Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review
Meeting Agenda – Regular Meeting
Saturday, August 7, 2021 9:00 AM

National Register Nominations: * denotes properties within a Certified Local Government boundary

I. Union Electric Warehouse – Abilene, Dickinson County*

II. A. J. & Mary Griffin House – Lawrence, Douglas County*
   1. Lawrence Historic Resources Commission reviewed and supports the nomination – from Lynne Zollner, City staff liaison – August 5, 2021
   2. Speaking: Barry Shalinsky (owner)

III. First Presbyterian Church – Junction City, Geary County

IV. LeCluyse Residence – Shawnee, Johnson County
   1. Speaking: Gay Clemenson (owner)

V. Mt. Pleasant Four Corners Burying Grounds – Gardner, Johnson County

VI. First Christian Church – Erie, Neosho County

VII. Rice County Jail & Sheriff’s Residence – Lyons, Rice County

VIII. Dawson’s Conoco Station – Manhattan, Riley County*
   1. Historic Resources Board reviewed and supports the nomination – from Ben Chmiel, City Staff Liaison – June 30, 2021
   2. Manhattan/Riley Co. Preservation Alliance supports the nomination – from Kathy Dzewaltowski – August 5, 2021

IX. Forrester House – Manhattan, Riley County*
   1. Historic Resources Board reviewed and supports the nomination – from Ben Chmiel, City Staff Liaison – June 30, 2021
   2. Manhattan/Riley Co. Preservation Alliance supports the nomination – from Kathy Dzewaltowski – August 5, 2021
   3. Speaking: Ben Chmiel (owner)

X. First Christian Church – Manhattan, Riley County*
   1. Letter of support – from Kim Zito – June 18, 2021
   2. Letter of support – from Katie Loughmiller – June 18, 2021
   3. Manhattan Historic Resources Board reviewed and supports the nomination – from Ben Chmiel, City Staff Liaison – June 30, 2021
   5. Letter of support – from Doris E. Milldyke – July 15, 2021
   7. Letter of support – from Barbara Anderson – July 18, 2021
8. Letter of Objection – from Riley County Board of Commissioners (property owners) – July 22, 2021
11. Letter of support – from Dede Brokesh – August 2, 2021
12. Letter of support – from Manhattan/Riley Co. Preservation Alliance – Kathy Dzewaltowski – August 5, 2021
13. Letter of support – from Kathryn Focke – August 5, 2021
14. Letter of support – from Teresa Sanborn – August 5, 2021
15. Letter of support – from Michael Grogan, AIA Kansas President – August 5, 2021
16. Letter of support – from Christopher Fein – August 5, 2021
17. Speaking: Ben Chmiel; Kathryn Focke; Clancy Holeman, Riley County Attorney

XI. Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Historic District - Wabaunsee County

1. Speaking: Michael Stubbs – advocate/Prairie Guard
August 5, 2021

Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review
Cultural Resources Division
Kansas State Historical Society
6425 SW 6th Avenue
Topeka, KS 66615-1099

Dear Board Members:

The Lawrence Historic Resources Commission (HRC) reviewed the National Register Nomination for the Andrew J. and Mary C. Griffin House located at 645 Connecticut Street at their July 15, 2021 meeting. The HRC voted unanimously to send a letter to the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review supporting the nomination. The HRC considers listing in the National Register of Historic Places an important component of the identification and protection of historic resources in Lawrence and Douglas County.

Chapter 7 of Plan 2040: A Comprehensive Plan for Unincorporated Douglas County & the City of Lawrence identifies Douglas County and the City of Lawrence’s commitment to the identification and protection of Historic Resources. This plan encourages the identification, evaluation, and protection of historic resources. The nomination of the Zimmerman Steel Company to the National Register helps to further this goal.

The Historic Resources Commission is of the opinion the Griffin House is an important historic resource that is worthy of the recognition and protection that listing in the National Register of Historic Places provides.

