

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

LIBERTY MEMORIAL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Liberty Memorial

Other Name/Site Number: N/A

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 100 W. 26th Street

Not for publication: N/A

City/Town: Kansas City

Vicinity: N/A

State: Missouri County: Jackson Code: 095

Zip Code: 64108

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: ___
Public-Local: X
Public-State: ___
Public-Federal: ___

Category of Property

Building(s): ___
District: ___
Site: X
Structure: ___
Object: ___

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing

2
1
1
6
10

Noncontributing

___ buildings
___ sites
___ structures
___ objects
___ Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 9

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

Designated a NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK on

SEP 20 2006

by the Secretary of the Interior

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register
- Determined eligible for the National Register
- Determined not eligible for the National Register
- Removed from the National Register
- Other (explain):

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: RECREATION AND CULTURE Sub: Monument

Current: RECREATION AND CULTURE Sub: Monument

7. DESCRIPTIONARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:
Beaux Arts Classicism**MATERIALS:**Foundation: concrete
Walls: stone (limestone)
Roof: asphalt
Other: concrete

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.**Overview**

The Liberty Memorial, located at 100 W. 26th Street, is sited on a 47.5-acre tract in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri. Liberty Memorial is bounded on the north by Pershing Road, on the south by Memorial Drive, on the east by Main Street and on the west by Kessler Road. Historic Union Station is located directly to the north and the United States Post Office is sited to the northwest. The property includes two buildings (Memory Hall and the Museum Building); one site (including all landscaping); one structure (the Shaft), five objects (including the courtyard, the Great Frieze, the fountain group, the paired sphinx-like limestone statues, and the Dedication Wall), for a total of ten contributing resources.

As it stands today, Liberty Memorial is one of the nation's most compelling monuments constructed to honor those who sacrificed their lives during World War I and a remembrance of those who survived. This nationally significant property is one of the most important landmarks in Kansas City and one of the most commanding memorial sites in the nation. After being closed in 1994 due to the dangerous condition of its structural integrity, Liberty Memorial was rehabilitated in 2000-2002 and rededicated in May 2002. It continues in its historic use as a monument to World War I, with the library, archives and museum in operation.

Liberty Memorial was designated the National World War One Museum of the United States by the United States Senate and the House of Representatives, as signed into law by President George W. Bush as part of the FY 2005 defense authorization bill. The Liberty Memorial was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 6, 2000.

Designed by architects Harold Van Buren Magonigle, with Wight and Wight and landscape architects the Olmsted Brothers, George E. Kessler and Hare and Hare, the Liberty Memorial features the imposing central shaft rising from a Memorial Court, flanked by Memory Hall on the east, the Museum Building on the west, and the Great Frieze on the north wall. Other resources associated with Liberty Memorial include the prominent sphinx-like limestone statues placed to the south of the court, paired fountains to the north of the Great Frieze, and the Dedication Wall sited directly south of Pershing Road. Extending for a 1/4 mile, Memorial Mall serves the main entrance to the site at the south. The entire complex, including the ten contributing elements and surrounding landscape, was constructed between 1923 and 1938.

Magonigle stressed particular architectural nuances in describing his design for the Liberty Memorial. These refinements include:

The top of the north terrace wall is a curved line higher in the center of the arc than at the ends by one foot, and all horizontal joints in the stonework and the terrace at the foot of the wall are parallel to this curve. It is this, which gives the wall its unusual effect of spring and life despite its enormous mass. The entire pavement of the Memorial Court follows the curve just described, likewise the southerly wall and the entrance steps of the court.

All walls incline backward to the extent of one inch in eight feet. This gives them an air of Greater stability and brings them into harmonious relation with the taper of the Shaft, which besides diminishing in size toward the top has also the curved outline known . . . as entasis. From any point on the easterly or westerly steps where the outline of the Shaft is seen in relation to the corner of one of the buildings, it will be seen how the two lines

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move in unison.¹

Magonigle also emphasized the use of the wing motif as a decorative element, (i.e., Guardian Spirits, the sphinx like sculptures, and central figure of the great frieze), throughout the Memorial, that he felt unified the design of the whole. Generally categorized as designed in Beaux Arts Classicism, Liberty Memorial also integrates a twentieth century artistic interpretation stemming from the Gothic in the Guardian Spirits of the shaft, and from the Greeks with the application of mathematical ratios and ceremonial form. It should be noted that the Gothic and Greek influences, as well as the Egyptian Revival, are only alluded to and are not fully realized in the final design.

Memorial Shaft and Court

Rising 217'6" or 21 stories above the surrounding plaza, the limestone shaft measures 36' in diameter at the base and 28' at the top, recalling Greek entasis. Eighty-three feet below Memorial Court, the shaft measures 43' at its foundation. The shaft is crowned by a Flame of Inspiration originally created by a ring of steam and by accent lighting. The bronze ring that originally sent a 60' plume of steam measures 9' – 06" in diameter and weighs 600 pounds. Seen from a great distance, the shaft casts heavy shadows due to the buttresses and the engaged piers that carry the four Guardian Spirits of the flame at each side. Sculpted by New York artist Robert Aitken, the Guardian Spirits, each 40' in height and weighing over 11 tons each, represent by Honor, Courage, Sacrifice, and Patriotism. Honor is characterized by wreath of laurel, Courage by a helmet, Patriotism by a civic crown, and Sacrifice by a winged star on the forehead. Each deeply carved figure bears a sword, representative of militant guardianship, and carries near the tip of their outstretched wings the symbolic censer.

The following commemorative inscription is carved in raised letters on the southerly face of the limestone shaft:

IN HONOR OF THOSE WHO SERVED IN THE WORLD WAR
IN DEFENSE OF LIBERTY AND OUR COUNTRY

Placed just below the inscription is the cornerstone, stating the following in incised script:

DEDICATED * NOVEMBER * 1 * 1921
IN THE PRESENCE OF
MARSHALL FOCH * ADMIRAL BEATTY * GENERAL PERSHING
GENERAL DIAZ * GENERAL JACQUES
VICE PRESIDENT CALVIN COOLIDGE
ROBERT ALEXANDER LONG
PRESIDENT OF THE LIBERTY MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION
GUESTS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

Inside the shaft is a passenger elevator and staircase that permits access to the observation deck around the rim of the censer, approximately 360' above Union Station to the north. A bronze door, embellished with star-studded alternating panels of eagles and the interlaced monogram of the Liberty Memorial Association, accesses the interior. Angelo Tagliabue with John Donnelly, Inc., designed the door under the direction of Magonigle; John Polachek cast and finished the bronze work.

¹ H. Van Buren Magonigle, "Description of the Memorial," in The Liberty Memorial Association and J. E. McPherson, The Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri (Kansas City: The Liberty Memorial Association, 1929): 36.

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Measuring 274' x 124', the Memorial Court is a terrace paved with non-original concrete and pebble aggregate. The shaft is located at its center and flanked on the west by the Museum and on the east by Memory Hall. The terrace is reached by the Memorial Mall to the south and by a series of steps, each 24' wide with retaining walls 16' deep, to the east and west abutting Memory Hall and the Museum Building. The central portion of the terrace is placed at a lower level than the flanking buildings, while a raised walkway shielded by a continuous parapet runs the expanse of the north side. Raised garden plots, anchored at each corner, break the otherwise stark character of the immense terrace.

Memory Hall and the Museum Building

Each flat roofed limestone building, placed at the east and west sides of the Memorial Court, measures 46' x 93' and are similarly designed with few exceptions. Originally called the Legion Building, Memory Hall lies to the east and the Museum Building is sited to the west. The main façade of each building, facing onto the court towards the shaft, features a two-story barrel-vaulted portico reached by a brief series of concrete and limestone steps through paired, square limestone piers faced with Classically inspired pilasters. The porticos are lined with polychromatic mosaic tile ranging from dark blue at the top to a light blue at the base and bordered by a checkerboard pattern of black and gold. Two large ornamental bronze sconces, decorated with laurel and ivy, are placed at the inside of each portico on each pier. Entrances to the buildings are symmetrically placed bronze-framed double-leaf plate glass doors with transoms and unadorned molded limestone entablature surrounds. Open design wrought-iron security gates protect each entrance. Flanking the entrance steps of each building is a pair of rose-colored polished marble urns measuring 10' in height and 6' in diameter. A band of laurel encircles each urn with emblems of the Army, the Navy, and the Red Cross, in recognition of each of the branches of service that aided in the war effort.

The north and south façades of Memory Hall and the Museum Building feature six recessed openings with large limestone piers, like those of the main façade, separating the bays. The upper portion of each recess is lined with mosaic tile similar to that of the main portico. Industrial sash, multi-paned casement windows (six-light) are placed in the lower sections of each recess and originally also on the west façade of the Museum Building. One-over-one hopper units are placed at the far-west bay of the north and south facades of Memory Hall and at the end bays and below each window recess of the Museum Building. A series of copper flush light receptacles, placed on the north and south façades of each building, illuminate the tiled openings and walls. The Museum building also features two fireproof single-leaf doors at the north façade; one at the far east bay leading to the museum archives and offices and a second at the far west bay for access to the storage area. At the east façade of Memory Hall, the Arms of the United States are featured and at the west façade of the Museum Building, the Arms of the State of Missouri are displayed. Both symbols, carved in high relief and centrally arranged in the upper-most quadrant of each facade, feature stylized heraldic eagles.

The interior of Memory Hall measures 73'4" in length, 37'6" wide and 27'3" in height, at the highest point of the coffered and non-original acoustic tile ceiling. Geometric bands of foliation studded with stars of Dutch gold, separate the tiles. Walls, originally of French Caen stone ground into plaster and scored, are now covered with acoustic tile; floors are linomosaic.² On the walnut wainscot of the north, east, and south walls are a series of thirty-five war maps, painted by D. Putnam Brinley, illustrating the American Army and Navy in foreign territory, U.S. military training camps, and convoy system.³ Dominating the upper portion of the easterly wall is

² The acoustic tile resembles stone, creating a trompe l'oeil effect.

³ Originally there were 27 maps installed in Memory Hall, but due to damage from a steam radiator, two of the canvases were removed from the southeast corner of the interior.

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a mural painting, by the artist Jules Guerin, *In Memoriam, 1914-1918*, measuring 17'-36'.⁴ The works by Brinley and Guerin are the only paintings that were originally part of Memory Hall.

Covering the west wall of Memory Hall above the entrance is the mural *Dedication of the Memorial Site November 1, 1921*, measuring 33' in width x 16' in height, depicting portraits of the five Allied leaders and more than 100 Kansas Citians who were present at the original dedication for Liberty Memorial. The huge canvas, the work of Kansas City artist Daniel MacMorris, was dedicated on May 30, 1950. MacMorris was also responsible for the following paintings in Memory Hall: *Blood of Mother's Tears Given for a Star of Gold* located on the east end of the south wall and measuring 16' x 9' (1970); *Women of WWI*, a mural placed centrally on the south wall and measuring 16' x 21' (1955); *Hope like a Blue Star Kept Mothers Faith Alive* at the west end of the south wall (1970); and *Pantheon de la Guerre*, a 1914-1918 mural reworked by the artist and hung on the north wall in 1959.⁵ Further embellishing Memory Hall are four bronze tablets, bearing the names of the 440 sons and one daughter of Kansas City who died in World War I, located at either side of the entrance, which is crowned by a patterned lunette. Six walnut benches are placed throughout the perimeter.

Concluding the list of decorative features of the interior of Memory Hall is a bronze door, decorated with ivy and commemorating the American Legion. It contains the following inscription:

FOR
GOD AND COUNTRY
WE ASSOCIATE OURSELVES
TOGETHER FOR THE FOLLOWING
PURPOSES:
TO UPHOLD AND DEFEND
THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES:
TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER:
TO FOSTER AND PERPETUATE
ONE HUNDRED PERCENT AMERICANISM:
TO PRESERVE THE MEMORIES AND INCIDENTS
OF OUR ASSOCIATION IN THE GREAT WAR:
TO INCULCATE A SENSE OF INDIVIDUAL OBLIGATION
TO THE COMMUNITY, STATE AND NATION:
TO COMBAT THE AUTOCRACY OF BOTH
THE CLASSES AND THE MASSES:
TO MAKE RIGHT THE MASTER OF MIGHT:
TO PROMOTE PEACE AND GOOD WILL ON EARTH:
TO SAFEGUARD AND TRANSMIT TO POSTERITY
THE PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE, FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY:

⁴ Guerin, a native of St. Louis, was the artist of the mural decorations in the Lincoln Memorial, Washington, DC. Daniel MacMorris repainted the mural in 1955.

⁵ Pierre Carrier-Belleuse and Auguste-François Gourguet conceived the painting Pantheon De la Guerre, a traveling cyclorama hung like a huge curtain in a circle. The enormous canvas, originally sized over 45' high and 402' in length, was the work of more than 120 French artists over a four-year period. The World War I mural completed in 1918, was given to the Liberty Memorial Association by a Baltimore collector, William H. Haussner. Haussner gave permission to revise the painting for installation and subsequently, MacMorris rearranged the piece by cutting, pasting and reworking sections. The portion that hangs in Memory Hall contains sections of the original work comprised of Belgian, Serbian, Russian, Italian, American, and Asian forces and participants. For more detailed information regarding the painting, and other artworks in Memory Hall and the Museum Building, see Evergreene Painting Studios, Inc. "Liberty Memorial Study, Liberty Memorial Kansas City, Missouri," November 1999.

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TO CONSECRATE AND SANCTIFY OUR COMRADESHIP
BY OUR DEVOTION TO MUTUAL HELPFULNESS

The interior of the Museum Building was originally designed to feature the same wall and floor materials as Memory Hall and is dimensioned the same. Before the restoration, the walls of the exhibit space had been covered with acoustic tile and painted black; the original ceiling was modified with acoustic tile and florescent lighting. Wainscoting is composed of light gray marble. The flags of the nations involved in the Great War are hung below the ceiling. One of the most elaborate features of the Museum Building are the paired bronze doors, embellished with intricately detailed panels of symbolic images of peace and war, justice, prosperity and learning, knowledge and eternity.⁶ The doors were designed by F. Lynn Jenkins and executed by John Polachek, New York. A section of the mammoth mural *Pantheon de la Guerre* hangs on the east wall.⁷

Above the doors at the east end is an inscription from Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and the Psalms declaring:

ONLY TAKE HEED TO THYSELF AND KEEP THY SOUL DELIGENTLY LEST THOU
FORGET THE THINGS WHICH THINE EYES HAVE SEEN AND LEST THEY DEPART
FROM THY HEART ALL THE DAYS OF THY LIFE: BUT TEACH THEN THY SONS
AND THY SON'S SONS: : HOW BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS ARE THE FEET
OF HIM THAT PUBLISHETH PEACE: : AND HE SHALL JUDGE AMONG THE NATIONS
AND SHALL REBUKE MANY PEOPLES: AND THEY SHALL BEAT THEIR SWORDS INTO PLOUGH-
SHARES AND THEIR SPEARS INTO PRUNING HOOKS: NATION SHALL NOT
LIFT UP SWORD AGAINST NATION NEITHER SHALL THEY LEARN WAR ANY MORE:
EXCEPT THE LORD KEEP THE CITY THE WATCHMAN WAKETH BUT IN VAIN.

The Sphinxes

Two colossal Egyptian sphinx-like sculptures, shrouded by their wings, guard the south entrance to the Memorial Court. They were placed on the Memorial Court in September 1925. Measuring 32' x 15' x 15' and weighing 615 tons each, these immense limestone statues "prepare visitors for the spirit and mood of the shrine of sacrifice."⁸ "Memory" located on the southwest side of the court hides its head to forget the pain and suffering of war. The figure faces east toward Flanders Field, the seat of war. On the southeast side, "Future" covers its head to attest to the skepticism of things to come and faces west where "the course of Empire takes its way."⁹ Edgar F. Bircsak, an artist and architect who worked in Magonigle's office, was the creator of the sphinxes.¹⁰ John Donnelly was responsible for the carving.

The Great Frieze

The Great Frieze is reached from the north lawn or from a series of steps, 72' wide, leading from the Memorial Court at the east and west ends to broad terrace landings with broad planters on either side and finally to a large forecourt in front of the frieze. The wall of the Great Frieze measures 488' long x 13' high; the carved figures occupy a space measuring 145' x 19', modified from the original plan. Wight and Wight, the prominent

⁶ For a complete description of the bronze doors, see C. Kevin McShane, "A History of the Liberty Memorial" (master's thesis, University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1969), 71.

⁷ This section includes the Winged Victory with French heroes and leaders. See fn. 5.

⁸ C. Kevin McShane, "A History of the Liberty Memorial," 68.

⁹ Quoted in Magonigle, "Description of the Memorial," 28.

¹⁰ Sarajane Sandusky Aber, "An Architectural History of the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri, 1918-1935" (master's thesis, University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1988, 59), n. 8.

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architectural firm from Kansas City, working with the Olmsted Brothers, designed the frieze, as well as the terracing, walls, and steps. Under the direction of Wight and Wight, Edmond Amateis assisted in design particulars and executed the sculpture. The Great Frieze is characterized by an inscription, in bas relief, 14" high and running the entire length of the narrative:

THESE HAVE DARED BEAR THE TORCHES OF SACRIFICE AND SERVICE—THEIR BODIES RETURN TO DUST BUT THEIR WORK LIVETH FOR EVERMORE. LET US STRIVE ON TO DO ALL WHICH MAY ACHIEVE AND CHERISH A JUST AND LASTING PEACE AMONG OURSELVES AND WITH ALL NATIONS.

At the eastern half of the frieze, images of war are contrasted with symbols of peace at the western half. The central figure, that of a woman with spread wings, symbolizes peace and understanding. Four men huddle beneath the wings; two figures with their heads bowed face east towards the memories of war, while the other pair gaze west, with uplifted heads, toward everlasting peace. Beginning at the far eastern panel, a series of five poses depicting war are as follows: two soldiers holding a wounded comrade, three soldiers with bayonets, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, a nurse in aid of three injured soldiers, and finally a grieving family gazing toward the central figure of peace. Moving from the central figure toward the west, is a group of women engaged in music and song, a family (with the addition of a judge) awaiting the return of a soldier, a group that depicts "Poetry" and "Music" riding on two bulls, a farmer and his family beside a ram, and at the far west end, a single figure of a working man juxtaposed with a beaver and a giant wheel. Amateis further contrasted the two themes by his use of line and general carving techniques. The images of war are expressed with a more emphatic verticality and harshness; the cadence of the figures appears dramatic and rigorous, almost tense. On the other hand, the images of peace are much more fluid in characterization.

Four inscriptions are carved above the figures of the frieze, two to a side. Above the figures of the three soldiers is the following:

BEHOLD A PALE HORSE AND HIS
NAME THAT SAT ON HIM WAS DEATH
AND HELL FOLLOWED WITH HIM

The inscription above the figures of the nurse and wounded men reads:

VIOLENCE SHALL NO MORE BE HEARD
IN THY LAND WASTING NOR
DESTRUCTION WITHIN THY BORDERS

To the west of the central figure, above the women engaged in music and song and the awaiting family reads the following:

WHAT DOTTH THE LORD REQUIRE OF THEE
BUT TO DO JUSTLY AND TO LOVE MERCY
AND TO WALK HUMBLY WITH THY GOD

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Above the farm family, the final passage evokes a message of assurance:

THEN SHALL THE EARTH YIELD
HER INCREASE AND GOD EVEN
OUR OWN GOD SHALL BLESS US

The Memorial Fountains

Leading from the forecourt of the Great Frieze down a flight of steps 90' in width are dual fountains, also designed by Wight and Wight. Constructed in 1934-1935 on two levels, each fountain is placed in a niche comprised of retaining walls. The upper tier consists of a spray ring with jets that create a waterfall that flows into the second level. Lining the bowed second tier basin is a series of jets that cast the water back into the lower pool. Carved above each fountain is a passage to honor those who died in the war. The inscription at the east fountain, an excerpt from *America the Beautiful* by Katherine Lee Bates, reads:

WHO MORE THAN SELF THEIR COUNTRY LOVED

Above the west fountain, a quote from Sir Samuel Brydges's verse on the death of Sir Walter Scott is inscribed as follows:

THE GLORY DIES NOT AND GRIEF IS PAST¹¹

The Dedication Wall

At the northern edge of Liberty Memorial, sited 150' south of Pershing Road, is the slightly curved Dedication Wall commemorating the site dedication held on November 1, 1921. The limestone wall itself, measuring 10' high and 90' in length carries the bronze portraits of the five Allied leaders who attended the dedication; Admiral Beatty, Marshal Foch, General Pershing, Lt. General Diaz, and General Jacques (moving from east to west). Their last names are carved into a ribbon-like banner beneath their portraits. Walker Hancock, Gloucester, Massachusetts, was the sculptor of the portraits. Beneath the wall is a limestone bench. Wight and Wight planned for the wall in February 1934. It appears that its construction was completed in 1935; due to deterioration, reconstruction of the wall, complete with concrete terrace and stairs, occurred in 1999-2000. From the Dedication Wall, a series of stairs lead to the north lawn of Liberty Memorial.

Carved into each end of the wall are two quotes; one from John J. Pershing and another by Woodrow Wilson. The authors' names are placed at the bottom right of each inscription. Pershing's quote, placed to the west of the portrait grouping, reads:

IN DEDICATION OF THIS MEMORIAL LET US
PLEDGE OUR LIVES TO GOD AND COUNTRY
MAY THE DEVOTION OF THOSE WHO
ANSWERED THE CALL OF DUTY IN THE
SUPREME CRISIS OF WAR PROVE AN ABIDING
INSPIRATION TO LOYALTY AND HIGH ENDEAVOR

The quote from Wilson placed to the east, states:

¹¹ Sherry Piland and Ellen Ugucioni, *Fountains of Kansas City* (Kansas City: City of Fountains, 1985), 133-34.

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THE GLORY OF AMERICA GIVES DEEPER THAN
ALL THE TINSEL GOES DEEPER THAN THE
SOUND OF GUNS AND THE CLASH OF SABERS
IT GOES DOWN TO THE VERY FOUNDATION
OF THOSE THINGS THAT HAVE MADE
THE SPIRIT OF MAN FREE HAPPY AND CONTENT

Two bronze tablets flank either end of the Dedication Wall. Both inscriptions carry the same text:

ON THIS SPOT ON THE FIRST DAY OF NOVEMBER
ONE THOUSAND AND NINE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE
DURING THE THIRD CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ASSOCIATED WAR LEADERS
FERDINAND FOCH MARSHAL OF FRANCE
ARMANDO DIAZ GENERAL OF THE ARMY OF ITALY
EARL BEATTY ADMIRAL OF THE BRITISH FLEET
BARON JACQUES LIEUTENANT GENERAL OF BELGIUM
JOHN J. PERSHING GENERAL OF THE ARMIES OF
THE UNITED STATES AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES
CALVIN COOLIDGE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
ARTHUR HYDE GOVERNOR OF MISSOURI
SIXTEEN GOVERNORS OF OTHER STATES
AND A VAST MULTITUDE
WAS DEDICATED THE SITE OF THE LIBERTY MEMORIAL
IN COMMEMORATION OF THE SERVICE AND SACRIFICE
OF AMERICAN SOLDIERS, SAILORS AND CITIZENS
IN THE GREAT WAR

The Site: The North Lawn and the South Mall**Overview**

Extending south from either end of the Dedication Wall at the north end of the Memorial is a series of stone stairs that lead to an irregular elliptical asphalt walkway 9' in width. As envisioned by George Kessler and planned by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., the area between the Dedication wall and the lower terrace steps of the Memorial remains a unobstructed grassy lawn, rising in elevation from 90' to approximately 165'. Additional series of stone stairways are located at the western edge of the north lawn, at the 135 foot elevation, and at the far northeast corner at the 90 foot elevation. A flagpole stands at the 150 foot elevation, just northwest of the terrace in front of the Great Frieze. Vegetation on the north lawn includes shrubbery scattered at the stairs at the northeast corner from the Dedication Wall, and cottonwood trees densely planted throughout the west and east sides adjacent to Main Street and Kessler Road. Walkways stretch from the north lawn to the east and west sides of the Memorial proper and continue to the South Mall. Non-original, deteriorated concrete paths also run the length of the Memorial.

