NPS Form 10-900
Oct. 1990

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A) Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-9000a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property WOLF HOTEL

Historic name

Other name/site number 009-1590-0010

2. Location

Street & number 104 EAST SANTA FE ☐ not for publication

City or town ELLINWOOD ☐ vicinity

State KANSAS Code KS County BARTON Code 009 Zip code 67526

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this **XX** nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property **XX** meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide **XX** locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Richard D. Pendergast DSHPO September 20, 2002

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Kansas State Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of commenting official /Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I herby certify that the property is Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet..
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other, (explain:)

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

XX private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

XX building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter Categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE
DOMESTIC

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: ITALIANATE
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:
MISSION/SPANISH COLONIAL REVIVAL

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

FOUNDATION STONE: LIMESTONE
WALLS BRICK
ROOF SYNTHETICS

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

Name of Property WOLF HOTEL County and State BARTON COUNTY, KANSAS

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register

XX A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

XX B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

XX C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ D Property has yielded, or likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ B removed from it original location.

☐ C a birthplace or grave.

☐ D a cemetery.

☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ F a commemorative property.

☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1894 - 1952

Significant Dates

1894, 1923

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

JOHN WOLF, FRED WOLF

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

S.S. VOIGT, ARCHITECT

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS): Primary location of additional data:

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

XX State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Name of repository:

Name of Property WOLF HOTEL County and State BARTON COUNTY, KANSAS

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property LESS THAN ONE ACRE

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

Zone	Easting	Northing
14	536645	4244940
1		
2		
3		
4		

☐ See continuation sheet

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

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

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

Organization _____ Date _____

Street & number _____ Telephone _____

City or town _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

name SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

street & number _____ telephone _____

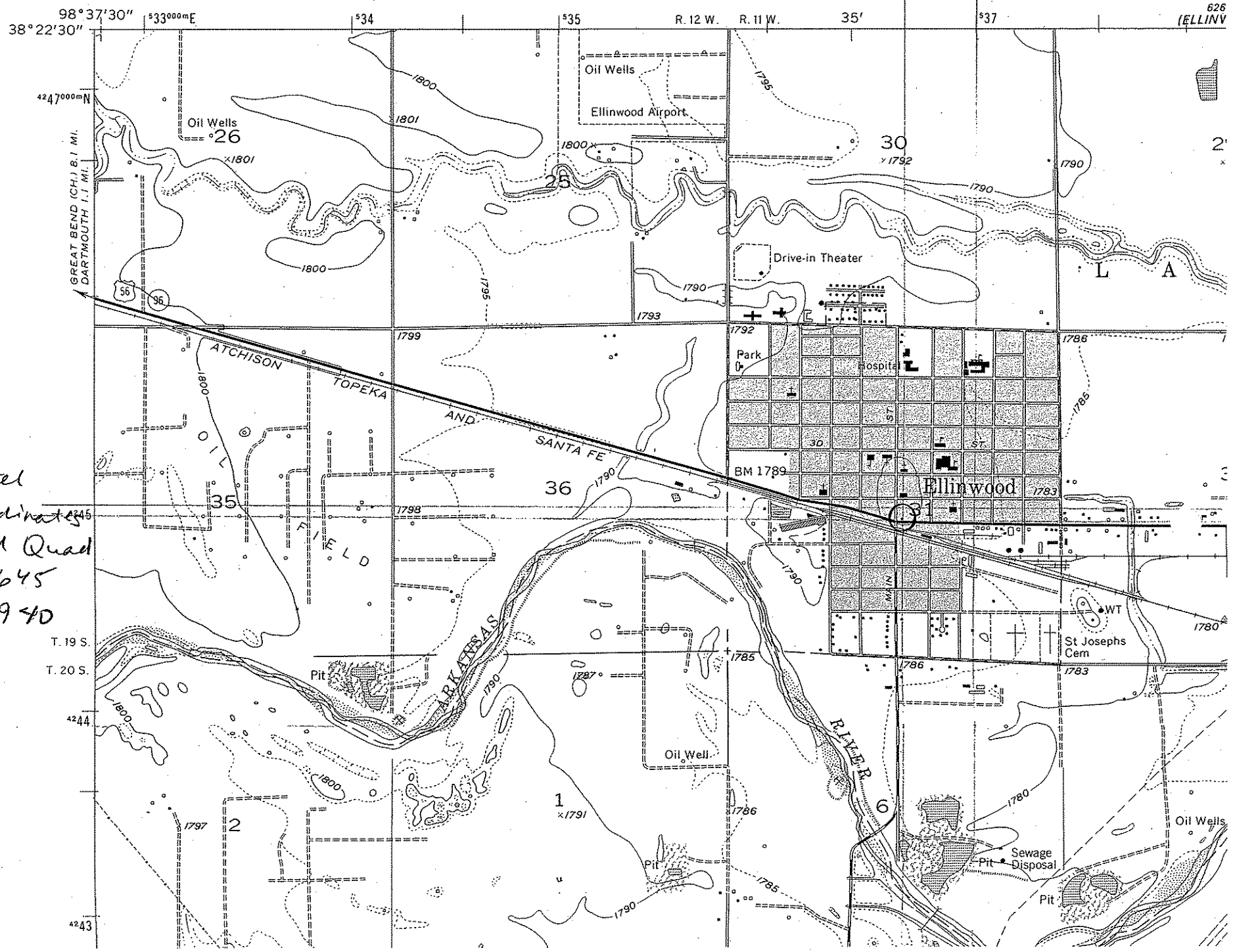
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16) U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

