

# LAWRENCE PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

ARCHIVE: 1984-1990

PHOTOS, NEWS CLIPPINGS, DOCUMENTS FOR VARIOUS PROJECTS

VOLUME 2

# 947 LOUISIANA



## Group offers to buy house for renovation

By BOB MUELLER  
J-W Staff Writer

The newly formed Lawrence Preservation Alliance made an offer to a local developer today to buy a house at 947 La. with hopes of saving it from demolition.

The LPA is offering \$21,000 to Duane Schwada for the house. Schwada bought the property last month and has a permit to demolish it.

The object of the project, dubbed the "Louisiana Purchase," is to resell the house to someone who will renovate it.

Oliver Finney, LPA president, said he dropped off a contract at Schwada's office this morning. Schwada apparently had not made a decision on the offer by early afternoon.

Schwada was unavailable for comment, but Finney said he understood that Schwada had planned to build a multi-family building at the site, possibly a duplex.

THE ALLIANCE solicited pledges ranging from \$100 to \$1,000 to buy the home. Finney, who is also president of the Old West Lawrence Assn., said, "This project is our most visible one. It would be nice to start off with a success and save a house."

But Finney said the building purchase is not a typical function planned by the new LPA.

"We're not in the direct business of saving houses. We want to facilitate others in saving houses," he said. "We are gathering information which can be used by people for technical expertise on renovating old houses."

He said the group wants to

become a resource for the city, to provide information on what homes are available for sale, the condition they are in, repairs needed and the best way to make the repairs, and special financing available for prospective buyers.

THE HOUSE at 947 La. is structurally sound, but has been vacant for about three years, according to Marci Francisco, treasurer of the new organization. It needs renovation of electric and plumbing facilities and a new roof. Estimated repair costs run between \$20,000 and \$30,000, she said.

Finney said, "For some reason a lot of the old, abandoned houses in the older neighborhoods never go on the market. They just go to developers. It's not the developers' fault. Our goal is to get the price of housing up to make the house worth saving, so developers won't buy property for the land alone."

The group wants to promote more sales of old, abandoned houses to owners who will refurbish and live in the homes.

"We think it's good for the whole neighborhood," he said. "It raises the property values and keeps the neighborhoods uniform. And it's good for the city as a whole. If the older areas of Lawrence are just being condemned, that presents a terrible image to new businesses or industries planning to come here."

THE GROUP hopes to work with builders and developers planning to raze homes and construct new buildings, so the appearance of the new buildings fits in with the rest of the neighborhood.

The LPA had its first meeting last Saturday.

Local student

## Developer agrees to sale of house

A local developer has agreed to sell a dilapidated house at 947 La. to the newly formed Lawrence Preservation Alliance if the group can guarantee that the house will be rehabilitated.

The LPA offered \$21,000 to Duane Schwada for the building. Schwada bought the property last month and has a permit to demolish it.

The LPA formed in an effort to save older homes from destruction and urge rehabilitation. The goal of this project, dubbed the "Louisiana Purchase," is to resell the house to someone who will renovate it, according to Oliver Finney, LPA president.

The alliance solicited pledges of \$100 to \$1,000 to buy the home.

Finney said today that Schwada accepted the terms of the offer, but he wants additions to the contract saying that the house will be rehabilitated.

"My feeling is that he wants to make sure he's not inadvertently contributing to slum and blight by not tearing it down and building something new. He wants assurance that something will be done with the house," Finney said.

Schwada was unavailable for comment this morning.

The LPA board will meet tonight to discuss the contract revisions requested by Schwada.

Finney said the building purchase is not a typical project planned by the new LPA. The group's goal is provide information to help others interested in restoring old houses.

The group estimates repairs needed on the house at 947 La. will cost \$20,000 to \$30,000.



## Local preservation group rescues homes

By MICKI SAMPSON  
Staff Reporter

CHK 6/8/84

The view from the attic window of the old house was panoramic, stretching north to the Kaw River, and east to downtown Lawrence. But from the warped and splintery front porch, you could see little more than the overgrown bushes that had consumed what was left of the front lawn.

It was this old house, "which isn't really historically important or architecturally significant," Oliver Finney said, that launched the Lawrence Preservation Alliance into action.

**YESTERDAY, REPRESENTATIVES** from the LPA signed the closing papers to the house at 947 Louisiana St., closing the venture that the LPA members have dubbed the "Louisiana Purchase."

Finney, LPA president, said that the "Louisiana Purchase" was a first, though somewhat atypical, move for the LPA, which was organized during Lawrence's Historic Preservation Week, May 9-14.

This week, the five member LPA filed with the state to become a non-profit organization, enabling LPA to receive tax deductible contributions.

The board of directors of the LPA includes Finney, president; Karen Kressin, secre-

tary; Marci Francisco, treasurer; Glenn Kappelmann and Richard Kershenbaum.

"It's surprising that we haven't gotten something going before," Francisco said.

**OTHER GROUPS HAVE** formed in the past over specific issues, she said, but have not stayed together.

"We still have a lot of frame work to put together," Kershenbaum said.

After the group receives its non-profit status, it will decide how to solicit members and how to elect a new board of directors, Finney said.

Until then, the board of directors will continue to conduct the LPA's business.

Within a week and a half, the group received \$21,000 from private donors for the purchase of the house on Louisiana.

"The method we used was really very unscientific," Finney said.

Board members called friends and people they thought would be interested in contributing, and asked them to loan from \$100 to \$1,000.

"This shows that people are very concerned," he said.

**DESPITE THE FIRST** project, the LPA is not a restoration group, but an educational group that hopes to inform the public of the spiraling decay of older houses in Lawrence, and encourage their restoration, Finney said.

This decay began, he said, in the 1950s and

1960s when the trend was to move from the city to the suburbs.

"In lots of other cities, older houses have since come back into favor," Finney said. "But this hasn't happened in Lawrence."

"There comes a critical point where you either fix them up or they decay exponentially," he said. "Lots of us feel we are reaching that critical point."

For example, the LPA offered homeowner Duane Schwada \$21,000 for the "Louisiana Purchase," an amount, Finney said, that was only slightly more than the land alone is worth.

During the past six months, the value of old houses has dropped to almost zero, he said.

"When I started this I was really very angry," he said. "I suppose I am president because I was the angriest. I was hoping to find a scapegoat — someone to point my finger at, but there isn't a villain."

**THE VILLAINS**, he said, are lack of interest, knowledge, attention and organization by the public.

"If there is enough interest, there will be enough people to get things done," Finney said.

The LPA's next meeting will be at 10 a.m., June 23, at Watkins Community Museum, 1047 Massachusetts St., where the group will discuss the procedure for resale of the "Louisiana Purchase."

LAWRENCE JOURNAL-WORLD Thursday, October 11, 1984 Page 8

## Week patents for discoveries

out, according to Higuchi.

In the future, funding may come from private investors, Higuchi said. He believes this was what the state legislature intended, although he said it has been difficult to sort out the right approach.