The South Mall is essentially a parkway featuring parallel entrance roads flanking a level grassy area. A non-contributing, continuous asphalt walkway borders the road. Stretching a quarter mile from the non-original dual stone bollards and iron gates at the south end, the South Mall serves as the main entrance to Liberty Memorial.

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On either side of the road is a double row of formally planted sugar maples known as the Avenue of Trees, followed by rows of pin oaks planted in 1937. Sycamores, cottonwoods, and various volunteer species are also extant throughout the south lawn. Plaques dedicated to World War II veterans are located at the east side of the mall near the Avenue of Trees; no plaques have been found to exist to the west. Additional limestone stairs are located at both the east and west fringes of the south lawn.

The historic designed landscape of Liberty memorial evolved between November 1, 1921, the date of the site's dedication, and the late 1930s when its landscaping improvements were completed. Since then, numerous features have been added to the landscape. Others have disappeared due to deferred maintenance or modifications to the site to accommodate the municipality's needs.

While the architectural elements of the Memorial dominate the site, the vegetation plays a major role in the visual aesthetics of the landscape and structures. Many original plantings survive, albeit in a mature or overgrown condition. Most of the original plantings were installed between 1926 and the mid-1930s, and many of the species are reaching their life expectancy.

The most dominant historical planting that remains is the remnant double row of Sugar Maple trees and Hawthorns that line both sides of the Mall. Other historical planting include:

- Two groves of mature trees at the south end of the Mall
- Specimen trees dispersed throughout the open lawn areas of the site
- Four Sugar Maple trees at the base of the Great Frieze
- A cluster of seven junipers located near the fountain on the east side of the large stairs
- The sweeping and expansive lawns throughout the site. Continuous mowing and other necessary maintenance of the lawn, restricts volunteer vegetation from overtaking the landscape, retaining the views to and from the Memorial.

Less easy to document, but no less important to the site's aesthetics, are the stands of thick trees and groundcover on the steep slopes east and west of the Memorial. This vegetation and the steep terrain upon which it grows, visually and physically separates the north end of the site from the south end.

Memorial Trees

Two groves of memorial trees with plaques are located at the southern end of the Mall. On the east side, a 2' x 2'3 1/2" bronze plaque, set in concrete states, "THESE TREES PLANTED BY UNITED STATES ARMY MOTHERS FOUNDERS POST IN LOVING MEMORY OF THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN WORLD WAR II 1948." When originally installed, a small bronze plaque bearing a soldier's name was installed at the base of each tree. Some of the trees have been removed, leaving their accompanying plaques. Three trunks have grown around some of the plaques, and other plaques are broken and are no longer flush with the ground.

On the west side of the Mall, a 1'-10" x 2'-3" bronze plaque set in concrete states, "TREE IN LIVING MEMORY ALL MARINES KILLED IN ACTION WORLD WAR 2, 1945 SIMPSON-HOGATT UNIT MARINE CORPS LEAGUE AUXILIARY 1949." Here too, small memorial plaques with individual soldier names were placed at the base of trees.

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Views and Vistas

Owing to the Memorial's prominent location and the topographical relief of its landform, significant views can be obtained both from within the site looking out and from the perimeter looking in. The grandest views are from the observation gallery on top of the shaft, which affords visitors a 360-degree view of the surrounding city. Two prominent views from outside the site are from Union Station looking up at the Memorial and from Memorial Drive looking south for one-quarter mile directly at the Memorial and its vertical shaft.

Circulation*Vehicle Access*

The existing network of roads is used for pedestrian paths but are wide enough to be used for vehicles. The roads surrounding the site and the internal drives, parking and services areas are all paved with bituminous asphalt.

The arrival sequence to Liberty Memorial has not changed significantly since its inception. The main point of vehicular access continues to be provided from the south via the Memorial Mall, at Memorial Drive, while pedestrian access is provided from the north, south and west.

The main vehicular entrance for visitors enters the site from Memorial Drive to the south. Designed as a formal, symmetrical entrance, in contrast with the North Lawn, the Mall is a quarter-mile boulevard-style approach drive with a central lawn area between two travel lanes. Parking is provided along the outside of each travel lane and directly in front of the Memorial. The parking area immediately in front of the Memorial has been removed and the travel lanes of the Mall shortened to provide room for a pedestrian entrance to the new museum. The new entrance is below the existing grade, thus requiring a sloped access ramp from Memorial Drive to the front doors.

Prior to restoration, all on-site parking was limited to the Memorial Mall. The new site design includes a paved parking area to the west of the Mall. The parking area is connected to the westernmost lane of the Mall's boulevard and to Kessler Road. This parking area is set below the elevation of the Mall so that its visual impact does not affect the integrity of the Mall. The drives and parking area are paved with bituminous asphalt.

A service drive that enters the site from Kessler Road provides vehicular access to the loading area west of the Museum Building. Another service drive begins at Kessler Road, passing below the western loading area and connecting to the North Lawn.

A pedestrian path along the east side of the Memorial was modified, including minor grading and the removal of a set of stairs, to accommodate construction vehicles.

Pedestrian Access

The pedestrian access to the site and circulation paths, are extensive and diverse. Most of the walks are paved with bituminous asphalt or were paved prior to restoration. The exceptions include the original rubble stone steps, landings and cheek walls and the concrete and limestone located at the Dedication Wall along Pershing Street. New concrete walks connect the Dedication Wall to the Main Street/Pershing Road intersection.

The main pedestrian entrance has always been from Pershing Road to the north, via a series of steps and

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landings to the North Lawn, which remains open and unimpeded. Bituminous asphalt walks sweep around the entire North Lawn and connect at the fountains and wide steps below the Great Frieze. These walks are wide enough to accommodate service and maintenance vehicles.

Historically, paved “woodland walks” led around the east and west sides of the Memorial to asphalt walks on the south side of the site. Before the recent restoration, two walks cut east/west across the Memorial Mall: one still remains, approximately two-thirds of the way south down the Mall, connecting Memorial Drive to the grassy slope overlooking Kessler Road; the other walk, near the museum, was removed for the new entrance. The perimeter walks were paved prior to the 2002 restoration.¹²

Small-scale Structures

Numerous small-scale features are located throughout the site. While each feature alone may seem insignificant, together they enhance the character of Liberty Memorial and contribute to the significance of the overall site. These features include stone steps, walks, and retaining walls; a brick and concrete swale; iron gates with stone walls; improvements at the Dedication Wall; lights and flagpoles.

The stone features throughout the site consist of rubble stone, ashlar style stone and limestone. The rubble and ashlar stone features are rustic in style and significantly contrast with the refined materials and lines of the limestone Memorial and Dedication Wall. They were built in the 1930s by the Civil Works Administration, city employees, and the Works Progress Administration.

Stairs

Several sets of rubble stone stairs were originally built to accommodate the varying topography of the Liberty Memorial site. Some staircases were large, segmented and built with landings between them, while others are much smaller. All of the steps are set within stone cheek walls.

One staircase, consisting of three sets of steps and two landings, is located on the footpath extending north and south between the Memorial and Main Street. Two smaller sets of stairs, separated with a paved walkway, are located south of Memory Hall. Additionally, the site contains three significant sets of stairs:

- The first major set of stairs is located on the west side of the site, just south of the Museum Building. The segmented stair is comprised of twelve flights of steps and connects the Mall to the service drive leading to the west end of the Memorial and to the service drive that connects Kessler Road to the North Lawn. These stairs are laid out with smooth lines and arcs.
- The second major staircase is located north of the Memorial and connects the North Lawn to the public sidewalk running along Kessler Road, near Pershing Road. The segmented stairs zigzag up the steep terrain.
- The third major staircase is segmented and flanks both sides of the Dedication Wall. Here, the original rubble stone steps descend to a set of concrete stairs with limestone retaining/cheek walls, adjacent to and at the same elevation as the Dedication Wall. The western staircase is comprised of four flights of steps, each separated with a landing. The eastern staircase consists of five flights of steps separated by landings.

¹² John G. Waite Associates, Architects PLLC, “Historic Structure, landscape, and Preservation Planning Report for Liberty Memorial, Kansas City, Missouri.” Prepared for Kansas City, Missouri Board of Parks and Recreation commissioners, 2004, See pages 225-234.

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A staircase located near Memorial Drive links an internal walk to the street sidewalk. These stairs consist of two flights of steps and one landing. Two sets of smaller stairs are located along the walk that bisects the Memorial Mall, one on each side, approximately one-third of the distance from the Memorial Drive entrance.

A set of stairs located along Main Street consists of two risers. These stairs are built into the rubble stone retaining wall and link the concrete sidewalk along Main Street to the site's north/south pedestrian walk.

Stone Retaining Walls

Stone retaining walls are a common feature along the steeper sections of this landscape. The longest retaining wall runs from Kessler Road, along Pershing Road, up Main Street and then along Memorial Drive. At Kessler Road, the stone face is set in an ashlar pattern, and the wall is capped by large pieces of elongated cut stone with split edges. This wall continues around the Pershing Road and Main Street intersection before it changes to a rubble-style stone wall extending south to a pair of square stone piers near the staircase at Memorial Drive. This wall varies in height to accommodate the changing grade.

The recent site improvements included additional pedestrian access to the Dedication Wall. As part of this work, a section of the original stone retaining wall was removed and replaced with a new limestone retaining wall with integral bench. The work also included a new walk leading toward the Wall, several ornamental iron bollards and a change in paving material.

A stone retaining wall built into the bank at the northern service road along Kessler Road blends into the landscape as part of the natural stone outcropping.

A brick and concrete swale extends from the walk at the North Lawn, down the steep slope at the north end of Kessler Road, to the retaining wall at the street. This swale zigs and zags down the slope in much the same manner as the zigzag set of adjacent stairs. Swales are typically built to manage and control the flow of storm water runoff.

South Gates

Two pairs of ornamental iron gates are located at the southern end of the Mall near Memorial Drive. The swinging gates are attached to square ashlar-style piers with ornamental stone caps and finials. The stone piers are each attached to a short segment of freestanding wall with a sloping top and an ashlar stone finish. The gates were built in the 1970s as part of a movie set and do not contribute to the significance of the site.

Flagpoles

The plinth features inscriptions and portraits in bas-relief, while a gold leaf eagle crowns the flagpole. The 89th Division Memorial was dedicated in 1948.

There are two flagpoles on the site: one at the southern end of the Mall and the other in the south section of the North Lawn. Both poles align with the Memorial shaft. Both are non-contributing to the significance of the site because they were placed after the period of significance.

89th Division Memorial

The south flagpole was designed by Kansas City architect Edward Buehler Delk as the 89th Division Memorial,

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and was dedicated in 1948. Centrally placed inside the entrance gate on the lawn, the 70' high flagpole rests on a square 2' x 9" bronze plinth resting on a concrete base with three steps; each step has a 12" tread and a 6" riser.

The bronze plinth is ornamented with four placards. The south placard reads, "In Memory of the service and sacrifices Given our nation by men of the 89th Division American Expeditionary Forces England – France – Belgium - Luxemburg-Germany 1917-1918-1919."

Each of the other three plaques is adorned with a man's profile.

- The east placard reads: "Maj. Gen. Wm. Mason Wright Sept.-Nov. 1918."
- The north placard reads: "Maj. Gen. Leonard Wood Aug – Nov 1917 April – June 1918."
- The west placard reads: "Maj. Gen. Frank L. Winn Nov. 1917 – April 1918 June – Sept 1918, Nov 1918 - June 1919."

A gold leaf eagle crowns the flagpole. This flagpole is built on octagonal exposed aggregate pavement with a concrete border. Each side of the pavement measures 10' – 4." Physical evidence indicates that there were four benches placed on the pavement. Four uprights set flush with the ground are located on alternating sides of the locations for the benches.

North flagpole

The north flagpole is less ornate than its counterpart. A brushed aluminum pole, measuring 12" in diameter at the base, extends from a simple 3' – 0" square x 2' – 0" high concrete base. A plaque attached to the base reads, "TO KANSAS CITY FLAG DAY – 1968." This base is surrounded by a concrete pad that measures 10' x 16.' Three ground level, flush-mounted, uprights are located in the grass around the flagpole.

Lighting

Two different styles of site lighting are located at the Memorial. Light poles and fixtures are set into the grass strip along the outside edges of the Memorial Hall roadway to provide light for vehicles and pedestrians. These fixtures, commonly referred to as "cobra" style fixtures, are attached to long arching arms that extend over the road. Their height, and the brightness of the light bulbs, allow for significant space between each pole. The "shoe box" fixtures in the new parking area to the west of the Mall are recent additions.

Restoration of the Liberty Memorial and the Museum Expansion, 2000-2002

The Liberty Memorial was restored and museum space located beneath the observation deck was expanded beginning in summer 2000. Rededication occurred on May 25, 2002. ASAI Architecture, Kansas City, Missouri, prepared drawings for the restoration and expansion. All work on the Memorial was conducted in accordance with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Properties* and approved by the staff of the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office to insure that the historic integrity of the site was protected and maintained. The new museum was placed in an unfinished and unused space.

Changes to Liberty Memorial were undertaken due to the deteriorated and dangerous condition of the support columns, beams and deck, in addition to the four sets of steps on either side of the Museum and Memory Hall. All of these elements of the Memorial were removed and a new basement level for the current museum and administrative expansion programs was constructed.

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On the exterior of the Memorial, the cut stone facing on the Shaft, Memory Hall and the Museum Building; the stone paving on the stairs, and the concrete paving on the Memorial court, suffered from deteriorated mortar and open joints. The infiltration of water, and attendant freeze-thaw cycling, had caused deterioration of the base construction, resulting in settlement and displacement of the concrete paving and stonework. Significant masonry cleaning, repointing, patching, reconstruction and waterproofing measures during the 2000-2002 restoration project have largely addressed these problems and restored the Liberty Memorial back to its original condition and glory.

All of the changes to the Memorial were thoroughly reviewed by the SHPO, the City of Kansas City, Missouri, the Citizens to Save Liberty Memorial, the Jackson County Historical Society, the Liberty Memorial Association, the Municipal Arts Commission, the Veterans of Foreign War and the Historic Kansas City Foundation. The Kansas City Board of Parks and Recreation, in conjunction with a Design Review Committee, met on a monthly basis, during the duration of the restoration project. This group incorporated their comments into a written response to the SHPO with copies to the concurring parties about how their comments have been considered prior to the initiation of restoration and rehabilitation activities. The SHPO made numerous visits to the site during the process to insure that the design was in compliance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*, to monitor construction and to meet with project personnel.

Great care and research was taken to restore and rehabilitate the Liberty Memorial. This is particularly true with the exterior stone, where the finest experts in the country documented and field-tested different methods of repair. National experts were also involved in restoration treatments of the interior murals, woodwork, bronze, plaster ceiling and intricate lino-mosaic floor. None of the important or prominent existing details of the Liberty Memorial were removed or altered.

Because of the restoration, the Liberty Memorial stands in excellent condition; the new museum entrance, as well as the new reflecting pool are not intrusive to the original design of the Memorial or the site. The original form, shape, character, appearance and materials of the Liberty Memorial, as conceived by Magonigle and the team of supporting architects, landscape architects, and artists, has been maintained and reactivated.

It is important to note that the monument and the museum have led parallel existences, and now that the monument has been restored, likewise, the museum is primed for a facility that can best feature its mostly never-been-seen, world-class collection. Ultimately, the transformation was implemented with the integrity of the original design.

The following describes specific changes that occurred as a result of the 2000-2002 restoration.

Memorial Shaft and Court

In addition to the cleaning of the stone, the elevator car, platform, gate and equipment were replaced due to unsafe conditions. Due to extreme obsolescence, the original elevator cab of the Memorial Shaft was replaced with a unit to match the historic design and function. The new elevator cab was installed in the original hoistway. Copper flashing was added to the wall of the observation deck, and was installed over new membrane flashing. A new limestone coping was installed at the parapet wall.

The Memorial Court is a terrace that was originally paved with Indiana limestone and pebble mosaic. By the time of the 2000-2002 restoration, the original paving had been replaced with concrete and pebble aggregate decking. During the rehabilitation, the Court was repaved with a pedestal paving system, a combination of

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limestone slabs and concrete with exposed aggregate. Brick risers on the steps were replaced with limestone risers to match the limestone treads and reduce expansion of the material. The planters on the south were reduced in length to allow for the addition of handicapped access ramps adjacent to the sphinxes between the levels of the main deck. During the restoration project, two bronze lamp standards on the northeast and northwest sides of the Court were restored and placed on new raised platforms. New fixtures that light the exterior of the Shaft were introduced into the Court paving.

The Museum Building and Memory Hall

The limestone landing to the Museum Building was replaced during the 2000-2002 rehabilitation due to deterioration. The massive funeral urns were replicated, due to the extreme deterioration. The original urns are stored off-site. The west façade of the Museum Building originally featured three basement window openings; the center opening has been filled in and the remaining openings removed. There is now a large, coiling dock door and a new fire-rated basement entrance. An elevator doorway at the east end of the north facade was inserted in the 2000-2002 restoration. The opening has a bronze frame and door. At the basement level, a door at the west end of the north façade was removed. The original Caen Stone wall finishes of the interior of the Museum Building, in poor to deteriorated condition, were removed and the original finish was replicated. In addition, new exhibit elements were installed, murals were restored, and hardware was either restored or replaced with an historic replica.

New elevators were added for ADA access from the outside deck of Memory Hall and the Museum Building. In both buildings, the original steam radiators were removed and forced air heating and cooling was added with the radiator pockets used for return air. Exhibit casework was also added in both spaces, while in Memory Hall, the fabric valance and old lighting on the maps was replaced with a wood valance. New lighting was added to illuminate the murals.

On each side of the buildings the stairs were replaced with new concrete stairs with a combination of new and reused limestone treads. Each stair descends from the Court in three flights of fifteen risers (with landings), ending in a flight of eight risers to the pavement at the base of each building. The rise of each stair was changed to accommodate the new below-grade museum.

At the service area west of the Museum Building, a cooling tower for the new mechanical system was installed with enclosure walls, and an enclosure wall around the electric transformers was built.

The New South Entrance, Walk of Honor and Visitor Parking

As originally designed, Liberty Memorial was entered directly from the South Mall by ascending five steps to an entrance terrace and then another flight of limestone steps that extended between the sphinxes. Visitors can now walk along paved paths directly to the southeast and southwest ends of the court, near the sphinxes, or they can descend ramps down to the new entrance to the below-grade museum, including an auditorium, museum store, restrooms and service spaces. The new museum space has been designed in a discreet and sophisticated manner that has minimal impact on the existing historic fabric of the Liberty Memorial. The majority of the modifications to this memorial have occurred in the unfinished space beneath the observation deck. This area was never considered a character-defining feature of the Memorial.

The new entrance, with its series of brushed-bronze doors, is placed within a plain limestone façade. This entrance is placed along the south axis of the Memorial. This new entrance is only visible from the south and does not impact the views of the Memorial from the east, west, or the north.

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The paved courtyard at the entrance features an oval fountain, designed on axis with the Memorial Shaft and the south mall. Landscaped terraces to the south, east and west visually connect the mall to the entrance.

The southern portion of the deck was extended approximately 80 feet with the same construction and finish of precast pavers, as described above. Limestone steps at the north end of the entrance courtyard ascend to the east and west to the paved paths. From the paths, curved steps flank the broad coffered skylights of the new museum ascending to the Memorial Court. The skylights offer a view down to the lobby level and from the lobby level up to the sphinxes and the tower. New planters, reflecting the design of the original, were built on the south side of the deck addition.

As part of the restoration, a "Walk of Honor" has been created along the paved paths, where individually inscribed granite bricks are inserted into the paths, with named pavers and separate areas for those who served in World War I, other military service and non-military persons.

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A complete list of architects, landscape architects, artists, engineers and contractors and builders associated with the Liberty Memorial:

Harold Van Buren Magonigle, New York	Architect
Westlake Construction Company, St. Louis	Contractors
Hool & Johnson, New York	Engineers
Wight and Wight, Kansas City	Architects
Olmsted Brothers, Brookline, Massachusetts	Landscape Architects
George E. Kessler, Kansas City	Landscape Architect
Sidney J. and S. Herbert Hare	Landscape Architects
Percival Gallagher	Landscape Architect
Robert Aitken, New York	Artist; Guardian Angels
Edmund Amateis, New York	Artist; The Great Frieze
Walter Hancock, New York	Artist; Dedication Wall
Edgar Bircsak, New York	Artist; Sphinxes
Angelo Taglibue (John Donnelly Inc., New York)	Artist; bronze work
John Polachek, New York	Artist; bronze work
F. Lynn Jenkins, New York	Artist; bronze work
Walker Hancock, Gloucester, Massachusetts	Artist
Jules Guerin, New York	Artist; mural painting
D. Putnam Brinley, New York	Artist; decorative maps
Daniel MacMorris, Kansas City	Artist; murals
Pierre Carrier-Belleuse, France	Artist; mural
Auguste-François Gourguet, France	Artist; mural
Edward Buehler Delk, Kansas City	Architect; 89 th Division Memorial
Sterling Bronze Company	lighting fixtures

December 1933-February 1934: Civil Works Administration workers graded and made fills for Kessler Road. CWA also hand-graded and constructed sidewalks and walls at the southeast section of the Memorial. Work was completed under the direction of W. H. Dunn, Superintendent of Parks and J. V. Lewis, Field Engineer for the Park Board, per Olmsted's plans.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: X Statewide: Locally:

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C X D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A B C D E F X G

NHL Criteria: 1

NHL Exception: 7

NHL Theme(s): III. Expressing Cultural Values
6. Popular and traditional culture

Areas of Significance: Social History
Architecture
Landscape Architecture
Art

Period(s) of Significance: 1923-1938

Significant Dates: 1923, 1938

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Magonigle, Harold Van Buren/architect
Westlake Construction Company/builder

Historic Context: XXXI. Social and Humanitarian Movements

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.**SUMMARY**

The Liberty Memorial, constructed from 1923-1938, is nationally significant as a commemorative property designed and constructed after the occurrence of an important historic event. Designed by architects H. Van Buren Magonigle with Wight and Wight; landscape architects George E. Kessler, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., (Olmsted Brothers), with Hare and Hare; and artists to include Robert Aitken and Edmond Amateis, Liberty Memorial vividly exemplifies the fulfillment of city planning concepts, combining monumentally-scaled Beaux Arts Classicism envisioned by some of the nation's most notable and diverse delineators of the City Beautiful movement working in the early twentieth century and as a monument and memorial to those who served and died in World War I.

More than any other memorial in the nation, Liberty Memorial expresses the ideals about the importance of World War I through aesthetic and moral values. Liberty Memorial's complex of limestone buildings together with the towering shaft, vast sculpture, bas-reliefs, decorative bronze art, and dramatic open vistas, all contribute to its power and distinction. These elements together present a potent psychological manifestation relating to and reflecting on the emotional effects of WWI and all wars, in general. As World War I was deemed the "War to end all Wars" the very essence of that statement became clear when Gen. John J. Pershing, Gen. John J. Lejeune, Ferdinand Foch, and Adm. David Beatty, representatives from Belgium, Italy, and Serbia attended the site dedication in 1921, along with over 200,000 people.

Today Liberty Memorial stands as one of the most important landmarks in Kansas City and one of the most commanding memorial sites in the nation. Moreover, Liberty Memorial remains one of the nation's most compelling monuments to those who sacrificed their lives during World War I and a remembrance of those who survived. Its dramatic combination of elements is not only a momentous tribute to those veterans but also an important expression of American memorial architecture of the early twentieth century. As Dr. Steven Trout points out in his book *Memorial Fictions: Willa Cather and the First World War*, "[the 1920s] saw a wave of military commemoration on an unprecedented scale—even vaster than that which followed the Civil War—as millions of Americans sought to interpret what had in fact been a bewildering national experience."¹³ More than the American Legion hall, the Indiana World War Memorial Plaza (NHL, 1994) or Grant Park Stadium in Chicago (NHL, 1987), dedicated as a memorial to World War I soldiers, Liberty Memorial stands as an exemplary representation of a memorial that uniquely and ambitiously commemorates the Great War.¹⁴ Additionally, the Liberty Memorial houses the only public World War I museum in the United States. Although other commemoratives to World War I were built around the country in high numbers, including the ubiquitous doughboy placed on town squares or in front of county courthouses, Liberty Memorial remains an "architectural wonder several times the size of the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials and home to an unmatched collection of artifacts from the war."¹⁵

¹³ Steven Trout, *Memorial Fictions: Willa Cather and the First World War* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 15.

