

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1** NAME

HISTORIC

Crawford Building

AND/OR COMMON

**2** LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 501 Jackson Street

CITY, TOWN

Topeka

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
No. 2, Martha Keys

STATE

Kansas

CODE

20

COUNTY

Shawnee

CODE

177

**3** CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4** OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Crawford Landmark Plaza, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

501 Jackson Street

CITY, TOWN

Topeka

VICINITY OF

STATE

Kansas 66603

**5** LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURT HOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Shawnee County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Topeka

STATE

Kansas 66603

**6** REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Remembrances in Wood, Brick and Stone, Examples From the Architectural  
Heritage of Shawnee County, Kansas

DATE

1974

FEDERAL STATE  COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Topeka-Shawnee County Metropolitan Planning Commission

CITY, TOWN

Topeka

STATE

Kansas 66603

# DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

\_\_\_EXCELLENT  
X.GOOD  
\_\_\_FAIR

\_\_\_DETERIORATED  
\_\_\_RUINS  
\_\_\_UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

\_\_\_UNALTERED  
X.ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

X.ORIGINAL SITE  
\_\_\_MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located at the southwest corner of 5th and Jackson streets, the Crawford Building is one of the few remaining commercial office buildings in Topeka which demonstrates the Romanesque influence so much in vogue just prior to the turn of the century. The building is situated in an area of commercial buildings and parking lots, and across the street to the north is the city's police station. It is one block west of Kansas avenue, Topeka's main commercial street, but very much part of the central business district.

The Crawford Building is four stories high with a basement and measures 50 feet wide, 100 feet long and 65 feet high. The basement walls are 24 inches thick, the first floor walls 20 inches, and the remainder of the exterior walls are 16 inches.

The basement walls are of white limestone on the east and north sides. Pressed red brick, terra cotta and Bedford stone trim complete the east and north walls. Both the west and south walls are of rough cut native stone which has been plastered. The south wall is now painted red.

An ornamental wrought iron fire escape ladder and a tier of latticed balcony landings are placed on the east front. A fire escape ladder is also located on the north side. A four-story wrought iron spiral fire escape winds its way down the west wall. This fire escape was not depicted on a 1913 fire insurance map so it may likely have been added later. Some of the window openings centered on the west wall appear to have been modified to permit access to the fire escape.

Window openings on the street facades are symmetrically placed. All major window openings on the first and third floors have semicircular arches while window openings on the second and fourth floors are rectangular openings. The main entrance is centered on the east facade and is placed in a recessed stilted round arched opening. Flanking the entry are large round arched window openings; within each are two single sash and two quarter round windows. The same pattern is used on the north side except for three narrow rectangular windows and one door opening, near the west end. The third floor windows are similar except that double sash instead of single sash windows are employed. Double sash windows are used throughout on the second and fourth floors. Transom windows are placed in all fourth floor openings and also occur on all other floors in the four narrow openings near the west end of the north side.

The original appearance of the building hasn't been altered too much except for the removal of the brick capitals from the tops of the many pilasters on the east and north walls. The removal occurred some time prior to 1930. Decorative terra cotta capitals are still located on all pilasters at the mid point of the third floor. Other terra cotta trim is found beneath the second floor balcony and flanking the main entrance. Decorative patterns are also carved into the limestone blocks at the basement windows.

The interior has 16 foot ceilings, patterned tile hallway floors, hardwood wainscoting, woodburning fireplaces and the original elevator cage. The present owners are renovating the interior, in keeping with the spirit of the original, to make the building once again a desirable commercial location.

# SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES      1888                                      BUILDER/ARCHITECT      Seymour Davis

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Crawford Building was erected in 1888 for former Kansas governor Samuel J. Crawford from plans prepared by architect Seymour Davis. During the late 1880's Topeka was experiencing a tremendous economic boom. Full of confidence in the city's future, many investors erected brick and stone office blocks. The Crawford Building is one of only a few of these which have survived without extensive alterations.

Seymour Davis was a prominent Topeka architect in the late 1880's and 1890's. He was the state architect of Kansas from 1893 to 1895 and prepared plans for wings of the State Capitol which were under construction during his term in office. (He also designed the Columbian Building in Topeka, which will soon be nominated to the Register.) Davis later returned to his native Philadelphia, where he built a reputation as one of that city's leading architects before his death in 1923.

