jack B. Wymore, *The Heritage of Liberty* (Liberty: R.C. Printing Service, 1976), pp. 3-4.

Liberty's original boundary covered one square mile. (Image courtesy State Historical Society of Missouri, from An Illustrated Historical Atlas of Clay County, Missouri, 1877, p. 24, retrieved from https://digital.shsmo.org/digital/collection/plat/id/1071)

Courthouse Square, others connected with the city at its boundaries or at the edge of the commercial district. Growing travel and trade between Liberty and Fort Leavenworth encouraged residential construction on the connecting roads; the roads leading to other settlements in Clay County, such as Barry, Gallatin, Kearney, and Excelsior Springs, and to other county seats north of the Missouri River, such as Richmond and Lexington, were among the major arterial transportation routes.

In 1828, the Clay County Court authorized construction of a courthouse for the new county seat. However, construction of the first courthouse was not completed until 1833, on the same site as the present building. This building was destroyed by fire in 1857, and was replaced by a more elaborate building in 1858. Liberty was incorporated as a town in 1829, and was granted its first charter in 1851 (Withers, 1922). The town encompassed one square mile, with the courthouse as the physical center.

During this early period, road districts were established, as well as a post office. Commercial activity naturally grew with the population of Clay County. Prior to 1821, there were no stores or trading posts in the county

The Liberty Tribune *(now the* Courier Tribune, *https://www.mycouriertribune.com/site/about.html) was founded in 1846 and is the oldest continuously publishing newspaper west of the Mississippi River. Through its editorials, the* Tribune *encouraged Liberty's growth and development. (Google image capture 2017)*

from which to purchase supplies.[14] In 1822, however, the first county clerk, William L. Smith, began selling a few goods out of his home in Liberty. That same year, the county collector licensed only six stores over the entire county (Withers, 1922). Two other stores started in Liberty in 1822, one run by Essex & Hough, and the other by Robert Hood. A tanyard opened in 1825, a distillery in 1826, and a harness shop in 1827. Earlier, in 1821, a grain mill had already been built near Liberty (Norris, 1918).

Genteel Liberty

When Fort Leavenworth was established in Kansas in 1827, commercial activities began to expand more rapidly in town, with construction materials, labor, and supplies being supplied by Liberty and the surrounding area. Not only were goods shipped northwest to the fort from Liberty (generally by steamboat), but the nearby military post brought increased commercial traffic to the town itself.[15] The federal trade generated by Fort Leavenworth, coupled with the river trade mentioned earlier, led to the establishment of the first dram-shop in 1828, adding to two taverns established earlier (one by Leonard Searcy in 1826, and another by Laban Garrett in 1827). Another tavern was added by John Chauncey in 1832. The increased trade and traffic in the town generated business in other areas of commerce as well. The Green Hotel, on the north end of the east side of the square, was a popular retreat in the 1830s for military men on weekend leave from the fort, as Liberty was the closest town to the east (Jackson, 1976).

The officers from Fort Leavenworth and their wives were attracted to not only the commercial enterprises of Liberty, but to the social amenities as well. An atmosphere of gentility was presented by the community, which differed dramatically from the rough conditions at the Fort.

This atmosphere was aided in part by the large number of publications founded in Liberty, at a time when journalism also separated Liberty from its

[14] Don Jackson, *The Heritage of Liberty* (Liberty, MO.: R.C. Printing Service, 1976), p. 3.
[15] Deon Wolfenbarger, "Historic Resources of Liberty, Clay County, Missouri," National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form, Section E, p. 4.

uncivilized neighbors to the west, and contributed to the community's aura of refinement. An amazing number of papers, now defunct, played significant roles in the settlement of the American West and added to the sense of civic pride felt in this period. The founding of the *Liberty Tribune* in 1846 did much to legitimize the town of Liberty. At the time of its first issue on April 4, 1846, it was one of the few newspapers west of the Mississippi River which was regularly published. Also prior to the Civil War, *The Far West* (est. 1836), the *Liberty Banner* (1843), and the *Clay County Flag* (1860). After the war, the *Liberty Weekly Union* was established in 1867; the *Clay County Democrat* in 1870; and the *Liberty Advance* in 1877. The *Liberty Tribune* was founded in 1846 and continues to be among newspapers published today. It is the oldest continuously publishing newspaper west of the Mississippi River. Through its editorials, the Tribune encouraged the growth and development of the town.

By this date, leading merchants in Liberty included T.G. Slaughter, J.A.H. Garlichs, and E.C. Hale. Garlichs and Hale operated a drugstore in partnership on the south side of the square. Other establishments at this time were Schild & Siege1 and Christy & Kyle, a dry goods business on the west side of the square. Dr. E. S. Ferguson was a physician and obstetrician with an office on the square. Two attorneys' offices were also located on the square. They were joined in 1847 by Liberty's first permanent dentists, H.E. Peebles and Joel Ball.

A few short years later, in 1849, Liberty had not only several commercial establishments within its boundaries, but industrial concerns as well. There were eight dry goods stores, two drug stores, eight taverns, three cabinet shops, four blacksmith shops, five tailors, four saddlers, four carriage manufacturers, one tinner, two hatter shops, three shoemakers, three groceries, one bakery, one silversmith, one tanner, one gunsmith, two stonemasons, one brick mason, two plasterers, one carding machine, one oil mill, one circular saw mill, one printing office, one rope manufacturer, one livery stable, nine lawyers, seven physicians, and one dentist (Withers, 1922). Nearly all of the commercial enterprises were on the square, and the industrial or manufacturing concerns were located to the south and east of the square.

Early Schools in Liberty

Liberty's atmosphere of gentility was further enhanced by its growing reputation as an educational center starting in the 1840s, which in turn had a beneficial effect on the business climate of the town and influenced residential development. Education in particular is an area of which Liberty's citizens have long been proud. As early as 1822, Liberty had its first log school house. The town was incorporated into Clay County's first school township in 1825. The idea of free public schools for all was not popular at first, however, and academies and institutes flourished. Initially, Liberty was better known for its private academies and institutes, particularly those for

430 E. Franklin (1853) is recognizable as an early structure from the Greek Revival doorway with its sidelights and transom. Associated with early schooling in Liberty, at the time of its construction the building was located on the city's eastern edge. (Google image capture March 2019)

women. Most of these academies were located in residential buildings, and in turn many of the students boarded in nearby residences.

A partial list of the private educational institutes (and their founding date) located in Liberty during this period reveals the extent of influence that education had on the economy and development of the city: High School for Young Ladies [first] (1828); Liberty Female Seminary (1838); High School for Young Ladies [second] (1840); "Female School" (1844)[16]; Liberty Male and Female Seminary (1841); William Jewell College and Academy in 1849; Liberty Female Institute (1852, re-opened as the Liberty Female College in 1855); and Clay Seminary (1855).

It was natural that Liberty should become known as a regional education center, and it served Clay County and beyond in this capacity. Many leading figures received their education in Liberty. One of Missouri's pioneer suffrage workers, Phoebe Routt Ess attended Clay Seminary, as did Carry Nation, national temperance leader. During this period, two more educational institutions were opened, the Hawthorne Institute in 1883, and Liberty Ladies' College in 1890. Very few structures associated with this educational theme have been surveyed, save for 438 W. Franklin, 430 E. Franklin, and 9 S. Leonard, which were all constructed prior to the Civil War. However, while no other historic resources have been evaluated, the quality of education played a major role in attracting teachers and other new residents to Liberty in this period.

The largest and best known institution, and at first for men only, was William Jewell College. It was established by charter by the Baptists of Missouri in 1849. It was named for Dr. William Jewell of Columbia, Missouri who provided a land endowment for the formation of a College. Two Liberty citizens, Judge Joseph T.V. Thompson and Colonel Alexander W. Doniphan, are credited with working to locate the college in Liberty. A subscription drive amounting to $22,000 in Clay County undoubtedly was a deciding factor as well. William Jewell opened for instruction on January 1, 1850 in the basement of the Baptist Church with the Rev. Elijah Dulin as principal. Construction of Jewell Hall at the east end of Franklin Street began in 1852, and classes were held there for the first time in 1853.

This period saw Liberty move from its settlement period to the early stages of community development. Although influenced by the nearby Missouri

[16] Withers, *Clay County Centennial*, p. 132.

River traffic and the surrounding agricultural lands, Liberty's growth and development was more affected by its selection as the county seat. The accompanying commercial growth, as well as the establishment of the numerous educational institutions, in tum was reflected by the town's buildings and infrastructure.

This small Greek Revival building at 9 South Leonard Street was built in 1842 as a Methodist church and originally had a second door where the window to the right of the door is now (one entrance for men, one for women). It was sold in 1855 to Professor James Love and then served as part of the Clay Seminary. (Photo © Shane Immelt, Minds-i Photographic)

Early Architecture

Built from the 1830s through 1860s in Liberty and usually of brick construction, Greek Revival residences were often the first substantial homes constructed in and around the community after the initial settlement dwellings. Building traditions of the Upland South were perpetuated by brick construction, with chimneys usually placed at opposite ends of the main block. The Greek Revival style is distinguished by its simple rectangular form with a symmetrical appearance on the facade. The window and door openings are the principal areas of decoration, generally coupled with some form of cornice elaboration. The entry door is a dominant feature, and it generally has either sidelights, transoms, or both with rectangular glass panes. Although some Greek Revival residences are located within Liberty's historic residential districts, others are located on what were the outer edges of the city at the time of their construction. (In addition to the two structures pictured on this page and the opposite page, see images of Lightburne Hall on p. 23.)

The Greek Revival style sustained its popularity longer than any other style of the period. It was identified with the ideals of ancient Greece, and was a visual attempt to link the world's oldest and newest republics. Most residential examples were constructed between 1830 and 1860 in Liberty, when the style was popularized by carpenter's guides and pattern books. In Liberty, these houses are typically associated with settlers from the Upland South. Some of the examples are substantial mansions built for farmers with large holdings of land supported by a slave economy, while other more modest versions nonetheless reflect the civilized aspirations of its owners (such as 430 E. Franklin pictured on p. 30). These residences represent the change from a pioneering settlement to a more refined community.

Early Churches

Early religious buildings are rare in Liberty. Religion was an important theme in Liberty's and Clay County's history. The great majority of emigrants from the Upper South who moved westward up the Missouri River were Evangelical or Protestant. The largest number of these were Baptists,

Disciples, Methodist and Presbyterians. The Baptists did not form officially until 1843. The Christian Church (Disciples) began in 1837; the Methodist Church in 1822; and the Presbyterian Church in 1829. One Catholic church, Saint James, also dates from this period (1840). However, as congregations outgrew their original small brick or frame structures, they very often rebuilt more elaborate churches on the same site.

Although a few examples still exist in the county, only one of these modest houses of worship remains in Liberty, 9 S. Leonard (pictured on p. 31). Originally built for the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1842, this building was sold in 1855 to Professor James Love and then served as part of the Clay Seminary. There are some similar modest church buildings scattered around Clay County, and they appear to have some features in common with 9 S. Leonard. All were simple rectangular blocks, with a front-facing gable end. There are two doors at the front one for the men and one for women. Early photos and drawings of the Methodist Episcopal Church show that it also had two doors, one of which has been modified to a window.[17] As typical evidence of a Southern transplanted culture, most of the early churches were brick, after the brief homesteading period in which such structures were log.

2.4. The Courthouse Square in Liberty, 1858-1941

Several factors combined to influence the development of Liberty from its inception through the end of World War II. Some of these factors were unique to Liberty; others are representative of small, Midwestern towns. The factors that affected the development of Liberty over the years were:

- Its selection as the county seat of Clay County;
- The central courthouse square plan of the "Original Town" plat, with the square situated in a lower flat area surrounded by hills on three sides;
- Its location high above the river floodplain, yet within proximity to the Missouri River;
- Its ability to provide goods and services for trade to the northwest;
- The high number of educational institutions;
- The securing of railroad lines;
- A stable, slow-growing economy and population;
- Increased transportation opportunities between Kansas City and Liberty allowing for suburban-type development patterns.

[17] The Methodist Episcopal Church has undergone other modifications, some of which occurred when it served as one of the two buildings of the Clay Seminary. Dormers have been added on the right. In 1916, the Christian Science Church bought the property and stuccoed the exterior wall surfaces. It is probable that the Craftsman style entry porch was added at this time.

The Antebellum Courthouse Square

Liberty's earliest trade was undoubtedly conducted in the log structures which also served as residences for the owners. Sometimes the type of commercial enterprises were reflected in the architecture, but more often there was no indication that the structure housed a different use. This type of "shop-house" was common across America. It was not until the early nineteenth century that the design of strictly commercial buildings emerged as a separate facet of American architecture. The development of an entire town can often be traced by its patterns of commercial architecture. The size and extent of commercial buildings are an index of a town's achievements and potential, and play a major role in defining the character of a community. Liberty's downtown square is thus a reflection of its period of commercial growth and development in the late nineteenth century.

A closeup view of two Federal-style buildings remaining on Main Street when this photo was taken in 1885. These were probably built during the first or second decade after Liberty was settled in 1822. (Photo courtesy Clay County Archives & Historical Library; see the entire photo on p. 3.)

The first true commercial buildings (devoted entirely to commerce) constructed around the square appear to have been built in the same manner as the building known today as the Jesse James Bank Museum (pictured on p. 97). Photographs from this period reveal these commercial structures were brick, one to two stories in height, and featured gable roofs. The ridge line of the roofs paralleled the street, and the roof slopes were frequently pierced by dormers and chimneys.

From this period, only the museum remains, located on the northeast corner of E. Franklin and Water Streets and significant as the only remaining Federal-style commercial structure in Liberty. Its corner lot location allowed for a full pedimented gable end to face one street, and the ridgeline to parallel the other street. Located on the northeast corner of E. Franklin and Water Streets on the square, it was constructed in 1858 as the branch office of the Farmer's Bank of Missouri at Lexington. (Later, it served as the Clay County Savings Association, and in 1866, as also mentioned below, served as the site of the nation's first daylight bank robbery.)

The decade of the 1850s had seen the construction of number of large, imposing structures on the square. Whereas the earliest buildings on the square were constructed of wood, the structures built in the 1850s were usually of brick. The Author House, on the southeast corner of Water and

Kansas streets, was known as the finest hotel west of the Mississippi when it was built in the first part of the 1850s. It was an imposing three-story structure, and was the site of many of Liberty's social events until it burned in 1903. In particular, 1858 saw the construction of more buildings on the square in that year than had been undertaken during much of the previous part of the decade (*Liberty Tribune*, 8 October 1958).

The most prominent of these on the square was the 1858 Clay County Courthouse. The courthouse was physical evidence of the county's and town's affluence by this time. It was an ornately featured structure, which historian Deon K. Wolfenbarger found in 1992 was "still fondly remembered in the community." Its cross-shaped plan was oriented so that the four points faced the intersections of the four streets on the perimeter of the public square. The courthouse featured a prominent dome with a heroic-sized bronze above. A classically inspired portico was on the main facade.

By the 1850s, the central courthouse square truly served as the focus of governmental, commercial, and social activity in Liberty. Saloons and hotels, but one indicator of social life, were located in buildings around the courthouse, and even in the courthouse itself. Fraternal organizations started to meet in buildings around the square during this period, and eventually constructed their own buildings facing the courthouse. Among the businesses in and around the square in 1858 were two carriage shops, three blacksmiths, a wagon shop, five tailor shops, three cabinet shops, two tinsmiths, one cooper, a gunsmith shop, five milliners, two liveries, three boot and shoe stores, and two saddlers (*Liberty Tribune*, 22 October 1858). The high level of construction activity in the late 1850s is evidenced by the four carpentry shops and the numerous painters, paperers, bricklayers, plasterers, and stone masons cited in local newspapers of the period.

The importance of the railroad to Liberty's economy and growth is discussed below. The railroad did not affect the basic configuration and focus of Liberty's commercial district. The square remained the dominant place to conduct business. Thus early in its history Liberty possessed a core district that became a major component of its identity and gave a focus for community activities. The four streets of Franklin, Kansas, Water, and Main were the anchors of the square, and the commercial district focused inward on those streets and the Courthouse. The buildings abutted the sidewalks and their neighbors, filling the entire lot. If any open space existed on the square, it was assumed that a building would someday move in.

This dense pattern of construction had existed in urban areas for hundreds of years. However, what was occurring in American commercial districts during the nineteenth century was somewhat different. The major difference was the wide, straight linear streets, necessary for the heavy traffic that these districts received. The reason the traffic was heavier was that commercial usage dominated these districts. Even though there were sometimes

The second Clay County Courthouse (1858), as seen in a 1909 postcard view. Liberty's second automobile is pictured at left, a Model S Ford purchased in 1903 by hardware store owner Sterling Price Boggess, who soon became the local Ford dealer. (Image used by permission, Kansas City Library, on view at https://kchistory.org/islandora/object/kchistory%253A109133 together with a story that ran in the Kansas City Times *in 1977.)*

apartments on the upper stories of these buildings, this was generally not a shared area for homes. Except in very large cities, residential districts in America comprised free-standing buildings. Thus, it was easy to differentiate between commercial and residential areas in smaller to mid-sized communities in late-nineteenth-century America.

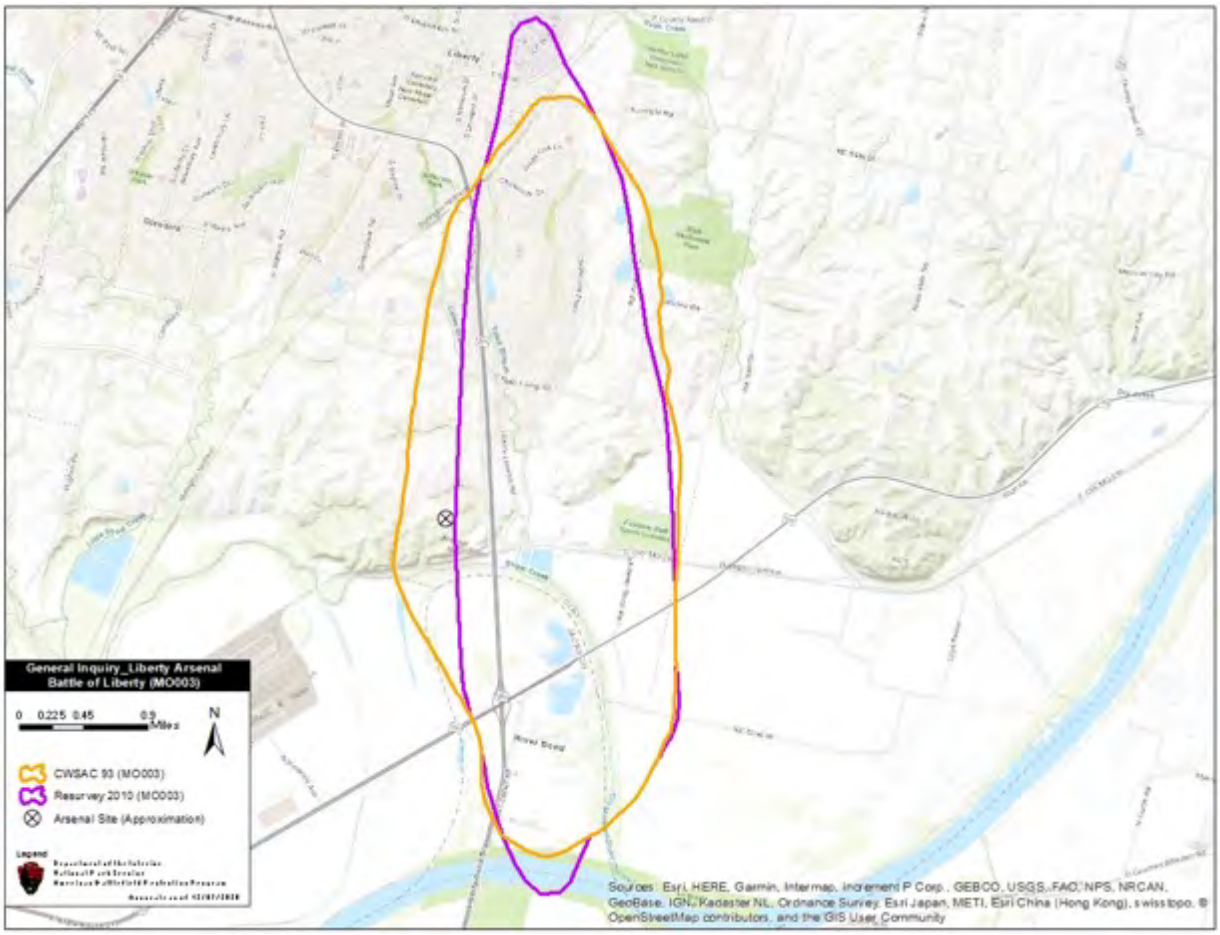
Effects of the Civil War

The decade before the Civil War was a time of great unrest in western Missouri. Clay County experienced this turmoil over the issues of slavery and free soil states, and is included in the territory of the modern Freedom's Way National Heritage Area, which interprets that period in both states along the border between Missouri and Kansas (see Chapter 6).

Liberty can claim two major actions during the Civil War – part of the hundreds of clashes across Missouri, which after Virginia and Tennessee endured more strife than any state. Nearly 110,000 Missouri men fought for the Union, while about 40,000 served the Confederacy.

First, the Liberty Arsenal was raided on April 20, 1861, just eight days after Fort Sumter was attacked by the South Carolina Militia (pre-cursor of the Confederate Army). The 1885 *History of Clay and Platte Counties, Missouri* tells the tale:

> In Clay County a long-meditated act – an act forming an incident of a grand scheme – was accomplished, highly import-



The battlefield of the Battle of Liberty, as mapped by the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) in 2020 showing the original survey from 1993 and a resurvey in 2010. At the request of Liberty's planners to support this Historic Preservation Plan, the ABPP also located the approximate site of the Arsenal on this map. Battlefields include not only core areas where combat took place but also such other areas as routes of approach, assembly areas, headquarters, and hospitals that were also directly pertinent to the battle. In the case of the Battle of Liberty, William Jewell College's main building is included since it was used as a hospital and for other military needs.

ant in its results to the Secession cause. This was the capture of what was generally known as the Liberty Arsenal, although it was four miles from Liberty, and was called by the U.S. Authorities the Missouri Depot. It is altogether probable – though the evidence cannot be had, owing to the reluctance of certain parties to give it in such clear terms as is desirable – that a plan had been organized by leading Secessionists of the State, Gov. Jackson among the number, to see not only Liberty Arsenal, but the St. Louis Arsenal, and even Fort Leavenworth…. The force that captured and seized the Arsenal was about 200 Secessionists, composed of one Company from Jackson County, commanded by Capt. [John] McMurray, of Independence, and a strong Company from Liberty and Clay

> County under Col. Henry L. Routt, the whole under command of Col. Routt…. The Secessionists held possession of the Arsenal for a week, until all the stores and munitions had been removed…. By far the greatest portion of the arms and munitions were taken possession of and hauled in wagons, provided for the purpose, to Liberty. Here they were distributed to the "minute men" of Clay and surrounding counties.[18]

Second, also quite early in the war, on September 20, 1861, the Battle of Liberty, known alternatively as the Battle of Blue Mills Landing, took place. The official description of the battle made by the national Civil War Advisory Commission reads as follows:

> "General" D.R. Atchison left Lexington on September 15, 1861, and proceeded to Liberty where he met the Missouri State Guard. On the night of September 16-17, his force crossed the Missouri River to the south side and prepared for a fight with Union troops reported to be in the area. At the same time, Union Lt. Col. John Scott led a force of about 600 men from Cameron, on the 15th, towards Liberty. He left his camp in Centreville, at 2:00 am on the 17th. He arrived in Liberty, sent scouts out to find the enemy, and, about 11:00 am, skirmishing began. At noon, Scott marched in the direction of the firing, approached Blue Mills Landing and, at 3:00 am, struck the Confederate pickets. The Union force began to fall back, though, and the Rebels pursued for some distance. The fight lasted for an hour. The Confederates were consolidating influence in northwestern Missouri. Estimated Casualties: 126 total (US 56; CS 70).[19]

The Blue Mills Landing battle lasted for an hour and resulted in a total of 126 casualties. The Union forces suffered 56 casualties and the Missouri State

Missouri and the Civil War

"The struggle for Missouri was one of the most prolonged and violent conflicts of nineteenth-century America, extending beyond the boundaries of the Civil War. In fact, Missouri was the very seedbed of the Civil War. Events in Missouri prior to 1861 triggered the national debate over the westward expansion of slavery, and the Kansas-Missouri Border War of the 1850s heralded the larger conflict. Yet, Missouri is marginalized in Civil War history, and its war continues to be treated as a "sideshow" because it defied notions of acceptable nineteenth-century warfare and continues to challenge our paradigm of a civil war. Claimed by both North and South, Missouri held a liminal status between Union and Confederate, with combatants fighting conventional battles as well as a guerrilla war. Over the course of the war, the guerrilla war predominated and shifted the struggle from the battlefield to the home front, blurring the line between combatant and noncombatant, drawing civilians into the conflict."

SOURCE: Elle E. Harvell, "The Struggle for Missouri," web entry in the online Essential Civil War Curriculum by the Virginia Center for Civil War Studies at Virginia Tech, https://www.essentialcivilwarcurriculum.com/the-struggle-for-missouri.html.

[18] *History of Clay and Platte Counties, Missouri* (1885), pp. 195-97, as cited by Christopher Harris in his authoritative *Historical Timeline of the Missouri Depot/Liberty Arsenal at Liberty, Clay County, Missouri* (March 2020), pp. 35-36.

[19] Civil War Sites Advisory Commission, *Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields - Technical Volume II_ Battle Summaries*, p. 79 (listed as Battle of Liberty); available at https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/DownloadFile/640755

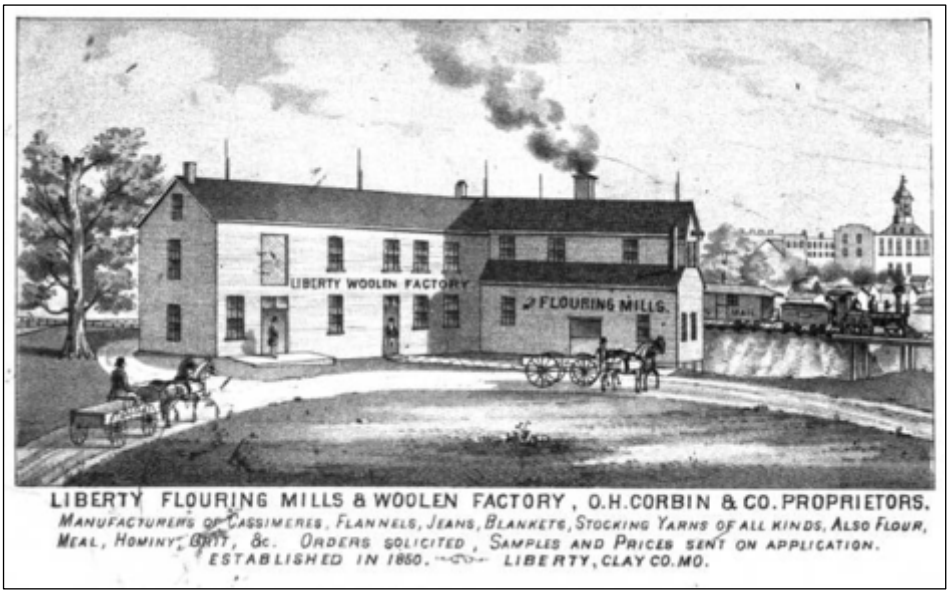
Guard lost 70.[20] In the aftermath of the battle, Jewell Hall on the William Jewell College campus was pressed into service as a hospital. According to the National Register nomination for Jewell Hall, "sources note that Jewell Hall was used as a hospital for the Union men wounded in the battle and served as such for about six weeks. Union Lieutenant John Scott in his official report listed about eighty wounded. Jewell Hall was one of the few buildings in Liberty large enough to accommodate the wounded."[21]

Local historian Christopher Harris has reported that "available information suggests that 19 Union soldiers died as a result of actions associated with the Battle of Liberty/Blue Mills Landing. Seventeen of those soldiers are believed to have been initially interred in or near Mt. Memorial Cemetery in Liberty, Missouri. In 1912, the soldiers that had been originally buried in Liberty were moved to the Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery, Leavenworth, Kansas." Mt. Memorial Cemetery was the public cemetery a little more than a stone's throw from Jewell Hall, north on the same ridge occupied by the hall. In 1891, Congress voted to compensate the college for Jewell Hall's use (but not its damage) during the war.[22]

The period immediately following the Civil War remained turbulent in and around Liberty. After the war, three-quarters of the voting men were disfranchised by Missouri's Drake Constitution. Ratified by voters on June 6, 1865, the new constitution formalized emancipation, established a formal government to replace the provisional Union government, and controversially required Missouri's male citizens to take an "Iron-Clad Test Oath" to prove their loyalty to the Union before voting in elections. This, coupled with the continued guerrilla violence of southern sympathizers, halted most construction activity in Liberty.

Guerrilla border warfare plagued Liberty and its environs both before and after the Civil War, with some of its more infamous residents giving it a short-lived nationwide reputation for lawlessness. As late as 1879, promotional literature prepared about Clay County still found it necessary to refute the "popular prejudice against Missouri, and Clay County particularly" by insisting that the whole region was not "UNDER MORTGAGE TO THE JAMES BOYS," and in fact, this opinion was "A GRAND MISTAKE" ("Clay County, Missouri," 28 August 1879). It was true, however, that at one point in 1864, business in Liberty came to a standstill due to the ruthlessness of the bushwhackers (Jackson, 1976). However, the most infamous incident of this period occurred shortly after the war: The first daylight bank robbery during peace time in the nation took place on February 13, 1866, at the Clay

[20] https://libertymissouri.gov/2113/Mt-Memorial-Cemetery-History
[21] National Register nomination form for Jewell Hall, Item 8, p. 3 (continuation; pdf p. 11; footnotes omitted). The nomination continues to sketch the further uses to which the building was put in 1862. Available at https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/nps-nr/78001642.pdf.
[22] Ibid.



This illustration from 1877 provides a glimpse of Liberty's second courthouse (the tower to the far right) and the area's earliest railroad. (Image courtesy State Historical Society of Missouri, from An Illustrated Historical Atlas of Clay County, Missouri, 1877, p. 33, retrieved from https://digital.shsmo.org/digital/collection/plat/id/1071)

County Savings Association on the northeast corner of the square, committed by Jesse James and his brother Frank.

The Railroad Arrives

Soon enough after the war, life returned to normal and the town began a short period of quiet growth. As with many small midwestern communities, Liberty's growth after the Civil War was aided by the arrival of the railroad lines. As with most smaller communities, residents realized the importance of railroads to their town's future. The location of a railroad line had the capacity to build or destroy a town. Citizens knew that a railroad connection would link them to more communities, more markets and goods – in effect, with the rest of the world. The state was deep in debt as a result of the Civil War, however, a railroad financing issue unresolved until the turn of the century. It was up to the local governments to attract financiers as well as the railroad companies.

As a result, several committees in Liberty were formed to promote the area for railroads. They were rewarded in 1867 when the Hannibal & St. Joseph (later the Chicago, Burlington, & Quincy) made Liberty a stop on the line from Kansas City to Cameron, Missouri (Jackson, 1976). In 1868, the Wabash, St. Louis, and Pacific Railroad passed through the south part of Liberty.[23] By the turn of the century, six to eight passenger trains passed through or stopped in Liberty each day (Piland, 1985). Ironically, the coming of the railroad to Liberty, so necessary for a town's survival, probably also led to a halt in any further commercial expansion in the town. The construction of a railroad bridge across the Missouri River, which allowed

[23] See original MPS Submission, Section E, pp. 7-8 for further discussion of the effect of the railroad on Liberty's development.

the connection to Kansas City, helped that city emerge as the dominant railroad town in the region.

This, coupled with the ending of the steamboat era in nearby Liberty Landing, led to shift in commercial enterprises. Businesses in Liberty focused on serving the town and the surrounding area, rather than on trade for the larger region. New commercial and industrial businesses were established along the railroad corridor. As Liberty was not a major crossroads for the rails, but merely a stop along the line, this was in actuality not a very major adjustment.

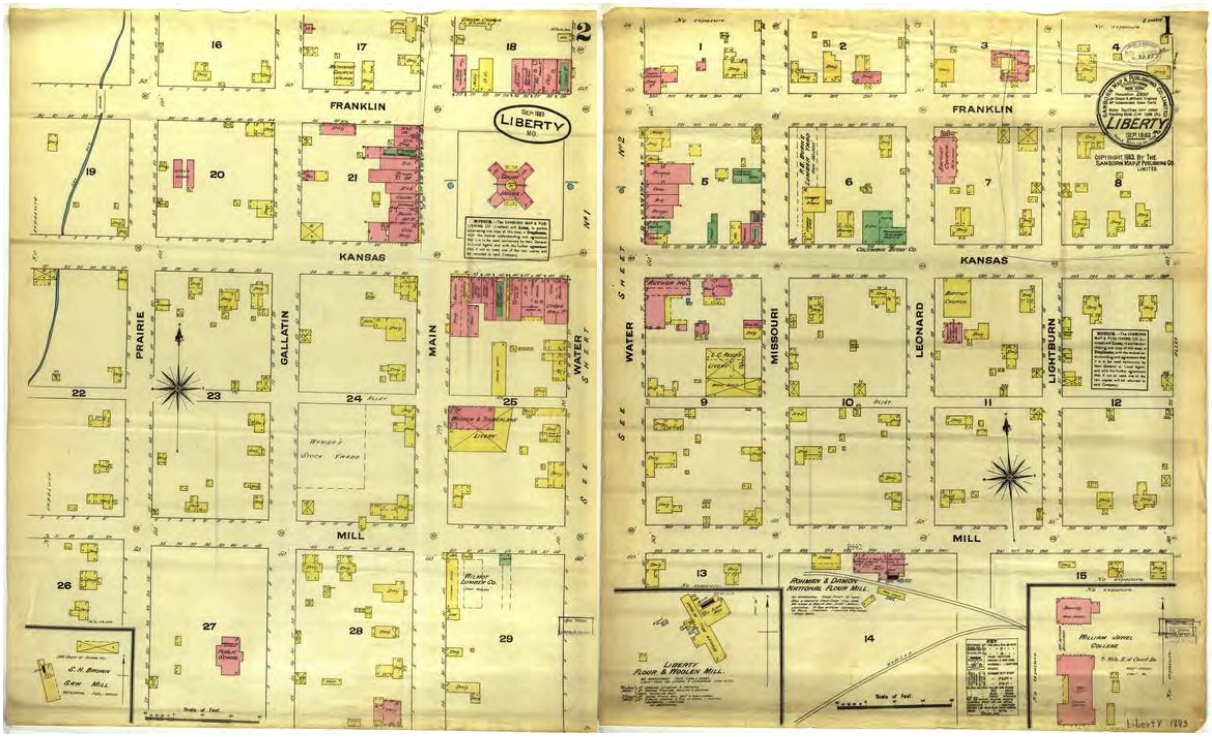
The coming of the rail lines to Liberty did not affect the physical development of the town to any great extent, and certainly did not diminish the importance of the square. The railroad line was located south of Mill Street, a block south of the square. A small industrial area, with two woolen and flour mills and two wagon and carriage factories, had already been established close to the rails. Also located just off the square, due to the nature of the businesses, were several livery stables and a stockyard. A few commercial structures were constructed just adjacent to the square on the four roads leading away from the courthouse. However, the vast majority of commerce was conducted in the structures facing the courthouse. The commercial and service enterprises of Liberty remained centered around the square, just as they were before the War and the coming of the railroads (Sanborn Maps, 1883, 1889, 1894, 1899).

A few years after the war, Liberty began to pick up the pace of commercial development that had been started in the 1850s. All of the brick for these first masonry commercial buildings was manufactured within the town. A few of the commercial buildings were constructed of the soft bricks taken from the demolished Liberty Arsenal, which was constructed in 1832, but abandoned at the close of the Civil War and sold to a private owner in 1868 (Jackson, 1976).

Educational Opportunities in Liberty

The numerous schools, seminaries, and institutions of higher learning found in the community also impacted Liberty's development. These educational institutions attracted students and professors, giving the community a "cultured" appeal not found in other nearby towns, and affected the development of some residential areas. Although little primary data is available to directly correlate the effect of education on the community's physical layout, many sources provide examples of residents' opinions of the importance of education to Liberty's economy and development. An editorial in the July 25, 1846 in the *Liberty Tribune* states that:

> Liberty, in its comprehensive, national sense, can only be preserved, strengthened and enlarged by virtue and intelligence…, can only be kept from becoming a place for 'bats and owls' by enlarging the means of educating the youth of the



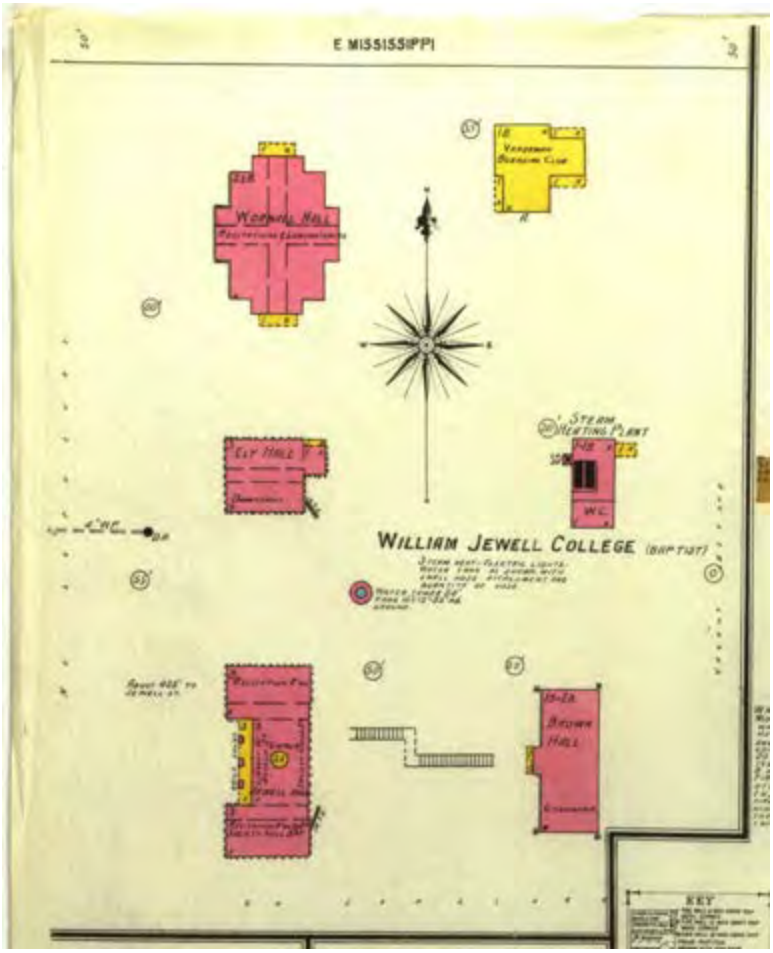
In the late nineteenth century, the Sanborn company began making insurance maps of many communities across the country. Liberty's first set, the two sheets shown here, was published in 1883. (Yellow indicates wood construction; red, brick; and green, "special.") Preservationists and historians treasure these maps for their detail. Note the inset at lower right showing William Jewell College and compare to its 1906 map shown on p. 42. (Image from the University of Missouri Libraries, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Collection; retrieved from https://dl.mospace.umsystem.edu/mu/islandora/object/mu%3A138865)

> county. [The editorial further emphasized the importance of education over commerce in Liberty by going on to state that Liberty:] has no commercial advantages, beyond that of any other spot of land in the county; but it has the most superior advantages for schools. These advantages are: First, as healthy a situation as can be found in North America; Second, good water; Third, a dense population around it; Fourthly, it would command a large portion of several adjoining counties.[24]

More than forty years later on December 20,1898, an editorial in the Liberty Tribune noted that as Liberty would not usurp other larger cities as a commercial center:

> ….she must place her main reliance for prosperity in the future on her schools and colleges. She must and will attract the youth from all parts of the country to her institutions of learning. This is now being done and William Jewell College, Clay Seminary and our Public Schools... will... conduce [sic] more to our prosperity than all our other advantages put together. The future of Liberty in respect to education is brilliant. If she cannot be a busy mart she can be a great educational center."[25]

[24] Jackson, *Heritage of Liberty*, p. 5
[25] Withers, *Clay County Centennial*, p. 129.



The campus of William Jewell College in 1906, which grew considerably after it was first mapped in 1883 (and misspelled then) by the Sanborn company – see the preceding page. (Image from the University of Missouri Libraries, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Collection; retrieved from https://dl.mospace.umsystem.edu/mu/islandora/object/mu%3A138865)

Again in 1922, the *Clay County, Missouri Centennial Souvenir* noted "Liberty's greatest interest has always been in education and from the beginning she has had good schools."[26]

Particularly in the early part of Liberty's development, the number of educational institutions in town had a profound effect on the economy. For example, in 1847, there were 170 pupils from Clay, Ray and Platte Counties enrolled in the Liberty Male and Female Seminary, while there were only 744 residents in all of Liberty at that time.[27] In addition to the numerous schools attracting students to the community, the location of these various institutions influenced housing and residential development in Liberty and impacted the quality of life in the community. The location of the William Jewell College campus, for example, encouraged construction on the east end of town, and other institutions had the same effect. Many schools or academies either located in existing residential buildings or constructed new buildings which resembled the surrounding housing stock. Additionally, neighboring homes were used to house out-of-town boarding students, and likely additions were made to existing residences for this purpose. Some fraternity residences were constructed for students at William Jewell, and several residences were eventually completely converted to apartments for other Jewell students.

Life in Liberty in the Late Nineteenth Century

Liberty's economy and existence did not hinge on the railroad lines, however. After it was apparent that Kansas City would serve as the regional center for

[26] Ibid., p. 33.
[27] Ibid., p. 132.

Liberty in the 1906 Sanborn map. Note the public schools at lower left. (red, indicating brick-built). The livery mentioned in the text on p. 45 is on the west side of S. Missouri, center. (Image pieced from several images drawn from the University of Missouri Libraries, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Collection; retrieved from https://dl.mospace.umsystem.edu/mu/islandora/object/mu%3A138865)

commerce and trade, Liberty's role became defined as the governmental seat for Clay County as well as a commercial center for the surrounding countryside. [28] Liberty began to cultivate an atmosphere of gentility, emphasizing service over trade and manufacturing. Although commercial businesses were obviously established to serve the town and the nearby farmland, regionally Liberty was more noted for education, religion, good journalism, culture, and temperance (for a short period).

Saloons had been fixtures in Liberty nearly from its inception. The first courthouse, built in 1833, even contained a public bar that was renovated at public expense (Jackson, 1976). In 1873, however, with five saloons located around the square in Liberty, the County Court voted to no longer grant saloon licenses. By 1880, all of the saloons and dram shops in Clay County were gone. Liberty had associations with the temperance movement nationwide, as well. Carry Nation, a famous leader of the Woman's Christian

[28] See original MPS Submission for a more thorough discussion of the factors affecting Liberty's governmental and commercial development. Section E, pp. 6-13.

Temperance Union, had been a student at the Clay Seminary in Liberty, when she was known as Amelia Moore.

By 1883, all types of commercial establishments which were necessary to small town life were found immediately on the square – two clothing stores, two furniture stores, three harness stores, three barber shops, the Post Office, a photographer, a paint store, tinner, four dry goods establishments, five druggists, a hardware store, two books & stationery stores, two confectioneries, a newspaper office, general office space, and a skating rink.[29] However, the commercial district never expanded much more than a block beyond the square and the size of the buildings throughout Liberty remained a modest two stories. (See 1906 map, p. 43.)

The commercial and industrial part of town was not confined to the square, although it did serve as the focal point of business for Liberty. A stockyard and several livery stables were just south of the square and north of Mill. South of Mill Street, adjacent to the railroad tracks, were the Liberty Flour & Woolen Mill (see image, p. 39), the Rohman & Damon National Flour Mill, the S.H. Brown Saw Mill, and Wilmot Lumber Company. Two blocks east of the square (on the corner of Leonard and E. Kansas) was the Columbus Buggy Company. Immediately to the northwest on the same block was P. B. Burn's Lumberyard. The first lateral expansion of the commercial district along the four major arteries occurred during this period. By 1883, five commercial structures were built on E. Kansas between the square and Columbus Buggy Company.

Commerce in general prospered in Liberty in the decade of the 1880s, and several new commercial buildings were constructed on the square in this period. In the first six months of 1885, five commercial buildings were completed on the square, and other merchants were "talking confidently of building" (Liberty Tribune, 31 July 1885). All of these new buildings were constructed in a similar manner – they all filled up the entire lot, were built of brick, and had their facades organized in a distinct two-zone pattern. For the first time, the buildings on the square were quite distinct in their construction from the residential buildings of the period. In short, they were representative of the Two-Part Commercial Block property type, which was prevalent throughout the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Longstreth, 1987).

The Great Real Estate "Boom"

The late 1880s brought the "Great Boom" in Clay County real estate. Until this point, Liberty had experienced steady growth since the 1850s, when the population was around 800. In 1860, it was 1,300; in 1870, 1,700; and in 1880, it had actually dropped slightly to 1,500. In 1890 though, the population had jumped to 2,600 residents. The first year of the boom is variously placed in

[29] "Liberty, MO," (New York: Sanborn Map & Publishing Co., Sept. 1883) pp. 1-2.

The Administration Building in the Odd Fellows Home (now a 36-acre historic district listed in the National Register) was built in 1900 in Jacobethan Revival style by noted Missouri architect William B. Ittner of St. Louis. The Odd Fellows Home is significant as an early 20th century example of a statewide home providing care and education for the orphans and elderly members of a fraternal organization.

1887 or 1889. In one year during this short period, the value of real property transfers in Clay County was reported at $6,074,176.00 (Jackson, 1976). The "boom" was reflected in not only the dollar amounts of real estate transfers, but by the amount of construction taking place in Liberty. Particularly around the square, the 1880s was the decade of the greatest amount of construction. A survey of 89 buildings surrounding the square revealed that 23 buildings were constructed in the 1880s, more than twice the number of any other decade in the survey area (Piland, 1985).

One man in particular, W. E. Winner, was heavily involved in Clay County real estate. In 1887, his investment company purchased 18,000 acres of Clay County land. In 1891, he bought the Reed Springs Hotel and changed the name to the Winner Hotel. As his fortunes began to decline, he sold the hotel to the Grand Lodge of the Missouri Independent Order of Odd Fellows. In 1896, 9000 acres of land were sold to satisfy bonds issued to Mr. Winner, and the "Great Boom" was over, leaving many in financial distress. The Odd Fellows, however, profited from Mr. Winner's and others' losses by obtaining the hotel and 240 surrounding acres for a very reasonable price.

Almost immediately, the "boom" turned to a "bust," leaving many in the area in financial distress. This in turn must have affected business on the square. However, except for one vacant spot in the center of the east side of the square (along Water Street), all of the lots facing the courthouse by this point already contained two to three-story brick commercial buildings (Sanborn Map, 1889). The physical appearance of the square was thus, for the most part, already confirmed.

The Armour, Swift, Burlington Bridge (1911), Kansas City, MO, looking downriver with the lift span in down position, as recorded by the Historic American Engineering Record after 1968. The A.S.B. bridge is the only vertical lift span of its type ever built. The lower railroad portion telescopes into the truss of the upper-level vehicular roadway so as not to interfere with vehicular traffic. It is a National Civil Engineering Landmark. The bridge enabled Kansas City to consolidate its dominance as a railroad hub and led to the growth of North Kansas City. (Image at https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/mo0450.photos.096277p/, landmark listing at https://www.asce.org/project/armour-swift-burlington-bridge/)

The Square and Beyond in the Early Twentieth Century

After the turn of the century, Liberty's commercial growth was focused on the major arteries leading away from the square, as by 1900 most of the square was fully constructed. The 1906 Sanborn map (see image, p. 44) indicates that Kansas Street was developed for one block east of the square, as was the east side of S. Main and the north side of W. Kansas. The remaining blocks around the square had some commercial enterprises, but there were still a few residences scattered among them. There was still one livery nearby on S. Missouri, but many present in 1883 were now absent. They were beginning to make way for new businesses, as well as for two new suburban building types – garages and gas stations. In 1913 there were enough owners of automobiles to warrant the formation of an automobile club. By 1915, the automobile was a permanent fixture in Liberty, and it required its own special form of architecture.

The last remaining livery stable in the area of the square was destroyed by a major fire that occurred in 1934. The fire started in the mule barn and immediately spread to the nearby fire station, preventing quick action to fight the fire. By the time fire trucks arrived from other communities, almost the entire block of buildings between Kansas and Mill Streets on Missouri were destroyed. Substantial damage was done to other buildings along Kansas Street, to the Plaza Theatre (located on Water Street south of Kansas), and to Satterfield's Garage (just north of Mill on Water). Other buildings were destroyed by burning embers carried by strong wind. This brought about the rebuilding or remodeling of several buildings on the square and nearby.

At the turn of the century, there were sweeping technological changes that seemed to have more effect on the residential development of the town than on Liberty's square. The Electric Light Company was formed in 1887, but by the turn of the century, customers were still only allowed one light bulb. The few street lights in town were turned on only when the moon was not shining (Jackson, 1976). In 1906, Liberty's waterworks system began operation, and the sewer system was completed in 1909. The first telephone company was started in 1896 (Withers, 1922). Other phone companies were formed and competed for business until 1917, when all the systems were bought by the Liberty Telephone Company (Jackson, 1976). This enabled Liberty to have connections with the long distance lines operating in Kansas City.

