

---

## LAWRENCE HISTORIC RESOURCES COMMISSION

### ITEM NO. 8: L-2-12-10

### STAFF REPORT

---

#### A. SUMMARY

**L-2-12-10** Hold public hearing for consideration of placing the structure located at 1029 Delaware Street on the Lawrence Register of Historic Places.

#### B. HISTORIC REGISTER STATUS

1029 Delaware Street is not listed on the State or the National Registers of Historic Places. The property is in the environs of Hobbs Park (702 E 11<sup>th</sup>), Lawrence Register of Historic Places.

#### C. REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS

##### 1) History Summary

The nomination indicates that the structure now standing at 1029 Delaware Street was constructed by A.H. Whitcomb and Sargent Whitcomb. The Whitcombs made important contributions to Lawrence's business history. A. H. Whitcomb enlisted in Company A, Second Regiment Maine Volunteer Infantry in May 1861 and was attached to the Fifth Corps, Army of the Potomac. During his term of service he participated in the battles of Bull Run, Yorktown, Williamsburg, Gaines Mill, Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville.

Sargent Whitcomb was a clerk who worked with Whitcomb and Mead grain dealers and grocers at 114 Massachusetts Street. In 1872, the Whitcombs built and operated the Kansas Elevator at 10<sup>th</sup> and Delaware Streets. Theo Poehler bought the elevator in 1879, and Sargent went to work with him at Whitcomb and Poehler Grocery as well as the Poehler Mercantile Company. Poehler leased the elevator, then called the Kaw Valley Elevator, back to the Whitcomb Brothers in 1883; the building later burned in 1886. In that year the Whitcomb Brothers started another grocery business at 902 Massachusetts Street which was foreclosed in 1892, causing Sargent Whitcomb to sell his house at 1029 Delaware Street to Poehler and move to Kansas City where he continued in the grocery business until his death in 1913. His brother, A.H., later operated the Santa Fe Hotel at 7<sup>th</sup> and Connecticut Streets until his death in 1910. Poehler sold the house to Conrad Altenbernd in 1902 where he and his family resided until 1923.



## 2) Architectural Integrity Summary

This side entry house has changed very little since it was built in 1872 and has high architectural integrity. It retains the original balloon framing system, limestone foundation, clapboard siding, original two over two windows all around, pointed crown moldings over windows, paneled exterior doors with working transoms, porch with paired pillars, oak floors throughout, wainscoted dining room and kitchen with turned corner pieces, cast iron hearth and two brick chimneys, built in cabinets, chefs pantry with pass-thru, five-window bay, baseboard, window and door surrounds, interior paneled doors, front stairs with turned newel and spindles, and rear stair. The interior also retains original pressed metal ceilings, plastered walls, decorative hardware, electrified gas fixtures,

The gable front east elevation is symmetrically aligned with two-over-two vertical divided glass windows and a 3-panel single light front door with textured glass and working transom. The wrap-around porch has turned posts with Queen Anne wood detailing and embellishments. The side entry door is a 4-panel wood door with working transom and pointed crown molding to match the windows. This door also retains its original wood screened door with wood detailing.



The south elevation is symmetrically aligned with the rear 3-bay addition being recessed. The front portion is symmetrical with the exception of the 5-sided bay window with brackets and French doors on the first floor that match the rest of the detailing. The 3-bay rear addition is symmetrically aligned with a central secondary entrance. The west elevation is asymmetrical with two doors that lead to a stair hall; the southern door leads to the upstairs, the northern door leads to the basement. The rear porch with a shed roof has recently been replaced with square wood posts and minimalistic

crowns and bases.





The north elevation has vertically aligned openings that reference the interior spatial arrangements and articulate the additions that have been made over the years (see floor plans and Change Over Time).

1029 Delaware also has a 2-story secondary structure located along the northeast portion of the lot accessible from the alley.

West elevation of secondary structure



East elevation of secondary structure

### 3) Context Description

The Sargent S. Whitcomb House is an example of a National Folk gable front, side entry vernacular dwelling that was constructed during the historic context associated with the development of Lawrence, the City-building Period (1864-1873) as defined by the Historic Resources of Lawrence, Douglas County, Kansas Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF). This MPDF notes that during the brief period from 1864 to 1873, many modest wood-frame houses were built in east and north Lawrence for workers on the railroad and in associated manufacturing, agricultural processing, and business enterprises. Many of the surviving residences were gable-front subtypes of the



National Folk style; other types included gable front-and wings, I-houses, and hall and parlor houses which comprise the residential structures surrounding the nominated property.