Respectfully,

Lynne Braddock Zollner, Historic Resources Administrator
June 30, 2021

Jennie Chinn  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Kansas State Historical Society  
6425 SW 6th Ave., Topeka KS 66615-1099

Dear Jennie,

I am writing to inform you that the Manhattan Historic Resources Board reviewed the State and National Register nomination form for **Dawson's Conoco Service Station**, located at 1026 Poyntz Avenue, at their June 28, 2021 meeting, in accordance with 36 CFR 60-61 and Section IV of the *Procedures for Implementation of Certified Local Governments in Kansas*. The Board voted unanimously in support of the nomination, concurring with the findings that the property is eligible for the State and National Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,

Ben Chmiel, Planner III & Staff Liaison to the Historic Resources Board  
City of Manhattan, KS, 1101 Poyntz Ave.  
785/587-2438 | chmiel@cityofmhk.com
June 30, 2021

Jennie Chinn  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Kansas State Historical Society  
6425 SW 6th Ave., Topeka KS 66615-1099

Dear Jennie,

I am writing to inform you that the Manhattan Historic Resources Board reviewed the State and National Register nomination form for the F.B. Forrester House, located at 410 N. Juliette Avenue, at their June 28, 2021 meeting, in accordance with 36 CFR 60-61 and Section IV of the Procedures for Implementation of Certified Local Governments in Kansas. The Board voted unanimously in support of the nomination, concurring with the findings that the property is eligible for the State and National Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Ben Chmiel, Planner III & Staff Liaison to the Historic Resources Board  
City of Manhattan, KS, 1101 Poyntz Ave.  
785/587-2438 | chmiel@cityofmhk.com
A letter to the Historic Sites Board of Review c/o Deputy SHPO Patrick Zollner for August 7, 2021

Dear Members of the Historic Sites Board of Review,

The Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance, Inc. (M/RCPA) would like to express its support for the register nomination of the F. B. Forrester House, 410 North Juliette Avenue, in Manhattan, KS.

Forrest B. and Blanche Forrester were the original owners of 410 North Juliette Avenue in Manhattan. The 1916 house is an outstanding example of the Craftsman style and retains a high degree of historic integrity. The exterior features rough-cut stone porch piers, shingle siding, dual front-facing gabled dormers, and three sets of original double casement windows. The interior is characteristic of the Craftsman style and features a brick fireplace flanked by built-ins, French doors, coffered ceilings, wood columns, and wood paneling that encloses the stair landing.

The Forresters were prominent Manhattan citizens. Forrest and his brother operated the Palace Drug Store, which was a long-standing local business with downtown and Aggieville locations. The Palace’s Aggieville location operated for decades and became a beloved Aggieville icon. Blanche participated in the dramatic arts and was an accomplished writer, composing articles for home-related magazines and periodicals. An article she wrote about her home was featured in the February 1936 issue of Household Magazine, and the photograph of her home’s interior in the magazine provides evidence that the interior is largely unchanged from when the Forresters lived in the house.

Manhattan is fortunate to have the Forresters’ house as an excellent example of the Craftsman style and to help residents appreciate and interpret life in Manhattan’s early years. The M/RCPA believes the F. B. Forrester House is worthy of registry listing and would like to urge the Historic Sites Board of Review to support the nomination.

Sincerely,

Kathy Dzewaltowski, Board of Directors
Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance
P. O. Box 1893
Manhattan, KS 66505

mrcpanewsletter@gmail.com
www.preservemanhattan.org
A letter to the Historic Sites Board of Review c/o Deputy SHPO Patrick Zollner for August 7, 2021

Dear Members of the Historic Sites Board of Review,

The Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance, Inc. (M/RCPA) would like to express its support for the register nomination of Dawson’s Conoco Service Station, 1026 Poyntz Avenue, in Manhattan, KS.

