

# DOWNTOWN GARDEN CITY HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY



*Historic views of downtown Garden City from Finney County Museum*

Survey Report  
May 2011



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**DOWNTOWN GARDEN CITY HISTORIC SURVEY  
SURVEY REPORT  
May 24, 2011**

**A. INTRODUCTION**

The City of Garden City received a Historic Preservation Fund grant from the Kansas State Historical Society in 2010 to assist with the update of an inventory of the community's historic resources. Following a competitive bid process, the City contracted with Spencer Preservation to update the survey of approximately 80 properties in downtown Garden City. The project commenced in February 2011. This report documents the survey methodology, summarizes the results of historic survey, and provides recommendations regarding potential listing of local resources on the state or national registers of historic places. A list of properties surveyed and a map of the survey area is provided at the end of the report.

**B. SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

Spencer was hired in January 2011 and a site visit was scheduled for mid-February. The City of Garden City Planning Department administered the project and had established the preliminary boundaries for the survey area in the grant application process. The Garden City GIS Department provided aerial photos of the survey area. These "maps" were used for site work and the site plans for individual buildings.

Spencer was in Garden City February 7 – 11, 2011 to conduct site investigation and begin research on individual properties. A public meeting was held in February 9, 2011 to kick off the project. The primary goal was to inform local business and property owners of the project. Spencer also met with representatives from the local Landmarks Commission, the Downtown Vision Group, and the Finney County Museum.

Preliminary site work revealed that the number of properties in the survey area far exceeded the contract number. Spencer worked with the City and Kansas State Historical Society (KSHS) to narrow the boundary to approximately 100 buildings. Following the first site visit, Spencer met with staff of the Kansas State Historical Society to review potential boundaries for the survey project. City of Garden City representatives concurred with the proposed boundaries and Spencer was authorized to proceed. The survey area generally spanned from Depot Street on the south to Spruce on the north and from 7<sup>th</sup> Street to 8<sup>th</sup> Street encompassing just over 100 buildings. KSHS offered to update existing survey forms with Spencer's photos of buildings excluded from the survey.

This project, an update of the existing historic survey, utilized the existing data in the Kansas Historic Resource Inventory database on individual properties in the survey area. Spencer worked on compiling basic property data on each resource utilizing the information provided by the City of Garden City, the

Downtown Vision office, and the Finney County Appraiser's website. Spencer utilized the GIS photos provided by the City and photos taken during the site visit to document each property. Research began on the history of individual properties utilizing Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps to date existing buildings. Maps of Garden City were published in 1887, 1892, 1899, 1905, 1911, 1920, 1929 and a 1950 update of the 1929 map.

Spencer returned to Garden City April 4-7 to do research on the history of buildings in the survey area. The primary source for historic data on the individual properties was the Finney County Museum and Historical Society collection. Museum staff member Laurie Oshel assisted Spencer in reviewing museum files and scanning photographs. Museum volunteer Jan Coulter shared her knowledge on several local businesses and buildings, and assisted Spencer in culling the museum's photographic collection. Spencer also reviewed city directories to identify historic dates and locations of businesses.

Local architect and chair of the Garden City Landmarks Commission, Bruce Glass provided valuable input on building alterations and the Downtown Vision Office shared property data on buildings in the survey area.

The survey data on each property, including brief historical summary and physical description, was entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Local representatives including the City of Garden City, Downtown Vision, and the Finney County Museum, were given the opportunity to review and comment on a completed draft of the database. The survey data was then uploaded to the Kansas State Historical Society's on-line database, along with current and historic photos, and site plans. Once approved by KSHS staff, the survey records will be available to the public at <http://khri.kansasgis.org>. The properties in the survey area can be viewed as a group by searching under "Garden City - Downtown Survey (2011)" as the survey project name, or records of individual buildings can be retrieved searching by the building address or historic name.

