
LAWRENCE HISTORIC RESOURCES COMMISSION
ITEM NO. 11: DR-15-00035
STAFF REPORT

A. SUMMARY

DR-15-00035 620 E 8th Street; Demolition; Design Guidelines 8th and Penn Review. The property is located in the 8th and Pennsylvania Urban Conservation Overlay District. Submitted by Remediation Services, Inc. for Black Hills Corporation, the property owner of record.

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant is requesting to demolish the structure located at 620 E 8th Street.



C. STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

8th and Pennsylvania Urban Conservation Overlay District Guidelines

The City Commission and the Historic Resources Commission have adopted a set of *Design Guidelines 8th and Penn Neighborhood Redevelopment Zone* to review projects within the 8th and Pennsylvania Urban Conservation Overlay District. The guidelines that relate to this project are:

PRINCIPLES, STANDARDS, AND CRITERIA

DEMOLITION

Demolition should be the result of a holistic planning and development process. Properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the Register of Historic Kansas Places, or the Lawrence Register of Historic Places are subject to additional review as required by KSA 75-2724 and/or Chapter 22, Code of the

City of Lawrence. Moreover, demolition of properties within the environs of listed properties is also subject to review. Historic tax credit programs include the anticipated demolition as part of the compliance review process. Federal agencies must consider the impact of demolition on project undertakings as well.

Any demolition request not related to public safety shall be accompanied by additional documentation indicating the existing condition of the building and the proposed use for the site. Documentation shall include proposed elevations and an explanation of why it is not feasible to use the existing structure/building.

Demolition permits shall be reviewed by the Historic Resource Commission. If the permit is denied by the Historic Resource Commission, it may be appealed to the City Commission.

ZONE 4

Architectural Characteristics and Materials

1. Retaining the Quonset Huts in adaptive re-use when economically feasible.
2. Incorporating new construction that uses mid- to large-scale buildings. Constructing buildings that reference the street grid or the railroad alignment.
3. Continuing new mixed-use residential commercial development patterns established in Zone 3 in the zone north of East 8th Street between New Jersey and Pennsylvania Streets, creating a buffer zone or locating large industrial size buildings within surrounding open space.
4. Building scale should be consistent with the zoned usage.
5. Building materials and fenestration should be consistent with building use but complementary to the surrounding zones.

Landscape

Retaining traditional open spaces.

Access

1. Locating dual access drives for service and delivery vehicles so that they do not disrupt pedestrian or vehicular circulation and do not visually detract from the front of the buildings by shifting them to parking areas or providing alley access.
2. Designing and locating access drives so that they prevent headlights from shining into adjacent residential zones.

Parking

1. Locating surface parking lots on all sides of the primary buildings and structures.
2. Retention of existing on-street parking in front of existing Zone 4 buildings.
3. Parking design should be consistent with other zones in the UC-O District.
4. Low bollard lighting will be used to limit lighting impacts to adjacent residential areas.

Signage

1. Having all signs conform with the Sign Code provisions of Article 7 of the Code of the City of Lawrence
2. Depending upon the building's use, signs may be oriented toward both pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
3. Having storefront façades that do not extend past the storefront cornice line. Locating storefront signs in the zone between the display windows and the roofline or the second story. Signs for multiple storefronts within the same building should align with each other.
4. Using signs that reflect the overall symmetry of the building

Lighting

Unless noted otherwise, lighting in Zone 4 will be consistent with City of Lawrence Code Section 20-14A01 through Section 20-14A03, or subsequent applicable City standards.

D. STAFF ANALYSIS

The applicant proposes to demolish the structure located at 620 E 8th Street to allow for significant environmental testing. The testing is required because the site has a history of uses that have potentially contaminated the site. Due to the site history, the application material notes that the site was only granted a "Resolved with Restriction" determination in 2000. This restricted use does not allow residential uses or drinking water wells. The restrictive covenant must be conveyed with any sale of the land and KDHE must be provided notice of any excavation activities. The application materials also note that the needed testing is not possible with the building remaining in-place. The clean-up of the site will be required before the site can be redeveloped. The applicant would like to discover the extent of the required remediation prior to redevelopment of the property.

Staff is sympathetic to the applicant's request. However, the Guidelines for the 8th and Penn Urban Conservation Overlay District pose two questions for consideration:

- (1) Is the structure a Quonset hut as identified in the guidelines as a structure that should be rehabilitated?
- (2) Is the demolition request related to public safety and not required to be accompanied by additional documentation indicating the existing condition of the building and the proposed use for the site. Documentation would include proposed elevations and an explanation of why it is not feasible to use the existing structure/building.

Quonset Hut

Please see the information at this link

<http://www.quonsethuts.org/index.htm>

The information below is taken from this web site and from additional research. *Quonset Hut: Metal Living for a Modern Age* is the book associated with the above link.