Transportation

Transportation was another key factor in the development of Liberty. Securing rail lines insured that Liberty, although never a major shipping point, would not be cut off from the rest of the country. In addition to impacting the city's economy, new commercial and industrial businesses were established along the railroad corridor, which lay just south of the Courthouse Square. For a time this corridor served as an effective southern boundary to residential development in Liberty, further encouraging construction to the north, east, and west sides of the square. Property along Leonard Street, which was the primary road leading south of town across the railroad line, was not subdivided until the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Other advances led to Liberty and Clay County becoming more closely tied to the development of the Kansas City area. In the early part of the twentieth century, new bridges across the Missouri River, the Interurban electric rail line, and automobile traffic changed the face of development in Liberty even further. In 1911, the Armour-Swift-Burlington (A.S.B.) Bridge opened for traffic, connecting Liberty to Kansas City over the Missouri River (pictured, p. 46).

The opening of this bridge led to the formation of the Kansas City, Clay County and St. Joseph Electric Railroad (the "Interurban"), which began operation in 1913. At its peak the Interurban operated more than eighty cars per day, capable of speeds of seventy-five miles per hour; the running time in 1917 was between forty and forty-seven minutes from Liberty to 13th & Walnut streets in Kansas City. Liberty had two stops on the branch from Kansas City to Excelsior Springs, and the trains to Kansas City came at forty-five minute intervals. (A second branch ran from Kansas City to St. Joseph.) One interurban station was on the William Jewell College campus, and the other at the Interurban Station on the southeast corner of E. Mill and S. Leonard. The Craftsman style station was built in 1912, and soon became a familiar landmark. In spite of the outrageous fee of thirty-five cents, which

Liberty citizens believed was far too high, the Interurban trains greatly facilitated travel between Liberty and Kansas City.[30]

The electric interurban trains had a considerable impact on Liberty's development. The train allowed people to commute to Kansas City to work. The fare, however, was high enough that only the middle to upper class could afford to do so. Thus the town soon became desirable for its quiet residential character and its high-quality, middle class homes. The electric trains had only a brief heyday, as they were soon supplanted by the automobile. The paving of Highway 10 and the A.S.B. Bridge made the automobile the preferred mode of transportation to Kansas City. In addition, a bus line started hourly service from Liberty's square to downtown Kansas City in 1923. However, even this fare was considered high for the day, and owning an automobile was still a luxury of the middle class. As the city made no real attempt to attract industry in this period, most of Liberty's residential growth at this time was limited to those who could afford to move to Liberty and commute to Kansas City.

The business establishments of Liberty remained fairly stable from the turn of the century to the second World War. By 1899, nearly all of the commercial buildings facing the courthouse square were in place. A comparison of business types shown on various Sanborn Maps also reveals that, especially on the west and south sides of the square, not only were the buildings in place, but most of the business establishments themselves remained constant from the 1880s through the 1920s (Sanborn Maps, 1883, 1889, 1894, 1899, 1906, 1913, 1924). In 1922, the following businesses were on the square: three banks, five grocery stores, five clothing stores, two dry goods stores, a Red Cross Rest Room, three shoe stores, two meat markets, two jewelers, a millinery, an undertaker, five drugstores, two barber shops, a book store, a tea company, three hardware stores, a furniture store, a "Five to Twenty-five Cent Store," a cafe, a tailor, as well as offices for various professionals (Withers, 1922). Also on the square were the lodges for three fraternal organizations, the post office, and the printing press for the newspaper. These businesses do not represent much change from those found on the square in the 1880s. Most industrial enterprises were still located near the railroad, just to the south of the square. However, one "light" manufacturing plant was situated on the second floor of two buildings on the north side of the square (Sanborn Map, 1924). The Mother Goose Toy Shop in 1922 employed fifteen women, and made fabric "cuddle" toys, Mother Goose character dolls, and animal souvenirs for conventions. These toys were sent around the world (Withers, 1922).

The most visible change in the physical appearance in the square in the first decades of the twentieth century occurred when two new bank structures were constructed on Kansas Street, and a third bank "modernized" their

[30] Jackson, *Heritage of Liberty*, pp. 53-54

original building. In 1914, a new group of commercial buildings was built on the southeast corner of East Kansas and Water streets, on the former site of the Author House, and had a bank as the anchor building on the corner (Sanborn Map, 1924). During 1915, the Commercial Bank completely remodeled its building at the southwest corner of East Kansas and Water streets ("The First 100 Years," 1967). In 1923-1924, the First National Bank constructed a new building on the southwest corner of West Kansas and Main streets, and vacated their former building on North Main Street. At this point in time, then, all four corners of the square were occupied by bank buildings, or at least, buildings that at one point had contained a bank.

On the square itself, the only construction activity after 1929 occurred with the "modernization" of the existing structures or the replacement of buildings lost to fires. Interestingly, although the Depression brought a virtual halt to construction in Liberty (which wasn't truly revived until after World War II), the only building permits issued during the height of the Depression was for plate glass storefronts on some commercial structures around the square (Building Permits). Business was steady enough that entrepreneurs were willing to expend money to update the appearance of their store. Another reason given for the number of storefront alterations at this time was the construction of the new county courthouse. Merchants felt it necessary to modernize their storefronts "in order to have the four sides of the square conform as nearly as possible to the new building." (Piland, 1985).

Since all of the lots facing the county courthouse already contained a building, new commercial construction during the 1920s took place on the streets leading away from the square. From 1920 to 1929, twenty-one buildings were constructed around the central courthouse square, and the majority of these were just "off" the square (Piland, 1985). Some of this new construction involved examples of the Civic Buildings property type. These differentiated from Two-part Commercial Blocks in their function, which in turn was reflected in the design of the buildings. First and foremost, as a reflection of their importance to the community, Civic Buildings were freestanding, and set within an open space. Two-part Commercial Blocks, on the other hand, abutted the street and occupied the entire lot upon which they were set. The surrounding open space gave the Civic Buildings an importance that was not accorded to single 'commercial structures, and reflected their standing in the community. In accordance with Liberty's size, however, only few of these structures were constructed. The most significant of these, however, was also the largest single construction project in the city of the period.

Prior to 1934, there had long been a recognition of the need for a new county courthouse. Finally, in the spring of 1934, bonds were voted for the construction of a new courthouse, with the federal Public Works Administration providing additional funds. The total cost of the structure was $275,000.00, and its design reflects the prevailing Art Deco/Moderne

Clay County completed its new courthouse facilities in 1985 (left); the City of Liberty dedicated its City Hall with its dramatic atrium in 1982 (right). Despite differing in design, both are considered part of the general Postmodern architectural style that grew from the 1960s to roughly 2000. (Photo at right retrieved from https://mapio.net/pic/p-77020177/)

styles. The cornerstone was laid in 1935, with Senator Harry S. Truman taking part in the ceremony by the Masonic Grand Lodge of Missouri (Jackson, 1976). Today, the Clay County Courthouse serves as the prime example of a Civic Building property type in Liberty.

Other new commercial construction on and around the square occurred over the years, however, in response to disasters, primarily major fires. On August 10, 1934, a fire started in an old mule barn on "Jockey Row" between Mill and Kansas, and quickly spread until almost that entire block was destroyed (Sun Special Edition, 1991). The fire was especially disastrous, as Liberty's fire station was next door to the barn. It, too, was damaged, and consequently delayed the city's response to the fire. Substantial damage was also done to other buildings along Kansas Street, and to the Plaza Theatre located on Water Street, just south of Kansas.

Liberty's courthouse square has continued to play a key role in commerce, government, and social activities in town through the present date. A need for expansion of Clay County government offices in the 1980s led to a recommitment to the courthouse square, with new facilities constructed on the southeast corner of East Kansas and Water streets. In this same decade, the City of Liberty constructed a new City Hall on this block as well. These public buildings exhibit their own sense of place and time, and with the passage of the fifty-year cutoff, should be added to Liberty's inventory and assessed for their significance, possibly to be nominated to the National Register.

The Courthouse Square's Architecture

From the initial offering of lots around the square, the popularity of the location was evidenced by the quick sale of lots. Such valuable land could not be wasted on residences or even shop-houses, and strictly commercial buildings were soon built. These early buildings looked similar to residences, but were taller, more uniform, and had more practical facades.

As the century approached the Civil War, commercial buildings recognized by architectural scholars as Two-part Commercial Block buildings began to emerge. In Liberty these were constructed as early as 1868. Prior to this, the

Buildings around Liberty's Courthouse Square exhibit classic Two-Part Commercial Block styling with a clear division between the first floor and the upper story and large windows serving the first-floor retail space.

earliest commercial buildings actually were a combination of residential and commercial uses, housed within a single log building. There were few features to distinguish the special functions of the building. The rapid growth of commerce in Liberty led to alterations of existing shop-house buildings, and eventually, to their supplantation by more substantial structures on the four streets that faced the courthouse square. However, these replacement buildings still often combined residential with commercial quarters.

As happened across most of the country, Two-Part Commercial Block buildings eventually dominated the streets in Liberty immediately bordering the central courthouse square. A visual distinction could be seen between the commercial district in Liberty and the nearby residential areas.

As the Victorian period of residential architecture brought about many changes (discussed below), so did this period of commercial architecture change the visual components of the street facades.

The styles of commercial architecture in this period were diffused from larger urban examples to the smaller towns, much as pattern books spread residential styles. In spite of Liberty having its own distinct flavor, certain uniform characteristics were common to many commercial buildings across America. Generally, people wanted their places of business to look urbane and therefore successful. This desire gave rise to the development of national commercial styles. The extent to which Liberty's commercial buildings reflected these urbane styles depended upon the town's available economic resources and aspirations, as well as upon its level of sophistication.

Historically, Two-Part Commercial Blocks were the most common property type (based on facade arrangement) for small and moderate sized commercial buildings throughout the country (Longstreth, 1987). They were prevalent from the 1850s to the 1950s across America, but in Liberty, were constructed

primarily after the Civil War to the turn of the century. Extant examples of this property type, which still retain their historic integrity, can be found on Liberty's central courthouse square dating from 1868 through 1923, although later examples exist as well.

In Liberty, Two-Part Commercial Blocks are two stories in height, sometimes with an exposed basement level on corner lots where the street drops in elevation. The prime defining characteristic is a horizontal division of the facade into two distinct zones (Longstreth, 1987). The lower zone, at the first story, indicates public use, such as a retail store or bank. The upper zone suggests more private spaces, which in Liberty were generally offices, rooms for let, or meeting halls. The first and second story zones may either be similar in architectural treatment, or different in character, but still reflect the differences in use.

The general public's overall enthusiasm for decoration at this time is especially reflected on these commercial buildings, which were viewed as ornaments to the community. Like residential decorations of the time, this was due in part to technological advances and mass manufacturing. Another development in technology was the casting of iron. Entire storefronts were sometimes constructed of cast iron, as this was thought to be fire-proof.

In spite of these new construction techniques, which also allowed for the flat roofs, the upper stories of Liberty's buildings remained constructed of masonry. Although the buildings generally remained two stories tall, they were increased in scale. The proportions were taller and more slender, and the facade elements themselves, such as windows, were larger. Most commercial buildings constructed after the 1870s have flat, rather than gable roofs. The cornice is accentuated and more ornate, serving as an elaborate terminus to the building. A larger portion of the wall surface was covered with decorative patterns of brick, wood, stone, cast iron, terra cotta, etc. New technological advances allowed for mass manufacturing of ornamentation, flat roofs, larger panes of glass, and the casting of iron.

Retail stores, in particular, utilized the new technology of glass manufacturing. Large windows were the perfect means by which to display merchandise. Often, the entire storefront was of glass, divided only by window frames and cast-iron columns supporting the wall above. The availability of light was greatly decreased because these buildings were usually part of a row of connecting buildings and thus had no side windows. Building owners compensated for this lack of light with not only the large display windows, but with transom lights above these. The first-story, storefront section was then usually topped by its own cornice, further delineating the first story from the second. A few buildings accentuated the division between the two floors with a brick or stone stringcourse.

The second-story windows were tall and narrow, and more closely resembled those of residential buildings in that they were usually double-hung, rather

than fixed panes of glass. As was also common with residential architecture during the Victorian era in America, a variety of fenestration openings were utilized in order to provide visual interest. Windows were frequently embellished by decorative surrounds (sometimes arched with keystones) or caps.

The first and second story of one building usually featured slightly different forms of architectural treatment, to further emphasize the distinction between the two zones of the facade. However, the design of banks was generally distinguished by having a greater consistency in the treatment of all the stories (Longstreth, 1987). Fraternal halls, or buildings with meeting halls and theaters above, were sometimes taller than the norm. Usually, though, retail shops were included as part of fraternal hall buildings in order to generate additional revenue, and therefore differed little in overall visual appearance from their commercial neighbors, save for an embellished entry or sign (Longstreth, 1987).

The arrangement of the facades, including both the distinction between the first and second story, and the distinction between commercial and residential structures, was born out of practical considerations. Entrepreneurs, in Liberty as well as other towns across the country, wanted their building to serve as an "advertisement" for their business. Strangers to the town should be able to recognize the structure as a commercial structure, simply based on the building type and the arrangement of its facade. An accentuated entry door, transom lights above to allow for light. Thus, not only are Two-Part Commercial Blocks representative of the changes in commerce on Liberty's square, but also of a property type that came to dominate small town commercial landscapes for nearly a century (Longstreth, 1987).

Individual buildings generally received a high degree of ornamentation and design, showing the citizen's awareness of current architectural styles. The earliest of these more sophisticated property types is the Italianate commercial. This was quickly followed by two highly decorative types, the Romanesque commercial and the Queen Anne commercial styles. At the same time, some commercial buildings were very eclectic in nature, and others were more modest in their ornamentation.

Although the buildings around the square had many design elements in common that lent them a unified, collective image, they still exhibited some degree of individuality. This was due to the fact that the buildings were becoming increasingly specialized in their function. Banks, theaters, hotels, and retail structures began to develop their own type of commercial architecture in this period.

For example, retail structures featured large plate glass windows (another technological development) to better show off their wares. Hotels had regularly spaced windows that reflected their interior room configurations.

The three buildings in the National Register's West Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District on N. Main were constructed between 1877 and 1885. The nomination states that they "contain numerous features common to the Italianate style of commercial architecture. All three buildings are of identical height, and have a projecting and heavily emphasized roof line, which contains the majority of architectural detailing on the buildings. Other design features common to all three buildings are arched window openings on the second story, a clearly defined "cornice" between the first and second story, and a distinct storefront area." (Google image capture May 2018)

In addition, highly decorative appearances, previously reserved for only the most costly buildings, were now available with mass-manufactured ornamentation. It was necessary for facades to become advertisements for the type and quality of business conducted within due to the large number of enterprises competing on the square.

Many of Liberty's Victorian commercial buildings reflect several stylistic trends. Some are elaborate, such as 12 N. Main, which features a heavy bracketed cornice of the Italianate type coupled with the highly textured surface reminiscent of the Queen Anne style. Others, such as the building at 24-30 S. Main, are simpler vernacular expressions of higher style commercial structures. In general, Victorian commercial buildings in Liberty are built in brick and have double-hung windows with at least a minimal form of decorative treatment. With seven such buildings remaining in Liberty, this type comprises a large portion of the downtown fabric. They were constructed from the time of Liberty's real estate boom to the turn of the

century. This type has received a greater loss of integrity than the other historic property types from this context.

The Italianate movement in general influenced only in domestic (discussed earlier) and commercial architecture. It emerged as one of the dominant commercial styles in America from about 1845 to 1875, and received many varying and vernacular applications. In Liberty, the survey revealed seven Italianate commercial buildings on the square with varying degrees of integrity. Most are missing their original storefronts, but some have their ground floor bays and transom windows intact, such as 11 E. Kansas. Nearly all have deep, elaborate cornices (some made of metal) with brackets; 2 E. Franklin has no brackets, but instead has a corbelled masonry cornice. All feature decorative window treatments – some have arched openings with a stone keystone set within a masonry opening, and some have wood pedimented crowns with arched undersides.

5 East Kansas is an excellent representative of the Romanesque/ Commercial style, and is considered virtually intact. (Google image capture May 2018)

The Romanesque Revival style began in the 1840s, and featured the revival of the medieval round arch, as opposed to the pointed Gothic arch. Generally, heavy emphasis is given to the structural elements of this style. H. H. Richardson, one of the greatest American-born architects, developed his own style called "Richardsonian Romanesque," which even further emphasized the structure and the massiveness of the materials (most frequently stone). From about the time of his death in 1886 until the turn of the century, versions of this style once again became popular. The rounded arches are what distinguish the buildings as Romanesque commercial. The arches rest on wide pilasters that divide the facade into vertical bays. Romanesque designs traditionally emphasize the structural elements: columns, lintels, pilaster, and arches, which are usually wide and heavy, creating an impression of weight and massiveness. There are three Romanesque/ Commercial buildings in downtown Liberty. An excellent representative of the style, virtually intact, is 5 E. Kansas.

The Queen Anne commercial style gained popularity later in the Victorian era, from about 1880 to 1900. This style saw a great increase in ornamentation due to the ready availability and relatively inexpensive cost of features. In Liberty, this style also coincided with the real estate and

construction booms. One of the most distinguishing features of the Queen Anne is its irregular roofline. In addition, a variety of other design elements and materials were used. Wood, stone, masonry, and metal were all combined on a single building. There is usually a playful treatment of surface textures through the use of raised and recessed panels. Windows are also decorative elements in the design of Queen Anne buildings; the Clay County Historical Museum shows the varying sizes and treatment of the windows in the style. The windows are tied together by a linear band of stone that follows the curvature of the window heads. A cast metal oriel window is featured on the second story of 1 E. Kansas. (Historic photographs of this building indicate the presence of an elaborate, pedimented cornice, now missing.) There are three extant examples of this style in Liberty – two were originally drugstores, and the other served as a dry goods store on the first floor and as the Knights of Pythias Lodge on the second. As there were several drugstores and dry goods establishments competing for business on the square, these buildings served as vivid advertisements. The entrepreneurs who constructed these lavish structures were making a statement to their clientele about their level of success.

Also after the turn of the twentieth century, the One-Part Commercial Block became more common. This building type has only a single story topped with a flat roof. The store or shop front is treated in much the same way as storefronts of two-story commercial buildings. The buildings are generally constructed of brick and are quite modest. While composed in an orderly manner, most examples from this period in Liberty have few if any historical references. The configuration of the building only allowed for a little embellishment near the roofline – sometimes raised horizontal bands of brick capped off the building at the cornice line. There were eleven one-part commercial block structures built in and around Liberty's square in this period. (For one example, see p. 28.)

Most new commercial buildings (garages included) were quite modest One-part Commercial Block types. A few were Two-part Commercial Block types. Both of these property types are determined by their form and their minimal amounts of detailing.

Liberty's very modest commercial growth in this period could be due to a number of factors:

- The town appears to have made a conscious effort to emphasize service and residential growth over trade;
- Transportation links were strong enough to ensure the town's continued existence, but not strong enough to warrant explosive growth;
- Kansas City's dominance precluded the need for large, regional type of commercial enterprises; and
- Liberty's conservative banking community may have clamped down on the money supply after the real estate crash in the late 1890s.

The two-part commercial block varies from two to four stories in height. The structures have a horizontal division dividing the buildings into two distinct zones (in the case of two-story structures, dividing between the two floors). There are three two-part commercial block buildings with two stories. These are flat-roofed, and like the one-story commercial blocks, feature a little embellishment at the cornice line. The Colonial Hotel at 112 East Franklin is the only one taller than two stories, and it has several strong stylistic ties to the Prairie style, with its wide, overhanging roof eaves and square porch supports.

A cast metal oriel window is featured on the second story of 1 E. Kansas, an element often found in the Queen Anne style as applied to commercial buildings.

Civic Buildings

After the turn of the century, Liberty settled into its role of a high-quality residential community that provided services and amenities to its residents. As such, the citizens desired civic and public buildings that represented the high ideals of the community. A few of these buildings were constructed on or around the courthouse square in Liberty.

As the county seat, Liberty provided services not only to the residents of the community, but to a greater number of citizens of the county. Although travel to Kansas City was greatly facilitated after the turn of the century, the vast majority of needs of local residents were met within the city limits of Liberty. Civic Buildings played an important role in the day-to-day lives of Liberty citizens. A few large impressive commercial and/or public structures were built in the early decades of the twentieth century, utilizing the Neoclassical/Commercial or Art Deco mode. Some were the result of city bond issues and public works funds, such as the Clay County Courthouse, while others were the result of philanthropic donations, such as the Frank Hughes Memorial Library. These two examples of this property type were constructed in the mid to late 1930s; others were constructed in the first decades after the turn of the century.

As opposed to Two-part Commercial Block buildings, which filled the entire lot and abutted the street, Civic Buildings were designed as freestanding objects. Their importance to the community was demarcated by the surrounding open space (Longstreth, 1987). Civic and public structures ranged in height from one to three stories. As they were usually meant to represent lasting qualities of the community, the exterior wall cladding was usually brick or stone, giving an appearance of permanence. The Clay County

The Art Deco-style commercial building built by the I.O.O.F. Liberty Lodge #49 at 16-18 E. Franklin on the Square. Retail spaces were included to provide income to the lodge for maintenance of the entire structure.

Courthouse, in particular, visually dominates the entire square through not only its size, but its choice of material and design.

When applied to commercial and public buildings, this style took on an especially monumental scale. Due to their commercial nature and site locations abutting the street, the Neoclassical commercial buildings do not feature a full height porch. Rather, a flattened pediment, pilasters, or engaged columns are used to express the monumentality of the style in the entry. There were three Neoclassical structures built in this period. One, 17 East Kansas, was actually a facade renovation for the Commercial Savings Bank. It features simpler, austere detailing reminiscent of Renaissance Revival architecture. (See photo, p. 51, building at far left.)

In 1934, amidst the fervor of new governmental public construction inspired by the Public Works Administration, bonds were voted for the construction of a new courthouse for Clay County (pictured on p. 103). It would be the third to occupy the site, with the first destroyed in 1857 by fire, and the second becoming outdated. (This courthouse replacement did not proceed without controversy; the fight birthed the first of Liberty's historical groups, as described in Chapter 6, re the Clay County Museum & Historical Society.) Prominent Kansas City architects Wight & Wight designed the 1935 courthouse in a "modern" style, now referred to as Art Deco. The style conspicuously strove for modernity, simplicity, and an artistic expression of the machine age. This can be seen in the smooth limestone facade and minimal, stylized ornamentation. One other civic structure, the I.O.O.F. Liberty Lodge #49 at 16-18 E. Franklin (pictured on p. 58), was also designed in this style, though not on such a monumental public scale.

Churches

Religion was an important facet of community life and churches were highly visible symbols, especially in this era of stressing the quality of life found in Liberty. Not all churches have been surveyed within the city limits of Liberty, and a historic context statement has yet to be developed for this topic. The Second Baptist Church at 309 E. Franklin was built in the Neoclassical style. The Liberty Christian Church (427 E. Kansas) and the Old St. James Church (342 N. Water) are elaborate examples of the Victorian Gothic Revival, also called High Victorian Gothic by some historians. Features can include a bi- or polychromatic color scheme; combination of brick and stone work; solid details, such as moldings, tracery, and carved ornaments; often complex rooflines and towers; and pointed Gothic arched windows.

2.5. Residential Growth in Liberty, 1866-1896

Prior to the boom, only a few new additions and subdivisions had been platted in Liberty. Michael Arthur's 1st and 2nd Additions were among the earlier, with the 2nd Addition of 1870 laying out Arthur Street from S. Leonard east to Jewell. Lightburne's 1st Addition of 1883 divided up some of the large farm of Major Alvan and Ellen Lightburne along Water, Missouri, and Leonard streets. These are typical examples of how the city grew in this period and how lots were made available to the general public. The large land owners would decide to sell off some of their acreage, and as it was easier to sell land within the city limits, they would apply to have their parcels added to the city.

During the boom, there was a flurry of activity in additions to the town's area plus and subdivision platting ("subdivision" being the re-platting of previously platted land within the city boundaries). North and east of the square, Brown's M.B. Subdivision (1887), Allen & Burns Addition (1887), and Jewell Addition (1898) were platted. In the neighborhoods west of the square, Corbin & Hughes (1890), Dougherty Place (1890), and Prospect

Heights (1889) were laid out. Along S. Leonard, Ford Place (1891), Lincoln Place (1889), and Groom's Addition (1889) divided the land west of the road.

The trend in Liberty appears to have been towards small developers. All the platted areas were quite small, usually only a block or two. It is possible that the frequency and cost of land transactions prevented any one person from acquiring large tracts of land. Thus the owners of the larger, close-in estates were in the best position to profit from Liberty's growth, and many small lots were laid out among the large, earlier homes.

The construction industry followed the developers' lead with enthusiasm. In 1887, approximately seventy new residences were constructed at an average cost of $1,000 each. A similar number were constructed the following year at an average cost of $1,500. In 1889 the average cost had risen to $2,000, and approximately eighty new homes were built in Liberty.[31] Most new houses were built on vacant lots of the "Original Town" plat, or on the newly platted parcels of land purchased from the large estate owners.

Liberty's Vernacular Residential Architecture

The building traditions of the Southern settlers were not always associated with high stylistic delineations of property types. Vernacular traditions of early ethnic architectural forms continued well past the Civil War. The most prevalent of these is the I-house. The I-house is distinguished by its plan and form: side-facing gables, one-room depth, at least two-room width, and two full stories in height. The form was modified in Liberty to conform to Southern tastes and represent the affluent local gentry. Even the larger I-house "mansions" were often not textbook examples of the style. Rather, they were comfortable adaptations made for the rural lifestyle on the western edge of civilization. Across the Missouri border was Indian territory and the rough world of Fort Leavenworth. Back in Liberty, however, even townspeople of modest means could aspire to a civilized home reflecting the classical ideals of architecture and thus the hopes of a new democracy.

The I-house is a traditional British folk form introduced into North America in Colonial times. It possibly had the widest distribution of any folk house in America, and was particularly popular in the South and Midwest. In Liberty, and throughout most of Missouri, the I-house was the favored building type of the transplanted Southerners. It was constructed up to the beginning of the twentieth century. So persistent was the I-house form throughout the nineteenth century that it can be found with a variety of stylistic features. Many of the aforementioned Greek Revival property types have the basic I-house form. (Lightburne Hall, pictured on p. 23, is a Greek Revival-styled I-house.) Some later I-houses were constructed in the later Italianate style, discussed below.

[31] Wolfenbarger, "Summary Report," p. 25.

There were other diverse forms of vernacular, or folk architecture that were constructed before, during, and even after the boom. The coming of the railroads signaled an end to the rough, pioneer folk types built during homesteading periods. Log houses (and in other parts of the country, sod and timber frame) were abandoned for wooden dwellings constructed with balloon framing and covered by wood sheathing. Lumber from sawmills and other materials could be moved rapidly and cheaply over long distances.

Liberty contains examples of virtually every type of late nineteenth century vernacular housing. High-style homes were constructed in this period as well, but of the extant resources in Liberty, the vernacular type predominates. The great variety of vernacular building forms in Liberty are further distinguished by the use of applied architectural ornament. With the advent of the industrial age, architectural ornamentation could be mass produced and shipped inexpensively by rail. Owners of modest means could thus personalize a common building type and differentiate their home from those of their neighbors.

As railroads spread across America in the decades from 1850 to 1890, the nature of folk housing changed dramatically. Modest dwellings were no longer restricted to local materials. Instead, houses were built of lumber from sawmills in a balloon frame and sheathed with clapboards. The advent of balloon framing affected not only the basic floor plan but the types of roofs that could be constructed. As a result, residences no longer reflected regional or ethnic building trends, but nationwide trends in domestic architecture instead.

Large lumberyards became standard fixtures in towns along the rail lines. In Liberty, this began in the 1870s, after the railroad and lumberyards became important fixtures in the community. In 1883, Liberty had at least two lumberyards, the Wilmot Lumber Co., which averaged 300,000 board feet, and P. B. Burn's Lumberyard, which averaged 150,000 board feet. Wood and mill work was also stored at the Columbus Buggy Co. at the corner of S. Leonard and E. Kansas Streets. The S. H. Brown Saw Mill was located 500 feet south of the school house.

403 N. Prairie, identified in the 1995 survey of African American historic resources as an I-house built circa 1890, demonstrates that the I-house form can be found in all sizes as well as multiple eras of the nineteenth century. The "I" is from an early cultural geographer's recognition that states beginning with an "I" – Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa – have many such structures, although they were common also in southern and Mid-Atlantic states. The shape of the building is actually often an L formed by a wing on the rear of the structure. (Google image capture September 2012, top and middle; and 2020, bottom)

This easy accessibility led to changes in the building materials and construction techniques of folk dwellings. Some previous folk shapes, such as the I-house, persisted, others were modified, and new shapes were constructed. In Liberty, in addition to the I-house, five other folk house forms were discovered, some with greater frequency than others. However, they all tell much the same story of the influence of the railroad to spread housing types and to move building materials cheaply. All of the subtypes are defined by their plan, form, and roof shape. The most simple houses rarely had any form of decoration, and were usually built by the working class for modest sums. These include:

230 N. Missouri (1890)

452 N. Water (Google September 2012)

438 N. Missouri (1890)

- The Hall-and-parlor, a simple side-gabled traditional British folk form popular since Colonial times, two rooms wide and one room deep. In the pre-railroad Tidewater South, it was executed in a variety of materials (timber frame, hewn log, and brick) and in several variations based on chimney placement, addition of central hall, and rear extensions. After the railroad, the hall-and-parlor type became widely distributed.

- Double pen houses persisted as a popular vernacular housing type even when balloon frame lumber construction was employed. Double pens were originally formed in this country by adding another "pen" to a single pen log cabin. Double pen houses are thus two rooms wide and one room deep, with each of the rooms having a front door. Virtually all have side gable roofs, and, in Liberty, all are one story in height. Most of the extant double pens are located in the area north of the Square.

- The Gable-front, first used during the Greek Revival period of American architecture, where the front facing gable echoed the pediment of Greek temples. Again, the railroad expanded the use of this house form after 1860, and it persisted into the twentieth century. It was particularly suited for narrow urban lots in rapidly expanding cities. There are a few remaining small "shotgun" houses in Liberty, a version of this form. Other gable-front houses in Liberty are at least two rooms wide and vary from one to two stories in height.

- The Pyramidal, illustrating square plans that are typically built with pyramidal roofs. One-story pyramidals were common in the South, but were less commonly constructed in Liberty. Pyramidal homes are distinguished by the pyramidal hipped roofs that covered a square floor plan. Although slightly more complex in their roof framing, they required fewer long rafters and were less expensive to build. One-story examples are more typically found in southern states and are true folk forms. Two-story houses with pyramidal roofs are called four-squares; built after the turn of the century, these are quite common in Liberty. Nearly all have Prairie style detailing, and are classified with that property type.

409 E. Franklin

- The Gable-front-and-wing (also referred to as "gabled ells") is believed to have also descended from styled Greek Revival houses. Whereas the gable-front was more common in urban neighborhoods, the gable-front-and-wing prevailed in rural areas. In this form type, a side-gabled wing was added at right angles to the gable-front section, forming an L-shaped plan. Or, simple hall-and-parlor and I-houses had front gabled wings added. In Liberty's historic neighborhoods, most were simple folk houses where the wings were generally the result of additions over the years. Also classified within this category are Liberty variants that have identical L-shaped floor plans but with hip roofs rather than gable over the two main blocks. Two-story gable-front-and-wing houses are common in the Midwest, one-story more so in the South. As the gable-front-and-wing is the most common vernacular property type in Liberty, there are both one- and two-story examples.

116 N. Missouri (1880)

402 N. Leonard

Variations of these forms are found through the porch sizes and roof shapes, differing chimney placements, and various patterns of additions that were necessary to accommodate the small buildings for modern living. For those who could afford them, Victorian era details, such as turned porch spindle posts, friezes, and carved brackets were applied to vernacular residences.[32]

[32] As defined in Virginia & Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), pp. 88-101.

Shadowlawn at 704 N. Nash had the ideal rural setting for a Gothic Revival home. It is sited on a prominent ridge on the major road leading north out of town, and was undoubtedly noticed and admired by Liberty residents.

Liberty's High-style Residential Architecture

Liberty's cultural amenities and interests affected the housing choices of the residents and newcomers. Encouraged by the cultivated atmosphere, businessmen and educators from William Jewell College began to construct homes that reflected their growing prosperity and position in society. Pattern books by Andrew Jackson Downing were quite popular at the time, and began to influence residential architectural styles everywhere. These styles were generally romantic, and began as a reaction against the prevailing Greek Revival style.

One of these, the Gothic Revival style, came to this country from England. However, it never achieved widespread popularity, perhaps because of its association with England, still not favored in the new democracy. As a property type in Liberty, it was never built in great numbers.

A modest, vernacular example of the Gothic Revival style, often called "Carpenter Gothic," is located at 139 Morse.

The residences of the more prominent citizens of Liberty in the late nineteenth century tended to be either Italianate or Queen Anne houses, usually two stories in height.

Gothic Revival

Andrew Jackson Downing's influential book, *The Architecture of Country Houses*, was primarily responsible for the popularity of the Gothic Revival style in America from 1840 to 1870. Buildings in this style are most abundant in the northeastern states. As the style reached its zenith after the Civil War, states experiencing war debts and reconstruction, such as Missouri, did not grow in the period when Gothic Revival houses were built.

This Gothic Revival home at 214 E. Mississippi was built in 1859, when the style was newly fashionable. It features three steeply pitched front gables, narrow, pointed Gothic windows, and dramatic pointed finials at the top of the gables in the front of the house.

Nationwide, although never as popular as the Greek Revival and Italianate styles, Gothic Revival was influential for several reasons. Gothic Revival homes were often the first buildings in an area to use the balloon framing construction technique. It was also important for breaking associations with classical architecture. It was the predecessor for the later romantic picturesque styles, such as the Italianate and the Queen Anne.

The Gothic Revival style was never widely constructed in Liberty – the survey found only four – but the few houses associated with it were probably influential models for the later romantic styles. Shadowlawn at 704 N. Nash had the ideal setting for a Gothic Revival home (pictured, p. 64). The writings of both A.J. Downing and Alexander Jackson Davis promoted the suitability of the style for rural settings, stressing its compatibility with the natural landscape. Shadowlawn was sited on a prominent ridge on the major road leading north out of town, and was undoubtedly noticed and admired by Liberty residents. Manheim Goldman, twice mayor of Liberty and a store owner, must have been one resident who noticed, for he constructed his town home in the same style. His house at 214 E. Mississippi features three steeply pitched front gables, narrow, pointed Gothic windows, and finials in the gable ends (pictured). A modest, vernacular example of the style, often called "Carpenter Gothic" is 139 Morse (pictured on p. 64). It is possible that there were more vernacular examples of Carpenter Gothic in Liberty. The detailing that distinguishes these houses from a vernacular house type (gable end bargeboards, jigsawn porches) is usually the first to go in a remodeling. Lacking that detailing, a Carpenter Gothic house becomes just a vernacular house type.

106 Groom Street ("The Heart House," 1881) displays the Italianate style's classic double brackets beneath the cornice. The front two rooms are octagonal, a rare form seen in the Italianate style, more often found applied to entire houses and barns.

Italianate

Another picturesque style, the Italianate, was more influential in Liberty than Gothic Revival. Like Gothic

400 W. Kansas (1880) displays a comparatively restrained Italianate style.

Revival, the Italianate style also began in England as a protest against the prevailing era of classicism, and was adapted in America with varying degrees of authenticity.

As with the Gothic Revival style, the Italianate style was never widely built in the South due to the Civil War and Reconstruction. The number of Italianate houses in Liberty is not great, but is large enough to signal the start of a new era. The cultural ties to the South were beginning to weaken, and the ethnic character of architecture became diluted as pattern book inspired houses began to dominate. This process of converging into homogenous national styles was gradual.

Italianate residences are typically distinguished by their low-pitched roofs, overhanging eaves with decorative brackets, tall narrow windows with elaborate or molded crowns, and accentuated entry doors. Vernacular housing traditions remained strong as the I-house continued to be used as a backdrop for stylistic applications. In the Italianate, the I-house was modified with a centered front gable, paired brackets under wide, overhanging eaves, and tall, narrow windows, often with crown moldings. A representative is the Arthur House at 316 E. Franklin (pictured, below). As this was the home of Michael Arthur, a local slave dealer, it serves as a symbol of the transition between the cultural traditions of the South and the desire to be part of the national mainstream in architecture.

The Arthur House at 316 E. Franklin (1859) once occupied by local slave dealer Michael Arthur, is considered an early representative of the Italianate style.

Liberty's survey found twelve examples of the Italianate style within the survey boundaries. Many have important historical associations with prominent Liberty citizens, and others are good representatives of the property type.

Queen Anne

More commonly found in Liberty are Queen Anne style residences, both large and small in scale and constructed of either frame or brick. These are distinguished by their irregular massing, multiple rooflines, and a variety of other architectural features that were used to avoid a smooth-walled surface: varied wall coverings, projecting bays, and applied decorations.

409 N. Leonard (1885)

306 Doniphan (1895)

Most houses built during the height of the boom were in the Queen Anne style. Some were vernacular adaptations of the style, typical of many small cottages built in Liberty. High-style Queen Anne residences, like the Raymond House at 232 W. Kansas (pictured on p. 4), feature elaborate porch spindlework, varied surface textures, and irregular roof lines typical to the style. These houses reflect the changes that were occurring in architecture across the country. Rather than regional or ethnic forms of architecture, most of the country was dominated by such pattern-book inspired construction as the Queen Anne style. Liberty moved into the American mainstream of national architectural styles during its own period of booming growth. Most Liberty Queen Anne structures, however, were influenced by pattern books and architectural magazines that were promoting interpretations more indigenous to America.

The Queen Anne style was popular for only two decades, from about 1880 to the turn of the century. However, it was the dominant style at a time of rapid growth across America and in Liberty, and was therefore built in great numbers. It came at a time of many technological advances in the housing and construction industry, and was thus "modern." At the same time, it represented a renewed interest in picturesque qualities, and conjured up a period of the past that was just distant enough to seem rosy after the financial panic of 1873. Yet while being nostalgic, it also encouraged the disestablishment of all previous standards of design.

402 W. Franklin (1890)

Structurally, the Queen Anne houses were much different from their predecessors. Nearly all used the balloon framing construction technique introduced by the Gothic Revival houses. Gone were the simple rectangular boxes of earlier days. The shape of the house was now deter-

414 N. Missouri (1890)

431 N. Leonard (1885)

mined by the internal layout of rooms. The inner structure reflected the outer shape, and that inner structure was changing.

Now single-purpose rooms were designed, and kitchens were typically part of the house (rather than separate, as in earlier homes). Central heating was becoming more common, but indoor toilets were still considered a luxury in the 1880s. The first examples of the Queen Anne looked vaguely Gothic. This changed to become the highly exuberant "spindlework" version of the Queen Anne style. Characterized by delicate turned porch supports, balusters, and frieze, with decorative bargeboards and shingles in the gable end, the spindlework version was dominant during the 1880s.

There was certainly no shortage of trim work. Improvements in wood-working equipment, particularly in turning machinery, gave rise to factories producing ready-made gingerbread. Potential home builders could browse through catalogs and chose their ornamentation. As a result, many vernacular house types (i.e., those with simple plans, rather than the irregular high-style) were decorated without restraint.

In the 1890s, the "free classic" version of the Queen Anne style became widespread, thus called because of its free use of Greek and Roman decorative motifs. Dentils appeared under the cornice, Palladian windows were revived, and porch supports were inspired by classical columns. The free classic Queen Anne was actually transitional to the Colonial Revival style that was to follow, discussed below.

Information about a local builder who worked in this style has surfaced in research for Liberty's surveys of the 1980s. Elderly residents spoke of John Will Hall as being the "best around," using only high-quality materials inside and out. It is believed he was responsible for the designs of many of his buildings as well. Mr. Hall built all manner of residences, from the fanciful Queen Anne at 442 W. Franklin to the vernacular house at 507 W. Liberty Drive. Mr. Hall was well known in Liberty for reasons other than his quality construction. A Confederate veteran, he was responsible for raising the

Confederate flag over the Clay County Courthouse in 1862. When the American flag was raised over the courthouse in 1912 (for the first time since 1861), John Will Hall was asked to serve the honor.

102 N. Morse (1890; Google, May 2018)

During the Victorian period of architecture in America, a style closely related to the Queen Anne style, the Shingle style, was built. Only one example was identified during the survey, at 333 N. Water, although another heavily shingled Queen Anne is located at 102 N. Morse (pictured). It is possible that more were built in Liberty, but many older houses have lost their original wall cladding and have been covered by asbestos shingles or aluminum siding. Altered in this manner, a Shingle house would have the characteristics of a simple Queen Anne. The Shingle style has many of the same historical associations as the Queen Anne; for example, mass production of the shingles was also due to a technological innovation, the band saw.

In Liberty, Queen Anne residences were designed in three levels of intensity: large, elaborate two-story (typically called "high-style"); elaborate one-story cottages; and vernacular house types with Queen Anne detailing applied. The survey found thirty of each.

The Queen Anne house fits the stereotypical description of an "old house", complete with gingerbread. As an old, and therefore once considered an "outdated" style, Queen Anne residences in Liberty fell victim to the urge to remodel. With siding changes also came removal of decorative details, such as brackets and bargeboards, to make painting and other maintenance chores easier. In addition, Victorian porches were often removed and replaced with Craftsman or Prairie style porches in the 1910s and 1920s.

More Revivals

The feeling of optimism in America and belief in the superiority of Western technology was still high, yet all was not perfect. Corruption in city government and politics was rampant at this time. Also, the technological revolution had brought about more changes in the past few decades than had ever occurred in all of previous history. These rather frightening developments saw citizens turning back to America's glorious past (in this case, Colonial times) in an attempt to recreate stability, security, and graciousness. This nostalgia was a large reason for the increasing popularity

The Frank Hughes Memorial Library (1940), now housing the Clay County Archives and listed individually in the National Register, is formally considered a late Neoclassical design by architects Wight & Wight (the same designers of the Clay County Courthouse). Its elaborate colonial detailing such as the window headers with 'keystone' was encouraged by studies of colonial buildings featured in Williamsburg in the early twentieth century and expanded by the federal Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) that began in the 1930s.

of the revival styles, Neoclassical, Colonial Revival, and Tudor Revival. The examples of the Colonial and Tudor Revival styles in Liberty are generally modest, but are typical of those found in the region in the early twentieth century; Neoclassical buildings tend to be grander.

As with other revival periods in architecture, these property types represented visual metaphors of past cherished values. In the twenties however, these reminders of the past were placed within that most modern and particularly American development – the suburb.

Neoclassical

Neoclassical buildings were popular in Liberty, both for new construction and for alterations to existing buildings. Many earlier antebellum homes were updated with a massive, two-story Neoclassical entry porch in the early twentieth century. Indeed, the porch is one of the main identifying features of this style and one that sets the buildings apart as compared to Colonial Revival. (See Frank Hughes Memorial Library, built 1940, above.)

The World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893 was responsible for the revival of interest in classical architecture in America. Originally used on monumental public buildings, the style eventually filtered down to residences. In Liberty, these Neoclassical houses retained a degree of monumentality that sets them apart from others. In fact, the three Neoclassical houses surveyed no longer serve as residences – two are fraternity houses, and one serves as a branch of the library. A few commercial and ecclesiastical Neoclassical structures were also constructed in Liberty. (For examples pictured in this plan, see William Jewell College's President's House, p. 13; the Second Baptist Church, p. 59; and the former Liberty High School, p. 192.)

321 N. Lightburne (Google, March 2019)

300 E. Franklin

Colonial Revival

The first big promotion of architecture harking back to Colonial times occurred with the outburst of patriotism in America after the 1876 Centennial in Philadelphia. This was somewhat reinforced by the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. The nostalgia only went so far as to revere English or Anglo-Saxon heritage. It was felt by recreating Colonial English architecture, it might be possible to preserve the vanished world of the nation's founders.

After the turn of the century, the Colonial Revival style grew in popularity and the fashion shifted towards carefully researched copies with more correct proportions and details. This effort for faithful reproduction was further aided in the 1930s when the first drawings for the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) were produced through the employment of out-of-work architects during the Depression. Their exact measurements made authentic reproduction of features possible.

Colonial Revival houses in Liberty are simple as well, featuring symmetrical facades. Its identifying features include an accentuated front door, such as a decorative pediment or crown supported by pilasters or a pedimented portico serving as the entry porch. Windows are double-hung and multi-paned.

Different versions of the Colonial Revival style have remained popular from the turn of the century up to the present day. In the twenties and thirties, for example, a popular subtype was the Dutch Colonial house, which always featured a gambrel roof, such as 321 N. Lightburne (above). Another Colonial Revival form is commonly referred to as the Cape Cod cottage, featuring a steeply pitched, side-gabled roof, such as 132 N. Mississippi (p. 70). The symmetrical small houses typically have a simple, yet accentuated entry. Although looking to the past for exterior design features, the interior of these houses were thoroughly modern. There were fewer rooms, but the

132 N. Missouri

440 Miller

rooms were much larger and space flowed more freely. Often, especially in smaller houses, the dining room was replaced by a dining area at one end of an oversized living room. Of course, no Colonial Revival house was complete without the most modern utility systems incorporated.

Many Colonial Revival details were utilized on vernacular house types, such as the foursquare or gable-front-and-wing. In Liberty, a Colonial Revival foursquare at 300 E. Franklin features simple classical porch columns rather than the square supports of the Prairie foursquare (pictured, p. 72). The typical foursquare hipped roof is sometimes replaced with a front-facing gable roof.

Tudor Revival

As Americans became more enamored with their Anglo-Saxon heritage, as described above, late Medieval English prototypes became the basis for an eclectic style known as the Tudor style. This property type was relatively uncommon before World War I, but exploded in popularity during the 1920s and 1930s. Growing masonry veneering skills allowed even modest homes to mimic the elaborate English prototypes. There are twenty-two Tudor structures surveyed in Liberty.

155 S. Leonard (1908; Google, April 2017)

The examples of the Tudor Revival style in Liberty are generally modest, but are typical of those found in the larger Kansas City metropolitan area in the early twentieth century. Common identifying features are steeply pitched roofs, with at least one front-facing gable. Many have ornamental false half-timbering and stucco in the upper story. The windows are tall and narrow, often in bands of twos or threes, and are multi-paned, some with diamond-shaped lights.

The earliest American examples of this type are architect-designed and more closely follow Elizabethan and Jacobean examples. A group

441 N. Leonard

424 Wilson

of English architects led by Richard Norman Shaw borrowed heavily from Elizabethan and Jacobean models and designed imposing half-timbered and masonry structures. A group of buildings in Liberty was influenced by this melding of the Elizabethan and Jacobean styles, termed "Jacobethan." Liberty is fortunate to have three excellent examples of this type of Tudor design at the Missouri State Odd Fellows Home complex on Missouri Highway 291. The Administration Building was designed by William B. Ittner, a well-known St. Louis architect who built many fine examples of this style (pictured, p. 45). The large residence at 155 S. Leonard is an early residential example of Tudor Revival employing the symmetry of a foursquare (pictured, p. 73).

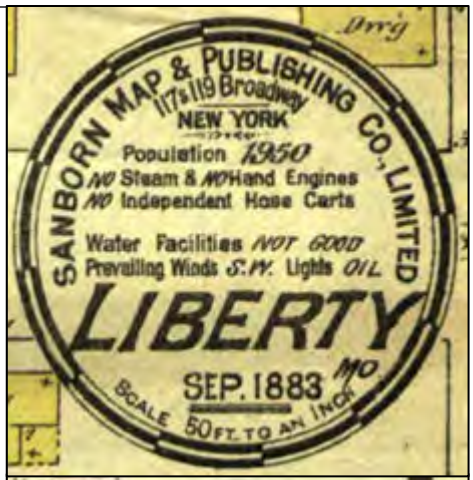
2.6. Suburban Residential Growth in Liberty, 1896-1941

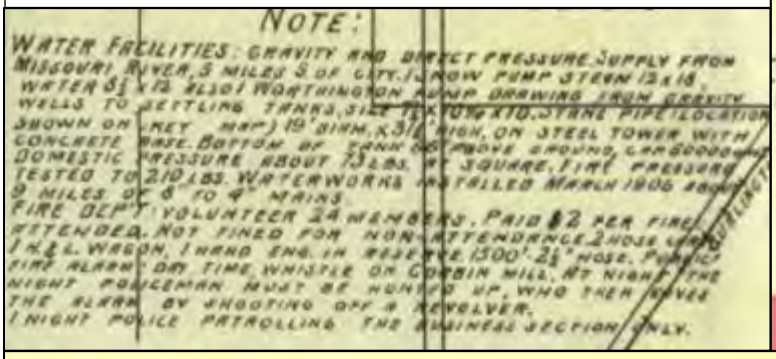
Liberty did not immediately become a suburban community. The rate of growth up through World War II was still slow and steady. Lots were still available in the close-in older neighborhoods surrounding the Courthouse Square. Where lots were not available, sometimes older houses were demolished, making way for newer residences. In general, though, the older houses were well maintained throughout their history, and these neighborhoods surrounding the Square never really fell out of favor. Due to Liberty's slow, stable economy, these neighborhoods surrounding the Square remain as excellent examples of the more gradual and relaxed pace of small town development and retain their integrity, thus representing an important aspect of the community's history. Because of this random building pattern, antebellum homes in Liberty are often adjacent to Craftsman bungalows, which in turn might be across the street from a Queen Anne cottage.

