

Register of Historic Kansas Places

Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating individual properties and districts. The format is similar to the National Register of Historic Places form. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets. Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Palmyra Masonic Lodge
 Other name/site number 045-3833

2. Location

Street & number 602-604 High Street not for publication
 City or town Baldwin City vicinity
 State Kansas Code KS County Douglas Code 045 Zip code 66006

3.,4. Certification

I hereby certify that this property is listed in the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

SR Listed 5-14-2011

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>		total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter Categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

SOCIAL: meeting hall

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: Limestone

Walls: Brick/Limestone

Roof: Asphalt

Other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the State Register)

- 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 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1894-1946

Significant Dates

1894, 1914

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

UNKNOWN

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	5	3	1	0	0	7	4	4	2	9	4	0	9	1
Zone		Easting						Northing						

2

Zone		Easting						Northing						

3

Zone		Easting						Northing						

4

Zone		Easting						Northing						

 See continuation sheet**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title Christy Davis

Organization Davis Preservation Date 2/7/2011

Street & number 909 1/2 Kansas Ave, Suite 7 Telephone 785-234-5053

City or town Topeka State Kansas Zip code 66612

Property Owner

Name DWHH, LLC (c/o David Hill)

Street & number PO Box 4 Telephone 785-594-2100

City or town Baldwin City State Kansas Zip code 66006

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*Palmyra Masonic Lodge
Douglas County, Kansas*

Narrative Description

Summary

The Palmyra Masonic Lodge (1894) is in deteriorated condition. Still, the building retains sufficient integrity for listing on the Register of Historic Kansas Places for its association with the early history of Baldwin City. The Palmyra Masonic Lodge is located on the east end of downtown Baldwin City, on the northwest corner of Sixth Street and High, the principal east/west thoroughfare. The two-story red brick building is fifty feet wide and approximately seventy-five feet deep. A one-story concrete block addition extends from the west end of the north elevation. The first floor was originally occupied by retail shops and converted in the 1940s for industrial use. The second floor was occupied by a lodge hall, used by the Masons and American Legion. The building is currently vacant.

South (Front) Elevation

The front elevation of the Palmyra Masonic Lodge is fifty feet wide, with its first floor historically housing two twenty-five-foot storefronts. On the lower level, the storefronts have been infilled with stucco-covered concrete blocks dating to the building's conversion from retail to industrial use in the 1940s. There are two large overhead door openings. The one on the west is flanked by two four-pane fixed windows. The one on the east is flanked by a large window opening on its east and a man door on the west. The upper level of the façade is symmetrical, with four evenly spaced arched 1/1 windows with stone sills and brick lintels. An infilled area at the center of the façade betrays the location of a missing stone. The stone was removed by the masons when they left the building. A corbelled brick band tops the parapet.

North (Rear) Elevation

The north elevation is rubble limestone partially coated with stucco. There are five arched openings – three infilled arched window openings on the upper level and a window and door on the lower level. A one-story concrete-block addition, which likely dates to the building's industrial use in the 1940s, projects from the northwest corner. The northeast corner, which was near collapse, is in the process of being reconstructed.

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*Palmyra Masonic Lodge
Douglas County, Kansas*

East (Side) Elevation

The east elevation faces Sixth Street. There are five masonry openings on the lower level, including a partially infilled storefront opening on the south end, a blocked-in arched man door opening to its north, two arched windows in the center, and an arched man door on the north end. There are five evenly spaced arched window openings on the upper level. A fire escape descends from the second window on the upper level. The parapet steps down from south to north.

West (Side) Elevation

The top of the west elevation peaks out above the adjacent one-story building to the west. It is exposed rubble limestone. This elevation lacks the detail of the east elevation. For instance, it does not have a stepped parapet.

Interior – First Floor

The first floor is divided into three principal spaces – two twenty-five-foot stores in the original building and a large open space in the one-story addition. The store space on the west features exposed wood ceiling joists, steel studs against plaster walls, and a combination of concrete and hardwood floors. Steel posts and beams support the ceiling. The store space on the east has exposed wood ceiling joists, steel posts and beams, historic plaster walls, painted wood trim. Much of the floor in this area is missing. The two store spaces are accessible via a masonry opening on the south end of the shared wall.

