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 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name WHITESITT-SHIRK HISTORIC DISTRICT

other names/site number 037-4460-0079 AND 037-4460-0080

## 2. Location

street & number 116 E. LINDBURG AND 120 E. LINDBURG ☐ not for publication

city or town PITTSBURG ☐ vicinity

state KANSAS code KS county CRAWFORD code 037 zip code 66762

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ 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 ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Richard D. Pankratz 1-16-02
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
State of 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 hereby 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:)

WHITESITT-SHIRK HISTORIC DI' 'ICT
Name of Property

CRAWFO' COUNTY, KANSAS
County and State

## 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- [x] private
- [ ] public-local
- [ ] public-State
- [ ] public-Federal

**Category of Property**
(Check only one box)

- [ ] building(s)
- [x] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

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

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|---|---|---|
| 4 | | buildings |
| | | sites |
| | | structures |
| | | objects |
| 4 | | 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)

DOMESTIC: SINGLE DWELLING

**Current Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: SINGLE DWELLING

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: BUNGALOW/CRAFTSMAN

**Materials**
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls WOOD: WEATHERBOARD, SHINGLE
roof ASPHALT
other

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

## 8. Statement of Significance

**Applicable National Register Criteria**
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☒ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

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

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION
ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1914 - 1950

**Significant Dates**

1914, 1916, 1935, 1950

**Significant Person**
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

WHITESITT, ANDREW H.
SHIRK, A.J. GARFIELD

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

WHITESITT, ANDREW H.

**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):**

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

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:

KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WHITESITT-SHIRK HISTORIC D' 'RICT
Name of Property

CRAW' 'D COUNTY, KANSAS
County a... State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** LESS THAN 10 ACRES

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

| | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 15 | 349140 | 4139320 |
| 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 LURA LARSSON PATRICK

organization _____ date AUGUST 4, 2001

street & number 120 E. LINDBURG telephone 620-231-8989

city or town PITTSBURG state KS zip code 66762

## 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 the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

## Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name 1. BERT AND LURA PATRICK
2. JACK AND DORIS OVERMAN

street & number 1. 120 E. LINDBURG
2. 116 E. LINDBURG

telephone 1. 620-231-8989
2. 620-231-6111

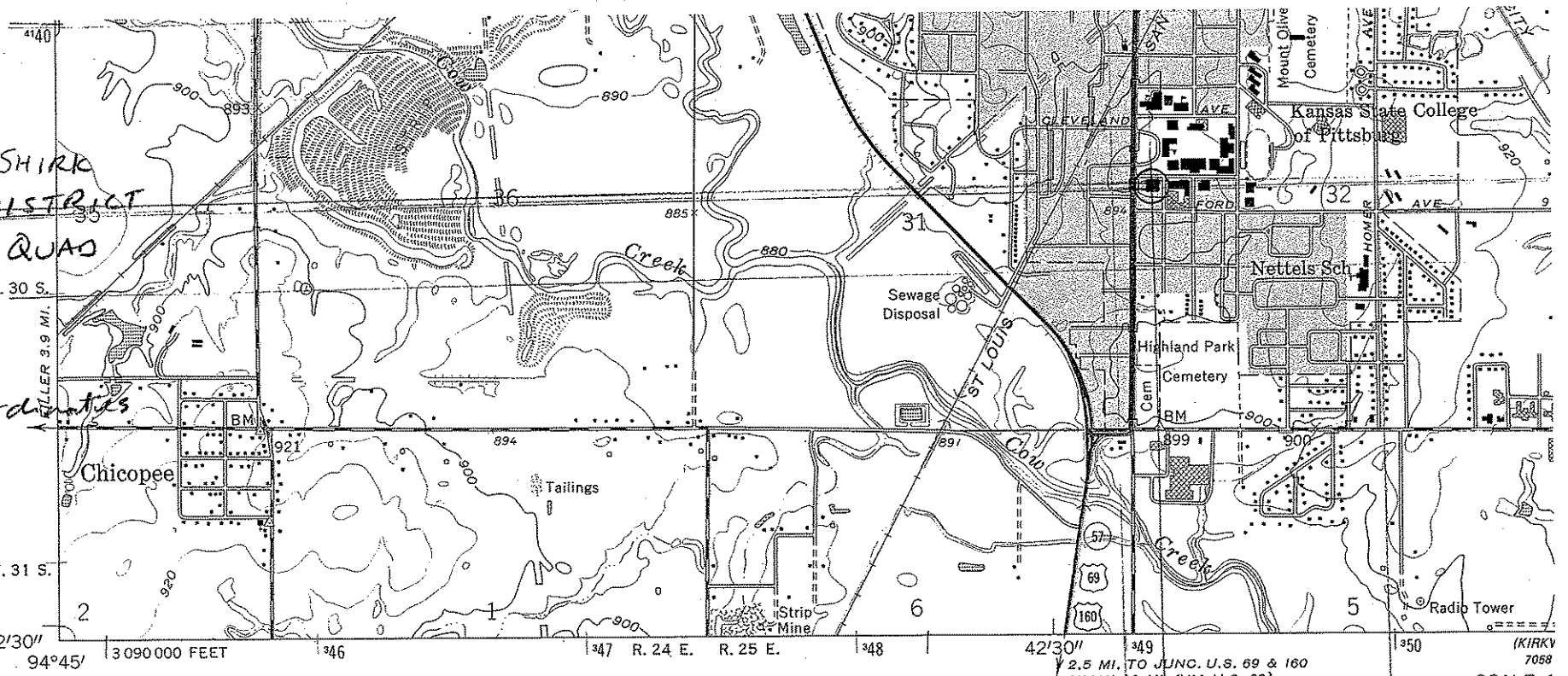
city or town PITTSBURG state KANSAS zip code 66762

**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.

US GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1993 O - 350-416 QL 3

WHITESITT-SHIRK
HISTORIC DISTRICT
PITTSBURG QUAD
15 349140
4139320
UTM Coordinates




Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey in cooperation with State of Kansas agencies

Control by USGS and USC&GS

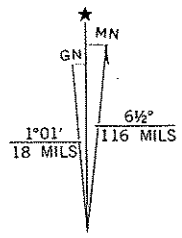
Topography from aerial photographs by photogrammetric methods
Aerial photographs taken 1958. Field check 1959

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Kansas coordinate system, south zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with State of Kansas agencies from aerial photographs taken 1977. Map edited 1978. This information not field checked

Areas bounded by dashed purple lines and printed with disturbed surface pattern represent reclaimed mining areas




UTM GRID AND 1978 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIO
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER
AND STATE GEOLOGICAL SURV
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS

**The Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District**
**Pittsburg, KS**

## Description Overview

The Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District is located at 120 E. Lindburg and 116 E. Lindburg, respectively, in the College Park Addition, Pittsburg, Crawford County, Kansas. The properties for these houses were bought in 1914 and the houses were completed by the early part of 1916. Both houses front Lindburg Street to the north and an alley to the south which is located between Lindburg and Ford Streets. To the east of the Whitesitt House is Locust Street and to the west is the Shirk House. The Shirk House faces west onto adjoining property. The houses are located in what is known as College Park Addition which was originally platted as Broadway Park Addition but was changed in 1914 because of the proximity to the Kansas State Manual Training Normal School (Pittsburg State University today) as well as to the professors who built the original houses and who owned the property in Blocks 1 and 2 just south of the college. This area was called "Professors' Row" because of the four original owners of these houses: President William A. Brandenburg, Dr. James Yates, Mr. J. A. Garfield Shirk, and Mr. Andrew H. Whitesitt. These men were the founding fathers of what today is Pittsburg State University, and they all have buildings on campus named after them.

