

Analysis of Environs of 1645 Louisiana Street, Benjamin F. Akers House

Step One

Historical Significance and Context

According to the application for Historic Landmark Designation, the structure located at 1645 Louisiana Street was constructed c. 1873. The property is being nominated to the Lawrence Register of Historic Places under local criteria (1) and (6). Local criterion one is a property's character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the community, county, state, or nation. Local criterion six is embodiment of elements of design, detailing, materials, or craftsmanship that render it architecturally significant.

The importance of this structure's visual and physical characteristics influences the environs definition process in that it is an excellent example of an Italianate architectural style constructed during the period "City Building (1864-1873)" as defined by the amendment to Historic Resources of Lawrence, Douglas County, Kansas Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF). The structure maintains integrity in location and design.

Step Two

Historical Character of the Area Surrounding the Property

Historical character is the primary issue 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) are the primary sources used to identify the historic character of the area.

Natural Features The environs consisted of hilly ground associated with the proximity to Mount Oread.

Property Boundaries and Ownership Patterns Property boundaries and ownership patterns were typically larger land areas with one owner followed by increasingly smaller boundaries with one owner as the area was platted as the University Place Subdivision.

Land Use Patterns and Zoning Land use in the area was residential with land area to support the semi-rural uses. There was no zoning at the time of construction.

Circulation Patterns There were few circulation patterns in the area at the time of construction. With the University Place Subdivision, the typical grid pattern for Lawrence was applied to this area laying streets north/south and east/west.

Planned Vegetation Patterns Vegetation in the area was consistent with the typical semi-rural development patterns adjacent to the City. Development of the area added vegetation associated with smaller lots.

Signs and Pedestrian Amenities At the time of construction, there were no signs or pedestrian amenities in the area.

Primary Structures At the time of construction, there were no other primary structures in the immediate area. As the subdivision developed, primary structures were constructed that represented examples of early 20th century single-family houses. Wood frame and brick structures were present in the area.

Secondary Structures Secondary structures in the area were primarily utilitarian structures of the period including barns. As the subdivision developed, most of the secondary structures were still utilitarian but garages started to appear.

Outdoor Activity Spaces Outdoor activity spaces were primarily associated with the lots associated with structures. The University owned property to the west with open spaces sometimes provided for open activity space.

Utilities and Mechanical Equipment There were no utilities or mechanical equipment in the area at the time of construction.

Views The views to the listed property were typical of a semi-rural area that developed into a residential subdivision. Original views to the Akers's house were more expansive prior to the subdivision development.

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 The environs consist of hilly ground associated with the proximity to Mount Oread.

Property Boundaries and Ownership Patterns Property boundaries in this area are primarily consistent with the platted residential lots. While a few of the lots to the north are not platted, the overall ownership patterns of the properties are typically individual owners for each lot. Some lots have been combined to provide individual owners with larger parcels. The non-platted areas are also one owner with one primary structure. Some lots in the area have been replatted to accommodate more modern development.

Land Use Patterns and Zoning The land use patterns for the area are consistent with the ownership patterns. Current zoning is RS5 – Single Dwelling Residential District. The zoning

supports the residential *detached dwelling* (single dwelling) use. Properties to the northeast and east are zoned for higher-density residential uses (RMG and RM32).

Circulation Patterns Vehicular traffic in the area is primarily local traffic on improved streets. However, because of the proximity to the University, the area experiences increased vehicular traffic during the day. Pedestrian access in the area is limited to sidewalks.

Planned Vegetation Patterns The landscape in the area is mature and typical for a subdivision of this age. The planned vegetation in the front yards consists of mature trees and plant beds with both annual and perennial plantings.

Signs and Pedestrian Amenities Signs in the area vary, but typically they are road signs with street names and traffic signs. There are no pedestrian amenities other than the existing sidewalks.

Primary Structures The primary structures in the area continue to be a mix of various architectural styles. Building materials remain consistent with typical building materials for a development of this age. Fenestration patterns vary, but most of the structures have a primary entrance that faces the street.

Secondary Structures Secondary structures in the area consist mainly of garages and small type garden/utility sheds.

Outdoor Activity Spaces Open space is primarily limited to the portions of the individual lots that are not encompassed with structure.

Utilities and Mechanical Equipment There are storm sewer inlets, traffic signs and some street lighting along streets in the area. Water meter and manhole covers are typical through the area. Fire hydrants are located along the streets. City water lines are primarily in the streets and sanitary sewer lines are to the rear of the properties and in the streets. Mechanical equipment consists primarily of HVAC units that are located on the ground adjacent to the primary structures and behind the front building plane. Electrical and telephone lines exist in the area.

Views Views to and from the nominated property are limited due to the residential development of the area. In addition, views are often obscured by the mature vegetation in the area.

Step Four

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

Natural Features The natural features remain the same.

Property Boundaries and Ownership Patterns The typical property boundaries and

ownership patterns of the area are similar today to what they were in the development period of the area after the construction of the Akers's house.

Land Use Patterns and Zoning The land use patterns, single structures on individual lots, has not changed. Zoning for the area has changed over time but the majority of the area in the environs is now single dwelling residential. Some of the property to the east and southeast has developed as multi-dwelling residential and is now zoned for those uses.

Circulation Patterns Vehicular traffic in the area has increased from the primarily local traffic on the area streets due to the proximity to the University and the increase in personal motorized vehicles. Pedestrian access in the area continues to be limited to sidewalks.

Primary Structures The majority of primary structures in the environs area continue to be residential structures.

Secondary Structures Secondary structures in the area are in the form of small sheds in the rear yards.

Outdoor Activity Spaces Open space continues to be limited to the portions of the individual lots that are not encompassed with structure.

Utilities and Mechanical Equipment Additional modern utilities and mechanical equipment have been introduced into the area since the construction of the Akers House.

Views The views in the area have not significantly changed since the construction of the original development of the subdivision.

Conclusion

The Environs for 1645 Louisiana Street, the Benjamin F. Akers House, have significantly changed since the construction of the house but are consistent with the planned University Place subdivision.

The environs should be considered as one area with the exception of an approximate 1,130 sf area owned by the University of Kansas at the northwest corner of Indiana Street and Sunflower Road. This area is not subject to Chapter 22 Review Projects in the environs should be reviewed in the following manner.

The area primarily consists of residential structures. The residential character of the environs in this area is important. The area should maintain the overall residential character of the historic environs and the following should apply:

The proposed alteration or construction should meet the intent of the Criteria set forth in 22-505. Important design elements include scale, massing, site placement, height, directional expression, percentage of building coverage to site, setback, roof shapes, rhythm of openings, and sense of entry. Demolition of properties shall be approved if a compatible structure is proposed on the site. Maintaining views to the listed property and maintaining the rhythm and pattern within the environs are the primary focus of review.

All projects except for demolition of main structures, new infill construction, or large additions (25% or greater than the footprint of the existing structure) will be reviewed administratively by the Historic Resources Administrator. The proposed alteration or construction should meet the intent of the Criteria set forth in 22-505. The main issues in the review are the continuation of the residential character of the area and whether the project will encroach upon, damage or destroy the environs of the listed property. If the project does not meet the Criteria set forth in 22-505, the project will be forwarded to the Historic Resources Commission for review.

Major projects (demolition of main structures, new infill construction, and large additions greater than 25% of the footprint of the existing structure) will be reviewed by the Historic Resources Commission. The proposed alteration or construction should meet the intent of the Criteria set forth in 22-505. The main issues in the review are the continuation of the residential character of the area and if the project will encroach upon, damage or destroy the environs of the listed property.

1645 Louisiana Street