Interior – Second Floor

The second floor is divided into two principal spaces – one above the west store and the other about the east store. The rear/north wall is exposed rubble limestone. The northeast corner, which was near collapse, is being rebuilt. The floors are mostly hardwood, with some covered by plywood. The original plaster remains on the east, west and south walls. Character-defining features include wood baseboards, simple wood window trim, and pressed-metal ceilings. The pressed-metal ceilings, applied over wood lath and plaster, were likely added in the 1914 remodel. A prior owner constructed wood stud walls throughout the second floor. At this time, the second floor is accessible only by a ladder on the north end of the building.

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*Palmyra Masonic Lodge
Douglas County, Kansas*

Statement of Significance

Introduction

The Palmyra Masonic Lodge is being nominated to the Register of Historic Kansas Places for its association with the social history of Baldwin City, Kansas and as an example of Italianate architecture. The period of significance stretches from the building's original construction in 1894 until it was converted for industrial use in 1946.

A Brief History of Baldwin City

Baldwin City, Kansas, the third-largest city in Douglas County, is located about fifteen miles south of Lawrence. The community's history dates back to 1855 when "Robert and Richard Pierson along with L.F. Green, Jacob Cantrell and a few others" created a settlement called Palmyra "in and near what is now known as Baldwin City." Like many communities platted during the territorial period, Palmyra staked its future on its adjacency to the Santa Fe Trail. Among the town's first buildings was the Santa Fe Trail House, a combination hotel and store.

Palmyra Township played a unique role in the raucous pre-Civil War period known as Bleeding Kansas. On June 2, 1856, abolitionist John Brown attacked an encampment of pro-slavery men in a skirmish that came to be known as the Battle of Black Jack.¹

Over time, the community has become known as home to Baker University, the state's oldest four-year institution of higher learning. The school traces its history back to 1858, when the Palmyra Town Company surveyed land adjacent to the original town site with the purpose of donating proceeds of lot sales to the Kansas Educational Association of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Ironically, this effort provided the funds necessary to establish Baker University at the expense of the town of Palmyra.² Soon, families and businesses were moving from Palmyra to the property near the Baker campus.³ The final death blow came in 1858 when resident John Baldwin built a saw grist mill in the new business district.⁴ The community was officially renamed Baldwin City, in honor of John Baldwin, on May 22, 1862, after the post office moved from Palmyra.

¹ William Cutler. *History of the State of Kansas* (Chicago: A.T. Andreas, 1883), part 34.

² Frank Blackmar, *Kansas: A Cyclopaedia of State History* . . . 2 vols. (Chicago: Standard Publishing Company, 1912), 132-133.

³ Cutler.

⁴ Blackmar.

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*Palmyra Masonic Lodge
Douglas County, Kansas*

By 1870, the year Baldwin was finally incorporated, the population of Palmyra Township had grown to 2,431. Baldwin City's population stood at 325 in 1880.⁵ By 1893, Baldwin's two-block-long downtown business district included a feed and meal mill, two hotels, a hardware store, and a smattering of specialty shops featuring carpentry, meat, hats, groceries and drugs.

By the early twentieth century Baldwin City boasted "beautiful" homes and churches, several retail stores, a water system, and telegraph and telephone facilities. After a groundbreaking public vote in 1905, Baldwin City became one of the area's first communities to install an electric grid. The system, designed by Baker University science professor W. C. Bauer, became the model for other Kansas towns. Between 1900 and 1910, the town's population ballooned from 1039 to 3051. The majority of the town's population in 1912 was students, which numbered 700 of the town's 1200 residents.⁶ The population remained steady through 1930.

Since 1930, Baldwin's population has nearly tripled, standing today at 3400.

Palmyra Masonic Lodge

Freemasonry, which dates back as far as 926 A.D., arrived in the American colonies in the 1720s. By the time of the American Revolution, there were approximately 150 lodges in the colonies, whose Masonic leaders included the likes of George Washington. The first Masonic meeting in Kansas was held on August 11, 1854 in Wyandotte, now Kansas City.⁷

Palmyra Masonic Lodge was one of the first Masonic Lodges in Kansas Territory, holding its first meetings in 1856 in the "open air." The Palmyra Masonic Lodge was granted a charter on October 18, 1859, over a year before Kansas entered the union as a state. From 1859 until the late 1860s, the lodge met on the third floor of Baker University's "College Building" (now

⁵ Cutler.

⁶ Blackmar.