In addition to providing basic information on individual properties in the survey area, the primary purpose of a survey project is to identify existing historic resources. The threshold criteria is the age of the property, which must generally exceed 50 years to be considered historic. Among those properties that are over 50 years old, buildings are examined to determine the level of historic integrity – how well the existing property portrays its historic character. It is that level of historic integrity that determines whether a property is eligible for individual listing on the National Register, whether it would be a contributing resource to a potential historic district, or if the building has been so compromised by former alterations that it no longer portrays its historic character and therefore, would likely not be eligible for any type of listing. Each property was surveyed and a preliminary determination made regarding its potential eligibility for listing on the National Register. Spencer met with KSHS to review the potential contributing status of each property and the proposed boundaries for a potential historic district. The recommendations in this report are based on the input from KSHS.

Following is a summary of the survey data including a list of surveyed properties and a map of the survey area.

### C. SURVEY RESULTS

A community's physical assets are a reflection of its history and a discussion of Garden City's buildings must begin with the town's origins.<sup>1</sup>

Finney County was created by an act of Legislature in 1883, named in honor of Lieutenant Governor Finney of Woodson County. The first settlers in Garden City were the Fulton brothers, William D. and James R. who arrived in February of 1878. The Fulton brothers brought with them the county surveyor from Dodge City who platted the town. The original townsite of Garden City was laid out on the south half of section 18 by engineer Chas. Van Trump. Van Trump and John A. Stevens, and the Fulton brothers, each filed a claim on quarter section. Main Street ran directly north and south, dividing the Fulton's claims and the Fulton's built the first structures on Main Street.

The Fulton brothers met C.J. Jones from Sterling and encouraged Jones to use his influence to secure the Atchison Topeka Santa Fe railroad in Garden City. Jones bought one of the original quarter sections of the town and became one of Garden City's prominent leaders competing with John A. Stevens in developing local properties and building prominent landmarks that define the city even today. Jones impacted the development of Garden City, not only through his own investment but through his recruitment of other prominent citizens including Fredrick Finnup.

The Garden City Town Company was established and the town was re-surveyed in April of 1879. The town was named Garden City, reportedly based on a suggestion from a passerby at viewing Mrs. Fulton's garden. The city fathers planted trees along the city streets and began development of a system of irrigation canals to direct water to local crop land. Garden City was incorporated as a city of the third class in January 1883.

The city experienced an incredible boom in the mid-1880s spurred in part by the investments of the city founders. The town's first bank had been established in 1884 and the city's water works in 1886. By 1885, the town had grown to a population of 6,000. Jones built the Buffalo Block and the adjacent Buffalo Hotel in 1885-86. These buildings fronted Grant Avenue, a reported attempt to redirect business from Main Street where competitor John Steven's owned land. Stevens usurped Jones with construction of the Windsor Hotel and the Opera House on Main Street. Garden City was named the county seat in 1887 and the town's population neared 10,000 but there were already indications of the bust that inevitably follows such boom periods. The blizzard of 1886 was followed by a period of agricultural foreclosures that would be the ruin of many early settlers including Jones and Stevens. In a period of four years, the city's population fell by nearly half.

Garden City languished through the turn of the century, its population having fallen to 2124 in 1900. But the town welcomed its next boom with the opening of a local sugar beet factory in 1906. The sugar beet industry, heavily subsidized by the federal government, would become the city's leading industry and a mainstay through the coming decades. Garden City did not match its original boom in later development but instead experienced a steady, sustainable growth based in large part, on the sugar beet industry. The town's population grew to 4,000 by 1910 and steadily rose to over 7,000 in the next twenty years. The town experienced modest development throughout as businesses and buildings emerged to meet the needs of the growing population. An Army airbase was established east of town in 1942 (now the municipal airport) providing another boost to the local economy. The opening of Iowa

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<sup>1</sup> The summary of the town's history was taken in large part from: Kansas State Historical Society - Kansapedia. (2010). *Finney County, Kansas* retrieved from <http://kshs.org/kansapedia/finney-county-kansas/15283> and from [Conquest of Southwest Kansas](#) by Leola Howard Blanchard retrieved from <http://www.gardencity.net/info/history/garden>, as well as U.S. Census reports.

Beef Packers in the 1980s was the first step in the establishment of Garden City as a home to the beef packing industry, a prominent component of the town's economic base today.

