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 WOLCOTT HOUSE

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 5701 OAKWOOD ROAD ☐ not for publication

city or town MISSION HILLS ☐ vicinity

state KANSAS code KS county JOHNSON code 091 zip code 66208

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 Pankratz D-SHPO 3/19/01
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:)

WOLCOTT HOUSE
Name of Property

JOHNSON COUNTY, KANSAS
County and State

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	
2		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2		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
REVIVALS: Tudor Revival
OTHER: French Eclectic

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: limestone
walls STONE: limestone
roof CERAMIC TILE
other

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

WOLCOTT HOUSE

Name of Property

JOHNSON COUNTY, KANSAS

County and State

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)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1928

Significant Dates

1928

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

KURFISS, SHELBY- Architect

HELLMAN, JOSEPH- Builder

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:

WOLCOTT HOUSE
Name of Property

JOHNSON COUNTY, KANSAS
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.1 acres

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	15	360460	4320580
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 SUSAN JEZAK FORD

organization _____ date NOVEMBER 2000

street & number 3628 HOLMES STREET telephone 816-531-2489

city or town KANSAS CITY state KS zip code 64109

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 SHARON G. COUGHLIN

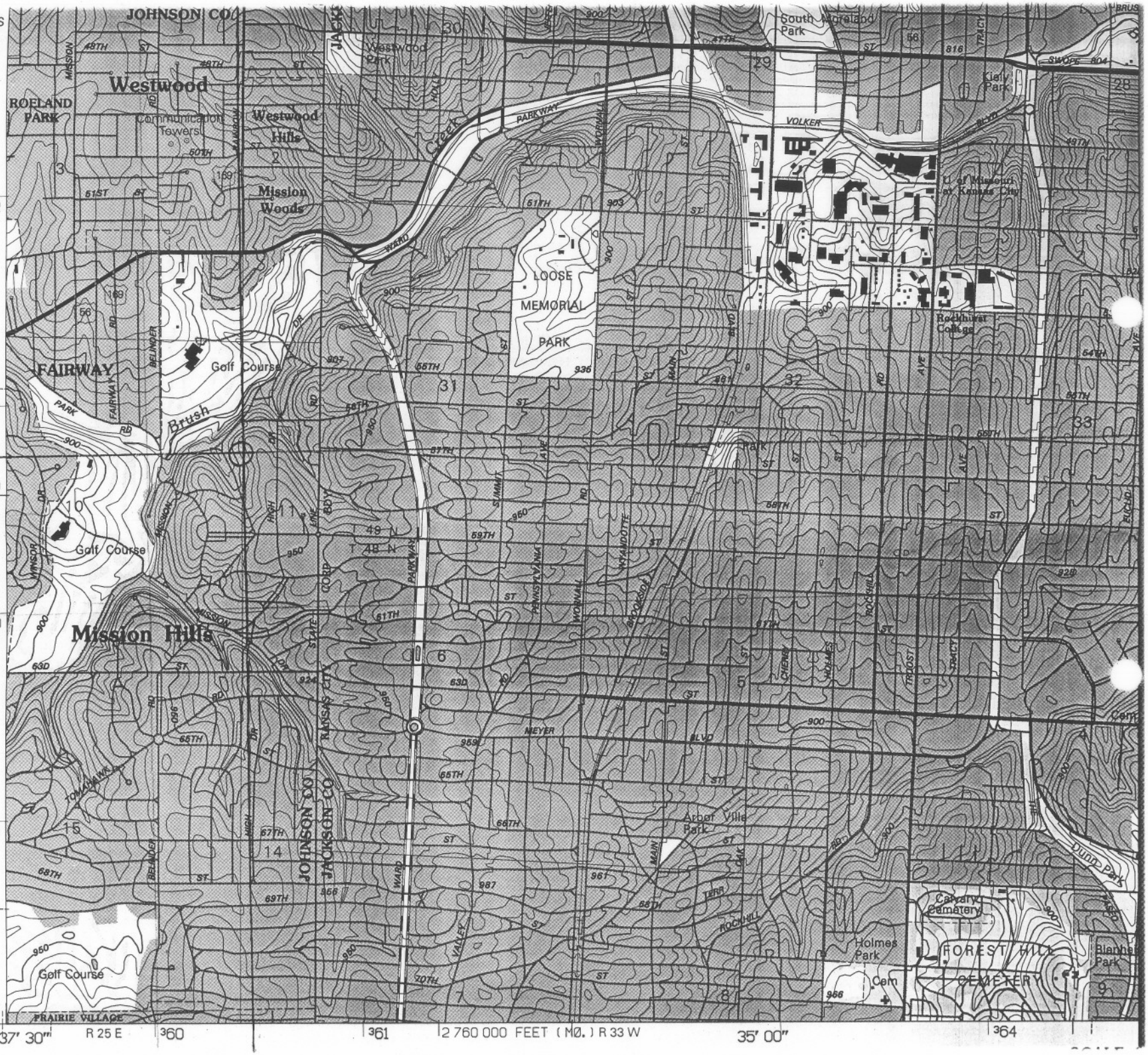
street & number 5701 OAKWOOD ROAD telephone 913-722-9417

city or town MISSION HILLS state KS zip code 66208

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



Wolcott House

UTM COORDINATES
15360460
4320580

Overview—Section 7

The Wolcott residence, a stately, two-and-a-half-story stone house, sits on a 2.1-acre lot located on a hill above Oakwood Road in Mission Hills, Kansas. Architect Selby Kurfiss' interpretation of the French Eclectic and Tudor Revival, two closely related architectural styles, blends together quite well to create a massive residence that presents a formal French Eclectic façade to the public thoroughfare and an impressive Tudor facade to visitors arriving at the rear (main) entrance.