¹⁴ Grant Park, listed as an NHL in 1987, has been significantly modified since its designation. Subsequently, this WWI memorial was de-designated in 2006 due to a loss of integrity, as the alteration compromised its historical integrity. In light of this unfortunate loss of NHL status of Grant Park, the significance of Liberty Memorial to our nation's cultural heritage is even more tangible.

¹⁵ Shirley Christian, "World War I Museum's New Drive on the Home Front," *The New York Times*, 31 March 1998, B2. Liberty Memorial was designated the National World War One Museum of the United States by the United States Senate and the House of Representatives, as signed into law by President Bush as part of the FY 2005 defense authorization bill. The Liberty Memorial was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 6, 2000.

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Early Planning and Development of the Memorial, 1918-1920

Even before the Armistice ending World War I was signed on November 11, 1918, citizens of Kansas City, Missouri, were eager to commemorate the great sacrifice for freedom. These concerns and ideas were given public voice in the local press and the general call was for the construction of a victory monument, appropriately honoring local participants in the war effort.¹⁶ Strong public sentiment prompted the City Council and local city leaders to enter into preliminary considerations for a memorial. Robert Alexander Long, one of these civic leaders and a successful lumber businessman, emerged as a major player in the organization of a group of citizens dedicated to the development of a war memorial project.¹⁷

The City Council announced a public conference to be held on November 29, 1918. Invitations were sent to notable citizens regarding this meeting. At the Council's request, R.A. Long presided over the forum. Mayor James Cowgill and his Council had called the meeting "[f]or the purpose of arranging for an appropriate memorial expressing the appreciation of the people of Kansas City, Missouri, of the service and sacrifice of the soldiers, sailors, and citizens . . ."¹⁸ At the meeting, R.A. Long was authorized to appoint a Committee of 100 and a temporary advisory Committee of 150, whose members would meet jointly to initiate the memorial movement. Members of the Joint Committee would include citizens who actively participated in civic work, selected without political or religious preferences.¹⁹

Another meeting was held on December 12, 1918, to discuss a formal name for the project. Many proposals were set forth including a Patriots War Memorial, Heroes War Memorial, World War Memorial, Victory Memorial, Democracy War Memorial, World War Liberty Memorial, and Victory and Peace Memorial.²⁰ Frank P. Sebree cautioned that the decision should not be hastily made and Jesse Clyde Nichols suggested that the name itself might "have an effect on the success of the enterprise."²¹ Dr. Burris Jenkins proposed the incorporation of "liberty," as the word was often used in connection with the war.²² Whether the memorial should emphasize war or peace was also debated. The Memorial Committee resolved on this date to consider public opinion prior to naming the memorial and its organization.²³ Another issue of business considered at this meeting was the general outline of the committee—its character, purpose, and structure.

The name Liberty Memorial Association was selected at the December 16, 1918, meeting. R.A. Long, as Chairman of the Association, then appointed the 100 citizens to serve on the Committee of 100.²⁴ This group

¹⁶ Celbe C. Cline, *Kansas City Journal*, 9 November 1918, Mounted Clipping File, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri. Many of the newspaper articles from this repository do not include page numbers and dates. In addition, a voluminous record of contemporary press clippings, compiled by Liberty Memorial Association Secretary, J. E. McPherson, is reserved in the Liberty Memorial Museum Library and Archives. Like that of the Missouri Valley Room, most of these clippings also do not include page numbers and dates. The Liberty Memorial Museum Library and Archives, Kansas City, Missouri, will be hereafter cited as Liberty Memorial Archives.

¹⁷ Long served as Chairman and President of the Association from 1918 until his retirement in 1926, at which time the Association awarded him with the title of Honorary President.

¹⁸ The Liberty Memorial Association and J. E. McPherson, *The Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri*, 5.

¹⁹ C. Kevin McShane, "A History of the Liberty Memorial," (master's thesis, University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1969) 7-8.

²⁰ Minutes of the Liberty Memorial Association, Liberty Memorial Archives, 6, which will be hereafter cited as "Minutes."

²¹ "Minutes," 6. Sebree was an attorney and served as President of the Kansas City Park Board. J. C. Nichols was a leading Kansas City real estate investor with a personal interest in civic affairs.

²² "Minutes," 7. Dr. Burris A. Jenkins was a long-time Kansas City minister, former editor of the *Kansas City Post* and author of more than a dozen books.

²³ "Minutes," 6-7. For more on the contemporary concern about haste in regards to war memorials, see *New York Times*, 24 January 1919; *New York Evening Post*, 7 February 1919; "War Memorials," *Art Digest* 15 April 1931, n.p.; and *New York Times*, 27 November 1918.

²⁴ A list of these members is included in The LMA and J.E. McPherson, *The Liberty Memorial*, 21.

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would eventually be incorporated under Missouri State statutes into a legal entity, the Board of Trustees, to administer the development and construction of the Memorial.²⁵ In order to represent all voices, a temporary advisory committee of 150 citizens was also appointed at this meeting.²⁶ Together as the Joint Committee, the group of 100 and the advisory group of 150 were to encourage public suggestions, seek professional advice, hold open forums to disseminate information, and above all, to determine the character, location, cost, and all collateral matters of the Memorial. One thing, however, was already decided—the Liberty Memorial Association wanted a beautiful and original monument. Not only would such a memorial express the gratitude and honor Kansas Citizens felt towards their lost ones who sacrificed for peace, but it was also understood that civic beauty reflected civic activity and growth.²⁷

From January 16 through March 21, 1919, thirteen Joint Committee meetings were held, despite an influenza epidemic that closed the local public schools and led the City Health Department to ban gatherings.²⁸ These meetings were held to acquire information on notable war monuments, the significance of various architectural types, to consult expert advice, and ultimately ensure that committee members made informed decisions concerning the Memorial.²⁹ The Association consulted Thomas R. Kimball, former President of the American Institute of Architects, regarding these aims. His expert advice led the Association to invite some of the most prominent figures in memorial design and architecture to address the Joint Committee meetings. Nationally known sculptor Lorado Taft was invited to give a presentation. Although Taft was unable to attend, Nellie V. Walker, a sculptor from his Chicago Midway studio, was sent in his place.³⁰ Chicago architects Dwight H. Perkins and Jarvis Hunt, as well as the New York architect Harold Van Buren Magonigle, also spoke to the Joint Committee.³¹

Subsequently, important decisions began to be made. In March 1919, the Liberty Memorial Association decided that the monument would be located in Kansas City, Missouri, regardless of suggestions otherwise.³² The Joint Committee proceeded cautiously in determining what form the monument should take. They feared that by constructing a utilitarian building, the Association would not adequately honor the war casualties and effort.³³

²⁵ J. E. McPherson, "The Liberty Memorial of Kansas City, Missouri," *Apollo: Journal of the Arts* 6 (September 1927): 104, and J.E. McPherson, "A Pillar of Cloud and Fire," *Executive's Magazine* 11 (June 1927): 39.

²⁶ The concern for public opinion was strong throughout the organizational phases of the memorial.

²⁷ LMA and McShane, "Liberty Memorial," 15.

²⁸ From September through December 1918, it was reported that approximately 1800 Kansas Citizens died from influenza and pneumonia. The death rate in 1917 was 205.0, whereas for 1919, it jumped to 301.1. *United States Mortality Statistics, 1920* (Washington, DC, 1922), 30.

²⁹ R. A. Long, "Kansas City's Liberty Memorial," unpublished typescript in the Liberty Memorial Archives, 1921, unpaginated.

³⁰ Lorado Taft (1860- 1936), was the author of *The History of American Sculpture* (1903), the first history of its kind, and a leading American sculptor schooled in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts tradition. He taught and lectured at the Art Institute of Chicago. On January 30, 1919, Miss Walker presented stereopticon slides of existing war memorials. "Minutes," 115.

³¹ Perkins, senior member of Perkins, Fellows, and Hamilton Architectural Firm, delivered an address on memorials and a review of notable monuments in history on February 28. Hunt, the architect of Kansas City's Union Station, the National Bank of Commerce Building, and the William Rockhill Nelson Memorial Chapel, presented on March 6. Magonigle reiterated the Joint Committee's emphasis on beauty and discussed the historical evolution of memorial monuments, including several of his own designs, and advised the committee to first secure funding and then select an architect, on March 13. "Minutes," 54, 80, 97, 107, 112, 115-116.

³² Citizen Frank Titus suggested a regional memorial, inviting neighboring states to participate in the Liberty Memorial enterprise. Frank Titus, "Reasons for the Liberty War Memorial of Kansas City Becoming a Regional Movement of the Trans-Mississippi States," no date of publication, 6-8, as received by the Kansas City Public Library on March 24, 1927, and noted in McShane, "Liberty Memorial," 12.

³³ Several groups within the community suggested utilitarian memorials. The Merchants Association of Kansas City proposed building a stadium in Penn Valley Park. Letter from the Merchants Association of Kansas City to the Liberty Memorial Association, March 25, 1919, and "Minutes," 41. The War Camp Community Service submitted a proposal for a community building with facilities for boxing, wrestling, fencing, and swimming. Letter from Henry F. Burt, Executive Secretary of the War Camp Community Service to the Liberty Memorial Association, December 14, 1918, and "Minutes," 43.

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Again, the fear of haste and ill-informed decisions resulting in one of those “cemetery-like” monuments remained foremost in the minds of the Association.³⁴

At a meeting on April 3, 1919, the Joint Committee took a formal ballot, which listed seven possible monument types for the Memorial. The seven types were: A Monument; A Monument Plus A Building; A Monumental Building Without Shaft; A Memorial Building With Shaft Or Other Monumental Feature; A Memorial Building Without Shaft Or Other Feature; A Memorial University, Plus A Monument; A Memorial University, Without Monument.³⁵ In a nearly unanimous decision, a “Monument Plus A Building, not for utilitarian purposes” was selected. This vote, however, was only to decide the general character of the Memorial, leaving the design open to the originality and inspiration of the architect.³⁶

With the general type of monument resolved, the Association proceeded to discuss the amount of money required for the construction of a beautiful and commensurate memorial. All members agreed that indeed, no matter the cost, the Memorial must befit the cause. A subcommittee on Finance proposed \$2,000,000. R.A. Long strongly supported this sum, while others were surprised and thought it exceedingly large. From spring until October, publicity fueled civic sentiment and enthusiasm in preparation for the fund drive. The financial campaign was held for a mere 10 days, beginning October 27 and ending November 5, 1919, and as a result, a total of \$2,051,506.57 was procured by popular subscription.³⁷ The campaign was endorsed by over a quarter of Kansas City’s population of 300,000. The press recorded an “almost religious fervor” during the campaign, “with ministers urging their congregations to contribute, bells tolling, and school children parading. It was a demonstration ‘without parallel.’”³⁸

Next on the Association’s agenda was to determine a site for the Memorial. While several locations throughout the city had been suggested, the favored and selected site was the park area south of the Union Station Plaza.³⁹ Recommended by a subcommittee on Location on January 24, 1920, this site included 132 acres of Penn Valley Park, an 8-1/2 acre area called Station Park, and a 33-acre tract to the southwest of Station Park, acquired by the city through condemnation proceedings for park purposes.⁴⁰

³⁴ *Art Digest*, 15 April 1931, n.p. The Municipal Art Society of New York issued a pamphlet just after the war, calling attention to the problem of poorly conceived war memorials. The Society suggested 32 architectural types appropriate for war memorials, including beacons, museums, and shafts. *Bulletin of the Municipal Art Society of New York*, First Quarter, 1919, and “Minutes,” 91.

³⁵ Aber, “An Architectural History of the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri, 1918-1935,” Fig. 1 Ballot, p. 143 (“Minutes,” 177).

³⁶ J. E. McPherson, *Executive’s Magazine* 6 (June 1927), 12.

³⁷ A newspaper quoted Liberty Memorial Association member, J. C. Nichols’ exclamation, “The eyes of the Middle West—if not the entire United States—focused on Kansas City. . . [and] the biggest undertaking an American city ever has attempted.” *Kansas City Journal*, 3 November 1919.

³⁸ Aber, “An Architectural History,” 9; J.E. McPherson, “Kansas City’s Liberty Memorial,” Part I, *Arts and Decoration* 15 (June 1921): 98.

³⁹ Swope Park was the only other seriously considered site. Given to the city in 1896 by Thomas Swope, the area contained over 1,300 acres, had a rolling landscape, and was located far to the southeast of downtown. William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement in Kansas City* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1964): see especially 100-119. The development scheme included everything south of the terminal tracks and north of 24th Street, and from Grand Avenue (now Boulevard) west to Broadway. In 1907 Kansas City landscape architect George Kessler had presented his original plan for a civic center at this same site. R. A. Long’s interest in the site also went back several years. He and J. C. Nichols had studied the area with the idea of beautifying the “Front Door” of the Union Station. *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Penn Valley Park, part of the original 1893 parks and boulevard plan for Kansas City, was designed by the brilliant landscape architect George E. Kessler, who envisioned and designed the city’s celebrated parks and boulevard system. The Kansas City Railway Company had previously deeded Station Park land to the city under the provision that the property would only be used for park purposes, controlled by the Park Board. The Railway owners had originally bought this land to prevent any eyesore from developing across from the Union Station. See McShane, “Liberty Memorial,” 24. Condemnation proceedings were begun by the city on October

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The total 173-1/2 acres for the site was especially noted for its commanding elevation of 134' above the Station Plaza, its accessibility to the center of the population, and its varied and picturesque topography.

Architect Selection/Competition, 1920-1921

The Liberty Memorial Association, by the end of January 1920, had determined what form the monument would take, secured the necessary funds, and agreed upon a location. The selection of a Memorial architect was considered at this time. The Association retained Thomas Kimball as their official architectural advisor in March 1920. He conferred with a subcommittee on Architect, chaired by Henry M. Beardsley, whose responsibility was to enlist the most competent architectural talent available. To this end, Kimball organized a competition, open to all local architects and certain invited architects from across the country, who were distinguished by their accomplishments and many notable architectural achievements.⁴¹ During the summer of 1920, sixty-three Kansas City architects were asked to nominate professional colleagues of national repute, to whom competition invitations would be sent.

Kimball's program specifically provided that a competent and unbiased jury is selected. The Liberty Memorial Association chose the first juror and named W. R. B. Wilcox of Seattle.⁴² The second juror, selected by local architects, was James Gamble Rogers of New York.⁴³ The out-of-town architects, who had been invited to participate in the competition, elected the third juror, Louis Ayres of New York.⁴⁴ The fourth juror, Henry Bacon of New York, was called upon by the first three selected jurors.⁴⁵ The Liberty Memorial Association again decided the final jury selection. They chose John M. Donaldson of Detroit.⁴⁶ The preeminent jury members would be sequestered to review and judge the elevation drawings, perspectives, and 750-word essays submitted by the competing architects.⁴⁷ To assure against any biases influencing the final selection, the competition strictly prohibited any identifying mark of the architect on all drawings and related sheets.

According to Kimball, the competition was planned not to obtain a design, but rather to select the appropriate architect for the job. Indeed, the competition program made clear the aims of the Association, "to secure our

11, 1920. The jury allotted damages of nearly \$1,000,000 to the owners. Due to the voluntary advancement of funds and purchase of 40% of this area by some of the Association members, the total cost of the condemnation procedures was considerably less than expected. See the Liberty Memorial Association and McPherson, *The Liberty Memorial*, 8. This arrangement brought the Park Board directly in on the development of the Memorial grounds. The Board would later play a significant role in the landscape beautification and completion of the Memorial.

⁴¹ Kimball had recently achieved success for his direction of the architect's competition for the Nebraska State Capital Building. See [Charles Harris Whitaker], "Shadow and Straws," *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* 9 (August 1921): 250-9. On his plans for the Liberty Memorial competition, see J. E. McPherson, "The Liberty Memorial: Kansas City Plans Biggest Project of Any City," *The Kansas Citian*, 30 August 1921, 660, and *Kansas City Times*, 28 June 1921. As an incentive to enter, the Association offered \$2,000 for each of the top four designs submitted. Uncited newspaper clipping in the Liberty Memorial Archives.

⁴² W. R. B. Wilcox was a past president of the AIA and had done work for the University of Vermont Agricultural College along with designing many banks, churches, and schools in New England and Seattle.

⁴³ James G. Rogers designed the Harkness Memorial quadrangle at Yale University and was the architect of the \$2 million building program at Columbia University in New York.

⁴⁴ Louis Ayres was a member of the successful New York firm, York and Sawyer, who designed the Federal Reserve Bank in New York City, the Department of Commerce and Labor in DC, and the First National Bank of Boston, along with many other projects.

⁴⁵ Henry Bacon was regarded as the leading Classical architect in the United States. He designed the Lincoln Memorial and the U.S. Supreme Court Building in Washington, DC

⁴⁶ J. E. McPherson, *Executive's Magazine* 6 (June 1924), 12, and *Kansas City Post*, 24 June 1921. John Donaldson was the architect of several University of Michigan buildings and the Detroit Y.M.C.A.

⁴⁷ "Art Jury in Session to Choose Liberty Memorial Architect," *Kansas City Post*, 24 June 1921. This article included a photograph of the jurors.

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city a Memorial that shall symbolize the dawn of a warless age, and do honor to those who died that such an age might be a human heritage . . . [and] while the monument with its symbolic purpose is the chief objective, it must be remembered that a certain part of the fund . . . is to be expended for a more or less utilitarian object.”⁴⁸ While the jury’s selection would be final, the Association did not have to use the winning design. Furthermore, the Association reserved the right to request that the architect amend the plan or even resubmit a new one.⁴⁹

The Association recently incorporated as the Board of Trustees on December 27, 1920, approved Kimball’s competition program, and during January of the following year, the Association prepared to receive submissions. The competition was held between February 1 and June 28, 1921, with the entry deadline set for June 15. All competition plans were kept in a sealed vault at Northeast High School, Kansas City, Missouri, and each was marked with a number for later identification. Bound with very few limitations, just like the architects, the jurors deliberated for four days. Federal Judge Arba S. Van Valkenburgh secured the sealed envelope containing the architects’ names until the jury was ready to announce their decision.

The list of the local competing architects included Brostrom & Drotts; Edward Buehler Delk; Greenebaum, Hardy & Schumacher; Hoit, Price & Barnes; Keene & Simpson; Selby H. Kurfiss; and Wight & Wight. The national competitors invited to submit proposals were Bliss & Faville of San Francisco; Paul P. Cret & Zanzinger, Borie & Medary of Philadelphia; Bertam G. Goodue of New York; and Harold Van Buren Magonigle.⁵⁰ While some Association members and citizens believed that since the Memorial funds had been raised by Kansas Citians to tribute Kansas City soldiers, it would be most appropriate to award a Kansas City architect, the majority felt that due to the monumental scale of the project, all efforts should be taken to obtain the best architect, local or not.⁵¹

Late in the afternoon on June 28, 1921, the jury prepared to announce a winner. Judge VanValkenburgh provided the sealed envelope containing all the architects’ names and Magonigle was awarded first place.⁵² Despite those who had disapproved of a national contest, there was little to question regarding Magonigle’s proven ability. The architect announced his collaborators for the project at this time, including George E. Kessler, landscape architect, Edith Magonigle, painter, and Robert Aitken, sculptor.⁵³ Magonigle’s contract with the Board was secured and the architect proceeded to make initial models of his plans in order to study the proportions and dimensions of his competition design.

Harold Van Buren Magonigle, Architect

⁴⁸ The Liberty Memorial Association, “Program: Competition for the Selection of an Architect to Design and Supervise the Construction of A Memorial at Kansas City, Missouri, Adopted December 8, 1920 and Approved December 27, 1920, 6, 8-9.

⁴⁹ Giles Carroll Mitchell, *There Is No Limit: Architecture and Sculpture in Kansas City* (Kansas City, MO: Brown-White Company, 1934): 67. John G. Gamble, juror, voiced his opinions about Kansas City’s planning of the competition in “Ready for Art Studies,” *Kansas City Times*, 25 June 1921.

⁵⁰ *The Kansas City Star*, 4 November 1926, reported that the invited firm, York and Sawyer of New York, had to withdraw from the competition due to an overload of work.

⁵¹ Henry F. Hoit, President of the Kansas City chapter of the AIA, was especially vocal in the protest against the invitation to national architects. He even went so far as to accuse the Association’s professional advisor, Kimball, of violating AIA competition codes. See the Letter from H.F. Hoit to R. A. Long, 16 April 1919, in the Liberty Memorial Archives. Hoit’s antagonism resulted in the division of Kansas City’s AIA chapter, with a significant number of members leaving the chapter to form the Kansas City Architectural league. Price and Barnes, along with Greenebaum, Hardy, and Schumacher, and Keene and Simpson, who were competition participants, were included in this group. See Abers, “An Architectural History,” 21-23.

⁵² “Memorial Design Chosen,” *Kansas City Times*, 28 June 1921. All submissions were to be hung on display at the Kansas City Art Institute, Kansas City, Missouri.

⁵³ *Kansas City Times*, 29 June 1921.

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This courage and loyalty so splendidly shown, this honor for which these patriots sacrificed their lives and their material interests—it is the memory of these which must be our inspiration for life in the new world revealed to us by the World War. Therefore this memorial shaft signifies: The Flame of Inspiration, guarded by the Spirits of Honor, Courage Patriotism and Sacrifice, burning forever upon an altar-high erected in the skies, a pillar of cloud by day, a pillar of fire by night, to lead men out of the bondage of strife into the promised land of Peace and the blessings of peace.

H. Van Buren Magonigle, 1929.

Harold Van Buren Magonigle was born in 1867 in Bergen Heights, Ohio, where he attended public school.⁵⁴ He went on to earn his professional training in an unconventional manner, not uncommon for the time.⁵⁵ Rather than studying at the leading American universities, he worked in some of the most prestigious architectural firms in the country, including Vaux and Radford, Charles C. Haight, McKim, Mead, and White, and Rotch and Tilden and thus, secured the equivalent architectural training. In 1889, Magonigle won the Gold medal of the Architectural League of New York. He moved to Boston in the summer of 1891 to join the staff of Rotch and Tilden, hoping to position himself as a candidate for the Rotch Traveling Scholarship.⁵⁶ From 1893-1894, he also taught courses in decorative design at Cowles Art School in Boston. His efforts paid off as he earned the Traveling Scholarship in the spring of 1894, which allowed him to study in Europe. From 1894 to 1896, Magonigle traveled to Italy, Greece, France, and England, where he sketched some of the greatest architectural monuments of the world and studied at the American Academy in Rome.⁵⁷ Upon returning to the United States during the fall of 1896, he spent the winter in the office of McKim, Mead, and White and in 1897, Magonigle became a practicing architect in New York.⁵⁸

Magonigle married Edith Marion Day, also an accomplished artist, on April 24, 1900.⁵⁹ Early in his professional career, Magonigle associated with the architect Evarts Tracy in Tracy and Magonigle for two years, and then spent another two years as head of the office of Schickel and Ditmars.⁶⁰ After these associations, Magonigle practiced alone, with the exception of his work with H. W. Wilkinson. His important works include: the McKinley Tomb in Canton, Ohio (NHL, 1975); the Maine Monument and the Fireman's Memorial in New

⁵⁴ His parents were John Henry and Katherine Celestine (Devlin) Magonigle. "Magonigle, H(arold) Van Buren," *Who Was Who in American History—Arts and Letters*, (Chicago: Marquis Who's Who, Inc., 1975): 309, and "Magonigle, H(arold) Van Buren," *Who Was Who in America 1897-1942*, 8th ed., vol. 1 (Chicago: Marquis Who's Who, Inc., 1981): 767-68.