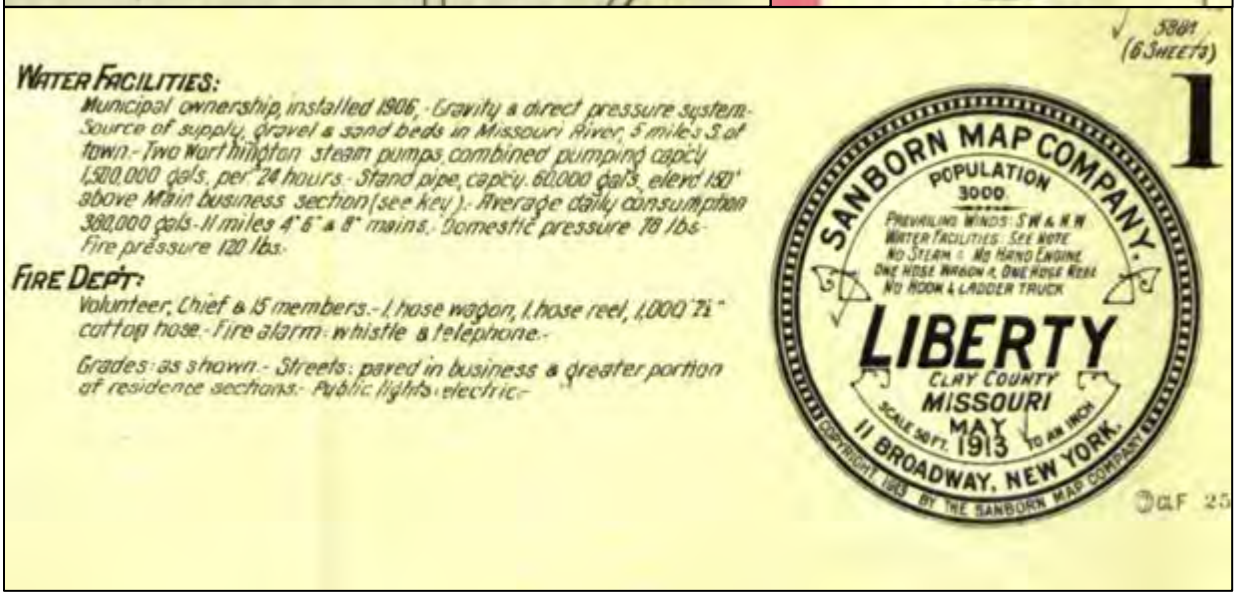
The Influences of Technology and Transportation

Technology and transportation were to play major roles in changing the face of Liberty's built environment in the 1900s. The beginnings of the technological revolution occurred a short while before the turn of the century. The Electric Light Company was formed in 1887. As with many

Sanborn maps provide a wealth of information about a community's development. Notes in each set shows that Liberty's population rose from 1,950 in 1883 to 3,000 in 1913. In 1906, Sanborn notes that water facilities have "gravity and direct pressure. Supply from Missouri River, 5 miles S. of city. ... Waterworks installed March 1906 about 9 miles of 8" to 4" mains." The fire department had 24 volunteers "paid $2 per fire attended. ... Public fire alarm day time, whistle on Corbin mill. At night the night policeman must be hunted up, who then gives the alarm by shooting off a revolver. 1 night police patrolling the business section only." By 1913, there were 11 miles of water mains and two steam pumps to move the water, streets were "paved in business & greater portion of residence sections," public lights were electric, and the fire alarm was "whistle & telephone." (Image pieced from several images drawn from the University of Missouri Libraries, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Collection; retrieved from https://dl.mospace.umsystem.edu/mu/islandora/object/mu%3A138690)




NOTE:
WATER FACILITIES: GRAVITY AND DIRECT PRESSURE. SUPPLY FROM MISSOURI RIVER, 5 MILES S. OF CITY. 1 DOW PUMP STEAM 12 x 18, WATER 8½ x 12, 1 1201 WORTHINGTON PUMP DRAWING FROM GRAVITY WELLS TO SETTLING TANKS, SIZE 75' x 100' x 10'. STAND PIPE LOCATION SHOWN ON KEY MAP, 19' DIAM. x 316' HIGH, ON STEEL TOWER WITH CONCRETE BASE. BOTTOM OF TANK 150' ABOVE GROUND, CAP 600000 GALS. DOMESTIC PRESSURE ABOUT 73 LBS. FIRE PRESSURE TESTED TO 210 LBS. WATERWORKS INSTALLED MARCH 1906 ABOUT 9 MILES OF 8" TO 4" MAINS.
FIRE DEPT: VOLUNTEER 24 MEMBERS. PAID $2 PER FIRE ATTENDED. NOT FINED FOR NON-ATTENDANCE. 2 HOSE CARTS, 1 H & L. WAGON, 1 HAND ENG. IN RESERVE. 1500' 2½" HOSE. PUBLIC FIRE ALARM: DAY TIME WHISTLE ON CORBIN MILL. AT NIGHT THE NIGHT POLICEMAN MUST BE HUNTED UP, WHO THEN GIVES THE ALARM BY SHOOTING OFF A REVOLVER. 1 NIGHT POLICE PATROLLING THE BUSINESS SECTION ONLY.



other changes in Liberty, the electric revolution was slow in coming at first. By the turn of the century, electric customers were still only allowed one light bulb, and the few street lights in town were turned on only when the moon was not shining.[33] In 1896, F.H. Matthews established the first telephone company in Liberty with were fifty residential subscribers at $1.00 per month.

The brief forays into the new world of technology in the late nineteenth century were soon overshadowed by the changes coming in rapid succession after 1900. Other telephone companies formed and competed for business until 1917, when the duplicated systems were eliminated after being purchased by the Liberty Telephone Company.[34] This enabled Liberty for the first time to have connections with the two long distance toll lines operating in Kansas City.

Liberty began operation of its own waterworks system in 1906. The sewer system was completed in 1909. A local hydraulic engineer, Wynkoop Kiersted, designed Liberty's systems, as well as Kansas City's and fifty other cities across the country.

Changes in transportation were to have the most significant effect on the residential development of Liberty. The coming of automobiles to town required that the roads have permanent solid surfacing. The streets around the square were the first to be hard-surfaced, but the main residential streets soon followed. In 1910, a contract for paving West Franklin was signed at the cost of $1.88 per square foot South Leonard was paved in 1911, and East Kansas in 1916. East Kansas was one of the first streets in Liberty to be paved with concrete.[35] Later, in 1923, a critical paved road from Liberty to Kansas City would be built, but events leading up to this road had more profound influences on Liberty's transportation opportunities and subsequent growth.

By 1922, there were six-and-one-half miles of mostly concrete paved road in Liberty. It seems that the citizens of Liberty and Clay County could never be satisfied with their roads, though. Newspaper articles and editorials were filled with clamors for more and better paved roads, sometimes to the point of neglecting other news (such as the war in Europe!). In 1923, a hard surface road for automobiles was completed to Kansas City.

Before such a road to Kansas City could be built, however, another event occurred that had more profound influence on Liberty's transportation opportunities and subsequent growth. As described earlier, in 1911, the A.S.B. Bridge opened for traffic, spanning the Missouri River and connecting Liberty to the burgeoning metropolis of Kansas City. The greatest

[33] Jackson, *Heritage of Liberty*, p. 115.
[34] Ibid., p. 89.
[35] Wolfenbarger, Summary Report, p. 53.

disadvantage to travel by automobile was that the bridge did not become toll-free until 1927.

In 1929, the Liberty Landing Bridge was opened across the Missouri River, thereby placing Liberty for the first time on a major highway, U. S. 71 By-Pass (now Missouri Highway 291).[36]

With all of these transportation alternatives, not all of Liberty's residents in the early twentieth century were dependent upon the local community for their needs. Not only did some commute to Kansas City for work, but shopping, banking, and other goods and services were purchased in the "big city." However, the Missouri River remained enough of a deterrent, both literally and physically, to prevent rapid suburban development in Liberty. Although the electric Interurban line did open up daily commuting possibilities, its cost was affordable only to the most comfortable middle-class citizens. The long commute, coupled with the toll fee on the bridge in place until 1927, effectively relegated automobile commuting to only well-to-do residents.

Transportation was really "moving," and Liberty citizens had a variety of modes and routes to choose from. The technological and transportation changes occurring in Liberty coincided with similar trends nationwide. There was a clear change in city growth patterns as streetcars, trains, and automobiles permitted and encouraged housing to move away from the dense city to the ever more distant suburbs.

Patterns of Suburban Development

With the large migration of the rural population to urban areas occurring nationwide and in the region, Liberty might have attracted more citizens had it made efforts to attract industries that could provide jobs. Liberty instead chose to retain its character as a small town focusing on local and county services; the position of industrial center north of the Missouri River fell to North Kansas City. The citizenry's feelings on this were reflected in a description of the community in the Clay County, Missouri Centennial Souvenir of 1922:

> Liberty has been a conservative town not given to taking up hurriedly with untried innovations, but its progress in a material way has been constant. Today it leads all the towns of its size in Missouri in beauty, in public utilities, traffic ways, etc. …Liberty aspires to continue as a home and school center rather than to attain industrial prominence.[37]

Most of Liberty's residential neighborhoods continued to develop in the same pattern established in the nineteenth century. New homes continued to

[36] Ibid., p. 54.
[37] Withers, *Clay County Centennial*, p. 34.

be constructed near the town square in the "Original Town" plat or in subdivisions laid out in the late nineteenth century. As in the previous decades, these homes were constructed on vacant lots or on the site of an earlier building. A few new subdivisions/additions were platted in the city, most on the vacant land surrounding a large property. Unlike nearby Kansas City, where one can find block after block of nearly identical houses built speculatively by one developer, the majority of Liberty's houses were built one at a time, generally for or by the owner. Also unlike urban settings such as Kansas City, the existing residential areas did not "fall out of favor" in Liberty. In small towns, prime residential sites from the nineteenth century were generally still considered valuable into the twentieth century. In fact, land values by 1919 were booming again in and around Liberty. Thus in the nineteenth century plats or additions, modem Colonial or Tudor Revival homes would be constructed immediately adjacent to an "out-of-date" Victorian remnant from the previous century.

Liberty's growth continued at a slow rate; its population by 1930 was only 3,500. Although this slow rate of growth did not warrant large-scale planned subdivisions, some local developers planned a few of these new "suburban"-type additions on a smaller scale in outlying areas of the city. G. W. Clardy, who owned the Greek Revival Mansion at 758 W. Liberty Drive, envisioned a planned subdivision on the northeast portion of his estate. In 1912, he submitted his plan for "Clardy Heights." Most of the lots were approximately 50' by 135', and were for sale for about $300.00. Clardy prepared a promotion brochure for his new neighborhood extolling the virtues of living in Liberty, "the Bon ton suburb of Kansas City." Clardy believed that Liberty was "destined to be to Kansas City what Pasadena is to Los Angeles; a city of fine suburban homes."[38] Undoubtedly echoing the thoughts of many of its residents, in his pamphlet Clardy emphasized the good schools, fine residences, and quality of life that could be found in Liberty at this time.

The Effects of Education

Education continued to serve as a drawing point for new residents. Liberty High School was the first high school in Clay County to give a full four years' course of study. The public school system became overcrowded in the first two decades of the century, and in 1921, Liberty's citizens voted to spend $125,000 to construct a new high school (pictured p. 192). The site chosen for the new school was the former location of the Liberty Ladies College. That institution had prospered until a catastrophic fire on February 23, 1913 that completely destroyed the building.

Larger changes in education were in store at William Jewell College in the fall of 1917, when Liberty residents finally managed to persuade faculty members to teach classes for young ladies. This was due in part to financial necessity, due to declining enrollment because of World War I, and in part as a response

[38] "Clardy Heights," promotional brochure, [1912].

to the lack of women's educational facilities after the fire at the Liberty Ladies College. In the 1922 *Clay County Centennial*, the effect of education on the quality of life in Liberty was expounded by the editor:

> The effect of almost a hundred years of splendid schools has been to increase constantly the number of educated citizens who have been and are stimulated mentally by contact with educators of the highest scholarly qualifications and there has been set a standard, an ideal, of intellectual development and culture, whose influence has been persistently though intangibly diffused among the people.[39]

Besides attracting professors and other staff to residences near the college campus, William Jewell affected the housing development in Liberty due to the inadequate dormitory facilities at the college during the early twentieth century. Many of the out-of-town students were housed in private homes, boarding houses, and fraternity and sorority houses off-campus.[40] A map from the 1930s Hare & Hare report shows that a large number of the non-resident students lived in the area immediately west and southwest of the college.

Undoubtedly a historic context could be developed around Liberty's historic resources related to education. As education was a highly important theme throughout Liberty's history, the resources identified with such a context should prove to be significant.

For example, one structure surveyed in the 1980s did not fall neatly into any developed historic contexts or property types. The Garrison School, located at 502 N. Water Street, is a two story, flat-roofed education building. It is significant as the only public resource connected with black history in Liberty (pictured, p. 7 and p. 179). The school was organized in the 1880s for the black children of the community. This particular structure was built in 1912 after a fire destroyed the first school, and has a later addition made in the 1940s. James A. Gay was the principal, and the school was named for William Lloyd Garrison, a famous abolitionist. Today, it is known as the Garrison Cultural Center and home to Clay County African American Legacy Inc.; as part of a small historic district, it was listed in the National Register. (More on the African American experience in Liberty in this chapter appears in a major section below; and the Garrison Cultural Center is described in Chapter 6, Heritage Tourism.)

The Commuting Life Begins

With the problem of crossing the Missouri River and travel to and from Kansas City settled, Liberty could finally compete with other surrounding

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[39] Withers, *Clay County Centennial*, p. 139.

[40] Hare & Hare, *A City Plan for Liberty, Missouri: A Report of the City Planning Commission, 1930-1934*, p. 8.

small towns as a suburban community. Representative of the nationwide trend, transportation was changing the way urban centers developed in the early twentieth century. First streetcars, then trains and automobiles permitted and even encouraged new housing to be constructed away from the densely populated cities and in the ever more distant suburbs.

Starting in the 1890s, therefore, well-to-do American citizens were able to commute to work at an urban center from a distant neighborhood or even a small outlying town, such as Liberty. Although Americans had long glorified rural living as a more preferable existence, by the tum of the century the majority of the nation's population was no longer living on farms. When the United States was founded, only ten percent of its people lived in cities. By 1930, America had completed its transformation from a largely rural to predominantly urban population. Although the best wages were to be had in the city, the suburbs were perceived as the best place to raise a family.

Liberty was far enough from Kansas City to have important rural qualities. There were open fields nearby, and homeowners could afford enough land to have a good-sized garden behind the house with a front lawn setting it off from the street. Liberty thus earned a new social function in this period. No longer was it simply a county seat and service center for the surrounding rural families. It became a haven for people wishing to escape the city. The man of the household would commute to earn a living, while the more delicate wife and children would stay behind in the healthful suburbs.

Due to various factors, however, Liberty never experienced an overwhelming migration from either Kansas City or the rural hinterlands. First, while Kansas City was made accessible, the river still imposed somewhat of a barrier to rapid development. Electric interurban, trains, and automobiles using the toll bridge were used largely by the middle class. Second, Kansas City developers were promoting subdivisions, commercial areas, and parks all south of downtown, turning their backs on the river and the potential up north. Last, Liberty made no real efforts to attract industries that could provide jobs for rural families wishing to move to a city, but who could not afford to commute great distances. It remained by choice a quiet, residential community that placed a great emphasis on education and service. Liberty thus retained its character as a small town, while at the same time served as a suburban enclave for middle-class Kansas City workers.

The New Boom and City Planning

Liberty first lived up to its new role as a suburban community around 1908, when it experienced another building boom. At least forty new residences were completed that represented quite a departure, not only in style but in form, from their Victorian counterparts.

Although the residential development within Liberty's historic neighborhoods surrounding the Square is representative of change over time, the

layout and size really did not change much from what had been established in the 1800s through the early twentieth century. A 1930s city plan prepared by Hare & Hare, a nationally recognized landscape architectural firm, noted the physical conditions at that time which characterized Liberty's development:

> The topography of the district in which Liberty is situated in [is] quite broken, and the total difference in elevation within the city limits is more than two hundred feet. The town itself consists of a group of hills, ridges and valleys. The Court House is located near the south end of a ridge which extends north to the city limits, then turns northwest for several miles. At the northeast section of the city is a hill on which William Jewell College is located, and this site overlooks a broad valley to the east and south. Another ridge, starting at about the center of the south city limits, runs southeast into the country. The west half of the city is a group of hills... The natural expansion of the town is limited on the north by a sharp break of grade, and on the east and to some extent on the south by lower land and railroads.[41]

Hare & Hare also noted that the town was laid out on a rectangular grid pattern, which unfortunately does not fit the topography in some places. Topographical barriers have tended to cause gaps in the rectangular street system, and relatively few streets extend entirely across the city. For instance, the north part of the city is entirely lacking in any through street between the east and west side of town.[42]

At the time of Hare & Hare's report, Liberty had not benefited from any formal planning. As with many other small towns, however, there had been no need for formal planning, because as Hare & Hare believed, "Liberty is not destined to be a large city."[43] The planners did not find any congested areas of development, and noted that the permanent population (i.e., not including William Jewell College students) was fairly evenly distributed over the developed areas of the city.[44]

The Depression brought a virtual halt to new construction in Liberty, and the building industry was not truly revived until after World War II.

Architecture of the Early Twentieth Century

The two predominant styles for the first two decades of the 1900s were Prairie and Craftsman. These styles had simpler detailing, more geometric massing, and more interior space given over to the new technologies. Electricity had rescued people from darkness; pure water and indoor

[41] Hare & Hare, pp. 2-3.
[42] Ibid., p. 11.
[43] Ibid., p. 4.
[44] Ibid., p. 7.

After the turn of the twentieth century, for the first time, a number of houses in Liberty were designed by professional architects, primarily the large, impressive Prairie style homes. Horace LaPierre of Kansas City was commissioned for several Liberty residences, including the Schubael Allen home at 222 W. Franklin, ca. 1912. (Photo by Jacob Knowles)

plumbing for virtually all were true marks of civilization; and the ring of a phone connecting voices hundreds of miles apart was nothing short of a technological marvel.

After the Victorian era, the country as a whole was rejecting the old-fashioned exuberant styles from the previous decades. Tastes in residential architecture were turning in favor of revival styles, which harkened back to an even earlier era, or to the simpler lines of the Prairie style. The "modern" house was first and foremost a house of comfort and convenience. Indoor plumbing, built-in gas, electric facilities and central heating were luxuries a few decades before. Even laundry facilities began to appear in basements. Coal-fired central heating systems almost entirely superseded the wood or coal-burning stoves in the post-Victorian period, even though they were introduced in 1818. By the 1920s, alternative heating systems utilizing steam, hot air, and hot water were available.

To compensate for the technological improvements in kitchen, bath, and heating and ventilation systems (which now comprised 25 percent of the total cost of the house), the houses overall became smaller and the square footage decreased.

The smaller size also reflects the decrease in the average size of the American family, from five children in 1870 to three-and-one-half in 1900. In contrast to Victorian single-purpose rooms and accumulated clutter, these houses had multiple-function spaces, simpler interior woodwork, and furnishing for more efficient, sanitary living. In practice however, isolated box-like rooms

322 W. Franklin is an intriguing combination of four-square house plan with elements from the Victorian (the bays), Craftsman (the porch), and Prairie (the urns and generous eaves). The surveyors in their 1987 report stated, "Exact categorization and subsequent dating of this house is difficult due to the eclectic manner in which details were used.... The house retains many historic features, probably all original, and adds to the historic character of the neighborhood."

continued to be designed for sleeping areas, probably due to the owners' desire for privacy.

For the first time, a number of houses in Liberty were designed by professional architects, primarily the large, impressive Prairie style homes. Horace LaPierre of Kansas City was commissioned for several Liberty residences, including the Schubael Allen home at 222 W. Franklin (pictured). Nationwide, architects were beginning to enjoy higher status and profiles. There were 10,000 listed in the 1900 census. These architects were more highly educated than their predecessors, studying either in Europe or in the newly developing architectural schools. In previous decades, architects were responsible for the design of nearly all of our country's large public buildings and private mansions. With so much competition now, these large commissions were no longer easy to win, and people like Frank Lloyd Wright made their reputation in residential design. Well-to-do Liberty residents could choose from among the many architectural firms in Kansas City.

Architects were in a minority during this period when it came to house design in the Prairie or Craftsman property type. Vernacular builders (i.e., carpenters) used architectural features without being conscious of style. Contractors replicated and adapted complete building plans from a variety of sources, such as books, catalogues, and trade literature. The *Ladies Home Journal* was a major arbiter of residential taste, and supplied plans for a nominal fee. Entire books of plans, such as the Radford catalogues, offered

blueprints through the mail. Hank B. Simpson was a prominent contractor in Liberty whose houses closely resemble the designs found in many of these plan books.

Entire buildings could be ordered from a number of firms. The idea of ordering parts of a building was not new. It was in the previous decades that the standardization of millwork for balloon framing and ready-made trim was spread by the network of railroads. In contrast, mail-order firms of this period felt that by ordering an entire ready-made building, an owner could eliminate the mistakes and misinterpretations of local carpenters. The Aladdin Company, Sears, and Montgomery Ward were among the major suppliers of ready-to-build homes, but several small firms flourished too.

Other national trends had some effect on Liberty's built environment. By the beginning of the twentieth century, middle-class women were finding themselves freed from many household drudgeries, again thanks to the technological revolution. This, combined with their increased affluence, led women to look outside their homes for personal satisfaction. With time on their hands, they soon organized into many civic groups whose goals were to bring the same order, cleanliness, and beauty to the community as they had to their homes. These groups had varying social and cosmetic objectives, some of which were dedicated to beautifying their communities.

While Liberty had many community organizations that provided much service, the enthusiasm for beautification was short-lived. The women's Civic League was organized in 1908 and ceased to function in 1912. Their banner year was 1910 when funds were raised for building a fence with iron panels and large ornamental posts of native stone on the north and west sides of Fairview Cemetery (pictured, p. 129). This organization also inaugurated the first official community "clean-up" day. Other efforts given to beautifying and improving the town included planting shrubs at Fairview Cemetery.

The interest in community beautification was fueled by the "White City" of the World's Columbian Exposition of Chicago in 1893. If nothing else, the fair provided a positive statement about the possibilities for American cities. The "City Beautiful" movement began from the visions of that fair, and out of the City Beautiful movement was born the city planning profession.

However, the far-reaching idea that comprehensive planning could produce a more livable environment was largely overlooked for many decades. Rather, the cosmetic aspects of the fair – the classical architecture, the broad thoroughfares, and the generous landscaping – were what ended up becoming popular themes. From city planning came the concepts of separation of uses, planned residential communities with restrictive covenants, and the tool of zoning. In Liberty, the first zoning ordinance was enacted in 1955, and a comprehensive land-use plan was not developed until the late 1960s.

433 Miller (1906), in the Jewell local historic district and the Jewell-Lightburne National Register district. This two-story stucco and brick residence is one of the purest examples of the Prairie style in Liberty. (Google image capture March 2019)

Liberty experienced a pattern of growth typical of many small towns. Residences continued to be constructed near the town square in the "Original Town" plat or in subdivisions laid out in the late 1800s. The homes were built on remaining vacant lots, or sometimes on the site of an earlier structure. A few new subdivisions and additions were platted. These again were fairly small parcels of land left over from dividing existing estates and farms.

After World War I, America's industrial plants were undamaged and its banking system emerged unscathed. The economy was healthy as compared to that of war-torn Europe. The 1920s saw a building boom in suburbs throughout much of the nation, and Liberty was no exception. Land values in and around town were once again on the rise after 1919. Transactions occurred so rapidly that several properties changed hands on a daily basis.

Prairie

The Prairie type is one of the few indigenous American styles of architecture. It is also distinctively Midwestern, with its horizontal lines inspired by flat prairies. It started at the turn of the century with a group of Chicago architects who had Frank Lloyd Wright as their self-proclaimed leader. It was primarily a residential style, but was comparatively short-lived. It fell out of favor after World War I when Americans, and particularly the Midwesterners who popularized it, turned to the more comfortable associations of the nostalgic revival styles.

In addition to its radically simple and modern exterior appearance, the interiors of Prairie style homes were different from those of the previous decades. They were designed to maximize the sense of space, as homes of this period were not as large as they appeared, especially with the new utility systems taking up so much floor space. The designers vanquished the compartmentalized interiors of the Victorian Queen Anne, and opened up

the living and dining rooms to form a single L-shaped space pivoting around a large fireplace. Japanese architecture was also responsible for many aspects of Prairie design, with the sand-finished plaster walls and wide, simple wood trim resembling paper screens.

During this period, Liberty residents employed architects for the first time. The style they designed in was Prairie; 433 Miller and 202 N. Water are typical of asymmetrical, high style homes found across the nation. More typical of Liberty architect-designed residences, however, are the symmetrical, large brick homes built from about 1908 through 1915. These were basically boxy in shape, but asymmetrical in some of their detailing and features. These more elaborate homes feature extensions from the main structure, such as wings or porte-cocheres. Walls and terraces also extend outward, with a coping or ledge of contrasting material emphasizing the horizontal. There are often horizontal ribbons of windows (three or more) with vertical mullions. The chimneys are large and plain. Liberty's survey identified seventeen high-style examples of the Prairie property type that were probably designed by architects, or at least built by very competent and sensitive contractors.

The most common vernacular expression of the Prairie style is the foursquare. Liberty's survey identified houses with foursquare shapes that had features representative of two different stylistic categories, Prairie and Colonial Revival. The most common were Prairie influenced, and there were twenty-three examples within the survey boundaries. The foursquares with Colonial Revival detailing are actually more transitional between the two styles. (See 300 E. Franklin pictured on p. 71.)

A Prairie foursquare in Liberty typically has the following features: two stories high on a raised basement; box-like shape; low-pitched hipped roof with wide, overhanging eaves; usually at least a front, hipped roof dormer, sometimes also side; one-story front porch running the full length of the house; wide, square porch supports, often tapering and on piers; first floor door approached by steps. (See 402 N. Lightburne pictured on p. 161.)

These were very popular homes in plan books and mail-order catalogues, and their sturdiness and massiveness were emphasized in the ad copy. They were built in great numbers across the country in this period. The Prairie style was very wide-spread in a more diluted form, and features were often applied to many different vernacular house types, such as the gable-front-and-wing and gable-front. These feature the wide, overhanging eaves, but on a gable rather than hipped roof. The porch supports are typical Prairie, and there is often a difference between the two stories in wall coverings (this is locally referred to as a "Shirtwaist" house – see p. 121).

Duplexes and apartments were new types of residential structures to Liberty. A few were built within this period, and it is natural that their styling reflects the Prairie influence. Duplexes were built in what has been called the "double-decker" form; that is, the two apartments are on separate floors.

127 N. Morse

Simple, flat-roofed brick apartments feature Prairie style porches, but are almost a property type in themselves.

Liberty's survey found a total of sixty-seven Prairie style residences, varying from high-style homes to vernacular forms with a few Prairie details. Research to date has not documented the full extent of the influence of pattern books and mail order firms, but it is probably greater than residents believe.

Craftsman

Two California architects, Charles S. and Henry M. Greene inspired much of the design in America in the Craftsman style. The Greene brothers' residences were large, elaborate examples that in turn were influenced by Gustav Stickley and his magazine. Stickley was devoted to Craftsman design and smaller, simpler homes. Examples from these two sources were popularized by period magazines geared towards women, and as a result, the pattern books and mail-order firms quickly followed with a multitude of variations on the style. It was the dominant style for smaller houses built throughout the country and in Liberty from about 1905 until the early 1920s.

A closely related form is the bungalow house type. Hardly known in 1900, there were literally thousands built by 1910. It is a term used loosely to refer to many types (as it was a more popular term than "cottage"), but it generally refers to a one or one-and-a-half story small house with a full-length front porch. As a house form it probably began in British India in the nineteenth century. Nationwide, it was generally built with Craftsman features. In Liberty, all bungalow types had either Craftsman detailing, or else very little architectural style at all. As the two terms (Craftsman and bungalow) are often used interchangeably, and as both were greatly popularized through plan books, Liberty's survey classified bungalows as a sub-type of the Craftsman style.

The Craftsman style was the dominant style for smaller houses built throughout the country and in Liberty from about 1905 until the early 1920s. The Craftsman style featured a low-pitched roof with wide, unenclosed overhanging eaves in which the roof rafters were usually exposed. A full or partial width porch had square porch columns, often tapering and on piers or pedestals. The Prairie style, one of the few indigenous American styles of architecture, is typified by a low-pitched roof with widely overhanging eaves. The emphasis in the detailing is on the horizontal, although the overall

316 N. Water Street (c. 1906) is in the small Lightburne Historic District designated by the City of Liberty (a subset of the much larger Jewell-Lightburne Historic District listed in the National Register). Liberty's 1986 survey noted that this is a good example of the high-style Craftsman style inspired by California architects Greene and Greene that quickly spread throughout the United States by pattern books and popular magazines. The heavily rusticated stonework may be unique to Liberty but similar renditions can readily be seen in Kansas City.

massing of the house may be vertical or squarish. Craftsman and Prairie details, or a combination of both, were frequently applied to modest buildings such as foursquares and bungalows. Additionally, many Victorian era homes in Liberty were updated in the early part of the twentieth century with a Craftsman/Prairie porch featuring square, wide tapering porch columns on stone or brick piers.

Many Craftsman features are similar to those used in vernacular Prairie houses, such as square porch supports, and wide, overhanging eaves. Distinctive to the Craftsman style is unenclosed eaves with exposed rafters. Also, most Craftsman houses are one-story, while most Prairie are two-story. 504 W. Liberty Drive is an exceptionally detailed, two-story Craftsman. The Craftsman/bungalow property types were built in great numbers in Liberty – ninety-five within the survey boundaries. This is due to three major factors: the pervasiveness of the style nationwide; the fact that Liberty was experiencing a building boom at this time; more of the middle class were moving to Liberty due to its accessibility; and more were able to afford modest homes.

After the Depression, the majority of new construction activity was garages. The upper class had always had carriage houses built to the rear of their lots. These were converted to use for automobiles after the turn of the century. Contemporary homes for the well-to-do included garages built much in the same manner as carriage houses. When the middle-class began to buy automobiles in great numbers, the mail-order companies saw a good chance for profit, and developed inexpensive garages in a variety of styles. Garages accounted for a large percentage of mail-order business. These later-added garages were still built detached and as far away from houses as possible. Fear of fire and smells, as well as force of habit were responsible for their placement. It was not really until the 1950s that attached garages were

Craftsman "double-decker" apartments at 343 and 347 W. Franklin (1924)

accepted, although there are isolated examples among Liberty's historic residences.

Although some of the largest residences had carriage houses that were now converted to garages, a large number of simple buildings were constructed to house the automobiles of the middle class. Although some were built with design features that echoed the style of the main residence, the vast majority were simple wood buildings with gable roofs. Due to the built-up character of most of Liberty's neighborhoods, most were constructed at the rear of the lot with access provided by the rear alleys.

Apartment houses were also among the new types of buildings constructed in the early twentieth century. "The Ramona" on N. Leonard Street laid claim to being the first apartment building in Liberty. Built in 1910, this simple brick, flat-roofed building has sparse architectural details. Brick "quoins" ornament the corners of the building, but the facade is dominated by the one-story porch with verandah above. Duplexes were more common than apartment buildings, though. In Liberty, they were usually "double-deckers"; that is, two apartment units per building, each on its own separate floors. A double-decker facade features double-stacked front porches with wide, square porch columns.

Liberty never really stopped growing. Within the survey area, however, it was already so developed that it was impossible for someone to accumulate enough land to develop either an Olmstedian romantic neighborhood (complete with gently curved roads separated with park spaces) or the more typical gridded neighborhood with restrictive covenants. Liberty's size, grown to 3,500 in 1930, also did not warrant such large-scale ventures, which were common nationwide. A few planned neighborhoods were laid out in

The First Baptist Mt. Zion Church was the first African American church to be established in Liberty. Rev. William Brown organized the church in 1843 when he was in his late teens. After worshiping in varying locations, the Baptist congregation purchased the present lot on N. Gallatin and constructed a church in approximately 1874. The oldest part of the church is on the left. Concrete columns in the basement show the impressions of the lard cans that were used as forms. (Google image capture October 2016)

non-surveyed areas. One, laid out around the antebellum Ringo House at 758 W. Liberty Drive, envisioned a planned subdivision on the northeast portion of the estate. A promotional brochure for the neighborhood is devoted to Liberty, "the Bon ton suburb of Kansas City," predicting that Liberty was "destined to be to Kansas City what Pasadena is to Los Angeles; a city of fine suburban homes." (Wolfenbarger, p. 57)

By the end of the period under discussion, roadways were beginning to change in major ways, although it would be some years more before Eisenhower's Interstate Highway System changed the landscape again. In 1949, a new channel was cut for the Missouri River south of the loop hard against Arsenal Hill, called Liberty Bend. The 1927 truss bridge carrying Route 291 (now Southview Drive) over the Missouri continued to cross the now dry-floodway and the railroad beside the old channel. It was later replaced when Route 291 became a divided highway. The "new" Liberty Bend Bridge is a pair of spans. The northbound bridge was built 1949 (with the rerouting, and new channel of the Missouri River) and rehabilitated 1986. The southbound bridge was built in the 1970s.

2.7. The African American Experience in Liberty: Forging a Community after the Civil War, 1866-1941

NOTE: The following discussion is based upon a context written to support the survey of African American resources in Liberty, completed in 1995. The accompanying survey report presented a draft of this context and an evaluation of potential National Register districts. In Deon K. Wolfenbarger, "African American Architectural/Historic Resources, Liberty, Missouri: Survey Report," report for the Liberty Historic District Review Commission, September 15, 1995.

Liberty's white settlers came primarily from the Southern states of Kentucky, Virginia, and Tennessee. The Southern culture that these settlers brought with them included commercial agriculture in the form of tobacco, hemp,

and hogs, which in turn was dependent upon chattel slavery. Use of enslaved workers was common in Clay County from the time of its organization in 1822, although large numbers were not needed at most farms and residences. Slave-owners in Clay County utilized African Americans as field hands, housekeepers, gardeners, and nurses. Hemp and tobacco crops, commonly grown in this area, dictated intensive, back-breaking labor.

By 1849 the population of Clay County consisted of 6,882 whites, 2,530 slaves, and fourteen free African Americans. In Liberty 49 individuals owned 157 slaves in 1850. This constituted an average of nearly three enslaved people per owner, not counting Col. A. Lightburne, who owned eighteen. The total African American population (freed and enslaved) was just over 20 percent of the city's population of 827 in 1850. In 1860 the number of slave-owners in Liberty had grown to 82, and the number of those who were enslaved totaled 346.

The Formation of a New Society

After the Civil War and emancipation, African Americans in Missouri had to begin new lives with little or no resources and few jobs available to them. Some African Americans responded to the animosity against them by leaving the state. By 1870, the number of African Americans in Missouri had dropped to 6.9 percent of the total population. This population trend was found in Liberty as well. Beginning in the 1860s the percentage of African Americans as part of total population in Liberty steadily declined, although in actual numbers the population totals increased until about 1890. The opportunities for employment and housing for African Americans were greater in larger cities, and this may have been a factor in the slower rate of population growth for Liberty's African Americans.[45]

Little documentation about the lives of post-Civil War African Americans in Liberty was found during the 1994-1995 survey, but that research indicated that their experiences were similar to those of African Americans in other small, previously pro-Southern towns in Missouri. From the latter decades of the nineteenth century up to World War I, African American progress in Missouri was halting. Housing for African Americans was hard to find and often substandard. One consequence of poor living conditions, general poverty, and persistent discrimination was the rise of African American fraternal organizations and lodges that formed to assist members of their community.

African American institutions provided the social, economic, and cultural opportunities denied them by white society. Churches and lodges

[45] As a percentage of Liberty's entire population, African Americans' numbers have continued to decrease over the years. They totaled 14.1 percent of the population in 1931 and less than 3 percent in 1970. In Wolfenbarger, "African American Resources Survey Report," pp. 13-15.

contributed greatly to social life by holding fairs, picnics, suppers, and dances. They were also important as ties to other communities – travelers could stay at homes of members of sister lodges or of church members. In Liberty, these institutions served the same significant role in the lives of its African American citizens.

Before the end of official segregation. Liberty's African American residents operated businesses out of their homes by necessity. They were not allowed in white establishments, and were not allowed to rent, even if they could afford to, business quarters in town. Some of these enterprises, noted in the 1994-1995 resource survey, were restaurants, an undertaker, funeral home, nightclub, a greenhouse (patronized by both African Americans and white residents), grocery stores, beauty parlors, pool halls, and recreation facilities such as a croquet court and tennis court.[46] Segregation, although it achieved nothing else positive, did foster a sense of community for a group that was excluded from full participation in white society.

Lawrence "China" Slaughter was born in the first two-story house to be owned by a Black family in Liberty, on N. Grover Street. His parents Anna and Isaac Slaughter were early residents of Liberty. Anna was chief dietician at the former Major Hotel in Liberty. Slaughter was the Buildings and Grounds Supervisor for the Liberty school district for 48 years, and was well-known for directing traffic near Franklin Elementary School for more than 30 years. He organized the first African American Boy Scout troop in Liberty in 1936. Slaughter taught Industrial Education for the state of Missouri for 28 years. He was commissioned by Liberty Police Department in 1942 and served on the city's Human Relations Committee. (Text from the 1995 survey summary on African American historic resources, "Significant Community Members." A statue of Mr. Slaughter was installed in a park built across from Franklin Elementary and named in his honor in 2018; photo © Shane Immelt, Minds-i Photographic)

Schools for the Community

Another key institution in the lives of Liberty's African American residents were the schools. Early schools for African Americans, both in Missouri and across the country, were held in churches, homes, or other makeshift facilities. When schoolhouses were built, they were usually of the traditional one-room design, were constructed of frame rather than brick, and had few amenities. By 1900 more substantial schools were being built. A number of African American schools in Missouri were built through Works Progress Administration grants. By 1939 Missouri had approximately 260 elementary and high schools for African Americans.

African American education in Liberty followed the general pattern within the state, with public facilities not provided until the late 1800s. The first school for African American children is commonly believed to have been a

[46] Ibid., pp. 24-26.

Humphrey Temple, 213 W. Shrader Street (Google image capture April 2017)

subscription school that was established at the end of the Civil War. Mrs. Laura Armstrong taught the school in a room of her home, which was located on W. Mill Street, between Gallatin and Prairie Streets. Students paid $1 a month, and attendance was said to have grown rapidly.[47] Lucretia Robinson is thought to have taught the second African American (and Indian) school in Liberty at her residence on 446 N. Water Street. The third school met in the Old Rock Church, located on a hill near where Garrison School is now located. The first Garrison School building was constructed in 1880 on the present site at 502 N. Water Street, where it was central to the greatest portion of the African American population. The present school building (pictured on p. 7 and p. 179) was constructed shortly after the first was destroyed by fire in 1911.[48]

Churches

Churches were generally the most significant institution in the African American community, and Liberty was no exception to this generalization. During the early African American independent church movement in this country following the Civil War, African Americans gravitated toward the Baptist and Methodist churches. These denominations were usually preferred because of the more emotional form of worship, the absence of formal ritual, and the greater leadership opportunities offered to ministers.

The earliest African American churches in Liberty were from these two denominations. The First Baptist Mt. Zion Church was the first African American church to be established in Liberty.[49] Rev. William Brown organized the church in 1843 when he was in his late teens. After worshiping in varying locations, the Baptist congregation purchased the present lot on N. Gallatin and constructed a church in approximately 1874. The church offered a variety of activities for its members; it had at least six choirs at one time, as well as other church organizations, including the Mission Society, the Pride of Zion Club, and the Willa Herring Matrons. The St. Luke A.M.E.

[47] One unsubstantiated written account, which is not corroborated elsewhere, states that in 1867 an African American man taught the first African American school in Liberty. He was also said to be the first African American commissioned by Governor Thomas Fletcher to establish free schools for African American children. Black History Files, Clay County Historical Society Archives, Liberty, Missouri.

[48] Wolfenbarger, "African American Resources Survey Report," pp. 17-21.

[49] The Mt. Zion Baptist Church is referred to locally as the oldest church in Liberty, white or black congregations. Other congregations were founded earlier; however, the scope of this study did not confirm whether these other congregations are still in existence. The Mt. Zion Baptist Church is the first Baptist church of Liberty, however, of any ethnic group (and is today known as the First Baptist Church).

The St. Luke A.M.E. congregation was organized by Rev. Jesse Mills in 1875, and the original church building was constructed in 1876 at 443 N. Main. The building pictured was constructed in 1935 and dedicated in 1942. Unfortunately, due to structural problems the building was deemed unsafe for worship and demolished in early October 2016. Previously, the church had survived two fires and a 2003 tornado that destroyed its windows. (Google image capture September 2012)

congregation was organized by Rev. Jesse Mills in 1875, and the church building was construct-ed in 1876 at 443 N. Main. The other significant African American church in Liberty was the Sanctified Church/ Church of God in Christ/ Humphrey Temple, at 213 W. Shrader Street and established at an unknown date. The church was referred to as the Humphrey Temple after Rolla Humphrey, who helped to construct and maintain the buildings (pictured on p. 92).[50]

Lodges

African American lodges also served as important social foundations for the Liberty's black community. They served to provide many of the social supports that were not available to Africans Americans otherwise. Masonic organizations were among the most important of these societies nationwide. In northern Missouri, enough African American Masonic chapters existed by 1869 for a conclave to be held. The (African American) Liberty Lodge #37 of the A.F. & A.M. was issued a charter in 1877. The first brick Masonic Lodge structure, built in the late 1800s, was once located on N. Main Street, near the Garrison School. This hall was tom down in the 1930s. In the 1980s the lodge met twice a month in a small hall on Grover Street. The lodge had about thirty members at that time.[51] Other important African American organizations in Liberty included the St. Matthews Commandery No. 17 of the Knights Templar of Liberty, who won the state drill contest in 1922; the Football Town Team organized in 1915; and its later version, the Liberty Athletic Club Team (which went undefeated for ten years).[52]

Neighborhoods

Just as the social, religious, and educational institutions for African Americans in Liberty were segregated, so were the areas for housing. Historically, the African American population in Liberty has been concentrated in two areas. The first area is bounded by Francis Street on the north, N. Main Street on the east, Mississippi Street on the south, and N.

[50] Wolfenbarger, "African American Resources Survey Report," pp. 21-23.
[51] Ibid., pp. 23-24.
[52] Withers, *Clay County Centennial*, p. 53; and Jackson, *Heritage of Liberty*, pp. 158-59.

Morse Street on the west. It appears that these lots were set aside for African Americans from the end of the Civil War, although documentation has not been found to verify this assumption. The section west of N. Grover was called "Happy Hollow," currently Ruth Moore Park. A second major section is bounded by Shrader, Pine, and Ford Streets on the north, Jewell and Leonard Streets on the east, Murray Road on the south, and the Burlington Railroad on the west.[53] This area near W. Shrader is popularly called "The Addition," or New Liberia (the name of the plat).

The basic geographic distribution defined by these two areas has remained fairly constant through the present, and was illustrated by two maps in the city plan report prepared by Hare & Hare (ca. 1930s). At that time, students of grade school age were located north of Mississippi between Miller and Water streets, as well as in the location of the present Brooks Landing, along Pine, and on Richfield Road. Junior high and high school age African American students are located in the same areas, with a few additionally located on Doniphan Road east of Garrison School.[54]

As was typical in segregated towns, Liberty residents wanted to maintain the separation of living areas. The official position of white residents in the 1930s, at least as expounded by Hare & Hare in their city plan, seemed to be that African Americans were a "useful element" whose welfare should be safeguarded, but that separation of housing areas "be controlled by mutual agreement between the races." [55] The proposed method of enforcing segregation was to continue confining African Americans to the two main districts in which they already lived, since there existed "ample area within these districts" according to the planners. Hare & Hare not only recognized the existing segregation but perpetuated the practice in planning by preserving these geographic divisions.

Conditions in these districts were, of course, not equal to those in the white portions of town. Houses in the African American sections tended to be smaller, and, given the greater poverty of African Americans, in poorer condition. Electricity, water, and telephone service were installed at later dates than in white homes. Because many of the houses were not supplied

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[53] The African-American neighborhoods fell into the following platted subdivisions: outlots in the Original Town of Liberty, platted about 1823; Corbin Place, platted in 1888; Arnold's Addition, platted in 1886; New Liberia, platted in 1888; Petty's Addition, platted in 1889; Adkin's Addition, platted in 1881; Willmott's Addition, platted in 1899; Michael Arthur's Second Addition, platted in 1870; Suddarth Place, platted in 1890; Morse's Addition, was platted in 1884; Peter's Addition, platted prior to 1877; M.B. Brown's Subdivision, platted in 1887; and Bird & Glasgow Addition, platted prior to 1877. In 1930, the two sections were defined as follows: the most populous section was bounded by Corbin Street on the north. Water Street on the east, Mississippi on the south, and Morse Avenue on the west. The second area was bounded by Pine Street on the north, railroad tracks on the south and west, and a creek on the east.

[54] Hare & Hare, "A City Plan for Liberty, Missouri," accompanying maps.

[55] Ibid., p. 6.

with water, it had to be drawn from springs, such as the one near the present Franklin Elementary School at Mill and Gallatin Streets, and another near Pine and Missouri Streets.

Housing standards were particularly low during the Depression. A newspaper article in 1938 admitted that "there is not a house that [African Americans] can buy, or rent that is fit to live in, and in a number of cases there are several families living together in very crowded quarters." [56] The housing shortage was exacerbated during this period because many white families were on relief and, unable to afford houses in the white portion of town, bought homes in African American neighborhoods, displacing African Americans from the only neighborhoods open to them.

343 N. Gallatin, a shotgun-style vernacular residence. The surveyor's note from the 1995 survey of Liberty's African American neighborhoods states that "this house is on an outlot in part of the Original Town of Liberty, platted in approximately 1823. The water was turned on at this address in 1910."

Even after segregation was declared unconstitutional, African Americans in Liberty did not move out of the two traditionally African American sections in great numbers. Some, particularly those who had lived in the area for many years, stayed because they were older and had neither the desire nor financial resources to move. Many younger African Americans who could have afforded housing in previously white areas moved out of Liberty because of the lack of job opportunities. It was not until the 1970s that segregation of residential housing ended and African Americans were finally allowed to purchase residences in any part of the city.

African American Residential Architecture

The majority of buildings constructed in the late 1800s up through World War I in these African American neighborhoods were vernacular, including some types not typically found in other sections of Liberty. A few shotgun, single pen, and several double pen and hall-and-parlor houses remain, although the vast majority have been altered. After the turn of the century, new construction was more likely to contain architectural features of the period, such as bungalows with Craftsman detailing. Inventory sheets were completed for 171 buildings in 1995. (For more images, see 403 N. Prairie, p. 61, an I-house; 452 N. Water, p. 62, a double pen; and the Charles Houston House, 316 N. Gallatin, from the survey on p. 116.)

[56] "The Liberty Negro is Title of Church Paper," *Liberty Tribune*, 26 February 1938.

2.8. Conclusion

The physical plan of the Courthouse Square also affected the historic development of the town. Racial segregation within the community affected the residential patterns of African Americans within Liberty, as did the location of the numerous educational institutions. The slow, steady growth of the city preserved the building patterns within the residential neighborhoods up through the second World War. Remarkably, most eras are well-represented (Depression-era structures, not surprisingly, are few) and both vernacular and high-style versions – including an intriguing number of transitional versions combining multiple styles – are plentiful to engage the imaginations of history-minded observers.

After World War II, the growth of the city was focused in other areas of town and the historic neighborhoods surrounding the Courthouse Square were not substantially affected in any adverse way. Today, the city is fortunate to have districts representative of these community development trends with a high degree of integrity.

Overall, the distribution, scale, and style of individual structures in Liberty are accurate records of the City's historic districts' relations to the historic contexts into which Liberty's history can be divided. From the times of Southern immigration to pattern book architecture, Liberty's individual buildings and districts were conservative, comfortable versions of regional and national movements in building and planning. The architecture and neighborhoods maintain a simplicity and modest scale that contrasts with the more spectacular adventure and glamour of skyscrapers, estates, and vast rowhouse development of major cities. Regional and national trends of development are reflected here, but for the most part Liberty's historic districts have flourished over time as an examples of small town neighborhoods that have evolved over many decades.

While Liberty has remained a small town, it has always continued to grow and change. Thus no districts can be found that contain only one property type, or which even represent only one historic context. Instead they have evolved over time to produce Liberty's own version of small town Middle America.

Chapter 3 begins the formal part planning part of the Historic Preservation Plan, describing the overall approach. Chapter 4 then carries forward the historic preservation planning that began in Liberty in the 1970s, which was guided by the surveys whose contexts are summarized in this chapter. While the discussion in this chapter of Liberty's resources effectively ends at World War II, the City's evolution continued and it is possible also to trace its history in later additions, neighborhoods, and architectural styles. Chapter 4 suggests carrying on the work of researching historic contexts and property types as exemplified in this chapter, to bring documentation up to the fifty-year mark, 1970.

The Jesse James Bank Museum, the former Clay County Savings Association, is the only remaining Federal style commercial building in Liberty (left side). The first daylight bank robbery during peace time in the nation took place here on February 13, 1866, said to have been committed by Jesse and Frank James, natives of Clay County. It is now operated by Clay County as a museum. (Photo © Shane Immelt, Minds-i Photographic)

Chapter 3. Preservation Approach

3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides the concept and approach, vision statement, and goals and principles for historic preservation as they apply in the City of Liberty to both public and private sector initiatives. It also provides the philosophical basis for preservation strategies and recommendations in subsequent chapters.