The original integrity of the exterior and interiors of both houses in the Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District is still intact. The only exterior change has been made to the Whitesitt House with the back porch being replaced with a deck. However, the original porch overhang which has a front gabled roof and asphalt shingles is still in its original place. The original garage was replaced at least by the 1940s with a two car garage with attic storage. The only change to the Shirk House was an add-on to the garage. In both houses only the kitchens have been altered and the basements converted into apartments. Minor changes have been made to update both houses. Early pictures from 1917 show that the two houses have retained their original look.

The Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District is unique in Pittsburg. The majority of the family houses built in 1914-1916 were small company homes originally occupied by miners and smelters and their families. Most of the Pittsburg residents through World War I were miners or smelters and their houses were square- and T-shaped houses. Although some houses were built in similar styles to the Whitesitt-Shirk homes during the 1920s, few

**The Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District**
**Pittsburg, KS**

Description Overview (continued)

were built in Pittsburg prior to World War I. These homes were also made with the best of materials and there is fine craftsmanship and attention to detail in both houses.

## The Whitesitt House

**Whitesitt House Exterior Description Overview:**

The Whitesitt House (1914-1916) is located at 120 E. Lindburg Street, in the College Park Addition, Pittsburg, Crawford County, Kansas. It fronts north onto Lindburg Street, east to Locust Street, south to an alley and west to adjacent property known as the Shirk House. It is a framed two story pre-World War I (early 20th century) house with elements of the Craftsman style. It has a rectangular plan and a one story front and back porch/deck which cover most of the front and backsides of the house. There is a full finished basement and an unfinished attic. The walls are horizontal wooden clapboards, the foundation is of molded decorative concrete blocks and the front gabled roof with wide eave overhangs is crowned with squared asphalt shingling. Parts of the original green painted wooden shingles are still found in the attic of the house. There is a brick fireplace chimney but originally, there were two chimneys: one for the coal/wood-burning fireplace and the other for the coal-burning furnace. The roof wall junction has wide eave overhangs with the rafter ends exposed. There are contrasting colors on the eaves, cornices, window facings, fascia and string courses as it was originally and there is an emphasis on the horizontal decorations.

The walls are of horizontal six (6) inch wood clapboards on the lower level and a three (3) inch clapboard on the second level. Wrapping around the entire house, a horizontal string course separates the basement from the first floor, the first from the second floor and another that runs under the eaves of the attic area. To add architectural interest to the house and to break up the horizontal string courses, vertical string courses on each of the corners of the house have been placed. Above all the doors and windows of the house and garage there are decorative cornices and simple moldings are under the eaves and

**The Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District**
**Pittsburg, KS**

Description Overview (continued)

joints. A string course wraps around the bay window on the west side of the house. The shed roof over the bay window has a generous eave overhang with exposed rafters.

There are 9 rooms in the main section of the house: 5 bedrooms, 1 full bath, one dining room, one kitchen, and one living room. Because the basement had been converted into apartments in 1966, there are two full baths and two bedroom/living rooms with kitchen facilties in the basement. An additional room houses the original coal furnace which has been converted to a gas burning furnace.

**North Façade:**

The north-fronted porch is accessed by six steps onto a wide, off-center entrance toward the east side. It is a one story, front-gabled roof with squared asphalt shingling. It is supported from the ground to the top of the balustrades by piers of decorative concrete blocks and by two (2) sets of double columns which are placed on concrete squares at both ends of the porch. These are sloping side columns. Balustrades on all three sides of the porch are broken only by the opening for the stairway. Original to the house is the porch light, the wooden ceiling and the floor of the porch. (The floor is now covered with indoor/outdoor carpet.) The front door is solid oak with three rectangular, vertical sections of beveled glass.

All fenestration consists of rectangular double hung sash windows with vertical panes with the exception of the basement windows and they are all horizontal awning windows with four (4) vertical panes. There are aluminum storm windows on all the windows of the house and storm doors on the front and back doors. Originally, there were wooden storm doors and screens. All the windows and doors in the house, except the basement door, are original to the house.

Fenestration on the lower level north side, from east to west, consists of two rectangular single configurations with vertical 5/1 and 6/1 respectively with the front door placed between; the upper level with two single configurations with 6/1 in both; and the attic

**The Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District**
**Pittsburg, KS**

Description Overview (continued)

level with one double configuration of horizontal windows of five (5) vertical panes in each.

**West Façade:**

Running from north to south, the basement level west side has three (3) single windows with four (4) vertical panes. The lower level consists of one triple configuration (bay windows) with 3/1 in each; one configuration with 4/1 and one almost square 5/1. The upper west side has two single configurations with 5/1, 4/1 and one double configuration of 5/1, 5/1.

**South Façade:**

The south side fenetration, from west to east, consists of two basement awning windows with four (4) vertical panes. The southeast window was originally used as a coal chute. On the lower level there are two single configurations of 5/1. Between the windows is a wood back door that consists of four (4) vertical panes on the upper half and horizontal wood panels on the lower half. The upper level consists of one double configuration of 5/1; and two singular configurations of 5/1.

**East Façade:**

The east side, from south to north, consists of two basement awning windows with four (4) vertical panes each. There is a basement metal door between the windows that is accessed from the east by seven (7) steps. This was added in 1966. The lower level has three (3) single configurations of 5/1. The upper level fenestration consists of one singular with 5/1 and one double with 5/1.

**The Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District**
**Pittsburg, KS**

Description Overview (continued)

**Garage:**

On the southwest side of the house echoing the house in design and materials, there is a two-story, two-car garage built sometime in the late 1930s or early 1940s. The original garage was located close to the entrance of the driveway which was reached from the Locust Street entrance as it is today. This was a one car garage built sometime in the 1920s. The present two garage doors pierce the east façade and each door is divided into 20 rectangular, vertical panels with two of these having small, rectangular, vertical one pane windows. On the north side, there is one rectangular, horizontal window with five (5) vertical panes; on the west side there is a door in the middle of the lower level and a rectangular, horizontal window on the second level with one horizontal pane; the south side has one rectangular horizontal window with 5 vertical panes. The roof is front gabled with an open eave overhang. Inside, there is a stairway that runs from the west wall upwards toward the east to get into the upper level of the garage. This is used for storage whereas the lower level is used for cars. To the north of the garage, there is a brick patio that was laid in the late 1940's. Just south of the garage, there are parking spaces for three (3) vehicles.

**Interesting Landscaping Details:**

A variety of trees were planted by the Whitesitts including several ash, elm and pin oak trees. These trees still survive on the property except for the pin oak which was damaged in a wind storm in April, 2001 and removed. It is known that this pin oak tree was planted in 1937 by a Mr. Allen who was one of Mr. Whitesitt's students. To the north of the property, spirea and japonica bushes were planted and they still exist on the property. On the east and south sides there are irises and rose bushes that were planted by the Whitesitts. A concrete bench just to the south of the deck has been in the same place since at least 1924 as seen in a photograph from the Whitesitt family archives. To the south and west sides of the house is a brick patio that was put in by Mr. McMillan in the 1940's.

