

Analysis of Environs of Oak Hill Cemetery, 1605 Oak Hill Avenue

Step One

Historical Significance and Context

Oak Hill Cemetery at 1605 Oak Hill Avenue was purchased by the City of Lawrence in 1865. The 40 acres was a planned rural cemetery that still serves the city. The property is being nominated to the Lawrence Register of Historic Places under local criteria one, six and eight. Local criterion one is for *character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the community, county, state, or nation*. Local criterion six is a building's *embodiment of elements of design, detailing, materials, or craftsmanship that render it architecturally significant*. Local criterion eight is a property's *unique location or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature*.

The period of significance for the related nomination categories is as follows:

Period of Significance for value as part of the development of Lawrence: 1889 to present, the active use of the property for a cemetery for the city.

Period of Significance for Architecture: The Landscape Architectural Significance is based on the property's historic design and is not limited to a specific period of significance.

Period of Significance for unique location and established visual feature: This significance is based on the property's location and design and is not limited to a specific period of significance.

The property also maintains sufficient integrity worthy of preservation.

Step Two

Historical Character of the Area Surrounding the Property

Historical character is the primary issued considered in this section. Historic photographs, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, the nomination information, *1873 Douglas County Atlas*, *Living with History: A Historic Preservation Plan for Lawrence, Kansas*, by Dale Nimz, and Historic Resources of Lawrence, Douglas County, Kansas Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) were the primary sources used to identify the historic character of the area. Because the significance of the property is not defined by specific periods of significance, the historic character of the area was determined on information for the area prior to 1900.

Natural Features The environs were defined by a small ridge running through the area. The highest point of the cemetery and the environs was the center of the south portion of the cemetery.

Property Boundaries and Ownership Patterns When the cemetery was purchased and

originally designed, the surrounding area was unplatted farmland. The 1873 Beers Atlas shows the area surrounding the cemetery was a mix of small and large tracts of land. Large tracts in the area were the J. G. Haskell property of approximately 160 acres to the west and E. Jackson property of 38 acres to the east of the cemetery. To the north of the cemetery were smaller tracts of land ranging from 5 to 15 acres and the properties to the south of what is now E 15th Street were 15 and 145 acre tracts.

Land Use Patterns and Zoning Land use in the surrounding area during the period of significance was open space primarily associated with agricultural uses. There was no zoning for this area.

Circulation Patterns The 1873 Beers Atlas shows east/west access from the platted City of Lawrence to Oak Hill in alignment with what would become E Morris Street (E 15th Street). The roads in the area reflected a traditional grid pattern that related to the section and township designations.

Planned Vegetation Patterns The majority of the area was open space and agricultural crops with a few structures associated with the farm use of the properties including dwellings. The planned vegetation was primarily the patterns of the plantings on the farmland and minimal landscaping may have existed around some of the existing dwellings.

Signs and Pedestrian Amenities There were no documented signs in the area. There is an undated photograph showing the original entrance to Oak Hill with signage. There was a sidewalk from town to Oak Hill by 1900.

Primary Structures The primary structures in the environs of the property were dwellings associated with the surrounding open space. The majority of the structures were likely vernacular forms. However, by 1866-1868, John G. Haskell had constructed a two story brick home on property that had been subdivided from the original Haskell tract. This structure was redesigned c. 1883 with an addition and Queen Anne detailing. The two other properties to the north of the John Haskell house were constructed for the siblings of Haskell c.1868-1869. Both structures were examples of simple vernacular style.

Secondary Structures Secondary structures were associated with rural living and were typically garages, barns, chicken houses, sheds, and out houses. They would have been constructed of wood. They typically would have been 1 to 2 ½ stories in height.

Outdoor Activity Spaces There were no public parks in the immediate area. This was a rural area that provided outdoor activity spaces on private grounds.

Utilities and Mechanical Equipment Utilities and mechanical equipment associated with land development did not exist when the cemetery was designed. Water was installed in the cemetery in 1889.

Views The views to the listed property were expansive because there was very little development in the area.

Step Three

Present Character of the Area Surrounding the Property

The primary source of information on this section is personal observation, city zoning maps, and recent aerial photographs.

