National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter “N/A” for “not applicable.” For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property
   Historic name  Lowell School
   Other names/site number
   Name of related Multiple Property Listing  Historic Public Schools of Kansas

2. Location
   Street & number 1009 S. Highland Avenue
   City or town
   City or town vicinity
   State Kansas  Code KS  County Saline  Code 169  Zip code 67401

3. State/Federal Agency Certification
   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
   I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
   In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
   ___ national  ___ statewide  ___ local  Applicable National Register Criteria: ___ A  ___ B  ___ C  ___ D

   Signature of certifying official/Title  Patrick Zollner, Deputy SHPO  Date
   Kansas State Historical Society
   State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government
   In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

   Signature of commenting official  Date
   Title
   State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification
   I hereby certify that this property is:
   _____ entered in the National Register  _____ determined eligible for the National Register
   _____ determined not eligible for the National Register  _____ removed from the National Register
   _____ other (explain:)

   Signature of the Keeper  Date of Action
**5. Classification**

<table>
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<th>Ownership of Property</th>
<th>Category of Property</th>
<th>Number of Resources within Property</th>
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<td>1 contributing buildings</td>
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<td>district</td>
<td>1 sites</td>
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<tr>
<td>public - State</td>
<td>site</td>
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Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

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**6. Function or Use**

<table>
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<th>Historic Functions</th>
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<tr>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>VACANT/NOT IN USE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WORK IN PROGRESS</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN

MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style

LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Classical Revival

**Materials**

- foundation: Concrete
- walls: Brick
- roof: Synthetic
- other: Stone detailing
Narrative Description

Summary
Built in 1915 in south-central Salina to serve the expanding neighborhood around Kansas Wesleyan University, Lowell School is a modest Progressive Era school. The two-story unreinforced masonry building has a concrete foundation and is a rectangular plan form with slightly projecting rear bays. The building has red brick facades with a corbelled brick parapet that obscures a flat/tapered roof with a square central chimney. The exterior is red brick laid in American/common bond coursing with every sixth course having alternative headers and stretchers. Patterned and corbelled brick provides subtle detailing around the facades. The design incorporated the use of contrasting panels on the brick facades to convey equations such as the Pythagorean Theorem visible on the north and south facades.

Occupying the east three-quarters of a city block, the school faces west fronting Highland Avenue in a residential neighborhood of modest single-family homes. The three-bay symmetrical front facade features a finely detailed center bay framed by massive brick pilasters that extend above the parapet and fluted Corinthian columns inside the pilasters that framing the entry bay. The existing doors are a pair of multi-light paneled wood doors with wood-framed transoms featuring three panels with radiating Mullions.

Housing additional classrooms and a rear multi-purpose room, the two-story south addition was constructed in 1963 connected to the original school at its south entrance by an enclosed two-level corridor. The two-story addition is a simple two-bay rectangular box with flat roof. The Modern-era addition has a light orange brick facade laid in a running bond pattern contrasted by vertical bands of windows as the only articulation of the unadorned brick facades.

At the time of it opening in 1916, Lowell school served 1st-3rd Grades. Fluctuating enrollment numbers resulted in the addition of temporary classrooms on the site at various times. Although the School Board considered closing the school in the 1970s, Lowell continued to serve south-central Salina until 2002. Architectural integrity is moderate with physical changes that are typical of the property type with suspended ceilings and new lighting, replacement windows, and new floor finishes but no significant changes to the plan configuration. One alteration – the removal of a tile pent roof at the central parapet – affected the building’s historic integrity. The original entrances and stairs remain; the south entrance now connecting to the 1960s gymnasium and classroom addition.

Elaboration

Location and Setting
Built to serve the growing population in the neighborhood around Kansas Wesleyan University in south-central Salina, Lowell School is located one block east of Ninth Street (Old U.S. Highway 81) and five blocks north of Wesleyan. Built as a grade school, Lowell lies between Salina Central High School to the northeast and Salina South High School to the south east.

The school site spans the east three-quarters of a block bordered by W. Republic on the north, W. Beloit on the south, and Highland Avenue on the west. Six single dwellings are located at the east edge of the block along S. Santa Fe Avenue with an alley between the residential and school parcels. The school site varied through the years primarily with the addition and removal of portable classrooms. Kindergarten classes were added at Lowell school in 1917 and by 1920, a surge in the number of students required acquisition of one of the houses on the east end of the block to be used as a classroom. The house was called Lowell Cottage but sold a few years later when Franklin School was built to relieve enrollment pressures on Lowell. However, with swelling city population with the establishment of Smoky Hill/Chilling Air Force Base in WWII, a twenty-year period from the early 1940s to 1960s again saw a spike in student population that required up to five portable classrooms on the site. The south addition was constructed in 1963 and the portable classrooms removed, bringing the site to its existing configuration.