3.2. Concept and Approach

The City of Liberty and its citizens, property owners, and business owners have benefited greatly from a long community-based effort to take advantage of historic preservation tools and approaches. The modern national historic preservation movement began from the effort to pass the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966; in Liberty, recognition of preservation's benefits began just fifteen years later.

Now, in just forty years, within living memory for many residents, the central business district and the surrounding historic neighborhoods have brightened with rehabilitated homes and storefronts, many new businesses, and recurring festivals and events that bring the entire Downtown alive.

Liberty has eight historic districts listed in the National Register, six of which are locally recognized and protected by local ordinance and review by the City's Historic District Review Commission (HDRC; see Map 4.1, p. 117; the Liberty Square local historic district includes two National Register districts as well as individual listings). Another eight sites are individually listed in the National Register (some are within the National Register districts), and the city has recognized and protected eighteen local landmarks. The City of Liberty is a Certified Local Government (CLG) through state and federal rules under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, which confers the ability to compete for grants provided through the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) reserved only for CLG communities and a special relationship for the HDRC with the SHPO for training and consultation.

The city has put in place a local property-tax abatement program to encourage rehabilitation of both commercial and residential exteriors and has invested (twice) in upgrading of the infrastructure and streetscaping around the historic Liberty Courthouse Square at the heart of its central business district.

A nonprofit Main Street program, Historic Downtown Liberty, Inc. (HDLI) – part of a highly successful nationwide and statewide movement with high standards for local support – began in 2005, leading to such programs as a farmers' market and many Downtown events. HDLI also spearheaded efforts to establish a Community Improvement District (CID) for the Downtown business district to devote additional funds to its upkeep and attractiveness. Moreover, it also led the campaign to establish a local lodging tax to enable greater funds for tourism marketing and the arts.

Pride in Liberty's historic resources has gone hand in hand with pride in its stories. For such a small city, it has a large number of historic sites (see Chapter 6). Perhaps this should not be a surprise, for it is the second-oldest settlement west of the Mississippi, after St. Genevieve, MO.

Liberty has also taken great interest in enhancing the commercial center of Downtown through the arts. Among other programs, the City mounts annual outdoor sculpture exhibits and is gradually adding to its permanent collection, including a series of life-sized bronze statues of notable Americans. Of special note is the Freedom Fountain Monument commemorating the City's African American pioneers installed in 2001 (pictured, p. 194).

Thus, Liberty should take great pride in its preservation-related accomplishments to date. The purpose of this Historic Preservation Plan is to assess each of these accomplishments, recommend ways to make further strides – either by improving existing programs, or by adding new initiatives – and guide priority-setting on an annual basis. The challenge in doing this is that the City of Liberty and its community of preservation-minded property owners and interpretive sites have undertaken all of the usual initiatives that one would hope such a historic small town with so many fine historic assets would accept.

There are three major elements to this plan, each described in the following chapters. First, Chapter 4 reviews traditional historic preservation programs and measures them against "best practices." Liberty comes out well in this analysis, but there is always room for improvement. For one thing, historic district recognition could be extended to more neighborhoods.

Chapter 5 examines other city planning and programs to see how they align with the aims of historic preservation, asking how each reinforces the other, looking at the commercial center of Downtown, its historic neighborhoods, and management of the public domain (e.g., streetscaping). Again, Liberty comes out well in the analysis; major sets of recommendations concern ways to incorporate historic preservation concerns into the upcoming comprehensive plan update that will follow the completion of this plan.

Finally, Chapter 6 examines how to reinforce the public outreach, storytelling, and heritage tourism already present in Liberty. Appreciation for Liberty's stories and historic resources is the bedrock of a committed constituency ready to support City actions on behalf of historic preservation. Moreover, heritage tourism is already fundamental to the success of the Downtown business district; this plan seeks to leverage the considerable public and private investment already made on behalf of historic

What Is Liberty's "Downtown"?

Liberty's "Downtown" is sometimes used to refer to the historic central business district – the Courthouse Square and the blocks immediately adjacent to the square (and a few other buildings, just beyond, all part of a local historic district in its own right). In this plan, "Historic Downtown" and "Downtown commercial area" are terms used interchangeably to refer to the historic central business district. It is the area served by Historic Downtown Liberty, Inc., Liberty's Main Street organization as described in Chapter 5, City Planning.

"Downtown" is also used to refer to a much larger area at the heart of the entire City, the historic core that includes not only the central business district but the historic residential neighborhoods that are immediately adjacent. So when a Liberty resident says, "Let's go to the Downtown," they may be talking about heading to the business district for a great meal or a shopping experience, or they may be imagining a walk around all of the beautiful neighborhoods at the center of Liberty – including, but not limited to, the Courthouse Square.

As one person explained this somewhat flexible use of "Downtown" to the planning team (inclined to think literally of "downtown" as "commercial"): think of it like a Russian doll. The largest doll – the outermost boundary – includes all of the historic core of Liberty, residential areas and all. This is the area contained, roughly, within the Chapter 353 boundaries drawn to support Liberty's property tax abatement program, which supports rehabilitation of both residential and commercial projects (see Chapter 5 and Maps 5.1-5.2 on pp. 158-59). Then, within that, is the historic central business district, about nine blocks of retail, restaurants, offices, and a few apartments. And then, within that, is Liberty's splendid Courthouse Square. When this plan refers to the "Square," it is being precise.

preservation and storytelling to foster even greater heritage tourism as a part of the City's economic development.

3.3. Vision and Goals

This Historic Preservation Plan for the City of Liberty advocates embracing "community character" as an animating concept central to the city's identity and well-being. This plan seeks to advance community character through supporting the continued preservation of the city's historic Downtown, including the surrounding historic neighborhoods. The preservation plan's strategies are organized under three areas of activity, each of which, as explained above, is an action chapter of the plan.

Vision Statement

The following vision statement has been crafted for historic preservation in the City of Liberty:

> The City of Liberty's heritage plays a critical role in our community identity and quality of life. Historic resources express the City's long history as the oldest settlement west of the Mississippi after the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, and reflect the growth and change of the City over time. We value not only the architecture but the stories that sustain our sense of the history of this place and our connections to our predecessors who invested for years to come. We are committed to investment that continues this proud heritage and adds to the City's long-term success. If we are successful, the City of Liberty will continue to grow and prosper, drawing new residents, visitors, businesses, and investors who recognize that our heritage, identity, community character, and quality of life are essential to this success and seek to participate in building these assets long into the future.

Goals for Historic Preservation

Three broad goals express how the City of Liberty's historic assets and character relate to the city's vision for the future. These goals are embodied in the strategies and recommendations presented in subsequent chapters of this plan.

> **Goal #1 – Strengthen Community Character and Reinforce Historic Areas of the City:** Reinforce the role of the City of Liberty's historic resources as a key element of the city's character, central to the city's identity and long-term economic sustainability and development. Recognize Liberty's historic Downtown, including its surrounding historic residential

neighborhoods, as distinctive places for living, working, and investing.

Goal #2 – Make the Most of City Programs: Use the city's planning, public works, and recreation programs strategically to stimulate private investment in continued revitalization of historic areas, sustain quality of life, and connect the city's historic core to its outlying suburban neighborhoods. A focus on historic preservation throughout City policies provides an important lens in seeing and setting priorities.

Goal #3 – Activate Community Engagement: Actively engage residents and visitors with information, interpretation, and programming that reinforces community identity, tells the City's stories, and encourages local appreciation of historic preservation action.

3.4. Guiding Principles

In addition to the vision and goals outlined above, the following guiding principles will shape implementation of the strategies discussed in this plan:

Authenticity: We recognize and value authentic historic places and the complexities that derive from the layers of change that have occurred over time. We respect both individual resources and the districts or contexts in which they are found.

Shared Stewardship: We value both individual and community-based efforts to take care of historic properties in Liberty. We acknowledge a collaborative responsibility in caring for our natural, historic, and cultural assets and seek to infuse historic preservation values and considerations into all public and private activities.

Long-Term Interests: We work in the best long-term interest of Liberty, its people, neighborhoods, natural and historic assets, and environment.

Community Respect and Inclusion: We value our neighbors and invite and encourage the participation of every person in community initiatives.

Environment and Sustainability: We promote ecological and economic sustainability in our planning and our actions as the foundation of a successful community, including the preservation and rehabilitation of historic and cultural assets.

Best Practices: We foster a continuing process of upgrading to best practices in planning, historic preservation, and stewardship.

Quality: We promote and expect quality in all development, whether new or preservation-related. New work undertaken now should make a lasting

contribution to the community and be worthy of the respect of future generations.

Accommodating Change: We recognize that change is often necessary, but seek to accommodate it in ways that can be leveraged to enhance historic neighborhoods, historic properties, and their contexts.

Economic Stimulation: We believe historic and cultural assets support the City's economic prosperity and will seek to be creative in doing so.

Hospitality: We make visitors feel welcome throughout Liberty as a matter of principle as well as to the benefit of our economy.

Respect for History: We believe that Liberty's stories are among our community's many assets, and will strive to tell those stories completely and fairly in ways that highlight their continuing relevance to our present and future.

Respect for Varied Perspectives: We respecting differing points of view and maintain an atmosphere of civil discourse.

3.5. Conclusion

Imagine Liberty forty years ago. It is 1980. The first round of city-sponsored infrastructure is brand new, thanks to an invigorated City Council elected earlier in the preceding decade. That City Council also recommitted to the City's longstanding support for its educational system, a fundamentally economic decision that not only has served generations of K-12 students, but has encouraged families new and old to seek out or stay in Liberty for the sake of their children.

Those families have proven vital to Liberty's staying power, as they invested in their own properties and provided the markets for new generations of business owners occupying the historic commercial center of Liberty. They built new neighborhoods, invested in old ones, or found homes in the mid-century modern neighborhoods beyond Downtown. They supported the City Council as it invested in a fine city parks and recreation department with upgraded parks. Some families discovered Liberty's history and enthusiastically supported the long-lived Clay County Museum & Historical Society and the Archives, more recently established a little more than a decade earlier in 1969.

Those business owners benefitting from their local market of Liberty families adapted as Liberty grew westward with the strip shopping center development that has become common to any small town. There is no longer a hardware store or furniture store downtown – those kinds of stores have evolved into "big box" locations with easy access and parking for the cars needed to carry home buyers' goods. Instead new businesses grew and

The 1935 Art Deco-style Clay County Courthouse stands at the center of Liberty's busy commercial district with many historic buildings. The entire district is protected by local designation; rehab projects done for "contributing buildings" can qualify for Missouri Historic Tax Credits. Some buildings are also individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places or contribute to the Liberty Square South and West historic districts listed in the National Register, qualifying them also for federal Historic Tax Credits. (Photo © Shane Immelt, Minds-i Photographic)

created the specialty stores and restaurants that give Downtown its vitality – along with the longstanding city and county government offices and other center-city occupations that bring workers downtown.

To those basic, sustainable fundamentals, historic preservation became the deciding factor contributing to the lively Downtown that Liberty's residents throughout the city enjoy today. First, the HDRC began in the 1980s, assuring property owners wishing to invest in historic upgrades that their neighbors will not undermine those investments with ill-advised changes and teaching all owners about the importance of high-quality maintenance and upgrades. Bedrock surveys and research on the history that provides context for evaluating the historic buildings now in Liberty's inventory provided the basis for pursuing National Register nominations for buildings and districts and designating local historic districts.

Some fifteen years later, in 2005, Liberty's Downtown business owners caught up to the national Main Street movement that had begun about 30 years before (1976). As described earlier in this chapter, Historic Downtown

Liberty, Inc., now enjoys fifteen years of experience and is one of Missouri's top programs.

Eight years ago, the City took another major step with the establishment of its property-tax abatement program under Missouri Chapter 353 – having overcome the local effects of the national economic downturn known as the Great Recession that began in 2008. While the immediate tax impact of the program is temporarily to freeze property tax collections on improvements, it has leveraged considerable investment in historic commercial and residential buildings across historic Downtown, stabilizing and enhancing property values overall. Moreover, the City and its voters undertook a recent, more thorough updating of the streetscaping and infrastructure of the Courthouse Square area of Downtown, assuring high-quality maintenance for decades to come. This big decision was followed by the establishment of the CID described earlier in this chapter, and then by the voters' approval of a lodging tax to support tourism and the arts (described in Chapter 5, City planning).

All of those admirable accomplishments happened in just forty years. This Historic Preservation Plan describes the strategies that in the next twenty to forty years could help Liberty consolidate its many gains as a City, take advantage of new trends in population and investment, and develop sustainably to provide more local jobs and maintain its budget for the City services that underpin quality of life.

If this plan is successful, in the years ahead, Liberty will still have great, community-supported historic preservation programs, an excellent public domain, and even more enthusiastic families and imaginative business owners enjoying a high quality of life and continuing to celebrate Liberty's status as one of the most historic places west of the Mississippi River.

William Jewell College, founded in 1849, was built upon one of the hills overlooking the City of Liberty. Antebellum Jewell Hall (1849; the brightly lit building) served Union troops during the Civil War as a makeshift hospital. (Photo by Elizabeth Watson, Heritage Strategies, LLC)

Chapter 4. Strengthening Liberty's Preservation Programs

4.1. Introduction

This chapter of the City of Liberty's Historic Preservation Plan provides context, issues, and actions for strengthening the City of Liberty's existing historic preservation program, to meet Goal #1. This is the first of three chapters at the heart of the plan, presenting actions, indicating timeframe and responsible parties, and providing background and guidance for each action or set of actions. Across the nation, historic preservation has powered revitalization of cities' downtowns and neighborhoods, addressed blight, provided more housing, recycled old buildings, and secured more investment in the built environment as a whole. In the City of Liberty, strategies incorporating historic preservation can provide these benefits.

City of Liberty Historic Preservation Goal #1

Strengthen Community Character and Reinforce Historic Areas of the City: Reinforce the role of the City of Liberty's historic resources as a key element of the city's character, central to the city's identity and long-term economic sustainability and development. Recognize Liberty's historic Downtown, including its surrounding historic residential neighborhoods, as distinctive places for living, working, and investing.

4.2. The National Program for Historic Preservation

On October 15, 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA; Public Law 89-665; 54 U.S.C. 300101 et seq., as amended) to establish a broad suite of programs to help preserve historic and archeological sites across the nation and its territories. In its preface to act, Congress declared that the preservation of historic properties "is in the public interest so that its vital legacy of cultural, educational, aesthetic, inspirational, economic and energy benefits will be maintained and enriched for future generations of Americans." (See sidebar for more.)

The act created the National Register of Historic Places and the National Historic Landmarks program, both administered by the National Park Service; established a federal-state and federal-tribal partnership through authorization and funding for State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs, THPOs); and created the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The role of THPOs was established through later amendment, as was the role of Certified Local Governments (CLGs), a federal program administered by the SHPOs.

Among other things, the act requires federal agencies to evaluate the impact of all federally funded or permitted projects on historic properties through a process known as Section 106 review, a process that also involves SHPOs and sometimes CLGs. Effectively an environmental review procedure, Section 106 preceded the more wide-ranging review established under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. (Today, the two kinds of review are commonly conducted together wherever appropriate.[57]) While the process ultimately may result in changes desired by the sponsoring agency, it requires careful evaluation of the resources involved and the given project's impact so that all dimensions of the challenge are well-understood before a final decision. The resulting project frequently involves adjustments and mitigation.

The Purpose and Need of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

The timeless language of the preamble to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 reads in its entirety as follows:

(a) This subchapter may be cited as the "National Historic Preservation Act".

(b) The Congress finds and declares that—

(1) the spirit and direction of the Nation are founded upon and reflected in its historic heritage;

(2) the historical and cultural foundations of the Nation should be preserved as a living part of our community life and development in order to give a sense of orientation to the American people;

(3) historic properties significant to the Nation's heritage are being lost or substantially altered, often inadvertently, with increasing frequency;

(4) the preservation of this irreplaceable heritage is in the public interest so that its vital legacy of cultural, educational, aesthetic, inspirational, economic, and energy benefits will be maintained and enriched for future generations of Americans;

(5) in the face of ever-increasing extensions of urban centers, highways, and

(Continued on page 107)

[57] https://www.achp.gov/integrating_nepa_106

In Missouri, the state established its corresponding State Historic Preservation Officer and agency soon after passage of the NHPA, in 1970. The agency carrying out the state's responsibilities is the State Historic Preservation Office within the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, advised by the Missouri Advisory Council for Historic Preservation.[58] As part of the process of receiving annual grants from the federal Historic Preservation Fund, the SHPO periodically develops a statewide comprehensive historic preservation plan. The most recent, *Our Sense of Place: Preserving Missouri's Cultural Resources,* was approved in 2018.[59] (See sidebar on p. 109 for statewide goals.)

Nonprofit organizations at the national, state, and local levels supplement both the NHPA and local systems with additional programs, such as lists of endangered properties and intervention in the real estate market to help find new owners and investors for "white elephant" buildings that have suffered loss of economic value without finding new uses or owners. Nonprofits' public education and advocacy build and retain constituencies who support elected officials at all levels in maintaining historic preservation programs.

Local governments not only participate in this system, but also generally avail themselves of state enabling legislation that permits the local, independent regulation of proposed changes to locally recognized historic resources and districts through historic preservation ordinances and other forms of land use regulation. In both systems, incentives and technical assistance are key to encouraging positive outcomes for historic resources and their owners.

(Continued from page 106)

residential, commercial, and industrial developments, the present governmental and nongovernmental historic preservation programs and activities are inadequate to insure future generations a genuine opportunity to appreciate and enjoy the rich heritage of our Nation;

(6) the increased knowledge of our historic resources, the establishment of better means of identifying and administering them, and the encouragement of their preservation will improve the planning and execution of Federal and federally assisted projects and will assist economic growth and development; and

(7) although the major burdens of historic preservation have been borne and major efforts initiated by private agencies and individuals, and both should continue to play a vital role, it is nevertheless necessary and appropriate for the Federal Government to accelerate its historic preservation programs and activities, to give maximum encouragement to agencies and individuals undertaking preservation by private means, and to assist State and local governments and the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States to expand and accelerate their historic preservation programs and activities.

(Pub. L. 89–665, §1, Oct. 15, 1966, 80 Stat. 915; Pub. L. 96–515, title I, §101(a), Dec. 12, 1980, 94 Stat. 2987.)

Thus modern national system supporting historic preservation is based on a robust federal-state-local partnership. Excellent explanations of the National Historic Preservation Act and the many associated programs and policies may be found at the websites of the National Park Service, Advisory Council,

[58] https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/ and https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/moachp.htm
[59] https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/docs/shpo_statewide_presentation_plan_final_final_rfs.pdf

Liberty's longstanding preservation program has focused on the local recognition and protection of historic resources in the City's historic commercial and residential Downtown. Pictured, the south side of the Courthouse Square; with the Clay County Courthouse, these buildings make up the small National Register-listed Liberty Square South historic district.

and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers.[60] At the state level, the Missouri Alliance for Historic Preservation and the Missouri SHPO offer considerable resources.[61]

4.3. The Local Program for Historic Preservation

The City of Liberty's longstanding and well-rounded historic preservation program has focused on (1) the local recognition and protection of historic resources in the City's historic commercial and residential Downtown; and (2) tax abatements for rehabilitation of commercial and residential properties in the Downtown where at least 50 percent of the project is addressed to the building's exterior, as described in Chapter 5, City Planning. More residential areas of the city are recognized by the National Register of Historic Places than are under local historic-district protection. The entire Liberty Square commercial historic district, however, is protected locally, unusually and commendably more so than by National Register listing.

The City's historic preservation ordinance is included in the Code of the City of Liberty, Chapter 30, Unified Development Ordinance; Article VII,

[60] https://www.nps.gov/articles/using-the-national-historic-preservation-act-of-1966.htm; https://www.achp.gov/ (national act: https://www.achp.gov/digital-library-section-106-landing/national-historic-preservation-act); and https://ncshpo.org/resources/national-historic-preservation-act-of-1966/. The National Preservation Institute, a continuing education and professional training organization, offers a portal to the wide range of information on the worldwide web about historic preservation: https://www.npi.org/useful-links.

[61] https://preservemo.org/ and https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/links.htm

Historic Preservation Overlay District.[62] The article establishes and governs the actions of the Historic District Review Commission (HDRC). In addition, as described in Chapter 5, City Planning, other programs and authorities of the City reinforce historic preservation.

The City of Liberty with its HDRC has been recognized as a Certified Local Government since 1986; it was the third CLG to be recognized in Missouri.

Action for Certified Local Government

Action 4.3.A: Continue participation in Missouri's Certified Local Government program. Liberty's CLG designation is at the core of the city's historic preservation program and provides the city with an ongoing source of preservation project funding. If at all possible given City revenues and budgets, the City should compete as often as feasible for CLG matching grants. Early priorities for CLG grant applications include additional work on the City's historic contexts and more surveying, as described in further actions below. Other priorities include training for the HDRC; and updates to the City's design guidelines. Work on designating local historic districts and updating nominations of National Register historic districts may follow from completed survey work.

4.4. Tax Incentives for Historic Preservation

Federal and state income tax incentives are, in effect, excellent subsidies for local historic preservation investment and offer excellent returns to the community in the form of support for high-quality jobs associated with rehabilitation and stabilizing and enhancing property values. By reducing developers' bottom-line costs for rehab, they then have more funds to reinvest in further projects.

Missouri's Statewide Vision and Goals for Historic Preservation

Vision: Missouri will be a state that progresses and prospers while preserving and respecting its unique heritage. Citizens of all ages will appreciate the unique and fragile nature of Missouri's historic places and archaeological resources. Preservation will be widely recognized as a major contributor to tourism, economic development, and quality of life. Government officials at all levels, legislators, and private-sector leaders will include preservation concerns as they make decisions about Missouri's future. Missouri's diverse constituencies will work together as partners in a statewide preservation effort. A high level of services will be provided to assist members of the preservation community in accomplishing preservation goals throughout Missouri.

GOAL #1: Understand the value of historic preservation.

GOAL #2: Strengthen and enhance historic preservation as an economic development tool.

GOAL #3: Continue the identification, evaluation, and protection of Missouri's cultural resources.

GOAL #4: Enhance cooperation and partnerships among government entities, institutions, and the private sector.

GOAL #5: Integrate historic preservation strategies into planning and routine procedures at all levels of Missouri government: local, regional, and state.

GOAL #6: Improve the delivery of historic preservation services to include innovative technologies and an expanded information network.

Source: Our Sense of Place: Preserving Missouri's Cultural Resources – Missouri's Statewide Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan, 2018-2024, *p. 4; available at* https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/docs/shpo_statewide_presentation_plan_final_final_rfs.pdf.

[62] https://library.municode.com/mo/liberty/codes/code_of_ordinances;

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards were established to guide reviews of projects proposed for the federal Historic Tax Credit soon after the first federal tax law for historic preservation was passed in 1976. With few changes over the years, the Standards have stood the test of time and now also provide the basis for local design review guidelines.

In 1976, Congress established tax credits designed to stimulate rehabilitation of commercial historic properties. The program has been a huge success, returning more than the taxpayers' actual investment. The program works as follows: Once an income-producing, depreciable property (including residential rental property) is deemed 'historic' by being listed either in the National Register individually or as contributing to a National Register historic district, a rehab project can receive a federal income tax credit, called the Historic Tax Credit. The credit lowers the taxes owed on a dollar-for-dollar basis (as opposed to a tax deduction), on qualified rehabilitation expenses (QRE), *if* the work conforms to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (commonly called the Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation).[63] The 2017 federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act changed the tax credit to require that taxpayers take the 20 percent credit over five years instead of the option of taking it wholly in the year in which the building is placed into service.[64]

According to the National Park Service, "The State Historic Preservation Offices and the National Park Service review the rehabilitation work to ensure that it complies with the Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation."[65] The application process is done in three stages, *the first two of which must precede start of the work*: Part 1, which insures that a property is actually listed in the National Register (or applied for); Part 2, which thoroughly describes the intended project in advance of the work, allowing reviewers to see that it conforms to the Secretary's Standards; and Part 3, which documents the completed work.

Nationwide, from its enactment in 1976 through federal fiscal year 2019, the tax credit has led to an estimated $102.64 billion invested in rehabilitation, affecting "historic structures of every period, size, style, and type in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands," according to the National Park Service's most recent annual report on the program. The report goes on to state, "The Historic Tax Credit is the largest Federal program specifically supporting historic preservation. It generates much needed jobs and economic activity, enhances property values in older communities, creates affordable housing, and augments revenue for Federal,

[63] https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation.htm
[64] https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/rehabilitation-tax-credit-real-estate-tax-tips
[65] https://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm

500 SE Green St., Lee's Summit: Historic Tax Credit of $21,811.35

4317 Gibson Ave., St. Louis: Historic Tax Credit of $39,049.93

4069 Flad Ave., St. Louis: Historic Tax Credit of $23,473.10

Use of the Missouri Historic Tax Credit

Missouri's Tax Credit Accountability Report for calendar year 2018 reports that the state awarded $53,521,475.16 in Historic Tax Credits that year, of which $51,955,157.15 were issued to developers competing for larger projects (more than $250,000 in credits). These developer-run projects were responsible for at least 167 full time and 84 part time jobs.

Also in 2018, state records show that as of November 12, 2020, 35 projects have reported the use of the Missouri HTC, totaling $3,950,921.08 (so far), only two of which were above the $250,000 limit that requires competition for the award. Six, judging by the use of individuals' names rather than corporate/LLC names, were for individual homeowners with credits ranging for five of these from $68,750 to not quite $22,000; four of these were in St. Louis and one in Lee's Summit. (The sixth, in Kansas City, was an outlier at more than $161,000.) Shown here are the three lowest-cost projects.

Sources: Annual Status Report of Economic Development Programs, retrieved from https://ded.mo.gov/sites/default/files/Annual%20Tax%20Credit%20Accountability%20Report_6-19_0.pdf; residential HTC data retrieved from https://mapyourtaxes.mo.gov/MAP/TaxCredits/HomePage.aspx, specifically https://mapyourtaxes.mo.gov/Map/TaxCredits/Categories/Customer.aspx?cat=G&year=2018&prog=38). Photos are Google image captures, (left to right) 2018, 2018, and 2019.

state, and local governments, leveraging many times its cost in private expenditures on historic preservation. This widely recognized program has been instrumental in preserving the historic buildings and places that give our cities, towns, Main Streets, and rural areas their special character and has attracted new private investment to communities small and large throughout the nation."

As of 2019, 45,383 projects have been completed. Projects to date have resulted in 291,828 rehabilitated housing units and 312,176 new housing units, including 172,416 low- and moderate-income housing units. The year saw more than $5.7 billion in private investment in historic preservation and community revitalization, 17 percent of which involved projects under

$250,000. About 15 percent of projects involved properties not yet listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

For those reading this plan who are curious about the program, the 2019 annual report offers photos and case studies illustrating projects similar to those that might be possible in Liberty.[66] Missouri is among the most active states nationwide; from 2015 through 2019, it was among the eleven states exceeding one-billion-dollar totals in qualified rehab expenses, with more than $1.7 billion. Thus, considerable expertise exists within the state for taking advantage of this important historic preservation program. The Missouri Department of Economic Development administers the program.[67]

Thirty-seven states have passed companion state tax credits that apply similarly to income-producing property, and sometimes also to personal residences that are certified historic structures and meet a minimum investment threshold. Missouri state law provides an investment tax credit equal to 25 percent of approved costs associated with qualified rehabilitation for both types of historic properties; as with the federal level, the credit is referred to as a Historic Tax Credit. The state-level program has an aggregate annual cap for commercial properties; developments that exceed the state minimum of $275,000 must compete for an allocation of the tax credit within that cap. Owner-occupied residential properties have an individual project cap of $250,000 and there is no limit to the number of projects or their aggregate costs. The one barrier to the use of this tax credit for homeowners and developers of smaller properties is that the qualified expenditures must reach a total cost of at least 50 percent of the full basis of the project, that is, typically the acquisition cost. Balanced against this, the tax credit can be used against a wider array of tax liabilities, beyond state income taxes. (See sidebar, p. 111; for more information, see Appendix 1, Missouri Historic Tax Credit Basics.)

At a total credit of 45 cents on every dollar spent on qualified expenditures, reducing the bottom line of income tax by the total credit (federal plus state), developers of income-producing historic properties in Missouri have eagerly learned to combine federal and state credits to invest in ageing, severely deteriorated, or vacant structures. Homeowners, too, can gain 25 cents back for every dollar of qualified expenditures. In terms of benefiting Liberty, every project can be expected to stimulate nearby investment, whether or not the tax credits themselves are used in nearby projects.

Historic rehab tax credits can be combined with other tax incentives. A frequent companion approach for low-income housing and other projects is

[66] https://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives/taxdocs/tax-incentives-2019annual.pdf
[67] https://ded.mo.gov/programs/business/historic-preservation

A new home constructed in the Jewell Historic District (local and National Register) qualified for a Missouri Neighborhood Preservation Act (NPA) tax credit because its census tract is designated by the Missouri Department of Economic Development. The building's modern Craftsman style was approved by the HDRC.

the New Markets Tax Credit that attract private investment to economically distressed communities.[68]

In Missouri, a tax credit established by the Missouri Neighborhood Preservation Act of 1999 (effective as of January 1, 2000) is designed to aid in the rehabilitation and new construction of homes in identified census tracts. The Missouri Department of Economic Development administers this program: "Upon approval from the Department of Economic Development, the tax credit recipient can choose to use the credit against their tax liability or has the option of selling/transferring the credit to another person/entity. The tax credit is issued at the completion of the project and based upon approval of the final paperwork. The credit must first be applied against the tax liability for the tax year in which the credit is issued. Thereafter, any excess credit may be applied towards the tax liability for the three prior years or the five subsequent years."

The credits can be combined with historic preservation tax credits, but if a program participant claims those credits, the maximum available credits under the NPA program will be the lesser of 20 percent of the eligible costs or $40,000. As with historic tax credits, participants must apply in advance of the project to be sure of receiving them.[69] Because they are transferable, nonprofit entities such as Community Development Corporations (CDCs)

[68] https://www.cdfifund.gov/programs-training/Programs/new-markets-tax-credit/Pages/default.aspx

[69] https://ded.mo.gov/sites/default/files/program/instructions/2018%20NPA%20Guidelines%20%20Application.pdf and https://ded.mo.gov/sites/default/files/programs/flyers/NPAProgramSummary10.pdf

are able to use NPA credits; federal tax credits may be syndicated (there are private corporations that specialize in this) and so may also be used by nonprofits (although in Missouri there are specific limitations on the use of the state tax credit).

Action for Historic Tax Credits

Action 4.4.A: Build a local constituency for using the Missouri and federal Historic Tax Credits. Liberty's property owners and commercial developers of existing buildings are leaving money on the table when they fail to take advantage of the rehab tax credits as part of the "capital stack" in financing commercial rehabilitation projects. Use of the Historic Tax Credit takes good planning and careful negotiation of the preservation process at both the local (HDRC) and state levels (DED and SHPO) – and the federal level in the case of depreciable property (National Park Service). When applicants are not in a hurry, they may enjoy considerable financial benefits from undergoing the tax credit process. Moreover, at least at the federal level, developers can proceed at will and at their own pace and are able to capture the entire credit. While the paperwork involved might be perceived by some as a hassle, the rules are clear and consistently applied; if a few owners in Liberty can be persuaded to use the process, through word of mouth about their positive experience, they may help to build a local, long-term culture of taking advantage of the program.

At the state level, developers must compete to participate if they exceed the state minimum of $275,000. Owner-occupied residential properties have a project cap of $250,000. Thus smaller projects, both commercial and residential – the kinds of projects most often seen in Liberty – have fewer

The pair of grand Colonial Revival homes from the early twentieth century on Ridge Road have not been surveyed for Liberty's historic resources inventory. The surveys of the 1980s and 1995 were limited to the City's 1940 boundaries.

barriers to achieving the tax credit – putting more money in the hands of their owners to be able to spend on other needed projects.

- The HDRC can provide leadership in priming owners' willingness to undertake the work involved by offering occasional introductory workshops for commercial and residential property owners (together or separately) and local tax advisors; this would make more people familiar with the potential and details involved, reducing their reluctance to try something new. Members of the HDRC should take the training themselves.
- The HDRC, particularly the design review subcommittee (when project planning may still be flexible), should routinely ask applicants if they have considered applying and offer information if they have not.
- Liberty's administrator of the Chapter 353 tax abatement program (described in Chapter 5, City Planning) should also routinely ask applicants if they have considered applying and offer information if they have not.

4.5. Historic Resource Surveys

The process of nominating, preserving, and protecting local historic districts and landmarks begins with surveys of historic resources. Liberty has had several thorough surveys, but they are old. As summarized by project coordinator Deon K. Wolfenbarger of Three Gables Preservation in the most recent of those surveys (writing in 1995):

> The City of Liberty began a formal inventory of its historic resources in 1984. This first phase of survey was centered

The Charles Houston House, 316 N. Gallatin, was recorded in Liberty's 1995 survey of African American historic resources. The survey form reads: "This house is on an outlot in part of the Original Town of Liberty, platted in approximately 1823. It is the boyhood residence of Sam Houston, First District city councilman from 1975 to 1993 and the only African-American to ever serve on the city council. Charles (and Sam) Houston are descended from the Houstons that settled in Clay County in 1844, a prominent African-American family in Liberty. Water was turned on at this address in 1945. Alice Byrd, the widow of Albert Byrd and daughter of Charles Houston, lived at this address from approximately 1958-94. The style of the house suggests an estimated construction date of 1910. A former resident believes that the rear additions were made in the 1940s."

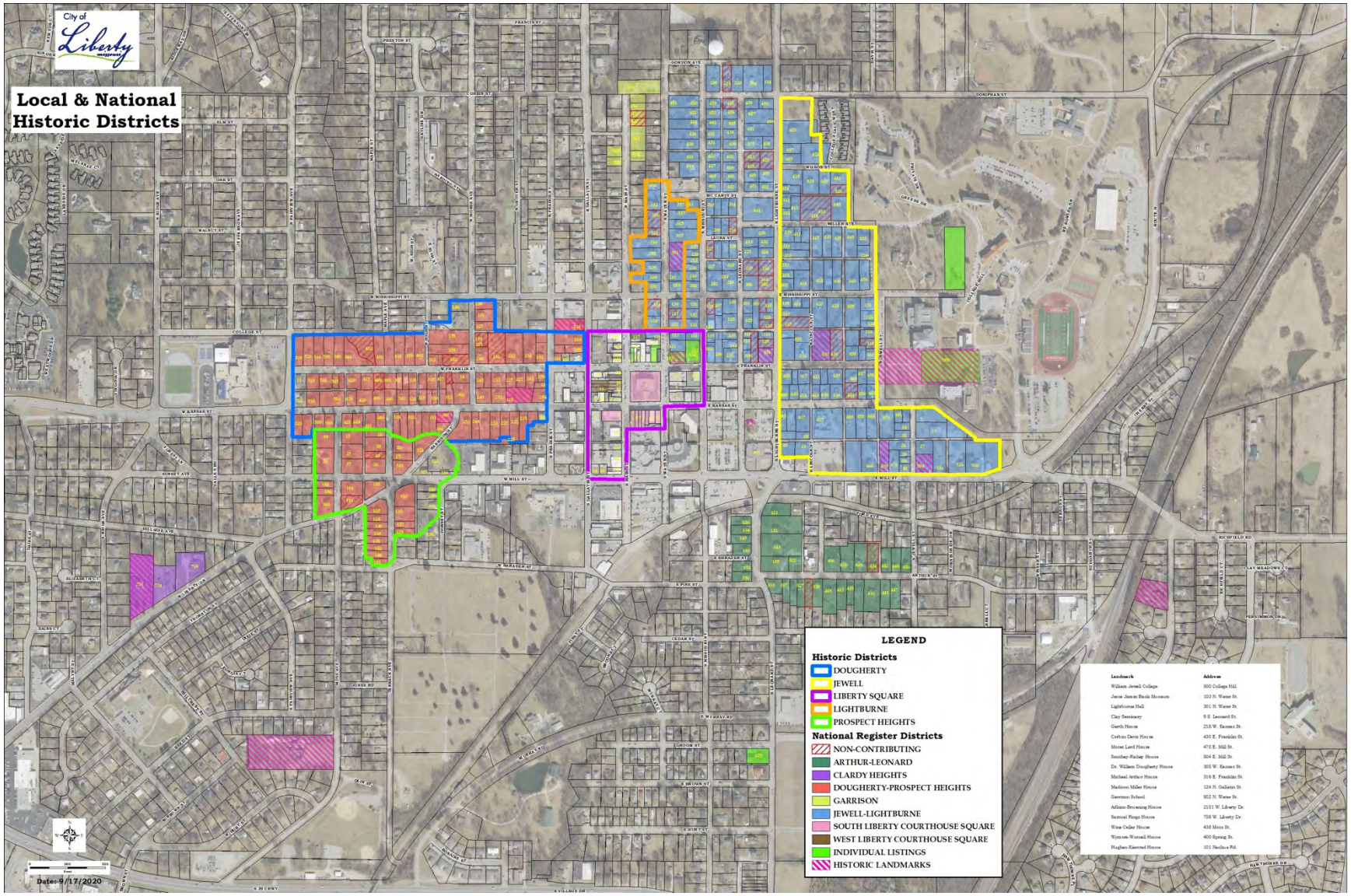
> around the Clay County Courthouse. Approximately 100 buildings were inventoried on the four streets which form the courthouse square – Main, Franklin, Water, and Kansas. The next survey phase was begun in 1985, and 275 buildings were surveyed in the residential neighborhoods north and east of the square. The last phase of survey completed before the present [1995] project was conducted in 1986-87, and covered the residential areas west and south of the square. 218 buildings were inventoried in this phase.

The 1995 survey was a specialized survey recommended in an intervening summary report, and consisted of surveying 171 buildings identified across Liberty as related to the community's African American Heritage.

The four surveys are available on the Missouri SHPO website[70]:

- Liberty - African American Architecture (1995)
- Liberty - Central Business District (1985)
- Liberty - Residential, Phase II (1985)
- Liberty - Residential, Phase III (1986)

[70] https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/survey-eg.htm



Map 4.1. Historic Districts (Both Local and Listed in the National Register of Historic Places)

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This residence at 458 N. Missouri Street in the Jewell-Lightburne Historic District, now listed in the National Register but not protected by local designation, was first surveyed in 1985 in Liberty's Phase II survey of 275 residential buildings to the north and east of the square. The survey form provides the following description: "Characteristic of the Shirtwaist Style are: the steep bell-cast gable; contrasting material of the first floor and second story; oriel, here, extending the height of the two stories (N façade [actually south; see left photo]); and the broad porch with gable roof (E facade). First floor fenestration has stone lintels and lugsills [a sill with its ends extending beyond the window or door and built into the masonry at the jambs]; 2nd story windows are tucked tightly beneath the wide eaves and have plain moldings. HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE: The Shirtwaist style gained popularity in Kansas City before the turn of the century. Always utilizing two contrasting materials, either brick or stone for the first floor and shingles or clapboard for the upper stories, it took its name from the woman's shirtwaist dress it resembled. The 2-story elevation, broad front porch, wide eaves and gable or hip roof can be understood as overgrown bungaloid houses [like the bungalow style, but without full-width porch]. Exterior decoration – selected from pattern books – ranged from Colonial to Victorian. Largely contractor built, these homes exist in large numbers throughout the greater Kansas City area."

Even though these are surveys conducted so long ago, this documentation appears to be thorough, extensive, and complete as far as the areas surveyed are concerned.

Moreover, the *Liberty Summary Survey Report* is an excellent, 110-page snapshot of the surveying done in Liberty that was completed in 1987. It recommends potential historic districts and individual landmarks, with priorities for designation.[71]

The summary report furthermore recommends undertaking the development of "historic contexts":

> The previously surveyed historic resources in Liberty were evaluated in accordance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Preservation Planning, Identification, and Evaluation. According to these standards, this evaluation of historic resources must be referenced against broad patterns of historical development within a community, defined as historic contexts. Cultural resources have long been examined from some sort of historical perspective, but by evaluating them in

[71] https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/survey/CLAS001-R.pdf

The Rev. Moses Lard House, 470 E. Mill, is a rare frame Greek Revival residence. The 1987 report summarizing the first surveys in Liberty recommended "Greek Revival Residences" as a potential context study. (Google image capture March 2019)

> reference to historic contexts, important links can be made with local patterns or major themes in Missouri history. Therefore, an accurate appraisal of the significance of these properties can't be established with locally meaningful terms unless they are defined by historic contexts. Only then may the criteria for evaluating properties for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places be successfully applied. Historic contexts broadly define cultural themes within geographical and chronological limits. In Liberty, these themes are represented by its historic resources. The individual houses and other properties reflect the development of Liberty's built environment. Between the level of individual buildings and the broad historic contexts is a concept known as property type. A property type is a grouping of individual properties based on shared physical or associative characteristics. In Liberty, six broad historic contexts were developed, which contained 24 property types. (p. 3)

The report preliminarily identified Liberty historic contexts. The first historic context, "center of trade for Liberty" (the Clay County Courthouse and the town square), was subsequently codified as a Multiple Property Submission (using a Multiple Property Documentation Form – observers will find "MPS" used more often now than "MPDF") and approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.[72] The MPDF has been amended once; as other contexts are

[72] https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/nps-nr/64500301.pdf; subsequent to this document, an amendment was filed adding two additional contexts, "Establishing a Community: Liberty from 1817-1860" and The 'Bon ton' Suburban Community: Liberty from 1896-1946."

Buildings fifty years or older should be surveyed throughout Liberty when the inventory is updated. As of the date of this plan, that standard would mean structures dating through 1970 would be considered. As the sample homes shown here might suggest with their interesting rooflines characteristic of the era, Liberty has a number of noteworthy buildings and neighborhoods dating from the post-World War II years, with most located well beyond the 1940 city limits used to delineate earlier surveys.

developed, the MPDF may be further amended. The other contexts recommended by the 1987 summary report were:

- Exploration and Settlement in Clay County, 1817-1860 (property types: Log Buildings; Greek Revival Residences; Settlement Religious Buildings; Vernacular Settlement Residences);
- The Real Estate "Boom" and Residential Growth in Liberty, 1866-1896 (Victorian Residences; National Folk Style Residences)
- Suburban Residential Growth in Liberty, 1896-1941 (Revival Style Houses);
- The Education of Citizens: Liberty and Beyond; and

While it is difficult to find on the MO SHPO website, it can be downloaded from the National Archives website, https://catalog.archives.gov/id/63817186; it will download under the filename <Liberty, Clay County, Missouri MPS AD_01/04/2001 – 64500302>.

- Transportation in Clay County (The "Interurban" Electric Resources).

Subsequently, two additional contexts have been written:

- Establishing a Community: Liberty from 1817-1860; and
- The "Bon ton" Suburban Community: Liberty from 1896-1946.[73]

Actions for Surveying

Action 4.5.A: Carry out all contexts sketched in the original Multiple Property Submission, as appropriate based on modern research. The City of Liberty is a Missouri treasure. As a whole it should be regarded as a historic resource and deserves to have a complete historic context written that covers its founding to the present. Information for the years between World War II and the present should include the sequence/dates of subdivisions as they occurred and the roadways and other public infrastructure that have been developed to support the city's significant expansion.

Action 4.5.B: **Update and extend Liberty's inventory to the modern city limits.** The 1940 city boundary was used to restrict the original set of surveys, a useful tactic in delineating focus (and limiting costs). Today's boundary has expanded to incorporate a few outlying farmhouses and country properties. Moreover, in the more than thirty years since the 1987 summary report was written, architectural historians have developed an appreciation for "mid-century modern," a collection of architectural styles that began with ranch houses built after 1941, with commercial buildings extending the "International" style decades beyond its beginnings in the 1920s. Liberty, like much of the Kansas City region post-war, developed substantial mid-century neighborhoods following the end of World War II; consultants for this plan also identified at least one potentially individually significant mid-century

[73] https://catalog.archives.gov/id/63817186

Only the central buildings of this first block of North Main Street are listed in the National Register as the Liberty Square West historic district (all are included in the local historic district). As a comparison of the original survey photo, opposite page, readily shows, the integrity of the entire block has improved considerably.

residence. Therefore, the timespan cited for the theme "Suburban Residential Growth in Liberty" would extend at least into the 1960s. In addition the survey should examine and report on the changes in the conditions of National Register-listed buildings and districts. Finally, the survey should be converted to fully digitized access to all records (photos, inventory forms, permits) within the GIS system. It may be necessary to phase the survey and associated GIS tasks; decisions on priorities should be based on the research and assessment provided in completing the historic contexts under Action 4.5.A.

4.6. National Register Listings

The National Register is the nation's official list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. Properties listed in the National Register may be significant at the community, state, or national level. For Liberty, nominations for listing historic properties generated by owners (or the City in the case of historic districts) go first to the Missouri SHPO where a professional review board considers each property proposed for listing and makes a recommendation on its eligibility. National Historic Landmarks are a separate designation, but upon designation, NHLs are listed in the National Register of Historic Places if not already listed.[74]

Liberty has eight National Register historic districts and eight individually listed National Register buildings and sites (see Map 4.1, p. 117, and Appendix 2). The Missouri SHPO provides a web page providing listings in Clay County with links to the nominations.[75] The most recent nomination, for Mt. Memorial Cemetery on the grounds of William Jewell College, was

[74] https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/index.htm
[75] https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/clay.htm

accepted for listing in 2012. At least fourteen of the sixteen listings benefited from the Multiple Property Submission – that is, nominations benefited from the considerable research provided in the original historic context, and were not required to provide extensive research on their own.

Actions for National Register Nominations

Action 4.6.A: Update National Register nominations for the Liberty Square South and West historic districts; consolidation may also be appropriate. In the years since the two original nominations (and other individual nominations based on the historic context statement in the Multiple Property Submission), the integrity of more buildings facing onto the Courthouse Square and immediately adjacent to those blocks has improved, as demonstrated by the pair of photos provided on pages 122-23.

Action 4.6.B: Encourage other National Register nominations. The City of Liberty has completed listings for several important historic districts and individual buildings. Continued preparation of National Register nominations for significant historic resources should be pursued by the City and/or owners (as appropriate), with a focus on National Register listings for significant neighborhoods that retain integrity. Prioritization should be set during the survey described in Action 4.5.B. Note that by amending the current Multiple Property Submission already accepted by the National Register with additional contexts (or updating existing ones), the City lessens the effort involved in individual and district nominations.

4.7. Historic District Review Commission

The Historic District Review Commission (HDRC) is the City's official voice for the protection, enhancement, perpetuation, and use of historically significant properties. It is governed by Sec. 30-20 of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). The HDRC should participate actively in city governance and be integral to city activities. It should be proactive in performing its duties through the leadership of its members with support from city staff. The principal responsibilities of the HDRC are:

- To inform and educate the citizens of Liberty on their historic and architectural heritage;
- To investigate, recommend and keep a register of properties designated as historic landmarks or districts; and
- To provide assistance to property owners regarding the preservation or renovation of their buildings.[76]

More specifically, in performing its duties, the HDRC is expected to take active leadership in:

[76] https://www.libertymissouri.gov/2024/Historic-District-Review-Commission

- **Inventorying, documenting, and designating historic resources and monitoring the overall condition of historic resources city-wide.** This relates to the HDRC's powers to
    - "Identify historically and architecturally significant properties, structures and areas and recommend to the commission and city council the designation of properties or structures having special historic, community or architectural value as "landmarks" and "historic districts"; and
    - "Keep a register of all properties and structures that have been designated as landmarks or historic districts, including all information required for each designation" and "Nominate landmarks and historic districts to the National Register of Historic Places, and to review and comment on any National Register nominations submitted to the commission upon request of the mayor or city council." (UDO Sec. 30-20.5 (1)-(3))
- **Participating in and supporting City and private sector programs for the enhancement of historic neighborhoods and commercial centers and providing ongoing information, guidance, and advice to the Mayor, City Council, boards and commissions, and city departments.** This relates to the HDRC's power to "review and provide information and comments to all boards and commissions on any matter affecting historically and architecturally significant property, structures and areas" (UDO Sec. 30-20.5 (7)) and to review the City's public improvement and land acquisition projects (UDO Sec. 30-20.6).
- **Reviewing the proposed designs for construction activity within designated Local Historic Districts (involving both old and new buildings and additions) and affecting designated Landmarks; and reviewing applications for proposed demolition of historic buildings**, under the HDRC's powers to
    - "Hold public hearings and to review applications for certificates of appropriateness";
    - "Cause the issuance of stop work orders for any construction, alteration, removal or demolition undertaken without a certificate of appropriateness"; and
    - "Develop and routinely evaluate specific design guidelines for the alteration, construction or removal of landmarks, or property and structures within historic districts." (UDO Sec. 30-20.5(4)-(6))
- **Public outreach to promote historic preservation**, under the HDRC's power to "undertake any other action or activity necessary or appropriate to effectuate its powers and duties, or for implementation of the purposes of this Article." (UDO Sec. 30-20.5 (8))

The HDRC has first-level review of applications for Certificates of Appropriateness (COAs) where the city is providing financial incentives and demolitions, after which the City Council decides; for other COAs, the

HDRC has the power of final decision. The City's process for appeals and referrals of decisions is generally strong; appeals to HDRC COAs are first to the board of zoning adjustment and then to circuit court, or, in the case of a demolition denial by the council, a return to the HDRC for a certificate of economic hardship and on through the same appeals process once again.

Actions for the HDRC

Action 4.7.A: Prepare a yearly work plan for projects to be undertaken, including continuing an **annual report** to the Mayor and City Council on historic preservation issues, accomplishments, and initiatives citywide (based on the annual report provided to the SHPO to maintain the City's CLG status).

Action 4.7.B: Reinforce the role and responsibilities of the HDRC with periodic training; require that new Commissioners receive training prior to appointment.