The house is constructed completely of stone, topped by a red tile roof. A two-story hexagonal tower and narrow, two-story gabled entry front its main façade and hipped roof. The rear façade provides the residence's main entrance from the driveway that circles behind the house to an entry porch and garage. The rear facade is a striking example of Tudor Revival design, with a main gable containing parallel peaks, an all-stone entry porch, numerous windows of leaded glass and three sets of French doors. The roofline is extremely irregular, containing many dormers, gables and wing projections. The house is sited on a large lot that contains stone patios, a fishpond, stone walls and an original three-car garage.

The house's exterior is in near-perfect original condition and has been very well maintained. Vines that covered the house in the 1950s and 1960 have been removed. The entire house is constructed of irregularly coursed ashlar limestone with an ochre tint. The roof—hipped on the west façade and gabled on the east façade—is of red ceramic tile. The roof configuration gives this three-story house the appearance of being only two stories on the front façade. Each window and exterior doorway contains a stone lintel and sill and stone block modillions are located under many of the eaves and at some of the second story overhangs. All windows contain modern bronze-colored storms/screens. The house also contains copper guttering ornamented with small rosettes, usually located above a block modillion where present.

West Façade

The west façade faces the street and is dominated by a centrally placed two story hexagonal tower. A red tiled hipped roof with gable-end extensions rises behind this tower. A screened porch is located on the first story, to the north of the tower. The massive front door opening is located just south of the tower, topped by a narrow two-story gable projection that slightly overhangs the entrance. The house's living room area is located in a gable-end wing to the south of the front door.

The front façade of the house is 11 bays wide. From left to right (north to south), the first bay is recessed from the main body of the house and consists of a two-story, gable-end extension to the house. The second story of this bay is fronted by the steep gable roof. The first story contains a six-over-six window in the center of the bay and a copper downspout on the northern edge. The eave contains stone block modillions placed below copper guttering. Five stone steps leading to the screened porch rise perpendicular to the plane of this bay, fronted by a graduated stone ledge west of the steps.

Bays two through four contain the house's screened porch, with stone piers placed between each bay. Wood-framed screens are located in bays two and three and a single screened door with two side panels are located in bay four. The three screened openings contain retractable exterior canvas awnings and massive stone lintels, each measuring approximately two feet thick and eight feet long. Stone block modillions are located at the eave line below the copper gutters. Behind the screened porch, a set of French doors with sidelights leads to the house's kitchen. The slope of the hipped roof begins at bay two and a hipped dormer projects from the north side of this slope above bay two. A hipped dormer is located between bays three and four. This dormer contains a copper gutter and wood modillions on three sides. The front surface of the dormer is wood; the two sides are covered in red ceramic tiles. The dormer contains three windows of equal size, each with a six-over-three configuration.

Bays five through seven make up the façade's central two-story hexagonal tower. This tower projects from the plane of the screened porch to its left and the front doorway to its right. The tower contains six identical windows, one located on each side of the tower on each of the two stories, in eight-over-four configurations. The peaked roof contains gutters above stone block modillions at the eave line.

Bay eight contains the front entrance to the house within a narrow, two-story gable that is capped by stone approximately two feet deep and six inches thick, forming a slight parapet. The second story of this bay contains an eight-over-eight window within the plane that overhangs the first story. Stone block modillions are placed under this overhang. The massive oak front door contains multiple panels; it is fronted by an oak-framed screen door. A flat stone entry porch, reached by one small stone step, projects in front of this door. To the right of the door hangs an ornate copper lamp from a bracket; below the lamp is a square copper doorbell plate.

Bay nine is slightly recessed from the plane of bay eight. The sloping edge of the hipped roof and a hipped dormer projecting from the south side of the roof can be seen in the second story of this bay. Stone block modillions are located below the gutters at the cornice in the middle of the second story. The roof projects on the south side of this bay below the cornice line to the top of the first story. The first story of this bay contains two eight-paned casement windows in the center of the bay and a downspout close to the south corner.

Bays ten and eleven recede from bay nine by approximately 15 feet and contain the two-story vaulted living room within a gable-end extension. The two-story wing has the appearance of being one story, due to the second-story slope of the roof. Below the copper gutter and stone block modillions at the eave line, two eight-over-eight windows are located on the first story. Two rectangular basement windows are placed at ground level below these first-story windows.

A stone terrace wall is constructed approximately 25 feet in front of the west façade, extending from bay two through bay nine. The walls of this terrace are approximately two feet thick and five feet tall, contain stone caps and appear to be constructed of a different source of limestone than the house, but in a similar course. The main wall runs north

to south and two shorter walls on either side run east to west. A set of seven to eight stone steps is located on the northwest and southwest corners of this terrace, perpendicular to the main wall and leading to the driveway and the lawn. This terrace appears in all historic photographs and is original to the date of construction.

South Façade

The south façade contains two irregular bays of unequal size. The two-story first bay consists of bay nine of the west façade, but the parapeted gable of bay eight of the west façade can also be seen rising above it. The first story of the south façade's first bay contains one pair of eight-paned casement windows and the basement level contains a rectangular window located slightly to the east of the first story window. Above the stone block modillions and gutter, a hipped dormer extends from the roof. This dormer contains red ceramic tiles on the walls, a ten-over-ten window, a gutter and wood block modillions at the roofline.

The second bay extends south of the main body of the house and contains the two-story gable end of the house's vaulted living room. The gable peak contains a simple fascia and the copper gutters from the west and east façades wrap around the corners of this bay above the first story. A two-story leaded glass window with diamond panes divided into nine panels is encased in this bay. The Wolcott crest is painted in the center top panel and the bottom left and right panels can open as doors. A pieced stone lintel arch tops the window. To the right of this window a copper lamp hangs from a bracket.