"If we do bring in private in-

vestors — and we anticipate success, of course — the private investors will profit substantially from any success and this may draw negative comments from the faculty people," he said.

According to the Internal Revenue Service, the endowment association cannot retain more

than a 20 percent interest in a profit-making corporation, Higuchi said.

"As long as we're losing money, no one complains," he said. The money is an investment in technology, Higuchi said. "I think it will take us four years to become profitable."

**The LAWRENCE PRESERVATION ALLIANCE would like to thank the following individuals and groups, without whose cooperation or help, the house at 947 Louisiana St. could not have been saved.**

**Pat Flavin**

Calvin, Eddy & Kappelman

**Webster, Golden**

Stevens, Brand, Lungstrum, Golden & Winter

**Margaret Harwood**

Douglas County Abstract & Title Co.

**The Journal-World**

**Glenn Kappelman**

Calvin, Eddy & Kappelman

**Jack Klinknett**, attorney

**Craig Patterson**, architect

**James Postma**, attorney

**Diane Simpson**

Stevens, Brand, Lungstrum, Golden & Winter

**Deb Smith**, The Gill Agency

**Venture Properties**

**Leta White**, The Banks Co.

**Lawrence Federal Savings**

# 947 LOUISIANA

LAWRENCE JOURNAL-WORLD

Sunday, May, 20, 1984 Page 3A

## Local group proposes 'Louisiana Purchase'

A project called the Louisiana Purchase has become the focus of a newly formed Lawrence Preservation Alliance, whose members are hope to buy a home on, of course, Louisiana Street.

About 15 persons attended the LPA's first meeting Saturday morning to discuss the project.

The purpose of the alliance, incorporated Thursday, is to provide education and advice for the use of neighborhood resources, such as preservation of communities, buildings and parks, according to former Lawrence Mayor Marci Francisco, a member of the alliance.

The home, at 947 La., was bought last month by local developer Duane Schwada, who has a permit to demolish the property.

The alliance has solicited pledges ranging from \$100 to \$1,000 to buy the home, and the LPA interim board of directors plans to make a \$21,000 purchase offer to the developer Monday, along with \$1,000 in earnest money. Schwada could not be reached for comment Saturday.

If the home is sold to the Preservation Alliance, the group plans to sell it to someone who will

renovate it, and the LPA will be "an umbrella" for the project, Ms. Francisco said.

Although the home is structurally sound, it has been vacant for three years and is uninhabitable. The home needs renovation of electric and plumbing facilities and a new roof. Estimated repair costs run between \$20,000 and \$30,000, Ms. Francisco said.

Saturday's meeting also included a discussion of the alliance organization. The group plans to work under a committee structure, with the chairman of each committee serving on an executive committee.

Four committees were proposed: A research committee, to deal with technical information concerning the effect of zoning on neighborhoods; a resources committee, to deal with the purchase and development of property; a networking committee, to contact other preservation groups and local officials; and a program committee, to plan and organize presentations and tours.

The group's next meeting is planned for 10 a.m. June 23 at the Elizabeth M. Watkins Community Museum.

LAWRENCE JOURNAL-WORLD

Tuesday, May 29, 1984 Page 3

## Plan to buy house still up in the air

Efforts are still up in the air to purchase and renovate a dilapidated house at 947 La.

The Louisiana Preservation Alliance has offered \$21,000 for the house to Duane Schwada, a local developer who owns the building. But Schwada will not sell it to the group unless group members guarantee the house will be rehabilitated.

Schwada's has a permit for demolition of the building, but delayed his plans temporarily when the LPA made its offer. He said he has several different plans for the lot which legally can support a four-unit building.

Schwada said this morning he is still willing to talk to the group about the matter, but he wants assurance that something will be done with the building if he sells it to the LPA. He said he doesn't want to sell it to the group, only to have it resold to someone who will tear it down.

The LPA was formed to save older homes from destruction and to urge rehabilitation. The hope of this project, dubbed the "Louisiana Purchase," is to resell the house to someone who will renovate it, according to Oliver Finney, president of the LPA.

Finney said this morning that several people have expressed interest in the house since the LPA's efforts to buy it were announced.



## Local & regional

LAWRENCE JOURNAL-WORLD

Friday, September 28, 1984 Page 3



### Heard in Lawrence

If your dog likes to fetch a Frisbee, plan on competing in the Ashley Whippet Invitational at 1:30 p.m. Saturday in South Park.

The event, sponsored by the Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department, is free and open to anyone.

Every competitor will receive a free Frisbee and awards will be given to winners.

There are two parts to the competition: freestyle, during which the dog and owner can perform any special trick; and basic throw-

# Preservation group finds buyer to renovate home

By BOB MUELLER  
J-W Staff Writer

A buyer has been found to save a house at 947 La. from the bulldozer.

Members of the Lawrence Preservation Alliance can stop "biting fingernails" today because Todd Pederson, 644½ Locust, was to sign papers buying the house from the group this afternoon, according to Oliver Finney, LPA president.

Pederson, operator of Independent Woodcraft, 500 Locust, said he plans to start renovating the house Monday and move in with his wife by the end of January. The house will be used as a single-family dwelling, he said, and will not be rented.

ing the lot, which could support a four-unit building if the present house is demolished.

The group bought the house from Schwada for about \$21,000, which was borrowed mostly from neighborhood residents.

"A lot of people put their money where their mouths were," Finney said. "There's a lot who say people only talk about saving older homes but aren't willing to do anything themselves. This was a loan of money at no interest. There was no possibility of a profit, and some possibility of a loss."

There was no loss.

PEDERSON, WHO has lived in Lawrence for about 14 years, obtained his financing through Lawrence Federal and paid the

LPA \$21,000 for the house, he said.

Because of his experience with woodworking, he said, he will be able to do much of the renovation work himself.

He admits there's much to be done.

"I plan to renovate it back to its original appearance as much as possible. It needs a new roof, plumbing, electrical system, insulation, sheetrock and other work," Pederson said.

He said initial estimates by the group of the renovation costing between \$20,000 and \$30,000 are "pretty close."

Dubbed the "Louisiana Purchase," the project was the LPA's first large scale effort at saving older homes.

THE MAIN purpose of the group, which organized in May, is to provide information about renovating older homes and keep tabs on how many older homes are for sale and what repairs are needed on the homes, Finney said. The group also wants to work with developers who plan to raze homes and construct new buildings, so the appearance of new buildings fits in with the remainder of the neighborhood, he said.

Finney said it is possible the group could try another project similar to the "Louisiana Purchase" in the future.

"We learned a lot through this. And next time maybe we can move with more grace and sophistication on this kind of project," he said.

Finney said the purchase "just barely" made the deadline set when the group first purchased the house from a local developer in June.

The group bought the house from Duane Schwada who had already obtained a permit to tear it down. The group's intentions were to find someone willing to buy the house from the group and rehabilitate it.

SCHWADA AGREED to the sale only after obtaining a written guarantee that it would be rehabilitated. The guarantee stated that the group must have a contract signed by a purchaser by Sunday, or Schwada could buy back the property.

