
LAWRENCE HISTORIC RESOURCES COMMISSION
ITEM NO. 4: L-17-00062
STAFF REPORT

A. SUMMARY

Public hearing for consideration of placing the structure known as the Louis and Eva Poehler Residence located at 801 Alabama Street on the Lawrence Register of Historic Places. Submitted by the Lawrence Preservation Alliance on behalf of James A. Slater II and Geraldine Slater, the property owner of record.

The public hearing for the nomination of the structure to the Lawrence Register of Historic Places will be held at 6:30 p.m., or thereafter, in the City Commission Room at Lawrence City Hall located at 6 E 6th Street.

This report includes the proposed environs definition for the structure known the Louis and Eva Poehler Residence located at 801 Alabama Street.



B. HISTORIC REGISTER STATUS

The structure known as the Louis and Eva Poehler Residence located at 801 Alabama Street is not listed on any historic register.

C. REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS

1) History Summary

According to the nomination, the structure located at 801 Alabama Street, known as the Louis and Eva Poehler Residence, was originally constructed c. 1899.

The Louis and Eva Poehler House is eligible for listing as a local landmark under Criteria 6 for its embodiment of popular elements of design, detailing, materials, and craftsmanship that render it architecturally significant.

The nomination for the property notes that there was a smaller structure located on the property prior to the sale of the property to Theodore and Sophia Poehler on May 15, 1895. (Theodore Poehler established the Poehler Mercantile Company with one of the company warehouses located at 619 E 8th Street in East Lawrence listed in the National Register of Historic Places.) The current owner and research conducted by Dale Nimz dates the current house to c. 1899-1900 after Theodore and Sophia Poehler had deeded the property to Louis C. Poehler in 1897. City directories show that Louis and Eva Poehler were listed as residing at 801 Alabama Street in 1901 and 1903.

Eva Poehler sold the property in 1907 and the property was sold several times within short timespans until 1919 when Frank E Banks was listed as the owner and resident until after 1961.

2) Architectural Integrity Summary

The primary structure located at 801 Alabama Street has good historic integrity both from the original design and alterations that have been made to the structure that have achieved historic significance in their own right. It is a good example of the gambrel-roof sub-type of the Shingle style of architecture that is not currently well represented on the Lawrence Register of Historic Places. The nomination and *A Field Guide to American Houses* by Virginia McAlester identify that only approximately twenty-five percent of Shingle style houses are of this gambrel roof with a full second story incorporated into the steeper, lower slope of the gambrel roof sub-type.

The structure maintains significant integrity of location and design that make it worthy of preservation. The architectural description was provided by Dale Nimz in the nomination application. Nimz notes in the description that the front porch is likely not original and was possibly constructed in the 1920s. Another addition likely constructed in the 1920s is the sleeping porch wing. Both of these alterations have achieved historic significance in their own right according to the standards. The only alteration that has not achieved significance is the contemporary alteration of an addition of a one-story shed-roofed sunroom to the rear wing c. 2000.

There is an existing garage on site that is likely historic. However, the condition of the garage was not assessed with this nomination to be considered a contributing structure to the nomination and should be evaluated as a structure in the environs of the primary structure.

3) Historic and Current Context Description and Environs Definition

Historic character information is based on 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). Existing context is based on personal observation, city zoning maps, and recent aerial photographs.

When the Louis and Eva Poehler Residence located at 801 Alabama Street was constructed c. 1899, the historic context for this property is outlined in the National Register multiple property listing "Historic Resources of Lawrence, Douglas County, Kansas," (1998). The Poehler house was constructed during a transition of two of the context periods from the "Agriculture and Manufacturing, Foundations of Stability, 1874-1899" period and "Quiet University Town, 1900-1945". During this timeframe, the town's population grew at a slow gradual rate.

At the time of construction it is likely that there were no public amenities adjacent to the Poehler house. However early in the twentieth century improvements in the urban infrastructure likely impacted this area of Lawrence. Natural features, relatively flat ground with some slope, and outdoor spaces were typical for additions to the city in this area. At the time of construction, the area was a mix of developed and undeveloped lots.