Samuel J. Crawford came to Kansas from Indiana in 1859 to practice law. The following quotation from the foreword of Mark Plummer's biography entitled Frontier Governor offers a brief summary of Crawford's contributions to Kansas:

"The Kansas frontier brought rapid success to Samuel J. Crawford. At age twenty-nine he was Kansas's youngest governor. He was elected as an authentic Civil War hero who had displayed bravery in numerous battles in the Western theater and who had commanded a regiment of black soldiers. As governor, he was involved in reconstruction politics, the 1867 peace treaty with the southern plains Indians at Medicine Lodge, the building of the Kansas Pacific railroad, and the rapid settlement of the state. He resigned his position as the state's chief executive to lead the Nineteenth Kansas Cavalry in an expedition against the Indians in the winter of 1868-1869. His campaigning against the Indians brought him into contact with Generals William T. Sherman, Phil Sheridan and George Custer. Crawford's early political success was followed by frustration. He repeatedly attempted to obtain a U. S. House or Senate seat, but he was thwarted by the corrupt election practices of the "gilded age." He joined Liberal Republican and the Greenback parties but he later opposed the Populists. He found monetary success, however, by prosecuting claims against the national government on behalf of the state, numerous Indian tribes, and individual claimants. . . ."

With some of the earnings from his claims' work, he built the Crawford Building at Fifth and Jackson in Topeka. Construction began in the fall of 1887. The Topeka Daily Capital of October 27, 1887, reported, "The foundation for Governor Crawford's building on Jackson Street is probably the most substantial ever built in Topeka. The building when completed will cost \$35,000." A building permit was issued by the city of Topeka on November 14, 1887. Information filed then gave the estimated date of completion as September, 1888, and the estimated cost as \$30,000.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET 1

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE

8. The contractor for the project was Henry Bennett of Topeka, one of the master builders of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Bennett remodeled the east wing of the Capitol for the Senate chamber, built the governor's mansion, erected depots and other structures for the Santa Fe railroad throughout the Southwest, and built all of the original Rock Island railroad stations in Oklahoma.

The bricklaying began on April 14, 1888. On June 12 the Capital reported the contract for the steam heating and plumbing was awarded to W. F. McCarthy. On September 30, 1888, the Capital stated that the exterior was finished but the inside was not ready for occupancy. Construction costs were then estimated at \$50,000. A few years later Crawford's investment in the building and its worth were placed at \$75,000.

Original tenants of Crawford's office building included the Kansas Farmer publishing company, of which Crawford was president, a loan and trust company, attorneys, insurance agencies, and an art school. By 1891 another newspaper, the Alliance Advocate, was in the building, and Arthur Capper, who married Crawford's daughter Florence, moved the offices of his paper, the Mail and Breeze, to the Crawford Building in 1897. Later the original offices of Kansas Blue Cross-Blue Shield were in the building, and, to name a few, other occupants included architects, a number of state agencies and the Kansas Baptist Convention offices. The building was closed down in 1964 and sat empty and deteriorating until it was acquired for \$20,000 in 1973 by a group called Crawford Landmark Plaza, Inc. The building's exterior has since been cleaned, part of the interior has been refurbished, basically in keeping with the original, and new tenants are being secured. A restaurant, a health food store, and an antique shop were opened in the early summer of 1975, and several other shops and offices were scheduled to be ready shortly. The basement and first floor are expected soon to be fully utilized. The upper floors will be renovated as the developers' funds permit and as additional leases are executed.

The Crawford Building is significant for its association with Samuel Crawford, the third governor of Kansas. It is the work of a noted 19th century Kansas architect, Seymour Davis, and it was for many years an important commercial office block and of significance to the economic growth and development of Topeka. The Romanesque-influenced structure is a significant example of the architectural style and construction of the 1880's and one of the few Topeka commercial structures of that era to survive without substantial alterations.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET 2

ITEM NUMBER 6, 9 PAGE

6. Historic Sites Survey

June, 1969 X State  
Kansas State Historical Society  
120 West 10th Street  
Topeka, Kansas 66612 20

9.

"Record of Building and Other Permits, City of Topeka (Nov. 8, 1884--Oct. 14, 1891),  
p. 116.  
Topeka Capital, April 15, June 12, July 1, Sept. 2, 30, 1888; Mar. 21, 1973, Feb. 3,  
Dec. 1, 1974; June 8, 1975.  
Topeka Journal, Sept. 28, 1951.

Note: A preliminary nomination form containing a substantial amount of the information  
used in this nomination was submitted by Eric Kjorlie for Crawford Landmark Plaza, Inc.

