



2026 Historic Kansas City's Most Endangered Places List

Once it's gone, it's gone forever.

Historic Kansas City announces its 2026 Most Endangered Places List, the first comprehensive revision of the program since 2021. The list identifies historic buildings, sites, and building types threatened by demolition, prolonged vacancy, deferred maintenance, redevelopment pressures, and inadequate preservation protections.

Since establishing the Most Endangered Places program in the late 1980s, Historic Kansas City has used the list to bring public attention to significant historic resources at risk of destruction or irreparable damage. This year's selections draw upon nominations submitted by neighborhood associations, community organizations, and preservation advocates, alongside properties with which HKC has been directly involved. The list is not intended to be a complete inventory of threatened historic places, nor are its entries presented in order of priority.

The 2026 list comes amid heightened public attention to demolition by neglect, dangerous buildings policies, and the future of historic properties in areas experiencing substantial reinvestment. While some properties face immediate demolition proposals, others have remained vacant for decades, awaiting the investment needed to return them to productive use. Several have active rehabilitation proposals or preservation efforts underway. Their inclusion recognizes the importance of seeing those efforts through.

This year's list includes 17 individual property listings and three thematic listings addressing threats to historic building types found throughout Kansas City. The thematic listings recognize that the gradual disappearance of familiar buildings can have consequences extending well beyond any single demolition, diminishing the architectural character entire neighborhoods through the loss of housing stock and commercial buildings anchors.

The Most Endangered Places List is a call to action for property owners, public officials, neighborhood organizations, developers, and the broader Kansas City community. Historic Kansas City hopes that renewed attention to these places will encourage stabilization, rehabilitation, and the use of available preservation tools before further losses occur. The public can play an important role by learning about these properties, supporting ongoing preservation efforts, and advocating for the rehabilitation and reuse of endangered historic places.

Read more, report a threatened property, or get involved: historickansascity.org/most-endangered/

Former Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City

925 Grand Boulevard

THE STORY

The former Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City opened in November 1921 as the headquarters of the Tenth Federal Reserve District. Designed by the Chicago firm Graham, Anderson, Probst & White, the 21-story Classical Revival tower was briefly the tallest building in Missouri and remained a major Downtown landmark after the Federal Reserve relocated in 2008. The complex also includes a four-story parking garage constructed in 1965 as part of a major expansion of the bank. Harry S. Truman maintained an office in the building from 1953 to 1957 following his presidency.

THE THREAT

The Federal Reserve has remained vacant since 2008 despite repeated redevelopment proposals, including plans for a hotel and, more recently, apartments. The narrow building's floor plates have been cited as a significant challenge to residential adaptive reuse, adding to the financial and physical difficulties of rehabilitating the enormous complex. Current owner Delta Quad Holdings has pursued redevelopment since acquiring the property in 2014, but work never began in earnest, and the building has faced repeated foreclosure proceedings, deterioration, vandalism and fires. In 2026, Kansas City began pursuing the possibility of placing the property into receivership, which could allow a court-appointed receiver to rehabilitate it or transfer it to a developer capable of doing so.



"New Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City Building," 1921.
Courtesy of Kansas City Public Library, Missouri Valley Special Collections.

Downtown Kansas City

The Downtown area's revival has been shaped by the rehabilitation and reuse of its historic buildings, but some of its most challenging projects—and greatest opportunities—remain. The **Downtown Council of Kansas City**, which nominated two historic office buildings for the 2026 Most Endangered Places list, has also organized a Grand Boulevard Reimagined Task Force focused on the future of the corridor and the buildings that remain to be brought back into use.

Palace Clothing Company Building

1150 Grand Boulevard

THE STORY

Designed in 1924 by Kansas City architect Frederic E. McIlvain, the Palace Clothing Company Building is a premier local example of Chicago School commercial architecture and has been listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places since 1985. The Palace Clothing Company, established in 1893 by Henry Guettel and Henry Auerbach, grew into one of the world's largest clothing stores, eventually occupying 275 feet of frontage on Grand Boulevard. The building's terra cotta and brick exterior combines the openness of the Chicago School "neutral cage" with extensive ornamentation. A metal façade installed in 1972 was removed in 1984, revealing the historic exterior once again.