⁵⁵ Aber, "An Architectural History," 26. *The Kansas City Times*, 29 June 1921, described him as a "self-made man."

⁵⁶ Harold Van Buren Magonigle, "A Half Century of Architecture, 5, A Biographical Review," *Pencil Points* 15 (July 1934): 357. Benjamin Rotch, father of Arthur Rotch, a partner in the Boston architectural firm Rotch and Tilden, founded the scholarship in 1884. The scholarship gave the recipient a generous two years of travel and study abroad. Magonigle reminisces about his time in Boston in this article. *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Many of these drawings are published in Francis S. Swales, "Master Draughtsmen, X, Harold Van Buren Magonigle," *Pencil Points* 6 (March 1925): 46-66, and Harold Van Buren Magonigle, "A Half Century of Architecture, 6, A Biographical Review," *Pencil Points* 15 (September 1934): 464.

⁵⁸ Magonigle, *Pencil Points* 15 (July 1934): 357, and Swales, *Pencil Points* 6 (March 1925): 47.

⁵⁹ Edith was born in Brooklyn, New York, on May 11, 1877, to John and Clara Marion Perry (Stafford) Day. She attended private schools and was a painter and sculptor. Her principle works include the frieze for the Administration Building, Branch Brook Park, Newark, New Jersey, murals in the Playhouse, Wilmington, Delaware; work for the residence of Isaac Guggenheim, Port Washington, and various works of architectural sculpture, of which, "Asia," Victory Way, Park Avenue, New York, is one. She was a member of the Women's Roosevelt Memorial Association and served as the organization's president from 1920-1922. She was also a member of the National Society of Mural Painters. "Magonigle, Edith Marion," *Who Was Who in American History—Arts and Letters*, (Chicago: Marquis Who's Who, Inc., 1975): 309.

⁶⁰ His association with Tracy suffered financially due to the national economic turmoil of Cleveland's second term. Magonigle, *Pencil Points* 15 (September 1934), 465. Magonigle describes his time at Schickel and Ditmars, and with an interesting humor, he also recalls Schickel's German accent in his article "A Half Century of Architecture, 7, A Biographical Review," *Pencil Points* 16 (November 1934): 564-565.

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York; Gate's Avenue Court House in Brooklyn; the Liberty Memorial at Kansas City, Missouri; the U.S. Embassy and Consulate in Tokyo; the Arsenal Technical Schools in Indianapolis, Indiana; the Schenley Fountain in Pittsburgh; and his design for the Robert Fulton Memorial Watergate in New York.⁶¹ He was also the architect for many private residences, clubs, schools, and other buildings.⁶² In 1931, he received a doctoral degree, presumably honorary, from the College of Architecture at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln.⁶³

Concurrent to his architectural practice, he served as First Lieutenant and Battle Adjunct General in the New York National Guard and was a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), a member and president of the New York chapter of the AIA, and a member and director of the American Federation of Arts. He had also served as the Vice President of the National Sculpture Society from 1925-1927.⁶⁴ During 1930-1931, the New York chapter of the AIA awarded Magonigle their Gold Medal of Honor.⁶⁵

Magonigle's talents were many. He was especially gifted as a draftsman.⁶⁶ Architecture was not, however, his only artistic interest. He also pursued other design endeavors, as well as literary ones. When not creating beautiful and precisely rendered architectural drawings, he designed furniture, magazine covers, seals, pottery, typography, and illustration, and sketched in watercolor and painted in oil.⁶⁷ Complementing, and even matching his design work, was Magonigle's literary talent. An eloquent speaker, he published many papers and articles in professional journals, including *Brickbuilder* and *Pencil Points*. For the latter, Magonigle was a regular contributor of architectural criticism under the title, "The Upper Ground, Being Essays in Criticism." He authored three books-- *The Nature, Practice and History of Art* (1924, Charles Scribner's Sons), *Architectural Rendering in Wash* (1926, Charles Scribner's Sons), and *The Renaissance*.⁶⁸ In both his artistic and literary work, Magonigle stressed academic training and rendering while allowing for free expression—two methods often difficult to orchestrate into a balanced union.⁶⁹ At the 1924 Convention of the AIA in Washington, D.C., he presented his theory on what American architects should strive for: "An architecture firmly rooted in tradition, appropriate to its uses and therefore of infinite variety, free from freakishness as it is free from pedantry."⁷⁰

Magonigle's critical reception, despite the negative image he has been given in the Liberty Memorial history, was very positive. Writing in 1925, just after construction on the Memorial in Kansas City began, Francis S. Swales commended Magonigle by stating, "[a]s a designer of important monuments he has achieved a leading position among modern architects . . . [Magonigle's works are] distinctly American. They are a kind of

⁶¹ The Fulton Memorial, however, was never built because of financial problems. Aber, "An Architectural History," 27.

⁶² "Magonigle, H.," *Who Was Who in American History—Arts and Letters*, 309, and "Magonigle, H.," *Who Was Who in America*, 768.

⁶³ Both "Magonigle, H.," *Who Was Who in American History—Arts and Letters*, 309, and "Magonigle, H.," *Who Was Who in America*, 768, are unclear as to whether this was an honorary award, but presumably so, since Magonigle had been practicing professionally since 1897 and died in 1935.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ "The paragon of line drawing of architectural detail became Magonigle's drawings." *Ibid.*, 47.

⁶⁷ Swales, *Pencil Points* 6 (March 1925): 66.

⁶⁸ In the preface for *The Nature, Practice and History of Art*, Thomas R. Kimball wrote: "I foresee for this book a widespread and lasting influence for the betterment of artistic appreciation, architectural draughtsmanship, and last, but not least, architecture itself." Thomas R. Kimball, "Preface," in Harold Van Buren Magonigle, *The Nature, Practice and History of Art* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), vii. Swales wrote of Magonigle's *Architectural Rendering in Wash*, ". . . a useful guide . . . as necessary to the young draughtsmen's equipment as his scale or compass." Swales, *Pencil Points* 6 (March 1925): 66.

⁶⁹ Swales, *Pencil Points* 6 (March 1925): 65.

⁷⁰ Francis P. Sullivan, "A Conscientious Artist," *Pencil Points* 16 (October 1935): 522. Sullivan described Magonigle's design as "[C]lassical in its background and origin, imbued with a scholarship as broad as it is unobtrusive . . . (with) no interest in or desire to achieve a lifeless archaeological correctness." *Ibid.*

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architecture that will survive and find a place in architectural history, and are, therefore, worthy of the excellent representation which Mr. Magonigle gives them in his masterly drawings.”⁷¹ Magonigle’s influence was again praised after his death on August 29, 1935. Francis P. Sullivan, in a eulogizing essay for *Pencil Points* wrote of Magonigle, “This was a man of brilliant and varied talents, an artist with an enduring record of accomplishment A draughtsman of the greatest sensitiveness and facility”⁷² He remembered the architect’s “great service to his contemporaries . . . (as his persistence) in keeping before them by word and by example the truth that architecture is an art and that ‘in the arts is most of the beauty of the world and of life in the world; subtract them and the world is like a waterless desert.’ ”⁷³

Harold Van Buren Magonigle’s Winning Design

Following the jury’s selection, the A.I.A. announced in their journal that “the competition...[had] brought forth a number of notably distinguished and original designs... They all show a new and wholesome, vital tendency to get away from purely traditional forms and styles to make architecture more an expression of our own times, of American ideals, of the noble purposes the memorial commemorates.”⁷⁴ Indeed, while all the entries reflected a sincere interest in transcending stale architectural modes, they all incorporated to varying degrees traditional elements. Each plan was distinguished by an Ecole des Beaux-Arts “look,” and exhibited influences of the contemporary monumental ideas expressed in the Washington Monument, by the World’s Fairs of 1893 in Chicago and of 1904 in St. Louis, and by the City Beautiful movement.⁷⁵ Several of the architects conceived similar memorial-complex layouts, using the natural topography to advantage.⁷⁶

H. Van Buren Magonigle’s winning design exhibited a thorough grasp of the ideals and problems of the project according to the jury. His descriptive text accompanying his drawings fulfilled many of the aims set forth by the Association. The architect managed to capture this “idealism that lead the youth to lay upon the altar of their country, the flaming torch of self sacrifice,” through his use of great artistic styles of the past, including ancient Egyptian and Greek elements as well as Gothic architecture. Magonigle’s inspired plan, rendered to perfection, detailed a grand tower rising 401’ on the hill south of the Station Plaza, “so that the visitor leaving the great railroad station will pause and stand in almost awe at the . . . soaring shaft . . . [a] commanding figure of peace which rises out of the very stone of which it is a part.”⁷⁷ The idea behind the tall shaft was to signify “The Flame of Inspiration... a pillar of cloud by day, [and] a pillar of fire by night.”⁷⁸ It also was conceived to cast strong shadows, able to be seen from a distance, and thus, a visually interesting element beyond its symbolic significance. The Memorial was approached by wide stretches of steps and terraces that led up to the shaft.

⁷¹ Swales, *Pencil Points* 6 (March 1925): 47.

⁷² Sullivan, *Pencil Points* 16 (October 1935): 522.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ *Architecture* 44 (August 1921): 241.

⁷⁵ The Chicago’s World Fair of 1893, designed with the aid of architect Richard Morris Hunt and the architectural firm, McKim, Mead, and White, initiated a revival of classical taste in the arts, a new and modern reaction to the nineteenth century’s Victorian ideals. The Fair’s design also represented a climax of new ideas in American urban planning, a movement known as the City Beautiful Movement. See Wilson, *City Beautiful* for a discussion of the City Beautiful Movement in Kansas City. These influences appeared in an early newspaper story on the Liberty Memorial which included a drawing “showing a Columbian Exposition-type Court of Honor and a soaring Washington Monument-like shaft.” Aber, “An Architectural History,” 28, and *Kansas City Times*, 22 October 1919.

⁷⁶ See Elizabeth G. Grossman, “Two Postwar Competitions: The Nebraska State Capitol and the Kansas City Liberty Memorial,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 45 (September 1986): 261 for further analysis of the competition entries.

⁷⁷ Liberty Memorial Competition Pictures Submitted to the Liberty Memorial Association’s Committee of 100, (Kansas City, 1921), in the Liberty Memorial Archives, hereafter cited as “Liberty Memorial Competition Pictures.”

⁷⁸ H. V. B. Magonigle’s accompanying descriptive essay to his drawings was published along with the essays by Goodhue, Cret, and Greenebaum, Hardy, and Schumacher, in “The Competition for the Liberty Memorial,” *Architecture* 44 (August 1921): 235; Harold Van Buren Magonigle, “A Memorial at Kansas City, Missouri,” *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* 9 (August 1921): 266; and “The Competition for a Memorial at Kansas City, Missouri,” *Western Architects* 30 (July 1921): 70.

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Atop the shaft was a censor, representing an altar of sacrifice. However, the original, complex design submitted by Magonigle was not exactly the same Liberty Memorial constructed. Many economic decisions made later resulted in a more simplified and austere, but nonetheless beautiful monument.

Site Dedication and Construction Preliminaries, 1921-1923

The site for the Liberty Memorial was dedicated on November 21, 1921. The Dedication ceremony coincided with the third national convention of the American Legion. Both civic and national pride were displayed and celebrated by the crowd of 100,000 people amassed for the celebration. With a preamble of cannons, moving tributes by national and foreign dignitaries, and a pageant of Vestal Virgins carrying laurel wreaths, the Liberty Memorial, even before construction began, embodied the "Kansas City Spirit."⁷⁹

On November 3, 1921, Magonigle discussed his plans for the Memorial with the Board of Governors at a special meeting, and on the following day, the Board unanimously adopted the "general conception embodied" in Magonigle's competition sketches.⁸⁰ The Board also authorized a committee to consider ordering a complete survey of the Memorial site and contiguous territory.⁸¹ R.A. Long appointed the committee and included himself. At the December 15 meeting of this committee with officers of the Liberty Memorial Association, Magonigle, Thomas Kimball, George E. Kessler, and H. M. Beardsley, R.A. Long initiated discussion on the relationship of Magonigle and Kessler to the Liberty Memorial Association. He hoped that a clear understanding of the parameters of this relationship would defer any future misunderstanding.⁸² All present agreed that Magonigle would only be responsible for the architectural development of the Memorial, proper. Furthermore, Kessler and Magonigle confirmed that they were working in thorough accord with one another in the architectural and landscape work.

George Kessler presented his plans for the grounds and street approaches that included a north automobile entry and accounted for future development at the site to the Board of Governors on April 5, 1922.⁸³ Magonigle, who had just returned to Kansas City from New York with new drawings, also presented his work at this meeting.⁸⁴ The architect's revised design, Scheme A, was even grander than his competition renderings. He had increased the diameter of the tower 5' and its height by 46'.⁸⁵ Magonigle's amended plans were commended and approved by the Board.⁸⁶ At a special meeting of the Board of Governors on June 7, 1922, Hughes Bryant was

⁷⁹ See Aber, "An Architectural History," 38-39, and *Kansas City Journal*, 1 November 1921. The site dedication of the Liberty Memorial was significant in that it was the only occasion following the war when all five Allied leaders were assembled together—a good measure of the worldly significance the Memorial had already assumed.

⁸⁰ "Minutes," 290, 307.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, and Aber, "An Architectural History," 39-41.

⁸² "Minutes," (V.I, 15 December 1921).

⁸³ Kessler's park and boulevard system for Kansas City is the first City Beautiful/Beaux Arts system in the nation, parallel with the World's Columbian Exposition. The Kansas City system, as pointed out by Charles Birnbaum, FASLA, Coordinator, National Park Service, Historic Landscape Initiative, "is without any doubt a future National Historic Landmark in its own right." German-born George Edward Kessler (1862-1923) worked throughout the nation during the first decades of the twentieth Century. Besides the plan for Kansas City, Kessler's other works include a park system plan for Memphis (1900), Indianapolis (1905), Syracuse (1906), Fort Worth (1907) and Denver (1907). Kessler also worked for the U.S. Housing Corporation and prepared master plans for cities across the United States. For further information see Kurt Culbertson's essay, "George Edward Kessler," in *Pioneers of American Landscape Design* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000), 212-215. Charles Birnbaum and Robin Karson are the editors of this book.

⁸⁴ Kessler had previously submitted an early recommendation to the City Planning Commission on June 23, 1921. *Kansas City Star*, 23 June 1921.

⁸⁵ *Kansas City Star*, 5 April 1922.

⁸⁶ Aber, "An Architectural History," 43.

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named advisor to the architect.⁸⁷ Bryant would assist Magonigle in obtaining competitive bids, keeping records, and auditing and approving extras and credits.⁸⁸

Returning to Kansas City again in November 1922, Magonigle submitted a report dated October 17, 1922, and revised November 8, 1922, to the Board of Governors. His report revealed that the cost of Scheme A, with the larger shaft dimensions, could not be built for “a sum within measurable reach of the sum at our disposal.”⁸⁹ Therefore, Magonigle had designed Scheme B, using the dimensions of the original competition renderings. His new plans moved the shaft to the southwest along with other adjustments.⁹⁰ However, when Magonigle presented charts showing “basic estimates” with four scales of materials and costs, Scheme B was also not within the budgeted means, even based on the least costly estimate.⁹¹

Faced with serious financial problems that could compromise the integrity of the project, the Board of Governors met on November 17, 1922, to consider “possible savings in the design or construction of the Memorial to bring estimated cost within the limit of the funds available.” R.A. Long endeavored to remain positive and dedicated to the idealism that had initiated the Memorial program. Magonigle reported a number of reductions and money saving proposals to the Board, including moving the axis of the shaft east and north, within a radius of twenty-five feet. The Board, however, was not satisfied and demanded that Magonigle seriously re-study his plans to accommodate the Board’s new budget of \$1,600,000 for the Memorial. Magonigle unsuccessfully protested this figure.⁹²

At a meeting early in December 1922, Magonigle presented another revised plan with his estimate of \$1,572,322.⁹³ The architect’s new plan reduced the overall dimensions by eliminating the original north-thrusting T-shape, keeping only the east-west crossbar.⁹⁴ The dimensions of the shaft remained the same. While some Board members expressed their concerns about the design and the finances involved, others found Magonigle’s report satisfactory and the revised plans were approved.⁹⁵ George Kessler’s death March 19, 1923, was recorded in the minutes of the next meeting, held on the same

⁸⁷ Attorney Hughes Bryant had a “guiding hand in reshaping the skyline of Kansas City.” He was directly responsible for the construction of several prominent commercial buildings including the Fidelity National Bank and Trust Company, the Bryant Building, and the R. A. Long Building.

⁸⁸ “Minutes,” 320.

⁸⁹ Harold Van Buren Magonigle, Report to the President and the Board of Governors of the Liberty Memorial Association, 17 October 1922 and revised 8 November 1922, 3.

⁹⁰ “Minutes,” 325-342.

⁹¹ Magonigle’s Basic estimate was \$2,402,406, using golden-hued Kettle River sandstone from Minnesota. Alternate A used Benedict Stone in place of the sandstone, deducting \$144,541 from the Basic estimate to a total of \$2,257,865. Benedict Stone is a high quality, synthetic stone, rated superior in endurance to sandstone and equal in durability to the best limestone. Alternate B used limestone from Bedford, Indiana, throughout in place of sandstone, which added \$88,055 to the Basic estimate for a total of \$2,490,461. Alternate C used Kettle River sandstone for the shaft, two buildings, and steps, and a special concrete finish for all terrace and retaining walls. This deducted \$277,576 from the Basic estimate for a total of \$2,124,830. Alternate D was inclusive of Alternate C, along with the elimination of 458 feet of the lower retaining wall on the east and west. This would deduct \$331,397 from the Basic estimate, making the total at \$2,071,009. All these estimates exceeded the Board’s limit of \$1,600,000. *Ibid.*, 11 and graph.

⁹² “Minutes,” 365-367, 377-386, 389-401. Magonigle also suggested that instead of bronze window panes with wire plate glass, wood panes and plain plate glass could be used; a gravel roof could replace copper; cement stair treads could replace terrazzo; all marble in the restrooms could be eliminated; the porticoes could be made of plaster instead of mosaics; and finally, the size could be reduced; and Aber, “An Architectural History,” 46.

⁹³ Harold Van Buren Magonigle, Report to the President and Board of Governors of the Liberty Memorial Association of Kansas City, Missouri, December 2, 1922.

⁹⁴ This eliminated additional expenses associated with the necessity for deeper footings and grading for work on the expansive north slope.

⁹⁵ “Minutes,” 419, 438-440, 449, 452-53, 474.

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day.⁹⁶ The minutes also reveal that Magonigle had gone against instructions to work with Kansas City contractors. Instead, he had sent plans and specifications to a contractor on the East Coast.⁹⁷ This action increased the friction between Magonigle and the Board, which had begun almost immediately with the architect's apparent disregard for the Association's finances. A month later, at a meeting on April 27, 1923, the Board of Governors approved the specifications for Magonigle's amended design, consisting of the shaft, two buildings to the east and west, the north wall, and a south Memorial court with steps descending parallel to the buildings, so they could advertise for bids. The specifications were then released to contractors on May 7, with a return deadline of June 4.⁹⁸

On May 10, 1923, J. C. Nichols, representing the Liberty Memorial Association, presented the City Planning Commission with the final plans for the Liberty Memorial. The plans were approved by the Commission at this meeting.⁹⁹ The following month, on June 11, the Liberty Memorial Association then considered ten bids for construction. Westlake Construction Company of St. Louis, Missouri, with the lowest bid of \$1,150,000 was awarded the contract.¹⁰⁰

At this stage, it appeared that the project was ready to break ground. But the Board had another problem with Magonigle on their hands—this time, regarding the architect's choice of his wife as the sculptor of the Memorial's bas-relief on the north wall. Meeting on June 13, 1923, to review Magonigle's choice, the Board requested Kimball's opinion. Kimball advised the Association to support Magonigle, for surely the architect would not jeopardize his reputation by enlisting the collaboration of an unqualified artist.¹⁰¹ The next day, Magonigle reminded the Board that the Competition Program had authorized the architect to choose his collaborators. He then proceeded to confirm his prior nominations: Robert I. Aiken, past president of the National Sculpture Society and author of many distinguished works, as the sculptor of the four Guardian Spirits on the shaft; Mrs. Edith Magonigle, past president of the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors of America, for the north wall sculpture relief; and himself, for the two sphinxes to be placed just south of the shaft. Elaborating on the wall relief, Magonigle stated that the design would depict the progress of civilization across an amazing 400', with a height of 13'. His estimated cost for the frieze was \$80,000, not including the production of a model, which would be around \$40,000 to \$50,000.¹⁰²

Construction, 1923-1926

The approved design for the Liberty Memorial, as by the Board's vote of April 27, 1923, included four

⁹⁶ Ibid., 491. Touching upon the death of Kessler at a meeting later in the year, the Board eulogized, ". . . we can but feel that this Association has lost a useful advisor, and our state and nation one of its most useful citizens . . . Mr. Kessler quickly felt the high purpose of the undertaking . . . [He] was endowed with the highest order of common sense . . . [which] always merited and obtained for him both . . . public and private confidence. . . . In the art of park and boulevard construction and beautification he stood almost alone. As the impetus Pericles . . . gave to art . . . so the high ideals and beautiful works . . . of George E. Kessler, shall stand as beacons . . ." Ibid., 734-35.

⁹⁷ In Magonigle's report of note 72, he mentioned New York engineers, Hool and Johnson, as well as other contractors for heating and ventilation, plumbing, and electrical work. See pages 5-6.

⁹⁸ "Minutes," 525.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 644, an excerpt of minutes of City Plan Commission meeting.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 617.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 679, 693, 718-720.

¹⁰² Ibid., 723-724. Aber writes, "Edith Magonigle worked on the drawings for the 400-foot 'March of Civilization for some nine years. As completed, they are impressive and beautifully done. They were, however, never realized in stone. Nearly ten years passed before the Great North Wall was completed with an abbreviated sculptured frieze by another artist, a frieze that perhaps fell short of Mr. Kimball's plea that "sculpture must be a part and harmonize with architecture." Aber, "An Architectural History," 56.

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elements.¹⁰³ In these four elements, Magonigle combined the austerity of the ancient Egyptians, the simplicity of the ancient Greeks, and the spirituality of Gothic architecture. The chief element was the tall shaft, 36' in diameter at the base and 28' at the top, and rising 217'-06" high. Rather than a fluted, Classical column, Magonigle's tower was faceted. Located near the top was Magonigle's "Altar of Sacrifice." Four sculpted Guardian Spirits encircled the shaft just below the altar. Each embodied a symbolic ideal for which the monument was erected. Distinguished by their attributes, Honor had a laurel wreath, Courage wore a helmet, Sacrifice had a winged star on her forehead, and Patriotism wore a civic crown.¹⁰⁴ Magonigle likened his guardian spirits to the sculptural program of the portal at Chartres Cathedral in France.¹⁰⁵ The wings of these figures appeared to support the bowl and censor from whom Magonigle's "Flame of Inspiration... a pillar of cloud by day, [and] a pillar of fire by night" enlivened the sky.¹⁰⁶ The shaft design included an elevator and staircase, allowing access to a lookout platform around the rim of the censor. The words "In Honor of Those Who Served in the World War in Defense of Liberty" was to be etched on the south side of the shaft. Magonigle designed bronze doors for the shaft entrance and many other decorative elements.¹⁰⁷

In Magonigle's eyes, the next element of importance was the sculpted stone frieze on the north terrace wall. Exemplary of his many refinements, the north wall was designed using a concept known to the ancient Greeks as entasis.¹⁰⁸ Magonigle recognized that the tower would appear to sink in relation to the horizontal line of the north wall, and therefore softened this line by curving the wall upwards, so that the center was one foot higher than the ends.¹⁰⁹

The other two elements of the Liberty Memorial plan were the two smaller buildings located to the east and west of the tall shaft. They created a long horizontal axis, intersected by the tower base. In plan, each building was 46' x 93'. The Legion Building, on the east, was to hold four bronze tablets that were inscribed with the names of the 440 sons and one daughter from Kansas City who had died in the war. The building also was to serve as a meeting room for the Liberty Memorial Association and other patriotic and veterans organizations. It was designed as a one-story structure with a partial basement for storage. The Museum Building to the west was envisioned to house a flag shrine, and was designed with a basement for storage. The heating plant, a steam generated boiler for the "Flame of Inspiration," and electrical equipment were to be put in a sub-basement area.¹¹⁰ Guarding the south approach to the Memorial were two colossal sphinxes, 32' long and nearly 5' tall.¹¹¹

¹⁰³ Harold Van Buren Magonigle, "Specifications: The Liberty Memorial, Kansas City, Missouri," 24 February 1923.