For many years, U. S. Highway 40 traveled down Poyntz Avenue, making Poyntz Avenue a popular stretch of roadway for filling stations to provide service to travelers. The Continental Oil Company, a.k.a. Conoco, erected a filling station at this location in 1925, which was later demolished, and the current station was erected 1966-67 based on a Conoco corporate design. The Modern-designed building retains many of its original features and has a high degree of historic integrity. Two of its most striking features are the rectangular canopies that originally sheltered the gas pumps. Exterior arched pole lights, which provided ample lighting for the fueling area, are also distinctive original features. The canopies and the arched exterior lighting help to convey the building’s original function as a filling station.

Dawson’s Conoco Service Station is an excellent example of a Modern service station from a time when a major U. S. highway traversed the center of town, and it will help residents appreciate and interpret Manhattan’s commercial and architectural history from the mid-20th Century. The M/RCPA believes Dawson’s Conoco Service Station is worthy of registry listing and would like to urge the Historic Sites Board of Review to support the nomination.

Sincerely,

Kathy Dzewaltowski, Board of Directors
Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance
P. O. Box 1893
Manhattan, KS 66505

mrcpanewsletter@gmail.com
www.preservemanhattan.org
June 30, 2021

Jennie Chinn
State Historic Preservation Officer
Kansas State Historical Society
6425 SW 6th Ave., Topeka KS 66615-1099

Dear Jennie,

I am writing to inform you that the Manhattan Historic Resources Board reviewed the State and National Register nomination form for the First Christian Church building, located at 115 Courthouse Plaza, at their June 28, 2021 meeting, in accordance with 36 CFR 60-61 and Section IV of the Procedures for Implementation of Certified Local Governments in Kansas. The Board voted unanimously in support of the nomination, concurring with the findings that the property is eligible for the State and National Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,

Ben Chmiel, Planner III & Staff Liaison to the Historic Resources Board
City of Manhattan, KS, 1101 Poyntz Ave.
785/587-2438 | chmiel@cityofmhk.com
July 22, 2021

Cultural Resources Division
State Historic Preservation Office
6425 SW 6th Avenue
Topeka, KS 66615-1099
ATTN: State Historic Preservation Officer

Re: The First Christian Church (115 Courthouse Plaza, Manhattan, Riley County—Objection to Nomination and Listing)

Dear State Historic Preservation Officer:

The Board of Riley County Commissioners is the owner in fee simple title of the above real property. This Board owns this public property on behalf of all citizens of Riley County. We respectfully provide our notarized objection to the nomination of this publicly-owned property to the National Register of Historic Places and the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

As early as March, 2007, a predecessor Board of Riley County Commissioners convened a Riley County “retreat,” participated in by all Riley County government departments. The 2007 retreat focused upon the need for expanded Riley County facilities, and generated a written “Retreat Report”. (Attachment A) Part of that open public discussion included, under the heading “Location of County Facilities” : “Acquire church and adjoining parcels”; and “Demolish existing structures and rebuild” (Attachment A, p. 3) Further, under the heading “Next Steps for Facilities,” one of the publicly-voiced “action steps” was to “Determine what to do about church.” (Attachment A, p. 4) These open, public discussions about the “church” referred to The First Christian Church. So even 14 years ago, the First Christian Church was a key part in the plans of Riley County government to provide necessary facilities expansion for the benefit of the public. And the potential future demolition of this property was never a secret.

By 2012 Riley County government’s space needs had continued to grow. A formal “Riley County Offices Downtown Manhattan, KS Master Plan” (Attachment B) was completed May 22, 2012. This Master Plan presented a detailed analysis of the facility needs of Riley County government. That Plan had begun in 2007 and had been “revised in 2008.” (Attachment B, p. 6) In 2011 the Plan’s authors had been “commissioned” by Riley County to do the groundwork for further study of facility expansion, focusing on a separate county building still in use today, “Courthouse Plaza East.” (Attachment B, p. 7; pp. 50-57) According to this 2012 public document, “The Christian Church should be acquired and razed to provide site area for the new building” -- an administrative building which would consolidate the location of most departments. (Attachment B, p.8) This conclusion by the architect was reached based his logical and independent assessment of the First Christian Church (Attachment B, pp. 33-48) and the costs associated with that structure’s “limited adaptability.” (Attachment B, p. 33) Key to the architect’s decision to abandon the idea of renovating the Church for County use was the fact that, even with that done, Riley County’s operational needs required an additional 40, 171 square feet of space. (Attachment B, p. 49)