6260 I NW
(ELLINWOOD NW)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



WOLF Hotel
UTM Coordinates
Ellinwood Quad
14 536645
4244940

The Wolf Hotel building (c. 1894, 1923) is located at 104 East Santa Fe in Ellinwood, Kansas. A late nineteenth century Italianate style commercial building, the Wolf Hotel sits at the intersection of Main and Santa Fe streets, the most southern point of the Ellinwood downtown commercial area. This two-story building sits upon a native greenhorn limestone foundation and the walls consist of pressed brick. The roof was originally tin, but the majority of the original metal has been replaced with a composition roof. In 1923, a dining room addition, designed by Wichita architect S. S. Voigt with the help of Mr. Fred Wolf, in the Mission style, complete with a brick terrace and grape arbor. Originally connected to the adjoining northern property owned by the M.K. Wolf & Company, the Wolf Hotel became a free-standing structure in 1952, when the Peoples State Bank tore down the adjoining building and created a parking lot for their bank which now occupies the adjoining property.

The building sits 140 feet long from east to west, the west end is 50 feet wide, and the east end is 30 feet wide, as the south portion of the west end of the building narrows fifteen degrees to the north at the middle section, due to its original location directly north of the train depot, railroad tracks, and railroad right of way.

The 1894 building is a two-part commercial block with full fenestration on both levels. A corbelled brick and limestone stringcourse separates the two stories below the second level window sills. Tall, arched windows with 1/1 double hung sash fenestrate the building. Corbelled arched lintels surmount the windows, limestone sills underscore them. The second level window groups are recessed and flanked by plain brick pilasters. Two double unit plate glass windows fenestrate the west and south/southeast first floor elevations. The windows are framed with cast iron. A pressed metal cornice projects from the building, above a corbelled freize. An arched and corbelled doorway stands in the bevelled 45 degree angled southwest elevation, providing entry to the original bank space. The double doors are surmounted by a rectangular transom. A second, more modest arched door stands in the southern elevation, this was the entrance to the hotel.

The one-story, dark red brick Mission style dining room adjoins the hotel along the eastern elevation. Its large, multi-paned windows are flankd by projecting pilasters. Limestone capping trims the parapetted roof, the first level string course and the pilasters. The building stands on an above grade, stone foundation.

Below grade commercial space was once accessible on both sides of the 1894 building. While this space is still accessible from the basement of the building, the sidewalks have been filled in or access has otherwise been restricted.

The interior of the building maintains its overall floorplan and pressed tin ceilings in the bank and dining room. The wheat shafts and sunflowers that decorate the dining pilasters are particularly noteworthy.

The Wolf Hotel (c. 1894, 1923) is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its historical association with the growth and development of the city of Ellinwood, Kansas; under Criterion B for its association with Ellinwood businessmen John Wolf and Fred Wolf; and under Criterion C for its architectural significance as a late nineteenth century, Italianate style commercial building with a twentieth century Mission style dining room addition.

Historical Context

As the Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe Railroad began building its way across Kansas, the rails paved the way for population and growth in the western plains of the state. It was in 1872 that the town of Ellinwood, Kansas, was designed under the ownership of the railroad by the Arkansas River Town Company. The streets were laid out, the blocks were numbered, and even the train depot was designed and placed on the southern edge of the new town, with two main tracks and a short side track that was called the railroad "right of way." The German immigration agent of the Santa Fe Railroad Company, Mr. C.B. Schmidt, recruited hard-working German immigrants to come to this middle section of Kansas, and his local German land agents in the Ellinwood area were, for the most part, protestant, and therefore, Ellinwood itself was populated with German protestant immigrant families.

In 1878, Ellinwood filed its petition with the State of Kansas to become an official city of the state. By then, business was already bustling in the town and the population was growing. More German immigrants populated the town with every year that passed, and their "little Germania" was evident from the German-named street signs, to church sermons and business dealings completed only in the German language, to last names like Bockemohle, Steckel, Manglesdorf, and Wolf. With increased railroad traffic and a location situated on the flat valley of the Arkansas River approximately ten miles east of Great Bend, there was much to celebrate in Ellinwood's early years as the townspeople looked ahead to the future.

Lots 17 and 18 of block 10 in Ellinwood were (and still are) situated directly north of the train depot and railroad tracks. The first owner of the two lots was Mr. F.A. Steckel, who was the first mayor of Ellinwood. An ingenious civil servant and businessman, Mr. Steckel purchased the west end of the lots and built a merchandise store upon his land. Selling the business later to the Manglesdorf brothers, Mr. Steckel retained the land until his death in 1893. Ms. Louise Clemm owned the eastern portion of the lots and on her section, she built a small grocery that also sold gingham and winter goods. The local newspaper, The Ellinwood Advocate, was located in a small room in the Clemm grocery store. Slowly, the Clemm family fazed out their business and by the early 1890s, the two buildings on lots 17 and 18 of the block sat completely vacant. For a short time, the city stored their gasoline tanks in the Clemm building. In 1893, the lots were sold in entirety to Mr. John Wolf.

