

South Central Neighborhood Survey Area 1 Summary Report

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PURPOSE

The survey of South Central Neighborhood Area 1 was undertaken to expand the documentation of historic residential, civic/social, commercial and industrial buildings of Wichita, Kansas. Six neighborhood surveys documenting approximately 6,000 structures have been completed in Wichita. Two multiple property documents have been written for Wichita using these surveys – *Residential Resources in Wichita, Kansas 1870-1957* (Morgan and Hammond, 2007) and *African American Resources in Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas* (Wolfenbarger, 2010). These surveys provide historic information to property owners about the development of the area as well as open avenues to economic development incentives at the local, state and federal levels. Map 1 shows the areas that have been surveyed.

METHODOLOGY

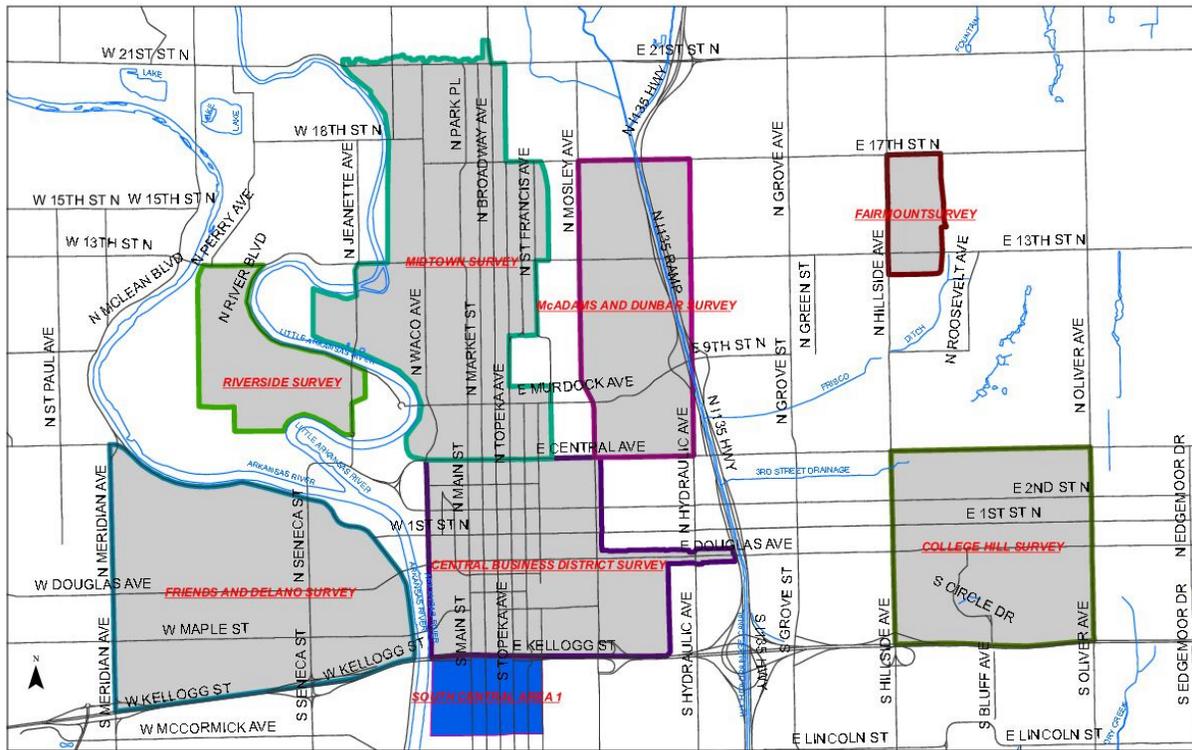
The Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department (MAPD) conducted a survey according to the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) Grant guidelines and under the oversight of the Kansas State Historic Preservation Office and the City of Wichita Historic Preservation Office. The South Central Neighborhood Area 1 Historic Properties Survey chronicles eight decades of commercial, civic and residential history that includes information about specific location of minority populations here-to-fore not published in a concise historic context report. This report will be incorporated into the existing *Residential Resources 1870-1957 Wichita, Kansas* MPD (Morgan and Hammond, 2007). Identification of state/national register eligible properties are intended to provide a guide for residential neighborhood gentrification stimulated by housing growth projections over the next five years which have been identified in the Goody Clancy Downtown Master Plan adopted by the City of Wichita (2010) and Sedgwick County (2011).