The 2012 Master Plan, beginning on page 74, set out a “Vision for the Future” for Riley County government facilities. (Attachment B, pp. 74-94) Early in that portion of the Plan, 5 “Project Phases” are
described. (Attachment B, p. 77) “Phase 1” is “Purchase and demolish First Christian Church and parking lot.” *Ibid.*

Riley County’s logical and long-standing plans to expand its footprint in downtown Manhattan Kansas depend largely upon our ability to make the highest and best use of the First Christian Church property. As shown by the foregoing history and our formal planning documents, this organization has been transparent about our plans from the outset. And we have done so for at least the past 14 years. Most recently, a key final step in those plans was our negotiated purchase of the First Christian Church. And that property is today no more suited to be a part of those plans by renovation than it was in 2007. (See Attachment B, pp. 96-101)

A boundary map which was submitted years ago as part of the nomination the listing of the “Downtown Manhattan Historic District“is included with this objection. (Attachment C) The First Christian Church was conspicuously absent from the boundaries of that Historic District, as that District’s nomination was submitted. And yet the First Christian Church nearly abutted the proposed District’s boundary. This raises a legitimate question why the District’s comprehensive nomination form did not include the First Christian Church, if it were truly a property of significant historical value.

The public good is best served by not listing the First Christian Church on the National Register of Historic Places and the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

John Ford, Chairman

[Signature]

Greg McKinley, Vice-Chairman

State of Kansas )
County of Riley)

Signed or attested before me on _July 30, 2021_ (date) by _John Ford_

_Greg McKinley_ [Name(s) of person(s)].

(Seal) _CYNTHIA S. KABRIEL_
Notary Public - State of Kansas
My Appt. Expires _07/12/2025_

My appointment expires: _July 12, 2025_
Dear Patrick,

I am writing in support of the First Christian Church in Manhattan for historical designation. Please share this letter with the Historic Sites Board of Review.

I believe our community will benefit from listing the historic First Christian Church. Our community is debating what should happen to the property. Unfortunately, some want to demolish it. Historic buildings are valuable for multiple reasons and there is community benefit in prolonging their usefulness. Listing this property will encourage our community to seek expert opinions and fully consider options to demolition.

Thank you for your service and your consideration of this nomination.

Barbara G. Anderson
Manhattan, Kansas
To Historic Sites Board of Review

I support the Historic Register nomination of First Christian Church, Manhattan, KS. The original section of First Christian Church was built in two phases in 1908 and 1909. The architect, J. C. Holland, had also designed the Riley County Courthouse, and the building was intentionally designed to be harmonious with the Carnegie Library and the Court House. This historic church is a significant cultural asset to the community.

Sincerely,

Doris E. Milldyke
108 Yale Circle
Manhattan, KS 66503
785 410 -7017
Dear Mr. Zollner,

I am in FAVOR of a Register nomination for the historic First Christian Church, Manhattan, KS. It is a significant cultural asset to the community.

I prefer to live in a city/county that sustains its irreplaceable historic architecture. I am surprised it was not included in the Manhattan Downtown Historic District in the first place???

Regards,
Ann Kosch
405 Vattier St.
Manhattan, KS 66502
Hi, I am writing in support of the nomination of the First Christian Church building, Manhattan, KS, to the Register of Historic Kansas Places. The 112 year old building has long been a centerpiece of downtown Manhattan. I hope it is also determined that it is eligible for the National Register. This old stone building has so much character. We need to honor and protect these fine, old buildings.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Gloria Juhl Raney
815 Sunset Ave.
Manhattan, KS 66502
It appears that I am now the object of a targeted letter writing campaign!