THE THREAT

The Palace has been vacant since 2020 and has suffered extensive vandalism, fires, broken windows, and theft of wiring, piping, and architectural materials. Its deterioration is increasingly conspicuous amid the substantial reinvestment that has occurred elsewhere in Downtown. The Downtown Council, which nominated the Palace to the Most Endangered Places List, has joined other Downtown stakeholders in calling for renewed attention to the building and a viable path toward rehabilitation.



Palace Clothing Company, 1928

Courtesy of Kansas City Public Library, Missouri Valley Special Collections.



Palace Clothing Company Building, 1988. Captured by Bruce Mathews

Courtesy of Kansas City Public Library, Missouri Valley Special Collections.

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Southwell Building/Harlings Building

3941 Main Street

THE STORY

Built in 1929 and designed by prolific Kansas City architect John McKecknie, the Southwell Building is one of Main Street's distinctive historic commercial buildings. Its exterior combines white terra cotta banding with polychrome terra cotta lights and floral-patterned tiles. George Southwell, a noted composer and publisher of band music, commissioned the building for his nationally known music publishing and printing business. It is a contributing resource to the South Side Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.

THE THREAT

Long-term maintenance problems have caused substantial deterioration, including water infiltration and collapse of an upper-story ceiling in 2025. Clint's Comics, the building's last tenant, departed in early 2026, leaving the property vacant, and Kansas City has since added the building to its Dangerous Buildings list. Located immediately along the newly extended Main Street streetcar corridor, the Southwell occupies a highly visible site where rehabilitation could both preserve an important historic building and contribute to continued reinvestment along Main Street. **Midtown KC Now** submitted the nomination, seeking to see the building stabilized.



Midtown Kansas City

Midtown's historic buildings have faced substantial challenges in recent years, including demolition and redevelopment pressure intensified by investment and speculation along the Main Street streetcar corridor. Other losses have stemmed from prolonged vacancy, deferred maintenance, and deterioration—telltale patterns of the phenomenon of “demolition by neglect.” Recent decades of rehabilitation efforts have demonstrated that at-risk Midtown landmarks see the best chance of successful rehabilitation when met with safeguards of historic register recognition, Preservation Commission review, and sound zoning and land use recommendations.

Carmen Building, **101 West Linwood Boulevard**

THE STORY

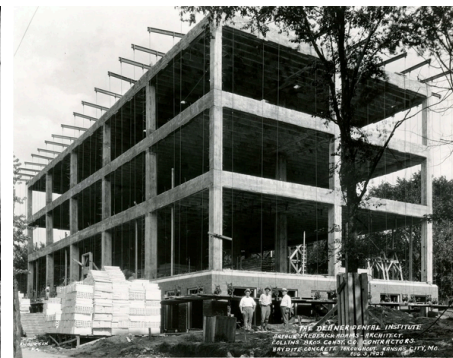
The Carmen Building at 101 West Linwood Boulevard served as the national headquarters of the Brotherhood of Railway Car Repairers of America from 1927 to 1949. Founded in Topeka, Kansas, in 1890, the Brotherhood was part of the growing organized labor movement advocating for better pay, benefits, and working conditions for railroad workers. One of its greatest accomplishments while headquartered on Linwood was advocating for passage of the Railroad Retirement Act of 1937, which established retirement benefits for railroad employees. The building remains an important physical reminder of Kansas City's role in the national labor movement.

THE THREAT

The building faced imminent demolition in early 2024 after its owner obtained a demolition permit, erected fencing, and disconnected utilities. Historic Kansas City worked with the **Old Hyde Park Historic District Neighborhood** to secure its designation on the Kansas City Register of Historic Places, preventing immediate demolition and placing future exterior alterations under review by the City's Historic Preservation Commission. Since designation, the property's only major physical change has been removal of a noncontributing rear addition dating to 1992. The building remains vacant, with neighbors reporting regular unauthorized entries over a period of years. More recently, the owner retained an architect and general contractor who initiated a preliminary review from the City of plans for adaptive reuse of the existing building into approximately 31 residential units. Although these plans represent a potential path toward rehabilitation, no work has commenced, and concerns persist over the building's condition amid reports of standing water in its basement.



"Carmen's Building," undated.
Courtesy of Kansas City Public Library, Missouri Valley Special Collections.



Deaner Dental Institute Building Construction, 1923.
Courtesy of Kansas City Public Library, Missouri Valley Special Collections.