In May 2010, the City of Wichita Planning Department received an HPF grant to survey structures immediately south of the downtown commercial district. An article was published in the *Wichita Eagle* in May 2010 notifying the community that a survey was being undertaken. The article provided contact information for anyone having questions about the survey. Planning department staff received field survey and survey data entry training from the State Historic Preservation Office Survey Coordinator.

Research sources included Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Wichita/Sedgwick County aerial maps 1938 to present (1997 through 2008 are available on-line), City of Wichita building permits and city directories. City/County aerial maps provided structure information post 1950. Site plans were created from the 2008 aerial database and in some cases Bing® maps were added to the survey forms¹.

¹ Wichita-Sedgwick County MAPD has contracted to update the aerial maps in spring and early summer 2011 and those images will be available on-line in 2012. In addition to aerial images available on-line, the Wichita Public Library Central branch retains the aerial maps for Wichita and Sedgwick County in their local history section dating from 1938 up through 2006.

MAP 1: Historic Resource Surveys in Wichita, Kansas



SURVEY AREA

The entire South Central Neighborhood measures two square miles (Map 2). It is bounded on the east by railroad tracks and Mead Avenue and on the west by the Arkansas River. North and south boundaries are Kellogg Avenue (US 54/US 400) and Pawnee Street, respectively. The total neighborhood contains one small National Register Historic District (Winders District), three properties listed on the NRHP (Grace Methodist Episcopal Church, Monroe Mahan House, Engine House #6), and one property on the Wichita Register of Historic Places (Schnitzler House – also eligible for the State and National Registers).

Survey area 1 comprises one-fourth of the total neighborhood. Survey Area 1 of the South Central Neighborhood is bounded by Kellogg on the north, the Arkansas River on the west, Santa Fe/Burlington Rail Road right-of-way on the east and Morris Street on the south. Parcels surveyed are outlined in yellow (Map 3).