From: Katie Loughmiller <loughmiller.katie@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, June 18, 2021 12:12 PM
To: Zollner, Patrick [KSHS] <Patrick.Zollner@ks.gov>
Subject: First Christian Church - Manhattan KS

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

I am writing to support the adoption of First Christian Church in Manhattan KS as a state historic building. The church stands as a monument of the history of Manhattan and has served as an architecture cornerstone of the Courthouse Plaza for over a hundred years. Buildings like this should be preserved so that our communities history can be represented.

Katie Loughmiller
1621 Fishermans Ln
Manhattan KS 66503
For the HSBR meeting letters file I guess.

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**From:** Kimberly Zito <kim.vlach@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 18, 2021 12:09 PM  
**To:** Zollner, Patrick [KSHS] <Patrick.Zollner@ks.gov>  
**Subject:** First Christian Church in Manhattan

*EXTERNAL:* This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mr. Zollner,

I am writing to urge you to place the First Christian Church in Manhattan on the National Register.

This is too important of a building - especially in that section of Manhattan - to lose.

It is disgraceful that the county commission is working so diligently on destroying it without any genuine due diligence. Please get it on the register.

Thank you,
Kim Zito  
1013 Cassidy Dr, Manhattan, KS 66502  
813-316-5463
EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello, Mr. Zollner,

I am glad that the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review has agreed to review whether the former First Christian Church building in Manhattan is eligible to be placed on the Register of Historic Kansas Places, and possibly the National Register of Historic Places.

This church, remodeled over the years but well over 100 years old, is one of those classic Kansas limestone structures that are iconic in the state. When I was growing up in Manhattan, even as a child I appreciated the beautiful limestone courthouse, the Carnegie Library, the Kansas State University buildings, the Presbyterian Church, the limestone bank buildings downtown and the limestone homes scattered throughout the town.

Over the years, with 5th Street closed off and the Courthouse Plaza area becoming more elegant, I have appreciated that the historic buildings in that area have been kept, providing a beautiful continuity to the city.

The recent purchase of the former First Christian Church on the Plaza by Riley County represents an opportunity to preserve another of those iconic buildings. It is my understanding that the building is structurally sound. It seems to me that demolishing it to plant grass, perhaps hoping to build something in the future, seems a monumental waste and will probably result in either a temporary strip of green, a parking lot, or an eventual new, expensive building that won't have the same historic character. Since the county hasn't even, as far as I know, proposed a structure to replace it, it seems premature to me to destroy a sound building that might serve a renewed purpose.

I am aware that repurposing old buildings can be costly, but preservation tax credits can assist with that, I am reminded of how Nichols Gym at KSU was also scheduled for demolition until so much public sentiment saved it. While this church building is not as iconic a structure as the old "castle" on campus, it is still a part of the character of the city. People with imagination should be given a chance to find out first whether the building meets the criteria for a historic site, and second, whether it could be remodeled into a useful structure for the county.

Sincerely,

Jerri Garretson
(Author of "No Place Like Home - Growing Up in Manhattan, Kansas 1948-1964)

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B097SMRFWN
Dear Patrick:

After sending my previous note to you, I see that I needed to provide more information with my name and location. My name and address are Dede Brokesh, 3005 Wilson Dr., Manhattan, KS. We have met at State historic preservation conferences. I was on the Manhattan Historic Resources Board for six years, one year as chair.