Schwada had said there were several options open for develop-





(Staff photo by Larry Funk)

Colleen and Todd Pederson stand in front of the house at 947 La., which they bought and helped save from demolition. They are now working to make the house into their home and hope to move in by February.

## Local couple labors to restore home

(Continued from page 1)

Both admit the extensive repair work is difficult and warned that anyone considering buying a house in need of repair "shouldn't go in with any misconceptions, because it's not easy." Commenting about the size of the house, Pederson laughs and says as they evaluate what work needs to be done, "it gets bigger all the time."

The Pedersons had been interested in buying a house for some time, but found most of the "interesting" homes on the market out of their price range, they said. "We also needed something with tall ceilings for Todd," Ms. Pederson said, noting her husband's 6-foot-4 frame.

The house at 947 La., with its \$21,000 price tag and 10-foot ceilings met both requirements.

"RIGHT NOW, we're concentrating on getting the exterior work buttoned up before winter," Pederson said last week, explaining that they're working late nights on tuckpointing the basement while workers repair the exterior walls during the day.

The Pedersons were just what the LPA was looking for. The group purchased the house from Duane Schwada, a local developer, in May with hopes of finding someone willing to buy it from the group and rehabilitate it for single-family use.

Schwada had already obtained a demolition permit for the house and said he had several options for the lot which could support a four-plex if the house were removed.

Contributions, made mostly by neighborhood residents, according to Oliver Finney, LPA member, were used to pay Schwada \$21,000 for the house. The contract stipulated, however, that if the house was not resold by Sept. 30, Schwada would retain the property. Just before the deadline, the Pedersons matched the \$21,000 and bought the house from the LPA.

ALTHOUGH THE resale price was the same as the purchase price, Finney said the LPA profited by retaining part of the local housing stock.

Pederson is acting as the contractor for the job, and said most of the work is being done by friends. "We really have a lot of friends working out here. It's just great," Ms. Pederson said.

They said the rehabilitation job will cost about \$25,000, not including the "free labor" by themselves and friends. "But after the work is done, we're going to basically have a new house. This house is definitely worth saving," Pederson said.

The house has three large bedrooms and one smaller bedroom. One of the "neatest spaces" in the house is the

Pederson said. It has a finished floor and the ceiling follows the nooks and crannies of the roof, resulting in an interesting shape. He has a spot picked out for skylights, and windows located on most of the attic walls already provide a panoramic view of the Kansas River Valley.

Thursday

November 22, 1984

Lawrence, Kansas

70 Pages • Vol. 126, No. 327

25 cents

## Couple gives local house a 2nd chance

By BOB MUELLER  
J-W Staff Writer

This real estate deal echoes a spirit of Thanksgiving.

The Pedersons are thankful for the Lawrence Preservation Alliance because it allowed the local couple to pursue their dream of owning a home. And the LPA is thankful for the Pedersons because they're saving from demolition a grand, old house perched on the hill at 947 La.

Since Todd and Colleen Pederson took possession of the ramshackle house Sept. 28 in what was dubbed the "Louisiana Purchase," they've done a lot of work. Slaving long hours in the evenings and on weekends, after finishing their regular jobs, they're gradually rejuvenating the 81-year-old house.

The unruly brush that had spread since the house was abandoned three years ago is now cleared. A rickety front porch has been torn down to make way for a replacement. A weathered extension built on the back of the house was cut off. "Eighty some years of junk" has been cleared out of the basement, including bricks from the old boilers, to make way for a new heating system. And primer is going up on the exterior walls in preparation for a new paint job.

ALTHOUGH THERE'S a lot more work to do before the Pedersons make their move from a studio apartment in North Lawrence to their new home in the Oread neighborhood, they say they'll be ready to move by February.

Still to come at the house is a new roof, electrical and plumbing systems and insulation.

Although it's arduous work, the Pedersons say they enjoy it.

"This is something I've always wanted to do. I've been doing carpentry for a long time, and this is part of that interest," Pederson said. He is part owner of Independent Woodcraft, 500 Locust. He plans to use his skills to add some custom woodwork to the home.

See Local, page 6

### Oread Neighborhood Association NEWSLETTER

Lawrence, Kansas Vol. VI No. 9 November 1984



Colleen and Tod Pederson take a break on the beginning of their new front porch

#### Pedersons Work Nights and Weekends To Rehabilitate 947 Louisiana St.

Thanks to the Lawrence Preservation Alliance the four-plex that was planned for the corner of 10th and Louisiana Streets won't be built. Instead the eighty-year old house still standing on the lot will be renovated and its new owners will be living there by the end of January.

Several months ago, the LPA bought the house from Duane Schwada who planned to raze it and build a four-plex on the lot. The LPA resold the house to Tod and Colleen Pederson in September.

The Pedersons spend their evenings and weekends working on the house. Both work at full time jobs; Tod is owner/operator of Independent Woodcraft in East Lawrence and works lots of overtime. Colleen's job with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America requires her to do alot of traveling.

In spite of their long work hours and the huge amount of work needed at the house, they still plan to move in according to their original schedule.

In the three weeks the Pedersons have been working on the house they have made considerable progress. "Within six more weeks people will see an even more significant change in the house," Colleen said.

The large curved front porch is being rebuilt now and the house has already been cleaned of debris leaving a spacious basement and attic, both run the full length of the house.

Contracts for a new roof and new plumbing and electrical systems have been drawn. Later, the Pedersons plan to hire additional people to help them. Eventually, the kitchen will be enlarged and a deck will be added off the back of the house.

con't on p. 4

#### City and ONA Fund Reps To Conference in Omaha

The National Association of Neighborhoods choose Omaha, Nebraska to be the host city of its 12th National Convention. ONA sent three representatives to the conference: James and Nancy Dunn and John Naughtin. Under the auspices of LINC, Lawrence Inter Neighborhood Council, Glenda Hewlett of Barker Neighborhood Association submitted a request to the city to help send representatives to the conference. The request was granted and consequently 9 Lawrence residents attended the conference, including Lynn Goodell and Kurt Schroeder of Community Development.

James Dunn reports that the emphasis of the conference was on political and economic development. The majority of the groups attending were from low-income, inner city neighborhoods, however in

con't on p. 4

#### NEXT MEETING

Monday  
November 5  
7:30 p.m.  
Southpark  
Recreation Center

AGENDA  
Sidewalk Project  
CDBG 1985-86 Application  
Report on NAN Conference  
Survey Analysis/Neighborhood Watch/Alley Repair

#### Residents & Volunteers Haul Off 6 1/4 Tons of Junk

Truck crews hauled 6 1/4 tons of trash to the city landfill, Sat. Oct. 13. Each truck made two runs to the dump, delivering brush, beds, stoves, sinks, lumber, and certified junk. Two new Board Members Allan Long and John Hunter, sat behind the wheel navigating 18' long rented trucks through streets and alleys. Allan took the north end and John took the South, while veteran crew members Dale Nimz, Marci Francisco, Jean Senegas, and Al Nelson hauled in the loot. Rookie crew members, Carol Duemeier, Brad Call, Eric Boyer, and Alan Ruda aided skillfully.