A small stone patio extends from the second bay on this façade. This patio begins just to the left of the window and extends to the far right side of the bay, projecting approximately 15 feet. The patio is irregularly shaped, curving to the west and also enclosing a small fountain area on the south. Two stone steps lead to the patio on the west and one step leads to it on the south; small stone ledges enclose the area.

North Façade

The north façade consists of three bays—two within a gable-end wing and one that is part of the front screened porch. Moving left to right, bays one and two are located within the gable, which is topped by simple fascia, the overlap of the roof tiles and contains the wraparound of gutters from the east and west sides of the house at the top of the first story. Bays one and two each contain a four-over-four window on the first story and a rectangular basement window at ground level. Located in the peak of the gable between the two bays, a pair of casement windows—each with eight panes—is located.

Bay three is part of the front screened porch and the story above it. The first story contains five stone steps with a short wall on each side. These steps lead from the porch to a short stone walkway that leads to the driveway. An entrance to the porch is placed within the first story of this bay and consists of a wood screened door between two wood-framed screen panels. Beneath the gutter and stone block modillions, a retractable canvas awning is located.

The second story of the bay contains a shed dormer facing north, extending from the hipped roof. This dormer contains wood on the front, tiles on the side walls and wood block modillions placed below a gutter at its roofline.

East Façade

The east, or rear, façade is the most irregular and therefore the most difficult to separate into clearly defined individual bays. It can be divided into 11 irregular bays based on window and door placement of the first story. These bays will be described from left to right.

Bays one and two comprise the two-story wing that encloses the house's living room. Each bay contains one eight-over-four window on the first story, topped by the stone block modillions and copper gutter at the cornice. Downspouts are located to the right of each window and the second story of both bays contains the steep roof. Between the two windows, the house's three-story chimney is located. The chimney is all stone and quite plain. It measures approximately 15 feet wide at the first story and slopes to approximately seven feet wide at the cornice and is topped by two chimney caps. The slope of the chimney is covered with red roofing tiles.

Bays three through eight contain the three-story center of the house, consisting of a parallel gable that extends from the ridge of hipped roof of the west façade. The peaks of the gable are located in bays four and seven, separated by a flat roof between them. All of the woodwork on the windows of this façade is painted cream and all, except French doors, leaded windows and casement windows, contain storm/screen windows.

The slope for the south gable begins at bay three. This bay contains a pair of small, four-paned casement windows on the first story. A rectangular leaded window with 30 small panes is place above the casement window between the first and second floors, located at the interior mezzanine level that overlooks the vaulted living room.

Bay four contains a set of graduated rectangular leaded glass windows placed on the interior stairway. Each window contains between 16 and 26 panes, with one wood muntin placed horizontally in the center of the window. The longest window is located on the north and the shortest on the south, following the rise of the stairs. The peak of the south gable is located between bays four and five. The peak of the gable contains a small ten-over-ten window and simple fascia.

Bay five contains the entry portico for this façade. Two stone piers on the East side and stone pilasters next to the house support the one-story stone portico. The ceiling of the portico is plaster and a copper light fixture hangs from the center of the ceiling. The second story of the portico contains a stone balustrade on three sides, approximately 18 inches deep. The house's driveway abuts the portico and the floor consists of a stone patio that extends from bay five through bay eight. The first story of this bay contains a pair of French doors above a stone threshold. Each door consists of four panels of leaded beveled panes set in dark oak. This set of doors is fronted by a set of dark oak screen doors. The second story of this bay, above the portico, contains a single wood door on the south, fronted by

a modern screen/storm door. The north side of the portico balcony contains a one-story, shallow hipped extension that houses a large circulation fan. The roof of this extension is clad in red roofing tiles with a gutter at the edge. The third story of the fifth bay is the flat center of the façade's parallel gable, containing a gutter and stone block modillions. A very small, rectangular four-over-four window is located on this third story, directly above the second-story extension.

Bay six contains the service entry to the house, a single wood-paneled door on the first story with a small, diamond-paned window in the upper portion of the door. A wood screen door divided into three vertical panels fronts this dark oak door. A copper awning is located above the door, supported by an ornate copper bracket with "5701" worked into it. A small copper light is located to the right of the door, between the bracket and the door. Directly above the door is a large copper air vent between the first and second stories. At the third-story level, the flat roof between the parallel gables extends to this bay, along with the gutter and stone modillions from the previous bay. A downspout leaves the north portion of this area and angles to run alongside the stone portico in bay five.

Bay seven contains the north third-story peak of the parallel gable, with a small ten-over-ten window in the peak and simple fascia in the gable. The south slope of this gable contains a simple stone chimney that rises above the gable peak and contains one chimney cap. The bulk of bays seven and eight are place slightly to the north of the gable peak; each contains an eight-over-eight window on the second story. The first stories of bays seven and eight are located under a slight overhang emphasized with stone modillions. Two sets of French doors are place on these bays; each door contains 24 panes and is fronted by French screen door. Each set of doors contains a massive stone lintel, measuring approximately 12 inches by four feet. A stone patio is accessed through these doors and a short stone wall is placed between the patio and the driveway from bay six through eight.

The North slope of the parallel gable is shorter than the south slope, ending to just above the second story between bays eight and nine. Bays nine through eleven consist of a two-story gable end wing with a gutter and stone modillions (continued from bays seven and eight) at the first story cornice line. The first story of bay nine contains a small four-over-four window. The first story of bay ten contains a larger four-over-four window. The first story of bay eleven contains no window, but only a downspout. A shed dormer is located on the second story, extending from bay nine to the center of bay ten. The placement of this dormer creates an interesting juncture between the gable front of the east façade, the back of the hipped roof of the west façade and the gable end of the north façade. The dormer itself is stone with a gutter and stone block modillions at the cornice and a ten-over-ten window.