The existing buildings in downtown Garden City literally reflect each and every decade since the town's founding in 1879. Many of the prominent local landmarks date to the boom years immediately following the town's establishment. The long-term influence of Garden City's founding families like the Fulton's and Finnup's is undeniable and visible in the community today. Likewise, the legacy of two early settlers, John A. Stevens and C.J. Jones, lives on as a physical manifestation of the town's unrivaled 1880s boom. Buildings from this period include the ATSF Depot, the Buffalo, Grand Central, and Windsor Hotels, the Masonic Hall, and prominent commercial buildings such as the Eirsman Block.

Despite experiencing rapid growth in its early years, a majority of existing historic resources date to the city's second period of development that related primarily to the sugar beet industry. More than half of Garden City's downtown buildings date to the first four decades of the twentieth century. Prominent downtown buildings constructed during this period include the Finney County Courthouse, the old U.S. Post Office, the American Legion Hall, the Warren, Baird, and Palace Hotels, two downtown churches, and numerous commercial business buildings. Architectural style and building materials distinguish these later buildings from their predecessors, the latter being constructed largely of brick compared to the native stone used in many of the earlier structures.

The current project involved survey of 103 resources located in a 5-1/2 block area in downtown Garden City. Representative of the boom and bust cycles outlined above, 17 of the surveyed properties date to the town's first ten years, from 1879-1889. Only 3 of the existing buildings date to the period 1890-1899. Seventeen buildings date to the first two decades of the twentieth century; 18 existing buildings were built between 1920-1929, 19 buildings were built from 1930-1939, and 14 were built 1940-49. Five buildings in the survey area were constructed between 1950 and 1963 (fifty-year age threshold). Eleven buildings post-date 1964, the newest structures being The Women's Clinic (1993), Sandhill Orthopedics (1999) and Robinson Garage (2004).

The oldest of the surveyed buildings is Geo. Finnup's Hardware and Furniture Store, originally constructed in 1879 however; many of the earliest commercial buildings do not reflect their original dates of construction. Among the oldest buildings in downtown Garden City, The Finnup Hardware building has a c.1960s metal slipcover, the Finnup Grocery Store building has a c.1950s blond brick facade, the Coverdale Block was completely remodeled in the 1960s, and portions of the Buffalo Block was remodeled in the 1980s. Only 25% of the properties constructed before the turn of the century portray their original design. However, among those that reflect their original design and construction are some of the most prominent downtown buildings including the Buffalo and Windsor Hotels. A much higher percentage of buildings constructed after the turn of the century, portray their original designs or styles (approximately 64%).

The majority of buildings in downtown Garden City are classified by two dominant architectural styles: Commercial Style/Progressive Era buildings and Modern/Modern Movement buildings (44% and 23% respectively). Nearly 20% of the surveyed properties defy traditional architectural or stylistic classifications, reflecting in large part, contemporary construction or contemporary facades. Five percent of the surveyed buildings date to the Late Victorian period in the Italianate style. The balance of downtown buildings reflect a wide variety of architectural styles including Italian Renaissance, Greek Revival, Neoclassical, Collegiate Gothic, Spanish Eclectic, Tudor Revival, and Art Deco (less than 3% each).

As one would expect, a majority of the downtown buildings were historically used for Commerce/Trade functions including retail stores, financial institutions, restaurants, and professional and service businesses. Seventy-four percent of buildings in the survey area were classified as Commerce/Trade for their original function and 73% of the buildings retain that function today. Approximately 5% of buildings in the survey area were transportation-related uses (gas-stations) and domestic uses (hotels) historically. The balance of historic functions included: industrial/communications facilities, government, religious, social, and recreation/culture uses at less than 5% each. This distribution of uses is comparable to current functions of buildings in the survey area. Fourteen percent of the surveyed buildings are vacant. Aside from the predominant Commerce/Trade classification, less than 5% of the buildings surveyed fall into each of the following categories: industrial/communications, health care, government, social/civic, religious, recreation/culture, and domestic. The primary distinction, when compared to historic functions, is the absence of the numerous hotels that were located downtown historically.