Back at the ranch, 1310 Louisiana, Paul Crabb diagnosed our washing machine as a lost cause. He said the water valve needs replacing and once that's fixed we'd find out whether the water pump works. Both are costly items to replace. However the machine is still in the basement, so if anyone has a spare water valve, call the office! The dryer does work.

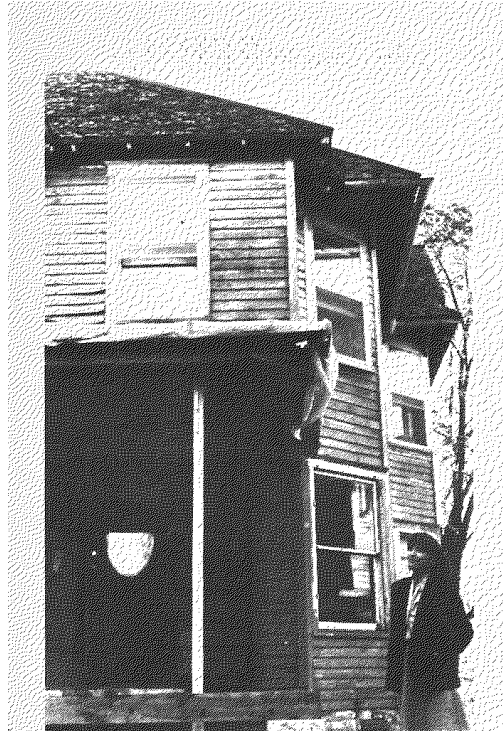
Not much else is in the basement now. Thanks largely to Brad and Paul's efforts, with some help from me, the anonymous writer, we emptied out years of rubbish and filth and insulation gone wrong. Please come have a look.

Venetta Abbott and Alan Ruda cleaned-up Davis Park among other tasks. The lawnmower managed to survive the strenuous workout. Pre-schoolers from Hilltop Child Development Center collected twigs and litter Friday morning.

Jeff Morrow supervised and assisted house residents Jim Hogg and Rao Gollapudi in winterizing the ONA living room.

And what would the cleanup be without a picnic lunch? Mama Jeneric's Pizza made sure we didn't need to ask that question and generously donated five pizzas with glorious toppings. Bob Schumm who regularly contributes food to our clean-ups could not be reached prior to the picnic. Pearl Sylvester baked brownies, Margie Coggins whipped up cookies, Alan Ruda brought cookies, Sue Kapfer contributed doughnuts and pop, and Jeff Morrow provided beer. Your anonymous writer brewed a pot of coffee strong enough to wake up a sleeping bear.

No less than 25 residents called in to have trash picked up and many more had trash waiting. Thanks to one and all who made this fall's clean-up a success, and a special thanks to the following residents who contributed to ONA as they watched the trucks shove off with their trash: Kurt Look, Helen Gee, Elleen Williams, and Sunflower House.



Each corner of the house at 947 La. is sliced off.

#### Pedersons

con't from p. 1

Both of the Pedersons have lived in the Oread Neighborhood at one time or another as renters. In January they will return to Oread as home owners through the dedication of people who are doing something about preservation in Lawrence.

Sarah McAllister

A special tribute should be given city commissioners Hill and Longhurst for being big enough to admit a serious error was made, costing a huge sum of money — the building of a new air terminal building at the Lawrence airport a half mile from the old one — the so-called white elephant in the swamp. Go see it; you won't believe what you see.

Now comes a new hangar adjoining the white elephant — who pays? The Lawrence taxpayer, of course, along with the FBO (the fixed base operator at the airport) who now is about to have a \$357,000 debt dumped on him. This amount would scare a large operator; what will it do to a small one? He may possibly leave by the same road as the long-gone commuter service did. What then — hello, Vinland Valley?

We all know this airport move will go on and on with more and more expensive projects if allowed to continue.

Isn't this a very high price to pay for an image? We cannot buy friends. For this price the city could build a four-lane expressway from the Kansas Turnpike exit to downtown Lawrence complete with "Welcome to Lawrence" signs saying "Welcome to Lawrence — Home of the Image-Builders."

Good images of a city are made by the sincerity of the people who live there, not by building false images such as an unused air terminal building.

George Schmitendorf,  
1211 Ky.

#### Historic preservation

Editor, Journal-World:

In September of 1984, we purchased our home at 947 La. from the Lawrence Preservation Alliance. The 81-year-old house had been abandoned for over two

years and a demolition permit had been issued to a local developer who had purchased the property. The preservation alliance formed to save the house by raising \$21,000 to purchase the building from the developer and save it from demolition. We purchased the house from the preservation alliance.

The house appeared to be in very bad condition. Prior to moving into the house in June of 1985, we replaced the roof, plumbing, heating and electrical systems, rebuilt the front porch, and replaced all the interior walls. Financially we were taking a great risk and were warned against the project by many knowledgeable people prior to our purchase. However, to our surprise, when the house was recently appraised, it was valued at a substantially larger amount than we expected — far more than we actually put into the purchase and renovations.

We were disturbed by the article in the March 2 issue of the Journal-World citing the alarming increase in demolition permits being issued in recent months for residences in the Oread neighborhood. We feel strongly about the preservation of older homes, particularly in the Oread neighborhood. Our experience with this house proves that renovation of older homes in this neighborhood can be financially worthwhile. We have many photos of the house before our purchase and during the renovations and have kept good records of our expenditures. We would be glad to share this information with anyone in Lawrence who is interested in pursuing a similar project.

Todd/Colleen Pederson,  
947 La.

#### The Junior Olympics

Editor, Journal-World:

A couple of weeks ago the Amateur Athletic Union held its in-



# 1505 KENTUCKY

LAWRENCE JOURNAL-WORLD

Wednesday, December 31, 1986 Page 3A

## Pieces fall into place; old house will be saved

By TIM BONFIELD  
J-W Staff Writer

Although many old Oread neighborhood houses have been torn down to build apartments, the house at 1505 Ky. will not be one of them.

The Lawrence Preservation Alliance closed a deal today to buy "the Priestly house" from its owner, who had plans to tear down the nearly 120-year-old structure to build apartments if the house couldn't be sold.

"Well, we've done it. All the documents have been signed. We have the keys to the house," said Nancy Shontz, a member of the LPA board of directors and a former city commissioner.

LPA members have said that the Priestly house represents the post-Civil War era, when veterans settling in Lawrence created a construction boom by building many of the houses in the city's older neighborhoods. The group has begun efforts to get the house listed on state and national historic registers.

THE HOUSE'S previous owner, local real estate executive John

### Other city commission actions, page 8A

McGrew, said he initially had no idea that the LPA was interested in saving the house.

"I think it's a charming, lovely home," he said. But, "It's not in my judgment one of our authentic historic structures. It just didn't dawn on me that the preservation alliance wanted to preserve it."

