

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER  
LISTED

JAN 28 2004

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A) Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-9000a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Justus Bissing, Jr. Historic District  
Other name/site number Justus Bissing, Jr. House and Tower Service Station, 051-2390-0068

2. Location

Street & number 502-504 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street ☐ not for publication  
City or town Hays ☐ vicinity  
State Kansas Code KS County Ellis Code 051 Zip code 67601

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  
☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Deborah D. Lambertz DSHS December 9, 2003  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Kansas State Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional  
Comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official /Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

- ☐ entered in the National Register. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ See continuation sheet.  
☐ determined eligible for the National \_\_\_\_\_  
Register  
☐ See continuation sheet.  
☐ determined not eligible for the \_\_\_\_\_  
National Register  
☐ removed from the National \_\_\_\_\_  
Register  
☐ other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Justus Bissing, Jr. Historic District  
Name of property

Ellis County, KS  
County and State

### 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- ☐ building(s)  
☒ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	1	total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)  
N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register**  
0

### 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter Categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Transportation: road-related

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Commerce: business

### 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movements:

Bungalow/ Craftsman

Other: Cottage style

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone: limestone  
walls Brick; Wood: shingle

roof Asphalt

other

**Narrative Description**  
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Name of Property Justus Bissing, Jr. Historic District County and State Ellis County, KS

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register)

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

### Period of Significance

1920- 1932

### Significant Dates

1920, 1932

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Justus Bissing, Jr.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS): Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ 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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Kansas State Historical Society

Name of Property	Justus Bissing, Jr. Historic District	County and State	Ellis County, Kansas
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## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

## UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

Figure 1 illustrates four examples of the proposed data structure for the 2010 Census. Each example shows a grid of cells representing different geographic areas, with labels for Zone, Easting, and Northing. Example 1 shows a 3x3 grid with values in the cells. Example 2 shows a 3x3 grid with values in the cells. Example 3 shows a 3x3 grid with values in the cells. Example 4 shows a 3x3 grid with values in the cells.

☐ See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

Name/title	Susan Jezak Ford
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Organization Citysearch Preservation Date August 2003

Street & number 3628 Holmes Street Telephone 816-531-2489

City or town      Kansas City                                  State      Missouri                                  Zip code      64109

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

## Continuation Sheets

## Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

## Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

### Additional items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

## Property Owner

name Preston and Christine Gilson

street & number      502 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street      telephone      785-625-2967

city or town      Hays                          state      Kansas                          zip code      67601

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**Section 7 Page 1**Justus Bissing, Jr. Historic District  
Ellis County, Kansas****Overview of Description**

The Justus Bissing, Jr. Historic District, located just west of the intersection of Hall Street, Elm Street and 12<sup>th</sup> Street in Hays, Kansas, contains two contributing buildings and one non-contributing building. The proposed district is located on a corner lot at 502 and 504 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street on Lots 3 and 4 in the southeast quarter of Section 32, Township 12 South, Range 18 West. Both buildings face northeast, toward Elm Street, which runs northwest to southeast. When the buildings were constructed, the site was located just west of the city limits of Hays, a midwestern town of medium size. Today, the corner is located west of the historic downtown area, but within the city limits of Hays. The property is currently owned by Preston and Christine Gilson.

The district's two contributing buildings are listed below.

1. The Justus Bissing, Jr. House, 502 W. 12<sup>th</sup> Street, 1920.
2. The Tower Service Station, 504 W. 12<sup>th</sup> Street, circa 1932.

The district's non-contributing building is a garage of undetermined age located between the house and service station.

The 1920 Justus Bissing, Jr. house is designed in the Craftsman style with Prairie School influences. The circa 1932 Tower Service station is a house-type plan, designed in a variation of the Queen Anne style.

