



# MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

April 2016, Vol. 22, Issue II

## A Message From Our President

Did you see the mention of the Preservation Alliance in last Wednesday's *Manhattan Mercury*? The article titled "City approves upzone near KSU" reported on Tuesday's (March 22) City Commission meeting, which included up-zoning an area east of campus. Up-zoning, in this case, meant rezoning an area from RM (Four-Family Residential) to higher density M-FRO (Multi-Family Residential Overlay), the kind of zoning necessary for multilevel apartment buildings that currently exist along west Bluemont Avenue. The commission heard a proposal to expand the current M-FRO district by 57 parcels, 3.5 blocks, or nearly 10 acres. This change could potentially increase the number of dwelling units from 114 to 400. While most of the 3.5 blocks are north of Bluemont Avenue, one block is not, and it is part of the Bluemont corridor.

The M/RCPA went on record at Tuesday's commission meeting in opposition to the proposed up-zone for two related reasons. First, the decision to up-zone the area seemed very hasty; and second, because the zoning change preempts a proposed *study of the Bluemont corridor*.

You may recall in March 2015 that city officials adopted a long-range comprehensive plan, known as Manhattan Area 2035 while it was in development. The plan, while "only a plan," is intended to lay out what people can expect from local government. Officials claim that citizens make future-oriented decisions based on the long-range plan. Manhattan Area 2035 included up-zoning, down-zoning, studies, and much more.

In fact, Manhattan Area 2035 included up-zoning of the area east of campus, but it also recommended a study of the Bluemont corridor. The Bluemont corridor study was given "high priority" status, which is defined as "to be initiated as soon as possible, and completed within one to two years after the plan has been adopted." The Bluemont study is intended to "explore a range of possible futures; for example, maintain current residential character, increase opportunities for higher intensity residential or mixed-use development." To date, Manhattan Area 2035 is one year old, and the "high priority" study has not even begun, nor do city officials know when it will begin. Meanwhile, the Bluemont corridor is changing without the benefit of a "high priority" study. This seems very out of order.

Aside from being out of order, it seems rushed. We speculate a developer might be involved. One property owner told commissioners that he had recently purchased a

"dump" on Bluemont between Eighth and Ninth Streets – exactly the block along Bluemont included in the up-zone. If the up-zone were approved, he said he would buy more property and invest in development, but if not, he said, "I won't, and it will stay a dump." You decide.

During comments, one commissioner observed the loss of low- to moderate-density housing between Third Street and the campus edge, and another expressed concern for the proximity to Bluemont Elementary School, calling it encroachment. Both commissioners voted against the up-zone. A third commissioner suggested that zoning is not permanent and said, "If we decide later to change the zoning, we can do that." While zoning may not be permanent, the effects of zoning are very permanent. Once the character of single-family homes is lost to high-density, multilevel apartment buildings, it is gone permanently.

Our opposition is not to Manhattan Area 2035. Many of our members participated in its development and spoke publicly in support of the comprehensive plan. We question the sequence of events. Should not a study precede action? It seems commonsensical to research and learn about an area *before taking action* that will permanently alter its character.

*Sara Fisher*

Manhattan/Riley County  
Preservation Alliance  
P. O. Box 1893  
Manhattan, KS 66505

E-mail: [mrcpanewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:mrcpanewsletter@gmail.com)  
Web site:  
[www.preservemanhattan.org](http://www.preservemanhattan.org)

## The Last Residence in Manhattan's Core Downtown

Tucked between a dental office and a hair salon is the Benjamin W. Powers Residence, which is the oldest structure in the Downtown Manhattan Historic District. Built in 1869, the Powers Residence is also the only remaining residence in the core downtown.

Benjamin W. Powers came to Manhattan from New York in the early 1860s and worked as an architect and builder. He designed or built several of Manhattan's well-known structures (O'Brien).

Isaac and Ellen Goodnow came to the Manhattan area in 1855 as part of the New England Emigrant Aid Society in an effort to block proslavery influences in Kansas. The Goodnows purchased their stone home, which is now a state historic site, at 2031 Claflin Road in 1859 and made a number of additions to it over the years. The front section was added in 1868, and Benjamin did the stone work on the addition. Later, the Goodnows added a stone barn in 1869, and Benjamin designed the Goodnows' barn (O'Brien).

