



MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

October 2012

A Message From Our President

The Preservation Alliance held its annual meeting and kicked off a new membership year on Sept. 27th, which provided me with the opportunity to pause and reflect on what's happened regarding historic preservation over the past year.

Unfortunately, 2012 has been somewhat of a gloomy year for historic preservation. During the 2012 session of the Kansas Legislature, the state historic rehabilitation tax credit and the environs review process (see pg. 3-4) were both threatened with elimination by proposed amendments. In the case of the tax credit program, it survived due to advocacy by preservationists, which included educating legislators about the economic benefits the tax credit program brings to Kansas. While both the tax credit program and the historic environs review process were kept intact, it's quite likely that both will be challenged again during the 2013 session of the Kansas Legislature.

Recently, the Kansas Main Street program (see pg. 5) was eliminated by the Department of Commerce. The Kansas Main Street program has been instrumental in helping Kansas's communities revitalize their historic downtowns, so the announcement that the program was being discontinued came as a shock.

During the past year locally, the Marlatt Homestead, which is listed on the Register of Historic Kansas Places, was inappropriately covered with corrugated metal siding, a number of older homes were demolished over the summer, and another house is going through the public hearing process to discuss its potential demolition (see pg. 4).

But, the past year hasn't all been

negative. The Historic Summit, hosted by the Riley County Historical Society and Museum, was a great success and provided participants with a great deal of information about preservation. The multiple property listing the "African American Resources of Manhattan, Kansas" was added to the state historic register, and the Bethel A.M.E. Church and the Second (Pilgrim) Baptist Church were both added to the National Register of Historic Places. The Rocky Ford School was also added to the National Register in 2012. While a few older homes were flattened to make way for new projects, another will be rehabilitated to be the new home of the Wonder Workshop (see pg. 2). The Wonder Workshop's director's excitement at the prospect of a long-term space to use as well as his ability to imagine the future renovated space is inspiring.

During the annual meeting on Sept. 27th, we elected the board of directors and officers, including myself to serve another year as president. The program was a presentation on the Kansas Preservation Alliance's Awards for Excellence. Similar to our local Preservation Awards, which will be held in the spring of 2013, the Awards for Excellence honor the efforts of individuals and organizations statewide that have made exemplary contributions to preserving Kansas's historic places. In this year when historic preservation faced many challenges, it was good to be reminded that there are, in fact, others around the state who value historic preservation as much as we do.

Kathy Dzewaltowski

2012-13 Officers & Board of Directors

President: Kathy Dzewaltowski
Vice President: Sara Fisher
Secretary: TBD
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Terms ending in 2013:

Debbie Nuss
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Terms ending in 2014:

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Nancy Holmes

Terms ending in 2015:

Kathy Dzewaltowski
Gary Ellis
Alyn Pennington West
Catherine Roy-Tremblay
Allana Saenger

Bluemont Elementary Open House & Dedication Monday, October 1st

714 Bluemont Ave.

6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

USD 383 invites the community to come see the new and improved Bluemont! There will be a short program at 7:00 p.m.

The Wonder Workshop's Fixer-Upper

For many years, the Wonder Workshop, a program established in 1989 and dedicated to providing learning opportunities in the arts, sciences, and the humanities for children, was located in a vibrantly painted historic house at 821 Poyntz Avenue. The house was owned by USD 383 and was used for district offices prior to establishing an agreement that allowed the Wonder Workshop to use the house for its programs. Budget constraints led to the school board's decision to sell the house in 2003 to McCullough Development. The new owner allowed the Wonder Workshop to remain in the house for the next two years, but the house was eventually demolished in 2005, leaving the Wonder Workshop homeless.

Since 2005, the Wonder Workshop has operated its programs in space provided at elementary schools and at its Outback Camp located at Tuttle Creek Lake. During these years, the Wonder Workshop has not had a permanent space to call home – until now.