**The Justus Bissing, Jr. House**

The Bissing house, located on a corner lot, has primary façades on the north, facing West 12<sup>th</sup> Street, and on the east, facing Elm Street. It is two stories tall, clad in brick on the first story and coated in stucco on the second story. A stone watercourse is present on all sides of the house and all windows have stone sills. The house is generally of an irregular cube plan that includes porches, bay windows and a porte cochere. The house is approximately 33 feet square on the first story and 16 feet square on the second story. A one-story porch wraps around the northeast corner of the house, supported by massive pillars faced with river rock. The low-sloped decked asphalt roof of the first story contains a stucco parapet that runs on all four sides of the house. The roof behind the parapet is flat for a short space, until an abbreviated second story rises from it. The roof of the second story has a very low slope and is also asphalt. The eaves of the house are very wide and are supported by pairs of large wood brackets that extend to the fascia; pairs of brackets support the corners of the eaves.

The house is located on the eastern portion of a two-lot parcel that was purchased by Justus Bissing, Jr. in 1920.<sup>1</sup> When built, it was located on U.S. Highway 40, just west of the Hays city limits and across the street from Bissing's former residence. It is believed that a driveway once existed on the southern edge of the property and concrete footings for a curved driveway, buried but still present, lead to a basement coal door. Short, decorative posts constructed of bricks, faced with river rock and topped with concrete, line the north and east edges of the property; hedges were originally planted between these posts. Nine posts were constructed with the house; seven are still present and in good condition. A pre-1940 single-car garage, covered with asbestos siding, is located west of the house, between the house and the former service station.

<sup>1</sup> Deed record 50-125 at the Ellis County Courthouse.

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Justus Bissing, Jr. Historic District  
Ellis County, Kansas

**Exterior**

The **north façade** of the house is dominated by the front porch that extends across the left half of the house. Three substantial pillars support the north side of the porch. The porch supports contain simple square capitals and are clad in river rock. Brackets extend from the top of the capitals across the soffit to the roof fascia. The porch contains an arched stucco fascia placed between the posts and a low balustrade of ornamental brick topped by concrete. Two square single-pane basement windows are located on the right half of the porch and a stone watercourse runs between the pillars. The stucco parapet atop the porch roof consists of a shallow arc that terminates in squared corner sections.

The main wall of the house underneath the overhang of the porch contains three windows in a Chicago-style configuration, with one central double-hung window flanked by two narrow double-hung windows. The right half of the north façade contains a set of windows in this same configuration. Three small windows are located at the basement level on the right portion of the north façade; the central window contains six panes and the two side windows each contain four panes. The northwest corner of the house is slightly indented and the eaves follow this pattern. The stucco parapet continues from the roof of the porch to the roof of the main portion of the house.

The west side of the front porch contains an arched stucco fascia under the overhang of the roof. A metal hinged door for the delivery of coal to the house is placed in the far right portion of this section at the basement level.

The second story of the north façade contains a row of five double-hung windows placed between two pairs of brackets that support the second story eaves.

Like the north façade, the **east façade** of the Bissing House is dominated by the porch, which extends across the right third of the house and makes up approximately half of the width of this façade. The porch roof is supported by a massive pillar on the far right, described above, and an identical support on the left. A flight of central wood steps, surrounded by low brick walls topped by concrete, lead to the front door of the house. Short pillars clad in river rock are placed at the bottom and the top of the steps; the top posts terminate balustrades matching those found on the north side of the porch. The house's main entrance, a wood door surrounded by sidelights, is located under the porch overhang. To the right of this doorway on a north wall is a small double-hung window. The roof's stucco parapet continues from the north side of the house across the entire roof of the east side, in a configuration that consists of two arcs separated and ended by three square cube portions.

The left portion of this façade contains a central projecting bay that contains a set of three windows in a Chicago-style configuration, with one central double-hung window flanked by two narrow double-hung windows. Three small windows are located at the basement level on this portion; the central window contains six panes and the two side windows each contain four panes.

A porte cochere attached to the south side of the house can be seen from the east façade. The porte cochere is constructed in a fashion similar to the front porch, with a stucco fascia, wide eaves and supported by two massive pillars clad in river rock. Above this porte cochere, the second story interior staircase projects slightly forward from the roof's fascia line. This second-story extension, housing the interior stairwell, is connected to

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Justus Bissing, Jr. Historic District  
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the second story room. The main portion of the east second story contains a strip of five double-hung windows placed between two pairs of brackets.