Two of the properties surveyed were formerly listed on the National Register of Historic Places – the Windsor and Buffalo Hotels. A majority of the resources surveyed were determined to be potentially eligible for listing on the National or Kansas Registers of Historic Places or contributing to a state/national historic district. Fifty-six of the 103 properties in the survey area, a total of 54%, were deemed to be contributing to a potential historic district. These properties include the two resources already listed on the national register and properties deemed potentially eligible for individual listing. Ten of the properties surveyed were deemed to be potentially eligible for individual listing on the Kansas or National Registers of Historic Places. Those properties include: the American Legion Post, AME Church, Warren Hotel, First Christian Church, Garden National Bank, the Eirsman Block, J.C. Penney's Store, the Squire Building, the old U.S. Post Office, and the Marland Oil Company Service Station.

The preliminary determination of eligibility for listing was made based on exterior site investigation and preliminary research at the Finney County Museum, appraisal records, City Directories and Sanborn Maps. Interior inspection and additional research may be required, particularly involving those properties that were preliminarily deemed eligible for individual listing.

#### **D. SUMMARY**

The resources surveyed reflect the evolution of commercial development in Garden City and serve as a physical reflection of the town's history. A total of 56 of the properties surveyed were preliminarily determined to be eligible for listing or would be contributors to a historic district, including the two properties already listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

While the requirement for district eligibility is a simple majority, the numbers are marginal and present some concern for successful nomination of a historic district. The survey area was limited to one hundred properties and the boundary was determined by the City of Garden City and Brenda Spencer in consultation with the Kansas State Historical Society. Not all of downtown Garden City's historic commercial area was included in the survey project but the project focused on those areas with the highest level of historic integrity. With the exception of individual set-piece buildings nearby such as the ATSF Railroad Depot and the Finney County Courthouse, adjacent commercial blocks such as the 600 block of N. Main Street and the cluster on the west side of 8<sup>th</sup> Street at the intersection with Grant Avenue have experienced major modifications that have diminished the level of historic integrity to a degree that inclusion in a historic district is likely not feasible.

Based on an analysis of the geographic distribution of eligible properties, the percentage of contributing properties does not change significantly by reducing the size of the proposed district. Clusters of properties on the edges of the survey area (7<sup>th</sup> Street, in the 500 block of N. Main Street, and the 100

block of N. Main) provide a higher percentage of contributing properties than some blocks in the core area. For this reason, it is recommended that the proposed historic district resemble the survey area generally spanning the 100 to 500 blocks of N. Main and including the clusters of historic buildings in the 100-200 blocks of 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the southeast and Stevens Avenue on the northwest. Consideration should also be given to expanding the boundary to include the ATSF depot on the south and the Finney County Courthouse on the west (the latter two buildings were not included in the current survey project). Minor alterations in the district boundary may be feasible based on support of local property owners. Additionally, the National Park Service will likely encourage cutting the parking lots on the edges of the district out of the district boundary.

Only the Kansas State Historical Society and the National Park Service have the authority to approve historic district boundaries. Any changes to the recommended boundary should be reviewed with the Kansas State Historical Society and Garden City should maintain close communication with KSHS when pursuing the next phase of this project.

The following map illustrates the proposed boundaries of a Downtown Garden City Historic District and the table includes a listing of the properties surveyed. Based on a preliminary tally of the survey data, the proposed district would include a total of 107 resources, 59 of which were preliminarily determined to be eligible for listing or contributing to a potential district (including the 2 properties already listed on the National Register).<sup>2</sup> It is recommended that the City of Garden City, in cooperation with Downtown Vision, pursue the second phase of this project through the Kansas State Historical Society to prepare a National Register District nomination for the proposed district. A downtown historic district would expand recognition and protection of downtown Garden City's buildings as a reflection of the town's rich history and enable property owners to take advantage of incentive programs available for listed properties through the Kansas State Historical Society.

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<sup>2</sup> The total of 107 includes the 103 buildings in the survey area and the depot and courthouse. Additionally, KSHS advised listing Stevens Park as a site, in addition to the band shell and concession stand as individual buildings.