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Belmont Hotel

911 East Linwood Boulevard

THE STORY

The six-story Belmont Hotel was designed in 1912 by architect L. Grant Middaugh for developer John H. Van Closter and the Belmont Building Company. Completed in 1913, it is the oldest of several surviving apartment hotels on Linwood Boulevard and represents the early twentieth-century growth of upscale residential accommodations outside the Downtown core. Its restrained design incorporates Classical Revival and Prairie style elements, and its location placed it amid a concentration of apartment hotels that developed along Linwood Boulevard in keeping with George Kessler's plans for the Parks and Boulevard system. Later conversion to hospital use retained much of the building's historic configuration, including its corridors, residential rooms, dining room and kitchen.

THE THREAT

The Belmont has been vacant since the mid-1980s, amounting to more than a third of its 113-year history. Multiple rehabilitation proposals have failed, and the property has been listed as a Dangerous Building since 2021. There is, however, a potentially important change in its prospects. Linwood Equity Investments LLC acquired the property out of bankruptcy, cleared debris and secured the building, and is now pursuing a rehabilitation containing 101 apartments, including studios and one-, two- and three-bedroom units. Forty percent are planned as affordable units for households earning up to 60 percent of area median income, with historic tax credits and City Housing Trust Fund support contemplated for the project. The Belmont remains endangered by the cumulative effects of decades of vacancy and deterioration, but the current proposal presents the strongest opportunity in years to return the building to productive use. The **Hyde Park Neighborhood Association** nominated this property to return to the list.



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Bryant School

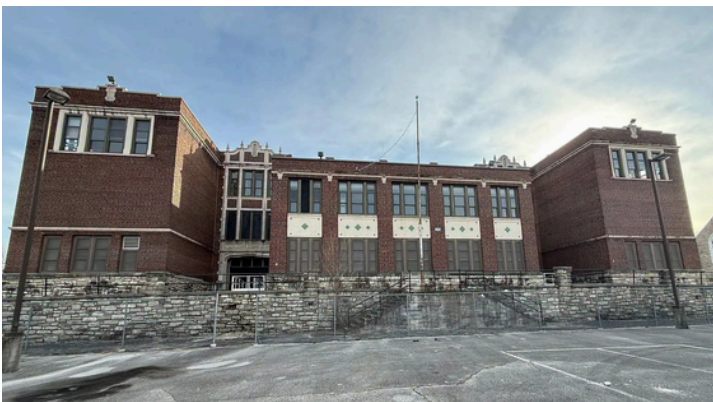
319 Westover Road

THE STORY

Built in 1915, with additions completed in 1920 and 1938, Bryant School at 319 Westover Road was designed by the Kansas City architectural firm Smith, Rea & Lovitt in the Jacobethan style. The approximately 46,000-square-foot building in the Countryside Neighborhood served generations of Brookside-area students before Kansas City Public Schools closed it in 2009. Bryant retains its historic classrooms, wide corridors, auditorium, gymnasium, and cafeteria and has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Efforts to find a new use have been complicated by deed restrictions dating to 1908 that limit the property principally to educational or single-family residential uses and prohibit apartments. These restrictions, coupled with uncertainty over how the district could move forward with a solution for the property, contributed to Bryant remaining vacant for more than fifteen years.

THE THREAT

In early 2026, KCPS issued a Request for Proposals seeking redevelopment of Bryant after previously promoting the property for conversion to housing, including the possibility of affordable housing for teachers. No teacher-housing proposal was submitted, and the district instead received three responses: two calling for demolition and one proposing rehabilitation of the school as an early childhood education center alongside new housing. KCPS selected Sunflower Development Group's proposal to demolish Bryant and construct 14 single-family homes, and on September 23rd, 2026, the School Board voted to enter into a contract for the property. The decision was immediately followed by an application for a demolition permit.



Advocates for preservation of the school building and neighbors established the **Bryant Deserves Better Committee** and launched a petition on August 25th that gathered more than 700 signatures within its first 48 hours and has since surpassed 1,300. A member of the KCMO Historic Preservation Commission submitted an application soon after to designate Bryant on the Kansas City Register of Historic Places. With KCPS having approved the redevelopment contract and the developer's pursuit of demolition, saving Bryant would require a change in course by parties advancing the project in response to the support to retain this civic asset of Brookside.