Benjamin also designed a barn in 1869 for Joseph Denison (O'Brien), who also came to Manhattan as part of the New England Emigrant Aid Society. Denison was one of the founders of Bluemont College and served as the first president of both Bluemont College and Kansas State Agricultural College. Denison's barn still stands at 1117 Hylton Heights Road.

Another prominent Manhattan home that Benjamin was involved with as the builder is the home of Colonel W. M. Snow, located at 539 Westview Drive. The two-story stone house was constructed

in 1869. A newspaper account of the construction noted, "The caps, sills, and corner stones present a finished appearance not often seen in a stone house. . . Powers is known to be a first class reliable architect, and builder, and hence he gets all he can do" (O'Brien).

Benjamin was the builder for the Jeremiah Platt House (O'Brien), located at 2005 Claflin Road, and currently used by the Riley County Genealogical Society (see also pg. 5). The brick structure was constructed in 1871 and represents a Victorian variation of the Georgian style with elements of the Italianate style. The house is a relatively rare example in Manhattan of domestic architecture constructed in the decade immediately following the Civil War. The Platt House is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1869, Benjamin designed and built a home for himself at 426 Houston Street (O'Brien). The original section of the house is a two-story brick I-house (two rooms wide, one room deep). The windows have cut stone sills and lintels with keystones. Prominent stone quoining defines the corners of the house. A wood cornice band with dentils is located just below the eaves. A one-story addition was added to the north side post World War II, and a commercial storefront was added to the east side in the 1960s or 1970s and is currently occupied by a hair salon (National). The Powers Residence is a contributing structure



Benjamin W. Powers Residence, 426 Houston St.

to the Downtown Manhattan Historic District.

In addition to the newspaper account that described Benjamin as a "first class reliable architect and builder," the 1870 U. S. Census also provides evidence that Benjamin was successful in his careers. The Census shows Benjamin as owning \$6,740 in real estate and \$1,070 in personal property. The 1880 U. S. Census doesn't include information about a person's wealth, but it does list Benjamin's occupation as a stone mason and shows that Benjamin, his wife, and his youngest son were still living in the house on Houston Street.

Benjamin moved to Clay Center and sold the Houston Street house to William Beverly in the early 1880s (O'Brien). The Downtown Manhattan Historic District register nomination indicates that William Beverly and his family lived in the lower level of the house, and William made the second floor into an office (National). The 1910 U. S. Census lists William's occupation as a salesman in the *(continued on pg. 3)*

(continued from pg. 2)

grocery industry and shows that he and his wife are still living at 426 Houston Street.

In 1925, Dr. Belle Little purchased the Powers Residence from William Beverly and converted the house to her doctor's office (National). Belle was the daughter of Dr. Charles F. Little, who was a medical doctor in Manhattan's early days, having arrived in Manhattan in 1866. Belle graduated from Kansas State Agricultural College in 1891 and then attended the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia. After a year as an intern, Dr. Belle Little returned to Manhattan and began practicing medicine with her father in 1907. She was described as "one of the foremost women physicians of Kansas, and her influence and activities extend beyond the realm of her private practice" (Connelly). Dr. Belle Little founded the Charlotte Swift Memorial Hospital in 1915, located at 11th and Fremont, which was named for her mother. The hospital was later purchased by the Sisters of St. Joseph and became St. Mary's Hospital.

Following Dr. Belle Little, other prominent Manhattan physicians used the Powers Residence for their medical practices, including Dr. Lloyd McFarlane and Dr. K. F. Bascom (National). Dr. McFarlane died at the young age of 40 from surgery complications, and Dr. Bascom subsequently purchased all of Dr. McFarlane's equipment and also the office. Dr. Bascom used the Powers Residence for his medical practice until 1963 (National).

In the years after Dr. Bascom used the house for his practice, the Powers Residence was used as a dental office, a psychiatric clinic,

a bakery, a chiropractic office, a photography studio, and it was home to the *Manhattan Free Press* (National).