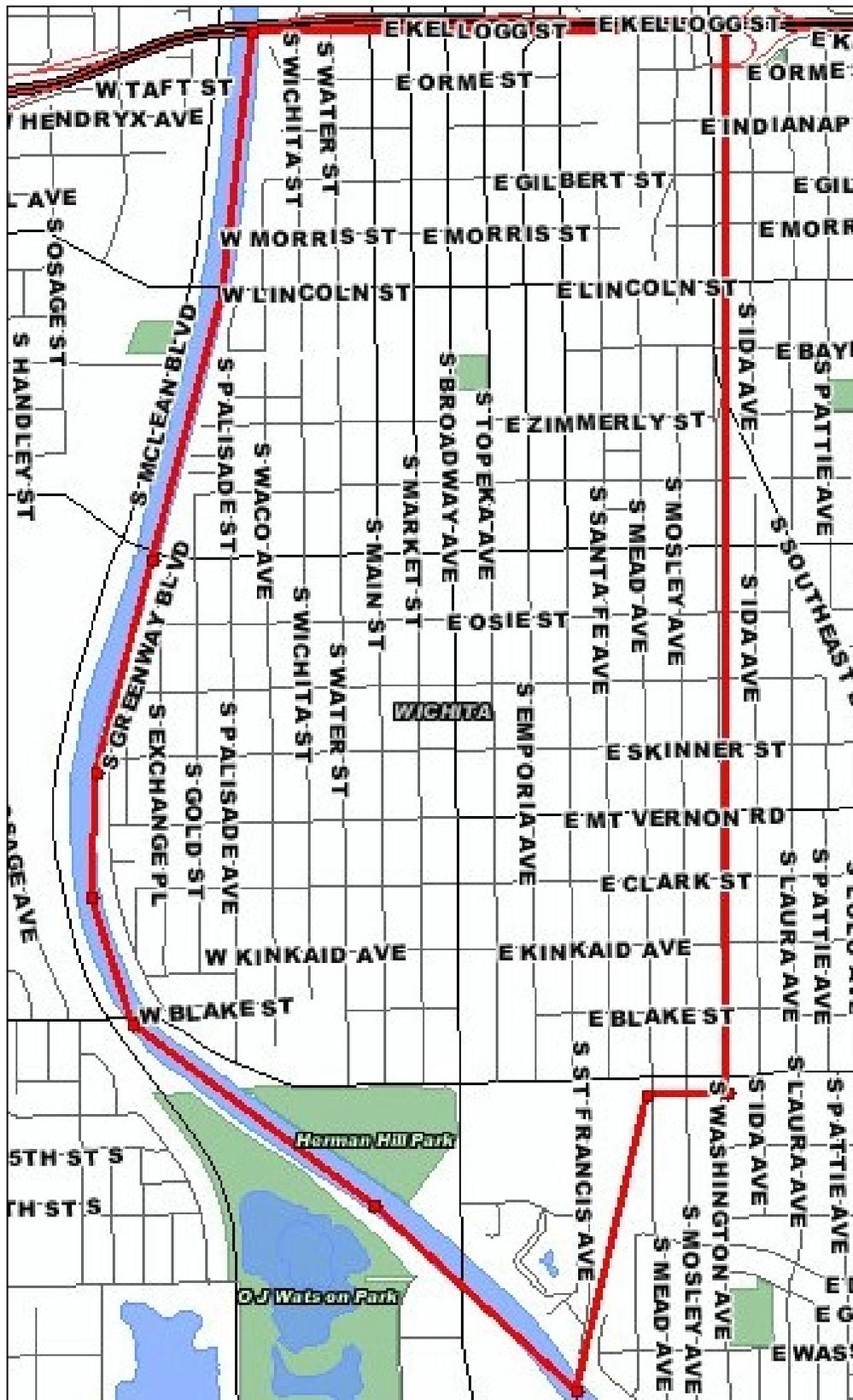
The South Central Neighborhood Area 1 Survey produced 381 individual inventory forms, which include residential and commercial buildings. One hundred four buildings, almost 28 percent, have been determined potentially eligible to be nominated to the State and National Registers by the State Historic Preservation Office.

Brutalism – 2	Modern Movement – 5
Commercial Style – 4	National Folk – 32
Contemporary Folk – 3	Neoclassical – 5
Craftsman/Bungalow – 67	No Style – 1
Dutch Colonial Revival – 3	Other - 29
Eclectic – 15	Post Modern/Neoelectic - 9
Gothic Revival – 1	Prairie – 28
Late 19 th Early 20 th Century Classical Revival – 2	Queen Anne – 39
Minimal Commercial – 12	Ranch - 1
Minimal Traditional – 47	Tudor Revival - 2
Mission – 2	Vernacular – 81

The neighborhood has been substantially residential since its development in the late 19th century. As houses began to fill the platted lots, residents depended on home delivery and streetcar service for commerce and shopping. During Wichita's high building period of the 1920s, intermittent little "corner stores" scattered themselves throughout area. At mid-century, a commercial strip grew up along South Broadway Avenue (formerly Lawrence) which supported the households with neighborhood businesses. Broadway is now entirely commercial with very few exceptions of remaining residences.

South Topeka, Emporia, Market, Main, Wichita, Water Streets extend south from the downtown business district. Concrete sidewalks, mature trees, and original set-back lines still present a substantial historic residential streetscape between Kellogg and Lincoln Streets.

MAP 2: South Central Neighborhood Boundary in red.



MAP 3: South Central Neighborhood Survey Area 1



Residents of the area were predominately European American, but a small Hispanic community has always occupied the east fringe along the railroad tracks. Churches are a character-defining feature of the neighborhood. Community anchors still serving the area are Grace Methodist Episcopal Church (NRHP), built in 1910; a Mexican Catholic church still operates a clinic at 940 South St. Francis on the 1930s site of their original church and school buildings, and a Mexican Protestant church has also been located at 927 South St. Francis since 1925.