Garage

The two-story three-car garage, located southeast of the house, is set at an angle, reportedly to save one of the original forest trees on the building site[1]. The structure was also built in 1928 and is of the same style and materials asblock modillions matching those on the house. Windows set in the gable ends have stone lintels and sills. The

entrance façade is located on the northeast side, presenting a gable-ended appearance. New doors have replaced the original folding doors. One double-width paneled garage door and one single-width paneled garage door fill most of the first story of this façade. The doors contain four rows of panels, with the top row consisting of windows. The cornice above the garage doors contains wood block modillions and the stone edges of this façade contain stone block modillions of the same size. The rear of the garage is the southwest side and consists of a stone wall with a pair of eight-paned casement windows in the center of the facade. A gutter and stone block modillions are located at the first story cornice line. The southeast and northwest gable-end sides are identical, consisting of the same simple fascia and gutters wrapped at the corners, as seen on the gable ends of the house. Pairs of eight-paned casement windows are located in the center of each of these side façades in the first and second stories.

Interior

The interior of the Wolcott home reflects the irregular plan of the exterior, as well as the grand intentions of architect Selby Kurfiss and first homeowners John and Wynnogene Wolcott. Paneling, windows, the main stairway and other items salvaged from William Rockhill Nelson's Oak Hall have been expertly incorporated into this residence, creating a warm and elegant interior. The paneling and moldings appear to be custom-milled for the Wolcott home, despite their previous use in Nelson's home. The skill with which these materials were adapted to the Wolcott home speaks to the talent and planning by Kurfiss and the high quality of craftsmen that he must have hired to build this house.

The Wolcott home is usually entered at the rear of the house via the portico on the east façade. After passing through leaded glass doors, one enters a large two-story foyer, measuring approximately 15 feet by 22 feet. The walls and ceilings of this foyer are carved oak paneling of quarter-sawn oak. The main stairway leading to the second floor begins to the right of this entrance on the East side of the room, rising almost one story to a mezzanine level before turning, forming a balcony overlooking the living room. The stairway then continues on the West side of the area by rising three steps to form a balcony that overlooks the entry on the west and north sides of the space. The second story bedrooms are accessed from the north side of the balcony. The stairway, paneling and floors of this area are of quarter-sawn oak. The spindled stairway is accented by an ornately carved newel post and the leaded glass window panels that are staggered with the first flight of steps. Massive hand-hewn beams are located on the ceiling at the mezzanine level. A new chandelier hangs in the center of the foyer and the stairs contain a new carpet runner.

The west entrance to the house connects to a much smaller foyer than the east entrance, measuring approximately fifteen feet long by eight feet wide. The walls and ceiling of this entrance are also covered with quarter-sawn oak paneling. A door on the south side of this foyer leads to the house's library, paneled in blonde oak. The library also contains a black marble fireplace and an ornate traceried plaster ceiling.

The house's two-story vaulted living room, located on the south end of the house, is reached by descending two steps from the main foyer area. This large room, measuring approximately17 feet wide by 33 feet long, is overlooked by the mezzanine level of the main stairway and contains hand-hewn dark ceiling trusses. The sills of the windows on

the west and east sides of this room are ten inches deep. The two-story leaded glass window/French doors, located on the south end of this room, can be easily seen from the main foyer. The room's fireplace contains a hewn mantel, added after initial construction and supported by four large brackets. New chandeliers hang from the ceiling, but original fixtures are stored within the house.

The house's dining room is located behind the tower on the West side of the house, giving the West end of the room a bay window. Accessed via the main foyer, the room's floor-to-ceiling paneling is painted white and the ceiling beams remain dark; the original chandelier hangs in the center of the room. The room measures approximately 22 feet long by 15 feet wide. French doors on the north side of the room lead to the screened porch.

The north end of the house of the house contains the service and private family areas of the residence in the original configuration of spaces, but these spaces have seen more cosmetic changes than the public rooms. The kitchen, located on the first story, is quite contemporary, featuring new laminated cabinets, an island and eating area. North of the kitchen, two additional small rooms are placed side-by-side in the end of the north gable. The basement, second and third stories of the house can be accessed through a secondary staircase located between the kitchen and main foyer. The second story of the north end of the house contains three bedrooms and two baths, most with original moldings and paneled walls, but new carpeting, wallpaper and paint have been added. The rooms are irregularly shaped, reflecting the tower and dormers present on the house's exterior. This story also contains small spaces that are currently used as closets, a sewing room and a dressing room. The third story of the house is located on the east façade and has been remodeled consist primarily of one large open area and an adjacent bath. This story contains cove ceilings.

Fish Pond

An ornamental fish pond is located at the southwest corner of the house. Water falls down a series of three pools, beginning at the stone patio on the south side of the house and meandering south and west, until it empties into the largest pond, irregularly shaped and measuring approximately 20-30 feet by 50 feet. The pond is cement with natural rocks set in around the edges. Shrubs and other plantings are located around the edges of the pond, interspersed with stone benches and statuary. Within the pond, lily pads and cattails are planted. Only the foliage of the pond is visible from the street. Photographs of the pond were taken in 1932[2], so it is likely that it was built soon after construction.

Site

The Wolcott residence is located on approximately one and one-half acres. One enters the driveway at the northwest corner of the property. The entrance splits the driveway on either side of a triangular stone post, approximately eight feet tall. This post is topped by an ornate copper lantern bearing the numbers "5701" carved into it. A contemporary triangular planting bed edged with railroad ties is located in front of the post. One either side of the forked entrance, two short curved stone walls are located, each containing piers at either end, with the piers closest to the drive approximately four feet tall the those farthest from the drive approximately two feet tall.

The driveway curves up the north side of the property, forming a loop at the rear, or east, façade of the house. The entire driveway was repaved and widened this year.