Park Concession Building/Lakeside Restaurant and Ranger/First Aid Station

Swope Park

THE STORY

Two largely unused buildings near the intersection of East Gregory Boulevard, Lakeside Drive, and Oldham Road illustrate an important period of twentieth-century development within Swope Park. Master architect Edward Buehler Delk designed both one-story native-stone buildings: the Ranger/First Aid Station, constructed in 1941, and Lakeside Restaurant, completed in 1942 to replace an earlier frame concession stand. Their arched openings, shingle roofs, multi-lite windows, and wood-trimmed ceilings followed the naturalistic architectural tradition established for Kansas City's parks and boulevards. The Ranger Station housed park rangers, including mounted patrols that once policed Swope Park around the clock. The L-shaped restaurant, with its covered stone-arched walkway, redwood columns, copper-roofed cupola, and carved "SWOPE PARK" entrance panel, served visitors near the Lake of the Woods before a mid-1960s conversion into the original home of Lakeside Nature Center. Both are recognized as historic resources associated with Swope Park.

THE THREAT

Today, both City-owned structures require substantial investment after years of vacancy and deferred maintenance. Lakeside Restaurant has been largely unused since the Lakeside Nature Center departed in 1999 and later suffered serious roof and service-area damage from a building fire, although much of its exterior stonework and redwood columns remain intact. The Ranger/First Aid Station has likewise stood vacant for years, with a badly deteriorated roof now open to daylight in places despite the survival of its substantial stone walls. The **Kansas City Parks Foundation**, which nominated the pair, identified inadequate capital funding amid the Parks Department's competing systemwide needs as a central obstacle to their preservation. Renewed investment is needed to stabilize and rehabilitate both buildings before continued exposure and deterioration place their reuse beyond reach.



Kansas City Parks & Boulevard System

Kansas City's nationally recognized parks and boulevards system, established initially under landscape architect George Edward Kessler in the 1890s, encompasses historic landscapes, recreational facilities, and architecturally significant structures. Some of these buildings have stood underutilized for years and require substantial investment to restore them to active use.

The Colonnade

200 Benton Boulevard

THE STORY

Designed by Henry Wright and constructed in 1908, the Colonnade is a monumental feature of Kessler Park and a contributing resource to the National Register-listed Kansas City Parks and Boulevards Historic District. Its Beaux Arts colonnades are reinforced concrete faced with limestone and capped by red clay tile roofs. Salvatore Arnone's 1965 memorial to President John F. Kennedy occupies the center of the structure.

THE THREAT

First included on HKC's Most Endangered Places List in 2021, the Colonnade has suffered decades of water infiltration and deterioration. The **Scarritt Renaissance Neighborhood Association**, which nominated the landmark for continued inclusion on the Endangered List, has worked with Kansas City Parks and Recreation and other partners to secure rehabilitation funding. A recent PIAC request advanced some preliminary funding for repairs to the structure, but substantial work has not begun and subsequent funding requests to address substantial repair needs have not been fulfilled.



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Mayor Jay Holcomb Neff Residence

526 Benton Boulevard

THE STORY

Built in 1890 on a limestone rise in D. O. Smart's Addition, the brick Victorian residence features a wraparound porch, carriage house and double-arched third-floor dormer. By 1895 it was home to the family of Andrew J. Neff, including Jay Holcomb Neff, a lawyer and newspaper publisher who served as Kansas City mayor from 1904 to 1905 and is credited with coining the name "American Royal."

THE THREAT

Owner Adam Jones began stabilization after acquiring the vacant property in 2018, with plans for restaurant reuse. A two-alarm fire in 2023 caused extensive roof damage and injured a firefighter, and Kansas City placed the house on its Dangerous Buildings list in 2024. Jones has since agreed to a preservation plan and obtained new permits, but substantial rehabilitation remains unfinished. The **Scarritt Renaissance Neighborhood Association** serves as the nominator of this property, and has remained closely engaged with this case.



Northeast Kansas City

The collection of neighborhoods known collectively as the Historic Northeast developed over several decades and contains a remarkable diversity of architecture, from grand Victorian and turn-of-the-century mansions along its boulevards to dense concentrations of multifamily apartment buildings. Prolonged vacancy, fires, and deferred maintenance—often exacerbated by absentee property ownership—have placed many of these significant historic properties at risk.