Housing types in the neighborhood range from one-story National Folks and two-story Queen Anne cottages of the 19th century to American foursquare houses and bungalows of the early 20th century, and also include infill duplexes and houses of the mid-20th century Minimal Traditional style. Most houses in the area have been modified by the application of asbestos,

vinyl, or metal siding; many bungalow porches have been reconstructed with concrete floors and wrought iron posts in place of the original wood or masonry piers; some structures have lost their original configuration due to additions at the first and/or second floor level. P.N. Randal house (above) is a Queen Anne Free Classic sub-type, designed by architect C.W. Terry, is currently undergoing renovation by the home owner.

A common vernacular house type found throughout this neighborhood is a one-story Vernacular Queen Anne cottage shown by this residence (at right) located on South Main. It has the architectural detail elements of the Queen Anne Free Classic sub-type, but has a vernacular form typified by the off-set front gable on the porch.



Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps were a valuable resource and used along with Wichita city directories to provide estimated construction dates when building permit documentation was unavailable. The 1903, 1914, 1935 and 1950 Sanborn Maps provided documentation of the construction of single-family residences in the survey area and the changes that occurred during periods of population growth. The years between 1914 and 1950 reveal the great extent to which

multifamily housing had developed in the neighborhood. Duplexes, flats², apartment buildings, and apartment courts are located on nearly every block within the survey area.

Setting

The South Central Neighborhood is located one-half mile directly south of Wichita's original (and current) business center on East Douglas Avenue.

The buildings between Douglas Avenue and the South Central Neighborhood were originally office and commercial structures, light manufacturing, and residences. Since the mid-20th century, the residences have been replaced by commercial structures, and widening of Kellogg Street into a multi-lane highway (US54 & US400) demolished residences that were on the farthest north end of what is now the South Central Neighborhood. The total neighborhood measures two square miles. It is bounded on the east by railroad tracks and Mead Avenue and on the west by the Arkansas River. North and south boundaries are Kellogg Avenue (US 54/US 400) and Pawnee Street, respectively.

The Reconnaissance Survey area comprises one-fourth of the total neighborhood. It is bounded by railroad tracks and Santa Fe Avenue on the east and the Arkansas River on the west. The north and south boundaries are Kellogg Street and Morris Street respectively.

Industrial/manufacturing activities were historically located between Wichita and the Arkansas River and St. Francis and the railroad tracks. The 1903 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map does not cover the area between Waco and the Arkansas River, but does show a few residences along Wichita Street from Kellogg to Indianapolis. By 1914, Wichita Silex Brick Company and Kansas Construction Company Cement Works were located along the river in the two blocks south of Kellogg with only a few scattered houses along the east side of Wichita Street. Between 1914 and 1935 this enclave of construction related industry changed to oil field related industry. The Silex Brick Company facility was demolished and the Kansas Construction Company Cement Works site was replaced with a cable and oil field winch manufacturer had begun operation. By 1950 the area between from Kellogg south to Indianapolis and Wichita Street west to the Arkansas River was steel fabricating and oil well drilling equipment. Today BG Products occupies this area, and they are involved in production of oil/gasoline additives.

Furniture and mattress manufacturing businesses were in operation between St. Francis and the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad on the eastern edge of the survey area in 1903. Between 1903 and 1914 AT&SF had built a round house in area occupied by the mattress company, but by the time the 1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map was published, the map noted it was scheduled for demolition. The land between St. Francis and the railroad tracks south to Orme became iron scrap and currently has an active scrap metal operation. The area between Orme and Gilbert remained in use as manufacturing until the 1950s. Substantial brick buildings associated with mattress companies and paper bailing operations remain extant although no manufacturing activity occurs.

² Flats are two or three story houses with each floor being a separate apartment. This property type is identified in Residential Resources 1870-1957 Wichita, Kansas MPD.