It was not surprising that Mr. Wolf purchased lots 17 and 18. He already owned several buildings that sat directly north of the old Steckel and Clemm properties. In fact, the line of downtown buildings that Mr. Wolf owned was nicknamed "The Wolf Block." Therefore, it was assumed that the new lots would become a part of "The Wolf Block," and when Mr. Wolf tore down the old Steckel building and began construction of a new building, the people of Ellinwood believed it was yet another sign of Ellinwood's growth and prosperity in the Gilded Age of the American West.

The Construction

There was excitement in the community for the new Wolf structure, which would consist of a hotel addition and rooms for other businesses. The new hotel portion would adjoin the Delmonico Hotel, which was located in the Wolf-owned building directly north of lots 17 and 18, and the Bank of Ellinwood would occupy the west portion of the first floor in the new building. Such an addition would be "a magnificent structure when completed" and it was perceived that "John [Wolf]...[was] doing a good thing for the town." Materials, such as the pressed brick for the walls of the building, were imported, but local greenhorn limestone was used for the foundation and only local craftsmen were contracted to construct the massive structure.

Located at what was and remains the busiest intersection in town, the Wolf Hotel building was designed with the greatness and grandeur that would make it a focal point of the downtown business block. Sitting on the northeast corner of Main and Santa Fe, a rival bank building was built on the northwest corner of the same intersection, which only added to the anticipation of the townspeople throughout the construction process. The early architectural history of the building can be traced through newspaper accounts of the construction.

The first mention of the Wolf Hotel building was in the 16 November, 1893, issue of the Ellinwood Advocate. With much anticipation throughout the winter months, the Advocate detailed the arrival of supplies for the new Wolf building to built south of the Delmonico Hotel and in January of 1894, the newspaper excited reported that "The old Deutscher store is now a thing of the past." On 8 February, 1894, the "scraping on the cellar for John Wolf's new building" began and the foundation was laid. The newspaper reported that Mr. Wolf hoped to have the building ready by 1 June for occupancy.

The dirt removed from the new cellar was "used in grading up the streets in the low places in town." In March, the cornerstone of the building was laid and as reported by the newspaper, "the boys commermorated the event by drinking an 'achtel.'" By late March, stonework for the first floor of the building had commenced. The newspaper actively reported the news of the new Wolf building and even reported when the brick masons became ill and could not work for a week, thus slowing construction. However, the building would be worth the wait, because not only

was "John Wolf's...new building ...the only building in the county built of imported pressed brick," the townspeople needed to remember that "[t]he building is large and naturally develops slowly."

In April, the first floor had been built and the joists for the second floor were being laid so that brickwork could be resumed, and on 24 May, 1894, the brickwork on the Wolf building was past the second story and workmen were preparing to install the roof. "When this building is completed there will not be another city in western Kansas with better hotel facilities than Ellinwood," reported the newspaper. During the first and second weeks of June, the roof and glass were installed by local carpenters. The final touch, an awning, was installed in August as the hotel opened for business.

The Bank of Ellinwood, which occupied the west end of the first floor of the new building, did not open at the same time. On 16 August, 1894, the Advocate reported that the new tile floor had arrived and was being installed. The entire space to be covered by the tile was not over sixteen square feet, yet it consisted of 3,140 pieces to cover it. The largest pieces were six inch octagons and the smallest pieces were one and three-eighth inch triangles.

The hotel and bank were open for business in the fall of 1894, yet John Wolf was still improving the appearance of his new building. In November, he had new hitching posts placed outside the hotel block and touched up the fronts of the building with "a very dark green color" which apparently added "very much to the general appearance of the block.

Architectural Style

Erected during Ellinwood's building boom of the 1890s, the Wolf Hotel employed native greenhorn limestone for its foundations and pressed red brick for its walls. Like many late nineteenth century commercial structures built in Kansas, the building reflects Italianate influences. The arched window, corbelled lintels, pilastered second story wall and the corbelled freize that runs between the pilasters are design features that rest in the Italianate tradition. While the building represents a vernacular and diluted interpretation of the style, the result is an elegantly conceived commerical structure that stands as an important landmark in the community.

The Mission style addition blends with the architecture of an earlier era, allowing its arched parapetted roof and elegant stone capping to play off of the corbelling and arches used in the older building. Both styles suit the commercial nature of the building nicely, offering large windows for good lighting and pleasant atmosphere. In the same way that the Italianate style was used for commerical buildings throughout the state in the late nineteenth century, the Mission style was also employed frequently for commerical architecture during the 1920s.

Ready for Business

When the building was completed in late 1894 at a cost of approximately $10,000, several businesses made the Wolf building their home. The new addition for the Delmonico Hotel added fifteen more rentable rooms for a total of thirty rooms. Under the new name of "The National Hotel," the hotel boasted "30 well-appointed rooms including a dining room, parlor with an organ, office, [and] sample room on the ground floor." The newspaper proclaimed the National Hotel was "[a] metropolitan hotel in every respect." The hotel occupied the second floor and the east portion of the main floor of the building, while the Bank of Ellinwood, privately owned by the prestigious Bockemohle family, opened its business in the west portion of the main floor of the building.