LISTING OF SURVEYED PROPERTIES

Survey #	Address		Street	Historic Name	Date	Eligibility
1	102	N	MAIN	I.E. Diesem Building	1911	Contributing
2	108	N	MAIN	Penny Cleaner's Building	1931	No
3	110	N	MAIN	Postal Telegraph Building	1930	No
4	112	N	MAIN	Ideal Food Store	1935	No
5	116	N	MAIN	Ritz Theater	1930	No
6	118	N	MAIN	H.N. Goulding Billiards and Bowling	1930	No
7	122	N	MAIN	H.N. Goulding Motor Co.	1920	Contributing
8	105 107	N	7TH	Anderson Motor Co.	1948	Contributing
9	101	E	FULTON	Non-Historic Commercial Building	1999	No
10	214 216	N	MAIN	Warden Building	1910	Contributing
11	218	N	MAIN	Kisner Realty/OK Barber Shop	1910	Contributing
12	220	N	MAIN	Severs/VeDor Café Building	1925	No
13	222	N	MAIN	Renick Drug	1925	Contributing
14	224	N	MAIN	Sweetbriar Shop	1945	Contributing
15	110 112	E	CHESTNUT	Lawrence & Co. Coal Office	1920	Contributing
16	116	E	CHESTNUT	Old City Hall	1936	Contributing
17	118	E	CHESTNUT	Cement Warehouse/Battery & Tire Shop/Smith Bakery	1910	No
18	120	E	CHESTNUT	Coast to Coast	1947	Contributing
19	201	E	FULTON	Phillips 66 Service Station No. 450	1956	Contributing
20	204	N	7TH	Tractor Parts Co./Downing Restaurant	1940	Contributing
21	206	N	7TH	Garden City News Building	1930	Contributing
22	210	N	7TH	U.S. Post Office	1914	Yes
23	306	N	7TH	First Christian Church	1920	Yes
24	308 310	N	7TH	Ideal Food Store	1947	No
25	312	N	7TH	Non-Historic Commercial Building	1980	No
26	302	N	MAIN	Home Grocery	1907	Contributing
27	304	N	MAIN	Squire Building	1963	Yes
28	306	N	MAIN	L. & M. Mercantile Co.	1908	Contributing
29	310	N	MAIN	Daines Building/Gardiner Building	1895	No
30	312	N	MAIN	Burns & Goulding Hardware	1895	No
31	314 316	N	MAIN	Holcomb Block	1908	No
32	318	N	MAIN	Lawyers' Block-McBeth & Kinnison Feed Store	1887	No
33	320	N	MAIN	Lawyers' Block-J.C. Walls Grocery	1887	No
34	322 324	N	MAIN	Coverdale Block	1885	No
35	116 118 120	E	LAUREL	McAllister Building	1950	Contributing
36	117	E	LAUREL	Elks Lodge	1931	No
37	115	E	LAUREL	Non-Historic Commercial Building	1985	No
38	402 404	N	MAIN	Erisman Block	1886	Yes
39	406	N	MAIN	Carter Brothers Bldg/ Montgomery Wards/Woolworths	1916	Contributing
40	412	N	MAIN	Garden City Building & Loan Assn.	1910	Contributing
41	414	N	MAIN	Z.T. Nelson Building/ Conard Studio	1888	Contributing
42	416	N	MAIN	Ryan's Gent's Clothing	1910	Contributing
43	418 422	N	MAIN	State Theater	1929	No
44	424 426	N	MAIN	Non-Historic Commercial Building	1980	No
45	407	N	7TH	Southwestern Bell Building	1948	Contributing
46	502	N	MAIN	Stevens Park Band Shell	1931	Contributing
47	521 523	N	MAIN	Baugh's Body Works	1930	Contributing
48	519	N	MAIN	Nolan Motor Co.	1931	Contributing
49	515	N	MAIN	Nolan Motor Co.	1929	No
50	507 509	N	MAIN	McCoy Motor Co.	1920	Contributing
51	505	N	MAIN	McCoy Motor Co.	1929	Contributing
52	501 503	N	MAIN	Champlain's Service Station	1950	No
53	518	N	GARDEN CITY	Coulter Building	1911	Contributing
54	106	W	STEVENS	Gas Station	1940	No

