
LAWRENCE HISTORIC RESOURCES COMMISSION
ITEM NO. 6: L-2-5-10
STAFF REPORT

A. SUMMARY

L-2-5-10 Hold public hearing for consideration of placing the structure located at 946 Connecticut Street on the Lawrence Register of Historic Places.

B. HISTORIC REGISTER STATUS

946 Connecticut Street is not listed on the State or the National Registers of Historic Places. The property is in the environs of the North Rhode Island Street Historic Residential District, National Register of Historic Places; the Shalor Eldridge Residence (945 Rhode Island), Register of Historic Kansas Places; and the McFarland Residence (940 Rhode Island), Lawrence Register of Historic Places.

C. REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS

1) History Summary

Abram Watts, a stone mason, brought his wife, Sibella, and their young children from England to America then to Lawrence in 1856. By 1870 the census shows that Abram owned \$10,000 in real estate. Eventually all of his six children came to America. Abram's five sons were all stone masons: Henry, William, Samuel, John, and Abram, according to 1870 and 1871 city directories, along with one other relative, Isaac, who was also a mason. These men were responsible for building Miller's Block, the G.A.R. Building, KU Library and Fowler Shops, and many Lawrence residences (Lawrence Daily Journal, Sept. 3, 1904). William purchased the property located at 946 Connecticut St. in 1877 by paying tax arrears and after the three-year redemption period received the deed in 1882. It appears that he demolished an earlier house to build this one. [The structure that Watts demolished may have been the home of Peter Vinegar, one of three African-American men hanged from the bridge over the Kaw on June 10, 1882.] William's widow, Louisa, lived at 946 Connecticut until her death in 1932.

2) Architectural Integrity Summary

This "L" house, with Italianate brackets under the eaves was built in 1886 and retains a high degree of integrity. The original siding was covered with asbestos in the 1950s. It has a balloon frame system with 2x10 inch floor joists, original doors, 1-over-1 windows, spindle frieze front and side porches, an exceptional two-story bay window with bead board bases, exterior horizontal basement door, original front door with





colored panes, an outstanding quarter flight staircase with an octagonal newel and fancy turned balusters, chamfered woodwork with bull's-eye corner blocks, original oak floors in the entry hall and living room, and plastered walls in the parlor, dining, and living room. Joists in the basement and scaring on the first floor wood floors indicate a removed parlor wall.



front door



rear door



2-story bay window

This property also includes a secondary structure that is a contributing structure to the environs of the property. The secondary structure is located along the northeastern property line near the alley. The garage is a 1-story side gable structure and retains its architectural integrity with wood clapboard siding, exposed rafter beams, large vertical wood plank garage doors on the south gable end, offset right 4-panel window on the east elevation, a pair of wood doors and a 4-panel window on the west elevation and a small square fixed window on the north elevation.



3) Context Description

The William Watts House is an example of L-house type with Italianate styling architecture that was constructed during the historic context associated with the development of Lawrence-- Agricultural and Manufacturing Period (1874-1899), as defined by the Historic Resources of Lawrence, Douglas County, Kansas Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF).

The area surrounding the property is a mix of residential and general public/institutional zoning and uses. The property to the east is zoned GPI. The residential properties surrounding the nominated property is zoned RS5, Single-Dwelling Residential.

The nominated property is in the environs of the North Rhode Island Historic Residential District, National Register of Historic Places; the Shalor Eldridge Residence (945 Rhode Island), Register of Historic Kansas Places; McFarland Residence (940 Rhode Island), 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. This property expresses the traditional building practices found during the "Settlement Period" and "Agriculture and Manufacturing" period of Lawrence.

This structure is an L-house with a stair hall entry. The L-house and T-house types combined represent 10.8% of the houses in East Lawrence (6th-15th Streets and New Hampshire to Oregon Streets). Of the 44 houses surveyed, this is the only L-house house type with a stair hall entry submitted for nomination to the Lawrence Register of Historic Places.

4) Planning and Zoning Considerations

946 Connecticut 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 minimum lot size in the RS5, Single-Dwelling District is 5,000 square feet.

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 15th 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;

(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 William Watts House located at 946 Connecticut Street for designation as a Landmark on the Lawrence Register of Historic Places pursuant to Criteria #1, 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;*
946 Connecticut is significant for its vernacular architecture as a L-house type with Italianate features.
- (2) *Explanation of the integrity or lack of integrity of the nominated landmark or historic district;*
This structure is an L-house. The L-house and T-house types combined account for 10.8% of East Lawrence (6th-15th Streets and New Hampshire to Oregon Streets). 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, window surrounds, Italianate brackets, and the porch.
 - (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 wood windows, window surrounds, Italianate brackets, and the porch 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 946 Connecticut 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

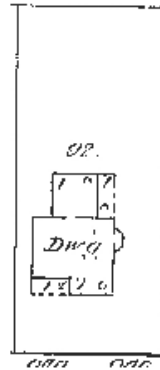
Environs Definition

See attached

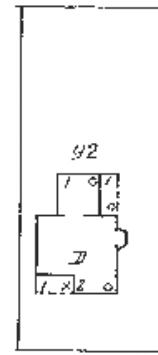


Beers Atlas 1873

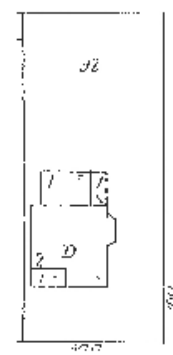
Sanborn 1883



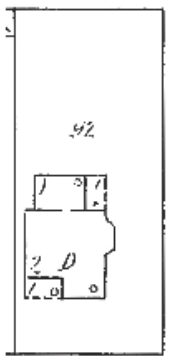
Sanborn 1889



Sanborn 1897



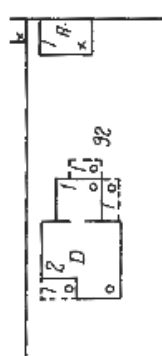
Sanborn 1905



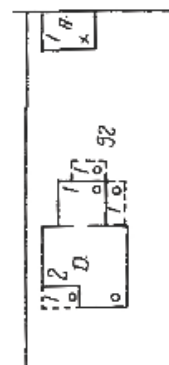
Sanborn 1912



Sanborn 1918



Sanborn 1927



Sanborn 1949



DBK 2008

946 connecticut

Change Over Time

East Lawrence Neighborhood Association