Action 4.7.C: Reinforce the HDRC's decision process to ensure that it conforms to best practices. Decisions should be consistent and well-grounded in law and policy, which generally requires periodic training to reinforce; findings of fact are critical, and should conform to UDO specifications.

Action 4.7.D: Assign HDRC members to be liaisons to the City Council and other boards and commissions to monitor issues that may impact historic resources. The HDRC is charged to "review and provide information and comments to all boards and commissions on any matter affecting historically and architecturally significant property, structures and areas." (UDO Sec. 30-20.5(7)).) Flag potential historic preservation issues for consideration by the HDRC. Maintain an ongoing list of issues including timeframes in which actions and recommendations must be provided. Attend meetings, provide information and guidance, provide written reports with information and recommendations, and provide testimony as appropriate on issues related to historic preservation. Use the HDRC's annual report as the basis for a once-a-year address to each body.

Action 4.7.E: Redouble efforts to align City actions across all departments with the needs of historic preservation. The City's Unified Development Ordinance states that "the HDRC shall review public improvement and land acquisition by the City of Liberty or any of its departments or agencies, where such improvements and acquisitions shall be on the site of or within two hundred (200) feet of any landmark, or within two hundred (200) feet of any boundary of a historic district. The HDRC shall review the project plan, public improvement or land acquisition to determine its effect upon the historic or architectural character of the landmark or historic district and forward a report to the city council. The report shall include recommendations for changes to the preliminary design

Under the City's Unified Development Ordinance, the HDRC is empowered to review public improvements and land acquisition by the City of Liberty or any of its departments or agencies, on the site of or within 200 feet of any locally designated landmark or boundary of a local historic district. While Mt. Memorial Cemetery is listed in the National Register, it is rare for cemeteries to be so listed; the City would have to designate Fairvew and New Hope cemeteries to include them in the HDRC's power of review. The rustic stone gate to Fairview Cemetery was constructed in 1910.

or land acquisition that will lessen or alleviate any adverse effect upon the historic or architectural character of the landmark or historic district." (UDO Sec. 30-20.6) This excellent practice will help to assure that City actions will support and not undermine historic preservation and affects public works, parks, economic development, and other departments as well planning. As with the HDRC's delegation of a certain level of review to the City Historic Preservation Officer (CHPO) for the sake of efficiency, the CHPO should be the first line of review, referring to the HDRC when needed.

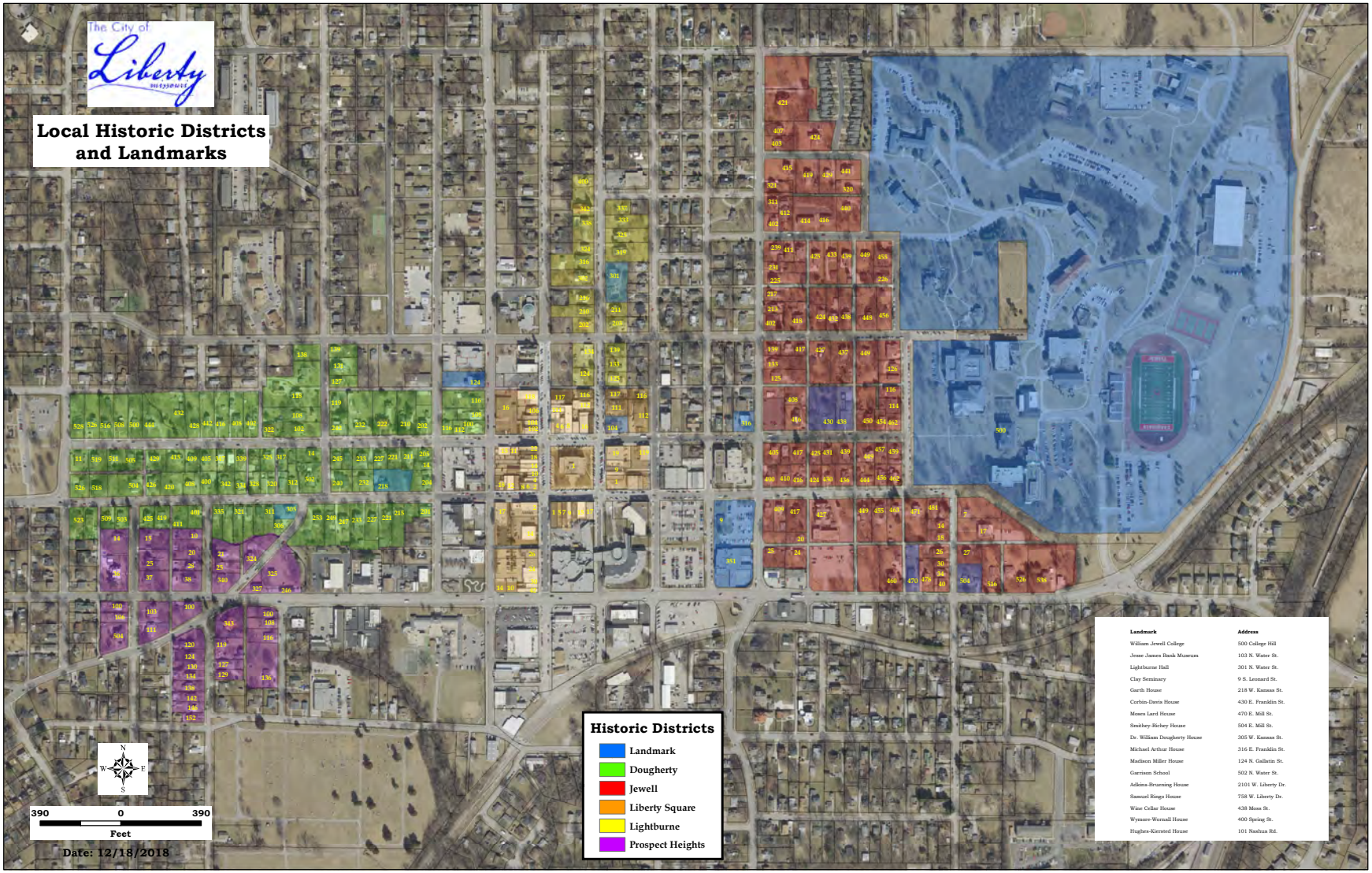
Action 4.7.F: Continue the HDRC's design subcommittee. The subcommittee is specified in the UDO: "The historic district review commission may establish a design subcommittee of five (5) of its members to meet with applicants at any time during the application process to review and comment on proposed applications. An applicant may request a meeting with the subcommittee before or during the review of any application. The subcommittee may issue a certificate of appropriateness for standard applications upon the affirmative vote of four (4) of its members, when delay to the next regular meeting would create an unnecessary inconvenience to an applicant." (UDO Sec. 30-73) Implementation of this feature of the law has been flexible, welcomed by applicants, and demonstrably helpful and effective in insuring complete applications that the HDRC can act upon quickly. Those interviewed for this plan mentioned that the subcommittee's willingness to make site visits has proven especially helpful in the HDRC's ambassadorship to the community.

Action 4.7.G: Augment the HDRC's public engagement. The HDRC should participate in public outreach initiatives of other entities whose work affects historic preservation, revitalization, and historical interpretation within the city and should take primary responsibility for outreach related to

the maintenance, treatment, and design of historic resources. While this is additional work and asks that the HDRC do more than focus on the single task of issuing Certificates of Appropriateness, going beyond its regulatory role to embrace its educational role, the rewards are considerable. Such public outreach can yield more-educated applicants and long-range community support for the HDRC and the historic preservation program. Initiatives may include interpretation, historic publications, website information, social media, events and other forms of public outreach:

- **Conduct periodic public workshops** on the maintenance and treatment of historic properties, including such tax incentives as the Missouri Historic Tax Credit and the City's 353 tax abatement program. Hands-on public workshops held over the years in Liberty have been popular, particularly in helping owners understand how to rehabilitate older windows.
- **Work with the SHPO to assist with the publication of "an interactive forum and digital directory of craftsmen** who have skills related to the repair and maintenance of older properties." (Action 1.B.4 of the Statewide Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan)
- **Consider providing leadership regionally in developing preservation trades training** by reaching out to statewide and nearby partners about the need for more skilled workers in preservation trades. Model programs are underway at Preservation Maryland[77], the Michigan Historic Preservation Network[78], and Gem City Hilltop Community and Housing Development, Inc. (a Community Development Corporation in Dayton, OH, that focuses on historic preservation initiatives), which is currently seeking funding from the State of Ohio to establish the Miami Valley Historic Preservation Institute to provide training for owners and contractors. The Missouri SHPO has called for providing "instruction in preservation techniques in high school industrial arts and/or vocational training programs." (Action 1.E.4. of the Statewide Comprehensive Plan)
- **Work with the SHPO to assist with the development of "a database of volunteers who are interested in community service rehabilitation opportunities" and to help "establish a statewide volunteer day** to physically rehabilitate historic properties." (Actions 1.B.5 and 1.B.6 of the Statewide Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan)

[77] https://www.preservationmaryland.org/programs/the-campaign-for-historic-trades/
[78] https://www.mhpn.org/living-trades-academy/



Map 4.2. Locally Designated Historic Districts and Landmarks

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- **Partner with the DAR and the Archives on refining and extending the historic plaque program for "century homes"** (whether or not landmarked/in Local Historic Districts; see Actions 4.9.D and 4.9.F for further discussion of the use of plaques).
- **Revive and refine the awards program for meritorious rehab and good new design** in Local Historic Districts and for Landmarks.
- **Ask City-based interpretive and historical programs and neighborhood groups to provide a once-a-year group reporting session** on ways that these programs raise awareness of the City's historic resources and stories. The simple power of the HDRC to ask for information can help to bring these organizations together, focus public attention on their accomplishments, and encourage their mutual cooperation over time in supporting events, signage, and other means of assuring that the general public appreciates the work of the HDRC together with the organizations in question.

4.8. Protecting Locally Designated Historic Districts

Local Historic Districts are vital for encouraging owners to invest in their historic properties, by encouraging careful review of proposals for changes in the district (including demolition and new construction as well as rehabilitation of and additions to existing buildings), thereby reducing the risk that development adverse to historic investment will be permitted. Liberty has had considerable success in designating Local Historic Districts and providing substantial review of proposed changes to structures within those districts, based on carefully drawn design guidelines.

One of the most important actions not yet taken in Liberty concerns providing protection for the considerable "gap" between the Lightburne and Jewell Local Historic Districts. Both Local Historic Districts are listed in the National Register, as part of the single, much larger Jewell-Lightburne historic district. Other listed districts or portions of districts are similarly unprotected. Fortunately, boundaries for the Chapter 353 tax abatement program include the National Register historic districts, which has encouraged the preservation of those properties, as explained in Chapter 5, City Planning. Perversely however, property owners outside the Local Historic Districts enjoy somewhat more attractive incentives in pursuing the abatement if they voluntarily adhere to Local Historic District standards, which means they have no direct financial reason to wish to be a part of the Local Historic Districts. (They are also able to take advantage of Missouri's Historic Tax Credit if they are in NR historic districts, whether or not the district is locally designated.)

The long-term benefits of having designated and regulated Liberty's historic districts through the local Unified Development Ordinance have been considerable. It would be much to the City's benefit if those districts were to

These houses are listed in the National Register, as part of the single, quite large Jewell-Lightburne historic district, but are not protected by local historic district designation and therefore vulnerable to adverse changes to their integrity. One of the most important actions not yet taken in Liberty is providing protection for this gap between the Lightburne and Jewell local historic districts.

be expanded in order to stabilize and enhance the value of still more properties. In the context of the Kansas City region, Liberty offers highly desirable residential neighborhoods. Thus far, the overall attractiveness of the community and its schools has provided stability in demand and investment. There are risks, however, in that smaller properties might be converted to rentals (single-family; the City put a stop to the tendency to subdivide larger properties) OR that smaller or 'outmoded' properties in some more desirable locations might be demolished and replaced with larger, more modern residences. These desirable locations may include mid-century neighborhoods not previously considered for local protection.

The City has long been sensitive to the desires of some property owners in the NR historic districts not to be subject to the additional regulatory layer implied by design review by the HDRC – even though the experience of most owners who go through the process has been highly positive. This "leave me be" posture, however, should be balanced against the benefits of wider protections against any adverse trends of changing demand in the Kansas City region. As the region grows – it is projected to add more than half a million people (plus more than 260,000 households and well over 300,000 jobs) from 2010 to 2040[79] – the City must take care to safeguard its unique historic character and assets. It is well to think strategically and employ public education to lay a foundation for support for greater protections over time.

[79] https://www.marc.org/Data-Economy/Forecast/Forecast-Process/2040-Forecast

Actions for Protecting Locally Designated Historic Districts

(Photo by Jeanine Thill, City of Liberty)

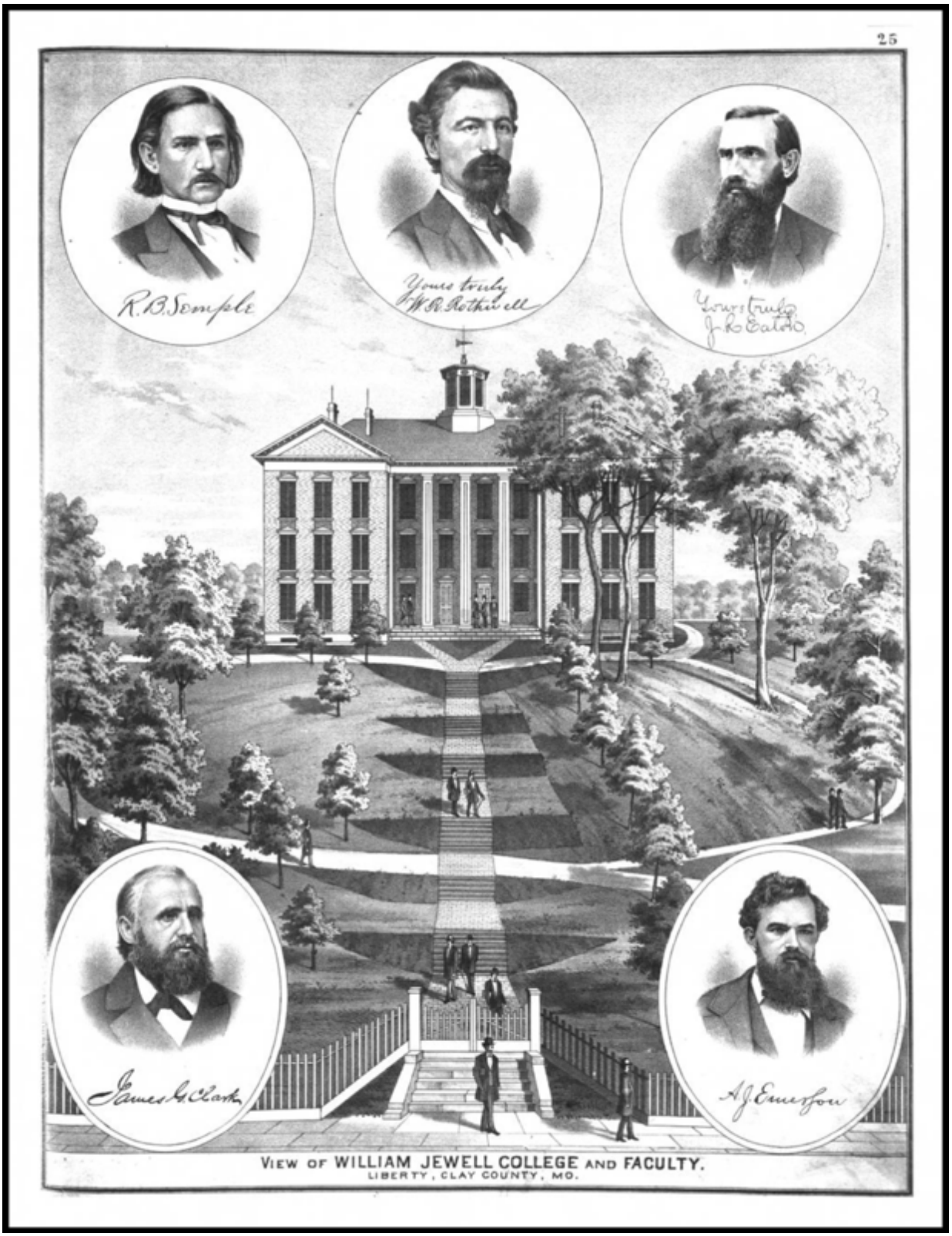
Action 4.8.A: Improve the identification of local historic districts with additional signage. Mark local historic districts with street-sign "toppers" (over time as street signs are maintained, or all at once if funding can be obtained) or other means of encouraging residents, visitors, and buyers to understand their locations. While entrance signs exist for some historic districts, and should also be encouraged, the pervasive nature of street signs provides a constant reminder block by block for every historic district resident. This would have the benefit of both alerting some owners who may be unaware that they live in a protected district and causing others living outside such districts to realize they do not enjoy the benefits of consistent protection.

Action 4.8.B: Consider undertaking a study of the economic benefits of local historic districts, to lay the foundation for action to protect a wider portion of National Register-listed districts. Many municipalities large and small have undertaken these studies over time. They routinely reveal that the value of properties within locally protected historic districts has risen more than the value of properties outside the districts. This is the tangible benefit of encouraging property owners to invest in the assurance that their neighbors cannot undermine that investment through adverse changes next door. Given the concern that there can be a downside to the effects of rising property values on affordable housing, especially for renters (a process called "gentrification"), such a study can also be designed to look at those impacts and recommend steps to mitigate them. (Note that the Missouri SHPO also calls for such evaluation in the statewide comprehensive preservation plan (see p. 109; see also actions under the SHPO's Goal 2, "Strengthen and enhance historic preservation as an economic development tool," starting on p. 27 of the statewide plan.)

Action 4.8.C: Consider expanding existing local historic districts and naming new ones. Such action should follow completion of the city-wide survey recommended above, plus consistent, long-term public outreach to communicate the benefits of Local Historic Districts as recommended for the HDRC (see Action 4.8.F).

Action 4.8.D: Improve the City's local property tax incentives (and/or other incentives) for rehabilitation of properties within Local Historic Districts. (See Chapter 5 for details.)

Action 4.8.E: Update the current design guidelines to reflect HDRC experience. While the existing design guidelines are commendable, best practice is to update on occasion, with a continued emphasis on user-friendly illustrations.



A view of Jewell Hall from an 1877 atlas of Clay County, at the time the only building on campus. Jewell Hall is a designated City of Liberty historic landmark. (Image courtesy State Historical Society of Missouri, from An Illustrated Historical Atlas of Clay County, Missouri, *1877, p. 25, retrieved from https://digital.shsmo.org/digital/collection/plat/id/1071)*

Because of a lack of public awareness of the value of good design and high-quality materials in undertaking rehabilitation of older structures, the HDRC has had occasional difficulty when applicants object to its recommendations. A well-illustrated set of design guidelines can be a handbook to help guide property owners on the care of their historic assets.

Action 4.8.F: Undertake a concerted public relations campaign within existing Local Historic Districts about the design guidelines and the benefits of districts in general, distributing either a brochure or the guidelines themselves to every property owner and asking real estate agents to provide the brochure at closings (or some other mechanism as part of a "welcome" packet).

4.9. Protecting Local Historic Landmarks

Under the same municipal code that allows the designation of historic districts, the City of Liberty can recognize individual buildings, called local landmarks, and protect them in the same way as historic districts. Eighteen such sites are listed (William Jewell College is listed once, but there are two properties on the campus designated, Jewell Hall and the President's House; see Map 4.1, p. 117) It is a best practice to assure both that landmarks are recognized by the community and their owners (who generally seek such designation) and that they protected through HDRC design review. However, the number is quite small – and some are already protected under local historic district designations (the Jesse James Bank Museum building, for example). As with historic districts, the City's practice has been to designate landmarks only if their owners desire; a recent and controversial attempt to use the process to delay demolition of a large historic residence failed narrowly by HDRC vote. The situation indicates that greater knowledge of landmark-quality buildings across the City, and potential threats, might avert such last-minute maneuvers.

Actions for Protecting Locally Designated Landmarks

Action 4.9.A: Continue to encourage the designation of historically significant public and private properties as landmarks in accordance with the city's Unified Development Ordinance.

Action 4.9.B: Following the updated city-wide survey recommended above, maintain a list of potential future landmarks.

Action 4.9.C: Work with public and private property owners to encourage the nomination of landmarks each year.

Action 4.9.D: Actively publicize designated landmarks through the city's website, social media, publications, plaques, and programs such as yearly tours.

Action 4.9.E: Consider using landmark designation to allow owners special access to potential incentives, such as (1) design assistance for maintenance issues and owners' desired updates, and (2) access to local grants, loans, and property tax incentives. Among other benefits, this would encourage owners even within locally designated historic districts to seek recognition.

Action 4.9.F: Consider establishing a parallel program of honorary "Liberty History Awards" (or some other name) whereby owners of any historic property across the city can apply to join a list of such properties by submitting documentation about the history of their property. This might become a refinement of the "century homes" historic plaque program operated in concert with the DAR and the Archives (as mentioned in Action 4.9.F). A model for such a program is one maintained by Jefferson City, MO, which adds a few properties each year to what has grown to be a long list providing interesting history and long-term documentation. That city's Historic Preservation Commission states, "Whatever their condition or use, the Commission truly appreciates the willingness of the individual property owners to allow their properties to be recognized for the historic and architectural contribution they make to our community."[80]

4.10. Cooperating with the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office

The HDRC (and other Liberty-based preservation entities) should engage with the SHPO, take advantage of technical assistance available from that office, and seek to be a statewide model for best practices in historic preservation. City leaders should actively support State Historic Preservation Office programs and funding through engagement with federal and state legislators and others. The City's HDRC and staff should participate in and support State Historic Preservation Office programs such as workshops, training sessions, and conferences and provide information and support to other Missouri communities as requested.

CLGs are able to become involved with the SHPO in Section 106 and National Register nominations on a preferred basis. As appropriate, the City should participate as an interested party in Section 106 and other state and federal environmental review processes in the City of Liberty managed by the SHPO. Preservation staff should avail themselves of Section 106 training offered by the SHPO or others in order to be prepared to participate effectively.

In addition, the HDRC and preservation staff should work with the Missouri SHPO to develop and carry out Action 4.4.B, a strategy to encourage greater use of the Missouri and federal Historic Tax Credits. As emphasized in the

[80] https://www.jeffersoncitymo.gov/live_play/history_heritage/landmark_awards.php

The Wymore-Worrall House, 400 Spring St., is a designated local landmark and one of three buildings in Liberty known to be of log construction according to the Liberty Survey Summary. (As is often the case, all have been altered by clapboard coverings.) This residence was built sometime after 1835 by James M. Hughes, an early settler and merchant in Clay County. Hughes had a mail contract, so mail may have been delivered to this residence, thus contributing to local lore that the structure used to be a stage coach stop. William H. Wymore, owner of a livery stable and several large tracts of land, purchased the property and lived there with his family until after the Civil War. It is probable that he was responsible for the Greek Revival modifications such as the porch visible in this Google image. (Google image capture September 2012)

discussion of that strategy, owners who fail to take advantage of these tax credits are missing out on dollars that can be returned to their pockets so they can continue to invest in Liberty's historic resources, benefitting not only themselves but also Liberty as a community.

Actions for Cooperating with the Missouri SHPO

Action 4.10.A: Review the Missouri Comprehensive State Historic Preservation Plan and identify how the City of Liberty can be a model of best practices in its implementation.

Action 4.10.B: Seek to host statewide conferences, now that Liberty has enough hotels (including those pending/under construction as of this writing). Hosting statewide conferences will have at least three benefits: boosting local tourism income, providing local training opportunities to the HDRC and other stakeholders, and enhancing Liberty's statewide profile.

4.11. Administrative Resources

The City of Liberty has one position devoted part-time to historic preservation. If the survey, promotion, and protection actions described throughout this Historic Preservation Plan, especially in this chapter, are to be implemented effectively, and if the City is to compete for grants to help carry out these ideas, staffing enhancements will be required. This might be carried out in a number of ways, including use of contractual services and adding staff for the other responsibilities currently carried by the preservation program administrator. In addition, the annual work plan described in Action 4.7.A can be used as a tool to set priorities and design phases for the work to gradually get it done within budgetary limitations.

Action for Enhancing Administrative Resources

Action 4.11.A: Consider increasing administrative resources for the historic preservation program to enable additional initiatives supported by staff and consultants.

4.12. Conclusion

Without a doubt, over the past thirty-plus years as detailed in this chapter, the City of Liberty has built a substantial foundation of historic preservation programs for even greater achievements over the next thirty years. The community's longstanding interest in history and historic resources has led to many accomplishments of which it can be quite proud. Actions identified in this chapter can bring even more gains for historic preservation over the coming years.

The following chapter turns the plan's attention to programs considered outside the formal historic preservation work of the City, to other City programs whose impacts on historic preservation outcomes are considerable and indeed vital.

Buildings in the center of this block of Main Street are part of a small historic district listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the West Courthouse Square Historic District. The entire commercial area, however, is a locally designated historic district. (Photo by Patrick McDowell)

Chapter 5. Pursuing Best Practices in City Planning

5.1. Introduction

This chapter addresses aligning historic preservation strategies with the City of Liberty's planning programs and other programs affecting historic resources. It seeks to incorporate preservation values and practices into land development, growth management, and City maintenance with a focus on the future of Liberty and the role of historic resources in community identity, character, economy, and quality of life. This includes building historic preservation perspectives and processes into other municipal initiatives and programs community-wide, including planning, economic development, housing, code enforcement, public works, and others as appropriate, as well as parks, trails, and other public capital improvement initiatives.

City of Liberty Historic Preservation Goal #2

Make the Most of City Programs: Use the city's planning, public works, and recreation programs strategically to stimulate private investment in continued revitalization of historic areas, sustain quality of life, and connect the city's historic core to its outlying suburban neighborhoods. A focus on historic preservation throughout City policies provides an important lens in seeing and setting priorities.

5.2. Liberty's Department of Planning and Development

As the City's website explains, "The Planning and Development Department is responsible for guiding desirable community development through its various divisions. Together, these divisions work to ensure responsible and comprehensive land use decisions, healthy neighborhoods and preservation of Liberty's rich history, and quality and safe construction in the community."[81]

The Community Development Division manages the City's historic preservation and neighborhood planning and staffs both the Historic District Review Commission (as discussed in the previous chapter) and the Preservation and Development Commission. The latter provides grants for the neighborhood enhancement program, discussed later in this chapter. The Community Development Division's other functions include the coordination of neighborhood needs, nuisance code enforcement, and providing support to the Arts Commission.

The department has two other divisions. The Planning and Zoning Division manages current and long-range planning, including the review and processing of development applications, platting of property, code amendments, and implementation of long-range plans. It staffs the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board of Zoning Adjustments. The Commission is the chief planning advisory group to the City, involved in both planning and ordinary decisions implementing plans and assuring that development conforms to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO – the city's zoning and subdivision code) or other applicable chapters of the City Code.

The Board of Zoning Adjustments is a quasi-judicial board whose responsibility it is to consider applications of variances to the requirements of the Unified Development Ordinance and appeals to interpretations or enforcement of the Unified Development Ordinance by City staff. The Board is empowered to direct the variance of certain zoning standards upon determination of "practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships" particular to a specific property or situation "so that the spirit of this UDO shall be observed, public safety and welfare maintained and substantial justice done." Decisions by the Board are considered final and may only be appealed to the Circuit Court.[82]

The Building Division manages the inspection activities necessary to ensure that residential, commercial, and industrial structures conform to building codes and approved plans. The division's functions include building plan review, processing and issuing permits, and inspection activities. The division also coordinates the Residential Rental Occupancy Code Program and conducts inspections of residential units. It is this division that identifies

[81] https://www.libertymissouri.gov/322/Planning-Development
[82] https://www.libertymissouri.gov/2697/Board-of-Zoning-Adjustments

owners of properties in locally designated historic districts who must first obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness prior to obtaining a building permit. It staffs the Board of Appeals, which reviews challenges to the interpretive decisions of the Chief Building Official and can grant leeway if exceptional conditions constitute a practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship. Variances must be at least the equivalent of that prescribed in the codes with respect to quality, strength, effectiveness, fire resistance, durability, and safety. The board has the power to revoke a license if it finds that the holder of such license has willfully violated the provision of the City Code or other ordinances pertaining to the work for which the license was issued.[83]

5.3. Liberty's Comprehensive Plan

The Department of Planning and Development expected to begin work on updating the City's comprehensive plan, *Blueprint for Liberty*[84], and had prepared funding and issued an RFP for consulting support when the Covid-19 pandemic occurred in early 2020. Staff anticipates moving forward with the update again as soon as allowed.

The *Blueprint*, completed in 1999, included one mapmaking session, nine workshops, and four surveys from November of 1998 through June of 1999. It articulated two guidelines related to one principle for Liberty's neighborhoods that address historic preservation: "The community's commitment to preserving its historic structures, neighborhoods and landscapes should be continued," and "efforts to maintain and preserve the Square and its surroundings should be continued as the Square represents Liberty." (Principle 10, p. 25) It did not, however, include specific recommendations on historic preservation.

Work on this Historic Preservation Plan has incorporated issues and topics that are expected to be addressed in the new comprehensive plan. Recommendations as outlined below are expected to inform the new comprehensive plan's approach and concepts. It is furthermore anticipated that the Historic Preservation Plan will be adopted as the comprehensive plan's preservation planning element.

Actions for the Comprehensive Plan

Action 5.3.A: Reinforce historic preservation through comprehensive planning by clearly stating that it is the City of Liberty's policy that historic resources should be identified, preserved, appropriately treated, and incorporated into new planning and development

[83] https://www.libertymissouri.gov/1446/Boards-Commissions-Committees
[84] https://www.libertymissouri.gov/485/Planning-Zoning

initiatives. Consider how to incorporate the vision and goals expressed in this plan into the comprehensive plan. As also discussed in Chapter 4, Historic Preservation, the City's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) confers on the Historic District Review Commission the role of reviewing public improvement and land acquisition projects which extends beyond the immediate purview of the Department of Planning and Development.[85] This role could be employed in the renewal of the Chapter 353 tax abatement program described in detail below.

Action 5.3.B: Designate a historic focus area for focus and appropriate treatment through multiple City policies and incentives (planning, redevelopment, historic preservation, public infrastructure). The historic core of Liberty is a treasure that deserves holistic, careful consideration in every City action to sustain it over the very long term. We recommend outlining the portion of the City of Liberty developed prior to a date to be determined by the survey recommended in the historic preservation. This will reinforce Liberty's historic Downtown, including the historic neighborhoods that surround it, and clarify branding and identity in order to further encourage private and public investment.

The current boundary for the Downtown Liberty Residential Chapter 353 District ("Downtown Residential District") should be considered the starting point for this outer boundary, with adjustment as appropriate, since it implements City tax incentives that encourage historic preservation in both the commercial and older residential districts. (See Map 5.1, p. 156) Over time, starting with a detailed exploration of the possibilities during the comprehensive plan update, existing and new policies within this central part of the City can evolve to reinforce the character of existing locally designated historic districts, through updated or new plans, policies such as zoning and overlay districts (including additional locally designated historic districts or conservation neighborhood designations), tax incentives, signage, design of transportation corridors, and capital improvements. Creating such a district implies that "one size fits all" in terms of public infrastructure design and other policies need not be the rule, and indeed often should not be.

Action 5.3.C: Focus on the enhancement of historic neighborhoods as outlined in this chapter. Much but not all of areas of Liberty's earliest historic neighborhoods are protected through local historic district designation, a critical tool for encouraging property owners to care for these neighborhoods according to community standards based on the best practices of historic

[85] UDO Sec. 30-20.6: "The HDRC shall review public improvement and land acquisition by the City of Liberty or any of its departments or agencies, where such improvements and acquisitions shall be on the site of or within two hundred (200) feet of any landmark, or within two hundred (200) feet of any boundary of a historic district. The HDRC shall review the project plan, public improvement or land acquisition to determine its effect upon the historic or architectural character of the landmark or historic district and forward a report to the city council. The report shall include recommendations for changes to the preliminary design or land acquisition that will lessen or alleviate any adverse effect upon the historic or architectural character of the landmark or historic district."

Through unique retail and restaurant options and by serving as a central gathering place for the entire community, Liberty's historic commercial area is a distinctive place that enhances Liberty's quality of life.

preservation. The City's growth and evolution are expressed in neighborhoods throughout Liberty, and as time passes, many of these have grown old enough for considering how to sustain their essential character and attraction as places in which to live and invest. The updated and extended inventory recommended in Chapter 4, Action 4.5.B, will help to identify neighborhoods beyond the City's 1940 boundary used to create the City's first inventory through surveys done in the 1980s and 1990s.

Action 5.3.D: Focus on the Liberty's historic commercial area as outlined in this chapter. This is a distinctive place that enhances Liberty's quality of life through unique retail/restaurant options and serving as a central gathering place for the entire community.

Action 5.3.E: During comprehensive planning, take steps to support renewal of the Chapter 353 tax abatement program for residential properties by 2024. This will also require a separate initiative.

Action 5.3.F: Continue trail and greenway initiatives tying the community into a single whole. Liberty's multi-use trail system covers more than 17 miles of trails through parks and greenways across the city. Trails range from less than 1/4 mile to 2 1/4 miles. Many of the trails connect with neighborhood sidewalks. The City's Trails and Greenways Plan (2014) maps nearly 80 miles of trails along streets, streams, upland greenways, and various rights-of-way and includes a discussion of the priorities, processes, and standards to be followed in trail development projects.

Principle 3 of the City's current comprehensive plan states, "All existing and future neighborhoods should be designed to facilitate the community's walking and bicycling environment using pedestrian dimensions and distances, compact form and layout, connections and streetscape characteristics that invite and encourage walking and biking." (p. 18).

Such a system not only offers walkers, bikers, and runners miles of opportunities for recreation and fitness and enhance Liberty's appeal as a desirable place to live. It can also strengthen connections between Downtown and more recently developed neighborhoods through transportation enhancements, signage, trails, parks, open space, and interpretation (outdoor interpretive signs). Liberty's historic Downtown commercial and residential neighborhoods will benefit from the connectivity, attracting more residents with easy, attractive trails – residents who will be customers and "home-town" visitors. Action 5.12.E adds further ideas to improving trails for city-wide benefits.

Action 5.3.G: Emphasize quality in all elements of the City's built environment – landscapes, streetscapes, public and private buildings, new development, and public infrastructure – and in all topics addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. In both permitting of private development and in the City's own public works, encourage the design and choice of materials such that Liberty's unique qualities are recognized and reinforced, so that future generations 50 or 100 years hence will appreciate today's construction and consider it worthy of preservation.

5.4. Reviews and Processes of the Planning & Zoning Commission

With support from the Planning and Zoning Division staff, the city's Planning & Zoning Commission reviews and renders approvals on new development and construction projects throughout the city. Historic preservation considerations and objectives are part of the Commission's approach and processes by city code in UDO Sec. 30-20.6. The following recommendations apply to newly expanding neighborhoods as well as to older portions of the city. In general, it is desirable that Liberty continue to evolve with new development reflecting its own place and time, continuing to develop Liberty's story in new layers. Principle 7 of the City's current comprehensive plan states, "Liberty's neighborhoods should be developed and built with the intent to create unique places of enduring quality with variety and pattern." Action 5.3.G for the comprehensive plan reinforces this principle.

Actions Regarding the Role of the Planning & Zoning Commission

Action 5.4.A: Continue to cultivate appreciation for historic preservation values and approaches on the part of the Commissioners, by providing information, training, and guidance on historic preservation and through specific inclusion of preservation policies in planning and zoning documents. Planning & Zoning Commission members should value and appreciate historic character and the role of historic resources in the community as a factor in relevant decisions. For example, the UDO could be amended to require the identification of historic building and landscape resources in the existing conditions analysis required

for any new development project under review in the same way that water, wetland, and other environmental resources must be identified. (Note that the updated surveying recommended in Chapter 4, Historic Preservation, will reduce the burden on developers by creating a database that will indicate what should be studied by the developers.)

Action 5.4.B: Communicate to applicants before the Planning & Zoning Commission the expectation that identified historic resources on a property will be incorporated into a new project and appropriately treated. The UDO could be amended to require developers to identify how they will incorporate historic resources into their projects in ways that preserve the resources and enhance the character of the development.

Action 5.4.C: Where the City determines that existing historic resources will be adversely impacted by a new development that is permitted, negotiate mitigation to reduce the adverse impact. Once a historic resource is diminished or lost, the impact is permanent – it is lost forever. Mitigation measures, though not ideal, can help alleviate the negative impact and can be applied onsite or offsite. Depending on state law, such measures may need to be voluntary on the part of developers as a part of negotiating a final agreement between the City and developers. Such mitigation could range from a donation to local historic sites for their continued maintenance (thereby gaining more permanence for another historic resource valued by the community) to creating additional trail connections (more than might already be required as part of the development process) on-site or nearby that will continue the City's long-term goal of creating a network of trails and greenways that weave all neighborhoods together, historic and otherwise. The UDO already requires a form of mitigation in requiring buffering between zoning districts (e.g., single-family residential districts and apartments).

5.5. Building Permit Review

Liberty's Building Division staff are experienced in addressing conditions in a wide variety of circumstances involving both new construction and older buildings. Many historic buildings are not able to fully comply with contemporary building code standards and require creative mitigation packages to make them safe while meeting preservation and adaptive reuse goals. The Building Division is currently working to update Liberty's building code, parallel to that used in Kansas City, based on the 2018 models promulgated by the International Code Council, the International Building Code and the International Residential Code.[86] The ICC also has issued a model code for existing buildings, the IEBC, that includes a chapter on historic buildings.[87]

[86] https://www.iccsafe.org/products-and-services/i-codes/the-i-codes/
[87] https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/IEBC2018/CHAPTER-12-HISTORIC-BUILDINGS

Comments about Enforcement Received During Interviews

Stakeholders interviewed for this plan commented repeatedly about their concerns for particular buildings and their observations about needs for enforcement. Some selected remarks appear below from notes taken by the planning team; each paragraph below is contributed by a different interviewee.

"I would love to see more ticketing." Give them a chance first, then start writing tickets and keep writing them again, have to answer to the judge, a little embarrassing. If mentally, physically capable, eventually they're going to get tired of being ticketed. There's one with open window, broken, raining in for years. Another in limbo – can it even be saved? Need to decide.

"Let's get rolling here." Have to deal with it. "C'mon, you're in a historic district."

"There are people out there ready to fix them up." On the Square, had a disaster. "Can't afford to lose any more."

Power of enforcement – we're a "paper tiger" – vinyl siding put up "in the dark of night" – not a whole lot of ability to enforce. If someone doesn't do what we ask them to do, I don't know what we could do, especially if there's not a building permit involved (e.g., siding). But then again we can be flexible in reaching an outcome – we don't really have the ability to say, "my way or the highway."

One of my big worries about things that can happen – speculator buys a property at a reduced price and waits out [the enforcement process] for demolition by neglect.

Actions for Building Permit Review

Action 5.5.A: Assure understanding on the part of building inspectors and building plan examiners about the needs of historic properties in redevelopment. Provide information, guidance, and training on the historic preservation concepts as outlined in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and other information necessary to understand and facilitate code compliance issues in older buildings.

- **Conduct information and training sessions in collaboration with the State Historic Preservation Office.**
- **Assure consistency** between and among building inspectors and plan examiners.
- **Train inspectors and examiners in appropriate mitigation techniques** so they are able to develop and approve mitigation packages that promote safety while accommodating preservation goals.
- **Work with the Board of Appeals to detect patterns** and problems related to older buildings and resolve obstacles through code updates.

Action 5.5.B: Establish an early intervention team that can work with property owners and their architects to resolve code compliance issues at the conceptual design phase of a project's implementation. Include building inspectors, plan examiners, the fire marshal, planners, and other city staff as appropriate.

Action 5.5.C: Develop a citizens' information brochure on permitting, inspection, and code compliance for historic buildings to include in the city's series of "summary guides" that acquaint residents with city requirements.[88]

5.6. Property Maintenance and Code Enforcement

The nuisance code officer within the Community Development Division undertakes enforcement of housing and property maintenance codes across

[88] As found at https://www.libertymissouri.gov/485/Planning-Zoning.

the city to help ensure that properties meet minimum requirements and do not contribute to the deterioration of neighborhoods. Property maintenance is particularly important in supporting the Chapter 353 tax abatement program, so as not to undermine the community investment inherent in the tax incentives.

Early detection and the remediation of deteriorated conditions are essential to address "demolition by neglect" and the consequent need to remove buildings in historic neighborhoods once conditions have deteriorated beyond the possibility of repair. While the UDO states that "deterioration caused by neglect or lack of routine maintenance by the existing owner does not provide grounds for the approval of demolition," buildings can still be lost through poor maintenance by exceptions spelled out in the UDO.[89]

In general, this is a difficult area for all cities and towns to address in finding the right place on the spectrum of possible enforcement, from tolerance for differing standards of and means for upkeep among homeowners on one end of the spectrum and immediate crackdown on the other. The important considerations from a historic preservation standpoint are how to avoid blighting or devaluing an entire block or neighborhood and how to catch important maintenance issues early. Enforcement staff often need encouragement and backing from City leaders through regular reviews of the status of properties where concerns are raised by neighbors and staff.

Actions for Property Maintenance and Code Enforcement

Action 5.6.A: Emphasize the role of property/code inspectors in early detection of deteriorating conditions leading to demolition by neglect and addressing issues in accordance with existing code enforcement processes.

Action 5.6.B: Maintain a policy and process that allows the city to make emergency stabilization repairs to prevent deterioration and recoup costs through a lien on the property; deploy penalties to persuade the owner to comply, such as inability to obtain permits.

5.7. Sustaining Liberty's Central Business District

This Historic Preservation Plan seeks to reinforce the vigorous, coordinated program of revitalizing and sustaining Liberty's historic central business district – Liberty's Downtown, with the Historic Courthouse Square at its heart – all of it driven by a lively business community and supportive local government.

[89] UDO Sec. Sec. 30-71.9 (1); exceptions are "(a) The structure has been substantially damaged through fire, deterioration, or natural disaster; (b) The structure does not possess the integrity, originality, craftsmanship, and age to merit preservation; and (c) There is substantial evidence that it would not be physically or economically viable to rehabilitate the structure."

Main Street Fundamentals

The National Main Street Center explains the basics of its approach this way:

- The Main Street Approach is centered around Transformation Strategies. A Transformation Strategy articulates a focused, deliberate path to revitalizing or strengthening a downtown or commercial district's economy.
- A program's work on Transformation Strategies should be organized around the Four Points: Economic Vitality, Design, Promotion, and Organization.
- A revitalization program's work – and its Transformation Strategies – need to be informed by a solid understanding of local and regional market data, and sustained and inclusive community engagement.

Source: *https://www.mainstreet.org/mainstreetamerica/theapproach*

The entire downtown is a central element of Liberty's community identity. Its distinctive historic character and local businesses are not known to all residents citywide, especially in neighborhoods to the west that are closer to the modern shopping area that has grown up along Kansas Street and whose residents may be more oriented to Kansas City. The Clay County Courthouse is less than sixteen miles from the City Hall of Kansas City, with I-35 providing easy access. Residents on the western and southwestern side of Liberty are even closer to Kansas City.

The recent growth of Liberty's modern shopping area to the west may have had an impact on the mix of businesses found in Liberty's Downtown. But this historic district is fortunate to have several critical factors in its favor for continued, long-term success – in addition to being listed in the National Register and served by local historic district design review. For example, as discussed in detail later in this chapter, a property tax abatement program to encourage owners to make improvements to commercial buildings has resulted in considerable property improvements. (The program also includes a property tax abatement program for residential property owners, administered in a slightly different manner.)

Existing High-value Steps to Sustain the Central Business District

The following sections review other critical factors that may prove especially valuable in meeting the economic challenges ahead from the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic that began in early 2020.

The Main Street Program

Addressing the needs of commercial centers requires a combination of economic development approaches and sensitivity to the needs of historic buildings in order to achieve the best combinations of businesses and buildings. The decades-old, trusted approach to this challenge is the Main Street Four-Point Approach® used in more than 2,000 small towns and neighborhood commercial centers across the country (see sidebar, Main Street Fundamentals). Most of these programs rely on a spectrum of assistance and encouragement from the National Main Street Center (an affiliate of the National Trust for Historic Preservation). And most states have statewide coordinating bodies that also assist – as is the case in Missouri with the widely acclaimed Missouri Main Street Connection, a nonprofit organization serving more than 160 commercial districts across the state.

Liberty began its Main Street program in 2005 through the nonprofit Historic Downtown Liberty, Inc. (HDLI). It is one of only seven Main Street programs that has achieved the highest tier of participation in Missouri, Accredited Community[90], and furthermore is a nationally Accredited Community recognized by the National Main Street Center.[91] The existence of this program has enabled the entire Downtown to prosper even as the modern shopping area to the west has grown.

In May of 2020, almost 500 Liberty residents participated in a survey about historic preservation. Among other questions, they were asked to provide up to three words describing Liberty's Downtown (business and residential areas). This is the word cloud generated from those words – the larger the word, the more it was mentioned by respondents. (See Appendix 3 for a summary of the survey.)

Funds for Enhanced Maintenance

HDLI and its stakeholders (the businesses and property owners of Downtown and property owners) spearheaded the establishment of a Community Investment District (CID), which funds basic maintenance (flowers, snow removal, etc.) each year through an extra 1% sales tax collected by businesses in the district. HDLI administers this maintenance under a contract with the City.

Funds for Community Marketing and Promotion

HDLI and its stakeholders also participated in the establishment of a Transient Guest Tax (sometimes called a "bed tax" or "lodging tax") that is collected from local hotels, motels, and bed & breakfast inns. The funds support art grants administered through the Liberty Arts Commission that contribute to projects that enhance the Downtown's sense of place, and also allows more marketing to bring more visitors to the Downtown.

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[90] Others are Cape Girardeau, Chillicothe, Excelsior Springs, Lee's Summit, Warrensburg, and Washington.

[91] https://www.mainstreet.org/mainstreetamerica/theprograms. Of the preceding list of state-accredited programs, only Lee's Summit is also nationally accredited.

Up-to-date Infrastructure

The City of Liberty recently completed modernization of utilities, sidewalks, streets, and streetscaping for the Courthouse Square and just beyond, funded by a public improvement project passed by the voters. Construction addressed a long-ago project that similarly upgraded appearances in the 1970s, but which was reaching the end of its useful life – and utilities had not been included in that last upgrade.

Challenges for the Central Business District

There were three major concerns identified in interviews undertaken as part of the planning process.

First, that the commercial business district is constrained in its ability to grow, in part because office uses are taking up ground floor spaces that once were retail, particularly on the Courthouse Square.

Second, that the vacant lot at the highly visible northeast corner of North Water and East Kansas is unsightly (1-3 North Water Street; the building there formerly housed the Ethan Allen furniture store). Observers are anxious to see new construction there – mentioned by many interviewees. The building that stood there had a Chapter 353 tax abatement applied to the intended rehabilitation; although that agreement has lapsed, the owner still has the option of applying again for the abatement, for the new construction.

And third, that additional parking appears to be needed, although that need is not conclusively supported one way or another. (People walk further to get into the Wal-Mart, commented one; another complained that government and business employees take up close-in parking and dodge the parking rule of taking no more than two hours around the courthouse; still others suggested the parking need is real. Another wryly quoted a favored statement among Main Street organizations, "The only time when there is a real parking problem downtown is when there are no cars.") These concerns are addressed in the recommendations below, which are organized according to the Main Street Four-Point Approach®, but addressed to all concerned – HDLI, business stakeholders, and the City.

Actions for Downtown Enhancement through the Main Street Approach: Economic Vitality

Focus on support and promotion of existing businesses and recruitment of businesses that will enhance the experience of the Downtown.

Action 5.7.A: Consider requiring first-floor space on the Courthouse Square to be devoted to retail uses. In administering such a requirement, it would be expected that current office users would remain until either a time certain sometime into the future – "amortization" – or until the use/user changes, at which time the new rules apply – "grandfathering." While this is a direct recommendation of this Historic Preservation Plan, it

The collapse of the historic building at 1-3 North Water Street in May of 2016, which last housed a furniture store, has left a gaping hole in the small Courthouse Square at the heart of Liberty's historic Downtown. A colorful public art project distracts from but does not disguise the sad state of the site. (Left photo © Shane Immelt, Minds-i Photographic; right by Elizabeth Watson, Heritage Strategies, LLC)

may be appropriate to study this policy and details for implementation further during the comprehensive plan update.

Action 5.7.B: Retain, and increase if possible, residential uses within and close to the Downtown business district, insuring that any new construction does not impact the quality of life of existing residential neighborhoods adjacent to the central business district. The reason this recommendation falls within "economic vitality" is that close-by residents make good customers for the kinds of businesses found in the Downtown business district. Within the existing fabric of the business district, and with good design (another Main Street value), more residential development is a good thing.

Action 5.7.C: Address under-utilized upper floors of commercial buildings. This problem is ubiquitous in small downtowns – it is partly a matter of design, partly a matter of code (elevator access especially), and partly a matter of cost. Making more use of these spaces, however, is an excellent way to increase the number of businesses and residents in the central business district.

Actions for Downtown Enhancement through the Main Street Approach: Design

Continue to work on attractive public improvements and the preservation of historic buildings within the Downtown commercial area, building on past accomplishments.

Action 5.7.D: Provide design assistance or design grants for small businesses in planning for future changes to the facades of historic commercial properties. (This idea is parallel to the action recommended for commercial property owners in Action 5.9.D.)