The Bethel A.M.E. Church owns a one-story bungalow immediately

adjacent to the church, located at 506 South 4th Street. The church has agreed to allow the Wonder Workshop to use the house rent-free for the next 20 years in exchange for the Wonder Workshop's renovating the house and completing repairs. The house has been vacant for a number of years and has no utilities.

Richard Pitts, Director of the Wonder Workshop, provided a recent tour of the house. The exterior is in good condition, with the exception of the roof that needs to be replaced. The foundation is solid and the basement is dry, so those are pluses. However, the house has no plumbing, no bath or kitchen fixtures, and no water heater. There is no furnace or air conditioning system, but there is ductwork for a forced-air system. The former kitchen is in sad shape, but Mr. Pitts says he only really needs a sink in the kitchen space because the Wonder Workshop

doesn't offer cooking programs. The main floor will also need to be made handicapped accessible, which will involve creating an accessible entrance and restroom, and widening a few interior doorways. Mr. Pitts plans to apply for grants and raise private funds to finance the work.

While the list of repairs may seem daunting, on the positive side, the house retains much of its historic character. It still has its original windows, Craftsman-style front door, pocket doors, built-in linen closet, and interior doors and woodwork. Mr. Pitts said he plans to keep as much of the original features as possible.

Mr. Pitts said he knows a lot of hard work lies ahead, but he's excited about the location and excited to have the Wonder Workshop in its own place for the next 20 years.



506 S. 4th St.

Pictured below, left to right, are original pocket doors, the living room, original front door, and built-in linen closet.



The Kansas Environs Law

During the 2012 session of the Kansas Legislature, a bill was introduced in the Senate that would have allowed municipalities to opt-out of the review process for projects in the environs of historic registered properties and to develop their own standards. The Senate Committee on Local Government, where the bill was introduced, also discussed completely eliminating the environs review process from the state preservation statute. The bill did not progress and was withdrawn from action. Senator Roger Reitz, the Senate committee chairman, noted that “The committee felt the changes in the amendments potentially went too far and more time for input and deliberation was needed.”

It’s easy to imagine that the historic environs review process will be challenged again in the future. With that in mind, a discussion of the historic environs review process and its impact seemed appropriate.

Post World War II construction projects, such as the Interstate Highway System and urban renewal projects, resulted in the destruction of many historic properties. Concern about the impacts these projects were having in historic areas led to the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) established in 1966. The NHPA is the primary federal law governing the preservation of cultural and historic resources. The NHPA established the program for identifying resources for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, created State Historic Preservation Offices, and it required federal agencies to consider the impact their actions might have on historic registered properties, known as the Sec. 106 Review. The creation of State Historic Preservation Offices by the NHPA led to Kansas’s establishing the

Kansas Preservation Act in 1977 (“Guide”) to spell out the duties and responsibilities of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

The 1977 version of the Kansas Preservation Act required only those projects undertaken by governmental entities that would impact a historic registered property to be reviewed. A 1981 amendment to the statute expanded the review process to include any project that required a local permit to be reviewed. The 1981 amendment introduced the concept of “historic environs” to the review process, but the exact meaning of environs was not defined (“Guide”).

The lack of clear definition of what was meant by “historic environs” caused confusion and uncertainty for local historic commissions in reviewing projects. As a result, an amendment was added in 1988 that defined the environs as being within 500 feet of a historic registered property inside city limits, and 1,000 feet in unincorporated areas of counties.

During the 2012 session of the Kansas Legislature, opponents of the historic environs review process expressed concerns that the process is time consuming and causes project delays, restricts private property owners’ rights, leads to litigation, and is unique to Kansas, meaning other states don’t have similar legislation and manage to protect historic properties without a historic environs

review.

Supporters of the historic environs review process tend to believe the context of a historic property, which provides a physical record of time, place, and use, helps to broaden the understanding of the property’s historic significance. The maintenance of character-defining buildings, structures, landscape features, spatial relationships, etc. deepens the appreciation of the historic property and shows what the surrounding environs were like when the structure was built. A property that has become “orphaned” through the removal of its environs loses its connection to its historic context.