Recently, Trinity Canton Church moved into the Powers Residence. Rev. Dr. Justin Kastner, church pastor, explained that the name "Canton" was intentionally selected in honor of the early Canton settlement at the base of Bluemont Hill along the Big Blue River. Canton joined with Isaac Goodnow's New England Emigrant Aid Society colony along with Poliska, which was another early settlement (Slagg). With the name symbolizing the partnership that occurred in Manhattan's early days when these three communities combined, Trinity Canton similarly strives to be a strong community partner and has plans for classes and trainings available to the public to benefit the community.

Having been in the Powers Residence only three months, Rev. Dr. Kastner says the church is still getting used to having an actual meeting place. He says the Powers Residence is strategic for them as the multi-faceted nature of the space is ideal for trainings, and the downtown location is convenient and easily accessed by attendees who may be coming from outside Manhattan.

The Powers Residence has experienced multiple uses over the past 147 year, and throughout it all, it appears to have been well cared for. The house retains much of its historic integrity and many original features, including an original stair railing and woodwork surrounding windows and doors. While it may be the last residence in the core downtown, the Powers Residence seems to be well positioned to maintain that distinction for many years to come.



The staircase, close-up of the quoining, and the fireplace of the Powers Residence.

1870 U. S. Census, Riley County, Kansas, Manhattan City, page 12, dwelling 132, Benjamin W. Powers household, digital image ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 17 March 2016).

1910 U. S. Census, Riley County, Kansas, City of Manhattan, enumeration district 116, sheet 7B, dwelling 160, William M. Beverly household, digital image ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 17 March 2016).

Connelly, William E. *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, Vol. 3.* Chicago, Illinois: Lewis Publishing Company, 1918.

National Register of Historic Places, Downtown Manhattan Historic District, Manhattan, Riley County, Kansas, National Register #06001240.

O'Brien, Dr. Patricia J. *The Architects and Buildings of Manhattan, Kansas.* Manhattan, Kansas: Riley County Historical Society, 2008.

Slagg, Winifred N. *Riley County, Kansas.* Brooklyn, NY: Theo. Gaus' Sons, Inc., 1968.



## Historic Summit

May 5, 7:00 p.m.

Manhattan Public Library

629 Poyntz Ave.

Free & open to public.

Doors open at 6:30 p.m., and the program will begin at 7:00 p.m.

The Historic Summit will include a keynote address by K. Vance Kelley, who is the Historic Preservation principal at Treanor Architects in Topeka and is an Ex-Officio Trustee of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Board of Trustees. Mr. Kelley is the chair of the National Trust Advisors, and he has also served on the National Trust's Honor Awards jury.

In addition to the keynote, there will be a panel discussion on purchasing and renovating an older home, information on how to register a Mid-Century structure, and a case study of a historic preservation project.

## Concert to Benefit Auditorium

Saturday, May 7, 7:30 p.m.

Peace Memorial Auditorium

1101 Poyntz Ave.

Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, a music fraternity at KSU, in partnership with the Friends of Peace Memorial Auditorium, will present a spring music program with donations appreciated for the future restoration of Peace Memorial Auditorium. Donations may also be sent to the Greater Manhattan Community Foundation, 555 Poyntz Ave., Manhattan, KS 66502, with "Peace Memorial Auditorium" written in the memo line of checks.

## City Park's Historic Round House

For over 30 years, Manhattan's Parks and Recreation Department was housed in City Park in a building that had once been garages. Recently, new offices were added onto City Hall, and the city held a ribbon-cutting event and open house to mark the completion of the new office space. Immediately adjacent to the former offices in City Park is the historic limestone Round House building. With the relocation of the Parks and Rec. offices, the M/RCPA wondered if there will similarly be changes ahead for the Round House.

In the 1870s and 1880s, the Riley County Fair was held in City Park. The north side of the park along Fremont Street featured a half-mile track, grandstand, amphitheater, and a limestone exhibition building known as Floral Hall, which was built in approximately 1875 and today, is known as the Round House due to its rounded, octagonal shape. As its name implies, Floral Hall housed displays of flowers, fruits, and vegetables during the county fair. In later years, Floral Hall was used to quarantine patients with contagious diseases, such as small pox.