**The Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District**
**Pittsburg, KS**

Description Overview (continued)

**Whitesitt House Interior Description:**

**Overview:**

There are nine (9) rooms in the house: five (5) bedrooms, one (1) full bath, one (1)dining room, one (1) kitchen, and one (1) living room. Because the basement had been converted into apartments in 1966, there are two full baths and two bedroom/living rooms with kitchen facilties in the basement. There is an additional room which houses the original coal furnace which has been converted to a gas burning furnace. The interior of the first and second floors of the Whitesitt House retains its original floor plan and detailing except for the kitchen which was remodeled in the late 1940's by Edmond and Mary Fenimore McMillan and extensively remodeled in 1987 by Bert and Lura Patrick. The first level is arranged by having one room lead into another except for the downstair's bedroom/study which is accessed through the southeast cormer of the living room. All the woodwork on the first floor is oak and the living and dining rooms have quarter-sawed oak. All the woodwork is trimmed with slightly tapered architrave trim molding. There are generous baseboards throughout the house as well as picture moldings. Except for the kitchen, which has linoleum, all the floors are hardwood covered with carpeting. The walls throughout the house are made with lathe and plaster. All doors in the house have their original door handles and locksets as well as having large recessed panels. While the Whitesitts inhabited the house, most of the furniture for the house was made by Mr. Whitesitt. There are several pieces remaining in the family including a desk, a footstool, twin beds, a round table, a dresser and a double bed.

**First Floor Description:**

The house is accessed through the north entrance off of Lindburg Street, through a front porch, into the living room. On the west wall of the living room there is an entrance into the dining room through two oak French doors that have 15 panes of beveled glass in each door that match the beveled glass on the front entry door. Also on the west wall is a generous opening into the stairwell area and the kitchen. On the south wall, centered in

**The Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District**
**Pittsburg, KS**

Description Overview (continued)

the living room, is a coal/wood-burning fireplace. It is constructed of bricks that have been painted (not originally) and topped with a simple mantle of quarter-sawed oak. Originally over the mantle, there were two light fixtures on each side and a landscape print that was acquired around 1912-1913. According to Robert Whitesitt, grandson of Andrew and Ada Whitesitt, the painting went with Ada Whitesitt to a nursing home and Robert's mother took it to make a copy. Shortly after being returned, it was stolen, never to reappear. The copy has remained in the family and is a treasured item. Adjacent and to the west of the mantle is an area that joins with the stairwell. This is paneled with quarter-sawed oak. Originally, there was a bench that opened to put coal or wood into for the fireplace. There was also a place for the telephone. Today, this area has a cold air register (which was installed when the basement was converted into apartments in 1966) and now holds a love seat to imitate the original idea. A small opening at the base of the panel on the stairwell held some treasures of some of the children who had lived in the house. The entrance into this area has a ledge so as to be able to see into the living from about the third step up.

To the east of the fireplace, a door leads into the bedroom/study. Mr. Whitesitt used this room as a study and had in there a large solid walnut William and Mary desk that he himself had constructed in the early 1920's. Today this is used as a study/television room. A guest closet occupies the northwest wall.

To the west of the living room is the stairwell and kitchen areas. Originally, the kitchen had a pantry on the north wall with built-in cabinets with drawers and glass fronted doors. There was an opening in the middle of this wall which led into the dining room for easy serving. Two of these glass doors still remain on the property. This kitchen has undergone at least two major renovations. During the first renovation, there were cabinets built in on the west wall but only to where the original pantry began. Just to the left of the sink, on the south end, there was one large upper and lower wooden cabinet and to the lower right on the north end, there was a cabinet with drawers. Under the single sink unit, there were metal cabinets. On the upper north end, there was a wooden cabinet finished off below with a bookshelf. In 1966, the owner, Jack Overman, rewired the

**The Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District**
**Pittsburg, KS**

Description Overview (continued)

house and redid the plumbing so the kitchen would house a washer and dryer in the area where the original pantry would have been. In 1987, the Bert Patricks added built-in cabinets and a projecting counter on the west wall and cabinets on the south and east walls from the soffitts to the floor. A tin ceiling (made from original 1902 molds) was put in. There is a small vestibule to the east side of the kitchen that contains the basement (north side) and back (south side) doors which face each other. On the north side to the east is a closet area. All the original woodwork in the kitchen has been painted.

The dining room to the northwest of the kitchen is accessed through a swivel door (now removed but still on the property). The dining room boasts a beautiful built-in quarter-sawed oak cabinet which forms the bay window area. This has a center of two (2) small drawers on the top and three (3) large drawers that go to the floor. The drawers are accented with Japanese influenced solid brass pulls. On each side of the drawers are two cabinets with shelves. Each unit has two (2) vertical, rectangular doors with vertical 3/1 glazing. Small, square, solid brass pulls open the cabinet doors. There is a simplistic, almost Wrightian feel about the cabinet and the woodwork around the windows, doors, cabinet and baseboards. They are all in very good condition. The dining room has a prominent place for a portrait of the Whitesitt family as well as a gold dish that a renter of the upper level northwest bedroom gave to Mrs. Whitesitt.

**Second Floor Description:**

The first and second story floorplans are aligned around a central oak staircase (now carpeted) which is accessed from the north side of the kitchen. There are thirteen (13) steps that go straight south up to the landing and four (4) more that head back north to the second story. The floorplan upstairs consists of a large hallway with four (4) bedrooms and one full bathroom accessed by it. All the woodwork around the doors and windows on the second level has a flat profile and it has all been painted. All doors in the house have their original door handles and locksets. There is picture molding in each room and in the hallway and there are generous baseboards throughout.

**The Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District**
**Pittsburg, KS**

Description Overview (continued)

The bathroom is the middle room on the west wall and it still has the original skirted cast iron bathtub. There is a single lavatory and stool on the south wall. The medicine cabinet is original to the house and contains plate glass shelves. Originally, there was a laundry chute on the south wall that would take the clothes to the basement laundry area but with the remodeling of the house in 1966, this was closed off. The door still remains intact. Congo board was put up around the late 1940's-1950's and it is still on the walls as wainscoting. The floor is lineoleum but has been carpeted.

To the north of the bathroom is a spacious bedroom which was rented out by Mrs. Whitesitt for her "pin money." There is a large closet on the east side of this room.

On the northeast side of the upper level is the master bedroom which has two closets (one on the northwest wall and one on the south wall). The entrance to the attic is accessed through the south closet.

On the south side, there are two smaller bedrooms. The room in the southeast corner has been made into a study with built-in bookshelves on the east wall added in 1998. There is a spacious walk-in closet in this room as well. The other south bedroom is quite small and houses a very small closet.

**Attic Description:**

The attic was never finished and entrance is gained through a small hinged door through the walk-in closet of the master bedroom. There is flooring to get to the two windows on the north side.

**Basement Description:**

The basement is accessed through the back entry by stairs from the south end of the first level and by steps from the outside in the middle of the east side of the house. The latter leads into what is now the furnace room. The basement runs the length and width of the

**The Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District**
**Pittsburg, KS**

Description Overview (continued)

house. To the north of the furnace room, there is a large room that runs the length of the north wall. On the west wall there is a facility for a kitchen and a full bath. To the south of the furnace room, there is a laundry room and workshop where the original coal room was. To the west of this room is a full bath. The stairs leading to the basement from the first floor run parallel to both basement bathrooms and the furnace room is directly to the east. Originally, the basement had the furnace, the laundry and a small workshop for Mr. Whitesitt. In 1966 the basement was converted into two fully equipped apartments.