The original school was centrally located at the west end of the block facing Highland Avenue on the west. The school is setback from the streets on all sides with clusters of large mature trees at the front and sides of the site. The 1960s classroom and gym addition extends to the south and west connected to the original building by a two-story corridor bay at the school's original south entrance. Foundation plantings are scattered around the perimeter of the south addition. With concrete sidewalks around the perimeter of the site, walkways extend to the three building entrances on the west and a walk curves around to the north entry. The rear of the school site is a grass lawn with soccer field on the south. Shrubs line the rear alley and a small portable storage shed is centrally located at the east property line. Two small one-
story gabled bays are located at the rear of the building. The south shed has a gabled roof with metal siding while the north shed has a shallow gable roof and shiplap wood siding, each with a center door on the east. A chain link fence surrounds the school property inside the perimeter sidewalk.

Exterior
Lowell Grade School is a two-story masonry structure with a rectangular footprint with slightly projecting east/rear bay on the north and south. Architecturally, the school is a Commercial Style structure, representative of the Progressive Era known for its simple red brick rectangular structures with symmetrical front facade and formal central entrance with applied ornament often with Classical references. Subtle brick corbelling and detailing is the primary source of ornament aside from the classically ordered front building entrance. Large brick pilasters with corbelled ornament frame the center bay, extending above the parapet with raised ends resembling crenulations. Classic fluted round stone columns with ornate Corinthian capitals rest upon raised brick bases that frame the central entrance inside of the pilasters. A stone cornice rests atop the columns spanning between the pilasters and a pair of windows are located on the second floor above the entry. The front entrance is a pair of paneled wood doors with six-lights over a single panel topped by a three-part transom with radiating muntin grid. The entrance has a stone molded surround with ornate scroll brackets supporting a pediment with exaggerated keystone inscribed ‘1915.’ The entablature below the pediment is inscribed ‘LOWELL SCHOOL.’ A set of three narrow windows are located on the upper facade of the outer bays with ornate brick corbelling below that resembles two courses of a blind arcade with drops that frame a single narrow window on the lower floor.

The rear/west facade has five bays of varying width in a symmetrical configuration. Brick pilasters define the bays with bays two and four being wider with a band of three wide replacement windows. Center and outer bays have a set of paired narrow windows. The upper windows at the center bay were converted to doors when fire escapes were installed in 1949.

At the north and south sides of the building, the facades were identical with a center entrance and the east and west end bays varying in design creating an asymmetrical composition. The west end bay is similar to the rear facade with a wide center bay flanked by narrow end bays. The east end of the north and south facades projects out from the facade of the front/west bay and has no openings. Like other facades, brick pilasters define three bays and subtle brick banding creates a well articulated facade. Contrasting tan panels represent the Pythagorean Theorem on the upper facade in the center of the east bay on the north facade.

There have been three primary exterior alterations. Other than the 1949 fire escapes, the 1963 addition is the first known exterior alteration; the replacement of doors and windows being the second. However, historic views of the building illustrate original front doors with a unique elliptical glass lights and the existing three-panel transom. The original windows were sets of two and three multi-light wood units with transom panels on the north and south. The historic view also reveals a missing detail – a tile pent roof originally spanned between the front pilasters with exposed rafter tails at the roofline. Similar small pents capped the central pilasters and a tile canopy was in place at the south building entrance (likely matching on the north). There is no current evidence of these features. Contemporary metal flashing suggests these features may have been removed when the existing membrane roof was installed.

The original windows were multi-light wood windows. The existing windows are ca. 1980s replacement aluminum windows – 1/1 double-hung units with an opaque panel in the original transom. The replacement windows vary in configuration including single units and sets of two and three windows within the original masonry openings. The original window openings with brick sills and lintels have been maintained. The existing doors at side and rear entrances are slab metal replacement doors. Single-light fixed windows were formerly installed at the stairways in the center of the north and south facade. In comparison to the historic photo, the existing front doors are replacements, but they are compatible with the building’s historic character.

Interior
The school retains its basic plan configuration. Entered from the west, a wide corridor extends to the east connecting with a wide central N/S corridor creating a T-shaped circulation pattern. The N/S corridor has stairways and exterior doors at each end. The four-square plan has a room in each corner of the first floor. The west classrooms are entered from the E/W corridor while the east rooms are entered from the N/S corridor. At the time of construction, the two west rooms were classrooms while the east rooms were a recreational room and restrooms. On the second floor, two classrooms were located on the east accessed from the central N/S corridor and stairs while the west half of the floor was a single large assembly room. There have been no major changes to the plan configuration although the precise functions of the rooms have changed throughout history. At times of peak student populations, all rooms were used as classrooms. In the early 1940s the large assembly room on the second floor became the library but was later needed for classrooms. The library was moved to the first floor in the northeast corner room where small rooms were partitioned for the school.
offices as well as the library. The plan form of the original building remains with wide central corridors forming a ‘T’ with open stairways at each end of the corridor. The only known plan changes were removal of the original restrooms likely when the addition was built, and the addition of wall partitions in one classroom to accommodate school offices.