Angie Sutton, Community Relations Director, provided information via email about plans for the former office space and the Round House. Ms. Sutton wrote, "When the Round House was built in 1875 in Manhattan's City Park, those who designed and constructed it likely had grand visions of what would be hosted in this space. We celebrated the 140th birthday of this building last year and paused for a few moments to ponder the merriment that had taken place in the building's storied history.



The historic Round House in City Park, which was originally known as Floral Hall.

"It is currently home to the Manhattan Parks and Rec. dance program and storage for the youth sports program. A City Park Master Plan is underway and will provide direction for the future of this building and the former Parks and Rec. Administrative Office next door. A 2017 City of Manhattan Capital Improvement is proposed for the former administrative office, and the dance program will likely shift to this more suitable space along with other potential programming."

According to the Kansas Historic Resources Inventory listing for Floral Hall, a historic register nomination was prepared for the building in 1977. The nomination was scheduled to be reviewed by the Historic Sites Board of Review in November 1977, but the board meeting ran long, and the board didn't have the time to consider the nomination. The nomination didn't appear on later agendas for consideration, but this likely means the Round House is potentially eligible for historic registry listing.

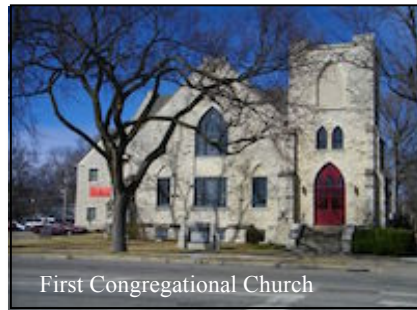
Future plans for the Round House are yet to be determined, but the M/RCPA hopes that any plans will take into account its historic significance and will plan for the building to continue to be an important part of City Park.

## Riley Co.'s Registered Properties

The National Historic Preservation Act was signed into law in 1966, and the M/RCPA will be featuring locally registered properties in the newsletter in 2016 in honor of the 50th anniversary.

### *First Congregational Church* 700 Poyntz Avenue, built 1859 National Register, 2008

The First Congregational Church was founded by Rev. Charles E. Blood in 1856, and the Gothic Revival style church was constructed in 1859. The original section of the church is the oldest church building in Manhattan. Rev. Blood and other church leaders were abolitionists, and Rev. Blood's move to Manhattan was sponsored by an organization opposed to the spread of slavery to new territories.



First Congregational Church



Jeremiah Platt House

### *Jeremiah Platt House*

2005 Claflin Road, built 1871  
National Register, 1981

The Platt House is a notable and relatively rare example of domestic architecture constructed in the decade immediately following the Civil War. Jeremiah Platt was a faculty member at Kansas State Agricultural College and was held in high esteem by his colleagues. He was also a prominent member of the Congregational Church. However, he was very active in the Prohibition movement, and the Board of Regents demanded that he resign in 1889 due to his Prohibition activism.



Downtown Manhattan Historic District

### *Downtown Manhattan Historic District* National Register, 2007

The buildings in downtown Manhattan reflect the late 19th and early 20th century development of the commercial district, and the buildings represent a wide range of architectural styles from vernacular two-part commercial blocks to modern designs. The oldest structure dates to 1869, and many of the commercial structures date to the 1880s.



McFarlane-Wareham House

### *McFarlane-Wareham House*

1908 Leavenworth Street, built 1928  
National Register, 2004

The house was designed by Prof. Paul Weigel, Head of the Dept. of Architecture at Kansas State, for Dr. and Mrs. McFarlane. The house is an excellent example of the Tudor Revival style, and features original leaded casement windows, an arched doorway in the Tudor style, a brick first floor with stucco second floor with half-timbers, and a Jacobsen cut stone fireplace mantel. The house was purchased by Ralph and Betty Wareham in 1938, and Ralph's second wife, Ruth, lived in the house until 1998.