The back yard begins at a stone wall that abuts the driveway, approximately four feet tall and 125 feet long. Two sets of stone stairs lead from the driveway to the back yard. Three large millstones adorn the wall. Another stone wall is located approximately 15 feet from the south property line in the back yard. This forms an enclosed space, reached by crossing a stone threshold with stone posts, eight feet tall, that hold a pair of wrought iron gates. Another stone wall is located across the rear of the property.

Overview—Section 8

The Wolcott Residence is eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, Architecture. The home is a unique combination of Tudor Revival and French Eclectic design by one of Kansas City's most prominent early 20th Century architects, Selby Kurfiss. Kurfiss successfully combined the two revival styles to create this impressive home for grain dealer John J. Wolcott and his wife, Wynnogene (better know as Daisy.) The public façade of the home is of the French Eclectic style, dominated by a hexagonal tower. This irregular façade includes numerous protrusions in the form of dormers and gables from the hipped roof of red ceramic tile, second-story overhangs, a screened porch and wing extensions attached to the main structure. This French façade is fronted by a stone terrace that overlooks the street below. The rear façade, designed in the Tudor Revival style, provides the main entrance to the house for anyone arriving by automobile. Not simply a back door to the house, a grand double gable rises above the one-story stone entry that recalls porte cochères of earlier styles. Leaded glass and multi-paned windows abound on this elaborate façade, along with bays, overhangs and dormers.

The interior of the Wolcott house contains many of the original details that define this residence as a grand home. Original paneling, woodwork, windows, flooring, fireplaces and other details remain throughout the house, contributing to its integrity. Several areas within the house, including the two-story vaulted living room, library, two-story entry and the dining room are virtually unchanged from the year of construction. (Modern fixtures have replaced a few light fixtures within these rooms, but the originals are stored on-site.) The rooms continue as an extension of the Tudor Revival exterior, with dark woodwork, a trussed living room ceiling, carved balustrades and ornate paneling that extends from floor to ceiling.

The rambling stone form and outstanding architectural details of this house retain a notable portion of their integrity. The extant interior details combine with the distinguished presence of the exterior to provide a significant intact contribution to the surrounding neighborhood.

History

The Wolcott home was built in 1928 at 5701 Oakwood Road. The house is prominently situated on a hill facing west, overlooking the winding streets of J.C. Nichols' Mission Hills development.

The design and construction of the Wolcott residence began with the demolition of another outstanding Kansas City home, Oak Hall. Oak Hall was the home of William Rockhill Nelson, the powerful owner and publisher of two daily newspapers, The Kansas City Star and The Kansas City Times. Located at 45th Street and Rockhill Road in Kansas City, Missouri, Oak Hall was a sprawling stone structure that took form in the 1890s. Beginning in 1893, a number of additions were made to the home by the innovative architectural firm of Curtiss and Gunn. After Nelson's death in 1915, the great house was left to his daughter and son in law, Laura Nelson Kirkwood and Irwin Kirkwood. The couple were entitled to live in Oak Hall until their deaths, but Nelson's will stated that upon their deaths the residence was to be demolished and the site used for a new art museum.

Laura Kirkwood Nelson died in 1926 and, as she and her father wished, Oak Hall was deeded to the city of Kansas City in 1927 by her surviving husband, Irwin Kirkwood[3]. Upon Kirkwood's death soon thereafter, the disbursement of Oak Hall began. The home was opened to the public in early October of that year and thousands of citizens filed through the magnificent rooms, past the many impressive works of art. The razing of the residence loomed, however, as irrevocably stated in Laura Nelson Kirkwood's will which also stated that furnishings were to be sold only to out-of-town dealers:

> All of the furnishings, ornaments and other contents of the said residence, "Oak Hall,"...shall be sold by said trustees...to or through dealers, merchants or persons, strangers to me, doing business or living more than 250 miles from Kansas City, MO...[4]

Many of the items were purchased by the Loew's chain of theaters, presumably to ornament various movie palaces owned by the company[5].

Demolition of Oak Hall began in April 1928 by E.L. Winn of the Winn Construction Company. Winn planned to dispose of the stone, flooring and interior wood through his building business. The only room to be saved intact was the room from which the house took its name, Oak Hall, to be restored in the future William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art[6]. The process was more than a wrecking operation; the house was dismantled over a period of more than seven weeks. Each stone and piece of molding was carefully extracted and marked for reuse in other buildings. Purchasers of the largest portion of the materials were Mr. and Mrs. John J. Wolcott[7].

John J. Wolcott was a well-known Kansas City grain dealer. He joined the Kansas City Board of Trade in 1902 and began his own business in 1922. He formed Wolcott and Lincoln with William B. Lincoln in 1925, a firm that operated grain elevators in Kansas City and throughout Kansas. Wolcott served as president and treasurer of the company, as well as the president of the Board of Trade, until his death in 1939[8]. John J. Wolcott and his wife, Wynnogene (known as Daisy), were an active part of Kansas City society, joining the Kansas City Club, The Mission Hills Country Club, the Women's City Club and contributing toward the Kansas City Art Institute[9]. The couple had three children: Dorothy Louise, Frederick Lile and John Jefferson, Jr.[10]

The Wolcotts spent more than $5000 for Oak Hall materials to be incorporated into their new home under construction in nearby Mission Hills, Kansas.

> The variety of these materials is surprising. Their material bill includes 700 perch of stone from the Oak Hall walls. This native stone, beautifully rusted in yellow, ochre and beige shades has found a ready sale. Also Mr. and Mrs. Wolcott have purchased the heavy oak door, which hung at the principal portal of the great house, and it will become the "front" door of their home. Other items included are oak paneling, windows, stone sills and caps, four French windows, copper guttering and downspouts[11].