¹⁰⁴ Close up photographs of these guardian angels appeared in the January 1927 volume of *Architecture*. Liberty Memorial Archives.

¹⁰⁵ The Liberty Memorial Association and J. E. McPherson, *Liberty Memorial*, 25. The doorjambs of the west portals at Chartres are lined with tall figures attached to columns.

¹⁰⁶ Four banks of floodlights were placed on both buildings to illuminate the shaft and steam was generated at the apex of the shaft, thereby creating the "pillar of cloud by day, [and] . . . fire by night." J. E. McPherson, *Liberty Memorial*, 27.

¹⁰⁷ He directed the modeling of the doors and various bronze elements by Angelo Tagliabue, working for John Donnelly, Inc., and he also supervised the casting by John Polacheck.

¹⁰⁸ Further refinements by Magonigle included the backward inclination of all walls, one inch for every eight feet, giving the walls an air of greater stability and an effect of spring and life, as well as to bring them into harmony with the tapering of the shaft. Finally, from any point along the east and west stairs, the shaft's outline is viewed in unison with the lines of the building corners. The Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners, *Historic and Dedicatory Monuments of Kansas City* (Kansas City: Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners, 1987): 30-31.

¹⁰⁹ The Liberty Memorial Association and J. E. McPherson, *Liberty Memorial*, 36. It was this wall on which Magonigle planned the long, sculptural frieze.

¹¹⁰ For more on the heating and ventilating system of the Memorial, see "Kansas City Liberty Memorial Heating and Ventilating Equipment," *The Heating and Ventilating Magazine* (February 1927): 61-71.

¹¹¹ The largest stones used in constructing the Memorial are to be found in the hindquarters of the sphinxes, weighing 17 tons apiece.

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The Liberty Memorial Association had a splendid Memorial design, created by a nationally respected architect, with public support and secure funding, so probably felt confident moving into the next phase of the project. But not long after excavation began on July 5, 1923, the progress of the Liberty Memorial met the first of many setbacks along the road to completion. In a report dated September 12, 1923, Hool and Johnson, the New York engineers selected by Magonigle, informed the architect of the soil conditions at the Memorial site and recommended adjustments to the footing and structural plans.¹¹² The investigation revealed that rather than the expected “‘hill of rock,’ ... ancient glaciers... had left a complex condition ranging from honeycombed, or grottoed rock, to muddy clay as the nearest materials on which to rest the Memorial structure.” However, the report also stated, “It is fortunate that a firm ledge underlies the entire site at Elevation 144 ... this ‘Calico Ledge’ can be depended upon ... to give unvarying and invariable support to the Memorial structure.”¹¹³ The engineers suggested using a five-foot cylinder plan to insure stability, to keep additional costs to a minimum, and to compensate for lost time.

Magonigle submitted this recommendation to the Board on November 1, 1923. Extra expenses for the new structural program amounted to nearly \$17,705. The combination of these expenses with costly delays made the Board uneasy. To many members, it was apparent that Magonigle had neglected to consider the actual site when projecting his estimates. The tension over finances between Magonigle and the Board further kindled the heated relationship, which would continue to be fueled by future disagreements and misunderstandings. Under the watchful eye of the local press, work at the Memorial site resumed on January 18, 1924.¹¹⁴ In April, the *Kansas City Star* wrote, “For months, nothing tangible ... [there were] months of soil tests, of excavating, of pouring massive concrete block fifty feet below the earth’s surface ... [finally a] huge wall 488 feet long arises above the Station ... reaching a stage where a layman’s eyes can measure its purpose.”¹¹⁵ Revered as the most exciting event ever to occur in the city, the Liberty Memorial construction gave Kansas Citizens a sense of personal achievement.¹¹⁶

Despite minor controversies, such as labor disputes, progress continued and newspaper reports reflected the continued civic interest and pride in the Liberty Memorial. The *Kansas City Journal Post* stated, “[It] will make [Kansas City] known all over the world ... [the] Heart of America will be famous for its perpetual beacon on a lofty column as ancient cities have been known in history for their beautiful monuments... a living memory to the thousands of travelers who pass through the Union Station.”¹¹⁷ The pace of construction gained momentum and by October 24, 1924, a mere 15 feet of the shaft remained to be completed. During a simple, but impressive ceremony on November 9, 1924, the cornerstone was laid. A crowd of 25,000 people gathered for the event that had been planned on a more local and national key rather than the international flair of the 1921 site dedication.¹¹⁸

As local newspapers continued to report the progress of the Memorial construction into the following year,

¹¹² Hool and Johnson, Engineers, “Report On Soil Conditions At The Liberty Memorial Site and Proposed Changes in Structural Footings To Meet These Conditions,” 12 September 1923; “Minutes,” 736.

¹¹³ Hool and Johnson, Engineers, to Mr. H. Van Buren Magonigle, 12 September 1923; “Minutes,” 737.

¹¹⁴ See “Reshaping Memorial Hill in Preparation for Liberty Memorial Legion and Museum Buildings,” *Kansas City Star*, 9 December 1923; *Kansas City Star*, 8 January 1924; and *Kansas City Times*, 9 January 1924.

¹¹⁵ *Kansas City Star*, 20 April 1924.

¹¹⁶ *Kansas City Journal Post*, 15 June 1924.

¹¹⁷ *Kansas City Journal Post*, 24 August 1924. Furthermore, the grand-scale of the construction fascinated the public, particularly the large amounts of stone required. The *Kansas City Star* of September 3, 1924, reported that 238 carloads held 4,000 tons of Indiana limestone, carefully selected by the architect himself.

¹¹⁸ The Liberty Memorial Association and J. E. McPherson, *Liberty Memorial*, 13.

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another controversy arose.¹¹⁹ The national president of War Mothers, the commander of the local post of disabled war veterans, and representatives from the Veterans of Foreign Wars approached the Board of the Liberty Memorial Association. Together, they contended that the name “Legion Building” was not a fair representation of all those who contributed to the war effort.¹²⁰ Their suggestions for a new name included “Veteran Building” and “Memorial Hall.”¹²¹ In response, the Board renamed the east building “Memory Hall” on February 24, 1925. However, the American Legion was not satisfied by this action, and would assert their disapproval by later declining the Liberty Memorial Association’s invitation to officially participate in the 1926 dedication ceremonies.¹²²

As the Board prepared to assess the final stages towards completing the Memorial, one big cloud of contention loomed overhead—money. The funds raised to finance the project were quickly being depleted, and with the landscaping, the approaches and steps, the proposed sculptural frieze, the painted murals and maps inside Memory Hall, and other ornamental details yet to be completed, the Board was forced to reconsider their plans. Unfortunately, what was deemed priority by the Board did not coincide with Magonigle’s ideas. At a Board meeting on May 8, 1925, J. C. Nichols reported that any additional work north of the wall should be left for later consideration, while the landscaping on the south should be finished immediately to accommodate for the proposed cultural institutions on that side.¹²³ He also recommended re-examining Magonigle’s plans for the lower walls and terraces and eliminating the circular driveway on the north side. The crucial question at hand was whether the steps and approaches or the frieze should be completed first. Magonigle was present at this meeting to argue his case for the frieze. He reminded the Board of the public criticisms that the Memorial, in its unfinished state, appeared like a fortress or a penitentiary, and thus, did not yet fulfill its purpose as a tribute to peace.¹²⁴ Magonigle asserted that the shaft required the frieze to unify the entire architectural vision into harmony. He presented the Board with the frieze design drawn by his wife Edith, whom he had already named as the sculptor for the frieze. Titled “Progress of Civilization Toward Peace,” Edith Magonigle’s drawing incorporated over 500 figures from all historic times and artistic styles, marching towards a female figure symbolizing the Spirit of America.

On July 13, 1925, the Board finally made some decisions to complete the Memorial. They announced their adoption of a modified plan for the grounds. The north end of Main Street was to be sliced off and the north approach in front of the Memorial would be restricted to pedestrians. These changes, made “in the interest of economy,” would eliminate “the additional stone walls and approaches” depicted in Magonigle’s original plan.¹²⁵

As summer turned to fall, progress continued to complete the Memorial. In late August 1925, the last of the

¹¹⁹ “Memorial Hall To Be Completed By End of Week,” *Kansas City Journal*, 18 February 1925; “The Pieces Go Together Like A Puzzle At Memorial’s Crest,” *Kansas City Star*, 30 June 1925; and *Kansas City Times*, 15 September 1925.

¹²⁰ A joint letter written by these three organizations, dated November 28, 1924, was sent to the Board. Their concerns were taken before the Board on December 1, 1924, and not until after the New Year, did the Board respond. Aber, “An Architectural History,” 67.

¹²¹ “Minutes,” 845.

¹²² Considering the important role-played by the American Legion in the first, 1921 site dedication, the loss of their support must have been disheartening. The Legion was not appeased until shortly after the 1926 dedication ceremony, in November, when the Board agreed to consider their grievances and make a change. While the name of the building was not to be altered, the American Legion preamble would be placed on the building and a dedication tablet would be installed near the Pershing Road Wall. “Minutes,” 1209-1210, 1228-1229.

¹²³ “Minutes,” 858.

¹²⁴ Criticism would continue throughout the Memorial project work. *Kansas City Star*, 4 November 1926 would report that the Memorial, as it stood unfinished, looked like “a silo” and “a salt-shaker.”

¹²⁵ *Kansas City Star*, 14 July 1925, and *Kansas City Journal*, 15 July 1925.

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large derricks used to hoist the stones up the shaft was removed.¹²⁶ In September, the two guardian sphinxes designed by Magonigle were mounted on the south side, under the supervision of John Donnelly, an architectural sculptor from New York.¹²⁷ On September 18, 1925, the bronze ring and steam mechanism for the “cloud by day and flame by night” was installed.¹²⁸

In October 1925, Jules Guerin of New York was selected to design and execute the mural painting for Memory Hall.¹²⁹ The Board approved his sketches on January 19, 1926, and on May 3, the artist completed the murals. Per Guerin’s design, the mural along the east wall, facing the entrance, measured 17’ x 36’. At the center of the composition was a figure representing peace and victory with a billowing American flag behind her. To the figure’s right, a soldier places a wreath upon a grave while a French peasant and his daughter stand nearby. To the left of the figure, a sailor comforts a grieving mother. Behind these central figures is a war-riddled cathedral and marching soldiers.

In January 1926, twenty-eight Hawthorn trees were planted on the Memorial grounds and dedicated by the Kansas City Hoo-Hoo Club, an organization of lumbermen.¹³⁰ In February, four ornamental bronze lanterns were hung in pairs in the porticoes of the Museum Building and Memory Hall.¹³¹

In May 1926, the Kansas City Art Commission proposed a civic art center to be built south of the Memorial. The *Kansas City Journal Post* printed a diagram of the proposal, which included an art museum and a music hall. The plan required the razing of nearby buildings, including the Bruce Dodson Building and the Sweeney Building.¹³² No actions were taken to develop this art center, however, and the buildings deemed expendable remained. On June 23, 1926, the Board decided not to consider the north wall frieze, but to move forward in completing the landscaping. On October 22, the Board approved the hiring of the respected Kansas City landscape architectural firm, Hare and Hare, to prepare a plan for the land immediately surrounding the Memorial. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., of the Massachusetts firm, Olmsted Brothers, was asked to review the plan, which would then be submitted to the Board of Governors and the Park Board for final approval.¹³³ In

¹²⁶ *Kansas City Times*, 16 August 1925.

¹²⁷ *Kansas City Times*, 15 September 1925. Each sphinx consisted of 49 stones, with a total mass of 8,000 cubic feet and a weight of 615 tons. They were placed 125’ apart.

¹²⁸ “A Fire Cloud Test October 8,” *The Kansas City Star*, 18 September 1925. It was reported that the steam cloud would not be turned on permanently until the dedication scheduled for 1926.

¹²⁹ Guerin was the artist of the Lincoln Memorial murals in Washington, DC, and had been unofficially nominated by a local paper, along with Adolphe Blondheim of the Kansas City Art Institute, and L. D. (Daniel) MacMorris, a former Kansas Citian presently in New York. *Kansas City Post*, 17 October 1925. Later, in 1955, MacMorris would be the artist to restore Guerin’s mural as well as paint additional ones. McShane, “Liberty Memorial,” 74-75.

¹³⁰ *Kansas City Star*, 28 January 1926.

¹³¹ *Kansas City Star*, 23 February 1926. This article printed an illustration of one lantern. “They were hung inside the square pillars before the doors, and will light up the recesses of the high-ceilinged doorways.”

¹³² “Art Commission Proposes a Civic Art Center Treatment on a Scale of Grandeur,” *Kansas City Journal Post*, 9 May 1926. See also *Kansas City Star*, 9 May 1926. Aber notes that “[a]t a special board meeting, 24 September 1928, elimination of the Sweeney Building was discussed. On 19 December 1928, the record of the meeting three months earlier was ‘expunged’ because of its ‘confidentiality.’ Many years later, the white classical Dodson Building was incorporated into the St. Mary’s Hospital complex and sheathed in red brick. The Sweeney Automotive School Building, later named the Business Men’s Assurance (BMA) Building, and later still, named the Pershing Building, also underwent restoration.” Aber, “An Architectural History,” 81, no. 93. On November 16, 1926, J. C. Nichols announced to the Board that the funds from the estate of Mrs. William Rockhill Nelson would not contribute to the construction of an art museum on the Memorial grounds and that plans were underway for an art museum funded by the Mary Atkins fund by the architects Wight and Wight. This concluded any further planning of a civic art center at this location. “Minutes,” 1226.

¹³³ Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (1870-1957), “was destined to become a landscape architect and a leader in guiding the growth and philosophy of the profession established by his father. Together their careers spanned 100 years. He was a founding member and later president of the American Society of Landscape Architects; he established the first formal training in landscape architecture at Harvard University in 1900; and his prolific writings and extensive service on various boards and commissions made him a highly visible

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spite of these efforts, landscaping plans were delayed for one year. Also in mid-October, the series of twenty-seven pictorial maps showing spheres of military action painted by D. Putnam Brinley were installed in Memory Hall.¹³⁴

Further decoration of the Memorial included four large urns placed in front of the doors to the Museum Building and Memory Hall. As the only contrast to the buff, gray, and cream tones of the Indiana limestone, these four rose-colored marble urns were originally proposed to be black, representative of death and sacrifice. The insignia of the Army, the Navy, and the Red Cross, adorn three of the urns and on the fourth are symbols of industry. The bronze doors adorning the entrance to the shaft and the Museum Building were designed by Magonigle and executed in a special alloy with a warm black and silver color. The Museum doors were decorated with the Missouri State flower, the Hawthorn, symbols of peace and justice, and with images related to the war. Inscriptions taken from Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and Psalms, were put above the doors.¹³⁵

With the exception of the north wall frieze, the buildings and monument were complete. Despite the unfinished Memorial grounds, the dedication ceremony for the Liberty Memorial was held on November 11, 1926. Keynote speaker President Calvin Coolidge addressed a crowd of nearly 150,000 in a ceremony much more national in character than the international flair of the 1921 dedication.¹³⁶ Other speakers included Howard P. Savage, National Commander of the American Legion, Dwight F. Davis, U.S. Secretary of War, and R. A. Long, Liberty Memorial Association President. At this point in time, eight years past the end of the war, five years after the 1921 site dedication, and two years following the 1924 cornerstone ceremony, the emotional appeal of the Liberty Memorial and its symbolism was still strong in the hearts and minds of all those present.¹³⁷ Interesting to note is that amidst all the praise bestowed upon Kansas City's Liberty Memorial, no credit was given to the architect.¹³⁸ Nonetheless, Magonigle had left his mark—by carving his name, as well as sculptor Robert Aitken's, next to the bronze doors of the shaft, about 7' above ground level.¹³⁹

Completion of the Liberty Memorial and Grounds, 1926-1938

figure.” See Shary Page Berg, “Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.,” *American Landscape Architecture* (Washington, DC: The Preservation Press, 1989), 60.

¹³⁴ For the historical and geographical accuracy in these maps, Brinley studied the resources at the Army War College in Washington, DC. Prior to their installation in Kansas City, Brinley's murals were exhibited at the Grand Central Art Galleries in New York. Upon seeing them at this venue, Major General C. P. Summerhall, Chief of Staff of the United States Army, expressed “high praise at the achievement both for the military accuracy and for artistic quality...” to the Liberty Memorial Association Board of Governors. Telegram from C. P. Summerhall to Board of Governors, September 15, 1926, quoted in McShane, “Liberty Memorial,” 72. See also *New York Times*, 19 September 1926; J. E. McPherson, *Apollo* 6 (September 1927), 104; and J. E. McPherson, *Executive's Magazine* 11 (June 1927), 39.

¹³⁵ A federal War Memorial Committee regulated inscriptions on war memorials. Their standards were reported in *New York Times*, 5 August 1919.

¹³⁶ The Liberty Memorial Association and McPherson, *Liberty Memorial*, 13.

¹³⁷ For press coverage, see *Kansas City Journal*, 7, 9, 11; 12 November 1926; *Kansas City Star*, 8, 11 November 1926; and *New York Herald Tribune*, 13 November 1926. See also *The Missouri Historical Review* 43 (January 1927): 259-60. Racial dissension regarding the lack of representation of all Kansas Citians in the day's celebration, were voiced by C. A. Franklin, editor of the *Kansas City Call*. *Kansas City Call*, 12 November 1926.

¹³⁸ For criticism of this apparent lack of respect, see Henry H. Saylor, “The Editor Presents. The Liberty Memorial at Kansas City,” *Architecture* 55 (January 1927): 31.

¹³⁹ Aber notes, “Apparently the propriety of the signatures in stone had been a matter of discussion. According to J. E. McPherson to R. A. Long, 12 July 1926, it was ‘ethical and proper... [just] as an artist signs his pictures.’ The authority on this subject is Kansas City architect, Henry F. Hoyt. Unfortunately, cleaning for its rededication in 1961 significantly abraded the Liberty Memorial's stone surfaces including those bearing the artists' signatures and the carved names are somewhat difficult to see.” Aber, “An Architectural History,” 88, n. 114.

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Following the November 11, 1926, dedication ceremony, the Board struggled to complete the Memorial and beautify the grounds. Two integral elements remained unfinished—the sculptural frieze on the north wall and the landscape beautification for the entire site. Likewise, two important factors contributed to the difficulty; namely, money and strained relations between the architect and the Board.

On November 26, 1926, R.A. Long retired from his position as President of the Liberty Memorial Association after eight years of dedicated service. The Board elected George S. Carkener to replace Long.¹⁴⁰ Also on this date, the Board officially rejected Edith Magonigle as sculptor for the frieze, a motion pending for the past several years after her nomination.¹⁴¹ The decision, in all probability, was not related to Mrs. Magonigle's competence nor her design, but rather a reflection upon the tense relations between her husband, the architect Magonigle, and the Board.¹⁴² From the beginning, the architect appeared to disregard finances and to overestimate his influence, or at least this was how the Board perceived his actions. That he continued to insist on his wife as the sculptor for the frieze had pushed the Board to their limits of toleration. Despite measures taken in December 1926, and during the following years, to terminate Magonigle's contract, the Board could not easily remove the thorn in their side. Not only was the contract legally binding, but the architect's pride and reputation drove him to stay on until the project was completed.¹⁴³ The Board had no choice other than to simply ignore the issue of the frieze, which remained incomplete until Magonigle's death in August 1935.

Meeting on February 10, 1927, the Board, in general terms, agreed to proceed in completing landscaping for the Memorial with plans, prepared by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and approved by the Park Board.¹⁴⁴

Olmsted worked on the landscaping plans in collaboration with Magonigle during the first months of 1927.¹⁴⁵ Following through on their decision from the year before, in November 1928 the city Park Board hired the prominent Kansas City landscape architectural firm of Hare and Hare to carry out the landscaping work.¹⁴⁶ However, landscaping progress, as well as the completion of the Memorial, proper, moved slowly.

The stock market crash of 1929 posed the next roadblock to completing the Memorial. The ensuing depression hit Kansas City no differently than the rest of the nation. The Board's strategy for completing the Memorial necessitated economy-based simplification and reduction, which drastically altered Magonigle's original conception.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁰ George Carkener, of the firm Goffe, Lucas and Carkener, was involved in the grain commission business.

¹⁴¹ In the original newspaper announcement of Magonigle's selection by the jury, the architect named his collaborators, which included his wife Edith as the sculptor. *Kansas City Times*, 29 June 1921. Also interesting to note is that on August 24, 1924, a newspaper article reported the two buildings would be "decorated with mural paintings to be the work of Mrs. Magonigle..." *Kansas City Journal-Post*, 24 August 1924.

¹⁴² In fact, many national voices spoke out in support of Edith during this time. See "East and West Meet in Peace Memorial," *New York Times Magazine*, 22 August 1926, 18-19; J. Monroe Hewlett, "A World War Memorial," *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* 14 (September 1926): 388-95; Arthur T. North, "The Passing Show: The Acropolis at Kansas City," *Western Architect* 35 (October 1926): 132-133; "Kansas City Memorializes," *Literary Digest*, 11 September 1926, 24-25; and Irving K. Pond, "An Essay in Collaboration," *American Architect*, 5 October, 1926, 285-87. See also Edith Magonigle, "East is East—and West is West," *World Review*, 25 October 1926, 81-82, 97.

¹⁴³ *Kansas City Star*, 22 December 1926, printed in full the correspondence between the Board and Magonigle regarding the Board's rejection of Edith. See also "Memorandum as to the Developments of the Liberty Memorial," undated manuscript in the Liberty Memorial Archives.

¹⁴⁴ R. A. Long offered on this date to collaborate with others in contributing one twelfth of the expense for the Memorial frieze, should extra funds be required.

¹⁴⁵ Harold Van Buren Magonigle to Liberty Memorial Association President George S. Carkener, 11 March 1927.

¹⁴⁶ The problem of traffic movement was tackled along with the landscape beautification work in July 1930. *Kansas City Star*, 13 July 1930.

¹⁴⁷ Aber, "An Architectural History," 104.

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The area most affected was the eight-and-one-half acres that comprised Station Park. This land was under the jurisdiction of the Park Board and therefore, the city was financially responsible for the work at that site.¹⁴⁸ However, the Depression had left the Park Board with inadequate funds to grade the grounds surrounding the Memorial, forcing the Board to request a favor from Kansas City Democratic political boss, Tom J. Pendergast.¹⁴⁹ His influence helped secure bond money from the Ten-Year Plan, a \$40 million public works project, for the completion of the Liberty Memorial.¹⁵⁰ On January 22, 1931, the Park Board approved plans for the Memorial's north approaches and in April 1931, Kansas City citizens passed a bond issue designed to help finance both the Memorial and the Nelson Gallery of Art.¹⁵¹

Work on the major landscaping program moved forward on June 21, 1932. Olmsted, assisted by his New York associate, Percival Gallagher, oversaw the completion of the landscape planning, while the Board selected S. Herbert Hare, landscape consultant to the Board, William D. Wight, the consulting architect, David E. Long, Park Board President, W. H. Dunn, Superintendent of Parks, and J. V. Lewis, field engineer, to complete the north approach. Olmsted's plans included placing a series of "benches, utilizing natural rock ledges as bases" along the Main Street wall.¹⁵² Plans for the north lawn included a plaza with a ten-foot high, ninety-foot long Dedication Wall, placed 150' from the street separating the Memorial grounds and the Union Station. E. M. Prellwitz, of Olmsted Brothers, was responsible for the design. During the years leading up to November 1935, five bronze portrait medallions of the Allied leaders would be added to this wall.¹⁵³ From the wall, steps would lead up to the Memorial over a series of terraces in the lawn. Maple trees were to be planted to add shade and color.¹⁵⁴ The plans also included the construction of fountains near the steps, just below the north wall.¹⁵⁵

Work on the north side of the Liberty Memorial began on April 11, 1933. Wight had estimated the cost of his plans at \$200,000, not including the architect's fees. The Board requested that modifications be made to lower this amount and further authorized Wight to consult with sculptors in New York.¹⁵⁶ On November 29 of the previous year, W. D. Wight presented sketches to the Board that included the proposed frieze on the north wall. Wight also reported four estimates to the Board on April 18, 1933. The estimates were submitted by four sculptors, whom Wight had met with in New York and they included: Leo Friedlander, \$37,000, Charles Keck, \$52,000, Albert T. Stewart, \$34,000, and Edmond Amateis, \$23,000. With the lowest bid and the most

¹⁴⁸ The Liberty Memorial Association and McPherson, *Liberty Memorial*, 20.

