

## **Analysis of Environs of 745 Vermont Street, Fire Station No. 1**

### ***Step One***

#### ***Historical Significance and Context***

According to the application for Historic Landmark Designation, the property was constructed in 1951. The property is being nominated to the Lawrence Register of Historic Places under local criteria one and six. 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 buildings *embodiment of elements of design, detailing, materials, or craftsmanship that render it architecturally significant*.

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

Period of Significance for value as part of the development of Lawrence: 1951

Period of Significance for Architecture: Architectural Significance is based on a structure's design and is not limited to a specific period of significance.

The structure also maintains a high degree of integrity worthy of preservation.

Because the structure was constructed in 1951, the majority of the elements reviewed in an environs description are the same from the historic character to the present. Staff has used historic photographs, historic aerials, Historic Resources of Lawrence, Douglas County, Kansas Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) including the amendment, historic property files, zoning maps and observation to analyze the historic and current character. Because of the similarities, Step 3 and 4 have been combined.

### ***Step Two***

#### ***Historical Character of the Area Surrounding the Property***

**Natural Features** The primary natural feature was the ravine that created Central Park (Watson Park).

**Property Boundaries and Ownership Patterns** Property boundaries and ownership patterns mainly reflected the proposed development pattern of the original plat. Typically, there are individual structures on individual lots. Some lots were combined to allow for larger land uses. Most of the lots were owned by business entities with some of the residential properties to the southwest remaining in individual ownerships.

**Land Use Patterns and Zoning** Fire Station No. 1 had divided zoning due to the way the lots were consolidated to construct the building. The east portion was zoned C-3, Central Commercial District, and the west was zoned RO-1, Residential Office District. The prior use of the property was

the old City Hall that included the Fire Department. This structure was demolished to provide a space for the new fire station.

The surrounding properties were both commercial, residential, and office.

**Circulation Patterns** The circulation patterns were street grid patterns.

**Planned Vegetation Patterns** The planned vegetation patterns consist of residential lots with yards that include trees and heavily landscaped yards. The downtown area including, Vermont Street, had some planned vegetation.

**Signs and Pedestrian Amenities** There were a large number of signs in the area including traffic signs, road name signs, identification signs and commercial signs. Pedestrian amenities include sidewalks and bench seating.

**Primary Structures** The majority of the structures in the commercial areas were masonry. Most of the residential structures to the south were wood frame. There was a variety of 1, 1 ½ and 2 story structures in the area.

**Secondary Structures** Almost no secondary structures existed in the area.

**Outdoor Activity Spaces** Outdoor activity space was Watson Park to the west.

**Utilities and Mechanical Equipment** All modern utilities and mechanical equipment existed in the area.

**Views** Views to and from the property were typical for a commercial area that was transitioning into a residential area.

### *Step Three and Four*

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

In the late 1960's and early 1970's a large area surrounding the property was changed to include a public pool in the park to the west and a library to the north. These two new uses are responsible for the changes noted in this section.

All of the patterns identified in Step 2, with the exception of the below, are consistent with the historic period.

**Property Boundaries and Ownership Patterns** The property boundaries and ownership patterns changed due to the consolidation of the lots needed to support the library to the north. In

addition, the City acquired the lots across Vermont Street and used them as a parking lot. As a result, the boundaries have changed and the primary owner in the area is the City of Lawrence.

**Land Use Patterns and Zoning** Land uses in the surrounding area changed with the construction of the library. While the park was across Kentucky Street when the fire station was constructed, the construction of the public pool dramatically changed the use of this portion of the park. The zoning for these two areas was also changed with the 2006 Development Code adoption.

**Primary Structures** Primary structures continue to range in size and style, but the addition of the 1972 library was a significant deviation from the structures in the area. With the 2014-2015 rehabilitation of the library and its totally new exterior, this change is further amplified. The addition of the parking garage to the north of the fire station is another significant alteration to the types of primary structures in the area. There is no other structure of this use or design in the environs area.

**Outdoor Activity Spaces** The outdoor activity space has increased with the recent changes to the library property. The character of the park space was changed with the construction of the public pool.

**Views** The views to the fire station have significantly changed from the north as the new parking garage partially obscures the building.

## *Conclusion*

The environs for Fire Station No. 1 at 745 Vermont Street should be divided into three areas and reviewed in the following manner.

### Area One      Public and Commercial Areas

The proposed alteration or construction should meet the intent of the Criteria set forth in 22-505, 22-506, and 22-506.1. The forms in this area should continue to represent public and commercial architectural styles. Design elements that are important are scale, massing, site placement, height, directional expression, percentage of building coverage to site, setback, roof shapes, rhythm of openings and sense of entry. Maintaining views to the listed property and maintaining the rhythm and pattern in the environs are the primary focus of review.

Minor projects will be approved by the Historic Resources Administrator. The proposed alteration or construction should meet the intent of the Criteria set forth in 22-505, 22-506, and 22-506.1.

Major projects (demolition, partial demolition, new construction, new additions, and significant façade alterations) will be reviewed and approved by the Historic Resources Commission. The proposed alteration or construction should meet the intent of the Criteria set forth in 22-505, 22-506, and 22-506.1.

### Area Two      Park Area

This area should be maintained as a public park with new uses mindful of the historic green space associated with the park. Proposed alterations or 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 scale, massing, site placement, height, directional expression, percentage of building coverage to site, setback, roof shapes, rhythm of openings and sense of entry. Maintaining views to the listed property and maintaining the rhythm and pattern in the environs are the primary focus of review.

Minor projects will be approved by the Historic Resources Administrator. All projects associated with the Outdoor Aquatic Center will be reviewed by the Historic Resources Administrator except for new construction or demolition of the primary structure. The proposed alteration or construction should meet the intent of the Criteria set forth in 22-505, 22-506, and 22-506.1.

Major projects (demolition, partial demolition, new construction, new additions, and significant alterations to the open park area) will be reviewed and approved by the Historic Resources Commission. The proposed alteration or construction should meet the intent of the Criteria set forth in 22-505, 22-506, and 22-506.1.

Area Three Residential Area

The proposed alteration or construction should meet the intent of the Criteria set forth in 22-505, 22-506, and 22-506.1. The forms in this area should remain residential in scale and architectural design. Design elements that are important are scale, massing, site placement, height, directional expression, percentage of building coverage to site, setback, roof shapes, rhythm of openings, materials, and sense of entry. While a portion of this area is currently a parking lot, if it should redevelop it should be a transitional building type to represent the transition from the commercial to the residential that was the historic use for the property. Maintaining views to the listed property and maintaining the rhythm and pattern in the environs are the primary focus of review.

Minor projects will be reviewed and approved by the Historic Resources Administrator. The proposed alteration or construction should meet the intent of the Criteria set forth in 22-505, 22-506, and 22-506.1.

Major projects (demolition, partial demolition, new construction, and new additions greater than 20% of the existing structure) will be reviewed and approved by the Historic Resources Commission. The proposed alteration or construction should meet the intent of the Criteria set forth in 22-505, 22-506, and 22-506.1.



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## Area One

## Area Three