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## THE STAUDER FAMILY'S ARCHITECTURAL DYNASTY

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*by David J. Simmons*

For more than twelve decades, five generations of the Stauder family have offered architectural services in St. Louis and its surrounding communities. Joseph Stauder established this architectural dynasty in 1890 when his contracting company began providing architectural services to his clients. Today the firm survives as Stauder and Associates. Eventually they achieved community recognition for their excellent institutional design work especially for the Roman Catholic Church. While the firm came to focus on institutional work, they did process at the same time a wide variety of different architectural projects. One of the firm's most important and productive periods evolved during the architectural practice of Adolph Stauder, Joseph's son, from 1921 to 1960. Both Adolph's son Arthur and grandson Arthur, Jr. joined the firm during this period and participated in its creativity. Church design proved to be Stauder's most important contribution to St. Louis' architectural achievement.

In 1874 Joseph Stauder (1848-1926) started his St. Louis contracting business and added architectural services to his operation sixteen years later. When his two sons Joseph P. Stauder (1870 to 1935) and Adolph Stauder (1879 to 1967) joined the operation, he provided them with training. Adolph received additional training from St. Joseph's College at Teutopolis, Illinois, St. Louis Museum of Fine Arts, and the Chicago Art Institute. During Adolph's absence from the firm between 1900 and 1903 he served as a draughtsman in the offices of several prominent Chicago architects. After his return to his father's business, it became known as Joseph Stauder and Sons. When the father retired from the firm in 1912, the two brothers continued the operation until 1915 following the dissolution of their partnership. Afterward, Adolph spent one year in Detroit, Michigan doing free-lance work for various local architects. Upon his return to St. Louis, he rendered architectural services for several St. Louis architects during the next four years.

Then in 1921 he founded his own architectural firm. A year

later Arthur Stauder (1903 to 1976), his son, entered the firm as a draughtsman following his completion of an architectural program at Washington University. By 1926 the names of both father and son appeared as architects on the firm's building permits. A fourth generation of the family, Arthur Stauder Junior (1930 to 2000) became part of the business in 1953. Like his father, he had received an architectural degree from Washington University. Upon finishing architectural studies at Kansas State University, Daniel Stauder, the fifth generation, started working in 1995 for the Stauder architectural team.

According to the St. Louis Daily Record, the architectural team of Adolph and Arthur Stauder processed more than 320 architectural projects from 1921 through 1960. Residential work accounted for roughly 38 percent of this total or 121 commissions involving some 170 homes. Another 38 percent or 125 projects representing about 150 buildings dealt with institutional work. Most of these came from some aspect of the Roman Catholic Church, be it parish, college, hospital, etc. Retail store related structures accounted for eleven percent of the total with 37 commissions and a like number of buildings. Tenements garnered ten percent with 32 commissions and 60 buildings. Among their miscellaneous projects were several mortuaries such as Hoffmeister Mortuary at 4016 Chippewa (1931) and several movie houses such as the Avalon Theater at 4225 South Kingshighway (1935).

With the Second World War dividing this 40 year period into two segments, in the pre-war era the single family home dominated the firm's production, but in the post-war era, the institutional project shaped the firm's direction. Residential commissions reached their peak during the 1930's, declined in the 1940's, and vanished in the early 1950's. Stauder housing targeted for the most part middle and upper middle class families who wanted to live in the southwest quadrant of St. Louis or the middle and south areas of St. Louis County. Of the 170 plus Stauder houses, 30 dwellings had county addresses ranging from University City south to Mehlville including the Sunset Hills and Webster Groves areas.

Some of their finest city residential work lines the streets around Francis Park in the St. Louis Hills development and across from Carondelet Park in the Holly Hills subdivision.

Of the 40 homes built in the Hills, 24 of them predate the Second World War and the remainder between 1945 and 1950. Pre-war housing averages \$8,500 a unit with the most expensive house costing \$14,000. After the war each housing unit exceeded \$10,000 with some house costing as much as \$25,000. The greatest concentration of Stauder housing appears on Itaska at these eight addresses – 5852 (1931), 5856 (1935), 5873 (1933), 5877 (1935), 5882 (1936), 6232 (1936), 6736 (1947), and 6765 (1946). One block over, Murdoch lists six Stauder residences – 6337 (1946), 6370 (1933), 6449 (1937), 6459 (1937), 6473 (1936) and 6503 (1936). An additional list of Stauder homes in the area consists of:

1. Residence for St. Louis Hills Realty at 6203 Walsh, 1932
2. Residence for W.C. Heyde at 5373 Donovan, 1935
3. Residence for Robert G. Warner at 5017 Donovan, 1935
4. Residence for F. Roth at 5846 Delor, 1936
5. Residence for Felix Kinsley at 5300 Tamm, 1941
6. Residence for St. Louis Hills Realty at 6744 Neosho, 1941
7. Residence for L.N. Jakobert, 6761 Devonshire, 1946
8. Residence for Michael Mantia, 9 Willmore Road, 1947
9. Residence for H. Higgenbotham, 6053 Childress, 1948
10. Residence for Ralph Bentsinger, 6435 Kinsey Place, 1948

Seventeen dwellings in the Holly Hills subdivision reflect the design work of the Stauder architects. Six of these houses reside on Federer Place and four of them on Holly Hills Blvd. Good examples of the firm's creativity in this area include:

1. Residence for O. Meissner at 3860 Federer Place, 1929
2. Residence for W.E. Beckman at 3938 Federer Place, 1929
3. Residence for Elmer Gast at 3838 Federer Place, 1933
4. Residence for J. Foristel at 6212 Arendes Drive, 1935
5. Residence for Virginia McCarthey at 3800 Bowen, 1935
6. Residence for Birdie Strauss at 6204 Marwinette, 1936
7. Residence for A.L. Nabit at 3960 Wilmington, 1939
8. Residence for Arthur Stauder at 4050 Holly Hills, 1950

Remaining Stauder-designed single housing stock spreads across the city from 4205 Flora Place to 6211 Arundel Place.



4205 Flora Place

Their residential design work depended on an updated version of the various traditional styles. Using a simplified format coupled with a fluid line, their work achieved a streamlined look indicative of the 1920's and 1930's. In preparing a plan they often mixed several different styles together. But they earned their greatest success with a modified Tudor design suggesting a Teutonic presence. These designs enjoyed support from the families of St. Louis' German community. Reminiscent of the Hansel and Gretel-type cottages popular during this period, Stauder homes often used brick construction with rough cut limestone trim, a steep pitched gable roof covered with tile, an asymmetrical arrangement, and castle-type devices such as towers and turrets. One such device was a tower main entrance. In addition, they favored the Art Deco style for single residences as well as store building and tenements during the 1930's.

Institutional commissions brought to the firm financial success and community recognition for their excellent design capacity. Beginning in 1926 with a new school for Our Lady of Sorrows parish, they tallied through 1960 a total of 53 new parochial schools and 14 parochial school additions, all for the Catholic Church except for one structure intended for Timothy Lutheran. New school total racked up 6 high schools. Both Webster University and Notre Dame College campuses had buildings created by the Stauders. Beside schools and churches, their parish efforts resulted in 16 new convents and 3 convent additions, 14 new rectories and 2 rectory additions, and 11 new gyms. The total number of their religious structures exceeded 150.

Church design remains the most important contribution to local architecture made by the firm during the tenure of Adolph Stauder (1921 to 1967). It encompasses seven major churches in St. Louis city, six churches in St. Louis County, and ten houses of worship in Illinois and out-state Missouri. A typical Stauder church exhibits an uneven or gabled roof, an attached or free-standing bell tower, narrow or large vertical windows, a contrast of low and tall volumes, a prominent main entrance area, and a vaulted ceiling. Three of the city churches follow the traditional approach while the remaining city worship centers employ a modern idiom. Traditional design prevails at three city Catholic churches – Our Lady of Sorrows (1927), St. Mary Magdalene (1939), and St. Raphael (1962).

Located at 5831 South Kingshighway at Rhodes Avenue, Our Lady of Sorrows has an orange and beige brick exterior trimmed with grey limestone columns and red terra cotta complete with a red tile roof. An Italian Romanesque jewel, this church measures 64 feet across the front to a depth of 198 feet. A tall arcaded portico crosses the entire front of the church, above a circular window dominates the fenestration, and a gabled tile roof frames the top of the





*Our Lady of Sorrows (1927) 5831 South Kingshighway  
photo by Mark Abeln*

church. On the right side of the church about 60 feet in the rear along Rhodes Avenue, a magnificent campanile rises to a height of 150 feet. Construction costs exceeded \$200,000.

Nearby, the Art Deco St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church at 4924 Bancroft Avenue fronts on the west side of South Kingshighway for 67 feet to a depth of 136 feet. Covered with a limestone exterior, the church has two main entrances, an entry on either side of the front. A large carved cross placed at the center acts as a focus for the church front. On the left side near the front, a large spire rises from the gable tile roof. Clerestory windows on the church side walls have unusual shallow Gothic arches. Porches at either end of the front house side entrances opening into the church vestibule.