¹⁴⁹ *Kansas City Times*, 23 January 1931. Machine Boss Tom Pendergast, saloonkeeper, deputy constable, City Councilman, and owner of the "ubiquitous Ready-Mix-Concrete Company," was indicted by the Federal Grand Jury for back taxes in 1939.

¹⁵⁰ In 1931, The Ten-Year Plan was a \$40 million public works project for Kansas City, including a new City Hall, the Municipal Auditorium, parks, playgrounds, and boulevards.

¹⁵¹ *Kansas City Times*, 29 May 1931, and McShane, "Liberty Memorial," 90.

¹⁵² *Kansas City Times*, 1 July 1932. A photograph of the "[b]eautifying the Main Street side of Liberty Memorial Hill" appeared in *Kansas City Times*, 20 August 1932, showing the "jagged mass of rocks ... being graded into a series of benches supported by natural rock ledges." Olmsted sent a plaster model of the park-like setting he designed for the north approach to the Board. In its present condition, the hill was bleak with an awkward slope. *Kansas City Star*, 9 November 1932.

¹⁵³ "Minutes," 1393. The *Kansas City Times*, 24 March 1933, reported that Wight and Olmsted had originally opposed the portraits because they felt the Memorial should remain "one to all soldiers," not just to military leaders. Walker Hancock of Gloucester, Massachusetts, created the medallions. Two large bronze buffaloes were also proposed, but never implemented. Records in the Liberty Memorial Archives indicate that William D. Wight did come to appreciate Hancock's work. Noted in Aber, "An Architectural History," 108.

¹⁵⁴ *Kansas City Times*, 24 March 1932.

¹⁵⁵ For a detailed description of these fountains, see Sherry Piland and Ellen J. Uguccioni, *Fountains of Kansas City* (Kansas City: City of Fountains Foundation, 1985): 132-134 and plate 6.

¹⁵⁶ "Minutes," 1359. Wight's modified plans, reduced in cost to \$180,000 were approved and implemented by the Board on March 29, 1933. "Minutes," 1362. The plans for the Memorial completion were illustrated in *The Kansas City Star*, 4 December 1932.

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recommendations in his favor, Amateis was selected by the Board to execute the frieze sculpture.¹⁵⁷

Wight had significantly modified Magonigle's original plan for the frieze. He changed the dimensions from 13' x 400' to 19' x 145'. Furthermore, he moved the frieze to a lower position on the wall, which required the replacement of the six-inch limestone veneer with stone 10" thick.¹⁵⁸ Rather than a continuous procession of many figures, Wight's general composition had a central figure.¹⁵⁹ The Board approved Wight and Wight's completed plans for the north terrace walls, platforms, approaches, fountains, frieze, and steps, and Amateis' initial drawing for the frieze on June 8 and 19, 1933, respectively.¹⁶⁰

Amateis composed his drawing around a theme that contrasted war and peace; the "Curse of War" was depicted on the east side and the "Blessings of Peace" on the west. He continued Magonigle's symbolic use of imagery, including the east-west orientation of the sphinxes and the wings of the Guardian Angels. Amateis' plan was to make the contrast between war and peace through artistic measures. Rigid, straight lines to suggest the uncivilized nature of conflict would represent war at the east side. The west side depicting peace would be carved with bold and deep lines to emphasize strength and unity.¹⁶¹ During the next two months, various recommendations and modifications were made to the design and on August 10, 1933, Amateis' design was approved.¹⁶² Work on the frieze began in January of the following year.¹⁶³ In July 1933, Wight and Wight made plans for the lighting of the Memorial terraces, frieze wall, and fountains.¹⁶⁴

Also in June 1933, the Olmsted office sent the Board of Park Commissioners a general planting plan for the Liberty Memorial Grounds and an accompanying plant list, as well as suggestions for soil preparation. An attached letter to the Board outlined the landscaping scheme for the south and north side of the Memorial. S. Herbert Hare commented on the plant list and planting plan in advance of the final approval by the LMA.

The plan for the south portion "embodies Mr. Olmsted's conception of treating the summit of the hill south of the monument as a more or less compact wood with the south axial approach to the Memorial apparently cut through it. To simulate a natural woodland we have used an assortment of trees, with oaks predominating."¹⁶⁵ The letter also suggested that the plantings for the north lawn occupy the outer edges of the area and more or less covering the slopes between the principal paths and bounding streets...with the strongest massing of trees including poplars, along Kessler Drive to screen the buildings to the west and northwest."¹⁶⁶ With the exception

¹⁵⁷ See *Kansas City Star*, 9 May 1933. Edmund Romulus Amateis worked in the tradition of sculptor Paul Manship. See Jacques Schnier, *Sculpture in Modern America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1948).

¹⁵⁸ Magonigle had placed his design at a higher position with a panel of eight inch stone. Aber, "An Architectural History," 112, and *Kansas City Star*, 9 May 1933.

¹⁵⁹ "The Proposed Plan For Completing the North," *Kansas City Times*, 24 March 1933.

¹⁶⁰ Amateis' drawing was praised by W. D. Wight as well as Paul D. Gardner, Director of the Nelson Gallery of Art and Wallace Rosenbauer, of the Kansas City Art Institute faculty. Aber, "An Architectural History," 113.

¹⁶¹ See McShane, "Liberty Memorial," 77-78, for a detailed description of Amateis' frieze.

¹⁶² Changes suggested by war organizations included "the elimination of the money changers, the ravished women, and the jackal," which were replaced by soldiers and an eagle. "Minutes," 1372. A request was also made that the weapon of the war—the machine gun—should also be included on the frieze, however this suggestion was not incorporated into the finished composition.

¹⁶³ *Kansas City Times*, 10 and 16 January 1934, reported on the Italian artisans who "pointed" their way across the north wall, under the protection from winter weather by a rolling shed. See Aber, 115, for her critical comparison between the Amateis' frieze and the original frieze design by Magonigle.

¹⁶⁴ Wight and Wight to Olmsted Brothers, Landscape Architects, 21 and 27 July 1933. On the buttresses of the great steps White and White located a series of flush light receptacles with louvers, close to the line of the treads. The frieze itself was to be lit by flood-lights installed behind the hedge.

¹⁶⁵ Letter to the Board of Park Commissioners, Kansas City, Missouri from the office of the Olmsted Brothers dated 15 June 1933, 1.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 2.

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of tree plantings, it appears that the majority of Olmsted's planting scheme, as called for in his extensive landscaping plan, was never implemented.

At a meeting of the Board on March 15, 1934, two pressing issues were addressed. The Board's final settlement with Magonigle was discussed first.¹⁶⁷ The second order of business was the preparation of a memorial service for R. A. Long, who had died on that day. The service was held May 13, 1934, in Memory Hall. More than 250 people braved the rain and unfinished walkways up to the Memorial to pay tribute to R.A. Long, "builder, philanthropist, and inspirer of the Liberty Memorial."¹⁶⁸ At the end of the summer, Harold Van Buren Magonigle, the architect of the Memorial, also died.¹⁶⁹

After the passing of these two important men in the creation and development of the Liberty Memorial, came the dedication of the north wall frieze—the element that had plagued them both for nearly fifteen years. The ceremony was held on the eve of Armistice Day, November 10, 1935. For Kansas Citians and the Liberty Memorial Association, the completion of the frieze indicated the completion of the Memorial. However, the celebration demonstrated none of the jubilation and fanfare of the prior dedications. With the country just coming out of a devastating economic depression and the world on the verge of another war, only the hope for peace carried the ceremony. General Malin Craig, Chief of Staff of the United States Army, delivered the dedicatory address on the north terrace, in front of the Memorial. The climax of the ceremony occurred after the sun had set, when the floodlights on the Memorial buildings flashed on, lighting up a completed Liberty Memorial.¹⁷⁰ The following day, during the Armistice Day parade, the Wall of Dedication was presented to the public. Marchers then made their way up to the shaft for the traditional Armistice Day services.¹⁷¹

On November 19, 1935, the Board of Trustees of the Liberty Memorial Association met for their fifteenth annual meeting. It was customary at this annual meeting to pay tribute to Association members who had died during the past year, and as if to bring the Memorial project full circle, the Board presented their last honor in memory of Harold Van Buren Magonigle, the architect whose meaningful and original conception gave an imposing monument to Kansas City and the nation.¹⁷²

Since its completion in 1938, Liberty Memorial has served Kansas City and the nation as the country's single largest memorial dedicated to the memory of those who fought in World War I.

Post-1938

It appears that between the completion of the Liberty Memorial in 1938 and 1941, no significant changes occurred. In 1942, the Heart of America Navy Mothers Club initiated the first of several subsequent tree and plaque dedications, in honor of those who lost their lives in service, along the South Mall. In 1948 the 89th Division Memorial was dedicated at the south entrance. During the 1950s and in 1970, several additional murals by Kansas City artist Daniel MacMorris were hung in Memory Hall.

¹⁶⁷ "Minutes," 1410.

¹⁶⁸ Quoted from Aber, "An Architectural History," 116. *Kansas City Times*, 14 May 1934.

¹⁶⁹ Magonigle's death on August 29, 1935, was noted in *Pencil Points* 16 (September 1935): 485. A tribute to the architect appeared in the October issue. Francis P. Sullivan, "A Conscientious Artist," *Pencil Points* 16 (October 1935): 521-522.

¹⁷⁰ *Kansas City Times*, 6 and 8 November 1935.

¹⁷¹ *Kansas City Times*, 8 November 1935.

¹⁷² "Minutes," 1439-1440.

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Conclusion

Originally intended to be a large-scale, lasting monument to commemorate the sacrifices of those who fought and died in World War I, Liberty Memorial today stands as a reminder of those who have served our country in battle since the Great War of 1914-1918. United by means of a grand axial design terminating in the monumental trio of buildings and enormous shaft, Liberty Memorial is the sacred civic shrine in Kansas City. The fulfillment of the plan, which embedded a profound and lasting dignity to Memorial Hill, demonstrated the prowess of city leaders and the public alike. Liberty Memorial architect H. Van Buren Magonigle, in collaboration with artists, local architects, and landscape designers, together created a powerful civic monument for Kansas City and the nation. George Ehrlich, Architectural Historian and professor emeritus of the University of Missouri-Kansas City best expressed a summary of the importance of Liberty Memorial:

Characteristic of this vision was the drive to fund a gigantic monument to the dead of World War I. While symbolically a clear link to the past, Liberty Memorial was also evidence of progress appropriate to the new image of the city. The public became thoroughly involved in the discussion over what would be a suitable memorial, and it was not surprising that a grand monument, such as could be found in major cities, rather than a utilitarian memorial, was chosen. The selection of the site on the crest of the hill south of the Union Station was also in keeping with the spirit if not the scope of earlier plans for a civic center at that location. Fund raising involved all segments of the population, and the design was selected through a national competition. The original expectations held for both the memorial and the site were not fully realized, and what eventuated required some years' time. But when the design of H. Van Buren Magonigle was dedicated in 1926, there was no doubt that here was a fitting companion to Jarvis Hunt's Union Station. Both were suitable civic images for the city a building. Both are also structures in the best tradition of early twentieth century, Beaux-Arts monumentalism.¹⁷³

With one exception, it appears that the Liberty Memorial is the most elaborate and complex World War I memorial in the nation. War tributes are typically single pieces of sculpture with examples of the ubiquitous Doughboy throughout the nation.¹⁷⁴ Other monuments dedicated to World War I include the Doric column and plaza in Providence, Rhode Island designed by Paul P. Cret (the second place winner in the Liberty Memorial competition) and sculpted by Carl P. Jennewein. Reflecting the late 1920s popularity of Greek Revivalism, Cret's monument was completed in 1929.¹⁷⁵ The Rosedale World War I Memorial Arch, designed by John L. Marshall and constructed in 1923-1924, is a scaled-down version of the Arc de Triomphe. Listed in the National Register in 1977, the Rosedale Arch is sited in Rosedale, Kansas.

Perhaps the only World War I monument that is as distinguished in scope and design as the Liberty Memorial is the 1920s Indiana World War Memorial Plaza Historic District (NHL, 1994). Like Liberty Memorial, the Indiana site, located on a north-south axis, combines monumental architecture with heroic statuary. Of exceptional architectural and planning significance, this National Historic Landmark is also the location of the

¹⁷³ George Ehrlich, *Kansas City, Missouri: An Architectural History, 1826-1976* (Kansas City: Historic Kansas City Foundation), 82.

¹⁷⁴ Examples of World War I sculpture include: WWI and Confederate Soldier Monument, Memphis, Texas (1924); World War I relief, Union City, New Jersey (n.d.); "Hooded Woman," Albany, New York (1923). There is also a WWI memorial statue located in Phoenix at the Phoenix Indian School.

¹⁷⁵ The WWI monument in Providence is a contributing resource within the Downtown Providence Historic District. See also HABS No. RI-387.

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national headquarters of the American Legion and its auxiliary and affiliated organizations.¹⁷⁶

Although the Indiana World War Memorial Plaza is a “nationally distinguished commemorative tribute to the State’s heroes who have fought and suffered or died in war,” and the national headquarters of the American Legion, its concept incorporated existing buildings and a plaza to make the whole.¹⁷⁷ Rather than a place of contemplation, it remains a mix of utilitarian buildings merged together from various phases of architectural and landscape design. Two Neoclassical buildings by other architects, the Public Library and the Federal Building, guided the overall design of the plaza. Furthermore, University Park sited between the War Memorial and the Federal Building was subsequently worked into the plan. The result of this is a pieced together civic monument that lacks the same power, distinction, and impact so conspicuously demonstrated at Liberty Memorial. The Liberty Memorial, as Dr. Ehrlich points out, is a civic monument of “grand proportions.” It is an interesting combination of elements, tied together by a unified aesthetic that reflects the great debate of how World War I was and will be remembered by future generations. It is a working, sacred civic center that allows one to contemplate the meaning of war, not unlike Maya Lin’s Vietnam Memorial, in Washington, DC, and at the same time a gathering place to congregate and interpret the war by experiencing, first hand, authentic and irreplaceable relics of that period in our military history.

In contrast to the Vietnam Memorial, Liberty Memorial “emphasizes not the connection between the living and the dead but the distance between them—between the ordinary human beings who visit the memorial, who cannot help but be awed by it and the superhuman heroes whom it commemorates. Through its larger-than-life dimensions, the memorial lifts the war dead beyond the realm of ordinary experience, its acres of funereal concrete and bronze creating the impression of an enormous sepulcher, a crypt for titans.”¹⁷⁸

With regard to the creation of a museum at the Liberty Memorial, it is important to note that the Liberty Memorial Association resolved to establish a future “war museum” at the Sixth Joint meeting of the Committee of One Hundred Fifty held on February 13, 1919.¹⁷⁹ Over the course of six years, prior to the completion of the memorial, several important artifacts were donated to the Liberty Memorial Association (LMA), including: uniforms, posters, ancient relics from France, an ordnance exhibit, trophies, guns, captured German materials, and American War Department medals. Subsequently, donations of important World War I artifacts continued. Correspondence between members of the LMA clearly indicates that it was always the intent to create a museum at the Liberty Memorial and that, in 1926, the Trophies Committee was given the duty of “establishing the War Museum, for the use of which the west hall of the Liberty Memorial was designated.”¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶ Suzanne T. Rollins, Katherine Martin, Lawrence Downey, and Bruce E. Goetzman, “The Indiana World War Memorial Plaza Historic District,” National Historic Landmark Nomination (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1994), 19.

¹⁷⁷ “Indiana World War Memorial Plaza Historic District,” National Historic Landmark Nomination (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1988), 19 and 21.

¹⁷⁸ Steven Trout, *Memorial Fictions: Willa Cather and the First World War* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press), 20-21.

¹⁷⁹ “Minutes,” 72.

¹⁸⁰ “Minutes,” 1222. The minutes from this meeting also state “now that the existence and nature of the Museum have become known, we are receiving many offers of contributions; and if it continues to grow, as we hope it will, it will be necessary in the not [too] distant future to supply more cases, for which there is ample floor space in the hall.”

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A voluminous record of newspaper clippings was compiled by Liberty Memorial Association Secretary J. E. McPherson, for the Press Clipping Books. The books are housed in the Liberty Memorial Museum Library and Archives, Kansas City, Missouri. Additional newspaper clippings are also housed in the Mounted Clipping File, Missouri Valley Room Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri. Many of the clippings held in both repositories do not include full citations, including title, date, and page number.

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The morning *Kansas City Journal* and the evening *Kansas City Post* published the *Kansas City Journal Post* on Sunday. The *Kansas City Journal* and the *Kansas City Post* consolidated into the evening *Kansas City Journal Post* in 1929. The publication then became the *Kansas City Journal* after 1939 and ended all publication in 1942. *The Kansas City Times* was published by the Kansas City Star Company.

“A Fire Cloud Test October 8.” *The Kansas City Star*, September 18, 1925.

“A Higher Memorial Shaft.” *The Kansas City Star*, April 4, 1922.

“A Plan For Humanizing Kansas City’s Great Liberty Memorial With A Carefully Developed Approach On Its Now Bleak North Side Is Ready For Final Study And Approval.” *The Kansas City Star*, December 4, 1932.

“Art Jury In Session To Choose Liberty Memorial Architect.” *Kansas City Post*, June 24, 1921.

“Memorial Plan is Ready.” *The Kansas City Times*, March 24, 1933.

“The Memorial Satisfies: R. A. Long Is Not Disturbed By Criticisms of Structure.” *The Kansas City Star*, November 4, 1926.

“Offer Memorial Changes: The Art Commission Submits Bold Suggestions For Consideration.” *The Kansas City Star*, May 9, 1926.

“Plans Approved by the Park Board for the Liberty Memorial and Union Station Approaches and Kessler Road.” *The Kansas City Times*, January 23, 1931.

“Progress in Beautification of Liberty Memorial Grounds.” *The Kansas City Times*, January 26, 1934.

“Shaft’s Last Big Stone Up.” *The Kansas City Times*, September 16, 1925.

“Simplified Traffic Channels And Beauty of Setting Will Be Sought In A Proposed Alteration Of The Union Station Plaza When The Street Car Lines Are Removed.” *The Kansas City Star*, July 13, 1930.

“Study New Memorial Landscape Plan.” *The Kansas City Star*, November 9, 1932.

“We Dedicate This Liberty Memorial To The People For All Time.” *The Kansas City Star Magazine*, November 9, 1924.

“Where Kessler Road is Beginning to Form.” *The Kansas City Star*, February 25, 1934.

Programs and Pamphlets

The Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners. *Historic and Dedicatory Monuments of Kansas City*. Kansas City: The Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners, 1987.

The Liberty Memorial Association and J. E. McPherson. “The Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri.” Kansas City: The Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners, 1929.

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_____. "Program: Competition for the Selection of an Architect to Design and Supervise the Construction of A Memorial at Kansas City, Missouri." Adopted December 8, 1920; Approved, December 27, 1920. LMA.

Liberty Memorial Competition Pictures Submitted to the Liberty Memorial Association's Committee of 100, 1921. LMA.

Municipal Art Society of New York. *Bulletin of the Municipal Art Society of New York*. 1919.

"Program of the Laying of the Corner Stone of the Liberty Memorial." November 9, 1924.

Rededication Committee of the Liberty Memorial. *The Liberty Memorial Rededication*. Kansas City: Glenn Printing Company. 1961.

Third National Convention American Legion Official Program. October 31, November 1 & 2, 1921.

United States Mortality Statistics, 1920. Washington, D.C. 1922.

Specifications and Unpublished Documents

Aber, Sarajane Sandusky. "An Architectural History of the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri, 1918-1935." Master's Thesis, University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1988.

Evergreene Painting Studios, Inc. "Liberty Memorial Study, Liberty Memorial, Kansas City." November 1999.

Grossman, Elizabeth G. "Paul P. Cret 1876-1945: Rationalism and Imagery in American Architecture." Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 1980.

Hool and Johnson, Engineers. "Report on Soil Conditions at the Liberty Memorial Site and Proposed Changes in Structural Footings To Meet These Changes." September 12, 1923.

Liberty Memorial Competition Drawings and Accompanying Text Submitted to The Liberty Memorial Association's Committee of One Hundred. [1921].

Long, R. A. "Kansas City's Liberty Memorial." [1921].

McShane, C. Kevin. "A History of the Liberty Memorial." Master's Thesis, University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1969.

Magonigle, H. Van Buren. "Specifications: The Liberty Memorial, Kansas City, Missouri." February 24, 1923.

_____. "The Liberty Memorial of Kansas City, Missouri. October 17, 1922, as revised November 8, 1922.

_____. "The Liberty Memorial of Kansas City, Missouri." December 2, 1922.

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Report of the Jury, Liberty Memorial Competition, Kansas City, Missouri to the Trustees of the Liberty Memorial Association.

Wight and Wight, Architects. Specifications for the North Terrace Walls, Platforms, Approaches and Embellishments, Liberty Memorial for the Liberty Memorial Association, Kansas City, Missouri. n.d.

Wolfenbarger, Deon K. "Historic Resources Survey of the 1893 Parks and Boulevard System, Kansas City, Missouri." 1988-89.

Letters

Magonigle, H. Van Buren. Letter to George S. Carkener. March 11, 1927.

Olmsted, Frederick Law. Letter to J. C. Nichols, April 6, 1927.

Wight and Wight. Letter to The Permanent Memorial Committee of the American Legion. March 9, 1928.

Photographs

Tyner, F. L. Construction Photographs of the Liberty Memorial for Westlake Construction Company. July, 1923 through August 26, 1924. Western Historic Manuscripts Collection, Kansas City, Missouri.

Liberty Memorial. Missouri Valley Room, Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library. Series of historic photographs.

Plans

Olmsted Brothers, Brookline, Massachusetts. Penn Valley Park, Kansas City, MO, Plan No. 74 and General Planting List to Accompany Plan No. 74, File No. 1256. Western Historic Manuscripts Collection, Kansas City, Missouri.

REPOSITORIES

The following is a comprehensive list of the many collections of manuscripts, drawings, and photographs related to the Liberty Memorial.

Avery Library, Columbia University, 116th Broadway, New York, New York.

This repository houses the H. Van Buren Magonigle Papers including a complete set of drawings for Liberty Memorial. Magonigle's original competition drawings for the Liberty Memorial are also on file. The collection was a gift of Edith Magonigle in 1939.

The Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. Papers, and the Olmsted Associates Records, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

This important comprehensive collection includes correspondence papers (1933-1935), telegrams, newspaper

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clippings (1932-1933), contracts, and cost estimates pertaining to Olmsted Brothers' landscaping plan for Kansas City's Liberty Memorial and Penn Valley Park (Job No. 1256, Folder No. 2). The majority of the contents of these two files are listed below; actual plans and drawings are located at the Olmsted National Historic Site, Brookline, Massachusetts. Job No. 1256

Letter to J. C. Nichols from Olmsted Brothers. Re: the frieze and steps at north; plan 1256-82A, 82B, 82C, 83.77A, 78 and 81. January 5, 1933.

Letter to Olmsted Brothers from Wight and Wight. Re: steps to frieze at north; receipt of drawing No. 1256-77, 78 and 79. January 12, 1933.

