Planning of Jefferson City
St. Louis Post-Dispatch  February 8, 1938

Are your public buildings, such as courthouse, fire stations, city hall, public library, etc., conveniently and effectively located? Have you convinced the people of your city that in a civic center the cumulative effect of the good appearance of a number of well related public buildings is far greater than the sum of the units of these buildings scattered throughout the city? Are all your public buildings located in an impressive manner; with appropriate dignity to the greatness of your city? According to the splendid manner in which European cities always place their public structures? Such a civic center becomes a rallying place of public life and crystallizes a spirit and love for a city of indomitable force in building patriotism and ambition for your town.

An open square around a public building, a handsome structure placed on the axis of a broad approaching street, stately monument, a beautiful fountain, or colonnade gives distinction and civic magnetism. A great civic, state or national building must have appropriate open spaces to give a setting of dignity and popular appeal.

We must always think of future buildings in our plans. We must always remember the impression of an orderly arrangement in buildings on the generations to come. No public authority should dare to place any structure without due regard to the final plan of the whole ensemble of present and future buildings.

Have you created in your city or town impressive architecture, masterful highways, wide residential areas of appeal and charm, which demand the attention and hold the respect of your visitor, imprinting an indelible picture in his memory; bringing him to you again and again? Have you created a civic order and beauty that has grappled the hearts and love of your citizenry in a manner that they will never, for long, leave the city they call their own?

Have you given a quiet domestic character to your purely residential streets? So designed as to discourage business traffic; so adapted to the topography as to create interesting home sites; affording best currents of air; preserving the best views and most desirable orientation of the house; assuring harmonious environment to which the owner of every home is entitled? The term ‘backyard’ should be unknown and replaced by the ‘gardenside’ of the home – a real living lawn in which the children may safely play and the family may enjoy the great outdoors.

As I understand it, a careful plan has been made for the grouping of the state buildings in Jefferson City. Certainly our capital should be an inspiration and an example for every city and town in our state! If the Missouri Office Building is placed contrary to plan, our whole state will suffer for generations to come. The taxpayers have expended
an immense amount of money for the erection of one of the most beautiful of all capital buildings in the nation. Its splendid setting should be preserved and improved. Immediate, or shortsighted policy may tie us down to an incongruous plan which may never be remedied. The approaches and view of all our state structures should be preserved.

The whole patriotic impulse and state pride of our commonwealth; the regard for the enforcement of law; the very spirit of service to community and state is affected by an orderly, inspiring arrangement of the governmental structures of our people.

Fortunately, the frame of our capital city – Jefferson City – is still plastic; it is not hardened beyond repair. Its sweeping view of the Missouri River; its valleys and hills; all the elements of a well-planned city, may still be directed into a carefully planned city of broad civic and state appeal.

The officials having to do with the decision as to the location of every new building within its limits have a great responsibility and they should not ignore a comprehensive plan as to location of any one of our public buildings.

They have the opportunity to locate these buildings where they will stir the hearts of all of our citizens; bring visitors from afar and make every man, woman and child in Missouri proud of our capital city.

The saddest words in city planning are, “too late.” But, we still have the chance to make Jefferson City a capital, embodying the fundamental principles of a well-related, orderly city, recognizing that an absolute essential in the expenditure of public money for structures is the obligation to serve humanity through the centuries.

The J.C. Nichols Company Records (KC106) – Speech JCN049

Arguably Jesse Clyde Nichols (1880-1950) was the single most influential individual to the development of metropolitan Kansas City. Moreover his work, ideas, and philosophy of city planning and development had far-reaching impact nationally – so much so that the Urban Land Institute has established the J.C. Nichols Prize for Visionary Urban Development to recognize a person or a person representing an institution whose career demonstrates a commitment to the highest standards of responsible development.

Nichols’ objective was to “develop whole residential neighborhoods that would attract an element of people who desired a better way of life, a nicer place to live and would be willing to work in order to keep it better.” The Company under Nichols and his son, Miller Nichols (1911- ), undertook such ventures as rental housing, industrial parks, hotels, and shopping centers. Perhaps the most widely recognized Nichols Company developments are the Country Club District and the Country Club Plaza Shopping Center, reportedly the first shopping area in the United States planned to serve those arriving by automobile rather than trolley car.

The J.C. Nichols Company Records (KC106) contains both personal and business files concerning J.C. Nichols' private and business life. Included are personal correspondence, family related material, and speeches and articles written by him. Business and financial files pertain to actions of the Company, including information about different developments and the securing of art objects; and printed materials produced by and about the Company.