In the basement of the building, reported the newspaper in September of 1894, "Joseph Meyer is now snugly located under the bank in the Wolf Block in a neat, clean, comfortable restaurant." Lunch "could be had at all times of day or night, with winter and summer drinks and cigars" at Joe's Lunch Counter.

Another room in the basement was the Drummers' Room. Salesmen would depart from the train and go to the Drummers' Room to preview their merchandise. Henry Musenburg of Ellinwood remembered that the elite of the town would go down to the underground shopping for selective buying and special garments. They would get to go before anyone else. Esther Voth, also of Ellinwood, added in an interview that after the elite shopped, the businessmen would then get their chance to buy goods. Bertha Steimel Wendel stated that she got to try on clothes in the Drummers' Room because the salesmen only carried one size and she was a perfect size 36. The Drummers' Room reflected, in a way, the social and cultural development the town was experiencing in the 1890s. There were distinct social classes in Ellinwood, for one was either rich or poor.

New clubs and organizations began and administrative boards for the school, churches, and city all became very active during this time period. Music also became quite important in the town, with the beginning of several musical clubs, which might have stemmed the interest in the building of the Opera House. Traveling groups would come and perform at the new, downtown Opera House, spending the night at the National Hotel, located directly north of the train depot. Ladies needed new gowns and accessories for the performances, and items were sampled in the Drummers' Room underground in the new Wolf building. Economically, the town was prospering, the rich getting more rich, and although the poor were still poor, they were not depressed and did not go without.

By 1896, the National Hotel had changed hands and become the "Hotel Richards" in honor of the proprietor, Mrs. Richards, and by the end of her short-lived career in the Ellinwood hotel that lasted six months, the hotel was renamed the "Hotel Wolf," which it remained for the duration of the business. In 1896, the hotel was "newly papered and painted. The beds had springs with good mattresses, white linens and down pillows." Traveling men

were regular customers, often staying over Sunday. The dining room was well-lighted, large with a seating capacity of fifty, with meat, game, fruits, vegetables, fresh eggs, sweet butter, wheat or brown bread, flaky biscuits along with coffee, tea or milk on the menu. Before the new dining room was built in 1925, the original dining room earned, in its own right, an outstanding reputation.

People came from far and wide to eat in the Hotel Wolf dining room. The chefs were usually local and sometimes were more popular than the food that they created. One in particular, nicknamed "Sparky," weighed approximately 300 pounds and dressed similarly to the modern-day Pillsbury Dough Boy, as recalled by Ellinwood resident Adrianna Dierolf. The dining room was also the location of social events for the town, which were then reported in the newspaper. The Ellinwood Senior Class of 1913, for instance, were "elaborately entertained" there. Other not-so-pleasant events also took place in the Hotel Wolf dining room. An incident occurred in 1907 when the cook, Robert Miller, shot the former cook, Richard Derx, after accusing the latter of trying to steal his job. Derx was dining at the hotel that evening and escaped with a minor flesh wound in his right ankle.

The kitchen, located north of the dining room area in the east portion of the building, did their own canning and at times, employed younger females of the community as waitresses during busy times, which usually occurred when entertainment for the Opera House or fairs were in town. Outside of the kitchen, to the rear of the building, was the location of the outhouses, which were used until indoor plumbing was installed some years later. The outhouses were home to at least one known suicide and several pranks throughout their existence on the property.

Ellinwood, like the railroads, chugged into the twentieth century. The 1900s was a decade of industrial growth for the town and a decade of modernization. Passenger and freight traffic on the railroad that had doubled in the previous decade was still increasing in the 1900s. In order to stimulate new milling operations to capitalize on the railroad and the strong agricultural base of the community, a Commerce Club was begun to provide financial backing to anyone who wanted to begin a mill in the town. Milling businesses sprung up all over Ellinwood, providing much-needed markets for grain farmers and prosperity to the new millers in town. New manufacturing businesses also began during this period; making sleds, farming equipment, and other products.

Coming hand-in-hand with industrialization was modernization. In 1900, telephone lines were strung throughout the town and numbers were issued. The Hotel Wolf was #55, and the Bank of Ellinwood was #10. After the train depot burned down in 1902 and was promptly rebuilt in the same year, the concerns about fires in the town mounted which resulted in two wells being dug in the town, one located directly behind the kitchen of the Hotel Wolf. In 1909, after much anticipation, electricity was introduced to the Ellinwood community, including the Hotel Wolf and the other businesses of the building.