## II. The Shirk House

**Shirk House Exterior Description Overview:**

The Shirk House (1914-1916) is located at 116 E. Lindburg Street, in the College Park Addition, Pittsburg, Crawford County, Kansas. It fronts north onto Lindburg Street, east to adjacent property known as the Whitesitt house, south onto an alley that runs east and west and which is located between Lindburg and Ford Streets, and west onto adjacent property. It is a classic two story, frame, pre-World War I style Craftsman bungalow with a rectangular plan and a front porch that almost covers the front of the house. There is horizontal clapbord siding, contrasting colors on the eaves and cornices, boxed in rafters, a broad flat chimney, a large porch, dormers on both the front and back, and a side-gabled roof with a wide eave overhang. A string course runs on the upper half of the north and south sides between the gabled dormer and the roof and one that skirts the entire house between the basement and first levels. This is finished out with moldings. Moldings are also found all around the roof edges as well as above all the windows and doors in the house. The corners of the house and the north side of the garage have unique architectural features of rake molding. The corners are mitered to 45 degrees. There are architectual tabbed asphalt shingles on the roof and overhangs. The walls are 3" clapboards, the foundation is of molded decorative concrete blocks and the roof is a side-gable with a break in the slope that creates a gently sloping, wide roof span and is accented with 45°

**The Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District**
**Pittsburg, KS**

Description Overview (continued)

mitered corners and it is all surmounted by architectural tabbed asphalt shingles. The original green painted wood shingles are still on the house under three layers of shingles. There is a full finished basement which has been converted into three apartments and an unfinished attic. Standing southeast of the house is a separate garage, which echoes the design and materials of the house.

**North Façade:**

On the northern façade, there is a side-gabled roof. On the first level, the windows to the east side are grouped in triple configuration with 3/1, 6/l, 3/l. Those to the west side are in triple configuration with 3/1, 7/1, 3/1. The front door is located between these two window units and consists of the upper portion of three (3) rectangular, vertical beveled glass units with the lower half of the door in flat solid oak wood. An original screen door with decorative metal protection is still used as is the original storm door. The original hardware is still being used on all three doors. There is a screened-in porch which is original to the house with a crank on the east inside porch wall to raise and lower an awning on the east side of the house. All the gears and pulley systems for all the awnings, lights, doors, etc. on the house and garage were made by Mr. Shirk. Front entry is reached from Lindburg Street from the north through an oversized screen door that opens onto the original wooden floored porch. The screened porch door unit is unique in that it is made from steel braces while the others on the porch are wooden. This steel brace has a screw jack that is used to jack up the porch if it starts to sag. These screen units are original to the house. There are four brick pillars that support the roof of the porch, two of which are full length and the two by the stairs are stepped and just reach the top of the stairs. They are finished with squared concrete caps. The porch light is original to the house as are the doorbells. There is a doorbell outside on the screen, one on the porch by the front door and one at the rear entrance. Each of these bells has a distinct sound to be able to identify which door to answer. There is a system on the front step that, when stepped on, makes the porch light go on so no one need go onto the screened porch in the dark, nor could someone successfully hide there. This is still there but a new wire needs to be installed for it to be functional. On the upper level, the fenestration consists of five (5) rectangular, vertical, 4/1 double hung sash windows.

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Description Overview (continued)

**West Façade:**

On the basement west side there are three horizontal, rectangular, awning windows with 4 vertical panes. On the lower level moving from north to south, there are two rectangular, vertical windows with five (5) vertical panes on each side of the original coal/wood burning fireplace, and one rectangular window with 5/1 vertical glazing. Another window is 6/l. On the upper level from north to south, fenestration consists of a rectangular, vertical 5/1 and a double configuration of the same 5/1. The brick chimney runs up the west side of the house. Original hardware is still on all the windows.

**South Façade:**

On the south side, the basement windows have two rectangular, horizontal awning windows with 4 vertical panes. There is a basement storm door, six steps down, that is aluminum and glass and is not original to the house. Formed steel railings on each side of the entrance to the basement are original to the house. On the main level from west to east, there is a double configuration with 5/1, another with the same and a singular configuration with 6/1. There is a back entrance on the east side of the south side with a solid wood door with the upper portion having rectangular, vertical 3 panes and the bottom recessed wood panels that run horizontally. An interesting item about the door is a cabinet handle that is placed close to the hinged part of the door. Mr. Shirk put that on because there is a step down from the back entrance up into the house and instead of having to go back up the step to grab the doorhandle, he just pulled on the cabinet handle and the door closed easily, saving the extra effort. Between the back door and the basement door, there is an opening for the milkman to put the milk into and this can be opened from the inside as well. There is an outdoor light to the far east of the south side which is on a pulley system and this can be turned on outside or inside. All these mechanisms were made by Mr. Shirk. On the upper level, there are five horizontal, rectangular windows with vertical 4/1 double hung sash windows.

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Description Overview (continued)

**East Façade:**

On the east side, the basement has 3 rectangular, horizontal awning windows with 4 vertical panes each. On the first level from south to north, there are rectangular, vertical, double hung sash windows with double configuration of 4/1; another double with 4/1 and a quadruple with 3/1. The latter is part of a bay window. The upper level east side is fenestrated with 3 rectangular, vertical, double hung sash windows with 4/1.

**Garage:**

The original garage, built in 1915-1916, is a one story clapboard which stands southwest of the home. The building maintains a northern façade orientation and is accessed by a driveway from Lindburg Street. The garage stands on a concrete foundation and is surmounted by a side-gabled roof with architectural tabbed asphalt shingles. A single garage door pierces the north façade and is divided into 12 panels. The upper one half has four rectangular, vertical windows. Originally, the garage door was a three section roll around door that was on an upper track. It was driven by a series of pulleys and weights that Mr. Shirk had designed and built himself. With the pull of a latch found to the east of the garage door opening, a mercury switch would be activated to start the pulley system which would open the garage door into the interior east wall of the garage. This was the forerunner of the automatic garage door opener. This is no longer there but there is a new automatic garage door opener. On the outside of the garage, just under the peak and over the garage door, is an original thermometer from the Simpson Oil Co, Inc. from Clermont, Indiana. It reads "Good fuel makes warm friends." There is another original thermometer on the north of the garage on the east side of the door. The west façade is pierced by two horizontal, rectangular windows with four (4) vertical panes and one entry door that is located on the south end of the west side in the newer lean-to addition. This addition was added onto the south of the garage in the early 1970's. The lean-to does not have overhangs; it has a shed roof. On the south side, there is one horizontal, rectangular window with four (4) vertical panes and this is copied on the east side by two windows with the same description. The garage echoes the house in style, workmanship and color.

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Description Overview (continued)

Originally, green painted wooden shingles were used and these are still on the roof under the asphalt shingling. In fact, a whole history of the shingling of the house and garage can be seen there.

**Sheds:**

The property also holds two wooden sheds on the west side of the house which were bought in 1985. They both have curb roofs and are painted to match the color of the house and garage. They are topped with three-tab asphalt shingling. The flooring is of wood.