The Wolcott home was constructed during the summer of 1928[12]. Sited on more than an acre and a half with 230 feet of frontage overlooking the courses of the Kansas City Country Club and the Mission Hills Country Club, the house had a commanding presence. The winding drive swept past the 135 feet of lawn that separated the house from the road. Many of the native oak and elm trees were included in the landscaping plan of the house and the garage of the house was angled to save one of the trees. The Kansas City Star noted the appropriateness of the well rusted, heavy stones to the English design by architect Selby Kurfiss[13].

Mrs. Wolcott echoed the sentiments of The Star when she remarked, "The last generation built for permanence. The old stone which we have used in our home has mellowed in color from the winds and rains. Our tile roof was laid by the same man who, thirty years before, had put the material on the original Nelson roof[14]."

Selby Kurfiss was a local architect known for his meticulous attention to detail and preference for European-inspired styles. Kurfiss was born in Louisville, Kentucky, and studied architecture at Columbia University. In 1891 he was employed in Kansas City as a draftsman for architect Adriance Van Brunt. He opened his own office by 1900 and rapidly earned a reputation as one of Kansas City's best draftsmen. For most of his career, Kurfiss worked alone and was highly sought after. He was held several offices in the local chapter of the AIA between 1911 and 1917 and served as a local delegate to the 1918 convention of the AIA[15].

During his early career, Kurfiss designed many houses in Kansas City's northeast neighborhoods for the McGonigle, Stintson, Metcalf Realty Company. He produced several designs for Fletcher Cowherd and Company in the Country Club District in the 1910s and 1920s. Kurfiss frequently incorporated European details in the grand residences that he designed throughout Kansas City, working in styles that included Jacobethan, French Provincial, Elizabethan and Georgian Revival. Examples of his residential work in Kansas City, Missouri can be seen in a 1907 Georgian Revival design at 3733 Gillham Road, a 1909 French Eclectic design at 3737 Holmes Street and a 1926 Elizabethan design at 5060 Sunset Drive. An early sample of the Kurfiss' treatment of the Tudor Revival style can be seen in a 1909 home located at 3707 Holmes St[16]. These examples, as well as many other of Kurfiss' residences, are located in wealthy neighborhoods of their time. In the 1928 Wolcott home, Kurfiss combined French Eclectic and Tudor Revival details, resulting in a house that shows a primarily French Eclectic façade to the street and a Tudor façade to the rear of the house, which serves as the primary entrance. The interior is decidedly Tudor-influenced and primary spaces feature carved oak paneling, a carved main stairway, dark oak floors, leaded glass windows and a vaulted living room ceiling.

The Wolcott family also chose "Oak Hall" as the name for their house, in tribute to the structure that formerly bore the name. They lived in the home until Mr. Wolcott's death in 1939. Three subsequent owners were also associated with the grain milling industry. Mr. and Mrs. Louis S. Myers purchased the home in 1939; Mr. Myers was vice-president and treasurer of the Rodney Milling Company. Samuel Sosland, editor of the Southwestern Miller publication, purchased the home in 1951. David W. Gibson, president of the Wolcott-Lincoln Company and a

descendant from John J. Wolcott's partner, William B. Lincoln, purchased the home with his wife in 1984. The current owners, Michael and Sharon Coughlin, purchased the home in 1999 from Mark A. Morgan, who had owned the house for less than two years.

Remarkably few changes have occurred within the house. According to a previous owner, the kitchen was first remodeled in 1954; today it has a very contemporary look. The suspended light fixtures in the entrance stairwell and living room have been replaced with new chandeliers, but the original fixtures are stored on-site, along with samples of original kitchen cabinetry. Each owner of the house appears to have served as a good steward for this unique residence, maintaining as closely as possible its integrity.

Design

The Wolcott home is a unique and high-style example of two closely related architectural styles, Tudor Revival and French Eclectic. The combination of these styles is a singular approach by architect Selby Kurfiss to place an elegant, formal French façade on a form that is otherwise a Tudor residence. The two styles, however, share several common characteristics, such as asymmetry, windows grouped in rows, walls clad in stone and fenestration emphasized by stone framing. The French Eclectic style is based on French domestic architecture and, due to the fact that domestic styles in northwestern France share many features with the Medieval English tradition, French Eclectic homes often resemble Tudor styles[17]; the pairing of the two styles in the Wolcott/Coughlin home results in a striking and tasteful combination.

The West side of the house facing the public thoroughfare presents a façade to the street that is truly French Eclectic. This style is relatively uncommon in this country, but is occasionally found in suburbs built in the 1920s and 1930s. A main identifying feature of the style is the steeply pitched hipped roof that may contain a tower/gable combination, as seen in this home. The comparatively small gable located next to the tower is more ornamental than the prominent cross gables that serve as an identifying feature of the Tudor Revival style. The simple front doorway and the overhanging second story in this gable are also details consistent with the French Eclectic style, as are the wings on the north and south sides of the main body of the house[18].

The remainder of the house is decidedly Tudor Revival. The Tudor style, based on medieval models, gained popularity for wealthy suburbanites in the late 1910s and continued as a popular style through the early 1930s. The large houses tended to incorporate eclectic influences from other styles, as seen in the Wolcott home, but careful attention was paid to scale and the use of the best materials available[19]. The style was later frequently used for more modest homes and is often seen in areas developed by J.C. Nichols in Kansas City. The rear façade, which serves as the most frequently used entrance to the house, and the interior are excellent high-style illustrations of the style. While the front, or west, façade of the house serves as a view for the public, guests and residents of the house enter at the rear, or east side, under a one-story stone portico that is centered below a dominant three-story parallel gable. The gable, interspersed with decorative as well as functional windows, rises unbroken by any cornice line as a cross

gable from the hipped roof directly behind it. This gable is paired in mass with the chimney that rises just south of it and the wings that extend on either side of this area, creating an appearance of rambling asymmetry. This steeply pitched front-facing gable defines the façade as consistent of an American version of the Tudor Revival style; the relatively rare use of stone as the principal wall material, however, is not typical for this style. The use of stone in the 1920s and 1930s was usually reserved as a covering for modest, stone-veneered Tudor Revival cottages[20]. It is very likely that the stone made available from the demolition of William Rockhill Nelson's home had a major influence on the design and materials of the Wolcott home, shown on Sanborn maps as being of all-stone construction[21].

