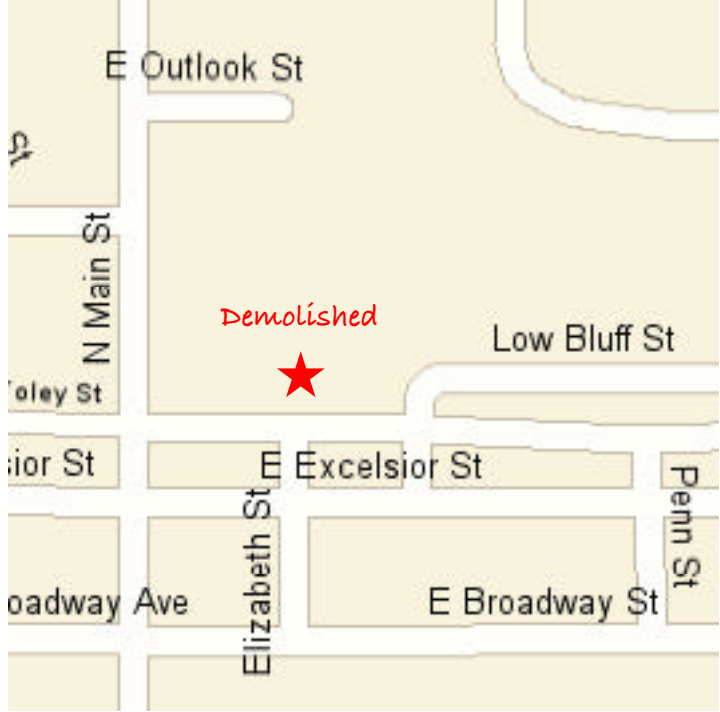


EXCELSIOR SPRINGS HISTORIC RESOURCES

Resource No. 1

<p>1. Property name, present Spa View Nursing Home</p> <p>Property name, historic Ball Sanitarium Building; Castle Rock Hotel; Link's Soda & Sulpho Salt Well</p> <p>2. Address/location 120 E. Bluff Excelsior Springs, MO</p> <p>3. Owner's name and address</p> <p>4. Building Structure Site Object</p> <p>5. Use, present Demolished after survey</p> <p>Use, original Hotel; Health clinic</p>	<p>6. Location Map</p> 
<p>7. Date of construction (or estimate) ca. 1900-1905; plus additions</p> <p>8. Changes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Addition <input type="checkbox"/> Moved</p> <p>9. Architect/engineer/designer</p> <p>10. Contractor/builder/craftsman</p> <p>11. Style: High Style Elements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vernacular</p>	<p>12. Plan Shape Irregular</p> <p>13. Number of stories 5 & 3</p> <p>14. Roof type and material Flat</p> <p>15. Type of construction Frame & steel beam</p> <p>16. Exterior material(s) Stucco; stone</p> <p>17. Foundation material(s) Limestone</p> <p>18. Porch(es) Stoop & recessed</p>

19. Additional physical description

120 E. Bluff was constructed in three phases. The westernmost portion was built first, and today is 3 stories tall. The first story is random ashlar, quarry-faced limestone, and is really more of a very high foundation. The 2nd story is stucco, and has small, 6/1 windows. The 3rd story has a recessed porch with turned wood supports and metal balustrade. There are entry doors from the building to the porch. The wall surface is not flat, with a bay window and other variations in the wall. At the southwest corner, the remainder of the former tower is still in evidence. This portion of the building is in fair to poor condition.

The central portion of 120 E. Bluff serves as the main entry to the building. It is three bays wide, and five stories tall. The front (south) elevation is faced with random ashlar, quarry-faced limestone. Engaged stone pilasters divide the structure vertically. There are two entry doors on the 1st story - one had double wood doors with glass lights, and transom above. The other entry door is single, with sidelights and transom above. There is a

flat roof, metal stoop porch covering, with the words “Spa View Nursing Home”. Both entries and the two windows on the 1st story are in arched window openings, as are all the windows in this central portion. The 2nd through 5th windows are paired, wood frame, 1/1, set within a triangular arched opening with stone voussoirs and keystone. The cornice area is accentuated by projecting stone belt courses both above and below, and has a carved stone panel denoting the Ball Health Clinic, and a parapet top. The upper west elevation of this central portion have been covered with stucco.

The easternmost portion of 120 E. Bluff is five bays wide on the lower levels, and is also 5 stories tall. However, due to the parapet roof of the central portion, the roofline appears to be set slightly lower. The windows on the 1st through 3rd floors are paired, single sash, and set within large square openings. The 4th and 5th story windows are single, narrow, each with four lights. All windows in this portion have stone courses serving as sill and lintel. Engaged stone pilasters vertically divide this portion into three sections.