The area surrounding 801 Alabama Street was platted in 1871 with a grid pattern as Lane Place Addition. The lots were divided into 50' X 117' lots. The block was developed with detached dwelling units predominantly on single platted lots or 1½ lots. Land use was primarily single family residential. Land use in the surrounding area during the period of construction was primarily residential. There was no zoning for this area.

The current context of the Louis and Eva Poehler Residence located at 801 Alabama Street has changed little since the construction of the house in 1899. The area has completely developed with residential structures with residential uses and architectural types. The grid pattern and original plat has continued and the zoning reflects this development pattern.

Environs Definition Based on the Historic and Current Context Description

The environs of the Louis and Eva Poehler Residence located at 801 Alabama Street have not significantly changed and should be reviewed as one area. 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.



4) Planning and Zoning Considerations

The property on which the Louis and Eva Poehler Residence is located is zoned RS5, Single Dwelling Residential District. The primary purpose of the RS Districts is 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 RS Districts are primarily differentiated on the basis of required minimum lot size. The RS5 district should have 5,000 sf.

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. Copies of this information are also on file at the Kansas Collection in Spencer Research Library on the University of Kansas main campus and at the Watkin's Community Museum. 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.

Examples of projects which would require review and approval are projects involving the exterior of a building, and demolitions or partial demolitions. 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 Local 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;*
- (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;***

The Louis and Eva Poehler Residence located at 801 Alabama Street a good example of the gambrel-roof sub-type of the Shingle style of architecture.

- (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.**
- (D) In the case of a nominated historic district found to meet the criteria for designation:
 - (1) The types of significant exterior architectural features of the structures within the nominated historic district that should be protected;*
 - (2) 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.*
 - (3) A list of all key contributing, contributing and noncontributing sites, structures and objects within the historic district.**
- (E) Proposed design guidelines for applying the criteria for review of certificates of appropriateness to the nominated landmark or historic district.*
- (F) 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.*
- (G) A map showing the location of the nominated landmark or the boundaries of the*

nominated historic district.

E. RECOMMENDATION:

Staff is of the opinion the Louis and Eva Poehler Residence located at 801 Alabama Street qualifies for designation as a Landmark on the Lawrence Register of Historic Places pursuant to Criterion #6, as described in Section 22-403. The existing garage located on the property has not been evaluated for nomination and is not identified as either contributing or non-contributing to the landmark designation at this time.

Staff recommends the Louis and Eva Poehler Residence located at 801 Alabama Street for designation as a Landmark on the Lawrence Register of Historic Places pursuant to Criterion #6 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 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;*

Louis and Eva Poehler Residence located at 801 Alabama Street is a good example of the gambrel-roof sub-type of the Shingle style of architecture.

- (2) *Explanation of the integrity or lack of integrity of the nominated landmark or historic district;*

Louis and Eva Poehler Residence located at 801 Alabama Street maintains sufficient integrity of location and design 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,*

Fenestration pattern, windows, and window and door openings, the historic form of the structure, the historic form of the roof and primary/front porch, brick and stone columns of the primary porch, wood siding, arched windows, bay projection with shingled accents, wide overhanging wood eaves, dormers including forms and decorative shingles, brick chimney, and sleeping 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.

Changes to fenestration pattern, windows, and window and door openings, the historic form of the structure, the historic form of the roof and primary/front porch, brick and stone columns of the primary porch, wood siding, arched windows, bay projection with shingled accents, wide overhanging wood eaves, dormers including forms and decorative shingles, brick chimney, and sleeping porch should require a *Certificate of Appropriateness*.

(E) 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 has adopted an ***Environs Definition for the Louis and Eva Poehler Residence located at 801 Alabama Street*** to delineate how environs review will be conducted in relation to the listed property. (See above)

(F) 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.

(G) A map showing the location of the nominated landmark. (Attached)