*St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church, 4924 Bancroft Avenue*

On 6000 Jamison Avenue in the St. Louis Hills development, the St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church follows a Colonial Revival design.



*St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church, (1962),  
6000 Jamieson Avenue photo by Mark Abeln*

A red brick T-shaped configuration, it features two main entrances, each with a four white Doric column portico. While the Jamieson entry/portico sits in the center of the church front, the other entry/portico exists on the left side of the church at the rear in front of the building extension. To the right of this side entrance extension an attached bell tower fills the junction between the extension and the main sanctuary. Fenestration for this gabled roof structure highlights round and round-headed windows.



*St. Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Church, (1950),  
6303 Nottingham Avenue photo by Mark Abeln*

The plan for the St. Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Church at 6303 Nottingham Avenue shows the Stauder firm's move from traditional ideas to modern architecture. Reminiscent of Gothic Revival and Art Deco, the church now assumes the look of the Mid Century Modern style. Clad with a limestone exterior, the multi-level church (150 feet by 133 feet) displays a two level fan-shaped configuration and a multi-level bell tower attached to the left side of the church



front. The rocket-shaped tower has Art Deco lines. Three main entrances in rectangular frames, above a stone carving of St. Gabriel, flanked by two narrow rectangular windows on either side, and a gabled roof at the top characterize the church front. A fan shaped arrangement seats one thousand people in the sanctuary. Church records list the building cost in 1950 at \$600,000.



*St. Joan of Arc (1958), 5800 Oleatha Avenue  
photo by Mark Abeln*

Finished in 1958, the St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church at 5800 Oleatha Avenue fronts one block south on Pernod. This Mid-Century Modern church of buff brick has an L-shape design with the building turning to the left at its rear. Without windows the church front employs a centered deep framed area housing the church main entrance on street level and above a colorful mosaic depicting St. Joan of Arc. A low gabled roof covers the church. To the right of the church stands a side entrance enclosed mostly by glass and accessible by a drive through porch. In the same area is a free-standing bell tower with a decorated top and edge framing. Long narrow windows on the church side walls extend vertically to the roof line.

Erected just after the Civil War in 1867 for \$75,000, the English Gothic old St. Nicholas Catholic Church owed its existence to the architectural firm of Mitchell (John) and Debonne. The new St. Nicholas Catholic Church, its replacement, opened in 1960. Another Mid-Century Modern design, this beige brick structure at 1801-27 Lucas Avenue places its two main entrances at the sides of the church rather than in the front. Both flat and uneven roofing with over-hang replace the usual gabled roof. A multi-level front shows a tall sanctuary, a short wing on either side, and a high tower behind the right wing. Front façade decoration depends on vertical fenestration. Around the top of the sanctuary a continuous horizontal window gives the appearance of a floating roof. The church's attached tower has a space needle spire, and uneven roof with overhang, and a central reticulated panel extending upward to the top of the tower.



*St. Stephen Protomartyr (1963), 3949 Wilmington Avenue  
photo by Mark Abeln*

The 1963 sanctuary of St. Stephen Protomartyr Catholic Church at 3949 Wilmington Avenue has a futuristic look. Its main features include an A-frame roof, a deeply recessed front, and a free-standing open bell tower with a rocket-type spire. A wide central front entrance supports a six panel vertical window extending up to the roof line. A porch at the right side of the church shelters a side entrance. Supported by six vertical piers, the unattached open tower to the right of church contains three shelves and a like number of bells. Modified Tudor style windows fill the side walls of the church.

Of less importance, two other city worship centers reflect the Stauder architectural touch. One of these is St. John's Lutheran Church at 3738 Morgan Ford Road. This 1927 sanctuary uses Gothic Revival ideas. The other house of worship is a 1941 Art Deco structure for the Southside Society of Unity located at 3616 Bates Street.

Between 1930 and 1967 St. Louis County served as the site for six new Stauder Catholic churches. Both St. Andrews Catholic Church at 323 Hoffmeister Avenue in Lemay and All Souls Catholic Church at 9550 Tennyson Avenue in Overland use designs rooted in traditional architecture. Cast in the Lombard Romanesque style, the 1930 St. Andrews resembles a simplified version of the earlier Our Lady of Sorrows Church. Without a portico across the front, this church places greater emphasis on its three main entrances. The campanile moves to the front of the church on the right. It converts the round window into a rose window and uses bracketing to support the tile gabled roof. Two niches on the front façade, each holds a sculpture with the Virgin Mary and Baby Jesus on the west side and St. Andrew to the east.