This does not mean that historic environs are never altered. New additions, exterior alterations, infill
(continued on pg. 4)



Pictured at top is an orphaned Strasser House in 2009, its surrounding neighborhood demolished. Below, the Strasser House in its 2012 neighborhood.

(continued from
pg. 3)

construction, and demolitions regularly occur in historic environs. The review process, though, allows for a community discussion and the opportunity to examine what changes are compatible and won't adversely impact the historic registered property. Without this process, a convenience store could be built adjacent to a historic registered property or a character-defining structure could be demolished with no public discussion. Opponents of the environs review process claim that the public process, which sometimes results in projects being denied by the SHPO, hampers development. However, in cases of denial, an applicant can appeal to the local government, and the local government has the authority to overrule the SHPO's findings.

For a local example of why the context of a historic registered property matters, one only needs to look to the Phillipena Strasser House, located at 326 Laramie Street in the north redevelopment area. Protecting and preserving the Strasser House was part of a Memorandum of Agreement established between the City of



Pictured above at right is the Strasser House as it appeared in the March 2004 newsletter and when its neighborhood was intact.

Manhattan and the State Historic Preservation Office. Part of the agreement was the stipulation that the city would encourage and aid the house's owner, which was Dial Realty at the time, to have the house listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The house was not listed until 2010 when its current owner, Strasser Landing LLC, completed the process. In the intervening years while the house was not yet listed and its environs not technically protected by statute, all of the surrounding area was demolished to make way for the redevelopment, including the adjacent house pictured above that was supposed to be spared.

The Strasser House was restored, but all of its historic environs, which could have provided living history lessons for future generations about the development of Manhattan, are gone because they weren't protected

by statute.

Preservationists would regard this example as clearly demonstrating why the environs of a historic registered property are significant and why alterations to the environs should be carefully considered with a review process. Opponents of the environs review process would likely regard the Strasser House situation as an example of how things should be, meaning the historic property didn't block development in the surrounding environs.

The M/RCPA plans to continue to advocate for the retention of the historic environs review process.

"Guide to the State Historic Preservation Statute." 17 Sept. 2012. www.kshs.org/p/guide-to-the-state-historic-preservation-statute/14648.

Public Hearing to Demolish 1446 Laramie

The City Commission will conduct a public hearing on Tuesday, Oct. 2nd, 7:00 p.m., in the City Commission Room, to consider a request by the owner of 1446 Laramie St. to demolish the house. The house is within 500 feet of the KSAC Radio Towers, which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The demolition request was

reviewed in 2011 by the Historic Resources Board and the State Historic Preservation Office. Both entities found that the house's demolition would be detrimental to the environs of the radio towers. The house is considered to be potentially eligible for historic registry listing.

The M/RCPA submitted comments to the City Commission in

opposition to the demolition and plans to comment during the public hearing.



1446 Laramie St.

Depot News

If you've been to the depot recently, you may have noticed a slight bounce to the floor and a low spot. The city contracted with an engineer to inspect the structural condition of the depot's floor. The engineer discovered that some of the wood timbers supporting the floor had termite damage and had deteriorated, resulting in the wood's compressing on the weight bearing ends.

This summer, Bruce McMillan, Michael Mecseri, and Mike Buchanan entered the crawl space beneath the depot's floor to make their own observations. During the Sept. 10th meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Mr. McMillan reported their observations to the board and said the depot's foundation is in good shape, but the compressed supporting timbers will need to be addressed. His recommendation was that the city should contract with another engineer to do a complete analysis of the floor's structure and to develop strategies to address the situation.



Manhattan/Riley County
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Web site: www.preservemanhattan.org
Facebook: Visit our web site and click the Facebook "Like" button at the bottom of the home page.