**Interesting Details:**

There are many fascinating items found in and around the yard and house. One interesting detail is that Mr. Shirk put in a great number of outdoor faucets: 3 on the east side, one on the north; one on the west; one on the south and another on the south that is a mixing faucet for any temperature; and one faucet in the middle of the property to the west of the lot between the house and the alley for the bird bath. This was probably installed because the backyard originally was covered with many rose arbors and also had all elm trees in the yard. (The elms fell victim to Dutch elm disease and all had to be removed in the 1950's; the roses were removed by Jack Overman.) In order to avoid having to dig up the yard in case there was a sewer problem, Mr. Shirk had built a 3' x 5' wide , 10' deep brick room built with a heavy metal lid covering it. A plumber can climb down into it and ream the sewer to the house or to the alley.

**Shirk House Interior Description Overview:**

The original floor plans for the interior of the Shirk House retain their original integrity except for the kitchen which was remodeled in 1977 and the basement which was made into apartments between 1956-1963. All rooms, including the hallway and stairway, are carpeted. Throughout the house, original doors, doorknobs, pulls, latches, mechanical

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Description Overview (continued)

mechanisms, keys, knobs, and hardware except on the kitchen and bathroom cabinets still exist. All the woodwork inside the house is flat. The walls are all lathe and plaster on the lower and upper levels.

**First Floor Description:**

The house is entered on the north façade through the screened-in porch and then through the solid oak front door into the living room. Directly west of the door is a push-button switch that turns on the porch light and another of unknown direction. Below this there is a plug-in for a radio hook-up. Instead of having an unattractive radio antenna installed on the roof of the house, Mr. Shirk installed wires in the attic and then placed plug-ins for the radio in the living room, dining room and family room so he could listen to the radio from several different places. There was never an overhead light in the living room. Any light was from lamps or from outside light. All the molding around the top of the room is picture molding and capped with a decorative concave molding that joins the wall to the ceiling. There are 8" baseboards throughout the house. On the west wall is the original coal/wood fireplace that is brick with a simple, thick oak mantlepiece. On each side of the fireplace are two unique windows with nice casings of solid oak. They have unique, original hinges and locks and are single hung windows that can be raised into the wall. The south wall houses a large, flat, oak woodwork opening that goes into a hallway and stairwell.

To the east of the living room, there is another large, flat, oak cased opening that goes into the dining room. The same molding and baseboards are in the dining room. On the east wall is a built-in oak buffet with two doors on both ends of the cabinet each containing two shelves. There are leaded glass doors and the pulls are solid brass squares. In the middle of the cabinet there are three (3) drawers on the top section and two (2) long drawers on the bottom section that were built to hold the extra leaves of the table. This is part of the bay window. The Japanese influenced drawpulls are original as well. All the woodwork is flat and generous. As in the living room, there is no overhead light. On the south wall to the east, there is a solid oak veneered swinging door which leads into the kitchen.

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Description Overview (continued)

The east wall of the kitchen has original cabinets that are painted. The kitchen was remodeled in 1977 but the original cabinets on the east wall are still in use except for one lower cabinet that was removed to afford space for a dishwasher. Above the sink a decorative trim was added. To the northside of the sink, there originally was a hole that held a porcelain sink with a machine beveled stainless steel lid. This had a drain on it and the hose connected to the sink drain. An ordinary miner's dinner bucket, with drain holes punched into the bottom, was placed inside the porcelain section for easy removal. Garbage was placed in this and all the liquid from the garbage would run through the hose into the drain and then the bucket could be lifted out and the garbage thrown out. This was an early version of a garbage disposal. In the bottom cabinet south of the sink, there is a heating vent on the lower shelf. Racks were placed in this so the dishtowels would dry and the air would then go into the cabinet under the sink through vents to heat the kitchen.

On the north wall, new cabinets as well as the range and a double oven were installed in the 1970's. The west wall houses original cabinets. To the north of the west wall there are several clever inventions by Mr. Shirk. There is a small door about half-way up the wall that is part of the laundry chute from the upstairs bathroom that goes into the basement. To the left of this is a cubbyhole for the telephone. It has a movable bottom so the telephone can come out to make it easier to dial or to take messages. Underneath that, there is another pull-out shelf that has a handle underneath. To the right of this cubby hole, there is a small area with a square cut out. This was for the tin cans which could be dropped into a container in the basement for easy removal. There is a 12 volt electrical light that provides a light for the telephone and this is hooked up to a transformer in the basement. A trap door with a brass pull on the opposite side of this telephone cubby-hole can be raised to easily get the telephone from the living room/hallway. In addition there is a light on this side that would come on if the attic fan were left running. A switch was used to shut it off, saving steps.

Under the telephone cubby-hole, there is another door that opens to a hole. When the kitchen was swept, there was no need to use a dustpan; everything was swept into the hole

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Description Overview (continued)

that led to a container in the basement. So, there was a place for laundry, tin cans and sweepings. To the south of this west wall, there is a doorway with a solid wood door, that leads into the family room. On the south wall there is an opening into the breakfast nook. Originally, this wall was solid except for the entry way. In 1977 the upper half of this wall was taken out and a counter was put in to make it easier to pass food into the breakfast nook and to be able to see out the large window. The trim above this counter echoes the trim above the kitchen sink. The breakfast nook contains a crank to open and close the awning on the south side of the house.

All the pulleys, gears, etc. were made by Mr. Shirk and they are still functional. All the picture molding in this room is painted as are all the kitchen cabinets. To the east side of the south wall of the kitchen, there is an entry with a door that has the upper half made of one pane of glass and the lower part of a recessed wood panel. This is opposite of a solid wood door to a utility closet. There is so little room between the doors that conventional, round doorknobs could not be used. There are small brass handles instead. Evidence shows that very little settling has occurred in the house because the doors can both be opened without hitting the other door. To the south are four steps that go down to the back door. There is a heat vent on the top stair so it would be warm when entering from outside. The extra door into the kitchen was closed to keep the rest of the house insulated from the outside cold or heat. One more step, after opening the back door, leads to the outside. Directly to the right and back north (just behind the utility closet), is another door that leads into the basement.

From the west entrance of the kitchen there is a family room. The east wall joins the breakfast nook and kitchen, the south wall houses the window units, the west wall to the north has another doorway with a solid oak door that leads into the guest bedroom. On the north wall, there are more push-button light switches and below this, and above the baseboard, there is a little 12 volt light that came on originally to let the Shirks know that a light had been left on in the basement. To avoid a trip to the basement, he pulled a chain which was hooked up to a transformer that shut off all the lights in the basement. This was taken out when the apartments were put in the basement in 1958. An entrance into

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Description Overview (continued)

the hallway between the family and living rooms boasts another solid oak door. There is picture molding around the top of the room. Original to the room is the chandelier.

On the west side of the family room there is an entrance into a guest bedroom. Opposite the door, on the west side of the room, there are two original wall lamps with chains. The overhead light was put in around 1958. There is painted picture molding at the top and painted baseboards. On the north wall there is another solid door that leads into a small bathroom. Just to the east, after entering the bathroom, is an original closet with two (2) shelves in the back and a rod to the front. This closet is under the stairwell so it slopes downward with the flow of the stairs. The trim on the door was added in the 1950s. The lavatory is not original but was placed where the original one was just north of the closet. A vertical shower unit was placed in the corner and is not original to the house. On the north wall, there is a stool where the original stool was. An original vent behind that stool has a pull switch that turns on a motor that will suck out any bad air or moisture. This was an early version of an exhaust fan. It still works. The cabinets above the stool were added in the 1950s.