Conceived in the Gothic Revival style, All Souls covers its exterior with broken ashlar Wisconsin Lannon stone trimmed with Indiana Limestone for all aperture framing.



Three part front locates its two main entrances at either end of the building. Central section has three lancet windows at the clerestory over three rectangle windows on ground level. An attached tower rises from the gable slate roof on the right side of the church. This 1950 church cost \$500,000.



*St. Andrews Catholic Church (1930), 323 Hoffmeister Avenue  
photo by Mark Abeln*



*All Souls Catholic Church (1950), 9550 Tennyson Avenue  
photo by Mark Abeln*

Mid-Century Modern architecture inspires the designs for all four remaining Stauder churches. Two of them – St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church at 4550 Telegraph Road in Oakville and St. Dominic Savio at 7748 Mackenzie Road in Affton employ designs with modest proportions and simple exteriors. Completed in 1952, the buff and brown brick St. Francis has squared top openings framed with limestone.

Its cruciform arrangement makes use of steep gable roofing and a three-part front. Church's main entrance with three lancet windows above in the clerestory occupy the center area of the front. On the right side a square tower culminates with an octagon shape top. Four bays using square windows decorate each church side wall.



*St. Dominic Savio Catholic Church (1957), 323 Hoffmeister Ave.  
photo by Mark Abeln*

Five years later St. Dominic's appears on the east side of Mackenzie Road facing west. An A-frame roof filled with a stain glass front sits on a one story orange brick base punctuated with twelve small windows across its front. A pyramidal spire straddles the ridge of the gabled roof. Church entry comes through a one story glass and metal entry area to the left of the sanctuary.



*St. Clement Catholic Church (1965), 1508 Bopp Road  
photo by Mark Abeln*

A striking and imaginative Stauder church, St. Clement Catholic Church at 1508 Bopp Road in Des Peres presents a circular sanctuary in twelve sections composed of tan brick, exterior concrete and stain glass. Exposed concrete and stain glass in a reticulated pattern fills each section. A gabled roof over each section radiates from the roof center upon which resides a vertical spire. A brick wall with decorative concrete inserts encloses a square open courtyard



surrounding the sanctuary. Church's main entrance is at the rear of the sanctuary. Behind the church complex on the left side exists an open unattached bell tower supported by three vertical piers.



*Holy Redeemer Catholic Church (1962), 347 East Lockwood Ave.  
photo by Mark Abeln*

In 1962 the Holy Redeemer Catholic Church at 347 East Lockwood Avenue in Webster Groves hires the Stauder firm to design a replacement church for them. Fire ravaged their previous church in 1948. Their earlier church built in 1897 owes its existence to the architectural firm of Barnett, Haynes, & Barnett. Facing Lockwood, the replacement church has a slightly indented front composed of limestone and glass exterior. It houses the main church entrance at its center and a large six panel vertical window which extends up to the low gabled roof. To the right of the church front near the Joy Avenue intersection stands an open unattached tower supported by four vertical piers and three shelves and bells. The church side walls consist of a limestone paneled clerestory and framed stain glass for the ground level. At the far end of the church, recessed area contains the high altar.

Between 1930 and 1960 the Stauders supplied plans for many churches in communities surrounding the St. Louis area in both Missouri and Illinois. A partial listing of these churches includes:

1. Sacred Heart Catholic Church, New Franklin, MO, 1938
2. Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Eighth and Pine, Poplar Bluff, MO, 1941
3. St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, Luebbering, MO, 1945
4. Catholic Rural Life Church, New Melle, MO, 1945
5. St. Benedict Catholic Church, Doniphan, MO, 1947
6. Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Owensville, MO, 1948
7. St. Cecelia Catholic Church, Meta, MO, 1950
8. St. Mary Goretti Catholic Church, East Prairie, MO, 1951
9. St. Mary Catholic Church, Eldorado, IL, 1952

10. St. Charles Catholic Church, West Alton, MO, 1957
11. St. Patrick Catholic Church, Vogel and Summit, East St. Louis, IL, 1955
12. St. Albert Catholic Church, French Village, East St. Louis, IL, 1955

After Adolph's death in 1967, the firm, under the guidance of Arthur and Arthur, Jr. and later Daniel, continued to create church designs of exceptional merit. Evidence of this achievement can be found in the following list of works completed by this team:

1. Christ Community Lutheran Church, 1 Christ Church Way, Columbia, IL
2. Church of Our Lady (Catholic), 1550 St. Mary Lane, Festus, MO
3. Holy Spirit Catholic Church, 3130 Parkwood Lane, Maryland Heights, MO
4. Holy Trinity Catholic Church, 505 Fountains Parkway, Fairview Heights, IL
5. Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Dardenne Prairie, MO
6. Peace Lutheran Church, 737 Barracksview Road, Mehlville, MO
7. St. Boniface Catholic Church, 110 North Buchanan, Edwardsville, IL
8. St. Catherine Labouré Catholic Church, 9750 Sappington Road, Sappington, MO
9. St. Gerard Majella Catholic Church, 1969 Dougherty Ferry, Kirkwood, MO
10. St. Joseph Catholic Church, 6024 Old Antonia Road, Imperial, MO
11. St. Margaret Mary Alacoque Catholic Church, 4900 Ringer Road, Oakville, MO
12. St. Simon the Apostle Catholic Church, 11019 Mueller Road, Concord Village, MO



*St. Margaret Mary Alacoque (1992), Oakville  
photo by Mark Abeln*

Designated as the Stauder touch, the firm's creative genius flows through the designs for all these churches. Sometimes striking but always imaginative, designs with the Stauder touch impart a sense of drama, a quest for originality, a focus on detail, and an integration of architectural ideas within a single work or a progression of works. Proficient at a wide range of building types and styles, they have earned the most public praise for their church designs in the Modern style. Besides churches, their talent spills over in the creation of schools, residences, movie theaters, business structures, and other building types.

We celebrate the Stauder dynasty – its achievement, its longevity, and its design genius (Stauder touch). Recognition of the important place held by this dynasty in St. Louis architectural history is long overdue.



*Immaculate Conception (2001), Dardenne Prairie  
photo by Mark Abeln*

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## **DAVID JAN SIMMONS 1938-2021**

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David received his eternal promotion Tuesday, December 14th, 2021. He was born April 23rd, 1938 in St. Louis; The son of Buford and Estelle (Walters) Simmons. Raised with loving care by his Aunt Ruth Walters,

David graduated from Roosevelt High School, Oklahoma Baptist University and received his Master's degree from the University of Denver. Prior to his college education, David proudly served for two years in the United States Army.

David was employed for many years as an Education Auditor for the Veteran's Administration. Following his retirement at the age of 59, David pursued his deep interest in St. Louis architectural history, becoming one of the foremost sources of knowledge and research expertise in this field.



David's Christian faith and service have been a very significant part of his life. Growing up in the Shaw neighborhood, David made a personal profession of faith in Christ as a teenager at the Compton Heights Baptist Church and continued that commitment throughout his life. He served in many capacities of leadership including Deacon and Sunday School teacher and, more recently, as the coordinator of senior adult activities (Hilltoppers) at the First Baptist Church of Affton. He has loved singing hymns and, more recently, enjoyed singing the songs of well known Broadway musicals.

David is survived by his Uncle Kenny Walters and his family of St. Louis, many cousins in Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia. And his wonderful friend, Dan Gremminger, who has always been there to assist David, and whom David has often expressed, "Dan is like a son to me.", and his many friends who have often said, "He is one of a kind!".

David had numerous articles published through the Society of Architectural Historians- St. Louis Chapter. A review of the Chapter's NewsLetters reveals that from 1997 to 2021, 41 articles of his were published. This article is David's forty-second, and one he had long hoped be printed.

As prolific as he was, David had so many more articles in various stages of completion, with meticulous research underpinning them. He leaves behind a treasure trove of architectural history and research awaiting future scholars to carry on his work. David, thank you for all of your scholarship and service to the Society of Architectural Historians-St. Louis Chapter. You will truly be missed.

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February 22, 2022

Catherine Kerr, author

Gale E. Henderson, Prominent St. Louis Architect  
March 22, 2022

Andrew Raimist, Architect

Becoming Charles Eames: St. Louis (1930-1938)

April 26, 2022

**2022 Fall**

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Preservation Research Office

Housing Blocs – Comparing Modernist Mass Housing  
Architectures Across the US and Yugoslavia

September 27, 2022

Riley Price, Executive Director, Missouri Preservation  
“Missouri Places in Peril”

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The Society of Architectural Historians  
St. Louis Chapter

# News Letter

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- Spring Issue 15 February
- Summer Issue 15 May
- Fall Issue 15 August
- Winter Issue 15 November

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The Society of Architectural Historians  
St. Louis Chapter  
Post Office Box 23110  
St. Louis, MO 63108