

---

**LAWRENCE HISTORIC RESOURCES COMMISSION**  
**ITEM NO. 3: L-12-03-08**  
**STAFF REPORT**

---

**A. SUMMARY**

**L-12-03-08:** Hold public hearing for consideration of placing the structure located at 1204 Oread Avenue, the Ecumenical Christian Ministries Building, on the Lawrence Register of Historic Places.

**B. HISTORIC REGISTER STATUS**

1204 Oread Avenue is not listed in the Register of Historic Kansas Places or the National Register of Historic Places. An application for listing in the Kansas and National registers has been submitted to the State Historic Sites Board of Review.

**C. REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS**

**1) History Summary**

The area in which the subject property is located was first mapped by the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company in 1889 on the Index map. The maps from 1897 to 1949 show the water tank to the south of the subject property and identify it as "Stand Pipe 105 X 20" and later "Stand Pipe Cap 250,000." The subject property is not identified on a detail sheet until 1927 when it is shown as vacant lots. According to the nomination, the structure was constructed in 1959 by B.A. Green Construction. Kiene & Bradley Architects from Topeka designed the structure.

The structure at 1204 Oread Avenue is significant for its association with the social history and culture of Lawrence during the 1960's and 1970's. According to the National Register nomination, the building's history "has been intricately interwoven into the history of Lawrence." The nomination identifies the ECM as an important meeting place not only for students from the University of Kansas but also for individuals and groups of the Lawrence community seeking a "safe place" to organize "to advocate for peace, justice and equality."

**2) Architectural Integrity Summary**

The structure located at 1204 Oread Avenue is architecturally significant as a good example of the Modern-style architecture that was popular in the United States from the 1940's to 1970's. The post World War II era of this style was particularly focused on the use of concrete, steel, and glass with overtures toward nature or form. Overall, the ECM building is characterized by its concrete structure and steel, glass and brick. According to the National Register nomination, the building includes "three principal masses: a two-story section with a barrel vaulted cast-in-place concrete roof; a one-story flat roof section along the south and west elevations; and a three story square tower at the southeast corner of the building." The nomination application notes minor alterations to the structure including the "L" shaped extension on the southwest side of the building that was rehabilitated in the 1980's due to a fire.

The ECM building is also significant because it maintains a high degree of architectural integrity with only minimal changes to the exterior since the completion of the original construction.

### **3) Context Description**

The area surrounding 1204 Oread Avenue is a mixture of single family residential, multi-family residential, commercial and University activities. The property is bordered by the City of Lawrence water tanks on the south, multi-family (apartment complex) to the north and west, and a parking lot to the east. The age of the extant structures in the area ranges from the late 1800's to the ongoing construction of the Oread Inn located at the corner of 12<sup>th</sup> and Indiana Street. The Oread Addition to the City of Lawrence was platted and filed before August 21, 1863 but was destroyed by the "burning of the Office of the Register of Deeds on that day" The plat was refilled on September 23, 1870. 1204 Oread Avenue occupies Block 3 lot 1 and the north ½ of lot 2 of the subdivision.

The Ecumenical Christian Ministries Building was completed in 1960. At that time, the area surrounding the ECM was significantly different than it exists today.

### **4) Planning and Zoning Considerations**

1204 Oread Avenue is zoned RM32, Multi-Dwelling Residential District. The primary purpose of the RM districts is to accommodate multi-dwelling housing. The Districts are intended to create, maintain, and promote higher density housing opportunities in areas with good transportation access. The RM districts are primarily differentiated on the basis of maximum allowed net density with the RM32 allowing 32 dwelling units per acre. The area around the subject property is zoned RM32 and U-KU (University District) with two smaller areas zoned RMO (Multi-Dwelling Residential Office) and PCD (The Oread).

The existing neighborhood plan dates to 1979 and the subject property's identified future land use is "Public/Quasi-Public." The structure located on the subject property has been a religious institution since its construction in 1959-60.

### **5) Fiscal Comments**

There are no monetary benefits directly associated with nomination of a structure to the Lawrence Register of Historic Places at this time. However, Chapter 22 of the Code of the City of Lawrence does identify mechanisms for financial incentives. If these programs become available in the future, structures listed on the Lawrence Register will be eligible for participation.

Listing on the local register does help preserve built resources important to Lawrence's history and helps to maintain streetscapes in older neighborhoods through environs reviews.

The original information submitted with nominations for properties to the Lawrence Register is kept on file in the City Planning office for public review and consultation with regard to development projects within the notification area. Copies of this information are also on file at the Kansas Collection in Spencer Research Library on the University of Kansas main campus and at the Watkin's Community Museum. This type of information is useful, for example, if present or future property owners seek nomination to the State or National Register of Historic Places.

This property is concurrently being considered for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. If listed, the property may be eligible for State Rehabilitation Tax Credits and other funding sources tied to National Register listing.

## **6) Positive/Negative Effects of the Designation**

The positive effect of designation is the creation of a permanent record of the historical significance of an individual property, for its architectural quality or its association with a significant local individual or event. This provides the local Historic Resources Commission, an advisory board, with pertinent historical data which can help to provide an 'historic' perspective to property owners when they desire to improve, add on, or redevelop a property within an older section of the City.

The public accessibility of this information is also a resource as it can be used by realtors, builders/developers, and others in the community prior to a property's resale, redevelopment or rehabilitation. In a more general sense, this information can be used by the Chamber of Commerce and existing businesses and industries to 'identify' one of the facets that makes up Lawrence's *Quality of Living*.