Chronological development of the Survey Area 1 of the South Central Neighborhood

1870s: At the founding of Wichita in 1870 the four quadrants of the city were divided by the intersection of Douglas Avenue and Main Street. These Additions were owned by four original settlers. The men were William R. Waterman (northwest), James R. Mead (northeast), William Greiffenstein (southwest), and Nathaniel A. English (southeast).

Other speculators purchased farm and range land into the county several miles south of Douglas Avenue but platted development was contained within one mile. One of the earliest plats was that of Phillips & Orme. As noted in the *Wichita Eagle* on June 1, 1876, “Messrs. Phillip[s] and Orme” had bought a parcel of the Morris farm and laid out an addition to Wichita. This accounts for the street named Morris within their plat. The men both resided in Indianapolis, Indiana and never lived in Wichita, thus streets in the addition are also named for Orme and their home town, but Phillips is not recognized by name.³

The Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe railroad ran north/south on the east edge of English’s and Mead’s Additions, crossing Douglas Avenue at what was then the east boundary of the city. This gave rise to several grain elevators and mills clustered along the railroad near Douglas Avenue. Hotels, restaurants, and new businesses associated with a new city were located on Douglas westward to the Arkansas River.

1880s: Residences and their accompanying stables and outbuildings were built southward in the Greiffenstein and English Additions between the Arkansas River on the west and the railroad on the east.

In 1882 Horace Lee and his wife Mary filed a large plat that paralleled the west boundary of Orme & Phillips between Indianapolis Street and Lincoln Avenue.⁴ H. G. Lee (1835-1904) arrived in Wichita in 1872 to investigate local real estate opportunities and over the course of his life he was involved as a lender and agent to many who wanted to buy building lots in Wichita.⁵ He also held stock and helped organized other speculative projects such as the Wichita Street Railway Company, the Kansas Midland Railway Company, and the Citizen’s Land Company.

H.G. Lee’s Addition in combination with a few smaller additions, including that of James Oakley Davidson (1850-1916), brought residential construction to the south side during the building boom of the mid-1880s.

J. O Davidson’s business speculations contributed greatly to Wichita’s early development years. His connections with eastern financiers brought investment money to Wichita and he often contracted with real estate agent Horace G. Lee to sell the lots in his various additions. He and his father operated J.L. Davidson & Company, loaning money for the Five Percent Savings Institution, a bank in Keene, New Hampshire. J. Oak Davidson was a major investor in many other ventures of which he was the owner, an officer, or a stockholder, including streetcars, livestock, banking and lending, St. Francis Hospital, real estate, oil, lumber, and an electric light company.

³ If one other street name (*Gilbert*) is associated with Phillips’ family, no documentation has been found.

⁴ Sedgwick County Plat Records, internet: <http://gis.sedgwick.gov/view/plats>

⁵ *Wichita Beacon*. Mar 24, 1904:6

Wichita experienced the same boom and bust periods as the rest of the country during the 1880s and early 1890s. At the same time that Wichita was growing to the east and west, rapid expansion was also steadily moving south of Greenway Street (now Kellogg).⁶

J.O. Davidson promoted electricity for Wichita and with that, electric streetcar lines allowed homeowners to build farther out from the metropolitan center in all directions. To the south, the Wichita Railway Company (represented by H.G. Lee, M. Zimmerly, and N.A. English) contracted in 1885 to build a line on Main Street to open up new territory in Orme & Phillips, Lee's, Bayley's, March's, Fitzgerald's and Zimmerly's Additions.⁷ In the same year that the streetcar line reached Lincoln Avenue, a new school was built four blocks to the east at Lincoln and Topeka Avenues. By the next year, "a teacher in the new Lincoln School (1210 South Topeka) could stand at the window and count more than one hundred new houses south and east of the building."⁸

1890s: After the national bank panic of 1893, the economy recovered and by 1897 the city was prosperous again.⁹ Growth southward from Greenway into the Orme & Phillips and Lee's Additions was primarily residential. There were also several homes for the needy on the east side of the neighborhood including the Women's Benevolent Home at 1021 S. Fourth Avenue (now St. Francis Ave.) which changed its name to Wichita Hospital in 1889. In 1898 the Board of Directors voted to move to a location on the west side of the river and the Wichita Rescue Home moved into the vacated property from its original site on North St Francis Avenue.^{10,11} The platted lots on the 1903 Sanborn Map are approximately one-third filled. Commercial development was slow with the exception of four retail stores, a blacksmith and a cobbler on Lawrence Avenue and a green house business on Water Street. A mattress factory occupied the far northeastern corner at Greenway and Tremont Avenue.