McGrew won city commission approval earlier this month of a site plan to build one six-unit apartment building on a vacant lot north of the old house that is part of the site. McGrew's long-range plans included tearing down the old house to build a second six-unit building on the site.

"At some point in time, sure, but that might be five or 10 years down the road," McGrew said.

FOR A WHILE at least, McGrew said he had planned to keep the old house intact because it generates about \$750 a month in rental income. He estimated that building on the north lot alone would have made the two lots at 1505 Ky. worth a total of about \$100,000.

The LPA bought the house and the two adjacent lots of the site from McGrew for \$80,000.

"I didn't make any profit off it. I have, for all practical purposes, that much money in it," McGrew said. "There are lots of other business opportunities. It wasn't a project I was married to."

THE LPA IS using a 90-day loan from the First National Bank to temporarily cover \$60,000 of the purchase price. The group is seeking donations and no-interest loans to pay back the temporary note.

To cover the rest of the cost, the city chipped in \$20,000 in Community Development funds.

The commission on Tuesday unanimously approved using funds for saving 1505 Ky. \$20,000 already had been set as in 1986 for the LPA to use as "seed money" to fund demonstration rescue projects.

"This is exactly the kind of project that I think we all had

See Employment, page 9A

LAWRENCE JOURNAL-WORLD Tuesday, January 13, 1987 Page 8A

**The Lawrence Preservation Alliance and the Oread Neighborhood Assn. thank the following people for their assistance in saving the Priestly House . . .**

**An Anonymous Cosigner**

**The City Commissioners**

**The CD Staff**

**Mary Hickman**

*Stephens Real Estate*

**Michael Looney**

*The Banks Co.*

**John McGrew**

*McGrew Real Estate*

**Ron Turner**

*American Family Life Ins.*

**Staff**

*First National Bank*

(Continued from page 3A)

mind," said Mayor Sandy Praeger.

Commissioner Howard Hill said, "I think it's neat to rescue this property. It really is a delightful home."

IF THE HOUSE is resold, any proceeds above \$60,000 will be returned to the city to use as a revolving fund to pay for other similar projects. But LPA member

and former city commissioner Marci Francisco said Tuesday that the \$20,000 may not all be returned to the city.

"No, I can't promise you that we won't lose any money and that we're not taking a risk," she said.

But, this is the third house the LPA has "rescued." The other two are at 947 La. and at 840 W. 21st. Francisco said the LPA made a small profit on the resale of both those houses.

The commissioners also agreed that saving the house is a risk worth taking.

"Getting up in the morning is a risk. Everything's a risk. But I feel this is probably a risk worth taking. In my mind, this kind of action is appropriate. I think this is great," Commissioner Ernest Angino said.

THE NEXT STEP is finding someone to buy the house from the LPA, Mrs. Shontz said.

The group wants to sell the house "to someone who will live in it, protect it and maintain it and enjoy it," she said. At the time of sale, covenants will be placed in the deed that would require new owner to maintain the house. Currently, some Kansas University students are renting room in the old house. Part of the covenants require the LPA to allow the students to live in the house until their leases expire.

**Prepared Childbirth, Inc.**



established 1973; member of International Childbirth Education Association

- Small group education and discussion for childbirth.
- Individualized instruction and practice of Lamaze breathing and relaxation for labor and delivery.

*Pla*

**20%**

## Pieces fall into place; old house will be saved

# 1505 KENTUCKY

## Group stages rescue of historical homes

(Continued from page 1A)

in and asked him to sell it to them instead.

"I didn't even know that group existed," Mrs. Buller said.

LPA purchased the house from McGrew for \$80,000 — a profit Mrs. Buller says the real estate agent deserves for dealing with all the changes of heart that she and her sister put him through.

LPA made the buy with \$60,000 in privately raised money and \$20,000 from the city's Community Development funds.

Last week, Nancy Shontz and Marci Francisco, both of whom are former Lawrence city commissioners and current members of the LPA, talked about the latest mission and the group's history.

Although the Priestly House on Kentucky Street was not in immediate danger of being torn down, LPA said the development planned next to it would have ruined the house for owner-occupancy and probably have led to its eventual deterioration.

THE HOUSE is leased through July 31 and brings in \$750 a month, so there is income while the LPA seeks a buyer. Unlike the LPA's previous rescues, this house does not need major renovation to make it livable.

Mrs. Buller said that between 1978 and 1985, she and her mother did \$87,000 of work on the house with some advice from a Kansas University architecture professor.

"We wanted to make it look as much like the old style as possible, but add modern conveniences," she said.

The house was gutted. A new kitchen and bathrooms were installed in what she describes as the "old cottage-style" structure. Hard pine floors on the lower level and the wide plank floor upstairs were refinished. Separate furnace and central air conditioning units were installed on each level because of the solid walls.

Although the exact age of the house is unknown, Mrs. Buller's great-grandfather, who fought in the Civil War and later became a gentleman farmer in Baldwin, purchased it in 1872 for his children to live in when they attended KU.

ALTHOUGH LPA had heard that the house was for sale, the group never really considered it in danger.

"It never occurred to us that a house where this much work had been done would be purchased for the land," Francisco said.

After hearing of the development plans, LPA had only 10 days to put its financing together.

LPA already has \$20,000 in pledges to pay back the \$60,000 loan. The members' smaller loans — mostly \$500 or \$1,000 — will be repaid in whole or part when LPA resells the house.

"We're asking people to take a risk," Francisco said. On the first two houses, LPA was able to pay back the loans in full and to make a

\$4,000 profit that was then set aside as seed money for future rescues.

The past success stories make it easier to find willing investors. As news of the "Priestly House" rescue spread, the telephone started ringing and checks started appearing, she said.

THE FIRST RESCUE came in 1984 when an 81-year-old abandoned house at 947 La. was purchased by the LPA and resold to Todd and Colleen Pederson who renovated it and made it their family home.

In 1985 came the rundown house at 840 W. 21st — known as the "Boardman Farm House" — that was saved from demolition by the LPA and renovated by Randy and Wanda Breeden.

As well as being "rescues," those two LPA purchases were also "demonstration projects" that showed how dilapidated and unappealing structures, which were still relatively sound, could be turned into attractive family homes.

Francisco and Shontz reminisced about the beginnings of LPA. The idea for a historical preservation alliance was already forming when the Louisiana Street house was discovered to be in danger.

The first official meeting of the LPA was held May 19, 1984, Shontz said. Regular meetings are still held and a board of directors, headed by Betty Alderson, makes the decision on which houses to try to rescue.

The LPA was originally incorporated as the legal entity to allow the purchase of the Louisiana Street house.

When LPA asked developer Duane Schwada if he would sell to them, Francisco recalls, "His answer was 'I'm not in the business to take a loss.' We took that as a 'yes,'" she said.

"I think he presented a challenge to us . . . People got on the phone and started called and saying 'we're trying to get together the funds to purchase this property.'"