Action 5.7.E: Create a low-interest loan pool to support commercial rehabilitations, possibly with a forgivable loan feature if affordable. While the City's Chapter 353 tax abatement program is beneficial over the long term, it requires up-front spending; it is sometimes difficult for property owners to assemble these funds, and regular commercial loans for such specialized needs can be difficult to obtain. More mature Main Street organizations have undertaken such initiatives, and it may be time for HDLI and the City to jointly spearhead this as a new goal. Such a program should rely on the HDRC to review proposed improvements and an early intervention team of building inspectors to provide guidance to commercial property owners in resolving code issues during rehabilitation projects.

Action 5.7.F: Use the Certified Local Government technical assistance program available to the City and the HDRC from the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to provide guidance to business owners in use of the state Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program (and the federal tax credit where projects are large enough). The program is managed by the Missouri Department of Economic Development with SHPO support. See discussion associated with this concept in Chapter 4, Action 4.4.A.

Action 5.7.G: Remain vigilant and supportive in encouraging development of the parcels at 1-3 North Water Street. The HDRC will have a major role in approving the design of the new construction in this highly sensitive location. Moreover, the adjacent existing building must be carefully considered for any development at that site. The City could consider acquiring these properties under Missouri's Chapter 353, concerning land banking to address blight, in order to accelerate and have greater control over the fate of the vacant parcels and the adjacent building.

Actions for Downtown Enhancement through the Main Street Approach: Promotion

Organize long-range, collaborative marketing and promotional events to draw repeat visitors. HDLI and the City have had many successes in this approach. The following ideas are ongoing:

Action 5.7.H: Continue to develop an annual marketing campaign for Liberty, with a portion devoted to marketing the Downtown.

Action 5.7.I: Continue City support for events in the Downtown.

Action 5.7.J: Continue to create and promote a calendar of events for the Downtown.

Action 5.7.K: Continue to support the farmers' markets in the central business district.

Action 5.7.L: Continue deploying the existing wayfinding signage program to enhance the identity and cohesiveness of the entire central business district. (Described further in Chapter 6, Action 6.3.A.)

Actions for Downtown Enhancement through the Main Street Approach: Organization

Action 5.7.M: Ensure the continued sustainability of HDLI. This nonprofit partners effectively with private commercial businesses and many other stakeholders in the Downtown and with the City, a crucial role. The ability of HDLI to administer City CID funds that serve the Downtown business district is an example of the symbiosis that is beneficial to both entities, to the benefit of the businesses, residents, and visitors. Other ways to reinforce HDLI may be possible to engage in over time.

Actions for Downtown Enhancement through Additional Planning

Action 5.7.N: Include an update to the Downtown business district master plan written in 2005 in the update to Liberty's comprehensive plan that will follow the completion of this Historic Preservation Plan,

Action 5.7.O: Conduct a parking study, prior to the initiation of the comprehensive plan if at all possible, or undertake such a study as a part of the comprehensive planning process, including incorporation of previous parking analyses. This would provide much-needed factual information about the actual problems and available solutions.

Action 5.7.P: Continue to explore the idea of expanding the Downtown commercial area's attractions and overall economic productivity through additional construction allowing more retail/restaurant and residential space. Some years ago, the City's economic development office investigated the idea of attracting a developer to build a parking structure faced with first-floor retail/restaurant space and topped with residential apartments. At the time the office concluded that at least $10 million in public funding may be needed to support such a project. This could possibly be financed by tax increment financing (TIF)[92] and there may be other public

[92] From the City's website, https://www.libertymissouri.gov/2586/Tax-Increment-Financing-TIF#:~:text=TIF%20is%20a%20financial%20tool,within%20the%20TIF%20project%20area: "Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a public funding mechanism to assist private development of an area within the City. TIF may only be used: (1) When there is evidence the development would not occur without public assistance; and (2) When the project area qualifies as a blighted, conservation or economic development area. TIF is a financial tool used to capture the increase in property taxes and sales taxes created from new construction. Up to 100% of the increase in property taxes and 50% of the increase in local sales taxes (the "increment") can be captured within the TIF project area. The property tax and sales tax increment may then be used to reimburse a private developer for eligible expenses or to

financing (typically, one would be special-purpose bonding to be paid back by public parking fees) to be combined with private investment. Highly desirable small towns close to major metropolitan areas like Liberty are thought to be becoming even more in demand as the nation undergoes the many different shifts being brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic. This, combined with the potentially dramatic increase in the number of households in the Kansas City (see Chapter 1, Overview), could mean that the demand and investors wise to that demand may change the dynamics in the feasibility of such a project.

Action 5.7.Q: Enhance walkable connections from the historic Downtown in every direction, to increase the attractiveness and viability of commercial spaces in close proximity to the Courthouse Square, including the historic mill area.

Action 5.7.R: Consider extending the distinctive infrastructure improvements undertaken around the Courthouse Square to side streets, which would improve the identity of the entire commercial business district as a specific designation.

5.8. Chapter 353 Property Tax Abatement for Commercial and Residential Properties

NOTE: As the following discussion is not the City's official description of Liberty's Chapter 353 property tax abatement program, anyone contemplating participating in this program is advised to consult the City's website beginning at https://libertymissouri.gov/2383/Incentives. Documents available through links on that page provide applications and guidelines providing details on what can and cannot be allowed for tax abatement in a given construction project, how much investment is required, and how long the abatement can be made. The discussion in this section is based on the guidelines as of September 30, 2020.

The Liberty's Chapter 353 program (so named for its chapter in Missouri law) for abating property taxes in return for property owners' investment in their commercial and residential properties is so important that this plan devotes an entire section to it. Much of the program is applicable to both kinds of properties, so it is difficult to divide this description into the preceding section on the Downtown commercial area and the following section on neighborhoods (Downtown and otherwise) without much repetition.

Introduction to the Chapter 353 Program

Chapter 353 property tax abatement is an incentive allowed by Missouri law to encourage the redevelopment of blighted areas through the abatement of real property taxes. Three basic steps are required to establish this incentive program: (1) a study establishing that specifically identified areas meet the qualifications set by state statute as "blighted"; (2) a redevelopment plan establishing criteria for qualifying

repay principal and interest on bonds used to finance the eligible public improvement expenses for up to 23 years.

projects; and (3) formation of an urban redevelopment corporation to act as the applicant for the abatement under state law.

Under Chapter 353, tax abatement on real property taxes is available for a period up to 25 years to commercial and residential applicants who undertake rehabilitation or redevelopment of their properties. During the first ten years, the property is not subject to real property taxes except in the amount of real property taxes assessed on the land, exclusive of improvements, during the calendar year preceding the calendar year during which the URC acquired title to the real property. Additional years after the first ten, up to fifteen for commercial properties and up to five for residential properties, can be approved based upon the amount of the property investment as outlined within the City's guidelines.[93]

Results of Liberty's Chapter 353 program

Commercial Projects as of September, 2020

Total Commercial Projects since 2013: 23

Total Actual Investment since 2013: $1,575,000

Residential Projects as of September, 2020

Total Residential Projects since 2015: 38

Total Abatement Provided since 2015: $84,000

Total Required Minimum Investment since 2015: $578,670

Total Actual Investment since 2015: $1,688,800

Source: City of Liberty, Economic Development Department

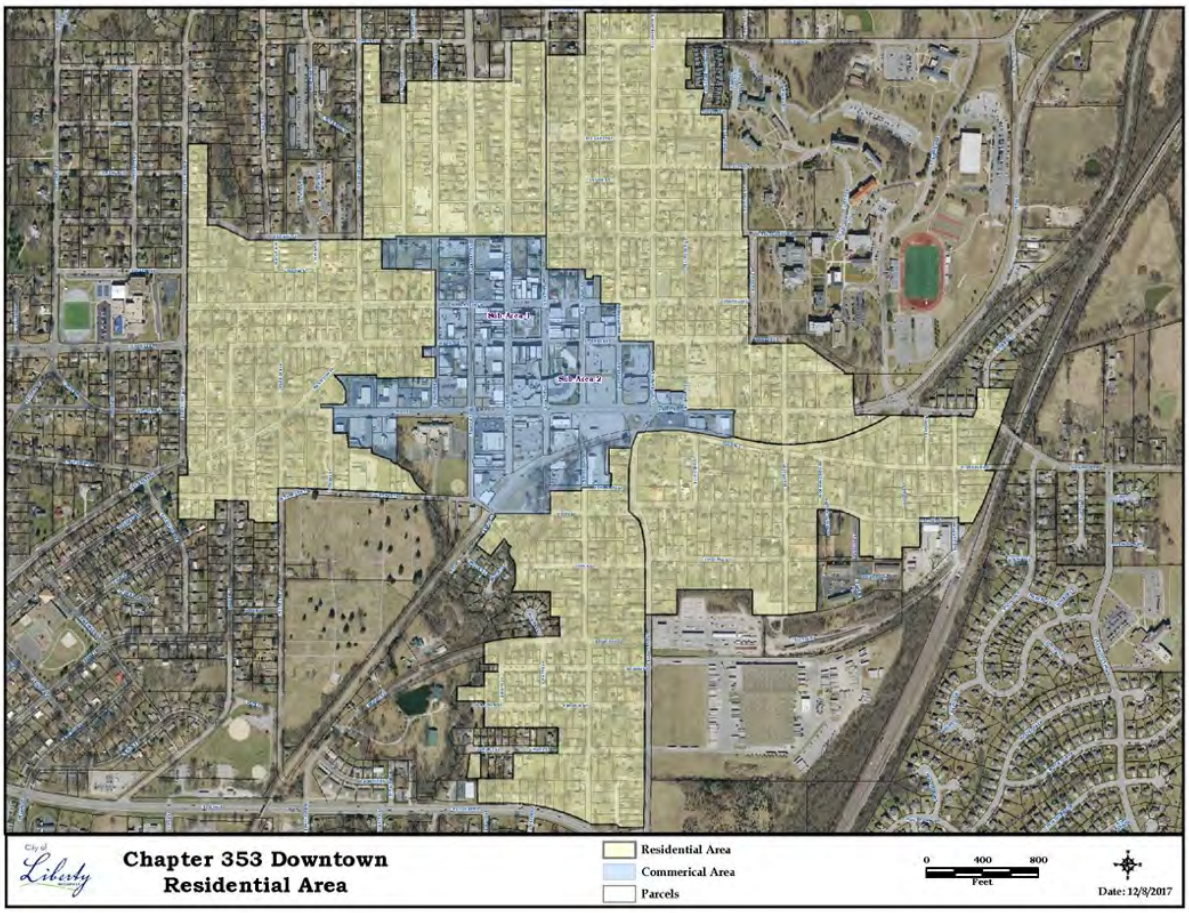
The City's economic goals for the program include encouraging property investment, expanding the tax base, creating good jobs, and spurring development in targeted City locations. The City also seeks to preserve the community's heritage and to "enhance and promote the unique atmosphere" of Liberty.

According to the City's official Chapter 353 Tax Abatement Redevelopment Incentive Policy, "Real property may be found to be blighted even though it contains improvements, which by themselves do not constitute blight. Tax abatement may also be extended to a tract of real property, which by itself does not meet the definition of a blighted area if such tract is necessary to the redevelopment project and the area on a whole constitutes a blighted area."[94] (See maps 5A and 5B.)

In 2011, the City voted to form the Liberty Municipal Redevelopment Corporation (LMRC), to operate the program. According to one of the City's two primary websites for the program, "The purpose of the corporation is

[93] Payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTS) may be imposed on the URC or private entity by contract with the city. PILOTS are paid on an annual basis to replace all or part of the real estate taxes that are abated. https://www.libertymissouri.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1999/353-Final-Policy?bidId=, p. 1. See also, https://libertymissouri.gov/2393/Downtown-Residential-Property-Tax-Abatem (for Downtown residential properties) and https://libertymissouri.gov/2392/Downtown-Commercial-Property-Tax-Abateme (for Downtown commercial properties).

[94] https://www.libertymissouri.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1999/353-Final-Policy?bidId=, pp. 1-2.



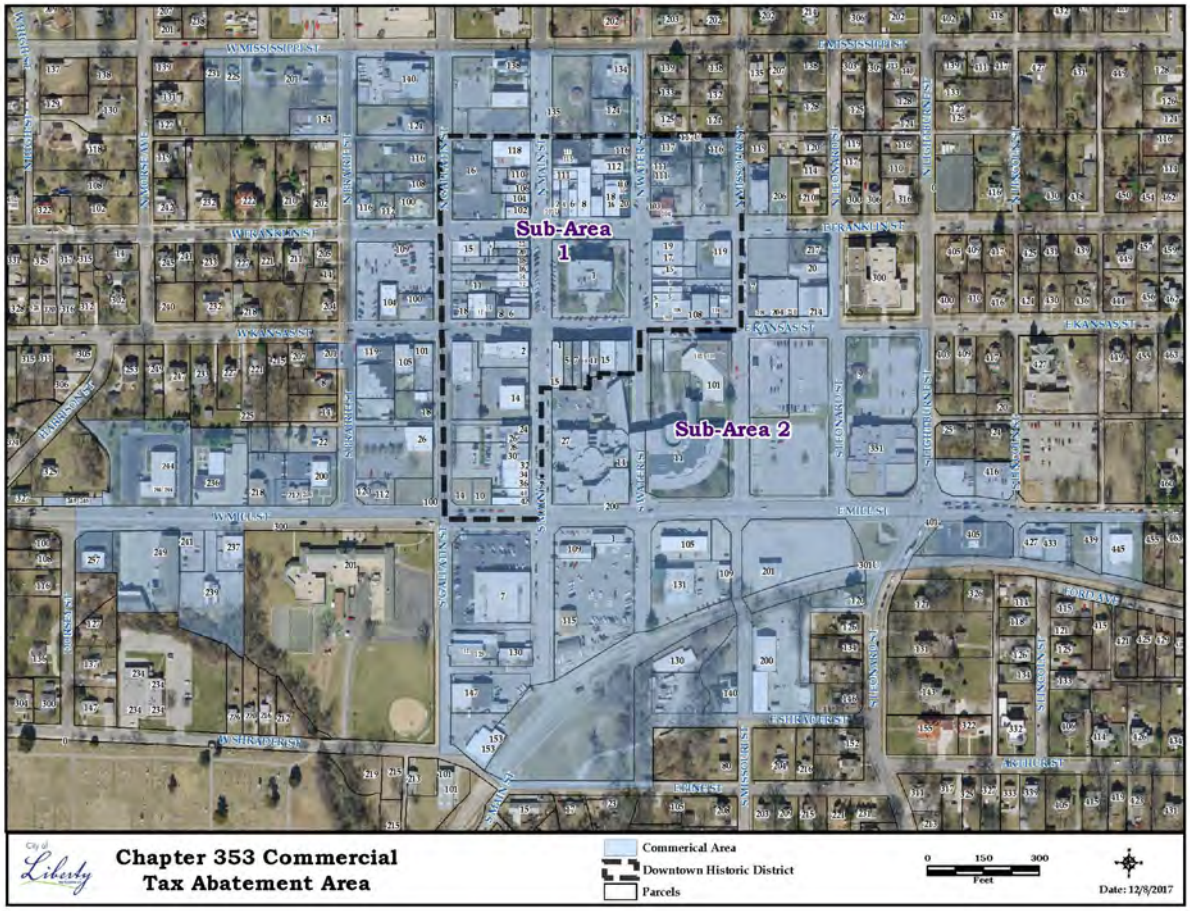
Map 5.1. Commercial and Residential Areas Designated under Chapter 353

to provide a streamlined, cost-effective means for individual property owners to obtain partial tax abatement on their properties in return for making improvements. Stock in the corporation is owned wholly by the City of Liberty and the corporation is managed by a board of directors."[95]

The LMRC must acquire title to any property in the program in order to confer the tax abatement, but is then by law permitted to convey the property onward to another owner, including the original owner. Thus, in practice the property owner surrenders ownership temporarily in a legal closing, and regains it in a second, immediate legal closing – a pass-through procedure.[96] Approximately forty owners have joined the program.

[95] https://libertymissouri.gov/2393/Downtown-Residential-Property-Tax-Abatem

[96] Under Chapter 353, the LMRC is technically not only able to receive property and convey it back to its owner, but it might be able to condemn property and give it to another owner entirely. The latter has long been a practice of urban redevelopment corporations across the nation; the power of eminent domain, however, is not in the LMRC's charter from the City.



Map 5.2. Commercial Areas Designated under Chapter 353

The City of Liberty began this program in 2012 for commercial properties and added residential properties in 2014. In establishing the program, Liberty chose to allow the residential side of the program to accept applications for ten years. This Historic Preservation Plan recommends positioning the residential program for renewal in 2024 respectively, a process that needs to begin in 2022. As discussed in the section above concerning the upcoming comprehensive plan, that process can be used to lay the groundwork for renewal.

General Guidelines

In addition to the statutory requirement that the potential abatement applies only within the delineated area, the City requires certain criteria be satisfied, including: advancement of the City's economic development goals; demonstration that the project would not occur "but for" the incentives offered; evidence that the property owner has the financial ability and capacity to complete the project; a showing that the request for abatement covers at least 50 percent exterior improvements so as to be visible to the public; and a minimum capital investment. Properties receiving tax abatement must be maintained in compliance with minimum standards,

This handsome turn-of-the century house in the Jewell local historic district shows traces of Colonial Revival styling on a foursquare house form. The sidewalks and driveway show signs of recent repair along with beautifully executed maintenance, part of a Chapter 353 rehabilitation described in Chapter 5 and an important property tax incentive offered in Liberty for historic preservation.

codes, and ordinances of the City or the abatement can be revoked; for residential projects, any sidewalk repairs needed as determined by the City must be included. Program guidelines also require or encourage the purchase of materials within Liberty city limits.

Residential Properties

The tax abatement program for Liberty's Downtown residential properties is intended to preserve and enhance the homes within the targeted neighborhoods and thereby enhance those neighborhoods. Five neighborhoods identified as local historic districts require adherence to specific design guidelines and approval steps identified through adopted Historic District Design Guidelines and the Unified Development Code, Section 30-70, Historic Preservation Overlay District. Property owners in those neighborhoods who agree to remove inappropriate siding (at which point they must follow HDRC guidelines for replacement and repairs) can receive additional years of tax abatement beyond the basic ten years, up to five more years. Other neighborhoods not identified as historic districts do not have specific guidelines but must follow eligible and non-eligible improvement guidelines in order to participate. Applicants with properties that considered historic who agree to follow HDRC guidelines may receive up to five more additional years of tax abatement.

Applicants can be approved directly by the LMRC, a streamlined process that is not applicable to commercial properties. For residential properties, there is a cap on the tax revenue loss from the abatements of $25,000 per year, which has not been reached in any year of the program to date.

402 North Lightburne Street, a simple and elegant rendition of a four-square in the Prairie style, upgraded its sidewalk and steps sometime between 2012, when Google first captured its image (left), and 2019 (right).

Commercial Properties

An additional intent of the program is to provide an opportunity for property owners to make improvements that allow their property to be competitive with other business locations. Until this program, Liberty did not have an incentive program for the Downtown commercial area. A report to the City Council recommending enactment of the program stated, "The historic buildings and maturity of the area bring both charm as well as challenge, as many of the buildings do not conform to current building and fire standards as well as the historic [design review] guidelines developed for the downtown area….Successful implementation will result in a stronger downtown area and a stronger community."[97]

Both the LMRC and the City Council approve each commercial application, which is technically an amendment to the overarching development plan maintained by the LMRC. The applicant must enter into a Redevelopment Agreement among the City, the property owner, and the LMRC that describes the obligations to carry out the project development plan. Each individual project within a larger district covered by a development plan need not make a blight finding each time a project is considered.

The incentive can also be used for new building construction but acquisition costs of the property are excluded from abatement calculation.

Applications for the program are accepted by the City staff on behalf of the LMRC. A filing fee is required with the final application to cover the cost of staff time for review and processing the application and any mailings and public notices.

[97] https://liberty-mo.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=3&clip_id=48&meta_id=4185, pdf p. 3.

For commercial properties, Chapter 353 requires the City Council to hold a public hearing regarding any proposed development plan. Before the public hearing, the governing body must furnish to the political entities whose boundaries include any portion of the property to be affected by tax abatement notice of the scheduled public hearing and a written statement of the impact on ad valorem taxes such tax abatement will have on the taxing entities.

5.9. Strengthening Historic Neighborhoods

The City of Liberty has been working to strengthen historic neighborhoods as an element of public policy for many years, particularly through the preservation of historic districts. Sustaining the city's historic neighborhoods is central to this Historic Preservation Plan and the Blueprint for Liberty, and will be further addressed in the city's updated comprehensive plan. The primary goal is to make magnets of historic neighborhoods for owners who value historic neighborhood character – retaining those who already live there, and recruiting others who seek the experience of living in such high-quality places.

Neighborhood Enhancement Grants

In addition to the Chapter 353 property tax abatement program described above in Section 5.8, in recent years, the City Council has funded a Neighborhood Enhancement Grant Program to allow residents to compete for matching funds to reinvest in improvements that benefit an entire neighborhood. Program guidelines state that "while some neighborhoods may need more assistance than others, ongoing improvements are needed in every neighborhood to maintain the attractive qualities that appeal to residents and prospective home buyers."[98]

The amount of the grants awarded range from $500 to $10,000, depending on the scope of the project, the number of grant proposals received, and the funding available. In 2020, the City Council appropriated a total of $10,000 for this program, but it was not granted as one of the many decisions the Council took in order to cope with expected losses from the Covid-19 pandemic's effects on revenues in the coming fiscal years. Grants are awarded by the Preservation and Development Commission described previously.

This program allows residents to identify their own priorities for their neighborhood and to undertake the enhancement project together. Eligible projects include landscaping and street trees; signage (historic markers, neighborhood watch, etc.); and such improvements as sidewalk replacement. Projects are selected by the Preservation and Development Commission,

[98] https://www.libertymissouri.gov/1445/Neighborhoods

which considers feasibility, need, and potential impact to the neighborhood and community.

Projects must be permanent neighborhood improvements and located within the city's right-of-way. The City of Liberty reimburses the cost of approved activities and projects equal to 75 percent of the total project cost. The required 25 percent match may be in the form of cash or in-kind services such as labor, equipment, and materials.

Eligible organizations are neighborhood associations (a formal organization of residents and property owners within a neighborhood or subdivision; not necessarily a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, but registered with the City) and homeowners' associations (formal organization of homeowners within a specific residential development).

Missouri Rehabilitation Tax Credits

As noted in Chapter 4, Historic Preservation Programs, Section 4.4, Tax Incentives for Historic Preservation, Missouri offers a generous rehabilitation tax credit for approved rehabilitation improvements to historic residences (as well as commercial buildings), which has been used very little across the City. This income tax incentive would be above and beyond any benefit the property owner would experience through the Chapter 353 property tax abatement.

Neighborhood Preservation Act Tax Credits

The State of Missouri has one further incentive, limited to moderate and lower income neighborhoods, the NPA credit, explained further in Chapter 4, Section 4.4, Tax Incentives for Historic Preservation.

Actions for Enhancing Incentives for Neighborhood Improvement

Action 5.9.A: Adjust the Chapter 353 tax abatement guidelines to avoid incentivizing changes to eligible or contributing historic buildings outside local historic districts that do not follow HDRC design review guidelines. Projects should not be allowed to receive the tax abatement for any portion of a project that would be disallowed under the guidelines. This is in keeping with the "first do no harm" general principle that nothing the City of Liberty does should lead to the degradation of historic properties listed in or eligible for the National Register or contributing to a National Register or locally recognized historic district.

Action 5.9.B: Use staff trained in design review of projects affecting historic structures and able to uphold the City of Liberty's design standards to approve tax abatement incentives for projects outside local historic districts where property owners are required to follow the standards, as articulated in Action 5.9.B. Insure that preservation staff are reviewing all applications for historic properties listed in or eligible for the National Register or contributing to a National Register or locally recognized

historic district. (As a practical matter, until new surveying in the Chapter 353 districts takes place as discussed in Chapter 4, Preservation Programs, this would mean every building older than fifty years should be referred to that staff for an initial determination as to eligibility.)

Action 5.9.C: Educate property owners within the historic districts about the availability of multiple incentives to improve their properties and their neighborhoods, all of which are under-utilized: 353 tax abatement, Neighborhood Enhancement Grants, NPA credit, and the state tax credit for rehabilitation. The possibility of a Neighborhood Improvement District, even though it would mean an increase in individual taxation, is also something to publicize (see last section, this chapter).

Action 5.9.D: Consider the viability of providing a counselor to individual commercial and residential property owners to take maximum advantage of local and state (and sometimes the federal) tax incentives for rehabilitation. The economic value to the entire community of maximizing these programs for individual owners should not be underestimated. Tax credits can make the difference in assuring the success of a project, savings to individual developers can be recycled to other local investments, and successful projects can benefit an entire neighborhood. This might be organized by either the City's Economic Development Department (which deals with incentives) or by a private, nonprofit organization.

Action 5.9.E: During the update of the City's comprehensive plan, identify neighborhoods for strategic investment in public infrastructure and support for public investments that are likely to encourage additional private sector investment. Continue to provide funding incentives for the enhancement of Liberty's historic commercial and residential neighborhoods. In the comprehensive plan update, consider revising and adding incentive programs to meet community development and enhancement goals. Possibilities include:

- **A change to the Neighborhood Enhancement Grant program** to ensure that it is efficient and effective, first considering whether and how to broaden eligibility.
- Incentive program for conversion of **multi-family residences back to single-family** residences.
- **Low-interest loan program for the rehabilitation** of residences for qualified homeowners in targeted areas.
- **Homeowner facade improvement program** for qualified homeowners in targeted areas (this idea is parallel to the action recommended for commercial property owners in Action 5.7.D).
- **Maintenance/home repair grants and loans** for qualified homeowners in targeted areas.

- **A land bank under Missouri's Chapter 353 and/or the state's Abandoned Housing Act** for the public acquisition of tax delinquent properties and re-introduction of the properties back into the private sector for revitalization under the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Action 5.9.F: Consider a strategy for compatible, affordable infill development of residential properties on vacant lots in under-developed historic neighborhoods within the Chapter 353 tax abatement district. This idea could be further explored during the comprehensive planning process, including ways to enable current property owners to gain the benefits of development.

Action 5.9.G: Begin planning for the renewal of the Residential Chapter 353 tax abatement program for neighborhood properties by 2024. This may be an important subject for the comprehensive planning process, but it will also require a separate initiative.

Action 5.9.H: Encourage higher density residential development in areas within and surrounding the Downtown business district. As discussed earlier, more people mean more markets for local businesses and more life on the street after hours, both of which contribute to overall quality of life.

5.10. The Community Development Block Grant Program

As a city under 50,000 in population, Liberty is eligible to apply for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), which is federal funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that is administered by the State of Missouri. Activities that are eligible for funding include community facilities, workforce training, demolition of abandoned blighted structures, infrastructure, downtown revitalization, and economic development. Requirements for matching funds vary but a match is generally expected, either public or private funding or both, and applications are competitive, not guaranteed. At least 51 percent of the funds must be used to benefit residents with low and moderate incomes. Depending on a city's priorities, qualified neighborhoods can receive a wide variety of CDBG assistance, including infrastructure projects such as sidewalks, curbs, water, sewer, or roads in low-to-moderate income neighborhoods; minor home repairs; and down payment assistance to first-time home buyers. The City of Liberty is currently focusing on workforce training and economic development.

Neighborhood Principles from Liberty's Comprehensive Plan, *Blueprint for Liberty*

1. Liberty should be a full-service community for a diverse population consisting of neighborhoods designed for human interaction.
2. All existing and future neighborhoods should respect and complement the natural landscape by preserving and enhancing ecological features.
3. All existing and future neighborhoods should be designed to facilitate the community's walking and bicycling environment using pedestrian dimensions and distances, compact form and layout, connections and streetscape characteristics that invite and encourage walking and biking.
4. All existing and future neighborhoods in Liberty should be designed with attention to the creation and maintenance of open spaces to serve as areas of recreation, agriculture and ecological conservation.
5. Liberty should continue to maintain and preserve the Historic Square as the City center in addition to encouraging smaller neighborhood level centers of activity and commerce. (One guideline: To preserve the integrity of the Historic Square and surrounding neighborhoods, further utilization of properties on the Square and

(Continued on page 165)

Actions for the Community Development Block Grant Program

Action 5.10.A: Identify neighborhoods for strategic investments in public infrastructure funded by the Community Development Block Grant program (with a match from private sector investment) and that are likely to encourage additional private sector activity as a result of these projects. This concept can be considered during the update of the City's comprehensive plan, but will require a separate planning initiative as part of the CDBG grant application process.

Action 5.10.B: Determine whether CDBG funding can be devoted to support historic and other neighborhoods housing low- to moderate-income residents. Programs that would be eligible are suggested in the preceding section on Incentives for Neighborhood Improvement.

5.11. Strengthening Neighborhood Character throughout Liberty

The benefits of neighborhood planning and incentives can be extended across the community; Liberty is endowed with a large number of high-quality, early neighborhoods that are affordable and well-designed. They can house the young families attracted to the excellent schools of the Liberty School District, and thus help to sustain the level of population that helps to determine state and federal support for local schools. Working to encourage healthy neighborhoods across the city knits the community together, and encourages policies that will also benefit recognized historic neighborhoods. The *Blueprint for Liberty* emphasizes the importance of maintaining the quality of all of Liberty's neighborhoods.

One of the best ways to accomplish great neighborhood planning is to engage the residents themselves. The upcoming comprehensive plan update offers an excellent opportunity to communicate with Liberty residents on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis. Some neighborhoods are already organized into associations; still others use the social-media platform Next Door. The comprehensive planning process should organize neighborhood focus groups to undertake a "plan on a page" exercise to identify issues,

needs, and opportunities – which may ultimately encourage more neighborhoods to organize.

The City of Liberty currently offers one way for residents to take matters somewhat into their own hands, to address their needs, the Neighborhood Improvement District (NID). This tool offers the ability for neighbors to join together to tax themselves as "a defined geographic area in which benefitted property owners assess the cost of public improvements, such as streets, storm and sanitary sewer, waterworks, or other enhancements against themselves in order to help finance the improvements."[99] Currently, only one NID exists, for a relatively recent neighborhood where the developer organized it to pay for streets, sewers, and a pool.

While the preference in Liberty for protecting historic neighborhoods is the Local Historic District discussed in Chapter 4, there is one other possibility, the Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District (NCOD). For neighborhoods that are not considered historic – or which are reluctant to provide the high level of consent required for local historic district designation – an NCOD is a means of encouraging the preservation and appropriate treatment of neighborhood properties and requiring context sensitive design for new infill construction. Such design stewardship can be an important part of sustaining neighborhoods, by retaining their character-defining qualities and enhancing community pride through knowledgeable appreciation of their surroundings. NCODs can be established with flexible regulations and guidelines customized to community goals, the character of the neighborhood, and the interest and support of property owners. Reviews would be undertaken by Planning and Development Department staff in accordance with regulations and guidelines customized to the district.

At present, there are no established NCODs in Liberty. Certain neighborhoods that are not yet willing to consent to local historic district designation might benefit from NCOD designation that provides a certain amount of stability and encouragement for improvements. Such NCOD

(Continued from page 164)

in nearby commercial areas is encouraged, but expansion into residential areas is discouraged.)

6. Streets should be designed such that the motor vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian can all function and thrive in a safe, efficient, and integrated environment.
7. Liberty's neighborhoods should be developed and built with the intent to create unique places of enduring quality with variety and pattern.
8. A mix of land uses and housing types contributes to a more balanced, self-sufficient city.
9. The citizens of Liberty view the health of their natural environment, the strength of their community, the security of their economy, and the fiscal stability of their local government as interdependent.
10. Liberty is committed to maintaining and enhancing its unique character and offering a high quality of life to its citizens.
11. (Re)development of vacant and under-utilized parcels in the City should be encouraged.
12. Future growth should reflect Liberty's commitment to the efficient use of land and resources and the City's desire to be a regional partner.

Source: Blueprint for Liberty, pp 17-27.

[99] https://www.libertymissouri.gov/DocumentCenter/View/23941/NID-Summary?bidId=

designation could be in effect permanently or it might sustain neighborhood integrity long enough to allow a change to full-fledged historic district designation. (If, however, residents feel that their neighborhood is already eligible for local historic district designation and they are willing to campaign for the recognition, they should be encouraged to pursue that designation.)

In the years ahead, as the Kansas City metro region grows apace, the NCOD may become a useful tool in controlling one of the products of spillover growth pressures, the tearing down of smaller homes in order to construct newer, usually much larger homes, usually out of character with the neighborhood. If this tool is to be developed in Liberty, it should be undertaken with public participation during the update to the comprehensive plan.

Actions for Strengthening Neighborhood Character throughout Liberty

Action 5.11.A: In comprehensive planning, identify areas appropriate for establishment of Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Districts.

- Use **neighborhood associations and local engagement as a means of determining local priorities** and encouraging grassroots initiatives to sustain neighborhood character.
- Identify **target neighborhoods** where physical infrastructure improvements, programs, and incentives will make a difference and encourage positive change in adjacent areas.
- Long-range, use **detailed neighborhood plans** to implement the comprehensive plan at the neighborhood level; assess conditions, provide vision, and identify priorities.

Action 5.11.B: Cultivate the establishment and effectiveness of local neighborhood associations as a vehicle for sparking engagement by local residents.

- Devote staff time to providing **organizational support** and empowerment of neighborhood associations.
- **Target programmatic resources** to neighborhood areas where residents are engaged and demonstrate capacity to get things done.
- Identify a range of possible programs and ideas that neighborhood associations can use to **encourage participation** and engagement, such as clean-up events; maintenance assistance for seniors, etc.; recognition program for homeowners who take exceptional care of their properties; research and writing of neighborhood and property histories; or neighborhood picnics, etc. Signage and arts installations are other possibilities that neighborhood associations could lead.
- **Identify and name neighborhoods** that have coherent character and a sense of common identity citywide. Give them names as recognized by local residents.

A row of houses on West Kansas Street exhibits the eclectic nature of the Dougherty historic district, with two early-twentieth-century simplified bungalows at left sharing space with two homes built perhaps decades earlier in the Victorian era. The district is both locally recognized and listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Dougherty-Prospect Heights district.

- **Train residents on programs available to help them steward their neighborhoods**, including both Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Districts, and Neighborhood Improvement Districts. (This would also include training about tax incentives as discussed under "Historic Neighborhoods," as applicable.)

5.12. Enhancing the Public Domain

The City of Liberty is the custodian of an extensive public domain – streets and alleys, streetscaping (including lighting and signage), "green infrastructure" such as stream valleys and unbuildable swales, and of course parks and trails. It also stewards the all-important, yet largely invisible, utility infrastructure that provides drinking water, sewer, trash pickup, and stormwater services. (Although it does not have strict control over the wires that also serve residents with telephone, electricity, cable, and digital services, it also has some say there, as well.) If the City's historic architecture, friendly neighborhoods, and the Downtown with its business district and residential historic districts are the jewels of the community, the public domain is the all-important setting.

The interviews that have informed the process of putting these "issues, opportunities, and recommendations" together for city planning yielded a surprising number of complaints related to the public domain. These

amenities and services are important if not critical factors in sustaining the desirability of living in Liberty (and thus local property values).

Current Issues Affecting the Public Domain

Actions and upgrades related to the following issues are likely to stimulate private investment in Liberty's neighborhoods and central business district; all should be subjects for study and recommendations in the upcoming comprehensive plan:

Stormwater Management Remediation

For Liberty's older neighborhoods, it should not come as a surprise to find that there are no storm sewers. With weather patterns changing and heavy rains becoming more frequent, residents are dealing with flooded basements and sandbagging their properties to keep water out.

Sidewalk Maintenance

With the recent recognition of the benefits of walking for the health of any generation of City residents, sidewalks are becoming even more important to the quality of life across the city. One interviewee told us, "We're a great walking community," but another observed that "sidewalks are in horrible condition." Between the roots of street trees, frost heave (and the aforementioned stormwater problems), and general wear and tear, sidewalks across the city require continual attention to keep hazards to sidewalk users at a minimum. Maintenance of sidewalks in Liberty (as with many, many communities) is considered the responsibility of the adjacent property owner. Sidewalk maintenance, therefore, is similar to code enforcement. The City's public works staff do not typically, as a first choice, take over a sidewalk to fix it and bill the resident (ultimately applying a lien to the property if the bill goes unpaid); rather, there is a careful process of notifying the owner several times before the City steps in. Sidewalk/driveway access repairs are also a requirement for residential projects to be eligible to participate in the Chapter 353 property tax abatement.

Sidewalk Width

While sidewalk maintenance is the principal concern expressed, sidewalk width is another long-term issue for City planners and public works staff. Some historic districts might wish to keep their sidewalks as originally designed; others might trade original design for a context-sensitive widening that allows two individuals to walk side-by-side. Whenever sidewalks are replaced on an entire block, or when roadways are rebuilt, this could be a consideration if front yard setbacks allow (terrain and roadway widths may make it difficult to install or widen sidewalks in some older areas).

Street Trees

The leafy streets of historic districts are more than a simple pleasure: the trees planted in the public domain provide shade that helps with energy

conservation across the City, and provide shade for sidewalk users, critical for Missouri's hot summers. Moreover, they can also be a critical element of stormwater management, breaking and helping to absorb rainfall. Liberty is recognized in the National Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA program. The maintenance of street trees, like sidewalks, are the responsibility of the property owner, which for some owners can be a financial burden.

Roadways

The roadways, like the sidewalks, in Liberty's historic districts are older and showing their wear and tear. Unlike sidewalks, however, for city-owned streets, the City has complete control over where, how, and when the roadways are to be maintained and improved. Roadway design is also critical in controlling traffic, especially traffic speed, in historic districts. Speeding on Kansas Street, through the Dougherty District, is a particular concern mentioned by stakeholders interviewed for this plan.

Alleys

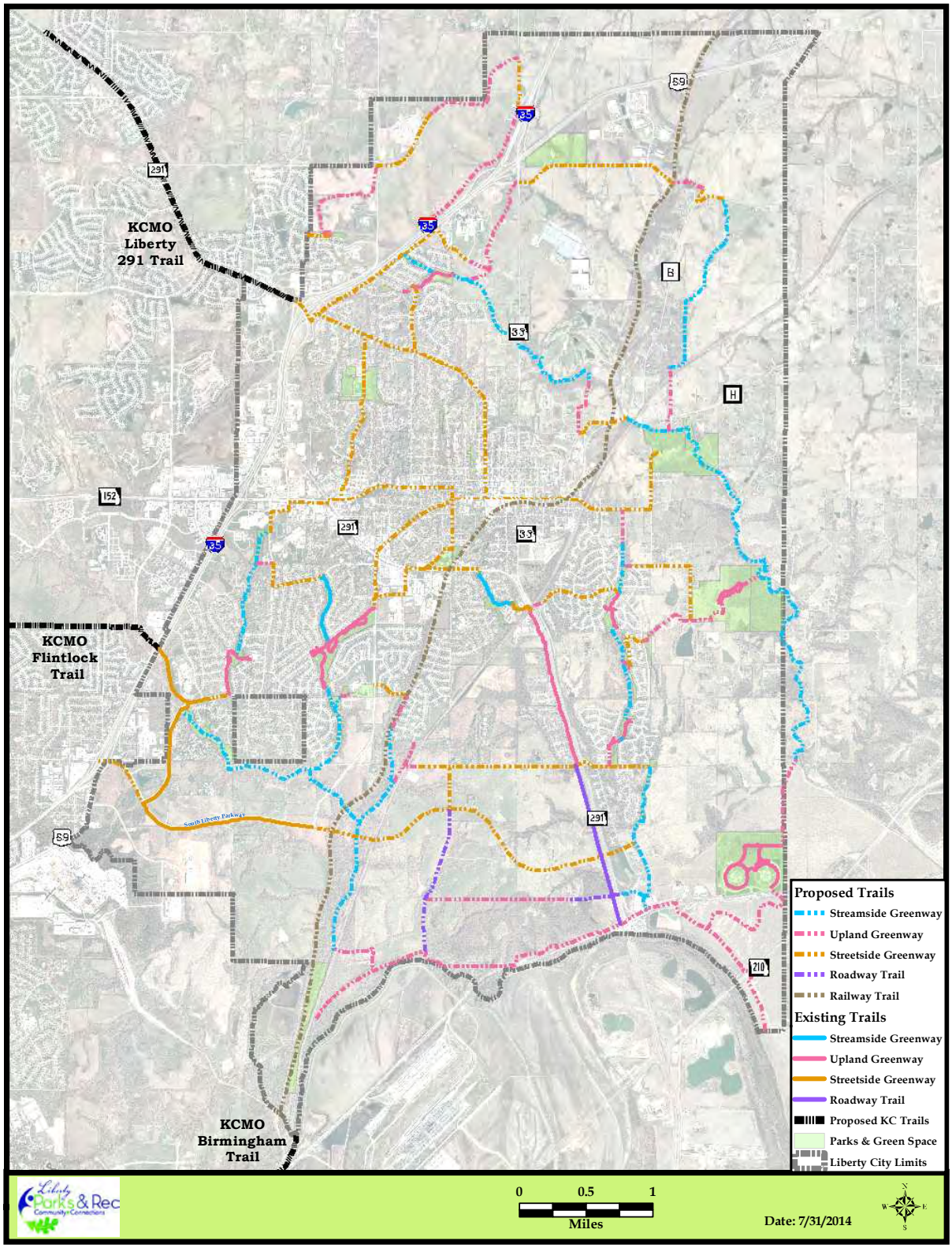
Alleys are often an important aspect of historic districts ("part of their charm," said one interviewee), which allow rear parking and (not in Liberty) trash collection. Liberty has allocated no funding specifically for the repair and upkeep of alleys, which are found in each of the five local historic districts. As a result, many are in quite poor condition; some have been allowed to go out of the public domain.

Trash Management

Code enforcement concerns down to the level of trash pickup were reported among those interviewed for this plan as an annoyance, and unsightly. This can affect the first impression of the City for visitors and potential buyers, among other issues. One interviewee reported, "Ugly dumpsters are in full view everywhere. We have rules about enclosures, but only a handful of businesses on the [Courthouse] Square comply." Trash cans in neighborhoods should not constantly remain at the curb, only be available on pickup days.

Parks and Trails

Liberty's residents are justifiably proud of the City's parks and trails; the only wish expressed in interviews is for more. (See Map 5.3, p. 170)



Map 5.3. Existing and Proposed Trails and Greenways (from Liberty Trails and Greenways Plan, July 2014)

Actions for Sustaining and Enhancing the Public Domain

Action 5.12.A: Undertake a stormwater management plan for Liberty's National Register historic districts (or the Downtown Liberty Chapter 353 District, or city-wide):

- It may be possible to **add some elements of needed stormwater remediation as a cost-effective step during the planned upgrade of the City's drinking water infrastructure**, when streets are being opened for new piping anyway.
- Explore **state and federal grant and demonstration funding** that may be available for addressing urban stormwater management and thus water quality in the Missouri River Basin.
- Implement the recommendations in the *Blueprint for Liberty* regarding **green infrastructure**.
- **Emphasize plantings, swales, and rain gardens to control stormwater at its source.**
- **Work with property owners to retain as much water on their properties as possible.** Consider providing small "cost share" grants to implement the recommendations of technical advisors made available directly to homeowners.
- Ask William Jewell College for a **student engineering team** to participate in designing engineering solutions to particular problems.
- Publicize the City's determination to do its part for the **water quality of the Missouri River.**

Action 5.12.B: Inventory street trees in historic districts and create detailed maintenance (and replacement) plans.

- Establish criteria for **"landmark trees"** and create a program to assist property owners with the maintenance of these special trees.
- In the comprehensive plan, consider **additional city-wide planning for street trees.**

Action 5.12.C: Inventory sidewalks, alleys, and roadways in the Downtown Liberty Chapter 353 District and develop a capital improvement plan "beyond the Square." This would be an implementation step planned first in the comprehensive plan.

- Consider a **"Complete Streets"** approach (https://smartgrowthamerica.org/program/national-complete-streets-coalition/
- In the inventory, pay particular attention to sidewalk needs in commercial areas (those not improved by the infrastructure upgrade around the Courthouse Square and immediate environs) and consider whether those with commercial projects seeking Chapter 353 property tax abatement should be required to repair their sidewalks (residential projects are already

required to make repairs to sidewalks and driveways where the City decides they are needed).

Action 5.12.D: Enforce City codes addressing trash-handling, with special attention to the maintenance and operation of commercial trash facilities.

Action 5.12.E: Enhance parks and trails across the City, aiming over the long term to connect all neighborhoods so that every house is just a five-minute walk from a trail that ultimately leads to the Downtown.

- Undertake a **bike and pedestrian plan** as an implementation step planned first in the comprehensive plan.
- Seek both **recreational and transportation grant funding** available from the state and federal governments.
- Encourage the formation of a **"Friends of Liberty's Parks and Trails" citizens' association** to advocate for the system, help with trail maintenance and fundraising, and develop a strong constituency of city residents.
- Tie parks, trails, sidewalks, and bicycling to a **"Healthy Liberty"** initiative.

Action 5.12.F: In all maintenance, construction, and replacement of elements of the public domain, the Public Works Department should consult with the HDRC in advance of detailed planning, as required under the Unified Development Ordinance, Sec. 30-20.6. The value of historic districts lies in their entirety, not simply in regulating them building by building. Matching the color, texture, and design of historic sidewalks, for example, can be desirable when a length of sidewalk is being patched or replaced. (This is an action reinforcing Action 5.3.A earlier in this chapter and Action 4.7.E in Chapter 4, Preservation Programs.)

5.13. Conclusion

As the length of this chapter demonstrates, a great deal of the City's work through planning, economic development, public works, and recreation, to identify the most important agencies, substantially affects historic preservation issues. Just as with the City's historic preservation program, the fundamentals are commendable. It remains for the City's leaders and staff, together with its residents and business owners, to implement concepts and actions in this chapter through fine-tuning, careful attention, and continual diligence. With a focus on the historic preservation dimension of all of its many responsibilities, the City of Liberty can assure that the historic character and assets of its community can be sustained for the long term, while continuing to contribute to the quality of life of its residents, the returns to its businesses and investors, and the enjoyment of its visitors.

(Photo © Shane Immelt, Minds-i Photographic)

Chapter 6: Heritage Tourism and Public Outreach

6.1. Introduction

This chapter explores using heritage tourism and public education to reinforce and extend residents' appreciation for Liberty's heritage.

Heritage tourism is a means of welcoming visitors and gaining economic benefits from heritage assets that also benefits residents. It reinforces quality of place and interpretive programs that all can enjoy, visitors and residents alike.

City of Liberty Historic Preservation Goal #3

Activate Community Engagement: Actively engage residents and visitors with information, interpretation, and programming that reinforces community identity, tells the City's stories, and encourages local appreciation of historic preservation action.

Public education includes both interpretation and community outreach. Interpretation is designed by heritage sites and programs to tell a wide variety of community stories. It includes storytelling but is generally considered more inclusive in terms of explaining the broad themes of history in a place, to provide storytelling with context that leads audiences to follow those themes across multiple presentations and sites.

(Photo © Shane Immelt, Minds-i Photographic)

Community outreach is a process to inform community residents about activities that protect historic resources, both public and private. Public education also includes outreach to schools, especially K-12 schools.

If public education in all its forms is done well, community residents' appreciation for Liberty's history and historic resources and historic preservation's role in community economic activity will grow, and their understanding of their own role as supporters for historic preservation will also increase.

6.2. Heritage Tourism in Liberty

The state of tourism in Liberty has improved over the last five years and is poised to continue to grow. With the creation of a new "Visit Liberty" entity and advertising campaign, City staff now have a way to promote businesses, attractions, and events around Liberty with one voice that is intentionally separate from the City of Liberty, Missouri, government communication channels.

The backbone of Visit Liberty is providing a cohesive marketing message through all platforms that promotes Liberty's complete offerings, including history, events, arts, local businesses, and more. This gives visitors one reliable source of information for planning a trip that is easier to navigate than searching out information from many businesses individually. Individual businesses may still market to visitors, but now have the reinforcement from Visit Liberty to bring visitors to Liberty as a destination.

For a small city of just 30,000 residents, Liberty is well-endowed with interpretive sites, outdoor interpretation, history books, events, walking tours, and educational programs related to the city's long history. At least two interpretive sites, the Liberty Jail and the Jesse James Bank Museum, from a tourism perspective are considered regional destinations in their own right. The diligent visitor can easily spend a day if not more exploring the sites and enjoying programs in Liberty – especially if they are led to walk through the city's splendid residential historic districts as well as the attractive downtown business district, or to visit the Civil War site of the Battle of Blue Hills (also called the Battle of Liberty) on the City's outskirts.

The City of Liberty also has a strong tradition of local historians, in partnership with the Clay County Archives & Historical Library, who have researched city history, documented sites and organizations, and produced a range of publications accessible to the public. Both the Archives and the Clay County Museum & Historical Society encourage self-guided walking tours

(which are hosted online) and on occasion provide guides for in-person tours.

(Photo © Shane Immelt, Minds-i Photographic)

What brings visitors to Liberty most of all, however, is events. Liberty's Main Street program, Historic Downtown Liberty, Inc. (HDLI, described in detail in Chapter 5, City Planning), sponsors many events for the downtown business district, including the Saturday farmers' market (open seasonally, early spring through early fall), Wine About Winter, Dog Days of Summer Craft Beer Crawl, and others.

Main Street programs across the nation traditionally undertake a great deal of promotional events; HDLI has been in operation since 2005 and thus has long experience and heretofore an ambitious schedule. The focus at the time this Historic Preservation Plan has been produced has been figuring out ways to encourage visitors during the Covid-19 pandemic; so far, a cruise night (featuring "show-worthy" old cars and motorcycles) and sidewalk sales have been successful.