The one-story portico creates a sense of cozy enclosure as one enters this impressive home, which was described by The Kansas City Star in the spring of 1929 as a "modified Medieval English manor[22]." The dark interior woodwork and floors, typical of Tudor Revival design, bring a sense of comfortable warmth to the soaring two-story spaces of the main entry and living room. Carved oak paneling and ceilings, dark oak floors, diamond-paned leaded windows and ceiling trusses in the living room are all original elements consistent with the Tudor Revival style. The high standards of construction are also evident in the carved stone fireplaces, marble baths and original chandeliers stored on site, elements reserved for houses of the wealthy. The focal point of the house is the living room, a two-story space located on the south end of the house, reminiscent of the all-purpose "Great Hall," a principal room of the original Tudor homes. "The key of the floor plan is the living room with its lofty ceiling two stories above the floor and a great south window..." reported The Kansas City Star in 1928[23]. This two-story south window, divided into nine panels, contains diamond panes and the Wolcott family crest in the uppermost central panel. Surrounding rooms, such as the front entry, library and dining room, are more enclosed spaces with low, paneled and plastered ceilings and paneled walls. These spaces contribute a sense of comfortable enclosure found within even the largest Tudor Revival residences by mimicking original Tudor plans of several small rooms adjacent to the Great Hall.

The Tudor Revival style is echoed in the design for the detached garage, which remains located south of the house in its original 1928 configuration. Architectural details that contribute to the house's design—exposed brackets, tile roof and stone walls, lintels and sills—remain as part of this two-story structure. Able to accommodate three automobiles, the garage was angled to save one of the original trees located on the site. The upper story of the garage is reached by interior stairs and serves as storage space.

Surroundings

The Mission Hills neighborhood was the premier development of Jesse Clyde Nichols, a Kansas City real estate developer who earned a national reputation for his far-sighted urban planning methods. In 1908, J.C. Nichols and several financial partners gained control of approximately 1000 acres surrounding the Kansas City Country Club for residential development. This tract also included 229 acres in Johnson County, Kansas purchased from the Armour family, which would eventually become Mission Hills.

J.C. Nichols was reportedly fascinated by the rolling terrain and meandering creeks in the topography of Mission Hills, seeing the opportunity to create a development that resembled one large formal garden[24]. He worked closely with Sid J. Hare, noted landscape architect and protégé of George Kessler, and his son, Herbert Hare. The firm of Hare & Hare platted the oversized blocks and layout of mostly curved streets of Mission Hills. The large blocks, some averaging ten acres each and one containing over 30 acres, were often bisected by landscaped pedestrian walkways and more than 2000 trees were planted before 1919; every lot would eventually contain trees. The nearby Mission Hills Country Club provided recreation and gathering space for residents.

The first Mission Hills area lot at 59th and State Line Road was sold to A.C. Jobes, a Kansas City banker, in 1909[25]. Full-scale development of Mission Hills began in 1913-14. Advertisements for the area portrayed the Kansas location as exclusive and desirable by stating, "Mission Hills offers the first opportunity ever given to persons who may wish to reside in a restricted residence section in Kansas, yet share in the conveniences and social environment of Kansas City proper." The development was the first in the Kansas City area not served by a streetcar and, thus, designed for the automobile. Many streets were curvilinear, and oversized blocks contained lots with up to 175 feet or more of frontage. As the area was platted, deed restrictions were placed on the lots concerning minimum construction costs, landscaping, and setbacks[26]. Ward Parkway, also constructed by the Nichols Company just across the state line in Missouri, connected the exclusive neighborhood to the rest of Kansas City.

In developing Mission Hills, J.C. Nichols pioneered the concept of an automatic homeowner's association; the association and its deed restrictions were automatically renewed each year unless a vote by the majority of the homeowners decided otherwise. Because the area was located outside of Kansas City city limits, the Nichols Company was responsible for providing all basic services—sewers, electricity, gas, police and fire protection, water and maintenance of streets[27]. The Mission Hills Homes Company, formed in 1914, assessed residents for these services.

Nichols actively pursued residents for his select development, reportedly convincing nine Kansas millionaires to build estates in Mission Hills. Among them were brothers Albert and Harry Jones, who built homes on adjoining lots on East Mission Drive in 1918 and John and Phoebe Horn, who began construction at 6624 Wenonga Road in 1929. The Wolcott family apparently purchased their Oakwood Road property in 1920, and experienced a household upheaval as they planned their new home. A 1982 article from the *Country Club District, Country Side Homes Association* newsletter reads:

> From the K.C. Star 1920, 5225 Wyandotte. The Real Estate market the last year indulged in many curious pranks. One of these was disclosed when John J. Wolcott, a grain man, bought back for $25,000 the residence at 5225 Wyandotte St. which he sold T.L. Burrell for $20,000 a year ago. Yet Mr. Wolcott himself is a gainer for a large tract he bought in Mission Hills for his future home has appreciated in value even more than the house he sold and repurchased. Mr. Wolcott will occupy his re-purchased home only until his new residence has been planned and built.