The Bank

The Bank of Ellinwood, which had occupied the west portion of the main floor of the Wolf Hotel building from the very beginning, would provide the biggest scare of the new century. On January 20, 1908, the deputy bank examiner for the State of Kansas completed his review of the bank's statements and then proceeded to close the bank early in the day. This action puzzled the Ellinwood community and what was even more puzzling was the arrest of the bank cashier, W. Leo Bockemohle, the very next day. The Bockemohle family owned the bank and being a pioneer family of Ellinwood, they were well respected in the town. Two days after the closing of the bank, a group of concerned citizens, including Mr. John Wolf and Mr. Fred Wolf, gathered together to pledge money for the start of a new bank, owned by the businessmen and farmers of the area. Four days after the closing of the bank, W. Leo Bockemohle committed suicide and his brother and bank president, Ed Bockemohle was indicted and later convicted of falsifying bank statements. Two months later, in March of 1908, the Peoples State Bank opened its doors for business in the former Bank of Ellinwood offices, and the community began a fresh start with its new bank, owned by its investors.

Twentieth Century Stability

Ellinwood found itself economically stable in the 1910s, yet there was noticeable change in the ethnicity of the town. More and more pioneer Ellinwood settlers were passing away, including Mr. John Wolf in 1916, and the younger generation was beginning to move away from home after high school and college. The shock of World War I deeply affected the Ellinwood community. Many had strong ties to Germany and most Ellinwood residents still had close family in the motherland, which did not go unnoticed to surrounding communities. A strong anti-German movement forced some of Ellinwood's strongest German supporters to seek refuge in the underground tunnels that were usually used for access to the downtown underground stores. Refuge under the Wolf Hotel building was particularly popular, because it was accessible to food and other services.

After the end of World War I and the 1910s decade, the 1920s spawned a new day in Ellinwood's history. This was a period of progression and transition, yet compared to the 1920s that most think of in the large cities, Ellinwood's 1920s were relatively laid back and easy going, a period of calmness following the turbulent war years. Civic improvements were first and foremost important. Sanitary sewer lines were built which allowed homes and businesses, including the Hotel Wolf, to install indoor toilets and running water. A new school was built and perhaps one of the longest-defining features, the streets of Ellinwood were paved with brick, the same brick streets that exist today.

Sunflower Dining Room

The Hotel Wolf also underwent its first complete renovation since its construction almost thirty years before. Under the new ownership of Mr. Fred Wolf, the son of the deceased Mr. John Wolf, new curbs and guttering were erected in April of 1923 and in October of the same year, Mr. Fred Wolf began construction of a new dining room for the hotel. The new dining room would be an attached room to the original building and therefore, Mr. Wolf made the decision to knock down the remaining Clemm building that had stood vacant on the east portion of the lot since the late 1880s. The new dining room, designed by Wichita architect S.S. Voight, was a different architectural style than the original building and it was also very elaborately decorated. Of all the memories recounted by Ellinwood citizens for this nomination, the 1923 dining room at the Hotel Wolf was the most recalled.

In the era right before the Great Depression, no expense was spared in the construction of Ellinwood's dining gem. It has been hinted that Mr. Fred Wolf himself influenced much of the design of the new dining room, and that he wished it to give "a home-like appearance to the native Kansan." The dining room was artistically designed with sunflowers, wheat, specially designed terrazzo floors, and unique chandeliers that used only amber-colored bulbs to give off a golden hue in the room. The outdoor patio area, the first of its kind in Ellinwood, was lined with a grape arbor, also the first of its kind in the town. Indeed, it was a special place for the Ellinwood community.

The Sunflower Dining Room, named by Mr. Wolf, opened for business on Easter Sunday of 1924. Decorated with flowers, Easter decorations, and large quantities of floral baskets, a five-piece orchestra serenaded the curious patrons who were awe-struck by the aura of the room. The newspaper reported that never had the town seen such a dining room and it would quickly become the place to eat in Ellinwood.

Only the best was used in the Sunflower Dining Room. The French doors to the dining room were closed when meals were not being served and once opened, dining guests looked into a room softly lit by the amber-colored bulbs in the chandeliers, tables covered with crisp white linen tablecloths and linen napkins, with the good silver flatware set precisely on top of the table, all complemented by a vase of fresh flowers. It was an excellent place for private dinners, parties, dinner dances, luncheons, teas, and almost any social occasion that could be planned. Sunday dinners, however, were the favorite of staff and patrons alike. As recounted by Adrianna Dierolf:

> "After church I remember it was a ritual to go to the hotel for dinner if you could afford it…They used the finest china and silver, cut glass, linen tablecloths and napkins. [The] end of the meal [was] always followed with a finger bowl…A dinner would include a filet mignon, potato, vegetable, relish plate, roll, and dessert followed by finger bowls for 50 cents."

The dining room also drew travelers from afar. Some businessmen would specifically plan their journeys around the Sunflower Dining Room Sunday dinners and as it was, the hotel's business boomed. The dining room, like the previous hotel dining room, received much attention from peculiar incidents that happened in the room. One man, Bernard J. Millet, arrived in Ellinwood in the early afternoon and after doing some shopping downtown, he registered in the Hotel Wolf and prepared for dinner in the dining room. He ordered his meal and ate so slowly that by the time he was almost finished, he was the last person left in the dining room, attracting the attention of the two young ladies working in the dining room, one playing the piano, and the other cleaning up. Suddenly, the man reached into his pocket, took out a pistol, and shot himself in the head. The suicide in the dining room produced a four-page article in the newspaper detailing the entire event and the life of Mr. Millet, and the dining room ceiling also bore the mark of the incident with a bullet hole as part of its fixture. No other serious incidents occurred in the dining room during its remaining time in business.