The most noticeable features of the **south side** of the Bissing house are the porte cochere and the second story extension that contains an interior stairwell. These features are placed in the center of this façade. The porte cochere is supported by substantial pillars coated with river rock from ground level to the plain capitals that match those on the front porch. An arched stucco fascia is located under the eaves of the porte cochere. Under this canopy, three wide concrete steps lead to a single wood door. Brick piers are placed on either side of the steps and a double-hung window is located to the right of the doorway.

The wall to the right of the porte cochere contains a tall double-hung window in the first story and two, three-paned windows at the basement level. The wall to the left of the porte cochere contains a small double-hung window in the first story and two basement windows filled with glass brick.

The second-story stairwell protrudes from the top of the roof of the porte cochere, extending beyond the main plane of the house and past the edge of the main roofline. This wall contains a pair of small double-hung windows placed between two pairs of brackets. The wall to the right of the stairwell contains a single small double-hung window; the north wall is plain. The stucco parapet runs along the first story roof on the south side, but is interrupted by the protruding stairwell.

The house's **west façade** is divided into two halves. The right side of the façade is fairly plain, consisting of a small pair of double-hung windows in the first story and two basement windows that have been filled with glass brick. The left side of the west façade protrudes slightly from the main plane to provide bay windows in the dining room and basement. This portion of the façade contains a set of windows in the first story that consists of one large three-over-three window surrounded by two smaller single-pane windows approximately half the height of the larger window. Two pairs of brackets surround these fixed-pane windows. Two small two-pane windows are located at the basement level.

The main portion of the second story contains a small double-hung window on the left side and a pair of double-hung windows on the right. A brick chimney rises from the roof between these two sets of windows. The second-story stairwell can be seen attached to the far right portion of the main portion of the second story. The stucco parapet continues across the roof of the first story, following the outline of the roof.

The first story of the house's **interior** is divided into public and private spaces. Half of this level is made up of a common living/dining room that includes oak paneling and an oak ceiling. Columns originally delineated the living room and dining room, but Bissing subsequently removed these. Built-in cabinets fill the dining room's west wall under the window and an elaborately inlaid cabinet with leaded glass is placed on the south wall of the dining room. According to the current owner, Justus Bissing extracted mother of pearl from local mussel shells to add to the inlay that includes ebony and other woods, forming clusters of grapes and geometric designs.

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Justus Bissing, Jr. Historic District  
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The private portion of the first story, accessed through a door in the dining room, includes an updated kitchen, a bathroom that may have been added after construction and a bedroom in the southeast corner of the house. The bedroom contains built-in pine cabinets under an east window.

A stairwell located between the kitchen and bathroom leads to a single bedroom and a new bathroom on the second story. The room on the second story is lined with windows on nearly every wall and the floor is clear fir in strips 12 to 14 feet long.

The basement of the house contains an office/bedroom and various utility rooms. Tile brick divides the space of the basement and the bedroom contains pine built-in cabinets.

The Bissing house retains many original features and has had few alterations. The second-story roof once had a parapet similar to the one on the roof of the first story; this parapet is no longer present. Several basement windows have been removed and the space filled in with glass brick. The updated kitchen is the only interior room that has changed considerably since construction. The last owner of the house sold furniture that Justus Bissing built for the house, along with some of the light fixtures and pieces of beveled stained glass from the dining room built-in cabinets. The current owners have expanded the 2<sup>nd</sup> story bathroom and added a bathroom to the basement.

**The Tower Service Station**

The Tower Service Station was built on the western portion of the site in the early 1930s by Bissing to be run by his son, Peter. The service station building is small and has been altered several times since its original construction. It is an irregularly shaped rectangle with a circular tower attached to the northwest corner. The main portion of the roof is hipped, but small gables are present on the north and east façades. The entire building is covered with narrow clapboard siding ending in corner boards, except for the tower, which is covered with rows of staggered shingles. The roof of the building is covered with asphalt shingles. The eaves contain decorative brackets and all window and door surrounds are simple wood frames with plain lintel molding.