The concrete structure had plaster walls and ceilings and VAT on classrooms floors. The concrete floor was exposed in the corridors and stairs. Plaster walls remain with original wood window trim (with replacement window units), wood-framed chalk boards, coat closets and built-in cabinetry in select classrooms likely reflecting art or science rooms. Suspended acoustic tile ceilings, florescent lights and ceiling fans have been installed in most classrooms but the original plaster ceilings are visible above. Contemporary vinyl tile has been installed throughout and new slab wood doors at classrooms. The heating system was a gas boiler located in a basement mechanical room and the original cast-iron radiators are in place throughout the building.

**South Addition**

To permanently accommodate a steadily-rising population, the school district authorized an addition to Lowell School in the early 1960s. Completed in 1963, the addition was larger than the original school building and comprised of two sections – a classroom wing and a multi-purpose room with a N/S corridor that connected to the school at the south door. The connecting bay between the addition and the original school included an entrance on the west, setback from the front facades and an entrance on the east at the northeast corner of the gymnasium. Another entrance to the addition occurred at the south end of the corridor. On the west, the classroom bay is two stories in height arranged in a four-square plan with a central E/W corridor with front entry and open stair at the west end. Classrooms were generally located in each quarter of the wing with the exception of the northwest corner of the first floor where an enlarged classroom was specially designed for the kindergarten and boys’ and girls’ restrooms were located at the northeast corner of the wing accessed from the N/S corridor opposite the gymnasium. The east multi-purpose bay is 1-1/2 stories in height and flexible in function to serve as a gymnasium, auditorium, or lunchroom with no fixed seating. A stage is located on the north end with small rooms in the northeast and northwest corners.

The design of the addition is representative of the period in which it was constructed. Exterior walls are a pale orange brick; the only articulation of the plain brick facades being contrasting vertical bays of glass and metal. The front/west facade has a center bay of glass corresponding to the open stair. The north and south sides of the classroom section have five bays where solid brick walls alternate with vertical glass windows or doors with opaque panels between. In sets of three, the windows are aluminum fixed-lights with horizontal hopper lower panels; the windows and solid panels are a dark anodized brown finish. In homage to the paneled theorem on the original school facades, a section of colorful tile panels are located on the south facade beside the central entrance. The multi-purpose room on the west end of the addition has unadorned brick walls with a row of clerestory windows at the top of the east facade providing natural light into the space.

The Modern design is characterized by its simple rectangular form with flat roof and total lack of ornamentation. The interior too, reflects modern materials with concrete block walls, vinyl tile flooring, and suspended acoustical tile ceilings. Along the perimeter classroom walls metal shelving aligns with the original heating units. Metal-framed chalkboards are in place in some classrooms. The addition retains a high degree of integrity reflecting its 1963 construction. The only known modification is replacement tile and carpet flooring.
8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
EDUCATION

Period of Significance
1915-1963

Significant Dates
1915
1963

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
William T. Schmitt, architect (Oklahoma City, OK)
J.O. Brown, contractor (Arkansas City, KS)
Anderson-Johnson (Salina) 1963 addition

Period of Significance (justification)
The period of significance spans from 1915 to 1963 encompassing the date of original construction and the south addition. The building operated as a public school throughout this period.

Criteria Considerations (justification)
None
Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary

Named for poet James Russell Lowell, Lowell School located at 1009 Highland Avenue, is significant on a local level under Criterion A as a neighborhood public school built to serve the burgeoning population in south central Salina around Kansas Wesleyan University. The building continually served the school district from 1916 to 2002, ultimately closing due to population shifts in the community and construction of a new elementary school. Lowell School is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under the Historic Public Schools of Kansas MPDF as a representative of the City Graded School property type. Built in 1915, the school is a Progressive Era educational structure. Outside its formal Classical Revival entry bay, the small neighborhood school was modest in design while still conveying the prominent and permanent role of educational facilities. Lowell School embodies tenets of the Progressive Era with an emphasis on building safety and public health. The safety of the masonry school was touted at its opening with the building materials clearly selected with safety in mind. Although not constructed with a gymnasium, the school was designed with an assembly space to hold 200 and an indoor recreation room for physical activity in poor weather.

The school is a representative of the work of Oklahoma City Architect William T. Schmitt who also designed the Franklin and Lincoln Schools and the Masonic Temple in Salina; the latter two are National Register listed properties. The school was built by J. Oscar Brown of Arkansas City. Anderson-Johnson Architects of Salina designed the 1963 addition. All of these firms designed multiple educational facilities in Kansas.