20. Description of environment and outbuildings.

Elizabeth Street leads directly to the front of the Spa View Nursing Home. Bluff provides parking for visitors and staff. The topography rises dramatically behind (to the north) of the structure. A vacant lot is west of Elizabeth, between Bluff and Excelsior. To the east of Elizabeth, the remnants of the stone pavilion for Link’s Soda and Sulpho Salt well remain. It is a circular balustrade, of square-cut, random ashlar, quarry faced limestone. There are four openings, which have concrete sidewalks and steps leading from them. Flanking each entry are stone piers (total, eight). In the center, a circular well has been covered. This area is surrounded by grass and overgrown trees and shrubs. A stone retaining wall leads eastward from the main structure along Bluff.

21. History and significance

The original, western portion of this structure was constructed between 1900 and 1905. It served as the Hotel Castle Rock, and was one of the four 1st class hotels in Excelsior Springs. It was a frame Queen Anne style hotel, with stone foundation, towers and full length, multi-story front porch. By 1926, Dr. Samuel Ball had purchased the hotel, added the 5-story central stone section, and had enlarged the original Castle Rock structure to five stories.

Dr. Samuel Ball came to Excelsior Springs in 1918 and opened his private practice on Broadway. He stayed at the clinic in 1919 when he purchased the 12-room cottage across the street. He later purchased the Castle Rock Hotel with the intention to enlarge it. He subsequently built the building at the northeast corner of Elizabeth and E. Broadway, and eventually the Ball Clinic included seven buildings. His program of treatment incorporated the use of mineral waters. Dr. Ball, who operated the clinic with his son, C.B. Ball, eventually drilled four wells. After the construction of the Hall of Waters though, he used water supplied by the city-owned system. Dr. Ball published a book on low and high blood pressure, although the clinic itself specialized in the treatment of arthritis and rheumatism (colonic and other disorders were also treated). The use of the waters was accompanied by massage. The clinic advertised that the prescriptions for the baths and waters were free. He also operated the Ball Health School in Colfax, Iowa. Both institutions were “non-medical and non-surgical”.

Dr. Ball retired from active management in 1953, and died in 1956. In the early 1960’s, as the Arthritis and Rheumatism Foundation became skeptical of health clinics such as this, business began to drop off. Legislation was passed denying these clinics the right to advertise, but the most damaging blow was an article written by Ralph Lee Smith in the August 24, 1963 issue of the *Saturday Evening Post*. It focused specifically on the Ball Clinic. A reporter came to the clinic with false symptoms and wrote the scathing article “The Hucksters of Pain”. The clinic subsequently closed its doors on December 31, 1963.

Originally a brick structure enclosed the wells of Link’s Soda and Sulpho Salt. This was razed, and the partially extant stone pavilion was built. The waters were advertised as: Saline (Chloride), Soda (Chloro-Carbonate), and Calcic (Sulphato-Carbonate).

The present day Spa View has been razed and is no longer an architectural representation of the Excelsior Springs property type “Hotels - 1st Class”. However, it was noted in Wolfenbarger’s survey that the alterations had achieved their own historic significance over time, especially as representative of the large complex that

served as the Ball Clinic, Sanitarium, and Health School. The Ball Health buildings were very significant to the history of Excelsior Springs. It illustrated to the extent to which the local economy was dependent upon the mineral waters and health industry. The Ball Clinic was one of the largest employers in Excelsior Springs. Even the demise of the town's economy was centered around the Ball Clinic, as it was one which was singled out in the Saturday Evening Post article in 1963. Not just the Ball Clinic, but the entire town suffered the repercussions from the expose. Although the alterations reduced 120 E. Bluff's architectural integrity, a strong argument could have been made for extending the period of significance to 1963, had the building survived.

22. Sources of information.

Sanborn maps. City directories. "Ball Clinic", "Castlerock" files, Excelsior Springs Historical Museum. *A History of the Mineral Water Springs and Wells*, Excelsior Springs Historical Museum, 1968.

23. Prepared by

Deon Wolfenbarger
 Three Gables Preservation
 9550 NE Cookingham Drive
 Kansas City, MO 64157

24. Date of survey

July, 1991

25.

On National Register
 Eligible for listing
 Individual
 District
 Local designation
 Eligible for local designation

23B. Updated by

Excelsior Springs HPC
 City of Excelsior Springs
 101 E. Broadway
 Excelsior Springs, MO 64024

24B. Date of survey

January, 2005

25B.

Demolished

26. Negative: roll #

frame #



Castle Rock Hotel, 120 E. Bluff, pictured at left. Building at right is the Ball Clinic building. Both are demolished.