The **north**, or main, **façade** is four irregular bays wide. Moving from left to right (east to west), the first two bays consist of a front gable pulled slightly forward from the main plane of the façade. This gable is one story tall, in contrast to the one-and-a-half-story hipped roof that rises behind it. The first two bays contain a set of two double-hung windows. The third bay of the north façade contains the main entrance to the building. A wood door with three lights in the upper half is covered by a modern metal and glass storm door. The fourth bay contains a double-hung window. The hipped roof rises above bays three and four.

A two-and-a-half-story round tower is attached to the building's northwest corner. It is clad in staggered rows of shingles and contains six single-pane windows, arranged on three levels. The tower has an octagonal pointed roof, topped with a flat finial.

The **west façade** is plain, consisting of a single double-hung window placed in the center of the façade, topped by the peak of the hipped roof.



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Justus Bissing, Jr. Historic District  
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The four bays of the **south**, or rear, **façade** contain, from left to right, a modern steel door with nine lights in the upper half, a modern double-hung window, a permanently sealed wood door, and a double-hung window with embossed glass. An addition was once attached to this façade when the building was converted to living space; it has been removed by the current owner.

The **east façade** contains a central gable and the side of the eastern gable from the main façade. The left portion of the façade contains a sealed door opening. Under the right portion of the gable, a modern steel door, identical to the new door on the south façade, has been placed in a previous window opening. An electricity meter is positioned between the two doors and power lines rise upward from it.

The building has served many purposes in its history and continues to do so. The current owner is converting the building to office space; he has gutted the interior and added new doors and door openings to the exterior. New thermal windows will replace the current wood windows.

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**Justus Bissing, Jr. Historic District  
Ellis County, Kansas**

**Overview of Significance**

The Justus Bissing, Jr. Historic District is significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The house and service station were designed and built by Justus Bissing, Jr., one of Hays' best-known citizens. Bissing was a well-known craftsman, inventor and entrepreneur. His craftsmanship was much admired in the area, especially his skill in woodworking. He undertook a number of businesses that had a significant impact on Hays, including the development of a planing mill, the town's first electric light plant and the first successful telephone office. The district is a representation of the architecture designed by Bissing in Hays. His meticulous artistry can be found in the exterior and interior of his last home, a two-story Craftsman bungalow with Prairie School influences. The small house retains much of its integrity and eclecticism in its design and ornamentation. The Tower Service Station, built by Bissing to be run by his son, is an example of an early, locally owned gas station. The building is the last remaining service station of several that were located on this street in Hays.

**Justus Bissing, Jr. and the History of the District**

Justus Bissing, Jr. came to Ellis County in 1874 with his family from Catherine, Russia. The family was Volga Germans, a group of German heritage that came to the area via Topeka. The ancestors of this group migrated to Russia at the invitation of Catherine the Great in the 1760s. One hundred years later, their descendants came to America when Catherine's successor revoked privileges provided under her rule. This group spread across central Kansas in Russell, Ellis, Trego and Rush Counties.

Bissing grew up on a farm north of Catherine, Kansas. His father, Justus Bissing, Sr., was one of the founders of Catherine. The senior Bissing was an accomplished organ maker and goldsmith. He and his wife, Margaret, had five sons, with Justus, Jr. being the second oldest. The junior Justus Bissing married Elisabeth Leikam in 1883 and the couple had nine children.