The Dorson Apartments

912-918 Benton Boulevard

Separated by only a block on Benton Boulevard, the Dorson and Tusawara are exceptional examples of Kansas City's colonnaded apartment building type. Both buildings are now vacant and fire-damaged, with their respective ownership having no clear plans for rehabilitation.

THE STORY

Designed in 1905 by builder Frank C. Reynolds for R. L. Dawson, the Dorson originally contained thirteen spacious apartments and was altered in 1944 to accommodate 28 units. Monumental Corinthian columns frame stacked porches, while beveled-glass transoms, wrought-iron railings and a curving rear staircase add Art Nouveau detailing. The building underwent extensive rehabilitation efforts throughout the 1980s, attaining listing on the National Register of Historic Places and historic tax credits as a means of funding rehabilitation and replication of missing exterior features. It served as affordable housing in successive decades.

THE THREAT

The building is again vacant and boarded following a fire, with repeated property-maintenance violations and unsecured entries leaving it vulnerable to further damage. The **Independence Plaza Neighborhood Council** nominated the Dorson for this year's list.



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Tusawara Apartments

1013-1019 Benton Boulevard

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THE STORY

Constructed in 1901, the Tusawara is an even earlier surviving example of the Colonnaded Apartment type. It is located immediately to the southeast of the Dorson Apartments along Benton Blvd. The twelve-unit apartment building contains two projecting porch stacks outfitted with ornamental columns and balustrades on upper stories. Having similarly received substantial reinvestment in the 1980s, the building served as affordable housing units for decades prior to the last half-decade. It is not currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

THE THREAT

The building is vacant and boarded, and fires have caused additional damage to surviving historic material. The **Lykins Neighborhood Association** nominated the Tusawara as continued vacancy and repeated fire threaten one of Benton Boulevard's earliest multifamily buildings.



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North Indiana Avenue Apartments

101-107 and 104-110 North Indiana Avenue

THE STORY

Facing one another near St. John and Indiana avenues, this cluster of apartment buildings illustrate the neighborhood-scale multifamily development that defined the growth of Northeast neighborhoods along major transportation corridors in the 1920s. Along the east side of the street, an eight-unit Tudor Revival building at 101-107 North Indiana was constructed in 1915 at a reported cost of \$12,000. There were, prior to late 2025, three six-unit buildings opposite at 100-102, 104-106, and 108-110 North Indiana; these three-story, Classically styled buildings were erected by the McCanles Realty Company later in the same decade.

THE THREAT

This stretch of N. Indiana has suffered from vacancy and fires in recent years; the Tudor Revival building on the east side of the street has remained boarded for years following a 2023 fire, transferring to new ownership in July 2026, while a September 2025 fire saw the six-plex at 100-102 placed on the City's Dangerous Buildings List and, later, demolished. **The Scarritt Renaissance Neighborhood Association** nominated the properties, seeking to see these apartment buildings secured, stabilized, and returned to active residential use.



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North Lawn Apartments

118–148 North Lawn Avenue

THE STORY

Three apartment buildings constructed in 1923 along North Lawn Avenue have provided multifamily housing for more than a century. Developed by John G. Hiatt for \$40,000, the complex has remained a source of comparatively affordable housing in the Northeast.

THE THREAT

Years of deferred maintenance culminated in severe conditions at the partly occupied buildings during the summer of 2026, including electrical deficiencies, wastewater and sewage problems, gas-service disruption, and limited hot water. Kansas City revoked rental permits, and ownership subsequently transferred from Wiser KC LLC to Vital20 LLC. Two buildings were ordered vacated in August as repairs began, requiring residents to relocate while repair work proceeds. The property was nominated by the **Indian Mound Neighborhood Association** amid intense scrutiny from local media and City Hall regarding the much-needed affordable housing the complex has provided, as well as the imperative for preservation of their existing residential density.



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Perky Brothers Transfer & Storage Building

3212 Independence Avenue

THE STORY

Brothers Daniel Jefferson and Albin Perky established their Kansas City storage business in 1883 and constructed this \$175,000 Independence Avenue facility in 1921. Designed by C. B. Sloan, its stacked windows, terra cotta parapet and prominent clock made the otherwise utilitarian building a neighborhood landmark. Storage operations continued under the original company until 1981.