Mr. Fred Wolf continued improvements to the slightly dilapidated hotel and its guest rooms. New fixtures and furniture, along with the installation of private baths with new plumbing (thanks to the city installation of the sanitary sewer system) helped to bring the hotel back to its original glory. Striped canvas awnings were installed on each window of the hotel building and a 23-foot marquee was planned for the front entrance, but it was never erected.

The Sunflower Sample Room, which had replaced Joe's Lunch Counter at the turn of the century, operated for "thirsty wayfarers [whom] were served with the leading brands of wet goods." The Sunflower Sample Room even provided a place to "sample" most restricted "wet goods" after the beginning of the Prohibition movement. This would not last past the 1920s, with Prohibition finally getting the better of the business located underneath the bank in the Wolf Hotel building. Soon after the Sample Room's demise, the first Ellinwood Public Library moved into the space, where it would remain until approximately forty years later. The Drummers' Room of the early days of the building had stayed in business, providing a place for traveling salesmen to showcase their goods. Another sample room, located in the basement of the new dining room of the building was now used in the same capacity and the old Drummers' Room was rented out to several different businesses throughout the 1920s. Eventually, Mr. Fred Wolf, one of Ellinwood's greatest public servants in its history, transformed the room into a sort of cards room for the gentlemen of the town.

The Depression-era and beyond

The year of 1929 ushered in a new era for Ellinwood. The stock market crash in October brought about much hardship and strife for the town, which would continue throughout the 1930s, yet it was also a period of hope for the people of Ellinwood, because it was during this time that oil was discovered underneath the town and the

surrounding area. Indeed, what would have made the town extremely wealthy in previous or future decades simply kept the town and townspeople alive during the Great Depression.

1931 was bad, 1932 was awful, 1933 was terrible, and 1934 was even worse, yet somehow, Ellinwood maintained its lifeline. It could not prosper because of the depression, yet it did not die out like so many agriculturally based western towns did. It was at this point in which Ellinwood ceased to become just an agriculturally based community. Oil was now a full partner in the local economy.

A pipeline was constructed through the area as a way to send oil to outside markets. Prices were extremely low and there was little demand for the product, but it was still income for the depressed economy. People were moving to Ellinwood to work in oil drilling. The newspaper noted that there was no vacancy anywhere in the town, which definitely included the Hotel Wolf. Anyone who wanted to work could find a job in oil. The pay was low, the work was hard and dirty, but it was money in the pocket during a time of need. And so, Ellinwood maintained.

By the end of the 1930s, industry was booming in Ellinwood. A Chamber of Commerce was formed to deal with the industrial boom thrust upon the town, as oil became an important natural resource and a desired commodity. The town developed and saw growth like it had never seen before. Mr. Fred Wolf passed away in 1939 and his son, Mr. Fred Wolf, Jr., took ownership of the building, only to sell it some years later to a Mrs. Roth, who was a long-time Ellinwood resident.

Leading into the 1940s, Ellinwood saw a period of unprecedented growth. Oil was the backbone of the economy and it made many families incredibly wealthy. New houses were being built, schools were improved, and it seemed as though business could not get any better. With the outbreak of World War II, however, Ellinwood was once again faced with its troubles of being associated with Germany. The majority of Ellinwood citizens were second or even third generation Americans by this time, yet there were still those with strong ties to Germany. With its German-named streets and strong German heritage, there was no escaping attention, and this time, Ellinwood received national press. Walter Winchell himself called Ellinwood, Kansas, "a hotbed of German sympathizers," and some Ellinwood residents were forced into the underground tunnels under the Wolf Hotel building once again to wait out the anger associated with the war cause.

After World War II, there was a definite change in the Ellinwood community. The young people were again moving away and the oil economy began to slow down in the town. The decade of the 1950s brought about change to the Wolf Hotel building. The Peoples State Bank and Trust Company moved from its location in the west end of the building to a new location directly north of its previous building. A parking lot, drive-in tellers, and one-story bank

building were built in 1952, ending the banking era in the Hotel Wolf. The police department leased the space in the Wolf Hotel building for several years, and after the police moved its headquarters elsewhere, the City of Ellinwood maintained its offices in the space until the mid-1970s.

Throughout the changing times in the Ellinwood community, the Hotel Wolf remained a permanent fixture. But, with the changing times came changing people, a changing economy, and changing lifestyles. Proprietors of the business came and went, then came and went again, and travelers that used to stop for the night at the Hotel Wolf and catch the 50-cent Sunday dinner with old friends in the town now drove by on Highway 56 in their car to Great Bend. In 1972, the Hotel Wolf rented its last room, two years short of its 80th anniversary.

With the demise of the hotel business, the Wolf Hotel entered a new era of existence that appeared quite bleak; however, in November of 1975, Bill and Carol Starr of Lyons, Kansas, purchased the building from Mrs. Roth and gave the building a new life. An antique collector by trade, with training in art, fabrics, and stained glass, Bill Starr along with partner James Elliott have made a huge effort to restore and refurbish the Wolf Hotel building. The original bank area located on the west end of the first floor has been restored to its original appearance and the building owners are planning to restore the Sunflower Dining Room sometime in the near future. The Starr Antiques business currently occupies the first floor, including the original bank area, the Hotel Wolf lobby, the Sunflower Dining Room and its kitchen. The second floor is a residence.