Bissing's impact on the town of Hays was noteworthy. After moving to Hays in 1886, he embarked on a number of enterprises, including ownership of a planing mill, the town's first electric light plant and the first successful telephone office. A number of churches and/or their interiors in and around Hays are attributed to Bissing. Raised in a devoutly Catholic family, he is credited with building Catholic churches in Catherine, Munjor and Liebenthal. He also received a contract to do the woodwork in St. Joseph's church in Hays; due to an accident that killed the contractor, Bissing completed the entire church.<sup>2</sup>

Justus Bissing, Jr. began showing a skill for woodwork and building in his teen years. For a time he manufactured the dulcette, an instrument invented by his youngest brother, Petrovitch, which was never successful. Stories still circulate in the Hays community of fantastic prices paid for clocks, organs and intricate furniture built and ornamented by Bissing. Of special note is the story of one or two elaborately carved and inlaid "Apostle" clocks, one of which may still reside in storage at the Sternburg Natural History Museum.

<sup>2</sup> "Leaves Churches As His Monuments" *The Hays Daily News*, 28 November 1936, 1.

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Justus Bissing, Jr. Historic District  
Ellis County, Kansas

Bissing built a number of houses in Hays for himself and others. He built a "fine residence" for himself on the north side of Crawford Avenue (West 12<sup>th</sup> Street) in 1917.<sup>3</sup> In 1920, he purchased a site on the south side of the street.<sup>4</sup> In August 1920, he sold his frame house to a Mr. Parsons for \$14,000 and began excavation for the new home within days. All but two of his children had left home and it was reported by *The Ellis County News* that the new house would be a small brick veneer house, as the previous house was too large for the needs of the family.<sup>5</sup> The small house became a tribute to Bissing's craftsmanship.

Construction proceeded quickly. By late September, *The Hays Free Press* reported that:

Justus Bissing is building a splendid residence on his lots in the west part of the city. Justus is a carpenter and architect extraordinary and his residence when finished will be right up-to-date in every respect.<sup>6</sup>

By mid-November, it was reported that the dwelling was near completion.<sup>7</sup> The location was just north of the planing mill, founded by Bissing in 1897,<sup>8</sup> and proved to be an exceptional residence for the aging entrepreneur.

Justus Bissing lived in the house until his death in 1936 and his widow lived there until she died in 1953. His son Albert inherited the house and lived there until he died around 1984. A cousin then inherited the house and sold it to the current owners, Preston and Christine Gilson.

Bissing designed and built the service station at 504 W. 12<sup>th</sup> Street in the early 1930s, to be run by his son, Peter.<sup>9</sup> At the time, the building was located just west of the Hays city limits along U.S. Highway 40. Peter Bissing ran the station, which contained two pumps and an outdoor pit for changing oil until World War II. The building had a central office/retail room, individual restrooms for men and women and the requisite soda, candy and cigarette machines common to the era. Although independently owned and operated, the station sold Texaco gasoline. Around World War II, for reasons unknown, Peter Bissing moved away (eventually settling in Aurora, Illinois) and the station closed.

At the time of its operation, the Tower Service Station was one of several gas stations located along West 12<sup>th</sup> Street in Hays. Although remnants of the buildings remain, most closed during or shortly after World War II, due to wartime shortages or the 1951 rerouting of Highway 40 to the southern edge of Hays.

<sup>3</sup> "Is Hays Growing—Just a Little" *The Hays Free Press*, 17 March 1917, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Deed record 50-125 at the Ellis County Courthouse.

<sup>5</sup> "Bissing Makes Quick Work Of It" *The Ellis County News*, 26 August 1920, 1.

<sup>6</sup> *The Hays Free Press*, 30 September 1920, 1.

<sup>7</sup> *The Hays Free Press*, 11 November 1920, 1.

<sup>8</sup> *At Home in Ellis County*. Hays, KS: Ellis County Historical Society, 1991, 335.

<sup>9</sup> No written history is available on the Tower Service Station. Hays produced one City Directory (1938) and the service station does not appear in telephone directories. The building was outside of city limits and the site has always been attached to the Justus Bissing, Jr. property to the east. Thus, all historical information comes from the memory of Vince Dreiling, a former building inspector for the city of Hays, and a conversation that took place via telephone on 13 May 2002.