Letter to Olmsted Brothers from Wight and Wight. Re: north terrace scheme. February 20, 1933.

Letter to Olmsted Brothers from J. C. Nichols. Re: support of Wight and Wight. February 22, 1933.

Report of the Conference with Wight, Whiting, Gallagher re: plans for north frieze, panel, fountains, planting and station plaza design. March 3, 1933.

Letter to J. C. Nichols from Olmsted Brothers. Re: north side east and west walls. March 7, 1933.

Letter to Wight and Wight from Olmsted Brothers. Re: grading plan No. 1256-88 (finished grades for terraces). March 8, 1933; correction noted March 9, 1933.

Letter to Wight and Wight from Olmsted Brothers. Re: grading plan No. 1256-88, 1256-89. March 10, 1933.

Letter to Wight and Wight from Olmsted Brothers. Re: No. 1256-88; riser height for steps. March 13, 1933.

Letter to Wight and Wight from Olmsted Brothers re: Plan No. 1256-92; incorporation of the planting panel in the paved terrace and walks leading from the frieze court to each end of the memorial, met with approval. March 20, 1933.

Letter to Wight and Wight from Olmsted Brothers. Re: Plan No. 1256-88; general arrangement of walks, grades, etc., at north. March 27, 1933.

Letter to P. Gallagher from S. Herbert Hare. Re: criticism of proposed plants. April 1, 1933.

Letter to S. Herbert Hare from Olmsted Brothers. Re: plant list; waiting for plans for architectural work from Wight and Wight. April 4, 1933.

Letter to Olmsted Brothers from S. Herbert Hare. Re: Plan No. 1256-74; plant list and planting plan. April 20, 1933.

Letter to J. V. Lewis from Olmsted Brothers. Re: Plan No. 1256-19; grading for Main Street Ledge. April 26, 1933.

Letter to Wight and Wight from Olmsted Brothers. Re: completion of general planting plan No. 74 and plant list. June 14, 1933. Copy to J. V. Lewis and W. H. Dunn, June 15, 1933. The letter explains the concept of the summit of the hill south of the monument as a compact wood with the south axial approach to the Memorial cut through it, simulating a natural woodland.

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Letter to Olmsted Brothers from Wight and Wight. Re: lighting the architecture of the new terrace. July 21, 1933.

Telegram to Olmsted Brothers from J. V. Lewis stating work had started on entire Liberty Memorial Plan under the Civil Works Administration. December 2, 1933.

Letter to Olmsted Brothers from Wight and Wight. Re: planting of maple trees per No. 105 dated October 26, 1933. December 2, 1933.

**Kansas City Parks and Recreation Department Archives,
Swope Park Interpretive Center, 6601 Swope Parkway, Kansas City, Missouri**

The archives contains a series of photographs illustrating grading, landscaping, road building and the construction of various elements of the east and north side of the memorial. In addition, there are several plans and drawings housed at this location.

Photographs:

Building wall at Main Street side; terracing, wall construction on Memorial Hill, July through September, 1932.

Continuation of wall construction, south on Main Street side, June, 1934.

The construction of Kessler Road, 1934-1935.

Reconstruction of Pershing Road, c. 1934.

Earthwork on north side of Memorial, 1933-1935.

Construction of Fountain, c. 1935.

Construction of the east entrance to Penn Valley Park, 1933-1935.

Liberty Memorial Mall, 1933-1935.

Looking east from 27th and Central streets, 1933-1935.

Plans and Drawings

Plan for Surroundings, 12/16/22, Kessler	11.172
Study for approaches at Memorial Hill, 11/15/23, Magonigle	11.184
Study for approaches to the Art Museum, 1/10/24, Magonigle.	11.185
Improvement of Station Plaza; May, 1924, W. H. Dunn and S. Herbert Hare.	11.197

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Nine-foot terrace north side; May, 1925, Magonigle.	11.198
General Study for Memorial Art Grounds; May, 1925, Magonigle.	11.199
Steps and Terraces (detail), 6/8/25, Magonigle.	11.202
Study for North Approach. 3/17/27; W. H. Dunn and F. Gabelman	11.213
Revised Plan for Station Plaza and Approach, 12/23/30; Hare and Hare and W. H. Dunn.	11.244
Steps and fountains on north side; 3/11/33. Wight and Wight.	11.259
North terrace walls, platforms, approaches and embellishments. 6/8/33, Wight and Wight.	11.265
Dedication wall and approaches, 12/12/33, Olmsted Bros.	11.267
Liberty Memorial grounds, Pershing Road to 28th Street, 5/4/37, WIA.	11.282
Plan for location of Memorial Trees at south end of Mall, 8/28/42; Hare and Hare.	11.329
Liberty Memorial and Mall, 10/18/62, D. Rudolf	11.523

Liberty Memorial Archives, Kansas City, Missouri
100 W. 26th Street, Kansas City, Missouri

This repository contains the Liberty Memorial Association Minutes and Records, Mounted Press Clippings, 1918-1938, covering Liberty Memorial events, the Robert Alexander Long Papers, the George S. Carkener Papers and the Jerome E. McPherson Papers. There is also an extensive collection of Liberty Memorial related materials including competition drawings and accompanying texts, specifications, photographs and miscellaneous plans and drawings on microfilm.

Plans and Drawings on Microfilm:

1. Storage room in basement. Drawing No. 008; Work #164. n.d. HVB Magonigle.
2. "Laying to the Cornerstone," October 28, 1924; HVB Magonigle.
3. Two light standards for Memorial Court. Sketch No. 009, February 1, 1927; HVB Magonigle.
4. Proposed Terraces and Approaches for preliminary estimate only. December 13, 1924; HVB Magonigle.
5. Letters regarding grading from E. H. Bradbury to W. H. Dunn, November 24, 1924; W. H. Dunn to J. C. Nichols, December 2, 1924; Spitcaufsky Bros. to W. H. Dunn, n.d; W. H. Dunn to J. C. Nichols, August

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30, 1924.

6. Assembly of Rings and Pins on Shaft Door, n.d.
7. Bronze Architrave and Entrance Door, Memory Hall. Drawing No. 0012, 1927; HVB Magonigle.
8. Shrinkage Scale, details of ornamental bronze vestibule in west entrance of Memory Hall. Drawing 225, July 19, 1927; HVB Magonigle.
9. Half-Full Size and Shrinkage Scale, details of ornamental bronze vestibule in west entrance of Memory Hall with alphabets for lunette. Drawing No. 224, July 7, 1927; HVB Magonigle.
10. Details of Light Standard. Elevation of base. Drawing No. 227, March 28, 1928.

Missouri Historical Society

The George Kessler Collection contains references to H. Van Buren Magonigle and Liberty Memorial.

TLS J. C. Nichols to George Kessler. Re: Magonigle's plan, November 12, 1921.

Carbon of TLS George Kessler to J. C. Nichols. Re: topography, December 22, 1921.

Carbon of TLS George Kessler to J. C. Nichols. Re: site plans, January 17, 1922

Carbon of TL George Kessler to J. C. Nichols. Re: conferences, March 27, 1922

Carbon of TL George Kessler to J. C. Nichols. Re: criticism/observations of Magonigle's plans and the land north and south of Liberty Memorial, May 26, 1922.

Carbon of TL George Kessler to R. A. Long. Re: Magonigle's drawing No. 0.001, Work No. 164, location of the center of the shaft and wall on Main Street, June 23, 1922; July 21, 1922.

Memorandum of meeting attended by Magonigle, Kessler and Hughes Bryant to analyze the proposals submitted by Magonigle to the Board of Governors, November 14, 1922; November 15, 1922.

Copy of estimate to grade the Memorial site, n.d.

Carbon of TL George Kessler to J. C. Nichols. Re: detail of general plan, February 15, 1923.

Carbon of TL Kessler to R. A. Long. Re: Magonigle's revised plans; January 31, 1923.

Drawing showing location of Memorial, July 21, 1922.

Olmsted National Historic Site, 99 Warren Street, Brookline Massachusetts.

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Included in this extensive collection of the archives of the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site are the plans, drawings and related materials of Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. and the Olmsted Brothers. Materials relating to the Liberty Memorial/Penn Valley Park contain 210 plans dating from 1923-1934, two folders of plant lists dating from 1932-1933 and a collection of 74 photographs. "The archival collection represents a rare continuity of work by a single professional office and reflects the history of the development of landscape architecture and environmental design in the United States." This collection of materials is best used in tandem with the surviving correspondence records of the Olmsted firm that are housed at the Library of Congress. The list below highlights some of the more crucial materials pertaining to the Liberty Memorial:

- 1256-5 Penn Valley Park; Elevation of Main Street Cut Showing Rock Strata. June, 1932. Percival Gallagher.
- 1256-11 Plan of Union Station Plaza and Approach to Liberty Memorial, Kansas City, Missouri. Jan 20, 1931. Hare and Hare
- 1256-13, 15 Proposed North Approach to the Liberty Memorial. June 6, 1932. Wight and Wight.
- 1256-16 Study for approach to Memorial Monument, July 19, 1932. Percival Gallagher.
- 1256-19 Penn Valley Park Kansas City, Missouri Original Grading Plan. August 19, 1932. Percival Gallagher.
- 1256-21 Profile of Kessler Drive to Accompany Plan No. 19. June, 1932. Percival Gallagher.
- 1256-26, 29 Study for Slope North of Memorial. August 19, 1932. Percival Gallagher.
- 1256-27 South Entrance Studies. August, 1932. Percival Gallagher.
- 1256-31 Plan for Drainage, Curbing and Paving Conforming to the General Plan for improvement of the Mall South of Liberty Memorial. February 3, 1932. Drewin Wight.
- 1256-67 Sketch Plan for South Entrance to Memorial Mall. November 4, 1932. Percival Gallagher.
- 1256-70 View of Liberty Memorial from Main Street and Union Station. November 8, 1932. Perspective Sketch of Liberty Memorial. Charcoal.
- 1256-71 Sketch of Liberty Memorial from West Door of Station. November 9, 1932. Charcoal
- 1256-74 Penn Valley Park Planting Plan. June, 1933. Percival Gallagher.
- 1256-77 Study for Treatment of North Terrace and Central Approach to 77A North Terrace of Memorial. January 3, 1933. Percival Gallagher.
- 1256-82A Elevation of North Terrace. February 10, 1933. Percival Gallagher.

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- 1256-82B Study for Treatment of North Terrace. February 10, 1933. Percival Gallagher.
- 1256-83 Penn Valley Park, Elevation of Central Steps to Accompany Plans No. 77 and 77A. February 7, 1932. Percival Gallagher.
- 1256-89 Sections through North Terrace of Memorial. March 10, 1933.
- 1256-92 Study for Planting Panels on North Terrace. March 20, 1933.
- 1256-94 Profile of Walks leading to North Terrace. March 10, 1933.
- [1256]-98 Blue Print to Accompany letter dated April 20, 1933 from Hare and Hare re: ledges, planting vistas, etc. Study. April 20, 1933. Hare and Hare.
- 1256-104 Sketch of trees on North Terrace with composition of trees on each side. October 25, 1933. Hare and Hare.
- 1256-105 Revised sketch of North Terrace Planting. October 26, 1933.
- 1256-109 Plans for Main Street and Pershing Road Entrance. December, 1932.

**Western Historic Manuscripts Collection, Newcomb Hall,
University of Missouri, Kansas City. 816-235-1543**

Liberty Memorial plans, drawings, photographs and related materials.

144 cards (microfilm of original drawings from the City of Kansas City, Missouri); 15 Construction Photographs by F. L. Tyner, Kansas City, Missouri; Two folders and one drawing from the Hare and Hare Collection.

Other papers that pertain to the Liberty Memorial include: The Albert Beach Papers, 1924-1931; J. C. Nichols Company Records, c. 1896-1980; the Liberty Memorial Association Records, 1921-1933 and the Sid and S. Herbert Hare Collection, which contains Olmsted Brothers planting plan for the site (see selected bibliography).

Plans and Drawings:

North Terrace Walls, Platforms, Approaches and Embellishments including North Elevation of Fountains, Frieze and Steps to Frieze Court. Wight and Wight, architects, Kansas City, Missouri, June 8, 1933.

5 cards. 77.7

Light Standards Liberty Memorial Court and Memory Hall. Stephens Chandelier Company, n.d.

2 cards. 86.2

Marble Treatment for Museum; Celotex Wall Tile for Museum. Henges Company, Inc., Kansas City, Missouri, 1947.

1 card 86.3

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- Bronze Vestibule with Bronze Lunette and Architrave for West Entrance of Memory Hall. Flour City Ornamental Iron Company, Minneapolis, Minnesota, September 17, 1928.
4 cards 86.4
- Interior Door in Museum. John Polachek Bronze and Iron Company, Long Island City, New York, June 11, 1925.
4 cards. 86.5
- Bronze Door to Shaft of Liberty Memorial. John Polachek Bronze and Iron Company, Long Island City, New York, June 2, 1925.
3 cards. 86.6
- Bronze Doors to Legion Building and Museum. John Polachek Bronze and Iron Company, Long Island City, New York. [1925].
2 cards. 86.7
- Memorial Court paving and Jointing West Half. W. C. Company, February 24, 1925.
2 cards. 86.8
- Location of Shaft. Map of Plat and Contours (relation to property lines). Prepared by the Board of Park Commissioners, October 25, 1920.
2 cards. 86.9
- Approaches to Liberty Memorial After Kessler's Plan. (Application of George E. Kessler's Plan for Approaches to the Liberty Memorial). W. H. Dunn with Fred Gabelman. Drawing by W. I. Ayres. May 18, 1923.
3 cards. 86.10
- Grades on New Union Station Grounds. Kansas City Terminal Railway Company. n.d.
2 cards. 86.11
- Penn Valley Park Grading Plan. Olmsted Brothers, August 19, 1932, Plan No. 19.
3 cards. 86.12
- Section on Line O-E-W West of Main Looking south. HVB Magonigle. August 18, 1922. Drawing A.011, Work No. 164. 3 cards. 86.13
- Framing Plan East Half of Terraces and Memory Hall (B .024); Bracing Beam Framing Plan (BR). HVB Magonigle; Hool and Johnson, Engineers. September 8, 1922; November 23, 1923.
4 cards. 86.14
- Plan at Principal Terrace Levels. HVB Magonigle, B. 003, August 18, 1922. Image is weak.
4 cards. 86.15
- Feeder Diagram and Electric Plan. HVB Magonigle, Drawing No. 24, Work No. 164, 1923.
4 cards. 86.16
- Basement and Heating Plan of Basement and Sub-basement. HVB Magonigle, Drawing No. 22, 1923.

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4 cards.	86.17
North Terrace Walls, Platforms, Approaches. Wight and Wight, June 8, 1933. (See 77.7). 10 cards.	86.18
Penn Valley Park/Liberty Memorial. Sections; East and West Axis. Union Station to 28th Street, August, 1924. 5 cards.	86.19
Sections looking North and South. HVB Magonigle, B .018, A. 018 and B .012. 1922. Images are weak. 15 cards.	86.20
Sections Looking East and West. HVB Magonigle. A .005 series, July 12, 1922. Images are weak. 12 cards.	86.21
Elevations of Liberty Memorial Site. HVB Magonigle, n. d. Images are weak. 2 cards.	86.22
Union Station and Adjacent Land. Study by George Edward Kessler. 1922; tracing by W. I. Ayres, January 10, 1919. 3 cards.	86.23
Section on Line "2S." Looking North to Shaft; Also Section of E-W Axis of Shaft Looking South. No. A .019; B .019; B .016; A .004, 1922. Images are weak. 6 cards	86.24
Profile Lines. George E. Kessler. n.d. 7 cards.	86.25
Plan for Art Center, Stadium and Memorial (includes study of building groups and plantings). George E. Kessler. May 15, 1922. 6 cards.	86.26
Scheme A-1st and 2nd Stage for Liberty Memorial with Comparative Diagrams. HVB Magonigle with Kessler, March 15, 1922; March 24, 1922. 5 cards.	86.27
Plat and Contours of the Site of Liberty Memorial. Board of Park Commissioners. October 25, 1920. 4 cards.	86.28
Diagram Showing Relation of Easterly Terrace Wall to Main Street. HVB Magonigle. A .023, No. 164, August 7, 1922. 1 card.	86.29
Time Schedule. November 1, 1923 through April 2, 1925. HVB Magonigle. 1 card.	86.30
Elevations for Bases for Sphinx. HVB Magonigle. Drawing No. 136, September 29, 1924. 1 card.	86.31

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Axis of Memorial and Main Street Showing Property Lines. George Kessler, 1922. 1 card.	86.32
Elevations looking East and west. HVB Magonigle, A .022, Drawing No. 10, 1923. 2 cards.	86.33
Plan at Liberty Memorial Court Level, Drawing No. 4. 1 card.	86.34
Study of Memorial Proper with Suggested Future Terraces and Approaches. HVB Magonigle, Drawing No. PP20, January 22, 1923. Images are weak. 1 card.	86.35

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
 Previously Listed in the National Register.
 Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
 Designated a National Historic Landmark.
 Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: # **MO-1936**
 Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State Agency
 Federal Agency
 Local Government
 University
 Other (Specify Repository): Liberty Memorial Archives

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 47.5 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	15	363790	4327260
B	15	363000	4327300
C	15	363970	4326780
D	15	363840	4326470
E	15	363560	4326570
F	15	363660	4327010

Verbal Boundary Description:

The Charter Administrative Code and Code of General Ordinances of Kansas City, Missouri adopted October 14, 1967, in Section 76 describes Memorial Hill as the location of Liberty Memorial "bounded on the north by Pershing Road, on the east by Main Street, on the south by the center line of Twenty-eight Street, as it exists west of Penn Valley Park projected eastwardly, and on the west by the center line of Central Street, as it exists north of Twenty-first street projected southwardly."

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes all of the resources that have historically been part of the Liberty Memorial that maintain integrity.

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11. FORM PREPARED BY

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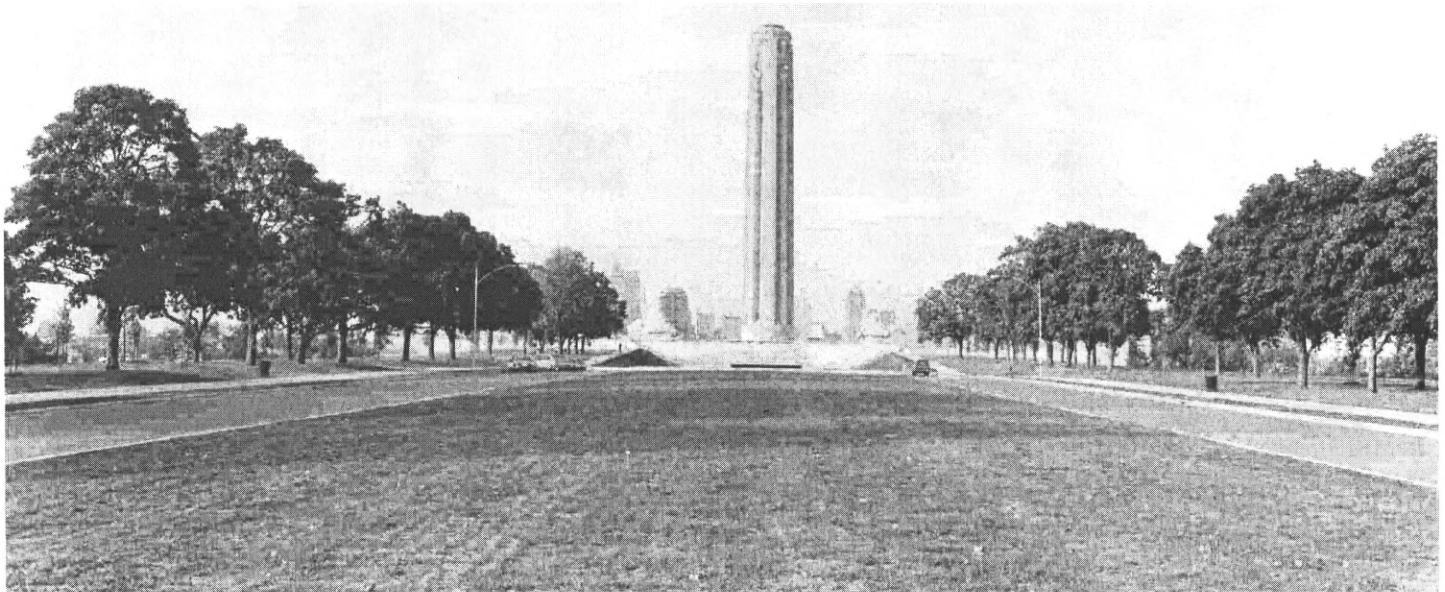
DESIGNATED A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK
September 20, 2006

LIBERTY MEMORIAL

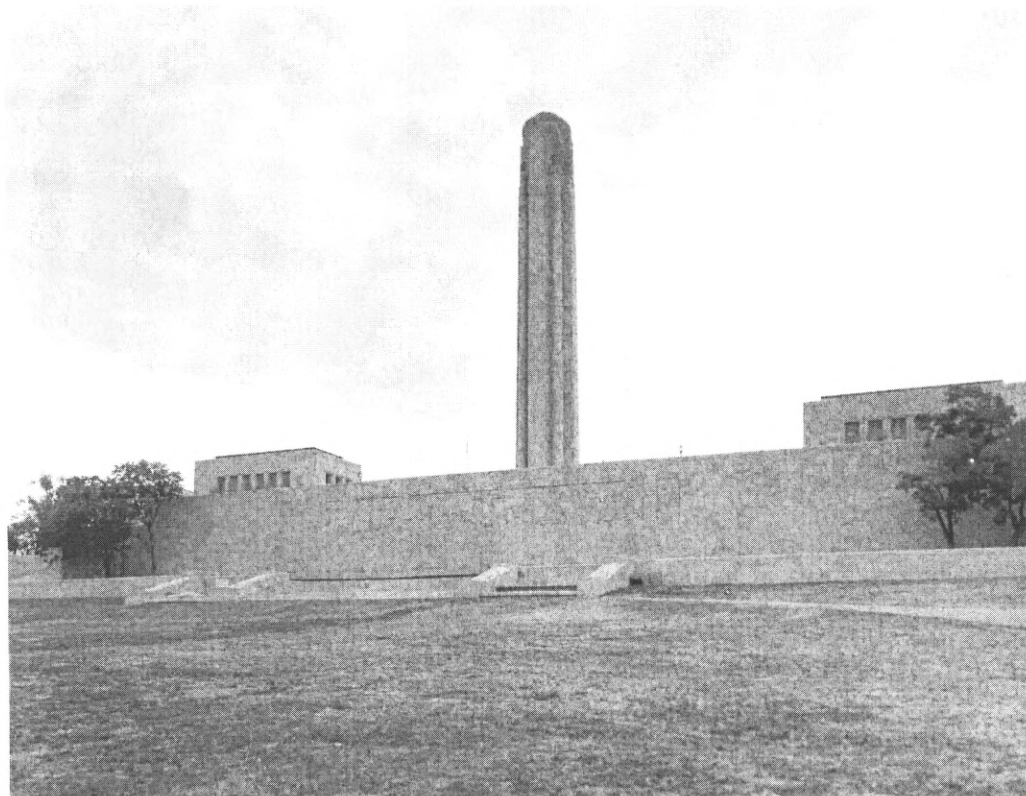
United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos

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General view facing north.
Photograph by Len Fohn, Summer/Fall 2003.