A Quonset hut is typically identified as an architectural type of structure with corrugated galvanized steel siding and semicircular shape that could be prefabricated and assembled on site. Based on the Nissen hut developed during WWI by the British, the Quonset hut was first developed with a 16' diameter and had steel arch frames. The huts were in full production by 1941. The most recognizable huts are the original T-Rib that has the arch to the ground level and a redesigned hut that had a modified arch with four foot vertical sidewalls. There are variations on hut designs and generally the metal siding, arched frames, and semicircular design are the connecting elements.

According to *Quonset Hut: Metal Living for a Modern Age* web site

By 1941, companies other than original contractors George A. Fuller and Stran-Steel began developing their own versions of the Quonset hut. Some, like Butler and Cowin, developed Quonset-type structures to sell to the Army or anyone else who wanted to buy them. Others created hut designs in response to a special need, such as the wooden Pacific hut, which was created to save metal resources, and the heavy-steel Armco hut, which was intended for ordnance storage and air raid shelters. In addition, Stran-Steel began manufacturing a larger version and a multi-arched version of the Quonset hut. Nicknames abound for various hut types. Some are "official" military nicknames, such as "Elephant Shelter" and "Igloo."

After World War II, some companies continued to make metal prefabricated buildings, however, few continued in the old arched shape. The main descendant of the Quonset hut today is the arch-roofed warehouse, now often clad in aluminum, and the tent-like Weather-port® — a direct descendant of the Jamesway hut.

One of the structures identified as “other” on the web page is the EmKay Hut.

Emkay Hut

20' x 48'

Morrison-Knudsen Company designed the "Emkay" (M-K) hut to shelter their crews for their large and remote military construction contracts. While they credit the origin of the design—inspired by a chicken shed—to their engineer G. D. Paxson, the similarities to the Quonset and Pacific huts are undeniable. Built in Boise, Idaho, beginning in 1943, the Emkay had laminated wood ribs. Its distinct "two-centered arch" appears pointed, or gothic, in profile. All styles were built entirely of wood and wallboard, could be built to any lengths in multiples of twelve feet, and could accommodate different climates.



While there are some similarities to the EmKay, the structure at 620 E 8th does not have the arch system to the ground but has side walls. The structure at 620 E 8th is also 42' X 121'.

The existing structure at 620 E 8th Street does not show on the 1927-1949 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. This particular parcel may not have been resurveyed with the 1949 maps; however properties to the south were resurveyed in 1949. The date provided by the applicant as the early 1950's is likely the construction timeframe.

Staff is of the opinion that the structure at 620 E 8th, while not a specific type of “Quonset Hut,” is likely one of the “other” metal buildings associated with the Quonset Hut architectural style.

The guidelines identify that Quonset huts should be adaptively reused when economically feasible.

Additional Documentation

Staff rarely supports demolition without a replacement plan. The Historic Resources Commission has not typically approved the demolition of a structure without a replacement plan. The *Design Guidelines 8th* and *Penn Neighborhood Redevelopment Zone*, state that

Any demolition request not related to public safety shall be accompanied by additional documentation indicating the existing condition of the building and the proposed use for the site. Documentation shall include proposed elevations and an explanation of why it is not feasible to use the existing structure/building.

Typically, demolition requests related to public safety are structures that have been deemed by the Building Codes Administrator to be unsafe and dangerous to the public health, safety and welfare. To staff's knowledge, this determination has not been made at this time.

The applicant has provided information that should be considered to meet the criteria for public safety. The entire site has been contaminated. Remediation has taken place on the site except for the area covered by the building. This area needs to be addressed. And likely remediation will be needed. The environmental site overview identifies that neither VOCs nor PHAs were detected during the last three groundwater sampling events. The environmental site overview states that due to the type of sampling that needs to occur under the building, there is no option other than demolition. The applicant is not arguing that the structure warrants demolition due to the building condition, but rather the site on which the building stands is the issue.

While staff is sympathetic to the need to discover if and how much work will need to be done to clean the site for future use, the demolition of a structure without a replacement plan is not recommended and does not meet the guidelines. The purpose of a replacement plan is to ensure that the property will not remain vacant and that the spacial relationships that characterize the district by the buildings, setbacks and open spaces are not damaged.

E. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

In accordance with the *Design Guidelines 8th* and *Penn Neighborhood Redevelopment Zone*, the standards of evaluation, staff recommends the Commission deny the proposed project and make the determination that the proposed project does not meet the intent of the *Design Guidelines 8th* and *Penn Neighborhood Redevelopment Zone*. Specifically, the project does not include plans for a replacement structure and or proposed development of the site if demolition were to occur.