1900-1919: By 1909 the city limits included Orme & Phillips and Lees's Additions plus Zimmerly's Addition, which extended beyond Lincoln Avenue to Harry Street. Residential development continued steadily southward with high-style two-story Queen Anne houses along Lawrence and Topeka. One-and-a-half-story and two-story Queen Anne, and Victorian- and Revival-style cottages were filling the platted lots.

Multifamily housing mingled sporadically in the form of one apartment hotel and one boarding house in the 700 block of South Lawrence and two 2-story flats on Topeka and Lawrence. Electric streetcar lines on both Emporia and Main connected the residents to the main business center on Douglas, and Lawrence Avenue saw a slight trend toward commercialism in the establishment of nine or ten small stores clustered at Morris and Lincoln.¹²

Tremont Avenue was adjacent to the Santa Fe Railroad tracks and for that reason industrial concerns continued to develop there. Wetterhold Mattress Factory at Greenway and Tremont grew, and the Western Furniture & Manufacturing Company opened at Tremont and Orme.¹³ On

⁶ *Wichita Beacon*. Jan 5, 1885:4

⁷ *Wichita Beacon*. Jan 5, 1885:4

⁸ *A History of Wichita Public School Buildings*". United School District 259, Wichita, Kansas.1997:93.

⁹ *Residential Resources of Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas: 1870-1957*

¹⁰ *Wichita Eagle*. May 9, 1898:3

¹¹ *Wichita Beacon*. June 20, 1901:5

¹² Sanborn. 1914:195,198

¹³ Sanborn. 1903:53-57

the west side near the river Kansas Construction Company built a cement works and Bixby's Greenhouse expanded over several lots on Water Street.

1920s: As prosperity and housing construction boomed throughout the country, Wichita's growth reflected the national bungalow trend that had started in the previous decade. The Craftsman style bungalow became the dominant new-house design in every neighborhood, including South Central. As newspaper advertisements encouraged residents to invest in their futures by owning their homes, contractors, realty companies, and lending agencies purchased lots and built speculative housing.^{14, 15} The demand for well-built and up-to-date houses caused many older Queen Anne and vernacular cottages to be demolished and replaced with the newer designs. E.G. Robertson of the Hartford Western Land Company, which regularly financed many homes in Wichita, was quoted in the *Wichita Eagle* as saying that a demand for better houses had begun in Wichita in spite of the fact that the average cost had increased. Robertson saw this as a sign that "a class of people are building houses who expect to reside in the city permanently."¹⁶ Commercial interests developed on Lawrence Avenue; a sampling of business concerns in the late decade (1927) on Lawrence Avenue found fifteen small retail and service businesses between Indianapolis Street and Lincoln Street.¹⁷

1930s: The prosperity of the 1920s left Wichita with a well-developed central business district, and in 1933 the Wichita City Commission approved an ordinance to change the name of Lawrence Avenue to Broadway, presumably to project a "big-city" image.¹⁸ On the west side of the South Central Neighborhood an inventory of sixteen businesses on Broadway in 1936 as compared to the fifteen from ten years earlier, shows that fifty percent had survived the Great Depression and were still in operation; apparently the others had failed or moved, but an equal number of new retail and service businesses had replaced them.¹⁹ The residential neighborhood had remained in place during the 1930s. Even as the depressed economy affected Wichitans, the city gained architectural assets, plus jobs for the unemployed, through the federally-funded New Deal programs. To the east on St. Francis (formerly Tremont; Fourth Avenue) a small community of Mexican American residents established Our Lady of Guadalupe Church and School at 930 & 944 S St. Francis as well as the Iglesia Evangelical Mexicana Church at 913 S St. Francis. Several Mexican families lived in that block and a Queen Anne residence at 1001 South St. Francis housed the Convent of Our Lady of Guadalupe. This ethnic grouping was an extension of a Mexican community on St. Francis Avenue in North Wichita. Many Mexican immigrants worked for the railroad and found humble housing there and across the tracks east on South Mead Avenue amid a warehouse and industrial district.²⁰