⁷ Albert Gallatin Mackey, *The History of Freemasonry* (The Masonic History Co., 1898).

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*Palmyra Masonic Lodge
Douglas County, Kansas*

known as Old Castle). In fact, the lodge was instrumental in the completion of the nascent college's main hall. When Baker University ran out of funds for the building's construction, the Palmyra Lodge stepped in and offered to provide the funds for the third story. For a decade, the third story was used for classrooms during the day and Masonic meetings at night.

In 1867 or 1868, the Masons partnered with the Baldwin chapter of the International Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) to build a new frame building in Baldwin City's fledgling commercial district. The Masons and Odd Fellows leased the building to various other organizations, including the Grand Army of the Republic, Ladies' Relief Corps, Presbyterian Sewing Society and Sons of Veterans. The Masons became the building's sole owner in 1883, when the Odd Fellows chapter sold its share and moved down the street. By then, the Palmyra Masonic Lodge boasted thirty-one members.⁸

A devastating fire on October 12, 1891 wreaked havoc on the wood-framed building. As the fire coincided with a nationwide financial panic, it took the Masons nearly three years to rebuild. Although plans initially called for a seventy-five-foot wide building, the Masons settled for a fifty-foot front.⁹ The new masonry building was dedicated on June 26, 1894 with a keynote address by Bishop William A. Quayle, the president of Baker University and ancestor of future Vice President James Danforth (Dan) Quayle. Like that of many fraternal buildings, the first floor was designed to lease to local businesses. The second floor was divided into two principal spaces, a lodge room on the south end and a dining room on the north.

Despite an improved economy, the Masons were forced to sell the building and lease back the meeting hall. By the early twentieth century, the west half of the building was owned by Mary Jane Bristow and east half was owned by grocer Cassius E. Lockwood. Under this new ownership, the meeting hall was remodeled in 1914.¹⁰ The newly formed American Legion Post 228 purchased the east half of the building from Lockwood in 1919. During the period in which the Legion owned the building, from 1919 to the mid 1940s, it was known as the "Memorial Building."

In 1946 the Early Manufacturing Company (later the Vermillion Manufacturing Company) remodeled the building for use as a wood products manufacturing company. After a 1956 fire damaged the building, it was purchased by the local Ford dealership, which converted half of

⁸ Cutler, part 34.

⁹ 1893 Sanborn Map.

¹⁰ The pressed-metal ceilings likely date to this early remodel.

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the first floor to an auto showroom and the other half into a feed store. From the 1950s to 1970s, the Manufacturing Company (later the Vermillion Manufacturing Company) second floor, which was decorated with a western theme and known as “The Loft,” was rented for parties. After the Ford dealership closed in the late 1960s, the building was used for storage for decades.¹¹

The building was recently condemned by the City of Baldwin City as an unsafe structure. A group of local developers is working to protect this downtown anchor from demolition.

Italianate Architecture

The Italianate Style was popular nationwide from 1840 through the boom years of the mid-1880s, spurred on by popular pattern books such as those published by Andrew Jackson Downing. The style was applied to both residential and commercial architecture. Most residential examples in Kansas pre-date 1885, by which time Queen Anne had come to dominate. Commercial examples, such as the Palmyra Masonic Lodge, were built in Kansas through the end of the nineteenth century. Character-defining features of commercial examples include the following features found on the Palmyra Masonic Lodge: symmetrical massing and narrow window openings with arched tops surrounded by hood molds. The corbelling on the Palmyra Masonic Lodge is indicative of late examples, when elaborate cornices were abandoned in a transition from Italianate Style to Commercial Style.¹² Although there are a few other Italianate buildings in downtown Baldwin City, the others are smaller examples, all only twenty-five feet wide.

¹¹ Loren Litteer, “Building at 602-604 High Street has long history” *The Signal*, 8 July 2010.

¹² John Poppeliers and S. Allen Chambers, Jr., *What Style Is It? A Guide to American Architecture* (New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, 2003), 57-61. Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), 211-229.

Kansas State Historical Society

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*Palmyra Masonic Lodge
Douglas County, Kansas*

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Sanborn Maps, 1893, 1927.

The [Baldwin City] Signal.

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*Palmyra Masonic Lodge
Douglas County, Kansas*

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The legal description for the nominated property is as follows: High Street Lot X. The parcel ID number is 023-202-04-0-10-30-006.02-0.