Sincerely,

Dede

On 8/2/2021 11:14 PM, Dede Brokesh wrote:
> Dear Patrick Zollner:
> 
> I support historic preservation listing for the First Christian Church in Manhattan. I understand that the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review will be reviewing the nomination on August 7, 2021.
> 
> To me, it is very nice to be able to view the arched stonework of the 1908 church from three sides. Also, the 1960's addition is distinctive for that time period. The location of the building fits with the Riley County Courthouse complex grounds by forming connecting architectural massing and complimentary stone work to the other stone buildings on the site. If the building were removed, these distinctive features and the character of the outdoor spaces would be lost.
> 
> Also, it is interesting to learn that someone who worked in my office
> at Kansas State University Facilities Planning, Ray Lippenberger,
> designed an addition to the building.
> It is imperative that the Board make a decision on the nomination on
> or before August 7, 2021. The Riley County Commission has voted to
> try to demolish the building by August 7, 2021. I have not seen a
> notice in the local newspaper to proceed with the complete demolition
> other than asbestos removal by that date; however, I have been
> out-of-town and not updated on the bid-letting process.
> Thank you for your consideration of the possibility of saving this
> structure with historic preservation listing.
> Sincerely,
> Dede
Dear Members of the Historic Sites Board of Review,

The Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance, Inc. (M/RCPA) would like to express its support for the register nomination of the First Christian Church in Manhattan, KS.

The M/RCPA is a 501 c 3 organization, founded in 1994. It currently represents a membership consisting of seventy-nine families and three businesses. The website address is www.preservemanhattan.org. M/RCPA newsletters are published six times a year and are available to the public on the website. The organization is also active on social media. The M/RCPA provides programs and other activities throughout the year for its members and the public. The organization has a long history associated with historic preservation, and it has provided preservation leaders at the state level in the past.

The First Christian Church has been an important part of the Manhattan community for more than a century. The original building was designed by J. C. Holland, who designed the adjacent Riley County Courthouse, several other courthouses in Kansas, and at least one other church. Constructed of limestone, the church was intentionally designed to be harmonious with neighboring substantial stone buildings: the Riley County Courthouse and Carnegie Library. Architect A. F. Wickes designed an addition in 1938 for educational space, and Ray Lippenberger designed an addition and renovations that occurred in 1962. Lippenberger skillfully incorporated 1960s architectural trends with the original building. In the early 1980s, the street in front of the First Christian Church was vacated in order to create a pedestrian plaza, and the church has served as the western anchor of this urban plaza in the decades since.

The First Christian Church was purchased by Riley County in 2020. Riley County had discussed the possibility of purchasing the former church for a number of years, but it was always unknown whether the building would ever be for sale and if it was, whether the County would be the successful buyer. The three county commissioners who were serving at the time of the 2020 purchase made no decisions regarding what Riley County would do with the building. The former church is now owned by the citizens of Riley County, which created the opportunity for the public to nominate the building. The M/RCPA consulted with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for guidance. SHPO’s response was that because the building may be eligible for listing on a register, the M/RCPA should prepare a nomination, which it did. Manhattan’s Historic Resources Board voted to draft a letter of support of the nomination based on the recommendation of City of Manhattan staff.

It is the M/RCPA’s understanding that two of the three Riley County commissioners object to the nomination, seemingly lacking critical information about registry listing, including the positives such as the recognition that listing provides as well as potential financial benefits. On April 29, 2021, a member of the M/RCPA’s Board of Directors addressed the Riley County Commission and urged commissioners to seek accurate information about registry listing from SHPO. On May 10, 2021, Brent Bowman, who is a local architect who developed a space needs study for Riley County in the past (last updated in 2012), told commissioners he would like to re-look at the church with a “more holistic view” and “for adaptive use.”

The M/RCPA would like to express its appreciation of the preservation community and the process for considering a property for registry listing. The M/RCPA believes the First Christian Church is worthy of
registry listing and would like to urge the Historic Sites Board of Review to make a determination about
the building’s nomination based on the criteria for evaluation, and if it meets the criteria, to list it.

Sincerely,

Kathy Dzewaltowski, Board of Directors
Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance
P. O. Box 1893
Manhattan, KS 66505

mrcpanewsletter@gmail.com
www.preservemanhattan.org
Mr. Zollner:

I’m writing to you both as a citizen of Riley County and an elected County Commissioner in support of the application to the historic register of the First Christian Church, now owned by the citizens of Riley County.

