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**LAWRENCE HISTORIC RESOURCES COMMISSION**  
**ITEM NO.3: L-02-01-09**  
**STAFF REPORT**

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**A. SUMMARY**

**L-02-01-09:** Hold public hearing for consideration of placing the structure located at 714 Mississippi Street on the Lawrence Register of Historic Places.

**B. HISTORIC REGISTER STATUS**

714 Mississippi Street is listed on the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

**C. REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS**

**1) History Summary**

According to the nomination, the structure located at 714 Mississippi Street was constructed in five building stages beginning in 1865 with the last major change in 1911. The architect/builder of the structure is not known.

The structure at 714 Mississippi Street is architecturally significant as a good example of the National Folk as described in the National Register of Historic Places multiple property documentation form "Historic Resources of Lawrence, Douglas County, Kansas". This document identifies the National Folk house type as "Especially in Lawrence's working class neighborhoods, the National Folk Residences property type is the predominant housing stock." This structure is an exemplary example of how residents of Lawrence started with a small structure and added on as time, family growth, and finances allowed.

714 Mississippi is perhaps most significant for its association with John Robert Greenlees, a late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century entrepreneur. Greenlees made his first fortune in potatoes and eventually founded the Mutual Oil Company in 1909.

**2) Architectural Integrity Summary**

The structure at 714 Mississippi Street is architecturally significant as a good example of the National Folk house type that evolved over time. This house type was common across the United States from the 1850's and the early twentieth century and was most popular with the working middle class. 714 Mississippi Street, according to the Register of Historic Kansas Places nomination, is a large two and one half story hall entry house built with a 2"x4" balloon frame. The structure sits on a limestone and brick foundation with a structural framing system of mostly 2"x 8" sawed lumber. The house boasts a large gable on the main (west) elevation.

The nomination application notes several building phases and known alterations to the structure.

### **3) Context Description**

714 Mississippi Street is a good example of the housing that was constructed in Lawrence and evolved over a span of almost 50 years. This structure has elements from three of the historic contexts associated with the development of Lawrence including the City-building Period (1864-1873), Agriculture and Manufacturing (1874-1899), and Quiet University Town (1900-1945) as defined by the Historic Resources of Lawrence, Douglas County, Kansas Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF).

The area surrounding 714 Mississippi Street is residential. The property is surrounded on all sides by residential structures and single family zoning. The Old West Lawrence National Register of Historic Places District is across the alley to the east from the property. The age of the extant structures in the area ranges from the late 1800's to the 1950's. The subject property is located on portions of lots 21 and 22, Block 5 of Lane's Subdivision which was originally platted in 1863.

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

714 Mississippi is zoned RS5, Single-Dwelling Residential District. The primary purpose of the RS5 district is to accommodate predominately single detached dwelling units on individual lots. The district is intended to create, maintain and promote housing opportunities for individual households, although they do permit nonresidential uses that are compatible with residential neighborhoods. Research indicates that the 700 block of Mississippi has historically and continues to be residential in use.

### **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.

### **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;***

714 Mississippi Street is significant for its contribution to the study of the architectural evolution of simple residential building types over the time period from 1865 to 1911 in Lawrence, Kansas.

***(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;***

714 Mississippi Street is associated with John Robert Greenless, a late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century entrepreneur. Greenless made his first fortune in potatoes and eventually founded the Mutual Oil Company in 1909.

***(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.***

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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 John Robert Greenlees House located at 714 Mississippi Street 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. In addition to the resolution, staff should prepare a report to accompany this resolution including the information set forth in Section 22-404.2(1) - (7) and an environs definition.