Elaboration

The Lowell School

Built to accommodate first through third grade school students on the south side of Salina, the Lowell School, named in honor of the poet James Russell Lowell, opened in February 1916. On February 25, 1915, Salina residents passed a $100,000 bond measure funding the construction of new schools. The Salina Board of Education purchased six lots on Republic Avenue and six lots on Beloit Avenue for the new school. The building, designed by Oklahoma City architect William T. Schmitt, was constructed by J. Oscar Brown, contractor from Arkansas City, KS. Safety and functionality were top considerations for the building.

The Lowell School campus lay on the northern edge of the Wesleyan Addition at the corner of S. Highland and W. Republic. The July 1917 Sanborn Map shows the school surrounded by dwellings with no commercial buildings nearby and Kansas Wesleyan University (KWU) six blocks to the south. The neighborhood remains residential today.

While the design was state of the art, funding limited the size of the building. The school board had failed to secure passage of school bonds in October 1914 forcing city leaders to rethink the location and scale of new schools. A second bond measure was offered to Salina citizens in early 1915, specifically noting the need for a grammar school in the Wesleyan Addition to accommodate the students that were being taught in rented rooms at KWU. City growth continued and as the school readied to open, thirty one new students enrolled from families that had just moved to Salina. In total, just under one hundred students matriculated at Lowell in 1916. The school divided the student body into three classrooms with two grades taught together in each room. Principal Anna Bates, Clara Hale and Marguerite Price were the teachers for the first two years. One year later kindergarten was added with an enrollment of nineteen students, bringing the school’s total fall enrollment to 115. School spirit was not lacking; Lowell students wrote a school song and in later years a boys’ basketball team and drama club were formed. The library swelled from 500 to over 1,000 volumes.

2 Salina Sun. 8 May 1915, 4.
3 Salina Daily Union. 13 Oct 1914, 7; and 12 Jan 1915, 5.
4 Salina Evening Journal. 14 Aug 1915, 4. Parcels included Lot 7 from August and Ester A. Pearson; Lot 9 from J.P. Perrill; Lot 11 from Aye Buner; and Lots 13, 15 & 16 from Edith McClintock, Elmer J. Johnson and Herbert J. Johnson. Additionally, Lots 8, 10, & 12 on Beloit Avenue were purchased from H.H.F. Sudendorf and E.H. Sudendorf, as well as Lot 14 from M.M. Stolz and James A. Brain; Lot 16 from M.M. Alford and James A. Brain; and Lot 18 from M.M. Alford.
6 “Times have changed.” National Field. 14 Feb 1916, 6; and Salina Daily Union. 8 Sep 1916, 3.
7 Salina Daily Union. 15 Sep 1916, 3.
Art, music, band and orchestra were taught to the fifth and sixth grades and a student council included representatives of all grades.

As early as the 1920s the school was at capacity with the resulting overflow students being taught in a house in the 800 block of Santa Fe Avenue. The house, called “Lowell Cottage,” is extant on the 1926 Sanborn Map, but reverted back to a dwelling by 1931 after the completion of Franklin Elementary eased overcrowding. Lowell School enrollment reached 138 during the 1927-1928 school year and continued to rise. The 1931 Sanborn Map illustrates the addition of one auxiliary classroom beside the school. During World War II, Salina’s military installations led to a dramatic expansion of the population, beyond the capability of the school system. Instead of overpopulating classrooms, students at Lowell attended half days so that two class sessions could be taught; one in the morning and one in the afternoon. In 1942, another portable classroom was moved from Longfellow School grounds to Lowell to provide additional space; then another was added in 1944. The end of the war did not reduce the student population in Salina. By 1947, four portable classroom buildings were extant on the east side of the school on the Sanborn Map. The school campus housed two rooms of each grade, in addition to morning and afternoon kindergarten. The school system continued to struggle to manage an ever increasing number of students. In 1951, 440 students were educated by fourteen teachers. At least one more “cottage” classroom was added during the 1950s. These separate portable classrooms were not meeting the student needs; the school required a permanent expansion. In the interim, some students were taught in rooms at nearby Kansas Wesleyan.

In the 1960s, the Lowell School added a new wing. Completed in 1963; it added 13,710 feet of space doubling the number of classrooms and providing a multi-purpose auditorium and gymnasium. During the mid-1970s the school board considered shuttering Lowell, but it was decided replacement was not feasible. The Lowell School continued to serve Salina students until it closed following the 2002-2003 school year. The building was sold to Salina Christian Academy, which opened in 2004 and closed in May 2019 ending more than one hundred years of educating Salina students in these buildings.