> According to Virginia Altman Wolcott (daughter-in-law of J.J.) Mr. and Mrs. Wolcott moved into the Locarno (an apartment on the Plaza) after they sold the Wyandotte property. Mrs. Wolcott, who went by Daisy, was very fussy and would have nothing to do with apartment living. She made J.J. buy the house back[28].

Oakwood Road was virtually undeveloped when the Wolcott home was built, making it one of the first in the 5700 block of Oakwood Road. A 1931 Sanborn map shows only three houses along this portion of Oakwood Road—the Wolcott home at 5701, a home two lots north at 5601 and one home across the street and south at 5750 Oakwood Road.

The city of Mission Hills, measuring approximately 2½ square miles, was incorporated in 1949. At the time of its incorporation, it included the largest number of golf courses in the country—Mission Hills, the Kansas City Country Club, Indian Hill Country Club and Armour Fields[29].

The Wolcott family's social status and financial success were solidly expressed with the construction of their stately manor in Kansas City area's most elegant neighborhood. The house and its location remain as impressive today as they did in 1928.

[1] "Built Of Material Yielded By The Razed Oak Hall Structure, The New John J. Walcott (sic) House Begins To Take Form". The Kansas City Star, 24 June 1928.
[2] Kansas City Public Library Main Library, Lauder Autochrome Collection, W-25. The photograph is identified as "Mrs. John J. (Wynojene) Wolcott, 5701 Oakwood Road; Pool from the South—Depth 9'; July 21, 1932." The depth of the fish pond today is still nine to ten feet.
[3] "The Deed Which Gives Oak Hall to Kansas City for the Fine Arts". The Kansas City Star, 15 February 1927.
[4] "Save the Oak Hall Room". The Kansas City Star, 22 January 1928.
[5] "Lump Oak Hall Sale". The Kansas City Star, 23 January 1928.
[6] "Oak Hall Begins to Go". The Kansas City Star, 9 April 1928.
Oak Hall was installed in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, where it remained for many years. It is currently disassembled and in storage at the museum.
[7] "Oak Hall Bits Reappear". The Kansas City Star, 10 June 1928.
[8] "John J. Wolcott Is Dead". The Kansas City Times, 31 March 1939.
[9] 1930-31 Social Register of Kansas City. Kansas City, MO: Kansas City Social Directory, 1930.
[10] Who's Who in Kansas City 1930. Hebron, NE: Robert M. Baldwin, 1930.
[11] "Oak Hall Bits Reappear". The Kansas City Star, 10 June 1928.
[12] The house's construction date is erroneously stated as "about 1932" in Mission Hills; Reflections on the Past and Present by Madelyn Voigts, published by The Lowell Press in 1987.
[13] "Built Of Material Yielded By The Razed Oak Hall Structure, The New John J. Walcott (sic) House Begins To Take Form". The Kansas City Star, 24 June 1928.
[14] This undated clipping, apparently from The Kansas City Star, was found in a scrapbook in the owners' possession.
[15] Sherry Piland. "Early Kansas City Architects: Selby Kurfiss." The Historic Kansas City News, Vol. 4, no. 1, August-September 1979.
[16] "A New home for G.W. Lincoln". The Kansas City Times, 8 May 1909.
[17] Virginia & Lee McAlester. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995.
[18] Virginia & Lee McAlester. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995.
[19] Leland M. Roth. A Concise History of American Architecture. New York: Harper & Row, 1979.
[20] Virginia & Lee McAlester. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995.
[21] 1931 Kansas City, Kansas Sanborn Fire Map, Volume 7, Plate 705.
[22] "Glimpses of the New Home of Mr. and Mrs. John J. Wolcott, Built Largely From Material Taken From Oak Hall". The Kansas City Star, 14 April 1929.
[23] "Built Of Material Yielded By The Razed Oak Hall Structure, The New John J. Walcott (sic) House Begins To Take Form". The Kansas City Star, 24 June 1928.
[24] Madelyn Voigts. Mission Hills; Reflections on the Past and Present. Kansas City: The Lowell Press, 1987.
[25] Robert Pearson. The J.C. Nichols chronicle: the authorized story of the man, his company and his legacy, 1880-1994. Lawrence, KS: Country Club Plaza Press, 1994.
[26] William S. Worley. J.C. Nichols and the Shaping of Kansas City. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1993.
[27] Robert Pearson. The J.C. Nichols chronicle: the authorized story of the man, his company and his legacy, 1880-1994. Lawrence, KS: Country Club Plaza Press, 1994.
[28] *Country Club District, Country Side Homes Association*, March 1982. The 1920 Kansas City Star article could not be located.
[29] George Fuller Green. A Condensed History of the Kansas City Area; Its Mayor and Some V.I.P.s. Kansas City: The Lowell Press, 1968.

Section 9

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Verbal Boundary Description: The nominated property is located on all of Block 5, Lot 3 except northerly 50 feet in Mission Hills, Johnson County, Kansas. The 2.1 acre tract is bounded on the west by Oakwood Road and on the north, south and east by adjacent property lines.

Boundary Justification: The boundaries include all of the land historically associated with the residence built in 1928 for Mr. and Mrs. John J. Wolcott.

Photograph Continuation Sheet

Information for all photographs;
3. Susan Jezak Ford
4. October 26, 2000
5. Negatives to be stored at Kansas State Historical Society

6. West façade; camera pointed east.
7. #1

6. East façade; camera pointed southwest.
7. #2

6. South façade; camera pointed north.
7. #3

6. North façade; camera pointed southeast.
7. #4

6. Garage; camera pointed southwest.
7. #5

6. Main foyer; camera pointed northeast.
7. #6

6. Living room; camera pointed south.
7. #7

6. Library; camera pointed south.
7. #8

6. Dining room; camera pointed west.
7. #9

6. Porch; camera pointed north.
7. #10