THE THREAT

The vacant building is listed as dangerous by Kansas City, with portions of its historic masonry failing toward the public right-of-way. This designation leaves the building at immediate risk of demolition, without the standard preservation review procedures in place to require repairs or consideration of alternatives to demolition. **The Scarritt Renaissance Neighborhood Association** nominated the building, for which it is actively engaged in receivership proceedings, for the Most Endangered List. Neighborhood planning efforts with the Kansas City Design Center have previously identified the building as a prime candidate for adaptive reuse for housing or mixed-use development. Stabilization is needed before masonry deterioration and prolonged vacancy cause further loss.



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Kansas City Call Building

1715 East 18th Street

THE STORY

Founded in 1919 by Chester Arthur Franklin, The Kansas City Call became one of the city's most influential African American newspapers, reporting on community affairs and advocating for civil rights, including efforts to combat discrimination in housing and employment and secure the right of Black citizens to serve on juries. From 1922 until 2021, the newspaper operated from a complex of commercial buildings at the corner of East 18th Street and Woodland Avenue, in the heart of the 18th & Vine neighborhood. The complex consists of a three-story building constructed in 1888, an adjoining two-story building dating to approximately 1890, and an L-shaped warehouse and garage addition completed in 1945. Its street-facing façades were remodeled in 1964 with brick panels and a metal grille. Beyond its role as the newspaper's headquarters, the building served as a center for community news, advertising, and organizing during a formative century of African American history in Kansas City.

THE THREAT

Following The Call's relocation two blocks away in 2021, the historic complex has remained vacant, with rehabilitation complicated by longstanding structural deterioration and water infiltration. Historic Kansas City secured two grants from the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Kemper Fund for Kansas and Missouri in 2020 and 2021 to investigate the building's condition. The resulting architectural, engineering, and environmental assessments documented deteriorated masonry, leaking roofs, damaged floors, and mold, recommending immediate measures to prevent further water intrusion and stabilize the property. The building was acquired by Aetas Development in 2024, and redevelopment has been discussed, but substantial rehabilitation remains necessary. Although located within the National Register-listed 18th & Vine Historic District, the building is currently classified as noncontributing, limiting access to historic rehabilitation tax credits. Revising that designation, securing the building against further deterioration, and developing a phased rehabilitation plan are important steps toward preserving a landmark closely associated with Kansas City's African American press and civil rights history.

18th and Vine District

Long viewed as the center of African American culture, commerce, and history in Kansas City, the 18th & Vine Historic District has seen substantial reinvestment in recent years, with some major rehabilitation projects reaching completion alongside new construction in recent years. While previously included in its entirety on HKC's Most Endangered Places, the National Register-listed District has stabilized and requires additional public and private investment to ensure the preservation of remaining at-risk cultural landmarks.

Kansas City Call Building

1715 East 18th Street



Left: Chester Franklin Outside of The Call Building;

Right: Image of the Call Building in the 1920s.

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1872 Merriam School

5820 Merriam Drive, Merriam, KS

THE STORY

Construction began on Merriam's first purpose-built school in 1872, with the building completed in 1873. Brick was molded and fired on site, and the two-story building contained a large classroom for kindergarten through eighth grade downstairs and community meeting space above. It also accommodated church and Sunday school activities before closing as a school in 1911. Later occupants included a Chevrolet dealership and repair shop, the Gas Service Company, Gribble Music Company and Robert Pittman Moving and Storage.

THE THREAT

The school remains privately owned on the west side of Merriam Drive, within the federally designated floodplain encompassing much of Downtown Merriam. Although no demolition proposal presently targets the school itself, the preferred downtown plan now contemplates substantial flood-control intervention immediately around it. Construction of an earthen barrier along Turkey Creek could require demolition of neighboring buildings and substantially alter the setting surrounding what is likely to be Merriam's oldest surviving building.



Downtown Merriam, Kansas

Merriam School serving as Sunday School, 11/28/1915

Merriam School in December 2010, prior to the current paint scheme

Downtown Merriam is poised for substantial change as the City considers new construction alongside major intervention to reduce flood risk along Turkey Creek. Since 2023, the City has acquired a number of downtown properties, some of which have since been demolished. Of three concepts presented for public consideration, the Downtown Master Plan Steering Committee has selected the most intensive alternative, which pairs redevelopment on both sides of Merriam Drive with substantial flood-control work, including an earthen barrier along Turkey Creek. These changes would reshape the setting surrounding two historic landmarks along Merriam Drive; demolitions could level both neighboring commercial buildings and these two buildings of significance.