Going back through the bedroom and the family room, there is a door on the northeast wall that leads into the hallway/stairwell area. Directly to the west is the staircase which has a Craftsman style solid oak banister on the south wall and beautiful oak woodwork on the north side. The opening into the hall from the stairs is supported by a square column topped with four blocks of ascending size. There is a balustrade in the upper 1/3 of the stairwell, with square railings. The lower 2/3rds is of solid oak paneling. Next to the stairway on the west side is a hall closet. There is a solid oak door that, when opened, has a light that automatically comes on and when closed, it shuts off. This functions by the use of a spring that was weighted and measured to strike on an open 110 volt wire which in turn would spark and turn on the light or would cut off the electrical source to shut off the light. This is another ingenious detail engineered by Mr. Shirk. To the north of this closet is the large opening into the living room and to the east wall, there is the oak trap door for the telephone. Beneath this, there is an oak air register with an oak grille of one-inch squares. To the south is the solid oak door that leads into the family room. The

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Description Overview (continued)

same moldings and baseboards found in the living room and dining room are also evident in this hallway. A beautiful original light fixture hangs at the base of the stairs.

Just to the left of the stairway on the south wall, three two-way push buttom switches are found and their match is found at the top of the stairs. There are fourteen steps that go up to the first landing and they are directed to the west. At the landing there is a wooden door with 15 panels of vertical glass with original latches for the door. The south side of the ceiling on the landing follows the curvature of the sloping roof. Turning back east, there is another set of four (4) steps that leads into a large hallway. There is a solid oak handrail that goes up the stairwell.

**Second Floor Description:**

The second story is entered from the stairwell on the west side into a wide hallway. Directly to the west is a small bedroom with a recessed panel solid wood door. All the woodwork, including the picture molding, is painted. The door and window facings are all flat in this room as they are in all the rooms of the upper and lower levels. There is a large closet on the west side of the room with an original light. Also on the west wall is an original light fixture that has a chain pull. On the west wall there is a projection that houses the chimney. The overhead light fixture is not original.

Coming back into the hallway, there is another typical door that leads north into the master bedroom. On the east wall is a solid wood door that leads into a large walk-in closet with an opening into the attic. Mr. Shirk created a tapered pole with two parts that could be adjusted to bend to whatever angle he needed. On one end there was a hook and on the other what looks like a wall doorstop. He used the hook to open and close the latch to the attic covering and the other end to pull down and push up an 8' ladder down from the attic for easier access. The trap door was hooked up to a series of weights and pulleys so when the latch was released, the door would easily go up. Just to the right of

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Description Overview (continued)

the opened trap door, there is a chain that is turned off and on by the hook end of the same pole used to open the door. While the attic fan is in use, the door is left open.

Back into the hallway to the east, is a rather large, rectangular bathroom. The north wall houses an original cabinet unit with a rectangular, vertical beveled mirror in the center and about 1/3 of the way down on both sides are medicine cabinets with the original plate glass shelves. A change was made to the doors of the medicine cabinets when new cabinets were installed in other areas of the bathroom so everything would match. The lavatory is directly under this unit and is not original but in the same place as the original. On each side of the medicine cabinet, there are original light fixtures and to the east of the vanity cabinet are original glass and porcelain towel racks. On the east wall, new cabinets were added in the late 1990. The south wall boasts the original skirted tub and stool (water closet) that was purchased and installed in November, 1915. Above the tub there are two more glass and porcelain towel racks. To the west there are new cabinets. Originally, there was one set of cabinets on this wall. Plain, flat chair rail molding is placed all around the room and the lower half of all the walls consists of original tile. The floor is linoleum covered with carpet.

The south bedroom is also quite large with another solid recessed paneled door. To the west, on the north side, there is a linen closet that begins about 1/3 of the way up from the floor. The painted door is solid and there is an original round turn latch used to open it. On the west side of this is another large walk in closet with the same style door found in all the rooms upstairs. On the south wall there are the five windows that face the alley. On the east wall there is an original wall light fixture that is turned on and off with a chain. Just to the north of that is another walk-in closet. The overhead light fixture is not original to the house.

**Basement Description:**

The basement of the house is finished into three separate apartments each with a full kitchen, full bath, and a bedroom/living room area. It is accessed from the south through

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Description Overview (continued)

a storm door, down one step. Another access was gained through the inside, going north down seven (7)steps to a landing and then one step down to the west. There is a wooden handrail on the east side of the steps and a steel formed rail to the west that are original. Just north of the steps was the original laundry chute as well as the containers for the tin cans, and floor sweepings. A Bendix washing machine was just north of this (at the time of purchase in 1955). The flooring is all concrete with some parts having linoleum tiles installed and the walls are of cement blocks that have been painted and/or paneled. Originally, the basement was one big room which housed both a gas furnace and a coal burning furnace equipped with a stoker so it continuously fed in the coal. There were two thermostats to control the heat for them both as well. They were originally installed to make sure there would be heat for the house if one of them failed. On the east side of the house, through the middle basement window, the coal chute could be found. The furnaces were where the present-day furnace is.

**Attic Description:**

The attic is unfinished and is accessed through the master bedroom or south bedroom closets through trap doors. On the north side, there is a large attic fan that is enclosed so more fresh air could be drawn in. To the north of the fan, there are two doors that lead into a storage area. To the south there is a sheet metal door that leads into the rest of the attic. This side is accessed by the trap door in the south bedroom.

**Garage Interior Description:**

Inside the garage on the northeast corner, the original pulley system for the door can be found. On the east wall towards the rear of the original space of the garage, there is a rough wood cabinet that has a tri-fold door that only takes up about one (1) foot of space so if the car is in the garage, it does not have to be moved to get into the tool cabinet. An original latch to open this is still working. To the north of this cabinet, there is even an original yardstick that Mr. Shirk used. In addition, the original awnings are still stored in the garage. The new lean-to section of the garage is on the south end and houses a small workshop. The floor of the garage is concrete.

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## Statement of Significance

**Criterion:**

The Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District (1914-1916) is located at 120 and 116 E. Lindburg, respectively, in the College Park Addition, Pittsburg, Crawford County, Kansas. The property is being nominated to the National Register under Criterion B because of the significant contributions that the builders and subsequent owners have made to the city of Pittsburg and the State of Kansas during World War I and to higher education, especially their relationship with the growth and development of the Kansas State Manual Training Normal School into today's Pittsburg State University. It is also being nominated under Criterion C for being classic examples of pre-World War I architecture in the Craftsman style and bungalow style. The Whitesitt House is a prime example of early 20th century architecture with elements of the Craftsman style. The Shirk House is a classic example of a pre-World War I Craftsman style bungalow. These homes were unique to Pittsburg at the time of construction because they incorporated the most up-to-date building techniques and styles. Most of the houses in Pittsburg were company houses built in the square- and T-shaped styles. The Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District is relatively unchanged from their original plans and appearance in 1916.