A Brief History of Salina
In April 1858, a group of Scottish immigrants led by William A. Philips founded a town beside the Smoky Hill River, an ideal location for agriculture and trade. As the westernmost town on the Smoky Hill Trail, Salina quickly established a burgeoning trade; but growth was halted with the outbreak of the Civil War. Following the war, the city resumed its central position in trade. Salina was incorporated and began building flour mills to process the grain from the surrounding area. When the Kansas Pacific Railroad arrived in 1867, the city rapidly transitioned into an industrial town. By 1871, Salina was one of the fastest growing towns in the state.

In 1884, Salina gained a college called Salina Normal University offering men and women a four-year course of study for teachers, as well as programs in business, science, and the classics. Sixty students were enrolled in the first academic year. Located one-half mile southwest of the courthouse on the western end of Iron Avenue, the university drew hundreds of students, as many as 700 by the early 1900s but was destroyed by fire in 1904 and never rebuilt.

During the same era the Methodist Church sought a home for its new college. Cities across the western portion of the state competed to become the home of the college. Salina citizens formed a “Kansas Wesleyan University Aid Association” to support the city’s bid of fifteen acres of well-suited land and the construction of a $20,000 building. The Board of Trustees accepted. Salina’s offer, according to the Kansas Methodist Newspaper, was considered noble and with Salina’s location near the center of the state, ensured the success of the college. Kansas Wesleyan University laid the cornerstone on June 3, 1885, and began selling plots of land around the fifteen-acre university campus to fund the

9 Ibid. 6.
10 Ibid. 8.
11 Ibid. 9.
12 Ibid. 10.
13 Ibid. 10.
14 Ibid. 10.
16 Salina County Journal. 4 Sep 1884, 2.
17 The Kansas Methodist. 15 Jul 1885, 4.
university. The Wesleyan Addition was comprised of eighty acres divided into 640 lots offered for $25-$175 by land agent Paul Jordan of Beloit, Kansas.\(^{18}\) The co-educational college opened for fall classes in September 1886.

As the new century began, Salina’s population topped 6,000, a number that would grow to 9,688 by 1910.\(^{19}\) The city was a hub of four rail lines—the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific, the Missouri Pacific, the Union Pacific and the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe, affording transport in all directions.\(^{20}\) This ease of transportation bolstered Salina’s economy that was largely comprised of the milling and lumber industries as well as wholesalers and manufacturers. In 1910, Salina had two iron foundries, a large modern brick plant, two planing mills, twenty churches, seven schools and the largest mill and elevator between Kansas City and Denver.\(^{21}\) Manufacturing concerns produced everything from gloves, sunbonnets, cigars, razor stoups, and brooms to mattresses.\(^{22}\)

By the end of 1916 the city was booming with a record $782,627 in building permits for the year.\(^{23}\) The 220 new residences were easily filled with Salina’s growing population. The city boasted nineteen miles of brick or paved passable roads and nine motor trolleys operated by the Salina Street and Interurban Railway.\(^{24}\) Trolley service provided Kansas Wesleyan University students with easy access to downtown shops and the new Union Station on the west side of town.

As the country recovered from the Great War, commercial growth began to outpace agricultural commodities in Salina’s economy, specifically with the help of the H.D. Lee Company’s success resulting from new endeavors to manufacture and sell its own clothing.\(^{25}\) In 1920 Salina became a city of first-class, boasting twelve miles of paved roads and over $3M in new construction.\(^{26}\) The population rose to 16,621 and the city’s flour mills ranked seventh in the nation.\(^{27}\) By August 1922, building construction in the city for the year was over $4,000,000 including 150 new homes.\(^{28}\)

In 1930 Salina’s population had topped 20,000, automobiles were on every street and the city’s tallest building, the United Life Insurance Building, at Iron Ave and Seventh Street opened with a three-day open house. Salina residents would become grateful for the volume of wholesale business that helped them to weather the Great Depression. H.D. Lee alone kept many Salina residents employed with $12M in business in 1931.\(^{29}\)

During World War II, Salina had two military installations: Camp Phillips, a temporary army training facility open from 1942 to 1944, and Smokey Hill Army Airfield established in 1943 as a base for strategic bomber units during the war. The fifties were an era of prosperity and growth for Salina. Agricultural commodities remained vital to Salina’s postwar growth and continued to increase through the decade. The city’s grain storage grew more than six fold from 6.5M bushels in 1953 to 40M bushels in 1958, while trucking and rail transport maintained Salina’s leading role in agriculture.\(^{30}\) Housing construction rose to accommodate new homes for the returning servicemen and their expanding families. Smokey Hill Air Force Base had trained B-29 pilots during the war then closed at war’s end. The base was reopened in 1952 and renamed in 1956 as Schilling Air Force Base. By 1958 Schilling had contributed more than $370M to Salina’s economy.\(^{31}\)

**Education in Salina**

Salina’s earliest schools were private and funded by subscription. In 1864 Salina built the first public school at the corner of Iron and Santa Fe Ave. The 14’ by 16’ frame house did not suffice. In 1868 a two-story white frame structure was built...