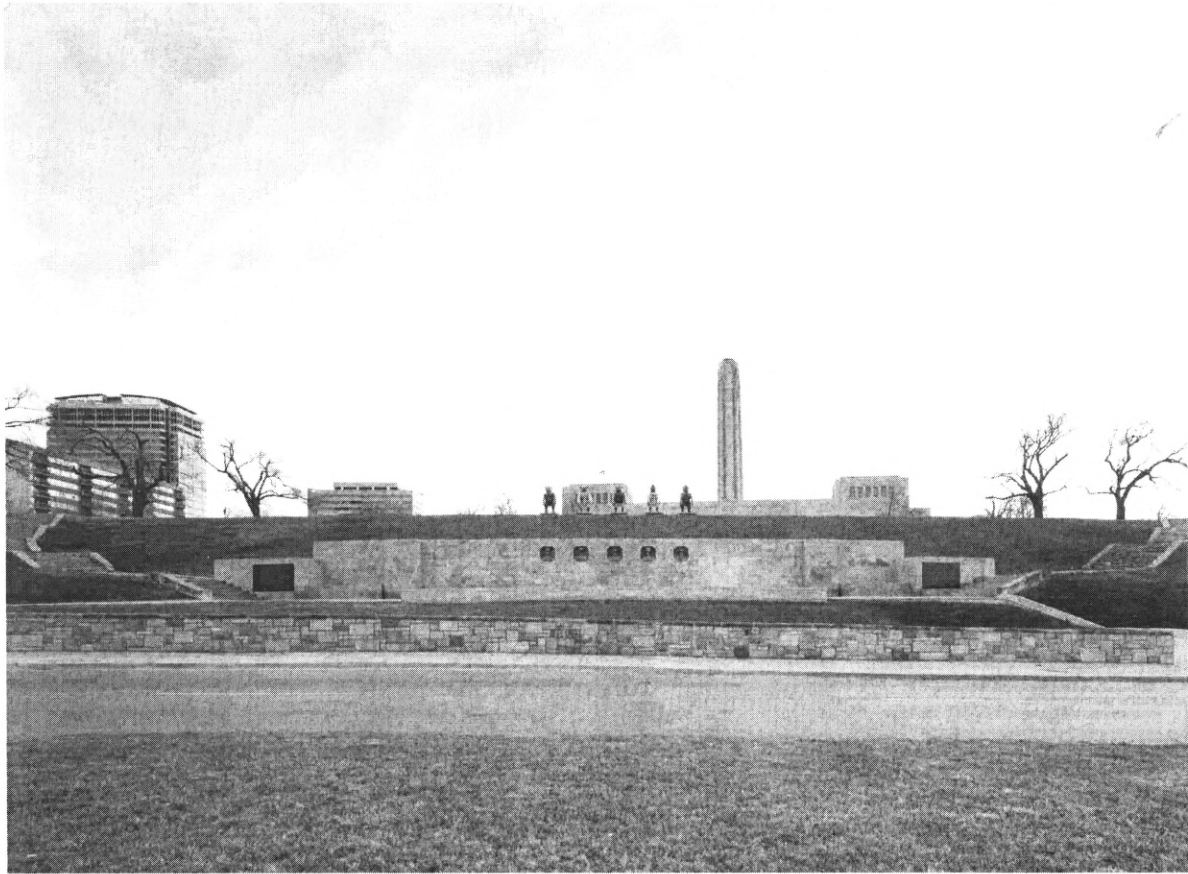
General view from Great Frieze, view facing south, southeast.
Photograph by Len Fohn, Summer/Fall 2003.

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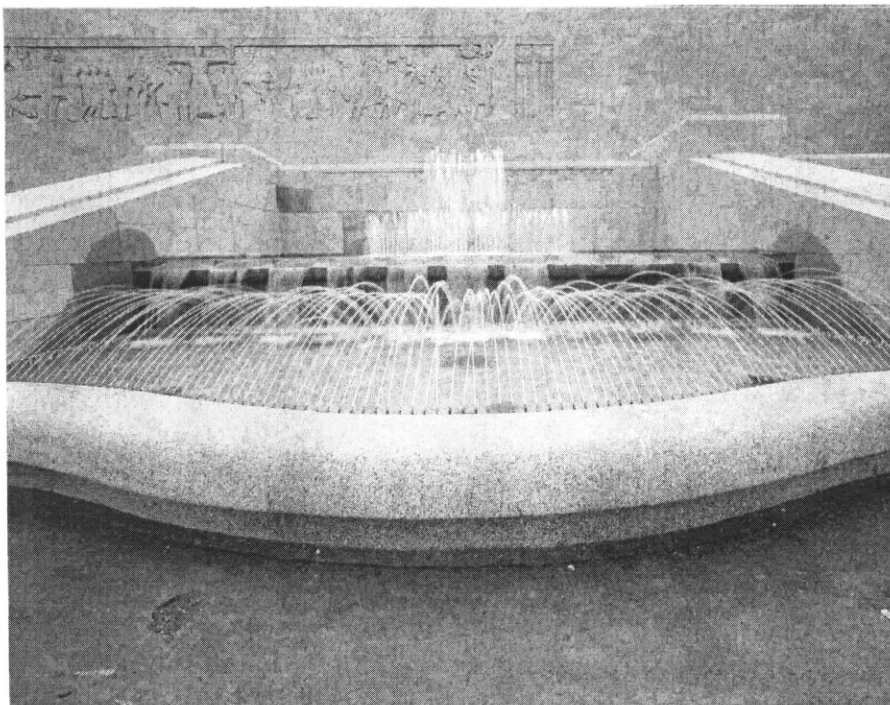
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General view from the north showing Dedication Wall with Great Frieze and shaft in the background. View facing south, southwest.

Photograph by Len Fohn, Summer/Fall 2003.



Detail of fountain, view facing south.

Photograph by Len Fohn, Summer/Fall 2003.

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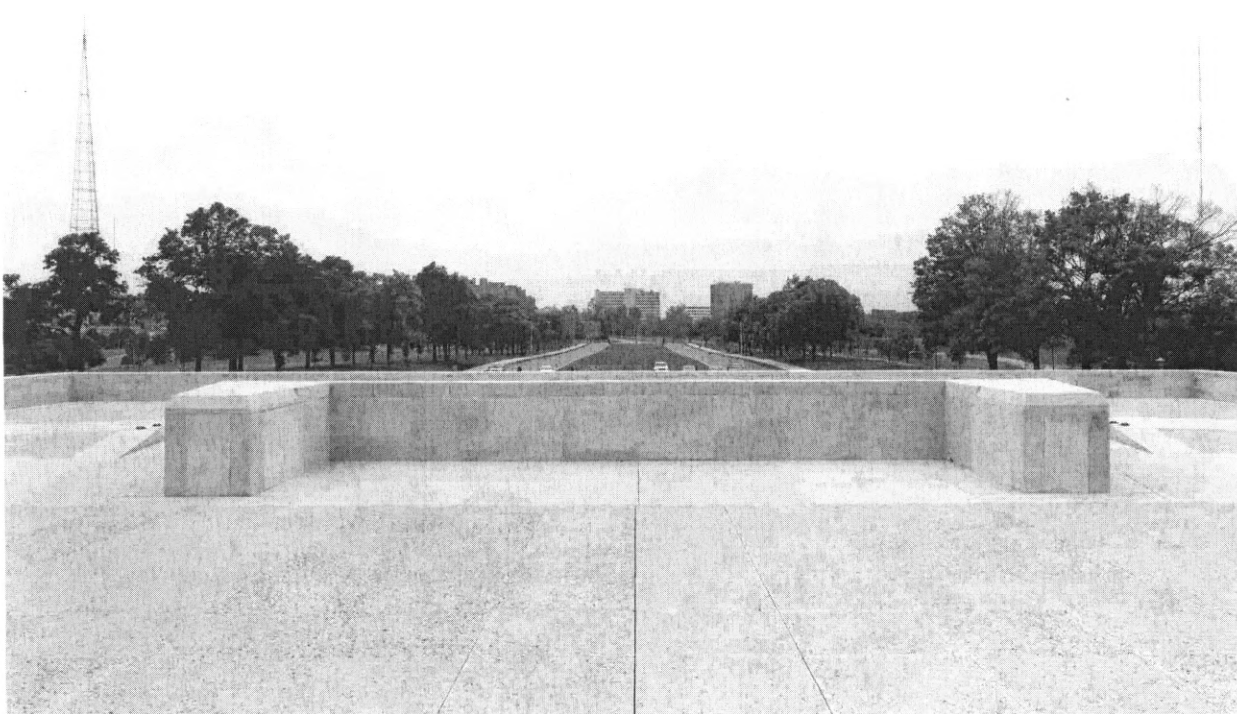
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Photos

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General view of deck and sphinxes, view facing west.
Photograph by Len Fohn, Summer/Fall 2003.



View from deck, facing south toward the South Mall.
Photograph by Len Fohn, Summer/Fall 2003.

LIBERTY MEMORIAL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



Museum building west and north façades, view facing east, southeast.
Photograph by Len Fohn, Summer/Fall 2003.



Museum building east façade, view facing northwest.
Photograph by Len Fohn, Summer/Fall 2003.

LIBERTY MEMORIAL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



View of Memory Hall, east and north facades, view facing northwest.
Photograph by Len Fohn, Summer/Fall 2003.

LIBERTY MEMORIAL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



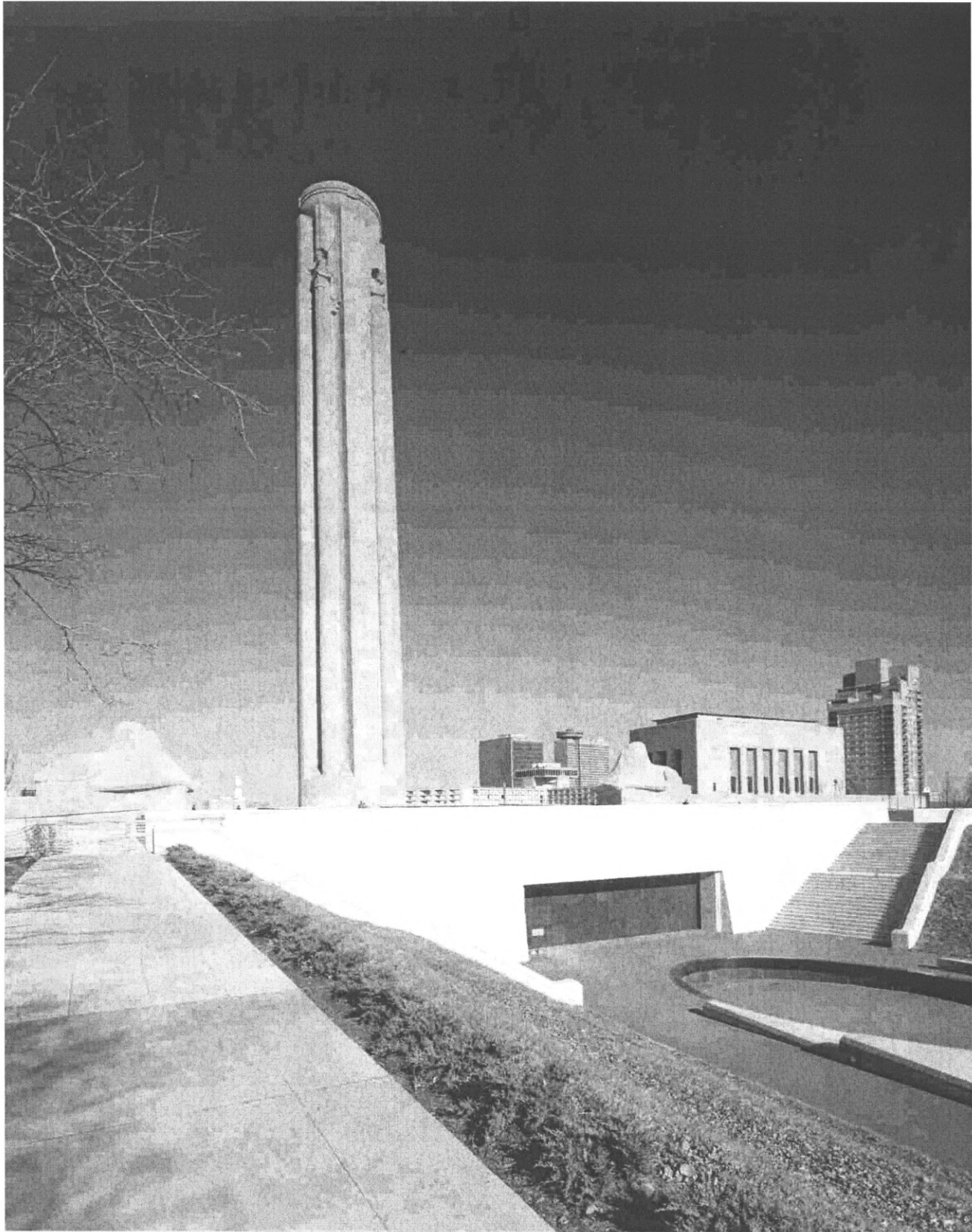
Museum building, west and north facades, view facing east, southeast.
Photograph by Len Fohn, Summer/Fall 2003.

LIBERTY MEMORIAL

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Photos

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



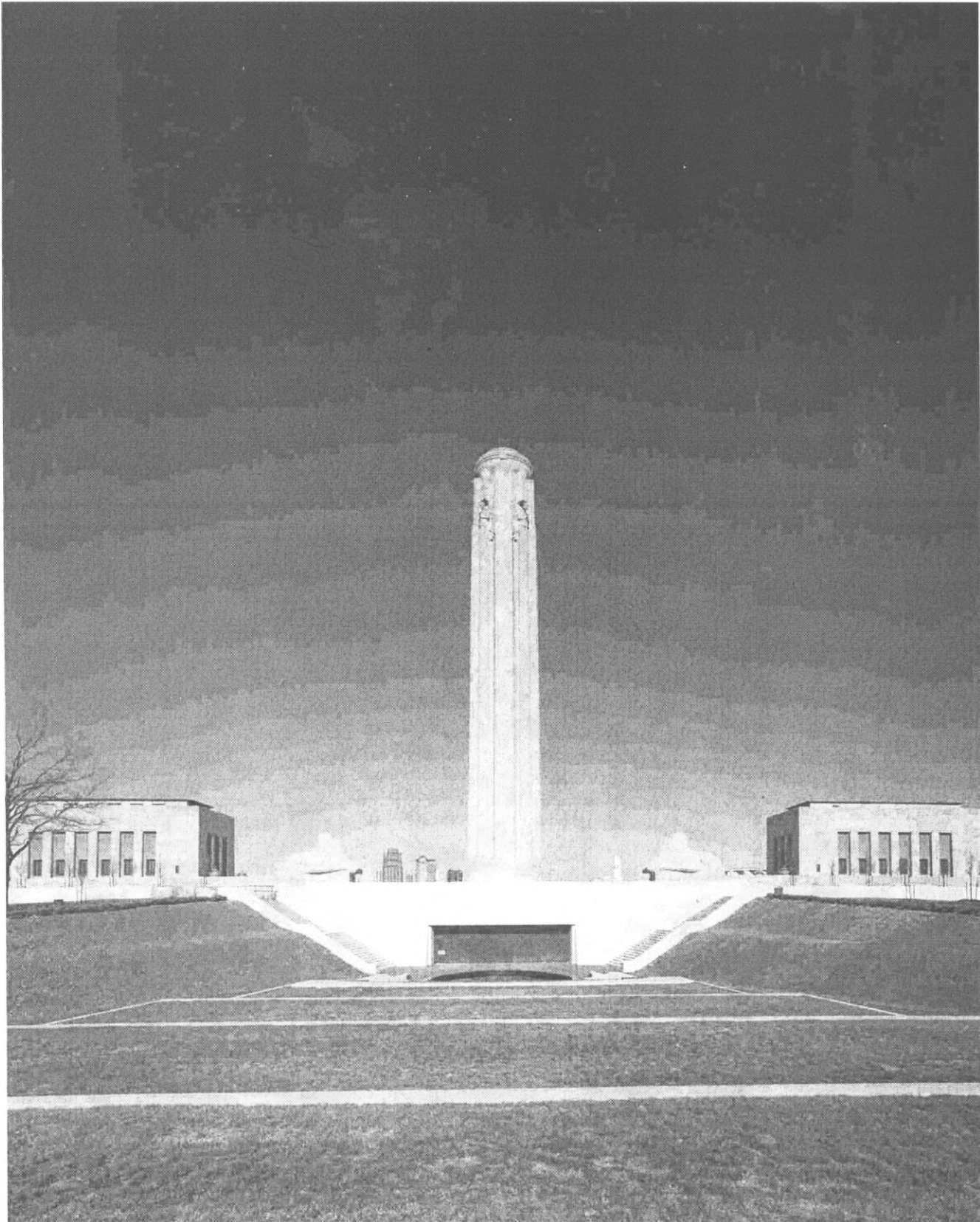
New museum entrance, walkways, and a portion of the reflecting pool and stairs.
View facing northeast.
Photograph by Len Fohn, Summer/Fall 2003.

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View of new museum entrance, terracing, Memory Hall, museum buildings, shaft and sphinxes.
View facing north.
Photograph by Len Fohn, Summer/Fall 2003.

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Memory Hall, interior view facing east.
Photograph by Len Fohn, Summer/Fall 2003.

LIBERTY MEMORIAL

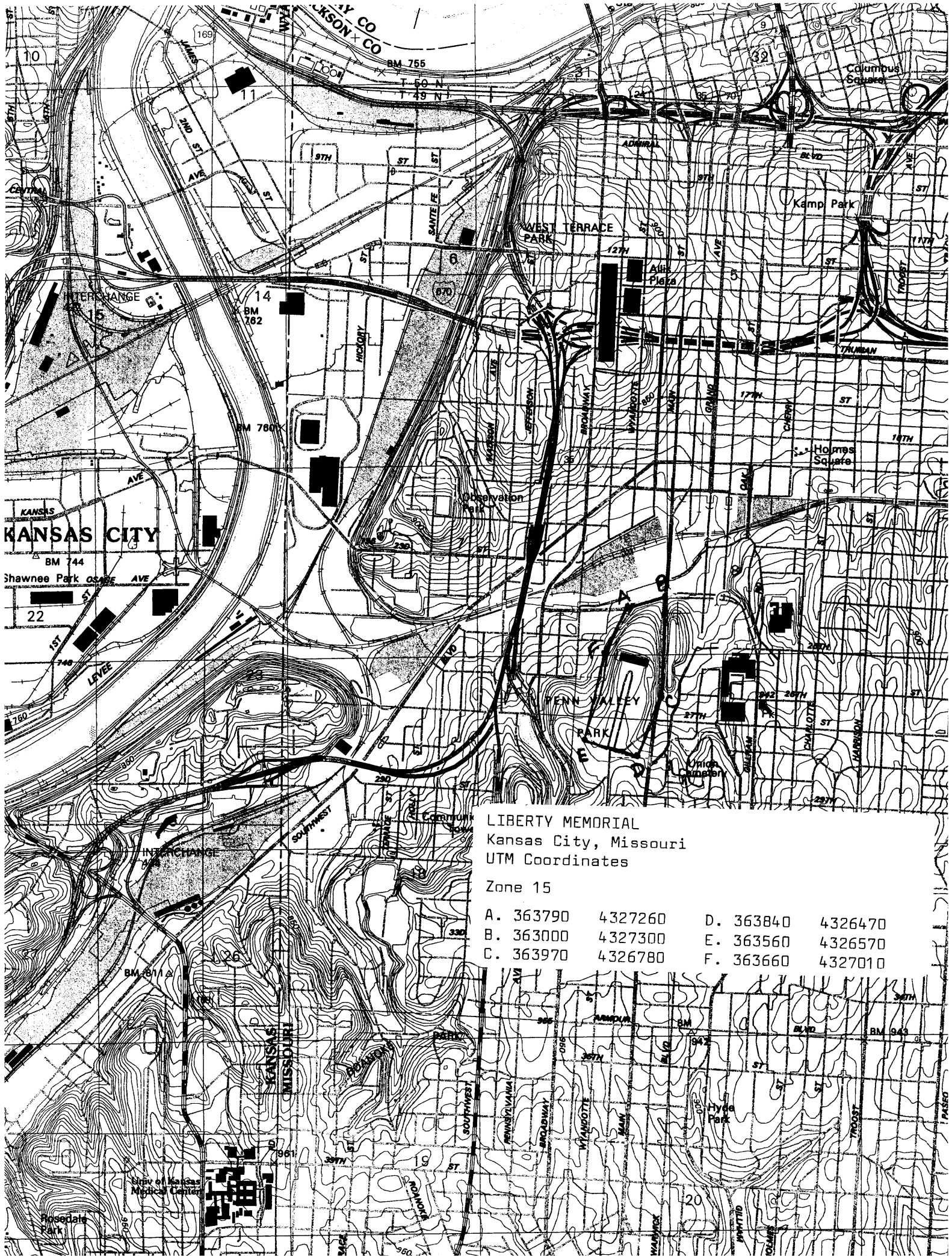
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Photos

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



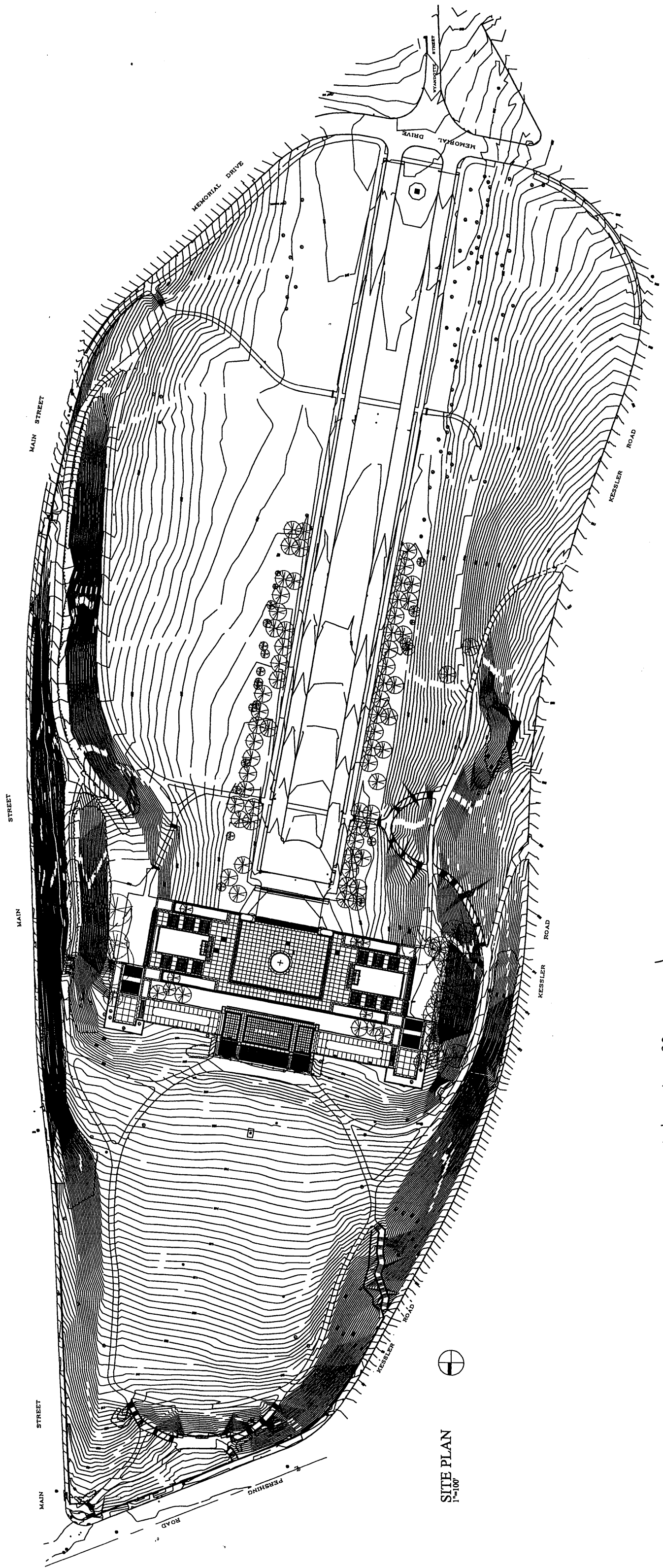
Museum building interior, view facing west.
Photograph by Len Fohn, Summer/Fall 2003.



LIBERTY MEMORIAL
 Kansas City, Missouri
 UTM Coordinates

Zone 15

- | | | | |
|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|
| A. 363790 | 4327260 | D. 363840 | 4326470 |
| B. 363000 | 4327300 | E. 363560 | 4326570 |
| C. 363970 | 4326780 | F. 363660 | 4327010 |



Liberty Memorial
Kansas City, Missouri

SITE PLAN
1"=100'