Former Christian Science Church

5820 Merriam Drive, Merriam, KS

THE STORY

Merriam's Christian Science congregation began holding services in private homes in 1913 and erected a small temporary church the following year. As the congregation grew, Kansas City architect Nelle Peters designed a larger permanent church of brick and stone in the Tudor Style. Construction began before the Depression interrupted the project for more than a year, and members ultimately borrowed money to finish the building. The first service was held on Thanksgiving Day, November 26, 1931; the debt was retired in 1937. The church was outfitted with a main auditorium, adjoining board room, two Readers' Rooms, vestibule and basement, with stained-glass windows and oak woodwork and pews. A Sunday School and nursery building was added in the early 1950s.

THE THREAT

The City recently acquired ownership of the church alongside other downtown properties. Earlier planning concepts contemplated a Merriam Drive realignment that could have affected the property, but that alignment is absent from the preferred plan now moving forward. Its immediate preservation question is, therefore, that of reuse. The City will need to identify an event-oriented, public-facing, congregational or other compatible purpose capable of keeping the building occupied as redevelopment of Downtown Merriam transforms the surrounding blocks.



Downtown Merriam, Kansas

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Colonnaded Apartment Buildings

Kansas City's colonnaded apartment buildings emerged at the turn of the twentieth century as a distinctive housing typology tied to growth south and east of Downtown along the boulevard system and expanding streetcar network. These multi-family buildings often appeared in clusters along major corridors—including Armour Boulevard, The Paseo, Independence Avenue, and Benton Boulevard—and combined self-sufficient apartment units with prominent open porches framed by monumental columns. Promoted by architect John W. McKecknie to provide essential ventilation during long summers, and cited by landscape architect George Kessler as an ideal development form adjacent to urban parks, the typology typically featured three-story, six-unit brick structures with classical masonry ornament. The most widely distributed pattern of this building type was the "double triple-decker" walk-up plan, which developers widely replicated to accommodate moderate and lower incomes by reducing design and construction costs. Colonnaded apartments ranged from prestigious middle-class residences to more economical rental housing, becoming a defining feature of Kansas City's early twentieth-century residential neighborhoods.

Despite their architectural significance and historical role as integral components of the city's housing fabric, Kansas City's colonnaded apartment buildings face severe threats from prolonged vacancy, deferred maintenance, and redevelopment pressures. Large numbers of these buildings disappeared during postwar clearance and highway construction, and losses have continued in the decades since. The 2016 demolition of the Nelle Peters-designed Green Gables Apartments near the Country Club Plaza brought attention to the vulnerability of historic multi-family housing and the work of one of Kansas City's most prolific architects. The following year, the five-building Colonial Court Apartments in Pendleton Heights were demolished after the City Council declined to retain local historic protections, eliminating 30 apartments. Such demolitions, even when incremental, deprive Kansas City of much-needed housing stock and diminish the integrity of historic neighborhoods.

Too often, buildings are lost simply because owners neglect needed reinvestment, or because these relatively common building types are not recognized as historically significant. Recent demolitions in Midtown's Valentine neighborhood, where several historic six-unit colonnaded apartment buildings remain acutely threatened, demonstrate the importance of ongoing, preventative maintenance and use of effective local historic preservation protections. Meanwhile, the Tusawara and Dorson apartments in the Historic Northeast, individually included on this year's Most Endangered Places list, face continued deterioration following years of vacancy and repeated fires. Colonnaded apartments are a distinctive part of Kansas City's architectural identity and a longstanding component of its affordable, relatively dense urban housing stock. Their preservation deserves particular attention, both for their architectural significance and for their role in sustaining diverse housing options within historic neighborhoods.

Thematic Listings

Some threats to Kansas City's historic built environment extend beyond individual properties to entire building types found throughout the city. These thematic listings recognize their collective significance and the cumulative impact of losses that often occur one building at a time.