Boundary Justification

The above is the legal description and parcel ID number for the parcel on which the Palmyra Masonic Lodge sits. The nominated property includes the building and the lot on which the building sits.

Photo Log

All photos were taken by Christy Davis on January 6, 2011.

1. Exterior, Overall view of south and east elevations, looking northwest.
2. Exterior, Close-up of south elevation.
3. Exterior, Overall view of north elevation, looking south.
4. Interior, First Floor, Overall view of west store, looking south.
5. Interior, First Floor, Overall view of west store, looking north.
6. Interior, First Floor, Overall view of east store, looking south.
7. Interior, First Floor, East store, looking east.
8. Interior, Second Floor, looking north.
9. Interior, Second Floor, looking east.

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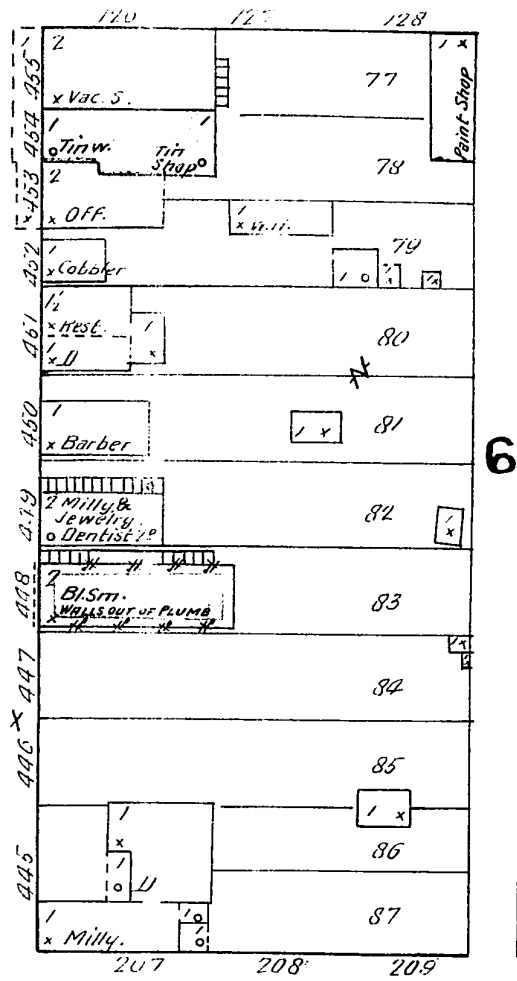
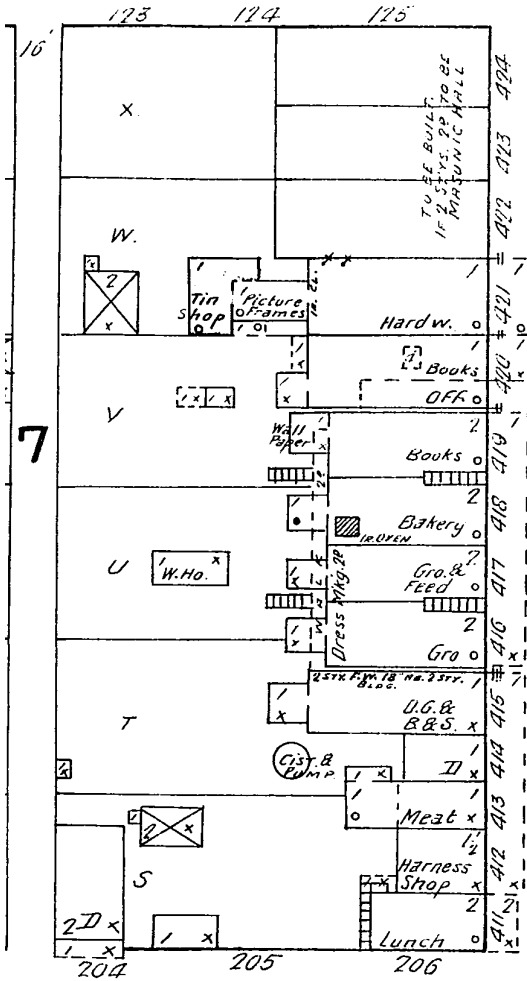
Palmyra Masonic Lodge
Douglas County, Kansas

(80 FEET WIDE)

6TH



ST.



(80 FEET WIDE)

7TH
6

ST.

Close-up of 1893 Sanborn Map.