Survey #	Address		Street	Historic Name	Date	Eligibility
55	110	W	STEVENS	Auto Parts Building	1940	No
56	126	W	STEVENS	Auto Repair Building-Scheufler Supply Co.	1925	Contributing
57	128	W	STEVENS	Auto Shop Building-Rickman Body Shop	1930	Contributing
58	132 134	W	STEVENS	O'Neil, Rhodes, and Robinson's Auto Shops	1930	Contributing
59	528	N	8TH	Bus Depot	1940	No
60	520	N	8TH	AME Church	1925	Yes
61	518	N	8TH	Non-Historic Commercial Building	2004	No
62	125	W	PINE	American Legion Post	1932	Yes
63	118	W	PINE	Office Building	1932	No
64	116	W	PINE	Romine Building	1920	Contributing
65	114	W	PINE	Office Building	1930	Contributing
66	112	W	PINE	Non-Historic Commercial Building	1969	No
67	112	W	PINE	Furniture Warehouse	1945	No
68	421 423	N	MAIN	Baird Hotel	1927	Contributing
69	413 421	N	MAIN	Windsor Hotel	1887	Listed on NR
70	409 411	N	MAIN	J.C.Penneys Building	1954	Yes
71	407	N	MAIN	Masonic Hall	1886	Contributing
72	401	N	MAIN	Grand Central Hotel/Carter Bros. Mercantile	1885	No
73	402	N	8TH	Non-Historic Commercial Building	1975	No
74	122	W	LAUREL	Non-Historic Commercial Building	1972	No
75	325	N	MAIN	Walters Clothing Co./Buffalo Brick Annex	1906	No
76	321	N	MAIN	Oll Brown's Billiard Hall/Buffalo Brick Annex	1906	No
77	301 309	N	MAIN	Buffalo Block/First National Bank	1885	No
78	109	W	GRANT	Buffalo Block	1885	Contributing
79	111 115 117	W	GRANT	Buffalo Hotel	1886	Listed on NR
80	119	W	GRANT	Myers Milk Products	1927	Contributing
81	121	W	GRANT	Knox Buttercrust Bakery	1925	Contributing
82	124	W	GRANT	Non-Historic Commercial Building	1982	No
83	116 118	W	GRANT	People's Natural Gas Co. Office	1948	Contributing
84	114	W	GRANT	Meschkes Men's Wear	1949	No
85	112	W	GRANT	Clothing Store Building	1948	No
86	305	N	MAIN	Garden City National Bank	1905	Yes
87	301 303	N	MAIN	Warren Hotel	1929	Yes
88	110	W	CHESTNUT	Peoples Natural Gas Co. Office	1940	Contributing
89	221	N	MAIN	Dunn's Dry Goods/ Palace Drug (Renick Bros.)	1887	No
90	213 215 217 219	N	MAIN	Peoples State Bank/Fidelity State Bank	1910	No
91	211	N	MAIN	Stationary Shop/Post Office (late 1890s-1910s)	1890	No
92	209	N	MAIN	Billiard Hall & J.F. Wiley Furniture/K of P Hall	1885	No
93	205 207	N	MAIN	Geo. Finnup Hardware/Furniture/Carpet	1879	No
94	203	N	MAIN	Fredrick Finnup General Merchandise Store/IOOF	1886	Contributing
95	201	N	MAIN	Hotel Palace	1925	No
96	111	W	FULTON	Office Building	1910	No
97	116	W	FULTON	Cash Grocerteria	1935	Contributing
98	106 108 112	W	FULTON	Elite Café/Acme Cleaners/Ace High Barber Shop	1935	No
99	121	N	MAIN	Marland Oil Co. Service Station	1937	Yes
100	119	N	MAIN	Finnup Grocery	1884	Contributing
101	117	N	MAIN	Finnup Feed & Seed Store	1885	Contributing
102	113 115	N	MAIN	Non-Historic Commercial Building	1993	No
103	106 108	N	8TH	Blacksmith Shop	1928	Contributing



- KEY**
- Survey Area Boundary
  - Proposed Historic District
  - Already listed on National Register of Historic Places
  - Potentially eligible for individual listing on National Register of Historic Places
  - Contributing to potential National Register Historic District
  - Non Contributors to potential National Register Historic District

**DOWNTOWN GARDEN CITY HISTORIC SURVEY**