Kansas Main Street Program Ends

On Sept. 20th, the Kansas Department of Commerce announced that the department was restructuring and consolidating services. As a result, the Kansas Main Street program would end, effective immediately.

The Kansas Main Street program began in 1985 with the goal of being a resource to help community leaders revitalize their downtowns. The program used a four-point approach, believing that focusing on only one aspect, such as fixing up storefronts, wouldn't address all of the issues. The four points included organizing and getting stakeholders focused on the same goal, promoting and marketing downtown, enhancing design to create an inviting area, and strengthening and diversifying the economic base. The Kansas Main Street program provided training, design assistance, business strategies, incentive dollars, and local program evaluations to support Kansas's downtowns.

The Kansas Main Street program was part of the national Main Street program, which was developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The national program has been in place for 30 years and includes 37 state programs. During this time, \$49 billion have been reinvested in traditional downtowns ("About"). According to the National Trust, our nation's main streets matter because they are "the economic engine, the big stage, the core of the community. Our Main Streets tell us who we are and who

we were, and how the past has shaped us" ("About"). In [The Economics of Historic Preservation](#), Donovan Rypkema writes, "There is no form of economic development of any kind, anywhere, on any level, that is more cost effective and that is better able to leverage scarce public resources than the preservation-based commercial revitalization approach known as Main Street." The fact that the Main Street program has been such a significant economic development tool for historic downtowns makes the Kansas Department of Commerce's decision to end it all the more surprising and disheartening.

In its announcement regarding the ending of the program, the Kansas Department of Commerce expressed the belief that other resources available through the Business and Community Development programs will be able to help Kansas downtowns revitalize.

Manhattan had participated in the Kansas Main Street program for several years but had ceased to participate in the program in 2010.

"About Main Street." National Trust for Historic Preservation. 21 September 2012. www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/.

Rypkema, Donovan D. [The Economics of Historic Preservation](#). Washington, D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1994.



Downtown Manhattan

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

\$35 Historic Level

Mary Elizabeth & Tom Atwood, Donna M. Bark, Charlene Brownson, Wally Cash, Diana Chapel, Wayne (Mick) Charney, Susanne Siepl-Coates & Gary Coates, D. Cheryl Collins, Margaret Conrow, Michael & Janet Danenberg, Nancy & Clark Danner, Glee Eggers, Cam & Britt Feltner, Rev. H. Wayne & Beverly A. Fink, Sara Fisher, Mary Ann Fleming, Ron Fowles Construction, Joe & Janette Gelroth, Charles Gillum, Larry & Linda Glasgow, Fred & Katherine Hasler, Charles S. & Charlotte B. Herr, Angie Hickel, Robin D. S. Higham, Jean Bigbee Hill, Julie Hostetler, Corina Hugo, Jean Hulbert, Gloria Juhl Raney, Lowell & Stacy Kohlmeier, Camille & Phillip Korenek, Marianne Korten, Ann Kosch, Robert D. Linder, Bonnie Lynn-Sherow, Judith K. Major, Marilyn McCord, Bill Meredith, Robert & Elaine Mohr, Fred Newton, Janet & Tony Nichols, Ed & Kay Olson, Kevin G. W. Olson, Bill Pallett, Mary H. Pollack, Jerry & Martha Powell, Virginia Quiring, Dr. M. C. Reay, Linda Rice, Lauren Ritterbush, Tom & Karen Roberts, James E. Roper, Rachelle Routh/The Strong House, Catherine Roy-Tremblay, Marcia Rozell, Sharlin Sargent, Geri Simon, Connie Sink, Kimberly & Richard Smith, Brenda Spencer, Maurice & Carolee Stark, Gary Stowe (Stowe Property LLC), Joan & John Strickler, Bria Taddiken-Williams, Walter Remodeling Inc., Patricia & Ray Weisenburger, Edna Williams, Judith M. Willingham, Barbara Withee.

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\$250 Landmark Level

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Honorary Lifetime Members

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