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\(^{18}\) The Beloit Courier. 4 Feb 1886, 3; and Smith County Bulletin. 25 Jun 1886, 2.


\(^{21}\) The National Field. 23 Jul 1910, 16.

\(^{22}\) Blackmar, 634.

\(^{23}\) Salina Daily Union. 30 Dec 1916.


\(^{28}\) Ibid, 20.

\(^{29}\) Salina Journal. 22 Jan 1952, 4.


\(^{31}\) Ibid. 41.
on a city block bordered by Mulberry, Seventh, Walnut and Eighth Streets in downtown that had been reserved by the town founders for a future school.\textsuperscript{32} The frame building was replaced by a three-story brick structure called Central School in 1873. Central accommodated students of all ages and grades until a grammar school was added a few blocks away seven years later. Together the two schools educated all Salina's children until 1887 when three additional grammar schools were added. By 1893 Central School was so overcrowded that the city leased space in the Red Men's Lodge at Walnut and Santa Fe for high school students.\textsuperscript{33} In 1899 voters approved school bonds for the construction of a new high school on the grounds of the Central School.

Salina's growth required the city to build eight new schools between 1912 and 1926, including the Lowell School.\textsuperscript{34} In 1911 concerned citizens residing on the southern side of Salina signed a petition for a grammar school in their area. In response the following year, the school board assigned Anna Bates to teach first, second and third grade in a building on the Kansas Wesleyan University campus.

The city and its schools experienced numerous changes between 1910 and 1930 that went beyond expansion of the population. In 1910, kindergarten became part of grammar school; shortly thereafter night classes and summer schools were added to the curriculum. Special classrooms appointed for “sub-normal” children and for the influx of Mexican immigrant children who accompanied their fathers employed by the railroad.\textsuperscript{35} Overcrowding continued to plague the school system and residents responded by approving bonds for new construction. Lincoln Junior High was added in 1915 and Roosevelt Junior High adjacent to Lincoln was finished in 1920. In 1922 the city's schools were segregated; black children were educated at Dunbar School until desegregation in 1954. Dunbar closed in 1956.

\textbf{A City Graded School (Historic Public Schools in Kansas)}

Lowell School is classified as a City Graded School, as defined in The Historic Public Schools of Kansas MPDF reflecting the distinguishing factor of the property as a school constructed specifically for elementary grades. City schools are characterized by the fact that they had High School(s) separate from the Graded School(s) regardless of size of the community. Lowell School was designed and constructed to serve students in the first through third grades, adding kindergarten during its second year of operation. With its eight rooms configured in a simple rectangular plan, Lowell School is typical of early City Graded Schools. The school site, although it did not occupy the entire block, was landscaped with trees and featured a playground and ball fields.

The MPDF notes, "The largest of the early graded schools were eight rooms and therefore, could serve a limited number of students. In larger cities, the pattern of neighborhood schools was established from the beginning as a means to serve the children throughout the city." Lowell School was built specifically to serve the growing population in south-central Salina in the Wesleyan Addition around Kansas Wesleyan University. While the school was being constructed, the first-third graders were taught in the basement of Kansas Wesleyan because it was determined that the distance was too far for younger children to walk to South Park School.

The Progressive Era, which began around 1900 and lasted into the 1920s in Kansas, introduced new educational philosophies that promoted a comprehensive view of the cultural, academic, and physical health of students. These reforms addressed sanitation and safety issues, such as proper ventilation and fire safety. As the Progressive Era developed, so too did the standardization movement, which sought to regulate faculty qualifications, instruction and educational materials. The basic tenets of the era generated innovations in the design and construction of public schools which incorporated specific classroom and recreational spaces into their plans. Although later appropriated for classroom space, the school was designed with indoor recreation and assembly space reflecting the period’s emphasis on health of students. The use of masonry in Lowell's construction reflects the emphasis on safety. Every effort was made to make the schoolhouse fire proof. At its opening, one newspaper quipped, "There's not enough wood in the entire school to make a respectable bon fire."\textsuperscript{36}


\textsuperscript{33} Ibid, 10.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid, 10.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid, 10.

\textsuperscript{36} \textit{The National Field}. 17 Feb 1916, 6.
Lowell School retains a moderate level of architectural integrity. According to The Historic Public Schools of Kansas MPDF alterations such as replacement windows and doors are common among those schools that served their intended use for decades. These alterations will not automatically render a school ineligible for register listing. The original masonry openings at doors and windows of Lowell School have been maintained and are clearly visible despite the replacement units. Lowell School clearly communicates its historic function as a public grade school and embodies the characteristics of the “City Schools” property type as defined in the Historic Public Schools of Kansas MPDF.