### *Henry and Elenora Strong House*

1916 Beck Street, built 1867  
Register of Historic Kansas Places, 2007

Stone for the property was quarried from Henry's own quarry at the base of Bluemont Hill. Stone from Henry's quarry was used to construct many limestone buildings in the area, including Anderson Hall. Family history indicates the Strongs were part of the Underground Railroad, providing shelter to fugitive slaves on their farmstead. The Strongs' granddaughter, Mabel Hoerner, grew up on the farm and is known today as "Grandma Hoerner," and her family markets her recipes.



Henry & Elenora Strong House

### *Young Buck Prehistoric Archaeological Site*

National Register, 2015

The Young Buck Site is located along Wildcat Creek. Investigations of the site indicate that intact evidence of past human activities remain and hold the potential of yielding new information about how earlier peoples lived in this area. Evidence indicates that peoples from the Middle Woodland Period (A.D. 1 – 600) used the site, and also native peoples from the Central Plains tradition lived in this region A.D. 1000 – 1400.

M/RCPA P.O. Box 1893 MANHATTAN, KS 66505-1893
--

.....

## *2015-16 M/RCPA Membership Roster*

### **\$35 Historic Level**

Richard & Sylvia Beeman, Dede Brokesh, Charlene Brownson, Sandra Chandler, Margaret Conrow, Clark & Nancy Danner, Dean Denner, Michael L. Dodson, Calvin & Genie Emig, David J. Fiser, Mary Ann Fleming, Joe & Janette Gelroth, Kelly & Jeremy Gilkerson, Tom Giller/Commerce Bank, Joann S. Goldstein, Corina Hugo, Jean Hulbert, Lowell & Stacy Kohlmeier, Camille & Phillip Korenek, Marianne Korten, Richard & Marge McKittrick, John Neill, Tony & Janet Nichols, Bill Pallet, Allana Parker, Jerry & Martha Powell, Gloria Juhl Raney, Linda Rice, Lauren W. Ritterbush, Tom & Karen Roberts, James E. Roper, Catherine Roy-Tremblay, Tim & Marcia Rozell, Sharlin Sargent, Karen Sheffield, Richard & Kimberly Smith, Carolee Stark, Chris & Olivia Toomajian, Tyler Traxson, Ronald E. Wells, Ron & Dixie West, Nancy B. Williams, Judy Willingham

### **\$100 Preservation Level**

Barbara Anderson, Phil & Dawn Anderson/Anderson Bed & Breakfast, AsterHouse Design, Mimi Balderson, BHS Construction, Mel & Jan Borst/Borst Restoration, Bowman Bowman Novick Inc., Cheryl Collins, Melvin & Randi Dale, Kevin & Sue Donnelly, Gary & Paula Ellis, Wanda Fateley, Debbie Nuss & Brad Fenwick, Troy & Sara Fisher, Larry & Linda Glasgow, Judy Glowiak, Bert & Val Harrop, Jean Bigbee Hill, Nancy Holmes, Claudia Jones, Ann R. Kosch, Master Landscape Inc., John & Karen McCulloh, McCullough Development Inc., Bruce McMillan/Bruce McMillan Architects, Michael and Judine Mecseri, Dori Milldyke, Linda L. Morse, Karin Westman & Phil Nel, Marina Pecar-Krstic, Lawrence & Mary Pollack, Barbara Poresky, John & Barbara Rees, Steve & Deborah Saroff, Schrum Rentals LLC, Brenda Spencer/Spencer Preservation, George & Julie Strecker, Joan C. Strickler, Ray & Patricia Weisenburger, Barbara Withee

### **\$250 Landmark Level**

David & Kathy Dzewaltowski, GJL Real Estate, Andy & Erica Larson, Dr. Patricia J. O'Brien, Verlyn D. Richards, Gwyn & Gina Riffel, Kevin S. & Alyn Pennington West

### **Honorary Lifetime Members**

Rose M. Bissey (in memory of Charles Bissey), Enell Foerster (in memory of Bernd Foerster), Dr. Patricia J. O'Brien, Edna L. Williams