The nominated property is in the environs of Hobbs Park (702 E 11<sup>th</sup>), Lawrence Register of Historic Places. This property represents the housing and land use patterns during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century which followed local population, social, economic and economic trends.

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

1029 Delaware Street is zoned RS5, Single-Dwelling Residential District. The RS Districts are designed to accommodate predominantly single detached dwelling units on individual lots. The Districts are intended to create, maintain and promote housing opportunities for individual households, although they do permit nonresidential uses that are compatible with residential neighborhoods. The required minimum lot size in the RS5, Single-Dwelling District is 5,000 square feet.

The area surrounding the property is predominantly residential zoning and uses. The property to the east, Hobbs Park, is zoned OS, Open Space District. The property to the north, south, and west is zoned RS5 Single-Dwelling Residential District. The uses surrounding the Whitcomb House are a parking lot associated with the park to the east, residential to the south, north and west. There are some commercial properties to the southwest just outside the 250' environs.

At the time of construction and throughout the historic period of significance, the property was located in a residential area.

#### **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. 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 Lawrence 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 East Lawrence neighborhood as identified in the context document Living in East Lawrence: An Essay for a Multiple Listings Nomination, encompasses approximately 50 city blocks east of Massachusetts Street to Oregon Street and from the Kansas River to 15<sup>th</sup> Street. This neighborhood and the structures located therein are valuable as part of the development of the City of Lawrence documenting residential land use from the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. The East Lawrence neighborhood followed local population, social, economic and architectural building patterns described in the MPDF *Historic Resources of Lawrence, Douglas County, Kansas*. The vernacular architecture and the cohesive streetscapes of the neighborhood emphasize the commonalities of the diverse populations that settled in this area of Lawrence. While the structures in the neighborhood reflect the evolution of vernacular architecture and the incorporation of stylistic details over time, the relationship between the structures based on location, streetscape, building materials, workmanship, mass and scale create a distinct neighborhood identity that is of value to the study of the history of the City of Lawrence. The context describes the neighborhood as a "working class" neighborhood and the history of the people who lived in these vernacular structures is important to the understanding of the growth and development of the community as a whole.

***(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;***

***(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;***

1029 Delaware retains high architectural integrity with original wood detailing on the exterior and interior, oak floors throughout the first floor and clear pine flooring on the second floor, pressed metal ceiling, plastered walls, built-in cabinets, ornate hardware and fixtures, and solid wood doors with working transoms.

***(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:**

Staff recommends the Whitcomb House located at 1029 Delaware Street for designation as a Landmark on the Lawrence Register of Historic Places pursuant to Criteria #1 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. In addition to the resolution, the Commission should direct staff to prepare a report to accompany the resolution including the information set forth in Section 22-404.2(1) - (7) and the environs definition.

Staff recommends the following for the report to the City Commission:

- (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;*  
1029 Delaware is significant for its vernacular architecture and its association with the Whitcomb family.
- (2) *Explanation of the integrity or lack of integrity of the nominated landmark or historic district;*  
This structure is a side entry house type. The side entry accounts for 4.1% of the East Lawrence Neighborhood homes. The structure maintains significant integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship that make it worthy of preservation.
- (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,*  
The wood windows, siding, porch, and wood detailing.
  - (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.*  
Alterations to the windows, siding, porch and exterior detailing should require a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- (5) *Proposed design guidelines for applying the criteria for review of certificates of appropriateness to the nominated landmark or historic district.*  
U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, published in 1990, and any future amendments, in addition to any criteria specified by Chapter 22 of the Code of the City of Lawrence, Kansas.

The HRC may also adopt **An Analysis of the Environs for 1029 Delaware Street** and delineate how environs review will be conducted in relation to the listed property. The analysis is attached with the delineation of environs areas.

- (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.*  
A primary goal of the HRC is to build a Register of properties which show the diversity and growth of Lawrence since its inception. The nomination of this property is another step toward registering a wide variety of historic properties which together



present a visual history of Lawrence's past. The goal of the Lawrence Register of Historic Places is to represent all socioeconomic strata; businesses and industries which illustrate the diversity that has been prevalent in Lawrence since its inception.

- (7) *A map showing the location of the nominated landmark.*  
See attached

Environs Definition  
See attached