Additional effects of designation are the creation of an arbitrary, 250' environs notification and review area. Within this 250' circle, projects which require city permits, e.g., demolition, redevelopment, renovation or modification, require review by Historic Resources staff or the Commission. These environs reviews permit analysis of proposed development/redevelopment by individuals sensitive to historic preservation.

A *Certificate of Appropriateness* or a *Certificate of Economic Hardship* is required to be issued by the Historic Resources Commission before a City permit can be issued for the proposed project. If the Historic Resources Commission denies a *Certificate of Appropriateness* or a *Certificate of Economic Hardship*, the property owner can appeal to the City Commission for a new hearing. The City Commission can uphold the decision of the HRC or it can grant the proposed development over the Historic Resources Commission's action.

The local ordinance 250' environs review area is exceeded by State law with regard to State and/or National Register properties. Certificates of Appropriateness or Economic Hardship are required for a project within the 250' radius of a Local Register property.

Examples of projects which would require review and approval are: projects involving the exterior building which are considered 'structural' changes, demolitions or partial demolitions, rezonings, replats, site plans, variance requests or other items which require a city permit or are the direct result of an action of the City Commission. Many actions requiring a city permit can be administratively approved by the Historic Resources Administrator.

## **7) Summary of Applicable Designation Criteria**

Chapter 22, of the City Code is the *Conservation of Historic Resources Code* for the City of Lawrence.

Section 22-403 of this code establishes criteria for the evaluation of an application for nomination to the Local Register of Historic Places.

#### **D. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION AND DESIGNATION - Section 22-403**

Nine criteria are provided within this section for review and determination of qualification as a Landmark or Historic District. These criteria are set forth below with staff's recommendations as to which this application qualifies for:

***(1) Its character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the community, county, state, or nation;***

The structure located at 1204 Oread Avenue is significant for its association with the social development of Lawrence and particularly the events of associated with the civil rights, anti war, feminism, and gay and lesbian movements.

***(2) Its location as a site of a significant local, county, state, or national event;***

***(3) Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community, county, state, or nation;***

***(4) Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, type, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials;***

The structure at 1204 Oread Avenue is architecturally significant as a good example of Modern architecture and is important when studying the evolution of architectural styles in Lawrence.

***(5) Its identification as a work of a master builder, designer, architect, or landscape architect whose individual work has influenced the development of the community, county, state or nation;***

***(6) Its embodiment of elements of design, detailing, materials, or craftsmanship that render it architecturally significant;***

As a good example of Modern architecture, 1204 Oread Avenue contains elements of design, detailing, materials, and craftsmanship that render it architecturally significant.

***(7) Its embodiment of design elements that make it structurally or architecturally innovative;***

***(8) Its unique location or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature;***

***(9) Its character as a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian structure; including, but not limited to farmhouses, gas stations, or other commercial structures, with a high level of integrity or architectural significance.***

-----

The HISTORIC RESOURCES CODE establishes a procedure to follow in the forwarding of a

recommendation to the City Commission on applications for listing on the local register.

*"Following the hearing the commission shall adopt by resolution a recommendation to be submitted to the city commission for either (a) designation as a landmark or historic district; (b) not to designate as a landmark or historic district; or, (c) not to make a recommendation. The resolution shall be accompanied by a report to the city commission containing the following information:*

The Historic Resources Commission needs to formulate its recommendation in response to the following subsections section 22-404.2 (b):

- (1) *Explanation of the significance or lack of significance of the nominated landmark or historic district as it relates to the criteria for designation as set forth in section 22-403;*
- (2) *Explanation of the integrity or lack of integrity of the nominated landmark or historic district;*
- (3) *In the case of a nominated landmark found to meet the criteria for designation:*
  - (A) *The significant exterior architectural features of the nominated landmark that should be protected; and,*
  - (B) *The types of construction, alteration, demolition, and removal, other than those requiring a building or demolition permit, that cannot be undertaken without obtaining a certificate of appropriateness.*
- (4) *In the case of a nominated historic district found to meet the criteria for designation:*
  - (A) *The types of significant exterior architectural features of the structures within the nominated historic district that should be protected;*
  - (B) *The types of construction, alteration, demolition, and removal, other than those requiring a building or demolition permit, that cannot be undertaken without obtaining a certificate of appropriateness.*
  - (C) *A list of all key contributing, contributing and noncontributing sites, structures and objects within the historic district.*
- (5) *Proposed design guidelines for applying the criteria for review of certificates of appropriateness to the nominated landmark or historic district.*
- (6) *The relationship of the nominated landmark or historic district to the on-going effort of the commission to identify and nominate all potential areas and structures that meet the criteria for designation.*
- (7) *A map showing the location of the nominated landmark or the boundaries of the nominated historic district.*

#### **E. RECOMMENDATION:**

The Ecumenical Christian Ministries Building at 1204 Oread Avenue qualifies for designation as a Landmark on the Lawrence Register of Historic Places pursuant to Criteria #1, #4 and #6, as described in Section 22-403.

If the Historic Resources Commission recommends this property for local nomination, the Commission should adopt a resolution for recommendation to be submitted to the City Commission for designation as a landmark. Staff shall prepare a report including the information set forth in Section 22-404.2(1) - (7)

and an environs definition to be forwarded to the City Commission with the adopted resolution.