Indeed, the Wolf Hotel building has come a long way since its beginnings in 1894. It has remained a constant in a town where people have come and gone, and the old west era has changed into the modern times. The Wolf Hotel building stands today in Ellinwood as a landmark to times that once were and hopefully will be again.

John Wolf and Fred Wolf

The legacy of the Wolf family in Ellinwood, Kansas, is an important one. Their accomplishments were profound in a new town in the west, where technology and modern conveniences were non-existent. They worked as only immigrants can work, beginning lives with nothing and ending immortalized in a town's history. Today, there are no living Wolf descendants in Ellinwood. The Wolf businesses that were once renowned across several states have not operated for years. Even the buildings the family owned or the houses they built with the money they earned stand vacant or occupied with non-Wolf businesses. Yet, the people of Ellinwood still long to tell the Wolfs' story, and there is still pride in the town for the family who struck it rich without ever feeling the burden of having money.

In 1862, John Wolf arrived in America. Born in Bremen, Germany, in 1848, John Wolf grew up in his town with a neighbor that was a sea captain by trade. Never having any intention of immigrating to America, he must have had a certain affinity for traveling, for he pestered his neighbor to take him on a journey to America, where the sea captain often sailed. The sea captain finally agreed to take young John on the voyage across the Atlantic and at age 14, John Wolf left Germany, never to return to his homeland again.

On the boat, an older woman took a liking to young John and decided to help the young man along in his life. When the vessel reached America, the sea captain was forced to wait until he received enough freight to sail back to Germany. While waiting for the freight, John accompanied the older woman to Cincinnati, Ohio, where he began to assimilate to the American way of life. When it came time for the ship to return to Germany, John made the decision to stay. After a few years in Cincinnati, John decided to move to another Ohio town, where he began working as a butcher and stock dealer. Even after John had made his money in Ellinwood, Kansas, and he had established a family, it was well-known throughout the town that every year he made the pilgrimage to Cincinnati to visit his old friend that helped him out of sheer human kindness.

In Toledo, Ohio, John Wolf's life as an American truly began. He worked and grew to adulthood, and finally married the popular and lovely Mary Katherine Haas in 1871. In 1876, the Wolf family, now consisting of son Fred and daughter Kate, moved to Kansas where they lived in Sterling for just one year and then in 1877, the family permanently moved to Ellinwood.

The Wolf family built a residence on the west side of Ellinwood, almost directly on the Santa Fe Trail. A story told by an Ellinwood-native says that while Mr. Wolf was "setting out trees [on his property], Mr. Wolf found many remains of posts in the ground and on inquiry found that here was once located the old Clark trading post in the early days where business was carried on with the Indians, and back of the houses and barns on the banks of the creek he found where the first settlers had been killed as indicated by many scalps and skulls lying about, which were said to be those of white men." While this story can sufficiently be classified as truly hearsay, it can be safely said that John Wolf was an early pioneer of Ellinwood and his actions and decisions were influential in the beginning years of the town.

Upon arriving in Ellinwood, John Wolf's first business purchase was the town brewery, which had been erected in 1876. The first and only brewery in Ellinwood and the only brewery in the surrounding area, The Wolf Brewery prospered until 1884 when Kansas state law abolished the manufacture of liquors and spirits in the state. Consequently, Mr. Wolf converted the brewery into the first cold storage plant and wholesale dealer of liquors and spirits in Ellinwood and in the surrounding area, which grew to become one of the largest wholesale dealers in keg and bottled goods in Kansas and eastern Colorado. As Mr. Wolf built his new house on the newly developed

southern edge of town, he also built a large pond to be used by the town for fishing and as a picnic and gathering point. In the winter, however, Mr. Wolf would hire workers to cut the ice from the pond and transport it to the cold storage facility where ice was available for sale to anyone who wanted to purchase it. It was the first business of its kind in the area and made the M.K. Wolf Company famous.

To encompass his growing business adventures, Mr. Wolf created the M.K. Wolf Company, named for his wife, Margaret Katherine Wolf. It was under the M.K. Wolf Company, for instance, that Mr. Wolf purchased lots 17 and 18 of block 10 in Ellinwood, the future site of the Wolf Hotel building.

Mr. Wolf already owned several lots in the downtown area of Ellinwood. The adjoining lots to the north of lots 17 and 18 were some of his original purchases in the town. Mr. Wolf and his son, Fred, owned property in downtown Ellinwood, but never owned the businesses that rented the property from them. Therefore, their influence in updating the property and its furnishings throughout their ownership, especially in the Wolf Hotel building's history, is very important because it reflects not only the business aspect of owning property, but the pride in downtown Ellinwood looking modern and up-to-date. Aside from Ellinwood property, Mr. Wolf also held the deeds to city property in the business sections of the Kansas towns of Great Bend, Claflin, and Olmitz. Mr. Wolf also owned approximately 2,000 acres of land in Barton and Stafford counties, the majority of which was rented out to area farmers.