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**Justus Bissing, Jr. Historic District  
Ellis County, Kansas**

The Tower Service Station was converted for use as a small rental residence. It served in this capacity for many years, until approximately the middle 1980s. The current owner, Preston Gilson, purchased the property and the Bissing house to the east in 1988. He is currently remodeling the structure into office space.

**Architecture**

The proposed Justus Bissing, Jr. Historic District contains two very good examples of midwestern vernacular architecture. The 1920 Bissing house is the last of several homes in Hays built by Bissing for his own use. Its design utilizing the Craftsman and Prairie School styles, combined with local materials and Bissing's own handiwork, make it a truly outstanding residence. The Tower Service Station is the last of a number of gas stations that once lined U.S. Highway 40 on the western edge of Hays. The rather old-fashioned building was obviously designed to blend into its residential surroundings. It is clear, however, that the building is not a residence, but served a customized purpose.

**Design of the House**

The Bissing House is an eclectic derivation of the Craftsman/Bungalow style, a style with roots in the English Arts and Crafts movement and the California Bungalow promoted by Charles Sumner Greene and Henry Mather Greene. The parapets of the unique house also demonstrate a Mission design influence. The bungalow was an affordable home that adapted easily to the zoning of most cities and towns; thus, it was the most popular style for small houses in this country from around 1905 until the 1920s. The style became so popular that pre-cut homes eventually became available from mail-order companies.

The bungalow is defined as a small, nonsymmetrical one- or one-and-a-half-story house with a large front porch, low roof profile and handcrafted details. Exterior elements often include brackets supporting wide eaves, massive porch supports and a porte cochere. Common interior features usually include an open floor plan, built-in storage and prominent wood paneling and trim. All of these elements can be found in Justus Bissing's home. The house deviates, however, from traditional Bungalow form in the nearly separate second-story room. Rather than integrating the room into the house's roofline in a traditional manner, Bissing raised it above the first story and gave it its own distinct profile, bringing to mind a cupola. The addition of custom art glass and inlays in the interior elevates the residence to the original goals of the Craftsman style by further contributing Bissing's artistic personalization to the house.

Bissing invested a lifetime of talents in his last home. The thoughtful design, distinctive exterior features and detailed woodwork in the interior all contribute to this very unique property. The houses that Bissing built for himself were more detail-oriented than those built for his clients; this house is no exception. The small home continues to retain the integrity of its design and location.

Alterations, most of which are reversible, have not seriously affected the house's integrity. Its interior and exterior appearance are much the same as in historic photographs.

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**Design of the Service Station**

The independent plan of the Tower Service Station is an eclectic vernacular design that appears to draw inspiration from the much earlier Queen Anne style, with its irregular roofline, tower and combination of wall materials. Its design was likely an attempt to blend in with the surrounding residential neighborhood, yet the tower would have drawn attention to the building as a place of business.

The Tower Service Station can be identified within the House type of gas stations, as identified by John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle in *The Gas Station in America*.<sup>10</sup> During the 1920s, oil companies branched out into residential neighborhoods, seeking customers, as well as inclusion in neighborhoods. It was believed that gas stations that blended into the surroundings would be better accepted. Thus began the trend of creating a gas station that resembled a small house. Most of these stations typically contained small offices, one or two storage rooms and public restrooms.

The Tower Service Station has been remodeled several times to allow its use after the relocation of U.S. Highway 40. The building today retains much of its integrity in form and materials due to maintenance provided by the current owners. It remains a viable building and is a significant part of the proposed historic district.

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<sup>10</sup> John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle. *The Gas Station in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 137.

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**Justus Bissing, Jr. Historic District**  
**Ellis County, Kansas**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The proposed district is located on Lots three and four in the southeast quarter of Section 32, Township 12 South, Range 18 West. The district is bounded on the north by 12<sup>th</sup> Street, on the east by Elm Street and on the south and west by adjacent property lines.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries include the property historically associated with the land purchased and developed by Justus Bissing, Jr. in 1920.