I was present at the May, 2020 meeting of the Riley County Commission when they purchased the property, sign unseen, and questioned the actions of the commissioners. I was campaigning to replace one of them at the time. They voted at the end of their term in 2020 to pass the decision for the future of the property to the incoming commission. I was surprised at the time that they didn’t demolish it in the 8 months prior to the seating of the 2021 commission if that’s what they intended at the time of purchase.

In January, after being sworn in, I knew that we would have to address the issue in the 2021 session, and began searching for various possibilities for the building. I visited other historic properties in the county that had been renovated and repurposed, and sought the advice of a local architect specializing in historic properties, the Dean of the KSU Dept. of Architecture, the local Preservation Alliance, developers, and other citizens of the city and county. My purpose was to bring this information to the other two commissioners and have an educated discussion on the future of this historic building. Kathy Dzewaltowski and Dean DeNoble came before the commission on April 29th and urged the commission to take some time to consider the use and fate of the building. The chair of the commission asked for the original architect, Brent Bowman, to come before the body and review his studies from 2006 and 2012. He did so a week later and suggested that he could do an updated study. On the same day, the director of public works made a short presentation stating that the building needed to be demolished and the lot planted to grass (with no logical reason). The chair of the commission called for a vote on that day with no consideration given to the possibility to preserve and repurpose the building.

A question has been raised in the two commissioner’s letter to this committee as to “why the church was not included in the city’s historical district?” I have heard that it was because the church was not a business or a public building at the time. Whether or not this was the case, it doesn’t pertain to the issue before this board.

After several years of sitting vacant, there is no sign of pest infestation, water damage, structural problems or deterioration and I have yet to see an itemization of any maintenance costs. The county approved removal of asbestos and bids are to be reviewed in the coming weeks.

Originally I had been interested in the 2009 church structure and how it could be saved, but after many visits to the interior and exterior, study of the architectural plans from 1961 and in reading the history and evolution of the structure, I am convinced that renovation and repurposing for the entire building is the best plan going forward. I have gone on record against demolition and will continue to do so.

In closing, I would strongly support the application for the First Christian Church, Manhattan, KS, to be placed on the state and national registers of historical places. Thank you for your time and consideration of this historic and beloved building in our community.

Kathryn G. Focke
429 Stone Glenn Drive
Manhattan, KS 66503
785-313-0663
July 30, 2021

Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review
c/o Patrick Zollner, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
6425 SW 6th Avenue
Topeka, KS  66615-1099

Mel and Jan Borst
1918 Humboldt Street
Manhattan, KS  66502

Reference: Manhattan’s former First Christian Church nomination support.

Dear Chair Schneider and Members of the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review,

We believe Manhattan’s former First Christian Church building is a valuable historic public asset worthy of its nomination to national and state historic registers.

The building’s examples of architectural and community development heritage are highly visible from all directions – including the striking Poyntz Avenue views of the original 1908 building’s S and W elevations in conjunction with the 1905 Courthouse and 1904 Carnegie buildings; the studious 1938 N classroom addition along with the 1908 W elevation and upper N building elements as observed from Humboldt Street; and the modern 1962 E facade and office addition’s stately presence on the Courthouse Plaza.

The significance of the building’s architectural value and future was apparent when Riley County and Manhattan planners prominently included it in the 1981 Courthouse Plaza design. It is noteworthy the County Office Building’s entry facade and foyer designs complement the plaza-opposite 1962 church entry façade’s vertical masonry openings and soring open foyer and staircases.

We were pleased when Riley County was able to purchase the property last year and agree with the county’s space consultant’s recent recommendation to take a fresh look at utilizing the facility’s space for county use. *

Indeed, one can observe how the building’s historic volume, massing and natural lighting could be used to provide excellent public meeting spaces and offices. During a recent tour of the building, it was also observed how the three distinct eras of the building’s masonry construction provide very stable interior conditions despite having no HVAC during and perhaps prior to county ownership. **

We support the preservation and public use of the former First Christian Church building and encourage you to recommend its nomination to the National Register of Historic Places and the Register of Historic Kansas places to make both possible.