Natural Features There are elevation changes in the area. While not “rolling hills,” the area has gently sloping hills.

Property Boundaries and Ownership Patterns Property boundaries and ownership patterns mainly reflect the proposed development pattern of the plats for the area. Typically, the platted areas consist of individual structures on individual lots or combined lots of two.

Land Use Patterns and Zoning Land use and zoning in the surrounding area is primarily residential.

Circulation Patterns The circulation patterns are both street grid patterns and modern curvilinear patterns respective to the development periods of the properties. Cul-de-sacs exist in some of the modern development to the south.

Planned Vegetation Patterns The planned vegetation patterns consist of residential lots with yards that include trees and landscaped yards.

Signs and Pedestrian Amenities There are signs in the area including traffic signs, road name signs, and identification signs. Pedestrian amenities include some areas of sidewalks.

Primary Structures The majority of the structures are one and two story structures.

Secondary Structures Secondary structures are typically garages and storage buildings. Some are wood frame with wood sheathing while some are metal.

Outdoor Activity Spaces The closest outdoor activity space, other than the cemetery, is Edgewood Park just over a ¼ mile west of the cemetery.

Utilities and Mechanical Equipment There are storm sewer inlets, traffic signs and street lighting along all of the streets in the area. Water meter and manhole covers are typical through the area. Fire hydrants are located along the streets. Electrical and telephone lines are both above ground and below ground in the area.

Views Views to and from the property have diminished due to the infill of residential development in the area. The primary views to the cemetery are along E 15th Street due to the lack of development of the cemetery property.

Step Four

Comparison of the Historic and Present Character of the Area Surrounding the Property

Natural Features The natural features are similar to the historic features. Some of the elevation changes may be less significant.

Property Boundaries and Ownership Patterns The property boundaries have decreased over time but the ownership patterns continue to be individual dwellings on individual lots

Land Use Patterns and Zoning The land use has changed in that there are no longer large tracts of land in agricultural use. The zoning for the cemetery and a portion of the environs was designated first dwelling and a large portion to the east was zoned second dwelling in 1949. The current zoning is still residential.

Circulation Patterns Street patterns have changed in relationship to the time of development of the subdivision in the environs area. Older areas continue to have a dominate grid system while newer developments have more suburban circulation patterns that include curved streets and cul-de-sacs.

Primary Structures Primary structures continue to range in size and style. Newer structures have attached garages.

Secondary Structures The numbers of secondary structures has likely been increased due to the development of the area. Structures are primarily in the rear of yards in the form of sheds or garages.

Outdoor Activity Spaces There is a dedicated activity space in close proximity (Edgewood Park), but the overall open space that could have supported outdoor activity has been significantly reduced.

Utilities and Mechanical Equipment The character of the utilities and mechanical equipment in the area are different than in the historic period. Public and private lighting systems, utility lines including phone and electrical lines have a significant impact on the visual quality of the area.

Views The differences in the views of the area are created by the infill construction. The cemetery continues to have a predominant visual location due to the topography and open space that it creates.

Conclusion

The Environs for Oak Hill Cemetery have changed from the historic period. Because of the unique location of the cemetery on the eastern boundary of the city, a portion of the environs is located in the county. This county area is not covered by review under Chapter 22. The remainder of the environs is a mix of residential and open space. The majority of the open space is owned by the city. Approximately 3 acres is owned by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Kansas City and used as a cemetery. The environs should be viewed as one area and reviewed in the following manner:

The primary purpose of the environs review should be to review demolition and new development for its impact on the cemetery. Maintaining views to the listed property and maintaining the rhythm and pattern in the environs are the primary focus of review.

All projects with the exception of demolition and associated new construction of primary structures will be reviewed and approved by the Historic Resources Administrator.

Demolition and associated new construction of primary structures will be reviewed and approved by the Historic Resources Commission. The proposed construction should meet the intent of the Criteria set forth in 22-505, 22-506, and 22-506.1. Design elements that are important are site placement, height, setback, and spacial relationships.

Environs of Oak Hill Cemetery