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Control by USGS and USC&amp;GS

Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown

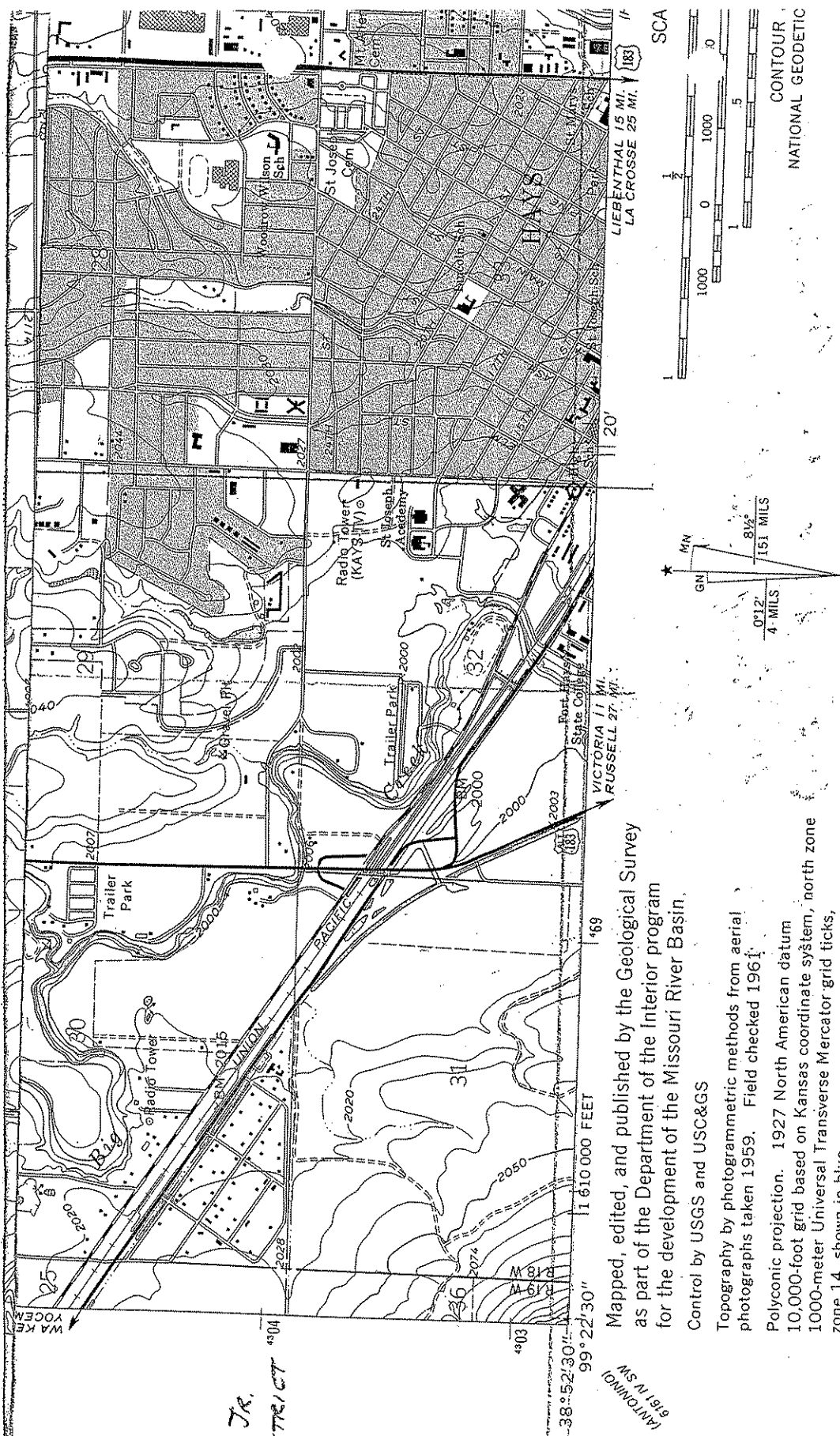
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983

remove the projection lines 3 meters north and 32 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

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