Architect and Builder
William Taussig Schmitt (1880-1965) was born in Cat Spring, TX to German immigrant parents. By 1900, the family had moved to LaGrange, TX where William practiced architecture, a vocation he would continue for more than fifty years.

Schmitt established his own practice in Oklahoma City. He worked on the Lowell School with J. Oscar Brown, a general contractor from Arkansas City. Brown and Schmitt worked on other projects together including the Lincoln School in Salina and the Presbyterian Church in the contractor’s home town. During the teens Brown owned the Arkansas City Planing Mill; his construction firm also was responsible for numerous residences in Arkansas City.

Schmitt was responsible for the design of many buildings in Arkansas City, Kansas ranging from residences to the Presbyterian Church (1914), Coliseum (1918), City Hall (1918), Rex Theatre (1914) and the five-story modern Newman’s Department Store (1917), then the tallest building in downtown. During the teens and twenties Schmitt designed numerous schools in Kansas including Lincoln Junior High (1915) and Dunbar School (1922), both in Salina; as well as Dexter High School (1915), Arkansas City New High School (1915), Concordia (1916), Pittsburg High School (1921), and St. Mary’s School in Fort Scott (1923). Additionally, First United Methodist Church (1916) and Kansas Wesleyan Methodist Church (1916) were two Salina churches designed by Schmitt.

Throughout Kansas four of Schmitt’s designs were noted for their iconic architecture in David Sachs and George Ehrlich’s Guide to Kansas Architecture, two of which are in Salina: the six-story Neo-Classical Masonic Temple (NR, 2000) finished in 1927 and the 1915 Lincoln Junior High School (NR, 2006). Schmitt, a 33rd degree mason, designed the Masonic Center (as the Masonic Temple is now known) that at the time of its construction, was considered the “Landmark of the Valley” and is widely famed for its Ionic columns and row of copper gargoyles along the roof line. The third noted Schmitt design is the Fort Scott Scottish Rite Temple (1929), known as “the social center of Southeast Kansas;” listed in the National Register in 2009 as part of Fort Scott Downtown District. Sachs and Ehrlich also recognized the 1926 Schmitt-designed Gothic Revival Besse Hotel in Pittsburg, Kansas, which was listed in the National Register in 2008.

In Oklahoma, Schmitt designed the Wesley Methodist Church in Oklahoma City (1928), the Administration Building at Oklahoma City University (1922, NR 1978) and the Masonic Temple in McAlester, Oklahoma (1928-30, NR 1980). During the 1930s Schmitt acted as city architect in Oklahoma City. Then as the Depression continued through the decade Schmitt designed government-funded works including the single building that houses the post office and courthouse in Ada, OK (1932) and the library in Cushing, Oklahoma (1939), both of which are still in use today. Schmitt also designed City Hall and Memorial Building in Cushing in the 1940s. Schmitt and his wife moved to California in the early 1960s where he died in 1965.

37 Arkansas City Daily News. 6 Mar 1915, 1.
38 Arkansas City Daily Traveler. 18 Dec 1914, 26 Jun 1915, 17 Dec 1917, 18 Mar 1918.
39 Catholic Advance. 4 Feb 1924, 1.
45 Oklahoma News. 4 Oct 1932, 12.
46 The Democrat-American. 21 Jul 1932, 7; and Cushing Daily Citizen. 21 Aug 1938.
47 Cushing Daily Citizen. 5 Apr 1946, 1.
Lowell School represents the work of a second architectural firm, that of Anderson-Johnson of Salina who were hired by the school district in 1963 to design an addition to the school. Wilber L. Johnson, Earl Q. Anderson and Leland Srack opened a design firm in Salina in 1954. The team designed several schools including: a rural high school for Combined District Eleven in Saline County, Wichita Heights High School, Marysville Junior High, Parsons Elementary School (Salina) and an addition to Riker Manor Elementary School (Salina). The partnership dissolved when Johnson moved his practice to Topeka in 1968.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)


Arkansas City Daily News. 6 Mar 1915.
Arkansas City Daily Traveler. Multiple dates.
The Beloit Courier. 4 Feb 1886.
Catholic Advance. 4 Feb 1924.
Cushing Daily Citizen. Multiple dates.
The Democrat-American. 21 Jul 1932.
The Kansas Methodist. 15 Jul 1885.
National Field. Multiple dates.
Oklahoma News. 4 Oct 1932.
Salina Evening Journal. Multiple dates.
Salina Sun. Multiple dates.
Salina Daily Union. Multiple dates.
Saline County Journal. 4 Sep 1884.
Silvers, Jason. “Scottish Rite closes door on historic building for good.” Fort Scott Tribune. 29 Jan 2014.
Smith County Bulletin. 25 Jun 1886.
Special Collections, Salina Public Library, Vertical File ‘Lowell School.’