In 1900, the M.K. Wolf Company was changed to the M.K. Wolf & Company to include Mr. Wolf's son Fred, and son-in-law George M. Heim. Taking the lead of the patriarch of the family, Fred Wolf and George Heim immediately invested money in a milling business, the Wolf Milling Company, in 1908, which was located directly on the railroad track on the southwest corner of the town. It provided an alternative to the brewery business of Mr. Wolf's, as well as a market for the ever-increasing wheat production of the area. Their business that produced "Wolf's Premium Flour" was renowned as one of the largest flour manufacturers in the Midwest.

In 1916, Mr. Wolf, at the age of 68, died unexpectedly. His obituary that appeared in the newspaper declared him to be "one of the main factors in the upbuilding of Ellinwood." He was a town leader and a town pioneer. He stood up for his community, which was echoed in his obituary: "the outstanding impression is that of his thorough-going goodness to the community." "[H]e was for Ellinwood and anything for the town's betterment, and commanded the respect of all sects and classes of people..." He was a regular presence in downtown business affairs, and he had always taken an active interest in public affairs, doing his best to promote the welfare and advancement of the town. Mr. Wolf had served on the city council, the school board, and as township treasurer, all positions that his son, Fred Wolf, would also hold. Mr. Wolf was also a member of the Masonic fraternity, the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, Knights of Pythias, and the Elks. John Wolf was Ellinwood as much as Ellinwood was John Wolf, and rare

as this trait is in a person, it is even rarer indeed that his son was as much and even more so devoted to the town that father and son shared.

With the passing of his father, Fred Wolf, along with his brother-in-law George Heim, inherited the M.K. Wolf & Company business responsibilities. Fred was not inexperienced by any means when it came to running the businesses in Ellinwood. He had worked in the brewery and in the mill, side-by-side fellow laborers, in order to better understand the business at hand. Fred Wolf was unusual in the sense that he knew the regular people of the town—the farmers, the laborers, the blue-collar folks that he met on the street and played cards with at the pool hall.

Fred had grown to adulthood in Ellinwood, the product of the Ellinwood school system. In 1901, he married the Kansas City socialite Miss Lotta Schaeffer, and to this union produced three children, two of which would die tragically young. Despite some hardship in his life, Fred Wolf would epitomize the example of a true public servant to the city of Ellinwood.

By the time of his marriage, Fred was already a member of the Masonic fraternity, the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, and the Elks. He had already served for eight years as the city clerk and for three years as the township treasurer. The years of service in these two offices would more than triple by the end of his life. He was also a seemingly life-long appointment to the school board, which he was currently serving on at the time of his death in 1939. Besides the giving of his time and knowledge to his town, Fred Wolf also gave of his finances. Quoted in his obituary, "[Fred] enjoyed seeing old buildings fixed up and put to good use." In fact, that was exactly what he did with the old brewery building. He refurbished the inside and donated it to the American Legion for its use. When the Twentieth Century Ladies Club discussed opening a library for the town, but lacked a proper place, Fred again fixed up a room in one of the basement rooms underneath the People's State Bank in the Wolf Hotel building, and gave it rent-free for the library. The gentlemen of the town who used that room to play cards every afternoon were not left out, for Fred fixed up another room in the basement for their use.

The Boy Scouts in town were without a proper place to conduct meetings and events, and therefore, the number in the club was diminishing. In response to the problem, Fred Wolf and his son, Fred Wolf, Jr., designed and built a log cabin on Wolf property for the Boy Scouts' use. They also made it their personal responsibility to see to it that the log cabin always had enough firewood stacked outside and the most up-to-date games, books, and toys on the inside. The only green golf course in Western Kansas in the early 20th Century belonged to Fred Wolf, which he opened freely to the public. In order to encourage the game, he built a clubhouse on the course where players could store their golf clubs and get together before and after rounds. The Wolf tennis courts, also located on Wolf property, were opened to the public as well. And finally, Fred donated land directly north of downtown for a city

park, where a bandshell was erected for public use. Bushes and roses were planted around the park, where many social events took place and still do.

When he passed away in 1939, the town mourned one of its great public servants. Commented one local woman in the two-page obituary in the local newspaper, "I can't believe I'll never see him on Main Street again." A memorial, designed by an east coast artist and paid for by some of Kansas City's most successful businessmen, was placed in Wolf Park to remind future generations of Ellinwood's great "native son."

Bibliography

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Voigt, S. S. Architectural Drawings. "A Café for Fred Wolf, Ellinwood, Kansas." October 1923.

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located on Lots 17 and 18 in Block 10, Ellinwood Original Townsite. The property is bounded to the west by North Main, to the south by East Santa Fe and to the east and north by adjacent property lines.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property contains all land historically associated with it.

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Photographs

Wolf Hotel
Ellinwood, Barton County, KS
Martha Hagedorn-Krass
May, 2000
Kansas State Historical Society

1. Northeast view, west facade, south elevation
2. Northwest view, south elevation, east elevation
3. Original bank area, east view
4. Sunflower dining room, southeast view

Property Owners

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