OTHER ORIGINAL members of the group included Shontz, Francisco, Glenn Kappelman, Richard Kershenbaum, Oliver Finney and Karen Kressin.

"Purchasing the house sort of had the galvanizing effect of forcing us to organize," Shontz said.

LPA's goal — both then and now — she added, "is to protect and preserve our architectural heritage."

In the meantime, the group will be looking for a buyer for the latest rescued property. Shontz said that the LPA would prefer a family that would live in the "Priestly House." If that fails, they will seek an investor who will maintain the property while renting it.

"I FEEL very proud," Shontz said, when she drives by the two houses that have been saved with LPA efforts.

"Without our help both of those houses would be gone."

## Group stages rescue of historical homes

By BONNIE DUNHAM  
J-W Staff Writer

The Lawrence Preservation Alliance — which already has two success stories under its belt — calls the saving of old homes "rescue missions."

On the last day of 1986, the LPA signed the papers to buy its third rescue, the "Priestly House" and its adjoining lot at 1505 Ky.

"It's a godsend," said Martha Buller, who grew up in the house. "I can't think of anything nicer to happen to that house. I'm just so tickled. I called my sister immediately and she was absolutely delighted. We both cried and blubbered. I really owe the Lawrence Preservation Alliance a huge big thank you."

After their mother, Mrs. J.W. Holmes, died in late 1985, Mrs. Buller and her sister, who lives out of state, tried to sell the house which had been in their family for more than 100 years. They listed the house with McGrew Real Estate and asked that a covenant be attached to the property prohibiting its demolition. They were asking just under \$70,000.

"WE DIDN'T GET a nibble,"

Mrs. Buller said. "I think partly because the neighborhood has gotten run down a little. And I think a lot of the people who are interested in restoring old houses and that have the energy are young people and they don't have the money."

When the house hadn't sold in three months, she said, John McGrew offered to buy it.

But the sisters decided to take the house off the market.

"It had been in our family for over a 100 years. We couldn't decide whether to sell it or not. We just acted like a couple of silly old women," she said. "We've just been so emotional about this house that it really is awful," she said.

"We couldn't bear to part with it. But we couldn't afford to keep it."

After renting the house for 18 months, Mrs. Buller said she again contacted McGrew and accepted his earlier offer to buy the house for \$70,000.

WHEN THE Lawrence Preservation Alliance heard of McGrew's plans to develop a six-plex on the adjoining lot and build a driveway around the old house, they stepped

See Group, page 13A

# 1505 KENTUCKY



Friday

December 26, 1986

Lawrence, Kansas

28 pages • Vol. 128, No. 360

25 cents

## Group may purchase threatened old house

By TIM BONFIELD  
J-W Staff Writer

You could call it the Lawrence Preservation Alliance's Christmas present to the city.

The LPA plans to buy an old house at 1505 Ky. that is slated for possible demolition, according to Nancy Shontz, member of the LPA board of directors and a former city commissioner.

"We feel that we can contribute a great deal, give the city a real positive gift, by helping to preserve this old home," Mrs. Shontz said.

Known as "the Priestly house," the old Oread neighborhood home

is nearly 120 years old, Mrs. Shontz said. But its owner submitted plans to the city commission Dec. 16 to build two six-unit apartment buildings on the site. The development was planned to take place in two phases that would leave the house intact until the second building was built.

SEVERAL PEOPLE from the Oread Neighborhood Assn. and the LPA spoke at the meeting against approving the site plan, saying that the building should be preserved for its historic and architectural value.

But the commission voted 4-1,

See Preservation, page 11A

## Preservation group seeks to buy old house

(Continued from page 1A)

with Commissioner Ernest Angino against, to approve the first phase of the site plan. The commissioners who supported approving the site plan said they didn't feel they could vote against it, because it met city standards.

Roger Schenewerk, of Landplan Engineering, said at the meeting that the owner, local real estate executive John McGrew, would be willing to consider a serious purchase offer. McGrew offered to sell the two separate lots that make up 1505 Ky for \$80,000, Mrs. Shontz said.

"HE'S BEEN very generous to give us a crack at it," Mrs. Shontz said. But the LPA has only until Dec. 31 to raise the money, she ad-

ded.

"We're in the process of putting the financial package together so we can purchase that house," she said. The LPA is seeking donations and no-interest loans from its members and other concerned citizens to raise \$60,000.

"I'm quite confident that it will happen, that we can complete the financial package," Mrs. Shontz said. "There are a great many people in this community that are interested in saving that house."

However, the LPA may not be able to get \$60,000 in donations by the deadline, she said.

"Everything has to come together all of the sudden," she said. "We're in such a hurry."

MRS. SHONTZ and LPA President Betty Alderson will be looking

today or on Monday into obtaining a bank loan to provide temporary financing until all the donations needed to buy the house can be obtained.

To cover the rest of the purchase price, the LPA plans to use \$20,000 in "seed money" allocated to the group for 1986 from the Community Development budget. The commission will consider on Tuesday allowing the LPA to use the funds.

In a memo to the city commission, CD director Lynn Goodell wrote that the city money was intended to be used for a project like this. Mrs. Shontz said the city funds will be returned to the LPA budget once the Priestly house is sold. Then, the seed money can be used for other similar projects.

If the commission approves

allocating the funds, the purchase contract will have to be signed the next day, she said.

"OUR IDEA is to resell the house to someone who will live in it and protect it and maintain it and enjoy it," Mrs. Shontz said. When it sells the house, the LPA plans to place covenants on the deed that would require the new owner to maintain the house, she added.

Currently, about four Kansas University students are renting rooms in the old house. If the purchase plans are successful, the LPA will be acting temporarily as a landlord of the property.

"We don't have any plans to oust anyone," Mrs. Shontz said. But the LPA would prefer to sell the house to someone who plans to live in it rather than rent it out, she added.



# 1505 KENTUCKY

MARCH 1987  
**KANSAS ALUMNI**  
M•A•G•A•Z•I•N•E



Two sides came together as John McGrew and Betty Alderson compromised to save the Priestly house.

**S**INCE ITS DAYS AS Faculty Row, the historic Oread Neighborhood has welcomed University professors and students. But zoning changes have created a curious assortment of stately renovations, modern apartment complexes and neglected homes. As the neighborhood faces an uncertain future, *Kansas Alumni* examines the views of preservationists, developers and students.

# OLD ENGLISH CHURCH

UDK July 18, 1990

## Church preservation battle may be ordinance test case

Controversy over demolition turns into two-year fight

By Eric Swanson

Special to the Kansan

The fight over the Old English Lutheran Church, 1040 New Hampshire St., is a landmark in the annals of Kansas' historic preservation efforts, according to a member of the Lawrence Preservation Alliance.

"The battle over the church represents the coming-of-age of historic preservation in Lawrence and in Kansas," said Mary Lee Robbins, alliance member.

The church has been the subject of a two-year battle among Allen Realty Inc., the Lawrence Preservation Alliance and the Kansas State Historical Society. Allen Realty wants to demolish the building to make way for a business expansion, while the alliance and the state historical society want to preserve the church as an example of John G. Haskell's work.