HDLI also collaborates with the Chamber of Commerce, which hosts Liberty's largest event, Fall Festival in the Downtown; and a Wednesday farmers' market is self-operated under City permission.

City of Liberty Support for Tourism

Direct public spending to reinforce the City's tourism potential was expanded when Liberty voters passed the Transient Guest Tax (TGT) in November of 2014. This 5% tax on hotel night stays is specifically dedicated to provide funding for:

- Marketing and promoting the City of Liberty to increase tourism and the economic benefits that tourism brings to local businesses and to the City;
- Supporting Liberty's special events and festivals;
- Public art; and
- The development and installation of wayfinding signage (see illustration).

Distribution of the funds from this tax is overseen by the City's Tourism Committee with recommendations from the City Council and the Liberty Finance Department. The Tourism Committee is made up of delegates from Historic Downtown Liberty, Inc., the Liberty Area Chamber of Commerce, the Arts Commission, the Liberty City Council, and representatives from Liberty's hotel, restaurant, retail, and attraction industries.

The City's tourism program is directed by its Marketing & Special Events Supervisor, who is a part of the staff of the City's Public Relations Division. This position is responsible for:

- Managing the Transient Guest Tax budget, working with the Tourism Committee to create a budget for the year and monitoring expenses and revenues on a monthly basis;
- Supervising the City's tourism website, www.visitlibertymo.com, and social media channels, creating content relevant for visitors to Liberty;
- Coordinating the "Visit Liberty" advertising campaign;
- Coordinating and managing two of Liberty's long-running events, Liberty Fest in July and Hometown Holidays in December, and also working with the Arts Commission, HDLI, and the Liberty Area Chamber of Commerce to support events and programs that are partially funded by the TGT; and
- Working with Clay County Tourism and the Kansas City Regional Destination Alliance to coordinate regional promotion of Liberty as a part of the Kansas City area.

Actions for Heritage Tourism

Action 6.2.A: Work on Liberty's identity and overall branding (marketing presence) in markets beyond Liberty. The City is well-positioned to become a regional attraction; indeed for some limited markets (Jesse James enthusiasts, Mormons visiting historic sites in the region, including the Liberty Jail), it already is. Ideas include the following:

- **The Battle of Blue Hills, and potentially the Arsenal, are Civil War sites and stories that can be promoted** as part of the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area and to tap into the national interest in the Civil War.
- **The Freedom's Way National Heritage Area's logo** (which can be seen on the entrance sign to the Archives) should be used wherever possible both physically and digitally. The heritage area provides an important boost to Liberty's status as a part of Missouri's Civil War history, a large and fascinating topic given the many, many Civil War encounters across the state.
- **Obtain a brown highway sign proclaiming "Historic Liberty Next Right,"** installed in both directions for Liberty's primary exit on I-35.

Action 6.2.B: Develop a robust program of tourism promotion. Ideas include the following:

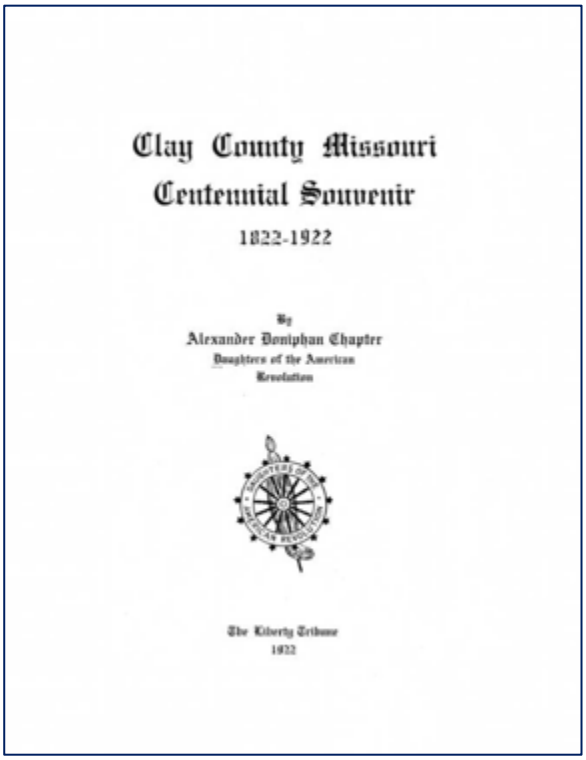
- Continue to **maintain a robust, attractive, easy-to-use online resource under the Visit Liberty banner.**
- **Focus on bus companies bringing visitors to Liberty** (past, present) to develop a well-rounded hospitality and interpretive experience. Work

to understand their needs and meet them well through cooperation with the Tourism Committee, HDLI, and individual partners.

- **Work with regional attractions** (businesses as well as interpretive sites) to develop targeted promotion and other actions. Liberty's business owners have developed several unique retail offerings with a significant online presence who can encourage their customers to visit in person.
- **Continue to work with Clay County Tourism and the Kansas City Regional Destination Alliance** to maintain Liberty's place as a regional destination and expand its share of the market.

Action 6.2.C: Continue developing events and refining existing events. Ideas include the following:

- **Programs that allow kids to participate** in events and activities downtown.
- Reinforce the **farmers' markets** (Saturday, Wednesday).
- Consider **new events**, such as a Blues & Jazz Festival suggested by one interviewee, who thought perhaps William Jewell College could become involved.


Clay County Missouri
Centennial Souvenir
1822-1922
By
Alexander Doniphan Chapter
Daughters of the American
Revolution
The Liberty Tribune
1922

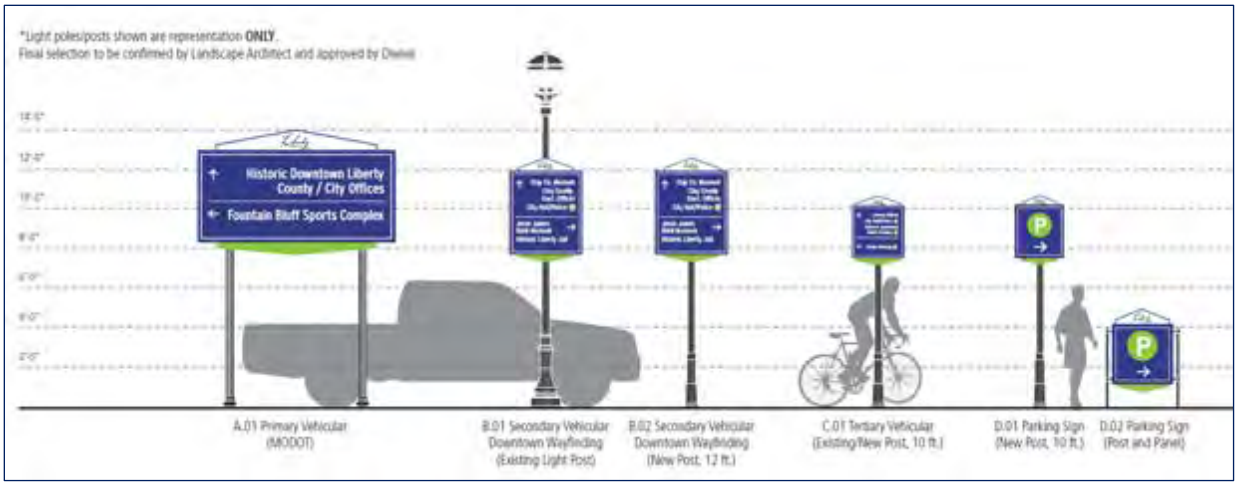
The Alexander Doniphan Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution collaborated with the Liberty Tribune *to publish a centennial history of Clay County in 1922. (Image courtesy Missouri Digital Heritage, retrieved from https://cdm16795.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/mocohist/id/84785/rec/9*

Action 6.2.D: Take advantage of the Missouri Bicentennial commemoration in the upcoming year – the actual date of Missouri's establishment is August 20, 2021 but the entire year is one for celebration. The state has a program to welcome "community engagement projects" that support the anniversary, including "local and regional projects that enhance our shared understanding of Missouri's diverse regions, communities, and people, both past and present."[100]

Action 6.2.E: Consider Downtown business district initiatives to encourage businesses to enhance the visitor experience. Reinforce the Main Street Four-Point Approach®:

- Encourage **more sidewalk participation** by businesses – e.g., restaurants on the sidewalks, sidewalk sales. Residents surveyed for this plan (during the early months of the Covid-19 pandemic) especially asked for more outdoor dining opportunities. Some businesses may need coaching in the City's permitting process, assistance that might be

[100] https://missouri2021.org/projects/



available not only from the City's friendly staff but from local small-busines advisory groups.

- Consider how to **encourage entrepreneurial retail and food businesses.** The most-requested kind of business for Liberty's central business districts in a survey conducted for this plan was for restaurants.

Action 6.2.F: Start now to plan for the commemoration of Liberty's official bicentennial year of 2029.

6.3. Wayfinding in Liberty

The wayfinding project established as one result of the new lodging tax has outlined signage needs across the City, in order to direct visitors to tourism attractions as well as various City and County buildings. Phase 1, completed in 2018, included parking signs and two kiosks in Downtown Liberty. Phase 2, completed in 2019, included signs to various attractions, including William Jewell College, Historic Downtown Liberty, and Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary.

Actions for Wayfinding

Action 6.3.A: Continue phased implementation of a citywide wayfinding and signage system using the existing graphic identity. This is a critical program that can, with additional phases yet to be planned, support the awareness of both residents and visitors of the City's historic identity. The City is fortunate in having a continuing source of funds to be able to expand the system over time and provide for its maintenance. Key points to consider in expansion include the following:

- Continue to improve the system with **additional phases designed to make it even easier for visitors to find their way around.**
- **Extend the wayfinding system citywide** so it is a useful amenity for residents as well as visitors, building pride of place.

- **Add a new phase for gateway and entrance signage to distinctive historic neighborhoods.** (See more discussion in Chapter 4, Action 4.8.A.)
- Develop a part of the sign family applying to **new outdoor community interpretation** where appropriate. (See more discussion below at Action 6.4.D.)

6.4. Interpretation in Liberty

Existing Interpretive Sites & Programs

Clay County African American Legacy Inc. (Garrison School Cultural Center)

(Photo by Jacob Knowles)

Clay County African American Legacy Inc. (CCAAL), founded in 2000, focuses on "improving the quality of life for its citizens by educating adults, and especially youth, of the cultural diversity that exists in the Northland."[101] CCAAL's programs include cultural and educational programs, social and recreational programs, and community partnerships.

In 2001, CCAAL raised $40,000 to build the Freedom Fountain Monument on the courthouse lawn (pictured, p. 194). The organization also worked for the installation of a mural on the third floor of the courthouse that features African American pioneers, businesses, schools, and churches from the 1820s to the turn of the twenty-first century; the mural is one of four sponsored by the Clay County Fine Arts Council and painted by local artist David McClain. In 2017, CCAAL also oversaw the installation and dedication of two exterior murals celebrating African American history on Garrison School.

CCAAL purchased Garrison School from the Liberty School District in 2003. This permanent base of operation allows presentation of ongoing programming for residents of Clay County and the surrounding region in what is now known as the Garrison School Cultural Center. The center includes permanent and rotating exhibits and Clay County's first African American gallery and allows such other programming as art exhibits, open house tours, lectures, readings, other events, and film screenings and plays. CCAAL has also created a walking tour focusing on African American sites in Liberty.

Garrison School was constructed in 1911 to replace the first African American school, built in 1877, which had burned. The 1911 school includes much of the building seen today, which is listed in the National Register of

[101] https://ccaal-garrisonschool.org/

Historic Places and recognized as a City of Liberty Local Landmark. The organization's membership brochure features the school's story:

> Garrison School soon earned the reputation as being one of the best schools for African American students in the state of Missouri. However the school only provided its students with a tenth grade education during most of its history. Garrison graduates had to ride buses into Kansas City to attend high school. In 1954, as a result of Brown vs. the Topeka Board of Education, the court ruled "separate but equal education" unconstitutional, and the Liberty school district began to integrate its African American students. The building continued to serve the community as part of the Liberty school district [until 2003].

(Photo © Shane Immelt, Minds-i Photographic)

Clay County Archives & Historical Library

Clay County and Liberty are among the few local communities across the country with their own archives, whether publicly or privately supported. The Clay County Archives & Historical Library, founded in 1969, has the following mission:

> To procure, preserve, restore, maintain, study, and promote manuscripts, instruments, records, charters, evidence, and documents of a public or private nature which may have statistical, legal or historical significance to Clay County, Missouri, its government or residents, or such documents as might be desirable to the association and to encourage public interest therein.

A non-profit corporation, organized as a depository and research center for original records of Clay County, the Archives and its programs are directed by a Board of Directors comprising representatives of Clay County museums, genealogical groups, historical societies, and patriotic organizations. It is supported by memberships, donations, and grants, and also by contributions by the County and City, especially in the provision of its building, purpose-built as a library early in the twentieth century not far from the Courthouse Square. Grants have included support from the Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area.

The Archives also makes heavy use of volunteers, who chair and serve on committees and also are needed for "indexing and scanning photos; criminal court records; birth, death and marriage records; filing and data entry to name

just a few," according to the Archives website.[102] One full-time volunteer, Christopher Harris, directs the organization and its operations.

In addition to a website of general interest and providing an interface to its collection (as well as promoting the organization and its activities and soliciting donations), the Archives operates a variety of programs. Its "Imaging History" program is working to digitize many of the historical records that are in the Archives' collection:

> Maps, newspapers, historical government records, obituaries, books, photographs and various other documents are being imaged. Vintage film footage, video programs, audio recordings and microfilm based documents are being converted to digital format. The digital collection is being expanded to include content that was not previously available at the Archives. Information is being added to the electronic index to enable searching of and easy access to the digital collection. Electronic backup files are being created to ensure that important historical documents will not be lost.

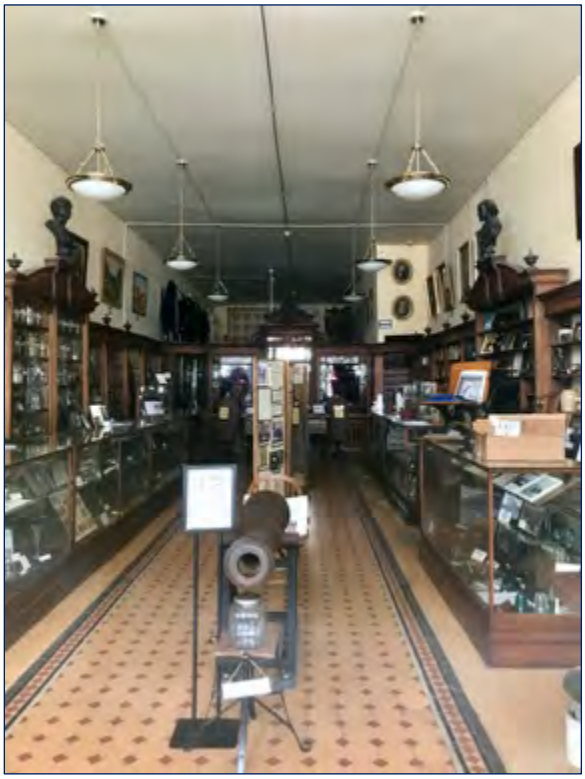
The Archives has also published several books and makes such items as maps it has scanned available for purchase. It publishes a quarterly newsletter, *MOsaic*, that offers details on local stories uncovered, updates members on activities, and recognizes the considerable number of donations to its collections it has received over the years.

In 2005, Christopher Harris, along with co-volunteers Neita Geilker (chair) and Elaine Keopke of the Archives Century House Committee, were recognized with the prestigious Missouri Governor's Humanities Award for Community Heritage. The Committee oversaw the Archives' publication in 2004 of *Liberty's Living Legacy: 19th Century Houses and Buildings, 1830-1899* (reprinted 2018). The extensive research from that project – the final publication includes 240 houses – also formed the basis of walking tours written at that time by Harris, now also used by other docents for tours scheduled occasionally by Historic Liberty, Inc.

Clay County Museum & Historical Society

The all-volunteer Clay County Museum & Historical Society was founded in 1955. It inherited the interests of an earlier historical society (founded to fight the loss of the second county courthouse to a Works Progress Administration replacement, the current courthouse) and in 1969 also accepted the donation of the contents of William Jewell College's museum. As that decade ended, the Archives was founded in order to focus on the wide variety of papers and documents collected by then, which included many records kept in the second courthouse.

[102] www.claycountyarchives.org



In the early 1960s the organization opened its building on the Square, formerly owned by a doctor whose family sold it to the society after his death along with his office, originating at the turn of the twentieth century, plus the antique drugstore fittings on the first floor. The organization's website explains:

> A drug store for at least 84 years became 2 then 3 floors of artifacts celebrating its 50th anniversary as a museum in 2015. A variety of exhibits and ever changing displays acquaints visitors with Clay County's past history. The newly renovated lower level features early cottage industries, farming equipment, tools, a vintage kitchen, a "touch table" and 1900s Boy Scout equipment. The main floor is divided by a glass partition with vintage display cases filled with china, toys, railroad artifacts and apothecary paraphernalia. Behind the partition the visitor will find letters by the Jesse James family; Civil War, WWI and WWII items; antiques quilts; and Native American artifacts. The 2nd floor includes Dr. Goodson's office, as set up by his son, also Dr. Goodson; 3 rooms of antique furniture; and displays of the county courthouses, vintage sewing machines and other bits and pieces of the past.[103]

The nonprofit organization is supported by memberships, donations, grants, and museum sales, including a gift shop. It is operated by a Board of Directors that includes a volunteer curator who directs the participation of many other volunteers; a volunteer docent coordinator schedules and trains museum guides. Projects over the years by the organization have included an extensive number of publications and guidebooks plus audiovisuals. Most recently completed is a video documentary explaining the early Civil War battle known as the Battle of Liberty or the Battle of Blue Mills. The organization offers webinars and other kinds of public education and outreach, including hosting local school groups, and a richly developed website[104]. Currently, the organization is sponsoring the collection of the history of the Covid-19 pandemic for posterity.

Daughters of the American Revolution – Alexander Doniphan Chapter

The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), founded in 1890 and headquartered in Washington, DC, is a non-profit, non-political volunteer

[103] https://www.claycountymuseum.org/history-of-the-museum-building
[104] www.claycountymuseum.org

Dedication in 2020 of the historical marker for the Battle of Blue Mills Landing sponsored by the Alexander Doniphan Chapter and the Clay County Museum & Historical Society. (Photo courtesy Alexander Doniphan Chapter, DAR)

women's service organization dedicated to "promoting patriotism, preserving American history, and securing America's future through better education for children."[105]

Liberty's Alexander Doniphan Chapter of the DAR was formed in 1909 and serves the Liberty area. The chapter is named for Col. Alexander W. Doniphan (1808-87), who was a resident of Liberty at the time of the Mexican War. The State Historical Society of Missouri's Historic Missourians website states that he was "a prominent lawyer, military leader, and political figure. He is remembered for his refusal to execute Joseph Smith and Smith's followers during the 1838 Mormon War and his exemplary military leadership during the Mexican War of 1846-1848. Although he was not a professional military commander, Doniphan successfully led his troops on one of the longest marches in military history, contributing to the United States' victory over Mexico."[106]

The chapter has long encouraged students to focus on American history at William Jewell College, Liberty Ladies' College (before it burned), and Liberty's two high schools through an essay contest, offering scholarships and gold medals. Members also donate items related to American history to local classrooms of all grades. Moreover, it has focused on local history for decades, as a website created by early chapter members recounts:

[105] https://www.dar.org/national-society/about-dar/who-we-are/who-we-are
[106] https://historicmissourians.shsmo.org/historicmissourians/name/d/doniphan/

> Historical interest has led to the collecting and compiling of much valuable county history data. To aid in this work pioneers of the county were persuaded to write articles dealing with conditions and life in the county's youth. In 1912, Mr. Dan Carpenter, who came to Clay County in 1845 at the age of twenty years, wrote a series on the churches, the schools, the mills, the cemeteries, the social customs and the homes of Clay County. These articles were published in the *Liberty Tribune*.[107]

The DAR also seeks to mark the graves of Revolutionary War soldiers. As early as 1912, the chapter secured a marker for the grave of Richard P. Simms, a soldier of the Revolution who is buried seven miles north of Liberty. More recently, the chapter placed a marker in the Clay County Courthouse with a list of all World War I veterans from Clay County.

Modern DAR chapters are known for their interest in historic preservation[108] as well as local history, and this is the case for the Alexander Doniphan Chapter, which is considering how they might assist with documents, cemeteries, and markers for historic houses or sites. From time to time, they are able to make small grants. Local DAR members are volunteers with the Clay County Museum and the Clay County Archives, including service on their boards of directors. In September of 2020, the chapter collaborated with the museum to use a Liberty Tourism Grant to erect a new marker about the Battle of Blue Mills Landing on county land at the corner of Highway 291and Ruth Ewing Drive.

(Photos © Shane Immelt, Minds-i Photographic)

Historic Downtown Liberty, Inc.

Historic Downtown Liberty, Inc. (HDLI), a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to preserving the past and promoting the future of downtown Liberty, Missouri. It was organized in 2005 and follows the Main Street Four-Point Approach® created by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which includes promotional events such as the musical appearances pictured at left. HDLI is one of seven Accredited Main Street Communities in Missouri and are "proud participants of both Missouri Main Street Connection and Main Street America."[109] HDLI and its Main Street programs are further explained in detail in Chapter 5, City Planning, Section 5.7, Sustaining Liberty's Central Business District, and also covered elsewhere in this chapter.

[107] https://moclay.genealogyvillage.com/daughters-of-the-american-revolution.html
[108] https://www.dar.org/national-society/historic-preservation
[109] https://www.historicdowntownliberty.org/

Historic Liberty, Inc.

In 2003, a tornado struck Liberty. In its aftermath, residents formed the nonprofit organization Historic Liberty, Inc., in order to be "pro-active for all things in Historic Liberty. We defined Historic Liberty as pre-World War II," recalls one of the founders, Harold Phillips, now a member of City Council. The group envisioned working together for the improvement of neighborhoods and encouraging residents to "live, work, shop, learn, explore" in Liberty. Currently, the group works with the Community Development Division of the Planning and Development Department to co-sponsor monthly walking tours for residents and visitors.

Historic Liberty Jail (museum of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints)

Liberty Jail is a reconstruction of a jail that once stood in Liberty, a memorial to the history of the Mormon Church as it was experienced in Liberty, dedicated in 1963. The reconstructed jail is housed within a visitors' center built of granite in a mid-century modern style on the original site of the jail. The jail is presented as a cutaway, giving visitors a view inside. A brief audiovisual presentation is offered to orient visitors. The church's website tells the story:

> On December 1, 1838, the Prophet Joseph Smith and five other men were falsely accused of treason and imprisoned in the original Liberty Jail. One of those men, Sidney Rigdon, was released from the jail in early February 1839. The others – Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Lyman Wight, Caleb Baldwin, and Alexander McRae – remained there until early April 1839. For Joseph Smith and his imprisoned companions, Liberty Jail was a place of intense suffering and glorious revelation.
>
> In Liberty Jail, Joseph Smith and his companions endured many trials, not the least of which was the knowledge that their family members and friends were enduring intense persecution throughout western Missouri. Toward the end of their confinement, Joseph prayed to God for understanding and deliverance. He received a revelation that he sent in a letter to the Saints. Portions of that letter are now recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 121, 122, and 123.[110]

[110] https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org/subsection/historic-sites/missouri/historic-liberty-jail?lang=eng

(Photo © Shane Immelt, Minds-i Photographic)

Jesse James Bank Museum

The Jesse James Bank Museum, located on the historic square in Liberty, Missouri, was the site of the nation's first successful daylight peacetime bank robbery. Visitors will see the bank as it was in 1866. While the robbers were never caught, the crime was attributed to the infamous James Gang led by brothers Jesse and Frank. The museum is run by Clay County as a part of its Parks and Recreation Department. VisitClay.org tells the story of the site:

> It was a cold and snowy February afternoon when a group of horsemen rode into Liberty, Missouri. After a short time, gunshots broke the winter silence as the men rode off with their loot, leaving one young college student dead and the town in shock.
>
> Period furnishings fill the room and one becomes immersed in the story of the robbery as told by the bank teller. As you peer into the original green vault you can imagine the fear felt by the poor, distraught banker and his son, a consequence of the robbery. Among the furnishings, a rare Seth Thomas clock, one of only two known to exist, hangs on the wall set for the exact time and date of the robbery, February 13, 1866. Many photographs and other documents are on display.[111]

William Jewell College

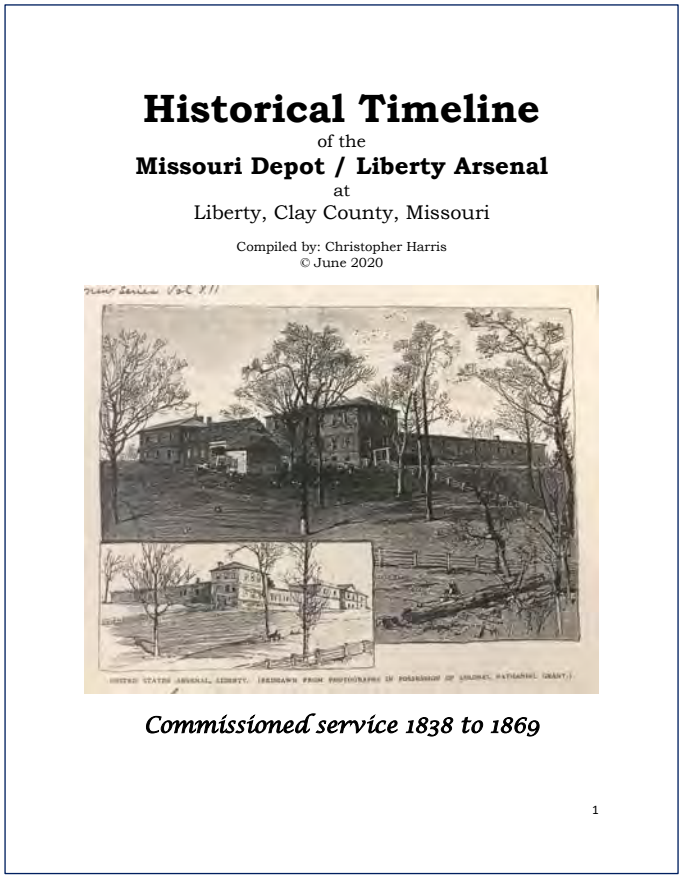
William Jewell College is a respected small liberal-arts college established in 1849. There are four historic sites on the campus: Jewell Hall, used by federal troops as a lookout point and an infirmary during the Civil War[112]; Mt. Memorial, the City's original cemetery, with a small chapel; a larger chapel; and the President's House, a handsome large brick structure built in the Neoclassical style after the turn of the twentieth century. The college explains its founding on its website:

> As settlers migrated West in the 1830s, a group of Baptists who lived along the Missouri River envisioned a college at the edge of the American wilderness in Liberty. Many towns in Missouri wanted the college, but Clay County Baptists, joined by Mexican War hero Colonel Alexander Doniphan and Dr. William Jewell, a physician, legislator and Baptist layman who donated land for a college, persevered with grassroots fundraising.

[111] https://www.visitclaymo.com/business/jesse-james-bank-museum
[112] https://jewell.edu/about/jewell-history

> The General Association (forerunner of the Missouri Baptist Convention) approved a proposal, and the Missouri Legislature granted a charter to found a college in 1849.[113]

The college, of course, was named for its key founder, William Jewell. Its relationship with the Baptist Convention continued through 2003.



Regional: Civil War Sites (Liberty Arsenal; Battle of Liberty/Battle of Blue Mills Landing; Jewell Hall)

Both the arsenal and battlefield were important to the story of retaining Missouri within the Union – a state that saw roughly a thousand skirmishes, third after Virginia and Tennessee. The arsenal and battlefield are unprotected; Jewell Hall is still in use by William Jewell College. Local interest in these sites is high and the existing research and information are strong. A new book about the Liberty Arsenal by local historian Christopher Harris was recently published; a fifteen-minute video documentary has recently been completed about the battle by the Clay County Museum & Historical Society and the Alexander Doniphan Chapter of the DAR with support from the Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area; and the museum and chapter also collaborated on an interpretive historical marker installed at the battle site with a grant from the Liberty Tourism Committee. More descriptions of both sites and the events associated with them are found in Chapter 2, History and Context.

Regional: Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area

Liberty is fortunate in being located in the bi-state Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area (FFNHA), one of just 55 established by Congress across the country in places where the history of a place is nationally significant and the historic, recreational, and cultural resources and visitor experiences of that region enable visitors to learn the story of each place.

[113] Ibid.

FFNHA interprets the "border war" between residents of Missouri and Kansas and the events that led up to that conflict, a struggle between abolitionists and those who believed slavery should remain sanctioned by the United States. The heritage area has three core themes it seeks to interpret across the region, including encouraging other sites and programs to reflect these themes: Shaping the Frontier,

the Missouri Kansas Border War, and the Enduring Struggle for Freedom. The heritage area offers grants for local sites and programs.[114]

Cemeteries

The City owns and operates two historic cemeteries, Mt. Memorial on the William Jewell College campus (as mentioned in the entry above about the college) and Fairview/New Hope).[115]

A current project at New Hope Cemetery is underway to identify the unmarked graves of the many African Americans buried there, a story that has only recently come to prominent attention. A memorial is in the planning stages.

Historical Markers

Liberty possesses an extensive set of memorials, markers, outdoor interpretive signs, and commemorative art installations, at least 59 by count from the Historical Marker Database, HMDB.org[116]. (See illustration, next page.)

Actions for Interpretation

Action 6.4.A: Encourage more collaboration among Liberty's multiple interpretive sites, William Jewell College, and others as appropriate in order to expand the telling of the entire story of the City of Liberty, reinforce each individual program, and reach more visitors and audiences. Involve and include all community organizations in the concept and program. Ultimately, the collaborators should work with the City on a combined interpretive and heritage tourism plan that can flesh out the ideas in the following actions.

Action 6.4.B: Encourage the City's interpretive sites, history organizations, and other stakeholders to form a committee, perhaps with City support, to create events and other ways to commemorate the bicentennial settlement of Liberty in 2022. While this is not the official bicentennial of the City's incorporation, which the City expects to

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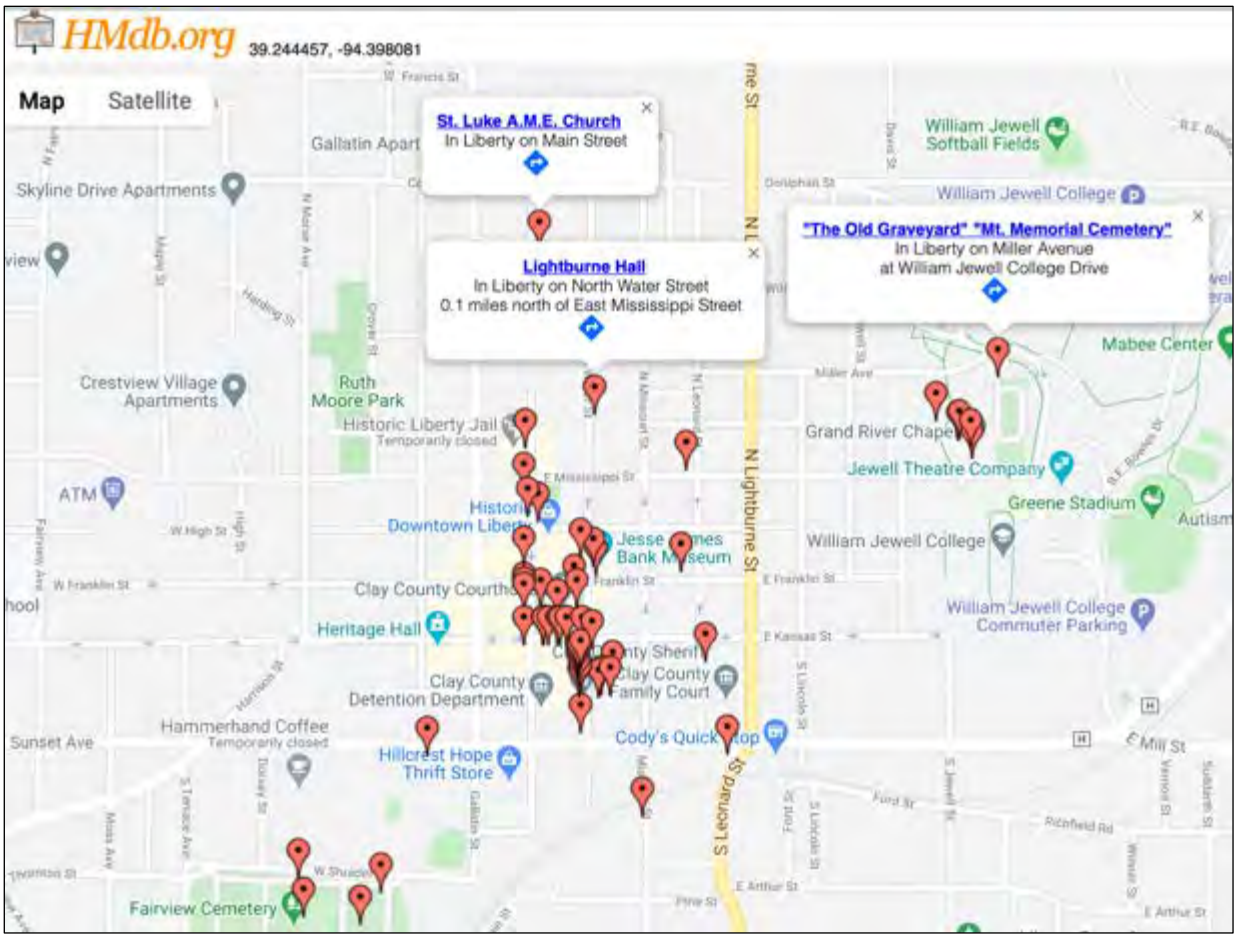
[114] For more information, consult FFNHA's website, http://www.freedomsfrontier.org/

[115] https://www.libertymissouri.gov/2113/Mt-Memorial-Cemetery-History; https://www.libertymissouri.gov/1745/Fairview-New-Hope-Cemeteries-History

[116] https://www.hmdb.org/results.asp?Search=Town&FilterState=Missouri&FilterCountry=United%20States%20of%20America&FilterCounty=Clay%20County&Town=Liberty

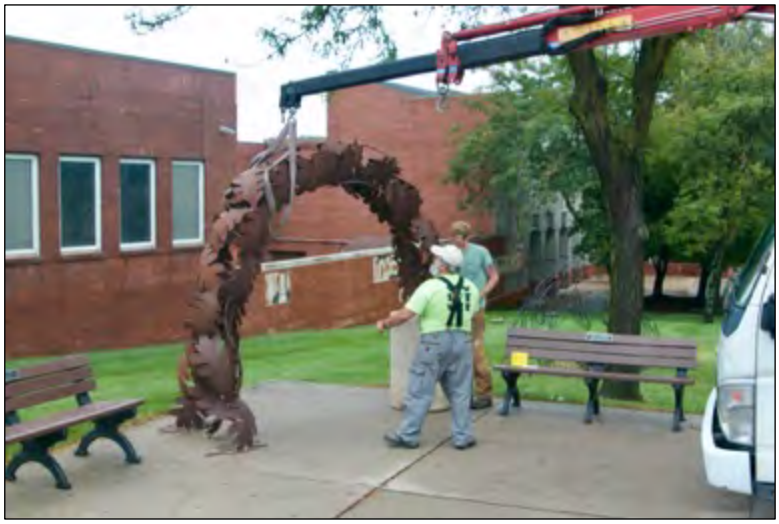


The Historical Marker Database (HMDB.org) generates photos, geo-location data, marker text, and explanations thanks to the contributions of thousands of marker enthusiasts. This is the map of markers and monuments HMDB.org has on record in Liberty as of September 30, 2020 (with a few pop-up identifications added for illustration that do not obscure other pins). (Image courtesy HMDB.org; search https://www.hmdb.org/geolists.asp for Missouri, then political subdivision Clay County, then Liberty)

lead (see Action 6.2.F), it marks an important milestone that could stimulate creative collaborations among history leaders.

Action 6.4.C: Encourage the committee described in Action 6.4.B also to continue toward 2026 by developing a program to support the national 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. While Liberty did not exist at the time, it was founded at a time when some historians suggest the Revolution was "continuing," in the aftermath of the final bout with the British in the War of 1812. There are many interesting ways to link Liberty's history to the 250th, starting with Liberty's name.[117] The early emphasis on education in Liberty is another echo of the Revolution and the determination of Americans to become educated in order to participate in their democracy.

[117] https://www.america250.org/



(Photo © Shane Immelt, Minds-i Photographic)

Action 6.4.D: Continue to grow the system of outdoor community interpretation using wayside exhibits and public art, a major approach to continued placemaking to enhance public and private spaces. Create a plan or a strategy to expand and fill any gaps in the current system of permanent installations. Ideas include the following:

- Under Liberty's Parks and Recreation Department, **install interpretation at trailheads and in parks** to implement a citywide installation of community interpretation (as noted above in Section 6.3, Wayfinding, designed to match the wayfinding system).
- Encourage **historic neighbor-hoods to participate in the interpretive program** by telling their own stories through arts installations, outdoor interpretation, and digital media.
- Encourage **local businesses to participate in the interpretive program** by telling their own stories.
- Continue to use the **Downtown temporary sculpture program** to add dynamism and modern appeal.

Action 6.4.E: Work with HDLI to encourage owners to install permanent small, distinctive interpretive plaques on buildings in the Downtown business district that are significant for architecture and/or history. The Archives has already sponsored research on many of these buildings that could be distilled into engaging interpretation.

Action 6.4.F: Consider the system of community interpretation as an enhancement that can be presented and marketed to visitors, perhaps as an "Arts & History Trail" designed with both walking-tour and driving-tour components. The City's many existing historical markers and arts installations provide an excellent basis for implementing this concept.

Action 6.4.G: Continue to use community events as a way to attract and engage visitors as well as residents through storytelling activities. Ideas include the following:

- Consider historical re-enactment events in the Downtown and at historic cemeteries (an especially popular activity for Halloween). Recruit the Clay County Museum & Historical Society, Clay County African American Legacy, the Archives, Corbin Theater, William Jewell College, and the

City's two high schools as partners to design and present high-quality re-enactments based on local history.

(Photo © Shane Immelt, Minds-i Photographic)

Action 6.4.H: Continue to encourage and support local historians in the research and documentation of historic sites, organizations, and individuals. Sponsor a public Cultural Heritage Workshop as presented by Missouri Humanities[118] to add to their enthusiasm and knowledge of resources to involve in their work.

6.5. Public Outreach in Liberty

Historic preservation in any community does not happen by accident. Community leaders and citizens who persuade their fellow residents and public officials to put in place the kinds of programs found in Liberty have had to organize, strategize, and work diligently to be successful. With many long-time programs in place that support preservation in Liberty, it would be natural to suppose that the hard work is over. Unfortunately, competent governance and a well-informed electorate do not happen by accident, either.

Cultivating community support over the long term for historic preservation requires ongoing attention, by both the Historic District Review Commission (HDRC) and nonprofit advocates for Liberty's history. While there is not a nonprofit advocacy organization specifically for historic preservation – not an action this plan can specify – the interpretive institutions and history-related organizations described earlier in this chapter, such as the Alexander Doniphan Chapter of the DAR, rely on the historic context of the entire city to inspire their members, residents, and visitors. They are also a constituency that should help to lead the cultivation of community support for Liberty, not only for Liberty's stories, but also for Liberty as a well-preserved historic place where those stories took place.

There are two aspects of public outreach that require focus. First, informing the public about City and HDRC actions. These actions are discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.7 and Action 4.7.G. Organizations with a stake in preserving Liberty's history and historic resources should be special targets of this outreach, since they are filled with natural supporters who will be interested. Finding ways to collaborate on interpretation is recommended above in Actions 6.4.A-C; this plan also recommends that they collaborate on understanding how historic preservation works in Liberty, and what the issues are, on an ongoing basis.

[118] https://mohumanities.org/programs/cultural/

Liberty High School, built in the early twentieth century in a restrained Neoclassical style, serves today's students as the Heritage Middle School. (Photo by Jacob Knowles)

Second, public outreach in Liberty must include cultivation of the next generations of community residents and leaders. Liberty and the Kansas City area are such good places to live and work, it is reasonable to expect that many of those who raise children here can expect them to return to raise their own families and find their own paths through life in the immediate area. The school system, then, is a logical place to encourage the incubation of life-long interests in history and community affairs, including the civic action needed to keep history and historic places alive in Liberty.

It is natural to expect the interpretive institutions described in this chapter to participate in K-12 programs, and indeed they do. The school district, however, simply allows them to serve teachers who are interested; there is no specific, multi-graded program to teach their students not only about Liberty's history, but its architecture and its civics – the community programs that someday their students will find themselves participating in as community leaders.

As remarked upon in the introduction to this Historic Preservation Plan, by all ordinary measures the City of Liberty and its residents, property owners, and community leaders have built an excellent context for historic preservation and public appreciation for Liberty's history. If there is any one big missing piece, it is a coordinated campaign to enlist the entire school system in making sure that Liberty's students from kindergarten through twelfth grade know Liberty's stories and appreciate the place that Liberty has come to be.

The need for this was recognized as far back as the 1980s surveys of historic resources in Downtown Liberty. The project leader for that work, Deon K. Wolfenbarger, endorsed developing "a public and school-age information

program, as education is often the best protection device of all." She called for more walking and driving tours for Liberty – and many are now available – and encouraging local school systems to "develop a 'Liberty Heritage Education' packet, which would focus on local history as expressed by Liberty's built environment." A few interested teachers do take their students to various interpretive locations in Liberty, but a more comprehensive program still is needed.

Action for Educational Outreach

Action 6.5.A: Confer with the Liberty school district on how the City and its history stakeholders can support the teaching of local history, civics, and other topics through multidisciplinary, place-based, team learning for all grades, K-12.

Strategies for this action should be developed not only to enlist the system's administrators and curriculum supervisors, its teachers, and its community of parents, but also community leaders at large. It is those leaders who experience the competence – good or bad – of the generations of leaders rising up from the ranks of the City's young residents, and know only too well how much good preparation would serve the community.

This is not an easy thing to prescribe, and we are not going to provide specific strategies here. The obstacles to penetrating public schools to develop these kinds of programs are many – not least that STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), if not STEAM (add arts), have crowded out time available for history and civics in the school year. A carefully designed initiative to support school tours, in-classroom presentations, and independent studies and/or community service for older students need not impose more burdens on teachers' planning and classroom time, especially if Liberty's history stakeholders help with lesson plans and curriculum design. It will take teamwork, time, and resources to identify the obstacles and find ways to overcome them in mutually supportive ways.

An initiative such as imagined here will take the kind of leadership, determination, and creativity that sparked Liberty's interest in historic preservation in the first place, well over 40 years ago.

6.6. Conclusion

Imagine, if you will, what Liberty could be like in forty more years with the backing of many more residents raised and educated in this historic, beautiful place if they have come to a deeper appreciation for what they can see for themselves, but may fail to understand completely without more strategic guidance. Liberty never did happen by accident, and its continued preservation and the leadership that preservation requires will not happen by accident, either.

The "Freedom Fountain Monument" (called "Clay County African American Pioneers" in the Historical Marker Database discussed on pp. 188-89) was a project led by Clay County African American Legacy Inc., and completed in 2001. The front reads in part that "this monument commemorates African American contributions to Clay County first in slavery and later in freedom. We honor these men and women who rose to become distinguished residents, politicians, educators, and business and civic leaders." The reverse lists "Clay County 19th-20th Century African-American Pioneers." (Photo at left © Shane Immelt, Minds-i Photographic; right by Jacob Knowles)

Cultivating energetic historic preservation in Liberty – and with it a sustainable economy and good governance – across neighborhoods and generations is a serious business. There is every reason, however, that the work described in this chapter can also be enjoyable. The drive for learning and exploration is a powerful human instinct, powered first of all by enjoyment. A sense of connection to the past and to beautiful places adds to that enjoyment.

Liberty has the platform to respond to new audiences willing to engage in discovering stories of its past and its quality of life today. It remains for the City and its history stakeholders, residents, and business owners to join together in coordinated strategies to harness history in service to tourism and education – and the future.

Liberty invests in its community assets with teamwork, resources, and enthusiasm – no matter what the project. Those qualities will carry everyone in the community very far indeed in implementing this Historic Preservation Plan. (Photo © Shane Immelt, Minds-i Photographic)

Chapter 7: Conclusion & Implementation

This plan is designed to help the officials and residents of the City of Liberty understand, protect, and promote the wealth of historic assets that gives the City a strong sense of place. Preservation is both an economic development tool and a unique city-building activity, intersecting with many community programs, for neighborhoods and the central business district, from public domain to tourism, as described in the preceding pages.

Following are the actions described in the previous chapters presented as a multi-year implementation plan for incorporating historic preservation into the broad range of the City's programs and initiatives.

Liberty has the benefit of forty years of taking preservation action to understand how valuable this Historic Preservation Plan can be to the Liberty of forty years from now. While the actions suggested here are sketched out for just the next ten years, the next phase of work will mean a great deal to the following thirty years.