## Historical Significance

### The Early Years

The Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District property was bought by a consortium of important leaders in the town and the college: Dr. William Brandenburg, President of the Kansas State Manual Training Normal School, Professors J.A. Garfield Shirk, James Yates, and Andrew H. Whitesitt, and W. O. Moore, a local osteopath. Blocks one (1) and two (2) of Broadway Park Addition were bought by these men on February 19, 1914, from Walter B. and Mary Lance. The name of Broadway Park Addition was changed to College Park Addition at this time because of the proximity to the campus and because of these men's profession. This property was on the south side of the campus which was, in turn, the southernmost point of Pittsburg at that time. In fact, there were corn fields just to the east

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Statement of Significance (continued)

of these newly built houses on property that belonged to this consortium. This area was divided into lots and they divided up the property on February 26, 1915. Today, the Brandenburg home has been razed, the Yates home is a rental property, but the Whitesitt and Shirk homes are still reflections of what they were when they were built: fine examples of middle class pre-World War I housing. They reveal a sense of strength and simplicity combined with pleasing aesthetic qualities and fine craftsmanship. Education was at the core of both Whitesitt and Shirk's lives and they applied their knowledge in the construction of their homes. Each section of their houses was well planned for efficiency and use while keeping it in the latest trends of the day. Both houses show the influence of early 20th century architecture in the Craftsman style. The most unique thing about these houses is the personality that the original owners put into their homes which reflected their own passions and professions.

**The University Connection and the Role of Whitesitt and Shirk**

Because President Brandenburg, Professors Whitesitt, Shirk and Yates built their homes facing Lindburg and the university, this area was affectionately known as "Professors' Row." As the owners built a solid foundation for their homes, they also laid a solid foundation for the university to grow and subsequently, for Pittsburg to grow. By 1922, the school had grown from 43 students in 1903 to over 4500 students and over 100 faculty members according to Pittsburg's City Directory of that year. Because of the dedication of these early leaders, Pittsburg State University became one of the city of Pittsburg's main industries and the cultural center of Southeast Kansas.

The Kansas State Manual Training Normal School was the first teacher training school of the manual arts in which public monies were appropriated and for that school to grow, President Brandenburg sought the best teachers in their fields. Answering that call were Andrew Harmon Whitesitt and A.J. Garfield Shirk. Professor Whitesitt became one of the first leaders in industrial education in the United States and was head of this department from 1918 to 1935. During his tenure as chairman, he expanded the program from woodworking and drafting to include auto mechanics, sheet metal work, forging and

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Statement of Significance (continued)

blacksmith work, wood finishing, machine shop practice, furniture making, upholstery and printing. His expertise was also in carpentry and cabinetmaking. Having established a graduate program that offered a M.S. degree with a major or minor in Industrial Education, Mr. Whitesitt propelled the college into one of the few in the country that offered such a program. Whitesitt was recognized nationally as a leader in industrial education. He was an excellent teacher and a well-respected person. Professor Shirk was the chairman of the physics and math departments from 1914 until 1946 but remained a full-time instructor until his death in April, 1950. During his tenure astronomy was added as well as an observatory that boasted several telescopes that contained excellent optical properties according to W.T. Bawden in his History of Kansas State Teachers College 1903-1941. Shirk was considered an expert in his field and gave many lectures and presented many papers and articles for publication. During World War II, he taught the ground instruction for civilian pilots of B-12 and glider airplanes at the university.

Because of their great contributions to what today is Pittsburg State University, both Whitesitt and Shirk have buildings on campus named for them. They were important in education because they contributed so much to the development of Pittsburg State University and to the modern concepts of education in their respective fields. They had a vision for education that brought the university into the 20th century through exploration, development and hands-on application of the principles that they taught. Their guidance was invaluable in helping a normal training school become a university noted for its teacher training, vocational education and its forward thinking. Subsequent owners have held onto this philosophy and made the properties at 120 and 116 E. Lindburg synonymous with education. They have been tied to the university through physical location and through the efforts of the inhabitants to build a better university through excellence in their field of expertise and in teaching.. It is interesting to note that Brandenburg, Yates, Shirk and Whitesitt have buildings at Pittsburg State University named after them.

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Statement of Significance (continued)

**Whitesitt the Man**

Andrew Harmon Whitesitt was born May 13, 1874, near Whitaker, Morgan County, Indiana, to George W. and Evaline Whitesitt. He grew up in Paragon, Indiana, and began his teaching career in a rural school in Plainville, Indiana in 1895. There he met Ada Dearmin and they were married on June 4, 1899. They had two children, Ermal Kennedy Whitesitt, born April 27, 1905, and Robert Donald Whitesitt, born July 26, 1911. Whitesitt was Director of Manual Training for the City Schools in East Chicago, Indiana, from 1908-1911. He then moved to Indianapolis, Indiana, to be an instructor in furniture and cabinetmaking at Emmerich Manual Training High School. After being offered a position as Director of Woodworking at Kansas State Manual Training Normal School, he moved to Pittsburg, Kansas, in 1913. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Education from Kansas State Manual Training School in 1917 and his Master of Arts degree in Education in 1927 from Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City, New York. Professor Whitesitt was a member of the National Education Association, the Kansas State Teachers Association, the American Vocational Association, the Kansas Industrial Arts Association (president for two terms), Phi Delta Kappa, national honorary fraternity in education, and the American Association of University Professors. He was also very active as a leader in the First Christian Church, Pittsburg, Kansas. Although he retired in 1935 as head of the department, he continued as a member of the staff until his death on October 5, 1942. In 1964, the Industrial Arts Building, the second building on campus, was rededicated as Whitesitt Hall by the Kansas Board of Regents. This was in honor of the man who helped the college grow into the university it is today.

**Shirk the Man**

James Abram Garfield Shirk was born in McPherson, Kansas, January 12, 1881, and received his Bachelor's (1901) and Master's (1902) degree at McPherson College, McPherson, Kansas. A second masters degree was obtained from the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, in 1905. He married Anna Gevene McCoy and had one

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Statement of Significance (continued)

daughter, Gevene Shirk (McCreight), who was born February 12, 1912. Before coming to Pittsburg, Kansas in 1912 as assistant professor of physics and mathematics, Shirk taught at both McPherson College and Ottawa University in Kansas. In 1914, he became a full professor and chairman of the physics and mathematics department. He spent the school year of 1930-1931 in advanced study at Stanford University in California. He was considered an expert on astromony as well. During World War II, Professor Shirk was the head of the civilian pilot training program based on the Pittsburg campus. During his tenure, Mr. Shirk was a member of many professional and civic organizations, a frequent lecturer at conferences and wrote many articles on scientific and educational subjects. He retired as department chair in 1946 but remained a full-time instructor until his death in April, 1950. Like his neighbor, friend and colleague, Andrew Whitesitt, he worked as a teacher up to the day he died. Professor Shirk was a member of the American Association for the Advance of Science, the Kansas Academy of Science, the American Mathematical Society, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the Mathematical Association of America, the National Education Association, the Kansas State Teachers Association, and the Kansas Association of Teachers of Mathematics. He was the president of the Kansas Academy of Science and the Kansas Association of Mathematics Teachers. He was a member of Sigma Xi, a national honorary scientific society at the University of Kansas, and past president of the Kappa Mu Epsilon national honorary fraternity in mathematics.

Being the commander of the Montjoie Commandery of the Knights Templar in 1927 and prelate of the Grand Commandery of the Knights Templar of Kansas, showed the leadership skills that Professor Shirk possessed. He was also a member of the Mirza Shrine. At this time in Pittsburg, this was the best social organization that one could belong to and it carried a lot of prestige to be one of its leaders. In 1958, Shirk Hall was built as a men's residence hall and was dedicated by the Kansas Board of Regents in honor of J.A. Garfield Shirk for his many contributions to the university.

**The Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District**
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Statement of Significance (continued)

## Architectural Significance

Education was at the core of both Whitesitt and Shirk's lives and they applied their knowledge to everyday life. Each section of their homes was well planned for efficiency and use while keeping it in the latest trends of the day. They were the pacesetters for Pittsburg in that most houses were miners or smelters' homes that were company houses built in the square-and T-shaped style. Most of the houses like the Whitesitt and Shirk Houses in Pittsburg were not built until the mid to late 1920's in Pittsburg.

The Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District distinguishes itself as prime examples of early 20th century architecture centered in the Craftsman style. There is simplicity of form in the basic rectangular configuration of the houses as well as the use of the best materials. This simplicity is subtle because it is combined with linear ornamentation with the string courses which divide the houses into definite sections which draw the eyes to the simplistic yet intentional details. The front porches cover almost the entire front of the houses and the generous eaves protect them from the sun. Both houses originally donned green wooden shingles that matched the green window casings, doors and screens. Natural materials and colors were used to blend into the landscape as well. There is a distinction between the two houses.

The Whitesitt House has a front gabled roof with square asphalt shingles, with the rafter ends exposed whereas the Shirk House is a bungalow with a side gable roof with a break in the slope with boxed in rafters and architectural tabbed asphalt shingles. It also boasts a unique feature of rake molding. Both houses were built like fine pieces of cabinetry with the best of materials, design and craftsmanship. In the interior of both homes, there is the same attention to simplistic form but with the use of the best materials. The woodwork is oak and much of it is quarter-sawed oak. The built-in cabinets in the dining rooms show the influence of the Craftsman style with a strong influence of Japanese craftsmanship in line and form and in the hardware. A fluidity exists in the homes as the rooms flow one into the other. The Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District shows the simple, unpretentious charms of early 20th century architecture.

**The Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District**
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Statement of Significance (continued)

As a professor of drafting and construction, Mr. Whitesitt applied his skills in designing and building his own home in the latest style and trends. The house is a prime example of early 20th century architecture and certainly unique for the pre-World War I era. Original floor plans for the house at 120 E. Lindburg are still in the family archives. He also designed and constructed the interior cabinets and furniture for the house. The use of the best of materials combined with fine craftsmanship shows the many talents that Mr. Whitesitt had in his field of expertise

Being a physics and math professor, Professor Shirk combined his knowledge and inventiveness into constructing his very unique home at 116 E. Lindburg. It is not known who designed or built the house, but it is known that Mr. Shirk definitely had a lot to do with many parts of the house. The principles applied in his profession were also used in the many time savers and "inventions" that he created for his home. He truly lived what he had taught.

**Other Owners Before 1950 and Their Significance**

There have been other owners of these properties that are prominent in local, state and national history. The Whitesitt House was bought from the Whitesitts by Mr. E. H. McFarland, a Lakeside Junior High School industrial arts teacher and owner of the McFarland Flying Service, Pittsburg, Kansas. He, too, was associated with education but is best remembered for his participation in the training of thousands of pilots of glider and B-12 airplanes for World War II. There were two parts of this program: one was working with the college on ground school classes that was headed by Professor Shirk and the other was flight instruction at the airport which was directed by Mr. McFarland. There were only a few colleges in the United States chosen for this training and Kansas State College of Pittsburg (Pittsburg State University) was one of them. A letter of appreciation for the services of Mr. McFarland to the war effort was written to him by Brigadier General, U.S. Army Commanding, Walter F. Kraus, who was headquartered at the Army Air Forces Central Flying Training Command in Randolph Field, Texas.

**The Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District**
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Statement of Significance (continued)

In May, 1945, Mary Fenimore McMillan and her husband, Edmond, bought the house at 120 E . Lindburg from Mr. E.H. McFarland. Mrs. McMillan was the daughter of J. A. Fenimore, who was the president of the Joplin-Pittsburg Railroad and the Pittsburg Chamber of Commerce and one of the first leaders in Pittsburg. Mr. McMillan was the personnel manager and later division engineer for Spencer Chemical Company in Pittsburg, Kansas. Mrs. McMillan made news in Pittsburg by having triplets-a rare event here at that time-while her husband was serving in the U.S. Navy in the South Pacific during World War II..

## The Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District After 1950

The Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District after 1950 continued to be inhabited by educators at Pittsburg State University. Those living in the Whitesitt House include Mr. Floyd Meyers, Head Librarian at Pittsburg State University, who lived in the house with his family from 1959 -1966. In 1966, Jack and Doris Overman bought the house and rented it to students of Pittsburg State University and to faculty members. The faculty members were Paul Lawrence, Head of Instructional Media (1966-1971); and Dr. Bert Patrick, professor in the foreign language department (1971-present). Bert and Lura Patrick bought the house in 1985 and have used the house as a single family dwelling since then. There are over 100 years of combined service dedicated to Pittsburg State University on the part of the occupants of the Whitesitt House since it was built in 1914-1916. Lura Patrick has also taught at the University as an adjunct professor and has taught 17 years at Pittsburg High School.

The Shirk House was sold to Jack and Doris Overman in 1955. Both the Overmans have been involved with education at Pittsburg State University. Both the Overmans and their two children received their degrees from P.S.U. Mr. Overman began work at Kansas State Teachers College of Pittsburg (Pittsburg State) in 1940 as assistant to the dean of men and in 1951 began as director of the new Student Center. His long career with the university lasted for 33 years and ended with his retirement in 1984, but he is still actively

**The Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District**
**Pittsburg, KS**

Statement of Significance (continued)

involved with the univeristy as an ardent supporter of athletics, alumni associations, fund-raisers, and a supporter of various departments.

Awards that have been given to Mr. Overman include: Meritorious Alumnus from Pittsburg State University, Governor's Award for community service, ROTC Hall of Fame, Honorary Lifetime member of the Association of College Unions, and the first "Outstanding Alumnus" honoree from U.S.D. 250 because of his great contributions to the school district, to education, and to the community and state. Although the Student Center was opened in 1951, it was renovated and expanded in 1962 and was dedicated in 1985 as the Jack H. Overman Student Center. This was most remarkable because the move to rename the center was begun and driven by students who admired and respected Mr. Overman for his outstanding contributions to the university and in particular, to the Student Center. This is the only building on campus that has been named for a living person who has not contributed money for the construction of the building. Truly, this recognition for his invaluable contributions to the Student Center, the University and the community was well deserved. In addition to campus responsibilities, Mr. Overman has been very active in professional and civic organizations.

There are over 60 years of service given by Mr. Shirk and Mr. Overman to Pittsburg State University. With all the additional work that Mr. Overman has given to the university after his retirement, that number would go to 75 years. The residents of the Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District have contributed almost 200 years of service to Pittsburg State University and combined with the other residents of these houses, it would be around 300 years. Many of the former college students who lived at these two addresses have also worked for the University.

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## 10. Geographical Data

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated Whitesitt-Shirk Historic District property is located in the College Park Addition, Block one (1), with the East 1/2 of Lot seven (7), and all of Lots eight (8), nine (9), ten (10), eleven (11) and twelve (12) in Pittsburg, Crawford County, Kansas. The property is bounded to the north by Lindburg Street and to east by Locust Street and west by adjacent property lines, and to the south by an alley that runs east-west between Lindburg and Ford Streets. The Whitesitt House property dimensions are 160 feet by 75 feet and the house measures 32 feet by 28 feet. The front porch is eight (8) feet by 22 feet and the deck is 16 by 26 feet. The Shirk House property dimensions are 160 feet by 75 feet and the house is 37 feet by 34 feet. The front porch is 34 feet by 8 feet.

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary contains all property historically associated with the nominated buildings.