Haskell, a native Kansan, designed many buildings in Lawrence and southeastern Kansas. Of the 35 he designed and built in Lawrence, only 11, including the church, still are standing.

Robbins said efforts to save the church had galvanized the community.

"The Lawrence Preservation Alliance, the historic preservation ordinance, the Historic Resources Commission and community support are all just now coming together," she said. "We've forged the way; it's a process we won't have to go through again, because we'll know the way."

She also said that the battle over the church only can encourage the alliance to continue its work, even if it loses the battle.

"We don't know yet if the church is restorable," she said. "If the church is restorable, if Allen Realty will sell the building, and if the new buyer restores it, then it's a wonderful triumph for historic preservation in Lawrence. Even if we fail, the process that we went through is a positive one."

The battle may prove to be the test case for Lawrence's historic preservation ordinance, passed in November 1988. The ordinance is Lawrence's first attempt to establish a legal basis for the preservation of historic buildings.

The ordinance establishes laws governing the preservation of historic resources and provides rules for the nomination of such resources to the state and national registers of historic places.

Sherry Kay, a former member of the task force that wrote the ordinance, said the ordinance was designed to prod people into considering the history of Lawrence

and practical ways to conserve that history.

Today's culture focuses only on the present, she said.

"We think about what's going on now, we think a little about the future, but we think very little about the past," she said.

The ordinance also created the Historic Resources Commission to administer those laws.

The commission has seven members, all Lawrence residents, who have shown interest in either historic or architectural preservation. Of those members, three are preservation-related professionals, such as architects or historians. The other four members are citizens interested in historic preservation.

Robbins said the commission's main function was to advise the City Commission on resources that should be designated historic.

**'The battle over the church represents the coming-of-age of historic preservation in Lawrence and in Kansas.'**

— Mary Lee Robbins  
Alliance member

Among the commission's duties are educating citizens, keeping a Lawrence Register of Historic Places, nominating resources to the state and national registers, and reviewing applications for alteration, removal or demolition of historic properties.

The Commission also is required to add input to the Douglas County Planning Commission's comprehensive plan.

The finished ordinance has drawn fire from some quarters.

The ordinance's chief opponent is Arly Allen, president of Allen Press, a stockholder in Allen Realty, and a former member of the Historic Preservation Ordinance Task Force.

Allen said the ordinance permits the historic resources commission to stop any change on or near registered properties.

"The historic preservation ordinance, as written, is a detriment to historic preservation," he said. "There are many ways in which you can support historic preservation, other than by establishing a series of penalties for property owners who do not comply with the historic resources commission's wishes."

Kay, however, said that the finished product was satisfactory.

"You have to let some years go by before you see if an ordinance is really going to work, but I think we did a really pretty good job," she said. "The groundwork has been laid."

P.3



THE LAWRENCE DAILY

## JOURNAL

MC20 38225 3/04/86  
BUREAU CHILD RESEARCH  
C/O THELMA DILLON  
223 NEW HAYWORTH HALL  
LAWRENCE KS 66045



Oliver Finney, a member of the Lawrence Preservation Alliance, is "outraged" that Community Development funds are being used to demolish this house at 915

Ohio. The house's owner and the CD department defend the move.

(Staff photo by Richard Gwin)

## Groups question aid for demolition

By BOB MUELLER  
J-W Staff Writer

A local preservation group and a neighborhood association are angered by the planned demolition of an old house at 915 Ohio. They point to it as an example of a need to change a city policy.

Not only do the groups believe the Italianate-style house is worth saving, members are "outraged" that federal Community Development funds are being used to raze the vacant building.

The owner, meanwhile, defends his decision to have the house torn down, and the city's CD funds director, while willing to discuss changes in the program, says removing this particular structure appears to make sense.

**THE HOUSE** is behind Town and Country, a convenience store. The owner, Charles Cassity, 1414 Davis, requested the two-story house be included in the CD department's voluntary demolition program. It provides funds to help owners remove blighted conditions.

(Continued from page 1)

techniques on the roof earlier this week.

The only policy for the voluntary demolition program is that structures be located in "target neighborhoods," said Lynn Goodell, CD director. The program has funded demolition of eight houses since 1983 at a total cost of \$8,600, he said.

**CASSITY**, the owner, said he's tearing down the house because "it's not worth fixing up." He estimated the structure is 100 years old.

When asked if anyone contacted him about buying the house, he said, "They wanted me to give it to them. . . . They wanted the ground and everything for around \$11,000. The ground alone is worth three times that much," he said.

The property is zoned for commercial use, he noted. But he said his long range plans are to build a new house on the lot.

Goodell said the house at 915 Ohio is "falling

Officials recently awarded a contract for \$4,765 under the CD demolition program. That contract includes demolishing another house at 1328 N.Y., four garages and two sheds. The contractor's estimate for the demolition cost of the house at 915 Ohio was \$2,540, according to Margene Swarts, the city's minimum housing inspector.

"I just think it's an outrage to use tax dollars for destroying a good house," said Oliver Finney, a member of the Lawrence Preservation Alliance. "It's at least of architectural interest. It's unknown now if it has any historical interest."

**THE GROUP** discussed the issue at a meeting this week and agreed to ask the city commission to revise the CD department demolition policy, Finney said.

Jerry Harper, president of the Oread Neighborhood Assn., has written a letter to CD officials asking for an explanation of the policy.

Allowing CD funds to be used by anyone who wants to tear down a house is "counter-productive" to the goal of retaining the city's apart in places" and could not be repaired without a large investment.

**"OUR GENERAL** policy is we don't tear it down if it's in good condition. My department is in the business of saving houses. . . . My information is that it had been pretty well salvaged inside and the outside was coming apart. When we said the fire department could use it for practice, they went up on the roof but came down pretty fast because it was spongy and in pretty bad shape," Goodell said.

People applying for assistance from the demolition program need not meet certain income guidelines, as under most CD programs, he said.

"It's not an individual benefit program. It's an area benefit program. The idea is we're removing blighted conditions in a neighborhood. . . . We hope we don't subsidize somebody if the structure is worth saving. But that's where the horse race is — determining

housing stock, Finney said.

"If they (CD officials) contribute anything at all, it's money mispent. We realize it's a person's right to do whatever they want with their property. But the city shouldn't encourage demolition by paying for it. The city could condemn it and require the property owner to fix it up or tear it down himself," he said.

Finney said the city could at least establish income guidelines people must meet before applying for the demolition program.

**MS. SWARTS** agreed with Finney, saying that technically, nothing would keep a developer from requesting funds to tear down a house for redevelopment. But that hasn't happened under the program so far, she said.

Two aspects of the issue "added insult to injury," Finney said. First, he said, several people have contacted the LPA who are interested in the buying the house and rehabilitating it. Second, he said, the Lawrence Fire Department was allowed to practice ax-chopping

See Groups, page 9

what's worth saving and what's not."