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Ref. #	Page #	Actions for Historic Preservation	Ongoing	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Lead/Participating Parties; Notes
		Certified Local Government					
4.3.A	109	Continue participation in Missouri's Certified Local Government program. Priorities for Certified Local Government grant applications include: updates to the City's context statements and surveys; training for the HDRC; and updates to the City's design guidelines. Work on designating local historic districts and updating nominations of National Register historic districts may follow from completed survey work.	✓				HDRC, Community Development Division staff of the Department of Planning and Development (DPD)/Missouri State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
		Historic Tax Credits					
4.4.A	114	Build a local constituency for using the Missouri and federal Historic Tax Credits.	✓	✓			HDRC, Community Development Division, Economic Development Department/SHPO
		Surveying					
4.5.A	122	Carry out all contexts sketched in the original Multiple Property Submission.		✓			HDRC, Community Development Division /SHPO
4.5.B	122	Update and extend Liberty's inventory to the modern city limits.		✓	✓		HDRC, Community Development Division /SHPO
		National Register Nominations					
4.6.A	124	Update National Register nominations for the Liberty Square South and West historic districts.			✓		HDRC, Community Development Division, owners of historic properties /SHPO
4.6.B	124	Encourage other National Register nominations.	✓				HDRC, Community Development Division, owners of historic properties /SHPO

Ref. #	Page #	Actions for Historic Preservation	Ongoing	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Lead/Participating Parties; Notes
		Historic District Review Commission					
4.7.A	126	Prepare a yearly work plan and continue the annual report.	✓				HDRC, Community Development Division
4.7.B	126	Reinforce the role and responsibilities of the HDRC with periodic training.	✓				HDRC, Community Development Division /SHPO
4.7.C	126	Reinforce the HDRC's decision process to ensure that it conforms to best practices.	✓	✓			HDRC, Community Development Division /SHPO
4.7.D	126	Assign HDRC members to be liaisons to the City Council and other boards and commissions.	✓	✓			HDRC
4.7.E	126	Redouble efforts to align City actions across all departments with the needs of historic preservation.	✓	✓			Department of Planning and Development
4.7.F	127	Continue the HDRC's design subcommittee.	✓				HDRC, Community Development Division
4.7.G	128	Augment the HDRC's public engagement.	✓	✓			HDRC, Community Development Division
		Protecting Locally Designated Historic Districts					
4.8.A	133	Improve the identification of local historic districts with additional signage.			✓		HDRC, Community Development Division, Department of Public Works
4.8.B	133	Consider undertaking a study of the economic benefits of local historic districts.			✓		Department of Planning and Development and the Economic Development Department; SHPO intends to undertake a similar program across the state
4.8.C	133	Consider expanding existing local historic districts and naming new ones (after completion of surveys and long-term public engagement; see action 4.8.F).			✓	✓	HDRC and City Council, owners of historic properties

Ref. #	Page #	Actions for Historic Preservation	Ongoing	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Lead/Participating Parties; Notes
4.8.D	133	Improve the City's local property tax incentives.			✓		Department of Planning and Development and the Economic Development Department
4.8.E	133	Update the current design guidelines.			✓		HDRC, Community Development Division
4.8.F	135	Undertake a concerted public relations campaign within existing Local Historic Districts about the design guidelines and the benefits of districts in general.	✓	✓			HDRC, Community Development Division, neighborhood associations
		Protecting Locally Designated Landmarks					
4.9.A	135	Continue to encourage the designation of historically significant public and private properties as landmarks.	✓				HDRC and City Council, owners of historic properties
4.9.B	135	Following the updated city-wide survey recommended above, maintain a list of potential future landmarks.			✓		HDRC, Community Development Division
4.9.C	135	Work with public and private property owners to encourage the nomination of landmarks each year.	✓				HDRC and City Council, owners of historic properties
4.9.D	135	Actively publicize designated landmarks.	✓				HDRC and City Council, owners of historic properties
4.9.E	136	Consider using landmark designation to allow owners special access to potential incentives.			✓		HDRC, Community Development Division, Economic Development Department
4.9.F	136	Consider establishing a parallel program of honorary "Liberty History Awards."			✓		HDRC, Community Development Division, history stakeholders, owners of historic properties

Ref. #	Page #	Actions for Historic Preservation	Ongoing	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Lead/Participating Parties; Notes
		Cooperating with the SHPO					
4.10.A	137	Review the Missouri Comprehensive State Historic Preservation Plan and identify how the City of Liberty can be a model of best practices in its implementation.		✓			HDRC, Community Development Division
4.10.B	137	Seek to host statewide conferences.	✓				HDRC, Community Development Division, Public Relations Division, Tourism Committee
		Enhancing Administrative Resources					
4.11.A	138	Consider increasing administrative resources for the historic preservation program.	✓	✓			HDRC, Community Development Division /Mayor and City Council

Ref. #	Page #	Actions for City Planning	Ongoing	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Lead/Participating Parties; Notes
		The Comprehensive Plan					
5.3.A	141	Reinforce historic preservation through comprehensive planning by clearly stating that it is the City of Liberty's policy that historic resources should be identified, preserved, appropriately treated, and incorporated into new planning and development initiatives.		✓			Department of Planning and Development, HDRC/stakeholders
5.3.B	142	Designate a historic focus area for focus and appropriate treatment through multiple City policies and incentives (planning, redevelopment, historic preservation, public infrastructure).		✓			Department of Planning and Development, HDRC/stakeholders

Ref. #	Page #	Actions for City Planning	Ongoing	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Lead/Participating Parties; Notes
5.3.C	142	Focus on the enhancement of historic neighborhoods.		✓			Department of Planning and Development, HDRC/neighborhood associations, other stakeholders
5.3.D	143	Focus on the Liberty's historic commercial area.					Department of Planning and Development, HDRC, HDLI/business owners, Chamber of Commerce, other stakeholders
5.3.E	143	During comprehensive planning, take steps to support renewal of the Chapter 353 tax abatement program for residential properties by 2024.		✓			Economic Development Department and Liberty Municipal Redevelopment Corporation, Department of Planning and Development, Mayor and City Council
5.3.F	143	Continue trail and greenway initiatives tying the community into a single whole.		✓			Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Public Works, Department of Planning and Development
5.3.G	144	Emphasize quality in all elements of the City's built environment – landscapes, streetscapes, public and private buildings, new development, and public infrastructure.		✓			Department of Planning and Development, and Department of Public Works/stakeholders

Ref. #	Page #	Actions for City Planning	Ongoing	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Lead/Participating Parties; Notes
		The Role of the Planning & Zoning Commission					
5.4.A	144	Continue to cultivate appreciation for historic preservation values and approaches on the part of the Commissioners, by providing information, training, and guidance on historic preservation and through specific inclusion of preservation policies in planning and zoning documents.	✓				Planning & Zoning Commission, HDRC, Community Development Division staff of the Department of Planning and Development
5.4.B	145	Communicate to applicants before the Planning & Zoning Commission the expectation that identified historic resources on a property will be incorporated into a new project and appropriately treated.	✓	✓			Planning & Zoning Commission, Department of Planning and Development
5.4.C	145	Where the City determines that existing historic resources will be adversely impacted by a new development that is permitted, negotiate mitigation to reduce the adverse impact.	✓	✓			Planning & Zoning Commission, Department of Planning and Development
		Building Permit Review					
5.5.A	146	Assure understanding on the part of building inspectors and building plan examiners about the needs of historic properties in redevelopment.	✓	✓			Department of Planning and Development, Building Inspections Division/Community Development Division, SHPO
5.5.B	146	Establish an early intervention team that can work with property owners and their architects to resolve code compliance issues at the conceptual design phase.	✓	✓			Department of Planning and Development, Building Inspections Division/Community Development Division, SHPO

Ref. #	Page #	Actions for City Planning	Ongoing	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Lead/Participating Parties; Notes
5.5.C	146	Develop a citizens' information brochure on permitting, inspection, and code compliance for historic buildings.	✓		✓		Department of Planning and Development, Building Inspections Division/Community Development Division, SHPO
		Property Maintenance and Code Enforcement					
5.6.A	147	Emphasize the role of property/code inspectors in early detection of deteriorating conditions.	✓				Department of Planning and Development, Community Development Division/ Building Inspections Division
5.6.B	147	Maintain a policy and process that allows the city to make emergency stabilization repairs.	✓	✓			Department of Planning and Development, Community Development Division, Building Inspections Division, Department of Public Works; Mayor and City Council as appropriate
		Downtown Enhancement through the Main Street Approach: Economic Vitality					
5.7.A	150	Consider requiring first-floor space on the Courthouse Square to be devoted to retail uses (comprehensive plan consideration).		✓			Department of Planning and Development/property owners, HDLI, business owners, Chamber of Commerce; Mayor and City Council as appropriate
5.7.B	151	Retain, and increase if possible, residential uses within and close to the Downtown business district (comprehensive plan consideration).	✓				Department of Planning and Development, Economic Development Department/HDLI
5.7.C	151	Address under-utilized upper floors of commercial buildings (comprehensive plan consideration).	✓	✓			Department of Planning and Development, Economic Development Department/HDLI

Ref. #	Page #	Actions for City Planning	Ongoing	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Lead/Participating Parties; Notes
		Downtown Enhancement through the Main Street Approach: Design					
5.7.D	152	Provide design assistance or design grants for small businesses.	✓		✓		Department of Planning and Development, Economic Development Department/HDLI
5.7.E	152	Create a low-interest loan pool to support commercial rehabilitations.	✓		✓		Department of Planning and Development, Economic Development Department/HDLI
5.7.F	152	Use the Certified Local Government technical assistance program available to the City and the HDRC from the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to provide guidance to business owners in use of the state Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program.	✓	✓			Department of Planning and Development, Community Development Division, HRDC, Economic Development Department, HDLI
5.7.G	152	Remain vigilant and supportive in encouraging development of the parcels at 1-3 North Water Street.	✓	✓	✓		Department of Planning and Development, Community Development Division, HRDC, Economic Development Department, HDLI
		Downtown Enhancement through the Main Street Approach: Promotion					
5.7.H	152	Continue to develop an annual marketing campaign for Liberty, with a portion devoted to marketing the Downtown.	✓				Public Relations Division, Tourism Committee/ HDLI, business and nonprofit stakeholders
5.7.I	152	Continue City support for events in the Downtown.	✓				Public Relations Division, Tourism Committee/ HDLI, business and nonprofit stakeholders
5.7.J	152	Continue to create and promote a calendar of events for the Downtown.	✓				Public Relations Division, Tourism Committee/ HDLI, business and nonprofit stakeholders

Ref. #	Page #	Actions for City Planning	Ongoing	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Lead/Participating Parties; Notes
5.7.K	153	Continue to support the farmers' markets in the central business district.	✓				Public Relations Division, Tourism Committee/ HDLI, business and nonprofit stakeholders
5.7.L	153	Continue deploying the existing wayfinding signage program to enhance the identity and cohesiveness of the entire central business district.	✓				Public Relations Division, Tourism Committee/ business and nonprofit stakeholders
		Downtown Enhancement through the Main Street Approach: Organization					
5.7.M	153	Ensure the continued sustainability of HDLI.	✓				Community Development Division, HDLI, business and nonprofit stakeholders
		Downtown Enhancement through Additional Planning					
5.7.N	153	Include an update to the Downtown master plan written in 2005 in the update to Liberty's comprehensive plan.		✓			Department of Planning and Development, Community Development Division, HRDC, Economic Development Department, HDLI
5.7.O	153	Conduct a parking study (comprehensive plan consideration).		✓			Department of Planning and Development, Community Development Division, HRDC, Economic Development Department, HDLI
5.7.P	153	Continue to explore the idea of expanding the Downtown's commercial area's attractions and overall productivity through additional construction allowing more retail/restaurant and residential space (comprehensive plan consideration).		✓		✓	Economic Development Department, HDLI, Department of Planning and Development, Community Development Division, HRDC

Ref. #	Page #	Actions for City Planning	Ongoing	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Lead/Participating Parties; Notes
5.7.Q	154	Enhance walkable connections from the historic Downtown in every direction.	✓				Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Public Works, Department of Planning and Development
5.7.R	154	Consider extending the distinctive infrastructure improvements undertaken around the Courthouse Square to side streets (comprehensive plan consideration).	✓				Department of Public Works, Department of Planning and Development, Economic Development Department
		Enhancing Incentives for Neighborhood Improvement					
5.9.A	161	Adjust the Chapter 353 tax abatement guidelines to avoid incentivizing changes to eligible or contributing historic buildings outside local historic districts that do not follow HDRC design review guidelines.		✓			Economic Development Department and Liberty Municipal Redevelopment Corporation, Department of Planning and Development, Mayor and City Council
5.9.B	161	Use staff trained in design review of projects affecting historic structures and able to uphold the City of Liberty's design standards to approve tax abatement incentives for projects outside local historic districts where property owners are required to follow the standards.		✓			
5.9.C	161	Educate property owners within the historic districts about the availability of multiple incentives to improve their properties and their neighborhoods.	✓	✓			

Ref. #	Page #	Actions for City Planning	Ongoing	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Lead/Participating Parties; Notes
5.9.D	161	Consider the viability of providing a counselor to individual commercial and residential property owners to take maximum advantage of local and state (and sometimes the federal) tax incentives for rehabilitation.	✓	✓			
5.9.E	161	During the update of the City's comprehensive plan, identify neighborhoods for strategic investment in public infrastructure and support for public investments that are likely to encourage additional private sector investment.	✓	✓			
5.9.F	163	Consider a strategy for compatible, affordable infill development of residential properties on vacant lots in under-developed historic neighborhoods within the Chapter 353 tax abatement district (comprehensive plan consideration).		✓		✓	Economic Development Department and Liberty Municipal Redevelopment Corporation, Department of Planning and Development, Mayor and City Council, current property owners
5.9.G	163	Begin planning for the renewal of the Residential Chapter 353 tax abatement program for neighborhood properties by 2024.		✓			Economic Development Department and Liberty Municipal Redevelopment Corporation, Department of Planning and Development, Mayor and City Council
5.9.H	163	Encourage higher density residential development in areas within and surrounding the Downtown business district.					Economic Development Department and Liberty Municipal Redevelopment Corporation, Department of Planning and Development, Mayor and City Council

Ref. #	Page #	Actions for City Planning	Ongoing	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Lead/Participating Parties; Notes
		The Community Development Block Grant Program					
5.10.A	164	Identify neighborhoods for strategic investments in public infrastructure funded by the Community Development Block Grant program (with a match from private sector investment) and that are likely to encourage additional private sector activity as a result of these projects.	✓	✓			Economic Development Department, Department of Planning and Development, Mayor and City Council
5.10.B	164	Determine whether CDBG funding can be devoted to support historic and other neighborhoods housing low- to moderate-income residents.	✓	✓			Economic Development Department, Department of Planning and Development, Mayor and City Council
		Strengthening Neighborhood Character throughout Liberty					
5.11.A	166	In comprehensive planning, identify areas appropriate for establishment of Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Districts.		✓			Department of Planning and Development
5.11.B	166	Cultivate the establishment and effectiveness of local neighborhood associations as a vehicle for sparking engagement by local residents.	✓				Department of Planning and Development, Community Development Division
		Sustaining and Enhancing the Public Domain					
5.12.A	171	Undertake a stormwater management plan (comprehensive plan consideration).		✓	✓		Department of Public Works, Department of Planning and Development
5.12.B	171	Inventory street trees in historic districts and create detailed maintenance (and replacement) plans.		✓			Department of Public Works, Department of Planning and Development

Ref. #	Page #	Actions for City Planning	Ongoing	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Lead/Participating Parties; Notes
5.12.C	171	Inventory sidewalks, alleys, and roadways in the Downtown Liberty Chapter 353 District and develop a capital improvement plan (comprehensive plan consideration).		✓	✓		Department of Public Works, Department of Planning and Development
5.12.D	172	Enforce City codes addressing trash-handling, with special attention to the maintenance and operation of commercial trash facilities.	✓				Department of Planning and Development, Community Development Division
5.12.E	172	Enhance parks and trails across the City, aiming over the long term to connect all neighborhoods so that every house is just a five-minute walk from a trail that ultimately leads to the Downtown.	✓				Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Public Works, Department of Planning and Development
5.12.F	172	In all maintenance, construction, and replacement of elements of the public domain, the Public Works Department should consult with the HDRC in advance of detailed planning.	✓				Department of Public Works, HDRC, Department of Planning and Development, Community Development Division

Ref. #	Page #	Actions for Tourism and Public Outreach	Ongoing	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Lead/Participating Parties; Notes
		Actions for Heritage Tourism					
6.2.A	176	Work on Liberty's identity and overall branding (marketing presence) in markets beyond Liberty.	✓				Public Relations Division, Tourism Committee/ HDLI, business and nonprofit stakeholders
6.2.B	176	Develop a robust program of tourism promotion.	✓				Public Relations Division, Tourism Committee/ HDLI, business and nonprofit stakeholders

Ref. #	Page #	Actions for Tourism and Public Outreach	Ongoing	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Lead/Participating Parties; Notes
6.2.C	177	Continue developing events and refining existing events.	✓				HDLI, Chamber of Commerce/ business and nonprofit stakeholders; supported by Public Relations Division
6.2.D	177	Take advantage of the Missouri Bicentennial commemoration in the upcoming year – the actual date of Missouri's establishment is August 20, 2021 but the entire year is one for celebration.		✓			Public Relations Division, Tourism Committee/ history stakeholders (interpretive sites, nonprofit history-related stakeholders, William Jewell College educators, other educators, local historians; HDRC and Liberty Arts Commission as appropriate)
6.2.E	177	Consider Downtown initiatives to encourage businesses to enhance the visitor experience.	✓				HDLI, Chamber of Commerce/ tourism businesses; supported by Public Relations Division, Tourism Committee
6.2.F	178	Start now to plan for the commemoration of Liberty's official bicentennial year of 2029.		✓	✓		Mayor & City Council/ City commissions, committees, and agencies; history stakeholders
		Action for Wayfinding					
6.3.A	178	Continue phased implementation of a citywide wayfinding and signage system using the existing graphic identity.		✓	✓		Public Relations Division, Tourism Committee, Department of Public Works
		Actions for Interpretation					
6.4.A	188	Encourage more collaboration among Liberty's multiple interpretive sites, William Jewell College, and others as appropriate in order to expand the telling of the entire story of the City of Liberty, reinforce each individual program, and reach more visitors and audiences.	✓				History stakeholders; granting organizations, City agencies (Mayor & City Council action as appropriate)

Ref. #	Page #	Actions for Tourism and Public Outreach	Ongoing	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Lead/Participating Parties; Notes
6.4.B	188	Encourage the City's interpretive sites, history organizations, and other stakeholders to form a committee, perhaps with City support, to create events and other ways to commemorate the bicentennial settlement of Liberty in 2022.		✓			History stakeholders (interpretive sites, nonprofit history-related stakeholders, William Jewell College educators, other educators, local historians); granting organizations, City agencies (Mayor & City Council action as appropriate)
6.4.C	188	Encourage the committee described in Action 6.4.B also to continue toward 2026 by developing a program to support the national 250th anniversary of the American Revolution.		✓	✓		History stakeholders (interpretive sites, nonprofit history-related stakeholders, William Jewell College educators, other educators, local historians); granting organizations, City agencies, US Semiquincentennial Commission (Mayor & City Council action as appropriate)
6.4.D	189	Continue to grow the system of outdoor community interpretation using wayside exhibits and public art.	✓				Public Relations Division, Tourism Committee, Liberty Arts Commission, Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Public Works, HDRC
6.4.E	190	Work with HDLI to encourage owners to install permanent small, distinctive interpretive plaques on buildings in the Downtown business district that are significant for architecture and/or history.			✓		HDLI, building owners, Archives, HDRC, Liberty Arts Commission

Ref. #	Page #	Actions for Tourism and Public Outreach	Ongoing	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Lead/Participating Parties; Notes
6.4.F	190	Consider the system of community interpretation as an enhancement that can be presented and marketed to visitors, perhaps as an "Arts & History Trail" designed with both walking-tour and driving-tour components.		✓			Public Relations Division, Tourism Committee, Liberty Arts Commission
6.4.G	190	Continue to use community events as a way to attract and engage visitors as well as residents through storytelling activities.	✓				History stakeholders/HDLI, Chamber of Commerce, business and nonprofit stakeholders; supported by Public Relations Division
6.4.H	190	Continue to encourage and support local historians in the research and documentation of historic sites, organizations, and individuals. Sponsor a public Cultural Heritage Workshop as presented by Missouri Humanities.	✓				History stakeholders; HDRC is potentially the workshop sponsor
		Action for Educational Outreach					
6.5.A	193	Confer with the Liberty school district on how the City and its history stakeholders can support the teaching of local history, civics, and other topics through multidisciplinary, place-based, team learning for all grades, K-12.	✓	✓			HDRC, Liberty Arts Commission, history stakeholders, Liberty School District

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City of Liberty historic resources surveys: Links to the reports, maps, and survey data for Liberty's four surveys may be found on the SHPO's web page for architectural surveys, https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/survey-eg.htm. The MPDF itself is provided in this link: https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/nps-nr/64500301.pdf. Subsequent to this document, an amendment was filed adding two more contexts; while difficult to find on the SHPO website, it can be downloaded at https://catalog.archives.gov/id/63817186.

City of Liberty website: https://www.libertymissouri.gov/. See especially, "Historic Preservation" at https://www.libertymissouri.gov/484/Historic-Preservation.

City of Liberty walking tours: https://libertymissouri.gov/2186/Self-Guided-Walking-Tours.

City of Liberty storymaps: The Jewell-Lightburne/William Jewell College walking tour is further available in ARCGIS storymap format at: https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/3986e277291e4192808097056b591ff0 The Dougherty Historic District is similarly available at https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/de442670f3f94d43833613cb117ae679. The History of Liberty, MO storymap is available at https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/ad4fe601456b4759be897d116462704a. Liberty Public Art can be seen in storymap form at https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b7fb2e8175534aa39e2b8a7114938f39. The Alexander Doniphan Walking Tour in storymap format is available at https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/4d80ae5446dc48bcb2d11b59bab81d12

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APPENDIX 1. Missouri Historic Tax Credit Basics

MISSOURI
Department of Economic Development

HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT PROGRAM

Provide an incentive for the redevelopment of commercial and residential historic structures in Missouri.

Authorization

Sections 253.545 to 253.559, RSMo

Eligible Areas

Statewide

Eligible Applicants

Any taxpayer is eligible to participate in this program. Not-for-profit entities and government entities are ineligible. Any participation by not-for-profit entities, including but not limited to ownership interest, capital contributions, distribution of tax credits, incurrence or payment of rehabilitation expenses, lease to a tax-exempt entity, may result in the reduction of tax credits.

Program Benefits/Eligible Uses

The program provides state tax credits equal to 25% of eligible costs and expenses of the rehabilitation of approved historic structures.

This tax credit can be applied to:

- Ch. 143 – Income tax, excluding withholding tax
- Ch. 148 –
- Bank Tax
- Insurance Premium Tax
- Other Financial Institution Tax

This credit's special attributes:

- Carry back 3 years
- Carry forward 10 years
- Sellable or transferable

Funding Limits

- Effective 7/1/2018, the cap is $90 million for projects receiving tax credits for $275,000 or more plus an additional $30 million solely for projects located in a qualified census tract.
- Owner occupied residential has a project cap of $250,000 and projects receiving less than $275,000 do not fall under the program cap.

Application/Approval Procedure

An application is submitted to the Missouri Department of Economic Development (DED), which will then be submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office to determine the eligibility of the property and proposed rehabilitation, based

on the standards of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Preliminary applications subject to the cap will be scored and considered by DED in accordance with section 253.559.3(1), RSMo and accepted in two (2) cycles for each state fiscal year.

Projects receiving less than $275,000 in credits may be accepted at any time.

Reporting Requirements

The "Tax Credit Accountability Act" reporting form must be submitted to the Missouri Department of Revenue by June 30 each year for three years following the year of the first issuance of tax credits.

Special Program Requirements

An eligible property must be:

- listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places;
- certified by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources as contributing to the historical significance of a certified historic district listed on the National Register; or
- of a local historic district that has been certified by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

The costs and expenses associated with the rehabilitation must exceed 50% of the total basis of the property (acquisition cost).

Contact

Missouri Department of Economic Development
Division of Business and Community Services
301 West High Street, Room 770 | P.O. Box 118
Jefferson City, MO | 65102
Phone: 573-522-8004 | Fax: 573-522-9462
E-mail: redevelopment@ded.mo.gov | Web: www.ded.mo.gov

Revised March 2019

Source: https://ded.mo.gov/sites/default/files/programs/flyers/HTC-ProgramSummary.pdf

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APPENDIX 2. National Register Listings in Liberty

Liberty has eight National Register historic districts and eight individually listed National Register buildings. The following alphabetical lists are excerpted from the Missouri SHPO page for listings in Clay County, separated here by whether district or individual property.[119] (When "Historic Resources of Liberty MPDF" is cited, the nomination relied on the context provided by the MPDF, a considerable advantage in constructing a district or individual property nomination. The website itself provides links to the MPDF and maps when included in this list.)

NOTE: Links to the report, map, and survey data for Liberty's four surveys may be found on the SHPO's web page for architectural surveys, https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/survey-eg.htm. The MPDF itself is provided in this link: https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/nps-nr/64500301.pdf. Subsequent to this document, an amendment was filed adding two more contexts; while difficult to find on the SHPO website, it can be downloaded at https://catalog.archives.gov/id/63817186.

Historic Districts

1. Arthur-Leonard Historic District (*Historic Resources of Liberty MPDF*), roughly bounded by Ford Ave., Jewell, Choctaw, and Missouri Sts., Liberty (1/4/01)
2. Dougherty-Prospect Heights Historic District (*Historic Resources of Liberty MPDF*), roughly bounded by Mississippi, Gallatin, and Schrader streets, and Fairview Ave., Liberty (1/4/01)
3. Garrison School Historic District (*Historic Resources of Liberty MPDF*), roughly along North Main and North Water streets, Liberty (1/4/01)
4. Jewell-Lightburne Historic District (*Historic Resources of Liberty MPDF*), roughly bounded by North Jewell, East Mill, Main and Gordon streets, Liberty (1/4/01)
5. Odd Fellows Home District, MO 291, Liberty (9/15/87)
6. South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District (*Historic Resources of Liberty MPDF*), S Main and E Kansas streets, Liberty (12/28/92)
7. West Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District (*Historic Resources of Liberty MPDF*), N Main St., Liberty (12/28/92)
8. The 8th district, for the Clardy Heights historic district, is available at https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/nps-nr/00001609.pdf (11/22/00)

Individually Listed Properties

1. Clay County Savings Association Building (*Historic Resources of Liberty MPDF*), 104 E Franklin, Liberty (12/28/92)
2. Clinton House, 404 S Leonard St., Liberty (11/22/78)
3. Hughes, Frank, Memorial Library (*Historic Resources of Liberty MPDF*), 210 E Franklin, Liberty (12/28/92)
4. IOOF Liberty Lodge #49 (*Historic Resources of Liberty MPDF*), 16-18 E Franklin, Liberty (12/28/92)
5. Jewell Hall, Jewell St. between Kansas and Mississippi streets, Liberty (9/06/78)
6. Major Hotel (*Historic Resources of Liberty MPDF*), 112 E Franklin, Liberty (12/28/92)
7. Miller Building (*Historic Resources of Liberty MPDF*), 2 E Franklin, Liberty (12/28/92)
8. Mt. Memorial Cemetery, 500 blk. E. Mississippi St., Liberty (4/24/12)

[119] https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/clay.htm, as of September 30, 2020; note that the SHPO offers an interactive map for National Register listings (and surveys) at https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/mapgallery.htm.

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APPENDIX 3. Final Summary Report: Community Survey

From late May through the end of June, the City's staff in the Community Development Division of the Planning and Development Department conducted an online citywide survey with respect to the Historic Preservation Plan. In part, the online survey sought to engage residents in place of planned focus groups and community workshops that had to be canceled due to the Covid-19 pandemic that spread across the nation and closed communities, including Liberty, during the spring of 2020. (The historic preservation planning team also engaged in in-depth interviews with individuals who would ordinarily have participated in group discussions focusing on specific topics.)

The online survey was made available through the City's website and was promoted to residents through multiple forms of media outreach, assisted by the City's marketing contractor. Over the six-week period, 491 respondents were logged by the survey, an exceptional response. This report pulls together an overview of the 27 questions; it is accompanied by a detailed compilation of all answers and analysis.

Responses were received from residents spread broadly from across the City (Q1). Those who responded that they live in a specifically named, known-to-be-historic neighborhood (161) included Liberty Square and Downtown (18.1%), Dougherty District (16.9%), Jewell District (16.9%), Lightburne District (4.6%), Prospect Heights (4.6%), Arthur's Addition (3.7%) Garrison School District (1.2%), Clardy Heights (.4%). (Clardy, Garrison, and Lightburne are especially small in area.) Only 81 people said they don't know the name of the neighborhood where they live; another 259 (not represented in the percentages here) chose to name their neighborhood in an open-ended response for Q1. Scanning the names of neighborhoods they named, it is apparent that a considerable number live in the many attractive residential neighborhoods built in Liberty after World War II. Quite a few of these are considered "mid-century modern" now old enough to include in surveys of historic resources as discussed below in association with Q18 and Q19.

From an analysis of answers to Q1, it appears that fully two-thirds of respondents live outside specifically named, known-to-be-historic neighborhoods, and in separate questions, 53% stated that they do not believe that they live in a neighborhood that is "historic or to have a distinct character" (Q2) and 15.4% stated that they would not live in a historic neighborhood if they could (and another 12.6% weren't sure; Q10). These are indications of high interest in Liberty's history and community physical character regardless of respondents' living situation.

To further characterize respondents, 93% were homeowners; 6.9% owned commercial property, 5.4% were residential renters, and 2.5% were commercial renters (Q21). More than 60% had "lived/rented/owned property" in Liberty for more than ten years (Q22). "Prior to March 1, 2020," more than 43% worked outside Liberty, 11.4% worked in Liberty's Downtown, 11.8% were home-based workers, and 21.4% worked in Liberty "beyond the historic center" (Q23). Only 15% had a commute of more than half an hour (and only 1.8% commuted more than an hour; Q24). The age range was pretty much a perfect bell curve (see response to Q25 in the full report), ranging from 3 responses in the 0-20 age range and 18 in the 75+ age range, with near equal distribution in the 21-34 and 65-74 age ranges (42 and 45 respectively) and the remainder of those responding to the question also divided almost equally in three age classes from 35 to 64. The largest number of respondents was in the 35-44 age class, 60.

Five topics were of particular interest in the survey:

(1) What do residents consider historic?

(2) What is their thinking about how to improve the Downtown commercial area?

(3) Which resources are most at risk?

(4) What is their experience or observation of living in historic districts?

(5) What tools are residents willing to support for the preservation and protection of historic resources?

What is historic?

When asked what respondents think of when they hear about historic preservation in Liberty (Q3), the following answers were received:

- Historic Downtown (92%)
- Privately owned historic homes and properties (72%)
- Nonprofit-owned historic buildings and museums (e.g., the Clay County Museum, Garrison School Cultural Center, Jesse James Bank, Liberty Jail) (71%)
- Historic corridors (i.e., Liberty Drive, Kansas Street, Franklin Street, etc.) (57%)
- Stories and historic documents about Liberty's history (54%)
- Landscapes (i.e., historic cemeteries, parks, privately owned landscapes, etc.) (50%)
- Municipal and civic buildings (i.e., schools, courthouse, Archives, etc.) (48%)
- Neighborhoods (45%)
- William Jewell College campus (44%)
- Religious properties (22%)

Respondents added the Liberty Arsenal (site, no standing structure), the Odd Fellows Home (a 36-acre National Register historic district now known as Belvoir), walking tours, oral history, "City improvements such as, street surfaces, street lights, hitching posts, etc.," "preservation and digitization of the Liberty Tribune" (the oldest continuously publishing newspaper west of the Mississippi), and "Statues and headstones, or other monuments like the drinking fountain on the NE side of the Courthouse, in the cemeteries, or on public land." One respondent took an even broader view, stating "The businesses that have come and gone over the years as well as the parks. The city services and how they have changed with various fire department locations, 'dog pounds', veterinary services. Also more about the schools and how they have grown and changed over the years and include the Odd Fellows Home too."

In an open-ended question simply asking Liberty residents to name their top three favorite historic resources (Q4), 268 respondents offered 601 answers. "Historic Downtown Square" was mentioned the most, 93 times; followed closely by Clay County Archives & Historical Library (76) and Clay County Museum & Historical Society (60). "Downtown" (Downtown or Downtown Liberty, assumed to be a broader area than the "Historic Downtown Square") was mentioned 38 times, William Jewell College 36 times, Jesse James Bank Museum 27 times, "cemeteries" 29 times, and a mix of commemorative or interpretive markers, monuments, statues, plaques (named or not) occurred 22 times. Rounding out specific, programmed historic sites, Garrison School Cultural Center (operated by Clay County African American Legacy Inc.) was mentioned 14 times and Liberty Jail 7 times. "Neighborhoods" or neighborhoods by name were mentioned 40 times and specific historic sites, not necessarily publicly accessible, were mentioned 24 times (City Hall, Clay County Courthouse (9), "Civil War resources," Corbin Mill,

Fire and Police Station, Franklin Elementary School (5), Jewell Hall, Lightburne Hall, Odd Fellows Home National Register Historic District (currently Belvoir; 3), and St. James Church on Water St.).

In another open-ended question (Q9) asking Liberty residents to name up to five neighborhoods with "a strong history or character," 185 individuals responded with 548 total answers (most offered at least two answers). Top groups were Arthur St. area generally (27); Dougherty or Dougherty-Prospect Heights Historic District (99); Downtown (w/o specific mention of the Square, 32); Downtown Square (27); Franklin Street (10); Garrison School Historic District (including Gallatin St., 18); Jewell or Jewell-Lightburne Historic District (98); and William Jewell College (10).

How can the Downtown commercial area be improved?

Regarding the Downtown commercial area ("the Square and Downtown commercial areas"), 55% would "like to see changes" (Q5). 32% said "Liberty's Downtown is fine as it is," and a final 13% had no opinion. Asked "what 3 business types would you like to see downtown that aren't currently present" (Q6), the greatest aggregate answers were:

1. All Food & Restaurants (332)
2. All Retail (193)
3. All Food Purveyors (not restaurants, but including coffee shops) (195)
4. All Restaurants (137)

The top requests, garnering more than 10 "votes," were:

1. Food-Ice Cream Parlor (61)
2. Retail-Bookstore (53)
3. Restaurant, Not Specified (48)
4. Food-Grocery (37)
5. Coffee Shop (35)
6. Food-Bakery (26)
7. Entertainment (24)
8. Retail, Unspecified (24)
9. Retail-Antiques (22)
10. Restaurant-Bar/Bar & Grill (14)
11. Activities For Children, Families (12)
12. Restaurant-Fine Dining (11)
13. Restaurant-Wine Bar (11)

An open-ended question, "If you would like to see changes in the Downtown, please complete this sentence with a few words: "Liberty's Downtown would be better if…." brought a flood of answers (Q7), with 276 respondents providing 369 different ideas. Most were clearly referring to the Downtown commercial area, not the historic core of the City (also called "Downtown" in local parlance). They had a great deal to say about building maintenance generally, 28 comments (especially, even exasperatedly, wanting a replacement for the building demolished at 1-3 N. Water St., across from City Hall, after it collapsed during rehabilitation four years ago – another 25 comments).

In addition, respondents are worried about vacancies (6), think the commercial area can be expanded (10), and believe that professional offices take up too much space, whereas more

customer-activation businesses are preferred (25); a couple of respondents encouraged greater use of upper stories for those professional offices (and housing). They encourage business-friendly community support (8) and marketing (3). Parking at 37 had the highest number of mentions, exceeded only by building maintenance if both "1-3 N. Water" and "Better Building Maintenance" are combined (53); 10 also addressed traffic, pedestrian management, and streetscaping.

Bearing out the preceding question, respondents want to see more business variety (9), especially a grocery store (5), restaurants (15; or with entertainment, e.g., bars, 2 more – with one asking for fewer), restaurants or retail and preferably both (5 just retail, 19 both). Respondents also want more vibrancy (25, generally defined by the survey administrator as a rich mix of business types and events, "more to do"), outdoor seating (15), improved downtown character (6), green space (3), landscaping (8), and attention to the arts (7, including some critical of current efforts). They want more evening and weekend hours (16; one specified the summer as an opportunity) and more family-, child-, and youth-oriented businesses and activities (21), and had ideas about improving events and the farmers market (13). A few suggested more housing (3) and improving the surrounding residential neighborhoods (6).

Responses were clear, even clarion – the Square and the Downtown commercial area as a whole clearly have attentive, knowledgeable, and hungry (literally!) customers who generally speaking come across as thoughtful fans – even if only 4 said specifically they "love" Downtown. The "word cloud" image, above, generated from a request for up to three single words describing

how they see the Square and the Downtown commercial area (Q8), reinforces the impression of overall positivity.

Which resources are most at risk?

Participants were asked to check at least three choices offered in Question 14, "What types of historic resources do you think are most at risk in Liberty?" Only 6.6% chose the answer "I'm not concerned about losing historic resources in Liberty." The following answers were received:

- Downtown commercial buildings (62.91%)
- Individual historic buildings and properties (sometimes called "landmarks") (50.99%)
- Older residential neighborhoods (50.00%)
- Landscapes, cemeteries, parks, and public spaces (39.07%)
- Historic documents and stories (31.79%)
- Mid-20th-century residential neighborhoods (20.20%)
- Local government and civic buildings (e.g., courthouse, Heritage middle school or Franklin elementary school) (19.21%)
- Religious properties (10.93%)

Question 15 was a general follow-up to Q14, asking participants to check at least three choices among 11 possibilities in answer to the question, "What do you think causes these historic resources to be at risk? 301 provided responses, with only 5 stating "I don't think there are challenges in Liberty." The responses bear out the more granular responses described in the following section in relation to owning historic property:

- Cost of maintaining a historic property (79.1%)
- Neglect or abandonment of older buildings (64.5%)
- Little understanding or pride in local heritage (37.5%)
- Inadequate advocacy for historic preservation at a grassroots level (28.6%)
- Care of historic public domain and infrastructure (streetscapes) (27.6%)
- Negative perceptions about historic preservation on the part of property owners (25.3%)
- Inappropriate changes to older buildings (24.6%)
- Incompatible new construction (23.9%)
- Difficult to find skilled workers knowledgeable about historic buildings (23.6%)
- Current local regulations and zoning requirements (19.3%)
- Limited ability to find information on historic resources (12.0%)

What are Liberty residents' experience or observation of living in historic districts?

To prime respondents for a series of questions about Liberty's neighborhoods – seeking to discern what the problems might be for historic buildings and properties and older residential neighborhoods considered at risk in the previous question – we asked, "Would you live in a historic neighborhood if you could?" (Q10). Two-thirds of 318 respondents answered yes or "yes, I already do." We then asked those respondents to explain why (Q11); 211 answered the question with 282 reasons:

- Character of Home and/or Neighborhood (132)

- History (44)
- Community & Neighbors (28)
- Walkability (21)
- Location (17)
- Other (13)
- Better Upkeep (generally, by neighbors) (12)
- Trees (8)
- Size (3)
- Safety (3)
- Tax Incentives (1)

We then asked another open-ended question, "If you answered yes you already do, what improvements would you like to see in your historic neighborhood?" (Q12). 108 participants provided substantive and often multiple answers; the most responses (48) concerned a wide variety of infrastructure concerns (sidewalks were mentioned 41 times); closely followed by expressions of concern about property upkeep (29) and traffic and/or parking management (17). Other ideas were: address litter (2); community events (6); expand historic district (3); grants/incentives/assistance (8); improved interpretation about community history (3); more recreational facilities (3); more to do on the square (7); reduce multifamily use of single family homes (2); and signs marking historic districts (4).

We then asked a final, related open-ended question, "If you answered no, what changes would make the historic neighborhoods more attractive for you to want to live there?" (Q13). 104 individuals provided substantive, often multiple answers. In general, respondents had firm ideas about why they are NOT residing in a historic home or neighborhood (for example, 17 mentioned they do not like the idea of living with restrictions; others stated they want modern homes (5) or more spacious or rural settings (5)), but some left the impression that they find Liberty's historic neighborhoods unattractive (15 mentioned property upkeep) or they are concerned about infrastructure (6) and parking options (4). Fully 34 expressed a wide variety of reasons unrelated to these points. Surprisingly, expense and maintenance were mentioned only 11 or 10 times and only 5 suggested grants, incentives, or technical assistance. The most remarkable point is that 104 people who do not live in City historic neighborhoods cared enough to provide the thoughtful answers assembled in the full report.

What tools are residents willing to support for the preservation and protection of historic resources?

Question 16 asked, "Which educational and commemorative tools and actions would you like to see used more in Liberty? (Check all that apply)" 290 responded, with only 12 agreeing with the statement, "I don't think we need further educational or commemorative action to support historic preservation in Liberty." (21 offered specific ideas, many expanding on the general concepts below; see the full report.)

- Digitize and provide online access to information on historic properties and historic municipal documents. (57.93%)
- Provide more educational events about historic places and the history of Liberty. (56.90%)

- Provide more neighborhood or community events that focus on Liberty's local history and culture. (55.17%)
- Exhibits and public art on downtown streets and in neighborhood parks interpreting Liberty's history. (47.93%)
- Provide more information on the appropriate treatment of historic buildings and energy efficiency of and for historic buildings. (43.10%)
- Provide more walking tours of historic neighborhoods. (38.62%)
- Survey neighborhoods and individual properties and share histories with residents and visitors. (This action shares history but provides no formal protection.) (35.86%)
- Nominate more neighborhoods and individual properties to the National Register of Historic Places. (This action provides documentation and potentially national recognition but no formal protection.) (26.55%)

Question 17 asked, "Which regulatory or financial tools and actions would you like to see used more in Liberty? (Check all that apply). 291 responded, with 19 (6.5%) agreeing with the statement, "I don't think we need further regulatory or financial action to support historic preservation in Liberty." The following answers were received:

- Local grants for historic preservation planning, implementation, and rehabilitation projects. (69.76%)
- Federal and state tax credits for rehabilitation projects. (69.07%)
- Low-interest loan program for rehabilitation projects. (67.70%)
- Zoning that allows or encourages the adaptive reuse of historic buildings. (50.52%)
- Endangered properties "real estate revolving fund" (nonprofit action to find preservation-minded owners for buildings in need of preservation). (47.77%)
- Local property tax abatement for rehabilitation projects (Act 353). (45.36%)
- In historic neighborhoods already recognized through the National Register, designate local historic districts or conservation districts. (This action provides formal protection to historic resources and can halt demolition of historic properties.) (36.08%)
- Designate more local historic districts or conservation districts. (This action provides formal protection to historic resources and can halt demolition of historic properties.) (29.55%)

Nine of the 18 responses where participants took the time to comment are worth including verbatim here (all 18 are reproduced in the full report):

- There are plenty of financial incentives already in place that are utilized.
- Include residential properties in these programs.
- Stricter enforcement of ordinance violations in historic neighborhoods.
- I thought we already had fed and state tax credits? [Answer: yes, but they are hardly used.]
- I think in general we have to do more to incentivize owners to rehabilitate their properties. There are 3 homes in particular on Water St. that are falling apart and the owners are doing nothing to remedy. It's probably in part to the stringent regulations for fixing things up in the historic district and no incentive to do so (Tax abatement is not

enough and is too limited). I'm trying to fix up our home little by little but it's expensive - $3500 just to repair a 30ft section of my soffit or $10k for a new driveway and sidewalk. That takes time to save for but if I had an actual real incentive then I would be more motivated to do it sooner.

- Many of the suggested items are already in place. Stop encroachment on personal property!
- Make it easy to improve property.
- The use of tax abatements and grants are great if they are not abused. I have seen other historic towns with properties that never really get completed and the overall area just looks run-down while property owners just collect grant money and cheat the system. Not sure which of the above choices would prevent someone from taking advantage and not really moving forward with improvements.
- Make homeowners more aware of funds available to them. I think that if people knew of available monies they would be willing to use them to make improvements. A campaign to encourage improvements could do a lot to help our little downtown.

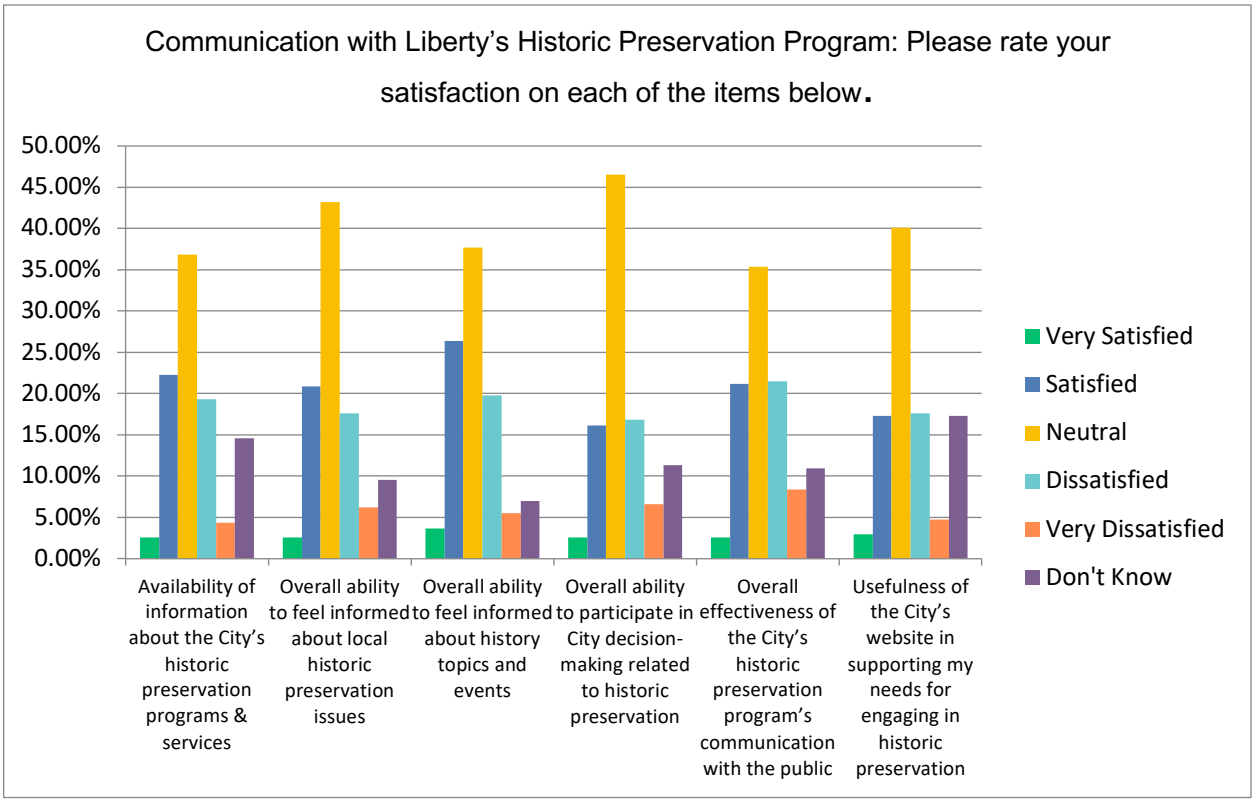
Concerning the specific idea of pursuing National Register nominations, in Question 18 we asked, "Are there any areas or properties in Liberty you think should be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places? (This action can provide national recognition and the opportunity to apply for rehabilitation tax credits and grants, but no formal protection. Owners must give their consent, and frequently are the nominators.)" A total of 55 individuals offered 72 possibilities resulting in the 54 separate entries provided in the full report, together with brief responses from the survey administrator (who used Google Maps visualization to check as many as possible).

Concerning the idea of designating local historic districts or conservation districts (see the Historic Preservation Plan for explanation), in Question 19 we asked, "Are there any areas you think should be designated as local historic districts or conservation districts? (This action provides formal protection to historic resources and can halt demolition of historic properties. It requires formal City action in consultation with property owners.)" A total of 19 individuals offered 51 possibilities resulting in the 51 separate entries provided in the full report.

Answers to both questions in the full report are organized geographically with the exception of the theme of "mid-century modern" – structures built after World War II and up to 1970. Several respondents offered mid-century modern possibilities under both Q18 and Q19. The City of Liberty Historic Preservation Plan recommends an updated survey to be undertaken throughout the City (surveys in 1985, 1986, and 1995 were undertaken only within the City's 1940 boundary; the City's post-war growth, like the entire Kansas City region, was substantial). The plan also encourages the development of a historic context statement to enable the proper evaluation of what seemed to the preservation planning team to be a rich number of interesting mid-century modern neighborhoods and several high-style versions of mid-century modern homes. Historic preservation techniques can help with the long-term preservation of such desirable neighborhoods, which attract families that support the City's highly valued schools and the local economy.

A map of the current historic districts and individually recognized historic resources in the City of Liberty (both local and National Register) is provided on page 11.

The last substantive question of the survey asked respondents to rate their satisfaction with the services, decision-making, and information provided by the City's historic preservation programs



and services. The chart provided above displays the results; 277 respondents provided their ratings.

Questions 21 through 25 elicited the information provided in the beginning of this summary report and Question 27 asked for name and email for further communication with the City as implementation of the Historic Preservation Plan proceeds (with 112 responding).

A final substantive question (Q26) asked, "Do you have any other thoughts or concerns about historic preservation in Liberty that you would like to share?" 116 individuals provided at least one comment, and many elected to fill all three spaces provided for comments, for a total of 226 unique comments. The largest categories (named by the survey administrator after reading each comment) are "affirm historic preservation/ heritage/ history" (17); "city policy" (19); "Confederate monument" (18)[120]; "Downtown Liberty" including all subcategories (43); "Interpretation/ Storytelling" (11); "Restrictions (Yea & Nay & In-between)" (24); and "Streetscaping/ Landscaping" (8).

[120] The "Confederate monument" concerns a statue on a tall plinth etched with an image of crossed swords and the Confederate battle flag that stands in City-owned Fairview Cemetery; it was erected in 1904 by the Daughters of the Confederacy. At the time of the survey, residents were being asked by community activists to sign petitions for and against its removal. The Historic Preservation Plan does not address this issue.

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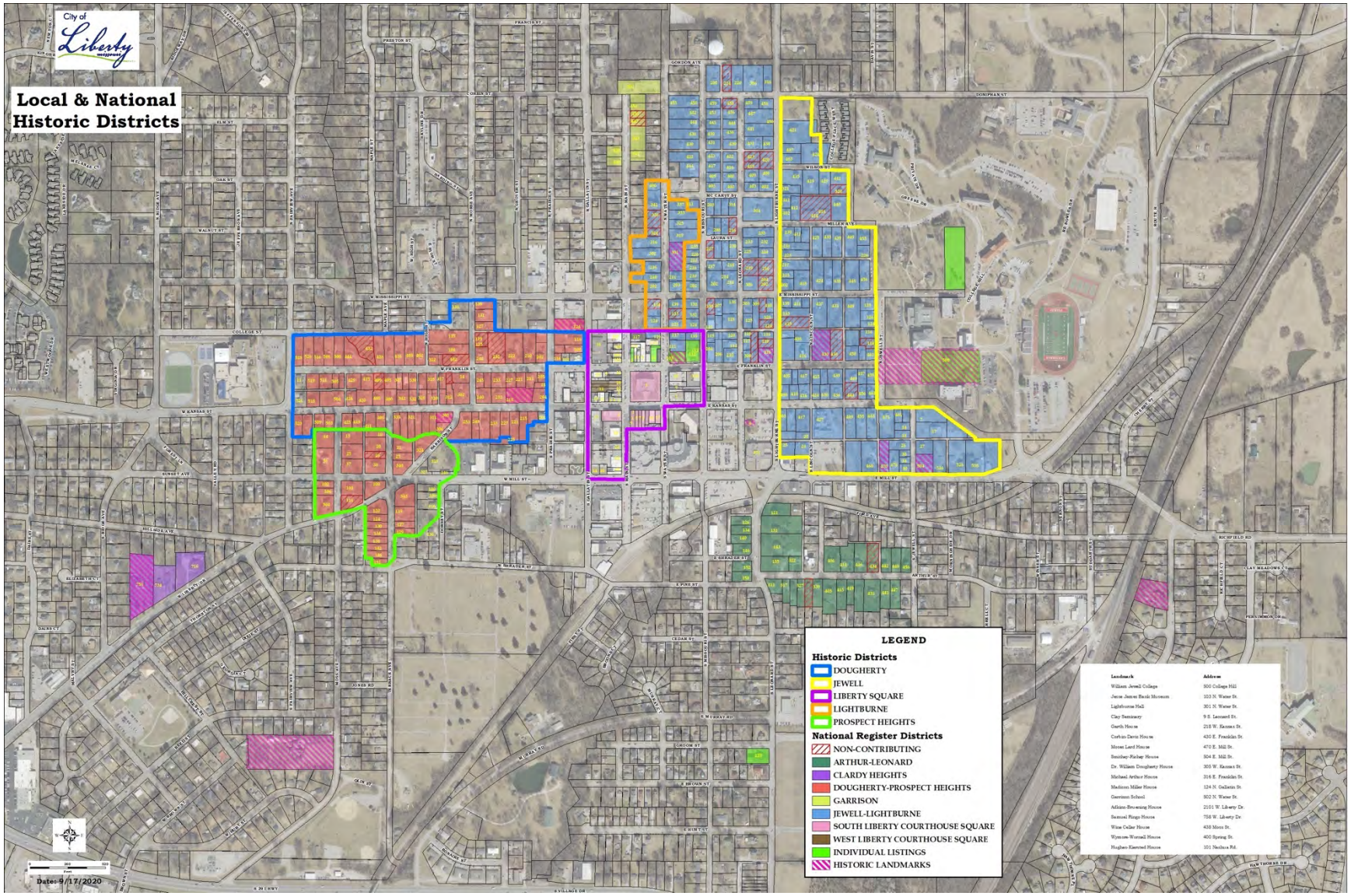

City of Liberty Historic Districts (Both Local and Listed in the National Register of Historic Places)

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City of Liberty missouri





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