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

| Preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested) | x State Historic Preservation Office |
| Previously listed in the National Register | Other State agency |
| Previously determined eligible by the National Register | Federal agency |
| Designated a National Historic Landmark | Local government |
| Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey | University |
| Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record | Other |
| Recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey | |

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____________

Primary location of additional data:

| Name of repository: |

13
Lowell School
Saline County, Kansas

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:__________
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 38.81429 -97.610996

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)
Lots 7-19 alt Republic Ave. & Lots 8-20 Alt Beloit Ave, Kansas Wesleyan University Addition, Salina, Saline County, Kansas

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)
The legal description above reflects the boundary on which the school is located and historically associated.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Brenda and Michelle Spencer
organization Spencer Preservation date 2/14/2020
street & number 10150 Onaga Road telephone 785-456-9857
city or town Wamego state KS zip code 66547
e-mail brenda@spencerpreservation.com

Property Owner: (complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name I will update this prior to submission – sale is pending
street & number __________________________ telephone __________________________
city or town Salina state KS zip code 67401

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.
Lowell School
Saline County, Kansas

Additional Documentation
Submit the following items with the completed form:

Photographs
Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each digital image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to a sketch map or aerial map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn’t need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photograph Log

Name of Property: Lowell School
City or Vicinity: Salina
County: Saline State: Kansas
Photographer: Brenda Spencer
Date Photographed: 21 January 2020

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Direction</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 of 21</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Front/west facade of original school with connector bay to 1963 addition on the south (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 of 21</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>View of school site from SW corner with 1963 addition in foreground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 of 21</td>
<td>NW</td>
<td>View of school and gym addition from W. Beloit Ave. southeast of school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 of 21</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>View of school site from north site boundary east of school with rear playground in foreground East/rear facades of original school and gym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 of 21</td>
<td>SW</td>
<td>Gymnasium addition off southeast corner of original school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 of 21</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>North facade of original school building with ball court in foreground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 of 21</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>View of school site from west on Highland Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 of 21</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Connector bay between original school and south addition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 of 21</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Primary building entrance in center of front/west facade of original school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 of 21</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Detail of stone entry surround with inscription “Lowell School 1915”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 of 21</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Interior view of front entry, original school building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 of 21</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Open stairway at north end of N/S corridor (also on south end)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 of 21</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Typical classroom with original cabinetry, chalkboards and trim, SE corner 2nd floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 of 21</td>
<td>SW</td>
<td>Typical classroom with carpet &amp; suspended ACT, original plaster walls &amp; trim, SW corner 2nd floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 of 21</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Looking toward east addition from connecting bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 of 21</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Example of original cabinetry extant in some classrooms, SW corner 1st floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 of 21</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Looking S in central corridor of south addition with gymnasium on left, restrooms on right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 of 21</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Stage on north end of gymnasium/auditorium at east end of 1963 addition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 of 21</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Typical classroom in 1963 addition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 of 21</td>
<td>SW</td>
<td>Detail of original windows in 1963 addition with operable hopper unit, 2nd floor classroom on S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 of 21</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>View of west stair from second floor south addition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Photo key on following page
Lowell School
Saline County, Kansas

Name of Property
County and State

PHOTO KEY
LOWELL SCHOOL
1009 Highland Avenue
Salina, Saline Co., KS
Plan sketch from School records provided by owner
Lowell School
Name of Property

Figures

Figure 1 – Context Plans of City of Salina (left) and South Central Neighborhood (below) with red dot marking school site
1009 Highland Avenue, Salina, Saline County, Kansas
Aerial Photo Google Maps, February 2020
Figure 2 – Site Plan
Lowell School
1009 Highland Avenue
Salina, Saline County, Kansas
Aerial Photo Google Maps February 2020
Lat/Long: 38.81429, -97.610996, Datum WGS84
Lowell School

Name of Property

Saline County, Kansas

County and State

Figure 3 – 1926 Sanborn Map Excerpt Sheet 31 (top) and 1947 update to 1931 Sanborn Map Excerpt Sheet 42 (lower)
Lowell School  
Name of Property  

Saline County, Kansas  
County and State  

showing development of the South Central Salina neighborhood around Lowell School. Also note presence of "Cottage" classrooms on 1947 map.

Figure 4 – Architect’s rendering of Lowell School  
Special Collections, Salina Public Library, Vertical File ‘Lowell School’

Figure 5 – Early Photo of Lowell School (undated)  
Special Collections, Salina Public Library, Vertical File ‘Lowell School’