Sincerely,
Jan and Mel Borst

* One can better understand the consultants insightful and perceptive planning recommendations as well as the ensuing unscheduled vote to demolish the property by viewing the May 10, 2021 Riley County BOCCC Meeting via You-Tube starting at the 2:45 time stamp.

** Other observations include no signs of water intrusion except a small ceiling leak stain at the corner of one of the 1963 addition skylights as well as no evidence of a break-in or occupancy.
Dear Mr. Patrick Zollner,

I am in favor of the former Christian Church building (recently purchased by the Riley County Commissioners) being nominated and listed on the National Historic Sites/Registry. I am not in favor of the demolition of this building that was designed and built in the same style as the Riley County Court House and the Carnegie Library.

Thank you for representing those of us in favor of preserving our historic buildings. I am 68 years old and have lived 64 of those years here in Riley County.

Sincerely,
Teresa Sanborn

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August 5, 2021

Patrick Zollner  
Deputy Director  
State Historic Preservation Office

Dear Mr. Zollner,

I am an Assistant Professor of Architecture with Kansas State University, the 2021 President of the American Institute of Architecture Kansas Chapter, and a Manhattan resident. I am writing you in support of the application to seek listings, on state and national registers, for the First Christian Church at 115 N 5th Street. As you are likely aware, the original wing of the building dates to 1909 with a late 1930s addition and a later 1962 wing facing east to the space north of the courthouse with a handsome glazing-infilled colonnade designed by the notable local architectural firm led by Ray Hutchins and Ray Lippenberger.

As a practitioner, scholar, and advocate for mid-twentieth century U.S. modern architecture with a particular focus on preservation and building reuse, it is my opinion that this building group merits the attention that historical listings may garner. Additionally, the building serves a positive urban role; in addition to fronting and creating an important edge to the space north of the courthouse (though currently use for parking, it should be considered part of Courthouse Plaza), the building also serves as one of four corner anchors for the block between 6th and 5th (currently an access drive), granting a sense of cohesion to a block otherwise mostly pockmarked with surface parking.

Summarily demolishing historic building fabric to be replaced by yet more surface parking, oft-mentioned in recent City Commission discussions, is an untenable scenario, especially as the surrounding parcels are already consumed with such lots. Historical listings will not, of course, guarantee survival of the building but should invite more options for reuse while enhancing the perceived value of this to the those controlling its future and the general community, something the building definitely merits.

Thank you for your consideration,

Michael Grogan, AIA Kansas President  
Assistant Professor, Kansas State University Department of Architecture  
202 S MLK Jr Dr  
Manhattan, KS 66502  
617-840-8930
08.05.2021

Patrick Zollner
Deputy Director
State Historic Preservation Office

RE: First Christian Church Manhattan

I’m writing to you in regards to the Application for State and National Listing of the Manhattan First Christian Church at 115 N 5th Street. As background I am an Architect in Kansas City that specializes in Historic work on post-war architecture. In addition to this I am a design and History professor at Kansas State University. I am currently working on a State Survey of post-war architecture in Manhattan, Kansas. This building is one of the identified properties in our survey. It is not only is an architecturally significant example of the architectural design of the period, but it also acts as an important edge to the urban fabric of Poyntz Avenue. In recent years many examples of post-war architecture in Manhattan have been lost. It seems this building although unoccupied is in servable condition and an adaptive reuse could be found. It is for these reasons that I am writing this letter of support for the application for the First Christian Church, Manhattan, KS, to be placed on the state and national registers of historical places. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,

Christopher Fein, AIA NCARB
Principal FORWARD Design I Architecture,
Assistant Professor KSU APD