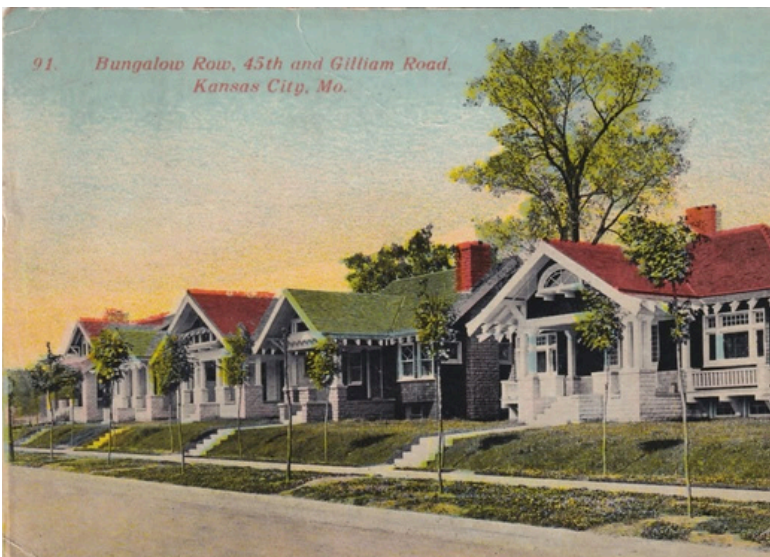
Colonnaded Apartment Buildings



Bungalow Neighborhoods

Bungalows comprise a substantial share of Kansas City's pre-1940 housing, particularly in Midtown neighborhoods south of 39th Street, throughout the Northeast, and in dense concentrations around the 49-63 Neighborhood. Popularized nationally through architectural magazines, pattern books, and mail-order firms during the early twentieth century, the bungalow became closely associated with the Arts and Crafts movement. Kansas City examples range from modest working- and middle-class houses to larger Craftsman residences, but commonly share low horizontal forms, broad eaves, abundant windows, and generous porches. Exterior materials can include stucco, brick, stone, shingle, or combinations of all three; bungalows are typically of frame construction. Built extensively in streetcar and early automobile suburbs, they provided compact, comparatively affordable homes for generations of Kansas Citians.

As this housing stock reaches and exceeds a century in age, concentrations of bungalows are being diminished by demolition and replacement with substantially larger and more expensive houses. The pattern is particularly visible in West Plaza, Plaza-Westport, and Westwood Park neighborhoods. Around West 44th Terrace, for example, the Plaza Heights development replaced a cluster of older bungalows with approximately 30 new luxury residences. Neighborhood advocates have begun examining various tools, including zoning overlay districts to manage redevelopment while retaining the scale and character of these neighborhoods. The threat is cumulative; the loss of one bungalow may appear modest, but repeated demolition can fundamentally erase the historic character of a neighborhood and reduce the available stock of smaller, comparatively inexpensive homes—a need traditionally met by this building type. This thematic nomination was submitted by the **Kansas City Bungalow Club**.



Above: A recently demolished bungalow in the Plaza Westport Neighborhood

Thematic Listings

Some threats to Kansas City's historic built environment extend beyond individual properties to entire building types found throughout the city. These thematic listings recognize their collective significance and the cumulative impact of losses that often occur one building at a time.

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Historic Neighborhood Corner Stores/Groceries

Before widespread automobile ownership and modern commercial zoning transformed the way Kansas City grew, small stores were woven directly into residential neighborhoods. One- and Two-Part commercial buildings appeared at streetcar stops and intersections throughout Midtown, the East Side, and Northeast, supplying groceries, medicines, baked goods, and everyday services within walking distance of surrounding homes. Proprietors frequently lived in apartments above their businesses. Angled entrances, storefront windows wrapping the intersection, decorative parapets, canopies, and corbelled brickwork made these modest buildings recognizable neighborhood landmarks.

Many survive, but their small scale, zoning restrictions, and isolation from large-scale commercial centers, can make rehabilitation difficult, particularly where project costs exceed what the buildings can economically support. Recent demolition of the 1912 former Temple Slug building, a former corner grocery at 4301 Jefferson Street, following a Dangerous Buildings designation illustrates how quickly a long-standing neighborhood building can disappear after deterioration takes hold. East side intersections like 39th and Woodland have seen gradual attrition of small-scale commercial buildings in recent decades, rendering National Register designation—and accompanying incentive eligibility—farther out of reach. Along commercial corridors experiencing major reinvestment, the future of retail buildings along thoroughfares like Independence Boulevard, 31st Street, 39th Street, and Main Street is called into question by increasing pressure for redevelopment. The survival and reuse of these buildings can retain the small-scale commercial nodes, diversity of uses, and walkable character that defined Kansas City neighborhoods long before those qualities returned to favor in contemporary planning.



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