

## **Analysis of Environs of 1047 Massachusetts Street, Watkins Bank Building**

### *Step One*

#### *Historical Significance and Context*

According to the application for Historic Landmark Designation, the property was constructed in 1887. The property is being nominated to the Lawrence Register of Historic Places under local criteria three and six. Local criteria three is a building's *identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community, county, state, or nation*. Local criteria six is a building's *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 a prominent building in central core. The structure's architectural significance is important in the environs definition process because it is excellent example of the Richardsonian Romanesque influence on the architecture of Kansas financial buildings. The structure also maintains a high degree of integrity.

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

Local Register Criteria Three  
J.B. Watkins 1887

Local Register Criteria Six  
1887-1964

### *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.

**Natural Features** The property is located in the original townsite of Lawrence. The environs consist of platted lots on relatively flat ground. There were no significant natural features in the environs of the subject property.

**Property Boundaries and Ownership Patterns** The area surrounding 1047 Massachusetts Street is platted into typical original townsite lots of 50 feet by 117 feet. Many lots were parceled into 25 feet by 117 feet. The property ownership changed during the period of significance. However, the traditional pattern of multiple property owners within the environs

has remained constant over the period of significance.

**Land Use Patterns and Zoning** Land use on in the surrounding area during the period of significance was primarily commercial on Massachusetts Street. Vermont Street was primarily residential although the 1889 Sanborn Fire Insurance maps show commercial encroachment onto the east site of Vermont in the form of lumber yard uses.

**Circulation Patterns** The streets in the area reflect the traditional grid pattern of the original town site.

**Planned Vegetation Patterns** The planned vegetation patterns were lawns around houses, schools and religious buildings. Street trees were common before the 1920s in the residential areas. Little or no vegetation was located on Massachusetts Street.

**Signs and Pedestrian amenities** Typically the historic signs were street name signs. The only pedestrian amenities were stone and cast iron hitching posts and stone steps to provide assistance in getting in and out of carriages.

**Primary Structures** The primary structures in the environs of the property were single-family residences and commercial structures. Quincy School was to the south. The structures were primarily 1, 1 ½ and 2 stories in height and constructed of wood or masonry materials. Various styles were represented in the area.

**Secondary Structures.** Secondary structures were nearly always carriage houses or garages, smoke houses, sheds, and garden structures. There may have been a few kitchen buildings. They would have been constructed of brick, stone, wood. They typically would have been 1 to 2 ½ stories in height. There were also retaining walls, wood and iron fences that generally marked property line boundaries.

**Outdoor Activity Spaces** South Park was located ½ block south of the property.

**Utilities and mechanical Equipment** Electrical and telephone lines were common by 1937. Water and sewer and natural gas lines were buried under ground.

**Views** The views to the listed property were typical of urban lots. Because the subject property was so massive compared to the other structures in the area, expanded views to and from the structure were possible.

### *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 no major natural features.

**Property Boundaries and Ownership Patterns** Property boundaries and ownership patterns along Massachusetts Street still reflect the 50 ft by 117 ft original townsite lots under multiple ownerships with some storefronts divided into 25 foot parcels. Vermont Street no longer retains its residential character and the lots have been combined to allow for large scale commercial and religious development.

**Land Use Patterns and Zoning** Land use on in the surrounding area has had the most dramatic change. The area is primarily commercial.

The Zoning in the area is commercial and general public use districts. The area contains a mixture of CD, GPI and OS zoning districts.

**Circulation Patterns** The circulation patterns have not changed. Access to the properties is still primarily from the State-named street and alleyways. In addition, parking lots have been introduced into the area.

**Planned Vegetation Patterns** The planned vegetation patterns have changed from the historic patterns. Commercial street trees and planters have been installed in the downtown area. A planned Japanese Friendship Garden is directly adjacent to the site on the north.

**Signs and Pedestrian amenities** The signs within the area are almost entirely street names and traffic control signs.

#### **Primary Structures**

Vermont Street is now commercial. All of the residential structures have been removed and have been replaced with commercial structures with the exception of a few residential structures that have been converted to commercial uses. Parking lots have been introduced into the area. Most commercial structures are 1 and 2 stories in height.

**Secondary Structures** Almost all of the secondary structures have been removed. New secondary structures include a drive-thru ATM on the northwest corner of Vermont and 11<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Outdoor Activity Spaces** South Park and the adjacent Japanese Friendship Garden are the closes public parks. The amount of public green space has been increase. The private green space associated with the residential structures on Vermont Street has been almost totally removed.

**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 subject property have changed significantly from the west due to the removal of residential structures.

**Time** Time of the day has an impact on the perception of the subject property, especially during peak hour traffic on 11<sup>th</sup> and Massachusetts streets. Nighttime appearance with lighted porches and interior lights through windows is also quite different from the normal day time appearance. Seasonal changes in vegetation are an important aspect of the experiential quality of the area.

**Weather** The full range of weather conditions common to this area influence the perception of this place.

**Sounds, Smells, Tastes** In general this area has the usual sounds of cars and conversation associated with residential areas. There are no unusual or distinct sounds, smells, or tastes that characterize the residential area.

**Imagination and Expectation** The area surrounding the subject property is considered part of the Downtown 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 platting of the property has changed. The ownership patterns in the area have changed. There is a consolidation of parcels in the area to provide for larger parking lots and structures.

**Land Use Patterns and Zoning** The land use and zoning patterns have changed dramatically from the period of significance. Originally, the majority of the area to the west was single-family residential. Today the area is primarily commercial. As downtown has expanded most of the residential structures have been removed.

**Circulation Patterns** Street and sidewalk patterns have changed very little, but the paving materials have changed substantially.

**Primary Structures** The most significant change is the removal of the residential structures along Vermont Street.

**Secondary Structures** Overall, the number of secondary structures has been reduced.

**Outdoor Activity Spaces** There is more green outdoor activity area space than was present during the period of significance.

**Utilities and Mechanical Equipment** The character of the utilities and mechanical equipment in the area is not obviously different than in the period of significance.

**Views** The differences in the views of the area have been caused by demolition of residential structures.

**Time** The amount of nighttime lighting has increased over time. The time when people were leaving and returning from work may have been characterized by more pedestrians and fewer automobiles.

**Weather** While the weather patterns are generally similar to the historic period of significance, the advent of air conditioning has altered the way the residents may react to weather. Historically, people would have utilized open windows and porches to react to the heat and in the evenings would have slept on sleeping porches if they were available.

**Sounds, Smells, Tastes** The introduction of more traffic and higher density living has introduced more sounds and smells.

**Imagination and Expectation** The area is now totally associated with Downtown and not with any residential neighborhood.

### *Conclusion*

The area no longer reflects the residential character of the historic environs. The majority of the area has developed in commercial patterns. It is anticipated with downtown commercial zoning that this area will continue to develop with commercial uses. The Environs for 1047 Massachusetts Street, the Watkins Bank Building, should be reviewed in the following manner.

The proposed alteration or construction should meet the intent of the Criteria set forth in 22-505. 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 administratively by the Historic Resources Administrator. The proposed alteration or construction should meet the intent of the Criteria set forth in 22-505.

Major projects (demolition of main structures, new infill construction, significant additions, etc.) 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.