Goodell said he would be willing to discuss possible changes in the demolition policy.

**HARPER CALLED** the current practice "bad public policy. . . . We end up with houses that have architectural or historical significance being torn down."

The present policy, in effect, rewards people with government subsidy for being "poor stewards" of their property, he said.

"The problem that underlies this is far more serious and I'm not sure if there's an easy answer. The Oread area is virtually without zoning so the economic pressures to bulldoze the area and redevelop are incredible," he said.

He said large areas in the neighborhood are zoned RD (residence-dormitory) and some land is zoned commercial.

"You can put an eight-plex on a 50-foot lot if you can figure out the parking configuration," he said.



# LIBERTY HALL/ OPERA HOUSE

## City defers action on opera house plan

By DAVID TOPLIKAR  
J-W Staff Writer

A Topeka firm that tried unsuccessfully last year to buy and renovate the Lawrence Opera House is ready to try again.

A representative of a bonding company from Wichita told the Lawrence City Commission Friday that the money is now available for the project to be a success. The plan centers on creating a school for entertainers in the opera house.

The commission was asked once more to approve industrial revenue bonds for the project — this time for \$1.75 million. No action was taken at the informal commission session, and a schedule for commission action is unclear.

NOW THAT money appears to be available for the two-year-old proposal — according to the project's backers — it has run into another sticking point: the proposed downtown mall project.

The city's downtown developer of record says if the proposal for the entertainment school goes through it may hamper a mall project in the 600 block. City Manager Buford Watson told the commission.

The commission met with

(Continued from page 1)

become the tenant for the bond issue, he said.

Dave Hayden, general partner for Bowersock Ltd., told the commission that the partnership will sublease part of the building to Management Alternatives.

Management Alternatives will continue its plan to turn the building into an entertainment school, which will include a video and audio recording facility and a performing arts center for community use, he said.

OTHER OFFICE space in the building will be rented, he said. The rents on the building would retire the IRBs in 15 years, he said.

He said there would also be a private club in the basement, where students at the entertainment school would perform.

Mayor Ernest Angino asked Hayden whether his firm had contacted the city's developer, Town Center Venture Corp., about the project, which falls in the "footprint" of the \$41 million proposed mall.

Hayden said he had met with Duane Schwada, TCVC's chief

representatives of Ranson & Company, an investment banking firm from Wichita, during the study session Friday.

The proposal for the IRBs had been placed on Tuesday night's commission agenda, but Watson said it would be withheld until more information could be received on the proposal.

MIKE RELIHAN, vice president of Ranson & Company, said he had been working on the funding project for two years, when Management Alternatives Inc. had first come forward with the project.

At that time Relihan represented Mid-Continent Municipal Investments Inc., Wichita, which was to offer the \$1.35 million in IRBs that the city commission approved for the project last year.

However, because of a number of factors, Management Alternatives Inc. was unable to raise the necessary \$540,000 in equity for the bonds to be issued, Relihan said.

But now a different firm is working on the same plan — and has been successful in getting a Wichita investor to put up the necessary \$540,000 equity for the bond issue, Relihan said.

A limited partnership has been formed, Bowersock Ltd., to

See New opera, page 3

developer; Dave Evans and Bob Gould, the project's architects; and Richard Zinn, a local attorney working on the project.

Hayden said the developers are only worried about the flexibility they would have in getting department stores for the project. He said the developers have said that they may need to tear the building down to suit the needs of department stores.

WATSON SAID he had a brief conversation with Schwada and Zinn, who told him they thought the city should buy the Opera House building and control its fate so that a mall project wouldn't be hampered.

Watson said the developers think the new proposal for the Opera House is untimely — and that if the city issues revenue bonds it could be to the detriment of the project.

"Our plan is to preserve the building," Watson said. "The real problem is how it fits in."

The commission asked for more written information on the project and for more comment from the city's developers before taking any action on the IRB request.

## Saturday column

JULY 30, 1984 By Dolph C. Simons Jr.

It would be interesting to know if those who are so anxious and eager to save the Bowersock theater building, and who are so positive in their opinions that the project can be economically sound, would be willing to put up their own money, or raise the funds, to pay for any major losses the project might incur.

It is relatively easy for some to be enthusiastic about "saving the opera house" when they don't stand any exposure to possible financial losses. It almost appears some would like to turn the "opera house" matter into a cause similar to the so-called "doll house" building furor, wherein a few years ago the city wound up being required to pay an inflated price for a building of questionable value across the street from the new city hall.

Also, it appears some may be attempting to use the Bowersock theater building debate as a means of trying to enhance their own visibility in the community, regardless of the wisdom of the city issuing revenue bonds to pay for an uncertain business scheme.

IT'S ALMOST a game with some of these people, in that they seem to find pleasure in taking on a project which they then build into an emotional event. In the case of the Bowersock site, the history of the building, its link to past theatrical productions, the fact that certain well-known movie and stage personalities once performed at the Bowersock — all are used as justifications as to why the building must be saved. Anyone opposed to the present bond plan is pictured as being against art, or as an individual who doesn't care about the past, and doesn't appreciate the importance of preserving a structure which some now are trying to turn into a shrine for music and performers.

If money grew on trees, if there were no questions about the ability of the city to issue an unlimited amount of industrial revenue bonds, if there were no possibility of the area's being incorporated into a mailed shopping center, and if there were better-than-average probabilities of the business-financial prospects for the building proving successful — then there might be justification to consider restoration, renovation and other uses for the building. This may not

be the situation, however, in that few businesses have been able to sustain themselves in a profitable manner in this location even though most every type of commercial project has been tried.

ALSO, if it is going to become illegal to sell beer to anyone in Kansas under the age of 21, what is that going to do to potential revenue which might be generated in this location if the primary lures are to be music, entertainment and refreshments?

It is hoped city officials do not feel so pressured that they will bend to the emotionally based pleas of a few residents rather than to display careful and seasoned judgment based on cold, hard facts. For example, the names of some entertainment personalities have been suggested as being interested in the project. Proponents of the bond plan suggest these individuals may become associated with the Bowersock undertaking in some manner. Have any city officials checked to verify if these "nationally known" entertainers have, indeed, made a financial commitment to the plan?

The threat of coercive attempts by some to suggest that support for a downtown mailed shopping center would be lessened, or even actively opposed, if city officials deny the bond plan is a tasteless approach.

Whether or not the mailed shopping center becomes a reality in downtown Lawrence will depend upon many factors, but there doesn't appear to be much question that if such a project isn't located in the downtown area, as opposed to a site near the outer boundaries of the city, the downtown area will suffer a severe economic blow.

FURTHER, it will be interesting to see if those individuals who today talk about possibly working against a downtown mall if they don't get their way about the city's issuing revenue bonds for the old theater will actively and publicly declare themselves opponents to the mall effort when it comes before Lawrence voters.

Lawrence probably needs more dreamers, and maybe there is need for more areas to benefit the "performing arts," but down-to-earth practicality should always have first consideration.