
LAWRENCE HISTORIC RESOURCES COMMISSION
ITEM NO. 3: L-02-01-08
STAFF REPORT

A. SUMMARY

L-02-01-08: Hold public hearing for consideration of placing the structure located at 1515 University Drive, the Fernand-Strong House, on the Lawrence Register of Historic Places.

B. HISTORIC REGISTER STATUS

1515 University Drive is not listed on the State or the National Registers of Historic Places. The property has been nominated by the owner to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places and the Kansas Sites Board of Review will hear the nomination on May 3, 2008.

C. REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS

1) History Summary

According to the nomination, the original portion of the structure was constructed c. 1872 with additions in 1905 and later. The area in which the property is located was not mapped by the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company. The architect/builder of the structure is not known.

The structure at 1515 University Drive is significant in the area of community development - as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the community – and for its associations with Frank Strong, Chancellor of the University of Kansas from 1902-1919. The property has significant historical associations with two of the contexts outlined in “Historic Resources of Lawrence” Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) – the City Building Period, 1864-1873 and the Quiet University Town, 1900-1945.

As part of the development of Douglas County and the City of Lawrence, the Fernand-Strong house is an example of a residential structure that was built as a rural property in the Wakarusa Township just west of the University on Mount Oread. The land was originally claimed by James S. Emery, one of the early settlers of Lawrence. The information in the nomination identifies the construction date to c. 1872 and ties the house with J.J. and Cyrena Fernand. As the University expanded west, the property became more involved with individuals and functions of the University and was eventually annexed into the City of Lawrence (1947). The property (approximately 5 acres at the time) was not platted until 1935 as Strong’s Addition. This addition was replatted in 1948 and combined with University Heights Part 1&2. As part of the development of the City, it is significant that the street to the south is Strong Avenue and the street to the east is Naismith Drive.

The property at 1515 University Drive is possibly most significant for its association with Dr. Frank Strong. Strong was the Chancellor of the University of Kansas from 1902 to 1919 and lived at 1515 University Drive from 1919 until his death in 1934. While Strong did not live at 1515 University Drive while he was Chancellor, his significance while Chancellor and his continued activity with the University

and the City of Lawrence forms historic associations with this structure. In addition, this is the only extant residential structure associated with Strong (While Chancellor, he lived in the Chancellor's residence at 1345 Louisiana Street and this structure no longer exists.). Strong Hall on the University of Kansas campus was named in honor of Strong and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In addition to its association with Dr. Strong, the house is also associated with James Naismith. Naismith purchased the property in March of 1939 and died in residence in November of that year.

2) Architectural Integrity Summary

The structure at 1515 University Drive retains sufficient integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship. Although the structure has been modified over the years, the existing structure continues to exhibit some of the significant visual architectural characteristics of the original structure, specifically the rounded elongated windows and the square entrance tower. Overall, the Fernand-Strong House is characterized by an irregular plan which can be associated with the expansion of the house with additions. The house is a wood-frame, two storey structure with a stone foundation and a partial basement. It is sheathed in weatherboard and has an asphalt shingle roof. The nomination application notes several known alterations to the structure.

1515 University Drive also has a non-contributing garage which, according to the nomination, was constructed c. 2003. The one storey garage is located to the southeast of the main structure and is wood frame sheathed in synthetic siding.

3) Context Description

The Fernand-Strong House is a good example of a rural house that was constructed just outside the City of Lawrence during the "Agriculture and Manufacturing, Foundations of Stability (1874-1899)" as defined by the MPDF. The structure was originally associated with a larger tract of land that was eventually subdivided to provide smaller lots for residential construction. The property associated with the structure today is an irregular shape. The area surrounding 1515 University Drive is a mixture of single family residential, multi-family residential and the University of Kansas. The property is bordered by single family residential uses on the north, west, east, and south. The age of the extant structures in the area ranges from the mid to 20th Century. The area was platted in 1935 as Strong's Addition. This addition was replatted in 1948 and combined with University Heights Part 1&2. 1515 University Drive occupies lots 3 & 17 and the west 35 feet of lot 2 and the west 15 feet of lots 18 and 19 in Strong's Addition.

4) Planning and Zoning Considerations

1515 University Drive is zoned RS7, Single-Dwelling Residential District. The primary purpose of the RS district is to accommodate predominantly single detached dwelling units on individual lots. The RS district is intended to create, maintain, and promote housing opportunities for individual households, although nonresidential uses that are compatible with residential neighborhoods are permitted.

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, for research on the growth and development of the City of Lawrence.

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 scrutiny 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. Minor changes which require 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 Fernand-Strong house is significant as a rural property that was incorporated into the City of Lawrence and whose acreage was subdivided to provide for additional residential housing. While the total amount of land associated with the house has diminished over time, the size of the house has increased to meet modern needs and fashions.

(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;

The Fernand-Strong House is significant for its associations with Dr. Frank Strong who significantly contributed to the development of the University of Kansas.

(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;

(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;

- (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 Fernand-Strong House at 1515 University Drive qualifies for designation as a Landmark on the Lawrence Register of Historic Places pursuant to Criteria #1 and #3, 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.