1940s-1950s: The end of the 1930s erupted into a housing frenzy in Wichita. As the United States realized that participation in the war was inevitable, local aviation companies Boeing, Beach, and Cessna hired thousands of people who rushed to Wichita to find work in 1939-1940. Rooming houses, federal housing villages, rooms-to-let in private homes, and new construction of apartments and single-family houses all served these new residents who flooded the city's population. The South Central Neighborhood was no exception to this building phase.

¹⁴ Building Permit Card File, MAPD

¹⁵ *Wichita Eagle*. Jan 25, 1919; Mar 22, 1919:6; May 7, 1919:10

¹⁶ *Wichita Eagle*. Jan 30, 1919:8

¹⁷ *Wichita City Directory*, 1927

¹⁸ *Wichita Eagle* Oct 31, 1933:3

¹⁹ *Wichita City Directory*, 1936

²⁰ Kansas State Census, 1925. Microfilm Roll 141:Ward 4 "Mexican Book"

Due to the limits on materials, architectural details in new construction were minimized and the result was little side-gabled houses that reverted to a style reminiscent of simple Cape Cod cottages which had derived from Colonial Revival styles and is what historian Alan Gowans calls the “Georgian Homestead style.”²¹ These cottages of the late 1930s and early 1940s were reduced in scale with lower roof pitch, narrow fascia boards, no dormers, and no overhanging eaves. The only stylistic remnant might be a pediment or flat canopy over the front door.

After the war the trend continued and most were built with attached garages and wider porches, a style that preceded the suburban ranch style. This minimalistic take on a traditional style was also adapted to two, three, four, and sometimes six-unit rental structures. The houses were generally built with clapboard or asbestos shingle siding, but the multiplexes were predominately brick veneer.²²

Duplexes were often built as infill on residential lots with entrance facades oriented at 90 degrees from the street. The Winders Duplex (Winders Historic District) is sited in this manner. This economical arrangement allowed space for two families in the space of one former house. These multi-family infill units are still very much evident in the South Central Neighborhood as well as throughout Wichita.

The 1950 Sanborn Maps reveal the great extent to which multifamily housing had occurred in the neighborhood. Duplexes, flat, apartment buildings, and apartment courts are located on nearly every block between Kellogg and Morris Street.

The post-war building boom in Wichita was even greater than the wartime construction. Returning servicemen had access to the GI Bill and loans with which to buy houses and gain an education. By this time the Ranch Style house had gained popularity in the new, outlying suburbs. However, by 1950 the South Central Neighborhood was nearly 100% built-up and the area did not see much modern residential architecture between Kellogg Avenue and Lincoln Street.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The South Central Neighborhood survey does provide a base for designation of historic districts in the area. Only three buildings, the Schnitzler House, the PN Randall house and a commercial structure located at 1046 South Broadway were identified as eligible for individual listing by MAPD. Broadway, Emporia, Gilbert, Indianapolis, Main, Market, Morris, Topeka, Water and Wichita all had residences identified that could be part of a district. The information gathered will be reported to the neighborhood to promote historic district designation.

²¹ Gowans, Alan. *The Comfortable House: North American Suburban Architecture 1890-1930*. MIT Press, Cambridge MA. 1986:164-165.

²² An exception is the three housing communities designed and financed by the federal government (Planeview, Hilltop, Beechwood); those buildings were covered with asbestos shingles.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A 1903, 1914, 1935 and 1935-50 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

Appendix B Building Survey Spreadsheets by Street